

Odisha Plus Two Science, Commerce Results To Be Declared Today

Bhubaneswar: The results of the Odisha Plus Two Examinations-2023 for Science and Commerce streams conducted by the Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE) will be announced tomorrow (May 31) at 11 AM.

Students who appeared for the Class-12 examinations will be able to access their results by visiting the official website of CHSE at www.chseodisha.nic.in. The results of Arts and Vocational streams will be published on a later date.

Around 3.5 lakh students had appeared the examinations under various streams this year. The CHSE had started evaluation of the answer sheets on April 10. The process of evaluating the answer sheets took place at 65 offline evaluation centers and 39 online evaluation centers.



Odisha Tops Fiscal Management

Bhubaneswar: From a debt-ridden State in 1999, Odisha has now emerged as the number one State in the country in fiscal management during past 23 years under the dynamic leadership of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, said Veteran Financial Analyst, Rajib Sekhar Sahoo. Shri Sahoo talked to Media on Financial Management of the State Government over last 23 years and said that Odisha was considered one of the most fiscally-stressed among all general category States in late 1990's and early 2000's. When Naveen Patnaik

was sworn in as the Chief Minister, the State was in a very bad shape. The Super Cyclone of 1999 not only created devastation in the State but also ruined the economy of Odisha, said he. But the Chief Minister Shri Patnaik had promised the people to bring financial stability back in Odisha. The State government took a number of strong fiscal correction measures both on resource as well as expenditure side during the early part of the century to bring the state finances back to stability. Now, the State has emerged as the 'Number One' State in the country



in fiscal management, which is the biggest success of Odisha, Ace Analyst Shri Sahoo said. Revenue augmentation

measures were taken which included introduction of taxes on profession in 2000; introduction of VAT in

2005; use of IT-based tools in tax administration for improving compliance, periodic revision of rates of various tax and non-tax revenues; monthly review of revenue collection etc. Successful mining leases through auction in recent years also added to the stability of the State's finances.

The State has gone forward in its performance in Own Tax Revenue collection, Debt Management, Capital Expenditure and bringing new investments, he said. As per Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act (FRBM Act), 2005, the debt stock

should remain below 25 percent of GSDP and in Odisha, it stood at about 17 to 18 percent while debt stock of many other States crossed the limit, the Top Economic Analyst said. Odisha has the unique distinction of adherence to all the parameters envisaged in FRBM Act every year since enactment. Considering the financial risks associated with the mining revenue, the State Government has created a Budget Stabilisation Fund which will act as a buffer fund to ensure financial stability during the period of negative shocks from the mining sector.

Scanner On Digital Bribery

Bhubaneswar: For the first time in its history, Odisha Vigilance has cracked down bribery cases done through digital mode of payments. The Vigilance has detected two cases of bribe taking through PhonePe and arrested government as well as private persons involved in the bribe cases. With the detection of bribe cases through digital mode, the anti-corruption wing of Odisha government, in a tweet said, "#Odisha #Vigilance is committed to take strong action against bribe takers and their facilitators. Remember, you aren't safe when taking bribes through PhonePe. We will follow the digital

footprints and come after you." In all three cases, private persons helping the government servants by taking bribe money in their PhonePe accounts have also been arrested. The Vigilance has arrested Karanjia Tahsildar Charles Nayak while taking a bribe of Rs 12 lakh through two different blank cheques. This was the first case of a bribe Rs 12 lakhs by cheque mode, also the highest bribe amount in a case, an official said on Tuesday. The Tahsildar demanded the bribe amount in the form of two blank cheques (without name

of the payee) of Rs.10 lakh and Rs.2 lakh, in order to release the compensation cheque of the complainant, he said.



Shri Nayak has been arrested as prima facie evidence well established against him and he will be forwarded today to court of special judge, vigilance,

Baripada, Mayurbhanj. In another case, the Vigilance has arrested Taruna Ranjan Nayak, working in the grievance redressal forum (GRF), Tata Power Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TPCODL), Bhubaneswar along with his associate Sailaza Muduli while demanding and accepting bribe Rs.10,000 from a complainant through PhonePe (digital mode).

They found taking the bribe on the PhonePe account of Muduli for processing the grievance application of the complainant in getting a new electricity

connection to his residence, the vigilance official said. In the third case, the Vigilance officials have caught three officials of the minor irrigation division of Berhampur in Ganjam district who have been arrested for demanding bribes of Rs 24,000. The accused are two junior engineers—Prasanna Kumar Padhy & Dharendra Kumar Panda, and supervisor Ajaya Patra. For processing the file for a work, Panda found taking Rs 10,000 cash while the supervisor Ajaya Patra previously accepted Rs.14,000 through Phonepe. Following the case, raids have been conducted in the properties of the three officials.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah visits tribal-dominated Manipur district, announces Rs 10 lakh for victims' families

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who had already held a half a dozen meetings since his arrival in violence-hit Manipur on Monday night, on Tuesday visited Churachandpur, one of the districts severely affected by the ethnic violence that ravaged the state since May 3, leaving at least 75 dead and over 300 injured. According to a senior Manipur government official, during a meeting between the Home Minister and state council of ministers headed by the Chief Minister, it was decided to give compensation of Rs 10 lakh each to those who died during the ethnic violence. A government job would



also be provided to a kin of the family whose members were killed in the violence. The compensation amount would be equally borne by the Centre and the state. Officials said that in the tribal-dominated Churachandpur, Shah held meetings with various Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), influential tribal leaders

and local security and civil administrations officials. "This crucial engagement aims to study the actual situation in ground zero and gather inputs and better understand the challenges faced by the affected communities," a government official said in Imphal. He said that the Home Minister is likely to chair an all party meeting in Imphal on Tuesday or Wednesday as part of the efforts to bring peace and normalcy in the northeastern state, where a large number of government and non-government properties, and nearly 1,800 houses destroyed in the ethnic hostilities.

Tribal Museums In 8 Dists

Bhubaneswar: To promote tribal art and culture, the State Government has decided to set up Tribal Museums in eight districts, where Special Development Councils have been formed. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik today reviewed the achievements of the ST & SC Development, Minorities and Backward Classes Welfare Department in the 3rd Floor Conference Hall of Lokaseva Bhawan. Department Minister Jagannath Saraka and Secretary Roopa Roshan Sahoo have briefed the media about the achievements of the department. STSCRTI Director Indramani Tripathy was present. The districts are Mayurbhanj, Malkangiri, Keonjhar, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Rayagada, Gajapati, Kandhamal, and Sundergarh districts. The Tribal Museums will be established in Mayurbhanj, Malkangiri, Keonjhar,

Koraput, Nabarangpur, Gajapati, Kandhamal, and Sundergarh districts. Land has been identified for construction of Tribal Museum and boundary wall construction has been completed in 6 districts, he said. Special Development Councils (SDCs) are formed under the Chairmanship of an eminent tribal person of the locality to focus on promotion, protection and preservation of the tribal culture and traditions, heritage and identity by involving tribal people. SDC started in 2017 covering over 60 lakh people in 117 blocks in 9 districts with more than 45% ST population. The number of districts was increased to 23 and blocks to 172 covering more than 84 lakh ST people in 2023, he said. An amount of Rs 223.5 cores has been budgeted for 23 SDCs for the year 2023-24 for 62 tribal blocks including 13 PVTGs. Under the scheme, 4731 sacred groves in 9 districts



completed while 1609 Tribal Cultural Club set up, 828 weekly Hats identified for improvement, 1870 musical troupes benefited, 10605 tribal delegates availed exposure visits, I-Cards issued to 36309 tribal artisans and 2249 clubs provided with sports kits, the Minister pointed out. Shri Saraka further said that 51 Tribal Resource Centres (TRCs) were constructed in Sundargarh district. More than 6 lakh students from 4.2 lakh households are studying in 1735 schools functioning under the department. In last 20 years, number of High

Schools under ST&SC Dev Department has increased to 422 from 215. Similarly, 62 Higher Secondary Schools have been opened for providing Higher Secondary Education. Smart classrooms and all 5T facilities are going to be provided to all the high schools under the department along with Standard-VIII classes. To promote critical thinking in students 1405 Reading Corners and 500 Smart classrooms have been set up across schools. Further all 422 High schools are equipped with ICT labs. For children in Primary schools tabs have been provided to make

learning from engaging and fun, he pointed out. In 17 micro projects areas with PVTG communities, 17 dedicated educational institutions from class I-X are functioning from 2007-08. Anwesha programme started in 2015-16 with an objective for providing English Medium Education to ST&SC students in CBSE & ICSE syllabus by admitting them in different English Medium Public Schools in urban areas or areas adjacent to urban local bodies. Currently, 80 such hostels are operational and cater to close to 22,000 students.

