

Banerjee boosts BJD

Bhubaneswar(KCN): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's Odisha visit has boosted the rank of file of the Governing BJD, which was apparently demoralized after BJP's meteoric rise in the recently concluded Zilla Parishad elections.

The BJD leaders and workers were worried as the saffron surge had already gripped the state due to frequent visit to Union Ministers and Prime Minister Narendra Modi besides the BJP holding its National Executive Meeting in the State Capital here.

After meeting, Mamata has forcefully claimed that the regional parties were strong enough to counter the BJP.

"The regional parties are enough to tackle the BJP," Trinamool Congress Chief Ms. Banerjee told Media Men after a 10-minute meeting with Mr. Patnaik at Naveen Niwas.

Though Naveen is equally popular in the state, he lacked the oratory skill as Mamata possessed.

Her words have given fresh lease of confidence among the BJD leaders and workers, admits a senior MLA.

not resort to.

"They divide parties. Sometimes they purchase Ministers, MLAs and whatever they can.

front, the TMC chief said, "That is my consistent effort. We love regional parties and we want regional parties to persist and

are there. Secular parties are always secular and are together," she said.

Asked whether she finds a natural

reaction over the meeting of two non-BJP Chief Ministers.

He ridiculed the meeting between Mamata and Naveen and termed it as a bid to develop "mutual cooperation" to deal with chitfund scam investigation.

"The understanding b/w @Naveen_Odisha led BJD & @MamataOfficial led TMC is driven by a common bonding of corruption & is nothing but natural," Mr. Pradhan tweeted barely one hour after the meeting between the two CMs.

Justifying his claim, Mr. Pradhan also tweeted saying: "News is that BJD assured Mamata to positively consider her proposal for a grand alliance in Odisha with Congress as the third partner."

On the purpose of Mamata's visit, Mr. Pradhan said: "Primary reason of Mamata's visit to Odisha was to meet two TMC MPs who are involved in chitfund scam and are lodged in Bhubaneswar jail."



Asked about the threat to regional parties, particularly from the BJP in wake of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly poll results, Ms. Banerjee shot back "I do not believe that they (BJP) are a threat."

Coming down heavily on the BJP, she said the party (BJP) divides people and split political parties, a tactics that the regional parties do

"They create division among Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, tribals and scheduled caste people. They even create division within the Hindu community. We regional parties do not do that. We say Jai Jagannath as there is no caste, creed and religion in the Jagannth culture," said Banerjee.

To a question on the proposed federal

grow."

"In the federal structure, regional parties strengthen the very system under the Constitution," she said adding all states are important in a federal setup.

"We are already in the federal structure. Look, he (Naveen) is Odisha Chief Minister and I belong to West Bengal. Therefore, I say all regional parties

ally in BJD, Banerjee said "We have great respect for it."

On the upcoming Presidential election, she said "It is still early for that. If he (Naveen) proposes any name, I will talk to him. Don't worry. We have the best of relationship."

On the other hand, Union Minister Petroleum & Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan has given his

Yogi's axe on Akhilesh's Lucknow-Agra Expressway project; irregularities in land use, acquisition surface

LUCKNOW(KCN): After prestigious Gomti Riverfront and Jai Prakash Narain International Centre (JPNIC), one of the most ambitious and much-hyped infrastructure projects of previous Akhilesh government—302 km long Lucknow-Agra Expressway—has come under the cloud as the newly anointed Yogi Adityanath government has ordered a departmental probe into it. The State government has also engaged RITES, a public sector consultancy company to undertake a technical survey of the Expressway.

In a letter dated April 19, sent to 10 district magistrates, the State government has ordered an inquiry into all the land deals done in around 230 notified villages over the last 18 months. The DMs have been asked to submit their respective reports within a month.

The decision to hold probe into the project follows a

complaint lodged by a special field officer of UP Expressways Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA) against five chakbandi officers and 22 land owners in Firozabad for changing the land use. "They are accused of showing agricultural land in Bachhela Bachheli village under Sirsaganj Tehsil as residential land since residential plots fetch a greater compensation," said a UPEIDA official.

"As per the mandate of the probe, the DMs will inquire if the lands across 10 districts, along the Expressway were acquired lawfully or they were purchased by the third party from the farmers at throwaway prices and later sold to authorities at government prices drawing huge profit," said a highly-placed source in UPEIDA.

