

'We Are Trying To Mainstream Mental Health', Says J.P. Nadda

Bengaluru: Union Health and Family Welfare Minister and BJP President, J.P. Nadda, said on Friday that efforts are being made to mainstream mental health in the country. He was delivering a speech during the golden jubilee celebrations of the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) in Bengaluru held in the institution's auditorium. Union Minister Nadda said, "I am happy that NIMHANS is providing mental healthcare to lakhs of people, and the footfalls are increasing. About 21 lakh lab investigations are conducted annually, and people visit the facility from every corner of the country. This demonstrates the care and quality services ensured at NIMHANS." He further highlighted that NIMHANS is ranked among the top 200 hospitals in the world. "This is one of the first institutes of national importance to receive NABH accreditation, which speaks volumes about the patient care provided," Nadda said while praising the hospital. Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Union government initiated the National Men-



tal Health Programme in 2022. "As part of this initiative, we are refocusing efforts to mainstream mental health and position the country as a primary service provider in this field," Union Minister Nadda added. "We understand that along with infrastructure, human resources are also limited. These limited resources need to be developed, and we must ensure that India becomes a leading mental healthcare provider. An important step in this direction is the introduction of Tele Manas. Currently, there are 53 centres across India, and NIMHANS has trained 2,000 counsellors. Keeping India's diversity in mind, counselling is offered in 20 different languages, ensuring swift and effective communication," he said. "Annually, more than 1,000 students are trained for Tele Manas at NIMHANS. I want to assure the President that NIMHANS will follow her guidance in letter and spirit as we move forward," he added. "When we complete 50 years, it's a time for celebration but also an opportunity to set a new direction and introspect. We must prepare a vision for the next 25 years," he said. "This is a moment of celebration and immense pride. Over these 50 years, NIMHANS has evolved from a mental hospital to an institute of national importance."

President Murmu Urges Doctors To Show Sympathy, Compassion To Cancer Patients

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu said on Friday that sympathy and compassion from doctors can bring a change to a cancer patient's life. She said this while speaking at the inauguration of the KLE Cancer Hospital at Belagavi in Karnataka. "It is the duty of healthcare professionals to provide comprehensive care, which addresses the physical and psychological needs of the cancer patients," the President said. "Every word of sympathy and compassion that a doctor utters has the power to change the life of his

patient for better," she added. Notably, President Murmu also encouraged women to share their problems related to health. She urged family members and society "to take the health of women more seriously and contribute pro-actively in taking care of them and facilitating appropriate timely treatment for them". She said that often the health issues of girls and women are ignored in comparison to boys and men. "Any such delay, especially in the case of cancer, could be critical," she said. She also called for a "patient-cent-

ric and equitable, along with being world-class" healthcare system for cancer patients. Further, the President called the need to spread awareness on the causes, diagnosis and treatment of cancer, as many cases occur either due to "ignorance of the patient and family or due to financial constraints". "This delays the diagnosis and treatment of diseases, worsening the outcomes," she said. Sharing global data on cancer, the President said that in 2022, there were an estimated 20 million new cancer cases and 9.7 million deaths worldwide.

Elaborate Arrangements For PM Modi's Visit To Vizag On Jan 8

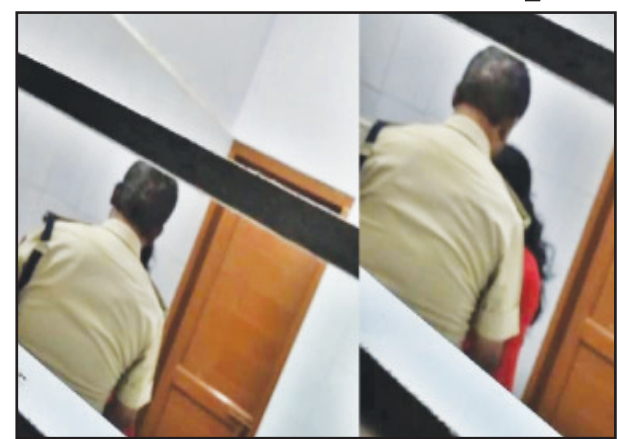
Amravati: The Andhra Pradesh government has been making elaborate arrangements for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Visakhapatnam on January 8, during which he will launch various development projects. Chief Secretary K. Vijayanand on Friday reviewed the arrangements for the Prime Minister's visit with the officials of the concerned departments through a video conference from the State Secretariat on Friday. The Prime Minister is scheduled to lay the foundation for the South Coast Railway Zone in Visakhapatnam. PM Modi will also virtually lay the foundation for the NTPC Integrated Green Hydrogen Hub in Pudimadaka of Anakapalle district. The NTPC will invest Rs 65,370 crore in this project under three phases, according to an official release by the state government. The Prime Minister will also virtually launch the Krishnapatnam Industrial Hub.

This project, worth Rs 1,518 crore, will be set up on 2,500 acres in the first phase. The project will provide employment opportunities to about 50,000 people. Similarly, the foundation of Bulk Drug Park, which will be set up in Nakkapalli at a cost of Rs 1,876.66 crore on an area of 2,001.8 acres, will be laid virtually. With an investment of Rs 11,542 crore in this park, 54,000 people will get employment opportunities. The Prime Minister will reach the port city in the evening and will hold a road show from Sampath Vinayaka Temple to the Andhra University Engineering College grounds, where he will address a public meeting. The Chief Minister directed the officials of the relevant departments to make fool-proof arrangements for the Prime Minister's visit. Orders have already been issued by the General Administration Department regarding the steps to be taken by the de-

partments concerned. He instructed the Visakhapatnam District Collector and Police Commissioner, as well as the officials of the concerned departments, to make all necessary arrangements. He clarified that the minute-to-minute program regarding the Prime Minister's visit is yet to be finalized, and in the meantime, the arrangements to be made in terms of various departments should be taken up on a war footing. As numerous people and public representatives will come to participate in the road show as part of the Prime Minister's visit, necessary steps should be taken for parking their vehicles. In view of the Prime Minister's visit in the evening, the Chief Secretary directed the officials of the Electricity and Municipal departments to install appropriate electric lights at the road show, as well as the venue and various parking places.