This year, 1500 more students will join the Anwesha scheme. There are 10 Kalinga Model Residential Schools operating since 2019 for providing residential English medium education in CBSE syllabus (VI-XII) for the ST&SC children in Tribal Sub Plan areas. One Biju Patnaik Adarsh Vidyalaya has been established in Berhampur in the year 2018-19 for providing residential English medium education in CBSE syllabus (VI-XII @120 students per class). To promote girl child education and reduce dropouts, the department has dedicated KBK hostels and 188 exclusive Girls High Schools. These hostel students are provided with Free Textbooks, Uniforms and Meals. To take care of the Holistic Development of the students, an additional Rs 1000 per child per annum has been

provisioned. "Parents as Partners" a new and unique initiative ensures 4 lakh parents to be stakeholders in education systems. For promotion of sports and games in the schools a provision of Rs 10 Crores has been made. As many as 8 Akankhya hostels have been established in the State for providing free lodging to ST&SC students pursuing post matric education. Under Mukhya Mantri Medhabi Chhatra Protsahan Yojana, financial assistance is being provided to meritorious ST & SC Students for higher education in national importance / premier state institutions. Free coaching for medical and engineering aspirants under this scheme, Sahoo said. As many as 5 lakhs ST&SC border students are provided with Rs 550 crores of pre matric scholarship annually. For OBCs and minorities 100+23

dedicated hostels are on different stages of construction, the Secretary said. The department has a MultiLingual Education (MLE) policy under which content has been prepared in 21 bilingual and trilingual languages for different classes. This is supported by language and curriculum-based training for the teachers, she said. MMJMM (Mukhya Mantri Janajati Jeevika Yojana) is a state scheme for livelihood at household level intervention for three-years from 2022-23 to 2025-26 with a budget of Rs 500 crore. The scheme primarily focuses on tribal-dominated 119 blocks covering 931 GPs with provisions for critical input support to beneficiaries. Approximately 2.4 lakh households benefited from Mission Jeevika program while more than 1 lakh households benefited under the Minor Forest Produce.

Countdown Begins For Intercontinental Cup 2023; Odisha CM Buys First Ticket



Bhubaneswar: After huge success of FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 Bhubaneswar-Rourkela, Odisha is all set to host an international football event here in the capital city. With countdown began for the upcoming Intercontinental Cup 2023 scheduled from June 9 to 18 in Bhubaneswar, Chief Minister Naveen

Patnaik bought the first ticket for marquee event to be held at the Kalinga Stadium. Captain of the Indian Football team, Sunil Chhetri handed the first ticket to the Chief Minister in the presence of All-India Football Federation General Secretary Shaji Prabhakaran and Coach of the Indian Football team, Igor Stimac. The four-nation

tournament will feature India, Lebanon, Mongolia, and Vanuatu. Speaking on the occasion, Patnaik said, "There is a lot of love for football amongst the people of Odisha. Hosting this spectacular event is another honour for us and will undoubtedly thrill the numerous football fans across the state and India. I would like to wish the teams

the best of luck and encourage the fans to turn out in huge numbers to watch the top-quality football that will unfold." For the first time, Odisha will be hosting international men's football tournament. The CM urged the football fans to come in large number to the stadium to cheer for the Blue Tigers (India). The state has been emerging as a major hub for football as well. It hosted the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup 2022, SAFF U-20 Championship 2022, ISL seasons, IWL 2021-22, and the Odisha Women's League thus providing a huge boost to the development of Football ecosystem in the state. In partnership with AIFF, the capital city of Bhubaneswar is also

the base of the Indian U16 and U19 teams, frequently hosting camps and training sessions at the state-of-the-art infrastructure. The interest in football in the state continues to grow as the state-partnered Odisha FC that is based out of the Kalinga Sports Complex recently brought home the coveted Super Cup. The partnership with Odisha FC has enabled the state to build a robust grassroots system. Odisha is also the only state that has two teams competing in the Indian Women's League (IWL). The Intercontinental Cup is set to kick off on June 9 with Lebanon taking on Vanuatu while the home team India will meet Mongolia in their first game of the campaign.

2 Persons Including Minor Die After Truck Collides With Two-Wheeler In Odisha's Jagatsinghpur



Jagatsinghpur: In a tragic incident, two persons including a minor girl died while two others suffered critical injuries after a truck hit their two-wheeler in Balikuda block of Odisha's Jagatsinghpur district here today. The deceased were identified as Kalima Bibi and her four-year old daughter of Mir Mahala village under Tirtol block of the district, and the injured

her father in-law Sheikh Mukhtar and elder daughter Alia Khatun. As per reports, the four of them were travelling on their scooty and going to the district headquarters hospital in Jagatsinghpur from their village when a truck coming the opposite direction rammed into their two-wheeler. Such was the impact of the collision that Kalima and her younger

daughter died on the spot while her elder daughter and father-in-law suffered grievous injuries. As news spread villagers gathered at the spot and started demanding compensation for the bereaved family. Police on getting information reached the spot and started investigation. A case has been registered and bodies seized for autopsy.

Valedictory of one-week STUTI training program by Central Research Instrumentation Facility (CRIF)



Warangal (KCN): A seven-day training program on Research & Development equipment under Synergistic Training Program Utilizing the Scientific and Technological Infrastructure (STUTI) has been organized by Central Research Instrumentation Facility (CRIF), NIT Warangal during 28th May 2023. 31 Participants from all the neighboring states of Telangana have

learnt the theory and experienced the hands-on of the Sophisticated Analytical Equipment during this one week. On the event of valedictory Prof. Bidyadhar Subudhi, Director, NIT Warangal has described the institute as the powerhouse of the Technology & Equipment and advised the participants to make collaborative research by utilizing the facilities at the center.

During his visit to the facilities at CRIF, the Director has appreciated the efforts in maintenance of the equipment and quick delivery of the reports of the sample analysis. "Participants should revise the knowledge gained in the training program to improve the research potential" Prof. Somasekhar V T, Dean (R&C), added. Prof. N Narasaiah, Principal Investigator of the STUTI expressed that they are

anticipating the extension of the project in view of its usefulness and capacity building of the researchers and educational institutions. Dr. T K Sai, Principal Scientific Officer; Sri. V Sudhakar, Sri Harish Madupu, Smt. GSR Sanjeevini, Technical Officers, Sri. Sharath, Technical Assistant and other CRIF and STUTI team were present during the valedictory.

Will Power Fights Cancer

Bhubaneswar: Though a population of about one lakh on an average are diagnosed with blood cancer in India every year, the critical illness can be defeated with proper treatment and the patient's will to fight, medical experts said on Saturday. "There is a need to dispel the notion that it is difficult to escape death if a person was afflicted with cancer," Dr. Hara Prasad Pati, former Head of Department of Hematopathology at AIIMS, New Delhi, said while addressing a programme organised at the Institute of Medical Sciences and SUM Hospital here on the eve of World Blood Cancer Day.

Dr. Pati said a lot of development had taken place in the field of hematology over the last three decades and it was now possible to defeat blood cancer with proper treatment, use of drugs, enhanced immunity and a positive attitude towards life. Prof. (Dr.) Ashok Kumar Mahapatra, SOA's Principal Advisor (Health Sciences) who addressed the programme, said blood cancer stood 5th in the list of critical illnesses. Though the disease is serious, it can be treated successfully, he said. Speaking on the occasion, Prof. (Dr.) Sanghamitra Mishra, Dean of IMS and SUM Hospital, said those who have emerged victorious

against blood cancer should be the source of inspiration for many others. Prof. (Dr.) Pusparaj Samantashinhar, Medical Superintendent, said the hospital had the necessary facilities for treatment of cancer including Bone Marrow Transplantation unit, ICU, lab hematology, transfusion medicine and infection control unit available under the same roof. "United effort of all concerned can help patients recover from the illness," he said. Prof. (Dr.) Priyanka Samal, Head of the Department of Hematology and Hemato Oncology, said the process of Bone Marrow Transplantation had begun in the hospital in

2018 and till now 48 cases of BMT had been done successfully. Stem Cell Transplantation had also been done in the hospital in February last, she said. Prof. (Dr.) Prithvi Chandra Patra, Associate Professor in the Hemato Oncology department proposed the vote of thanks. Among others, Prof. (Dr.) Rajesh Bhol, Head of Lab Hematology department, Prof. (Dr.) Santosh Singh, in-charge of Hematology ICU, Prof. (Dr.) Shivangi Harankheda, Associate Professor in the department of Hemato Oncology, Ms. Minati Mishra, Nursing Superintendent and Ms. Pushpanjali Rout, Deputy General Manager, were present.

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Ram Siya Ram Song: Fans Hail Prabhas-Kriti Sanon's New Song From Adipurush, Say 'They Bring Character To Life'

Pan India Star Prabhas has a tremendous fan base all around the country, thanks to his unparalleled talent which he has proven over the years. The celebrated star is currently preparing for the release of his magnum opus "Adipurush," and the public has already gone bonkers after watching his portrayal, and appearance as Lord Ram in the recently released song "Ram Siya Ram," in which the superstar once again wowed fans and audiences with his superb screen presence.



Not just the song, the audiences and fans have shown their love for every content that has been released so far. On the recently released song 'Ram Siya Ram', the fans have gone berserk and the actor is receiving rave reviews for his unmatched presence as Lord Sri Ram in the song. This is what fans have to say. Prabhas, who popularised the phrase "Pan India Superstar" with his historical smash "Baahubali: The Beginning," has consistently won over admirers with his alluring personality and intensely dramatic films. The superstar is more popular than ever right now, and his popularity only gets bigger and better every day. Today, Prabhas is one of India's most bankable actors and enjoys the support of the public. With films like Salaar with Shruti Haasan, Project K with Amitabh Bachchan and Deepika Padukone, Spirit with Sandeep Reddy Vanga, and another intriguing picture with filmmaker Maruthi, he currently has one of the strongest lineups ever.

