

380 Omicron "AT Risk" Countries Landed in Odisha

Bhubaneswar(KCN): At least 380 passengers returned to Odisha on 28 November, 156 persons arrived in the State on 29 November, said State Public Health Director Niranajn Mishra.

"So far, the State Government has received data of returnees of two days. As per the Centre's directive, all

sent to isolation and the swab samples will be sent for genome sequencing, Dr.Mishra said.

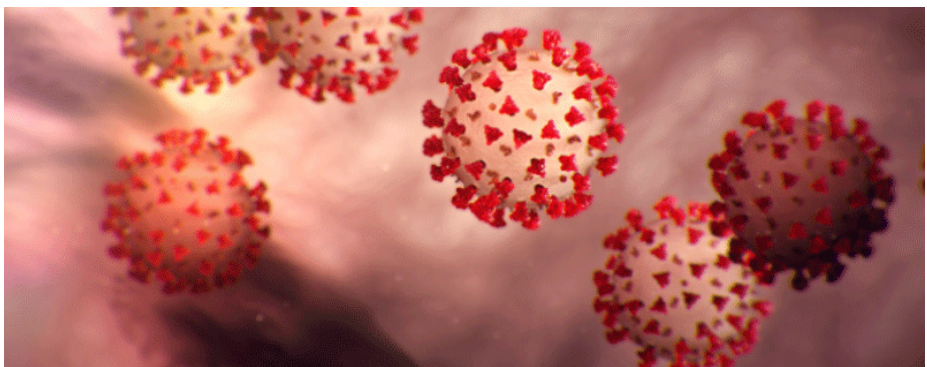
eight day, the director said.

After that, the concerned person will also remain under self-observation for another seven days. In total, one person will have to remain under surveillance for at least 14 days, he added.

Director Health Services, Bijay Mohapatra said the new variant has been termed as 'variant of concern.' WHO and other international and national bodies are under tense for the new variant, he said.

"Till now it is ascertained that their se

CONTINUED ON: P-7



Odisha on 28-29 November.

While 224 persons returned to Odisha on 28 November, 156 persons arrived in the State on 29 November, said State Public Health Director Niranajn Mishra.

the returnees are being tested at the International airports. As per the protocol, they are allowed to leave the airport only after they test negative for Covid-19," he said.

Those found positive will immediately be

If the test report comes negative, the traveler or returnee will have to remain under seven-day home quarantine mandatorily and again undergo for another round of Covid-19 test on the

Achyuta Samanta Nominated Member of CAVA



Bhubaneswar (KCN): Dr. Achyuta Samanta, MP, Kandhamal & President, Volleyball Federation of India has been nominated to the Central Asian

Volleyball Association (CAVA) as Member of Board of Administration (BOA). He was nominated during the CAVA meeting held virtually on

02.12.2021 in New Delhi. The CAVA nominated Dr. Samanta considering his multifaceted talent and especially his remarkable contribu

CONTINUED ON: P-7

BJD Youth protest Fuel Hike

Bhubaneswar(KCN): Continuing its agitation against Centre's step motherly attitude towards Odisha's interest and sky rocketing prices of petrol, diesel and LPG, the youth and student wings of the ruling BJD today staged protest and sit-in in from of Raj Bhawan here today.

Over 5,000 students and youth besides Minister Ashok Chandra Panda, MLAs Pranab Balabantaray, Rajendra Sahoo, Ananta Narayan Bhubaneswar: Con

Odisha: BJD alleges PMAY neglect

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): As the Opposition BJP

raised the issue of Central neglect by

Assembly to the Raj Bhavan and staged a



and Congress disrupted proceedings in the Assembly on the first day of the winter session over the Mamita Meher murder case, the ruling BJD on Wednesday

alleging inadequate sanction of houses to Odisha under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) scheme. BJD MLAs took out a padayatra from the

protest alleging that the Centre has deprived Odisha's poor people of getting the houses. A delegation of BJD MLAs submitted a memoran

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PM Modi chairs meeting on Cyclone Jawad, asks officials to ensure safe evacuation of people

NEW DELHI(KCN): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on

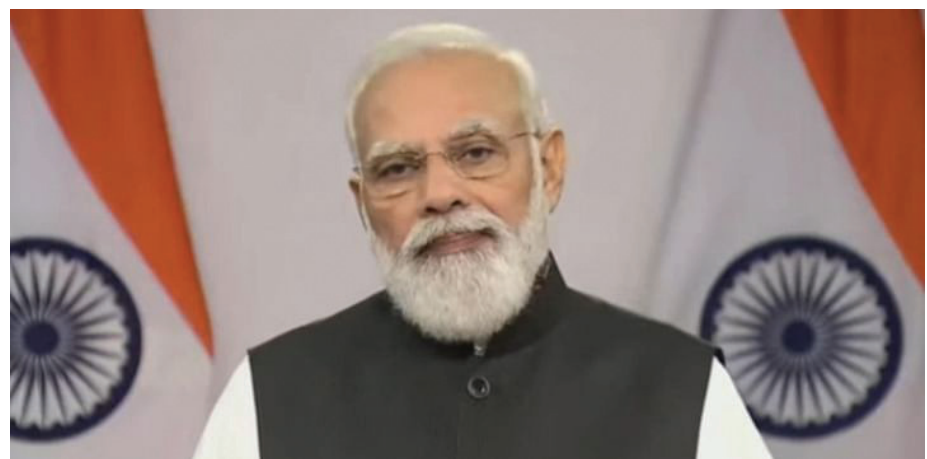
Thursday reviewed the likely formation of Cyclone Jawad that is

and directed officials to take every possible measure to en-

logical Department (IMD) has stated that a low-pressure region in the Bay of Bengal is expected to intensify into Cyclone Jawad, which is likely to reach the coast of North Andhra Pradesh-Odisha around the morning of December 4, with the wind speed ranging up to 100 kilometres per hour.

Modi chaired a high-level meeting to re

CONTINUED ON: P-7



Thursday reviewed the preparedness to deal with the situa-

expected to hit the North Andhra Pradesh-Odisha coast

sure that people are safely evacuated. The India Meteorolo-

Maharashtra Minister Aditya Udhav Thackeray, Sanjay Raut MP called on, paid respects to Mamata Banerjee CM West Bengal National Chairperson Trinamool Congress



Kolkata (KCN): During her visit to Mumbai Honorable Ms Mamata Banerjee Chief Minister of West Bengal and National Chairperson Trinamool Congress has been interacting with important political personalities and dignitaries.

Young and dynamic Maharashtra Minister for Tourism and Environment Honorable Shri Aditya Udhav Thackeray and Senior Shiv Sena MP Honourable Shri Sanjay Raut, (Executive Editor of Popular Party Organ Samna) called on to pay their re-

spects to Honourable Ms Mamata Banerjee, Respected DSidi Ji. On the 30th November, SHri Udhav Tharey said, "This evening, Sri Sanjay Raut ji and I called on West Bengal CM Respected Mamata Banerjee didi ji. During her visit to

Maharashtra. The bond between CM of Maharashtra Honourable Shri Udhav Thackeray ji and CM Mamata Didi is strong. Discussed various things including working together for tourism for our States, Maharashtra and West Bengal."

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SUMUM favors organ donation

Bhubaneswar(KCN): Talks to promote awareness on the dire need of organ dona-

here recently. Doctors and medical professionals attended the talks where the history of

cussed. The main objective of the celebration was to spread awareness among

ciety by saving lives. Those who participated in the talks included Brig. (Dr.) Biraj Mohan Mishra, Chief of Medical Services, Dr. Banambar Ray, Head of department of Critical Care, Dr. Biswaranjan Mohanty, visiting consultant, Nephrology, Dr. Biswajit Nanda, Consultant, Urology, Dr. Anand Mishra, Consultant, Critical Care, Dr. Tapas Behera, Consultant, Nephrology, Dr. Priyabrat Dash, Consultant, Urology and Dr. P.K.Tudu, Consultant, General Medicine.



tion marked the National Organ Donation Day at the SUM Ultimate Medicare

organ donation, the process flow and myths associated with it were dis-

people and to recognize the selfless efforts made towards the betterment of so-

IREDA Providing Loans to DISCOMs

New Delhi(KCN): The Government of India has facilitated providing loan to various State DISCOMs through Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA).

mission lines and 22600 MVA capacity of substations have been planned in eight states for evacuation of approx. 24 GW of

ergy Zones (REZ) spread across the country has been planned for power evacuation and grid integration.

