

earlier with the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance - to return, it could spell trouble for Mr Modi and the BJP. Sources said the Congress and the INDIA bloc are considering a late approach to both Mr Naidu and Nitish Kumar. The Congress has been circumspect on this topic, but senior coalition leaders have suggested this is a possible course of action. Nitish Kumar has not commented on such speculation, but Mr Naidu has, telling reporters in Delhi today, "I am in the NDA... am going for the meeting." The NDA and INDIA are in a huddle in Delhi today to review poll results and chalk out future plans.

Cuttack, it said, adding that nine injured have been discharged from the health facilities. Altogether 36 people were injured in the explosion of a stockpile of firecrackers that happened during Lord Jagannath's 'Chandan Yatra', a ritual, on the night of May 29 in Puri. The administrative-level probe into the accident by SRC Satyabrata Sahu was underway. The Puri collector has taken steps for the payment of ex gratia of Rs 4 lakh to the next of kin of each deceased, an official said.

and the Congress got one. In Assembly polls, the BJD got only 51 seats, while the BJP grabbed a thumping majority of 78 seats. To form a government in the House of 147 seats, a party requires 75 seats. Naveen Patnaik took oath as CM for the first time on March 5, 2000. He resigned from the post of CM after 24 years and three months.

accompanied by lightning during this period. The Southwest monsoon will touch Odisha in the next 3 to 4 days. The monsoon usually reaches Odisha 10 (ten) days after reaching Kerala.



## PENSIVE MOOD

by Badal Bhuyan

That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.  
Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the milky way,  
They stretched in never-ending line  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.



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## POEM ON NATURE

Alekh Chandra Samal, OFS-I (S.B.)

Oh wonderful nature,  
You are so beautiful.  
With green trees,  
And humming bees.  
The grass is so green  
And water is so clean.  
Birds fly in the sky,  
And mountains are so high.  
The wondering butterflies,  
Make my thoughts fly.  
The waterfall are so cool,  
Just like a swimming pool.  
I love nature very much,  
God gave us this feature.



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## Quotation of the Day

GIVE EVERY DAY THE  
CHANCE TO BECOME  
THE MOST BEAUTIFUL  
DAY OF YOUR LIFE.

- MARK TWAIN

# Sabitri Brata

Aparna Nayak



Odisha is remarkable for tradition of Oshas, Bratas and Melas. The ceremony and sanctity of these traditional religious festivities are more or less lively and some of them are gradually perishing too. The

Women wake up early in the morning on the Savitri Brata day and after taking bath, wear new clothes and ornaments including bangles. All married women use red vermilion on the forehead, which is elongated to touch the line parting the hair. Savitri is symbolically represented by the grinding stone, locally known as Sila Pua. The grinding stone is thoroughly cleaned and worshipped. Bhoga or offering to Savitri consists of

knowing from Narada that Satyaban is destined to die one year from the day of their marriage. As per her wishes the marriage took place. So strong was the single-minded love and determination of Savitri that she chose a noble youngman for her husband, knowing that he had only a year to live.

The morale of the festival is to teach the women to be virtuous, devotional and painstaking like Savitri to make worldly life happy and peaceful. Savitri



# DESTINY AND "SAVITRI BRATA"

Anupama Bhuyan



"Savitri Amavasya" or "Savitri Brata" which is most auspicious for the married Hindu women with husbands alive. Women observe as a vow with great devotion and pray for the long life of their husbands. A story of conjugal loves which conquering death. One can beat all odds in life through true devotional love.



source of these Oshas, Bratas and Melas goes back to the ancient times.

Out of nearly thirty Bratas, Savitri Brata is a fasting day observed by all Hindu Odia married women on the Amavasya, the last day of the dark fortnight, in the month of Jyestha. This day is most favourable for the married Hindu women whose husbands are alive. They observe it as a vow with great dedication and pray for their husband to have a long life. Married women in Odisha fast during the day and listen to the story of Savitri and Satyaban. The word Savitri Amavasya reflects the origin and significance of the Vat-Savitri puja. The fast is dedicated to Savitri and Satyaban; her husband who was destined to die within one year but was brought back to life by her penance.

rice, wet pulses and locally available fruits like mango, jackfruit, banana, palm, date palm, etc. The fasting begins at sunrise and ends after sunset with the evening prayers. The fast is broken by consuming the offering made to Savitri. Women also make it a point to read or listen to the Savitri Brata Katha mentioned in the Mahabharata.

Savitri Amavasya or Savitri Brata which is most auspicious for the married Hindu women with husbands alive. Women observe as a vow with great devotion and pray for the long life of their husbands. It is a story of conjugal loves which conquers death. One can beat all odds in life through true devotional love. Satyaban was known for his honesty and truthfulness. Savitri was determined to marry him in spite of

Bratas are observed mostly by Brahmin families. Even people of other castes also observe it with a greater sanctity although they depend upon a Brahmin to perform the puja at times. However, the advent of modernity has already hampered such traditions. People in various parts of Odisha observe the Brata as a traditional part of seasonal worshippings and some also observe it farcically. This seems to become gradually less pompous and lack of life. The get-together on such occasions imply a lot to the people of Odisha. Along with hulahuli and haribol sound, these pujas are performed in religious congregations.

Main Sagar Pan  
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"Savitri Amavasya" or "Savitri Brata" which is most auspicious for the married Hindu women with husbands alive. Women observe as a vow with great devotion and pray for the long life of their husbands. A story of conjugal loves which conquering death. One can beat all odds in life through true devotional love.

We believe, the Brahmin the supreme God visits every new born houses and write on the child's forehead of their fate / destiny. Satyavan's fate was only could be known when Savitri declared to marry as she started loving him. Satyavan was known for his honesty & truthfulness.

The story of Savitri is noted in the

Hindu epic Mahabharata. The vrata was named after Savitri, the beautiful daughter of King Ashvapati. She selected Satyavan as her life partner, a prince in exile who lived in the forest with his blind father Dyumatsena. Before marrying him, she was foretold that Satyavan would only live for a year - although, this did not stop her decision. After a year, Satyavan, accompanied by Savitri, went to the forest to chop wood, but fell unconscious and died. Yama, the god of death, appeared to take away Satyavan's soul. Seeing this, Savitri followed them, believing it to be her duty as a wife. Yama, moved by the devotion of Savitri, returned the life of her husband. Soon Satyavan

regained his lost kingdom, and his father, Dyumatsena, regained his sight. Savitri's virtue of faithfulness and devotion towards her husband has made her an exemplary figure for Hindu women.

She was determined to marry him in spite of knowing that Satyavan is destined to die one year from the day of their marriage. As per her wishes the marriage took place. So strong was the single-minded love and determination of Savitri that she chose a noble young man for her husband, knowing that he had only a year to live. Three days before the foreseen death of Satyavan, Savitri takes a vow of fasting. The morning of Satyavan's predicted death; she also

accompanied him to the forest. While Satyavan was collecting wood, he suddenly become weak and lays his head in Savitri's lap.

Yama himself, the god of Death, comes to claim the soul of Satyavan. Savitri follows Yama as he carries the soul away. Savitri ran after him, and pleaded with Yama either take her along with him to the land of the dead or give back the life of Satyavan. Yama replied, "Your time has not yet come, child. Go back to your home." But Savitri insisted on accompanying her husband. She also tries all her logic to convince him and repeatedly requested him for her husband's life. The God of Death turned down every

time. She was still following him with a hope.

Finally, he agreed to give her three boons but not the life of Satyavan. Savitri with a ray of hope requested for his blessing for her in laws. This was granted. The third boon was that she wishes to be the mother of hundred sons, the Yamraj agreed. Savitri informed him that it is impossible. As a Sati, she can't take another husband. Yamraj moved by the devotion of Savitri, returned the life of her husband. Satyavan came to life again and both of them lived happily there after. Love that conquers even death.

