

## PM Modi Hat-Trick, Powered By South, Bengal, Odisha, Predict Exit Polls

Source	NDA	I.N.D.I.A	OTH
ABP News-C Voter	353-383	152-182	4-12
Dainik Bhaskar	281-350	145-201	33-49
India News- D-Dynamics	371	125	47
India TV- CNX	371-401	109-139	28-38
NDTV Poll of Polls	362	148	33

**New Delhi:** A historic third term for Prime Minister Narendra Modi -- that's what exit polls are predicting as the seventh and the last phase of Lok Sabha election concluded this evening. Only one, though, has carried the NDA across its dream score of 400 of 543 Lok Sabha seats. The BJP, too, has been placed far short of its 370-seat target. The INDIA bloc, five exit polls predicted,

will fall massively short of the 285 seats predicted by Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge this evening. An aggregate of seven exit polls indicates that the NDA will get 361 seats, the INDIA bloc will get 145 seats. The BJP's individual score will be 311 seats and the Congress 63, up from the 52 seats it won in the last general election. The maximum number of seats predicted for the

NDA was 371-401, in the exit poll by India TV-CNX. It predicts the Opposition bloc will get 109-139 seats. It is followed by Jan ki Baat, which is predicting that the NDA will get 362-392 seats and INDIA 141-161 seats. The lowest score for the NDA comes from Dainik Bhaskar -- 281-350, and a corresponding higher score for the INDIA bloc, 145-201 seats.

All exit polls, though, are unanimous about NDA's improved performance in the south and in Bengal. In Andhra Pradesh, the alliance with Chandrababu Naidu paid off, they predict, with the NDA expected to get 18 of the state's 25 seats. Karnataka is also expected to vote overwhelmingly for the BJP, despite its preference for the Congress at the state



level. In Telangana too, the Congress may be unable to capitalise on its assembly poll victory and the decimation of K Chandrasekhar Rao's Bharat Rashtra Samithi, exit polls indicate. The BJP is likely to walk away with over half of the state's 17 seats. The BJP is even

Banerjee's party could get just 19 of the state's 42 Lok Sabha seats. In neighbouring Odisha, the BJP can do even better, winning 15 of the state's 21 seats and confining Naveen Patnaik's Biju Janata Dal -- once the unquestioned choice of the people -- to the margins.

The BJP will also continue to dominate bastions like Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Assam and the national capital. Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party -- and ally Congress -- could again fail to win a single seat in Delhi, exit polls predict. The two parties, however, are expected to do well in Punjab, where

they had a friendly contest. Of the state's 13 seats, the Congress is expected to win 5 and AAP, 4.

Some change is also expected in Bihar, which had given 39 of its 40 seats to the NDA in the last election. The Opposition alliance, spearheaded by Tejashwi Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal, is expected to prise off 7 seats. The Opposition could also pick up three of 10 seats in Haryana and a few in Rajasthan -- states where they scored a duck in 2019.

In Maharashtra, the state that proved one of the hardest to read, the Opposition can scoop up more than one-third of the seats, exit polls indicate. The counting of votes will take place on Tuesday.

## Pandian claims BJD to win 115 Odisha Assembly seats, 15 LS constituencies



**Bhubaneswar(KCN):** Senior BJD leader Kartik Pandian Saturday claimed that the ruling party in Odisha would win more than 115 of the 147 Assembly seats and secure 15 of the 21 Lok Sabha constituencies in the state.

His claim comes on a day when the state's fourth and final round of elections is underway. Taking to X, Pandian said, "The BJD is winning 85 Assembly seats after 3rd phase polls and with the 4th phase today, it will end up winning more than 115 seats out of a total of 147 and 15 Lok Sabha seats out of 21." The bureaucrat-turned-BJD leader also said that the party will form

the government in the state with more than a three-fourth majority. The BJD had, in 2019, won 113 Assembly seats and 12 Lok Sabha constituencies in the state.

"We are grateful to the people of Odisha for blessing us and we are committed to provide strong and transformational governance to Odisha," BJD spokesperson Sasmit Patra said.

Earlier, the opposition BJP claimed that it would win over 75 Assembly seats and form a government in the state, besides winning above 16 Lok Sabha constituencies in Odisha.

The counting of votes will be June 4. During the election campaign, Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged the people of Odisha to attend the swearing-in ceremony of the BJP government in the state June 10.

The BJD claimed that it would form the government for the sixth consecutive time and party president Naveen Patnaik would take the oath June 9.

**Bhubaneswar(KCN):** A voter turnout of 62.46 per cent was recorded till 5pm Saturday in six Lok Sabha constituencies and 42 Assembly seats of Odisha where polling is underway in the third phase of the simultaneous elections. Among the six Lok Sabha constituencies, Jagatsinghpur recorded the highest voter turnout at 65.93 per cent while Bhadrak logged the lowest turnout at 58.21 per cent till 5pm.

Besides, Mayurbhanj recorded a voter turnout of 64.17 per cent, Balasore 61.91 per cent, Jajpur 62.92 per cent and Kendrapara 62.02 per cent, the EC data



showed. It can be mentioned here that Manoranjan Sahoo, an assistant teacher deputed as a booth level officer at Oleichandanapur in Jajpur district, complained of uneasiness and was taken to a local hospital where he was declared dead, they said.

Similarly, an elderly man also collapsed while standing in a queue in a polling booth in Iswarpur in Nilagiri Assembly segment in Balasore district. He was taken to a hospital, where doctors declared him dead, they said.

Both deaths were suspected to have been caused due to heatstroke, officials said.

Two persons were injured in separate

group clashes outside a polling booth in Gop area in Jagatsinghpur Lok Sabha seat and Salipur under Kendrapara Lok Sabha seat.

Meanwhile, BJP's Salipur candidate Arindam Ray alleged rigging by BJD workers in some of the booths of Salipur and Mahanga Assembly segments. Replying to a question on the clashes, the CEO said no clash has taken place in any of the booths. However, the commission has received reports of disturbances outside booths and police have intervened in all cases immediately.

## Puri firecracker explosion: Toll mounts to nine

**Bhubaneswar(KCN):** The death toll in the explosion of a stockpile of firecrackers in Odisha's Puri mounted to nine after three of the injured people died, a senior official said Saturday.

A total of 21 people are currently undergoing treatment in various hospitals in Puri, Bhubaneswar and Cuttack.

A total of 30 people were injured in the explosion that happened during Lord Jagannath's 'Chandan Yatra', a ritual, on the night of May 29. According to information received from the Health & Family Welfare Department, three injured people died since late Friday night, the official said.

"The total death toll rose

to nine. Presently 21 patients are under medical treatment in different hospitals," the official said. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has ordered an inquiry into the incident and announced an ex-gratia amount of Rs 4 lakh to the next of kin of each deceased. The Puri collector has taken steps for the payment of ex-gratia, the official said.

Additional Chief Secretary of the Revenue and Disaster Management Department, Satyabrata Sahu, who is also the Special Relief Commissioner (SRC), has started a probe into the incident.

Meanwhile, Puri Police

said it registered a suo motu criminal case and an investigation is underway.

**New Delhi(KCN):** Senior leaders of the INDIA bloc met here Saturday to discuss their strategy for the counting of votes June 4, even as the TMC and PDP skipped the meeting.

Senior leaders of the Congress, Samajwadi Party, CPI-M, CPI, DMK, JMM, AAP, RJD, Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (Sharad Pawar) met at Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's residence Saturday afternoon and held discussions, even as the last phase of polling was underway.

TMC chief and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had already said they would not attend the meeting as there were elections in the state, while PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti did not attend the meeting due to personal reasons.

"I may not go as my mom has undergone an eye surgery," she had told PTI.

Venugopal were also present at the meeting. "June 4th will mark the beginning of a new dawn for India. In today's meeting of INDIA bloc leaders, DMK will be represented by our party Treasurer and leader of DMK's Parliamentary Party, Thiru. T.R. Baalu avl," DMK supremo and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin had said in a post on 'X.'

Kharge had earlier said this was an informal meeting where they would only discuss what kind of preparations they should have on the day of counting and how people should be alert, whether it is about the EVMs or the use of Form 17C. The meeting was only for discussing the counting preparations and the Congress has already told its state units to be alert about Form 17C, he had said. The seventh and last phase of Lok Sabha elections is underway Saturday, including in Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

## Polling for LS polls concludes, over 59% voting in last phase

**New Delhi(KCN):** An approximate voter turnout of 59.15 per cent was recorded Saturday in the seventh and final phase of the Lok Sabha polls with incidents of violence between TMC and BJP supporters reported in Sandeshkhali region of West Bengal, and complaints of EVM glitches and rigging at some booths lodged. Polling was conducted in seven states and the Union Territory of Chandigarh for 57

constituencies, including Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh from where Prime Minister Narendra Modi is seeking a third consecutive term in the Lok Sabha. Voting was held amid a severe heatwave in all 13 seats of Punjab and four of Himachal Pradesh, 13 constituencies in Uttar Pradesh, nine in West Bengal, eight in Bihar, six in Odisha and three in Jharkhand, besides Chandigarh. Polling for the remaining 42 assembly constituencies in Odisha

and bypolls to six assembly seats in Himachal Pradesh also took place simultaneously. Saturday's voting marked the end of the marathon polling process that began April 19. The assemblies of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim also went to polls. The BJP-led NDA is seeking a rare consecutive third term in office. The Opposition INDIA bloc is trying to upset the NDA applecart by putting up a joint fight in some states.

