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DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR  
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## 'Omicron multiplies in lungs 70 times faster than Delta'

Together with its ability to escape vax immunity, variant's threat high: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the first findings on how the hypermutated Omicron variant infects the respiratory tract, researchers from Hong Kong University (HKU) on Thursday reported that the virus multiplies 70 times faster in the bronchi than Delta and the original SARS-CoV-2 virus, which, they said, might explain why Omicron transmits faster. The researchers said Omicron infection may be less severe, depending on the body's immune response. The variant reaches higher levels in the tissue, compared to Delta, 48 hours after infection, said the study.

The preliminary data, published online on Wednesday, gives for the first time a look at how Omicron may behave inside the respiratory tract — and the data offers a tantalising clue as to why this heavily mutated variant is spreading so fast and even outcompeting Delta.

Michael Chan Chi-wai, who led the work, said the result needed to be interpreted with caution because the severe disease is determined not only



A health worker collects swab sample of an outstation passenger for Covid-19 test at Bandra Terminus railway station in Mumbai on Thursday PTI

by how quickly the virus replicates but also by a person's immune response and, in particular, whether the immune system goes into overdrive, causing a so-called cytokine storm.

"It is also noted that by infecting many more people, a very infectious virus may cause more severe disease and death even though the virus itself may be less pathogenic," he

turned out to be more pathogenic, showed a similar pattern of replicating more slowly in the lungs.

"These authors found Omicron replicates fantastically well — even far better than either Delta or the original virus — in bronchial tissue," Kamil said. "This could in some ways contribute to an advantage in spread/transmission between people.

"Of course, a huge component of Omicron's transmissibility in real life is going to be its potential to escape neutralising antibodies that protect against infection in the first place. It's very likely spreading well even between vaccinated people, especially those who haven't recently gotten a booster shot."

Continued on Page 2

## DELHI ADDS 85 COVID CASES

New Delhi: Delhi on Thursday recorded 85 fresh Covid-19 cases with a positivity rate of 0.15 per cent, according to data shared by the health department here.

With this, the city's Covid-19 caseload climbed to 14,41,935. Of this, over 14.16 lakh patients have recovered from the disease, the health department bulletin stated.

The death toll remained unchanged at 25,100, it said.

## India celebrates 50th anniversary of liberation of Bangladesh

Prez Kovind addresses Victory Day in Dhaka; Rahul, Priyanka slam Govt for no mention of Indira in PM's tribute

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/DEHRADUN

India on Thursday celebrated Vijay Diwas to mark the 50th anniversary of 1971 war and liberation of Bangladesh. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi recalled the valour and sacrifice by the Indian Armed forces, President Ram Nath Kovind addressed the Victory Day in Dhaka and said the 1971 Liberation War has a special place in the hearts of every Indian.

Modi led the nation on Thursday in paying tributes to the Armed forces by laying a wreath at the National War Memorial.

"On the 50th Vijay Diwas, I recall the great valour and sacrifice by the Muktiyoddhas, Biranganas and bravehearts of the Indian Armed forces. Together, we fought and defeated oppressive forces. Rashtrapati's presence in Dhaka is of special significance to every Indian," PM Modi wrote on Twitter.

However the occasion was marred by a controversy with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi criticising the Government for ignor-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the homa and reception ceremony of Swarnim Vijay Mashaals on the occasion of 'Vijay Diwas' at National War Memorial in New Delhi on Thursday PTI

ing former PM Indira Gandhi, who played a pivotal role in the 1971 war.

Four victory torches (Vijay Mashaals), which were taken across the country during the last one year, were merged into the memorial's eternal flame by the PM.

These victory torches, which were lit by the PM exactly a year ago, were carried to various parts of India, including to villages of the awardees of Param Vir Chakra and Maha Vir Chakra of the 1971 war, as a part of Golden Jubilee year celebrations

(Swarnim Vijay Varsh).

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and chiefs of the three Armed forces were present at the National War Memorial during the event. Modi said on Twitter, "On this special day of Vijay Diwas, I had the honour of paying my respects at the National War Memorial and merging into the Eternal Flame, the four Vijay Mashaals which traversed across the length and breadth on Dhaka."

President Kovind on Thursday said India has always attached the highest priority to its friendship with Bangladesh

and that New Delhi remains committed to doing all it can to help realise the full potential of its friendship with Dhaka.

Addressing the Victory Day celebrations here, President Kovind said the 1971 Liberation War, struggle for freedom has a special place in the hearts of every Indian.

"India has always attached highest priority to its friendship with Bangladesh. We remain committed to doing all we can to help realise the full potential of our friendship with Bangladesh," he said.

Continued on Page 2

## Delhi to deregister 10 yrs old diesel vehicles; to give NOC for use elsewhere

Process from Jan 1

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government will deregister all diesel vehicles which will complete 10 years on January 1, 2022, and issue no objection certificate (NOC) so that they can be re-registered in other places in compliance with the National Green Tribunal's directions.

However, no NOC will be issued for diesel vehicles, which have completed 15 years or more on the date of applying for it, according to an order issued earlier this week by the Delhi Transport Department.

The NGT has issued directions relating to restrictions on registration and plying of diesel vehicles more than 10 years old and petrol vehicles more than 15 years old in Delhi-NCR.

In an order in July 2016, the tribunal said its direction for deregistration of diesel vehicles, which are more than 10 years old, will be complied with effectively and without



default.

The deregistration of diesel vehicles, which are 15 years old, was to be taken up in the first instance. The transport department order said that "accordingly, the department will deregister all such diesel vehicles in Delhi on January 1, 2022, which have completed or would be completing 10 years on that date."

The department has been deregistering vehicles that have completed their lifespan. NOC for diesel vehicles, which are 10 years old, and petrol vehicles, which are 15 years old, can be issued for any place in the country, it said. This will be, however, subject to condition that NOC will not be issued for the places which are identified by states as restricted area for re-registration, the order said.

Continued on Page 2

## Young national level shooter found hanging

PTI ■ NEW DELHI/HOWRAH

Young national-level shooter Konic Layak was found hanging at her hostel in Bally in Howrah district, police said.

According to Howrah Police sources, a suicide note was found with her where she blamed "depression" as the reason for taking the extreme step. The incident happened on Wednesday.

"She was depressed for not getting chances, she wrote in the note," said a police official, adding that the 26-year-old girl was due to get married in February. This is the fourth such case in recent times in the shooting fraternity.

The shooter, who had won a few medals at the state level, was training along with Olympian and Arjuna Awardee Joydeep Karmakar in Kolkata. Police have started investigations into the death of the shooter who was from Dhanbad in Jharkhand.

The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) is aware of the shocking incident.

Continued on Page 2

## Naravane appointed chairman of chiefs of staff committee

Army chief to serve as head till a new CDS is appointed

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Army chief General MM Naravane has been appointed Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee. He is the senior-most among the three Services Chiefs and will serve as the Chairman till a new Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) is announced.

The institution of Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee, was functional till two years ago to ensure cohesion and synergy between the three Services. However, the role was taken over by General Rawat when he was made the first CDS of the country in January last year and the Committee was made redundant.

Naravane's appointment as the head of the Committee is a



stop-gap arrangement till the political leadership appoints the new CDS, sources said here on Thursday. General Rawat, his wife, and 12 others were killed in a helicopter crash on December 8.

The Government went by the principle of selecting the senior-most amongst the three Chiefs for the newly created CDS post and appointed General Rawat as he was the senior-most then.

Continued on Page 2

## Amarinder in Delhi to finalise ties with BJP

New Delhi: Former Punjab

Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh has reached Delhi to finalise the alliance between the BJP and his newly formed Punjab Lok Congress Party.

He will remain in Delhi for the next three days and will meet senior BJP leaders.

On Friday evening, Amarinder will meet BJP national president JP Nadda and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

However, it is not yet clear whether the picture will be clear about the seats during this visit of the Captain to Delhi.

With the formation of the Punjab Lok Congress Party, he has announced to enter the election fray along with BJP and other Taksali parties. Recently, he met BJP's Punjab election in-charge Union Minister Gajendra Shekhawat at his Siswan farm house.

The Captain had apprised the BJP of his seat-sharing formula in this important meeting and the same was liked by the BJP's central leadership, according to sources.

## Akhilesh buries 5-yr-old feud with uncle, forges alliance for UP polls

VIRENDRA NATH BHATT ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav and his estranged uncle and Pragatishheel Samajwadi Party Lohia (PSPL) chief Shivpal Yadav buried their five-year long family feud on Thursday and forged an alliance for the forthcoming Assembly polls.

The SP chief reached Shivpal's residence in the evening and held a closed-door meeting, which lasted for about 40 minutes. Sources said apart from Shivpal and Akhilesh, the former's son, Aditya Yadav, was also present at the crucial meeting.

Following the meeting, Akhilesh tweeted and confirmed the alliance between the SP and the PSPL. "Met the PSPL chief and confirmed our alliance. The strategy of alliance with smaller parties is strengthening the SP and is taking the SP along with alliance parties towards a historic win," said Akhilesh.



Akhilesh Yadav meets Shivpal Singh Yadav at his residence in Lucknow on Thursday PTI

The decision of seat-sharing, however, has not yet been announced by either of the leaders. During the meeting, hundreds of supporters of both parties gathered outside Shivpal's residence and raised the slogan "Chacha -Bhatija zindabad".

Continued on Page 2

## CAPSULE

### 2 LeT MILITANTS KILLED IN ENCOUNTER IN J&K

Srinagar: Two LeT militants were killed in an encounter with security forces in Kulgam district of Jammu & Kashmir on Thursday, police said.

### MAX TEMP TO DROP ON CHRISTMAS: IMD

New Delhi: Due to a 'Western Disturbance', the maximum temperature this Christmas will be colder with light to moderate rain or snowfall over the western Himalayan region, northwest India, and adjoining areas of central India, the IMD said.



Armed forces personnel pay tribute to the mortal remains of late Group Captain Varun Singh in Bengaluru on Thursday PTI

## Sheena Bora alive, claims Indrani

Her letter to CBI gives a sensational twist to murder trial

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

After having been behind bars for more than six years on charges of murdering her daughter Sheena Bora, Indrani Mukherjea has now — in a bizarre claim made in a letter to the CBI — said that her daughter "is still alive" and "is currently in Kashmir" and asked the CBI to track her down.

In what is being seen as a tactic to further delay or derail the already much-delayed trial in the sensational case, Indrani claimed in her letter to the CBI that her fellow inmate at the Byculla Women's Jail had told her that the latter had met Sheena in Kashmir and want-



ed the Central investigating to trace her daughter.

Talking to the media persons here, Indrani's lawyer Sana Raees declined to divulge the details of the letter but said that she on behalf of her client would file an application in the Bombay High Court on December 28, after which she would share the letter her client had written to the CBI with the

media.

However, there was no reaction yet from the CBI till the evening on the claim made by Indrani, who has been lodged in Byculla Women's Jail in south Mumbai ever since she was arrested on August 25, 2015 for the alleged murder of Sheena.

However, Peter Mukherjea — who separated from Indrani

by way of divorce through mutual consent in October 2019 while both were behind bars — has been out on bail for the last 10 months. The Bombay High Court had on February 6, 2020 granted bail to Peter on the ground that prima facie there was no evidence to prove his direct involvement in the murder.

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# Top official-CSM prolonged nexus surfaces

IT firms hesitate to venture into State

**SAROJ MISHRA ■ BHUBANESWAR**

Earlier, it was reported that a firm, CSM Technologies Private Limited, which is owned by a relative of an IAS officer, has managed to bag all the contracts through the Odisha Computer Application Centre (OCAC) and the IDCOL from Government agencies, particularly mining, education, tourism, food and civil supplies, on nomination by deviating the Odisha Procurement Rule.

It has further come to light that the founder of the CSM Technology has got the



support of all the bureaucrats because of his relationship with this IAS Officer, who for the last 20 years has played a key role in giving projects and also has conceptualised many projects from the Government departments for the firm as one of the virtual directors of the company.

During the tenure of him as Secretary in the IT Depart-

The communication was to the State IT Secretary in 2013 to grab a project from the Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) when the BDA was headed by Vishal Dev to do the favour to get the project. The communication shows how to trap Dr GK Nayak, the then Director, IIIT, Bhubaneswar, who was reluctant to favour CSM. It also shows how to trap Dr Nayak by involving Mastek, an agency to give placement from IIIT.

This ongoing practice has largely affected the image of the State and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik because good IT companies are hesitating to set up their units in Odisha and don't approach to get the good e-Governance Project in the State.

The startup units do not have any scope to get even small projects to prove their competency. Though OCAC has formulated one empanelment approach, it has many loopholes and it has been designed by the CSM in support of the OCAC to get all the projects from the departments on nomination basis as per the rate defined. The empanelment procedure should also be revised to adopt the procedure in allocating projects to the empanelled agencies.

Many young IT entrepreneurs have requested the State Government to set up a high-level inquiry committee to evaluate all the procedures established and adopted in giving projects to CSM in the interest of the State.

# AICA calls for industries' closure on Dec 20

Demand reduction in price of raw materials

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

All India Council of Association of MSMEs (AICA), formed by around 170 MSME associations, has decided for one-day closure of all industries and one-hour demonstrations in front of the district Collectorate on December 20 across the country.

The AICA announced this

move in protest of constant rising prices of raw materials. It is a matter of grave concern for all MSMEs across India that the prices of raw materials continue to rise for unknown reasons.

The AICA has represented this alarming situation in a memorandum to the Prime Minister and various other Ministers in the Union Government with a request to control raw material prices, but unfortunately, nothing has happened and the situation of the MSMEs has only wors-

ened day by day due to the alarming increase in prices of input materials, the associations said.

"It is highly worrisome that in spite of our repeated representation to the Government, the prices are not controlled and is increasing continuously," the AICA said.

The MSME bodies requested the Government to reduce the raw material prices to the level which was prevailing during April 2020 and fix MRP for all

# BBSR lease deed application date extended

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

The Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) has extended the last date of applications submission for lease deed execution till December 31 from earlier December 15.

The applicants can also apply online from December 20 to 31 by visiting website www.bda.gov.in to complete the whole process in a smooth and hassle-free manner. "We have decided to extend the deadline upon request of some applicants as they failed to submit required documents regarding execution of their lease deed and sought more time,"

said BDS Secretary Kabindrar Sahoo.

If an applicant faces any trouble during online application, he/she can contact on 0674-2396437. This notice is not applicable for allotment under discretionary quota/taskforce/audit report/third party transfer and any other allotment having legal issues.

Similarly, this notice is not applicable for Lingaraj Vihar Housing & Shopping Scheme, Baramunda Housing Scheme & Shopping Scheme, District Centre Commercial Complex, Mahatab Market, Subham Market and Barabhuja Market Complex.

# 15 Steel, Mines Dept staffs test Covid+

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

As many as 15 employees of the Steel and Mines Department tested positive for Covid-19 on Thursday. It was decided to close the department for next 48 hours for sanitisation. The office would resume functioning on December 18.

"It has come to the notice that 15 employees of the Steel and Mines Department have been infected by Covid-19 recently. Taking into consideration the advisory issued by the GA and PG Department, the department shall remain closed for next 48 hours i.e. on 16.12.2021 to 17.12.2021 for undertaking disinfection work and breaking the chain of infection. The office will resume on 18.12.2021 as usual," an official order of the department said.

"The employees who are not attending office will work from home with VPN and attend office at short notice and also be available over telephone at all times," the order added.

# Now, Jagannath darshan from 5.30 am

**PNS ■ PURI**

To ensure hassle-free darshan of Lord Jagannath and His siblings for the devotees, the Shree Jagannatha Temple Administration (SJTA) has decided to open the shrine from 5.30 am.

SJTA Chief Administrator Dr Krishan Kumar said the devotees can now enter the temple for the darshan of Lords from 5.30 am to 9.30 pm on all days when the shrine is open for public. Earlier, the temple remained open from 7 am to 9 pm excluding two hours' extension for some days of Kartik.



A Chhatisa Nijog meeting was held on December 10 under Dr Kumar's chairmanship to approve the schedule for the Lords' Pahili Bhog to be performed from December 16, 2021 to January 13, 2022 along with Niti Nirghanta for Makara Sankranti and Debabhisheka Purnirna scheduled on January 14 and January 17, respectively.

# NIA grills top Maoist Dubasi in Jharpada

Over killing of BSF men in ambush

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

A team of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday questioned top Maoist leader Dubasi Shankar alias Arun in connection with the killing of four BSF personnel in an encounter near Malkangiri's Balimela in 2012.

Sources said Arun was earlier brought to Bhubaneswar Jharpada jail from Boipariguda jail on the order of the Jeypore SDJM court.

The NIA team had earlier filed a petition with the Jeypore SDJM seeking permission to interrogate the Maoist leader. The investigation agency wants to unearth more information regarding the Maoist ambush in which four BSF personnel including a Commandant and an Assis-



tant Commandant were martyred in 2012.

Arun was an active member of the CPI (Maoist) since 1987 and involved in a series of violent attacks in Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

He was wanted in several crimes, carried a cash reward of Rs 20 lakh on his head. He was arrested by the security forces in Koraput on Septem-

ber 14, 2021.

Arun was involved in exchange of fire with security forces in Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. He was suspected to be involved in two cases reported in Koraput district, 18 cases in Malkangiri, 32 cases in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh and 24 cases in Telangana.

# 6,131 new teachers inducted in a day

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

After the renovation of 1,075 schools under the 5T School Transformation programme, the State Government on Thursday inducted 6,131 newly-appointed secondary school teachers at a time. This is a record in the State's recruitment history. Addressing an

orientation programme for these teachers at the Kalinga Stadium, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said education is the overall reflection of the society's hopes and aspirations. "Teachers are the soul of the education system while students are the symbol of infinite possibilities," he said. He said schools in the State are undergoing major

transformation such as infrastructural development, smart classrooms, e-libraries, modern laboratories, improved sanitation and playgrounds. While 1,075 schools have been transformed so far in the first phase, all Government and aided high schools would be developed in a similar fashion in a phased manner, Patnaik added.

# SOCIAL CANVAS

# Let Odisha have human rights courts in each district

And adequate public prosecutors from vulnerable communities



**MANAS JENA**

It is globally understood in the famous saying of Martin Luther King that "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere". The International Human Rights Day on December 10 is celebrated worldwide since 1950 after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in the year 1948 by the United Nations General Assembly. Today there are 193 countries as members of United Nations, which came into existence in post Second World War aiming to bring peace and equality to the world. The theme of this year's Human Rights Day is 'Equality - reducing in equalities and advancing human rights.'

Article -1 of UDHR says that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and

rights. The UDHR is an international treaty of 30 articles of human rights which the member countries need to disseminate among people for promoting awareness on human rights and for its realization by all human beings. The right to equality includes a range of rights, including the right to life without slavery, discrimination and torture. It says about equality before law and protection of human rights by law. The document affirms the right to freedom, democracy, freedom of thought and expression, privacy, mobility, nationality, right to marriage and family. The right to food and shelter, education, social security, and responsibility are interrelated for a dignified life. The end part of the document says that no one can take away your human rights. It is also said that each human being has right to defend other rights.

The International Bill of Human Rights is a human rights law which includes UDHR and International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) produced by the UN Human Rights Commission since 1976. The countries which have ratified ICCPR have agreed to allow the Human Rights Committee to investi-

gate allegations by individuals and organisations of their country that have violated human rights but before that the complainants have to exhaust all legal remedies available in their own country.

During the years after the World War II, the understanding and connotations of human rights have been getting widened in the changing international perspective by including civil rights, peace, anti-war, terrorism, migration, refugees, environment and climate change issues. The issues of poverty and increasing inequality, discrimination and exclusion of communities and democratic deficiencies have become a global human rights concern. The UN has set up the Millennium Development Goals leaving no one behind and aims to achieve some of the basic rights such as food, shelter, health and education for all without discrimination.

In spite of progress in many fronts, today millions of people, mostly children, women, girls, elders, PWDs, ethnic minorities, indigenous people, migrants, sexual minorities, LGTBs, African ancestry, race and caste affected communities and poorer section continue to suffer in realisation of rights to live with dignity and they have also denied the right to development.

The historical battles for

human rights witnessed many stalwarts those who continue to inspire the human rights movement in many fronts and their remarkable struggles have changed the human rights discourses. The ideas and work of Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962) of USA who is credited for the UDHR document, Dr Ambedkar, Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968), Nelson Mandela (1918-2013) and many others are a continual source of inspiration for struggle against inequality and discriminations existing around the world.

There have been powerful peoples' movements going on in many parts of the world for realization of human rights. The post independent rights movement in our country witnessed multiple issues of violation against the women, Dalit, STs, other indigenous ethnic groups, religious and linguistic minorities, displaced families and migrant workers who are deprived of their rights as citizens although there are human rights laws and dedicated institutions. But still many of the existing laws have not reached to too many of the poorer and vulnerable groups and individuals.

