

WORLD 6
INDONESIA'S SEMERU
VOLCANO ERUPTS**MONEY 7**
LOT OF UNHEALTHY SPECULATION
ON CRYPTO TAKING PLACE: FM**SPORT 8**
SINDHU ENTERS FINAL OF
BWF WORLD TOUR FINALS

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2 more Omicron cases detected

One each flier from S Africa, Zimbabwe found positive in Maha, Gujarat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Two more new cases of Omicron infection, SARS-CoV-2 variant of Covid-19 were reported on Saturday in India, one each from Maharashtra and Gujarat. With this, the number of infections from Omicron has gone to four in two days. Two cases of the new variant of Covid-19 were reported from Karnataka on Friday. On Saturday, one case was reported from Jamnagar in Gujarat, another one from Mumbai.

A 72-year-old man from Zimbabwe, who reached Jamnagar last week, was found infected with the Omicron variant of the coronavirus dis-

ease becoming the first case in the State, the State health department confirmed.

Dr S Chatterjee, the nodal officer for Covid-19 at the State-run Guru Gobind Singh Hospital in Jamnagar told reporters, "The man's samples were sent to the Biotechnological Research Laboratory in Ahmedabad which found him positive for the Omicron variant. He has been kept in isolation ever since his admission to the hospital. We had traced all his contacts, screened them and they tested negative."

He added, "We will test all his contacts once again after the reports confirmed that he carried the Omicron variant of the



People wait on the premises of Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan Hospital (LNJP) in New Delhi on Saturday. 12 patients suspected to be infected with the Covid-19 'Omicron' variant have been admitted in the hospital

PTI

virus."

Gujarat's additional chief secretary (health) Manoj Aggarwal said, "A micro containment zone has been made where he is living. In the area, we will do the tracing, testing of people."

He landed in Jamnagar on November 28. Soon after, he was running a fever and his doctor asked him to go for an RT-PCR test and he was found Covid-19 infected.

The officials are also tracing 87 people who could have come in contact with him in the Jamnagar district.

The man was visiting his in-laws at his native Morakda village near Jamnagar city and has been living in Zimbabwe, which has been classified as an

"at-risk" country, for many years. In the second instance, a 33-year-old man, who arrived in Mumbai from South Africa via New Delhi, tested positive for the latest variant on Saturday. The passenger, who is exhibiting mild symptoms, including fever, is currently under treatment at a Covid centre in Kalyan-Dombivali.

The infected person arrived from Capetown on November 24 and complained of mild fever, but no other symptoms were noticed.

Meanwhile, 30 other passengers coming from Dubai to Ahmedabad and a woman who reached Vadodara from London have tested positive for Covid-19.

Continued on Page 2

Delta derivatives hit Covishield efficacy, booster needed: ICMR

Their study reveals Delta variants can escape vax-induced immune response

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Derivatives of the Covid-19 Delta variant have the potential to reduce the neutralisation ability of the Covishield vaccine, especially among those who have never been infected with the virus, said ICMR researchers calling for booster doses.

They, however, added that even with reduced neutralisation ability, Covishield will protect against severe disease and fatalities.

"Delta variant has slowly dominated other variants of concern. Subsequently, Delta has further mutated to Delta AY.1 to Delta AY.126. Of these, Delta AY.1 has been reported from several countries, including India. It's considered highly infectious and probable escape mutant," researchers said in the latest study posted on bioRxiv (a repository of pre-print studies).

An escape mutant is one



that can escape human immune response or vaccine-induced immune response. Researchers had previously evaluated the efficacy of Covaxin against Delta AY.1 (because it is an escape mutant) and found the vaccine to be effective.

The study is yet to be peer-reviewed. Researchers evaluated the neutralising potential of blood samples from people who had received two doses of the Covishield vaccine.

They studied three types of blood samples. The first was from people who have been fully vaccinated with Covishield and have never been infected with Covid. The second was from people who have been fully vaccinated after recovering from Covid infection in the past. The third was

from people who got infected with Covid after being fully vaccinated, that is people who suffered breakthrough infections.

They observed the highest reduction in the level of neutralising antibodies against the Delta — a reduction of 27.3-fold — among fully vaccinated individuals who had never been infected with Covid, compared to other groups and variants.

Neutralisation was reduced against Delta and AY.1 in all three groups.

However, the team said vaccines will continue to provide sufficient protection against the severity of the disease and fatality, based on breakthrough infections data they analysed.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

GIRL GETS 'SEX' ON NO. PLATE, DCW STEPS IN

New Delhi: The Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) has issued a notice to the Transport Department seeking that the registration number for a girl's two-wheeler comprising the letters 'SEX' be changed as she has been facing "severe harassment" due to it. The DCW has also asked the department to mention in its reply the total number of vehicles that have been registered under the new series.

COURT GRANTS BAIL TO PETER IN INX MEDIA CASE

New Delhi: A Delhi court on Saturday granted bail to former media baron Peter Mukerjee in the INX Media money laundering case linked to former Union minister P Chidambaram and his son Karti. Special Judge M K Nagpal granted relief to Mukerjee, the erstwhile director and COO of INX Media.

49 KIDS TAKE ILL AFTER EATING FRUIT IN SEONI

Seoni: At least 49 children studying in a Government-run primary and middle school took ill after allegedly consuming a poisonous fruit in Madhya Pradesh's Seoni district, an official said on Saturday.

PM GIFTS ₹18K CR IN POLL-BOUND U'KHAND

Dehradun: Prime Minister Narendra Modi gifted development projects worth more than ₹18,000 crore to poll-bound Uttarakhand and said his Government believes in the development of all and not in serving a particular community, caste or religion and using them as a vote bank.

Assembly paralysed again over Mamita issue

Cong demands Min Mishra's sacking, purifies House

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The stalemate in the State Assembly continued for the fourth consecutive day on Saturday as opposition Congress and BJP created uproar over the schoolteacher Mamita Meher murder case demanding dismissal and arrest of Minister of State for Home Dibya Shankar Mishra for his alleged links with the prime accused Govinda Sahu in the case.

The House could not transact any business throughout the day as the opposition MLAs rushed near the Speaker's podium carrying placards and shouting slogans.

Unable to run the House, Speaker Surjya Narayan Patro adjourned the House till 4 pm. As pandemonium continued after the House reassembled, the Speaker adjourned it till Monday.

After the members gathered for the day, Congress MLA Tara Prasad Bahinipati dressed up as a Hindu priest wearing dhoti sprinkled Gangajal and cow dung-mixed water inside the Assembly hall amidst ringing of bells by his party colleagues to purify the House.



"With the entry of the Minister (Mishra), the House had been desecrated. By sprinkling Gangajal, tulsi leaf and cow dung water, we are trying to purify it. The Chief Minister must sack and arrest Mishra," Bahinipati told mediapersons.

In the Well of the House, Congress members Santosh Singh Saluja recited Sikh Gurugranth while Namaz and Bible were recited by party members Mohammed Mokim and S Ranjan Ekka, respectively.

On Friday too, the BJP members had sprinkled Gangajal and cow dung water in the Assembly premises on the same ground.

Notably, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had made a statement in the House on Friday saying that his Government is committed to give justice to Mamita Meher and appealed to Opposition members not to politicise the issue. But the Opposition rejected Patnaik's appeal stating that he is protecting Minister Mishra.

Sena raps Mamata for bid to damage Cong

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Slamming the Trinamool Chief and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's move to sideline the Congress and emerge as the key Opposition's face against the BJP, the Shiv Sena on Saturday said that Mamata's bid to push the grand-old party away from national politics and create a new Opposition front along lines of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) was tantamount to strengthening the "fascist" ruling party at the Centre.

"Mamata's politics does not augur well for the Congress. Though it is true that TMC finished the Congress, the BJP and the Left in West Bengal, Mamata's effort to push the grand-old party away from national politics and create a new Opposition front along lines of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) was tantamount to strengthening the fascist forces in the country," the

Shiv Sena said.

In an editorial published in its official mouth-piece "Saamana", the Shiv Sena said, "We can understand Prime Minister Modi saying the BJP would wipe out the Congress from the political map of the country, because that is a part of the current ruling party's agenda. But, any thought of finishing the Congress which is fighting Modi and his fascist

tendencies poses a serious danger to the country."

"There are no two opinions about the fact that the weakening of the Congress during the last ten years is a serious cause for concern. But, the attempt to prevent the derailed Congress from getting back onto the tracks reflects the destructive mindset of some people," the editorial said.

Continued on Page 2

Akhilesh backs Mamata to sideline Cong to take on BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee questioned the existence of Congress-led UPA, Samajwadi party chief Akhilesh Yadav has sought to write the obituary of the grand old party in Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls.

Backing Mamata call for

forming an alternative to the UPA, Akhilesh has said he might be open to joining such a political front led by the Trinamool Congress supremo. Talking about the prospect of the Congress in the forthcoming Assembly polls, Akhilesh said, "The public will refuse them... and they will get 0 seats in the upcoming election."

6,970 beggars identified in State

Max 1,060 in Cuttack, minimum 5 in Boudh

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State Government has identified total 6,970 beggars, 4,128 male and 2,842 female, stated Social Security and Disability Empowerment Minister Ashok Panda in the State Assembly on Saturday.

Replying to a question of BJP MLA Nauri Nayak, the Minister said Cuttack district has the highest 1,060 beggars and Boudh the minimum five. Bargharh has 595, Ganjam 545 and Balangir 502 persons who live by begging.

He said the State



Government has started a 'Sahaya' scheme for the beggars' welfare. According to the Odisha Rules of Business, there should be special provisions for beggars and other distressed people.

Panda said that in the first phase, two special drives started, one in Puri as 'Niladri

Nilaya' and another in Bhubaneswar as 'Ekamra Nilaya', to make these cities beggar-free. Besides these, beggar rehabilitation centres have started in the Khordha, Sambalpur, Rourkela, Ganjam, Dhenkanal and in Cuttack municipal areas.

Protesting farmers form 5-member panel for talks with Govt on 6 issues

Want legal backing of MSP; Shah speaks with farmer leaders

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Protesting farmers' groups on Saturday formed a five-member committee for dialogue to talk with the Government on their six issues, including a legal backing of the minimum support price (MSP) after Union Home Minister Amit Shah spoke to two farmers' leaders on Friday late evening and assured them that the Government was serious about their demands.

After a meeting under the aegis of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), farmer groups have decided to continue their



Bharatiya Kisan Union spokesperson Rakesh Tikait addresses a Press conference after farmers' meeting at Singhu Border in New Delhi on Saturday

PTI

protests till a formal and satisfactory response from the Government was received. The next meeting of farmers' groups would be held on December 7.

After the meeting, farmer leader and Bharatiya Kisan Union spokesperson Rakesh

Tikait said the committee will consist of Balbir Singh Rajewal, Shiv Kumar Kakka, Gurnam Singh Charuni, Yudhvir Singh and Ashok Dhawale.

"Farmers' Morchas will hold its next meeting on December 7 at 11 am to finalise

the agenda for talks with the Government. The committee will decide on who will hold talks in various States from the farmers' side. Farmers would not end their protests until gets confirmation from the Government on their demands," he said.

On Tuesday, the Government had sought five names from Kisan Morcha to discuss the pending demands.

"Whatever we talk about with the Centre, we will have that agenda ready. In Haryana, we already have a committee. If the Haryana Government wants to talk, they are ready. Our five-member committee will handle all affairs, and we hope the Centre will be in touch with us through them. It will be responsible for deciding who will talk in respective States," Tikait added.

Continued on Page 2

Sigh of relief Weakened Jawad to reach Puri today

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Cyclonic Storm Jawad over west-central Bay of Bengal turned into a deep depression on Saturday before nearing the coast of Puri on Sunday, said the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD).

The cyclonic storm re-curved northwards since Saturday morning and it is likely to lose its intensity, the IMD predicted.

It is likely to continue to move north-northeastwards along the Odisha coast towards West

Bengal coast and weaken into a well-marked low pressure area during subsequent 24 hours, the IMD added.

The wind speed is likely to remain under 50 KMPH to 60 kmph and the gusting speed of the wind is likely to go up to 70 kmph.

Some areas of the coastal districts of Odisha are likely to experience rains under the influence of the developing weather system on Sunday, the IMD said.

Vinod Dua, veteran journalist, dies at 67

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Veteran journalist Vinod Dua, who started his career with Doordarshan in the black and white era and went on to make his mark in the digital space in the decades that followed, died in Delhi's Apollo hospital on Saturday. He was 67.

The last rites of the pioneering television journalist, who was hospitalised with Covid earlier this year and lost his wife, radiologist Padmavati 'Chinna' Dua, to the virus in June, will be performed at the Lodhi crematorium here on Sunday, his daughter and actor-comic Mallika Dua said.

Vinod Dua breathed his last at 5 pm at the Indraprastha Apollo Hospital where he was battling chronic liver disease, the hospital said in a statement.

"He was admitted in the

**VINOD DUA**

11 March 1954 – 4 Dec 2021

intensive care unit in a critical condition, and was monitored by a team of senior doctors. In this tragic time, our prayers are with his family and dear ones," it said.

Mallika Dua announced the death of her "irreverent, fearless and extraordinary father" on Instagram.

Continued on Page 2

Bombs hurled at pro-industry supporter in JSpur

7 cops injured while confronting hooligans

KAHNU NANDA ■ JAGATSINGHPUR

Two motorcycle-borne miscreants hurled bombs at the house of one Prabhat Rout in Govindapur village under Erasama block on Friday night.

According to an FIR filed by victim Pabhat in the Abhyachandpur police station on Saturday, the miscreants came in two

bikes at about 1 pm and hurled two bombs at his house. Hearing the blast sound, the family members woke up and ran out of the house. Seeing them, the miscreants scolded them in filthy language and fled towards Dhinkia village, the FIR stated.

On being informed, while Abhyachandpur police was rushing to the spot, they were obstructed and attacked on the way by a few people. Later, Additional SP, Paradip and senior police personnel with force boarding two vehicles rushed to the spot.

While entering the Dhinkia village they too were intercepted by as many 25 people who pelted stone at the vehicles.

As a result, two police conveys sustained damages and seven policemen were injured, including the IIC Abhyachandpur police station, informed Jagatsinghpur SP Akheleshvar Singh.

Meanwhile, based on victim Prabhat complaints, a case has been registered against Debendra Swain, who is Samiti Member of Dhinkia

Panchayat, besides six others and an investigation is underway, the SP informed.

According to sources, tensions are prevailing at Dhinkia village after a demarcation drive was successfully launched at Mahala revenue village on Thursday. Samiti Member Swain had threatened Prabhat of dire consequences for supporting a proposed JSW steel mill in the locality and the revenue village demarcation is stated to be an exercise to shore up support for the industry.

Sahitya Parishad poll row

Disgruntled members to move court in Baleswar

UBACHAK MOHANTY ■ BALESWAR

A section of writers who are members of the Fakir Mohan Sahitya Parishad (FMSP) threatened to move court, challenging the validity of the election of office bearers of the Parishad held in November.

They alleged that the election was manipulated and the guidelines relating to the election of office bearers of the literary body were largely violated. They, in a press brief, said that they had approached the district administration, seeking its in-

tervention and declare the elections as illegal, but they have not got any response till date.

It may be noted the FMSP is the second oldest literary body of the State and is affiliated to the Kendra Sahitya Akademi. The election for various posts while is held in every three years, the latest one was held on November 7. Laxmikanta Tripathy and Dipak Bose were elected as president and secretary respectively of the Parishad along with other office bearers.

However, the disgruntled members alleged that al-

though they had approached the Additional District Magistrate on the issue the very next day of the election and the latter had assigned the Sub collector to inquire into the allegations, yet even after lapse of about two months, nothing substantial has emerged.

"As we failed to get any result from the district administration, we will be approaching the court seeking the elections to be declared as null and void as the guidelines laid in the constitution of the body were flouted," said FMSP member Abhay Das.

On the other hand, FMSP president Laxmikanta Tripathy said, "The group which lost the election is making such allegations. Election agents of the contesting parties were present. If some irregularities were seen they could have brought them to the notice of the returning officer and the agent could have raised objections during the voting."

Dr Radha Ranjan Pattnaik, Kalipada Panda, Sradhanjali Pradhan, Srustidhar Parida, Prasanna Patra and Uday Narayan Das were among the disgruntled members present in the media brief.

NISER Prof bags Infosys Prize in Physical Sc

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Infosys Prize in Physical Sciences was awarded to Prof Bedangadas Mohanty for investigations of the nuclear force. At the Brookhaven National Laboratory and the European Organization for Nuclear Research he determined the transition temperature of the quark-gluon plasma to hadronic matter, observed heavy antimatter nuclei, observed nuclear spin-orbital angular momentum interactions, and other effects in quark-gluon plasma.

Prof Mohanty is an experimental high energy physicist at the National Institute of Science Education and Re-

search in Bhubaneswar and at the Homi Bhabha National Institute in Mumbai.

Prof Mohanty is a Fellow of the Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi, of the Indian Academy of Sciences, Bangalore, of the National Academy of Sciences, India, and of the American Physical Society in the USA. He has held Fellowships and post-doctoral positions at the Variable Energy Cyclotron Centre (Kolkata) and at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (USA). He has won the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award (2015), the Swarna Jayanti Fellowship (2010-11), and the INSA Young Scientist Medal (2003).

Scientist Trilochan Pradhan passes away

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Eminent physicist Padma Bhushan Trilochan Pradhan passed away on Saturday. He was 93.

Born on January 3, 1929, Dr Pradhan, who did his Ph D from the University of Chicago in 1956, headed the Theoretical Nuclear Physics Division at the Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics from 1964 to 74, was



the first Director of the Institute of Physics, Bhubaneswar from 1974 to 89 and served as the Vice-Chancellor of Utkal

University from 1989 to 1991.

Pradhan received the Kalinga Ratna in 2018; Kalinga Samman in 2014; Padma Bhushan in 1990; and Meghnad Saha Award in 1980.

Governor Prof Ganeshi Lal, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and PCC president Niranjana Patnaik expressed grief over the passing away of the scientist.

Lal said, "Dr. Pradhan's stellar contribution to the

world of scientific research and education will be remembered forever.

Patnaik said, "Saddened to know about the demise of eminent scientist Padma Bhushan Dr Trilochan Pradhan. His immense contribution in the field of science will always be remembered. My thoughts and prayers are with the bereaved family members,"

BWI's Puri meet

Fix minimum wage for forest workers: Khuntia

Also create market base for forest produces'

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Central Government should fix a minimum wage for all forest workers who are totally dependent on forest and minor forest produce collection, said former MP, INTUC national vice president and vice chairman, Building and Wood Workers International, Dr Rama Chandra Khuntia while presiding over the BWI affiliated For-

est Unions meeting held in Puri.

Dr Khuntia said the Government should enforce compulsory forest certification by the FSC, SFI, PEFC like international agencies to check illegal timber trading and expand the international trade for forest produces, including non timber forest produces (NTFP).

