

People's Odia daily PARYABEKHYAK '4th Monthly Reporters Meet Held today on Google meet platform. Dr Pabitra Mohan Samantatay, Editor-in - Chief, Bibhu Acharya, Digital Coordinator, Subrat Sahu, System administrator, Ramchandr Swain, Dilip Mishra, Subhendu Kanoongo, Gyan Ranjan Rout, Prasant Mohanty, Jogeswar Panda, Bhagirathi Swain, Manas Sethi and Reporters across the state were present

BJP to protest Odisha government 'apathy' towards OBCs

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): The BJP on Monday resolved to launch a Statewide agitation against the BJD government for its alleged apathy towards the vast majority of OBC population of Odisha. National president of BJP OBC Morcha K Laxman, addressing the

organisation's State executive meeting here on Monday, said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has done a great disservice to the majority of the State's OBC population by



Grow your buds poetry contest 2021 jury announced by Motivational Strips

Bangalore (KCN): Poetry rendition contest organised by Soundarya Educational Trust and Motivational Strips, the world's most active writers forum, grabs attention in social media, mass media. The contest was the first of its kind in the world of literature. Budding poets rendered their poems with full zest and zeal. The announcement of judges and criteria of judgement were made clear to the public by the founder, Shiju H Pallithazheth, to maintain transparency in evaluation procedure. An attractive and fabulous surprise was

Kingdom, Author Dr Raja Rajeswari Seetha Raman from Malaysia. The Deputy Jury members chosen are Author Nivedita Roy from Bahrain and Author Samuella Conteh from Sierra Leone.

The contestants would be evaluated with a total of 100 marks where the Chief Jury members decide marks from 0-60, Deputy Jury members from 0-20 and 10 marks from public opinion on the contestant's work. The Founder and President of Motivational Strips Shiju H Pallithazheth and its Forum Director Sabrina



revealed, the top scorer of the contest will receive a prize amount of 30 thousand INR (US Dollars 400). The amount would be dispersed by the founder of Motivational Strips Shiju H. Pallithazheth from the royalty of his debut best seller book 'Katashi Tales'. Also Author Shiju assured that the six top winners would be getting in addition to the award, a copy of best selling young adult fiction 'Katashi Tales' each. All the rest of participants would be receiving participation certificates endorsed by Motivational Strips and Soundarya Educational Trust.

The evaluation of the contestants would be governed by a five member global jury covering West to Far East countries. The chief jury comprises of Author Mary Lynn Luiz from USA, Author Penny Wobbly from United

Bryant will handle 5 marks each for every contestant. The announcement was made by the Founder of Motivational Strips on Saturday evening through a live broadcast. Sreekala P Vijayan, Convener for Grow the Buds contest has stated that the evaluation process has aggressive integrity elements attached to it. CEO of Soundarya Educational Trust, Mr Keerthan Kumar was happy with the incredible response received from worldwide contestants. The Founder of Motivational Strips Shiju H Pallithazheth opined that the extensive evaluation process was devised to make sure that each contribution of the contestants are given its micro consideration before a final verdict is reached. The semi final results is expected to be announced during mid December.

CM releases Mahima Book

Bhubaneswar: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has released "Ink from Night Skies", a collection of poems written by young poet Mahima

verse. "Ink from Night Skies" is the maiden creation of Mahima, who has graduated from IIT Mumbai. Congratulating

and priced at Rs 695, "Ink from Night Skies" is characterized by tumult and chaos, with violent nature unfolding itself at every turn.

for my page' or 'I am waiting, as I bleed/ to write'. The young poet finds her world strewn with fireworks, lightning, thunderstorm, tem-



Sethi here on 30 November. The book, containing 110 poems written by Mahima, is about expression of her feelings and a depiction of human connection to life, inanimate objects and non-material aspects of the uni-

Mahima on writing such beautiful poems with maturity at such a tender age, the Chief Minister wished her more success in creative writing. Published by New Delhi-based Har Anand Publications,

Like the mother earth emerging from the fiery inception process, the poet also undergoes the creative throes. She is aware of the agony involved in creation when she writes, 'I have to cut open/my insides every time/to draw ink

pest and 'wrestling hellhounds' while her 'earth shudders along my feet/ locking up fidgeting demons/ inside the ground'. But, like the primordial violence controlling the world outside, she is tormented by

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Milton bags 'BRAND OF THE YEAR' award for the third time at the World Branding Awards

Kolkata (KCN): Milton, a leading manufacturer and marketer of forum judged winners uniquely through three streams: brand



houseware products nationally and across the globe, bagged the esteemed 'Brand of the Year' title at the World Branding Awards 2021-2022. A hat trick for the brand, the prestigious honour was awarded to Milton by The World Branding forum which stands testimony to Milton's global recognition and commitment to always offering their consumers with the best. The Forum recognizes and celebrates brands globally for advancing branding standards for the good of the branding community as well as consumers. The 14th annual edition of The World Branding Awards was held virtually for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic. Acknowledging and lauding the efforts of some of the best global, regional and national brands, the

valuation, consumer market research, and public online voting. The virtual ceremony saw the felicitation of each brand winning the title 'Brand of the Year' in their respective categories. It also saw keynote speakers deliver riveting speeches to all present. Headquartered in London, The World Branding forum's recognition is a consumer voted acknowledgement wherein only brands with the highest recall and deepest connect with consumers from their respective countries is chosen by them, hence not every category from every country is awarded. Thus the award is an honor that is given to truly worthy brands which makes it an exclusive, notable achievement. Much like the previous year, over 345,000 consumers from around the world voted for their

favorite brands, in 66 countries, across 6 continents. This led to a nomination of more than 5300 brands out of which only 512 were named "Brand of the Year". The World Branding Awards has recognized some of the biggest brands across the world as winners for the year 2021-2022. Leading brands like Spotify, Netflix, Amazon, CoCo, Lego, Nescafé, Nike amongst others received the awards this year. Milton won the illustrious 'Brand of the year' award in the Regional tier for the Houseware Product category making it the third consecutive win for the brand, an accomplishment that is celebrated by a few. Milton is also the only Indian brand in this category to be awarded at this prestigious forum. Thus, this achievement is truly remarkable not just for the brand, but for India as well. **Ajay Vaghani - Founder & Managing Director, Hamilton Housewares Pvt. Ltd says,** "Being awarded 'Brand of the Year' by the globally renowned 'World Branding Awards' for the third time is a significant achievement for us at Milton. It is a testimony to the tenacity and intuitiveness with which we innovate to add value to our customers' lives. Holding our consumers in the highest regard, we bring forth products that not only facilitate their needs, but also become an essential

component in their lives." The winning brands have established strong brand recall, top-of-mind awareness and trust among their consumers. The Awards are an acknowledgement to the tireless effort of the teams that build and maintain the presence of their brands in an ever-changing market." said **Richard Rowles, Chairman of the World Branding Forum.** Launched in 1972, Milton has been conceptualized with the endeavor to providing innovative and efficient houseware products to customers that bring convenience to life. These include an array of products that are inspired from the day-to-day lives of the modern Indian customer offering them solutions to everyday problems. Some of the popular products in the Milton portfolio include bottles, casseroles, tiffins, flasks, jars and the IOT based smart products, to name a few. Brand campaigns which include ad campaigns, digital activations, PR and collaborations with suitable influencers and platforms for Milton have seen the brand seamlessly command immense credibility across segments and all age brackets. The brand has always worked towards achieving its vision and this resolute commitment to bring a positive change to have won consumer loyalty in India, and across more than 60 countries worldwide.

