



Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik with Hon'ble Members of 16th Odisha Legislative Assembly

# Odisha House Sine Die

**Bhubaneswar(KCN):** Amid protests and walkout by opposition BJP and Congress members, Speaker Pramila Mallik on Friday adjourned Odisha Legislative Assembly sine die, two business days ahead of its schedule.

The State Legislative Assembly's budget session commenced on February 5 and is scheduled to end on February 13. However, the Speaker adjourned the House sine die this evening after the assembly passed the Odisha Appropriation (vote-on-account) Bill, 2024.

Government Chief Whip in Assembly Prashanta Muduli of BJD brought a motion to adjourn the House sine



die for the remaining period stating there is no business before the House to transit.

The proposal was supported by treasury bench members Sashi Bhusan Behera and Amar Satpathy. The MLAs of Opposition BJP and Congress staged a walkout in protest against the motion.

The short-term budget session was the last session of the 16th Odisha Assembly as the

## MLA Premananda Nayak Resigns From BJD

**Bhubaneswar(KCN):** Odisha MLA and former minister Premananda Nayak resigned from the primary membership of the Biju Janata Dal (BJD).

Nayak sent his resignation to BJD Supremo and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik in which he mentioned that he was parting ways with the BJD as he was being 'sidelined' in the party. "I have been neglected in the party. Thus, I hereby resign from the prime membership of the Biju Janata Dal," stated his resignation letter. Premananda Nayak ventured into politics with the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in 2009 and contested the election from Telkoi Constituency. Nayak's effective campaigning and constituent trust contributed to his success with his dedication leading to victory in the 2019 elections, and securing him a seat as a BJD MLA. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and party head Biju Janta Dal appointed Premananda Nayak as a minister in the Odisha government, where he served as the Minister of Skill Development and Technical Education, focusing on enhancing vocational training and technical education opportunities within the state in the year 2019.

**Bhubaneswar(KCN):** As many as 716 Assistant Section Officers today joined the State Government. They will work in the state secretariat in Lok Seva Bhawan in different departments. An orientation programme was organized in the Convention centre for the recruits in the presence of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. Congratulating the new assistant section officers and their family members for the success in the recruitment process, the CM asked the recruits to follow the 5T principles to bring efficiency to the governance initiated by the state government. Explaining the mandate

way for their sons, daughters in the upcoming Assembly polls.

All the MLAs have posed for a beautiful picture with Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik at the Assembly premises on the last day. The women members have also taken another picture to remember the special day in their political careers.

Odisha's veteran Congress leader Suresh Kumar Routray, who had announced retirement from politics, bade farewell to the Legislative Assembly today.

Speaking to media persons, Shri Routray said, "I have turned 80. I am tired. My body can no more cope with the hectic activities of a

legislator. When my two sons agreed to join politics, I decided to retire from active politics. I hope that they will take on from where I left," he said.

"Since I have taken a firm decision to retire from politics, I will not contest elections. My younger son Manmath Routray will contest from Jatni and elder son from Nimapara. I hope the people will support them the way they did to me," the Congress leader said.

The Congress leader was elected to the Assembly six times from Jatni. In 1977, he won on a Janata Party ticket. Later, he represented the constituency in 1980, 1985, 1995, 2000, and 2019 as a Congress candidate.

## Chaudhary Charan Singh, PV Narasimha Rao, Dr MS Swaminathan To Be Conferred Bharat Ratna



### New Delhi(KCN):

Former Prime Ministers Chaudhary Charan Singh, PV Narasimha Rao and renowned agricultural scientist

MS Swaminathan will be conferred with Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian award of the Republic of India, announced PM Modi on Friday.

In three separate posts from his X account, the prime minister said it is a matter of great honour and pride for his government to confer the prestigious award to these distinguished personalities.

Announcing the Bharat Ratna to Chaudhary Charan Singh, PM Modi wrote, "It is the good fortune of our government that former Prime Minister of the country Chaudhary Charan Singh is being honoured with Bharat Ratna. This honour is dedicated to his incomparable contribution to the country. He had dedicated his entire life to the rights and welfare of farmers. Be it the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh or the Home Minister of the country and even as an MLA, he always gave impetus to nation-building. He also stood firm against the Emergency. His

dedication to our farmer brothers and sisters and his commitment to democracy during the Emergency is inspiring to the entire nation."

On former PM Narasimha Rao getting the highest civilian honour, PM Modi said, "Delighted to share that our former Prime Minister, Shri PV Narasimha Rao Garu, will be honoured with the Bharat Ratna. As a distinguished scholar and statesman, Narasimha Rao Garu served India extensively in various capacities. He is equally remembered for the work he did as Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Union Minister, and as a Member of Parliament and Legislative Assembly for many years. His

visionary leadership was instrumental in making India economically advanced, laying a solid foundation for the country's prosperity and growth. Narasimha Rao Garu's tenure as Prime Minister was marked by significant measures that opened India to global markets, fostering a new era of economic development. Furthermore, his contributions to India's foreign policy, language

and education sectors underscore his multifaceted legacy as a leader who not only steered India through critical transformations but also enriched its cultural and intellectual heritage."

PM Modi also announced the honour for Dr. MS Swaminathan. "It is a matter of immense joy that the Government of India is conferring the Bharat Ratna on Dr. MS Swaminathan Ji, in recognition of his monumental contributions to our nation in agriculture and farmers' welfare. He played a pivotal role in helping India achieve self-reliance in agriculture during challenging times and made outstanding efforts towards modernizing Indian agriculture. We also recognise his invaluable work as an innovator and mentor and encourage learning and research among several students."

Dr. Swaminathan's visionary leadership has not only transformed Indian agriculture but also ensured the nation's food security and prosperity. He was someone I knew closely and I always valued his insights and inputs," PM Modi wrote.

## Corporate Honcho Joins BJD

**Bhubaneswar(KCN):** Ahead of Rajya Sabha polls for three seats, Corporate Honcho Santrupt Misra joined the Governing BJD here today.

Shri Misra joined the ruling party here in presence of BJD President and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, 5T Chairman V K Pandian, organizational Secretary Pranab Prakash Das, Pratap Jena, Pratap Deb and other senior leaders.

Shri Misra resigned as the Director of Group

Human Resources at the

Aditya Birla Group in December after 27 years

in the conglomerate.

"I welcome Santrupt Misra to the Biju Janata

Dal. He left an important post in the corporate

world to help us in good

work," Chief Minister

Naveen Patnaik said.

"I will take up any work

assigned to me by the

BJD leadership and abide

by party discipline. I

joined the BJD after

being inspired by the

ideology, personality and

people-oriented work of

the chief minister," the

newly joined BJD leader

said.

Soon after the joining,

Shri Misra was appointed

the BJD's National

Spokesperson. The

regional party has also

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# \$100 Billion Economy

**Bhubaneswar(KCN):** Odisha has now become more than a \$100 Billion economy. Since 2015-16, the State has registered an average growth of 7.25 percent, which is about 1 percent higher than the average growth of the national economy, Finance Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha said today.

While delivering the interim budget speech in the Assembly, Shri Arukha said, "As per advance estimates for 2023-24, it is projected that the State economy will grow at 8.5 percent

compared to 7.3 percent of the country. Thus, Odisha continues to be a bright spot in the whole country."

This is the outcome of the consistency in efforts and pro-development and pro-people policy of the Government under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, he said. Later Minister Shri Arukha and Principal Secretary Finance, Vishal Dev briefed Media about the Interim Budget. Informing about the fiscal status of the state, he said the debt stock at the end

of 2024-25 is projected to remain at 13.1 percent of GSDP against the FRBM (Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, 2003) mandated level of 25 percent. Similarly, the interest payment to revenue receipt ratio is projected to remain at 3.7 percent against the FRBM prescribed level of 15 percent. Thus, all debt parameters are well within the sustainable level, The Minister stated.

