

WORLD 6UK CONFIRMS FIRST
2 CASES OF OMICRON**MONEY 7**OVER 390 RCS-UDAN AIR
ROUTES OPERATIONAL NOW**SPORT 8**NEW ZEALAND ALL OUT
FOR 296 ON DAY THREE

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DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL
BHUBANESWAR RANCHI
RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD
VIJAYWADA

BHUBANESWAR, SUNDAY NOVEMBER 28, 2021; PAGES 8-4 ₹4



sunday pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



Now, stubble burning to be decriminalised

Centre agrees to farmers' demand even as stubble burning remains a big cause of pollution in Delhi

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

After agreeing to repeal three farm laws, the Modi Government has agreed to meet the protesting farmers' demand to decriminalise stubble burning, a major source of air pollution in the national Capital.

Announcing this, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Saturday urged farmer groups to end their agitation as the Government has listed the farm laws' repeal Bill on the very first day of the Winter Session of Parliament on November 29.

On withdrawal of cases against farmers during the agitation, Tomar said this is in the domain of the State Governments and they can consider withdrawal of cases.

In the note on the farm law repeal Bill, sent to Parliament members, Tomar has defended



the three contentious farm laws and wrote "the Government has tried hard to sensitise the farmers on the importance of the farm laws and explain the merits through several meetings and other forums. Without taking away the existing mechanisms available to farmers, new avenues were provided for trade of their produce. Besides, farmers were free to select the avenues of their choice where they can get more prices for their pro-

duce without any compulsion". "...the farm laws are proposed to be repealed. It is also proposed to omit sub section (1A) of section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act 1955 which was inserted vide the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act 2020," the Bill said.

"As we celebrate the 75th year of Independence — Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav — the need of the hour is to take everyone together on the path of inclusive growth and devel-

opment," reads the note written by the Agriculture Minister.

To repeal a law, a new law has to be enacted and a specific repealing clause is added to it. Therefore, the amendment bill for the three farm laws would have to be tabled in Parliament the same way as any other bill.

Once both Houses of Parliament pass the bill, it will be ratified by the President of India and the previous Act would be withdrawn.

Modi: Maintain intensive containment, surveillance

PM briefs about global trends on Covid, Omicron

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In wake of the new variant Omicron, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday convened a high-level meeting to review the situation relating to Covid-19 and vaccination.

Modi urged the officials to be proactive and maintain intensive containment and active surveillance and make people cautious.

He also said States should be sensitised on the need to ensure that all those who have got the first dose are given the second dose timely. The Prime Minister also asked officials to review plans for easing international travel restrictions in the light of the emerging new evidence.

"The PM was briefed about the global trends on Covid-19 infections and cases. Officials highlighted that countries across the world have experienced multiple Covid-19 surges since the onset of the pandemic. The PM also reviewed all the national situation relating to Covid-19 cases and test positivity rates.

"The PM was apprised of

the progress in vaccination and the efforts being made under the 'Har Ghar Dastak' campaign. The PM directed that there is a need to increase the second dose coverage and that States need to be sensitised on the need to ensure that all those who have got the first dose are given the second dose timely. The PM was also given details about the seropositivity in the country from time to time and its implications in public health response," said the PMO in a statement about the two-hour-long review meeting chaired by the PM.



PM Narendra Modi chairs a meeting on the situation relating to Covid-19 with top officials, through video conferencing in New Delhi on Saturday

PTI

Maha makes quarantine must for fliers from Omicron-hit nations

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Hours after the Maharashtra Government decided to screen air passengers arriving from at least 10 countries where a deadly new coronavirus variant has been detected, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Saturday announced that all the passengers arriving here from the Omicron "high-risk nations" would undergo compulsory institutional quaran-



time. Making an announce-

ment about the civic body's plans to quarantine all those passengers from the ten Omicron-hit countries, Additional Municipal Commissioner Suresh Kakani said that the BMC — in consultation with the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport — would make available a list of all the passengers who have arrived from abroad in the past 14 days to the Mumbai Metropolitan Region.

State logs 264 new Covid cases, 3 deaths

Khordha district recorded the day's highest 127 cases followed by Mayurbhanj with 26, Sundargarh 16 and Cuttack 14

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State on Saturday registered 264 more Covid-19 positive cases in 20 districts and the State pool, surging the total tally to 10,48,492.

Among the newly-infected were 41 children in the age group of 0 to 18 years.

Notably, the State had recorded 219 cases on Friday.

Out of the new cases, 154 were detected from quarantine and 110 local contacts.

Khordha district recorded the day's highest 127 cases followed by Mayurbhanj with 26, Sundargarh 16 and Cuttack 14.

The districts which recorded below-10 cases were Sambalpur nine, Jajpur eight, Baleswar and Puri five each, Bargarh and Jharsuguda four each, Jagatsinghpur and Keonjhar three each, Angul, Deogarh, Ganjam and Kendrapada two each and Bhadrak, Kandhamal, Koraput and Nayagarh one Covid case each.

Besides, 28 cases were detected from the State pool.

The active cases stood at 2,424. Three more persons succumbed to the disease, mounting the total death toll to 8,409.

Balangir, Jharsuguda and Kalahandi districts reported one death each.

However, another 255 patients recovered on the day, increasing the total recoveries to 10,37,864.

96 infected in BBSR

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

State Capital Bhubaneswar registered 96 of the State's 264 cases on Saturday, with which the total tally in the city rose to 1, 21,082. The active cases were 1,085.

Notably, 88 cases had been recorded in the city on Friday. So far, 1,085 persons have died of the disease in the city.

Farmers defer their march to Parliament tomorrow

Ask PM to fulfil all demands, to meet on Dec 4 to decide their next course

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Two days before the tabling of the farm Bill in Parliament to repeal the three legislations, protesting farmer groups on Saturday deferred their November 29 march to Parliament and urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to fulfil their six demands.

The march to Parliament on November 29 was announced by Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait. The demands include written assurance about giving legal guarantee to procurement of crops at minimum support price (MSP) by



Farm leader Darshan Pal with others addresses a Press conference at Singhu border in New Delhi on Saturday

PTI

December 4, sacking and arrest of Union Minister Ajay Mishra, and compensations to the family members of farmers who lost their lives during the protests. Now, the farmer groups will wait for the Government's formal response to their demands and then meet again on December 4 to

decide the further course of action.

The decision of the farmers to defer the march to Parliament has come as big relief to the Government, which is trying to buy peace with the farmers ahead of the crucial Assembly elections of UP, Uttarakhand, and Punjab.

Uphaar cinema blaze: Court reserves order on 7-yr jail terms for Ansals

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi court on Saturday reserved for December 3 its order on whether to suspend the seven-year jail terms awarded to real estate barons Sushil and Gopal Ansal for tampering with evidence in the 1997 case of Uphaar cinema fire, which had claimed 59 lives. Additional Sessions Judge Anil Antil reserved the order on appeals filed by the Ansals against their conviction and jail terms by a magisterial court. Besides challenging their conviction and punishment, the Ansals had urged the sessions court to suspend their jail terms till the appeal is decided.

The court heard the arguments of the accused as well as the victim and police and reserved the order.

Senior advocate Vikas Pahwa, appearing for the Association of Victims of Uphaar Tragedy (AVUT), had opposed the appeals and told the court that the offence of tampering with evidence is extremely serious in nature as



it affects the entire criminal justice system.

The Delhi Police had also opposed the appeals filed by the Ansals and told the court that suspending the jail terms of the convicts would trigger the mental trauma and agony of the victims.

The police had told the court that the punishment provided a solace to the victims of the tragedy and reinforced their faith in the justice delivery system, that too after 24 years. If the jail terms awarded to the convicts are suspended within a month of incrimination, it will further erode the faith of the country's

common citizens in the criminal justice system, Additional Public Prosecutor A T Ansari had told the court. The case is related to tampering with evidence in the main fire tragedy case, in which the Ansals were convicted and sentenced to a two-year jail term by the Supreme Court.

The apex court had, however, released the Ansals, taking into account the prison time they had done, on the condition that they pay a fine of ₹30 crore each, to be used for building a trauma centre in the national Capital.

The magisterial court had also sentenced former court staff Dinesh Chand Sharma and two others — P P Batra and Anoop Singh — to seven years in jail and slapped a fine of ₹3 lakh each on them.

It had imposed a fine of ₹2.25 crore each on the Ansals.

The tampering was detected for the first time on July 20, 2002 and a departmental enquiry was initiated against Sharma, who was suspended subsequently.



‘More than tough, it was very exciting and fun’

MADHUR MITTAL, who plays Raju in MX Player's Matsya Kaand, speaks with SUPRIYA RAMESH about his role, his experience of doing a thriller-con and how acting happened

■ **What is Matsya Kaand about?**

It's basically a cat and mouse game between two equally intelligent and genius people. That's Matsya played by Ravii Dubey and Ravi Krishan ji is playing Tej Raj, the guy is trying to catch Matsya. It's just a brilliant back and forth, trying to out wit each other. Which I think is fabulous. It's more like brains over brawn, which is more interesting to watch and along with that you have an incredible ensemble of cast playing all of these characters that make the show come to life.

■ **What is your role?**

I play Raju, who I think in some ways the heart of the show. In the sense that he is very *jugaadu*. The trait that leads him to meet Matsya and become a part of his team. The three people team where Raju is the glue that holds the team together. He is a little clumsy, he is very disarming, full of heart, warmth and very loyal. That's what attracted me to this character. A sweet boy that I don't think people have had the chance to see this character before. That's the main reason why I wanted to do this.

■ **How did you land this project?**

Mr Gautam Talwar, who is the chief content

officer of MX player was very kind enough to set up a meeting with me and Ajay sir. That's because he thought I was right for the character. We met and instantly clicked. I love Ajay sir's energy, the way he is so calm and incredibly supportive. With him, it felt free. We had a couple of meetings and he thought I was right for the part and I obviously loved it because I haven't done something like this before. The show was great and fantastic people in it from the creators to the cast.

■ **How tough was this role?**

More than tough, I would like to say it was very exciting and fun. I mean every job is tough in its own way but for me, because I love acting so much, they seem like opportunities rather than obstacles.

This was a team effort. You can make paintings alone, songs alone, most of the arts alone but you can't make a show alone. You need a great team around you and luckily we found amazing people that all just fit like a Legos together. It was like clockwork and we were working. It was just a fantastic experience.

■ **How has your experience been with your co-stars?**

Ravi *bhaiya* and Zoya are so fun to be with. All three of us bonded a lot after work. Zoya's mom was with us as well.

All of us would go out to so many dinners and lunches as much as we could during COVID with the places that were open. We had a tremendous time gorging on all sorts of food.

I always made everyone jealous of my samosas because I would eat everything while Ravi *bhaiya* and Zoya would watch what they eat. That was my favourite thing to do. We had an incredible time. The whole show has been fantastic.

■ **You have been on screen from a very young age. How did acting happen?**

Acting happened a little late. I started my career as a dancer. I won Boogie Woogie back in 1997. After that me and my father, we all came to Bombay so that I could have a career. Through dancing a lot of people suggested that because I was very expressive in dance and I should try acting. I started giving a few auditions and then my first film was *One Two Ka Four*. I got another one with Salman called *Kahi Pyaar Na Hojaye*. So then the acting journey started and somewhere down the line I felt that I was a better actor than a dancer. So around the age of 14 I focused all my energy into acting and the universe has been kind. At the age of 18 I was at the Oscars with *Slumdog Millionaire*.

■ **You are known for *Slumdog Millionaire* and your role and acting is highly appreciated. How tough was it to get into that character of Salim?**

For Salim, the main thing was, before that I had never played a grey character. Even now, people associate to that sort of characters. Before that I was this very timid sort of nice guy. I was a kid so I played a kid, all of the things that I had done before, there is nothing grey about that. So to get someone like Salim who was more complicated under the surface. It's not just a guy who is doing bad things to get money. There are layers there and obviously you get to see them as the film progresses.

It was super intense and luckily Danny Boyle was a director who sat down with me because I was a young actor. We had workshops with him for couple of months. Almost two and a half to three months before the film began. It was very guided, that time I wasn't even evolved enough as an actor to bring a lot of myself to the character.

I did my fair share of research like I went out with some guys who had a similar vibe like Salim and I realised that people who do bad things aren't that bad inherently. Things have happened to them which doesn't really justify what they do but you can understand it in a way. That's how I started approaching that character.

■ **What has been the most challenging role till now?**

I think the most challenging role that I have done was in this Disney film called *Million Dollar Arm*. That was difficult because I had done a sports film before *Slumdog Millionaire*. This was about baseball and I had no clue about it. I had never picked up a baseball in my life before, which was great in a way because the character also goes through the same journey. But physically, it was very enduring because for three months, we had coaches and rigorous training programme. I had to put up some muscle so, it was very physically demanding and that was one of the first times I had to do that.

I would say that because of the physicality of it and the second one would be this film called *Matr* which was after this life-ending car crash that I had been through. In which I had almost completely lost my face. I had to get multiple surgeries done to look like myself again. Because of the accident, I thought I would never act again. The film was super exciting but also very scary. That character took a lot out of me as well.

■ **What genre do you prefer?**

I will always say yes to a genre that I haven't had the chance to do yet. Funny but yeah science-fiction is the one. A film like *Sunshine* by Danny Boyle or like the *Arrival*. I love films like that. I almost did get a show like that but I missed out on it due to date issues. Something in that realm, I would absolutely jump up.



Director: Ashok Tyagi
Producer: Kalyani Singh
Starring: Amol Kolhe (Nathuram Godse)
Presenter: Maann Singh
Release date: January 30, 2022

It is not often that you get to see films that are taken from real life, especially when it comes to life stories on people who gave up everything to get India free. Maann Singh's *Why I Killed Gandhi* is the picturisation of the legal statement that was submitted by Nathuram Godse to the honourable Court during Gandhiji's murder trial. With the permission of Justice Atma Charan, the statement was read out by Nathuram Godse before the Court. It took almost four-and-a-half hours for the entire statement to be read out. It was later published as a book by the same title. This book is freely available at all popular e-commerce sites.

Everybody knows that Gandhiji was killed by Nathuram Godse. But the burning question – what prompted him to take such an extreme step – was never answered. However, a perception has been created that Godse was a terrorist or a mentally disbalanced Hindu extremist. However, when you read his statement, you realise that he was a freedom fighter and social activist from Pune and edited a newspaper *Agrani*.

In 1964, the Government instituted a one-man commission under the jurisdiction of Justice J.L. Kapoor, a retired justice of the Supreme Court to investigate into the causes that led to the murder of Gandhiji. Justice J.L. Kapoor submitted his report in 1970 and the 10-minute commentary in the beginning of the film is the reproduction of the selected passages from the Chapter 12 of that report. The remaining 35 minutes of the film, the edited version, is the legal statement submitted by Godse to the Court of law. Every word spoken in the film is the translation of words taken from this legal document. What the film reveals has been systematically suppressed since Nathuram Godse was hanged and it gives a radically alternative perspective to look at the history of 20th Century India.

TELLYTALE

‘I WAS A LITTLE SCEPTICAL ABOUT TAKING IT’



Actor Sharad Malhotra says that he was a little sceptical about taking his latest show *Vidrohi*, which is historical.

"Frankly speaking, when I was offered the show, I was a little sceptical about taking it, but not in a negative way. I had neither heard about my character Bakshi Jagabandhu nor much was written about him in history. But when I researched about him, I found out that he was the first man in history to have started a people's revolt in the country. I have not done too many shows, I am very choosy about the ones I do. It's been less but it has been good work. I have done just a handful of shows in the last 15 years but most of them did pretty well and were etched in people's memories," he said.

According to him, earlier actors had a demarcation between a TV actor and a film actor, which is not there anymore.

"The line has blurred and a TV actor is

working in web shows and films and vice versa. As far as shelf life is concerned, it is a very subjective matter. When I started acting, I wanted to just give it a shot, I didn't plan on continuing for so long. I was taking each day as it came," he said.

"I have been extremely blessed to be getting lead roles even after 15 years. But that didn't happen overnight, I had to work towards it. It took a lot of blood, sweat, and hard work to be where I am today," he added.

The Bharat Ka Veer Putra – Maharana Pratap actor calls himself a very greedy actor.

"A lot of male actors on TV complain of the screen space as the industry is still governed by women. TV is said to be a medium ruled by the women, for the women, and of the women. But a few men have been lucky enough to not fall into that category," he said.

HARSHALI ZINE ON TROLLS

It goes without saying that social media has redefined our lives. Things have become easier and good for us in more ways than one. However, many feel that the world of social media is fake, yet, at the same time, everyone wants that attention. Actor Harshali Zine decodes the whole thing.

"One has to understand that social media isn't free, it costs you your focus. These free apps ask for permission to read your emails, text messages, listen to your phone calls, etc. The less apps you are on is better. Privacy is a myth in the age of smartphones and social media," says the actor known for TV shows, CID, Diya Aur Baati Hum, web series, BOSS: Baap of Special Services, and Marathi film, Paach Naar Ek Bezaar, among others.

Social media has become an ego massage tool and it disrupts the regular life of actors as they are expected to put new content on a daily basis.

What's your opinion on trolls and how do you deal with trolling? "I don't think anything about them. They should not be given importance to. Nobody has that kind of power over me to affect my peace of mind. It's them reflecting their diseased mentality. Why should I take it personally? It has nothing to do with me. I send them healing," she replies.



LOMOTIF LAUNCHES IN INDIA

The Punjabi heartthrob and singing sensation Guru Randhawa rocked the stage at the launch of US-based Short-Format Video-Sharing App- *Lomotif* - Singer Shirley Setia, Big Boss Fame Asim Riaz, Popular actors Adaa Khan, Anushka Sen and Bhojpuri superstars Ravi Kishan & Akshara Singh were also a part of the launch.