Renewable Energy Implementing Agencies (REIA) such as SECI, NTPC, and NHPC have a provision of Tripartite Agreement (TPA) to ensure timely payment.



While IREDA is extending such support, Power Finance Corporation (PFC) and Rural Electrification Corporation Limited (REC) are also providing loans to clear outstanding dues to renewable energy developers.

RE projects. Out of this, 8405 kcm transmission lines and 15268 MVA of substations have been completed.

Following steps, inter alia, have been taken by the Government to resolve the issue of long pending dues of power distribution companies (Discoms) to renewable power generators:

In addition, Ministry of Power has issued an order (no. 23/22/2019-R&R dated 28.06.2019) which mandates opening of Letter of Credit (LC) by DISCOMs as Payment Security Mechanism.

Union Minister Power R K Singh spelt out the measures taken to accommodate larger shares of renewable energy in the grid in a written reply in Lok Sabha. Under Green Energy Corridor Scheme-Intra-State approx. 9700 ckm of trans-

Under Green Energy Corridor-Inter-State approx. 3200 ckm of transmission lines and 17000 MVA capacity of substations have been commissioned in March 2020 for evacuation of approx. 6 GW of RE projects.

The State Governments have been requested to pay outstanding dues to the renewable energy developers. Intra-State Green Energy Corridor Phase-II scheme is under finalization for setting up 10750 ckm of transmission lines and 27500 MVA capacity of substations.

Digital classes reach just 22 per cent students in Odisha

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): Only a little over 22 per cent (pc) school students attended the virtual classes through YouTube, Doordarshan and radio platforms that were started by the State government to impart remote learning to students during Covid-19 pandemic.

classes broadcast by Doordarshan under the Shiksha Darpan initiative. Attendance in Radio Pathshala

State School Education Programme Authority (OSEPA). The information furnished by the SME department

21 academic year following closure of schools due to outbreak of Covid-19. At secondary level, the percentage of



In reply to a query on the digital education initiative by BJP Chief Whip Mohan Charan Majhi, the School and Mass Education (SME) Minister Samir Ranjan Dash said that 35 pc students from Class I to X attended YouTube live classes while only around 22.46 students attended

classes - meant for students from classes one to eight of government-run institutes - was even more disappointing. Less than 10 pc students attended these audio classes that were started by Odisha

further stated that out of 43.72 lakh students enrolled at the elementary level (from Class I to VIII), only 15.92 lakh (36.42 pc) watched live YouTube classes conducted by OSEPA in the 2020-

students who attended live YouTube classes was only 33.52 pc. Out of 10.60 lakh students enrolled in Class IX and X, a little over 3.5 lakh students attended the programme. Koraput remained

Mamita murder: BJP demands CBI probe, says Odisha police not reliable

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): A DAY after the Orissa High Court nominated retired district judge ABS Naidu to monitor investigation into the Kalahandi lady teacher murder case, the BJP reiterated its demand for a CBI probe into the matter.

We reiterate our demand for a CBI probe into the case and ouster of the Minister from the



The party Chief Whip in Assembly Mohan Majhi told media persons here on Wednesday that the High Court assigning a retired district judge to monitor the Mamita murder case is a welcome step but the BJP does not have faith in the State police.

State Cabinet. If the State government is keen for a fair probe it should first dismiss the Minister and hand over the case to CBI," he added. A delegation of the saffron party met Speaker Surjya Narayan Patro and voiced its protest over allowing a tainted Minister like Mishra into the Assembly. Majhi said former speaker Maheswar Mohanty had not allowed ex-minister Samir Dey to take part in the proceedings of the House for some allegations against him. The same rule should be applicable to Mishra as he is under cloud over his alleged involvement in the lady teacher murder case. The Speaker assured the BJP to look into the earlier convention of the House.

Stating that the police investigating the case is not above suspicion, he said that the investigating officers have done their best to destroy evidence and protect Minister of State for Home Dibya Shankar Mishra. "Even if a special investigation team (SIT) is constituted, it will be of no use as the team will be from the State police and would be guided by the officers currently investigating the case.

UVP President Er. Prakash Ch. Sethi wrote a letter to the Railway Minister

Cuttack (KCN): that those student apprentices pass trainees at carriage repair



workshop East Coast Railway, popular Government provides them permanent appointments in India Railway in Group -D vacancies. In such type app appointments, encouraging to schelor students will make the Railway department to achieve grand success and popularity.

Khordha Model Police Arrest Two Persons For Selling Fake Mobile Phone

Khordha (KCN): On Brand Mobile phone, getting reliable information as per the di- Four nos M.I. Power Bank, Money Receipt



rection of Raj Books were seized from their possession



intendent of Police, Khordha and Sushil Kumar Mishra, SDPO, Khordha, the raid was conducted in the leadership of Sanjaya Kumar Pattnaik, IIC, Khordha, Model Police Station and Staffs in Spoon Hotel & Lodge Khordha. During raid one red colour Apache M/C bearing regd. No-MP12 MX-6641 and One Black colour Splendor Plus M/C bearing regd. No-MP-12 MV 6211. Twenty Eight number of fake Oppo of the accused persons. They were selling the fake mobile phone to general public in Khordha area in the name of Oppo Brand in high price and was cheating them. The police said that the accused have been identified as Papu Chawhan(32) and Dillip Yadav(19) both of district - Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh and registered a case vide Khordha Model PS, Case no-488/21, U/S-420/34 IPC and forwarded to the Judicial Court Khordha.

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Shivali, daughter of senior film journalist Shantiswaroop Tripathi, had an auspicious wedding ceremony with Siddharth

Mumbai (KCN, Sanjay Sharma Raj): Shivali, daughter of senior film journalist Shantiswaroop

Bayandar Suburb, adjacent to Mumbai. In order to bless the bride and groom on this auspicious occa-

Yogesh Mishra, Samarjit Singh, Ashish Tiwari, Umesh Upadhyay, Jitendra Pandey,

rities. While actor Mukesh Khanna, 'Shaktimaan' fame who also played the role of Bhishma

birth. Journalist Shantiswaroop Tripathi, who has been honored with many awards includ-

shobha', 'Sarita', 'Mayapuri', 'Hindustan', 'Haribhoomi' and 'Lokmat Samachar'.



Tripathi, working in the field of journalism for the last 40 years, had a joyful wedding ceremony with Siddharth Mishra, a resident of Jaipur (Native-Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh) on 28 November 2021 in the 'Vaishnav Samaj Bhavan' of

sion, Shivali and Siddharth's family and best friends attended the wedding. Actor Surendra Pal, Actor Jai Mishra and 'Mira Bhaindar Darshan' monthly magazine's Editor Ved Prakash Srivastava, Mrs Usha Yadav, Shashikant Singh 'Munna',



Ashwini Shukla, Sanjay Sharma, Rakesh Dubey, Murlidhar Pandey, Rajesh Kumar Singh and Rakesh Dave were present from the journalism world including many celeb-

Pitamah in his outstanding work in the field of journalism. He has been writing for magazines and almost all newspapers and magazines across the country including 'Griha-



ing 'Ashwamegh' for his outstanding work in the field of journalism. He has been writing for magazines and almost all newspapers and magazines across the country including 'Griha-

He has also been reporting in 'International Film Festivals' for 27 consecutive years. He has been a member of the 'Advisory Panel' of the Central Board of Film Certification.

