



Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik with Young Astronomer Talent Search (YATS) programme at Pathani Samanta Planetarium, Bhubaneswar

6 Involved In Parliament Smoke Scare, 5 Arrested, 1 On The Run: Sources

New Delhi(KCN): Six people were involved in the planning and execution of a major security breach in Parliament on Wednesday, police sources told NDTV this evening, prompting a flood of questions on security systems in place in the new building, which included at least four levels of screening. Two individuals - Sagar Sharma and D Manoranjan - deployed yellow smoke canisters inside the Lok Sabha, and two others - Neelam Devi and Amol Shinde - burst red and yellow canisters outside the Parliament. The fifth has been named as Lalit Jha, at whose Gurgaon home the other five stayed. The sixth is Vicky Sharma, also from Gurgaon, and he has also been arrested.



Initial inquiries have established the two who popped the smoke cans inside the Lok Sabha are from Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh (Sagar Sharma) and Karnataka's Mysuru (D Manoranjan). The two caught outside Parliament are from Maharashtra's Latur (Amol Shinde) and Hissar in Haryana (Neelam Devi). Sagar Sharma and Manoranjan, who were seated in the Lok Sabha's

visitors' gallery before launching this shocking disruption were given entrance passes requested by BJP MP Pratap Sinha's office. Mr Simha, the ruling party's lawmaker from Mysuru, has told NDTV he will meet Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to explain his position regarding the requests for passes that was forwarded by his office. The six have known each other for four years and

The police have also

released a few more details, including the Aadhaar cards of Sagar Sharma and D Manoranjan, while NDTV has learned Neelam Devi, 42, is a teacher studying for the civil services. According to Neelam's brother, she was actively involved in the controversial farmers' protest of 2020 against the government's three farm laws, but is not linked to any political party. Today's Parliament breach comes 22 years after a terror strike on the old building in which nine people, including eight security personnel, were killed. It also follows threats by a Khalistani terrorist - Gurpatwant Singh Pannu - to stage an attack that will "shake the very foundation of Parliament".

Odisha matric exam 2024: BSE releases timetable



Cuttack(KCN): The Board of Secondary Education (BSE), Odisha Wednesday released the timetable for the upcoming Class-X (matriculation) examinations that are scheduled to take place between February 20 and March 4 next year. The board, through a press release, informed that the Annual High School Certificate (AHSC), State Open School Certificate (SOSC) and Madhyama examinations will be conducted simultaneously in the timeframe as mentioned below.

First language: February 20, Second language: February 23, Mathematics: February 26, Third language:

February 28, General Science: March 2, Social Science: March 4.

The board further said that vocational practical examinations will be conducted at schools under the direct supervision of Odisha School Education Programme Authority (OSEPA) between January 15 and January 31, 2024.

According to the board, as many as 5,51,611 candidates are expected to appear in the AHSC examination, 2024. The head of the institutions shall submit original documents for verification at BSE head office located in Cuttack between December 14 and December 21, 2023.

Parliament Clears Bill To Repeal 76 Outdated, Obsolete Laws



New Delhi(KCN): Parliament today passed a bill to repeal 76 redundant and obsolete laws with the government saying the move is part of its continuing efforts to improve the ease of living and doing business.

The Repealing and Amending Bill, 2023 was cleared in the Rajya Sabha with a voice vote.

Lok Sabha had cleared the legislation on July 27 this year.

In December last year, the government introduced the Repealing and Amending Bill to cull 65 old laws. But the bill could not come up for discussion in subsequent sessions.

The government later moved amendment to add 11 more laws to the list, bringing the total to 76 laws. The bill proposes to repeal outdated laws like the Land Acquisition (Mines) Act, 1885 and the Telegraph Wires (Unlawful Possession) Act, 1950. The bill also seeks to repeal certain Appropriation Acts passed by Parliament in the recent past. Replying to the debate, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal said the Modi government since coming to power in 2014 has repealed 1,486 defunct laws in order to improve ease of living. With the 76 more added, the list now stands at 1,562 such laws, he added.

Orissa HC Directs Puri Municipality To Pay Rs 10 Lakh Compensation To Family Of Child Killed In Dog Bite In 2016



Colony in Puri.

Later, a petition was filed in the High Court in connection with the incident. The Puri Municipality had submitted an affidavit before the court mentioning about the steps taken by the civic body for sterilization of dogs in

the town. The municipality had said in the affidavit that there was no provision of compensation in case of death due to dog bite. Expressing displeasure over the reply, the High Court asked for the payment of compensation to the deceased's family.

Odisha Inks MoU With Tata Steel To Establish High Performance Centres In Archery, Sports Climbing



Bhubaneswar(KCN): Odisha's bouquet of High Performance Centre will now feature two new disciplines. In the presence of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, today, a Memorandum of Understanding was inked between Odisha and Tata Steel to establish High Performance Centres in Olympic sports, Archery and Sports Climbing. Odisha Tata Archery Academy and Odisha Tata Steel Adventure Foundation Sport Climbing Academy will be established in Bhubaneswar for the development of athletes in the disciplines. Regional Development Centres will also be set up for archery while both academies will also run grassroots programs. Led by experts these HPCs will identify and nurture exceptional talent, empowering them to compete at national and international levels and provide top-notch infrastructure and training facilities. These centres will serve as hubs for aspiring athletes to realize their full potential. These academies will feature players that are scouted from the state sports hostels, state level and national level programs. The athletes will also have access to the sports facilities of the Sports & Youth Services Department for their holistic development, which will include the gymnasium, swimming pool and India's largest sports science centre at the Kalinga Stadium. On this occasion, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, said, "We are delighted to collaborate with Tata Steel in this endeavour. Our partnership with Tata Steel for Hockey High Performance Centre has been exemplary and producing encouraging results. We have a huge potential for Archery and Sports Climbing in Odisha and in the country and with this new association we will be able to collectively contribute towards creating a conducive environment for athletes in these disciplines." Secretary Vineel Krishna represented the Sports & Youth Services

Department while, Tata Steel was represented by Mr. Chanakya Chaudhary, Vice President, Corporate Services Tata Steel Ltd. and Chairman of Tata Steel Adventure Foundation.

A bouquet of HPCs has been established by Odisha at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar. This is a unique partnership model between a state and a corporation that has proven to produce elite athletes in Hockey, Football, Swimming, Athletics, Gymnastics, Sports Science, Shooting, Weightlifting and now archery and sport climbing will further benefit from this partnership.

TEACHERS- OUR GUIDE

By Santyona Jena

At the times of darkness,
They're our guiding light
They're our teachers who,
Makes our day bright.

When we follow the wrong path,
They show us the right one,
They're our well-wishers who,
Never leave us alone.

'Love and care for others,
Go by the right way,
We will be good human beings',
This our teachers pray !

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No, life begins without a fall

DWIT DAVID PHILIP

Desiring tongues,
Searches each other,
Not just the bone less flesh, it's mind and wisdom,
Desiring bones,
Searches each other,
Not just the bones the flesh that it covers,
Desiring arms,
Searches each other,
Between them approved only passion,
Lonely cheek cries you are my own,
If equally responded together jubilant unknown,
It's heavy rain, that cools down all,
No, life begins without a fall.



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Quotation of the Day

**Don't judge each day
by the harvest
you reap but by the seeds
that you plant.**

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railways: A Passage through Time

During the 19th century, till the time the Northern Bengal State Railway extended its operation to Siliguri in 1879, the journey from Calcutta to Darjeeling was a daunting one.

Various means of transport including rail, steam ferry, bullock cart and the road were employed to reach Darjeeling. The journey took five to six days. The railway was considered to be a panacea to the problems presented by conveyance through the Hill Cart Road where, for years, travellers had used pack ponies, bullocks, palkees (palanquins), pony tongas (horse-drawn carriage) and bullock carts to reach their destination. Tea and other local produce from the Darjeeling hills could now be easily transported to the plains and likewise necessary supplies, tea garden machinery and troops could be sent to the hills in a timely fashion. Siliguri, located at the foothills of the Himalayas, 400 feet above sea level, became the point at which the travellers would have breakfast served to them in the morning, after an unbroken rail journey from Sara Ghat. From there the travellers would transfer from a metre gauge system to one where the rails were only 2 feet apart and the entire journey would now take less than 24 hours.

