

Govt efforts alone cannot be successful, people's participation required: PM Modi

New Delhi(KCN): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday underlined the importance of people's participation in the efforts for wa-

ter conservation and said the governments' attempts alone cannot be successful. In his virtual address at the first national conference of water ministers from states, Modi said water should be a subject of cooperation, collaboration and coordination among states and asked them to plan in advance in view of the fast pace of urbanisation. His remarks assume significance as disputes over water-sharing have lingered among several states for decades. The prime minister said he thinks that under the MGNREGA maximum work should be



done on water as he called for spreading awareness among people for its conservation. Water is most consumed in sectors such as industry and farming, and awareness should be spread among them, he said, advocating for crop diversity and natural farming. Modi also urged states to work on waste management and sewage treatment to stop water bodies from being polluted, and said they can use the 'Namami Gange' scheme as a template. People's participation in any programme develops a sense of ownership among them which, he said, is a key to success. Modi cited the 'Swachh Bharat' (clean India) campaign as a successful example of this. The all-India water ministers' meet on the theme 'Water Vision@2047' brings together key policy makers to discuss "ways to harness water resources for sustainable development", the government has said. The Union Jal Shakti Ministry is organising the national level conference on water.

Ram Mandir in Ayodhya to be ready by Jan 1, Shah says in poll-bound Tripura

HYDERABAD(KCN): The completion of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya on January 1, 2024, will set the ball rolling for the crucial Lok Sabha polls to be held next year. The opening date of the temple will be announced after the completion. Addressing a rally at Tripura on Thursday, Union home minister Amit Shah announced: "January 1, 2024 ko Gagan chumbi Ram Mandir aapko taiyar milega (the magnificent Ram Mandir, touching the sky, will be ready on January 1, 2024)." It is not only the opening of the Ram temple but the tempo of the 2024 battle royal that will also be set by the opening of the new Parliament building and India's presidency of the G-20 summit by the end of this year.



formed the bhoomi puja at the spot without any delay." With the grand opening of the Ram temple only a couple of months before the 2024 general election (due in April-May 2024), the BJP is all set to play its tried and tested aggressive Hindutva card, sources said. By playing majoritarian politics, the BJP hopes to to strengthen

working on transformation in every field under principles of the 5T charter. Addressing 378 young officials of the 2020 civil services batch, the chief minister said that the initiatives of the state government have resulted in a visible transformation in a number of sectors. He said the state's success in developing a robust disaster management system, turning Odisha into a food surplus state,

making the state a global hotspot of international sports, reshaping Odisha's economy and making it attractive for investors and massive infrastructure drive have brought Odisha to a leadership position among states. Describing Odisha as a model welfare state, the CM said it is reaching out to every vulnerable section, providing them economic justice, and making endeavours to bring them to the mainstream. "I believe of women can bring about the real transformation of the state," he added. The CM also launched the online registration of pension Adalat and the promotion Adalat. The pension and promotion adalats are functioning for a couple of years. The online registration system has been started in these adalats under the 5T charter.

Washington(KCN): The Biden administration has proposed a massive hike in immigration fees, including the much sought-after H-1B visas for high-skilled foreign workers which is very popular among Indian tech professionals. Under the proposed rule, published by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) on Wednesday, the application for the H-1B visa increases from USD 460 to USD 780, and L-1



from USD 460 to USD 1,385. The application fee for O-1 visas has been proposed to increase

from USD 460 to USD 1,055. The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in spe-

ciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. Technology compa-

tion, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) said that USCIS is primarily funded by fees charged to applicants and petitioners for immigration and naturalisation benefit requests. These fee collections fund the cost of fairly and efficiently adjudicating immigration benefit requests, including those provided without charge to refugees, asylum, and certain other applicants or petitioners, it argued.

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Rahul concludes UP leg of Bharat Jodo Yatra; draws many, disappoints a few

LUCKNOW(KCN): Congress MP Rahul Gandhi completed the UP leg of the Bharat Jodo Yatra by stepping into Panipat in neighbouring Haryana through Kairana in the Shamli district on Thursday evening. However, during the course of the UP leg of Yatra, the Congress MP drew support from unexpected quarters and a huge crowd joined him in his sojourn but left a few, especially the RLD workers, disappointed as well. The Bharat Jodo Yatra resumed its journey around 6:45 am on Thursday after the night halting at Ailum village in Shamli district with a huge crowd marching through the hinterland braving the chilling cold wave conditions. While the yatra drew a huge crowd, it also left the workers and leaders of Jayant Chaudhury-led Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) high and dry who claimed that they were ignored by Rahul Gandhi and the yatris while passing through Kandhla town in Shamli. Notably, following the diktat of their president Jayant Chaudhury, a number of senior leaders, including three MLAs and workers,

of RLD were prepared to welcome the yatra. RLD leaders said they had also made arrangements for Rahul Gandhi to stop at the statue of former PM Chaudhury Charan Singh at



Kandhla to pay tribute to him. "He did not pay any attention to us. We had been standing by the roadside for hours to

welcome the yatra but it passed through even without acknowledging the RLD workers," said an agitated RLD leader. He was joined by a party worker who accused



the Congress MP of insulting Chaudhury Charan Singh and the farmers' community by not stopping at his statue and paying homage

to him. However, earlier around 10 am on Thursday, the Yatra took a break at Unchagaon village in Shamli district for nearly five hours. A special VIP camp was set up on land owned by farmer Ramchandra Singh at Unchagaon for Rahul Gandhi to take rest, while a separate camp was set up for other yatris. A kitchen was also established over 10 bigha land where 90 cooks, ferried from the Ajmer district of Rajasthan, prepared food for the Yatris. As per the Congress sources, the cooks had reached Unchagaon on Wednesday evening along with four trucks full of necessary food items, spices, grains and vegetables. Interestingly, Motichur laddoos, green vegetables, Chapatis, Pooris, and curries were there on the menu which was similar for VIPs and common yatris. Rahul Gandhi was accompanied by senior Congress leaders including General Secretary (Communications in-charge) Jairam Ramesh and the party's state chief Brijlal Khabri while he made his way through Shamli district to enter Haryana.

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Regulation of Trains due to developmental work

In East Coast Railway

Kolkata(KCN): In view of the non-Interlocking work in connection with doubling between Koraput-Manabar & Koraput-Dumuriput sections in East Coast Railway, the railway authority has decided to regulate the following train services:

Cancellation of Trains:

- The 18107 Rourkela-Jagdalpur Express will remain cancelled today.
- The 18108 Jagdalpur-Rourkela Express will remain cancelled tomorrow.

Short Termination/Short Origination of Trains:

- The 18005 Howrah-Jagdalpur Express leaving Howrah o-n today will be short terminated at Titlagarh.

- The 18006 Jagdalpur-Howrah Express scheduled to leave Jagdalpur o-n January 7, 2023 will be short originated from Titlagarh. Diversion of Trains via Dumuriput-Koraput B Cabin-Koraput A Cabin-Manabar

- The 18005 Howrah-Jagdalpur Express leaving Howrah from tomorrow to January 9, 2023

- The 18006 Jagdalpur-Howrah Express leaving Jagdalpur from January 8 to 10, 2023

- The 18107 Rourkela-Jagdalpur Express leaving Rourkela tomorrow to January 9, 2023

- The 18108 Jagdalpur-Rourkela Express leaving Jagdalpur from January 7, 2023 to January 10, 2023

Budget Utilization On Rise

Bhubaneswar(KCN): While Budget utilization during Current Fiscal has increased, the State Government has urged the Development Departments to take steps to further increase the pace of expenditure to ensure full utilization of Budget Provision. Vishal Dev, Principal Secretary Finance has presented detailed report on Fiscal Performance up to December 2022 in the All Secretary Meet held on 4 January.

Principal Secretary Finance has informed that the Budget Utilization has increased by about 1.15%.

There is also increase in expenditure by 25.6% against 22.5% increase in Budget Provision.

So far Programme expenditure as percentage of Budget Provision is 46.34% till December, 2022 compared to 45.20% during previous year. Total expenditure as percentage of Budget Provision, which includes Budget Estimate and supplement-

ary Budget is 54% till December, 2022 which shows 2.6% increase in budget utilization compared to previous year. Utilization in Agri-



culture & Allied Sector is 54.4% compared to 53% previous year. Infrastructure spending is 53% against 34.6% previous year. Percentage utilization of budget in social sector is 54.9% compared to 53.1% previous year.

The Programme Expenditure in Agriculture and Allied sector till December, 2022 has been 53.2% of BE compared to 52.5% previous year.

