

Opposition seeks JPC probe on Adani stock rout; force adjournments in LS, RS

New Delhi(KCN): Opposition parties Thursday sought a debate in Parliament and a probe by a joint committee into the fraud-allegation-triggered rout in Adani group company stocks, forcing adjournment of proceedings in both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha in the pre-lunch session.

The Congress, Shiv Sena, the Left, Aam Aadmi Party and other opposition parties tried to raise in both Houses of Parliament the issue of allegations levelled

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Dr. Dillip Kumar Parida took charge as Medical Superintendent of AIIMS Bhubaneswar

Bhubaneswar(KCN): Medical Superintendent of the national AIIMS Bhubaneswar



Radiation Oncology Department HoD Prof (Dr) Dillip Kumar Parida has been assigned additional Charge of

institute. Dr. Parida will be in-charge of the post till filling up of the post on regular basis or till further order.

AIIMS Bhubaneswar Executive Director Prof (Dr) Ashutosh Biswas congratulated Dr. Parida for the new assignment.

It may be noted here that Dr. Parida is having a vast experience in the field of medical service and was one of the founding faculties of AIIMS Bhubaneswar. Earlier, he has held many important posts at AIIMS Bhubaneswar including Medical Superintendent(I/c) in the year 2016-17.

Dr. Parida has worked in prestigious institutes like AIIMS Delhi and NEIGRIHMS, Shillong.

Budget Session from 21 Feb

Bhubaneswar(KCN) : The Budget session of Odisha Legislative Assembly (OLA) will start from 21 February and continue till 6 April. The Assembly Secretariat has notified the schedule for the Budget Session on Thursday. The session will start with the address of Governor Ganeshi Lal on 21 February and motion of thanks on Governor's speech will be moved on the same day. Further discussion on the Governor's address will be held on 22-23 February.

Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari will present the budget for the year 2023-24 on 24 February, while general discussion on the budget will start from 27 February. The Appropriation Bill will be laid before the House on 31 March.

There will be a gap from 2 March to 9 March during the session. There will be no business on all second & fourth Saturdays and Sundays.

Besides, the Assembly will not conduct any business on 30 March (Shree Ram Navami) and 1 April (Utkal Diwas).

According to sources, the State Government has decided to a full-flagged annual budget with a hike of about 15-20 per cent than the previous year's budget.

The size of the State Annual Budget for 2023-

24 is likely to touch Rs.2.40 Lakh Crore mark.

According to financial analysts as a percentage of GSDP, the size of the Budget has remained within the range of 20% - 25% with minor inter-year variations.

As per the latest IMF projection, the world economy is expected to grow 3.2% this year, before slowing further to a 2.7% in 2023.

In the case of Odisha, the economy is projected to register higher growth of about 8% in 2022-23 as well as in 2023-24.

Analysts pointed out that the Budget formulation is now based on the micro-economic outlook and the fiscal framework envisaged in the fiscal responsibility legislation with an objective to counter the deficit bias and maintain a sustainable fiscal position.

It also takes into account implications of key public policy decisions and factors in the risks to public finances. Thus, maintenance of fiscal sustainability is the primary concern of the budget formulation process.

The debt stock is expected to remain well within the FRBM prescribed limit of 25% of GSDP in the medium term. Odisha's overall fiscal outlook remains stable over the medium term, officials say.



Budget: Naveen voices concern over MGNREGS cut

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Wednesday voiced concern over some aspects of the Union budget 2023 like the drastic cut in allocation for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and national food security programme while appreciating some good features.

The good steps are increased capital investment, support to drinking water initiatives and increasing rural housing, the chief minister said in his reaction to the budget and added that

these will accelerate growth while having a social impact in rural areas.

Welcoming Prime Minister Narendra Modi's thrust on mil-



lets, the chief minister said that the 'Odisha Millet Mission' is a pioneering initiative in the country. "I am happy that millets have been given importance in the budget," he

stated. Naveen voices concern over MGNREGS cut

Appreciating the focus on new world technologies like artificial intelligence

and the internet of things, the chief minister said these are some of the good aspects of the budget. The focus on primitive tribal groups is also a welcome step. He, however, said the

drastic reduction of funds for

MGNREGS and the food security budget along with the slashing of procurement will hit the poor people as well as farmers. About Rs 80,000 crore was spent on procurement in 2021-22 while only about Rs 60,000 crore is kept in this budget. This will cause serious problems in selling crops at minimum support prices. While in 2021-22 Rs 2 lakh crore was spent under the national food security programme, in this budget only Rs 1.37

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Naba Kishore Das' PSO suspended, 2 more cops transferred

SAMBALPUR(KCN): Odisha police suspended the personal security officer (PSO) of slain minister Naba Kishore

were transferred. ASI Gopal Das, the cop who shot the minister with his service revolver, was posted in the police outpost.

On Tuesday, the state government transferred Jharsuguda SP Rahul Jain and SDPO Gupteswar Bhoi. Meanwhile, the

IPC and section 27 of the Arms Act.

"The Crime Branch had requested the court for seven-day remand but I raised an objection. Following the hearing, the court granted a remand for four days from Wednesday. Our bail plea was also rejected. We do not have any evidence of the accused being mentally ill. If that is ascertained in the reports, we will again apply for bail. As of now, there is no such ground," Agarwal added.

Official sources said following his remand, the accused cop was taken to OSAP Battalion in Jharsuguda. His medical examination was conducted there. On the day, new Jharsuguda SP Smit P Parmar took charge in the afternoon.



Das and transferred two more cops of Jharsuguda on Wednesday. The minister's PSO Mitrabhanu Deo was placed under suspension for dereliction of duty. Similarly, Brajrajnagar IIC Pradyumna Kumar Swain and in-charge of Gandhi Chowk police outpost SI Sashibhusan Podha

IIC Swain and SI Podha have been transferred to Sambalpur and Subarnapur police headquarters respectively. Swain had sustained a bullet injury while trying to overpower the accused ASI after he fired at the minister. On the day of the incident, the IIC also lodged an FIR against Gopal

JMFC court of Brajrajnagar granted the Crime Branch four days' remand of the accused ASI. Remand advocate Harishankar Agrawal said the case was registered against the accused under section 307 of the IPC only. But he was forwarded with the additional imposition of section 302 of the

29 blocks likely to be covered under ABP in Odisha

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): As many as 29 blocks of the state are likely to be covered under the aspirational block programme launched by the Centre recently.

Presenting the full-fledged budget of the Modi government before the next general elections, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said 500 blocks of the country have been covered under the programme to improve their socio-economic status.

In her budget speech, Sitharaman said, "Building on the success of the aspirational district's programme, the government has recently launched the aspirational blocks programme

covering 500 blocks for saturation of essential government services across multiple domains such as health, nutrition, education, agriculture, water resources, financial inclusion, skill development, and basic infrastructure."

Official sources said the number of included blocks in Odisha may increase if the necessity



arises. Launched in 2018, of the 112 districts in the country, 10 from Odisha - Balangir, Dhenkanal, Gajapati, Kandhamal, Kalahandi, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Nuapada and Rayagada - were covered under the aspirational district

CONTINUED ON: P-7

PM undertook 21 trips abroad since 2019, over Rs 22.76 cr spent on these visits: Govt

NEW DELHI(KCN): Prime Minister abroad, the PM undertook 21 trips since Narendra Modi has undertaken 21 trips abroad since 2019 and over Rs 22.76 crore was spent on these visits, the government said on Thursday.

