

Suspended BJD leader Prasanta Jagdev confident of renomination

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): When speculations are flying thick and fast about a major revamp in BJD ahead of the 2024 elections - with many sitting MLAs expected to be replaced with new faces - two senior leaders have their daggers drawn over party ticket for Chilika Assembly seat.

The sitting MLA from the coastal constituency Prasanta Jagdev, who has been suspended from the party, on Saturday exuded confidence of his renomination from Chilika. "I am confident that BJD president Naveen Patnaik will revoke my suspension soon and he will give the party ticket to me," Jagdev told mediapersons.

A known bete noire of former Chilika MLA Raghunath Sahu, who has been



lobbying hard for party ticket, Jagdev came down heavily on the former for playing a major role in his suspension from the party. Stating that Sahu has become politically insignificant, Jagdev said the former is day dreaming for getting BJD ticket when he has no chance to win from the seat.

"The party opted for me in Chilika as Sahu stood no chance to

win. He has no base in the constituency. He has been hatching conspiracy against

me after I got elected from Chilika. He will not succeed in his endeavour," Jagdev said. Jagdev, suspended from the BJD in October 2021 for anti-party activities after he assaulted a BJP dalit leader of Chilika, accused Sahu of conspiring with the BJP to create a situation near the Banpur block office where he was assaulted and his vehicle was ransacked

after I got elected from Chilika. He will not succeed in his endeavour," Jagdev said. Jagdev, suspended from the BJD in October 2021 for anti-party activities after he assaulted a BJP dalit leader of Chilika, accused Sahu of conspiring with the BJP to create a situation near the Banpur block office where he was assaulted and his vehicle was ransacked

on March 12, 2022. Sahu, who was elected from Chilika on BJD ticket in 2014 and 2019, on the other hand said that the people of the state knew very well about me and Jagdev. "He (Jagdev) is a man without character and at least eight criminal cases are pending against him. He has no moral right to comment on me," Sahu said.

The former MLA said that Jagdev who was denied bail from Orissa High Court in the Banpur incident in which he rammed his vehicle on a crowd and injuring 20 people including eight police personnel got his bail from the Supreme Court. This speaks volume about his criminal mindset, Sahu added.

Live music, food festival and night market in Bhubaneswar from today

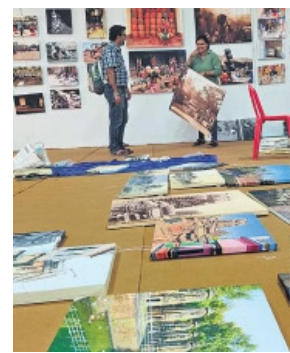
BHUBANESWAR(KCN): From popular Odia artistes and Bollywood celebrities to K-pop band Blackswan, a galaxy of stars will perform in the 'Bhubaneswar Live' event



organised as part of the DoT Fest from Sunday. As many as 11 Odia stars including Dipti Rekha Padhi, Pragyan Hota, Lisa Mishra, Rituraj Mohanty, rapper Big Deal, Swyam Padhi, Satyajet Jena and Aseema Panda will

perform in the cultural festival that intends to offer a a cherishable experience to citizens and tourists during the hockey World Cup.

The live show will be organised at Idco exhibition ground from 7 pm to 10 pm every day from January 15 to 24. The curtain-raiser show on January 15 will have performances of K-pop band Blackswan, singer Guru Randhawa and actress Disha Patani. Similarly, the last day of the show will also witness performances by renowned choreographers like Shiamak



Every Indian is proud of our Army: PM Modi on Army Day



New Delhi(KCN): On the occasion of Army Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday lauded the Indian Army, saying the soldiers have always kept our nation safe and are widely admired for their service during times of crisis.

Army Day is observed on January 15 to mark Field Marshal K M Cariappa taking over as the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of the

Indian Army, replacing his British predecessor in 1949. "On Army Day, I convey my best wishes to all army personnel, veterans and their families. Every Indian is proud of our Army and will always be grateful to our soldiers," Prime Minister Modi said in a tweet. "They have always kept our nation safe and are widely admired for their service during times of crisis," he said.

7.6 quake damages buildings in Indonesia, felt in Australia

JAKARTA(KCN): A powerful deep-sea earthquake damaged village buildings in a lightly populated island chain in eastern Indonesia early on Tuesday and was widely felt in northern Australia.

Two school buildings and 124 houses were



damaged in Indonesia's Tanimbar islands and Southwest Maluku districts, the National Disaster Mitigation Agency said. Only one injury was reported.

Local residents felt strong tremors for three

BJP's two day long national executive meet to begin from Monday

NEW DELHI (KCN) : The two-day long national executive meeting of the BJP will begin on January 16 in the national capital, which could see the meet endorsing the extension of national president J.P. Nadda's term, which is ending on January 20. The meeting will also see deliberations on organisational issues, including the planning for the impending Assembly elections in nine states. Prime Minister Narendra Modi



to five seconds. There was panic when the quake shook so the residents left their houses, agency spokesperson Abdul Muhari said in a statement.

The epicentre of the magnitude 7.6 temblor was in the Banda Sea, nearest the Tanimbar islands, which have about 127,000 residents. The quake was felt in several regions, including Papua and East Nusa Tenggara provinces, as well as in northern Australia.

Indonesia's Meteorology, Climatology, and Geophysical Agency issued a tsunami warning that was lifted three hours

later. Based on four tide gauge observations around the centre of the earthquake, it did not show any significant anomaly or change in sea level, agency head

CONTINUED ON: P-7

will also be attending the national executive meeting.

Tripura, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chattisgarh, Telangana, Mizoram are among the states that will be going to the polls this year.

The BJP's performance in these states will have an impact on the parliamentary elections as well. With an eye on the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the party top

CONTINUED ON: P-7

Four of five Indians who died in plane crash in Nepal were planning to visit Pokhara for paragliding

KATHMANDU(KCN): Nepal's resort city of Pokhara on Sunday, officials said. The five Indians were identified as Abhisekh Kushwaha, 25, Bishal Sharma, 22, Anil Kumar

lake city and tourist hub Pokhara," recalled Ajay Kumar Shah, a resident of Sarlahi district in southern Nepal. "We came together from India in the

Gorakhpur, he added. Sonu, the eldest among the Indian nationals, was a resident of Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. Meanwhile, External Affairs Minister S



in the tourist hub of Pokhara, a local resident said.

At least 68 people were killed when a Yeti Airlines passenger plane with 72 people onboard, including five Indians, crashed into a river gorge while landing at the newly-opened airport in central

Rajbhar, 27, Sonu Jaiswal, 35, and Sanjaya Jaiswal, a Yeti Airlines official said.

Among the five Indian nationals, four had just arrived in Kathmandu from India on Friday. "All the four were planning to enjoy paragliding in the

same vehicle," he said. "They stayed in Gaushala near Pashupatinath Temple and then in Hotel Discovery of Thamel, before departing to Pokhara," he said.

They were planning to return to India from Pokhara via

Jaishankar expressed grief over the air crash and said "our thoughts are with the affected families".

"Deeply grieved on hearing about the air crash in Pokhara, Nepal. Our thoughts are with the affected families," Jaishankar said in a tweet.

Makar Sankranti observed in an unique way at Barbil

Barbil(KCN): Festival of harvest, Makar Sankranti being celebrated in several parts of



Barbil with full religious fervour. Many organisation across Barbil and adjoining area offered diety in different temples. Long queues of devotees are being witnessed outside Temples right from early morning. Despite biting cold thousands of devotees have seen taking dips at rivers from the early morning on the occasion of Makar Sankranti. At many places different committee of different temple observed the festival in various ways. However Prasad Sevan was seen as common programme in all temples. Makar being a popular festival of eastern Odisha, the roads in Barbil city wore a near-deserted look yesterday as most working class left for their hometowns to celebrate Makara Sankranti. Several dedicated religious

programmes were being organized in the area. Bhakti Seva Sangh had organised Bhajan (Jagran) Sandhya at Hari Om Bhawna where singers of National repute like Surjit Albela of Kanpur, Julie Singh of Prayagraj and Biswas Rai of Mumbai had participated. In the similar occasion another Jagaran was organised at Rungta Town hall, Barbil where some popular singer like Babli Sharma and Binod Sharma of Punjab state along with two singers Dinesh Joshi and Ankita Das from Odisha were participated. Devotees across Barbil



were enthralled with devotions. Seva group Barbil organised a Kite flying competition among children on the occasion at Bhagbat play ground, Barbil. They too felicitated children with trophy. Rotary club, Barbil distributed blankets among poor to mark the occasion.

Winning Youth @ Hockey

Bhubaneswar: After winning the confidence of women through women self help groups (WSHG) under Mission Shakti program and farmers with KALIA and BALARAM and several other pro-farmers programs it now focuses on the youths and new voters who will cast their votes for the first time in the ensuing Lok Sabha and Odisha Legislative Assembly elections scheduled to be held in 2024. Of the 3.29 crore voters in the state, the new voters (in the age group of 18-19 years) has been estimated at 5.23 lakh. This year's final electoral rolls, published recently, said that there were 9,50,789 new voters. And the new voters and youths are in focus of all parties and as usual, the Governing Biju Janata Dal (BJD) headed by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik leaves no stone unturned to bring these huge voters to the regional party's fold.



And hosting an international event like Men's Hockey World Cup, 2023, has offered a golden opportunity for Naveen Patnaik to attract the youths.