Budget utilization has increased by about 0.7% over previous year. In absolute term, it has increased by 20.2%. The Programme Expenditure in Infrastructure till December 2022 is 54.7% of BE compared to 32.7% previous year.

In absolute term, it has increased by 103%.

The Social Sector Programme Expenditure till December, 2022 is 46.5% of BE compared to 46.4% against previous year.

Programme expenditure in other sectors till December, 2022 has been 32.8% compared to 48.2% previous year.

The total programme expenditure till December, 2022 is 46.3% of BE in comparison to 45.2% previous year.

The Budget utilization has increased by 1.1% and 25.6% increase in spending under programme expenditure during this period.

Parking of funds at the bank account of the implementing agencies should be avoided, advised Principal Secretary Finance.

Submission of Utilization Certificate to be presented in time and it should be given priority to ensure release of Central Assistance, pointed out a senior officer..

4.14% growth in freight loading, earnings of SER increases

Kolkata(KCN): South Eastern Railway (SER) loaded a total 149.23 million tonnes of originating freight in the first nine months (April-December) of the current financial year (2022-23) registering a growth of 4.14% in comparison to the corresponding period of previous finan-

cial year. During this period, the revenue generation from originating freight loading has also increased to Rs 13315.29 crore as against Rs. 11916.82 crore in the same period of the previous year. Therefore, the earnings performance of SER has enhanced by 11.74%.

SER has also registered a remarkable growth in Coal loading in the first nine months i.e. April to December of the current financial year (2022-23). During this period, SER has loaded 38.05 million tonnes of Coal, which is 24.92% more than the corresponding period

of previous fiscal. Cement loading has also registered a growth of 23.24% with a loading of 11.56 million tonnes during this period. The main commodities of freight loading during this period were Iron Ore, Coal, Pig Iron & Finished Steel, Cement, Petroleum Products etc.

CM opens new MCH

Sundargarh(KCN): Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday inaugurated the Government Medical College and Hospital at Sundargarh.

He interacted with the

Odisha has decided to set up new Medical Colleges & Hospitals in different districts to strengthen healthcare services to the people of Odisha. In this direction, Gov-

Medical Education sector in the State. This Medical College & Hospital has been built by NTPC Ltd. at a cost of Rs 417.77 crore out of its Re-

settlement and Rehabilitation Community Development Fund. The Medical College has obtained the Letter of Permission from the National Medical Commission (NMC) to admit 100 Medical Under Graduate Students annually for the academic session



1st batch of UG students of the Medical College and wished them all success for their future.

He also advised them to abide by the 5T principles and render dedicated service to the patients of the State.

The government of

ernment Medical College & Hospital at Sundargarh has been set up in joint collaboration with NTPC which will give a boost to the availability of specialised health care to the people of Western Odisha as well as to further strengthen the

the university were inaugurated by the Chief Minister. He also inaugurated the new sculpture garden constructed in the university premises and praised the work of the sculptors and launched two time-

country including Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, New Delhi, and Rajasthan.

Further 12 students from state government schools have got admission into the Medical College under the state quota.

Culture Varsity Ceremony

Bhubaneswar(KCN): Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday inaugurated the 24th Foundation Day Ceremony of Utkal University of Culture here. ACS Odia Language, Literature, and Culture,

Satyabrata Sahu, Vice Chancellor Utkal University of Culture, Bymokesh Tripathy, Director Ranjan Kumar Das graced the occasion. On this occasion, three new academic blocks of

the university were inaugurated by the Chief Minister. He also inaugurated the new sculpture garden constructed in the university premises and praised the work of the sculptors and launched two time-

less books— Illustrated Palm leaf manuscript and Timeless Tales—published by the State Museum. Shri Patnaik visited the art exhibition by the students of the department of visual arts of the university.

Pact for 5G Lab

Bhubaneswar(KCN): Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (SOA) Deemed to be University here on Thursday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Jio Platforms Ltd (JPL) for establishment of a 5G Lab and collaboration towards exploring other opportunities including building new technologies such as optical communication and 6G.

A separate MoU was also signed during the program between SOA and the Software Tech-

nology Parks of India (STPI) with the objective of developing skilled manpower in the domains of interest such as management and emerging technologies through the participatory mode.

The MoU was signed during the launching of the 5G services in Odisha at the SOA auditorium which was attended by union minister for Education, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Mr. Dharmendra Pradhan and minister for Rail-

ways, Communications, Electronics and Information Technology, Ashwini Vaishnav.



SOA's Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof. Pradipta Kumar Nanda and STPI's Director General Mr. Arvind Kumar signed one of the MoUs while the university's

Director Prof. Manas Kumar Mallick and JPL's President Dr. Ravi P. Gandhi signed the

other. The MoU between JPL and SOA underlined that JPL and/or its affiliates and group companies would work with SOA to meet the grow-

ing requirement of research and training in the latest 5G standard—5G Standalone (SA), optical fiber networks, work on development of new services and use-cases on the 5G platform, optical fiber communication as well as other associated technology domains such as Beyond 5G (B5G) and to work on other projects.

JPL would establish 'Jio Standalone Technology Test Labs' in collaboration with SOA and work with developers of

the university for sharing necessary technical information which might be necessary to execute the projects. In this regard, JPL may also set up a 5G test bed at SOA University.

Mr. Vaishnav, while on a visit to SOA on September 15 last, had suggested that a university like SOA needed to set up a 5G lab while promising all assistance for the venture. A world class 5G lab had already been established at IIT, Madras to provide a boost to the 5G technology, he

had said. SOA Deemed to be University would help execute the project by providing the necessary infrastructure for setting up the lab and facilitate the training and developmental activities.

SOA and STPI, as per the MoU signed between them, would work together to develop skilled manpower in the domains of interest such as management, emerging technologies through a participatory mode including internships, place-

ments, field visits, joint programs, projects and consultancy.

The scope of the MoU included designing and delivering various industry-oriented training and certification program for individual, corporate and industry professionals at the national and international level in the domain and technologies like Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML), to enhance the start-up eco-system in Odisha.

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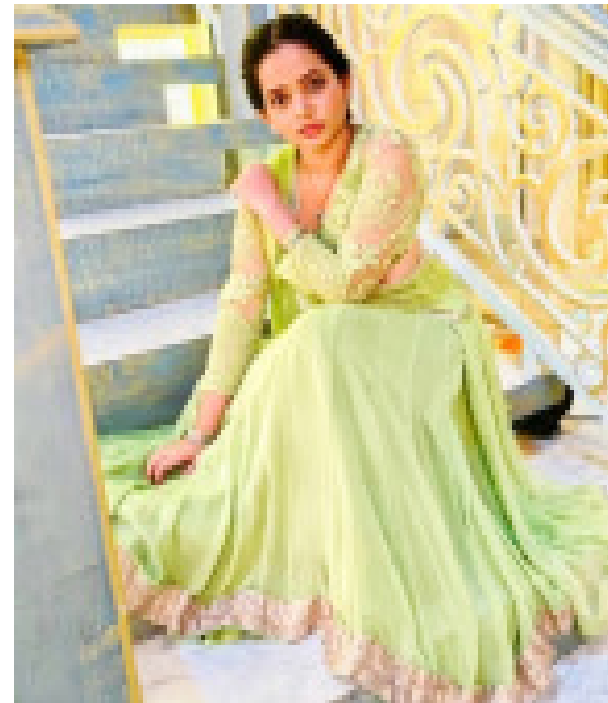
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Now a days the heroines have nothing much in the film, except to flaunt their glamour: Aarushi Sharma