Odisha: Slapped in classroom for not being able to repay loan, student consumes poison

SAMBALPUR (KCN): A 16-year-old student tried to die by suicide in Odisha's Sambalpur district after being allegedly slapped by a re-



tired lecturer from whom he had borrowed Rs 10,000 but was not being able to repay, police said on Tuesday. The boy, a student of BRG Plus-II College in Bhojpur, also runs a paan shop in the area, they said. He borrowed Rs 10,000 from the retired lecturer of Jamankira College, which, he was sup-

posed to pay back with interest, they added. As he was unable to repay the loan, the retired lecturer on Monday went to BRG College, where the boy studies, and slapped him in a classroom full of students, police said. Humiliated in front of his classmates, the boy bought pesticide from the market and consumed it, they said. The boy is at present undergoing treatment at the Kuchinda sub-divisional hospital and his condition is stated to be critical, police said. The matter is being probed and a case will be registered, said Sobhakar Seth, the inspector-in-charge of Kuchinda police station. (If you are having suicidal thoughts, or are worried about a friend or need emotional support, someone is always there to listen. Call Sneha Foundation - 04424640050 (available 24x7) or iCall, the Tata Institute of Social Sciences' helpline - 9152987821, which is available Monday to Saturday from 8 am to 10 pm)

Former CM Meghalaya and Leader of Opposition Shri Mukul Sangma met Ms Mamata Banerjee Chief Minister of West Bengal and National Chairperson Trinamool Congress.

Kolkata (KCN): On 29th November Meghalaya Trinamool Congress leaders and MLA's led by Honourable Shri

Kolkata. Distinguished Legislators and Leaders from Meghalaya met with Honourable Ms Mamata Banerjee

General Secretary of All India Trinamool Congress. Honourable Shri Subrata Bakshi MP and West Bengal Trinamool

tional Chairperson of Trinamool Congress appointed Sri Charles Pyngrope Trinamool Congress President



Mukul Sangma, Leader of Opposition Meghalay Assembly (and former Chief Minister of Meghalaya, 2010-2018) came to

Chief Minister of West Bengal and National Chairperson Trinamool Congress and Honourable Shri Abhishek Banerjee MP and National

President was also present in this important meeting. Shri Abhishek Banerjee informed that Ms Mamata Banerjee as the Na-

for Meghalaya. For betterment of and furthering the interests of Meghalaya with Trinamool Congress leading the way.

SAHAJOG Distributed Blankets and Masks to Leprosy Ashram



Khordha (KCN): The volunteer organization SAHAJOG distributed blankets and masks to inmates of Gopabandhu Leprosy Ashram, Khordha. Every Sunday the organization SAHA-JOG distributed food to the helpless people in road side of the National Highway and also

extended their support to the flood and Cyclone affected peoples. The Co-ordinator of SAHAJOG Himanshu Bhusan Champatiray said "the organisation was a non-political body and worked for the welfare of the poor, downtrodden and helpless people. He

appreciated the efforts of the members of SAHAJOG who had contributed funds from time to time and further spent on the poor and needy". On the occasions of Birth Day of Debasish Pahadsingh the active member of SAHAJOG distributed food pocket and

blankets to the helpless people in the road side of 16 number national highway. In this programme Pranati Behera, Dasarathi Srichandan, Swagatika Pahad-singh and Sai Sri Anurag were present. All the programme were Co-ordinator by Himanshu Bhusan Champatiray.

Third genders shown a great level of humanity at Barbil



Barbil (KCN): It is need not to say that the third genders are ever been neglected in the society. But one incident at Barbil in the district of Keonjhar has witnessed the great heart of humanity by these third genders.

AS per report one helpless and physically challenged old lady lost her only daughter. There was no one come forward to take her into the graveyard. In the mean time fr third gender extent

of their hands in support of the old woman Sunai Dei. They did all work beginning from making bier to graveyard. Latter Two social activist Dilu Swami ,Pratik Bhasani along with one reporter

Debabrat Patra reached at the sight and extended help to take the deceased to graveyards. These third genders too shouldered the body of the deceased as a part of rituals. Their work is highly praised in this area

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Ajay Devgn and Kajol are two of a kind

Wife and husband and duo Kajol and Ajay Devgn are poles

Tanhaji is Ajay's centennial film in Bollywood. "We

believe that hard work pays off." At a time when

more than necessary. He keeps me grounded and makes

On the use of 3D technology, the actor says, "The technol-

younger generation is robbed of Indian history. "Not much has been written about unsung warriors such as Tanhaji in school textbooks. My children have not even read about him. During the British era they did not let people read about Indian warriors. Our textbooks have not changed much since then. So, I decided to do this film. The least we can do is respect our heroes. Maybe it will bring about a change in our country. But such films require an audience connect. So, we made it a commercial film with lots of music, action and drama."



apart in their behaviour. While he is quiet and speaks in monosyllables, she is animated and happy-go-lucky. The couple is currently in a celebratory mode as they recently marked their 21st wedding anniversary and are now busy promoting their upcoming film Tanhaji together. The duo is making a comeback on screen after a decade.

Their last film together Toonpur Ka Superhero in 2010 was also made under their own banner—Ajay Devgn Films.

Aditya Roy Kapoor, Disha Patani sizzle in new 'Malang' poster

A new poster of Mohit Suri's Malang featuring Aditya Roy Kapur and Disha Patani is out. The poster highlights an intimate moment between the stars, framed against a surreal background.

Suri shares, "Passionate, exciting, energetic, mad, love is all this and more. Aditya and Disha's love depicts their liberated and Malang state of mind in this poster. I'm looking forward to seeing how the audience perceives it."

Malang was shot in Mauritius, Goa and Mumbai. Produced by T-Series, Luv Films and Ankur Garg, and Northern Lights Entertainment, the film is slated to release on February 7, 2020.

There was strange inherent comfort with Brad Pitt: Leonardo DiCaprio

LOS ANGELES(KCN): Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio

the film, which was well-received across the globe.

working with Brad was this strange inherent comfort and



says working with Brad Pitt on Quentin Tarantino's "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood" was an incredible experience.

The actor said they both clicked instantly and were on the same page while portraying their respective characters in

DiCaprio played an ageing, out-of-work actor, Rick Dalton, in the film set in 1960s' Hollywood, while Pitt essayed the part of his stunt double and confident Cliff Booth.

"What was very interesting about

ease that we really both clicked into day one. It didn't need a lot of prep work. We talked about the script, and we instinctively knew that dynamic and relationship, and who these guys were to one another," the actor, 45, told Deadline.

me realise that I am going overboard at times," says Kajol on how their marriage works.

