

Religious institutions in Bhubaneswar to re-open from Saturday

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): Religious institutions

safety protocols. The civic body, however,

measures in this regard.

places of worship with proper verification of identification and only under the supervision of their parents or relatives. In Lingaraj temple, maximum 100 devotees will be allowed for darshan at any point of time. However, sahan darshan and Garbha Gruha darshan remain prohibited till further orders. The devotees shall be required to bring their photo ID proof like Aadhaar/Voter ID or any other for identification. The rituals in the religious institutions will be performed by the priests and sevayats who are fully vaccinated.



including the 11th century Lord Lingaraj temple in the State Capital will re-open for devotees from February 12. The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has permitted reopening of all places of worship in the city with strict adherence to Covid

said only those who are fully vaccinated, if eligible, will be allowed inside the religious institutions after producing the hard or soft copy of the inoculation certificate. Temple, mosque, church and gurudwara management in the city have been asked to take

As per the guidelines of the civic body, no devotee will be allowed inside the Garbha Gruha of the temple. Darshan will be allowed from a safe distance and there will be no offering of bhoga. Children below the age of 15 years will be allowed inside the

New Vice president ITAT felicitated

Kolkata (KCN): Rajpal Yadav has joined as New Vice President of Income Tax Appellate Tribunal, Kolkata on

Kolkata as well as by KK Jain, President, Narayan Jain, Chairman Representation Committee, CA

in smooth functioning of the ITAT benches in Kolkata. The book How to Handle Income Tax

,Sanjay Garg, Rajesh Kumar. Sonjoy Sarma, and Girish Agarwal. On this occasion, S/Shri NS Saini, AK



9th February, 2022. He has been in Ahmedabad earlier. He was felicitated by Adv. SM Surana, President, CA Siddharth Jhajaria, Secretary of ITAT Bar Association,

Sunil Surana, CA Barkha Agarwal, Secretary of Direct Taxes Professionals Association. The delegation assured the Vice President of full co-operation of the tax professionals

Problems written by Narayan Jain and DilipLoyal;ka was also presented to the Vice President Yadav. At present other Members of the Tribunal in Kolkata are S/ Shri AT Varkey

Tibrewal, SS Gupta, SD Verma, Nilima Joshi, Arvind Agarwal, Subhash Agarwal, PR Kothari, Harsh Bhardwaj, Amit Agarwal were also present.

Denied ticket, ?Uttar Pradesh BJP MLA Surendra Singh joins Vikassheel Insaan Party



BALLIA(KCN): Bharatiya Janata Party MLA Surendra Singh on Thursday joined the Vikassheel Insaan Party of Mukesh Sahani, a minister in

the Bihar government. Singh resigned from the primary membership of the BJP after he was denied a ticket. Singh, the MLA of

Bairia area in the district, who has hogged headlines for his controversial statements, told reporters that Raja Ram Bind, the national vice president

of Vikassheel Insaan Party (VIP), came to his residence and declared him the candidate of his party. Singh said he will contest the Bairiya seat from the VIP.

Don't insult spirit of India: Rahul Gandhi after Yogi Adityanath's 'Kashmir, Kerala, Bengal' remark

NEW DELHI(KCN): India is beautiful in all its colours, "don't

insult the spirit of India: Rahul Gandhi after Yogi Adityanath's 'Kashmir, Kerala or Bengal' if the BJP was not voted

the assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh.

"From Kashmir to Kerala. From Gujarat to West Bengal. India is beautiful in all its colours. Don't insult the spirit of India," he said, without naming anyone. In his video message, the chief minister said he was concerned that rioters, whose activities were curbed by his government, are now feeling uneasy. Terrorists are making threats, he added. "Be alert. If you miss this time, the five-year effort will be washed away. And it will take no time for UP to become Kashmir, Kerala or Bengal. "This vote will be your guarantee to a life without fear," Adityanath said in his appeal to voters.



insult the spirit" of the country, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said on Thursday, apparently responding to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's remark that the state will turn

back to power. Gandhi's attack came after Adityanath made the remark in a six-minute video message on Twitter, on the eve of Thursday's polling for the first phase of

"There is strength in our Union. Our Union of Cultures. Our Union of Diversity. Our Union of Languages. Our Union of People. Our Union of States," Gandhi tweeted.

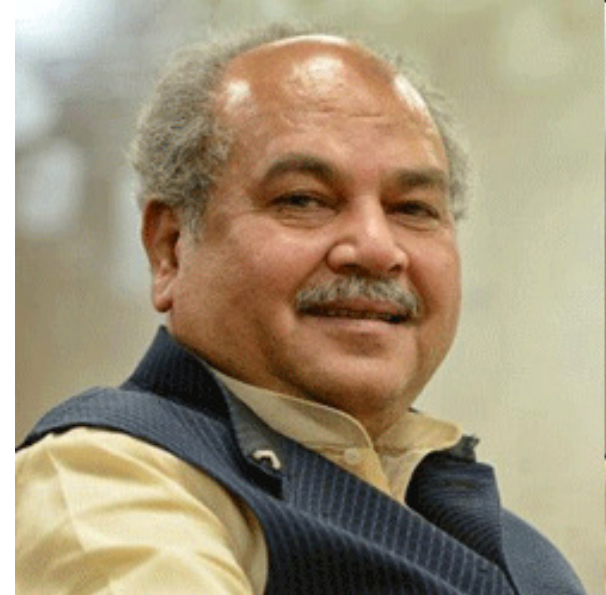
Odisha Farmers Get 6K Cr PM KISAN Funds

New Delhi(KCN): The Centre has released Rs 5969.61

This was informed by Minister of Agriculture and Farmers

port to all landholding farmers' families (subject to certain exclusion criteria related to higher income status) across the country and to enable them to take care of expenses related to agriculture and allied activities as well as domestic needs and save them from the clutches of money lenders. The scheme is effective from December 1, 2018. Under the Scheme, an income support of Rs 6000 per annum, in 3 equal installments, is provided to all eligible farmer families directly into their bank accounts through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode.

In Odisha, an amount of Rs 59,69,61,66,000 has been released to 39,36,731 since inception of the scheme (as on February 3, 2022), Tomar said. As per the statement of the Union Minister, highest Rs 451.43 crore has been released to 2,90,717 farmers of Mayurbhanj district while lowest Rs 59.74 crore distributed among 37,045 farmers of Jharsuguda district under the Scheme. Similarly, Rs 222.29 crore has been released to 1,50,806 farmers of Angul, Rs 325.28 crore given to 2,10,528 farmers of



crore to over 39.36 lakh farmers of Odisha under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (P M - K I S A N) Scheme.

Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar in Lok Sabha recently. He said the PM-KISAN Scheme was launched in an aim to provide income sup-

Russia has no plans to mediate between India-China talks over standoff in Ladakh: Russian envoy

MOSCOW(KCN): Russia has no plans to mediate between India and China over the border issue in Ladakh, said newly appointed Russian Ambassador to India Denis Alipov, adding that if both the countries expressed a wish for an intermediary then Russia can consider it. India and China have been engaged in holding talks on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Eastern Ladakh area to resolve the standoff. So far, 14 rounds of talks have been held between India and China.