"We are the pioneer State to launch Ama



Bank Scheme during 2023 as an initiative to provide banking services at all 4,373 un-banked GPs through establishment of CSP Plus Outlets in partnership with six Public Sector Banks," he

pointed out. In the first phase, he said, 750 CSP Plus outlets have been made operational. In the second phase, around 2000 CSP Plus outlets will be operationalized shortly. This is an

exemplary model to provide minimum 15 banking services free of cost including door step banking for senior citizens, differently abled persons and pregnant women.

This is a landmark initiative by any State Government aimed at transforming financial inclusion and taking it to the next level in line with the 5T mantra of Chief Minister, he further said. The Finance Minister again informed that the revised estimates for 2023-24, the total

expenditure from consolidated fund is estimated at Rs 2,30,000 crore. Total revenue receipt is estimated at Rs 1,85,500 crore and revenue expenditure at Rs.1,63,089 crore.

Stating that the capital outlay in 2024-25 is Rs 63,162 crore, which is about 6.8 percent of GSDP, Arukha said, "This would be one of the highest among all major States. The estimated revenue surplus is of the order of Rs.37,077 crore, which would be 4 percent of GSDP. The estimated fiscal deficit of Rs.27,750 crore would amount to 3 percent of GSDP."

## Tata Steel Foundation Partners with Odisha Govt to establish Multi Skill Centre in Jajpur



**Kalinganagar, (Sapan Kar) :-** A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed today between Tata Steel Foundation (TSF) and the Government of Odisha to establish a Multi Skill Development Centre (MSDC) in Jajpur district

at the World Skill Center here. Shri Sarada Prasanna, Block Development Officer of Danagadi, Jajpur, and Sourav Roy, Chief Executive Officer, Tata Steel Foundation, signed the MoU at the World Skill Centre,

Bhubaneswar, in the presence of Shri Pritiranjan Gharai, Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development, Skill Development, and Technical Education, Government of Odisha. Present on the occasion were Alka Misra,

Chairperson, Odisha Skill Development Authority, Ambika Prasad Nanda, Head, CSR (Odisha), Tata Steel Foundation and Captain Amitabh, Head, Skill Development, Tata Steel Foundation. The MSC is poised to benefit youth from underserved communities in Danagadi and Sukinda blocks, aiming to offer industry-specific training courses to bolster employment prospects. Under the agreement, Tata Steel Foundation will collaborate with the Government of Odisha to establish the necessary infrastructure for short-term skill training courses specifically in the Danagadi block of Jajpur.

## Bharat Darshan Study Tour Takes Kashmir Valley Students on a Journey Across India



**Srinagar, (Aasif Malik):** A group of 27 students from Kashmir Valley is embarking on a Bharat Darshan Study Tour organized by 10 BN SSB Batmaloo, Srinagar. Starting from Srinagar, their journey will take them through Amritsar, Chandigarh, Delhi, and back, promising an exciting exploration of India's diverse tapestry. Kicking off on February 6, 2024, this week-long expedition aims to enrich the students' minds and

souls by immersing them in India's rich cultural heritage, historical landmarks, and natural wonders. From the majestic Golden Temple and Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar to the serene Sukhna Lake and Punjab Governor's House, and then on to iconic sites in Delhi like India Gate, Kartavyapath, War Memorial, PM Museum, Red Fort, and Gandhi Smriti, each stop on their itinerary holds the promise of discovery. A

Ravinder Nath, Director of NIT Srinagar/Vice Chancellor of Central University of Kashmir, graced the program as Chief Guest, encouraging the local youth and applauding the efforts of SSB. Rohitashwa, C o m m a n d a n t , emphasized that under the guidance of experienced mentors and tour guides, the students will not only witness India's splendor but also engage in meaningful interactions with local

communities, fostering a deeper understanding of the nation's ethos and values. This journey represents unity in diversity, as students from diverse backgrounds come together to celebrate India's vibrant culture. Through this transformative experience, the aim is to instill a sense of pride and belonging in the young generation, nurturing future leaders who will carry forward India's legacy.

## Voluntary Blood Donation Camps Organised Under 'NUA O' Banner

**Bhubaneswar(KCN):** Atanu Sabyasachi Naik Minister of Higher Education reviewed the "New O" program organized by the department. Minister Shri Naik discussed with the staff and students of all the universities and government-aided colleges of the state regarding the activities organized under this program and inquired about its impact on the students and youth. Its

impact on students is far-reaching. It has been very helpful in developing the hidden talent among them and they have got a strong platform to showcase their talent, was the feedback. Minister Mr. Naik said that while the phases of sports, cultural programs etc. have been completed, the social programs should continue with proper visibility. He also advised to organize voluntary blood donation

camps through the NUA O program. Briefing the media after the review, Minister Mr. Naik said, that 70 to 80% of the higher education students of the state have welcomed this initiative of the government. This has brought out the hidden talents among the students. Nua O has been divided into 3 sections, sports, cultural and social service, and organized competitions among students. Even the students studying in the

village have a platform to bring their talents to the forefront. They got the opportunity to show their talent in the state-level competition knowing their talent. District and state-level competitions have been held in sports activities. Similarly, cultural, literature and culture-based competitions have also been held. An inter-university competition was held between colleges.

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# Watching & Learning



along the road.

Everything was alive this morning. As we watched, there was a sense of great joy and the heavens were blue, the sun was slowly coming out of the hills, and there was light. As we watched the mockingbird on the wire, it was doing its antics, jumping high, doing its somersault, then coming down on the same spot on the wire. The watcher was no longer there, only the bird, grey and white, with a longish tail. The watching was without any movement of thought, watching the flurry of the bird that was enjoying itself.

We never watch for long. When we watch with great patience, watch without any sense of

the watcher, watch those birds, those droplets on the quivering leaves, bees, flowers, and the long trails of ants, then time ceases, time has a stop. One doesn't take time to watch or have the patience to watch. One learns a great deal through watching—watching people, the way they walk, talk and their gestures. You can see through their vanity, or their negligence of their own bodies. They are indifferent, they are callous.

There was an eagle flying high in the air, circling, without the beat of the wings, carried away by the air current beyond the hills, and it was lost. Watching, learning: Learning is time, but watching has no time.



**Dr. Arundhati Devi**

Or when you listen, listen without interpretation, without any reaction, listen without any bias. Listen to that thunder in the skies, the thunder rolling among the hills. One never listens completely, there is always interruption. Watching and listening are a great art, watching and

listening without any reaction, without any sense of the listener or the see-er. By watching and learning, we learn infinitely more than from any books. Books are necessary, but watching and listening sharpen your senses. For, after all, the brain is the centre of all the reactions, thoughts,

and remembrances. But if your senses are not highly awakened, you cannot really watch and listen and learn, not only how to act but also about learning, the very soil in which the seed of goodness can grow.

When there is this simple, clear watching and listening, then there is an awareness —

awareness of the colour of those flowers, red, yellow, white; of the spring leaves and stems, so tender, so delicate; awareness of the heavens, the earth and those people who are passing by. They have been chattering along that long road, never looking at the trees, flowers, skies, and at the marvellous hills. They are not even aware of what is going on around them. They talk a great deal about the environment, how we must protect nature and so on, but it seems they are not aware of the beauty and the silence of the hills and the dignity of the marvellous old tree. They are not even

It does not mean that you are to be self-centred in your watching, in your awareness, but just be aware. When you are aware, there is a choice of what to do, what not to do, like and dislike, your biases, fears, anxieties, the joys which you have remembered, the pleasures you have pursued; in all this there is a choice, and we think that choice gives us freedom. We like the freedom to choose — or, rather, that choice gives us a sense of freedom; but there is no choice when you see things very, very clearly.