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## Sanya Malhotra wins Best Actress award at New York Indian Film Festival for 'Mrs'

Sanya Malhotra won the Best Actress award for her role in 'Mrs' at the New York Indian Film Festival 2024. The film is a remake of the Malayalam film, 'The Great Indian Kitchen', which revolves around Sanya's character who navigates the challenges and expectations imposed by society and her marital life. 'Mrs', which has only travelled to film festivals, will soon release in theatres. Filmmaker

Arati Kadav was also nominated in the Best Director category. In 'Mrs', Sanya Malhotra portrays a woman navigating the challenges of being a wife while yearning to discover her own path and express herself freely. The film tackles societal pressures to conform, and Sanya's performance has resonated with critics and audiences at film festivals. Earlier this year, Sanya



received the Dadasaheb Phalke Award for her performance in 'Kathal'. The teaser of Sanya Malhotra's 'Mrs' was unveiled in November 2023. Sharing the same, Jio Studios' official Instagram handle wrote, "All set to inspire, move and spark conversations about the challenges & triumphs faced by women globally at the world stage! We are happy to announce our film #Mrs, a captivating story of strength & resilience, will have its World Premiere at #TalinnBlackNightsFilmFestival on 17th November. The powerful narrative has also been selected under the Critics' Pick Competition category at the film festival (sic)." Sanya Malhotra had quite an eventful 2023. She was seen in 'Kathal', 'Jawan' and 'Sam Bahadur'.

## 'Gully Boy' to 'Darlings'- Vijay Varma has come a long way

Gully Boy, India's official entry to the Oscars celebrates 4 years today, and while the film was highly celebrated for its impactful performances, it was dark horse Vijay Varma who stood for the sheer potential he showed and for holding his own despite the strong and established cast.

The actor was praised for his performance as Moeen Arif, and his portrayal instantly caught the attention of audiences and critics alike. From thereon, Vijay continued to impress with web series' like A Suitable Boy, She and Mirzapur 2 and Ok Computer, all of which he won rave reviews for.

But it was finally with



Darlings, that Vijay Varma cemented his position as the 'King of Grey' as his character 'Hamza' was yet another example of Vijay's incredible prowess as a performer who constantly raises the bar with every project he takes on. Critics spoke

about how Vijay 'nailed the character', 'was like a chameleon', 'terrific and absolutely scintillating' making audiences feel the dread that Badru (Alia Bhatt) felt everytime his character Hamza came home.

From being a supporting cast alongside

Alia Bhatt in Gully Boy to being a parallel lead opposite her in her production Darlings, the actor has come a long way in the last 4 years and his journey has been nothing short of inspiring.

It's no surprise then that after his phenomenal performance in the film, he is now part of some of the most exciting theatrical and OTT content including Sujoy Ghosh's untitled next alongside Kareena Kapoor Khan, Reema Kagti's Fallen and Sumit Saxena's untitled project that took almost 100 days of immersive, relentless work. Each of these are versatile and challenging but nothing that the actor can't pull off!

## Samantha Ruth Prabhu Climbs 600 Steps Barefoot, Prays to Palani Murugan



Samantha Ruth Prabhu climbed 600 steps of the Palani Murugan temple in Tamil Nadu on February 13 draped in an all-white churidar-kurta and offered prayers at the temple.

She also lit a camphor diya and tweeted on the same. She was accompanied by her

'Jaanu' movie director C. Premkumar and other friends. The actor, who suffers from Myositis, an autoimmune disease condition that causes acute muscular pain, has started shooting for the web series 'Citadel' in which she shares screen space with Bollywood actor Varun Dhawan.

'Citadel' is the Indian version of the international sci-fi action web series of the same name created by the Russo Brothers. In the international series, Priyanka Chopra plays the lead.

The Indian web series is directed by the director duo Raj and

DK, who had helmed the popular web series, 'The Family Man', in which Samantha played the role of Raji, a Sri Lankan Tamil militant.

She had recently tweeted: "I am thrilled to be part of this brilliant universe conceptualised by the Russo Brothers AGBO. I am also looking forward to working with Varun for the first time. He is someone who is full of life and cheer when you are around him." Samantha is awaiting the release of her Telugu mythological movie 'Shakuntalam' in which she shares the screen with Prakash Raj and Dev Mohan. The movie is to be released on April 14.

## Karan Johar reviews 'The Romantics', asks Aditya Chopra if he can share their personal pictures clicked over the decades

The 'Romantics', which released on OTT on the occasion of Valentine's Day, has received an emotional review from Karan Johar. He confessed to binge-watching the four episode long docu series, which got him thinking about old school filmmaking.

"I realised the purity, the innocence and the conviction we all collectively had... is so lost today for most of us....

Yash Chopra is not just a legend of romance... a connoisseur of chiffon, music and beauty... a maestro of musicals... he was also a pillar of belief and conviction... is there any conviction left today? We are burdened by media commentary... box office opening analytics, research engines (all probably relevant to the technology and times) but where did good old fashioned conviction vanish," shared Karan



Johar.

He went on to state how the series made him reflect on his own journey and added, "The rom doc



reminds us of the past that seemed so organic and heartfelt.... Makes me want to go back to that zone of filmmaking .... I

am so deeply inspired by the YRF story... it's origin and it's journey.... Having learnt everything I know from the corridors of the studio I stand blessed and watching The Romantics made me so self aware... of my strengths and my failings.... Thank you @smritimundhra for weaving a narrative out of the archives and actually making an audience go through the many emotional beats through the 4 episodes... just brilliant!"

Paying an ode to Chopra scions, Aditya and Uday, KJo added, "And finally my Best friend has a face and how beautifully articulate was he!!! Adi does that mean I can post all the images we have shared over decades that you have threatened to never speak to me if I put out ??? #justasking #I love you Adi congratulations to my dearest friend @udayc for being such a force behind this."

## Success of Shah Rukh Khan's Pathaan is the victory of the age-old, exploitative, nepotistic top-heavy system, says Vivek Agnihotri



The Kashmir Files director Vivek Agnihotri, who had previously criticised Pathaan amid the controversy over the Besharam Rang song, recently credited Shah Rukh Khan for the success of the Siddharth Anand directorial. However, he said in the podcast, "They will go back to their fundamental beliefs that audience is an idiot and you just need star power and lot of marketing hype to make a film successful."

"After Pathaan, I have a feeling that everybody will fall back to the same old system because Pathaan's success is the success or in today's environment I would choose the word victory. It's the victory of the age-old, exploitative, nepotistic top-heavy system," he added.

The filmmaker further said that Pathaan's success should also be credited to those who threatened to boycott the film and made 'stupid statements' against it. He said that the film's promotions had turned into a political campaign, adding that Pathaan worked purely because of SRK's charisma and his fan following.

"The way he marketed it, the way he took it on his shoulders 'that, okay it's my film and I am responsible for it' which is pretty good. I also think that some credit should also go to people who were making stupid statements against the film and people who were unnecessarily protesting and asking for boycott and these are different people from regular 'Boycott Bollywood' gang," he said.

Pathaan has now become the highest grossing film in the history of Hindi cinema. The movie has grossed Rs 901 crore worldwide. While it has grossed Rs 558 crore in India, it has raked in Rs 343 crore in the overseas market.

The movie also features Deepika Padukone, John Abraham in the lead, followed by Dimple Kapadia, Ashutosh Rana and others in pivotal roles.

Speaking about the immense success of 'Pathaan', Shah Rukh Khan had shared "The four years that I had... Covid had good and bad parts. I didn't work. I was with my children. I saw them grow up. My last film had not worked and people had said my movies now won't work. So, I thought of an alternate career: cooking Italian. In these four days, I've forgotten my last four years."



# Why East Delhi result is so heart-breaking for Valmikis



When capital voted for the Lok Sabha elections on last May 25, anticipation hung heavy in the air at the capital's historic Valmiki Mandir on Mandir Marg . The eyes of Krishan Vidhyarthi, the revered caretaker of the temple, and his community were fixed on the outcome of the East Delhi contest. Would Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) candidate, Kuldeep Kumar, triumph over his BJP rival, Harsh Malhotra?