The talks led to some disengagement of troops from several friction points along the LAC, but not all of them. "No. We have no such plans [to be an

a simple reason: both sides view the territorial dispute between them as a purely bilateral matter," Alipov said in an interview with Sputnik, the Russian News Agency.



intermediary]. But if such a wish is expressed on both sides, then, of course, we will consider it most carefully. We have no mediation plans for

Moscow respects this position and is not going to interfere, the diplomat said, expressing hope that the territorial problem will be resolved as soon as

possible by purely diplomatic means. India and China have been engaged in a standoff since April-May 2020 over the transgressions by the Chinese Army in multiple areas including the Finger area, Galwan Valley, Hot springs, and Kongrung Nala. After the conclusion of 14 rounds of military talks, India and China had agreed to hold the commander-level meeting at the earliest on the LAC in the Western sector to resolve the standoff between the two nuclear nations.

Annual project exhibition "Edutech" organised at DAV, Kalinga Nagar

Bhubaneswar(KCN): With an endeavor to promote scientific temperament and attitude among budding young students, the programme was conducted on the virtual platform. The program was inaugurated by the Principal



entific enquiry and logical approach for a better tomorrow. More than 107 projects in Mathematics, Science, Social Science, English, Odia and Hindi on various topics related to Green Energy, Innovation Transport, Communication, Agriculture, Technology, Bio-diversity, Community Health, Environment and Mathematical Modelling were an eye opener for all. Where 207 students demonstrated their inventive exhibits. The entire show was livestreamed in the Youtube for the students and parents.

BRPL employee killed in road accident

Barbil(KCN): Being Kendujhar district is a mineral-rich different part of the country and aboard to cater the need of management envisage difficulties. Over taking of



very often. As per report BasudevGop, an employee of BRPL Company met a fatal accident yesterday. Deceased Gopa collide with a truck while going to the plant on his Honda Shine bike. The truck vide regd.no OOD-09G-5043 hit Basudev Gop, causing him severely injured in the head and got fatal on the spot. The truck was loaded with iron ore mineral transported from RP Sao mines to BRPL plant. Police reached the spot and sent dead body to Barbil CHC for autopsy.

Days after journalist's death, youth killed in Maoist blast in Kandhamal district

BHUBANESWAR/ PHULBANI(KCN): In fresh Maoist violence in poll-bound Odisha, a 20-year-old youth was killed in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast triggered by the Naxals at Kiamunda village in Kandhamal district on Wednesday. The incident comes four days after a journalist died in a similar fashion in Kalahandi district. The deceased was identified as Priyaranjan Kanhar



of Kiamunda village. At around 8 am, Kanhar was passing through by Maoists on Monday night. The next day, posters and banners threatening locals to boycott the ensuing panchayat elections had surfaced near Kiamunda. A bomb detection and disposal squad had diffused two IEDs near Kiamunda on Tuesday and combat operation was halted in the evening. "Out of frustration, Maoists have now started targeting civilians too. To ensure smooth passage of panchayat polls, area domination exercises by local police, District Voluntary Force, Special Operations Group and Central Reserve Police Force personnel are continuing in all Naxal affected areas of the State including Swabhimanchal," said a senior police officer. On Wednesday too, posters and banners of Kalahandi-Kandhamal-Boudh-Nayagarh (KKBN) division of the banned CPI Maoist were found in different areas of Balliguda town, triggering panic among locals. On February 5, a journalist working with a vernacular daily was killed in an IED blast triggered by Maoists in Madanpur Rampur block of Kalahandi district.

Villagers made their road motorable despite all hindrances

Barbil (KCN): Joda-Barbil is a wealth rich region for its iron ore mining. Crores of rupees of revenue is also generated daily here. Thousands of crores of rupees have also been deposited in OMBAC and DMF for the development of the region. But unfortunately there are still many areas under privileged to get minimum facilities due to lack of either interest or ignorance of concerned assigned authorities. A village 'DumurtaTalasahi' of Bolani Panchayat under Joda block in the district of Keonjhar is far way from common facility. Neither they are connected road nor electricity. The village is isolated



approached Sarpanch, Jilla Parishad and administration several times. They alleged with earth and morum soil. Irrespective of all age group, men and women join hands to construct their village road. This is good to hear. But iron of the fact is that elected members and administration should be pro active to address such issue, intellectual comments.

Special Screening of Odia Short-film "Dahani"

Bhubaneswar (KCN): A special screening of Odia short-film "Dahani" official named Meera posted in an interior Odia tribal village. She was influencing them since time immemorial. However, the film perspective. We hope this will inspire other aspiring creators to



was organized at JaydevBhawan, Bhubaneswar. Produced by SatyabrataSanuRatho, the film has been directed by the young and emerging director Subhasmita Jena. Under the banner of Prelude Productions and Kaveri Film Entertainment, these 35 minutes long woman-centric tale tells the story through the eyes of a tribal woman named Phoola. A government disheartened to see her young tribal maid, an ever-smiling Phoola, turned out to be a victim of domestic violence. Later, Phoola is believed to be possessed by an evil spirit and she is exorcized by the community priest and Meera becomes a helpless spectator to this sad state of affairs. Meera is amazed to witness the tribal society believing in supernatural powers that have been concludes with a twist enquiring this pertinent question if this age-old superstition can be employed as an instrument of resistance, confrontation and liberation. Ratho, who has always believed in giving opportunities to the new generation of techies and artists, said, "It's a pleasure witnessing such talented lady directors coming up with women-centric films with a fresh come forward and show something new through the medium of film. The social message in Dahani will definitely touch everybody." Excited for the screening, Subhasmita said, "It has been a hectic yet interesting journey of 365 days for this film. Thanks to all my team members and Prelude Productions for trusting me and my work. I am eagerly waiting for the honest reviews from my viewers."

State To Consult Stakeholders on Exam Mode

Bhubaneswar(KCN): Odisha Government has allowed reopening of classes for Class-VIII to XII from 7 February.2022. Offline, Online and Hybrid Teachings are being conducted,



thanks to the initiative of Bishnupada Sethi, Principal Secretary of Secondary Education and Council of Higher Secondary Education, Stakeholders include students, teachers, parents, educationists & experts and will come out with suitable proposal on the conduct of the Examination, Assessment. The Chairman, CHSE, Odisha, President, Board of Secondary Education will work out the details of consultation process. The Government is aware of the difficult time; Covid has created for the education sector and will address the challenges in the best possible manner. The predominant concern is to resume teaching, increase attendance and address the learning gaps.

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'We can be heroes' movie review: Super-kids save the day

Just last week, Robert Rodriguez was being lauded for being part of what is

Jonas), the director of the Heroics programme. But then, when did any

gets, the colours... But it isn't all for children. The film takes pot-



considered one of the best things to happen to the Star Wars Universe:

The Mandalorian. This week, after dabbling with big budgets, he comes up with We can be Heroes, a spiritual sequel to his own film, The Adventures of Sharkboy and Lavagirl.