The President undertook eight trips abroad and an amount of over Rs 6.24 crore was spent on these trips since 2019, Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan said in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha.

The government incurred an amount of Rs 6,24,31,424 for President's visits, an amount of Rs 22,76,76,934 for prime minister's visits and an amount of Rs 20,87,01,475 for External Affairs Minister's visits since 2019, according to the minister.

While the President undertook eight visits

2019. During this period, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar undertook 86 visits abroad.

Since 2019, the prime minister has visited Japan thrice, and the US and the UAE twice. Among the president's visits, seven out of the eight trips were undertaken by Ram Nath Kovind, while current president Droupadi Murmu visited the UK last September.



VD College Turns Varsity Global tag for MUKTA

Bhubaneswar(KCN): Ahead of his visit to Vikram Dev Autonomous College,

to upgrade the autonomous college into an university. The Chief Minister

Odisha. It has also fulfilled the long-standing demand of intellectuals, and students of undivided Koraput district, Patnaik said.

Following the approval of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to a proposal to grant university status to the famous Vikram Dev Autonomous College, the Higher Education Department has issued an official notification in this regard.

"In exercise of powers conferred by subsection (1) and (2) of Section 32 of the Odisha University Act, 1989 (Odisha Act 5 of 1989), the State Government do hereby alter the territorial jurisdiction of Berhampur University by establishing a new Uni-

versity called the Vikram Dev University at, Jeypore, Koraput, Odisha with effect from the date of notification in the Odisha Gazette", read the notification. The college, which is completing 75 years, has played a significant role in the field of higher education in the undivided Koraput district imparting teaching to BBA, BCA and B Ed students. The college has 16 Post-graduate, 17 undergraduate programmes.

At present all colleges of undivided Koraput district are affiliated to Berhampur university. After the new University thousands of students of Koraput, Rayagada, Nabarangpur and Malkangiri districts would be benefitted.

Bhubaneswar(KCN): In a Global recognition for "MUKTA" – the Urban Wage Employment Scheme under the 5T Initiative of Sri Naveen Patnaik's Government, the Housing & Urban Development Department of the Government of Odisha is selected as one of the winners of the 2021-2022 World Resources Institute (WRI), Ross Centre Prize for Cities. The winners were announced at Prize for Cities event held at the Ford Foundation Centre for Social Justice in New York City on February 1, (yesterday).

Principal Secretary, Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) Department G. Mathi Vathanan received the International Award in the special event organized in New York. Sarada Prasad Panda, Joint Secretary, H&UD Department, has accompanied the Principal Secretary. This award, administered by an International Jury, selected "MUKTA" as a winner through a competitive process from amongst 260 applications from 155 cities in 65 countries.

The Prize for Cities is WRI's Urban Transformation Award recognizing the leaders creating more sustainable and inclusive cities worldwide. The award acknowledged MUKTA's innovative approach to responding to uncertainty, disruption and crisis by creating large-scale jobs for the urban poor, informal and migrant laborers by engaging them in development works as a mechanism for cities to live and thrive in turbulent times. Till date, 7 lakh urban poor and migrant workers across Odisha's 114 cities have been engaged in 22,500 community-level development works worth Rs. 208 crores, which includes paved roads, drains, rainwater harvest-

ing, community centres, plantation, water bodies rejuvenation and public space development.

Besides, 5,368 Mission Shakti Groups and 438 slum dwellers associations have also been engaged as implementation partners under the ambitious Scheme of Odisha Government.

MUKTA scheme is lauded for the swift re-



Jeypore, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Thursday approved the proposal

hoped that it will be a milestone in the field of higher education in South

Odisha's budget session of assembly from February 21, annual budget on February 24

BHUBANESWAR (KCN): The budget session of the assembly will commence on February 21. The annual budget for 2023-24 will be placed in the house on February 24 by Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari.

According to a notification issued by the parliamentary affairs department, the session will begin with Governor Ganeshi Lal's address on February

21. Discussion on Governor's address will be held for two

have 27 business days and 18 meeting days.

As per the schedule,



days on February 22 and 23.

The session is scheduled to conclude on April 6. The session will

the budget discussion will be held on February 27, 28 and March 1. The reports of department-related standing

committees will be presented on March 10. The appropriation bill on the budget for the year 2023-24 will be tabled on March 31. The private member's business (bills and resolutions) will be presented on April 4 and 6.

The first phase of the assembly will be held from February 21 to March 1 while the second phase will be held from March 10 to April 6.

Parliamentary delegation from Zambia colls on the president

New Delhi (KCN): A Parliamentary Delegation from Zambia led by H.E. Ms Nelly Butete Kashumba Mutti called on President of In-

dia share a strong development partnership including India's four lines of credit, which are being utilized in important fields such as transport, hydro-power, and health. She urged to work to strengthen this partnership, for the prosperity and development of India and Zambia.

The President noted that past parliamentary visits have strength-

dia, Smt Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan today (February 2, 2023).

Welcoming the delegation to Rashtrapati Bhavan, the President said that India and Zambia enjoy strong and cordial relations. The leaders of the Zambian freedom struggle, like the founding father and first President of Zambia, Dr Kenneth Kaunda drew inspiration from the Indian freedom struggle, particularly Mahatma Gandhi.

The President said that in the area of economic cooperation, our bilateral trade has been growing steadily. India is one of the leading investors in Zambia. She said that it is a matter of satisfaction that India and Zam-



ened relations between the Parliaments of India and Zambia. She appreciated the efforts of the National Assembly of Zambia to form an India-Zambia Parliamentary Friendship Group. She was confident that this visit would make these bonds even stronger.

BJD blasts Ayushman plan

Bhubaneswar(KCN) : Claiming that State Government's Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) is much better than Centre's Ayushman Bharat Yojana, the Governing BJD on Thursday slammed the BJP for demanding implementation of the Central scheme in Odisha.

Addressing a press meet here, BJD spokesperson Shreemayee Mishra said that on a regular basis, Odisha BJP has been harping on how Ayushman

On the other hand, the BJD Government led by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik spends about Rs. 6000 crores under the BSKY which is on average about Rs. 200 crores per district per year in Odisha. It means, Rs 200 crores of Ayushman by Centre per year would only cover one district of Odisha. Where would the rest 29 districts of Odisha go? Searching for the empty promises and false narrative of Odisha BJP on Ayushman? she asked.

The BJD leader further asked, "What relief will the people of Odisha get? Will Odisha BJP leaders have the courage to reply? They won't, and they can't."

The CM is committed to provide comprehensive healthcare to the people of Odisha as compared to the false propoganda of the Odisha BJP, she added.

Another BJD leader Gautam Buddha Das said a woman can only avail treatment for 5 lakhs under Ayushman Bharat while she can avail it upto Rs.10 lakhs under State scheme.