**Director & Secretary, International Indency Prevention Movement, Odisha, Cuttack, Mob. : 9937172810**

## Everything In Our Lives

**Jasaswini Pattanaik**



At any given moment, there is a certain reality that is existing. It cannot be wished away at the present moment. You have to live the present moment as it really is. It means that there is no point in our mind playing the game of going into the past and trying to "reengineer" the past, as if by doing that, this moment will change for the "better!"

But yes, there is nothing wrong in wanting something to be different ("better") from what it is at the present moment. At least so long as one hasn't managed to become completely detached! But the important thing is to approach this objective positively. That is, one should not make oneself feel bad about why the present moment is what it is. Accept the present

moment as perfectly belonging to its space and time fitting well into the big picture created by the Creator. Then think what action you can take to actualise the desired scenario at a future point in time and take that action.

If you are desirous of bringing about a certain scenario in future and are moved to work towards it, that also belongs to its own space and time. However, the actual scenario that will emerge may not be what you desired and worked towards. It would be what will belong to its space and time in accordance with the Creator's big picture!

There is a time for everything in our lives. Whatever is happening with us is how it is meant to be. Whatever good or bad, fortunate or unfortunate, is how it is meant to be. Each turn of events in our lives has its own significance and we may not understand it right now it also has a lesson for us! It is our toughest times that



teach us the most! We should not try to control these events too much. Maybe we need to watch and observe them, savouring each moment as it is, and not try and fight what we don't like.

Success and failure have their deep implications. Success brings in more failures than failures if one dares to introspect impartially. Failures always have their blessings in disguise. Moreover, one simply remains a witness to all — success and failure are merely society's manipulations. The

synchronizing with existence deliberates that supreme power has always the last laugh. There is a buzz in spiritual regions that grass grows by itself. Can grass grow without existential inclining? The persecution of mind and body is disrespect to life. Whatever is available now is always more than what one deserves if one just thinks gratefully. If it is so, then why this hoo-ha or hurrah-scurry?

**Chairperson, Nalanda public School, Cuttack**  
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## Claustrophobia

**Dr. Samrat Kar**



reinforce the fear. Some people with claustrophobia experience mild anxiety when in a confined space, while others have severe anxiety or a panic attack. If you experience claustrophobia, you may feel like you're having a panic attack, although claustrophobia isn't a panic condition. For some people, claustrophobia may disappear on its own. Others may need therapy to manage and cope with their symptoms.

There is no diagnostic laboratory test for phobias. The diagnostic criteria of the American Psychiatric Association for specific phobias are: Excessive or irrational fear of a specific object or situation. Exposure to the feared object or situation leads to immediate anxiety or panic attack. One of the most

common phobias is claustrophobia, or the fear of enclosed spaces. A person who has claustrophobia may panic when inside a lift, aeroplane, crowded room or other confined area. The cause of anxiety disorders such as phobias is thought to be a combination of genetic vulnerability and life experience.

Claustrophobia can run in families. A single gene encoding a stress-regulated neuronal protein, GPM6a, can cause claustrophobia. In a 2013 study published in Transl. Psychiatry, mice deficient in GPM6a had no obvious abnormalities, but could be induced to develop claustrophobia.

Claustrophobia is a form of anxiety disorder, in which an irrational fear of having no escape or being closed-in can

lead to a panic attack. It is considered a specific phobia according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual. Medications like Zoloft, Paxil and Lexapro are commonly used SSRIs and effective for treating symptoms of claustrophobia. Anti-anxiety medications reduce the physiological symptoms that come with anxiety. A combination of CBT and exposure therapy is the gold standard for treating phobias, including claustrophobia, Antony notes.

Medication and lifestyle strategies, such as relaxation techniques, may also be used in some cases.

**Psychiatrist, The Brain Foundation, Purighat Road, Cuttack, Mob. : 9132433333**

# Encountering Timeless Moments



I had association with Lau Majaw, who is considered as Bob Dylan of the North East. When Dylan got a Nobel, I wrote on him in local newspapers. There I wrote, 'lyrical poetry and sonnets are all expressions of human emotions of immortal life and love, to include the agony in the loss or pain felt in the inability to attain it. The human conviction of immortality through every civilization asserts 'rebirth' or

rising in the 'judgement day' as a renewal of that human emotion as a positive assertion in hope. Poems (not prose) are lyrical and often sung. Poetic words have deep philosophical content; an expression of life itself.

In antiquity, lyrical poets had patrons, but in modern times apart from a small group who understand the significance of poetry, do not get a wider audience or recognition. It is encouraging that recognition of Bob Dylan as a lyrical poet is a step towards immortalizing immortality.'

Immortality is a relative term. In India it has a negative connotation whereas

in the west it is taken positively. Many of the fans of Bob Dylan consider that awarding the Poet-Singer with Nobel is a step towards immortalizing lust and immorality.

India be a Hindu Country like a Muslim or Christian one. Do what you can to create History as you so wish. But keep in mind: history shouldn't be interpreted like mythical epics! I did a small request to all in the 'Me Too' queue, 'don't let yourself down. Please read the background material of my Facebook page, a poem by Sarbeswar Dayal Saxena on liberty of women.'

If a 55 year old tongue entered to

**Prof. Manas Ranjan Mahapatra**

your 18 year old throat what you were doing? In stead of chewing the tongue you have come to take the political mileage as the person in question is a minister!'

Who is the boss? Let me elaborate a story in a lighter vein: 'BOSS hangs a Poster in his Office:

"I'M THE BOSS, DON'T FORGET AND REMAIN IN YOUR LIMITS"

He returns from lunch and finds a slip on his desk:

'Your Wife called, she was shouting and said that she wants the Poster back at HOME...'

Media is the greatest enemy of people's liberty these days. According to

media report from Nabarangpur district from my young friend Shantakar Chelapila, a teacher transferred Rs.30.000/- to the Journalists out of fear of getting a news published in their web channel. The teacher lodged complain with police and the journalists were arrested.

Good thing that the teacher complained. But why should anyone fear the journalists? What can happen if a report is published when the teacher has not done anything wrong? If he has done wrong and tried to suppress the event by giving bribe, he too has done a crime. While the arrests of journalists

be done on the reason why the teacher was trying to give such a huge amount to suppress the event and be punished if found guilty.'

Was it against her wife or daughter? Nobody

knows the truth as in

our country, truth is

always a myth and mystery.

Amrita Pritam was born a century ago. I wrote on her in 1981 when she got Jnanpith. When I came to Delhi in 1990 and joined NBT she was one of the few eminent authors with whom I had regular meetings. I met her partner Imroz there, he was a fine artist. I fondly recollect the memory of meeting Amrita and Imroz and how she struggled for liberty of women.

Karubaki... Sultana Razia was killed by her ethnic subjects. Many of our leaders have left their wives and hidden from records, living with other women. Women are not loved but tortured in History. Religious societies are not women friendly!