He emphasized that the Government while ensuring full minimum wage could help them for value addition of minor forest produces and create a market base for the sale of the

produces like Sal seed, Sal leaf, Kendu leaf, honey, Jhuna, lac, mahua flower, mahua seed and mushroom. He said these are the major minor forest produces in Odisha, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand.

More than a third of the total work force engaged in forest is women and hence, the Government should intervene to protect their livelihood, he said. The BWI affiliates will work and coordinate with the Government for the proper implementation of Government schemes

pertaining to health, safety and social security for the forest workers, he told.

The meeting unanimously resolved for the implementation of Forest Right Act 2006 and settlement of all pending cases in Odisha and across the country.

Dr Rajiv Sharma and Prerna Prasad co-ordinated the programme, while among others, INTUC State general secretary Kishore Juna, vice president Madan Mohan Dhal, Dada Rao Dongre, Dr Milan, Pranati Mishra, Jabamani Tudu and N Sahoo participated.

OSCPCR chief miffed at no kids' entry in Lingaraj

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (OSCPCR) Chairperson Sandhyabati Pradhan has been displeased with the ban on entry of children below 18 years into the Lingaraj Temple here.

Taking on the temple administration, Pradhan said due to the ban, the devotees are leaving their children outside the temple in unsafe conditions which is a violation of rights of the children. Besides,

the devotees while inside the temple stay bothered about their children all the while and therefore, are not able to have darshan of the deities in a peaceful mind.

The ban which is in force as a part of the Covid guidelines followed in the shrine is rather putting the devotees and their children in great inconveniences, said Pradhan. Expressing his displeasure at the rule, she said in the Jagannath Temple in Puri there is no such ban on the entry of children.

Potato promotion under OPELIP

Sunabeda Bhunjia tribals hopeful of bumper crop

AJIT PANDA ■ NUAPADA

In order to improve livelihood conditions of the Bhunjia tribe of Sunabeda, Soseng and Michhapali gram panchayats of Komna block, the Government has introduced crop diversification under OPELIP (Odisha Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups Empowerment and Livelihoods Improvement Programme) through CBDA (Chakotia Bhunjia Development Agency).

Promotion of potato is going to be a major intervention under the programme, in addition to promotion of pulses, ragi and other millets like bajra, jowar, kangu, kodo and suan. Considering the high altitude of Sunabeda plateau, potato cultivation is best suited for the area, and looking at the enthusiasm this year, it is expected that the crop would be more popular among the tribals.

"Potato cultivation will bring a good income to the farmers of the area. This year the CBDA has provided support to 40 farmers and provided seed, bio fertiliser and



vermi compost to them. The seed and yield ratio is expected to be 1:10," said Nuapada CBDA special project head Himanshu Mahapatra.

Tike Jhankar of Barkot village of Michhapali Gram Panchayat has cultivated potato in one-fourth of an acre. "The CBDA provided 150 kg of potato seed for cultivation in 25 decimals of land that I planted two weeks ago. I hope to harvest 12 quintals," said Tike. Growth of plants in Tike's potato field looks very healthy and creates hope that the produce would be good. "The yield would be higher – about 18 to 20 quintals—if the size of potatoes becomes bigger," added Tike.

The CBDA has provided 6

MT potato seed of Khurpri Jyoti variety to 40 farmers of three Panchayats this year. Each farmer has been provided 150 kg of seed to cover one-fourth of an acre under the crop. All the farmers are expecting yield in the range of 12 to 15 quintals. "We don't use chemicals; thus the quality of our produce would be good," said Sadaram Jhankar of Sanbaheli village who in spite of sowing late, expects the same amount of yield like others. He is, however, afraid of fungal attack in the plants. "I had got very good yield in potato four years ago, but the crop totally failed last year," said he. "Farmers are using only locally available manures made of cow dung, crop residues and leaves.

They have also treated the seed in cow urine prior to the sowing (soaking in the mix of one litre of cow urine with 20 liters of water for about 20 minutes). This inhibits the seed borne diseases. We have also provided Trichoderma Viride bio fertilizer for better growth and yield of crop," added Mohapatra, further adding that the programme has got very good response from women.

"We have a proposal to establish a soil testing laboratory at Sunabeda to be managed by a self help group (SHG). Project cost of the lab would be Rs 2 lakh, out of which two-third would be borne by the Government and the rest by the SHG. The lab would be operative within next one month," he informed.

Subash Singh demands in Rajya Sabha

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

BJD MP Subash Singh raised the plight of the Anganawadi workers in the Rajya Sabha demanding a hike in their salary to a minimum of Rs 18,000 based on recom-

mendations of the 7th Pay Commission.

Raising the issue in the Zero Hour, Singh said the Commission had fixed a minimum wage for Central Government employees at Rs 18,000.

He said during the two Covid waves, the Anganawadi workers have worked relentlessly to containing the disease, leaving aside their own

and family members' health and happiness. They continue to devote themselves fully for vaccination of the masses across the country, he told.

"Nearly 2.5 million Anganawadi workers are engaged to serve women and children across the country since 1975 and they need Government's support now," Singh pleaded.

He informed that the

Odisha Chief Minister had declared them as Corona warriors and had provided Rs 50 lakh to each Covid deceased Government employee. "But unfortunately, the Central Government hasn't paid heed to their miserable conditions yet," he said.

He said Rajya Sabha Chairman and Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu has announced to forward the issue to the Union Government.

Omicron awareness held among blind



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

An awareness programme on the new Covid variant Omicron was conducted at the Blind Association here on the International Day for Disabled on Friday under the guidance of chairperson, MAMATA, Prof Dr Bijoya Mishra. Maj Dr Kalpana Das coordinated the event.

The visually-impaired people were advised to be

more cautious for the new variant and maintain hand hygiene, social distancing and mask wearing as a habitual practice. To mark the day, MAMATA donated a hand sanitiser and hand spray machine to the Blind Association.

Blind Association president Sanyasi Behera, Dr Bikash Das of Calp Organisation and Dr Taru Dwivedy were present.

Attempt to rob jewellers foiled in Jaipur

2 injured in firing by miscreants

PNS ■ JAIPUR

An attempt on Friday to rob the owners of the MS Jewellery in Haripur Bazaar under the Kuakhia police station in Jaipur district was foiled with the help of locals. Two persons received bullet injuries trying to resist the robbery attempt.

Reports said after closing their shop, the owners of MS Jewellery, Debashis Patra and his brother Ashish,, were returning home by their motorbike when they were intercepted by two miscreants on a Pulsar bike near

the medical intersection. The miscreants sprayed chilly powder on Debashis and tried to snatch a bag with valuables.

But Debashis' younger brother Ashish and Sonu confronted the robbers. As more locals gathered hearing the commotion, the miscreants fired couple of rounds, which hit Ashish and Sonu on their legs. The miscreants then sped away from the spot towards Kuakhia.

The two injured were taken to Haripur Primary Health Centre and later to the District General Hospital. Getting information, the Kuakhia police arrived at the scene and conducted a preliminary investigation. A bulletproof vest was found at the spot. Jaipur SP Rahul PR also rushed to the spot.

‘Odisha has transformational approach in governance’

Mo Sarkar system has direct feed-back from citizens : CM

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Saturday said Odisha has adopted a transformational approach in its governance, keeping people at the forefront.

Speaking at the valedictory session of a two-day Regional Conference on Replication of Good Governance Practices organised at the Lok Seva Bhawan, he underlined the significance of Odisha's Mo Sarkar initiative in good governance.

The meeting was attended by Union Minister of State for Administrative Reforms & Pub-



lic Grievances Dr Jitendra Singh and officers and resource persons from across the country.

Patnaik said, “A ‘Mo Sarkar’ programme has been rolled out with direct random feedback from citizens who visit Government institutions for various services to instill high professionalism in the Government and monitor the feedback from the citizens. The spirit behind Mo Sarkar is that in a democracy, the citizens are supreme and their satisfaction of Government service delivery must be taken seriously and used as a bench-

mark for initiating change.”

The CM said good governance precisely includes building competency, aligning strategies with goals, being accountable, having a high level of ethics and integrity, defining roles and responsibilities. And above all, the State Government is having a pro-people approach to all interventions.

He further said Odisha has initiated a number of good governance practices and various e-governance projects including Odisha One Portal and Odisha Right to Public

Services Act to provide services to people within the stipulated time frame. E-Jana Sunani has also been rolled out to cater to the grievances of citizens anytime anywhere.

Union Minister Singh said this conference is an initiative directed towards a natural way of improving work culture. Best practices in governance in different regions would be replicated in other regions that are suitable for a specific purpose.

Speaking on Odisha's efforts on good governance, he appreciated digital initiatives such as OSWAS, Mo Sarkar and Bhubaneswar Land Use Information System. “We will collaborate with Government of Odisha for its replication in other regions. We all have a common goal to serve people,” he added.

Wanted drug peddler nabbed from Rajasthan

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Special Task Force (STF) of the Odisha police on Saturday arrested a notorious fugitive drug peddler from Jodhpur in Rajasthan. The arrested peddler was identified as Sk Azbahar of Rajpur village under Jaleswar police station of Baleswar district. Azbahar was also wanted in many narcotic trade cases. A team of Odisha STF with the help of their Rajasthan counterparts conducted raids at Jodhapur earlier in the day. According to sources, the accused was the mastermind in inter-State drug trafficking racket and was absconding for long. He was frequently changing hideouts in various States including in West Bengal and Rajasthan, to elude the police dragnet. “A local court at Jodhapur has granted transit remand and he will be brought to Odisha and produced in the Baleswar District and Sessions Judge Court” the STF said.

Memo to Guv demands PWDs’ welfare

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) was observed here on Friday with focus on promoting the rights of people with disabilities (PWDs) and raise awareness on their wellbeing. More than 12, 46,902 persons in Odisha live with some form of disability of which 5, 42,000 are visually impaired. This year's theme for IDPD 2021 is ‘Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID 19 world.’

The event was organised by the VIEWS, Odisha Association for Blind with support of DKBW, Germany.

Odisha Blind Association president Sanyas Behera highlighted how the PwD population have been the worst af-



ected during the Covid 19 pandemic. Birupakshya Dixit from Practical Action observed how in spite of multiple measures to create awareness around their issues, the disabled are often overlooked during times of emergency.

Among others, MLA Priyadarshi Mishra, UNFPA representative Manish Kumar, CLAP president Bikash Das and VIEWS director S Bheema Rao attended the programme. An MoU was signed between the VIEWS and OAB to support a special blind school and promote inclusive education through audio books.

A three-member delegation of OAB submitted a MoU to the Governor demanding Government's intervention to release of Grant in Aid to the OAB, a special recruitment drive for filling all posts meant for PWDs, construction of a barrier-free girls hostel building, digital library building for the blind, reservation in promotion to service holders, up-gradation of Bhima Bhoi School for the Blind to +2 level classes, enhancement of monthly disability pension to Rs 3,000 per month, 5% reservation for PWDs in all housing schemes and a special disability census.

State aware of AP intrusion in Kotia : Min

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

While replying to a question of BJP MLA Mohan Charan Majhi on the State Government's action in the Kotia dispute, Revenue Minister Sudam Marndi said in the State Assembly on Friday that as a follow-up of the November 9 meeting of the two concerned Chief Ministers, based on mutual interests the Odisha Government has already taken the first step by forming a Chief Secretary-level committee.

Marndi stated that the

State Government is aware of the intrusion of Andhra Pradesh Government officials in Kotia.

As per the Supreme Court direction, until solution comes from a competent authority, the status quo regarding demands of both States would remain.

The writ of Odisha regarding Andhra Pradesh holding panchayat elections in Kotia is still pending in the Supreme Court the Minister pointed out.

It was decided between the two Chief Ministers to resolve the dispute within the ambit of Federal framework

and with mutual cooperation and an institutional structure, Minister said.

He further said that besides the issue of Kotial cluster of villages, Neradi barrage, Jhanjabati dam, Polavaram, water discharge from Bahuda river and NOC for Balimela and Saluru power projects, Maoist issue and ganja cultivation were discussed.

Besides, setting up of Chairs in Odia and Telugu in BR Ambedkar University, Visakhapatnam and Berhampur University were also discussed.

Vaishnav informs Parliament

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav on Friday informed the Rajya Sabha that the completion time of the Khurda Road-Bolangir new line project cannot be ascertained at this time.

Replying to a question of BJD member Prashanta Nanda, he said completion of

any railway project depends on various factors like quick land acquisition by the State Government, forest clearance by officials of forest department, shifting of infringing utilities, statutory clearances from various authorities, geological and topographical conditions of area, law and order situation in the area of project site, number of working months in a year for particular project site due to climatic conditions, etc.

“All these factors affect the completion time of the project,” he said.

The railway has taken up the work for Khurda Road-Bolangir new line (289 km) with an anticipated cost of Rs 3792 crore. An expenditure of Rs 1497 crore has been incurred on the project upto March 2021 and an outlay of Rs 1000.50 crore (Railway's share: Rs 500.50 crore and State's share: Rs 500 crore) has been

provided in the financial year 2021-22, he informed.

So far, 92 km length (Khurda Road to Mahipur (77 km) and Bolangir to Bichupalli (15 km)) of the project has been commissioned. Work has been taken up in Mahipur-Nuagaon-Buguda (45 km), Purunakatak-Boudh-Sonepur (65 km) and Sonepur tarbha-Bachupally (37 km), Vaishnav said.

This project involves acquisition of 6,162 acres of land and diversion of 1844 acre forest land, out of which 5208 acre land has been acquired and diversion of 170 acre forestland has been completed. Further, acquisition of 954 acre of land and diversion of 1,674-acre forestland has been taken up, he added.

This East Coast Railway is executing the project, which has been delayed for several years.

22,497 S’garh PWDs yet to get UDID card

Of total 49,497 disabled living in dist

MALAY RAY ■ SUNDARGARH

Of 49,497 persons with disabilities (PWDs) living in Sundargarh district, as many as 22,497 are yet to get the Unique Disability ID (UDID) card. The Central Government had introduced the UDID with a view to create a national database for PWDs for transparency, efficiency and ease of delivering the Government benefits to them.

The UDID was introduced during the year 2016 through which registration of all disabled persons are done and UDID card is provided to them. However, five years

have passed to the introduction of the scheme but thousands of disabled people of the district are yet to get the card.

There are a number of schemes by both the Central and State Governments meant for the disabled persons like pre and post Matric scholarship, supply of free laptop and voice recorder, financial assistance for marriage, concession on travel, benefit under Bhimabhoi Bhinnakshyama Samarthya Abhiyan (BBSA), establishment of special school for disabled children, scholarship for disabled children and Banishree scheme, etc. About 23,260 persons have benefited from different schemes. Still a large number of the PWDs have not got the benefit due to non availability of UDID cards, said sources.

“We have already started Bhimabhoi Binakshyama Samarthya Abhiyan (BBSA) camp in different blocks and ULBs in Sundargarh district since November 24 and it will continue till end of February. We will try to identify disabled persons through this camp and will provide them disabled certificate,” said Social Security Officer, Sundargarh, Ashok Kumar Habadasingh. “We are also trying that the identified disabled persons who have not got UDID card, get the same at the earliest,” Habadasingh added.

Meanwhile, the Sundargarh district administration on Friday gave Rs 2.5 lakh each to three persons for marrying PwDs on the World Disability Day.

Ahead of centenary fest

Blood donation camp held at East Hostel

PNS ■ CUTTACK

Current boarders of the historic East Hostel at the Ravenshaw University, in association with the East Hostel Alumni Association (EAA) organised a mega blood donation camp in the campus on Friday which was jointly inaugurated by EAA members Santosh Dash, Sashanka Sekhar Rout, Dr Debashish Mishra and Santosh Kumar Sethi.

The camp was held in collaboration of the Capital Hospital and Jajpur District Headquarters Hospital Blood Banks. As many as 505 units of blood were collected. This was the result of a massive signature campaign and outreach activity by the boarders.



Hostel Superintendent Dr Gurudev Meher, old alumni Manjit Mitra, members of the EAA, many students and guests also donated blood.

Notably, the blood donation camp was organised as part of prior events of the hostel's centenary celebration on December 24. Prominent EAA members Sambit Tripathy, Subham Sahoo and Ashish Choudhury coordinated the camp.

Ex-MLA to use pension for poor patients, students

Forms trust in Sambalpur

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR

Former Sambalpur MLA and eminent gynaecologist Dr Raseswari Panigrahi has formed a charitable trust to help poor patients for treatment and students for higher education.

“Such an idea came when I got the first pension of Rs 32, 000 per month in 2019 as a former MLA. I decided not to spend the money for myself



but for the poor people,” said Dr Panigrahi on Friday in a media conference.

“Many other eminent people like retired professors from colleges and universities, doctors and

social activists etc have also come forward to get involved in the noble work,” she added.

While Prof Shankar Prasad Pati has taken over the charge of president of the trust, Subash Panigrahi is the secretary. There are also eight other members of the trust.

“If the trust will work with dedication, I decide to donate my properties to it through a will,” said Dr Panigrahi. Other members present like Dr Nirupama Badpanda and Prof Pati also gave their consent to donate handsome amounts for the noble purpose.

State logs 193 new Covid cases, 2 deaths

71 infections in BBSR

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State registered 193 more Covid positive cases in 19 districts and the State pool on Saturday, with which the total tally increased to 10,50,060. Among the newly-infected were 23 children in the age group of 0 to 18 years. Notably, the State had recorded 270 cases on Friday. Among the new cases, 114 were from quarantine and 79 local contacts. Khordha district recorded the highest 88 cases followed by Jajpur with 14, Cuttack 12 and Mayurbhanj 11. The districts which recorded below-10 cases were Sambalpur seven, Ganjam six, Bhadrak, Jharsuguda, Kandhamal and Kendrapada four each, Baleswar, Puri and Sundargarh three each, Bargarh, Dhenkanal, Jagatsinghpur and Keonjhar two each and Balangir and Nayagarh one each. Besides, 20 cases were detected from the State pool. The active cases stood at 2,383. Two more patients succumbed to the disease, taking the total death toll to 8,420 in the State. Khordha and Jajpur districts reported one death each. However, 257 patients recovered on the day, increasing the total recoveries to 10, 39,461. State Capital Bhubaneswar registered 71 of the State's 193 cases, with which the total tally in the city rose to 1,21,698. The active cases were 1,228.

Official nexus derails vision for IT sector

SAROJ MISHRA ■ BHUBANESWAR

Even though Odisha has immense potential to excel in the field of information technology and information technology-enabled services, (IT and ITes) and the State Government is doing its best to create conducive environment for it, the rampant favouritism shown to a particular company has dissuaded many other companies to venture into the State and affecting the survival of many small startup-promising companies in the State.