It's a Spy Kids-meets-Avengers film. Aliens attack Earth. The superheroes (led by Pedro Pascal), known as the Heroics in this film, come a cropper. Nepotism comes into the picture, with the children of the Heroics getting pushed to the forefront. There is an Avengers-inspired spaceship that spits out smaller spaceships with which the superheroes get kidnapped. They are kept safe in a bunker by Ms Granada (a superbly hammy Priyanka Chopra-

film kid ever listen to the adults and stay put? Each of the superkids use their superpower under the able guidance of Missy Moreno (Ya Ya Gosselin), who interestingly is the muggle among wizards and yet, the leader. We can be Heroes is a film made for kids, and the message is that anyone can be a hero, superpowers notwithstanding. Just like his Spy Kids films, Rodriguez paints this film with dreamy colours like pink and perky purples, and shoots it as if the scenes were pages straight out of a kids' comic. In one scene, a super-kid even comments that the villain's lair feels made for kids. This is a film that is designed for kids, and this audience segment is best suited to enjoy the gags, the highs, the charades, the gad-

shots at the big-ticket superhero films, for being needlessly destructive. Missy and her friends express their unhappiness about their superhero-parents fighting villains in crowded areas. In some ways, Rodriguez tries to level up the film for the not-so-young audience members, but the saccharine ending, and the overall simplicity makes it quite clear who he's targeting with this film. Growing up, we didn't ask logical questions of Spy Kids or The Adventures of Sharkboy and Lavagirl, and simply took in the sights and sounds created by this whimsical filmmaker. For this generation of kids, Rodriguez has created We can be Heroes. The kids are safe, so long as this filmmaker is around. The adults may want to wait for a version of Sin City though.

Shooting for third season of 'Four More Shots Please' to begin soon: Kirti Kulhari

MUMBAI(KCN): Bollywood actor Kirti Kulhari on Thursday said shoot for her series "Four More Shots Please!" is set to commence in coming days. The Amazon Prime

Taking to Instagram, Kulhari shared her excitement to team up with her co-actors again for the new season. "And we are back #fourmoreshotsplease #season3 shoot begins su-

tions, the show was recently nominated in the best comedy series category at the 48th International Emmy Awards. On the film front, Kulhari is currently awaiting the release



Video series, which also features Sayani Gupta, Maanvi Gupta and Bani J, follows a quartet of friends who deal with their relationships, work-life conflicts, ambitions and anxieties in a male-dominated society.

per soon. Lovely to be back with the crazy 3," Kulhari wrote alongside a series of candid photos with Gupta, Gagroo and Bani. Created by Rangita Pritish Nandy and produced by Pritish Nandy Communica-

of the Hindi remake of Hollywood blockbuster "The Girl on the Train", starring Parineeti Chopra. The movie, which premiere on streamer Netflix on February 26, will feature Kulhari as a British cop.

Richa Chadha drops first look poster of her political drama 'Madam Chief Minister'

NEW DELHI: Actor Richa Chadha on Monday dropped the first look poster of her upcoming political drama 'Madam Chief Minister.' The Subhash Kapoor

directorial revolves around the story of an "untouchable" woman who rises to the top. The poster that Chadha shared on Instagram sees her sporting a pixie cut

hairstyle with bruises on her face. She is also seen holding a broom. The background of the poster features Manav Kaul and Saurabh Shukla, who play pivotal roles in the film.

Priyanka Chopra Jonas to star opposite Richard Madden for 'Citadel' Amazon series

Washington DC: In a recent series of tweets, Priyanka

content. More soon. @AmazonStudios @AGBOfilms"

wood Reporter. Josh Appelbaum, Andre Nemece, Jeff



Chopra Jonas made the announcement that she would be starring alongside Richard Madden in 'Citadel,' a Russo brothers drama series that'll be launched on Amazon. Tweeting a screenshot of an article from the Variety website, Chopra wrote: "Cannot wait to work with the talented @_richardmadden and incredible @Russo_Brothers on CITADEL... A multi-layered global franchise with interconnected local language productions from India, Italy and Mexico. It will truly be global

Furthermore, she also posted two online article links about this latest development, one from Deadline, and another from The Hollywood Reporter. According to Variety, the producers have till now remained secretive about 'Citadel's' plot. The show would also be released in various local languages. As announced at the recent Television Critics Association's winter press tour, a separate version for Mexico is also in the works along with local productions in Italy and India, reported The Holly-

Pinkner, and Scott Rosenberg would be the executive producers and writers of this series. Apart from the aforementioned, Patrick Moran, Mike Larocca, and Joe and Anthony Russo would also be among the executive producers. The Italian series will be co-produced with Amazon Studios and Cattleya, part of ITV Studios, and the Indian series will be developed by Raj Nidimoru and Krishna D.K. and produced with Amazon Studios.

Vijay Sethupathi, Katrina Kaif in Sriram Raghavan's next?

It was recently revealed that Sriram Raghavan's upcoming film, Ekkis, has been put on hold. A big-budget military drama starring Varun

Santosh Sivan, is a Hindi remake of Maanagaram (2017). He is also rumoured to star in an upcoming web series directed by Raj and

Sriram Raghavan's last film was Andhadhun (2018) with Ayushmann Khurrana and Tabu. The film is getting a Tamil and Telugu re-



Dhawan, the film was delayed due to Covid-19.

DK. The unrevealed series will also star Shahid Kapoor.

make with Prashanth and Nithiin, respectively, in the lead.

Now, rumour has it that Sriram has signed Katrina Kaif and Vijay Sethupathi for his next. If true, this is the latest Hindi project Vijay Sethupathi is attached to — the others being Laal Singh Chadha and Mumbaikar. The latter, directed by

Banita Sandhu clarifies on COVID-19 diagnosis, says she 'continues to test negative' **MUMBAI(KCN):** "October" actor Banita Sandhu on Thursday said she has continued to test negative for COVID-19 since her arrival to the country in January 3, contrary to what is being reported in media.

According to health department sources, Sandhu had tested positive for COVID-19 on January 4 in Kolkata after flying from United Kingdom and was admitted to a private hospital after she refused to be treated in a government facility.

Karnataka sets up 3-judge bench to dissect hijab row

Karnataka's hijab row which has found reverberations in Pakistan and prompted Asaduddin Owaisi to tell that country to mind its own business- tests if India is secular or a



Hindu majoritarian state. The Karnataka high court has already set up a three-judge Constitution bench headed by the chief justice to examine the

judgments pronounced by the Supreme Court on Article 25 to 27 on what constitutes essential practices of the Islamic faith linked to the Karnataka Education Act, 1983 and the Right to Education Act, 2009.

The hijab row has spread from Udupi to Bagalkot, Vijayapura, Mandya and Shivamogga in Karnataka prompting the Opposition MPs to walkout from the Lok Sabha to demand the government make its stand clear. For the Karnataka Education Act, 1983 is subsumed by the Right to Education Act, 2009 which in turn, is subsumed by Articles 25 to 27 of the Constitution which permits restrictions of health, public order and morality on the citizens' right to practice, profess and propagate any religion. The right to wear a hijab will determine whether minorities really are free to profess and practice their own religion.

Muslim girls must defy gender stereotypes to get an education by escaping ghettoization to build their careers. After the oil boom collapse in the Gulf countries, Muslims have been deprived of quality education because their

madrassas fuel the stereotypes of being sectarian seminaries

where religious indoctrination overrides vocational training.