K'taka: Cop Caught In Compromising Position With Woman At Office Washroom; Suspended

Tumakuru: The Karnataka Police have suspended the Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) posted with the Madhugiri subdivision, who was allegedly caught on camera in a compromising position with a woman in his office washroom on Friday. The office of the Karnataka Director General of Police (DGP) has issued the suspension orders of DSP P. Ramachandrapa in connection with the incident. A video showing the officer in uniform "romancing" the woman has gone viral on social media in the state, raising serious concerns. According to sources, the victim, a woman came into contact with the DSP from



Madhugiri town, in connection with a land dispute complaint. The victim from Pavagada town approached the police, and the DSP allegedly exploited his position to coerce her into an intimate act. The police officer reportedly took the woman, who had come to complain, to his office washroom to commit the act. It is suspected that a relative accompanying

the woman secretly recorded the incident and circulated the video online. The 35-second footage showed the officer in uniform and the woman noticing a mobile phone recording through a window. It showed an intimate act of the senior police officer in uniform. The video also showed the woman noticing the mobile phone at the window. The inci-

dent has raised further concerns as Madhugiri town falls within Tumakuru district, the native of State Home Minister G. Parameshwara. Following the video's release, the DSP has reportedly gone missing. However, the Police Department has yet to give an official statement about the incident. It is not known whether the woman has filed a complaint against the DSP. The police are waiting for orders from senior officials for further action in connection with the incident. The sources also claimed that the DSP used to indulge in obscene acts with the woman whenever she visited his office in connection with the case.

Centralized Pension Payments System Fully Rolled Out in All Regional Offices of EPFO Across India

NEWDELHI: In a landmark move towards enhancing pension services, EPFO completed the full-scale rollout of the new Centralized Pension Payments System (CPPS) under the Employees' Pension Scheme 1995 in December 2024. About Rs. 1570 Crore pension was disbursed to more than 68 Lakh pensioners pertaining to all 122 pension disbursing Regional offices of EPFO for December 2024. The first pilot of the Centralized Pension Payment System (CPPS) was successfully completed in October 2024 in Karnal, Jammu and Srinagar Regional Offices with the pension disbursement of about Rs 11 Crore to more than 49,000 EPS Pensioners. The second pilot was taken up in November 2024 in 24 Regional Offices in which around Rs. 213 crores pension was disbursed to more than 9.3 lakh pensioners. Announcing the successful rollout, Union Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya said, "The full-scale implementation of the Centralized Pension Payments System (CPPS) across all Regional Offices of EPFO is a historic milestone. This transformative initiative empowers pensioners to access their pension seamlessly from any bank, any branch, anywhere in the country. It eliminates the need for physical verification visits and simplifies the pension disbursement process. CPPS is a testament to our commitment to modernizing EPFO services and ensuring convenience, transparency, and efficiency for our pensioners. With this rollout, we are setting a new benchmark in pension service delivery, aligning with the vision of a tech-enabled and member-centric EPFO."

Committed To Make India A Chip Manufacturing Hub, Prepare Skilled Workforce: Ashwini Vaishnaw

Guwahati: The Central government is committed to transforming India into a leading hub for semiconductor manufacturing, while preparing a skilled workforce that meets the evolving demands of the industry, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, said here on Friday. After inaugurating the National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT), deemed to be a university at 12 locations including five locations in the northeastern states, the minister said the university is set to play a crucial role in equipping students with the necessary skills to thrive in a rapidly changing technological environment. He added that now the meaning of northeast



is "New Engine", to lead the development and growth of the country. At the event, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was also signed between NIELIT and Tata Electronics Private Ltd (TEPL) to collaboratively enhance the semiconductor skilling ecosystem in India. The MoU was signed by Dr M.M. Tripathi, Director General, NIELIT and Dr Randhir Thakur, CEO and MD, TEPL. The partner-

ship aims to establish skill centres, develop diploma and certification programmes and conduct workshops in semiconductor ATMP (Assembly, Testing, Marking, and Packaging) technologies. TEPL will offer technical expertise and internship opportunities, while NIELIT will focus on education, training, and outreach. Both organisations will also jointly pursue research and funding initiatives, with a spe-

cial emphasis on creating opportunities in the northeastern region, said the minister. The minister announced the launch of NIELIT University, highlighting that it is inspired by the vision of the Prime Minister to prepare professionals in cutting-edge fields such as Semiconductor Manufacturing, Artificial Intelligence, Industry 4.0, and Quantum Computing. Vaishnaw said the new campus of NIELIT will be

developed in Jagiroad town near Guwahati, which will focus on semiconductor manufacturing and electronics manufacturing. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma reiterated Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a future where the entire world will rely on semiconductor chips that are "Made in India" and "Made in Assam." He emphasised the significant potential for the semiconductor industry to thrive in the region, highlighting the necessity for a skilled workforce and trained manpower to support this growing sector. "This underscored the commitment to fostering local talent and creating job opportunities, ensuring that Assam plays a pivotal role in the global technology landscape," said Sarma.

PM Modi Inaugurates Swabhiman Apartments

NEWDELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday inaugurated the 1,675 newly constructed flats for the dwellers of JJ clusters and handed over keys to eligible beneficiaries at Swabhiman Apartments in Ashok Vihar, Delhi. The inauguration of newly constructed flats marks the completion of the second successful In-Situ Slum Rehabilitation Project by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA). The objective of the project is to provide the residents of the JJ clusters in Delhi with a better and healthier living environment equipped with proper amenities and facilities. For every Rs 25 lakh spent on the construction of a flat by the central government, the eligible beneficiaries pay less than seven per cent of the total amount, comprising Rs 1.42 lakh as a nominal contribution and Rs 30,000 for five years of maintenance.

EDITORIAL

Make the world a peaceful place

Media reports show that youth violence is on the rise. We find children fighting and even killing each other due to prejudices and hatred. How could such young, pure, and innocent children be involved in such tragic crimes? Children learn from adult role models. When they see adults expressing prejudice and bigotry, they think that is the way to be. Our children are innocent and pure at heart, but they learn from our example. If we teach them to lie, they will lie. If we teach them to steal, they will steal. If we teach them to hate, they will hate. Instead, if we teach them to be loving, truthful and kind, they will be loving truthful and kind.