Several exit polls, which were aired after the 6.30 pm deadline set by the Election Commission, predicted a comfortable majority for the BJP-led NDA.

Leaders of several



# BJP Leader Alleges Booth Capturing By BJD Workers In Odisha's Salipur

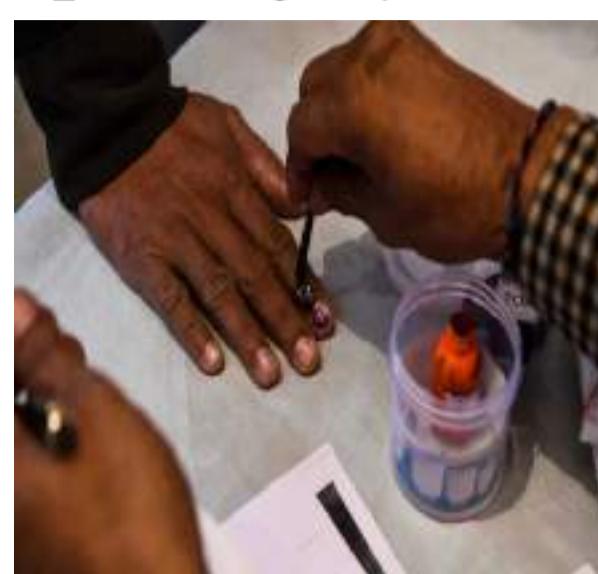
**Bhubaneswar(KCN):** Tension erupted on Saturday in Odisha's Salipur assembly seat under Kendrapara Lok Sabha constituency after the Bharatiya Janata Party MLA candidate Arindam Roy alleged booth capturing by some ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) workers at a booth in Malasasan village under the segment.

Speaking to media

persons, Arindam Roy said, "When I reached the booth, I was shocked to see that some eight to ten youths gathered inside the booth. They were directing a woman by holding her hand to press a particular party's button on the EVM. Upon being asked, they identified themselves as polling agents. This is a clear case of booth capturing. When I

objected to this, some BJD workers reached the spot and engaged in a brawl."

Some alleged workers of BJD reportedly attacked BJP polling agent, Sanjay Rout, and four other party supporters with sharp weapons and wooden sticks at the booth in Malasasan village. The injured BJP workers were later rushed to a nearby hospital for



treatment.

Arindam Roy also claimed about receiving such allegations of booth rigging from at least six more booths in the assembly segment. The BJP candidate stated that he would bring these incidents to the notice of the additional district magistrate (ADM) and sub-divisional police officer (SDPO).

The BJP workers demanded re-polling at the particular booth

following rigging by BJD workers.

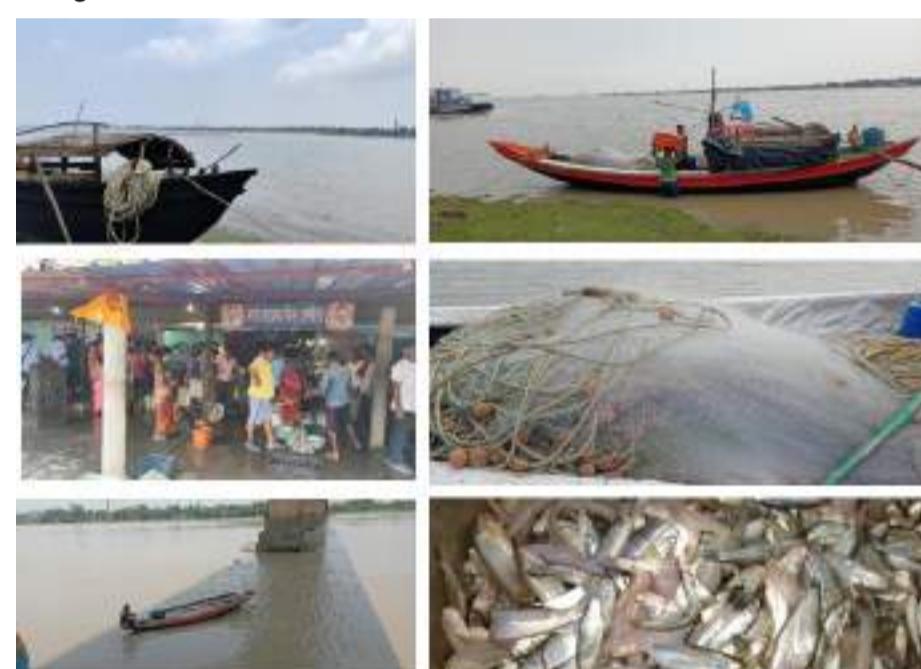
The BJP leader Arindam Roy has urged the district administration of Cuttack to take stringent action against the guilty. Meanwhile, the Cuttack district administration rubbished the allegations of booth capturing in the Salipur assembly segment.

Listen to the latest songs, only on JioSaavn.com "In Booth No-184 & 185 of Salipur AC, both

the parties clashed 150 metres outside the booths. The presence of the candidate has aggravated the situation. The report of the attack with 'paniki' isn't true. The report of booth capture is completely false," said Cuttack DM on its official X handle. Voting is underway for six Lok Sabha constituencies and 42 assembly segments of the state for the final phase of polling.

## ICAR-CIFRI Journey ensuring the sustainability of River Haldi

**Kolkata,(KCN):** The Haldi River is a prominent waterway in West Bengal. The Haldi River is a secondary river that runs through the PurbaMedinipur and joins the Hooghly River. The Keleghai River meets the Kansai River near Tangrakhali, which is located in the Tamluk district. The confluence of the two streams is referred to as the Haldi River. The river in question is the final significant tributary to join the Haldi and Hooghly estuaries before the latter empties into the ocean. In May 2024, the NMCG team from ICAR-Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute (ICAR-CIFRI), Barrackpore under the leadership of Dr B.K.Das, Director undertook a comprehensive assessment to evaluate the ecological management of the river and the influence of human activities on it. The researchers examined many facets of fish diversity, distribution patterns, ecological traits, and alterations in community structure during the investigation. For the analysis, five sampling sites were chosen in West Bengal: Haldia ferry ghat, Balughata, Teropara lock gate, Teropekhy, and



Narghat railway bridge in PurbaMedinipur District along the Haldi River. Upon study, it was determined that the water of the Haldi River had a somewhat alkaline character, with a pH range of 8.12-8.55. The alkaline pH of the region might have resulted from the release of alkaline chemicals from the Haldia industrial region or rainfall flowing over embankments containing high levels of soluble alkaline substances. Furthermore, the quantity of Dissolved Oxygen (DO) was determined to be within the ideal range of 3.4 to 3.6 ppm. The turbidity of water in the Haldi river varied from 3.44 to 45.7 NTU. It can be concluded that the river environment

provided a conducive habitat for the fish to thrive. Fish species such as *Mystusgulio*, *Ompokpabda*, *Notopterusnotopterus*, *Ailiacolia*, *Coliadussumeri*, *Penaeusmonodon*, *Setipinnaphasa*, *Glossogobiusguris*, *Latiscalcarifer*, *Scyllaolivacea*, *Systemussarana*, *Chanda*, *nama*, etc. are mainly found in the stretches. The Haldi River offers a variety of fishing techniques, including gill nets, surface bag nets, and hook-and-line methods. The optimal fishing periods are between October to January, particularly when employing bag nets. Although there was industrialization in the surrounding area, the study revealed that no heavy or

small industries were located near the sample areas. The substrate, predominantly composed of clay, offers an optimal habitat for a wide range of aquatic organisms. Nevertheless, NMCG emphasized the farming techniques used by the farmers in Nandigram for mud crab fattening.

The Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute played a pivotal part in this investigation, offering vital observations on the variety of fish species, fishing techniques, and general health of the river. CIFRI's ongoing efforts guarantee the comprehension and preservation of these aquatic marvels for future generations.

## ECoR GM INSPECTED TALCHER AREA.

- Reviewed action plan for faster coal evacuation from the sidings.
- Took stock of ongoing infrastructure projects connecting Talcher coal fields and inspected traffic facility works at various sidings of mines and industries.



**Bhubaneswar,(KCN):** East Coast Railway (ECoR) General Manager, Shri Parmeshwar Funkwal inspected the ongoing works at Talcher area including Infrastructural Development and Traffic Facilities. Senior officials from ECoR headquarters

and Divisional Railway Manager, Khurda Road Division Shri H. S. Bajwa accompanied him during the inspection. During the inspection, Shri Funkwal reviewed the infrastructure works and advised officials for project completion within

the target period. Shri Funkwal also inspected the Railway Sidings at Talcher area and advised for better traffic movements. Reviewing the traffic facility works, General Manager instructed concerned officials to

improve mobility for hassle free traffic movements. Apart from this, Shri Funkwal stressed upon faster coal evacuation from various collieries in Talcher area towards different destinations of the country.

