



BJD General secretary (Organization) Pranab Prakash Das, Sanjay Das Verma, General secretary (office), Health Minister Naba Das, Rural Development Minister Sushant Singh, Cuttack Mayor and Jarsuguda District BJD Observer Subash Singh in a meeting preparing election strategy for ongoing Brajrajnagar By election to be held on 31st May

Another Gaffe by MP Pinaki Mishra

You cannot fool all the people all the time

Bhubaneswar(KCN): In another blatant attempt of misinformation and

done and therefore allegations about digging without doing GPRS are baseless.

ogy for the Shree Mandira Parikrama Project". The honourable MP is suffering from chronic foot in the mouth disease. He has not even ascertained that the Utility Detection GPRS is only for detection of underground gas, water and power lines. This survey is done to locate these utilities to prevent damage where proposed excavation is undertaken. The Ground penetrating radar is essential for locating non-conductive utilities, unlocatable subsurface features, non-metallic pipes, and concrete storm and sewer systems, underground storage tanks etc. Abandoned lines,

electric cables, fibre optic cables, septic tanks etc. are also detected by this method. The Utility Detection GPRS is in no way a survey of buried artefacts or archaeological materials. The report is only for specific materials as above. The MP is once again indulging in lies and subterfuge by suggesting that composite GPRS has been conducted for archaeological materials. In fact, in the affidavit submitted to the High Court, the ASI has specifically mentioned that during the Joint Inspection, the executing agencies, both OPCC and Tata Project and stated that no GPRS had been done.



disinformation, BJD MP Pinaki Mishra has tweeted that the GPRS Report of the Jagannath Mandir Parikrama has been conducted and will be submitted to the High Court as an affidavit. He has tweeted: "Documents will show GPRS was duly

HC affidavit will clarify all these aspects. All that's needed is a little more patience and a little less malice." He has also attached the front two pages of a purported report titled "Report on Underground Utility Detection by GPR Technol-

Odisha Cabinet approves five amendments to Lokayukta Act

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): Disobedience of any notice or direction by Lokayukta may put government officers in trouble as it would be treated as misconduct entailing departmental action, as per the amended Odisha Lokayukta



Act, 2014.

The State Cabinet chaired by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Wednesday approved the GA and PG department's proposal for five amendments to the Act.

As government servants need to comply with the notices/orders of the Lokayukta for timely disposal of its proceedings, specific provision will be made by inserting sub-section (2) in section 22 of the Act for effective functioning of the anti-corruption ombudsman.

Any willful disobedience of any process, or-

der or direction of the Lokayukta will be treated as misconduct entailing departmental action/ disciplinary proceeding against the officer concerned on the recommendation of the former.

In order to strengthen the authority of the Lokayukta, it has been decided to empower it with power of Contempt under the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971 like the power of Contempt of the High Court by inserting the provision as section 27 A in the said Act.

The Cabinet has also decided to amend the existing provision in Section 2(1)(c)(iv) of the Act for administrative convenience.

The section defines the 'competent authority' in relation to an officer in any department of the government, which means the minister in-charge of the department under which such officer is serving.

Section 14(1)(h) of the Act will also be amended as the existing provision of 'receipt of any donation from the public' covers an area having no bounds and at times it may create an unnecessary exercise having no specific type of donation, which can be inquired into by the appropriate

CONTINUED ON: P-7

Development Plan for Chandi Mandir

Bhubaneswar (KCN): Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday

The project will be completed within a year. Project has been prepared by

the participation of the people of Cuttack in this direction, noting that

The plan, developed by the OBCC, will make the temple com-



approved the development plan of the Chandi Mandir in Cuttack at a cost of Rs 80 crore under the 5T charter. The plan envisages a spiritual atmosphere for the devotees with various facilities and opportunities.

Odisha Bridge & Construction Corporation (OBCC). The 5T initiative includes integrated development of heritage, monuments and tourist destination schemes.

The Chief Minister wished for the ac-

the rejuvenation of the Chandi temple will play an important role in the overall development of the city of Cuttack. A presentation was presented to the Chief Minister by the Department of Works.

plex more attractive. There will be stone walls around the temple, and four gates on each side. OBCC Managing Director J K Das presented details.

In addition, new Jagmohan, Yajna

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PM Modi to attend Tokyo Quad meet; to hold bilateral talks with US President Biden

NEW DELHI(KCN): Prime Minister Narendra Modi will join US President Joe Biden and prime ministers of Australia and Japan at a summit of the Quad leaders in Tokyo on May 24 which is taking place amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Making the announcement of Modi's participation at the summit, External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said Modi will also have bilateral talks with US President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

Modi is also likely to hold a bilateral meeting

with his Australian counterpart.

"At the invitation of Prime Minister of Japan Fumio Kishida, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate in the third Quad Leaders' Summit in Tokyo

on 24 May 2022 along with President Joseph R Biden Jr. of the US and the Prime Minister of Australia," Bagchi said.

The summit in Tokyo is the fourth interaction among Quad leaders since their first virtual meeting in March 2021.

They held an in-person summit in Washington in September last year and a virtual meeting in March. CONTINUED ON: P-7



Congress unable to check exodus despite promise of reforms in 'Chintan Shivir'

NEW DELHI(KCN): The Congress has failed to stem the exodus of leaders de-

Hardik Patel - in quick succession after the Chintan Shivir, a section of leaders in

the pudding is in the eating" and it remains to be seen whether the "process" will end

chief with ties with the Congress spanning three generations, quit even as the Shivir was on and joined the BJP on Thursday.

Patel, a young leader who came into prominence with the Patidar quota agitation, had been elevated as the working president of the Gujarat unit in July 2020 as part of efforts to strengthen the party and strongly take on the BJP.

Jakhar started working for BJP long before joining it: Punjab Congress chief He quit the party on Wednesday while launching a scathing attack on the Congress leadership.

CONTINUED ON: P-7



spite the promise of reforms, including structural changes and prominence to youth, by the beleaguered party at the recent brainstorming session in Udaipur. With the exit of two influential leaders - Sunil Jakhar and

the party feels the changes have not generated enough hope as skepticism remains on their delivery.

Speaking on the Shivir, Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Wednesday said "the proof of

up where many leaders wanted it to.

The Kerala MP was among the group of 23 leaders who had written to party chief Sonia Gandhi in 2020 seeking large-scale reforms.

Jakhar, a former Punjab state unit

All faith peace prayer meeting on Buddha Purnima

Kolkata(KCN): On the occasion of Buddha Purnima, Divine Bliss Foundation, Lions Club of Kolkata Harmony and Bharat-Tibet Samanvay Sangh in association with Pragyan Foundation had organized an "ALL FAITH PEACE PRAYER MEETING" at Pragyan Bhawan, Kolkata, India.

