

kept in the budget will not be adequate to cover even thirty percent farmers. How do you plan to cover the remaining lakhs of farmers of Odisha? BJP promised three hundred units of free electricity in campaign speeches. The Central Government has planned free electricity for One crore houses for the whole country. Odisha's share may be three lakh houses. We have one and half crore houses in the state. Is this the free electricity you promised to the people?

KIIT DU Awarded Prestigious UN ECOSOC Special Consultative Status

Bhubaneswar, (KCN): Nations Headquarters in New York. This recognition underscores KIIT's unwavering commitment to the United Nations' Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. Attaining Special Consultative Status marks a significant milestone, positioning KIIT among a select group of universities globally that have earned this esteemed distinction. In another development, KIIT has signed an MoU with UN Volunteers (UNV). This partnership opens a remarkable opportunity for students of KIIT DU to engage with various UN agencies to serve as 'National University



UN Volunteers' who will be deployed for various development initiatives within the UN agencies. These opportunities will equip KIIT students with valuable professional experience in international development, shaping their future career paths with proper stipend. This initiative is a first of its kind by any private university in South Asia. Similarly, the American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL), a global leader in fostering

international understanding and diplomacy has announced its historic collaboration with the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) and KIIT. KISS is the sister concern of KIIT. With the steadfast support of the U.S. Department of State and a score of other partners, over 8,900 leaders in the U.S. and in 129 countries and territories around the world have travelled on our life-changing exchange programs. With alumni that include

prominent figures such as Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper, Illinois Governor JB Pritzker, Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii, and former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley, ACYPL has a storied history of influencing international relations and leadership. Expressing his happiness Dr. Achyuta Samanta, Founder, KIIT & KISS said that it is a matter of pride that KIIT is the only professional/ technical university in India to achieve UN ECOSOC Special Consultative Status. Also, in India, both KIIT and KISS in Odisha are proud to get this prestigious award. KISS has already been awarded with UN ECOSOC Special Consultative Status in 2015 and has been continuing with this status till date, he informed. He has also expressed that KIIT is the only university in South Asia to get UNV status for engaging students for internship. ACYPL is a very prestigious thing for KIIT to engage political diplomats and leaders to visit KIIT & KISS from across the world and have an internship programme, he added.

East Coast Railway (ECoR) General Manager Inspects Khurda Road-Palasa Railway Section:

Bhubaneswar, (KCN): East Coast Railway (ECoR) General Manager Shri Parmeshwar Funkwal conducted a detailed inspection of the Bhubaneswar-Palasa Railway section recently. He was accompanied by senior officials from ECoR headquarters, construction teams for ongoing projects, and representatives from the Khurda Road Railway Division, led by Divisional Railway Manager Shri H S Bajwa. During the inspection,



Shri Funkwal reviewed the progress of the Amrit Stations project, emphasizing the importance of adhering to the targeted timelines.

The stations inspected included Balugaon, Bhubaneswar, Brahmapur, Chatrapur, Khurda Road, Lingaraj Temple Road, Palasa,

and Ichhapuram. The current status of ongoing construction works at these stations was also reviewed. Additionally, he inspected infrastructural and developmental works related to traffic facilities and passenger amenities at various railway stations. He advised officials to take necessary steps to ensure the early completion of these projects, underscoring the importance of providing enhanced services and facilities to passengers.

Lions Club Bhubaneswar Nayapalli installed its New Office Bearers for the year 2024-25.



Bhubaneswar (KCN): Ln T Rabi Kumar Patro, President presided the meeting. All Lion members of this club and many from other clubs with their office bearers, Past District Governors attended. Club Secretary Lion Sanjukta Subudhi read out the Activity report along with the

power point representation. ZC Lion Surabhi Dash and 1st Vice District Governor Ln Dr Hemant Kumar Khuntia praised the noble jobs performed by the club. Induction officer cum Guest of Honour Ln Dr Anjali Chhotray inducted 10 new members. The Chief

Guest Lion Rajanish Kumar, PDG-322A from Bihar explained the responsibility to all the new Office Bearers with the leadership of new President Lion T Pramod Patro and new Secretary Ln Sanjukta Subudhi and installed them. Ln Rajnish motivated the gathering about the ethics and

motto of Lionism to serve the downtrodden and carry out activities to protect the environment. Meeting was meticulously organised by Lion Pradipta Mohanty and Lion Kunal Kishore Das, MOC Lion Mahendra Patra conducted the program covering all the agenda.

Joint Grievance Hearing Camp of Collector and SP held at Dunguripali.

SUBARNAPUR (KCN): Subarnapur District Dunguripali Block Level Joint Grievance Camp has been held at the block conference hall. Collector & District Magistrate Mrs. Anya Das and Additional Supdt. Of Police Mr. Birendra Kumar Naik joined the Joint Genocide Camp and received 90 registered complaints of public against various objections and problems. 82 applications have been received and 08 collective applications have been accepted. The applications have been given to the departmental officers of the various departments

concerned to resolve them within the stipulated time. In the joint complaint hearing program held under the supervision of BDO Dunguripali Bipin Bihari Deep, Zilla Parishad Chairperson Supara Thela, Panchayat Samiti Chairperson Ahalya Sahu the district level including District Chief Development Officer Zilla Parishad Ashwini Kumar Meher, Sub Collector Sonapur Suraj Kumar Patnaik, Superintendent Engineer Er. Damodar Kaibart, District Chief Supply Officer Suresh Panigrahi, District Panchayat Officer Arjun

Charan Majhi, District Information and Public Relations Officer Ashwini Kumar Bhoi, District Culture Officer Yamuna Pradhan, District Welfare Officer Achyutananda Singh, District Social Security Officer Govinda Ballabha Sarangi, District Education Officer Laxman Bhoi, District Sports Officer Chittaranjan Mishra, District Labour Officer Sabita Kumari Naik, District Fisheries Officer Prasanna Kumar Patnaik, Executive Officer T.P. W.O.D.L Ashok Kumar Mishra, Executive Engineer Rural

Development B.N.Reddy, Executive Engineer Water Lift Irrigation Project Prafulla Kumar Behera, Deputy Director Handicrafts Banmali Tappno, Forest Range Officer Dumbardhar Pradhan, Deputy Director Handicrafts Binaya Prusti, GM. District Industries Center Abhijit Tripathy, CDVO Dr. Parmananda Sethi, Tehsildar Rampur Bimal Patra, Deputy Collector (Grievances) Shubhashree Rath, various District Level Officers, Tehsil and Block Level Officers, Journalists contributed significantly.