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## 'Blackout' trailer: Vikrant Massey's film is muddled with unhinged chaos



Vikrant Massey is set to venture into dark comedy genre with his new film 'Blackout', directed by Devang Bhavsar. The film's trailer, showcasing a chaotic plot, was unveiled on May 30. The trailer for 'Blackout' released on May 30. The film, featuring Vikrant Massey, Sunil Grover, Mouni Roy and others will release on June 7 on JioCinema. The film is directed by debutant Devang Bhavsar.

The film has been co-produced by Jyoti Deshpande and Niraj Kothari. 'Blackout' also features Jisshu Sengupta, Karan Sudhakar Sonawane, Saurabh Dilip Ghadge, Ruhani

Sharma, Anantvijay Joshi, Prasad Oak, Chhaya Raghunath Kadam, Sooraj Pops and Kelly Dorji in crucial roles.

When asked about the film, Vikrant Massey

said, "I am thrilled that 'Blackout' is making its premiere on JioCinema. This film pushes the boundaries of storytelling, and I believe viewers will be captivated by its unique narrative."

Co-star Sunil Grover added, "Working on 'Blackout' was an extraordinary experience. The film offers a perfect blend of suspense and drama that will keep audiences

hooked from start to finish. I can't wait for the world to see it."

Mouni Roy, expressing her enthusiasm for the film, stated, "Being a part of 'Blackout' has been an incredible journey. The film's unique storyline and captivating characters drew me in from the start. I'm excited for audiences to witness the suspense and excitement that the film has to offer."

'Blackout' will be streaming on JioCinema from June 7. Vikrant will next be seen in 'Yaar Jigri', 'Sector 36', 'Phir Aayi Haseen Dillruba' and 'The Sabarmati Report'.

## Katrina Kaif, Karan Johar Praises 'The Archies' Actor Vedang Raina



'The Archies' is making a lot of buzz. After all, not just the movie marks the debut of many Bollywood starlets but also the screening was attended by the who's who of the industry. Recently, in a dazzling and star-studded premiere for the much-anticipated movie 'The Archies', debutant Vedang Raina has taken the spotlight by storm. He has earned accolades from none other than Bollywood

sensation Katrina Kaif and Karan Johar. Celebrities are not holding back in commending the remarkable performances of the cast and crew and Katrina Kaif and Karan Johar took a moment to express her admiration, including a special mention for Vedang Raina.

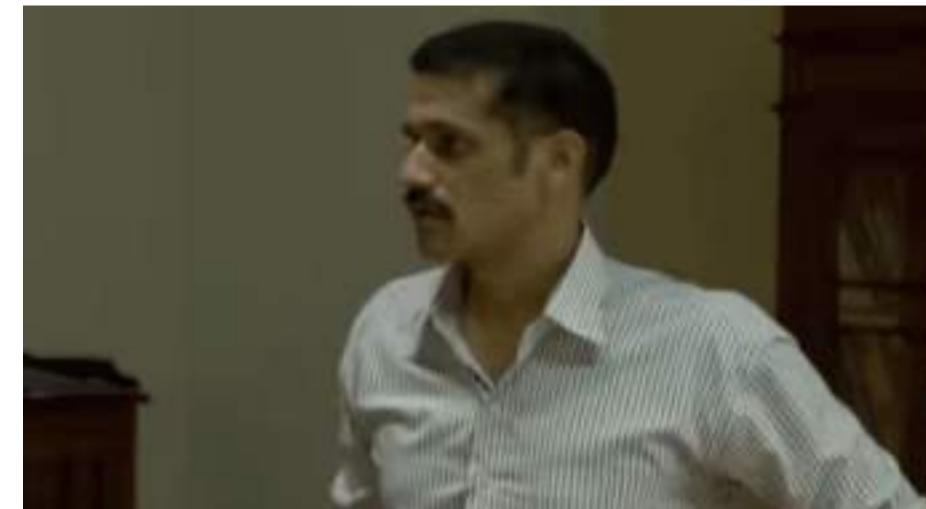
In a heartfelt message, Katrina praised Vedang Raina, stating, "@vedangraina reminds

you of the old Hollywood stars." Karan Johar appreciated Vedang's natural charm and said, "@vedangraina as Reggie walks the talk! He oozes charm and confidence in equal measure and has that movie star swag. Also dances with unabashed ease".

This accolade for Vedang's debut proves Vedang's star power on screen and builds anticipation for his performance. Vedang

Raina not only mesmerises the audience with his on-screen presence but also lent his voice to a song in the movie adding an extra layer of depth to his already promising debut. Helmed by Zoya Akhtar, 'The Archies' also marks the debut of late Sridevi and producer Boney Kapoor's daughter Khushi Kapoor, Shweta Bachchan and Nikhil Nanda's son Agastya.

## Talvaar Turns 8: Revisiting Exceptional Performance Of Sohum Shah, Who Played Investigative Officer



As 'Talvaar' marks its 8th anniversary today, we can't help but recall on the exceptional performance of Sohum Shah, who portrayed the role of an investigative officer in this gripping crime drama. Despite his limited screen time, Shah managed to leave an indelible mark on the audience and industry alike, establishing himself as a true bonafide performer.

Sohum Shah has always been an actor who seamlessly embodies his director's vision of the character on screen. With Meghna Gulzar's direction in 'Talvaar', he

had the opportunity to delve deep into the psyche of his character. In doing so, he not only met but exceeded all expectations, delivering a performance that was widely praised by critics and audiences alike.

One of the key aspects of Shah's portrayal in 'Talvaar' was his ability to bring authenticity and depth to his character. As an investigative officer tasked with unraveling a complex murder case, he

displayed a remarkable range of emotions and

nuances, making the character feel real and relatable. His dedication to his craft was evident

in every scene, from his meticulous attention to detail to his flawless execution of even the most challenging sequences, he didn't just

play the character but became the character. The collaboration between Sohum Shah and Meghna Gulzar in 'Talvaar' also serves as a

prime example of the powerful synergy that can be achieved when a talented actor joins forces with a visionary director. The film's success can be

attributed, in large part, to Shah's outstanding performance, which breathed life into the character and added depth to the narrative. It's a testament to his dedication to his craft and his ability to elevate any project he's a part of. Up next for Sohum Shah is his production venture 'CrazXy' and as he continues to take on new challenges and work with acclaimed directors, audiences can look forward to witnessing more exceptional performances from this talented artist.

## Vijay Deverakonda Expresses Gratitude For 'Kushi' Success, Says 'Love Knows No Language'



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Jee Le Zaraa: Real reason behind Priyanka Chopra, Katrina Kaif and Alia Bhatt starrer's delay revealed and it's not date issues

Jee Le Zaraa is one of the most talked about movies starring Priyanka Chopra, Katrina Kaif and Alia Bhatt. The movie was announced a couple of years ago and there has been much excitement around the same as it is. Farhan Akhtar along with Zoya Akhtar and Reema Kagti are making this all-female road

trip movie happen but there have been a lot of hiccups already. Whether Jee Le Zaraa is being shelved or not, has Priyanka Chopra said no to the script, etc. have grabbed headlines in the last couple of days. But fresh reports revealing the real reason for the delay have surfaced. A lot of fans have questioned Farhan Akhtar about the delay of Jee Le Zaraa which is supposed to star Priyanka Chopra, Katrina Kaif and Alia Bhatt in the lead. There have been numerous reasons that have surfaced for the delay in making of the new movie. Recently, reports surfaced talking about Priyanka Chopra opting out of Jee Le Zaraa because she did not like the script. She was supposed to come down to India during Parineeti Chopra's wedding and sign the contract which did not happen. But that's not the case, as per a report in Koimoi.com, Priyanka is very much a part of the movie. She has not opted out of the project nor has she said 'no' to the script

Actor Vijay Deverakonda's latest release 'Kushi' with Samantha Ruth Prabhu successfully managed to strike a chord with people. The film, which performed well at the box office, is now streaming on OTT platform Netflix. On receiving audiences' love

for his role in 'Kushi', Vijay said, "We made 'Kushi' with the belief that love knows no language and emotions have no boundaries. Seeing the overwhelming love pour in again with its OTT release is incredibly gratifying. Whether you're watching it in

Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, or Hindi, I hope the film brings as much 'Kushi' to your hearts as it has to ours."

Written and directed by Shiva Nirvana and produced by Mythri Movie Makers, 'Kushi' hit the theatres on September 1 in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam. The film marked Vijay and Samantha's second collaboration after 'Mahanati'. Earlier talking about working in the film, Vijay told ANI, "The whole experience of shooting it will be a very fond memory for life. The relationships I've formed with Samantha and Shiva, are the two people I spent the most time with, and shared a lot of memories and highs and lows with. I will always enjoy thinking about the making of this film..."

