



The Minister of State for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences (I/C), Prime Minister's Office, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh at the inauguration of "Good Governance Week", in New Delhi

## Center Supports River Cleaning

**New Delhi:** Minister of State for Jal Shakti, Bishweswar Tudu said that the Government of India is supplementing the efforts of the State Government in addressing the challenges of pollution in river Ganga and its tributaries (including the major tributary Yamuna) by providing financial and technical assistance under Namami Gange Program. Under this program, a diverse set of interventions for cleaning and rejuvenation of river Ganga have been taken up including waste water treatment, solid waste management, river front management (ghats and crematoria), maintaining continuous flow, rural sanitation, afforestation, biodiversity conservation and Public Participation etc. For cleaning of Ganga and its tributaries including river Yamuna, Rs.20,000 crore fund has been allocated under Namami Gange Mission (NGM) Phase-I. Considering the need and spread of the Program, Government of India has further approved Namami Gange Mission-II with a budgetary outlay of Rs.22,500 crore till 2026 inter-alia including projects for existing liabilities (Rs.11,225 Cr.) and new projects/interventions (Rs.11,275 Cr.).

## Rourkela Airport to be operational in 1-2 days: Chief Secretary

**Rourkela(KCN):** Ahead of the Hockey World Cup, the Rourkela Airport will become operational within 1-2 days, informed Odisha Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra here today. The Chief Secretary, 5T Secretary VK Pandian and Sports Department Secretary Vineel Krishna today visited Rourkela to review preparations for the upcoming international sporting event in the steel city. "We inspected the stadium and the airport. The work for the airstrip has been completed. We also visited the terminal building. Inspection by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is over. We expect to get license for the airstrip within 1-2 days," the official said. "Under the UDAN scheme, Alliance Air airline will provide flight services at the airport initially. We have also booked charter flight for transporting hockey players to and from Bhubaneswar," he said. "As far as the stadium is concerned, its work has been completed. The practice field and the main field are ready for use. The high-mast lighting has been tested. From December 24, three practice matches will be played at the main field and necessary corrections will be made as per the feedback of the players," the official added. The FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 Bhubaneswar-Rourkela will be held from 13th January to 29th January at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar and Birsamunda International Hockey Stadium in Rourkela.

# BBI Airport Set For Lease BJD MPs Demand Dues Release



**New Delhi:** As per National Monetization Pipeline (NMP), 25 Airports Authority of India (AAI) airports namely Bhubaneswar, Varanasi, Amritsar, Trichy, Indore, Raipur, Calicut, Coimbatore, Nagpur, Patna, Madurai, Surat, Ranchi, Jodhpur, Chennai, Vijayawada, Vadodara, Bhopal, Tirupati, Hubli, Imphal, Agartala, Udaipur, Dehradun and Rajahmundry have been earmarked for leasing over the years 2022 to 2025. AAI has leased out eight of its airports under Public Private Partnership (PPP) for operation, management and development on long term lease basis. Details of airports along with the Concessionaires are as under: Indira Gandhi International Airport,

Delhi - M/s Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL), Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, Mumbai - M/s Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL), Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport, Lucknow - M/s Lucknow International Airport Limited (LIAI), Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport, Ahmedabad - M/s Ahmedabad International Airport Limited (AIAL), Mangaluru International Airport - M/s Mangaluru International Airport Limited (MaIAL), Jaipur International Airport - M/s Jaipur International Airport Limited (JIAL), Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport, Guwahati - M/s

Guwahati International Airport Limited (GIAL), Thiruvananthapuram International Airport - M/s TRV-Kerala International Airport Limited (TIAL) Airports of AAI are leased out in public interest for their better management utilizing private sector efficiency and investment. States and passengers are the ultimate beneficiary of enhanced airport infrastructure and facilities created by private partner, who operates, manages and develops the leased airport under PPP. Airports have emerged as a nucleus of economic activities and have multiplier effect on the economy of the State. The revenue received by AAI from the leased airports is also utilized in development of airport infrastructure across the country.

**New Delhi:** A delegation of BJD MPs on Monday met Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Piyush Goyal in New Delhi and demanded release of pending food

subsidy dues of Rs 14,292.51 crores. The MPs including leaders from Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha have submitted a memorandum to Goyal. The Odisha Government led by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has been on the forefront of ensuring record production of food grains and third largest contributor of rice to the PDS system. While the responsibility for procurement of rice

towards advance subsidy, they said. Besides, the Odisha State Civil Supplies Corporation (OSCS) is yet to be paid Rs. 6,187 crores towards the additional interest it has

release Rs. 14,292.51 crores of pending food subsidy to Odisha," the Parliamentarians told Shri Goyal. They also urged the Union Minister to release Rs. 6,187 crores incurred



from Odisha rests with the Union Government, in order to ensure that the farmers of Odisha do not face any problems, the Odisha Government signed an MOU with the Government of India to

be a Decentralised Procurement (DCP) State and help the farmers by procuring foodgrains on behalf of the Government of India, the MPs pointed out in their memorandum. There is a total pending food subsidy amounting to Rs. 14,292.51 crores that the Government of India is to pay the Odisha Government. Out of the total dues, Rs. 11,689.21 crores pending towards provisional food subsidy and Rs. 2603.30 crores

incurred till November, 2022 cumulatively due to the delay in release and short-release of subsidy by the Government of India. "This amount still remains un-couped and should be paid by the Government of India. We, the MPs of Biju Janata Dal, as public representatives from Odisha, and in the interests of the lakhs of farmers of Odisha, especially those from western Odisha; we request you to kindly

by the Odisha State Civil Supplies Corporation towards the interest incurred by it due to delay in release and short-release of subsidy cumulatively over the years by the Government of India. Notably, during the last session of Parliament, in July last, the BJD MPs had met Shri Goyal over the same demand. However, the Centre is yet to take any step to release the ending food subsidy dues to Odisha.

# PEDICRITICON 2022 Concludes at KIIT Campus; Call for Opening Pediatric ICUs Across Govt, Pvt & Medical Colleges in India

**Bhubaneswar, (KCN):** The 24th National Conference of the Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP) Intensive 'PEDICRITICON 2022' concluded at the KIIT Campus on Sunday. It was attended by pediatricians from across the country and abroad with a call for establishing pediatric ICUs in all government, private hospitals, and medical colleges across the country.

The event gave the pediatricians in the State a unique opportunity to interact with renowned pediatric doctors from different parts of India and outside, get exposure to the scientific advancements made in the field and upgrade their knowledge to offer advanced treatments to the patient in Odisha. It also aimed at inspiring doctors and developing interest in the subject.



The conference was organised by the IAP - Intensive Care Chapter Odisha Branch in association with IAP Odisha and assumed significance for Odisha as it was held for the first time in Eastern India

IAP President-elect Dr GV Basavaraj stressed the efforts of all stakeholders for provisions of pediatric ICUs in all private, government hospitals and various medical colleges across the

future generations, KISS, a unit of KIIT offering education and care to tribal students free of cost, also takes care of the neglected kids and makes them self-reliant and future-ready

through education. He expressed his gratitude to the pediatricians who attended the conference. Dr Samanta added that KIIT University is thankful to

IAP for choosing the beautiful KIIT campus as the conference venue during the University's Silver Jubilee Year. The theme of this year's conference was "rationale, reachable

and reasonable, said well-known pediatrician Dr Sibabrata Patnaik. Explaining in detail, he said the meet sought knowledge upgradation of doctors for rational treatment and make all stakeholders including the government aware of the importance of having pediatric ICUs at the district level for quick and better treatment. The other objective was to make treatment affordable for the benefit of all classes of society.