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Holistic Progress Card by NCERT for classes 9-12 to focus on evaluating competencies



The national assessment centre P A R A K H , established under the National Council For Education and Research Training (NCERT), recently released a Holistic Progress Card (HPC) for secondary school students (classes IX-XII). Aiming to align and develop competencies among school students the HPC is divided into four parts evaluating self-reflection, research skills, entrance exam preparation, and time management, among students, which will be filled by students after self-evaluation. Teachers and counsellors will assess the competencies and provide feedback

while finalising the HPC. The NCERT has developed HPC in sync with the National Education Policy's framework National Curriculum Framework for School Education . The framework aims to introduce multidisciplinary education, foster creative pedagogies, and nurture the holistic development of students beyond traditional pen-and-paper exams. NCERT is also hopeful of integrating it with the traditional report card, by focussing on building the personality, developing intrinsic skills and helping in building long-term career goals. "The secondary stage in HPC focuses on helping students make career choices in a targeted manner. The progress card assesses students' interests to connect them with their work and potential. The card includes questions

about how students envision themselves in one, two, or ten years, as well as inquiries about their progress, preparation for competitive exams, and skills required to achieve a certain goal. Teachers and counsellors will assist students in completing these sections to help them better evaluate their career goals," said Prof Indrani Bhaduri, CEO PARAKH and head, Educational Survey Division, NCERT. The NCERT has started to run regional workshops for the implementation of HPC. "We are in talks with different state boards and SCERTs for the implementation of the progress card at the secondary level. The implementation varies in each state, as Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh have already shown interest in initiating the process and conducting workshops to help the

teacher A d d r e s s i n g academic pressure To reduce the academic pressure on students in Board exams and encourage a more holistic learning process, PARAKH is also planning to integrate the HPC into the Board results. "We are also working on the equivalence of the board results, which means we plan to merge HPC with the Board results. This will help in reducing the academic stress on the students and will also address the examination phobia that students face, especially in class X and XII," says Bhaduri, adding that PARAKH has submitted to the Education Ministry the details of the equivalence process in Board exams. Training sessions for teachers will also be conducted for the s u c c e s s f u l implementation of HPC. NCERT will

Vijay GarG

assign 'master trainers' from each educational block to conduct the training sessions. "The teachers will be supported by a sample of HPC that will help them to understand its essential sections and their role in its execution. We are connecting with different boards, the Directorate of Education, and SCERTs to conduct training sessions at the district levels. Those trained in these sessions will be called master trainers, who will then train the teachers," Bhaduri says. The training sessions are designed to equip teachers with in-depth knowledge of HPC, which will enable them to provide guidance and support to students who may struggle with filling out the progress card. The sessions will also help the teachers enhance their i n s t r u c t i o n a l approaches and

embrace innovative solutions to support the students with the challenges that they face. More focus on career In March, PARAKH introduced the HPC for the foundational, middle, and preparatory stages, aiming to enhance primary students' comprehension and creative abilities. For the secondary stage, the HPC developed by PARAKH places greater emphasis on vocational learning and career choices. The HPC includes sections that evaluate the vocational courses students have undertaken, their p r o f e s s i o n a l interests, career plans, and self-assessment of their career choices. Emphasis on research A distinct feature of the HPC is its emphasis on individual research and the learning process. Students will be required to conduct research on the subject of their

choice and fill in the learning process while conducting research in the HPC. "The research topic can be chosen by the students from the subjects of their choice. The idea is to inculcate curiosity and enhance student's ability to develop hypotheses and find evidence to support them. HPC will focus more on the research process than the outcome. For all the stages of the research, we have teachers assessment and learner reflection, emphasising teacher-learner relationship," Digital learning Short-term online courses from platforms such as Coursera and MOOCs in the subjects of the choice of students have also been introduced as part of the HPC. "Funds are given to schools under the Samagra Siksha Abhiyan to make the classrooms smart. Yet, many rural students are not able to sign up for the

digital courses. One section of the HPC focuses on the registration and completion of digital courses on subjects such as Entrepreneurship and Artificial Intelligence. Teachers will assist the students to register on digital courses and assess their progress," The initiative has been introduced to help students access digital learning and build skills beyond classrooms. "The idea is to bridge the gap between rural and urban learners. Students who come from cities are aware of such courses that they can utilise to learn more about their subjects of interest. However, there is a significant gap in awareness of such courses in the rural belt. Emphasis on digital learning will help fill these gaps,"

Retired Principal Educational columnist malout

The Importance and Utility of Career Counselors

Aubaid Ahmad Akhoon



After completing their 10th grade, students often make hasty decisions regarding their choice of subjects and streams. When they later find that these choices do not align with their interests or lead to success, they may e x p e r i e n c e significant mental distress, sometimes even contemplating drastic measures. In Kashmir, the absence of effective career counseling is a pressing issue. Students are often left without guidance on choosing subjects that align with current and future job markets. Instead, they may simply follow the choices of their peers or family, driven by social pressures and a desire to uphold family prestige. This lack of structured counseling can lead to misguided decisions, where

even intelligent students may end up in unsuitable career paths. The Role and Benefits of Career Counseling Career counseling plays a crucial role in guiding students to make informed decisions about their academic and professional futures. A good career counselor helps students select subjects and career paths that are both suitable and fulfilling. By addressing the psychological and emotional aspects of career choice, counselors can assist students in aligning their educational paths with their true interests and capabilities. In Kashmir, the scarcity of career counseling services exacerbates the problem. Many students and their families lack access to expert guidance that could help them make better-informed choices. This gap in the system can lead to a situation where educational degrees end up being perceived

as mere pieces of paper, devoid of real market value. Why Career Counseling is Essential Guidance in Subject and Stream Selection: Career counselors provide valuable insights into which subjects and streams are best suited to a student's strengths and interests. This helps prevent the frustration and disillusionment that can occur when students struggle in areas that do not align with their abilities. Psychological Support: Career counselors offer emotional and psychological support, helping students navigate the stress and anxiety associated with academic and career choices. Future Readiness: Counselors ensure that students are prepared for the demands of the job market. They provide information about emerging fields, industry trends, and the skills required for various careers. Improved Job Market Outcomes: By guiding students towards careers with strong job prospects, counselors help reduce the

disconnect between a c a d e m i c achievements and real-world job opportunities. The Current Shortage of Career Counseling Services in Kashmir Kashmir faces a significant shortage of career counseling cells. This lack of infrastructure means that many students are not receiving the support they need to make informed decisions about their education and future careers. Establishing comprehensive career counseling cells in schools and colleges is essential. These cells would offer personalized guidance, career assessments, and support services that can help students align their educational choices with their career goals. Steps to Address the Lack of Career Counseling Establish Career Counseling Centers: Setting up dedicated career counseling centers in educational institutions across Kashmir is crucial. These centers should be staffed with trained

professionals who can provide expert advice and support. Increase Awareness and Training: Educators and parents should be made aware of the importance of career counseling. Training programs for teachers and career counselors can help improve the quality of guidance provided. Collaborate with Industry Experts: Partnerships with industry professionals and organizations can provide students with insights into various careers and job market trends. E n h a n c e Accessibility: Ensure that career counseling services are accessible to all students, including those from underprivileged backgrounds. This can be achieved through outreach programs and online counseling options. Career Counselor Qualifications and Skills Becoming a career counselor typically does not require specific qualifications, but those with certifications or degrees in public

relations, human resource management, psychology, or related fields are often preferred. Essential skills for career counselors include: S t r o n g Communication: E f f e c t i v e communication skills are crucial for understanding and advising clients. Empathy and Understanding: A good counselor must be able to relate to students' concerns and p r o v i d e c o m p a s s i o n a t e support. Knowledge of Career Options: Awareness of various career paths and their requirements is vital. Analytical Skills: Ability to analyze students' interests and aptitudes to guide them towards suitable career options. The Growing Demand for Career Counselors The global economy's growing complexity and the wide range of career options available have increased the demand for career counselors. This trend is expected to continue, with career counselors

finding opportunities in schools, colleges, social services organizations, and private practices. The profession offers flexibility and the potential for a fulfilling career helping others achieve their professional goals. Becoming a Career Counselor To become a career counselor, follow these steps: Complete Senior Secondary Education: Obtain a high school diploma or equivalent. Pursue Relevant Courses: Enroll in certification or degree programs in career counseling, human resources, or related fields. Gain Experience: Work in relevant fields or internships to build experience. Seek Advanced Education: Consider higher education or additional certifications to enhance qualifications. Salary Expectations Career counselors can earn between 1,000 to 20,000 rupees per case, depending on their expertise and market demand. As their

reputation and credentials grow, there is significant potential for higher earnings in this field. Bottom line Career counseling is more than just guiding students; it is about shaping their futures and ensuring that their educational pursuits lead to meaningful and rewarding careers. The establishment of career counseling cells in Kashmir is not just a necessity but a crucial step towards securing a brighter future for our students and ensuring that their degrees hold real value in the job market. By investing in career counseling, we invest in the success and well-being of our future generations.

