

UDAN on right track Government, BJP lock horns on power claim

Bhubaneswar (K-CN): Regional Air Connectivity initiatives in Odisha under the Ude Deshki Aam Nagarik (UDAN) have been put on track with Chief Secretary Aditya Prasad Padhi taking a review of its progress in the State Level Monitoring Committee meeting held in State Secretariat.

Special Secretary General Administration Ashok Kumar Meena outlined the issues for discussion.

Chief Secretary Mr. Padhi directed to complete the short term project report for operationalization of air ports at Utkela and Joypore within 31 May, 2017.

The Executive Engineers of the concerned district were instructed to prepare the report.

Mr. Padhi further directed to expedite preparation of long term DPRs for full phased development of these Airports.

Discussions in the meeting revealed that UDAN scheme is being implemented in Odisha in joint collaboration between State and Central Government.

It was decided in the meeting that un-

served and underserved areas would be prioritized under the scheme.

line operators to kick-off operations during initial period keeping the passenger fares at



Four Airports at Utkela, Jeypore, Jharsuguda, Rourkela would be developed for regional air connectivity. BPIAP, Bhubaneswar has also been included in the list for regional connectivity from state capital.

The routes like Bhubaneswar to Utkela, Utkela to Raipur, Bhubaneswar to Jeypore, Bhubaneswar to Jharsuguda, Jharsuguda to Ranchi, and Bhubaneswar to Rourkela were suggested for regional connectivity. It was decided to make the airports operational by September, 2017.

The meeting further deliberated on Viability Gap Funding (VGF) and other subsidies to the air-

affordable level.

As per initial calculations, the average price of a subsidized ticket to be paid by the passengers for these flights would be around Rs.2500. The subsidy would be borne both by the Central and State Government on 80:20 ratio basis.

Apart from this, Government of Odisha is also providing land acquisition cost, cost sharing towards construction and development along with other concessions to minimize the cost of air operations by the airline operators.

It may be pertinent to mention here that a MOU was signed among Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India,

Government of Odisha and Airport Authorities of India on 1 March, 2017 to jointly carry forward regional connectivity program.

Its objective was to establish an integrated eco-system that would lead to significant growth in civil aviation which in turn would lead to promotion of tourism, trade and industry. Since then State Government has been pushing forward development of the airports.

The issues relating to deployment of security personnel, fire services, power & water supply, provision of air port filling station near the airstrip and notification of regional connectivity airports were discussed and resolved in the meeting.

Director General of Police Kunwar Brajesh Singh, Special Secretary Home Lalit Das, Inspector General Fire Services Santosh Bala, Additional Secretary Finance Aswani Kumar Mishra along with other senior officers from concerned departments participated in discussions.

BHUBANESWAR(K-CN): As people grapple with unscheduled power cuts amid unrelenting heat, the State Government on Thursday claimed to have achieved self-sufficiency in power generation and making substantial investment to improve transmission and dis-

tribution of hydro power projects, he was silent on the progress achieved under rural electrification programme which is Centrally funded.

On the other hand, hitting out at the State Government for its failure to provide electricity to all villages, the BJP said about 39 lakh out of

Odisha are yet to get the benefit of free electricity connection.

“What happened to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik’s promise to electrify all villages by May, 2017 and supply 24X7 electricity to all households by March, 2019?” he questioned.

As many parts of the State are experiencing abysmally low voltage and frequent power cuts, people have resorted to agitation and violence in some places against the apathy of the Government in improving transmission and distribution systems.

In 2013, the State



tribution sectors.

Listing out his department’s achievements in the last 17 years, Energy Minister Prafulla Mallick said 21,000 villages have been electrified while electricity consumers’ base has been increased from 16 lakhs in 2000 to 66 lakhs in 2017.

Though the Minister provided details about the investment made by the State Government in development of infrastructure and renova-

one crore households in Odisha are still living without electricity. The poor progress is despite the fact that the entire funding of rural electrification is being provided by the Centre.