I haven't locked the doors for love in my life but they are not wide open too, says Suchitra Krishnamoorthi

Kabhi Haan Kabhi Naa fame Suchitra Krishnamoorthi was recently in Lucknow to stage her play Drama Queen. The actress, who got divorced from filmmaker Shekhar Kapur in 2007, has been a single mom. But now with her daughter shifting to college, Suchitra says her life has taken a complete turn. In a chat with us Suchitra talked about her Lucknow visit, theatre, being a single parent and finding love again.... So how was your visit to Lucknow?

The funny part about the visit was that I wasn't aware of chikankari work, so people kept telling me to try chikankari work and I was like but I am a vegetarian and why are people offering me chikan curry? But when I finally realized what chikankari was, I went to Janpath and picked up a lot of stuff. I liked it so much that later on, I picked up more stuff at the airport. I have picked up so many clothes that for the next few months,



I am only going to be seen in chikankari work.

I have been here before but very briefly. This time, I managed to go out and shop. But yes, since I love history and architecture, I would love to come here for a few more days and see all that since Lucknow is the hotbed of all that.

You had staged your play Drama Queen here for the first time. How did you find the audience here?

The audience here was very responsive. They were laughing and enjoying it so much. A lot of women in fact came to me later telling me that they enjoyed the show and it managed to touch

Maniesh Paul Unveils Poster Of His Next 'Rafuchakkar,' Fans Are Excited For His Never-Seen-Before Avatar



Maniesh Paul hits it out of the park in his digital debut Rafuchakkar releasing on Jio Cinema, the teaser proves his worth as a versatile actor generating excitement amongst the audience. After an impactful and impressive performance in Jugjugg Jeeyo last year which led to a streak of awards for the actor, Maniesh Paul has pushed his boundaries to unveil different facets of his versatility in his OTT debut - Rafuchakkar. Known for his innate wit and spontaneity, Maniesh Paul has earlier impressed the audience with his comic timing on screen, however, Rafuchakkar delves deep into the acting prowess of the actor, exploring the intense and versatile

performer within him. Donning five different looks, Maniesh plays a con artist in the show. Talking about the show, Maniesh Paul shares says, "After Jugjugg Jeeyo, Rafuchakkar feels the right step as an actor. I love the challenge to push my boundaries and mould myself into different characters. And I have been fortunate enough to experiment with five characters in one for Rafuchakkar especially as it marks my digital debut as well. Special shout-out to Jio Studios for instilling their faith in me to play a role so drastically different from my personality. It has been a wonderful experience, from going through a series of combinations and

experiments for every look to the interesting process of actually slipping into them, I felt like I lived ages and lives in just one show." From a distinctive moustache, sporting a turban, to a suave and sassy man with grey hair and beard, Maniesh Paul is seen slipping into different avatars for the character. The teaser for the Jio Studios' Rafuchakkar was recently unveiled offering a sneak peek into the world of deceit, presented by Maniesh, piquing the interest of the audience for the fun-filled and thrilling show. Directed by Ritam Shrivastava, Rafuchakkar stars Maniesh Paul in the leading role alongwith Priya Bapat and others.

Martin Scorsese Announces His Film On Jesus Christ As He Meets Pope

Martin Scorsese is on a post-Cannes tour of Italy where over the weekend, the director, known for having a religious bent, met Pope Francis and announced that he will make a film about Jesus, reports 'Variety'.

Scorsese was till recently at the Cannes Film Festival, where his film



with Robert De Niro and Leonardo DiCaprio, "Killers of the Flower Moon", received a long-standing ovation after it was screened.

"I have responded to the Pope's appeal to artists in the only way I know how: by imagining and writing a screenplay for a film about Jesus," Scorsese said on Saturday during a Rome conference at the Vatican, according to multiple reports quoted by 'Variety'.

"And I'm about to start making it," the director added, suggesting that this could be his next film.

The Jesuit publication "La Civiltà Cattolica" and Georgetown University had organised the conference. Antonio Spadaro, the religious periodical's editor, said on the publication's website that during their conversation at the confabulations Scorsese alternated between references to his films and personal anecdotes and explained "How the Holy Father's appeal 'to let us see Jesus' moved him".

Scorsese, notes 'Variety', cited his admiration for Pier Paolo Pasolini's "The Gospel According to St Matthew". He also talked about the meaning of his own 1988 epic "The Last Temptation of Christ" and of "the subsequent step in his research on the figure of Jesus" represented by his smaller-scale 2016 drama "Silence" about the persecution of Jesuits in 17th-century Japan.

That film was screened in 2016 at the Vatican. Francis is the first Jesuit pope and is known to have joined the Jesuit order hoping to become a missionary in Japan.

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Salman Khan Teases Fans With new Look as he Wraps up 'Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan'

The shooting for Salman Khan-starrer 'Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan' has come to an end. On Wednesday, Salman took to Instagram and shared the update with his fans and followers. He wrote, "KisiKaBhaiKisikiJaan shooting complete ... #eid2023." Salman also dropped a photo of his look from the film. In the image, he is seen wearing a white shirt, gold hoop earrings and his signature blue bracelet.

Lock Upp winner: Munawar Faruqui bags the trophy, wins a cash prize of Rs 20 lakh

Reality show Lock Upp, hosted by Kangana Ranaut, found its first winner in Munawar Faruqui. The comedian emerged victorious after defeating the other two finalists Payal Rohatgi and Anjali Arora.

Along with the trophy, Munawar won a cash prize of Ra 20 lakh, a car and a fully paid trip to Italy.

Munawar's journey in Lock Upp was quite eventful. While some claimed he was



manipulative, there were others with whom he forged a genuine connection in the jail like Prince Narula and

revealing a lot about his personal life. He shared how his mother died by suicide after consuming poison. He added he still feels guilty for not being by her side when she needed him the most. He spoke about his debt and how his mother could not make ends meet which led her to take the drastic step. In one of the episodes, Munawar, who has garnered a massive fan following with Lock Upp, revealed that he is married and has a child. He shared he has been

living separately from his wife for the last one and a half years, and the matter is in the court. He said all of this after Kangana shared his viral photo doing rounds on social media. It sees him with his wife and son. Munawar's popularity is such that he is often seen trending on Twitter. His innocent looks have charmed girls. Several netizens shared tweets on Saturday (May 7) hoping he would bag the trophy. And now they have a reason to rejoice.

living separately from his wife for the last one and a half years, and the matter is in the court. He said all of this after Kangana shared his viral photo doing rounds on social media. It sees him with his wife and son. Munawar's popularity is such that he is often seen trending on Twitter. His innocent looks have charmed girls. Several netizens shared tweets on Saturday (May 7) hoping he would bag the trophy. And now they have a reason to rejoice.

Increasing Income of Smallholder Farmers in India



Agriculture is the backbone of Indian economy. Although its contribution to gross domestic product is now around one sixth, it provides employment to 56% of the workforce. Also, the forward and backward linkage effects of agriculture growth increase the incomes in the non-agriculture sector. However, there have been exclusion problems like problems of poverty, unemployment, inequalities in access to health and education and poor performance. Real development in terms of growth shared by all sections of the population has not taken place. One of the excluded sector during the reform period was agriculture which showed low growth

and experienced more farmers' distress. There are serious concerns on the performance of agriculture sector in the country and need attention of policy makers. Small holdings agriculture is important for raising agriculture growth, food security and livelihoods in India. Indian agriculture is the home of 80% small and marginal farmers. Therefore, the future of sustainable agriculture growth and food security in India depends on the performance of small and marginal farmers. The number of smallholdings has been consistently increasing in India since the first Agriculture Census in 1970-71. The number of holdings, which was 71 million in 1970-71 went upto 138.35 million in 2010-11 showing a compound annual growth rate of 1.68% during the period. However, the operated area which was 162.3 million hectares in 1970-71 marginally declined to 159.59 million hectares

in 2010-11. The average size of holdings had shown a consistent decline over all the census periods. For instance, in 1970-71 it was 2.28 hectares which was reduced to 1.15 hectares in 2010-11. The access to irrigation has increased for all categories of farmers. It is the highest for marginal farmers followed by small farmers. Data indicate that the percentage of area under irrigation for small farmers increased from 40 in 1980-81 to 51 in 2000-01. The fertilizer per hectare is inversely related to farm size for both irrigated and unirrigated areas. It increased from marginal farmers in irrigated areas from 100 kgs. in 1980-81 to 252 kgs. in 2001-02. In fact, the per hectare consumption for all farm sizes was similar on irrigated areas in 1981-82 but it rose faster for marginal farmers and small farmers in 2001-02. This is true in the case of unirrigated areas also.

Pradeep Kumar Panda

The percentage of area under high yielding varieties (HYV) is also inversely related to farm size. In the irrigated areas, the coverage of are under HYV was 89%, 86% and 78% respectively in marginal, small and large farmers in 2001-02. In the case of unirrigated areas, the coverage was above 50% for marginal, small and semi-medium but it was only 30% for large farmers in 2001-02. Multiple cropping index is higher for marginal and small farmers than that for medium and large farmers. For marginal farmers, cropping intensity increased from 134 in 1981-82 to 139 in 2001-02. In the case of large farmer, it rose from 116 to 121 during the same period. The differences across farm sizes persisted over time. The contribution to output is higher for marginal and small farmers as compared to their share in area. The share of these farmers was 46.1% in land

possessed but they contribute 51.2% to the total output of the country at all India level in 2002-03. In terms of production, small and marginal farmers also make larger contribution to the production of high value crops. They contribute around 70% to the total production of vegetables, 55% to fruits against their share of 44% in land area. Their share in cereal production is 52% and 69% in milk production. Thus, small farmers contribute to both diversification and food security. Only in the cases of pulses and oilseeds, their share is lower than other farmers. There has been debate in India on the relationship between farm size and productivity. The results of NSS 2003 Farmers' survey has empirically established that small farms continue to be produce more in value terms per hectare than the medium and large farms.

