



CHIEF GUEST PRATAP DEV, HON'BLE MINISTER GOVT. OF ODISHA, GUEST OF HONOUR RAJA SAHAB KANIKA, SHIVENDRA NARAYAN BHANJADEO, MLA RAJNAGAR, ON THE OCCASION OF 41ST ALL ODISHA RAJKANIKA CUP INVITATION FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT-2022...

4 ESI Hospitals For Odisha

New Delhi: The Centre has approved four new ESI hospitals in Odisha, informed the Union Minister of State (MoS) for Labour and Employment Rameswar Teli in Parliament on Monday.

In a written reply to a question of Kendrapada MP Anubhav Mohanty, Mr. Teli said in-principle approval has been given to set up four new ESI hospitals at Jagannath Prasad in

Bhubaneswar, Duburi in Jajpur, Paradeep in Jagatsinghpur and Jharsuguda.

While the proposed ESI hospital in Bhubaneswar will have 150-beds, 100-bedded hospitals will be set up at each of Duburi and Jharsuguda. Further, a 30-bedded ESI hospital will be established at Paradeep, he said.

The Union Minister also informed that the Employee State



Insurance Corporation (ESIC) has also given approval for upgradation of the existing ESI Scheme (ESIS) hospital at Bhubaneswar from 50 to 100 beds.

At present, two ESIC hospitals, six

ESIS hospitals and 41 ESI dispensaries are functioning in the State.

Presently, the wage limit for coverage of an employee in ESI covered factories and establishments is Rs.21000 per month. The eligible ESI beneficiaries are provided benefits under the scheme as per simplified procedure enshrined under the ESI (General) Regulations, 1950. To streamline the

process of availing benefits, he said, the ESIC has implemented the Project Panchdeep (IT roll out) since 2010, thereby easing out claim and payment through a complete online process system.

About 27 crore labourers including 1.3 crore from Odisha from the un-organised sector have registered in the e-Shram portal and various social sector benefits are being extended to them.

Odisha lawyers intensify agitation over HC bench establishment demand; protestors sit on 'Satyagraha'



Bhubaneswar(KCN): Amid ongoing strike by lawyers, the protestors today launched a state-wide 'Satyagraha' demanding establishment of separate High Court benches in their respective regions and opposing arrest order by the Supreme Court for agitation. Various organisations along with agitating lawyers joined the 'Satyagraha' in Sambalpur to mount pressure to set up a permanent bench of Orissa High Court in the western Odisha town. During the protest, scuffle erupted between police and protestors at Kacheri Chhak. The agitators reportedly stormed the protest area breaking the barricades and clashed with police.

In Bhubaneswar, The members of

Bhubaneswar Bar Association staged a peaceful protest today in front of the District and Sessions Court.

Condemning the affidavit that has been filed by Orissa High Court's Registrar General in the Supreme Court without verifying the reason of lawyers' strike, the members of Bhubaneswar Bar Association demanded the apex court to look into the matter.

Meanwhile, lawyers in Koraput sat on 'Satyagraha' against the Supreme Court's directive to the Bar Association of India to cancel licence of striking lawyers.

The decision was made at a high-level meeting called by Bhubaneswar Bar Association on December 4. The members had discussed to place their demand

before the Supreme Court.

A couple of weeks ago, the apex court had threatened to suspend en masse members of 20 district bar associations in Odisha if they failed to call off their decision to boycott courts.

Taking serious view of an application filed by the Orissa High Court demanding action to rein in the district bar association office bearers who had brought functioning of courts in 20 districts to a standstill with their frequent strike calls, the Supreme Court bench comprising Justices Sanjay Kishan and Abhay S. Oka recommended the Bar Council of India take appropriate action against the district bar associations whose members were involved in protests.

Former Jajpur MP Mohan Jena Passes Away

Bhubaneswar(KCN): Senior BJP leader and Former MP Mohan Jena passed away on Monday at a private hospital following pro-longed illness, family sources said. He was 65.

The two times MP had been admitted to hospital a few days ago following illness. He breathed his last today while undergoing treatment.

Jena was elected to the Lok Sabha from Jajpur constituency twice on Biju Janata Dal (BJD) ticket.

In 2019 general election, he had joined



BJP after BJD denied ticket.

He was born on July 14, 1957 in Jajpur. He is survived by his wife and a daughter.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has expressed grief over the

demise of former Jajpur MP Mohan Jena. He also expressed condolences to the family members of Jena and prayed for the departed soul to rest in peace.

Taking to Twitter, the Odisha CM wrote in Odia: "I am saddened to hear about the demise of former Jajpur MP Mohan Jena. The work he did for the welfare of the people as a public representative will always be remembered. May his soul rest in peace. My condolences to the bereaved family members at this time of sorrow."

Missing four persons from Nabarangpur who had gone to Chhattisgarh found dead inside car

Nabarangpur(KCN): As many as four persons from Odisha's Nabarangpur district, who had gone to Chhattisgarh and went missing, were found dead inside a car, today.

According to reports, the car was found inside a roadside abandoned well while the bodies were recovered from the vehicle. A crane was used to fish out the car from the well, located around 8 km away from Kanker. It is being suspected that the driver of the vehicle lost control over the wheels, following which it plunged into the well leading to the death of the four by drowning. The deceased have been identified as Sapan Sarkar of Umerkote town in the district, his wife Rita, brother-in-law Biswajit Adhikary and relative Hazari Dhali. All of them had on December 10 gone to Kanker in Chhattisgarh in the car to attend a wedding ceremony. However, they went missing while returning from the venue in the vehicle.

BDA Fasttracks Projects

Bhubaneswar(KCN): Suresh Chandra Mahapatra, Chief Secretary visited and reviewed the ongoing works of the Inter-State Bus Terminal (ISBT), Baramunda, BMC ICOMC Building and the functioning of the Multi-Level Car Parking (MLCP) building in Saheed Nagar at Bhubaneswar on 11 December 2022.

Shri Mahapatra – while visiting along with Balwant Singh, Vice-Chairman, BDA and Vijay Amruta Kulange,

Commissioner, BMC interacted with the respective officials and instructed to complete the projects in the stipulated time. The ISBT Baramunda project, being implemented by Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) over 15.5 acre of land, will have facilities for the convenience of the passengers, office spaces, parking, food court, restaurant, commercial spaces etc.

The Chief Secretary was apprised about the

detailed master plan and about the details of the execution plan for timely accomplishment of the project which will be first step to create a world class transit infrastructure in the capital city. Chief Secretary directed BDA officials to complete the work by March, 2023.

While visiting the Multi-Level Car Parking building at Saheed Nagar in the capital city, Chief Secretary advised the officials of BMC and Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL)



for enforcement of no parking zones and to make safe passage for the commuters from the parking building to the nearby market

areas. The Multi-Level Car Parking will accommodate minimum 250 equivalent car spaces. The Chief

Secretary also visited the new 12-storeyed BMC ICOMC building at Janpath, Bhubaneswar and also took stock of the

capital city's ongoing landscaping works and the street art ahead of the Hockey World Cup scheduled in January 2023.

He visited the south lake zone where various citizen amenities activities are being planned like park for children, cycling track, walking track which will cater to the localities of Satya Nagar, Saheed Nagar, Kharavel Nagar, etc. He directed officials for development of proper parking place at front side.

He visited the National Level Painting Camp and State level sculptures' camp at Kalabhumi which is part of the STAMP 3.0 initiative and undertaken by Odisha Lalit Kala Academy and BMC – a platform where Odisha's art and culture will be showcased before the people visiting to Bhubaneswar from across the country as well as from different countries during the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup in January 2023.