The onward journey would be carried forth on the miniature trains of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. Travellers would marvel at its tiny scale, its tracks laid out like something out of a toy train set box. Despite its quaint features the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, also known as the Toy Train, was a formidable

engineering marvel. It was built between 1871 and 1881.

The origin of the Toy Train was tied to the construction of the Hill Cart Road which was started in 1839 under Lieutenant Napier of the Royal Engineers who had been deputed to lay out the town of Darjeeling. This strip of hill territory which had earlier been part of the Kingdom of Sikkim became part of British India in 1835. As the hill station expanded, the old cart road now known as the Old Military Road was found unsuitable and a new Cart Road was sanctioned in 1861. This new road connecting Siliguri to Darjeeling became the route through which the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway made its way slowly from the foothills, navigating the numerous spurs to its final terminus at Darjeeling.

The plan for the construction of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railways was drawn up by Sir Franklin Prestage, an agent of the Eastern Bengal Railways in 1878. The plan and estimates were submitted to the Government of Bengal which received the sanction of the then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Ashley Eden in 1879. Arrangements were then made to form a company in order to carry out the endeavour. A sum of Rs. 14,00,000 was set aside for this purpose. This line is perhaps one of the first instances of an attempt at private initiative in railways. In 1879, the Darjeeling Steam Tramway Company was formed by Prestage and by the terms of a revised contract he was forced to scale down the line to a narrow gauge line (2ft/ 610mm). The name of the company was changed to Darjeeling Himalayan Railway,



Company in 1881 and the title was retained after it was taken over by the newly independent Indian state in 1948. By the August of 1880, the line was opened for passenger and goods traffic for a distance of 32 miles from Siliguri to Kurseong which stood at 4,864 feet above sea level. The entire line was finally opened in July, 1881 with a total length of 52 miles till Darjeeling Bazaar. The total expenditure of construction stood at Rs. 31,96,000 or a cost of Rs. 60,400 per mile. Many arrangements were made by the company to ensure a smooth service including the establishment of workshops for repairs. The gradients of the line were also improved to allow for high capacity engines to function on the line. Solid steel rails were laid on sleepers of timber and the locomotives were made by Messrs. Sharpe, Stewart and Company of Glasgow. They manufactured two types of locomotives for the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, one type weighing around 12 tons with hauling capacity of 39 tons in steep inclines and around sharp mountain bends and curves and the other type weighing around 14 tons with powerful brakes capable of taking a 50

ton train up sharp inclines. The steep nature of the mountain climb necessitated a lot of adjustments to be made at great cost, as a number of loops, spirals and reverses had to be constructed in order to navigate the steep ascent. The train had different carriages marked out to accommodate different classes of passengers. The First Class passenger carriages were 13 feet long and 6 feet wide and they were 7.5 feet high above rails with low floors. These carriages were fitted with 19.5 inch wheels and were divided into two compartments. The optimum carrying capacity of these carriages was 12 passengers along with small packages which could be kept under the seats. Though these carriages were suited for rainy weather they did not allow much opportunity for sightseeing. Open trolleys would be attached to each passenger train and these would seat six first class passengers or sixteen second class passengers. These trolleys were fitted with hoods and curtains and the passengers could take in the beautiful sights as they wended their way up from the foothills.

The baggage would be carried in separate trucks. Travellers were

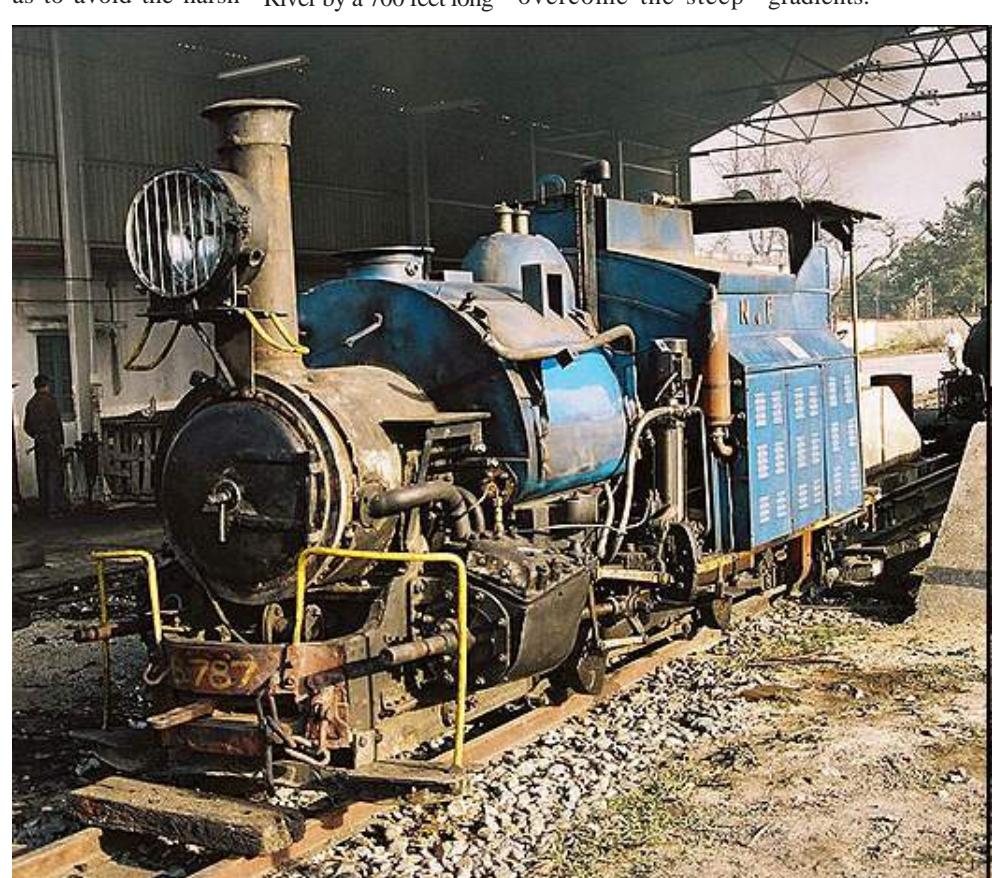
iron bridge and then

offer the passengers a glimpse of the first tea garden visible on their journey, the Panchanai Tea Garden. The first stoppage of the journey would be at the Sukna Station which was around seven miles from Siliguri and from here the ascent to the hills would begin. Dense forest would greet the travellers and sometimes elephants would be sighted. The ninth mile

gradients.

Between the twelfth and thirteenth miles the train would stop at Rungtong Station for cooling down and for water. From this point the line headed south towards another spiral and passed over a tunnel-like opening and then turned northwards and eastwards towards the third loop at the sixteenth mile.

Moving forward the next encounter would be with the "zigzag" or reverse at the seventeenth and a half mile, the first set of reverses, which was another unique feature of the line. This zigzag feature was styled on the backward and forward steps of ballroom dancing and had been suggested by Lily Ramsey, wife of Henry Ramsey, the chief contractor of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, as a way of navigating the gradients.



