

## No Proposal To Grant Constitutional Status To Minorities Commission: Centre

New Delhi: The government on Thursday told the Lok Sabha that there is no proposal at present to grant constitutional status to the National Commission for Minorities. In a written response to a question in the lower house by Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, Minority Affairs Minister Smriti Irani said the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) was established as a statutory body with the enactment of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992 by Parliament. This Act came into force with effect from May 17, 1992, she said. "Under section 2 (c) of the said Act, the central government has notified five religious



communities namely, Buddhists, Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, and Zoroastrians (Parsis) as minority communities," she said. Subsequently, the central government further notified the Jain community as a minority community vide

notification on January 27, 2014, the minister said. "Further, there is no proposal, at present, to grant constitutional status to the National Commission for Minorities," she said. In response to another question as to whether it is true that the number of

beneficiaries has decreased under the Pre-Matric and Post-Matric scholarship schemes in 2020-21 in comparison to 2019-20, Irani said there is state-wise/community-wise quota for fresh scholarships under pre-matric and post-matric scholarship

schemes. However, in 2019-20 all the eligible beneficiaries from certain states/UTs were awarded scholarship under the two schemes and hence the number of scholarships disbursed in 2019-20 was higher than 2020-21, she said.

On whether the government has considered revising the income criteria under the scheme since fixed income limit deprives many students of availing benefits of such schemes, the minister said the process of scheme revision is a continuous process and various aspects, including revision of the income criteria under the scholarship schemes, are looked into by the ministry during such processes.

## BJD MP Patra demands passage of Women's Reservation Bill in Parliament

Bhubaneswar/New Delhi(KCN): Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP Sasmit Patra today raised the demand for passing of Women's Reservation Bill in Indian Parliament, through a Special Mention in the Rajya Sabha.

Patra said that the passing of the Women's Reservation Bill in Parliament will be a historic step towards the empowerment of 66 crore women of the country. Especially, when India is celebrating its 75 years of Independence and has the Presidency of the G-20 now. By passing the Women's Reservation Bill in Parliament, India can set a shining achievement before the world. Thirty-three percent women's reservation through this Bill will provide new opportunities of leadership to women and



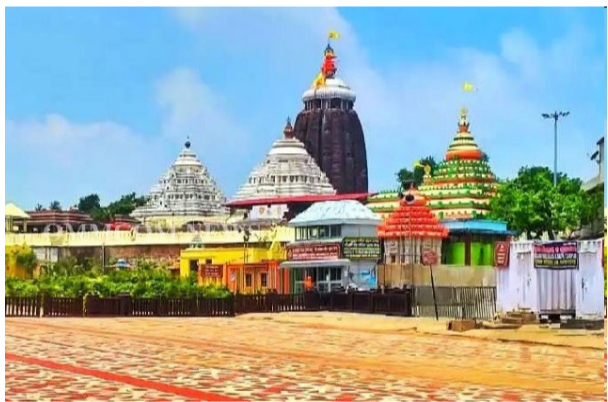
would help India to become the best nation in the world, Patra added.

Patra stated, "My leader and Hon'ble CM Shri Naveen Patnaik and our party the Biju Janata Dal have been demanding for the passing of the Women's Reservation Bill for many years. In 2018, the CM Patnaik sent BJD delegations to 22 political parties and sought support from them for the passage of the Women's

Reservation Bill. Many political parties also supported his initiative. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Patnaik ensured 33% of Lok Sabha seat tickets of the party to women candidates and many of them are Lok Sabha MPs today."

Concluding his Special Mention, Patra reiterated that the Women's Reservation Bill should be brought and passed in the Indian Parliament at the earliest.

## SJTA imposes ban on carrying mobile phones into Jagannath temple from Jan 1



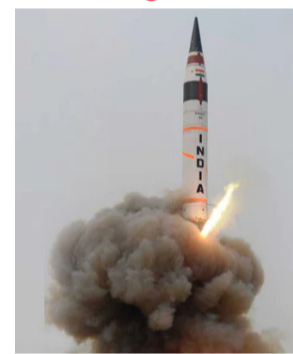
Puri(KCN): Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) in Puri decided today, in its meeting held here, to ban mobile phones from being carried into Jagannath temple premises with effect from January 1, 2023. Flouters of the fresh

rules will face stringent punishment, a SJTA official source informed. Previously, a similar restriction was clamped on devotees and visitors alone. However, the fresh norm will apply to one and all including policemen, servitors and employees of the

Vaishnavite shrine. Persons entering the 12th-Century shrine shall have to leave their mobile phones outside the temple premises. Special arrangements will be made for the safe custody of mobile phones at Singhadwar and Dakshina Dwar, SJTA Chief Administrator Vir Vikram Yadav said while briefing mediapersons. The managing committee meeting was chaired by Gajapati Dibyasingha Deb and Puri district Collector Samarth Verma, SP Kanwar Vishal Singh and all members of the committee took part in it.

## Days After China Clash, Agni V Successfully Tested, It Can Reach Beijing

New Delhi: India has successfully carried out night trials of the Agni V nuclear-capable ballistic missile which can hit targets beyond 5,400 km, sources in the Defence Ministry said on Thursday, amid heightened tensions with China over clashes along the de facto border in Arunachal Pradesh last



week. The test was carried out to validate new

technologies and equipment on the missile and has proved that the missile can now hit targets further away than before, they added.

The intercontinental nuclear-capable ballistic missile was fired from Abdul Kalam Island, off the coast of Odisha. While the test was carried out

days after the clashes, it had been planned earlier. India had announced its intention to test a long-range missile and issued a NOTAM or Notice to Airmen well before the incident in Arunachal's Tawang. This is the ninth flight of the Agni V - a missile first tested in 2012 - and was a routine test, Defence Ministry sources said.

## SI of Tamando PS found in possession of properties worth crores during Vigilance raid

Bhubaneswar(KCN): Abhimanyu Choudhury, SI of Tamando police station in Odisha capital, was found in possession of properties worth crores of rupees during raid by the Vigilance, today. Acting on a complaint against the

police official regarding possession of assets disproportionate to his known sources of income, the anti-corruption agency raided multiple places belonging to him. The following properties

in the name of the SI and his family members were unearthed during the raids: A four-storeyed building at Unit-8, Paika Nagar, Bhubaneswar with about 10,000 sq ft area. The valuation appears to be about Rs

1.5 crore. However, the Technical Team of Odisha Vigilance is carrying out measurements to assess the value. A single-storeyed building at Nachipur, PS-Ranpur, Dist-Nayagarh.

## Female jumbo dies after coming in contact with live wire in Odisha's Deogarh

Reamal(KCN): A female elephant died after reportedly coming in contact with a live wire at an orange farm in Reamal block of Deogarh district in Odisha here today. The incident took place in Khilaberani village under Chadheimara panchayat which comes under Kundeigola section of Reamal forest range in the district. As per reports, a herd of 17-18 elephants came into the area and tried entering the orange farm at around 2 am in the night. As the farm was fenced with live wire, one of the female elephants came in contact with it and died on the spot.

# BJP Plea For Ayushman

New Delhi: Renewing their old demand, the BJP Parliamentarians from Odisha on Thursday met Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya here and urged to put pressure on the Odisha Government for implementation of the Ayushman Bharat scheme in the State.

A delegation of BJP MPs including three Union Ministers Dharmendra Pradhan, Ashwini Vaishnav & Bishweswar Tudu, Basant Panda, Suresh Pujari, Pratap Sarangi, Aparajita Sarangi, Sangeeta Singhdeo and Nitesh Ganga Deb met Mr. Mandaviya in Parliament and submitted a

memorandum to put forth their demand.