It seems Odisha BJP leaders want Odisha's Nari-Shakti not to benefit from Rs.10 lakhs of BSKY rather half of it at 5 lakhs in Ayushman, just for their selfish political interests, he said. Giving another example of organ transplants, under Ayushman Bharat, a patient requiring organ transplant cannot exceed the limit of Rs 5 lakhs but in BSKY, the beneficiary can benefit far exceeding the Rs 5 lakhs limit.

"Even after this if the Odisha BJP leaders haven't been able to understand the difference between Ayushman and BSKY and the benefits of BSKY far superseding Ayushman, we will be very happy to explain to them till they are able to understand," said Mishra.

The BJD leaders urged the Odisha BJP leaders to stop misleading people.



Bharat Yojana formally known as Pradhan Mantri Jan Ayushman Yojana is such a better program than the BSKY.

However, yesterday's Union Budget has exposed the Odisha BJP's false propoganda and deception on Ayushman Yojana, she said.

Under the Outlay on major schemes in the Union Budget 2023-24 under serial no. 7 of Core Schemes, the Centre has provided only Rs.7200 crores towards Ayushman Bharat yojana.

"When we take into consideration India's 28 States and 8 Union Territories, per State/UT it comes to around Rs. 200 crores per annum for Ayushman Yojana," Shrimati Mishra said.

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Delhi High Court refuses to stay release of Hansal Mehta's film 'Faraaz'

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court has refused to stay the release of Hansal Mehta's film, "Faraaz", which is scheduled to be released at theatres on Friday and said to be based on a 2016 terrorist attack in

appellants' counsel to obtain further instructions in the matter and listed it for hearing on February 22. The court observed that the counsel for the filmmakers has categorically stated that pictures or im-

The division bench was hearing an appeal filed by the two women against the single-judge order declining to stay the screening of the film. Before the single judge, the two women had sought to

on the film's release. The judge had observed that the right to privacy of the deceased was not inheritable by their mothers and the "disclaimer" in the film prima facie took care of their concerns.



Dhaka. The court made it clear on Thursday that the makers shall scrupulously adhere to a disclaimer that says the film is inspired by the attack and the elements contained in it are purely a work of fiction. The court was hearing a plea moved by the family members of the terror attack victims. The mothers of two victims of the Holey Artisan terrorist attack in Bangladesh had objected to the release of the film on February 3 on the ground of invasion of privacy. A bench of justices Siddharth Mridul and Talwant Singh granted time to the

ages relating to the appellants' daughters do not feature in the movie. As the appellants' counsel sought the court's direction to the filmmakers to shorten the disclaimer, the division bench said it was in full agreement with the view of a single-judge bench on the long disclaimer. "You want some editorial control over the film. Sorry, we cannot help you," it said, adding, "We see nothing unfounded with this disclaimer." The filmmakers' counsel submitted that the film is scheduled to be released on Friday, prints have been distributed and tickets have been sold.

restrain the film's release on the ground that it might depict their daughters in a "bad light", which would not only make them revisit their trauma, but also violate the right to privacy of the deceased and cause defamation. Their counsel had told the court that the filmmakers refused to show the movie to the family members of the two victims and contrary to their stand before the single judge, the film showed the images of their deceased daughters when it was screened in London. In October last year, the single-judge bench dismissed the women's plea seeking an interim stay

Seeking an interim stay on the film's release, the appellants had submitted that there was a reasonable apprehension that the movie was made to show Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain as a "protagonist" or something of the attack" and such a depiction would be completely false. The filmmakers had stated that the incident was extensively covered by the global media and there was material available in the public domain that revealed intricate details of the attack, including the identities of the victims, and the film is a work of fiction that has depicted the attack with utmost sensitivity.

'Pathaan' raises Rs 667 crore on Day 8 in gross worldwide earnings

MUMBAI: Star-studded action spectacle "Pathaan" has earned Rs 667 crore gross worldwide in

amassed Rs 348.50 (Hindi - Rs 336 crore, dubbed - Rs 12.50 crore) in its nett India collection



eight days, said production house Yash Raj Films (YRF) on Thursday.

Directed by Siddharth Anand, the globetrotting espionage thriller was released globally in Hindi with dubbed versions in Tamil and Telugu on January 25.

It stars Shah Rukh Khan, John Abraham and Deepika Padukone. According to YRF, on its eighth day, "Pathaan" registered Rs 18.25 crore nett in India (Hindi - Rs 17.50 crore, all dubbed versions - Rs 0.75 crore).

'Pathaan' movie review: A sprightly, entertaining comeback from SRK Since its release, the movie has

with Rs 250 crore in overseas territories alone.

Also featuring Dimple Kapadia and Ashutosh Rana, the blockbuster film follows Shah Rukh's Pathaan, an Indian intelligence agent, who resurfaces to thwart a terror attack planned by mercenary group Outfit X, led by Jim (John) on the Indian capital.

"Pathaan" is Shah Rukh's first big screen release as a lead in over four years after "Zero" (2018).

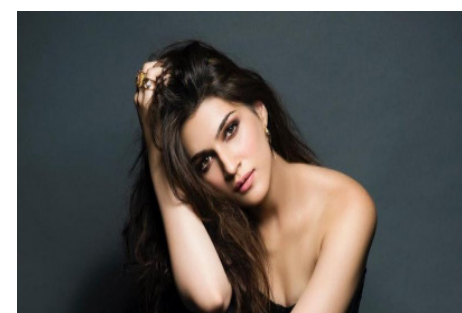
It is the fourth movie in producer Aditya Chopra's spy universe, following Salman Khan's "Ek Tha Tiger" and "Tiger Zinda Hai", and "War", featuring Hrithik Roshan.

Hope 'Adipurush' gets its due: Kriti Sanon

MUMBAI: Bollywood star Kriti Sanon says she is 'extremely proud' of 'Adipurush', the big screen adaptation of the Ramayana.

Fronted by "Baahubali" star Prabhas, who features in the title role as Lord Ram, the multilingual period saga sees Saif Ali Khan in the role of Lankesh and Sanon as Sita.

"It is a film that the entire team is extremely proud of. I hope and pray that people will also equally be proud of it. It is something that is so important to all of us. It is just not a film for us, it is way more than that. I hope it gets its due. I have a feeling it will," Sanon told PTI in an interview.



There was some controversy over the depiction of Ravana in the film after the makers

launched the teaser in October last year. The film was earlier scheduled to arrive in theatres on January 12 but the release date has now been shifted to June 16.

It is directed by Om Raut and produced by Bhushan Kumar-led T-Series.

The "Mimi" star, who did not get to see Ramanand Sagar's "Ramayana" while growing up, hopes the film appeals to the younger generation.

"It is important to make these stories. It is educational for kids. I feel if I had not seen it then, today's children would also have not seen it," she said.

"I feel visual memory is way stronger than anything else. The best way to make kids know (this) story is to have it imprinted in their minds, it is important to watch it. If you are getting it out now after so many years, that same story also needs to relate to the audience it is catering to."

Up next for Sanon is action-drama 'Shehzada' opposite Kartik Aaryan. The film is a remake of a 2020 Telugu blockbuster 'Ala Vaikunthapurramuloo', which featured Allu Arjun and Pooja Hegde.

The Hindi movie, directed by Rohit Dhawan, will release theatrically on February 17. She will be reteaming with her 'Heropanti' co-star Tiger Shroff for a futuristic action film 'Ganapath'.