Lomotif has made its official entry into India. Ted Farnsworth, Chairman and Co-founder of ZASH Global Media and

Entertainment Corporation, spearheaded the launch in New Delhi. On this occasion, the app also unveiled Lomotif India, a brand-new channel. Users can also participate in Lomotif India's weekly challenges by posting their videos to win amazing prizes. Founded by Singapore-based Paul Yang, Lomotif was acquired by ZASH earlier this year.

Its patent technology allows users to immerse themselves in a super-engaging reel format of content.



SOS! ATHARVA GETS KIDNAPPED

Sony SAB's *Wagle Ki Duniya* - *Nayi Peedhi Naye Kissey* continues to garner a massive fan following with its lighthearted and relatable content. The current series of episodes brings the biggest twist of all time in the story as the Wagle family goes through harrowingly trying times with Atharva's (Sheehan Kapahi) kidnapping.

Atharva and Vandana's (Pariva Pranati) day begins with a dispute as Vandana mistakenly blames Atharva for printing Dakku's (Deepak Pareek) picture with 'Wanted - Dead or Alive' written on it. Going about their usual day, the Wagle family is completely oblivious of the misfortune which looms over them. On his way to school, Atharva gets kidnapped by two goons. What has happened to Atharva is of complete mystery to the entire Wagle family as their simple lifestyle could not land them in trouble with goons.

WALT DISNEY ANIMATION STUDIOS CELEBRATE'S 60TH FILM — ENCANTO

Disney movies are special and have a surprise element in them that they transport the audience to the world of magic and laughter. With a legacy spanning more than 90 years, Walt Disney Animation Studios have created phenomenal movies which have received much love and appreciation from people of all ages from all over the world. To celebrate this love and joy, Disney has come up with its 60th animated musical — *Encanto*, releasing in your nearest theaters. This movie is about a family who has special powers of magic to make this world a better place. Here's a look back at some iconic movies by Walt Disney Animation Studios.

The *Lion King* (2019), If you are looking to watch a movie which is filled with love, adventure and motivation, then *Lion King* is your destination. Directed by Jon Favreau, this 2019 film was a mega hit globally. The gripping storyline, amazing music, astonishing animation kept the viewers hooked right from the start till the very end.

Raya and The Last Dragon (2021), Filled with a whole lot of intense drama and action, this movie will make the wildest and unimaginable of scenarios come true. The story is about a place where dragons and humans live together in harmony until one day when a sinister monster, returns after 500 years and threatens this land. Raya is given the responsibility to track down the last dragon to save the humans. Will Raya be able to give hope to all and return with a dragon?

Tangled (2010), Walt Disney Animation Studios is known to think out of the box. We all



know the story of Rapunzel but could we have ever imagined her to kidnap the most eligible bachelor, aka Flynn Rider, in town? Directed by Nathan Greno and Byron Howard, the movie is a treat to the viewer's eyes with a gripping storyline and amazing music.

Tarzan This movie has to be in this list. The famous and iconic - Disney's *Tarzan* is what the people who are in their 20's and early 30's watched and grew up with. This magnificent adaptation of Edgar Rice Burroughs's story of

the ape man begins deep within the jungle when Tarzan, a baby who's lost his parents to a leopard, is adopted by a family of gorillas. The phenomenal animation, great music and wonderful voiceover made this movie a blockbuster globally with people from all ages loving this movie and never getting bored even after watching it multiple times. It was the movie which raised the bar for Walt Disney Animation Studios and made a mark on people's hearts and minds forever.

Frozen, *Frozen* was inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale 'The Snow Queen'. Directed by Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee, this movie depicts a princess who sets off on a journey along with an iceman, his reindeer and a snowman to find her sister whose magical power acted as a curse on their kingdom in eternal winter. With a story and soundtrack that struck the right chord, the film took absolutely no time to shatter all box office records worldwide. It won multiple prestigious awards because of how magnificent it was and the love that was showered by the fans and viewers.

Walt Disney Animation Studio is all geared up for yet another theatrical release of *Encanto*. Directed by Byron Howard and Jared Bush, while the beautiful songs featured in it are by Emmy, Grammy and Tony Award winner Lin-Manuel Miranda.

Produced by Yvett Merino, this movie is geared up to give you a gala time in a lala-land which is filled with great songs and captivating sequences.

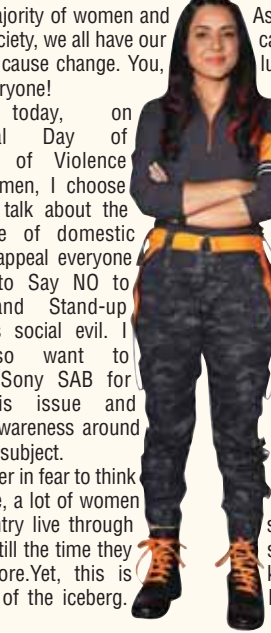
SAY NO TO DOMESTIC ABUSE

In an actor's career, we don't manyhats, but rarely do we come across characters that leave us shaken to the core. Not because it lets you explore more as an artist, but it wakes you up to a reality, you knew little about. This is exactly what hit me when I got to portray Koel in *Ziddi Dil Maane Na*, a character subjected to domestic violence and an agonizing past that continues to haunt her and her little son. Reprising Koel, I realized how home has a completely different meaning for many women across the globe and how big a menace is domestic abuse.

I wasn't oblivious to this peril before. The alarming number of cases for domestic abuse in our country startled and shocked me as well. But what my character made me aware of, is the intensity of the problem, its relevance amongst majority of women and how as a society, we all have our bit to do to cause change. You, me, and everyone!

So, today, on International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women, I choose courage to talk about the grave issue of domestic abuse and appeal everyone out there to Say NO to violence and Stand-up against this social evil. I would also want to appreciate Sony SAB for raising this issue and spreading awareness around this serious subject.

I shudder in fear to think of the abuse, a lot of women in this country live through and endure till the time they can't anymore. Yet, this is just the tip of the iceberg.



As much as we read such cases, there are many more lurking in the dark waiting to be heard. It's hard to imagine the trauma, the pain and the stigma surrounding this vicious practice that causes women to stay silent.

As I navigate the journey of my character Koel in the show *Ziddi Dil Maane Na*, the reality of domestic abuse is enveloping me tight. My heart goes out to the women who endure through it all, either out of helplessness, or lack of awareness or both. The sleepless nights, the fear of survival, the fear of your kid's survival is something I cannot even begin to

measure. And not to forget, even if you happen to tide over this crisis, the shame and stigma that trails a woman is hard to put in words.

But dear women, just like Koel, that shouldn't deter you from battling this menace. The bruises that you carry on your skin, heart and mind are worth fighting for. Because we all deserve a world full of love, compassion and respect.

I understand the responsibility of portraying your side of the story as authentically as I can. I need you to know that you're not alone, today and always. You're a queen, you just need to awaken and take your stride as the world awaits you with open arms.

I hope like Koel, you also find the strength to speak up and fight for your rights. Because if she can, so can you.

10-day quarantine mandatory for foreign returnees

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

In view of the new Covid-19 variant detected in South Africa being designated as the 'Variant of Concern', the State Government as a precautionary measure has made a 10-day quarantine mandatory for people returning from foreign countries.

"The foreign returnees would have to stay under quarantine for a period of 10 days to prevent further transmission of Covid-19 infections in the State," said Health Director Niranjana Mishra on Saturday. As per Government's revised Covid guidelines against the new mutant named Omicron by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the returnees would undergo Covid test at airports. Their swab samples would be sent for genome sequencing if tested positive for the virus, Mishra added.

Regarding the surge in infections in educational insti-

tutions in the State, he said that a close watch would be kept on schools, colleges and hostels.

The Health and Family Welfare Department has written to all district Collectors, CDMOs and Municipal Commissioners instructing them to focus on 3Ts- Testing, Tracking and Treatment while intensifying the Covid vaccination drive across the State. The schools, colleges and hostels authorities have been asked to adhere to the Covid guidelines stringently.

"The students with Covid-19 symptoms have been asked not to come to schools. Covid test would be conducted on the symptomatic students immediately. The schools and colleges which report new Covid cases will be sealed and instructions have been made to comply with Covid appropriate behaviour on the premises, Mishra said. He urged people to remain careful to prevent the third wave which is imminent.

Farm issues: Kissan Cong to hold State-wide stir



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Terming the BJD Government as 'killer of farmers', the Congress on Saturday announced that it would start a massive mobilisation of farmers for a State-wide agitation.

Congress State spokesperson Sudarsan Das told reporters that till now, at least seven farmers have committed suicide because of the increasing farm crisis and inability to pay loans.

The debt burden and the attack by brown plant hoppers and other unknown insects on crops have hit the prospects of a steady income of farmers, he said.

The recent suicide of farmers of Jaleswar in Baleswar

district and Raigarh in Nabrangpur points to the State Government's failure and insensitivity, Das added.

Pradesh Kissan Congress president Amiya Kumar Pattanaik stated that though a unanimous resolution was passed in the State Assembly to provide at least Rs 2,930 as MSP for paddy, the Government took no follow-up action to implement it.

"If you have really concern for farmers, implement it in the State like in neighbouring Chhattisgarh and create an example," Pattanaik told the Government.

He said a State Kissan Congress executive meeting would be held on December 1 to devise a strategy for a long-term agitation of farmers.

Aparajita faces protest from BJD workers, says she welcomes 'democratic' act



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Bhubaneswar BJP MP Aparajita Sarangi faced protest by BJD workers during her Padyatra at Khandual slum in Ward-61 here on Saturday.

BJD leader Samaresh Beura, who led the agitators, said, "Odisha's major economy is dependent on agriculture and many farmers are below poverty line. How will they survive if the price of cooking gas is so high?"

The unprecedented price hike by the Central Government is forcing them to look for alternatives to keep the kitchen fire burning, he said.

However, Sarangi said, "I welcome all democratic protests. But the protest by BJD workers is more out of arrogance than their right to express.

All Odias are close to me. I will reiterate again that I am ready to help any BJD, Congress or apolitical worker

who seeks help in any initiative for development."

"Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik is the legislative head of the State and it is his duty to protect an elected representative of people. Today, I think he is doing his duty," she added, taking a dig at the administration's alleged failure in preventing the attacks on her recently.

Earlier on Thursday, the MP's carcade had been attacked by Chhatra Congress activists at Balipatna Square with eggs over the issues of unemployment, rise in fuel and cooking gas.

Later in the night when Sarangi was at a programme for senior citizens at Acharya Vihar, BJD workers allegedly tried to storm the venue and pelted stones and eggs in a face-off with the BJP workers in the presence of police. The city DCP had to rush to the spot and rescue the MP from the spot.

Koraput Coffee to be grown in 5K hectares in next 5 yrs, says CM



PNS ■ KORAPUT

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Saturday announced that coffee would be cultivated in 5,000 hectares of land in Koraput district in next five years.

On the occasion of distribution of Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) smart health cards in the district, Patnaik said Koraput's organic coffee has now become a global brand and given employment to women in the tribals-dominated district.

Earlier in August this year, the CM had informed that the 'Koraput Coffee' procured from

growers in Koraput by the Tribal Development Cooperative Corporation of Odisha Ltd (TDCCOL) would be sold by the Tata Coffee across the country and abroad.

Regarding the smart health cards, Patnaik said that more than 12 lakh people in the district would avail the benefits of the scheme.

On the occasion, the CM through videoconferencing also inaugurated and laid foundation-stone of various projects worth Rs 866 crore. He also paid floral tribute to the statue of former Minister and Koraput MLA Harishchandra Buxipatra.

BMC adds nine colony parks to its list, managing 62 parks at present



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Nine small parks of the city have been added to the park list of the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC). As per order of the BMC Commissioner, all parks having less than half acre area will be looked after by the civic body.

Parks in more than half acre area will be managed by the Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA). A letter from the horticulture section of the BDA has confirmed saying nine small parks will be managed by the BMC.

The BMC at present is managing 62 colony parks through public private partnership approach (PPP mode) which has yielded positive result.

Hence, in order to strengthen community participation for promotion of greenery and easing city life, community driven approach is being adopted to promote colony parks in the BMC area.

The parks are managed by 22 Mission Shakti SHGs and 18 Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs). The managing agencies get Rs 10,000 per month

per park for maintenance. Among 62 parks 36 parks are developed under AMRUT Yojana.

Community managed parks activities are being reviewed every six month with chairmanship of the concerned Zonal Deputy Commissioner in presence of community representatives, environment section of BMC and concerned engineer. Responsibilities under PPP mode include timely opening and closing of the park, cleaning, watering, mowing, loosening of soil, regular application of insecticides/fungicides, staking and seasonal flower beds.

Major activities like modification and reconstruction are looked after by the BMC.

"Including the nine newly added parks now BMC has 71 parks. We are trying to make them community managed parks and a process has already started," told Environment Officer Basanta Kumar Mallick and Horticulturist Girija Bhusan Satpathy.

On the other hand, the BDA has 52 major parks and four more are under construction, told Chief Horticulturist Ashokananda Dhara.

IIPA holds webinar on 'creating leaders with winning habits'



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) Odisha branch organised a webinar on the theme 'Creating leaders with winning habits' recently.

The national event was attended by participants from Odisha and different parts of the country. Presiding over the webinar Chairman IIPA Odisha Dr Arun Kumar Rath stressed on the importance of

leadership among public administrators in the 21st century.

Dr Rath advised the leaders of public administration to ensure fair and just decisions with the utmost efficiency and least cost. Former Vice Chancellor of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University Tamil Nadu Professor Krishnan Baskar spoke about the crucial role of effective academic leadership. Director Rajalakshmi School of Management

Chennai Prof Deen Dayal Swain was of the view that leadership is all about taking decisions with five leadership traits.

There was a lively session at the end when the members of audience asked various questions which were very well answered by the panelists.

Honorary Secretary of IIPA Regional Branch Bhubaneswar Ashok Mohapatra welcomed the guests and treasurer BC Tripathy proposed vote of thanks.

'Let Utkal be an int'l university'



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Utkal University should think about quality education for all after the Covid situation, said by Union Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Minister Dharmendra Pradhan as chief guest on the occasion of the university's 79th foundation day celebration at its campus on Saturday.

University Vice-Chancellor Prof Sabita Acharya delivered

a welcome speech. PG Council Chairman Prof Basant Kumar Mallik introduced the guests and Registrar Dr Avaya Kumar Nayak presented the annual report.

Padma Shri Dr Rajat Kumar Kar said that by forming a new committee the Vice-Chancellor should promote the Odia language and literature.

Dharmendra Pradhan said digital pencil has taken the place of chalk; so, in this situation quality education is very

essential for all. "We should try to make Utkal University an international university so that globally students can come down to Odisha for higher studies. More priority should be given to mother language and regional languages.

Students from different departments were felicitated with gold medals and case prizes for their academic excellence. Director, Students' Welfare Dr Sushant Kumar Badamali offered a vote of thanks.

26 tribal schoolgirls Covid+ in Mayurbhanj

PNS ■ BARIPADA

As many as 26 girl students of a tribal school in Mayurbhanj district have tested positive for Covid-19.

The infected students of the Chamakpur Tribal Residential School under Thakurmunda block have been put in isolation in the premises of the institution. Source informed that the contact tracing of the 26 students was underway and the 300 students of the school would undergo Covid-19 test immediately as part of Covid safety protocols.

Earlier this week, 53 students of a high school in Sundargarh district and 31 students of the Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) at Burla were found positive for Covid-19. Later, the Covid tally in the VIMSAR rose to 56 as more students tested positive for the virus.

Leading K'pada lawyer Mohanty dies



PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

Leading lawyer Satchidananda Mohanty passed away at his residence here on Friday. He was 93 and is survived by three sons and two daughters.

He was cremated at the Swargadwar in Puri. His younger son Biswadas Mohanty lit the funeral pyre. Mohanty, a former president of the Kendrapada District Lawyers' Association, had over 60 years of legal practice. The courts in the district were suspended on Friday as a mark of respect to him. Mohanty earned reputation as an expert both in civil and criminal laws. Mohanty's younger sister and eminent woman writer Binapani Mohanty has also been a Padma awardee. Former Minister Ganeswar Behera, Kendrapada MLA Sasibhusan Behera, Rajnagar MLA Dhruva Charan Sahoo, District Judge Gopal Charan Behera and others condoled his death.

ITDA engineer has ₹2.81-cr assets

PNS ■ CUTTACK

The Vigilance police on Saturday arrested Santosh Kumar Das, Assistant Engineer, Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), Baripada, for possession of disproportionate assets worth Rs 2.81 crore.

After a thorough search of the properties, the income, expenditure and assets of the Assistant Engineer were calculated and he was found in possession of the disproportionate assets, which constituted 245 per cent of his known sources of income which he couldn't account for satisfactorily.

Balugaon: 3 picnickers die, 7 critical as truck hits bus

PNS ■ KHORDHA

Three picnickers were killed and seven more sustained critical injuries after a speeding truck hit their stationary bus in Balugaon in wee hours of Saturday.

The deceased persons were identified as Loi Das, Ganga Maharana and Asit Behera, all from Ganjam district.

According to reports, the tragedy took place at around 2.30 am when the truck dashed against the bus parked at Belapada Chhak on NH-16 in the Balugaon area.

On receiving information, a team of Fire Services personnel reached the spot and rescued 19 picnickers from the bus. While two died on the spot, eight were rushed to the Balugaon Community Health Centre, where one succumbed to his injuries. The doctors referred seven of the injured to the MKCG Hospital in



Brahmapur.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik expressed deep grief over the death of the three students in the road mishap at Balugaon.