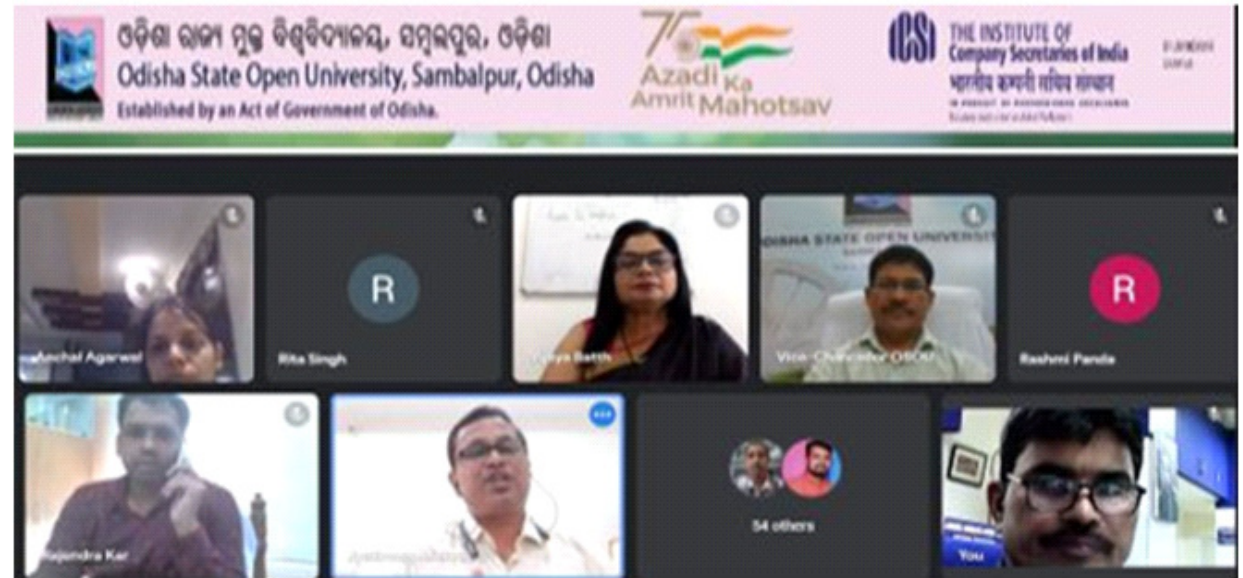
Buddha Purnima unites people all over the world for a common cause — to celebrate the three main events of the life of Buddha: his birth, enlightenment, and nirvana. It builds awareness of the teachings of Buddha in a way that respects all cultures. Buddha Purnima commemorates the life of a historical figure whose teachings have changed the lives of millions. Whether Buddha is viewed as a spiritual or philosophical figure, there is no doubt about the impact his words have had on people for centuries, and continue to have.

Buddhist Master Monk Ven. Nyima Lama, Abott of Buddhist Monestry, Swami Divakar Maharaj, Chinmaya Mission Kolkata, Prof. Dr. Mohd. Ayyoob, Principal of The Calcutta Unani Medical College &

Hospital Kolkata, Tenzin choedup and Lobsang tsering, Tibetan Medical Institute, Dr. Rajat Chatterjee, Bharat-Tibet Samanvay Sangh, Dr Mukhtav Ahmad, Founder of Charon Disha, MD Ehteshamul Haque Siddiqui a social worker, MD Fatah Alam a social worker, Mr. Farooque Malik a social worker, Dr. Naren Pandey, Sri Anil Jaiswal, Dr Anand Prasad Maurya, Principal of Jam Institute of Yoga and Naturopathy, Mr. Narnder Singh a Social worker, Mr. Gurcharan Singh Saral a social worker, Ms Sarita Harza, Bharat-Tibet Samanvay Sangh, Mr. R.R. Agarwal member of Lions Club of Kolkata Harmony, Dr. Pran Krishna Pramanik and many others actively participated and spoke on the occasion. All the Guests and Speakers were felicitated by the organizing committee members.

Dr. Suresh Kumar Agarwal President of Divine Bliss Foundation and Lions Club of Kolkata Harmony was the Convener of the programme.

Odisha state Open University organises webinar on "Accounting profession in circular economy - issues and challenges"



Sambalpur (KCN): Odisha State Open University organized a webinar in collaboration with Institute of Company Secretary of India (ICSI), Bhubaneswar Chapter on "Accounting Profession in Circular Economy-Issues and Challenges". Prof. (Dr.) Arka Kumar Das Mohapatra, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Odisha

State Open University was the **Chief Guest and Chief-Patron** in the event. Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor highlighted the importance of circular economy and stressed upon the concept of 'Reuse, Recycle, Sustainability' and 'Harvest Value' in his enlightening speech. **CA CS (Dr.) Vijaya Batth** was the **Chief**

Speaker for the said event. Dr. Batthprolifically elucidated the concept of circular economy; the different issues and challenges being faced by the professional in the circular economy. She also explained the concept by placing precise examples of celebrated comp-

anies. CS Jyotirmoiy Mishra, Chairman, ICSI Bhubaneswar Chapter and Shri NaliniRanjanSarangi graced the event with their presence. The webinar ended with a formal vote of thanks by Dr. Manas Ranjan Pujari, Esteemed Registrar, OSOU. The meeting was coordinated by Ms. Rita Singh, Academic Consultant in Management.

Odisha government set to launch Navchetana programme to reduce drug abuse among children

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): As educational institutions have reopened following reduction of Covid cases, Odisha government is set to launch Navchetana programme under National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR).The programme will be implemented in 10 selected districts - Puri, Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack, Angul, Khurda, Sundargarh, Ganjam, Balasore, Kalahandi and Kendrapara for the next three years with an aim

to reduce adverse consequences of drug abuse. District Social Security Officers have been directed to implement the programme as per the State action plan prepared on the line of national action plan.As part of the programme, 10 schools in each of the 10 identified districts will be taken up with a focus on providing education and awareness on drug abuse among school going children in the age group of 11-18 years.

Internationally acclaimed Poet Sreekala P Vijayan was honoured as one of the special guests at the Creative Women initiative's 2nd anniversary



Bangalore (KCN): The second annual conference of Creative Women held at the Indiranagar Rotary Club has come to an end. Officials said next year's conference will be held in Kolkata. President Rajeshwari Nair delivered the welcome address at the function which started with morning prayers. Kendra Sahitya Akademi winner Shri Sudhakaran Ramanthali, Bangalore

Kerala Samaj President Shri CP Radhakrishnan, KNSS President Smt Subhadra Devi, renowned poet and author Sreekala P. Vijayan, Prajitha Nambiar, Mrs. Hemalini N S, Founder of Triambaka Performing Arts, Dr. Sudha K.K. were the special guests. The conference was colorful with poetry, storytelling, story-telling, Kathak dance and Zumba dance.

Educational Tour of Yoga Students



New Delhi(KCN): A group of fifty students of Diploma in Yogic Science(DYSc) along with faculty members of Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY) Ms Amrita Sharma and Sh. Lalit Gangwal went on a Study

Tour to Haridwar, Uttarakhand from 13th to 16th May 2022. During the visit; the MDNIY team met and interacted with Dr Pranav Pandya, Chancellor of the Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya and Shradhdheya

Shaibalba Pandya Ji, Managing Trustee of Shri Vedmata Gayatri Trust, Shantikunj , Haridwar. The team also visited Himalayan University, Gurukula Kangri Vishwavidyalaya, Haridwar and Patanjali Yog

Peeth. The educational tour helped them in exploring the career opportunities and experiencing diversification in the field of Yoga. They returned with powerful insights and had a memorable experience.

