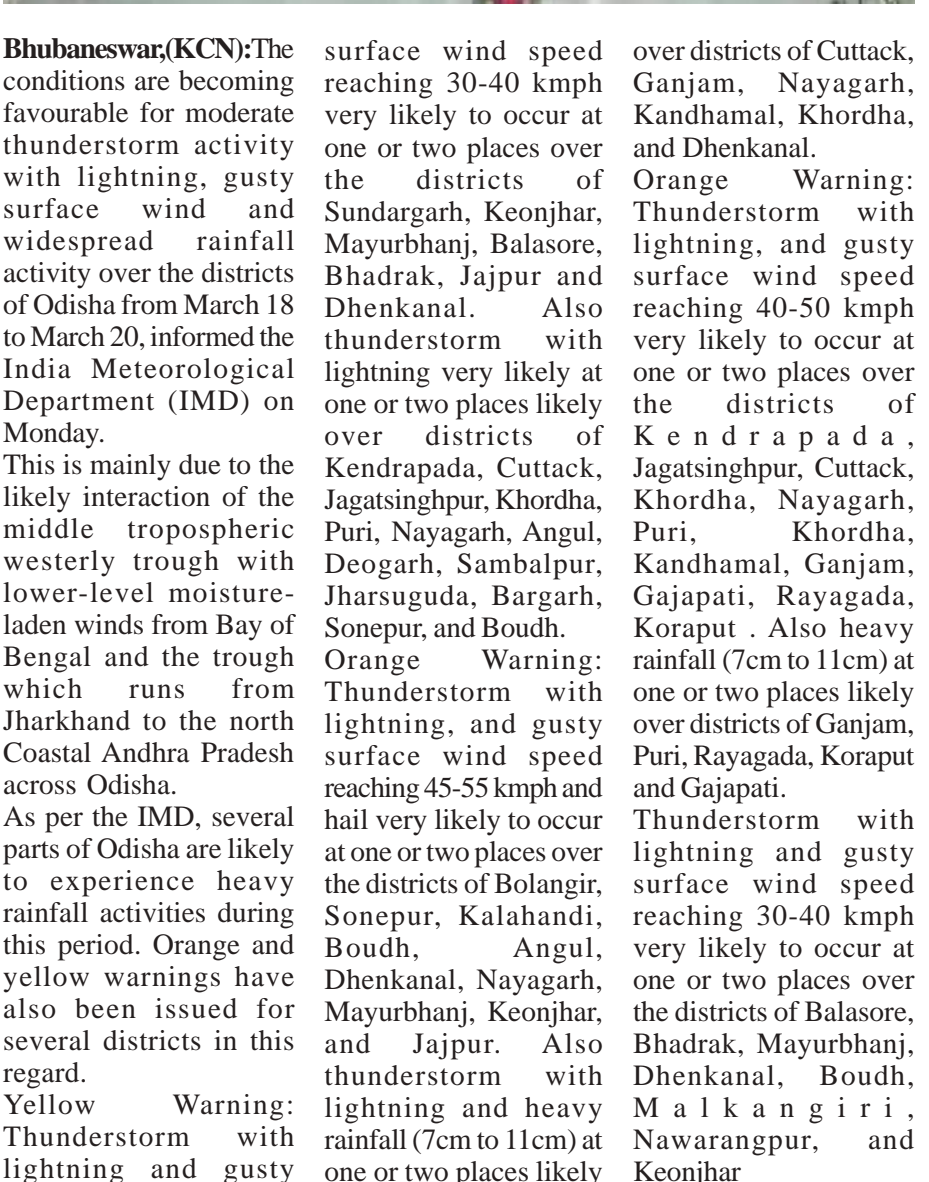


New Delhi, (KCN): State civil services officers attending the 125th Induction Training Programme at LBSNAA called on the President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan today (March 18, 2024). Addressing the officers, the President said that they are at a position where they can be an inspiration to others. Each step that they take can motivate those around them to give their best for the progress of the department or the organisation. As IAS officers, they are required to develop an All-India perspective on administrative functioning and the policies and programmes of the Government. The President said that these days, tech-enabled and aware citizens track the delivery of every service being provided - whether public or private. These are the days of FAQs and service providers proactively answer the queries and try their best to satisfy the customers. She stated that officers must adapt to this changing world of digital governance and enhance their capabilities accordingly. She urged them to make use of the latest technologies such as AI, blockchain and big data analytics for an efficient and smart administration. The President said that this is the time when collaboration and convergence are the need of the hour. Collaboration among various stakeholders at the organisational, state,

Odisha Elections 2024: Focus on enforcement, curbing fake news, says DGP



The President said that officers should always keep in mind sustainability and inclusiveness when they undertake any developmental work. With the world facing the threats of global warming and climate change, it is essential that they take innovative measures to adopt eco-friendly practices and promote sustainability. Inclusiveness is another major aspect of development which means encouraging participation and ensuring progress of all including the underprivileged and marginalised sections.



vt advertisements: Orissa HC refuses to intervene now

decision on the issue is not satisfactory for the petitioner. The general secretary of Odisha BJP, Jatindra Mohanty had earlier drawn the attention of the ECI towards the use of conch symbol. He pointed out that such advertisements with the symbol of the ruling party violate the ECI guidelines. Citing that the ECI did not

take any steps in the matter for two months, he moved the Supreme Court. However, the apex court quashed the case during the admission stage, observing that it falls under a different jurisdiction and the petitioner may approach the proper forum. Later, the BJP leader moved the Delhi High Court which also cited the jurisdiction issue and advised the appellant to approach the Orissa High Court. Subsequently, the BJP leader moved the Orissa High Court.

Meanwhile, the ECI has issued a notification to the state government and the BJD on the matter seeking replies from them. When the BJP leader's case came up for hearing on Monday, the HC observed that as the ECI has started hearing the case and the BJD have received notices, it would not intervene in the issue for the time being.

The HC also noted that if the complainant is unhappy over the final decision of the ECI, then he can approach the court again.

Boudh, (KCN): Ganja worth over Rs 1.50 crore was seized in Odisha's Boudh district, police said on Monday. Acting on a tip-off, a team of the Boudh Model police station conducted a raid in Bidamaska forest near Dimbirikhoh village and seized 1,560 kg of ganja, Superintendent of Police Raj Prasad said. When the police personnel approached the place, three-four persons, who were there, managed to flee, he said. "We will soon identify the accused and arrest them," he added.

So far this year, 3,800 kg of ganja was seized and 17 drug peddlers arrested in the district, the SP said.

"In some of the areas where such huge quantities of ganja were seized, we received information about Maoist movements initially. It indicates that Maoists are involved in the smuggling of ganja," he said.

Focus on says DGP

held and necessary action will be taken in this regard.

On misinformation and fake news, ECI has directed to take special measures, the Odisha DGP said.

“Our social media cell is there and an IG rank officer is monitoring all news and we will try to block fake news. When allegations will come, appropriate action will be taken against those spreading fake news,” the DGP added.

Conch symbol in govt

Cuttack, (KCN): The Orissa High Court reportedly refused to intervene in a case related to the alleged use of the conch symbol (the party symbol of ruling Biju Janata Dal) in government advertisements, citing grounds that the Election Commission of India (ECI) has already admitted the issue.

The HC made such an observation on Monday while hearing a case filed by BJP leader, Jatin Mohanty. The HC also observed that the case can be taken up for hearing if the ECI's

<p>Bhubaneswar,(KCN):Seashore Group CMD Prashant Das deposed before the Enforcement Directorate for the second time on Monday. According to the reports, the Seashore Group of companies collected money from people from 2006. Such collections were done without the permission</p>	<p>of the Reserve Bank of India and the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI). The company had invested the collected money in several sectors. Presently, the ED has started investigating into the old chit-fund cases, looking for political links in the Rs 578-crore scam. As a part of this, the ED grilled Das on</p>	<p>Monday for the second time. The ED had quizzed him last Friday as well. The ED has been interrogating Das because it is said that the ED is convinced that more assets of Das haven't been attached as yet. It is alleged that the people involved in several chit fund cases be it</p>	<p>Seashore chit fund, AT chit fund or Rose Valley chit fund are now out on bail and are maintaining luxurious lives. Hence, they are now coming under the scanner of the ED. The agency is now reportedly quizzing them to find leads so that more assets can be attached. They have been summoned to depose before the ED in phases.</p>	<p>The ED is learnt to be looking into their political links. Notably, the ED had attached Seashore Group's assets worth over Rs 150 crore under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act in December 2014. It had again attached the company's properties worth Rs 84 crore in January 2015.</p>
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Two killed in lightning strike in Odisha

Balasore(KCN): Two persons died and another was injured in incidents of lightning strike in Odisha's Balasore and Mayurbhanj districts Monday, police said. A 30-year-old man died after lightning struck a thatched hut where he took shelter, at Tukuri Hazira village in Balasore, they said. In the second incident that took place at Manik Sahi village in Mayurbhanj district, Baidhar Samad died and his wife Buhuni was injured in a lightning strike. The bodies have been sent for post-mortem, the officer added.