He said that the awareness about critical care treatment in the field of pediatrics in Odisha is still less as compared to other states and therefore this

conference." We need to raise the level of awareness among our doctors about intensive care treatment, which is difficult compared to general pediatrics. This conference was aimed at realizing this objective," he said. About 30 international faculties attended the conference. They represented Harvard University; Kings College, London; Children's Hospital of Philadelphia among others. Pediatricians from countries such as the Netherlands, from middle East, Indonesia, Nepal, New Zealand attended the event while doctors from Canada gave online lectures.

## DAV, Kalinga Nagar celebrated its Annual Day Silvery journey Saga Culminates in 'Roupyaayanam'

Bhubaneswar(KCN): DAV Public School celebrated its annual day "ROUPYAAYANAM" amidst great zest, enthusiasm and jubilation



with a distinct spark given to the occasion to mark its glorious journey for twenty-five years. Shri Upendra Tripathy, IAS (Retd.), Principal Advisor (Education) to the Chief Minister and Chairman, Odisha Adarsh Vidyalaya was the Chief Guest on the occasion. In the formal meeting organized in this connection,

Chairman of the school Sj Madan Mohan Panda delivered the welcome address which recounted the long struggle that the school had to pass through in order to reach its present stature while Principal Mr Bipin Kumar Sahoo presented the annual report that echoed with the glorious achievements of the students in different spheres highlighting the glorious trajectory of the school from its humble beginning to its majestic presence till date. In his address to the audience, the chief guest emphasised on the important role played by school in general and DAV institutions

in particular in providing quality education to students and for their upliftment in all spheres of excellence. Regional Director Dr. K.C. Satapathy commended the steady growth of the school in all areas of academic brilliance and reaffirmed that DAV institutions of the zone are committed to their goal of providing quality education to its students. On this occasion, the chief guest and other dignitaries felicitated the meritorious students as well as their parents for their contribution and unveiled the 'Coffee Table Book' released to mark the silver jubilee of the Alma mater. Mr. Satyabrata Patra and Mrs. Mahasweta Patra,

## National Green Tribunal dismisses plea for recall of Rs 38.28 lakh penalty order

CUTTACK(KCN): The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has dismissed a lessee's appeal for recall of order imposing a penalty of Rs 38.28 lakh towards environmental compensation for extracting sand without a valid consent to operate.

Sudhakar Nayak, the lessee filed the appeal for recall of the March 3, 2022 order which the NGT's East Zone Bench in Kolkata had imposed in response to a petition filed by Srikant Kumar Pakal and other residents of the Nuapatana area

under Tangi-Choudwar tehsil in Cuttack district. The petitioners had sought intervention against widespread degradation of the Mahanadi river bed



due to unchecked sand mining operations in the area. Advocate Sankar Prasad Pani argued the case for the petitioners. The bench of B Amit Sthalekar (judicial

parents of Miss Ipsita Patra the highest scorers in the AISSCE-2021-22, were awarded 'Parents of the Year Award'. Miss Abha Priyadarshini Best Girl Child for the session



was awarded with 'Asha Memorial Award' while Miss Krishna Jena and Miss Krishnapriya Agarwal- Best All-Rounder of classes X and XII for the session 2021-22 were honoured with 'J.P. Memorial Award and Best All-Rounder award respectively. It was followed by a colourful cultural extravaganza meticulously presented by more than 800 students from L.K.G to XII. The dignitaries present on the occasion includes the former Chairman of the school and Vice Chairman



of DAV Public School, Chandrasekharpur, Sj Sarat Chandra Misra, Founder Principal and Regional Director, DAV Institutions, Odisha, Dr K.C Satapathy, Manager of the school Dr Bhagaybati Nayak, ARO, Dr (Ms) Sujata Sahoo, Mrs Ipsita Das, Principals of DAV Public schools of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, Members of PTCC and School Managing Committee. Mrs Dipanjali Sahu, Senior Academic Supervisor rendered the vote of thanks at the end of the meeting. The celebration was a great success and this was made possible by the whole-hearted support and co-operation of all the students and staff members.

## A dead body with a bike recovered from a mining query

Barbil.(KCN): Bamebari Police and fire brigade have recovered a dead body along with a bike in a mining query of a iron ore mines operated by Kasvi Mining company of Keonjhar district in Odisha. A Hero Honda bike bearing number OD09 R 4969 was also found near the deceased. As per information local people informed Bamebari police after seeing the half submerged body inside the

various mined mines due to lack of proper reclamation. Mine reclamation is the process of modifying land that has been mined to ecologically functional or economically usable state. Although the process of mine reclamation occurs once mining is completed, the planning of mine reclamation activities occurs prior to a mine being permitted or started. But the concerned



query. Police along with fire brigade reached the spot and recovered the dead body from water. The deceased is identified as resident of Ganua village under Ganua gram panchayat. Local residents suspect that someone killed him and threw him away. Bamebari police have started an investigation into the facts of the incident. It is seen that accident occurred in

department has not taken any seriousness to address this issue, says expert. Mining companies are limited to safety hoarding instead of working on it says another individual. He too added that Government should not concentrate on revenue factor only rather should give more focus on safety of lives whether it is human or animal.

## BJD's foundation day to be celebrated at Puri

BHUBANESWAR: BJD has decided to shift the state-level celebration of its foundation day on December 26 to Puri during which the party is expected to chalk out strategy as the buzz of an early election is in the air. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik is expected to address a massive public meeting at

Talabania in Puri to kickstart the poll preparations of the party. Besides, several important political resolutions will be passed in the meeting keeping in view the upcoming elections. Celebrations will also be held throughout the year to mark the 25th year of establishment of the party.

## 20<sup>th</sup> December 2005: A Historic Day in democratizing our Tricolor, Naveen Jindal

Barbil (KCN): Prevention of Insults to National Honour



leaves an imprint in the history of the democratization of the Indian National Flag. On this day, the Government of India amended the

tization of the Indian National Flag has always been a priority issue for the President of the Flag Foundation of India, Mr Naveen Jindal. He fought a decade-long legal battle to empower every citizen to fly and display our National Flag with pride, dignity & Honour. "Mr Naveen Jindal always wanted citizens to display the Tiranga to show their respect and pride towards the nation. After he joined the Lok Sabha as a newly elected MP after winning the 2004 general elections from Kurukshetra Constituency, he was informed that a Member of Parliament cannot wear the Tiranga on the clothes under rule 349 (XIV) of the House. Mr Jindal filed a petition to the

chair for permission to wear the National flag and got the resolution passed in the Parliament. In line with the action, he got amended the Prevention of Insults to National Honor Act-1971 on 20 December 2005, which allowed citizens of India to wear the National Flag above the waist", said Major General (Retd) Ashim Kohli, CEO of Flag Foundation of India in a statement. "The landmark decision helped to take the message of patriotism to every Indian and strengthened the roots of Indian democracy. Let us all cherish this historic day and pledge to continue to wear Tiranga on clothes and feel proud", Mr Kohli further added.

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## 'Can't say you can't attack my films, but let there be a conversation': Sudhir Mishra

KOLKATA: People have every right to criticise a movie against which they have some issue, but they should also take into account the view of the filmmaker on that matter, ace director Sudhir Mishra has said. But, film lovers must understand what is right and what is wrong, Mishra said while delivering the annual Satyajit Ray Memorial Lecture as part of the Kolkata International Film Festival.