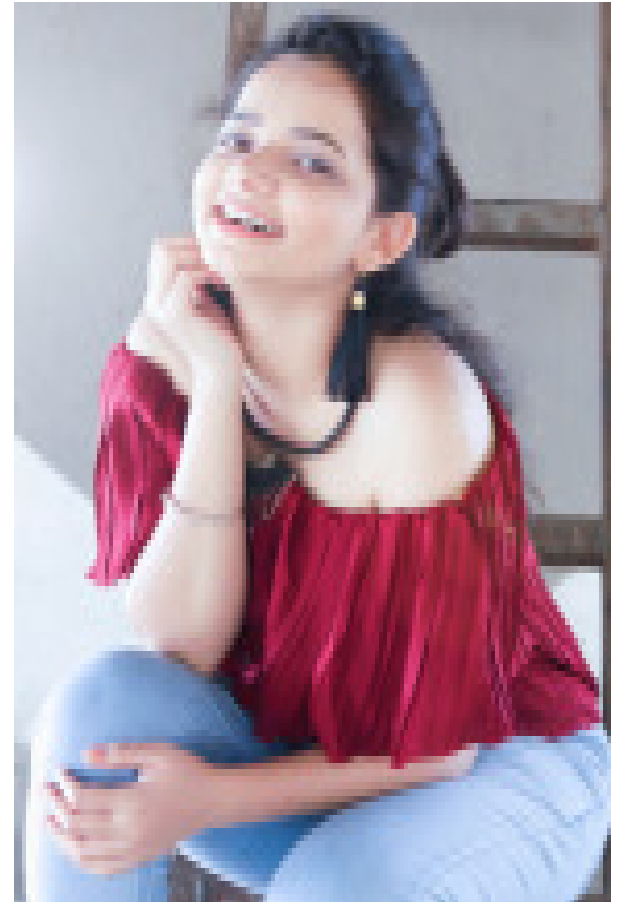
The multi-faceted talented actress “Jag Jaanani Maa Vaishnodevi” and Her performance is being widely appreciated and her role as Muskaan is being



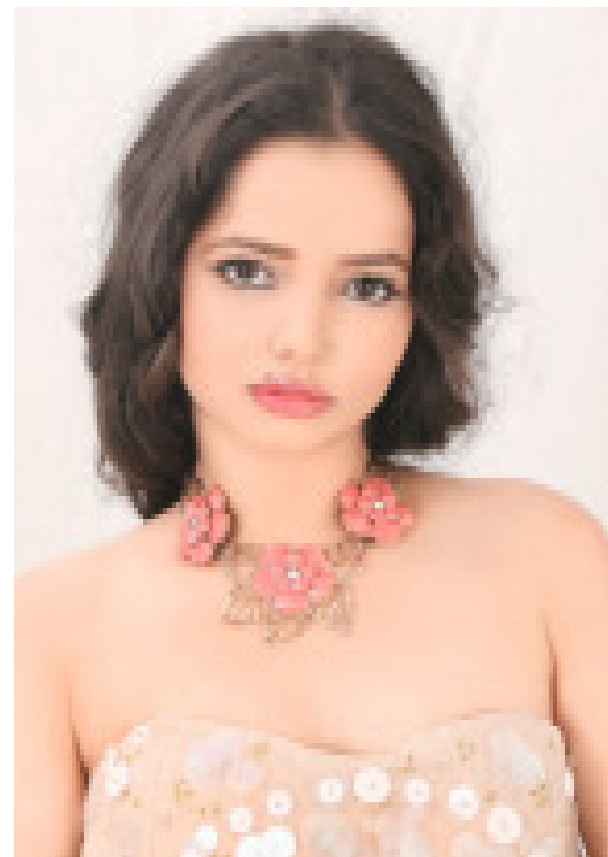
Aarushi Sharma “Muskaan” is now who has left an in-



ciated and her role as Muskaan is being



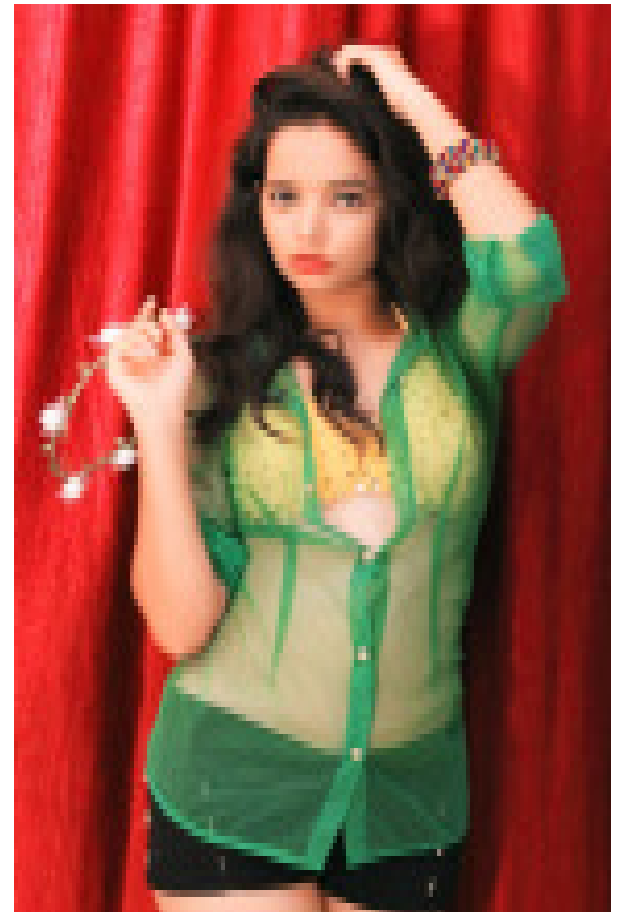
M i s h r a start soon. That way (Deepshikha) and I was highly ben-



delible impression of her acting on TV serial “Ranju Ki



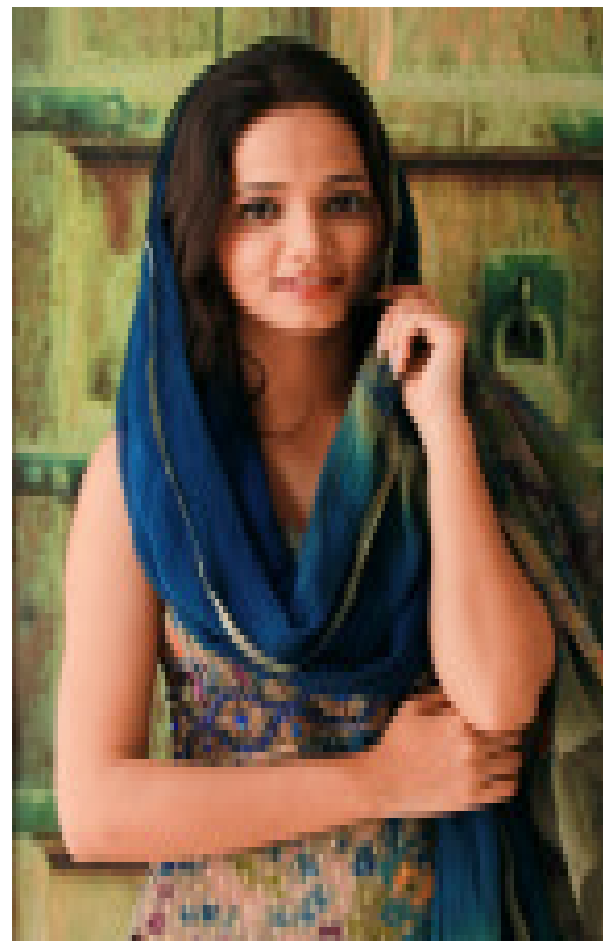
highly acclaimed by the viewers. third daughter. My mother brings us



harasses our family. Till now my role was that of an innocent and bubbly girl. But henceforth my role will be different and the viewers will be taken aback by my new role. The viewers will certainly like the new twist in the story. About her film ventures Aarushi says “I had signed a film in the South. However the project could not start early due



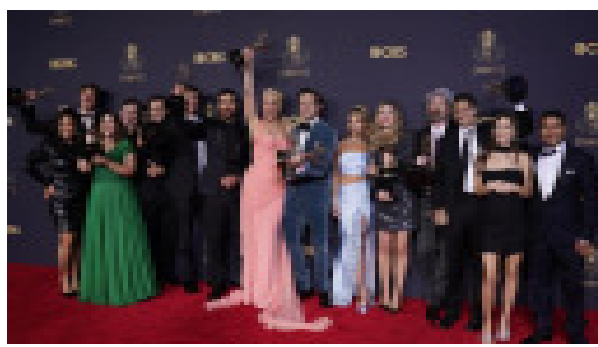
viewers' mind with her TV serials like telecast now a days on “Dangal TV”.