Data show that value of output per hectare was Rs.14754 for marginal farmers, Rs.13001 for small farmers, Rs. 10655 for medium farmers and Rs.8783 for large farmers. It shows that from efficiency point of view, small holdings are equal or better than large holdings. The sustainability of these farmers is crucial for livelihoods in rural areas and for the entire country. The cost of cultivation per hectare is also high on small and marginal farmers than medium and large farms. However, the monthly income and consumption figures across different size class of land holdings show that marginal and small farmers have dis-savings compared to medium and large farmers. According to NSS 2003 data, the monthly consumption of marginal farmers was Rs.2482 and monthly income was Rs.1659. It shows that they have dis-savings of Rs.823. The dis-savings for small farmers were Rs.655. On the other hand, for

large farmers, monthly income and consumption respectively were Rs.9667 and Rs.6418 with savings of Rs.3249. In an effort to boost the agriculture sector, the Government of India has set a goal to double farmers' income by 2022 but failed to achieve same. Government of India has to unveil strategies ranging from irrigation to crop insurance. But if the agriculture sector is to undergo true transformation, it needs to move from a production-driven system to one driven by demand, one that increasingly connects consumers with producers. This will require new approaches and innovations, as well as increasing collaboration between the private sector and other stakeholders in the sector. It will require integrated approach that connect farm to fork, competitive markets that provide better prices to farmers, and an enabling

environment that supports innovation and action. Agriculture is a complex sector. No one stakeholder – whether governmental, corporate or from civil society – can do this alone, especially given climate change and increasing pressure on land and water resources. Real impact will come from combining the competencies of diverse organizations and stakeholders and creating better alignment through partnership platforms. More investment, more infrastructure, more on-the-ground resources, financial linkage, market linkage, agriculture value chain, post harvest management, new collaboration models that combine the knowledge and resources of diverse stakeholders, and which share best practices, risks and mutual accountability will help in achieving the targeted outcome.

Economist, Bhubaneswar

Lessons from Karnataka Assembly Election

“Political parties have to pay the cost of avoiding the Govt. employees and pensioners who are a significant and powerful chunk of the vote bank”



With a sweeping victory of 135 seats out of 224 in the recently concluded Karnataka Assembly election, the Indian National Congress party formed the Govt. on 20th May, 2023. It was a do or die situation both for BJP and Congress before 2024 General Election for which political analysts and intellectuals are scrutinizing titbits of every aspect responsible for the victory of Congress and defeat of BJP. As per Lokniti-CSDS Survey on Karnataka Assembly Poll verdict, unemployment was the biggest voting issue in Karnataka followed by poverty, lack of development, price rise, educational issues and corruption and scam charges. According to voter's choice, while 60% voter chose Congress to vote for price rise / inflation issue, only 28% and 8% went for BJP and JDS respectively. For poverty, while 48% chose Congress to vote only 33% and 12% went for BJP and JDS respectively. Similarly, while 47% chose Congress to vote for unemployment issue,

only 30% and 18% went for BJP and JDS respectively. In a nutshell, according to the political giants, the anti-incumbency factor, reactive campaign lacking central narrative, avoidance to senior local leaders, scams and corruption charges, confusion over reservations, poor implementation of welfare schemes and more importantly the hard Hindutva factor are considered as the major reasons of failure for BJP. But one important aspect that must be discussed is the issues of the Govt. employees and pensioners especially related to restoration of Old Pension Scheme (OPS) that was completely ignored by the ruling BJP in Karnataka in spite of their bitter experience gained from Himachal Pradesh Assembly Election. In this context, the statement of Sushil Kumar Modi, a BJP Member of Parliament in Rajya Sabha and Bihar's former Deputy Chief Minister is worth mentioning who told on 14th December, 2022, speaking at the annual conference of PRS Legislative, an independent legislative research institute in Delhi, “(Because) we didn't revert to the Old Pension Scheme, didn't announce anything, the results are in front of us. The BJP had to pay a price in Himachal Pradesh. There might be other

reasons also but the main reason for this (election) debacle was not reverting to the Old Pension Scheme.” The Govt. employees and pensioners are a significant and powerful chunk of the vote bank in Karnataka and had been on a dharna over the past several months for scrapping up of National Pension Scheme (NPS) and restoration of OPS which ceased on 31st March 2004 in Karnataka. Out of 9 lakh government employees in toto, some 3 lakh are covered under the NPS in the state. Following protests in March demanding a roll back of NPS, the Basavaraj Bommai-led BJP government, which did not want to risk its prospects in elections, formed a panel led by Additional Chief Secretary to study the feasibility of reintroducing OPS for employees. The panel was tasked with visiting five states which have already implemented OPS and to make suitable recommendations by the end of May. Though the move was significant, it is believed that political compulsions from higher forums forced the Pradesh Congress of Karnataka to modify its stand. It is worth mentioning here that since introduction of NPS with effect from 1st January, 2004, all the Central Govt. employees including

Bruhaspati Samal

Railways and all the State Govt. employees including Teachers across the country are conducting various agitational programmes to scrap NPS and restore OPS with the support of the Central Trade Unions. Encumbered with such continuous struggle programmes, various State Governments like Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh have rolled back to OPS. The Govt. of Andhra Pradesh has decided to offer a guaranteed pension of 33% of the last basic pay and the Govt. of Maharashtra has already decided to exit from the NPS. Both the local and national BJP leadership fails to closely scrutinize these developments to avoid a repeat of Himachal Pradesh-like defeat and avoid the angering influential vote bank led by Govt. employees and pensioners. The high profile loud-campaign programmes under the leadership of the Hon'ble Prime Minister and Home Minister on behalf of BJP promising for a double-engine government in Karnataka did not work to their expectations. But instead, the Congress tailored its campaign around local civic issues with enchanted poll promises, viz; 200

units of free electricity to each household (Gruha Jyoti), Rs.2000/- per month to head women of each family (Gruha Lakshmi), 10 Kgs of rice every month to each BPL family (Anna Bhagya), Rs. 3000 every month to unemployed youth with graduation degrees for two years and Rs. 1500 every month as an allowance to those young people with a diploma and unemployed (Yuva Nidhi). More importantly, the Congress made the OPS an electoral plank in Karnataka Assembly poll. The Congress Karnataka Chief Shri D K Shivakumar assured the protesting Govt. employees in Bengaluru on the issue of OPS with clear indication that they are actively considering it as a possible game changer ahead of the Assembly polls. In addition, the Chairman of the Congress Campaign Committee in Karnataka Shri M B Patil also said that the party will implement OPS if voted for power. Though officials and bureaucrats of the State Finance Department said that implementing OPS could deliver a blow to the state's finances which is already in bad shape, Mr. Patil said: “We have done our homework. We will implement it without any hitch if we form

the government.” While the OPS being a defined benefit scheme without any contribution from the employee guarantees minimum pension of 50% of the last pay drawn subject to minimum of Rs.9000/- per month plus DR (7th CPC norms), there is neither any social security nor any guarantee of minimum pension under NPS even though the employee contributes 10% of his salary every month in addition to 14% similar contribution by the employer. The NPS beneficiary gets a meagre amount confined to maximum 10% of the last pay drawn as monthly pension only. To manage their families, such pensioners are now seen to work as daily-wagers, street vendors and even suicidal cases are being witnessed in case of failures. The interesting fact is that while the ruling BJP ignored the employees and pensioners counting them for 3% only, the Congress calculated the voting strength of these 3% population. The pension does not affect a single person only. It affects the entire family as a whole. If a single family carries minimum 5 votes in average, there is 15% voting strength in the hands of these 3% employees and pensioners. In addition to their family

members, they have the power to motivate others. And, they are forced to do so since their genuine grievances are not being heard either by the State Govt. or by the Central Govt. for years together not for OPS only, but for constitution of 8th CPC, filling up of all vacant posts, payment of 18 month DA / DR from January 2020 to June 2021, stoppage of implementation of labour codes, protection of Trade Union rights etc. No rally, no meeting is required for the Teachers and State Govt. employees of Public Health Department, Electricity Board, Municipality etc. and Central Govt. employees of Postal Department who are moving from door to door and have a special identity in their respective localities. They can simply canvass the members of public against unemployment, poverty, inflation etc. with normal conversation. If we see the mathematics of Karnataka election, out of 224 seats in toto, Congress won in 135 seats i.e. 60.26%, BJP 66 seats i.e. 29.46% and JDS 19, i.e. 8.48%. Had the BJP been able to manage these 15% voters, the whole equation would have been different. Thus, BJP committed a blunder by ignoring the employees and pensioners.

The assurances given by the BJP-led NDA Govt. both in 2014 and in 2019 to settle unemployment issue, to control price rise and poverty etc. which are mostly related to common citizens of India have reflected a negative trend during last 9 years which have affected not only Karnataka Assembly election but all other States also. With a serious defeat in Karnataka, now the South India is almost free from BJP. The reintroduction of OPS for Govt. employees in addition to the above burning issues has been a headache for BJP at the Centre for which it may soon need to fine-tune its strategy. The OPS is turning out to be an issue related to the masses and could damage its vote share with a major reversal of voting pattern if it is not addressed swiftly ahead of the Lok Sabha polls in 2024. The OPS will be a key issue before 2024 elections and if the BJP government remains in the illusion that they might win the elections again, they are highly mistaken.