Claiming that the Centre has provided `2,727 crore for rural electrification and integrated power development during the last three years, State BJP secretary Kalandi Samal told reporters here that 40 lakh BPL families of

Recalling the December 16, 2016 review meeting on rural electrification, Samal said the CM, who presided over the meeting, had directed Energy Department to provide electricity to all villages of Kandhamal, Nuapada, Malkangiri and Nabarangpur districts on a priority basis by February, 2017. There is hardly any change in the situation of the four districts even now, he said.

Government launched Odisha Distribution System Strengthening Project with a view to improve the distribution system and provide reliable power with improved voltage to all parts of Odisha. The State Government had planned to construct 500 new 33/11 KV sub-stations with an investment of `2,600 crore. The Government has so far completed 100 sub-stations.

Big five get ACS ranks

Bhubaneswar (K-CN): Big Five Of Odisha Bureaucracy has finally been promoted to Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) Rank, thanks to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

Chief Minister Mr. Patnaik cleared the file for promotion all the five of 1986 Batch IAS and they are given In-Situ Promotion.

Accordingly Department of General Administration (DoGA) has brought out a notification in this regard today.

So Asit Kumar Tripathy, Laxmi Narayan Gupta, Suresh Chandra Mohapatra, Sudashan Pal Thakur and G V Venugopala Sarma are promoted to ACS Rank.

Chief Secretary Aditya Prasad Padhi has been proactively pursuing their case for promotion as these hardworking and ef-

fective Mandarins were due for promotion.

With the creation of Five More ACS Rank Posts and Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) Chaired by Chief Secretary Mr. Padhi, Chief Minister gave Green Signal for promotion of these Top Five Bureaucrats at one go.

In fact at least 20 State Governments have already given promotion to 1986 Batch IAS Officers to ACS Rank and these Mandarins were feeling bad about it.

Asit Kumar Tripathy, Principal Secretary, Department of Home is now ACS, Home.

Mr. Tripathy, an intelligent and performing Bureaucrat has the leadership quality and leads his Team well.

During the time of crisis, he takes the front seat and handles

situation effectively, which was seen during recent riots in Bhadrakh.

He stood like a Rock of Gibraltar for the Odisha Police, which was on its back foot during the crisis.

Laxmi Narayan Gupta, Principal Secretary of the Department of MSME will be ACS MSME.

Mr. Gupta, an excellent go getter, has the ability to organize an institution in a befitting manner and scale up the activities to new high.

During Mr. Gupta’s tenure, MSME Sector in Odisha has received the boost, which was never experienced.

Exports have been doubled with over Rs.40,000 Crore and Start Up Movement has gained momentum in the State, thanks to overdrive of Mr. Gupta.

Suresh Chandra

Mohapatra, Principal Secretary of the Department of Forest & Environment will be ACS Forest & Environment.

Mr. Mohapatra, an unassuming Mandarin has remained in the good books of the Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik during these years.

He has been handling crucial departments during these years without much hype.

G V Venugopala Sarma, Principal Secretary of the Department of Higher Education will be ACS Higher Education.

Mr. Sarma, an honest, upright and warm hearted Bureaucrat is a low profile and hardworking officer.

Deep going Mr. Sarma knows his subject well and performs his job with all sincerity.

Sudarshan Pal

Thakur, Chief Administrator KBK Administration is fortunate among all his batch mates.

Mr. Thakur is heading a Chief Secretary Rank Post for last eight months though he was in the Rank of Principal Secretary.

Now he will continue as Chief Administrator KBK with the promotion to ACS Rank.

Mr. Thakur, a friendly and fervent Mandarin has always been taken Pro-Poor approach in the Administration.

However he has not received enough scope to prove his mettle during these years,

And as he has long six years to serve in service, Mr. Thakur will be able to give much better results if given opportunity to serve in the main line sectors.

