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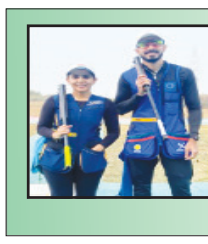
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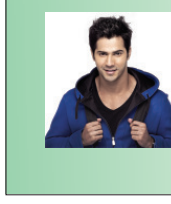
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Stands Tall As Statesman, Continues To Inspire: PM Modi's Tribute To Atal Bihari Vajpayee



New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi remembered former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee as the "architect of India's transition" and lauded his contributions towards political stability, nation-building, and good governance on the occasion of Vajpayee's 100th birth anniversary.Born on December 15, 1994, in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, Vajpayee, a poet and politician, served as the Prime Minister of India for three terms — first for a term of 13 days in 1996, second, for a period of 13 months from 1998 to 1999, third, a full term from 1999 to 2004 — becoming the first non-Congress Prime Minister to serve a full term in the office.He left an indelible mark on the country's political and social fabric. His birth anniversary is also celebrated as 'Good Governance Day' in India.In a heartfelt blog post, PM Modi described December 25 as a special day for the nation, marking the centenary of Vajpayee's birth.

"Today, 25th December is a very special day for all of us. Our nation marks the 100th Jayanti of our beloved former Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ji. He stands tall as a statesman who continues to inspire countless people," he wrote.Highlighting Vajpayee's pivotal role in shaping India's future, PM Modi wrote, "Our nation will always be grateful to Atal Ji for being the architect of India's transition into the 21st century. When he took oath as PM in 1998, our nation had passed through a period of political instability. In about nine years, we had seen four Lok Sabha elections."'The people of India were getting impatient and sceptical about governments being able to deliver. It was Atal Ji who turned this tide by providing stable and effective governance.

Vajpayee's Leadership Ensured 21st Century Would Be India's Century: CM Majhi



Bhubaneswar: "The depth of Atal Bihari Vajpayee's life, virtues and ideals made him loved by all. He had political opponents but no one was his enemy. He was Ajatashatru," Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said while attending the Good Governance Day celebrations on the occasion of the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee on Wednesday.Majhi attended the programme organised by the Information and Public Relations Department at the local OUAT Prashikshi Seva Sadan.The Chief Minister said that Vajpayee's name will forever be engraved in the political history of India as a generous-hearted hero, a successful Prime Minister, an orator and a poet. Vajpayee led the country and gave it a new direction at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century.It was his successful leadership at defining moments of the country that proved that the 21st century will be India's century. Describing Vajpayee as a good ruler, the Chief Minister said that the economic progress of the country had reached a new peak during his time.Stating that the greatest need for development is infrastructure, the Chief Minister said that if we look at the history of India's development, Vajpayee's time was a new beginning of infrastructure development. "He gave a new impetus to development by connecting four major cities of India in the Golden Quadrilateral scheme. In the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, he improved rural infrastructure by laying concrete roads in the villages of the country." The Chief Minister said that Vajpayee's far-reaching ideas have brought about a massive change in the environment and rural economy of the village.Narrating some stories about Vajpayee, the Chief Minister said that he was a great leader who never compromised his ideals.The Chief Minister said that Atal Bihari Vajpayee was a leader whose personality attracted Opposition parties and ushered in a new type of politics in India. He had the art and skill of doing constructive work for the country by taking political parties that believed in different ideas.Commenting on the 1999 Kargil victory, the Chief Minister said that it showed Vajpayee's strong leadership. The Chief Minister said that while he showed strong leadership for the integrity of the country, he was not going to go the extra mile to establish peace.Stating that the late Vajpayee had contributed a lot to Odisha, the Chief Minister said that when Odisha was devastated by the 1999 cyclone, Vajpayee came to Odisha and showed the light of hope to all Odias.

Three Dead, Several Injured As Bus Falls Into Gorge In Nainital

Nainital: In a tragic accident, three people were killed and several others injured as a bus carrying 27 people plunged into a 1,500-feet-deep gorge on the Bhimtal-Ranibagh road in Uttarakhand's Nainital district on Wednesday.The bus was en route from Almora to Haldwani when the incident occurred on the Ranibagh road.Rescue operations were initiated immediately by the police, the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), and the fire department, with significant assistance from locals. However, the steep terrain has made the efforts challenging.Using ropes, the rescuers and locals carefully aided the injured, carrying them on their shoulders to safety.The injured were provided first aid before being rushed to the Community Health Centre (CHC) in Bhimtal. Fifteen ambulances have been dispatched to Haldwani for further medical assistance.

Allu Arjun, Pushpa 2 makers announce 2 crore aid to Sandhya Theatre stampede victim's family



Hyderabad: Allu Aravind, film producer and father of Pushpa 2 actor Allu Arjun, on Wednesday announced financial support totalling ?2 crores for the eight-year-old boy injured in the December 4 Sandhya Theatre stampede.The tragic incident, which occurred during Allu Arjun's visit to the theatre for a Pushpa 2 premiere, claimed the life of the boy's 35-year-old mother.Arjun, now facing charges in the case, was questioned by police on Tuesday regarding his involvement.The veteran producer along with Dil Raju and others, visited the private hospital where the boy injured in the stampede is being treated. After consulting with the doctors, Allu Aravind expressed relief upon learning that the boy is recovering and is now able to breathe independently.Speaking to the media, according to news agency PTI, Allu Aravind said, "The boy, Sri Teja, is recovering. Now he is not on aventilator. To support the family, we should support him with ?2 crore: ?1 crore by Allu Arjun, ?50 lakh by Mythri Movie Makers, and ?50 lakh by director Sukumar. We will give this money through Telangana Film Development Corporation Chairman Dil Raju."When asked if he had visited the boy's family, Aravind explained, "I cannot interact with the family due to the legal problems. With the police permission, once, 10 days back, I visited him. He was then recovering."

Delhi government department's notice against AAP scheme triggers row; Arvind Kejriwal, BJP react

Delhi: Delhi government's Women and Child Development Department triggered a political storm on Wednesday morning with its public notification saying that "any political party collecting information from applicants in the name of the 'Mukhyamantri Mahila Samman Yojana' is committing fraud and has no authority".The public notification came a day after AAP ministers, MLAs, and volunteers launched an extensive outreach campaign to register people for the scheme.The department said in the communique that it received information through media reports and social media posts that a political party claimed to give ?2100 per month to the women of Delhi under the 'Mukhyamantri Mahila Samman Yojana'."It is clarified that no such scheme has been notified by the Delhi government," the public notice said.It said no such scheme was in existence and any individual or political party collecting forms or applications was committing fraud."It is emphasized that since no such Scheme is in existence, the question of acceptance of the form/application for registration under this non-existent Scheme does not arise. Any private person/ political party who is collecting forms/ applications or collecting information from applicants in the name of this scheme is committing fraud and has no authority," it added.

Delhi Govt Receives Over 84,000 Pollution Complaints Through Green Delhi App This Year

NEWDELHI: The Delhi government has logged a total of 84,765 pollution complaints this year through its Green Delhi App.The primary civic agencies addressing these issues include the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), the Public Works Department (PWD), and the Delhi Development Authority (DDA). The MCD recorded the highest number of grievances, with 54,878 complaints, of which 46,279 (approximately 84.33%) have been resolved, leaving 8,599 pending. The PWD received 12,327 complaints, successfully resolving 10,803 (around 87.64%) while 1,524 remain unresolved. Meanwhile, the DDA handled 4,795 complaints, addressing 4,424 (92.26%) with 371 still outstanding.These figures come from the department-wise complaint report available on the Green Delhi App, which is overseen by the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) under the Department of Environment in the Government of Delhi. Launched in 2020, the app allows residents to report pollution issues by uploading photos or videos, tagging locations, and detailing the nature of their complaints. Submitted grievances are forwarded to the relevant civic agency for resolution, and users can track updates regarding their issues. Other agencies involved include the Irrigation and Flood Control Department (with 2,032 complaints and a resolution rate of 91.98%), the Revenue Department (reporting 1,041 complaints with an 84.53% resolution rate), and the Delhi Jal Board (3,056 complaints, with a 97.94% resolution rate).Additionally, the Delhi Traffic Police received 362 complaints, while the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation had 564. Of all the complaints submitted, 10,656 are overdue, with the MCD alone accounting for 8,322 of these. November saw Delhi facing its worst air pollution levels of the year, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) peaking at a hazardous 491, according to pollution control authorities. This "severe plus" classification indicates dangerously unhealthy air quality that poses serious health risks for the population.





SGPC Chief Dhami Undergoes Punishment, Cleans Shoes In Golden Temple

Amritsar: Five Sikh high priests, headed by Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Raghbir Singh, on Wednesday pronounced religious punishment, also known as "tankhah" for Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) President Harjinder Singh Dhami for allegedly making offensive remarks against Bibi Jagir Kaur, a three-time chief of the gurdwara management body.This voluntary punishment comes less than a month after Akali Dal leader Sukhbir Badal was held guilty of religious misconduct by the high priests. The former Punjab Deputy Chief Minister was ordered to clean utensils and shoes in gurdwaras, including the holiest of all Sikh shrines, Harmandar Sahib, popularly known as the Golden Temple in Amritsar, and complied.Earlier in the day, SGPC chief Dhami appeared before the Akal Takht here and held a meeting with the Akal Takht Jathedar before appearing before the high priests, who asked him to wash dishes and clean shoes of the devotees for an hour each in the Golden Temple.Soon after the religious punishment was pronounced, the SGPC chief, who accepted the directive, underwent the religious punishment in the Golden Temple.Earlier Dhami had apologised for using foul language and submitted an apol-



ogy letter to the Akal Takht.Before the religious punishment, Punjab State Women Commission Chairperson Raj Lali Gill had issued a notice to the SGPC President for allegedly making offensive remarks. Gill had stated that the commission took suo-motu cognisance of an audio recording circulating on social media, in which Dhami purportedly used offensive and demeaning language during a telephonic conversation with a journalist."The remarks were not only personally defamatory but also disrespectful to women as a whole," she had said, emphasizing the seriousness of the issue.The commission had underlined that Dhami, as the head of a revered institution like the SGPC, is expected to uphold the highest standards of respect and dignity."Such language is unbecoming of his office and sends a damaging message to society," she had added.Dhami appeared in person and submitted a written explanation to the commission, which was yet to pronounce its decision.Bibi Jagir Kaur had also appeared before the commission and demanded that Dhami should face legal action after admitting his mistake of using foul language.