General Secretary Confederation of Central Govt. Employees and Workers Odisha State Coordination Committee Mobile: 9437022669, eMail: bsamalbbbsr@gmail.com



The Union Minister for Home Affairs and Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah reviewed the security situation with senior officials of Manipur Police, CAPFs and Indian Army at Imphal, in Manipur

Shri Amar Prakash Dwivedi GENERAL MANAGER/EASTERN RAILWAY INAUGURATED 'HAR GHAR DHYAN' PROGRAMME

Kolkata: As a part of 2nd phase of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, a Meditation Workshop titled "Har Ghar Dhyam" is being organized at Eastern Railway Headquarters, Fairlie Place from 29 May 2023 to 1st June 2023 under the auspices of "Art Of Living". Shri Amar Prakash Dwivedi, General Manager/Eastern Railway inaugurated the Meditation Workshop at Eastern Railway Headquarters on 29.5.2023. The 'Har Ghar Dhyam' session organized at Eastern Railway



Headquarters focused on orientation of the participants to mental and emotional health,

introduced a simple and easy-to-adopt practice of meditation and provided useful content

for a continuous journey of self-improvement through physical & mental

fitness. Shri Amar Prakash Dwivedi, General Manager, Shri S. R. Ghoshal, Additional General Manager, all Principal Officers of Eastern Railway Headquarters and staff of all levels participated in this meditation workshop at Eastern Railway Headquarters for self-improvement through meditation which not only helps to mitigate the day to day stress in working life but also helps to serve people of India even better.

"Corrupt": BJP To Those Supporting Arvind Kejriwal On Delhi Postings Issue



New Delhi: All those coming in support of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to oppose the central ordinance on control over administrative services in Delhi will be seen by the people as the "corrupt standing in favour of corruption", the BJP said on Tuesday. The BJP's reaction came after CPI (M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury assured his party's support to Arvind Kejriwal on the issue. BJP leader and Union minister Meenakshi Lekhi said the ordinance has been brought to ensure action is taken against those involved in corruption and "make Delhi and India corruption-free." "All those who are standing against the ordinance will be seen by the people as the corrupt

who are standing in favour of corruption," Ms Lekhi charged. "To those who are meeting (Kejriwal), I want to tell them from my side that you should come in his favour, if you are corrupt. History will record your deposition...", she added. The development comes after Delhi Chief Minister and AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal met Yechury at the CPI(M) office here. Arvind Kejriwal has been meeting leaders of opposition parties to rally support on the issue. Bihar Chief Minister and JD (U) leader Nitish Kumar, his deputy and RJD leader Tejaswi Yadav, Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief leader Uddhav

Thackeray, NCP chief Sharad Pawar and West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee have expressed solidarity with AAP on the matter. Accusing the BJP-led Centre of attacking federalism, Mr Yechury earlier in the day condemned the central ordinance and extended his party's support to the AAP in opposing it in Parliament when a bill will be brought to replace it. He also appealed to the Congress and other opposition parties to support the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on the issue, saying promulgation of the ordinance on administrative services in Delhi is a "brazen violation" of the Constitution and this can happen with the government of any non-BJP party.

22 MLAs, 9 MPs May Quit Eknath Shinde Faction, Claims Team Thackeray

Mumbai: The Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) has claimed that 22 MLAs and nine MPs from the faction led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, are feeling suffocated due to "step-motherly treatment" by the BJP and could quit. An editorial in Sena (UBT) mouthpiece 'Saamana' has dubbed the MPs and MLAs belonging to the Shiv Sena group as "fowls" in BJP coop and there's no saying when they could be slaughtered. In 2019, the Sena had severed its ties with the BJP for the same "step-motherly treatment", the editorial

also mentioned. There are reports are that Shinde group's "22 MLAs and nine MPs are feeling suffocated because of step-motherly treatment by the BJP and they have developed the mindset to quit the group," the editorial said. The Sena MPs and MLAs who "betrayed" the Thackerays and joined hands with the BJP, has had their "love affair turned sour" and there are "talks of divorce," it added. The matter was raised over the weekend by Sena MP Gajanan Kirtikar, who alleged that his party was getting step-motherly



treatment from the BJP. "We are part of the NDA....So our work should be carried out accordingly, and (NDA) constituents should get a (suitable) status. We think we are being given step-motherly treatment," Mr Kirtikar had said on Friday. His comment came as a shot in the arm for the UBT, which responded

the next day. "Shiv Sena distanced itself from the BJP as the party was trying to finish it," said Sanjay Raut, one of the seniormost leaders of the UBT and the editor of Saamana. "The BJP is like a crocodile or python. Whoever goes with them, they are swallowed. Now they (Shiv Sena MPs and MLAs who rebelled

against leadership) will realise that Uddhav Thackeray's stand to distance himself from this crocodile was right," added Mr Raut, who is also a close aide of Uddhav Thackeray.. In 2019, the Shiv Sena had ended the alliance with the BJP and formed the Maha Vikas Aghadi government in Maharashtra with the Congress and Sharad Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party. The government collapsed last year after Eknath Shinde split the party and joined hands with the BJP to form a new government.

Mamata Banerjee Seeks Centre's Permission To Visit Violence-Hit Manipur

Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday said she has written to the Centre, seeking permission to visit the strife-torn state of Manipur. According to officials, the TMC supremo has been closely monitoring incidents in the northeastern state. Questioning the "delay" by central leaders in reaching out to Manipur, she also said the "country wants to know the real picture in Manipur". "I want to be with the people of Manipur ... I

have no intention to breach any protocol but wish to be with the peace-loving people of the state," Mamata Banerjee told reporters at Nabanna, the West Bengal secretariat, adding that she had sent the letter to the central government on Monday. She had, last week, accused the BJP of trying to create "Manipur-like conflicts" in West Bengal. To visit, work or do business in Manipur, all people from outside the state require an inner line permit.



However, the permit is issued by the state government and not the Centre. Mamata Banerjee's party, TMC, has been trying to expand its footprint outside West Bengal without much success. While it managed to win five seats in the recently held elections to the Meghalaya assembly, the party had no success in polls to the Tripura assembly. The TMC used to have one MLA in the Manipur assembly, prior to the elections held last year. However, TMC

legislator Tongbram Robindro had joined the BJP ahead of the 2022 elections. Notably, Union Home Minister Amit Shah arrived in strife-torn Manipur on Monday night to try to restore peace by hammering out a solution between the warring communities. The northeastern state, afflicted by ethnic conflict for nearly a month, witnessed a sudden spurt in clashes and firing between militants and security forces on Sunday, after a relative lull for several weeks.

Agri Markets @ e-NAM

Bhubaneswar: Odisha has achieved a new height in the cooperative sector with successful onboarding of all 66 Regulated Marketing Committees (RMCs) of the State in the e-NAM portal.

Odisha has left many agriculturally advanced States in the country far behind and has achieved the unique feat of 100 percent onboarding of its agricultural markets under all RMCs.

Under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Cooperative Minister Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak, Principal Secretary Sanjeeb Kumar Chadha and their team achieved the milestone, which immensely helped the farmers of the State, an official said here on Tuesday.

The Odisha State

Agricultural Marketing Board (OSAM Board) under the administrative control of the Cooperation Department has taken this initiative. All the 66 Regulated Market Committees of the State have been successfully onboarded to the e-NAM platform.

It is pertinent to mention here that e-NAM is a pan India online platform developed by Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Government of India with the aim to link all the buyers and sellers of agricultural produce, virtually, through the APMCs (Agricultural Produce Marketing Committees)/ Regulated Market Committees (RMCs).

With only 10 RMCs in the e-NAM platform in the year 2017, Odisha has left many agriculturally advanced states in the country far behind and

has achieved the unique feat of 100% onboarding of its agricultural markets under all RMCs, said the Principal Secretary Shri Chadha.

In moving one step further, the Department has onboarded 401 Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) to the Agri-Marketing platform. About 400 Women Self Help Groups (WSHG) as members of these FPOs, can now reap the benefits of this online platform in marketing of their produce, he said.

Facilities have now been developed enabling transactions through android mobile phones. A farmer having an android mobile phone can now access the Agri-commodities market functioning across the country and sell his produce at the

price of his choice from within the comforts of his home by use of his fingertip. All steps are being taken to ensure that the RMCs are operating without hassles, under the guidance of Minister Shri Nayak, he said.

To further facilitate efficient use of the online platform and by foreseeing the required policy level interventions in future, he said the Department has undertaken some strategically important and futuristic Agri-Marketing Reforms. These include- unified licensing system and single point levy of market fee.

The Odisha State Agricultural Produce Marketing Act has been suitably amended to make ways for these much-needed reforms. The e-NAM platform along with these reforms

have brought in the benefits of transparency in trade, better pricing, access of farmers to all the mandis across the country, availability of up to date price information and online receipt of payment. Bargaining power of farmers has increased to a considerable extent due to this futuristic intervention with multiple buyer options, Shri Chadha informed. Further, to boost agricultural marketing, the Cooperation Department has initiated a project on Agri Marketing Network linking all 66 RMCs, 43 Krushak Bazars, 76 Municipal Markets including 800 FPOs and WSHGs.