About her role in “Ranju Ki up- we four sisters. My father deserts

'Emmys So White': Netizens call out award show for 'fake diversity'

Los Angeles: The 73rd Primetime Emmy Awards concluded on a disappointing note on Monday. While setting a record for diversity, with 49 black or indigenous people of colour (BIPOC) nominated across all categories, all major acting trophies went to white actors at the Emmys 2021. According to Variety, actors that were seen as solid contenders included Billy Porter and Mj Rodriguez and Kenan Thompson and Bowen Yang (Saturday Night Live) --



(‘Pose’), the late Michael K. Williams (‘Lovecraft Country’) but in the end, all ended up empty-handed. The 2021 ceremony

has undoubtedly failed to meet the expectations of people. Calling out the event, a netizen tweeted, “Not a single Black actor won tonight. Not a single Asian actor won tonight. Not a single Latino actor won tonight.” Another one wrote, “#Emmys do this every year: Nominate a diverse selection of our faves, only to give them to the same white actors and/or stories. Middle-aged white folks in conflict or British period pieces will win over nuanced, multi-dimensional plots involving characters of colour.” #EmmysSoWhite has been trending all over Twitter since morning. “Black host, Black announcer hell even Black music. We do winning everything but win. #Emm-ysSoWhite,” a social media user wrote while condemning Emmys 2021. “Lovecraft country won nothing tonight and 98% of the winners were white despite the amount of black talent around #EmmysSoWhite,” a netizen tweeted. This time Black performers had a strong showing at the event. But all efforts went in vain when nominees of colour failed to win most categories.

Ignoring the human aspects of the farmers in agricultural development

Earth is the most unique gift of nature and along with living on this earth, we grow all the food here for earning a living. This is because of the giving tendency of this earth. The earth's sense of giving is also our basic existence. Cultivating the seeds and turning

them into plants, trees and becoming the life of the living beings is the biggest favor of the earth. The most emotionally connected with the earth is a farmer who becomes the medium of charity for the produce of the earth. In fact, he is most connected to the ground. The importance of the farmer has not received the respect it deserves in the

Letter to Editor

Take exemplary action against tipsy air travellers

Should we stop serving liquor onboard?

Two back to back incidents onboard in flights that are coming to India from New York and Bangkok respectively have shaken anyone and everyone. They cannot be put under the carpet. The culprits must be given exemplary punishments that go a long way in ensuring safe air travels. In the first incident, a Mumbai based businessman Shekhar Mishra boarded a New York to Delhi Air India flight- business class. After taking enough booze, Mishra went up to a woman passenger and urinated on her in a full view of other passengers. Just spare a thought for the poor lady who had to face such a scary situation. You can not say that he had urinated under the influence of liquor. No, this is a lame defence. He didn't urinate on any male co-passenger. That proves a point beyond any doubt that he was a sex maniac. And equally shocking is the fact that the crew took no action against Mishra. And did not support the shocked woman. Did you know about the incident, Ratan Tata, chairman emeritus of Tata Group?

The only good thing is that the brave woman pursued the case tooth and nail. And it's now that AI has imposed a measly 30 day flight ban on Mishra. That's too late and too late considering the fact that the incident took place on last 26 November, 2022.

Noted writer Seema Mustafa has rightly said- "Flights with Indian men aboard are becoming a security risk. They beat up fellow passengers; they abuse the air stewards and now this. Sheer dirt and filth."

Now the big question: Can't we stop serving liquor in flights? What is so great about it? This very incident should be a wake-up call for all of us. On my recent return flight from Dubai to Delhi, a young passenger just two seats away from me was creating ruckus for more and more liquor. The Air India staff had served him enough, yet he was asking for more to the embarrassment of his family. He was not listening either his family or crew members. Thankfully he didn't urinate on his co passengers. But given his tipsy condition, he could easily become another Mishra. The authorities concerned must think whether serving liquor to passengers can be discontinued? However, the noted ad professional Preet KS Bedi says that you can not take such a drastic step because of couple of black sheeps.

An in another incident that also happened recently, an Indian passenger's refusal to straighten his reclined seat before take-off first led to an acrimonious argument with a stewardess on board a taxiing Bangkok-Kolkata flight and then a full-blown assault involving some fellow flyers who decided he should be taught a lesson. A viral video of the December 27 fracas on the Thai Smile Airways flight prompted the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) to institute a suo

flourishing urban culture. Basically the farmer does the

hard work to grow the crop, but he is still on the margins and the middlemen who buy and sell the crop grown by him are in the mainstream and all the glory is tied to them. If today's farmer is being inspired to commit suicide, then behind it is the economics of agriculture based on middlemen.

It is said in the Atharvaveda that the Gods cultivated sweet grain-barley, rice etc. in the best land with water, at that time Indra was the protector of the plows (Sirpati) and the best giver Maruts were the farmers. Kutsitah nashayati iti ki naashah means he who destroys sorrow, inferiority and evil is a farmer. The condition of poverty and famine is destroyed by the attainment of food grains.

motu probe and register a case with the airport police station in Kolkata.

Union aviation minister Jyotiraditya Scindia tweeted, "...Such behaviour is unacceptable." Mr. Scindia, you must take strong actions against such travellers. Tweets are not suffice.

Meanwhile, the airlines said the take-off had been "slightly delayed" as a result and "the incident has been taken care of as we followed the flight safety procedures in accordance with international standards." Since Thai Smile hadn't reported the incident, regulator DGCA and the aviation security bureau both sought a report from the full-service carrier, which currently doesn't have a country head in India. "Thai Smile Airways feels sorry for this. Our flight crews have already provided support to the persons affected by the incident," the airline tweeted.

Experts say since the episode took place aboard a foreign airliner and abroad, the scope and jurisdiction of Indian agencies to act against unruly passengers is apparently limited. BCAS's police complaint is against the flyer who started the assault as well as the one who was targeted for not following safety instructions.

It is said that there were passengers seated in 38 A, B and C. When the crew asked him to straighten his seat during take-off, the person in 37C said he had a backache. The crew tried explaining that the seat must be in upright position (for safety reasons). The airline quoted the passenger as telling the crew, "I fly often, I know what to do." The stewardess then told the passenger that if he didn't follow safety rules, the crew would be forced to report him to the pilot. "Ok, tell him. I am not scared," he allegedly said.

Finally, those who travel often know that some passengers refuse to tow the requests of captain of the plane and other crew members. Even when it is announced that "All passengers are requested to take their seats as the weather is rough", these 'problems flyers' keep on moving from one side to another. Only God knows what kind of joy or pleasure they get in flouting the simple instructions. They forget that they are risking the lives of their so many co-passengers. Naturally, all such passengers should be punished. The action can be ban of their air travel from 3-5 years as well as police action. And those passengers who argue with crew for vegetarian and non-vegetarian food should also be warned of. Often, we see many travellers creating a scene for food. It is high time that we take a lead in dealing irresponsible travellers. Let us start some exemplary action against Mishra who urinated on a lady.

Vivek Shukla
Ex editor Somaiya Publications,
New Delhi

Dr. Lokendra Singh Kot

The farmer is the one who destroys the bad by produc-

ing food. Due to providing prosperity to the nation and society by removing scarcity and poverty through food production, the farmer has been praised in the Vedas by calling him the husband of food and the owner of the field. It is easy to gauge the development of agriculture from the fact that before independence, the contribution of agricultural sector to the GDP was more than 50 percent, which is currently only about 15 percent. The increasing demand for food grains not only increases the pressure on agriculture, but also various additional efforts are made for more production. There are many challenges for the farmer at the same time where he is benefiting from the use of modern techniques, while he has also opened the doors for accidents from those machinery. Even today, there is special focus on production in agriculture but its human side is yet to be included. Due to predominantly production based policies, the farmer himself becomes secondary. For the last several decades, more attention was paid on how to produce more, but humanity kept disappearing in its desire. Today, the excessive use of pesticides, chemical fertilizers has not only put the lives of farmers at risk, but the common people who consume it are also indirectly becoming victims of many non-communicable diseases. Due to the incomplete definition of agricultural development, today's farmer and common man both are at a great risk. Indigenous agriculture in India relies heavily on human and animal energy sources for various agricultural activities. However, nowadays energy and electricity are widely used in various agricultural activities. At present, the number of agricultural machinery in the country is about 200 million. Due to the small size of the land administration, India is the world's largest market for tractors and other agricultural equipment such as threshing etc. However, the number of tractors used in Indian agriculture is estimated at 2.5 million. India is the largest producer of tractors in the world (0.25 million/year). Apart from being used as an agricultural power source for a variety of activities, tractors are widely used to transport goods, people and even animals.

The increased use of agricultural machinery has increased the production of Indian farms. But, on the other hand the risk of agricultural accidents increases. Injury or loss of a family member due to agricultural accidents causes a huge financial loss not only to the family but to the entire state. The unavailability of adequate and reliable data on the cause and nature of agricultural accidents makes it difficult to measure the economic burden of these risks and identify ways to mitigate them. Most of the world's population, more than 75 percent, is directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. But this is one sector in which there is a deep tendency to overestimate and undervalue the role that good health and safety management can play.