The Constitution of India and international covenants and UDHR paved the way for the foundation for the Human Rights Act 1993 under which human rights commissions are

in place to address the issues of human rights violation. There are human rights bodies at State and national levels such as the National Human Rights Commission, National Commission for Scheduled Castes, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, National Commission for Women and National Commission for Minorities. There have been provisions of human rights courts and special public prosecutor along with provisions of legal aid for speedy trial of offences arising out of violation of rights. These days a number of civil society groups, private bodies, activists and community voluntary organisations are engaged in promotion and protection of human rights but they are prone to many forms of physical and mental harassment and humiliation by anti-social forces and sometimes by police and paramilitary forces. It is being reported by the UN that some of the rights defenders are facing life threat in conflicting situations while discharging their duty and a few of them even have lost their life.

At the State level the Odisha Human Rights Commission came into operation in the year 2003. It is reported that thousands of cases have been pending for trial and the disposal of cases is very negligible in number while there have been increasing rate of

rights violation against the vulnerable sections such as the women, children, girls, SCs, STs, PVTGs, PWDs and minorities. It is a fact that a majority of people are not aware about the existence of human rights bodies due to lack of information about such bodies and their activities. On the flip side it is good that in many cases of public interest, the Odisha Human Rights Commission has intervened on its own and passed many exemplary judgments. What is required is there must be human rights courts in each district and adequate public prosecutors from among vulnerable communities of the State to improve the justice delivery system.

However, the practice of respect for human rights must be reflected in our day-to-day personal life, in our families, schools and work places by making all efforts of spreading rights education. The human rights institutions must have adequate funds to disseminate human rights education among the students and youths. Media has a foremost role in projecting issues of rights violation and matter of public interest. The UDHR must reach to all people to build a society with adoption of international human rights standards. (manasbbsr15@gmail.com)

# DSBM inks industry academic tie-up pacts



**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

The DAV School of Business Management (DSBM) signed MoUs with three reputed industrial houses and a neighbouring degree college on Wednesday.

The purpose was to meet the thrust objectives of the National Education Policy- 2020, where both the Governments of India and Odisha have proposed corporate-academia interface and exchange of faculty and students programmes under the portal of Higher Education Department. The organisations are RSB Transmission (I) Ltd, Wallet Finserve Private Ltd, Amber Clothing Private Ltd and DR Nayapalli College for the empowerment of stu-

dents' community. The DSBM would undertake several academic research projects, market surveys, knowledge sharing sessions, etc., in the areas of commerce, finance, management, accounting, analytical skills and life skills towards the empowerment of students.

DSBM Principal Dr DN Mishra said the MoUs would result in a win-win situation for the DSBM and the partners. RSB Global Vice-Chairman and MD SK Behera, Wallet Finserve Director and Co-Founder Trinath Lenka, Amber Clothing Director Manik Chand Maheshwari and DR Nayapalli College Principal Dr Ghadei besides DSBM President MM Panda were present.

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# 9 Odisha cities have dangerous pollutants 'PM10'

Angul, Talcher worst-hit as new mines to be run sans locals' consent

**BIJAY MISHRA**  
BHUBANESWAR

Air pollution is on the rise in at least nine cities of Odisha due to massive unplanned industrialisation, mining activities and vehicular movement. The cities, Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Baleswar, Angul, Talcher, Rourkela, Jharsuguda, Bonaigarh and Kalinganagar (Jajpur), have dangerous air pollutants, 'PM10' and have been categorised as the 'non-attainment city' under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) initiated by the Government of India.

The NACP by the Central Pollution Control Board monitors three major air pollutants, sulphur dioxide, nitro-

gen dioxide and particulate matter size equal to or less than 10 micron (PM10) along with meteorological parameters across the country. At least six cities of Odisha are among the 102 most polluted ones in India. Cuttack, Bhubaneswar, Baleswar, Angul, Talcher and Rourkela have failed to maintain the national ambient air quality standards fixed by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

Bhubaneswar is recording an alarming level of suspended particulate matter (SPM) in air. It leads to serious aggravation of heart and lungs diseases and increases the risk of premature death. It could also lead to cardio-respiratory diseases.

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) in a related case

observed that in Odisha, the primary reasons of air pollution are vehicular emission, road dust, pollution from industries, construction and demolition works.

The University of Chicago's Air Quality Life Index suggests that residents in Cuttack and Bhubaneswar could live 2.7 years longer if the Government met the WHO air quality standards. The number of tuberculosis, bronchitis and cardio-vascular patients is increasing dramatically in the mining clusters of Keonjhar, Joda and Barbil. Children, pregnant women and senior citizens are the worst victims.

Both Talcher and Angul are polluted due to growing industrial and mining activities. Angul district has got enough coal reserve. Deviating from the principle of phas-

ing out production of fossil fuel energy, the Government stressed upon opening of new coal mines in the critically polluted area.

A process has been started for opening another 20 coal mines only in Chhendipada and Kaniha region in the district. Presently, there are 12 mines being operated in Angul - Talcher region.

In the recent auctions of coal blocks, around 30,000 acres of land in the State was put up for mining. Chhendipada area in Angul district is marked by large patches of green cover comprising forests of large tree species like Sal and others. It has a rich flora and fauna and is adjacent to the Bamur Forest Range. But the zone is a part of the Talcher coalfield which is known to be India's largest repository of coal.

Talcher region is known in the country for hosting the largest deposits of power grade coal. According to Mahanadi Coalfield Limited, Talcher coalfield hosts the highest geological reserve of coal in India measuring up to 51.220 billion tonnes.

However, without consulting the affected people, as many as 20 coal mines are auctioned in a small region of Chhendipada block for commercial mining and experts apprehend it will have serious environmental repercussions in the area. Without a proper 'Habitat Planning', around 20 coal mines, including Radhikapur East and West, are set to be run for commercial mining in the Chhendipada block.

At present, people are vehemently opposing EMIL owned Radhikapur East. Aditya Birla group owned EMIL Mines and Minerals Re-

sources Limited became the winning bidder for Radhikapur (East) coal mine. This coal block, spread over an area of 10.16 sq km, has a net proved reserve of 176.33 million tonne (MT) of fossil fuel. Villages like Jhintipal, Gopiballabhpur, Gopinathpur and Barpada will be directly and immensely affected by Radhikapur (East) coal mine.

Without habitat planning, coal mines are allowed to operate in Chhendipada, Talcher and Kaniha area. People have lost their natural resources, water and connectivity. Coal mine surrounding villages are greatly affected by air, water and noise pollution. People are continuously demonstrating against traffic jam for coal transport vehicles. Without addressing these issues, the Government allowed further mining in Angul area.

# 10-day Nadi Utsav kick-starts in Paradip



**PNS** ■ PARADIP

Responding to PM's appeal of a Nadi Utsav (River Festival) near every river in the country, multiple States with the help of the Centre held the celebrations at riverbanks on Wednesday to bring people closer to the rivers and protect them.

The Jagatsinghpur district administration began the Nadi Utsav which will continue till December 25 at the Biju Maidan near the sea beach of Paradip. Collector Parul Patawari inaugurated the festival. Paradip

ADM Dr Kanhu Charan Dhir, Paradip Municipality Executive Officer Saurindra Routray, DIPRO Kamini Ranjan Pattnaik, Paradip College NCC Officer Akshaya Chandra Mishra, District Officer, Nehru Yuva Kendra Nikhil Kokul and Programme Officer Pabitra Mohan Subudhi were present.

During the ten days of the festival, programmes like sand art, cleanliness drive, pledge for clean river, yoga and meditation, storytelling, afforestation with tree guard, painting and rangoli competitions, tourism walk and prize distribution will be organised.

# Only 15 Odisha candidates on ASEEM portal

Among country's 56,000

**PNS** ■ NEW DELHI

Till now, around 56,000 candidates have been placed through the Aatmanirbhar Skilled Employees Employers Mapping (ASEEM) portal across the country, but the number of candidates from Odisha is a mere 15. Union Minister of State Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

Rajeev Chandrasekhar said this in a reply in Rajya Sabha on Wednesday.

The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has launched the ASEEM portal which acts as a directory of skilled workforce. The objective is to provide a platform that matches supply of skilled workforce with the market demand, thereby facilitating better livelihood opportunities for

youths and availability of ready skilled manpower to employers.

The portal is managed by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) under the aegis of the Ministry. Till now, 1.3 crore candidates have been registered on the portal. On the portal, a total demand of around 21.79 lakh has been aggregated nationally with the highest aggregation in the logistics sector which is around 26 per

cent. In Odisha, a total demand of about 17,000 has been aggregated on the portal with the highest aggregation in the retail sector which is around 32 per cent.

The Ministry through the NSDC is providing facilities to candidates for registering on the Demand Aggregation portal where the need for upskilling/re-skilling is catered depending on the candidates' aspirations.

# CM unveils sports infra at Kalinga Stadium

Lays stone for 89 projects

**PNS** ■ BHUBANESWAR

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Thursday visited the Kalinga Stadium and reviewed the progress of the major sports infrastructure projects ongoing within its premises, particularly the indoor aquatic centre, which once complete, will be an iconic facility for swimmers.

In addition, the Indoor Athletics Stadium will be the first such facility in India. The projects are to be completed in a year. The CM expressed his satisfaction on the progress



of construction. He was accompanied by Minister for Sports and Youth Services, Tusharkanti Behera, Development Commissioner, PK Jena, Secretary to CM (ST), VK

Pandian, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Sports and Youth Services Department, R Vineel Krishna and officials of the State Sports Department.

The CM inaugurated five sports infrastructure facilities and laid the foundation stone for 89 multipurpose indoor hall. The projects inaugurated include the Biju Patnaik Weightlifting Hall and a new sports hostel at the Kalinga stadium, a swimming pool each in Angul and Baripada and the indoor stadium in Rourkela.

These multipurpose indoor stadiums will have facilities for badminton, table tennis, weightlifting and can be used as disaster shelters and hospitals during disaster and pandemic like situations.

All these projects will give an added boost to the ever-evolving sports ecosystem of the State.

## INBRIEF

### DOLPHIN CENSUS BEGINS; 9 TEAMS ENGAGED

Kendrapada: The annual dolphin census began in the Bhitarkanika and Gahirmatha water bodies on Thursday. The Forest & Environment Department has formed nine teams for the counting. The headcount exercise will continue till December 18. The officials will use GPS, binoculars and rangefinder to count the dolphins in water from Dhamra to Devi river mouth. In 2020, Odisha had registered 62 dolphins, which was a drop in the population of the aquatic animal species.



### GANJAM DARSHAN BUS SERVICE STARTS

Brahmapur: For the first time, a sponsored tour for senior citizens and children named as 'Ganjam Darshan' by bus was inaugurated on Thursday at the Ramalingeswar Park here. The rolling of bus service was witnessed by Brahmapur MLA Bikram Kumar Panda, district Collector Vijaya Amruta Kulange and BeMC Commissioner Siddheswar Baliram Bonder.



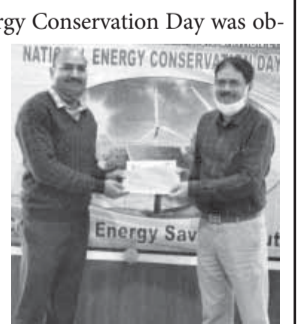
### B'PUR MOURNS YOUNG LAWYER'S DEATH

Brahmapur: People here mourned the death of young advocate Arun Patnaik on Thursday. A resident of Lala Street, Arun (39) was an active member of the Ganjam Bar Association and had 15 years of legal practice. He was also an active member of the Friends Helping Club and AVBD. Much before his death, Arun had wished to donate his eyes. Accordingly, MKCG Medical College Hospital Eye Department doctors collected both of his corneas from his residence.



### ENERGY CONSERVATION DAY AT OPGC PLANT

Jharsuguda: The National Energy Conservation Day was observed at the OPGC IB Thermal Power Station. A number of activities were organised with the objective of creating awareness on the importance of energy conservation amongst employees, their spouses and school students of ITPS Township. Additional Director of Petroleum Conservation Research Association, Eastern Region Pradeep Panda spoke on the importance of energy consumption.



### ASHA workers demand job regularisation

Stage demo before Assembly

**PNS** ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Rajya ASHA Karmi Sangha staged a mas-



# Chhatra Cong decries attack on its secy



Lodge FIR against BJD workers

**PNS** ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Chhatra Congress on Thursday condemned the BJD workers' attack on its State secretary Soumya Srichandan at Daruthenga village in the Chandaka area.

A Press release by the Chhatra Congress said Soumya was attacked physically when he opposed the distribution of Biju smart health cards by BJD leaders under the leadership of the former Jatni MLA and

Khordha district BJD president. An FIR has been filed by the organisation at the Chandaka police stations demanding immediate arrest of the culprits involved in the attack.

Chhatra Congress State president Yashir Nawaj said that other than Government officials and without inviting the local MLA, the BJD workers and leaders are distributing smart cards only to garner votes in the upcoming panchayat elections.

the State Assembly on Wednesday demanding job regularisation, minimum salary of Rs 18,000, EPF and ESI cover, declaring them as Covid warriors and accidental insurance of Rs 5 lakh.

They held the stir under the leadership of Sangha president Kamala Behera. A delegation led by Behera, Mamata Mohanty, Mamata Biswal, Pratima Samal and Sakuntala Gochayat met the National Health Mission (NHM) Director and discussed about their 10-point charter of demands including making NHM a permanent structure. A memorandum addressed to the Chief Minister was submitted to the Health Minister.

Behera said more than 10,000 ASHA workers joined the rally as for quite long years their demands are underplayed by the Government. "We are not given promotion nor regular salary; even, we have no place to sit in CHCs and PHCs," she said.

### SEMICONDUCTOR CHIP DEVELOPED AT IIT-B

**PNS** ■ BHUBANESWAR

Research teams of the IIT Bhubaneswar have been working on designing low power Integrated Circuits (IC) targeting internet of things (IoT) based sensing, monitoring and wireless devices. Efforts towards rising of research teams,



and developing technologies started yielding results, and the first batch of ICs have been successfully fabricated, recently. The team headed by Dr M S Manikandan and Dr Srinivas

Boppu has designed and got developed a ultra-low power CMOS data conversion integrated circuit (IC) with the support of the Special Manpower Development Programme for

chips to system design (SMDP-C2SD) of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and got fabricated at the Semi-Conductor Laboratory (SCL), Mohali. The indigenously developed IC is targeted for energy-efficient secured biomedical data transmission in internet of medical

things (IoMT) and wearable body area networks (WBANs) to Edge or Cloud computing devices. Another effort spearheaded by Dr Debapratim Ghosh is developing microwave passive and active components, filters power-detectors aim at RF instrumentation and ASIC applications.

# REAC again defers Vedanta smelter expansion plan

**PNS** ■ JHARSUGUDA

The Rs 1,240-crore Vedanta Jharsuguda smelter expansion plan once again got into troubled waters with the Union Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) as the regulatory body once again deferred the EC clearance on technical grounds in a recent meeting of the Re-Constituted Expert Appraisal Committee (REAC).

The 48th REAC meeting held on November 11 and 12 for environment appraisal of Industry-1 sector projects constituted under the provisions of Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006

observed that the Vedanta while applying for project expansion has not brought into the notice of the regulatory forum one case of violation of environmental norms under consideration at the National Green Tribunal (NGT). The REAC noted that the public representation mentioned at para 48.14.23 quoted a NGT court case (O.A. 10/2021/EZ) National Green Tribunal Eastern Zone Bench, Kolkata. The case is arising out of the disposal of fly ash in the nearby agricultural land by the proponent causing damage on the

agricultural land. As per the NGT order dated 2/09/2021, the inspection report filed by the Odisha State Pollution Control Board shows several violations of Consent conditions. In this regard, the NGT directed to file an affidavit inter-alia the Environmental Compensation assessed on account of damage caused to the environment. The Vedanta did not provide the information of said court case in the Form 2 application while applying for environmental clearance and also did not disclose it during the presentation. The REAC

opined to seek an explanation from Vedanta in this regard.

While making its recommendation, the committee recommended deferring the proposal and sought for following additional information like Ministry may forward the public representation to the project proponent. Vedanta was asked to submit a pointwise reply to the said public representation received on 12/11/2021 along with the requisite supporting documents. The details of environmental compensation made, if any, shall also be submitted. Vedanta should also explain

the reasons for not disclosing the court case details in Form 2 application (or) during the EAC presentation. Vedanta shall submit the recommendation of the interim report on the impact of the project on the crop by the plant and an action plan to mitigate the impact on crop damage shall be submitted. The other technical parameters where compliance and action-taken report are still awaited.

This is the second time Vedanta Jharsuguda's EC clearance has been deferred in recent times causing setback to its smelter expansion.

# Work on permanent solution for Delhi-NCR pollution: SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court directed the Commission for Air Quality Management on Thursday to invite suggestions of the public and experts about a permanent solution to the problem of air pollution in Delhi-NCR.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana took note of a report filed by the Commission which informed it that a decision to lift the ban on certain industries has been taken.

"The committee's report states measures that have been taken. So far as construction activities have been taken it's been stated that a decision will be taken tomorrow. We will list the matter in the first week of February. Meanwhile, we direct the commission to invite suggestions of the general public and experts about a permanent solution to the pollution," the bench also comprising Justices DY Chandrachud and Surya Kant said.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the bench that

operation of industrial processes related to milk, dairy processing, manufacture of drugs, life-saving medicines and medical equipment has been permitted. He said some industries were permitted for eight hours, some industries said their nature of industries is such that eight hours is not sufficient. "We have asked them to have a continuous process but five days not seven days. And we have staggered industries so they don't function on the same days," Mehta said.

"Thermal power plants that are closed will remain shut but more will not be closed. Decision on construction activities will be taken tomorrow. Hospital constructions are permitted, while trucks, etc continue to be banned," he submitted.

Senior advocate Vikas Singh, appearing for the petitioners in the case, said only short term measures have been proposed and the problem of air pollution, long term permanent measures are needed.

The bench asked him to submit suggestions which



would be considered by an expert group constituted by the commission. The commission has told the top court that milk and dairy processing units, medicines, drugs and life-saving equipment industries have been allowed to resume full-time operations.

Besides these, paper and pulp processing industries have been allowed to work five times a week while paddy, rice industries and textile, garment

units have been permitted to work five days a week. The commission further told the apex court that power plants have been permitted to operate keeping in view the demand for power.

The ban on construction activities, however, will continue and schools will also continue to function through online mode for the time being which will be reviewed again on December 17.

# Eye on Omicron, States told to be ready with O2, equipment

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Taking cue from the rapid surge in new Omicron variant cases in various countries and in India where tally has touched to 73, an alarmed Center has asked the States and Union Territories to monitor their availability of oxygen supply, equipment, ventilators and concentrators among other things on a daily basis to ensure that there is absolute preparedness to tackle any rise in the number of infections.

In India, Omicron cases are gradually inching up. From 25 on December 4, the cases have risen to 73 with more States coming into its grip. In the wake of the rapid spread of the 'super-variant', Omicron, Maharashtra recorded 32 cases till Wednesday — the highest in the country — prompting the state government to extend the Covid-safety curbs in Mumbai till December 31 with new rules. Rajasthan was second on the list with 17 cases.

In a review meeting with the states and UTs on Wednesday, Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan advised states to ensure the gap between equipment and systems deliv-

ered to the districts and installed at the healthcare facilities is reduced to zero. States have also been asked to conduct mock drills of all installed and commissioned PSA plants to ensure that they are fully operational so that oxygen of required quantity, pressure and purity reaches the intended patients at their bedside. These drills are to be completed by the end of December, the health ministry said.

Uninterrupted supply of medical oxygen in sufficient quantity is of critical importance to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic, the Centre said.

While equipment and systems have been sanctioned and delivered, in many states these have not been sent to district health facilities and when delivered, some have not been made functional, Bhushan said.

State nodal officers were requested to streamline coordination with the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), HLL Infra Tech Services Limited (HITES) and Central Medical Services Society (CMSS) for resolution of electricity-related and site-related issues for ensuring quick operationalisation of the entire medical oxy-

gen supply infrastructure supplied to them.

So far, a total of 3,236 PSA plants have been installed in the country from various sources with a total commissioned oxygen capacity of 3,783 MT. Moreover, 1,14,000 oxygen concentrators are being provided to states under PM-CARES (1 lakh) and 14,000 from Emergency Covid Relief Package (ECRP-II), the government said.

It was also pointed out that ECRP-II funds have been sanctioned to them for installation of 958 LMO storage tanks and medical gas pipeline systems in 1,374 hospitals.

# Over 375 mn people went hungry in Asia-Pacific due to Covid: Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the emergence of Covid-19, an estimated 375.8 million people in the Asia and the Pacific region faced hunger in 2020, which is nearly 54 million more people than in 2019, according to a joint report just published by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF).

According to the 2021 Asia and the Pacific Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition, in this region alone, more than 1.1 billion people did not have access to adequate food in 2020 — an increase of almost 150 million people in just one year.

"This most recent report on the state of food security and nutrition in Asia and the Pacific tells a grim story. The high cost of a healthy diet and persistently high levels of poverty and income inequality continue to hold healthy

diets out of reach for 1.8 billion people in this region," wrote Jong-Jin Kim, Assistant Director General and Regional Representative for Asia-Pacific at FAO, in the report.

