

### 19,833 CR Supplementary Budget

Bhubaneswar(KCN): Amid uproar by Opposition members, Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari on Wednesday tabled the Supplementary Budget Rs 19,833 crore for 2021-22 in the Legislative Assembly. Last year, the Supplementary Budget outlay was Rs 11,200 crore.

Out of the total supplementary provision, lion share of Rs 13,568 crore has been allocated towards programme expenditure (schemes and infrastructure projects), Rs 4,577 crore towards administrative expenditure (salary and pension), Rs 1,682 crore towards disaster management funds and Rs 6 crore towards transfer to local bodies (panchayati raj institutions and urban local bodies).

The provision of Rs 13,568 crore has been made under Programme Expenditure is to be financed by tied up resources to the extent of Rs 6,137 crore, and through additional collection of own revenue to the extent of Rs 7,431 crore, an official said.

### Luizinho Faleiro, MP, Trinamool Congress National Vice President: A true Goenkar raising the Voice of Goa

Kolkata (KCN): Luizinho Faleiro, MP, Trinamool Congress National Vice President: A true Goenkar raising the Voice of Goa Goa Trinamool Congress sincere thanks to Sri

environment in his speech and how the double tracks laid for transportation of coal is harming the Goan environment. Only a Goan Voice can be so passionate in bringing up the is-

the Honourable Supreme Court. A true Goenkar raising the VoiceOfGoa In his debut speech itself, Luizinho Faleiro pointed out 3 cardinal sins plaguing Goa.

a) Double tracking of



Luizinho Faleiro, National Vice President of Trinamool Congress and former Goa CM Honourable Sri Faleiro was thanked for raising Goa's burnings issues in Rajya Sabha in his maiden speech on November 30th Sri luizinho faleiro even raised the issue of en-

sues plaguing Goa! TMC Rajya Sabha MP luizinhno faleiro highlighted the plight of 2.5 lakh mining affected citizens & demanded that sustainable & legal mining be started. He also urged the govt to recover Rs 35,000 Cr mining money as assured to

railway line  
b) Expansion of National Highway  
c) Tanmar Power Transmission Project  
He also questioned the diversion of Mhadei river water to Karnataka. Raising the Voice Of people of Goa in Rajya Sabha.

### Omicron unravels travel industry's plans for a comeback

TOKYO(KCN): Tourism businesses that were just finding their footing after nearly two years of devastation wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic are being rattled again as countries throw up new barriers to travel in an effort to contain the omicron variant.



From shopping districts in Japan and tour guides in the Holy Land to ski resorts in the Alps and airlines the world over, a familiar dread is rising about the renewed restrictions. Meanwhile, travelers eager to get out there have been thrown back into the old routine of reading up on new requirements and postponing trips.

Abby Moore, a librarian and associate professor at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, was scheduled to leave for Prague

on Wednesday. But the day before her flight, she started having doubts when she saw that Prague had closed its Christmas markets and imposed a citywide curfew.

"I wasn't really concerned about my trip until the Czech Republic started what looked like a mini-lockdown process," said Moore, who decided to re-schedule her travel to March.

Less than a month after significantly easing restrictions for inbound international travel, the U.S. government has banned most foreign nationals who have recently

been in any of eight southern African countries. A similar boomerang was seen in Japan and Israel, both of which tightened restrictions shortly after relaxing them.

While it is not clear where the variant emerged, South African scientists identified it last week, and many places have restricted travel from the wider region, including the European Union and Canada.

For all the alarm, little is known about omicron, including whether it is

### Odisha CM's Covid aid for newspaper hawkers

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Tuesday announced special assistance of

them due to Covid-19. The assistance will be released from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF).



Rs 3,000 each to newspaper hawkers in view of the financial distress faced by

Announcing a special package for them, Naveen said that work sheds will be

constructed for the hawkers at sub-divisional and district levels. Besides, the Information and Public Relations department has been directed to prepare a digital database of hawkers and provide them identity cards. All hawkers registered under the Odisha Unorganised Workers Social Security Board will also be provided social security benefits. The

family of a hawker will get an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh in case of accidental death and Rs 1 lakh for natural death. Similarly, hawkers who become completely disabled due to accident will be given Rs 1.5 lakh. In case of the loss of both limbs, a hawker will be given an additional Rs 80,000 and those who have lost one limb will be provided Rs 40,000 extra.

### Odisha Assembly session starts on rocky note, Congress MLAs stage dharna against minister

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): The winter session of the Odisha Assembly started on a rocky note on Wednesday with opposition Congress MLAs staging a dharna at one of the gates of the Odisha Assembly to prevent the entry of Minister of State for Home Dibya Shankar Mishra into the House.

The Congress has been demanding Mishra's ouster from the Council of Ministers and arrest for his alleged link with the prime accused in the Kalahandi woman teacher's murder.

In order to prevent the entry of Mishra, Congress lawmakers led by Tarapasrad Bahinipati sat at the entry point of the Assembly holding placards demanding the minister's removal and his arrest.

"We would not allow Mishra to destroy the sanctity of the Assembly which is a temple of democracy," Bahinipati told reporters.

Coming down heavily on Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik for his stoic silence on the sensitive issue, senior Congress member Santosh Singh Saluja said the former is going to all

districts to distribute the health smart cards under Biju Swasthya

Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) but not coming to the Assembly. He has made the Assembly sessions a mockery by participating in virtual mode, he said.

However, Mishra was stated to have reached the Assembly ahead of the Congress dharna at the main gates.

Members of the BJP, the principal opposition party in the Assembly, urged Speaker S N Patro not to allow Mishra to participate in the proceedings due to his alleged involvement in the murder case.

The opposition members made a protest outside the chamber of the Speaker for allowing the minister to the proceedings of the house for the day.

Amid opposition protest, the House assembled for the day as scheduled and the Chief Minister attended the proceedings from his residence through virtual mode.

Members cutting across party lines condoled the death of three former





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**Inescapable Poignance**  
Shreeta Sikruti Kuanr

When will I stop writing?  
For what stays between you and me is this  
A passage of letters and keys  
Traffic along spaces of poignance and  
springs  
I'm nothing other than this  
It drains in me  
Like the river my father, asked to me jump  
over  
When the war broke out  
To have said it takes away fear, and brings  
in courage  
And I cannot leave her  
Not much of a quitter  
Something my mother taught me to be

Wherever is this little poignance  
Inescapable wrapped in a crumbled paper  
I'll look out for the core  
Drink all of it  
And create this path

One day, however

One day, when I look back  
Poetry will be ahead of me  
And I on my deathbed  
Watching her running  
From mine, to someone like me  
Will be the last poem of me.



**Girl you are beautiful inside and out**  
Dr. Gita Mohanty, USA

Girl you are beautiful with your whatever,  
Color, texture, look, style and wear,  
Figure and nature,  
Doesn't matter,

Girl you are beautiful with your whatever,  
Nationality and ethnicity,  
Creed, religion and race,  
You are a blessed beauty  
And you are graced,

Girl you are beautiful with your whatever,  
Vital statistics, obese or emaciated, Irrespec-  
tive of age and marital status,  
You are fantastically fabulous,

Being a girl, you are blessed with enormous  
potential,  
You are elegant, intelligent, eloquent and  
fluent,  
Potent, strong and thoughtful,  
Girl by default you are beautiful,

Home to office,  
Business to science,  
Bureaucracy to defense-line,  
Poetry to Rocket science,  
Art to architect,  
Physiology to philosophy,  
And babies to men,  
Easily you can handle all of them,

Your heart is beautiful,  
Your mind is powerful,  
Your intellect is sharp,  
And you are soulful,  
Girl, in and out you are beautiful.



**Sky-Pearls**  
Sanjib Kumar Dash

Thrill, that the  
new winter hath impinged,  
Waving trains of stimuli inside body n mind,  
with fiery speed, transforms everything fabu-  
lous n fairy.  
Never to ignore the season's current of intrin-  
sic joy,  
Ushering a wonderful feel,  
in hearts of millions,  
condensing vigour n beauty.  
Sky sprinkles the pearls,  
the hopeful dews majestic,  
'Be Cool', their laconic words, let's gather,  
with dazzling colors along  
the sunlit morning.  
Truely green is the planet, we landed on, as  
dewdrops,  
with a lify impulse therein.  
No knowledge wherefrom have all come, with  
a certain return ticket in hand,  
no matter, how short it's,  
glitter with charity n love.  
Redeem thy tranquil-cool touch, to flora n  
fauna all around,  
with cheers n smile.  
Reader in Physics, Deogarh College

**She wonders about  
your purity, Often  
she asks herself in  
tranquility, Each  
time she gets ans....  
It's.... It's perhaps beyond  
eternity.**  
**AYENANKITA DAS**

**Amber**  
The Amber style shows a strong Mughal im-  
pact because of their kinship with the com-  
munity (Mughal style outfits and nu-  
ances can be seen in  
the paintings). Amber  
paintings neither  
possess the subtlety  
like the Bundi style  
nor the bolder quali-  
ties of the Mewar  
style. Depiction of  
Krishna-lila, el-  
ephant riding, camel  
riding and raag-ragini  
are some of the popu-  
lar themes of these paintings.  
This article was first published in the presti-  
gious MARWAR INDIA magazine and Here  
The purpose of sharing article is to document  
and promote. (Concluded)



# Rajasthan's Schools of Miniature Paintings are a League Apart

Rajasthan's miniature paintings are known the world over and Rajasthan is considered one of the main cultural centres where paintings developed and later took various forms. It is said that the Mughals brought the art of miniature paintings from Persia under Humayun, and then Akbar patronised it, establishing the art in India. Indian artists were trained, and slowly, with the amalgamation of Mughal flair and local culture, various schools of art emerged with their own unique genres. We bring you some of the oldest schools and their traits and styles.