From the moment they are born, they are being influenced by the environment. They are learning to speak what they hear, and are learning to act in the manner they see the adults around them acting. We cannot hide what we do, from our children. Do we want them to grow up to be kind or cruel? The choice is ours to make. We as parents and adults need to make sure that every word and deed gives out the sweetness of respect, tolerance and concern for all people. If we let out a word of prejudice towards another group of people due to differences in culture, nationalities, or social and economic background, children are bound to absorb that and make it a part of themselves. For us not to speak and act in a manner that is prejudiced, we must even guard our thoughts. Human unity begins with an inner acceptance and realisation that we are all part of one family.

Our differences are a part of the beauty of creation, just that there are many different coloured flowers in a garden. If we appreciate our differences, then they will radiate to the young. They too will grow up in a way that they will accept and appreciate all others. This is the first step towards world peace.

An effective method to make human unity a living reality is through daily, silent meditation that helps us commune with our true Self and the divine Power that created us. Those moments are filled with bliss, peace and love. In the inner sanctum of our hearts, there is Light within us. That Light is the Light of the Creator. The realisation dawns on us that the same Light that is within us is in all other human beings. We start to recognise that Light within others. Then the outer differences that separate us start to dissolve. We no longer see the way people dress or speak. Instead we see one Light expressed by many different outer coverings, each beautiful in its own way. So, by sitting in meditation we can increase our own understanding of unity. We will then radiate that example to others. The young need exposure to adults who are examples of these values so that they can imbibe these qualities. If they see us meditating, they too will learn to meditate and be peaceful. Along with that they learn the values of non-violence, truthfulness, humility and purity, having love for all and performing selfless service. If we wish to make the world safe and peaceful for our children, parents need to become positive role models.

We Live in a Boundless World of Thoughts

Dr. Tapan Kumar Pal

Thought alone is the whole world, the great pains, the old age, death and the great sin, earth, water, fire, air, ether. Thought binds a man. He who has controlled his thoughts, is a veritable God on this earth.

We live in a world of thoughts. First is thought. Then there is the expression of that thought through the organ of speech. Thought and language are intimately connected. Thoughts of anger, bitterness and malice injure others. If the mind which is the cause of all thoughts vanishes, the external objects will disappear. Thoughts are things. Sound, touch, form, taste and odour, the five sheaths, the waking, the dreaming and deep sleep states—all these are the products of mind. Sankalpa, passion, anger, bondage, time—know them to be the result of mind. Mind is the king of the Indriyas or senses. Thought is the root of all mental process.

The thoughts that we perceive all round us are only the mind in form or substance. Thought creates, thought destroys. Bitterness



and sweetness do not lie in the objects, but they are in the mind, in the subject, in thinking. They are created by thought. Through the play of the mind or thought upon objects, proximity appears to be a great distance and vice versa. All objects in this world are unconnected; they are connected and associated together only by thought, by the imagination of your mind. It is the mind that gives colour, shape, qualities to the objects. Mind assumes the shape of any object it intensely thinks upon.

Friend and enemy, virtue and vice are in the mind only. Every man creates a world of good and evil, pleasure and pain, out of his own imagination only. Good and evil, pleasure and pain do not proceed from objects. These belong to the attitude of your mind. There is nothing good nor pleasant in this world. Your imagination makes it so. It is the mind that is the root cause of the tree of Samsara with its thousands of shoots, branches, tender leaves and fruits. If you annihilate thoughts, you can destroy the tree of Samsara at once.

Destroy the thoughts as soon as they arise. The root will dry up through the annihilation of thoughts, and the tree of Samsara will wither soon. This demands considerable patience and perseverance. You will be bathed in the ocean of bliss when all thoughts are extirpated. This state is indescribable. You will have to feel it yourself. Just as the fire is absorbed into its source when the fuel is burnt out, so also, the mind is absorbed into its source, the Atman, when all Sankalpas or thoughts are annihilated. Then one attains Kaivalya, the experience of the Timeless Reality, the state of absolute independence.

Louis Braille: (The Eye of the Eyeless)

Narayan Chandra Biswal

In olden times, the world of the blind was full of darkness. They felt desperate and depressed. They could not even dream of gaining knowledge about the world and its ways. Even then there have been some exceptional blind persons in the world who created history by lighting the dark world of blind persons, namely Louis Braille, Homer, Helen Keller, John Milton, Surdas, etc. But generally blind persons wandered in the wilderness like a rudderless boat.

It is the law of nature that darkness is followed by light. The same law brought light in the dark world of the blind. Louis Braille, a blind Frenchman, made the unimaginable a reality by bringing light into the life of the people who lived in perennial darkness. He was born on January 4, 1809 at a small village of Coupvray in France. He was the youngest of the four children of Simon-René Braille and Monique Braille. He was a sickly child, but he grew robust under the devoted care of his mother and family.

Louis was very lucky as he got guidance from his father in the very beginning. During this period, the Abbé Palluy, the priest of St. Pierre Church in Coupvray, started teaching him about the ways of nature. The gentle priest told him the stories from the Bible. He also talked at



length of God and His ways. So, the priest's association played a vital role in Louis' life. Whenever he expressed his desire to read the books, the Abbé Palluy would tell him: "Trust in God, Louis, I feel confident that He has something very special in store for you". Such words encouraged Louis and he would concentrate on "one idea".

Louis Braille was thrilled to learn Captain Barbier's method called Sonography, which dealt with turning different sounds of the French language into dots and dashes. He picked up this idea, but he found this system

very difficult. He thought of inventing a special alphabet for the blind out of this method. He had "an idea", and he put his heart and soul to turn it into reality. He worked hard day in and day out to evolve the new system. Sometimes he would sit all night punching his dots into scraps of papers with a sharp tool, called stylus. Ultimately, he attained success in achieving his goal of devising the special alphabet, Braille, and illumined the dark world of the blind.