However, when news of Kuldeep Kumar's defeat spread on June 4, it was heart-breaking for Krishan Vidharthi and his ilk. "The East Delhi seat result has proved that our society is still not ready to give fair deal to a Valmiki candidate. We were expecting victory for Kuldeep Kumar as he has been serving his constituency for the last many, many years. AAP had shattered a glass ceiling when it had given ticket to a Valmiki to contest from a general

seat. You know that Kuldeep belongs to the marginalized Valmiki caste," said Krishan Vidharthi, adds "Kuldeep's defeat unequivocally proves our society is not evolving for the better."

Born to a humble sanitation worker, Kuldeep Kumar's childhood was marked by hardship. "I recall those bleak days when our resources were scarce, and my father was the sole breadwinner for our large family. Yet, I never neglected my education. From my school days, I took on odd jobs in shops to contribute financially," Kuldeep Kumar has recently told in an interview.

Kuldeep's family hails from Modi Nagar in UP, where his wife also comes from. "My parents and my wife have always encouraged me to champion social justice. Without their unwavering support, I wouldn't have dedicated myself so wholeheartedly to social work," he added.

Kuldeep Kumar's journey was interrupted when he had to abandon his BA (Hons) studies after the second year at Shayam Lal College of Delhi University. Meanwhile, his defeat was also felt throughout

Valmiki colonies across Delhi, including Nabi Karim in Pahar Ganj, Mandir Marg, Mehrauli, Darya Ganj, and many others. Most Valmiki families in New Delhi



trace their roots to western Uttar Pradesh. Their arrival in Delhi coincided with the construction of New Delhi by the British, when many Valmiki families came to work as sanitation workers. Those residing in West or North Delhi often trace their lineage to present-day Haryana. Notable figures like Rakhi Birla, Deputy Speaker of the Delhi Assembly, and Rajesh Lilothia, former Congress MLA from Patel Nagar, also hail from Haryana. Of course, they belong to Valmiki community. "While we have had Valmiki political leaders

like R.N. Chandeliya (Gole Market) and Sukhan Lal (East Delhi) in the capital, who served as MCD Councillors, Rajesh Lilothia was elected to

the Delhi Legislative Assembly from Patel Nagar in the 4th Assembly. He served as President of the Delhi Pradesh Youth Congress from 2001 to 2006. Rakhi Birla was also a minister in the Kejriwal government," remarked Dr. Om Prakash, a veteran Dalit activist, writer, and former Law Advisor to the Railways. While Valmiki temples are scattered across capital, the ones at Mandir Marg, Khan Market, and the Sri Valmiki Ashram in Chanakyapuri hold special significance for the community. The

Valmiki Mandir, located near Nehru Park in Chanakyapuri, attracts numerous devotees. For the Valmiki community, visiting Valmiki Mandir at Mandir Marg on Valmiki

Jayanti is like leap of faith. The main procession of Valmiki Jayanti begins at the Red Fort, passing through Gauri Shankar Mandir Chowk, Nai Sarak, Chawri Bazar, Ajmeri Gate, Paharganj Chuna Mandi, Ramakrishna Mission, and Chitra Gupta Marg before concluding at the Valmiki Mandir on Mandir Marg. For many Valmikis, a visit to this temple holds deep spiritual significance. Kuldeep Kumar himself has been a frequent visitor to the Valmiki Mandir on Mandir Marg since his childhood. "We were ready to celebrate his

victory in the rhythmic beats of the dhol in Valmiki Basti at Nabi Karim in Pahar Ganj, Mehrauli, and behind Ambedkar Stadium. Alas, all our plans were

gone awry." Those who have known Kuldeep Kumar for years attest to his active involvement in socio-political movements in East Delhi from a young age, highlighting his commitment to promoting education among Valmiki and Scheduled Castes youth. He was a prominent figure in the India Against Corruption movement and subsequently joined the AAP. A staunch follower of Babasaheb Ambedkar and Bhagat Singh, Kuldeep Kumar considers Arvind Kejriwal his mentor. His

electoral triumphs, first as a Corporator and later as an MLA, have made him a role model for his community.

Gandhi and the Valmiki Mandir

The Valmiki Mandir on Mandir Marg, where Mahatma Gandhi resided for 214 days from April 1st, 1946, to June 10th, 1947, serves as a focal point for Valmiki community activities. Valmikis from across India and even Pakistan visit the temple to interact with Krishan Vidhyarthi. Even Valmikis and some Christians from across the border used to visit the temple. According to Brother Solomon George of Delhi Brotherhood society that had established St. Stepehn's College to St. Stephen Cambridge school in Sonapat, "Pakistani Christians and Valmiki Hindus often visited this historical Valmiki temple when visas were easily obtained and India-Pakistan relations were less strained. For them, it was a must-visit destination."

Both Krishan Vidhyarthi and Brother Solom George identify with the Christian and Valmiki community of Pakistan, calling them their "brothers." Why? Brother Solomon George

explained, "Almost all the Christians of Punjab in Pakistan were originally Valmikis. Even after embracing their new faith, they continue to work as sweepers in most cases. Unlike in India, they lack reservations in employment or educational institutions. They remain trapped in a dark age."

Pakistan, unfortunately, has not had messiahs like Dr. Bindeswar Pathak, who sought to liberate the Valmiki community from manual scavenging and open up other career opportunities. Had Dr. Pathak not read about Gandhi Ji's association with the Valmiki community, he might not have dedicated his life to their welfare. Gandhi Ji's empathy for the Valmiki community is well-documented.

Kuldeep Kumar's defeat apart, Brother Solomon George feels that Kuldeep was given a ticket from a general seat signifies a new dawn for the Valmiki community. It serves as a beacon of hope, inspiring them to dream bigger, strive higher, and break free from the shackles of centuries-old scourge of Casteism.

The Author is a Delhi based columnist and former Editor

## ACT NOW AND SAVE THE EARTH



Now a days Delhi has sat rid of the world's most polluted city tag. The temperature is highest in Delhi 52 .9 degree celcius. The world Health organization urban air quality database released on May 2016, ranked the capital 11th away 300 cities in 103 countries on pm 2.5 fine particulate pollution levels and 25th in term of pm10 coarse pollution particles levels. Zabal in Iran is the most polluted city in the world Gwalior and Allahabad are a close second and third in terms of pm2. 5 levels also ciated with more serious health impacts than pm10. Patna and Raipur rank sixth and seventh respectively.

W.H.O data showed that air pollution in smaller cities such as Gwalior, Allahabad, Canpur, Ludhiana, Jodhpur and Bhopal has been rising at a much faster pace than in the big metes. Air pollution is a National crisis and demand a controlled national action plan in response.

Global climate change is the long-term shift in weather pattern globally. It is a holistic concept with refers to

the changes in a region over all weather pattern including precipitation temprature cloud cover and other such conditions which prevail for a longer period of the climate is the weather conditions prevailing over an area for a longer period of time

We simply cannot ignore that economic and population growth in society can have a very strong influence on our demand for resources and how we manage them. And climate on top of that can lead to substantial magnification to these stresses said scholsser. To conduct the study the scientist built upon an existing model developed previously at the integrated global system. Model IGSM which contains probabilistic projection of population growth, Economic expansion, climate and carbon emissions from human actively.

According to the scientist the accumulation of heat in the occasions is the strongest evidence of how fast the earth is warming. In recent years, oceans have absorbed about 90% of the trapped heat increasing Green house gases. Sea level has risen at an accelerating rate. There has been a net loss of ice from glaciers world wide. Northern Hemisphere snow cover has also decreased in recent decades. Changes in rainfall and weather patterns also indicate towards the climate

change. Other factors like earlier unfolding of new leaves inspiring changes in bird migration patterns etc also show that climate is changed. These are the evidence of climate change.