"The government has no intent to close any project. But it would ensure that genuine farmers have not See page - 7

Concern for out of school

Bhubaneswar (KCN): Union Minister Human Resource Development Prakash Javadekar has expressed concern for the "Out Of School Children" in Odisha as their number is growing, officials say.

Mr. Javadekar during his recent visit to the State held talks with senior officials of the Education Sector and expressed his concern for the large number of "Out Of School Children" (OoSC), who are needed to be taken care of.

In fact Odisha has the highest percentage (6.10%) of OoSC in the country as per the National Survey on Estimation on OoSC taken up in 2014, where it was estimated over 4 lakh children of 6-13 is Out of School.

While East Zone shares 4.02 % of the OoSC, South zone has a share of only 0.97% of OoSC.

Officials admit that this number is rising and steps are taken to take care of these children.

Principal Secretary Higher Educa-

tion, G Venugopal Sarma, Secretary School & Mass Education Ranjana Chopra and other senior officials were present along with Director IIT Bhubaneswar and Director NCERT,

School Children have been identified to be covered through various initiatives through Sarva Siskhya Abhiyan (SSA), said sources.

Poverty and Economic reasons are cited more for Out of

Mr. Javadekar said this trend is needed to be controlled through various innovative initiatives.

During the meeting Mr. Javadekar urged the Director IIT Bhubaneswar to work jointly with the State Government for expansion of Education Facilities as the students from preliminary level are needed to be groomed up so that in future they will be joining IIT and other Centers of Higher Learning.

He said that IIT Bhubaneswar has a role in developing primary schooling in these state.

Union Minister also pointed out that all the Universities including the Central University of Odisha have also a role in improving the Education Sector.

He held discussion for over two long hours and wanted to know the problems faced in the State for expanding the Education Sector, which was appreciated by the senior officials.



Bhubaneswar.

Union Minister Mr. Javadekar asked about the steps taken up by the State Government and Secretary School & Mass Education Ms. Chopra briefed details as to how this problem is tackled in Odisha.

During 2017-18, over 41,000 Out Of

School Menace, which are faced by the Children, admit officials.

According to National Survey of 2014, at least 28.52 Percent participants favor such an idea that due to acute poverty and economic weakness children are forced to go out of school.



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'We are not promoting sex'

Do you think the film industry is welcoming to newcomers like you? It's tough; and it was tough for me. It



ing to newcomers like you? It's really difficult to get into Bollywood - it's a matter of time and the luck factor counts

Taapsee calls Judwaa 2 a challenge, wants to meet original star Salman

She wants to look her glamorous best in the film and says that she has not yet met the stars of the original 'Judwaa.'

Taapsee Pannu has said that her role is neither based on



Karisma's or Rambha's characters from the original film starring Salman Khan.

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Karisma's or Rambha's characters from the original film starring Salman Khan.

Mumbai: Actress Taapsee Pannu wants to explore the commercial film space with 'Judwaa 2' and says she wants to look her glamorous best in the sequel.

Known for her hard-hitting performances in films like 'Baby' and 'Pink', Taapsee set off on her Bollywood journey with David Dhawan's 'Chashme Baddoor' in 2013.

Four years later, she is now set to collaborate with him again for 'Judwaa 2'.

"I will work on my part by making sure I look my glamorous best in the film.

The change of look is

nothing ... I have taken a little long to do the kind of film I really wanted and desired. But it has finally happened and I am here.

Wajah Tum Ho can be termed as your proper debut film. What are your expectations from it?

My expectations are very high because this film has given me everything that I have ever dreamt of. I feel amazing as I have experienced everything I wanted in this film - being a solo lead, performing to the best songs, playing a very strong character.

the most that I am expecting out of the film. I have experimented a lot with my acting bit, so I want to get into the commercial heroine space," she says.

"It (commercial tress says it is not easy to make people laugh. "Comedy is a difficult genre, it is not easy to make people laugh. I am keeping myself prepared to have fun. But as it's a new genre

KOEL ORIYA ACTRESS BIOGRAPHY

Many bengali girls tried their luck in Oriya film industry, but some of them are successful. Actress Koel is one of them. Now she is also married to odia actor Bobby Mishra. They have acted together in 'Tate Bhala Pauchi Boli', directed by Prashant Kumar. After marriage, Koel is acting in Hara Pattnaik's upcoming venture "Om Sai Ram" opposite Budhaditya.