**Mewar**  
The Mewar School of Painting centred around



Udaipur and counts among the most impor-  
tant, having played a crucial role in creating a  
base for future artists. The Mewar School  
concentrated on its conservative style and  
avoided Mughal influence. Bright colours  
and emotional appeal characterise the  
Mewar School, and the earliest example  
of art from this school is the ragamala  
series, painted in 1605, at Chawand.

**Nathdwara**

Nathdwara is a small town which is  
known for Srinath ji's temple. Nathdwara  
art is based on manifestations of the deity  
and devotional themes of Krishna, depict-  
ing him in different moods, postures and  
attires.



**Marwar**

Marwar lies in the south western region of Rajasthan, and the paintings that developed in Bikaner, Kishangarh, Pali, Nagaur, Ghanerao and Jodhpur are now



collectively known as the Marwar School of Painting. The Marwar School later was to be highly influenced by Mughal flair. The most important features of the Marwar School were the use of thick lines, muscular figures with whiskers, huge turbans and strong facial expressions which were depicted in bright colours.

**Jodhpur**

Being the second largest city of Rajasthan and having represented the kingdom of Marwar historically, the Jodhpur style is considered the principal style of the Marwar School. Yet, it



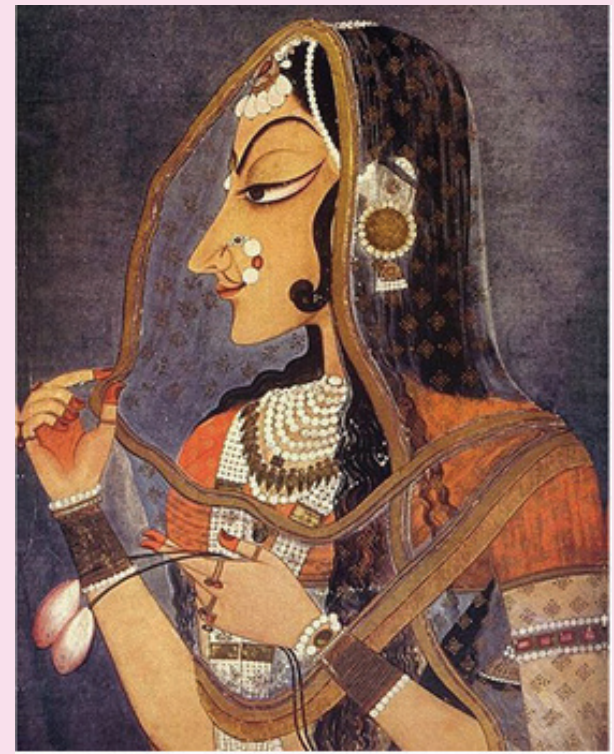
has its own features and has not been as heavily influenced by the Mughals like the Marwar School. The Jodhpur style is

**Srushti Deshpande**

characterised by bright yet subtle hues, depicting women in bell-shaped skirts, men in pleated coats and spiral clouds on the horizon.

**Kishangarh**

The Kishangarh style, also famous as Bani Thani paintings, portrays elegant women with long necks, arched eyebrows, thin lips and wide eyes, and adorned with jewellery. This art form developed under the rule of King



Sawant Singh, who was in love with Bani Thani and wanted to portray their relationship as Radha-Krishna. Subtle colours like rose, white, red, emerald and cream were used to express the gentle sentiments.

**Hadoti**

Also known as Hadavati, this school developed around the 1630s and drew major inspiration from the Mewar style. It was also in-

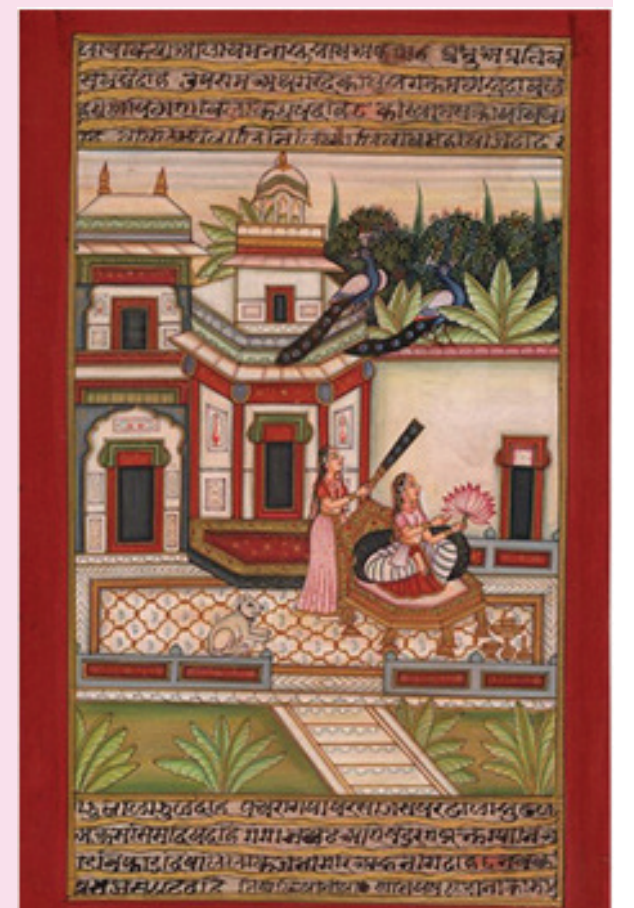


fluenced by Mughal paintings and beautifully intertwined their characteristics into their own style. Kota, Bundi and Jhalwar styles are col-

lectively known as the Hadoti School and is considered of utmost quality.

**Bundi**

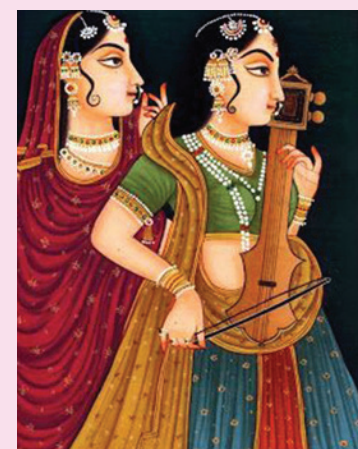
The Bundi School flourished under the rule of the Hada Rajputs, and apart from Mughals, it was also influenced by Deccan paintings. Bundi's artists used a selective colour palette to show the rich variety of flora and fauna,



together with the portrayal of a nayak and a nayika. The women were depicted gracefully, with strong features and slim, well-structured bodies. Bundi paintings emphasised on hunting, festivals, processions, court scenes, lovers, wildlife and episodes from Lord Krishna's life.

**Dhundhar**

The Dhundhar School of paintings includes the Jaipur, Amber, Shekhawati and Alwar styles. The Dhundhar School was known for its exclusive folk art paintings for which the artists took inspiration from the Hadoti School. The styles date back to the early 17th century and depict beautiful women with round faces and pointed noses.



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## Appealing to fans' inner writers, Anupam Kher offers autographed book

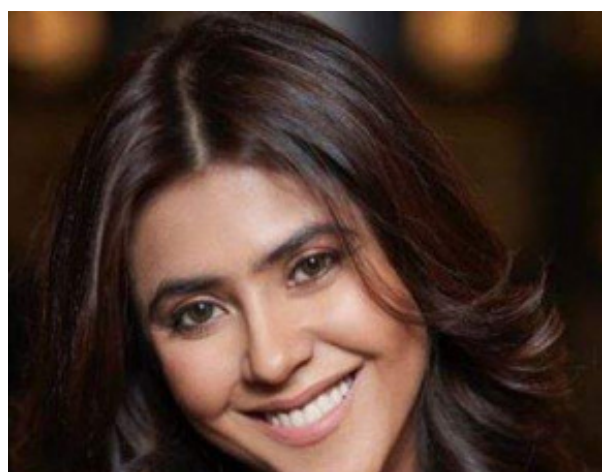


**NEW DELHI:** Asking his fans to rejuvenate their inner writers, veteran actor Anupam Kher, offered them to send his autographed book 'Your Best Day is Today' on Tuesday. Kher hopped on to Twitter and shared a candid picture of him. Calling on his fans to give a suitable caption for the picture, he wrote "Mujhe meri ye tasveer pasand hai. (I like this picture of mine) I will send an autographed copy of my latest book #YourBestDayIsToday to the person whose caption for this pic I like the most!" Adding to the cation, he noted "Hindi or English - apka caption kisi bhi bhasha me chalega! Chaliye! Apne andar ke lekhak ko jagaiye!! (your caption will go in any language! Let's go! Wake up your inner writer,) with Hibiscus smiling face and heart-shaped smile emoticon. Within a few hours of being posted, fans of the former Chairman of Film and Television Institute of India started coming up with innovative captions and showcased their creative skills. A day ago, the 65-year-old star shared a clip of his mother lauding PM Modi and scientist's efforts for the new COVID-19 vaccines.