There are many factors are responsible for climate change. Natural causes like continental Drift, Volcanoes, Geothermal Energy and Human causes like Industrial Revolution, Deforestation, Greenhouse Gases Effects are the factors responsible for climate change

Global climate change has already had observable effect on the environment. Glaciers have shrunk, ice on rivers and lakes is breaking up earlier, plant and animal ranges have shifted and trees are flowing sooner. Climate change has resulted in more heat waves, drought, floods or intense rain. Climate change is likely to contribute substantially to food insecurity in the future by increasing food prices and reducing food production. Due to increase in extreme weather events such as hurricanes, tornadoes, drought, heavy rainfall and heat waves, the extent and frequency of vector borne deases may increase. climate change also result in enhanced land degradation and expansion of sub-tropical deserts. climate change create an imbalance in the natural ecosystem by disruption in timing of

seasonal life cycle events, range shift and food web of many species.

The problem of global warming can be controlled by minimising the emission of greenhouse gases into the environment. To secure water supply, societies have traditionally used grey infrastructure such as pipeline, dams and man-made reservoirs. However green infrastructure uses natural or semi natural system to provide similar benefits with positive long-term environmental consequences

Urban tree cover is a win win solution for our cities. Trees cool the surrounding air by releasing water through their leaves. By 2050 sea levels could be so high that 300 million people in coastal communities will face severe floods every year. Government of India has also taken number of initiatives to combat the challenge of climate change. Restoring and protecting nature is one of the greatest strategies for tackling climate change. The kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Nations Environment Programme UNEP will mark Environment day on June 5 to be held this year under the theme our land our future.

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## Fortifying Democracy : The Urgent Need for Stronger Anti-Defection Laws to Curb Political Opportunism



In recent years, the political landscape has been marred by a surge in defections where politicians switch parties, often seeking personal gain at the expense of voters' trust. This phenomenon undermines the very essence of democracy as elected representatives betray the mandate given to them leading to political instability and eroding public faith in democratic institutions. A robust legal framework is imperative to deter such opportunistic activities and safeguard the sanctity of the electoral process. Political defections are not a new phenomenon but their frequency and impact have grown alarmingly. Politicians often switch parties for promises of better positions, financial incentives or to align with the ruling party for political leverage. This not only disrupts governance but also makes a mockery of the

voters' mandate. For instance, in India a significant number of legislators have switched parties post-elections causing political turmoil and necessitating re-elections at the taxpayers' expense. A notable example is the 2019 Karnataka political crisis, where a series of defections led to the collapse of the state government. Similarly, in 2020, Madhya Pradesh witnessed a dramatic shift in power when several MLAs defected from the Congress to the BJP resulting in the fall of the Kamal Nath government. Such instances highlight the urgent need for stringent anti-defection laws. Many countries have attempted to address this issue through anti-defection laws. For example, India's Tenth Schedule, added to the Constitution in 1985, aims to curb the evil of political defections. This law stipulates that a member of parliament or a state legislature who defects to another party is disqualified from continuing in office. However, the law has loopholes. It allows for defections if a substantial number of legislators (at least two-thirds) from a party decide to join another, thereby encouraging mass

defections. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, the Recall of MPs Act 2015 allows constituents to recall their Member of Parliament if they believe the MP has acted against their interests including switching parties. However, this process is lengthy and rarely results in actual recall, limiting its effectiveness as a deterrent. To effectively address political defections, it is essential to fortify existing laws and introduce new measures. Here are some proposed reforms:

- Mandatory Resignation and Re-Election:** Legislators who switch parties should be mandated to resign and seek re-election. This ensures that the decision to defect is scrutinized and approved by the electorate, maintaining democratic accountability.
- Stricter Disqualification Norms:** The anti-defection laws should eliminate the provision that allows mass defections. Any member defecting, regardless of the number, should face disqualification.
- Financial Penalties and Loss of Perks:** Defectors should face financial penalties and lose benefits such as pensions, government

housing and other perks associated with their position.

- Transparency in Political Funding:** To discourage defections driven by financial incentives, there should be greater transparency in political funding and stricter regulations to curb illicit financial inducements.
- Strengthening Internal Party Democracy:** Political parties should foster internal democracy ensuring that members' grievances are addressed within the party framework reducing the impetus to defect. Political defections undermine the democratic process, disrupt governance and betray voters' trust. Strengthening anti-defection laws is crucial to curbing this opportunistic behavior. Legislators must be held accountable to the electorate ensuring that the mandate given by the people is respected. By introducing stringent measures we can restore faith in the democratic process and ensure stable governance. It is high time that lawmakers rise above partisan interests and enact reforms that fortify the integrity of our political system.

The author is a journalist and columnist





DG NCC Lt Gen Gurbirpal Singh attends Two-day 'Varshik Niti Samvad Shivir' of NCC, in New Delhi

## Lok Sabha Election Result: Out Of 265 Candidates, 215 Lose Security Deposits In Gujarat

**Ahmedabad(KCN):** Out of 265 candidates who contested Lok Sabha elections across 25 constituencies in Gujarat, a staggering 215, including all contestants from the BSP, failed to meet the required vote threshold and consequently lost their security deposits. At 118, most of these candidates were Independents, besides all 24 nominees fielded by Mayawati-led Bahujan Samaj Party, as per data. As per Election Commission rules, candidates must secure at least one-sixth of the total votes polled in a constituency to retrieve their security deposit, which amounts to ₹25,000 for general candidates and ₹12,500 for scheduled caste and scheduled tribe nominees, said Joint Chief Electoral Officer for Gujarat, Ashok Patel. "The security deposit amount, submitted to the EC at the time of filing of nominations, is forfeited if a candidate fails to secure



one-sixth or 16.67 per cent of total valid votes polled in that constituency," he said. With the BJP securing the Surat seat uncontested, the electoral battleground saw 265 candidates vying for 25 out of the total 26 Lok Sabha seats in Gujarat. Notably, voting was conducted on May 7, with results declared on June 4. Statistics shared by the EC show an average of 9 to 13 lakh votes cast in each of the 25 constituencies, indicating

candidates would lose their security deposit if failing to secure at least 1.5 lakh votes (one-sixth of the total votes). Data highlights that except for 50 candidates - comprising the winner and their closest contender on 25 seats - the remaining 215 candidates saw their deposits forfeited as their vote tally fell below 20,000 in all constituencies. Of these 215 candidates who lost their deposits, 118 are independents, as per the data.

Bahujan Samaj Party, contesting 24 seats except the Panchmahal, witnessed all their candidates losing their deposits. Despite securing the third position on several seats, none of BSP's candidates surpassed the 20,000-vote mark. Other candidates losing their deposits hailed from lesser-known or obscure parties, including Insaniyat Party, Garib Kalyan Party, New India United Party, Malwa Congress, and Rashtra Nirman

Party.

In the election results announced, BJP emerged victorious on 24 seats, with Congress making a notable comeback by clinching the Banaskantha seat in north Gujarat. Noteworthy is the case of BSP's Rekhaben Chaudhari, the lone candidate losing the deposit on Bardoli Lok Sabha seat where the contest involved only three candidates. Meanwhile, 16 candidates, including 8 independents, lost their deposits on Ahmedabad-East seat, while 13 candidates, including seven independents, faced the same fate on Sabarkantha seat. The trend continued across several constituencies, with notable numbers of candidates losing their deposits on seats like Vadodara, Navsari, Gandhinagar, Surendranagar, and Jamnagar- 12 each, Bharuch and Bhavnagar, 11 each, and Banskantha, Porbandar, and Kheda- 10 each.

**New Delhi(KCN):** Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut has backed the idea of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi becoming Prime Minister - if the situation ever arises - after the Opposition bloc INDIA's better than expected performance in the Lok Sabha elections.

"If Rahul Gandhi is ready to accept the leadership, why would we object? He has proven himself as a national leader for multiple times. He is one of the popular leaders. We all want him and love him. There is no objection and difference in the alliance," Mr Raut told reporters in Mumbai when asked whether they would accept Mr Gandhi as Prime Minister if the prospect opens up. "Since the beginning of the elections, the INDIA alliance has no dissonance over the post of Prime Minister. This alliance has always fought to save democracy and the constitution from the dictatorial governance of the BJP and people have voted for us. Narendra Modi and Amit Shah should accept their defeat," said the leader from the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray), or UBT, group.



