



MISSION Shakti



LAKH EMPOWERED WOMEN



- Meeting Fees and Travel allowance for EC members of GPLFs and BLFs – Rs.217 crore.
- e- Transfer of Interest Subvention to 1.38 lakh SHGs –Rs. 65 crore.
- Launching of Mission Shakti e- Market Portal.
- Foundation Stone laying for Mission Shakti Bazar at Bhubaneswar.

Department of Mission Shakti, Government of Odisha

leisure



LEONARDO JUMPED INTO FROZEN LAKE TO SAVE DOGS

Oscar-winning actor Leonardo DiCaprio has recalled a moment when he was forced to perform a scary stunt in real life. In a new interview, the actor revealed that he jumped into a frozen lake to rescue his dogs while filming his new movie *Don't Look Up*, reports *aceshowbiz.com*.

LILY LIKENS EMILY IN PARIS SHOOT TO A MINI VACATION

Actress Lily Collins, who reprises the role of Emily Cooper for the second series of the Netflix show *Emily In Paris*, relished shooting in the spectacular surroundings of St. Tropez and called it a mini vacation.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES
You can make a difference to others' lives. Considerate and thoughtful, today, you will be treasured more than ever as a boss, colleague, parent or beloved. Utilise this exchange of energy to sort out difficult issues. Ganesha gives a thumbs up to mega projects.

TAURUS
You will find comfort, perched on a branch in the family tree, today. Your maturity will help you deal with emotional issues with ease. Energy and exuberance will be an investment you make today, the results of which you will reap in the days to come, hopes Ganesha.

GEMINI
Today, you will toil as if you have to conquer Mt. Everest. And you will, says Ganesha. You may not get a standing ovation or a medal of honour for your hard work and dedication, but you will be lavishly appreciated by your superiors and colleagues.

CANCER
When the going gets tough, it's better to go with the flow. But you belong to a school of thought that believes that in such troubled times, it's better to stay out of water altogether. Since it is not your day today, you are likely to postpone all important decisions and work.

LEO
People involved in Sales and Marketing related jobs will attend productive meetings and will make effective presentations. However, delays in journeying are a possibility. It is a good time to recognise your inherent capabilities. You will be able to prove your worth in the next 2-3 days, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Ganesha suggests that you take a much-needed break from the daily rigmarole. Introduce an element of the exotic in order to replace all the mundane work that fills up your day. You may attend private and social get-togethers, and Ganesha advises you to mingle with other people to keep your spirits high.

LIBRA
Ganesha says you will spend time with your family members by putting them above other commitments. There may be plans made to go out for dinner or for a short excursion with them. Ganesha says that the health of a close relative may be a cause of concern for you today.

SCORPIO
Just another mundane day in store for you. At work, pressure may mount and lead to a hectic and tedious day. You may even feel irritated at times. Thus, feeling the need to unwind, you may invite your sweetheart for the cup of coffee and spend quality time together.

SAGITTARIUS
Whatever you take up today, you are on a winning spree, foresees Ganesha. A leader, you will guide and instruct your subordinates when they seek your advice. In a way, you even encourage and motivate them. All in all, you are a happy soul at the end of the day!

CAPRICORN
Often, sentiments take over your mind. Making you impractical, at times, this tendency proves to be harmful for you. Don't show it on your face as others may take advantage of your weakness, advises Ganesha. If you don't control your emotions, it may become an obstacle in your path to success.

AQUARIUS
You will go through some heavy mood swings today. And the people who know you well will get shocked and find it difficult to deal with you. Keep your guards on, and don't take uncalculated decisions, advises Ganesha, rather get your current assignments cross the finishing line.

PISCES
Today will be a hectic day for you. Most of your time will be spent in making your relationships on the business as well as the personal front more meaningful. You will likely find yourself attending social events. There is also the possibility that you will attend some religious ritual today. Apart from this, nothing substantial is likely to occur today, says Ganesha.

Madhavan 'roasts' Chetan Bhagat



Mumbai: R Madhavan and Chetan Bhagat got into a banter-filled Twitter exchanges in which the actor seemed subtly roasting the author.

It all began on Monday with Netflix India asking people to pick between books and movies. Bhagat replied to the thread, saying: "My books, and the movies based on them."

It caught Madhavan's eye, who replied: "Hey Chetan...My bias is movies > books." Soon a hilarious war-of-words commenced between the two on the micro-blogging website.

To Madhavan's message, Bhagat's reply read: "Have you ever heard anyone ever say the movie is better than the book?" "Yes! 3 Idiots," pat came the reply from Madhavan, who referred to the 2009 blockbuster he starred in, based on Bhagat's maiden best-seller titled *Five Point Someone*.

"Well I prefer to be known as Chetan Bhagat over being known as Farhan from that one movie," Bhagat said. "I'm not known just as Farhan. I'm also known as Manu from *Tanu Weds Manu*, *Kartikh from Alaiya*, and my favourite, *Maddy kyunki mein rehta hoon sab ke dil mein*," Madhavan said.

The banter went on till night, when Madhavan finally disclosed that the exchanges were "scripted".

Los Angeles: Reality TV survival expert Bear Grylls who shot to fame after *Man vs Wild* said that he killed "way too many animals" in his early days.

Speaking to *BBC 4*, Grylls expressed his regret by proclaiming that he should not kill anymore animals and only eat dead animals instead, reports *femalefirst.co.uk*.

"I think in terms of survival and food, definitely in the early days we were killing way too many snakes and stuff like that in the name of survival. I've moved so far away from that nowadays," Grylls has taken inspiration from the surge in veganism and his experience with vegan stars on his shows who have altered his thinking towards eating meat.

"I have taken many, many stars who are vegan and vegetarian into the wild. It has been a wonderful adventure and I am always super respectful of that," stated the former 21 SAS reservist, who was part of the UK Special Forces in the late 90s, served as a trooper, survival instructor and patrol medic.

Presenting a historic moment is a huge responsibility: Wamiqa

Grylls regrets killing animals for his shows



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



Kangana talks about her life-altering experience



Mumbai: For Kangana Ranaut, working on *Thalaivi* has been an experience of a lifetime as it allowed her to explore and portray the life of late Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa, both in terms of emotions and physicality.

Talking about her experience of working in the film, Kangana said, "Thalaivi was definitely a life-changing experience for me as it was profuse with learning. Portraying a strong and inspiring personality like Jaya amma, was an enriching experience."

Praising the late politician for her versatility, the actress said, "Among one of the many hats that she wore, Jaya amma was also a trained Bharatanatyam dancer, and a fabulous actress in mainstream cinema. She had a very different physique as compared to mine."

As the film gears up for its world television premiere, she feels grateful to have portrayed a character with such broad range and span, "The storyline follows from the time she was 16 up till she turned 42 that had to look absolutely convincing, and there is a lot that went behind transforming my body in a way that would look like hers. It was our director, Vijay Sir, that made me believe that I could do this and now that I look back, I am only grateful to have played this career-defining role."

FUN post CROSSWORD

CROSSWORD

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14		15		16		17		18
19			20				21	
22								
23				24				
25							26	

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Across

1 Labels	23 Raw fish dish	6 Desiccated (4-3)
3 Top-heavy	24 Coarse lace	7 Black, in poetry
9 Blatant lie	25 Cleopatra, for one	8 Choice
10 Latin ballroom dance	26 Questions	12 Sphere
11 The Red Cross, c.g. (7,5)		13 Tornadoes
14 Young fellow		15 Visits (5,2)
16 Weeper of myth		17 Tempt
18 Bow wood		20 Constructed
19 They can pave the way		21 Draws nigh
		22 To be, to Brutus
		24 Extinct flightless bird

Down

1 Government building (4,4)
2 Body snatcher partner
4 Neither's
5 Aquarium fish

SUDOKU

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	5	6						4
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SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

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SUDOKU

3	5	4	6	8	7	9	1	2
6	1	7	9	2	5	8	3	4
9	2	8	4	1	3	6	5	7
2	4	9	7	3	8	5	6	1
1	3	5	2	6	9	7	4	8
8	7	6	1	5	4	2	9	3
7	6	3	8	9	1	4	2	5
5	8	2	3	4	6	1	7	9
4	9	1	5	7	2	3	8	6

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



ENRICHING EXPERIENCE

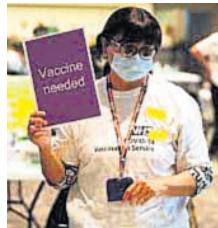
Actor Kangana Ranaut says working on late Tamil Nadu CM J Jayalalithaa's biopic has been an experience of a lifetime

LEISURE

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EUROPE WEIGHS OMICRON CURBS

Countries across Europe considered new curbs on movement as US Prez called on military medics to support hospitals

INTERNATIONAL P7



INDIA GO DOWN

India suffer a 3-5 defeat against Japan in the semifinal of the Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament

SPORTS BACK PAGE

BHUBANESWAR | WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22 | 2021

P1



Duty on palm oil cut to 12.5 pc

New Delhi: The government Monday cut the basic customs duty on refined palm oil to 12.5 per cent from 17.5 per cent as part of efforts to increase domestic supplies and bring down the retail prices of the cooking oil. The revised Basic Customs Duty (BCD) will be effective till the end of March 2022. The latest move also comes on a day when the government decided to allow traders to import refined palm oil without licence for one more year till December 2022 and markets regulator banned launch of new derivative contracts of crude palm oil and a few other agricultural commodities. All these measures have been put in place at a time when inflation is ruling high.



Coldwave for 3 days more

Bhubaneswar: The Indian Meteorological Department Tuesday said cold wave to severe cold wave with isolated cold day conditions will prevail over interior districts and adjacent coastal districts of Odisha over next 2-3 days. Minimum temperature will drop by 5 to 6 degree Celsius. The IMD issued orange warning for cold wave to severe cold wave over Boudh, Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Mayurbhanj, Kalahandi, Bolangir and Sonepur. Yellow warning for isolated cold wave condition over Balasore, Bhadrak, Puri, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Khurda, Cuttack, Ganjam, Nayagarh, Jajpur, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar, Angul, Deogarh, Sambalpur, Bargarh, Nuapada and Nawarangpur.

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BIRDS OF SAME FEATHER...



A flock of Lesser Flamingos that migrated here during winter at Airoli creek in Mumbai, Tuesday

Centre blocks 20 anti-India YouTube channels, 2 websites

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 21: The information and broadcasting ministry Tuesday said in a "closely coordinated" effort with intelligence agencies, it has ordered blocking of 20 YouTube channels and two websites as they were spreading anti-India propaganda and fake news. On Monday, the ministry issued two orders, one directing YouTube to block the 20 channels and the other, for blocking of the news websites.

"The channels and the websites belong to a coordinated disinformation network operating from Pakistan and spreading fake news about various sensitive subjects related to India," the information and broadcasting ministry said in

These channels posted contents on issues such as the farmers' protest, protests related to the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, and 'tried to incite minorities against the govt of India'

Omicron enters state

The two cases from Jagatsinghpur and Khurda, are stable now. One is asymptomatic while another has mild symptoms

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 21: Two Omicron cases have been detected in the state. Both are foreign returnees and they are under isolation, an official said here Tuesday. "After genome sequencing, we found two Omicron positive cases among foreign returnees. While one person returned from Nigeria, another returned from Qatar," said director, public health, Niranjan Mishra.

Both Omicron positive persons have returned from non-at-risk countries and from beginning they are under isolation, he said, adding, "Both are stable now. One person is asymptomatic while another has mild symptoms."

One, from Jagatsinghpur, is undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Cuttack while another is a resident of Khurda and is admitted to a Bhubaneswar hospital, sources said.

Contract tracing of both the persons has been done. As many as 21 persons, who have come in contact with the positive persons have been traced out and RTPCR testing is being done, Mishra said. He said genome sequencing will be conducted for all those who were found positive in RTPCR test.

"Since November 21, we are put-

2 CONTAINMENT ZONES IN CITY

Bhubaneswar: Containment zones were back in the city Tuesday. Following detection of increased number of Covid-19 cases from Jayadurga Nagar of Bomikhil area and ward no 11 of VSS Nagar, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) declared these areas as containment zones. As per the BMC order, no one can move out of these areas nor can anyone enter them. The BMC will provide all essential services to the residents staying in these zones. In larger public interest and with a view to containing the spread of Covid 19, no public shall move into the containment zones and move out. All inhabitants within these zones will strictly remain in home and all shopping establishments of whatsoever nature shall be closed immediately. All government and private institutions in these zones will remain closed.

ting all foreign returnees including those who returned from 'non-at-risk' countries are under surveillance. So far, around 8800 people from foreign countries have returned to Odisha, of which 1600 are from 'at-risk' countries," Mishra said. Among the foreign returnees, 12 persons have tested Covid-19 positive while a few people are untraceable, he said.

As the transmission rate of the new variant is very high, the director cautioned all people and appealed them to follow Covid appropriate behavior.

Aid pours in ahead of polls

Beneficiaries who have availed houses under state schemes will receive ₹3,000 while those awaiting PMAY will receive ₹5,000

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 21: Ahead of Panchayat elections, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday announced house repairing assistance of ₹3,000 for those who have availed houses under state schemes and ₹5,000 for those who are waiting to get houses under the PMAY. The Chief Minister announced this after chairing a meeting of the state cabinet Tuesday evening.

All the beneficiaries who have availed houses under state schemes—the Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana (BPGY), BPGY (Mining) and Nirman Shramik Pucca Ghar Yojana will get house repairing assistance of ₹3,000 each, he said.

Similarly, the state government will provide ₹5,000 to needy families who have been deprived of houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (Grameen) to repair their houses. Odisha is the first state in the country to make such a decision, Patnaik said. Stating that Odisha faces cyclones almost every year, he said shelter is a basic need for security of all.

"Biju Babu's dream was to have a roof over the heads of all families. To realise his dream, we have



TOP-UP FOR NEEDY

- CM announces house repairing aid for housing scheme beneficiaries
- State govt will bear additional cost of ₹1,444 cr for this move

₹3,000

will be given to beneficiaries covered under state schemes

₹5,000

will be given to those waiting to get houses under PMAY

LIVELIHOOD SOP OF ₹1,000 EACH

Bhubaneswar: Ahead of the three-tier Panchayat elections, the state government Tuesday released Rs350crore for disbursement of livelihood assistance of ₹1,000 each to ration card holders. In view of Covid situation, the state government has decided to distribute the special aid to all eligible beneficiaries covered under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and State Food Security Scheme (SFSS), Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare additional secretary MQ Haque said in a letter. Haque asked the State Civil Supplies Corporation to release the funds to all 30 districts immediately and complete the distribution within seven days from the date of start. As per the letter, the Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana cards will be used as the primary identity proof. However, in case of non-availability of BSKY cards, existing NFSA and SFSS cards will be taken as ID proof. Civil supply officers will download block/ULB-wise NFSA and SFSS card lists for January 2022 allotment from the Ration Card Management System dashboard and prepare a block/ULB-wise funds requirement. Accordingly, Collectors will credit funds to the bank.

launched the Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana. In the first Cabinet of my government after the 2014 election, we had decided to convert all kutcha houses to pucca and good work has been done in this direction," he said.

He said, Odisha is one of the leading states in the country in execution of rural housing schemes. The state government has spent more than ₹22,000 crore since 2014.

For this purpose, Naveen said the

state government has launched Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana (BPGY), BPGY (Mining) and Nirman Shramik Pucca Ghar Yojana. The central scheme of the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (Grameen) is also there, for which, the state government bears about half the cost.

"Many eligible families have been waiting for a long time to get a house under the central scheme. Sadly, people from our tribal areas

and western Odisha are mostly affected by this. In this regard, I have been repeatedly drawing the attention of the Union government," the Chief Minister said.

"I know that our poor people are in distress because of Covid. You are facing difficulty even to paint your houses. I can feel your pain. To this end, the state cabinet has taken this historic decision today to help the poor," he said.

About 30 lakh families will benefit from the decision and the amount will be directly transferred to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries, the CM said. The state government will bear an additional cost of ₹1,444 crore for this move and the fund will be met from BPGY, he added. Hitting out at the Centre for not sanctioning PMAY houses, Naveen said, "As long as my government is there, I will not allow my brothers and sisters in the state to be harassed for a house. I wish everyone to live with dignity. We are trying to get a pucca house for you all from the central scheme."

"However, no need to worry, if the central government does not accept yours' legitimate rights, the state government is with you. We will take steps to provide pucca houses to you all," the Chief Minister stated. The state government is after the Centre to sanction 1.84 lakh houses for Fani-hit people and another 13 lakh houses for non-Fani affected districts comprising tribal and KBK districts.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Take a route which has no religious sites or statues of revered leaders. I want to reach home safely!

Covishield useless after 3 months: Lancet

The findings suggest booster doses are needed to help maintain protection in those vaccinated with Covishield or Oxford-AstraZeneca

AGENCIES

London, Dec 21: The protection offered by the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine declines after three months of receiving two doses of the preventive, according to a study published in The Lancet journal.

The findings drawn from datasets in Brazil and Scotland suggest that booster programmes are needed to help maintain protection from severe disease in those vaccinated with AstraZeneca, known as Covishield in India.

The researchers analysed data for two million people in Scotland and 42 million people in Brazil who had been vaccinated with the AstraZeneca vaccine. In



Scotland, when compared with two weeks after receiving a second dose, there was approximately a fivefold increase in the chance of being hospitalised or dying from COVID-19 nearly five months after being double vaccinated, the researchers said.

The decline in effectiveness begins to first appear at around three months, when the risk of hospitalisation and death is double that of two weeks after the second dose,

they said. The researchers from Scotland and Brazil found that the risk of hospitalisation and death increases threefold just short of four months after the second vaccine dose. Similar numbers were seen for Brazil, they said.

"Vaccines have been a key tool in fighting the pandemic, but waning in their effectiveness has been a concern for a while," said Professor Aziz Sheikh, from the University of Edinburgh, UK. "By

identifying when waning first starts to occur in the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, it should be possible for governments to design booster programmes that can ensure maximum protection is maintained," Sheikh said.