Author is a columnist, motivational speaker, and Associate Editor of Weekly 'Education Quill'. Presently working as EDP Head at SKIE Classes Khanyar/ Soura branch. For more insights, follow him on Instagram @Ubi9305 or reach out at akhoonaubaid@gmail.com.

Robust GDP Growth Amidst Rising Indirect Taxes and Subsidy Cuts

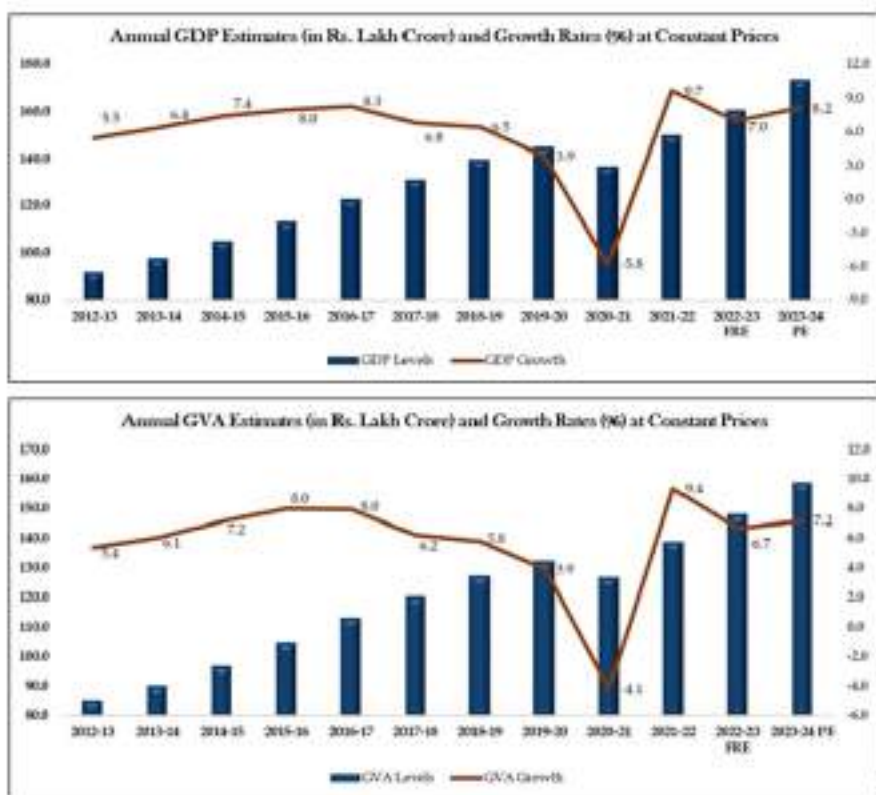


Prof (Dr.) S N Tripathy*

Nominal GDP gives the market value of all final goods and services produced within a country during a given period, while real GDP adjusts the nominal GDP for price changes (inflation) through the implicit price deflator. The GDP deflator is a price index showing how average prices for all goods and services produced in an economy change over time. Arvind Subramanian, former chief economic advisor, argues that the wholesale price index (WPI) is not the appropriate price deflator, advocating for the Producer Price Index (PPI), reflecting what producers receive. The use of WPI systematically underestimates inflation, leading to an overestimation of GDP, especially when the WPI is negative. The provisional estimates of the annual GDP for FY2023-24 reveal a healthy economic growth performance. Real GDP is estimated to grow 8.2% in 2023-24, compared to 7% in the previous fiscal year.

Real GVA has grown by 7.2% in 2023-24, up from 6.7% in 2022-23. Real GVA is estimated at ₹158.74 lakh crore for the year 2023-24, up from the First Revised Estimates (FRE) of ₹148.05 lakh crore for 2022-23, marking a growth rate of 7.2% compared to 6.7% in 2022-23. Nominal GVA for FY 2023-24 is projected to reach ₹267.62 lakh crore, compared to ₹246.59 lakh crore in 2022-23, reflecting a growth rate of 8.5%. The sharp divergence of 1% between real GDP and real GVA growth in 2023-24, compared to 0.3% in 2022-23, is a serious concern. Due to higher indirect taxes like GST and excise on petroleum products, coupled with reduced subsidies, GDP appears higher than GVA. This disparity, driven by increased indirect taxes and subsidy cuts, adversely affects low-income people, suggesting that GDP growth can coincide with increased suffering among the lower-income population. Professor Ashoka Mody of Princeton School of Public and International Affairs has pointed out discrepancies in India's GDP calculation, explicitly noting that GDP calculated via the expenditure method is often less than that

calculated through the product method. Under the production/output approach, officials compute the value added by the three major sectors—agriculture, industry, and services. The sum of value addition is termed GVA. They then add product taxes and subtract product subsidies from GVA to derive GDP. Product taxes include GST (post-2017), excise duties, VAT, and import/export duties, while product subsidies include subsidies on food, petroleum, and fertilizers. The growth rates thus influence the difference between GDP and GVA in taxes and subsidies. Provisional and Quarterly Estimates of National Income are compiled using the benchmark-indicator method, whereby estimates from the previous year (2022-23) are extrapolated using relevant indicators reflecting sector performance. The Second Advance Estimates (SAE) of National Income for 2023-24, initially released on 29th February 2024, have been revised to incorporate the latest information on relevant indicators for the financial year. The sector-wise estimates are based on the following indicators and data sources for the



financial year 2023-24: The sector-wise estimates are based on a range of indicators and data sources for the financial year 2023-24, including the Index of Industrial Production (IIP); the economic performance of listed companies in the private corporate sector, based on quarterly financial results; Advance Estimates of Crop Production; production of major livestock products; fish production; production and consumption of cement and steel; net tonne-kilometres and passenger-kilometers for railways; passenger and cargo traffic

handled by civil aviation; cargo traffic handled at major and minor sea ports; sales of commercial vehicles; bank deposits and credits; and accounts of Central and State Governments. Total tax revenue used for GDP compilation includes both non-GST and GST revenue. The latest information from the Controller General of Accounts (CGA) and the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has been used to estimate taxes on products at current prices. For taxes on products at constant prices, volume extrapolation is done using the volume growth of taxed goods and

services. Total product subsidies are compiled using the latest information on significant subsidies such as food, urea, petroleum, and nutrient-based subsidies for the Centre, along with the expenditure on subsidies by most States up to March 2024 and the Centre/State-wise Revised Estimates (RE) and Budget Estimates (BE) Provision for 2023-24. Information on revenue expenditure, interest payments, subsidies, etc., from the Centre and States for 2023-24 is used to estimate Government Final Consumption

Expenditure (GFCE). Improved data coverage and revisions in input data by source agencies may lead to subsequent revisions of these estimates. Evaluating a country's progress solely in terms of GDP neglects qualitative aspects of life such as education, social relations, social progress, and scientific innovation. The government should reconsider measuring development primarily through GDP and adopt a more holistic approach considering these qualitative aspects. However, this is not a time for celebration, as GDP is merely an indicator of economic activity, not the well-being of society. GDP often masks the harsh realities and sufferings of the masses. Even if 40 crores out of 140 crore people consume and spend more, boosting GDP, it does not reflect the plight of the remaining 100 crore people. The benefits of growth tend to be reaped by a few wealthy individuals, leading to jobless growth and rampant inequality, a stark and unjust reality. This underscores the urgent need for a more comprehensive measure of societal progress that goes beyond GDP.