Priyanka Chopra reveals husband Nick Jonas likes her 'natural' looks, calls him 'appreciator'

WASHINGTON(KCN): Nick Jonas has

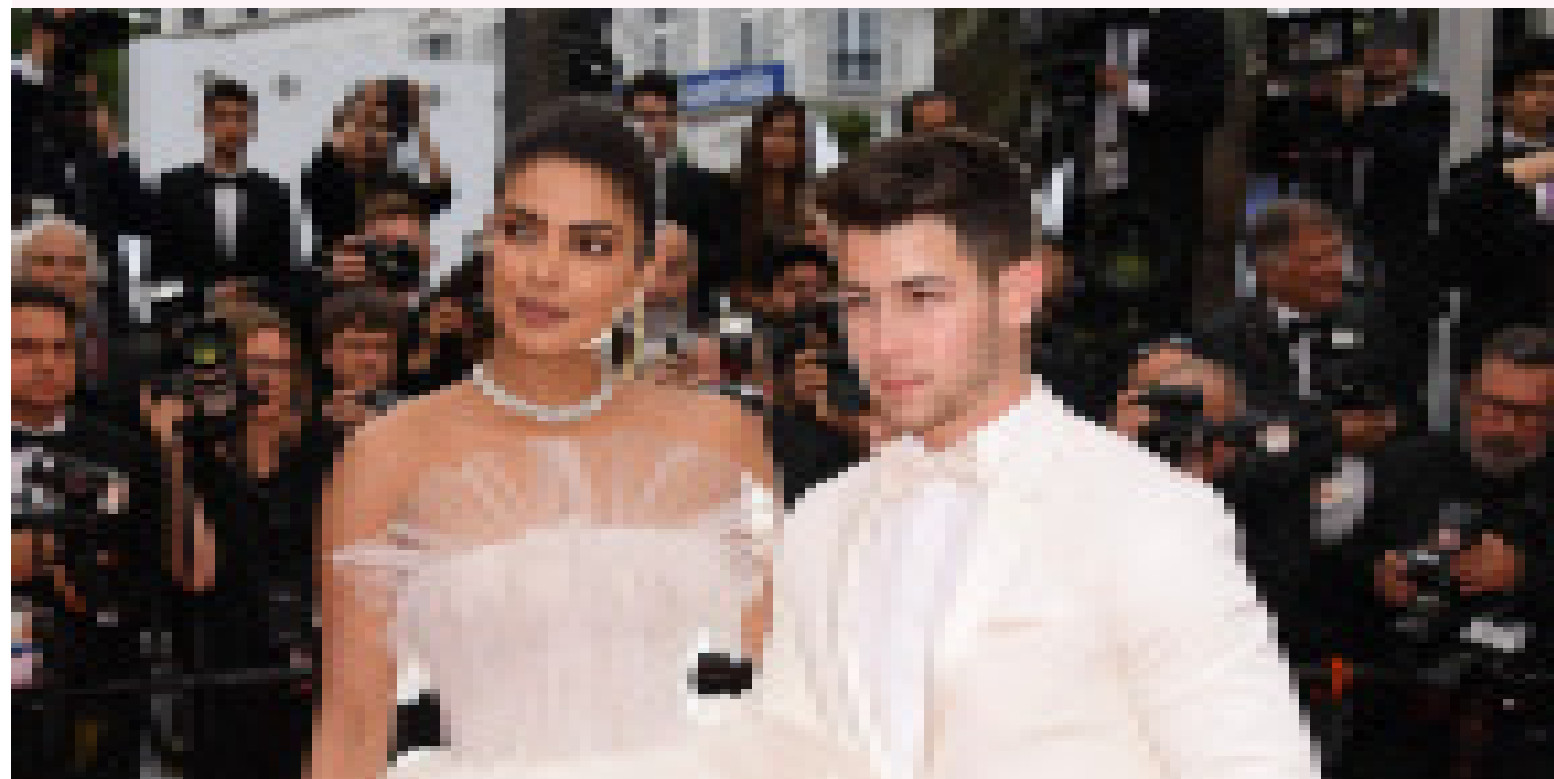
cently spoke to People at Beautycon

ides to go for a more natural or a more

he likes a really natural thing."

In honour of Beautycon, Priyanka

with a matching pair of pants. Adding a pop of colour to the whole look, she opted for striking pink eye makeup with a matching bold lip colour.



nothing but love and admiration for his wife Priyanka Chopra.

Festival Los Angeles 2019 and revealed how her husband is full of admiration for her whether she de-

glamorous look.

"He likes a bit of both," the 'Quantico' star, said, adding that "there are days when

The 'Mary Kom' actor added, "He's an appreciator. He's someone who can appreciate both things."

went all out for the event, wearing a sheer black top with a pussycat bow, a white blazer paired

Earlier this month, Priyanka joined her fellow J sisters Sophie Turner and Danielle Jonas in celebrating the first night of their husbands' 'Happiness Begins' tour. All three women rocked Jonas Brothers T-shirts.

The actor shared that it was "really cool" that they all decided on coordinating their outfits since they "have such distinct personalities."

Akshay Kumar shoots with Kriti Sanon's sister Nupur for music video



MUMBAI(KCN): Actor Akshay Kumar on Sunday

shot for singer B Praaks new single with actress Kriti

Sanon's younger sister Nupur. It is reported

that the romantic song is written by Jaani. B Praak has previously lent his voice to the song "Teri Mitti" in Akshay's film "Kesari".

ALSO READ: Akshay Kumar has

a namesake actor in London!

The song will also feature renowned Punjabi singer Ammy Virk.

A lot of pictures are doing the rounds on the internet in which Akshay is

seen posing with Nupur and Ammy at the St. Xavier's college in Mumbai.

On the work front, Akshay will be seen in "Housefull 4" and "Good Newwz" this year.

Why All The Anti-Trans Arguments Are Bogus

There are a lot of bullshit arguments made against transgender people, and no person is better at debunking these arguments than Dr. Julia Serano. Serano is a PhD molecular biologist, writer, and musician whose books include



Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity, *Outspoken: A Decade of Transgender*

Activism and Trans Feminism, and the surrealist novel *99 Erics*. Her writing has appeared in *The New York Times*, *TIME*, *The Guardian*, *The Daily Beast*, *Salon*, and elsewhere. She has written a number of articles patiently taking apart common misconceptions. Her “transgender glossary of sorts” is also an essential resource for those who find gender and sexuality terms confusing or imprecise.

Dr. Serano recently joined *Current Affairs* editor in chief Nathan J. Robinson on an episode of the *Current Affairs* podcast to examine claims made by J.K. Rowling, Helen Joyce, Deborah Soh, Abigail Shrier, and Ben Shapiro. They go through some of the most common arguments made about trans people in the popular press and show why they are pernicious, factually incorrect nonsense. Having previously spent two decades as a professional biologist, Dr. Serano corrects the laughably ignorant claims that transgender people misunderstand or ignore “biology.” In fact, it is the critics who are unacquainted with the basics of science.

A transcript of the interview follows. It has been lightly edited for grammar and clarity.

ROBINSON

You’re a musician, a spoken word performer, and a writer. You have a blog. People can go to juliaserano.com to find out about all the many things you do. You are the author of a number of books, including a surrealist novel. But you also you have a PhD in biochemistry and molecular biophysics from Columbia and spent 17 years researching genetics and developmental and evolutionary biology, and I cite this fact when I mention your work, which I do fairly frequently because one of my special interests is responding to bullshit conservative arguments. And I do cite your credentials because the argument that is always trotted out by these right-wing pundits is, “Oh, well, you’re ignoring biology.” And when I cite you I always think “You know who could tell them something about biology?” Does this “trans people don’t understand biology” thing just drive you up the wall?

SERANO

Yeah, pretty much. It’s understandable that they do it. I think that there’s become, especially in the last five years—although these arguments have been around for a long time—this tendency to separate out gender from sex. Sex is biology and science, and gender is this ephemeral identity stuff that isn’t based in concrete reality, which is a very bizarre separation to make in 2021. We went through this period of time in the 60s through 80s when a lot of psychologists and sociologists and feminists were thinking in terms of sex-gender dichotomy, that there are two separate things, that sex is physical and gender is psychological or social. And basically, all these fields have decided that actually, that’s all crap. It’s a lot more complicated, and you can’t just pull those things apart. But I think what’s happened is that because a lot of the anti-discrimination policies protecting trans people are written with the language of protecting gender identity or gender expression, it becomes this convenient go-to to say, “Well, actually, we’re concerned about sex, which is different from gender.” So there’s a little bit of a hand wave there. But then again, it’s like sex and the biology of sex is way more complicated than any of these anti-trans activists are willing to admit.

ROBINSON

This is probably one of the reasons why they are so successful in the discourse. It’s really easy to succeed when your point is simple and a lot harder when your point is complex. When you see someone like Ben Shapiro confront a college student and say, “Well, if I say I’m a moose, does that make me a moose?” or

“biology is reality,” there is a very simple “logic” to what he says. But reality is complicated. It takes 10 seconds to say something that is wrong, but simple. And then it takes two minutes to explain something more complicated. When you encounter someone who begins with that, who has clearly swallowed the right-wing talking points, what is the first thing you say to them to begin to unpack or disentangle them and get them out of this?