Native Land Youth Poet Payal Priyadarshini Felicitated



Cuttack Sadar(KCN) : Cuttack Sadar 42 mouza belongs to Chanduli villagers the daughter of Eminent social work Lecture Prafull Das & Pious lady Sumitra Das the Youth poet Piyal Priyadarshini for her best quality in odia language, Education has felicitated by Leading social organisation Utkal Vikash Parisad(UVP) at historical place Balibamana Pitha. In this meeting held by President Social worker Er.Praakash Chandra Sethi with presence of Saraswati Kala Parisad

Hon. Secretary Ashok Pattanik,President poet Pratibha Satapathy,Artist Daitari Pradhan, Coorona Worriers Aviram Sahoo,social worker Sandhyarani Das, Babuli Patra, Parbitrra Mohan Ojah, Singer Er.Amiya Patnaik,Journalist Bijaya Swain, Er.Basanta Ratha all studies. Poet Payal for her great achievement,dedication for the betterment of arts,Odia Literature,tradition etc he was awarded by was awarded by much more organization.

Man rides cycle to his wedding venue as mark of protest against high fuel price

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): A man in full wedding finery rode a cycle to the venue here as a mark of protest against the high fuel prices in the country. His family and friends followed on foot to attend the wedding, which took place at Unit III area of the city on Wednesday. Photos of the wedding procession went viral on the social media and was praised by many as the "ideal wedding". Subhranshu Samal, the groom, said his

family had arranged for an expensive marriage procession. "But I decided to use

cycle dressed in his wedding clothes. The overwhelming support from the



a bicycle to reach at the wedding pandal to lodge my protest against the high and ever increasing price of fuel in the country". He covered a distance of about one km in his

people for his novel protest surprised him, Samal said. "Even bystanders and passersby took selfies with Subhranshu riding cyclone," a member of the 'barati' (marriage party) said.

Samal said that many others are frustrated like him over the shooting price of petrol and diesel. "Staging agitations near Raj Bhavan have become a normal practice by political parties. As an individual I preferred to show my displeasure. Those at helm should get an idea of the anger that is there in the people on the fuel price issue," he said. The price of petrol per litre in Bhubaneswar on Thursday was Rs 112.56 and Rs 102.24 for diesel.

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'Shakeela' trailer falls flat, lacks the punch expected in a star biopic



The trailer of Indrajit Lankesh's Hindi language film "Shakeela" doesn't hold much to impress. From using modern-day Hindi music to cliched film sets, it feels like a repackaging of Vidya Balan's 'Dirty Picture' except that this version fails to bring the charm Vidya brought to the

screen. The film, as described by the filmmakers of 'Shakeela', is "inspired by life events of a famous star Shakeela who predominantly starred in southern cinema." It features Richa Chadha as the titular adult actor who was one of the biggest stars of the 1990s ar-

iving from Kerala who went on to act in several adult films in languages spanning Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada, while Pankaj Tripathi is the male lead. The film is described to "portray the hardships of the actress as she had to face a lot of criticism, insults and betrayals from

her own family members and the film fraternity who were influential in getting her films banned." The main reason for the success of 'Kinnarathumbikal', one of the films that catapulted her into the limelight, was solely her screen presence and energy, and with no other male lead in the

movie. Trying to fill in the gaping hole left by Silk Smitha in the low-budget softcore industry, Shakeela made her own mark with around 250 movies in her kitty -- heralding the 'Shakeela Tharangam' (The wave of Shakeela). Meanwhile, the Shakeela that

Indrajith is trying to portray doesn't look like she has much story to tell. The screen-space also seems to be overpowered by star cast Pankaj Tripathi. Let's hope the full length movie holds more than what the trailer showed. The film is produced by Sammy Nanwani and Sahil Nanwani, with music by Meet Bros and Veer Samarth.

Priyanka Chopra reveals husband Nick Jonas likes her 'natural' looks, calls him 'appreciator'

WASHINGTON(K-CN): Nick Jonas has

Chopra. The actor re-

2019 and revealed how her husband is

natural or a more glamorous look.

"there are days when he likes a really natu-

went all out for the event, wearing a sheer black top with a pussycat bow, a white blazer paired with a matching pair of pants. Adding a pop of colour to the whole look, she opted for striking pink eye makeup with a matching bold lip colour.

Earlier this month, Priyanka joined her fellow J sisters Sophie Turner and Danielle Jonas in celebrating the first night of their husbands' 'Happiness Begins' tour. All three women rocked Jonas Brothers T-shirts.

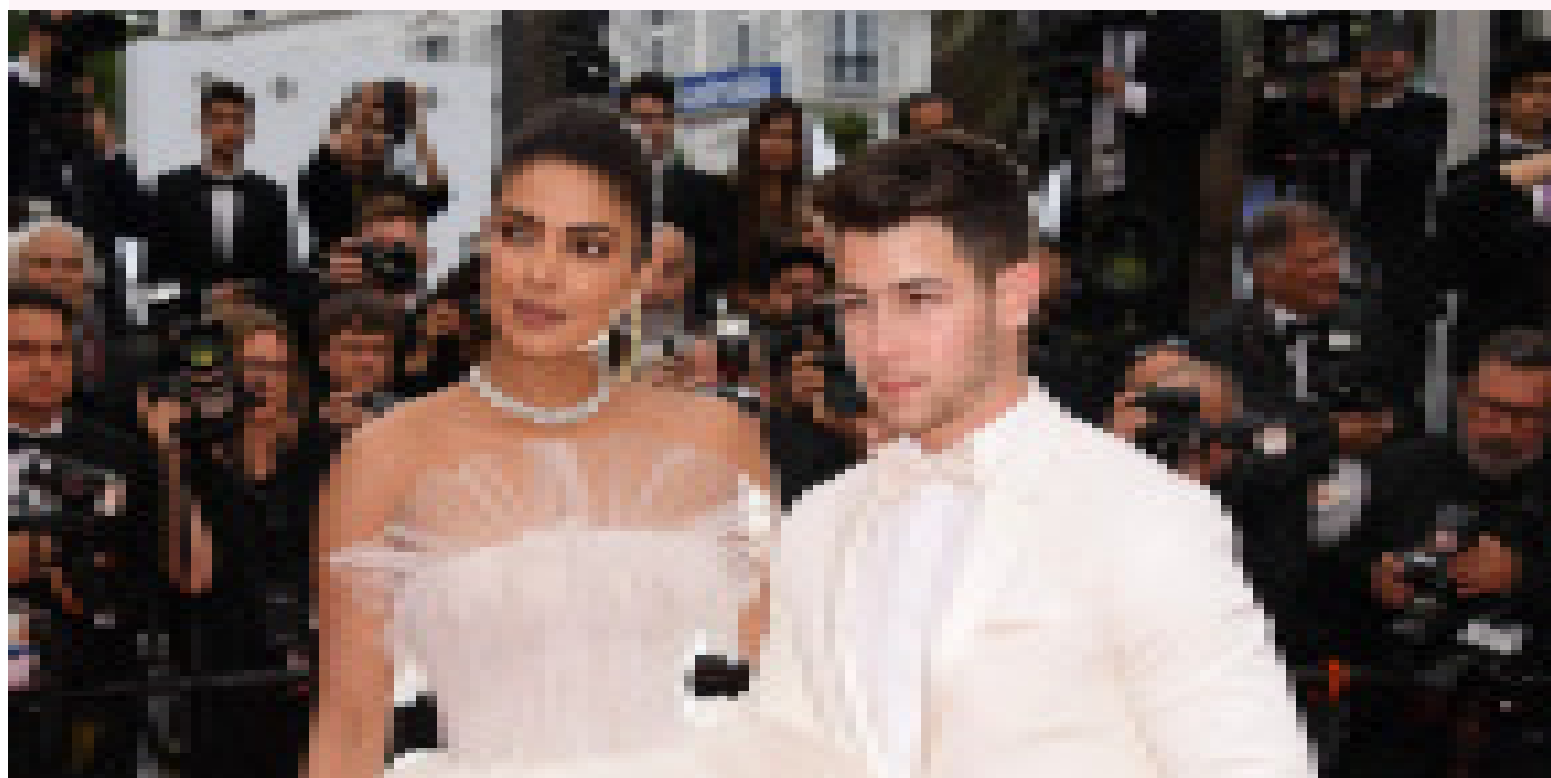
The actor shared that it was "really cool" that they all decided on coordinating their outfits since they "have such distinct personalities."