The team was able to compare data between Scotland and Brazil as they had a similar interval between doses - 12 weeks - and initial prioritisation of who was vaccinated - people at highest risk of severe disease and healthcare workers. The dominant variant was different in each country during the study period - Delta in Scotland and Gamma in Brazil.

This means the decline in effectiveness is likely because of vaccine waning and the impact of variants, according to the researchers. The study also estimated vaccine effectiveness at similar fortnightly intervals by comparing outcomes of people who have been jabbed with those who are unvaccinated.

Both Houses pass electoral reforms Bill

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Dec 21: Parliament Tuesday passed a bill to link electoral roll data with the Aadhaar ecosystem with Rajya Sabha passing it by voice vote amid a walkout by the opposition.

The Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021, which was passed in Lok Sabha Monday, seeks to weed out fake voters from electoral rolls. It seeks to allow electoral registration officers to seek Aadhaar number of people who want to register as voters "for the purpose of establishing the identity".

At the same time, the amendment bill makes it clear that "no application for inclusion of name in the electoral roll shall be denied and no entries in the electoral roll shall be deleted for inability of an individual to furnish or intimate

Aadhaar number due to such sufficient cause as may be prescribed". The bill was passed after an hour-long discussion with members of several parties supporting it but had some concerns. They said the bill is part of electoral reforms and will help weed out fake and bogus voters in the electoral rolls.

Brushing aside opposition criticism, Law Minister Kiren Rijiju said, "In our democracy, the electoral process should be cleansed and that can happen only if the electoral rolls are clean." "This bill will be opposed only by those who take advantage of fake voting. Otherwise, there is no basis for opposing this bill," he said, adding the new and genuine voters will never forgive them for doing so. He said the country has understood how necessary the electoral reform bill is and termed it as a "revolutionary bill".

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	56319.01	↑ 497.00
NIFTY	16770.80	↑ 156.60
DOLLAR	75.87	↓ ₹0.31
EURO	85.32	↓ ₹0.05
GOLD	₹48,207	↓ ₹33
SILVER	₹61,952	↑ ₹535

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	24.9°C	24.0°C
TEMP MIN	10.0°C	10.1°C
Humidity	71%	64%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	dry weather most likely	

CBI books trader over loan fraud

Bhubaneswar: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Tuesday registered two fresh cases against Cuttack-based businessman for duping a nationalised bank of more than Rs 40 crore.

Banker arrested for availing loan illegally

Bhubaneswar: Commissionerate Police Tuesday arrested a woman staff of a nationalised bank for illegally availing loan against the fixed deposit account of a 62-year-old retired government servant.

Man gets 20 yr in jail for raping minor girl

Cuttack: A special Pocco court here Tuesday sentenced a man to 20 years of imprisonment after convicting him for raping a minor girl in Nemala area of Cuttack district in 2019.

Odisha clocks 100% in faecal sludge mgmt

Bhubaneswar, Dec 21: Odisha has excelled in achieving 100 per cent faecal sludge management with the help of a strong political will, according to National Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (NFSSM) Alliance comprehensive infographic 'India for the World'.

WASSUP TODAY

BHUBANESWAR Inaugural ceremony of Odisha State Safety Conclave-2021, hotel The New Marrion, 10:30am

Programmes/announcements for wassup today may be sent to opwassup@gmail.com for record, it must also carry the sender's mobile number for our verification, but not for publication.

Bone-chilling cold to grip 7 dists

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 21: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Tuesday said that severe cold wave conditions are very likely to prevail over the interior districts and adjacent coastal districts of Odisha during next two-three days.

The IMD said that minimum temperature will be below normal by 5 to 6 degrees Celsius in interior Odisha during next three days and by 4 degrees to 5 degrees during next 3 days.

The IMD also issued orange warning for isolated cold wave to severe cold wave conditions in Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Mayurbhanj, Kalahandi, Bolangir, Sonepur and Boudh.

Similarly yellow warning for isolated cold wave condition has been issued for Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Cuttack, Ganjam, Nayagarh, Jajpur, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar, Angul, Deogarh, Sambalpur, Bargarh, Nuapada, Kandhamal and Nabarangpur.

SRC's advisory

The Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) has issued advisory after the IMD's prediction of cold wave to severe cold wave that is likely to prevail over several districts of Odisha during next two-three days.

The SRC said there is increased likelihood of cold related illnesses



People buying winter clothes from a stall at Kochilei market in Rasulgarh area of Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

Bhubaneswar recorded the third lowest December temperature in the last 10 years at 10 degrees Celsius. The minimum temperature at Similiguda in Koraput district was 4.5 degrees C, while it plunged to 10.1 degrees in Cuttack

among people which may get aggravated due to prolonged exposure to cold. Livestock may also get affected due to prolonged exposure to cold.

People in the districts under yellow warning and also in other areas, where intense cold is felt, are

advised to stay indoors during night and avoid exposure to cold.

Movement during night especially in two-wheelers or in open cars must be avoided. Necessary safety measures are to be taken while using electrical and gas hearing devices or using fire for

Home tutor 'kidnaps' minor sisters in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 21: In a shocking incident, a man from Badagada area here has accused the home tutor of kidnapping his minor daughters from his residence, Sunday.

The Commissionerate Police has started investigations into the matter on the basis of a complaint lodged by the victims' father at Badagada police station.

The parents of the missing girls suspect that the accused tutor, Gopalkrushna Badatya, 33, of Khurda, might have abducted the girls when they were away for some work.

The father of the girls also alleged that Badatya had recently threatened him of dire consequences after he asked him not to come home for tuition around 10 days ago.

Badatya had reportedly warned the complainant that the sisters would harass the family members if he was stopped from giving tuition to the girls.

The minor girls had reportedly written in a letter that they would return home after eight days.

Police reportedly carried out raids at different places including the native house of the accused in Khurda.

"We have launched a manhunt by registering a case (435/21) in



We have launched a manhunt by registering a case (435/21) in this regard. The accused youth has been residing in the locality for the last couple of years. He has been giving tuition to several students in the area for many days. We are trying to ascertain the reasons behind the abduction of the two minor sisters

BISWARANJAN NAYAK | BADAGADA IIC

this regard. The accused youth has been residing in the locality for the last couple of years. He has been giving tuition to several students in the area for many days. We are trying to ascertain the reasons behind the abduction of the two minor sisters," IIC of the Badagada police station, Biswaranjan Nayak told Orissa POST.

Speaking on the allegations of elopement, he said that it would be premature to claim something at this stage of investigations.

Agri minister calls for environment protection

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 21: Higher Education and Agriculture Minister Arun Kumar Sahoo, Tuesday, advised the National Service Scheme (NSS) volunteers to work diligently towards environmental conservation as ecological degradation is the prime cause of health hazards afflicting the world.

The minister was addressing a gathering during valedictory programme of National Integration Camp organised by the NSS in collaboration with SOA. Over 200 NSS volunteers from 20 states participated in the camp.

Sahoo said that environmental degradation has been leading to serious health problems in the world even as Covid-19 pandemic continues to wreak havoc.

Sahoo also encouraged students to develop interest in sporting activities highlighting the state government's initiatives to support and development of hockey in India.

Sahoo said environmental degradation has been leading to serious health problems in the world even as Covid-19 pandemic continues to wreak havoc

"It has led to the Indian hockey team winning an Olympic medal in the Tokyo games after a gap of four decades," he said, adding Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik is an avid hockey follower as he played the game passionately in his younger days.

SOA Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Pradipta Kumar Nanda presided over the function.

NSS Regional Director Sarita Patel, SNO of State NSS Cell Ramesh Chandra Behera and SOA Dean (Students' Welfare) Prof Jyoti Ranjan Das and others were present at the event.

HC: Regularise STA data entry operators

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack: The Orissa High Court Tuesday directed the state government to regularise the jobs of data entry operators engaged at the State Transport Authority (STA) and at the offices of all regional transport officers (RTOs) within three months.

A bench of Justice BR Sarangi asked the state government to regularise the services of around 350 data entry operators engaged at the STA and RTO offices in Odisha.

In their petition, the data entry operators informed the HC that they have been working at the STA and RTO offices since 2008. However, the state government did not take any step to regularise their jobs.

Panda seeks passport office in Nuapada

New Delhi: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Basanta Panda recently met Union External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar here and requested him to open a Passport Seva Kendra in Nuapada district. The BJP MP submitted a memorandum to the Union minister highlighting the difficulties faced by residents of Nuapada to obtain a passport.

ATHLETIC MEET



Students participate in a march past during the inauguration of 15th annual athletic meet of Ravenshaw University in Cuttack, Tuesday

2 killed, 1 hurt in Puri road mishap

Puri: Two youths were killed while another was left injured after the trio was hit by an unidentified truck near Kathapola bypass on Puri-Bhubaneswar NH here Tuesday. The incident occurred early in the morning when Siddharth Das, Trilochan Pradhan and Pradeep Das, all 22-year olds of Orakala village under Pipili police limits here, were on way to Srimandir on a motorcycle. "They had just crossed a median near the truck owners' association office at Kathapola bypass when a truck hit them. While Siddharth and Trilochan were crushed to death under the truck, Pradeep had a close shave," said a source. Informed, Chandanpur police reached the spot and rushed the trio to the DHH where Siddharth and Trilochan were declared dead.

All GPs in Odisha have banking outlets: Centre

Karad said all the panchayats of Odisha are covered with banking outlets including bank branches, business correspondents and India Post Payments Bank centres within 5km radius

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 21: At a time when the state government is pleading before the banks to open more branches in the state, Union Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat Karad Tuesday said all panchayats of Odisha are covered with banking outlets within 5km radius.

Replying to a question of Rajya Sabha MP Prasanna Acharya, Karad said all the GPs (gram panchayats) of Odisha are covered with banking outlets including bank branches, business correspondents and India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) centres within 5km radius.

To ensure availability of banking outlets within 5km of all inhabited villages, the Centre has launched a Geographic Information System (GIS) based mobile app, Jan Dhan Darshak App (JDD App). The banks upload the GIS lo-

cation of their branches, business correspondents (BCs) and automated teller machines (ATMs) on the app.

In terms of the revised guidelines issued by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) May 18, 2017, the term 'branch' has been substituted by 'banking outlet (BO) which includes the brick and mortar branches and business correspondent (BC) outlets to enable banks in expanding their network even in remote areas in a cost-effective manner for hassle-free service to customers, the Union minister said.

However, rolling out of banking outlets in uncovered areas is a continuous process and it is being looked after by the State Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC), in consultation with the concerned state government, member banks and other stakeholders, he added.

The banks are also considering the proposals for opening banking outlets by assessing the commercial viability. The banks carry out surveys to assess the viability of opening a banking outlet, Karad said.

A total of 26,673 banking touch points including 5,822 bank branches and 20,851 business correspondents are providing banking services in Odisha, he added.

BJD backs electoral reforms Bill in RS

New Delhi: The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in the Rajya Sabha Tuesday supported the Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021 that seeks to link electoral



ODISHA IN PARLIAMENT

rolls to Aadhaar numbers.

The party, however, raised concern over privacy-related issues and urged the government to address them.

Speaking on behalf of the regional party in the Upper House, BJD MP Sujet Kumar said Section 23 of the Bill allows linking of electoral rolls with Aadhaar numbers and this is a matter of concern.

"We support the intent of the government but there is possi-

THE ELECTION LAWS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2021 SEEKS TO LINK ELECTORAL ROLLS TO AADHAAR NUMBERS

THE BILL ALLOWS ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICERS TO ASK FOR AADHAAR NUMBERS OF APPLICANTS SEEKING TO REGISTER THEMSELVES AS VOTERS

THE PARTY, HOWEVER, RAISED CONCERN OVER PRIVACY-RELATED ISSUES AND URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO ADDRESS THEM

bility of abuse of this intent. If the purpose is to ascertain identity of a voter then Aadhaar number is enough but why should we link Aadhaar with voter card," Kumar said.

The BJD MP raised apprehensions that following this amendment some people may be left out of the voter list. He claimed that use of Aadhaar for PDS and MGNREGA payments also resulted in exclusion of some beneficiaries.

He also said that this proposed linkage will make the data available to Election Commission of India but there is possibility that the data will be used for targeted political advertisement.

"In the absence of data protection, if the data is available to one political party then it should be made available to every other political party," Kumar said.

Significantly, the Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021 that seeks to link electoral rolls to Aadhaar numbers was passed in the Rajya Sabha Tuesday, amid protests from Opposition members.

The Bill was passed in the Lok Sabha Monday.

The Bill allows electoral registration officers to ask for Aadhaar numbers of applicants seeking to register themselves as voters. Union Law and Justice Minister Kiren Rijiju, however, clarified that linking of Aadhaar to Electoral Photo Identity Card is voluntary.

The Bill also seeks to allow the officers to ask for the Aadhaar numbers from persons who have already been included in the electoral rolls for the purpose of authentication of entries.

Pacts inked for Phase II of LED street light projects

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 21: The Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) department Tuesday organised a workshop on smart LED street lighting projects in 114 urban local bodies (ULBs) in Odisha.

All deputy commissioners of municipal corporations, executive officers of municipalities and engineers of street lighting projects in the ULBs participated in the workshop. H&UD Secretary G Mathivathanan highlighted the implications of both retrofitting and greenfield LED street lighting projects being implemented by the state government.

Director of municipal administration Sangramjit Nayak presented a brief outline of the projects and their different facets. He insisted on proper coordination between the ULBs and the executing agencies to ensure that the objectives of the statewide retrofitting and greenfield projects worth around Rs 590 crore are fulfilled.

Agreements were also signed with ULBs for implementation of Phase II of the greenfield LED street lighting projects covering 270km stretches with 13,505 poles and 14,805 LED luminaires with an expenditure of Rs 56.48 crore. The Projects are scheduled to be completed by March 2022, sources said.

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Cauldron of Calamities

The year 2021 did nothing positive for the world. It rather rubbed salt into the wounds--- adding cascades of calamities to the pandemic. Earth became a cauldron of chaos, leaving thousands dead and stranded due to successive natural disasters. The very elements of the planet became hostile, raising eyebrows over the evident climatic shift while burning, ravaging and submerging parts of almost every continent. From hurricanes and winter storms in North America to cyclones, volcanoes and typhoons in Asia, nature unleashed its fiercest of forces to torment the already gasping mankind. Orissa POST takes a look back at the endurance of human race in 2021 on the face of a rather nightmarish guise of the world



Hurricane Ida
After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Ida was the second most damaging and intense hurricane to wreck US State of Louisiana. During landfall, the maximum sustained wind speed was 240kmph. The remnants of the system also caused floods and tornadic destructions across the Northeastern US. Ida, since its inception August 23 in the Caribbean Sea, showed signs of becoming a formidable foe and developed into a tropical depression August 26 and subsequently a tropical storm the same day. The system became a hurricane the next day and moved over Cuba. Owing to rapid intensification over the Gulf of Mexico, Ida turned into a category 4 hurricane and made landfall August 29, also the 16th anniversary of Katrina, devastating the town of Grand Isle. The storm took 115 lives and left damages worth 65.25 billion USD.

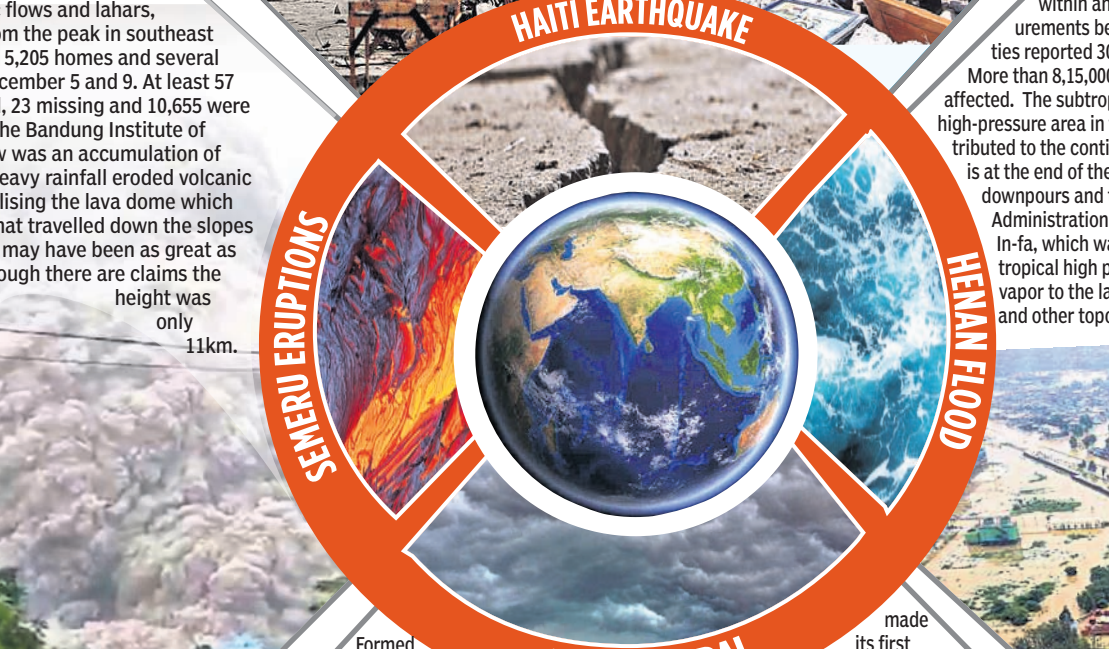


Texas Storm Uri
Winter Storm Uri affected US, Northern Mexico and parts of Canada from February 13 to 17. It started out in the Pacific Northwest, quickly moved into the Southern US and subsequently to the Midwestern and Northeastern US. Uri pushed over 170 million Americans under winter weather alerts and caused blackouts for over 9.9 million people in the US and Mexico, most notably in the 2021 Texas power crisis. It also brought severe weather to Southeastern US, including several tornadoes. By July 14, the death toll had risen to at least 237, including 223 in the US and 14 in Mexico. The system cost over \$196.5 billion in damages, including at least \$195 billion in the US and over \$1.5 billion in Mexico, making it the costliest winter storm on record and the costliest natural disaster in the US.