SERANO

So I do two things. Generally, one that I started doing a couple years ago that I find is a very useful analogy, for people who have at least some basic science background, is the idea of gravity. Gravity seems really simple. If I drop my keys, they fall to the ground, right? Really simple. We can all agree on that; it’s common sense knowledge. But if you actually study gravity, and you get into the weeds of it, you wind up with Einstein’s theory of relativity, which has some non-obvious realities to it, such as the fact that light bends when it encounters gravity, or that upon encountering a black hole, time slows down. That sounds weird, but it’s reality. And you only get there by looking a little bit deeper than the surface. So a lot of times, I find that that analogy will open people up to the idea that there’s a little bit more to this biological sex thing than meets the eye.

And so if people are open to listening, I’ll talk about something very commonly accepted in biology nowadays, which is that every single trait is a complex trait, which means that a trait has many, many different inputs. Some of them are biological, but some may be environmental. And there’s also a lot of random chance in biology. And all that stuff comes together to create a spectrum of outcomes. So take height, for example. Height is a really good example because we all understand it. And if you look at height, there’s not a male height and a female height, right? Even though it is a sexually dimorphic trait, you get these bell curves. There are these factors that go into it. There are over 100 genes that are known to have at least some impact on height. So you get these overlapping bell curves, such that even though there is a biological component like gender differences in height, we wouldn’t be surprised if we were to see a tall woman standing next to a shorter man. We see that every day. So there can be sex differences at the same time that they’re complex traits. And so there’s a lot of overlapping bell curves, if you just apply that, not only to every single physical trait between the sexes, but also, if you take into consideration gender identity and gender expression and sexual orientation, these are all concepts that trans people did not invent. These were invented by researchers in the late 20th century to describe different aspects of people that may not all align in the same person.

And if you also take, for example, physical traits, there are a lot of different physical traits. There are chromosomes and hormones and reproductive systems. And every single one of these has a certain amount of overlapping bell curves. And so if you accept that, then it becomes really easy to not just accept trans people, but also people who vary in their sexual orientations and people who vary in their gender expression, which is whether you express yourself in a feminine or masculine manner. And so this becomes really obvious if we understand biological diversity. But you’re right in that the people who like to think of themselves as facts over feelings, who have the “gotcha” line in the debate, it seems easy for them to say that it’s obvious that there are males and females and that’s that.

ROBINSON

The first thing to do, it seems to me, is to get people to be willing to listen and think for a minute. With someone like Ben Shapiro, I often think “How would I begin with that guy to try and sort him out and set him straight?” Natalie Wynn of *ContraPoints* has this wonderful video about Ben Shapiro. One thing she says that he needs to understand is that when we’re talking about “men” and “women,” we’re often talking as much about language as we’re talking about features of the real

Dr. Julia Serano

world. We’re talking about labels, we’re talk-

ing about categories, we’re talking about what terms we decide to use. We’re not having a debate in which some people “accept biology” and other people “reject biology.” I think that’s really helpful. But there are a lot of people who are very, very convinced that they know everything that they need to know, because they know they’ve heard the word chromosomes, and they know their chromosomes, and they know that there are two categories of people, and you assign people to a category. And that’s all you need to know. And how could it be more complicated than that?

SERANO

We’re taught from a very early age to see two different genders. That’s something we learn at a young age. There’s lots of research into how children learn to understand gender. Their understanding of gender is very different from adults. It starts out being very flexible. So even once young children understand that there are girls and boys, they will still sometimes think it’s possible for a girl to become a boy or a boy to become a girl, which is why a lot of times young people are sometimes more accepting of trans people than are older people. So there are all these different stages that have been chronicled. The last stage considered by psychologists who studied this to be the most mature or sophisticated stage was called gender constancy. And it’s the idea that there are only two sexes. And if you’re born a boy, you’ll always be a boy or a man; if you’re born a girl, you’ll always be a girl or woman. This is an idea that we’ve each been taught. Maybe nowadays, not all kids are being taught that. And they will probably have a slightly different understanding of gender than some of us who came up in past eras here, at least here in the U.S. and in the West. So these are things that we’re taught.

It’s difficult because you have to get past the point that people perceive a world where there are men and women, but they haven’t really investigated that. So I feel like a lot of people who are pointing to biology are doing so to try to justify the fact that when they look at the world, they see women and men, although as any trans person or even gender non-conforming person can tell you, a lot of times people look onto the world, and they’ll see you as a man, but that’s not how you identify, or they’ll see you as a woman, and that’s not how you identify. But I think a lot of the appeals to biology are sometimes motivated by opposition to trans people. Opponents will just use any argument they can find in their toolbox. But I think that for a lot of people, it comes from a different place. People look around the world and see women and men and then you’re telling them that that’s not true. So it’s sometimes a little bit difficult to get over.

ROBINSON

One of the funniest things to me, the thing I cannot help laughing about really, is that people who look at the world and see women and men, when they’re going through that world, often they correctly gender trans people, and they can’t, in fact, carry out their ideological program. There’s this great clip of Ben Shapiro talking about Laverne Cox, and he correctly genders her by accident because he sees a world of men and women and he’s got fixed psychological categories. But Laverne Cox is in the “female” box in his head, and he has to try to forcibly pull her out of the female box in his head because he can’t help himself. A lot of these people can’t actually carry out their scheme because as you have mentioned in your writing, we don’t see people’s chromosomes. People suddenly say, “Oh, chromosomes are the end all, be all.” But that’s not, in fact, how the classifications operate. They are social categories.

SERANO

Exactly. One of the things that really struck me during my transition—a lot of trans people have shared similar stories, but let me speak in “I” statements—one of the most startling things that I totally did not expect was that people who knew me before I transitioned were so invested in my being a he/him. Versus after I transitioned, and people started

reading me as female, I would get the reverse situation—where people, upon finding out I was trans, were shocked. They were just as shocked to find out that I was trans, when I presented as a woman, as the people who knew me as male were shocked when I came out to them as trans. And so it’s very weird to be in a world where people just accept me as like she/her and nobody thinks about it. But then I’ll still have people from my past, who I don’t see all that often, who slip up and call me the wrong pronouns. And I think this is exactly what you’re saying. I think we have these boxes—I sometimes describe them as filing cabinets. Not like literal spaces in your brain, but basically, we organize people, or we’re taught to organize people, according to the man box or the woman box. And it creates difficulty for all of us, including myself.

I think most trans people would say the same thing, which is that once you learn more about gender, about trans people’s experiences, when you learn about non-binary people, there are these hurdles or obstacles you have to get over. You have to think about the world in a slightly different way to accommodate people who exist, people you didn’t know existed in the world before. And I think all of us do it to some degree, even if it’s not about gender. Almost all of us grow up in a very straight world. We think there are men and women and husbands and wives, and those are the only relationships. And then as you get older, you realize that there are same sex relationships. And that’s a hurdle that a lot of us get over at a certain point in time. We realize that there’s more diversity here. And so it’s not any different with trans people. It’s just that as a society, most of society has moved on. Not all, obviously. I don’t know specifically what Ben Shapiro’s opinion is on same sex relationships. [Editor’s note: Shapiro has claimed homosexuality is a mental illness and a sin.] But I think most people have accepted same sex relationships. And trans is a new thing to them, even though trans people have been around forever.

ROBINSON

There’s this wretched, rancid new book by an editor of *The Economist*, Helen Joyce, called *Trans: When Ideology Meets Reality*, which I’m sure you’ve heard about. Richard Dawkins, the biologist, says it’s “frighteningly necessary, thoroughly researched, passionate, and very brave.” And one of the disturbing things is that, obviously, it got reviewed very favorably in the right-wing press. But it also got a positive review in the *New York Times*. *The Guardian* was relatively positive on it. I wanted to go through a couple of things she wrote with you, I looked at Joyce’s book in preparation for this interview, just to see some of the ideas. It’s a really, really aggressive manifesto, claiming that a thing called “gender identity ideology” has been taking over. She writes:

“...underlying my objections to gender self-identification is a scientific fact. Biological sex has an objective basis lacked by other socially salient categories like race and nationality. Sexual dimorphism, the two sexes, male and female, first appeared on Earth 1.2 billion years ago. Mammals, animals that grow their young inside them rather than laying eggs,”—I think she forgot that platypuses exist—“date back 210 million years. No mammal has ever changed sex.”

Could you, as a biologist, respond to this?