Meanwhile, in the coming months, Vijay will be seen in 'VD 12'. The film is being directed by Gowtam Tinnanuri. to the script, etc. have grabbed headlines in the last couple of days. But fresh reports revealing the real reason for the delay have surfaced. A lot of fans have questioned Farhan Akhtar about the delay of Jee Le Zaraa which is supposed to star Priyanka Chopra, Katrina Kaif and Alia Bhatt in the lead. There have been numerous reasons that have surfaced for the delay in making of the new movie. Recently, reports surfaced talking about Priyanka Chopra opting out of Jee Le Zaraa because she did not like the script. She was supposed to come down to India during Parineeti Chopra's wedding and sign the contract which did not happen. But that's not the case, as per a report in Koimoi.com, Priyanka is very much a part of the movie. She has not opted out of the project nor has she said 'no' to the script

# Challenges of saving biodiversity

*The United Nations has declared 2021-30 as the Decade of Ecosystem Restoration. People around the world face the challenge of reviving their natural ecosystem, hence it is a matter of worldwide concern.*



India is a biodiversity rich country. Despite covering 2.4 percent of the world's area, it is home to 7-8 percent of all the world's recorded species (45,000 plant species and 91,000 animal species). Four of the world's 34 biodiversity hotspots are in India. Similarly, India is included among the 17 mega-diversity countries of the world. Thus, biodiversity not only forms the basis of ecosystem functioning, but it also provides the basis of livelihood in the country. In such a situation, conservation of biodiversity in India becomes inevitable. Many measures have been taken to conserve biodiversity such as establishment of 103 national parks, 510 wildlife sanctuaries, 50 tiger reserves, 18 biosphere reserves, 3 conservation reserves and 2 community reserves.

A National Biodiversity Action Plan has been prepared for the conservation of

biodiversity, which is consistent with the Global Biodiversity Strategic Plan 2011-20. It was accepted at the meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2010. The Biodiversity Act was prepared in the year 2002 to conserve biodiversity and related knowledge in India. A three-tier institutional structure has been formed for the implementation of this Act. At the highest level, under Section 8 of the Act, the National Biodiversity Authority was constituted in the year 2003, whose headquarters is in Chennai. It is a statutory body, whose main role is regulatory and advisory in nature.

State Biodiversity Authorities have also been established in the states. Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) have been formed at the local level. According to NBA data, 26 states of the country have constituted State Biodiversity Authorities and Biodiversity Management Committees. In the year 2016 the number of BMCs was 41,180, which increased to 74,575 in the year 2018. 43,743 BMCs have been formed in

Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh alone. The objective of these committees is to conserve the country's biodiversity and related knowledge, to facilitate its sustainable use, and to ensure that the benefits arising from the use of biological resources are shared fairly and equitably among those most likely to contribute to its conservation, utilization and involvement in management.

The National Biodiversity Authority is performing its role well for the conservation of biodiversity in the country. According to the NBA implementation of the National Biodiversity Action Plan is challenging. People's participation plays an important role in its successful implementation. MS Swaminathan Research Foundation's Community Farming Biodiversity Center in Wayanad district of Kerala provides an excellent example of how strengthening local self-governance can integrate biodiversity conservation into local development plans.

India's National Biodiversity Authority has recently set new standards in improving the livelihoods of villagers with the help of the United Nations Environment Programme.

India has been at the forefront in establishing comprehensive legal and institutional mechanisms to achieve the goals of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Convention's third objective of making genetic resources available to people and fair, equitable sharing of benefits is being implemented under the Biological Diversity Act 2002 and Rules 2004. The National Biodiversity Authority is globally recognized for its work in implementing the provisions of the Convention. To expand its reach and operationalize benefit sharing provisions, a network of people's biodiversity registers and biodiversity management committees is created at the national level.

A big project Biodiversity Management Committees, formed under the 2002 Act, are local level statutory bodies that require the participation of at least two women members through a democratic selection process. These committees help in facilitating access and

consent of proposed users such as researchers, private companies, governments etc. to biological resources. This ensures sustainable use and conservation of available resources through biodiversity registers and decisions on conservation and sustainable use of biological resources. The title of the project is Focus on Strengthening the Implementation and Access to Biological Diversity Act and Rules and Benefit Sharing Provisions.

The project aims to create better access to biological resources, assess their economic value and better share their benefits among local people. It is being run in 10 states of the country namely Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, West Bengal, Goa, Karnataka, Odisha, Telangana and Tripura. Very few people would know that India has many attractive global centers of biodiversity. For example, Sikkim has 422 species of birds and 697 species of butterflies, four and a half thousand species of flowering plants, 362 species of plants and a rich variety of beautiful orchid flowers.

Countless species of animals and plants make the Himalayas a precious storehouse of biodiversity. Thousands of small and big glaciers, precious forests, rivers and waterfalls present here prepare suitable ground for this. The Himalayas are divided into several zones, with the Central Himalayan region particularly home to this biodiversity. In the state of Uttarakhand situated in the Central Himalayas, 7000 important species of plants and 500 species of animals are present. Today there are many threats to biodiversity in the Himalayan region. There are many reasons for this, including humid climate change, deforestation, frequent uncontrolled fires, drying up of water streams, poor forest management and lack of awareness among people. This is why many species are facing existential crisis. One such plant species is Orchid. Efforts are being made in Uttarakhand for the last few years to save it.

The Orchid plant is one of the oldest plants in the world, which is known for its beautiful flowers and invaluable contribution to the environment. There are

more than twenty-five thousand species all over the world and in the Himalayas, they are found at an altitude of 700 meters to about 3000 meters. About 250 species of orchids have been identified in the state of Uttarakhand, but most are on the verge of losing their existence. Biologists say that at least 5 or 6 species are on the verge of extinction. The orchid itself, growing either in the ground or on trees such as oaks and pines, makes pollination possible or easier for many plants. A nutritious and popular Ayurvedic product like Chyawanprash uses at least 4 species of orchids, which are found in the high Himalayan regions. These include most of the Scheduled Tribes people, who reside in the forests and maintain a special bonding with it. There is an interdependent relationship between them. These people are the natural guardians of biodiversity.

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**Prof. Dr. Umesh Chandra Patra**



World No Tobacco Day is an annual global event observed on May 31st, dedicated to raising awareness about the detrimental effects of tobacco use on health and advocating for effective policies to reduce tobacco consumption. As we approach World No Tobacco Day 2024, it's crucial to reflect on the progress made in tobacco control efforts, acknowledge the challenges that remain, and renew our commitment to promoting a tobacco-free world.

31 May is the World No Tobacco Day (WNTD). This year, once again, WHO and public health champions from across the globe will come together to raise awareness about the harmful influences of the tobacco industry on youth. Protecting children from tobacco

industry interference. This theme of WNTD 2024 is focused on advocating for an end to the targeting of youth with harmful tobacco products. This discourse provides a platform for young people, policy-makers and tobacco control advocates globally to discuss the issue and to urge governments to adopt policies that shield young people from the manipulative practices of the tobacco and related industries.

Although cigarette smoking has decreased over the years due to phenomenal efforts by the tobacco control community, more must be done to safeguard these vulnerable groups. Products such as electronic cigarettes and nicotine pouches are gaining popularity among youth. It is estimated that 12.5% of adolescents in the European Region used e-cigarettes in 2022 compared to 2% of adults. In some countries of the Region, the rates of e-cigarette use among school children are 2-3 times higher than the rates of cigarette smoking.

The industry wilfully sells a deadly dependency to young people, therefore WNTD 2024 calls on the governments and tobacco control community to protect current and future generations and to hold the tobacco industry liable for the harm it causes.

The consequences of youth tobacco use are dire. Nicotine is highly addictive, and early exposure increases the likelihood of dependence in adulthood. This dependence can lead to



a range of health problems, including: Respiratory illnesses: Tobacco use damages the lungs, increasing the risk of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma, and lung cancer. Cardiovascular disease: Tobacco use is a major risk factor for heart attacks, strokes, and other cardiovascular complications. Cancer: Tobacco use is not just linked to lung cancer but also increases the risk of cancers of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, and pancreas. Mental health issues: There is a growing body of evidence linking tobacco use to

depression, anxiety, and other mental health conditions. Beyond the immediate health effects, youth tobacco use poses a significant economic burden on healthcare systems. Early intervention and prevention efforts are crucial to protect future generations and ensure a healthier tomorrow. Raising Awareness: World No Tobacco Day serves as a platform to raise awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco use on health. Through educational campaigns, media outreach, and community events, the public is informed about the various diseases and conditions caused by

tobacco consumption, including cancer, heart disease, respiratory illnesses, and more. Preventing Initiation: For many individuals, tobacco addiction begins during adolescence or young adulthood. By dedicating a day to highlight the dangers of tobacco use, especially among youth, World No Tobacco Day aims to prevent initiation and discourage experimentation with tobacco products. Early intervention and education can help shape healthier behaviors and lifestyles among future generations.

Supporting Cessation Efforts:

World No Tobacco Day also emphasizes the importance of supporting tobacco users in their cessation journey. Many people struggle to quit smoking or using other tobacco products due to nicotine addiction and other factors. By promoting cessation resources, such as counseling services, helplines, and nicotine replacement therapy, this observance encourages individuals to seek help and take steps toward quitting tobacco for good.