**Visiting Professor of Development Communication**  
**Former Director, I & PR and Culture, North Eastern Council**  
**Ministry of DoNER, Govt. of India**  
**Former Director, Book Publishing Courses & Editor, NCCL National Book Trust, Ministry of HRD, Govt. of India**

# Technology is becoming the cause of diseases in children

**(Technology is causing the loss of man in many fields)**

Vijay Garg



As the technology is increasing, the comfortable facilities of human life are also increasing. Technology which is considered as a boon today is causing loss of human being in many fields. One such major disadvantage, which is considered to be a gift of modern technology, is the problem of late speech in young children. Technology is becoming the cause of diseases in children. As technology is increasing, human life

develop. This is a major sign that a child is suffering from a speech delay. Sometimes a child's mental retardation from birth is a major reason. The second symptom is that even after 24 months, if the child does not make

direct eye contact with us after listening to us, or ignores the person speaking and delays in understanding, then this symptom is a late speech problem. There are beginnings. The remaining 50 percent of children are not delayed due to our own mistakes or negligence. They suffer from speech problems. In modern times, the biggest reason is technology, the misuse and excessive use of which is causing delayed speech in children. If the child does not start speaking by 2-4 years, then we will call him a victim of late speech disorder, which must be treated. Excessive use of TV and mobile

phones have come in the hands of children in the world today. Children spend more time on TV due to parents not being able to spare time for their children. Priority is given to watching or passing time by using mobile all the time, which is causing delay in speech development. For their own convenience, parents encourage young children to spend more time watching cartoons on TV or playing games on mobile phones, due to which the development of communication skills in children is delayed. A child communicates only one-way, due to which the act of seeing is more

developed than the act of speaking. Watching too much TV has a bad effect on the eyesight, as well as too much mobile. Hearing is also affected by its use. Today, excessive use of such tools is causing physical damage. Increase in physical diseases Due to the mistakes of the parents, there is a significant increase in the physical diseases of young children today. If we compare the children of two-three decades ago with today's generation, we have very alarming results. In those times, the lack of technology, the good outdoor environment and the constant presence of parents with children were the main reasons for the absence of diseases among them.

due to which the child gets such an environment from birth, in which he has to stay alone from morning to evening with the elder of a house or the maid, which is a very quiet environment. It happens, due to which the speech act does not develop quickly in the child. Parents not talking to their children as needed and being busy is becoming a major reason for non-development of spoken language in children. Behavioral change Due to the above reasons, many young children today are increasing. Due to the mistakes of parents and the misuse of technology, only a few percent of children are falling prey to autism at a young age. This is such a change of behavior, in which children are lost only in themselves. They delay in listening and understanding everything. Most of the parents consider these symptoms to be normal and do not pay attention to the child at all, but if this problem is not taken seriously, then in



the future this problem also causes physical and mental diseases of the child. suggestion First of all Or every parent should give only specified time to the children to use mobile, TV, internet. Children should be encouraged to play outdoor sports as much as possible, through which their physical development takes place in a proper manner. Children should be encouraged to do yoga and other physical exercises, which strengthen the physical and mental condition. Younger children should be talked to more often, which proves helpful in their speech development and with them. Should spend more time. It is better to take the time to play with them yourself than to play alone. If a child shows symptoms of a speech delay related illness, he should immediately consult a speech therapy specialist.

**Retired Principal Educational Columnist Malout Punjab**

## Unique Fashion Walk Celebrates Tribal Heritage at Sambalpur Mahotsav



**Sambalpur, (SIDDHARTH PATTNAIK)** : In a celebration of indigenous culture and heritage, the Indian Beauty Council (IBC), under the leadership of President

Minati Sahoo, organised a one-of-a-kind fashion walk at the Sambalpur Mahotsav hosted by the Sambalpur Sanskrutik Parishad on January 8, 2024. The event, held at Birsa Maidan,

showcased the rich diversity of tribal traditions and clothing, featuring genuine tribal representatives and leaders.

Distinguished figures such as Mangal Tai from

Maharashtra and Sanjulata Naik from Jharsuguda graced the runway, donning traditional tribal attire with pride and elegance. Their participation not only added authenticity to

the event but also conveyed a powerful message of cultural preservation and empowerment.

The fashion walk, choreographed by Sambalpuri Hub and with music composed by Durga Madhab Panda, served as a platform to highlight the beauty and significance of tribal heritage, emphasizing the importance of honoring indigenous cultures while embracing modernity. Through this unique initiative, the IBC aims to promote inclusivity, diversity, and appreciation for the rich tapestry of traditions that define India's cultural landscape.

## Grand Welcome to Sonepur-Puri Express on its first regular run from Sonepur



on Fridays. The train is leaving Puri at 7.35 pm on Thursdays and reaching Sonepur at 5.30 am on Fridays. In the return direction, it will depart from Sonepur at 7.30 pm on

Fridays and will reach Puri at 6.55 am on Saturdays. The train will have

## Rural Cultural Meet organises at NTPC Talcher Kaniha



**Kaniha, (KCN)** : The 11th Rural Cultural Meet was organized by NTPC Talcher Kaniha under its CSR initiative on 08th February, 2024. Every year the power station organises the event to promote rich heritage and culture of Odisha through various forms of dance showcased by rural school students.

This year, the popular CSR programme saw participation of 497 students from 34 schools guided by 68 teachers. This is the eleven year in series that NTPC Talcher Kaniha had organized the cultural meet.

The event was inaugurated by Chief Guest, Shri A K Sehgal, HOP (Talcher Kaniha) by lighting of lamps in presence of other senior officials, Shri Ch. Satya Rama Krishna, GM(O&M), Shri A.J. R. a j k u m a r , GM(Maintenance), Shri Prakash Kumar,

GM(FM) & Shri Brij Kishor Pandey, Head of HR and representatives of Unions/Associations. In Senior category, Kalpataru Maa Bhairavi Vidya Mandir, Bijigol, in Middle category, Govt. U.P. School, Sibarampur and in Junior category,

Govt. Primary School, Huttin Area were declared the best performing group. Smt Anita Singh Deo, (Nṛutyaacharya) and Shri Bairagi Charan Mallick (Byanga Baruda), Angul were the judges of the rural cultural meet.

Language in Official Communications' on Friday, Dr Shashank Goel said that the training programme was aimed at imparting knowledge and skills to develop positive attitude in using Gender-Inclusive Language in all forms of communication, including oral, written, formal and informal, both in English and Telugu. He added that the Institute was making strong efforts to apply Gender-Inclusive Language in various sectors like Education,

Koraput, (KCN) : The Central University of Odisha, Koraput organized a MOOCs induction programme for students on 6 February 2024 at its campus at Sunabeda, Koraput. Prof. Y. Narasimhulu, Former Vice-Chancellor, Rayalseema University and Prof. K. Srinivas, Head of IT, NIEPA, New Delhi were resource persons in the programme. Prof. Chakradhar Tripathi, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, inaugurated the programme. Prof. V. C. Jha, Consultant, Academics & Administration was present on the inaugural dais as Guests of Honour. The programme was organized by Dr. Kakoli Banerjee, Assistant Professor, Dept. of

Biodiversity and Conservation of Natural Resources & University MOOCs Coordinator. Dr. Banerjee in his welcome address explained that the objective of the programme was to orient the students about the basics of MOOCs which by an act of UGC has become a compulsory component of the syllabus. Prof. Tripathi, VC, CUO expressed his happiness on the introduction of MOOCs courses as this

## AIIMS Bhubaneswar Pediatrics Department Achieves Milestone in Life-Saving Procedure

- Saved life of a 9-year boy, removing a stitching needle from lungs by performing bronchoscopic interventions
- Removal of such type of sharp foreign bodies without any open surgery is first time by any pediatrics centre in Odisha



Bhubaneswar, (KCN) : In a remarkable and pioneering effort, the Department of Pediatrics at AIIMS Bhubaneswar successfully saved the life of a 9-year-old boy by performing a ground-breaking bronchoscopic intervention to remove a stitching needle lodged in the lungs. This achievement marks the first instance of removing such sharp foreign bodies without resorting to open surgery in any pediatrics center in Odisha.

The young patient, hailing from West Bengal, was brought to AIIMS Bhubaneswar after aspirating a stitching needle, approximately 4 CM in length, into the left lower lobe bronchus lateral segment of the lungs. The expert team of pediatricians, including Dr. Rashmi Ranjan Das, Dr. Krishna M Gulla, Dr. Ketan, and Dr. Ramakrishna, skillfully performed bronchoscopic interventions to extract the needle without encountering any complications.

Executive Director Dr. Ashutosh Biswas extends his heartfelt congratulations to the dedicated team of doctors, praising their life-saving procedure. He encourages continued excellence in such

interventions in the future. The entire process, taking approximately 1 hour, spared the young patient from a major life-threatening surgery (thoracotomy).