In this particular case, CSM Technologies Private Limited, which is owned by a relative of an IAS Officer, has managed to bag all the contracts through Odisha Computer Application Centre (OCAC), IDCOL and from Government agencies par-

ticularly from mining, education, tourism, Food and Civil Supply on nomination by deviating the Odisha Procurement Rule.

It is alleged that senior officials, who are having a nexus with CSM are promoting the company to gain huge monetary benefits and is the best place to invest their black money.

Without any tender process, many departments give the e-Governance project as a POC (Proof of Concept) without any financial commitment but later on that project continues with huge financial commitment in nexus with the corrupted high-level officials. During the Covid-19 pandemic many projects have been given with a value of crores of money from Government exchequer to CSM by OCAC/IDCOL on nomination or on adopting irregularities.

The nexus with top bureaucrats has left no space to get competitive company to give effective e-Governance solution to the State and it is

the mandate of the officials to follow all the procedures for un-fair selection of a solution integrator (CSM) for the ICT (Information Communication Technology) initiatives in the State.

Many cases it has also been observed that on transfer to a new position, the corrupted officials' first priority is to eliminate the existing company to give the entry for CSM. It affects a lot for the young entrepreneurs with a question mark of survival. So in other ways the top level officials are responsible for the failure of growth of the IT sectors in the State that need to be assessed.

This attitude has also damaged the image of the State by which the good companies are hesitating to participate in the tender process and they never think also Odisha as the ultimate destination to start up their unit though is the best place in the eastern zone to lure the investors.

In the last 20 years, with all the support, the company is able to generate 500 numbers of resources which could have been more if other companies would have been given the opportunity to prove their competency. It indicates Odisha is lacking with availability of potential top level bureaucrats with vision for IT penetration in the State.

In the process, ultimately the State exchequer loses crores of rupees and the other firms, which want to do genuine work, are left in the lurch. So, it is no surprise that no new companies are coming to the State to set-up new ventures.

Since, these practices are affecting the State, IT entrepreneurship and many potential companies are going to be affected, it is being demanded to constitute a committee with the representatives from technical team members and judiciary to investigate the reason of the favouritism by the top bureaucrats to CSM.

KV students shine in Sanskrit Olympiad

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The prize distribution ceremony of the All India Sanskrit Olympiad 2021 was recently held at the Kendriya Vidyalaya No. 1 (Second Shift).

The prizes were awarded to Class-X student Adyasha Diyarshi, the national topper and Class-VII students Rudranarayan Mishra and Akanksha Jena, the State toppers.

More than 40 participants of the school have also won gold medals in this competition. In 2020, one student from Class-VI and one from Class-VII of the school had been declared winners and 72 participants of the school had got gold medals.

Students of the school, under the guidance of



Mahapatra Sabita Hota, are making the institution proud by participating in large numbers in the Sanskrit Olympiad for Classes-IV, V and VI.

School Principal (I/C) Bhupendra Singh felicitated the winners with gold medals, certificates, laptops, tabs, pen drives and books.

Ranks upgraded in RAF, CoBRA by Centre

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has accorded sanction to upgrade the post of one deputy commandant (operations) to second-in-command (operations) in each of the 15 battalions of the Rapid Action Force (RAF), 10 CoBRA battalions and six Mahila battalions of the CRPF to temporarily stem stagnation at the level of deputy commandants. The proposal was pending for over two years when a cadre review was undertaken in 2016-17 and one deputy commandant (operations) in each of the General Duty battalions was upgraded to second-in-command (II-I/C). GD battalions refer to operational battalions of the Force.

While the purpose of the cadre review was to undertake a thorough cadre management, the CRPF opted for ad hoc promotion of the deputy commandants to II-I/C. This led to stagnation at the level of the deputy commandants which was affecting operational profile, CRPF veterans said.

The move will lead to promotion of 31 deputy commandants in the RAF, specialized anti-Naxal unit Combat

Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) and Mahila Battalions.

While officials welcomed the move to promote the deputy commandants in the RAF, CoBRA and Mahila Battalions, they termed it as a temporary measure which will not alleviate the long term problem of stagnation at the junior and middle level hierarchy of the cadre officers.

While the rank of the deputy commandants have been upgraded to II I/C but the number of the posts of the deputy commandants has been simultaneously reduced, they said, adding the cadre review conducted in 2016-17 was an eyewash.

An Assistant Commandant rank officer in the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) as well as the Border Security Force (BSF) takes 11 to 12 years to get the first promotion to the rank of deputy commandant as against the army officers getting their first promotion in just four years. A deputy commandant is promoted to the next level of II-I/C in six to seven years. "This leads to an increased age profile of the junior and middle level leadership in the armed

forces under the Union Home Ministry which is alarming and detrimental for both the morale of the officers and operational efficiency," officials said.

While yet another cadre review is underway but the same has not been finalized. A scientific career progression management of the cadre officers is required to improve the bleak promotion prospects of the officers who are recruited by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), they added.

"The undersigned is directed to refer to CRPF's (note on the subject) and to convey approval of the competent authority for upgradation of one post each of Deputy Commandant (Ops) to the rank of Second-in-Command (Ops) in 10 CoBRA Bns, 15 RAF Battalions and 06 Mahila Battalions of CRPF at par with male GD (General Duty) Battalions subject to the filling up of these posts by the officers who are already drawing NFFU (non-functional financial upgradation) or higher ranks," reads an order issued on Tuesday by Under Secretary Ashutosh Kumar of PF III desk of the Union Home Ministry.

Govt working to ensure healthcare, housing for CAPF jawans: Shah

Jaisalmer (Rajasthan): The Narendra Modi government is working to ensure better healthcare facilities and increased housing satisfaction and family time for personnel of the Central Armed Police Forces, who are guarding India's fronts under very difficult conditions, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Saturday.

Addressing Border Security Force (BSF) personnel at the 'Rohitash' post along the India-Pakistan border here in Rajasthan, the Minister said the Government will do "everything for the welfare of troops who spend the golden days of their life in protecting the motherland".

Shah, who is on a two-day visit to Jaisalmer in the desert state, is spending the first night of his trip at the 'Rohitash' border post, where he will share meals with jawans during the 'bada khana' (feast).

"I am going to stay here tonight with you at this post and this is an attempt to understand your difficulties and to find ways to ease problems," Shah told troopers during an evening address at a 'Sainik Sammelan'.

He said the 'Rohitash' post

was witness to the glory and bravery of BSF and army personnel during wars with Pakistan.

Shah said his government has made it a point to ensure healthcare of jawans and their families and that is why the 'Ayushman CAPF' scheme has been launched.

"You can get all the health benefits for your families by just swiping a card... This new scheme will lessen the administrative burden on forces like the BSF, unlike earlier where they had to clear a number of health bills," the minister said.

Quoting official data, Shah said 25 lakh 'Ayushman CAPF' health cards have been distributed among personnel of various central armed police forces (CAPFs) till December 2.

In the BSF, 4.5 lakh cards have been distributed, he said.

"We want to distribute these cards, which will ensure easy healthcare facilities to jawans and their families, to each and every personnel and their kin by February next year," he said.

"We are also working to improve the housing satisfaction level for CAPF personnel," he said.

Congress begins online drive for families of those who died of Covid

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Saturday launched the party's online campaign demanding compensation for the families of those who died of Covid and accused the government of sleeping while people coped with pain and loss.

The Congress said the aim of the "#SpeakUpforCovidNyay" campaign was to demand that the central government disclose the actual number of Covid deaths in the country and "properly compensate all families of the victims with Rs 4 lakh".

"When it comes to people's pain and loss, Government of India is sleeping. Let's wake them up," Rahul tweeted while launching the campaign.

The party alleged the Narendra Modi government has very tactfully tried to cover up its failures in managing the Covid-19 pandemic by distorting the number of Covid deaths, the party alleged.

"#SpeakUpForCovidNyay so the govt is forced to disclose the correct number of Covid deaths," it said on its official Twitter handle.

The party alleged that the government lacked the intention to support the distressed



families.

"If the government doesn't have data of Covid deaths, the entire country is willing to share it with the government. There is no dearth of fund... The real issue is the government is lacking in the intention to help Covid-hit families. We demand Rs 4 lakh each for the kin of those who died of the pandemic," AICC spokesperson Pawan Khara said.

"By making up false numbers, the Modi government is not only withholding compensation for lakhs of families, but it is simply trying to cover up its failure in managing and controlling the pandemic," party said in a statement.

The Congress said that

under the disaster management guidelines, the government is required to compensate the families of COVID-19 victims with Rs 4 lakh.

"The Modi government has carefully tried to wriggle its way out of compensating the fair amount and is trying to settle for compensation of a meagre amount of Rs 50,000," it alleged.

Several state Congress units and leaders across the country put out videos in support of the online campaign and to press the government for providing compensation of Rs 4 lakh each to the families of the COVID-19 deceased. The party has raised the demand in Parliament too.

Relief for Andhra, Odisha, WB as storm Jawad weakens

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a relief for Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Saturday said that cyclonic storm 'Jawad' weakened into a deep depression on Saturday and is likely to weaken further into a depression by the time it reaches Puri on Sunday.

The cyclonic storm weakened into a deep depression and lay centered over west-central Bay of Bengal, about 180 km east-southeast of Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, and 330 km south-southwest of Puri, Odisha at 5:30 pm, the IMD said in a statement.

"It is likely to move north-northeastwards and weaken further into a depression by tomorrow morning. It is likely to reach near Puri around Sunday noon. Subsequently, it is likely to continue to move

north-northeastwards along the coast of Odisha towards the coast of West Bengal and weaken into a well marked low pressure area during the subsequent 24 hours," it said. Saudi Arabia has given the cyclone its name 'Jawad' -- the liberal or merciful.

A low-pressure area had developed over the Andaman Sea on November 30. It intensified into a depression on December 2 and further into a deep depression on Friday morning. It turned into a cyclone on Friday noon, the IMD said.

The IMD has forecast heavy to very heavy rainfall at isolated places over Gangetic West Bengal and north Odisha on Sunday, and heavy rainfall at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura on Sunday and Monday. Sea conditions will remain unsafe for shipping and fishermen in the central and north Bay of Bengal till Sunday.



Focusing on improving passenger experience through world-class stations: Railways Min



New Delhi: The Railway Ministry's focus is on improving passenger experience through world-class railway stations, Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Saturday.

Speaking at an event of the Confederation of Indian Industries, he maintained that spending on new railway lines, doubling of tracks and electrification among others is on track.

With the stations at Bhopal and Gandhinagar now with world-class features in terms of city integration and passenger flow, 40 more stations will be tendered shortly, he said.

The Minister also said that tourism is being created as a new growth segment for the railways and invited the industry to participate in this objective. Modern train sets with air cushions are being designed and will be rolled out at the end of the next year, he said.

For reducing cargo costs, Vaishnaw noted that it is important to raise the share of freight carried by the railways. For this, the ministry is working on stepping up investment in new tracks, capacity and other infrastructure, he said.

"The customer interface must be made simple with not more than three months for clearances on cargo terminals and other facilities. Wagon designs are being changed to cater to different commodities and products. The railways is working on a hybrid BOT model for greater private participation," he added.

In telecom, the railway minister said India is developing its own 5G system. The Postal Life Insurance (PLI) scheme for telecom manufacturing has been very encouraging with 35 applications.

In the electronics and

information technology sector, Vaishnaw said electronics manufacturing is likely to exceed the expectation of USD 250 billion of production by FY-26. Similarly, Startup India had targeted 100 unicorns by 2025, but more than 70 are already in place, he noted, adding that a user-centric and trust-based regime is being developed.

He also said that the bulk of government's revenues is going on capital investment in areas such as healthcare infrastructure.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called for changing the government's operating systems under the Atmanirbhar Bharat package. Capacity utilisation is now rising as a result of this strategy. If the capital investment by the government rises, private investment will also pick up," Vaishnaw added.

NEW CORONAVIRUS VARIANT

No need to panic, follow Covid appropriate behaviour: VP

New Delhi: Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Saturday urged people not to panic about the emergence of new Covid-19 strain Omicron and advised them to remain vigilant and keep following Covid-appropriate behaviour till the pandemic is over.

Addressing a gathering at a book launch event at the Upa Rashtrapati Nivas here, he also urged people to shed hesitancy and get themselves vaccinated against coronavirus at the earliest.

The vice president said the coronavirus pandemic has come as a big challenge for the entire human race, and appreciated the world's largest vaccination drive currently underway in India, an official statement of the Vice President Secretariat said.

Naidu also referred to the transformational changes brought in governance over the past seven years.

These changes are both empowering and enabling 1.3 billion people to deliver on their potential, he said.

"Be it life expectancy, financial inclusion, access to healthcare, employment, owning a house, or honouring entrepreneurial ability, the quality of Indian lives is getting better with each passing day," Naidu said.

Quoting the prime minister's three word mantra - 'reform, perform and transform', the vice president praised the tremendous progress made by the nation over the past few years in various fields such as financial inclusion, insurance coverage, number of LPG connections for poor women and tap water connection to households.

He said following the principle of 'minimum government and maximum governance', the government is leveraging technologies to bring transformation in every sector, and expressed satisfaction over India becoming the third



largest startup ecosystem in the world.

"It is a testimony to the government's resolute commitment to improve the business environment in the country that India's ranking rose to 63rd place in World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index 2020," he said. Naidu noted that India's strategic partnerships are based on mutual respect and the nation has given a resolute response to inimical forces who dared to challenge its integrity and sovereignty.

"We are guided by our unwavering self-belief and our dedication to becoming 'atmanirbhar' (self-reliant) in every possible way," he noted.

PTI

PAC upholds prudence, wisdom in Parl system: Prez



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On the occasion of the 100th year of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), President Ram Nath Kovind on Saturday said that the PAC upholds prudence, wisdom and propriety in the Parliamentary system.

Kovind said Gandhiji considered account keeping as essential for clean public life. He underlined that the philosophy of public accounts has not been changed from the time of Kautilya.

PAC was constituted in 1921 in the pre-Independent India. Since the sixties, an opposition member has been heading the committee. The PAC examines the

accounts showing the appropriation of the sums granted by Parliament to meet the expenditure of the central government, the Annual Finance Accounts of the Government of India and such other accounts laid before the House as the Committee may think fit.

Several high dignitaries along with central ministers and members of Parliament of both the houses attended the function in the Parliament.

Vice President Venkaiah Naidu said, PAC reports always strive for improvement in the system. PAC has detected many financial lapses in its glorious work traditions. Naidu also suggested that Parliament should meet 100 days in a year. Lok Sabha Speaker Om

Birla said this is one of the most important Committees of Parliament and complimented the PAC members for their dedication to the cause.

In his first address in the function, PAC Chairman Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said, the PAC is committed to uphold transparency and accountability of the government money. He said the committee always acts in an impartial manner.

The President released a special souvenir depicting the 100 glorious years of PAC's journey and 67 special articles including 15 from Commonwealth countries. Mr Kovind also inaugurated an exhibition depicting the milestone moments of PAC from 1921 to 2021.

Kovid felicitates individuals, organisations for contribution towards PwDs empowerment

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Ram Nath Kovind on Friday conferred the National Awards on individuals, institutions, organisations and state/district etc. for their outstanding achievements and work done towards empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs).

The president was the Chief Guest at a function to celebrate "International Day of Persons with Disabilities" organized by the DEPwD, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment on Friday.

Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Dr. Virendra Kumar, Ministers of State for Social Justice & Empowerment Ramdas Athawale, Pratima Bhaumik were also present in the function.

In his address, Dr. Virendra Kumar expressed his gratitude to the President for his presence and guidance from time to time towards empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.

Dr. Kumar said that the Divyangjans are valuable human resources and the Prime Minister gives priority to the issues of persons with disabilities in the National Development Agenda. His motto is "Inclusive growth, development of all and confidence of all". The Government has enacted the Right to Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 which came into effect from 19.04.2017. The Act provides for 4% reservation in government jobs for persons with disabilities. In January 2021,



the Ministry has identified 3566 posts suitable for persons with disabilities, he said.

He also said that the Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan (Accessible India Campaign) was launched by the Government on 03.12.2015 to provide universal accessibility to persons with disabilities so that they can live a meaningful life with dignity. Public buildings, transport system and information and communication technology have been included under this campaign. Keeping in view the problems related to accessibility faced by the masses, the Department has developed a Mobile APP to address those problems in a quick and systematic manner as possible.

The Government has set up Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre to promote the empowerment of hearing-impaired persons and to create sign language in India. The Institute, among other functions, is continuously preparing sign language dictionaries that have so far included more than 10,000 words.

Going to courts should be last resort: CJI

Only after exploring arbitration, mediation, conciliation

Hyderabad: Chief Justice of India N V Ramana on Saturday said that the option of going to courts for dispute resolution should be used as the 'last resort', only after exploring Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms like arbitration and mediation.

"My advice, after practicing in the legal profession for over 40 years in different capacities, is that you must keep the option of going to courts as a last resort. Use this last resort only after exploring the option of ADR- arbitration, mediation and conciliation," he said.

Justice Ramana, who was speaking at the Curtain Raiser and Stakeholders' Conclave of International Arbitration and Mediation Centre (IAMC) here, recalled Lord Krishna's attempt to mediate between the Pandavas and Kauravas in the epic Mahabharata.

"It may be worthwhile to recall that the failure of mediation led to disastrous consequences," he said.

The reasons for conflicts are many, including misunderstandings, ego issues, trust and greed. Ultimately, small differences of opinion can lead to a big conflict and even big conflicts can be resolved with some effort in understanding one another, he said.

If conflicts arise in personal life, they can be resolved by avoiding

the people we do not like or by sacrificing some money to get mental peace, among others, the CJI said.

A prudent person tries to find ways to resolve conflicts amicably, he said.

But in a business, money, honour or reputation cannot be lost and the interests of business or industry cannot be sacrificed. In such a situation also, an easy way of settling disputes without wasting much time or money or losing peace of mind can be thought of, he said.

"Now to come back to the reality, in business you might have a difference of opinion and disagreements. One would usually start by initiating a dialogue to clarify issues. If it doesn't happen, you may still look for people who can help you resolve such issues by negotiating. If this also doesn't work, then the only option people consider is to go to courts," he said, advising that going to courts should be the last option.