His Commander In Chief, the Secretary to CM VK Pandian, who connects to the youth is the prime mover of the Mega Show that endears youth, has taken the next level, beyond the imagination of others.

The state had last time in 2018, ahead of the 2019 general elections, held the Men's Hockey World Cup and the result is known to all. The ruling party easily overcame the Modi wave and the BJD secured 112 assembly seats and 12 of the 21 Lok Sabha seats. Thanks to youths who also joined with women to ensure that Naveen's party gets votes and forms government.

This time round, the 2023 event also came just before the next general elections and Naveen grabbed the opportunity giving little opportunity to rival BJP the potential political utility of such events. Both football and hockey have all along been major points of attraction for youths in the rural constituencies like in Odisha.

The FIH Men's Hockey World Cup has now come back to Odisha for the second consecutive time and expected not only to enthral the youths, but ensure that their Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik is really interested in the growth of sports. The lucrative rewards being given to players in the state is also another factor to attract youths. No state in the country is as liberal towards sports as Naveen is.

After tasting the benefits of holding an international sports event in the state in 2018, the BJD government has planned hosting the event in a massive way creating a wave in the nook and corner of the state. The ongoing World Cup, for the first time, is being organized in two destinations — Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar and Birsamunda Hockey Stadium, Rourkela.

To involve youths, students, community and people at large, the State Government has toured the World Cup Trophy to almost all States of India. After that, the trophy travelled to all districts of Odisha. The trophy was welcomed in a massive way with a festive mode. Though the tournament has already started on January 13, the festive atmosphere has continued to grip the youths since fortnight ago. The trophy toured to several educational institutions during the tour to the district, which was able to attract the youths towards the event.

Following the trophy tour, the State has organized the opening ceremony of the World Cup in a very grand manner. Perhaps for the first time in its history, Odisha has organized such a mega show in-

volving a galaxy of stars from the Bollywood and also the international-level Black Swan group. The buzz created across the state before the opening ceremony, has attracted lakhs of youths towards the event and the World Cup. A lion share in the audience at the Barabati Stadium on January 11 evening were youths. The atmosphere was so electrifying that youths loved and enjoyed it a lot. The young audience has also felt proud for organization such an international standard cultural event in Odisha that too in historic Silver City. To ensure maximum involvement of youths, the State Government closed down all universities, colleges and technical education institutions in the afternoon for World Cup celebration.

The ceremony involved performances by actors Ranveer Singh, Disha Patani and music composer Pritam, who has also composed the World Cup anthem. A host of vocalists — including Benny Dayal, Neeti Mohan, Sreerama Chandra, Nakash Aziz, and Shalmali Kholgade — K-pop band Blackswan, which also features Sriya Lenka from Odisha, enthralled the audience, while there were performances from local stars of Odisha highlighting the State's culture and heritage.

An incredible showcase of technology elevated the stadium to new heights with xylo bands glittering all across the audience and pulsing to the music, an awe-inspiring show that is sure to live on in youth's hearts forever.

Thousands of people across the state witnessed the grand opening ceremony on television, LCD screens and smartphones. The Government has organised free live telecast of the event at all GP level, cities and wards of Cuttack city.

Apart from the mega inaugural ceremony, several cultural, sports and food festivals are being organized in five corporation towns of Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Rourkela, Sambalpur and Berhampur. Besides, district-level festivals are also being organized in major towns across the State to celebrate the Hockey World Cup. All these festivals are also attracting the youths as they love to spend the evening in such events and they are charged.

In the Capital City Bhubaneswar, the entire city has been decked up and parallel events — including musical concerts, fan village and storytelling sessions — are being organized at the Kalinga Stadium and across the city.

Similarly, a project called STAMP (Street Art and Mural Project) with seven artists of national and international repute has been launched to create artwork at major junctions in Bhubaneswar.

For Rourkela, which comes under the Sundergarh district, known as the nursery of hockey in Odisha, this is the first brush with an international tournament of such level. The entire Rourkela town has been decked up with lights and beautification projects, which will last in the mind of the players forever.

A 'Sports Carnival' has been launched in Rourkela to create a sporting atmosphere in the city. Commercial flight operations have already begun from Rourkela to transport players and officials to the venue.

Several cultural and sporting events are lined up in five corporation cities of Odisha Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Sambalpur, Rourkela and Berhampur. The entire State will witness a festive moment during the entire month.

Both the parties — the BJD and BJP have also been fighting with each other and the saffron party alleged that Naveen was using hockey for political purposes. A senior BJD leader, however, said what is wrong in hoisting international sports events and involving youths in it? If the youths are attracted towards BJD, what is wrong in it? Above all, they are tilted towards some positive activities through sports instead of getting involved in any other divisive activities in the name of case, creed and religion.

Anyway, the next elections will prove whether the Hockey World Cup helped the BJD to garner support of youths or not.

Master Plan For Vedavyas



Rourkela(KCN): Secretary to CM VK Pandian on Saturday directed the Vedavyas Peetha Trust to prepare a master plan for the development of the shrine here within 15 days. R Vineel Krishna, Special Secretary to CM and Secretary Sports & Youth Services accompanied him.

An ardent devotee of Lord Shiva, Shri Pandian, who visited the shrine—a major pilgrimage center during his visit held discussion with the members of the Trust Board,

the staff, and the local people about the development of Peetha under the 5T initiative. Every day, many devotees from the state and outside visit the peetha. Therefore, the state government is keen on the overall improvement of this peetha, Shri Pandian said.

During his visit Sundargarh District Collector Parag Harshad Gavali, Rourkela Municipal commissioner Shubhankar Mohapatra and others were present.

Fest for Startups

Bhubaneswar(KCN): Startup Odisha is organizing a two-day festival-Startup Mela- 2023,



at O-Hub here from Sunday.

It is also Startup Odisha's bid to expand its outreach among the students in various institutes, colleges, B-schools, and schools spread across the State so that youth develop an inclination towards startups and dwell on prospects in this domain.

Besides students and budding entrepreneurs, other stakeholders of the Startup ecosystem like Industry leaders, incubators, academicians, policymakers, investors, etc. have been invited and they would be interacting with students and sharing their valuable insights. The two-day event would be buzzing with a host of interactive activities scheduled one after

the other. These are for students' engagement and to help them understand the ecosystem better.

Startup Odisha in its attempt to directly reach out to the students across campuses, and in its bid to be pervasive throughout educational institutions, universities, colleges, B-schools, etc., has identified some bright students as Campus Ambassadors who would add value to the Startup Ecosystem of Odisha by inspiring, sensitizing, and orienting their peers to be part of startups and encourage them for entrepreneurship. Thus, Campus Ambassadors would act as a bridge between their respective academic institutions and Startup Odisha. These Campus Ambassadors would be felicitated in Mela and would be encouraged to come up with new and sparkling ideas in the field of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Also, for the first time, Startup Odisha is bringing successful Industry leaders of Odisha to connect them directly with students and Startups so that they can become part of the Startup ecosystem and contribute to it. Industry leaders from Ruchi Foodline, Falcon Marine Exports, OvoFarm, and Z Estates will participate in the two-day fest.

An exhibition of various startups across Industries and sectors would attract the audience and give them an opportunity to see these Startups from close quarters and interact with the entrepreneurs, said a senior officer.

Whistleblower Reward in FCI

New Delhi(KCN): Ashok Kumar Meena, Chairman & Managing Director of Food Corporation of India (FCI) will design mechanism for a transpar-



ent and corruption free system in the FCI.

Shri Meena to ensure a system of eliminating corruption and providing an efficient and transparent service to the people, said Sanjeev Chopra, Secretary, Department of Food and Public Distribution.

Known for his diehard honesty and impartiality, Shri Meena has started bringing in transparency to the system in FCI since he joined the PSU.

Earlier speaking at the inaugural address at the 59th Foundation Day of FCI here today, Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution directed the Secretary Shri Chopra to institutionalize a mechanism wherein whistleblowers may be rewarded. He called out to all officers and staff of FCI to report any incident of corruption.

He said that the transformation of Food Corporation of India (FCI) should be done on a fast track mode so that the organization can continue to help

the people, the poor and the farmers of the country, advised. In his speech,

Shri Goyal directed the Secretary, to monitor the transformation of FCI and Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC) every week and to update him on the status on a fortnightly basis. He said strict action has to be taken against the officers who do not cooperate with or delay the transformation process.

Taking about the ongoing investigation against alleged cases of corruption in FCI, Shri Goyal said that it's a wake-up call for the organization and assured that no one found involved in corrupt practices will be spared. He said FCI will follow the principle of Zero tolerance for corruption.

Shri Goyal praised the way FCI carried out the world's largest food supply chain system, especially during the pandemic to ensure seamless supply of foodgrains under the "Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana" (PMGKAY). He said that despite Covid pandemic, no one slept hungry in the country.

He said that India has set a global example in the areas of food security, strengthening economic scenario, controlling inflation and others.

Shri Goyal mentioned that the rice procurement figures for the year are good and he looked forward to a robust wheat procurement in the coming season as well.

Virtually attending the event, Minister of State, Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti applauded the remarkable job undertaken by FCI during the pandemic by ensuring sufficient supply of food grains in every part of the country especially to vulnerable sections of the society under PM's visionary scheme of PMGKAY.