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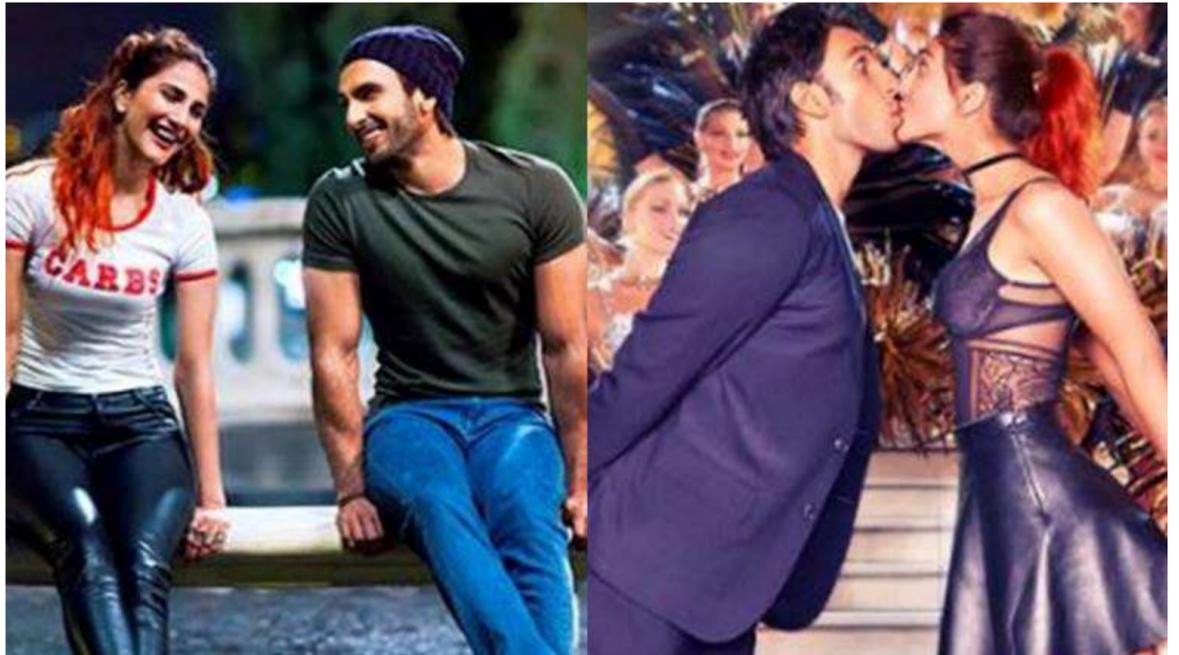
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Befikre's new song Je T'aime proves French is language of love

After giving us songs to groove on, Befikre filmmakers have released a romantic song with flavours of Paris in it. French is the language of love and this song proves the dictum all over again. The song explores the bond between the characters of Ranveer Singh and Vaani Kapoor, which is shown transforming from a casual relationship into love and commitment. The lyrics, which have been written by Jaideep Sahni, are poetic, relatable and beautiful. He has penned down all those sweet miseries

that you will experience being in love. The music, which has been given by the very talented duo Vishal- Shekhar, sets you free from the notion that one cannot dance on a romantic number. If you know even a bit of Salsa, you have your moves ready too. Unlike other lovey-dovey songs which made you a bit uncomfortable to dance with your partner, this number will make the entire ambience a bit more romantic. And don't miss the chemistry between Ranveer and Vaani too.



Hot, Hot, Hot! Padma Lakshmi Shows Off Her Beach Body In Teeny Bikini, Radar Online

Mila Kunis and Ashton Kutcher welcome second child

LOS ANGELES(KCN): Actors Mila Kunis and Ashton Kutcher, 33, met as co-stars on the set of "Two and a Half Men," among his other roles, shot to international fame when he began dating actress Demi Moore, to whom he was married from 2005 to 2013. Kutcher, who also starred in the television series



Kutcher announced the birth of their second child together, a spokeswoman for Kunis confirmed on Thursday. The couple has yet to name the baby boy born on Wednesday.

