

BJP will contest all 147 Assembly, 21 Lok Sabha seats alone in Odisha: Manmohan

Bhubaneswar(KCN): Odisha BJP president Manmohan Samal Friday said that his party will contest alone in both the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in the state.

Samal thanked BJD for extending support to Modi Government in the Centre, but announced on his X (formerly Twitter) handle that BJP will fight alone this time in all 21 Lok Sabha and 147

Assembly seats of Odisha.

Samal wrote, "For the last 10 years, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) of Odisha, under the leadership of Shri Naveen Patnaik, has been supporting the Government of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on a number of issues of

national importance. We thank him for that."

"We feel that in the states, where there are double engine governments across the country, the development and welfare of the poor have been accelerated and the concerned states are also making progress in all fields," he added.

In the same post, Samal also alleged that many welfare schemes of the Modi government in Odisha are not reaching the grassroots level, due to which the poor sisters and brothers of Odisha are not getting the benefits.

"We are unable to agree with the state government on a number of issues related to Odisha's self-respect, pride and interests of the people of the state."

"The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will go alone in all the 21 Lok Sabha and 147 Assembly seats this time to build a developed India and a developed Odisha under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of four and a half crore Odias," he concluded.



BJD To Contest For All Assembly, Lok Sabha Seats In Odisha: Pranab Prakash Das



Bhubaneswar(KCN): "The BJD will contest in all 147 assembly constituencies and all 21 Lok Sabha constituencies with the support of people of Odisha and win more than three fourth seats under the leadership of Shri Naveen Patnaik," said Biju Janata Dal's Organisational Secretary Pranab Prakash Das, in a 'X' post on Friday.

Putting an end to the much-hyped alliance, the BJD today announced its decision to go "solo" in the ensuing elections, and the ruling BJD also cleared the air and declared to contest the elections "independently".

"With the blessings of Lord Jagannatha and the faith of the people of Odisha, BJD has been serving the state and transforming it like never before in every sector."

BJD will contest in all 147 assembly constituencies and all 21 Lok Sabha constituencies with the support of the people of Odisha and win more than three-fourth seats under the leadership of Shri Naveen Patnaik.

BJD will continue to take decisions keeping people of Odisha in the forefront always and their welfare in true spirit of cooperative federalism and statesmanship required for nation-building.

New Odisha and Empowered Odisha will be our goal and we are on track to achieve this under the leadership of our leader Shri Naveen Patnaik," the BJD Organisational Secretary said.

Veteran Odisha leader Damodar Rout passes away

Bhubaneswar(KCN):

Senior Biju Janata Dal (BJD) leader and former minister Damodar Rout passed away at a private hospital in Bhubaneswar Friday.

Rout was admitted to the hospital after he suffered a cardiac arrest March 18.

President Droupadi Murmu, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and other senior leaders cutting across party lines expressed their condolences on the demise of Rout.

"Saddened by the demise of veteran leader Shri Damodar Rout who served as minister several times in Odisha Government. Shri Rout's contribution to the progress of Odisha and the country will always be remembered. My deepest condolences to his family members and followers," President Murmu posted on her X.

Expressing his condolences, Chief Minister Patnaik said, "I am saddened learning about the death of Senior leader of BJD and former



minister Damodar Rout.

This is an irreparable loss in Odisha politics. His work for the service and development of people will always be remembered."

The veteran leader, a veterinarian, was elected to the Odisha Assembly for the first time from Erasama constituency in Jagatsinghpur district on Janata Dal ticket in 1977.

Rout won the seat five times between 1977 and 2004. He later contested from the Paradip constituency and won the seat twice in 2009 and 2014 on the BJD ticket before losing from Balikuda-Erasama in 2019 polls.

Rout also held several portfolios as minister during his 50-year-long political career.

He was a minister in Naveen Patnaik's cabinet four times and was also considered a close associate of former Chief Minister Biju Patnaik.

However, Rout was expelled from the BJD September 12, 2018, over allegations of anti-party activities. He was embroiled in several controversies for his comments on the Brahmin community and Aanganwadi workers.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik revoked the expulsion order against Rout in January 2024.

Cuttack MP Bhartruhari Mahtab snaps ties with BJD



Cuttack(KCN): Cuttack MP Bhartruhari Mahtab resigned from the BJD's primary membership on Friday. While addressing a press meet, the Parliamentarian said, "The party was formed to fight against corruption and to stay away from self-aggrandizement. Believing this, the people of Odisha supported the party. But during the last few years, things went wrong and I often raised the issues but nothing happened. So I have distanced myself from the party. I believe I can do the work for what I had joined the party, more freely after quitting the party." "I was criticised for sharing my views

freely, or even if I said something, it was distorted and discussed. So I decided to distance myself. You may have noticed that I have not been saying anything about party matters because I failed to rectify them," he said. Referring to an episode from the Ramayan, he said he severed his relationship with the

party to build Odisha in a better way. "And everything has a limit. And I have drawn the line because things have crossed the limits of patience," he said.

When asked if he would join the BJP, he said, "Before taking any decision, I would like to have consultations with my well-wishers and friends."

"My decision to snap my umbilical cord with the party may be harsh but it gives me immense relief. This is because I had been living with a kind of pain. When it became unbearable, I took the decision," said the six-time Parliamentarian. Notably, Mahtab's move came a day after the Special Court for MP/MLAs framed charges against him in connection with the alleged assault on a police officer.

ED says Kejriwal kingpin of alleged excise policy scam, non-cooperative in investigation

New Delhi(KCN): Arrested Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is the kingpin of the alleged excise policy scam and is directly involved in its implementation and giving favours to the 'South Group', the ED told a court here on Friday as it sought his custody for questioning Kejriwal, who was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the liquor policy case on Thursday evening, was produced in Rouse Avenue Court as he withdrew his plea filed before the Supreme Court



Seeking 10 days custody, Additional Solicitor General S.V. Raju, who appeared for the ED with special counsel Zoheb Hossain, said that Kejriwal was non-cooperative in the investigation. "We want to gather information and interrogate him," he said. He contended that the CM "is involved in the use of proceeds of crime", and had demanded kickbacks from the "South Group" in exchange for giving favours to them. The South Group in question includes accused persons from whom, the ED claimed, that AAP leaders

received kickbacks to the tune of Rs 100 crore, including Sarath Reddy, Raghav Magunta, and Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy. Last week, Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) MLC K. Kavitha was allegedly held for being a part of this group. "Proceeds of crime of about Rs 45 crore received from the South

Group were used by Aam Aadmi Party in the Goa campaign in 2021-22," ASG Raju said, adding that proceeds of crime were not only the Rs 100 crore bribe but also the profits made by bribe payers. "Aam Aadmi Party is a beneficiary but it doesn't exist individually. It is a company. Every person

New Delhi(KCN): The Bharatiya Janata Party was the largest beneficiary of electoral bonds between April 2019 and January 2024 - companies donated ₹ 5,594 crore in that period - the Election Commission of India said this week. The BJD pocketed over three times the amount (Rs 1,592 crore) the Trinamool Congress took home and more than four times the amount donated to its arch-rivals Congress (Rs 1,351 crore).

Fourth on the list was former Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao's Bharat Rashtra Samithi, which was dumped out of power by the Congress in November; the BRS got ₹ 1,191 crore. Odisha's Biju Janata Dal, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam from Tamil Nadu, and the YSR Congress Party and Telugu Desam Party from Andhra Pradesh are next on the list; the BJD got ₹ 775 crore and the DMK got ₹ 632 crore, while the TDP raked in ₹ 211 crore and the YSRCP got ₹ 128 crore.

Exactly how much each party received through the contentious electoral bonds - in a landmark verdict last month the Supreme Court called the scheme "unconstitutional" - has come to light after the State Bank of India released the alphanumeric codes that match donors to parties. The SBI - hauled up by the court for first appearing to delay release of electoral bonds data and then neglecting to provide matching codes - submitted the data to the Election Commission on Thursday. Under the rules, the SBI was the only bank allowed to issue electoral bonds; this, of course, was only till the top court ordered the scheme be scrapped and the public sector bank to stop selling bonds. Earlier the SBI had released two lists - one of donors and the other of receiving political parties - but without the codes it was not possible to see which donor had given how much to which party.

India, Bhutan Ink Strategic Pacts, Establishment Of Rail Links Soon



Thimphu(KCN): India and Bhutan today exchanged several strategic MoUs and signed agreements in the fields of energy, trade, digital connectivity, space and agriculture, and finalised the MoU on the establishment of rail links between the two nations. The MoUs were exchanged in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bhutanese counterpart Tshering Tobgay during the ongoing two-day State visit of PM Modi.