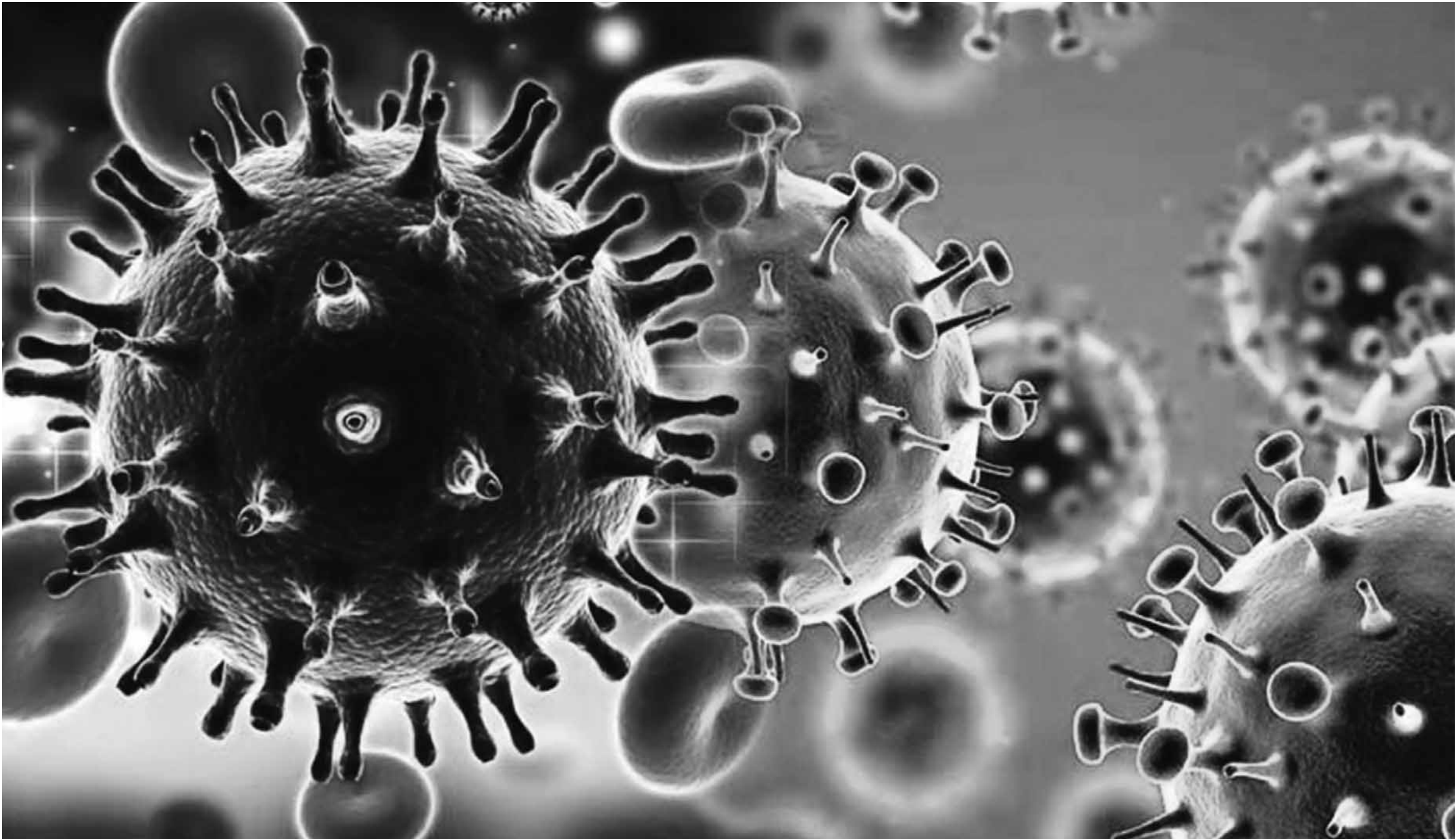
Observing that arbitration and mediation are efforts at restoring a relationship, he said the most important factor behind the resolution of any dispute is having the right attitude of leaving aside ego, emotions and embracing practicality.

Once the conflicts enter a Court, much gets lost in the practice and procedure, he said.

PTI

OH! MI-CRON

World Health Organization has declared Omicron (B.1.1.529) a variant of concern. Preliminary evidence suggests there may be an increased risk of reinfection among elderly and the immunocompromised. SUPRIYA RAMESH speaks with experts to bring you a report



After Delta, any other variant which has stirred fear among people is the new Omicron mutant. Originating in South Africa, it has now spread to 24 countries including India. On December 2, 2021, the country observed and confirmed its first two cases in Karnataka. One of them was a South African national.

Based on the evidence presented to the World Health Organization's Technical Advisory Group on Virus Evolution (TAG-VE) that Omicron has several mutations that may have an impact on how it behaves, on November 26, 2021, WHO designated the variant Omicron (B.1.1.529) a variant of concern (VOC) on the advice of TAG-VE. According to WHO, this variant has a large number of mutations, some of which are concerning. Preliminary evidence suggests an increased risk of reinfection with this variant, as compared to other VOCs.

Scientists are still gathering data to establish how contagious Omicron is, and the severity of the illness it causes. "Omicron variant has a large number of mutations, some of which are concerning. Researchers around the world are conducting studies to better understand transmissibility, severity and immune escape capabilities of Omicron. WHO commends countries which have been able to quickly detect and report cases of the new Variant of Concern," says Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia Region.

Talking about the severity of infection, Dr Anurag Aggarwal, Consultant Internal Medicine, says, "This variant has a large number of mutations, some of which are concerning. Preliminary evidence suggests an increased risk of reinfection with this variant, as compared to other variants of concern."

Aggarwal, citing Professor Tulio de Oliveira, the director of the Centre for Epidemic Response and Innovation in South Africa, tells us that there was an 'unusual constellation of mutations' and that it was 'very different' to other variants that have circulated. "It is incredibly heavily mutated. There were 50 mutations overall and more than 30 on the spike protein, which is the target of most vaccines and the key the virus uses to unlock the doorway into our body's cells. Further, the receptor binding domain (that's the part of the virus that makes first contact with our body's cells) has 10 mutations compared to just two for the Delta variant that swept the world," explains Aggarwal.

After travel routes easing down post-second wave, it is obvious that people would travel everywhere after being caged for more than a year. With that, it is understandable that people will carry the virus from one place to another, even after the major chunk of the population is vaccinated.

“IN THE FESTIVE SEASON, COVID-APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR TAKES A BACK SEAT. BUT, TIME HAS AGAIN COME WHEN WE HAVE TO ADHERE TO ALL THE PROTOCOLS DILIGENTLY — AVOIDING SOCIAL GATHERINGS IS ESSENTIAL. IT'S UNDERSTANDABLE THAT WE'VE ALL BEEN COMPELLED TO STAY INSIDE AND AVOID SOCIAL INTERACTION FOR ALMOST TWENTY MONTHS. HOWEVER, IF WE ARE TO COMPLETELY ERADICATE THIS VIRUS, WE MUST LIMIT ITS SPREAD — DR ARUNESH KUMAR, HOD & SENIOR CONSULTANT-PULMONOLOGY, PARAS HOSPITALS, GURUGRAM

It is incredibly heavily mutated. There were 50 mutations overall and more than 30 on the spike protein, which is the target of most vaccines and the key the virus uses to unlock the doorway into our body's cells

— DR ANURAG AGGARWAL
Consultant Internal Medicine, QRG Super Speciality Hospital, Faridabad



"The confirmation of the Omicron, a variant of concern today by India, the first two cases in WHO South-East Asia Region, was not unexpected in view of the interconnected world that we live in. This emphasises the need for all countries to step up surveillance, to be on alert and rapidly detect any importation and take measures to curtail further spread of the virus," says Singh.

She adds that the response measures for all variants, including Omicron, is the same as that for SARs CoV2. Comprehensive and tailored public health and social measures by Governments, and strict adherence to preventive and precautionary measures by individuals, is a must. People must wear a well-fitting mask which covers their nose and mouth well, keep distance, avoid poorly ventilated or crowded spaces, keep hands clean, cover cough and sneeze and get vaccinated. And continue to take all precautionary measures even after getting vaccinated. All travelers must adhere to public health and social measures at all times and remain vigilant for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

Dr Shuchin Bajaj, Founder Director, Ujala Cygnus Group of Hospitals says, "This is the 5th variant of concern and overall the 15th variant of COVID-19. We already have flights being banned and travel restrictions in place. Therefore, we need to follow COVID-appropriate behavior like wearing masks, following social distancing, and regular use of sanitizer.

With the festive season upon us, we need to make sure that we take proper measures and keep safe as much as possible. "Although the so-called third wave has not eventuate as yet, the sudden appearance and the spread of omicron – a new variant of COVID-19 – across several countries has brought back memories of the second wave and its visibly devastating all-round consequences on people in the country. This means that we must shake off the complacency which was creeping in and instead get back to observing the same COVID-appropriate protocols and behaviour as we did before with utmost seriousness and discipline. So, while we resume wearing double masks, using sanitizers and maintaining social distancing, because of the fact that the virus can be airborne and transmitted through the air, we must also continue to employ indoor air purification systems in order to pre-empt any threat from the new strain, or any strain of the virus for that matter. Since people are now more likely to stay indoors for a greater duration due to the newly-perceived threat from the new variant, the role of indoor air purifiers with their ability to inactivate microbial pathogens including viruses and bacteria will continue to be critical to people's health," says Himanshu Agarwal, CEO, Magneto CleanTech.

"In the festive season, people tend to put all the COVID appropriate behavior on the back seat. But, time has again come when we have to adhere to all the COVID-appropriate behavior diligently. Avoiding social gatherings is essential. It's understandable that we've all been compelled to stay inside and avoid social interaction for almost twenty months. However, if we are to completely eradicate this virus, we must limit its spread. This means we'll have to avoid social gatherings for a while longer. Even if you are fully vaccinated, following the protocol and avoiding social gatherings will help. When you're outside, maintain social distance," says Kumar.

SAFETY COMES FIRST

- ❖ Children over the age of five should also be encouraged to wear masks
- ❖ Maintaining a six-foot social distance while outside the home should always be followed
- ❖ Hand sanitisation should be practiced every 5-6 hours or whenever one goes out
- ❖ Masks should be worn at all times when leaving the house. It should be worn in such a way that it should cover your mouth and nostrils properly. Used masks should be washed on a regular basis to avoid opportunistic infections
- ❖ Quarantine guidelines need to be modified by the centre and state government so that we can restrict the transmission of the virus
- ❖ People should immediately get themselves tested if they are experiencing fever, scratchy throat, low oxygen level and feeling lethargic all the time

GLOBE TROTTER

SHAKESPEAREAN ACTOR ANTONY SHER DIES AT 72

London: The award-winning theatre and film actor Antony Sher has died aged 72 after suffering from cancer, the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) announced on Friday. South Africa-born Sher was widely considered to be one of Britain's finest contemporary actors, playing almost all the great Shakespearean roles from King Lear to Shylock. In 1985, he won an Olivier Award for his energetic portrayal of Richard III as a villainous hunchback, propelling himself around the stage on crutches. While at the RSC, Sher — once described by Prince Charles as his favourite actor — met his husband, Gregory Doran, who would become the company's artistic director.

3 INDIANS HELD IN US FOR ILLEGAL ENTRY

Washington: Three Indian nationals, who were earlier deported to India, have been arrested once again in the US Virgin Islands for illegally entering into the country an American attorney has said.

210 MIGRANTS FOUND PACKED INTO TRUCK

Mexico City: Mexican immigration authorities say they discovered 210 migrants packed into a truck trailer in the central part of the country. The National Migration Institute said the truck failed to stop as directed at a checkpoint in Puebla state on Friday and it was pulled over after a pursuit near the city of Tecamachalco.

GAMBIANS VOTE IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Banjul (Gambia): Lines of voters snaked around corners outside polling stations in Gambia's capital Saturday as the nation holds a presidential election that for the first time in decades does not include former dictator Yahya Jammeh as a candidate. Polls opened to high turnout, with many people lining up at the capital's Independence Stadium before sunrise.

POLICE SHOOT PALESTINIAN ATTACKER

Jerusalem: Israeli police shot a Palestinian after he stabbed and wounded an ultra-Orthodox Jew on Saturday near Damascus Gate just outside Jerusalem's Old City. Video circulated online appeared to show an Israeli Border Police officer shooting a Palestinian man who was lying on the ground. Another video appeared to show police with guns drawn keeping medics from reaching the man. The Magen David Adom emergency service said it treated an ultra-Orthodox man in his 20s who was stabbed in the area, saying he was in moderate condition.

Public Notice
NOTICE is hereby given that Mr. Shiron Grover (hereinafter referred to as the said Mortgagee) is intending to purchase the Entire Second Floor, with roof rights "said floor" built on Property Bearing No. 35-A, in Block E, area measuring 249 Sq. yds., situated in residential Colony known as Rajouri Garden, Area of Village Basaji Suburb, Delhi-110034 (hereinafter referred to as "said property") from Mr. Swarnilata Bai, who is the owner of above the said property by way of Relinquishment Deed dated 16.09.2021 and Now, Mr. Shiron Grover has agreed to create mortgage in respect of the said property in favour of our clients DPC FIRST Bank Limited. Further, if any person, body, individual, institution having any claim, title, interest and/or objection in respect of or against or relating to or touching upon said property or part of the property by way of sale, exchange, lease, lien, mortgage, charge, encumbrance, gift, trust, easement, maintenance, inheritance, testamentary disposition or otherwise or having in their custody any title, documents pertaining the said property shall communicate the same to the undersigned at below mentioned address within 10 days from the publication of this notice with documentary evidence in support thereof, failing which all the claim, of such person shall be considered to have been waived and abandoned. Any objections raised after the completion of the 10 days shall not be binding upon the said property or any Client & in case anyone has any objection, the same may be raised within 10 days of this publication to Mr. Muneesh Dhanraj Mr. Sudhir Jain (Advocates), Law Vertas, Unit no 907, 9th Floor, GD-TL Tower, (B-08), Basaji Suburb, Place, Delhi-110034 or contact at 906670712/9818226363 (M).

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for notice of the general public that a political party is proposed to be registered by the name of **Samrat Mihir Bhoj Samaj Party**. The office of the party located at F-64/C9/197, Sec-40, Noida, (Near Sai Nath Mandir), Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, Pin Code-201303. This Party has submitted application to the Election Commission of India, New Delhi for its registration as Political Party under Section 29A of the Representation of People Act, 1951 - Names/address of the office - bearers of the Party are as follows:
President/Chairman: Harendra Kumar Gurjar, (Gurujii), F-197, Sec.-40, Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P.-201303
General Secretary / Secretary : Anil Kumar Vashisht, 29, Nithari, Sec.-31, Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P.-201303
Treasurer : Anita Devi, F-64/C9/197 Sec.-40, Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P.-201303.
If any one has any objection to the registration of **Samrat Mihir Bhoj Samaj Party** they may send their Objection with reasons thereof, to the Secretary (Political Party) Election Commission of India, Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001 within 30 days of the publication of this notice.

Merkel: Virus death toll ‘so bitter because it is avoidable’

AP ■ BERLIN

Outgoing Chancellor Angela Merkel on Saturday made what is likely her final appeal before leaving office next week for Germans to get vaccinated against Covid-19.

Merkel gave what is expected to be her last weekly video message two days after federal and state leaders decided on a series of measures meant to break a wave of coronavirus infections.

The measures include excluding unvaccinated people across the country from nonessential stores, restaurants and sports and cultural venues. In a longer-term move, parliament will consider a general vaccine mandate.

At least 68.9 per cent of Germans are fully vaccinated against the coronavirus, short of the Government's aim of a minimum



75 per cent vaccination rate. The number of unvaccinated residents has been blamed as a key factor in a surge of new virus cases in recent weeks.

Official figures suggest that the infection rate may now be stabilising, but at too high a level.

The national disease control center on Saturday reported 64,510 new daily cases and a 7-day infection rate of 442.7 new cases per 1,00,000 residents. Another 378 deaths in 24

hours brought Germany's total in the pandemic to 102,946.

"Every one of them leaves behind families or friends, stunned, speechless and helpless," Merkel said in her video message. "This is so bitter because it is avoidable. With the effective and safe vaccines, we have the key to this in our hands."

She renewed a plea to Germans to take the virus seriously, adding that the new omicron variant "appears to be even more contagious than the previous ones."

"Get vaccinated, no matter whether it's a first vaccination or a booster," Merkel said. "Every vaccination helps."

Merkel is expected to leave office on Wednesday and be replaced by Olaf Scholz of the center-left Social Democratic Party, who is currently vice chancellor. Scholz said on

Saturday that his Government's "most important first task" is to "fight the corona pandemic with all the strength that we have."

"There would be a different situation now if just a few more citizens had also made the decision to get vaccination," he said at a convention of the Social Democrats. "We must again make a whole new effort, set in motion a whole new campaign" to get more shots in arms, Scholz said.

Senior members of the party denounced a Friday evening protest outside the home of Saxony state's health minister, Petra Koepping, a Social Democrat. About 30 people gathered with torches and placards outside the home in the eastern town of Grimma.

The demonstrators chanted against coronavirus policies before fleeing in cars when police arrived.

S Korea sets daily records for new Covid cases, deaths

Seoul: South Korea again broke its daily records for coronavirus infections and deaths and confirmed three more cases of the new omicron variant as officials scramble to tighten social distancing and border controls.

The 5,352 new cases reported by the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency on Saturday marked the third time this week the daily tally exceeded 5,000. The

country's death toll was at 3,809 after a record 70 virus patients died in the past 24 hours, while the 752 patients in serious or critical conditions were also an all-time high.

As the delta-driven surge threatens to overwhelm hospital systems, there is also concern about the local spread of the omicron variant, which is seen as potentially more infectious than previous strains of the virus. **AP**

Lanka's Parl condemns lynching in Pakistan

PM Rajapaksa seeks justice

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's Parliament and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa on Saturday condemned the brutal lynching of a Sri Lankan national in Pakistan and hoped that Prime Minister Imran Khan will keep his commitment to bring all those involved to justice and ensure the safety of the rest of the island nation's expat workers.

In a grisly incident on Friday, Priyantha Kumara Diyawadana, who was in his 40s, was lynched and his body burnt by angry supporters of a hardline Islamist party which attacked a garment factory in Pakistan's Punjab province over blasphemy allegations.

Diyawadana, a Sri Lankan Christian from Kandy city, was working as the general manager of the garment factory in Sialkot district, some 100 kms from Lahore.

New footage shot prior to the lynching showed a colleague trying to protect the victim on the roof of the factory where he had fled while the mob of around two dozen people slowly grew in number.

In the video, some among the mob can be heard chanting slogans and saying "he (the manager) will not escape today", while the colleague tried to shield Diyawadana with his body, who clung to the

man's legs, the *Dawn* newspaper reported.

The workers had later overpowered the colleague and dragged Diyawadana out on the road and tortured him with kicks, stones and iron rods, killing him on the spot. The mob had then set the body on fire.

The Sri Lankan Government and the Opposition were united in urging the Sri Lankan authorities to have talks with Islamabad to ensure the safety of the rest of the Sri Lankan workers in Pakistan.

Pakistan Prime Minister Khan said he had spoken to Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa "to convey our nation's anger and shame to

people of Sri Lanka at the vigilante killing of Priyantha Diyawadana in Sialkot."

"Spoke to Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa today in UAE to convey our nation's anger & shame to people of Sri Lanka at vigilante killing of Priyantha Diyawadana in Sialkot. I informed him 100+ ppl arrested & assured him they would be prosecuted with full severity of the law," he said in a tweet on Saturday.