Almost all the states in the country irrespective of political parties are utilizing the Central Government health scheme to benefit the people except Odisha and few others, denying the benefits of this well-crafted universal health scheme by the Union of India to citizens in Odisha, the MPs said in their memo.

The dwindling healthcare scenario of Odisha coupled with absence of AB-PMJAY is a major bane for Odia people living in the state and outside the State, they said.

The Universal Health Coverage in Odisha remains sporadic



because of inequitable distribution of medical resources across the state. Poor rural healthcare infrastructure, gaping holes in medical and paramedic staff positioning, and access to diagnostics facilities remain major

challenges in accessing healthcare services.

The Rural Health Statistics 2021 reveals that doctor vacancies in PHCs stand close to 31 percent. Acute shortage of medical staff and those in administrative positions are languishing in the state.

Per Capita availability of Doctors and Hospital Bed are also one of the lowest in the country, the MPs said.

The BJP Lawmakers pointed out that Odisha has been ranked 14th for Overall health performance among 19 large states in 2019-20,

which is lower than nearby states like Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.

Since 2014, Odisha has been one of the worst performers in Neonatal Mortality Rate, Maternal Mortality, Anemia amongst adolescents

and women and child malnourishment.

On State Government's Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojna (BSKY), they said the scheme has limitation to cater to the tertiary healthcare needs of Odia people as it doesn't have a pan India portability/admissibility, enough number of empanelled hospitals, robust and fraud free claim settlement process.

Despite having the State Health Insurance Scheme, most of the patients are refused admissions into private hospitals even in the State citing non availability of bed.

Also, Odisha is prone to distress migration which forces

nearly 33.45 Percent of families in Rural Odisha to migrate to other states in search of work. An estimated population of 1 crore Odias live outside the state for their livelihood, the MPs pointed out.

Stating Ayushman Bharat, the world's largest healthcare programme is a game changer and an opportunity to serve the poor, the State BJP MPs said, "In the larger interest of people of Odisha, especially the State's huge migrant worker population, we request you to kindly intervene and pursue Government of Odisha to opt for Ayushman Bharat Scheme."



# Female elephant accidentally electrocuted to death in Odisha's Deogarh



DEOGARH(KCN): An adult female elephant was found dead near a farm land in Khilaberini village of Chadeimara panchayat under Reamal forest range in Deogarh district on Thursday morning.

According to reports, the carcass of the pachyderm was first spotted by the villagers who then informed the forest officials. Preliminary investigation revealed the elephant died due to electrocution after coming in contact with a live wire. However, official sources informed that the live wire was not laid as a trap and that it was merely passing through the farm land, upon which the elephant might have accidentally stumbled.

The pachyderm was part of a large herd which had lost its way back in the wee hours of Thursday. The exact cause of death will be ascertained only after postmortem.

The corporators cutting across party lines boycotted the health standing committee meeting of Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) scheduled on Tuesday as their demand for transfer of municipal commissioner Nikhil Pavan Kalyan remained unaddressed. Convened by the

# Corporators stay firm, skip CMC meetings demanding transfer of municipal commissioner



CUTTACK(KCN): Corporators cutting across party lines boycotted the health standing committee meeting of Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) scheduled on Tuesday as their demand for transfer of municipal commissioner Nikhil Pavan Kalyan remained unaddressed. Convened by the

civic body, neither the members nor the chairperson turned up for the meeting. The corporators had decided to boycott the council and standing committee meetings unless their demand of the commissioner's transfer was fulfilled. "The issue pertaining to commissioner's misconduct towards a senior corporator is

yet to be resolved and we have taken decision to boycott all meetings till he is transferred," said Diptimayee Mulia and Monalisha Das, chairpersons of health and education and recreation standing committee respectively. "It is a matter of regret that instead of apologising, the commissioner has

remained firm on his stand," they said. Sources said a meeting of BJD corporators of CMC was scheduled to be held under the chairmanship of secretary (Organization) Biju Janata Dal, Pranab Prakash Das in Bhubaneswar on Wednesday. But the meeting got postponed at the last moment.

# Two girls fall into septic tank, die in Ganjam

BERHAMPUR(KCN): Wedding celebrations turned into tragedy after two cousins - both minor - died after they fell

Bhanjanagar on Wednesday. Basumati and Dibya, both aged five, were cousins and had arrived at the house of

The girls were playing over the septic tank behind Sethy's house when the cover collapsed, reportedly unable to take the

members were busy in the marriage function. On hearing the girls' screams, family members rushed to the spot and pulled them out of the tank. The cousins were rushed to Sorada hospital but doctors declared them dead. ASI of Bhanjanagar police station Ramesh Lenka said bodies of the girls were sent to MKCG Medical College and Hospital for post-mortem. The mishap may have taken place due to a broken slab cover over the septic tank, he added.



into a septic tank in Pakarda village of Ganjam's

maternal uncle J Sathy on Tuesday to attend the wedding.

weight of the girls. All this happened when the family

# 49th meeting of East Coast Railway Zonal Official Language Implementation Committee

Bhubaneswar(KCN):

ing Shri Sunkar urged

He also advised that

and more in Rajbhasha. On this occasion Shri Sunkar released the posters related to effective quotes of great Hindi litterateurs. He also felicitated Khurda Road, Waltair and Sambalpur Divisions for remarkable achievements in implementation of Rajbhasha. Winners of the quiz competition based on Hindi writers were also



The 49th Joint Meeting of East Coast Railway Official Language Implementation Committee was held under the chairmanship of General Manager, Shri R. N. Sunkar. All the Principal Heads of departments, Apar Mukhya Rajbhasha Adhikaris from Khurda Road, Sambalpur and Waltair Division and Chief Workshop Manager, Carriage Repair Workshop, Mancheswar were present in the meeting.

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employees

# CMC expresses inability to preserve 66 water bodies

CUTTACK(KCN) : The Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) has expressed inability to undertake revival of 66 water bodies in the

city which were identified by the Revenue department for preservation and maintenance a decade ago.

and an MoU was signed on June 3, 2019. But nothing had followed till date, Nayak pleaded, while submitting an appraisal note on the issue.



The Orissa High Court was hearing on Tuesday a PIL seeking intervention for conservation of these water bodies. Maitree Sansad, a city based socio-cultural organisation had filed the petition in 2019. CMC counsel Debashis Nayak pleaded before the court that the civic body will not be in a position to maintain or preserve the 66 water bodies till they are transferred to the CMC. There are technical difficulties as the water bodies are in control of the state government. The issue was discussed a number of times

store the 66 water bodies in the city even as the Revenue department had drawn up a plan to develop and conserve them for community use in 2012. The Housing and Urban Development department had sanctioned Rs 5 crore for the purpose. After hearing both sides the division bench of Chief Justice S Muralidhar and Justice MS Raman directed the state government to file an affidavit within four weeks listing out the concrete steps taken for preservation and revival of water bodies in the city. The bench posted the matter to January 19 for further consideration on the issue.

awarded by the GM. Mukhya Rajbhasha Adhikari and Principal Financial Advisor, Shri R. S. Mitra asked railway men to extend their cooperation to implement official language policy. Deputy Mukhya Rajbhasha Adhikari and Deputy Chief Operations Manager (General), Shri Debraj Nayak delivered the welcome speech. Smt. Yelleena Panda, Rajbhasha Adhikari, co-ordinated the meeting.