Tornado outbreak
The largest and deadliest on record tornado outbreak in December brought catastrophic damage and fatalities across portions of the Southern US and Ohio Valley December 10 and 11. A trough progressed eastward across the US, interacting with a moist and unstable environment across Mississippi Valley. Tornadoes began in northeastern Arkansas, and ramed into Missouri, Illinois, Tennessee, and Kentucky. The most prolific activity was caused by a long-track supercell thunderstorm that produced a family of strong tornadoes that travelled across four Mid-South states. A path was composed of two distinct EF4 tornadoes, with a



The Tiburon Peninsula in the Caribbean nation of Haiti was toppled by a devastating magnitude 7.2 earthquake at 8.29 EDT August 14. The 10km deep hypocentre was located 150km west of the capital Port-au-Prince. The quake damaged at least 1,37,500 buildings and left around 6,50,00 people in need of assistance. As of September 1, the death toll was 2,248 and over 12,000 people were injured. The quake remains the deadliest natural disaster of 2021, and the worst disaster to mar Haiti since 2010 earthquake. It has affected more than half a million children, as per UNICEF, and has inflicted an economic loss of over 1.5 billion US dollars which is 10% of the country's economy. The quake claimed the most casualties of any disaster since the 2018 Sulawesi earthquake and subsequent tsunami, which had killed close to 5,000 people.



SEMERU ERUPTIONS
The recent eruption of Mount Semeru, a volcano in the East Java province of the Indonesian island Java, began December 4 after heavy precipitation caused the collapse of the lava dome at the summit. Eight pyroclastic flows and lahars, travelling as far as 3km from the peak in southeast direction, damaged at least 5,205 homes and several public buildings between December 5 and 9. At least 57 people died, 104 more injured, 23 missing and 10,655 were displaced. A volcanologist at the Bandung Institute of Technology said the debris flow was an accumulation of material from past eruptions. Heavy rainfall eroded volcanic material on the summit, destabilising the lava dome which triggered the pyroclastic flows that travelled down the slopes of the volcano. The plume height may have been as great as 45km, although there are claims the height was only 11km.

HAITI EARTHQUAKE
Formed December 9 near the equator, a Category 5 super typhoon Rai AKA Odette that devastated Philippines was notorious for being unpredictable. The very next day of its formation, it dissipated before again turning into a tropical depression December 12. Favorable conditions ensured further intensification of the system into a tropical storm December 13 and subsequently a low-end Category 1 equivalent typhoon December 15 as an eye continued to be prominent. While approaching Philippines, the system unexpectedly juiced up into a Category 5 super Typhoon and

HENAN FLOOD
China's Henan province was affected by severe flooding attributed to prolonged heavy rainfall throughout July. Record-breaking figures were observed in 19 weather stations in the province and July 20, the provincial capital Zhengzhou recorded 201.9 millimetres of rainfall within an hour, the highest ever recorded since measurements began in 1951. As of August 2, provincial authorities reported 302 deaths (292 in Zhengzhou) and over 50 missing. More than 8,15,000 people were evacuated and 14.5 million people affected. The subtropical high in the western Pacific and the continental high-pressure area in the Sea of Japan and inland Northwest China contributed to the continuous rainfall in the province. The region, in addition, is at the end of the subtropical high in mid-July, which causes frequent downpours and thunderstorms. According to China Meteorological Administration, the main reasons for the torrential rains are Typhoon In-fa, which was 1,000km away from Henan, and the continuous subtropical high pressure that continuously guides a large amount of water vapor to the land and is affected by the uplift of the Taihang Mountains and other topographical areas.

TYPHOON RAI
After making its last landfall over Palawan, Rai steadily weakened before again re-intensifying into a Category 5 equivalent typhoon December 18. Places like Bohol and Cagayan de Oro were flooded, and Surigao City was reported to be 100% damaged, making Rai the worst Calamity ever for the City. So far, 375 people have reportedly died and at least 56 are missing. The UN estimates around 13 million people to have been affected by Rai. The current estimate of damages stands at over \$628 million.



Uttarakhand landslide
The Chamoli disaster began February 7 in the environs of the Nanda Devi National Park in the outer Garhwal Himalayas in Uttarakhand. The mayhem was caused by a large rock and ice avalanche estimated at about 27 million cubic meters with 80% rock and 20% glacier ice. Over the course of 3.2km elevation difference from the peak, the glacier ice melted and caused a debris flood wave, worsening the impact. The disaster flooded Chamoli district, and Rishiganga, Dhaultiganga and Alakananda rivers. At least 83 people died and 121 are still missing, 140 being workers at the Tapovan Dam. Most houses in the path were damaged and the undamaged ones were covered in slush up to 20 feet deep.



Cyclone Tauktae
Tauktae was a powerful, deadly and damaging tropical cyclone in the Arabian Sea that became the strongest tropical cyclone to make landfall in Gujarat since the 1998 Gujarat cyclone and one of the strongest tropical cyclones to ever affect the west coast of India. It originated from a low pressure area in the Arabian Sea May 13. The low gradually intensifies because of coastal warm waters May 14, strengthened into a cyclonic storm the same day and reached severe cyclonic storm status May 15 while paralleling the coasts of Kerala, Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra. Early May 17, it became an extremely severe cyclonic storm and underwent an eyewall replacement cycle and weakened, before restrengthening as it made landfall. The storm displaced over 2,00,000 people in Gujarat while causing widespread infrastructure and agricultural damage. At least 174 people have died, with over 80 still missing. Losses from Tauktae are estimated at ₹15,000 crore.

South India floods
The 2021 South India floods are a series of floods associated with Depression BOB 05 that is causing widespread disruption across the Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and the nearby Sri Lanka. The rainfall started November 1 in Tamil Nadu and the flooding began November 6 and is currently continuing. The flooding was caused by extremely heavy downpours from



La Palma eruptions
The 2021 Cumbre Vieja eruption, the most damaging volcanic eruption on La Palma, began September 19 as a flank eruption at the volcanic ridge comprising the southern half of the Spanish island of La Palma in the Canary Islands. It has caused evacuation of around 7,000 people, and the lava flow has covered over 1,000 hectares. The lava flow is about 3.5km wide in its widest point, about 6.2km long and has reached the sea, destroying over 3,000 buildings, cutting the coastal highway and forming a new peninsula. The town of Todoque, including its easternmost neighbourhood Los Campitos, was completely destroyed by lava, which has also reached La Laguna. The 3-month long eruption has been silent since December 13 and 1 death has been reported.



Europe floods
Several European countries were affected by severe floods between July 12 and 25. Some were catastrophic, causing deaths and widespread damage. The floods started in the UK as flash floods causing some property damage and inconvenience. Later, floods affected several river basins across Europe including Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Romania, Czech Republic and Switzerland. At least 242 people have died in the floods, including 196 in Germany, 42 in Belgium, 2 in Romania, 1 in Italy and 1 in Austria. July and August saw many floods occurring at similar times in Turkey, China, India, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the US and New Zealand. In addition to the confirmed fatalities, the flooding led to widespread power outages, forced evacuations and damage to infrastructure and agriculture in the affected areas. The damage to infrastructure was especially severe in Belgium and Germany. The floods are estimated to have cost up to 3 billion USD in insured losses, with the total damage costs being much higher, at a minimum of 11.8 billion USD.

Wildfires
Even at halfway through the calendar year, wildfire seasons were occurring in multiple continents and were larger than in previous history, with increased extreme weather such as droughts and heat waves caused by climate change strengthening the intensity and scale of fires.



FOCUS IDEOLOGIES

REFORMING CONSERVATISM



Although conservatives traditionally have resisted social and economic change, the center-right necessarily has evolved over time. The question, always, is whether it can continue to do so in ways that are still compatible with effective governance and democracy

were the key to an adaptable conservatism capable of offering meaningful responses when social and political change became inevitable. The darker side of this approach was its commitment to existing social hierarchies, such as those regarding gender and race. Along with its nationalism, the center right's willingness to defend such hierarchies accounted for much of its electoral appeal.

A third pillar was a commitment to markets. Like the first two pillars, this one helped the right define itself against various alternatives (whether Soviet socialism after 1917 or social democracy after World War II). Conservatives opposed extensive state ownership and various government interventions, both in order to preserve the benefits of free markets and in the name of Burkean gradualism.

Nonetheless, European and American conservatives remained adaptable, sometimes working with, and even investing in, the welfare state. True, in the first election after WWII, the Tories, under Winston Churchill, opposed the new welfare state that was being built according to the blueprint laid out by William Beveridge's famous 1942 report. But they lost that election, and conservative politicians soon made peace with many elements of the new dispensation. Meanwhile, in Nordic countries and Germany up until the 1980s, the center right was

almost as committed as the labour left was to basic welfare-state institutions.

But there was a fourth aspect to the right's electoral success: support for wealthy businesses, which often funded center-right parties. When the interests of big business conflicted with pro-market philosophy (such as opposition to monopoly), the right tended to side with big business.

A combination of economic and social developments has since destroyed this earlier center-right compact. With the rise of more radical right-wing ideas came new challenges and objections to the welfare state and the role of government in the economy. A new anti-regulation philosophy, popularised by Milton Friedman and other free-market thinkers, gained traction in the 1980s under British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and US President Ronald Reagan. And in the 1990s, it was lent further momentum by the collapse of the Soviet Union, an event that nullified a key social-democratic argument for the welfare state — namely, that it was necessary to prevent working-class demands for outright socialism.

Thatcher and Reagan's deregulatory agendas contributed to the rise in inequality over these past four decades of accelerating globalisation and automation, undercutting the feasibility of Burkean traditionalism and communitarian nationalism. At the same time,

the rise of mega-monopolies and multi-billionaires who back right-wing media outlets has made a mockery of the right's commitment to competitive markets.

Once again, the right will need to reinvent itself. Former German Chancellor Angela Merkel's policies, which started resembling core social-democratic measures over the last decade, and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's desultory efforts to revive Disraeli's one-nation conservatism, are an indication of how center-right parties might proceed. But these attempts appear unlikely to succeed, because they are not commensurate with the severity of the challenges the right — and the world — is facing.

To grapple effectively with the sources of inequality and the challenges posed by globalisation and Big Tech, center-right parties will need to undergo a massive transformation. American conservatives may find this process especially difficult, given their historical loyalties to big business and ultra-wealthy individuals. Indeed, they have long since abandoned Burke's ideas in the interest of clinging to power by any means. From Richard Nixon's cynical Southern strategy to Republican voter-suppression laws today, the American right has long relied on the US political system's malapportioned allocation of power to right-leaning rural areas.

This strategy cannot work forever, given demographic shifts toward more urban and educated voters and the mounting discontent with economic stagnation. The American right either will recognise that it must change, or it will become even more aggressive and reliant on a minority of voters — ultimately pitting it against democracy itself.

The Republican Party's worship of former President Donald Trump suggests that it is opting for the second option. That means the US is heading into a period of even deeper polarisation and dysfunctional governance. Meaningful policies to address inequality, climate change, and the stifling dominance of large tech companies are unlikely. Worse, the rise of repressive authoritarianism following a Trumpian restoration in 2024 cannot be ruled out.

The writer is Professor of Economics at MIT.
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Daron Acemoglu

TO GRAPPLE EFFECTIVELY WITH THE SOURCES OF INEQUALITY AND THE CHALLENGES POSED BY GLOBALISATION AND BIG TECH, CENTER-RIGHT PARTIES WILL NEED TO UNDERGO A MASSIVE TRANSFORMATION

The squabbling that has erupted within the US Democratic Party following its loss in the recent Virginia gubernatorial election has convinced many observers that the Republicans will handily retake the House of Representatives next year. In fact, it is the right whose future is most uncertain — a problem for which we are all paying the price.

The right has suffered identity crises before. The rise of mass democracy in the nineteenth century, when industrialisation created huge inequities and immiserated the working classes, could have wiped out traditional center-right parties, such as the British Conservatives. By concentrating tens of thousands of workers in cities and workplaces, new opportunities for solidarity and political organisation opened up. The appearance of new ideas — ranging from anarchism and utopian socialism to Marx and Engels's version of communism — reflected mass discontent and provided templates for an alternative organisation of society.

But the center right reinvented itself, perhaps most spectacularly under the leadership of Benjamin Disraeli in Britain. In the 1860s, Disraeli spearheaded reforms to expand the electorate (going even further than his rival, Liberal Prime Minister William Gladstone), because he believed that a conservative nationalist ideology would appeal to many workers. He was right. The Tories soon re-emerged as the leading party, often surpassing the Liberals for the rest of the century.

The new right succeeded by fusing several distinct philosophies and instincts. Its first pillar was nationalism, which came in various guises. Its more benign form was expressed in Disraeli's "One Nation" vision: a communitarian identity that would hold all citizens to be part of a single social contract. But Disraeli also channeled more aggressive nationalist sentiments, reflected in his commitment to a jingoistic vision of the British Empire. And in France and Germany, anti-Semitism was often central to the new conservatism.

A second pillar was the impulse to defend traditional institutions and the social order against radical change. These ideas, originating in Edmund Burke's powerful attack on the French Revolution,

IN JEST THIS

Don't take laughter for granted

If you enjoy laughing, good for you. Laughter doesn't just bring you pleasure, it has many other benefits, as long as you are careful when and where you laugh.

Don't laugh if you're in a classroom and the teacher mispronounces a word. The teacher might give you a low grade and have the last laugh. Don't laugh when your wife returns from the beauty salon with a new hairstyle. You might spend the night crying on the couch.

Whatever you do, don't laugh if you happen to be visiting North Korea during a national mourning period. If you're lucky, you'll be kicked out of the country. If you're unlucky, you'll just be kicked.

Actually, being kicked would be considered a 'lucky' punishment in North Korea, one of the most repressive countries in the world.

North Korea is currently observing an 11-day period of mourning, but not for anyone who died recently, not even for COVID-19 victims. This mourning period is

for the 10th anniversary of former leader Kim Jong Il's death December 17, 2011.

According to a Radio Free Asia (RFA) report, North Korea has periods of mourning every year for the death anniversaries of both national founder Kim Il Sung (one week) and his son Kim Jong Il (10 days). The mourning period has been extended by one day this year for the 10th anniversary of Kim Jong Il's death.

"During the mourning period, we must not drink alcohol, laugh or engage in leisure activities," a resident of the northeastern border city of Sinuiju told RFA's Korean Service.

I'm not sure what happens to people who laugh during a mourning period, but those who've been caught in other non-solemn activities such as drinking alcohol have been treated as "ideological criminals," the Sinuiju resident said. "They were taken away and never seen again."

The message is clear: North

Korea doesn't mess around. A mourning period is for mourning, and if you have an urge to laugh, do yourself a favour and cut onions for a while. Just find some way to cry or feel sad. Look at your bank balance if it helps. Ask your mother-in-law to visit. Compare yourself to someone on Facebook.

Whatever you do, don't watch a Vir Das comedy special. Even if you're in the privacy of your own home, you might burst out in laughter. Next thing you know, there'll be a knock on the door.

Police officer: "Was someone laughing? We heard laughter."

You: "Oh no, no laughter. It was crying. I was crying like a baby. I can't believe it has been only 10 years since our great leader left us. It feels like yesterday."

Police officer: "We definitely heard laughter. If you don't tell us who was laughing, we will take the whole family away. Maybe the whole neighborhood."

You: "Sorry, sir, it was this guy on Netflix named Vir Das. That

scoundrel made us laugh. If you are going to arrest anyone, please arrest him!"

Police officer: "Where does he live? We will get him!"

You: "I think he lives in India, but he travels around doing comedy shows. Maybe you can invite him to North Korea and arrest him."

Fortunately (or unfortunately) for people in North Korea, the government controls the media, which means that they can't watch comedians like Vir Das, especially during mourning periods, when the police are on the lookout for people who don't appear to be appropriately bereaved.

"From the first day of December, they will have a special duty to crack down on those who harm the mood of collective mourning," a resident of the southwestern province of South Hwanghae told RFA.

So next time you enjoy a bout of laughter, be grateful you live in a country where laughter is permissible year-round.

Take Truth for your force; take Truth for your refuge.

THE MOTHER



Don't Laugh, Nor Cry

No one in North Korea was allowed to buy provisions from grocery shops December 17 to mark the death anniversary of the supreme leader of the country Kim Jong Un's father, Kim Jong Il, who had ruled for 17 years until his death in 2011. Ironically, within a week of over 100 countries attending a US-sponsored virtual Summit for Democracy, the world is made to witness the height of dictatorship and trampling of individual freedom in North Korea. A ban has been imposed by the authoritarian regime on exhibiting in public the simplest of human emotions such as laughing and crying for 11 days when the country is in a state of mourning to grieve the death of their past leader who could not even free them from the shackles of hunger during a severe food crisis. What the North Koreans are being made to do is but a continuation of a practice, with even more harshness, being followed for the past decade. Many people who were caught drinking or being intoxicated during the mourning period in the past were arrested and treated as ideological criminals. They were taken away and never seen again.

What is appalling this time is the diktat that even if someone's family member dies during the mourning period, they would not be allowed to cry out loud and the body must be taken out only after the mourning period is over. People would not be allowed to celebrate birthdays either. The state television broadcasts showed people observing several moments of silence and bowing before portraits and statues of the departed leader, while air-raid sirens and car horns could be heard blaring and beeping. Kim Jong Un was shown with hundreds of officials at a ceremony outside the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun in the capital, Pyongyang, where the body of North Korea's founding leader, Kim Il Sung, also lies in state under glass. The three generations of the Kim family have ruled the country since 1948.

The question is whether the outpouring of grief is sincere or contrived, a product of brainwashing. Some North Koreans are believed to be sincerely sorrowful. But, analysts explain a minority who have benefited under Kim Jong Il's rule, belonged to the category of sincere mourners. Though the state media showcased the wailing students from Pyongyang's premier Secondary School as genuine expression of grief, fact is this school is where the elites, benefiting from the regime, go. But it is surprising that teens of a higher secondary school would actually be bothered to cry or laugh at the death anniversary of any leader who has passed away long back.