Not just about films, people even in a family should also discuss any issue among themselves to understand each other's views better, he said.

It is (a) tough time and strange time,' the 63-year-old three-time National Award-winning filmmaker said while replying to an observation by Bengali director Arindam Sil that politics and religion are infringing on creative space.

Sil cited the controversy over a song in Shah Rukh Khan-Deepika Padukon starrer 'Pathaan' which is yet to release.

"I can't say you can't attack my films. I say let's there be a conversation. We should not stop having a conversation. Holding conversations makes us aware of the other view," said the maker of 'Hazaaron Khwaishein Aisi' (2003) which was set in the backdrop of the Emergency in 1975.

"We must agree that if I make something that might disturb you, you can off course react.

If one side comprehends the reason why the other side was disturbed, the issue can be better handled. But, to know what is right, I have to know what is wrong," he said during the lecture.

ALSO READ | Current brand of historicals couched in fictionalised jingoism: Amitabh Bachchan



Speaking on the topic, 'Understanding cinema in changing times of OTT', the subject chosen for this year's Satyajit Ray Memorial Lecture, Mishra said that OTTs tend to allow another way of seeing things.

Had Ray been around now, he would have definitely embraced OTT as a medium of storytelling and adapted it in his own style, the director of 'Dharavi' (1992) said.

Stating that OTT demands a loyal audience,

he said, "He (Ray) was not just a filmmaker popular in Cannes, he also had a large loyal following who loved his craft. It is wonderful that all sorts of actors are getting work. Pankaj Tripathi, K K Menon, Taapsee Pannu, Nawazuddin Siddiqui...all," Mishra who himself directed a web series on an OTT platform said.

The West Bengal government must support young filmmakers, he said.

VIEW PHOTOS | Kolkata Intl Film Festival commences "Pather Panchali was possible because (then state chief minister) Bidhan Chandra Roy had stepped in. He had opened that window

for Ray but afterwards, Ray did not need anyone. Young people need guidance and advice from the right sources. That can be the function of the state government," Mishra said.

A young filmmaker should get handholding by the state government for three movies at the most, the veteran director said.

Mishra also said that taxes earned by governments should be given back to cinema.

## 'I am still hungry for compelling roles'

Actor Rohini Molleti, who began acting as a child artist in 1974 with the Telugu film Harathi, is just a couple of years away from marking the glorious milestone of the golden jubilee. With over a hundred films to her credit, predominantly in Tamil, Malayalam, and Telugu, Rohini is far from feeling saturated. "I am still hungry for compelling roles. It has only increased after my recently released film, "Witness."

The constant hunger to manifest the best version of their craft is what pushes actors like Rohini forward even when the roles that come their way don't always satisfy that urge. "It is like we breathe and eat to live. A character with an assertive arc and one that gives scope for me to perform becomes important in sustaining us."

In debut director Deepak's Witness, which premiered on SonyLIV, Rohini plays Indrani, a conservancy worker fighting the system to seek justice for her son, a manual scavenger. The actor observes that being part of such a cinema is more than just a job. "It is part of my activism. I

would like to use cinema to speak about social issues. A few years ago, I staged a theatre play titled Vasanai, which spoke about manual scavenging.

aspect of Witness, and once People Media Factory banner and actor Shraddha Srinath came on board, I knew the film would have the legs to go

the writing and imagine a backstory for her, incidents that must have shaped her present version. It makes my performance real, relatable, and

and dubbing. "I began dubbing with one of Mani Ratnam's films, Geethanjali (1989) and went on to do many more. The craft taught me the

ema, but she did have a prolonged period of years when she was waiting around for promising roles. Although she has a prolific career in



So, when I got Witness, I immediately said yes," she says. Rohini believes that her real-life stand on many social issues allows filmmakers to approach her with such issue-based films, and notes that Witness allowed her to explore her craft to the fullest. "Deepak spent three years researching manual scavenging, and Witness is a product of such labour. The film not only highlights the problem but proposes a step-by-step solution and pushes people to have a discussion. This was an important

far." As someone who believes in actors playing their age, Rohini notes that there is no dearth for "amma roles", and yet, she strives to bring a change in each of those characters. That way, the amma in Bahubali is not the same as the amma in Guppy (2016), and the amma in Ante Sundaraniki is not the amma in Witness. "When you do a notable role, you tend to get the same kind of role again. I take a conscious effort to reinvent my craft and not get complacent. I go beyond

convincing," explains Rohini, who goes on to credit her involvement in poetry, theatre, literature, and writing for helping her evolve as an artist. "Similarly, it was the late legendary actor Nedomudi Venu who made me understand that I need to think and understand the subtext and background of the character before acting. In fact, some characters, like Indrani, affect me a lot." Over the years, apart from acting, the actor has also showcased her other talents like writing, directing

value of sound and how to use it to tell captivating stories. On the other hand, working with legendary filmmakers like Balu Mahendra, Padmarajan and Bharathan and my exposure to world cinema, made me realise that I, too, had stories to tell, and that's how my direction dream blossomed," says Rohini, whose directorial debut, Appavin Meesai, starring Cheran and Nithya Menen, is planned for a direct-OTT release. A pragmatic Rohini does agree that she is now in a "good place" in Tamil cin-

Telugu and Malayalam, especially in the latter where she has starred in 16 films in a single year, playing vital roles, her presence in Tamil was limited for the longest time. "In Tamil, in all these years, I have done only a handful of prominent roles like Pavunna Pavunathan (1991), Magalir Mattum (1994), Virumandi (2004) and Velaikkaran (2017), to name a few. But I want to do more. I hope Indrani and Witness signify a new beginning."

# Quitting is the only way you can stop smoking



Every one is aware that "Smoking" has been criticized as the most lethal weapon of self murder. According to the Tobacco Products Act, 2004, direct and indirect advertising of all tobacco products and its sale to minors is banned. Addiction to nicotine makes it hard to quit. The increasing incidence of heart attack in India, fast spreading among younger generation has been largely on account of smoking habits. The problem of Smoking in India is widespread but no studies have been done to estimate what percentage of the population are smokers. Roadside paan shops bountifully stocked with cigarettes feed smokers

continuing to exhale smoke from cigarettes. It is a fact that smoking is a hard habit to break because tobacco contains nicotine, which is highly addictive. Smoking harms not just the smoker, but also family members, coworkers, and others who breathe the smoker's cigarette smoke, called secondhand smoke or passive smoke. In fact, statistics tell us that approximately 70 out of 100 people who smoke want to stop but go on puffing, day in and day out, seemingly powerless to quit. Research has shown that non-smokers who reside with a smoker have a 24% increase in risk for developing lung cancer when compared with other non-smokers. Owners of sales outlets must display boards with the warnings like "tobacco causes cancer", "tobacco kills" & "sale to minors is a punishable offence". Sometimes it happens that

notification prohibiting selling tobacco products to minors has no effect as the teenagers continue to buy tobacco/cigarettes on the pretext that they are buying it on behalf of their elders. Smoking also provides other side benefits which are real. Let us remember that staying smoke free helps more of everything — more energy, better performance, better looks, more money in your pocket, and, in the long run, more life to live. In India there is little campaigning save the statutory warnings printed in small print on cigarette cartons and advertisements. Graphic health warnings using a mixture of pictures and words are part and parcel of every country's policy on cigarette marketing. The 40 per cent warning on one side proved ineffective as vendors displayed the packaging on the other side, so that consumers would not