Khan's response came after Sri Lankan Prime Minister Rajapaksa said in a tweet that he was shocked to see the "brutal and fatal" attack on Diyawadana by extremist mobs in Pakistan.

Over 800 booked under terrorism charges in lynching of Lankan

Lahore: Over 800 people have been booked under terrorism charges while 13 prime suspects are among 118 arrested so far in the horrific lynching of a Sri Lankan national over allegations of blasphemy in Punjab province of Pakistan, a top police official said on Saturday, as pressure mounted on the government to bring the guilty to justice.

In a shocking incident on Friday, angry supporters of the hardline Islamist party Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) attacked a garment factory and lynched its general manager Priyantha Kumara Diyawadana before setting his body on fire over allegations of blasphemy. Diyawadana, who was in his 40s and was from Sri Lanka's Kandy city, was working as the general manager in the Rajko industries (dealing in garments — sportswear) in Sialkot district, some 100 kilometres from Lahore, for the last seven years or so. **PTI**

Pakistan receives \$3 bn from Saudi to help stabilise economy: Official

Islamabad: Pakistan on Saturday received \$3 billion from Saudi Arabia as part of a financial assistance sought from the Kingdom to stabilise the country's economy, according to a senior Government official.

Saudi Arabia's financial support comes more than one month after PM Imran Khan visited Riyadh and held talks with the Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman.

Following the talks, Saudi Arabia had agreed to provide \$4.2 billion worth of assistance to Pakistan, out of which \$3 billion was to be transferred as deposit in Pakistan's central bank. **PTI**

NSO Group spyware used to hack US Govt employees: Sources

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The phones of 11 US State Department employees were hacked with spyware from Israel's NSO Group, the world's most infamous hacker-for-hire company, a person familiar with the matter said on Friday.

The employees were all located in Uganda and included some foreign service officers, said the person, who was not authorised to speak publicly about an ongoing investigation. Some local Ugandan employees of the department appear to have been among the 11 hacked, the person said.

The hacking is the first known instance of NSO

Group's trademark Pegasus spyware being used against US Government personnel.

It was not known what individual or entity used the NSO technology to hack into the accounts, or what information was sought.

"We have been acutely concerned that commercial spyware like NSO Group software poses a serious counterintelligence and security risk to US personnel," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said at briefing on Friday.

Senior researcher John Scott-Railton of Citizen Lab, the public-interest sleuths at the University of Toronto who have been tracking Pegasus

infections for years, called the discovery a giant wake-up call for the US Government about diplomatic security.

"For years we have seen that diplomats around the world are among targets," he said, "and it looks like the message had to be brought home to the US Government in this very direct and unfortunate way. There is no exceptionalism when it comes to American phones in diplomats' pockets."

News of the hacks, which were first reported by Reuters, comes a month after the US Commerce Department black-listed NSO Group, barring US technology from being used by the company.

US intelligence finds Russia planning Ukraine offensive

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden has pledged to make it "very, very difficult" for Russia's Vladimir Putin to take military action in Ukraine as US intelligence officials determined that Russian planning is underway for a possible military offensive that could begin as soon as early 2022.

The new intelligence finding estimates that the Russians are planning to deploy an estimated 1.75,000 troops and almost half of them are already deployed along various points near Ukraine's border, according to a Biden administration



official who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the finding.

It comes as Russia has picked up its demands on Biden to guarantee that

Office of the Superintending Engineer
1st Circle, Public Works Department, Almorah
Phone/Fax: 05962-230295 Email: sepwdalm@rediffmail.com

Letter No. : 8370/ Nivda-01/2021**Dated : 03/12/2021**

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING (E-Tendering)

E-TENDER NOTICE

The superintending Engineer, 1st Circle, Public Works Department, Almorah invites tender through E-Tendering (Two Bid System) on behalf of Honourable Governor of Uttarakhnad for following works. All other information will be available from dated 06/12/2021 & onwards on website <http://www.uktenders.gov.in>

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Cost of Tender Form	Earnest Money (Rupee in lakh)	Validity of Tender	Time of Completion	Contractor's Category of Registration for tendering
1	C/O 36M. Span Steel Girder Bridge Over Sai River in Village Dalmori near Dwarahat Someshwar Motor Road in Someshwar Constituency under C.M. Ghoshna 149/2020	Rs. 5000.00 + 18% GST	6.95 Lakh	60 Days	18 Months	Class "A" & Higher in Bridge work
2	Upgradation of Helipad to Heliport at Falsima Tatrck Near District Head Quarter Almorah.	Rs. 5000.00 + 18% GST	4.44 Lakh	60 Days	15 Months	Category "B" & above in Building works

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.	Captain Deepak Kumar LBDEL00004221662/ LBDEL00004221672	DDA MIG, Flat No-86C, Block- GG- 1, Second Floor, Vikas Puri, Delhi- 110018/ December 02, 2021	June 25, 2021 Rs. 88,76,626/-	Delhi/ NCR
2.	Charanjeet Dhanjal/ Sandeep Dhanjal/ LBDEL00004207004/ LBDEL00005032728	MIG Flat No:- 139-D, Third Floor Pocket-AG-1 Vikas Puri, Delhi/ December 02, 2021	June 23, 2021 Rs. 68,34,332/-	Delhi/ NCR

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 04, 2021**Authorized Officer**
Place: Delhi/ NCR**ICICI Bank Limited**

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER , CONSTRUCTION WING, UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL NIGAM
DURGAPAL GARDEN NEAR SINTHIYA SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL, PILIKOTHI ROAD, BARI MUKHANI HAL DWANI, DISTT.- NAINITAL (PIN 263139)

Letter no. 1721/Nivda/Anubandh-Ranikhet/40**Dated: 02-12-2021**

E-Tender Notice

1. **Name of the work:- REPAIRING OF NON RESIDENTIAL AND RESIDENTIAL BUILDING FOR TEHSIL OFFICE AT KHUMAD SULT, DISTT.-ALMORA**

2. **Estimated Cost:- Rs. 145.20 Lakh**

3. **Period of Completion:- 08 Month**

4. **Date and Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal:-03.12.2021 (17.00 hrs)**

5. **Last date/Time of receipt of bids in the portal:- 24.12.2021 (17.00 hrs)**

6. **Date & Time of Technical bid Opening :- 28.12.2021 (11.00hrs)**

7. **Name and Address of the Officer inviting bid:- General Manager (Kumaon), Nirman Wing, Uttarakhand Pey Jal Nigam, Laxmi Niwas, Durgapal Garden, Pilikothi, Haldwani.**

8. **Pre-bid meeting details (if required) Date & Place:- 07.12.2021 (11.00 hrs) Project Manager, Construction Unit, Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam, Ranikhet.**

9. **For further details, details of subsequent Amendment / correction documentation etc. may be obtained from the e-Procurement portal www.uktenders.gov.in**

GENERAL MANAGER

URBAN IMPROVEMENT TRUST ALWAR
S.No. 13102/11/21 Date : 26/11/2021

NOTICE INVITING BID-18/2021-22

Bids for Electrician and helper, Computers with operators and Civil guards/Chaukidar Providing of service invited from interest bidders upto 20.12.2021, 4.00 PM. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppp.raji.nic.in>) of the state and www.uitalwar.in.

UBN No. UAL2122WSOB00213 | UBN No. UAL2122WSOB00214 | UBN No. UAL2122WSOB00215**Secretary, UIT, Alwar**

Raj.Samwadi/C/9079/2021-2022

छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मण्डल
पर्यावास भवन, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, जिला- रायपुर (छ.ग.)

// सर्व संबंधित को सूचना //

भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय की ई.आई.ए. अभिसूचना दिनांक 14/09/2006 (यथा संशोधित) के अंतर्गत सर्व संबंधित को सूचित किया जाता है कि मेसर्स नीरोग इस्पात प्राइवेट लिमिटेड, ग्राम-बोरिया, तहसील-बेरला, जिला-बेमेतरा (छ.ग.) में Proposed Greenfield project for installation of manufacturing facilities for production of Sponge Iron - 2,31,000 TPA, Mild Steel Billet - 2,32,848 TPA, rerolled Steel Products through Hot Charging and through Reheating Furnace - 2,25,863 TPA, Captive Power Plant - 25 MW (16 MW through WHRB and 9 MW through AFBC) and Fly Ash Bricks - 34,600 TPA के पर्यावरणीय स्वीकृति हेतु लोक सुनवाई बाबत छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, नवा रायपुर में आवेदन प्रस्तुत किया गया है। उक्त परियोजना के संबंध में आपत्ति/सुझाव/ विचार/ टीका टिप्पणी, इस सूचना के जारी होने के दिनांक से 30 दिवस के अंदर क्षेत्रीय अधिकारी, छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, 5/32 बंगला, भिलाई, जिला-दुर्ग के कार्यालय में मौखिक अथवा लिखित रूप से कार्यालयीन समय में प्रस्तुत की जा सकती है। इस परियोजना के लिए लोक सुनवाई दिनांक 10/01/2022 को समय प्रातः 11:00 बजे स्थान- शासकीय हाईस्कूल, ग्राम-बोरिया, तहसील-बेरला, जिला-बेमेतरा (छ.ग.) में नियत की गई है। यह भी सूचित हो कि :

- लोक सुनवाई के दौरान सम्मिलित होने वाले व्यक्तियों को फिजिकल/सोशल डिस्टेंसिंग का पालन करना अनिवार्य होगा।
- लोक सुनवाई में सम्मिलित होने वाले व्यक्तियों द्वारा मास्क का उपयोग किया जायेगा तथा समय-समय पर सेनेटाइजर का उपयोग किया जाना अनिवार्य होगा।
- लोक सुनवाई स्थल पर सम्मिलित होने वाले व्यक्तियों की बैठक व्यवस्था कम से कम 02 मीटर की दूरी रखना अनिवार्य होगा।
- कोरोना वायरस के निर्वन्धन एवं रोकथाम हेतु शासन द्वारा जारी समस्त दिशा-निर्देशों का अक्षरशः पालन किया जाना अनिवार्य होगा।

ई.आई.ए. नोटिफिकेशन 14 सितम्बर 2006 (यथा-संशोधित) के अनुसार संबंधित व्यक्तियों के अवलोकन/ पटन हेतु डाक्टर ई.आई.ए. रिपोर्ट, कार्यालयिक सार हिन्दी एवं अंग्रेजी भाषा तथा सी.डी. (साफ्ट कॉपी) डाफ्टरकर, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार, इंदिरा पर्यावरण भवन, जोर बाग रोड, नई दिल्ली, भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, एकीकृत क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, अरण्य भवन, नार्थ ब्लॉक, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, छत्तीसगढ़, कलेक्टर, कार्यालय कलेक्टर, जिला-बेमेतरा, मुख्य कार्यालय अधिकारी, जिला पंचायत, जिला-बेमेतरा, महाप्रबंधक, जिला व्यापार एवं उद्योग केन्द्र, जिला- बेमेतरा, सरपंच/ सचिव, ग्राम पंचायत बोरिया, जिला-बेमेतरा, क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, 5/32 बंगला, भिलाई, जिला-दुर्ग एवं मुख्यालय, छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, पर्यावास भवन, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, जिला-रायपुर में रखी गई है।

हस्ता/- सदस्य सचिव
छ.ग. पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल,
नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, जिला- रायपुर (छ.ग.)

Lot of unhealthy speculation on crypto taking place: FM

New Delhi: Asserting that a lot of speculation is taking place on cryptocurrencies, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said these speculations are not "healthy at all."

Her comments come against the backdrop of the government preparing to come out with legislation to regulate cryptocurrencies.

Speaking at the HT Leadership Summit, the Finance Minister said there is certainly a well consulted bill which is coming in Parliament after the Cabinet nod.

"There is a lot of speculation...That's not healthy at all," she said in a reply to a question if she thinks that a lot of unregulated speculation is taking place on crypto.

The Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill, 2021, has been included in the Lok Sabha Bulletin-Part II for the introduction in the ongoing Winter Session.

The bill seeks to create a facilitative framework for the creation of the official digital currency to be issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the Bulletin said.

It also seeks to prohibit all private cryptocurrencies in India, however, it allows for certain exceptions to promote the underlying technology of cryptocurrency and its uses.

Earlier this week, Sitharaman in the Rajya Sabha while replying to a series of questions had



said the new bill takes into account the rapidly changing dimensions in virtual currency space, and incorporates features of the earlier bill that could not be taken up.

Asked if the government proposes to ban misleading advertisements in media, she had said the guidelines of Advertising Standards Council of India are being studied and their regulations are also being looked into "so that we can take, if necessary, some kind of a position or a decision to see how we are going to handle it".

She had said the government, RBI and Sebi have been cautioning people about the cryptocurrencies that could be a "high risk" area and "more can be done" to create awareness.

On the economic growth, Sitharaman at the HT Leadership Summit said, the GDP number this year would be very encouraging and India would emerge as the fastest

India exemplary in publishing its foreign exchange market intervention: US Treasury

Washington: India has been exemplary in publishing its foreign exchange market intervention, the US Treasury Department said on Friday adding that New Delhi should allow the exchange rate to move flexibly to reflect economic fundamentals.

"The (Indian) authorities should allow the exchange rate to move flexibly to reflect economic fundamentals, limit foreign exchange intervention to circumstances of disorderly market conditions, and refrain from further significant reserve accumulation," it said.

"As the economic recovery progresses, the authorities should continue to pursue structural reforms that can help lift productivity and living standards, while supporting an inclusive and green recovery," the Treasury said.

In its semi-annual Report to Congress on Macroeconomic and Foreign Exchange Policies of Major Trading Partners of the United States, the Treasury reviewed and assessed the policies of its major trading partners, comprising more than 80 per cent of its foreign trade in goods and services, during the four quarters through June 2021.

In accordance with the

Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988 (the 1988 Act), the Report concludes that no major US trading partner manipulated the rate of exchange between its currency and the US dollar for purposes of preventing effective balance of payments adjustments or gaining unfair competitive advantage in international trade.

However, it found that 12 economies warrant placement on the Treasury's "Monitoring List" of major trading partners that merit close attention to their currency practices: China, Japan, Korea, Germany, Ireland, Italy, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Mexico, and Switzerland. All except Switzerland were on the Monitoring List in the April 2021 Report.

"India has been exemplary in publishing its foreign exchange market intervention, both monthly spot purchases and sales and net forward activity, with a two-month lag. While the RBI frequently intervenes in both directions, the RBI purchased foreign exchange on net in 10 of the 12 months through June 2021, with net intervention reaching USD 131 billion, or 4.6 per cent of GDP," it said.

Automotive R&D body ARAI working on developing fast chargers for EVs: Minister

Canacona (Goa): Automotive research and development body Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI) is working on developing fast chargers for e-vehicles, Heavy Industries Minister Mahendra Nath Pandey said on Saturday.

The Pune-based autonomous institution has already developed a prototype of the product, he told PTI on the sidelines of the 'Round Table To Promote Electric Mobility' event organised by the Ministry of Heavy Industries here.

When asked about the challenges related to the usage of e-vehicles, he said, "This (issue) is being talked about that it consumes more time (to charge an e-vehicle battery). ARAI has been directed to work on it. In fact they have developed a prototype of a fast charger and the product is expected to be ready by December 2022."

The ARAI has been asked for completion of the project by October 2022, so by December, it can be made available to the users for use, he informed.

The launch of fast chargers will address the issue of charging and boost demand for the battery vehicles, the Minister said adding the research is still underway and after its completion, the specific charging time of a two-wheeler e-vehicle,



three-wheeler and four-wheeler e-vehicle will be known.

Pandey further said his ministry is also in talks with the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas for installation of chargers at 22,000 petrol pumps across the country.

Without sharing any timeline, he said there are about 70,000 petrol pumps across the country, and as per the plan a charging station would be at an interval of 25 km on highways and with a radius of 3 km in cities.

The minister also said that at the round table he has asked the industry stakeholders to apprise his ministry of their issues. "I have asked the players to discuss and inform about their concerns. I assure them of full support in addressing the

issues brought to my notice."

Transport ministers of eight states, top officials from 19 states and industry leaders from the automotive sector attended the round table deliberate about ways to promote electric vehicles in the country and attract investments.

Meanwhile in a statement issued by the Ministry of Heavy Industries, quoted Pandey as saying, 'India's transition to Electric Mobility System can save ₹20 lakh crore by 2030 on avoided oil imports alone.'

The statement said that the minister directed the Indian automakers to look for major share of global electric vehicle market.

Growth of the auto Industry will also help India achieve the commitments given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in COP26, he said.

Cases should be taken to logical conclusion expeditiously: FM to DRI



New Delhi: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday urged officials of intelligence wings to take every case to logical conclusion expeditiously, so that it can deter perpetrators of economic crime like smuggling.

Speaking at the 64th DRI Foundation Day, the Finance Minister said logical conclusion is important but speedier conclusion is what will keep the heat on people who are promoting these kinds of activities.

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), under the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), is an intelligence and enforcement agency of the Government of India on anti-smuggling matters.

She stressed on capacity building so that the officials are quick to pick up right intelligence

inputs and act on time.

"You get a lot of intelligence input, but sometimes and many times it is difficult to identify if it is really actionable, sometimes they're so generic. To act on it becomes difficult...Capacity to be built within these institutions to make sure you're able to see which of these intelligence inputs are so quickly actionable," she said.

Agencies like DRI based on their experience can give ideas on the methods through those illegal acts can be prevented, she said.

"I think attempts at preventing will also have to be undertaken by us while deterrence and detection will always have to be on the high," she said.

She exhorted the DRI to be vigilant with regard to toxic waste being dumped into the country.

In emerging economies "because of the way in which we have built over the decades capacity to recycle materials, I'm afraid quite a large attempt and frequent attempt is being made on bringing in toxic waste to our shores and leave them there. So I would think that is an area on which I would like to see DRI more active", she said.

She also observed that greater media coverage of success of DRI's would also deter the perpetrators of illegal activities.

Coal production from captive mines likely to touch 85 MT in current fiscal



New Delhi: The Government on Saturday said that coal production from captive mines is likely to touch 85 million tonnes (MT) during the ongoing fiscal, which is significantly higher than last year's 62 MT.

The coal production from from captive mines during this year till November has already reached around 50 million tonnes, the coal Ministry said in a statement.

In order to further enhance coal production, Coal Secretary Anil Kumar Jain

reviewed the issues related to environment and forest clearances impacting development of new coal blocks, with senior officers of the Ministry in view of high demand for domestic coal.

Coal production from captive mines is expected to reach 120 MT during the next financial year.

"This achievement will further fulfil the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat in domestic coal production," the Ministry said.

Labour Minister launches annual health check-up programme for ESIC members aged above 40

New Delhi: Union Labour Minister Bhupender Yadav on Saturday launched annual preventive health check-up programme for Employees' State Insurance Corporation's insured members aged 40 years and above in pilot mode at ESI hospitals in Ahmedabad, Faridabad, Hyderabad and Kolkata.