Prime Minister Modi met his Bhutanese counterpart in Thimphu

"over a working lunch hosted in his honour".

He thanked Prime Minister Tobgay for the "exceptional public welcome accorded to him, with people greeting him all along the journey from Paro to Thimphu," India's Ministry of External Affairs said here in a statement. The two leaders held discussions on various aspects of the multi-faceted bilateral relations and "forged an understanding to further enhance cooperation in sectors such as renewable energy, agriculture, youth exchange, environment and forestry, and tourism," it said.

State-Level World Forestry Day 2024 Observed

Bhubaneswar (KCN): Odisha is the wealthiest State when it comes to natural resources, so we feel blessed to take birth in this beautiful State. For the safety and security of nature and the environment, the protection and preservation of forests and wild animals are imperative. Future generations will not forgive us unless we preserve nature for them, stated Additional Chief Secretary of Forest, Environment and Climate Change Department Shri Satyabrata Sahu. World Forestry Day 2024 was observed

today at a State-level function in Jayadev Bhawan, Development and nature are two sides of a coin, and a balance has to be maintained between both of them. The officers and staff of the Forest Department have to play a crucial role here, said Chief Guest Sri Sahu. The State has gained 893 Sq. KMs of forest and tree cover during the last two assessment years i.e. from 2019 to 2021 as per the Forest Survey of India Report 2021. Forest growth has a direct impact on rain, surface drinking water and pollution.

Considering its importance, we have to amplify the afforestation drive involving one and all, urged Sri Sahu. PCCF & HOFF, Odisha Sri Debidutta Biswal

highlighted the year's theme "Forest & Innovation". The department has taken several steps to make forest polythene free and it will intensify such drive in times to come, added Sri Biswal.

PCCF (WL) Sri Susanta Nanda spoke about the importance of wildlife for the protection and preservation of the eco-system, while PCCF (P&SM) Sri Prafull Kumar Mallik said that forest is no longer a local resource, it is now a global resource. This is the most important part of nature. State Forestry Award-2024 was awarded to 40 numbers of Forest field personnel of the rank of Forest Guard, Forester and Forest Ranger for their outstanding performance in service. A book titled "Highlights of Odisha Forestry Sector-2024" was released on the occasion. Meanwhile, a photo exhibition depicting the wildlife of Odisha, Nandankanan, Eco-tourism, Medicinal plants and different programmes of the Department was inaugurated by the guests before the function. Shri Mrutyunjaya Ratha anchored the programme.

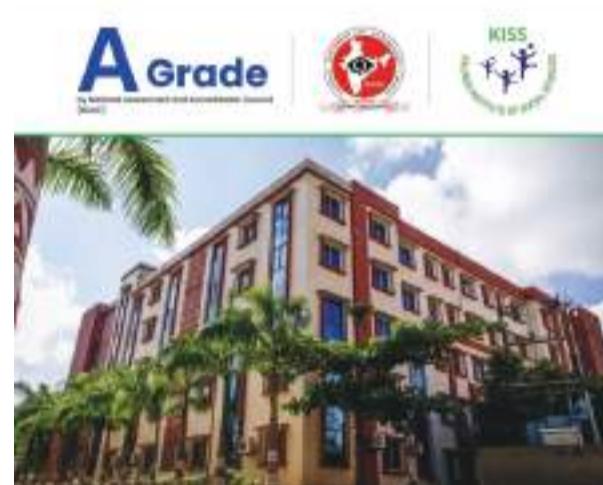


KISS University Granted 'A' Grade Accreditation by NAAC in First Cycle

Bhubaneswar, (KCN): The KISS Deemed-to-be-University has been awarded the prestigious 'A' grade accreditation by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in its first cycle of accreditation. The university is the first institution in the country to achieve this feat in its first attempt at accreditation by NAAC. The recognition by NAAC as an 'A' grade institution is a testament to the quality of education and the dedication to academic excellence at KISS University.

The Ministry of Education granted deemed-to-be-university status to KISS in 2017, acknowledging its significant contributions to the field of education.

"Happy to announce



KISS Deemed to be University got NAAC grade in its first cycle since 2017 recognition of DU status. A unique feat, adding to accolades like the UNESCO Literacy Prize 2022. This marks an academic pinnacle for our fully free, residential school for tribal children", declared the Founder of KIIT and KISS Dr. Achyuta Samanta. Educational stakeholders and the academic community have expressed their happiness and pride in achieving this milestone, giving the credit for the recognition to Dr Samanta, his dedication and perseverance. KISS is the only

university in the world that offers education to tribal students free of cost. The accreditation underscores the university's commitment to providing quality education. The timely application and successful accreditation by NAAC as an 'A' grade institution are considered a major achievement for KISS University.

Dr Samanta extended his heartfelt thanks to the teachers, staff, students, and supporters of KISS University for their hard work and dedication, which played a crucial role in achieving this accolade. This success has sparked a wave of happiness among the students, faculty, staff, and the tribal communities associated with the university.

Odisha plans green polling booths in Ganjam, Kandhamal districts



Berhampur (KCN): People in Odisha's Ganjam and Kandhamal districts can expect a novel experience when they go to polling stations to cast their votes in the upcoming Lok Sabha and Assembly elections. The Election Commission of India (ECI) has announced four-phase elections in the state on May 13, May 20, May 25, and June 1.

Apart from introducing all-women and persons with disabilities (PWD) managed booths, both district authorities have decided to set up eco-

friendly polling stations, aiming to engage and educate voters on environmental sustainability. These green polling booths will be entirely plastic-free and adorned with fully biodegradable materials, officials said. The objective behind this initiative is to raise awareness about a plastic-free environment and attract voters to the polling booths, they added. The idea of eco-friendly polling booths is, however, not new. Previous elections in

Chhattisgarh's Bastar division, Goa, Meghalaya, Assam, and panchayat elections in Ernakulam district in Kerala have witnessed the setup of eco-friendly booths to engage voters and promote a plastic-free environment.

Ganjam district collector Dibyajyoti Parida said they have planned to set up 13 plastic-free booths with at least one in each assembly constituency in the upcoming elections. The district has 13 assembly constituencies with 3,077 polling booths.

The booths will refrain from using plastic and instead utilise cloth and minimal paper. Natural colours will be used to mark the booths, he said. Similarly, in Kandhamal district, around 25 green booths will be set up. These booths will be decorated with saplings and the waiting area and corridors of the polling stations will be covered with green sheds. Earthen utensils like pots and mugs will be kept for drinking water, said Ashish Ishwar Patil, Kandhamal collector.

Patil mentioned that the eco-friendly booths will be primarily established in schools, preferably those equipped with solar panels.

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Strategic importance in Lakshadweep



China has increased India's strategic challenge by building inland waterways and ports in several countries bordering the Pacific Ocean-Arabian Sea. In the past few decades, India has become a sensation. Has rapidly modernized the power. India has also strengthened its navy and coast guard forces in the last few years to deal with it. In addition, Lakshadweep is very important among the centers that India has established to enhance its maritime security capabilities. Lakshadweep is a sum of sixty islands and its total area is thirty two square kilometers. It extends to about thirty thousand square miles in the Arabian Sea.

The Arabian Sea borders Yemen, Oman, Pakistan, Iran, India and the Maldives. It is a

strategic area, which connects many important 'CP lanes' ports. It therefore becomes an important route for international trade. The Arabian Sea is rich in oil and natural gas. It is an important form of energy in the region. The archipelago can be used as a vantage point to monitor movement. It is also interesting to note that India's EEZ is very large, including Lakshadweep. The EEZ extends for over two hundred miles. For example, 370 km from the coast of any country. KM. Thanks to Lakshadweep, India has gained control over a large area of sea through which the movement of ships going far away can be monitored. There is an Indian naval base in Lapa. It is expected to be helpful.

The total coastline of India is seven thousand five hundred and sixteen kilometers. It extends to the states of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Cuttack, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal and the islands of Daman and

Controls critical parts. It has been an important port city since ancient times, attracting traders from all over the world including the East and Europe. Codport is well connected with the international bazaar through regular shipping services.

Vikram Saralai West Center is located in Ahubanantapuram, Kerala. Here the designs of satellite launch vehicles and related technologies are

Dr. Laxman Sahoo

developed. It is the primary center of ISRO, which is responsible for the design and development of rocket technology. It conducts active research and development in the areas of aeronautics, space armaments, structures, chassis physics and system reliability. So Lakshadweep to protect these centers.