There are ongoing contentions that India's GDP needs to be more accurately measured and corroborated by ground realities, including various indices such as human development, hunger, and happiness. Critics argue that India's GDP calculation methodology needs to be revised despite the government claiming adherence to international practices. GDP is measured through production/output, expenditure, and income methods. The expenditure approach measures the total spending on goods and services produced within the nation's borders. GDP is the sum of private consumption, gross investment, government investment, government spending, and net foreign trade (the difference between exports and imports). The income approach measures the total income earned by all households in the nation, considering payments made to primary factors of production in the form of rent, wages, interest, and profit for their productive services over an accounting year. In all three methods, GDP figures should align.

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MISOGYNY, WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND THE HYPOCRISY

M.R.LALU



As the octogenarian President of the US bows out of the race Kamala Harris has stepped up her stake. Being a woman, her candidature began to matter. The oldest democracy so far failed to elect a female President. Hillary Clinton puts it amply clear in the New York Times that Kamala's race is not going to be that easy, especially her fight through the intense sexism and double standard in American politics. Hillary recalls her candidature. She was, by the misogynists, being termed as witch and nasty, which she says was an insult that had gone deeper into her senses though she strongly ensured her presence in the race divulging her essence and power of being a woman. She says it was a self-revealing fight of her essential instinct of being a woman even though she was abused

and frequently burned in effigies. Your identity of being a woman becomes so hard to establish in a country that drumbeats its gender equality while hypocritically sensitizing its impact of being a free society. Additionally, the race is more compact and challenging for Kamala as she is the first black woman and also a South Asian and misogyny is the most dangerous weapon that she has to fight against. This indeed has become the pressing threat and demands our attention. America's long journey as democracy failed to award its female population the right to vote until 1920. It remained a male dominated democracy for centuries and even today when Kamala Harris ramps up the show, the concern that disturbingly echoes across the echelon of the polity is her gender, color and ethnicity. And this time, for her, it is intense misogyny with racism. This has been the reality of the western world. Women for centuries were pressed hard to suffer the ignominious authority of male dominance and

endure society's resentful hypocrisy. Male-driven societies had vehemently justified their indifference to the feminine gender mostly refusing to treat it with respect. With religious doctrines sanctifying masculinity as the power and authority to capture the prospects of societies fully, women in most of the western world had to quell their desire to break the misogyny. Undoubtedly, fables of a God who created a woman to breathe from the rib of a man, whom he created in his own image, do not, in the first glance, appear to be misogynistic. This, in a later period, was canonized as a divinely ordained enterprise of the almighty. The differences and their ramifications and the disorder began there. Accentuating the sanctity of misogyny further, the New Testament of the Bible, on behalf of St Paul declares that women could not teach at the pulpit because of their inherent sinfulness and moral corruption. Your journey through the philosophical gardens of monotheistic religions would not bless you with

the breeze of equality and amiability between the two prominent genders. In fact, they would crush your confidence and pull you hard from the meadows of spiritual insights that you have consistently gained by flipping their pages. The alarming reality overturns your conviction and a new dawn of understanding gets its imprints deeply engraved. India's case was entirely different. We, from the beginning of our civilizational journey were aware of the feminine energy, its power and impact on society. The godhood that we adhered for centuries was a fine combination of the masculine and the feminine. We worshipped the feminine power in the form of Durga, Saraswati, Lakshmi and Kali. We adorned its power and made its various representations part of our daily spiritual activity. Celebrations in the name of the divine in the feminine bring millions together even today and the festivities run for days.

A complete assimilation of womanhood in the lives of Indians has given it a deeper meaning. We began it from the smallest social units called families, where the women received the highest recognition. Families nourished the feminine aspects of gentleness and empathy with respect, acceptance and inclusion. No religious authorization could throw her away from the institution called family. Though that was not the case with monotheistic faiths across the world, India, especially the Hindu view of life, preserved its womanhood. Our spiritual understanding had never discriminated between man and woman. Both enjoyed equal space and valid representation in the society. Creation, according to the Indic traditions, was supreme, which they professed, was divine. God, in Hinduism, is a divine representation of half man and half woman. Epics were written to establish womanhood, its purity, sanctity and power. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata have comprehensive descriptions of respect

enjoyed by women such as Sita and Draupadi and they also depict the sacrifices these women had to undergo while remaining virtuous. The wars that the epics have resoundingly narrated were for the protection of womanhood and its dignity. Lord Rama had a long and tedious journey on foot devotedly taken across the gigantic landscape covering the whole of India for his divine consort Sita. And his ultimate challenge, the sea, was also overcome with admirable focus. The Vedic period was probably the golden period for women. From among the Vedic women emerged female sages who are known to have composed certain hymns and taught generations of students. Victoria Woodhull was the first woman to run for President of America. She ran for the top job in 1872. Among those who tried their luck was Patsy Mink in 1972 to Carol Moseley Braun in 2004 to Hillary

Clinton and Tulsi Gabbard and a few more women of socio-political repute. But their race to the Oval office ended as a dismal affair and got throttled under the power of the country's patriarchy. Kamala, the first female Vice-President is now the candidate for the top job of her party. Though India held womanhood in high esteem, murmurs from the political colonies in our country were also heard recently when Draupadi Murmu, India's first adivasi woman became the President. There were misogynistic narratives on her ascent being apathetically scribbled and publicized by people in social media. Questions were raised and eyebrows convulsed skeptically on the woman who held the top office even before Murmu's regime. Pratibha Patil was the other woman, who, the remnants of misogyny got rattled about. There had also been instances when deep seated differences were buried under particular

circumstances and a leader to the stature of Atal Bihari Vajpayee was seen showering his deep poetic vocabulary of veneration for Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The Indic spiritual background that India as a civilization has been leaning on has surprisingly been an indicator of respect and honor that the Indian society had accorded to women's self-esteem. As a society, our democracy and spiritual values have assertively added meaning to our entity and protecting the interests of womanhood has been an important aspect of it. In India, this cultural idealism has helped its women to rise to the top. The question is will Kamala Harris overwhelmingly galvanize her country's women power to the top office?

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West Bengal MSME Development Forum Chairperson Mamta Binani lauds proactive measures of Govt for inclusive growth and economic vigour

Kolkata, (Saikat Kumar Basu): Reacting to the Union Budget, Mamta Binani, Chairperson of West Bengal MSME Development Forum, CS, Dr. and Advocate said, "The Union Budget for the financial year 2024-25 presented by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday reflects a strong commitment towards inclusive growth and economic vigour. In this Budget, we are optimistic about the Government's initiatives aimed at empowering the youth, boosting agricultural productivity and increasing the participation of women in the workforce. These measures are important to promote inclusive growth and create a conducive environment for business growth. This is a Budget to stimulate economic activity with an emphasis

on increasing the minimum support price for farmers, expanding welfare schemes like PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana and launching important youth employment schemes with an allocation of ₹2 lakh crore over five years. The focus in this Budget on enhancing agricultural productivity, employment-linked skill development and promoting female workforce participation through targeted initiatives is expected to create favourable conditions for sustained business innovation and growth. Overall, this Budget provides a solid foundation for the country's economic stability and progress. This Budget is designed keeping in mind corporate goals for a dynamic and inclusive economy.