producers have a two-year-old daughter, Wyatt. They became engaged in February 2014 after a two-year relationship and married in July 2015. Kutcher, 38, and

television series aired in the United States between 1998 and 2006 in which their characters were also in a relationship. Kutcher, who also starred in the television series

international fame when he began dating actress Demi Moore, to whom he was married from 2005 to 2013. Kutcher, who also starred in the television series

UAE's Omar Abdulrahman named Asia Player of Year

Abu Dhabi(KCN): Omar Abdulrahman, uae football, afc football, afc player of the year, Omar Abdulrahman afc, football news, football Omar Abdulrahman (R) admitted he would like to play in Europe. (Source: AP)

Omar Abdulrahman, arguably Asia's biggest star, was crowned AFC player of the year in a glittering ceremony in his home country of United Arab Emirates. The left-sided midfielder and winger is the second Emirati to win the trophy in consecutive years and his award was greeted with a huge cheer in the Emirates Palace Hotel in Abu Dhabi. The victory was even sweeter as he was nominated last year but lost out to compatriot, Ahmed Khalil. But he said the trophy would not make up for his Emirati league side Al Ain losing the Asian Champions League final last month to South Korea's Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors. "My main ambition was to win the Champions League trophy," he said. PM Modi Is More Interested In TRP Politics Rahul Gandhi At Congress Parliamentary Meet PM Modi Is More Interested In TRP Politics Rahul Gandhi At Congress Parliamentary Meet. Row Over West Bengal "Military Coup" Issue Escalates: Who Said What Row Over West Bengal "Military Coup" Issue Escalates: Who Said What Here's How Mohammad Kaif Replied To Virender Sehwag's Birthday Wish

BT Exclusive! Nadira Zaheer Babbar

Bombay (KCN): Nadira Zaheer hasn't done till date in her life. In an exclu-



Babbar will soon be seen enacting both her mother and herself in a play to be featured at the Prithvi Theatre Festival. The soon-to-be 70 actress wishes to do everything she

sive chat with Bombay Times, she opens up on finally being able to write a play on her mother and work with Makarand Deshpande at the same time.

Sensex makes history, crosses 31,000; Nifty on new peak

MUMBAI(KCN): Stocks defied gravity for the second straight session today, propelling the Sensex past the 31,000- mark for the first time ever on the third anniversary of the Modi government. The broader Nifty too breached the 9,600-level, also in a first, before settling at a record high of 9,595.10.

Sustained buying, both by domestic and foreign investors, propped up the market at elevated levels amid optimism for more reforms by the government.

The BSE Sensex has risen 25.53 per cent, while the NSE Nifty has gained 30.38 per cent since the BJP-led NDA government came to power in May 2014.

Creation of new positions by participants following the beginning of the June futures and options (F&O) series added to the momentum, brokers said.

Extending the previous session's record-setting spree, the BSE Sensex crossed the landmark 31,000-level to hit a lifetime high of 31,074.07.

After paring some gains, the 30-share index settled at 31,028.21, up 278.18 points, or 0.90 per cent. It surpassed the earlier record closing of 30,750.03 hit yesterday.

It was the third straight week of gains for the key indices. The Sensex rose by 563.29 points, or 1.84 per cent, while the Nifty finished the week 167.20 points, or

1.77 per cent higher. "Market touched another milestone supported by continued buying interest on index heavyweights post expiry. Expectation on good monsoon and a slow pace in interest rate hike by US Fed continue to weigh on the sentiment.

"Mid and small caps outperformed as recent correction

Bank (1.28 per cent), Bharti Airtel (1.12 per cent), Tata Motors (1.11 per cent), M&M (1.11 per cent), L&T (1.05 per cent), Axis Bank (1 per cent), ONGC (0.95 per cent) and Coal India (0.90 per cent).

However, pharma counters continued their slide on persistent selling pressure largely on muted earn-

Japan's Nikkei fell 0.64 per cent.

European markets were in the red in their early deals. Paris CAC 30 fell 0.70 per cent and Frankfurt's DAX lost 0.41 per cent. London's FTSE, however, was marginally up by 0.10 per cent.