**Vinod Chandrashekhar Dixit**

see the warnings. Cigarette manufacturers share the kitty with vested interest, hence their interest is well protected with simple modifications to fool the general public. It is

the most vulnerable group as far as the consumption of tobacco is concerned. Most of them begin smoking as a fad and even as a rite of passage. According to The Cigarette Package

the companies manufacturing these tobacco products of intoxication. One would find (particularly smokers) like all laws in India, nothing will be implemented. Indians just do not have the psyche to obey laws.

cigarettes. Various provisions that we implement time and again clearly states that People can smoke on roads or in their homes but not in any other place. More deaths are caused each year by tobacco use than by all deaths from AIDS, illegal drug use, alcohol use, motor vehicle injuries, suicides, and murders combined.

each cigarette smoked, almost the time he spends for smoking it. The increasing incidence of heart attack in India, fast spreading among younger generation has been largely on account of smoking habits. Nearly 30 million people in the country are estimated to be victims of heart diseases. No doubt, the Government has come out with good points to deal with the matter but at the same time taxes on tobacco products should go up to help smokers give up. Such methods will be long lasting.



agreed that the bigger warning can create an impact when a smoker buys a cigarette pack. But how do we resolve the issue when smokers buy one or two cigarettes and the packet is being opened by the shop owner who sells cigarettes for business. It is the youth who are the

Health Warnings: International Status Report 2014 India has slipped to 136th position in the list of 198 countries that warn smokers about the hazards of smoking through graphic pictures on cigarette packages. Can't we implement the ban on

They believe that rules are meant to be broken. Smokers are unmindful of the consequences of passive smoking. Over time, the habit of smoking weaves its way through all of the activities in our lives, and we come to think we can't be happy or productive without

It smells something else totally against enforcing the rule strongly across the country as law enacted smoking is banned only for outside propaganda. Here, the Govt. is happy that it has a law, police is happy that it can earn more money, the cigarette companies are happy that they don't have to bother, the finance ministry is happy as there is no affect on taxes and the health minister is happy that he could do atleast one thing in his tenure - so what matters if it is not implemented. It is reported that a cigarette smoker shortens his life by about 5.5 minutes for

Under such circumstances, it clearly shows that the anti-smoking Act will go up in smoke. But I feel that People must wake up to the danger of smoke to themselves and passive smokers before it is too late.

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

## Letter To Editor

**Dear Editor, Consumption of Sharks has to be banned**

Nearly a hundred million sharks are killed for shark fin soup every year. Fins are cut off and often thrown back into the sea alive. Human cruelty in the name of commercial fishing is leading to a dramatic decline in shark populations and entire ecosystems. Currently, international concerns about the sustainability and welfare of sharks have impacted consumption and availability of the soup to very small extent worldwide. Recently health concerns have arisen about the high levels of toxins in shark fins. There are claims that shark fins prevent cancer; however, there is no scientific evidence, and one study found that shark cartilage has no value in cancer treatment in general. In addition, there is no scientific evidence that shark fin can be used to treat all diseases. Sharks biologically reproduce toxins, so eating shark meat can increase your risk of dementia and heavy metal poisoning like mercury poisoning. A wildlife NGO has warned that eating too much shark fin can lead to infertility in men. Larger fish such as sharks, tuna, and swordfish are known to contain high concentrations of mercury and methylmercury salts. For pregnant women or those planning to become pregnant, nursing mothers, and young children, the FDA has recommended avoiding consumption of fish that are high in mercury. High levels of toxins are present in shark fin. Because fins contain neurotoxins, eating shark fin soup and cartilage pills can put one at risk for degenerative brain diseases like Alzheimer's and as well as Parkinson's disease. Shark fins often contain toxins as well. Shark fins used in the soup are the cartilaginous dorsal, pectoral, and caudal fins. These are regularly harvested through a process known as shark finning, which involves taking only the fins and discarding the carcass, alive or dead. Overfishing poses a major threat to the global shark population. Some groups advise against consuming the soup due to concerns about the global shark population and how sharks are being inhumanely ripped off and returned alive to the ocean, unable to swim, hunt or to survive. The prevalence of shark finning and the sustainability of shark species are both discussed. All countries has to ban the sale and possession of shark fins, effectively eliminating the soup's availability. China shows no interest in banning shark fin soup because of the social significance of the dish in Chinese culture. One must act to protect sharks through the Global Oceans Treaty.

**Vijaykumar H K Raichur, Karnataka Environmentalist**

# Collegium, a fraud on the Constitution



The judges of the SCI are appointed by the collegium of judges. The Collegium is unknown to our Constitution. The judges created it in 1993 by rewriting the Constitution. They had no authority to do so at all. It was a fraud played by a few powerful lawyers in Delhi on the Constitution. They did so to subserve their narrow, vested interests. Because an all powerful Supreme Court is extremely profitable for them. They could do so easily, taking advantage of the ignorance of the common man. They could effortlessly make the Parliament and the Executive subordinate to the Court. 2. The AGs and SGs of yester years

facilitated it. Abusing the much hallowed concept of judicial review they made the Supreme Court "quash and set aside" even constitutional amendments like they quash an order of a subordinate court/Tribunal. The SC forgot that it has no power to "quash and set aside" an act of Parliament. An Act of Parliament remains in the statute book until it is repealed. The Court can at best grant a declaration that it is void, which is theoretically binding only between the parties. A mere res judicata, binding the parties before the Court. Such a judgment is no 'law of the land'. That is the undeniable legal position. 3. When the Parliament enacts a law, it is with the consent of we all citizens for we are symbolically present in the Parliament. The laws which we thus make cannot

**Mathews J Nedumpara.**

be "quashed and set aside". But is done so day in and day out, behind our back, in gross violation of the principles of natural justice. 4. The SC failed to

That is the elementary principles of natural justice. The judges are duty bound to act according to the basic tenets of law,



realize that they have no power to set aside an act of Parliament behind the back of the 130 crores citizens of this country, we have enacted it. 5. We, the citizens, are not bound by a judgment of the SCI of which we are not parties. It will not bind us.

in observance of the principles of natural justice. Namely, the principles of "res judicata" and "res inter alios". The doctrine of 'res inter alios' means that no one is bound by a judgment of which he is not a party. 6. The judgments of

the Supreme Court in the Judges-2 case and the NJAC case are all null void, rendered behind the back of the citizens of the country. The court only heard a few "elite" lawyers

enforcement of the public law remedies available to them, but denied. 8. Today's PIL business is entirely different. It is not for the enforcement of the fundamental or legal rights of a poor man. It is not for the enforcement of the fundamental rights at all. But it is used only to compel the courts to substitute the Parliament and Executive. That is unconstitutional. 10. PIL can no longer be allowed to be conducted as if it is a private litigation. The principle applicable for representative suits/class actions shall be made mandatory. 11. Kindly join NLCs Campaign against subjugation of the Parliament and annihilation of democracy by a few powerful vested interests using PILs as a ploy.

**The Author is the President, National Lawyers Campaign for judicial transparency & Reforms**

# Historic biodiversity agreement reached at UN conference

MONTREAL: Negotiators reached a historic deal at a UN biodiversity conference early Monday that would represent the most significant effort to protect the world's lands and oceans and provide critical financing to save biodiversity in the developing world.

The global framework comes on the day the United Nations Biodiversity Conference, or COP15 is set to end in Montreal. China, which holds the presidency at this conference, released a new draft on Sunday that gave the sometimes contentious talks much-needed momentum.