To complete the picture of authoritarian rule, state police officers have been deployed to watch for people who fail to look appropriately upset during the mourning period. From the first day of December, they have been tasked to crack down on those who try to destroy the mood of collective mourning in any way. It is a month-long special duty for the police.

To keep up the illusion of humane conduct of the regime, citizen groups and state-owned companies have been ordered to take care of those in poverty during the period of mourning, as the country is in the grip of a food crisis. The message that is being given out is social order and safety must be ensured and companies are being made to collect food to give to residents and employees who cannot come to work due to food shortages. Instructions have also been given to help out the 'kotjebi' (North Korea's street beggars).

Kim Jong Il ruled North Korea from 1994 until his death in 2011, and was then succeeded by his third and youngest son, current leader Kim Jong Un. Words trickling down from North Korea give a grim picture of the citizens' suffering during the period of mourning. The common refrain of many people is that the living are being forced to mourn the dead leader to death.

Even the services of old soldiers who had worked during Kim Jong Il's tenure are being used to deliver lectures to workers in factories on the supposed dedication of the departed leader "in the cause of the people." The propaganda is so blatant that reports emanating from North Korea suggest the people want food, coal and firewood during the winter and the raging COVID pandemic rather than lectures.

North Korea is facing acute poverty and hardships because of a series of international sanctions over its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes. But, the great dictator ruling the country is least bothered and continues to deny basic human needs to his people. The votaries of democracy need to seriously ponder over how to help the hapless people rather than organising summits to belt out inane lectures on the values of democracy. On the other hand, it is difficult for the international community of nations to act against a country like North Korea, which is highly weaponised and nuclear armed.

WISDOM CORNER

- You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today. **ABRAHAM LINCOLN**
- When angry count to ten before you speak. If very angry, count to one hundred. **THOMAS JEFFERSON**
- Action may not always bring happiness; but there is no happiness without action. **BENJAMIN DISRAELI**

WORDSWORTH

Quack

It's an abbreviation of an old Dutch word that in the modern language is spelled kwakzalver. It comes from quack, an early modern Dutch word meaning a person who chatters or prattles (probably connected to the English word for the noise a duck makes), and safe, essentially the same word as our salve. So a quacksalver was somebody who boasted about the virtues of his remedies, so it later became attached to a person who claimed to have miraculous medications. The longer form was common in the sixteenth century, but it was abbreviated later. The similarity of the full-length word to quicksilver, or mercury, and the once common use of that element in medicine (especially to treat diseases such as syphilis), falsely suggests a link with the name. But there's no connection.

Qubit

This is a key concept in the very new field of quantum computing. The aim is to produce a device which is the quantum equivalent of the digital computer. The qubit (pronounced exactly the same as the Old Testament measurement, the cubit) is a "quantum bit", the analogue at quantum dimensions of the ordinary computer's 1 or 0, on or off, heads or tails binary digit or bit. Unlike such digital representations, a qubit remains in an indeterminate state until it is observed, like a tossed coin that is still spinning. It was shown recently that in theory a quantum computer could solve certain mathematical problems, such as factoring large numbers, much faster than conventional ones, and so could be used, for example, in codebreaking. It might even be possible to employ the "action at a distance" properties of quantum mechanics to transport information instantaneously over great distances without loss. This may all sound like science fiction, but the first two-bit quantum logic gates were actually demonstrated at the end of 1995. If this field takes off, we shall probably see a whole series of new portmanteau words beginning in "qu". Anyone for "quanputer"?

LOL

Please describe him

A cop was interrogating a very intoxicated Irishman, who was also severely bleeding. The officer asked, "Can you describe



the person who did this to you?" The Irishman replied, "That's what I was doing when he hit me."



Melvin Durai

DON'T LAUGH WHEN YOUR WIFE RETURNS FROM THE BEAUTY SALON WITH A NEW HAIRSTYLE. YOU MIGHT SPEND THE NIGHT CRYING ON THE COUCH

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

OrissaPOST
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Inspiring stories

Sir, The Time magazine has declared Elon Musk as the 'Person of the Year 2021' for all his excellent endeavours. CEO of Tesla and SpaceX, Musk has now been making waves across the world for his successful business efforts. Time has long been choosing people from various fields for its coveted 'Person of the Year'. The interesting stories behind such people have been a source of inspiration for many. When the world has been grappling with crises after crises, such inspiring stories and people will be panacea for all ills. Still, media houses like Time and the international media should try to create a better world through beautiful reports and inspiring writing.

P. Senthil Saravana Durai,
MUMBAI

Aadhaar-voter ID linking

Sir, The Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021 that seeks to link Aadhaar with the Elector's Photo Identity Card (EPIC), has been passed in Lok Sabha amid Opposition protests. The Opposition demanded the rollback of the Bill. Many social activists and organisations have raised alarm over this move. In fact, the Election Commission had started linking the two in 2015. The process for around 30 crore IDs had been completed when it was stayed by the Supreme Court. Considering that when the EC linked the two about 55 lakh voters were deleted from the voter database of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, the move to link the two is a matter of concern. Several complicating factors are involved in the linking of the two. Concerns about the proposal include privacy and voter manipulation. A substantial amount of data linked to Aadhaar would be linked to voter database. Exclusion is a stark reality when data is linked to Aadhaar. Deletion of voters is done in an unsystematic way. There is no proper verification of voters whose names are to be deleted. Considering that India does not have a data protection law, the linking of Aadhaar and voter ID may create privacy concerns. To take a particular instance: Aadhaar data of over 7 crore people of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana was leaked in 2019. Initially, Aadhaar was a voluntary facility. Despite the SC order that Aadhaar should not be made mandatory, the government made Aadhaar mandatory for several services. Passage of Aadhaar Act made Aadhaar compulsory for many facilities and services. Despite the 2019 Amendment to the Aadhaar Act, Aadhaar is being used for verification. The Election Commission too uses Aadhaar details when voters are being enrolled.

Venu GS, KOLLAM (KERALA)

national



India's stature on the global stage has grown significantly and the world expects more from the country
S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

SHRINGLA LEAVES FOR MYANMAR

Foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla left for Myanmar Tuesday on a two-day visit, in the first such high-level outreach from India after that country's military evicted the democratically-elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in a coup February 1



of the day quote

The Centre is practising double standards on this issue. To lure voters, Prime Minister Narendra Modi went to Varanasi and referred to Chhatrapati Shivaji and how he fought the Mughals. But not a single Union minister has uttered a word on the insult meted out to Chhatrapati Shivaji in a BJP-ruled state
SANJAY RAUT | SHIV SENA LEADER

The word 'anti-national' has not been defined in statutes but was first inserted in the Constitution during Emergency in 1976 and subsequently removed a year later
NITYANAND RAI | UNION MINISTER

The BJP will raise the Maharashtra government's "failure" in protecting the reservation for OBCs in local bodies in the winter session of the state legislature beginning Wednesday
DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | BJP LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Derek suspended from Raja Sabha

New Delhi: TMC floor leader Derek O'Brien Tuesday said he was suspended from Raja Sabha while protesting the "mockery of Parliament and bulldozing" of the Election Laws (Amendment) Bill by the BJP, and hoped that this bill would be repealed soon in the same way the farm laws were taken back. O'Brien was suspended from the Upper House of Parliament Tuesday for the remaining part of the Winter Session after he threw a Raja Sabha rule book at the Chair.

13 TN fishermen arrested

Chennai: Thirteen more Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu -- seven from Myladuthurai, and six from Pudukottai were detained by Sri Lankan Navy for allegedly crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line. The fishermen were detained Monday evening. The fishermen according to state fisheries department had ventured into sea from Jagadapattinam fishing harbour in two mechanized trawlers.

Majithia booked under NDPS Act

Chandigarh: Former Punjab minister and senior SAD leader Bikram Singh Majithia has been booked under the NDPS Act, triggering allegations of "political vendetta" from his party. A case against Majithia under various sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act was registered on the basis of a 2018 status report of probe into the drug racket in the state.

OMICRON SCARE

ACTIVATE WAR ROOMS: CENTRE



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 21: Asserting that the Omicron variant is at least three more transmissible than Delta, the Centre Tuesday asked states and union territories to "activate" war rooms, keep analyzing even small trends and surges and keep taking strict and prompt containment action at district and local levels.

In a letter to the states and union territories, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan advised implementing strategic interventions for containment like imposition of night curfew, strict regulation of large gatherings, curtailing numbers in marriages and funerals besides increasing testing and surveillance.

The letter highlights measures that need to be taken in view of initial signs of surge in cases of COVID-19 as well as increased detection of the variant of concern Omicron in different parts of the country.

HC junks plea to remove PM's photo from vax certificates

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, Dec 21: The Prime Minister is the leader of the nation and not of a political party and citizens "need not be ashamed" to carry a vaccination certificate with his photograph and "morale boosting message", the Kerala High Court said Tuesday and dismissed a plea seeking removal of PM's photo from the COVID-19 immunisation certificates.

"Nobody can say that a Prime Minister is a Congress Prime Minister or a BJP Prime Minister or the Prime Minister of any political party. But once a Prime Minister is elected as per the constitution, he is the Prime Minister of our country and that post should be the pride of every citizen... They can differ on the policies of the government and even the political stand of the Prime Minister. But the citizens need not be ashamed to carry a vaccination certificate with the photograph of the Prime Minister with a morale boosting message, especially in this pandemic situation," the high court said.

It also said that when COVID-19 pandemic can be eliminated only by vaccination, if the PM gave a message with his photograph, in the certificates, that with the help of medicine and strict control, India will defeat the virus, "what is wrong with it?"

be constant review of emerging data regarding the population affected by COVID-19, geographical spread, hospital infrastructure and its utilization, manpower, notifying containment zones, enforcement of perimeter of containment zones etc. This evidence should be the basis for effective decision making at the district level itself. "Such a strategy ensures that infection is contained at the local level itself before it spreads to other parts of the state," Bhushan said in the letter.

"Kindly activate the war rooms/EOCs (emergency operation centres) and keep analyzing all trends and surges, no matter how small and keep taking proactive action at the district/local level. Regular reviews with field officers and proactive action in this regard will definitely control the spread of infection and flatten the curve," he said. In case of all new clusters of Covid positive cases, prompt notification of "containment zones", "buffer zones"

should be done, strict perimeter control of containment zone according to extant guidelines must be ensured. All cluster samples must be sent to INSACOG Labs for Genome Sequencing without delay, Bhushan underlined. The letter highlighted that test positivity of 10 per cent or more in the last one week or bed occupancy of 40 per cent or more on oxygen supported or ICU beds should be main elements of the framework to be used by states and union territories to facilitate decision making at the district level. "Based on current scientific evidence, the VOC (variant of concern) Omicron is at least 3 times more transmissible than the Delta VOC. Besides, the Delta VOC is still present in different parts of the country."

"Hence, even greater foresight, data analysis, dynamic decision making and strict and prompt containment action is required at the local and district level. The decision making at the state and UT and district level must be very prompt and focussed," he said. Listing some of the strategic areas of intervention focusing on containment, test, track, surveillance, clinical management to be taken, Bhushan asked states and union territories to ensure door to door case search, testing of all SARI/ILI and vulnerable/co-morbid people and right proportion of RT PCR tests in total tests being conducted daily.

Contact tracing of all Covid positive persons and utilizing the access to "AIR SUVIDHA Portal by State Surveillance Officers (SSOS) and District Surveillance Officers (DSOS) to monitor the international passengers who have arrived in their states and districts was also stressed.

TMC gains control of KMC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Dec 21: West Bengal's ruling TMC gained control of the 144-member Kolkata Municipal Corporation on Tuesday clinching nearly 72 per cent of votes, in a ringing endorsement for the party seven months after its landslide win in the state assembly polls.

Mamata Banerjee's party won 132 seats and was all set to pocket two more to post a hat-trick of wins, decimating a frail challenge from the opposition BJP, the Left Front and the Congress, officials said. The BJP, which lost much of its steam after the assembly poll defeat, managed to win just three wards, a senior State Election Commission official said. The Congress and the CPI(M)-led Left Front bagged two wards each, and Independents three. The Left Front, despite the mauling, finished second to the TMC in terms of vote share.

Chief Minister and TMC supreme Mamata Banerjee, who has been trying to expand her party's footprint beyond her native state, saw in



TMC supporters dance as they celebrate the party's victory in the Kolkata Municipal Corporation elections in Kolkata
PTI PHOTO

the victory a leg-up for her national ambitions.

"I want to dedicate this triumph to the people of the state and 'Maa, Mati, Manush' (mother, land and people - TMC slogan for many years). Several national parties like the BJP, Congress, and CPI(M) fought against us, but they were all defeated. This is a victory of a daughter of the soil. This victory will show the way in national politics in days to come," a visibly pleased Banerjee told reporters outside her residence.

The TMC had swept all the 16 assembly segments in the city in the assembly polls and the BJP was its main challenger. The saffron party was second after

the TMC in the assembly elections in all the wards constituting the 16 seats in terms of vote share.

Riding the momentum of its massive victory in the state polls and the recent UNESCO Intangible Heritage tag for Kolkata's Durga Puja, the TMC bagged about three-fourths of the votes polled. The TMC bagged 71.95 per cent of the votes polled, whereas the Left Front and the BJP bagged 11.13 and 8.94 per cent each. The Congress clinched 4.47 per cent of the votes and Independents 3.25 per cent. The TMC got 22 per cent votes more than the 2015 KMC polls and increased its vote share by 11 per cent compared to the April-May assembly elections.

BJP retorts to Rahul's attack



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 21: BJP leaders Tuesday raked up the anti-Sikh riots of 1984 and called former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi the "father of mob lynching" to hit back at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for his attack on the government over incidents of lynching.

"Before 2014, the word 'lynching' was practically unheard of. #ThankYouModiJI," Rahul Gandhi tweeted, days after two cases of lynching in the Congress-ruled Punjab. The two men were lynched in separate incidents, and both of them were accused of sacrilege by Sikh religious leaders.

Information and Broadcasting Minister and BJP leader Anurag Thakur said the 1984 riots in which thousands of Sikhs were killed are the "biggest example" of lynching. Thakur also slammed Rahul Gandhi for using the abusive term "dalali" for the media when he was asked a question at a briefing, saying it's a matter of big shame.

Noting that the Congress leader has attacked journalists for a third time in such manner, he urged the "big section of media", which has always been speaking on such matters, to put forth its opinion too on the matter. Gandhi's

views are a reminder of the emergency when media rights were curbed, he said.

Speaking to reporters, Union minister Ashwini Kumar Choubey noted that hundreds of Sikhs were killed in the 1984 riots, for which some Congress leaders were blamed, and also referred to the 1989 Bhagalpur riots to ask if these were not lynchings.

"Mobs killed Sikhs by burning tyres around their neck. Wasn't it lynching?" he asked. BJP's IT department head Amit Malviya tweeted, "Meet Rajiv Gandhi, father of mob lynching, justifying blood curdling genocide of Sikhs. Congress took to streets, raised slogans like 'khooon ka badla khooon se lenge', raped women, wrapped burning tyres around necks of Sikh men while dogs gorged on charred bodies dumped in drains." He posted a short clip of the former prime minister's speech.

Rajiv Gandhi had said earth shakes when a big tree falls, remarks that were seen by critics to be justifying the anti-Sikh violence following the assassination of the then prime minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards. Malviya also posted about various riots that happened under the Congress rule between 1969 and 1993 to take a swipe at Rahul Gandhi.

Bill to raise marriage age introduced in LS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 21: A bill that seeks to fix 21 years as the uniform age of marriage for women and men was introduced in Lok Sabha Tuesday with Union Minister Smriti Irani terming it a "decisive step" in the country's history, while some experts stressed that legislative changes alone will not solve the problem of early marriages unless its root causes are addressed.

The introduction of the Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021 was opposed by some members who contended that it infringed upon several personal laws and was in violation of fundamental rights. The bill was referred to a parliamentary panel for greater scrutiny.

Experts are divided on the issue of raising the age of marriage for women with some saying it will go a long way in empowering women and some others laying emphasis on addressing the root causes behind early marriages such as lack of education and poverty.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender Notice No.	PCMM/EP/2021-22/53, Date: 17.12.2021
SL NO.01	TENDER NO.03211069A, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS: SET OF HIGH TENSILE BOLT, QTY: 360 SET.
SL NO.02	TENDER NO. 09211018, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS: IMPREGNATED COMPRESSED LAMINATES, QTY: 1638 NOS.
SL NO.03	TENDER NO.04211064B, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS: TRANSFORMER, QTY: 31 NOS.
SL NO.04	TENDER NO.03213790A, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS: BALL JOINT TRACTION LEVER, QTY: 3660 NOS.
SL NO.05	TENDER NO.04215066A, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS: CADMIUM COPPER WIRE, QTY: AS PER TS.
SL NO.06	TENDER NO.02211540A, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS: PRIMARY AXLE DAMPER, QTY: 578 NOS.
SL NO.07	TENDER NO.02211077A, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS: CONTACTOR FILTER ON/OFF & ADAPTATION, QTY: 06 NOS.
SL NO.08	TENDER NO.03213905, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS: TRACTION CENTRE ELASTIC JOINT, QTY: 900 NOS.
SL NO.09	TENDER NO.02211045A, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS: AXLE BOX BEARING CRU-150, QTY: 180 NOS.
SL NO.10	TENDER NO.02211446A, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS: SET OF CYLINDRICAL ROLLER BEARING, QTY: 40 SETS.
SL NO.11	TENDER NO.03211826B, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS: BREAK BEAM WITHOUT BUSH, QTY: 1200 NOS.
SL NO.12	TENDER NO.02211630, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS: SPHERE BLOCK FOR AXLE GUIDE LINK, QTY: 1200 NOS.
SL NO.13	TENDER NO.05215410, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS: GREEN ASPECT MAIN LED SIGNAL, QTY: AS PER TS.
SL NO.14	TENDER NO.07211075A, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS: PU PAINT SYSTEM, QTY: 240 SET.
SL NO.15	TENDER NO.05215344, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS: YELLOW ASPECT MAIN LED SIGNAL, QTY: AS PER TS.
SL NO.16	TENDER NO.05215348, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS: RED ASPECT MAIN LED SIGNAL, QTY: AS PER TS.
SL NO.17	TENDER NO.03213792, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS: LATERAL BUMP STOP, QTY: 1560 NOS.
SL NO.18	TENDER NO.02211619, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS: YAW DAMPER, QTY: 210 NOS.