Orthodox parents may force their daughters to wear the hijab outside their homes which is their fundamental right. So, invoking section 133 (2) of the Karnataka Education Act, 1983 to prevent these Muslim girls from entering classrooms will thwart their education. Priyanka Gandhi's assertion that women have a right whether to wear a bikini or a hijab may be anathema to a majoritarian-turned-authoritarian government accused of using Pegasus to snoop on us.

What constitutes an essential part of a religious practice must be ascertained with reference to the doctrines of that religion itself, the Supreme Court held in the 1954 Shirur Mutt case which ironically also originated in Udupi where the hijab row began. But legal scholars criticize this crucial test because in general judges are not theological experts.

Every religion has its own unique symbols – be it the Sikh turban, the Muslim burqa, the Christian Cross, the Hindu tikka on the forehead or the Parsi sadra. And every Indian has the right to wear it proudly subject to health, public order and morality. The right to practice one's religion is a negative right which means the state cannot enact laws to nullify this right.

The successive judgments of the Supreme Court have whittled down secularism as the founding fathers envisaged it. Today, the government propagates that its version of secularism is to treat all religions equally. But if we believe that, we are living in a delusional

Dr Olav Albuquerque

world. Most of the laws enacted from 2014 favour a certain community – never mind what the Constitution declares.

In a 2004 ruling, the Supreme Court held the Ananda Marga sect had no fundamental right to perform Tandava dance in public because it was not an essential religious practice whereas in 2016, a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court upheld the discharge of a Muslim airman from the Indian Air Force for keeping a beard.

The IAF airman was discharged because keeping a beard did not constitute an essential religious practice in Islam as distinguished from Sikhism which enjoins its followers to grow their hair. Using the same logic, wearing of a hijab is also not an essential religious practice of Islam.

The right to profess, practice and propagate any religion of your choice subject to decency, public order and morality has become a chimera because laws enacted by a Hindu majoritarian state have prohibited beef, raised the marriageable age of girls to 21 years and made it compulsory to declare before a magistrate that one is changing one's religion to avoid charges of love jihad – of which there was no data, according to the government's own admission.

So, now banning the hijab maybe viewed with suspicion because although it is not an essential religious practice, it is part of customary law. The Quran enjoins all Muslim women to be submissive to men who are their guardians and protectors which implies Karnataka cannot ban Muslim women from wearing the hijab.

The counter to that is the last major judgment of the Supreme Court in 2017 known as *Shyara Bano versus Union of India* recognized the State could enact laws regulating or restricting any economic, financial, political or other secular activity linked to pernicious religious practices.

But the five-judge Constitution bench recorded the founding fathers arguments against the state interfering in religious customs by enacting a uniform civil code to homogenize laws of inheritance, marriage and divorce. Any citizen could take the state to court because such laws were justiciable if they restricted fundamental rights.

The right to wear a piece of cloth, whether it is an essential religious practice or not, is part of the right to privacy, which like the *Shyara Bano* case, was also validated by the Supreme Court in 2017. Senior advocate Devadutt Kamath argued in the Karnataka high court that the state did not have the power to ban the hijab.

The state can enact laws to curtail fundamental rights such as freedom of speech and expression, the right to choose your attire, and the twin rights of religious freedom which is part of the right to privacy. But these laws will become justiciable because it is ultimately the courts which must decide what is part of an essential religious practice.

Politicians can ban the hijab to inflame religious sentiments. For politics and law are instruments of oppression and compromise. Faith is not.

Dr Olav Albuquerque holds a Ph.D in law and is a senior journalist-cum-advocate of the Bombay high court. He is an honorary member of the Goa Union of Journalists.

Gender equality and Women's entry to Sabarimala

As the pilgrim season of the Mandala Makaravilakku festival culminates, the famous Sabarimala hill shrine in Kerala and the endless forest garden surrounding it have fallen into a deep meditative silence once again. Endless



stretch of forest to the borders of Tamil Nadu remains deathly silent. This year arrangements for the pilgrim season were made under the directives of the Kerala High Court with

necessary measures put in place to check the pandemic. The state government, in a significant move, allowed 30000 devotees to visit the shrine through a virtual queue system every day. The Makaravilakku festival was on January 14 and the temple was closed on January 20. Sabarimala temple was in controversy for years as the traditions of the temple forbade entry of women of menstruating age into its premises. A pilgrimage to this shrine is of great importance to millions of devotees. 60 kilometers away from my house, the shrine and the Lord Ayyappa have always been a subject of great reverence for me personally and a matter of deep faith for my family.

The Supreme Court's verdict on women entry to this popular shrine in Kerala had been a great shock for a significant population of the state. The social impact began to be visible as the women folk of the majority community in the state came out to the streets against the CPI (M) led government. Sabarimala, as I know it from my childhood, has been a spiritual shrine that attracts millions of devotees every year. Interestingly, it was the first time in the history of any verdict that the beneficiaries of the decree directly flooded to the streets in millions rejecting its efficacy and questioning its intentions. 'The Ready to Wait' campaign by the women of the state was unprecedented in many ways. It was a movement of the women by the women and for the women. While they stood against the verdict of the court, they were ready to wait to visit the shrine until their menopause age dawned in. It was in 1990 a case was filed in the Kerala High Court alleging that women were entering Sabarimala occasionally, probably unnoticed, and the petitioner demanding a carpet ban on women of certain age to the shrine. The Kerala High Court, citing the need of preserving the age-old customs of the shrine, banned the women of certain age from entering it. In 2006 the matter was taken to the Supreme Court by a group of lawyers from the Indian Young

Lawyers' Association which demanded the ban be lifted, citing the

ban as a violation of women's right to worship in Hindu spiritual centers. The court viewed that any exception placed on women on biological differences violates the Constitution. Therefore,

M.R. Lalu

temple because she was a woman. For them, both genders were blessed with unique biological capabilities and that should be respected. This entry ban was only applicable to Sabarimala and temples dedicated to the same deity elsewhere did not



the ban was lifted and the state government, to implement the court verdict, against the will of millions of devotees, managed to intrude into the sanctity of the temple, by bringing two women from the ultra-left social groups in disguise of security personnel.

Historical evidence from the 19th century reveals that menstruating women were banned from entering the temple for almost 200 years. The principal deity Lord Ayyappa is treated as a celibate (Naishtika Brahmachari) and the customs prohibited women of menstruating age from entering into his abode. The argument was mainly considering the deity as a person and his eligibility to enjoy the constitutional right to privacy by denying women of that age from visiting him. On the contrary, menstruation being purely a biological factor and exclusively a matter of womanhood, the petitioners seeking a lift on the ban were of the opinion that no woman should be prohibited from entering the

temple because she was a woman. For them, both genders were blessed with unique biological capabilities and that should be respected. This entry ban was only applicable to Sabarimala and temples dedicated to the same deity elsewhere did not

have such restrictions. Photos and idols of the deity can be seen in almost every South Indian family. The apex court viewed the whole issue as a dominance of the patriarchal entity in the present-day society. It also viewed that excluding the women of menstruating age from a pilgrimage was equally amounting to untouchability. Every year the preparations for the pilgrim season start on the first day of the Malayalam month Vrischikam. The pilgrim season begins as the devotees start observing austerities for 41 days and climbing the hill shrine with spiritual offerings for Lord Ayyappa which they carry bundled on their head. These are the symbolic representations of the sinful karmas of the devotee, who indeed carries them to the Lord as an act of surrender and regret. He opens the bundle of sinful karmas at the shrine and takes refuge at the lotus feet of Lord Ayyappa. 41 days of penance by the pilgrim

undergoing rigorous religious practices transforms the ambiance of the family purely into a spiritual one. Menstruating ladies are not welcome to certain places of the houses as their presence is viewed to bring impurity and disrupt the penance.