SERANO

Sure. I’ve gone through parts of her book. And as much as I didn’t want to do it, a couple of months ago, I went through all the more recent anti-trans books including the books by Kathleen Stock and Abigail Shrier. I know you’ve reviewed Shrier. There are several others too, including Debra Soh, who has a lot of anti-trans talking points. So I went through them and skimmed them. Sometimes I get angry comments like, “Well, you didn’t read the book.” And it’s like, I’m a biologist. You’re going to tell me that if somebody writes a book that’s wrong about (Continued)

Biologist and trans activist Dr. Julia Serano discusses what people like Ben Shapiro and J.K. Rowling get wrong about “biology” and debunks some common transphobic talking points.

Nearly 3,000 international passengers arrive at Delhi airport on Thursday; 6 test positive for COVID

NEW DELHI: Nearly 3,000 international passengers arrived at the Delhi airport on Thursday, including from the UK, France and Germany, and officials said at least six

more people tested positive for COVID-19. Strict norms, including mandatory COVID test, are in place for passengers coming from 'at-risk'

countries in the wake of the emergence of the new coronavirus variant Omicron. With the new norms that also require passengers from 'at-risk' countries to stay back

at airports till their test results are declared, there have been reports of chaos as people have to wait for long hours. On Thursday, a Twitter user complained

that his wife and toddler had to spend hours despite taking Rapid PCR test at the airport. "@DelhiAirport @airindia My wife and toddler are in the Delhi Airport right now. Despite taking the rapid covid test they are still waiting (4 hours). Is this fair? And now they find that the toddler's stroller is missing. The height of loot and carelessness. Can someone help?," the user said in a tweet.

In response, Delhi airport tweeted that "this is not the experience we want you to have" and asked the person to provide details to look into the issue. According to a Delhi airport official, the result of a Rapid PCR test takes around 90 minutes while that for an RT-PCR test is at least four to six hours. The charge for a Rapid PCR test has been reduced to Rs 3,500 from Rs 3,900 earlier, the official added. The official said that little over 2,950 pas-

sengers arrived in international flights from Wednesday midnight till 7 pm on Thursday. Out of them, more than 2,150 passengers took Rapid PCR test while the rest opted for RT-PCR test. More than five international flights landed at the airport, including four flights from London and one from Paris. Officials said that six more passengers from 'at-risk' countries have tested positive for COVID on arrival at the airport in the national capital on Thursday. Their samples have been sent for genome sequencing to ascertain whether they have been infected by Omicron.

As increasing number of passengers have to compulsorily undergo tests, efforts are also on to ramp up manpower for carrying out the tests and related procedures. Genestrings official had said that it will be increasing the manpower at its laboratory. Currently, Genestrings has more than 600 people at the airport for testing purposes, the official had said. In the Lok Sabha on Thursday, Scindia said there have been efforts over the last six months to slowly increase international flights but Omicron is "certainly a setback because all countries across the world need to be safe and secure". "That is our first priority and, therefore, different countries have put in place different yardsticks. I think, the yardstick that has been put in place by our government with putting eleven countries marked as 'at-risk' and testing them completely is the right way to go," he said. According to him, double vaccination does not give 100 per cent immunity and there are still breakthrough infections that take place despite full vaccination.



Mamita Meher murder case: Opposition stall House proceedings demanding the ouster of Minister of State for Home Dibya Shankar Mishra

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): Stalemate continues for the second day in the winter session of the Assembly with a determined opposition stalling the proceedings over their demand for the ouster of Minister of State for Home Dibya Shankar Mishra and restriction on his entry to the House.

As the House assembled for the day, members of BJP and Congress shouted slogans against the government over the schoolteacher Mamita Meher murder case.

Sensing the mood of the opposition, Speaker Surjya Narayan Patro adjourned the house till 4 pm. The Assembly could not transact any business.

In the pandemonium, the BJP moved an adjournment notice for discussion on the deteriorating law and order situation.

However, the Speaker adjourned the House. Opposition Chief Whip Mohan Charan Makhi told reporters that the Speaker is acting under the pressure of the ruling BJD.

"As we had said that the normal functioning of the Assembly would depend on the neutrality of the Speaker, we don't see any fair play in the management of the House. We will continue our protest till the minister was sacked and the case is handed over to CBI," said Majhi.

Accusing the Speaker of playing into the hand of the government, Congress MLA Taraprasad

Bahinpati said the treasury benches are not interested in a discussion on the contentious issue. It is always the job of the ruling party to ensure the smooth functioning of the Assembly but the BJD is trying to escape a debate to save its face.

On the other hand, a delegation of the Congress legislators led by the leader of the leg-



islature party Narsingha Mishra met Director General of Police Abhay and demanded that the Mamita murder case be investigated by a special investigation team monitored by a sitting judge of the Orissa High Court.

In a counter move, BJD MLAs staged a dharna near Mahatma Gandhi statue on the premises of the Odisha Assembly protesting the stiff hike in LPG prices.

The students' wing of the BJD also stages a dharna near Raj Bhavan protesting the price hike of petroleum products and neglect of the Central Government to Odisha in the allotment of houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY).

Singapore detects two apparent omicron cases, its first

KUALA LUMPUR: Singapore's health ministry said Thurs-

day that preliminary tests detected the new omicron variant of the coronavirus in two passengers who arrived on a plane from Johannesburg, the country's first suspected cases. It said it is conducting further tests to confirm the results. The ministry said the two Singaporeans were isolated upon arrival on Wednesday and had not interacted in the com-

unity. The results of their polymerase chain re-

action test on arrival "revealed the presence of S-gene target failure which may be associated with the omicron variant," it said. The ministry said 19 other passengers on the same flight tested negative for COVID-19 and have been placed under quarantine. It said the two apparent cases are both fully vaccinated and have mild symptoms



of cough and scratchy throat. One is a male who also now requires all travelers to Singapore to un-

dergo pre-departure and on-arrival tests. Singapore has a high vaccination rate, with 96% of its eligible population inoculated. Much remains unknown about the new variant, including whether it is more contagious, as some health authorities suspect, whether it makes people more seriously ill, and whether it can thwart vaccines.

arrived in Singapore from Mozambique, transiting through Johannesburg, it said. The other is a woman who flew directly from South Africa. Both of their pre-departure tests on Monday were negative, the ministry said in a statement. Singapore recently banned the entry and transit of non-residents from seven African countries. It

dergo pre-departure and on-arrival tests. Singapore has a high vaccination rate, with 96% of its eligible population inoculated. Much remains unknown about the new variant, including whether it is more contagious, as some health authorities suspect, whether it makes people more seriously ill, and whether it can thwart vaccines.



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Smart Cities Execute 69 Projects

Bhubaneswar: At least 69 projects worth Rs 4,918.54 crore have been

Parliament on Thursday while replying to Bhubaneswar MP

Smart Cities in Odisha, out of which Rs 588 crore (91 per cent) has already the 100 Smart Cities as part of their Smart City Proposals (SCPs).



tended for execution in two cities Bhubaneswar and Rourkela, which have been selected for development as Smart Cities. Out of the 69 projects, work orders have been issued against 56 projects worth Rs 3588.39 crore and 23 of these projects worth Rs 1,114.29 crore have been completed. Minister of State, Housing and Urban Affairs, Kaushal Kishore told this in

Aparajita Sarangi. The Bhubaneswar Smart City has tendered out 28 projects worth Rs 3538.94 crore; out of which work orders have been issued in 25 projects worth Rs 2330.62 crore, Mr.Kishore said. Out of tendered projects, 16 projects worth Rs 873.56 crore have been completed so far, the Union Minister said. However, the Government of India has released Rs 645 crore for the two

been utilized by these cities, he pointed out. The MoS made it clear that there is no proposal under consideration by the Centre for including any more cities under the Small City Mission (SCM). Government of India had launched Smart Cities Mission on 25 June, 2015 for development of 100 cities as Smart Cities. At all India level 5,151 projects worth Rs 2,05,018 crore were proposed by

The objective of SCM is to promote cities that provide core infrastructure and give a decent quality of life to its citizens, a clean and sustainable environment through application of Smart solutions, he said. Mr.Kaushal Kishore further said that the focus is on sustainable and inclusive development and the idea is to look at compact areas, create replicable models which will act as lighthouses for other areas in the same city/ other aspiring cities.