Dr. Rashmi Ranjan Das emphasizes that such a surgery could have jeopardized the boy's health, potentially requiring the removal of a portion of the lungs. The patient, admitted for four days post-procedure, is now in stable condition and on the path to recovery. This innovative procedure, available at AIIMS Bhubaneswar and only a few centers across India, utilizes less invasive flexible bronchoscopy for the removal of sharp airway foreign bodies. Dr. Krishna M Gulla informs that AIIMS Bhubaneswar boasts a dedicated Pediatric Pulmonology and ICU team, performing bronchoscopic

The success stories are a result of collaborative efforts with specialists from Pediatrics, Pediatric Surgery, ENT, and Radiology, showcasing AIIMS Bhubaneswar's commitment to providing exceptional care for children facing respiratory problems.

## CUO organizes MOOCs induction programme for students



opens up new opportunities of learning for students and they can venture beyond syllabus. Students in remote areas like Koraput may access best of courses and faculty through MOOCs, he said. Prof. V.C. Jha emphasized on the importance of interdisciplinary education as envisaged in NEP 2020. In the technical sessions that followed Prof. Y. Narasimhulu spoke about use of ICT in MOOCs and the credit transfer framework. He particularly stressed that Universities should be flexible in their approach to allow students to learn subjects of their choice. Prof. K. Srinivas discussed various IT tools, softwares and their usage to create learning content in audio visual mode. He discussed about Google classroom, moodle, Anuvadini etc.

Prof. N. C. Panda, Registrar, CUO was the chief guest of the

valedictory session. Prof. Panda appreciated the induction programme and hoped that the academic atmosphere of the University will be greatly benefitted through MOOCs.

The vote of thanks was delivered by Dr. Sourav Gupta, HOD (i/c), Dep't of Journalism & Mass Communication & Member, MOOCs. The programme was well attended by students, research scholars and faculty members.

## Training program on 'Using Gender-Inclusive Language in Official Communications' at Dr MCR HRD Institute concludes



**Hyderabad, Feb 9 (KCN)** : "Gender-Inclusive Language is a powerful way to promote gender equality and eradicate gender bias," said Director General of Dr Marri Chenna Reddy Human Resource Development (MCRHRD) Institute and Special Chief Secretary to Govt. Dr Shashank Goel. Delivering the valedictory address at the three-day training programme on 'Using Gender-Inclusive Language in various sectors like Education,

Health, Local Governance, Media, and appreciated the efforts of Senior Faculty and Course Coordinator Srinivas Madhav, Head,

play on the subject. They expressed confidence that awareness could be created amongst the youth and employees on the use of Gender-Inclusive Language in their communications. Officers from Sakhi OSC, Hub for Empowerment of Women from Department of Women Development and Child Welfare who conduct awareness programs as a part of their outreach activities participated in the program.

Speaking and writing in a way that does not discriminate against a particular sex, social gender or gender identity, and does not perpetuate gender stereotypes." State Mission Coordinator Dr. Sunitha, and Faculty member Saka Venkateswara Rao also conducted sessions on gender issues. Trainees made innovative presentations on application of the principles for Gender-Inclusive Communication and also enacted a role

Course successfully. Speaking on the occasion, Srinivas Madhav said, "According to the United Nations, using gender-inclusive language means

# Opposition Slams AONO

**Bhubaneswar(KCN):** Opposition BJP and Congress today criticized the State Government alleging that elected representatives of panchayati raj institutions (PRIs) have been neglected in execution of newly launched 'Ama Odisha Nabin Odisha' (AONO) scheme.

The scheme was launched last December with an outlay of more than Rs 4,200 crore to boost rural infrastructure and promote Shree Jagannath culture. Under the scheme, an assistance of Rs 50 lakh is being provided to each panchayat for execution of several infrastructure projects.

Starting the old scheme 'Ama Gaon Ama Bikash' has been renamed as 'Ama

Odisha Nabin Odisha' to collect funds keeping election in view. The fund is provided to only ruling party workers while the elected representatives including sarpanches have not been included in the programme, said BJP Chief Whip Mohan Majhi while participating in a debate on an adjournment motion in the State Assembly.

Similarly, Congress legislature party (CLP) leader Narasingha Mishra alleged the state government has provided funds to a particular religious community under the scheme. Shri Mishra

raised questions on the secular credentials of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

In the name of conservation of Shree

Jagannath culture, money is generously being provided to villages, he alleged. The AONO scheme was launched only for political gain. No elected public representatives have been consulted, Mishra said.

Reacting to Shri Mishra's statement, senior BJD leader and Panchayati Raj Minister Pradeep Kumar Amat said the government is

providing funds for development of places of worship of all religious communities including Masjids.

Shri Amat, in his reply, said the Chief Minister has launched a historic scheme like 'Aam Odisha Nabin Odisha' to make all the basic facilities of urban areas available in rural areas. Due to the continuous efforts of the Chief Minister, more than 1 crore people have come out of poverty in the past

years, which has been reported in the Niti Aayog report. The main objectives of the AONO scheme are to transform rural Odisha, develop infrastructure

and communities, Amat said. Unfortunately, the opposition parties are opposing every step taken by the state government for the preservation, promotion, and protection of Jagannath culture and making all facilities available to pilgrims at places of worship is another major approach of the program, the minister added. However, he said that no public elected representative has been neglected in implementation of the scheme. The project's proposals have been brought from elected representatives, public earmarked Rs 50 lakh for each panchayat from the state's own fund, he said. For promotion, preservation and protection of Jagannath culture and making all facilities available to pilgrims at places of worship is another major approach of the program, the minister added. However, he said that no public elected representative has been neglected in implementation of the scheme. The project's proposals have been brought from elected representatives, public

and the transformation of rural Odisha, which is against the development of the state, Shri Amat said.

## Notification Issued For Rajya Sabha Polls In Odisha, Nomination Deadline Feb 15, Voting Feb 27

**Bhubaneswar(KCN):** The Odisha Legislative Assembly has issued a notification for the election to three Rajya Sabha seats that will become vacant in April. The election will be held

for the seats held by Ashwini Vaishnaw, Prashanta Nanda, and Amar Patnaik, whose terms are set to end on April 3, 2024. The Election Commission of India had earlier announced that 56

seats of Rajya Sabha from 15 states, including Odisha, will go to polls on February 27, 2024. The last date for filing nomination papers is February 15, and the scrutiny of papers will be held on February 16. Candidates can withdraw their candidature by February 20th. The Voting will be held from 9 am to 4 pm on February 27 and the results will be declared on the same day.

**General Elections 2024: ECI Team To Review Poll Preparedness In Odisha From Feb 15-17**

**Bhubaneswar(KCN):** Officials from the Election Commission of India (ECI) are scheduled to visit Odisha from February 15 to February 17, 2024, to review the state's preparedness for the upcoming General Elections in 2024. During their two-day visit, they will meet with various stakeholders including political parties, DEOs, SPs, CPs, Divisional Commissioners, IGs, Chief Electoral Officer, State Police Nodal Officer, CPF Nodal Officer, enforcement agencies, Odisha Chief Secretary, and DGP to discuss and review the election preparedness.

## Royal Bengal tiger found dead in Odisha's Similipal

**Baripada(KCN):** The carcass of a Royal Bengal tiger was found in the Similipal Tiger Reserve in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district, an official said Thursday.

The carcass of the male tiger, around 3.5 years old, was found near a nullah in the core area February 5, the reserve's field director Prakash Chand Gogineni said.

During patrolling, forest

guards found the carcass, and it is suspected that the death happened two days before being found, he said.

"We informed the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and principal chief conservator of forests about the incident on February 6," he said. The post-mortem examination has been completed, Gogineni said. Samples from the carcass were sent to different laboratories for testing, he said.