## SC grants Ekta Kapoor interim protection from arrest in FIR over web series

**NEW DELHI(K-CN):** The Supreme

leged objectionable content in her web



Court on Thursday granted interim protection from arrest to TV producer Ekta Kapoor in an FIR against her for al-

leged objectionable content in her web series "XXX season 2". A bench headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde granted interim protection to

## Phenomenal experience: Riteish Deshmukh praises Anil Kapoor, Anurag Kashyap's 'AK vs AK'

**NEW DELHI(K-CN):** Actor Riteish Deshmukh lauded Vikramaditya Motwane's 'AK vs AK' and termed the

blown!!! #AKvsAK is a phenomenal experience - @VikramMotwane take a bow my friend," tweeted

only you could do this, you are pure gold in this film but @HarshKapoor\_has outdone your entire performance in one

movie star and a film director who get into a public spat, following which the director retaliates by kidnapping the actor's



Netflix based film "a phenomenal experience". Deshmukh took to Twitter to share a poster of the movie, which features Anurag Kashyap and Anil Kapoor in lead roles. "Mind has been

Deshmukh. He then went on to heap praise on Kashyap, Kapoor, and his actor son Harshvardhan Kapoor who has a cameo in the film. "@anuragkashyap72 how good are you, @AnilKapoor Sir,

scene," the 'Housefull' actor's tweet further read. While Kapoor essays the role of a yesterday actor, Kashyap plays the role of a disgraced film director in the film. 'AK vs AK,' revolves around the story of a

daughter and films the search for her in real-time. The Netflix India Original film was released on the platform on December 24, which also happens to be Anil Kapoor's birthday.

## Aakanksha Singh joins team Mayday

Ajay Devgn's Mayday has been creating a massive buzz because of its interest-

the icing on the cake is that Ajay Sir is directing the film. It's actually happening!



ing star cast, which includes Amitabh Bachchan, Ajay Devgn, Rakul Preet Singh and Angira Dhar. Talented actress, Aakanksha Singh has now joined the team. Aakanksha will essaying the role of Ajay Devgn's wife in the film. She joined the shoot yesterday. Aakanksha says, "It's like a dream come true to be a part of such a big and much-awaited film. I am so excited to share the screen with Ajay Sir and Amitabh Sir; and

It's an important role and I am lucky that the first muhurat shot of the film had me in it." Ajay Devgn took to social media to announce that the shoot had begun yesterday. "Happy to officially begin Mayday in a start-to-finish shooting schedule. Seek blessings from the Almighty and my parents. Nothing is complete without the support of all my fans, family and well-wishers. Releases on 29th April 2022 (sic)" he posted.

## 'Wanted to make a film on Indian Army with Shah Rukh Khan', says Director Kabir Khan

**MUMBAI(KCN):** Filmmaker Kabir Khan, who is gearing up for the release of his web series "The Forgotten Army: Azaadi Ke Liye", based on Indian National Army (INA), says he wanted to make a film on the subject starring Shah Rukh Khan. He added that Shah Rukh didn't charge a fee for the voiceover he gave for the series. "Shah Rukh has very graciously given the voiceover. The series is based on a true story, so there is an introduction of a few minutes before every episode along with real footage, where he has lent his voice. I talked about it with Shah Rukh earlier as well, when this was a film script. Back then, I wanted Shah Rukh to do the film. We even had a few meetings but we couldn't take it forward," said Kabir while promoting the series along with its lead actors Sunny Kaushal and Sharvari Wagh. Kabir added that Shah Rukh didn't charge a single

paisa for his voiceover assignment. "When I was making this series, I thought I should ask Shah Rukh (to be the narrator) because Shah Rukh's father had involvement with this army. His father knew General Shahnawaz Khan, who was an important part of INA. So, I knew he (Shah Rukh Khan) has sympathy and attachment with Azad Hind Fauj and I called him up. It's not an easy task to ask a superstar for a voiceover but Shah Rukh instantly agreed to do it. Usually, when you discuss a film with Shah Rukh, it's a long process, but in this case Shah Rukh literally did the voiceover for us on the second day. I don't know whether he would like me to reveal this, but he didn't take a fee from us. I think the kind of attachment he has with Azad Hind Fauj reflects in his act." Incidentally, Shah Rukh did a cameo in Kabir Khan's 2017 release "Tubelight", starring Salman Khan.

## Pets in Cities, Rights and Responsibilities of Pet Parents

**D**ogs have an ambivalent status in Indian tradition and culture. On one hand they were one of the first animals to be domesticated, a friend and close helper

of man since the dawn of time with their presence in holy scriptures like Vedas and Mahabharata. On the other hand they are perceived as liminal animals, existing in the border of two worlds that is life and death, their connection with cremation sites. Hindus believe that after death the soul travels to the kingdom of Yama (God of death) accompanied by two dogs. In India, dogs have got a lower status that is being attributed to them by the Brahminical tradition, while a high status predominated in other areas such as Tantrism. For centuries in our culture dogs are domesticated as hunters, guard and companion animals and never acquired the status of family members. It is in the early part of 20th century, keeping dogs in Indian homes has become more and more acceptable. The greatest reformers and thinkers of that era such as Swami Vivekanand and Rabindranath Tagore, had their favourite pets.

In modern times there has been a phenomenal increase in the number of pets in developed countries. The trend is catching on in India too. As per the data of the Kennel club of India which registered more than 50,000 pet dogs last year, every year on an average the number of new pets increases by 15 per cent, another 30 to 40 per cent of the canine population is not registered with kennels. The pet dog population is growing for a number of reasons. On the top of the list is a love for dogs some of the factors responsible for the growing trend of pet dog ownership in urban India are nuclear families, double income households and changing lifestyles. The one child norm has also led to more families keeping pets. Other beliefs that hold for increasing trend is the security concern. With a rise in prosperity, more and more people are keeping dogs as pets for safety. The rise of pets in ad campaigns and films too help an increase trend in pet ownership. Remember how the sale of pugs went up during the Hutch campaign? The biggest shift, though was the change in mind set that is how pets today are considered family members. Note the change in language: people no longer refer to themselves as pet owners, but as 'proud pet parents'. And speaking of parenthood, many, in fact, see pets as the first extension of their family, before having children. Getting a pet is like having a child, with lesser responsibility. It offers companionship, especially to people who live alone.

Whether you believe it or not, pets are great way to improve your mood and temperament. Research has shown that people who suffer from various diseases

have lesser chances of depression if they keep pets as compared to those who are suffering from similar diseases and don't keep pets. Health experts say that dog owners have less blood pressure and heart rates which reduces the need to take medicines and also helps reduce cholesterol and triglyceride levels. Dogs can be great companions and will happily go out for walks and is a good source of exercise. Experts say that people can get relieved from stress and depression, if they spend some time with their pets. It is said that people who keep pets are said to be good in their social relations. Kids who grow up with pets at home are always respectful towards living things. No burglar alarm can be better thanna dog at home.

Pets are quite like family members. However, with growing apartment complexes and Housing societies becoming the norm in almost all major cities in India, new challenges emerges relating to pet ownership. On one hand, there are the non-pet-owners who constantly complain and disapprove the activities related to pets, and on the other, there are the pet owners who strive to ensure that their rights are intact. In this conflict the pet parents living in apartments and housing societies are confronted with a number of issues. Pets being banned on society premises on account of being noisy. Prohibiting homeowners from using parks, lifts and other facilities if they are accompanied by pets. Also, being charged for the same. Being charged 'pet rent'. Forced usage of muzzles (to calm the pets). Discrimination as per the size and breed of pets allowed in the housing society and apartments. Being asked for a pet resume before being given the flat on rent (A pet resume contains the pet's basic details, previous rental experience, health, behaviour, references, etc). Such rules are highly discriminatory and might lead to friction among the members of the society and more often people end up are the pet parents having to choose between their home or their animal companion. But it must be kept in mind that these objections have risen due to certain behaviours of pet animals that have inconvenienced people in some way or another in the past living in apartments and housing societies.