Just 'normal' to exclude women in decision making process: Adil Hussain

MUMBAI(KCN): Actor Adil Hussain has offered support to the growing group of female artistes who are asking the reason for women's absence from the Bollywood delegation of producers and actors that recently met Prime Minister Narendra Modi to discuss issues faced by the film industry.

Ritesh Sidhwani and CBFC chief Prasoon Joshi, met Modi to discuss how to take the entertainment industry to the next stage.

The meeting of the delegation came under fire on Wednesday for its exclusion of female representation with some activists and filmmakers pointing out that it was 2018 and asking, "Where are the women?" Adil took to Twitter to criticise the panel that met the prime minister.



nothing but love and admiration for his wife Priyanka

cently spoke to People at Beautycon Festival Los Angeles

full of admiration for her whether she decides to go for a more

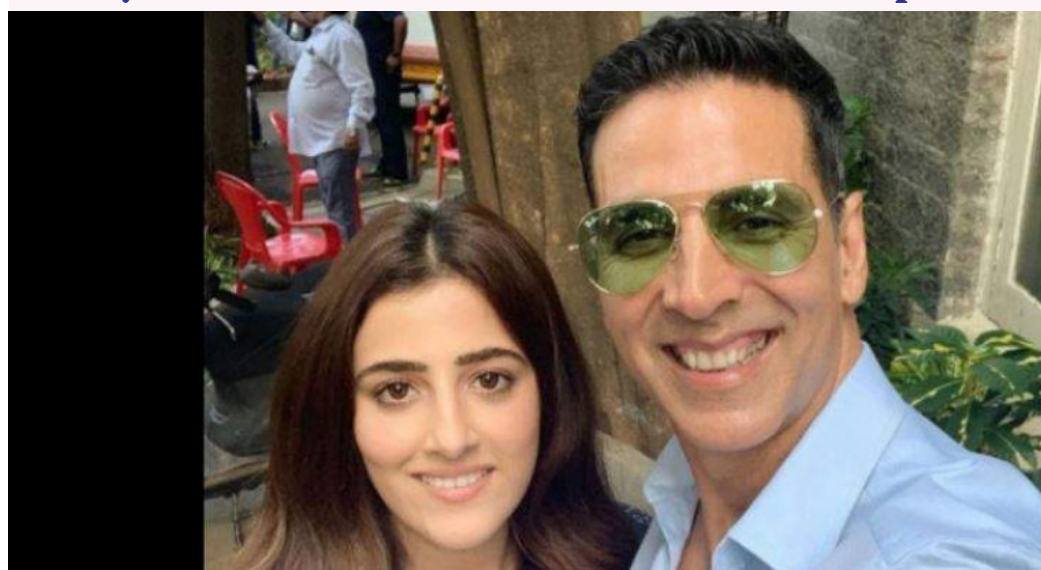
"He likes a bit of both," the 'Quantico' star, said, adding that

real thing."

The 'Mary Kom' actor added, "He's an appreciator. He's someone who can appreciate both things."

In honour of Beautycon, Priyanka

Akshay Kumar shoots with Kriti Sanon's sister Nupur for music video



MUMBAI(KCN): Actor Akshay Kumar on Sunday shot for singer B Praaks new single with actress Kriti Sanon's younger sister Nupur.

written by Jaani. B Praak has previously lent his voice to the song "Teri Mitti" in Akshay's film "Kesari".

London! The song will also feature renowned Punjabi singer Ammy Virk.

London! The song will also feature renowned Punjabi singer Ammy Virk.

On the work front, Akshay will be seen in "Housefull 4" and "Good Newwz" this year.

It is reported that the romantic song is

AKSHAY KUMAR HAS A NAMESAKE ACTOR IN

A lot of pictures are doing the rounds on the internet in which Akshay is seen

posing with Nupur and Ammy at the St. Xavier's college in Mumbai.

Russia-Ukraine crisis only a temporary setback for Indian tea

Darjeeling based leading tea retailer-Golden Tips recently came to limelight after it had purchased organic white tea, a special variety of the beverage, at Rs 23,000 per kilogram and 'Moonlight' tea at Rs 21,000 per kg from Goodricke's Badamtam estate in Darjeeling. The prices are the season's highest so far. Tea retailer Golden Tips plans to expand its footprint through the e-commerce route by entering into strategic partnerships in the country and widen its reach in export markets through distributor tie-ups overseas.

Speaking to Ritwik Mukherjee exclusively, Madhav Sardha, Managing Director Golden Tips Tea and an expert Tea



Taster, decodes what is often known and described as 'champagne of tea'.

Excerpts:

RM: According to Indian Tea Association (ITA), annual production in Darjeeling tea has drastically fallen from 12 million kg to six million kg, with the primary reason being difficulty in replantation due to the hilly terrain and lack of expansion of the cultivation area in the region. Has the output fallen substantially or alarmingly? What is your



take on this?

Sardha: See, you will have to keep in mind that tea production (both quality and quantity) needs nice and warm sunshine and at the same time good rainfall. If there is a shortfall of either of the two, both quality and quantity drops. The tea output in the period that you mentioned, had gone down thanks to a dry spell and as there was no precipitation. Rains started very late and bushes



were not flushing. Although the output had fallen initially due to lower rainfall, it subsequently picked up. Now it's almost normal. However, having said this, one must remember that there is nothing like 'making up for production losses'. Whatever has been lost, has been lost.