Mamta Binani is the President of West Bengal MSME Development Forum. Ms. Binani has served as a jury member for the ICSI National Award for Excellence in Corporate Governance and CSR

2016, Golden Peacock Award of the Institute of Directors for the year 2016, ASSOCHAM Award for Commendable CSR Activity for the year 2016. She is also the Vice President of Kolkata National Company Law

Tribunal Bar Association, President of Merchant Chamber of Commerce-Legal Affairs Council and Executive Committee Member of Insol India. She is also a member of the Board of International Women's Insolvency and Restructuring Confederation (IAIRC) and is currently the Co-Chair of the India Network. Ms. Binani is also an independent director on some of the prestigious boards of the country, including Century Ply, Balrampur Chini Mills, Emami Limited and other reputed companies. Ms. Binani believes that the Central Government is an engine and she is a member of that mechanism. Hence, it is her responsibility to take the efforts of the Government to the masses and to all sections of the society.

Renowned academician Dr. R.K. Uppal appointed principal of Guru Gobind Singh College of Management and Technology

New Delhi, (KCN): Professor Dr. R.K. Uppal has been appointed principal of Guru Gobind Singh College of Management and

research. Dr. Uppal is also the MTC Global Chair Professor of Banking and Finance and Research Professor at the Indian Institute of

completed seven post-doctoral major research projects at UGC and ICSSR, New Delhi. As well as publishing an Encyclopedia on the



Technology, Gidderbaha. A prolific writer, a Man of Letters, an eminent academican, a research stalwart, and the most ingenious guide, Dr. Rajinder Kumar Uppal has received accolades not only from the academic world but also from the genre of

Finance. He is also a visiting professor at several national and international institutions/universities. He is also a professor of practice in finance at Narayana Engineering College, Nellore, Andhra Pradesh. Dr. Uppal has 87 books on his credit and has

the advisory board of numerous research journals. It was under the guidance of General Secretary S. Gurcharan Singh that he joined the GGS Group of Institutions as a principal. He expressed his gratitude to the Badal family for appointing him principal.

World Odisha Society's Delegation meets CM Mohan Majhi

New Delhi, (KCN): A delegation of World Odisha Society led by Chairman and Senior Journalist Kishore Dwibedi met Odisha's Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi at Odisha Bhawan in New Delhi. Shri Dwibedi and other leaders of WOS warmly felicitated Shri Majhi with flower bouquets and Uttariyas.

During the courtesy meeting, Shri Dwibedi handed over an unanimous resolution passed during the joint meeting of WOS's Working committee and Executive body welcoming the New Government of Odisha



under the dynamic leadership of Shri Majhi. It was mentioned in the Resolution that WOS is quite hopeful that

Shri Majhi's Government will definitely be able to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of 4.5 crore Odia people living inside

Odisha and two crore non resident Odias staying outside Odisha. The Founder couple of Mahakankya

Foundation Pushpanjali Barik and Bimal Bhal greeted Chief Minister with a flower bouquet, shawl and citation as a mark of Honour during the occasion. India Chapter President of WOS Dr Bipin Mishra and Senior Advocate Biraja Mishra played vital role in organising this courtesy meeting. The delegation includes Sudhir Dash, Kaveri Behera, Advocate Sasmita Tripathy, Dr Nirmal Patnaik, Jnana Prakash Jena, Surya Rath, Nandan Dwibedi, Santosh Panda, Saurabh Mishra, Priyatama Kar and Asit Kumar Kar.

DTPA Annual Conference 2024 in Kolkata on 3rd August 2024

Kolkata (KCN): Direct Taxes Professionals' Association (DTPA) announced its One Day Annual Conference to be held in Kolkata on Saturday, 3rd August, 2024 at Taj Bengal Hotel. CA Rajesh Kr. Agrawal, President, DTPA informed that Theme of the Conference is "Heading Towards Deemed Taxation Regime". Founder member Adv. Narayan Jain said that DTPA was established on 28th August, 1982 and now it has within its fold 1885+ members including Advocates, Chartered Accountants and Company Secretaries. The Annual Conference is a signature event of DTPA he added. Giving an

illustration, Narayan Jain said that in case of sale of immovable property if stamp duty valuation is more than the consideration shown in sale deed or sale agreement, the difference between such consideration shown in deed or sale agreement and the stamp duty valuation is treated as deemed income of transferor and transferee. CAN. K. Goyal, Chairman, Conference Committee said that the topics are of current relevance and these include Tax on Deemed Income vis a vis on Real Income; The Dynamics of Modern Taxation and Deemed Supply & Valuation: Identifying Multibaggers with Exit Strategy & Secret

of Success in Stock Markets. He informed that Session Chairmen and Speakers from all over the country have been invited to deliberate. These include Sr. CA. (Dr.) Girish Ahuja, CA Jatin Christopher, Market Analyst. Bharat Shah, Ajay Bagga, Ashish Somaiya and Sandeep Jain. Past President Advocate Paras Kochar, Past President RD Kakra and CA Mahendra Kr. Agarwal, General Secretary of DTPA were also present. Barkha Agarwal and Manjulata Shukla, Vice Presidents informed that about 450+ delegates are going to participate in the Conference.

Punjab CM Accuses Centre of 'Discrimination', Slams Budget Oversight

Chandigarh (JAG MOHAN THAKEN): Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has accused the Centre of 'Discrimination' against Punjab. On Sunday Mann alleged that the Union government has stalled Rs 1000 crore of the state under the National Health Mission to deprive the Punjabis from the access of quality health services.

Interacting with the media persons after flagging off 58 hi-tech ambulances for the state, the Chief Minister said that the state government is committed to impart quality health services to the state but the Union government is continuously hatching conspiracies to deny these to Punjabis. He said that the Union government has stalled the grant of worth Rs 1000 crore under the National Health Mission just to torpedo pro-people initiatives being taken by the state. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that this is a condemnable move as the non-BJP governments are being harassed by the Union government on one pretext or another. The Chief Minister said that Aam Aadmi clinics have revolutionized the health care sector in the

state. He said that 1.75 crore people have taken the benefits of these clinics in the state and more than 95% of patients visiting these clinics daily recover from their ailments. Mann said that ever since the starting of these clinics have witnessed a huge footfall indicating that every third person of the state has taken benefit from these clinics. The Chief Minister said that today 58 new hi-tech ambulances have been dedicated to the people of the state thereby ensuring that they are available to people in hour of distress. He said that with this addition in the fleet of ambulances a total number of 325 ambulances have been pressed into the service of people across the state to ensure that they get health services in time. CM Mann asserted that these Ultra-Modern Ambulances have been mandated to reach the needy patients within 15 minutes in Urban Areas and 20 minutes in Rural Areas. The Chief Minister bemoaned that it is



strange that despite of immense contribution in the freedom struggle, making the country self-reliant in food production and safeguarding the unity, integrity and sovereignty of the country, Punjab has been completely ignored in the Union budget. He said that this step motherly treatment with the state is unwarranted and reflects the myopic mindset of the Union government towards the state. Bhagwant Singh Mann further said that this high handedness of the Union government will not be tolerated and