Louis Braille's life is a great example of not focusing on the disability but the ability. How can a person with a disability have a huge ability? Louis Braille demonstrated it with his imagination and lots of courage. Helen Keller paid a rich tribute to Louis Braille for his invention: "Braille made it a pleasure for me to read ... The world around me shone afresh with treasures." Louis- Braille, in his short life, accomplished such a great task that made him immortal. Like John Milton, he made use of the 'talent' given to him by his 'Maker', and presented his 'true account' to God. It seems as if Ben Jonson had written the following lines in his poem 'The Perfect Life' four centuries ago for Louis Braille. A lily of a day, Is fairer far in May, Although it fall and die that night – It was the plant and flower of Light. In small proportions we just beauties see; And in short measure life may perfect be.

Why is the depreciation of the rupee not stopping?

Dr. Satyawan Saurabh

A widening trade deficit due to a rise in imports compared to exports leads to foreign exchange outflows, weakening the rupee. India's record trade deficit in 2022 due to rising crude oil and gold imports drives rupee depreciation. The fall in the Indian rupee underscores the challenges of maintaining currency stability amid external sector vulnerabilities. Currency fluctuations are triggered by global geopolitical tensions such as the Russia-Ukraine war, rising crude oil prices, and capital outflows, as well as domestic factors such as the fiscal deficit. Effective policy measures are crucial to enhance India's external resilience and stabilize its economy.

Sustained outflows after the September 2024 stock peak weakened the rupee as investors moved to safer assets amid speculation of a rise in US interest rates. Trade deficits, such as the high trade deficit, highlight external dependence on imports, especially for energy, widening the current account deficit during rupee weakness. India's crude oil import bill rose with the rupee depreciation, widening the 2024 trade deficit to close to \$75 billion.

Global events such as tariff threats and the BRICS currency dispute add to volatility by creating

uncertainties for India's external trade and investment. The US President's 2024 tariff warning against the currency plans of the BRICS countries triggered a market sell-off, weakening India's external stability. Heavy reliance on foreign exchange reserves to stabilize the rupee restricts long-term monetary flexibility during sustained global market turmoil.

The rupee exhausted more than \$20 billion in reserves in a single quarter to pull the rupee back to 85.53 in December 2024. A weak rupee constrains domestic monetary policies, raising inflation through costlier imports while reducing fiscal space to address growth concerns. The cost of crude oil imports rose 15% in December 2024, putting pressure on policymakers to effectively balance currency management and fiscal expansion strategies. Protectionist trade measures, such as tariffs or sanctions, can undermine currency stability by disrupting the trade balance. Political instability or conflict between major economies creates volatility, boosting demand for the safe-haven dollar and weakening emerging market currencies. The Russia-Ukraine war led to a surge in global crude oil prices, which put pressure on India's import bill and depreciated the rupee. Tight monetary policies in advanced economies lead to capital outflows from India, putting pressure on the rupee.

The US Federal Reserve's rate hike plan in 2022-23 led to foreign portfolio outflows, which weakened the rupee.

A widening trade deficit due to a rise in imports

compared to exports leads to foreign exchange outflows, weakening the rupee. India's record trade deficit in 2022 due to rising crude oil and gold imports drives rupee depreciation. High domestic inflation depreciates the currency value, making exports less competitive and imports costlier. Rising prices of inelastic imports such as crude oil push up India's import bills, weakening the rupee in 2023. A decline in domestic and foreign investment indicates weak economic growth, discouraging currency inflows. In 2024, declining corporate performance and rising stock valuations led to foreign portfolio investment outflows. Central bank interventions to stabilize the currency are limited by foreign exchange reserves and can provide only temporary relief. A late RBI intervention in December 2024 managed to temporarily stabilize the rupee at 85.53 per dollar. A fiscally constrained government reduces its ability to manage external shocks, thereby weakening confidence in currency stability. India's record fiscal deficit during the pandemic limited government measures to boost external resilience. The government's clear stance on currency policies boosts investor confidence and reduces speculative pressure. The RBI governor's ruling out of de-dollarization in 2024 reassured the market, temporarily easing concerns of rupee depreciation.

Measures to strengthen external resilience include boosting exports and focusing on value-added manufacturing and services to increase foreign exchange earnings and reduce trade imbalances. Strengthening

sectors such as pharmaceuticals and IT can help reduce the trade deficit and stabilize the rupee. Reduce dependence on volatile crude oil and essential imports by entering into long-term agreements with diversified suppliers. Expanding crude oil imports from Russia and Middle Eastern countries reduces average oil import costs in 2023. Build strong reserves through sovereign wealth funds and gold accumulation for effective currency stabilization.

According to the Reserve Bank, record foreign exchange reserves of \$600 billion in 2021 helped manage volatility during the pandemic. Enter into agreements to settle trade in local currencies, reducing dependence on the US dollar and mitigating exchange rate risks. The India-Russia Rupee-Ruble Trading Mechanism eased pressure on foreign exchange reserves during the Russia-Ukraine crisis. Prioritize low-cost and long-term borrowings while reducing short-term external debt to avoid currency risks. India's increased issuance of sovereign green bonds helped attract stable foreign investment while reducing repayment volatility in 2023. A strong external sector is important for India's economic resilience amid global uncertainties. By promoting export competitiveness, ensuring prudent fiscal policy, diversifying foreign exchange reserves, and increasing bilateral trade in rupees, India can reduce currency volatility. A visionary strategy emphasizing structural reforms and global economic integration will ensure long-term stability and strengthen India's position in the global economy.