Urban India's love for pets is growing without any rules. The absence of any rules and regulations on pet control in India means there are no mechanisms to settle a range of disputes. This perpetual debate of whether pets must be allowed in apartment and housing complexes or not, has made us realise that there is a need for a clear understanding of the situation before we jump to conclusions about the rights and wrongs. Humans interact with animals in numerous ways and on numerous levels. We the Homo sapiens indeed are living in an "animal's world," in the sense that our lives are very much intertwined with the lives of animals. This also means that animals, like those dogs we commonly refer to as our pets, are living in a "human's world" in the sense

**Dr. Gyana Ranjan Mishra**

that it is us, not them, who, to a large degree, define and manage the interactions we have with them. In this sense, the human-animal relationship is nothing we should romanticize: it comes with clear power relations and thus with a set of responsibilities on the side of those, (we humans) who exercise this power.

With growing apartment complexes and housing societies, it becomes important for pet owners to understand their rights and responsibilities, for the welfare of their pets and their neighbours. As per the opinion of the legal Advisor to the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI). "Apartment owners' associations (AOA) and residents' welfare associations (RWA) cannot 'legislate'. They cannot take it upon themselves to issue 'edicts' and restrict rights available to citizens. There is no law enacted by Parliament or any State Legislature that 'bans' companion animals. At best, municipalities and local authorities can regulate, or insist on registration or licensing of pets. This is tantamount to harassment and violates the fundamental right of being a citizen of this country. The right to make personal choices is protected by the constitution of India. By pressurizing people to abandon their pets, they actually compel them to violate the law. Anyone who threatens or intimidates any person taking care of dogs is liable for criminal intimidation under Section 503 of Indian Penal Code and can be arrested without a warrant. As per Section 11 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, beating, kicking, over-riding, overloading, overdriving, torturing or otherwise treating any animals so as to subject it to unnecessary pain amounts to cruelty on animals. Whoever indulges in an act of cruelty to animals makes himself liable for action.

The Animal Welfare Board of India has passed By-laws on keeping pet dogs in apartments. If you are living in an apartment or housing society you should be aware of these laws and make sure no one harasses you for keeping a pet. The Bylaws and Rules have summarized here in simple words for easy understanding. Any civic body, Resident Welfare Association (RWA) does not have the right to ban residents from keeping pets in their apartments, not even by getting a majority vote in the society with the help of other tenants or residents. Any discrimination over size or type of pet breed is not allowed in a housing society. No ban can be imposed on pet owners due to their dog's barking habits. If a pet owner abide by the municipal laws regarding pets then no society civic body has the right to ban the pets or their owners from the society. So far as use of lift and park by pets is concerned AWBI comes up with following Bylaws, pets cannot be disallowed to use lifts. No ban or special charges can be imposed on pet owners for using lifts with their pets. Banning pets from parks is a short-sighted perspective and can result in canine's aggressive behavior. A dedicated time can be appointed for taking pets

to parks and should be informed to RWA. For controlling of pets in common areas AWBI advocates, pet owners should keep their pets on leash while in public parks and common areas in the society. The most important issue thing being defecation by pets in community premises, AWBI states, there is no central/state law that require pet owners to clean their pet excreta. However, RWA can request pet owners to clean up after their dogs for society's cleanliness. RWA cannot impose fines or special charges on pet owners in case they don't clean up after their pets excreta. Pet owners are encouraged to train their pets to use a specified defecation area without causing trouble to other residents.

These rights, however, do come with duties. The real problem in this conflict lies with the pet owner rather than the pet itself. Owning a dog is not just a privilege, it is a responsibility too, and responsible pet parenting is the need of the hour. The AWBI appeals to the pet parents to abide to certain manners living in apartments and housing complexes. Make sure your pets must undergo regular vaccinations and medications required to stay healthy. Don't let society children tease your pet. It might anger your pet and can cause them to react badly. Make sure that your pet isn't causing any annoyance in the society. You should abide by the Municipal Sanitary Bye-Laws or Regulations. Keep your dog on leash even while walking inside society premises. Train your dog properly and make sure that your pet doesn't fight with other pets in the society.

Large number of cities in the developed world have well enacted pet policies mandating a set of DO's and DON'Ts that are applicable to the ownership of pets. For instance in most countries, cleaning of litter of the pets is the sole responsibility of the pet owner. They should carry a bag with them all the times while toiling with their pets and take away the excreta for disposal. In fact in countries like Japan in addition to this the pet owners also carry with them a water bottle to wash the area where the pet defecates or urinates. Local regulation by municipalities is universally acknowledged as ideal solution to this particular issue, since they are in a better position than the state to satisfy the specific needs of their citizens. However in India most of the laws and guidelines specified by AWBI remains toothless in the absence of specific city regulation, further if each residential society comes up with its own bylaws/rules with regard to pets, it may result in unacceptable levels of variation in the same city. Given the rampant rise in the number of pets in cities, civic body in each city must frame specific rules and regulations for their own citizens taking in to consideration the animal welfare, animal rights, pet parents rights and above all human rights in to consideration.

M.V.Sc. ( Veterinary & A.H. Extension), Block Veterinary Officer, (OVS-I, Sr.), Veterinary Dispensary, Satyabadi, Puri.

## What motivated teachers during the pandemic?

**W**hat kept teachers motivated over the last 18 months? How did they cope with the pandemic, not being able to go to school, and the sudden need for online and blended learning and teaching? What strategies did teachers use to cope with the unexpected? And, most importantly, what do these strategies and practices tell us about supporting teachers better in the future? At STiR Education we work with government school officials and teachers across the states of Delhi, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka, and these questions were on our



mind as we supported their response to the pandemic. Our approach includes creating peer networks of officials and teachers, giving teachers the autonomy to decide classroom strategies, providing feedback through peer observation, and enabling reflection. When schools were removed from the equation during the COVID-19 pandemic, we struggled to see how we could do this digitally. With no classroom practice, what would teachers reflect on? And what would officials and peers provide feedback on? While this was a tall order, teachers rose to the challenge. They came up with teaching and learning strategies that they feel has added value and enriched them as educators. We were also pleasantly surprised with the resilience and willingness of district- and block-level officials and teachers to find new ways to support student learning. Now that they are back in school, teachers shared that they would like some of these practices to continue. Here are six steps that governments and policymakers can take to support teachers and build a stronger teacher community as schools reopen:

1. Increase teacher autonomy  
For the longest time, teachers in India have been limited by an overloaded curriculum, fixed textbooks, and in-service teacher training modules that follow a one-size-fits-all approach. Though not without its challenges, the pandemic gave teachers the autonomy to reach students in many different ways. Teachers came up with multiple content formats, which included booklets, worksheets, small videos, and audio recordings that could be sent through WhatsApp and did not require a textbook and face-to-face teaching. Once the lockdown was lifted, teachers started community visits and distributed material to children they could reach. Where children had access to phone and internet, teachers conducted online classes.

For one of our activities built around encouraging

students to reflect and share their feelings, we saw teachers contextualise this

**Swaha Sahoo**

to students' needs. Some students drew, some wrote in notebooks, some recorded audio, and some typed out their diaries. As one teacher put it, "We were not forced to follow any one strategy and hence we innovated based on local needs. It was challenging and time-consuming. But students responded positively and this motivated us to find better ways." An image of a woman holding a mobile phone with a zoom video playing on it. We can see her saree, there are bangles on her hand, and we can see her id card hanging. As we move from digital learning to physically attending schools again, what steps can policymakers take to create a supportive and enabling environment for government school teachers-teachers

Blended learning gave both teachers and students a degree of flexibility for teaching and learning, since neither was restricted to the classroom. | Picture courtesy: STiR Education

Though teachers found creative ways to teach, they often improvised without a lot of planning. With schools reopening, giving teachers more say in curriculum design, planning timetables and the method of teaching will go a long way in improving teacher motivation as well as performance. The pandemic has shown us that teachers with more experience put greater effort into reaching students. Governments can take advantage of their rich experience and commitment by giving teachers more control over the teaching and learning process.

2. Give teachers agency to direct their own learning  
During COVID-19 teachers had to quickly adapt lesson content planned for physical classes to an online or a remote format. Doing this successfully requires a different set of skills, and so teachers had to brush up their technology skills and learn virtual tools. While not mandated to do so, many teachers in our network responded positively to our inputs on digital skills and learning virtual tools. They proactively asked for help and practised strategies for making learning accessible with their peers and students. Whether it was learning to join a link for an online meeting, taking online classes, recording videos and audios, or using forms, teachers took ownership of their own learning.

Teachers have a good understanding of their developmental needs and the gaps in their skill set. Instead of centrally planned one-way training modules, states and the education ministry can create a bouquet of courses for teachers to choose from. It will also benefit our policymakers to ask teachers what support they want and challenge teachers with innovative content.