The lagoons and exclusive economic zones of the Lakshadweep peninsula have significant fisheries and mineral resources, which are economically important. India is developing Aglega Island in Mauritius. Lakshadweep, becoming a connecting point between India and the Aglaga Peninsula, will give India a strategic border on China in the Indian Ocean. In other words, Lakshadweep's strategic location and its sensitivity to China and its territorial restrictions, efforts to promote it as a sub-classified defense island could add to the security challenge. Citizens here are protesting against it. They believe that doing so will destroy the

unique culture and traditions of the beautiful islands.

Strengthening India's strategic capabilities in the archipelago is crucial. The Nine Degree Channel located in the Lakshadweep Archipelago is the most direct route for ships bound for East Asia through the Persian Gulf. This channel is used by all traders traveling to Europe, Middle East, West Asia, South East Asia and the Far East. During the war, India could block the channel and cut off enemy supply lines. The geographical location of the Lakshadweep archipelago also raises India's security concerns. Therefore, a monitoring system has been prepared on this. Language Island is very close to Macau Island. The continent is emerging as an anti-India center. Not because of the influence of China, where extremist activities have also increased.

In recent years, religious fundamentalism has also been exported from this

country with the help of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. The South Asian country has the largest number of jihadist recruits for ISIS 100 percent are from the continental United States. While hundreds of islands of the continent are uninhabited, there is a danger of the rise of the aristocratic power. This could have a direct impact on India's internal security. Lakshadweep can be redeveloped to counter China's growing influence in neighboring countries such as the mainland, Mauritius, Mauritius, Settey, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Myanmar. About three hundred kilometers away from India, China is in Sri Lanka. Hambantota is under construction. Similarly, it controls much of the continent.

An airport is being built there. The spatial distance of Chennai, Kodi and Visakhapatnam ports is about nine hundred to fifteen kilometers. Sriharikota Satish Dhawan Space Center for the Indian program for the Indian

is also located about eleven hundred kilometers away. The importance of the island has increased for India to counter China's naval presence and activities in the Indian Ocean and to establish a new surveillance system. Six hundred and fifty kilometers away from Kodi, India's Sana Vicki land is being built on the 16th level at Kar Karwar in Karnataka on the west coast.

In other words, Lakshadweep's strategic location and its sensitivity to China and territorial restrictions suggest the need to turn it into a special defense island, but efforts to promote it as a tourist center have increased security challenges. Citizens here are protesting against it. By doing so, the unique culture of the beautiful islands will be destroyed. There will be a possibility of smuggling due to tourism and research of this place. Recently, China and Pakistan are also doing this in India's security sensitive areas.

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Pain of Time



A deserted closed door and thousands of desires behind it, who want this door to open every day. But what about the desires running in the mind? They are born every day and also die every day. Such a longing can also be for a closed door, leaving behind which the families who have gone thousands of kilometers away to pursue their dreams are separated from their roots. Left behind are the elderly people living in one or two rooms of that house, holding on to their hope, who just gaze at their loved ones. They sit waiting to know when their loved ones will arrive and when the big locked locks will be opened. This situation can be seen nowadays in many houses in Punjab and some other parts of the country, where in comparison to cities, in villages, big houses are occupied by domestic helpers or their families or just the elderly who

Vijay Garg

are looking after their next generations. Have become the caretakers of the house. In the village, someone's wedding or other auspicious events, which are organized in a planned manner, involve one or two members of the family. Generations are seen together, but in times of unplanned sorrow in life, only the generation of elders is seen to share the sorrow. The situation is such that to wait for the generation coming from abroad, the dead body also has to wait in the mortuary among the ice cubes. Many times it becomes difficult to understand that just to get more facilities and to live among them and to earn more money, people not only tear themselves from their land but also leave behind those people who helped them. Don't know how many hardships he faced and what kind of times he saw to make his life better. But then this complex picture also emerges that the dream of 'moving forward' in the minds of children as well as the elderly is also defined in the same way and in such a way that some 'very important people' are left on the margins. Let's go. These days, the land of Guru-Pirs is being

decorated not with the open laughter of the youth, but with the moist eyes of the elders. The elders sitting on the platform of the village are seen engrossed in some discussion and asking each other the same question as to what is missing. The youth of Punjab, who feed the country, have to go abroad to feed themselves. Elders share their experiences. On this basis, it is said that when we were small, we used to play together in the fields and barns, without realizing when we grew up. After some time, when he grew up, he felt proud as an educated youth by joining the army, becoming a teacher and working in a bank. Even if they were not educated at a very high level, they considered it their duty to feed the country through farming. But the childhood of today's youth is spent in technology. Trapped and away from his roots, he wants to settle in a foreign country and not in his village and country. The source of this dilemma is the environment that has been prevailing for some time now which does not give a certificate to the future of the youth to be bright. On the other

hand, the question of the grown up children to the elders is whether we too will have to take to the streets for every reasonable right when we are young! Will we be guaranteed employment after education? Will the dream of a clean environment be achieved? The elders do not have answers to these questions. It seems that governments have also given up on this issue. The slogan of Golden Punjab is heard in slogans and promises, but the ground reality is that the youth are moving abroad to make their dreams come true. The question is, what is the place of those elders in those dreams, who sacrificed their lives to make their children able to dream? If the palace of relationships rests on the foundation of emotions, then where is the limit of the ambitions of the youth in which there is space for emotions and relationships too? In such a situation, people who think like this also must be wishing that some angel would come, who would be the support of the failing youth and weak old age, such that it cannot be said when the light

will go out from the dimming eyes of our loved ones. There is no need to wait for this. Society and governments should think about this issue in time. It should not happen that facing such a situation, a state becomes known only for the population of the elderly and the youth start appearing absent. Somewhere this new culture is emerging that considering joint families as hindrances in their 'development', the young generation is trying to remain within the confines of their nuclear family. If it is moving, then somewhere it is leaving its land and going out. However, every day we are told that India is a country of youth and it is because of them that the country is taking every step forward. To a large extent, this is true, but if the presence of young generation is seen as the strength of the country, then there is a need to make their life better and satisfactory, so that they do not find themselves in a position to go somewhere else.

Retired Principal Educational Columnist MALOUT punjab



Prof. Dr. Jyotiranjan Champatiray

The two main types in adults are wet beriberi and dry beriberi. Wet beriberi affects the cardiovascular system, resulting in a fast heart rate, shortness of breath, and leg swelling. Dry beriberi affects the nervous system, resulting in numbness of the hands and feet, confusion, trouble moving the legs, and pain. In conjunction with whole blood or erythrocyte transketolase activity preloading and postloading, a thiamine loading test is the best indicator of thiamine deficiency. An increase of more than 15% in enzyme activity is a definitive marker of deficiency. They include fatigue, irritability, poor memory, loss of appetite, sleep disturbances, abdominal discomfort, and weight loss. Eventually, a severe thiamine deficiency (beriberi) may develop, characterized by nerve, heart, and brain abnormalities. Different forms of beriberi cause different symptoms.

Vitamin B1, or thiamine, helps prevent complications in the nervous system, brain, muscles, heart, stomach, and intestines. It is also involved in the flow of electrolytes into and out of muscle and nerve cells. Symptoms can worsen with a more severe, chronic deficiency, and may include conditions like nerve damage, heart problems, and even paralysis. The best approach is to eat a variety of thiamine-containing foods or take a multivitamin to prevent a deficiency from occurring.

In suspected cases of thiamine deficiency, prompt administration of parenteral thiamine is indicated. The recommended dose is 50 mg given intravenously or intramuscularly for several days. The duration of therapy depends on the symptoms, and therapy is indicated until all symptoms have disappeared. Maintenance is recommended at 2.5-5 mg per day orally unless a malabsorption syndrome is suspected. Thiamine is used to treat beriberi and to treat and prevent Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome (tingling and numbness in hands and feet, memory loss, confusion caused by a lack of thiamine in the diet).