Besides expressing his sympathies to the bereaved families, the CM sanctioned a

compensation of Rs 2 lakh each for the next of kin of the deceased.

He also directed the authorities to provide the best of healthcare to the injured students and wished them a speedy recovery.

UCCI to hold international trade fair in BBSR next yr

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Utkal Chamber of Commerce and Industry (UCCI) has planned to organise an International Trade Fair in Bhubaneswar in March next, the proposal of which is pending with the State Government.

Addressing a Press conference here on Saturday, UCCI president Brahma Mishra said that during the Covid-19 crisis and lockdown thereafter, the chamber distributed at least 10,000 food plates among senior citizens and the distressed, conducted vaccination camps for 1,100 people in its premises, provided oxygen cylinders and concentrators to the needy.

To boost revenue earning projects, the chamber has planned to train 500 youths at the garment factories and has sought the Union Textile Ministry's registration for the purpose, Mishra stated.



Highlighting a major milestone in policy intervention, he asserted that the long-pending notification of August 27, 2009 which had limited items as priorities' list in food processing under the MSME sector was revised on November 16, 2021 seeing the expanded industry by including a as many as 32 items.

The joint efforts of AKM Foods and UCCI fetched the result.

Apart from these, the UCCI has also taken up the cause of non-availability of iron ore to sponge iron plants in the State and insisted that a

preemptive policy of the State must not be overlooked as the sponge iron industry is the worst sufferer.

The issue of coal shortage, though for the time being mitigated, may crop up again. Similar is the issue of stainless steel sector requesting for re-imposition of countervailing duty on stainless steel flats products to affectively counter the dumping of steel in China and Indonesia, Mishra added.

Among others, UCCI vice-president Ashok Kumar Sharda, AKM group chairman Ajit Kumar Mishra and Binod Dash were present.

Execute abatement proposals, DMs told



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State Government has asked all district Collectors for proper execution of abatement proposals and correction of Record of Rights (RoR) under land acquisition proceedings.

Principal Secretary, Revenue and Disaster Management Bishnupada Sethi

directed the senior officials to get in touch with district Collectors in this regard. Additional Secretary Revenue, Avaya Kumar Nayak has written to district Collectors in this regard.

Since the RORs have not been corrected, the land continues to remain in the name of the earlier land owner and it has resulted in multiple fraudulent sales, he pointed out.

The Collectors have been requested to take necessary steps for effective implementation of the guidelines issued in the matter of abatement of land revenue and correction of RORs in respect of acquired land under land acquisition proceedings and through direct purchase.

The guidelines were issued following implementation of

the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013.

As per the guidelines, the land which is purchased directly on bilateral negotiations by project proponents/project implementing agencies for social infrastructure, infrastructure and Government projects, shall be recorded in the Government khata or in the concerned Department khata after mutation.

Since the land revenue shall be abated for all time to come, the capitalized value of land revenue i.e. 25 times the annual rent shall be collected, the guidelines say. The capitalized value of revenue shall be included in the preliminary estimate of the project. The capitalized value so collected

shall be deposited in the relevant Head of Account of Government.

Similarly, the project proponents/ project implementing agencies will have to submit the detailed land schedule of purchased lands (village—wise) along with copies of the registered sale deeds to the Land Acquisition Officer of the district. On receipt of such applications, the tehsildars shall forward all applications to the LAO of the district for preparation and approval of land abatement proposal by the Collector.

The Land Acquisition Officer shall prepare the abatement proposal in triplicate in form-38 and submit the same to the district Collector for approval.

Then, the Collector shall

pass necessary orders for abatement of rent and approve the abatement proposal.

Two copies of the approved abatement proposal shall be sent to Tauzi section of the Collector for records and another copy to the concerned Tehsildar for implementation of the order.

On receipt of two copies of the abatement statements, with the number and date of the order noted on the top and the tauzinavis will return one copy with his signature and the date noted thereon, in token of his receipt of the Statement. On receipt of formal abatement order, Tehsildar concerned will initiate a Touzi (abatement) Misc Case and pass necessary orders to give effect to the abatement of land revenue and correction of RoR.

Anganwadi supervisor held taking bribe

PNS ■ CUTTACK

The Vigilance police on Saturday caught Sulochana Arka, Anganwadi Sector Supervisor, Jayantpur Sector in Sambalpur district, red-handed while she was accepting a bribe of Rs 13,500.

Arka had demanded the money from a person to issue winter clothing and dry food items for distribution among beneficiaries at Anganwadi Centres.

Following the trap, a search was launched in the residential house of Arka at village Kuagola under the Jamankira police station in Sambalpur district.

Later, the accused was arrested and forwarded to court.

Naveen's Puri visit row: 'Projectile object', not eggs thrown at CM, say police

SAROJ KUMAR MISHRA ■ PURI

Following egg hurling at the carcade of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik during his Puri visit on Wednesday, a row has erupted over the porous security arrangement by police.

Though police have remanded three BJP activists in judicial custody in this connection, but interestingly, there is no mention of eggs in the complaint. Instead, police have cited that a projectile object was thrown at the carcade, giving a twist to a video played by many news channel, showing eggs thrown at the CM's car.

In the video telecast, a person with eggs in hand is seen targeting the CM's carcade with other fellows waving black flag when the CM is on his way back to a helipad from the Shreemanira.

But in the complaint these things are absent. Meanwhile, there are mixed reactions over the incident in Puri. While the BJD took on the BJP for targeting the CM who came for a purely religious work for its

political interest, there were many local residents who criticized the administration for imposing an undeclared curfew along Badadanda for the CM visit.

Even some opined that shops along Badadanda had never been shut earlier even during visit of the President and the PM. "The CM's visit for development of Jagannath Temple was completely apolitical. Rather than welcoming the CM, what the BJP supporters did was a criminal act for which they deserve strong punishment," told BJD State vice-president Subhashish Khuntia.

"We had never asked anybody to pelt eggs at the CM. Rather they did it on their own as it was part of a symbolic protest in the whole State against CM taking no action against Minister for State for Home Dibya Shankar Mishra who is an accused in the Mamita Meher murder case," said Puri BJP MLA Jayant Sarangi.

Anganwadi Centres now to be co-located with schools

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

For early construction of Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) for kids, the State Government has decided to construct AWC building, as far as possible, inside the premises of Government primary schools.

Women and Child Development Principal Secretary Anu Garg and School and Mass Education Department Principal Secretary Satyabrata Sahu have jointly written a letter to all Collectors in this regard on Thursday.

Presently, a large number of AWCs are still functioning in rented houses or community halls. So in order to maintain functional linkage of Anganwadi Centres and primary school, construction of AWC building of a village will be done, as far as possible, inside of the premises of Government primary school of the said village.

As per the latest reports, some bottlenecks have arisen in the functioning of AWCs within the school premises. Hence,

the two Principal Secretaries have issued detailed instructions for the purpose.

It is a Government policy that AWCs should be co-located in the Government schools as far as possible. Therefore, no NOC should be insisted upon from DEO/ BED/ SMC/ HM or any other authorities, the letter said.

The concerned BDO must encourage the construction of buildings in school premises and take construction on priority. The decision of the site selection committee under the chairpersonship of the BDO for the construction of AWCs will be final and conclusive, where BED/ his/ her representative should be present, read the letter.

Similarly, a large number of primary schools are closed down due to mergers owing to inadequate number of children. Where the school buildings are in good condition with the provision of drinking water, toilets, and kitchen sheds, they will be used as AWCs on a priority basis.

The Government has instructed to constitute a com-

mittee under the chairpersonship of Sub-Collector with BDO, Tahasildar, CDPO, BEO, and Executive Officer/ AEO of the concerned NAC/ Municipality as members and decide modalities to use primary school as AWCs.

Where Anganwadi Centre of a village is functioning in a rented house and, on the other hand, the primary school of the said village has extra classroom/ space; the AWC shall be permitted to function in the available extra classroom/ space till the construction of its own building. But no AWCs should function on the veranda of the school premises under any circumstances.

The vegetables available in the kitchen garden of the school should also be provided to the AWCs for provisioning of the same in the hot cooked meal for pre-school children in the case of co-located AWCs in the primary schools.

The Collectors have been urged to instruct the district / block-level authorities to take effective measures in this regard.

Pee Safe opens outlet in BBSR

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Pee Safe, one of India's leading hygiene and wellness brands, launched its offline store in Bhubaneswar on Thursday. The store, located at Patia, is the company's first FOFO outlet in Odisha.

The store was inaugurated by noted real estate developer Jitendra Choudhury. It has products ranging from personal hygiene and skin care. The brand is looking at expanding its presence pan India with 50 offline stores in the months ahead.

Choudhury said the brand is a frontrunner in the hygiene and wellness space and its



products are extremely relevant in the present scenario due to Covid-19.

Pee Safe CEO & Founder Vikas Bagaria said the firm has

been helping people combat hygiene-related issues with its holistic range of products ever since its inception during the pandemic.

N'pada BJD hails CM's fund for Khariar dev



PNS ■ NUAPADA

The Nuapada district unit of BJD held a Press meet at Khariar on Friday to express thank to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik for allocating Rs 2.78 crore for 33 development projects to be undertaken in Khariar NAC under the MUKTA scheme.

"We had requested the honourable CM for allocation of funds for different development projects and we are extremely glad that Rs 2.78 crore has been allocated to Khariar NAC," said party leader Lambodar Nial. "We are grateful to the CM as well as 5T Secretary VK Pandian for this allocation," said BJD district

president Manoj Mishra.

The sanctioned projects include open air gyms, mini parks, jogging tracks, playground, vending zones, roadside urinals, children's parks, roads and drains, etc. "Naveen Patnaik has a lot of love for Khariar and its people. We are proud that we have got a leader like him," said other leaders.

S-ILF starts new centre in R'kela

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Sasakawa-India Leprosy Foundation (S-ILF), has started a learning centre for children living at Leprosy Colony in Rourkela.

The new centre at Rourkela, which is the first in Odisha and the 11th in the country, was inaugurated by Tata Steel CEO & MD and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) president TV Narendran.

These learning centres provide an opportunity to enable all-round development of children living in marginalised



leprosy colonies with an emphasis on both curricular and extracurricular activities including sports and hobbies.

S-ILF chairman Tarun Das recalled the major milestones in the foundation's 15 years' journey and newer initiatives such as decentralisation of offices.

IIT BBS joins Constitution Day



Students, faculty members, officials take pledge

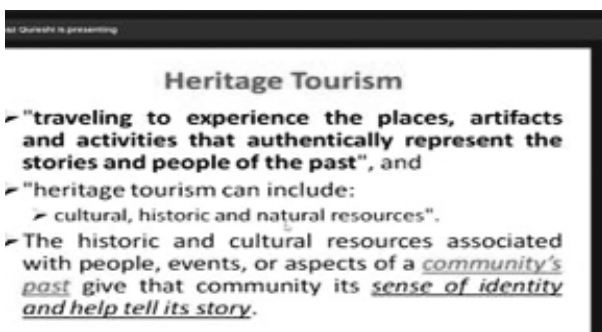
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bhubaneswar joined the celebration of the Constitution Day organised by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, New Delhi online to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India as per the directives of the Union Ministry of Education.

The students, faculty members and staff listened to the addresses by the President, Vice-President, Prime Minister, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Speaker of Lok Sabha. They joined a pledge administered by the President of India.

IIT Bhubaneswar Director, Prof RV Raja Kumar presided and offered floral tributes to Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar, the Chief Architect of the Indian Constitution. He said, "It is very inspiring to join the event. The faculty, staff and students at IIT Bhubaneswar will surely strive to uphold the core values of Constitution in letter and spirit."

'Boost regional heritage, sustainable tourism practices'



KRUSHNA CHANDRA PANDA ■ BRAHMAPUR

To commemorate the celebrations of World Heritage Week-2021, the PG Department of Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Management, highlighted the importance of the event, while Assistant Professor of the Department Kalpana Behara introduced the guest speaker.

Dr Qureshi in his address explained the significance of heritage tourism and the criterion required for development of heritage tourism in India as well as in Odisha.

He laid thrust on the promotion of regional heritage while laying emphasis on sustainable tourism practices and explained the importance of cross-cultural understanding as well as the heritage in the development of tourism.

Dr Qureshi expressed his willingness to undertake projects in collaboration between Berhampur University and Kashmir University. The deliberations in the webinar was followed by a question-and-answer session.

In his opening remarks, Dr Iqbal Ahmad Bhat, the Coordinator of the PG Department of Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Management, highlighted the importance of the event, while Assistant Professor of the Department Kalpana Behara introduced the guest speaker.

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Tripartite meet: JSW earmarks ₹196 cr for project periphery dev



PNS ■ PARADIP ■ JAGATSINGHPUR

The JSW for its proposed steel plant near here conducted a series of tripartite discussions at the district and GP levels by mobilising project-affected villagers, district administration and JSW senior officials. The objective was for eliciting public opinion.

The company has earmarked Rs 196 crore for periphery development and to engage 1,000 local youths.

The first village-level meeting was held at Govindpur on Friday amid discernible pro-industry support among villagers and other stakeholders.

Earlier, stakeholders' meeting was held at Gadakujang on November 16 followed by another at Nuagaon on November 17.

As many as 3,500 people participated in these meetings. Among the concerns of people came out during discussions alternative livelihood, employment, health, education intervention, environment and water issues. A roadmap to initiate livelihood engagement for people at the project site was announced by JSW.

The district administration team was led by the Collector Parul Patawari. Among the participants were Water Resources Minister Raghunandan Das.

Jagatsinghpur SP Akhileswar Singh was also present.

Though the Friday meeting overall showed a pro-industry atmosphere among the villagers, they urged the district administration and the JSW to consider their 11-point charter of demands.

The demands of the villagers were included as peripheral development of the area, job guarantee for displaced families, adequate compensation for land givers both private and government occupants, and inevitability for the project initiation.

Minister Das shared the concerns of the villagers and assured that the authorities would address them.

S'garh ASHA features in Forbes India W-Power list

MALAY RAY ■ SUNDARGARH

Matilda Kullu, a woman from Sundargarh district, who is a Covid Warrior and one among the strong women personalities in the country, has featured in the Forbes India W-Power 2021 list.

She got third place behind Aparna Purohit, Head of Originals, Amazon Prime Video India and Arundhati Bhattacharya, Chairperson and CEO, Salesforces India. Congratulations have poured to Matilda from different quarters, for her remarkable feat.

Kullu(45) has been working as an Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) in Gargadahal village in Baragaon of Sundargarh district for the last 15 years. She



has been instrumental in bringing the healthcare system closer to the people.

When Kullu had joined as an ASHA, the villagers neither visited a doctor nor a hospital if they fell sick—they rather performed black magic to treat themselves.

It took years for Kullu to

educate the villagers to stop this and take appropriate medical routes.

That's not all, she even had to bear the brunt of casteism and untouchability during door-to-door visits since Kullu belongs to a Scheduled Tribe. She is also deputy general secretary of



Nikhil Odisha Asha Karmi Sangha.

"It was really bad some years ago, things are much better now. People have become more understanding and less superstitious. The old generation still practices untouchability but that doesn't bother me anymore," said

Kullu.

She single-handedly took care of around 964 people in the village at a meager remuneration of Rs 4,500 per month.

Apart from home visits, providing medicines, and helping expecting mothers with deliveries, Kullu's other regular tasks include antenatal/postnatal check-ups, immunisation, sanitisation, promoting hygiene, administering polio and other vaccines, conducting surveys, and so on.

Significantly, Forbes India had asked All India Asha Federation General Secretary B Bijaylaxmi to give a name of an ASHA worker who is inspiration for other women. B Bijaylaxmi had recommended the name and details of work of Kullu to Forbes India.

Delhi HC nixes CRPF DG's plea on ₹20K fine waiver

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has rejected CRPF DG Kuldiep Singh's plea for waiver of the ₹20,000 fine imposed on him in a contempt plea.

Earlier this week, Justice Najmi Waziri in an order said, "This application seeks waiver of the cost imposed vide order dated 29.10.2021. Since no ground is made out, the application is dismissed."

"An order is stated to have been passed on the petitioner's representation and the same has been communicated to him. However, costs of ₹20,000 has not been paid in terms of the previous order. Let the same be paid within two weeks. List for compliance on 21.12.2021," reads the latest order.

The contempt plea was filed by a serving deputy commandant for non-compliance of the court order dated June 9 on a writ petition filed by a group serving CRPF officers aggrieved by the discriminatory provisions and differential policy for promotion for medical officers and combatant officers.

Through an order on October 29, the Delhi High Court had slapped a fine of Rs 20,000 on CRPF Director General Kuldiep Singh in response to a contempt petition.

Through its order in June, the court had directed the CRPF chief to address the grievances of the combatant officers within 12 weeks.

The petitioners were aggrieved with the anomalies in the promotional entitlement of the medical cadre officers of the paramilitary who were getting a faster promotion than the combatant officers.



"Since the petitioner had to approach this court on account of non-compliance of the aforesaid order, costs of ₹20,000 is imposed upon the respondent (CRPF DG) to be paid to the petitioner on or before the next date," the court had said in its October order.

The petitioner Ranjeet Kumar Singh, a combatant in the rank of Deputy Commandant, and other serving officers had filed a contempt petition against CRPF Chief and had sought exemplary costs to be imposed on him on account of non-compliance of the court order.

The court posted the matter of the contempt petition after four weeks on November 24 and sought a compliance affidavit to be submitted by CRPF, Director General. However, the fine was not deposited as ordered by the court.