Hindi in their day to

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# Mahesh Narayanan: Ariyippu is my most satisfying work yet

In today's digital era, where privacy has become a luxury for many, scandalous videos

tain incident should affect me, and then I'll let it marinate and travel with me for some



being leaked online is an everyday thing. It's a pertinent, universal subject that has been explored in several films worldwide. With his latest film, Ariyippu, writer-director Mahesh Narayanan also attempts the same by interweaving it with a few other relevant topics like imbalances in marital life, patriarchal conditioning, migration among skilled labourers, and the crumbling economy during the pandemic.

Unlike his previous films, Mahesh has eschewed all the so-called commercial elements in Ariyippu, and as intended, the film has had a successful run in several international festivals across the world. It all started with its world premiere at the 75th Locarno International Film Festival, followed by screenings at the British Film Institute, Busan International Film Festival, IFFI, and IFFK. Despite the successful run at the festival circuit, Mahesh feels that the 'real test' is on December 16, when the film comes out for public viewing on Netflix. "So far, the reception has been great, but unless and until it reaches the common audience, we can't be

time. That's how most of my films are born. This incident of a woman's fight for a declaration stayed with me for long. I initially thought of setting the story in a bank, but changed it later because I'm someone who keeps rewriting my drafts every six months to ensure it stays relevant. During the pandemic, I visited a few factories in Kochi and interacted with the workers there. They were among the first to ring the bell saying that, 'look, there's something ominous coming our way'. They sensed it from the unusually huge quantity of orders and their long work shifts. From there, I also heard stories about how these skilled labourers migrate to other Asian countries like Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand. They

commercial film, and we all knew Mahesh was capable of pulling it off. But he wanted to do it in a grounded manner without any cinematic adulterations. We trusted his vision, and that's how Mahesh, Shebin (Becker) and I came together to produce the film. Our intention was to make a pan-Indian film with a rooted Malayali soul, which we could present globally. Thankfully, it all came together well with the efforts of some wonderful artists and technicians."

Over the last few years, Kunchacko Boban's career has seen a remarkable shift. The actor, who was known for his 'chocolate hero' image, had to consciously make some tricky career choices to get rid of that tag. In Ariyippu, he does scenes that one wouldn't have expected from him a few years back. The actor chuckles in delight when I mention it. "These are words that I've always longed for. This is my 25th year in cinema, and in pursuit of trying to reinvent myself, I've been doing a variety of genres and different character shades lately. It's a process that started during my Gulumal (2009) and Traffic (2011) days. Interestingly, Mahesh has been a con-



stant in all my landmark films, mostly as an editor. Naturally, he knows me inside out, as a person and as a performer. In Ariyippu, he wanted to push my limits and make me do a character which I've never done before."

Like Kunchacko Boban, Divyaprabha has also had a long association with Mahesh Narayanan. Her breakout role came in his directorial debut Take Off (2017). Later, she did a noteworthy role as Fahadh Faasil's sister in Malik. Ariyippu marks her maiden film as a lead actor. "As an actor, I always believe in having a healthy rapport with the director. With Mahesh sir, since it's my third film, I'm well aware of what he expects from me." However, the actor admits that it was not easy to get into the shoes of Reshmi. "She is completely different from me, in terms of the way she talks or walks. I could only connect to her emotions. So I had to prep a lot, which included visiting factories in Kochi and Faridabad and observing the body language and mannerisms of the working class people." Kunchacko Boban also has a similar acting process of observing and learning, but he believes that it's the well-compiled bound script



complacent. December 16 is the D-day." Mahesh, an editor-turned-filmmaker is known for helming hard-hitting films like Take Off, CU Soon, Malik, and Malayankunju. There's an interesting pattern to all his films—he borrows inspirations from real-life incidents, craftily blends them with fictitious elements and then sets them in distinctive terrains. Mahesh admits that Ariyippu also germinated from a similar thought. "It was sometime in 2015 during the Take Off days when I accidentally came across this news article about a bank employee in Mumbai approaching the high court about a lookalike video circulating through porn websites. She wanted the judge to issue a declaration stating that she wasn't the same woman. The judge was sarcastic saying that it can't be used as a legal document anywhere. But the woman was determined, and she got it issued. This incident sparked an idea."

When asked about how the pandemic and migrant labour issues came into the picture, Mahesh explains in detail the chain of events that lead to the making of Ariyippu. "A cer-

don't take the usual route through Mumbai or Chennai. They move to places like Delhi, where most of the embassies are, live in the city's outskirts, work there for 6-8 months, attend recruitment programmes and then get the paperwork done. I found their journey interesting. What if such a couple with the intention to move abroad are caught in this video scandal and get stuck in an alien environment? How would they cope with it? That was my trigger for Ariyippu."

Kunchacko Boban and Divyaprabha play the couple, Hareesh and Reshmi, who face a crisis situation. For Kunchacko Boban, Ariyippu is special for more than one reason. It is the maiden production venture of his new banner, Kunchacko Boban Productions. Despite being a leading actor for over two decades, it is perhaps the first time he is part of a film that's gaining such global acclaim. The actor credits it as a result of Mahesh's conviction and some great teamwork. "I've known Mahesh for long, and he has been an integral part in shaping up my career in the second innings. Ariyippu's subject was suited for a gripping



and shooting in chronological order that helped him pull off Hareesh's character. "Hareesh was alien to me when Mahesh first narrated the subject. But when I finally got the bound script, I could understand everything about the character. There were even well-defined backstories for Hareesh and Reshmi, which is not there in the film. Similarly, shooting in chronological order in real locations did wonders to our performances." Mahesh quickly adds that this is the first film where he got the liberty to shoot in chronological order. "Given a chance, I would want all my films to be shot this way, but there's a problem with logistics. With Ariyippu, in which I'm also part of the production, I wanted to shoot it in order to help my actors perform with ease. In that sense, this is my most satisfying work yet."



## MODI - THE ALCHEMIST AND CATALYST



**M.R.LALU**

What makes India's electioneering a monumental surprise is its unpredictability. You do not know what will happen the next moment. There are no permanent friends and enemies and nobody knows who would be the next stowaway comfortably hiding to cross jump ships. But when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) President Rajnath Singh announced Narendra Modi as its prime ministerial candidate on 13 September 2013 it was not unpredictable. There was already the mist of speculation emanating from the ravines of India's political landscape. Everybody in the BJP and in the opposition camps began to sense the emergence of Modi as a contender for the post of Prime Minister and brand Modi's Gujarat model was deliberately made a topic of discussion. The only confusion that persisted was about his ability to

drag the country's population into 'the new thinking, new hope' version of new politics that he declared in one of his press meets. But later, India was to march with the 'Modified' version of Indian politics and administration; perhaps you would call it the most articulative period of India's electoral politics. The surprise element is seemingly getting more pronounced, at least for his opponents, who failed to cut paths to bypass Modi's popularity. He is the most popular outsider in Delhi who hailed from humble beginnings and successfully captured the minds of the electorate by winning all popular parameters of political superstardom and still unstoppable for a decade.