3. Create communities of practice

Blended learning gave both teachers and students a degree of flexibility for teaching and learning, since neither was restricted to the classroom. For instance, one teacher made several small video modules for a topic and sent it to students over the course of a month. "Since I was not bound by a timetable of 45 minutes, I took the liberty to experiment with different content on the topic. But I would like to get some formal training on how to do this better," she shared. Technology can also take a lot of administrative burden off teachers. "We did most monitoring meetings online and that saved a lot of travel time," added another teacher. We found that teachers are keen to continue with blended teaching strategies in school. One teacher adds, "Technology can support my teaching if I plan it better and have better resources. This momentum should not be lost now that school has opened."

In order to intentionally use digital teaching and learning tools, teachers need time, training, and tools. With adequate technological infrastructure and teacher capacity building, schools can create a system of sending homework reminders to parents through WhatsApp, design modules and tests, and involve parents in their child's education. Unfortunately, while senior secondary and secondary schools across many states have desktops and laptops, the active use of technology has not been a part of teachers' daily work. In many cases, computers are dysfunctional and access to regular internet is a challenge. For blended learning to succeed, governments need to provide access to functional technology, integrate technology into everyday teaching, and build teacher capacity around blended pedagogies.

5. Fill teacher vacancies to enable differentiated teaching  
During the pandemic teachers became flexible and changed their teaching strategies to fit the needs of their students. For example, many students had access to a phone only in the evenings and we saw teachers in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu organise classes in the evenings. Some students had basic phones and so teachers recorded lessons and homework for them. They called students to check on individual progress. Children who struggled were given one-on-one time. "I realised that the weaker students were responding well to this individual attention and I tried hard to design some meaningful lessons for them. But once school is back in full swing, I will not have the time to give individual attention. My class size is huge and there are other administrative duties. I would love to have a small

class size and time to try some creative strategies," a teacher said.

By hiring more teachers and improving the student-teacher ratio, the government can encourage such activities without additional burden on the teachers. This will ensure that students, especially the weaker and marginalised ones, benefit from more attention. It also has the potential to improve both teacher and student motivation, while enhancing learning outcomes.

6. Prioritise the social and emotional health of teachers

The pandemic has put the spotlight on teachers' social and emotional health worldwide. Our sessions on the social and emotional well-being of teachers were attended by nearly 2.5 times more teachers than before. Teachers admitted to connecting over and reflecting on their feelings for the first time in a structured manner. Since many teachers ended up going to communities and visiting students' homes, it also gave them an opportunity to understand student backgrounds better.

Delhi has been a front runner, having introduced the Happiness Curriculum across its schools much before the pandemic. Through this, teachers were introduced to concepts of mindfulness, deep listening, and social and emotional well-being. But it was only during COVID-19 that these concepts took root and became central to teacher network meetings, where teachers discussed and practised the concepts. Other states can follow suit by introducing counselling and mindfulness practices as a regular feature for teachers. This can be a platform for teachers to discuss not only their well-being but also strategies for the social and emotional well-being of their students.

The COVID-19 pandemic has kept children and teachers out of school for almost two academic sessions now. Teachers have struggled to adapt to the change, but also gained a lot—they were resilient, overcame their fear of technology, learnt new tools, innovated widely, connected and collaborated with peers, and made time for professional development. Our education system needs to capitalise on these gains and support teachers to make these gains sustainable. Bringing children back to school, closing the learning gap, and ensuring their social and emotional well-being is a tall order for the system, and especially for teachers. Creating an enabling environment will go a long way in making this happen.

The author is the India country director for STiR Education, an international nonprofit that supports education systems focused on motivating every child, teacher, and official to learn and improve. Previously, Swaha spent a decade with the Tata Trusts leading the Parag Initiative. A World Bank scholar, she has a degree in international education and development from the University of Sussex.

## Training to CBOs on Sexual Violence against Women

Khordha(KCN): The leading NGO of the Ms. Manasi Padhi CDPO, Balipatna, and Mr. Kedar Chaudhury, Secretary, DSS attended and deliberated on different aspects of Sexual violence against women and children and the role of CBOs, AWW. Speakers stressed on the act's, laws and enforcement mechanism of those act's. The programme was



state Darbar Sahitya Sansad (DSS) Organized one day training programme for CBOs and other stakeholders on "Sexual Violence Against Women and Children". 40 Youth club members and 10 AWW, Supervisors attended the programme. Resources persons like



Khordha, Ms. Krupasinthu Barad, highly interactive and Sangeeta Padhi, IIC, Balipatna, PS fruitful.

## 8 lakh devotees visited Puri Srimandir in November

PURI: Around eight lakh devotees visited the Srimandir and Rs 12.8 crore was collected from the hundi of Kartika due to Covid concerns. The highest single day hundi collection stood at Rs 28 lakh on due to large gatherings, it had also closed all government facilities for visitors like last year. However, considering the downward trend in Covid cases, the temple adminis-



in November, shared sources in the Shri Jagannath Temple on Tuesday. People mostly from outside Puri visited the 12th-century shrine despite restrictions for visitors in the holy month November 13, the sources said. In October, the district administration had appealed to people observing the Kartika brata not to come to Puri. Anticipating a rise in cases And despite the closure of the temple for devotees on every Sunday and festive occasions like Kartika Purnima, the number of visitors to the shrine was significantly high in November. However, considering the downward trend in Covid cases, the temple adminis-

## African, Western Pacific and European regions report increase in COVID cases: WHO

GENEVA: The World Health Organisation says the rate of increase of linked to COVID-19 fell 10 per cent. The UN health agency, in its latest due to batch reporting of antigen tests by South Africa. The report, for the reported in a limited number of countries - though it has spread widely, into four of



coronavirus cases held steady over the last week, though its African, Western Pacific and European regions all reported gains. At the same time, new deaths globally weekly epidemiological report on the pandemic, said case counts shot up 93% in Africa, though it cautioned about interpreting too much from that high figure because it was largely first time, referred to the new omicron variant that was christened on Friday after being detected in South Africa and Botswana. WHO said the variant has now been re-

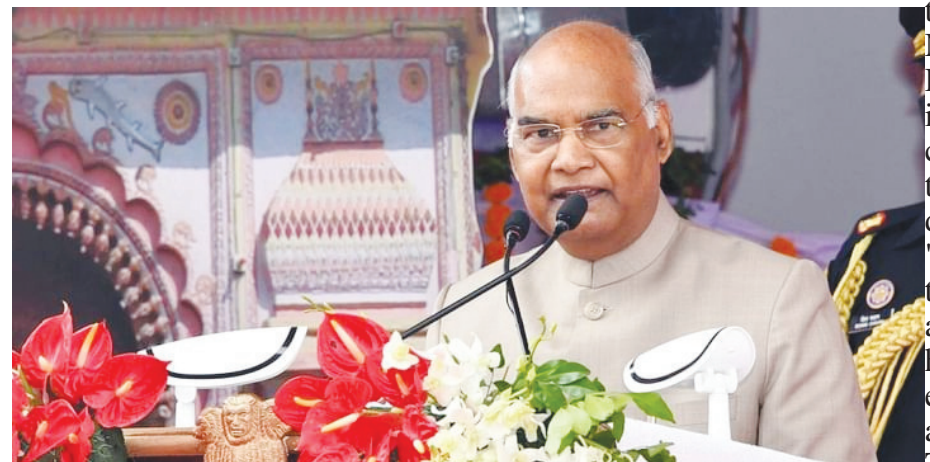
the WHO's six regions. As of Sunday, more than 280 million cases and more than 5.2 million deaths have been tallied due to the pandemic, WHO said.

## India fully committed to timely completion of oil refinery project in Mongolia: President Kovind

NEW DELHI: President Ram Nath Kovind on Wednesday said India is fully committed to the timely completion of an oil refinery project in Mongolia as it will greatly increase its "spiritual" neighbour's energy security. Welcoming a parliamentary delegation from

decided to join the International Solar Alliance, a statement issued by the Rashtrapati Bhavan said.

Speaking about the developmental projects undertaken by India in Mongolia, the president was also happy to note the progress on the oil refinery project in Mongolia, it said.



He said that this project is a symbol of strong cooperation and the strategic partnership of India and Mongolia.

"India is fully committed to its timely completion as it would greatly enhance Mongolia's energy security," Kovind added.

The delegation led by

Mongolia to India, he said the two countries share civilisational, historical, spiritual and cultural ties.

"The common values and ideals of democracy and freedom strengthen our bonds. As Mongolia's 'third neighbour' and 'spiritual neighbour', India looks forward to continued cooperation to further deepen its strategic partnership with Mongolia," the president said. He expressed confidence that this visit will add to the vibrancy of India's and Mongolia's bilateral relationship.

Speaking about climate change, Kovind said that the impact of climate change will be particularly higher on developing countries such as ours.

"It is imperative that we work together to address this common challenge," the president said. He was happy to note that Mongolia has

Gombojav Zadanshatar, chairman of the State Great Hural of Mongolia, had called on President Kovind at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here. Kovind said that Buddhism is a special connect between India and Mongolia.