Punjabis will give a befitting reply to it. The Chief Minister also reiterated his demand for a special economic package for the state in recognition of the immense contribution made by Punjabis in every field. He said that it is the need of hour to ensure that Punjab makes tremendous progress in every sphere adding that this will give a major fillip to the growth and development of the state. However, Bhagwant Singh Mann bemoaned that currently, the tax holiday given to

other states is acting as an impediment to the industrial growth of the state as industrial units are shifting there. The Chief Minister welcomed the appointment of the new Governor of the state and expressed hope that constitutional rights of both the Government and the Governor will be safeguarded. Mann said that the outgoing Governor had unnecessarily tried to create hiccups in the smooth functioning of the state government. He said that it is unfortunate that the Governor had not granted sanction for calling

a budget session and had even declared a session illegitimate only to grant it sanction later. The Chief Minister said that this is unwarranted and undesirable in a democratic government country like India but unfortunately all this happened in the state. He said that today both freedom and democracy are in danger as the Union government is leaving no stone unturned to sabotage them by harassing the non-BJP governments. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that the voice of opposition is being muzzled and the

central agencies are being used to arm twist them and mute their voice. The Chief Minister said that meetings of Niti Aayog are a futile exercise as states do not even get the proper time to flag the issues of their concern. He said that owing to this reason only they had decided to boycott the meeting of the Niti Aayog this time. CM Mann asserted that nothing fruitful had come out of the meeting of the Niti Aayog last time also so it was better to boycott it and do some constructive work in the state. The Chief Minister said that the state government is giving a major facelift to the health sector in the state adding that the hospitals running in the heritage buildings will be soon modernized. He said that a lot of resources and funds are being pumped in to upgrade the health sector in the state to ensure that people get access to quality health services. Mann also said that the medical colleges at Hoshiarpur, Sangrur and Kapurthala are coming up and the state government is duty bound to complete the work on them. The Chief Minister said

that the youth who were compelled by the system of previous governments to migrate abroad are now returning back, which is a positive trend of reverse migration in the state. He said that his government had provided government jobs to more than 43,000 youths in just two years, marking a record in Punjab's history. Mann said that among those who secured these government jobs, some are youngsters returned from abroad. The Chief Minister said that the state has created history by purchasing Goindwal power plant owned by a private company GVK Power. He said that for the first time this reverse trend has started that the government has purchased any private power plant whereas in the past the state governments used to sell their assets to the favourite individuals at 'throw away' prices. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that as coal from Pachwara coal mine can be used only for government power plants so with purchase of this power plant this coal can be aptly utilized for producing power to provide it to every sector of the state.

Dropout rate rising in Rayagada

Rayagada(KCN): The increasing dropout rate of students at mid school level has sparked concern in the tribal-dominated Rayagada district despite the Central and state governments spending crores for the development of education. The government is implementing various schemes to check school dropout rates but has failed in its pursuit in Rayagada district due to alleged apathy of the education department officials. Despite the distribution of free books, uniforms and mid-day meals to attract students towards studies, many of them drop out of schools in Rayagada district either after passing Class

V or VIII and take to cultivation and other jobs to support their families. Recently, the state government has sanctioned funds to the district to check the school dropout rate under the Star scheme. However, the district administration had to return a majority of the funds which remained unspent due to negligence of the officials. Local intelligentsia have demanded proper implementation of the government scheme to check dropout rates in the district. Sources said children in the district often drop out of school ending their studies midway and take to wood cutting or work in hotels



to earn and support their family due to a lack of awareness among the vulnerable tribal population in this district. Most of the children from tribal families or below the poverty line (BPL)

category are seen migrating to other states with their family members to earn a living. It is alleged that the district education department has failed in its bid to bring back these

dropouts to the schools and engage them in studies. Official sources said the number of dropouts stands at 4,690 in the district. The local intelligentsia alleged that several other students in slums and rural areas of

the district have left studies midway but the officials have not included them in the list. As per the district education department, the number of dropouts stood at 5,465 in 11 blocks of the district by

July 18. However, it declined to 4,690 by July 25 due to efforts put on by the officials of the department. The highest number of dropouts stood at 1,135 in remote Kashipur block while it is the lowest at 40 in Ramnaguda block. Similarly, the figure is 318 in Bissam Cuttack block, 284 in Chandrapur block, 494 in Gudari block, 396 in Gunupur block, 445 in Kalyansinghpur block, 348 in Kolnara block, 742 in Muniguda block, 91 in Padmapur block and 397 in Rayagada block. Educationist Dushmant Kumar Mohanty said that the increase in dropout rates is quite concerning. "Students are the future of the country and the

government should take immediate steps to encourage the children to get back to schools," he said. Moreover, he added, there should be hostel facilities in every school in the tribal-dominated district. The students should be taught in their local language. Stress on quality education will help reduce dropout rates in the district.

When contacted, District Education Officer Basant Kumar Nayak said the department is working on reducing the dropout rate and has been able to bring 427 dropouts back to the schools. This work will continue and the Block Education Officers (BEOs) have been directed to bring back more and more dropouts to the schools.

RMC stresses on green, renewable energy



Rourkela(KCN): With the Central government aggressively promoting and laying emphasis on green, renewable energy and clean power generation, the Rourkela Municipal Corporation (RMC) has initiated a unique step in accordance. Solar panels are being installed on the RMC office building for clean power generation and as per sources, this will be done in all the hospitals being managed by the civic body in the coming days.

In the initial phase, panels will be installed on the rooftops of the health centres at Chhend, Mahatab Road, Sector-6 and 22, Panposh, Gopabandhupalli, Tilak Nagar and Basanti Colony following the RMC office building. The power generated from these rooftop installations will be supplied to the grid and the RMC will receive a rebate of up to 30- 50% significantly reducing its power bill. Speaking on this, ADM, Rourkela

and RMC Commissioner Ashutosh Kulkarni said, "The Government of India is stressing on the generation of clean and green energy and its use. RMC is also moving in that direction. With the use of solar energy, the power bill will be reduced significantly. In future, this will be done in other places under RMC which will help make Rourkela clean and green." Furthermore, RMC is

also planning to aggressively sensitise the residents of the civic body area to install such panels on their residences and produce electricity, thereby reducing the dependence on thermal and hydropower. "We are going to promote the use of solar energy soon by sensitising the residents about the benefits," said the commissioner during a discussion. Solar panels are gradually becoming visible on private rooftops in the Steel City.

Int'l Tiger Day: 2 tigresses to be brought to Similipal

Baripada(KCN): At least two Royal Bengal tigresses will be brought soon to the Similipal Tiger Reserve in Mayurbhanj district to bring about a change in the genetic diversity among the tigers of Similipal Tiger Reserve, which is witnessing a sharp rise in the population of melanistic tigers. The National Tiger Conservation Authority has given the go-ahead after the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) applied in this regard three months back. The mission will start soon after a Central technical team issues an order in this regard, sources from the Forest department said. Sources said the population of Royal Bengal tigers has now reached 39 in Similipal Tiger Reserve. Among them, 50 per cent are melanistic tigers. The Forest Department hopes that bringing these

two tigresses will help increase the tiger population in the STR and enhance their genetic diversity. In the past, the presence of hundreds of tigers had been recorded in Similipal Wildlife Sanctuary. However, the 2004 census indicated the presence of only four Royal Bengal tigers — three females and a male black tiger — due to poaching and other reasons. The STR witnessed the birth of melanistic tiger cubs following mating between the black male tiger and female tigers. Later, the tiger population rose to eight in the 2014 census. However, the census report published in 2023 has sparked surprise as it says 27 adult Royal Bengal tigers and eight cubs are present in Similipal. The state government conducted a fresh census and identified the presence of 12 cubs including 27 adult Royal

Bengal tigers through trap cameras in the sanctuary. This took the total tiger headcount to 39 but there are more melanistic tigers among them, Regional Chief Conservator of Forests (RCCF) and project director of STR Prakash Chand Gogineni said. The change in colour among the Royal Bengal tigers sparked curiosity and surprise among the experts.