The report stated that the region was already facing a "quite discouraging" food security and nutrition situation in 2019. Progress had stalled in reducing the number of undernourished, and the prevalence of certain nutritional indicators, such as stunting in children under five years of age, was much too high.

But Covid worsened the situation. Besides increasing infections, the containment measures led to a major contraction of economic activity around the globe. Disruption in food supply chains added to the problems. The report also lauded the response of governments on the social protection measures they put in place during the crisis. However, they noted

that in building back better food environments, future agri-food systems will have to provide better protection, better nutrition, a better environment and better lives.

"Our focus must revolve around the needs of small-scale family farmers in the region, as well as the needs of other vulnerable groups such as indigenous people, women and youth. These are the people that produce the nutritious food that everyone needs to eliminate malnutrition," wrote Marcoluigi Corsi, Regional Director of East Asia and the Pacific region, UNICEF.

While commitments have been made to ensure recovery, and there are opportunities to begin the hard work of advancing food security and nutrition through transforming agri-food systems, implementing these will be key to meet the second Sustainable Development Goal, SDG2, to eradicate food insecurity and malnutrition, the report said.

# PM leads nation in paying tribute to 1971 war martyrs on Vijay Diwas

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the nation on Thursday in paying tributes to the armed forces on the occasion of 50th anniversary of India defeating Pakistan in the 1971 war. It led to the creation of Bangladesh.

Modi laid a wreath and paid his respects at the National War Memorial on the occasion of Vijay Diwas, which is celebrated in commemoration of India's victory over Pakistan in the 1971 war.

Four victory torches (vijay mashaals), which were taken across the country during the last one year, were merged into the memorial's eternal flame by the Prime Minister.

These victory torches, which

were lighted by the Prime Minister exactly a year ago, were carried to various parts of India, including to villages of the awardees of Param Vir Chakra and Maha Vir Chakra of the 1971 war, as a part of Golden Jubilee year celebrations (Swarnim Vijay Varsh).

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and chiefs of the three armed forces were present at the National War Memorial during the event. Modi said on Twitter, "On this special day of Vijay Diwas, I had the honour of paying my respects at the National War Memorial and merging into the Eternal Flame, the four Vijay Mashaals which traversed across the length and breadth of the country over the course of last one year." December 16 is celebrated as Vijay Diwas.

# Indira took 32 bullets for country but ignored on 1971 war anniv: Rahul

PNS ■ DEHRADUN/NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Thursday accused the BJP Government of ignoring the role of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in the 1971 War as India celebrates the 50th anniversary of the victory, which he said was achieved as the country was united then.

Referring to his grandmother and the former PM, Rahul said she took '32 bullets for the country' but her name was not even mentioned at an event in New Delhi on the anniversary of the victory over Pakistan.

Parliament paid tributes to Bangladeshi freedom fighters and Indian armed forces on the 50th anniversary of Vijay Diwas, which celebrates India's victory over Pakistan in the 1971 war that led to the liberation of Bangladesh. Making a reference in the Lok Sabha, Speaker Om Birla remembered the exemplary courage displayed by freedom fighters of Bangladesh

as well as the Indian Army, the Navy and the Air Force.

With Indira not being named in either of the house of Parliament, Congress members raised slogans hailing late prime minister Indira Gandhi for leading the nation during the 1971 war. In the Rajya Sabha, Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu said the display of dauntless courage and gallantry by Indian armed forces in 1971 is still remembered with pride and zeal across the country, which continues to inspire the people of the nation.

Congress accused the Government of indulging in petty politics by not remembering Indira Gandhi during the Vijay Diwas celebrations. "It does not make any difference because I know what she (Indira Gandhi) did for the country by giving her blood," Rahul said launching his party's campaign for the Uttarakhand Assembly polls during a rally at Parade Ground in Dehradun.

# Yechury seeks removal of J&K HC Chief Justice

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

CPI(M) general secretary Sitarum Yechury on Thursday urged President Ram Nath Kovind to remove Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh (J&K&L) High Court's Chief Justice Pankaj Mithal for allegedly speaking 'against the Indian Constitution'. While addressing a programme organised by advocates' organisation affiliated to the RSS on December 5 at Jammu, Mithal spoke 'against the Constitution of India', Yechury claimed in his letter to Kovind.

"It has been widely reported in the media that Mithal addressed a seminar organised by the Akhil Bharatiya Adhivakta Parishad and said the following, 'Inclusion of the terms secular and socialist in the Preamble of the Constitution had narrowed India's spiritual image,'" Yechury said. "Mithal is further

reported to have said, 'Sometimes, we bring amendments due to our adamancy,' he noted.

Utterances against the country's Constitution by a High Court Chief justice, that too from a platform which preaches a particular ideology, is an unpardonable offence which is in violation of the oath taken by him to carry out his constitutional functions, the CPI(M) leader asserted. "Mithal's conduct (is) unbecoming of the constitutional office of the chief justice that he is holding (and it) warrants his immediate removal from the said office," he said.

"As the custodian of the Constitution, as the head of the State and as the appointing authority of Mithal, I request your good self to immediately set in motion the process for his removal from office to uphold the sanctity of the Constitution and independence of judiciary," Yechury said.



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla welcomes Vuong Dinh Hue, Chairman of the National Assembly of Vietnam, and his delegation at Parliament. Vuong Dinh Hue is on a five-day visit to India

# French Defence Min to visit India today; boosting strategic, defence ties on agenda

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and France will discuss at length maritime security including the Indo-Pacific region during the talks here on Friday between visiting Defence Minister Florence Parly and her Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh.

France on Thursday said the visit of its Defence Minister to India highlights its "centrality" in the French strategy for the Indo-Pacific and called for friendly powers to unitedly defend the rule of law and reject all forms of "hegemony" in the region. The Pioneer had reported about the visit on Wednesday.

Parly will hold extensive talks with Rajnath with a focus on maritime security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, industrial partnership and ways to deal with the threat of terrorism, the French Embassy said. It said she will call on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and also meet National Security Advisor (NSA) SA Ajit Doval particularly for discussions on

regional security issues. The two had met in November during Doval's visit to Paris. Parly visited India in September last year primarily to attend a ceremony in Ambala that was held to induct the first batch of five Rafale jets into the Indian Air Force.

The embassy said that since then, a total of 33 Rafale jets have been delivered to India "all perfectly on schedule despite the disruptions of the pandemic".

"The minister will reiterate France's commitment to strengthening India's defence industrial base and its willingness to offer the best of its technology with a high 'Make In India' component," it said. In a statement, the embassy said she will be on an official visit to India on Friday to strengthen Indo-French strategic and defence ties.

"This visit highlights France's engagement in the Indo-Pacific and the centrality of India in the French strategy. It comes in the wake of several major bilateral air, navy,

and army exercises this year," the embassy said.

There has been growing global concerns over China's increasing military muscle-flexing in the Indo-Pacific region. "In this respect, Minister Parly will detail the recently unveiled EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific that brings a multiplier effect to this comprehensive approach for the region," the embassy said.

"Upon taking the presidency of the Council of the European Union on January 1, 2022, France will make the Indo-Pacific and India a key priority," it said.

The embassy said the "in-depth talks" she will have in India will cover all aspects of the wide-ranging Indo-French defence ties. It said the areas to be covered in the talks will include operational defence cooperation, particularly maritime security in the Indo-Pacific, industrial and technological partnership in line with Make in India and counter-terrorism cooperation.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday called for the adaptation of agriculture according to new requirements, new challenges of the journey till the 100th year of independence and urged the farmers to shift their focus from 'chemistry laboratory experiments' and connect it with the 'natural farming' methods.

The Prime Minister said that those who will benefit the most from natural farming, constitute about 80 percent of the farmers of the country. "Those small farmers, who have less than 2 hectares of land. Most of these farmers

spend a lot on chemical fertilizers. If they turn to natural farming, their condition will be better," PM Modi said.

Addressing the summit on natural and zero-budget farming being held at Anand, in Gujarat through video conference, the PM Modi said, "In the past 7 years, with 'Beej se leke, bazaar tak' we have introduced several reforms to modernise the Indian Krishi sector with technology and reviving organic ways to protect mother nature."

Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar were present on the occasion,

"The time has come to shift our focus from 'Chemistry lab experiments' to natural farming methods in the agriculture sector to support our environment. We have to take our agriculture out of the lab of chemistry and connect it to the lab of nature. When I talk about nature's laboratory, it is completely science-based," the Prime Minister said.

PM Modi said today the more modern the world is becoming, the more it is moving towards 'back to basics'. "It means connecting with your roots. Who understands this better than all of you farmer friends? The more we water the roots, the more the plant

grows", PM Modi said. "We need not only to re-learn the ancient knowledge of agriculture but also to sharpen it for modern times. In this direction, we have to do research afresh, mould ancient knowledge into the modern scientific frame", he said.

"There is no doubt that fertilisers led to green revolution. But this is also true that we have to keep working on alternatives. The main reason for this is we have to import fertilisers for other countries, which increases the cost of farming. Hence, there is a need to be aware (about natural farming)," PM Modi said.

Citing the prevalent

notions of burning crop residue, Modi also expressed concern over the issue of stubble burning, saying the practice would actually harm the productivity of the agricultural land. He said time has now come to "correct the mistakes" that have become part of farming. He said that this happens despite experts having established that by setting fire to the field, the earth loses its fertile capacity.

"It is a fact that fertilizers have played a crucial role in the green revolution. But it is also imperative to work on their alternatives. It is the right time to take big steps before the issues related to farming become severe," the PM said.

# NEET-PG COUNSELLING

## Resident doctors' body warns of withdrawing from all services from Dec 17

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Resident doctors in healthcare institutions under the platform of the Federation of Resident Doctors' Association (FORDA) have threatened to withdraw from all services, including routine and emergency services, from December 17 over their demand of urgent hearing of NEET PG counseling 2021, which is pending before the Supreme Court.

The FORDA has written to Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, in this regard. The resident doctors' associations across the nation have been protesting since November 27 against the multiple postponement of the NEET PG counseling and the subsequent admission of the fresh batch of resident doctors in the medical colleges. The RDAs have boycotted emergency and routine services in hospitals from December 6.

However, the federation announced to suspend its agitation for one week after getting positive assurance from the Health Ministry on December 9.

The federation has said in the letter that the resident

doctors across the nation have waited patiently since the agitation was put on hold on December 9 for one week following assurance of expediting the NEET PG counseling and considering multiple factors, including patient care.

With the threat of the third wave of Covid-19 looming large, the best the authorities could have done was to expedite the counseling and a subsequent admission process, but instead there is inaction and lack of urgency in the matter, the letter read.

Urging the Health Ministry to take the measures for fast-tracking court hearings and for expediting NEETA PG counseling and admission process, the federation said that it is left with no choice but to go for withdrawal from all services, routine as well as emergency, in the healthcare institutions from December 17.

Admissions for NEET PG have been delayed due to the dispute over revising the income criteria for the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) quota. Approximately 16 lakh candidates too are waiting for the NEET UG Counselling 2021 this year.

# VHP seeks ban on Tablighis, crackdown on Deoband, PFI

## 'Nizamuddin markaz building, its linked accounts should be sealed'

**New Delhi:** The Vishva Hindu Parishad on Thursday demanded a ban on the Tablighi Jamaat in India and "crackdown" on Darul Uloom Deoband and Popular Front of India as they provide 'direct or indirect nourishment' to Jamaat.

In a statement, the VHP, a saffron outfit, also demanded that the Nizamuddin Markaz building in Delhi and the bank accounts associated with it should be sealed, and its 'economic sources and resources' should be found out and plugged.

"Not only Bharat (India) but the whole world is in a serious trouble today due to the transgressions of the Tablighi Jamaat and its Nizamuddin

Markaz," it alleged.

"The VHP demands a complete ban on Tablighis, Tablighi Jamaat and Ijtema (religious congregation) in India be imposed," the VHP said, alleging that the Tablighi Jamaat is a manufacturing hub of "radical Islamic Jihadism" as well as a host and patron of global terrorism.

The VHP also demanded that authorities "crackdown on institutions and organisations like Darul Uloom Deoband and PFI (Popular Front of India) that give direct or indirect nourishment to Tablighis, Tablighi Jamaat and Ijtema".

"The building of Nizamuddin Markaz and the bank accounts associated with it should be sealed. Their economic sources and resources should be found out and plugged," the saffron outfit added.

Saudi Arabia has banned the Tablighi and Da'wah group, also known as Al Ahabab, call-

ing it "danger to society and one of the gates of terrorism".

However, it was unclear if the Saudi Arabian government's tweets earlier this month were directed at the Tablighi Jamaat group. Muslim organisations and clerics in India have reacted over reports of Saudi Arabia's reported ban on Tablighi Jamaat.

VHP working president Alok Kumar claimed that the Saudi Arabian government has imposed a ban "the Jamaat" and welcomed the move.

"This radical Islamic fundamentalist organisation is already banned in many countries of the world including Russia," he said, adding that "despite this, instead of welcoming the decision of the Saudi government, some Bharatiya (Indian) Muslim organisations, with their protests against it, have exposed themselves and made their role in terror-rearing and fostering quite clear." **PTI**

# Mamata attacks BJP after UNESCO's Puja heritage tag

Says those who allege I bar Hindu festivals should be ashamed

**SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA**

**A** day after Durga Puja won the UNESCO world heritage tag Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday attacked the saffron leadership for criticising her all these years for allegedly not letting Hindu festivals take place in her State.

"Some people (read the BJP leadership) now have egg on their face ...Some people used to spread canards against me saying 'Mamata does not allow Durga Puja and other festivals in Bengal ... now that the UNESCO has put Durga Pujas on world heritage list what these people have to say ... they should blacken their faces in shame," the Chief Minister said adding "you can abuse Mamata ... but can abuse UNESCO ... I have only one mantra ... fight against these evil forces ... I have created three generations that will continue to fight against these forces."

Addressing an election rally in support of TMC candidates in Kolkata Municipal Corporation elections Banerjee said "days are coming when these people who criticize us will be shamed by more such honours that we will win ... we have already won international awards for Kanya Shree... we will soon win awards like the social schemes like Laxmir Bhandar, Duare Sarkar and other farmer and worker-friendly programmes."

Announcing a ₹24,000 crore programme for the development of Kolkata she said the whole city would be linked with a maze of flyovers adding "tomorrow Bengal will be known for its massive development ... we will be number one not only in India but all over the world."

Vouching for the industrial projects in Bengal she said "we have created a Silicon Valley in Salt Lake where TCS is going to employ 50,000 people ... similarly Deucha Pachami coal project will see employment of 1 lakh youth."

Saying that Bengal was the only State in India where the retired Government servants still got pension she claimed "the Centre was pressuring me to discontinue such schemes but I refused."

She also said that by 2024 all households in Kolkata would get drinking waterline and additional 200 water pumps would be installed in the city to rid water logging. KMC elections are going to take place on December 19. Results will be declared on 21st December.

Meanwhile, the Calcutta High Court on Wednesday rejected the BJP's plea seeking central forces saying such decision was for the State Election Commission to take. The saffron outfit immediately appealed before the Division Bench and the case was to be heard on .

# Kerala reports 4 Omicron cases

**KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI**

**D**espite claims by the State administration that Covid-19 was well under control, Kerala is in the grip of fear as four persons have been diagnosed with Omicron till Thursday evening.

The health sector in the State has come to a standstill as the indefinite agitation by the Government Doctors demanding better service conditions entered the ninth day while house surgeons and post graduate doctors continued their strike for the third day.

A release by Veena George, the Kerala Health Minister, on Thursday said that 3,404 persons were diagnosed with Covid-19 during the last 24 hours.

The death toll till Thursday, according to the minister, was 43,946.

The Ernakulam District administration has issued a red alert following reports that

a person who reached Kochi airport from Congo on December 7 was diagnosed with omicron.

The passenger instead of undergoing self-quarantine visited many public places including malls, restaurants and cinemas, according to the route map released by the district administration on Thursday.

The tourism sector in the State suffered a serious setback as it was disclosed by office bearers of Kerala Homestay and Tourism Society saying that more than 50 per cent of bookings by travelers have been canceled fearing surge of Covid-19 and omicron cases in the State.

The months of December and January see heavy tourist inflow into the State, especially to Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam districts which are known for their panoramic beaches and reserve forests.

# RSS chief roots for 'ghar wapsi' of Hindus

**Chitrakoot:** Rooting for 'ghar wapsi', RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat administered an oath to a congregation of Hindus to work for the return of those who had left the religion and exhorted those seeking power to shed arrogance.

"To get power, there is a need to work among the people, not have arrogance," Bhagwat said on Wednesday while taking part in a three-day "Hindu Ekta Mahakumbh" here.

The participants also pledged to protect the "modesty and honour of Hindu sisters" and strengthen Hindu society by rising above the divisions of caste and language.

Spiritual guru Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and Hindutva leader Sadhvi Rithambara were among the seers from across the country who attended the gathering.

"From the 'sankalpsthali' (place of resolution) of Lord Ram, the 'dharma yodhas' of Hindu culture take a pledge to work for the protection, promotion and security of the sacred Hindu religion, culture and society throughout life," the RSS chief said.

The gathering vowed to work for the return to the Hindu fold of those who had converted to other faiths.

It pledged "not to allow any Hindu brother to get alienated from Hindu religion and work for the ghar wapsi (return) of those who left Hindu religion and went somewhere else, and make them family members."

Bhagwat said, "While practising dharma and working selflessly without ego, one gets success even in the most difficult tasks." **PTI**

# Raj Govt announces Govt jobs for 1971 war martyrs' kin

**Jaipur:** Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Thursday announced Government jobs to kin of 1971 Indo-Pak War martyrs from the state.

He made the announcement while addressing a programme on Vijay Diwas at Amar Jawan Jyoti. As per the existing rules, any one dependent of those martyred between August 15, 1947 and December 31, 1970 is given a government job.

The new rule will extend the cut off to December 31, 1971, paving the way for appointments of the dependents of soldiers martyred in

the 1971 India-Pakistan war. Gehlot said the new rule will be extended to include the son and daughter of the martyr's daughter (Navasa-Navasi), even if adopted, as dependents. The son and daughter of the martyr's brother and sister too will be reckoned as dependents, he said.

Gehlot said he is proud of being the Chief Minister of a state where every house has the spirit of martyrdom to protect the borders of the country.

On the occasion, he met and honoured the dependents of the officers and soldiers who were martyred in the 1971 War. **PTI**



The statue of Maharaja Ranjit Singh at the Heritage street amid dense fog on a winter day in Amritsar on Thursday **PTI**

# 2 LeT terrorists killed in Kulgam, 180 eliminated since Jan 2021

**PNS ■ JAMMU**

**T**wo local terrorists belonging to the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) offshoot- The Resistance Front (TRF) were eliminated by the joint team of security forces in an overnight encounter in Kulgam on Thursday. Around 180 terrorists have been eliminated by the security forces since January 2021.

Meanwhile, the Union Territory administration Thursday also replaced the district police Chief in Srinagar in a major reshuffle in the police department.

A 2012 batch IPS officer from Manipur cadre, Rakesh Balwal has been appointed as SSP Srinagar in place of Sandeep Choudhary. For last three years Balwal was serving in the National Investigation Agency in J&K and was part of the probe team which investigated Pulwama terror attack and other cases. He recently completed his stint with the NIA and was awaiting posting.

The district police chiefs of Poonch, Rajouri, Ramban, Udhampur have also been replaced by the UT administration in the much awaited reshuffle. A total number of 27 police officers were transferred by the Home department.

Meanwhile sharing details of the Kulgam encounter a spokesman of the Jammu and Kashmir police said, "the operation was launched on a specific input regarding the presence of terrorists in village Redwani area of Kulgam". "During the search operation, as the presence of terrorists got ascertained, they were given repeated opportunities to surrender; however they fired indiscriminately upon the joint search party which was retaliated leading to an encounter".

In the ensuing encounter, 02 terrorists of proscribed terror outfit LeT (TRF) were killed and their bodies were retrieved from the site of encounter. They have been identified as Amir Bashir Dar resident of Kujjar Frisal and Adil Yousuf Shan resident of Sursano Hatipora, Kulgam, the police spokesman said.

As per police records, both the killed terrorists were categorized terrorists and linked with proscribed terror outfit LeT (TRF). They were also part of groups involved in several terror crime cases including attacks on security forces and civilian atrocities.

The security forces recovered 02 Pistols, 02 magazines, 07 pistol rounds & 01 grenade from the encounter site.

# Donkey population decreased by 61.23%: Study

**PNS ■ NEWDELHI**

**T**he Brooke India, the India chapter of the UK-based international equine charity Boorke, has got a detailed Investigative Study conducted on the Donkey Hide Trade going on illegally in India. From 2012 Livestock Census until the latest Livestock Census of 2019, the donkey population has decreased by 61.23 per cent.

The Study, titled as "The Hidden Hide" has been conducted by Sharat K Verma. The trigger for this Study was a drastic decrease in the donkey population across the country.

# Maha politicians welcome SC's decision to allow resumption of bullock cart races

## Jubilant cart owners burst crackers

**Mumbai/Pune:** Political leaders in Maharashtra cutting across the party lines on Thursday welcomed the Supreme Court's decision to allow the resumption of bullock cart races in the state, with Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar calling it a "victory of farmers" and saying that the move will benefit in protecting the livestock.

Senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis also expressed happiness over the apex court's decision and claimed that he and other leaders of his party had followed up the matter with the Union government.

After the SC nod, the bullock cart owners in Pune district celebrated by bursting crackers and said that holding the races will give a boost to the rural economy.

The bullock cart races, a popular sport in rural Maharashtra which had been banned in 2014 on the ground that it caused pain and suffering to the bullocks. On Thursday, the apex court allowed the resumption of bullock cart races in the state.

Ajit Pawar said that with the lifting of the ban, bullock cart races can now again resume in

the state, but he appealed to the farmers to abide by all rules and regulations. "With this decision, the ox farmers have won a long battle," Pawar said, adding that NCP chief Sharad Pawar, other leaders and, social activists had contested the ban vigorously.

The Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government gave strength to this court battle. This success will create new enthusiasm among the farmers in the state, he added.

While allowing the resumption of bullock cart races, the top court on Thursday observed that the validity of the amended provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 and the rules framed by Maharashtra, which provided for bullock cart race in the state, would operate during the pendency of the petitions as the entire matter has been referred to a constitution bench.

On Wednesday, the Maharashtra government had told the apex court that the ban on bullock cart races in the state should be lifted as the same is going on in states like Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

Fadnavis, who is the Leader of Opposition in the state Legislative Assembly, said, "The Supreme Court had banned the bull races in 2014. I had personally followed it up with the Union government and later BJP MLA Mahesh Landge had made a representation before the Centre over it," he said.

Prakash Javadekar, the then Union minister, had also issued a gazette notification to pave the way for resumption of races, but the SC had put a ban on that also. The Centre in 2017 introduced a new act so that such bull races can be organised, he said.

"A report titled as 'Running ability of bull' was prepared in two months. Today's SC decision was taken only after acceptance of the recommendations made in the report. I am pleased with the SC decision," the former chief minister added.

Former Shiv Sena MP from Shirur Shivajirao Adhalrao Patil said that for the last over seven years, bullock cart races were banned in the state, but the Maharashtra government, various organisations, stakeholders and he gave a prolonged fight for the cause.

"For the last several months, the bullock cart owners were getting restless because of the ban. Without worrying about the ban, they even resorted to holding races, due to which cases were registered against them," he said.

The Sena leader said the state government "woke up" after he and bullock cart owners threatened to launch an agitation.

"The state government, officials from the animal husbandry department put forth the state's side strongly in the

apex court through state counsel Mukul Rohatgi and due to this collective efforts, the court allowed the resumption of the races today," he said.

Maahesh Landage, BJP MLA from Bhosari in Pimpri Chinchwad, who had been pressing for the lifting of the ban, called it a victory of farmers and bullock cart owners.

With the apex court giving its nod, several parts of the state, especially Pune and the western Maharashtra region, where the 400-year-old tradition was prevalent, will once again experience the thrill of the sport, those associated with the races said.

After the decision, the jubilant bullock cart owners in Pune district decorated their bullocks and burst firecrackers.

Bullock cart races were the main attractions at the village fairs in parts of the state and according to the bullock cart organisations, these events were instrumental in giving a boost to the rural economy.

Ramkrishna Takalkar, a representative of Akhil Bharatiya Baigada Sharyat Sanghatna, said that the apex court has given the nod to hold the races by adhering to the rules and regulations made by the state government in 2017.

"Since the Supreme Court has given the conditional permission, we appeal all the bullock cart owners to hold the races by adhering to the rules and regulations," he said. **PTI**

# Kerala clocks 3,404 new Covid cases, 320 deaths

**Thiruvananthapuram:** Kerala on Thursday reported 3,404 new infections and 320 deaths, which took the caseload to 51,95,997 and the death toll to 43,946.

Of the 320 deaths, 36 were recorded over the last few days and 284 were designated as COVID-19 deaths after receiving appeals based on the new guidelines of the Centre and the directions of the Supreme Court, a state government release said.

Thiruvananthapuram recorded the highest with 633 fresh cases, followed by Kozhikode (523) and Ernakulam (501).

Of the new cases, 27 were health workers, 8 from outside the State and 3,170 were through contact with the source of it not being clear in 199. There are currently 1,47,204 people under surveillance in various districts, of whom 1,43,110 are in home or institutional quarantine and 4,094 in hospitals, the release said. **PTI**

# Petition filed to stop namaz at Idgah near temple in Mathura

**Mathura:** A petition has been filed at a local court here seeking prohibition on namaz at the Shahi Idgah, located close to the temple in Krishna Janmasthan here. In recent months, some organisations have moved the courts here seeking the 'removal of the Idgah claiming it is built in the 'actual birthplace' of Lord Krishna.

"The court has been requested to pass an injunction

order restraining the Muslim community from offering namaz in Shahi Masjid Idgah and on adjacent road," Mahendra Pratap Singh, the petitioner said in his application.

He said Moghul emperor Aurangzeb had built the mosque by dismantling the temple in 1669 and that the walls of the Idgah still had signs of Om, Swastik and Shesh Nag.

In the petition filed at the

court of civil judge, senior division, Singh alleged that the management of the mosque was now attempting to either deface or remove them.

Earlier, the Mathura district administration had imposed prohibitory orders under CrPC section 144 following an announcement by the Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha that it will install a statue of the deity at the mosque. **PTI**

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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Coming of age

The Govt wants women to marry not before they turn 21 so they can take better hold of their lives

The Union Government proposes to raise the legal marriageable age of women from 18 to 21, the same as men, by amending the marriage Acts concerned. The Government will have to clarify whether the amended age will be applicable to personal laws of all religions. The proposal is based on the suggestions sent to NITI Aayog a year ago by a Central task force that examined "matters pertaining to the age of motherhood, imperatives of lowering Maternal Mortality Rate, improvement of nutritional levels and related issues". The task force, however, was quick to point out that empowerment of women was its primary consideration. The proposal ticks all the right boxes. It is one more way to assert that child marriages and marriages of minors are illegal. It should steer families towards adapting to changing times and encouraging young adults to take independent decisions instead of rushing them into marriages the moment they get their undergraduate degrees. The younger generation does not want to be thrust into marriage just as they leave their teens and the proposal backs their thought. It clears the path for women to become



economically independent and not be dependent on anyone for their livelihood. It paves the way for women to enjoy the right of choice, in terms of factors where they feel the pressure from their families the most — marriage, sex, or motherhood.

It is not that society's attitude towards women will improve once the amendments become law. It is that the country is making a conscious decision to create circumstances for women to take hold of their lives. We must remember that till 1978, women's marriageable age was only 15, which was then raised to 18. Women have moved up on

the ladder of choice and parity in the four decades since then and are consciously pursuing higher studies and professional careers like never before. If the age limit ensures women are not married off before they attain mature adulthood, it is also a caution that they are not married off the moment they attain the age of consent. The point of the exercise is to respect women's right to consent. The limit also discourages the marriage of minors, a social evil still prevalent in several parts of the country. It means women should be able to convince their families that at 21 they are mature enough to exercise their choice about all things in life, including, and especially, marriage. Empowerment is not selective. It is not conditional. An empowered woman has the right to educate herself, make adult choices vis-à-vis relationships, take up employment and choose the time to have a life partner. The right gives her the choice to not choose as well. That is the critical point that society at large needs to understand. Otherwise, empowerment has no meaning. Needless to say, the biggest responsibility of respecting everything the proposal stands for lies with the State apparatus.

### PICTALK



Artistes dressed as Lord Hanuman take part in a procession to mark Hanuman Jayanti, in Bengaluru

PTI

## To \$ or not to \$

The Centre must not rush to ban it as cryptocurrency is the future, say experts

The winter session of Parliament is on and the Government is planning to bring a Bill on cryptocurrency. Locally, it is being dubbed a Bill to ban, or at least regulate, cryptocurrency. It had an impact on the crypto market and Bitcoin tumbled down 15 per cent before staging a recovery. For nearly 10 years now, cryptocurrency has been in news and its exponential growth has made instant billionaires, which led to a mad rush for Bitcoins. It has also opened an additional hawala route to transfer funds. Why is the Government so keen to ban it? Its alarm may have been triggered by the fact that crypto is being used for all the wrong purposes like procuring drugs and arms through the darknet, a hidden internet used by fugitives. The Enforcement Directorate has discovered that ₹4,000 crore were laundered out of India using cryptos last year. Though indeed a serious problem, crypto is not the only way to make such transactions. There are several other nefarious routes, and these continue unabated.

Cryptocurrency is not issued by any bank or Government but by anyone who wants to float his currency, just like airlines offering 'flying miles' or malls issuing their plastic money. Therefore, nobody — least of all a Government — has any control over it, which means regulating or banning it is nigh impossible, even though a number of Ministers have hinted that it may get banned. The Government can at best declare it to not be a legal tender, which isn't in most countries barring a few South American nations such as Ecuador and Chile. No doubt the concerns are many, but would it really be possible for the Government to control or, for that matter, ban it? If yes, would it be in the nation's interest? What happens to the 'Digital India' drive as experts feel that cryptocurrency is here to stay and, in future, it would be the mainstay for online transactions. The Government would do well to wait and watch rather than jumping the gun and deciding in haste. Except China, no country has so far banned cryptocurrency. In fact, many countries with weak currencies are promoting it. Even the US, the UK and France have not tried to control it. Crypto is the future and it won't be possible for any single nation to control it; it has to be done collectively. Banning it would in fact be a setback for 'Digital India'!

# The land of freedom and democracy



PRAFULL GORADIA

At Biden's 'Summit for Democracy', Modi appropriately underlined the point that the democratic spirit is integral to India's civilisational ethos

It is safe to assume that US President Joe Biden had in mind only electoral democracy when he invited many a head of Government to his December 9 'Summit for Democracy'. Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a telling point when he said that the democratic spirit is integral to India's civilisational ethos. Centuries of colonial rule could not suppress the democratic spirit of Indians. He avoided extending the proposition to a faith in the phenomenon of karma which is nothing, if not democratic, on a metaphysical scale. All humans have a fair and equal opportunity to be automatically rewarded with or denied a *bhagya* or fate commensurate with her/his karma without a divine entity, say God, having an overriding say in the *bhagya*. The belief in the operation of karma is like the law in physics that for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. This is a faith as near science as yet possible.

Another symptom of Indian democracy is its history down the ages. Anyone who arrived whether via the Hindu Kush or Arabian Sea as the early Jews or other traders, the Parsees, British and many others were welcome, or at least allowed to stay and settle on Indian soil. No one was expelled regardless of being cruel or kind.

The idea behind the open welcome to one and all was that the world was one family, *Vasudhaiva kutumbakam*. An advantage of this policy — call it Indic — or conduct was that the culture-cum-civilisation became resilient and, regardless of its disinclination to fight, survived against any number and kinds of invasions. Few cultures could withstand it and survive. It began with the advent of the Caliph and his successors, from Arabia, on to Egypt and the Mediterranean countries certainly up to Spain. On the eastern side were Iran, Central Asia, Afghanistan *et al* but, strictly speaking, not India. If conversions of the indigenous on any scale took place, they were well after the Islamic conquest.

After the Sepoy Mutiny was



over in 1858 AD, contact with Britain was reasonably close and frequent. As a result, Indian youth, even women, learnt the British ways of education, culture and socio-politics by the early years of the 20th century. By the time we won Independence, Indian leaders were ready to adopt electoral democracy as the means to choose Governments, at the Centre and in the provinces. We also chose a parliamentary system and not the American presidential style, although it would have been more suitable for India. Every adult was straightaway entitled to vote; those with more education, property or influence could exercise the advantage in their profession but not in an election. This insistence on equality is a hallmark of true electoral democracy. With the passage of every election, the Indian nation has learnt to participate better. There have so far been general elections at the Centre while the States have also been disciplined in holding their polls. The only significant interruption was the Emergency imposed by the Indira Gandhi regime in 1975; it lasted until early 1977. It was unpopular because it was declared only



THE INSISTENCE ON EQUALITY IS A HALLMARK OF TRUE ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY. WITH THE PASSAGE OF EVERY ELECTION, THE INDIAN NATION HAS LEARNT TO PARTICIPATE BETTER

with the intent of saving Indira's hold on power. Except for those 21 months or so, India's record of electoral democracy has been commendable.

Even when dealing with Mohammed Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League during Partition, India's behaviour was, if anything, overdemocratic. In anticipation of the separation, the Qaid-e-Azam and his colleagues were insistent that all Muslims should be facilitated to migrate to the new Islamic country, their homeland. They were at times so vehement as to insist that all Muslims should migrate from India. In his rabid enthusiasm, one of the League bigwigs Sir Feroz Khan Noon thundered in February 1946 in Patna that if the Hindus in India came in the way of the transfer of Muslims to Pakistan, the League would re-enact the orgies of Chengiz Khan and Halaqu Khan.

Indian leaders remained calm and implied that Muslims were also their brothers and they should be allowed to decide for themselves. An Exchange of Population plan was proposed and supported by Jinnah whereby Muslims, preferably all of them, would migrate to Pakistan. And

reciprocally, all non-Muslims would move to India. Rajendra Prasad, who subsequently became the President of independent India, wrote a book entitled *India Divided* wherein he suggested that those Muslims who didn't emigrate could stay in India as aliens with visas issued by the Government of India. The same could be done by Pakistan to the non-Muslims who remained behind in that country.

Jinnah promptly agreed with Prasad. Yet, the other Congress leaders kept quiet. In the end, Pakistan, with the help of violence, loot and killing chased out most Hindus whereas Muslims were allowed to stay back in India if they wished. Some went away from East Punjab (India), UP and Bihar but compared to Pakistan, India did practically little. This is true to this day, 75 years later.

This was the practical essence of democracy. It is difficult to think of any other example of such devotion to freedom. India is indeed the land of freedom and, therefore, democracy.

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal.)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### RECOGNITION FOR FEMALE ATHLETES

Sir — Hyundai Motors has struck a big blow for gender parity by signing a MoU with four Indian women cricketers. So far, it was only men who were given almost god-like status in advertisements across all media. Even on the world stage, not many women get as much attention as their male counterparts do. In Indian cricket, male sportspersons have always been given preference by companies as the face of their brands. India has produced some of the finest athletes in various sports who should have been promoted but were not. Therefore, this becomes an important and perhaps a bold step by the company.

This move will benefit not only the four players who have been signed up but also serve as an example for other brands to follow suit. It will also give an added impetus to the many budding sportswomen who are trying to make a mark in the national and international sports arena. There are many dedicated and elite women athletes in the country who need and deserve such recognition. Other brands, too, should go ahead with women brand ambassadors and promote gender equality. With more women reaching the top in various fields, it certainly seems as if happy days are on the way to the women of the nation.

Anthony Henriques | Mumbai

#### THE BAND OF BROTHERS, FOR EVER

Sir — The soldiers of our country have protected their land and its people forever. Their supreme sacrifice has always been the flame of example that can never be extinguished. They have never failed in winning the hearts of the people by their duty as well as gesture. Recently, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) jawans attended the marriage ceremony of martyred Constable Shailendra Pratap Singh's sister in Uttar Pradesh. The jawans, Constable Singh's colleagues, performed all the brotherly rituals and gestures in the wedding of his sister.

Constable Shailendra Pratap Singh was martyred in a terrorist attack in Pulwama last year. This gesture by the

## Sack the untenable Minister



After the Special Investigation Team's (SIT) finding that the Lakhimpur Kheri carnage was 'pre-planned', the position of Minister of State (MoS) for Home Affairs Ajay Mishra Teni has become untenable. Propriety requires that he steps aside till a court finds his son, against whom the SIT found prima facie evidence, not guilty of running over four farmers and a journalist and killing them. Circumstantial evidence suggests that his son may have been abetted in the alleged commission of the crime by

him. The fact that the killing of farmers occurred following the MoS' threat that it would take him 'two minutes to discipline the protesting farmers' if he so wished, may not be sufficient to implicate him in the crime, still it is not without its own underlying import or significance.

One thing is clear, were the killers not drunk in power, the farmers would not have lost their lives. The inclusion of sections under the Arms Act in the charge-sheet spells trouble for Ajay Mishra since it was from his burnt vehicle that empty cartridges were recovered. By venting his anger on journalists, he can assert his VVIP status, but he cannot exonerate himself from the charges. The Supreme Court deserves credit for taking suo motu cognisance of the tragic incident and ordering a credible SIT without allowing the Modi Government or the Yogi Government to pervert the course of justice.

G David Milton | Maruthancode

jawans has caught the eyes of the country and a video of them performing marriage rituals has surfaced on social media and is winning hearts. The jawans showed what brotherhood actually looks like. They not only protect our motherland but have also set benchmarks for us that brotherhood does not end with the end of one's life. It leaves a very deep message encouraging us to remember our brother and sister even after they've left the world.

Manoj Kumar Jena | Cuttack

#### AN EVERGREEN MAESTRO'S CENTENARY

Sir — A documentary film, *Paravaikalam*, has been made on nadaswaram maestro Karukurichi Arunachalam, whose birth centenary is being celebrated. The documentary has been titled so because the legendary artist would play the instrument effortlessly like a bird in flight. At the height of his fame, Karukurichi Arunachalam had a huge fan following which was enhanced

by his contribution to the blockbuster Tamil film *Konjum Salangai*.

The song *Singara Velane Deva*, in which playback singer S Janaki sang in tandem with Arunachalam's nadaswaram, mirroring every phrase of the song, became a runaway hit. Though Janaki sang innumerable songs and won plenty of awards, Singara Velane Deva remains a watermark in her outstanding career. This song is an eternal favourite, tugging at the heartstrings of the young and old and transcending time and age boundaries. In an era when song-tracks are recorded separately and then synthesised, this immortal song was a pioneer for such an innovation more than five decades ago. It was veteran director MV Raman who directed this epic film in technicolour which reportedly cost around ₹40 lakh, something unheard of in those days.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

### SOUNDBITE

The Government's refusal to sack Ajay Mishra Teni is the starkest indication of its moral bankruptcy.



Congress leader —Priyanka Gandhi

At the moment, I have no plans to attend the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics.



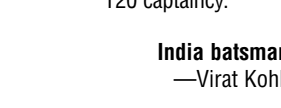
Japanese Prime Minister —Fumio Kishida

We gained experience by doing 60-70 films but the new actors already have that kind of experience.



Actor —Akshay Kumar

There was no offence, no hesitation and not once was I told that you should not leave T20 captaincy.



India batsman —Virat Kohli

When the AAP forms Government in Punjab, the country's biggest sports university will be set up in Jalandhar.



Delhi Chief Minister —Arvind Kejriwal

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

INDIA'S CONNECT: A CENTRAL ASIA POLICY

Despite a solid economic partnership with China, central Asia is well aware of its deceitful nature



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Leaders from five central Asian countries comprising of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan could be the chief guests on the next Republic Day. This comes close on the heels of the Russian president's tour to India that re-emphasized Indo-Russian strategic friendship. All this happens in the backdrop of India finding new strategic allies such as the US, and Russia's growing intimacy with China and Pakistan. It brings the focus on the big global powers trying to recalibrate their strategic, geo-political and military alliances in a post-COVID, multipolar and a more transactional world order. India, therefore, has made the right move by focusing on a specific regional cluster of nations, i.e., Central Asia, within its larger foreign strategy. If the heads of state of the five Central Asian republics attend as chief guests on January 26, 2022, it would be the second occasion after 2018 when regionally important ASEAN leaders had been the chief guests. It would



be a good optical moment for India to showcase its increased influence over the central Asian republics, specifically to China and Pakistan. The five countries share land borders with Afghanistan and some also with China, Russia and Iran. The Afghanistan situation is increasingly threatening to spill over and start impacting the rest of the landlocked neighbors and beyond. The immediate threats are a barrage of illegal Afghan immigrants spilling into these five countries and onwards to Russia and perhaps China and Iran, too. There are additional threats of drug and human trafficking, terror activities and smuggling and the whole of Eurasia starts feeling the tremors. India has a unique position in the relationship because of its historical, cultural and infrastructural linkages with these countries in the past; even though it is now isolated due to its evolving relationship with China and Pakistan. Pakistan, and by proxy China, would not spare a chance to use the Taliban-trained militia to create problems for India. China and Pakistan have significant political, economic and strategic interests in Afghanistan that serves as a key gateway into Eurasia for them. China, dictated by its expansionist foreign policy almost teetering towards colonization, steadily strengthened its economic relations with Central Asia over the years. The annual trade between them is approximately \$100bn compared to India's less than \$2bn with the same group of countries. That leaves a yawning gap for India to fill by nurturing a strong relationship with them at the earliest.