"There was no injury mark on the carcass. It is suspected that the tiger died due to natural causes. However, the exact reason behind the death will be known after getting the examination reports," he added.

## PM Modi not OBC by birth: Rahul Gandhi claims during Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in Odisha

**Jharsuguda(KCN):** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Thursday claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was not born in an Other Backward Class family, and he is 'misleading' people by identifying himself as an OBC. Gandhi, while making a brief speech in Jharsuguda on the third and concluding day of his 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra' in Odisha, said Modi "was born in a family that belonged to the general caste". "Modi ji has been misleading the people by saying that he is an OBC. He was born in a family of the Teli caste, which was included in the OBC list during the BJP government's tenure in Gujarat in 2000. Therefore, Modi ji is not an OBC by birth," the Congress MP asserted.

## IMD weather forecast: Odisha likely to see rain on these two dates

**Bhubaneswar(KCN):** The regional centre of IMD in Bhubaneswar Thursday forecast that light rain or thundershower is likely to occur in many districts of Odisha between February 11 and 12. The weather agency further predicted that minimum temperature (night) is likely to fall slightly by 2-3 degree

Celsius over the next two days and gradually rise by 3-4 degree Celsius thereafter at many places over the districts of the state.

From 8:30am of February 11 to 8:30am of February 12: According to IMD, light to moderate rain/thundershower is very likely to prevail over the remaining districts of the state. From 8:30am of February 12 to 8:30am of February 13:

Jharsuguda, Subarnapur, Sambalpur, Deogarh, Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Angul, Dhenkanal, Mayurbhanj, Boudh, Jajpur, Bhadrak and Balasore districts. Besides, dry weather is very likely to prevail over the remaining districts of the state. From 8:30am of February 12 to 8:30am of February 13:



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## Health care camp held for senior citizens



**SUBARNAPUR(KCN):** Today Senior Citizens Day Retirement in memory of Maharaja High School Mathematics teacher and author of Gita Bhashya Sangam v Prasanna Kumar Panda. A free health camp has been organized at Majhipada Kali Puja Mandap by Swachha Bharat and Ramadhun Club accordingly, a leading voluntary organization of Subarnapur. Hundreds of senior citizens have been examined in this camp from 8 am to 11 am. Inaugurating by Excise Supdt. Sumati Tripathy, saying that this effort of Sreechasebi is commendable, he was of the opinion that it is everyone's responsibility and

duty to serve and respect senior citizens. Jyoti Ranjan Bahidhar, Sonepur Municipality Ex Chairman Piyush Panda, Ramadhun Club Secretary Bikas Panda, Santosh Padhi, Advisor of Health Radha Kisan Agrawala, Swachha Bharat Advisor Gariba L o i , B a i k u n t h a Satpathy, Binod Meher, Indu Mati Purohit, Prahallad Mishra, Pramod Sahu, Tarani Meher, Ladu Kishore Mallick, Sushant Sahu, Pratap Dash, Jayanta Behera, Ganesh Mishra were the major contributors. Manoj Panda, who coordinated the co-ordinator Manoranjan Tripathy meeting, gave the vote of thanks.

## Ashok Leyland launches industry first 8-wheel truck – AVTR 2620

**Chennai:** Ashok Leyland, flagship of the Hinduja Group and India's leading commercial vehicle manufacturer, today, launched the industry first 8 wheeler truck – AVTR 2620. With this launch of AVTR 2620, Ashok Leyland becomes the first and only player in the country to have a full range of trucks based on lift axle technology from GVW of 25.5 to 47.5T. This new product can be operated as 25.5 T (6x2) truck with the lift axle down (offering

payload closer to regular 6x2 MAV truck) and a 4x2 truck (18.5T GVW) with lift axle up (lower fuel and operating cost similar to 4x2) during light load/partial load/return empty. This new product thus offers an excellent operational flexibility to customers to choose the option based on their load, offering best-in-class Total Cost of Operation (TCO) benefits. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Sanjeev Kumar, Head - M&HCV, Ashok Leyland, said, "Ashok

## Kansai Nerolac Paints Ltd. placed in Leadership position in CRISIL's Sustainability Yearbook, 2022

**Mumbai:** In recognition of its relentless commitment towards sustainability and the environment, Kansai Nerolac Paints Ltd (KNPL) has been placed in the 'Leadership' category in the CRISIL Sustainability Yearbook 2022. The company is one among the only 14 companies that have been placed in this category for their ESG initiatives. Further, Kansai Nerolac Paints Ltd has earned the highest ESG score amongst paint and manufacturing companies. This recognition further reinforces the company's commitment towards nurturing a beautiful and healthy world for future generations.

The CRISIL

## Statement by State Bank of India

**Mumbai :** Shri Vijay Kumar, Branch Manager, Arreah branch of EllaquaiDehati Bank (EDB), a Srinagar-headquartered Regional Rural Bank sponsored by SBI was shot dead today in the branch premises by a terrorist. Vijay Kumar, who belonged to

Sustainability Yearbook is one of the most comprehensive annual publications based on CRISIL's proprietary ESG framework on Indian companies. Analyzing over 575 companies across 53 sectors in India based on data from 2021, the Yearbook covers the latest global and domestic developments in the ESG space, incorporation of climate risks by global financial institutions, decarbonization of hard-to-abate sectors in India, implications of transitioning from BRR to BRSR for Indian companies and showcases insights on ESG trends based on the scores and data of the Indian companies.

Commenting on the

uninterrupted banking services to the public. SBI, as the sponsor of EllaquaiDehati Bank, remains committed to ensure the safety and well-being of all its employees, including those posted in the Valley.

## AirAsia India launches Splash Sale with fares starting at Rs1,620

**New Delhi:** AirAsia India announced the launch of a splash sale with fares starting at ₹1,620, while riding on the launch of its loyalty marketing campaign and inviting flyers to sign up on its website or mobile app to "make the most of fast bookings, fab deals and fantastic value" with the NeuPass.

Special sale fares are open for advance booking till 3rd June for travel from 20th June till 14 Dec 2022 and include fares such as Bengaluru-Chennai at ₹1,620. The sale fares are bookable on AirAsia India's website [www.airasia.co.in](http://www.airasia.co.in), mobile app and partner booking channels.

As reported by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), AirAsia India topped the charts with 94.8% On Time Performance while also having the lowest cancellation percentage (0.00%) in April 2022.

### Get your daily grocery needs fulfilled during Super Value Days on Amazon Fresh

**Bhubaneswar:** Get ready to shop for daily grocery essentials during Amazon.in'Super Value Days' till 7th June, 2022. Customers can avail up to 50% off on fresh produce, daily and household essentials, packaged foods, personal care, baby products, pet care essentials and much more. They can enjoy grocery deals starting at ₹1 and free delivery for prime members. Customers can also avail great prices and fresh offers from popular brands including Daawat, Fortune, Tata, Nestle, Godrej, Cadbury, and Himalaya among others at convenient delivery slots options from a single online destination. Credit card holders can avail of an instant discount of 10% by using SBI Bank Credit Card and Credit EMI with a minimum transaction of INR 2,500, and discounts up to INR 300 till 3rd June 2022. From 4th to 7th June 2022, customers can avail of an instant discount of 10% by using ICICI Bank Credit Card and Credit EMI with a minimum transaction of INR 2,500, and discounts up to INR 500.

## 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. This MoU would help the Banks to increase their customer base, while helping the MSMEs to meet their

## Emami Limited announced a second interim dividend of 400 % translating to Rs 4,per share

**Kolkata (Ambar Mukherjee):** The Board of Directors of Emami Limited met on Friday, to consider the unaudited financial results of the company for the third quarter and nine months ended 31st January 2024.

The third quarter witnessed subdued demand trends particularly in rural markets. Moreover, the period was characterized by the late onset of winter, negatively impacting the demand for winter contextual products.