An employee sits at the front desk inside Tech Mahindra office building in Noida

nesses from many of the hundreds of slums and frequently shoot it out with rival gangs over territory and engage in gun battles with military police during operations. (AP) Brazilians hit the streets to protest against gang gun battles and police. On May 20, 1977, Roger Moore is accompanied by co-star Barbara Bach as they arrive for the screening of their latest 007 feature, 'The Spy Who Loved Me,' during the Cannes Film Festival at the French Riviera. Moore died on May 23 in Switzerland after a fall from a balcony. My world is my Bond - A look at James Bond 007 Roger Moore's acting life. South China Sea patrol. US launches first South China Sea patrol under Trump. ManU fans celebrate Manchester United fans celebrate Europa League win.

Asked whether he would want the major to be awarded for his action, Amit Shah said there is a process involved in honouring people.

The 'next-gen' stars will be hoping to step up and display their skills to fill in the gap at the French Open.

People alleged that this couple got over 6 lakh rupees for feeding Amit Shah. If that's the reality, "how come we are still poor," asks this village woman. India being world's largest beef exporter, the new regulations are expected to have an adverse impact on the meat industry.

SC removes BCCI president Anurag

NEW DELHI(KCN): Supreme Court of India removed Anurag Thakur

the court in nominating persons as the members in the committee of ad-

from International Cricket Council (ICC) CEO Dave Richardson



as president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) with a show cause notice issued in regards to charges of perjury and contempt of court, saying, "forthwith cease and desist from" the board's work. The apex court also removed Ajay Shirke, secretary of BCCI.

A bench headed by Chief Justice T S Thakur and comprising Justices A M Khanwilkar and D Y Chandrachud also decided to initiate contempt proceedings against Thakur by seeking his response as to why he should not be held liable for obstructing the implementation of the court's directions aimed at reforming BCCI.

The court ordered that the working of BCCI will be looked after by a committee of administrators and requested senior advocate Fali S Nariman and senior advocate Gopal Subramanian, who was assisting in the matter as amicus curiae, to assist

administrators in two weeks. The matter for passing the direction for nominating the persons in committee of administrators will be taken up on January 19, said the bench.

Until the new administrators take over the working of BCCI, the senior most vice president of the board will act as the president and the present joint secretary will assume the work as secretary, added the bench.

The apex court directed that all office bearers of BCCI and state associations will have to give their undertaking that they will abide by the directions of the court. In an earlier order on July 18 by the court, most of BCCI office bearers were ineligible to carry on and the panel headed by former chief justice of India R M Lodha had asked the court to remove them.

The court reminded the BCCI top brass that Thakur as president of the board had asked for a letter

that the appointment of a Comptroller and auditor general (CAG) nominee in the cricket body would compromise with autonomy and amount to government interference.

"If you want to escape perjury charges, you ought to apologise. At every stage you have been trying to obstruct. Everyone wants to go around and continue to hold the post even after 70 years. This is such a lucrative business that everyone wants to go on forever" the bench had said.

It had also referred to a letter by ICC chairman Shashank Manohar and said even he has stated that Thakur had asked for such a letter.

The apex court had also said that by asking ICC to write such a letter, BCCI has intended to defeat the purpose of the verdict, that too when the bench had made it clear that appointment of CAG nominee would bring about transparency in the cricket body.

public interest

Mumbai (KCN) ROLLING OUT one of the steepest cuts in borrowing rates in recent times, leading banks lowered their lending rates on Sunday by up to 90 basis points, or a little less than one per cent, a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi suggested that they should focus on the poor, lower middle class, middle class and senior citizens, and act in "public interest".