The Sabarimala shrine and its economic importance in Kerala was one of the reasons behind the state government's over enthusiasm to implement the court order against the ban. Every year, the pilgrim season pumps a huge amount of money to the state's exchequer. When the sanctum sanctorum alone receives more than 200 crores in the form of cash and ornaments and other revenues from the prasadam distribution in a pilgrim season, the government gets an additional 1000 crore or more as revenue recovery from various pilgrim related activities from across the state. More than three crore devotees are estimated to take to the pilgrimage from different parts of the world and the importance and the impact of the temple on the socio-economic scenario of the state is unparalleled. The state government was much aware of this fact and by implementing the verdict the government wanted more devotees including the womenfolk to throng into the shrine and thereby more money to pour in.

The Sabarimala Temple is a unique institution with regard to its religious practices. As I mentioned above, the 41 days of severe abstinence transforms a devotee into a spiritual being. As he begins his austerities by putting a rosary around his neck, he becomes a swami and stops eating meat and consuming alcohol and stays away from sensual pleasures and also strictly stops using coarse language even in unfavorable situations. He is on a spiritual journey aiming to discover the divine Ayyappa principle in him. He wears simple orange or black waist cloth and lives on limited needs. The pilgrimage is a perfect example of spiritual coexistence of human beings forgetting all the differences and merging into what the Upanishads call "Tatvamasi", the divine state of the Lord in oneself. Though the major castes in the state were seen divided on the whole issue, the devotees were seen to be out in one voice against the court order and the state government's stand to implement it. More than 3000 Ayyappa devotees were arrested in the agitation and the subsequent unrest. The stalemate continued for long but this year the pilgrim season went on smoothly amidst the pandemic with the state government sensibly avoiding women entry to the shrine.

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Bhubaneswar in wedding rush: 2,500 marriages in a month, more coming

BHUBANESWAR: The first two waves of Covid put on hold - or at least forced-cut - weddings in Bhubaneswar. But this time, not many are willing to back down. Not by Covid, at least although lavishness quotient may have been missing. The State Capital hosted over 2,000 weddings in last three weeks and over 500 marriage functions are

weddings were allowed between November 15 and December 15. The number of marriages that took place in the City between December 16 and January 15, however, was less than 250. "The number remained less mostly due to Covid-19 restrictions as the crowd limit in areas under BMC jurisdiction had been reduced to 50 against 100 in other

portal, official sources said. KC Mishra, a resident, who postponed the marriage of his daughter in June last year due to Covid-19, said his family decided not to delay the event any further apprehending restrictions in future in the event of another spike in cases. No big fat weddings Even as the matrimony business is looking at brighter days,

things but the Covid has forced their hands. "The number of big fat weddings as well as destination weddings in Puri, Bhubaneswar and other locations have either been cancelled or postponed due to the pandemic," Biswal added. Curbs needs to be lifted Kalyan Mandap owners, event planners, catering and tent houses, meanwhile,



lined up over the next seven days. The numbers could go up as the wedding season will remain at its peak till March end. The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) sources said the civic body has issued permission to around 7,627 weddings since October last year. License for wedding was given to around 2,500 weddings between January 16 and February 15. An equal number of

places," he said. This apart, people avoid marriages, engagements in the month of 'Pausha' between mid-December and January as the period is not considered ideal for auspicious events. Marriage events, however, have picked up since January last week and those applying for conducting the events are being granted permission within 72 hours through the www.Bhubaneswar.me

the weddings organised in the city are not lavish any longer. Baldev Biswal, founder of Royal Saga Event Management and Wedding Wale, said business is picking up slowly but is yet to bounce back as many are still not opting for high-end weddings due to Covid-19 restrictions. Members of Gujarati and Marwari communities are known for their luxurious wed-

ding but the Covid has forced their hands. "The number of big fat weddings as well as destination weddings in Puri, Bhubaneswar and other locations have either been cancelled or postponed due to the pandemic," Biswal added. Curbs needs to be lifted Kalyan Mandap owners, event planners, catering and tent houses, meanwhile,

In presence of Lalu Prasad Yadav, RJD calls for anti-BJP front

PATNA: Lalu Prasad Yadav's RJD on Thursday highlighted the need for a "political front" to take on the BJP, which it accused of pursuing a

with the help of his family, has repeatedly sought to scotch such speculations. The matter, though, is likely to hang in balance till October 11

Pradesh, states where the Congress is struggling to find its feet. It was, however, not clear whether by exhorting the people to "make a meaningful

It attacked the government for economic measures like farm laws and demonetisation and accused it of playing in the hands of big



divisive agenda and remaining oblivious to the need for social and economic progress. A resolution to the effect was passed here by the party at the meeting of its national executive which took place in presence of Prasad, the founding president, who had flown down from Delhi despite old age and poor health. The meeting also sought to place a lid on speculations about Prasad replacing himself as the national president with younger son and heir apparent Tejashwi Yadav who was also present on the occasion. The former Bihar chief minister, who controls the party

when, the party has resolved, the national president's election will take place at an "open session" of the RJD which will be held in Delhi. The resolution, which ran into several pages, painted a grim picture of the country's political situation, on both domestic and international fronts, and called for "formation of a front committed to secularism and socialism". Notably, the RJD was a staunch ally of the Congress when the UPA was in power. In the state, however, the two parties have frequently squabbled. Outside Bihar, the RJD has openly supported parties like TMC in West Bengal and SP in Uttar

political intervention", the RJD was hinting at willingness to back a formation that was opposed to BJP but not helmed by Congress. "BJP believes in values espoused by RSS and its ideologues like V D Savarkar who stood for the two-nation theory which set the tone for partition of the country. It also seeks to replace Ambedkar's egalitarian ideals with a Manuvadi agenda," said the RJD. The party, which draws its support base from primarily the OBCs, also slammed the Modi government for refusing to conduct caste census "childishly citing problems in collating data".

business by privatisation of public sector undertakings. The RJD also said "even the most unreservedly capitalist countries do realise the need for unemployment doles. This government is callous enough to turn a blind eye despite rampant joblessness". The party also accused Modi of harming India's international standing "despite undertaking 110 tours of 60 countries". It alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had made his country a "laughing stock" by supporting re-election as US President of Donald Trump who ultimately got voted out.