Besides, in the ESIC's 186th meeting here chaired by Yadav, a proposal was also cleared for construction of 500-bed ESIC Hospital at Gurugram (Manesar) for expansion of services of existing 100-bed hospital.

Talking to the media after the meeting, Yadav said, "We have started a pilot project under which we are providing for free medical check for insured persons (IPs) of ESIC who are of 40 years or above age every year. We have a dream of 'swasth Bharat'. We have around 3.5 crore IPs. So if we also run preventive care moment in ESIC along with curative, then we can achieve that vision."

The minister also informed that this pilot would be further expanded in coming days with the increase in number of IPs to five crore with implementation of Social Security Code.

The minister said the ESIC also wants to improve its hospitals to super speciality ones so that referral to others can be reduced in coming days.

The minister also talked about roll out of a mobile app 'Santush' for ESIC beneficiaries for improving delivery of services. Yadav further said that the construction of two ESIC hospitals at Bihta in Patna and Alwar in Rajasthan has been completed and soon these would be inaugurated.

Informing about approving the proposal for construction of 500-bed ESIC Hospital at Gurugram (Manesar), Yadav said that ESIC has approved deposit of funds required for the purpose.

On ESIC's request, the Haryana government has identified 8.7 acres of land for allotment. The ESIC on Saturday approved the proposal to

set up 500-bed ESIC Hospital at HSI-IDC, Manesar and of acquisition of this plot for the purpose.

He also informed that a 100-bed ESIC hospital would be built. The Uttar Pradesh Government has identified a piece of land measuring 2 hectares and conveyed approval for free of cost transfer of the land for 90 years. The ESIC on Saturday approved proposal and process of acquisition of identified land for construction of 100-bed ESIC Hospital at Meerut.

It also approved taking over of the state government-run ESIC Hospital, Tinsukia, Assam by the ESIC. Its subsequent running as a 100-bed ESIC-run hospital state government of Assam has consented for handing over the state run hospital at Tinsukia to ESIC.

The ESIC also approved acquisition of land for proposed 30-bed ESIC Hospital at Atchutapuram, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

Land measuring 2 acres or 8,089.07 sqm has been allotted in Atchutapuram, Vishakhapatnam free of cost.

ESIC also approved setting up of a Sub-Regional Office (SRO) of ESIC at Jharsuguda in Odisha. The ESI Scheme is implemented in 24 districts of the State.

The ESIC also relaxed the contributory condition in the ESIC COVID-19 Relief Scheme. In order to provide help and succour to the families of the IPs who died due to COVID-19, the ESIC COVID-19 Relief Scheme was introduced.

This contributory condition of payment of 70 days contribution is proposed to be relaxed to an extent that contributions for at least 35 days should have been paid instead of 70 days. The ESIC also adopted the Audited Annual Accounts of the ESIC for the Financial year 2020-2021 together with the report of the C&AG of India. It also adopted annual report of the ESIC for the year 2020-2021 and Analysis thereof.

Over 550 applicants for BEE energy conservation awards

New Delhi: More than 550 applicants are in fray for the BEE energy conservation awards that have been instituted to push industries and sectors to develop innovative energy efficiency efforts in their units as well as reduce power consumption, the Power Ministry said on Saturday.

Under the National Energy Efficiency Innovation Awards (NEEIA), a total of 149 applicants participated by the due date. Online applications were invited from Category A (industry, transport, building) and Category B (students & research scholars) under the NEEIA awards.

The Ministry said that 408 applicants participated in the National Energy Conservation Awards (NECA), which have been instituted to promote industrial units, institutions and establishments to reduce energy consumption.

The Ministry explained that the National Energy Efficiency Innovation Award is the need of the hour to promote newer technologies, ideas, and pave way for the

adoption of these innovations by larger groups. As promotion of energy efficiency and Renewable energy are major pillars for low carbon energy transition, recognition of such efforts undertaken by various participants stimulate further action in accelerating the transition. Outcomes of which eventually contribute towards meeting India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and broader climate goals, it stated.

The BEE recognises and encourages endeavors of industrial units, institutions and establishments in reducing energy consumption by felicitating them with National Energy Conservation Awards (NECA).

This year, the NECA and the NEEIA awards are being organized as part of the "Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav". The awardees of the National Energy Conservation Awards and National Energy Efficiency Innovation Awards would be felicitated on 14th December 2021, on the occasion of National Energy Conservation Day, by high-level dignitaries, the Ministry said.

MSME Min urges entrepreneurs to grab opportunity created by closure of plants in China



Ahmedabad: Union Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Narayan Rane on Saturday urged Indian entrepreneurs to take advantage of closure of factories in China.

Indian industrialists should start manufacturing the products which are no longer produced in China, he said, speaking at an event at the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) here.

"China is number one in the world in terms of production. China is leading with 64 per cent share in global manufacturing. However, many companies are shutting down (in that country)," Rane said.

"I have urged large and medium industrialists to capture this opportunity and start manufacturing these products in India," he said. "We should also take up marketing and export of these products. At present,

India's manufacturing share is nearly six per cent. If we add another 10 per cent, our GDP would increase significantly. This will help the country become a super power," the Minister added. Rane had been invited by the EDII to address students and entrepreneurs on the "Role of MSMEs in Enhancing Growth and Competitiveness".

He also said the latest machinery should be used for manufacturing the

"China is number one in the world in terms of production. China is leading with 64 per cent share in global manufacturing. However, many companies are shutting down (in that country)," Rane said



कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, निर्माण शाखा,

उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल संसाधन विकास एवं निर्माण निगम, भिकियासैन (अल्मोड़ा)

ई-मेल :- eecd.bksain@gmail.com

पत्रांक : 1998 / सिविच-5 / 415

दिनांक : 04.12.2021

निविदा शुद्धि पत्र

इस कार्यालय की ई-निविदा सूचना संख्या 1913 / सिविच-5 / 400, दिनांक 20.11.2021 जो कि दैनिक हिन्दुस्तान व द पाईनियर अंग्रेजी पेपर में दिनांक 22.11.2021 को प्रकाशित हुई थी। उक्त निविदाये तकनीकी कारणां से ई-टण्डर पोर्टल पर प्रदर्शित नहीं हो पा रही है।

अतः निविदाओं की संशोधित तिथियाँ निम्नानुसार हैं:-

1	Date of Calling of Tender	20.11.2021
2	Date of Online Publication	07.12.2021 at 10.00 hrs.
3	Document download : Start Date	07.12.2021 at 10.00 hrs.
4	Document download : End Date	21.12.2021 at 17.00 hrs.
5	Bid Submission : Start Date	07.12.2021 at 10.00 hrs.
6	Bid Submission : End Date	21.12.2021 at 17.00 hrs.
7	Offline submission of documents (Cost of bidding document, Bid Security, Original Affidavits & all the Supporting Documents in Support of Qualification)	22.12.2021 at 17.00 hrs.
8	Date of Tender Opening	23.12.2021 at 12.00 hrs.

अन्य नियम व शर्तें पूर्ववत् रहेंगी।

अधिशासी अभियन्ता

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

DIRECTORATE OF FLORICULTURE SRINAGAR KASHMIR

Tel-0194-2474234 Fax - 2482032 – email :- kashflori@rediffmail.com

Subject:- Extension No. 01.

In view of no response, the last date for submission of bids invited vide this office e-Tender Notice No. 28 of 2021 dated.12.11.2021 for **Outsourcing of Entry Ticketing system of Mughal Garden Nishant**, is hereby extended as per the details given below: -

1.	Period of downloading of bidding document	04.12.2021 from 01:00 PM to 24.12.2021 up to 2:00 PM
2.	Bid submission Start Date	04.12.2021 from 02:00 PM
3.	Bid submission End Date	24.12.2021 up to 2:00 PM
4.	Date and time of Opening of Tenders (Online)	27.12.2021 at 2:00 PM

Other terms and conditions shall remain same as laid down in the aforesaid Tender Notice.

By Order

Sd/- Accounts Officer
(Member Secretary)

No. DIPK-14248/21 Dated:- 04-12-2021

India vs New Zealand DAY 1

Scoreboard

INDIA 1ST INNINGS: (OVERNIGHT 221/4)	
Mayank Agarwal c Blundell b Patel	150
Shubman Gill c Taylor b Patel	44
Cheteshwar Pujara b Patel	0
Virat Kohli lbw b Patel	0
Shreyas Iyer c Blundell b Patel	18
Wriddhiman Saha lbw b Patel	27
Ravichandran Ashwin b Patel	0
Axar Patel lbw b Patel	52
Jayant Yadav c Ravindra b Patel	12
Umesh Yadav not out	0
Mohammed Siraj c Ravindra b Patel	4

Extras: (B-13 LB-5) 18
Total: (All out in 109.5 overs) 325

BOWLING (NEW ZEALAND)	
Tim Southee	22-6-43-0
Kyle Jamieson	12-3-36-0
Ajaz Patel	47.5-12-119-10
William Somerville	19-0-80-0
Rachin Ravindra	4-0-20-0
Daryl Mitchell	5-3-9-0

NEW ZEALAND 1ST INNINGS:	
Tom Latham c Iyer b Mohammed Siraj	10
Will Young c Kohli b Mohammed Siraj	4
Daryl Mitchell lbw b Patel	8
Ross Taylor b Mohammed Siraj	1
Henry Nicholls b Ashwin	7
Tom Blundell c Pujara b Ashwin	8
Rachin Ravindra c Kohli b J Yadav	4
Kyle Jamieson c Iyer b Patel	17
Tim Southee c sub b Ashwin	0
W Somerville c Mohd Siraj b Ashwin	0
Ajaz Patel not out	0

Extras: (LB-1 NB-2) 3
Total: (All out in 28.1 overs) 62

BOWLING (INDIA)	
Umesh Yadav	5-2-7-0
Mohammed Siraj	4-0-19-3
Axar Patel	9.1-3-14-2
Ravichandran Ashwin	8-2-8-4
Jayant Yadav	2-0-13-1

INDIA 2ND INNINGS:	
Mayank Agarwal batting	38
Cheteshwar Pujara batting	29

Extras: (lb-2) 2
Total: 69 for no loss in 21 overs

BOWLING (NEW ZEALAND)	
Tim Southee	5-0-14-0
Ajaz Patel	9-1-35-0
Kyle Jamieson	4-2-5-0
William Somerville	2-0-9-0
Rachin Ravindra	1-0-4-0



AJAZ TAKES ‘PERFECT 10’

...But India bowl out NZ for 62 to inch towards massive win

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Mumbai-born New Zealand left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel had an unforgettable afternoon when he entered the annals of Test cricket history with a 10-wicket haul but Indian bowlers made it a forgettable evening for him as well as his team by dismissing the visitors for a paltry 62, taking a massive stride towards a series victory.

By the end of the day, India were 69 for no loss in their second innings with Virat Kohli deciding against enforcing the follow-on in the second and final Test.

Cheteshwar Pujara, coming out to open in place of an injured Shubman Gill, looked good during his 29 not out while Mayank Agarwal, after his fine 150 in India's first innings

total of 325, remained unbeaten on 38.

The lead swelled to 332 for the hosts and in these conditions, the Indians will brace up for a three-day finish to earn some rest before boarding the charter flight to Johannesburg on December 16.

The second day of the second Test should have solely belonged to the 33-year-old Patel, who had figures of 47.5-12-119-10, to join the 'Elite List', where he has late Jim Laker and Indian great Anil Kumble for company.

By keeping India's first innings total down to a manageable level, Patel must have had a sense of elation but before the plethora of congratulatory messages on social media would stop coming, his batters just flattered to deceive as they managed to bat out only 28.1 overs.

The team ended up scoring the lowest total by an overseas side on Indian soil.



Sindhu enters final of BWF World Tour Finals



PTI ■ BALI

Indian badminton ace P V Sindhu entered the summit clash of BWF World Tour Finals with a hard-fought win over Akane Yamaguchi of Japan in the semifinals here on Saturday.

Sindhu, the reigning world champion and two-time Olympic medallist, beat Yamaguchi 21-15 15-21 21-19 in a thrilling match that lasted one hour 10 minutes.

She will face Korea's An Seyoung, who beat Pornpawee Chochuwong of Thailand 25-23 21-17 in the other semifinal, in the summit clash on Sunday.

It will be Sindhu's third final appearance in the season-ending tournament. She had won the title in 2018 to become the only Indian to achieve the feat.

The world number 7 Indian had come into the match with an overall head-to-head win-loss record of 12-8 against the world number three Japanese.

Sindhu has been in fine form after picking up a bronze in the Tokyo Olympics. She had reached the semifinals in her last three events — French Open, Indonesia Masters and Indonesia Open — before coming into the BWF World Tour Finals.

She had finished runner-up in the Swiss Open in March. But it won't be easy for Sindhu in the final against Seyoung who had come into the season-ending tournament with back-to-back titles in the Indonesia Masters and Indonesia Open.

The world number six Seyoung had also beaten Sindhu in the quarterfinals of the Denmark Open in October.

Against Yamaguchi, Sindhu trailed 0-4 in the first game but quickly came to level terms at 4-4 and then 9-9. The duo were neck and neck but Sindhu zoomed ahead from 15-14 to reach 18-15. She then took three straight points to pocket the first game.

The second game was also a tight contest as the two players were levelled at 10-10 before Yamaguchi shifted the gear to pocket it without much fuss.

In the deciding game, Sindhu and Yamaguchi were tied at 5-5 before the Indian reeled off seven straight points. The Japanese made a sort of comeback by narrowing down the gap to 11-13 but Sindhu cruised to 17-12.

OFFICE OFFICE THE ROURKELA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION : ROURKELA
INVITATION FOR BID
NO. 15346 Dated 01/12/21
Bid Identification No. :- MC/RMC/49/2021

C-1482

The Municipal Commissioner, Rourkela Municipal Corporation on behalf of Rourkela Municipal Corporation invites bids for works on percentage rate basis in Double cover on on-line Mode. Bid Identification No. MC/RMC/49/2021 for 01 no Civil work with value of Rs. 89.13 lakh.

1. Bid documents will be available in website www.tendersorissa.gov.in from 02.12.2021.
2. Bids must be submitted on "online" on or before 15.12.2021 by 17.00 hours.
3. Bids shall be opened at 11.00 hours on 16.12.2021 in the office of the undersigned in the presence of the bidders or their authorized agents.
4. Other details will be available in the web site tendersorissa.gov.in

Municipal Commissioner
Rourkela Municipal Corporation

OIPR-13131/11/0046/2122

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
PHULBANI (R&B) DIVISION, PHULBANI.
e-mail-eeplbrb@gmail.com
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)
e-Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. EE-R&B-PLB-29-2021-22

- 1) (a) Name of the work : Road work - 1(One) no.
Estimated Cost : Rs. 17.69 Lakhs
- 2) Period of Completion : As notified in Tender Call Notice.
- 3) Date & Time of availability of : From 06.12.2021, 11.30 A.M. to 14.12.2021,
Bid documents in the portal 5.00 P.M.
- 4) Last date / time for receipt of bids : Up to 5.00 P.M. of dated 14.12.2021. in the portal
- 5) Name and address of the O.I.T. : Superintending Engineer, Phulbani (R&B) Division.

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in

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

OIPR-34066/11/0015/2122

Superintending `Engineer,
Phulbani (R&B) Division

[GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA]
OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER,
BARGARH FOREST DIVISION, BARGARH
E-mail – dfo.bargarh@odisha.gov.in Mob No.-9439120135
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (I.F.B.)
e-Procurement Notice
IDENTIFICATION NO.FOR DFO BGH No.06 OF 2021-22
No. 4764 , Dated,02.12.2021/

- 1) The Divisional Forest Officer, Bargarh Forest Division, Bargarh on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Percentage Rate bid in Single Cover System in ONLINE MODE for the Civil work as detailed in the Detailed Tender Call Notice (D.T.C.N) from the eligible class of contractors.
- 2) No of Civil work: – 32 Nos.
- 3) Cost of Tender Paper: – Rs.600/-, to Rs.6000/-
- 4) Class of contractor:– "C" & "D" Contractor
- 5) Date & Time of available in web site & receipt of Bids: – 11:00 Hrs. of 05/12/2021 to 17:00Hrs. of 14/12/2021.
- 6) Date of opening of Technical Bid: –15/12/2021at 11:30 Hrs.
- 7) The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the State Govt. Portal website <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>
- 8) Any corrigendum / Addendum will be displayed in the website <https://tendersodisha.gov.in> only

(Sandeep Pratty, IFS)
Divisional Forest Officer,
Bargarh Forest Division

OIPR-08057/11/0009/2122

BEST BOWLING IN AN INNINGS IN TESTS				
Figures	Bowler	Opponent	Venue	Season
10-53	Jim Laker (England)	Australia	Manchester	1956
10-74	Anil Kumble (India)	Pakistan	Delhi	1998-99
10-119	Ajaz Patel (New Zealand)	India	Mumbai	2021-22
9-28	George Lohmann (England)	South Africa	Johannesburg	1895-96
9-37	Jim Laker (England)	Australia	Manchester	1956

LOWEST TOTALS AGAINST INDIA IN TESTS				
Score	Overs	Team	Venue	Season
62	28.1	New Zealand	Mumbai	2021-22
79	33.1	South Africa	Nagpur	2015-16
81	30.4	England	Ahmedabad	2020-21
82	51.5	Sri Lanka	Chandigarh	1990-91
83	48.4	Australia	Melbourne	1980-81

FAISEL FEATURES

The Black Caps batted 14.4 overs less than what their premier spinner took to get all the Indian players out.

They didn't even let the feat sink in before Mohammed Siraj's (3/19) hostile four over time against a battered opposition which would give him and Puara requisite confidence. With the match all but in their pocket, Pujara stroked freely and also got a pulled six off Patel — a rarity from an exponent of defensive batting.

Ravichandran Ashwin (4/8 in 8 overs) and Axar Patel (2/14 in 9.1 overs) were expectedly just too good on this track. The opposition batters simply

couldn't counter the turn and bounce.

The New Zealand innings finished even before the Indian bowlers were nicely warmed up and it was understandable that Kohli wanted some batting time against a battered opposition which would give him and Puara requisite confidence. With the match all but in their pocket, Pujara stroked freely and also got a pulled six off Patel — a rarity from an exponent of defensive batting.

While Pujara will certainly value these welcome runs but it can't be seen in isolation that

it came when the pressure was already completely released due to a mammoth 263-run first innings lead.

Patel started the day with two quick wickets before Agarwal and Axar added 67 runs for the seventh wicket to take the score towards the 300-run mark. Axar got his first 50 and batted with a lot of caution and occasional aggression.