Mr Raut also took a swipe at the support by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United) and Chandrababu Naidu's Telugu Desam Party (TDP) to the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA), indicating at "two pillars of weakness". "The government they want to form with the support of two pillars - TDP and JD(U) - can be diminished at any moment. Modi ji has lost respect and the 'Modi Brand' is finished now. We don't want such a Prime Minister now," Mr Raut said. Mr Raut indicated the INDIA bloc would be amenable to accepting Mr Kumar or Mr Naidu, as "both have always supported democracy". "The BJP doesn't have a mandate. What if Chandrababu Naidu and Nitish Kumar decide to go ahead with democracy and work in

a democratic system instead of their dictatorial regime? Whether it is Chandrababu Naidu or Nitish Kumar, both of them have always supported democracy and I don't think they will support dictatorship," Mr Raut said. Mr Naidu yesterday extended support to the BJP and affirmed he is "a part of NDA". "I have seen so many political changes in the country. I am in NDA. I am going to the NDA meeting. If there is anything else, we will report to you," Mr Naidu told reporters in Vijaywada. Both Mr Naidu and Mr Kumar are in Delhi, attending an NDA meeting post the announcement of election results. The BJP won 240 seats, much lower than its 2019 tally of 303. The Congress saw strong growth, winning 99 seats. The INDIA bloc's performance defied all predictions.

## Now, Devotees Visiting Vaishno Devi Shrine To Get Plant As "Prasad"



**Jammu (KCN):** Devotees visiting the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine will now get a plant as a "prasad", the shrine board said on Wednesday. Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) launched a new initiative under which they will offer plants to pilgrims from a newly established nursery 'Vaishnavi Vatika'. The nursery was launched by Board's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Anshul Garg in Katra, the base camp of the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine, on the occasion of the World Environment Day. Situated in the Trikuta hills of Reasi district, the Mata Vaishno Devi cave shrine is one of the most revered sites in Jammu and

Kashmir, attracting nearly one crore devotees annually. Mr Garg highlighted the board's ongoing commitment to ecological preservation, including water conservation, afforestation, and water treatment efforts. "On this World Environment Day, I congratulate everyone. The board has consistently worked to protect the environment, and this new initiative is another step in that direction. We are providing plants to devotees as prasad from our nursery," Garg told reporters. The newly launched nursery, featuring 40 species of plants, aims to promote environmental

awareness among pilgrims. He added that these plants would be available to pilgrims at nominal prices, with plans to expand the project based on its reception. Garg also pointed towards the intention to extend this initiative to the Amarnath pilgrimage as well. "We are working to make these prasad plants available at Vaishnavi Dham and through counters in Jammu for Amarnath yatra pilgrims," he stated. Nandan Kumar, a devotee from Pune, shared his joy, saying, "I am very happy to receive a plant as prasad. It is a wonderful initiative and a special prasad from Mata."

## From Kangana Ranaut To Arun Govil: Many Celebrities In New Parliament

**New Delhi(KCN):** With voters favouring many celebrity faces -- trusted and new -- this election season, eyes will be on the performance of first-time MPs like Kangana Ranaut and Arun Govil as they take their place in the 18th Lok Sabha along with returning star politicians Hema Malini and Manoj Tiwari.

The country went to the polls from April 19 to June 1 in seven phases to elect the 543 members in the lower house of the Parliament and many from the showbiz were in the fray.

Ms Ranaut, a popular face from Bollywood and a long-time supporter of Prime Minister Narendra Modi won her first-ever election as she was elected from Mandi in Himachal Pradesh, her home state. She defeated Vikramaditya Singh, the son of six-time chief minister Virbhadr Singh and state Congress chief Pratibha Singh.

The actor, who has often found herself at the centre of controversies and always vocal about her opinions, had spoken about devoting her life to public service post her win. There is a lot of curiosity about Ranaut's tenure as an MP.

Not just Ms Ranaut, "Ramayan" star Arun Govil was another celebrity face fielded by the BJP. He emerged victorious from the Meerut seat in Uttar Pradesh in a close battle with Samajwadi Party's Sunita Yadav. The winning margin was just 10,585 votes and for a time it looked like Mr Govil would lose but his image of lord Ram from the classic TV serial seems to have worked in his favour. Hema Malini, another popular face from Hindi cinema, was elected for a straight third term in Lok Sabha from Mathura (Uttar Pradesh) against her nearest rival, Mukesh Dhanger of the Congress. Ms Malini's third win shows the sway the actor-politician and a self-confessed Krishna devotee has on the electoral public in the temple town of Mathura, regarded as the birthplace of the Hindu god. Mr Tiwari, a former Bhojpuri cinema star-singer and the BJP's candidate from North East Delhi, bested Congress rival Kanhaiya Kumar, a popular youth leader.

## Congress Opens Gujarat Account After A Decade, Dismantling BJP Stronghold



**NEWDELHI(KCN):** The Congress opened its account in Gujarat after a decade with a crucial victory from the Banaskantha Lok Sabha seat. The BJP won all 26 Gujarat seats in the 2014 and 2019 elections, but fell short of repeating a clean sweep by just one seat as the Congress's Geniben Thakor defeated the BJP's Rekhaben Chaudhari in Banaskantha by a margin of over 30,000 votes. Ms Thakor is a two-time MLA and the only woman representative of the Congress in the

Gujarat Assembly. She crowdfunded her deposit, encouraging her constituents to help her financially with funds as low as ₹11. She promoted her QR code to receive donations and reached out to voters beyond the traditional party mechanisms. Gujarat, the home state of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, is a BJP stronghold and has had BJP government in power since 1995. Mr Shah, who contested from state capital Gandhinagar, won

by a margin of nearly 7.5 lakh votes. Banaskantha, from where Ms Thakor won, has been a traditional stronghold of the BJP. In 2014, the BJP's Haribhai Chaudhary won the seat with 620,228 votes, defeating Congress's Joitabhai Patel, who won 394,221 votes. The victory margin increased from 2.26 lakh in 2014 to 3.55 lakh in 2019 with the BJP's Parbatbhai Patel securing 716,825 votes against his Congress rival Paranjayaditya Singh Parmar, who received 361,112 votes.



# Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo Wins Balangir

**Balangir(KCN):** That's great news for Fire Brand Senior BJD Leader Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo and his supporters!

Shri Singh Deo won Balangir Assembly seat with a decisive margin, which indicates strong support from the constituents.

While Shri Singh Deo polled 85,265 votes, his rival Samarendra Mishra of INC bagged 71,856 Votes.

This result reflects the preferences of the electorate in the Balangir Assembly Seat

Indeed, winning by a margin of nearly 13,500 votes demonstrates a

strong mandate from the voters in the Balangir constituency for Kalikesh, pointed out Ashok Mohanty, Senior Advocate.

It reflects their confidence and trust in Shri Singh Deo's ability to represent their interests and address their concerns effectively, said he.

This significant margin underscores the support he enjoys from the electorate and highlights the strength of his campaign and leadership. Team Singh Deo led by BJD Veteran A U Singh Deo, Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo, Manmath Vijay Singh Deo and



Arkesh Narayan Singh Deo clinched the win.

The campaigning efforts of Vijayalakshmi Devi and Meghna Singh Deo undoubtedly added charm and appeal to the overall campaign.

Their active involvement likely brought a fresh

perspective, energy, and resonance to the campaign, attracting a broader spectrum of voters and enhancing the team's outreach.

Their contributions, along with the rest of the Singh Deo Team, have played a crucial role in securing

this victory.

Their combined efforts and leadership have evidently resonated with the voters, leading to a successful outcome in the election.

This win reflects not only the individual strengths of each member but also their collective vision and

dedication to serving the people of their constituency.

The Singh Deo Team employed a strategic approach to expose corruption and mal approach for development associated with the INC Lawmaker.

Strategies likely included: Emphasizing a message of change and a break from the previous regime, appealing to voters' desires for a fresh start.