Tender Opening Date: for SL No. 01: 04.01.2022, for SL No. 02: 05.01.2022, for SL No. 03, 04 & 05: 07.01.2022, for SL No. 06: 10.01.2022, for SL No. 07: 11.01.2022, for SL No. 12, 13, 14, 15 & 16: 17.01.2022, for SL No. 17: 18.01.2022 and for SL No. 18: 19.01.2022

Regarding detailed notice EMD, Purchase restrictions and tendered tender condition, please visit Website www.irps.gov.in and www.eastcoastrail.indianrailways.gov.in

Principal Chief Materials Manager/PR-654/M/21-22
Bhubaneswar

Government of Odisha
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
KANTABANJI (R&B) DIVISION
e-mail ID: eerbkjb@rediffmail.com, Tel. FAX NO. 06657-220216
Bid Identification No.07/ KBJ/ 2021-2022
No.B-849:- The Superintending Engineer, Kantabanji (R&B) Division, Kantabanji on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids in Single Cover System to be received in online mode only for Building Works.

- No. of work : 02 Nos. (Single Cover)
- Nature of work : Building work
- Class of contractor : B & A
- Approximate value of work : Between Rs.43.95 to Rs.43.97 lakhs
- Tender cost : Rs.6,000/-
- Date and time of availability : From 11.00 hours of Dt.24.12.2021 to 17.00 hours of Dt.05.01.2022
- Date of opening : 11.30 hours on Dt. 06.01.2022
- Other details can be seen in the bidding documents from the e-procurement portal "www.tendersodisha.gov.in"
- Any Corrigendum / addendum will be displayed in the above e-procurement portal.

Sd./Superintending Engineer,
Kantabanji (R&B) Division
OIPR-34099/11/0011/2122

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA E-mail: rw_rourkela@yahoo.co.in
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, ROURKELA
TENDER CALL NOTICE
No. O-1454 BID IDENTIFICATION NO. ONLINE-SERKL-21 of 2021-22

- Name of the Work : Road & Bridge Works
- Total No. of Works : 4 (Four) Nos.
- Estimated Cost : Rs.4.42 lakhs to Rs.13.27 lakhs
- Class of Contractor : "D" & "C" Class
- Period of Completion : 01 (One) Calendar Month
- Type of Tender : Single Cover
- Other details

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender Online for Bidding	
		From	To
1	2	3	4
Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division, Rourkela	Online-SERKL-21 of 2021-22	22.12.2021 from 10.00 A.M.	28.12.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersorissa.gov.in.
Sd./ Superintending Engineer, RW Division, Rourkela
OIPR-25067/11/0026/2122

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA E-mail: rw_rourkela@yahoo.co.in
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, ROURKELA
TENDER CALL NOTICE
No. O-1427 BID IDENTIFICATION NO. ONLINE-SERKL-20 of 2021-22

- Name of the Work : Road, Bridge & Building Works
- Total No. of Works : 16 (Sixteen) Nos.
- Estimated Cost : Rs.1.94 lakhs to Rs.23.89 lakhs
- Class of Contractor : "D", "C" & "B" Class
- Period of Completion : 01 (One) & 2 (Two) Calendar Months
- Type of Tender : Single Cover
- Other details

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender Online for Bidding	
		From	To
1	2	3	4
Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division, Rourkela	Online-SERKL-20 of 2021-22	22.12.2021 from 10.00 A.M.	28.12.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersorissa.gov.in.
Sd./ Superintending Engineer, RW Division, Rourkela
OIPR-25067/11/0025/2122

Raising age to enable girls study further: PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Prayagraj, Dec 21: Taking a swipe at his rivals, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday said the government is trying to raise the marriage age of women to 21 so that they can have time to study and progress, but this has upset some.

Addressing a rally here in Uttar Pradesh, were assembly elections are due early next year, he also said 25 lakh of the 30 lakh houses given under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana are registered in the name of women in the state.

This shows the government's commitment to "sacha (true) empowerment of women", Modi said. "We are trying to increase the age of

marriage of women to 21 years so that they can have time to study and progress. The country is taking this decision for its daughters. Everyone is seeing who is having problems with this," he said.

Samajwadi Party (SP) MPs Shafiqur Rehman Barq and ST Hasan had made adverse comments over the Centre's move to increase the legal age of marriage. SP president Akhilesh Yadav had, however, distanced himself from the statements of his party's Sambhal and Moradabad MPs, saying the SP is progressive and the views expressed are personal.

On Tuesday, the Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021, that seeks to fix 21 years as the



Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaking to a child during his interaction with women of self-help groups in Prayagraj, Tuesday
PTI PHOTO

uniform age of marriage for women and men was introduced in Lok Sabha. Soon after its introduction, the government urged the Chair to

refer it to a standing committee.

The bill seeks to amend seven personal laws -- the Indian Christian Marriage

Act; the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act; the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act; the Special Marriage Act; the Hindu Marriage Act; and the Foreign Marriage Act.

In an apparent dig at the SP's rule in the state, Modi said, "Five years ago the mafia ruled the roost on the roads of Uttar Pradesh, and the worst sufferers were our sisters and daughters."

"It was difficult for them to move out on roads and go to schools and colleges. But Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has put these hooligans in their right place," he said. The SP government in the state from 2012 to 2017 was succeeded by the BJP government.

Ch'garh cops mount ponzi raids at Jaleswar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jaleswar, Dec 21: A team of police officials from Chhattisgarh reached Jaleswar in Balasore district Tuesday to nab some people accused of committing financial fraud through chit fund company Green Ray International.

Notably, Green Ray International has allegedly fleeced nearly ₹2,000 crore from thousands of people in the country while the firm is involved in a ₹500-crore fraud in Odisha. Following a directive from the state government, the head office of the ponzi company was sealed in May, 2013. The company had three heads – Sahiuddin, Ayub Saha and Khalik Saha.

Sahiuddin had earlier been arrested from Kolkata airport while Ayub Saha was arrested from Chhattisgarh. Managing director



of the company Khalik Saha is still absconding.

Tuesday, four police officials from the neighboring state raided the houses of Khalik Saha, Toimuddin and Ajit Saha in Jaleswar area. However, none of them was traced out.

It may be noted here that a six member team of CBI led by DSP Ashok Kumar had arrested two of the accomplices of the chit fund fraudsters in July, 2020.

After the raids Tuesday, others involved in the financial wrongdoings are panicked.

Two awarded 8-yr imprisonment

BERHAMPUR: A special chit fund court sentenced two persons each to eight years of imprisonment after convicting them of defrauding depositors of their hard earned money by alluring them to deposit their funds in attractive schemes, Tuesday. The convicts were identified as Chandrakant Bhargav Goel, managing director of ponzi firm Sriram Electro-Control Ltd and his manager Suresh Kumar Padhi. Judge Debashis Panda of the special chit fund court also slapped a fine of ₹73,000 on each, Bijay Kumar Pradhan, special public prosecutor said. In default, the two would undergo an additional 21 months of imprisonment each, the judge observed.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



SHORT TAKES

Youth killed in Rourkela

Rourkela: In broad daylight, a youth was beaten to death by unidentified miscreants at Naya Bazar, Sector 21 area, under Plant Site police limits in Rourkela Tuesday. The deceased was identified as Pintu Srivastava (22). According to eyewitnesses, the attack took place near Naya Bazar area. They immediately informed police about the incident. According to reports, two miscreants attacked the youth on the main road. They fled from the spot after the crime. The critically injured Srivastava was rushed to the local hospital where he was declared dead. Plant Site police have registered a murder case and started an investigation into the matter. A manhunt has been launched to nab the assailants. As the last report came in, one of the accused was detained in the police station. Locals say, the attack was a fallout of past enmity between the two sides.

FIR filed against Tapaswini, aides

Berhampur: A police complaint has been lodged against Tapaswini Dash and her associates, Tuesday on charge of barging into the house of her husband Dr. Sumit Sahu at Brahma Nagar locality of the city, the previous day. Pramod Kumar Sahu, father-in-law of Tapaswini filed the FIR. He alleged that Tapaswini, her associate namely Pramila Tripathi and her parents who were staging protests outside his house broke into the house Monday. He has mentioned that this has put the life of Pramod and his family members in danger. Meanwhile, Sumit in a video has sought to know why Tapaswini is behaving in such manner when the matter is sub-judice. Moreover, he accused Pramila Tripathy of interfering in his family affairs. Meanwhile, the district administration has imposed section 144 of CrPc around Sumit's house. Apprehending more attacks, Pramod urged the IIC of BN Pur police station to protect their lives and property. He sought police protection as they are presently 'under house arrest.' Pramod said his entire family including his aged and ailing mother feels unsafe.

MSME park hits roadblock in Ganjam

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, Dec 21: An ambitious project – MSME park proposed at Barpalli under Kukudakhandi tehsil in Ganjam district – has hit a roadblock due to opposition by local people against land acquisition for the park, a report said.

The state government has planned to establish an MSME park at Barpalli by March 2022 in an effort to promote small and medium industries and create scope of jobs for local people.

The park needs vast space to house micro, small and medium industries. But no land has been available in the Berhampur Industrial estate to accommodate these industries.

Meanwhile, the Kukudakhandi tehsildar has handed over 30 acres of land to the state-owned IDCO for the park. However, locals have strongly opposed the park and warned the administration against carrying out its construction work. As a result, the groundwork for



REPRESENTATIVE PICTURE

the park has failed to make any headway.

Local people alleged that the land identified for the park was a pasture land in past. The tehsil officials converted the land and handed it over to IDCO for the park, they said.

Reports said, the officials of the Kukudakhandi tehsil have identified 30 acres of land at Barpalli and leased it out to IDCO October 24, 2019, to set up the park. As part of groundwork, the state-owned agency had undertaken con-

struction of the compound wall for the park.

However, the IDCO officials had to stop the work when a group of 40-50 people from the nearby village forcibly halted the work after pulling down the structure.

They warned the contractor against carrying forward the construction work.

The villagers alleged that the administration had earlier acquired lands and converted them for establishment of educational institutions and residential colonies.

Daringbadi shivers; mercury at 3.5°C

POST NEWS NETWORK

Daringbadi, Dec 21: Cold wave condition continued to grip Daringbadi and some other parts of Kandhamal district as the area witnessed snowflakes again. Temperature in the area dipped to 3.5 degree Celsius, Tuesday morning.

The temperature was 8.5 degree Celsius Sunday while it dipped to 4 degree Celsius Monday, Daringbadi BDO Gadadhar Patra said. Meanwhile, the chilly wind has doubled the cold wave condition in the area.

Daringbadi known as the Kashmir of Odisha recorded the season's coldest night as the mercury plummeted to 3.5 degree Celsius, making it the coldest place in the state. The bone-chilling cold in the area threw normal life out of gear.

The snowflakes were found at several places in the morning. Huge crowds of tourists were seen en-



ing the snowflakes at some places. Cold intensified in Daringbadi and frost was visible on the ground, car tops, haystacks and asbestos roofs. A local resident said that the intense cold wave and snowflakes have made life miserable. The cold wave also gripped Kirikuti, Badabanga, Partamaha, Greenbadi, Sinagbali, Bhramarabadi and Dasingbadi. Daily wagers and labourers failed to venture out for work due to the cold wave.

Blindfolded, 7-yr-old girl can do all works

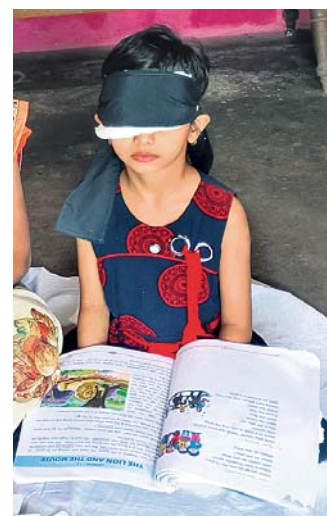
POST NEWS NETWORK

Junagarh, Dec 21: She may not be a magician, but has an amazing ability indeed to do all her works blindfolded.

Meet seven-year-old girl, Soumya Swaroopa Sahoo. Soumya, daughter of Reena and Jayant Sahoo is a native of Junagarh town and studies in Standard-1 in Junagarh English Medium School.

Soumya while talking on phone can even precisely tell the colour of the caller's cloth

People are surprised to see her often performing all her works with eyes covered with a cloth. The miracle of doing works blindfolded by a kid has set locals abuzz in the area. She can read books, write, run, cycle, dance and cook while being blindfolded. She gets her eyes covered with a black cloth and do all these works without any problem. What is most surprising is that Soumya while talking on phone can even precisely tell the colour of the cloth that the caller on the other side wears. She



loves singing and anchoring and has excelled in her studies at school.

She aspires to become an IPS officer in future. International brain master Tapeswar Mohanta is providing her training after noticing her amazing skills.

She has also been felicitated and awarded by various organisations for this remarkable skill. Her parents say they took her to doctors but they said there was nothing wrong with her.

State's tourist circuits get short shrift from Centre

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, Dec 21: Although tourism is a major source of revenue for the state and the Centre, the latter has allegedly turned a blind eye to development of this sector in the state.

The Centre's failure to develop the tourist sites in Odisha under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme is a case in point. It is yet to accept the proposals submitted by the state government for the development of several tourist sites.

Launched in 2014-15, the Swadesh Darshan Scheme comes handy in the integrated development of theme-based tourist circuits. The scheme aims to promote, develop and harness potentials of tourism in India through infrastructure development with financial assistance from the Centre.

The matter came to the fore when state Tourism Minister Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi highlighted the Centre's negligence towards the development of tourist sites in the state while replying to a question and awarded by various organisations for this remarkable skill.

The minister said that the Centre is yet to include Odisha in the Development of Buddhist circuits

SWADESH DARSHAN SCHEME



under its Swadesh Darshan scheme. The state Tourism department submitted a proposal along with a project report to the Union government September 24, 2019. Later, a reminder was sent to the Centre July 17, 2020. However, the Centre is yet to reply in this regard.

The state Tourism department had also submitted a proposal to the Centre, October 24, 2015 for development of a rural tourist circuit and another proposal for a spiritual circuit under the Swadesh Darshan scheme in Odisha, January 1, 2016.

The department has also submitted a list of the tourist sites to the Centre for development under the Sagarmala Highway project, October 22, 2020. However, none of

these projects has been approved so far. The state with a 500-km-long coastline, scenic hills, lakes, natural biodiversity, rivers, wildlife reserves, beaches, temples, monuments, arts and festivals, varied tribal cultures and the delectable cuisines is one of the favoured destinations of tourists.

The state has over 500 small and big tourist sites. The state government is developing sites like Srikrishna Puri, Tara Tarini shrine in Ganjam, Samaleswari temple in Sambalpur, Sun temple at Konark, Lingaraj temple in Bhubaneswar on its own. However, the development of many tourist sites is moving at a snail's pace due to neglect and apathetic attitude of the government officials.

Brown sugar worth ₹1cr seized; 2 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, Dec 21: Acting on a tip-off, a Special Task Force (STF) team seized over 1.90kg brown sugar and arrested two persons during a raid at Ghatipiri village under Sadar police limits in Dhenkanal district, police said Tuesday.

The seized contraband was valued at over ₹1 crore.

The accused were identified as Rakesh Kumar Sahu alias Kalu alias Raka of Balaramprasad village under Motanga police limits and Santosh Kumar Sahu alias Santa of Gadashila village under Sadar police limits in the district.

The two were arrested when they were negotiating with some people to sell the contraband on outskirts of Ghatipiri village.

Later, the STF registered a case under Section 21(C)/29 of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985, and produced the two in the court of district and sessions judge. Further investigation is on, STF sources said.

Since 2020, the Special Task Force in its special drive against narcotic drugs has seized more than 44 kg of brown sugar, more than 86 quintals of ganja and arrested several drug peddlers in connection with these cases.

PLEDGE FOR A CLEAN MAHANADI



Participants taking a pledge for a clean and green Mahanadi before the start of a mini-marathon on the occasion of Mahanadi Utsav in Sambalpur, Tuesday OP PHOTO

BAN DHAN BIKASH YOJANA

SHGs to buy MFPs from tribals

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Dec 21: Livelihood of scores of traditional forest dwellers and tribals mainly depends on collection and sales of minor forest produce (MFPs), but most of them allegedly face distress sale of their produce and are deprived of fair price. The distress sale of MFPs is expected to be over as SHGs will buy them from tribals at fair prices.

According to reports, Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) has launched Ban Dhan Bikash Yojana in Mayurbhanj district to ensure that tribals get the minimum support prices of their MFPs. Union Minister of Jal Shakti Bisweshwar Tudu said that tribals and forest dwellers will immensely benefit from the scheme. Mayurbhanj is the first district in the state where this



scheme has been launched. Thousands of traditional forest dwellers and tribals in Mayurbhanj eke out their living by selling minor forest produce like mahua flowers, resin, harida, ba-

hada, tamarind and anla in local markets. But the prices they get from sales of the MFPs are too meagre in comparison to their hard labour they invest in collection, and the prices offered by other states.

Many a time, the unsold MFPs rot in their houses. Thus, their hard labour goes waste, it is said.

A dozen of 12 self help groups have been involved in the scheme. Four SHGs working under Baripada ITDA, two from Udala and three each from Karanjia and Rairangpur blocks will procure the MFPs from tribals living their respective areas.

Each SHG will be provided with ₹15 lakh loan for the work. The MFPs will be packaged and sold in the market with approval of Food Safety and Standard Authority of India (FSAI). TRIFED will also open a sales outlet named as Tribes India in the district.