The couple reveals that their children Nysa and Yug have not watched the film yet. "They don't like my movies because they feel I weep too much. They feel that I cry in happy scenes too," says Kajol. Ajay laughs and adds, "Nysa doesn't discuss much about films but Yug calls me Tanhaji Malsure when I reach home. Even when I call him he says 'Hello Tanhaji'."

ogy that we've used has been done for the first time in India by Indians. I formed my own company for this. The CGI has been done completely by us. I have always tried to experiment with new techniques. Our director Om Raut had done all the research before we embarked on the path. In fact, we met Tanhaji's family and they would be on the sets every day. We recreated the sets as such locales are not available in the current situation."

The 50-year-old further rues how the

Common man has always been the hero: Vikrant Massey

MUMBAI: Actor Vikrant Massey says for him the common man is the hero in real life and he aims to showcase the same on-screen.

The actor believes "aam-aadmi" has been ignored by the film industry for too long and through his movies he wants him to take the centre stage.

"This is the time of common man. The person cleaning the drain is a common man, the common man are out on streets fighting.

"The common man has always been the hero and they have been ignored for too long. I am an actor, I can act and what I can do through my work is, become their voice," Vikrant told PTI in an interview here.

Coming from a lower-middle class family, Vikrant says he has had his fair share of struggles in life, and he has come out stronger.

"I was told I am a TV actor and I won't get to work in films. When I came here (films) I was told I can only be a hero's friend, but I am the

protagonist and the so-called hero. I have lived a journey. Like Amol in 'Chhapaak' is a common man, who left his job and is walking on this path. There are people, these are characters, who for me are the heroes."

The actor says he has always drawn inspiration from the society as he is not a trained performer.

"I travel a lot. I want to bring on-screen all my experiences. I am still learning, I am very young, what I see around me, I try to bring it on screen.

"I hope audiences like me, they laugh and cry with me and take away something from the characters I play.

I am not attempting to change the world, I want people to get aware of their own self, and relate to the characters I play," he adds.

Vikrant is looking forward to "Chhapaak", featuring Deepika Padukone as an acid attack survivor.

The film, directed by Meghna Gulzar, is inspired the life of Laxmi

Agarwal. The actor, who was earlier supposed to collaborate with Meghna on "Raazi", says he is happy to have got the opportunity to be part of her latest venture.

"The response has been positive so far and we are looking forward to January 10, when it releases. It's an opportunity for any aspiring artiste to work with Meghna, Deepika and on a story as such. I am fortunate to be a part of this film."

Vikrant says with "Chhapaak" their aim is to create awareness about acid violence.

"It is a heinous crime and no living being deserves this. No one has the right to have an impact or influence on anyone else's life in such a life-altering way.

"Through 'Chhapaak' our attempt is to talk about acid violence and we hope people take this film in the right way and there will be more awareness and discussion on this topic."

The film is scheduled to release on January 10.

It takes a village: A systemic approach to suicide prevention

Due to the prevailing COVID-19 situation, many Indians are experiencing depression, anxiety, or some other form of mental health concern. The pandemic is set to compound mental distress. It is likely to be worse for those who are already on the socio-economic margins, considering the lack of sufficient social security nets. Cases of familial conflicts and gendered violence are on the rise, as evidenced by reports from government crisis helplines. COVID has severely disrupted social networks, particularly for people who do not have access to technology, while destroying livelihoods and community resources like shelter homes for the urban homeless. People who do not have access to a smartphone and the internet are facing trouble in accessing basic services such as banking and train travel. With 18 percent of the global population residing in India, the country accounts for a quarter of global suicide deaths. Suicide



National Review
Bhawesh Jha
 (VNR) at the United Nations High-level Political Forum on the SDGs. In this report, he says, "India has fully adopted the SDG framework and is aligned to its development." While the report talks about the merits of the Mental Healthcare Act (MHCA), 2017, it does not mention anything about the government's efforts to reduce suicide. Moreover, four years later, the MHCA is yet to be implemented in its full letter and spirit in most states across the country. Understanding suicide prevention work does not typically fit into the biomedical approach, which prioritises the use of medication to treat psychosocial issues while ignoring experiences of abuse, poverty, and racial, caste, and gender inequalities. The conventional approach of suicide prevention from a biomedical lens is based on the premise that suicide is a mental health issue. This is not true, as less than half of the people who die by suicide do not have major mental health issues. Studies suggest that multiple social and personal factors such as socio-economic

achieving desirable outcomes.
 What India needs to focus on
1. More and better suicide data
 In India, suicide data is collected by the NCRB which falls under the purview of the home ministry. Data for 2020, widely regarded as one of the most stressful years in recent history, has however not been released to date. Researchers have highlighted the under-reporting of suicide deaths, as NCRB only collects suicide deaths reported by the police. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends timely registration and regular monitoring of suicide for an effective suicide prevention strategy. In India, we are far from this. In response to a Right to Information (RTI) query, the mental health division of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) said that they do not record or maintain data related to suicide. Lack of accurate and real time data on mental health and suicide acts as a barrier to accessing mental healthcare at the population level. Vital registration data of births and deaths in India is inadequate. The registration of

language it uses while reporting suicide. For example, publicising the suicide method used could trigger people already experiencing distress. Media can help in raising awareness, de-stigmatising suicide, and promoting the acceptance of suicide survivors and people with mental illnesses. This could be done by reframing public opinion about suicide and increasing public support for its prevention.
3. An advocacy movement
 The United Nation's SDG framework and the Government of India's National Mental Health Policy (NMHP) 2014 directs that suicide prevention work should be a public health priority. It provides scope for civil society to draw government attention towards this grave public health problem and mobilise support for implementation. The development of an advocacy movement could facilitate policy changes such as decriminalisation of suicide and implementation of existing policies like NMHP 2014 and the MHCA 2017. We could learn from global mental health advocacy movements like United for Global Mental Health (UnitedGMH), which contribute actively to policy development and serve as global platforms for mental health advocacy. UnitedGMH brings together campaigners, practitioners, national organisations, businesses, people with lived experiences, funders, researchers, governments, and international bodies to build knowledge and expertise to combat suicide.
4. Bringing in the lived experiences of people
 The high numbers of suicide alone have been insufficient to push suicide prevention higher on government agenda. We need to recognise that suicide does not happen in a vacuum. For every death that happens by suicide, there are about 60 people who are impacted due to the loss of a loved one. It is essential to visibilise the huge, affected population behind each suicide death in order to raise political will and action. People with lived experience of suicide are best suited to inform the conversation about suicide and ways of prevention. Civil society, advocacy groups, and people with lived experience, including people bereaved by suicide loss, people impacted by suicide attempt, and people living with mental illness can collaborate to inform suicide prevention efforts and advocate for public health interventions. A respectful and stigma-free environment would encourage many others affected by suicide to come forward and demand action. The shame and taboo around suicide is the first barrier for its recognition as a public health issue. Once people start recognising that their personal pain and suffering is shared by many, and that they can do more about it, the government's response will also begin to change. Globally, September 10th is observed as World Suicide Prevention Day to raise awareness about the suicide crisis and demand action for its prevention. We should take this opportunity to reframe public opinion about suicide, so that everyone recognises that it is not an individual problem, but a preventable public health issue.