Jnanpith Award Winner M.T. Vasudevan Nair Dies At 91



Thiruvananthapuram: M.T. Vasudevan Nair, the doyen of Malayalam literature and Jnanpith Award winner, passed away at a private hospital in Kozhikode, Kerala. He was 91.Fondly known as MT, he is considered one of the greatest writers in Malayalam and served as the editor of Mathrubhumi Weekly, a well-circulated periodical from Kerala.A Padma Bhushan awardee, MT was an iconic figure in Malayalam literature and cinema.His contributions left an indelible mark on both fields, earning him recognition as one of the most celebrated writers in the Malayalam language.MT won four National Film Awards for screenplay writing and directed seven films while scripting approximately 54 others.His screenplays, now available in book form, are considered essential reading for aspiring filmmakers.Over the years, he received numerous prestigious accolades, including the Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award, Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award,

BSF In Rajasthan Shoots Dead Pakistani Intruder Trying To Cross Indo-Pak Border

Jaipur: A Pakistani intruder was shot dead by the Border Security Force (BSF) along the India-Pakistan border in Rajasthan's Sri Ganganagar district when he was attempting to cross over to Indian territory near a village in the Kesarisinghpur area.The incident was confirmed by Superintendent of Police Gaurav Yadav. He said that the intruder was identified as Abdul Gaffar, a 33-year-old resident of Minchinabad, Pakistan.He was carrying Pakistani Rupees 1,700 (around Rs 518).SP Yadav told IANS: "The body of the intruder has been handed over to Kesarisinghpur police after Pakistan refused to take his body in the flag meeting. The name of the intruder is written as Abdul Gaffar on the identity card found with him. He is a resident of Minchinabad. His age is mentioned as 33 years."The police officer asserted that the BSF personnel had reportedly warned the intruder as he approached a border pillar, but he ignored the warnings, prompting the BSF troopers to open fire.Items recovered from him included Pakistani currencies, a cigarette packet, and other belongings .Despite a flag meeting, Pakistani authorities refused to claim the body, which has since been handed over to the Kesarisinghpur police.

Andhra CM Naidu Meets PM Modi

New Delhi: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu met Prime Minister Narendra Modi here on Wednesday and discussed some key issues related to the state.Chandrababu Naidu, whose Telugu Desam Party (TDP) is a key ally of the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre, is understood to have requested the Prime Minister to give priority to Andhra Pradesh in the Union Budget.The meeting at the Prime Minister's residence lasted for more than an



hour.The TDP Chief, who is leading the NDA government in Andhra Pradesh, briefed Prime Minister Modi about the development works undertaken during the last six months.
The Chief Minister also apprised him of the progress made in the construction of Polavaram, which is a national project.Union Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu, Union Minister of State for Rural Development and Communications Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani, Union Minister of State for Heavy Industries and Steel Bhupathiraju Srinivasa Varma and TDP Parliamentary Party leader Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu accompanied Chief Minister Naidu.Earlier, the Chief Minister also met Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw to discuss the pending railway projects in the state.Union Ministers from the state and the MPs were also present during the meeting.Chandrababu Naidu also met Union Home Minister Amit Shah.He is also scheduled to meet Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to discuss state-specific issues.The TDP Chief also attended the meeting of NDA leaders at the residence of BJP President J.P. Nadda.The Chief Minister began his day by offering tributes to former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee at Atal Samadhi.He accompanied Prime Minister Modi, Amit Shah and other top BJP leaders.CM Naidu also took to X to pay his tributes to former PM Vajpayee on his 100th birth anniversary.

Jaipur LPG Tanker Blast: Three More Succumb To Injuries, Death Toll Rises To 18

Jaipur: Three more individuals, including a severely burnt woman, succumbed to their injuries on Wednesday at Sawai Man Singh (SMS) Hospital, taking the death in the Jaipur LPG tanker blast to 18.Vijayata (22), a resident of Pratapgarh, passed away at around 4 a.m., and Vijendra (36) from Pawta (Jaipur) died at around 9:30 a.m. Later, Banshilal (35) also succumbed to his injuries at 1 p.m. Vijay and Vijendra had suffered 70 per cent burns. All three were Rajasthan natives, said officials.Currently, 15 patients with severe burns are receiving treatment in the burn ward of the SMS Hospital.The bodies of the deceased have been placed in the hospital mortuary and will be handed over to their families after post-mortem examinations conducted by a medical board. On Tuesday, two more victims, Naresh Babu from Etah (Uttar Pradesh) and Yusuf from Nuh (Haryana), passed away.

Malaria Cases, Deaths Drop Significantly By 80 Pc From 2015-2023: Centre

New Delhi: Malaria cases and deaths have dropped significantly by around 80 per cent from 2015-2023, with cases going down from 11,69,261 in 2015 to 2,27,564 in 2023, while deaths falling from 384 to just 83, the government said on Wednesday, as India envisions to achieve malaria-free status by 2030.In 2023, zero malaria cases were reported in 122 districts across various states, according to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
At the time of independence in 1947, malaria was one of the most pressing public health challenges, with an estimated 7.5 crore cases annually and 800,000 deaths.Over the decades, relentless efforts have drastically reduced these numbers by over 97 per cent, with cases declining to just 2 million and deaths plummeting to just 83 by 2023.The latest World Malaria Report 2024, released by the World Health Organisation (WHO), celebrates India's significant progress.India's achievements include a significant reduction in malaria cases and



malaria-related deaths between 2017 and 2023."This success is further highlighted by India's exit from the WHO's High Burden to High Impact (HBHI) group in 2024, signifying a turning point in its fight against malaria. These achievements reflect the nation's robust public health interventions and its vision to achieve malaria-free status by 2030," said the ministry.From 2015 to 2023, numerous states have transitioned from the higher-burden category to the significantly lower or zero-burden category.In 2015, 10 states and Union Territories were classified as high burden (Category 3). Of these, in 2023 only two states (Mizoram and Tripura) remain in Category 3, whereas four states such as Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Meghalaya have reduced the caseload and moved to Category 2.Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Madhya Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli have significantly reduced the caseload and moved to Category 1 in 2023. Simultaneously, intensified surveillance efforts have led to a significant rise in the Annual Blood Examination Rate (ABER), increasing from 9.58 (2015) to 11.62 (2023). This strengthened surveillance has ensured early detection, timely intervention, and more effective treatment, said the government. Integrated Vector Management (IVM) has been at the core of India's malaria control efforts. Strategies such as Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS) and the distribution of Long-Lasting Insecticidal Nets (LLINs) have significantly curtailed mosquito populations and disrupted the transmission cycle.

LS Speaker Pays Tributes To Madan Mohan Malaviya, Atal Bihari Vajpayee On Their Birth Anniversary

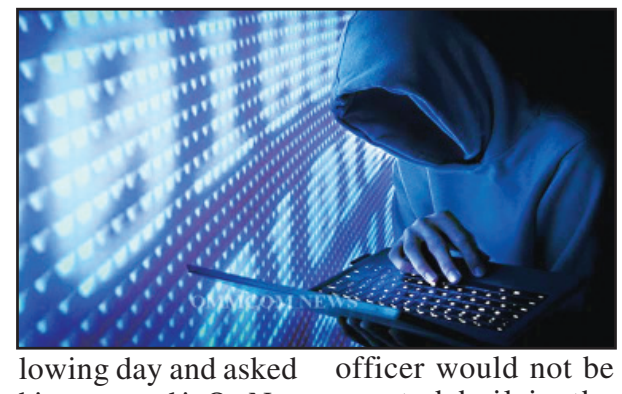
New Delhi: Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla paid floral tributes at the portraits of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in the Central Hall of Samvidhan Sadan on their birth anniversary, on Wednesday.Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare Jagat Prakash Nadda; Union Minister of Railways Ashwini Vaishnaw; Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal; Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav; Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Kiren Rijiju; Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge; Members of Parliament and former MPs also paid tributes to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Atal Bihari Vajpayee on the occasion.Booklets containing the profiles of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Atal Bihari Vajpayee, brought out in Hindi and English by the Lok Sabha Secretariat, were presented to the dignitaries.The portraits of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Atal Bihari Vajpayee were unveiled in the Central Hall of Samvidhan Sadan (then Parliament House) on December 19, 1957, and February 12, 2019, respectively, in recognition of their outstanding services to the nation.The President of India awarded the nation's highest civilian honour, the Bharat Ratna, to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya posthumously and Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 2015.Earlier, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla paid floral tributes to Atal Bihari Vajpayee at 'Sadaiv Atal' in New Delhi.Paying tribute to Vajpayee, Om Birla said in a post on X, "Heartfelt tributes to former Prime Minister, Bharat Ratna Late Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji on his birth anniversary. Atal ji will always be remembered as a wise politician, dynamic poet, author, mentor and inspirational personality.""By being elected to the Lok Sabha 10 times and to the Upper House twice, respected Atal ji enriched our parliamentary traditions and remained dedicated to the progress of the nation throughout his life," he added."Be it the ruling party or the opposition, he was respected by all. His approach towards parliamentary traditions and his behaviour of simplicity and dignity in the House is exemplary for all public representatives. In memory of late Atal ji, 'Good Governance Day' is also celebrated across the country on this day. Best wishes to all countrymen on this occasion," the Speaker wrote.

Sundargarh Residents Robbed Of 500-Gram Gold, Over Rs 1 Lakh In Series Robberies

Sundargarh(Correspondence):: Even as people were making merry and praying in the church on the eve of Christmas on Tuesday night, unidentified thieves ransacked their homes and looted their valuables in Fittingpada under Sundargarh Town police limits.The thieves broke the door locks of five houses with a gas cutter and decamped with gold ornaments weighing 500 grams and cash to the tune of Rs 1 lakh.According to the victims Dhanila Tigga, Elisab Ekka, Sarita Xess and others, they left for the local church around 9.00 – 9.30 pm on Tuesday and when they returned home past midnight they found that the thieves had entered their homes and robbed the valuables.On being informed, Sundargarh Town police have started an investigation with the help of a sniffer dog and a scientific team.

Ex-Army Officer Trapped In Digital Arrest Scam, Loses Rs 1 Crore

Cuttack(Correspondence):: An ex-Army officer from Cuttack has been robbed of over Rs 1 crore after he was trapped in a digital arrest scam.Cuttack ADCP Amarendra Panda said that the incident occurred on November 18 when the former Army officer received a video call around noon showing some people sitting in what looked like an office. They posed as officials of some organisation and the caller identified himself as an official of the Narcotics Control Bureau. He told the ex-Army officer that he had multiple phone numbers active on his Aadhaar card number and there are allegations of money laundering against him. They also said that g he is involved in illegal activities such as defrauding money from various banks with foreign links. His phone number is linked to multiple drug lords abroad and so he is being digitally arrested.The man further told the ex-Army officer that he would be tried in a special CBI court on the following day and asked him to attend it.On November 19, the ex-Army man received another video call on WhatsApp where he saw a room that seemed to be a courtroom. He was then interrogated by a man sitting as a judge, who said that the ex-Army officer would not be granted bail in the charges against him. He directed the ex-Army officer to transfer money to a bank account and assured that once the case was settled, the deposited money would be returned to his account. Scared, the former army officer transferred Rs 67 lakh on the same day and on December 20, he sent another Rs 37 lakh.After receiving the money the cyber fraudsters told him that the case against him was over. After this, for some reason, the ex-Army officer suspected that he was a victim of fraud and reported him to the cyber police station on Tuesday.After a preliminary investigation of the incident, the police found that the call came from Mumbai. The police are checking the number and IP address.