Odisha Finance Minister presents supplementary budget of Rs 19,000 crore, focus on rural infrastructure

BHUBANESWAR: AMID Opposition din over demand of Minister Dibya Shankar Mishra's ouster, Finance Minister Niranjana Pujari pre-

ture. While Rs 2,564 crore has been proposed for rural housing, Rs 300 crore is earmarked for rural connectivity under Biju Setu Yojana.

core for the new Centrally sponsored scheme Pradhan Mantri Atmanirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana. Allocation of Rs 2,039.69 crore has

packages related to Covid victims, financial support to different categories of people, revised procedure for release of funds under the Cen-



sented the supplementary budget of Rs 19,833 crore for 2021-22 in the Assembly on Wednesday. The supplementary provision of Rs 13,568 crore under programme expenditure is to be financed by tied-up resources from various sources to the extent of Rs 6,137 crore, and through additional collection of government revenue to the extent of Rs 7,431 crore. The highest allocation of Rs 3,911.81 crore has been proposed for rural housing, wage employment, provision of drinking water and rural infrastruc-

An additional provision of Rs 2,147 crore has been made for irrigation facilities, farmers' welfare and food security. Of this, Rs 1,105.18 crore has been provisioned for Covid-19 assistance and supply of rice to BPL Families. An amount of Rs 2,038.16 crore has been proposed for public healthcare of which, Rs 498.51 crore is for Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana, Rs 76.26 crore for infrastructure development of health institutions, Rs 907.83 crore towards State share for National Health Mission (NHM) and Rs 229.55

been made towards share capital investment in the Gridco. "Keeping in view the needs and expectations of the people in a welfare state, the supplementary budget is aimed at fulfilling the requirement of funds for public welfare and developmental activities mainly through reallocation of available resources and receipt of tied-up resources from various sources," the Finance Minister said. The additional requirement of funds is for completion of the important ongoing projects under State sector, post-budget announcements like

trally sponsored schemes and additional requirement for ongoing Central schemes. Minutes after the Finance Minister laid the supplementary budget proposal for approval of the Assembly, Speaker Surjya Narayan Patro adjourned the House for the day. As soon as the House reassembled, Opposition BJP and Congress members rushed to the well holding placards and shouting slogans against Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and Minister Dibya Mishra. The BJP members hurled black towels as a mark of protest.

High alert On JAWAD

Bhubaneswar: The State Government, different agencies, departments and dis-

pend on the direction in which it recurves (from sea to land). However, we are in

except a few out in the Chilika lake are back on the shore. From December 3 to

kutchha houses will begin from 3 December morning. "The cyclone shelters



tricts are well prepared to face the situation arising due to cyclone JAWAD which is likely to hit Odisha coast on December 4 morning, Special Relief Commissioner Pradeep Kumar Jena said on Thursday. The IMD will give a clear picture on Friday about the position, path and movement of the cyclone, he said.

complete readiness, especially the 14 coastal districts have been placed on high alert." The coastal belt and adjoining districts will see rains from the midnight of December 3. The rainfall activity will intensify further as the cyclone moves closer to land on December 4. Ganjam, Gajapati, Jagatsinghpur and Puri are very likely to face the maximum impact of this cyclone with heavy rains and strong winds, said Jena.

5 the Fisheries Department will announce a ban on fishing in the Bay of Bengal," he added. Since a no-moon period (Amavasya) falls on December 3 and 4, the storm surge is likely to be higher than it usually is, he added. A total 225 teams of NDRF, ODRAF and Fire Service have already been deployed in the coastal districts, Khurda and Cuttack and 50 teams are on stand by while evacuation process from the coast, low lying areas and

on the Odisha coast are well equipped with food stock and other necessities. COVID guidelines will be duly adhered to at these shelters," Jena added. Engineering Departments and Electricity DISCOMS are ready with men and material to carry out repair and restoration activities post cyclone. The picture will be more clear by Friday, when the cyclone approaches closer to the coast. More mobilization of men and equipment will be done accordingly, the SRC said.

PET-CT services for cancer patients at AIIMS-Bhubaneswar

BHUBANESWAR: Cancer patients can now expect world class treatment at an affordable price at A I I M S - Bhubaneswar. The Department of Nuclear Medicine on

high-end with 128-slice CT and LSO crystals and the first-of-its-kind in the State. "The radiation dose to the patient will be lesser with better imaging, leading to accurate diag-

in the body, assess the effectiveness of treatment and determine if cancer has returned after treatment besides to evaluate prognosis. The equipment is also used to determine the

brain abnormalities such as tumors, memory disorders, seizures and other central nervous system disorders, map normal human brain and heart function, Dr Agrawal said. The PET-CT charges



Wednesday started PET-CT service for the patients. Inaugurating it, Director Dr Gitanjali Batmanabane said AIIMS is the only government hospital in eastern India to have its own PET-CT equipment. "The service will certainly benefit the people of Odisha and its bordering states of West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand," she said. Associate Professor of Nuclear Medicine Dr Kanhaiya Agrawal said the installed PET-CT equipment is

nosis due to the high-end equipment," he said. PET-CT is used mainly in cancer patients to detect the disease, determine whether it has spread

effects of a heart attack on areas of the heart, identify the heart muscle that would benefit from angioplasty or coronary artery bypass surgery, evaluate

for patients will be Rs 7,500. Medical Superintendent Prof SN Mohanty, Dean Dr Debashis Hota and Deputy Director (Administration) PK Ray were present.

Odisha: New year school parties leave parents worried

BHUBANESWAR: Even as the State government has banned zero night celebrations, functions and picnics at public places on December 31 and January 1 due to growing apprehension over a new Covid variant Omicron, its silence on celebrations during rest of the month has led to apprehension of virus transmission. Sources said that students of a popular city-based school have planned a freshers party with DJ and unlim-

ited mocktails at a hotel in Kharavela Nagar on December 10 evening. BMC officials said that as the government has allowed celebrations in a limited manner with strict adherence to Covid-19 restrictions, the civic body will strengthen its enforcement and crackdown on the violators. If required the civic body may also come up with its own guidelines for events being hosted under BMC jurisdiction, they said.

GST records 64% growth

Bhubaneswar: Odisha has recorded 64 per cent growth in GST collection during the month of November 2021 compared to the same month of last year. GST collection of Odisha has touched new heights with a collection of Rs 4136 crore during November 2021 as against Rs 2528 crore collected during November 2020 registering a growth of 64%.

The growth of collection during November '21 is also the highest amongst major states for the 3rd consecutive month as well as the highest ever gross collection of GST by the State since launch of GST, said an official. The progressive GST collection till November '21 is Rs. 28032.98 crore against Rs. 17,229.26 crore till November '20 with growth of 62.71%. The corresponding collection till November '19 was Rs. 19366.95 crore.

The collection of OGST during the month of November '21 is Rs. 1157.69 crore against a collec-

tion of Rs. 681.96 crore during November '20 recording a robust growth of 69.76%. The collection of Rs. 1157.69 crore during November '21 is also the



highest ever gross collection of OGST by the state since the inception of GST, the official stated. Similarly, the progressive collection of OGST upto November 2021 is Rs 7977.60 crore against a collection of Rs. 5013.50 crore upto November 2020 recording a progressive growth of 59.12%. The corresponding figure till November 2019 was Rs 5661.18 crore.

There is also collection of Rs 1001.08 crore in CGST, Rs 1223.24 in IGST & 753.77 crore in cess during November '21 recording a growth of 87.62%, 55.31% & 43.62% over November '20, respectively.

The total collection of VAT (petrol & liquor) is Rs 844.45 crore in November '21 as against Rs 601.65 crore during November '20 with growth rate of

40.36%. Out of the above, collection from petroleum products is Rs 675.93 crore against Rs 520.56 crore collected during November 20 with growth rate of 29.85%. Moreover, collection from Liquor is Rs 168.52 crore during November '21 as against Rs 81.09 crore during November 20 with growth rate of 107.82%.

This growth during November '21 is a result of an increase in collection from the automobile, mining and manufacturing sector. Further, non filer management and regular return scrutiny by Circles combined with enforce-

ment activities has resulted in better compliance by taxpayers, the officials informed.

In this regard, during the current FY, 8512 nos. of assessment have been initiated against defaulters for non filing of returns. The total e-waybill generated during November '21 was 14.65 Lakh against 13.40 lakh during November '20 witnessing a growth of 9.38%.

Zonal review of all Territorial Circles and Ranges including Enforcement Ranges was held during November at five locations in the State i.e. C u t t a c k , B h u b a n e s w a r , J h a r s u g u d a , G a n j a m and Balasore.