The anti corruption crusade setup by the Anna Hazare camp came as a drizzle in the desert as Modi prepared for the elections 2014 and his political prominence began to grow enormously nationally when all the narratives failed to demonise him for the 2002 Gujarat riots. Any leader in his place could have

been emotionally crippled, ideologically paralysed and socially alienated. But Modi withstood the political storm which blew westward when he was engrossed in building his state Gujarat that had choked under the ravages of a deadly earthquake. When the earthquake shattered the hopes of the state in 2001, a few months later, the new Chief Minister of the state was struggling to build it brick by brick and then came the gruesome Godhra train carnage and the aftermath tremor of violence throwing the state into a deep turmoil. Restructuring of Gujarat was a tough task that the Modi regime had handled effortlessly. His victories since then have been historical and the spiteful narratives his opponents began to shriek louder against him have been blissfully swallowed and he waited for a appropriate occasions to react and intelligently turned the wind in favour of him.

To his ideological parent, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the emergence of the Modi persona

beyond its restricted flying space was not a subject of adulation. But Modi's popularity as a leader of mass support has been a helping factor for the Sangh to establish its lost base in various areas. This was because Narendra Modi was the only Prime Minister, who



in many occasions proudly spelt out vocularies venerating the Sangh. He never hesitated to narrate his umbilical connection with the Sangh. This has attached more respect, acceptance and accolades to the Sangh which otherwise was normally prosecuted in the media for its heavy Hindutva philosophy. Ever since the coronation of the first Modi regime, thousands of Sangh shakhas were revived and many units were newly formed across the

country. The Modi incarnation in the national politics could catapult its prospects manifold to a spectacular extent with more people idolizing its efforts and workers. Modi's audacity in building the world's largest statue, a dedication to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,

who banned the Sangh after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, was probably a step to establish his personal brand of ideology that he must have thought to launch outside the Sangh Parivar framework. The present scenario is evocative of the fact that more than anyone, it is the Sangh, the machinery that would seek to tap fortunes from the Modi regime. The Sangh has obviously been a force that toiled hard to establish its political wing the Bharatiya

Jana Sangh (BJS) since 1951. The political transition of the BJS to BJP had been an awesome creation that the Sangh with its cultural intelligence had managed to chisel out.

Systematically hijacking Mahatma Gandhi from the Congress

be seen as an outcome of his ideological transparency, organisational expertise and personal humility. Sliding away from its aggressive Hindutva, the party under Modi could now transform the emotions of a large chunk of the Indian voters in its favour.

Emerging as a serious contender to thwart the dominance of the Congress, the BJP since 2014 could almost nullify the coalition form of power politics. Effectively redefining the Hindutva philosophy by allocating enough space to accommodate nationalistic principles, the consistent transmutation of the saffron party under the Modi regime makes it an immortal phenomenon. To counter the narratives that the BJP sets to materialise its electoral success before every election, its detractors would need substantial and convincing ideological stuff. To present itself as a serious contender to the Modi fiefdom, the Aam Aadmi Party's efforts to frame saffron

narratives lack sincerity and so far, the emergence of the AAP as a distant shadow doesn't trouble the BJP's prospects. Modi has already scaled the unshakeable heights of the Hindutva's political legacy leaving maximum parties far behind. A third term for Modi in 2024 is almost certain and the colossal makeover of the Modi phenomenon would be a subject of study for the world community when leaders fall into perils without being able to garner the popular public support in countries where almost one tenth of India's population determines their political fortunes. Modi's indomitability is an unpleasant challenge to many in India which they never hesitate to hide. But the Modi magic is on, mainstreaming the country's cultural heritage and popularising India's political might.

**(Freelance Journalist / Author of the book (India @75- A Contemporary Approach) Meppurathu House Puthusserimala Ranni Pathanamthitta Kerala State**

### Letter To Editor

#### Sir, Soccer symphony on Sunday

When two of the best teams in the world clash for the World Cup it will not just be a clash between two Titans of the beautiful game of football but also a master competition between two maestros - Lionel Messi and Mbappe - who have carved a niche of their own in the history of football. Their feet will play music on the ground of Lusail along with their companions and the aura of soccer symphony created shall remain etched in the hearts of millions of football devotees around the globe.

The game no doubt will be a soccer extravaganza wherein the world is sure to witness a soccer symphony orchestrated by the football magicians of Argentina and the soccer wizards of France - a display of mesmerising feat and stunt by the football heroes from South America and Europe and what we have in store is surely going to be scintillating pyrotechnics to be remembered forever.

**M PRADYU KANNUR**

## Jobless Development - A Menace

**Pratap chandra sahu**

Every year near about 1.2 crore people enter the work-force in our country, the place of job creation to utilise their human resource remains far below what is needed. It is said that the crises arose in ukraine for world in development as well as in employment. Unemployed is defined as "a situation in which the person is capable of working both physically and mentally at the existing wage rate but does not get a job to work." It is a condition where a person is willing to work but does not get a job to work. Before moving to the status and different causes and effects of unemployment. There are different types of unemployment :- (1) disguised unemployment, more people are doing work when actually required, (2) seasonal

unemployment - people engaged in industries like ice factories, holiday resorts, and large number of people are rendered unemployed, (3) educated unemployed - they are unemployed because their qualification does not match the job, (4) cyclical unemployment - caused by trade cycles at regular intervals, when there is depression a number of persons rendered unemployed (5) structural unemployment arises due to drastic changes in the economic structure (6) frictional unemployment arises due to improper adjustment between supply of labour and demand of labour. Two to four percent differential over the medium term growth rate of the overall economy was expected to enable manufacturing to

contribute at least 25% of the g.d.p by 2022. Employment creation has been sluggish and economists have been calling this jobless growth. Though this recruitment drive in rojgar mela aimed at inducting more youths. Nearly 27.9% of indians are multidimensionally poor, while 97 crores people are deprived of getting healthy food and 22.43 crore people suffer from malnutrition. Nearly 56 crore people might have turned poor in 2020 due to devastating impact of corona pandemic. World bank slashes india's economic growth forecast to 6.5% for 2022-23. The rupee is crumbling each day. Overall the rupee depreciation is at 7.8% in the current financial year 2022 --9%. Inflation and unemployment rate of

India requires additional 26 crore employment. The economic growth has been decreased day by day and not creating any employment scheme, so that the number of unemployed persons increases. During this situation inflation increases, for which the number of customer decreases. This weakens the running system. The g.d.p is not an indicator of the wellbeing of people. It is just an indicator of economic activities, which can also be popped up when inequality increases and the rich consume more as private consumption constitutes nearly 60% g.d.p. in India the unemployment rate hit 45 year record high 6.1% in 2017-18. Now it is resolving around 8 to 10%. India became youngest

country in the world in 2019. Indian age for entire indians is 29 years. This holds the huge significance for india as the average age in most developed countries are approaching in late 40s. It tells us that our country is endowed with huge human resources. The following factors are responsible for increasing unemployment. These are (1) growing population (2) limited land resources (3) education system (4) lack of cottage industries. The effects of unemployment on society are exploitation of labour, industrial disputes, political instability, social disturbance, increase in poverty, and loss of human resources. Several initiatives are to be taken to solve the

unemployment problem. These are startup India and stand-up India, aajivika - national rural livelihood programme, mahatma gandhi national rural employment guarantee, pradhan mantri kausal vikas jayana, deendayal antodaya yojana, national career service, national urban livelihood mission, and pradhan mantri mudra yojana. Complete utilisation of human resource is prerequisite for growth of a country. Unemployment is a structural issue which remains a major hindrance for inclusive growth in the country. Lack of industrial reform along with over population has for their aggravated the problem of unemployment. So jobless growth is a menace for the society.