The Vikas Bahl directorial will arrive in cinemas this year. Sanon is also excited to be collaborating with Shahid Kapoor for a movie, to be backed by Maddock Films and to be working with stalwarts like Kareena Kapoor Khan and Tabu on 'The Crew'.

Sanjay Dutt joins Thalapathy Vijay in Lokesh Kanagaraj's untitled feature film

MUMBAI: Bollywood star Sanjay Dutt is set to share screen space with Tamil superstar Thalapathy Vijay in filmmaker

film and I am thrilled to start this journey," Dutt, 63, said in a statement.

The Munna Bhai actor made his



Lokesh Kanagaraj's next feature film.

The new Tamil project, currently called Thalapathy 67, marks a reunion between Vijay and Kanagaraj after the 2021 blockbuster Master.

Production banner 7 Screen Studio shared the news of Dutt joining the cast of the film, which will be the Bollywood star's first Tamil movie.

"We feel esteemed to welcome @duttсанjay sir to Tamil Cinema and we are happy to announce that he is a part of #Thalapathy67" the studio tweeted.

"When I heard the one-liner of Thalapathy 67, I knew in that exact moment I had to be part of the

debut in Kannada cinema with last year's Yash-starrer KGF: Chapter 2.

Anirudh Ravichander, who earlier gave music for Vijay's Kaththi, Master and Beast, is the composer of Thalapathy 67.

The project, which started shooting earlier this month, is produced by S S Lalit Kumar and co-produced by Jagadish Palanisamy.

The plot details of the movie have been kept under wraps.

However, there are speculations that the movie is part of Kanagaraj's 'Lokesh Cinematic Universe', which also includes Karthi-led Kaithi and Vikram, headlined by cinema veteran Kamal Haasan.

Letter to Editor

Dear Editor

India is a highly populous country with deep encroachment into forested areas. The recent highly monitored and media hyped reintroduction of the African cheetahs to Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh, has created great enthusiasm around the globe for more such reintroduction programs in different parts of the world. The social media has been loaded with several posts asking for the introduction of spotted hyena from Africa into Indian wilderness. Hyena breeding rates are high and they would not get enough prey if they establish themselves successfully. The result would be an inevitable human/animal conflict that would prove detrimental for the animals as well as the local populations. Spotted hyenas hunt in groups, a strategy not faced by herbivores in their natural ecosystem. They are adopted to predation by lions, tigers and leopards and wild dogs. Striped hyenas present in the ecosystem are mostly scavengers like foxes and jackals. They hunt smaller preys and feed upon other animal carcasses. Strategic group hunting by aggressive spotted hyenas would lead to negative impacts on the already dwindling herbivore populations. Furthermore, other than increased predation pressure, there will be intense competition among the major predators resulting in catastrophic changes to the ecosystem. Nature selected spotted hyenas to become extinct and it would be a mistake to introduce them into the Indian wilderness without looking into the pros and cons. Sometimes our best intentions ran into disaster unless we do our homework and calculations cautiously looking at future ecological and environmental impacts!

Thanking you
Sincerely yours

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Budget will complement India's Growth Story

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented her fifth straight budget viz the last the full budget of Modi 2.0 govt before the next parliamentary elections in 2024. She has rightly said that the Indian economy is on the right path and heading towards a bright future.



Vinod Chandrashekhar Dixit

We all are aware that the last three years were challenging for the Indian economy. FM has elaborated on the key areas that the government has identified to focus on during the financial year 2023-24. Covid dealt a heavy blow to India's large informal economy resulting in massive job and income losses. India is currently the fastest-growing large economy in the world.

The Budget mainly focusses on four major points: empowering women, tourism, helping "vishwakarma" (artisans) and green growth. The government with its 7-priorities and a greater focus on Financial Sector and infrastructure and Investment have stepped in the right direction. It is not just a budget, but also a vision document of the 'Amrit Kaal' of futuristic India. The Budget is an outstanding as it is disciplined, growth-oriented, inclusive and sustainable.

It is nice that the Finance Minister has made a big announcement for the taxpayers. Now in the new tax regime, no tax will have to be paid on annual income up to Rs 7 lakh. This will provide relief to new entrants in the job market, many of whose salaries would be well within this limit. The new taxation regime has now got greater incentives, and attractions so that people can unhesitatingly move from the old to the new. There is no doubt that the budget is an inclusive and futuristic, keeping in mind the empowerment of job professionals, youth, women and farmers as distinctive focus has been laid on infrastructure development, health, employment generation, housing, social welfare, farmers welfare, higher education, innovation and research. Focus on overall infrastructure development and on Tier 2 and 3 cities will be key to overall economic development. The emphasis on core infrastructure, including increased funding for railways and clean energy, as well as the government's ambitious plans for the agricultural sector, will help to improve rural incomes. States are also being incentivised

to spend more on infrastructure. Rs 2.40 lakh crore has been allocated for Indian Railways, which is the highest it has ever been.

As the budget has a vision for growth and development it will give benefit to the people in villages, women, rich or poor. The budget

towards the government's Housing for All mission.

One would have observed that since taking office in 2014, PM Modi has ramped up capital spending including on roads and energy, while pursuing investors through lower tax rates and labour reforms, and offering subsidies to poor households to clinch their political support. It is also



has strongly focused on education to make up for the learning losses incurred during COVID-19. The focus on job creation and skilling in this budget is a step in the right direction to completely rebrand India. The government's decision to remove tax-free status in insurance policies can potentially have a second-order impact on salaried individuals

India has made rapid strides in infrastructure development in recent years. Projects like Bharatmala, 'Sagarmala' and 'PM Gati Sakti' are transforming the economy's infrastructure. The 66% increase in the allocation to Prime Minister Awaas Yojana to Rs 79,000 crores is a sure boost for affordable housing. It is another step

encouraging that the budget signals the government's desire to engage with the tourism sector on a "mission mode" – tourism is a significant economic multiplier on job creation, foreign exchange receipts as well as infrastructure. It is also to be appreciated that there has been an 11% increase in the Sports budget which has now become a total of Rs 3,397 cores and around Rs 1,000 crores will be spent only on 'Khelo India Games'. The move on electric vehicles will help in controlling pollution. Overall Budget has enhanced capital spending, provided tax relief to salaried middle class.

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

Perfumes and their Care

Are you someone who loves to buy perfumes every now and then? Scents elicit emotions and offer a sense of comfort.



Shahnaz Husain

a pretty penny on it.

It's all about knowing where and how to apply fragrance, so it retains its quality. If you know how to make the most out of your perfume, you won't waste as much as well.

Picking a scent for one occasion, another for that moment, or this perfume to commemorate this moment, having loads of them lined up for each day, the biggest problem that any perfume user faces is storing them properly. Perfume is a very delicate composition, which can be damaged, ultimately affecting the fragrance and its longevity. Perfumes not only dilute and lose their fla-

vorful allure over time but discoloration and degradation can lead to bad-smelling perfume.

If stored incorrectly, perfume can start to go bad after a few months. So, what are the best ways to store your fragrance and keep it fresh?