He noted that India's national mission for manuscripts has undertaken the printing of Mongolian Kanjur manuscripts.

The president also noted that India is extending assistance for digitisation of Buddhist manuscripts at the Gandan Monastery.

Pointing to the cooperation between the two countries in facing the challenges of COVID-19, he said that "we appreciate the timely and valuable support given to us in the second wave by the government of Mongolia".

Kovind also expressed happiness that India could support Mongolia through the supply of vaccines and medicines.

## 'Smooth proceedings to depend on Speaker's neutrality'

BHUBANESWAR: The BJP on Tuesday said that the smooth functioning of the winter session of the Assembly - beginning Wednesday - largely depends on the manner in which the Speaker conducts the House proceedings.

As the State government is on the back foot over the Mamita

Mohan Charan Majhi after the party's legislature meeting. Majhi said the Kalahandi lady teacher murder case is an important issue for the BJP because of the involvement of the Minister of State for Home Dibya Shankar Mishra.

The legislature party has decided to rake up the worsening law

under Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik is a publicity stunt to woo voters ahead of the panchayat elections and people of the State are entitled to know from the government about the source of funding for such a massive scheme without any budgetary support.

the Opposition during the winter session. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik who presided over a meeting of the party virtually, laid stress on Central neglect and asked his MLAs to raise the issues in the House.

The Chief Minister said that the Centre has not sanctioned adequate number of



Meher murder case, the BJP has stacked up ammunition to target it on a host of issues. The deteriorating law and order situation and increasing atrocities on women are on the top of its agenda.

"We as principal opposition will extend our full cooperation to the treasury benches for smooth functioning of the Assembly. However, our assistance will be subject to the neutrality of the Speaker," said BJP chief whip

and order situation with specific reference to the involvement of Law Minister Pratap Jena in the Mahanaga murders and Agriculture Minister Arun Sahu's link in the Pari murder case in Nayagarh. The rising incidence of ganja and brown sugar seizure in the State is alarming and this points to the inefficiency of the law enforcing authorities, he added.

Majhi also said that the distribution of smart health cards

Termining the school transformation programme under 5T as propaganda, the saffron party lambasted the government for vacancies of teaching staff in schools and higher educational institutions.

BJD to raise Central neglect in Assembly BHUBANESWAR: The ruling BJD has decided to raise the issue of Central neglect relating to assistance under rural housing and other schemes to counter

IAY houses for beneficiaries of Odisha despite repeated requests. He also raised the issue of delay in revising coal royalty by the Centre due to which the State government is losing revenue every year. Increasing the MSP is another demand of the State.

Referring to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Chief Minister said the danger is not yet over and the new variant Omicron has raised concerns across the world.

# Hygiene routine for winters

Kolkata (KCN): Winters have surely arrived and with that out comes warm sweaters, woven scarves, and blankets. It is also a season to boost immune system and nurture our body. But with all those arrangements to keep you warm and cozy also come various diseases like asthma, cold, cough, chest congestion and other communicable diseases. While some of these illnesses are an outcome changing weather conditions, some of these also originate from cleanliness and hygiene issues that often get overlooked during this season.

Here are some quick health & hygiene tips for both kids and adults that should be kept in mind to keep diseases and allergies at bay:

1. Bathing regularly – Yes, you read that right! A daily morning ritual that you tend to ignore during the cold has a hyperthermic effect on your body. Which means rinsing your body with a gentle soap like Savlon glycerin soap and warm water can heat up your body. Hyperthermic effect has a direct impact on your heart health and bathing regularly with warm water can help regulate your heart rate that often tends to slow down during winters.
2. Well-ventilated rooms – Contrary to the popular belief

of shutting doors and windows from cold breeze, it is important to allow fresh air and sunshine to penetrate in the rooms. There are millions of microbes that tend to multiply in constantly closed, damp rooms. So, opening windows and letting plenty of fresh and sunrays can work wonders.

3. Washing your hands regularly – Most of the infections



including respiratory allergies spread from one person to another through hands. Especially amongst younger children who don't wash their hands as often as required. Bacteria can thrive on your hands and can be passed on to everything you touch, including food. So be sure that you and your kids wash hands after you've handled food, or after you have been to the bathroom. Use a disinfectant soap and remember to scrub your hands thoroughly for a minimum of 20 seconds as it is the scrubbing that removes germs, not the water temperature.

4. Disinfection of surfaces - Coronavirus or any other communicable disease does not only de-

mand a frequent hand wash and masks but also a wipe down of countertops, door-knobs, light switches, and common surfaces for that extra protection. These are areas that we often forget about while disinfecting our abode. Fortunately, it's easy to get rid of the virus material from these surfaces with the various trusted brands like Savlon disin-

5. Washing winter clothes thoroughly – Every time we come home from outside, we usually go straight into the shower and add the clothes we have been wearing to the 'to be washed' pile. This doesn't work for winter clothes though, does it? In the area designated for 'already worn' garments, keep a clothes disinfectant spray handy. Moreover, before making your child wear woolen clothes, wash them properly with detergent and clothes spray so that the dust which may have accumulated from lying in the wardrobe for long gets washed away.
6. Sterilizing comforters & blankets

– Sunning blanket, comforters and dohars in an age-old ritual that is followed in every Indian household. It not only helps in cleaning dust mites, fungi and in severe cases mold formation but has proven to be effective in controlling cases of asthma and allergies during the season. Though alongside this, it is important to disinfect them too.

Apart from following this routine, it is critical to keep get rid of dust during winters. It is a time when most of us spend time indoors and hibernate for a few months until spring. Not following a consistent dusting regime can lead to high levels of respiratory and skin allergies. So, dusting commonly used surfaces, fans, tables and most importantly your heaters with a soft cloth can help a lot. In a nutshell, good hygiene is key to avoiding spread of infections including COVID-19. Along with other important behaviors such as physical distancing, thoroughly washing hands often and at key moments is essential to controlling the pandemic. As they say, hygiene sahi to health sahi!

# Bike rider met an accident due to lack of statutory warning symbol boards on roads

Barbil (KCN): A motorcyclist was seriously injured in a road accident in the Barbil area of Kendujhar district. It has come to the knowledge that a man named Durga Prasad Maharana, who was on his way from Barbil to Bhadrasahi, could not keep his balance and was hit by a divider near the PWD office. The victim's home is in Bhubaneswar and he works for a transport company. It has been revealed that Nanda Infratech, a contractor is assigned to construct a four-lane road from Bhadrasahi to Barbil. As a rule, people are



often misled by road accidents because they do not have the required information board. But the contractor and assigned officials are ignoring the same, endangering public life. On the other hand, The newly constructed road has four lanes, but there are not enough parking areas, and trucks are parked on one side of the lane as there is no sufficient parking area. Intellectuals have suggested that the departmental authorities look into the matter before things transform into worse conditions.

# A huge discontent among journalists on extraneous statements of a doctor to a TV channel at Barbil



Barbil (KCN): There was discontentment among working journalists at Barbil in connection with a remark by a doctor of Barbil CHC to a Television Channel. It is learned that a TV channel from Bhubaneswar had come to Barbil to prepare a program on health infrastructure

issues in Barbil. They too had scheduled a meeting with doctors at the event. But doctors avoided the interview, saying they are not allowed to be interviewed. But he was again contacted over the phone by the channel. During a telephonic discus-

sion on some issues, CFC commented about some journalist that some journalist is extorting money and have also been to jail in the recent past. Hearing this some journalist outraged and demanded an enquiry saying this remark was irreverent and

extraneous. Some locals commented this as a personal matter between a few media people and doctors. It is learned that a complaint from the Regional Media Forum has been sent to the Chief Minister in this context through the Barbil Tahsildar.

# Odisha Co-Operative Employees Federation Movement: Societies and Lamps have been locked for a Week

Khordha (KCN): The Odisha Co-Operative Employees Federation has come down

tus of civil servants to the employees of primary Co-Operative societies and Lamps.