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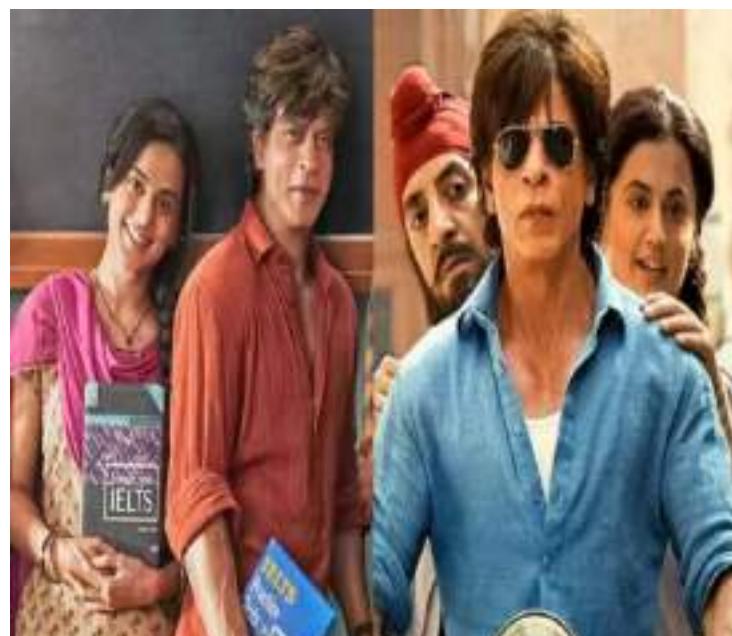
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5 Compelling Reasons To Watch Shah Rukh Khan's Dunki

Rajkumar Hirani and Shah Rukh Khan, two titans of Indian cinema, are finally joining forces for the highly anticipated film, Dunki. This dream collaboration promises a cinematic experience like no other.

1. A Rajkumar Hirani Masterpiece: Hirani has a knack for weaving magic on screen, delivering heartwarming stories that resonate deeply with audiences. From the poignant Munnabhai MBBS to the socially relevant PK, he has consistently pushed the boundaries of storytelling. With Dunki, Hirani promises to deliver another impactful film, one that will leave you laughing, crying, and thinking long after the credits roll.

2. Shah Rukh Khan's Magnetic Presence: Shah Rukh Khan is synonymous with cinematic charisma. His undeniable charm and powerful performances have cemented his place as one of the most beloved actors in the world. With Dunki, SRK is expected to break new ground, showcasing a different avatar sure to captivate audiences.



3. A Story with Global Appeal: While the details of the plot remain under wraps, Dunki is said to be a story with universal themes. This means that regardless of your cultural background, you'll be able to connect with the characters and their journeys. In a world increasingly divided, Dunki offers a powerful message of hope and unity.

4. Visually Spectacular: Hirani and his team are

renowned for creating visually stunning films. Dunki will be no exception, with breathtaking cinematography and production design that will transport you to different worlds. Prepare to be visually mesmerized by the film's grandeur.

5. A Musical Extravaganza: No Rajkumar Hirani film is complete without its music. Dunki promises to be a musical treat, featuring chart-topping songs composed by the legendary A.R. Rahman. Get ready to sing along to these tunes long after you leave the theater.

With its powerful storytelling, exceptional performances, and captivating visuals, Dunki promises to be a film that stays with you long after the final scene. So mark your calendars and book your tickets in advance! This is one cinematic experience you won't want to miss.



International Sports Drama film "A Game of Two Halves" explores Identity crisis, racial dissonance, acceptance, and Coming-of-Age starring Saaj Raja (Marvel's Eternals), Harish Khanna (12th Fail), Lucy Jackson (The Innocents), Swaroopa Ghosh (Piku) and Nikkita Chadha (Barbie). Directed by British Asian filmmaker Khayam Khan (Bus Ride). The Indo British film will be releasing in cinemas in India, UK and North America on February 23, 2024.

Set against the vibrant backdrop of both Britain and India, it chronicles the transformative journey of Sanjay, played by Saaj Raja. A young British student who discovers his true self not amidst the academic pressures of a prestigious university, but on the dusty fields of Hyderabad in India, while teaching football to underprivileged children.

On talking about the film Director Khayam Khan, stated, "Having grown up in an emerging Multicultural Britain, where I was one of only a handful of "Brown" skinned kids at school, I identify with Sanjay and sympathise with his struggle to find acceptance. Sanjay tries to be accepted by the "cool kids" by following the beautiful Shreya, but learns his true nature through the life lessons the kids teach him. In the film, I want to show the juxtaposition of what we believe our identity is and what it truly is when we find ourselves and are comfortable in the skin we have been blessed with."

The film also features an ensemble cast of Mary Poppins Returns fame Sudha Bhuchar, Holb's Chizzy Akudolu and Indian actors such as Rajiv Kumar Aneja, Pawan Chopra and Sachin Chaudhary among others. Written by Shirley Day and Produced by award winning producers Nicola Gregory and Sheila Nortley under the banner of K Squared Films, 2HotFilms & Emineo Films and internationally distributed by Shiladitya Bora of Platoon One Films.

Talvaar Turns 8: Revisiting Exceptional Performance Of Sohum Shah, Who Played Investigative Officer



As 'Talvaar' marks its 8th anniversary today, we can't help but recall on the exceptional performance of Sohum Shah, who portrayed the role of an investigative officer in this gripping crime drama. Despite his limited screen time, Shah managed to leave an indelible mark on the audience and industry alike, establishing himself as a true bonafide performer. Sohum Shah has always been an actor who seamlessly embodies his director's vision of the character on screen. With Meghna Gulzar's direction in 'Talvaar', he

had the opportunity to delve deep into the psyche of his character. In doing so, he not only met but exceeded all expectations, delivering a performance that was widely praised by critics and audiences alike. One of the key aspects of Shah's portrayal in 'Talvaar' was his ability to bring authenticity and depth to his character. As an investigative officer tasked with unraveling a complex murder case, he displayed a remarkable range of emotions and nuances, making the character feel real and relatable. His dedication to his craft was evident

in every scene, from his meticulous attention to detail to his flawless execution of even the most challenging sequences, he didn't just play the character but became the character.

The collaboration between Sohum Shah and Meghna Gulzar in 'Talvaar' also serves as a prime example of the powerful synergy that can be achieved when a talented actor joins forces with a visionary director. The film's

success can be attributed, in large part, to Shah's outstanding performance, which breathed life into the character and added depth to the narrative. It's a testament to his dedication to his craft and his ability to elevate any project he's a part of. Up next for Sohum Shah is his production venture 'CrazXy' and as he continues to take on new challenges and work with acclaimed directors, audiences can look forward to witnessing more exceptional performances from this talented artist.

Jee Le Zaraa: Real reason behind Priyanka Chopra, Katrina Kaif and Alia Bhatt starrer's delay revealed and it's not date issues

Jee Le Zaraa is one of the most talked about movies starring Priyanka Chopra, Katrina Kaif and Alia Bhatt. The movie was announced a couple of years ago and there has been much excitement around the same as it is. Farhan Akhtar along with Zoya Akhtar and Reema Kagti are making this all-female road

trip movie happen but there have been a lot of hiccups already. Whether Jee Le Zaraa is being shelved or not, has Priyanka Chopra said no to the script, etc. have grabbed headlines in the last couple of days. But fresh reports revealing the real reason for the delay have surfaced. A lot of fans have questioned Farhan Akhtar about the delay of Jee Le Zaraa which is supposed to star Priyanka Chopra, Katrina Kaif and Alia Bhatt in the lead. There have been numerous reasons that have surfaced for the delay in making of the new movie. Recently, reports surfaced talking about Priyanka Chopra opting out of Jee Le Zaraa because she did not like the script. She was supposed to come down to India during Parineeti Chopra's wedding and sign the contract which did not happen. But that's not the case, as per a report in Koimoi.com, Priyanka is very much a part of the movie. She has not opted out of the project nor has she said 'no' to the script.