Award for Health Centers



Bhubaneswar(KCN): Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, has felicitated Odisha for achieving the target of December 2022, for operationalization of Health and Wellness

Centers (HWC) in the State. On behalf of the State H&FW Department, Dr Brundha D, Mission Director, National Health Mission has received the coveted award from Union Minister, Health & Family Welfare on the eve of Universal Health Coverage Day celebration at Varanasi on Sunday.

As on today, 6304 HWCs are operational in the State to provide comprehensive primary healthcare services. 4792 Sub Centers, 1260 Primary Health Centers (PHCs), 105 Urban Primary Health Centers, 44 Urban Health & Wellness Centre (UHWC) and 100 AYUSH dispensaries have been converted and strengthened as HWCs.

In these HWCs, 12 types of primary healthcare services along with an expanded range of diagnosis and drugs are provided. In addition, specialist and super specialist consultations are also provided through telemedicine (e-Sanjeevani) services by linking with District Headquarter Hospitals, Medical Colleges & Hospitals and other Tertiary level healthcare institutions.

Yoga sessions and various types of wellness activities are conducted at HWCs as part of preventive health. Population based screening of common NCD like hypertension, Diabetes, oral, breast, cervical cancer, and other communicable diseases like leprosy are conducted regularly by HWC team including ASHAs.

State celebrates Prison Day

Bhubaneswar(KCN): The Prison Formation Day- 2022 has been celebrated in Special Jail, Bhubaneswar on Saturday.

DG Prisons & Director Correctional Services, Manoj Kumar Chhabra addressed the inmates.

Dr.Chhabra honoured the selected Officers and other staff with DG Disk on the occasion.

On the occasion certificates and prizes were distributed to the winners of different sports events organised among the prison inmates



inside Bhubaneswar Special Jail.

The DG also encouraged about 87 prison inmates who have been engaged in different skill development training programmes inside the jail.

The DG inaugurated the Jail Community FM Radio Station, Library Room-cum- Skill development Centre Recreation and wall art, Jail Nursery on the occasion of Prison Foundation Day and felicitated the members of organisations like the Orange Cross, the Amulya Jeevan Foundation and RPRC.

Notably, different skill development

programmes have been undertaken in almost all jails in Odisha for rehabilitation of jail inmates after their release from jail custody. In Bhubaneswar Special Jail the inmates have been engaged in Blanket Unit, Food Processing Unit (Turmeric, Gram Flour, Atta, Mustard Oil) Unit, Phenyl (Black & White), Biofloc, Gardening etc. and getting their incentives.

In Circle Jail, Choudwar inmates have been engaged in Weaving, Tailoring, Durry, Phenyl (Black & White), Food Processing Fly Ash Brick, Gardening, Beauty Parlour training and welding unit.

In other Circle Jails the inmates are also engaged in Weaving, Tailoring, Durry, Smithy, Dairy Farm, Vermicompost, Pisciculture, Gardening, Mushroom cultivation etc.

Besides in others district jails and Special Sub-Jails in Odisha Skill Development Training programmes are being organized for rehabilitation of jail inmates.

A sum of Rs. 65.81 Lakh has been deposited towards revenue from selling of jail products to the public through these skill developments training up to October, 2022.

The inmates of Bhubaneswar Special Jail presented a skit 'Bandira Paribartan.'

Chief Justice of Orissa High Court inaugurates court complex



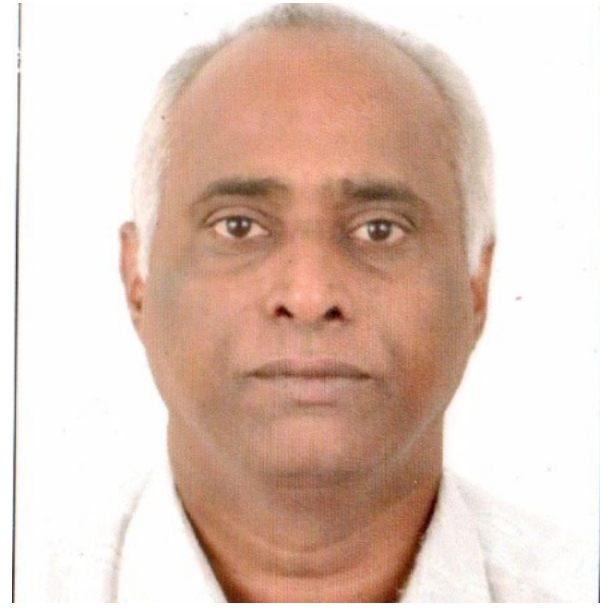
BHUBANESWAR(KCN): Chief Justice of Orissa High Court S Muralidhar inaugurated a

new civil court complex at Bhapur and laid the foundation stone for new court complex and dif-

ferent infrastructural development of judiciary in many places in Nayagarh district on Saturday.

Climate Change likely to Increase Rough Wave Days in Central Bay of Bengal Finds an IIT Kharagpur Scientist along with 2 other Scientists from Delhi & Hyderabad

Kolkata(KCN): A recent study of extreme wave events shows that the Indian Ocean,



northern sector of Arabian Sea, and central Bay of Bengal are likely to experience an increase in rough wave days in the near future. It could help timely warning and planning to prevent major impacts on life and property, especially in coastal areas.

A team of scientists from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, the Department of Applied Sciences, National Institute of Technology Delhi and Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services, Hyderabad, projected the likely future changes in extreme wave height indices over the Indian Ocean.

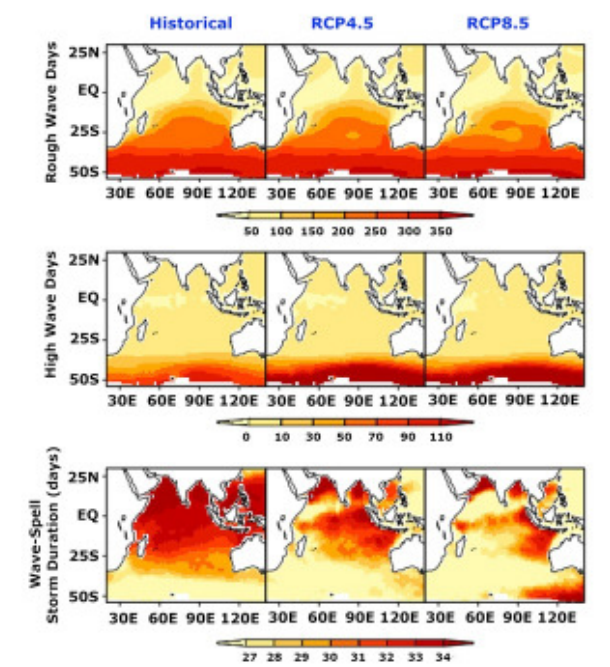
Their research published in the journal 'Climate Dynamics', Springer recently used COWCLIP2.0 datasets' to show that large-scale distribution in future wave climates can vary significantly from the present. They are of the opinion that in a changing climate, extreme wave events that have been recorded quite frequently during recent times can pose a tremendous impact on the livelihoods of the coastal population, infrastructure, and ocean-related activities. Observed variability and changes in extreme wave events, along with shifting storm intensity and tracks, can play a crucial role in shoreline changes, erosion rates, flooding episodes, and other related

Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya students lock school gate

PHULBANI(KCN): Protesting transfer of the in-charge principal of the school, students of Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya in Tumudibandh under Baliguda block of Kandhamal district locked the school gate on Sunday. According to the students, there were only three teachers in the school for English, Maths and Biology. While principal Bijaya Kumar Sethi

taught them Biology, there were no teachers for Physics and Chemistry. "There is already a dearth of teachers in our school and transferring our principal who taught us Biology would only add to our problems since we have our board examination after two months. We have to study Physics and Chemistry on our own as we do not have teachers for these subjects as yet," they complained.