India was one of the first countries to officially recognize these Central Asian republics in the 1990s. Prior to that, India's engagement with them was through the erstwhile Soviet Union. In the past three decades, India has hardly developed meaningful partnerships with these geo-politically important countries neighboring Afghanistan. In wake of the current Afghan crisis and a gradual recalibration of the global order, lethargy of the past has to be dropped. Central Asia despite having a robust economic partnership with China is well aware of the deceitful nature of the Dragon. They are also more influenced by Russia and Iran for their security, and strategic interests. Russia, even though it has an empathetic view of China's narrative on the evolving global order, knows that India is a tried and trusted friend in the region who can be a balancing component. Therefore, Russia would also encourage these central Asian countries to expand their security, economic partnerships with India and have complementarity of policies on regional concerns such as terrorism, drug trafficking and Afghanistan. India has done well by rekindling its Central Asia connect policy (first conceived in 2012). The roads from Tashkent to Thiruvananthapuram and Samarkand to Surat need to be built. (The writer is a policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)

Poor hygiene brings the economy down

The challenges in accessing adequate water supply, sanitation facilities and poor hygiene practices lead to a rise in diseases, causing increased economic burden



KRITHIKA MURALI SWATI MAHAJAN

Access to hygiene and sanitation facilities is a fundamental human right and one of the key determinants of health. According to the 2017 Household Survey for the Assessment of Toilet Coverage under Swachh Bharat Mission, 39.9 percent of India's rural population defecates in open and about 26 percent people do not use soap or detergent to wash their hands afterwards (National Sample Survey 2019). The challenges in accessing adequate water supply and sanitation facilities coupled with poor hygiene practices lead to a rise in diseases which can result in higher economic burden, exceeding investments in hygiene and sanitation systems.

The sixth Sustainable Development Goal is to 'Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all' by 2030. Since Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) programs have a direct impact on health and socio-economic indicators, they have played a central role in improving India's overall health over the past decades. Hygiene, water and sanitation programs are a proven cost-effective investment for public health.

Ever since Independence, WASH Programs have been synonymous with the country's public health agenda. Too many lives have been lost to preventable diseases such as malaria, diarrhoea, cholera, smallpox and other infectious diseases — all caused by poor hygiene, sanitation and inadequate water supply. As a result, the Government of India put emphasis on improving health indicators with a focused approach towards water supply and sanitation across the country.

In the 10th five-year plan adopted in 2002, the role of sanitation and hygiene were intrinsically linked to the objectives of reducing Infant Mortality Rate (IMR); Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR); ensuring completion of five years of schooling for all children by 2007 and providing potable drinking water in all villages. The Swachh Bharat Mission and the Jal Jeevan Mission are two recent government initiatives aimed at improving the supply of clean water and moving the country toward sustainable sanitation standards. While the Swachh Bharat Mission was aimed at achieving universal sanitation coverage, the Jal Jeevan Mission sought to ensure piped water supply for all households in the country; providing a significant boost to the rural water and sanitation industry. According to Lancet's 'The Global Burden of Disease' study, through these efforts India managed to add quality years of life expectancy to its people, indicating a substantial increase in the overall health of the country.

However, given the wide inequalities in the social and economic demographics of the population, India continues to experience mixed progress in terms of hygiene and sanitation-related outcomes.

The economic consequences caused by inadequate access to sanitation has reper-



TO OVERCOME THE ISSUES RELATED TO HYGIENE AND SANITATION AND PREVENT ITS NEGATIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS, THE COMMUNITIES, GOVERNMENTS, PRIVATE SECTOR AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS MUST MAKE COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS TOWARDS INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

(Dr Swati Mahajan is chief of party, USAID-NISHTHA project and leads the comprehensive primary healthcare portfolio for Jhpiego. Krithika Murali is leading the communication, documentation and knowledge management portfolio for USAID-NISHTHA project, implemented by Jhpiego. The views expressed are personal.)



ussions at multiple levels. Along with loss of GDP, communities suffer due to decreased productivity and increased expenditure on healthcare. A World Bank study on the economic impacts of poor sanitation in India estimated that the country lost the equivalent of 6.4 percent of GDP due to inadequate sanitation. Over 70 percent of it (₹1.75 lakh crore) was accounted for by premature mortality and health-related costs.

While social impacts are difficult to quantify, some risks are often exacerbated, affecting the most vulnerable groups including women, children and people with disabilities. For example, poor pregnancy outcomes, maternal mortality, violence and psychological stress are some of the serious consequences of lack of access to clean water and sanitation among women and girls. Inadequate access to WASH can also lead to vulnerability, rape and attacks, and the fear of such assaults can prohibit women and children from using toilets and sanitary facilities outside their homes at night. Similarly, problems of dignity, safety and privacy to maintain good hygiene get compounded for disabled persons as they experience increasing feelings of disgust, fear of violence, injury and shame due to lack of proper hygiene services.

To overcome the issues related to hygiene and sanitation and prevent its negative socio-economic impacts, communities, governments, private sector and development partners must make collaborative efforts towards innovative solutions. Governments and supporting agencies need to foster innovation, especially from the commercial sector, to make hand hygiene a universal practice in all contexts. To tackle issues of shortage of water,

inaccessibility and unavailability of hand washing facilities and soaps, new solutions are urgently required. Multi-stakeholder collaborations in such situations assume an important role in providing market knowledge and recommendations on enhancing hand hygiene and strengthening WASH facilities.

A collaboration between the World Bank, UNICEF, Johns Hopkins University, USAID and Unilever to form a Public-Private Partnership for Handwashing in 2001 is a case in point. More notably, Unilever has been involved in tackling epidemics such as cholera and has been able to reach over 1.2 billion individuals with programs and awareness campaigns through their Hygiene and Behaviour Change Coalition partners. Through close collaborations with Government/ public enterprises, HBCC has been able to advocate for hand and surface hygiene among the vulnerable slum populations even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Interventions to promote hand hygiene should also be founded on a thorough understanding of what people care about, and should incorporate appropriate social norms to help build sustainable habits. The emphasis needs to move towards a transformative approach focusing on needs of the community, going beyond the benefits of WASH in sanitation research and programming and eliminating the less safe forms of sanitation. Projects like NISHTHA, USAID's flagship health system strengthening project being implemented by Jhpiego in partnership with Unilever, support various state governments in leveraging the Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) platform under Ayushman Bharat. One of the key

aspects of this project is the health and wellness session, where local communities are educated on the importance of healthy hygiene. Considering the local context, this project leverages on existing limited resources and funds to establish handwashing corners and appropriate social norms to strengthen handwashing behaviours.

Transformative approaches to hygiene and sanitation require stronger governance, management and increased accountability. There is a need to build capacities of health workers and sanitation workers, create mass awareness among the larger public and collaborate with the private sector and other partners for investing in the area of WASH. This would not only ensure access to sanitary facilities to households but would also empower people to take sustained action at local levels.

Overall, investments in toilet usage, hygiene promotion, increased access to potable water, and effective waste management are estimated to save India \$32.6 billion (₹1.48 trillion) or \$29 (₹1321) per capita, according to a Water and Sanitation Program report. Improved sanitation yields several economic benefits, including direct benefits such as avoiding illnesses (the sum of money saved on healthcare expenses), indirect economic benefits such as fewer sick days and a longer lifespan because these benefits permit people to work more. As estimated by WHO, every dollar invested in hygiene and sanitation provides a return on investment for the society of \$5.50 due to lower health costs, increased productivity and fewer premature deaths. Therefore, it is imperative to carefully shape policies and regulations that prioritize and adequately fund hygiene and sanitation.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

I WANT TO SEE THE BJP LOSE ACROSS THE COUNTRY IN THE 2024 ELECTIONS. IT WILL BE *KHELA HOBEY* AGAIN.  
—WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER  
MAMATA BANERJEE



MAMATA BANERJEE HAD SAID SIMILAR THINGS IN 2014 AND IN 2019, AND ALL OF US HAVE SEEN THE RESULT.  
—BENGAL BJP PRESIDENT  
SUKANTA MAJUMDAR

Unifier's unflinching legacy: A tribute to Sardar Patel

Adhering to the ideals of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi is taking initiatives to realise his goals

December 15, marks the death anniversary of the nation's great unifier, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The right tribute will be to adopt his ideas, actions and nationalistic spirit. The people of India will forever remain indebted to him for his leadership during the freedom struggle and his vision, wisdom, and statesmanship in the post-Independence era.

Starting his public life from being a municipal councillor in Ahmedabad to becoming India's Home Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, Patel had a very granular understanding of the various stakeholders of governance, administration, their relevance, roles and responsibilities. His steadfast approach to handling the nation's complexities made



ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL

(The writer is Union Minister of State for Culture & Parliamentary Affairs & represents Bikaner constituency in Lok Sabha. The views expressed are personal.)

him a responsible and reasoned voice of the masses.

With unflinching zeal and rare boldness, he handled the task of unification of the princely states. Patel's diplomatic maneuvers secured "accession" of these states and provided shape to the nation by bringing them in line with the constitutional framework. The unsuccessful unification of Kashmir turned out to be a grave mistake of Jawahar Lal Nehru under Shaikh Abdullah's pressure. On December 23, 1947, Nehru took J&K away from Patel's charge and placed it under Gopalaswami Ayyangar. It hurt Patel deeply and in his reply to Nehru's letter, he expressed his will to resign. All three stalwarts of the constituent assembly, Bhimrao



Ambedkar, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee and Sardar Patel, outrightly opposed J&K's special status from the beginning. Intra-party power struggles and sheer hollowness of democratic values of Congress surfaced while choosing the Prime Minister of Independent India. Twelve out of 15 Congress Committees chose Sardar Patel for presidency, but still Pandit Nehru was selected. Socialistic leader Jayaprakash Narayan once remarked: "If Sardar Patel, and not Pandit

Nehru, had been the first PM of India, maybe, Partition of the country could have been averted."

Sardar Patel's famous letter of November 7, 1950, highlights his vigorous criticism of Nehru's foreign policy of in the context of mishandling of Tibet, China and Kashmir. This criticism finds consonance with Ambedkar's vision of foreign affairs. These Nehruvian interventions resulted in Sino-India and Indo-Pak wars over the course of our history. The 41-year delay in posthumously awarding Bharat Ratna to the Iron Man still highlights Congress's ill-will towards him. Sardar Patel was denied his fair share in history due to a lack of the rationality of Nehruvian and leftist historians. Thus, it is

imperative to bring a rational account of his monumental legacy to the new generations.

After his task of unifying India, the Iron Man of India was instrumental in making the Steel frame of India, i.e., creating a massive administrative grid through the All-India Services. He also decided to culturally connect the shared heritage and ethos of Indians by reconstructing the demolished Somnath temple that would depict the story of India's resurgence and victory of construction over destruction. Adhering to the ideals of Sardar Patel, the government under PM Narendra Modi is taking initiatives to realise his goals. The steel frame of India is further strengthened to prepare future-ready civil servants through Mission Karam

Yogi. This capacity-building program aims to overcome the modern challenges of a technologically connected world, facilitate ease of life to citizens, provide best governance and emerge as the world's best civil service.

The repeal of Article 370 was a well-articulated move to correct a historic blunder. The government is fulfilling the dream of Sardar Patel through the overall development of the Somnath temple complex.

On his 143rd birth anniversary, the 'Statue of Unity', the tallest statue in the world, was dedicated to the nation that radiates the wisdom of Sardar Patel and enlightens the path of the present as well as future generations. From 2014 onwards, his birth anniversary is

observed as National Unity Day. The Ek Bharat-Shreshtha Bharat initiative further strengthens the sustained and structured cultural connection between different regions.

It is worth realising that our forefathers did everything for the ambience we have inherited. They had worked hard to institutionalise the framework that empowers individuals to attain their full potential and collectively scale new heights for the nation. As part of the ongoing 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', the death anniversary of Sardar Patel is the apt moment to recall the supreme sacrifices of countless named and unnamed individuals and pay our fitting tribute by pledging to achieving the futuristic goals for building a New India.

# US faces a double coronavirus surge as omicron advances

Washington: The new omicron coronavirus mutant speeding around the world may bring another wave of chaos, threatening to further stretch hospital workers already struggling with a surge of delta cases and upend holiday plans for the second year in a row.

The White House on Wednesday insisted there is no need for a lockdown because vaccines are widely available and appear to offer protection against the worst consequences of the virus.

But even if omicron proves milder on the whole than delta, it may disarm some of the life-saving tools available and put immune-compromised and elderly people at particular risk as it begins a rapid assault on the United States.

"Our delta surge is ongoing and, in fact, accelerating. And on top of that, we're going to add an omicron surge," said Dr Jacob Lemieux, who monitors variants for a research collaboration led by Harvard Medical School.

"That's alarming, because our hospitals are already filling up. Staff are fatigued," leaving limited capacity for a potential crush of COVID-19 cases "from an omicron wave superimposed on a delta surge."

Most likely, he and other experts said at a press briefing Tuesday, an omicron surge is already under way in the United States, with the latest mutant coronavirus outpacing the nation's ability to track it.

Based on specimens collected last week, the Centres

for Disease Control and Prevention said omicron accounted for about 3% of genetically-sequenced coronaviruses nationally. Percentages vary by region, with the highest - 13% - in the New York/New Jersey area.

But Harvard experts said these are likely underestimates because omicron is moving so fast that surveillance attempts can't keep up.

Globally, more than 75 countries have reported confirmed cases of omicron. In the United States, 36 states have detected the variant.

Meanwhile, delta is surging in many places, with hot spots in New England and the upper Midwest. The five states with the highest two-week rolling average of cases per 100,000 people are New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Michigan, Minnesota and Vermont.

Universities are abruptly closing classrooms during finals week with infections multiplying at a fast rate. The NBA is postponing games and the NFL had its worst two-day outbreak since the start of the pandemic, with dozens of players infected.

Outside the US, the president of the European Union said omicron will become the dominant variant in a month and declared that "once again, this Christmas will be overshadowed by the pandemic".

Scientists around the world are racing to understand omicron, which has a large number of worrisome mutations in important regions

## France to restrict travel from Britain to fight omicron

Paris: France will sharply restrict travel to and from Britain because of fast-spreading cases of the omicron coronavirus variant, putting limits on reasons for travelling and requiring 48-hour isolation upon arrival, the government said Thursday.

The move suddenly disrupted travel plans for families and others on both sides of the English Channel. Travellers questioned whether the measures were politically driven, and UK officials suggested they were pointless.

With omicron now seeded around the world, "red list" travel bans "wouldn't be effective or proportionate," said Boris Johnson's spokesman, Max Blain. He said Johnson hadn't spoken to French President Emmanuel Macron about the move, and that Britain doesn't plan to take a reciprocal measure. The new French measures will take effect first thing Saturday, just after midnight, "in the face of the extremely rapid spread of the omicron variant in the UK", French Prime Minister Jean Castex said in a statement.

The French government is holding a special virus security meeting Friday that will address growing pressure on hospitals in France from rising infections in recent weeks. Delta remains the dominant variant in France, but omicron is spreading so fast in Britain that it's raising concerns across the Channel.

French government spokesman Gabriel Attal said on BFM television that tourism and business travel to and from Britain will be strongly curtailed, and all those arriving from Britain will need to have a negative virus test less than 24 hours old, and to test again upon arrival and isolate "in a place they choose" for at least 48 hours.

Wednesday that early data suggests omicron is more transmissible than delta, with a doubling time of about two days.

In Britain, where omicron cases are doubling every two to three days, the variant is expected to soon replace delta as the dominant

## Moderna vax 'highly effective' against Covid variants: Study

Los Angeles: Two doses of Moderna COVID-19 vaccine are highly effective against SARS-CoV-2 variants, but protection against Delta infection decreases over time, according to a study conducted in the US.

At the time of the study, the omicron variant had not yet been detected in the Southern California region, the researchers said.

The research, published in The British Medical Journal on Wednesday, showed the vaccine was effective against COVID-19 hospitalisation associated with the Delta variant. However, vaccine effectiveness against the variant moderately declined with increasing time after vaccination. "This study confirmed effectiveness against all variants during the study period, although we did find a drop in effectiveness over time against Delta infection, from 94 per cent effectiveness in the first 2 months after vaccination to 80 per cent effectiveness after 6 months," said Katia Bruxvoort.

afternoon, omicron was already the most common variant in London.

In many ways, omicron remains a mystery. Hints are emerging from South Africa, where it was first reported, indicating it may cause less severe disease than delta but be better at evading

**Notice Inviting e-Tender**  
No.SSA/Esst/KGBV-Utensile/3702021/7945 Date: 15.12.2021  
Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission (Samagra Shiksha), Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites tender through e-Tendering process from manufacturer of Steel Utensil/supplier of Steel Utensil for supply of Utensil.

To participate in the tender process through e-procurement document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) and have to register in the portal <https://assamtenders.gov.in> by themselves.

The Bidder who have downloaded the tender schedules containing the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website shall submit their tender on-line on the website <https://assamtenders.gov.in>, with proof of payment of non refundable bid processing fee of Rs. 5000/- (Rupees five thousand) only in the form of demand draft/Bankers Cheque drawn in favour of Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam, from any nationalized/Scheduled Bank and payable at Guwahati. The tender should be submitted on-line as per date and time of submission as per prescribed schedule.

Sd/-Mission Director, SSA, Assam, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

of its genetic structure that could affect how well it spreads from person to person. How quickly the number of cases doubles, known as "doubling time", can give a preview of what the disease burden could be in a few weeks.

CDC Director Rochelle Walensky said

strain in the country. "The data out of the UK are quite alarming at this point," and foreshadow what's to come in the United States, said Bronwyn MacInnis, director of pathogen genomic surveillance at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard. For example, she said, by Tuesday

these tools, I would be telling you to be really, really worried," Fauci said.

Jeff Zients, the White House coronavirus response coordinator, said the US has the tools to fight the virus, including omicron, and "there is no need to lock down".

With vaccines available now for 95% of Americans, "we know how to keep our kids in schools and our businesses open. And we're not going to shut down".

Health officials called on Americans to get vaccinated, get their booster shots, wear masks indoors and get tested before travelling and before holiday gatherings. AP

**OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER IN CHIEF  
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT,  
NAVA RAIPUR, ATAL NAGAR  
(CENTRAL TENDER CELL) E-Procurement Tender Notice  
Main Portal: <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>  
Tenders are invited for the Following works:-**

S NO	System Tender No. / Date	Name of Work	PAC Amount (Rupees in lacs)
1	87414 First Call 23.11.2021	CONSTRUCTION OF BHANPURI TO KOKDI MELA GROUND APPROACH ROAD(LENGTH 2.27 KM.) I/C. CULVERTS AT DISTT. DURG.	631.61
2	87415 First Call 23.11.2021	CONSTRUCTION OF GOVT. I.T.I. BUILDING AT BLOCK - LUNDRA DISTT. SURGUJA (C.G.) (Work code -W18112)	330.35
3	87435 First Call 23.11.2021	Construction of Govt. Girls College Building I/C. Water C Supply & Sanitary Fittings, And Electrification Work At Balod Distt. Balod.	455.56
4	87446 First Call 24.11.2021	CONSTRUCTION OF GOVT. I.T.I. BUILDING AT KANSABEL DISTT. JASHPUR (C.G.) (Work code - W18110)	330.35
5	87436 First Call 24.11.2021	CONSTRUCTION OF GOVT. I.T.I. BUILDING AT UDAIPUR DISTT. SURGUJA (C.G.) (Work code - W18113)	330.34
6	87554 Second Call 25.11.2021	Construction of Village Kikrapal Mata Mandir C To Nayapur Road Length 2.850 Km. I/C Bridges Culverts, Distt.Sukma. CGRIDCL	290.35
7	87551 First Call 25.11.2021	Construction of Teljundra Matiya Road C Length 2.20 K.M. At Distt. Durg.	656.81
8	87578 First Call 25.11.2021	Construction of Chaturdik Roads at Patan in Patan Vidhansabha Length 6.60 K.M. AT DISTT. DURG.	1821.28
9	87549 First Call 26.11.2021	CONSTRUCTION OF GOVT. COLLEGE BUILDING I/C.WATER SUPPLY, SANITARY FITTINGS WATER HARVESTING & ELECTRIFICATION WORK AT CHIRKO, DISTT. MAHASAMUND (C.G.) (DN. MAHASAMUND)	463.43
10	87593 First Call 26.11.2021	CONSTRUCTION OF Demar Approach Road from Main Road (SH-22) Near Petrol Pump. Length 2.30 Km In Distt. - DURG (C.G.)	735.26
11	87730 First Call 27.11.2021	Construction of Punjipathara to Tamnar-Milupara Road Length 27.50 Km (C.C. Road) (Actual Length 26.00 Km). CGRIDCL	5849.77
12	87780 Second Call 27.11.2021	Construction Of High Level Bridge I/C Approaches Across Achholi Nalla In Km. 28/2 Of Molipur(Rajnandgaon)- Dongargarh Road. CGRIDCL	460.92
13	87791 Second Call 29.11.2021	CONSTRUCTION OF STRENGTHENING & RECONSTRUCTION OF CHARAIDAND-BAGICHA ROAD 10.00 Km AND CONSTRUCTION OF TAMBAKACHHAR TO JABLA BASTI 3.40 Km BLOCK- BAGICHA DISTT, JASHPUR, (C.G.) (Work code - W17543, W17613).CGRIDCL	2737.34
14	87927 Second Call 01.12.2021	CONSTRUCTION OF HIGH LEVEL BRIDGE I/C APPROACHES ACROSS MEDHAKI RIVER IN KM 1/4 ON KOYALBEDA-DUTA ROAD. CGRIDCL	1103.58
15	87928 Second Call 01.12.2021	CONSTRUCTION OF HARANGARH BAZAR TO MARKAMPARA ROAD FROM KM 1/2 TO 4/10 = 4.00 KM, INCLUDING CULVERTS DISTT. KANKER (CGRIDCL)	435.05

Last Date of Tender Downloading For Tenders Date are Scheduled as Date 24-12-2021. For more details on the tender and bidding process please visit the above mentioned portal.