Highlighting the Team's commitment to transparency, integrity, and accountability in governance, Engaging with the community at grassroots levels, listening to their grievances, and offering concrete solutions to address their concerns, thereby building trust and rapport with the electorate.

Ensuring unity and coordination within the Team Singh Deo presented a united front against the Former

Lawmaker's Regime, maximizing their collective strength and resources, said Lika Sahu, Chairperson Balangir Municipality.

Utilizing various communication channels effectively, including social media, rallies, public meetings, and door-to-door campaigns, to disseminate their message and garner support.

By implementing these strategies, the Team Singh Deo ultimately secured the trust and support of the electorate of Balangir, said Bulu Behera, an young BJD Leader, who worked in a determined manner during entire election campaign.

## BJP committed to fulfil promises in Odisha: Himanta

**G u w a h a t i /**

**Bhubaneswar(KCN):** Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma affirmed the BJP's commitment to fulfil its promises to the people of Odisha as the party was on its way to form the government in that state. Sarma had extensively campaigned in Odisha.

"History created in Odisha! A heartfelt thanks to the people of Odisha for this historic mandate and for placing their absolute faith in the BJP to serve them both



in the state and in Parliament," Sarma posted on X.

He affirmed the BJP's commitment to fulfil the

promises made to the people of Odisha.

"I will always cherish the beautiful time I spent with the people of

Odisha and our Karyakartas during my campaign trail in the state," the BJP leader added.

The BJP has won 50 seats and was leading in 28 constituencies in the 147-member Odisha Assembly.

It has won five Lok Sabha seats and was leading in 14 others. Odisha has a total of 21 Lok Sabha seats.

Assembly and Lok Sabha elections were held simultaneously in Odisha.

## BJD congratulates BJP over its success in Odisha elections



**Bhubaneswar(KCN):** The Biju Janata Dal Tuesday congratulated the BJP for its success in the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in the state and thanked the people of Odisha for allowing the regional party to serve them.

BJD spokesperson Sasmit Patra, Manas R Mangaraj and MP Sulatra Deo in a joint press conference said that the regional party was indebted to the people of Odisha for allowing it to serve the state for uninterrupted 24 years. "We are grateful to the

people of Odisha for blessing us for 24 years to serve them. We are thankful to the people. We are also indebted to the people for having blessed us in this election also. The party has got about 40 per cent vote share though it is less by three per cent

from the previous elections," Patra said.

Stating that a slight decline in vote share made a difference in the number of seats, Patra said: "The party has got about 50 seats. We will work as per the wishes of the people in coming days," he said.

The BJP has won 43 seats and was leading in 35 constituencies in the 147-member Odisha Assembly.

The BJP has won two Lok Sabha seats and was leading in 17 other LS seats. Odisha has 21 Lok Sabha seats.

Assembly and Lok Sabha elections were held simultaneously in Odisha.

## Tripathy Wins Jharsuguda

**Bhubaneswar(KCN):** Fire Brand Saffron Leader Tankadhar Tripathy has won from Jharsuguda Assembly Segment.

Shri Tripathy defeated Deepali Das of Biju Janata Dal with a convincing margin from the Industrial Zone of the State.

As per latest information the BJP has won eight MLA seats and is leading in 72 constituencies while BJD and Congress have won one seat each, as per Election Commission sources.

The BJP has won Jharsuguda, Bargarh, Attabira, Brajarajnagar, R a g h u n a t h p a l i, Kuchinda, Umerkote, and Chilika MLA seats



so far while BJD won the Rourkela seat and Congress got Chittrakonda seat.

Senior BJP leader Suresh Pujari won Brajarajnagar MLA seat with a margin of 26,789 votes from his nearest rival BJD candidate Alaka Mohanty. Nityanand Gond won

from Umerkote assembly seat with a margin of 1037 votes from his nearest rival Nabina Nayak of the BJD.


Similarly, Nihar R a n j a n Mahanand won the Attabira MLA seat with a margin of 2891 votes while Rabi Narayan Naik won the Kuchinda assembly segment by 3222 votes. The other elected BJP candidates are—Durga Charan Tanti (R a g h u n a t h p a l i), Prithviraj Harichandan (Chilika), Tankadhar Tripathy (Jharsuguda), Nihar Ranjan Mahananda (Attabira), and Ashwini Kumar

Sarangi (Bargarh).

BJD leader and Minister Sarada Prasad Nayak won the Rourkela seat while Congress candidate Mangu Khilla won the Chittrakonda seat.

Out of 147 seats, results have been declared for 10 MLA seats. Of 137 remaining seats, BJP is leading in 73 seats, BJD in 47, Congress in 13 segments and CPI (M) in one seat.

Besides, three independent candidates are front runners in the race. They are—Himanshu Sekhar Sahoo (Dharmasala), Bijay Kumar Dalabehera (Baramba) and Sarada Prasad Padhan (Mahanga).



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# ICAR-CIFRI Celebrated World Environment Day

**KOLKATA, (KCN):** On World Environment Day, people get together from all over the world to celebrate sustainability and environmental conservation while underlining how vital it is to address environmental issues. This year World Environment Day 2024 was celebrated with the theme "Land Restoration, Desertification, and Drought Resilience." ICAR-Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute, Barrackpore celebrated the day with a series of programmes in collaboration with National Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Kolkata Chapter under the leadership of Dr. B.K. Das, Director, CIFRI. On the occasion of World Environment day ICAR-CIFRI carried out a ranching programme at

Seoraphuli Ghat followed by an awareness camp on Plastic pollution. Under the "Namami Gange" programme, ICAR-CIFRI commenced the river ranching programme, which was executed by the scientists and other members NMCG project team and local fishers. About 3.22 lakhs fingerlings including 3 lakhs IMC and 0.22 lakhs of indigenous fish Systemussarana (Olive barb) were released into the River Ganga at Monirampore Ghat to restore the riverine stock. Environmental and health issues related to plastic pollution is now universal. 'Team-CIFRI' conducted a public awareness campaign on 'plastic waste' by involving local communities. In the second half, a



lecture session was arranged at CIFRI Meeting room to sensitize the staff members and students about the "Climate change initiatives in the coastal region". Dr. Uttam Kumar Mandal, Principal Scientist, ICAR-Central Soil Salinity Research Institute, Regional Research Station, Canning Town delivered a lecture on "Towards self-reliant coastal Agriculture: Evidence from Indian Sundarbans." After the lecture session an interaction session was held. Dr. Srikanta Samanta, HOD, FRAI division enlightened the participants about the metal and pesticide pollution in the rivers. The programme was ended up with vote of thanks of Dr. S.K. Nag.

## SpiceJet and Axis Bank launch co-branded credit card

**GURUGRAM:** SpiceJet, the country's favourite airline and Axis Bank, India's third largest private sector bank, have partnered to launch the most rewarding co-branded credit card, powered by Visa that will offer a host of privileges and benefits to customers. The card comes in two variants – SpiceJet Axis Bank Voyage & Voyage Black, and is aimed at facilitating a superlative travel experience for flyers through SpiceClub, the first frequent flyer program by a low cost carrier in India. Through this collaboration, the two

brands hope to capitalize on the resurgent demand for travel following two years of stagnation caused by the pandemic. Further, with the shared goal of expanding their reach to Tier 2 & 3 cities and other synergies, the brands are committed to serving a much larger populace. SpiceJet Axis Bank Voyage & Voyage Black credit cards were officially launched at Indira Gandhi International airport in the presence of Ajay Singh, Chairman and MD, SpiceJet and Amitabh Chaudhry, MD & CEO, Axis Bank, where they unveiled a special

SpiceJet-Axis Bank credit card livery on a SpiceJet Boeing 737 MAX aircraft. The products are designed to enable customers use the rewards earned on their daily spends for booking flights and add-ons, thus encouraging both travel and digital payments embedded with benefits of SpiceJet's frequent flyer program, SpiceClub. Customers can earn benefits up to 7% on the Voyage Black credit card which is a Top-tier offering in the travel credit card segment. In addition, the redemption of earned points does not

have any limitations on blackout dates, festival demand, and are on first-come basis. Cardholders would get exclusive SpiceClub membership with direct entry in either Silver or Gold tiers, and special benefits like complimentary or discounted travel add-ons, priority check-in, SpiceMax upgrade, preferred seat selection, complimentary meal etc. Ajay Singh, Chairman and Managing Director, SpiceJet, said, "I am delighted to announce the launch of the SpiceJet-Axis Bank co-branded Credit Card. This card will make every customer journey an even

more rewarding one. We are the pioneers of the frequent flyer program for budget airlines in the country and this partnership with Axis Bank significantly strengthens the value offering of SpiceClub. Our association with Axis Bank – founded on the shared vision to offer unparalleled customer experience – is yet another innovative step towards creating a world class travel experience. I hope to see our customers enjoying the benefits of this rewarding collaboration as much as they love to fly with us."