"We have in our hands a package which I think can guide us as we all work together to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and put biodiversity on the path to recovery for the benefit of all people in the world," Chinese Environment Minister Huang Runqiu told delegates before the package was adopted to rapturous applause just before dawn. "We can be truly proud."

The most significant part of the agreement is a commitment to protect 30% of land and water considered important for biodiversity by 2030, known as 30 by 30. Currently, 17% of terrestrial and 10% of marine areas are protected.

The deal also calls for raising \$200 billion by 2030 for biodiversity from a range of sources and working to phase out or reform subsidies that could provide another \$500 billion for nature. As part of the financing package, the framework asks for increasing to at least \$20 billion annually by 2025 the money that goes to poor countries. That number would increase to \$30 billion each year by 2030.

Financing emerged late in the talks and risked derailing an agreement. Several African countries held up the final deal for almost nine hours. They wanted the creation of a new fund

for biodiversity but agreed to the creation of one under the pre-existing Global Environmental Facility.

"Creating a fund under the GEF is the best way to obtain something immediate and efficient," said Christophe Béchu, France's minister for ecological transition who headed its delegation, adding that a completely new fund would have taken several years to establish and deprived developing countries of immediate cash for biodiversity.

Then as the agreement was about to be adopted, Congo stood up and said it opposed the deal because it didn't set up that special biodiversity fund to provide developing countries with \$100 billion by 2030.

Huang swept aside the opposition and the documents that make up the framework were adopted. The convention's legal expert ruled Congo never formally objected to the document. Several other African countries, including Cameroon and Uganda, sided to no avail with Congo and said they would lodge a complaint.

"Many of us wanted more things in the text and more ambition but we got an ambitious package," Canada's Minister of Environment and Climate Change Steven Guilbeault said. "We have 30 by 30. Six months ago, who would have thought we could 30 by 30 in Montreal? We have an agreement to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, to work on restoration, to reduce the use of pesticides. This is tremendous progress."

France's Béchu called it a "historical deal."



"It's not a small deal. It's a deal with very precise and quantified objectives on pesticides, on reduction of loss of species, on eliminating bad subsidies," he said. "We double until 2025 and triple 2030 the finance for biodiversity."

The ministers and government officials from about 190 countries have mostly agreed that protecting biodiversity has to be a priority,

with many comparing those efforts to climate talks that wrapped up last month in Egypt. Climate change coupled with habitat loss, pollution and development have hammered the world's biodiversity, with one estimate in 2019 warning that a million plant and animal species face extinction within decades — a rate of loss 1,000 times greater than expected. Humans use about 50,000 wild species routinely, and 1 out of 5 people of the world's 8 billion population depend on those species for food and income, the report said. But they struggled for nearly two weeks to agree on what that protection looks like and who will pay for it.

The financing has been among the most contentious issues, with delegates from 70 African, South American and Asian countries walking out of negotiations Wednesday. They

returned several hours later.

Brazil, speaking for developing countries during the week, said in a statement that a new funding mechanism dedicated to biodiversity should be established and that developed countries provide \$100 billion annually in financial grants to emerging economies until 2030.

"All the elements are in there for a balance of unhappiness which is the secret to achieving agreement in U.N. bodies," Pierre du Plessis, a negotiator from Namibia who is helping coordinate the African group, told The Associated Press before the vote. "Everyone got a bit of what they wanted, not necessarily everything they wanted."

There were supporters of the framework who said it fell short in several areas.

The Wildlife Conservation Society and other environmental groups were concerned that the deal puts off until 2050 a goal of preventing the extinction of species, preserving the integrity of ecosystems and maintaining the genetic diversity within populations. They fear that timeline is not ambitious enough.

Some advocates also wanted tougher language around subsidies that make food and fuel so cheap in many parts of the world. The document only calls for identifying subsidies by 2025 that can be reformed or phased out and working to reduce them by 2030.

"The new text is a mixed bag," Andrew Deutz, director of global policy, institutions and conservation finance for The Nature Conservancy, said. "It contains some strong signals on finance and biodiversity but it fails to advance beyond the targets of 10 years ago in terms of addressing drivers of biodiversity loss in productive sectors like agriculture, fisheries, and infrastructure and thus still risks being fully transformational."

## BBI Airport set for Lease

New Delhi: As per National Monetization Pipeline (NMP), 25 Airports Authority of India (AAI) airports namely Bhubaneswar, Varanasi, Amritsar, Trichy, Indore, Raipur, Calicut, Coimbatore, Nagpur, Patna, Madurai, Surat, Ranchi, Jodhpur, Chennai, Vijayawada, Vadodara, Bhopal, Tirupati, Hubli, Imphal, Agartala, Udaipur, Dehradun and Rajahmundry have been earmarked for leasing over the years 2022 to 2025.

AAI has leased out eight of its airports

(5) Mangaluru International Airport – M/s Mangaluru International Airport Limited (MaIAL)

(6) Jaipur International Airport – M/s Jaipur International Airport Limited (JIAL)

(7) Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport, Guwahati – M/s Guwahati International Airport Limited (GIAL)

(8) Thiruvananthapuram International Airport – M/s TRV-Kerala International Airport Limited (TIAL)

Airports of AAI are leased out in public



under Public Private Partnership (PPP) for operation, management and development on long term lease basis. Details of airports along with the Concessionaires are as under:

(1) Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi – M/s Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL)

(2) Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, Mumbai – M/s Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL)

(3) Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport, Lucknow – M/s Lucknow International Airport Limited (LIAL)

(4) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport, Ahmedabad – M/s Ahmedabad International Airport Limited (AIAL)

interest for their better management utilizing private sector efficiency and investment. States and passengers are the ultimate beneficiary of enhanced airport infrastructure and facilities created by private partner, who operates, manages and develops the leased airport under PPP. Airports have emerged as a nucleus of economic activities and have multiplier effect on the economy of the State. The revenue received by AAI from the leased airports is also utilized in development of airport infrastructure across the country. This information was given by the Minister of State in the Ministry of Civil Aviation Gen. (Dr) V. K. Singh (Retd) in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha today.

## Home World Russian drones hit Kyiv as Putin to make rare Belarus visit

KYIV: Russia launched a swarm of attack drones at critical infrastructure in Kyiv on Monday in strikes that Ukraine said provoked emergency blackouts in a dozen regions.

The attacks came as Russia said it had shot down several US-made missiles over its airspace near Ukraine and President Vladimir Putin was due to visit neighbouring Belarus, used as a staging ground for the invasion of Ukraine. "I first heard the air raid siren howling from the street... I thought there is going to be a drone attack. For the first time, it scared me," Natalia Dobrovolska, a 68-year-old resident of Kyiv told AFP.

She described hearing multiple explosions before the power shut off in her building in western Kyiv. Officials said Russia had dispatched 35 attack drones nationwide, including 23 over Kyiv. Ukraine said it had downed 30 of the aerial weapons, including Iranian-made "Shaheds", which have pummeled the capital in recent weeks.

Mayor Vitali Klitschko said critical infrastructure facilities were "damaged" but there were no known casualties. Energy operator Ukrenergo said emergency electricity outages were scheduled in the capital and nearly a dozen regions.

A Ukrainian firefighter and serviceman inspect a damaged house following a Russian drone attack in the village of Stari Bezdrychi, Kyiv region, Ukraine Dec. 19, 2022 | AP

Moscow said it's air defence systems had shot down four US-made missiles over Belgorod, a Russian region bordering Ukraine, in one of its first such claims in nearly 10 months of fighting.