Operative office at the district level. As a result official works including farmers

input supply storage and marketing of agricultural produce to farmers in rural areas.



on the agitation to meet the five point demand as the government has been adopting a tactical policy to meet the demands. As a result all the Co-Operative societies and Lamps have been locked for

Similarly on the recommendations of the 7th pay commission all employees will be paid salaries, costly allowances, state-run committee and the Lamps Administrative fund and a budget of Rs. 300 Crore

registration, Paddy procurement and supply of fertilizer have been paralysed. General Secretary of Odisha Co-Operative Employees Federation Digambar Nayak said " Primary Co-Operative societies

Farmers must get a complete stake in the supply chain and this could happen through Co-Operatives. For this the state government should take welfare measures for Co-Operative employees which could prove to be a new engine for growth. If the government falls to fulfill the demands, services like crop loan, paddy procurement, supply of seed's and fertilizer provided by Co-Operative societies and LAMPS will be stopped. They also submitted memorandum to Chief Minister Naveen Pattnaik, Agriculture, Finance and Food Supplies & Consumer Welfare, Co-Operation Minister over their demands.



a weeks. In a five point demand the federation rejected the proposal of the Registrar of Co-Operatives to grant the sta-

in the upcoming Co-Operative budget for salaries and allowances etc. They are also staging a pen-down strike at all Co-

and Lamps, the bottom tier of the short term Co-Operative credit structure have been providing credit linked services like

## Need to resurrect concept of gold bank to monetise physical gold: Ex-RBI deputy governor R Gandhi

MUMBAI: There is a need to establish a gold bank in the country to help

predominantly," Gandhi said on Wednesday at a virtual event organised

couraging the public to invest in financial gold than in physical gold, steps to

signed for investments in financial gold include gold deposits, gold metal

that gold deposits have the potential to monetise existing gold holdings.

scheme products, promising the same type or different type of jewellery against gold jewellery deposited today after the tenor of say 10 or longer years, can mobilise and monetise existing gold," he said.

A persistent and patient programme to shift the public from holding physical gold to holding in financial gold should continue as a long-term mission," Gandhi noted.

However, he said that there are challenges in shifting people away from physical gold as making deeper inroads into the psyche of the public is not easy. Gandhi said efforts should be made to know the reason for people's preference for gold jewellery.

"Innovative thinking is needed. Gold jewellery deposit

towards investment as capital through gold monetisation. It will reduce the need for the import of capital from foreign countries, he added.



monetise physical gold lying with people, Reserve Bank of India's former deputy governor R Gandhi said on Wednesday.

He said the country needs to play along with the Indian psyche of the strong preference for physical gold and gold in the form of jewellery, if it wants to be successful in monetising gold for the betterment of the economy. He added that it is estimated that around 23,000-24,000 tonnes of gold lie with the households and religious institutions in India but it is not easy to change the psyche of the people.

"It may be the time to resurrect the concept of a gold bank - a bank which will accept gold deposits that provides gold loans exclusively or

## Our government's next target is industrial development: West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee

KOLKATA: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday said that the focus of the Trinamool Congress government will be on industrial development in the state for which packages will be drawn up. Speaking at the inaugural session of ABP Infocom virtually, Banerjee said the target of the government

by digital lending fintech firm Rupeek on 'Tech Disruption meets Gold Monetisation'.

Emerging economies like India need a lot of capital for ushering in consistent high growth, which will lead to higher standards of living for its population, he said. To set up the gold bank, certain regulatory facilitation and enablement in terms of bank licensing policy, its cash reserve ratio and statutory liquidity ratio in terms of gold will be needed.

The gold bank will act as a catalyst and market maker to monetise physical gold.

Gandhi said that in the past few years, there is a marked shift in policy towards gold in the country, including through en-

monetise current physical gold holdings of citizens and creating infrastructure for quality control of gold through licensed refineries and hallmarking.

The new products that have been de-

loans, gold bonds, and gold ETF (exchange-traded fund). Gold bonds and gold ETF schemes are aiming at steadily shifting the public's preference of physical gold into financial gold, he said adding

## Omicron unravels travel industry's plans for a comeback

Continued from page-1

more contagious, causes more serious illness or can evade vaccines.

Still, governments that were slow to react to the first wave of COVID-19 are eager to avoid past mistakes. The World Health Organization says, however, that travel bans are of limited value and will "place a heavy burden on lives and livelihoods." Other experts say travel restrictions won't keep variants out but might give countries more time to get people vaccinated.

London-based airline easyJet said Tuesday that renewed travel restrictions already appear to be hurting winter bookings, although CEO Johan Lundgren said the damage is not yet as severe as during previous waves. The CEO of SAS Scandinavian Airlines said winter demand was looking up, but now we "need to figure out what the new variants may mean." "In the past year, each new variant has brought a decline in bookings, but then an increase once the surge dissipates," said Helene Becker, an analyst with financial services firm Cowen. "We expect the same pattern" this time.

Israel's decision to close the country to foreign visitors is hitting the nation's tourism industry as it geared up for the Hanukkah and Christmas holidays. The country only opened to tourists in November, after barring most foreign visitors since early last year.

Just over 30,000 tourists entered Israel in the first half of November, compared to 421,000 in November 2019, according to government figures.

Joel Haber, a Jerusalem-based guide, said during a typical Hanukkah holiday his calendar would be chock full of food tours through Jerusalem's colorful Mahane Yehuda market. Instead, he has just one tour a day.

"Tour guides like me are the first to get hit and the last to emerge and are directly prevented from working by a government decision," Haber said.

In the West Bank city of Bethlehem, revered by Christians as Jesus' birthplace, local businesses expected a boost from Christmas tourism. The Bethlehem Hotel, one of the largest in the city, has operated at a fraction of capacity for the past 18 months.

"Everyone who had bookings over the next two weeks has canceled, while others are waiting to see what happens next," said the hotel's manager, Michael Mufdi. "I don't know how much longer we can last, but we are doing our best."

The pandemic already caused foreign tourism in Japan to shrink from 32 million visitors in 2019 to 4 million last year, a trend that has continued through this year.

As worries surfaced about omicron, Japan on Wednesday tightened its ban on foreign travelers, asking airlines to stop taking new reser-

vations for all flights arriving in the country until the end of December. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has pushed for avoiding "the worst-case scenario" and reversed a relaxation of travel restrictions that had been in effect just three weeks.

The crowds of Chinese shoppers who used to arrive in Tokyo's glitzy Ginza district in a stream of buses to snap up luxury items have long disappeared. Restaurants and bars have been forced to restrict hours.

In Asakusa, a quaint part of town filled with souvenir shops, rickshaw drivers, and stalls selling traditional sweets, news of the omicron variant made little difference this week. Vendors say there hasn't been any business for months except for a few local customers. Boat charter operator Tokyo Water Taxi started on the city's waterfront in 2015, when hopes were high for cashing in on the booming tourism trade. With the variant pushing the return of foreign visitors far into the future, the company is trying to look on the bright side.

"It's growing popular with Tokyo residents, who have lost other ways to entertain themselves," said company spokeswoman Yuha Inoue.

In Europe, Alpine ski resorts worry about how to keep up with requirements such as ensuring all skiers are vaccinated or recovered from infection and have tested negative for the virus.

Matthias Stauch, head of the German ski lift operators association VDS, said many are small family businesses that lack the staff to perform such checks. Meanwhile, the association is warning about "massive" economic damage to the tourism sector if there is another lockdown.

Travel executives argue that government decisions about restrictions should wait until more is known about omicron, but they admit it's a difficult call.

"If you wait, by the time you have all the data it's probably too late to stop community spread because (the virus) is already here," said Robert Jordan, the incoming CEO at Southwest Airlines. "If you jump ahead, you run the risk of the measures being more impactful than the actual cases."

About a month ago, Javier Barragan and his husband booked a visit to Paris for later this month. When news of omicron hit, they were concerned but decided to go ahead with the trip.

"The way that it was in the news, there's a sense of 'Oh, is this worse? Is this different?'" said Barragan, who lives in New York. France's health protocols — the couple will have to submit vaccine cards to enter the country — made them feel more comfortable. Also, both got booster shots.

They did, however, buy travel insurance that will cover cancellation for most any reason.

## NTPC board appoints three additional independent directors

NEW DELHI: State-run power giant NTPC on Wednesday said its board has ap-

Jitendra Jayantilal Tanna, aged 47 years is a Chartered Accountant by profes-



pointed three additional directors (independent directors). The board of NTPC has appointed Jitendra Jayantilal Tanna, Vivek Gupta and Vidyadhar Vaishampayan as Additional Directors (Independent Directors) in its meeting held on November 30, 2021, a BSE filing stated.

## Maruti car sales drop, Tata records a sparkling November

India's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki (MSIL) has seen a year on year fall in sales. It managed to sell only 109,726 passenger vehicles in the domestic market last month as against 135,775 units sold in the same month last year, thereby registering a decline of 19%.

"The shortage of electronic components had a minor impact on the production of vehicles during the month. The shortage primarily affected the production of vehicles sold in domestic market. The Company took all possible measures to minimise the impact," MSIL said in a regulatory filing.

Maruti Suzuki's total sales in November 2021 stood at 139,184 units as against 153,223 units in November 2020. The company also reported its highest-ever monthly exports of 21,393 units last month.

Going ahead, MSIL's monthly sales are expected to remain under pressure due to shortage of electronic components. The company on Tuesday said that vehicle production at two of its manufacturing locations could be around 80% to 85% of normal capacity in December due to the ongoing semiconductor shortages. Maruti's main rival Tata Motors, meanwhile, reported yet another month of outstanding sales figures. The homegrown auto major's total vehicle sales rose to 62,192 units in November 2021 from 49,650 units a year ago, a surge of 21%.