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'The Legend of Maula Jatt' ft Fawad, Mahira Khan to release in India

MUMBAI: Pakistani film "The Legend of Maula Jatt", starring Fawad Khan and Mahira Khan, is likely to be released on the big screen in India this Friday, an INOX official said.

This will perhaps be the first film from Pakistan in over a decade to get a theatrical release here.

"It will be played in Punjab and a few theatres in Delhi in INOX where there are Punjabi speaking people," Rajender Singh Jyala, chief programming officer, INOX Leisure Ltd, told PTI.

Multiplex chain PVR Cinemas had shared a release announcement on its official Instagram page but deleted it soon after. "Presenting the official poster of #TheLegendofMaulaJatt! Coming to PVR this Friday," the post read.

The action drama, which has become the highest-grossing Pakistani film of all time amassing USD 10 million, was released in Pakistan on October 13.

Directed by Bilal Lashari, "The Legend of

Maula Jatt" is an adaptation of the 1979 cult classic "Maula Jatt" and producers have said it is neither a remake nor a sequel.



Its stars Mahira and Fawad are familiar to Indian audiences through their popular Pakistani drama "Humsafar" and also through Bollywood -- Fawad, who was most recently seen in the superhero series "Ms Marvel", has featured in "Khoobsurat", "Kapoor & Sons", and "Ae Dil Hai Mushkil" while Mahira appeared in Shah Rukh Khan-starrer "Raees".

The last Pakistani film to get a theatrical release in India was "Bol" starring Mahira in 2011.

Before that was "Ramchand Pakistani" star-

ring Nandita Das and Rashid Farooqi in 2008. "Khuda Kay Liye", which included Fawad in the ensemble cast alongside Naseeruddin Shah, came in 2007.

Pakistani films, however, have been screened at festivals in India.

In November this year, the Dharamshala International Film Festival screened Saim Sadiq's "Joyland", which is Pakistan's official entry in the international film category at the 95th Academy Awards.

ALSO READ | 'Joyland' becomes first Pakistani film to enter Oscars shortlist
"Khuda Kay Liye" was the first ever Pakistani film to be included in the official selection of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI). "The Legend of Maula Jatt" started production in January 2017 and concluded in June 2019.

The film was initially scheduled for cinema release during multiple dates in 2019-2020, but kept getting delayed due to copyright related issues and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pakistani actors stopped being cast in Indian productions following the 2016 terror attack in Uri in which 19 Indian Army personnel were martyred.

The decision came amid demands by various political outfits to ban Pakistani artistes from Indian films and from performing here.

Salman Khan turns 57; police lathicharge unruly fans outside actor's home

MUMBAI: Salman Khan turned 57 on Tuesday and his fans, it seemed, were in full party mode with hundreds of people gathering outside his Bandra home through the day, waiting patiently for their 'bhaijaan' to come out to acknowledge their greetings.

Around 6 pm, just before dusk set in, he obliged, stepping out in his balcony, folding his hands to say 'namaste', doing a 'salaam' and then waving much to the delight of the crowds, some who were carrying life-size cut-outs and others who breached barricades in their excitement.

The actor's admirers started assembling outside Galaxy Apartments from early hours of the day and by evening the swelling crowd transformed into a sea of people waiting to catch a glimpse of the superstar.

Fans, who welcomed their favourite star with loud cheers, carried his life-size cut-outs, while others held up 'Happy Birthday' posters.

To add to the celebratory mood, they also released red-coloured balloons. Police personnel were stationed outside the building for crowd control as fans waited behind the barricades. After the star left, some of the fans breached the barricades following which the police resorted to lathicharge. Dressed in powder blue T-shirt and denims, Salman greeted an ecstatic crowd as he asked them to maintain order.

He was accompanied by his father, veteran screenwriter Salim Khan, who also waved at the public.

"Thank you all," the superstar posted on

Instagram alongside a photograph of him greeting the crowd.



Salman rang in his birthday with close family and friends on Monday night at a party hosted by his sister Arpita Khan Sharma and brother-



in-law Aayush Sharma at the Khar residence. Bollywood actor Salman Khan during his 57th birthday party celebration hosted by his sister Arpita Khan Sharma, at her residence,

celebration for their daughter Ayat Sharma, who turned three, and the Bollywood star.

The party was attended by superstar Shah Rukh Khan, Tabu, Kartik Aaryan, Suniel Shetty, Pooja Hegde, Riteish Deshmukh, Genelia D'Souza, Sangeeta Birlani, Sonakshi Sinha, Sajid Nadiadwala and wife Warda Nadiadwala, Ramesh Taurani and Iulia Vantur. Shah Rukh Khan with Salman Khan at the birthday party hosted

by Arpita Khan and her husband Aayush Sharma. (Photos | ANI/PTI)

The star-studded night was lit up by the visuals of "Karan Arjun" co-stars Salman and Shah Rukh sharing a warm hug as the latter left the party in the early hours of Tuesday.

Family members, including Arbaaz Khan, Sohail Khan, Atul Agnihotri and Alvira Khan Agnihotri were present.

Salman also celebrated his special day with the paparazzi stationed outside the party venue by cutting a cake.

On the work front, Salman will make a special appearance in Marathi film "Ved", starring Riteish and Genelia.

He will also make a cameo in Shah Rukh's much-anticipated spy movie "Pathaan", set to arrive in theatres on January 25.

Salman's first major standalone release in over two years will be "Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan", scheduled to come out on Eid next year. He will follow it up with the third installment

in his "Tiger" franchise slated to hit the cinemas on Diwali.

According to trade analyst Akshaye Rathi, industry insiders are hopeful both "Tiger 3" and "Kisi Ka Bhai" will give a much-needed boost to the Hindi film exhibition sector.

"I have a lot of confidence in 'Tiger 3'. It's an urban action film," Rathi told PTI, adding that producers Yash Raj Films will do a "great job" with the franchise. Salman

Khan on his day with the right kind of film is one of the biggest stars we have at the box office," he said.



The couple had organised a combined cel-

Schemes for Disclosure of Income and for ending tax disputes needed

Black Money is a big issue in our country. The Government had hope that demonetisation of currency notes of Rs.500 and Rs.1000 as announced on 8th November 2016 will help in tackling the problem and the undisclosed currency notes in circulation will be controlled. However, despite



demonetisation and the efforts of Government in promoting transactions by banking channel and credit cards, debit cards, Paytm etc. still the currency in circulation has not reduced, rather it has increased in last 6 years.

1. Another disclosure scheme: Income Declaration Scheme was last declared in the Finance Act, 2016. Section 184 provided that the undisclosed income declared under section 183 within the time specified therein shall be chargeable to tax at the rate of 30 per cent of such undisclosed income. Further the amount of tax chargeable under the scheme was to be increased by a surcharge, to be called the *Krishi Kalyan Cess* on tax calculated at the rate of 25 per cent of such tax so as to fulfil the commitment of the Government for the welfare of the farmers. Then the person making a declaration of undisclosed income shall, in addition to tax and surcharge under section 184, was also liable to penalty at the rate of 25 per cent of such tax. Thus effectively aggregate tax burden etc was 45 per cent of undisclosed income declared under the scheme. The amount of tax, surcharge penalty was allowed to be deposited in cash vide CBDT Instruction dated 8th September, 2016. The scheme was in operation from 1st June, 2016 to the midnight of 30th September, 2016

with an aggregate of Rs.65250 Crore worth of hitherto undeclared incomes in the form of cash and other assets being declared.

However, the amount declared was not upto mark in view of undisclosed money and assets amassed by the public. That was followed by demonetisation.

According to prevalent situation, there is considerable scope of further declaration of undisclosed income and therefore the Hon'ble Finance Minister will do well in considering and declaring Income declaration scheme, 2023 with the similar rate of tax, surcharge and penalty on the pattern of 2016 scheme. It is expected to garner undisclosed income and assets of about Rs. One Lakh Crore.

2. Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme: The Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme, 2020 was declared to minimise the tax cases pending in appeal in various forums and it was quite well meaning and successful scheme. Numerous taxpayers availed the scheme to get rid of disputes. Through Vivad se Vishwas 2020, the Central Board of Direct Taxes was able to collect tax of as much as 54000 Crore and Central Board of Excise and Custom garnered Rs.38000 Crore. Such a scheme may be announced again to reduce the pending litigations. Such a strategy will be useful for the department as well as taxpayers in getting rid of long drawn appeals pending in various forums. However the scheme may be reviewed and further simplified.

3. Liberal Tax Rates: The Budget 2023 to be presented by the Finance Minister will be last full budget of Modi Government, and elections are in offing this year in many States to be followed by General elections sometime in April/May 2024. The Finance Minister will do well by declaring exemption limit upto Rs.5 Lakhs. As a matter of fact even now a tax rebate of

Narayan Jain

Rs.12500 is allowed under section 87A that means if income of any

person is upto Rs.5 Lakhs he need not pay tax. However, for ensuring ease of doing business, the straight exemption of Rs. 5 Lakh for all taxpayers will be appreciated and will help people in coping with the prevailing inflation and lesser resources. Some more money in pocket if taxpayer will help in growth of demand and economy as a whole.

4. Tax Rates in case of Individuals: The highest tax and surcharge etc payable by Individual taxpayers is as much as 42.74 per cent in case of taxpayers having income exceeding Rs. 5 crore as they have to pay a surcharge of 37 per cent. It comprises of 30 per cent tax, 37 per cent surcharge that makes 41.1 per cent and then 4 per cent Health and education cess is to be added which makes an aggregate effective rate of 42.74 per cent.