Border situation a 'priority' "Four American 'HARM' anti-radar missiles were shot down in the airspace over the Belgorod region," the defence ministry said on social media. Ukraine has experienced frequent and deadly aerial attacks in the 10 months since Russia invaded in late February.

After a series of battlefield setbacks and lost territory this summer and autumn, Moscow stepped up its aerial campaign to target the country's energy grid. With winter setting in, missile and drone attacks have plunged cities around the country into darkness, and severed water and heat supplies to millions of Ukrainians. After a major Russian assault aiming more than 70 missiles on cities last Friday, the national electricity operator was forced to impose emergency rolling blackouts as it raced to repair the battered energy grid.

President Volodymyr Zelensky said as of Sunday evening, nine million people have had their energy restored. Ukraine has an estimated population of 40 million. Ukrainian President Volodymyr

Zelenskyy speaks via video link as Latvian Prime Minister Krisjanis Karins and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak listen, during the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) meeting in Riga, Latvia | AP

Zelensky also described the situation on Ukraine's border with Russia and Belarus as a "constant priority".

"We are preparing for all possible defence scenarios," Zelensky said, adding that he had recently discussed border regions with military commanders.

Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko, who has been in power since 1994, is a long-time Kremlin ally and allowed Russian troops to use Belarusian territory as a launchpad for Moscow's invasion. Putin visit Belarus

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was already in Minsk on Monday alongside Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu. With Putin also expected to arrive, Russia announced its forces were run-



ning military drills with Belarusian forces. The defence ministry released footage of drills in Belarus, showing soldiers conducting tank manoeuvres, and practising artillery and sniper fire at a snow-dusted training ground.

ALSO READ | Ukraine races to restore power after Russian missiles batter grid

"From the morning until the evening twilight -- there is not a single second of silence at the training grounds of Belarus," the ministry said.

In October, Belarus announced the formation of a joint regional force with Moscow with several thousand Russian servicemen arriving in the ex-Soviet country.

It did not say where the drills were taking place or how long they will last.

The deployment of Russian troops in Belarus had raised fears that Belarusian troops could join them in their offensive in Ukraine.

In the fighting that has spilt over into Russian regions bordering Ukraine, one person was killed, and others were wounded Sunday in Belgorod following attacks that the local authorities blamed on Kyiv.

Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said Ukrainian strikes left around 14,000 people without power in a district of the Belgorod region.

## Durua community in Odisha boycotts Parab festival over ST status

KORAPUT: Peeved to participate in any function organised during the festival. "Our community has been deprived of government benefits. The community has been accorded ST status in Chhattisgarh. But in Odisha, we have been denied the status due to an error committed by field function-



he added. Meanwhile, the community's decision to boycott the festival has come as a jolt to locals who said the event is incomplete without the famous Durua dance. For the last 24 years, the dance of Durua community has been major attraction of the Parab festival. Efforts to elicit response from district culture officer Priti Sudha Jena on the matter proved futile. Parab festival was inaugurated by ST, SC Development Minister Jagannath Saraka at sports ground of DAV College here on December 17. It will conclude on Monday.

aries of Revenue department. As per records of the state government, the community has been listed as 'Dharua' instead of Durua," said Tularam. The community members had apprised the Koraput collector about the error a month back,

tion organised during the festival. "Our community has been deprived of government benefits. The community has been accorded ST status in Chhattisgarh. But in Odisha, we have been denied the status due to an error committed by field function-

## Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation's one-drone-army to take on mosquito capital!

BHUBANESWAR: In what appears to be a damage control measure for its inability to curb the mosquito menace ahead of the hockey World Cup next month, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Sunday launched a drone spray drive by employing just one unmanned aerial vehicle, when all the

In such a case the civic body will require at least four to five drones to spray MLO and it needs to be sprayed at least once in every eight days at each targeted spot to destroy the mosquito breeding.

People allege that BMC's failure to carry out adequate source reduction drive during the Covid-19 led to outbreak of dengue menace in the city post pandemic.

Sources said the production of Gambusia and Guppy varieties of fish at the hatchery in the south-east zone of the city has also been stopped for years due to civic body's alleged failure in releasing these



67 wards are in the grip of the crisis post monsoon. Two days back, the civic body announced its plan to conduct the drone survey of inaccessible pockets in different wards and carry out the aerial mosquito larvicidal oil (MLO) to tackle the crisis.

On Sunday, when the drive was launched, only one drone was used for MLO spray. The other mini drone available was used for area survey prior to the spraying operation. With not many days left for the quadrennial event to start, the city residents say measures adopted seems to be too late and too little. They allege the drive is nothing but a stunt as one drone will be highly insufficient in carrying out the spraying operation.

Sources said the hexagon drone to be used for spraying MLO has a capacity of carrying 10 litres of chemical in one sortie covering a maximum area of less than half acre land. Besides, the drone can have a maximum of 10 to 12 sorties a day in case of targeted spray of small patches.

## Development of Central University of Odisha infra to be taken up on priority: Dharmendra Pradhan

JEYPORE: Infrastructure development of Central University of Odisha (CUO) will be taken up on a priority basis, said Union Edu-

chancellor Chakradhar Tripathy in New Delhi. Tripathy, an academician from Odisha, is working hard for the university's development," he said.

The development activities that will be taken up in the university include construction of buildings and introduction of new courses. Earlier on the day, Pradhan was given a rousing welcome by BJP workers led by the party's district president Sumant Pradhan after his arrival at Koraput.

Members of Koraput anganwadi workers' association met the union minister and submitted a memorandum consisting their eight-point charter of demands addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Pradhan assured the anganwadi workers of taking up their demands with the prime minister.



cation Minister Dharmendra Pradhan here on Sunday.

Addressing mediapersons in Koraput, Pradhan said the Education Ministry has been reviewing activities of CUO. "I have already discussed the requirements of CUO with vice-

## Odisha Congress to shape 2024 plan with mass contact programme 'Haat Se Haat Jodo'

BHUBANESWAR: media persons after a Padampur bypoll, Chellakumar said



announced a mass contact programme, 'Haat Se Haat Jodo', for revival of the party ahead of the 2024 elections and take on the BJP at the Centre and BJD in Odisha. The programme will start from January 26.

The party will also 'chargesheet' both the Centre and state government for not fulfilling the aspiration of the people, Congress Odisha in-charge A Chellakumar told

nior leaders to review the back-to-back poll debacle and prepare the roadmap for 2024 elections.


The party will reach out to every household and individual in the state to highlight the failure of both the Centre and the state government and spread the message of what the Congress has achieved for the state in the past. On the dismal show of the Congress in the recently held

that people of the state know it very well that elections in Odisha have become a mockery of democracy. Targeting BJD for using money and muscle power for winning elections, he said that the ruling party is also engaging official machinery and party workers during the polls.

Coming down heavily on BJD and BJP for accusing Congress of having sold its votes, Chellakumar said it

has become a fashion for these two political parties which have always been playing hide-and-seek game to hoodwink people. Alleging that BJD and BJP are two sides of the same coin, he said the BJD helps BJP at the Centre whenever it is in need. Throwing a challenge to BJP leaders who always talk about morality in politics, Chellakumar sought to know if they have the guts to take action against those involved in mining and chitfund scams in Odisha.

"If they show their guts, I will salute their morality, principles and ideology," the senior Congress leader added, asking leaders of BJP and BJD to refrain from trying to mislead people by spreading false information.




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## Google building AI model to support over 100 Indian languages: Sundar Pichai

NEW DELHI: Google, the world's most popular search engine, is working on making text and voice internet search over 100 Indian languages across speech and text - part of our global effort to bring the world's 1,000 most-spoken over a billion people in India, and more around the world," he said.