A division bench of the court had on June 9 directed the petitioner's representation dated March 28, 2020 to be disposed-off by the respondent (CRPF DG) within 12 weeks and failure of compliance led to the contempt plea..

"However, there is not even a whisper of compliance of the said order, thereby constraining the petitioner to

approach this court by way of instant contempt petition for which he has expended monies," the court had noted in its order while slapping the fine on the CRPF, DG.

Through the writ petition filed last year, the petitioner had sought quashing of a CRPF order dated June 10, 2010 and signal (internal message) dated February 21, 2019 relating to assignment of rank and badge to Medical Officers of CRPF in accordance with CRPF (Medical Officers Cadre) Rules.

But the CRPF, through its order in June 2010 and a Signal (internal communication platform of CRPF) message in February 2019 diluted the position postulated by the Ministry and made provisions to grant promotion to the medical officers without any link to the cadre officers getting a promotion.

After being slapped a fine of ₹20,000 by the Delhi High Court for failing to pass a reasoned order on discriminatory promotion policy of medical and cadre officers, CRPF DG Kuldiep Singh had subsequently trashed the petitioner's February 2020 plea to remedy the differential promotion of the two cadres in grant of badge and uniform.

Factionalism led to HP poll debacle: BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Reviewing the Himachal Pradesh bypoll debacle where it lost one Lok Sabha and three Assembly seats, the BJP has blamed wrong choice of candidates selection and "internal resentment" as the main causes for the Congress making a stunning comeback in the State.

The State BJP that reviewed the reasons of poll defeats this week from November 24 to November 26 also listed factionalism for the party's defeats in all four byelections held on October 30.

BJP president J P Nadra who hails from the State also addressed the BJP unit after the latter carried-out an extensive postmortem of the poll reverses.

The BJP lost the four Himachal seats that held bypolls — the Mandi parliamentary seat, and the Assembly constituencies of Arki, Fatehpur and Jubbals-Kotkhair.

The reports prepared by the State BJP said the party failed to gauge the sympathy for Pratibha Singh, the Congress candidate for the Mandi seat and widow of former Chief Minister Virbhadr Singh. Selection of candidates for assembly bypoll "without ascertaining their local base" and internal resentment were assessed to be the factors weakening BJP's challenge to the Congress.

Besides pocketing the prestigious Mandi Lok Sabha seat, the Congress also bagged assembly seats of Arki, Jubbals-Kotkhair and Fatehpur in the state and managed to resurrect itself where the BJP held its sway for over one decade.

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur, BJP state president Suresh Kashyap, former chief minister Prem Kumar Dhumal, and state-in-charge Avinash Rai Khanna participated in the review meeting.

BJP is also in the process of reviewing party's performance in the byelections in the states like West Bengal and Rajasthan where it did not perform to the expectations and is likely to affect major changes in these state units in coming month.

The BJP lost the two bypolls in Rajasthan and ran third and fourth in the Dhariawad and Vallabh Nagar seats in Rajasthan.

The feud of former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje's differences with state unit president Satish Punia seem to have played a negative factor in the bypoll debacle that went on to strengthen hands of a 'shaky' Congress Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot facing 'dissidence' from within his own party.

In West Bengal it Lost all four assembly seats including the one it held in the North Bengal

The remarkable comeback of the Congress in Himachal Pradesh had put question mark on the leadership of the Chief Minister Thakur who put blame on the "price rise" for the defeat instead of 'owning-up' the bypoll reverses in the state.

According to sources, Thakur would be allowed to make suitable changes in the party structure in the state and "continues" to enjoy the confidence of the central leadership.

Assembly polls are due in Himachal Pradesh in November, next year.



Chief Minister of Nagaland Neiphiu Rio, Minister of State for Tourism & Defence, Ajay Bhatt and MLA & Advisor Tourism, Government of Nagaland H Khehovi Yephuthomi jointly inaugurated the three-day long 9th International Tourism Mart for the North East Region at Kohima, Nagaland on Saturday. Union Secretary, Tourism, Arvind Singh, ADG Tourism, Rupinder Brar and other dignitaries of Central Government and North Eastern States were also present on the occasion

Pioneer photo

CBI arrests ASI for accepting ₹20K bribe



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested an Assistant Sub Inspector, Police Station Bishnah, Jammu (Jammu and Kashmir) for demanding and accepting a bribe of ₹20,000 from the complainant who had approached the SHO for registering a case against certain persons who were trying to encroach and sell his land.

A case was registered on a complaint against the accused ASI Sham Lal on the allegations

of demanding a bribe.

It was alleged that in September, 2020, the complainant had submitted a complaint to SHO, Bishnah for registration of an FIR against certain persons who were trying to encroach and sell his land, the CBI said in a statement.

It was further alleged that the said ASI initially threatened and pressured the complainant to compromise with the encroachers and later, demanded a bribe of ₹50,000 for taking action on the complaint and for

clearing all disputes related to the complainant's land, it said.

Later, the bribe amount was allegedly negotiated at ₹20,000.

The CBI laid a trap and caught the accused red-handed while demanding and accepting negotiated bribe money of ₹20,000 from the complainant.

Searches were conducted at the premises of the accused at Jammu.

The accused is being produced before the Court of Special Judge, CBI Cases, Jammu.

Rahul terms new Covid-19 variant as 'serious threat'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi on Saturday termed the new Covid-19 variant as a "serious threat" and said bad vaccination figures can't be hidden for long.

"New variant is a serious threat. High time the Government of India gets serious about providing vaccine security to our countrymen. Bad vaccination figures can't be hidden for long behind one man's photo," the Congress leader said in a tweet.

Rahul had on both the occasion, first wave and pre second wave claimed to have alerted the government to take preventive and precautionary measures against the covid. His party also on several occasions remarked that Rahul was the first one to have alerted the government on the pandemic.

According to the Ministry of Health and Family welfare, till now, 121.06 crore vaccine doses have been administered so far under Nationwide Vaccination Drive.



Amid rising concern about a new COVID-19 variant 'Omicron' first detected in South Africa, India has also added several countries to the list from where travellers would need to follow additional measures on arrival in India, including post-arrival testing for infection.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare adds Hong Kong and Israel to the list of countries from where travellers would need to follow additional measures on arrival in India, including post-arrival testing considering the detection of the new COVID-19 variant 'Omicron' in South Africa.

This variant is reported to have a significantly high number of mutations, and thus, has serious public health implications for the country, in view of recently relaxed visa restrictions and opening up of international travel.

Robust regulatory mechanism and draft 'agreement for sale' prescribed under provisions of RERA: Centre to SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has told the Supreme Court that there is a robust regulatory mechanism and draft 'agreement for sale' has already been prescribed under the provisions of RERA, which seeks to balance the rights and interest of home buyers and promoters in an accountable and transparent manner.

The Centre has filed an affidavit in the top court on a plea seeking direction to to frame model pacts for builders and agent buyers to protect customers and bring in transparency in the realty sector in line with the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) Act, 2016.

"There is a robust regulatory mechanism and a draft 'agreement for sale' has already been prescribed under the provisions of RERA, which seeks to balance the rights and interest of home buyers and promoters in an accountable and transparent manner," it said.

It said that according to section 84 of RERA, the appropriate government that is state government save in the instances involving its application in the territory of union territories has to notify rules for carrying out the provisions of this Act. The union government said that it has shared the



draft 'agreement for sale' in 2016 itself after the enactment of RERA with all the states and union territories and currently, all the states and union territories have notified rules under RERA except Nagaland with which the Centre is in discussion.

"It must be brought before the consideration of this court that prior to 2014 Real Estate Sector was largely unregulated. Under the regulatory regime of RERA, the ongoing projects which have not received the completion certificate; need to get registered under RERA," it said, adding that RERA ensures transparency, accountability, and financial discipline in the real estate sector.

The affidavit said that RERA mandates for registration of projects before adver-

tising, marketing, booking, selling and the law ensures the timely delivery of real estate projects and the entire fund flow is also subject to strict monitoring by the regulator to avoid diversion of funds, which will also secure the interest of home buyers.

"The RERA seeks to address vital issues of fair transactions, timely delivery, and quality construction through speedy adjudication of disputes, thus empowering the home buyers," it said.

The Centre said that under the provision of RERA, if the developer fails to complete the project as per terms of agreement for sale, a home buyer can either seek a refund of paid amount along with interest or ask for interest for every month of delay, till the handing over of the possession.

Kharge blames Centre for surrendering Indian territory to China

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge accused the Government on Saturday of surrendering Indian territory to China and said the BJP has transformed itself into the "Beijing Janata Party".

In Arunachal Pradesh, BJP government lets China to build villages. In Uttar Pradesh, BJP government showcases Chinese airport as its own. In Ladakh, government surrenders and cedes our territory to Chinese. BJP has transformed into Beijing

Janata Party," Kharge said. The Congress has been criticising the government over Chinese incursions in Ladakh and Uttarakhand and now in Arunachal Pradesh.

The opposition party has also been demanding that Prime Minister Narendra Modi take action against China and reclaim Indian territory.

A meeting of parliamentary party group chaired by Party president Sonia Gandhi also decided to corner the government on this Chinese loopholes during the Winter Session beginning Monday.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Modi Government constituted a five-member committee to ensure timely completion of various projects executed under the Central Vista Redevelopment Plan. The five-member committee will be headed by former finance secretary Ratan P Watal. Other members of the panel are Deputy CAG P.K. Tiwari, former director of L&T Shailendar Roy and IIT Delhi professor Mausam and the ministry's joint secretary.

The terms of reference of committee stated that the

panel will ensure continuous monitoring of the pace of execution of various projects of Central Vista with respect to targeted milestones to ensure their timely completion. The committee has been formed for next two years or next order (whatever is earlier) by the government.

The redevelopment of the Central Vista, the nation's power corridor, envisages a new parliament building, a common central secretariat, revamping of the 3-km-long Rajpath from the Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate, new office and resi-

dence of the prime minister, and a new vice-president enclave. The ministry said that the five-member committee will meet regularly and undertake site inspections for an independent review.

It will submit its reports and recommendations to the HUA ministry on a regular basis. Apart from this, it will also ensure that project is executed according to the approved scope of work and prescribed standards and specifications.

Earlier this month, infrastructure firm Kamladitya



Construction Pvt Ltd was awarded the contract for constructing the vice-president enclave

In October, Larsen & Toubro Limited had won the tender work for the con-

struction and maintenance of the first three buildings of the Common Central Secretariat under the Central Vista redevelopment project. Tata Projects Limited is constructing a new parlia-

ment building while Shapoorji Pallonji and Company Limited is executing the redevelopment work of the Central Vista Avenue from the Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate.

South Africa: Punished for detecting Omicron variant

AFP ■ JOHANNESBURG

South Africa complained on Saturday that it is being “punished” for detecting a new Covid-19 variant Omicron which the World Health Organization has termed a “variant of concern” and is more transmissible than the dominant Delta strain.

The decision by a number of countries around the world to ban flights from southern Africa following the discovery of the variant “is akin to punishing South Africa for its advanced genomic sequencing and the ability to detect new variants quicker,” the foreign affairs ministry said in a statement.

“Excellent science should be applauded and not punished,” it said.

The ministry pointed out that new variants had been discovered in other parts of the world.

“Each of those cases have had no recent links with Southern Africa, but the reaction to those countries is starkly different to cases in Southern Africa,” it said.

Israel and Belgium announced after South Africa that they also had detected cases of Omicron.

Government insisted that South Africa’s “capacity to test and its ramped-up vaccination



A woman wearing a face mask to curb the spread of Covid-19 holds a child on her back on a crowded sidewalk in Pretoria, South Africa on Saturday. As the world grapples with the emergence of the new variant of COVID-19, scientists in South Africa — where omicron was first identified — are scrambling to combat its spread across the country

The decision by a number of countries around the world to ban flights from southern Africa following the discovery of the variant “is akin to punishing South Africa for its advanced genomic sequencing

programme, backed up by a world-class scientific community should give our global partners the comfort that we

are doing as well as they are in managing the pandemic”.

With more than 2.95 mil-

lion cases and 89,783 deaths, South Africa is the worst-hit country in Africa by the pandemic.

Travel bans imposed on SA ‘draconian’, ‘misdirected’: Min

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

The travel bans imposed on South Africa by a growing number of countries due to the new potentially highly-transmissible variant of Covid-19 in this country is “draconian” and “misdirected”, Health Minister Joe Phaahla has said.

The new Covid-19 variant B.1.1.529, first detected in South Africa this week, was on Friday designated as a “Variant of Concern” by the World Health Organisation (WHO), which named it “Omicron”.

“We feel that it’s a wrong

approach. It is misdirected and it goes against the norms as advised by the WHO. We just feel that some of the leaderships of (these) countries are finding scapegoats to deal with what is a worldwide problem,” Phaahla said at a news briefing late Friday evening.

A “variant of concern” is the WHO’s top category of worrying Covid-19 variants. It was first reported to the WHO from South Africa on November 24, and has also been identified in Botswana, Belgium, Hong Kong and Israel.

Japan PM to step up defence amid China, N Korea threats

AP ■ TOKYO

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, at his first troop review Saturday, renewed his pledge to consider “all options,” including acquiring enemy base strike capability, and vowed to create a stronger Self-Defence Force to protect the country amid growing threats from China and North Korea.

Kishida said the security situation around Japan is rapidly changing and that “the reality is severer than ever,” with North Korea continuing to test-fire ballistic missiles while advancing its capability, and China pursuing a military buildup and increasingly assertive activity in the region.

“I will consider all options, including possessing so-called enemy base strike capability, to



Japanese PM Fumio Kishida

pursue strengthening of defense power that is necessary,” Kishida said in an address to hundreds of Ground Self-Defense Force members in olive-colored helmets and uniforms.

Kishida, who took office in October, served as top com-

mander for the first time at Saturday’s Self-Defense Force troop review held at the main army base Camp Asaka, north of Tokyo. About 800 troops gathered for the inspection, according to the Defense Ministry.

“The security environment surrounding Japan has been rapidly changing at an unprecedented speed. Things that used to happen only in science-fiction novels are today’s reality,” Kishida said. He said his government will lead “calm and realistic” discussions to determine what is needed to protect people’s lives and gain their understanding.

The possibility of possessing so-called enemy base strike capability has been a divisive issue because opponents say it violates Japan’s war-renouncing Constitution.

Cash-strapped Pak to get \$3 bn from Saudi

To park money in central bank

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Cash-strapped Pakistan will soon get USD 3 billion as loan from Saudi Arabia as the Cabinet led by Prime Minister Imran Khan has approved an agreement to keep the amount in the country’s central bank, media reports said on Saturday.

The Saudi government had promised to maintain a reserve of \$3 billion at the State Bank of Pakistan, *Geo News* reported.

According to the agreement, the aid will remain in the SBP’s deposit account for a year.

“The SBP has finalised all arrangements and now everything is in place and the amount of the agreed deposit will be received within the next couple of days,” official sources told *The News*.

The federal Cabinet approved the agreement to keep the USD 3 billion aid from Saudi Arabia in the SBP, the reports quoted an official document as saying. The Cabinet approved the State Bank’s retention of \$3 billion from the Saudi Development Fund.

Solomon Islands police find 3 bodies after violent protests

AP ■ CANBERRA

Solomon Islands police found three bodies in a burned-out building and arrested more than 100 people in this week’s violence sparked by concerns about the Pacific nation’s increasing links with China.

Australian media reported the bodies were recovered late Friday after riots and protests subsided. No other details were given. Authorities imposed a curfew in the capital Honiara, after a 36-hour lockdown ordered by the embattled Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare ended Friday.

SA President advances crucial Covid meeting

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has advanced an urgent meeting with the National Coronavirus Command Council (NCCC) to Saturday, amid growing global concern about the potentially more contagious new Omicron variant, which was first detected in the country.

The meeting was originally scheduled for Sunday.

The meeting comes as a growing number of European countries are following UK’s lead in banning travel to and from South Africa and neighbouring countries of Namibia, Zimbabwe and Botswana, as well as Lesotho and Eswatini (formerly Swaziland), both of which are landlocked within South Africa.

The latest to impose the ban are Mauritius, the US, Israel, Sri Lanka and the Netherlands.

Speculation is rife that Ramaphosa will announce a stricter lockdown and other measures to curb the spread of the new variant.

The new Covid-19 variant B.1.1.529, first detected in South Africa this week, was on Friday designated as a “Variant of Concern” by the World Health Organisation (WHO), which named it “Omicron”.

A “variant of concern” is the WHO’s top category of worrying Covid-19 variants.

UK confirms first 2 cases of Omicron

PTI ■ LONDON

The UK on Saturday detected two cases of the new Covid-19 variant, Omicron, according to health secretary Sajid Javid as he added four more African countries to Britain’s travel red list.

The patients were detected in Chelmsford and Nottingham, Javid was quoted as saying by the BBC.

He said that the cases are linked and the two people are self-isolating alongside their households while further tests and contact tracing takes place.

“We have been made aware by @UKHSA of two UK cases of the Omicron variant. The two cases are linked and there is a connection with travel to southern Africa. These individuals are self-isolating with their households while further testing and contact tracing is underway,” Javid said on Twitter.

“As a precaution we are rolling out additional targeted testing in the affected areas - Nottingham and Chelmsford - and sequencing all positive cases. This is a fast-moving situation and we are taking decisive steps to protect public health,” he said in another tweet.

The new variant has also been identified in South Africa, Botswana, Belgium, Hong Kong and Israel.

On Friday, the UK placed



South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho and Eswatini on the list.

In his announcement on Saturday, health secretary Javid said Angola, Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia would be added to that list.