Advocating for Policy Change: Another critical aspect of World No Tobacco Day is advocating for evidence-based policies and regulations to reduce tobacco consumption. From smoke-free laws and tobacco taxation to advertising bans and packaging regulations, policy interventions play a vital role in tobacco control efforts. By highlighting the effectiveness of these measures and calling for their implementation on a global scale, this observance amplifies the voice of public health advocates and policymakers. Fostering Global Collaboration: World No Tobacco Day serves as a reminder of the importance of international cooperation in tackling

the tobacco epidemic. Through collaboration between governments, public health organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and other stakeholders, countries can share best practices, exchange knowledge, and work together to develop comprehensive tobacco control strategies. Solidarity among nations is crucial for addressing cross-border challenges posed by the tobacco industry and ensuring that everyone has access to the tools and resources needed to lead tobacco-free lives.

As we commemorate World No Tobacco Day 2024, let us reaffirm our commitment to promoting health and well-being by combating the tobacco epidemic. By raising awareness about the health risks associated with tobacco use, advocating for evidence-based policies, and supporting individuals in their cessation journey, we can create a healthier future for generations to come. Together, let us strive towards a world where tobacco no longer robs us of our health and vitality, but instead, fosters a culture of well-being and resilience.

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## Bengal's Bank Bachao Desh Bachao Manch Criticizes SBI's Restrictive Policies on Employee Financial Choices

**Kolkata, (ABHIJIT SETH):**

Bank Bachao Desh Bachao Manch, a civil society forum advocating for banking stakeholders' rights, has criticized the State Bank of India's (SBI) new restrictions on its employees and their dependents. These restrictions prevent them from opening Demat accounts outside the State Bank Group, as stated in an internal circular issued on May 27, 2024. The forum sees this as an example of restrictive HR policies, similar to the existing limitations on employees under the National Pension System (NPS), which compel them to invest solely in the SBI Pension Fund.

The circular requires employees and their wholly dependent family members to get prior written permission from their controller (not below the rank of Chief General Manager) before opening Demat or Trading accounts outside the State Bank Group. Additionally, employees must submit quarterly statements of their Demat/Trading accounts for verification, and any breach of these instructions is considered misconduct, subject to disciplinary action.

Employees must also obtain post facto permission for continuing with existing Demat/Trading accounts outside the State Bank Group within six months of the circular's issuance or close such accounts within this period. The forum argues that these restrictions infringe on employees' rights, noting that limiting NPS choices impacts their ability to maximize retirement benefits. For example, while the SBI Pension Fund has yielded returns of 9.28% since inception, alternatives like the LIC Pension Fund and UTI Retirement Solutions have shown slightly better returns at 9.37% and 9.32%, respectively.

The lack of choice in investment options affects employees' financial well-being. By restricting employees to the SBI Pension Fund, the bank limits their potential for higher returns available from other funds, thus compromising their future financial security. Bank Bachao Desh Bachao Manch opposes these new restrictions and views them as a direct infringement on employees' rights.

## Tribute paid to Gulab Chandra Shukla by Bahrach's litterateurs

"Whoever went inside and looked, saw an ocean drowning: Dr Ved Mitra"



**Hamzapura (KCN):** khil Bhartiya Sahitya Parishad, Bahrach organized a tribute meeting focused on the literary and social contributions of former District President of BJP District Bahrach Gulab Chandra Shukla at Ram Janaki Mandir, Hamzapura. On this occasion, Pratap Narayan Pathak, who was presiding over the program, remembered Gulab Chandra Shukla in the meeting and paid floral tribute to his picture. In the program, the chief guest Dr. Ashok "Gulshan", keeping the late Gulab Chandra Shukla at the center, read his much-discussed composition "Father". District President of Sahitya Parishad Radhakrishna Pathak said that Mr Shukla's contribution in social, literary and political arena of our district is unforgettable. He will remain in our memories. Our young generation should learn from such personas. The famous poet of the district, Vimlesh Jaiswal 'Vimal', while connecting the audience with love through his poetry, said that He was a man of his words, and this was the reason that higher level

of the current political system of the district could never ignore him. He was always ready for the help of others especially of deprived and poor people. Dr. Ved Mitra Shukla, while remembering his father, recited his poem - "When I went inside and looked, I saw an ocean that was drowning". The program was conducted by the senior litterateur of the district, Gulab Chandra Jaiswal. On this occasion, Mr. Jaiswal presented his poetry by connecting them to social issues.

The Parishad's city president Subhashit Srivastava, city general secretary Viresh Pandey, Dr. Ved Mitra Shukla, Arpan Shukla, Rakesh Dubey Kunal, Pandit Yogendra Kumar Mishra, Prem Jalan, Sunil ji, lyricist Ravi Gulshan, Manjula Pathak, Vimlesh Jaiswal 'Vimal', Omprakash Shukla, Sarju Prasad Mishra, Manoj Sharma Bablu, etc. also addressed the gathering by reciting poetry and paying tribute to late Gulab Chandra Shukla.

## Brahmaputra Water Level Rises After Heavy Rain In Assam, 3.5 Lakh People Affected

**Guwahati (Assam) (KCN):**

The water level of the Brahmaputra River has been rising following incessant rainfall in many parts of Assam and other neighbouring states in the past couple of days. The water levels of the Kopili River, Barak River, Katakhal River, and Kushiya River are above the danger mark. The flood situation in Assam is still grim as over

3.50 lakh people in 11 districts have been affected.

A local resident Bikash Kumar Shah said, "The river water has increased due to constant rainfall. I had to close my ferry. I opened it today."

Another local resident Bitti Kumar expressed, "There is nothing to worry about as such. But all the shops were closed due to flood-like

conditions." Meanwhile, in response to the ongoing flood situation in Barak Valley in Assam, an additional team from the first Battalion of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has been deployed to the region. The team was airlifted from Guwahati's Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International (LGBI) Airport to Silchar Airport in the Cachar district of Assam.

## ICAR-CIFRI combating Churni's survival hindered by Black Water

**Kolkata, (KCN):**

The Mathabhanga River comes from the Padma River in Bangladesh and upon entering Indian territory, it divides into two sections, namely Ichamati and Churni, in Majhdia. The Churni River spans a distance of 56 km and merges into the Bhagirathi River near Payradanga, Ranaghat. An unfortunate consequence of the polluted rivers in the Bengal delta is the decline in fish variety and production in the sensitive river ecology.

To tackle the ecological



of this river and the influence of human activities on it. The investigation included a selection of five sampling locations along the river: Rabonbore Ferry Ghat, Ranaghat, Kalinarayanpur Foot Bridge, Aranghata Ferry Ghat, Ismail Fakir Ghat, Jafarnagar, and Shivnivas Ghat near Churni Resort. In March 2024, the team investigated the same regions and documented the existence of black water with a foul smell contaminating the river. The fishing activity was halted as a result of the previously reported contamination. There have been no reports of fish catching in the Rabonbore region, except

for shrimp fishing. The water in the river around Rabonbore and Kalinarayanpur was more transparent compared to the three sample points farther upstream, where black water has begun to contaminate the river. During April 2024, fishermen from Aranghata reported the occurrence of fish species such as Laberohita, Labecula, Notopterus notopterus, and other catfish in countable numbers. However, these fish were almost unavailable in May. It suggests that the river is not receiving sufficient time to recover,

and the contamination of black water is causing significant damage to the ecosystem of river Churni. Approximately 30,000 fishermen hailing from 120 villages along the riverbank are deeply displeased with the national and state administrations for evading their obligation to address the issue. The research revealed that the water of the Churni River had a very alkaline character, with a pH range of 7.56 to 8.22. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that the Dissolved Oxygen (DO) level fell within the range of 0.6 to 2.5 ppm, suggesting that the river water is of low quality

## In Big Show Of Unity, INDIA Bloc Held Strategy Meet Ahead Of Counting Day

**New Delhi (KCN):** The INDIA bloc held a crucial strategy meet as the Lok Sabha elections draw to a close. The meeting was held at the Delhi residence of Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge. Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress was the only absentee

-- the Bengal Chief Minister said she was skipping it in view of the last phase of the Lok Sabha elections in the state and relief operations for Cyclone Remal that passed through the state earlier this week.

While the official reason cited for the meeting is to devise a



strategy to ensure smooth counting at state and district levels, sources indicate the focus is on keeping the flock together. The point is crucial ahead of results in the event of the NDA winning by narrow margins,

confided Congress leaders. The party is expecting the NDA to get no more than 260-270 seats, which leaves it short of majority mark by just two seats.

But the alliance wants to stick together even if it does not have the numbers.

In a post on X, formerly Twitter, ahead of the

meeting, Mr Kharge said, "The fight is still not over, and the leaders and workers of all the parties are extremely alert... We have fought the Lok Sabha Elections 2024 with all our might and are confident of a positive outcome, as the

people of India have supported us".

The exit poll is expected this evening, and the Congress, which initially refused to join in the discussions thereafter, has reversed its decision.

While the Congress said it considers exit polls entirely avoidable, given the counting will take place within days, the BJP has called it a tacit acceptance of defeat.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, meanwhile, concluded his 45-hour meditation retreat at the Vivekananda Rock Memorial in Tamil Nadu's Kanyakumari and is heading back to Delhi.