In contrast in case of domestic companies the tax rate is only 22 per cent which does not claim any deduction or exemption under sec. 10AA and deductions under sec. 32AD, 33AB, 33ABA, 35(1)(ii), 35(1)(ia), 35(1)(iii), 35(2A), 35(2AB) 35AD, 35CCD and does not claim deductions under chapter VIA (other than sec. 80JAA or sec. 80M). In such cases the aggregate tax burden comes to 25.17 per cent (including 10 per cent surcharge and 4 per cent Health and education cess.

It is expected that the Hon'ble Finance Minister will peg up the rate of tax in case of Individuals to 22 per cent and also limit surcharge to only 10 per cent. The FM should appreciate that non-corporate taxpayers are also important in economic growth. It is accepted fact that lower tax rates help in greater tax collections.

5. Presumptive Income in case of professionals under sec. 44ADA: The Presumptive Income in case of professionals is considered under section 44ADA at the rate of 50 per cent of gross receipts which is quite excessive even while we compare with the presumptive income of 8 per cent or 6 per cent, as the case may be, for computing profit and gains of business, as prescribed under section 44AD. The presumptive income in case of

professionals should be at the rate of 30 per cent of gross receipts. It may be noted that RV Easwar Committee had suggested the rate of one third of gross receipt of professional receipts. The realistic presumptive rate will encourage more and more professional to opt for the scheme under section 44ADA. Other professions like Journalism, Authors, Writers etc. should be included in the definition of permitted professions for this purpose in addition to professions referred to in sec. 44AA(1).

6. Allow deduction for corporate social responsibility expenditure Sec. 37: At present the Income Tax Act provides that the expenses incurred by the taxpayer on the activities relating to CSR referred to in Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013 shall not be deemed to be incurred for the purpose of business and hence, shall not be allowed as a deduction for computation of income. **The corporate sector spending on CSR is for laudable purposes and effectively assisting the Government in undertaking social projects for the country.** Therefore, the deduction must be allowed for expenses on CSR for the purpose of Income tax. **It is recommended that a deduction of CSR expenses incurred by the taxpayers pursuant to the policy of the Central Government and provisions of the Companies Act should be allowed in computing business income.**

7. The incentives should be provided for encouraging small and MSME industries so that more jobs may be created.

8. Alternate Minimum Tax under sec. 115JC for non-corporate taxpayers: The present rate is 18.5 per cent of adjusted total income (ignoring the deductions under chapter VIA-C). The rate should be lowered to 12 per cent and the adjusted total income should be computed after allowing deductions under chapter VIA.

To conclude: **the tax rates, tax provisions and procedures have to be made simpler in real sense!**

(Narayan Jain is former Secretary General of AIFTP and author of the books "How to Handle Income Tax Problems" and "Income Tax Pleading & Practice" with CA DilipLoyalka).

Look sharp, Be sharp, Go army

Indian army day is marked every year on 15 January to remember the event when General

Vinod Chandrashekhar Dixit

KM Cariappa became the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of Independent India. The Indian Army celebrated its 75th Army Day. Kodandera M. Cariappa took over as the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from General Butcher. He was an army officer with a distinguished career in the British Indian Army and later the Indian Army. In 1919, he joined the army when he received the King's Commission with the first group of Indian cadets. Before taking charge as Army chief, he administered the country's army on the west during the Indo-

Pak War of 1947. He had a vital contribution to various reattaining territories in Kargil. The story of his appointment is also very interesting. The story goes something like this – Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was having a meeting with senior army personals and cabinet ministers. He suggested that the post of first army chief should be given to a British officer because Indian officers have no experience in handling such a post. One of the army personnel present their, objected to this and said that, "as we also don't have the experience of leading a nation, so we should appoint a British person as our first Prime Minister." After hearing this, Nehru realised his mistake and asked the person that would he like to become the first army chief? On this he suggested the name of Lieutenant general K.M. Cariappa who was also present there and thus he became the first army chief.

The day reminds us that independence wasn't just a fight of one day but a lengthy process. Indian Army Day is celebrated to recognise the efforts of this Man of Principals. He was known for his compassion & discipline. He inspired generations by demonstrating the highest standards of patriotism. It is said that, lucky are those who get selected for Indian army. With countries like the US, China, and Russia, our nation's army is one of the biggest armed forces in the world that operates on "Serve others before self" as its ultimate agenda. Discover more about the Indian Army Day's history,

significance, and celebrations.

As we all know, Indian army has a long and glorious history. Therefore, it is difficult to talk about everything in such a limited space. It would not be wrong to say that there would be no India without Indian Army. It is the backbone of the country. It is also one of the few institutions left in the country which could be considered as completely neutral and reliable. India became an independent nation after gaining freedom from British rulers in 1945 after almost 200 years. During that time, the country was experiencing a lot of chaos & riots as many refugees and people were migrating from Pakistan. Even though the country got freedom from British rulers in 1947, it didn't have the official reins of the Indian army in its hand until two years later, in 1949. Finally, on the day of 26th January 1950, the Constitution of the country was declared, and India became a republic country. Soldiers are one of the greatest assets of any country. They are the guardians of the nation and protect its citizens at all costs. The primary mission of the Indian Army is to ensure national security and national unity, to defend



the nation from external aggression and internal threats, and to maintain peace and security within its borders. We have taken for granted that someone is always deployed to guard our borders while we sleep in our cosy homes or there will be someone to take the bullets of the enemies and terrorists for us. We sleep comfortably in our homes because we know that even if we are not alert, there are some people who are always aware so that we can be safe. These people are part of the country's Army. The first priority of the Indian Army is to cater for the security of the nation, its unity and integrity, defence from any kind of external aggression and internal threats, and to keep peace and security within the borders. The Army also manages rescue missions at the time of natural disasters, calamities or any other disturbances, displaying their humanitarian face. Let us patch our ways and start giving real respect to the soldiers otherwise a time may come when there will be no one to defend our motherland. Long live India and long live Indian army.

the nation from external aggression and internal threats, and to maintain peace and security within its borders. We have taken for granted that someone is always deployed to guard our borders while we sleep in our cosy homes or there will be someone to take the bullets of the enemies and terrorists for us. We sleep comfortably in our homes because we know that even if we are not alert, there are some people who are always aware so that we can be safe. These people are part of the country's Army. The first priority of the Indian Army is to cater for the security of the nation, its unity and integrity, defence from any kind of external aggression and internal threats, and to keep peace and security within the borders. The Army also manages rescue missions at the time of natural disasters, calamities or any other disturbances, displaying their humanitarian face. Let us patch our ways and start giving real respect to the soldiers otherwise a time may come when there will be no one to defend our motherland. Long live India and long live Indian army.

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

The voice of our Chief Army General

CHIEF of our Army general Manoj Pande has assured the nation that India's security apparatus is fully alert and

Uma Sankar Prasad



prepared to meet any challenge on the long Line of Actual control (LAC) with China. Even as he has admitted that there is a slight increase in Chinese troops along the LAC, Indian Armed Forces collectively are in full readiness to repulse any misadventure by the enemy. The nation always believes such a word of assurance fully seriously. This is the credibility of India's Famed armed Forces—built over time painstakingly. In the past 7-8 years, no Indian leader—political or military has ever denied the seriousness of the Chinese Challenge. That is indicated clearly by the ramped up levels of military preparedness the government has insisted upon during these years. Previously, there were efforts by the political leadership to conceal from public knowledge certain details of how the Chinese were behaving. But after the rising of Mr Narendra Modi as Prime minister, the picture changed, the Government started paying special attention to building stronger than ever defence across the 3,700-kilometer long LAC in tough Himalayan terrain. Thanks to the approach, Indian Forces could stand tall and strong against some Chinese overtures like in Doka La or in Galwanor lately in Tawang.

It is also common knowledge that the Government has permitted force mobilisation to achieve a weapon-for-weapon, man-for-man, eyeball-to-eyeball readiness to confront Chinese. And as the nation knows fully, the Government pooled every resource to increase the ease of operating in the Himalayan heights and depths of a vast manpower



and weapons and ammunition plus fuel for multiple purposes. All this

mobilisation needed a lot of funds, which too the Government made available. Besides all these efforts to manpower at the LAC, the Government also moved the Indian Force in strategic locations so that in the event of a direct conflict, the country will have its protectors in right places and in right numbers.

General Manoj Pande's assertion that the Indian Air forces are keeping a close watch on the developing situation at the LAC represents all these efforts in the past some years. India has also made appropriate changes in the military doctrine to be able to stand equal to the Chinese challenge. The common people may not understand the technical details of what the Government has done, all right, but they do realise that the Indian preparedness is complete and equal and opposite. Despite this, India's domestic politics is full of people who keep questioning the government's intentions and integrity as regards China. These people do offer lip service to the Armed forces as being very good, but raise issues with the political leadership. This approach is certainly not healthy and is likely to lead to confusion in the common people's mind. With political motives in mind those who question the Government's integrity as regard the situation along the LAC with China seem to suggest that the Government is lying to the nation. It is a question to all such people When did the Government not acknowledge the seriousness of the situation along the LAC with China.

There is not one instance when the government lied to the nation in the past 7-8 years. There is not one moment when the Government denied the heightened Chinese military presence in the Himalayas. Can the opposition deny this? And deny also the truth that the Chinese have already annexed much of Indian territory years and years ago—and not during 7-8 years of P.M Modi regime? This is a sick mentality that the common people already under stand completely and they must not influenced by wrong propaganda.