They further alleged that several applications were sent to the block development officer Lalit Kumar Soren in this regard but to no avail. "Our only demand, for now, is to cancel the transfer of our principal. If our demands are not met, we will seek transfer from the school and not appear for our board exams," said the students.



ern sector of Arabian Sea showed a strong positive increase in rough wave days. Changes in high wave days are projected to intensify over the South Indian Ocean under both RCP 4.5 and 8.5 scenarios, and the wave-spell-storm duration is found to strengthen over the northern Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal, southeast Indian Ocean and South Indian Ocean under RCP8.5 forcing scenario. The study also indicated that projected changes in the amplitude of high-frequency extreme wave events in the Southern hemisphere are driven by changes in a sea-level pressure gradient that is consistent with the projections of SAM (Southern Annular Mode) for the twenty-first century period.

Permanent augmentation of trains

Kolkata(KCN): Considering the demand of the passengers, the South Eastern Railway (SER) authority has decided to augment the following trains by attaching extra coaches o-n permanent basis :-

The 18410/18409 Puri-Shalimar-Puri Express will be augmented by attaching two extra Sleeper Class coaches from January 1, 2023 from Puri and from January 2, 2023 from Shalimar.

The 22804/22803 Sambalpur-Shalimar-Sambalpur Express will be augmented by attaching o-ne extra 3AC and o-ne extra Sleeper Class coaches from January 6, 2023 from Sambalpur and from January 7, 2023 from Shalimar.

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SRK outshines Deepika with abs, man bun in 'Besharam Rang' song from 'Pathaan'

Finally, after much anticipation, and lots and lots of hype, the makers of 'Pathaan' have dropped a sneak peek of the song 'Besharam Rang'. And it looks every bit as glamorous as they promised us.

'Besharam Rang' which has vocals from the wonderful Shilpa Rao features the lead pair

'Bang Bang' and 'War' were both directed by 'Pathaan's director Siddharth Anand, so, no surprises there!

Interestingly, Shahrukh has tweeted in Tamil and Telugu to let audiences know that the song will be releasing in both these languages, too. A marketing move that makes

how he wanted to present Deepika in her most glam avatar ever. "For Besharam Rang, when she is in a visually stunning coastal town of Europe, dancing with Shah Rukh Khan, we decided to just maximise how hot DP could look on screen," he said.

However, nobody prepared us for SRK's



--- Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone --- romancing each other in Mallorca (Spain). The song's stylisation and aesthetics are a throwback to Hrithik Rosan-Katrina Kaif's 'Meherbaan' from 'Bang Bang', and also Deepika's own ultra-glam beachwear look in Abbas-Mustan's 'Race 2'. The song also has an unmistakable 'Ghungroo' vibe from 'War'.

sense considering how everyone is trying to woo 'South' audiences these days.

Shah Rukh Khan's 'Pathaan' has Tom Cruise connection

Deepika and Shah Rukh play spies in 'Pathaan'.

The film also stars John Abraham as the antagonist.

Director Siddharth Anand has spoken about

look at all!

The man belies his 57 years with his six-pack abs, clearly showing that like wine, he gets finer with time. Also, that man bun!

'Pathaan' is scheduled to be released on January 25 in Hindi, Tamil, and Telugu.

SRK and Deepika last worked together in 'Om Shanti Om', 'Chennai Express', and 'Happy New Year'.

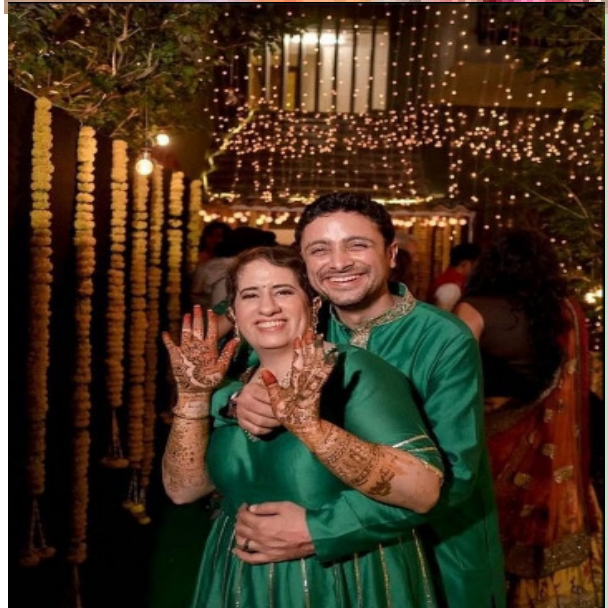
Guneet Monga and Sunny Kapoor get married in traditional Sikh ceremony

MUMBAI(KCN): Producer Guneet Monga and fashion entrepreneur Sunny Kapoor tied the knot on Monday. It was a traditional Anand Karaj ceremony at a gurdwara in Mumbai.

Monga, the founder of Sikhya Entertainment known for backing critically-acclaimed films like the "Gangs of Wasseypur" series, "The Lunchbox" and "Pagglait", exchanged vows

the divine union happen, added the producer, who had announced her engagement to Kapoor in April.

"Thank you for all the wishes, blessings and



with Kapoor here in the presence of family and friends.

The filmmaker took to Instagram to share the announcement.

"With the unconditional love and blessings of our Guruji, elders, friends and family we took our vows to start our forever, today. I had my parents with me in spirit and in small details of my wedding festivities and rituals. I know they're watching us from above and beaming. It's surreal to have found a family so pure and warm in Sunny and his parents who have made me feel so incredibly special and loved already," Monga captioned the pictures from the nuptials.

It's like the universe came together to make

heartwarming messages. Thank you for being a part of the biggest day of our life," she said.

Guneet Monga pens special note about SRK connection ahead of her wedding

In June, the couple had a mock wedding for Kapoor's ailing grandmother, who later died after a battle with cancer.

The couple from their mehendi ceremony. (Photo | Guneet Monga Instagram)

Besides producing feature films, Monga also served as an executive producer on the documentary "Period.

End of Sentence", which won the Academy Award for best documentary short subject in 2019.

PM Modi characteristically made the Gujarat poll a referendum on himself



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP.

This time BJP was not fighting the Gujarat state election to avert defeat but to increase its victory margins and win a greater number of seats in the 182-member assembly. BJP was eyeing a seventh straight win in Gujarat by banking on Hindutva tones and heavy dose of developmental projects, and even after denying tickets to 38 MLAs to beat anti-incumbency. The electoral battle in Gujarat is also crucial for the BJP because it is the home state of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who has been at the helm of leadership in the state for the past 21 years, and the people of the state have expressed their unflinching support for him for over two decades. Prime Minister

Narendra Modi's leadership in the last two decades, he has always put forward an idea that is for the benefit of people in Gujarat and also nationally.

PM Modi had during his intensive Gujarat campaign urged people to help sitting CM Bhupendra Patel surpass the 2002 record. When the BJP came to power in the state in 1995, it won 121 seats; that peaked at 127 in the first election with Narendra Modi as chief minister in 2002, after the vicious riots earlier that year. In the second Modi-led election in 2007, the BJP got 117 seats; in 2012, it bagged 115 seats. The ruling party always counts on the plank of Hindutva, development and "double engine" growth.