Agriculture is a dangerous business to-

day, with millions of workers facing injuries and deaths around the world. Comparisons between agricultural exposure levels in different countries are difficult because reporting and injury and mortality rates between countries and between countries may not be fully available. In many low-income countries, information about agricultural hazards is not always available. It is important to set the risk statistics correctly. The pain of the injured is well known. However, various other aspects of the problem need to be considered. Agricultural accident has wide ranging consequences. In smallholder agriculture, the loss of agricultural activity can bring severe and intolerable problems to the family. The focus of care should not only be on the injured but also on the family as normal family processes may be disrupted and income may be greatly reduced. At the national level, agricultural risks place a significant burden on the economy. Efficiency is limited and agricultural productivity is declining. Furthermore, in many cases the equipment involved in the accident may need to be replaced, often at great cost. Agriculture is a dangerous business today, with millions of workers facing injuries and deaths around the world. The issue of health and safety of agriculture in a developing country like India is still in its infancy despite the fact that agriculture is still a pillar of their economy. "Agriculture" includes not only farming but also many other related activities such as crop preparation and packing, irrigation, pest management, grain storage, animal husbandry, construction and household chores (watering or firewood, etc.). Agricultural work - and this is one of the main attractions - is being done in a rural area where there is no clear distinction between working and living conditions. Since agricultural work is carried out in rural areas, it depends on the health risks of the rural environment as well as those associated with specific labor processes. Due to the nature of agricultural work, workers in this sector are exposed to a number of risks, which is why health and safety in agriculture is essential. The latest developments in agriculture will not only increase the risks or risks faced by agricultural workers. By using chemicals they may be exposed to toxic substances associated with harmful chemicals which are injurious to health. The use or equipment exposes them to excessive noise pollution, resulting in the accumulation of all these hazards associated with new technologies that may ultimately affect the well-being of these workers, if an effective health and safety approach is put in place to mitigate the effects. The system can be set up against these threats. While it is true that data on agricultural damage are limited, it is clear that such exposures present a serious problem. Unless proper precautionary measures are taken, the problem is likely to increase in size and severity as equipment proliferates. International efforts must be made to balance the reporting of agricultural workplace injuries and ensure adequate access to agricultural employment.

The author is a Freelance Writer and Faculty in Community Medicine Department Govt. Medical College, Ratlam-457001 MP

'Govt to set up committee for Padampur dist soon:' Naveen Patnaik

BHUBANESWAR: The state government has decided to set up a high-level committee to start the process for the formation of a separate Padampur district as promised by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik during the campaign for the recent bypoll there. Announcing this, Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Pramila Mallick said the department is ready to start the process. It is only waiting for direction from the chief minister in this regard. The high-level committee can either be a cabinet sub-committee or an executive committee headed by a senior official of the state government. The new district can be formed either by an executive order or the government may take the legislation way by bringing a bill in the Assembly.

Former Law minister in the Biju Patnaik cabinet Narasingh Mishra said there is no need for taking the matter to the Assembly or form a District Reorganisation Commission. The new district can be announced simply by an executive order as was done by Biju Patnaik to increase the number of districts in the state from 13 to 30. Sources in the know of things, however, said that the state government will not go for the formation of only Padampur district when

there are demands for more than a dozen new districts. Such a decision will be suicidal for the ruling BJD when the elections are less than a year away.



As the chief minister has said that the new Padampur district will be announced before 2023-end, the state government will no doubt form a committee to consider several district demands. In an election year, it will also benefit the ruling BJD to accede to the district demands of some other regions along with Padampur to keep a check on the Opposition. There are demands for new districts from Rourkela in Sundargarh, Titlagarh in Balangir, Berhampur in Ganjam, Rairangpur in Mayurbhanj, Anandpur in Keonjhar, Gunupur in Rayagada, Talcher in Angul, Jaleswar and Soro in Balasore, Banki in Cuttack, Reamal tehsil in Deogarh, Dasapalla in Nayagarh and Bhubaneswar in Khurda. The Padampur district will have to be carved out from the Bargarh district.

Tourism boat operators in Andhra seek exemption from user charges

Vijayawada: Private tour boat operators have appealed to the state government to waive the user charges of Rs 100 per head as their operations on River Godavari to the tourism destination of Papikondalu are hit due to floods and safety issues.

More than 30 boats are being operated on the river to Papikondalu from Gandhi Pochamma and Pochavaram, depending upon patronage from tourists.

The operators say the user charge was recently doubled by the AP Tourism Develop-

ment Corporation. The operation has become so uncertain even during the peak festive season due to floods in the river and safety issues. The boats charge about Rs 1,000 per head.

ment Corporation. The operation has become so uncertain even during the peak festive season due to floods in the river and safety issues. The boats charge about Rs 1,000 per head. They say the cost of diesel as also the food being supplied to the tourists on board has gone up. "We have to pay wages to the staff irrespective of whether the boats are operated or not, on a monthly basis."

The operators also complain about lack of quality amenities at the ghats, like proper accommodation, drinking water, washrooms etc for tourists. Many boat operators are tribals or the Polavaram project-affected people with weak financial clout, they stressed. They have urged the state government to exempt them from paying the user charges at least for two years during which time they hope to recover from the present financial crisis. Meanwhile, the boat operators have been served notices by the forest authorities to ensure they pay another user charge of Rs

2 per head as the boats cross the eco-sensitive zone. "This is because tourists dump waste despite directions not to do so," it was explained.

A boat operator said, "We have spent nearly Rs 5 lakh on each boat for its overhaul to comply with safety norms. There was a long break in the boat operations and we are facing the problem of low occupancy."

The operators also want the state government to promote boating operations in Godavari river by linking pilgrim centres like

Annaram, Dwaraka Tirumala etc and giving wide publicity to such efforts.

A good number of tourists from Hyderabad and other places in Telangana arrive in the temple town of Badrachalam and set sail on Godavari from Pochavaram to Papikondalu and go back, they say.

Boat tourism

> Boat operators submit representations to local MLAs from Polavaram and Rampachodavaram and to the minister of tourism and culture, R.K. Roja, seeking waiver of the user charges.

> Nearly 25,000 tickets have been issued from Pochavaram to Papikondalu and about 17,000 tickets from Gandhi Pochamma to Papikondalu in 2021-22

> Dwindling boat occupancy is a cause of concern hundreds of stakeholders are involved in the boating operations

> Boats charge nearly Rs 1,000 per head

> The boat operators are contemplating the filing of a case to get relief from user charges

COVID-19 crisis: Celebrity deaths in China spark fears over death toll

BEIJING: The growing number of Chinese public figures whose deaths are being made public is prompting people to question the official Covid death toll, according to a media report.

The death of Chu Lanlan, a 40-year-old opera singer, last month came as a shock to many, given how young she was, BBC reported. Her family members said they were saddened by her "abrupt departure", but did not give details of the cause of her death, the report said. China scrapped its strict zero-Covid policy in December and has seen a rapid surge of infections and deaths. There are reports of hospitals and crematoria becoming overwhelmed. But the country has stopped publishing daily case data and has announced only 22 Covid deaths since December, using its own strict criteria. Now, only those who die from respiratory illnesses such as pneumonia are counted.

On Wednesday, the World Health Organization (WHO) warned that China was under-representing the true impact of Covid in the country - in particular deaths.

The BBC reported that Chinese media divulged details surrounding the deaths of 16 scientists from the country's top science and engineering academies from December 21 to 26. However, none of these deaths were

Royal Bengal Tiger skin seized Boudh district in Odisha, third in less than a month

BHUBANESWAR: A joint team of the Crime Branch Special Task Force (STF) and Forest department seized the skin of a Royal Bengal Tiger (RBT) from Boudh district, making it the third such seizure in the state in less than a month. STF officials said a skin of a tiger and a leopard were recovered from the possession of a person during a raid on Tuesday afternoon.

Sources said acting on intel regarding the smuggling of big cat skin, the STF with the help of Boudh Forest Division staff formed a team to carry out the raid near Saluki bridge. Members of the team, who

linked to Covid in their obituaries, prompting wider speculation online.



But the deaths of Chu Lanlan and others are sparking speculation about greater losses than those reported on official accounts.

According to the specialist news website Operawire, Chu Lanlan was a soprano who specialised in Peking Opera - a theatrical art in which performers use speech, song, dance and combat movements to tell stories - and was also involved in charitable causes.