Former Odisha Governor Raghubar Das Visits Puri Jagannath Temple After Resignation

Bhubaneswar: Former Odisha Governor Raghubar Das on Wednesday visited the Puri Jagannath Temple after resigning from his post.Das, who stepped down as Governor, arrived in Puri and sought the blessings of Lord Jagannath and his siblings. He spent some time at the Governor's house in Puri before heading to the temple, where he was provided with tight security, said sources.After offering prayers at the temple, Das expressed his happiness and contentment. He stated that he had taken up the role of Governor as per the will of Lord Jagannath. Das also mentioned that the development of Odisha would be achieved by 2036, as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Regarding his future course of action, Das said "I would abide by the decision of the high command and accept any responsibility given to me."Das also touched upon the issue of Odia Asmita stating that the previous government had failed to understand

Union Minister Giriraj Singh Demands Bharat Ratna for Nitish Kumar, Naveen Patnaik

BHUBANESWAR, (Correspondence): Union Minister Giriraj Singh stated on Wednesday that the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award, should be awarded to Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and former Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.Singh made this remark in Begusarai, his Lok Sabha constituency, praising Nitish Kumar, who is currently an ally of the BJP, and Naveen Patnaik, a former alliance partner ousted from power earlier this year."Bihar was known for its poor roads, schools, and



buildings until Nitish Kumar came to power and took the state to new heights. Similarly, Naveen Patnaik served Odisha for many years. Leaders like them deserve the highest honour, like the Bharat Ratna," he said.On the occasion of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's 100th birth anniversary, the BJP leader also remarked that the NDA government will be formed again in Bihar under Nitish Kumar's leadership in the upcoming Bihar assembly elections."No one should be confused. Lalu Prasad Yadav may try a million times, but the Bihar assembly elections will be held under Nitish Kumar's leadership, and the NDA government will be formed again. Nitish Kumar has served as Chief Minister for many years. Today's thirty-year-olds have never experienced Lalu ji's jungle raj," he stated.Earlier, Nitish Kumar's party, Janata Dal-United, had also clearly announced that the NDA alliance would contest the upcoming Bihar assembly elections under the leadership of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.Notably, elections for the 243 assembly seats in Bihar are likely to take place at the end of 2025.

Odisha Celebrating Christmas With Joy & Fervour; Special Arrangements In Kandhamal

Bhubaneswar(Correspondence): The State witnessed vibrant Christmas celebrations as people gathered in churches in large numbers to mark the birth of Lord Jesus. Midnight carols, holy masses, and special prayers characterized the festivities, with the Christian community radiating joy and enthusiasm.In Cuttack and Bhubaneswar, churches were packed with devotees participating in midnight sermons and carols. Similarly, in Baliguda of Kandhamal district, churches were adorned with colourful lights, stars, and decorated Christmas trees, creating a festive atmosphere.To ensure peaceful celebrations, security measures have been put in place in Kandhamal district where 20 platoons of forces took position in in sensitive areas. DIG Sarthak Sarangi stated that security personnel were stationed at identified churches, with increased mobile patrolling to maintain law and order.Kandhamal Collector Amrit Ruturaj urged people to maintain peace and follow the law during the celebrations. He emphasized that measures were being taken to control the spread of fake news and audio clips, ensuring peaceful celebrations across all communities.As Odisha celebrates Christmas with pomp and grandeur, the state's Christian community comes together to rejoice in the spirit of love, peace, and harmony.

Centre Releases Rs 1,069 Crore For Rural Local Bodies In Odisha, Rajasthan

New Delhi: The Central government has released the second installment of untied grants for rural local bodies in Odisha and Rajasthan for 2024-25 in accordance with the recommendations of the Fifteenth Finance Commission, the Finance Ministry announced on Wednesday.A sum of Rs 560.63 crore has been released as the second installment of the untied grant for Rajasthan along with the withheld amount of first installment of Untied Grants for the Financial Year 2024-25 amounting to Rs 53.41 crore for 10,105 eligible Gram Panchayats, 315 block panchayats and 20 eligible district panchayats in the state, according to the official statement.An amount of Rs 370.20 crore has also been released as the second installment of the untied grant Odisha along with the withheld amount of the first installment for the Financial Year 2024-25 amounting to Rs.84. 5086 crore for 6,794 eligible Gram Panchayats, 314 Block Panchayats and 30 District Panchayats of the state.The untied grants will be utilised by the Panchayati Raj Institutions for location-specific felt needs, under the 29 subjects enshrined in the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution, except for salaries and other establishment costs.The Tied Grants can be used for the basic services of sanitation and maintenance of ODF status, and this should include management and treatment of household waste, and human excreta and fecal sludge management in particular.They can also be used for the supply of drinking water, rainwater harvesting and water recycling.The Central government through the Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Ministry of Jal Shakti (Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation) recommends release of Fifteenth Finance Commission Grants to States for Rural Local Bodies which are then released by the Ministry of Finance.

HC Directs Odisha Govt To Install CCTV Cameras In All Police Stations By Mar '25

Cuttack (Correspondence):: The Orissa High Court has ordered the Odisha government to equip all police stations and outposts with CCTV cameras by March 31, 2025.This directive, issued by a division bench comprising Chief Justice Chakradhari Sharan Singh and Justice Savitri Ratho, came during the hearing of a public interest litigation (PIL) regarding the alleged custodial abuse of a serving Army officer and his fiancée in Bhubaneswar.The court emphasized that the



CCTV systems must be integrated with the Central Monitoring System (CMS) through a Video Management System (VMS) to enhance transparency and accountability in policing.Additionally, the bench highlighted the importance of strictly adhering to the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) established by the Odisha government for interactions with members of the armed forces in police stations. It directed that all police officers be made aware of these procedures and instructed the state to circulate the SOP in Odia across all police stations and outposts.According to an affidavit submitted by Additional Director General of Police (Headquarters) Dayal Gangwar, 96% of the state's 645 police stations have already been integrated with the CMS at the State Police Headquarters in Cuttack.The court's directives underscore the need for greater accountability and modernization in the state's policing framework, aiming to protect citizens' rights and prevent incidents of custodial misconduct.

Odisha BJP Promises Swift Refunds to Chit Fund Scam Victims

Bhubaneswar (Correspondence):: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Odisha has pledged to expedite the return of funds to investors defrauded in various chit fund scams. State BJP President Manmohan Samal criticized the previous administration for failing to ensure these refunds and assured that the new BJP government is committed to addressing this issue promptly. Speaking to reporters, Samal emphasized that efforts are underway to facilitate the reimbursement process. "We are actively considering all necessary steps to ensure that the duped investors receive their money back as soon as possible," he stated. The government is also evaluating the possibility of making the Commission's report public to ensure transparency in the process.Samal's statements have provided a glimmer of hope to many investors who have been waiting for justice for years. The opposition, however, remains skeptical. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Prasanna Acharya, remarked, "The BJP government claims to be contemplating various measures, but concrete actions are yet to be seen. Making statements alone is not enough."

Maa Manikeswari University VC Prof Sanjay Satpathy Passes Away

Bhubaneswar(Correspondence): The Vice-Chancellor of Maa Manikeswari University in Kalahandi, Prof. Sanjay Satpathy, passed away after a prolonged illness.He breathed his last in the early hours of Wednesday at a private hospital in Bhubaneswar. This was informed by the VC-in-charge, Nibedita Nath. He was diagnosed with cancer in April this year and had been undergoing treatment since then.He also suffered a stroke two months ago, following which Nibedita Nath was assigned as the VC-in-charge of the varsity. Prof. Satpathy was a writer, poet, actor, and good speaker.He had appeared in various characters on the television screen. After his demise, a team of faculty members, led by VC-in-charge Nibedita Rath, arrived in Bhubaneswar to pay their last respects to the departed soul. His family members will decide the place of his cremation.

OUHM Directs All ULBs Across State to Begin Application Receiving Process Under PMAY(U) 2.0

Bhubaneswar (Correspondence): The Odisha Urban Housing Mission (OUHM) under the Housing & Urban Development Department has instructed all Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) across the state to initiate the application receiving process under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) 2.0 [PMAY(U) 2.0].Unlike the previous phase of PMAY(U), applications for this phase will be accepted exclusively online through a web portal developed by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India.To ensure a smooth application process for eligible beneficiaries, the OUHM has recommended that ULBs establish helpdesks at their offices, organize ward-wise camps, and collaborate with Common Service Centers (CSCs) to assist applicants.The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has launched the process by organizing a camp in Gadakana. This holds special significance for PMAY(U) 2.0 as it was visited by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on his 74th birthday (17th September 2024), during which he interacted with beneficiaries of PMAY(U). The advice of Dr Krushna Chandra Mahapatra, Minister of Housing & Urban Development, and guidance from the Principal Secretary, H&UD, Gadakana has been selected for development as a Model Village.

EDITORIAL

Growing old is certainly not a countdown

It is widely held that once individuals become old, it is time to spend their remaining years in withdrawal or retirement, as their overall capabilities diminish and they are no longer capable of discharging their former responsibilities. It is for this reason that as people age, they begin to lose hope and then so many elderly people are relegated to lead lives of despair and helplessness, sometimes in old age homes.

This is an extremely morose approach to life, for just languishing, often in seclusion, is definitely not what nature expects from man. Ageing is a natural phenomenon and must be embraced rather than treated like an ailment. As a person ages, his body weakens physically but usually, not his mind. Even the argument of lack of physical strength does not hold good in today's tech-savvy world. An old person may, of course, be unable to run up and down a flight of steps but he can still use a lift or an escalator /elevator to reach his destination. Similarly, a person may lose his vision but, with the support of technology, he can still continue to enjoy his favourite books. Physical limitation is no longer a disabling aspect of life – all one needs is a developed mind and the capacity to think and learn anew.

In old age, a man's experience, knowledge and maturity increase, offering him multifaceted ways to lead a fulfilling and meaningful life. This view was endorsed in a study that found that in old age, the mind continues to produce as many neurons as it did at an earlier age. The findings suggest that many senior citizens remain more cognitively and emotionally intact than commonly believed,

In other words, as one ages, one's mind becomes more competent as a result of the production of brain cells coupled with years of wisdom and experience. Ageing is not the beginning of a countdown, but is rather, the time for a count-up. The world can benefit greatly from the planning skills and wisdom of the aged. This is, in fact, nature's way of enabling man to pass on his wisdom to succeeding generations. Longevity and old age are often spoken of in the same breath. But here the emphasis is misplaced. The key aspect of old age is maturity, not longevity. An old person develops mature thinking by experiencing the vicissitudes of life. This not only enhances his knowledge but makes him a prolific source of guidance and advice. Succeeding generations are always in need of this unique gift from nature so that they may plan a way forward. All major developments have taken place in the world by people 'standing on the shoulders of their predecessors'. It is time to actively acknowledge the contribution that senior citizens can make to society at large and to bring them into the mainstream so that they may uphold the veracity of the old adage – 'old is gold.'

well-being of others

Gangadhar Samal

The meaning and purpose of life is an introspective quest that many of us indulge in at some point in life. Arthur Schopenhauer gives the purpose of life a subjective hue, rooted in compassion, kindness, and love. His philosophy asserts that acknowledging the pervasive nature of suffering in all living beings fosters a compassionate attitude. And that the cultivation of moral virtues is a means to transcend the inherent suffering in existence. So, the recognition of shared suffering and the pursuit of moral excellence contribute to a meaningful life. In contrast, Soren Kierkegaard explores life's purpose by delineating three distinct stages – the aesthetic, ethical, and the religious. Each stage represents a facet of personal growth, with the religious stage, in particular, emphasising a connection to something greater for an understanding of existential themes. Kierkegaard's framework posits that genuine meaning is found in religious pursuits, underlining the significance of a transcendent connection in navigating life's complexities.