Refresher Training Programme on "Urban Governance"

Bhubaneswar, (correspondent):- The State Urban Development Agency (SUDA) hosted a Refresher Training Programme on "Urban Governance" for Community Organisers, MIS professionals/Consultants, and Accountants representing all 115 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in Odisha. This training is a key initiative under the Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) Department's commitment to strengthening urban governance and building capacity at the grassroots level. Addressing the participants, Principal Secretary, H&UD, Smt. Ushapadhee emphasized the pivotal role



of collective efforts and dedication in achieving the vision of Viksit Odisha @ 2036 and Viksit Bharat @ 2047. She stressed that the progress of urban Odisha lies in the effective implementation of governance reforms, innovative approaches to

service delivery, and fostering citizen-centric initiatives. Smt. Ushapadhee commended the role of community organizers and technical professionals in ensuring the efficient functioning of ULBs. She encouraged participants to actively contribute to improving urban infrastructure, enhancing transparency, and ensuring inclusive growth across cities and towns in Odisha. The program included sessions on best practices in urban governance, effective use of management information systems

(MIS), financial management, and community participation strategies. It aims to equip urban professionals with the necessary tools and knowledge to address the dynamic challenges of urban development and contribute to sustainable growth. This initiative aligns with the state government's overarching goals of empowering ULBs to become self-reliant and ensuring a high quality of life for all urban residents. The department remains committed to driving innovation, efficiency, and accountability in urban governance as a cornerstone of Odisha's development trajectory.

OSWC Contributes Rs 4.36 Cr Dividend To Odisha Govt

Bhubaneswar (correspondent): The Odisha State Warehouse Corporation (OSWC) presented a cheque of ₹4.36 crore as a dividend to Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi at Lok Seva Bhavan today. The dividend pertains to the financial years 2019-20 and 2020-21. On this occasion, Minister for Co-operation, Handlooms, and Textiles, Pradeep Bala Samanta, Commissioner-cum-Secretary of Co-operation, Rajesh Prabhakar Patil, and Managing Director of OSWC, Mihir Prasad Mohanty, were present. The Corporation has consistently remained profitable due to the efficient utilization of its storage capacity, enabling it to

pay regular dividends to its two shareholders: the State Government and the Central Warehousing Corporation. For the financial years 2019-20 and 2020-21, OSWC reported profits of ₹6.36 crore and ₹22.72 crore, respectively. As a result, a total dividend of ₹8.73 crore, equivalent to 30% of the combined profit, was distributed equally between the State Government and the Central Warehousing Corporation. Each partner received ₹4.36 crore. Established in 1958, OSWC operates 68 warehouses across all 30 districts of Odisha, with a total storage capacity of 5,21,400 metric tonnes. These ware-

houses primarily provide scientific storage and transportation services to the agricultural sector. They play a critical role in storing food grains procured by the Odisha State Civil Supplies Corporation (OSCSCL) and the Food Corporation of India (FCI) for distribution under the Public Distribution System and other welfare schemes. The warehouses also store food grains, oilseeds, pulses, and millets procured by agencies like NAFED and TDCC Ltd, ensuring that farmers receive the minimum support price for their produce while avoiding distress sales during harvest.

Odisha Cabinet Nods To Repeal 1993 Act Prohibiting Manual Scavenging

Bhubaneswar (correspondent): The State Cabinet today approved a proposal to repeal the "Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993. The Parliament had enacted the Employment of Manual Scavengers & Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993 under Article 252 to eliminate the construction or continuance of insanitary latrines and prohibit manual scavenging. The State Legislature had adopted the Central Act by virtue of a Resolution published in the Odisha Gazette. With the enactment of "the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act in 2013", the Act of 1993 has become redundant and therefore need to be repealed, an official release stated. The Central has requested the State to place the matter before the State Legislature for adoption of a Resolution to repeal the Act of 1993 as per the procedure prescribed under Art 252. Therefore, the Cabinet has given in-principle approval for repeal of "the Employment of Manual Scavengers & Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993".

Cabinet Approves Closure Date For Subhadra Registrations For 2024-25

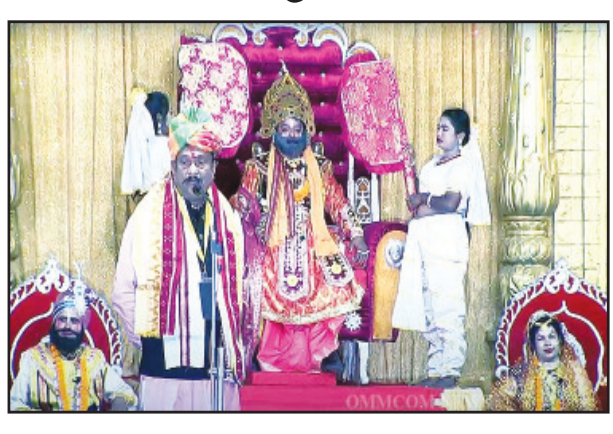
Bhubaneswar (correspondent):- The Odisha State Cabinet has approved March 31, 2025, as the closure date for registrations under the Subhadra scheme for the financial year 2024-25. Additionally, the Cabinet has approved the list of 20 lakh seventeen beneficiaries who received the first

installment of financial assistance on November 24, 2024. The Subhadra scheme, launched on August 22, 2024, aims to financially empower women and provide safety nets to them and their families, with a budget allocation of Rs. 55,825 crores for five years. To date, over 1.06 crore applications have

been registered under the scheme, with 80,29,741 applicants already approved and disbursed with the first installment of Rs 5,000. The remaining applications are under consideration, and field inquiry teams are verifying eligibility. Applications are still being accepted without a cut-off date for FY 2024-25.

Dhanu Jatra Kicks Off In Bargarh; Aims For Global Recognition

Bargarh (correspondent):- The world-renowned Dhanu Jatra, celebrated as the largest open-air theatre in the world, commenced today in Bargarh town with grandeur. The festival was inaugurated by Bargarh MP Pradip Purohit, in the presence of local MLA Ashwini Kumar Sarangi and other dignitaries. The 11-day festival, which runs until January 13, is based on the theme of 'Mathura Vijay,' narrating the victory of Lord Krishna over his tyrannical uncle, demon king Kansa.



The entire town of Bargarh transforms into the mythical city of Mathura, while the neighboring Ambapali village becomes Gopapura. The Jeera River, flowing near the town, symbolically represents the Yamuna River during the festival. Throughout the festival, residents of Bargarh actively participate, considering themselves subjects of King Kansa. Various episodes from the childhood of Lord Krishna and Lord Balaram are enacted, bringing the age-old tales to life. Dhanu Jatra has been celebrated annually since 1947, marking India's independence from British rule. Over the decades, it has become a significant cultural event, attracting thousands of visitors from across the globe.