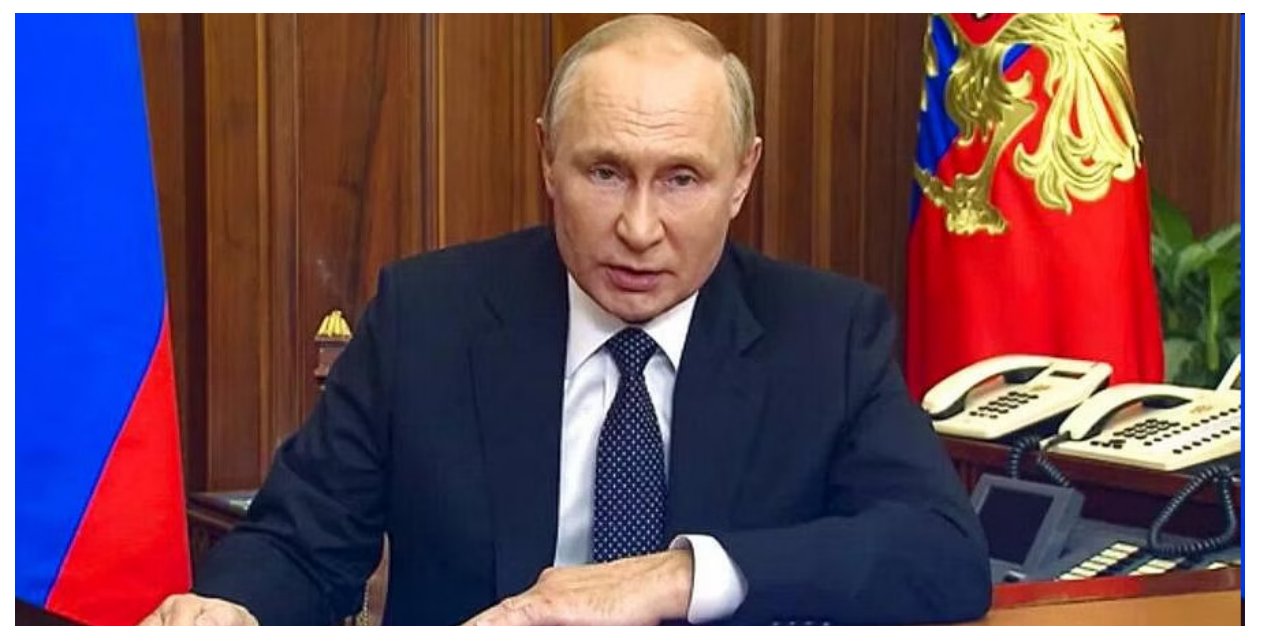
On New Year's Day, news of the death of actor Gong Jintang devastated many Chinese internet users, BBC reported. Gong, 83, was known to many households for his performance in the country's longest-running TV series, 'In-Laws, Out-laws'.

His portrait of Father Kang had captivated fans for more than two decades since the show first aired in 2000. The cause of his death is unclear, but many social media users linked it to the recent deaths of other older people, BBC reported.

posed themselves as customers, struck a deal with the smugglers and asked them to deliver the wildlife item. Soon they nabbed one Himalaya Dash of Olanda village within Badagaon police limits, while another accused managed to flee from the spot. The team recovered the two skins from the possession of the accused. "The accused could not produce any authority in support of the possession of tiger and leopard skins, for which he has been arrested. The skin will be sent to the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun for biological examination," said an STF official.

Putin says ready for Ukraine talks if Kyiv accepts 'new territorial realities'

MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin said on Tuesday that Russia is ready to discuss a peace agreement with Ukraine if Kyiv accepts "new territorial realities" and the need for "the removal of all barriers to the constructive role of Western states."



told Turkish leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan he was open to dialogue with Ukraine if Kyiv accepts territories occupied by Moscow as Russian, the Kremlin said Thursday.

"Putin again confirmed Russia's openness to serious dialogue on the condition of Kyiv authorities fulfilling the well-known and repeatedly voiced requirements of taking into account the new territorial realities," the Kremlin said in a

for peace talks in the phone call with Putin, his office said earlier. Russian troops occupy large swathes of eastern and southern Ukraine.

READ HERE | Russia says phone use allowed Ukraine to target its troops. The Kremlin claims it has annexed the Donetsk, Lugansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions despite not controlling them in their entirety. "The Russian side emphasised the de-

pumping the Kyiv regime with weapons and military equipment, providing it with operational information and targets," the statement added. The leaders also discussed the implementation of a landmark grain deal, brokered by the UN with the help of Turkey, to unblock Ukrainian grain. The Kremlin said the pair discussed "the unblocking of food and fertiliser supplies from Russia" and the need for "the removal of all barriers to Russian exports."

ALSO READ | International spotlight after dead tourist in Odisha found to be Russian tycoon and Putin critic. Russia briefly exited the deal in October after a drone attack on its Black Sea Fleet. It re-entered the deal within days but officials have complained of restrictions on Russian products. Putin sent troops to Ukraine in February last year.

India to Host Y20

New Delhi: Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Anurag Singh Thakur will launch the themes of Y20 summit, logo and website in the Curtain raiser event of Y20 Summit



India on 6 January 2023 at Akashwani Rang Bhawan New Delhi. India is hosting the Y20 summit for the first time.

The event of 6 January will be divided into two sessions: – In first session, logo launch, website launch, release of theme will take place by Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Anurag Singh Thakur. In the second session, panel discussions (young achievers) will take place. Panel discussions will be anchored around how India can harness its youth popu-

lation to be a superpower and discuss the personal success stories of the panelists.

In Youth20 Engagement Group, India's key focus is to bring young leaders from all across the globe together and discuss ideas for a better tomorrow and draft an agenda for action.

The activities to be undertaken by Y20 during our presidency will focus on global youth leadership and partnership. For the next 8 months, there will be Pre summits on the five Y20 themes along with various discussions and seminars at different Universities across states in India in a run up to the final Youth-20 Summit.

For India, the G20 Presidency also marks the beginning of "Amritkaal", the 25-year period beginning from the 75th anniversary of its independence on 15 August 2022, leading up to the centenary of its independence, towards a futuristic, prosperous, inclusive and developed society, distinguished by a human-centric approach at its core. India is playing a significant role in finding workable solutions at the international level to ensure holistic well-being embodying the idea of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.

Rourkela Hockey Stadium Opens

Rourkela(KCN) :Ahead of FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Thursday inaugurated the world's largest seated Birsa Munda

tary to CM VK Pandian, Sports Secretary R Vineel Krishna, and other government officials were present during the inauguration of the Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium.



Hockey Stadium at Rourkela.

Both the Stadium and the Hockey Practice Centre have been certified Level 1 by FIH which is the highest in its category. As a tribute, the stadium has been named after legendary tribal leader Birsa Munda.

Shri Patnaik also inaugurated Hockey Training Centres in Sundargarh, Ganjam, Sambalpur, and Rourkela.

On this landmark occasion, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said, "It is a moment of great joy and celebration for Odisha. We are not only hosting the Hockey World Cup for the second consecutive time, but we have also built the world's largest hockey stadium in Rourkela."

"This is the new Odisha. I dedicate this to the people of Sundargarh and the hockey players of our nation. I welcome the global Hockey fraternity to come and experience its grandeur," he said.

In the coming years, the Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium will play a pivotal role in taking Indian Hockey to global heights, he said.

The Chief Minister also inaugurated the World Cup Village with 225 room that will house the teams of the upcoming World Cup. Taj has been roped in by Hockey India to offer impeccable service and hospitality that reflects the culture of Odisha.

On this occasion, Shri Patnaik spent some time with the National men's hockey team and announced award of Rs 1 crore for each Indian Hockey team player if they win the World Cup. He wished them all the best and hoped they will lift the cup.

Players praised the Odisha government and thanked the Chief Minister for developing a holistic ecosystem for hockey for the players of the nation.

President Hockey India Dilip Tirkey, Sports Minister, Odisha, Tusharkanti Behera, Secre-

Earlier in the day, he flagged off the Mo Bus service in Rourkela. A fleet of 25 buses were rolled out. City level development projects in Rourkela were also inaugurated.

Patnaik has also inaugurated Government Medical College & Hospital at Sundargarh, which has been built by NTPC at a cost of Rs. 417.77 crores out of its Resettlement and Rehabilitation Community Development Fund.

The Hockey World Cup will be played in Kalinga Stadium and Birsa Munda Stadium in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela respectively from January 13 to 29. 16 teams will compete with each other in the prestigious world tournament. While 24 matches will be played in Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar, 20 matches will be held in Birsa Munda Stadium in Rourkela.

Jio, Airtel 5G launch services in Bhubaneswar

BHUBANESHWAR: Telecom operators Jio and Bharti Airtel on Thursday started their 5G services in the state capital.