**Nabarangapur**



# Learning scope for TULIP interns Governments apathy towards BCs

Bhubaneswar: G Mathi Vathanan, Principal Secretary Housing & Urban Development has said that the A three-month certificate course on "Sanitation Value Chain in Urban Odisha" program has been designed to provide the TULIP Interns unique learning opportunity & real world

(SWM) by Odisha Water Academy in partnership with Urban Management Centre (UMC) was inaugurated by Mr. Mathi Vathanan, Principal Secretary H&UD. Further, he emphasised on the role of trained youth to drive changes in converting waste into wealth. The Interns

employability of the interns. This is the first batch of TULIP Interns who will be trained, groomed and mentored to be equipped with knowledge, skill, tool kit & social skills to handle the nuances, issues & challenges in urban sanitation landscape. The programme will

tre was also signed in presence of Mr Mathi Vathanan which will provide technical support for designing the pedagogy, training modules and capacity building of TULIP interns. After successfully on boarding Women SHGs, Transgenders in Water & Sanitation, building the capacities of young

Warangal : December 15 Student and Youth Struggle for BC Rights the BC Vidyarthi and Yuvajanula Poru Yatra,

fee reimbursement in Telangana, which has prepared with the sacrifices of the students, is atrocious. MLAs are in-



hands-on learning in Municipal Solid Waste Managements during the 3 months Certification Course. A three-month certificate course on "Sanitation Value Chain in Urban Odisha" for TULIP interns commenced in Bhubaneswar. The launch of the first training module on Solid Waste Management

who will exhibit strong aptitude, commitment & put in sustained efforts during the Internship program will be retained as Sanitation Professionals. He clarified that the program aims to impart domain knowledge, practical experience in urban sanitation, which will improve their professional competence &

create a cadre of 500 trained sanitation professionals across 115 ULBs of the State, who will work as sanitation experts to ensure effective management of solid & liquid waste in urban areas. A tripartite MoU between H&UD department, Odisha Water Academy and Urban Management Cen-

fresh graduates/post graduates is an attempt to mainstream into urban sanitation. Among others Special Secretary, Kalyan Kumar Ratha, Director Water Academy Dr Santanu Ratha, Director UMC Ahmedabad, Manvita, Xerxes Rao, Head Urban Planning UMC and other departmental Officers were present.



which is going on from December 2 to January 8 in 33 districts from Palamuru to Patnam, reached Hanmakonda district today. It was presided over by Nagaraju. Jajula Srinivas Goud, national president of BC Welfare Association, who was the chief guest for this event, said that the rulers should stop discriminating against the BCs, who constitute 60% of the population, and allowed private universities in the state to commercialize education. If the state government does not cancel the private universities, SC, ST, He said that we will use the vote of all the minority of BC as a weapon and teach this government. He said that the situation of having to fight on the road for

creasing the salaries of ministers and chief ministers and asked why they are not increasing the scholarships of students in the hostel teachers. He asked them to think that BC and SCST minorities are unfit to take power. State Working President of BC Welfare Association Bairi Ravi Kishta said that they demanded to provide reservation to BCs whose population is 60 percent according to population Tama Shah. Vadlakonda Venugopal Goud, President of BC Welfare Association, Warangal Ummadi district, Tadi Mallaya Yadav, State Vice President of BC Welfare Association, participated in this programme.

## Lodi Organization Offers Service to the Poor

Warangal: Bishop Udu Mala Bala has said that Lodi social service organization has been offering good services to the poor people. Under the auspices of Warangal Lodi Social Service Organization, Mini

living with orphans participated in this program. Chief guest Dr. Udumala Bala Bishop Warangal participated in this program and spoke that Lodi social service organization conducts various service programs for flood victims,

praised. In this program, Save the Family Project Kerala in collaboration with the organization H.R. Manager Father Anthony participated and provided water filters to 500 people. The program was supervised by Sir Shibin

program 150 H. I.v. Nutritional food was distributed to the children living with HIV. Children's cultural programs impressed everyone. Also, the guests in this program were C. B. C. Chair Person Vasudha Member Sudhakar Ex Chair Person m.

## After Odisha bypoll debacle: Pattanayak, AICC in huddle

BHUBANESWAR: President of the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) Sarat Pattanayak had a discussion with office-bearers of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) at New Delhi regarding strengthening of the party organisation of the state. Pattanayak was summoned to New Delhi following the humiliating performance of

the party in the Padampur bypoll in which a three-time MLA and former government chief



whip Satya Bhusan Sahu lost his security deposit. Earlier, the party candidate in Dhamnagar by-election

had also lost his deposit. Congress has lost seven bypolls held in the state after 2019 of which five candidates have lost deposit. Congress candidates were defeated in three bypolls after Pattanayak took over as the OPCC president five months back. The continuous downward slide of the party in Odisha

when Congress stock seems to be improving in other parts of the country is worrying the state as well as the national leadership of the party. Pattanayak said he had discussions on a wide range of issues with AICC office-bearers regarding organisational restructuring of the party in the state. This includes appointment of office-bearers and members of different committees in the party.



Christ Jayanti" celebrations were organized in the premises of the organization's office in Fatimanagar to celebrate World AIDS Day, World Day of Persons with Disabilities and Christmas. Children with disabilities include HIV. 600 children

men's awareness, sustainable agriculture, emergency relief programs during Corona, this mini May Christu Jayanti celebrations fill your lives with a new enthusiasm, Manav Seva Ye Madhava Seva Gaa The Sisters Sevakwa working for The Vyangula

Anthony. Father D director of the local institution. Vijaya Paul said that this mini Christmas celebration is done every year as an extra, and even before that, we will also organize service programs. On this occasion Father Vijaya Paul in this

Parasuramulu, Lodi organization coordinators L. Weerababu, B. Arla Reddy, K Nageswarao, m. Bala Shourie, T. Jayakiran, K. Suresh, P. Shauri Reddy, Satish Reddy, D. Samuel, Sister Dhanika, Sister Elsamma and G. Joshna and others participated.

## Lithuanian firm makes stoves from car parts for power-starved Ukrainians

SIAULIAI: As winter temperatures plunge, a Lithuanian metal processing company has been turning used car parts into small stoves to keep war-weary and power-starved Ukrainians warm.

sending the stoves -- made from old wheel rims -- to both civilians and soldiers. "We do what we do best just to make Ukrainians feel a bit better," project co-author Rokas Utakis told AFP.

ported by legs. It includes two chambers for firewood and ash, as well as a cast iron cover and chimney. "It can be used as a stove, dryer, or simply as a heater," Utakis said. A few dozen employees

craftsman at Kalvis. "The emotions... of people enjoying the stoves make up for the fatigue you experience making them," he added. Lithuania and fellow Baltic states Estonia and Latvia have expressed



The initiative comes as a godsend as months of Russian strikes on Ukraine's power infrastructure have left people in the cold and dark for hours at a stretch. The Kalvis (Blacksmith) company has been

So far the company has produced nearly 100 stoves, with half of them already in use in Ukraine, including as far as Bakhmut or Izyum near the front line. Each stove consists of three rims stacked on each other and sup-

have been staying after hours to make the stoves in the northern city of Siauliai. Other residents have been lending a hand. "It's nice to work with such an enthusiastic group of people," said Utakis, who works as a

staunch solidarity with Ukraine since Russia invaded it in February. The trio spent decades under Soviet occupation before declaring independence in 1991 and later joining NATO and the European Union.