Canceling an event is better than canceling a life. It is better to cancel now and celebrate later than to celebrate now and mourn later
TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS
DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE WHO

NZ APPROVES NEW COVID DRUG

New Zealand's medicine regulator Tuesday approved a new Covid-19 medicine Ronapreve, which can both prevent and treat the disease though it is not a substitute for vaccination and its effectiveness against the Omicron variant is yet to be demonstrated



of the day quote

We're not going back to lockdowns. We're not going back to shutting down peoples' lives
SCOTT MORRISON
AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER

When you move away from your principles and make materialistic decisions it will have consequences
IMRAN KHAN
PAKISTAN PRIME MINISTER

We must prepare, bearing in mind that the omicron variant may soon become the general trend
MOON JAE-IN
SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENT

Europe weighs Omicron curbs

AGENCIES

London, Dec 21: Countries across Europe considered new curbs on movement Tuesday as US President Joe Biden called on military medics to support hospitals and fight the Omicron variant that has swept the world's days before the second Christmas of the pandemic.

Omicron infections are multiplying across Europe, the United States and Asia, including in Japan, where a single cluster of Covid-19 cases at a military base has grown to at least 180.

Biden struck a dire tone about the risks to the one in four American adults who remain unvaccinated. He will lay out new initiatives on testing Tuesday, a senior administration official said. The measures include activating some 1,000 military medical personnel to support hospitals that are already being overwhelmed. Germany, Scotland, Ireland, the



Netherlands and South Korea are among countries to have reimposed partial or full lockdowns or other social distancing measures in recent days. Nicola Sturgeon, first minister of Scotland - part of the United Kingdom but with devolved responsibilities for health - set out plans for further restrictions on big public events, including sports fixtures, for three weeks after Christmas.

"It will also mean unfortunately that large scale Hogmanay celebrations, including that planned here in our capital city (Edinburgh), will not proceed," she said, referring to traditional Scottish New Year parties. New Zealand Covid-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins said his country, which imposed some of the world's toughest Covid-19 measures, was delaying the start of a staggered reopening of its border until the end of February." All of the evidence so far points to Omicron being the most transmissible Covid-19 variant yet," he said in a statement.

Germany's Robert Koch Institute for infectious diseases Tuesday recommended that "maximum contact restrictions" be imposed at once. Federal and state leaders were due to meet later in the day to decide on new measures, which were likely to include contact restrictions even for the vaccinated and those who have recovered from an infection, but a nationwide lockdown seemed to be off the cards. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Monday he was looking at all kinds of measures to keep Omicron under control. Finance minister Rishi Sunak announced 1 billion pounds (\$1.3 billion) of extra support for businesses hit hardest by Omicron, which is hammering the hospitality sector and other businesses.

WHO approves Novavax as 10th authorised jab

Nuvaxovid uses a traditional technology involving proteins found on coronavirus spike proteins that trigger an immune response



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Geneva, Switzerland, Dec 21: The World Health Organisation Tuesday approved a Covid vaccine made by US pharma giant Novavax for emergency use, after the European Union medicines regulator gave it the green light.

The European Medicines Agency had assessed and approved Nuvaxovid Monday. It is made from a more conventional technology than others already approved, which has led officials in Brussels to express hope that this will help persuade those hesitant about vaccination to come forward.

The jab uses a traditional technology involving proteins found on coronavirus spike proteins that trigger an immune response.

It is a tried and tested approach, used for decades to vaccinate people against diseases including hepatitis B and whooping cough.

A so-called emergency use listing (EUL) by the WHO paves the way for countries worldwide to quickly approve and import a vaccine for distribution.

It also opens the door for them to enter the Covax global vaccine-sharing scheme, set up to provide equitable access to doses

around the world and particularly in poorer countries.

The two-shot Nuvaxovid jab is the 10th vaccine issued an EUL by the UN health agency. Among those already approved is the Covovax shot, a version of Novavax's vaccine made by the Serum Institute of India under licence from the US-based company. It was authorised December 17.

90-PERCENT EFFECTIVE
Also figuring on the list are the mRNA vaccines produced by BioNTech/Pfizer and Moderna, Johnson&Johnson, AstraZeneca (which is counted twice for the versions made in Europe and in India), the Indian-made Covaxin and Chinese-made Sinopharm and Sinovac.

Nuvaxovid was around 90-percent effective at reducing symptomatic cases of Covid-19 in two major clinical studies, one in Britain and the other in the United States and Mexico, involving more than 45,000 people.

In a separate document, WHO's Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunisation recommended the new vaccine for use in people over the age of 18, with an interval of three to four weeks between the two doses.

SHORT TAKES

Putin blames West for tensions

Moscow: The Russian President Tuesday reiterated his demand for guarantees from the US and its allies that NATO will not expand eastwards, blaming the West for "tensions that are building up in Europe." Russian President Vladimir Putin's speech at a meeting with Russia's top military brass came just days after Moscow submitted draft security documents demanding that NATO deny membership to Ukraine and other former Soviet countries and roll back the alliance's military deployments in Central and Eastern Europe.

Queen cancels Christmas plans

London: Britain's Queen Elizabeth II has been forced to call off traditional Christmas plans at her Sandringham estate in Norfolk, eastern England, and will stay on at Windsor Castle amidst a surge in coronavirus cases being driven by the Omicron variant of Covid-19.

Japan hangs 3

Tokyo: Japan hanged three death-row inmates on Tuesday, its first executions in two years, amid growing criticism by human rights groups of the country's use of the death penalty. One of the three, Yasutaka Fujishiro, was convicted of killing seven people and setting fire to their house in 2004, while the other two, Tomoaki Takanezawa and Mitsunori Onogawa, were convicted in the 2003 killings of two pinball parlor employees. Executions are carried out in high secrecy in Japan, where prisoners are not informed of their fate until the morning they are hanged.

UK offers 1 billion pounds to firms hit hardest by Omicron

London: Recognising that the rise of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus means some businesses are likely to struggle over the coming weeks, UK Chancellor Rishi Sunak Tuesday announced an additional GBP 1-billion package to fund one-off grants of up to GBP 6,000 per premises for businesses in the hospitality and leisure

sectors in England. Many pubs and restaurants have seen cancellations and reduced footfall as people have responded to the rise in cases ahead of Christmas, with Hospitality UK reporting that many businesses have lost 40-60 per cent of their December trade, often their most profitable month. Around 200,000 businesses will be

eligible for business grants, which will be administered by local authorities and will be available in the coming weeks. "We recognise that the spread of the Omicron variant means businesses in the hospitality and leisure sectors are facing huge uncertainty, at a crucial time," Sunak said in a statement.

PAK RLYS IN A HORRIFIC MESS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 21: Horrific accidents, losses amounting to billions, and most recently the stoppage of a train by the driver to buy yogurt for himself sum up the rapidly deteriorating state Pakistan Railways finds itself in, *The Express Tribune* reported.

According to a report for the Ministry of Railways, while the departmental deficit ballooned to a whopping 46 billion PKR in 2021, during the current Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) led government's tenure, total losses incurred for railways stand at 1.19 trillion PKR. As far as accidents are concerned, 270 people lost their lives and a further 396 were injured in 455 train accidents between 2018 and 2021.

The *Express Tribune* report provides a detailed overview of accidents, departmental deficit, and other administrative matters in the last three years. For instance, 57 passenger trains were shut down and now only 85 trains are available for the various routes across the country.

Similarly, the number of freight carriages was reduced from 16,159 to 14,327. While the number of employees decreased from 120,000 to 67,627, pensioners of the department now stand at more than 115,000 people.

Hindu temple's statues destroyed in Karachi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Karachi, Dec 21: The statues of deities at a Hindu temple in this Pakistani city have been destroyed, the police said Tuesday, the latest incident of vandalism against the places of worship of the minority community in this country.

The incident took place at the Narayan Mandir in Karachi's old city of Narainpura Monday evening, they said. A man, identified as Muhammad Waleed Shabbir, has been arrested for damaging the statues of the deities, a senior police officer official, Sarfaraz Nawaz, said. "He was arrested on the complaint

The incident took place at the Narayan Mandir in Karachi's old city of Narainpura Monday evening

of a Hindu man, Mukesh Kumar, who with his wife was at the Narayan Mandir for prayers when they saw this man damaging the statues of Hindu deities with a hammer," he said. An eyewitness said that angry Hindus, who were at the temple, caught hold of the miscreant and handed him over to the police. Later, the Hindu residents of the area

staged a protest outside the police station, demanding the government to provide security to Hindus. They also raised slogans and protested that they were feeling insecure in the area after the incident.

The area is mostly inhabited by poor and low-income Hindu families who have been living in Narainpura for decades. The police and Pakistani Rangers reached the spot and cordoned off the area.

Sindh's Minister for Minority Affairs Gyanchand Israni said that a case should be registered. He said that such incidents create unrest in the society. "We condemn such attacks," he said.

NATURE'S BOUNTY



Israelis enjoy hot spring in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights

UNI PHOTO

Dubai ruler must pay ex-wife \$700M in divorce settlement

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, Dec 21: A British court Tuesday ordered the ruler of Dubai to pay his ex-wife and their children close to 550 million pounds (\$730 million), in one of the most expensive divorce settlements in British history.

The total amount the children receive could be more or less than 290 million pounds, depending on factors including how long they live and whether they reconcile with their father. The settlement includes 11 million pounds a year to cover security costs for Princess Haya and the children while they are minors. Judge Philip Moor said the family needed "water-tight security," and that "absolutely uniquely," the main threat to them came from Sheikh Mohammed, rather than outside sources.

Haya, 47, fled to the UK in 2019 and sought custody of her two children



through the British courts. The princess, who is the daughter of the late King Hussein of Jordan, said she was "terrified" of her husband, who is alleged to have ordered the forced return to the Gulf emirate of two of his daughters.

Sheikh Mohammed, 72, is also the vice president and prime minister of the United Arab Emirates and a major horse breeder. The founder of the successful Godolphin horse-racing stable, he is on friendly terms with Queen Elizabeth II. Haya, a graduate of Oxford University, is also a keen equestrian and competed in show

jumping for Jordan at the 2000 Sydney Olympics. A separate British family court judge ruled in October that Sheikh Mohammed had authorised the hacking of Princess Haya's phone during their legal battle. Judge Andrew McFarlane said the sheikh gave his "express or implied authority" to hack the phones of the princess and her attorneys using Pegasus spyware produced by NSO Group of Israel, the court said. McFarlane earlier ruled that Sheikh Mohammed had conducted a campaign of fear and intimidation against his estranged wife and "ordered and orchestrated" the abduction and forced return to Dubai of two of his adult daughters: Sheikhha Shamsa in August 2000 and her sister Sheikhha Latifa, in 2002 and again in 2018. The divorce bill eclipses the 450 million pound settlement awarded Tatiana Akhmedova in her 2016 split from Russian billionaire Farkhad Akhmedov, at the time cited as Britain's most expensive divorce.

US population growth at lowest rate in pandemic's first year

Washington: US population growth dipped to its lowest rate since the nation's founding during the first year of the pandemic as the coronavirus curtailed immigration, delayed pregnancies and killed hundreds of thousands of US residents, according to figures released Tuesday. The United States grew by only 0.1 per cent, with an additional 392,665 added to the US population from July 2020 to July 2021, according to population estimates released by the US Census Bureau. The US has been experiencing slow population growth for years but the pandemic exacerbated that trend. This past year was the first time since 1937 that the nation's population grew by less than 1 million people. "I was expecting low growth but nothing this low," said William Frey, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution's metropolitan policy program, Brookings Metro.

WORKS DEPARTMENT No. B-862
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, ROURKELA (R&B) DIVISION, UDITNAGAR, ROURKELA
E-mail ID: eepwdrkl@gmail.com
Government of Orissa "e" Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. 44/2021-2022 Dated: 10.12.2021

1. Number of Works	: 5 (Five) number of works
2. Estimated Cost	: Rs. 54.89 lakhs to 84.86 lakhs
3. Period of Completion	: 4 (Four) Calendar Months
4. Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal	: Dt.23.12.2021 at 11.00 A.M.
5. Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal	: Dt.31.12.2021 upto 05.00 P.M.
6. Date of Opening of Bid	: Dt.03.01.2022 at 11.30 A.M.
7. Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: Superintending Engineer (R&B), Division, Rourkela, Udit Nagar

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <http://tendersorissa.gov.in>.
Sd./- Superintending Engineer
R&B Division, Rourkela
OIPR-34068/11/0025/2122

Government of Odisha No. O-1460
"e" Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. 19 of 2021-22

1 Number of Works	: 2 Nos. of Roads
2 Estimated Cost (Approx.)	: Rs. 8.84 lakh to 22.10 lakh
3 Period of Completion	: 01 Calendar Month
4 Date & time of availability of Bid documents in the portal	: 29.12.2021 at 11.00 hrs.
5 Last date & time for receipt of Bids in the portal	: 05.01.2022 at 17.00 hrs.
6 Date of Opening of Tender	: 06.01.2022 at 11.00 hrs.
7 Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Jagatsinghpur

Further details can be seen from the Government website: www.tendersorissa.gov.in.
Sd./- Executive Engineer
Rural Works Division, Jagatsinghpur
OIPR-25056/11/0024/2122

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, P.H. DIVISION, SAMBALPUR
Phone No.: (0663) 2412135, Fax No.: (0663) 2412335
Email ID: eephdsbp@gmail.com, eephdsbp@nic.in

No. C-1654
Bid Identification No. SEPHSBP-05/2021-22 Dt.20.12.2021

Sl. No.	Name of the Work	Class of Contractor / Type of Bid	Estimated Cost (Excluding GST) (Rs. in lakhs)	Cost of DTCN & EMD (Online)	Period of Completion	Availability of Tender for Online Bidding	Last date & time for bidding online	Date & time of opening of Technical Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
01	Improvement of Water Supply to Bijepur Town in Bargharh District	D & C Class	12.79	Rs.6,000.00 & EMD - Bid Security Declaration	1 (One) Calendar Month	From 11.00 hrs. of 28.12.2021 to 17.00 hrs. of 06.01.2022	17.00 hrs. of 06.01.2022	11.30 hrs. of 07.01.2022

OIPR-13026/11/0004/2122
Sd./- Superintending Engineer, P.H. Division, Sambalpur

Afflicted Afghanistan

History came full circle in Afghanistan in 2021. The 'forever war' of the US ended as it had begun, with Taliban ruling the land. When the world raced against time to contain a pandemic, Afghans delved into a pandemonium of their own. The age old aphorism 'graveyard of empires' resurfaced on people's minds as the chaotic US skedaddle coincided with a lightning fast offensive of Taliban that took the world aback. World witnessed the unprecedented unfolding of an exceptional humanitarian crisis. It was arguably the biggest news event of the year that put a question mark on the future of a land and the lives of its women, already fraught with war and oppression

A WALK-THROUGH

The US and the Taliban signed a peace deal during Donald Trump's presidency. As part of this deal, the US committed to withdraw military personnel from Afghanistan by May 2021

13 APRIL: Biden announces plans to withdraw US troops from Afghanistan by 11 September

2 MAY: Taliban threaten further attacks as the deadline for withdrawal passes 1 May, when previous US President Trump said US forces would withdraw

2 JULY: Germany and Italy withdraw their troops, US troops leave Bagram Airfield, handing it to the Afghan Armed Forces

12 AUGUST: Taliban capture provincial capital of Ghazni. Afghanistan's third largest city, Herat, also fell to the insurgents. The country's second-largest city, Kandahar, was later seized by the group

13 AUGUST:
■ As of 13 August, a total of 18 provincial capitals have been seized
■ Finland, Denmark and Switzerland announced plans to withdraw their consulate workers
■ UK announces Operation Pitting to evacuate its citizens out

14 AUGUST:
■ President Ashraf Ghani addresses the nation as Taliban makes rapid gain
■ Mazar-i-Sharif, last anti-Taliban stronghold in Northern Afghanistan, is captured

15 AUGUST: As Taliban advances to Kabul, incumbent Afghan President Ashraf Ghani decided to flee from the country. Taliban captures Kabul with little resistance, marking the beginning of Taliban rule over Afghanistan.



16 AUGUST: At least 7 people are killed after thousands flocked to Kabul's Hamid Karzai International Airport in an attempt to flee from Taliban rule of Afghanistan

26 AUGUST: Kabul airport attack - Explosion goes off on gates outside Hamid Karzai International Airport. At least 182 are killed and at least 150 are injured.

29 AUGUST: US army launches drone strike at a residential area in Kabul following reports of a possible terrorist attack in Kabul Airport, killing 10 people, including 7 children

30 AUGUST: The last American military plane evacuates officially ending 20 years of American military involvement in Afghanistan

A humanitarian catastrophe

WOMEN UNDER TALIBAN 2.0 - A REVERSAL OF TIME

Taliban's previous regime from 1996 to 2001 brought havoc in the lives of Afghan girls and women. It was marked by frequent incidents of whipping, lashing, stoning, acid attacks, public executions and sexual violence against Afghan women amid absence of basic rights. Since they took over power, the Taliban have sought to portray themselves as more moderate and tolerant than what their past reign and global reputation suggest. But the world remains sceptic.

In their first press conference held August 17, the Taliban categorically declared, "We will honour women's rights but within the norms of Islamic law." On September 17, they replaced the Ministry of Women's Affairs with the Ministry for Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, which was discontinued after 2001. Historically, the ministry is known for its patrol vans that enforced a harsh interpretation of the Sharia law while roaming the streets of Afghanistan. It banned music, carried out public executions, whipped and publicly humiliated women, and insisted upon a strict dress code.

The administration also released a set of restrictions on Afghan media, banned television dramas that included female actors and ordered women news presenters to wear Islamic hijab. Many Afghan women and girls now have to be accompanied by a male relative whenever they leave their residence.

Earlier this month, the Taliban issued a decree barring forced marriage in Afghanistan, saying women should not be considered as "property", but it did not make clear a minimum age for marriage, nor refer to any wider women and girls' rights to education, to work, to freedom of movement, or to participate in public life.