The Author is a Columnist, Khordha

WHO appeals to China to release more COVID-19 information

BEIJING: The World Health Organization has appealed to China to keep releasing information about its wave of COVID-19 infections after the government announced nearly



60,000 deaths since early December following weeks of complaints it was failing to tell the world what was happening.

The announcement Saturday was the first official death toll since the ruling Communist Party abruptly dropped anti-virus restrictions in December despite a surge in infections that flooded hospitals. That left the WHO and other governments appealing for information, while the United States, South Korea and others imposed controls on visitors from China.

READ HERE | Alarm over 60,000 Covid deaths in China in last one month

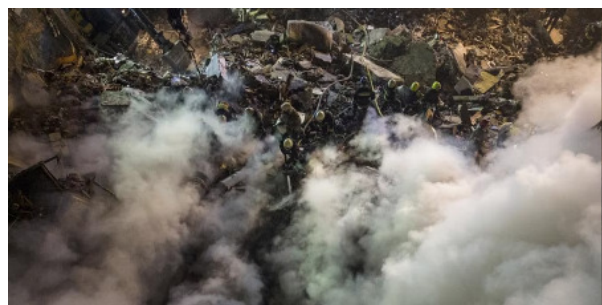
The government said 5,503 people died of respiratory failure caused by COVID-19 and there were 54,435 fatalities from cancer, heart disease and other ailments combined with COVID-19 between Dec. 8 and Jan. 12. The announcement "allows for a better understanding of the epidemiological situation," said a WHO statement. It said the WHO director-general, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, talked by phone with Health Minister Ma Xiaowei.

"WHO requested that this type of detailed information continued to be shared with us

Ukraine puts Dnipro toll at 21 after wave of Russian missile strikes

KYIV: Ukraine said Sunday that the death toll had risen to 21 after a Russian missile slammed into a tower block in the city of Dnipro during a massive wave of strikes causing power outages and blackouts across the war-torn country.

Officials said more than 40 people were still missing after the Dnipro strike Saturday, which came as Ukraine celebrated the Old New Year holiday and as Britain became the first Western country to



offer Kyiv the heavy tanks it has long sought. At least 21 people were killed and 73 others wounded in the attack on the Dnipro tower block, Ukraine's regional council head Mykola Lukashuk said.

A 15-year-old girl was among the dead, officials said, after dozens of people were pulled from the rubble, including a woman brought out by rescuers on Sunday.

"Rescue operations continue. The fate of more than 40 people remain unknown," regional governor Valentyn Reznichenko said.

The strike destroyed dozens of flats in the apartment block leaving hundreds of people homeless, said Kyrylo Tymoshenko, a senior official at the presidency.

The Ukrainian army said the block was hit by an X-22 Russian missile that it lacked the capacity to shoot down.

"Only anti-aircraft missile systems, which in the future may be provided to Ukraine by Western partners... are capable of intercepting these air targets," it said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Saturday pleaded for more Western military weapons, saying that Russian "terror" could be stopped only on the battlefield.

"What is needed for this? Those weapons that are in the warehouses of our partners," Zelensky said. British tanks

On Saturday, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak pledged to provide Challenger 2 tanks to Ukraine, the first Western country to supply the heavy tanks Kyiv has been demanding.

The tanks would arrive in Ukraine in the coming weeks, Downing Street said, adding that Britain would also train the Ukrainian Armed Forces on how to use them.

and the public," the agency said.

The National Health Commission said only deaths in hospitals were counted, which means anyone who died at home wouldn't be included. It gave no indication when or whether it might release updated numbers.

A health official said the "national emergency peak has passed" based on an 83% decline in the daily number of people going to fever clinics from a Dec. 23 high.

The report would more than double China's official COVID-19 death toll to 10,775 since the disease was first detected in the central city of Wuhan in late 2019. China has counted only deaths from pneumonia or respiratory failure in its official toll, which excludes many fatalities that might be attributed to the virus in other countries. Meanwhile, high-speed train service resumed Sunday between China's mainland and Hong Kong under restrictions that allow 5,000 passengers from each side to make the trip daily and require a negative virus test within the previous 48 hours. The two sides are reopening travel links that were suspended under Beijing's "zero-COVID" strategy, which aimed to keep the virus out of China. Hong Kong imposed different but similarly severe restrictions that blocked most international travel.

Candice Zhong, a resident of the neighbouring mainland city of Shenzhen who arrived in Hong Kong, said she planned to visit the city's two major theme parks.

"I want to come to Hong Kong to see what it's like now," Zhong said at the Hong Kong Mass Transit Railway terminal. "I will go to Disneyland and Ocean Park."

Russia's embassy in Britain warned that "bringing tanks to the conflict zone... will only serve to intensify combat operations, generating more casualties, including among the civilian population".

Moldova, Ukraine's southwestern neighbour, said it had found Russian missile debris on its territory after Saturday's strikes.

"Russia's brutal war against Ukraine directly impacts Moldova again," President Maia Sandu tweeted, posting photographs of the wreckage.

Ukraine's energy facilities were still reeling Sunday from what was a 12th wave of large-scale Russian attacks on energy infrastructure in recent months. The attacks targeted power infrastructure in the Kharkiv, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Zaporizhzhia, Vinnytsia and Kyiv regions, Energy Minister German Galushchenko said.

On Sunday, operator Ukrenergo said energy infrastructure was "being restored" but that the attacks had "increased the energy deficit".

"The period of outages may increase," it acknowledged. Zelensky said Ukraine shot down 20 of the more than 30 Russian missiles fired.

Rivalries over Soledar "Unfortunately, energy infrastructure facilities have been also hit," he said, adding that the regions of Kyiv and Kharkiv, home to the country's eponymous second city, were suffering the most.

The strikes came amid uncertainty about the fate of Soledar, a salt mining outpost that Russia claimed to have captured, despite denials from Ukraine.

Both sides have conceded heavy losses in the battle for the town, which had a pre-war population of about 10,000.

On Sunday, the US-based Institute for the Study of War said that "Ukrainian forces are highly unlikely to still hold positions within the settlement of Soledar itself".

On Friday, Russia's defence ministry announced that it had "completed the liberation" of Soledar. Russian paramilitary group Wagner first claimed victory over the city on Wednesday, although the defence ministry initially made no mention of Wagner, only later praising the "bravery" of Wagner's troops in Soledar.

Late Saturday, Wagner head Yevgeny Prigozhin praised his mercenaries in a veiled jab at Russian army command, which has been criticised for poor coordination and being too far removed from the ground.

Prigozhin attributed Wagner's victories to a "perfected system of command".

"Everyone can express his opinion," Prigozhin claimed, "but once a decision has been taken, all tasks are fulfilled. It is our group's strictest discipline that gives us these possibilities."

Wagner, which has been accused of abuses in the Central African Republic, Libya, Mali, Syria and Ukraine, has recruited thousands of convicts to fight in Ukraine.

A look at air crashes in Nepal since 2010

KATHMANDU: An aircraft with 72 people on board crashed in Nepal on Sunday, officials said, the latest aviation disaster to hit the Himalayan nation.

Nepal's air transport sector has been plagued by accidents due to poor maintenance, insufficient training and lax standards.

February 16, 2014

Eighteen people are killed when a Nepal Airlines flight crashes in Arghakhanchi district, with rescuers finding body parts and debris strewn across the mountainous countryside.

September 28, 2012

A plane flying 19 people towards Mount



The country also has some of the world's most remote and tricky runways, with approaches flanked by towering mountains that challenge even accomplished pilots.

Here is a timeline of major air disasters to hit the country since 2010:

May 29, 2022

A Twin Otter plane operated by Nepali carrier Tara Air crashes shortly after takeoff from Pokhara in western Nepal, killing 22 people.

April 14, 2019

A small plane veers off the runway while taking off near Mount Everest, hitting two helicopters and killing three people. Three people were also injured.

March 12, 2018

A flight from the Bangladeshi capital Dhaka crash-lands at Kathmandu airport, skidding into a football field where it bursts into flames. Fifty-one people are killed in what was the deadliest aviation accident in the country for decades.

February 24, 2016

A Twin Otter aircraft operated by Tara Air crashes into a hillside in Myagdi district, killing all 23 people on board.

Everest goes down in flames on the outskirts of the Nepali capital, killing everyone on board including seven Britons and five Chinese citizens.

May 14, 2012

Fifteen people die when an Agni Air plane carrying Indian pilgrims crashes near the treacherous high-altitude airport of Jomsom in northern Nepal, while six make a miraculous escape.

September 25, 2011

A small plane taking tourists on a sightseeing trip around Mount Everest crashes into a hillside near Kathmandu, killing all 19 people on board.

December 15, 2010

All 22 passengers and crew on board a passenger plane that crashes in eastern Nepal are killed. Most of the victims are pilgrims from Bhutan, with one US citizen also among the dead.

August 24, 2010

A small Agni Air plane crashes in bad weather near Kathmandu, killing all 14 people on board including four Americans, a Japanese and a British national.