Medha Ghosh



Another Ollywood actress Riya, who is also ruling the silver screen with her fascinating acting and appealing physique, is not behind to other actors when it comes to remuneration. Ollywood industry sources said Riya is getting above Rs 8 lakh for an Odia movie.

Banks have room to lower lending rates: Patel to Monetary Policy Committee

RBI Governor Urjit Patel told the six-member MPC, headed by Patel, had that interest rates on small savings are not only by 0.85-90 per cent as against a 1.75



etary Policy Committee (MPC) that there is room for banks to further cut interest rate while sounding a note of caution on inflation front in the coming months. The

opted for status quo on the benchmark policy rate (repo rate) on April 6. "There is still room for banks to cut lending rates. For efficient transmission, it is important

out of line with interest rates on other comparable instruments in the financial system," Patel said as per the MPC minutes released by the RBI on Thursday.

The weighted average lending rate of banks has come down

per cent cut in policy rates since January 2015. Lower lending rates encourage economic activities, but they also have the potential to fuel inflationary expectations. The RBI's mandate is to contain inflation without hurting eco-

nomical growth.

Referring to the price situation, Patel said that notwithstanding likely favourable base-effects in the next few months, "the outlook for inflation calls for close vigilance". The vigilance, he said, was required with a view to ensuring that inflation remains closer to the target of 4 per cent.

Another member and RBI Deputy Governor Viral Acharya said that on the growth front, the remonetisation is continuing apace and many sectors of the economy are recovering steadily after the transient slowdown. "There are signs though that the recovery is somewhat uneven. Private investment, given the high indebtedness of several stressed sectors,

remains a particularly weak spot," he said.

RBI Executive Director and MPC member Michael Debabrata Patra said high frequency indicators may be indicating that demonetisation affected actual output rather than potential.

"With remonetisation, therefore, the output gap may close sooner than expected - perhaps at a sub-optimal level since there is slack in several industries - and demand pressures could soon confront the path of inflation in the months ahead," he said.

In a surprise move, the government on November 9, 2016 had demonetised old Rs 500/1000 notes with an aim to check black money, fake currency and terror financing.

H-1B visa issue: Arun Jaitley may take it up with US authorities

New Delhi (KCN): India may take up the work visa issue with US authorities during the visit of finance minister Arun Jaitley to the US. Jaitley on Wednesday indicated that he would take up the visa issue with the US authorities during his visit. "These (IT industry issues) are matters of discussion with the appropriate authorities there. Once I do discuss and get an opportunity, I will let you know," he told reporters when asked whether he would take up the concerns of the Indian IT sector with the US administration.

The Indian IT industry has expressed concerns over the US government's clampdown on the rules for H-1B visa, which is primarily used by domestic IT professionals for short-term work. US President Donald Trump has signed an executive order for tightening the rules of the H-1B visa programme to stop its "abuse" and ensure that the visas are given to the "most-skilled or highest paid" petitioners.

Jaitley was scheduled to leave on a five-

day visit to the United States on Wednesday night to attend the Spring Meetings of the World Bank and IMF as well as deliberations of G20 nations. During his stay in Washington and New York, he will hold meetings with American CEOs and institutional and pension fund investors, where he will pitch India as a favourable investment destination. The finance minister is also slated to hold a meeting with the US Treasury Secretary. Industry body Nasscom warned that the US' move to replace the lottery system for issuing H-1B work visas with a merit-based approach could have "unintended consequences" even as it sought to downplay any immediate impact on IT companies this year. "No new changes are being implemented immediately... Nothing is being proposed that would impact or change the FY18 H-1B lottery that is currently underway," Nasscom said in a statement on Wednesday. The proposed changes are forward-looking and non-specific, it contended.

Ride-hailing app Ola to raise \$100 million as competition against Uber heats up

NEW DELHI(KCN): Cab aggregator Ola is looking at raising up to USD 100 million in fresh funding from existing shareholders to take American rival Uber head-on.