The Odisha government has increased financial grants for the festival from 10 lakh to 1 crore, aiming to elevate Dhanu Jatra to an international cultural platform. An additional ₹50 lakh has been allocated for promoting the event and live broadcasting. For the first time, the festival will be live-streamed on LED screens in major cities, including Bhubaneswar. The National School of Drama (NSD) will create a documentary capturing the essence of the festival.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas: Odisha DGP Directs Foolproof Security Arrangements

BHUBANESWAR, (correspondent):- (Director General of Police (DGP) Yogesh Bahadur Khurania held a review meeting at his camp office in Bhubaneswar today to discuss measures for managing the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, scheduled to take place at Janata Maidan from January 8 to 10. The meeting focused on ensuring a hassle-free experience during this three-day program. During the meeting, the DGP reviewed the preparations of the police department, including the recruitment of police officers and traffic management. The conference will be attended by VVIPs,



including President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, various senior ministers from the Union Government, as well as guests, overseas Indians, and officials from the Department of External Affairs. In light of this, DGP Khurania has ordered extensive arrangements to be made

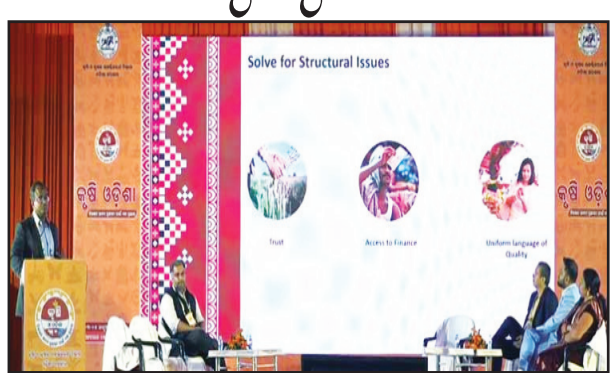
by the police administration. He instructed senior officials to implement appropriate measures regarding airport security, establish proper security arrangements during guest arrivals, and ensure the safety of VVIPs at the Janata Maidan event venue. Furthermore, he emphasized the need for

clearly defined VVIP route lines and traffic management on those roads. Khurania also conducted a thorough review of vehicle parking, security arrangements, and related preparations at the festival venue. He directed that adequate measures be taken to ensure a safe stay for guests in various hotels.

As guests will be visiting several tourist attractions, the DGP stressed the importance of enhancing security at tourist sites in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, and Puri. Additionally, he mandated strict checks for hotels in Cuttack, Puri, and Bhubaneswar, ensuring regular inspections and maintaining complete guest records with the police. Senior police officers have been tasked with ensuring proper supervision. The meeting also covered plans for better management of the CCTV system in the cities and streamlining traffic control. The DGP advised everyone to remain vigilant and alert to prevent any untoward incidents.

Krushi Odisha-2025 Highlights Power Of Digital Technologies In Transforming Agriculture

Bhubaneswar (correspondent):- The Krushi Odisha Mela, the flagship annual event organized by the Department of Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment, kicked off today at the Biju Patnaik Ground, Bhubaneswar. Celebrating agricultural successes and charting the way forward for the sector, this three-day event brings together prominent farmers, agri-ecosystem stakeholders, and dignitaries from both government and non-government sectors. As part of the inaugural day's activities, a session themed "Transforming Agriculture Through Digital Interventions" was conducted from 4:00 to 5:30 PM, exploring how digital technologies can revolutionise the sector and highlighting Odisha's pioneering efforts in leveraging technology to revolutionize agriculture. The session was chaired and opened by Prem Chandra Chaudhary, Director of



Agriculture & FP, who emphasized the critical role of digital interventions in modernising agriculture. Highlighting the Government of India's focus on the Farmer Registry and Digital Crop Survey, he reinforced Odisha's position as a leader in agricultural digitisation, setting the stage for a robust, future-ready system. Following this, Anay Gogate, Program Lead (KONNECT & LEAP), Samagra, detailed how Odisha has established integrated agricultural data systems that seamlessly interact. He explained the tech tools deployed to simplify farming operations, as well as vertical, tech-enabled initiatives like the Rice Fallow Management (RFM)

scheme, positioning the state as a frontrunner in implementing the AgriStack vision. Ravi Shankar, VP Agri, ONDC, shared insights on the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), explaining its potential to transform the agri-ecosystem by enabling private players to deliver services to farmers through an open and interoperable network. He highlighted the role ONDC can play in fostering innovation and collaboration across the agri-value chain. Senthilkumar Natarajan, Head of Public Policy & Government Relations, NinjaCart, stressed the importance of an open data ecosystem for improving market linkages.

Odisha cabinet approves hike in social security pension

BHUBANESWAR, ((correspondent):- The Odisha government announced an increased pension allowance under its social security scheme. This decision was

made during a cabinet meeting held on Friday. Under the new guidelines, the pension allowance has been raised for individuals aged 80 years and above, as well as for

those with 80% disability. The monthly pension for these categories has now been set at Rs 3,500, up from the previous amount of Rs 1,200. "State Cabinet

has approved the proposal to enhance the pension amount of the eligible pensioners aged 80 years and above or PwDs having disability percentage of 80% and above under both

Madhu Babu Pension Yojana and National Social Assistance Programme to Rs. 3500/- per month with effect from January 2025," a press brief from the government stated.