NATO chief says Russian build up at 'dangerous moment'

BRUSSELS: Russia's deployment for a military exercise in Belarus and on the borders of Ukraine marks a "dangerous moment" for Euro-

pean security, NATO's chief said Thursday. "We are closely monitoring Russia's deployment in Belarus, which is the biggest since the end of the Cold War," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg told reporters at a news conference with British Prime Minister Boris Johnson. "This is a dangerous moment for European

security. The number of Russian forces is going up. The warning time for a possible attack is going down." Stoltenberg and Johnson both warned NATO is ready to engage with Russia in talks on de-escalation and arms control, but warned that the alliance will not compromise on its open-door

"We must resist, we must oppose any return to the days when fates of nations are decided over their heads by a handful of great powers," he said.

recently by President Emmanuel Macron of France and Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz. But Russia has continued to increase its presence and battle-readiness, conducting exercises in Belarus and the Black Sea,

while NATO is still shoring up its eastern flank. "We're seeing the massing of huge numbers of tactical battalion groups on the borders of Ukraine, 70 or more," Johnson said. "This is probably the most dangerous mo-

ment, I would say, in the course of the next few days, in what is the biggest security crisis that Europe has faced for decades." Earlier, ahead of a meeting with British foreign minister Liz Truss, Lavrov had warned that western

threats would do nothing to ease tensions over Ukraine. "Ideological approaches, ultimatums, threats -- this is the road to nowhere," Lavrov said, adding that Britain's ties with Moscow were "at their lowest point in recent years".



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policy. Russia's wide-ranging demands for security guarantees include an insistence that its southern neighbour Ukraine must not be allowed to join NATO. "When the Berlin Wall fell, the people of Europe made clear that they wanted their freedom and their security to be inextricably tied together." Johnson said.

Stoltenberg said he had written a letter on Thursday to Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, urging Moscow to resume a dialogue under the revived format of the NATO-Russia Council. There have been several attempts to reach out to Russia's President Vladimir Putin since the start of the Russia build-up, most

Athagarh forest division in soup over recovery of jumbo carcass

BHUBANESWAR: Months after Athagarh ranger was suspended for allegedly keeping the Forest department in dark about the death of an elephant for over a year, the forest division is in news again after recovery of another carcass in Narasinghpur range. This time too, the elephant carcass was allegedly buried without the knowledge of the higher-ups in the department. The Special Task Force (STF) of the Crime Branch that went to the site in Narasinghpur west

range to recover the carcass allegedly faced stiff resistance from some forest watchers. PCCF Shashi Paul has ordered an inquiry and directed the Angul RCCF and Athagarh DFO to submit a report in this regard at the earliest. The STF is also probing the matter. An eight-member STF team headed by an additional SP rank officer recovered the carcass from Balikiari forest under Barasingha section of Narasinghpur west range in presence of an executive magistrate. When the mat-

ter came to light on Tuesday, Athagarh DFO Sudarsan Gopinath Jadav visited the spot. The Angul RCCF will also visit the spot to inquire about the incident. Forest officials will probe whether any carcass was buried in the location in the past as the decomposed bones seem to be a year old. STF, however, suspects that the carcass would be around three months old. A team of veterinary experts from OUAT will carry out the postmortem of the carcass. Meanwhile, the inci-

dent has put the Athagarh division in a fix as it has already faced embarrassment last year over burial of a carcass in violation of the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). A 15-year-old tusker was buried in Subasi reserve forest without following due procedure and the tusks recovered were also not deposited with the division office in violation of the SOP. The Forest department suspended Athagarh forest ranger Aisha Akhtari Nisha in connection with the incident in November, 2021.

Saffron flag may become national flag some time in future: Karnataka Minister KS Eshwarappa

BENGALURU: Senior BJP leader and Karnataka Minister for Rural Development and Panchayat Raj KS Eshwarappa on Wednesday claimed 'Bhagwa dhvaj' (saffron flag), may become the national flag some time in the future. He, however, said the tricolour is the national flag now, and it should be respected by everyone. "Hundreds of years ago the chariots of Sri Ramachandra and Maruthi had saffron flags on them. Was the tricolour flag there in our country then? Now it (tricolour) is fixed as our national flag, what respect it has to be given, should be given by every person who takes food in this country, there is no question about it," Eshwarappa said. Responding to a question by reporters, whether the saffron flag can be hoisted on the red fort, he said, "not today, some day in the future."

"Discussions are today taking place in the country on 'Hindu vichara' and 'Hindutva'. People used to laugh at one point when we said Ram Mandir will be constructed in Ayodhya, aren't we constructing it now? In the same way some time in the future, after 100 or 200 or 500 years Bhagwa dhvaj may become the national flag. I don't know." Further stating that now tricolour has been constitutionally accepted as the national flag, the Minister said, it should be respected, and those who don't respect it will be a traitor. "...we are the people who hoist the saffron flag, not today some time in the future Hindu dharma will come to this country at that time we will hoist it on the Red fort, for now tricolour is our national flag, there is now doubt about it and we all respect it," the former state BJP chief added.

Odisha faces renewed Naxal heat as Centre shifts 24 companies force

BHUBANESWAR: AS CPI (Maoist) steps up violence with the five-phase panchayat polls barely days away, Odisha Police faces an uphill task in

civil policing in the State. This decision of Odisha Police top brass last year to convert the SSB units into civil police could have ramifications, experts feel.

"There will come a time when the Central forces deployment will reduce and the State Police will have to meet its own requirement. That is when SSBs would

pared and will make all possible efforts to ensure smooth passage of elections," the DGP told The New Indian Express. Meanwhile, a meeting of senior officers of Odisha Police, CRPF and BSF was held on Wednesday to discuss strategies to ensure a violence-free panchayat polls. Odisha faces renewed Naxal heat as Centre shifts 24 companies force



Naxal-affected districts as the Centre has already diverted at least 16 companies of central armed police forces (CAPF) for redeployment in Assembly poll-bound states.

There are 94 companies of Border Security Force (BSF) and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) deployed in Odisha. In view of Assembly elections, the Centre has moved eight companies each to Uttar Pradesh and Punjab from the CRPF's mobilisation in the State.

Additionally, eight companies of Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB) and Special Security Battalions (SSB) from Odisha have also been deployed in UP.

With the two back-to-back IED explosions in Kalahandi and Phulbani districts claiming civilian lives, the security forces face a challenge to ensure smooth passage of rural polls in Odisha having seen at least 2,500 personnel redeployed in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. Besides, what could pinch the State is the fact that 1,500 personnel of Special Security Battalions (SSBs) of Sambalpur and Keonjhar were attached with various districts to strengthen

"The SSBs undertake anti-extremist tactics and counter operations training. Their primary responsibility



is to protect police stations and jails in Naxal affected districts and vital establishments in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. When need arises, they are engaged in area domination exercises in regions having presence of the red ultras," said a senior police officer. In 2020, the Odisha Government requested the Ministry of Home Affairs to remove Angul, Sambalpur, Boudh Nayagarh and Deogarh from the coverage of Security Related Expenditure (SRE) scheme on the grounds that LWE menace stands eliminated in these districts. This leaves only 10 under the Central scheme's ambit.

matter. The decision to convert them to civil police last year was a hasty one," said a former Director

of Police. Experts are of the opinion that rationalisation of such units may create hassles for Odisha Police as polling booths will be set up even in most interior areas of the State during the upcoming panchayat polls. However, DGP Sunil Kumar Bansal said the State Police is prepared because drawing forces from other states during Assembly elections is a standard and established practice during elections.