## Kolkata's Ruby Cancer Centre Hosts Walk to Promote Tobacco Cessation on World No Tobacco Day

**Kolkata, (ABHIJIT SETH):** Ruby Cancer Centre, a division of Ruby General Hospital, Kolkata, recently organized a vibrant and inspiring walk, in observance of World No Tobacco Day. The event aimed to raise awareness about the dangers of tobacco consumption and encourage individuals to quit this harmful habit.

With over 350 participants, the rally emphasized the collective effort needed to combat the tobacco epidemic, a leading cause of preventable death worldwide and a major contributor to lung cancer, heart disease, and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). The walk was a collaborative initiative between Ruby Cancer Centre and Ruby Cancer Care and Research Foundation. Participants included cancer survivors, healthcare professionals, students, and celebrities, all united in their mission to fight tobacco use. Esteemed personalities from various fields attended

the event to support and honour cancer survivors, recognizing them as the true heroes of the day. Cancer survivors who participated in the rally were nominated as crusaders. These individuals will actively raise awareness about the dangers of tobacco and assist others in their journey to quit.

Ruby Hospital has pledged to support these crusaders by providing educational materials, organizing awareness programs, and offering logistical support for events across West Bengal.

A significant announcement made during the event was the introduction of Free Tobacco Cessation Counselling at Ruby General Hospital. This initiative aims to provide support and resources for individuals who wish to

quit tobacco, promoting healthier lifestyles and reducing the incidence of tobacco-related diseases. Additionally, Ruby Cancer Care and Research Foundation will advocate for stricter enforcement of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act, 2003 (COTPA), particularly the prohibition of tobacco sales within 100 yards of hospitals. This measure aims to protect patients and visitors from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke and make it more difficult for individuals to purchase tobacco products in vulnerable settings.

The event saw participation from a diverse group, including cancer survivors from India, Bhutan, and Bangladesh, healthcare professionals, and

students from Ruby Nursing School and College. Notable personalities such as actors Mr. Phalguni Chatterjee, Mr. Subhasish Mukherjee, Mr. Chandan Sen, Mr. Arindam Sil, Ms. Sudeshna Roy, Mr. Anindya Banerjee, Ms. Sohini Sarkar, singer Mr. Saikat Mitra, and sports figures like Ms. Dola Banerjee, Mr. Anil Ghosh, Mr. Rimo Saha, and Mr. Kaushik Mitra, Deputy Chief Operation Manager Commercial, Metro Railway, also graced the occasion. As the colourful tableau moved through the city, participants distributed leaflets and engaged with the public in some of Kolkata's busiest areas, spreading the message of tobacco cessation and its critical

# Poultry biz goes haywire in Odisha's Kendrapara

**Kendrapara(KCN):** With the lone chick-producing farm located inside the veterinary hospital here lying closed for the last 12 years, poultry business in Kendrapara district has slipped into the hands of big companies.

These big companies, who own or control everything except the farms, call the shots in the poultry business. Poultry meat is sold for around Rs 220-350 per kg in hundreds of shops spread across the district. However, poultry farmers have failed to make any gains as they earn only peanuts from the business due to large-scale interference of big companies. Despite the demand for poultry meat witnessing a sharp rise in the state, the farmers

here have failed to reap any benefit.

In the absence of administrative control, the farmers have no way other than depending on these big companies for their survival. Owing to administrative apathy and lack of foresight, an incubator purchased for Rs 11 lakh and a generator to maintain uninterrupted power supply have been gathering dust with no effort being made for the revival of the defunct chick-producing centre established at an investment over Rs 1 crore.

As much as 97 per cent of the poultry meat consumed by people is produced by a farmer under contract with a big company. These poultry farmers are the last



independent link in the company-owned supply chain. In this scenario, the company owns every link of a product's supply chain from start to finish. This has happened as the state government has failed to regulate the big companies. Despite the demand for poultry meat witnessing a sharp rise in the state, the farmers

This has encouraged

women and youths to start poultry businesses. However, poultry farmers have been trapped by these big companies who are supplying them with poultry feeds, chicks and medicines. As a result, the farmers, instead of making profits, are facing losses. The situation has remained unchanged despite a rise in the price

of poultry meat all over the state. This has disappointed those who have started poultry farms to earn a livelihood. Poultry farmers Kalia Samantaray of Indupur, Subhasis Jena of Kansar village, Ramakant Mallick of Pakhar village and Sheik Hassan of Barimula village alleged that the state government has no role in regulating

both outside and inside the state. These companies charge exorbitant prices for their products if the farmers are unwilling to sign an agreement with them. In such a scenario, poultry farmers have asked the state government to intervene and bail them out of this situation.

When contacted, Chief District Veterinary Officer (CDVO) Deepi Mohapatra said that the state government has launched various schemes providing subsidies for the benefit of the poultry farmers. They can enroll in these schemes and reap the benefit. However, no legal action can be taken as the farmers are entering into contracts with these big companies. However, efforts are on to revive the chick-producing centre, she added.

## Decline in demand for local mango varieties hits tribals

**Keonjhar(KCN):** The drastic fall in sale of local mangoes and other seasonal fruits has affected the livelihood of tribals living in Keonjhar district. The tribals depend greatly on the sale of local variety of mangoes as it helps them earn handsomely and eke out a living during lean times. However, the lack of proper storage and marketing facilities has forced them to sell the mangoes at throwaway prices.

Also, the entry of hybrid mango varieties, which are grown with rampant use of fertilizers, has affected the sale of local ones. Locals said the state government should provide proper storage and marketing facilities for mangoes growing in this district. They added that the government can buy large quantities of the local mangoes and use those in various state-run



food processing units. The fruits can be used in making jam, jelly, juice and other products like pickles.

These days tribals, mostly women with their kids, can be seen waiting for hours under the scorching sun on the streets of villages and in urban markets to sell the fruits. "If we don't sell the mangoes, they will rot. Hence we sell the fruits at throwaway prices. We don't even earn enough to make for travel expenses from our village

to the market," said Sukumari Juang of Banspal area in this district. Senior residents of this district pointed out that due to falling income from the sale of food products, the lives of the tribals have been severely affected. The district officials should step in to help the tribals, they said, pointing out that rampant felling of trees has resulted in decreased production of the traditional varieties of mangoes. Furthermore, the

traditional mango orchards, called 'Amba Tota' in local parlance, are also fast vanishing from villages. Retired professor Bimabhadhar Behera said, "Hybrid variety can never be a substitute for local mangoes. Hence, traditional mango trees should be protected. The government should initiate steps for the protection of local varieties of mangoes through preservation efforts and proper marketing."

## Special summer measures for animals in RSP's zoo

**Rourkela(KCN):** With the scorching summer heat making life miserable here this year, not only human beings, but the animals also are tormented by the ongoing unprecedented heatwave. The Horticulture department has been taking all necessary steps and precautions to protect the animals, birds and reptiles of Indira Gandhi Park Zoo and Deer Park of SAIL, Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP). Coolers have been installed in the enclosures of monkeys, macau and other avian species. Cool water is being sprayed over bear, deer and emus regularly through water tankers. Water pools have been dug inside the paddock for bear, deer and emus to bathe in. The normal summer care provided includes succulent feed and anti-stress formulations in drinking water to the primates,



deer and birds. Round-the-clock water supply is ensured for all birds and animals.

Flowing water has been arranged so as to avoid scum formation. Water is provided in ponds for wallowing animals. The dwellings are cleaned on a regular basis with medicinal disinfectants to prevent diseases. Water

tankers are provided for sprinkling water on the sheds of the animals on every alternate day to prevent excessive heat. All-out efforts are being made to avoid dehydration, sunstroke and other heat-related problems among the zoo dwellers. Special care is being taken for endangered and sensitive

species so they can get into the water anytime and keep cooling themselves off. Indira Gandhi Park Zoo is the second largest integrated zoo of the state which houses 135 animals and birds belonging to 23 species. It gets a footfall of around one lakh visitors annually

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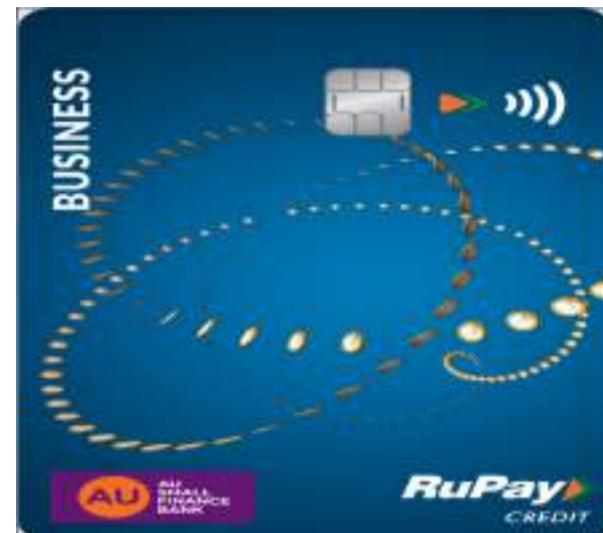
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# AU Small Finance Bank Launches Business Cashback RuPay Credit Card

Jaipur/ Bhubaneswar, May 8th, 2023: AU Small Finance Bank has partnered with RuPay to introduce the Business Cashback RuPay credit card, an innovative solution tailored to meet the financial requirements of self-employed customers. This latest offering is aimed at providing a diverse range of benefits to small businesses. The Credit Card was launched in the esteemed presence of Mr. Dilip Asbe, CEO of National Payments Corporation of India and Mr. Sanjay Agarwal, MD & CEO of AU Small Finance Bank. AU Small Finance Bank's Business Cashback RuPay Credit Card simplifies financial

operations for businesses with benefits like upto 2% cashback, 48 days interest-free credit, and instant loans. It also offers fire insurance, burglary, and housebreaking coverage, making it a one-stop solution for businesses.