SC stays Orissa High Court order nullifying MLA Mohammed Moquim's 2019 election

Cuttack,(KCN):In a big relief to Barabati-Cuttack MLA Mohammed Moquim, the Supreme Court has stayed the Orissa High Court's order nullifying his election to the Odisha Legislative Assembly in 2019. While hearing a petition filed by BJD leader Debashish Samantaray, the Orissa High Court on March 4, 2024, annulled the election of the Congress leader for allegedly failing to furnish detailed information regarding criminal cases against



him in an affidavit during the filing of nomination in 2019. Besides seeking direction to declare his election null and void, the petitioner had also sought direction

to the Election Commission to conduct fresh polls. The petition further cited that Moquim did not disclose correct facts about his assets and liabilities.

The Orissa High Court's ruling had effectively made Cuttack-Barabati Assembly Constituency vacant until the next election. However, the Supreme Court's order on Monday has come as a huge relief for the legislator. At a time when the 2024 General Elections are just around the corner, it seems things are going well for the Barabati-Cuttack MLA as his suspension from the Congress party was withdrawn in January and now the country's apex court has stayed the HC order.



Customers purchase coloured powders, water guns ahead of Holi at Choudhury Bazar locality in Cuttack

Truck owners' 24-hour bandh in Odisha's Keonjhar against railway project

Keonjhar(KCN): A truck owners' association in the mineral-rich Keonjhar district of Odisha began a 24-hour bandh from 6am Monday in protest against the proposed railway project aimed at transporting minerals, a member of the association said. The project aims at connecting Odisha Mining Corporation's Gandhamardan Block-B mines at Suakati to Gohaldihi railway siding. Numerous local organisations, including the private bus owners' association, merchants' associations, auto operators, etc, have extended their support to



the bandh, he said. All business establishments and educational institutions in the district remained shut, leading to disruptions in vehicular movement. Protesters intercepted a passenger train and two goods trains at Keonjhar railway station, sources said.

While the bandh has impacted normal life and mineral transportation in the district, emergency services have been exempted from the bandh's purview. Debu Patnaik, the joint secretary of the Keonjhar truck owners' association, expressed concerns over the potential unemployment

among truckers if the project is implemented. According to Patnaik, the project, if implemented, would transport iron ores via trains, adversely affecting the livelihoods of truckers and around 3-4 lakh people in the district. He urged the government to revoke the project in the best interest of the district's populace. Additional SP Santosh Nayak said police forces have been deployed at the station, and discussions have been initiated with the protestors to withdraw the agitation, enabling passengers to proceed to their destinations without hindrance.

Western belt farmers hold key to success in Odisha's simultaneous polls

Bhubaneswar(KCN): With the Election Commission of India (ECI) unveiling the dates for the simultaneous Lok Sabha and Odisha Assembly elections, the spotlight shifts to farmers of the western region, whose votes hold significant sway over at least five parliamentary constituencies and 35 Vidhan Sabha seats. In Odisha, which comprises 21 Lok Sabha seats and 147 Assembly segments, elections are scheduled to be held in four phases May 13, May 20, May 25 and June 1. Historically, the farmers of the western region, once a stronghold of the Congress, have wielded considerable electoral influence by voting en masse. In the 2019 general elections, all five western Odisha Lok Sabha seats were secured by the opposition BJP, while the ruling BJD, led by Naveen Patnaik, failed to secure a single seat in this agriculturally rich region, often referred to as the "Anna datas" (providers of food) region, with areas like Bargarh and Kalahandi being prominent rice-producing hubs. Out of the eight seats won by the BJP in the state in 2019, the party secured victories in all five Lok Sabha seats in the western region, including Sambalpur, Bargarh, Bolangir, Kalahandi, and



Sundergarh. The remaining three seats were won in northern Odisha's Balasore and Mayurbhanj, as well as the coastal belt's Bhubaneswar. However, despite the BJP's success in the Lok Sabha elections, the people of the region predominantly favoured Naveen Patnaik's BJD in the assembly polls. Out of the 35 assembly segments within these five western LS constituencies, BJP candidates only managed to secure victories in eight, with the majority going in favour of the BJD. The Congress also secured victories in three assembly segments in the western region. Recognising the significance of farmers in the western region and aiming to regain their support, the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) has promised various agricultural incentives in its recently released election manifesto. These include farm loan waivers, a guaranteed minimum support price (MSP) of Rs 3,000 per quintal of paddy, pensions for farmers,

allowances for agricultural workers, complete GST withdrawal on agricultural products, among others. Sarat Patnayak, president of OPCC, emphasised the importance of farmers in the rural economy and pledged support to them if the Congress comes to power after the 2024 elections. "Farmers are the backbone of rural economy and the Congress will do everything possible for the Anna Datas if it comes to power after 2024 elections," Patnayak, who also hails from Bolangir district, a part of the western region, said. On the other hand, the ruling BJD, which has governed the state since 2000, has not yet released its election manifesto but claims to have implemented several schemes for the welfare of farmers. Notably, initiatives like the Indravati Irrigation project and the recently launched Lower Suktel irrigation project aim to benefit farmers in regions like Kalahandi and

Bolangir. Additionally, the BJD government has undertaken significant water infrastructure projects in various districts, further emphasising its commitment to agricultural development. The BJP, meanwhile, has been appealing to farmers in the region through schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, particularly crucial for the drought-prone KBK (Kalahandi-Bolangir-Koraput) region. Pradip Purohit, a BJP leader and former MLA, asserted that the farmers of the western region strongly support the saffron party, citing confidence in Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Despite agriculture being the primary livelihood for 70 per cent of the state's population, farmers in western Odisha have been notably organised in articulating their concerns to the government, unlike their counterparts in other parts of the state. While the BJD has a stronghold in coastal and central Odisha, winning 12 Lok Sabha seats in 2019, the BJP and Congress have also secured victories in different regions, indicating a three-way competition as the election dates approach, with all parties vying for the support of the crucial farming community.



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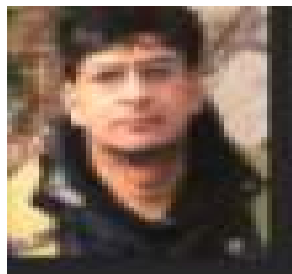
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Hearing My Own Voice

Saikat Kumar Basu



Hearing 'My Own Voices'; Accepting, Respecting & Embracing the Vibrant Spectrum of Diversity for a Sustainable World. Living a quality life and enjoying a fulfilled human existence is the right of every individual irrespective of any discrimination be it caste, creed, gender, culture, or country. However, we all are not born having the same attributes and hence we differ in terms of our inner traits and also due to our social context. Differences and diversities are a natural phenomenon of human existence and need to be accepted and their inherent potentialities need to be facilitated in a positive, conducive environment for a sustainable society. Such an inclusive platform was facilitated by the International Conference on 'Sustainability, Global Diversity, Inclusion, and Culture' held on 18th and 19th Jan 2024 at the heart of the city in Kolkata, West Bengal, India. The

Conference created the platform for First-person accounts or hearing their 'Own Voices' through a series of special talks by some of the notable achievers in society who not only have made a difference in their own lives through their determination and hard work but are also continuing to extend further to society through their sustainable ways of living to make the society a better place to live for all. Each of these speakers shared with the conference participants their real-life stories of struggle, their strengths, and challenges amidst all odds to bridge the interlude in society. Tusi Anit Sah, a celebrated mountaineer, who summited not only Everest but Mt Kanchenjunga, Mt Thalay Sagar, and many more as a resource person at the conference, shared her success story that came with years of struggle. Tusi lost her father at age 10, leaving the responsibility of the entire household to her mother, who earned a living by working in a cloth mill. From a very tender age, she had to balance studies, and sold eggs in a shop for nineteen long years but her passion for achieving something significant

constantly drove her to take all the plunge and hard work needed to be a hardcore mountaineer. Lack of funds made her Everest expedition a dream initially but her determination and her strong will transform it into reality. With her strong determination, hard work, and zeal she overcame and fought all; fund issues, lack of oxygen in the heights, weather extremities, frostbite, and fear of serious health issues with life risks. After scaling Everest her next project is to conquer all seven major global peaks alongside taking part in several adventure sports. Besides being a mountaineer, she shared that she is a believer in environmental sustainability, as she was surprised by the waste left by the climbers even on the top of the world over the mountains polluting the beautiful mother nature so she aims to clean up mountain sites. She sensitized the participants of the international conference around 300 (approx.) from over 40 Institutes/Universities of India and 10 Universities from other countries towards the love of nature and environmental protection.