“We’ve always been very

clear that we won’t hesitate to take further action if that is what is required.

“Today I can announce one thing that we are doing immediately is carrying out targeted testing and sequencing of positive cases in the two areas that are affected,” he said.

“We are also adding Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Angola to the travel red list — effective from 4am Sunday. If you have returned from there in the last 10 days you must isolate and get PCR tests. And if you are eligible for your booster jab — now is the time to get it,” Javid tweeted.

Top UK scientist says Omicron ‘not a disaster’, vax likely to protect

PTI ■ LONDON

The new potentially highly-transmissible variant of Covid-19, named Omicron by the WHO, is not a disaster as vaccines are still likely to protect against the serious disease from it, a UK scientist, who advises the government, said on Saturday.

Professor Calum Semple, a microbiologist from the UK government’s Scientific Advisory Group for

Emergencies (SAGE), struck a note of caution on the worldwide headlines around the new B.1.1.529 variant detected in South Africa.

The UK imposed travel restrictions on six southern African countries — South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Eswatini, Zimbabwe and Namibia — as health authorities said that they are investigating the “most significant variant” which could be potentially more infectious and vaccine-resistant.

GLOBE TROTTER

2 DEAD AS POWERFUL STORM BATTERS UK
London: Two people were killed, thousands of homes cut off from power and drivers stuck on freezing roads overnight as a powerful storm hit the northern UK, authorities said Saturday. One woman tweeted a video of her flight from Paris struggling to land in Manchester, northwest England, in high winds late Friday. Passengers’ nervous laughter gave way to screams and sobs before the pilot aborted the landing, succeeding on a second attempt.

DUTCH GOVT APOLOGIZES FOR TRANSGENDER LAW
The Hague: The Dutch Government made a public apology on Saturday for a now discredited and scrapped law that required transgender people to undergo surgery and sterilisation if they wanted to change their gender on their birth certificate. “Nobody should have experienced what you have experienced. I am truly sorry that it happened,” said Dutch Minister for Education, Culture and Science Ingrid van Engelshoven in an emotional speech at a ceremony in the historic Knights Hall in the Dutch parliamentary complex.

MUSICAL THEATRE MASTER STEPHEN DIES
New York: Stephen Sondheim, the songwriter who reshaped the American musical theatre in the second half of the 20th century with his intelligent, intricately rhymed lyrics, his use of evocative melodies and his willingness to tackle unusual subjects, has died. He was 91. Sondheim’s death was announced by Rick Miramontez, president of DKC/O&M. Sondheim’s Texas-based attorney, Rick Pappas, told *The New York Times* the composer died Friday at his home in Roxbury, Connecticut.

ALGERIANS HOLD LOCAL ELECTIONS AMID ANGER
Algiers: Algerians are voting Saturday to elect mayors and regional leaders amid widespread worry and frustration over rising prices for basic goods, housing and health care. The Government is hoping the election confirms support for President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, who won election after his predecessor was ousted in 2019 by protests backed by the army chief.

MACAO DETAINS SUNCITY BOSS OVER GAMBLING
Beijing: Macao police on Saturday detained the head of Macao’s biggest junket organiser and others after Chinese authorities issued an arrest warrant for them over accusations that they ran an illegal cross-border gambling syndicate. The arrests in the gambling enclave came after prosecutors in Wenzhou, in the eastern province of Zhejiang,



Travellers queue at a check-in counter at OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg after several countries banned flights from South Africa

evidence that the variant is already spreading. Cases have been reported in travellers in Belgium, Israel and Hong Kong, and Germany also has a

probable case. Dutch authorities are checking for the new variant after 61 passengers on two flights from South Africa tested positive for Covid-19.

Afghanistan's key Taliban leaders studied at Pak madrassa: Report

Peshawar: Darul Uloom Haqqania madrassa, one of Pakistan’s largest and oldest seminaries and dubbed as a ‘university of jihad’ by its critics for helping sow violence across the region for decades, has educated more Taliban leaders than any school in the world and its alumni now hold key positions in Afghanistan, according to a media report.

The seminary in Pakistan’s restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province has had an outsize effect in Afghanistan. The seminary’s alumni founded the Taliban movement and ruled Afghanistan in the 1990s.

The school has argued that the Taliban should be given the chance to show they have moved beyond their bloody ways since they first ruled Afghanistan two decades ago, *The New York Times* reported on Friday. **PTI**

Doctor killed by Taliban for not stopping at checkpoint

Kabul: Taliban have killed a young physician in Afghanistan’s Herat province, local media reported citing sources on Friday.

According to Khaama Press, the doctor, identified as 33-year-old Amruddin Noori was killed in Herat city after he did not stop at a police security checkpoint, the victim’s family members claimed while speaking to media.

According to sources, Noori used to have a small private medical clinic had newly got married. The Taliban came to power in Afghanistan after the seizure of the capital, Kabul, on August 15, which led to the collapse of the previous government and triggered mass evacuations of foreign workers and Afghan collaborators. **ANI**

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF PSYCHIATRY KANKE, RANCHI-834006, JHARKHAND	
ADMISSION TO THE POSTGRADUATE COURSES - 2022 SESSION	
Applications are invited from eligible candidates for admission to the following postgraduate degree/diploma courses of Ranchi University commencing from May, 2022. An All India Entrance Examination will be conducted through ONLINE mode at the following cities of this Country (Mumbai, New Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Bangalore & Ranchi).	
GROUP A	
1. Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology	: 4 seats- (NO RESERVATION)
Duration	: 2 years
Qualification	: M.Phil. (Medical & Social Psychology/ Clinical Psychology) from a University recognized by the UGC
2. M.Phil. in Clinical Psychology	: 21 seats (UR-09, EWS-02, OBC-05, SC-03, ST-02) (PH-01)
Duration	: 2 years
Qualification	: M.A./M.Sc. in Psychology course from a University recognized by the UGC With minimum 55% marks for UR & EWS and 50% marks for SC, ST & OBC in aggregate.
GROUP B	
3. M.Phil. in Psychiatric Social Work	: 12 seats (UR-07, EWS-01, OBC-02, SC-01, ST-01)
Duration	: 2 years
Qualification	: Masters in Social Work course from University recognized by the UGC with minimum 55% Marks for UR & EWS and 50% marks for SC, ST and OBC in aggregate.
GROUP C	
4. Diploma in Psychiatric Nursing	: 17 seats (UR-07, EWS-02, OBC-05, SC-02, ST-01) (PH-02)
Duration	: One year
Qualification	: 'A' Grade Certificate or Diploma in General Nursing and Midwifery.
Group A & B: Selected candidates will get scholarship of Rs. 25,000/- per month. Group C: Selected candidates will get scholarship of Rs. 2500/- per month.	
The application form is to be submitted electronically ONLY on internet through CIP website: www.cipranchi.nic.in on or before December 31, 2021. Hard copy of the application form will not be entertained. Online Payment fee of Rs.1000/-** for Unreserved, EWS and Rs. 500/-** for OBC, PwD, SC and ST candidates. (**Transactional charges will be extra from the above-said fee structure via Debit Card, Credit Card, UPI Payment, Net Banking & Mobile Wallets.)Please note that the examination fee is non-refundable.	
Online form will be available on our website (www.cipranchi.nic.in) from 01.12.2021. Online Examination will be held on 20.02.2022 and interview/practical would be held in person at CIP between 8 th to 12 th March, 2022. Last date for joining the courses is May 31 st , 2022.	
Please visit www.cipranchi.nic.in for downloading the prospectus with requisite details before filling the ONLINE application form.	
Director Central Institute of Psychiatry	

Over 390 RCS-Udan air routes operational now

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

India has till date operationalised 395 air routes under the Regional Connectivity Scheme 'Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik' or RCS-Udan.

Under the scheme, which was launched in 2016, airlines are provided with a 'Viability Gap Funding' to keep fares affordable and accessible.

"Till date, 395 routes and 63 airports, including six heliports and two water aerodromes, have been operationalised under the UDAN scheme," the Ministry of Civil Aviation said in a statement on Saturday.

The statement came a day after domestic flight operations at the newly-inaugurated Kushinagar Airport in Uttar Pradesh commenced with the first flight operating between Delhi and Kushinagar under RCS-UDAN.

"The commencement of the flight operations on this route is in line with the commitment and perseverance of



the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Airports Authority of India (AAI) to enable the country with better air connectivity under the UDAN scheme," the statement said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had inaugurated the Kushinagar International Airport on October 20, 2021.

Kushinagar is an international Buddhist pilgrimage centre.

"The operationalisation of the Kushinagar airport will connect this region directly to

national and global visitors and pilgrims," the statement said.

The Airports Authority of India has developed the Kushinagar Airport with a new terminal building at an estimated cost of Rs 260 crore in association with the Government of Uttar Pradesh.

The new terminal is equipped to handle 300 passengers during peak hours. SpiceJet was awarded the Kushinagar-Delhi route under the RCS-UDAN 4.0.

Strong demand to improve textile sector's YoY sales volumes in FY22

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Strong domestic as well as export demand will improve year-on-year (YoY) sales volumes of overall textile sector in FY22, said India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra).

According to the agency, domestic as well as export demand will sustain during the rest of FY22.

Besides, it has maintained the rating outlook of the sector at 'Stable' for the reminder of FY22, expecting a sustained improvement in the sector players' profitability and the continued deleveraging of their balance sheets.

"The strong operating cash flows will lead to an improvement in their credit metrics, despite the likely increase in the working capital requirement on the back of the higher sales volumes and increased capital expenditure."

"The benefits of integrated business operations, healthy balance sheet liquidity and operating efficiencies over FY22 have already been factored into the ratings."

As per the agency, the domestic demand improved



over '2HFY21' before declining marginally during '1QFY22', due to the closure of malls and retail spaces in cities.

"The demand is likely to improve from '2HFY22' with the easing of restrictions but remain vulnerable to any further restriction.

Also, the demand from spinning mills seems to be recovering ahead of festivities in India."

"During '1QFY22', players witnessed a rise in volumes YoY, although it declined marginally QoQ."

Accordingly, segments such as cotton yarn and fabrics witnessed a higher YoY demand from downstream

players during '1HFY22'.

"The domestic demand for home textile has sustained, whereas that for woven fabric and apparels is likely to improve with the opening up of retail shops and malls from '2HFY22'."

Furthermore, the agency expects the export demand to improve moderately in 2HFY22 on the back of accelerated vaccination and 'China Plus One' sourcing strategy.

"The demand is likely to improve further FY23 onwards. Furthermore, the ongoing impact of the sourcing restriction of China (Xinjiang) cotton, could play an important role in boosting the demand."

India shown as preferred destination partner for textiles at Dubai Expo

PTI ■ DUBAI

An Indian delegation at the Expo 2020 Dubai on Saturday described India as the preferred destination partner for textiles and clothing, and emphasised on the need for exporters to use the UAE as the gateway to Africa and Europe.

The delegation from India's textile industry gathered here for a networking session - Deepening Engagement with UAE and the World - to highlight the opportunities in the sector.

It described India as the preferred destination partner for textiles and clothing and also emphasised on the need for Indian exporters to use the UAE as the gateway of exports to Africa and Europe.

The Ministry of Textiles officials also highlighted the Government's 'Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for textiles, which aims to boost the production of Man-Made Fibre (MMF) fabric, MMF apparel and technical textiles. Several export promotion council officials were

present on the occasion.

Chandrasekhkar Bhatia, Chairman of the Global Business Federation, said the textile industry can help India achieve its target of becoming a 5 trillion economy.

"I request all stakeholders in India's textile industry here in the UAE and back home to play their role. With collaborations such as these, the target can definitely be achieved," Bhatia said.

India's Consul General in Dubai Dr Aman Puri said that India has traditional strengths in the textile sector and there are huge opportunities for it to grow.

"Since Expo 2020 is a six-month event, we would like to see over its remaining four months is more entrepreneurs, innovators, start-ups and women entrepreneurs in this sector to come and showcase their work," he said.

Dr Puri also said that Indian textile sector entrepreneurs should look at Dubai as a gateway for their expansion in the Middle East and North Africa region and beyond.

EDMC proposes hike in property tax

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC) in its budget on Friday proposed to increase property tax on residential and commercial prop-

erties and suggested dropping taxation on cycle rickshaws, milch animals and those which pull vehicles.

EDMC Commissioner Vikas Anand presented the revised budget estimates for the

financial year 2021-22 and budget estimates for 2022-23 fiscal at the corporation headquarters in Patparganj.

The decision to not levy taxes on owners of milch animals like cows, buffaloes, and those which pull vehicles like horses, has been taken as, "it is not appropriate with changing times," a senior official said.

These taxes were imposed during the British rule, he said. Also, a professional tax, education cess and betterment

tax have been proposed in the budget, the official said.

Residential, commercial and non-residential plots are currently divided into multiple categories in the city, there are no residential properties in the A-B category, officials said.

The EDMC budget has proposed an increase in property tax for the residential category with 13 per cent for the C-E category and 10 per cent for the F-H category.



Shippers prepare for another pandemic crush of holiday gifts

AP ■ PORTLAND

The last holiday season was far from the most wonderful time of the year for the U.S. Postal Service: Sick and quarantined workers, a flood of packages from shoppers loathe to set foot in stores and a last-minute dump of packages from overwhelmed private shippers.

Postal workers who recall packages and letters piled up in distribution hubs are better prepared this time as they gear up for another pandemic crunch. But low product inventories, and port and supply chain disruptions are creating new uncertainty about getting gifts delivered.

Already, workers are seeing a surge in holiday packages that began several weeks ago.

"A lot of the workers are saying, Oh no. Here we go again," said



Scott Adams, local president of the American Postal Workers Union in Portland.

The U.S. Postal Service and private shippers UPS and FedEx are bolstering their hiring — bringing in about 230,000 temporary workers — and taking other steps to ensure they don't become overwhelmed by packages.

Nearly 3.4 billion parcels

are expected to crisscross the country this holiday season, representing an estimated increase of about 400 million compared to last year, said Satish Jindal, from Pennsylvania-based

ShipMatrix, which analyzes shipping package data.

When cards and letters are included, the U.S. Postal Service said it'll be delivering

more than 12 billion items.

"The pandemic is still here. The supply chain is a challenge that's going to impact how people shop and how products move," said Mark Diamondstein, president of the American Postal Workers Union, which represents more than 200,000 postal workers.

Despite the precarious situation, the Postal Service, UPS and FedEx are in better shape to handle the peak volume, and several trends could work in their favor, Jindal said.

More people are shopping in stores compared to last year, and people have been placing online orders earlier because they're keenly aware of supply chain problems, Jindal said. Also, with workers returning to offices, there are fewer office supply shipments being made to homes, he said.

**UJVN LTD.**
(An Uttarakhand Govt. Enterprise)
H.O. "UJJAWAL" Maharani Bagh, G.M.S. Road Dehradun 248006
Telephone: 0135 - 2763808, Fax 0135-2763508
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866 Website: www.ujvnl.com

RO.No. 904 **Tender Notice** Dated-27.11.2021

The office of Executive Engineer (Maintenance), Maneri Bhali Stage-II, Chinyalisaur (Uttarkashi) invites sealed tenders from interested parties. Brief summary of tenders is given below:
Tender No: NIT- 67/EE(M)/MB-II/21-22
Name of work: Aluminium painting work at Dharasu power House.
Estimated cost: Rs. 782048/- Only (Taxes extra)
Date of availability of bid document on website: - 29.11.2021
Last date for submission of tender:- 20.12.2021 up to 11:00 Hrs.
For fuller & further details, kindly visit our website. The tender documents can be downloaded from the Nigam's website"
www.ujvnl.com"

Executive Engineer
(Maintenance)

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

**UJVN LIMITED**
(An Uttarakhand Govt. Enterprise)
H. O. "UJJAWAL" MAHARANI BAGH, GMS ROAD, DEHRADUN - 248006, CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866
Tele.: 0135-2763508, 2763808, Fax: 0135-2763507, website: www.ujvnl.com

No. 907 **e-Tender Notice** Date : 27.11.2021

Office of the Executive Engineer (E&M) SHP, UJVN Ltd., Guptkashi, invites online bids on from interested parties. Brief summary of tender is given below:
Tender No. NIT.No.02/EE(E&M-SHP)/Kalganga-I/2021-22
Name of Work- Design, Supply, Installation and Commissioning for modification of existing cooling water system to close loop cooling water system for Kalganga-I SHP (2x2 MW+15% COL),located in Tehsil Ukhimath, District- Rudraprayag, Uttarakhand
Estimated Cost- ₹ 23,57,876.00 (Including GST)
Date of availability of bid document on web site- 25.11.2021 at 16:00 Hrs
Last date for submission of bids on website- 20.12.2021 up to 17.00 Hrs.
For full & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal "**https://uktenders.gov.in"**

Executive Engineer (E&M)(SHP)

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General Public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of a male Namely Unknown S/o Unknown, R/o Unknown Age: 40 years, Height: 5'7", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Long, Built: Normal, Wearing: Blue coloured Printed T-shirt, Blue coloured jeans and Black coloured coat, was found under Ring Road Flyover, New Delhi and was admitted in Hospital, during the treatment Doctors declared him brought dead on 23.11.2021 at about 05:30 PM Vide MLC No.362819/21. In this regard a **DD No.42A, dated 23.11.2021** has been lodged at P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi. If any one having any clue about deceased male may kindly inform the undersigned and contact on following numbers.