"At AU Small Finance Bank, we understand that the small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) are the backbone of Indian economy and we have been serving this segment since the last 28 years. We are committed to providing innovative financial solutions that cater to the unique needs of this segment and Business Cashback RuPay credit card is a testament to our commitment to the



MSMEs. As the self-employed customer segment is at the heart of our bank, we are focused on adding value to these customers and promoting credit inclusion. Going forward, we shall work towards bringing

customized benefits to MSMEs through our other Credit Card variants too," said Mr. Sanjay Agarwal, MD & CEO of AU SFB.

The credit card also provides lifestyle and travel benefits. Their Silver Spoon Dining Program

also offers cardholders up to 30% off at over 300 restaurants, 8 complimentary railway lounge access per annum, and 1%\* fuel surcharge waiver.

"I am delighted to attend the launch event and witness the introduction of AU Small Finance Bank's Business Cashback RuPay Credit Card. National Payments Corporation of India is committed to promoting innovation in the banking sector, and this credit card is a clear example of that.

AU Small Finance Bank has consistently demonstrated their dedication to excellence and innovation in the banking industry. This credit card is a fantastic solution that empowers

Kapil Sharma and his team in Navratna Ayurvedic oil advertisement campaign



Kolkata (AMBAR MUKHERJEE): Navratna, the ayurvedic cool oil market leader from the house of Emami Ltd throws up a laughter challenge this summer as Kapil Sharma comes on board the brand along with his eccentric family members Kiku Sharda, Gaurav Gera and Sumona Chakravarti.

In a series of new TV ads and digital content, Navratna Oil introduces a burst of cool comic relief with the irrepressible Kapil Sharma and his band of quirky accomplices. Together, they tackle the everyday chaos and challenges encountered by common man as they present Navratna Oil as "Thandak Ka Badshah, Raahat Ka Raja." A two-minute champi (head massage) with Navratna Oil offers relief and relaxation leaving one "thanda thanda cool cool".

Commenting on this unique endorsement association, Mr. Harsha V. Agarwal, Vice Chairman and Managing Director, Emami Limited, said, "We are delighted to onboard Kapil Sharma and his quirky team for our brand Navratna Ayurvedic Oil. Humour is well known for being a stress buster and Kapil's brand of humour has been doing just that for over a decade across demographics. The pairing of Kapil Sharma and team with Navratna, which is India's number 1 cool oil that provides relief from daily stress to its millions of consumers, is one of the best fitments that a brand can envisage. To appeal to our evolving target audience, we strongly feel that this new approach of delivering the brand message will work effectively for us."

Kapil Sharma, the comedian, actor, singer and anchor said on this occasion, "Navratna Ayurvedic Oil provides effective relief from headache and stress related issues arising from daily life challenges. My team and I also attempt to use humour as a powerful tool towards stress relief by offering a much-needed escape from life's trials and tribulations. There is a natural synergy in what both of us are trying to deliver, thereby offering a perfect fitment for our collaboration. I am pleased to be associated with World's No 1 Cool Oil Navratna. This summer, together we will make every Indian - Thanda Thanda Cool Cool !"

## Muskaan Litfest for Child Authors showcases young literary talent

Bhubaneswar : Some of the leading social, cultural, corporate and literary organizations of the country came together for the first time to host a unique literature festival - 'Muskaan Litfest for Child Authors' - under the Muskaan initiative of Kolkata-based non-profit trusts, Prabha Khaitan Foundation and Education for All Trust. The three-day event was held at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) premises in Delhi. Union Minister of State for Women and Child Development, Dr. M. Unnappa Rama Mahendra Bhai

Kalubhai, interacted with 30 school-going young authors from all over the country. "Muskaan is a brilliant initiative of PKF to give a platform for the young talented writers to showcase their works and inspire future talents," the minister said. He also gave certificates to the young authors.

Ruskin Bond, the most popular, loved and revered author among the children, in a message lauded Prabha Khaitan Foundation for its commendable efforts to promote the habit of reading among children through the Muskaan initiative. The three-

day Litfest (Jan 10-12) was organized in collaboration with IGNCA and in association with India International Centre and Sahitya Akademi as the knowledge partner. Shree Cement supported the event as a part of its corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative.

The festival was inaugurated in the presence of Priyank Kanoongo, Chairman, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR). Also present on the occasion were Sachidanand Joshi, member secretary, the executive and academic head of IGNCA; K. N. Shrivastava, Director of

IIC, and K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi.

"Literature is the mirror of society. It is important to provide child authors the right environment and upbringing to promote literature," Kanoongo said. He asserted that instead of social media, the children should take more interest in writing and literature.

The evening was marked by a scintillating cultural programme 'Udaan' conceptualised by Shinjini Kulkarni, Ehsaas Woman of Prabha Khaitan Foundation. Huma Khalil Mirza, Ehsaas Woman of Delhi and Unnati Singh, Ehsaas

Woman of Indore, also chipped in and livened up the show. Teams of women achievers who work to create cultural capital and assets are a part of a Ehsaas Woman network in major cities of India under the aegis of Prabha Khaitan Foundation.

Dancer and choreographer Avirup Sengupta, who works with specially-abled children through Prayas Foundation, presented an enthralling performance. The Foundation had flown in children from Kolkata for the special performance. The latest issue of PKF newsletter Prabha, based on the theme of children's literature, was formally released.

## Almonds Food for Fitness

Bhubaneswar : Engaging in exercise promotes a healthful lifestyle, but even when performed correctly, exercise causes fatigue and muscle damage. Recovery from exercise is important because it leads to muscle gain and improved fitness over time. A new study involving people who exercise occasionally (less than three times per week) demonstrated that snacking on almonds reduced feelings of fatigue and tension, increased leg and lower back strength during recovery, and decreased muscle damage during the first day of recovery. David C. Nieman, DrPH, FACSM, Professor and Principal Investigator, Human Performance Laboratory, Appalachian State University, led this novel research, supported with funding from the Almond Board of California. Dr. Nieman's team wanted to see if an almond snack compared to a high-carbohydrate cereal bar snack would improve inflammation and recovery in adults engaging in 90-minute exercise sessions. "What we found tells us definitively that almonds should be added to sports nutrition strategies to help people recover better from exercise," explained Dr. Nieman. "Almonds are food for fitness. Carbs get most of the attention when it comes to fueling for exercise, but almonds offer a nutrition package, including good unsaturated fats, the antioxidant vitamin E, and proanthocyanidins (class of polyphenols, which are protective compounds in plants) that help explain the beneficial outcomes in our study." One serving of almonds (28g) has 13 g of good unsaturated fat and only 1 g of saturated fat.

Information about Tata Power's one of its kind Network Operations Center (NOC) located in Mumbai was also on display. This center aids in the effective operational management of charging stations across India. NOC is integrated with the online platform that supports Tata Power's EZ Charge services, has a real-time communication link with all on-board chargers, and aids in the early detection of tech-related issues. The NOC additionally supports quick problem solving, back-end system support, and proactive planning for charging infrastructure upkeep.

Tata Power has also kicked off an ambitious nationwide plan of setting up approx. 25000 electric vehicle (EV) charging points across the country to support faster adoption of e-mobility over the next 5 years. Greater Noida, January 12, 2023: Taking a leap in the era of sustainability and green mobility, WardWizard, a leading manufacturer of electric two-wheeler Joy ebike, today launched its new high-speed electric scooter 'MIHOS' with Poly Dicyclopentadiene Material (PDCPD) to bring high standards of durability for the riders.

Designed and developed by WardWizard's R&D team in Vadodara, MIHOS, is a retro-style electric scooter. It is equipped with advanced technology, and user-friendly features with a vehicle sound simulator for additional safety of the riders on the road. It also features a broad seat for enhanced riding comfort. The production will take place at the company's state-of-

the-art manufacturing facility in Vadodara, Gujarat and the deliveries will commence in a phased manner across the country.

Speaking on the launch occasion and the company's prospects, Mr. Yatin Gupte, Chairman & Managing Director, Wardwizard Innovations & Mobility Ltd, said, "As one of the first promoters of electric mobility in the country, we are committed to building a sustainable environment and greener planet for the generations of today and tomorrow. Our new product MIHOS is designed and developed keeping in mind the aspirations of the customers and market demand. The scooter will not only excite the customers with its retro look and advanced features but will also provide extra safety with

its high standards of durability and comfort across various road conditions. The company is further investing in R&D for creating a holistic e-mobility ecosystem and developing India's first EV ancillary cluster to accelerate the adoption and growth of green mobility in the country. The year 2023 is going to be the establishing year of EV mobility in the country." Making another move in strengthening its product portfolio in the electric motorcycle category, the company also unveiled the concept of its city electric motorcycle 'Rockefeller' at the expo. The concept motorcycle is designed keeping in mind the need of the riders for daily riding. The company is planning to launch the motorcycle by the end of FY'24.