After the deadline for the demonetisation of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes ended Friday, State Bank of India (SBI), the country's largest bank, reduced the overnight marginal cost of funds based lending rates (MCLR) to 7.75 per cent from 8.65 per cent. The new rates are 8 per cent against 8.90 per cent for one-year loans, 8.10 per cent for two-year loans and 8.15 per cent for three-year maturity, SBI said.



scaled down the valuation gap with large caps, which gave an entry point for those who missed the opportunity," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services. Foreign institutional investors bought shares worth a net Rs 589.11 crore on Thursday, which added to the upbeat sentiment.

Tata Steel soared 5.46 per cent to emerge as the biggest Sensex gainer, followed by ITC Ltd at 2.99 per cent on encouraging fourth quarterly earnings.

Other big gainers were Power Grid (2.57 per cent), Reliance Industries (2.53 per cent), Adani Ports (1.82 per cent), Asian Paints (1.76 per cent), Infosys (1.46 per cent), Maruti Suzuki (1.30 per cent), ICICI

ings. Sun Pharma fell 3.93 per cent, Cipla lost 2.48 per cent, Lupin shed 2.29 per cent and Dr Reddy's 0.64 per cent.

Sectorwise, BSE metal index gained the most by rising 3.40 per cent, followed by oil&gas 2.08 per cent, FMCG 1.77 per cent, power 1.61 per cent, consumer durables 1.56 per cent, capital goods 1.47 per cent, auto 1.34 per cent, PSU 1.13 per cent and banking 0.78 per cent.

Buying activity in the broader markets also gathered momentum, with the mid-cap index surging 2.06 per cent and small-cap index gaining 1.60 per cent.

Globally, in rest of Asia, Hong Kong's Hang Seng rose 0.03 per cent, while Shanghai Composite Index was up 0.07 per cent.

Tech Mahindra Q4 profit dives 33 per cent on weak margins BSE in Mumbai (File photo | Reuters) Investor wealth surges over Rs 50 lakh crore in three years

A technician opens a pressure gas valve inside the Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) group gathering station on the outskirts of Ahmedabad in March 2012. (File Photo | Reuters)

Residents and activist lays on the ground holding signs that read in Portuguese 'Peace' and 'Live' during a protest against police and gang gun battles that put residents in the crossfire at the Complexo da Mare slum in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Wednesday, May 24, 2017. Heavily armed gangs run drug busi-

Adventz group not keen on Paytm stake

KOLKATA(KCN): Saroj Poddar-controlled Adventz group today said it

buying a minority stake in Paytm, but has decided against it.

"We were ap-

proached by a few merchant bankers for a minority stake in Paytm. But we have decided not to go ahead with it," a top official of the group told PTI today. According to sources, Saroj Poddar's son Akshay Poddar was negotiating the deal.

Valuation is the key reason for not buying into the leading wallet company, the sources indicated.

According to media reports, industrialists Sunil Munjal and Saroj Poddar were in talks for a secondary deal to buy a minority stake in One97 Communications, the parent of Paytm. Paytm last received funding from Taiwan's MediaTek in August.



was approached for

proached by a few

Sensex breaks seven day fall, but logs weekly loss

Mumbai (KCN): Breaking a seven-day losing pattern, the Sensex today reclaimed the key 26,000-mark by recovering 61 points, helped by gains in pharma, auto and capital goods, but both indices registered a weekly drop. For the week, the Sensex lost 448.86 points, or 1.69 per cent, while the broader NSE Nifty dropped 153.70 points, or 1.88 per cent.

This is their biggest weekly in five, which is since the week ended November 18. Domestic investors backed up and covering-up of short positions gave equities a push too. But a weak trend in Asia and a muted opening in Europe cast its shadow.

The rupee appreciated 21 paise intra-day against the dollar, to 67.78, which had a positive influence too, brokers said. After a

subdued opening, the Sensex dropped as foreign funds liquidated bets ahead of Christmas. but emergence of value-buying later meant it wiped off early losses before settling higher by 61.10 points, or 0.24 per cent, at 26,040.70.

The 50-share NSE Nifty ended up 6.65 points, or 0.08 per cent, at 7,985.75 points. Intra-day, it shuttled between 7,942.05 and 8,022.60.