The second talk was about a topic perhaps much ignored in the urban localities; the struggle of the tiger widows TWs (widows who have lost their husbands due to tiger attacks in Sundarbans) an important aspect of Human-wildlife conflict (HWC); a global concern. This topic was presented by Dr. Arupa Mandal, an independent researcher and resident of Sundarbans whose passion is to do something for these women. She shared how one incident changes the entire life of a woman socio-culturally and socio-economically as they are commonly assigned the status of 'Husband eaters' and regarded as a misfortune by society. However, her presentation also reflects the strengths of these TWs which are less highlighted, and the call for strategic actions for their upliftment towards this section of society. Another such woman Seno Tshuhah of Nagaland, a teacher and a passionate farmer who strongly believes in sustainable living narrated the simplicity of village life and how a strong community and peer bonding can uplift a society. She recalled

how her mother grew her crops and she now follows the same path even after attaining modern education. She oriented the Conference participants with her way of advocating environmental sustainability and how indigenous knowledge of medicine, cropping, and community building make a regenerative ecosystem. Kovas Lili an autistic Student studying Bachelor at Eotvos Lorand University, Hungary, shared her experiences of growing up as an autistic individual, masking her feelings, questioning herself about why she is different from others, and being diagnosed. Through the lens of an autistic girl, the conference participants get to see how everyday masking stresses individuals with autism, and how unmasking is relaxing for them. She shared some of her unique strengths; her creation with digital art which despite imperfections is characterized by extreme attention to detail. Lili is fond of making cute humanoids, her cute pink wide-eyed queasy is something to adore and the animal humanoids are equally

creative. Her child-like innocence, curiosity about life, and happy face would light up any conversation, Lili has been able to conquer her challenges and is now a high-functioning happy member of society. Finally, there was another voice by Dr. Michelle Harrison, an over 80-year-old Doctor (from USA) whose life struggle was not for her own but for abandoned girls with disabilities in Kolkata, India. Dr. Harrison shared her life who came to India initially to adopt her second daughter is a real example of a woman who, in this world where most people are running to get their needs fulfilled, is selfless and devoted to protecting orphan girls, girls with disabilities, and tortured girls in her NGO, Kolkata. It is a pleasure to hear about her mesmerizing journey, a gynecologist cum psychiatrist left her settled life in a developed country, USA, and came to India being emotionally driven, empty-handed but with a passion to be a change. Since then, incessantly she has been working towards her goal, now crossing eight decades of her life she is still equally charismatic,

energetic, and motivating. Her organization Childlife Preserve Shishur Sevay became a best practices model of an inclusive, non-institutional home for lost and abandoned girls, some with disabilities, all having been rejected for adoption. Currently, she is also running a free inclusive playschool for the poor. Prof. Santoshi Halder, curator, coordinator, and organizer of the conference, Department of Education, University of Calcutta conveyed, "We live in a heterogenous world with each individual having a set of different abilities and as well as strengths. The idea of a truly inclusive society is to find creative ways to facilitate the potentialities of every individual matched to their inherent patterns or styles. The task begins with accepting and believing at the outset that everyone has a potential irrespective of their inner or contextual diversities and that needs to be recognized, embraced, respected, and facilitated through necessary strategic and proactive actions. Our abilities lie in finding creative ways to navigate the best pathways

personalized to match their inherent traits keeping in mind the contextual differences to facilitate full and effective participation of all people with diversities for an inclusive sustainable society". Being able to provide the scope, platform, and honor to such individuals with enormous energy, passion, and zeal to not only change their own lives but also to give back and do something significant for society and people is a moment of pride for the conference as expressed by Prof. Santoshi Halder, Department of Education, University of Calcutta. The funding and or in-kind support for the conference was provided by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), the National Library of India, the Ministry of Culture (GOI), the State Bank of India (SBI), the University of Calcutta, and the India Autism Center (IAC).

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Leap towards the next Generation: India's ambitious Fifth-gen fighter programme starting to take shape finally

Dr. Rahul Bharatbhushan Kamble



The Cabinet Committee on Security on March 7 cleared the project to design and develop the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA), which will be a fifth-generation, medium weight stealth fighter jet. It is being developed by the Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO), under a project worth around Rs 15,000 crore. DRDO's Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) will develop the stealth jet and the associated technology in partnership with various private and public sector agencies. According to sources, about five prototypes will be built in around five years. Public sector unit Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) will have a role in manufacturing of the Prototypes. The aircraft will propel India into a handful group of nations that have or are developing 5th generation fighter jets, based on futuristic technology in partnership with various private and public sector agencies.

A fifth-generation fighter jet has four main attributes. First, it is stealthy. That means it is near-invisible to enemy radars, which is a function of the jet's radar cross section. Secondly, it can 'Supercruise', or fly faster

than the speed of sound without using the fuel-guzzling afterburners on its engines. Third, it has advanced avionics and sensors with network centric operations. Increasingly, artificial intelligence is also being used in this regard to enhance pilot-aircraft interface. This allows a single pilot to both fly the aircraft and engage in combat. Last but not least, it should be able to outrange its adversaries by detecting and engaging targets from long distances, which is achieved by employing active electronically scanned array (AESA) radars. To achieve stealth, these aircraft are specifically shaped to scatter radar waves, instead of reflecting them back. After that, special materials and paints, called 'Radar absorbing structures' and materials, are used to further reduce radar reflectivity. When operating in stealth mode, these fighters have to conceal their weapons in an internal bay and can only count on the fuel carried in tanks located within their body. Weapons or fuel tanks carried externally, like conventional aircraft do under their wings, reflect radar waves and compromise stealth.

AMCA is proposed to be developed in two phases. Phase 1 development will result in AMCA Mk-1, powered by the US GE-414 engine. Phase 2 development will result in AMCA Mk2, which will feature an advanced, more powerful engine. What is more significant is it would be a difficult-to-swallow pill that the AMCA projected to be inducted by 2035 may not be a 'Completely 5th-generation fighter aircraft'. Based on specifications, it would be

categorised as a 4.5 gen Bird. AMCA Mk-1 will lack 'at least' three defining 5th-generation fighter traits which include Supercruise, Supermaneuverability and Sensor fusion. Additionally, AMCA Mk-1 would feature limited stealth. Why these timeline developments are significant, can be appreciated from the already existing global Fifth-gen fighter ecosystem.

China is set to outpace the US in the production of stealth aircrafts. In fact, China's inventory of the J-20A Mighty Dragon, China's first fifth-generation fighter, was slated to overtake that of the US Air Force's F-22 Raptor last year. The F-22 Raptor was the first-ever fifth-generation fighter to enter service. However, the F-22 hasn't been in production for some time now, and the US has shifted its attention to the F-35 Lightning II family of stealth fighters, which are meant to be more affordable. Incidentally, in April of 2018, India pulled out of the Fifth Generation Fighter Aircraft programme, or FGFA, which was a joint effort with Russia that was supposed to lead to an India-specific variant of the Russian Su-57 stealth fighter. Even South Korea and Turkey have taken a lead in the race for fifth-generation fighter aircraft. In July of 2022, the prototype of South Korea's KF-21 Boramae next-generation fighter jet conducted its first flight. Indonesia is a 20 per cent partner in the Boramae programme. The KF-21 Boramae is stealthier than previous fourth-generation jets. In February this year, Turkey's next-generation fighter, known as the TF KAAAN, took off for its first

flight. Of concern to India would be the fact that in August last year, the Turkish government had announced that Pakistan could officially join the Turkish Aerospace KAAAN aircraft programme. Also, the reports of Chinese J-20 being offered to Islamabad has been an eyebrow raiser.