The board of the Bengaluru-based company has approved a proposal to raise up to USD 100 million from existing shareholders in a re-

investments in their operations in India to ramp up number of vehicles on their platform as well as getting new riders on board.

The board approved the proposal to offer convertible securities at Rs 13,521 apiece through a rights issue at its meeting on March 22, 2017.

In a regulatory

"up to USD 100 million (about Rs 670 crore) by issue of 495,526 Series '11' preference shares of face value INR 10 each at a price per subscription share equivalent to INR 13,521".

The filing, made to the Corporate Affairs Ministry under the Companies Act, added that the rights issue was scheduled

much the company raised through the issue. A query sent to Ola did not elicit any response.

The filing said the objective of the issue was "to meet the growth and expansion of business and to strengthen financial position of the company".

Interestingly, Ola had recently raised about Rs 1,675 crore

dian cities, has been aggressively expanding its portfolio of services. It is placing big bets on new technologies like electric vehicles to stay ahead of the competition.

Uber, which operates in 29 Indian cities, has made the country one of its top priorities. After selling its China business to rival Didi, the company has sharpened

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incurred losses. However, the anomalies, if any, will draw harsh and strict action by

triarch Mulayam Singh Yadav in the presence of Shivpal Yadav and other senior SP leaders and

project has already been purchased. Now the DMs have been asked to return funds with them while the



cent meeting.

Both Ola and Uber have made multi-million dollar

filing, ANI Technologies -- which operates Ola -- said its board has approved raising

for March 23. However, it could not be immediately ascertained how

from its Japanese investor, SoftBank.

Ola, which has a presence in 110 In-

its focus on strengthening its platform and expanding driver partner ecosystem in India.

the authorities," said Awanish Awasthi, newly appointed CEO of UPEIDA, adding that he expected the detailed inquiry to be completed in a month.

It may be recalled that Lucknow-Agra Expressway dominated the poll narrative of previous CM Akhilesh Yadav who flagged the project as one of the most astounding achievements of his government. The Expressway was inaugurated by Akhilesh Yadav along with father and Samajwadi Party pa-

members of Yadav clan with much fanfare on November 21, 2017.

Meanwhile, the present dispensation has also underlined that fact that around Rs 670 crore earmarked for the project was lying unused in its accounts. Of the allocated amount, around Rs 200 crore was with district magistrates and the rest was with UPEIDA, it claimed.

Moreover, 99.5 per cent of the land out of the 3,300 hectare land that had to be acquired for the

amount with UPEIDA has also been reversed. The UPEIDA finance controller has been replaced.

The Expressway, worth Rs 15,000 crore, passes through Etawah, Firozabad, Mainpuri, Unno, Kanpur, Kannauj, Auraiya and Hardoi. As per the claims of the previous regime, the project was completed in record time of 23 months but the opposition often contested the claim by saying that it completed only superficially and a lot needed to be done.

Former Aston Villa defender Ugo Ehiogu dies

LONDON(KCN): Tottenham's under-23 coach Ugo Ehiogu has died at the age of 44, the Premier League club announced on Friday. Tottenham announced in a statement: "It is with immense sadness that we announce the passing of Ugo Ehiogu."



The former defender, capped four times by England, was being treated in hospital after collapsing at the club's training headquarters in north London on Thursday.

Watch Video: Former England defender Ugo Ehiogu dies after cardiac arrest

Ehiogu, who starred for Aston Villa and Middlesbrough during his playing career, has been on Tottenham's coaching staff since 2014. Tottenham's head of coaching and player development John

Leeds, Glasgow Manchester United star Rio Ferdinand tweeted: "Can't believe the news that Ugo Ehiogu has passed away. Calm and warming vibe when in his company. My heart goes out to his family."

Alan Shearer, the former England striker, wrote on Twitter: "Lost for words. A true gentleman. RIP Ugo."

Former Republic of Ireland midfielder Andy Townsend, a Villa team-mate of Ehiogu's, added: "I'm absolutely shocked. I didn't expect to wake up to this news."

"He was a player that every team would like to have at the back."

"I remember the 3-0 win over Leeds (in the League Cup final). I looked at pictures at home this morning and Ugo is in them celebrating."

He was the ultimate

feel at the Club. Former Aston Villa defender Ugo Ehiogu AFP "Ugo's immense presence will be irreplaceable. Our heartfelt sympathies go out to his wife Gemma and his family."