Despite these challenges, the company navigated the dynamic business environment, demonstrating resilience and achieving profit-led growth during Q3FY24.

The Company's Consolidated Revenues at ₹996 crores grew by 1% in Q3 with a flat growth in Domestic Business.

However, non-winter products grew by 5%. The International business delivered a constant currency growth of 11%, primarily attributed to robust performance in the MENAP region.

During the quarter, the Company launched Zandu Agni Balm - a stronger multi-purpose balm to counter regional competition and gain share for overall balm portfolio. The Company also launched 5 digital first

products during the quarter on its D2C portal Zanducare - Zandu Mahabhringraj Tel, Zandu Shilajitprash, Zandu Livital - Ayurvedic Liver Syrup & Tablets and Zandu Dantveer Ayurvedic Toothpaste. In the International markets, the Company launched Creme21 Pure Glycerin Oil and 7 Oils in One Double Conditioning Shampoo range.

In light of reduced input costs, the Company experienced a noteworthy enhancement in gross margins, reaching 68.8%, reflecting a substantial expansion of 290 basis points during the quarter. Furthermore, EBITDA at ₹315 crore grew by 7%, with margins expanding by 170 basis points to 31.6%. Profit after tax at ₹258 crore, also grew by 9% with margins expanding by 180 basis points to 25.9%.

For the nine months ending December 2023, the Company witnessed a 5% increase in revenues, coupled with an expansion of gross margins by 290 basis points. EBITDA surged by 11%, with margins expanding to 27.5%, indicating a rise of 170 basis points. Notably, the profit after tax demonstrated an impressive surge of 16%, amounting to ₹575 crore. The Board of Directors also

recommended a second interim dividend of 400%, translating to ₹4/- per share for the fiscal year 2024.

The Company remains optimistic about future growth, supported by a favourable economic landscape, a positive trend in inflation, anticipated rural market recovery, government initiatives, and promising macroeconomic factors, all contributing to a confident outlook for sustained positive performance.

Mr Harsha V Agarwal, vice Chairman and Managing Director, Emami Limited said "I am happy that we could deliver another quarter of resilient performance along with substantially improved profitability with a 7% growth in EBITDA and 9% growth in Profit after Tax, despite subdued demand in Q3. Disrupted winter, weak rural demand and continued inflationary woes impacted the winter and discretionary off-takes. We remain committed to deliver volume led profitable growth going forward aided by accelerated scale up of emerging channels, distribution initiatives, ongoing brand and strategic investments coupled with launch of innovative products"

## Unacademy produces 178 Rankers for UPSC CSE 2021

**Bhubaneswar:** Unacademy, India's largest learning platform\*, today announced that 178 out of 685 rank holders of UPSC CSE 2021 are Unacademy Learners. Among the top rankers from the Unacademy platform are Gurni Singla (AIR - 3), Aishwarya Verma (AIR - 4), Utkarsh Dwivedi (AIR - 5) and Yaksh Chaudhary (AIR - 6). 3 Learners have secured ranks between 1-5, 32 have secured ranks from 6-100 and 143 have secured AIRs from 101-685.

From the 178 Rankers, 45 Learners were Unacademy's Plus/ Iconic subscribers guided by India's Top Educators. The other rankers were guided by Unacademy's Last Mile Programme for UPSC CSE 2021 Interview. Last Mile Programme is an interview guidance program for the last stage of the UPSC CSE exam that helps Learners who have qualified the Mains exam to crack the Personal Interview stage. The questions are asked by retired bureaucrats, former UPSC members and Top Educators in a mock set-up. In last year's Unacademy's Interview Guidance Program 170+ Rankers qualified the Interview stage by securing AIR 2.

## Blue Dart signs the UNFCCC Climate Neutral Now Pledge

**Bhubaneswar:** Blue Dart, South Asia's premier express air and integrated transportation & distribution company and a part of the Deutsche Post DHL (DPDHL) Group has signed the 'Climate Neutral Now' (CNN) pledge by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The pledge highlights the organisation's commitment to ambitious CO2 reduction targets.

The Climate Neutral Now Initiative encourages and supports interested stakeholders to act now in order to achieve a climate neutral world by 2050 as enshrined in the Paris Climate Agreement. The initiative is a tool to promote voluntary action on climate change. Blue Dart has already invested extensively in remaining a Sustainable Provider of Choice by being the first

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 Bank and at Union Bank of India, we aim to become Bank of 1st choice for MSMEs. This tie-up with SIDBI aids in realizing the Bank's vision to have increased credit flow to the MSME sector and extend operational convenience to the

## India to see largest increase in energy demand worldwide over the next 20 years, says Infomerics

**New Delhi:** India faces the twin dilemma of co-existence of shortage and abundance in several parts of its energy system. While the provision of electricity has increased significantly over the years, weak institutions and utility governance hamper the power sector's financial performance with issues of accountability, operational efficiency, customer service, and transmission to state-level transmission institutions. The sector takes a huge and grossly unacceptable hit due to extensive losses, leakages and pilferages, and the cost recovery

from tariffs. These are some major findings of a report titled Power Sector in India: New Emerging Opportunities and Challenges released by Infomerics Valuation and Rating Pvt Ltd., the well-known SEBI-registered and RBI-accredited financial services credit rating company.

The report explores the opportunities and challenges ahead for India as it seeks to ensure reliable, affordable and sustainable energy for a growing population. During FY20 and FY19, the growth of electricity generation was lower than in the previous financial years because

of the impact of COVID-19. The report quotes the International Energy Agency (IEA) stating that during FY21 recovery in electricity demand from the COVID-19 pandemic was faster and stronger in India than in EU countries.

India is the third-largest producer and the third-largest consumer of electricity in the world. With the increasing population, electricity demand is rising at a fast clip and India has improved its power generation capacity over the years. India has added more than 500 billion units until FY22 from FY10.

developed a Sustainability Roadmap that supports the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. We are constantly working towards introducing innovative green logistics solutions that improve our carbon footprint. I am delighted to share that representing the DHL eCommerce Solutions Division in India, Blue Dart has been delivering high on its sustainability initiatives.



# First Test a jolt, a wake-up call - Conrad

**New Delhi:** Sometimes the story starts when the lights dim, the cameras droop and the action dwindles. So it was with Shukri Conrad in the moments before the end of his online press conference on Thursday. Conrad's erudition and ebullience had served him well for the 22 minutes in which he raked over the wreckage of South Africa's performance in the first men's Test against New Zealand in Mount Maunganui. Then, as goodbyes were said, he softened into a slight slump where he sat and the sharpness left his eyes. It had been another long day.

Minutes before, when the lights and cameras were still in action, Conrad had said, "It's not OK. It's tough. For everyone here. It's like Burnley going to Anfield every week." Burnley are currently 19th among the 20 teams contesting



football's English Premier League. Anfield is home to Liverpool, the league leaders and Conrad's abiding sporting obsession outside cricket. For a proper Liverpool supporter to put the matter into that context captures how bad things are. South Africa were beaten by 281 runs in four days. All involved knew they weren't the first-choice XI, that they were the leftovers the SA20 did not want. The result made concrete the portents that had swirled since it became apparent that the tournament and the series would clash, and that South Africa's best and most experienced players did not have a choice - they were contractually bound to put the SA20 first. For the good reason that it makes money. International cricket, unless it is against India at home, does not. Without money there is

no cricket. All of which is cold, hard logic. Less easy to explain is the hope that leaps in the hearts of those who are told they are on a hiding to nothing; that their six debutants and 37 Test caps next to New Zealand's no debutant and 404 caps means they shouldn't be there, that they have less than no chance, that they dare not hope. What, they tell themselves, if they are good enough, and all they need to do is prove

morning. The South Africans were bowled out for 247 early in the last hour of play. Kane Williamson, who scored 118 and 109, was dropped on 45 in the first innings and 62 in the second. Rachin Ravindra was 80 when a chance he offered was spilled. He went on to make 240.