The BJP, which

Vinod Chandrashekhar Dixit



had won 115 seats in 2012, had come down to 99 in 2017 primarily because of a spirited campaign waged by the Congress. The development model in Gujarat has been time and again cited by the BJP during the poll seasons over the years ever since the 2014 Lok Sabha polls were held. The grand old party's campaign in the state was largely muted with the Bharat Jodo Yatra being held in other parts of the country. PM Modi held more than 30 rallies in the home

state. Among other top BJP leaders that campaigned were UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Union Minister Smriti Irani. The two Gujaratis – Narendra Modi and Amit Shah – are currently the top two leaders of India also had a wide appeal among the state's voters. Further, electing the BJP is also a prestige issue for a substantial section of Gujaratis. BJP never take the elections lightly. It understands people's exhaustion with the saffron party at the state level and has

been making amends from time to time. In the last state election of 2017, when the BJP's performance dipped, it was largely due to the Patidar agitation then led by Hardik Patel, that foregrounded issues of rural distress and lack of growth.

Hardik Patel has now joined the BJP, more than 15 Congress MLAs joined the BJP, and Alpesh Thakur, the leader of the Thakur community movement, joined the BJP, thus the BJP got benefit.. BJP's decision to make Bhupendra Patel chief minister last year and bring the quota stir spearhead Hardik Patel into its fold has also worked in the party's favour. PM also inaugurated two key national events including the National Games and the Defence Expo 2022, both held in Gujarat. The party

denied tickets to senior leaders such as former chief minister Vijay Rupani and former deputy chief minister Nitin Patel and opted for new faces such as former Patidar quota leader Hardik Patel, cricketer Ravindra Jadeja's wife Rivaba Jadeja and OBC leader Alpesh Thakur, among others.

In 2022 Gujarat, there are new props, such as the world's largest stadium in Ahmedabad, named after Narendra Modi, in which Modi gave a knockout performance at the inauguration of the National Games.

BJP knows how to shield election outcomes from ground realities such as people's hardships, leaderless govt and corrupt bureaucracy. The BJP is of the opinion that young talent should be given a

chance. The BJP is on a very strong wicket. Modi had worked to change that as he packaged himself as the friend of industrialists, a supporter of the free market and a protector of Gujarat. He has organised summits named Vibrant Gujarat etc.

Remember that Gujaratis are walking with confidence in the world today only because of Modi. One thing is clear that the BJP's leader, Narendra Modi, cast himself as the right man in the right place at the right time. The BJP's electoral success in Gujarat is largely attributed to Modi's and Amit Shah's charisma and the politics of religious polarisation and strident nationalism.

B-15 Jyoti-Kalash Society, Jodhpur Tekra Satellite Ahmedabad

In Gujarat, BJP creates a history by getting 156 seats out of 182 (majority mark being 92). The saffron brigade smashed its own record of the highest 127 seats in 2002 under Narendra Modi as the CM. This has created a record in seventh consecutive term for the BJP, which has been ruling the state for 27 years since 1995. Gujarat had three chief ministers including the incumbent Bhupendra Patel since 2014 after Modi became prime minister. Modi was chief minister for 13 years. The massive verdict reflects people's trust in

Care for the elderly

M PRADYU

The Assam government has approved special casual leave to its employees to spend time with their parents for the second consecutive year.

The Chief of Assam Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had announced this initiative for state government employees after assuming office in 2021.

A government release states that special leaves will be clubbed with regular holidays of second Saturday and Sunday on the following two days. The detailed rules and modalities for applying and availing the special leaves will be informed through a special web portal.

This indeed is a very good gesture, an initiative worth emulating by the states and the centre.

Industrialisation, urbanisation and globalisation have cast their shadow on traditional family set up and the beautiful values and norms that once was an asset especially in our Indian heritage has faded

Today rise of nuclear family system has replaced joint family system. In a joint family system our parents and grandparents were cared for, and consulted by their children and loved and respected by their grandchildren. Due to fast paced and turbulent changes happening in the society, the respect for elders is fast dwindling.

The life of the elderly in India is turning from bad to worse due to many factors created by the modern world. It is really unfortunate that many of them are forced to live lives of humiliation, discrimination, abuse and isolation, without financial, medical or emotional support. And what is shocking is that this is common across all social classes and across urban and rural areas.

Special Casual Leave as initiated by the Assam Government is definitely a step to make the younger generation understand and be aware of respecting, caring and supporting the elderly. The government should also monitor so as this very good initiative is not misused by some.

KANNUR

INDIA @ 75 – A CONTEMPORARY APPROACH



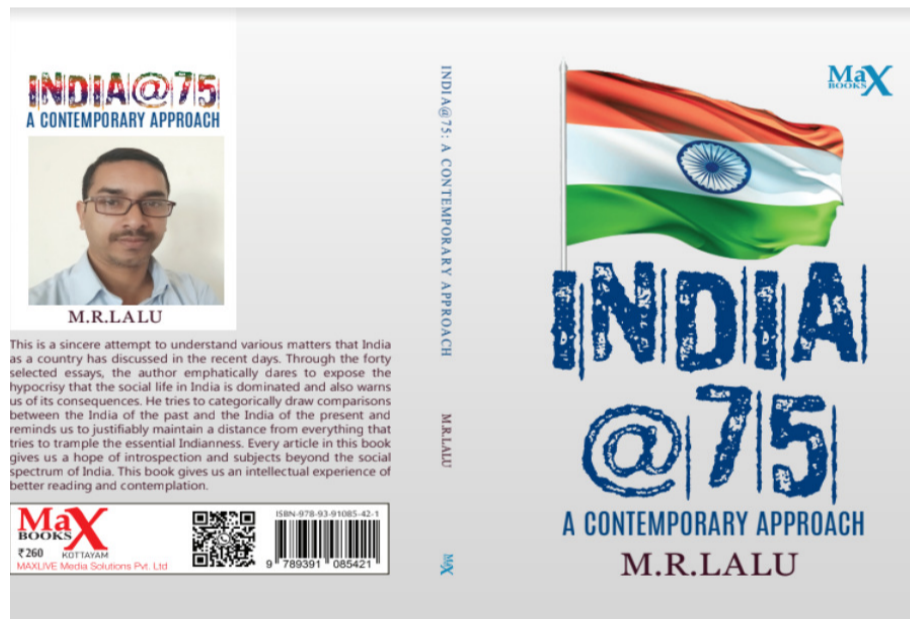
M.R.LALU

"The land where humanity has attained its highest towards gentleness, generosity, purity and calmness is India. Once more the world must be conquered by India. This is the dream of my life, and I wish that each one of you will have the same dream in your minds, and stop not till you have realised the dream." Almost in tune with what Swami Vivekananda envisioned a century ago, India @ 75 has witnessed a country's collective aspiration simmering for greater heights with exemplary democratic principles strengthening its inner core. The festivities of the 75th Independence Day this year were tantamount to what the soul of the country has been reflective of for years. A greater resurgence or what we technically call the Atmanirbharta has been intelligently illuminating every inch of its landscape and totally reminiscent of its glory of the past with every individual advocating and espousing it.

Centuries of invasions and the scars that they brought to the collective psyche get

revamped in every generation. Probably, as a country, we were successful in glorifying the brutality that the invasion had on this land and the invaders are still eulogised to be heroes. At present, the majoritarianism which is aggressively blamed and debated across the country has mostly been an output of the historical brutalities and the rejections and denials that followed in an independent India, deliberately concealing the struggles and hardships to counter the invasions. A new generation, ignorant of the historicity of the bravery that its ancestors fought against the brutal invading force is natural to dig deeper into the concealed realities and excavate the debris of its lost identity. To understand India, it is necessary to go beyond the politically discovered concept the 'union of states' and embrace the cultural ethos that are enshrined in the soul of the country, and avoiding which, not only the present generation, but the generations to come would also remain confused and incompetent to sublimate the rigidity with which we distorted the idea that India represents.