The militant group told all female government employees to stay at home and banned most girls from attending school after they swept into power. Some 4.2 million young Afghans are already out of school, 60 per cent of them girls. There has also been a decline in girls' secondary school attendance, even in provinces where the de facto authorities have permitted them to attend school. This is largely due to the absence of women teachers, since in some locations girls are only allowed to be taught by women.

More than a quarter of all civil servants in Afghanistan were women. The Taliban's move to restrict women from working could immediately cost the Afghan economy up to \$1 billion, or 5% of GDP, the UNDP said in a report.

With basic rights and freedom of Afghan women now snatched away all over again, although the Taliban 2.0 regime has maintained a veil of promises, the country is now back to square one.

Taliban rule marked by killings, denial of women's rights: UN

Violence spiked in May when NATO troops began to withdraw and fighting between the Taliban and government forces got worse. A total of 1,659 civilians were killed in the fighting, with women and children making up about half of those.

More than 100 former Afghan national security forces and others have been killed since the Taliban takeover in August, most at the hands of the hardline Islamist group which is recruiting boy soldiers and quashing women's rights, the UN said Tuesday.

Briefing the UN Human Rights Council, Nada Al-Nashif, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, detailed how the profound humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan is threatening basic rights, with women, girls, and civil society among those most affected. In a speech to the Human Rights Council, she described Taliban rule as being marked by extrajudicial killings across the country and restrictions on women's and girls' basic rights.

At least 72 of the more than 100 alleged killings have been attributed to the Taliban, she said, adding, "In several cases, the bodies were publicly displayed. This has exacerbated fear among this sizeable category of the population."

The UN mission in the country, UNAMA, has documented nearly 60 apparently arbitrary detentions, beatings, and threats to activists, journalists, and staff of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, attributed to the de facto authorities.

Afghanistan's envoy from the former government accused the Taliban of committing a wide range of abuses including targeted killings and enforced disappearances.

In a report published by International Federation of Journalists, Afghanistan topped the list with nine journalists killed in the country this year.

"With the military takeover of Kabul by the Taliban, not only we see a total reversal of two decades of advances, but the group is also committing a litany of abuses with impunity which in many cases is going unreported and undocumented," Nasir Ahmad Andisha, Kabul's ambassador to the UN in Geneva who is still recognised by the world body, told the forum. "Credible reports have testified accounts of ethnic and tribal purging in several provinces of the country," she added.

As Afghanistan ushers in a new era, the response of the international community and actions of the Taliban could greatly exacerbate or modestly ameliorate the current economic and humanitarian crises. Will 2022 see the world accepting Taliban? Will the Afghan women live freely, with rights and respect? Only time will tell



Supreme Leader MAWLAWI HIBATULLAH AKHUNDZADA
Akhundzada became the Taliban's third supreme commander -- the highest rank in the organisation -- after the US killed his predecessor in a 2016 drone strike. He is more known as a religious leader than a military commander, and maintains a low profile



Prime Minister MULLAH HASSAN AKHUND
Close aide to Taliban's late founder Mullah Omar. Head of group's powerful leadership council. Listed on UN sanctions list



Deputy Prime Minister MULLAH ABDUL GHANI BARADAR
Taliban co-founder. Head of group's political office in Doha, Qatar. Oversaw US withdrawal deal last year



Deputy Prime Minister MAULAWI ABDUL SALAM HANAFI
Deputy education minister when Taliban were last in power. Former member of group's negotiation team in Qatar



Interior Minister SIRAJUDDIN HAQQANI
Head of feared Haqqani Network and one of FBI's most wanted men, believed to still be holding at least one American hostage



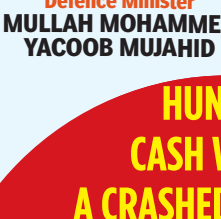
Foreign Minister MAULVI AMIR KHAN MUTTAQI
Former minister of culture and information during previous Taliban government and also member of group's negotiation team in Doha



Justice Minister ABDUL HAKIM ISHAQZAI



Defence Minister MULLAH MOHAMMED YACOOB MUJAHID



Information Minister KHAIRULLAH SAID WALI KHAIRKHWAH



Finance Minister MULLAH HIDAYAT BADRI

HUNGER, CASH WOES & A CRASHED ECONOMY

Afghanistan's economy has crashed since the Taliban's takeover, plunging the country into one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. Millions of dollars of aid that once propped up the previous government has vanished, billions in state assets are frozen and economic sanctions have isolated the new government from the global banking system. Now, Afghanistan faces a dire cash shortage that has crippled banks and businesses, sent food and fuel prices soaring, and triggered a devastating hunger crisis. The country is currently battered by the deepening economic, humanitarian, and security crisis following the takeover. Debt and starvation are forcing families to marry off their young daughters in exchange for dowry and in some cases selling off their babies. By the middle of next year, as much as 97 per cent of the Afghan population could sink below the poverty line, as per an analysis by the UNDP.

DEFINING FLASHBACKS

LAST MAN LEAVING

Major General Chris Donahue, commanding officer of the US Army 82nd Airborne Division, 18th Airborne Corps, seen boarding a US Air Force C-17, was the last of the US troops to leave Afghanistan August 30, marking the official end of 'America's Longest War'. With the monochromatic green colour of a night vision scope, it showed the general carrying an M4 carbine as he boarded the aircraft's ramp. It had gone viral on the social media after the US Army shared the image.

'AFGHAN GIRL' FINDS REFUGE

National Geographic magazine's famed green-eyed 'Afghan Girl' found refuge in Italy as part of the West's evacuation of Afghans after the Taliban takeover. The Italian government organised the evacuation of Sharbat Gula after she asked to be helped to leave the country. The Italian government would help to get her integrated into life in Italy, it said. Sharbat Gula gained international fame in 1984 as an Afghan refugee girl, after the war photographer Steve McCurry's photograph of her, with piercing green eyes, was published on the cover of National Geographic.

DESPERATE TO LEAVE, TO LIVE

In one of the defining images of the fall of Kabul, Afghans desperate to escape the Taliban takeover clung to the side of a departing US Air Force jet as it rolled down the tarmac. Scores of people ran alongside the giant plane at the Kabul airport, and some managed to get a foothold before it took off. US authorities said that all told, at least seven people died during the chaotic evacuation at the airport, including several who fell from a military jet. Video showed people watching as one or more objects plummeted to the ground.

BABIES THROWN OVER BARBED WIRES

In one of the heartbreaking incidents captured on camera, babies were seen being handed over to soldiers over the barbed wires of the airport wall. The video incited grief and rage on social media. Reports revealed that women were literally throwing their babies over the wall, begging officials to take them away. The desperation and helplessness of the parents made even the soldiers cry, it was reported.

DANISH SIDDIQUI KILLED

Pulitzer Prize-winning Indian photojournalist Danish Siddiqui was killed while covering clashes between Afghan troops and the Taliban in Spin Boldak district of Kandahar city. He was not simply killed in a crossfire in Afghanistan, nor was he simply a collateral damage, but was "brutally murdered" by the Taliban after verifying his identity, according to a report published in a US-based magazine. Whole world and the journalist community mourned his demise.

business



For those wondering, I will pay over \$11 billion in taxes this year
ELON MUSK | TESLA CEO

STELLAR DEBUT

Shares of CE Info Systems Ltd, the parent of digital mapping company MapmyIndia, Tuesday listed with a premium of 53 per cent against its issue price of ₹1,033 and finally settled with a gain of 35 per cent. The stock made its debut at ₹1,581, a huge gain of 53.04 per cent from the issue price on BSE.

MapmyIndia

of the day quote

We need hubs of excellence in R&D to become a world leader. Indians should file more patents



SANJIV MEHTA | FICCI PRESIDENT

The expected green energy generation by NTPC in the next fiscal year is 10 billion units. NTPC intends to achieve up to 35 GW of renewable energy (RE) capacity by 2027



R K SINGH | UNION POWER MINISTER

Certain representations have been received to bring petrol and diesel under GST. Article 279 A (5) of the Constitution prescribes that the GST Council shall recommend the date on which the GST be levied on petroleum crude, high speed diesel, motor spirit, natural gas and ATF



PANKAJ CHAUDHARY | MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE

SHORT TAKES

Soch launches fourth store

Bhubaneswar: Soch, India's women's ethnic wear brand, has inaugurated its fourth store at Utkal Mall here. The store is spread across a spacious 1200 sq ft housing latest collections. The brand already has its presence in Odisha with three other stores in Berhampur, Angul and Bhubaneswar. Vinay Chatlani, Executive Director & CEO, Soch Apparels said, "We are ecstatic about the launch of our second store in the city of Bhubaneswar. We see immense opportunity in the state of Odisha. In the last year we've opened three stores here."

Habitats Trust Grants recipients

Bhubaneswar: The Habitats Trust, founded by Roshni Nadar Malhotra, Chairperson of HCL Technologies, announced the recipients of the Habitats Trust Grants 2021. Association for Social and Environmental Development received the Lesser-known Species Grant (Rs 25 lakh) for its work towards conservation and habitat management of fishing cat in Chilika lagoon, Odisha. The four other recipients of the Grants were also chosen from 10 finalists. The Habitats Trust Grants is an annual initiative aimed at securing India's biodiversity by bolstering efforts of conservationists on-ground.

Industree helps state's producers

New Delhi: In the wake of Covid-19 outbreak, Industree Foundation has been involved in the movement of thousands of producers of Odisha from the informal sector to the formal one. The foundation prioritised to protect the lives and livelihoods of its producers but at the same time, also create a business model to support them both mentally and physically. Industree also continued to provide producers and their families with income for their survival.

Myntra's EORS ends Dec 23

New Delhi: The 15th edition of Myntra's grand EORS will be concluded December 23, 2021. The EORS brought the most extensive collection of about 1 million styles from across 5000 brands at great prices. The grand sale is packed with exciting offers, affordable prices and a fun selection of winter wear. The brand has introduced Style Cast for Gen-Z shoppers on the app.

Captive power producers urge govt to normalise coal supplies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 21: A captive power producers' association has urged the government for 100 per cent normalisation of coal supply to captive power producers while blaming independent power generators for the coal crisis and 'complete crash of whole system'.

The Indian Captive Power Producers' Association (ICPPA) alleged that independent power producers did not build up the required inventories which led to the supply crisis.

"Today where we have reached is 35-40 per cent of what we should be getting... Right from today let there be 100 per cent normalisation of supplies to captive power plants (CPPs)," Rajiv Agarwal, Secretary General, ICPPA said in a press conference.

IPPs do not build up the inventories for various reasons, as a result the safety stock and the insurance stock as it is called is depleted and subsequently there is a complete crash of the whole system, he said.

"All the coal rakes made for CPPs have virtually stopped," he said.

IPPs, he said, are not building inventories because they know that if there is a crisis the whole government will help them.



"This is the right time the government should start normalising the supplies because we are getting some feeler is that first they want to build up very high some 30 days inventory by March and after that they will start supplying to CPPs and industries... For next year also the CPP would continue to face problem and will be in crisis," he explained.

COVID-19 from last year created havoc for industries, infrastructure and the economy, and in such a situation the current coal crisis has been much more worrying factor for captive power, he said.

Out of a total 78,000 mw in-

stalled CPP capacity in the country, around 40,000 MW (i.e. 55 per cent) CPPs are thermal-coal based, which require 200 million tonnes (MT) coal per annum.

Significant investments to the tune of 30 billion dollars have been made for setting up these CPPs and associated infrastructure, which have generated 15 lakh direct and in-direct employment.

The CPPs provide grid stability as they operate with minimum T&D losses, reduce demand pressure on the National Grid network, and pump excess power into the grid, thereby contributing to the national energy pool.

Canadian fund buys out Odisha toll road

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Dec 21: Kolkata-based road developer Bharat Road Network has sold its entire 40 per cent stake in the 67-km-long Shree Jagannath Expressway in Odisha to an arm of the marquee Canadian infrastructure-focused fund Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (CDPQ) for ₹2,100 crore, according to two sources.

The Srei Group, which was sent to the NCLT by the Reserve Bank recently, owns 30 per cent in the toll road project through one of its alternate investment funds called Trinity Investment Managers.

The deal is between Bharat Road Network and India Highway Concession Trust, one of the infrastructure investment trusts set up by CDPQ in the country, one of the sources told PTI.

Both the companies did not re-



spond to calls seeking confirmation of the sale. The 67-km toll road from Bhubaneswar to Chandikhole in Odisha started operations in December 2011 with an initial concession period of 26 years, is given an enterprise value of ₹2,100 crore, the second source added.

The deal, which has all the approvals barring an NHAI nod and the customary regulatory approvals, is likely to be completed anytime now, the first source said,

adding Srei and other creditors would get over ₹2,020 crore from the sale. This excludes additional claims of ₹200 crore that are in advance stage of realization and will get added towards the overall corpus, the source added.

The sale process is set to be completed any time now or latest by early January as only the final nod from the regulators and National Highway Authority is pending now, the source said, adding all agree-

Team India for BMW Motorrad Int'l GST



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 21: BMW Motorrad has announced the finalists for 'Team India' who will participate in the BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2022. The finalists were chosen from multi-city qualifiers held across the country and will proudly represent India at the international GS Trophy in Albania. The three winners are - Rameez Mullick from Kolkata, Chowde Gowda from Bangalore and Adib Javanmardi from Pune. The competition for regional qualifiers was conducted in Konark.

For the first time, a female GS rider team also competed in the regional qualifier rounds and will also stand an opportunity to participate in the BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2022 challenge.

Vikram Pawah, President, BMW Group India said, "GS Trophy is a hallmark of competitive skills challenges, teamwork as well as some great riding. I would like to congratulate all the winners for showcasing exceptional endurance, riding skills and team spirit. To bring home the international GS trophy, these qualities are needed in abundance."

Team India will proudly represent the country at the BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2022 to be held in Albania.

ICC holds e-conference to save environment

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Dec 21: Minister of State (MoS) for Industries Dibya Shankar Mishra expressed concern over environmental degradation and said that environment protection is not just corporate social responsibility, it is also an individual social responsibility.

Mishra highlighted the concern at an e-conference on air pollution and industry organised by Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Odisha State council, Tuesday.

The MoS said that people living in far flung areas are more sensible

towards their surrounding environment. He also urged humans to stop torture on food chain and show empathy towards other species. All species have to live together to create a holistic environment friendly society, Mishra added.

Member Secretary Central Pollution Control Board Prashant Gargava called for technological intervention by industrial houses to check air quality. "BS-6 norm is a welcome step to reduce vehicular emission. He also calls to put individual responsibility on every sector to stop environmental degradation further," he said.

SOFTBANK-BACKED SNAPDEAL FILES FOR IPO

A stellar response to Zomato's IPO, and a profitable listing in July has prompted a number of internet-led businesses to make a beeline for this route

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 21: E-commerce platform Snapdeal has filed preliminary documents with markets regulator Sebi to raise funds through an initial public offer (IPO), joining the league of internet-led businesses looking to list on domestic stock exchanges.

The public issue comprises fresh issuance of equity shares worth ₹1,250 crore and an offer for sale



(OFS) of 3.07 crore equity shares, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP).

According to market sources, potential listing could value Snapdeal at about USD 1.5-1.7 billion. Snapdeal's founders Kunal Bahl and Rohit Bansal are not selling any of their holding in the IPO. Those selling shares in the OFS are Starfish I Pte, Wonderful Stars, Sequoia Capital, Kenneth Stuart Glass, Myriad Opportunities Master

NHAI toll revenue to jump to ₹1.40 lakh cr in 3 yrs: Gadkari

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 21: Toll revenue of the NHAI will soar to ₹1.40 lakh crore per annum in the next three years from ₹40,000 crore per annum currently, Union minister Nitin Gadkari said Tuesday.

Addressing an event here, the Road Transport and Highways Minister said that there is a huge opportunity for investors in India's infrastructure sector as the traffic density is rising every year.

"Our (state-owned NHAI's) current toll income is ₹40,000 crore. It

will rise to ₹1.40 lakh crore in the next three years," he said.

Inviting investments in the infrastructure sector, Gadkari said that size of Indian economy is rising, so naturally, internal rate of return on infrastructure projects is also rising. The Union minister said conciliation committees should decide cases related to road infrastructure projects within three months, as delay in the decision making process results in higher costs.

For faster settlement of claims through conciliation and reduce liabilities, the National Highways

Authority of India (NHAI) has rigorously started the process of conciliation by constituting three Conciliation Committees of Independent Experts (CCIE) of three members each. These committees are being headed by retired officials from the judiciary, senior experts from public administration, finance and the private sector. Making a strong case for accelerating the bankruptcy resolution process, Gadkari said no purpose is served if the financial matter is held up at courts and tribunals for a longer time.

Axis Bank top bidder for Citi consumer biz

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 21: Private sector Axis Bank has emerged as the highest bidder to buy Citi's consumer banking business, according to sources.

American banking major Citibank in April announced its plan to exit from the consumer banking business in India as part of a global strategy.

The business comprises credit cards, retail banking, home loans and wealth management. The bank has 35 branches in the country and employs about 4,000 people in the consumer banking business.

According to the sources, the valuation could be around USD 2 billion (about ₹13,000 crore).

The final valuation will be linked to the number of variables including the quantum of deposits, customers, the quantum of assets and liabilities moving from one franchise to another once all regulatory clearances come through, the sources added. Once approved, the sources added that the balance sheet size of Axis Bank will expand and the retail segment will witness a significant jump. Mails sent to Axis Bank and Citi on the proposed deal remained unanswered. Citi had entered India in 1902 and started the consumer banking business in 1965.

Apart from the institutional banking business, it will continue to focus on offshoring or global business support rendered from centres in Mumbai, Pune, Bengaluru, Chennai and Gurugram.

Markets stage comeback on bargain-hunting



AGENCIES

Mumbai, Dec 21: Market benchmarks clawed back some lost ground Tuesday after two days of heavy declines as investors made a cautious return to energy, IT and finance stocks amid supportive global cues.