RM: The fall in output notwithstanding, the good news is that the first flush Darjeeling tea (green tea and white tea) fetched very good prices. In fact tea from your garden was sold for Rs 23,000 per kg. Tea from some other garden or estate was sold for Rs 21,000. What about the second flush? Are you hopeful about a repeat performance?

Sardha: Yes first flush tea from our estate was sold in auction for Rs 23,000 per kg. But the quantity was very small. I wish the quantity had been larger. With monsoon having been finally set in and with the projections and optimism over normal or good monsoon, we are bullish about the second flush Darjeeling tea also. I think the second flush Darjeeling tea will also do well in the market.

RM: Darjeeling tea is only a miniscule percentage of the domestic and overseas tea market. Do you see this growing substantially, going forward?

Sardha: Darjeeling tea is only 7 mil-

lion kg market (all varieties taken together). So good quality Darjeeling tea market is even smaller. Ironically many people are

finding it easy, convenient and making more business sense in focussing on tea tourism, tea resort, than concentrating on producing good quality Darjeeling tea.

RM: Do you think that the Sri Lankan crisis can be a blessing in disguise for the Indian tea sector, Sri Lanka being one of the largest exporters of tea in the global market?

Sardha: See, tea plantations, plucking- everything have been done in Sri Lanka and they will have to be sent to the market. Especially in the current situation they are in dire need of dollar or other hard currencies. And tea is one of their top forex earners. So

they will do everything possible and make sure that their tea reaches the global market and fetches foreign exchange. Therefore, even if there are some minor benefits, I don't think there will be some significant or long term gains or benefits for us. Exports will continue from that country.

Ritwik Mukherjee

RM: How would the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war impact Indian tea industry?

Sardha: The overall tea exports had also fallen. Tea exports were lower due to

review from 46.19 million in the year-earlier period. Among the CIS bloc, Russia was the main importer with a shipment of 31.88 million kg in April- Feb-



ruary period of 2021-22, down from 33.65 million kg in the same period previous year.

But I think these are all temporary setbacks and it happened because both the transport route and payment routes came under shadow. Although India continues to enjoy the best of relationship with Russia, it has taken a non-committed and impartial stand in this armed conflict. India is also taking a role in mutually settling the conflicts. India is going ahead with its plans on the economic and business front. So, I think the conflicts will be resolved in due time. Unless there is further escalations, I don't think we have

reasons to be too much worried about this.

RM: The tea industry has been seeking and demanding a special financial package from the Centre for retaining the viability of plantation activity, which is now under "threat", according to the industry. What is your take on this?

Sardha: Although the industry, in general, has been demanding this, personally I don't think that anything is going to come. On the contrary, whatever little sops and other facilities we have been



shortage of shipping containers and high ocean freight. Tea exports fell to 195.50 million kg in the 2021 calendar year from 209.72 million in 2020, according to Tea Board statistics. And subse-



quently, tea exports declined by 2.4 per cent to 184.35 million kg during the April-February period of the last fiscal, according to latest Tea Board data.

Sardha: Although the industry, in general, has been demanding this, personally I don't think that anything is going to come. On the contrary, whatever little sops and other facilities we have been



The shipment of the crop stood at 188.91 million kg in the corresponding period of the previous year.

When it comes to CIS countries, including Russia and Ukraine, in particular, they imported 41.18 million kg, the highest among the overseas destinations of Indian tea, during the period under

getting here and there, may gradually be taken away. That's the trend. Personally, I also have a feeling that the moment we get anything we start to ask for more. We should rather strive to be self reliant and self sufficient.

Author is a Kolkata based Freelance journalist.

Sambit Patra, Pinaki Mishra exchange barbs over Srimandir Parikrama Project

BHUBANESWAR: A Day after a broken lion sculpture was found in the debris of where the Emar Mutt was located, a war of words between the

ging activities?" he asked. Alleging that there are chances that many such heritage sculptures are going to be damaged because of

Mishra is misleading people, whatever he's saying is against Constitutional laws," he added. Mishra was quick to hit back at Patra and

patience and a little less malice," he added. Mishra said that everywhere work is happening for the benefit of 4.5 crore people of Odisha, but most unfortunately, from day one in Puri Srimandir redevelopment, some vested interests and political factions especially those who want to create their political significance, have been creating obstacles.



BJD and BJP over Srimandir Parikrama project intensified with the latter calling the State government obstinate and stubborn. Coming down heavily on the Odisha government over the issue, national spokesperson of the BJP Sambit Patra alleged that the digging near the Jagannath temple has been done without a ground penetrating radar survey (GPRS) and impact assessment study. "Why was the ASI advice ignored and GPRS and heritage impact assessment study not done before carrying out the dig-

the State government's act of utilising JCB machines for digging, Patra said that the broken sculpture of the lion should be conserved. The issue should not have been politicised, he added. Stating that truth cannot be hidden forever, Patra said that people will never forgive the BJD government which failed to protect the heritage and culture of Odisha. The BJP leader also targeted Puri MP Pinaki Mishra for his misleading statement on the project. "The State government is going ahead with the project without any approval.

said that history will identify such people as charlatans and malefic clowns who were obstructing development, security and conservation works of the temple purely out of selfish greed and unbridled malice. "I would urge all such wannabe politicians to rise above party and personal lines at least for the sake of Srimandir," he added. Stating that allegations about digging without GPRS are baseless, Mishra said that the State government's affidavit in the High Court will clarify all the aspects. "All that's needed is a little more

He said it is the State government's mission to improve facilities for pilgrims and restore the architectural glory of ancient temples in Odisha such as Srimandir in Puri, Samaleswari temple, Baldevjew temple, Lingaraj temple, and Nurusinghnath temple. "However, politicians who have been rejected by the people are wanting to stop the temple work somehow as they fear the resounding success of the Srimandir project will be bad news for them in the elections in 2024. They can never be satisfied with any explanation," he added.

North Korea 'ready for nuclear test' with Biden due in Seoul

NORTH KOREA: North Korea is ready to conduct a nuclear test at any moment, a South Korean lawmaker said Thursday, with the United States warning it could happen while President Joe Biden is in Seoul this week.

North Korea's "preparations for a nuclear test have been completed and they are only looking for the right time", lawmaker Ha Tae-keung told reporters after being briefed by Seoul's National Intelligence Service. Kim Jong Un's regime is battling a spiralling Covid-19 outbreak with nearly two million reported cases of "fever", but both Washington and Seoul say this has not de-



railed Pyongyang's test plans. After a record-breaking blitz of missile launches this year, including intercontinental ballistic missiles, Kim could seek to distract North Koreans from the spiralling health crisis with a nuclear weapons test, analysts say. US intelligence thinks there is a "genuine possibility" that Kim could choose to stage a "provocation" after Biden arrives in Seoul late Friday for his first trip as president to Asia, his administration said. This could mean "further missile tests, long-range missile tests or a nuclear test, or frankly both" around the time of Biden's trip, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said. Satellite imagery also indicates North Korea is preparing to conduct what would be its seventh nuclear test. Both Seoul and Washington have been warning for weeks that it could come any day.