Bhogi bonfires start Sankranti festivities in AP

VIJAYAWADA: The three-day Sankranti celebrations kicked off with Bhogi bonfires in various parts of Andhra Pradesh on Saturday. Bhogi prayers and cock-

Chandrababu Naidu participated in the celebrations at his native Naravaripalle village in Chandragiri mandal of Chittoor district. Actor Balakrishna,

with popular film actor Manchu Mohan Babu attending the ceremony along with his family members. Cine actor Manchu Vishnu said Bhogi is celebrated to leave

songs. Bhogi bonfires marked the Sankranti festivities in all the 26 districts of AP, with women and children in large numbers participating.



fight followed even as people indulged in festivities with gusto after a two-year gap because of Corona crisis.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and his spouse Bharati started the festival by joining Sankranti rituals at their house. Leader of opposition Nara

past bitter memories and move forward with new ideas. Water resources minister Ambati Rambabu became the star attraction of Sankranti at Sattenapalli right from 5 a.m. on the day. He energetically danced with Lambadi women to the tunes of folk and movie

Vedic pandit N. Jagganatha Sarma explained that the first day Bhogi is for the family which wakes up early in the morning and burns waste wood accumulated in the house during the year, symbolising destruction of evil. Elders of the family bless younger people by putting Bhogi pandlu (jube) on their heads.

Disappearing hand of Congress in Odisha Five detained for killing man over 'sorcery'

Over since Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan dropped the 'early election' bomb, the political scene in Odisha has suddenly become surcharged with a bevy of political activities. The ruling BJD and its main chal-

lenger BJP have swung right into the thick of action. Organisational parleys of both the outfits have gained momentum and war of words heated up even as allegations and cross accusations over government policies and schemes are continuously being flung at each other.



BJD, as usual, is at the top of its game while the central BJP leaders and minister have been making a beeline to send the right message that Odisha tops their agenda. Politics over free rice and housing has gone high pitch. The battleground has even found new entrants with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) announcing to field its candidates in all of the 21 Lok Sabha constituencies. But one party seems to be in no hurry at all.

As is the state of Congress, it seems to have no idea what to do. While, elsewhere Rahul Gandhi is out on a long padyatra, here in Odisha, the grand old party is moving nowhere. Pradesh Congress chief Sarat Pattanayak has led the padyatra in the state but it has exposed more cracks and craters than bring in a ray of hope.

The performance of party in the polls, be the urban and rural elections or the by-elections, have been dismal. Party candidates have set a record in losing by-elections but no one is clearly in any mood to introspect. There is intense, unending squabbling and two of its MLAs have been served show cause for not adhering to the party line. Those who are ac-

tive and rooted to electoral politics are being sidelined. It has been eight months since OPCC got a new chief, but he continues to function sans any state office-bearers. To cut a long story short, Congress is going

into a coma. And no one cares. There is very little sync between the organisation and legislative wing of the party. Senior leaders do not even see eye to eye. PCC chief Pattanayak is accused of not being democratic in his actions while he enjoys little support from fellow members. The state-in-charges appointed from time to time are clueless and have no grasp of the organizational crisis even as promising leaders are slowly deserting the party.

For a party that had ruled Odisha for almost half the period since Independence, it is a sorry state of affairs. Its fortunes dwindling, the party's vote share has plummeted from 33.7 per cent in 2000 when it lost power to BJD to 16 per cent in 2019.

If Odisha actually goes into early elections, the party may not be in a position to even field fighting candidates for all the 147 constituencies. Simply because, it has stopped evolving. It does not appeal to the young aspiring voters and has no second-rung youth leadership in place while the irrelevant seniors continue to occupy the space. Personal and family ambitions have taken precedence over party interests.

At the core of the problem is the Congress leadership at Delhi. Odisha just does not figure in their scheme of things and the party's unravelling is not surprising at all. The writing is clearly on the wall for the grand old party.

by Siddaramaiah set to tour Assembly constituencies in north Karnataka region, while Shivakumar will be leading the way in southern districts. Congress leaders symbolically swept the street with a broom and said they will "wipe out the corrupt" BJP government from the state, where elections are due by May.

Siddaramaiah said, the Congress is beginning the Yatre from Belagavi to "wipe out the BJP government's corruption and its misrule" from the state.

"Our intention is to place before the people a charge sheet against the BJP government in the state, because the entire government is submerged in corruption, there is growing misrule, and they are indulging in a politics of hate. If any-

one questions, they are being intimidated with false cases and arrests," he said, adding that "corruption is rampant and people are fed up". Shivakumar said the BJP government has been a "curse" for this state as "scandals are coming out every day", and to wipe it out, the Congress is taking up this yatre.

"The BJP has made Karnataka the capital of corruption, this has to be ended and people need to be given a good administration, they should have confidence towards the government, so we are taking up this yatre with a promise of good governance," he said.

Listing out "various corruption and scandals" in the state and accusing the government of giving a clean chit to those involved by filing a b-report in such cases, he alleged, "estimates have been doubled in PWD and irrigation contracts, everything will be looked into, all scandals and B report will be inquired into on Congress coming to power."

Congress starts bus tour ahead of Karnataka assembly polls

Belagavi: Hitting the road in poll-bound Karnataka, the Congress on Wednesday began its statewide bus tour called 'Praja Dhvani Yatre', jointly led by party state unit President D K Shivakumar and Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Siddaramaiah.

The tour kickstarted at 'Veer Soudha', a memorial



where Mahatma Gandhi had presided over the Congress session in 1924, after paying tributes to the father of the nation.

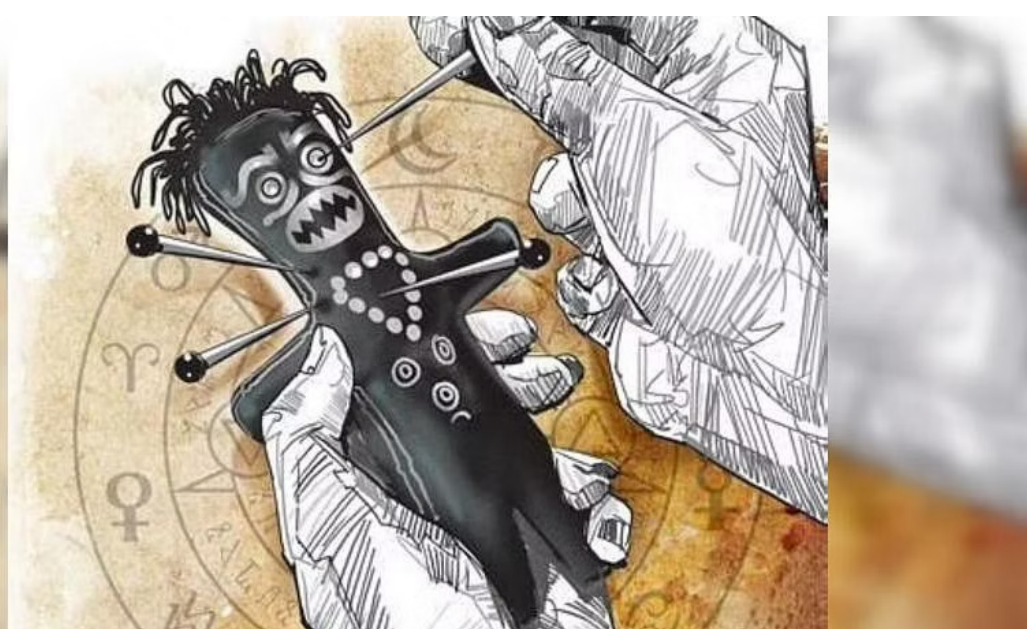
AICC General Secretary In-charge of State Randeep Surjewala, and senior leaders including campaign committee chief M B Patil, were among others present.

The tour covering 21 districts will see the party sharing its ideas with the people and assuring all-round development of the state, while attacking the BJP government with a "charge sheet" it has prepared, Congress leaders said.

As part of the bus yatra, both Shivakumar and Siddaramaiah, who are nursing chief ministerial ambitions in the event of the Congress coming to power, will travel in the same vehicle until January 29.

Thereafter, in the second week of February, two separate teams would be formed, with one headed

Five detained for killing man over 'sorcery'



BERHAMPUR: Five persons of Kalahandi's Kumudapadar village were detained on Friday for allegedly killing a man suspecting him to be practising sorcery. The accused were identified as Sridhar Nundruka, Kesab and three others. Bissamcuttack SDPO Akash Sahu said the deceased Bibhisana Nundruka had gone missing since January 1.

His family initially thought he had gone to a

relative's place but when they did not find him there, they lodged a missing complaint on January 6. On Friday while searching the area where the feast had taken place, the family sensed a foul smell emanating from the area and informed police. Soon police along with a scientific team and sniffer dog reached the spot and recovered the decomposed body and sent it for autopsy to Koraput, he added.

Curtains go up on Mukteswar festival



BHUBANESWAR(KCN): The three-day-long Mukteswar dance festival began on the premises of the 10th century temple here on

Saturday. Organised by the Culture department, the evening began with a 'Shiva Vandana' by artiste Mahendra Kumar Acharya which was followed by an 'abhinaya' on story of Bhagirathi - Ganga by Odissi dancer Sarita Mishra.

Inaugurated by Social Security Minister Ashok Chandra Panda, the inaugural evening concluded with performance by students of Utkal University of Culture. Among others, additional chief secretary of Culture department Satyabrata Sahu and president of Odisha Sangita Natak Akademi Aruna Mohanty were present.