The best delivery of the six wickets that he got on the day, was the one that got Ravichandran Ashwin out as he drew the batter forward and turned enough to clip the balls.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS DIVISION-I, GANJAM, BERHAMPUR

Government of Odisha e-Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. Online Tender // 23 // SERWDG-II// 2021-22

Letter No., 8084 / RWDG-I // BAM / Date: 30.11.21

1	Name of the Work	:: Building Works
2	Estimated Cost	:: Rs.2.65 Lakh to Rs. 51.47 Lakh
3	Period of Completion	:: 2 (Two) Month to 6 (Six) Months as per Annexure
4	Date & Time of Availability of Bid Documents in the Portal	:: From 10.12.2021 at 10.00 AM to 20.12.2021 upto 3.00 PM
5	Last Date/ Time for Receipt of Bids in the Portal	:: 20.12.2021 upto 3.00 PM
6	Name and Address of the Officer Inviting Bid	:: Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division-II, Ganjam, Berhampur

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal website <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in/nicgeplapp>

OIPR-25073/11/0018/2122

Superintending Engineer
R.W. Division-II, Ganjam
Berhampur

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS DIVISION PATNAGARH
e-Procurement Notice
E-mail: eerw_ptng@yahoo.in
Phone No – 06658-222121

IFB IDENTIFICATION NO. EEPTNG-Online -06/2021-22

1.	Name of work	:: Construction of Road , Building & Bridge works for 2021-22.
2.	Total no of work	:: 2(Two) Road , 7(Seven) Building & 20 (Twenty) bridge works .
3.	Time for completion	:: 2 (Two) Calendar month.
4.	Approximate estimated cost	:: 0.89 Lakh to 35.40 Lakh.
5.	Mode of Submission of tender	:: Tender should be submitted online in www.tendersorissa.gov.in
6.	Other details are as follow	

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on line for bidding From To	Last date and time of seeking tender clarification	Date & time of opening of tender
Superintending Engineer, R.W.Divn., Patnagarh	EEPTNG-Online-06/2021-22	06.12.2021 at 11.00 A.M	13.12.2021 upto 5.00PM	10.12.2021 upto 1.00PM 14.12.2021 At 11.00 AM

- Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersorissa.gov.in
- Any Corrigendum/Addendum will be displayed in the above e tender website only.

Superintending Engineer
R.W.Division, Patnagarh

OIPR-25154/11/0006/2122

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, FISHERY ENGINEERING DIVISION MATSYASADAN, LAXMISAGAR, CUTTACK ROAD BHUBANESWAR – 6
Phone / Fax – 0674 – 2313250, Email – eeefdbbsr@gmail.com

Letter No _____ // Date. _____ //

Bid Identification No. 09 / FED / 2021-2022
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)

Sl. No	Name of the Work	Amount (in rupees)	Class of Contractor	Period of Completion
1.	Construction of Floating Jetty and Allied Infrastructure for Cage Culture Project at Hirakud (Floating Jetty proper)	85,19,788.00	'B' & 'A'	04 (Four) Calendar Months
2.	Date & Time of availability of Bid Document in the portal	:- 10.12.2021		
3.	Last Date / Time for receipt of bids in the Portal	:- 27.12.2021 up to 17.00 Hours		
4.	Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	:- Executive Engineer, Fishery Engineering Division, Matsyasadan, Cuttack Road, Laxmisagar, Bhubaneswar-751006		

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <http://tendersorissa.gov.in>

1. The Bid Document shall be uploaded in the portal by the Officer Inviting Tender.
2. The Tender Documents published by the Tender Inviting Officer in the website <http://tendersorissa.gov.in>

N.B: Subsequent corrigendum / addendum if required shall be available in the website as indicated above

Executive Engineer,
Fishery Engineering Division,
Bhubaneswar

OIPR-06018/11/0004/2122

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BARIPADA

"e" Procurement Notice for PMGSYWorks
Identification No.- Online Tender- PMGSY N.C.B. No. 199 for 2021-22.
Letter No- 3709/Date26.11.2021//

1. Name of the work:- Balancework of PMGSY-I, Batch-II of 2017-18 & PMGSY-II, Batch-I of 2018-19 Packages in the district of Mayurbhanj.
2. Total No. of works :- 02No. (Two)
3. Estimated Cost :- Rs.53.41 lakhs to Rs.107.10 Lakhs (approximately).
4. Eligible Class of Contractor: -As per Annexure.
5. Period of Completion :- As per Annexure.
6. Other details :-

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender On-line for bidding From To	Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification.	Date & Time of Opening of Tender in O.O C.C.E.R.W. Circle, Baripada
1	2	3	4	5
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Baripada.	PMGSY Online N.C.B. No. 199	DL06.12.2021 at 11.00 A.M.	DL20.12.2021 up to 5.00 P.M.	DL21.12.2021 at 11.00 A.M.

- Further details can be seen from the website: www.pmgsvtenders.gov.in
- Any Corrigendum / Addendum will be displayed in the above e tender website only.

Chief Construction Engineer,
Rural Works Circle, Baripada.

OIPR-25130/11/0020/2122

AP ■ DHAKA

Skipper Babar Azam hit a Half-century to help Pakistan recover from early trouble and reach 161-2 against Bangladesh on the opening day of the second test, which was halted several times for bad light and rain on Saturday. The bad light finally ended play with Babar batting on 60 and Azhar Ali on 36. Left-arm spinner Taijul Islam (2-49) bowled brilliantly in the morning session to put Bangladesh on top after the visitors seemed headed toward a big score.

Openers Abid Ali and Abdullah Shafique brought up 50-run partnership in the first hour as Babar elected to bat first after winning the toss.

AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit before Notary Public Rayagada I, Sri Bhogi Venkata Ramana, Aged about-63 years, s/o-Late B. Prakasham, Kampo st, PO-Kolnara, PS-Chandili, Dist-Rayagada, Adhar no-325056466616 do hereby solemnly affirm on oath as follows- That I am deponent of this affidavit & Khatadar of Dangar-III land situated in vill/mouza-Rengalpadi, thana no-81 under po/tehsil-Kolnara covered by khata no-21/47, plot no-188/260, ac 0.910 cents & plot no-189/261, ac 0.130 cents, total ac 1.040 cents. I purchased the said land from Sunabansa Satrugghna vide regd sale deed no-898/1984 of sub-registrar, Rayagada. Original sale deed is lost on my journey to JK Pur from Kolnara. I searched for the same & could not trace out. (Sd)/Bhogi Venkata Ramana Deponent





the pioneer

agenda



I think there's a part of a woman that wants to be the thing that breaks a man down
— Dakota Johnson

FROM THE INSIDE

Forgiveness & Peace

Forgiveness leads to inner peace, and inner peace blossoms into outer peace, enriching every heart

2



Astrology helps reshape destiny

Becoming aware, guided by a proven Guru, helps purify mind of its limiting tendencies. It helps one to look at things in the right perspective

4

Both India and Russia seek a multi-polar world, where “no single country is able to impose its will through domination or through military force”. This will be the key takeaway of the 21st India-Russia Summit scheduled to be held on December 6, writes ASOKE MUKERJI

COMING OF AGE: THE 21ST INDIA- RUSSIA SUMMIT

The 21st bilateral India-Russia Summit scheduled for December 6, 2021 marks the coming of age of the special and strategic privileged partnership between the two countries. This will be President Vladimir Putin’s second foreign visit after the onset of the Covid pandemic in March 2020, and his first to any country in Asia, signaling the salience and resilience of the India-Russia strategic partnership. The annual summit mechanism, proposed by Russia’s President during his first official visit to India in October 2000, has vindicated its role in steering the India-Russia strategic partnership through the momentous changes of the past two decades.

BACKGROUND

The 2019 India-Russia Summit at Vladivostok charted innovative approaches to sustain and broaden India-Russia relations. These included the long-term participation of both countries in each other’s strategic sectors such as defence, energy, and technology. The resource-rich Russian Far East was added as a new dimension for trade and economic cooperation between enterprises of India’s constituent states and Russia’s eastern regions, pushing cooperation in Asia as the new frontier of India-Russia relations. A \$1 billion Indian line of credit was earmarked to implement this initiative, which would be sustained by a new maritime link between Vladivostok and Chennai through the Pacific and Indian oceans.

THE COVID PANDEMIC

The unexpected Covid pandemic created a barrier to the smooth implementation of these objectives, leading to the postponement of the 2020 India-Russia Summit. Despite this setback, the close personal interaction between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Putin, who have met 19 times since 2014, bridged the physical gap by using digital communications technologies to maintain the momentum, trust, and dialogue that are the hallmarks of India-Russia strategic relations.

A phone conversation on March 25, 2020 between the two leaders resulted in an agreement on ways to maintain the progress and warmth of bilateral relations. A joint response to the pandemic began in April 2020, when India lifted its ban on export of medicines to Russia to mitigate Covid. By mid-2020, the Gamaleya Research Institute of Russia developed the Sputnik-V human adenovirus vector platform vaccine against Covid. In April 2021, after clinical trials in India, the Sputnik-V vaccine joined Covishield and Covaxin on the list of vaccines registered for emergency use in India. In May 2021, joint manufacturing of the Sputnik-V vaccine in India through the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) was initiated, adding to the pool of Indian manufactured vaccines against Covid for domestic and international use in third countries.

DEFENCE AND FOREIGN POLICY DIALOGUE

President Putin and Prime Minister Modi agreed in a telephone conversation on April 28, 2021 to institutionalise a 2+2 Ministerial India-Russia Dialogue on foreign and defence cooperation to anchor the bilateral strategic partnership. The first India-Russia 2+2 Dialogue is expected to take place on the margins of the 21st Summit.

The ferocious border confrontation between India and China in May 2020 at Galwan caused another challenge for India-Russia relations, as Russia was chairing the trilateral Russia-India-China (RIC) grouping in 2020. However, by par-

ticipating in the RIC videoconference meeting of foreign ministers on June 23, 2020, and subsequently in a physical ministerial meeting in Moscow on September 10, 2020, Indian and Chinese foreign ministers were able to hold a bilateral “frank and constructive discussion” and agree on the need for new confidence-building measures. India has acknowledged its appreciation for Russia’s regular arms supplies to India for Russian origin defence equipment during this period.

The focus on long-term India-Russia defence cooperation benefited from regular interaction between India’s Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh and Russian Defence Minister General Sergei Shoigu during the past two years. The Raksha Mantri participated in the events in Moscow marking the 75th anniversary of the Soviet Union’s victory over Nazi Germany on June 24, 2020, and interacted bilaterally with his Russian counterpart during his visit to Moscow for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers meeting on September 3, 2020, and the SCO Defence Ministers meeting in Tajikistan on July 28, 2021.

The outcome of this interaction includes the first manufacturing joint venture between India and Russia with transfer of technology for about 600,000 world-class AK-203 Kalashnikov rifles at the Korwa Ordnance Factory in Amethi, Uttar Pradesh. Other outcomes include the manufacture and co-production of four Project 1135.6 naval Frigates; the supply of 400 more T-90 tanks; additional supplies of Su-30 MKI, as well as the MiG-29 aircraft; and additional supplies of the MANGO ammunition & VSHORAD systems. The supply of the first unit of the S-400 air defence systems from Russia to India contracted in 2018 is to be completed by the end of 2021. India and Russia are expected to sign an agreement on reciprocal logistic support for each other’s armed forces that come for exercises in either country.

The current value of India-Russia defence contracts is between \$9-10 billion, making Russia a top defence partner of India. By participating in the Make in India programme, Russia has committed to the transfer of defence technologies to India that it does not share with other countries, while Russian investments in Indian defence production will generate employment and boost defence exports. This approach mirrors India’s investments in Russia’s defence manufacturing sector two decades ago, which resulted in the supply of technologically advanced equipment for all three services of India’s armed forces, including the BrahMos missile system. The Summit is expected to extend the mandate of the India-Russia Military Technical Cooperation platform chaired by the two Defence Ministers by ten years to 2031.

A similar process of regular interaction between India’s External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has enabled the India-Russia strategic partnership to respond in a calibrated manner to international challenges. Besides the RIC meeting of 2020, India’s foreign minister has visited Moscow for the SCO Foreign Ministers meeting in September 2020 and for a bilateral visit in July 2021, while the Russian foreign minister visited India in April 2021. The two ministers have interacted in the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) framework twice through videoconferencing during Russia’s chairmanship in 2020, and once in 2021 under India’s chairmanship.

This interaction has been buttressed by consultations on India-Russia engagement on bilateral, regional, and multilateral issues. Experts



President Putin and Prime Minister Modi at Vladivostok Summit 2019

“THE FOCUS ON LONG-TERM INDIA-RUSSIA DEFENCE COOPERATION BENEFITED FROM REGULAR INTERACTION BETWEEN INDIA’S RAKSHA MANTRI SHRI RAJNATH SINGH AND RUSSIAN DEFENCE MINISTER GENERAL SERGEI SHOIGU DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS”

from both sides met in December 2020 to coordinate views on issues on the UN Security Council (UNSC) agenda, while discussions on the 21st Summit were held at foreign secretary level in Moscow in February 2021. The convergence of Indian and Russian positions in the UNSC on Myanmar, Syria, Yemen, Palestine, the UNSC Taliban sanctions regime, and UN peace-keeping operations during 2021 reflect the outcome of this cooperation.

MARITIME SECURITY AND CONNECTIVITY

The strategic rapport between the top leaders of India and Russia was on international display on August 9, 2021, when Prime Minister Modi chaired a special meeting of the UNSC on maritime security. President Putin was the only Head of State of a UNSC permanent member who spoke at this meeting, which endorsed a holistic approach to maritime security.

Russia’s proposal in August 2019 to establish “a security and cooperation organisation in the Gulf” has assumed a deeper significance for the India-Russia strategic partnership in 2021. Apart from its impact on stability in the Gulf region including Iran, such a regional structure can generate confidence in two major connectivity projects that India and Russia have pursued in recent years — the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC) linking Russia through Iran with India proposed in 2000, and the Chabahar project linking India, Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Russia proposed in 2016.

Greater regional cooperation in the western Indian Ocean will provide stability for the free flow of navigation along two major sea lanes of communication through the Red Sea and Yemen, and through the Straits of Hormuz. These routes transport a significant volume of India’s international trade, energy imports and international digital traffic.

A similar holistic approach to maritime security will sustain the Eastern Maritime Corridor proposed by the India-Russia Summit in 2019 to link Russia and India through the Pacific and Indian Oceans as part of India’s Act Far East policy. The first steps to modernise the port infrastructure of Chennai and Vladivostok have been initiated during the past six months. Eventually, the Eastern Maritime Corridor will connect India to ports in the Arctic.

India has emphasized the “centrality” of the ASEAN in any sustainable maritime security arrangement in the Indo-Pacific. The first-ever Russia-ASEAN naval exercises off Sumatra in early December 2021 demonstrates a similar emphasis on ASEAN-centrality, leading to India-Russia convergence in the maritime domain.

AFGHANISTAN AND COUNTERING TERRORISM

President Putin and Prime Minister Modi held a telephonic conversation on August 28, 2021 on the unexpected takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban disregarding calls for an “inclusive” government. The leaders agreed to cooperate in countering the common threats emanating from Afghanistan, such as terrorism, drug trafficking and the impact on Central Asian security. This objective has been integrated into the India-Russia strategic partnership by the first meeting of the India-Russia High Level Mechanism on Afghanistan on September 8, 2021. India’s official participation in the Moscow format talks on Afghanistan in Moscow on October 20, 2021, and Russia’s participation at the National Security Advisers Conference on Afghanistan hosted by India on November 10-11, 2021, in which Iran and the five Central Asian states participated, but Pakistan and China did not.

What is the conclusion then? If in trouble, do whatever to try to get out of it, but do not forget the given of real and absolute relief. Take God's shelter for guidance. But one must remember to have the right expectations.

Bishnoi is a spiritual writer and can be reached at spiritual@ajitbishnoi.com

Challenges for Scholz in post-Merkel era

The countdown for the post-Merkel era has just begun. The historic sixteen long years (four terms) of Angela Merkel chancellorship will be over by the end of this month. A new Chancellor is all set to take over. And once again, a rag-tag coalition has come to an agreement to form the next Government of Germany, the economic powerhouse of Europe.

Olaf Scholz, the Chancellor-elect, is a left leaning leader of the SPD (Social Democratic Party). He was born on June 14, 1958. Scholz is currently serving as the Federal Finance Minister and Vice Chancellor in the Merkel Government since March 14, 2018. Earlier, he served as the Mayor of Hamburg from March 7, 2011 to March 13, 2013. He also worked as the acting leader of the SPD in 2018.

The national election in Germany took place on September 2021. And now the Germans have got a new Bundestag (the Lower House of the German Reichstag i.e. Parliament), the 20th one in its post-war federal history. The current German Constitution stipulates that Parliament must meet 30 days at the latest after the election day, ending the term of its predecessor.

It would be really difficult for Scholz to match his predecessor's record. Merkel is the first woman leader of Germany; the second longest serving Chancellor ever and the first modern Chancellor to hail from eastern part of the country. Helmut Kohl was the longest serving Chancellor of Germany and he was in office from October 1, 1982, to October 26, 1998. If there would have been no announcement of a new government by December 17, Merkel would have surpassed Kohl's record. But now, the new Traffic Light Coalition (TLC) has already declared Scholz as the new Chancellor of the country.

The TLC is named after the three parties' respective colours in the alliance. All the three partners wanted to accelerate the transition to a green economy and digitalisation while maintaining strict fiscal discipline according to a 177-page pact signed by the SPD, the Greens and the Free Democrats. Interestingly, at a press conference held recently in Berlin along with the leaders of the Greens and the FDP, Scholz recalled when the "first traffic light" was installed at the city's Potsdamer Platz in 1924,

many people doubted whether it could really work. But he told people that this traffic light partnership will be indispensable for Germany. This coalition will see the first woman Foreign Minister of Germany, i.e. the Green's co-leader Annalena Baerbock. Again, FDP leader Christian Lindner is going to take over as the Finance Minister and Green's co-leader Robert Habeck is expected to take on as the newly expanded Economy and Environment Minister. Further, the brand-new coalition will try to balance the Green Party's call for a tough stance on Russia and China on human rights. But Scholz is attempting not to risk a direct confrontation with the two authoritarian regimes on complex issues such as Taiwan and Ukraine. This government will also allow multiple citizenships and legalize the sale of cannabis for recreational use at all registered outlets across the country.

Again, Merkel has set a record in history for the fact that she will be the first Chancellor to leave her office at a time of her own choice. However, many political analysts say that she did face serious internal pressure in her CDU (Christian Democratic Union) party to step down after the refugee crisis (mostly refugees came from war-torn nations like Syria, Iraq) rocked Europe, particularly Germany. But she announced on her own that by autumn 2021, she will relinquish the top job of Germany. Interestingly, from Konrad Adenauer through Helmut Schmidt to Helmut Kohl, all of the country's great leaders left their offices either under extreme party pressure or through an outright defeat in a national election.