During the course of review, Commissioner of CT & GST, Sushil Kumar Lohani instructed the field officers for proper maintenance of records, correct procedure to be followed during return scrutiny, demand and recovery. He also advised the officers to adhere to the principles of 5T and attend to the genuine grievances of the taxpayers without fail.

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BJD Youth Protest Fuel Hike

Continued from page-1
tinuing its agitation against Centre's step



motherly attitude towards Odisha's interest and sky rocketing prices of petrol, diesel and LPG, the youth and student wings of the ruling BJD today staged protest and sit-in in front of Raj Bhawan here today. Over 5,000 students and youth besides Minister Ashok Chandra Panda, MLAs Pranab Balabantaray, Rajendra Sahoo, Ananta Narayan Jena, Sushant Rout and Souvik Biswal of the BJD participated in the agitation.

Describing how the poor and common people in the State are facing hardship due to rise in prices of petrol, diesel and cooking gas, they demanded that the Centre should immediately roll back the price rise. The party will intensify the agitation if the Centre does not roll back the price of petro products.

The programme was coordinated by BJD Youth wing President Byomakesh Ray and party's student wing President Debi Ranjan Tripathy.

The BJD had staged demonstration on Wednesday against Centre's alleged con-

spiracy in allocation of houses to Odisha under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. The youth and student wings of the BJD

will stage protest on Friday against unemployment, said party spokesperson Lenin Mohanty.

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OYO ropes in former SBI Chairman Rajnish Kumar as strategic group advisor

MUMBAI: Global travel technology platform OYO on Thursday announced the appointment of Rajnish Kumar, former Chairman of State Bank of India (SBI), as its strategic group advisor. Kumar, who has spent over 40 years in the financial sector, will play a key role in advising OYO's management on short-term and long-term strategy, regulatory and stakeholder engagement and enhancing the brand of the company globally, the company said in a statement.

PM Modi chairs meeting on Cyclone Jawad, asks officials to ensure safe evacuation of people

Continued from page-1
view the preparedness of the states, central ministries and agencies concerned to deal with the situation arising out of the likely formation of Cyclone Jawad, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said in a statement.

He directed officials to take every possible measure to ensure that people are safely evacuated and the maintenance of all essential services such as power, telecommunications, health, drinking water etc., and that they are restored immediately in the event of any disruption, the PMO said.

Modi further asked them to ensure adequate storage of essential medicines and supplies and to plan for unhindered movement. He also directed for 24x7 functioning of control rooms.

The cyclone is likely to cause heavy rainfall in the coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal.

The IMD has been issuing regular bulletins with the latest forecast to all the states concerned, the statement said.

Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba has reviewed the situation and preparedness with the chief secretaries of all the coastal states and the central ministries and agencies concerned, the PMO said.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is reviewing the situation 24x7 and is in touch with the states, Union territories and the central agencies concerned.

The MHA has already released the first installment of the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) in advance to all the states, the statement said.

The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has pre-positioned 29 teams equipped with boats, tree-cutters, telecom equipments etc. in the states and has kept 33 teams on standby, it said.

The Indian Coast Guard and the Navy have deployed ships and helicopters for relief, search and rescue operations.

The Air Force and the engineer task force units of the Army, with boats and rescue equipment, are on standby for deployment, the PMO said. Surveillance aircraft and helicopters are carrying out serial surveillance along the coast, and disaster relief teams and medical teams are on standby at locations along the eastern coast, it added.

The Ministry of Power has activated emergency response systems and is keeping in readiness transformers, diesel generator sets and equipment for immediate restoration of electricity.

The Ministry of Communications is keeping all the telecom towers and exchanges under constant watch and is fully geared to restore the telecom network, the statement said.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued an advisory to the states and Union territories that are likely to be affected for health sector preparedness and response to COVID-19 in the affected areas, the PMO said.

The Ministry of Port, Shipping and Waterways has taken measures to secure all shipping vessels and has deployed emergency vessels, it added.

The states have also been asked to alert industrial establishments such as chemical and petrochemical units near the coast.

The NDRF is assisting the state agencies in their preparedness for evacuating people from the vulnerable locations and is also continuously holding community awareness campaigns on how to deal with the cyclonic situation.

The meeting chaired by Modi was attended by the principal secretary to the prime minister, the cabinet secretary, the home secretary, the director general (DG) of the NDRF and the DG, IMD.

"We are delighted to welcome Kumar as strategic group advisor. He is a veteran in the financial services sector and his leadership lessons and professionalism are an inspiration. His experience of digitisation and technology led initiatives for the customers is critical for us as we make a difference to our stakeholders' lives," OYO founder and chairman Ritesh Agarwal said. He is currently on the boards of HSBC Asia Pacific, L&T infotech, Hero Motocorp and BharatPe.

Achyuta Samanta Nominated Member of CAVA

Continued from page-1
tion to the field of sports. Thanking the CAVA, he said, "Though I was not interested to be a member of CAVA, they have decided to nominate me because of my contribution to the field of sports."

The meeting of CAVA with all 14 Countries members was held virtually under the Presidentship of Mr. Mohammed Latheef, President, CAVA. Mrs. Rita Subowo, President of the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC) inaugurated the meeting and shared her valuable views for the development of volleyball in the Central Zone. Mr. Kiattipong, Secretary-General, AVC, and Mr. Ramavtar Singh Jakhar, Executive Vice President-CZ also shared their valuable views with members.

On this occasion, Dr. Samanta requested CAVA to allot Asian Central Women's Volleyball Championship 2022 to India. Keeping his request, CAVA Championship was allotted to the Volleyball Federation of India (VFI) to organize the championship in India. Expressing his happiness over this decision, Dr. Samanta said, "I will try to organize the Championship in Bhubaneswar, Odisha and will discuss with the Govt of Odisha and Shri Naveen Patnaik, Hon'ble Chief Minister in this regard." The dates of the Championship will be informed in due course. The teams to participate in the above Championship are Iran, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Kazakhstan, to be qualified from the Challenge Cup of CAVA. The Annual General Assembly of the CAVA will be held in Dhaka, Bangladesh from 26th to 28th December 2021.

Odisha: BJD alleges PMAY neglect

Continued from page-1
dum to the Governor Prof Ganeshi Lal stating that the State government had identified 6.07 lakh more beneficiaries from 16 districts to be benefited under the PMAY scheme. However, the beneficiaries could not be covered under it as the Rural Development Ministry closed the window of the Awas Plus portal used for geo-tagging, it added.

The memorandum alleged that the Centre ignored several letters written by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to the Prime Minister in this regard. As a result, a large number of scheduled tribe people mainly from western and southern districts of the State were deprived of getting houses under the Central scheme. The Centre had sanctioned 1,77,528 houses under the scheme for Odisha out of which, 98,203 houses have already been constructed, the memorandum stated.

The BJP, however, described the BJD protest as a tactic to divert the people's attention from the Mamita Meher murder case. The BJD is raising various other issues from the first day of the winter session only to divert attention from the sensational murder case, Opposition Chief Whip Mohan Majhi said.

380 Omicron "AT Risk" Countries Landed in Odisha

Continued from page-1
verity is less and it is affecting the young population. Experts groups are advising for intensified vaccination drive which will certainly act as a protection," Mohapatra said.

He appealed to all to use masks and follow all Covid appropriate behaviour as a preventive measure.

Meanwhile, 33 students of a Plus II residential college in Dhenkanal town of Odisha tested Covid-19 positive. The local authority sealed college buildings and its hostel, and declared it as a micro containment zone.

More than 70 students of medical college in Burla of Sambalpur district, 53 girl students of a government-run high school in Sundargarh and 26 students of a tribal school in Mayurbhanj district have tested positive for the virus in the past few days.

Khurda District Administration has decided to strengthen enforcement activities in all public places.

Suspension of China events over Peng Shuai issue may go beyond 2022: Women's Tennis Association

WASHINGTON: The suspension of all Women's Tennis Association (WTA) tournaments in China because of concerns about the safety of Peng Shuai, a Grand Slam doubles champion who accused a former government official there of sexual assault, could result in cancellations of those events beyond 2022, the head of the women's professional tennis tour told The Associated Press on Wednesday. "We're hopeful we get to the right place, but

we are prepared, if it continues as it is - which hasn't been productive to date - that we will not be operating in the region. This is an organizational effort that is really addressing something that's about what's right and wrong," WTA President and CEO Steve Simon said in a video call from California. He said that the move to put a halt to the tour's play in China, including Hong Kong, came with the backing of the WTA Board of Direc-

tors, players, tournaments and sponsors. It is the strongest public stand against China taken by a sports body - and one that could cost the WTA millions of dollars.