The 5G services of both the companies were unveiled by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Union Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw at an event here. Vaishnaw said that the Narendra Modi government has sanctioned a total of Rs 5,600 crore for telecom services in Odisha in the 2022-23 and 5,000 mobile towers will be installed across the state for world class communication facilities.

Vaishnaw had committed to start 5G services in the state before January 26.

Telecom Secretary K Rajaraman said that the government has also dedicated 100 towers for 4G services in rural areas of the state.

He announced the setting up of a 5G research lab at Siksha O Anusandhan (SOA) University in collaboration with Jio.

Computer-assisted learning laboratory unveiled at SCB's Pharmacology department

CUTTACK: A computer-assisted learning (CAL) laboratory was inaugurated in the

course at SCB MCH to go for experimenting with the same through simulation.

the use of animals and rapid development of information technology has led to newer

and teachers, most important by meeting the learning objectives. However, there may be few pitfalls during implementation in medical Colleges like it's not dynamic in nature and can produce result as per provided software," head of the Pharmacology department Professor Dr. Trupti Rekha Swain said and added that lab would also help in imparting online learning during any possible pandemic. Among others, SCB MCH superintendent Prof Lucy Das, vice-principal Prof Geeta Sahu, Prof Bidyut Das, Prof Pratima Sahu, Prof RK Jena, Prof Minakshi Mohanty, Prof Jayant Panda and Prof Lity Mohanty were present on the occasion.



Pharmacology department of SCB Medical College and Hospital on Tuesday. As the National Medical Commission (NMC) has banned animal experiments, the CAL laboratory which was inaugurated by the dean and principal

Prof Prasanna Jee Mohanty will help 250 medical students pursuing a Pharmacology

Special software provided by the Indian Pharmacology Society is being used in the CAL laboratory to facilitate the students in experimenting animal ethics through simulation. Laboratory-based practical classes, have been the cornerstone of both undergraduate and postgraduate pharmacology learning. Ethical issues with

trends in teaching and learning such as computer-assisted learning (CAL). "This methodology is focusing on interactive instruction in a specific subject area and collection of animal experiments will encourage students to understand concepts in pharmacology. CAL offers a number of advantages to both students

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BSNL to roll out 5G service in the country by April 2024: Ashwini Vaishnaw

BHUBANESWAR: Union Minister for Railways, Communication and IT Ashwini Vaishnaw on Thursday announced that BSNL would launch its 5G service by April 2024. Speaking at the 5G roll out event organised at SOA University here, the minister said the

"The Narendra Modi government has sanctioned Rs 5600 crore for setting up 5000 mobile towers in around 7000 unconnected villages in Odisha. The towers will be installed by August 15, 2024. The state has also been allocated Rs 1080 crore for laying of fibre



Centre has infused around Rs 1.6 lakh crore to revive the state-run telecom provider, which will emerge as a strong entity in the telecom sector soon.

"The complete roll out of 4G service by BSNL across the country is expected by the end of this year. Since BSNL does not have legacy network, the 4G towers can be upgraded to 5G very fast. There will be no issues in faster roll out of 5G service by BSNL in India," he observed.

Vaishnaw and Union Minister for Education and Skill Development Dharmendra Pradhan launched the much awaited 5G service in the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack.

ALSO READ | India must ride 5G wave to transform governance

The service will now be provided by Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel in the state in the first phase. The operators have installed 510 base transceiver stations (BTS) towers, including 410 by Jio, to provide the service.

The 5G service will be available in eight cities and towns, including Berhampur, Rourkela, Sambalpur, Puri, Balasore and Angul by March this year and the 5G network will cover entire Odisha by December 2024.

Vaishnaw said the fifth-generation cellular technology will bring a revolution at the grassroots level as it will not only be available for cell phone users, but also for many public services like health and education.

Capital infusion in Vodafone Idea under discussion: Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw



BHUBANESWAR: Debt-ridden telecom firm Vodafone Idea has various requirements, including infusion of capital, and discussions on this front are going on, Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Thursday.

Vodafone Idea (VIL), reeling under debt burden of over Rs 2 lakh crore, has opted for converting about Rs 16,000 crore of interest liability payable to the government into equity, which will amount to around a 33 per cent stake in the company while promoters' holding will come down to 50 per cent from 74.99 per cent.

"Vodafone (Idea) has many requirements. It has a particular requirement of capital. How much capital, who will infuse? All those things are under discussion at this point of time," Vaishnaw said. VIL has offered a stake to the government at a par value of Rs 10 per share and the government is waiting for the company's shares to stabilise at Rs 10 apiece. "The responsibility of capital has to come from various sources. The company just doesn't require conversion. It requires capital. All those things are a complex issue," Vaishnaw said.

Satya Nadella meets PM Modi; says Govt's focus on sustainable, inclusive economic growth inspiring

NEW DELHI: Microsoft Chairman and CEO Satya Nadella, who is on a four-day visit to India, met Prime Minister Narendra Modi,

public good.

Nadella has also highlighted the importance of driving inclusivity and empowerment



through technology and economic growth, and asserted that the company is "very committed to India".

As part of the Microsoft's Tech for Good and Education showcase in Delhi on Wednesday, Nadella did a walk through, interacting with teachers, students and professionals who are

and pledged the company's support in helping the country realise the Digital India vision. The Microsoft top honcho described his meeting with the PM as "insightful", and lauded the government's deep focus on sustainable and inclusive economic growth driven by digital transformation.

"It's inspiring to see the government's deep focus on sustainable and inclusive economic growth led by digital transformation and we're looking forward to helping India realize the Digital India vision and be a light for the world," Nadella tweeted on Thursday.

"Thank you @narendramodi for an insightful meeting," he wrote.

Nadella, currently on day three of a multi-city tour of the country, has been on marathon meetings with customers, startups, developers, educators and students, as well as top government leaders.

Nadella had called on External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday, and issues relating to governance and security in the digital domain had come up for discussion.

Nadella also met Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar, who invited him to invest in India's expanding innovation and startup ecosystem.

"Co-Alumnus from @MIT_MANIPAL & CEO @Microsoft @satyanadella dropped by @GoI_MeitY today. Had an interesting chat about future of #Tech & @DigitalIndia incl @OfficialIndiaAI, search, gaming, compute and IndiaCloud," Chandrasekhar had tweeted on Wednesday.

Hyderabad-born Nadella has appreciated India for building public digital infrastructure for **Ram Mandir in Ayodhya to be ready by Jan 1, Shah says in poll-bound Tripura**

Continued from page-1

and consolidate its Hindu vote bank. Addressing the rally in Tripura, the home minister asked the crowd: "Should the Ram Mandir be constructed in Ayodhya or not?", and as the crowd roared "Yes" in response, the home minister pressed on: "Ever since Babur destroyed the structure and ever since India became independent, the Congress was stalling completion of the Ram Mandir in the courts... sessions court, high court, Supreme Court and then again sessions court." Targeting Mr Rahul Gandhi, the home minister remarked: "When I was president (of the BJP) and Rahul Baba was the Congress president... he would often ask, when will you announce the date (of the completion)."

Then came the Shah sting. "Rahul Baba, listen very carefully. January 1 will see the magnificent Ram Mandir being completed in Ayodhya," Mr Shah roared amidst thunderous applause.

While the completion of the temple on January 1 next year will consolidate the Prime Minister's image as the "Hindu Hriday Samrat", the G-20 summit would establish him and India as "Vishwa Guru" (global teacher) on the global stage. For the BJP's spin doctors, the new Parliament, expected to be ready anytime now, will not merely be an indelible part of the Narendra Modi era's legacy but will also be underlining the "spirit of nationalism". As the Opposition looks around to gather its forces to take on the might of Modi-Shah, armed with Hindutva, India's credentials on the international stage, and muscular nationalism, the BJP is all set to plunge into the battle headlong.

making a difference in the society, by leveraging various Microsoft programs, initiatives and tools.

Biden administration proposes massive hike in immigration fees including H-1B visas

Continued from page-1

The proposed rule went on a 60-day public opposition period, following which it is expected to be enforced. Under the proposed rule, the fee for the H-2B petitions (for seasonal, nonagricultural workers) is proposed to increase from USD 460 to USD 1,080.

?Economists would note that fee increase on these visa categories would work against the desire of US policymakers for more workers to enter the United States legally,? Forbes said in a news report.

While there is no increase in the premium processing, the number of days is now 15 business days from the existing 15 days.

However, in this proposal, DHS would eliminate the additional biometric services fee in most cases by, including the costs in the underlying immigration benefit request fee.