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India's challenge as the world slips into recession

Gem and jewellery exports in December declined 11.25% to Rs 19,432.88 crore (USD 2.36 billion), mainly because of a drop in demand in the US. Looking at the nine-month April-December window, jewellery exports grew 6.28% to Rs 2,27,537 crore, but in dollar terms, there was a marginal fall of 0.73%.

With just three months of the current financial year left, and exports touching a little over USD 28 billion so far, it is almost certain that the target of USD 46 billion for fiscal 2022-23 will not be met.

These are some of the signals of what is

By now, everyone and his uncle agrees the world is slipping into recession. Deutsche Bank was the first to stick its neck out about 9 months ago. A Bloomberg survey last month of 38 top economists saw concurrence that there was a 70% chance of the US hitting recession.

But their important naysayers too. Goldman Sachs believes the chance of the US going into recession this year is 35%. The firm's economists, Alec Phillips and David Mericle say that "below-potential growth can gradually rebalance supply and demand in the labour market and dampen wage and price pressures".

Goldman Sachs has now gone even further and said the Euro area may also skip recession as natural gas prices have eased, and inflation seems to be cooling faster than expected. A November analysis by Morgan Stanley concurs that recession may miss

the US but Europe may not be so lucky. Dodging the axe For India, the forecasts are better. The World Bank says the Indian economy is expected to grow at 6.6% in fiscal 2023-24, "before falling back toward its potential rate of just above 6%." At this pace, India will be the fastest growing among the 7 largest emerging market and developing economies (EMDEs). India is not fully 'coupled' with the global economy and is largely driven by large domestic demand.

In this respect, FMCG companies, agricultural products, and infrastructure businesses like power, transportation and roads may not feel the heat and continue to grow. However, there is no escape from the global recession, especially for export-oriented businesses. The US' share in India's merchandise exports has increased to 18.1% in FY2022 from 10.1% in FY2011. ALSO READ | Recession will hit a third of the world this year, warns IMF chief Software exports to the US account for as much as 58% of this segment's exports. Shrinking demand in the US will majorly impact these sectors. A contraction of jobs in the US and Europe will also hit the country's émigré workforce, many of whom may be forced to return home. A glimpse of the way things will play out can be seen from a recent survey by a business daily that showed 41 Nifty companies mainly in the production and supply commodities, metals, chemicals and logistics will see net profits shrink to just 3.1% in the third quarter. This trend may worsen in the 4th quarter and beyond as recession overtakes much of the developed world. Meanwhile, the US Federal Reserve's interest rate increases are already impacting the flow of foreign portfolio investments, and our foreign exchange reserves; and the rupee is weakening by the day. These are serious speed bumps our policymakers will have to tackle.

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Terminal 2 of Bengaluru's KIA airport gears up for debut flight on Sunday morning

BENGALURU: With the countdown to the maiden flight from Terminal 2 on Sunday at 8.40 am by Star Air fast approaching, massive security checks are being undertaken by security agencies to ensure complete safety before the launch.

Airport operator Bangalore International Airport Limited plans to scale up operations gradually at T2 to ensure the early phase of operations remains smooth. The largest airline operating from Bengaluru, Indigo Airlines, also plans to stay put at Terminal One for now, said sources.

Star Air will fully shift its operations to the new terminal. It only operates the Embraer 145 aircraft that has a maximum passenger seating capacity of 50 plus two cabin crew. VIPs including a few MPs and MLAs will be part of the debut flight but their names were kept under wraps citing security reasons.

"Our first flight (S5-117) from KIA to Kalaburagi has been fully booked. These are business jets operated under the Regional Connectivity Scheme and we want our passengers to experience the spectacular Terminal 2. So we have decided to shift all our operations here," said CA Boppana, Head of Airport Services at Star Air.

An airline spokesperson claimed its second departing flight from the terminal had received good bookings but refused to divulge details. S5-101 to Hubballi will depart at 11.55 am and reach HBX at 12.55 pm.

Friday saw massive anti-sabotage checks carried

Green revolutionaries: Meet the founders of Eco Oscars awardee agri-tech startup 'Kheyti'

Sathya Raju Mokkalapati was 17 when he saw a farmer eating mud out of hunger in his village in the West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh. The image stayed with him. Thirteen



years later, in 2015, he co-founded an agri-tech startup, Kheyti, along with Ayush Sharma, 37, Saumya Sahay, 33, and Kaushik Kappagantulu, 36, to supplement and enhance the income of farmers through their innovative 'greenhouse-in-a-box' method.

Kheyti recently won the Earthshot Prize 2022, also called the Eco Oscars.

Sharma and Mokkalapati—friends for over a decade—had earlier founded a similar startup, Cosmos Green. The seed for Kheyti was sown when Mokkalapati travelled with Kappagantulu to hundreds of villages in India in 2015 as part of Acumen Fellowship, a leadership development programme, to understand the problems faced by small farmers—no rains or unseasonal rains, extreme heat patterns and risks of pests due to the heat.

Kappagantulu, who roped in his former colleague Sahay, says, "Many farmers we met said their aim was to generate extra income each month. With that as a goal, we worked backwards and realised that the answer lay in greenhouses, which could minimise risk from vagaries of climate and regularise incomes."

Ayush Sharma, Saumya Sahay, Kaushik Kappagantulu, Sathya Raju Mokkalapati Thus was born Kheyti's 'greenhouse-in-a-box', an affordable, modular greenhouse that uses 90 per cent less water than standard greenhouses, grows seven times more food, and gives farmers a steady dependable income. The durable greenhouse also cuts off heat, prevents bugs and saves water, making it easier for the farmers to earn higher revenue.

Traditionally, greenhouses were earmarked for exotic vegetables such as broccoli and lettuce, but the startup has adapted them for wider use—almost all Indian vegetables from cabbage to cauliflower, leafy vegetables and other common ones like potatoes can be grown now. Kheyti installed their first greenhouse in 2017 in Siddipet (Telangana) before expanding to seven states, including Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha, benefitting over 1,500 farms.

By bringing down the standard one-acre size

of the dog squad and the Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad.

"We are taking all precautions to ensure no untoward incident takes place. We have been carrying out multiple checks during the last fortnight," said a top CISF official.

KIA records 28.32 lakh fliers this Nov, jump by 41 per cent compared to last year. Top cops including Police Commissioner CH Pratap Reddy visited the new terminal to inspect it.

No aerobridge An interesting aspect will that the shuttle bus will take the passengers directly from the terminal to the aircraft. "This being a small aircraft, there will be no need of an aerobridge here," an airport source said.

BIAL has deliberately chosen to start off in a small manner with an airline that transports less passengers, another source explained. "They are wary of technical glitches or other teething issues that new airports encounter. The recent problems faced by the second airport at Goa too has made them play very safe," he added.

Other domestic airlines will shift here gradually while international operations will take many months to start, the source said.

An insider said that due to the huge effort involved in shifting its operations to T2, Indigo will not be shifting base. "As of now, we have no plans to shift from T1 to T2," said an Indigo source. BIAL refused to share any details about the launch.

of the greenhouse to one-tenth, the startup has managed to bring down the cost from Rs 30 lakh to Rs 60,000, making it accessible and affordable. Mokkalapati says, "Agricultural incomes are dependent on climate risk. Kheyti provides a model of farming which is economically viable and environmentally friendly too."

Helping farmers meet the dual purpose of generating more income as well as creating diversified sources to do it, the 37-year-old says, "Small farmers usually extend their surplus income to buy cattle, which cost Rs 50,000 to Rs 80,000, the same amount Kheyti is helping them earn."

As the award propels Kheyti into much-needed and well-deserved recognition, they are eager to scale up and expand their operations. This is just the beginning of the greenhouse revolution.

Live music, food festival and night market in Bhubaneswar from today

Continued from page-1

Davar and Salman Yousuf.

Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia and Ustad Taufiq Qureshi will also perform in the show on January 19, while there will be a laughter riot with stand-up comedians Sunil Grover and Shilpa Rao taking the stage on January 20. The International Food Festival will also start from Sunday. The festival will have around 35 stalls, including six international stalls where people will find culinary delights from 16 different countries and 24 states. The much-talked-about night flea market will also start from Sunday and continue till January 29.

BJP's two day long national executive meet to begin from Monday

Continued from page-1

brass could also assign tasks for the party leaders and cadre.

The national executive is also expected to pass resolutions on political and economic situations, and on foreign policy, with a special mention about India's G-20 presidency. The meeting could also see the BJP leadership giving a mantra on how to win the 160 parliamentary seats that the party's assessment shows could be problematic during the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

According to party sources, Mr Modi will likely also hold a road show. While Mr Nadda will give the inaugural speech, Mr Modi is likely to give the valedictory address.

The BJP leadership will also assess the poll preparedness of its organisational units in states where Assembly polls are slated this year.

7.6 quake damages buildings in Indonesia, felt in Australia

Continued from page-1

Dwikorita Karnawati said.

The US Geological Survey said the quake was centred at a depth of 105 kilometres (65 miles) not far from Australia's northern tip. Deeper quakes tend to cause less surface damage but are more widely felt.

More than 1,000 people in northern Australia, including in the city of Darwin, reported to Geoscience Australia that they felt the quake. The Joint Australian Tsunami Warning Centre said the quake didn't pose a tsunami threat to the mainland or any islands or territories.

Australian singer Vassy wrote on Twitter that it was the longest quake she had felt.

"We ran out of the house in the middle of the night. I've never experienced earthquake that lasted that long and felt so strong. It was rather scary," Vassy wrote. "Woke us up in the middle of the night."