The 'Ubermensch' introduced by Nietzsche is an idealised human shaping his own meaning beyond societal norms, driven by the 'will to power' for selfassertion. He contends that individuals transcending conventional morality hold the power to infuse life with meaning. Tolstoy's spiritual view emphasises faith, unselfishness, and love for a purposeful life. Tagore explores life's essence spiritually, while Bertrand Russell suggests pursuing enduring interests practically for purpose. Shakespeare, through Macbeth, offers a nihilistic view, likening life to 'a tale told by an idiot', potentially overlooking individual capacity for finding meaning amid life's chaos.

The diverse philosophies from Schopenhauer's compassion to Nietzsche's individual empowerment to Kierkegaard's religious stage and Tolstoy's spiritual values serve not only as challenges to conventional notions but also as thought-provoking inquiries into the fundamental nature of existence and human experiences. The quest for meaning influences psychological and physical well-being, serving as a motivational and self-regulatory force. It aids in coping with life's challenges, and promotes mental health by mitigating uncertainty, stress, and sense of loss.

Finding a balance between personal fulfilment and contributing to the well-being of others, the community or society, emerges as a holistic approach to a meaningful life. Personal fulfilment involves understanding one's values, passions, and goals, engaging in activities that bring joy and satisfaction, and pursuing continuous self-improvement. Simultaneously, contributing to society's well-being, fostering meaningful relationships, and performing acts of kindness and service to others, contribute to collective well-being. This perspective recognises the interconnectedness of individual happiness and the greater good, emphasising that both personal and collective well-being are integral components of a fulfilling existence. Actions that benefit society create a more positive and supportive environment, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for individuals and communities alike. In weaving together these diverse philosophical threads, a comprehensive understanding of life's meaning and purpose begins to emerge – one that encompasses the individual, the collective, and the intricate interplay between the two.

Let the Food Nourish your Body, Mind and Soul

Dr. Jyotiranjan Champatiray

With drastic changes in the lifestyle, maximum people are cooking at home than ever before and in the process, they are also discovering the unique connection between cooking & happiness. That's also one of the positive aspects of staying at home. Certainly, when you are happy and peaceful in the kitchen, it strangely makes your food taste delicious. But why does that happen? It happens because everything is energy. The energy you are experiencing at the time of cooking can make a huge difference to the final outcome of a dish.

If you feel 'calm' and satisfied within, then you essentially permeate 'calmness' into the food. Likewise, if you feel sad and gloomy then you infuse such energy into your food. So, when you eat the food you not only absorb various nutrients, but also the 'energy' instilled into it. The energy with which you prepare food is greatly important and therefore you should always try to infuse spiritual energy into your food.

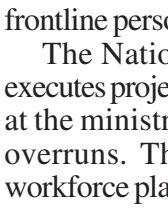
Here's how, Prepare Food with Utmost Sanctity. Mother Nature provides us with food that nourishes the physical body and helps it grow. No one can survive without it. We take food and thus this physical body has also been named 'Annamaya Kosha'- the food sheath, the first layer of the body. The next sheath is the 'Pranamaya Kosh'-Life force sheath, followed by the 'Manomaya Kosh'- the mind or thought process layer, then the 'Vijnanamaya Kosh'- the intuition sheath and finally, the 'Anandamaya kosha'- the spiritual bliss sheath.

In India, before we start eating, we offer prayers and express our gratitude for the food we eat. Some people chant the Gayatri mantra while cooking. So, when you prepare food with sanctity, these spiritual feelings get transferred in the food and then into family members as well who consume it. When you prepare food in a bad mood, it turns out to be tasteless, but when you prepare it happily, it's delicious. Therefore, prepare food with utmost sanctity while blessing your children, chanting mantras and with a positive frame of mind. Let the Food Nourish your Body, Mind and Soul, Also, when you are about to eat your food, you must offer prayers and along with that express gratitude towards God for all that you have. Take a bite of food and know that you are offering it to God only because your soul is a part of God. So, consume food with love, and then the food will convert into life-juice. It will nourish your body, mind, and soul. When you consume Sattvic food, your mind also becomes Sattvic and then you move on the path of selfless deeds. However, if the food is Rajasic or Tamasic, the mind and deeds also become like that.

The Sattvic Impact of Sattvic Food. You understand God, His blessings, the scriptures, and words of the Guru, and move on the path of devotion naturally when you consume Sattvic food. And therefore in meditation practices, seekers work on their food habits first. Food nourishes both the body and the mind- the subtle form of the body- as both are connected. That's why when the body is in trouble, it affects the mind and when the mind is disturbed, it affects the body. Further, almost seventy percent of diseases of the body are the outcome of a disturbed mind and stress. Therefore, in older times, it was a popular belief that one should not consume food at the house of those with whom they don't have good relations.

So, avoid eating just anywhere. When you have Sattvic food at home, it impacts your thought process in a positive way. These are just a few of the various ways to prepare and consume food mindfully and in a Sattvic way. Practice them, try to find the spiritual meaning in them, and also experience a culinary delight over the sacred nature of preparing & eating food.

Government grappling with staff shortage



Priyanka Saurabh

The small size of the government workforce places an excessive burden on officials, making effective policy execution difficult. Inadequate manpower and excessive processes lead to delays in services, as officials struggle to handle the volume of work. The Indian state has a low number of public sector employees per capita, resulting in understaffed personnel to address complex governance challenges. India has only 1,600 central government employees per million, while the US has 7,500 per million, impacting state efficiency. Despite fewer civil servants, the bureaucracy is mired in complex processes such as licensing, permits, and clearances. Starting a business requires going through a maze of clearances, permits, and approvals that hinder progress and delay results. The Indian state lacks adequate numbers of skilled professionals in key sectors such as healthcare, education, and policing. Increase the recruitment of qualified professionals at various levels to address the shortage of people, thereby ensuring a skilled workforce. Lateral entry programs and special training initiatives such as Mission Karmayogi can improve the skills and efficiency of civil servants.

The Indian system of governance is often described as 'lacking people' but 'lacking processes,' reflecting the imbalance between the large administrative machinery and the limited human resources available for effective governance. While bureaucratic processes are well established, a lack of personnel hinders efficient implementation. This paradox affects governance by causing delays, inefficiencies, and inadequate public service delivery, reducing the state's responsiveness to citizens' needs. The Indian state is often described as 'lacking people' but 'lacking processes.' The Indian state has a low number of public sector employees per capita, resulting in an understaffed presence of personnel to address complex governance challenges. India has only 1,600 central government employees per million, while the US has 7,500 per million, affecting the efficiency of the state. Despite fewer civil servants, the bureaucracy is bogged down in complex processes such as licensing, permits, and approvals. Starting a business requires going through a maze of clearances, permits, and approvals that hinder progress and delay results. The Indian state lacks an adequate number of skilled professionals in key sectors such as healthcare, education, and policing. The Reserve Bank of India has only 7,000 employees, while the US Federal Reserve has 22,000 employees, which limits effectiveness in managing national financial stability. Policy-making is highly centralized, but implementation remains a cumbersome process carried out by limited frontline personnel.

The National Highways Authority of India executes projects, while policy formulation remains at the ministry level, leading to delays and cost overruns. The small size of the government workforce places an excessive burden on officials, making effective policy execution difficult. Inadequate manpower and excessive processes lead to delays in services, as officials struggle to handle the volume of work. Infrastructure projects face cost overruns and delays due to cumbersome regulatory clearances and a lack of frontline decision-making authority. The division of policy formulation and execution creates a disconnection between decision-makers and service implementers, reducing accountability for poor performance. When problems arise in road construction projects, the absence of clear responsibility for monitoring between ministries and implementers leads to blame-shifting and inefficiencies. Lack of skills within the government leads to reliance on private consultancy firms for critical tasks, increasing public expenditure. The Indian government spent over Rs 500 crore on consultancy fees for tasks that could have been managed in-house with better-trained officials. Complex bureaucratic processes create an aversion to risk-taking and discretionary decision-making, thereby stifling innovation and slowing adaptation. Misalignment of incentives with high public sector salaries and job security attracts people who are motivated by financial gain rather than social service. Increase recruitment of qualified professionals at various levels to address shortages of people, thereby ensuring a skilled workforce. Lateral entry programs such as Mission Karmayogi and special training initiatives can improve the skills and competencies of civil servants. Empower frontline personnel with delegated authority to make implementation-related decisions, improve accountability, and speed up processes. Giving frontline workers more control in executing policies, similar to the National Highways Authority of India, reduces delays and improves efficiency.

Streamline bureaucratic processes to reduce the burden of licenses and approvals, making it easier for citizens and businesses to access public services. Online platforms that provide one-stop solutions for permits and approvals can reduce complexity and speed up processes. Implement moderate pay reforms that align public sector salaries with private sector compensation, discouraging corruption and attracting individuals motivated by social service. Implementing performance-linked incentives and ensuring competitive but fair salaries can increase the attractiveness of the public sector for socially minded professionals. Strengthen oversight and accountability mechanisms: Reform agencies such as the Comptroller and Auditor General and the Central Vigilance Commission to make audits and investigations more relevant and focused on policy objectives rather than just compliance. Sensitizing oversight agencies to the complexities of policy decisions will ensure that they understand the context, thereby reducing litigation and delays in project execution. India being 'low on people' but 'high on processes' requires greater accountability and efficiency in governance. Strengthening human resources, decentralizing decision-making, and leveraging technology can streamline public service delivery, ensuring better access and accountability. A future-focused approach should emphasize capacity building and transparency, leading to more people-centered and effective governance.

Yellow Alert For Cuttack & Bhubaneswar

Bhubaneswar(Correspondence): Cuttack and Bhubaneswar, along with several other districts of Odisha, are likely to experience light to moderate rain over the next three hours, according to nowcast warning issued by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) at 8.30 PM today. A yellow warning has been issued for these areas, urging residents to remain vigilant and take necessary precautions.The IMD has also placed Ganjam, Kandhamal, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, and Nayagarh under a yellow warning during this period.Additionally, an orange warning has been issued for seven districts, including Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Dhenkanal, Kendrapada, Jagatsinghpur, and Puri, where intense spells of rain are expected till 11:30 PM on Wednesday.

People in affected areas have been advised to monitor the weather closely and move to safer locations as needed.

Man Kills Wife, Attempts Suicide



Cuttack(Correspondent):: A man allegedly killed his wife over a family dispute and then tried to end his life in Cuttack Shidheshwar Sahi on Wednesday. The man has been admitted to SCB Medical College and Medical College.

The deceased woman has been identified as Bishnu Priya, while her husband is Biswajit Mall. Bishnu Priya was a constable at the Cyber Police Station here, Biswajit runs a business.

Biswajit and Bishnu Priya married in 2019 and the couple has a 5-year-old daughter. According to reports, the relationship between the two was not good and Bishnu Priya wanted a separation. On Wednesday, Biswajit came home and started a quarrel with his wife. As the quarrel intensified, Biswajit slit his wife's throat with a knife in a fit of rage. Next, he tried to end his life by slashing his throat but was rescued and admitted to hospital in critical condition.