Sheldon Jackson Announces Retirement from White-Ball Cricket

NEWDELHI: Prolific Saurashtra batter-wicket-keeper Sheldon Jackson on Friday announced his retirement from white-ball cricket. Jackson played 86 List A matches, scoring 2792 runs with nine hundred and 14 half-centuries, with a highest score of 150 not out, while also taking 42 catches. The 38-year-old played 84 T20 matches, scoring 1812 runs with one 100s and eleven fifties, with a highest score of 106 not out. Jackson played a pivotal role in Saurashtra's title triumph in the 2022-23 Vijay Hazare Trophy, scoring 297 runs in 10 matches @49.50, with one hundred and one fifty. "I'll continue to play red-ball cricket," Jackson told TOI from Rajkot. "Sheldon was always an integral part of Saurashtra in all the formats of the game. I have seen his passion

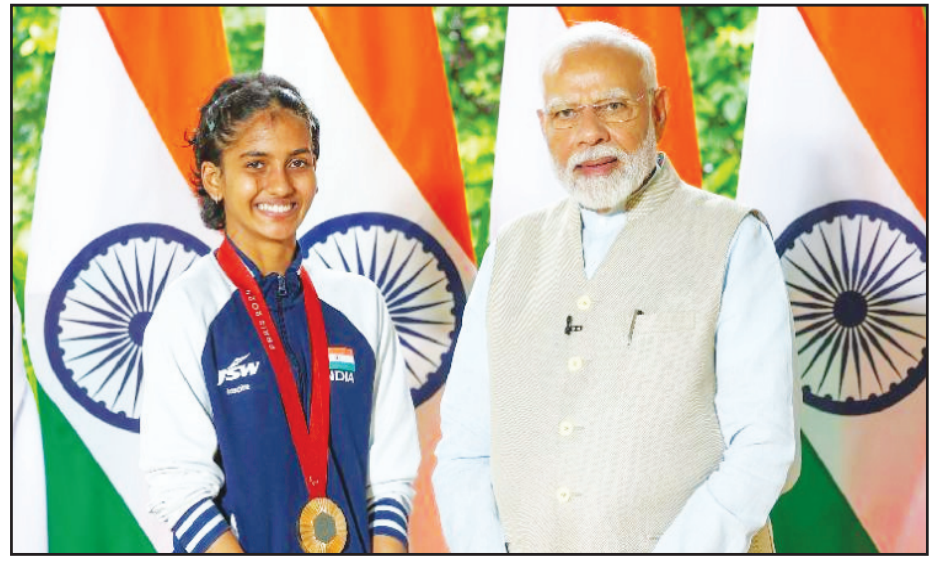


and dedication to cricket from a very young age. He has always craved better performances and continued making remarkable achievements. Sheldon has been one of the standout performers in the shorter formats of the game. He has consistently delivered strong performances in List A and T20 cricket, showcasing his ability to excel across different formats. I sincerely appreciate his valued contributions to white-ball cricket," former BCCI and Saurashtra Cricket Association secretary Niranjan Shah said. Jaydev Shah,

president of Saurashtra Cricket Association, said, "I would like to extend my deep gratitude to Sheldon as he has announced his retirement from white-ball Cricket. His dedication, hard work and exceptional performances over the years have made him a key player for Team Saurashtra. His commitment and passion for cricket in each format have been a true testament to the spirit of the game. As he bids a farewell to the white-ball formats, his contributions shall continue to echo and keep inspiring countless budding cricketers."

Para-Shuttler Manisha Ramadass Eyes LA '28 Gold After Arjuna Award Recognition

Tiruvallur (T.N): Indian para-badminton player Manisha Ramadass has been selected to receive the prestigious Arjuna Award, the second-highest sporting honour of India, for her bronze medal at the 2024 Paris Paralympics. The 19-year-old will take the honour as motivation as she aims to win the gold at the 2028 Paralympic Games in Los Angeles. Manisha won her maiden bronze medal in the Paralympic Games defeating Denmark's Cathrine Rosengren 2-0 (21-12, 21-8) in the third-place match in the Women's Singles SU5 category. Her victory ensured that India had a double podium finish with compatriot Thulasimathi Murugesan bagging the silver medal. Reacting to being awarded the Arjuna Award, Manisha said she was very happy to get the prestigious



award. "I am very happy to receive the award. I dedicate this honour to my parents, coaches, central government, and state government because without their support I could not have been here. They have supported me throughout my journey," she told IANS in an interview on Friday. "This award will motivate me to achieve more things in the future. My next big goal is to win the gold at the Los Angeles

Paralympics and this award will motivate me to achieve it." Manisha told IANS. Manisha's 0-2 (21-23, 17-21) loss against No.1 seed Thulasimathi in the semifinal saw her fall out of gold medal contention and battling for third place. The 19-year-old defeated Japan's Mamiko Toyoda 2-0 (21-13, 21-16) in the quarterfinals after finishing second in Group C. Her only loss in the Group Stage came

against eventual finalist Qiuxia Yang of China. In the SU5 category, the players have impairment of the upper limbs. The impairment could be on the playing or non-playing hand. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports on Thursday named 32 recipients for the Arjuna Award, given for "good performance over a period of the previous four years and for showing qualities of leadership, sportsmanship and a sense of

discipline". The Arjuna Award list includes hurdler Jyothi Yarraji, javelin thrower Annu Rani, Nitu, Saweety, Vantika Agrawal, women's hockey team captain Salima Tete, Olympic bronze medallists in men's hockey Abhishek, Sanjay, Jarmanpreet Singh, Sukhjeet Singh, para-archer Rakesh Kumar, Preeti Pal, Jeevanji Deepthi, Ajeet Singh, Sachin Sarjerao Khilari, Dharambir, Pranav Soorma, H. Hokato Sema, Simran, Navdeep, para-shuttlers Nitesh Kumar, Thulasimathi Murugesan, Nithya Sre Sumathy Sivan, Manisha Ramadass, Kapil Parmar, Mona Agarwal, Rubina Francis, Swapnil Suresh Kusale, Sarabjot Singh, Abhay Singh, Sajjan Prakash and Aman Sehrawat.

Former India Hockey Coach Jagbir Singh Hospitalised After Suffering A Heart Attack

Rourkela (Odisha): Former India forward and hockey coach Jagbir Singh suffered a massive heart attack and was admitted to a hospital here on Friday. Two-time Olympian Jagbir is in Rourkela for the Hockey India League with Team Gonasika. Jagbir, who was employed with Air India before retiring a few years back, was rushed to the hospital immediately and his condition is reported to be stable. The 59-year-old Jagbir Singh, who was born in a Sikh family in Agra, Uttar Pradesh, represented India in the 1988 Olympics in Seoul and then the 1992 Games in Barcelona. He played for India between 1985 and 1996, winning a bronze medal in the 1986 Asian Games in Seoul and a silver in the 1990 edition in Beijing. In all, he earned 175 international caps. A top forward of his time, Jagbir coached the Indian men's team in the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens and also worked as a renowned commentator since the 1990s.