Vijay Deverakonda Expresses Gratitude For 'Kushi' Success, Says 'Love Knows No Language'



Actor Vijay Deverakonda's latest release 'Kushi' with Samantha Ruth Prabhu successfully managed to strike a chord with people. The film, which performed well at the box office, is now streaming on OTT platform Netflix. On receiving audiences' love

for his role in 'Kushi', Vijay said, "We made 'Kushi' with the belief that love knows no language and emotions have no boundaries. Seeing the overwhelming love pour in again with its OTT release is incredibly gratifying. Whether you're

watching it in Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, or Hindi, I hope the film brings as much 'Kushi' to your hearts as it has to ours." Written and directed by Shiva Nirvana and produced by Mythri Movie Makers, 'Kushi' hit the theatres on September 1 in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam. The film marked Vijay and Samantha's second collaboration after 'Mahanati'.

Earlier talking about working in the film, Vijay told ANI, "The whole experience of shooting it will be a very fond memory for life. The relationships I've formed with Samantha and Shiva, are the two people I spent the most time with, and shared a lot of memories and highs and lows with. I will always enjoy thinking about the making of this film..." Meanwhile, in the coming months, Vijay will be seen in 'VD 12'. The film is being directed by 'Jersey' fame Gowtam Tinnanuri.

It's time re-look at the global development agenda and the SDGs



UNFPA Evaluation Office, indicated that if the current trends were any evidence to go by, attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) would take several decades beyond 2030. That was even before COVID-19 arrived on the scene. In April 2020, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), a UN global initiative, conducted a survey on the progress made and the major challenges faced in implementing the SDGs, covering 715 respondents from 104 countries in the SDG community. Respondents indicated that even before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world was not on track to achieve these goals. Two-thirds of the community believed that their country would only achieve up to half of the

goals. Only 16 per cent of respondents believed that their country was on track. These two pieces of evidence—one based on data and the other anecdotal—are enough to alert the global community that a significantly major push (perhaps superhuman) is necessary to reach anywhere close to the goals by 2030. The COVID-19 pandemic appears to be throwing all development into disarray and exposing the inadequacies of all public health systems in more economically developed and developing countries alike. The effects of the pandemic have harmed millions of lives and livelihoods. It may take a few years for countries to recover from the economic and health crisis inflicted by the pandemic. To use the language of a cardinal principle of SDGs, those who were left behind earlier have been pushed back even further and those who had enjoyed a modicum of fruits of

development have also been pushed into the class of left behind, raising the amount of corrective action required to get back on track considerably. Examples of the negative impact are not restricted to just SDG 8 related to employment and decent work but to many other SDGs addressing hunger, poverty, well-being among other areas (SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4). Online education has replaced normal education methods. The major disadvantage of this trend is the exclusion of students who do not have access to the necessary technological equipment and/or the internet. An online survey conducted by the author and team BRAUSS in April 2020 (542 respondents from 58 countries) showed that continued lockdowns and other restrictions imposed raised negative feelings such as stress, anxiety and fear among the people (SDG 3) and even behaviour patterns had changed

due to continued disconnect with the outside world. BRAUSS and the evaluation practice—Evaluation itself has been affected by the pandemic. First, economic impact and budget constraints have affected the scope for evaluations. Some evaluations have been cancelled or postponed. Second, with drastic restrictions imposed upon some of the established evidence-gathering procedures such as face-to-face individual and group interviews, evaluation practice has been forced to modify its methods. Participatory methods such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and the like, which demand personal proximity, are not possible. The evaluation profession is no doubt resilient enough to adapt its techniques to these restrictions. However, alternative techniques have their own limitations. For example, in countries where internet

communication is not very widespread, online surveys do not reach all, particularly the most deprived sections. The examples are only indicative. However, these set a limit on knowing what is happening to those left behind. BRAUSS evaluation campaign - The BRAUSS evaluation campaign has been conceived under these circumstances. The evaluation campaign intends to promote influential evaluations contributing to acceleration of results through evidence-based policies and programmes. A legitimate question, however, is how evaluation can by itself improve the progress towards the SDGs? This requires a) carrying out quality evaluations to produce quality evidence to indicate what policies and programmes work, and,

b) convincing the policy-makers to plough this evidence into reshaping policies and programmes. The latter is more difficult to achieve. This is why the BRAUSS evaluation campaign is mobilizing the global evaluation community to come together to advocate for influential evaluation at all levels.

Role of BRAUSS evaluators - Evaluative evidence is required to assess the impact of the pandemic on the lives and livelihoods of the population and interventions made by the governments to tackle the situation. In these circumstances, the role of BRAUSS evaluators has increased many folds to generate quality evidence and guide the assessment of changed priorities and impacts by inventing new methodologies. Technological advances in information gathering, processing and dissemination need to be harnessed for more efficient evaluations, but at the same time, it should be recognized that such methods

could be biased due to exclusion and may infringe individual privacies. How can research universities like BRAUSS contribute? While developing evaluation capacities at all levels and professionalizing evaluation would raise the evaluation standards, leading to evaluations of high quality and utility, advocacy is required to ensure policy-makers use the evidence to frame policies and programmes. Coordination, synergies and constant dialogue between evaluators and other stakeholders like decision makers, legislators, media and the civil society at large are prerequisites. Research universities like BRAUSS have an important role in all the areas—evaluation capacity building, maintaining professional standards, advocacy for use of evidence and so on.

Takeaway - This is the right time for some introspection

on the time span set for the global development agenda. We need to re-look at the global agenda and reprioritize the SDGs to address the total well-being of people—both material and mental. While all the SDGs are important, emphasis on fewer goals related to poverty, hunger, health and inclusivity (SDGs 1, 2, 3 and 4) with fewer targets need to be considered. The role of evaluators is immense in the present scenario, both in creating demand and supply for evaluations and innovating appropriate techniques for evaluations.

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Book Festivals of Odisha: Looking back and forward



Literature and many others. His dream was, books should reach villages, say each door steps. NBT bought several Book Vans during his tenure. His able deputy was Arvind Kumar, the then Director.

So, the first ever Books on Wheels was planned. It was at two parts of the country, south and north. If I correctly recollect, the south one began at Chennai and the north one at Varanasi. The north one covered U P and Bihar and the South one Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh. Jharkhand, Uttarakhand and Telengana were not separate provinces at that time.

Bur willing manpower was not available as normally happens in Government Organisations. In one of the staff meetings, Arvind Kumar requested all to volunteer. Out of the 200+ employees of NBT he got only one, that is me. He was not very happy with

me, but he appreciated my action and deputed me to lead a team for the exhibition in Bihar.

Inspired by the Bihar experience, I proposed a similar exhibition in Odisha. The Odisha Publishers and Booksellers Association led by Shri Pitamber Mishra whole stood by me. The other partner was Odisha Sahitya Akademi of which Shri Rajkishore Mishra was then Secretary.

We had a dilemma, if to begin it from Puri or some other part of Odisha. Since I worked in Koraput district and is from Puri, everybody expected that I will like to begin from any of these. But I had a different take. During my tenure in NCERT, I used to visit Sambalpur and Bolangir very often. I had a nostalgic touch. I did a few months schooling in my class 2 at Sambalpur. 'How shall it be if we begin at Bargarh?' I asked all. They were

all surprised. Bargarh had no reputation as a market for books at that time. There was a Gaudi Pathagar, a block called Atabira where my friend and brother Aswini Kumar Mishra was BDO. a place

fine morning. It was not possible for the vehicle to enter to Balubazar. We parked our van near Sunshine Field. All the publishers came there with their book bundles. We took the books and went to



called Larambha where my favourite actor and the first super hero of Odia films Sarat Pujari was Principal in a College.. and Bargarh had a renowned author Dayalal Joshi, these were the only that I had in mind. But all approved my plan to go ahead. Our mobile van reached Cuttack with two drivers Dharam Pal and Pandey on one

dhaba. Apart from the two drivers, we had Chinmaya Vivek, the young poet as pilot, two clerk cum counter sales people, a cleaner and me. 'But I can't see in the night', Pandey, one of the drivers said. What to do I asked Dharam Pal. 'Sir, you

sit in front seat don't sleep. Pandey and I will sip pegs of whisky at times or take tea at places. Let us see if by tomorrow morning we can reach

Sambalpur. Dharam Pal said to give me hope. Sambalpur was about 350 kms and the van was fitted with glasses. The journey was adventurous. We took tea at Redhalkol. Next morning at 8 am we reached Sambalpur. Dharam Pal had to catch the train from there to return to Delhi. We reached Baragarh at 9.30 am. Shri

Hota, then President of Gandhi Smriti Pathagar and Lecturer in a local college was eagerly waiting. There were no mobiles then, nor PCs. He did not tell Sarat Pujari to come and inaugurate as he was not sure if we can reach there in time. Bargarh did not have a hotel that time, but a decent Marwari Dharamshala. Our only hope was Dayalal Joshi. We met him and he gladly accepted our invitation to inaugurate the exhibition at 5 pm. We sold books worth over 55 thousand INR in that Book Exhibition, the highest those days in India in such an exhibition of 4 days. Rest is part of History.