is the leading cause of death among those in the 15–39 age group in India. According to data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), the country has lost more than 24,000 adolescents aged 14–18 years from 2017–2019. More than 16 percent of these deaths were due to them failing their exams. A similar trend is evident globally as well. Today, suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15–29 years old and it qualifies as a top public health priority. In 2015, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) prioritised reduction of suicide deaths and included suicide rates as one of the indicators under its health-related goal. Image of the hands of a person at a group therapy session. Suicide prevention requires community effort and policy changes. Suicide prevention interventions need to be cross-cutting, involving sectors such as education, employment, and the legal justice system. | Photo courtesy: Pixabay India is a signatory in the implementation of the SDGs and has set up mechanisms to measure its progress, committing to reduce the suicide rate by one-third by 2030. Recently Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog launched India's Voluntary

status, unemployment, access to healthcare, discrimination due to gender, caste, religion, sexuality, and ability, and alcohol dependency contribute to suicide. Suicide prevention interventions, therefore, need to be cross-cutting and must involve different sectors such as education, employment, social security, agriculture, as well as the legal justice system. Instead, our policies and programmes are designed to work in silos; they do not recognise the complex interlinkages. A systemic approach to suicide prevention would require coordination and synergy between various sectors. For instance, pesticide poisoning is a leading cause of death by suicide in India. Due to the easy access to hazardous pesticides, especially in rural parts of the country, adults and youth alike often use them as a means when contemplating suicide. For government agencies, public health interventions could include framing legislations that restrict access to highly hazardous pesticides, as well as spreading awareness about suicide prevention among youth. Similarly, the Ministry of Youth Affairs can include elements of suicide prevention within its work, and also disseminate relevant information among youth in India. This coordinated effort has a better likelihood of

age, and socio-economic status could also inform the pandemic response and provide the basis for the government to integrate mental health interventions like psychological first aid.
2. More awareness and a nuanced public discourse
 Unfortunately, India's public health discourse around suicide is limited to individual events of suicide. Additionally, it puts the locus of responsibility on the individual rather than the reasons for the distress. This reductionist approach of blaming the individual hinders the larger conversation, and suicide prevention does not make it to the government agenda. Media needs to be more mindful about the language it uses while reporting suicide. An informed national conversation about the magnitude of this problem facilitated by civil society and advocacy groups could help in building support for the implementation of a cohesive national suicide prevention strategy. Media could play a critical role in improving the understanding of suicide. It could articulate that the responsibility when it comes to preventing suicide is not on the individual alone, but the government. Suicide is controllable by policy actions. Media needs to be more mindful about the

Author is the Advocacy Manager at Mariwala Health Initiative (MHI). At MHI, he engages with different stakeholders for the improvement of mental health services delivery. His areas of interest include health systems strengthening, mental health, disability, and law. Bhawesh holds a Master's Degree in Health Administration from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.

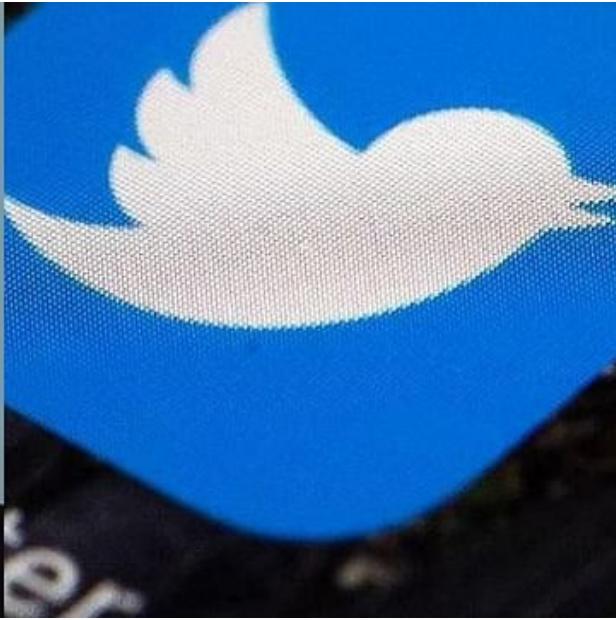
Netizens slam new Twitter CEO Parag Agarwal over old tweet on racism

NEW DELHI: Parag Agarwal, the new Indian-origin CEO of Twitter replacing Jack Dorsey, was trolled on Tuesday on his own platform

I distinguish between white people and racists," Agrawal said in the tweet posted on October 26, 2010. Questioning this, Republican Ken Buck,

for my current mental state," he posted. Agrawal also posted about Facebook and noted that the social media giant is simply a waste of time.

Meanwhile, Google CEO Sundar Pichai on Monday tweeted: "Wishing you the very best ahead @jack, and congrats @paraga and @btaylor - excited for



for an 11-year-old tweet that carried racist remarks. In 2010, when he was not even an employee of Twitter, Agrawal quoted a comedian mocking racism and Islamophobia in America. "If they are not gonna make a distinction between the Muslims and extremists, then why should

who represents Colorado's Fourth Congressional District, asked how users could trust Twitter's new CEO to treat everyone equally. However, Agrawal was quick to clarify his comments to a user. "I was quoting Asif Mandvi from The Daily Show. The article you are reading seems too deep

"Facebook is like a jail. You sit around, waste time, have a profile picture, write on walls and get poked by guys you don't know (via gizmodo)," he wrote. Agrawal had earlier tweeted: "Facebook is seriously messed up. The https settings revert back to http when you use any app that doesn't do https."

Twitter's future!" "Wishing you the very best ahead @jack, and congrats @paraga and @btaylor - excited for Twitter's future," Pichai said in a tweet. Agrawal will take over from Dorsey as the CEO in 2022. Agrawal joins a select group of CEOs of Indian origin heading technology companies in the US.

Maldives' top court annuls prison term for former President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom

MALE: The highest court in the Maldives on Tuesday overturned the prison sentence of

the initial trial had discrepancies and did not conclusively prove that Yameen had laundered USD 1 mil-



lion in state money for personal gain. Yameen ruled the Maldives, an Indian ocean archipelago state known as an expensive tourist destination, from 2013 to 2018, before losing a re-election bid to current President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih. He was accused of corruption and stifling dissent and the media during his time in office. There are other corruption cases pending against him in court.

the country's former president Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom, who had been convicted of money laundering. A three-member Supreme Court bench unanimously annulled the five-year jail term and USD 5 million fine slapped on Yameen two years ago by a lower court. The former leader had recently been moved to house arrest. The judges said the evidence given at

Covid pandemic strained public health delivery systems of most developed nations, says MoS Health

NEW DELHI: The enormous pressure of increased healthcare demand because of the COVID-19 pandemic has strained the matured public health delivery systems of most developed nations, Union Minister Bharati Pravin Pawar said on Tuesday while listing the steps taken to strengthen India's health sector.