# IREDA, SGEL Sign Pact

New Delhi: Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA) signed a historic loan agreement for Rs. 4,444.71 crore with SJVN Green Energy Ltd. (SGEL, a subsidiary of SJVN Ltd.) today, for a 1,000 MW Solar power project at Bikaner, Rajasthan. The IREDA funded project will connect to 400/220 KV sub-station Bikaner-II (near Bikaner). SJVN has bagged the project through the tender floated by IREDA under the CPSU Phase-II (Tranche III) Scheme for development of Grid connected Solar PV Power Project through competitive Bidding Process based on VGF support.

Speaking on the occasion, CMD, IREDA Pradip Kumar Das said: "We are pleased to sanction IREDA's highest loan amount to SGEL for development of 1,000 MW Solar project. We will be able to support Govt. of India to achieve its targets of 50% share of energy from non-fossil fuels by 2030 through

this kind of cooperation. Also, this partnership will encourage green investment and generate both direct and indirect employment opportunities." Pact was signed in the presence of Pradip Kumar Das, CMD, IREDA and



Nand Lal Sharma, CMD, SJVN, Pradipta Kumar Roy, DGM (IREDA) and S. L. Sharma, CEO (SGEL) at the corporate office of IREDA. Chintan Shah, Director (Technical), IREDA, A. K. Singh, Director (Finance), SJVN, R. C. Sharma, CFO, Debjani Bhatia, GM (TS), IREDA and other senior officials also graced the occasion.

# Loyola School, Kalinganagar celebrates 1st Annual Parents Nite

**Kalinganagar(Sapan Kar):** Loyola School, Kalinganagar organized its 1st Parents Nite on 10th

IR, Jindal Stainless Steel and Mr. Amitava Mukherjee, Head Administration, Tata Steel.

The event was an assemblage of colorful cultural performances by students from LKG till class 9th/10th and concluded with the prize distribution for all the winners for the different competitions held in the past academic months. Performances were precisely crafted and were highly appreciated by the guest and a large audience. Guests from Loyola School, Bhubaneshwar, St. Mary's School Jajpur, and also the parents and grandparents of students were invited to witness the colorful evening.

Addressing the audience, Shri. Gharai expressed his gratitude to the school management and Tata Steel for setting up such a good education infrastructure in a serene and education friendly environment. He also shared the struggle for developing this area as a manufacturing and employment hub. He encouraged and commended the students and the management for putting up such a magical show. Father Jaison Joshua, Principal of Loyola School expressed his gratitude to all the esteemed guests for their presence and congratulated the teachers and students on the success of the program.



December, 2022. The occasion was graced by Er. Pritiranjana Gharai, Honorable Minister of Rural Development, Skill Development & Technical Education, Government of Odisha as Chief Guest along with Ms. Usha Rani Samal, General Secretary, Mahila Biju Janata Dal, Jajpur as the special guest.

Among others present on the occasion were Mr. Rakesh Pathak, Associate Vice President HR &

## 'Rosaghara' of Lingaraj shrine to be closed for repair

**BHUBANESWAR:** LYING dilapidated for several decades, the severely damaged rosaghara (kitchen) of the 11th century Shri

temple on the premises till the works are completed. Sources said the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) will carry out the

are damaged due to water seepage and plaster from the walls has peeled off. Besides, the kitchen's only drainage system (called peja nullah) has been choked for a long time as a result of which, water used for cooking rice and cleaning vegetables is not being drained out from the kitchen. "Due to this, the kitchen floor remains slippery round the year and during rain, the dirty water spills over to the temple's bhitara bedha (inner compound)," said Biranchi Narayan Pati, Brahman Nijog secretary. There are two kitch-

ens in the temple, the present one spread over 2,000 sq ft where repair work will be carried out and the second one which is the temple's original kitchen is within 500 sq ft near Laxmi Nrusingha temple. ASI sources said the repair work will be completed within two to three months. The kitchen has 12 hearths and on normal days, food is cooked for 1,000 persons by Suaras. On festive days, the cooking is done for at least 10,000 persons. Servitors of the temple said this is the first time the rosaghara will be repaired since it was constructed.



Lingaraj temple will finally be taken up for repair in a week's time. It will be closed for the repair and renovation and alternatively, 'bhoga' will be cooked at the original small kitchen of the shrine near Laxmi Nrusingha

repair under conservation programme of the temple at the expenditure of Rs 1.24 crore. While the rosaghara's floor is entirely broken, the roof has developed cracks and is leaking. Similarly, the seven doors of the kitchen

# ECoR General Manager window training inspection between Bhubaneswar to Bhadrak and Dhamara port

Bhubaneswar Vaishnav, Hon'ble works going in the

ited (DPCL) sidings. DPCL deals with loading of Coal, Lime stone, fertilizer, Iron ore etc. Shri Sunkar had a meeting with the Chief Executive Officer / Dhamra Port Company Limited (CEO/DPCL) Shri Sushant Kumar Mishra and with other DPCL officials and discussed on various issues.

During the course of inspection, the General Manager emphasised upon the need and significance of facilities provided to the esteemed passengers. He also advised officials to focus for the speedy completion of various project works.

During the inspection General Manager was accompanied by Shri Rinkesh Roy, Divisional Railway Manager Khurda Road and other Senior officials from Head Quarter and Khurda Road Division.



(KCN): East Coast Railway General Manager Shri Roop Narayan Sunkar had Window Trailing inspection from Bhubaneswar to Bhadrak and Dhamara Port and reviewed various infrastructural works between Bhadrak and Dhamara to provide better connectivity and facilities to the port. Shri Ashwini

Minister of Railways is giving special fo-



cus to Odisha and various project

state has been under his constant supervision and priority. In line with the instructions of the Hon'ble Railway Minister Shri Sunkar inspected the Bhadrak railway station and various passenger amenities at the station.

He also had the Window Trailing inspection from Bhubaneswar to Bhadrak and Dhamra Port Company Lim-




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## Senate crypto hearing yields big claims, possible regulation

WASHINGTON: Whether increased regulation would have prevented the spectacular collapse of cryptocurrency exchange FTX was fiercely debated at a hearing of the Senate's banking committee Wednesday. However, new legislation is potentially on the way.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren announced at the hearing bipartisan legislation aimed at cracking down on cryptocurrencies being used in money laundering. The legislation, co-sponsored by Republican Sen. Roger



Marshall of Kansas, would require cryptocurrency exchanges to verify customer identities like banks and other financial institutions do.

"Crypto has become the preferred tool for terrorists, for ransomware gangs, for drug dealers and for rogue states that want to launder money," said Warren, the Massachusetts Democrat, adding that "crypto doesn't get a pass to help the world's worst criminals — no matter how many television ads they run or how many political contributions they make."

Republican Sen. Cynthia Lummis, of Wyoming, said she and Democratic Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, of New York, would reintroduce their bipartisan legislation, the Responsible Financial Innovation Act, next year. That act would require disclosures and consumer protection obligations from cryptocurrency issuers.

Lummis, like several other Republicans on the banking committee, said the alleged financial crimes of former FTX CEO Sam Bankman-Fried should not be used to target cryptocurrency more generally.

"Let's separate digital assets from corrupt organizations," she said. "FTX is good old-fashioned fraud."

However, Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown, chairman of the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs, asked the hearing's four witnesses — two crypto proponents and two critics — whether fraud was systemic at other firms in the industry. They all indicated that it was — one of the few points of agreement in the entire hearing.

Hilary J. Allen, professor of law at the American University Washington College of Law, testified that the current environment

## US economy rose 2.9 per cent in third quarter, upgrade from initial estimate

WASHINGTON: Despite high-interest rates and chronic inflation, the U.S. economy grew at a 2.9% annual rate from July through September, the government said Wednesday in an upgrade from its initial estimate.