Centre, states and automobile industry to meet in Goa on December 4 to discuss ways to promote EVs

The sales numbers come at a time when automakers around the world have been forced to make sharp production cuts this year due to supply chain disruptions. The rapid surge in demand for consumer electronics have led to an acute shortage of semiconductors, especially for auto sector.

## Odisha Assembly session starts on rocky note, Congress MLAs stage dharna against minister

Continued from page-1

members of the Assembly, a sepoy and corona warrior who passed away recently.

The Speaker allowed the obituary reference moved by the Chief Minister from his residence. The CM expressed his profound grief over the death of former Deputy Speaker Prahallad Dora, former MLAs Umesh Swain and Ramray Munda, sepoy Sitaram Murmu and a Covid warrior.

The CM was followed by deputy leader of BJP in the house Bishnu Sethi and leader of Congress legislature party Narsingha Mishra in paying obeisance to these departed souls.

After the Assembly paid tributes to the departed souls, the Speaker adjourned the House till 5pm due to lack of order.

The first supplementary budget of the current financial year will be tabled by Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari later in the day.

Official business will be transacted from December 2 to 6 while private members' business (bills and resolutions) will be tabled on December 3.

Discussion on demand for grants for the first supplementary statement of expenditure for 2021-22 will be held from December 7, followed by discussion and approval of the Appropriation Bill.



now is to promote development of industry in West Bengal and all industries will be given equal importance.

"Our state is number one in imparting social justice. Now our target is industry. More importance will be given to it now. Packages for the industry will come," she said adding that West Bengal will be the new industrial destination in the country.

The chief minister also urged the entrepreneurs to invest also in

Reliance is setting up a sub-sea cable landing station at Haldia which will have a major impact, she said.

More electronics manufacturing clusters, however, need to come up in the state, Banerjee said. West Bengal has allotted 200 acres in the Silicon Valley in New Town for a world class IT hub, the chief minister said.

The state has land map, land use policy, IT policy, tea tourism policy among others, she added.

## Attack key as India target semis berth in Jr World Cup

**BHUBANESWAR:** This match was in the post the moment France beat India on the opening night of the junior World Cup. On course to face Malaysia, the India colts, shorn of match practice, tripped and fell against the European upstarts. So, as Belgium coach Jeroen Baart says, this 'is a final'. It was the final match of 2016 but while the teams and a majority of support staff (Baart is one of the few survivors of that final) have moved on, the match itself is likely to be decided on similar lines. While India's play has

become more structured, the coaches that have come after, including Graham Reid, have tried to retain their natural pace and front-foot aggression. Belgium, like most elite European sides, have this natural ability to keep the ball and pick the right moments to attack. Both coaches focused on this area during the pre-match conference on Tuesday. "India will have that speed, vertical play... we focus more on control," Baart said. "For us, it's all about structure, show intensity at the right moment and survive the waves of attacks from India. "India will fly from the off, we will try to mix it up, don't make it predictable. We will see how to use these weapons at the right time." From an Indian perspective, that's a challenge in itself because Belgium's 'DNA', as Reid calls it, is part of their hockey fabric, distilled through the age-group sides. It's a challenge because part of that DNA is remaining patient, keeping hold of the ball, preventing Indian attacks from entering the striking circle and 'maintaining discipline', according to Baart. They have used these 'weapons' to a big ef-



fect in previous high profile matches against India. The hosts, for their part, will take heart from the visitors' less than convincing 1-1 draw against Malaysia. Reid, in fact, mentioned that the game showed them that they were vulnerable. "You saw some vulnerability," he said. The 60 minutes itself could be decided by who has more penalty corner opportunities and who keeps the ball in tight spaces in midfield. "It's an area that could influence the game tomorrow (Wednesday)," Reid opined. While

Vivek Sagar Prasad & Co. are good dribbling down the right hand side before cutting in, creating short corner opportunities have been a highly profitable route for them. Thirteen (12 penalty corners and one stroke) of the 25 goals they have scored have come from dead ball situations and that ability to play attacking, frontfoot hockey is vital for creating those opportunities. If Baart's charges can contain those waves, they have a chance. If the hosts are able to fashion chances by playing that brand of high-energy hockey whilst maintaining structure at the back, Reid's boys will believe.

### RESULTS

#### 9TH-16TH PLACE

South Africa 7-3 Canada, Pakistan 18-2 US, Poland 2-1 Chile, South Korea 3-3 Egypt (Korea won 6-5 in shootout).

#### WEDNESDAY'S MATCHES

(all quarterfinals) 10.30 AM Germany vs Spain, 1.30 PM Netherlands vs Argentina, 4.30 PM France vs Malaysia, 7.30 PM Belgium vs India.

## ICC Test batsman rankings: Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli retain spots; Shreyas Iyer enters in 74th spot

**DUBAI:** Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli continued to be best-placed Indians in the batting chart, while off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin also held on to the second spot among bowlers in the latest ICC Test Player ranking release on Wednesday.

While Rohit (5th), Kohli (6th) and Ashwin retained their spots, pacer Jasprit Bumrah slipped one place to the 10th position. Save Ashwin, all the other three players were not part of the first



Test against New Zealand which ended in a draw in Kanpur on Monday.

Debutant Shreyas Iyer's Player-of-the-Match effort of 105 and 65 helped him enter the batting rankings in 74th position, while opener Shubman Gill (up six places to 66th) and Wriddhiman Saha (up nine places to 99th) also made notable progress after notching half-centuries in the first Test.

Ravindra Jadeja is up two places to 19th among bowlers with five wickets in the match and is also up one place to second among all-rounders. Ashwin is the third-ranked all-rounder and 79th among batters. For New Zealand, Tom Latham's knocks of 95 and 52 placed him back in the top 10 among batters as he goes up from 14th to ninth.

Kyle Jamieson is ninth among bowlers, his three wickets in each innings resulting in a gain of six places. Tim Southee has gained 15 rating points to reach within one point of second-placed Ashwin (840) after his eight-wicket match haul.

The latest weekly update also includes the first Test between Sri Lanka and the West Indies at Galle, which the hosts won by 187 runs and the opening Test between Pakistan and Bangladesh. Pakistan fast bowler Shaheen Afridi made it to the top five for the first time in his career after a fine show in the first Test which his side won by eight wickets. ICC women's ODI rankings?: Mithali, Mandhana remain in 3rd and 6th positions

The 21-year-old left-arm bowler, who grabbed seven wickets including a haul of five for 32 in the second innings of the Chittagong Test, has moved up three places to fifth position after overtaking James Anderson, Kagiso Rabada and Neil Wagner.

Shaheen's new-ball partner Hasan Ali jumped five places to a career-best 11th after finishing with a similar seven-wicket match haul that included a five-for in the first innings.

Among batters, Abid Ali may have missed out on a century in each innings but his scores of 133 and 91 helped him shoot up 27 slots to a career-best 20th position, while Abdullah Shafique enters the rankings at 83rd with scores of 52 and 73.

For Bangladesh, Mushfiqur Rahim is up four places to 19th with scores of 91 and 16, while Liton Das has moved up 26 places to a career-best 31st position after accruing 114 and 59. Left-arm spinner Taijul Islam has progressed two places to 23rd after an eight-wicket match haul that included seven scalps in the first innings.

Sri Lanka, whose win in their first match of the ICC Test Championship put them on top of the table, also had some improvements after the Galle Test.

Captain Dimuth Karunaratne's Player-of-the-Match effort of 147 and 83 has lifted him four places to seventh, while Angelo Mathews (up two places to 23rd) and Dinesh Chandimal (up four places to 46th) have also moved up.

## British tennis star Johanna Konta retires following recurring knee trouble

**LONDON:** Former British number one Johanna Konta announced her retirement from tennis on Wednesday. The 30-year-old has struggled with per-

Open, made her announcement on social media with a post headlined 'Grateful'. She wrote: "This is the word that I've probably used the most during my

sion. However my luck materialised in the people that came into my life and impacted my existence in ways that transcended tennis," she wrote.

to be. How grateful I am," she added. In June, Konta won the Nottingham Open, becoming the first British woman to lift a WTA title on home soil since Sue



sistent knee trouble over the past couple of seasons and has slipped to 113 in the world rankings -- a far cry from her career high of number four.

Konta, who reached the semi-finals of three of the four majors, plus the quarter-finals of the US

career and is the word that I feel explains it best in the end." "My playing career has come to an end, and I am so incredibly grateful for the career that it turned out to be. All the evidence pointed towards me not 'making' it in this profes-

"I am so incredibly grateful for these people. You know who you are. Through my own resilience and through the guidance of others, I got to live my dreams. I got to become what I wanted and said as a child. How incredibly fortunate I count myself

Barker in 1981. But that victory was soon overshadowed by the astounding success of then 18-year-old compatriot Emma Raducanu in becoming the first qualifier to win a Grand Slam when she took the women's singles title at the US Open in September.

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