Replying to a question in the Rajya Sabha, the Union minister of state for health said her ministry has coordinated and supported states to upgrade and ensure the health infrastructure and requisite logistics to manage the battle against Covid. Various initiatives have been taken by the government to provide technical guidance and further strengthen the health infrastructure, ensure availability of essentials, including drugs and medical oxygen, to manage the pandemic, she said. "Health is a state subject. The Government of India is supporting states in their endeavour to manage COVID-19 since the beginning of pandemic and requisite support is being provided to them to en-

hance preparedness and response capacities against COVID-19 and other public health emergencies," Pawar said. She said, "Multiple surges of COVID-19 cases have been noted globally...including India. Even the most developed countries with matured public

strengthening of disease surveillance at points of entry and in the community, enhancement of laboratory capacities, telemedicine and enhancement of HR capacities. "The Ministry of Health continues to provide technical guidance for manag-

circulated while the guidelines for the management of COVID-19 in children was issued on June 18. Guidelines and checklists on prevention and clinical management of mucormycosis were disseminated to all states and Union Territo-

epidemiologists, clinicians, microbiologists and senior officials from the ministry have been deployed to 33 states and districts reporting increased trajectory of cases, the minister said. States are supported in terms of supply of logistics which in-

All the states have been advised to use oxygen rationally, prohibit wasteful usage by strict monitoring, undertake oxygen consumption audits in hospitals, facility-wise/hospital-wise oxygen inventory mapping and advance planning for timely replenishment. Pawar said COVID-19 vaccine has been made available free of cost for all citizens of the country aged 18 years and above. At all government COVID-19 vaccination centres. Under the 'Har Ghar Dastak' campaign for improving the vaccination rate, various initiatives including community awareness campaigning his being taken to ensure mobilisation and counselling of the eligible population, the minister said. Funding support is also being provided to states and UTs through various avenues, she said. The PM Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM) envisages increased investments in public health and other health reforms to safeguard against future resurgences of COVID-19, if any, and future public health emergencies, the Rajya Sabha was informed.



health delivery systems have been strained and came under enormous pressure due to increased healthcare demand posed due to COVID-19 pandemic." The minister said the major areas for strengthening include healthcare infrastructure, equipping of health facilities with requisite logistics including drugs, oxygen and equipment,

ing various aspects of COVID-19 and so far more than 150 guidelines/advisories/SoPs/ plans have been provided to states and Union Territories." Guidelines on Clinical management of COVID-19 continues to be updated with emerging scientific evidence. The treatment protocol for adults was last updated on May 24 and has been widely

ries, Pawar said. Also, a comprehensive Guidelines for Management of Post-Covid Sequelae was issued on October 21 after consultation with experts to guide doctors on post-COVID-19 complications and their management. To further provide on-field assistance to the states, 170 multidisciplinary Central teams comprising

cludes PPE Kits, N-95 masks, ventilators and drugs like hydroxychloroquine and remdesivir, she said. They have been supported with the supply of oxygen cylinders and oxygen concentrators. They are also being supported in terms of installation of oxygen concentrator plants/presure swing adsorption plants.

BJP govt trying to make reservations ineffective, claims Mayawati

LUCKNOW: Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief and former CM Mayawati has accused the BJP government of trying to make reservations ineffective through various ways. She also alleged that owing to its casteist mentality, the Modi government had turned a deaf ear to the demand of OBCs for a caste-based census. While interacting with media persons on Tuesday, the BSP chief claimed that her party leaders from the OBC community, minority community especially Muslims and Jat community were entrusted with bringing in people from their community on the reserved seats.

"If BSP forms government in the state then just like before our government will keep in mind the rights and development of OBCs, Muslims and Jats," stated Mayawati and added once again that BSP will be contesting the 2022 UP Polls on its own and will not be forging any pre-poll alliance. ALSO READ | 'UP doesn't want Bua-babua, it wants only Baba': Rajnath hails Yogi, hits out at Mayawati, Akhilesh Attributing the reservation benefits to OBCs in education and government jobs to the efforts of honourable Baba Saheb Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar, Mayawati accused the Congress of not implementing the recommendations of the Mandal Commission despite ruling the country for the longest after independence. "These recommendations were later imple-

mented with the efforts of BSP during the VP Singh government at the Centre," claimed Mayawati. However, she claimed that the present dispensation, both at the Centre and state, was trying to make reservations ineffective through



various ways by making laws and rules and also through courts. "The atrocities on SC, ST in the country are not yet over," she said. Speaking on behalf of the minority community especially the Muslims, the BSP chief said that they were also unhappy with the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh. "Their development has almost stopped under this government. They are being harassed by people who frame them in false cases, they are being terrorized through new rules and laws," said Mayawati accusing the BJP of rendering step-motherly treatment to the Muslims. "However during the BSP regime along with their development, their safety was also ensured," claimed the BSP chief. On the question of suspension of 12 Rajya Sabha MPs, the BSP chief said that the government should not be so harsh and should find a middle path of consensus.

Ready for screening at airport: BPIA

BHUBANESWAR(K-CN): The Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) authorities on Monday said the airport is ready to initiate screening and conduct RT-PCR testing of domestic passen-

from 'countries at risk', BPIA Director Pravat Ranjan Beuria said there is no need to panic as no international flights are scheduled to the State Capital for the next one month. "There is no proposal

tional flyers arriving in the city," he said. Meanwhile, Public Health director Dr. Niranjana Mishra said the Health Department is monitoring the situation closely and keeping track of flyers coming from

positive, genome sequencing will be carried out to ascertain the new variant. The Health and Family Welfare department has asked all district administrations and municipal commissioners to stay in



gers - especially those having recent travel history to foreign countries at the airport - if the State government wants to up surveillance in wake of the Omicron scare. As the Centre tightens the norms for air travellers arriving

to resume international flights to and from Bhubaneswar till the end of December. If any proposal is received from foreign airlines, BPIA will communicate it to the State government and propose screening and testing of interna-

other countries on a regular basis. Even as a Covid-19 negative certificate is a must for flyers coming from foreign countries, they will still have to undergo quarantine for seven days. For international travellers testing

readiness to deal effectively with the situation, he said. Mishra also urged people to not let their guard down and follow Covid safety protocols every time and everywhere to keep the transmission in check.

Water distributing truck rams into tent in Syria camp, killing three Iraqi women

BEIRUT: A tanker truck distributing water at a sprawling camp housing families of Islamic State group members in northeast Syria rammed into a tent, apparently by accident, killing three women and injuring two children, a Kurdish official inside the camp said Tuesday. Al-Hol camp in Syria's Hassakeh province is controlled by U.S.-backed Kurdish fighters and the number of residents of the tent settlement rose sharply in early 2019 during the last days of IS in Syria before its defeat in March that year.