Following years of ups and downs, the home-grown, Desi-bird LCA Tejas has been inducted by the Indian Air Force and a naval version is in the works. To address the Elephant in the room, India's fighter squadron strength is on a decline and lagging behind the sanctioned strength of 42 squadrons. New Delhi is exploring all options to augment the squadron numbers as a couple of Rafale and Tejas LCA squadrons are too inadequate to fill the gap. From the point of view of the IAF, the urgency and importance of acquiring manned stealth fighters mandate CCS approval for the AMCA project. Supercruise, Supermaneuverability, and situational awareness can always be added to a stealth platform later, as well as evolving technologies such as loyal wingman & drone swarm control. Although have stiled the much awaited go-ahead to the project, it is important to be aware of the pitfalls and remain alert to the impact of project delays on the IAF's combat capability. Meticulous careful steps in this direction along with meeting the requirements of the IAF, can prove to be a game changer

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"Navigating Global Disparities: Insights from the 2023-24 Human Development Report"

Pratap Kishore Mohanty



The 2023-24 Human Development Report, a flagship publication of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), offers a comprehensive analysis of global development trends. It provides valuable insights into the challenges hindering progress towards achieving sustainable development goals. Despite projecting a record increase in the Human Development Index (HDI) for 2023, the report underscores the persistent and widening gap between affluent and impoverished nations. India's rank at 134 on the global HDI serves as a poignant reminder of this disparity, especially when contrasted with countries like China and Sri Lanka, which rank higher in the High Human Development category. A significant highlight of the report is its exploration of the deepening global

inequalities, largely fueled by economic concentration. It is staggering to note that nearly 40% of global trade in goods is dominated by just three countries. Moreover, the market capitalization of the three largest tech companies exceeded the GDP of over 90% of countries in 2021. These stark statistics paint a grim picture, illustrating how economic disparities not only hinder human development but also exacerbate polarization and erode trust in institutions on a global scale. The report's findings underscore the urgent need for concerted efforts to address these disparities and foster inclusive development. It calls for targeted policies and strategies to promote economic diversification, enhance access to education and healthcare, and ensure equitable distribution of resources. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of strengthening governance mechanisms to build trust and promote transparency in decision-making processes. Furthermore, the report highlights the role of technology and innovation in driving

sustainable development. It underscores the need for harnessing the potential of digital technologies to bridge the digital divide and empower marginalized communities. By leveraging technology for social good, countries can create new opportunities for economic growth and development, while ensuring that no one is left behind. The 2023-24 Human Development Report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provides a comprehensive analysis of global political dynamics, shedding light on both the support for democracy and the challenges it faces. Despite nine out of ten people worldwide endorsing democracy, the report highlights a troubling trend of support for leaders who may undermine democratic principles. This trend, coupled with a significant portion of the global population feeling they have little control over their lives or influence on government decisions, points to a crisis of political agency. Moreover, the report underscores the impact of political polarization on policy approaches. It

notes that protectionist or inward-turning policies hinder global cooperation on critical issues such as climate change, digital regulation, and conflict resolution. This stands in stark contrast to the united action needed to address these urgent global challenges. In conclusion, the 2023/24 Human Development Report calls for a paradigm shift towards united action and interconnected solutions to tackle the complex challenges facing humanity. It emphasizes the need to invest in each other and adopt an opportunity-driven agenda that harnesses the benefits of the energy transition and artificial intelligence for human development. Breaking through the current deadlock requires a renewed commitment to a shared future, where global cooperation and collective action take precedence over polarization and division. The report serves as a powerful call to action for governments, institutions, and individuals alike to work together towards a more equitable and sustainable world.

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Farmers' protests have again taken center stage in national headlines, marked by peaceful demonstrations and unfortunate incidents. At the heart of these protests lies a crucial demand from the farming community-a legal guarantee of Minimum Support Price (MSP) for their crops. The concept of MSP stems from the Green Revolution era. Its primary objectives are to ensure food security and provide price support to farmers. MSP was designed as a policy instrument to incentivize farmers to adopt modern production technologies, serving as a floor price for surplus produce. However, its implementation is selective, focusing primarily on a few crops and regions. While MSP is officially announced for 23 crops annually, its practical implementation is limited to only a handful. The

most actively procured crops include rice, wheat, pulses, and cotton. In 2019-20, 80 per cent of rice procurement came from seven states, while almost all wheat procurement occurred in just five states. This centralized approach to public procurement has consequences, discouraging crop diversification in specific regions and hindering the development of agricultural markets in states like Punjab and Haryana. Interestingly, the largest rice and wheat production states, such as West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh, contribute only a fraction of the total public procurement. This stark imbalance further widens the gap between the quantity produced and the quantity procured by public agencies in many states. As a result, only a minority of farmers benefit from these operations and MSP. Despite these limitations, empirical evidence suggests that a well-functioning procurement system positively impacts farmers' returns. Districts with effective procurement operations witness paddy prices surpassing MSP by at least 4 per cent. This

provides a viable avenue for farmers to sell their produce and enhances their bargaining power in the absence of public procurement. In recent years, procurement activities have expanded both geographically and in quantity. Some states have surpassed their targeted procurement quantities, with Madhya Pradesh experiencing a significant increase in wheat procurement since 2007-08. Scholars argue that smallholders have benefited the most from these expanded operations, although a noticeable bias towards larger farmers persists nationally. The ongoing farmers' protests, centring around demands for a legal guarantee of Minimum Support Price (MSP), bring to the forefront the critical question: Is MSP the solution? While MSP has proven somewhat effective for crops included in the Public Distribution System (PDS) basket, its broader application poses challenges. The argument for a broad-based MSP and public procurement system is valid, but relying solely on MSP as the instrument to address agrarian distress



is questionable. More than merely announcing MSP, effective procurement operations are essential to bridge the gap between farmers' expectations and actual realizations. The potential consequences of higher MSP without proportional procurement are significant price falls due to inelastic demand. To avoid such scenarios, the government must respond with increased procurement quantities, which, while providing temporary relief, burdens the exchequer and results in accumulated stocks that must be efficiently managed through market channels. The challenges extend beyond procurement issues. Poor storage infrastructure, inadequate trading capabilities of state agencies, and the inability to dispose of

surplus stock on time can lead to substantial losses. Therefore, whether procurement is done at MSP or not, there exists a risk of a lose-lose outcome in the long run. MSP, at best, offers temporary relief with limited reach in terms of crops, geographies, and the size class of farmers. The ongoing farmers' protests are symptomatic of a persistent agrarian crisis that has been overlooked for too long. Agriculture is becoming increasingly unviable, as evidenced by the declining share of income from cultivation in the total household income of agricultural households, coupled with a steady decrease in average landholding size. Despite early recognition of the importance of a minimum viable size of agricultural land, such goals have yet to materialize. Lower productivity, higher production costs, poor infrastructure, and a

significant portion of smallholders operating outside formal marketing arrangements further challenge the viability of Indian agriculture. Public investment in agriculture, including extension services and research and development, has declined, exacerbating the sector's challenges. Risk management in agriculture is another critical aspect that often needs to be discussed. Agricultural households face both idiosyncratic and covariate risks, including those arising from sources outside of agriculture. Climate change and globalization introduce production and price risks, and existing risk management instruments have proven largely ineffective. Moreover, credit availability from formal sources remains a concern, with rural credit adversely affected by branch closures and priority sector lending limit changes.

While MSP is a valuable measure to mitigate price risks, especially for certain crops, the current protests should prompt a broader discussion beyond its existence. The focus should shift towards comprehensively addressing farmers' livelihood concerns. This involves creating opportunities for viable livelihood activities, enhancing the asset base of agricultural households, and building their capabilities to lead sustainable livelihoods. Diversify MSP to Include More Crops and Regions: To address the existing imbalance in public procurement, there is a need to expand the scope of MSP to cover a broader range of crops and regions. This will encourage crop diversification, reduce dependency on specific states, and promote a more inclusive and resilient agricultural sector. Prioritize substantial

investments in agricultural infrastructure, including storage facilities and market capabilities, to efficiently manage surplus stocks. Moreover, it enhances risk management mechanisms to address idiosyncratic and covariate risks faced by farmers, ensuring a more sustainable and competitive agricultural landscape. In conclusion, while farmers' protests highlight the urgent need for reforms, addressing the uneven distribution of public procurement and MSP benefits is essential. A more inclusive and efficient system is crucial to ensuring the well-being of farmers across the country. The agrarian crisis demands a holistic approach beyond MSP, resolving the structural issues plaguing Indian agriculture and empowering farmers for long-term sustainability. The ongoing protests should be seen as an opportunity to embark on a mission to reshape the agricultural landscape and improve the lives of those dependent on it.