Most of us prefer vanity tables, bathrooms, or cars to keep our perfume bottles. But these are not ideal for storage and can significantly reduce the potency of your scent over time

The best way to keep perfume fresh for as long as possible is to hide it away — seriously. Dark, dry places are the best go-to's for fragrance storage. The catacombs of a closet or a dark box are ideal for storing a brand-new bottle of perfume.

The way we store our perfumes has an impact on how long they last. It is said that a dark, cool, and dry place would be the best. However, very often, we keep our perfumes on our dressing table, or in the bathroom, so that they are convenient to use. Your fragrances should be kept away from direct sunlight, due to exposure to ultraviolet rays. Therefore, they are best kept in drawers, away from light. Excessive heat can also break

down the chemical bonds in perfumes. Therefore, in hot

weather, you can even keep your colognes in your refrigerator. However, concentrated perfumes should not be kept in the fridge or in very hot places, as extremes of temperature can harm the delicate blends of perfumes. To select the right perfume, one needs to know a few facts. Body chemistry is important, as the effect may depend on individual body odour. That is why it is best to try out the perfume on one's own skin. The exact fragrance of a perfume is apparent only when it comes in contact with the skin.

Climate also plays a part in choosing the right perfume. In hot and humid conditions, it is better to go for light and fresh fragrances, rather than heavy ones. The effect of perfumes intensifies in hot and humid weather. A heavy perfume can be quite overpowering. In fact, some perfumes can even trigger off a headache in some individuals. In cold and dry weather, a heavier scent can be used. Lemon, rose, lavender or sandalwood are light and refreshing during hot weather. The time of day also matters. Go for light fragrances in the morning and heavier ones for the night. Colognes and Toilet waters can be used dur-

ing summer and be added to bath water. You can be generous with the use of colognes, even splashing them on. Colognes and Eau de Toilette constitute mainly of water, or a mixture of alcohol and water, with only 2 to 5 % perfume. They are lighter and the fragrance evaporates, leaving a light lingering fragrance. But, when it comes to perfumes, they should be used sparingly.

- Apply just a drop or two of perfume on the pulse points. These are at the temple, the wrists, the crook of your arm (in front of the elbow), beneath the neck, behind the knees.
- Apply perfumes before wearing your clothes, as they can linger on clothes and mix with other colognes or perfumes.
- If you have an oily skin, colognes are much more suitable.
- Avoid using perfumes if you are going to be out in the sun for a long time. Some perfumes may be photosensitizing, leading to a reaction on the skin, like a rash, or blotches.
- The author is an international fame beauty expert and is called the herbal queen of India

The author is international fame beauty expert and is called herbal queen of India

EU officials visit Kyiv as Russia strikes civilian target

KYIV: Top European Union officials arrived in Kyiv on Thursday for talks with Ukrainian officials as rescue crews dug through the rubble of an apartment building in eastern Ukraine struck by a Russian missile, killing at least three

Russia has frequently struck apartment buildings during the war, causing civilian casualties, although the Kremlin has denied targeting residential structures. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was due to meet with European

reached 50 billion euros (USD 55 billion) since the start of Russia's war on February 24. "Europe stood united with Ukraine from day one. And will still stand with you to win and rebuild," Borrell tweeted. It was Von der

ing out corruption a key condition for joining. Von der Leyen tweeted, "We are here together to show that the EU stands by Ukraine as firmly as ever. And to deepen further our support and cooperation."

channelling billions of dollars to help Kyiv fight Moscow's forces and as the Ukrainian government is introducing reforms so it can potentially join the EU one day. Ukraine's government is keen to get more Western military aid, on top of the tanks pledged last week, as the warring sides are expected to launch new offensives once winter ends. Kyiv is now asking for fighter jets.

US President Joe Biden has ruled out providing F-16s to Ukraine. US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Thursday during a trip to the Philippines that the focus of American aid is to increase Ukraine's military capabilities by sending artillery, armour, air defence and providing training to Ukrainian troops. The US is "focused on providing Ukraine the capability that it needs to be effective in its upcoming anticipated counteroffensive in the spring," Austin said. "And so we're doing everything we can to get them the capabilities that they need right now to be effective on the battlefield," he said.

Heavy rain likely in southern Tamil Nadu today: IMD

Chennai: Heavy rain is likely to occur at isolated places over Bay of Bengal is likely to continue to move Westwards South westwards Kodiyakarai (in Nagapattinam district), and Thirupondi (in



Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Ramanathapuram and Tenkasi districts, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Thursday. The depression over the southwest Bay of Bengal moved West-South Westwards at 15 km per hour and crossed the Sri Lanka coast on Thursday morning bringing heavy rainfall in South districts which affected normalcy. According to IMD, the system in the

across South Sri Lanka and emerge into Comorin and the adjoining Gulf of Mannar off the West Coast of Sri Lanka by early morning of February 3. Notably, because of the Depression in the Bay of Bengal, rains" heavy rains lashed the southern districts of the state, especially Nagapattinam, Thiruvavur and Mayiladuthurai. In the last 24 hours, Vedaranyam of Nagapattinam districts recorded 7 cm of rainfall.

Nagapattinam district) received 6 cm of rainfall, while Thalaigayiru (in Nagapattinam district) recorded 4 cm of rainfall. In the wake of continuous heavy rainfall, schools and colleges in Nagapattinam and Thiruvavur districts have been shut for Thursday, senior officials said. In Nagapattinam and Thiruvavur, where farming is a major dependency of the local people, farmers have been affected because of the continuous rainfall.



people and wounding about 20 others. The scene of devastation in the eastern Donetsk provincial city of Kramatorsk, where emergency workers spent the night searching for survivors after the missile hit late Wednesday, served as a grim reminder of the war's toll almost a year after Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell before what officials described as a summit on Friday. Borrell tweeted that the visit aimed "to convey the EU's strongest message of support to all Ukrainians defending their country." EU assistance for Ukraine, he said, has

Leyen's fourth visit since the invasion. The last such summit was held in Kyiv in October 2021 "a few months before the war started. Ukraine's anti-corruption drive was expected to be on the agenda of the talks. Kyiv's long path toward potential membership in the 27-nation bloc will be a key issue under discussion, with stamp-

Zelenskyy on Wednesday took aim at corrupt officials for the second time in the space of a week. Several high-ranking officials were dismissed. Zelenskyy was elected in 2019 on an anti-establishment and anti-corruption platform in a country long gripped by graft. The latest corruption allegations came as Western allies are

Rishi Sunak marks 100 days as UK prime minister, problems with party mount

LONDON: U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has angry unions to the left of him, anxious Conservative Party lawmakers to the right and, in the middle, millions of voters he must win over to avert electoral defeat. It's a daunting situation for Sunak, who on Thursday marks 100 days in office, more than twice the number of his ill-fated predecessor, Liz Truss. Installed as Conservative leader after Truss' plan for huge tax cuts sparked panic, the 42-year-old Sunak calmed financial markets and averted an economic meltdown after he assumed the post of prime minister on Oct. 25. Next, Britain's youngest leader for two centuries — and its first prime minister of South Asian heritage — has promised to tame soaring inflation, get the sluggish economy growing, ease pressure on the overburdened health care system and "restore the integrity back into politics" after years of scandals under former Prime Minister Boris Johnson. Easier said than done.