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CAUGHT BETWEEN RELIGION AND POLITICS – DEMOCRACY'S DARK DIMENSION

M.R.LALU



Without being cynical even a bit on the personality of Rahul Gandhi, the lone celebrity leader of the Congress who comes from the most powerful political family, the status that qualifies him to be a politician among the notables, on whom most of the members of the INDIA Alliance look up to for a better leadership; I have a question to ask, as to what makes him phenomenally land in the captivity of the BJP intellectually so that the saffron party and its leaders feel free to make satirical conclusions on his statements that are capable to cause serious political ramifications to him and his party. For instance, let us examine his concluding address delivered at the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in Mumbai, which the

Prime Minister has dramatically framed as a reason to lash out at him. Rahul Gandhi's remark on the concept of "Shakti" in Hinduism has blown the lid of one more fresh controversy that the Prime Minister has alleged was made against the spiritual concept of Shakti the deity worshipped by Hindus which according to him, was not only derogatory and disrespectful on the Hindu concept of Shakti alone but also a remark against the women of the country. Narendra Modi scathingly called it an insult to Hinduism. Now, what among the statements of Rahul Gandhi made this fresh controversy? While addressing the INDIA rally, Rahul had said: "There is a word 'Shakti' in Hinduism. We are fighting against a shakti too. The question is, where is the shakti and what does it mean for us?" Undoubtedly, Rahul Gandhi was sharpening his arrow against the Prime Minister and the

statements he spelt out throughout his speech were literally attacking the government and its leader. Then, what was the fallout? Why did the BJP and the Prime Minister take it far to that extent of calling it an attack on Hinduism? A fresh look at the statement delivered by Rahul Gandhi does not qualify any resentment except the word Hinduism. The statement could have been presented without taking the name of a particular religion. Instead of referring to Hinduism, he could have said the word Shakti is a profound expression in Sanskrit or so. But, as usual, the BJP caught his misquote afresh, a new subject to politically choreograph Rahul Gandhi and his side of the alliance. The Congress and its allies should have the basic sense on the vocabulary they would choose to fling allegations at the ruling party, especially its leader Narendra Modi. Religions being the most inflammable in India's present political climate,

Rahul Gandhi's utterances on Hinduism were sure to catch fire and what Modi did was to wait for the Gandhi scion to make remarks that he would further use to fuel anti-Congress sentiments. Though he refuses to take Rahul Gandhi's name directly, Modi leaves no chance from using his statements in public. This has two reasons. Modi absolutely understands the compulsion of the Congress and the parties that stand by it. The INDIA block does not have a face that enjoys the level of acceptance and attraction that the Gandhi scion does. Moreover, it is important for the saffron camp to deliberately project the kindergarten mindset of the Congress and its leaders so as to dismantle its efforts to bag relevance ever since it faced its devastating collapse. It's also a trap that the ruling dispensation spreads for its opposition parties in order to get them lost on stray issues, while the BJP would belligerently come hammer and tongs on its

achievement in the government. Adding fuel to the fire, derogatory remarks made on Hinduism by the DMK, and other members of the opposition camp would also be full-grown and manipulative as the elections near in the BJP's scheme of things bringing collateral damage to the INDIA framework. The saffron party and the Prime Minister would certainly draw instances from the archives where the Congress and its allies spew aggression on Hinduism with its complete inflammability. To count among the Congress insensitivities, the colossal and the most impactful was its approach on the Ram Temple at Ayodhya and its absence from its consecration. While in power, the Congress stance on Lord Ram embarrassed the country. The government led by the Congress in an affidavit filed in the Supreme Court questioned the authenticity and veracity

of Lord Ram depicted in the Valmiki Ramayana. Though Valmiki Ramayana and Ramcharitmanas formed an important part of Indian literature, they could not be said to be historical records, the Congress claimed. With multiple narratives piling on its account, mostly belittling on what Hinduism stands for, the Congress and its allies once again seem to struggle to survive its depleting non-pragmatic existence. The alliance, with its faith being shown in Rahul Gandhi, needs to help him learn the basics of framing narratives, especially when the country is conspiringly captured and suffocated by the dementors of immature politicians and their wayward political prologues and comments. Winning a General Election is a Himalayan task for all parties that are there in the fray. But for the political opposition of Narendra Modi, it is clearly an uphill task. That being the case, an internal leadership challenge would further

stretch the dilemma of the INDIA block. Squeezed not just by the controversial mishmash of the alliance, but also by the harsh dissonance on the comments made by its members would also be fulfilling the dreamy progress of the BJP pulling the grim popularity of the Congress and other parties again to a lower level. Extreme patriotic sensationalism has gripped the country with its burning issues being thrown into the cold storage. Obviously, the media pronounce what the ruling class dictates and amid such chaotically ideological primetime arguments, more scathingly illicit and disproportionate attacks and counter attacks would reveal the predictability of their dishonesty. Caught between religion and politics, India's democracy seems to be once again struggling to land the monumental exercise of the electoral process on the ground without any damage. And

the voter, before he casts his vote, has a reason to think twice to decide as to what his priorities are. Concoction of irrelevant subjects should not attract his voting right. The one he would use his voting right should be for the country first and the country last. One of the largest democratic exercises in the world, India's National Election cannot be stumbling on a litany of abuse on religions, race, societies and even individuals. Being the largest democracy, it is not hard for us to be the best. Elections should be a warm fight fought between ideal minds significantly tossing their views with great respect and of course religion should not be a paratrooper, a savior dominating the show.

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Play organic Holi with Natural colours

Shahnaz Husain



Holi is one of the most loved and zestful festivals celebrated in India with immense joy and enthusiasm every year.

Traditionally the Holi colours were created with naturally helpful ingredients like hibiscus flowers, henna leaves, Kesar, sandalwood and more. These natural colours are not just good for your skin, hair and eyes but even cleanse and clear the dead skin.

As Holi arrives in the season of spring, the Gulal colour was made of plants and flowers that blossomed during this month.

Holi gained popularity with time and natural colours got replaced with chemical-based synthetic colours gradually. These colours are cheaper compared to natural colours, but expensive for health as well as the environment. The famous quote "Bura na mano holi hai" implies that all playful mischief is allowed in holi.

The primary risk which Holi brings along with itself is exposure to harmful chemicals in form of Holi colours. These colours are made from harmful



substances like acid, glass powder, industrial dye, copper sulphate, lead oxide etc.

The toxicity from these chemicals are just not harmful for skin and hairs but exposure to them increases the risk of serious health complications such as Bronchial asthma, Renal failure, temporary blindness and much more. The situation becomes more alarming as it is young children who play Holi the most and thus get exposed to these harmful chemicals the most. Add to that later these chemicals cause environmental degradation and pollute groundwater and soil.

So, what are the options? The best option is definitely to make your natural, herbal and safe Holi colors at home.

1--Gulal ---- The most popular color of Holi, Gulal can be made by

mixing 100 grams of turmeric powder with 200 grams of arrowroot powder along with 50 grams of marigold flowers and 20 grams of powdered orange peel. Add to the mixture 20 grams of lemon or sandalwood essential oil and rub the mixture gently together to get a bowl full of safe and natural yellow colored gulal

2--Red-Red colour can be made by boiling petals of red hibiscus or red roses, beet or carrots. Tomato or carrot juice, pomegranate peel, puroi xaak guti, red sandalwood can also be used for the same

Red colour can also be prepared using dried red hibiscus flowers. Take properly dried hibiscus or China rose flowers and then grate them into a fine powder. Red sandalwood can also be used in its place.

You can add rice flour uniform quantity to obtain dry red colour. You can boil peel of pomegranate to get wet colour.

3-Green-Green colour is a vibrant and lively colour choice for holi celebrations

Green colour can be prepared by boiling different green leafy vegetables in water such as spinach (paleng), mustard greens (laai), coriander (dhania), etc. Neem leaves or other kinds of green leaves with medicinal values can also be helpful in this regard

Green coloured gulal can be made using henna or Mehendi powder. For wet colour, you can use any green leafy vegetables, such as spinach or Neem. The leaves when dipped in water will give it a green colour. To make it natural, corn starch, turmeric and dried lemon peels are used. Make sure the turmeric is organic, this will result in better colouring.

The author is an international fame beauty expert and is called the herbal queen of India

Green colour can be acquired by boiling marigold petals or add turmeric in water to make wet yellow colours. Turmeric powder can be mixed with gram flour or rice flour for presenting yellow colour. To make it natural, corn starch, turmeric and dried lemon peels are used. Make sure the turmeric is organic, this will result in better colouring.

The author is an international fame beauty expert and is called the herbal queen of India

Crafting art products from water hyacinth

Saikat Kumar Basu



Neglected Water Hyacinth, once left to waste by pond sides, are now transformed into stylish bags and coin purses adorning your arm.

A unique collection of artifacts derived from Water Hyacinth has emerged at the OSOP (One Station One Product) stall at Adisapagram Station.

Utilizing processed Water Hyacinth, the stall offers a range of items

including bags, coin purses, pen stands, files,

round trays, oval trays, tea baskets, and other utility items, all crafted with finesse and available at fair prices.

A few days ago, Smt. Arati Debnath, trained in

this craft, applied to Indian Railways to open an OSOP stall at Adisapagram Station.

Indian Railways has been

establishing OSOP stalls at various stations to

provide local artisans and

craftsmen with a wider

market for their products.

Consequently, employment opportunities and

the application for selling

Water Hyacinth-derived products at the OSOP stall was promptly approved, ensuring employment opportunities and fair income for skilled artisans in this sector.