To facilitate the implementation of the project, OSAM Board has entered into an agreement with the Agri-Business Incubator Wing of International Crop

Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), an international organisation notified by the United Nations and Government of India.

On successful completion of the project, the Board has aimed to bring in transformative changes in the sector of marketing of fruits and vegetables, ultimately empowering the primary producers especially, small and marginal farmers which in turn will serve the target of doubling farmers income.

Till date, 3.31 lakh farmers producing surplus marketable agricultural products have been registered by the RMCs of the State in the portal empowering them to sell their products in the pan India market without physically moving out of their villages.

In addition to that, 8297

traders from the state have also been registered in the online portal to facilitate their access to the tradable Agri-produces across the country.

The commodities being transacted through the RMCs include fruits and vegetables, coconut, maize, cotton, chilly, turmeric, ginger, cashew nuts, betel leaves, ground nuts, fish, prawn, crab, dry fish etc.

Now, all these efforts of the State Government have started yielding results. The farmers of the state have accepted this modern idea very enthusiastically and till now have traded Agri-Commodities to the tune of 90.44 lakh quintals and fetched a whopping amount of Rs 2364.80 crores.

The registered FPOs have traded 3.20 lakh quintals of Agri-commodities worth Rs 62.95 crores by using

this platform. This platform has also helped in executing 20,373 inter-mandi trades of 10.06 lakh quintals of Agri-commodities worth Rs 183.29 crores. There is also provision of trade via farm gate module within this platform and 129 trades have been executed involving traded quantities of 654.2 quintals of Agri-commodities. As is envisaged, these figures are going to grow in future benefiting the farmers, thanks to the foresightedness of the Department.

To further increase the scope of Agri-marketing the Department is organizing buyer-seller meets in all RMCs across the State. This techno-legal intervention will certainly fasten the achievement of the goal of doubling farmers' income.

No corruption charge against Modi govt in last 9 yrs': Minister G. Kishan Reddy



Bhubaneswar: Criticising the Congress over corruption during the tenure of the UPA government, Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy on Monday said not a single corruption charge has been levelled against the Narendra Modi-led government in the last nine years.

Addressing mediapersons here on the completion of nine years of the Modi-led government, Reddy accused the Congress-led UPA government of indulging in scams worth Rs 12 lakh crore during its 10-year-rule. He said

the UPA government was deep in corruption in the auction of 2G spectrum, coal block allocation, and procurement of choppers, etc. "The people were fed up with the Congress government and voted BJP into power. Since 2014, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP has given a stable government with inclusive development," Reddy said.

Highlighting the various welfare measures taken by the Central government during the last nine years, he said, during the Covid-19

pandemic, the entire nation was behind the Prime Minister, who personally ensured production of indigenous vaccines.

Over 200 crore vaccine doses were administered to people and given protection from the Covid-19 pandemic, the BJP leader said.

In the last nine years, Reddy said, over 3.5 crore houses and 11.72 toilets have been constructed in the households of poor families while LPG connections provided to 9.6 crore poor families under Ujjwala Yojana.

To provide handholding support to farmers, the Central government is providing Rs 6,000 in three tranches to the farmers every year under PM Kisan Yojana, while seven IIMs, seven IITs and 15 AIIMS were established by the Modi government in different parts of the country, he added.

Moreover, the Tourism Minister said that the situation in Kashmir has also improved a lot.

"Those who were pelting stones on security personnel now invite G20 delegations with roses," he said.

OSBC Pays Dividend To State



Bhubaneswar: Odisha State Beverages Corporation (OSBC), a State owned Public Sector Undertaking paid its dividend to the State Government today.

Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mohapatra received the a cheque of Rs.7,58,01,326.00 from the Principal Secretary Excise and Chairman OSBC S.K.

Lohani in Lokseba Bhawan.

Development Commissioner Pradeep Kumar Jena and Principal Secretary Finance Ashok Kumar Meena were present on the occasion.

Principal Secretary Mr. Lohani said, "As per the decisions of the Annual General Meeting of the Corporation, we have

paid this amount to Government towards dividend for the year 2019-20".

He added, "apart from this amount, the OSBC has also donated Rs.15 crore to the Chief Ministers' Relief Fund; and, Rs.1.43 crore to the Health & Family Welfare Department for purchase of the ambulances with advanced life support

system and technology during the year".

Managing Director OSBCL Saroj Kumar Sethi present on the occasion said, "OSBCC in its fight against ongoing pandemic of Covid-19 has distributed sanitizer and masks to the differently-abled persons and transgender communities during the current year".



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Haier India sets a benchmark with Kinouchi 5-Star Heavy Duty Pro Air Conditioners, being awarded as the 'Best Innovative Product of the Year'

Bhubaneswar, 30 May, 2023: Driven by its ethos of customer inspired innovation, Haier Appliances India (Haier India), the global leader in Home Appliances and the World's Number 1 brand in Major Appliances for 14 Consecutive Years, announced the exemplary performance and milestone for Haier Kinouchi 5-Star Heavy Duty Pro air conditioners. Awarded as the 'Best Innovative Product of the Year' it cools the room 20x faster and provides optimum cooling even at extreme temperatures of up to 60°C.

Speaking about the achievement, Mr. Satish NS, President, Haier India, said, "At Haier, we are focused on bringing the best-in-segment products across categories driven by well researched methodology, latest technologies and efficient manufacturing capabilities. With our presence in the Indian market for over two decades, we are proud to celebrate the Kinouchi 5-Star Heavy Duty Pro air conditioners being awarded as the 'Best Innovative Product of the Year'. Such achievements highlight Haier's commitment to deliver high-end products that meet the needs of our customers across India. We are pleased to have made a positive impact in India and are confident, that with support of our consumers, we will continue to deliver successful products, going forward." In line with the 'Make in India' and 'Make for India' strategy, Haier has been expanding its product range in India, focusing



on innovations that offer energy efficiency, durability, and convenience to its customers. The brand has successfully manufactured over 1 million Frost Self-Clean air conditioners this summer season, owing to the surge in consumer demand for air conditioners that provide energy-saving benefits and the convenience with self-cleaning feature.

In its endeavor to bring ultimate comfort to Indian homes, Haier combined the perfect blend of innovation, design, and energy proficiencies in Kinouchi Heavy-Duty Pro Air Conditioner series. They are designed to provide clean and fresh air to consumers, with features like self-cleaning, anti-bacterial filters, 10 second supersonic cooling and Intelli Convertible - 7 in 1. Equipped with Triple Inverter Plus Technology, their conditioners further benefits consumers, delivering up to 65% energy savings to the users.

The technology quintessentially allows you to clean the evaporator of the split air conditioner, without any hassle. This task can be performed by clicking a button, giving the customers the luxury of enjoying utmost cooling with the ease of cleanliness. With the mechanism of patented inverse-balance cleaning technology, Haier AC's are equipped to self-clean themselves. The self-cleaning is carried out by the AC through defrosting, frosting, cold expansion and the mechanism to remove all the dirt that enters the machine. The double ion sterilization technique tends to clean the residual dirt and bacteria that get stored in the fans & air ducts.

Vodafone Idea Foundation to Set up Robotic Labs in Schools

Bhubaneswar: Digital Skills are at the centre of the fourth industrial revolution and a prerequisite for future employment opportunities for today's children. With the objective of playing a role in building a future ready talent force from the school level onwards, Vodafone Idea Foundation, the CSR arm of Vi, and Ericsson India have partnered to set up state-of-the-art Robotic Labs in ten schools across the country to provide new-age learning experiences to children from

underserved communities, preparing them to participate in future technological studies. Digital Labs, an innovative education programme, is designed to hand-hold school going children aged 11-14 years, through their first experience with the world of programming and new technologies. By creating an open atmosphere for learning, Digital Labs aim to instill courage in these students to embrace technology and imbibe a problem-solving approach. The partnership is

aimed at improving the students' education and employment prospects across Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) by providing an exciting learning experience and develop skills such as teamwork, problem-solving skills, critical thinking. Through this partnership, ten Digital Labs will be set up at Vodafone Idea Foundation schools in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat.

Commenting on this initiative, P Balaji, Chief Regulatory and Corporate Affairs Officer - Vodafone Idea Limited, and Director - Vodafone Idea Foundation said, "Digital skills are a necessity for the holistic growth of the youth in the digital era. Exposing school going children to coding and robotics helps spark creativity, stimulates critical thinking, imbues a collaborative mindset and opens up a world of opportunities. Using our technology based tools, we have been working with

underprivileged children through various programmes aimed at giving them an opportunity to learn, grow and compete. Taking our 'Technology for Good' mission forward, we are happy to partner with Ericsson, to expose the young minds with higher-level skills and development, as well as encourage underserved groups to pursue advanced ICT education and enter science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields."

Funskool rolls out exclusive new range of toys for children this summer

Chennai: India's leading toy manufacturer, Funskool India Ltd is back with launching yet another blockbuster range of toys for children this summer. The wide range of new products are from a diverse range of categories such as board games, puzzles, Infants & pre-school, dough etc. This range will not only encourage the development of multiple skills: cognitive, physical,

social, and emotional but also help parents to fully engage their children. The product offerings include a 3 in 1 Deluxe Play Gymand Mini Vehicles combo packs for Toddlers, traditional board games such as Goats and Tigers (better known as Aadu Puli Attam in Tamil), Mancala, 9 in 1 Super Games apart from other products in Handy Crafts, Fun Dough and Puzzles for young children.