No stopping them? "North Korea will want to attract global attention by conducting a nuclear test during President Biden's visit to South Korea and Japan," Cheong Seong-chang of the Center for North Korea Studies at the Sejong Institute told AFP. Leader Kim is likely debating what to do, with the United States pressuring North Korea's sole major ally China to help rein in Pyongyang's nuclear and ICBM tests. But with Kim well aware of the gridlock at the UN Security Council after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, "it seems highly likely that he will carry out nuclear or ICBM tests during President Biden's visit to South Korea or Japan," Cheong added. Biden lands in South Korea on Friday for his first summit with the country's new president Yoon Suk-yeol, who took office last week. Talks between Washington and Pyongyang have been stalled for years after an extraordinary show of diplomacy between then US President Donald Trump and Kim -- which was brokered by Yoon's predecessor Moon Jae-in -- ultimately ended in failure. Trump held three headline-grabbing meetings with Kim and has claimed that the two were "in love", but analysts say little to no progress was made in dismantling the North's nuclear programmes. Kim recently said he was strengthening his nuclear arsenal "at the fastest possible speed". Part of the blame for the state of play must be laid at Biden's door due to his "strategic neglect" of North Korea since he took office, said Park Won-gon, a professor at Ewha University. "In terms of denuclearisation and US-North Korea ties, we have returned to a situation where it's difficult to find any progress," Park said. "There is no way to really stop North Korea now," he said.

JDU leader Anil Hegde files nomination for Rajya Sabha by-poll in Bihar

PATNA: Senior JD(U) leader Anil Hegde on Thursday filed his nomination for by-election to a Rajya Sabha seat in Bihar which fell vacant upon

"He has been known to us for long. He started working with late George Fernandes and has been working with us all through. Never has he ex-

drawal of nominations is May 23 and voting, if required, will take place on May 30. Kumar parried questions on the possibility of another term in

state, JD(U) holds two and another is represented by Sharad Yadav who was disqualified for anti-party activities in 2017. However, a dimin-



the death of a party MP. Hegde, who is the party's national election officer, filed his papers at the Vidhan Sabha premises where he was accompanied by a number of party colleagues, including Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, the JD(U)'s de facto chief. Talking to reporters afterwards, Kumar lauded Hegde, whose candidature has come as a surprise, for his dedication and selflessness.

pressed the desire for anything for himself. Not surprisingly, his candidature was supported unanimously," Kumar told reporters. The by-election has been necessitated by the death of Mahendra Prasad, better known as 'King Mahendra' in political circles. A multiple term MP, he owned a number of pharmaceutical companies and was said to be one of the richest members of Parliament. The last date for with-

the Rajya Sabha for former JD(U) national president RCP Singh, who is also a member of the union cabinet. Singh's term ends shortly and his seat is among the five for which biennial polls are scheduled early next month. "We have come here in connection with the by-election. Decision about the biennial polls will be taken in due course", said Kumar. Of the five Rajya Sabha seats in the

ished tally in the assembly may force the party to settle for only one seat this time. Kumar, who was accompanied by a number of cabinet colleagues including Syed Shahnawaz Husain of the BJP, ducked questions about the turmoil in the Congress and the controversy that has erupted around the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi. He walked past journalists wearing a smile and waving his hand.




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Pact For Women eMarket

New Delhi: Government eMarketplace [GeM] and Self Employed Women's Association [SEWA] inked a Memorandum of Understanding [MoU] for the advocacy, outreach, mobilization and capacity-building of last-mile women-led micro and small enterprises, women entrepreneurs, SHGs, Associations, Cooperatives, Collectives, Not-for-Profit Section 8 Companies, and various Voluntary Organizations [VO] as sellers and service providers in public procurement. The MoU was signed by PK Singh, CEO, GeM, and Rehana Riyawala, Vice-President, SEWA in New Delhi on 19 May 2022. GeM will train SEWA members to assist and enable women-led micro and small enterprises, women entrepreneurs, SHGs among others, with GeM processes related to seller registration and on-boarding on the platform, upload/update of product/service catalogues, acceptance of orders, participation in bids floated by Govt buyers, fulfilment of orders and invoice generation to receive payments directly into their bank accounts through the unified online national public procurement platform. Vernacular language-based training curriculum in print and digital media for women entrepreneurs and SHGs based on the requirement of the participants will be developed by GeM in consultation with SEWA. Training sessions will be conducted through in-person and virtual training modes for SEWA members in district and block-

level, who in turn will address the twin challenges of "access to markets" through GeM Outlet Stores and "access to finance" through GeM Sahay application for entrepreneurs and SHGs with various buyer and seller functionalities on the GeM portal. GeM has sought to

seller groups. Marketplace filters and icons on product display page for Women MSE entrepreneurs have been enabled on the portal to help government buyers meet the 3 percent [%] procurement target set aside for women-led MSEs in accordance with the Public Procurement Policy for MSEs [PPP-MSE] for promotion of women-led micro, small enterprises. Further, GeM has created 200+ handicraft, handloom and office accessories product categories, along with 8 dedicated outlet stores to showcase and promote products made by women entrepreneurs from the informal sector. Creation of "Stitching and tailoring", "canteen and catering", "house-keeping" service categories tailored to generate employment and business opportunities for women in urban and rural areas



are also available on the portal. Social inclusion being one of its core values, Government e Marketplace [GeM] is focused on increasing participation from last-mile women-led micro and small enterprises, women entrepreneurs, and SHGs who face challenges in accessing government markets. Last-mile underserved seller groups in rural areas, namely; women-led micro and small enterprises, women entrepreneurs, SHGs and others such as khadi and tribal entrepreneurs, farmer producer organizations [FPO], Startups, artisans and weavers, divyangjan and Hunar-Haat craftsmen, bamboo producers, and allied stakeholders' such as Corporates, Private Companies Colleges, Scientific and Technical Research Institutions, and Universities, among others in

public procurement will benefit from this MoU. Speaking at the ceremony, PK Singh, CEO, GeM mentioned that "inclusion is a core value at GeM, and this partnership will leverage the wide network of women entrepreneurs through SEWA to ensure the inclusion and participation of last-mile women entrepreneurs and women SHGs on GeM". Presently, 1.31 lakh+ women MSE entrepreneurs are registered on the GeM portal and they have fulfilled approx. 5.7 lakh+ orders worth INR 10,752 Crore in gross merchandise value. Rehana Riyawala, Vice-President, SEWA said that "the signing of MoU with GeM will usher access to an untapped market in public procurement for millions of women entrepreneurs from the informal sector". Engage-

ment of last-mile women-led micro and small enterprises, SHGs among others with Local Bodies, Panchayati Raj institutions located in block and district-level will spur hyper-local procurement of goods and services leading to employment-generation and wealth-creation in rural India. The MoU will align the untapped entrepreneurial energy of last-mile producers and service-providers in rural India with local government buyers. Social and economic inclusion of last-mile women-led micro and small enterprises, women entrepreneurs, and SHGs from the informal sector in public procurement will lead to integration of local value-chains through "Vocal for Local" and "Make in India" initiatives of the Government, thereby furthering the aim of ensuring a self-reliant "Atmanirbhar Bharat".