"The things that happened before I was prime minister, I can't do anything about," Sunak told a group of health workers this week. "What I think you can hold me to account for is how I deal with the things that arise on my watch."

Jill Rutter, a senior fellow at the Institute for Government think tank, said Sunak had succeeded in overcoming the impression that the U.K. "had a completely lunatic government."

"You would chalk that up as the first thing that he had on his to-do list," she said. "Otherwise, it's slightly hard to see concrete achievements."

Rishi Sunak is a former U.K. Treasury chief, and his top priority has been the country's economic malaise. Gross domestic product remains smaller than it was before the coronavirus pandemic, and the International Monetary Fund forecast this week that the

U.K. will be the only major economy to contract this year, shrinking by 0.6%. Sunak blames global forces — disruption from the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Critics say the elephant in the room is Brexit, which has led to a sharp reduction



in trade between the U.K. and the European Union.

Sunak, a longtime advocate of Britain's departure from the bloc, insisted Wednesday that the cost-of-living crisis had "nothing to do with Brexit."

Whatever the causes, Sunak has little economic room to manoeuvre. Annual inflation hit a four-decade high of 11.1% in October and remained at a painful 10.5% in December. The U.K. is in the midst of its biggest wave of strikes in decades as nurses, paramedics, teachers, border agents and other workers seek pay increases to offset the soaring cost of living and the stresses of holding a job in an increasingly threadbare public sector.

Meanwhile, a faction inside the Conservative Party is pushing for immediate tax cuts to encourage growth, despite the damage done by "Trussonomics" just months ago.

"We need growth or our debts will get bigger," lawmaker Iain Duncan Smith, a former Conservative leader, said this week. "Targeted tax reductions will help achieve that." Sunak is resisting both labour unions and tax-cutting Tories. He argues that double-

digit public sector pay raises would drive inflation even higher and that "the best tax cut right now is a cut in inflation." Economists say U.K. inflation will likely fall during 2023, allowing Sunak to meet one of his key pledges. Other goals are likely to be harder to achieve. He is seeking to improve relations with the 27-member EU, and both sides have made progress toward resolving a dispute over Northern Ireland trade rules that has burdened businesses and shuttered the regional government in Belfast.

But any agreement will anger Conservative euroskeptics, who are likely to see rapprochement with Brussels as a betrayal of Brexit. A compromise also faces opposition from Northern Ireland's British unionists, who say post-Brexit customs checks undermine Northern Ireland's place in the United Kingdom.

Sunak also has struggled to rid the Conservative Party of its reputation for scandal and sleaze. A member of his Cabinet, Gavin Williamson, quit in November over bullying claims. On Sunday, Sunak fired party chair Nadhim Zahawi for failing to come clean about a multimillion-dollar tax dispute. Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab is being investigated over allegations he bullied civil servants, which he denies.

The leader of the opposition Labour Party, Keir Starmer, alleged Wednesday that Sunak was "too weak" to tackle bad behaviour.

U.K. voters haven't yet had their say on Sunak, who was chosen as party leader by the 357 Conservative members of Parliament. The government doesn't have to call a national election until late 2024, so Sunak may have time on his side.

Or, he may not. The Conservatives are trailing 20 or more points behind Labour in opinion polls, and poor results in May's local elections could spur calls for another change of leader.

Some Conservatives hanker for the return of Johnson, whose final words to Parliament as prime minister — "Hasta la vista, baby" — hinted at a comeback.

Some analysts say it may be too late for any Conservative leader to avoid defeat. An Ipsos poll released this week, considered accurate to within 4 percentage points, found 66% of respondents wanted a change of governing party. Only 10% thought the Conservatives had done a good job.

Steven Fielding, emeritus professor of politics at the University of Nottingham, likened the mood to the final years of Prime Minister John Major's government, wiped away by Tony Blair's Labour election landslide in 1997 that ended 18 years of Conservative rule.

"People are just waiting for them to go," Fielding said. "And the longer they are there, the more irritated (voters) are with them." He said Sunak "is trying his best. But people aren't listening."

Kerala journalist Siddique Kappan walks out of Uttar Pradesh jail on bail

Lucknow: Kerala journalist Siddique Kappan walked out of jail on Thursday, a day after the sureties

mitted on Wednesday in the special PMLA (Prevention of Money Laundering Act) court here.

told PTI

The journalist and three others were arrested in October

were accused of trying to instigate violence over the death of the Hathras woman.

Police had alleged that Kappan had links with the now-banned Popular Front of India and charged him under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and sections of the Indian Penal Code.

In September last, the Supreme Court granted him bail in connection with that case. But, he continued to be in jail because of the money laundering case filed by the Enforcement Directorate.



required for his bail was submitted in court.

Two sureties of Rs 1 lakh each were sub-

Kappan was released from jail around 9.15 am, Jailer of Lucknow District Jail Rajendra Singh

2020 while on their way to Hathras where a Dalit woman died allegedly after being raped. They

Budgetary trends in conflict with fiscal federalism principles

Bhubaneswar : The growth in GDP is estimated at seven per cent in 2022-23. To stay on track, there is a need to augment both the investment ratio and productivity of investment by removing the supply shocks in the economy.



In 2022-23, the budget size was 15.30 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP).

In 2023-24, the budget size has become 14.92 per cent of GDP. This decline in the share of budget size might obscure the economy's growth. To further revive the economy and to grow at 8-8.5 per cent, the budget size should have been around 16 per cent of GDP.

Capital Expenditure was budgeted at 2.91 per cent of GDP in 2022-23 which increased to 3.32 per cent in 2023-24. The capital outlay is pegged at 2.77 per cent of GDP if we exclude the repayment of past loans. Revenue Expenditure is estimated at 11.61 per cent in 2023-24 (12.38 per cent in 2022-23 BE). Therefore, Revenue Expenditure should be pegged at more than 13 per cent. The Gross Fiscal Deficit (Gross Borrowing) is pegged at 5.92 per cent of GDP in 2023-24(BE) as against 6.44 per cent of GDP in 2022-22(BE).

Dr Asit Mohanty Professor Finance, XIMB

The total devolution to the states as a percentage of Gross Tax Revenue (GTR) has increased from 29.61 per cent in 2022-23 (BE) to 30.39 in 2023-24 (BE). A declining trend in the devolution of states' shared taxes has been witnessed over the last few years, barring a marginal increase during 2023-24. Total Transfer to states as a percentage of GTR has declined to 29.44 per cent in 2023-24 from 34.04 per cent in 2022-23. Similarly, Other Grants/Loans/Transfers

also declined to 10.3 per cent from 11 per cent during the same time. Finance Commission Grants to states also slashed to 4.9 per cent of GTR in 2023-24 from 7 per cent in FY 2022-23. Total Central Sponsored Schemes (CSS) Grants declined to 14.2 per cent in 2023-24 from 16.1 per cent in 2022-23. These budgetary trends conflict with fiscal federalism as enshrined in the Constitution through successive Finance Commissions.

The devolution to Odisha has increased marginally from 1.34 per cent of GTR in 2022-23 (BE) to 1.38 per cent in FY 2023-24 (BE). Its share in shared tax was budgeted at Rs 36,



977.88 crores in 2022-23 (BE). However, it amounts to Rs 42,989.33 crore in 2022-23 (RE) and Rs 46, 251.18 crore in 2023-24 (BE).