Last quarter's rise in the U.S. gross domestic product — the economy's total output of goods and services — followed two straight quarters of contraction. That decline in output had raised fears that the economy might have slipped into a recession in the first half of the year despite a still-robust job market and steady consumer spending.

Since then, though, most signs have pointed to a resilient if the slow-moving economy, led by steady hiring, plentiful job openings and low unemployment. Wednesday's government report showed that the restoration of growth in the July-September period was led by solid gains in exports and consumer spending that was slightly stronger than originally reported. It marked the second of three estimates the Commerce Department will provide of economic expansion in the third quarter. In its initial estimate, the department had estimated that the economy grew at a 2.6% annual rate last quarter. Economists expect the economy to eke out modest 1% annualized growth from October through December, according to a survey of forecasters conducted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia.

ALSO READ | US Inflation soars,

cryptocurrency operates in is highly conducive to fraud.

"Sam Bankman-Fried may have engaged in good old-fashioned embezzlement," she said, "but the embezzlement was able to reach such a scale and go undetected for so long because it was crypto — shrouded in opacity, complexity, and mystique."

FTX collapse: US asks companies to disclose exposure to beleaguered crypto firms Entrepreneur Kevin O'Leary, best known as Mr. Wonderful on the TV show "Shark Tank," disagreed with the characterization, even though the \$15 million he earned as a paid spokesman for FTX is now essentially worthless.

"I am of the opinion that crypto, blockchain technology and digital payment systems will be the 12th sector of the S&P within a decade," he said, referring to the S&P 500, a well-known benchmark for stocks.

O'Leary also testified that Bankman-Fried told him that the collapse of FTX was due to its battle with crypto competitor Binance, which also held a stake in FTX.

"These two behemoths that owned the unregulated market together... were at war with each other," O'Leary said. "And one put the other out of business."

Federal prosecutors say Bankman-Fried defrauded FTX customers and investors starting in 2019 and illegally diverted their money to cover expenses, debts and risky trades at the crypto hedge fund he started in 2017, Alameda Research. Bankman-Fried, 30, was arrested Monday in the Bahamas at the request of the U.S. government, and remains in custody after being denied bail.

Pennsylvania Republican Sen. Pat Toomey, the ranking member of the banking committee, said FTX's actions do not reflect the business of cryptocurrency as a whole.

"There's nothing intrinsically good or evil about software — it's about what people do with it," he said. "Code committed no crime." 740M in crypto assets recovered in FTX bankruptcy so far

However, actor and author Ben McKenzie Schenkkan, best known for his role as Jim Gordon on "Gotham," said his research shows cryptocurrency is built on "misinformation, hype and fraud" and that the estimated 40 million Americans who have invested in it were lied to.

"In my opinion, the cryptocurrency industry represents the largest Ponzi scheme in history," he said. "The fact that it has roped in tens of millions of Americans from all walks of life, as well as hundreds of millions of people worldwide, should be of concern to us all."

worldeconomy feels the heat

The nation's manufacturing sector is slowing despite an easing of supply chains that had been backlogged since the economy began rebounding from the pandemic recession two years ago. And inflation is threatening to weaken the crucial holiday shopping period. Retailers say inflation-weary shoppers are shopping cautiously, with many holding out for the most attractive bargains.

But a recession, if likely a mild one, is widely expected in 2023, a consequence of the Federal Reserve's drive to tame the worst bout of inflation in four decades by aggressively raising interest rates. The Fed has raised its benchmark short-term rate six times this year — including four straight hefty hikes of three-quarters of a percentage point.

The central bank is expected to announce an additional half-point hike in its key rate when it next meets in mid-December.

Because the Fed's benchmark rate influences many consumer and business loans, its series of hikes have made most loans throughout the economy sharply more expensive.

That has been particularly true of mortgage rates, which have proved devastating to the U.S. housing market. With mortgage rates having doubled over the past year, housing investment shrank in the July-September period at a 26.8% annual pace, according to Wednesday's GDP report.

## Rupee falls 27 paise to end at 82.76 against US dollar

MUMBAI: The rupee declined by 27 paise to close at 82.76 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday after the US Federal Reserve's interest rate hike and its hawkish stance dented investor sentiments.

A massive sell-off in domestic equities and a strong greenback overseas also weighed on the local unit, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened sharply lower at 82.63 against the

greenback and witnessed a high of 82.41 and a low of 82.77.

It finally settled at 82.76, down 27 paise over its previous close of 82.49.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.56 per cent to 104.35.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, dropped 0.76 per cent to USD 76.54 per barrel.

In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE

Sensex closed fight inflation.



787.88 points or 1.40 per cent lower at 61,799.03.

The broader NSE Nifty fell 245.40 points or 1.32 per cent to 18,414.90.

The US Fed on Wednesday increased interest rates by 50 basis points on expected more hikes ahead to

The US central bank raised the interest rate to 4.25-4.50 per cent to the highest level in 15 years.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) were net buyers in capital markets on Wednesday as they bought shares worth Rs 372.16 crore, according to exchange data.

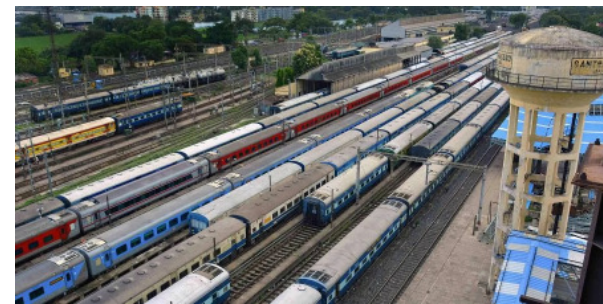
## Govt to sell up to 5 per cent stake in IRCTC via offer for sale

NEW DELHI: The Government of India is selling up to 5% stake in the Indian Railway Catering and

near 7.5% discount from the stock's close of Rs 735 on Wednesday. The OFS size is Rs 2,720

The Centre has set a target to raise Rs 65,000 crore through divestment in FY2022-23. "The promoter proposes to sell up to 2,00,00,000 equity shares of the company, (representing 2.5% of the total issued and paid up equity share capital of the company), on December 15, 2022, (for non-Retail Investors only) and on December 16, 2022 (for Retail Investors and for non-retail investors

who choose to carry forward their unallotted bids) with an option to additionally sell 2,00,00,000 equity shares (representing 2.5% of the issued and paid up equity share of the company)," IRCTC said in a regulatory filing on Wednesday. Minimum 25% of the shares in the OFS is reserved for mutual funds and insurance companies, while 10% will be kept aside for retail investors.



Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) through an (offer for sale) on Thursday and Friday. The floor price of the OFS has been fixed at Rs 680 per share which translates to a

crore at Floor Price. The total stake of the government in the company is 67.4%. The stake sale in IRCTC is part of the government's disinvestment target.

## Civil Aviation Minister inaugurates Air India's Mumbai-San Francisco direct flight

NEW DELHI: Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Thursday

civil aviation sector is on the cusp of transformation and boom.

Mumbai-San Francisco service is a significant step forward in the

to develop helipads in every talukas to increase air connectivity. He also said 1,50,988 travellers transited through Mumbai airport in 24 hours on December 10.

Air India-Vistara merger: Challenges ahead

Wilson and Shinde joined the event virtually from Mumbai, while Scindia and other officials were in the national capital.

After the Tata group took over the loss-making Air India in January this year, the airline has been working on expanding its services and fleet.