## JSW Infrastructure begins commercial operations at Paradip East Quay Terminal in Odisha

**Paradip/ Bhubaneswar :** JSW Infrastructure, India's leading ports company and part of US\$ 13 billion JSW Group, has begun commercial operations at Paradip East Quay Coal Terminal in Odisha. This is a fully-mechanized terminal at Paradip Port Trust with an annual coal handling capacity of 30 million tons. The coal terminal has been built as a cape compliant terminal and will handle cape size vessels once the dredging at Paradip Port is completed. The terminal has capacity to unload 25 rakes per day and can load two vessels simultaneously. The infrastructure of the terminal is built to ensure higher productivity while reducing overall logistics cost to power producers.

The company has invested approximately Rs 1,300 crore to establish this terminal at Paradip Port. Paradip Port Trust awarded JSW Infrastructure to develop a fully-mechanized coal terminal on Build, Operate & Transfer basis for 30 years. Following the commissioning of this coal terminal, JSW Infrastructure's current cargo capacity crosses 150 MTPA. It aims to have a total cargo handling capacity of 200 MTPA by FY24. Commenting on its coal terminal at Paradip, Mr Arun Maheshwari, Joint MD & CEO of JSW Infrastructure said, "Paradip Port continues to be an attractive sea route for coal movement. With the

commissioning of this terminal, India can now offer cape size shipments with efficient operations. During the last few months, steam coal prices globally have witnessed sharp increase forcing thermal power plants and other coal based industry to switch to domestic coal. Start of this coal terminal has come at the right time to fill up the demand gap of domestic coal. Through high productivity and larger shipment size, we hope to reduce overall logistics costs for our coal cargo customers. As the country pursues PM's vision of Atma Nirbhar Bharat, the total thermal coal demand in India is expected to remain strong and our endeavor would be to maximize fulfillment by domestic producers.

## Sony announces the Next-Gen Smart BRAVIA 32W830K Google TV

**Bhubaneswar :** Sony India today announced the launch of BRAVIA 32W830K television with attractive picture quality and life like sound. The all-new 80 cm (32) HD ready Google TV lets you enjoy movies, games and shows from apps or broadcast in an instant with advanced voice controls and built-in Chromecast. Now seamlessly integrate Google TV and bring together more than 700,000 movies, shows, live TV and more from apps and subscriptions and organize seamlessly. With BRAVIA 32W830K, browse content from across your apps, intelligently organized just for you. Customers can easily find something to watch with personalized recommendations and bookmark shows and movies by adding a watchlist from phone and watch it on TV to keep track of what to watch. Users can even add to their Watchlist from their phone or laptop with Google Search and find everything in one place. BRAVIA 32W830K supports Apple Home Kit and AirPlay that seamlessly integrates Apple devices like iPads and iPhones with the TV for effortless content streaming. Easily control your TV with Hands-free voice capabilities. The hands-free voice control is built into the TV, no need to reach for the remote every time to search for entertainment, get answers, or control the TV and smart home devices. Simply say, "OK Google" to issue a voice command.

## RELIANCE NIPPON LIFE INSURANCE RECORDS STRONG GROWTH IN FY22

**Mumbai :** Reliance Nippon Life Insurance Company Limited, a JV between Reliance Capital and Nippon Life of Japan, announced its financial results for the year ended March 31, 2022. The key performance highlights as on March 31, 2022 include: Commenting on the company's strong performance in FY22, Mr. Ashish Vohra, ED &

CEO, Reliance Nippon Life Insurance said, "FY22 continued to pose its own set of challenges with the outbreak of the second, and then the third wave of the pandemic. We are grateful for the support we have received from our customers, employees, distributors, service providers and their families, that powered our journey of providing maximum value to each

one of our stakeholders." Mr. Vohra further highlighted that in a volatile economic environment of today, there is a heightened appreciation of Life Insurance for ensuring certainty of life coverage as well as financial investments. These guarantees are designed to drive durable long-term returns and to help customers fulfill their life goals and form the

bedrock of our business model. The company paid death claims, maturity and survival benefit payouts of over Rs. 1,877 Cr in FY22 and achieved an impressive claims settlement ratio of 98.7% for FY22, up from 98.5% in FY21. The company expeditiously settled 3,517 Covid related claims worth Rs. 117 Cr. within an average period of 9 working days. Mr. Vohra

further commented, "A death claim is the ultimate test of a Life Insurance product, and it is the 'dharma' of a Life Insurer to honour all such claims with speed and accuracy. We continue to be fully committed and financially stable at 235% solvency (against the regulatory requirement of 150%), to meet all customer claims that may arise in the times ahead."

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## Texas Super Kings rope in Marcus Stoinis for MLC Season 2



**New Delhi:** A month after silencing the boisterous Super Kings fans with a blistering hundred in the IPL, Marcus Stoinis is set to don the yellow for the same franchise, albeit in their American avatar. The Australian all-rounder will join fellow WACA player Aaron Hardie, Daryl Mitchell, South African T20 skipper Aiden Markram and Naveen Ul Haq at the Texas Super Kings for the second season of MLC.

Australia's World Cup squad in the Caribbean but is without an Australian central contract for the 2024 season. However, he remains a force in the T20 circuit, coming fresh off a stellar IPL season when he scored close to 400 runs in the middle-order across 12 innings, and at a healthy strike rate of 150. A slew of Australian T20 superstars including Pat Cummins, Glenn Maxwell and Travis Head are set to feature in the MLC this year. The league finds itself richer with top-class

Australian talent, a very coveted tenet for any successful T20 league in the world. In a seeming shift of the cricketing world order, only four Australian players will be part of the action at this year's The Hundred competition. The MLC, on the other hand, will engage more than 10 frontline Aussie cricketers. "Signing a world-class player like Pat Cummins is a testament to the calibre of talent the league is attracting, underscoring our global impact and the success of the inaugural season," said MLC CEO Vijay Srinivasan in a media release on Tuesday after the announcement of Cummins' signing, which Cricbuzz was first to break on Sunday. "It elevates the level of competition fans will get to see and experience on home soil and showcases our commitment to bringing the top-tier players in the world to play in America's very own league."