Keegan Petersen's 45 was South Africa's best effort - in terms of runs as well as minutes and balls faced - in the first innings. David Bedingham's 96-ball 87 took some of the sting out of losing 6/69 in the second dig. Every which way you spin it, the South Africans were outplayed. Did the match illustrate the gulf between first-class and Test cricket? "Yes, if I were brutally honest," Conrad said. "The divide is great. If it was a T20, you know one performance can win the game. It's five days of relentless effort and pressure.

# Australia pick Michael Neser for New Zealand Tests



**New Delhi:** Seam bowler Michael Neser has been recalled to the Test squad for Australia's tour of New Zealand. Neser, who has played two Tests and four ODIs for Australia so far, last represented his country in a Test match in December 2022.

The 33-year-old has been selected keeping in mind the seamer-friendly conditions expected in New Zealand. His chances of getting picked received a boost after Lance Morris was injured during the ODI series against West Indies and Jhye Richardson was sidelined for six weeks with a side strain. Matt Renshaw, who replaced the recently retired David Warner in the squad, retains his spot despite being the backup batter.

"It's great to see Michael Neser get another opportunity in the squad following his ever-

consistent performances over a long period of time and the conditions we expect," selection panel chair George Bailey said. "As we know every Test match provides vital opportunities to obtain valuable WTC points and we expect this tour will be a tough challenge against a very strong side who have been so consistent at home for a long period of time."

## Raza 4-fer in vain as Australia clinch thrilling win to book final spot



**New Delhi:** A six-wicket haul from Tom Straker followed by a composed unbeaten knock from Raf MacMillan were the major highlights in Australia's nervy one-wicket win over Pakistan in the second semifinal of the 2024 U19 World Cup. Chasing an under-par target of 180, Australia were fairly comfortable at one point, with the score reading 146/5. Harry Dixon's fifty and Oliver Peake's innings of 49 had put the innings on track. However, they soon imploded in sensational fashion, losing four wickets for just 18 runs in 45 balls to flip the game upside

down. Suddenly, they needed 16 more to win with just a single wicket left in the shed. MacMillan, though, held his nerves and found solid support from no.11 Callum Vidler as the pair got Australia home with five balls to spare. It was Ali Raza (4/34) who turned the game on its head with his second spell to give Pakistan a sniff out of nowhere. In the end, Pakistan failed to capitalise on the opportunity to set up a finals date with arch-rivals India. The Asian side will regret their batting display earlier in the day as none of the batters dug in for long on

a tricky surface. Azan Awais and Arafat Minhas stroked fifties of contrasting nature but only one other batter got to double figures as Pakistan lost wickets at regular intervals. The duo's 54-run stand was the only partnership of some note, with Minhas being the only batter to play fluently from the get-go. However, with little support from the lower order, there was only so much he could do. Straker made hay with the new ball, striking thrice and then came back later to polish the tail in a jiffy. The target was well below-par for Australia who still ended up nearly making a hash of it.

Australia will face India at Benoni on Sunday (February 11) in the final. Brief scores: Pakistan 179 in 50 overs (Arafat Minhas 52, Azan Awais 52; Tom Straker 6-24) lost to Australia 181/9 in 49.1 overs (Harry Dixon 50, Oliver Peake 49; Ali Raza 4-34) by one wicket

**'I Made A Terrible Mistake...,' AB de Villiers Issues Apology For Spreading False Information On Virat Kohli, Anushka Sharma Expecting 2nd Child**

**New Delhi:** Former South Africa cricket sensation, AB de Villiers, found himself in the midst of a whirlwind of controversy after inadvertently spreading misinformation regarding the personal life of Indian cricket maestro Virat Kohli and his wife, Anushka Sharma. De Villiers, known for his camaraderie with Kohli both on and off the field, expressed regret over his earlier statement that had sparked a frenzy among fans and pundits alike.

"Absolutely family comes first, it's a priority, as I said on my YouTube show. Also, I made a terrible mistake at the same time

and yeah, sharing false information which was not true at all. No one knows what's happening. That's all I can do is wish him well and I think the whole world that follows Virat and that enjoys his cricket, must just wish him well, and whatever the reason is for this break. Really hope that he comes back stronger, better, healthier, and fresh," the former South African batter told IANS.

Initially, de Villiers had suggested that Kohli and Sharma were anticipating their second child, attributing Kohli's decision to skip the initial matches of the England series to family commitments. This

**New Delhi:** Opening batter Pathum Nissanka, who missed the recent series against Zimbabwe due to injury, is back for the upcoming three-match ODI series against Afghanistan, beginning on Friday (February 9). All-rounder Chamika Karunaratne also returns to the mix while former captain Dasun Shanaka is the notable omission from the Zimbabwe series in the 16-member squad announced by Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC). Shanaka's form with the bat in white-ball cricket has been under the scanner since 2022. Over the last two years, the 32-year-old has only tallied

584 runs from 32 innings

at an underwhelming

average of 20.13 while the strike-rate of 87.55 is also ordinary for a batter who has primarily played as the designated finisher. The other senior player who continues to be out of the selectors' radar is Dhananjaya de Silva. The newly appointed Test captain hasn't featured in ODIs since the 2023 World Cup.

Kusal Mendis continues to captain the side with Charith Asalanka donning the deputy's role. Core of the squad that featured in the Zimbabwe series has been retained with Jeffrey Vandersay being the one to miss out among the bowlers. His spot has been taken up by Karunaratne as the selectors look to add more balance to the

squad. Janith Liyanage, who starred in a famous heist win against Zimbabwe, keeps his spot while Shevon Daniel and Sahan Arachchige

## Klaasen, Mulder fire Durban Super Giants into the final



**New Delhi:** An imperious batting display fired Durban Super Giants to the final of the SA20 at the expense of their hosts Joburg Super Kings. Under excellent batting conditions at the Wanderers, the Super Giants racked up 211 on the board before burying their opposition under this mountain of runs for a comprehensive 69-run win.

Leading the charge were two buccaneering half-centuries from Heinrich Klaasen (74 off 30) and Wiaan Mulder (50\* off 23) after the Super Kings won the toss and opted to chase. The Super Kings began well with the ball, striking twice while conceding just 46 runs in the powerplay. It was an excellent cameo from Bhanuka Rajapaksa that set the

Super Giants up for the final assault. The Sri Lankan struck six boundaries in a 23-ball knock of 35 before falling in the 13th over, when Klaasen had only scored 13 off his first 11 deliveries.

The 15th over bowled by

Imran Tahir opened the floodgates. Mulder hit the veteran legspinner for a six and turned over the strike to watch Klaasen go 6, 6, 4, 6 to make it a 29-run over. From 15 off 13, Klaasen hit 37 off his next 9 balls to go to a 22-ball half-century. And he

wasn't done. Three straight sixes came in another 29-run over as he and Mulder tore into JSK's death-bowling. In all, the final six overs brought the visitors 102 runs with Mulder getting to a 23-ball half-century himself on the last ball of

the innings. The Super Kings, stung by this double-barrelled assault, were never in the chase once they lost three wickets in the powerplay. There were little contributions from Moeen Ali, Donovan Ferreira and Doug Bracewell through the middle but they were too few to pose any notion of a threat to the opposition. Junior Dala came back for his second spell and sealed the victory by finishing with four wickets. The Super Giants will face defending champions Sunrisers Eastern Cape in the final.

**Brief Scores:** Durban Super Giants 211/6 in 20 overs (Heinrich Klaasen 74, Wiaan Mulder 50\*; Nandre Burger 2-27) beat Joburg Super Kings 142 in 17.4 overs (Moeen Ali 30; Junior Dala 4-38) by 69 runs