Last month, Air India Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director Campbell Wilson said the airline will increase its market share to 30 per cent in domestic and international routes.



inaugurated Air India's direct flight between Mumbai and San Francisco.

The flight will be operated thrice a week.

Currently, Air India operates services from Mumbai to Newark.

After San Francisco, the airline plans to connect Mumbai with New York next year.

After inaugurating the flight, Scindia said the country's

"We need to push further, stronger, faster..." the minister said.

ALSO READ | Air India plans USD 400 million fleet cabin makeover

The event was held virtually, with ministers and officials joining from Delhi and Mumbai.

Air India Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director Campbell Wilson said the

journey of the new Air India. "It is a significant milestone in restoring a major Air India long haul hub in the city of Mumbai."

According to him, the carrier will be starting non-stop flights from Mumbai to New York, Paris and Frankfurt in early 2023.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said the state is working on airport expansion and plans



## France End Morocco's Dream FIFA World Cup Run To Set Up Final Clash With Argentina

**New Delhi:** France ended Morocco's World Cup dream as goals from Theo Hernandez and Randal Kolo Muani gave the holders a 2-0 win in their semi-final clash and set up a showdown on Sunday with Lionel Messi's Argentina. It looked like France might make short work of their opponents when Hernandez scored inside five minutes at Al Bayt Stadium, despite having a hostile crowd against them. But Morocco, the first African and Arab team ever to reach the last four at a World Cup, fought on despite losing key players to injury only to see substitute Kolo Muani seal victory for Les Bleus with a late second. It will be France's fourth World Cup final in

seven editions and they are hoping to become the first team since Brazil 60 years ago to retain the trophy when they take on Argentina at Lusail Stadium on Sunday. That will be billed as a showdown between Messi and his Paris Saint-Germain teammate Kylian Mbappe, but this match was not about the latter's individual brilliance. Instead France's victory was down to a team effort against a Moroccan side who will now face Croatia in Saturday's third-place play-off. Morocco had reached the semi-finals after beating Belgium in the group stage and then knocking out Spain and Portugal. But whether they could repeat the feat



against the holders was another matter, and coach Walid Regragui's plans were left in turmoil by a slew of injuries.

Having missed the quarter-final, centre-back Nayef Aguerd was recalled only to withdraw at the last

minute, with Achraf Dari stepping in. Then fellow defender and captain Romain Saiss had to abandon his

teammates after just 21 minutes, and by then Morocco were behind. France were met by deafening whistles when in possession from the huge Moroccan support but they silenced the crowd with the early opener, Hernandez netting with an acrobatic volley at the back post after Mbappe's shot was deflected. Remarkably it was also just the second goal conceded by Morocco at this World Cup and the first scored by an opposition player. If the excellent Azzedine Ounahi forced a fine save from Hugo Lloris soon after, there was the feeling that the evening could quickly turn into a rude reality check for them. When Saiss let a simple forward ball

bounce over his head, Olivier Giroud broke away but his shot hit the post. Then when Saiss came off Regragui abandoned his back three and matched France's 4-3-3. Morocco finished the half strongly and nearly drew level when, following a corner, defender Jawad El Yamiq saw his overhead kick tipped onto the post by Lloris. The Atlas Lions then also lost Bayern Munich left-back Noussair Mazraoui at half-time, but France had not been saved from fitness worries themselves. Two of their starters in the quarter-final win over England, Adrien Rabiot and Dayot Upamecano, were missing due to

illness. Les Bleus have been used to playing semi-finals on a knife-edge and their previous three wins at this stage - in 1998, 2006 and 2018 -- had all come by a single goal. Coach Didier Deschamps took off Giroud and replaced him with Marcus Thuram -- son of Lilian -- as Mbappe moved inside. Kolo Muani then came on for Ousmane Dembele, and with 11 minutes remaining he scored from his first touch, tapping in after another Mbappe shot had been deflected. The Moroccan players knew then it was game over, and so did French President Emmanuel Macron, standing to applaud in the crowd.

## Kane Williamson relinquishes Test captaincy



**New Delhi:** Kane Williamson has stepped down as the New Zealand Test captain, with Tim Southee replacing him. Williamson will continue to lead the side in the white-ball formats. Williamson took over the role in 2016 from Brendon McCullum and has led New Zealand to 22 wins in 38 Tests. "Captaining the BLACKCAPS in Test cricket has been an incredibly special honour," Williamson said. "For me, Test cricket is the pinnacle of the

game and I've enjoyed the challenges of leading the side in the format. "Captaincy comes with an increased workload on and off the field and at this stage of my career I feel the time is right for this decision. After discussions with NZC, we felt that continuing to captain the white-ball formats was preferable with two World Cups in the next two years," Williamson added. New Zealand enjoyed some of the best moments in Test cricket under the leadership of Williamson. They reached the top of

the Test rankings in 2021 before going on to beat India in the final of the inaugural ICC Test Championship in June that year. Paying tribute to Williamson, New Zealand Cricket CEO David White reckoned making sure Williamson plays for 'as long as possible' was priority. "Kane is one of our all-time greats and our priority is to ensure he enjoys his cricket and plays for New Zealand for as long as possible. He's a brilliant leader and the success the team has

achieved during his time in the longest and arguably toughest format of the game, has been nothing short of remarkable," White said. Head coach Gary Stead echoed those thoughts when he said: "Kane's guided the Test team through an immensely successful period which is testament to his ability to bring people together and work towards a common goal." "We hope by lessening his workload we can continue to see the best of Kane Williamson for longer on the international stage, and we know he will remain a key leader in this group." Southee has often stepped into the captaincy shoes in the absence of Williamson - albeit in the T20 format - and will take over the job in Tests in the upcoming Test tour of Pakistan. Wicketkeeper batter Tom Latham, who has led the Test side when Williamson has not been available, has been named Southee's deputy.

## Ish Sodhi returns to New Zealand squad for Pakistan Tests

**New Delhi:** New Zealand have brought back leg spinner Ish Sodhi into their Test squad for the upcoming tour of Pakistan, where they play two Tests and three ODIs. Sodhi last featured in the longest format in November 2018. Despite a strong first-class record - 279 wickets in 88 games - Sodhi has been more of a T20I lynchpin for New Zealand, recently joining the 100-wickets club in the format. He returns with a chance to rekindle his Test career in a series that will see Tim Southee take over from Williamson as captain. "It's always an exciting time for a player to be selected in a Test squad and even more so when you've



been away for an extended period of time," head coach Gary Stead said. "Ish has been playing international cricket for almost a decade now and we're backing his skills and experience." Also returning to the squad is another white-ball specialist - Glenn Phillips, who has one Test appearance to his name from 2020. New

Zealand have also retained uncapped Blair Tickner, who was part of the home series against South Africa and the away tour of England but hasn't got a game yet. "Blair's been with the group for our past two Test series and we believe he's very much ready for Test cricket. He has genuine pace and gets good bounce which is a real asset to have in a sub-continental

conditions," Stead reckoned. Among absentees is Trent Boult, who made himself unavailable for this tour while Kyle Jamieson is still recovering from his back injury. The upcoming tour of Pakistan will be New Zealand's first since 2003. "It's going to be a new experience and the kind of challenge that excites this group. We've naturally been keeping an eye on the current Test series against England, particularly the last two Tests of the series held in Multan and Karachi, where we will play," Stead said. The series kicks off with the Boxing Day Test from December 26 in Karachi, before moving to Multan for the New Year's fixture from January 3.



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