# KIIT & KISS Declared Founding Partners of FIVB Volleyball Foundation

PV Sindhu stuns top seed Han Yue to enter Malaysia Masters semi-final



**Bhubaneswar (KCN):** KIIT & KISS have been announced as the founding partners of the FIVB Volleyball Foundation by the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB). The announcement was made during the launch of the FIVB Volleyball Foundation on May 30, 2024. The foundation

aims to connect, serve, and inspire by providing support through meaningful charitable initiatives globally. To fund impactful volleyball projects around the world, the FIVB will raise funds through donations and a special charity auction. The launching ceremony of the FIVB Volleyball

Foundation was attended by International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Mr. Thomas Bach, representatives of volleyball associations from over 200 countries around the world, and many other dignitaries. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between FIVB and KIIT & KISS was originally

planned to be signed on May 30 for this. However, due to the absence of Dr. Achyuta Samanta, Founder, KIIT & KISS, on account of the General Election, the signing of the MoU has been rescheduled for a later date. KIIT & KISS have made a significant impact in the field of sports, gaining

recognition worldwide. Various sports associations have acknowledged and appreciated its contributions to the sport. Currently, KIIT & KISS are the only educational institution associated with the FIVB Volleyball Foundation, highlighting their commitment to sports excellence. Expressing happiness at this accomplishment, Dr. Samanta said, "I would like to express my gratitude to FIVB and its president Dr. Ary S. Graça, General Director Mr. Fabio Azevedo, and other members of FIVB for having decided to do charity inspired by my philanthropic works through the FIVB Volleyball Foundation." It is a matter of pride and honor not only for Odisha and the whole of India that the FIVB Volleyball Foundation has accepted KIIT & KISS as the exclusive Founding Partner Institution worldwide, he added.



**New Delhi:** Malaysia Masters 2024: India's PV Sindhu defeated top seed Han Yue 21-13, 14-21, 21-12 and made her way through to the semi-final of the tournament. Busan

Ongbamrungphan Ace Indian shuttler PV Sindhu put up a stunning show against top seed Han Yue from China to qualify for the semi-final of the Malaysia Masters 2024. On Friday, May 24, Sindhu won the quarterfinal 21-13, 14-21, 21-12 and made her way to her maiden semis on the BWF tour this year. Sindhu will now face the winner of the other quarterfinal between Singapore's Putri Kusuma Wardani and Thailand's Busan

confidence immensely if she manages to do it. Prior to the quadrennial event, which is scheduled to get underway on July 26, Sindhu will train in Germany after the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports' Mission Olympic Cell (MOC) approved her request. Sindhu will sweat it out at the Hermann-Neuberger Sportschule in Saarbrucken for around a month before travelling to Paris. Expectations will be high from Sindhu in Paris since she is the only Indian woman to win back-to-back medals in the history of the championship. While she won silver in Tokyo back in 2016, she had to stay content with bronze 3 years ago in Tokyo.

## King, bowlers help WI off to winning start against SA

**New Delhi:** Brandon King-led West Indies got off to a winning start in the T20I series against South Africa in Kingston, Jamaica, securing a 28-run victory in the first of three T20Is. Despite missing some of their big names in the batting department due to IPL duties, skipper King made up for the absence with a 45-ball 79 that helped them post 175/5. Reeza Hendricks struck a 51-ball 87 but lack of support from the other end meant that South Africa were bowled out for 147. Matthew Forde and Gudakesh Motie bagged three wickets apiece. Asked to bat, West Indies were off the blocks quickly thanks to King who dealt in regular boundaries. Johnson Charles, who contributed only 1 in the opening stand

worth 36, was dismissed in the fourth over by Ottiel Baartman. But there was no stopping King as he brought up his 10th T20I fifty, off only 26 deliveries, to power West Indies to 64/1 in the powerplay. The captain struck six maximums during his stay while Kyle Mayers also cleared the fence regularly as West Indies crossed the 100-run mark in the 10th over. But West Indies lost regular wickets in the second half of their innings, with Andile Phehlukwayo (3-28) doing the bulk of the damage, as they slipped to 137/5 in the 15th over. Roston Chase scored a useful 32 not out but he took 30 deliveries for those runs as South Africa kept West Indies in check in the death overs with wickets, with only 32

coming off the last five. Baartman finished with 3-26. South Africa lost Quinton de Kock and Ryan Rickleton early in the chase, with Forde and Chase delivering key strikes. Matthew Breetzke struck three fours in an over off Akeel Hosein followed by a boundary off Shamar Joseph but the pacer trapped him in front for 19, with South Africa at 46/3 at the end of the powerplay. Hendricks and Rassie van der Dussen tried to build a partnership but South Africa had a lot of work to do, having reached 77/3 after 10 overs. Already having an upper hand in the contest, West

Indies gained further advantage thanks to a double-wicket over from Motie, who dismissed van der Dussen and Wiaan Mulder in the 11th. Hendricks brought up a fighting 32-ball fifty but wickets fell around him as Motie finished with 3-25 while Obed McCoy picked up two wickets to reduce South Africa to 108/8. Hendricks tried to keep the fight going but with 39 needed off the final over, South Africa were well behind and Forde helped himself to a couple of wickets to finish with 3-27. Brief scores: West Indies 175/8 in 20 overs (Brandon King 79, Kyle Mayers 34; Ottiel Baartman 3-26, Andile Phehlukwayo 3-28) beat South Africa 147 in 19.5 overs (Reeza Hendricks 87; Gudakesh Motie 3-25, Matthew Forde 3-27) by 28 runs.

## Sunil Chhetri Farewell: India name 27-member squad for World Cup Qualifier vs Kuwait

**New Delhi:** FIFA World Cup 2026 Qualifier: Igor Stimac, head coach of the Indian senior men's team, picked a 27-member roster for the qualifier match against Kuwait on June 6. India head coach Igor Stimac has named a 27-member squad for Sunil Chhetri's farewell match

- FIFA World Cup 2026 Qualifier against Kuwait on June 6 in Kolkata. A total of 32 players had been camped in Bhubaneswar, with Phurba Lachenpa, Parthib Gogoi, Imran Khan, Muhammad Hammad, and Jithin MS being released. Stimac

will continue to train in Bhubaneswar till May 29, when they will head to Kolkata. The Blue Tigers will face Kuwait at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan on June 6 before heading to Qatar on June 11 for their final two Group A fixtures. India are presently ranked second in the group, with four points after four matches. The top two teams in the group will advance to Round 3 of the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers and secure a spot in the AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027.

The remaining players



## Series loss to USA a wake-up call for Bangladesh - Shakib

**New Delhi:** Shakib Al Hasan, the veteran Bangladesh all-rounder, said the team's T20I series loss to the USA, who registered their first series win over a full-member team, is a wake-up call for them ahead of the 2024 T20 World Cup. Bangladesh's preparation for the global event did not begin on a good note as they went 0-2 down to the USA in the three-match T20I series, with a game still to be played. In a chase of 145 in the second T20I, they were on track having reached 106/4 in the 15th over before suffering a big collapse as they were bowled out for 138 in 19.3 overs. "Certainly it is

disappointing and we didn't expect it but we must give credit to the US team for the way they have played," Shakib said. "I think no one expected that we will lose two games. Any match you lose as a team is disappointing and you don't want to lose a game and obviously it is very disappointing. But having said that we have to play the World Cup and this series might be a wake-up call for us as we haven't played the way we want to play. "It's a team game and everyone has to take the responsibility - you win as a team and you lose as a team. I don't want to blame any particular person or any particular

department. It's just that T20 is such a format you have to play very good cricket in all three departments to win against any team. There are no small or big teams in T20 cricket and that's why it is more exciting than any other format. And the proof of that is in the last two games the way US played." Despite the loss, Shakib insisted that they did not take the opposition lightly. "I don't think we took them lightly. In the first game maybe we couldn't do what we wanted to do and in the second game exactly the same thing happened - we couldn't execute the plans that we were supposed to do on the ground. "In T20 every team is very much equal. I have seen the game between West Indies A and Nepal and they really played well and you are seeing games

between Ireland and Netherlands and they are playing very close matches. Pakistan lost to Ireland and in T20 it is anybody's game. It is on

the day who performs better, and so you cannot take anything lightly in T20 cricket because one or two overs can change the momentum of the game and completely change the scenario of the game. That's why you are always up for the challenges and you cannot take anything lightly or anything for granted," he said.

Shakib, meanwhile, wasn't too pleased with the facilities at the Prairie View Cricket Complex in Houston, saying rain and limited practice time hampered their preparations. The first day of practice could not take place due to rain and then Bangladesh didn't get to spend enough time in the nets during their training session. "If we take this as a preparation series for the World Cup, in that