An expert team from National Centre for Biological Science at Bangalore rushed to Similipal and conducted a review on changes in colour by collecting samples of feces, vomit, pug marks and scratches made by the tigers. It was concluded that unnatural birth and other reasons might have contributed to the change in colour. Forest officials suspect that the birth of tiger cubs from a single male tiger might be the reason behind the change

in colour. As a result, the Forest Department thinks that bringing female tigers from other forests and an increase in the tiger population will help increase the genetic diversity among tigers in Similipal.

However, wildlife experts have expressed doubts about the success of the move. Bringing tigers from other states and releasing them in Odisha forests was first started in 2017. The plan was first launched in Satkosia Tiger Reserve when the tiger Mahavir was brought from Kanha Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh, June 21, 2018. Later, a tigress Sundari was brought from Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh and released at Satkosia. The Forest officials fitted radio collars on their necks to track their movements and for their protection before releasing them at Satkosia.



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Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board introducing a range of tourism activities in seven tiger reserves

Kolkata (AMBAR MUKHERJEE): Madhya Pradesh has cemented its position as India's undisputed "Tiger State". Home to a staggering 785 tigers - the highest number in the country according to the 2022 census - this central Indian state offers unparalleled opportunities for wildlife enthusiasts to witness these majestic creatures in their natural habitat. The Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board is introducing a range of tourism activities, including vehicle safaris, nature walks, jungle safaris, tree house stays, village tours, and stargazing to enhance the visitor experience. An official of the board said here that they are conducting workshops across different national parks to ensure a seamless and exciting journey. Global Tiger Day is celebrated every year on July 29th July as a way to raise awareness about this magnificent but endangered big cat. This year the theme of International Tiger's Day is "Tigers: Roar for Conservation." This theme reflects the urgency to implement the conservation efforts of the tigers from extinction. Madhya Pradesh's commitment to preserving its tiger population is evident in the latest tiger census. The state recorded a remarkable increase in the number of visitors' testament to the tireless efforts of the MP Tourism Board to promote wildlife tourism on a national and international level. According to the 2022 census, the maximum number of tigers, 785, was reported to be in Madhya Pradesh, followed by Karnataka (563), Uttarakhand (560), and Maharashtra (444). Being decked with numerous wildlife hotspots that include 7 tiger reserves, 12 National Parks and 24 Wildlife Sanctuaries, Madhya Pradesh is an absolute wonderland and a wildlife destination without compare. The state is not only known as the "Tiger State of India" but also gained the tags of "the Leopard State, the Vulture State, the Ghariyal State, Crocodile State and the Wolf State" of the country. A survey by the Forest Survey of India says that the forest cover in Madhya Pradesh increased to 77482.49 sq km! Mrs. Bidisha Mukherjee, Additional Managing Director,

Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board said, "Now, imagine you on a wild road trip to the Tiger Reserves and National Parks of Madhya Pradesh. It's like a real-life episode of your favorite nature show. From the playful rustling of leaves to the jaw-dropping moment when a tiger stops by, every step is a new page in the jungle diary". She also informed that, "Encounter tigers and other animals on a wildlife safari tour in seven tiger sanctuaries in Madhya Pradesh namely Kanha, Pench, Bandhavgarh, Satpura, Panna, Veerangana Durgavati and Sanjay Duburi. The only place you could find Cheetah in India is at Kuno National Park in Sheopur district". Think of a place where the swing of fresh air wakes you up, where the morning chimes of neighbors satisfy your soul, and where the blazing heat of summer is overwhelmed by the mist of early morning. Think of a place hidden beneath the green meadows... Think of the mesmerizing national parks in Madhya Pradesh. Principal Secretary of Tourism and Culture and Managing Director Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board Shri Sheo Shekhar Shukla said Madhya Pradesh is committed to responsible tourism and is focusing at the importance of m i n i z i n g environmental impact and involving local communities. By collaborating with forest departments, local authorities, and tourism operators, Madhya Pradesh aims to sustain tourism activities even during the park closures (July to September) and generate employment opportunities for local residents. Here's a glimpse into all 7 awe-inspiring tiger reserves of Madhya Pradesh: Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve spans across districts of Umaria and Katni. Encompassing an area of 1,536.93 square kilometres, the reserve boasts a thriving tiger population of 104 tigers. Apart from tigers, Bandhavgarh is home to leopards, deer, langurs, and over 250 species of birds. Kanha Tiger Reserve spanning the districts of Mandla and Balaghat is proudly one of the country's

premier tiger reserves and the state's largest national park. The reserve encompasses an area of 940 square kilometres and the tiger population is 61. The reserve boasts a thriving tiger population and is also home to various other species, including leopards, wild dogs, sloth bears, and the barasingha, an endangered species of deer. Pench National Park spans across the districts of Seoni and Chhindwara. Pench National Park is renowned for its thriving tiger population of 61 tigers across an area of 1179.63 square kilometres posing a possibility of tiger tracking every 19 km. Pench is home to leopards, wild dogs, sloth bears, and the Indian wolf. Madhya Pradesh's newest tiger reserve aims to conserve tigers and other wildlife within its vast expanse. Veerangana Tiger Reserve is in Madhya Pradesh, India that was established in 1997. It is the 7th Tiger Reserve named after Rani Durgavati, a queen of the Gond people, and is known for its rich biodiversity. The Satpura Tiger Reserve stuns visitors with its exquisite natural beauty. It is aptly nicknamed as "Seven Folds," derived from the Satpura mountain range. Satpura Tiger Reserve is a sprawling wilderness spread across the Satpura Range. The reserve is estimated to have 40 tigers. Panna Tiger Reserve span 1,598.10 sq km spread across Panna and Chhatarpur districts. The reserve is home to 25 tigers. Sanjay-Dubri Tiger Reserve comprising an Evergreen Sal, Bamboo and mixed forest span an impressive 1,674.5 square kilometers across Sidhi and Shahdol districts is a haven for wildlife. The government of Madhya Pradesh, in collaboration with various organizations, has implemented stringent measures to protect these reserves and promote sustainable tourism. The reserve plays a crucial role in tiger conservation is home to about 20 tigers, 152 species of birds 32 species of mammals, 11 species of reptiles, 03 species of amphibian and many more, 34 species of fresh water fishes. Sanjay National Park which is a part of Sanjay-Dubri Tiger Reserve is the most popular place to visit.