Indonesia is frequently shaken by earthquakes and lies on the Pacific 'Ring of Fire,' the arc of seismic faults around the Pacific Ocean where most of the world's earthquakes and volcanic eruptions occur.



brewing. As the US economy slows and could fall into recession, the jarring impact will be felt all over including India. The US accounts for nearly 40% of India's jewellery exports, and gems and jewellery are the third largest in India's export bucket.

World Bank's grim warning

On Tuesday, the World Bank sent out a grim warning that the world's financial health was "on a razor's edge". In its latest Global Economic Prospects report, it said the world's economy was expected to expand just 1.7% this year, a serious downgrade from its previous estimate of 2.9% in 2022. If this turns out true, this decade would see the world entering recession twice over, something that has not happened in 80 years since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

"The risks that we warned of six months ago have materialised and our worst-case scenario is now our baseline scenario," World Bank economist Ayhan Kose said. This will drag down development and hit the poorer countries hardest. The Bank expects growth to claw back to 2.7% in 2024. Elevated inflation, an aggressive central bank policy aimed at throttling unnecessary spending and the shocks of the Ukraine war are some of the reasons being cited for the extreme slowdown.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) concurred with the gloomy outlook. The bank's managing director Kristalina Georgieva warned last week that a third of the world's economy would fall into recession in 2023. The World Bank's report said advanced economies would expand just 0.5% in 2023, down from 2.5% last year. The 20 countries that use the euro will see zero growth. China is projected to expand by just 4.3% following the lifting of Covid restrictions.

"The world's three major engines of growth — the United States, the euro area and China — are undergoing a period of pronounced weakness," the World Bank said in its report.

Author Sreekala P Vijayan Receives PK Raghavan Memorial English Literature award

Bengaluru (KCN): Author Sreekala P Vijayan receives PK Raghavan Memorial English Literature prize 2022 for her fictional poetry book, Mridula—a woman's poetic revelations. She has contributed a lot to the field of literature. She is the academic



Incharge of Soundarya Central School. She has mentored many students and made few to release their own poetry books. She is an editor, translator and a newsreader too. The award ceremony was held at Kottayam. Motivational Strips founder Shiju H Pallithazheth received award for his book Katashi Tales in the story category. Bangalore based Rema Prasanna Pisharody has also received award for her poetry collections.

Police mitras to assist during Hockey World Cup



BHUBANESWAR(KCN): More than 150 police mitras have been engaged to assist the citizens and the visitors during the ongoing FIH Men's Hockey World Cup. The Commissionerate Police had earlier selected at least 1,000 youths from different slums of the capital to assist the cops in controlling crowd and regulating the traffic during major occasions. Additional police commissioner Umashankar Dash asked the police mitras will provide assistance to the citizens and visitors, check illegal parking, regulate traffic and main-

tain close coordination with the cops. The authorities are making all efforts to ensure smooth passage of the fortnight-long Dot Fest. The contribution of the police mitras is very important during the mega sporting event, said Bhubaneswar Development Authority vice-chairman Balwant Singh. Police mitras will also be engaged in 'May I Help You' desks set up in about 16 major locations of the city for the hockey World Cup. They have been provided with T-shirts and caps to be visible.

English test for India

India and England have served some fine clashes in recent times. With the likelihood of the winner rubber-stamping a spot directly in the quarterfinals, there is a lot riding on their group match in Rourkela on Sunday. A look at some of the talking points... Goals on the menu Both sides kept a clean sheet during wins in

marry consistency with winning all the key moments. If they aim to do that in 2023, doing it in front of a raucous home crowd will be a good start. Emergence of Hardik The 24-year-old is living up to the promise he showed when he first broke through before the Olympics. Perhaps, it shouldn't be a



their opening group stage matches against Wales (England, 5-0) and Spain (India, 2-0). Against each other, though, the likelihood of a goal-fest is high. In the last four matches against each other spanning three competitions, there have been 25 goals, including a madcap 4-4 game at the Commonwealth Games.

Watch out for PCs

Both sides not only conceded a fair few penalty corners but ended up conceding a lot of goals from that situation. Take the two-legged Pro League tie from last year, for instance. In a 24 hour period, both sides, between them, scored 13 goals. Out of the 13, 10 came from those situations. Both sides have a good battery and will be on the lookout to get the foot of a defender early doors.

Indian players will be keen to build on their opening-game win vs Spain 'Bazball' mentality in hockey

The experienced forward, Sam Ward, gave an interesting interview to the London Times before the side's opener against Wales. In it, he said: "We have gone down the 'Bazball' mentality, really, and it's great our coaches are really encouraging that... removing the fear of failure, just like Ben (Stokes) and Brendon (McCullum) have done. We feel the same as Stokes has done about cricket. We want to excite people, entertain people." England have always had players capable of individual moments but have never managed to

surprise because he has hockey DNA. Even then, he's been running games, essaying multiple midfield roles (dribbler, passer, creative hook) in a 60-minute period. Against Spain, his mazy run and finish was a delightful throwback to a goal he scored against Great Britain at the Olympics in 2021. His energy will be key against an English side who will not shy away from getting physical.

Bandurak, a big threat

This may come as a surprise but one of the top-scorers across elite international hockey is Nick Bandurak, who only made his national bow last year. In his nascent career, he averages more than a goal a game. He once again showcased his love for goal-scoring with a brace against Wales. Confidence can be a funny thing but right now he's enjoying loads of it. What's more, he has already scored four in three matches against India.

India's quiet attacking man

While the likes of Amit Rohidas and Hardik grabbed eyeballs with their goals, Akashdeep Singh was in his element picking the ball in areas where it's conventionally hard to defend. Referred to as the half space, he frequently picked up the ball there and looked to create openings. He might have made his name as a forward but he has reinvented his position as a withdrawn attacker in recent years. It's a position without many alternatives for coach Graham Reid & Co. If he can do more of that, India will benefit, in the short and long run.

IND vs SL: Kohli, Gill power India to series sweep with record 317-run win

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Virat Kohli lit up the dead rubber with an epic 166 not out, his third century in four innings, as India annihilated a clueless Sri Lanka with a record 317-run win in the third ODI to sweep the series here on Sunday.

Skipper Rohit Sharma (42 off 49) and Shubman Gill (116 off 97) shared a fluent 95-run opening partnership before Kohli (166 not out off 110) propelled India to a daunting 390 for five with his 74th international hundred and 46th in the 50-over format.

Sri Lanka succumbed to the high-quality fast bowling of Mohammad Siraj who struck four times inside the 10 overs to shut the door on the opposition. Sri Lanka were all out for a meagre 73 in 22 overs, highlighting the gulf between the two teams. It is the biggest margin of victory by runs in the history of men's ODIs.

The night well and truly belonged to 'King' Kohli. The 34-year-old, who had ended a nearly three-year wait for an international hundred in the Asia Cup last year, showed that he is back to his best. Kohli is now only three short of equalling Sachin Tendulkar's record of 49 ODI centuries. Kohli's conversion ratio is remarkable as he got to his 46th ton in 259 innings while Tendulkar had taken 452 innings to get to 49 centuries.

Before Kohli took over, Gill had played some high-quality strokes en route to his second ODI hundred. With that effort, he repaid the faith of the team management which had picked him to open ahead of Ishan Kishan, who came into the series with a double hundred under his belt.

The 23-run over from Lahiru Kumara in the initial stage of the innings got India going. After Rohit flicked him for a six over deep mid-wicket, Gill collected four straight boundaries off Kumara, three on the offside and one was a leg-side flick off a full toss. Rohit too was looking good at the other end but got out against the run of play while trying one of his signature shots, the front foot pull.

Gill and Kohli then shared a 131-run stand in which they were hardly troubled by the Sri Lankan bowlers.

Kohli began the innings with a flurry of boundaries

before accumulating runs with his exemplary running between the wickets. His first of his eight sixes came in the 80s and it was a mishit over long-on, leaving him in a chuckle.

He got to 99 with a boundary which came following a collision with Ashen Bandara and Jeffrey Vandersay, who both were running towards the ball from deep square leg and deep midwicket. Both



the fielders were eventually stretched off the field. The last 10 overs saw India smashing 116 runs with Kohli going ballistic after his century. It was raining sixes from his bat post the milestone and one over long on had shades of MS Dhoni's helicopter shot that left Kohli with a big smile. Most of his maximums came in the cow corner region.

In response to India's mammoth total, Sri Lanka never really turned up in the chase. Siraj had Avishka Fernando caught at wideish slip in the second over of the innings. It was a procession thereafter with Siraj running through the top order. Mohammad Shami and Kuldeep Yadav chipped in with a couple of wickets.

Brief scores

India: 390/5 in 50 overs (Virat Kohli 166 not out, Shubman Gill 116; Kasun Rajitha 2/81) Sri Lanka: 73 all out in 22 overs (Nuwanidu Fernando 19; Mohammed Siraj 4/32)

Teams

India: Rohit Sharma (c), Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul (wk), Suryakumar Yadav, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj. Sri Lanka: Avishka Fernando, Nuwanidu Fernando, Kusal Mendis (wk), Ashen Bandara, Charith Asalanka, Dasun Shanaka (c), Wanindu Hasaranga, Jeffrey Vandersay, Chamika Karunaratne, Kasun Rajitha, Lahiru Kumara.

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