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is down to 1.33 per cent of the budget size in 2023-24 from 1.85 per cent in 2022-23. In absolute terms, there is a slash of `13,000 core in MGNREGS. This will affect employment scenarios in rural areas. The total Core of the Core Schemes has also declined to 1.91 per cent of the budget size in 2023-24 compared to 2.51 per cent in 2022-23(BE). This will impact revenue receipts of the states and limit the economy's demand side.

Elephant kills elderly man in Angul forest, Odisha




ANGUL: A 63-year-old man was trampled to death by an elephant at the Bantala range in Angul forest division on Tuesday evening. The body of the victim, Sidheswar Sethy of Lokeipasi village,

was spotted by locals on Wednesday morning. Angul DFO Vivek Kumar said Sethy had gone to the forest to collect wood. The locals were warned about the presence of five to six elephants at a

mango orchard near the village. However, Sethy disregarded the warning and was possibly killed by the elephant in the forest.


Kumar said an ex-gratia of `1 lakh was given to the victim's

family and the remaining `3 lakh will be given after formalities are completed. Efforts are on to chase the elephants from the forest. Sethy's body was sent for postmortem on the day.



2023-2024

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RBI seeks details of banks' exposure to Adani Group

MUMBAI: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has sought details about lenders' exposures to the Adani Group, banking



sources said, a day after the conglomerate withdrew the Rs 20,000-crore follow on public offer (FPO) of its flagship firm Adani Enterprises amid the steep fall in its stock prices.

On Wednesday, Swiss lender Credit Suisse stopped accepting bonds by Adani group companies as collaterals for margin lending.

The going has been tough for the diversified conglomerate over the past week ever since US-based short seller Hindenburg Research levelled a slew of allegations about the group's operations, calling it the biggest corporate con ever. The Ahmedabad-headquartered group has denied all the allegations but failed to convince analysts and investors.

The RBI gets access to banks' large **Budget: Naveen voices concern over MGNREGS cut**

Continued from page-1

by a US short seller against the Adani group and the subsequent mayhem on company stocks but were disallowed by the chair.

Unhappy with the ruling, they raised slogans, forcing the adjournment of proceedings till 2 pm without transacting any official business.

The rout in Adani group stocks has threatened the value of investments made by the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) and public sector banks.

Adani group stocks, where LIC is heavily in-

vested, have lost over USD 100 billion in value since a tiny New York short seller came out with a damning report alleging financial and accounting fraud by the ports-to-energy conglomerate. The Adani group has denied all charges and called the report malicious and full of lies.

In the Lok Sabha, MPs from almost all opposition parties rushed to the Well of the House raising slogans and sought a probe into the business practices of the corporate giant.

Speaker Om Birla asked members not to make unsubstantiated claims and said Question Hour was an important part of Parliamentary proceedings which should not be disrupted.

As the slogan shouting continued, the Speaker adjourned the Lower House proceedings till 2 pm.

Nine MPs, including Leader of the Opposition and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Shiv Sena's Priyanka Chaturvedi and Aam Aadmi Party's Sanjay Singh, gave notices in the Rajya Sabha under rule 267.

They sought the suspension of regular business to discuss the Adani group stock route and its impact on millions of small investors as well as the hard-earned savings of crores of Indians being endangered in loss of value of investments of LIC.

Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar rejected all the notices, saying they were not in order. This infuriated the opposition MPs who rose in their places to protest.

Dhankhar called for order in the House but the MPs continued to raise their demands, which also included the constitution of a joint

parliamentary committee (JPC) to probe the entire fiasco.

With the MPs not relenting, he adjourned the proceedings till 2 pm. No business was transacted.

Outside the House, Kharge said the opposition parties want day-to-day reporting of the Joint Parliament Committee (JPC) or the SC-monitored probe into the issue which concerns public money.

"Keeping public interest in mind, we want a thorough probe into the Adani issue either by a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) or a Supreme Court-monitored panel. There should also be day-to-day reporting of the investigation on the issue," he told reporters.

Earlier in the day, leaders of several opposition parties met to evolve a joint strategy to take on the government during the Budget Session. At that meeting, they decided to press for a JPC on the issue as well as a discussion in both houses.

Leaders of like-minded parties met in the chamber of

Kharge.

Leaders of the Congress, DMK, TMC, SP, JD(U), Shiv Sena, CPI(M), CPI, NCP, IUML, NC, AAP and the Kerala Congress were present at the meeting.

Thursday is the first full sitting day of the Budget session of Parliament that started on January 31. President Droupadi Murmu delivered her address to the joint sitting of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on the opening day and the Union Budget for the 2023-24 fiscal starting April 1 was presented on Wednesday.

Adani Group stocks have taken a beating on the bourses after Hindenburg Research made a litany of allegations in its report, including fraudulent transactions and share price manipulation at the Gautam Adani-led group.

The Adani Group has dismissed the charges as lies, saying it complies with all laws and disclosure requirements. It termed the Hindenburg report baseless and threatened to sue the short seller.

LIC has a sizable holding in almost all the 10 listed companies of the Adani Group. The holdings include 9 per cent in Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone, 3.7 per cent in Adani Transmission, 1.3 per cent in Adani Green Energy and 6 per cent in Adani Total Gas Ltd.

LIC, India's largest life insurer, invested about Rs 300 crore in buying 9,15,748 more shares as an anchor investor in a Rs 20,000-crore new share sale by Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL).

AEL late on Wednesday cancelled the share sale due to market volatility and decided to return the money to investors.

She said that the fiscal deficit is to

Rupee falls 2 paise to close at 81.90 against US dollar on Budget day

MUMBAI: The rupee pared initial gains and settled 2 paise lower at 81.90



be brought down to below 4.5 pc by 2025-26. "This led to some strengthening of

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six

late sell-off in domestic markets and expectations of outflows by FIIs. Overnight gains in crude oil prices also weighed on Rupee," Choudhary said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 187.31 points or 0.31 per cent higher at 59,708.08, while the broader NSE Nifty declined 45.85 points or 0.26 per cent to 17,616.30.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital market on Tuesday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 5,439.64 crore, according to exchange data.

Foreign currencies, was trading 0.14 per cent lower at 101.95.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures declined 0.26 per cent to USD 85.24 per barrel.

"Indian Rupee depreciated on

Budget: Naveen voices concern over MGNREGS cut

Continued from page-1

lakh crore is kept for this purpose, he said.

The chief minister also expressed his unhappiness over the decrease or no growth in allocation for the health and education sectors.

Targeting the Odisha BJP leaders for always harping on the Ayushman Bharat scheme for which an allocation of Rs 7,200 crore has been made in the budget for the entire country, the chief minister said that Odisha spends almost about Rs 2,400 crore on Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) in private facilities alone.

"If we include government facilities, it will be around Rs 6,000 crore annually under BSKY. Health is an important priority for our state. We believe in investing and in sincere efforts," he said and asked the BJP state leaders to refrain from 'misleading' people about Ayushman Bharat Yojana.