I Wasn't In Frame Of Mind To Take Charge, Says Pant On His Defensive Knock

Sydney: India wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant reflected on his defensive of 40 off 98 balls in the fifth Test against Australia on Friday and said he was not in the mindset to take charge of the game. Pant came to bat at No. 5 when India were already reeling at 57/3 in the opening session of the day. Playing according to the demand of the match, Pant took defensive guard and also suffered blows on his body on the green-top Sydney Cricket Ground pitch. "Definitely, it's painful but sometimes you've to do the hard work for the team and that's okay. Not thinking too much about where I got hit. I was just playing the ball to the best of my abilities and that's the only thing I can do and that's what I did," Pant said after the end of play. "This is the first time I've got hit so much (on the body). In cricket, you can't plan anything. Everything happens for the first time at some point of time in your career. That was me today, not thinking about it too much. "In this innings I was not in a frame of mind where I wanted to take charge of the game because the wicket was doing too much and the kind of situation we're in. While playing inside, I felt like I could play a little bit of defensive cricket. Yes, there's a time to attack but you have to feel that from inside," he added. Commenting on the nature of the pitch, Pant admitted it was difficult to bat on while also acknowledging the need to adjust to the conditions. "I think it should remain the same hopefully for us.

KKFI Unveils Trophies and Mascots for Inaugural Kho Kho World Cup

New Delhi: The Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI) has unveiled the trophies and mascots for the first-ever Kho Kho World Cup, set to take place from January 13 to 19 at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium. This historic event will feature teams from 24 countries, showcasing the sport's growing global appeal. The World Cup will present two distinct trophies: a blue trophy for the men's championship and a green trophy for the women's event. The blue trophy symbolizes trust, determination, and universal appeal, while the green trophy represents growth and vitality. Both trophies feature intricate crystal detailing and flowing curves,



embodying the spirit of Kho Kho. In addition to the trophies, KKFI introduced the official mascots, Tejas and Tara, a pair of gazelles. Tejas, symbolizing brilliance and energy, and Tara, representing guidance and aspiration, are depicted in vibrant blue and orange attire adorned with traditional Indian motifs. These mascots highlight the sport's core

attributes of speed, agility, and teamwork. Sudhanshu Mittal, president of KKFI, expressed gratitude to all stakeholders supporting the inaugural edition of the Kho Kho World Cup. "This World Cup marks a watershed moment for Kho Kho, transforming our indigenous sport into a global phenomenon," he said. The event will be live-

streamed on Disney+ Hotstar and broadcast on DD Sports, making it accessible to a wide audience. The tournament, organized under the aegis of the Sports Authority of India (SAI), will feature 21 men's and 20 women's teams from six continents. MS Tyagi, general secretary of KKFI, emphasized the World Cup's potential to unite diverse cultures through sport and set new benchmarks in sporting excellence. The Kho Kho World Cup aims to elevate the sport to new heights and pave the way for its inclusion in future international sporting events, including the Olympics.

5th Test: Relentless Boland Picks 4 As Australia Bowl Out India For 185

Sydney: A relentless Scott Boland proved to be India's nemesis yet again by picking a four-wicket haul as Australia bowled out India for a paltry 185 on day one of fifth Test at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday. Electing to bat first on a grassy pitch backfired for India, as they suffered another first-innings failure to be dismissed for a score below 200 for the fifth time in the ongoing series. Apart from Boland's 4-31, Mitchell Starc took 3-49 while skipper Pat Cummins chipped in with two scalps as Australia's fast bowlers took nine wickets in an accurate bowling performance. On a cloudy morning, India left out captain Rohit Sharma, with Jasprit Bumrah replacing him at the helm. In the morning, Starc and Cummins got some steep bounce on the green SCG pitch, which has shown signs of being on the slower side. KL Rahul initially showed good judgement to balls outside the off-stump, but fell for four off 14 balls after chipping a half-volley on leg-stump to square leg off Starc. Boland struck with his fourth ball in India's eighth over when he got to nip one away and extracted an outside edge of Jaiswal's bat, which was safely caught by debutant Beau Webster at third slip, as the opener fell for 10 off 26 balls. The seamer almost got his second wicket on the bounce when he found Virat Kohli's outside edge, and Steve Smith dived across to catch to his right at second slip.

ISL 2024-25: Precise Passers Odisha Meet Defensive FC Goa As Both Try To Build Momentum

Bhubaneswar: FC Goa take on Odisha FC in an away match of the Indian Super League (ISL) 2024-25 at the Kalinga Stadium here on Saturday with both teams hoping to build on their current form and boost their position the points table with three points. FC Goa are enjoying a strong campaign with a solid current unbeaten streak in away games (6), while Odisha FC are seeking their first-ever win against the Gaurs in ISL history. However, the home team enters the fixture in high spirits, having won thrice and



drawn twice in their previous five matches. FC Goa better them in this aspect since they have emerged victorious in four out of their last five ISL encounters. The

Gaurs are placed third in the standings with 22 points from 12 matches, and the Juggernauts are positioned sixth with 20 points from 13 games. Odisha FC will

be eager to break their duck against the Gaurs and register their first victory in this rivalry, which will be a significant feat for their head coach Sergio Lobera,

who previously used to be at the helm of FC Goa. The two teams present contrasting styles and fortunes. Odisha have been accurate in passing, boasting the second-highest pass completion rate (81.3%) this season, while FC Goa depend on their defensive solidity, especially since Sandesh Jhingan's return, conceding only four goals in their last six games. So, will Odisha FC finally secure a win against the Gaurs, or will FC Goa reaffirm their superiority? The encounter at the Kalinga Stadium is expected to

give a clear indication of that on Saturday. The Juggernauts have recorded a 49% success rate in winning aerial duels this season, significantly higher than the 43.8% of FC Goa. Mourtada Fall, who has won 34 aerial duels, has been pivotal in Odisha FC winning their battles in the air, particularly inside both the defensive and attacking boxes. However, Odisha have struggled for goals. They have played out two goalless draws this season (vs Mumbai City FC on Dec 5 and vs Mohammedan SC on Dec 27).