Rice has critically important role to play in national & global food security

Kolkata (PARTHA ROY): Rice has critically important role to play in food security scape of India and around the world in time ahead. With the advent of climate change challenges as well as depletion of conducive resources for rice cultivation, there is need for synergistic sustainable efforts for sustainable development of rice cultivation and rice economy. Bengal Rice Conclave was organised by Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) with support of Government of West Bengal on the inspiration of Chief Minister of West Bengal Smt. Mamata Banerjee on 26th July 2024 in Kolkata. The conclave had three panel discussions on 'Best Practice on Farm Management for Quality Rice Production, Seeds, Crop Protection, Micro Irrigation and Climate issues and Technology,' 'Sustainable Post-Harvest Practices, Advanced Rice Milling Technologies & Machinery, Efficiency and Productivity in Milling, Modern Rice Storage Techniques,' and 'Market Linkage, Financial Schemes and Export Possibilities. Eminent personalities addressed the various sessions of the conclave were Shri S o b h a n d e b Chattopadhyay, Minister-In-Charge, Department of Agriculture, Government of West Bengal; Shri Arup Roy, Minister, Department of Food Processing Industries and Horticulture, Government of West Bengal; Shri Pradip Kumar Mazumdar, Minister-in-Charge, Department of Panchayats & Rural Development and Cooperation, Government of West Bengal; Mr. Ashutosh Mondal, Director, Department of Agriculture, Government of West Bengal; Prof. Swapan Dutta, Former, DDG-Crops, ICAR, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India; Dr. Amresh Kumar Nayak, Director, National Rice Research Institute (NRRI), Cuttack; and



Mr. Shrikant Goenka, Chairman, Agriculture and Food Processing Committee, ICC amongst many others. Minister Sobhandeb Chattopadhyay, said, "Rice has been a staple in Bengal for centuries, integral to cultural and religious events. West Bengal, the 'rice bowl of India,' contributes 14% of the nation's rice, featuring rich biodiversity. Over 12 years, significant advances in production and cultivator livelihoods have been made, yet challenges persist, such as climate risks, inadequate seeds, resource depletion, soil health, labour issues and limited mechanisation. Climate change has intensified droughts, floods and cyclones, impacting rice and other crops. The State Government has introduced initiatives, including climate-resilient seeds, crop insurance and direct-seeded rice (DSR). Research focuses on stress-tolerant, hybrid and bio-fortified rice varieties. Efforts to promote indigenous aromatic varieties have expanded cultivation significantly. ... Organic farming and sustainable practices like DSR and AWD are promoted to conserve resources and improve soil health.... Today,.... Farmers receive ₹10,000 annually, split into two payments of ₹5,000 each, while those with smaller landholdings receive ₹4,000 annually. Insurance premiums are now fully covered and if a farmer dies before the age of 60, their family receives ₹2 lakh

immediately. Farmers over 60 are also provided with pensions. Families of farmers in West Bengal, in particular, are now in a better financial state. Our research centres are dedicated to advancing the agricultural sector, including the development of rice with lower sugar content. We are also exploring alternative cultivation options, such as millet production. Rice remains a staple food across several Indian states, including Bengal, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha, Assam and Jharkhand. We are optimistic that our ongoing efforts will help bridge existing gaps and further enhance the sector's resilience." Minister Arup Roy, said, ".... Today, Bengal is manufacturing a lot of quality products. In 2011, Govind Bhog and Tulaipani were very famous in Bardhaman and North Bengal respectively. Earlier, the market price of Tulaipani was around ₹50 per kg, which has now risen to ₹130. We are organising the Food Festival at Netaji Indoor Stadium on 9th, 10th and 11th August 2024...." Minister Pradip Kumar Mazumdar, said, "..... The Green Revolution of the 1960s, led by Dr. S w a m i n a t h a n , transformed India into a food-surplus nation, allowing us to feed 1.4 billion people. However, the focus on increasing productivity also led to problems in the agricultural sector. Our approach needs to shift from merely increasing production to managing demand effectively. Since

2012, we have been diversifying rice varieties in West Bengal to help farmers get better prices at the farm gate. This initiative has enabled them to receive up to 40-45% more for certain varieties, despite lower yields. West Bengal is a major rice-producing state that grows summer rice and must balance self-sufficiency with avoiding surplus production. Our challenge is to minimise water usage and reduce methane emissions. This is not just environmentally beneficial but also economically prudent and supportive of farmers' livelihoods. Additionally, jute is a significant crop in West Bengal. We need to support farmers... offering marketing support and business linkages to keep them informed and profitable." Prof. Swapan Dutta, Former, DDG-Crops, ICAR, said, "India's agriculture sector is thriving, with significant exports. We're the leading rice-exporting country, earning 46 billion USD from agriculture exports, which underscores the sector's strength.... Bengal's rainfall is generally adequate but there's a need to adopt micro-irrigation for better productivity.... With the right milling systems and technological adoption, Bengal can lead in both productivity and quality..... India must remain self-sufficient in rice production, and Bengal plays a crucial role in this. Bengal's traditional rice variety, Jira, fetches higher prices

than Basmati due to its quality and market strategy. This shows the potential for quality rice production and the importance of effective marketing strategies." Dr. Amresh Kumar Nayak, Director, National Rice Research Institute (NRRI), Cuttack, said, "National Rice Research Institution (NRRI) has a rich history dating back to 1942 when a severe famine struck Odisha, Jharkhand, Bangladesh and West Bengal, killing over 20 lakh people due to erratic rainfall and disease. In response, during World War II, the British government established the institute to ensure food security in the region. Since then, increasing grain production, notably boosting rice output by 10 million tons. Rice, being highly resilient and adaptable to diverse ecologies, remains vital for future food security and c l i m a t e resilience..... linking rice farming with the market for profitability requires significant research and investment." Mr. Shrikant Goenka, Chairman, Agriculture and Food Processing Committee, ICC, said, "Rice stands as a cornerstone in India's agricultural landscape, intricately woven into its cultural and culinary fabric. West Bengal, a major rice producer, is projected to produce approximately 15.75 million tonnes this year. Traditional flood irrigation methods are no longer sustainable; therefore, adopting modern technologies such as micro irrigation is crucial for increasing yields. The System of Rice Intensification (SRI) method, which maintains paddy fields in a moist rather than inundated state, has demonstrated a 30% increase in rice yields while optimizing water, land, labor, and capital..... Continuous research and development in organic farming, advancements in rice genetics and biodiversity conservation for resilience and yield are commendable...."

Bandhan Bank's total business grows 22% to ₹2.59 lakh crore

Kolkata (PARTHA ROY): Bandhan Bank announced its financial results for the first quarter of the financial year 2024-25 in Kolkata on 26th July 2024. The bank's total business grew by 22%, to close at ₹2.59 lakh crore. The Bank's share of retail to total deposits now stands at nearly 69%. The encouraging growth witnessed in the last quarter has been driven by its expansion in distribution, business efficiency and the favourable operating environment. The Bank now serves more than 3.44 crore customers through 6,300 banking outlets in India. The total number of employees working at



Bandhan Bank is now nearly 77,500. During Q1 FY24-25, the Bank's deposit book grew by 23% over the same period in the previous year. The total deposit book now stands at ₹1.33 lakh crore while total advances are at ₹1.26 lakh crore. The

current account and savings account (CASA) ratio is standing at 33.4% of the overall deposit book. Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR), an indicator of the stability of the Bank, is at 15.7%, higher than the regulatory requirement. Speaking on the Bank's

performance, Ratan Kumar Kesh, MD & CEO, said, "The first quarter of the year is a testament to the business performance we aim to sustain throughout the year. We have demonstrated stability and growth across key parameters.

Bandhan Bank's foundation is built on the trust of its customers and the unwavering commitment of its employees. These cornerstones, along with a focus on technology, process, product and people, will drive the growth trajectory of Bandhan Bank 2.0. " The Bank continues its focus on asset diversification with a clear intention to increase its retail book. The bank intends to focus on greater digitization for higher productivity and efficiency. This will also lead to an overall enhancement in customer experience.

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