The complexity that India's multiculturalism offers is genuinely visible and the essence of its spiritual wisdom seems



to be fading but slowly, without being able to bring a convincing flavour to the platter of India's religious concomitance. Seeing India as a world teacher amidst the modern tumult of a universal disorder was first conceived by Swami Vivekananda; who, throughout his deliberations in India and abroad had spoken about the potentiality that India held in terms of delivering a spiritual solace.

An impending threat is menacingly visible on India's political horizon which needs urgent attention. With its population crossing 1.3 billion, India would be battling to balance itself between democracy and a theocracy that it might be slowly inching towards. While democracy provides its citizens with the essential freedom to flourish as a social being, theocracy dictates terms holding on to the theatrics of radicalization. Signs to

(BOOK EXTRACT)

this effect of growing disagreement and dissatisfaction is evident and efforts to cobble together the differences without patching them up resolutely for mere electoral gains is obviously throwing the country on to the brim of a scuffle. This is dangerous. India needs to plan not only for its tomorrow but also for the decades to come. The impending threat is to keep the landscape united without being axed once again on religious lines. The basic tenets of India's spiritual wellbeing are based on diverse and pluralistic social engineering that it, from the ages of the sages, propagated with clarity and humility. Despite the belittling of the idea that India represents from different global platforms and some deliberate attempts from India too; there seems to be a spiritual essence emanating

from the core of Indianness that keeps strengthening the country inexorably.

Though India's baby steps towards progress have been unsteady, its national energy has been unparalleled and stable pushing an infant state from the clutches of cultural devaluation and denigration. Shaking the impact of the colonial influence was not that easy. Surprisingly, even today we could not successfully emancipate our country from the colonial blow. The policies forcefully disseminated by Lord Macaulay have definitely chiselled a genus out of Indians who represent the white-man's wisdom and are unapologetically argumentative on its efficacy even today. We can find them everywhere among the academics, the media fraternity, the politicians, the judiciary, and the

intellectuals and also among social critics.

India as of today is a complex democracy. On one side its aspirational worldview is gaining momentum and on the other we are pulled by the pinching realities of illiteracy, inequality, corruption and the contradictions and conflicts of religious hypocrisy. The question that often penetrates into the collective psyche of Indians is that; how long shall we live a life of contradictions? Does this country have the energy to defend its inner conflicts? A regime change in India since 2014 was a result of an aspirational shift by the Indian voters from a system of institutionalised corruption. All sectors of social life in the country received indomitable challenges but considerable moves in the direction of reforms followed. India, towards its centenary is an aspirational India and its quest is to accomplish big things and the Amrit Kaal will be a period of an aspirational India's rise to greater global significance. As India marches towards its centenary, Himalayan challenges await us.

(Freelance Journalist/ Author of "India @ 75- A Contemporary Approach") Meppurathu House Pathanamthitta District Kerala State

Redevelopment/Major upgradation of Bhubaneswar station: Camp

Bhubaneswar (KCN): The Camp office to look after the proposed Redevelopment Work of Bhubaneswar Railway Station has



been made operational recently in front of the Station.

Bhubaneswar Railway Station is being redeveloped to be a World-Class infrastructure. This is a public centric vital project. East Coast Railway General Manager Shri Roop Narayan Sunkar is reviewing and monitoring this project work and advised officials to



make this project with passenger friendly amenities along with World Class infrastructure. Shri Sunkar also stressed upon detailed & precise planning, supervision of execution of works with proper co-ordination.

Chennai-Jaffna flight service back, passengers happy about ease of travel

COLOMBO/CHENNAI: India and Sri Lanka on Monday resumed flight services between Chennai and Jaffna, three years after the island nation discontinued the services due to Covid, and the passengers expressed happiness about the hassle-free



journey. The first flight on resumption of services landed this morning at the Jaffna International Airport, Upul Dharmadasa, the Chairman of the Airport and Aviation Services told reporters. Jaffna airport officials said the Alliance Air service landed at Jaffna at 11.25 am local time.

A small ceremony was conducted to welcome the flight which had 14 selected passengers, mostly officials, on board.

The flight returned to Chennai at 2.35 pm local time, a delay of an hour and 20 minutes.

On arrival here, Jaffna resident Danakshan told PTI that the flight to Chennai made his Tamil Nadu visit 'easy and convenient'. He was here to visit his relatives in the state.

Previously, the passenger said he had to go to Colombo to get a connecting flight to Chennai.

Akileswaran, another native of Jaffna, said the resumption has proved to be timely for him as his pilgrimage to Sabarimala in

A number of facilities have been developed and under the process of development. The primary focus is on development of New Building, Air concourse, Renovation of Platforms and Platform Shelters and Circulating areas, Platform Lightings, Food Court Zone and Shopping Areas and Waste Management, waiting rooms, toilets, recently added el-



evators that are much needed for the comfort of passengers. There will be provision of well-designed service roads, vehicle parking, Drains, Signage and Dividers. The New Building will have high Standard Dormitories and Retiring Rooms apart from the beautified circulating area.

Railways will work out the Railway portion of the developmental work. Action is being taken to complete this work at the earliest. Ministry of Railways has sanctioned Rupees 308 Crores for this redevelopment. The project was assigned to Construction organization of ECoR. Tendering process have already been completed and works awarded. The Construction period of the project is 24 months from starting of the work. All the ongoing Railway projects of Odisha have National Importance. Railways have given all input to the projects.

Kerala has become hassle-free. "Otherwise, I have to go to Colombo to catch a flight or board a ship. The direct Chennai flight from Jaffna is pretty useful," he said.

Sekar, an Indian Tamil, and his wife

Mrutula, a native of Jaffna, expressed similar views.

The couple, who now live in the USA, said their proposal to go on a vacation to Tamil Nadu from Sri Lanka is 'quicker now,' thanks to the direct flight.

The Jaffna-Chennai flight duration is one and a half hours.

The Alliance Air flights would operate four times a week between the two cities.

The airport in Palaly was named the Jaffna International Airport as Sri Lanka's third international airport in October 2019 and had its first flight from Chennai.

The 2019 redevelopment of the airport was funded by both Sri Lanka and India.

The tourism sector is the main source of foreign exchange earnings for cash-strapped Sri Lanka.

However, the onset of the pandemic in 2020 severely crippled the tourism sector and was one of the major reasons for Sri Lanka's economic travails.

The resumption of flights is expected to help the country's tourism sector and provide a fillip to its beleaguered economy.

India can play bridging role in divides caused by conflicts such as Ukraine: Jaishankar

ABU DHABI: India can play a bridging role in an increasingly divided world around conflicts such as the war in Ukraine, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Monday.

At the India Global Forum (IGF) UAE summit in Abu Dhabi, the minister highlighted two big divides in the world today, largely impacted by the Russia-Ukraine conflict and analysed the role countries like India and the UAE can play.

"One is the East-West divide centring around Ukraine and the other is a north-south divide centring around development," said Jaishankar.

"Ukraine is also having an impact on development. I do believe a country like India can play that bridging role, not alone but with other countries like UAE. There is the need today to bridge," he said.

Dr Anwar M o h a m m e d Gargash, the Diplo-

matic Adviser to the UAE President, who was in conversation with Jaishankar during the summit session, called for a "quick end to the

Indians: Jaishankar on Russian oil Prime Minister Narendra Modi has spoken to the presidents of Russia and Ukraine on multiple

through dialogue. Earlier, Jaishankar opened the UAE summit, organised by UK-headquartered India Global Forum, with a key-



conflict in Ukraine." "It will not end except politically. It is in our interest to ensure a political process that ends this conflict," he said. Russia launched a special military operation in Ukraine on February 24. The Russian action has been widely condemned by the US-led West. India has repeatedly called on Russia and Ukraine to return to the path of diplomacy and dialogue and end their ongoing conflict.