Even in the pouring rain, the protest of women in front of the Collectorate



SUBARNAPUR (Correspondence): A heart-rending scene was seen in front of the office of Subarnapur Collectorate when all the bureaucrats were having fun during the Christmas vacation. A mother is holding a small milk-fed baby.Manoj Mahakur, supply assistant of S. Patrapali Panchayat Beheramal village and his wife CRP Bijuli Mahakur cheated 7 women and looted more than 6 lakh rupees. Among them is a tribal woman Basanti Toppo. Only two women have the courage to stand up for their justice. This incident has been going on for six months. It is alleged that Ulunda Police station IIC also took the side of the accused and repeatedly abused the women. Ulunda Tehsildar also ignored her and threatened her. Finally, the women contacted leader Sonali Bishi and reported the incident. Among them, Mrs. Bishi and District President Pradyumna Padhi discussed one of them with Ranjita Padhan in the presence of the additional supdt. Of police and other officials in the additional district magistrate chamber . After the intervention of Additional District Magistrate Angalina Pradhan, the police informed the accused to take him to court. The women insisted that they will sit in front of the Collectorate till tomorrow night until they get a written promise. "How can we trust the administration that has cheated us for six months," they said. In the end Shubham Sahu, the youth leader of Navnirman Krushak Sangathan their dinner. Officials are absent today as it is a public(X Mass) holiday. The concept is still ongoing. Let's see what action the administration is taking against the corrupt and abusive IIC and Tahsildar. Mrs. Bishi demanded immediate action against the accused. Respect for women is a farce. The government changed. Pradyumna asatirizes the state government saying that nothing has changed in the suffering of these women

Environmental Activist Abhaya Tripathi Honored with Prestigious Honorary Doctorate



Khaprakhol, (Correspondence): – Abhaya Chandra Tripathi, an environmental activist and journalist from Budhibahal village in Khaprakhol block of Balangir district, has been awarded the honorary doctorate by the prestigious Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Hindi Vidyapeeth, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh.The honor was conferred during the National Hindi Language Conference and the convocation ceremony of the Vidyapeeth, held at Hotel Sayaji in Indore, Madhya Pradesh. This event celebrated outstanding individuals selected from various parts of the country, recognizing their contributions with honorary doctorate degrees.Abhaya Tripathi was specifically honored for his exemplary work in natural farming, environmental awareness, and journalism.The ceremony was presided over by Dr. Indubhushan Mishra, Chancellor of the Vidyapeeth and Secretary of the Madhya Pradesh Child Protection Commission. The Chief Guest was Justice Devendra Kumar Jain, and the keynote speaker was renowned storyteller Deepa Mishra from Vrindavan.

Youth Association Hosts Blood Donation Camp to Honor Atal Bihari Vajpayee's 100th Birth Anniversary



Jharsuguda (Correspondent): The Youth Association of Sarbahal organized a blood donation camp on Wednesday to commemorate the 100th birth anniversary of former Prime Minister and Bharat Ratna awardee Atal Bihari Vajpayee.The event witnessed enthusiastic participation as members of the association queued up to donate blood, holding pictures of the late leader. A total of 40 units of blood were collected during the camp, showcasing the community's spirit of service and dedication to Vajpayee's ideals.

Tankadhar Tripathy, MLA of Jharsuguda, attended the event as the chief guest. In his address, he paid tribute to Vajpayee's remarkable governance and selfless service to the nation. Tripathy also emphasized the importance of blood donation as a noble act that can save lives.Prominent BJP leader Pramod Tripathi graced the event as a guest, along with key organizers Shyam Poddar, Nikhil Sharma, and Niranjan Rohidas, whose efforts were instrumental in making the camp a success.This initiative not only honored the legacy of one of India's most revered leaders but also promoted the vital cause of blood donation, reflecting Vajpayee's vision of a compassionate and united society.The Youth Association's efforts received widespread appreciation, with attendees expressing their commitment to continuing such initiatives in the future to uphold Vajpayee's values.

Good Governance Day observed in Khordha

Khordha (Correspondence):On Wednesday, the



district-level birth anniversary of former Prime Minister of India, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Good Governance Day was observed at Jayee Rajguru Town Hall in Khordha district. Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan attended the event as chief guest, while Bhubaneswar MP Aparajita Sarangi, Khordha MLA Prashant Kumar Jagadev ,Khordha DM Chanchal Rana, ADM Saphalaya Mandit Pradhan, ADM (Admn) Pratap Chandra Beura were attended as guests.Chief guest Minister Harichandan said in his speech that Atal Bihari Vajpayee left his mark as an eloquent orator, a diplomat, a humble politician and a statesman.On this occasion, certificates and cups were awarded to the winners of the district level debate competition. CDO ZP, SDM, DIPRO, DCO and various officers were prominently present in the event.

3,000 Ltrs Of Illicit Liquor Seized

Baripada(Correspondence):: Police have seized around 3,000 litres of illicit country liquor from a pickup van during a vehicle check at Krushna Chandra Golei under the Baripada Town police limits on Wednesday. Two persons have been detained in connection with the case.According to reports, the contraband was being transported from Ambadali in the Shyamakhunta area to Deuli in 30 tubes.The police have detained the pickup van driver, Shantanu Dey, from Khunta block in Mayurbhanj district, and his helper, Samai Murmu, from the Baliapal area in Balasore district.Both detainees are currently being interrogated by the police.

Thieves Strike Balasore Jewellery Shop, Decamp With Rs 5L

Balasore: In a daylight robbery under Kamarda police station in Balasore district, miscreants made off with gold jewelry worth Rs 5 lakh from a jewellery shop.According to reports, the shop owner had gone to fetch water, leaving behind a bag containing 300 grams of gold jewellery and cash. Upon his return, he found the bag missing.

The shop owner immediately searched the surrounding area but couldn't find the stolen items. He then filed a complaint at the Kamarda police station.Based on a complaint filed by shop owner, police have initiated an investigation into the incident and are reviewing CCTV footage to identify the culprits.This brazen robbery has sent shockwaves in the locality.

Balasore SP Suspends Sartha Police Outpost In-Charge Over Dereliction Of Duty

Bhubaneswar: Balasore Superintendent of Police (SP) suspended incharge of Sartha police outpost Chandra Sekhar Mohanty on charges of dereliction of duty.As per reports, Ajay Das, owner of a cloth store of Sartha village had filed a complaint with local police alleging his store was burglarized a few days ago. However, no action was taken, and the stolen items were not recovered.On December 22, Ajay and his two sons picked up four youths Trilochan Pradhan, Satish Singh, Bhanu Pradhan, and Tapu Mohanty from their respective homes on suspicion of theft. They were taken to a nearby electric pole, where they were brutally beaten with iron rods and wooden sticks.The suspects' family members requested Mohanty to the stop unlawful practices and take action , Mohanty reported to have not paid heed to their pleas. One of them, Trilochan, died on the spot due to severe injuries, while the other three were critically injured and hospitalized.

Subhadra Yojana 2nd Instalment Money to be Credited in March: CM Majhi

BHUBANESWAR, Correspondence): The second instalment money of the Subhadra Yojana is set to be credited to the accounts of beneficiary women in March 2025, as announced by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Wednesday.According to reports, CM Majhi mentioned that under the Subhadra Yojana, a key program of the Odisha BJP government, one crore women will receive this financial aid in one transaction. He also stated that the first instalment for one crore beneficiaries under the program will be disbursed in January 2025, coinciding with the New Year.The distribution of funds through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system will ensure that all eligible women receive their assistance promptly and efficiently, highlighting the need to reach every community member.The scheme, which aims to improve women's economic opportunities, has successfully delivered its initial payment of Rs 5,000 to approximately 80 lakh beneficiaries in three phases. According to the Odisha government, preparations are underway for the fourth phase of the first instalment transfer, expected to be completed by January 2025. As of December 1, a total of 1,05,36,612 women have registered under the Subhadra scheme.

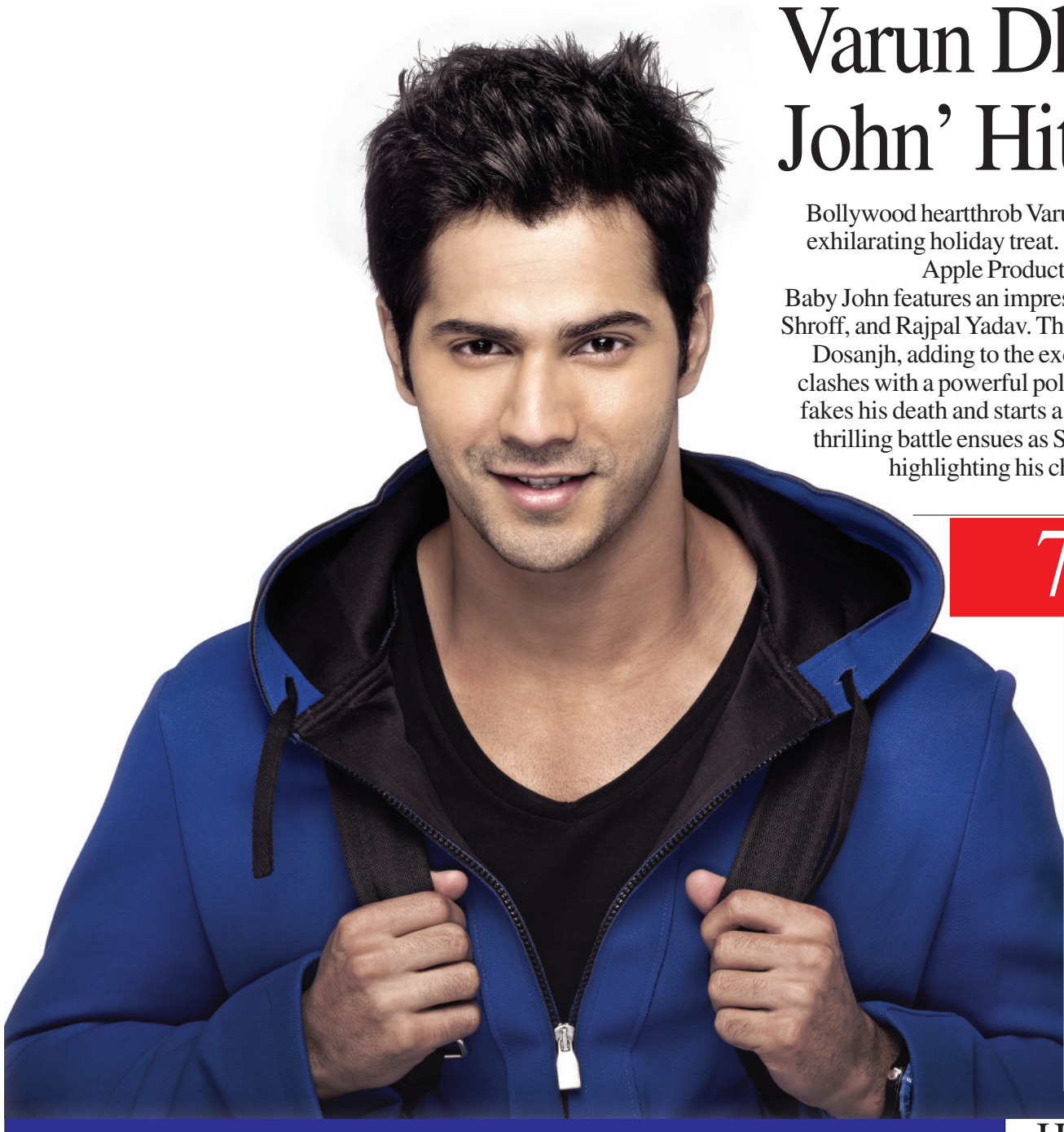
Srimandir Ratna Bhandar Repair Work Halted Till Jan 2

puri,(Correspondence): The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) has announced that the repair work of the Ratna Bhandar will be paused from December 25 to January 2 to accommodate the large number of devotees expected during the year-end.This decision aims to facilitate better crowd management and ensure uninterrupted rituals and darshan during the busy holiday season. Repairs are set to resume on January 3, following the guidelines approved by the state government and the protocols established by SJTA.It is important to note that the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) began its repair and renovation work at the Ratna Bhandar on December 17, starting with cleaning and staging efforts in accordance with a Standard Operating Procedure set by the state government.Senior ASI official DB Garnayak previously mentioned the construction of a temporary platform, 20 feet high, to expedite the repair process. He also confirmed the successful completion of scaffolding work inside the inner chamber of the Jagannath Temple Ratna Bhandar on December 17, with de-plastering of the inner chamber planned as the next step.Odisha's Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan has recently stated that the Odisha government has instructed ASI to complete the repair work within three months, after which the inventory of ornaments in the Ratna Bhandar will commence.