Commenting on the launch of the new products for summer 2022, Mr. R. Jeswant, CEO, of Funskool India said, "Funskool has always strived to introduce the best inspiring and engaging toys with a focus on edutainment. Being indigenously developed and manufactured, the new range of toys and games align with the nation's goal of Atma Nirbhar Bharat."

Samsung Launches High-Performance Premium Jet™ Cordless Stick Vacuum Cleaners in India

Bhubaneswar: Samsung, India's largest and most trusted consumer electronics brand, has launched its premium, highly powerful and intuitive Samsung Jet™ cordless stick vacuum cleaner line-up, delivering the ultimate end-to-end hygienic home cleaning solution to consumers in India. The line-up of vacuum cleaners will be available on Samsung's official online store, Samsung Shop starting May 04, 2022 and soon on Flipkart. The launch marks Samsung's foray in the vacuum cleaner segment in India with a range that can generate up to 200W of industry-leading suction power.

traps 99.999% of fine dust particles and allergens. This is certified by the British Allergy Foundation & SLG Pruf & Zertifizierungs. Running on a robust Digital Inverter Motor that optimizes airflow with its ultrasonic welded airfoil blades for high energy efficiency, Samsung vacuum cleaners - Jet 70, Jet 75 and Jet 90 - come with the promise to provide high-speed and enhanced cleaning for consumers.

and hygienic cleaning. Despite Samsung Jet's remarkably powerful suction capabilities, its body has been designed to be lightweight, allowing our consumers to enjoy the Jet's easy-to-use features more comfortably," said Mohandeep Singh, Senior Vice President, Consumer Electronics Business, Samsung India. The all-new range of Samsung Jet™ cordless stick vacuum cleaners will be available in three models - Jet 70, Jet 75 and Jet 90 - with prices ranging from INR 36,990 to INR 52,990. The models will be available on Samsung's official online store Samsung Shop starting May 04, 2022 and soon on Flipkart. For a limited period between May 04 and May 09, 2022, consumers buying Samsung Jet™ cordless stick vacuum cleaners can avail no cost EMIs of up to 12 months, starting INR 2,799. Consumers will get one-year warranty on Samsung Jet™ cordless stick vacuum cleaners.

The range comes with a Jet Cyclone system that features nine cyclones with 27 air inlets to securely trap fine dust particles that are sucked into the vacuum cleaner without compromising on suction power. Samsung Jet™ cordless stick vacuum cleaners release clean air out with a Multi-layered Filtration System, which

"With increased focus on safety, health and hygiene in the post-pandemic era, consumers are looking for agile and efficient home cleaning solutions. Our all new Samsung Jet™ cordless stick vacuum cleaners are here to provide unmatched convenience to our consumers with best-in-class features for a hassle-free cleaning experience. Equipped with cutting-edge technology such as a Multi-layered Filtration System, the vacuum cleaners trap 99.999% of fine dust and allergens and provide powerful

Gifting ideas for Mother's Day

With Mother's day just around the corner, we must appreciate the role she plays in our lives. While mothers deserve our love round-the-clock, it's all about going all-out on Mother's day. From grand-mothers to new moms, these super women play myriad roles in our lives. And they deserve much appreciation and a lot of CARE!

and make it look effortless and breezy without caring about the toll it takes on their mind, body and skin. This Mother's Day pamper your super-mom with Clensta's Super Women Combo Pack which comprises of a Face Moisturizer, a Sunscreen, a Face Serum and an Under-eye Cream. Laced with the goodness of magical Red Aloe Vera, this essential combo will help your mother in replenishing her natural glow and having the perfect skin she has always dreamt of. The higher concentrations of beneficial phytochemicals in Red Aloe Vera provide it a 22-times more powerful anti-inflammatory effect. High concentrations of salicylic acid and polysaccharides help relax tight muscles and provide a soothing effect.

However, the plethora of choices tend to daunt a person while picking out the perfect gift for your mother. But worry not! If you are on the lookout for a gift that would be the perfect token of love - Here's a gifting guide for mother's day that will tick all your check boxes for the 8th of May 1. Clensta's Super Women Combo Pack for your Super Woman: The super women that our moms are, they hop from one task to another

Blue Dart reports record performance with positive Q4 and Year-End

Mumbai: Blue Dart Express Limited, South Asia's premier express air and integrated transportation & Distribution Company, declared its Audited financial results for the quarter and year ended March 31, 2022 at the Board Meeting held in Mumbai.

The company posted ₹ 1,354 million profit after tax (previous year ₹ 891 million profit) for the quarter ended March 31, 2022, and ₹ 3,764 million profit after tax (previous year ₹ 963 million profit) for the year ended March 31, 2022. Revenue from operations for the quarter ended March 31, 2022 stood at ₹ 11,659 million and 44,090 million for the year ended March 31, 2022.

India Poker Championship and India Online Poker Championship

Mumbai: Spartan Poker announced the dates for its leading poker championships. The India Online Poker Championship (IPC) is heading to Casino Vegas by Big Daddy, Nepal, and will be held from 17th - 22nd May 2022. The 13th edition of the Indian Online Poker Championship (IOPC) will be held from 2nd - 19th June 2022. Indian poker enthusiasts will get to experience the best of both felts this summer with a whopping combined Prize-Pool of 36.5 Crore GTD.

'22 MegaStacks edition is also designed in a best-in-class live tournament structure with heavy buy-ins & deep stacks for a high-quality gaming experience. The India Online Poker Championship, which follows immediately post IPC, would be the biggest ever online poker series in India with a massive prize pool of 33 Crore GTD! The 18-day-long virtual series will provide an online experience unlike any other gaming event in India.

India Online Poker Championship that will be hosted on the Spartan Poker platform, along with other streaming partners like AIO Games, Blitzpoker, PokerHigh, and PokerDaddy. We know how incredible the level of play in these competitions can be! We aim to offer an even better experience for players & fans, and even more opportunities for skilled players to raise their games and win huge prizes."

Speaking on the launch, Mr. Amin Rozani, CEO of Spartan Poker Group said, "We are excited to host the India Online Poker Championship live this year and follow it up with our very successful

Speaking on the launch, Mr. Amin Rozani, CEO of Spartan Poker Group said, "We are excited to host the India Online Poker Championship live this year and follow it up with our very successful

At Spartan Poker, we provide a seamless and a fair gaming experience to the Indian poker community, and we are driven to build Poker as a professional sport in India, along with all its inherent thrill, while also showcasing the country's untapped poker talent. Added Mr. Rozani.

Sudarshan Venu elevated as Managing Director of TVS Motor Company

Chennai: TVS Motor Company, a reputed manufacturer of two-wheelers and three-wheelers globally, announced at its board meeting today the elevation of Sudarshan Venu as Managing Director of the Company, effective today. Sudarshan has been charting the future of one of India's leading two-wheeler manufacturer and has made it the most awarded two-wheeler company. He has played a pivotal role in the company's growth in India and key

international markets, including Asia, Africa, and more recently in Europe. Prof Sir Ralf Dieter Speth, Chairman, TVS Motor Company said, "Sudarshan has got a clear vision and brings with him both a tremendous passion for advanced technologies and sustainable growth, deep-seated in values. He thinks future-oriented, staying ahead of the emerging trends. Personal, smart mobility, including electrification, are two of his big areas of focus. He has also spearheaded the international growth of

TVS Motor. He has the ability to lead high performing teams internationally with empathy. He takes care of people and society. I am sure that with his leadership, the company will grow stronger and further pivot to the future." Mr Venu Srinivasan, Chairman Emeritus, TVS Motor Company said, "Sudarshan's extraordinary efforts have witnessed key decisions to develop aspirational products and grow fast in India and overseas."

WhatsApp rolls out emoji reactions, bigger groups

San Francisco: With an aim to make the messaging platform more user friendly, Meta-owned WhatsApp has announced that it is rolling out new features, including emoji reactions, bigger files and groups. The company said that it is slowly rolling out the ability to add up to 512 people to a group, which, till now, allowed to add only up to 256. "We are excited to share that emoji reactions are now available on the latest version of the app. Reactions are fun, fast, and they reduce overload in groups too. We will continue improving them by adding an even broader range of expressions in the future," the company said in a blogpost.

Jadeja's nerveless hitting gifts CSK fifth IPL title



New Delhi: Chennai Super Kings became IPL champions for the fifth time in a game befitting a title clash. With 10 needed off the last two deliveries, Ravindra Jadeja smacked a six down the ground and a four to fine leg off Mohit Sharma to seal one of the most dramatic finales in the history of the tournament.

In a rain-curtailed chase, the game swung one way and another as CSK were powered by a series of cameos before they seemingly wobbled at the climax with Mohit Sharma doing the star turn, picking up two wickets and stitching together 13 consecutive balls without a boundary along with Mohammed Shami.

It included the first four of the final over where 13 were needed. Switching to a pace-up full length tactic, Mohit found success initially but Jadeja managed to stay deep in the crease to first loft a six down the ground, and then wait for a low full toss to swing it to the fine leg fence triggering manic

celebrations in front of a 75000 crowd that had stayed back despite the rain delays.

With a revised target of 171 in 15 overs, the tone was first set by the opening duo of Devon Conway and Ruturaj Gaikwad. The former played the role of an aggressor initially hitting 47 in a 74-run opening stand. The duo fell in quick succession with Afghanistan's young left-arm spinner Noor Ahmed triggering a turnaround with a double blow in a spell of 2-17.