SHO
P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi
Ph.: 011-24106345, 24106346
DP/933/SW/2021 Mob. 7065036231

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of a man namely **Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown was found dead on 04.11.2021 at Gagan Cinema Hall Park Bus Stop, Nand Nagri, Near SDM Court, Delhi.** In this regard **DD No. 20-A dated 04.11.2021** has been lodged at Police Station, Nand Nagri, Delhi. Identification of unidentified dead body of male is as under:

Name: Unknown, Age: About 50 Years, Height: 5', Built: Normal, Face: Round, Complexion: Wheatish, Wearing: Shirt & Pant.

If anyone have any information or clue about this male deceased may kindly be inform undersigned.

SHO
Police Station Nand Nagri, Delhi
Ph.: 011-22137761, 8750870733
DP/1201/NE/2021

Democratic countries need to think about creating safe, accountable internet: MoS IT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Democratic countries need to join hands to think about creating safety, trust and accountability on the internet which has no boundaries, Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar said on Saturday.

Speaking at the first ever India Internet Governance Forum (IIGF) organised by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI), he said India is becoming one of the largest connected nations with 800 million people online.

With the world's largest rural broadband programme,

India would soon have more than 1 billion people on the internet, he noted.

"Given the size of the internet and cyberspace, which does not have boundaries, it needs cooperation. The world needs to think about it, especially democratic countries and societies," Chandrasekhar said.

He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Digital India Mission with 3 major objectives -- to transform lives of Indians, expand economic opportunities with digital entrepreneurship, and enhance strategic capabilities in certain technologies including the internet so that the future of internet is shepherded by countries that are open soci-

eties and share the same set of democratic values and respect citizen rights.

"IIGF in a lot of ways was about talking and having more stakeholders around the big roundtable i.e. India about how do we keep the internet open? How do we make sure that the internet is safe and trusted by all those people who use it, and safety and trust being extremely important attributes because there are whole new demographics that were not foreseen many years ago which are children, women and the elderly," Chandrasekhar said.

He said the government is committed to connecting all Indians to the internet.

Specialised groups to address exporters' banking challenges: Minister Karad

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Centre's specialised groups will address banking challenges faced by exporters, said Union Minister of State for Finance, Dr Bhagwat Kishanrao Karad.

Speaking at the 'Banking Conclave on Exports' organised by FIEO in Mumbai on Friday, the minister announced formation of various groups to address the problems raised by exporters and other stakeholders consisting of FIEO, leading banks, IBA, Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Finance including one on challenges of e-commerce retail exports.

He highlighted the importance of banking sector in promoting and facilitating exports.

He informed that several reforms related to the banking sector have taken place in the recent past, and all the banks have implemented it in a successful manner.

Paytm posts Q2 results, revenue from ops up by 64% to ₹10.9 bn

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

India's leading digital ecosystem for consumers and merchants, Paytm announced its second quarter earnings report. The digital payments and financial services platform saw its revenue from operations grow by 64 per cent Y-o-Y to ₹10.9 billion in Q2 FY 2022, driven by 52 per cent growth in non-UPI payment volumes (GMV) and more than 3 times growth in financial services and other revenue.

The company's contribution profit grew to ₹2.6 billion in Q2 FY 2022, year-on-year increase of 592 per cent. The contribution margin jumped to 24.0 per cent of revenue from 5.7 per cent the previous year.

Paytm posted an improved Adjusted EBITDA margin to (39 per cent) of revenues in Q2 FY 2022 (₹4,255 million), from (64 per cent) of revenues Q2 FY 2021 (₹ 4,267 million), along with increased investments in technology and merchant base expansion.

"The growth of non-UPI



GMV has driven continued payments revenue growth, and our UPI-led payment volume growth is translating to a significant ramp up of our financial services offering. We are driving digital payments and financial services penetration and widespread adoption across India.

Paytm has seen a strong second quarter of FY22, which is a testimony to the strong two-sided ecosystem of consumers and merchants that we have built.

We have maintained the growth momentum in our payments services business, expanded our financial services business aggressively and are on our way to pre-Covid volumes for Commerce and Cloud services," said the com-

pany's management on the second quarter earnings.

Paytm's Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) growth was driven by active user engagement & adoption across businesses. The company's GMV for Q2FY2022 was ₹1,956 billion, up by 107 per cent Y-o-Y and the growth momentum continued in October 2021, where the GMV at ₹832 billion was up 131 per cent Y-o-Y.

The company's average Monthly Transacting Users (MTU) in Q2FY2022 is up by 33 per cent Y-o-Y to 57.4 million and the trajectory has continued in October 2021 with 63 million MTUs, growth of 35 per cent Y-o-Y compared to 47 million MTUs in October 2020.

US dollar falls amid rising risk aversion

IAN S ■ NEW YORK

The US dollar recorded a deep decrease in late trading on Friday as demand for a safe haven shot up.

The dollar index, which measures the greenback against six major peers, decreased 0.75 per cent at 96.0468 in late trading. The discovery of a new Covid-19 variant in South Africa sent jitters across global markets on Friday, Xinhua news agency reported. Surging demand for a safe haven drove 10-year Treasury bond yield to 1.479 per cent on Friday, down 16.2 basis points from the previous trading session. Commodity-based currencies were in a free fall on Friday morning as the price of commodities plunged with global equities, said a note by foreign exchange and international payment solutions provider Tempus, Inc.

PUBLIC NOTICE
The general Public is hereby informed that my client Pawan Kumar S/o Matu Ram R/o C-112, Yadav Nagar, Samai Pur, Delhi-42, have disowned/debarred his son namely Nitish Aggarwal (age 30 years) from all their movable and immovable properties due to their quarrel/some character and bad behaviour towards my client. My client shall not be at all responsible of any act done by them in what so manner in future.
NAZIA PARVEEN(Advocate)
13, Hargovind Enclave,
Bhartendu Harish Chandra Marg, ND-110092
Mobile: 9278993021

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform to all concerned that Smt. Usha Kapoor W/o Shri Anil Kumar Kapoor R/o 121, Chander Nagar, Block-A, Janak Puri, New Delhi, owner of property No. F-17, Sector-56, Noida had executed a general power of attorney in favour of Mrs. Lata Jain W/o Shri Sushil Kumar Jain on 07-12-1987 regd. with S.R. Noida Dt. 07-12-1987 as document no. 2178, and the agreement to sell is not registered because an agreement to sell is not registered so it is publicly notified that the transfer application of the said property is going to apply for transfer through G.P.A. holder in favor of Smt. Suman Lata W/o Shri Shankar Pal Singh R/o F-17, Sector-56, Noida if someone has any objection he should move her/his/their objection with proof within 30 days from this notice in Residential Plot Department of Noida Authority. **Lata Jain**

PUBLIC NOTICE
Subject: Plot bearing No. K-14, admeasuring around 502 Sq. Mt., situated in the area of Village Basai Darapur, New Delhi
WHEREAS Mr. Anand Swarup Gosain was the owner of Plot bearing No. K-14, admeasuring around 502 Sq. Mt., situated in the area of Village Basai Darapur, New Delhi.
WHEREAS the said Mr. Anand Swarup Gosain has died on 31.10.1984.
WHEREAS Mr. Krishan Kumar and Mr. Narender Kumar sons of the said Late Mr. Anand Swarup Gosain are the only legal heirs of the said Late Mr. Anand Swarup Gosain.
WHEREAS Mr. Krishan Kumar and Mr. Narender Kumar sons of the said Late Mr. Anand Swarup Gosain intend to apply for the transfer of the said property in their favour being the only legal heirs of the said Late Mr. Anand Swarup Gosain.
If any person is having any objection against the transfer of Plot bearing No. K-14, admeasuring around 502 Sq. Mt., situated in the area of Village Basai Darapur, New Delhi in favour of Mr. Krishan Kumar and Mr. Narender Kumar sons of the said Late Mr. Anand Swarup Gosain, he/she /they can submit objection in writing to the office of the undersigned, along with supporting documents within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice failing which the concerned Authority may sanction the mutation of the property as per the records & may not entertain subsequent claim, thereupon.
Mr. Subash Bhat (Advocate)
Add: Trinity Legal Partners, C-401, The Courtyard, Naranya Country, Sector 50, Gurgaon, Haryana. subash.bhat@trinitylegalpartners.com

AXAR's high 5! NZ out for 296 on Day 3

PTI ■ KANPUR

Axar Patel continued his golden run in favourable home conditions, grabbing another five-wicket haul to put India in the driver's seat after New Zealand were bowled out for 296 despite an opening stand of 151 on the third day of the first Test here on Saturday.

The left-arm spinner had a couple of dream sessions when he finally found the ideal pace and turn off the surface to completely derail New Zealand's steady first innings. His final figures read 34-6-62-5 as India got a crucial 49-run first innings lead, which increased to 63 at stumps.

Ravichandran Ashwin was also on the money as he bowled 42.3 overs to finish on 3 for 82, inching closer to becoming the third highest Indian wicket-taker in Test cricket.

Gujarat man Axar has been terrific since he donned the India whites at the start of the year and now has as many as 32 wickets in just three and half Tests.

The five-for was his fifth having already got four in the three Tests against England.

However, he will cherish this one a bit more considering that the track was not as diabolical as the ones in the England series (second Test in Chennai and the Pink Test in Ahmedabad).

At stumps, the hosts were 14 for 1 after losing Shubman Gill (1) for the second time to Kyle Jamieson, who again found a gaping hole between his bat and pad.

With the deliveries keeping wickedly low, New Zealand's chances of fighting it out in the fourth innings will be pretty low unless skipper Kane Williamson produces one of his steady knocks.

On the day, however, he



managed just 18 and when Umesh Yadav's in-cutter brought about his downfall at the stroke of lunch, the wheels of fortune turned in favour of India.

This was after openers Will Young (89 off 214 balls) and Tom Latham (95 off 282 balls) added 151 for the opening stand but both, despite their dogged display, missed out on hundreds.

It was the second new ball that did the trick just before lunch as Umesh (1/50 in 18 overs) pitched one on off-stump, which cut back enough to find Williamson's pads.

The next two sessions belonged to India as they got eight wickets for just 99 runs.

Axar's perseverance paid off as he changed his line from leg-middle to off-middle and the release was at a greater speed when compared to what he did on the second evening.

He removed Ross Taylor (11), Henry Nicholls (2) and Latham within a space of 13 runs to completely upset Black Caps' rhythm.

session that Axar finally sent down a classical left-arm spinner's delivery.

There was a delivery that had a bit of air and pitched on length drawing Taylor forward and then turned enough to take an outside edge which went to substitute keeper K S Bharat. Bharat came in after regular stumper Wriddhiman Saha complained of a stiff neck.

Nicholls also tried sweeping a much fuller delivery which turned back in and he was found leg before.

Having understood that on a slower track like this one, the pace off the pitch needed to increase, Axar gave it a tweak at decent clip which saw

Latham beaten all ends up. Bharat fumbled before he could effect the stumping.

Prior to that, Latham hardly had any lapse of concentration as he played 47 overs of the New Zealand innings.

Later on, Axar got Tom Bundell (13 off 94 balls), who looked to merely survive and finally got a 'shooter' that cleaned his defence.

Southie became his fifth victim trying to play inside an arm ball which turned enough to hit the off-stump.

The pitch on the third day didn't change its character as it stayed low and slow but the Indian spinners did better as the time progressed by varying

Scoreboard	
INDIA 1st INNINGS: 345	
NEW ZEALAND 1st INNINGS: (OVERNIGHT 129/0)	
Tom Latham st sub (KS Bharat) b Patel	95
Will Young c sub (KS Bharat) b Ashwin	89
Kane Williamson lbw b Yadav	18
Ross Taylor c sub (KS Bharat) b Patel	11
Henry Nicholls lbw b Patel	2
Tom Blundell b Patel	13
Rachin Ravindra b Jadeja	13
Kyle Jamieson c Patel b Ashwin	23
Tim Southee b Patel	5
William Somerville b Ashwin	6
Ajaz Patel	5*
Extras: (B-6, LB-4, NB-5, W-1) 16	
Total: (all out in 142.3 overs) 296	
Fall of wickets: 1-151, 2-197, 3-214, 4-218, 5-227, 6-241, 7-258, 8-270, 9-284	
Bowling (India):	
Ishant Sharma	15-5-35-0
Umesh Yadav	18-3-50-1
R Ashwin	42.3-10-82-3
R Jadeja	33-10-57-1
Axar Patel	34-6-62-5
INDIA 2ND INNINGS: 14-1	
Mayank Agarwal	4*
Shubman Gill b Jamieson	1
Cheteshwar Pujara	9*
Extras: 0	
Total: (1 wkts, 5 Overs) 14	
Fall of Wickets: 2-1	
Bowler (New Zealand):	
Tim Southee	2-1-2-0
Kyle Jamieson	2-0-8-1
Ajaz Patel	1-0-4-0

the pace of their deliveries.

During the session, Ashwin was seen involved in an animated discussion with umpire Nitin Menon after he decided to come round the wicket against Williamson and cautioned for walking on the dangerous area on his follow-through, which also obstructed the umpire's view.

The intention was to create a few roughs with his bowling spikes in the region.

Menon, having understood the motive, had a word with Ashwin and skipper Ajinkya Rahane and after some discussions, normalcy prevailed.

Later at the bag end of the day, Ashwin cleaned up the visiting team's tail.

Never saw myself as a white ball specialist: Axar Patel

PTI ■ KANPUR

Thirty two wickets in only seven Tests innings is no mean feat and Axar Patel says the secret of his success lies in enjoying his craft and believing that he can't be 'pigeon-holed' as a T20 specialist.

The left-arm spinner took 5 wickets for 62 runs to bring India back in the first Test against New Zealand.

It was his fifth fifer in just seven completed Test innings, an incredible feat in its own way even if he bowled in spin-friendly conditions.

"Whenever I have played first-class or India A, I have done well. I have never seen myself as a white ball specialist," Patel made it clear that he doesn't like being bracketed.

For the left-arm orthodox from Gujarat, it's all in the mind. "It's all in mind-set as to what you perceive yourself as - a white ball specialist or red ball specialist. I always had the belief that whenever I get a chance I will do well. "Obviously, I give credit to team members for having faith in me and I have been able to stand up to their expectations."

But does he feel extra pressure that two world class spinners in Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja are also in the same eleven? "Whenever I go to the ground, I try and enjoy and not think about whether Ashwin bhai and Jaddu are there," he made his thought-process clear.

"When I have ball in my hand, I just try and see to it that I am enjoying my bowling, trying to read the wicket and understand what's happening, how it's behaving and plan accordingly," he elaborated.

He is not at all bothered whether he has a lead role or a supporting one. "I don't think about whether my role is a lead one or whether there are senior bowlers around me, I only think about my bowling and what is required to be done in that particular spell," he added.

while bowling on Saturday compared to his first spell on the second day and the key was to play with varied angles, mixing the pace of his deliveries. "I used the crease much more today



and I didn't use the crease a lot in the 10 overs that I bowled yesterday. "I was using the crease by going wide and coming near the stumps, creating various angles, and that helped me get a lot of purchase," he said when asked about what kind of changes he brought about on Saturday.

CRACKS HAVEN'T OPENED MUCH

Patel assessed that the pitch isn't as difficult as it may seem as only the odd ball is turning or keeping low but at the same time reminded that patience will be the key.

"Our batters were present at the ground and they also have a fair idea. We were discussing that cracks haven't opened much and only the odd ball is doing a bit, if you play the ball on its

merit, there won't be much trouble," he said.

"There isn't any uneven bounce as such. An odd ball is either turning or keeping low. If they start bowling a disciplined line and keep patience then only our batters can face some trouble. I will advise our batters to keep patience and put the bad balls away," he said.

RAHUL SIR, AJJU BHAI WERE CALM WHEN WICKETS WEREN'T COMING

Patel is happy that stand-in captain Ajinkya Rahane and head coach Rahul Dravid helped in keeping a calm dressing room when the team did not get any wicket for 67 overs.

"Obviously, if you don't get wicket for 67 overs, it's tough but the dressing room was calm as Ajju bhai and Rahul sir kept a calm environment. They said we have to keep patience because if we get one, we will get a few more and then we can make inroads," he said. "We got the reward for our persistence in the first and second session," he signed off.