ALSO READ | Sensible to get best deal in interest of

occasions and urged for an immediate cessation of hostilities and a return to the path of diplomacy and dialogue for the resolution of the conflict.

In his bilateral meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Uzbekistan on September 16, Modi said "today's era is not of war" and nudged him to end the conflict.

India has not yet criticised the Russian attack on Ukraine and has been maintaining that the crisis should be resolved

note address around the geopolitical developments in the region and the role being played by India and the UAE as "partners for global impact."

On UAE-India bilateral relations, the minister noted that the historic ties have within it "centuries of comfort" with an often "intuitive" element. He pointed to the UAE as India's third-largest trade partner and second-largest export destination and an important partner as the country with more Indian citizens than anywhere else abroad.

US teases 'major' science news amid fusion energy reports

WASHINGTON: The US Department of Energy said on Sunday it would announce a "major scientific breakthrough" this week, after media reported a federal

same type that powers the Sun -- than was consumed during the process, a potentially major step in the pursuit of zero-carbon power. Energy Department

The fusion reaction that produced a 120 per cent net energy gain occurred in the past two weeks, the FT said, citing three people with knowledge of the prelimi-

it produces little waste and no greenhouse gases. "If this fusion energy breakthrough is true, it could be a game changer for the world," tweeted Ted



laboratory had recently achieved a major milestone in nuclear fusion research.

The Financial Times reported on Sunday that scientists in the California-based Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) had achieved a "net energy gain" from an experimental fusion reactor.

That would represent the first time that researchers have successfully produced more energy in a fusion reaction -- the

and LLNL spokesperson told AFP they could not comment or provide confirmation regarding the FT report, but said US Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm would "announce a major scientific breakthrough" on Tuesday.

The LLNL spokesperson added that their "analysis is still ongoing." "We look forward to sharing more on Tuesday when that process is complete," she said.

nary results.

China to have 1,500 nuclear warheads by 2035: Pentagon report

The Washington Post later reported two people familiar with the research confirmed the development, with a senior fusion scientist telling the newspaper, "To most of us, this was only a matter of time."

Nuclear fusion is considered by some scientists to be a potential energy of the future, particularly as

Lieu, a member of Congress from California.

We are not crazy to not know what nuclear weapons are, says Putin

Fusion differs from fission, the technique currently used in nuclear power plants, by fusing two atomic nuclei instead of splitting one.

The LLNL fusion facility consists of almost 200 lasers the size of three football fields, which bombard a tiny spot with high levels of energy to initiate a fusion reaction.

Kalinga Fellowship 2022 Inaugurated at KISS by Twin-City Police Commissioner

Bhubaneswar(KCN): The prestigious annual Kalinga Fellowship 2022 was inaugurated on Monday by the Police Commissioner of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack S K Priyadarshi in the presence of delegates from India and abroad. The Commissioner said that the prevention of child marriage and

The Kalinga Fellowship, which debuted in 2017, is a societal leadership platform to facilitate a breakthrough in thinking and strategy on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 that concerns gender equality.

The fellowship has been co-founded by the Kalinga



sexual abuse is a priority that should be addressed keeping the social and cultural values of Odisha in mind.

Child marriage, he said, is still a big issue across the State, citing a recent example where the police in the State Capital itself had to stop one of such cases. "This is happening in the heart of the city. Imagine the magnitude of the problem in the state as a whole," he said.

Emphasizing the objectives of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals that call for ending gender violence at the earliest, he said reintegration of the victims is another issue that has to be addressed while being sensitive to the social values and customs of Odisha. The psychosomatic challenges for victims cannot be adequately addressed without taking into account the deeper social values, he underlined. He welcomed the association of the police with the fellowship.

Metropolitan surveillance centre in Bhubaneswar soon

BHUBANESWAR: Bhubaneswar will soon have a metropolitan health surveillance centre to keep a tab on future pandemics and communicable diseases. It is one of the 20 cities of the country selected by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The metropolitan disease surveillance centre will conduct research and forecast epidemic prone diseases like dengue, chikungunya, scrub typhus, leptospirosis and Zika virus before its outbreak. The state government has decided to set up the centre on the premises of the proposed regional branch of National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), for which it had provided 3.125 acre of land at Andharua Mouza under Bhubaneswar tehsil in Khurda district.

"The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) was initially asked to identify a piece of land for the surveillance centre in the city. As the BMC failed to provide, it has been decided that the centre will function from the NCDC building," said a Health department official. The centre to be set up under

the Prime Minister Atmanirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana' (PMASBY) scheme and will work in tandem with the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) unit of the National Health Mission, state government laboratories, Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC) and the civic authorities.

The centre will be part of a nation-wide IT enabled disease surveillance network of laboratories at district, regional and national levels in metropolitan areas. It will strengthen health units at the points of entry for effectively detecting and combating public health emergencies and disease outbreaks.

"As a post-Covid initiative, the centre will initially function for five years. It will facilitate timely recognition of the early warning signals and institution of effective public health measures to curb the diseases. Though the centre is expected to start functioning from January next year, it will take a few more months to get operationalised in Bhubaneswar," the health official said.

Guv Lauds Centurion Varsity

Bhubaneswar: Odisha Governor Professor Ganeshi Lal on Sunday said that success or failure in life is just a part of life. Addressing the students at the 10th convocation of Centurion University of Technology and Management at its Paralakhemundi campus today, the Governor said, "Success or failure in life is just a part of life. The most important thing is to act conscientiously and be honest."

Prof. Lal congratulated the students on their success and praised Centurion University's relentless effort to build a dynamic workforce through its well-structured educational initiatives. He rekindled the feeling of oneness among young minds and said the learners are like divinities and a medium of radiating happiness. Professor Iain Martin, Vice Chancellor, Deakin University, Australia who graced the convocation as the Guest of Honour, appreciated Deakin University's relationship with Centurion University and the shared goals for developing leadership qualities among students and focus on sustainable devel-

opment.

Peter Wuffli, Founder & Chairman, elea Foundation for Ethics in Globalization, Switzerland in his speech stressed upon the importance of digital innovation and digital transformation; and appreciated how Centurion University is leading with innovation and entrepreneurial vision. He urged students to develop a "can do" attitude. Presenting the annual report of the University, Vice Chancellor Supriya Patnaik encouraged the graduating students to apply their learning and industry experience to nurture entrepreneurship as job creators. Goading the students to commit themselves to growth with sustainability and responsibility, she said, "Climb a mountain to see the world, not for the world to see you."

In the convocation, 22 scholars received doctoral degrees out of which one received the Vice Chancellor's Best Thesis Award. Twelve graduates were conferred gold medals. A total of 2,298 students from the 2020-22 batch and 131 students from earlier batches were conferred degrees at the convocation.

Gajapati district Collector Lingaraj Panda, Centurion University of Technology and Management President Muktikanta Mishra, Vice President DN Rao, Registrar Anita Patra and Deans of all schools of the University were among the dignitaries who graced the convocation.

Conviction Miss Cyber Cases

New Delhi: The conviction in cyber fraud cases in Odisha is 'zero' and not a single person has been convicted during the last three years though such cases are on rise in the State.

Fraud for Cyber Crimes is rising and during the last three years the State Police has registered 3240 cases.

According to the latest report, while 956 cases of Cyber Crime were registered during 2019, not a single person has been convicted and also not a single case of conviction has been recorded.