This is the journey of Indian Publishing and how the first ever Mobile Book Exhibition in Odisha at Bargarh, then a sub division of Odisha took place. But alas, the new generation of Book Fair Organisers at Bargarh are possibly not aware of their glorious past in the

history of Indian Book Industry! People have also forgotten that I did four National Book Festivals in Odisha at Bhubaneswar, Rourkela, Brahmapur and Puri besides ten more in the North Eastern Region and twenty World Book Fairs. I was the only Odia who was Adviser to National Book Development Council, Singapore and Director, Art and Culture of North Eastern Region. That's now history. If I tell the truth, people feel that I am beating my own drum. But, how long can I remain silent? I have been in a festival of memories for the last two years.

Visiting Professor of Development Communication, Former Director, I & PR and Culture, North Eastern Council Ministry of DoNER, Govt. of India
Former Director, Book Publishing Courses & Editor, NCCL National Book Trust, Ministry of HRD, Govt. of India

Police Should Inform Rape Survivors Of Option To Terminate Pregnancy: Court

Bengaluru (KCN): While allowing a rape victim to terminate a pregnancy that was in the 24th week, the High Court has directed that all jurisdictional police should inform victims of the option available for termination of pregnancy so that they do not have to approach the courts at a belated stage.

The 17-year-old victim's father had approached the High Court seeking for medical termination of

her pregnancy. She is subject to a crime under Section 376 (rape) of the IPC and POCSO Act. As a result of the crime she conceived and is currently 24 weeks pregnant. The petition claimed that the victim does not want to continue with the pregnancy and sought medical termination. Justice Suraj Govindaraj, who heard the petition in his order on December 11, said such a situation would not have arisen "if at all

such a decision had been taken earlier, then there would have been no requirement for the petitioner to approach this Court." It, therefore, directed the Principal Secretary, Home Department, to issue necessary directions to all jurisdictional and/or investigating officers "to make known the availability of an option of medical termination of pregnancy, the procedure and process required to be

followed for the same if the victim and/or natural guardian so desire." The investigating officer should also keep ready a member or representative of the jurisdictional Child Welfare Committee or the District Child Protection Unit, the court maintained. The High Court had also directed a Medical Board consisting of a gynecologist, pediatrician and psychologist to give an opinion on the fitness

of the victim in the present case to undergo medical termination of pregnancy (MTP). The report was submitted on December 12. The High Court then allowed the MTP to be carried out. The High Court ordered that after the MTP, the tissue samples of the foetus should be preserved for the purpose of DNA analysis if required or ordered by the trial court in the POCSO case.

Death of Mahendra Prasad Panda, Renowned Retired Government Officer, Mourned in Delhi and Beyond

New Delhi (KCN): In a somber turn of events, Mahendra Prasad Panda, a distinguished retired officer of the Indian Information Service, breathed his last at a private hospital in New Delhi. The news of his sudden demise has left a community in mourning, both in the capital city and his hometown.

Mahendra Prasad Panda's life journey began in Ichchada village under Bhagabanpur gram panchayat of Bhadrak district. Born into a respected family, he dedicated his early years to education, later becoming the Headmaster at Chudakuti Indragovind High School. His career

path then led him to the Odisha Administrative Service and subsequently to the Civil Service (Allied Service) Delhi Cadre of the Government of India. The late Panda's professional trajectory included serving as Joint Director in Odisha-Assam, culminating in his retirement as

Director from Delhi. Throughout his career, he played a pivotal role in shaping the lives of those around him, leaving a lasting impact on the communities he served.

Mahendra Prasad Panda was more than a dedicated officer; he was a family man. At the time of his passing, he

was surrounded by loved ones, including his only son Satyaban Siddharth, daughter-in-law Sanjukta, grandson Sarthak, wife Manjulata, elder daughter Soumya Sanghamitra, and younger daughter Smita Sucharita.

Raised among five brothers, the late Panda

not only educated his younger siblings – Padmanav, Hemendra, Rabindra, and Soumendra – but also contributed to the betterment of his village. He played a crucial role in establishing high schools and fostering positive changes in the community.



NYKS, West Bengal to Organise Kashmiri Youth Exchange Programme in City



Kolkata, (KCN): Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), West Bengal under Union Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports will be organising

the programme will be attended by 120 Kashmiri youths in the age-group of 18 years to 22 years along with the escorts from districts Anantnag, Kupwara, Baramulla, Budgam, Srinagar and Pulwama of Jammu & Kashmir.

December 17, 2023. During the programme, the Kashmiri youths will be provided information and knowledge on national integration, patriotism, nation building, skill development, communal harmony, Indian Constitution, democracy, rights and duties of citizens through various academic sessions and will also provide an opportunity to understand appreciate and compare each other's understandings on socio-cultural, economic as well as environmental situations. This apart, field visits to various places of interest of the city like Science City, BITM, Birla Planetarium and the like, interactive sessions with social workers, CRPF officials and school students have been scheduled to be organised.

Besides, traditional cultural exchange programmes will also be organised between the youths of West Bengal and those visiting from the Kashmir Valley.

Known for his quiet demeanor and simplicity, Mahendra Prasad Panda was a respected figure in both professional and personal spheres. His sudden departure has cast a shadow of sorrow over Delhi and its surrounding regions. Dignitaries from various walks of life have expressed their deep grief over his passing, extending heartfelt condolences to the grieving family.

The legacy of Mahendra Prasad Panda lives on in the hearts of those he touched, and his contributions to education and community development remain an indelible part of his remarkable journey.

Thr 2nd International Conference on 'Environment, Forestry and Sustainable Agriculture' 2023 held at Bengaluru

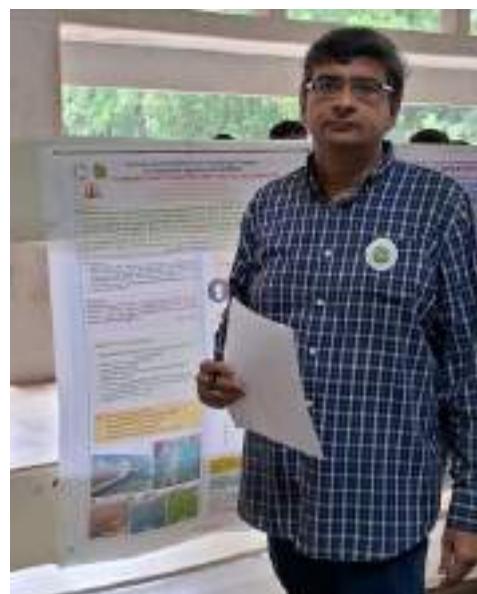
Kolkata, (Saikat Kumar Basu): The 2nd International Conference on 'Environment, Forestry and Sustainable Agriculture' (2nd ICEFSA) was held between November, 23-25, 2023 at Gandhi Krishi Vikas Kendra (GKV), University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Bengaluru, Karnataka. This presigious 3-day International Conference was organized in collaboration between Indian Academy of Science and Research (IASR), Kolkata and GKV, UAS, Bengaluru, in association with the Confederation of Indian Universities (CIU), New Delhi. The conference was attended by over 300 participants including under graduate and post graduate students, research scholars, academics, researchers, scientists, foreign dignitaries and various government and non-government organizational members working in different areas of Environment, Ecology, Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry. The conference was initiated following registration and by singing the National Anthem on November 23rd at the spectacular North Block Auditorium of GKV, UAS, Bengaluru. The welcome address was delivered by Dr. K. C. Narayan swamy, DOE, USAB &