I almost destroyed wrist at French Open: Rafael Nadal

PARIS(KCN): Rafael Nadal admitted Thursday that he almost destroyed his left wrist injury on the eve of his third round match, "What seemed doable on Monday was more difficult on Tuesday clinching clay court titles in Monte Carlo, Barcelona and



most "destroyed" his wrist at last year's French Open, as he relived the pain which forced him to abandon his pursuit of a 10th Roland Garros title.

The Spanish star withdrew from the 2016 tournament

going on to miss Wimbledon before returning for the Rio Olympics.

"It was not a decision -- it was an obligation. I almost destroyed my wrist at Roland Garros," Nadal told Eurosport on Thursday.

Friday. I was playing well and pushed further until my wrist said 'no'. After that, the rest of the year was complicated."

Nadal is bidding to win the French Open for a 10th time and is considered the leading favourite af-

Madrid already this year.

He also reached his first Grand Slam final in three years in Australia in January where he lost in three sets to old rival Roger Federer who is skipping Roland Garros.

Pablo Zabaleta joins West Ham United from Manchester City

LONDON(KCN): Argentina full-back Pablo Zabaleta will join West Ham

United on Thursday. Zabaleta, who revealed he turned down offers from Italy, Spain and also

Manchester City, said he was "pleased" to be part of West Ham. I hope I can give you good moments. Of

opportunity to come to this wonderful league, the Premier League, something



United from Premier League rivals Manchester City, it was announced Friday.

Zabaleta will formally begin a two-year deal with the London club on July 1, when his City contract expires.

The 32-year-old had already been released by City, for whom he made more than 200 appearances after joining from Espanyol in 2008.

"This is an abso-

lute pleasure to be part of West Ham. I hope I can give you good moments. Of course, I come to the club to enjoy myself and hopefully we can have a very successful time," Zabaleta told West Ham TV.

Zabaleta won the Premier League twice as well as the 2011 FA Cup and two League Cups during his time at City, where he became a popular figure with fans as a symbol of the club's modern resurgence as a major force in English football.

elsewhere in England to sign for the Hammers, now hopes to play his part in helping the east London club improve on last season's mid-table finish.

"Sometimes a new challenge is all you need as a person and as a player. I thought my time at City was done. It has been a fantastic nine years, absolutely brilliant," he said.

"Manchester City gave me the op-

portunity to come to this wonderful league, the Premier League, something

I've been enjoying a lot as a player. And, of course, for me it was probably the right time to move on.

"Also, as a player, I thought I wanted to keep playing in the Premier League.

"For me, after being in this country for so long, this is a new challenge for me in the Premier League and I'm ready for it and looking forward to it."

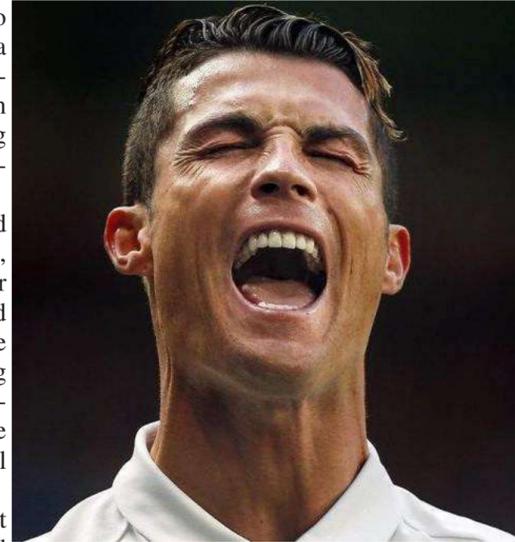
Real Madrid forward Cristiano Ronaldo postpones London appearance after Manchester attack

LONDON(KCN): Football star Cristiano Ronaldo has postponed a schedule appearance in London on Saturday following the Manchester terror attack.

Real Madrid forward Ronaldo, once a Manchester United player, had been due to promote SIXPAD training gear at a press conference at the InterContinental Hotel on Saturday.