However, 58 cases have been charged and 70 persons have been arrested by State Police.

Similarly, during 2020 the number of cybercrimes rose and 1079 cases were registered and 60 cases have been charge-sheeted and 74 persons were arrested.

During 2021 Cyber Crime registered 1205 and 74 cases have been charge-sheeted while 64 persons were arrested.

However, cases convicted and persons convicted are 'zero', official record shows.

So far All India Statistics is concerned in 2019 a total of 6229 fraud for Cyber Crimes were registered and in 18 cases of conviction at least 40 persons were convicted.

Similarly, in 2020 a total 10,395 cybercrime cases were registered and 221 cases of conviction recorded with 246 persons were convicted.

During 2021, a total number of 14,007 frauds under cybercrimes were registered across the country and in 30 cases of conviction at least 73 persons have been convicted.

While Telangana registered less cases of fraud under Cyber Crime than Odisha, it is 282 in 2019 and the State has convicted three persons in two cases.

In 2020, fraud under cybercrime spiked in Telangana to 3316 and in 202 cases conviction was pronounced while convicting 202 persons, which was a record.

During 2021, Telangana registered 7003 cases under Cyber Crime and convicted five persons, shows the latest reply placed in Rajya Sabha by the Union Minister of State Home Affairs Ajay Kumar Mishra.

The Minister said that 'Police' and 'Public Order' are State subjects as per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India.

The States and Union Territories are primarily responsible for the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of crimes including cybercrime through their Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs). The law enforcement agencies take legal action as per the provisions of law against persons involved in cyber fraud. The Central Government supplements the initiatives of the States/UTs through advisories and financial assistance under various schemes for their capacity building.

To strengthen the mechanism to deal with cybercrimes, including cyber fraud in a comprehensive and coordinated manner, the Central Government has taken steps for spreading awareness about cybercrimes, issuance of alerts/ advisories, capacity building/ training of law enforcement personnel/ prosecutors/ judicial officers, improving cyber forensic facilities, etc.

The Government has established the 'Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre' (I4C) to provide a framework and ecosystem for LEAs to deal with



cybercrimes in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. The Government has launched the 'National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal' (www.cybercrime.gov.in) to enable the public to report all types of cybercrimes, with special focus on cybercrimes against women and children.

Cybercrime incidents reported on this portal are routed automatically to the respective State/UT law enforcement agency for further handling as per the provisions of law.

The 'Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting and Management System' has been launched for immediate reporting of financial frauds and to stop siphoning off funds by the fraudsters. A toll-free Helpline number '1930' has been operationalized to get assistance in lodging online cyber complaints.

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India's retail inflation falls to 11-month low of 5.88 per cent in November



NEW DELHI: Retail inflation fell to an 11-month low of 5.88 per cent in November, mainly due to softening prices of food items, official data showed on Monday. This is the first time in 11 months that the retail inflation print has come within the RBI's tolerance band of 4 (+/- 2) per cent. The consumer price index (CPI) based retail inflation was

6.77 per cent in October 2022, and 4.91 per cent in November last year. As per the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), inflation in the food basket was 4.67 per cent in November, against 7.01 per cent in the previous month. After remaining above the Reserve Bank's upper tolerance threshold

of 6 per cent since January, retail inflation has declined to its lowest level in 11 months. In December 2021, retail inflation stood at 5.66 per cent. The Reserve Bank had said last week the worst of inflation is behind us, but there is no room for complacency in the fight against price rise. The central bank also said it will keep

'Arjuna's eye' (keen focus) on the evolving inflation dynamics and projected inflation to remain above 4 per cent for the next 12 months. The RBI's interest rate-setting panel last week hiked the benchmark rate by 35 basis points to 6.25 per cent, taking the cumulative rate hikes to 2.25 per cent since May 2022.

ELSS—the pure equity option for Tax Saving

With the calendar year-end Advance Tax payment date closing in, many taxpayers tend to wake up to the need of completing their tax-saving investments.

the remaining Tax Saving instruments, including the Tax Saving Bank Deposits, the underlying investment vehicle is debt and the

for focusing on 3-year returns here is simply because the lock-in period for ELSS is 3 years, which makes it the shortest tenure tax saving instrument.

thus not impacting a tax payers' liquidity. This of course must be accompanied by the caveat that there is an underlying assumption of being at least a status quo in the sum invested if not appreciation. But, as I mentioned before, historical evidence suggests that it is the case, more often than not. A suggestion I always make while discussing ELSS with anyone is that investors in ELSS would do well to consider completing it during the early part of the year so that their compounding tenure increases. Alternatively, one could plan it as a SIP and let it run on autopilot for at least three years. Hence, assuming one is claiming their entire Section 80C base entitlement of R1.5 lakh via ELSS, then an ongoing monthly SIP of R12,500 could be worth considering. Finally, one must choose their tax saving investment based on their risk appetite. For younger investors with a relatively higher risk appetite, ELSS could be the route to take.



While there are multiple options on offer, the sole pure equity option on offer in this category is the Equity Linked Saving Scheme (ELSS) offered by mutual fund houses. The Unit Linked Insurance Plan (ULIP) product offered by insurance companies is another popular option, where the lock-in is restricted to 5 years though ideally, one should hold it for a longer tenure to optimize returns. In the case of ULIPs, the investor also has the advantage of two-way fungibility between Equity and Debt. For almost all

minimum lock-in period is at least 5 years, with some having even longer holding tenures. Of such investment options, the Public Provident Fund (PPF), remains the most popular tax-saving debt-based investment for those averse to equity. The lock-in period is five times longer, though in this case, the returns unlike ELSS are still tax-free. When one looks at the relative 3-year performance of the ELSS as compared to its alternative tax-saving instruments, on more occasions than not it has been superior. The reason

Besides its plus points of being the only tax-saving instrument where the underlying asset class is equity and its being locked in for just 3 years, there is another unique feature that the ELSS offers investors. Once the funds complete 3 years of investment, the same can be redeemed and reinvested without having to bother about a fresh infusion of funds to save taxes under Section 80C. Hence, the outflows can be restricted to three years and thereafter, the funds can be rolled over if needed,

Reliance Jio joins OnePlus to bring 'True 5G' tech ecosystem to India

NEW DELHI: Reliance Jio on Monday collaborated with global technology brand OnePlus to bring in

services across the product portfolio. "The real power of a 5G smartphone can only be unleashed by a True 5G network

OnePlus 8 Series as well as the Nord, Nord 2T, Nord 2, Nord CE, Nord CE 2 and Nord CE 2 Lite. ALSO READ | Reliance Jio strongest telecom



the evolutionary stand-alone 5G technology ecosystem in the country. As part of the collaboration, all the OnePlus 5G devices will be powered by Jio "True 5G" technology. The Jio and OnePlus teams have been actively working together at the backend to make 5G technology more accessible to consumers and continue to expand their 5G technology

like Jio, which is built as a Standalone 5G network, the most advanced network of its kind. Jio True 5G will enable hundreds of new and powerful experiences that can be experienced on a leading device like OnePlus," said Sunil Dutt, President, Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd. OnePlus devices with access to the Jio True 5G network include the latest OnePlus 10 Series, OnePlus 9R, and

Reliance Jio tops 4G network speed chart in October: TRAI data Similarly, the OnePlus 9 Pro, OnePlus 9 and OnePlus 9RT will also have access to the Jio True 5G network shortly, said the company. "With 5G technology, users will enjoy a truly seamless, speedy internet experience, while achieving a lot more from their daily use of smartphones than they could possibly imagine," said Navnit

Rupee falls 25 paise to close at 82.53 against US dollar

MUMBAI: The rupee declined 25 paise to close at 82.53 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, pressured by a lacklustre trend in the domestic equity markets and foreign capital outflows ahead of macroeconomic data announcements. Forex traders said risk-off sentiment in global markets also weighed on the local unit.