For now, Merkel will continue as caretaker Chancellor till the new government is formed. Generally, the formation of coalition takes longer than usual in Germany. In 2017, when Merkel formed her last alliance government, it took nearly six months to ink the pact with the partners.

German election heralds absolutely a messier political environment. It has gradually resulted into a much weaker leadership in comparison to Merkel for now. After the national election in this September, the new German Parliament looks like this: the Christian Democratic Union (CDU)/Christian Social Union (CSU) of Merkel gets 196 (-50) i.e. 24.1%; the Social Democratic Party (SPD) of



Olaf Scholz, SPD chancellor-designate and executive federal minister of finance, raises his thumbs after the SPD convention at Willy Brandt House approved the planned coalition agreement in Berlin, Germany, on Saturday. Delegates voted on a coalition agreement with the FDP and Bündnis90/Die Grünen to form a new federal government

Scholz gets 206 (+ 56) i.e. 25.7%; the Green Party 118 (+51) i.e. 14.8%; the Free Democratic Party (FDP) 92 (+12); the Alternative for Germany (AfD) 83 (-11) i.e. 10.3%; the Left (Linke) 39 (-30) i.e. 4.9% and others 1 (+1) i.e. 8.7%. Merkel's Conservatives is the most successful party in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany. The SPD is traditional Centre-Left party. It appears intermittently in successive governments, sometimes in alliance with the CDU. The FDP is little less socially conservative party than the CDU. Though it is small, it is coherent and known for its pro-business approach. The AfD is a strong right-wing party that firmly opposes immigration and is absolutely sceptical about the EU. The Greens are influential and have tied up with many governments both at the centre and in some states.

This election showed the most consequential gains for the SPD, particularly in East Germany. Besides, the party has also recovered grounds in its traditional homelands such as

the Rhineland and in the north-west Germany, where it shared some of the advances with the Green Party. Despite losing some grounds, the AfD was able to muster support in Thuringia and other parts of the East Germany. Sadly, the CDU lost most of its support bases almost everywhere, but its partner party CSU could do better in Bavaria. The Linke Party lost big grounds in the East.

As legendary Merkel is tipped to tiptoe into Germany's political sunset, Scholz is taking up all challenges and opportunities left behind by the CDU leader. Today Germans are talking about a radical shift in the 'machtarchitektur', i.e. the architecture of power structure of the country. And the new SPD-led coalition is heading for wide policy changes both at home and abroad. During the four tenures of Merkel, the coalition partners like the SPD and others have always complained about their minimal role in policy making and in public appearances. She was adopting a pure top-down approach in running her fragile coalition government in all

the last 16 years in office. But this time, with Scholz, the power arrangement with partners is quite different. His partners are the Greens and the FDs which are handed over crucial ministries such as the foreign, finance, new economy and environment. Moreover, the Ministers and major leaders of these parties are much younger and dynamic than Scholz. They have a broader vision of Germany than him. Therefore, it would be too difficult for him to clip their wings or rather side-line them the way Merkel did with her political allies.

It seems Scholz has already convinced the German electorate that he would be able to replace the maverick Merkel. Truly speaking, her departure has not only ushered in a new era in Germany but also literally shakes up the fragile power balance among the competing powers in the coveted European Union. At a time when Russia under Putin is increasingly becoming aggressive and Lukashenko is pushing the migrants towards the border between Belarus and

Poland, the EU demands the role of accommodating and tough decision makers like Merkel. Her successor-in-waiting Scholz has a much bigger role to play — leveraging German power to handle a deadly pandemic Covid-19 and an ever-growing trend of migration of people from West Asian countries to Europe. Many in Europe today see huge potential in French President Emmanuel Macron, Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi and Scholz as contenders for leading Europe to the world stage. And probably to take over Merkel's mantle as the unquestioned leader of Europe, the world's another crucial power bloc. But the biggest hurdle for all these three statesmen would be to cope up with an EU minus the presence of the UK and the fast marginalisation of the group in global politics.

Scholz, a terse, well-briefed and a grounded professional political leader, would be no less a competent figure than Merkel to steer Germany ahead in this time of crisis. Undoubtedly, he would be

offering his long innings in German politics both for the benefit of his country and for Europe. Thus, Robin Alexander, a long-time political observer of Merkel and Scholz, aptly describes his credentials: "He is like a soccer player who studies videos of another player and changes his game. From temperament and political style all the way down to facial expressions, Scholz now channels Merkel. If Scholz was a woman, he would wear pantsuits."

Now it remains to be seen how the new Chancellor will take Germany to the post-Merkel era to overcome both fears and challenges in the days ahead.

(Dr Makhan Saikia has taught political science and international relations for over a decade in institutions of national and international repute after specialisation in globalisation and governance from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. He is the chief editor of the Journal of Global Studies, an international research journal)



MAKHAN SAIKIA

PERSPECTIVE

Afghan woman judges still fear Taliban

A female judge, Muska, was hiding with her family from newly empowered Taliban militants in Afghanistan when an apparent reading mistake 7,000 miles away helped to drastically change her life.

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro opened his nation's doors to potential refugees from the Asian nation during remarks at the United Nations General Assembly on September 21. "We will grant humanitarian visas for Afghan Christians, women, children and judges," he read on the teleprompter — apparently mispronouncing the final word, which was "jovens" — youngsters — in his printed speech as "juizes," or judges.

Error or not, his government fulfilled that offer.

Muska and her family were taken by bus to the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif and were then flown to Greece with six female colleagues. By the end of October, they found themselves in Brazil — a country with very little in common with Afghanistan beyond their shared love of soccer.

Speaking to international

media for the first time, Muska told *The Associated Press* this week that she and the other judges still fear retribution from the Taliban — some of whose members had been sentenced for various crimes in their courts.

She asked that her true name not be used, nor her precise location - at a Brazilian military installation - be published. Her colleagues declined to speak to the news media. Muska had been a judge for almost 10 years before the Taliban captured power in August and she said her home in the capital, Kabul, had recently been searched.

Afghanistan had about 300 female judges, Muska said, and many are now in hiding, their bank accounts frozen.

"We knew they (the Taliban) wouldn't let the women judges work. We would have serious threats to our lives," she said. "They released all the criminals from the prison. These were the criminals that we sentenced."

The judges who remain "are very scared, in hiding. They have serious financial problems, no salary, lost their



An Afghan judge who asked that her true name not be used, sits during an interview with AP in Brasilia on Wednesday. Seven Afghan female judges have taken refuge in Brazil due to fears of retribution from the Taliban

jobs, had their bank accounts blocked. They are still in danger," the judge said. "It is not good in Kabul."

The Taliban won widespread support in Afghanistan in part because the toppled US-backed government was wide-

ly seen as corrupt. "But women judges were the bravest, strongest and most honest officials in the previous administration," said Muska, who said the decision by US President Joe Biden to end American presence in the country meant

she quickly had to leave.

"Everything happened suddenly," she said.

Judge Renata Gil, the head of the Brazilian Association of Magistrates that is sponsoring the refugees, said the Afghans arrived "in a lot of fear, still feel-

ing threatened." "They are being chased because they convicted Taliban fighters," she said noting that she herself had received death threats "because I sentenced drug dealers. For women this is much harder."

Speaking at the association's headquarters in the capital, Brasilia, she said, "I hope they are able to live their lives independently. But as long as they need, we will be here to help."

The judges and their 19 family members — apparently the only Afghan refugees who have come to Brazil since the Taliban returned to power — now have Brazilian bank accounts and health care. Those who can are taking lessons in Portuguese. It's not clear yet what the future holds for them in Brazil, where at least they are protected. But Muska said they'd like to return home one day.

"I hope I can join my family members in Kabul. I have this dream I am in my house. I miss everything," the judge said. Muska hasn't seen much of Brazil due to security reasons, difficulties with the language and her own fears. But

she has found people with empathy for her situation. "They cry with us, we know they can sense our feelings," the judge said with tears in her eyes.

Muska's three children, including a toddler, are also having a tough time adapting. The judge used to have her parents and nannies to help, but in Brazil she's largely on her own, while worrying about her future, and theirs.

The children look happy and energetic as they run and jump at a public playground, speaking Dari among themselves. But the judge said her eldest daughter has questions she cannot answer. "She is always asking about my parents, her friends, her cousins," Muska said. "She always asks us questions about the Taliban, if they will kill us."

Despite the difficulties, Muska said she believes the future will be brighter for her children than for those still in Afghanistan.

"I have hope for them. That they have their studies in a good situation, in a good educational system," she said. "They will have their choice on what they can do." **AP**

Afghanistan had about 300 female judges before the Taliban snatched power, and many of these judges are now in hiding and their bank accounts frozen



IT IS IN YOUR
MOMENTS OF
DECISION THAT YOUR
DESTINY IS SHAPED
— TONY ROBBINS

tarot4

December 5, 2021



YOUR
WEEK
AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This week foresees you indulging in social activities. You will be shifting the balance in your life from work to social activities. This will improve your health and give you more energy. On the career front, you may feel a little confused with your career. Try not to get too overworked about it. Your modest approach and shift into a different track/department would be helpful. This is the time to define yourself do not bother yourself with other people's perspectives. There will be a time when you think that everything has come to a standstill. Use this time to enhance your skill. On the personal front, your partner is supportive. You can try and talk to your spouse and relieve yourself from the stress.

Lucky number 14
Lucky colour Green
Lucky day Thursday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

This is a good week for your emotional and physical well-being. Your positive approach to things will be of great help. Those waiting on health test results, know that the news will be good. You are likely to enter new realms in your spiritual exploration. You will get attracted to herbal ingredients and homemade remedies to cure health and you may join some courses. For some of you who are working from home, do not take it as leisure time, otherwise, this might turn negative. On the personal front, you may be involved in a serious conflict. Feelings of helplessness and lack of understanding are indicated. The situation may be lightened up with the support of a close family member.

Lucky number 8
Lucky colour Magenta
Lucky day Friday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

After recovering from certain health issues, you feel recharged with energy and stamina. During this time, you will find your self-confidence unharmed. Be grateful for all the blessings that surround you at this time. This week you will reflect on the positive influence and will prove to be a motivator for others. Career-wise, you will experience roadblocks and will find stagnation in your present job. The current scenario is not bright and this could demoralise you. Those in business will get some monetary gains. Prioritise your expenses and avoid unnecessary spending, this will help you now as well as in the long run. On the personal front, your maturity play's an important role at home.

Lucky number 18
Lucky colour Silver
Lucky day Wednesday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week count your blessings and enjoy the good things that life has to offer. Whatever you do, keep it simple and enjoy it. Stay safe and enjoy a good meal with your family. Some of you would like to stay close to nature, therefore, will spend time gardening. Females will feel sensitive and nurturing and make life meaningful. Professionally, good times on the card. Moneywise week is satisfactory, and your generosity will earn you goodwill. Overall, it is an extremely good period in your career life, and you should take full advantage of it. Do not indulge in gossip as it might hurt your image. On the personal front, you will find emotional stability. This is the time to enjoy your relationships.

Lucky number 6
Lucky colour Purple
Lucky day Friday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

This week you will feel very charged up and ready to take up physical activity. You are focused and goal-oriented. Your enthusiasm and charismatic personality will impress others. You are optimistic about your future. Therefore, your overall health will remain good. On the career front, you are trying your best to be in your senior's good book. Your determination and ambition will make you move forward. Remember that you'll need to use both your intellect and your heart to be successful. On the personal front, it is advised not to let small issues blow out of proportion in your mind. Beware that there is someone who does not want your relationship to grow and who is working against you.

Lucky number 13
Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Saturday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

When it comes to following a healthy diet, you make the same mistakes — neglect. Give extra attention to your diet, and follow physical exercise for at least half an so that you can take better care of yourself. On the career front, it is time to take a stand and make some tough choices. Be straightforward in your communication and to the point. This will bring reasonable change and improvement to a specific concern in life. You will find happiness in accomplishment. This week if you implement certain important pending decisions that will have the potential to change the rhythm of life for the better. On the personal front, you have very forceful energy this week. You are likely to be diplomatic and know how to get things done in your favour.

Lucky number 7
Lucky colour Grey
Lucky day Saturday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

You are likely to spend time in spiritual pursuits to find peace and inner calm. Follow meditation, yoga, and Pranayam etc to bring balance and gain strength to most of the issues of life. Don't be in a hurry for any work. Give time to pamper yourself. The divine connection will show you the right path. This week financial worries are indicated. Professionally, you are not happy and some of you feel demotivated. If possible, interact with people to keep up your morale. Do not give up on a temporary low phase. This is the time to wait for the good times. Things are not so good in the relationship. Your partner will have a long list of accusations, sit and discuss them. Things will move into a lighter phase.

Lucky number 15
Lucky colour Sky Blue
Lucky day Thursday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

This week your priorities will focus on others like children, spouse, and any elderly members in the family over your health. For those who follow an unhealthy diet, this is a wake-up call. A poor level of vitamins and protein will make you feel tired and irritable. The time is not favourable in terms of health, you must take care and eat healthy to increase metabolism. Professionally, those who are looking for a job will get hired in a few days that will test their skills and potentials. This will be a very demanding job. Believe in yourself. Some of you will be weighed down with far more responsibilities. On a personal level, you will have concern for others and people around you will be grateful and reciprocate well to your good intentions.

Lucky number 11
Lucky colour Beige
Lucky day Sunday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

This week you may need a medical examination, to clear some doubts and lead a stress-free life. You are likely to face some confusion and it will make you feel low. This is the time to lift yourself and transform your lives. It is a crucial time when you must be honest with yourselves and decide what best action should be implemented to rise to the challenges and embrace the best life. Career-wise, this week will be in your favour. You are likely to appreciate your sincere and hard work. Financially the week will be satisfactory, but you need to follow a budget to avoid any tough times. Relationship wise, you will experience freshness and a blissful state. This week you will be passionate and energetic and will enjoy a charming personality.

Lucky number 2
Lucky colour Pink
Lucky day Sunday



CANCER June 21-July 22

You can enjoy this week as you had planned. Your health, wealth and happiness are co-related. It is recommended that you learn some stress-free techniques to keep you healthy. Take some time out for a walk amidst nature that could be a great energy provider and refreshing for you. Career-wise, you need to ease your expectations. Those in business will see a good response and hike in financial matters. Those in the job need to sit down with a financial planner and figure out exactly your needs are and plan their finances accordingly. On the personal front, you are likely to feel a tight leash around you. There is a lack of understanding and feelings for each other. Married couples need to communicate well.

Lucky number 19
Lucky colour White
Lucky day Tuesday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

This week take your time to identify hidden issues and other subconscious thinking that is preventing you from seeing the fact. Some of you may look out for emotional support from a female person to identify the emotional trouble and what can be done about it. Meditation is beneficial currently. Don't be disappointed about not getting the things done as this would spoil your day or maybe the week. On the career front, investing your time in attending a webinar or any online skill development class will be favourable. These programs will help you virtually connect with people. This will further provide you unique guiding light and moral force. This week relationship area needs your attention and clear expression. Express yourself before it is too late.

Lucky number 20
Lucky colour Mauve
Lucky day Monday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

You will feel great about yourself. Overall health remains good for you. This week is a period of great productivity. You will have a sense of fullness and confidence that will make you feel that you have finally found your niche. This time is the biggest changing point in your life, so getting stuck and aggressive about things that are not working in your favour could hold you back. Choose a middle path to live life fullest. On the career front, you will face opposition. Your colleagues might not agree with you. Aggression is indicated. You need to understand the mentality of others and stay away from conflicts. On the personal front, you will use your charm to attract people. Be careful as a complication is indicated in relationships.

Lucky number 12
Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Tuesday

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ASTROTURF

BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Astrology helps reshape destiny

As we established in the previous two issues that human beings are empowered to guide their actions by choice and discrimination, this exclusive human prerogative also enjoins upon a being to make conscientious choice to modify even their destiny indications. The obvious implication is that 'freewill' has a role to play in human life, using which, we even reshape our destiny. How well we use that option is altogether a different matter. The fatalists may still insist that destiny is beyond change. What they forget that civilisation has successively grown thus far out of its primitive stage through human efforts only. If expectancy of life in India has risen to around 70 from below 50 since Independence, it is not that destiny of Indian people has changed by itself. Medical facility has improved and people have become more health conscious, which is nothing but human effort. If you still continue to be fatalist, you will be left behind in the run of time. The western world has been confidently using their power of freewill. They would be committing many mistakes in the way, yet they have grown faster and far beyond us.

It needs to be appreciated here that in

a unified world we live in, where no individual has a reality independent of the entirety, all set into an interdependent mechanism, 'freewill' cannot be absolute. In such a framework, we all have a shared destiny. So, you can't just blindly pursue your whims and fancies. You are within your right to pursue aspirational urges, but it will not yield desired result, if it is in conflict with the callings of collective existence. We, therefore, need to learn how to use our freewill option rightfully. It would be possible only when we remain alert to invoke our discriminatory faculty before taking any call. The irony, however, is that caught up in the flirtations of mind, we are not left with enough of mind-space necessary for due diligence before exercising our option. Truth remains that human potential — mind power — is immense, which unfolded in full will know limits. But major part remains buried under the limitations of mind. The irony, however is that human beings have access to hardly 5 to 7 percent of the faculties of mind. That is available by default. More than that is subject to our conscious efforts. Even what is available by default, if it could be optimally utilised, one will be



able to negotiate the callings of life with relative ease. The paradox, however, is that engaged in unnecessary brooding and contemplation, dreaming, worrying, dealing with sense of fear and insecurity, we more often dissipate considerable amount of mind power towards unproductive ends. Consequently, we are hardly left with enough to do justice to our priority preferences. When we fail, we find it convenient to shift the blame on destiny. Going by what Swami Vivekanand says, we do not fail in life because destiny is so scripted. We rather don't strive sufficiently to unfold immense power within. It is believed that Einstein and those in his ilk would have used around 10 percent of their mental abilities to have created history. The ancient India's learned masters would have been able to access full landscape of mind to have realised even subtle realities of life operative at intangible level.

What's the way forward then? Identify and acknowledge limiting tendencies of mind by self-reflection and address them through fresh educative inputs. Our ego, however, doesn't let us acknowledge our infirmities. Here Astrology comes handy as an effective

diagnostic tool to dispassionately figure out the basic fabric of an individual's making. For, it does energy mapping of a being, which a horoscope is. And energy knows no bias. Becoming aware, thus, guided by a proven Guru, purify the mind of its limiting tendencies. Sufficient mind-space will then be available, necessary for processing your thoughts objectively, and thereby all actions on your part. With such an expanded vision, and thereby mind-power, first, you will not take things on its face value. So, you will not will upon any action without due diligence.

Second, you will look at issues in hand with an open mind without any limitations whatsoever. You will, therefore, be able look at things in the right perspective due. You may then be able to discriminate between 'what you want' and 'what is right', and accordingly make most appropriate choices. Also, you will be able to intelligently deal with unforeseen challenges coming your way, and with relative ease.

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