29 blocks likely to be covered under ABP in Odisha

Continued from page-1

programme (ADP). The total number of blocks in these districts is 102. Even after five years of the launch of the ADP programme with a focus on five main themes - health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion and skill development, and basic infrastructure - which have a direct bearing on the quality of life and economic productivity of citizens, there is a lot to be desired from the 10 districts.

None of the districts is up to the mark in improving the health and nutrition condition even after five years of the launch of the programme. The tribal-dominated Malkangiri district is at the bottom of the list with a five per cent weightage.

In the agriculture and water resources sector, Gajapati district is among the top ten districts of the country while Balangir, Dhenkanal and Kalahandi are in the bottom 10 districts since the inception of the programme. Rayagada is among the top performer's districts by achieving 51 per cent improvement in the education sector while Nabarangpur is in the bottom 10 districts with 13 per cent against the 30 per cent target.

The three core principles of the programme are convergence (of central and state schemes), collaboration (among citizens and functionaries of central and state governments including district teams), and competition among districts.

The seasonally adjusted S&P Global India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) fell from December's recent high of 57.8 to 55.4 in January, as factory orders and production rose at a slower pace.

the Rupee earlier in the day," said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

The government's fiscal deficit as of December-end touched 59.8 per cent of the full-year Budget Estimate on subdued growth in revenue collections, according to finance ministry data released on Tuesday.

"Soft Dollar and a fiscally prudent budget may prevent a sharp fall in the Rupee. Market participants may remain cautious ahead of ISM manufacturing PMI, JOLTS job openings and FOMC meeting outcome," Choudhary said, adding that the Fed is expected to hike interest rates by 25 bps.

India's manufacturing sector activity moderated in January amid a slower increase in total sales, and headcounts were broadly unchanged amid sufficient staff numbers to cope with current requirements, according to a monthly survey.

The seasonally adjusted S&P Global India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) fell from December's recent high of 57.8 to 55.4 in January, as factory orders and production rose at a slower pace.

She said that the fiscal deficit is to

be brought down to below 4.5 pc by 2025-26.

"This led to some strengthening of

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six

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South Africa beats India by 5 wickets to clinch Women's T20I Tri-series title



EAST LONDON: South Africa beat India by five wickets in the final to clinch the Women's T20I Tri-series title here on Thursday. South Africa chased down the target 110 with 12 balls to spare. Chloe Tryon

top-scored with 57 not out off just 32 balls. She hit six fours and two sixes as South Africa reached 113 for 5 in 18 overs. For India, Sneha Rana was the most successful bowler with figures of 2

for 21 while Deepti Sharma, Rajeshwari Gayakwad and Renuka Singh got a wicket apiece. Earlier, opting to bat, India posted a below-par 109 for 4 with Harleen Deol top-scoring with a 56-ball 46.

Brief Scores: India: 109 for 4 in 20 overs (Harleen Deol 46; Nonkululeko Mlaba 2/16). South Africa: 113 for 5 in 18 overs (Chloe Tryon 57 not out; Sneha Rana 2/21).

U19 Women's T20 World Cup title: Testimony to meticulous planning by National Cricket Academy

CHENNAI: In this day and age of professional sports, anytime history is created, there are a slew of measures, including long-term planning and a proper system, that usually go into it. The triumphant tale of Girls in Blue that lifted the inaugural ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup title is a testimony to such a meticulous planning. It's the culmination of months and months of work done by the coaches and admin-

istrators at the National Cricket Academy. Once the domestic season began, there was the U19 T20 Trophy, followed by the Challengers, quadrangulars featuring India A, India B, Sri Lanka, and West Indies U19s, and bilateral series against the New Zealand Development squad. By the time the final squad was picked, the group of players had spent months together playing an ample amount of matches before getting on the flight to South Africa.

much they need to play now before that, it was all planned by the team," Shrabani, who is with the Tripura women's team as head coach, told this daily. "The thing is it is better to make more mistakes before the main event so that you can learn. We needed to learn before the World Cup. Those matches and preparations everything was planned. Every day after every session we used to sit together with all

they play, think, and their smartness, it is way better. The players have developed because of the T20 format. They try shots and have to be fit. The batting coaches ask them to be fearless and bowlers try variations. And in U19, there are 15-year-olds, but we don't treat them differently. They will be treated in the same mature way and the same is expected of them," said Shrabani. The former Tripura player also credits the way Nooshin Al Khadeer handled the team. While it was the first time she worked with her, Shrabani said, "She is very good at her job. She doesn't talk too much, but knows how to get the best out of a player," she said. And behind all the work that has gone was the head of the NCA, VVS Laxman. Shrabani calls him the mastermind. "Whenever I spoke at the NCA with Apurva (Desai) sir and Rajeeb (Dutta) sir, I felt like he (Laxman) was the mastermind. He really supported us a lot. Organising all the camps and even during rains, we used to have sessions, something or other will keep happening. It all could not have happened without his planning," Shrabani signed off.



Over the past 14 months, they have conducted several camps, starting with the Zonal in May-June, 2022, where players from different zones were shortlisted and shuffled into groups of 25 at different parts of the country before shortlisting the final squad comprising 25 cricketers for the main camp at the NCA in August.

Shrabani Debnath, who was at the camp in the NCA after the challengers and India A team during quadrangulars and the bilaterals against NZ, sums up how it felt when she joined the camp in the NCA. "When I joined, it felt like everything was planned. It was all in place. And it was individualistic — skill-wise, fitness-wise and recovery-wise. How many matches they will play in the World Cup, how

the staff and talk about each player, and how much they bowled or threw, everything was monitored. And the results are there to see." Shrabani feels that there is a difference in the generation of the players that have come up as well. "The way the U19 girls are evolving now is very nice. If you look at three years ago I have done zonal camps, these players are on a different level. The way

Indian team opens campaign against Bhutan in SAFF U-20 Women's Championships

DHAKA: Powerhouse India face Bhutan in their opening match of the SAFF U-20 Women's Championship here on Friday, with the team, mainly made up of

"We have a mixture of youth and experience in our team, players that have played at the senior level as well, so I am sure the girls will give their 100 per cent and the results will follow,"



Maymol said at the pre-match press conference. When asked about the opposition teams in the tournament, she said, "Bhutan are a good side, as are Nepal. Bangladesh have been doing brilliantly in the last

few years, and they are definitely the team to watch out for." "But if we give it our best shot, we can overcome all obstacles." India captain Martina Thokchom, one of the players to have played in the senior national team, spoke about the advantages of being in the same camp with the senior side in the build-up to the championship. "Yes, we are a junior team, but we were in the same camp as the seniors, and that has really helped us. We all stayed in the same hotel and even played a match together. It was a good learning experience, especially for the new girls in this team."

players from the FIFA U-17 World Cup campaign last year, hoping to clinch the title in the inaugural edition. Hosts Bangladesh and Nepal are the other teams in the tournament. All the matches will be played at the Bir Sherestha Shaheed Shipahi Mostafa Kamal Stadium here. After a four-team round-robin, the top two teams will play the final on February 9. India takes on Bangladesh on February 5 and Nepal on February 7. India head coach Maymol Rocky stressed the importance of having a mix of experienced and young players in the squad, including those who have played in the senior national team already.

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