The club's statement added: "Ugo received immediate treatment after suffering a cardiac arrest at the Training Centre yesterday (Thursday) before being transferred to hospital, where he passed away in the early hours of this morning."

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Mumbai eye another dominating show against Daredevils

MUMBAI(KCN): On a roll after five wins on the trot, table toppers Mumbai Indians will look to continue their domination when they clash with struggling Delhi Daredevils in an IPL game, here tomorrow.

The Rohit Sharma-led side mauled Kings XI Punjab by eight wickets while chasing a challenging 198-run target with Englishman Jos Butler smashing 77 off 37 balls.

Mumbai will be pleased with the consistency of orange cap holder Nitish Rana, who is getting better day by day. Rana, who has so far amassed 255 runs

been that they have not depended on a single batsman. All of them have chipped in with runs to shape team's fortunes.

The Mumbai bowlers went for runs in the home game against Gujarat Lions and also last night. This would be an area of definite concern for the team management. The team which possesses quality bowlers like Lasith Malinga, seasoned off spinner Harbhajan Singh, Jasprit Bumrah among others, will have to bowl well to restrict the opposition.

It is likely that Malinga, who has been leaking runs, may be replaced by Kiwi pacer Tim

Contribution by Mumbai boy Shreyas Iyer, who sort of knows the pitch, will be crucial for the visitors if they have to pile up a big total. Iyer played a breezy knock of 50 in 31 balls against Sunrisers Hyderabad, which albeit ended in a losing cause.

It will be interesting to see if Daredevils retain out of sorts Sri Lankan Angelo Matthews, who went for 41 in three overs in their last game.

South African Chris Morris, who returned a four-wicket haul, will need to replicate his performance and has to get support from seasoned pacer and skip-

consolidate the top slot.

Squads: Mumbai Indians: Rohit Sharma (capt), Parthiv Patel, Tim Southee, Kieron Pollard, Jos Buttler, Ambati Rayudu, Mitchell McClenaghan, Nitish Rana, Jasprit Bumrah, Hardik Pandya, Krunal Pandya, Harbhajan Singh, Mitchell Johnson, Lendl Simmons, Vinay Kumar, Saurabh Tiwary, Karn Sharma, Krishnappa Gowtham, Siddhesh Lad, Nicholas Pooran, Shreyas Gopal, Jitesh Sharma, Deepak Punia, Jagadeesha Suchith, Kulwant Khejroliya. Delhi Daredev-



this IPL season, remained unbeaten on 62 to take his side home against Punjab.

With Rohit, Rana, Patel brothers Hardik and Krunal, wicket-keeper Parthiv Patel and Butler in form, any team will be worried taking them.

It is apparent that Mumbai like to chase than setting targets with three of their five wins -- against Gujarat Lions, Punjab and Royal Challengers Bangalore -- coming batting second.

The best thing for the home side has

Southee.

For Daredevils', young guns Sanju Samson and Rishabh Pant have contributed nicely but the side will need their top order that includes Sam Billings and Karun Nair to fire in unison against Mumbai.

Billings' failure in the last match is a sign of worry and he along with Samson, the lone Indian centurion of IPL 10, will have to provide Delhi a solid start, especially on a Wankhede track, which is usually friendly for batters.

per Zaheer Khan and Australian Pat Cummins.

If Mumbai batting line up has to be restricted especially on a Wankhede track, role of spinners especially Amit Misha will be crucial.

A certain entertainment is on the cards for the crowds as scores here have been usually above the 150. Going into the game, Mumbai Indians have an upper hand and the team will like to continue their love affair with Wankhede by winning their sixth straight game and

ils: Zaheer Khan (capt), Mohammad Shami, Shahbaz Nadeem, Jayant Yadav, Amit Mishra, Shreyas Iyer, Sanju Samson, Karun Nair, Rishabh Pant, CV Milind, Khaleel Ahmed, Pratyush Singh, Murugan Ashwin, Aditya Tare, Shashank Singh, Ankit Bawane, Navdeep Saini, Corey Anderson, Angelo Matthews, Pat Cummins, Kagiso Rabada, Chris Morris, Carlos Brathwaite, Sam Billings.