Number of farmers' suicide fall to 5,579 in 2020: Tomar

NEW DELHI: The number of farmers who committed suicide dropped to 5,579

related issues, love affairs, bankruptcy or indebtedness, failure in examination, un-

(79), Kerala (57), Assam (12), Himachal Pradesh(6), four



In a separate, heavily guarded section of the camp known as the annex are housed another 2,000 women from 57 other countries, considered the most die-hard IS supporters, along with their children, numbering 8,000.

in 2020 as compared to 5,957 in the previous year, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar informed Parliament on Tuesday, citing the latest NCRB report. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), which functions under Ministry of Home Affairs, has not given "separate reasons" for farmers' suicide in its 2020 report, the minister said in his written reply to the Lok Sabha. "However, the causes of suicides of persons (including farmers) are family problems, illness, drug abuse/addition, marriage re-

employment, professional/career problem and property dispute," he added. Of the total number of farmers' suicides committed during 2020, maximum 2,567 cases were reported from Maharashtra, followed by 1,072 cases from Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh (564), Telangana (466), Madhya Pradesh (235) and Chhattisgarh (227), as per the NCRB data placed before the Lower House. The number of farmers' suicide in Uttar Pradesh was at 87 in 2020, Tamil Nadu

cases each in Meghalaya and Mizoram. Tomar further informed the Lower House that the government has not received any reports on farmers committing suicide due to unavailability of fertiliser in the country especially in Madhya Pradesh. He said state governments provide relief to families of farmers who commit suicide. Agriculture being a state subject, the Centre supplements efforts of states through appropriate policy measures for development of the farm sector, he added.

CJI NV Ramana pays floral tributes to TTD OSD P Seshadri



TIRUPATI: The final rites of TTD Officer on Special Duty (OSD) P Seshadri were performed in Tirupati on Tuesday evening. Chief Justice of India NV Ramana and others, including deputy CM K Narayana Swamy, paid homage to the departed soul. Seshadri, who served TTD since 1978, died of cardiac arrest in Visakhapatnam early hours on Monday. He was 73. CJI Ramana, who came

all the way from New Delhi to pay floral tributes to Seshadri, said his demise was a great loss to him personally. Speaking to reporters, he said he knew Seshadri for more than 25 years and was shocked when he learnt about his demise. "He always immersed himself in the service of the Lord, oblivious to his deteriorating health. He fulfilled his wish of serving the Lord Venkateswara till his

last breath," Justice Ramana said. On the occasion, the CJI suggested to Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) to publish books authored by Seshadri to benefit devotees. Several people such as TTD chairman YV Subba Reddy, executive officer Dr Jawaha Reddy, additional EO AV Dharma Reddy, TTD board members P Ashok Kumar, Krishnamurthy,

government advisor Ajey Kallam, former Chief Secretary LV Subramanyam, Tirupati MLA B Karunakar Reddy, Chandragiri MLA Chevireddy Bhaskar Reddy, former TTD JEOs Balasubrahmanyam, Srinivasaraju, TTD JEO Sada Bhargavi, CVSO Gopinath Jetti, and district judge YVSBG Parthasarathy were present on the occasion.

European Union set to unveil massive worldwide infrastructure plan

BRUSSELS: The European Union on Wednesday is set to unveil a multibillion-euro plan aimed at bolstering the 27-nation bloc's worldwide infrastructure and influence. The program is ex-

"For many partner countries, the offer of a rules-and-values-based cooperation at eye level will be an attractive alternative to the Chinese Belt and Road initiative," Michael Clauß said. China's program

commission is therefore intent on ensuring that we can cooperate with our partners across the globe in this area constructively," Mamer said. The EU is China's biggest trading partner, but they are

and future investment in Africa to create a market for green hydrogen. The plan also will favor investment in the health, education, climate and digitalization sectors. Von der Leyen also



pected to mobilize up to 300 billion euros (\$341 billion) in public and private funds by 2027. Although the European Commission, the EU's executive branch, does not present the project as an attempt to counter China's massive infrastructure initiative seeking to connect Asia with Africa and Europe, the German ambassador to the EU said the so-called Global Gateway "has the potential to turn the EU into a more effective geopolitical player."

aims to develop markets and new trade routes connecting China with the rest of the world by weaving a network of ports, bridges and power plants that will yield diplomatic clout and global power. Asked whether the 27-nation EU is trying to counter China's influence with its plan, commission chief spokesman Eric Mamer dodged the question. "We know that infrastructure communications are essential elements of modern life, and the

also economic competitors and strategic rivals. As Beijing has become more assertive in recent years, the bloc has struggled to balance its commercial interests with a country that it has human rights concerns about and sees as "a systemic rival." European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said in September that the goal is to invest in quality infrastructure, citing a new underwater fiber optic cable connecting Brazil to Portugal

pledged that the Global Gateway will be in line with high labor and environmental standards. "There are 25 million people out there, who are threatened or coerced into forced labor," she said. "We can never accept that they are forced to make products — and that these products then end up for sale in shops here in Europe. So we will propose a ban on products in our market that have been made by forced labor."

Odisha Gets 6430 CR GST Shortfall India registers highest growth across all economies in Q2, but now there's Omicron...

New Delhi: The Government of India has released Rs 6430 crore to Odisha Government as back-to-back loan to help the State to meet the re-

has received Rs 6430 crore till today during the current financial year 2021-22. The revenue collected by the State of Arunachal Pradesh,

3 November, 2021 towards GST compensation to States from the Compensation Fund. This is in addition to GST compensation

of the Union Government is on decline during the past three financial years.

Under this head, the Centre had released Rs 35,353.73 crore to Odisha during the financial year 2018-19, which decreased to Rs 30,453.25 crore in 2019-20 and subsequently, fell down to Rs 27,542.67 crore during the last financial year 2020-21.

Union Government devolved States' share in Central Taxes and Duties in terms of approved recommendations of the Fifteenth Finance Commission.

There are no pendency in disbursement on this account to the State Governments, the Minister added.

It may be pointed out that Odisha has all along raised the issue of decline in Central Transfers to the State. As compared to Financial Year of 2020-21, Odisha has received 15 Percent less Central Transfer than 2019-20, for which 17 Percent Negative growth has been experienced by the State, which requires pumping of more funds for development.



source gap due to shortfall in release of GST compensation. Minister of State (MoS), Ministry of Finance, Pankaj Chaudhary in a written reply informed to the Lok Sabha on Monday.

As per decision in 43rd GST Council meeting, Centre has borrowed Rs. 1.59 lakh crores from the market through special window and passed on to 26 States and Union Territory (UT)s as back-to-back loan, he said.

Accordingly, Odisha

Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim is more than the revenue protected as per GST (Compensation to States) Act, 2017.

Therefore, these States are not eligible for back to back loans under the Special Window Scheme.

Similarly, the Centre has released Rs 286 crore to Odisha as GST compensation on 3 November, this year, said Mr.Chaudhary.

The Centre has released a total amount of Rs 17,000 crore on

of Rs 43,303 crore released to States and Rs 1.59 lakh crore as back to back assistance during the current financial year, informed the MoS Finance.

During 2020-21, Centre had released compensation of Rs 1,36,988 crore and back to back assistance of Rs 1.1 lakh crore to the States and UTs.