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MERE POLITICIANS FAIL TO BECOME LEADERS PAR EXCELLENCE

M.R.LALU

A flash drought! With the national elections vigorously knocking our doors, this may be the term that would accurately narrate the political situation that the Congress is pressed to pass through. Many leaders in the party found it convenient to abandon the party that once remained their runway of political fortunes. There is of course a flaw in its plans. Almost, ever since its political dominance got replaced by the tactics of Narendra Modi, the party keeps trailing consistently irrespective of its plans to give it an overhaul. Consecrating Mallikarjun Kharge at the helm of the party was an indication, probably a calculated move taken to give Rahul Gandhi protective chest armor from being directly brought to focus as the party kept trailing repeatedly and help him stay safe from being held accountable. Behind this alteration, there must have been a second factor, a sheer realization that keeps giving it a rheumatic sensation, the reality of the Modi dominance and its power of shattering the hopes of the Congress recovery and the season of elections breaking floodgates of defections in the grand old party significantly weakening it. My subject of

amusement came with two defections from the Congress to the BJP in the state of Kerala. The first one was Anil Antony, son of Congress veteran and former Chief Minister of Kerala, A.K. Antony. And the second came a few days ago with former Chief Minister of Kerala, K. Karunakaran's daughter Padmaja Venugopal choosing to shift to the BJP camp. These desertions are apparent enough to prove the paradoxes that the party failed to fix. The question is why many leaders from across the country are leaving the party. The cases mentioned above have a queer element. The BJP, as of now, has a feeble existence in terms of electoral victories or winnability in Kerala. But still leaders from strong political backgrounds decide to vacate the Congress. Why does the Congress leadership fail to address this challenge? The situation is serious and the solution is nowhere to be seen on the horizon. Not even the thinnest glow of positivity is visible. On the other side, the BJP under Prime Minister Modi is all set to cross its magic tally of 400. He made it clear that his side of the alliance is going to fight the battle against the

'pariwar vadis', the group he alleges to have been in politics only to help their families to prospect and flourish. Undoubtedly, everybody, including the regional satraps has forcefully been working on the arithmetic that would at least save them from suffering an ultimate collapse. Trying to convert their lost existence to the stage of a visible revival is the principle that they are struggling to create their momentum for. There is a conscientious attempt to stay significant. Starting from the biggest family dynasty of the Congress, the Gandhis to the Thackerays of the Shivsena, the last ounce of their energy is squeezed to trickle for this single purpose. If the results of 2024 bring a fresh devastation, especially to the Congress for the third consecutive time, the family would face its severest revolt. Its ardent loyalists of today will desperately make attempts to seek asylum on the saffron tree irrespective of their harshest stand on the Hindutva soil on which the tree stands and expands its branches. Narendra Modi seems to have taken the whole game on his head. He is the one who openly declares that the national challenge is a

picturesque "Modi Vs All". Unlike 2014, the Prime Minister is full of confidence. Putting him on the front the leader in him is displaying not only confidence but also scripting the other side of the narrative. That if the party electorally collapses, he is willing to take the responsibility of its disintegration as well. This confidence cannot be brushed aside as a tainted aspiration of a politician. Not even the "India Shining Campaign" of the Vajpayee regime can be drawn as a parallel here which broke into smithereens when the results were out. Modi has dismantled all narratives that the opposition has been vehemently drafting against him. The key message of Modi's address to the party cadre during the BJP's National Council Meeting on February 18 clearly depicted his government's roadmap. He said the government was strictly futuristic and action oriented. And the factor that comes supportive and advantageous to his audacity is his clean government devoid of corruption, at least at the top. Above all, the popularity of the Prime Minister is not showing any diminishing trend. With his shrewd thespian oratory Modi

knows how to set the stage for the upcoming elections. The RJD patriarch's family taunt on Modi was timely for the Prime Minister as he grabbed the chance to mobilize a new narrative war against the opposition. As he once said, he prefers to be stoned by his opponents, so that he could effectively use them for building beautiful mansions. The same has happened this time as well. With him mobilizing the "Modi ki Parivar" campaign, his colleagues and party men began to popularize it instantly in social media with the slogan "Main hu Modi ka Parivaar (I am Modi's family)". National Elections 2019 also witnessed a similar situation. Rahul Gandhi's idiomatic "Chowkidar Chor He" was faced by millions of Modi supporters filling the social media with "Main Bhi Chowkidar". The BJP used this Hindi slogan extensively mobilizing the countrymen to emotionally rally behind the Prime Minister. The most influential part of his personality is his distinctive qualities as a leader. With his reach, acceptance and ability to practically accelerate the ambitions of the people of the country and with his exponentially visible policy decisions and initiatives, it seems the

leaders in the opposition alongside their so called secular peers have convincingly though silently began to recognize his posturing as the guardian of India's growth. There appears a visible distinction between him and other politicians. There have been relentless efforts throughout his political career planned and executed in his journey from a politician to a leader. You can have all definitions in the world of politics for a politician but if you want to define a leader, you should definitely have in him those qualities that he has developed through his years of self-sacrifice and commitment. Modi probably fulfils these characteristic requirements of a leader that separate him from a galaxy of politicians giving him the warmth of a leader. It is obvious that in democracy a meaningful opposition is a decisive factor. But the people who are supposed to contribute to turn their opposition congregation into a meaningful assembly need to grow beyond petty political gimmicks of a crowd. This is a defining growth that transforms a politician a good leader. Indeed this is the weakest part of their side and the demeaning factor of politicking in

India. When politicians fail to discover this transformation changing their perspectives adequately, Modi understands it fully and keeps manipulating his strategies drawing strength from their weaknesses. And the flash drought, the term I used in the beginning to describe the collapse of the principal opposition, is a result of this weakness, the

weakness that keeps them mere politicians not leaders. To become a leader par excellence, a politician should grow beyond petty politics.

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Letter to Editor

Sir
It's truly great to know that Maharashtra government in a recent resolution issued by the state school education department has permitted the teachers to use the prefix 'Tr' in front of their names on the lines of doctors and advocates. The resolution, besides introducing a dress code for school teachers has permitted teachers to use the prefix 'Tr' before their names. This noble and highly appreciative gesture is worth emulating as educators across the nation have been requesting the various governments for a prefix that can give significant recognition for those in the noble profession which is also considered to be the mother of all professions. The 'Tr' prefix can definitely uplift the spirits of school teachers who despite being the very foundation of education go unnoticed. Besides 'Dr' for doctors and 'Adv' for lawyers a few years ago Chartered Accountants were bestowed with a 'CA' and architects gracefully adopted 'Arch' for their titles. This gesture of Maharashtra is sure to be emulated by other state governments as teachers in the various states have been seeking this to acknowledge their indispensable role. Bestowing 'Tr' to teachers can garner more respect and admiration for the teaching community. The introduction of the 'Tr' prefix no doubt will redefine the teaching profession rewarding those in the profession with societal recognition and also gives a morale boost for teachers whose hard work and dedication create a better future for the society, nation and the whole world.
MPradyu Kannur
Geeth Thalikavu Kannur 670001.

Probe Agency's Big Claim Against K Kavitha, Arrested In Liquor Policy Case

New Delhi(KCN): BRS leader K Kavitha and some others "conspired" with top AAP leaders, including Arvind Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia, to get favours in the now-scrapped Delhi excise policy by paying ? 100 crore to the political party that rules Delhi, the Enforcement Directorate alleged on Monday.

Forty-six-year-old Kavitha, the MLC daughter of former Telangana chief minister K Chandrashekar Rao, was arrested by the federal agency last week from her Hyderabad home and she is in the ED custody till March 23.