"As five States are going into Assembly elections, the Election Commission has withdrawn forces from all parts of the country. We also have some challenges for upcoming panchayat polls but we are prepared and will make all possible efforts to ensure smooth passage of elections," the DGP told The New Indian Express. Meanwhile, a meeting of senior officers of Odisha Police, CRPF and BSF was held on Wednesday to discuss strategies to ensure a violence-free panchayat polls.

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Panchayat polls: Covid curbs eased, campaign picks up pace in Sundargarh

ROURKELA: A couple of days after the State Election Commission (SEC) eased Covid restrictions, electioneering for the three-tier

party candidates. Launching an attack on the State government, Mohanty accused the BJD of hindering growth of Sundargarh district

ALSO READ: Panchayat polls: Bereft of funds, Independent candidates in Jagatsinghpur opt for 'crowdsourcing' Citing the 'suffering'

teracted with booth-level workers in Bisra and Nuagaon blocks. He participated in a padayatra in Bisra block. Similarly, Tirkey addressed sev-



panchayat polls picked up pace in Sundargarh with the BJP and BJD stepping up campaigning for their respective candidates on Wednesday.

While BJP's campaign was led by State president Sameer Mohanty, former Indian Hockey captain and ex-Rajya Sabha Member of BJD Dilip Tirkey canvassed for votes in favour of

for 22 years despite adequate flow of funds from the Centre. He further accused the BJD government of not implementing the recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission to ensure financial and social security of rural poor. The BJP leader also alleged widespread irregularities in infrastructure development across gram panchayats.

of farmers due to irregularities in paddy procurement and lack of coordination between officials of Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare and Cooperation departments, Mohanty alleged that farmers are forced to sell paddy at throwaway prices. He also accused the State government of depriving rural beneficiaries of PMAY-G benefit. The BJP president in-

eral village-level meetings in Kuanrunda and other areas of Biramitrapur seeking votes for BJD's Zilla Parishad (ZP) candidates. Highlighting the development works of the State government, Tirkey said BJD is working towards promotion of rural hockey with creation of astro-turf grounds in all 17 blocks of the district.

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Economy likely contracted 12 per cent in Q1: Report

MUMBAI: Lockdowns imposed by the states in April and May to contain the second wave of the deadly COVID-19 pandemic has likely led to the economy contracting 12 per cent in the June quarter as against 23.9 per cent contraction in the same quarter in 2020, says a brokerage report.

The economy had its worst contraction on record in FY21 at 7.3 per cent as the 2.5 months of unplanned lockdown announced by the centre with just a four-hour notice had crippled the economy in the first quarter with a massive 23.9 per cent contraction, which improved to -17.5 per cent in the second quarter.

But the economy showed a sharp V-shaped recovery from the second half when it posted a 40 bps positive growth and in Q4 clipping at 1.6 per cent, containing the overall contraction at 7.3 per cent for

the year. This 12 percentage point contraction will

data from UBS-India activity indicator, Tanvee Gupta Jain,

localised mobility restrictions from the last week of May.

ainties. That said, we expect economic recovery to

limited scale this time.



have the economy missing a sharp V-shaped recovery this time around, unlike seen last year after the national lockdown was lifted, as consumer sentiment remains very weak this time around as people are more worried about the pandemic than last year, says Swiss brokerage UBS Securities India. Quoting in-house

the economist at the Swiss brokerage, says the indicator suggests that economic activity has contracted an average of 12 per cent in the June 2021 quarter as against 23.9 per cent in June 2020 quarter.

This is despite the indicator rebounded to 88.7 in the week to June 13, up 3 per cent week-on-week after many states eased

Though the brokerage expects a sequential pick-up in economic activity from June, it believes that the economy may gain traction only from the second half. Unlike the V-shaped recovery in 2020, we expect the economy to have only a gradual recovery this time, as consumer sentiment remains weak on pandemic-related uncer-

gain momentum from H2 as we see vaccination ramp up and the resultant control of the pandemic lifting consumer and business confidence from them, she said. The lockdown in the second wave lasted for slightly more than a month as against 2.5 months in the first wave and industrial/construction activities were allowed at a

We still expect only a sequential pick-up in economic activity from June and not a V-shaped recovery as in 2020, she added. Significantly, there is positive momentum on the ground on the vaccination front which has improved to 3.2 million doses daily in the week to June 13 from 2.5 million as of end-May.

Sebi directs AMC's to form audit committee from August

NEW DELHI: Markets regulator Sebi on Wednesday asked asset management companies (AMCs) to form audit com-

the feedback received from the industry and has come out with a detailed outline for the role, responsibility, mem-

oversight of financial reporting process, audit process, company's system of internal controls, compliance to laws

tions. "The internal auditor has to submit its report to the audit committees of AMC and the board of

audit committee will be appointed by the Board of Directors of AMC, as per Sebi. On the composition of the committee,

Monetary and fiscal policies today cannot be a 'question of either or': RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das

MUMBAI: Defending the long pause in interest rate hike and the continuing accommodative stance, Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das on Thursday said in current times, "monetary and fiscal policies cannot be a question of either or, but must go in tandem with each other".

For the 10th time in a row, RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) on Thursday left the key rates unchanged -- the repo at 4 per cent and the reverse repo at 3.35 per cent -- and decided to continue with the accommodative policy stance.

Underlining that growth is uneven and needs to be nursed some more, Das said that "monetary and fiscal policies cannot be a question of either or, but must go in tandem with each other, especially in times like what we are going through the past two years".

To a query on whether the central bank has fallen behind the curve of its peers, Das said, "We are very clear of our stance and our assessment is very much in sync with our evolving domestic situation which is very dif-

RBI keeps repo rate unchanged for 10th time in a row at 4 per cent

RBI kept benchmark lending rate unchanged 10th time in a row at 4 per cent

off-policy cycle to perk up demand by cutting the interest rate to a historic low.



and decided to continue with its accommodative stance in the backdrop of elevated level of inflation. Reverse repo rate too was left unchanged at 3.35 per cent.

This is the tenth time in a row that the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) headed by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das has maintained the status quo.

RBI had last revised its policy repo rate on May 22, 2020 in an

"Pandemic hold global economy hostage. India charting different course of recovery than rest of the world; to be fastest growing economy," Das said is the first MPC meeting after presentation of Budget 2022-23.

The top bank projects the real GDP growth for next financial year projected at 7.8 per cent. The RBI sees CPI inflation at 5.3 per cent for FY22 and 4.5 per cent in 2022-23: Governor Das.



mittees that will be responsible for oversight of the financial reporting process, audit process, and compliance with laws and regulations, among others. The circular will come into force with effect from August 1, 2022. Currently, an audit committee exists at the level of trustees of mutual funds.