Sd/-  
Chief Engineer  
(Central Tender Cell)  
Office Of Engineer In Chief  
P.W.D. Nava Raipur Atal Nagar

**GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR  
Office of the Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti PHE,  
Ground Water Division, Sgr.**

**Gist of e-Tender.**  
NIT No: - e-PHE/GWD/63 of 12/2021, Dated: - 15-12-2021

For and on behalf of Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir e-tenders are invited in 02 Cover System for Construction of tube wells at below mentioned site from registered water well drillers/contractors as per the details given in tender document.

**S.No 1. Name of work :-** Construction of Dug Well (200 mm dia Odex Type Production Well for Irrigation Purpose) at Hyen B Kabab Marg Block Thrgam of District Kupwara.

**Est. Cost Rs. in Lacs :-** Rs. 19.29 Lacs, **Cost of Tender Document :-** Rs. 1000/- **Time of completion :-** 45 Days, **Technical Sanction :-** PHE/GWD/85 of 12/2021, **Class of Contract :-** Registered for Construction of Gravel Packed Production Tube Wells, **Prog :-** PRI Grants (Capex Budget 2021-22), **AAA No:** 394 DDCK of 2021, dated: 13-12-2021

**Critical Dates / Information.**

- 1. Publishing Date :-** 16-12-2021 (02:00 P.M)
- 2. Period of Downloading of Bids :-** 16-12-2021 (02:00 P.M) to 24-12-2021 (02:00 P.M)
- 3. Period of Submission of bids :-** 16-12-2021 (02:00 P.M) to 24-12-2021 (02:00 P.M)
- 4. Date of opening of Tender. :-** 27-12-2021 at (02:00 P.M)
- 5. Tender Receiving Authority:** Executive Engineer, (Jal Shakti) PHE Ground Water Srinagar Kashmir- 190011.
- 6. Document Cost :- Non-Refundable** in the shape of Treasury Challan/receipt deposited to **Account Head 0215** in favour of Executive Engineer (Jal Shakti) PHE Ground Water Division Srinagar (at Saddar Treasury Srinagar) (The firm shall specify the name of work for which apply)
- 7. Bid Validity Period: 180 Days**
- 8. The bids can be downloaded or uploaded on [www.Jktenders.gov.in](http://www.Jktenders.gov.in)**
- 9. Instead of EMD the firm has to furnish "Bid Security Declaration",** format of the declaration is mentioned in the Bid Document.

Sd/- Executive Engineer,  
Jal Shakti PHE Ground Water Division Sgr.

**China's #MeToo victims face abuse, payback for going public**

Taipei: Human resources and upper management wouldn't deal with her accusation of sexual assault, a former employee of Alibaba said. So she went into the busy cafeteria at the Chinese e-commerce giant's headquarters and screamed out her plight.

Now she's facing online harassment, accusations of lying from the wives of the two men she accused and a defamation lawsuit from a Alibaba vice president who was forced to resign. And, she revealed recently, the company fired her.

Women in China often face such troubles if they choose to speak publicly about sexual assault. In multiple high-profile cases, particularly during China's brief #MeToo movement in 2018, victims were sued by the men who allegedly harassed them. Some have been targeted with online harassment and censored from speaking about their cases.

In the most high-profile case, former Chinese tennis star Peng Shuai disappeared from public view after accusing former high-level official Zhang Gaoli of sexual assault. Her accusation was quickly scrubbed from the internet and discussion of it remains heavily censored.

In such a climate, women's rights activists fear that fewer victims will be willing to speak up. "This is helping the wrongdoer, and makes the workplace environment even worse, and it's an attack on the next woman who wants to stand out," said #MeToo activist Zhou Xiaoxuan.

The former Alibaba employee told the Dahe Daily, a provincial Chinese newspaper, that she would not encourage other women to come forward, given her own experience of being attacked online and called a liar.

But she said in written responses to questions from The Associated Press that she would continue her fight.

**Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen has book deal**

New York: The former Facebook manager who startled the world this fall by leaking tens of thousands of internal documents and accusing her former employer of caring more about money than about public safety has a book deal.

Little, Brown and Company announced Thursday that it had acquired a planned memoir, "offering a critical examination of Facebook," by Frances Haugen. The book does not yet have a title or release date. Financial terms were not disclosed.

"During my time at Facebook I realised a devastating truth: almost nobody outside of Facebook knows what happens inside of Facebook. They operate in the dark," Haugen said in a statement.

"They win by keeping their systems closed without oversight or transparency, by shrouding their operations in secrecy and PR spin. I came forward because I believe that every human being deserves the dignity of the truth — and the truth is that Facebook buys its astronomical profits by sacrificing our safety. But it does not have to be this way — these problems are solvable. AP

**5 children die in bouncy castle accident in Australia**

Sydney: Five children died and four others were in critical condition on Thursday after falling from a bouncy castle that was lifted 10 metres (33 feet) into the air by a gust of wind at a school on Australia's island state of Tasmania.

The school was holding a celebration to mark the end of the school year.

The children who died included two boys and two girls in year 6, which would make them 10 or 11 years old, said Tasmania police Commissioner Darren Hine. Police later Thursday confirmed a fifth child died in the hospital.

Five other children were being treated, including four in critical condition. Hine said an investigation is underway.

Images published by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation showed police officers consoling each other as paramedics provided first aid to victims.

Parents arrived at the school gate to collect their children as helicopters ferried the injured to hospitals.

Tasmania state Premier Peter Gutwein called the incident "simply inconceivable... I know this is a strong and caring community that will stand together and support one another."

**NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY Auction Notice No.: 13/2021-22  
E-Auction Program for the Month of January-2022**

All prospective bidders are invited to participate in the on-line public auctions being conducted for sale of scrap material.

Proposed E-Auction Dates	Jurisdiction of lots	Contact No.
6, 12, 20 & 28 January 2022	Dy.CMM/GSD/Gorakhpur	0551-2283558
5, 11, 19 & 25 January 2022	Dy.CMM/GSD/Izzatnagar	0581-2518138
7, 13, 21 & 27 January 2022	Sr. DMM/Lucknow	0522-2233113
4, 11, 18 & 25 January 2022	Sr. DMM/Varanasi	0542-2224819
6, 12, 20 & 28 January 2022	Sr. DMM/Izzatnagar	0581-2518104

**Type of Material:** Scrap Rail, Cast Iron, Melting, MS, condemned Rolling Stock (Coaches, Wagons and Locomotives), Turning & Boring, Non-Ferrous such as copper, Aluminium, Batteries etc.

• In the event of Auction not being completed on the same day, Auction will be continued on the subsequent days also. • Details of Auction catalogue, Procedure and Conditions of Sale are available at [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) • This auction programme is also available on N.E. Railway website [www.ner.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.ner.indianrailways.gov.in) CPRO/S-86

**Principal Chief Material Manager, Gorakhpur**  
About any passenger amenity complaint SMS on Mob. No.: 09794845955  
Never travel on roof and foot boards.

**TECHNOFAB ENGINEERING**  
Regd. Office: 913, Hemkunt Chambers, 89 Nehru Place, New Delhi - 110 019, CIN: L74210DL1971PLCO0512  
Tel: +91-11-2641-1931 / 2641-5961  
Email: [cs@technofabengineering.com](mailto:cs@technofabengineering.com)  
Website: [www.technofabengineering.com](http://www.technofabengineering.com)

**NOTICE**

This is to inform that a Board meeting is scheduled to be held on 22 December 2021 at the corporate office of the Company to consider and approve the financial results for the quarter and six month ended 30 September 2021. Please take note that the trading window will remain closed for the concerned persons upto 24 December 2021.

For Technofab Engineering Limited  
Date: 16/12/2021 Arun Singh  
Place: New Delhi Company Secretary

**Israel to donate 1 million Covid vaccines to African countries**

Jerusalem: The Israeli government on Wednesday said it was donating 1 million coronavirus vaccines to the UN-backed COVAX programme.

The Foreign Ministry said the AstraZeneca vaccines would be transferred in the coming weeks, a decision that was part of Israel's strengthening ties with the African countries.

"I am delighted that Israel can contribute and be a partner in eradicating the pandemic around the world," said

Foreign Minister Yair Lapid.

The announcement said the vaccines would reach close to a quarter of African countries, though it did not provide a list. Israel has close ties with a number of African nations, including Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda.

Israel also established relations with Sudan last year as part of a series of US-brokered accords. COVAX is a global initiative that aims to provide coronavirus vaccines to poorer nations. Wealthier coun-

tries have acquired the most of the world's vaccine supplies, causing vast inequality in access to jabs. Israel was one of the first countries to vaccinate its population.

Early this year, it came under criticism for not sharing enough of its supplies with the Palestinians. Since then, Israel has vaccinated tens of thousands of Palestinians who work in Israel and its settlements, and the Palestinians have procured vaccines from COVAX and other sources. AP

**SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE**

**ICICI Bank** Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

**Whereas** The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	M/s Onyx Industries/ Yatin Magu/ Anu Magu/ Ashok Magu/ A/C No. 629351001201	1. Plot No- 3A GF, Block- J/10, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi 110027/ 2. 56/1, Block A, Rewari Line, Industrial Area, Phase II, Opposite- SBI Branch, Mayapuri, New Delhi- 110064/ December 13, 2021	July 31, 2021 Rs. 4,11,22,469/-	Mayapuri

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date: December 17, 2021  
Authorized Officer  
ICICI Bank Limited  
Place: Delhi/ NCR

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**Tender Notice No. :- NR/FUELLCELL/DEMUP/1/2021 Dt 15.12.2021**

Open Tender is invited for "Hydrogen Fuel cell based DPRS with regenerative braking system 1200 KW DEMU"

Approximate Value : Rs. 84.20 Crore (Eighty Four Crore Twenty Lacs only)  
Earnest Money deposit : Rs. 43,60,000/- (Forty Three lac Sixty Thousand only)

Option A (valid up to 31.12.2021) or Option B as per Clause No. 3.0 of Special Tender Conditions and Instructions to Tenderer (s)

Submission of Tender : 17.01.2022 to 31.01.2022  
Date & Time of Closing : 31.01.2022 at 15:00 Hrs  
Date & Time of Opening : 31.01.2022 at 15:30 Hrs  
Completion Period : 30 Months

Please visit website <https://www.ireps.gov.in/> Tender Notice (NR/FUELLCELL/DEMUP/1/2021 Dt 15.12.2021) for Tender Document and other details along with necessary corrigendum/amendments, if any which shall be available on IREPS website.

Contact Person :-  
Chief Mechanical Engineer/IT  
Mechanical Branch, Northern Railway Head Quarter,  
1st Floor, Annex-1, Baroda House, New Delhi-110001  
Contact no: 9717639460/9717637480  
Email: [cmeltmry@gmail.com](mailto:cmeltmry@gmail.com)  
No. NR/FuelCell/DEMUP/1/2021 Dated 15.12.2021

2947/2021  
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE



Banking services hit as employees go on strike

New Delhi: Banking operations were impacted across the country on Thursday as lakhs of public sector bank (PSB) employees began their two-day strike to protest against bank privatisation.



Employees of various public sector banks shout slogans against the move to privatise their banks during a protest near parliament in New Delhi on Thursday

Shutters of many branches of PSBs like State Bank of India (SBI), Punjab National Bank and Bank of India were down on Thursday with a message informing customers about the strike.

According to AIBEA General Secretary C H Venkatchalam, about 20.4 lakh cheques worth ₹18,600 crore could not be transacted on Thursday.

Services such as deposits and withdrawals at branches, cheque clearance and loan approvals were affected. However, ATMs at many places were working fine.

Sensex snaps 4-session slide amid firm global cues; IT stocks shine

Mumbai: Equity indices eked out modest gains on Thursday after a four-session losing streak, in tandem with an upmove in global markets despite a hawkish tilt by the US Federal Reserve.

A rebounding rupee also bolstered sentiment, though unabated selling by foreign institutional investors capped the upside, traders said.

After a choppy session, the 30-share BSE Sensex closed 113.11 points or 0.20 per cent higher at 57,901.14.

Bajaj Finance led the Sensex gainers' chart with a jump of 2.61 per cent, followed by Infosys, Titan, Reliance Industries, HCL Tech, M&M and Nestle India.

In contrast, Maruti, ICICI Bank, Bajaj Auto, Sun Pharma, IndusInd Bank and SBI were among the laggards, slipping up to 1.51 per cent.

"Domestic bourses closed flat with a mild positive bias despite an upbeat economic outlook by the US Fed. Domestic weakness was due to FII selling and moderation in retail activity," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

feel the performance of the global markets would be critical in days to come. At the same time, we expect the buzz to continue in the primary market.

Sectorally, BSE IT, energy, tech, consumer durables and oil and gas indices climbed as much as 1.25 per cent, while power, utilities, realty and bankex nursed losses.

Rupee posts first rise in 7 days, ends 23 paise higher at 76.09 a dollar

Mumbai: The rupee on Thursday clocked its first gain in seven sessions, rebounding 23 paise to close at 76.09 against the US dollar as participants took note of weakening of the greenback after US Fed turned hawkish.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened at 76.31 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 76.06 during the day's trade.

"Rupee traded positive on US Fed statement of tapering, but economic data relevance did not support the dollar index, helping the rupee to take support near 76.25. Going ahead rupee can be seen range of 75.75-76.25," Jateen Trivedi, Senior Research Analyst at LKP Securities said.

COMMODITY TRADING

Sebi comes out with cut-off time framework for risk parameter file generation

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi on Thursday came out with a framework pertaining to cut-off time for generation of last risk parameter file used for collecting margins from commodities traders.

Also, the regulator modified the framework prescribed for enabling verification of upfront collection of margins from clients in commodity derivatives segment.

The new framework will be effective from January 15, 2022, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a circular.

The regulator, in November 2019, had mandated that the cut-off time for the purpose of determining minimum threshold of margins to be collected by members from their clients will be 5 pm for commodity derivative contracts that are traded beyond banking hours.

This was done due to the limitations with availability of banking channels beyond 5 pm.

As both banking facilities -- RTGS and NEFT -- are functional round-the-clock on all days now, Sebi said its circular issued in November 2019 "stands withdrawn".

BSES wins prestigious Greentech Awards

New Delhi: There is a lot of outstanding work taking place at BSES. This is being increasingly recognized and appreciated by the industry, stakeholders and the peers.

Electric vehicle mkt to see investment of ₹94,000 cr in next 5 years: Report

New Delhi: Electric vehicle market is likely to attract investments of ₹94,000 crore over the next five years and is expected to generate business opportunities in the real estate sector, according to a joint report by Colliers India and Indospace.

The report 'Electric Mobility in Full Gear' mentioned that the electric vehicle (EV) industry in India is currently at a nascent stage but it is likely to grow, backed by government initiatives and a move towards recognising climate change.

India is taking a step towards sustainability and has vowed to cut its carbon emissions. At the recently concluded CoP26 summit, India pledged to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2070.

Property consultant Colliers estimated that over the next five years, the EV space in India is likely to see investments of ₹94,000 crore (USD 12.6 billion) across the value chain.

"There is ample opportunity for landlords across the spectrum from manufacturing to charging infrastructure," it said. Significant land around 1300 acres will be required pan-India to set up 110 GWh battery manufacturing capacity by 2030.

The consultant estimated that India will need about 26,800 public charging spots by 2025, requiring space of about 13.5 million square feet.

"Landlords can outsource dedicated charging stations to charging service providers at busy locations. They can also enter into a revenue share model with charging service providers. There is also ample scope for developers to develop retail and recreation spaces in proximity to charging stations," the report said.

Cryptocurrencies a challenge for emerging markets, regulation needed: IMF chief economist

New Delhi: International Monetary Fund (IMF) Chief Economist Gita Gopinath has made a strong case for regulating cryptocurrencies, saying it will always be a challenge to ban them as they operate from offshore exchanges.

Gopinath also suggested a global policy and co-ordinated action for regulating cryptocurrencies.

"I think cryptocurrencies are a particular challenge for emerging markets. It seems to be more attractive to adopt cryptocurrencies and assets in

emerging economies than in advanced economies," she said while addressing an event organised by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) on Wednesday.

India is contemplating bringing a bill in Parliament to deal with the challenges posed by the unregulated cryptocurrencies. Currently, there are no particular regulations or any ban on use of cryptocurrencies in the country. "Regulation is absolutely important for the sector (cryptocurrencies and assets)...

trying different things, there is obviously challenges to banning (cryptocurrencies and assets)," Gopinath, who is slated to be the first deputy managing director of the IMF early next year, said.

According to the IMF chief economist, no individual country could solve this (cryptocurrencies) problem on its own given the complex cross-border transactions.

Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam Limited (GMVN) E-TENDER NOTICE. Invites Tenders from Nationalized Banks / M.N.C./ Government / Semi Government / N.G.O. / Other reputed organisations/ Private Person for providing office building of GMVN on Lease/ Rent situated at C-50, Sector-62, Noida performing permissible institutional activities for the period of five years.

C.G. Police Housing Corporation, Raipur (CG) TENDER NOTICE (1st Call). Online Tenders are invited according to Key dates for (Group-A) Supply, Construction and erection of Prefabricated Barracks (13 Nos) for Paramilitary Force of sandwich puff panels along with developmental works at Padegaon, Antargah Block, District - Kanker & (Group-B) Construction of Road, digging & construction of bund temporary kitchen, morcha, toilet block, entrance gate, site leveling and temporary koth at Padegaon, Antargah Block, Distt - Kanker.

IMPORTANT NOTICE. This is notified for the information of rail passengers that Railways have decided to revise timings of Train No. 12618 H.Nizamuddin-Ernakulam Mangla Lakshadweep Express (Daily) at the following stations as per details given below:-

Table with 4 columns: STATION, Existing Timing, Revised Timing. Rows for Kalyan Jn., Panvel.

Rest of information will hold good. For any kind of information such as detailed Time -Table and stations enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website: www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in or NTES App.

All kinds of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 may please be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

RailMadad Helpline No. 139. Visit RailMadad website: www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in. Download Railmadad App. SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE.

C.G. Police Housing Corporation, Raipur (CG) MANUAL SHORT TENDER NOTICE (1st Call). Manual tenders are invited for providing and fixing of Fencing with punched tape Concertina Coils (PTCC) conforming to defence specification No.IND/ENGG./PRO/1245 B or COAE/5660/1602a & its connected drawing of 1050mm dia in close condition in pyramid shape i.e. 3 tiers two row at bottom and one at top the five rows of RPT ic transportation and cost of all materials and labour etc. complete.

UJVN LIMITED (An Uttarakhand Govt. Enterprise) No. 991 Date Extension Notice-1. Due to unavoidable circumstances the date of e-NIT No.11/EE(C-M)/DDN/2021-22 invited by Executive Engineer (Civil- Maintenance) Yamuna Bhawan, Yamuna Colony, Dehradun is hereby extended as below:

UJVN LIMITED (An Uttarakhand Govt. Enterprise) NOTICE INVITING TENDER. For and on behalf of UJVN Ltd., Executive Engineer (Civil), Pashulok Barrage Rishikesh, invites sealed & separate tenders from interested contractors for following works:-

OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER P.H.E.D CIRCLE TONK No.4750-4757 Date:10/12/2021 NOTICE INVITING TENDERS THROUGH e-procurement system NIT No. 26/2021-22. Online tenders through e-procurement system are hereby invited, on behalf of the Governor of Rajasthan from enlisted contractors with the department in appropriate class under the Government of Rajasthan and enlisted contractors with CPWD/ Postal, Telecom, Railways, MES, other state Govt./ Central Govt, undertaking / organization equivalent to "AA" Class of Rajasthan provided they meet out prescribed eligibility criteria for the following works.

DATA PROTECTION BILL Panel suggests greater accountability for social media, inclusion of personal and non-personal data

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

A Joint Committee on Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019, headed by BJP MP PP Chaudhary, tabled its report in both the Houses on Thursday recommending among others that all social media platforms which do not act as intermediaries be treated as publishers and held accountable for the content they host.

The panel finalized its report in 78 sittings encompassing 184 hours and 20 minutes after being granted six extensions to submit its report. The committee received 234 memorandums and each was analyzed and incorporated after getting the response of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) on each suggestion.

Thereafter, the Committee heard the views and suggestions of 31 experts, representatives of statutory, regulatory, government bodies, data experts, cyber security experts as well as organizations representing industry and professional bodies.

The committee has also taken view points from Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), National Investigation Agency (NIA), Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

The committee members also went to study tours to Mumbai, and Bengaluru between October 26 and 29 this year where they visited the

data centres of SBI and UIDAI; Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) and Central Processing Centre of Income Tax Department.