Peng dropped out of public view after raising the allegations about former vice premier Zhang Gaoli in a November 2 social media posting that was quickly taken down by Chinese authorities. In the month since, Simon has made repeated calls for China to carry out an inquiry into the 35-year-old Peng's accusations and to allow the WTA to communicate directly with the former No. 1-ranked doubles player and owner of titles at Wimbledon and the French Open.

"Our approach to this and our request to the authorities are consistent and they'll stay there. We definitely would like to have our own discussion with Peng and be comfortable that she's truly safe and free and has not been censored, intimidated or anything like that," Simon told The AP.

"We still haven't been able to have that conversation to have the comfort that what we're seeing isn't being orchestrated, to date. The second element of that is that we want a full and transparent - without any level of censorship - investigation on the allegations that were made," he adds.

China typically hosts about 10 women's tennis tournaments each year, including the prestigious season-ending WTA Finals, which are scheduled to be held there for a decade. The nation is a source of billions of dollars in in-

The European Union said Tuesday it wants China to offer "verifiable proof" that Peng is safe.

A number of Chinese businesspeople, activists and ordinary people have disappeared in recent years after criticizing ruling Communist Party figures or in crackdowns on corruption or pro-democracy and labor rights campaigns.

A statement attributed to Peng two weeks and tweeted out by the international arm of Chinese state broadcaster CCTV included a retraction of her accusations. "In good conscience, I don't see how I can ask our athletes to compete there when Peng Shuai is not allowed to communicate freely and has seemingly been pressured to contradict her allegation of sexual assault. Given the current state of affairs, I am also greatly concerned about the risks that all of our players and staff could face if we were to hold events in China in 2022," Simon said in the release announcing the suspensions.

Asked twice about the WTA's suspension of China tournaments and concerns about Peng Shuai's safety, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin refused to address either of the issues. "We are always firmly opposed to acts that politicize sports," Wang said in a one-sentence response to journalists at a daily ministry briefing.

In a tweet, the editor of hard-line nationalist Communist Party newspaper Global Times criticized the WTA for "coercing Peng Shuai

Unbeaten Chennaiyin eye top spot with ailing East Bengal up next

KOCHI: Sooner or later, Chennaiyin FC could miss a player as talented as Rafael Crivellaro but the Marina Machans are coping with the Brazilians

against the Red and Gold brigade. And there might be a change in approach required against a wounded East Bengal where Chennaiyin

his team up to hit on the counter and it worked effectively. The approach was largely similar against NorthEast who tested the Chennaiyin de-

take a game by game approach. And he understands that his team needs to start creating chances and goals in order to dominate opponents and games.



absence admirably at the moment.

Two wins out of two, and Indian players like Anirudh Thapa and Lallianzuala Chhangte playing starring roles would delight head coach Bozidar Bandovic as they go up against East Bengal on Friday. In the long run, Chennaiyin would need a player like Crivellaro's footballing gifts to unlock defences and sustain their play-off challenge, but the players at hand are getting the job done in the short run.

However, Bandovic might be posed with a tactical challenge

would be expected to take the initiative. Having been thrashed by bitter rivals ATK Mohun Bagan and leaking six goals against Odisha FC in their last game, Manolo Diaz is unlikely to take another gung-ho approach going up against Chennaiyin.

This would mean that Bandovic's men are likely to enjoy more of the possession and would be expected to break the opposition down. This is where a player of Crivellaro's caliber could be missed. Against Hyderabad, the Montenegrin coach set

fence a lot. Against East Bengal, Thapa and Co will have to take the initiative and force the issue.

"We have a chance to make it three wins out of three but we have to show respect to every opponent. It doesn't matter if the opponent has conceded ten goals. We have to be prepared and ready for the game," he said.

The 52-year-old coach has come across as a meticulous tactician. Whether it is analysing his team's mistakes, studying the opponents, using numbers to dissect his team's performances or whether it is just to

"The fact that we have started scoring goals is a big positive. That's an indication that the attacking line-up has started clicking together," said Bandovic.

And once Crivellaro returns, Chennaiyin would be firing on all cylinders, but Bandovic is an astute coach who wants to take it one step at a time and focus on the job at hand. A win against East Bengal at the Tilak Maidan will see Chennaiyin go top of the table and that's something Bandovic or Chennaiyin wouldn't want to miss out on.

Sri Lanka vs West Indies 2nd Test: Dhananjaya de Silva's 153 helps hosts extend lead to 279 on Day 4

GALLE: Dhananjaya de Silva ended the West Indies' hopes of a maiden win on Sri Lankan soil with a brilliant six-hour spell at the crease in Galle to finish day four with an unbeaten 153 on Thursday. The tourists went wicketless through the final session, with

wicket that is tough to bat on. De Silva batted really well and there was one chance and we couldn't hold on. He played us out of the game," said West Indies coach Phil Simmons. De Silva's back to the wall knock helped the hosts out of trouble

year-old ticked over 150 in style by driving Nkrumah Bonner for four. The West Indies were ruing a dropped catch off de Silva when he was on five, with wicketkeeper Joshua Da Silva spilling the chance. The batsman made the tourists pay with an excellent coun-

The tourists introduced pace to unsettle the batsmen, but with a couple of pulled boundaries off Kemar Roach, de Silva ensured that Sri Lanka had the momentum. Opener Nissanka, playing just his sixth Test match, posted his third half-century in the series with a conservative approach.

Nissanka made 66 before a Roston Chase delivery saw him dismissed on the last ball before lunch. Mendis then lost his wicket and Angelo Mathews -- struggling with a hamstring injury -- came into bat at the fall of the seventh wicket. He managed just one run. Sri Lanka skipper Dimuth Karunaratne said no decision had been made about when to declare. "Maybe we will try to give the bowlers a bit more cushion. Just checked with the two batsmen and they were saying that it is not too tough to bat. We are on top now and we can put them under pressure," he said.

terattack. To add insult to injury, Veerasammy Permaul dropped de Silva off his own bowling when he was on 116. The West Indies trail the two-Test series 0-1. The highest successful run chase in Galle is 268 by Sri Lanka in 2019 against New Zealand.



Lasith Embuldeniya rounding out a record 107-run partnership. Sri Lanka finished on 328 for eight at stumps and are ahead by 279 runs. No team has chased that many to win a Test match in Galle. "A target close to 300 runs is a little bit difficult especially on a

when he walked in to bat at 73-3, a lead of just 24. Having first put up a 78-run stand with overnight batsman Pathum Nissanka, de Silva then went on to eke out a crucial partnership of 51 with Ramesh Mendis. It was de Silva's eighth Test ton and the 30-



come for various sports entities based elsewhere, including the WTA (headquartered in St. Petersburg, Florida), the NBA (run out of New York) and the International Olympic Committee (Lausanne, Switzerland). Simon said the suspension, announced Wednesday via a statement from him issued by the tour, means that tournaments could still end up being staged in China if its government follows through with his requests.

If not, the events could be moved to other countries, as happened this year, when the tour's Asian swing was called off because of COVID-19 concerns; the WTA Finals, for example, were shifted to Guadalajara, Mexico, last month.

"We haven't canceled, as of yet, but we're prepared to get to that point. And that'll be a point of discussion at some point: Where do you get to cancellation? Is it 2022 only? Is it for the future? I mean, those are all questions that will come down the road," Simon said on the video call.

Beijing is set to host the Winter Games beginning on February 4, and IOC President Thomas Bach said on November 21 that he spoke with Peng - a three-time Olympian - on a 30-minute video call, and that she appeared to be "doing fine".

"This was reconfirmed in yesterday's call. Our human and person-centered approach means that we continue to be concerned about her personal situation and will continue to support her," the IOC said on Thursday, revealing that its officials held another video call with Peng on Wednesday.

Once again, the IOC did not release video or a transcript of the exchange, nor explain how the call was arranged.

The IOC repeated on Thursday its policy of "quiet diplomacy" dealing directly with sports officials "which, given the circumstances and based on the experience of governments and other organizations, is indicated to be the most promising way to proceed effectively in such humanitarian matters".