A sharp recovery in the rupee further fuelled the rebound, traders said. The 30-share BSE Sensex opened strong and rallied to 56,900, before paring some gains to close at 56,319.01, up 497 points or 0.89 per cent. Similarly, the NSE Nifty advanced 156.65 points or 0.94 per cent to 16,770.85.

HCL Tech was the top performer in the Sensex pack, spurring 3.91 per cent, followed by Wipro, Tata Steel, Tech Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, Titan and Sun Pharma.

On the other hand, PowerGrid, Axis Bank, Bajaj Finance, SBI, M&M, Kotak Bank and HDFC closed with losses of up to 1.50 per cent.

The market breadth was in favour of the bulls, with 23 advances compared to seven declines.

"Indian market is attempting to recover from yesterday's heavy selloff, domestic indices staged a gap-up opening on bargain hunt supported by positive sentiments across global markets. Although concerns surrounding the impact of Omicron and FII selling still lingers, investors are trading cautiously and are optimistic. Gains in IT, commodities and metal stocks lifted the indices higher," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Arijit Malakar, Head Research (Retail), Ashika Stock Broking, said the market is expected to remain weak amid concerns over the new Omicron strain which could derail the global economic recovery and sooner-than-expected interest rate hikes in developed economies.

"The market is now sell on rise market as the sustained foreign fund outflows and renewed concerns around Omicron variant of coronavirus may trigger profit taking at higher levels," he noted.

All sectoral indices ended on a positive note, with BSE metal, consumer durables, basic materials, telecom, teck and IT indices climbing up to 2.99 per cent. Broader BSE midcap and smallcap indices rose up to 1.43 per cent.

World stocks rebounded from the recent Omicron-triggered hammering even as investors monitored updates on the new strain.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul ended with gains.

Stock exchanges in Europe were also trading on a positive note in mid-session deals. Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude slipped 0.07 per cent to USD 71.47 per barrel. The rupee surged by 31 paise to close at 75.59 against the US dollar Tuesday as positive domestic equities and a weak American currency in the overseas markets boosted investor sentiment.

Foreign institutional investors remained net sellers in the capital market Monday, as they offloaded shares worth ₹3,565.36 crore, according to exchange data.

IPO, and a profitable listing in July has prompted a number of internet-led businesses to make a beeline for this route.

Since then a number of internet-led businesses, including Nykaa, Paytm and PolicyBazaar got listed on the exchanges too. However, Paytm - one of the most awaited IPOs - witnessed lacklustre listing. Snapdeal is an e-commerce company, and focuses exclusively on the value segment, with more than 90 per cent of the products sold on the platform priced below ₹1,000 and more than 80 per cent of its users residing beyond the metro cities.

Once a leading player in the Indian e-commerce space, Snapdeal has seen its fortunes falling amid strong competition from rivals Amazon and Flipkart.

In 2017, Snapdeal walked away from a potential merger deal with

Flipkart and instead pursued what it called the "Snapdeal 2.0" strategy to become "financially self-sustainable".

The company, which is backed by Softbank, BlackRock Inc, Temasek Holdings Pte and eBay Inc, has been investing in video, vernacular and other strategic projects, aimed at growing the online market among new users, especially those coming in from tier II cities and beyond. The company's Power Brands, UniMove logistics platform, multi-lingual user support and its discovery-based shopping approach that replicates the offline journey of buyers are some of the capabilities built by it as part of its Bharat-focused strategy.

As part of its expansion plans, Snapdeal plans to expand into omni-channel distribution through partner-driven offline stores.

Japan stun India Ashwin walks down memory lane

Heartbreak for title holders in Asian Champions Trophy hockey as they suffer 3-5 loss in the semifinal



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, Dec 21: Defending champions and Olympic bronze medalist India dished out a below-par performance to suffer a stunning 3-5 defeat against Japan in the second semifinal of the Asian Champions Trophy men's hockey tournament here Tuesday.

India were the overwhelming favourites before the start of the match after having thrashed the same opponents 6-0 in their last round robin match and also on head-to-head record, but the Japanese had other plans.

Japan were a completely different side Tuesday as they toyed with the defence of the Manpreet Singh-led side from the beginning.

The Indians were nowhere near their last match performance against Japan as their defence crumbled under relentless pressure from the lower-ranked opposition from the onset of the match.

It was a complete contrast of the performance India had displayed against Japan in their last outing as the Olympic medalist could never recover from the early goals they conceded.

Japan raced to a 2-0 lead inside the first two minutes and that seemed to have jolted the Indians and they played catch-up hockey thereafter. Japan scored through Shota Yamada

(1st minute, penalty), Raiki Fujishima (2nd minute), Yoshiaki Kirishita (29th), Kosei Kawabe (35th) and Ryoma Ooka (41st). India's goals were scored by Hardik Singh (17th, 58th minute) and vice-captain Harmanpreet Singh (43rd).

India and Japan had met 18 times before with the hosts winning 16 games, while Japan emerged victorious on one occasion and one ended in a draw.

Japan will now take on South Korea in the summit clash, while India will be once again up against Pakistan in the bronze medal clash Wednesday. In the other semifinal of the day, South Korea beat Pakistan 6-5 in a thrilling contest.

Japan's dominance can be gauged from the fact that they earned as many as six penalty corners in the first six minutes, two of which resulted in goals. They secured their first penalty corner in the very first minute, which resulted in a penalty stroke and Yamada made no mistake from the spot.

The Asian Games gold medalists continued to put relentless pressure on the Indian defence and secured five more penalty corners in one-and-a-half minutes, one of which resulting in another goal through Fujishima.

Trailing by two goals, the Indians came out with more purpose in the second quarter and reduced

the margin in the 17th minute through Hardik's field goal after he was set up by skipper Manpreet Singh and Dilpreet Singh.

India kept up the pressure and secured their first penalty corner in the 19th minute but Nilam Sanjeep Xess' effort was saved by the Japanese goalkeeper.

From a counter attack, Japan earned another penalty stroke for an obstruction by India custodian Krishan Bahadur Pathak and this time Kirishita stepped up and converted the chance to go into the breather with 3-1 lead.

After the change of ends, Japan stunned India again when Kawabe tapped in a loose ball in the open goal with the Indian defence giving up thinking they have conceded a penalty corner. But, the umpire played advantage.

Ooka then tapped in from close range in the 41st minute after being set up by Kenta Tanaka's brilliant work from the left flank. Two minutes later, Harmanpreet converted a penalty corner from India's second penalty corner.

Trailing 2-5, India went all out in search of goals and secured two more penalty corners soon but wasted both. With just over a minute left, India secured their fifth penalty corner; and this time Hardik scored his second goal of the day from a variation.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 21: India's premier off-spinner R Ashwin has revealed that he felt like he was being "thrown under the bus" after a remark by former head coach Ravi Shastri left him "crushed" during a torrid phase in his career when he contemplated retirement multiple times.

In an interview with 'ESPNews', Ashwin was asked how he felt when then coach Shastri anointed Kuldeep Yadav as India's No.1 spinner overseas after he had taken a five-for in the 2019 Sydney Test against Australia.

Ashwin said he was genuinely happy for Kuldeep as he knew how difficult it is to take five wickets as a spinner in Australia but Shastri's remarks left him "absolutely crushed".

"I hold Ravi bhai in high esteem. We all do. And I understand we all can say things and then retract them. In that moment, though, I felt crushed. Absolutely crushed," Ashwin said.

"We all talk about how important it is to enjoy your teammates' success. And I was happy for Kuldeep. I have not been able to get a five-for but he has a five-for in Australia. I know how big it is. Even when I have bowled well (at other times), I haven't ended up with a five-for. So I am genuinely happy for him. And it's an extremely happy occasion, to win in Australia.

"But if I have to come and partake in his happiness, and the success of the team, I must feel like I belong there. If I feel like I am being thrown under the bus, how am I supposed to get up and come for a party to enjoy the team's or team-mate's success?"

Ashwin, however, still made it to



the celebration party that was organised following the Indian's team's historic series triumph Down Under.

"I went back to my room and then I spoke to my wife. And my children were there. So we were able to, you know, shrug it off, and I still made it to the party, because, end of the day, we had won a massive series."

The 35-year-old said that recurring injuries meant that he was playing under "excruciating pain" when he took three wickets in each innings to lead India to victory in the first Test.

Shastri's remark was quite too much for Ashwin after he played a role in the team's win in the series opener. "The first Test seemed like a distant memory by then. I had taken three of the first four wickets in the first innings after we were bowled out cheaply, and then

when it got really flat in the final innings, I plugged away for 50-plus overs and took three wickets despite what turned out to be a grade three abdomen tear.

"In my mind, I had done something great for the team in excruciating pain, but all I heard was, "Nathan Lyon took six, Ashwin took three".

"As it is, I was frustrated with my body for letting me down when I was in really good bowling form. The last thing I needed was these comparisons and insinuations. Between that reaction and Sydney, it didn't feel like I had played any part at all," Ashwin said.

Ashwin has been a great asset for India in both home and away conditions in the longer format of the game. But there was a phase between 2018 to 2020 when he almost quit playing.

"Between 2018 and 2020, I con-

templated giving up the sport at various points. I thought, 'I have put in a lot of effort, but it is not coming through.'

"The harder I tried, the farther it felt. Especially with athletic pubalgia and the patellar tendonitis - I used to bowl six balls and then I used to be gasping for breath. And there would be pain all over the place.

"So you needed to make adjustments. When the knee pain got excruciating, the next ball I would probably jump less. When I jumped less, obviously the force needs to be produced through the core and the back and the shoulders, so the pubalgia (a chronic groin lesion) would act up.

"So the third ball I would be extra side-on to try to use the hips. By the time I was done with six balls, I would be like, 'I need a break here,'" Ashwin recalled.

INDIA AMONG TOP 3 DOPE VIOLATORS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 21: An uptick in the number of offenders has taken India into the top-three of the world's biggest doping violators in a WADA report detailing the transgressions for the year 2019 with bodybuilding, weightlifting and athletics contributing majorly to the country's embarrassing record.

In the latest report published by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), 152 (17 per cent of the world total) Anti-doping Rule Violations (ADRVs) were reported in India in 2019, leaving it third in the list with the maximum dope offenders coming from bodybuilding (57).

Among Olympic sports, weightlifting leads the way with 25 ADRVs, followed by athletics (20) and wrestling (10). Boxing and judo reported four ADRVs each. Four cricketers were also found to have committed ADRVs in 2019.

A lightweight in global sport, India is only behind Russia (167) and Italy (157), while Brazil (78) is at fourth and Iran (70) fifth.

An ADRV is reported after a final decision has been rendered and a sanction (a reprimand or period of ineligibility) imposed against the athlete following the conclusion of disciplinary proceedings.

Russia was banned from field-



ing its national team in Tokyo Olympics for not complying with international anti-doping rules.

The country now tops the violators' list, reporting more cases than from the previous report of 2018. It had gone down to seventh in the 2017, with 57 ADRVs.

In the previous WADA report meant for anti-doping violations in 2018, India was placed fourth with 107 ADRVs, behind Russia (144), Italy (132) and France (114).

Weightlifting (22) had produced the highest number of dope offenders in that report also, followed by athletics (16). A total of 278,047 samples were collected by

Anti-Doping Organisations worldwide in 2019, and subsequently, analysed by WADA-accredited laboratories. Of these samples, 2,701 (1 per cent) were reported as Adverse Analytical Findings.

Based on a compilation of the information received by WADA till January 31, 2021, 57 per cent (1,335 samples) were confirmed as ADRVs (sanctions), the world anti-doping watchdog said.

Among Olympic sports worldwide, athletics leads the number of dope offenders with 227 (18 per cent), followed by weightlifting with 160. Bodybuilding leads overall with 272.

Nortje ruled out of Test series vs India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Johannesburg, Dec 21: South Africa pacer Anrich Nortje was Tuesday ruled out of the upcoming three Test series against India due to a "persistent" injury.

Cricket South Africa (CSA) did not specify the nature of injury and also did not name a replacement for Nortje who has taken 47 wickets in 12 Tests, including three five-wicket hauls. The first Test is slated to begin in Centurion from December 26.

"Proteas bowler, Anrich Nortje, has been ruled out of the three-match, Betway Test series against India, due to a persistent injury," CSA said in a statement.

"He has unfortunately not recovered adequately for the expected Test match bowling loads and is currently consulting with specialists to manage and advise on his recovery. No replacement will be brought in," it added.



Nortje is well known for his exploits in the Indian Premier League where he plays for Delhi Capitals. The Capitals have retained Nortje and not compatriot Kagiso Rabada ahead of the IPL mega auction next month. Rabada will be leading the pace attack in the Boxing Day Test.

Queen's Baton Relay for '22 CWG: Odisha to be visited January 15

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 21: The Queen's Baton Relay for the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games will be held in Delhi, Ahmedabad, Bangalore and Odisha from January 12-15, for which the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has decided to constitute a committee.

The Queen's Baton Relay will be in India for four days during its international journey covering 72 countries. The relay will start with Delhi January 12, followed by Ahmedabad (January 13), Bangalore (January 14) and Odisha (January 15).

IOA president Narinder Batra has informed about the formation of the committee and places where the relay will take place in India, in a press release.

"Secretary General (Rajeev Mehta) and I are pleased to inform that IOA has decided to constitute a three-member committee to over-



see the preparation and conduct of the Queen's Baton Relay programme of 22nd Commonwealth Games Birmingham 2022," Batra said in the release.

The members of the committee are: IOA executive council member Rakesh Gupta, Mukesh Kumar and Netball Federation of India's executive council member Hari Om

Kaushi. IOA director George Matthew and IOA joint director Nazima Khan will assist the committee.

The presidents and secretaries of the state Olympic associations will be responsible for the preparation and smooth conduct of relays in their respective states.

The relay began October 7 at the Buckingham Palace, where Queen Elizabeth II placed her message to the Commonwealth into the Baton.

It will travel for 269 days, spending between two and four days in each nation or territory, covering approximately 140,000 kilometres, having over 7,500 Baton-bearers.

Over the course of the relay, the Baton will spend Christmas Eve in Seychelles, will bring in the New Year in the Maldives and plans to be in Jamaica over the Easter weekend.

Flying out from Birmingham Airport, the first stop on the Queen's Baton Relay was Cyprus October 9, shortly followed by Malta.

2 out of 2: Not much is going right for England

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Adelaide, Dec 21: After lopsided losses in the first two Ashes Tests, England captain Joe Root says he's frustrated by three components of his team's performance. Unfortunately for Root, they're the three main ones in the game — batting, bowling and fielding.

The Adelaide loss followed a nine-wicket defeat in the opening match in Brisbane. There, England only scored 147 in its first innings and Australia notched 425, leaving the visitors 278 runs in arrears going into their second innings.

The next match begins Sunday, the traditional Boxing Day test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, followed by matches in Sydney and Hobart in January. With Australia holding the Ashes, the visitors now need to win all three to regain the urn. That won't happen if their fielding doesn't improve.

In the first two Tests, England's total of dropped catches was in double figures and they've taken two



wickets from no-balls. Root said one positive was England's resistance on the final day, led by Jos Buttler, who got through 207 balls before backing into his stumps and was out for 26.

Only one team has ever come from 0-2 down to win an Ashes se-

ries: Don Bradman's Australians in 1936-37.

Root is undeterred, despite England not having won a match in Australia since 2010-11, when it won the series 3-1. In two series since before this one, it's been 5-0 and 4-0 with a draw for the home

side.

Buttler's role is one of several that selectors will discuss before the MCG Test. He is expected to retain his spot in England's team, but could lose the wicketkeeping role to Jonny Bairstow after Buttler dropped three catches in Adelaide.

PONTING QUESTIONS ROOT'S LEADERSHIP

Adelaide: Former Australia skipper Ricky Ponting has slammed Joe Root for criticising England bowlers after his side's second consecutive defeat in the ongoing Ashes series, saying as the leader it is his responsibility to ensure the strategy is followed. Root didn't hold back after England's 275-run defeat to Australia in the second Test. The 30-year-old blamed the bowlers for not bowling the right lengths, especially in the first innings. "I nearly fell off my seat when I heard that. Whose job is it then to make them change? Why are you captain then?" Ponting was quoted as saying by 'cricket.com.au'. "If you can't influence your bowlers on what length to bowl, what are you doing on the field?" Ponting, who led Australia to two World Cup titles, said the onus is on Root to influence his bowlers. "Joe Root can come back and say whatever he likes but if you're captain, you've got to be able to sense when your bowlers aren't bowling where you want them to. And if they're not going to listen, you take them off, simple as that. Give someone else a chance that is going to do it for you. Or you have a really strong conversation with them on the field to tell them what you need. That's what captaincy is all about," Ponting said. Root had said England were making the same mistakes they did during their 0-4 series defeat in 2017-18. To which Ponting said as skipper one needs to be firm with the bowlers if they are not executing the captain's plan.

Ollie Pope (5 and 4 in Adelaide) is also under pressure to keep his spot at No.6, potentially creating room for Bairstow to come in.

Haseeb Hameed (6 and 0 in Adelaide) and Rory Burns are under threat at the top of the order,

although Burns fought hard on the fourth night in Adelaide to put up 34 after scoring just 4 in England's first innings. To heat up the bowling, England could bring back rested paceman Mark Wood for Melbourne.

Advani triumphs at Billiards Nat'ls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, Dec 21: Ace cueist Pankaj Advani defended his national billiards title — his 11th in the tournament — after he defeated his PSPB teammate Dhruv Sitwala 5-2 in a best of nine games final here, Monday.

"Dhruv is a very close friend of mine, we share all the sneak peaks of our lives. To be honest, it is never easy to play against your best friend in the finals of a major event like this. But, after the snooker failures, this victory gives me a sense of redemption," Advani was quoted as saying in a media statement issued here Tuesday.

"The National Billiards Championship is surely a tough tournament to crack. I'm thrilled and grateful to lift my 11th Senior Billiards title, it is also my 35th title overall. So, I am more than happy and feeling deeply satisfied."