Rayagada Auto Driver Murder Cracked: Accused Committed Crime For Rs 25,000, Say Police

Rayagada (Correspondence): Police have cracked the stabbing murder case of auto driver Balaram Khara, which occurred on December 14, 2024, at Phuljaba Chowk under Tikiri police station in Rayagada district.Police have arrested 25-year-old Ramesh Jhodia, a resident of Maikanch Jhirigaon area, who was accused.According to Superintendent of Police (SP) Swati S Kumar, the accused had borrowed Rs 25,000 from the victim which is a friend of the accused in August this year. However, when the victim demanded repayment, the accused threatened to kill him. On the day of the incident, the accused bought a steel knife and attacked the victim from behind while they were in the auto rickshaw.The police have seized the steel knife used in the murder, along with two ATM cards, two purses, and the safety boots of the deceased.

Varun Dhawan's Action-Packed 'Baby John' Hits Theatres as a Holiday Treat

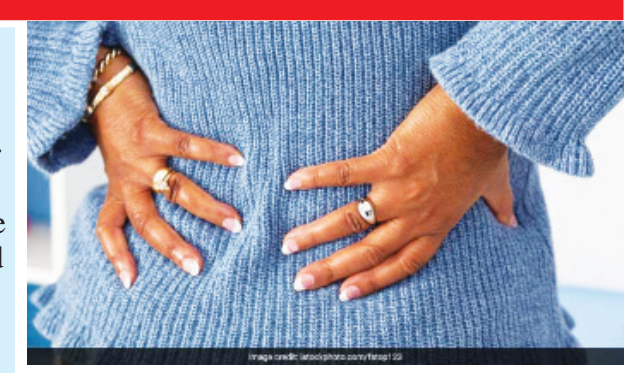


Bollywood heartthrob Varun Dhawan's latest action thriller, Baby John, has finally hit theatres today, offering moviegoers an exhilarating holiday treat. Directed by Kalees and produced by Jio Studios, Cine1 Studios, Vipin Agnihotri Films, and A for Apple Productions, the film promises a rollercoaster of emotions and high-octane action sequences.

Baby John features an impressive ensemble cast, including Keerthy Suresh, making her Hindi film debut, Wamiqa Gabbi, Jackie Shroff, and Rajpal Yadav. The film also boasts special appearances by Bollywood superstar Salman Khan and singer-actor Diljit Dosanjh, adding to the excitement.The film follows the story of DCP Satya Verma IPS, portrayed by Varun Dhawan, who clashes with a powerful politician, Babbar Sher, played by Jackie Shroff. After a tragic incident that destroys his family, Satya fakes his death and starts a new life in Kerala as Baby John. However, when Babbar Sher discovers Satya's whereabouts, a thrilling battle ensues as Satya fights to protect his daughter and seek revenge.Critics have praised Dhawan's performance, highlighting his charisma and action prowess. Keerthy Suresh's portrayal of Dr. Meera Verma, Satya's wife, has also garnered positive reviews for her compelling screen presence.

7 Home Remedies For Back Pain

Backache is one of the most common problem these days. It is a pain in the back caused by degenerative changes, injury, swelling or rarely, cancer. Usually the lower part of the back is involved and the pain worsens when a person bends forward. The muscles of the back may become weak and tender. Backache because of age-related changes may radiate to the legs due to pressure on the spinal nerves. Backaches usually indicate a strain of the back muscles. There are nearly 200 muscles in the back that maintain the upright posture. The triggering event could be carrying heavy weight, lifting from an awkward position, or overexertion of the back muscles.



Home remedies for backache:

Ice pack: ice works best as a pain reliever. You can use it twice or thrice a day. It even reduces swelling. An ice pack wrapped in a towel can reduce pain immediately.

Maintain a correct posture: since most of us tend to sit down for longer periods of time, it is important to maintain the correct posture. Sitting properly can reduce the amount of strain on the back. Correct posture means having all the bones lined up neatly and your feet flat on the floor. You should also concentrate on the correct sleeping posture.

Regular Massages: a good massage can not only relieve backache but also works as a stress buster. You can also use ointments for better results.

Garlic: simply eat two to three cloves of garlic every morning on empty stomach. You can also massage your back with garlic oil. To make garlic oil, heat some coconut oil, mustard oil or sesame oil on low heat and then add 8 to 10 cloves of garlic to it. Fry the garlic until it is brown. Strain the oil and let it cool to room temperature. Massage your back gently with the oil. Leave it on for some time and then take a bath in warm water.

Exercise regularly: the best way to prevent backache is to care for the back muscles and keep them in excellent physical condition. This requires back and abdominal exercises as a daily regime. Stretching exercises work the best for the back.Using Epsom bath salts: a bath tub with lukewarm water and Epsom bath salts can help you reduce backache. Epsom salts are available very easily. After a long working day it is the most relaxing thing to do. You must be careful about the water temperature.Add turmeric and honey to your milk: adding turmeric and honey to milk is the most traditional way to cure backache. It is something every grandmother has used and seemed to have worked. It can also cure other body and joint pains.

Pecan Nuts Brownie Recipe



Ingredients :300 Gram dark chocolate, roughly chopped2 cups butter + for greasing2¼ cup refined flour (maida) + for dusting6 eggs1½ tbsp vanilla essence3 cups castor sugar½ cup roughly chopped American Pecans8-10 American Pecans

How to Make Pecan Nuts Brownie

1.Preheat oven at 180° C.2.Grease a cake tin with butter and dust with refined flour.3.Melt butter and chocolate in a bowl on a double boiler. Allow the mixture to cool down to room temperature.4.Cream eggs with vanilla essence and castor sugar in another bowl till light and fluffy. Add butter-chocolate mixture and mix well.5.Fold in flour and mix lightly. Reserve some chopped American Pecans and add the remaining to the mixture and mix well.6.Pour batter into the prepared cake tin and sprinkle reserved American Pecans on top. Place the whole American Pecans on top and bake for 20-25 minutes.7.Allow the brownie to cool and demould Cut into squares and serve.

Diabetes



Diabetes mellitus (DM) is the body's inability to regulate the level of glucose in the blood. Glucose is the main form of sugar in the body. The body breaks down food into glucose and uses it as a source of energy. In healthy people insulin helps to regulate the glucose (sugar) levels. Insulin is a hormone produced by the pancreas (a long, thin organ located behind the stomach against the back).

In diabetics, the body does not produce enough insulin or does not use the produced insulin effectively. This results in a high level of glucose in the blood ("hyperglycaemia").

There are three main types of diabetes mellitus:

a) Type 1, earlier known as insulin dependent diabetes mellitus (IDDM) or juvenile-onset diabetes mellitus. People with this type of diabetes make little or no insulin in their body, and need regular insulin injections for survival and management of diabetes. It usually starts in childhood, but can occur at any age. This ususally happen before age of 40.

b) Type 2 (DM2), earlier known as non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus (NIDDM) or adult-onset diabetes. This is the most common form of diabetes, and is strongly associated with genetic tendency and obesity. The body produces normal or even high levels of insulin, but certain factors make its utilization ineffective ("insulin resistance"). Sedentary lifestyle, unhealthy dietary patterns, and the consequent obesity are common causes. It usually starts in adulthood, but is beginning to be seen in obese adolescents also.

c) Gestational diabetes mellitus, or pregnancy-induced diabetes.

Gestational diabetes is raised blood glucose levels during pregnancy. It develops in 5 % of all pregnancies but usually disappears when a pregnancy is over. Women who have had gestational diabetes are at increased risk (up to 40%) for later developing type 2 diabetes

What are the symptoms?

Other common symptoms:
Fatigue
Blurred vision
Urinary and vaginal infections
Skin infections, especially fungal or more serious bacterial infections
Increased thirst
Frequency of Urine
Weight loss
Genital itching or regular episodes UTI
Slow healing of wounds
Excessive hunger

There may be weight loss, especially if the amount of insulin made by the body is decreasing. If insulin deficiency is marked, the person can become drowsy and then go into coma. This is called Ketoacidosis, and usually occurs in DM1. Rarely, if the diabetes is completely out of control, it can also occur in DM2. Other symptoms of ketoacidosis include: Deep rapid breathing, sometimes with a fruity odour to the breath Pain in the stomach, with nausea and vomiting.

What are the risk factors?
Indians Ethnicity
Family history of DM
BMI more than 23
Overweight
Waist is 80 inches in men over 90 inches for women.
Sedentary lifestyle
Impaired glucose tolerance

How is the diagnosis made?

Diabetes mellitus is diagnosed based on a high level of glucose or sugar in the blood. The doctor may suspect diabetes mellitus after taking the medical history and doing a physical examination. There are several blood sugar tests used for diagnosis:

Fasting plasma glucose test: In this test, a person is asked to fast overnight, at least 8 hours, and the level of glucose in the blood is then checked. Normal fasting plasma glucose levels are less than 110 mg/dl. A fasting plasma glucose level of more than 126 mg/dl usually indicates diabetes mellitus. A level of 110-125 mg/dl is called "impaired fasting glucose".

Post prandial (PP) plasma glucose: This is tested two hours after having a meal, which serves as a challenge for the body to regulate the blood sugar. Normal PP levels are <140 mg/dl; a glucose level of more than 200 mg/dl indicates diabetes mellitus, while a level between 140-199 mg/ dl is called "impaired glucose tolerance".

Random plasma glucose test: is that which is done at any other time. A level of 200 mg/dl or higher generally indicates the presence of diabetes.

Oral glucose challenge test (oGTT): The blood glucose is tested 2 hours after giving 75 gm glucose by mouth. This is useful for detecting borderline diabetes and a condition called "impaired glucose tolerance".

Oral glucose tolerance test: is the preferred way to diagnose pregnancy-induced diabetes. Ideally all pregnant women in India should have a blood glucose test done 30 minutes after taking 50 gm gluocse (screening test). If this is abnormal, the lady should undergo an oGTT: with 100 gm glucose (not the conventional 75 gm). Blood samples are then drawn at intervals of one hour upto 3 hours (ie at 1, 2 and 3 hours post-glucose).

Monsoon joint pain and treatment

Ginger

Known for its anti-inflammatory properties, ginger can help reduce pain and stiffness in joints. It can be consumed as tea, added to meals, or even taken in raw form.