the felicitations of the Honourable Vice Chancellors; and IASR Fellowship Award and Lifetime Award Felicitation. Dr. Saikat Kumar Basu, Executive Research Director, PFS, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada in his speech as the 2nd Guest of Honour highlighted the importance of innovation, cooperation and collaboration among fellow researchers; and laid strong emphasis on the urgent need of multidisciplinary research. This was followed by IASR Award felicitations and speech by the 3rd Guest of Honour, Prof. (Dr.) S. V. Suresha, the Honourable Vice Chancellor, UAS, Bengaluru and Chairman of the 2nd ICEFSA 2023. He mentioned that the collaboration with IASR and CIU has been monumental in organising this prestigious conference. He encouraged the participants to make this conference a grand success through their whole hearted participation; and to learn from National and International experts on various disciplines of Environmental Sciences, Forestry and Agriculture summarizing his speech on the glorious history and tradition of Indian agriculture. The Vote of Thanks was delivered by Dr. Basave Gowda, the Registrar, UAS

and Organizing Secretary of the 2nd ICEFSA 2023. Following lunch Technical Session I was conducted, chaired by Dr. Basave Gowda. Dr. Basu highlighted on the importance of natural pollinators like bees in the long term success of Sustainable Agriculture. This was followed by four plenary talks by Dr. Hanumanthappa, Dr. H. B. Naike (DoE, Keladi Shivappa Nayaka University of Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences, Shivamogga), Dr. M. G. Patil (UAS, Raichur) and Dr. R. A. Balikai (Retired faculty, UAS, Dharwad). On November 24th, three technical sessions ran parallelly before lunch including a poster

lecture session was followed by the Oral and Poster Presentation Award ceremonies for handing medals and certificates to the winners amidst great cheer and enthusiasm. This invaluable conference provided a common platform for researchers across various disciplines and cross disciplines representing Forestry and Silviculture, Environmental and Ecological Sciences, Soil Sciences, Horticulture, Pomology, Apiculture, Plant Breeding and Genetics, Environmental Agriculture, Biostatistics, Agronomy, Agrology, Agricultural Meteorology, Crop Physiology, Plant Pathology, Biochemistry, Microbiology, Molecular Biology, Agricultural Biotechnology, Agricultural Chemistry, Nanotechnology, Zoology, Botany, Entomology, Crop Management, Agriculture Economics to mention only a few handful. States

represented in this international conference were West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Telengana, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Overall, the conference laid a significant emphasis on the importance of Sustainable Agriculture as the future promise for the success of Indian agriculture. Both challenges and opportunities of Sustainable Agriculture was discussed in a comprehensive manner on multiple realms from the local, regional and global perspectives. Dr. Sudip Barat, President of IASR rightly indicated in his concluding remarks that they had a successful interaction and introspection of various strategies, policies, technologies associated in making Sustainable Agriculture a reality in the next two decades across India. Dr. Tanmoy Rudra suggested in his closing remarks that this conference was only a beginning towards the multiple steps that IASR as an organization has been initiating both locally and nationally in collaboration with multiple reliable partners like UAS for making positive changes to the knowledge arena of future Indian agriculture. Dr. Rudra was released the name of the next venue for this international conference as the University of Agricultural Sciences, Thrissur, Kerala in November, 2024.



Urge For More Credit



Bhubaneswar(KCN): Principal Secretary Finance, Vishal Kumar Dev has urged the Bankers to extend adequate credit facilities for developmental and pro-people programs in order to improve growth rate of economy. Principal Secretary Finance Shri Dev said that bankers are needed to play a positive role to accelerate the economic

growth rate of the state in various sectors.

Speaking at the 173rd State Level Bankers' Committee Meeting held at Lok Seva Bhawan here on 12 December, Shri Dev advised bankers to take care in priority sector lending, bankable schemes and district-wise lending rate.

Shri Dev expressed satisfaction that the Credit Deposit (CD)

Ratio of the State has been increased to 81.75 Percent as on 30 September, 2023.

CD Ratio of the State was 81.44 Percent as on 30 June, 2023 and it is seen rising, which is a positive trend, officials admit.

Shri Dev congratulated the bankers for their achievements and advised them to play a positive role in public

welfare schemes.

He urged banks to insist on opening more branches and more ATMs across the State. Gautam Patra, General Manager, UCO Bank and Convener of the State Level Bankers' Committee Meeting delivered the welcome address.

Executive Director UCO Bank and Chairman of State Level Bankers'

Committee Vijay Kumar N. Kamble, Regional Director, Reserve Bank of India, Sharda Prasanna Mohanty, Chief General Manager, State Bank of India, Chandrashekhar Sharma, Chief General Manager, NABARD, Sudhanshu K.K. Mishra graced the occasion.

Principal Secretary Agriculture and Farmers Empowerment, Arabinda Kumar Padhee, Principal Secretary Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Saswat Mishra, Fisheries and Animal Resources Development Principal Secretary S K Vashistha, Principal Secretary, Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Department S K Lohani, Secretary, Mission Shakti, Sujata Rout Karthikeyan, along with other senior officials of the State Government and office bearers of various Banks and Lead Banks were also present and expressed their views on various issues.



Cuttack(KCN): The 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra' was held at Ratapat and Dasharathipur villages of Badamba Block of Cuttack district. The awareness vehicle of the Sankalp Yatra was accorded a rousing welcome by the villagers when it reached the village. On the occasion of The Sankalp Yatra, awareness was created about various major schemes of the Central Government. In particular beneficiaries have been made aware about the various schemes being implemented by the Department of Prime Minister's Housing Scheme, Ujjwala Yojana, Ujala Yojana, PM Kisan, Jan Dhan, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, Suraksha Bima Yojana, Postal Department. The LED screens installed on the awareness vans broadcast awareness short films and video messages of the Prime Minister about various central schemes. The programme was attended by local public representatives and nodal officers of Sankalp Yatra and advised the beneficiaries to take advantage of government schemes. On this occasion, all of them resolved to build a developed India by 2047. Additional Director General, Press Information Office (PIB), New Delhi, Kripashankar Yadav, Public Communication Officer, PIB, Bhubaneswar, Pradeep Kumar Chaudhary and Information Officer Swadhin Shakti Prasad were also present on the occasion. On this occasion, the officials interacted with the beneficiaries and apprised them about this special drive

Two get 20-year rigorous imprisonment for raping minor girl

BARIPADA: Special POCSO court judge of Mayurbhanj district Sumita Jena on Monday sentenced two persons to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) each for raping a 14-year-old girl. The convicts are Keshab Chandra Tiriya (46) of Takudipal village within Jashipur police limits and Asish Digi (28) of Anandpur in Keonjhar. Public prosecutor Abhinna Pattnaik said on February 11, 2017, the two convicts entered the victim's house taking



advantage of her parent's absence. Finding the girl alone, the duo raped her.

On February 13, the victim's mother lodged an FIR in Jashipur

police station against the duo based on which a case was registered under sections 376-D and 506 of the IPC and section 6 of the POCSO Act. Subsequently, police arrested Keshab and Asish. Pattnaik said the court also imposed a fine of Rs 10,000 on each of the convicts. Failure to pay the fine will result in an additional jail term of three months. The court directed the secretary of the district legal services authority to pay a compensation of Rs 4 lakh to the victim.