Probe found, the ED claimed in a statement, that Kavitha along with others "conspired with the top leaders of AAP including Arvind Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia for getting favours in the Delhi excise policy-formulation and implementation." "In



exchange of these favours, she was involved in paying ? 100 crore to the leaders of AAP," the agency said. By the acts of "corruption and conspiracy" in the formulation and implementation of Delhi excise policy 2021-22, a continuous stream of illegal funds in the form of kickbacks from the wholesalers was generated for the AAP, it said. It alleged that

"Kavitha and her associates were to recover the proceeds of crime paid in advance to AAP and to further generate profits/proceeds of crime from this entire conspiracy." The agency, while seeking the remand of Kavitha last week, told the special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court that she was "one of the kingpins, a key conspirator and beneficiary of the Delhi excise policy scam".

Kavitha asserted earlier that she had done nothing wrong and alleged that the Centre was "using" the ED as the BJP could not gain a "backdoor entry" into Telangana. The Aam Aadmi Party has accused the BJP was using ED and CBI as its "goons" to finish off political opponents. The agency said it has conducted searches at 245 locations across the country since the registration of a case in

2022 and has arrested 15 persons, including former Delhi deputy CM and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Manish Sisodia, AAP leader Sanjay Singh and some liquor businessmen.

It has filed a total of six charge sheets in this case till now and had attached assets worth over ? 128 crore.

The ED and the CBI have alleged that the Delhi government's excise policy to grant licences to liquor traders allowed cartelisation and favoured certain dealers who had allegedly paid bribes for it, a charge strongly refuted by the AAP. The policy was subsequently scrapped and Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena recommended a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the irregularities in its formulation and implementation. Later, the ED registered a case under the PMLA.

"Always Trying To Change My Words...": Rahul Gandhi On PM's 'Shakti' Jab



New Delhi(KCN):

Congress MP Rahul Gandhi on Monday responded to criticism by Prime Minister Narendra Modi about his use of the word 'shakti' - a reference to the feminine divine energy - when describing the opposition's bid to defeat the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party in the April/May Lok Sabha election. The PM and the BJP had accused Mr Gandhi and the opposition, including the Congress-led INDIA bloc, of wanting to destroy 'shakti', and extended the comment to "...denying the existence of Lord Ram". "I accept their challenge. I will sacrifice my life," the PM said in Telangana's Jagtial.

Mr Gandhi then counter-accused the PM of "always trying to change the meaning of my words by twisting them in some way or the other", and said he had spoken about a "power (or 'shakti') that has captured institutions, media, industry, and the entire constitutional structure of India".

"...he (PM Modi) knows I have spoken a deep truth. The power that I mentioned, the power that we are fighting... the mask of that power is Modiji. This is such a power that has captured

institutions... the Central Bureau of Investigation, the Enforcement Directorate, the Income Tax Department, the Election Commission, the media, and the entire constitutional structure of India," he declared.

"I recognise that power... Modiji also recognises that power. This is not religious power. It is the power of corruption and falsehood. And this is why, whenever I raise my voice against him, Modiji gets upset and enraged," Mr Gandhi thundered at a 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra' event in Mumbai. Mr Gandhi was seen as referring to claims by the opposition that the BJP uses central agencies, like the CBI, ED and Income Tax Department, to target and intimidate rivals, particularly before an election.

Mr Gandhi also spoke about a "senior (Maharashtra political) leader" who quit the Congress.

"Weeping... he told my mother (Congress matriarch Sonia Gandhi), 'Soniji, I'm ashamed to say, I do not have the power to fight this people, this force. I do not want to go to jail'."

The "senior leader" was seen by many to be ex-Maharashtra Chief

Minister Ashok Chavan, who last month swapped the Congress for the BJP, and got a Rajya Sabha nomination, within 48 hours. Mr Chavan this morning, however, issued a statement refusing talk Mr Gandhi was referring to him.

Mr Chavan has three cases pending against him; two are linked to the 2010 Adarsh Cooperative Housing Society scam, which led to his resignation as Chief Minister.

In a response on X (formerly Twitter), Mr Gandhi also said the PM had waived loans worth thousands of crores while farmers commit suicide over repay debts of a few thousands.

The Congress leader also referred to earlier "crony capitalism" attacks on the Prime Minister and the BJP, and claimed Mr Modi had "auctioned the country's property to increase that power" while poor Indians live in poverty and suffer through an ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

The Prime Minister wasn't the only BJP figure to lash out at Mr Gandhi;

BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla accused the Congress MP of expressing "misogynistic" views.

North India Winter Quickly Transitioning To Summer-Like Conditions: Report

New Delhi(KCN): An analysis of temperature data since 1970 shows that winters are quickly transitioning to summer-like conditions in north India, shortening the s p r i n g season. Researchers at the US-based Climate Central, an independent group of scientists, conducted this analysis to place India within the context of global warming trends, focusing on the winter months (December-February).

The analysis revealed abrupt changes in temperature occurring in late winter across north India.

The average

temperatures in states in north India showed either a cooling trend or slight warming in January, followed by strong warming in February. This indicates that these regions are now experiencing abrupt transitions from cool winter-like temperatures to much warmer conditions traditionally observed in March, the researchers said.

To show this change, the researchers calculated the difference between the warming rates in January and February, expressed as the change in average temperature since 1970.

The most significant jump in warming rates

was observed in Rajasthan, where the average temperature in February was 2.6 degrees Celsius higher than in January.

A total of nine states and Union territories, including Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, and Uttarakhand, showed a January-February difference of more than 2 degrees Celsius. This supports the reports that it feels like spring has disappeared in many parts of India, the researchers said.

The analysis also suggested that winter,

overall, is warming across India, with every region showing a net warming trend during winter.

Manipur experienced the largest change in average winter (Dec-Feb) temperature since 1970 (2.3 degrees Celsius), while Delhi had the smallest change (0.2 degrees Celsius).

"The cooling in the central and northern Indian states during January followed by very strong warming in February creates the potential for a quick jump from winter to spring-like conditions," said Andrew Pershing, VP for Science at Climate Central.

Global average temperatures have risen by more than 1.3 degrees Celsius since 1850, exacerbating climate impacts, with 2023 being the hottest year on record.

The CO2 spewed into the atmosphere, largely due to the burning of fossil fuels since the start of the Industrial Revolution, is closely tied to it.

Climate science says the world needs to slash CO2 emissions by 43 per cent by 2030 to limit the average temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius, the guardrail to prevent worsening of climate impacts.

PM Modi Congratulates Putin On Election Win, Vows To Boost Ties



New Delhi(KCN): Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Monday in a congratulatory message to re-elected Russian President Vladimir Putin he looked forward to boosting ties to develop their "special" relationship.

"Look forward to working together to further strengthen the time-tested Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership between India and Russia in the years to come," Modi wrote on social media

platform X. He offered his "warm congratulations" to Putin. New Delhi and Moscow have ties dating back to the Cold War and Russia remains by far the biggest arms supplier to the world's most populous country.

India has shied away from explicit condemnations of Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, even as it pursues greater security ties with the United States.

It has bought hundreds of

millions of barrels of cut-price Russian crude since the invasion of Ukraine, saving itself billions of dollars while bolstering Moscow's war coffers. Russia has become India's top oil supplier, overtaking the traditional heavyweight Middle Eastern exporters.

But India has also deepened defence cooperation with Western countries in recent years, including in the Quad alliance with the United States, Japan and Australia.

Drop Box To Anonymous Post, Parties Explain How They Got Electoral Bonds

New Delhi(KCN): Several political parties declined to share details of electoral bond donors citing various legal provisions, while others said they received the funding instruments through "drop box" or by post without any name.

The DMK, which received most of its donations from a lottery firm, reached out to its donors to seek details of the electoral bonds as demanded by the Supreme Court in 2019.

The BJP cited the amendments to the Representation of People Act, 1951 and the relevant portions of the Reserve Bank of India Act and the Income Tax Act for not revealing its donors.

"It is duly submitted that the electoral bonds were introduced with the aim of bringing only accounted for funds in political funding while protecting the donors from any consequences, therefrom," the BJP said in its letter to the Election Commission.

The Congress shot off a



letter to the State Bank of India (SBI) seeking details of donors of electoral bonds, the amount, the bank account in which it was credited and the date.

The SBI responded to the Congress that the details of the electoral bonds were available with the political parties and shared the statement of the bank account which was shared with the Commission.