The 'Samajik Pahel Foundation' has been

providing training to local

artisans in crafting

handmade items from

Water Hyacinth. These

trained artisans,

showcasing their

products at the OSOP

stall in Adisapagram,

have been receiving

orders from both

domestic and

international markets.

Consequently, employment opportunities and

the application for selling

incomes have risen, lifting many artisans above poverty line and into socio-economic prosperity. Through the OSOP stall at different stations of Eastern Railway, the concept of "Vocal for Local" and "Local to Global" is being actively promoted, facilitating the empowerment of local craftsmanship and ensuring its global recognition.

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Letter to Editor

Dear Sir,

Ensure water security

It is imperative for the Karnataka government to adopt and execute long-term strategies to ensure water security for the populace. It is crucial to curb the expansion of Bengaluru as there will be insufficient water resources to sustain the city in the future. Prioritizing schemes for rainwater harvesting, lake rejuvenation, and water recycling is essential, as these initiatives are often overlooked until crises arise. It is crucial to acknowledge that the Supreme Court has imposed a restriction on usage of Cauvery water. With the looming threat of climate change, the situation is expected to deteriorate further. The water crisis is palpable in numerous districts, including Chamarajanagar, Ramanagar, Mysuru, Mandya and also in North Karnataka districts including Bellary, Raichur, Yadgir, Bidar and Koppal. Many taluks in Karnataka are grappling with a drinking water shortage, while water levels in most reservoirs, including the Krishnaraja Sagar and the Tungabhadra, have plummeted to unprecedented lows. The distress signals and warnings from towns and villages must not be ignored.

Vijaykumar H K
Raichur, Karnataka.

"VISION ZERO": Pathways to healthy workculture & workforce management

Kolkata (PARTHA ROY): Safety and Security are catalyst to create healthy workculture as well as quality work force for any industry which further facilitate increase in productivity.

A daylong International Conference on "VISION ZERO: India and Malaysia" was organised by Bharat Chamber of Commerce (BCC) in collaboration with Indo-German Focal Point (DGUV) and PERKESO of Malaysia on 21st March 2024 in Kolkata and in hybrid mode to deliberate on evolving challenges in Occupational Safety and Hazard (OSH) management in various sectors of industries including MSMEs, government organisations, NGOs and in every day in Life.

About 200 companies

from Malaysia, India, Germany participated in the conference.

The Conference was addressed by Dr. Mohammed Azman Bin Dato' Aziz Mohammed President International Social Security Association (ISSA) and Group Chief Executive Officer Social Security Organisation (PERKESO), Malaysia, Dr. Stefan Hussy Director General German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV), Mr. Tom Reiner Regional Director, Indo German Chamber of Commerce, Kolkata, Dr. Lalit Ghabane Director General National Safety Council of India, Mr. Mohamad Fazli Bin Masri of Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) Malaysia, Smt. Manisha Sarkar Bhattacharya Director State Labour



Institute Government of West Bengal, Mr. Bimal Kanti Sahu Director Indo German Focal Point, Mr. Partha Pratim Mitra (Retd. IES), Prof. Subhashish Sahu of University of Kalyani, Mr. N. G. Khaitan President Bharat Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Naresh Pachisia Senior Vice President of BCC and others.

The conference

deliberated on various aspects of Occupational Safety and Hazard (OSH) issues across various industries in India, as well as in Malaysia and in several other countries and there connection with wellbeing of individual and/or group of workers in any industry.

Dr. Azlan Darus emphasized on need for evolutionary transformation of work

culture and working environments by incorporating safety measures in every steps of operations in any plant or in any sphere of Life far beyond the work area.

Dr. Azlan Darus stressed on the need to Invest in the people/workforce.

He mentioned there exists reciprocal relationship between social security and worker's industrial

safety measures. He added no. of accident get reduced when machines are made safe.

The speakers emphasized the need to broaden understanding of horizons of safety and security issues of any individual by incorporating physical & mental well being as well as well being of the family of the individual workers.

Vision Zero concept originated and has drawn global attention when in 1997 Swedish Parliament introduced a "Vision Zero" policy that requires that fatalities and serious injuries on road traffic management are reduced to zero by 2020. Roads were redesigned. This is a significant step-change in transport policy at the European level.

Vision Zero concept stresses on elimination of

fatalities and serious injuries in every sphere of Life. It calls for enhancement of safety measures to protect Life in any situations.

Vision Zero is fundamentally different way to approach to safety that eliminates fatalities and serious injuries in any business operation.

Vision Zero flows from a Safe Systems approach to industry safety management in which human life and health is the first and foremost consideration when designing any safety network.

A safe system recognises that people are fragile and by nature will make mistakes, so puts layers of protection around them. All parts of this system must be strengthened in combination to multiply their protective effects so

if one part fails, others will continue to protect people.

Seven Golden Rules for Vision Zero

1. Take leadership - demonstrate commitment
2. Identify hazards - control risks
3. Define targets - develop programmes
4. Ensure a safe and healthy system - be well-organized
5. Ensure safety and health in machines equipment and workplaces
6. Improve qualifications - develop competence
7. Invest in people - motivate by participation

Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu Seeks Debt Relief From India Amid Strained Ties



Male (KCN): Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu has struck a reconciliatory tone after his anti-India rhetoric, saying India will continue to remain his country's "closest ally" as he sought a debt relief from

New Delhi. The Maldives owed approximately \$400.9 million to India at the end of last year.

Ever since taking oath as the President in November last year, the pro-China Maldivian leader has pursued a hardline stand towards India and within hours demanded that Indian military personnel operating three aviation platforms be repatriated from his country by May 10.

On Thursday, in his first interview with the local media since assuming office, President Muizzu said India was instrumental in providing aid to the Maldives and implemented the "greatest number" of projects.

India will continue to remain the Maldives' closest ally, he said and emphasised that there was no question about it, Maldives news portal Edition.mv said in a report with excerpts of the President's interview to its Dhivehi language sister-publication 'Mihaaru.'

The comments praising

India came after the first batch of Indian military personnel left the island nation this month as planned. By May 10, President Muizzu had demanded that all 88 military personnel, manning the three Indian aviation platforms, should leave the country.

India has been providing humanitarian and medical evacuation services to the people of the Maldives for the last few years with two helicopters and a Dornier aircraft.

The Maldives' proximity to India, barely 70 nautical miles from the Minicoy island in Lakshadweep and 300 nautical miles from the mainland's western coast, and its location at the hub of commercial sea lanes running through the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) gives it significant strategic importance.

During the interview, President Muizzu urged India to accommodate debt relief measures for the Maldives in the repayment of "the hefty loans taken over consecutive governments".

"The conditions we have inherited are such that there are very large loans taken from India. Hence, we are holding discussions to explore leniencies in the repayment structure of

River Ranching: An Essential for the Conservation of Fish Fauna in the Ganga River



Kolkata (KCN): River ranching is a solution for conserving fish in natural open water systems, particularly the Ganga River in India. It highlights the importance of replenishing indigenous fish stocks and maintaining genetic diversity for sustainable fisheries. The ICAR-Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute is

using river ranching to conserve endemic warm water Indian Major Carps in depleted stretches of the Ganga River.

The report also highlights river ranching as a potentially important source of biological output in aquatic systems, especially in the Ganga River's diminishing sections. It

also emphasises the necessity of innovative technology and helpful interventions in the development of ranching practices, particularly in areas with inadequate riverine output. The achievement of a total production of wild IMC seed and the release of fish fingerlings at various events around the nation's five states serve as evidence of the success of river ranching. The text also emphasises how crucial community involvement and public awareness campaigns are to the success of river ranching and ex-situ conservation, as is the teaching of fishermen on ecological issues.

The river ranching strategy has created

"Constant Humiliation": Congress Spokesperson Rohan Gupta Quits Party



Ahmedabad (KCN): In a setback to the Congress ahead of the parliamentary elections, its national spokesperson Rohan Gupta on Friday resigned from primary membership and all other posts of the party citing "humiliation" and "character assassination".

Mr Gupta, who had been given a Lok Sabha ticket from the Ahmedabad East seat by the Congress, withdrew from the race on Monday citing his father's ill health.

In a letter to party chief Mallikarjun Kharge, Mr Gupta said, "I hereby resign from all posts and primary membership of the Congress party with immediate effect." He also posted a copy of the resignation letter on X.

"I am deeply pained to inform you that constant humiliation and character assassination by one of the senior leaders connected to the Communications department of the party for last two years (which many senior party leaders are aware of) and now at the time of personal crisis has compelled me to take

this decision," he said in the letter.

"His behaviour has caused serious mental agony and stress and has compelled me to resign from the party with a broken heart to protect my self-esteem," he said.