Unknown disease ruins paddy crop, dashes farmers' hope in Odisha

BARGARH: Farmers of Bargarh district are in dire straits after an unidentified plant disease has affected their standing paddy crops leaving them damaged and pale. The unknown disease was first noticed by farmers of the Attabira, Bhatli and Bheden blocks during mid-April. They reported that the tip of their paddy crops first turned pale after which the entire plant got damaged.

Later farmers of other blocks also complained of their paddy showing similar symptoms. While some reported the matter to the district agriculture office, others sent tweets to the principal secretary of the Agriculture Department, Government of Odisha, Arabinda K Padhee.

"We will incur huge losses as standing paddy grown on large tracts of land are now damaged," alleged farmer leader Ramesh Mahapatra. The crops have symptoms of two to three diseases but farmers are unable to identify the exact cause. The Agriculture Department officials



have collected samples. Large tracts of paddy cultivation have been affected by the disease, farmers said.

"While the officials have assessed the damage of crops on over 300-400 hectare land, in reality, around 2,000-3,000 hectare has been affected," Mahapatra further informed.

Chief district agriculture officer (CDAO), Bargarh, Ashok Kumar Amat said a team from Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) will visit all blocks to further assess the situation. The region

witnessed inclement weather conditions for the last few months, said Amat, adding, the district witnessed sweltering heat and incessant rainfall in succession while some regions faced hailstorms. "While the crops developed Rice Blast and Bacterial Leaf Blight diseases, excessive application of urea on the affected plants further led to Neck Blast Disease," Amat stated.

Official sources informed that while the farmers applied excess



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AMRI Bhubaneswar hosts Cardiac Conclave to showcase latest developments in cardiology



Bhubaneswar: AMRI Hospital, Bhubaneswar, on Saturday hosted the Cardiac Conclave 2023, one of the biggest conferences in Eastern India on cardiology, intervention and cardiac procedures, with a host of enlightening and instructive sessions led by experts. Aimed at spreading awareness and sharing knowledge, with opening avenues for collaboration among medical professionals from the field of cardiology in Odisha, the scientific event was a resounding success, with renowned cardiologists and healthcare professionals presenting on a range of topics related to cardiovascular diseases and their management.

Dr Siddharth Mishra, the

Medical Superintendent at AMRI Bhubaneswar, opened the event and emphasized on the importance of organizing such events to update medical professionals on the advances in the field of cardiology. Dr Mishra elaborated on the excellent clinical success in Cardiac Sciences at AMRI Bhubaneswar and said that the hospital has conducted more than 10,000 Coronary Angiograms (CAG), 5,000 PTCAs, and 1,000 CABG procedures. "In addition, we have also conducted more than 1,500 other cath lab procedures, taking our total cath lab procedures to more than 17,000," he said.

One of the most exciting scientific sessions of the conclave was presented

by Dr J.K. Padhi, Director of Cardiology at AMRI Bhubaneswar, on Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation (TAVI), a minimally invasive procedure that has revolutionized the treatment of aortic stenosis, a common heart valve condition. Another interesting session was presented by Dr Lingaraj Nath, HoD, Cardiology, AMRI Bhubaneswar, on new therapies in lipid management of coronary artery diseases. He shared the latest developments in this area, providing valuable insights into how patient outcomes can be further improved.

Top Interventional Cardiologist, Dr Mahesh Agarwala presented a fascinating case study on unexplained syncope, a

condition where a patient experiences fainting without an apparent cause. His presentation demonstrated the importance of careful diagnosis and management of such cases, which can be life-threatening if left untreated. Dr Dibya Ranjan Behera, Consultant, Cardiac Sciences, AMRI Bhubaneswar, deliberated on recent advancements in interventional cardiology and provided a glimpse into the future of interventional cardiology. Mr Rupak Barua, Group CEO, AMRI Hospitals, said, "Our success in the field of cardiology is a testament to the expertise of our team of doctors and healthcare professionals, as well as

our commitment to providing the best possible care to our patients. We have state-of-the-art facilities and equipment, along with a team of highly trained and experienced staff, who work tirelessly to ensure that our patients receive the best possible treatment and care."

He added that AMRI Bhubaneswar is committed to continue its efforts in providing the best possible care to patients and contribute to the advancement of the field of cardiology through research and innovation. "We look forward to hosting more events like this in the future and contributing to the ongoing efforts to improve cardiovascular health in the community," Mr Barua said.

FUTURE ENGINEERS/MANAGERS SUGGEST INPUTS FOR REDEVELOPMENT OF SAMBALPUR RAILWAY STATION



Sambalpur (KCN): Railway Ministry is planning for major upgradation of Sambalpur Railway Station to make it a world class station. It involves preparation of Master Plans and their implementation in phases to improve the amenities at the stations like improvement of station access, circulating areas, waiting halls, toilets, providing lift/escalators as necessary, kiosks for local products through schemes like 'One Station One Product', better passenger

information systems & display, landscaping, identification of future commercial space etc. The scheme also envisages improvement of building, integrating the station from both sides of the city, multimodal integration, amenities for Divyangans, sustainable and environment friendly Green building solutions, 'Roof Plazas', phasing and feasibility and creation of city centres at the station in the long term. On recent visit of Hon'ble Union Minister

of Education, Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Govt. of India, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan and Hon'ble Minister of Railways, Communications, Electronics & Information Technology, Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw announced that participation of the local reputed institutions (Students of Veer Surendra Sai University of Technology (VSSUT), Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Sambalpur) for the redevelopment design of VSSUT & IIM participated in the meeting. Detailed

Aries Agro Limited Empowers Kashmiri Apple Farmers with Innovative Training Programme At Srinagar

Srinagar (Assif Malik): Aries Agro Limited, a 54 year old leading Indian agri-inputs company, recently organized a comprehensive training program specifically tailored for apple farmers. The event aimed to equip farmers with essential technical knowledge about micronutrients and the optimal usage of high-quality Aries range of fertilizers for enhancing apple yield and quality.

The training program, attended by over 100 progressive farmers and retailers, focused on imparting crucial insights into the significance of micronutrients in apple cultivation. Aries Agro Limited launched for Kashmiri apple growers the HD range of NPK fertilizers, Orgaboost (Multi-Biostimulant) and Hortistar (Multi-nutrient specialty grade for Horticulture), specially formulated to address the unique needs of Kashmiri farmers and their apple orchards.

One of the highlights of



program and innovative products. The introduction of the HD range of NPK, Orgaboost, and Hortistar, along with our state-of-the-art Soil Testing Machine, reflects our dedication to providing farmers with the latest advancements in agriculture."

Aries Agro Limited remains at the forefront of agricultural innovation, continually striving to enhance productivity and sustainability in farming practices. The company believes that by empowering farmers with knowledge and advanced technologies, it can contribute to the overall growth and well-being of the agricultural community.



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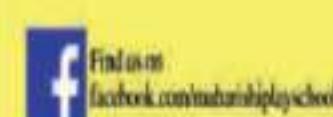
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Shamsi, Hendricks architects of South Africa's 1-0 lead

New Delhi: Put in to bat on a pitch that was under covers for a while, India put on 180/7 on the board, thanks to fifties from Suryakumar Yadav and Rinku Singh, before rain arrived with three balls left in the innings. South Africa's adjusted target of 152 in 15 overs was driven by Reeza Hendricks' 27-ball 49 and achieved with seven balls to spare, but wasn't without its fair share of drama as India found ways to overcome conditions consistently against them. India openers fall early. With Ruturaj Gaikwad unavailable due to illness, India were saved from a difficult choice at the top of the order but the organically assembled opening pair of Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shubman Gill totalled zero runs between them.