The committee also received dissent notes from Manish Tewari, Ms. Mahua Moitra, Gaurav Gogoi, Ritesh Pandey, Vivek K. Tankha, Jairam Ramesh, Derek O'Brien and Dr. Amar Patnaik on the bill.

In a dissent note, Vivek K Tankha said blanket protection to the government agency is neither constitutional nor in the interest of people's democracy.

India already has many data assets of national importance including Aadhar, Passport Seva, Open Data Stack (data.gov.in), MCA21, GSTN, Unified Payment Interface (UPI), WRIS (Jalshakti), DISHA (rural development) and Bhuvan (ISRO).

With the world's second largest population, the fifth largest economy with GDP of \$3.0 trillion, over 700 million internet users and over 400 million smart phone users, India is generating mammoth amounts of data on a daily basis. India generates about 150 exabytes of data annually and is amongst the fastest growing data generating nations in the world.

The Bill, seeking to provide for the protection of personal data of individuals and establish a Data Protection Authority for the same, was brought in Parliament in 2019 and was referred to the Joint Committee for further scrutiny on the demand of opposition members.

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE. Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005. Whereas The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) R/W Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, (on underlying pool assigned to ICICI Bank by Dewan Housing Finance Ltd.) in relation to the enforcement of security in respect of a housing loan facility granted pursuant to a loan agreement entered into between DHFL and the borrower, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER. No. RMSA/CW/RIDF-XXVI/1475/2021/22 Date : 15.12.2021. The Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha, Assam invites bids for the following building works from registered Class-I contractor under PWD (Building), Assam having experience of similar nature of work in Assam.



**Bollywood**  
 'Oh My Ghost is scary in some parts and funny in others. I think that's a clever combination.'  
 — Sunny Leone

<https://www.dailypioneer.com/vivacity/>

# PARADIGM SHIFT

Quack Quack shares a yearly round-up report of everything in online dating in 2021.

By RAVI MITTAL

If the year 2020 seemed grim for this planet, 2021 took it upon itself to be the chilling reminder that it wasn't so much about the year but the general times we have come to live in. Every domain and every sector has gone through seismic changes, both for the better and the worse. However, very few realms have observed an entire paradigm shift across 2021 as significantly as that of online dating.

Chronicling and charting out the key observations in the year 2021's dating trends becomes of paramount importance to assess where online dating stood and where it is headed. This is where a survey conducted by an Indian dating app, QuackQuack, assumes importance.

The pandemic has indeed thrown a few curveballs towards individuals wanting to date. Males and females alike are rapidly coming to terms with a new universe of online dating every single day and embracing more self-paced and healthier ways of dating, an evolving process that shall be the norm soon.

The key takeaways from the survey can be best summarised as below:



## VACCINATION IS A MUST

With the world changing ever so slightly every millisecond, we are coming to terms with the notion that a new normal is not just beckoning but is very much here. The survey corroborates this very trend whereby a distinct eight out of every 10 people, who were part of the sample size of the survey, voiced their opinion in favour of compulsory vaccination as a precursor to a date.

A fairly significant 65 per cent and 75 per cent of people belonging to the age groups of 18-20 and 21-30 respectively agreed upon the same. The importance of a double jab was uniformly highlighted across both the top cities as well as the tier two cities of the country as 75 per cent and 70 per cent of the sample size belonging to each felt that the first step towards a safe date would have to be complete vaccination of the other. It was also observed that 80 per cent of the women and 70 per cent of the men who were part of the survey sample felt the necessity of inoculation prior to dates.

## DATING WITH A PURPOSE

The survey outlined the notion that, owing to the protocols surrounding Covid in place, people have had very little reason to venture outdoors, thereby leading them to reflect on the nature of the dates they have found on the dating app as against plunging for matches with a sense of desperation. 47 per cent of the

women and 35 per cent of the men, who were part of the survey, vouched for this behavioural change and also commented that the process of reflection and introspection led them towards healthier relationships than before. The difference in the trend of intentional dating between individuals residing in urban areas and those belonging to rural or semi-urban areas was comparatively

similar. While nearly 37 per cent of urban teenagers found that their dating process had taken a purposeful turn, 39 per cent of those from rural or semi-urban areas felt likewise.

## HAILING FROM THE SAME LOCATION IS PIVOTAL

The survey found that a staggering 58 per cent and 56 per cent of individuals ranging between the age groups of 18 to 20 and 21 and 30 respectively preferred pairing up with those belonging to a different location as it would help expand their radius of search for a prospective partner. This trend seemed to be more prominent within women as 58 per cent of them were comfortable dating partners from other locations as against a relatively lower 50 per cent among men. Further investigation into a demographic analysis of the sampled data revealed that 46 per cent of those residing in major metro cities preferred dating beyond the confines of their home location whereas a comparatively higher 57 per cent chose the same in the case of smaller cities as well as towns. The numbers indicate that a significant number of individuals do

not find location to be a major barrier when it comes to dating and are flexible with having partners from a place other than their own.

## VIDEO CALLING VERSUS MEETING IN PERSON

The survey revealed that a major percentage of 56 per cent in the age group of 18 to 20 preferred having their first date on a virtual medium and were risk-averse owing to the ongoing Covid situation across the country. However, in contrast, 43 per cent people in the age bracket of 30 and above, belonging to a more old school approach, chose to meet in person whilst following all the necessary safety precautions.

In conclusion, this survey should be seen, more than anything, as a stepping stone towards more such insightful study aiming to explore the contemporary trends in the dating arena along with the ebb and flow of user habits and behaviors that is bound to accompany the vast expanse i.e. online dating.

(The author is the founder and CEO of QuackQuack.)



## NEW PARTY ANTHEM

The video of A R RAHMAN and DALER MEHNDI's song, *Saala Garda Uda Diya*, from *Atrangi Re*, goes viral. By TEAM VIVA

*Saala Garda Uda Diya* is the new slang that is trending. The internet went gaga over the music video which crossed two million views in the first few hours of its video release. The love for Daler Mehndi's voice with AR Rahman's music and Irshad Kamil's lyrics can be seen in the comment section of the song on YouTube. One person commented, "A R Rahman plus Daler Mehndi gave us *Rang de Basanti* way back in 2006 and the same magic is seen in 2021".

Mehndi shares his experience of working with Rahman and for the first time with Kamil. He expressed, "I remember getting a call from Rahman *saab* and I was extremely happy to be his only choice for this song. My excitement doubled when I heard that Kamil is the lyricist".

He added, "Whenever Rahman *saab* and I come together, there's some magic. Receiving such a warm response from the audience in the first few hours proves that our magic works".

Even after 25 years in the music industry, Mehndi never disappoints his audience. There is something new and exclusive in every song and every work he does. He is the powerhouse of the Bollywood music industry and his songs are a full power-pack deal. There is no doubt that *Garda* is the new party anthem of the year.

Zindagi ropes in Fawad Khan and Sanam Saeed for their forthcoming original which will stream on ZEE5. The yet-to-be-titled series is helmed by critically acclaimed director Asim Abbasi who also directed Zindagi's first original *Churails*.

The show blends together magical realism and supernatural fantasy within a family reunion setting, and deals with themes of love, loss and reconciliation. In this series, Khan plays a single parent — charming but ridden with guilt for what he has lost. With his son, he tries to be every bit the father his own father was and wasn't. Saeed plays the central female character in the series. Harboured otherworldly secrets, she takes it upon herself to heal, and make whole, everyone who surrounds her.

The series has gone on floors and a large part of it has been shot in the picturesque Hunza valley.

Speaking on the announcement of the new series, Shailja Kejriwal, from Zee Entertainment Enterprises said, "We've had a very rewarding association with Fawad, Sanam and Asim individually with their past projects and are thrilled to bring them together on this one. This time we've experimented with the genre as well as the storyline. While audiences have often seen shows on family dynamics this one is infused with realms of mystique

## Blend of mystique and fantasy

Actors FAWAD KHAN and SANAM SAEED roped in as Zindagi's yet-to-be-titled show. By TEAM VIVA



and fantasy, making it a fascinating watch."

"I think Zindagi is taking bold and brave decisions when it comes to storytelling. It's nat-

urally evolving into a platform that encourages diversity of opinion and inclusiveness for all filmmakers and material ranging from everyday mainstream

to avant-garde and noir. I feel there's a place for everyone in this artistic landscape," shared Khan.

Saeed expressed, "I'm

thrilled to be collaborating with one of my favourite directors Asim Abbasi again, this time for Zindagi. This new project embarks on a fantastical journey with some stunning performances by a very meticulously picked cast. I can't wait for everyone to see the magic that's been created in this beautiful limbo land."

"Zindagi has become a pioneer, not only for India-Pakistan OTT collaborations, but also for encouraging artists to push boundaries of narrative storytelling. I experienced that with *Churails*, and I am experiencing that again with this project. Under Shailja's support and guidance, Zindagi has truly become a home for many filmmakers like me, where we can see our craziest, wildest ideas come to fruition. I am feeling blessed, and very hopeful that this new project will have a very strong emotional resonance not only with the South Asian viewers, but a global audience," said Abbasi.

One of the greatest and most loved contemporary actors, Khan and Saeed have been known for their superlative work in the popular television series *Zindagi Gulzar Hai*.



Bollywood actors Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt and director Ayan Mukherji during their forthcoming film *Brahmastra's* promotion at Thyagraj Stadium in New Delhi



—Photos by Pankaj Kumar

## TRENDBLAZER

### RANBIR KAPOOR MISSES HIS FATHER

Actor **RANBIR KAPOOR** is all set to return to the big screen with his superhero saga *Brahmastra*, helmed by Ayan Mukherji. He revealed that Rishi Kapoor used to bombard him with a lot of questions about the film.

"I miss my father terribly today. I remember during the making of this film, during these last how many ever years, he kept fighting with Ayan and me and kept questioning us, 'What are you doing?' 'Who takes so long to make a film?' 'Who spends so much money? Ranbir, you're not making one penny on this film. India mein koi VFX film nahi dekhta.'" the *Barfi* star confessed.

### fairtalk

PANKAJ TRIPATHI



"Being a village boy, I never thought of becoming an actor when I was young, so meeting my favourite cricketer was out of question. Now, when 83's offer came to me and as part of the workshop I met Sunil sir and Kapil sir, it was emotional. It was a pinch-me moment for me. The young boy from the village has come this far — I am emotional about it."

### dailytalk

DHANUSH



"Somehow, Anand L Rai found me. He saw one song of mine from a film called *Aadukalam*. He wanted somebody like that to play Kundan (the character in *Raanjhanaa*). And then he was crazy enough to fly to Kolkata the same day he spoke to me, because I was there performing for an event. Then he spoke to me for ten minutes about impossible achievements. I was amazed by the conviction he had."

### BEN AFFLECK ON HIS PAST

Hollywood star **BEN AFFLECK** says that if he and his former wife Jennifer Garner had not divorced in 2018, he would feel trapped.

Affleck shared, "We probably would've ended up at each other's throats. I'd probably still be drinking. It's part of why I started... because I was trapped. I was like 'I can't leave 'cause of my kids, but I'm not happy, what do I do?' I would drink a bottle of scotch and fall asleep on the couch, which turned out not to be the solution."



# 38 YEARS OF ORIENT EXPRESS

SAMEER BAWA experiences an indulgent evening with fine wines and gourmet food accentuated by excellent service at Taj Palace

It's a bus, no it's a train, oh, it's the Orient Express! The train that defined luxury and comfort, before air travel came into vogue (1919 - 1977), has a namesake at the Taj Palace Hotel in New Delhi. The fine dining European restaurant which is celebrating its 38<sup>th</sup> anniversary offers luxury, comfort and great food on the lines of what the passengers experienced on the transcontinental journey from Paris to Constantinople (Istanbul) back in the day. The interiors of the restaurant are replete with deep armchairs, intricate panelling, oriental rugs and fine cutlery which mirrors the dining car of the original Orient Express.

I went in for an elaborate five course dinner last evening and thoroughly enjoyed the overall experience. "It's a rediscovery of Europe's culinary joys", says Ananya Mukherjee (Director PR & Marketing). The novel menu blends new and innovative preparations with the classics and, in a very special way, recreates the route of the journey.

We started with a selection of breads with *Chicken liver pâté* and butter on the side. Perfect accompaniment to your chilled tulip of sparkling wine. Starting off, I had the *Camembert cheese soufflé* with paprika sauce. The French classic preparation has been mastered by the Chef and was light, fluffy and perfectly balanced. Just a sprinkle of freshly crushed black pepper and every bite was divine. For the soup, I requested for the *Essence of roast fennel and celery root*, broiled pepitas seeds. Light and fragrant, the soup was exactly what I needed to rev up my appetite and perfect soul food for the nippy December evening. You could get a hint of aromas of the fennel when the broth was poured over pepitas seeds. Definitely, one for people who are counting the calories.

For the mains, I requested for the *New Zealand lamb chops* encrusted with herbs, almonds and drizzled with rosemary jus. And that, ladies and gentleman, was the show-stopper! Between medium and well done, the juicy lamb was an explosion of flavours in every bite. Perfumed with rosemary jus and garnished with almond crumble, the texture and taste were on point. One preparation that touches all your senses. You get the umami from the meat, the hint of salt and sweetness from the jus and the very slight bitterness from the almonds which made it a really well rounded dish. Absolutely loved it.

Culminated my meal with a *Baileys crème brûlée* which was nice but I thought the caramelised sugar on top could have had a bit more crunch and maybe burnt for a bit longer. They also had the very popular *Warm chocolate pudding with liquid chocolate centre* on the menu, which, off late, has been a regular feature on almost every restaurant menu. I have tried it before and its brilliant. I possibly would also stick my neck out and say that the Chefs at Taj have mastered it to the T.

All in all it was lovely indulgent evening around fine wines and gourmet food accentuated by excellent service. The



staff at the Orient Express is very well trained and have a keen eye for detail. They are happy to help you with selection of wines and at the same time equally at ease to recommend dishes from the menu that match your palate. I strongly suggest that you make a plan to experience the Orient Express if you have not tried it as yet. In my humble opinion, they have a knack of transforming a regular meal into an occasion.

(The author is a food critic and food connoisseur.)

# EDIBLE INGREDIENTS FOR A HEALTHY SKIN

RUCHIKA M SODHI shares easy home-made solutions to fight harsh winters and pollution



Winter months in and around the NCR are harsh on the skin, especially on account of the pollution. It is imperative that we take good care of our skin, especially our face as pigmentation, dark circles, crow's feet and black heads can become aggravated. But if you believe that you need to splurge on salon visits or on expensive creams and moisturisers, junk the thought. You can take care of your skin without the use of chemicals that will bring out the natural glow and radiance.

The very first step, if you are a smoker, is stop smoking. Though we always attribute smoking to lungs and heart diseases, it also hastens ageing of skin and creates pigmentation. Follow this up with staying hydrated and ensuring a good night's sleep. During the winter months, we tend to drink less water but it is very essential to remain hydrated. Water is a key constituent of healthy skin. The combination of a good night's sleep and hydration help to rejuvenate the skin.

To stay warm and comfortable, we tend to layer ourselves. While layers keep us nice and warm, these impede the breathing of our skin, resulting in dryness and itchiness. Simple home-made moisturisers can do wonders for our skin. A couple of simple and easy to make moisturisers are –

Mix aloe vera gel, rose water and a pinch or two of turmeric. Make a batch and store it in a cool place. Use it every day to nourish your skin

In aloe vera gel add a pinch of turmeric, a little almond oil, a dash of rose water and the contents of six Vitamin E capsules. Give the mixture a good shake and your nutrient-laden moisturiser.

While the body remains covered, it is the face that is exposed. We go to great lengths to add shimmer to our face and end up using a variety of creams, serums and lotions to bring out the radiance. But do you know that you can make your own effective home-made remedies to have a glowing face? I have for long propagated that you should use those ingredients on your skin that you can eat. You do not have to be a spendthrift to have a glowing skin or face. All you need is resilience and time. For starters, make a face pack using ground flax seeds, rose water and aloe vera gel. Apply this pack at least twice a week for 15 minutes at night and

scrub off with cold water. This pack will exfoliate dead skin and pollutants.

Pigmentation results in changing of your skin colour. Pollution and exposure to strong sun is one of the reasons of hyper-pigmentation that make the skin darken. The solution to remove pigmentation and marks on the face is rather simple. Boil six cloves in less than half cup of water and reduce it to one-fifth. Sieve the water and add aloe vera gel and a little rose water. Mix well and apply on your face before going to bed. You will see a distinct difference on your facial skin the following morning. If you have crow's feet and dark circles, gently massage coconut oil on the affected areas after the clove water treatment.

Skin impurities sometimes become difficult to tackle. Not only pollution and the winters but also our dietary habits have residual impact on skin impurities. Thankfully, there is a do-it-yourself remedy to weed out skin impurities. Coarsely grind oats and mix with green tea leaves. Keep in jar. Before making a pack, add milk and rose water and apply the pack on your face and neck. This should be done once a week.

Fruits and vegetable have a defining role to play to keep skin healthy. Whenever you have the opportunity, rub papaya on your skin. This will give the skin a lovely glow. Instead of a branded face scrub, you can make a scrub using couple of bananas and adding a tea spoon of coffee. Use it on your face to remove dirt particles. You can also rub a slice of beetroot on your face to even out the skin. And finally, you have to keep your face hydrated. For this a good toner is the order of the day. Make a juice of cucumber and mint leaves. Keep it in a spray bottle and spray the mixture on your face once in a while. This will keep the skin hydrated and is an excellent toner.

Nature has provided us with effective solutions to take care of our health and nutrition. It has solutions for our skincare, too. Have a healthy diet, hydrate and sleep well. These are the first three necessities of a supple skin. And to take care and maintain the supple skin during the winter months and pollution, these solutions will come handy.

(The author is a nutritionist.)

## R E C I P E S



### GINGERBREAD MEN BISCUITS

Recipe for 500 biscuits

**WHAT YOU NEED**

- Flour: 2,100 gm
  - Baking powder: 60 gm
  - Brown sugar: 1,020 gm
  - Garam masala: 9 gm
  - Ginger powder: 5 gm
  - Egg: 300 gm
  - Honey: 600 gm
  - Butter: 600 gm
- METHOD**
- Take a bowl and mix well butter and brown sugar.
  - Add eggs and honey little by little.
  - Add flour, baking powder, garam masala and ginger powder and mix all the ingredients for one minute.
  - Put it for rest at a temperature of 4° for 10 hours.
  - Pre heat the oven at a temperature of 160°.
  - Cut the biscuits into a shape.
  - Bake the biscuits for 15 minutes.
  - Leave the biscuits to cool down for 30 minutes.
  - Finish by decorating with royal icing.

Courtesy: By L'Opéra culinary head, Amit Kumar



### CHRISTMAS FRUIT CAKE

**WHAT YOU NEED**

- Light brown sugar: 200 gm
- Water: 240 ml/gm
- Butter (diced): 55 gm
- Ground cinnamon: 1 tsp
- Ground cloves: ¼ - ½ tsp
- Ground ginger: 1 tsp
- Fine salt: ½ tsp (2 gm)
- Dark or golden seedless raisins, currants, and/or dried cranberries: 300 gm
- Eggs (lightly beaten): 2 large (100 gm)
- All-purpose flour: 1½ cups (195 gm)
- Baking soda: 1 tsp (4 gm)
- Pure vanilla extract (optional): 1 tsp (4 gm)
- Candied orange or

Lemon peel (chopped): 1 cup (150 gm)

**METHOD**

- Take a large saucepan, over medium heat, bring to a boil and add sugar, water, butter, spices, and dried fruit. Boil gently for five minutes, then remove from heat, and let it cool until it is lukewarm (This will take about 45 to 60 minutes).
- Meanwhile, preheat your oven to 180° C. Butter, or spray an 8½ x 4½ x 3 inch (21.5 x 11.5 x 10 cm) loaf pan with a nonstick vegetable spray. Line the bottom of the pan with parchment paper and lightly butter the paper (Note: if using a dark colored pan, reduce the oven temperature to 60° C).
- Once the mixture has cooled, stir in the lightly

beaten eggs, flour, baking soda, vanilla extract (if using), and candied peel. Pour into your prepared pan, smoothing the top with the back of a spoon or offset spatula.

Bake for about 55 - 65 minutes or until a wooden toothpick inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean. Remove from oven and let cool on a wire rack for about 15 minutes before removing from pan. If possible, cover and store for a few days before serving. This fruit cake can be frozen.

The above cake is then covered with Marzipan and decorated for Christmas.

Courtesy: Mahesh Kini, executive chef of JW Marriott, Bengaluru

## RICE ABOVE THE REST AT CAFÉ DELHI HEIGHTS

Café Delhi Heights is known for their innovative food festivals time to time, but this time they have designed the best in the form of Rice above the Rest. In India, rice is not only the staple on the plate but also a cultural mainstay.

In Indian culture, rice holds great spiritual and ritual significance. It is a symbol of wealth and prosperity. The annual calendar of festivals has many celebrations based on the harvest cycle of rice.