Sebi said the decision has been taken after taking into account the recommendation of the Mutual Fund Advisory Committee and

bership, and other features of the Audit Committee of AMC. The mandate of the committee is to review the financial reporting processes, the system of internal controls, and the audit processes for the mutual fund operations of the AMC. Besides, it would be required to ensure that the rectifications, if any, suggested by internal and external auditors, among others, are acted upon. "The Audit Committee of the AMC shall be responsible for

and regulations and another related process, with specific reference to the operation of its Mutual Fund business," Sebi said in its circular. ALSO READ: Asset management companies asked to invest in schemes based on risks

The regulator has laid down detailed powers and responsibilities of the committee with respect to financial reporting, audit (internal and statutory) and internal controls, regulatory compliance, and other func-

AMC, Sebi said. The committee shall forward their observations on the internal audit report, if any, to the trustees," it added.

The chairperson is mandated to conduct at least four meetings in a financial year and there should not be a gap of over 120 days between two meetings. The meeting can also be called by the chairperson as and when required and Sebi has also mentioned the quorum for the meeting.

The members of the

Sebi said it shall have a minimum of three directors as members, and at least two-thirds of members of the committee shall be independent directors of AMC.

If two-thirds of the total strength results in a fraction, then a higher number after rounding up shall be considered. "The Chairperson of the Committee shall be an independent director, with adequate experience in the areas of finance and financial services," Sebi said.

Odisha Farmers Get 6K Cr PM KISAN Funds

Continued from page-1

Bolangir, Rs 367.09 crore to 2,42,834 farmers in Balasore, Rs 234.74 crore to 1,55,239 farmers of Bargarh, Rs 223.24 crore to 1,52,289 farmers of Bhadrak and Rs 91.12 crore to 58,449 farmers of Boudh district.

The Centre has also released a fund to the tune of Rs 290.27 crore to the eligible farmers of Cuttack, Rs 67.98 crore for Deogarh district, Rs 173.11 crore for Dhenkanal, Rs 91.15 crore for Gajapati, Rs 177.14 crore for Jagatsinghpur, Rs 221.79 crore for Jajpur, Rs 230.87 crore for Kalahandi, Rs 140.45 crore for Kandhamal, Rs 219.40 crore for Kendrapara and Rs 337.12 crore for Keonjhar district.

Moreover, Khurda district farmers have received Rs 133.90 crore while Rs 158.75 crore released to Koraput district farmers, Rs 90.11 crore transferred to Malkangiri farmers, Rs 347.69 crore for Ganjam district, Rs 183.01 crore for Nabarangpur, Rs 136.26 crore to Nayagarh, Rs 135.26 crore to Nuapada district farmers.

Besides, Rs 242.33 crore has been released to the farmers of Puri district whereas Rayagada district farmers have received Rs 116.01 crore. The eligible farmers of Sambalpur, Sonapur and Sundergarh districts have received Rs 124.94 crore, Rs 103.47 crore and Rs 273.56 crore, respectively under the PM-KISAN scheme of the Union Government.

BNP Paribas Open: Novak Djokovic makes it to entry list, would face COVID vaccine mandate

INDIAN WELLS: Top-ranked Novak Djokovic is on the entry list for the BNP Paribas Open in California, where the Serb would face a vaccine mandate. Djokovic, who was unvaccinated against COVID-19 as of last month, was detained and eventually deported from Australia for failing to meet that country's strict vaccination requirements. It prevented him from defending his Australian Open title last month.

To enter Australia, Djokovic submitted a positive test issued in Serbia on Dec. 16 for a visa exemption on the grounds that he had recently re-

covered from the virus. But the Australian government canceled his visa and deported him. Neither the ATP nor WTA tours require players to be vaccinated against COVID-19. However, non-US citizens must be fully vaccinated to travel to the US by plane,

according to the CDC. Travelers are required to show a negative COVID-19 test result or documentation of recovery from COVID-19 when traveling to the US by air. Limited exceptions apply. Djokovic is a five-time champion at Indian Wells, where he hasn't played since

2019. He hasn't played a match since November at the Davis Cup in Madrid. Djokovic is scheduled to play a

Ash Barty head the list of entries released Wednesday. Three-time winner Nadal returns to the desert for the first

men's draw are Australian Open finalist Daniil Medvedev, No. 3 Alexander Zverev, No. 4 Stefanos Tsitsipas,

2021 French Open winner Barbora Krejickova, No. 4 Karolina Pliskova and Australian Open finalist Danielle



Ligue One: PSG's Neymar back in training but unfit to face Rennes, says coach

SAINT-GERMAIN-EN-LAYE: Neymar will not be fit for

said Pochettino adding the player was back training with the

Pochettino. Since his arrival in 2017, Neymar has

maturity to manage himself, and channel his energy, to arrive in the best conditions when he can play," said Pochettino.

Pochettino said that recovery from injury was not a "mathematical formula". PSG will also be without former Real Madrid defensive great but increasingly injury-prone Sergio Ramos for Friday's match. Pochettino said Georginio Wijnaldum, Angel Di Maria and Leandro Paredes, who have all been struggling with injuries, were available to face Rennes. Abdou Diallo and Idrissa Gana Gueye, who helped guide Senegal to the Africa Cup of Nations title will not be available.

tournament in Dubai later this month. Fans attending Indian Wells from March 7-20 are required to show valid proof of full vaccination. Australian winners Rafael Nadal and

time since 2019. He missed last year's event that was moved to October because of a foot injury. He won his record-breaking 21st Grand Slam title in Australia. Joining Nadal in the

and defending champion Cameron Norrie. Top-ranked Barty already has two titles this year. She's joined in the women's draw by defending champion Paula Badosa, No. 2 Aryna Sabalenka,

Collins. Teenagers Leylah Fernandez, Emma Raducanu and Coco Gauff return for their second appearances in the desert. The remaining spots in the draw will be filled by winners of the qualifying and wild-card recipients.



Paris Saint-Germain's Ligue 1 match on Friday against Rennes, four days before a Champions League last-16 first leg clash with Real Madrid, coach Mauricio Pochettino said on Thursday. "He will not be in the squad for Rennes."

first team squad. The Brazilian sprained his left ankle in late November. The club said in a statement Neymar took part in a 15-minute session at training Thursday morning. "His progress is very good," said

missed five of his team's eight Champions League last 16 appearances due to various injuries, including the double-header against Barcelona last season. "All the great players want to play the big games. He has the experience and

India vs West Indies 3rd ODI: Rituraj Gaikwad recovers for COVID-19, out of isolation

AHMEDABAD: India batter Rituraj Gaikwad, who had tested positive for COVID-19, has recovered and is out of isolation. However, with skipper Rohit Sharma al-

Maharashtra player is unlikely to be considered for the inconsequential match. Rituraj warmed the bench in the home T20 series against New Zealand and also did not get an

Indies series, practically ruling him out of the rubber. Rituraj hasn't been included in the T20 squad and, in all likelihood, will now turn out for his home state in the upcoming

Gaikwad and middle-order batter Shreyas Iyer -- tested positive for the virus during their mandatory isolation period before the start of West Indies series. Four other persons,



ready making it clear that senior opener Shikhar Dhawan will open the innings in the third ODI against West Indies here on Friday, the

opportunity to play against South Africa in the away ODI series. He was found to be COVID positive just four days before the start of the West

Ranji Trophy. On February 2, a COVID-19 outbreak had hit the Indian cricket team as three players -- Dhawan, reserve opener

including net bowler Navdeep Saini, had also tested positive for COVID-19. Saini was on the standby list.




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