But this event has now been called off for the time being after the British government raised the UK's national terror threat level to critical following Monday's suicide

bomb at the is with regret that we



Manchester Arena that killed 22 people and injured dozens more.

"Following the upgrading of the UK's terror threat, it

have had to postpone Saturday's public appearances with Cristiano Ronaldo," said a SIXPAD statement issued Friday.

"Safety is of

paramount importance and given the high profile and public nature of this event we've taken the tough decision to postpone all activity until a later date," it added.

Numerous sporting bodies have reviewed their security arrangements in the light of Britain's deadliest terror attack for 12 years, with two showpiece events of the English sporting calendar -- football's FA Cup final and rugby union's Premiership final -- both due to take place in London on Saturday.

Five rising stars to watch out for at the French Open Men's singles

The 2017 French Open is all set to kick-start on the 28th and will definitely turnout to be an unpredictable one this time around with Roger Federer withdrawing from the tournament, and Andy Murray and Novak Djokovic struggling to find form after a disastrous past few months. This is exactly when 'next-gen' stars will be hoping to step up and display their skills to fill in the gap at the French Open. Let us take a look at the rising stars to watch out for at Roland Garros.

It's as unusual as it gets to see Rafael Nadal losing a match on clay. In the recently concluded Rome Masters, Dominic Thiem halted Nadal's 17-match winning streak on clay, which includes back-to-back Monte-Carlo, Barcelona and Madrid title wins. The nine-time French Open champ was decimated by the 23-year-old Austrian in straight sets.

The Austrian won 29 of the 41 matches this season and also went on to

win the Rio Open earlier in February. Thiem has constantly maintained his spot in the top 10 rankings since June 2016 and made it to the semis of Roland Garros last year, which makes him even more dangerous this time around.

The current season proved to be a noteworthy one for Thiem as he went on to defeat some of the top seeds which includes the likes of Andy Murray, Rafael Nadal and Stanislas 'Stan' Wawrinka.

Known for his powerful single-handed backhand, Thiem has won eight ATP titles, of which six of them came on his favourite clay surface. With his recent success on tour, Thiem is definitely one of the young guns to watch out for this French Open.

One name that's been the talk of the ATP circuit is that of 20-year-old Alexander Zverev, ever since the young German won the Italian Open just a few days ago, claiming the honour of being one of the youngest to clinch an ATP Masters title. Son of

former Russian tennis stars Alexander Zverev Sr and Irena Zvereva, Alexander's is a tennis family, with his brother Mischa Zverev also an accomplished singles player ranked 33rd in the world. Zverev's parents moved to Germany in 1991 and he was born and brought up in there.

"Sascha" as he is fondly called in the ATP tour circuit, he holds an astonishing winning percentage of 75 this season and has lost only 9 of the 36 matches he has played.

Considered one with the best serves on tour, Alexander Zverev has four ATP titles to his name, of which two were won just this month. Alexander Zverev lifted the Montpellier title in February and became one of the few players to win both the singles and doubles (along with his brother Mischa Zverev) titles at the same event.

In 2015, Emirates named him ATP Star of Tomorrow and true to the title awarded Zverev is proving his worth on the tennis court. Re-

cent victories over Novak Djokovic, Marin Cilic, Stan Wawrinka and Milos Raonic only goes to prove that Zverev is the new kid on the block to watch keenly.

When Zverev sets foot on the red clay to take on the tennis greats at Roland Garros, all eyes will be on the young German but his eyes would be set on the coveted French Open trophy.

There was a huge dent in American tennis when former world number 1 Andy Roddick retired in 2015 which left everyone wondering if there was anyone who could fill the shoes of the 2003 US Open champ. But to the surprise of everyone, they found Andy's replacement in Jack Sock quite quickly.

What makes the 24-year-old a dangerous one is the fact that he is that in addition of being a successful singles player he is a proficient doubles player as well and was once ranked sixth in doubles. The American has scripted his name on three ATP singles titles and eight doubles titles which also include.