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Tribal Dance Fest Kick Starts

Bhubaneswar: Minister, ST & SC Development, Minorities & Backward Classes Welfare Odisha Jagannath Sarka on

mance of different tribal dances, gives a glimpse of the dance tradition of tribal India. The 3-Day National

Bihu Dance of Tiwa and Bodo Tribe, Assam, Kachi Ghodi Dance of BhilMeena Tribe, Rajasthan, Dandaras Dance of

Mizoram, Dhemsas Dance of Gadaba Tribe, Odisha, Gaurmar Mandri Dance of Gond Tribe, Chhattisgarh, Hathi



Thursday inaugurated the three-day eleventh National Tribal Dance Festival here being organized by SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar with support from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. Tribal Dance features a cultural show to preserve, propagate and popularize by showcasing the rich cultural wealth of the picturesque tribals of different states like Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Goa and Odisha. This platform, for the events of live perfor-

Event of gaiety presents as many as thirty colourful dance forms of twenty tribal communities at Rabindra Mandap in the State Capital. MLA Rayagada Makaranda Muduli, Joint Secretary Ministry of Tribal Affairs Naval Jit Kapoor, State's Principal Secretary Ranjana Chopra and Director Guha Punam Tapas Kumar were among those who were present during the inauguration. First day cultural event of the National Tribal Dance Festival includes the Dangi Dance of Kunbi Tribe of Gujarat, Khoiguna Laam (Bee mating dance) of Rongmei/Kabui Tribe, Manipur, Birli Dance of Durua Tribe, Odisha,

Gaddi Tribe, Himachal Pradesh, Bijapandu Dance of Koya Tribe, Odisha, Nyung-Ma-Kaapu Dance of Sherpa Tribe, Sikkim, Sheila Dance of Gond Tribe, Uttarparadesh, Cheraw Dance of Mizo Tribe, Mizoram. The day-2 programme will presents different colourful tribal dances, like Ghusadi Dance of Gond Tribe, Maharashtra, Chaurang Dance of Velip Tribe, Goa, KaramThapadi Dance of Oraon Tribe, Jharkhand, Mayura Dance of Kondh Tribe, Andhra Pradesh, Kalasi Dance of Santal Tribe, Odisha, Bori Dance of Bhil Meena Tribe, Rajasthan, Sarlamkai Dance of Mizo Tribe,

Dance of Jaunsari Tribe of Uttarakhand state. The third evening of the cultural event presents colourful tribal dances such as Karma Dance of Gond Tribe, Uttarpradesh, Fagli Dance of Swangla Tribe, Himachal Pradesh, Dhemsas Dance of Paroja Tribe, Odisha, Hiran Dance of Jaunsari Tribe, Uttarakhand, Dhemsas Dance of Tamang Tribe, Maharashtra, Damphu Dance of Tamanag Tribe, Sikkim, Fly Dance of Rongmei/ Kabui Tribe Shim Laam, Karma Dance of Oraon Tribe, Odisha, Dunganardev Dance of Kunbi Tribe, Gujarat, Barat Mishwa Dance of Tiwa Tribe, Assam State.

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Edtech firm Vedantu further fires 424 employees, total number nears 624

NEW DELHI: Within a fortnight of laying off 200 employees, edtech firm Vedantu has further fired 424 employees

back to its operating principal, where it will look to create runway for 30 months and lower customer acquisition

let go as well. These calls are never easy to make, and let me also tell you, this is not a reflection of either the ability or the per-



from the company citing tough external environment and fear of recession. Vedantu, after laying off 200 employees, had shared its plan of hiring 1,000 employees this year. "Today I am writing about one of the toughest decisions we had to take in the past many years. It is days like these that are heartbreaking and I hope to never see them again."

"There is no easy way to say this -- out of 5,900 Vedans, 424 of our fellow teammates i.e. approximately 7 per cent of our company, will be parting with us," Vedantu co-founder and CEO Vamsi Krishna said in a blog post. He said that the current external environment is tough and the company is going

cost. "War in Europe, impending recession fears and Fed interest rate hikes have led to inflationary pressures with massive correction in stocks globally and in India as well. Given this environment, capital will be scarce for upcoming quarters," Krishna said. He said that with COVID-19 tailwinds receding, schools and offline models opening up and the hyper growth of 9 times Vedantu experienced during the last 2 years will also get moderated. Vamsi said that the company will have to adapt to situation for long term sustenance. "The result is that a few teams and projects will have to be deprioritised, and in the process, a few of our Vedans will be

performance of the impacted Vedans in any way," Krishna said. During this year edtech firms have laid off hundreds of their workforce. In April, Unacademy had laid off around 600 people. In February, Ronnie Screwvala-funded Lido Learning had shut shop, which reportedly led to loss of around 1,000 jobs.

PM Modi to attend Tokyo Quad meet; to hold bilateral talks with US President Biden

Continued from page-1

"The forthcoming Quad summit provides an opportunity for the Leaders to exchange views about developments in the Indo-Pacific region and contemporary global issues of mutual interest," Bagchi said at a media briefing.

"The leaders will review progress of Quad initiatives and working groups, identify new areas of cooperation and provide strategic guidance and vision for future collaboration," he added.

The Quad has been focusing on cooperation in areas such as producing vaccines, connectivity projects, facilitating the mobility of students, and looking at promoting startups and technology collaboration.

The Quad vaccine partnership was announced in March last year with an aim to deliver one billion doses of vaccines to the Indo-Pacific region by the end of 2022.

Bagchi said Modi will have a bilateral meeting with Kishida, adding it will provide an opportunity for the two leaders to carry forward their conversations from the 14th India-Japan Annual Summit held in March when the Japanese prime minister visited India.

During the visit, the prime minister will participate in a business event with Japanese business leaders and also address and interact with the Indian community in Japan, the spokesperson said.

About Modi's scheduled meeting with Biden on May 24, Bagchi said it will mark a continuation of their regular dialogue.

"The two leaders are expected to review the India-US Strategic Partnership and follow up on discussions held during the PM's bilateral meeting with President Biden in September 2021. They will also exchange views on regional and global developments of shared interest," he said.

Bagchi said Modi is likely to have a bilateral meeting with the prime minister of Australia, where elections are to be held on May 21.

"The two leaders are expected to review the India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and exchange views on regional and global developments of mutual interest," he said.

"The last bilateral meeting between the two prime ministers was held virtually on March 21 followed by the signing of the India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) on April 2," Bagchi added.

Rupee slumps 10 paise to close at all-time low of 77.72 USD

MUMBAI: The rupee extended its losses and slumped 10 paise to close at a record low of 77.72 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, weighed down by a negative trend in domestic equities and unabated foreign fund outflows.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened lower at 77.72 against the greenback and finally settled for the day at 77.72, down 10 paise over its previous close.

During the trading session, the rupee touched an intra-day low of 77.76 and a high of 77.63.

On Wednesday, the rupee declined by 18 paise to close at 77.62.

"Rupee consolidated in a narrow range despite sharp sell-off in domestic and glo-

bal equities. Dollar also retraced from higher levels after economic number released from the US came below estimates," said Gaurang Somaiya, Forex & Bullion Analyst, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.28 per cent lower at 103.51.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures fell 1.87 per cent to USD 107.07 per barrel.