Government of Odisha "e" procurement Notice
No. 4611 dated. 25.11.21
Bridge & Road Works as per DTCN available in the website.
www.tendersodisha.gov.in
08(Eight) Nos
Varies from Rs. 4.42 to 35.40 lakhs
01(One) to 02(Two) Calendar months
29.11.2021 at 11.00AM to 09.12.2021 up to 5.00 PM
10.12.21 at 11.00AM
E.E.R.W.Divn. Sambalpur
Rural Works Division, Sambalpur.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS DIVISION, BARGARH
e-Procurement Notice No. ONLINE-BGH- 13 OF 2021-22
Name of the Work : Road works during 2021-22 in the district of Bargarh.
EMD : Bid Security Declaration
As per DTCN
From To
29.11.2021 at 11.00 A.M. 06.12.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.
06.12.2021 up to 4.00 P.M.
07.12.2021 at 11.00 A.M.
Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersorissa.gov.in.
Executive Engineer
R.W. Division, Bargarh

ପୁରୁଷ ବନ୍ଧ୍ୟାକରଣ(ଏନ.ଏସ୍.ଭି) ପକ୍ଷ ୨୦୨୧
(୨୧ ନଭେମ୍ବର - ୪ ଡିସେମ୍ବର)
“ପୁରୁଷମାନେ ପରିବାର ନିୟୋଜନ ଆପଣାଇ,
ସୁଖୀ ପରିବାର ଗଢ଼ିବା ଖୁସିର ମୂଳଦୁଆ ପକାଇ”
ଏନ.ଏସ୍.ଭି. ପକ୍ଷ ଗ୍ରହଣକାରୀଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ
ଟ.୨୦୦୦ଙ୍କା ପ୍ରୋତ୍ସାହନ
ଏହି ପକ୍ଷ ଗ୍ରହଣ ପାଇଁ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟକର୍ମୀ କିମ୍ବା ନିକଟସ୍ଥ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟକେନ୍ଦ୍ର ସହ ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ କରନ୍ତୁ ।
ଇଞ୍ଜେକସନ୍ ଏମ.ପି.ଏ. ଅପରା ଚକ୍ରବାର୍ତ୍ତୀ ଗର୍ଭନିରୋଧକ ବର୍ତ୍ତିକା ଗର୍ଭନିରୋଧକ ବର୍ତ୍ତିକା ଆଇ.ପ୍ଲୁ.ସି.ଟି 375 ଆଇ.ପ୍ଲୁ.ସି.ଟି 380 A
ପରିବାର ନିୟୋଜନ ନୂଆ ଏବଂ ସହଜ ଉପାୟ ଗୁଡ଼ିକର ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସୂଚନା ପାଇଁ ପ୍ଲି ବୁକ୍: ୧୮୦୦ ୧୧୨ ୫୫୫ ଡ୍ରେବ: humdo.nhp.gov.in
ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ଏ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ ସମସ୍ତ ସୂଚନା ପ୍ରଦାନ କରାଯାଇଛି ଏବଂ ସମସ୍ତ ନିୟମ ମାନି ରହିବ ।
ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ଏବଂ ପରିବାର କଲ୍ୟାଣ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା



the pioneer agenda

FROM THE INSIDE

Exquisite prose poetry

Anita Nahal probes with the tenacity of a philosopher, existential questions of being & nothingness & of identity & subjectivity

2



4

Choice sets premise of destiny

Once choice option is there, the probability of its use and misuse becomes equal. One has to will upon to make a particular choice



Learning is the most important thing, no matter how you do it, or where you do it, or who you do it with
— Saoirse Ronan

The starting point of being an impact champion who sets the organisation on a socially oriented path is your own social consciousness and willingness to drive transformative innovations’ write
PRIYA NAIR RAJEEV & SIMY JOY

TIME TO AWAKEN CORPORATE SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS?



The 2019 Global Wealth Databook from Credit Suisse reports that 73 percent of Indians have a net worth of less than \$10,000 (compared to just 19 percent in China), while 2.3 percent have a net worth of over \$1 million. India ranks fourth in the world in ultra-high-net-worth individuals (4,593), making us one of the fastest-growing yet unequal nations.

Private sector corporates often do not see addressing developmental inequities as their problem. Access to food, water, healthcare, and education is commonly understood as ‘poor people’s problems that the government and social sector organisations must solve. No doubt that the poor are the first to be hit, that too very hard, as we saw in a mass exodus of the migrant workers during the first wave of the pandemic. The middle class and above believe that they can access basic necessities by private means and from the private sector. The second wave of the pandemic showed us how false that sense of security is! With the relatively well-off scrambling for medical care, medicines, oxygen, and ventilators, it was apparent that none of us would be spared from the ill effects of our developmental shortcomings.

IMPACT CHAMPIONS: THE FLAGBEARERS OF CHANGE

If we were to survive together, the corporate sector organisations must enact social consciousness. This mindset understands and accepts the interconnectedness of the economic, social, and natural worlds. Socially conscious organisations do not come into existence without socially-conscious managers. We see such managers as ‘Impact Champions’ having the intent and capabilities to help their organisations positively impact the economy and society, and the environment.

Enamored by the glitz of the corporate careers in the liberalized Indian economy, MBA aspirants in the 1990s readily bought into the mantra of ‘profit maximisation. But many Gen Z and Millennial MBA aspirants are a little more skeptical about whether that is the best way forward, as it has become apparent that their generation would bear the consequences of the social and environmental damage left by the unbridled pursuit of profits. Many of them harbor pro-social inclinations during their student days; however, they are unsure how to take it forward once they start a corporate career. In the ‘big, bad world of corporates’, beating competition and exceeding performance expectations are the basis for career advancement. Hence, they feel that there is little room for social ideals.

Time has never been more right for aspiring Impact Champions in the corporate sector to get into action. The UN has been driving Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDGs) to tackle the development challenges and climate change. SDGs urge the private sector to collaborate with the civic society and governments, to which influential corporates world over have

responded positively. In the global business circles, ‘Triple Bottom Line’, with its focus on 3Ps — People, Planet and Profit, is widely discussed as a replacement for the traditional ‘bottomline,’ focusing singularly on ‘profits.’ With avid support from the likes of Klaus Schwab (Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum) and Jack Welch (ex-CEO, GE), ‘shareholder capitalism’ has begun to make way for ‘stakeholder capitalism,’ which gives equal priority to the employees, customers, suppliers, and the community.

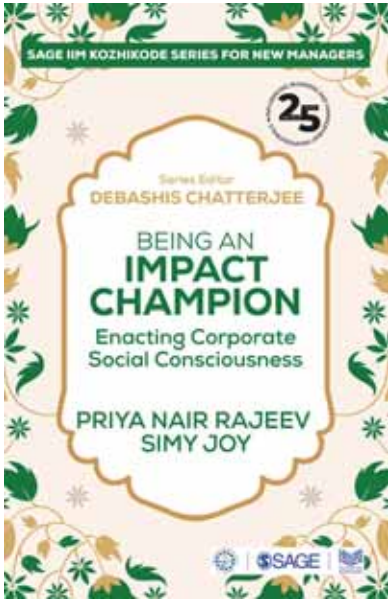
Indian corporates are slowly beginning to catch up with this global trend. However, they are in dire need of managers who can champion this transition.

HOW TO BE AN IMPACT CHAMPION?

● **Self-appoint yourself as an ‘Impact Champion’:** Most corporate jobs would demand you to mind only the impact on profit, not people or the planet. To be an impact champion, you have to self-appoint yourself as one and be sure that you do not leave your social consciousness at home while coming to work. When you operate with a ‘corporate mindset’ in a regular day’s work, you would accept and get on with decisions that look perfectly sensible and acceptable from the corporate and legal standpoints. It takes social consciousness to recognize when stakeholders or environmental interests are being compromised among what looks like business as usual. An impact champion not only recognises issues but also takes personal responsibility for action. New managers aspiring to impact champions may be unsure how to navigate organisational processes and culture in enacting social consciousness. They can find support in like-minded managers and mentors at the Impact Champions Forum, a seedbed for individuals who intend to transform organisations into socially conscious ones at CESI, Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode.

P P Sukumaran (ex-HR Head, Murugappa group) had to retrench 200 plant workers post-TQM implementation. A perfectly legal decision, arrived at in consultation with the Union, still left him worried about the ‘social debris’ that this decision would leave — what were the chances that 200 middle-workers in a northern Kerala village find alternate jobs; even with the severance money will their families have financial security in a social setting where alcoholism was rampant. P P Sukumaran was determined to do something about it. However, he was not required either by law or by his organisational mandate to address this.

● **Get partners:** You have to do it yourself, but you cannot do it alone. Irrespective of where you are in the organisational hierarchy, you would need partners. Partners are people inside (sometimes even outside) of the organisation committed to addressing societal or environmental problems that you seek to solve through organisational means. In addition to moral and emotional support (which you will need aplen-



“ALTHOUGH THE AMOUNT OF MONEY AND ENERGY INVESTED IN CSR AND CORPORATE SOCIAL INNOVATION IS GOING UP EACH YEAR, ENSURING THAT THEY DELIVER ACTUAL SOCIAL IMPACT SOMEHOW HAS TAKEN A BACKSEAT



ty), partners bring in legitimacy to the cause (especially if they are higher in the hierarchy or hold formal or informal positions of influence), knowledge and skills resources to develop a deeper understanding of the issue from multiple perspectives as well as potential solutions, access to networks and organisational resources, and political backing to elicit favorable decisions.

In the example, P P Sukumaran engaged in active discussions with his contacts within and outside his organisation. One of them directed him to Dr.Nalini Gangadharan, Livelihood Advancement Business School (LABS) of Dr. Reddy’s Foundation. LABS had a skilling model that Sukumaran found appropriate for retraining their redundant workers to suitably place them in alternate jobs or start their ventures. The model was later replicated in Chennai in partnership with other corporates for skilling at-risk urban youth, creating a corporate consortium model for financing such initiatives.

● **Explore Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** Most corporates support CSR activities which are perhaps the easiest way to initiate action. If your company already has CSR departments and programs, you can get involved in that. If current CSR activities do not address pressing social issues close to your heart, you can always pioneer new activities. Given that CSR has been mandated by law since 2013 and many companies are struggling to identify worthwhile projects, you may not find it too hard to get buy-in for your ideas.

You can implement them through any of these four different formats:(a) as a foundation, otherwise known as a Section 8 company(e.g., Infosys Foundation); (b) in partnership with NGOs, trusts, or registered societies with a proven track record (e.g., ITC and Pratham working together in the Reach India Plus initiative; (c) in partnership with other companies (e.g., Mphasis and Uber launched Uber Assist and Uber Access that retro-fitted vehicles to help Persons with Disabilities as their joint CSR initiative); and (d) following an employee volunteer model (e.g., Calpine Technologies runs Engage — their CSR program that builds leadership skills in school children through football with the help of employee volunteers).

● **Pursue Corporate Social Innovation (CSI):** Business models can generate societal benefits by changing their perspective (e.g., including marginalized groups in the supply chain, new products for the old and disabled). As an impact champion, you can tweak the current models in innovative ways that generate social and/or environmental impact while serving corporate interests.

For example, ITC launched ‘e-Choupal,’ one of the most extensive Internet-based interventions in rural India, enhancing earnings and transforming the livelihoods of over 4 million farmers in over 35000 villages through 6100 kiosks across ten states. e-Choupal deploys information technology to virtually cluster all the value chain participants and vertically integrate various actors in the agriculture supply

chain. Village internet kiosks set up to access information are managed by farmers, who get information on the weather, market prices, scientific farm practices, and risk management in their mother tongue. They can use the kiosks to purchase farm inputs and get them at their doorstep. Real-time information has made it possible for farmers to make better decisions aligned with market demand, significantly reducing transaction costs.

● **Track ‘Impact’:** Although the amount of money and energy invested in CSR and Corporate Social Innovation is going up each year, ensuring that they deliver actual social impact somehow has taken a backseat. Even after introducing mandatory reporting of impact, most companies focus on the inputs (e.g., amounts spent) or outputs (e.g., the number of rooms built in a rural hospital, pieces of equipment they bought). Some try to pass on the number of beneficiaries that they have been able to reach as impact. But this is not the same as tracking if and how the initiatives have created tangible differences in the lives of the beneficiaries. Without a robust impact tracking mechanism, attempts to make an impact may not be as effective as you would have imagined.

We conducted an impact assessment for the Vidhyadhan Scholarship program, run by the Sarojini Damodaran Foundation (SDF). Since 1995, SDF Foundation has provided scholarships to academically bright children, primarily from Below Poverty Line (BPL) families who completed high school (class 10 in India) to pursue higher education. Thus far, the program has provided 13,500 scholarships, with over 10,000 beneficiaries currently pursuing their higher studies across ten states. The basic premise of any scholarship program is that the monetary support would enable them to build human capital in academic qualifications, which will help them find employment and thus lift them out of poverty. We found that this undeniably was the case for those who were able to find jobs. However, we also found that finding a job and future career progression depended on social capital in terms of networks. It was hard for those who were low on social capital to get jobs. This led to the realisation that in addition to monetary support, the students from disadvantaged backgrounds also would need support to build their social capital through mentoring and networking.

The starting point of being an impact champion who sets the organisation on a socially oriented path is your own social consciousness and willingness to drive transformative innovations. If you ever feel shaken by the scale of what you have to achieve, take a cue from a climber scaling a peak: You need to focus on where to place your next step. Then, step by step, you would reach there.

The writers have recently published Being an Impact Champion: Enacting Corporate Social Consciousness, with SAGE Publications India, under the SAGE IIM-Kozhikode Series for New Managers



EXQUISITE PROSE POETRY

In her prose poems, *What's wrong with us Kali women?* Anita Nahal probes with the tenacity of a philosopher, existential questions of being and nothingness and of identity and subjectivity, writes SWATI PAL

You open the book to the title piece and you are hooked. In the first short passage, Anita Nahal puts together the oppositions that we live with, that we have internalised, that we resist, that we surrender to, that we challenge and in our hearts, rebel against. Be it the colour of the dark skin that is abhorred though ironically people try to tan theirs, the rapaciousness of men from which there is no reprieve, the double speak of worshipping women as goddesses and then tearing them down, all this and much more does Anita forcefully, poignantly and poetically put to the reader. And the haunting line that she repeats, 'Don't think she's not watching', stays with you as you turn the page.

And when you turn the page, she paints in words the picture of who really a goddess is. Fiercely alone whether among strangers or with those she knows, fending for her children herself, taking on a world that would judge a divorcee, that is the human and Hindu goddess that Anita would want us to see. And to be.

The next piece on 'How easy it is for a Black life to be taken' is a slice of real life. Real, living beings, non whites whose life was extinguished. Just like that. Snuffed out. As a reader your hair will stand on end and your eyes will prick with unshed tears even as your heart will smoulder with rage. Anita makes you think of the dead. And with them. In this piece of writing as well as the next when she wonders what happens to the clothes of those who died. Especially now, of Covid. How quickly they are bundled away while their clothes hang in the cupboards, mute testimony to the existence of their wearers.

Watching, seeing, observing, gazing — the whole idea of looking, of voyeurism, takes on a new meaning as Anita focuses on the jungle in Smooth operators and questions, who is looking at whom? As a reader, I have often wondered too. We create wild life sanctuaries and zoological parks, what do animals, caged or free, think of us humans. Do they see us as caged or free? Do they know we are humans or do they see us, in our herds, as two legged animals? Anita prompts you to think along these lines. Her writing about the animals makes them so much more human than us humans. The beautiful story about consideration rather than sex, which the male sloth understands is touching indeed.

Anita probes with the tenacity of a philosopher, existential questions of being and nothingness and of identity and sub-



jectivity. Her words reveal a quest to really go into the heart of our 'self', almost particle by particle as we see in 'Hard: Us, animals and the aliens' or in 'Greatest warrior is metamorphic Mother Earth'. She has a knack of self analysis so keenly felt in some of the poems such as 'A sip of wine'. There is also a sense of being pummeled by the world, of being trapped in a space that is claustrophobic which one comes across in many images including the one just mentioned and the next entitled 'Chase away demons left behind'. A characteristic poetic device that she uses so effectively is personification as we see in the way she personifies the concept of patriarchy.

While most of the prose poems are dark and somber, there is a playful yet serious look at the way women deal with ageing in

the frothy piece 'A woman's age is kicking and alive'.

Another poem that looks at the body, at age, in a brief recall is 'Mom's shoulders'. Anita can see the flip side of things and so her look at the Corona struck situation where nature blooms even as some foolish people continue to be callous about safety measures, is an honest review of a contemporary issue. While her engagement with the pandemic can be seen in several of her pieces, she is also clear that the concern for this abnormal time can make one lose sight of the eternal wheel of time with its larger questions as we see in 'Know your wheel, Homosapiens' or in a different sense, in 'Breathe' or 'Covid 19's inverted triangle' or 'Reclaim your space'.

Anita's selfhood is clearly shaped by her

location as an Indian Immigrant and she acknowledges that in many of her pieces such as 'Spilt milk in native and foreign lands' and 'Fallacy of a single, immigrant mom'. While she is alive, as immigrants are, to the traumas of being one, and to repeat, we see that so starkly in 'How easy it is for a Black life to be taken', one does not get any nuance of self pity or even of being forlorn. In fact, one of her prose poems is 'Pity, go take a hike' — she shuns pity entirely.

Anita is alive to the choices she has made and in her writing we see a kind of acculturation; she is aware of the multicultural, pluralistic world she inhabits and is absolutely unapologetic about any aspect that shapes her multidimensional self.

In fact she points out quite assertively that we are all in a sense immigrants in her

piece, 'You are an immigrant too'. There is a sense of a kind of acceptance of cultures and thus her calm assertion that her son would cremate her in America and scatter a few ashes in the Ganges, as her repayment of debt to the two lands, America and India that she has been a part of. This we see in 'Paying my debt to two lands'. She is critical of both, especially of the way women are treated in both countries, either seen as easily available if found in miniskirts and dancing or outraging society for doing so which we see in 'Babylon, my sinful dance music'.

Nothing escapes Anita's eagle eye and pen including the discomfort faced by women during their menstrual cramps as we see in 'Feeling down, being down'. The woman reader will find every word resonat-



ing. Betrayal looms in a lot of her writing, the betrayal of democracy, the betrayal by blood relations, and the betrayal in relationships. While it is the underlying motif in many of the poems, 'Family Blood', 'Democracy in decline' and 'Koala and judases' echo the theme more sharply. It is interesting to point out as with 'Koala and judases' that some of Anita's writing is inspired from Australian art and culture. Undoubtedly then, her writing is bound to strike a chord in the hearts of people across the world.

The *Kalis*, the *Durgas*, the *Sitas*, indeed all the Hindu Goddesses whom Anita invokes in her writing are none other than Anita, you and me — the modern Indian woman, an immigrant or a persona in a multicultural world. She questions, she mocks, she laughs at, she rages, she refuses to 'fit the bill', she speaks out and will not be silenced or choked, she breathes, dances, sings, makes love, drinks and even while falling into depths of despair, never gives up on hope. And as we read Anita, we agree. There's nothing wrong with us Kali women.