Jaiswal was out off the third ball of the innings, trying to back-cut a delivery from Marco Jansen and offering a sharp chance to David Miller at point; Gill was trapped on the back leg by Lizaad Williams, leaving India wobbling at 6/2 after two overs. Suryakumar at his T20 best Gerald Coetzee to Suryakumar Yadav: that was the contest. First ball, a yorker. Second ball, a drive-and-a-miss outside off-stump. Third ball, a cover drive for a boundary. Another four and six followed later in the over as India captain Suryakumar added 15 runs in the third over and then 13 runs in the next to help India repair their PowerPlay and finish at 59/3. This 29-ball fifty was Suryakumar's fourth in the last five matches

and also delivered him to 2000 runs in the T20I format, the second-fastest batter to that milestone in terms of innings taken. Rinku Singh breaks free. It doesn't matter if it's the IPL or the Asian Games or a home series against Australia or an overseas

tour of South Africa, Rinku Singh scores everywhere. This time, he walked out to bat inside the PowerPlay after Tilak Varma's dismissal and got off the mark with a classic straight drive first-ball. He then let the in-form Suryakumar take the

19th over for back-to-back sixes. His 30-ball fifty was his first in T20Is, doing his World Cup selection chances no harm. Shamsi shines Gerald Coetzee, who had dismissed Tilak Varma and then added the wickets of Ravindra Jadeja and Arshdeep Singh, returned figures of 3 for 32 but the pick of the bowlers was Tabraiz Shamsi who finished with 1 for 18, the wicket being that of hard-hitting Suryakumar. The left-arm legspinner was named Player of the Match for his frugal bowling figures in a T20I match where the average scoring rate was above 10. South Africa off to a flier

Mohammed Siraj conceded three

boundaries in the first over of the run-chase but two of them were off outside edges. With every passing minute, the South Africa batters looked more and more comfortable at the crease, not in the least because the ball got wet on a moist outfield in the aftermath of the rain delay. The openers set the side on course to 67/1 in the five PowerPlay overs (reduced from six in a rain-affected match) and it took a sharp Tilak Varma throw to end an explosive first-wicket stand of 42. But the damage had been done. India strike back with wickets... ... but the bowlers had left themselves with too little wiggle room towards the end. South Africa were going

comfortably at 96/1 when Mukesh Kumar banged one short and had the in-form Markram top-edging to the deep. Reeza Hendricks, going hammer at tongs at the other end, was caught off the bowling of Kuldeep Yadav in the next over but it was when Heinrich Klaasen was caught off the bowling of Mohammed Siraj that India started to believe. The moment witnessed South Africa with two new batters at the crease, with 44 runs still needed. But David Miller struck crucial runs only for Tristan Stubbs and Andile Phehlukwayo to finish things off.

Brief Scores: India 180/7 in 19.3 overs (Rinku 68*, Suryakumar 56; Coetzee 3-32) lost to South Africa 154/5 in 13.5 overs (Hendricks 49; Mukesh 2-34) by 5 wickets (DLS)

Uday Saharan to captain India at the U19 World Cup

New Delhi: Uday Saharan will lead the India squad at the Under 19 Men's World Cup in South Africa early next year, the BCCI have announced. Saharan, a middle-order batter who has played U14, U16 and U19 cricket for Punjab and who was the highest run-scorer at the U19 One-Day Challenger Trophy, is currently also the India captain at the ongoing U19 Asia Cup in Dubai.

The 15-player squad, which will also participate in the tri-series featuring England and hosts South Africa in the lead-up to the World Cup, is the same that's participating in the U19 Asia Cup.

India U19 Squad: Arshin Kulkarni, Adarsh Singh, Rudra Mayur Patel, Sachin Dhas, Priyanshu Moliya, Musheer Khan,



Uday Saharan (C), Aravelly Avanish Rao (WK), Saumy Kumar Pandey (VC), Murugan Abhishek, Innesh Mahajan (WK), Dhanush Gowda, Aaranya Shukla, Raj Limbani, Naman Tiwari Adarsh Singh, the left-hand batter from Uttar Pradesh, and Arshin Kulkarni, the right-hand batter from Maharashtra, have been India's steady

opening combination in the three Asia Cup games so far, and the board has placed faith in the duo once again. Kulkarni is among the top-three run-getters in the Asia Cup as of 12 December 2023. Gujarat's Rudra Mayur Patel bats at No.3 whereas captain Saharan, who scored 60 against Pakistan recently albeit in a losing cause, bats two-down. Aravelly Avanish Rao, the left-hand batter and keeper from Hyderabad, is likely to take the gloves, with Himachal Pradesh's Innesh Mahajan his back-up in the squad. Sachin Dhas from Maharashtra is one of the finishers in the squad. Left-arm pacer Naman Tiwari (Uttar Pradesh), right-arm pacer Raj Limbani (Baroda), left-arm spinner and vice-captain Saumy Kumar Pandey (Madhya Pradesh), offspinner Murugan Abhishek (Hyderabad) are among the frontline bowlers in the squad. Limbani is the top wicket-taker in the Asia Cup as of 12 December 2023. Kulkarni (right arm pacer), Saharan (offspinner) and Mumbai's Musheer Khan (left-arm

orthodox) who's also the brother of Sarfaraz Khan can also chip in with a few overs. Right-arm pacer Aaranya Shukla (Punjab), middle-order right-hand batter Priyanshu Moliya (Baroda) and right-arm pacer Dhanush Gowda (Karnataka) are the other members in the squad. Prem Devkar, Ansh Gosai and Md. Amaan are the designated traveling standbys for the tri-series whereas Digvijay Patil, Jayanth Goyat, P. Vignesh, Kiran Chormale have been named as the back-up players by the BCCI. India kick off their U19 World Cup campaign on 20 January 2024 against Bangladesh in Bloemfontein. The tri-series leading up to it starts 29 December 2023, with the final with the final scheduled on 10 January 2024.

Russell sizzles on comeback to give WI early lead



The second half of the innings was completely in contrast to the first one. Buttler had slowed down and mistimed a pull to get caught for 39 and Harry Brook failed to fire after getting outfoxed by a slower ball from Jason Holder. And if that wasn't enough,

England also lost Ben Duckett at a crucial juncture, handing over the finishing duties to Sam Curran and Liam Livingstone. The odd boundary did arrive and Livingstone threatened to give England a late push towards 200 after smashing Holder for

back-to-back sixes but in a stunning collapse, England went from 165/5 to 171 all out. Russell removed the dangerous Livingstone in his final over and added the wicket of Rehan Ahmed before Joseph made amends with two more wickets to give West Indies complete momentum heading into the innings break.

West Indies tee off in the powerplay as well. If England made 13 in the first over to kickstart proceedings, West Indies went one step ahead as Brandon King took on Curran for two sixes and a four which was then followed by a massive six from Kyle Mayers off Will Jacks. While King's rampage came to a halt after a stunning catch from Duckett, the hosts still made 59 in the first six overs. Mayers and Shai Hope then combined to smash Rehan for three sixes immediately after the PP to take control of the chase. The stutter in the middle. The chase followed a similar pattern to that of the first innings after

the rolicking start. Mayers mistimed one against Adil Rashid to depart for 35 and Rehan made a strong comeback with the wicket of Pooran, Rashid was going through an excellent spell and accounted for the big wicket of Shimron Hetmyer as well which was also incidentally his 100th wicket in this format in his 100th game. Thankfully for the hosts, the rain arrived in the following over causing a break in England's momentum. WI prevail with ease. West Indies were six runs ahead via DLS at that stage but play did resume around 40 minutes after the players left the field. Rehan then caused a huge dent post-resumption with a 4 wickets

nightmarish start as he first conceded a four and a six to Salt before Buttler punished a free-hit for a boundary. And if that wasn't enough, a slower ball down leg wasn't collected by Nicholas Pooran as West Indies conceded five wides to eventually make it a 26-run over.

Was the start backed up? The first ball after the powerplay fetched a wicket as the dangerous Salt departed for a 20-ball 40, giving Russell his first wicket. Joseph continued to leak runs by conceding 17 in his second but that over also saw him get rid of Will Jacks, who had just hammered successive sixes. At the halfway mark, England 112 on the board and were well on their way to going past 200. The turnaround