Pichai said he was amazed at the ways vision has helped to accelerate the progress we're seeing across India, and I'm excited for India to share its experience with the world as it takes over the G20 presidency in 2023," he said. "The pace of technological change in India has been extraordinary, and there's so much opportunity still ahead. Glad to be able to see it up close, and I'm already looking forward to my next visit."

ALSO READ | Google to focus on investing in women-led early-stage startups

Sanjay Gupta, Google's Country Head and Vice President, in India, said Google is making search results pages bilingual in India by tapping into its advanced ML (Machine Learning)-based translation models and cross-language search technology. "Looking to the longer term, we've joined hands with the Indian Institute of Science on 'Project Vaani' -- an initiative that aims at collecting and transcribing open source speech data from across all of India's 773 districts, making it available through the government of India's Bhashini project," he said.

ALSO READ | India will be big export economy; to benefit from open and connected internet: Sundar Pichai

Pichai met telecommunications and IT minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and was later scheduled to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "Prime Minister Modi's Digital India

available in over 100 Indian languages, its India-born CEO Sundar Pichai said on Monday. Pichai, who is visiting India, said the pace of technological change in the country has been extraordinary and Google is supporting small businesses and startups, investing in cybersecurity, providing education and skills training, and applying AI (Artificial Intelligence) in sectors like agriculture and healthcare. "I'm here to see progress being made from our USD 10 billion, 10-year India Digitization Fund (IDF), and share new ways. We're helping to advance India's digital future at our Google for India event. That includes our efforts to build a single, unified AI model that will be capable of handling

languages online, and to help people access knowledge and information in their preferred language," he wrote in a blog. In July 2020, Google announced plans to invest USD 10 billion in India over the next five to seven years as the search giant looks to help accelerate the adoption of digital services in the key overseas market. "We're also supporting a new, multidisciplinary centre for responsible AI with IIT Madras," Pichai said. This is part of Google's work to seize the opportunity in AI globally, balancing the need to be bold with innovation and responsible in its approach. "I'm excited to see the ways India will contribute to breakthroughs in AI that could benefit

people are already using technology to make their communities better. "One of the local tech founders I met today has broken new ground by offering a radiation-free and non-invasive breast cancer screening tool; another developed a chatbot that helps people manage stress. I was glad to hear their stories and to share thoughts on how technology can expand opportunity during a conversation at Women Will," he said.

## Govt says 3,291 foreign companies active in India till September 2022

NEW DELHI: As many as 3,291 foreign companies were active out of the 5,068 overseas companies that had registered their place of business in India till September this year, according to the government. Minister of State for Corporate Affairs Rao Inderjit Singh on Monday said that



information about the 'ceasing of operations' is not maintained by the corporate affairs ministry. Foreign companies are required to register their place of business in India and also cease their 'place of business in India with the Registrar of Companies, Delhi. Citing data from the Registrar of Companies (RoC), Delhi, Singh said 877 foreign companies have ceased their 'place of business' in India between 2014 and

November 2021. He also said that Ford and Harley Davidson have not closed their place of business in India. "There are 3,291 foreign companies having active status out of 5,068 foreign companies having registered their place of business in India till September 2022," the minister said in a written reply. To another query, he said that overall, there has been a marked improvement in the indicators relating to ease of doing business. "As per the database maintained by the ministry, the number of companies incorporated has increased from 1,22,721 in 2019-20 to 1,67,076 in 2021-22 and 1,15,229 this year till November 2022," he added. In a separate written reply, Singh said the ministry had issued instructions in August this year for the withdrawal of prosecution against companies in certain cases that do not involve serious breaches of the law. On whether such cases may include those seeking recovery of fees, penalties, or monetary damages by the government, the minister said no such cases are included.

## ED attaches Rs 907 crore assets of crypto exchanges under PMLA

NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate has attached proceeds of crime worth Rs 907 crore and arrested three persons in cases related to money laundering by crypto exchanges, Parliament was informed on Monday. Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said Central GST officers have detected Goods and Services Tax (GST) evasion worth Rs 87.60 crore by 12 crypto exchanges. Recovery of Rs 110.97 crore, including interest and penalty, has been made. The minister said further investigation is under process in eight cases and four cases are closed on payment of tax along with interest and penalty. Further, in the case of crypto exchange Zanmai Labs Pvt Ltd, assets worth Rs 289.68 crore have been seized from the exchange and its cases related to crypto frauds wherein a few crypto exchanges have also been found involved in money laundering. ALSO READ | Crypto unicorn CoinSwitch to diversify into wealth cases," Chaudhary said. Currently, crypto assets are unregulated in India. ALSO READ | G20 under India's presidency can make progress on crypto regulation

"Crypto assets by definition are borderless and require international collaboration to prevent regulatory arbitrage. Therefore, any legislation for regulation or for banning can be effective only with significant international collaboration on evaluation of the risks and benefits and evolution of common taxonomy and standards," Chaudhary added.

Directors for violation of the provisions of the foreign exchange management act (FEMA), Chaudhary said. In a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha, the minister said the Directorate of Enforcement is investigating several tech

"As on December 14, 2022, proceeds of crime amounting to Rs 907.48 crore have been attached/seized, three persons have been arrested and four prosecution complaints have been filed before the Special Court, PMLA, in these



## CREDAI seeks hike in deduction limit on home loan interest to Rs 5 lakh in next year's budget

NEW DELHI: Realtors apex body CREDAI on Monday, in its pre-Budget wish list, has sought an increase in the deduction limit on home loan interest to Rs 5 lakh from the current Rs 2 lakh in view of hardening of mortgage rates since May. The interest rates on home loans have gone up by around 2 percentage points in the last seven months, to around 8.5 per

materials, labour costs and overall construction costs. To boost demand, CREDAI urged the government to incentivise homeowners by exempting 100 per cent of the rental income up to Rs 20 lakh per annum. This would encourage people with disposable incomes to invest in properties for renting purposes. The Confederation of Real Estate



Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI) represents over 13,000 private developers across 221 city chapters in 21 states. ALSO READ | Rise in home loan interest rates fails to deter buyers

Among other pre-budget demands from industry players, Pradeep Aggarwal, Founder & Chairman of Signature Global, said, "keeping in view high inflation and significant rise in borrowing cost in the last few months, there is an urgent need of tax sops, especially for home buyers in affordable and mid-segment housing, to overcome the financial hardship." He said the government should enhance the deduction limit against interest payment on home loans. Subhankar Mitra, Managing Director of Advisory Services, Colliers India, said there is a need to give a further push for affordable housing. "Any institutional support mechanisms for the stalled projects would also be a timely intervention," he added. Piyush Bothra, Co-founder and CFO of Square Yards, said the price cap of Rs 45 lakh limit for affordable housing should be increased to Rs 80 lakh in metro cities and 60-65 lakh in non-metro cities, so that more people can take benefit of lower GST rates, government subsidies and tax deduction benefits on home loans. Property consultant Anarock Chairman Anuj Puri too said the Rs 2 lakh tax rebate on housing loan interest under Section 24 of the Income Tax Act needs to be hiked to at least Rs 5 lakh. "This will add momentum to housing demand, particularly in the affordable segment," he said.