The book is here to stay. You will find it unputdownable. It is powerful, poignant and of course, exquisite prose poetry.

The reviewer, Professor and Principal, Janki Devi Memorial College (DU), has been an educator since the last twenty seven years

NEW ARRIVALS

THE GREATEST TAMIL STORIES EVER TOLD

selected and edited by Sujatha Vijayaraghavan and Mini Krishnan

Aleph, ₹699

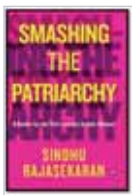
The Greatest Tamil Stories Ever Told showcases some of the best short fiction to emerge out of Tamil Nadu, dating from the last century to the present day. Two of the earliest stories included here are Subramania Bharati's 'The Story of a Crow Learning Prosody', a satirical tale about the exaltation of language, and 'Kalki' Krishnamurthy's 'The Governor's Visit', about how bigwigs in little places pandered to the British rulers during the time of the Raj. While some stories in this volume wrestle with the idea of public justice, as in Father Mark Stephen's 'Penance', others, such as Ambai's 'Journey 4', hide secrets that could destroy lives and relationships if they are ever revealed. Featuring memorable works by, among others, Bama, Perumal Murugan, and Poomani, the 30 stories in this collection come together to paint a striking picture of the Tamil people.

SMASHING THE PATRIARCHY: A GUIDE FOR THE 21ST-CENTURY INDIAN WOMAN

Sindhu Rajasekaran

Aleph, ₹699

From beauty, body politics, and sexuality, to caste, power, and the paradox of choice, the book explores a wide range of women's issues and draws important connections between these. Taking its inspiration from multi-disciplinary theories, grounded and deepened by interviews with a variety of experts and numerous women, *Smashing the Patriarchy* is an astonishingly insightful exploration of the collective psyche of modern Indian women.



From uncertainty to probabilities

God or No God: Awareness Enriches Life is a ratified statement claimed by many but understood by very few & Bharat Bhushan Padmadeo is among a few who dares to demystify the basic system of enquiry, writes PRADEEP

Someone asked Swami Vivekanand: "Can we become Godlike?" "First become a man," he answered. It literally implies that if full human potential (mind-power) is unfolded, one would know no limits. And it is very much achievable through conscious efforts, as did Ancient India's learned masters, to have captured subtle realities of life operative at even intangible level. So, raising human capital is more important than exploring and seeking God. That remains the real human calling, is how the book concludes, which makes the book an interesting read.

God or No God: Awareness Enriches Life is a ratified statement claimed by many but understood by very few. Bharat Bhushan Padmadeo is amongst those few who dared to accept the challenge and demystify the basic system of enquiry.

In modern times or precisely in this industrial age, every idea or belief demands an objective explanation. In this new framework of understanding, the concept of GOD is a most vulnerable idea. Leaning to some particular idea or school to rationalise existence is a matter of abandoned schools. Science sets up new logic and premises of rationals to support or reject conceptual realities. Whole discussion of existence is evolving around uncertainty, probability and unpredictable circumstances and tools to gauge them perfectly.

This book is remarkable because it changes the very basis of argument about existence from uncertainty to probabilities. It states that the process of understanding is far more important than the modes of happening or object itself. Writer argues that perception itself lies within the realm of being and awareness about it.

Significant character of twentieth century philosophy was departure from any faith unexplained or underexplained. It was rated as blind faith or fundamentalism to a large extent. Renowned philosopher J Krishnamurti argues, if you are free from sorrow and hate you don't require God. Whereas Gandhi's whole philosophy of non-violence is centered



around God. So the space of argument is divided between the two premises: "God or No God". Many more fell in line either rejecting or accepting the existence of a super controller as GOD.

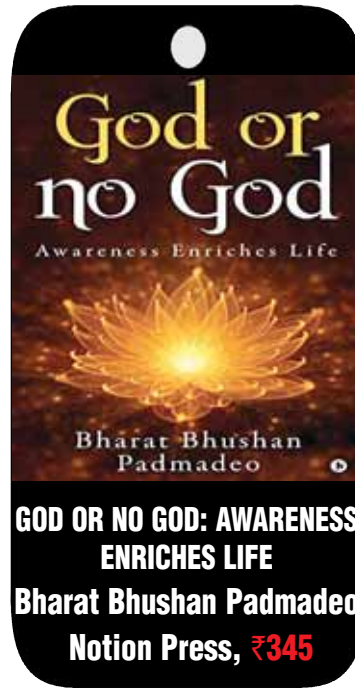
Padmadeo in this book argues that precursor to both is the same. The bearer of belief is consciousness, and understanding its existence is awareness. So, it is not important whether you believe or not, important is that you are aware or not. He wrote: "Consciousness, in fact, rightly deserves to be marked as fourth

dimension, vital to creation. It should not be seen as being in conflict with the perception of modern science, which assigns the fourth dimension to space and time. This particular fundamental element has been named as consciousness because it grants us with the power of knowing, besides granting necessary intelligence to other functional aspects of our individual and collective organism."

While frequently quoting scientists like Max Plank and excerpts from Kashmiri Shaivism, he kept on building

necessary bridges between science and theology. In other words, instead of dividing the argument into science or believing, he is indicating the science of awakening.

Explaining uncertainty and unpredictability, the book postulates that mind which itself is an area of study by itself creates most paradoxical results. It explains explicitly that consciousness is the prime mover. While exploring the construct of mind and body-mind connect, writer explains its extra cerebral



existence as an interactive phenomenon which comprehends undiscovered psycho-landscapes. Dr. Karan Singh writes precisely in the foreword of the book that writer has reinterpreted our ancient spiritual verities in the light of contemporary intellectual scene, paying attention to the infinite potentialities of human mind, which if unfolded in full would know no limits. The basic take home message of the book may be comprised as raising level of consciousness leads to the fact that "Existence is God". This process may be called as enriched awareness.

As conclusive remark this extremely engaging book demands an independent and fearless conviction to internalize the source and negating the fundamentalism of beliefs and faiths. It sets a new mode of enquiry within. This book is an invitation to quite undulating and challenging experience like awakening itself might be.

Mangolia: Hard choice between China and Russia

Mongolia is all set to build its nuclear energy. With the ascendance of the Mongolian People's Party (MPP) and the rise of Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh as the leader of this hermit nation, the nuclear future of Ulaanbaatar has become more pronounced. Khurelsukh, a former Prime Minister, is currently the sixth democratically elected President of this East Asian nation. His longstanding interest in generating nuclear power, backed by the country's abundant uranium deposits, is gaining more political and economic currency in recent times.

Barely a month of his victory in July 2021, Khurelsukh had an agreement with Chinese President Xi Jinping to continue the already existing strategic relations between the two nations, especially in critical sectors like the mining.

Known as the "Land of the Horse and the Land of the Eternal Blue Sky", this East Asian nation has a rich reserve of uranium. The country is large and sparsely populated. It is the world's second largest land-locked country just behind the Central Asian republic of Kazakhstan. Mongolia has proven uranium reserves of about 80,000 tons which ranks the country among top ten in the world. This is also making the nation one of the top mining giants in the world, and it has been attracted by others for having world-class deposits like the huge Oyu Tolgoi copper gold project. In fact, way back in 2011, Mongolia was planning to have its first nuclear power plant by 2020. The State-owned MonAtom LLC had the aim to build nuclear fuel production capacity by tapping the country's own uranium deposits. However, it could not materialise. Even the Mongolian Government had the plan to supply nuclear power plants across the countries of Northeast Asia with nuclear fuel. Ulaanbaator was expecting huge investments from top global giants such as the US, Russia, France and China.

As per the Vision 2050 of Mongolia, the country is committed to shift to cleaner technologies. But leveraging its uranium reserves to produce nuclear energy and lessening

the continued reliance on traditional sources of energy to cut back emission levels, Ulaanbaatar has arrived at a catch-22 situation. That is to choose between Moscow and Beijing.

The chilling new nuclear arms race has already begun in Asia. China is quietly building nearly 250 nuclear silos along the border of Mongolia mostly in Xinjiang, Gansu and Inner Mongolia Province. Independent analysts reveal that these silos are in close proximity to some of the richest uranium deposits on the other side of the Mongolian border. This seems to be one of the biggest nuclear expansions of Beijing in recent years under Xi Jinping, the man who is known for his gargantuan agenda. This nuclear build up revives the rivalry between Soviet Russia and the People's Republic of China under Mao Zedong when the latter deployed about 60,000 to 70,000 troops near the border of Mongolia. Then China on one hand was apprehensive about Soviet social imperialism and on the other, from the brutal Japanese militarism.

However, today China is different from Cold War days. Primarily China's economic might accompanied by continued decline of the Western powers, particularly the might and engagement of the US, has largely emboldened the country to surge ahead.

Way back in September 1992, Mongolia unilaterally declared herself as a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (NWFZ). Then Mongolia's decision was hailed both by the nuclear weapon and non-nuclear weapon states alike. Subsequently, in 1993 and 1994, the five nuclear weapon states made unilateral statements in support of this announcement by Ulaanbaatar. Ironically, this support was not a clear recognition of its single-state nuclear weapon free status, nor did it provide the legally binding security assurances that are normally provided to traditional nuclear-free zones. This has forced Mongolia to consistently pursue its goal to institutionalise itself as a single state nuclear weapons free zone since then. Again, non-nuclear weapon



states at the UN expressed full support not only for Mongolia's policy in general but also for its efforts to institutionalise that status. It was believed that unless the five nuclear weapon states accepted the concept of a single state nuclear weapon free zone, Mongolia could well be considered as a state with a unique nuclear weapon free status. Thus, it was agreed to use the word "status" instead of zone. And the content of the status could be defined by the states concerned.

Now what role China can play in Mongolia going nuclear power? Being its closest neighbour, China is in full force to influence Mongolia to grab the opportunity to develop its nuclear industry. With Xi, China is fast building its capabilities as an economic and military juggernaut. Hence, Ulaanbaatar would certainly fall into the clutch of Xi and his Communist cronies in no time.

China has been consistently increasing its nuclear capabilities. This entire nuclear build-up must be estimated in

the context of the Chinese Communist Party's ambition to have, in Xi's own words, "a world class military". And Beijing is harbouring a wild dream of achieving global domination, especially to torpedo US leadership from the global governance system. Further, several recent reports indicate that China is constructing 120 missile silos for Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) near Yumen in Gansu, up to 110 silos near Hami in the eastern part of the restive and Uighur-Muslim dominated Xinjiang province, and up to 40 silos in Ordos in Inner Mongolia. This rightly shows that China is pushing its nuclear agenda right up to the border of its quiet neighbour Mongolia.

How reliable Russia would be in developing Mongolia's nuclear future? Putin while whipping up nationalist frenzy within Russia and its neighbours is simply undermining the power of the declining global liberal order. He absolutely misjudged the West's

resolve in imposing effective financial sanctions on the Russian corporate sector and NATO's strategic plans in Europe. Hence, moving closer to Putin and allowing the state owned Russian Atomic Energy Corporation Rosatom to develop Mongolia's nuclear apparatus would be a dangerous game for the latter.

Who would be more reliable — Xi or Putin? It seems, both Putin and Xi are equally risky. Both are equally greedy, and they are just waiting for a power grab in Mongolian nuclear development industry. Lurching between opportunity and crisis, Mongolia is forced to anchor a clear policy about the engagement of its only two power-hungry neighbours — Russia and China — in the development of its nuclear power capability.

Chinese offensive is looming large. Its outreach in the form of subtle economic diplomacy supported by adventurous military is on the top agenda of the Communist Party of China under Xi. His

approach is to reach out to the critical geopolitical points within a very short span of time. His intention is ever clear: simply fend off the US primacy in global corridors of power. Therefore, it is quite clear why Beijing wants to grab the opportunity of developing nuclear projects in its neighbourhood.

Further, Xi is also wary of Russia's traditional influence over Ulaanbaatar for long. Moscow's old linkages with Ulaanbaatar are on the wane. But the Communists in China do no way want to take any chance. With China's massive nuclear build-up supported by wolf warrior diplomacy, one can easily make out that this is nothing but the display of dysfunction, naivete and dogmatism of Xi who is already thinking about the great decline of the global firepower of the US.

Consequently, Mongolia is walking a tightrope. Khurelsukh's nuclear ambitions may push this East Asian nation into the arms of age-old

rivalry of big and competing powers. Already, Khurelsukh has been accused of turning the nation into heavy militarisation fully funded by the Communists in Beijing. Considering the recent pledges made at COP-26 at Glasgow in the UK, the global trend is to stay away from using more fossil fuels so as to reduce carbon emissions. So, the road ahead for Khurelsukh is to go nuclear to reduce the choking environment in its Capital city Ulaanbaatar. But then, Mongolia will have a hard choice between two anti-West big powers — aggressive China and a resurgent Russia.

(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)

Mongolia is walking a tightrope. President Khurelsukh's nuclear ambitions may push this East Asian nation into the arms of age-old rivalry of big and competing powers. Already, Khurelsukh has been accused of turning the nation into heavy militarisation fully funded by the Communists in Beijing. Considering the recent pledges made at COP-26 at Glasgow in the UK, the global trend is to stay away from using more fossil fuels so as to reduce carbon emissions. So, the road ahead for Khurelsukh is to go nuclear to reduce the choking environment in its Capital city Ulaanbaatar. But then, Mongolia will have a hard choice between two anti-West big powers — aggressive China and a resurgent Russia



MAKHAN SAIKIA

PERSPECTIVE

AI powered drone new tool of warfare

Command, control, communications and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR) are becoming a most essential element in modern military operations. Countries with artificial intelligence powered drone have baffled their enemies in the war zone. AI powered drone swarms are the new tool of warfare and as of now are unregulated by weapons control regulations.

Though Israel and Turkey have successfully used them, India too is not far behind. On November 17, 2021, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) demonstrated offensive capabilities of its drone swarms at a three-day "RashtraRakshaSamarpanParv" in Jhansi. It was impressive.

The country that makes advances quickly joins an elite club that might evade future restrictions. "The DRDO demonstrated fully operational decentralised UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle) swarm comprising 25 drones flying coherently with minimal human intervention, during Rashtriya Raksha Samarpan Parv during Jhansi Jalsa," reported PTI.

In mid-May 2021, the latest developments on these weapons systems occurred when the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), during the recent clashes in Gaza, used a swarm of AI drones for the first time to geolocate, target, and strike Hamas members.

Israel is making major advances in AI-driven technology.

The IDF did debut "drone swarms to seek and attack hidden targets" in the May war in Gaza. The

Ghost Unit, which is part of the Paratroopers Brigade, has been using "packs of drones". The IDF used a swarm of AI-guided drones and supercomputing to comb through data and identify new targets within the Gaza Strip. It is thought this is the first time a swarm of AI drones has been used in combat."

The drones used so far are navigated in two ways — either remotely piloted or autonomously piloted with GPS and inertial navigation systems.

Autonomous drones have terrain matching capability. They use information from the cameras along with AI for navigation without being dependent on GPS, which is vulnerable to cyber-attacks.

A drone swarm can be modelled as a flying wireless grid, where each drone is capable of using and sending information to the others in the swarm. Converting data into actionable real-time information is done using AI. The reaction time in a battlefield must be less than the reaction time of the enemy elements. Therefore, swarm drones assess the threat to the swarm and at the same time identify the target to manoeuvre to achieve the desired strike, adjusting according to any losses they suffer.

There can be some sort of task sharing, where some of the drones would undertake target detection, others to counter the enemy air defence, some more counter the interference of enemy radars and electronic signals, and others will carry out the attack by bombing. In



a dynamic environment, this autonomous coordination is done with the help of AI technologies.

Some inferences:

1. Drone warfare is asymmetric and is almost mainstream. A bit like guerrilla warfare as it is low cost. Drones are dispensable, off the shelf commercial technology can be used.
2. Autonomous drone systems separate the big boys from the rest. A study in the USAF found that remote drone piloting for long hours induces fatigue. Fatigue leads to suboptimal performance. Fire and forget autonomous drone systems are therefore huge force multipliers.
3. Real-time systems using AI for navigation and guidance, coordina-

tion, self-healing, target identification and acquisition & munition delivery systems are therefore a strategic asset.

Jyoti Sinha, CTO at Omnipresent Robot Technologies Pvt. Ltd, explains how DRDO's demonstration is significant. Omnipresent leverages and augments its experience of working on DARPA LAndroid programme to develop palm size ground swarm robots while working in the US.

"I congratulate DRDO for developing the first fully functional swarm drone network for tactical and real time support to our armed forces. We would be happy to collaborate with DRDO and leverage our experience of swarm robotics where we have

extensively tried to provide solutions to the swarm formation, ad hoc network and drone autonomy piece."

She adds, "In tactical warfare, AI powered swarm drones can carry out simultaneous destruction and dismantling of multiple targets using precise swarm configurations and hover localisation even when less sophistication is available with guided defence equipment. In other situations, it can even be an 'omni-directional attack' where the swarm drones can target one attack from numerous angles. While targeting enemy frontlines, even if some of the drones are attacked, the cognitive AI algorithms kick in and reconfigure the drone network positioning to

maintain situational awareness and aid in completion of mission. Using AI, any individual drones in a swarm network can be trained to operate in offensive or defensive mode by switching roles such as decoy, sensor, attacker or just communicator depending upon its positioning and remaining resources."

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Real-time systems using AI for navigation and guidance, coordination, self-healing, target identification and acquisition & munition delivery systems are a strategic asset. Drone warfare is asymmetric and is almost mainstream. A bit like guerrilla warfare as it is low cost. Drones are dispensable; off the shelf commercial technology can be used, say

BHARGAV AND AVEEK SEN