In a separate post on X, along with the copy of the resignation letter, Mr Gupta said he was not afraid of anything but needed to raise his voice when there was a "systematic conspiracy" to betray him.

"My humbleness should not be considered as my weakness. I have learnt

my lessons the hard way," he wrote.

He went on to say, "The person who has humiliated me for the last two years, the person who has not budged from doing it in last three days, I am sure that he will not refrain from doing it in future and nobody will be able to stop him. But now I am not ready to take any more assault on my self-esteem."

Mr Gupta said he chose to quit the party with a broken heart, calling the decision "very difficult but necessary to protect" his self-respect.

"The same leader has also damaged the party with his arrogant and rude behaviour. Due to his extreme leftist mindset he ensured party's silence on insult of Sanatan Dharma which hurt me personally and I was forcefully stopped from opposition insult of Sanatan Dharma on national TV," he wrote.

This has done serious damage to the party's image and the morale of Congress leaders, said Mr Gupta.

"The leadership should not ignore such activities by this kind of leaders which leaves imprints of insult on the souls of honest workers and leaders and compels them to leave party," he said.

According to Mr Gupta, he decided to withdraw his candidature from the Ahmedabad East Lok Sabha seat due to his father Rajkumar Gupta's reluctance to let him contest from the constituency that he represented as the candidate of the same party two decades back.

Mr Gupta's father was the one who put his foot down and stopped him from contesting the upcoming elections despite the

26 seats in the state.

Forest care fosters community spirit

Sundargarh(KCN): In a concerted effort to safeguard the forests in Ujalpur range, 31 Van Surakhy Samities (VSSs) have launched a comprehensive awareness campaign under the leadership of dedicated officials and community leaders. Recognising the threat posed by forest fires that occur during summer, these grassroots initiatives aim to instill a deep sense of responsibility towards preserving invaluable natural resources.

The initiatives spearheaded by Sundargarh DFO Pradeep Mirase and



Hundreds of hectares of pristine forest land, along with countless innocent wild animals, flora and fauna, fall

victim to these infernos each year. Such calamities not only jeopardise the ecological balance but also imperil

the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities. Through relentless advocacy and community mobilisation, the initiatives aim to reverse this destructive trend. Primary produce collectors, youth groups, women's associations

and forest-dependent families were brought under the roof of the awareness drive. Officials pointed out that a collective effort is required to protect the forests.

"They have realised that if forests are protected, communities will prosper," observed a forester. "This collaborative endeavour stands as a testament to the power of grassroots actions in addressing pressing environmental challenges. As the lights of awareness continue to spread, the Ujalpur forest section is poised to emerge as a beacon of resilience and stewardship, ensuring the longevity of our shared natural heritage for generations to come," the official added.

Five-day theatre bonanza in Rourkela

Rourkela(KCN): 'Sampark', a leading cultural organisation here, is going to celebrate the 'World Theatre Day' which is held every year March 27.

To mark the occasion, 'Sampark' will be hosting four outstation troupes and its members will also present a play. The festival will begin March 23 and will culminate March 27. It should be stated that 'Sampark' has been in the forefront for revival of theatre in this part of the state.

Bhaskar Mohapatra, president of 'Sampark', spoke in detail about the event. "This year the festival will be held over five days. "There will be four teams (three from outside the state and one from Bhubaneswar) participating and we will also present a play," Mohapatra said. "Teachers from National School of Drama (NSD) will present The Zoo



Story. Next day 'Sampark' will stage Bhababini Odia a Kalathakur, a play based on Jagannath culture, 'IFTA', one of the leading theatre groups from Kolkata will present Krishna, a play based on Mahabharat, March 25. 'KITE' from Mumbai will present Ek Khoya Hua Admi, March 26 and on the last day, 'Ajit', a leading organisation from Bhubaneswar, will present Eka," Mohapatra added.

Some of the leading actors from the Hindi theatre industry and Odisha film fraternity will be performing during the festival, Mohapatra informed. This time the festival instead of the 'Civic Centre', which is under renovation, will be staged at the 'Music Circle', an open-air auditorium. "We are providing flight tickets and remunerations to all the outstation groups. We, however, will not be getting any government

help as the model code of conduct has already been implemented," informed Mohapatra. The official said that there will be audience participation during the event. "They will be allowed to ask questions to the director and the artistes. There will be an award for the best question of the day. Some leading writers and theatre artistes will be awarded with the 'Sampark Samman' on the last day of the festival," Mohapatra said.

Odisha: Two get 30 yrs in jail for raping minor

Keonjhar(KCN): Additional District-cum Special POCSO Court Judge Shubhashree Tripathi convicted two persons for raping a minor and sentenced each of them to 30 years of rigorous imprisonment in Keonjhar district Thursday.

The two convicts have been identified as SK Shahzad Ali (53) and Amita Karua (46). Incidentally, the latter is the stepgrandmother of the victim. The court also imposed fines of Rs30,000 on Ali and



Rs20,000 on Karua. Failure to pay the fines will lead to an additional three years in prison for Ali and two for Karua. According to information available, the victim was living with her

grandparents when she was raped. Incidentally, the victim's grandfather had married a second time and hence Karua became the stepgrandmother of the victim. When the victim's

5-year-old critical; teacher detained



Raigarh(KCN): A five-year-old nursery student was rendered critical after being beaten up black and blue by his school teacher at Kanadi village under Kundei police limits in Nabarangpur district,

Thursday. The survivor was identified as Dhanraj Satnami, 5, son of Lagnu Satnami and a nursery student of Sahid Birsa Munda Public School at Hatabharandi near here in Nabarangpur

district. Police detained the accused teacher Jayram Gond and launched an investigation over a complaint lodged by the boy's family members, Kundei IIC Prasant Kumar Sethi said. A case was also registered in this connection. Gond allegedly meted out corporal punishment to the five-year-old boy. Sources said Gond beat the minor with a stick during the

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realme redefines low light photography standards with the realme NARZO 70 Pro 5G starting from INR 18,999

Bhubaneswar : realme, the Most Reliable Smartphone Service Provider in India, unveiled the newest addition to their super successful NARZO By realme line-up - NARZO 70 Pro 5G. NARZO By realme is a stylish line of smartphones that delivers a comprehensive user experience. With a rapidly growing user base of over 16 million in India, NARZO By realme represents the next generation of smartphones. These devices are designed with advanced technology and premium features to help users stay ahead of the curve and express their individuality. The new

The realme NARZO 70

RELIANCE BRANDS LIMITED INKS A JV WITH PLASTIC LEGNO SPA

Mumbai: RELIANCE BRANDS LIMITED (RBL) and Plastic Legno SPA have signed a joint venture arrangement through which RBL will acquire a 40% stake in Plastic Legno SPA's toy manufacturing business in India. This investment by RBL serves a dual purpose, bringing in vertical integration for RBL's toy business and helping diversify the supply chain with a long-term strategic interest in building toy manufacturing in India.

Plastic Legno SPA is owned by the Sunino group that boasts of more than 25 years of toy production experience in Europe. The group started its India business in 2009 out of a need to develop a strong production hub that would cater to global markets, but more importantly to the fast evolving and growing Indian market.

"Keeping with our

honourable Prime Minister's vision of Atmanirbhar India, this collaboration with Plastic Legno's deep experience in world-class toy manufacturing coupled with our strong footing in the global toy retail industry would open new doors and unparalleled opportunities for toys manufactured in India. It is imperative for RBL to build design to shelf capability for a strategic advantage over the competition and to be an accelerator in building a robust toy manufacturing ecosystem in India not only for domestic consumption but also for global markets," said the spokesperson of Reliance Brands Limited.

RBL has a strong play in the Toy industry with its portfolio of Hamleys, the British toy retailer and homegrown toy brand - Rowan, making RBL one of the leading toy distributors. Hamleys currently has a global

realme NARZO 70 Pro 5G aims to redefine industry standards for low-light photography, further cementing realme's commitment to innovation and excellence. realme & Amazon have strategically engaged to bring the NARZO By realme line-up and to provide consumers with an enhanced shopping experience. NARZO By realme is exclusively available on Amazon.in and has been committed to bringing advanced technology to its users. In line with realme's dual platform strategy, realme launched its first online store on Amazon in March 2023.

The realme NARZO 70

footprint across 15 countries with 213 doors and is India's largest chain of toy stores.