The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 1,416.30 points or 2.61 per cent lower at 52,792.23, while the broader NSE Nifty fell 430.90 points or 2.65 per cent to 15,809.40.

Foreign institutional investors were net sellers in the capital market on Wednesday, as they offloaded shares worth Rs 1,254.64 crore, as per stock exchange data.

Congress unable to check exodus despite promise of reforms in 'Chintan Shivir'

Continued from page-1

The Congress is seen making little effort to woo its leaders back and Rahul Gandhi has been saying for quite some time in internal party forums that anyone who succumbs to the pressure of the BJP in this "fight for ideology" is free to leave.

Other leaders who have quit in the recent past have also held senior positions either in the government or the organisation, but have still decided to move on as infighting plagues many of its state units.

A suspended Congress leader has said that the "Congress party has stopped having conversations within itself" and cited it as the reason for the defections.

The party had recently lost former Assam PCC chief Ripun Bora, former union ministers Ashwani Kumar and RPN Singh, former Goa chief minister Luizinho Faleiro and chief whip in Rajya Sabha Bhubaneswar Kalita.

Senior leaders like Jitin Prasada and Jyotiraditya Scindia, besides former Mahila Congress chief Sushmita Dev and PC Chacko have also quit in the recent past.

Both Jakhar and Patel hit out at the Congress, saying it has failed to meet the aspirations of the people.

Hardik quit Cong fearing jail in sedition cases, says party leader; claims his resignation scripted by BJP

Jakhar turned emotional while recalling his five-decade association with the old party and said he decided to quit when attempts were made to silence his voice by issuing him a show-cause for anti-party activities.

"It is not easy to break a relationship with the Congress that spanned three generations - from 1972 till now. We had been with the Congress in good times and bad," he told reporters.

In his resignation letter to Congress chief Sonia Gandhi ahead of this year's Gujarat Assembly poll, Patel (28) accused the party's top leadership of behaving as if they hated Gujarat and Gujaratis.

He also criticised the party's stand on Article 370, Ram temple and GST.

Black Thursday wipes out almost Rs 7 lakh crore in investor wealth; near-term outlook bleak

MUMBAI: Investors lost Rs 6.72 lakh crore in wealth on Thursday as stocks

the fall as retail investors also pressed the panic button with the Nifty Midcap 100

coming resistances. "Nifty fell towards the previous swing low on the back of a gap down start. The trend has turned negative as the Nifty fell below 16000," said Rupak De, senior technical analyst at LKP Securities. "The immediate support is seen at 15671; below 15671 further correction towards 15400 looks possible. On the higher end, resistance is placed at 16000."



tanked in line with global markets taking cues from the Dow Jones and Nasdaq which fell overnight by 3.57% and almost 5%.

The Nifty and Sensex shed 2.6% each with the former correcting 431 points to close at 15809.4 and the latter by 1416.30 points to 52792.23. The top 5 Nifty losers were tech stocks -- Wipro, HCL Tech, Tech M, Infy and TCS -- which shed 5.4-6.25% reflecting the carnage on the Nasdaq.

The selling was led by FIIs who sold shares worth a provisional Rs 4899.92 crore. DII buying worth a provisional Rs 3225.54 crore was not able to cushion

falling by almost 3% and the Nifty Smallcap 100 by 2.7% to 27271.9 and 8912.3 points each. ALSO READ | Rupee closes at all-time low of 77.72 USD Midcap and smallcap indices underperformed the frontline indices causing huge losses to retail investors who tend to invest in these counters.

The outlook for markets looks bleak in the near term with earlier supports be-

Analysts like SK Srivastava, founder, IndiaCharts, expects the Nifty to slide to 15200, implying an almost 4% downside. The pessimistic mood was reflected by the fear gauge India Vix rising by 10% to 24.56. A reading above 20 signals negative market sentiment.

Development Plan for Chandi Mandir

Continued from page-1

Mandap, Chandipatha Mandap, Mundan Mandap, Hanuman Mandir and new Roshghar will be built in the temple premises.

Khandalite stones will be laid around the temple and CCTV will be installed. The Batamangala temple will also be rebuilt. Emphasis will be placed on the police control room, cloak room, 'prasad sevan' system, safe drinking water, interpretation center, etc. so that devotees can offer prayer to the Goddess in a convenient and orderly manner.

In addition, passenger accommodation is provided. Eighteen shops will be set up for displaced shopkeepers, restrooms and offices in the temple area.

Besides, parking, open spaces and landscaping will also be developed.

The plan will be implemented through the OBCC. The plan calls for the development of the surrounding area and the development of the Cuttack Chandi Temple as a major tourist destination, with a variety of issues related to Varian control, various basic amenities for travelers, and drainage.

The Chandi temple is so close to the road that heavy vehicles' traffic poses a threat to the safety of commuters. So the road in front of the Chandi temple will be diverted while the temple floor raised to set up a proper drainage system.

The Cuttack Chandi Temple is an old 'Shaktipeetha' in the state. Thousands of devotees come here every year to visit their mothers. During the Durga Puja, a large crowd gathers to pay homage to the mother during the sixteenth daily puja. Recently Chief Minister's Secretary, VK Pandian discussed the development plan with the local public and servitors. Principal Secretary Works Vir Vikram Yadav is coordinating the entire efforts for improvement of 'Shaktipeetha'.

Today's event was attended by senior officials, including the Chief Secretary to Government and officials of the RDC, Cuttack District Administration.

Members of the Temple Trust Board who attended the meeting and representatives of the service praised the plan and thanked the Chief Minister.

RBI allows settlement of trade transactions with Sri Lanka in INR

MUMBAI: In view of difficulties being faced by exporters in getting payments from crisis-hit Sri Lanka, the RBI on Thursday allowed settlement of trade transactions in Indian rupee outside the Asian Clearing Union (ACU) mechanism. In March, the government had guaranteed a term loan of USD 1 billion extended by the State Bank of India (SBI) to Sri Lanka for financing purchase of essential goods by the island nation from India.

"In view of the difficulties being experienced by exporters in receipt of export proceeds from Sri Lanka and SBI's credit facility.. it has been decided that such trade transactions with Sri Lanka, falling under the said arrangement, may be settled in INR outside the ACU mechanism," the RBI said in a circular.

Under the arrangement, financing of export of eligible goods and services from India would be allowed subject to conditions and whose purchase may be agreed to be financed by SBI under the agreement.

Sri Lanka is facing its worst economic crisis since gaining independence from Britain in 1948.

Odisha Cabinet approves five amendments to Lokayukta Act

Continued from page-1

agencies of the State administration. The provision will be removed as the intent of such provision can effectively be addressed by the State administration.

It has also been decided to continue the present funding system of allocation of funds to the Lokayukta instead of provision of grants by suitably amending the provision of Section 41 of the Act and its consequential provisions.

Homage on 1st Death Anniversary



Late Raghunath Samantaray

Kshetrapal, Chandikhole, Jajpur

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Pray for the Departed Soul

Deeply Mourned by Family members & Relatives

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