The Samajwadi Party shared details of bonds of relatively smaller amounts of ? 1 lakh and ? 10 lakh,

but merely mentioned that 10 bonds of ? 1 crore each were received by post without any name.

The DMK, which received almost 77 per cent of its funds from lottery king Santiago Martin's Future Gaming, said it had reached out to the donors of the party to get details of the donations they had made.

"The scheme also does not require the details of the donor to be furnished to the donee. ... Be that as it may, following the directions of Hon'ble Supreme Court, we

contacted our donors and we were able to collect the details from them," the DMK said.

The Telugu Desam Party mentioned "not readily available" in the column for listing out the names of donors.

The Trinamool Congress said the electoral bonds were sent to the party office and were "dropped in the drop box". The party said some bonds were sent through messengers from various persons who wished to support the party, many of whom prefer to remain

anonymous.

The NCP, then led by Sharad Pawar, expressed inability to furnish details of donors against each bond as the party had not maintained details or issued any receipts.

The letter by the NCP to the Election Commission said several of its office-bearers were busy with the election campaign.

"Wherever possible we have indicated the name of the person through whom bonds were received by the party," the NCP said.

The Goa unit of the Congress reached out to its donor VM Salgaonkar and Brothers to get details of the electoral bonds worth ? 30 lakh given by them to the party.

The RJD said the details about donations worth ? 1.5 crore were not readily available. The Nitish Kumar-led Janata Dal (United) has told the Election Commission that someone delivered to its office an envelope with electoral bonds worth ? 10 crore in 2019, which were redeemed by the party.

Poll Silence Hurts

Bhubaneswar(KCN): It is said silence is always blissful. However, the silence during festival season is certainly not. Festival means lot of joy, noise and merry making. When the entire country is celebrating the 'Festival of Democracy' i.e elections, there is unprecedented silence in Odisha.

This is because the state's two main political parties are in a fix. The announcement of election dates by the Election Commission of India on Saturday, has failed to break the silence. The entire state appeared to be silent mode and no one is seen celebrating the biggest festival of the world's biggest democracy in this coastal state. The people do not get voice on how to react over the election date announcement when the state's two major party-

the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are not sure whether to go for a pre-poll alliance or not. While sources said that the topmost leadership of BJD and the BJP are in the mood to go for an alliance, the rank and file of both the parties are against it. But, the party leaders in the state and at the grass root level have no voice to protest though a section of BJP people have expressed their opinion against a pre-poll alliance. It appears that the BJD's entire team is silent; even they do not have the scope to express their displeasure.

The State BJP President Manmohan Samal, who openly announced that his party would go alone in the upcoming elections, has paid a heavy price. He has to take a U turn and later announce that the party top leaders will take a decision whether

the saffron brigade will so solo or not. Many BJP leaders like MP Jual Oram and MP Pratap Sarangi have openly opposed the idea of an alliance. However, it seems that their opposition has little impact.

Though they remain silent, the BJD leaders and rank and file also not satisfied over the idea of the pre-poll alliance with the BJP whom they have been strongly opposing in the ground level. "How can we take BJP people into confidence and campaign for their candidates in the elections," asked a BJD leader. Similar was also the reaction of BJP leaders.

Elections in Odisha has always been violence free, but never silent as it is happening now. The party workers do campaign against each other. There were



competitions among parties to occupy space on roadside empty walls. The party workers also shout on top of their voices using loudspeaker during campaigning creating a all together different atmosphere. Electioneering has all along been source of joy for the party workers. Therefore, the ECI in his media brief described it as the "Festival of Democracy". However, the prevailing silence has made the party people to go on silent mode. The festival has already

begun across the country, except Odisha as many people now look at the PM-CM who hold string to their happiness. If there is no alliance, the silence may break. If the alliance is formalized, the silence may also deepen even as the parties announce name of their candidates. Many leaders fear that they may be denied party ticket as the seat which

they represented earlier and want to represent fall in share of the other party. Either way, one party will be unhappy if the other party gets the ticket. In the process, the state this time may witness many independent candidates in the fray due to the alliance factor.

Taking media into confidence, a BJP leader said that National Leadership needs to feel the pain of the state leaders and the grass root level workers. Everybody is ready for a fight and they have done it since 2009. They have practiced to oppose each other. However, when the real battle starts for the 2024 elections, it is something like taking away the arms from a soldier. This is the case

for both the BJD and the BJP. The real foot soldiers who work at the ground level and bring votes to the polling stations are demoralized. They are ready to fight, but they have to surrender before the enemy as their parties at the top level have y forged alliance. The situations for both the parties are similar. Both the BJD and the BJP will go to the battle ground with reluctant soldiers, who are mentally demoralized and weak.

This is the case because, another major party Congress is not in a situation to take benefit from the opportunity. The Congress is almost out of the ring as its vote share in subsequent elections has come

down. Now the Congress vote share is about 16 per cent as BJP raised its strength while BJD maintained its position since 2009.

Adding to the BJD and BJP's situation, the Congress people are also silent as the party maintains a wait and watch policy. The Congress is on a strategy to take benefit out of the situation. But, the people in Congress under the prevailing situation do not have the capacity to grab the power. The party has neither the men, muscle nor money required to win elections, pointed a political observer.

Anyway, the 2004 election scenario is something different from all the elections in the past. Silence prevails and workers as well as leaders are clueless.

ITI students create giant fish sculpture from plastic waste

Berhampur(KCN): Students of the state government-run Industrial Training Institute (ITI) Berhampur have made a giant fish sculpture from plastic waste with an aim to reduce plastic pollution. A 30-foot high and 1,500 kg heavy fish sculpture was made by the students using iron scraps. Around 20,000 used plastic bottles of different sizes were collected by students, mostly from seashores. After filling, the weight of the sculpture was around 1,500 kg, said Rajat Panigrahy, Principal, ITI Berhampur. The sculpture was installed near the institute's campus for public view and to educate the people



about plastic pollution with the objective of 'Swachhata Hi Seva', he said. "We have created this unique sculpture with the objectives of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). This emphasises the crucial need to conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas and marine resources, by preventing thousands of plastic bottles from entering landfills or potentially ending up in the oceans,"

said the principal. He said plastic pollution is a major threat to aquatic ecosystems. Plastic debris entangles and harms marine life, disrupts food chains and pollutes the delicate ocean environment. By effectively up-cycling plastic bottles into an impactful art installation, the institute creates awareness about this critical issue, he added. On Gandhi Jayanti, last year, the institute unveiled a 23-foot tall

elephant sculpture from 30,000 used plastic bottles, which won appreciation from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

Earlier, the students of the institute had made sculptures like Dashavatar (10 incarnations of Lord Vishnu), Mahatma Gandhi, Netaji Subash Chandra Bose and former Odisha chief minister Biju Patnaik by using the discarded materials. All these sculptures have been installed in its open scrap park. They had also made an idol of Sri Ganesh by using automobile scraps, which was installed in a park of the Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC).

Malkangiri tribal girl featured in Forbes

Malkangiri(KCN): Jayanti Buruda, a tribal woman journalist and social worker from Malkangiri district, has made it to the 2024 Forbes India WPower list featuring India's top 23 self-made women. Jayanti, the only Odia in the list, has overcome many hurdles in her journey as a journalist in tribal-dominated remote Malkangiri district to being featured in Forbes. She expressed surprise and happiness that she has figured in Forbes magazine.


Being the first woman journalist of her district and also the first tribal girl to receive a fellowship from NWMI, Jayanti imparts training to tribal women of her district on journalistic practices and technology so that every news of the remote area reaches everyone. She has carved a niche as a social worker by founding organisations like Jungle



Rani and Bada Didi Union that work on girls' education and sexual and reproductive health. She started Bada Didi Union in 2017 with about 20 educated young women of her area. They first started holding awareness camps

among young women about menstrual problems and the use of sanitary pads by going door to door in various villages of Banda Ghati. As sanitary pads were not available in the interior villages, Jayanthi started

distributing sanitary pads from house to house with the help of the public. Later, she started Jungle Rani, a social media-based news platform which is managed by 50 tribal women from all seven blocks of Malkangiri.