As per another reply of Mr.Chaudhary to the Lower House of the Parliament, the fund flow to Odisha as its share in 'Shareable Pool of Taxes'

Not yet 'V-shaped' recovery, sectors of economy still 'crippled': P Chidambaram

NEW DELHI: With India's GDP growth at 8.4 percent in the second quarter of 2021-22, senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Tuesday said it was not yet a V-shaped

print will bear that out," the former finance minister tweeted.

India's GDP growth slowed to 8.4 percent in the second quarter of 2021-22, mainly due to waning low

20.1 percent on a previous year's Q1 growth of -24.4 percent. In Q2, the growth is reported as 8.4 percent on a previous year's Q2 growth of -7.4 per-

cent, "Chidambaram noted.

There are sectors of the economy that are still "crippled" and need help and time to recover, he said.



recovery and there are sectors of the economy that are still "crippled".

"Let us extend a cautious welcome. It is NOT yet a 'V' shaped recovery. The fine

base effect, but the economy has surpassed the pre-COVID level, official data showed on Tuesday.

"In 2021-22, GDP growth in Q1 was

Rupee pares initial gains, settles 10 paise lower at 75.17 a dollar MUMBAI: The rupee on Tuesday, November 30, 2021, pared its initial gains to settle 10 paise lower at 75.17 (provisional) against the US dollar as investor concerns grew over fresh impact of new COVID variant on the economy. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency opened on a strong note at 74.91 and witnessed an intra-day high of 74.86 and a low of 75.19 against the US dollar in a highly volatile trading session.

The local unit finally settled at 75.17 a dollar, down 10 paise over its previous close. The rupee on Monday dived 18 paise to close at a five-week low of 75.07 against the US dollar on worries over the new coronavirus variant. On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 195.71 points or 0.34 per cent lower at 57,064.87, while the broader NSE Nifty declined 70.75 points or 0.41 per cent to 16,983.20.

Foreign institutional investors were net sellers in the capital market on Monday, as they offloaded shares worth Rs 3,332.21 crore, according to exchange data.

India's Q2 GDP grew by 8.4%, strengthening beliefs that the road to a complete economic rebound is just a few streets down.

With this, we have been in positive territory for four quarters straight, livening up hopes that growth will be north of 9.5% this fiscal. But then, the new virus variant Omicron is keeping the fear storm going creating unease and so all estimates are pretty much written in water.

According to the National Statistics Office's provisional estimates, nominal GDP printed at Rs 35.73 lakh crore in Q2, FY22 as against Rs 32.97 lakh crore a year ago. SBI Research noted that this is the highest growth across all economies. On a sequential basis, growth rate stood at 10.3%.

If the annual projections turn true, the national output will likely print at Rs 147.96 lakh crore in FY22, moderately higher than the pre-pandemic figure of Rs 145.7 lakh crore seen in FY20. Once we reach this threshold, it's only a matter of time for the economy to come up roses. Or so it was presumed. But all optimism of starting next year with a clean

breast may be put on hold for now, despite emerging views that any potential third wave will knife its way only through the

50% in Q1, it's down to a dismal 5.5%, perhaps indicating the strain due to the ongoing global supply chain crisis. Con-

ment, production and consumption. Government expenditure, which soldiered on since the pandemic began, saw its share decline sequentially,



outer layers of the economy.

The eight broad metrics of growth are decidedly back to black in Q2.

ALSO READ | There could be mild breakthrough with Omicron but severity is not expected: ICMR expert

Among them, mining and quarrying and public administration clocked double-digit growth over last year, but not so much on a sequential basis. And the good news ends pretty much here as other components including manufacturing, services, construction and electricity, which showed a stellar performance with growth rates ranging from 14-69% in Q1, are all down to single digits.

For instance, if manufacturing clocked

construction, which raked in a mighty 68.3%, settled for an unspeakable 7.5%. Ditto with services, which is down from 34.3% to 8.2%. Interestingly, agriculture neither gained, nor lost a jot printing at 4.5% sequentially.

On the expenditure side, the potting mix is being realigned with the three broad components -- invest-

though it did grow over last year. Similarly, consumption picked up both sequentially and over the previous fiscal led by the boost from reopening and festive tailwinds. Investments too maintained momentum crossed past pre-pandemic levels and should likely fare better from hereon should the projected 'capex mahatsov' jolt to life.

BJP to protest Odisha government 'apathy' towards OBCs

Continued from page-1

giving them only 11.25 per cent reservation. "It is injustice to the 52 per cent OBC population of Odisha who deserve a better deal from the BJD government. It will not be tolerated. We will fight for justice," he said.

While the Centre has been providing 27 per cent reservation to OBCs in educational institutions, the BJD government is reluctant to extend similar benefits to OBC students of Odisha. Stating that Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has initiated the process to fill up over 9,000 vacant posts reserved for OBCs in various Central Universities, Laxman urged the Chief Minister to follow suit and give deserving OBCs their due in the State government services.

CM releases Mahima Book

Continued from page-1

'cloudbursts inside of me'.

She is afraid of night and darkness. She is torn apart by sorrow as it insinuates into her existence not by hitting her loudly but 'Instead/ it eats away your core/ in silence'.

The body-shaming and doubts of self-worth festered by social media have doomed the confidence of many a young one today; Mahima's poetic self is also troubled by this obnoxious trend when she writes, 'I utterly despised the mirror,/ wanted to get out of my body,/ shed and rip apart my skin,/ beseeching for a straighter nose'.

However, all these rage and retribution, doubts and despair, violence and virulence do not condemn her poetic galaxy to an irremediable dark hole. On the contrary, hope and optimism lurk in many places. As her poetic horizon is quite expansive, there is plenty of scopes to redeem her doubtful soul.

She has her spiritual bent of mind, her faith in the glory of God, the power of nature to sustain itself, her love for humanity and above all, her creative words to fall back on. She is sure that she herself is 'God's glory/I'm God's Mahima'. With the grace of God, even death does not sting. It brings 'eternal rest', while the moon becomes her 'confidant, my witness/ of my yearning'.

While Mahima's faith in God soothes her anguish, her poetry becomes her balm, her creation relieves and energizes her. The night sky may be murky, but the ink it oozes out has the power to brighten Mahima's world.

Cyclonic storm likely to hit Odisha, Andhra coasts Saturday morning: IMD

NEW DELHI (KCN): A cyclonic storm is likely to hit the coasts of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha on Saturday morning, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Tues-

Thereafter, it is likely to move northwestwards, intensify further and reach north Andhra Pradesh, Odisha coasts around December 4 morning.



day. It said a low pressure lay over south Thailand and its neighbourhood at 8:30 am.

It is likely to emerge into the Andaman Sea during the next 12 hours.

"Thereafter, it is likely to move west-northwestwards and concentrate into a depression over southeast and adjoining east-central Bay of Bengal by December 2 and intensify into a cyclonic storm over the central parts of the Bay of Bengal during the subsequent 24 hours," an IMD statement said.

The Met office predicted "heavy to very heavy rainfall and extremely heavy falls" at isolated places over coastal Odisha and "heavy to very heavy" rainfall at isolated places over adjoining interior districts of Odisha, coastal districts of West Bengal and north coastal Andhra Pradesh.