Turmeric

Rich in curcumin, a compound with strong anti-inflammatory effects, turmeric can help alleviate joint pain. Adding turmeric to your meals or consuming it with warm milk can be beneficial.

Omega-3 fatty acids (from fish or flaxseeds)

Omega-3 fatty acids have potent anti-inflammatory properties that can reduce joint pain. Fatty fish like salmon, or flaxseeds for vegetarians, are good sources.

Green leafy vegetables

Vegetables like spinach, kale, and broccoli are rich in antioxidants and vitamins that support joint health and reduce inflammation.

Berries

Berries such as strawberries, blueberries, and raspberries are loaded with antioxidants that help fight inflammation and protect joints from damage.

Garlic

Garlic has strong anti-inflammatory properties and can reduce symptoms of arthritis, providing relief from joint pain. It can be used in cooking or consumed raw.

Olive oil

Extra virgin olive oil contains oleocanthal, which has anti-inflammatory properties similar to ibuprofen. Using it in cooking or as a salad dressing can be helpful.

Nuts and seeds

Almonds, walnuts, chia seeds, and flaxseeds are rich in healthy fats, protein, and antioxidants, which can reduce inflammation and strengthen joints.

National Shooting C'ships: Paris Olympics Pair Of Maheshwari/Anantjeet Win Skeet Mixed Team Title



New Delhi: The crack pair of Maheshwari Chauhan and Anantjeet Singh Naruka, who finished fourth in the Paris Olympics, rounded off a good year by bagging the Skeet Mixed Team national title for their home state Rajasthan in the ongoing 67th National Shooting Championship Competitions (NSCC) for Shotgun events, here on Wednesday.In the final played at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range (DKSSR) on Christmas Day, the duo pulled off a tight at the end 44-43 victory over Mairaj Ahmad Khan and Areeba Khan of Uttar Pradesh (U.P). Punjab's Ganemat Sekhon and Abhay Singh Sekhon won bronze.Earlier in the day, three 25-shot round totals of 72 and 71 by Maheshwari and Anantjeet respectively, ensured their path to the gold medal match as toppers of the seven-team qualification round.Three teams – Ganemat and Abhay and Haryana's Ishaan Libra and Raiza Dhillon, besides Mairaj and Areeba, finished on the same tally of 141 after which the U.P duo won a three-way shoot-off by blasting eight targets on the trot, to earn a right to shoot for gold.Maheshwari and Anantjeet shot a confident final and were leading throughout the six series of eight birds per team decider, but lapses in concentration and a nerve-wracking caution to Maheshwari for overshooting her shot time, made it closer in the end than it actually was.In the junior skeet mixed team, it was Madhya Pradesh that stunned Haryana to bag gold, when their pairing of Jyotiraditya Singh and Mansi Raghuvanshi outgunned Ishaan and Sanjana Sood 4-2 in a shoot-off after both teams had tied at 40-hits a piece out of the regulation 48 targets.Telangana's Munek Battula and Zahra Deesawala won bronze, getting the better of Rajasthan's Yaduraj Singh and Yashasvi Rathore 42-36 in the bronze medal match.

La Liga 2024-25: Four Things We Learned

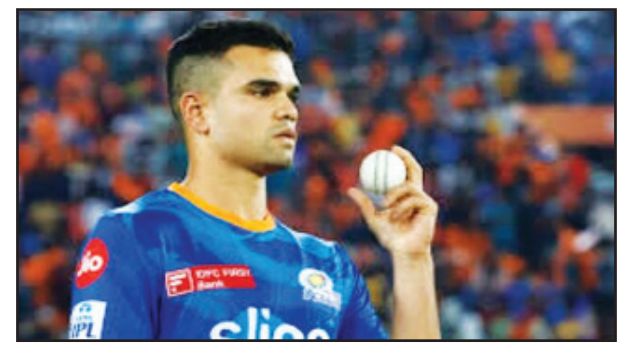
Madrid (Spain): There were changes at the top of the La Liga points table in last weekend's games before the Christmas holidays, with Atletico and Real Madrid both leap-frogging Barcelona in the standings. The two clubs from the Spanish capital are separated by just one point with Atletico racing to the top spot on the back of a seven-match winning streak.On a different day, FC Barcelona would have been out of sight before Rodrigo de Paul equalised for Atletico Madrid in their vital game on Saturday night in Montjuic.

India To Take Part In Physical Disabled Cricket Champions Trophy 2025



New Delhi: The Disabled Cricket Council of India (DCCI) on Wednesday announced India's participation in the Physical Disabled Cricket Champions Trophy 2025 set to be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from January 12 to January 21, 2025. This prestigious event will see cricketing giants from India, England, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan.The probable squad will begin its preparation with an intensive training camp in Jaipur during the first week of January and the final team will be selected afterwards. Sharing his thoughts on the event, Ravi Chauhan, General Secretary of DCCI, said, "India's participation in the Champions Trophy 2025 is a proud moment for the entire nation. This prestigious tournament in Colombo not only offers a platform for our players to showcase their talent but also highlights the importance of inclusivity in sports. The DCCI is committed to fostering opportunities for athletes with disabilities, and this event is another step towards setting new benchmarks in the world of cricket. I wish all the participating teams the very best for this tournament."

Arjun Tendulkar Reaches Landmark in White-Ball Cricket



NEWDELHI: Arjun Tendulkar, the son of legendary Indian batter Sachin Tendulkar, reached a significant milestone in his career during the ongoing Vijay Hazare Trophy.The left-arm pacer, representing Goa, completed 50 wickets in his white-ball career in a match against Odisha. Although he went wicketless in Goa's second game against Haryana after taking three wickets in the clash against Odisha.Arjun, who debuted in T20s for Mumbai in 2021, has taken 51 wickets across 41 white-ball matches. The left-arm pacer has claimed 24 dismissals in 17 List A games and 27 wickets in 24 T20 appearances.After being re-signed by the Mumbai Indians during the IPL 2025 mega-auction, Arjun has recorded a four-wicket haul in both List A and T20 formats.Before breaking into the India U19 team, he represented Mumbai in junior cricket and made his senior cricket debut for Mumbai during the 2020/21 season.Arjun has tallied 37 wickets and 532 runs in 17 first-class matches, including one five-wicket haul in the Ranji Trophy. In comparison, his father, the legendary Sachin Tendulkar, took 71 wickets in 310 first-class matches but never managed a five-fer in the format.However, the Master Blaster claimed two five-wicket hauls in ODIs and concluded his white-ball career with 201 wickets in List A cricket and two wickets in T20s.

'HIL Will Take Indian Hockey To The Top', Says UP Rudras' Forward Lalit Kumar

Rourkela: As the excitement builds for the return of the Hockey India League (HIL), Lalit Kumar Upadhyay of the UP Rudras, a seasoned forward of the national team and a two-time Olympic Bronze medallist, credited the HIL for shaping his early career and providing the opportunity to fight for his place on the national team."When the league was introduced, it was a huge platform for Indian players. It offered us a chance to showcase our talent and directly make it to the squad," Lalit remarked.He highlighted the financial and professional support the league has provided, noting its instrumental role in elevating the sport's profile. "It gave us the experience of playing with legends we had only seen on TV. Sharing the field with such icons boosted our confidence and made us more comfortable in competitive scenarios. India's performance graph went up after the first HIL, and with the league returning now, I am sure it will take us to the top and help us stay there."

Sr National Badminton: M Raghu, Devika Sihag Clinch Men's & Women's Singles Title

Bengaluru: Karnataka's M Raghu saved three match points in the decider to beat former champion Mithun Manjunath to clinch the men's singles title while Haryana's Devika Sihag ended the giant-killing run of Shriyanshi Valishetty to win the women's singles crown in the 86th Senior Nationals badminton championships here on Tuesday.Raghu, who upset top seed Sathish Kumar in the semi-finals, defeated Mithun 14-21, 21-14, 24-22 in just under an hour to win his maiden national title while Devika got the better of Shriyanshi 21-15, 21-16.Junior National Champions Arsh Mohammad and Sanskar Saraswat added the senior nationals title to their trophy cabinet as they upset top seeds Naveen P and Lokesh V 12-21, 21-12, 19-21 in the men's doubles final.Experienced triumphed over youth in the other two categories, with eighth seeds Rohan Kapoor and Ruthvika Shivani G bagging the mixed doubles crown while Arathi Sara Sunil and Varshini VS won the women's doubles final.It was the men's singles final, which provided the grand finale to the senior nationals at the Karnataka Badminton Association courts as two players from the state squared off. Mithun, who won the title two editions ago, was first off the blocks as he clinched the opening game rather easily.Raghu forced a decider by racing through the second game.

Australia Announce Playing XI for Boxing Day Test



NEWDELHI: Australia has announced their playing XI for the fourth Test against India in Melbourne. The team has made two significant changes, with Scott Boland stepping in for the injured Josh Hazlewood, and Sam Konstas taking the place of Nathan McSweeney at the top of the order.Uncapped batsman Konstas will fill the spot of McSweeney, who had led him during the recent Australia 'A' series against India 'A'. Meanwhile, Boland's inclusion comes as a result of Hazlewood's injury.A key update is that star batsman Travis Head, who had been dealing with a quad strain ahead of the important Boxing Day match, has successfully passed his fitness test and will participate in the game.Australia's captain, Pat Cummins, confirmed Head's readiness while addressing reporters during the team's optional training session on Christmas Day."Trav's good to go, he'll play. He checked off some final requirements today and yesterday. No worries about his injury; he'll enter the game fully fit."Head's participation is a significant advantage for Australia, considering his remarkable performance in the current series, where he has scored 409 runs at an average of 81.8, including two centuries.

First Match Crucial To Understand The Level, Says Head Coach Ahead Of Women's Futsal Asian Cup Qualifiers

New Delhi: The Indian national women's futsal camp, in preparation for next month's AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup Qualifiers, is in full swing in Bhavnagar, Gujarat. The year 2025 will bring a new dawn in Indian futsal as the qualifiers will mark the nation's competitive debut in the women's game.Less than two years ago, the Indian men's futsal team debuted in the AFC Futsal Asian Cup Qualifiers in Tajikistan. Despite losing all three games, India gave a decent account of themselves, scoring 10 goals and playing dynamic and fast-paced futsal. The head coach was Joshuah Stan Vaz, who will also be in-charge of leading the women's side in their international debut.India will face Hong Kong (January 15), Indonesia (January 17) and Kyrgyzstan (January 19) in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.From more than a hundred players who attended the selection trials in early November, the squad has been trimmed to 18 players currently in the final phase of preparation. The first phase of the camp ended on November 25 and the second began on December 15.Speaking to the-aiff.com from the Bhavnagar camp, head coach Vaz shared, "We had given the girls a fitness programme during the break between the camps. They have come back in quite good shape. They have kept their fitness. We have been working on our tactics, basically the system that we want to play in the tournament. Attacking and also defending. We are also working on set pieces. This is what we have covered in the first week of the second phase, but there is a lot more work to do in the next two-and-a-half weeks until the tournament."Many of the campers, primarily football players, did not have prior experience of competitive futsal and have had to adjust to playing on the hard indoor courts. However, Vaz is glad with how they have grasped the sport in such little time and are doing better than he had initially expected."I was a bit sceptical at the start but the girls have actually proven me wrong in many ways. They have adapted to certain tactics that I thought would be difficult for them. But they are learning and improving every day. They have good grasping power. It was a bit difficult for them to come from football to futsal. Here, it's a hard court. We are training on a wooden surface. The ball also moves faster, unlike football on a grass ground. So it took them a few days to adapt, but they have adapted well to the current scene."We had to start from scratch because even though a few of the girls have played futsal, it was not the correct form of futsal. The rules, the system had to be taught to them from scratch. It's a blank paper and they are learning to draw. But as I said, they have adapted well to the tactics. They have started to understand. There is a long way to go. Obviously, I cannot teach them everything in three weeks. But we're touching upon all important things. The way of scoring goals, defending well, and not conceding," said Vaz.The top two teams from each group and the best third-placed team among all five groups will qualify for the AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup to be hosted by China in May 2025. That's not out of reach for India, according to Vaz. His girls will go up against experienced teams in their debut tournament, but the ultimate goal will be to get a ticket to China."We don't have experience at the international level. The girls have never played an international match or a friendly against an international opponent.