The versatility of rice makes it the most loved grain all over the world. Right from the khichdi, to simple pulao to fragrant pots of



rice and spice meats called biryani, rice is a feast beyond compare. Hence, Café Delhi

Heights thought of curating a special menu to celebrate this very super food. They have added dishes from different states in the menu. From the belt of Andhra / Karnataka, one can enjoy varieties like Curd Rice, Hyderabadi Biryani, Bisi Bele Bath, and so on. One also gets to enjoy the specials from Maharashtra like Masale Bhaat, Payesh from Assam, Gian Pilaf from Goa, Tehri from Lucknow, Yakhini Pulao from Kashmir, Jadoh from Meghalaya are added in this special menu, too. Not only the specials from India, but favourites from International cuisines like Risotto,

Paella, Jasmine rice with stir-fry greens, Chipotle burritos bowl are added as well. Different varieties of rice like Sela basmati, Bangaru Theegalu, Rajbhog Arua rice, Dehradoni Basmati, Illupai Poo Samba, Musk budji, Goan short grain red rice, Ambe Mohar, Joha, et al, have been procured to make sure that each dish is prepared at its utmost accuracy with the perfect amalgamation of right flavours, spices and Chef's magic.

**When:** Till December 20  
**Where:** All Café Delhi Heights  
 Contact number for reservations: 9911154033, 8800691812

## CAFE MONIQUE PAVING THE WAY FOR A SWEET



Dangling fairy lights, Fir and Pine trees standing tall, angel-hangings streaming down the branches and white bright lights shining upon the dawn with carols playing in the back — Christmas is here and we know just how to make it merrier for you! Cafe Monique is all geared up to offer a Christmas Brunch topped with a diverse palette of flavours. With world renowned French chef, Maxime, exhibiting his expertise in delicacies, desserts and baked bites, the patisserie aims to please its patrons and match up to their expectations with

the sides of warmth and joy. From Croissants, Focaccia Panini to Le Fondant au Chocolat, Le Saint Honoré and other delicacies, Monique has been building its rapport with patrons as a go-to patisserie for all their food cravings.

On the special celebration of Christmas Day, the brand shall introduce 'Make A Wish' for children. The kids can write and hang their preferred choice of dessert at the Christmas tree and Monique will pick two lucky winners who will get a

special treat.

Make your way to the bespoke French patisserie & cafe and enjoy the celebratory vibe with delicious munchies and desserts in town. Enjoy Monique's special orange and dark chocolate Christmas cookies, their Sablés de Noël, Madeleines de Noël, Les bûches de Noël or Yule log and so on.

**When:** Till December, 12 pm - 12 am  
**Where:** Cafe Delhi Heights, Delhi-NCR

## EMBRACE THE WARMTH OF CHRISTMAS AT THE IMPERIAL

Add sparkle to your Christmas festivities and gear up to be mesmerised at The Imperial this year.

**Christmas Eve** — A lavish meal features Roast turkey, Brussel sprouts, Pork belly in a bread stuffing, gilet gravy, cranberry sauce on the Western grill station and a selection of international dishes like Shepherd's pie, Cajun chicken, celeriac, Tandoori favorites along with Italian specials, salads and cold cuts.

The extensive spread of classic global favourites also include Ginger crème brulee, Bannoffie pie, Amaretto cheese cake and more.



**When:** December 24, 7pm-11pm  
**Where:** 1911 Restaurant  
**Cost:** Christmas Eve Buffet at ₹4,000+ taxes per person without alcohol and ₹2,000+ taxes per

child  
 Call at 011-41116451/52 for reservations  
**Christmas Day** — Nothing spells cheer like a hearty

Christmas Brunch. Drench yourself in the melody of Christmas carols and gorge on the classic feast including Roasted lamb, Traditional roasted turkey along with other global favourites like Beer chicken, Lemon couscous, Grilled artichokes, Array of Smoked fish, cold sea food bar, antipasti, mezze and carving stations and more. Desserts like Traditional plum cake, Yule log, Mandarin Panacotta, Chocolate Cream de pot, Plum pudding with brandy sauce make sure you enjoy to the fullest.

**When:** December 25  
**Where:** 1911 Lawns  
**Cost:** Christmas Brunch at ₹4,500+ taxes per person without alcohol and ₹2,300+ taxes per child  
 Call at 011-41116451/52 for

# No statements or presser, will deal with it: Ganguly

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Day after India Test captain Virat Kohli triggered a storm by publicly contradicting him, BCCI president Sourav Ganguly refused to comment on the matter, saying the Board will deal with it.

Kohli, during his pre-departure press conference ahead of the tour of South Africa, said that he was never asked to stay on as T20 skipper when he made his intent clear on relinquishing the post.

This was in complete contrast to Ganguly's assertion a few days back that Kohli had been requested to not quit the position.

"No statements, no press conference. We will deal with it, leave it to (the) BCCI," Ganguly told local mediapersons on Thursday.

There was talk of BCCI

asking chairman of selectors Chetan Sharma to address the media after Kohli's explosive press conference but the Board eventually refrained from making any counter statements.

Kohli's comments on Wednesday brought to fore the underlying tension in his equation with the administrators.

"Whatever was said about the communication that happened about the decision that was made was inaccurate," Kohli had said with obvious reference to Ganguly's statement.

"When I left the T20 captaincy, I had first approached BCCI and intimated them of my decision and laid down my point of view in front of them (office bearers).

"I gave the reasons why I wanted to quit T20 captaincy and my view point was received very nicely. There was no

## DECLINES COMMENT ON KOHLI'S BOMBSHELL PC



offence, no hesitation and not for once was I told that 'you should not leave T20 captaincy,' he had asserted.

Earlier, Ganguly, in an interview to PTI, said that he had spoken to Kohli and told him that two captains in the white ball format was not something that the selectors wanted as there would be "too much of leadership."

Rohit Sharma is now the sole white-ball captain and has also been made Kohli's deputy in the Test format.

### KOHLI'S TIMING NOT RIGHT: KAPIL

World Cup-winning former India skipper Kapil Dev feels Virat Kohli's statements that exposed his differences with the BCCI on the issue of captaincy were ill-timed as they created an unsavoury controversy just ahead of a crucial tour to South Africa.

In the pre-departure press-conference in Mumbai on Wednesday, Kohli dismissed as "inaccurate" BCCI President Sourav Ganguly's statement that the Board had requested him not to step down as T20 captain.

The comment exposed the underlying tension between Kohli and the administrators after he was removed as ODI skipper as well earlier this month.

"It is not good to point fingers on anybody at this point in time.

The South Africa tour is coming and please pay attention to the tour," Kapil told 'ABP News' when asked about Kohli's remarks.

"I would say Board president is Board president but yes the Indian cricket team captain is also a big thing. But talking badly about each other in public, I don't think it is a good

thing, whether it is Sourav or Kohli."

The 62-year-old, who led India to the 1983 World Cup title, urged Kohli to take control of the situation and think about the country.

"Aap situation ko control kijiye, behtar ye hai ki aap desh ke baare mein sochiye (Please control the situation and it's better to think about the country now)," said the former skipper who played 134 Tests between 1978 and 1994 and took 434 wickets along with making 5248 runs.

"Jo galat hai woh kal pata chahi jayega but I don't think it is right to stoke a controversy before a tour," he opined.

The Indian Test team, led by Kohli, departed for South Africa on Thursday for a three-match series beginning at Centurion on December 26. India will also play three ODIs after the Test series.



## Team India lands in South Africa for Test series

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

The Indian cricket team, led by skipper Virat Kohli, landed here on Thursday for the three-match Test series against South Africa, beginning December 26 at Centurion. "Touchdown South Africa," the BCCI posted on its official Twitter handle along with pictures of team members, including Test specialist Cheteshwar Pujara, Shardul Thakur and Shreyas Iyer among others.

The Kohli-led Test side had departed from Mumbai for the tour that also includes three ODIs in January.

Given the threat posed by the new COVID-19 variant Omicron, the tour's T20 matches have been postponed for now and the two teams will stay in a bio-bubble for the duration of the series.

Star opener and newly-appointed white ball captain Rohit Sharma has been ruled out after sustaining a left ham-

string injury during a training session in Mumbai.

He was replaced by talented Gujarat opener Priyank Panchal.

The side's build-up to the series has been marred by controversies surrounding captaincy and the issue snowballed into a major controversy on Wednesday when Kohli said that the Board's assertion of trying to stop him from giving up T20 captaincy was "inaccurate."

He stepped down as T20 captain after the disastrous World Cup campaign in the UAE and was subsequently removed as ODI captain earlier this month.

While the series-opener will be hosted by Centurion, the other two Tests will be played at Johannesburg and Cape Town respectively.

The Test team's vice captain is yet to be announced after Rohit's injury. He had replaced a woefully out of form Ajinkya Rahane.

## Dominant Australia reaches 221-2 on Day 1 of 2nd Ashes test

AP ■ ADELAIDE

Australia shrugged off the late withdrawal of new skipper Pat Cummins because of coronavirus concerns to dominate England on the opening day of the second Ashes test and reach 221-2 at stumps.

Marnus Labuschagne was dropped twice but remained unbeaten on 95 at stumps Thursday after sharing partnerships of 172 with David Warner (95) and 45 with Steve Smith.

Smith returned to the Australian captaincy for the first time since the 2018 sandpaper scandal after Cummins was ruled out. He was deemed to be a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case when he dined at a restaurant on the eve of the match.

Smith won the toss and just about everything else went Australia's way to start the day-night test.

He was unbeaten on 18 after waiting most of the day to bat, with Australia losing just two wickets despite an England attack bolstered by the return of Jimmy Anderson and

Stuart Broad.

Wicketkeeper Jos Buttler took a brilliant catch in the first hour to dismiss opener Marcus Harris (3) but then dropped Labuschagne twice — once down legside when he was on 21 and the other when he fumbled a regulation chance off Anderson's bowling with the second new ball when the Australian No. 3 was on 95.

"That was massive for the team there. Just getting through that period, me and Steve there. Just sets us up for tomorrow," said Labuschagne, who batted for almost six hours and faced 275 deliveries.

"My job is to make sure I capitalize on that."

Veteran pacemen Anderson and Broad were recalled after missing the series opener and had the batters in trouble early, Australia surviving three reviews in the first hour and Warner taking 20 deliveries to get off the mark. The Australians grafted through 25 overs in the first session

to be 54-1 and added 84 runs in 28 overs in the middle session to reach the second interval at 129-1.

Warner and Labuschagne continued into the night session and posted their sixth

century partnership, and their second in as many tests after their 156 at the Gabba last week.

But after doing all the hard work early, Warner hit a short, wide ball from Ben Stokes

directly to Broad in the covers and his 167-ball innings ended on 95 — one better than his innings in Australia's nine-wicket win in the first test last week.

It was a reward for Stokes, who should have had a wicket in the 35th over when Labuschagne gloved a chance down the leg side but Buttler couldn't complete the catch.

Most of the drama happened pre-match.

Cricket Australia revealed only three hours before the coin toss that Cummins was ruled out because he was exposed to a person with COVID-19 in an Adelaide restaurant on Wednesday night.

He was deemed a close contact by the state's health authorities and ordered to isolate for seven days. Cummins has already returned a negative test for COVID-19.

"Gutted to miss this test but really excited to see Nesar finally get his chance in the baggy green," Cummins said in a Twitter post.

"He has done the hard yards and is a seriously skillful player." Smith became the third Australia captain in three tests. Tim Paine, who replaced Smith as test captain after the sandpaper scandal in South Africa, quit last month after reports emerged he'd been investigated four years ago for sending an inappropriate text to a work colleague.

He was replaced by Cummins, with Smith as vice-captain for the series-opening win in Brisbane.

## Karolina Pliskova out of Australian Open with hand injury



AP ■ MELBOURNE

Karolina Pliskova has withdrawn from next month's Australian Open and two warm-up tournaments because

of a right hand injury sustained in training. Australian Open officials on Thursday con-

firmed the world fourth-ranked player's withdrawal, and said in a tweet: "wishing you a speedy recovery."

Pliskova had earlier said on social media "unfortunately I hurt my right hand in practice yesterday and I won't be able to play in Adelaide, Sydney and Australian Open this year." The 29-year-old Czech Republic player is a two-time Grand Slam finalist. She lost to No. 1-ranked Ash Barty in this year's Wimbledon title match and in the 2016 U.S.

Open final to Angelique Kerber after Pliskova beat Serena Williams in the semifinals. Pliskova's best finish at Melbourne Park was the semifinals in 2019, where she lost to eventual champion Naomi Osaka after beating Williams in the quarterfinals.

## Real Madrid hit by virus outbreak before hosting Cádiz

BARCELONA: Real Madrid may have run into its toughest opponent of the season: COVID-19.

An outbreak of the virus has infected six Madrid players. The club said Thursday that

Gareth Bale, Marco Asensio, Rodrygo, and backup goalkeeper Andriy Lunin were infected, a day after both midfielder Luka Modric and Marcelo tested positive.

## PV Sindhu beats Pornpawee Chochuwong of Thailand to enter quarters



PTI ■ HUELVA (SPAIN)

Defending champion PV Sindhu stormed into the women's singles quarterfinals of the BWF World Championships with a straight-game win over Pornpawee Chochuwong of Thailand here on Thursday.

The world number 7 Indian

defeated her Thai opponent, ranked three places below her, 21-14 21-18 in the pre-quarterfinal match that lasted 48 minutes. With the win, Sindhu, seeded sixth in the showpiece tournament, extended her head-to-head record against Chochuwong to 5-3.

Sindhu also avenged her twin loss to Chochuwong this

season -- group match of BWF World Tour Finals earlier this month and All England Championships in March.

The double Olympic medalist Sindhu faces top seed and world number one Tai Tzu Ying of Chinese Taipei, who beat Kirsty Gilmour of Scotland 21-10 19-21 21-11, in the quarterfinals.

Sindhu took an early 5-1 lead but Chochuwong rallied to narrow the gap to 5-4 and then to 10-9. The Indian zoomed ahead from there on as she made it 15-10 and then 19-11 to pocket the first game. The second game was a tighter affair though Sindhu began on the front foot with a 3-0 lead. Sindhu led 11-6 at the change of ends and the second half saw some long rallies with the Thai player winning a few of them.

Sindhu was leading 16-10 but Chochuwong made a comeback of sort as she reduced the gap to 18-15 and then to 19-18. Sindhu won a crucial point after a long rally to make it 20-18 before winning the second game and the match.

## Sachin among top 3 sportspersons alongside Messi and Ronaldo

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Legendary Sachin Tendulkar has been adjudged as the world's 12th 'Most Admired Man', as per a survey conducted by YouGov, an internet-based market research and data analytics firm.

This year's study surveyed more than 42,000 people in 38 countries and territories to



compile the list.

Among sporting heroes, Tendulkar is third in the list behind Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo.

In the list, the iconic batter is ahead of former US president Donald Trump, Bollywood superstars Shah Rukh Khan, Amitabh Bachchan and also present India captain Virat Kohli.

Tendulkar has been associated with UNICEF for more than a decade and was appointed the South Asian ambassador in 2013.

**Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd.**  
(A Govt. of India Enterprise-Mini Ratna)  
CIN NO - L74899DL999G0110707

**IRCTC invites E-Bid/E-RFP for the following:-**

I) For selection of managed Service partner for Integrated Railways Helping & Enquiry System-139.1st Pre-bid Meeting (VC): 20.12.2021 at 12:30 hrs. 2nd Pre-bid VC at 06.01.2022 at 12:30 hrs. Last date of Submission: 24.01.2022.

II) For Selection of Operator for 'Rail Neer Packaged Drinking Water Plant at Bilaspur Chhattisgarh. Pre-bid meeting: 28.12.2021 at 15:00 hrs. at IRCTC CO, New Delhi. Last date of Submission: 18.01.2022 up to 15:00 hrs

III) For Operation, maintenance and provision of catering services in/through Refreshment Rooms & Jan Ahaar under A1 & A Category Stations under Indian Railways under IRCTC/North Zone. Tender availability from: 20.12.2021. Last date of submission : 10.01.2022 up to 15:00 hrs.

IV) For Setting up, operation and management of Fast Food Units at B, C & D Category Stations under Indian Railways under IRCTC/North Zone. Tender availability from: 20.12.2021. Last date of submission: 11.01.2022 up to 15:00 hrs.

V) For the selection of Chatbot Solution Provider for IRCTC Website & Mobile App. Last date of submission of bids: 23.01.2022 up to 15:00 hrs.

For details visit [irctc.com](http://irctc.com) (SN I to V), [www.tenderwizard.com/IRCTC](http://www.tenderwizard.com/IRCTC) (SN I to V) and [e-procure.gov.in/cppp](http://e-procure.gov.in/cppp) (SN III & IV). Above Tender documents downloading & participation can only be done on website: [www.tenderwizard.com/IRCTC](http://www.tenderwizard.com/IRCTC).

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**OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER, WATCO DIVISION, CUTTACK.**  
Telephone/e-mail/FAX: 0671-2547115/gmwatcoct@gmail.com

**NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement**

Bid Identification No. WATCO (W)-12/2021-22 Dtd.13.12.2021

1. Name of the work:- "Provision for procurement of drinking dia full bore type Electromagnetic water flow meter for implementation of different water supply at 129 MLD WTP, CDA, Sector-13, Cuttack"

2. Estimated cost: Rs.32.42 Lakhs (Approx).

3. Period of completion :- 3 (Three) Calendar Months.

4. Date & time of availability of bid document :- From 11 A.M of dt.18.12.21 to 5.00 P.M. of dt.01.01.2022.

5. Last date / time of receipt of bids in the portal :- 01.01.2022 up to 05.00 P.M.

6. Date & time of opening of bids :- 03.01.2022 at 12.30 P.M.

7. Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid :- The General Manager, WATCO Division, Cuttack-753003, Odisha, Ph.(0671)2547115, email: gmwatcoct@gmail.com

8. The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only.

Further details can be seen from the web site [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in)

OIPR-13170/11/0020/2122 General Manager, WATCO Division, Cuttack

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, DEOGARH.**  
E-mail Id - [eerw\\_deogarh@yahoo.co.in](mailto:eerw_deogarh@yahoo.co.in)  
E-Procurement Notice  
BID IDENTIFICATION NO. EEDGH-online- 14/2021-22

1. Name of work Road work :- One No

2. Amount put to tender:- Rs.47.79 lakhs Approx.

3. Mode of submission of tender:- Tender shall be submitted online in [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in)

4. Availability of tender for online bidding:- 16.12.2021, 11.00 A.M to 22.12.2021 up to 5.00 P.M

5. Date and time of opening of tender: - 23.12.2021, 11.00 A.M

6. Other details can be seen from the website [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in)

7. Corrigendum / Addendum if any shall only be published in the above website.

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer,  
R.W. Division, Deogarh

OIPR-25087/11/0016/2122

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, P.H. DIVISION, BERHAMPUR**  
Mail ID [eepbam@gmail.com](mailto:eepbam@gmail.com) / [eepbam@nic.in](mailto:eepbam@nic.in)  
Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice  
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING  
Bid Identification No. EEPHAM-25/2021-22 Dt. 07.12.2021

1. Name of work : Construction of 6.00m Inner dia Intake Well and laying of Gallery line for improvement of water supply to Kasinagar NAC (ward No. 1 to 13)

2. Estimated cost : Rs. 73.61 lakh (approx.)

3. Period completion : 06 (six) months

4. Date & Time of availability of bid document in the Portal : From 11.00 Hrs. of Dt. 18.12.2021. to 17.30 Hrs. of Dt. 03.01.2022.

5. Last date / Time for Bidding in the Portal: 17.30 Hrs of Dt. 03.01.2022.

6. Date of opening of Tender: On Dt. 04.01.2022 at 11.00Hrs.

7. Name and address of the Officer inviting tender : Superintending Engineer, P.H. Division Berhampur.

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement Portal: <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>

Sd/-  
Superintending Engineer,  
P. H. Division, Berhampur

OIPR-13020/11/0003/2122

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RWS&S DIVISION, BARIAPADA.**  
Tel. No.06792-254029,Fax No.06792-259464, E-Mail : [eerwss\\_bpd@rediffmail.com](mailto:eerwss_bpd@rediffmail.com), [eerwss\\_bpd@ori.nic.in](mailto:eerwss_bpd@ori.nic.in)  
Govt. of Odisha e-procurement Notice.  
Bid Identification No.29 of 2021-22, Date: 11.12.2021.

1. Nature of the work: Execution of Rural Piped Water Supply New Projects under different Blocks in Mayurbhanj district. in Percentage rate. (05packages).

2. Estimated Cost: 288.75 lakh to 395.58 Lakhs.

3. Period of Completion:- 11 months.

4. Date and time of availability of bid document in portal : From 11 hour of 20.12.2021 to 06.01.2022 up to 17 hours.

5. Last Date / Time for receipt of bids in the portal : Both Technical & Financial Bid for each Package Up to 17 hours of 06.01.2022.

6. Name and address of the O.I.T. : Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Baripada.

7. Date & Time for Opening of Tender: 07.01.2022 at 11.00 A.M.

8. Corrigendum and addendum if any shall only be published in the above website <http://www.tenderodisha.gov.in>

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement Portal: "<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>"

Executive Engineer,  
RWS&S Division, Baripada

OIPR-25014/11/0012/2122