However, CSK kept up the hitting tempo right through with Ajinkya Rahane stepping up with a 13-ball 27 before Ambati Rayudu smacked an 8-ball 19 in his final IPL innings. All along Shivam Dube had found it difficult to get his strike-rate up, but off Rashid Khan's last two deliveries he found his hitting range and struck two important sixes before the finale capped off a sweet finish for CSK despite MS Dhoni's golden duck. The approach was partly dictated by the situation

they found themselves in after an inordinate rain delay pushed them to a corner from where they could go only one way. Yes, and one that dragged the game nearly two hours into a third calendar day. A brief shower caused considerable seepage on a square which stopped the game for over two hours, after Gujarat Titans led by Sai Sudharsan, had put on a powerful batting performance.

That Gujarat Titans ended up with the highest ever score in an IPL final was thanks to a scintillating 96 off 47 from Sai Sudharsan. Gujarat Titans got it right by sending a left-hander in early, and not allowing CSK's bowlers to settle in. And the 21-year-old Tamil Nadu batter made sure that he delivered what was asked of him. His innings started slowly for he had only 10 off his first 12 balls. But his strike-rate ascendancy coincided with CSK's best laid death bowling plans. Sudharsan began by picking up two boundaries off their

specialist Matheesa Pathirana in his first two overs, sandwiched by two sixes off Theekshana. But the real punishment was dealt to Tushar Deshpande who went for 6, 4, 4, 4, peppering a packed offside field. He would go on to hit two more sixes off Pathirana in the final over before being trapped LBW, but having finished the job that was expected from the in-form Shubman Gill. Typically with a lot of promise, for Gujarat had racked up the highest powerplay score in an IPL final thanks in no small measure to his 20-ball 39. He hit seven boundaries in his cameo, after being an early beneficiary of a dropped catch at backward square leg with Deepak Chahar fumbling a trap. The lapses in the field also allowed Gill to take the attack to CSK's lead spinner Theekshana by hitting him for three consecutive boundaries when he came inside the powerplay. But just as he was beginning to tee off, Gill's end was brought about by some sharp

glovework from MS Dhoni playing his 250th IPL game, as Jadeja beat him and dragged him out with a big turner. For GT, Gill's early exit did not hurt them as it ought to because others chipped in.

Again a beneficiary of fielding lapses and surviving a fluffed run out chance and a dropped catch, Saha made sure that CSK paid for it. Getting his second fifty of the season and making full use of the fielding restrictions inside the powerplay, he played the role of an enforcer to perfection in that period, taking down Deepak Chahar with 6, 4, 4 in an over. His half-century played the perfect bridge between Gill's early onslaught and later Sai's as Gujarat racked up 214, which eventually proved insufficient.

Brief Scores: Gujarat Titans 214/4 in 20 overs (Sai Sudharsan 96, Wriddhiman Saha 54) lost to Chennai Super Kings 171/5 in 20 overs (Devon Conway 47, Shivam Dube 32*) by 5 wickets (DLS method)

Would be a gift from me to fans to play another season: Dhoni



New Delhi: Mahendra Singh Dhoni answered the most-anticipated question of the IPL season - on his future in the tournament - but without quite answering it one way or another in the affirmative. The soon to be 42-year-old CSK captain admitted that now was the best time to walk away, but felt he could try and give his adoring fans a gift by staying on for another season.

"The easy thing for me to say is thank you and retire," Dhoni said at the presentation ceremony. "But the hard thing to do is to work hard for nine months and try to play one more IPL season. The body has to hold up. But the amount of love I have received from CSK fans, it would be a gift from me, to play one more season. The way they've shown their love and emotion, it's something I need to do for them."

"It [the season] started over here [in Ahmedabad] and the full house was chanting my name. It was my same thing in Chennai, but it will be good to come back and play whatever I can," Dhoni added. IPL's return to venues all around the country for the first time since 2019 and the expectation that Dhoni was about to play

his last sparked a nationwide display of support for the CSK captain. Almost every ground had more supporters in yellow as Dhoni led CSK to yet another playoffs and eventually the final. The long-awaited reunion of the CSK faithful saw adulation for him hit fever pitch in Chennai - a phenomena that even moved the otherwise poker-faced Dhoni to tear. "You do get emotional, the first game at CSK everyone was chanting my name. My eyes were full of water, I needed to take some time off in the dugout," Dhoni revealed. "I realised I need to enjoy this. I think they love me for what I am, they love that I am so grounded, I don't try to portray something I'm not." CSK came into the season on the back of injuries to a few key players in the bowling department. Mukesh Choudhary and Simarjeet Singh, the two bright spots of another otherwise underwhelming campaign of IPL 2022 were sidelined which meant Dhoni had to operate with more inexperience with the ball. It turned out to be a season for CSK where they batted deep and with a lot of intent as they went about making big

scores and outbating oppositions in most cases. The final too, was one such a fixture.

"There were lapses today, the bowling department didn't work, but it was the batting department that took the pressure off them today," Dhoni said.

While the swansong is still not done for Dhoni, one other CSK batter confirmed his departure on May 29 and signed off in incredible style on May 30. Ambati Rayudu, who now has six IPL titles (including the ones he won with MI), played a scintillating cameo (19 off 8 balls) where he took apart Mohit Sharma's change of pace and dragged CSK back on track in chase before Ravindra Jadeja put the finishing touches.

"The special thing about Rayudu is he will always give his 100% when he is on his field," Dhoni said. "But with him in the team, I will never win the fairplay award. I've been playing with him for a long time, since the India A tours. He's a player who can play spin and pace equally well. It is something really special. I felt he would do something really special today."

While Rayudu walks away having played 204 IPL matches across 14 seasons, Dhoni remains 250 not out...for now.

Mahmudullah set to miss Afghanistan ODIs on account of Hajj

Dhaka: Bangladesh Cricket Board said on Monday that Mahmudullah is not available for selection for the upcoming ODI series against Afghanistan as he was granted leave to perform Hajj. While Mahmudullah has already retired from Test

cricket, he hasn't been considered for T20Is and ODIs for quite some time. "Riyad (Mahmudullah) has told us that he is going to Mecca to perform Hajj between June 22 and July 5, after which he will rejoin the Bangladesh camp. He can't play the ODIs as the opening game

of the series is scheduled on July 5," Jalal Yunus, BCB's Cricket Operation Chairman, told reporters in Mirpur on Monday (May 29). "This is a very sensitive issue. He is going to perform Hajj and everyone must remember that it is mandatory (for every Muslim) and everyone should support

him. I don't think his decision (of skipping the Afghanistan ODI series) will be a problem as far as his selection of the World Cup is concerned," he added.

Mahmudullah's decision to make himself unavailable for the ODIs against Afghanistan can be a big blow for him as

far as his chance of making a claim in the World Cup squad is concerned, given that the hosts will be looking forward to complete all their experiments in this series, before announcing the squad for the Asia Cup that is expected to be retained in the World Cup as well.

Rafael Nadal Drops Out Of Top 10 In Ranking For First Time In 18 years, Carlos Alcaraz At No 1

New Delhi: Carlos Alcaraz returned to No. 1 in the ATP rankings on Monday (March 20), replacing Novak Djokovic, and Rafael Nadal dropped out of the top 10 for the first time in 18 years. Alcaraz rose one spot, swapping places with Djokovic, a day after ending Daniil Medvedev's 19-match winning streak by beating him in straight sets in the final at Indian Wells, California. Alcaraz, a 19-year-old from Spain who first ascended to No. 1 by winning the US Open in September, didn't

drop a set in the hard-court tournament. Djokovic has spent more weeks at No. 1 than any man or woman in tennis history. He did not play in Indian Wells because he is not allowed to enter the United States as a foreign citizen who is not vaccinated against COVID-19. He also will miss the Miami Open that begins this week; Alcaraz is the defending champion there. Nadal has been sidelined since January by an injured hip flexor

and he slipped four spots to No. 13 on Monday, ending a stay in the top 10 that began in April 2005. It is the longest such run in the ATP; Jimmy Connors is next on the list with about 15 years. Djokovic and Nadal currently share the men's record of 22 Grand Slam singles titles. Elena Rybakina's straight-set victory over Aryna Sabalenka for the Indian Wells trophy pushed Rybakina up three spots to a career-high No. 7 in the



WTA rankings. Iga Swiatek remained at No. 1, followed by Sabalenka, who defeated Rybakina in the Australian Open final in January.

Meanwhile, Rafael Nadal is aiming to make his comeback from a hip injury at the clay-court Monte Carlo Masters next month, organizers said last

week. The 22-time Grand Slam champion has been sidelined with a left hip flexor injury since the Australian Open, and pulled out of hard-court

tournaments at Indian Wells and Miami. The Monte Carlo Masters begins on April 8 and tournament director David Massey is optimistic Nadal will play. "Rafa was the first (player) to be registered," Massey said in statement. "He really wants to play at the Monte Carlo Masters and is giving himself every chance to take part in the tournament he's so fond of." Nadal has won the tournament a record 11 times, including

an Open Era record streak of eight consecutive titles from 2005 to 2012. The 36-year-old Spaniard uses the event as a key part of his preparations for the French Open, which takes place May 28-June 11.

Nadal has won 14 of his major titles on clay at Roland Garros, including last year while dealing with chronic pain in his left foot. In January, Nadal hurt his hip flexor during a second-round loss to Mackenzie McDonald of the United States at the Australian Open.