"It is likely that the northeastern states also experience enhanced rainfall activity on December 5-6, with isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall owing to the likely northeastward movement of the remnant of the system during the same period," it said.

ICC women's ODI rankings?: Mithali Raj, Smriti Mandhana remain in third and sixth positions

DUBAI: India batters Mithali Raj and Smriti Mandhana

ICC women's ODI rankings released on Tuesday.

761 points. West Indies duo of Stafanie Taylor and Hayley

Qualifier action, with Taylor moving into the top ten in batting (676) and holding on to her No. 4 all-rounder ranking (319), as her teammate moved to equal eighth.

Matthews moved to her highest career rating (272) joining England's Katherine Brunt and New Zealand's Jess Jonassen in a three-way tie. Taylor is only bettered by Marizanne (384), Natalie Sciver (372) and Ellyse Perry (365).

Deepti was fifth with 299 points in the list.



held on to their third and sixth spots respectively while allrounder Deepti Sharma was also steady at the fifth position in the latest

While Mithali had 738 points, Smriti had 710 points in her kitty in the batting ranking, which had South Africa's Lizelle Lee at the top with

Matthews have risen in ODI batting and all-rounder rankings respectively. The pair stood up for their side in Women's Cricket World Cup

India seniors showing juniors the way at the World Cup

BHUBANESWAR: As India colts were preparing in Bhubaneswar for the junior World Cup, senior team skipper, Manpreet Singh, passed on a few tips to Vivek Sagar Prasad. Vivek, who has played many a match with Manpreet for the senior side, was captaining the juniors and Manpreet saw it as an opportunity to pass on a few messages. It helped that Manpreet could empathise with Vivek's position for the former was captain of the colts at the 2013 World Cup. So the midfielder knocked on Vivek's door to 'remain as a team' irrespective of 'wins or losses'. He urged Vivek, widely hailed to be the next Manpreet, to avoid 'pointing fingers' in case of a loss.

This isn't just some sort of bond between the captains of two teams at the World Cup. At some level, this is just a sub plot in wider, more meaningful relationships that's formed between most members of the junior and senior teams. It's now a forum where young tyros and old heads meet and dine together whilst talking about everything under the sun. Such relationships encourage trust, security and understanding.

So, in the hours after India were upset by France on the opening day of the World Cup, Manpreet, just to re-emphasise his message, again had a chat with the young midfielder. "I told him we could have done better," Manpreet told the media. "But that

wasn't a time to blame anyone or fingertip. He had to lead the team on the field, make sure the players communicated with each other and showed unity. They need to believe in themselves." That pep talk clearly helped. In the next two games, Vivek & Co. communicated with each other, something that was sorely lacking against France, and used that as a base to beat Poland and Canada to advance to the quarterfinals. Amid an endless loop of uncertainties and lockdowns in 2020, the senior team were stranded at the Sports Authority of India

were hard to come by so the status quo continued. That's when the senior management decided to use the services of the junior team. "Both sides needed games so why not play against each other," was the thinking behind it. Once that novelty wore off, senior team chief coach, Graham Reid, decided to experiment. The junior team changed its shape and identity to play like India's potential Olympic rivals.

A bond quickly started to develop. Normally, there is a degree of separation between the senior and junior programmes. The pandemic kind of blurred

reached out to us. They just needed some fine-tuning, not a lot of work. Overall, they are very good."

Harmanpreet has also sort of become an important figure in the growth story of the colts because of the prominence of the dragflickers in this team. Vice-captain Sanjay, for instance, even has that same style as the Tokyo medallist, five years Sanjay's senior. The two of them have exchanged copious amounts of notes over the finer science of dragflicking since March 2020. "Harman keeps telling us the new skills we can



(SAI) campus in Bengaluru. Competitions were scratched, friendlies were being very difficult to organise and even if countries showed a willingness to play, visas weren't being issued. Having just beaten the Netherlands and Belgium in a two-week window in January and February, they believed they were genuine contenders to medal at the Olympics. This setback hurt them.

Even as other teams started to cross borders and play, the senior Indian team were left to play 'internal squad' matches. Visas

that natural hierarchy between seniors and juniors because they started sharing the same space as the seniors day after day. The juniors understood that the seniors were there for them and the seniors understood the kind of problems the juniors might face because they themselves had gone through the exact process a few years ago. Harmanpreet Singh, who knows a lot of the colts like the back of his own hand, breaks the relationship down. "Whenever we used to spot something, we spoke to them. If they had any problem, they

learn," Sanjay says. Manpreet & Co, who are preparing for the Asian Champions Trophy, are also in Bhubaneswar. They train in the mornings but that hasn't stopped a few of them from watching the colts in action. They were at the Kalinga Stadium for all three group games, silently watching from the stands. Both Manpreet and Harman watched the juniors like hawks before passing on their feedback. "We are analysing the games and after it's over, we are giving the players our feedback," the former says.

Davis Cup: Croatia claim surprise win over Italy to reach semifinals

TURIN (ITALY): Croatia dumped out much-fancied Italy in the Davis Cup quarter-finals on Monday as Olympic men's

could not complete the job against the top two ranked doubles players as Mektic and Pavic won 6-3, 6-4 to silence the home

year's edition was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This win confirms their place at next year's Davis Cup

set as Pavic fired down an ace.

Earlier, rising star Sinner battled back from a set and a break down to beat Cilic and force the doubles rubber. Italy were facing a quick exit in Turin when former US Open champion Cilic served for the match when leading 5-4 in the second set. But Sinner fought back from the brink, breaking to love before taking a tie-break and going on to win 3-6, 7-6 (7/4), 6-3. Gojo beat Sonogo 7-6 (7/2), 2-6, 6-2 to give Croatia the first point. The Croatian overcame a hesitant start, with the 23-year-old trailing the 27th-ranked Sonogo 4-1 in northern Italy, before coming back from 5-3 down to take the first set in a tie-break. Sonogo, 26, powered back in the second set but dropped serve early in the final set at 2-1, with over 30 unforced errors allowing Gojo to win in 2 hours and 20 minutes.



doubles champions Nikola Mektic and Mate Pavic brushed aside Jannik Sinner and Fabio Fognini in a deciding match. The Italians were one of the favourites for the title but paid for Lorenzo Sonogo's shock defeat by world number 279 Borna Gojo in the first singles rubber in Turin. Singles world number 10 Sinner forced a deciding doubles with a dramatic victory over Marin Cilic, but he

crowd. Croatia will next face either Novak Djokovic's Serbia or Kazakhstan in the semi-finals in Madrid. "Honestly, it feels incredible. I don't think anyone expected us to get this far and it feels amazing to be going to Madrid," said Mektic.

Croatia are bidding for a third Davis Cup title and second in three stagings of the event after lifting the trophy in 2018. Last

Finals, with the four semi-finalists guaranteed qualification. "It was very tight but my players fought so well. I'm so happy," said Croatian captain Vedran Martic.

Mektic and Pavic were the stronger pair throughout the doubles, with Fognini's serve often targeted. They needed six set points to take the opener despite dominating, but wrapped up victory on their first match point in the second




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