"We are very privileged to have RBL as a partner in this Joint Venture. We are confident that Plastic Legno's experience in Toys production and Hamley's commercial outreach, will complement one another to enable the JV Company to achieve greater heights and successes. We have important development plans to implement, always in the spirit of creating a cultural background in this specific sector in India. We are ready for the challenges of the future, but when there is a group like RBL alongside, we are sure that together we can do a great development," said Paolo Sunino, Co-owner, Sunino Group.



you to perform various actions without touching the screen. To maintain optimal performance during intense usage, it comes with a 3D VC Cooling System that effectively dissipates heat. The smartphone houses a large 5000mAh battery and supports efficient 67W SUPERVOOC charging technology for

quick power-ups. Lastly, the realme UI 5.0 based on Android 14 offers a smooth, intuitive user interface with several customization options and features for enhanced usability. The realme NARZO 70 Pro 5G is available in two stunning colors: Glass Green and Glass Gold and two storage variants:

8GB+128GB, priced at INR 19,999 and 8GB+256GB, priced at INR 21,999

Commenting on the launch, a realme spokesperson said, "Today, we are thrilled to introduce the realme NARZO 70 Pro 5G, exclusively on Amazon, a smartphone that is set to redefine low-light photography standards in the smartphone industry. With NARZO By realme, we are committed to pushing boundaries and delivering products that resonate with our young and tech-savvy audience. With the realme NARZO 70 Pro 5G, we have introduced cutting-edge technology and

advanced features that will redefine the mid-range segment. We believe this smartphone will further solidify our position as a brand that offers innovative and trendsetting smartphones."

Commenting on the launch, Ranjit Babu, Director, Wireless and Home Entertainment, Amazon India said, "The NARZO series has been highly rated by customers on Amazon.in for its powerful performance, design and value for money. We extend our congratulations to the entire realme team on the launch of the NARZO 70 Pro, a smartphone

that aims to set newer benchmarks in the segment with its cutting-edge camera and stunning glass design. Along with other exciting launch offers, we are happy to announce that customers can also enjoy a hassle-free instant loan within minutes enabling up to 3 months of no-cost installments* on the NARZO 70 Pro, without the need for a credit card using Amazon Pay Later. We are proud of our continued engagement with realme and with the addition of the NARZO 70 Pro, we have further expanded our portfolio of 5G smartphones."

Union Bank of India signs MOU with SIDBI for Co-Financing arrangement of MSMEs

Mumbai: Union Bank of India today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) for a Co-Financing arrangement for MSMEs. The MoU was signed by Shri Lal Singh, Chief General Manager, Union Bank of India and Shri Vivek Kumar Malhotra, Chief General Manager, SIDBI. SIDBI is country's principal financial institution engaged in the Promotion, Financing and Development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME).

Under the MoU, Union Bank of India would consider Joint financing/Co-Financing with SIDBI to Projects/Units in the MSME. This MoU would help the Banks to increase their

customer base, while helping the MSMEs to meet their funding requirements. The key highlights of the arrangement include joint identification of viable projects and term loan and working capital financing to MSMEs. Initially the arrangement would be at specific centers and once the arrangement stabilizes at these centers, more locations would be covered.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Lal Singh, CGM (MSME), Union Bank of India, said "MSME is one of the key sectors of our Indian Economy contributing to GDP, Exports, Manufacturing Output, Employment, Women Empowerment etc. MSME is one of the focused areas of the SIDBI."

Also, speaking on the tie-up arrangement, Shri Vivek Kumar Malhotra, CGM, SIDBI reiterated SIDBI's commitment towards timely financing for MSMEs across all sectors.

TVS Motor Company registers sales of 302,982 units

Hosur: TVS Motor Company sales was at 302,982 units in May 2022. The year-on-year growth is not comparable due to the low base of sales in May 2021 because of the localised lockdown imposed by the Government of India during that period.

Two-Wheeler

Total two-wheeler sales grew from 154,416 units in May 2021 to 287,058 units in May 2022. Domestic two-wheeler sales grew from 52,084 units in May 2021 to 191,482 units in May 2022.

Motorcycle sales grew from 125,188 units in May 2021 to 148,560 units in May 2022. Scooter sales of the Company grew from 19,627 units in May 2021 to 100,665 units in May 2022.

The shortage in the supply of semiconductors has impacted the production and sales of

premium two-wheeler. We are working aggressively with alternate sources and taking every effort to improve supplies at the earliest. Some improvement has been seen this month. We are optimistic that volumes will revive to normal levels once the semiconductor supplies improve.

The Company's total exports registered sales of 110,245 units in May 2022 as against 114,674 units in May 2021. Two-wheeler exports recorded sales of 95,576 units in May 2022 as against 102,332 units in May 2021.

Three-wheeler of the Company grew by 28% from 12,473 units in May 2021 to 15,924 units in May 2022.

The domestic two-wheeler sales include TVS iQube Electric sales of 2,637 units in May 2022.

Spice Money to enable farmers to withdraw PM-KISAN subsidy through its 1 million Adhikari Network

New Delhi: The Government of India has disbursed PM-KISAN subsidy, directly to the farmers' bank accounts benefiting over 10 crore farmers and families who have received a grant of Rs 2,000 each. Spice Money, India's leading rural fintech with 1 million strong Adhikari network covering 18,500 plus pincodes, is assisting the farmers and farmer families residing in the heartlands of the country, to withdraw this subsidy through Aadhar Adhikari

Railway Board for construction of Subway near Nidhipanda Bridge of Balasore.

Nidhipanda bridge is an important bridge in Haldipada-Balasore section of Kharagpur-Bhadrak section. One of the spans of this bridge is being used by local people for commuting of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The area gets water-logged during monsoon and the crossing under the bridge becomes unapproachable cutting connectivity to villages.

The Railway Minister discussed the issue with local villagers and assured them to resolve the matter. The 'Designing team' of Railway has immediately prepared the design for Subway which was approved by the competent authority. A fund of Rs. 14.7 crores has been sanctioned in September 2023 by the

approach of the bridge at Kharagpur end. This subway will be used for passing of all kinds of vehicles including heavy vehicles.

In view of the above, the construction work has been started which will fulfill the demand of local people. Additionally, keeping in mind that the area is prone to water-logging during monsoon, a second subway is proposed having dimensions of 4m(W) X 2.7m(H) which is about 1.6m above the bed level of the bridge and will act as an all-weather road even in times of heavy water discharges. With the intervention and close monitoring of Hon'ble Minister for Railways, the project and fund of Rs 14.7 crores was sanctioned in September 2023 and work is now started with close monitoring.



FIFA World Cup Qualifiers: India held to frustrating 0-0 draw by Afghanistan

New Delhi: India and Afghanistan settled for a 0-0 draw after failing to turn their opportunities into goals in a Group A fixture of the 2026 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers here on Thursday.

It was end-to-end stuff in the first half with India coming very close to scoring through Manvir Singh on two occasions and the hosts too having their share of chances. However, most of them were half chances and goalkeepers of both teams were not tested enough. With India and Afghanistan resorting to open football, the first half (45+3) saw a wave of attacking moves, but the strikers were not able to come alive in the final third, leaving both gaffers Igor Stimac and Ashley Westwood a bit frustrated as they shouted instructions from the touchline.

India were on the offensive from the word go and caused some



anxious moments in the Afghanistan defence and had Manvir not spurned a great chance on the 17th minute, the visitors would have taken an early lead in their away leg of the second round of 2026 World Cup and 2027 AFC Asian Cup preliminary joint qualification match. Then there was a scope for Afghanistan to go ahead, but Mosawer Ahadi, who found room on the right side of the box, could not pack enough punch in his left-footed effort as Sandhu tackled it without much ado. A chance went begging for India in the

58th minute after Akash Mishra on the left flank won the ball and crossed it to Vikram Pratap Singh whose finishing left a lot to be desired.

Moments later, it was Afghanistan's turn to miss out on a golden opportunity as Rahul Bheke foiled Rahmat Akbari and Omid Popalzay's plan with a timely interception. One of the game's best chances came India's way but Subhashish Bose's free header off a corner kick missed the target.

Both teams will now meet in the reverse fixture on March 26.

'Mahi bhai hinted about captaincy last year' - Gaikwad

New Delhi: Rituraj Gaikwad, the newly appointed Chennai Super Kings captain, has revealed that his predecessor MS Dhoni had given him hints regarding a potential leadership switch last year. Just one day prior to the commencement of IPL 2024, the change was indeed made with Dhoni handing over the captaincy to Gaikwad while still remaining a player.

"I don't think I need to change anything. Last year itself, Mahi bhai had just hinted about captaincy at some point of time," Gaikwad told IPLT20.com. "Just hinted that, 'be ready, it shouldn't be a surprise to you'. When we came into the camp, obviously he made me involved in some of the practice match simulations."