The USCIS said the new fees would allow the immigration agency to more fully recover its operating costs, reestablish and maintain timely case processing, and prevent the accumulation of future case backlogs.

The agency receives approximately 96 per cent of its funding from filing fees, not from congressional appropriations, it said.

The proposed fee rule is the result of a comprehensive fee review at the USCIS. That review determined that the agency's current fees, which have remained unchanged since 2016, fall far short of recovering the full cost of agency operations.

The USCIS generally publishes a fee rule biennially, and proposes these changes to account for the expansion of humanitarian programmes, federally mandated pay raises, additional staffing requirements, and other essential investments, a media statement said. In 2020, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic led to a dramatic reduction in receipts of new applications, resulting in a temporary drop in revenue by 40 per cent. The combination of depleted cash reserves, a temporary hiring freeze, and workforce attrition has reduced the agency's capacity to timely adjudicate cases, particularly as incoming caseloads rebound to pre-pandemic levels, it said.

According to the USCIS, the proposed rule would increase some fees, including a modest increase in the fee for certain naturalisation applications, while preserving existing fee waiver eligibility for low-income and vulnerable populations and adding new fee exemptions for certain humanitarian programmes. If finalised, the proposed rule would decrease or minimally increase fees for more than one million low-income filers each year.

?In addition to improving customer service operations and managing the incoming workload, the USCIS must continue to fulfil our growing humanitarian mission, upholding fairness, integrity, and respect for all we serve,? said USCIS Director Ur M. Jaddou.

?This proposed rule allows the USCIS to more fully recover operating costs for the first time in six years and will support the administration's effort to rebuild the legal immigration system,? he said.

Hockey World Cup: Plans to host events in slum and non-slum areas

BHUBANESWAR: The state government has planned a host of activities and events in urban slums and non-slum areas during the Hockey World Cup (HWC) to inspire urban youth and inculcate sports culture in them.

sensitised about health, hygiene, cleanliness, various government schemes and key urban initiatives. Mission Shakti groups/federations will be roped in for managing the events. An estimated 10,000 for each programme has been approved.

Principal secretary of Housing and Urban Development department G Mathi Vathanan has asked all collectors, municipal commissioners and executive officers to organise events in all slum and non-slum areas in all ULBs to facilitate youth and other local inhabitants to witness and be

a part of the international tournament. "Odisha is a proud host of World Cup hockey for the second time. This is a great opportunity to inspire the urban youth to inculcate a sense of sportsmanship and help in creating sports culture which will promote sports talents in the urban areas," he said.

The Women and Child Development department has also planned to decorate childcare institutions with replicas of HWC mascot Olly, balloons and cut-outs of hockey legends along with proper lighting arrangements.

The opening ceremony and all matches will be telecast in all CCIs, including observation homes, women homes and working women hostels. CCIs and women's homes will have essay writing, debate, drawing, painting and quiz competitions on the role of Odisha in the promotion of hockey.



While in panchayats, where a special 'gram sabha' will be organised only on the inaugural day of HWC on January 11, the events in urban local bodies will be organised on the opening ceremony day, the first India match on January 13, the closing ceremony on January 29 and other dates when India matches have been scheduled.

As per the plan, public viewing arrangements will be made in each slum and the events will be organised in four municipalities, two NACs and in all wards of municipal corporations in case of non-slum areas. Parichaya centres, Mission Shakti gruha, public buildings or community centres will be preferably used for organising the events. The maximum overall ceiling of participants will be 100 per programme in slum areas and 250 for non-slum areas.

The participants in the events will be

Odisha CM opens world's largest hockey stadium, announces Rs 1 cr for each player if India wins HWC

ROURKELA: Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Thursday inaugurated the world's

Interacting with the men's India hockey team, the Odisha CM announced a reward of Rs 1 crore for each player of the Indian hockey team if they win the World Cup and wished them luck for the event. The players praised the Odisha government and thanked the CM for developing a holistic ecosystem for hockey.



largest hockey stadium at Rourkela ahead of the men's FIH Hockey World Cup which begins on January 13.

Built at a cost of over Rs 260 crore in a record 15 months, the world-class Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium (BMHS) is capable of hosting over 20,000 spectators.

Around 20 matches of the 44 matches will be played in the new state-of-the-art stadium. The remaining 24 matches, including the final, will be played at the Kalinga stadium in Bhubaneswar.

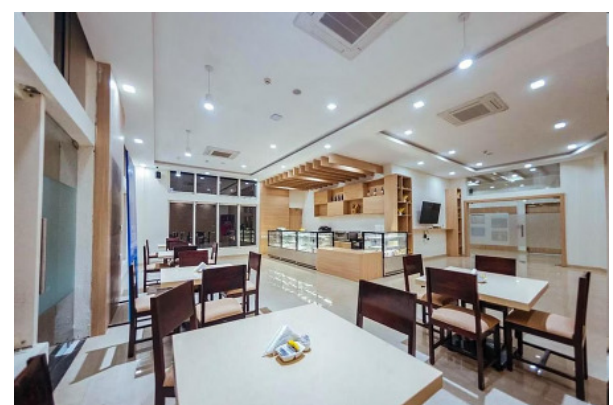
The chief minister also dedicated the World Cup village developed at a cost of around Rs 85 crore on the stadium campus. The complex has all amenities, including a practice pitch, fitness centre, hydrotherapy pool, dressing and changing room and a 225-room residential complex, developed in a record nine months, with five-star facilities capable of accommodating four hundred players.

The enviable BMHS complex is expected to offer a holistic environment to the participating world cup teams. Taj Group has been roped in by Hockey India to offer impeccable service and hospitality that reflects the culture of Odisha.

After inaugurating the stadium, Naveen in his inimitable style asked in Odia 'aapan mane khushi to' (are you all happy) and to thunderous applause, he replied, 'mu bhi bahut khushi' (I am also very happy).

Newly inaugurated World Cup Village at the Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium Complex, ahead of the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup 2023, in Rourkela.

venue and laid the foundation stone of 359 projects amounting to Rs 1,109 crore including multiple smart city projects. He also inaugurated the 'Mo Bus' (my bus) services in



the steel city with a fleet of 25 buses providing hassle-free movement, especially, during the hockey world cup matches.

Later, Naveen inaugurated the new government medical college and hospital at Sundargarh constructed at a cost of Rs 417.77 crore with the CSR contribution of NTCP. He interacted with the first batch of medical students.

Thousands of people and hockey fans from across the tribal-dominated Sundargarh district thronged the BMHS to welcome the CM and hockey players.

Prominent among others, Sports Minister Tusharkanit Behera, 5T secretary V Karthikeyan Pandian, Sports secretary R Vineel Krishna, Hockey India President Dilip Turkey, IDCO Managing Director Bhupendra Singh Poonia and Hockey India Secretary General Bholanath Singh were present.

Novak Djokovic, Shapovalov to meet in Adelaide quarterfinals

ADELAIDE: Top-seeded Novak Djokovic has reached the quarterfinals of the

ginning Jan. 16. Djokovic missed the Australian Open last year because he was unvaccinated.

played like a top-10 player." Djokovic said he was still trying to get a feel for his

time after Canada defeated Australia in the Davis Cup final in November.

"Last year we started with winning the ATP Cup and finished it off with winning the Davis Cup, so definitely the team events were a good success for me last year," Shapovalov said. "I'm definitely trying to implement that on the individual side as well, and so far it's been a great start."

On the women's side of the combined ATP-WTA event, former world No. 1 Victoria Azarenka defeated Zheng Qinwen 6-2, 7-5 to reach the quarterfinals.

Azarenka is a two-time Australian Open champion. She will next face Linda Noskova, who defeated American Claire Liu 6-2, 6-2.



Adelaide International where he will face Denis Shapovalov.

Djokovic defeated Quentin Halys 7-6 (3) 7-6 (5) on Thursday, and Canadian Shapovalov beat Roman Safiullin 6-4, 6-3 to advance.

Djokovic and other top players are using this event as a warm-up for the Australian Open be-

He's been allowed to enter this year as COVID-19 restrictions have been relaxed. Djokovic lauded Halys' play in a very tight match.

"It was a great performance from my opponent today," Djokovic said. "I want to congratulate him for great quality tennis and a great fight today. Tough luck, but he

game. "Two tiebreaks were probably the most realistic score of today's match and I'm just glad to overcome the tough challenge," Djokovic said.

Djokovic is unbeaten in seven matches against Shapovalov. However, the Canadian may have added confidence this



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