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Japanese Majors Toyota Tsusho & Secom to Set Up Second Multi-Super Specialty Hospital in India for Rs 1,000 cr



Bengaluru (KCN): In its continuous pursuit to provide quality healthcare to larger communities, Sakra World Hospital announced its visionary plan for a new state-of-the-art facility in Bengaluru on Saturday. The momentous occasion marked the 10th anniversary celebrations of the pioneering MNC hospital group. Sakra is India's first 100% FDI Multi-Super Specialty Hospital powered by Japanese innovation and technology through a collaboration between healthcare major Secom Medical System and trading conglomerate Toyota Tsusho. The event, held in the presence of Mr. Tatsuro Fuse, Executive Director, SECOM Co., Ltd. & Chairman, SECOM Medical System Co. Ltd. Japan, Mr. Hiroshi Yonenaga, Division CEO Senior Executive Officer, Toyota Tsusho corporation, Japan, Mr. Yuichi Nagano, Managing Director of Sakra World Hospital, Bengaluru, Mr. Naoya Matsumi, Deputy Managing Director, Sakra

World Hospital, Bengaluru, and Mr. Lovekesh Phasu, Group Chief Operating Officer, Sakra World Hospital, Bengaluru, witnessed the unveiling of Sakra's expansion plans and other groundbreaking initiatives. Strategically located in Banaswadi, Bengaluru North, to be constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 1,000 crore, Sakra's new facility will boast a remarkable 500-bed capacity and a sprawling built-up area spanning 600,000 sq. ft (55,740 sq. m). This expansion signifies Sakra's commitment to providing unparalleled healthcare services to the local community and beyond. Also, the latest healthcare project brings forth an unparalleled synergy of medical advancements and technological innovations to the Indian shores. At the forefront of integrated tertiary care, the new unit will offer a comprehensive range of specialties and super specialties, including

advanced oncology treatments and cutting-edge rehabilitation programs. "We are proud to combine the expertise of Secom Medical System and Toyota Tsusho to deliver world-class healthcare solutions in Bengaluru. The new facility is the extension of our firm commitment towards fulfilling the healthcare needs of the local and international communities," said Mr. Tatsuro Fuse, while announcing the new project. At the event, the global leadership of Sakra World Hospital provided insights into various aspects, including the hospital's ten-year journey in India, the integration of cutting-edge healthcare technology and innovation from Japan, and its forthcoming plans with a 1,000-bed Phase 2 expansion. The leaders also highlighted their investment strategies and the incorporation of state-of-the-art medical equipment sourced from Toyota Tsusho and Secom Medical System, which ensure the highest standards of care.

Haier celebrates its 20 years of innovating "In India, For India", unveils its new vision of "More Creation, More Possibilities"

New Delhi, (KCN): Haier Appliances India, the No.1 global major appliances brand for 15 consecutive years celebrates the 20th anniversary of its establishment in India. This significant milestone demonstrates Haier's unwavering commitment to customer-inspired innovation and its dedication to 'Make in India' and 'Made for India'. Adding to the celebrations, Haier India expanded its product offerings by launching a range of OLED & QLED TVs, Super Heavy-Duty Air conditioner series, Kinouchi Black Air conditioner, Vogue and smart convertible refrigerators, washer and dryer front load washing machine, commercial refrigeration solutions and commercial air conditioners. Focused on empowering consumers through smart and intuitive products curated for Indian homes, Haier India also unveiled a range of smart innovations including Robo-vacuum cleaners, smart kitchen appliances, microwaves, water heaters and much more. Commenting on Haier India's 20th anniversary, Mr. NS Satish, President, Haier Appliances India, said, "Today is a historic moment for Haier India as we celebrate our 20th anniversary in India. We are extremely proud of this milestone as it reflects the support and deep connection we have with our customers, partners, and employees who have played a pivotal



role in every step of our success. Throughout this journey, we have been driven by our commitment to customer-inspired innovation, dedication to 'Make in India and Made for India'. As a responsible brand committed to the consumer and country, we have worked towards offering solutions that enhance the customer's everyday life with convenience, comfort and are sustainable." He further added, "Moving our legacy forward it's a moment filled with profound pride to unveil our new vision, 'More Creation, More Possibilities'. This vision delves from our ongoing commitment to make our customer's daily lives more efficient, convenient, and comfortable. Keeping this in mind, we are committed to strengthening our position in the industry ensuring that we exceed expectations and pioneer new horizons in the market" As a brand at the helm of innovation driven by the evolving consumer

needs, Haier India unveiled its new vision through a new brand slogan, "More Creation, More Possibilities." Refining customer experiences through best in class technology, the brand has always ensured to understand their pulse and stay ahead of the curve while offering innovative solutions that makes everyday life easier and smarter. Moreover, this rebranding represents Haier India's focus towards nurturing growth, sparking innovation, and unlocking endless possibilities for its partners, dealers, customers, community, and employees. Additionally, the new vision is aligned with Haier's impressive 25% year-over-year CARG in India and its anticipated 35% growth in 2024. With a focus on strengthening its position in consumer durable sector, Haier India has been investing in expanding its manufacturing capacity across the Greater Noida and Pune plant. A testimony of this is the

inception of manufacturing of new range of commercial refrigerators, commercial Air conditioners and Kitchen appliances at its Pune plant. This strategic expansion reinforces the company's commitment to 'Make in India and Made for India.' Over the last 20 years, Haier India has transformed from a category leader to an ecosystem brand with products and services for every Indian household. Established in 2004, Haier entered the market offering expertise in 5 categories. Understanding the consumer pulse and their needs, Haier today has a wide range of product offerings under 11 categories including Refrigerators, Washing Machines, TVs, Air conditioners, water heaters, Robo-vacuum cleaners, deep freezer, microwaves, kitchen appliances, commercial refrigeration solutions and commercial air conditioners. With a special focus on customer-inspired innovation, Haier India has launched several

industry firsts including India's first 3 Door Side-by-Side (SBS) refrigerator, Bottom Mounted Refrigerator (BMR), Glass door refrigerator, Self-Clean Inverter and Anti-scaling technology in Washing Machines, shock-proof technology in water heaters, self-cleaning in Air Conditioners, and India's first-ever InstaJackets for Haier 2-door Side-by-Side and 3-door Side-by-Side, Bottom Mounted Refrigerator series. Taking its commitment of Customer-Inspired innovation a step further, Haier India launched a range of new products including: Haier's Smart QLED Series S800 QT: Designed to elevate the home entertainment experience, the S800 QT is available in 65" and 55" variants. With quantum dot technology at its core, the S800 QT series delivers an exceptional spectrum of colors, incredibly lifelike visuals, and unmatched clarity. This revolutionary series seamlessly integrates cutting-edge technology with a visually captivating look, aiming to immerse consumers in an unparalleled cinematic journey from the comfort of their homes. Super Heavy-Duty air conditioners: The latest lineup of Super Heavy-Duty air conditioners features Supersonic cooling and Hexa Inverter technology that enables 65% energy savings and 20X faster cooling for quick relief in 10 seconds.

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

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

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

achievement, Mr. Anuj Jain, Managing Director, Kansai Nerolac Paints Ltd. said, "We are elated to be placed in the 'Leadership' position in the CRISIL Sustainability Yearbook 2022. This report is a testament to our commitment towards sustainability. At Nerolac, sustainability is at the forefront of all our operations to deliver value to our stakeholders. ESG continues to remain a priority and that has helped us create a positive impact on our communities and the environment. We will continue increasing our ESG efforts as we focus on growing our business sustainably.

Statement by State Bank of India

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

Rajasthan, was just 29 years old and had joined EDB in March 2019. Vijay Kumar was one of many such bankers hailing from different parts of the country, who are working in the Kashmir Valley and other difficult places to ensure delivery of

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

Unacademy produces 178 Rankers for UPSC CSE

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

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

Blue Dart signs the UNFCCC Climate Neutral Now Pledge

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

to ambitious CO2 reduction targets. Deutsche Post DHL Group has adopted a package of measures worth up to €7 billion to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 in line with the Paris Climate Agreement, primarily to expand the use of sustainable technologies and fuels in its fleets and buildings. Its long-term goal is to reduce GHG emissions to net zero by

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

in the industry to set quantified carbon-reduction targets. The organisation, as a part of the Deutsche Post DHL Group aimed to increase their CO2 efficiency by 10% by the year 2012 and 30% by the year 2020. Against the 30% target, Blue Dart achieved a 34% CO2 efficiency in 2021. Pablo Ciano, EVP Corporate Development, DPDHL Group says, "As a Group, we have

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