NSE Nifty closed almost flat at 18,497.15. Industrial production data and retail inflation numbers are scheduled to be announced later on Monday. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Friday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 158.01 crore, according to



exchange data. After investing over Rs 36,200 crore last month, foreign investors continued their positive momentum and infused Rs 4,500 crore in the Indian equity markets so far in December, mainly due to the decline in the dollar index. However, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) turned sellers in the last four trading sessions and pulled out Rs 3,300 crore as they are adopting a cautious stance ahead of the US Federal Reserve's decision on the interest rate.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened lower at 82.54 against the greenback and witnessed a high of 82.50 and a low of 82.74. It finally settled at 82.53, down 25 paise over its previous close of 82.28. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.02 per cent lower at 104.79. Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures fell 1.02 per cent to USD 75.32 per barrel. The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 51.10 points or 0.08 per cent lower at 62,130.57, while the broader

Facing South African attack will be 'big step up' - Steve Smith

N e w D e l h i : A comfortable 2-0 series win against the West Indies has Australia in good stead as they face South Africa next, with stand-in skipper Steve Smith reckoning that their only real concern is that their lower middle-order wasn't tested in the just-concluded series. Australia declared in all four innings against the West Indies, losing only 19 wickets in total, as they won by 164 runs in the first Test in Perth and registered an even bigger 419-run victory in the pink-ball Test in Adelaide.

"I thought we played some really good cricket," said Smith at the post-match press conference following Australia's victory on Sunday (December 11). "Obviously first Test

match, no one below the top five got a bat so you are doing something right. This Test, two big hundreds in the top five. That is what we're about and how we're trying to play our cricket.

"I don't think there are any concerns. It's probably not ideal that a few of our batters from six onwards haven't had a great deal of time in the middle. That is probably the only real concern if you want to call it that. But they are also spending a lot of time in the nets batting, and batting well. It's been a good series for us. We have played good cricket and hopefully we can take that into South Africa," Smith said.

M a r n u s Labuschagne scored a double ton and two hundreds in successive

innings, Smith himself struck a double hundred, while Travis Head was amongst the runs too, scoring 99 in the first innings in Perth followed by a career-best 175 in Adelaide. Usman Khawaja, despite not scoring centuries, provided good starts with 60s in the first innings of both games.

While the top order has been in good form, Smith warned that facing the quality of the Proteas pace attack will be a "big step up" for the Australian batters. "It's a big step up. They have a quality pace attack, some experience there. It makes for a good series, all the boys are really excited for it.

"Sometimes when you're facing faster bowlers, that can be easier to score than



when you are facing 130 and nibbling them around. I think that's the key to any attack, is having that variety so you're never getting into

a real rhythm as a batter. South Africa provide that, they have [Anrich] Nortje bowling 150, [Kagiso] Rabada 140 to 150 bowling slightly

different. And then a left-arter in [Marco] Jansen as well and then a spinner in [Keshav] Maharaj. So it will be a good challenge. And

hopefully we can continue how we have started the summer."

Compared to some of the top Test nations he has played against, Smith's numbers against South Africa fall slightly behind as he averages 41.53, having scored 623 runs in 17 innings, with one hundred and three fifties.

"South Africa are probably the one team that have bowled well to me. My record isn't quite as good against them as some of the others," acknowledged Smith. "Some of the bowlers I will come up against I have come up against previously. I am really looking forward to the series like everyone else. Hopefully I can get into a nice groove and contribute and score

some runs.

"I feel in a good place, I feel like I am batting nicely. I feel in good rhythm and I am looking forward to it. I had a hit against the red ball this morning, preparation, changing from pink to red. Focus can now completely go to South Africa and I can't wait," he said.

Smith also came to the defence of David Warner, who didn't cross 50 in the series against the West Indies, ending up with a highest of 48. When asked if there were any concerns with Warner's form, Smith replied: "I don't think so. It's in his body language, the way he goes out and is really positive and in a good frame of mind. I have watched him in the nets. The way his feet are moving, he is really sharp."

FIFA World Cup 2022: Cristiano Ronaldo left in tears after Morocco stun Portugal

New Delhi: Morocco edged closer to becoming the first African nation to qualify for the last four after leading Portugal 1-0 at the end of the first half in the quarterfinal of the World Cup at the Al Thumama stadium on Saturday. A resilient Morocco found the back of the net through Youssef El-Nesyri in the 42nd minute. Cristiano Ronaldo was left in tears after the elimination of Portugal. It was his last FIFA World Cup and the 37-year-old would have hoped for a better campaign in Qatar.



The forward went airborne and headed the cross from Attiyat Allah to give his side the advantage. Morocco took the lead thanks to a stunning Nesyri header, and are only 45 minutes away from making history. Portugal had a couple of chances and

Bruno Fernandes almost equalized in the dying minutes of the half but his kick hit the crossbar. Portugal's penalty claim was disallowed shortly after Morocco found the lead. The game sprang to life in the closing five minutes of the first half, and everything is on the line in the second half. The sides met only for the third time with Morocco edging Portugal in the 1986 World Cup while the

European side took the honours in the second meeting through Cristiano Ronaldo's goal in the 2018 edition. Portugal started the game by keeping the ball in the Moroccan half and asserting dominance right from the beginning but Morocco showed resilience in defence and looked to make the most of their attacking chances. The European side were relentless in their attack

but the African nation was up to the task as they forged a solid defensive line to stop the Portuguese wave of attack. Hakim Ziyech, Morocco's most impressive player in the tournament, was once again a live wire in the field as he created chances for his team. Portugal started without their talismanic striker Ronaldo and it will be interesting to see if he is brought onto the field as he was the difference between the two sides in their previous meeting. The forward will be itching to prove his mettle after having been left out of the starting eleven. The stadium is engulfed with a sea of red and green as both the colours feature on the jerseys of Portugal and Morocco. An electric second half is on the cards for football lovers all around the globe.

WAKA WAKA singer Shakira's tweet celebrating Morocco's win over Portugal in FIFA WC goes VIRAL



New Delhi: Popstar Shakira, who sang the famous WAKA WAKA song ahead of the FIFA World Cup 2010 in South Africa, celebrated Morocco's spectacular win over Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal on Saturday night in Qatar at the FIFA World Cup 2022. She tweeted 'It's time for Africa', after Morocco pulled off

another big upset at the World Cup and entered the semi-finals. In a way, it is becoming unfair to call Morocco's win over big sides as upset as they have made winning a habit now with victoris over Croatia, Belgium, Spain and now Portugal. They seem to be the giant killers in this World Cup and they are not stopping just now.

Shakira's WAKA WAKA anthem had words 'This time for Africa' and she repeated the same after looking at Morocco's superb run in the tournament. Morocco next plays France in the semi-final of the tournament and if they win, they will qualify for the finals of the World Cup for the first time in the history. Known as 'Queen of Latin Music', Shakira is surely backing Morocco to go all the way and write history by winning the World Cup. Morocco are already the first semi-finalist from

Africa and could become the first from the continent to win the highest prize in international football. The France vs Morocco match will be played on December 15, in IST, at 12.30 am IST. It will be fascinating to see how the spirited African team, now being backed by many celebrities including Shakira, fare against a strong French outfit. Kylian Mbappe is in form as his life and Morocco will need to plan well to pull off another massive upset the defending champions. The first semi-final will be between Argentina and Croatia where Lionel Messi will be up against another legend of the sport Luka Modric.



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