GIET University Celebrates Three-Day Annual Techno-Cultural Fest "Shrujan 3.0"

Gunupur:(Correspondent):– GIET University successfully concluded its three-day annual techno-cultural festival, "Shrujan 3.0", which featured a variety of events and activities. A notable highlight of the festival was the marathon organized during the event. The marathon commenced at the local Venkateswara Temple and concluded at the GIET University campus. Students, professors, teaching staff, NSS volunteers, NCC cadets, and other university employees participated enthusiastically in the marathon. Dr. Chandra Dhwaj Panda, Vice-



president of GIET University, inaugurated the marathon, emphasizing the importance of daily physical activity for maintaining a healthy and disease-free life. The festival witnessed the gracious presence of eminent personalities, including Dr. A.V.N.L. Sharma, the Vice-Chancellor; Dr. N.V.J. Rao, Registrar; and Dr. P. Vijay Kumar, Controller of Examinations. A formal gathering was also organized in the morning, where special guests Mr. T. Vidyasagar, Senior Principal Architect at Zelis Company, Hyderabad, and Ms. V. Madhu, Manager at Miracle Software, addressed the audience. They provided valuable insights on preparing for future challenges in computer science. Dr. K. Murali Gopal, Deputy Dean of the Computer Science Department, also addressed the gathering. The welcome address was delivered by Dr. P. Vijay Kumar, followed by a vote of thanks from Professor Nalinikanta Panda. In the evening, a grand cultural program was inaugurated by Sub-Collector Gunupur Ms. Kirandeep Kaur Sahata who lit the ceremonial lamp. Distinguished guests such as Hon'ble MLA Gunupur Sri Satyajit Gamango, Tahasildar Leelabati Acharya, BDO Subhranjali Pradhan, Additional Tahasildar Anshuman Parida, and Asst collector Satyajit Nayak were present, among others. The highlight of the evening was a mesmerizing musical performance by Odisha's renowned singer Mantu Chhuria, which had the audience dancing with joy. Towards the end, Mantu Chhuria was honored with tokens of appreciation by Dr. Chandra Dhwaj Panda, Dr. Jagadish Panda, and Dr. N.V. Jagannadha Rao.The program also saw active participation from all Deans, professors, students, and local residents, reflecting an atmosphere of excitement and enthusiasm throughout the event.

AIIMS Bhubaneswar Observes "Good Governance Day" in Tribute to Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee

Bhubaneswar, (Correspondence):: AIIMS Bhubaneswar marked "Good Governance Day" today, celebrating the 100th birth anniversary of the late former Prime Minister and Bharat Ratna, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The event paid homage to the visionary leader as well as the founder of AIIMS Bhubaneswar, who played a pivotal role in establishing the national institute, revolutionizing healthcare in Odisha.In his address, AIIMS Bhubaneswar Executive Director Dr. Ashutosh Biswas expressed profound respect for Shri Vajpayee's



contributions, highlighting his instrumental role in the development of the institution. Reflecting on the former Prime Minister's legacy, Dr. Biswas emphasised the transformative impact of his vision on healthcare accessibility and quality.The event included a commem orative meeting held on the AIIMS Bhuban eswar campus. Distinguished attendees included Dean (Exam) Dr. Soubhagya Kumar Jena, MS Dr. Dillip Kumar Parida, Deputy Director (AdmiC nistration) Abhijeet Sarkar, SAO Rasmi Ranjan Sethy, and Dr. Ashok Kumar Jena, along with faculty members, students, and staff.

Govt Aims To Cut Fiscal Deficit To 4.5pc Of GDP In 2025-26

New Delhi: The government will continue its focus on improving quality spending, strengthening the social security net and reducing the fiscal deficit to 4.5 per cent of the GDP in the financial year 2025-2026, according to a Finance Ministry statement. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is expected to continue with the government's position of increasing expenditure on big-ticket infrastructure projects and social welfare schemes for the poor while keeping the fiscal deficit in check when she presents the Union Budget for 2025-26 in Parliament on February 1.The government is committed to pursuing the glide path of fiscal consolidation which aims to lower the fiscal deficit to 4.5 per cent of GDP by financial year 2025-26, according to Finance Ministry statements on the half-yearly



review of the trends in receipts and expenditure."The thrust will be on improving the quality of public spending, while at the same time, strengthening the social security net for the poor and needy. This approach would help further strengthen the nation's macro-economic fundamentals and ensure overall financial stability," the review said.According to the statements, the Budget 2024-25 was presented against the backdrop of global uncertainties caused by the wars in Europe and the Middle East. India's sound macroeconomic fundamentals have cushioned the country from the vagaries afflicting the global economy."It has also helped the nation pursue growth with fiscal consolidation. As a result, India retains its pride of place as one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. However, risks to growth still remain," it said.Total expenditure was estimated at Rs 48.21 lakh crore, of which, expenditure on the revenue account and capital account were estimated at Rs 37.09 lakh crore and Rs 11.11 lakh crore, respectively, as per the Budget Estimate for 2024-25.

India Projected To Witness 6.5 Per Cent Real GDP Growth In Current, Next Fiscal: Report

New Delhi: India is projected to witness 6.5 per cent real GDP growth in the current and next fiscal (FY25 and FY26), according to a report on Wednesday, which is in line with the expectation amid a resilient economy and strong fundamentals.The latest 'EY Economy Watch December 2024' projected that combining the real GDP growth of first two quarters of FY25 at 6.7 per cent and 5.4 per cent, respectively, with RBI's revised growth estimates for 3Q and 4Q FY25 at 6.8 per cent and 7.2 per cent, respectively, "the annual FY25 real GDP growth may be estimated at 6.6 per cent"."However, if the turnaround in GoI's investment expenditure remains subdued, Q3 growth may be 6.5 per cent or less," the report mentioned.The real



GDP growth eased to 5.4 per cent in the July-September quarter (Q2 FY25), compared to 6.7 per cent in the preceding quarter.The available high frequency data for October and November point to a mixed picture regarding the growth momentum of the Indian economy.Headline manufacturing PMI witnessed a softer expansion of 56.5 in November compared to 57.5 in October. Services PMI, however, remained nearly stable at 58.4 in November 2024, close to its level of 58.5 in October 2024, on account of strong international demand and improving business confidence.As per the data released by the Federation of Automobile Dealers Association, retail sales of motor vehicles continued to show a double-digit growth of 11.2 per cent in November.In particular, retail sales of two wheelers and tractors showed robust growth rates of 15.8 per cent and 29.9 per cent, respectively, in November 2024, according to the EY report."October 2024 witnessed an increase in IIP growth to 3.5 per cent, up from September's 3.1 per cent, driven by stronger manufacturing and electricity production," the report mentioned. CPI inflation eased to 5.5 per cent in November from 6.2 per cent in October as vegetable prices eased, whereas core CPI inflation remained steady at 3.7 per cent for the second successive month.WPI inflation also moderated to 1.9 per cent in November from 2.4 per cent in October.According to DK Srivastava, Chief Policy Advisor, EY India, in the medium-term, India's real GDP growth prospects can be kept at 6.5 per cent per year, provided the government accelerates its capital expenditure growth in the remaining part of the current fiscal year and comes up with a medium-term investment pipeline "with participation from the GoI and state governments and both their respective public sector entities, and the private corporate sector".

Reliance Industries' Stock Tanks 23 Pc From Its July High

Mumbai: The stock of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL), India's largest company by market capitalisation, has slipped by 23 per cent from its highest level in July this year.If the stock fails to rise 5 per cent in the remaining five trading sessions this calendar year, the company will not only record its longest monthly losing streak since the Covid-19 markets' slump but also give negative returns for the first time in the last 10 years.According to stock exchange data, RIL's market cap



declined by about Rs 5 lakh crore from its peak of Rs 21.50 lakh crore in July to Rs 16.5 lakh crore.Meanwhile, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), India's largest IT company owned by the Tata Group, as well as the country's largest bank by market capitalisation, HDFC Bank, are quickly catching up to dethrone the conglomerate from its top spot.TCS' market cap surged to Rs 15 lakh crore from Rs 13.72 lakh crore in January this year, and is closest to dethroning RIL from its top spot.HDFC Bank's market cap increased to Rs 13.74 lakh crore from Rs 12.95 lakh crore this year.Both TCS and HDFC Bank stocks performed well in 2024. TCS railed nearly 10 per cent and HDFC Bank surged around 7 per cent (as per the December 24 closing).

Investors remain optimistic about TCS and HDFC Bank due to the global rate cut cycle. On the other hand, RIL's earnings have consistently remained weaker than estimates.

Exporting MSMEs Up From 52,849 In 2020-21 To 1,73,350 In 2024-25: Centre

New Delhi: The total number of exporting micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) increased considerably from 52,849 in 2020-21 to 1,73,350 in 2024-25, the government said on Monday.MSMEs exports have witnessed a remarkable rise, increasing from Rs 3.95 lakh crore in 2020-21 to Rs 12.39 lakh crore in 2024-25, underscoring their critical role in boosting India's economy and strengthening global trade.MSMEs demonstrated an exemplary growth trajectory, contributing 45.73 per cent to exports in 2023-24, which increased to 45.79 per cent by May 2024, highlighting their growing impact on India's trade performance.Notably, the gross value added (GVA) by MSMEs in India's GDP was 29.7 per cent in 2017-18 which rose to 30.1 per cent in 2022-23.Even amid the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the sector sustained a contribution of 27.3 per cent in 2020-21, rebounding to 29.6 per cent in 2021-22.These figures highlight the sector's pivotal role in driving economic growth and stability, reflecting its enduring strength and importance to the Indian economy, said the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.Between July 1, 2020, and July 24, 2024, a significant number of enterprises transitioned to medium enterprises.During the financial year 2020-21 to 2021-22, 714 micro enterprises scaled up to medium and 3,701 small enterprises were upgraded to medium enterprises, informed the ministry.This number increased steadily with the financial year 2023-24 to 2024-25 witnessing further growth, with 2,372 micro enterprises and 17,745 small enterprises scale up to medium."As India strives to position itself as a global economic powerhouse, the MSME sector undoubtedly plays a central role, fostering innovation, generating employment, and enhancing export competitiveness," the ministry noted.MSME's are the backbone of India's economic landscape, pivotal in employment generation, entrepreneurship promotion, and economic development.

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