CREDAI President Harsh Vardhan Patodia said: "Our recommendations are focused on sustaining the current growth in the sector, boosting demand and exemptions for homeowners. The real estate sector can add millions of livelihoods in a short time and significantly contribute to GDP." He noted the continuous hike in key interest rates might cause short-term turbulence in overall housing demand. "The sector has begun to gradually recover across key property markets, primarily driven by end-users. However, repeated rate hikes may have an impact on the interest-sensitive sector," Patodia said. Moreover, CREDAI suggested that the price cap of Rs 45 lakh on units to qualify as affordable housing needs to be revised as there have been substantial changes in the prices of various construction raw

# World at their feet as Argentina crowned Champions

**New Delhi:** Rosario's rose-tinted boy finally has the World Cup trophy. Two years after losing Diego Maradona, a football-obsessed, trophy-starved nation will look up to the heavens not thinking about the past but about the present. Thirty-six years after one of Argentina's greatest sporting heroes delivered them the sport's holy grail, they have once again reached the promised land.

Holders France, who had the opportunity to become the first team to go back-to-back since Brazil in 1958 and 1962, were expected to seriously challenge for the title. And they did. After taking time to enter into the encounter — Argentina were winning 2-0 with 10 minutes left on the clock when the defending champions belatedly woke up —

they threatened to spoil Lionel Messi's dream farewell.

From 2-0 and one hand on the trophy, France scored twice inside 100 seconds to equalise. The identity of both those goals was Kylian Mbappe, whose hat trick illuminated a packed Lusail Stadium.

Messi had scored one and contributed to a thrilling counter-attacking goal to make it 2-0 before Mbappe showed why he's ideally placed to replace Messi as the best player in world football. In the second half of extra time, Messi added a third, his second of the evening that just dribbled over the line before it was cleared (it was clearly over), before Mbappe added a third from the penalty spot.

Both teams had at least one very presentable chance to



win it in 120 minutes after it became 3-3 — Emiliano Martinez made himself big to deny Kolo Muani from close range when it seemed difficult to miss — before Lautaro Martinez headed wide with seconds remaining on the clock.

In the shoot-out, Argentina, as they had shown against the

Netherlands, kept their nerve. Both Mbappe and Messi took responsibility to open and succeeded. Kingsley Coman, who shone throughout the match after coming in as a substitute, saw his penalty saved before Paulo Dybala gave his country daylight. When Aurelien Tchouameni shanked his penalty

wide, the grins on the Argentines became wider. The roars became louder. And they were confirmed as world champions after both Leandro Paredes and Gonzalo Montiel, who conceded a penalty for handball in extra time atoned for his error.

The match itself was largely pedestrian in

terms of quality before France's late onslaught. It's possible they took time to get going because of a flu that had been going on in their camp.

While that may have been a factor in Les Bleus' poor start, what changed the momentum from the very off was the inclusion of Angel di Maria. Even before the opening goal, Argentina were playing the kind of football they like to play. Front-foot, energetic and full of freedom. That kind of ethos was why coach Lionel Scaloni opted to bring Di Maria, an attacking player, in place of Leandro Paredes, a defensive midfielder.

It made wonders as Di Maria, before being substituted just past the hour mark, had scored, assisted and given the French right-back, Jules Kounde, a horrible evening.

Perhaps, it's not a surprise. Di Maria is one of the biggest big-game players in modern Argentine history. That is especially true for his country. Coming into the match, he had scored winners at the 2008 Olympics as well as at the Copa America final in 2021.

In Doha, the 34-year-old ran with a childish vigour. It left France with multiple migraines. His goal at the time seemed like sticking the knife into an already limp France performance. It was a move that was started by Julian Alvarez, and involved Messi before Alexis Mac Allister squared for Di Maria to score. It was coast to coast in the blink of an eye.

In that same blink of an eye, the match turned as France came back. Mbappe, who will

surely go on to break all World Cup goalscoring records, scored two in the time it takes to wash a hand properly these days. Then Messi and Mbappe traded a goal each before Martinez, one of the best keepers from 12 yards, stood out to give his country a third World Cup title.

As Montiel found the back of the net to lift 36 years of hurt, Messi, standing in the centre circle, slumped to his knees. The man who had famously been slugged off for not feeling Argentine enough, a man who had been attacked by a few of his compatriots for not singing the national anthem with passion had had a big hand in winning the title they crave.

Rosario's golden boy had dreamt the wildest of dreams. He delivered on it.

## FIFA targets USD 11 billion in revenue through 2026 World Cup

**DOHA:** FIFA expects to earn \$11 billion in the 2026 World Cup cycle with a 48-team men's tournament in North America set to deliver a big increase in revenue amid ongoing uncertainty about the exact match schedule.

The four-year budget, which was presented Friday to the FIFA Council, foresees an almost 50% increase in income mainly tied to broadcasting and sponsorship deals, plus ticketing and hospitality at a tournament which will use several NFL stadiums.

"We are bullish about the power of football," FIFA president Gianni Infantino said after the council meeting.

"We are convinced that the impact of the game will be massive." FIFA typically makes



conservative budget estimates and ends up overshooting its targets. The \$7.5 billion revenue announced in Qatar last month for the 2019-22 commercial cycle was \$1 billion more than the forecast.

There is also uncertainty about how many games will be played in 2026 "and sold to broadcasters" at the 48-team World Cup.

The FIFA Council agreed in January 2017 to have an 80-game format with teams playing in 16 groups of three ahead of a 32-team knockout round.

The 2022 tournament, which ends Sunday with Argentina playing defending champion France in the final, has 64 matches.

The format of eight groups playing their final

set of matches simultaneously created high tension with the standings changing late in games.

"We at least have to rediscuss" the best format, Infantino said, citing the "absolutely incredible" drama of simultaneous games that would be lost with three-team groups.

The expansion to 48 teams was designed to help accelerate development of soccer in countries which rarely qualify for the World Cup.

That was despite FIFA's own research advising that the highest quality games would be delivered by the current 32-team format, which has been in use since 1998 and is balanced with two teams advancing from each group to the round of 16.

## Bangladesh call up uncapped Nasum for second India Test

**DHAKA:** Bangladesh on Sunday called up uncapped left-arm spinner Nasum Ahmed and left-out injured pace bowler Ebadot Hossain for the second Test against India starting in Dhaka on December 22.

"Ebadot received an injury on his back in the first Test. He will not be fit for the second Test. That's why we took Nasum in his place though we have yet to decide whether we would play an extra spinner in Dhaka," said selector Habibur Bashar. India defeated Bangladesh by 188 runs in the first Test to take a 1-0 lead in the two-match series.

India scored 404 runs and declared their second innings at 258-2 after bowling out



Bangladesh for a paltry 150 runs in the first innings.

Set a monumental target of 513 runs, Bangladesh were all out for 324 runs after debutant Zakir Hasan made 100 and skipper Shakib Al Hasan

added 84. The hosts looked short on options during India's second innings, as Ebadot and Shakib did not bowl due to injury concerns.

Nasum has played four one-day internationals and 28 Twenty20

internationals but is yet to play a Test. He was part of the Bangladesh ODI squad that beat India 2-1 in the preceding three-match series.

Opening batsman Tamim Iqbal, who missed the ODI series and first Test due to a groin injury, failed to make it to the squad for the second Test.

Batsman Anamul Haque and pace bowler Shoriful Islam were also left out.

Bangladesh: Zakir Hasan, Najmul Hossain, Mominul Haque, Yasir Ali, Mushfiqur Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan (capt), Liton Das, Nurul Hasan, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Taijul Islam, Taskin Ahmed, Khaled Ahmed, Mahmudul Hasan, Rejaur Rahman Raja



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