Earlier this month, Dhoni had put up a cryptic post on social media announcing that he would be taking up a



'new role'. "I remember him posting about a new role on social media and everybody was just pointing towards me and asking me whether 'you are the next captain?' I was like, 'maybe it meant something else for social media'. Back of the mind, it was there. I would say just a week (before) we came and he said, 'I've decided this and this', but definitely now that I'm here, I'm really looking forward to

this." The 27-year-old was first signed by CSK in 2019 but he had to wait until the 2020 season for opportunities. Initially struggling to make a mark in the middle order and losing his place, he returned to the XI at the back end of the season and opened the innings, smashing three fifties on the trot. Since then, he has been an integral part of the XI, has won the tournament twice and was also the Orange Cap winner in 2021. "Feels great, I think two reasons," Gaikwad said looking back at the journey. "First of all to be part of this wonderful franchise right from when my IPL journey started and then to be trusted by MS Dhoni for a leadership role obviously speaks a lot. The challenge lies ahead and I'm looking forward to it.

"Right from day one, I

liked how this particular franchise works throughout the year, I kind of got to know the real mantra, the reasons behind their success, what kind of things the franchise goes through, what Mahi bhai does, the management or the support staff does. I wouldn't like to change a single bit of it. For me he (Dhoni) is a great backbone to have still on the field. I have Ajju (Ajinkya Rahane) bhai and Jaddu (Ravindra Jadeja) bhai as well, so definitely a lot of options to look around. I don't think I'll need to change anything. Just give the kind of freedom the players want and I think everything will be fine." Gaikwad's first assignment as CSK's full-time captain is the opening game of the season against an RCB side which will be led by his former opening partner Faf du Plessis. The duo scored over 600 runs each in CSK's title-winning 2021 season.

MLC Domestic Draft: Hassan Khan, Joshua Tromp draw top dollars. Smit Patel unsold

New Delhi: Former Pakistan U19 captain Hassan Khan (San Francisco Unicorns), wicket keeper batsman Adithya Ganesh (LA Knight Riders) and South African born teenaged sensation Joshua Tromp (Texas Super Kings) emerged as the blue chip selections in the MLC Season 2 domestic draft. The trio netted \$75,000 for the three week American extravaganza. Surprisingly, former India U19 star Smit Patel failed to attract a bid in the draft that saw 20 signings ranging from \$75,000 to \$5,000.

Left arm spinning allrounder Hassan Khan enjoyed a terrific allround 2023 season for the Chicago Kingsmen in the MiLC. Khan, 25, lit up the Minor League (MiLC) instantly after giving up on his Pakistan dream, amassing 220 runs at a strike rate of 181 over 5 innings.



Ganesh turned up for the Dindigul Dragons in the TNPL as recently as July last year. The 32 year old, who has been on a spousal visa in the US for about 18 month now, ended his BCCI career by lapping up the opportunity to play for the East Bay Blazers in the MiC last year. Although, he had a modest outing with the bat, scoring 265 runs over 10 innings with a strike rate of 116. TSK punted on the prodigal talent of Houston Hurricane's Joshua Tromp, locking him up as their top pick, despite a

special draft category for the U23 players. The 19 year old enjoyed a breakthrough season, piling up 362 runs in 10 innings with 4 half centuries in the most competitive central division. Joshua joins his twin brother Matthew in the MLC after the former was overlooked for the draft last year. After being released by the Seattle Orcas ahead of the draft, Matthew now joins the LA Knight Riders on a rookie contract. TSK further reward Philadelphians' Raj Nannan for his

incisive spells in the 2023 MiLC.

The perplexing omission of Smit Patel will be quite stirring in the American cricket circles. The 31 year old represented the Barbados Royals a couple of seasons back, suddenly has no takers as a domestic player in the MLC. A veteran of 55 Ranji trophy games, Patel, survived a near fatal accident in 2022. His return to competitive cricket hasn't been receptive. He was released from his San Francisco Unicorns contract without getting a game and was snubbed by the South West selectors for the national T20 before hopping in as an injury replacement. The big hitting Jaskaran Malhotra and former Mumbai batsman Akarshit Gomes failed to find favors with MLC franchises as well, going unsold after some impressive MiLC

performances. Hampshire and USA allrounder Ian Holland will make his debut MLC appearance and team up with former SL spinner Amila Aponso at Washington Freedom. MI New York secured the services of Ruben Clinton, South Africa born Heath Richards and Rushil Ugarkar. LA Knight Riders bought back fast bowling all rounder Corne Dry and left spinning all rounder Derone Davis.

Former Pakistan international Hammad Azam, Ali Sheikh and Ayan Desai were snapped up by Seattle Orcas. The San Francisco Unicorns brought in some calypso flavor in the mix with Jahmar Hamilton and USA discard Karima Gore. Former Mumbai Indians opening batsman Tejinder Singh will also add to Unicorns' batting muscle.

IPL 2024: Sourav Ganguly 'surprised' by Rishabh Pant's improvement



New Delhi: Former India captain and Delhi Capitals director of cricket Sourav Ganguly has said that he's been surprised by the improvements that captain Rishabh Pant has made since making a comeback from his horrific injury. Pant was involved in a car crash that kept him out of cricketing action for over 14 months. He will be making his return to the field when Delhi Capitals take on Punjab Kings in their opening match of IPL 2024 at the Maharaja Yadvindra Singh International Stadium in

Mohali on Saturday, March 23. Speaking his thoughts ahead of their match against PBKS, Ganguly said he was surprised with the improvement that Pant has made, while calling him a special player. Pant made his IPL debut in 2016 for Delhi Capitals and has gone on to score 2,838 runs in 98 matches for them. He averages 34.61 while striking at 147.97. The left-handed batter has smashed 15 fifties and a solitary hundred in the IPL, with a top-scorer of 128*. "I'm surprised with the

improvements he has made. Hopefully, it's a good season for him because he has gone through a lot emotionally. It's never easy when you go through that sort of injury. It will be great to see him back not just for the Delhi Capitals, but for the Delhi Ranji team and for India as well because he is a special talent, a special player," said Ganguly. He went on to say that Pant is not a conservative batter and he expects similar traits in his captaincy as well. Pant was named DC's captain ahead of IPL 2021 and was retained by the franchise ahead of the mega-auction in 2022. "He is not the conservative type of batter, so you expect that character in his captaincy. Nobody comes as a ready-made captain. You learn as you go and I think captaincy is by instinct.

Generational change: With Dhoni gone, Iyer most experienced captain in IPL

New Delhi: The exit of MS Dhoni as the captain of Chennai Super Kings may well mark the end of an era in the Indian Premier League (IPL), as the final link from the league's inception to the present day has now ceased. Having captained in 226 matches, Dhoni could potentially be remembered as the longest-serving captain in IPL history. However, with today's developments, Shreyas Iyer emerges as the most experienced captain in the IPL 2024 season. This shift could be heralding a new era

in the IPL, which was launched in 2008. Iyer has led two teams, the Delhi Capitals and the Kolkata Knight Riders, and has captained in 55 matches. Starting his captaincy journey in 2018, he is the most experienced captain in the IPL this year with 158 matches, will no longer lead Mumbai Indians. Instead, Hardik Pandya has taken up the mantle, having led in only 31 games. Pandya's captaincy career began in the 2022 season when the IPL expanded, and the Gujarat Titans entered the league. "The baton is being passed on, the new generation is well and



truly taking over," said Venky Mysore, one of the old guards of the

(129 for KKR and DC) and the (Virat) Kohlis (143 for RCB) have moved on. They are the captains who adapted to T20 cricket. The Iyers, the Sanjus, the Rahuls and the (Rishabh) Pant (30 for DC) have grown up with the format."

What Mysore has meant is that when the IPL started in 2008, Shreyas (30) was 14. Like many of his contemporaries, the new generation grew up with the format, unlike Dhoni, Gambhir and Kohli -- even Sourav Ganguly, Rahul Dravid and VVS Laxman -- who all had to adapt to

it. "They have grown up in the T20 ecosystem. The old generations were very good captains no doubt but some of them struggled too," Mysore, who took over as the CEO of Knight Riders in 2011, said and pointed out that Rohit Sharma has also adapted to the format well. He sees a whole new approach to the IPL with new captains taking over. "I guess there will be a fresh approach, they have seen and played at all levels. The skill levels have changed, the game has dramatically changed and the league is also in good hands," he explained. Mysore also pointed out the growth of the IPL as a brand and as a league. "The IPL also has grown. As a product it has dramatically changed for the better. As a league, cricket is of high quality. The gap between Indian and foreign players is not significant. For instance, if you see the WPL, the teams with good foreign players could end up doing well. The IPL is not like that. The men's game has gone to another level. The tournament has been terrific," he signed off.