## Max O'Dowd helps Netherlands prevail over fighting Nepal

**New Delhi:** Netherlands completed a nervy six-wicket win over Nepal in their T20 World Cup opener in Dallas, chasing a target of 107 with only eight balls to spare. Max O'Dowd's mature unbeaten half-century up top ensured two points for Scott Edwards's side. O'Dowd remained unbeaten on 54\* off 48 balls, helping Netherlands close the run-chase when the pressure was on them, on admittedly another bowler-friendly pitch. It got so tight that Netherlands needed over run a ball after the 17th over, but O'Dowd's takedown of Abinash Bohara when things got tight ensured that the match didn't run into the final over. Of course it didn't help that O'Dowd was dropped at long-off on 41, which may have exaggerated the difference between the sides. Netherlands won a good toss in conditions rife for swing and seam but their left-field decision to have a spinner bowl with the new ball paid immediate



dividends. Tim Pringle, the left-arm spinner, struck with the wicket of Aasif Sheikh before Logan van Beek doubled down with the wicket of Kushal Bhurtel in his first over. Van Beek could also have had Rohit Paudel in the same over but an inside edge, spotted on review, saved the Nepal captain. This is the phase of play where Nepal really lost the plot. Netherlands bowlers kept chipping in with wickets, starting with Anil Sah, who was outwitted on the sweep

by Pringle. Paul van Meekeren then had Kushal Malla caught at mid-on, restricting Nepal to 53/4 after 10 overs. Then two beautiful pieces of seam bowling brought about two more wickets, with Bas de Leede getting Dipendra Singh caught at first slip and Paul van Meekeren bowling Sompal Kami with a nip-backer. Paudel, the top-scorer at 35, fell in the 16th over in a major blow, holing out to long-off to give Pringle his third wicket of the match. Van Beek too finished with three against

his name, wrapping up the innings with back-to-back wickets of Gulsan Jha and Abinash Bohara. Karan KC's cameo of 17 off 12 helped Nepal reach 106 but they were eventually bowled out with four balls to spare. Karan KC bowled three of the PowerPlay overs as Nepal kept a lid on the scoring while adding the wicket of Michael Levitt, who holed one up in the air. But amidst some tight bowling, Max O'Dowd and Vikramjit Singh ticked runs at around run-a-ball. It remained neck and

neck between the two sides even in the middle overs, with the Nepal bowlers allowing three fewer runs than their batters scored in this phase of play. Only two boundaries were conceded in the middle overs as Netherlands got to 52/2 after 10 overs, having lost Vikramjit Singh to lbw to Dipendra Singh. Sybrand Engelbrecht's run out at the start of the 14th over added a spring in Nepal's step, who now felt they could defend the target. As the final five overs kicked off, Scott Edwards was bowled by Abinash Bohara and a tight four-run 17th over by Sagar Dhakal made the equation even tighter. That's when O'Dowd stepped up and hit a 6 and a 4 off consecutive balls in the 19th over to all but get Netherlands past the finish line. Brief Scores: Nepal 106 in 19.2 overs (Paudel 35; Pringle 3-20, van Beek 3-18) lost to Netherlands 109/4 in 18.4 overs (O'Dowd 54\*; Dipendra 1-6) by 6 wickets

## Ireland announce central contracts for 2024-25

**New Delhi:** Cricket Ireland has included Ross Adair, Matt Foster, Fionn Hand, PJ Moor and Ben White in the 21 men's player list of central contracts for the year 2024-25, going up from 14 offered last season. Simi Singh, the 37-year old spinner, who played his last international match in October 2022 has been left out of the contract list. Meanwhile, for the first time, Cricket Ireland has offered 12 full-time contracts to its women cricketers. Christina Coulter Reilly, Abbi Harrison, Kia McCartney and Alice Tector have been handed Casual Contracts while Una Raymond-Hoey has been given a retainer contract. In the Men's category, Gavin Hoey, Matthew Humphreys, Tom Mayes and Liam McCarthy have been handed Retainer Contracts. Casual Contracts offer players a retainer throughout the summer holidays, loss of earnings for the remainder of the



year, match fees, 12-month medical and healthcare insurance, sports science support (physiotherapy, strength and conditioning, psychology, performance analysis, nutrition and lifestyle management), specialist coaching support, and for ROI-based players, full access to the Sport Ireland Institute. On the other hand, Retainer Contracts engage players for a specific number of days or specific series, with entitlements similar to casual contracts. Additionally, six women players - Ava Canning, Georgina Dempsey,

Sarah Forbes, Amy Hunter, Joanna Loughran and Aimee Maguire - have been handed Educational Contracts. These are designed to work around players who are at school full-time or studying at a tertiary level. Players on these contracts gain a significant living allowance to ensure they do not need to find a job during their education years, and can instead concentrate on their cricket. All these players will be available full-time in the summer holidays. Speaking on the latest contract list, Ciara O'Brien, Women's

National Selector, said: "Women's cricket continues to progress, and I am delighted that we have been able to increase the number of full-time contracts offered to a record 12 this year. "We have a young but exceptionally talented cohort of players - although their average age is just over 21, it is a group of players who have built up a great deal of experience in the last few years. "This year we are also welcoming the return of Una Raymond-Hoey to the Irish set-up on a retainer basis. Una, who has 15 caps for Ireland, has spent the last five years in Australia - playing cricket and rising through the ranks of representing Victoria, and being part of the Melbourne Stars squad in the Women's Big Bash." Meanwhile, Andrew White, Men's National Selector, added, "As our talent pool grows, so too does the challenge of selecting central contracts. With an increasing volume of cricket to play both home

and away, our need to nurture and develop the talent to compete at the highest level becomes more acute and selecting the right mix of players to receive central contracts is one of the most consequential decisions we can make as an organisation. Our players are our assets, and we are constantly monitoring, reviewing and discussing the progress and performances of our players to ensure we have the best talent available to the head coach and captain. "We welcome the recent news about Heinrich Malan's contract extension and I look forward to continuing to work with him in shaping the direction and succession planning of the squad over the coming years. "I congratulate the players receiving contracts in 2024 and look forward to seeing that steady progress and development of the last few years turn into regular success on the field of play."



**New Delhi:** West Indies have called up uncapped opening batter Mikyle Louis for their upcoming three-Test tour of England in July. The 15-man squad, which will be captained by Kraigg Brathwaite and will have Alzarri Joseph as his deputy, also sees Jayden Seales who missed the last series against Australia with injury. Also back is Jason Holder who had made himself unavailable for the last tour. Louis, the 23-year-old who has turned out for the U19 side in the past, has been picked on the back of strong performances in his debut First-Class season, which saw him tally 682

runs for the Leeward Island Hurricanes at an average of 48.71. Squad: Kraigg Brathwaite (Captain), Alick Athanaze, Joshua Da Silva, Jason Holder, Kavem Hodge, Tevin Imlach, Alzarri Joseph (Vice-Captain), Shamar Joseph, Mikyle Louis, Zachary McCaskie, Kirk McKenzie, Gudakesh Motie, Kemar Roach, Jayden Seales, Kevin Sinclair, Sai Thorne, the 19-year-old fast bowler, will travel with the squad as a development player after impressing in his debut First-Class season with 31 wickets at an average of 16.29 across eight matches. "The squad has been shaped with both

experience and emerging talent, ensuring a strong balance as we face the challenge of playing in English conditions," CWI lead selector Desmond Haynes said. "Over the past year, our red-ball program has continued to develop. Following our victory in the last Test in Australia in January, it is evident that we are seeing the fruits of that investment. Each player selected has earned their place through consistent performances and hard work. We are confident that this blend of seasoned players and emerging faces will perform admirably against England." The Richards-Botham Trophy will kick off at Lord's on July 10

## Rohit Sharma reveals chat with Rahul Dravid on quitting Indian head coach role

**New Delhi:** India captain Rohit Sharma has revealed his chat with head coach Rahul Dravid about the latter quitting his role with the Indian cricket team. Sharma, speaking in a press conference ahead of the team's T20 World Cup 2024 opener against Ireland, said that he tried to convince Dravid to extend his contract.

Dravid did not choose to extend beyond the T20 World Cup 2024 and will be vacating his position after the T20 World Cup is over. The Board of Control for Cricket in India have already invited applications for the role. Sharma got emotional while talking about Dravid and said that it would be a difficult moment for him when Dravid has his

final day as the India coach. "He was my first international captain. We saw him play. He is a huge role model for all of us. He did a lot for the team over the years. I saw him when he came as coach. We won almost all the major tournaments with him. He is the first person who said that this is what we have to do, this is



important for the team. I have personally tried to convince him to continue as coach, but he has his own priorities. I will not be able to see him go," Rohit Sharma said. Sources had revealed to Indiatoday.in that Gautam Gambhir is set to replace Rahul Dravid as the new head coach of the Indian senior men's national team. The

chatter around Gautam Gambhir taking up the role of the head coach grew louder during the second half of the IPL 2024 season. However, considering his renewed association with the Knight Riders, it remained to be seen whether the former opener would show interest in the demanding job.