

Panchayat poll process notified

Bhubaneswar(KCN): As per the announcement made by State Election Commission (SEC), Election Officers in all Districts of the State today is-

file their nominations for Sarpanchs, Samiti Members and Zilla Parishad Member posts from January 17 to January 21 while the scrutiny of the

and declaration of results will be done at all the block levels on February 26, 27, and 28.

As per new rules, the candidate who files

relating to his criminal antecedents, assets and liabilities and educational qualification at the time of filing of nomination.



sued formal notifications for the three-tier Panchayat polls in their respective jurisdictions.

Notifications have been issued inviting nomination papers for election to Ward Member, Sarpanches, 6,793 Panchayat Samiti Members and 853 Zilla Parishad Members in the State. The candidates can

nomination papers will be done on January 22. The candidates can withdraw their nomination papers upto January 25 and the final list of candidates will be published on the same day.

The Panchayat polls will be held in five phases on February 16, 18, 20, 22, and 24. The counting of votes

false information in the affidavit will be punished with imprisonment for a period of six months, or with fine, or with both.

Similarly, any elected member of the three-tier Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) will be disqualified, if he/she has not furnished an affidavit containing particulars

The affidavits of candidates contesting for Zilla Parishad Member will be hoisted in the concerned district website so that people can know about the background of the candidates. However, the candidates contesting for Sarpanch and Samiti Sabhya will be displayed in the notice board of the Election Officer.

Punjab CM Charanjit Singh Channi recites verse to wish PM Narendra Modi long life

NEW DELHI(KCN): Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh



Channi on Thursday

expressed regret to Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the breach in his security during a visit to the state and recited a verse to extend his wishes for a long life to him, sources said. Channi used the occasion of Modi's

video interaction with chief ministers over the COVID-19 situation to convey the message to him. He regrets whatever happened during his visit to Punjab, Channi told Modi. The prime minister is

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BJP target for Odisha Panchayat polls: At least 5 zones in each Assembly

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): After the announcement of the election dates to the three-tier panchayat polls, the BJP on Wednesday decided to constitute an election management committee in each district. A senior leader of



the party will be in charge of each of the Assembly constituencies to oversee the electioneering. A five-member committee will be in charge of the selection of candidates in each of the Zilla Parishad zones and any dispute arising over candidate selection will be referred to the district election committee. The decision was taken at a meeting here chaired by state BJP president Samir Mohanty and attended by the party's state in-charge D

Purandeswari.

Purandeswari, on a two-day visit to the state, took a district-wise review of the party's preparedness with district functionaries in virtual mode. "It was decided to replicate the Amit Shah model of 'Vistarak Yojana' in which a dedicated worker of the BJP will be assigned a few booth committees. Their job will be to coordinate with booth committee members and reach every household to seek their support for the BJP," said Mohanty.

He said the zonal committees have been assigned the job for the selection of candidates and winnability will be the primary criteria. There will be a block-level coordinator who will be the link between the zone and district committees. Presidents and pravaris of all districts expressed their displeasure over the non-sharing of the voters' list by the district administration except Jajpur at the meeting. Though the State Election Commission (SEC) had promised to provide two sets of the voters' list to political parties on January 12, the same has not been complied with.

Srimandir Gears Up For Makar Sankranti

Puri (KCN): Preparedness is going in full swing for observation of a special ritual at

Shree Jagannath Temple here for Makar Sankranti tomorrow. For the Makar Vasha of the Trinity, Bada Odia Matha is preparing garlands made of different flowers and Basil leaves. The garlands will be served to the Lords.



Then the sibling deities will be dressed in Makara-chula (a sort of head-gear) Besha. Following these rituals, Gopalaballabha and Sakala Dhupa will be offered to the deities.

Again the deities were attired with ornaments as part of the Makar Chaurasi Besha before giving 'Darshan' to the devotees.

Usually, thousands of devotees throng the temple for 'Darshan' of the sibling deities and to partake in Makar Chaula. However, the temple has been closed for the devotees since 10 January due to rise in Covid infection in the State. The sibling deities at Shree Jagannath temple here will be decked up in the special Makar Chaurasi Besha on Friday. As part of the special rituals for the auspi-

For the special Makar Chaula Prasad for deities, five Makara Tadas will be given by Shree Alamchandi temple to Shree Jagannath temple this night.

Notably, Makar Chaula is the special Prasad for Makar Sankranti. It is prepared in every temple and Odia household. The rice used is preferably from the fresh harvest. There are slight variations in the ingredients depending on the regions where it is prepared.

In Odisha, people prepare Makar Chaula with uncooked newly-harvested rice, banana, coconut, jaggery, sesame, rasagola, khai/liaa and chhena puddings for 'naivedya' (offering) to Gods and Goddesses.

Three dead, over 10 injured as Bikaner-Guwahati Express derailed in Bengal, CM takes stock

Kolkata (KCN): At least three persons were killed and more than 20 injured when 12 coaches of the Bikaner-Guwahati Express train derailed near Domohani in West Bengal's Jalpaiguri district on Thursday, officials said.

The accident occurred around 5 p.m. in an area under Alipurduar division of Northeast Frontier Railway, an NFR spokesperson said in Guwahati, which is

over 360 km from the scene of the tragedy. Advertisement Commissioner, Railway Safety, will con-



duct an inquiry into the cause of the accident, a railway official said in New Delhi. Railway Minister Ashwini

Vaishnav, Railway Board Chairman and Director General (Safety) are also leaving for the accident

site, the official said. "Three bodies were recovered from the accident site. So far, around 20 people have been admitted to

hospital. The rescue operation is on at a war-footing," Jalpaiguri District Magistrate Moumita Godara Basu said.

An NFR spokesperson said in Guwahati that a relief and rescue train carrying a medical team has reach the accident site.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was in the middle of a meeting with chief ministers to review the COVID-19 situation, inquired West

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PM stresses on vaccination, localised measures to contain Covid without affecting livelihood

NEW DELHI(KCN): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday interacted with chief ministers over the COVID-19 situation

vaccination coverage.

"We have vaccinated nearly three crore adolescents within 10 days and this shows India's



potential and our preparedness to deal with this challenge," Modi said. The prime minister said that vaccines made in India are proving their superiority all over the world.

"It is a matter of pride for every Indian that today India has given the first dose to about 92 per cent of the adult population. The coverage of second dose has also reached around 70 per cent in the country," he said. Modi said the central and state governments must continue with pre-emptive, pro-active and collective approach followed so far in fighting the pandemic.

"The sooner we give precautionary dose to frontline workers and

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Nitesh Kumar became Peace Ambassador

Rourkela (KCN): International Action Council for Democratic World Government and Fight for World Peace and Implement Democratic World Government has made Social Activist, Journalist and Soft Skills Trainer Nitesh Kumar, it's peace ambassador from Rourkela of Odisha and it has also issued his identity card for the same. The organization demands to all world leaders to form a democratically elected World Government to maintain Peace and Harmony on this earth. Nitesh Kumar has thanked it's Chairman Rajeev Josef for giving him an opportunity to serve humanity by being a peace ambassador. Well wishers of

Social Activist Nitesh Kumar greeted him and congratulated him on the phone calls and on several social media platforms. He is the founder president of Social Organisation Super 20. Nitesh Kumar has been awarded with many recognition in the past as Indian Glory Award, Sangyan Drishti Org. honour, Digital media awards, Corona Warriors Award by Sanatan Bhagwa Raksha Dal and Working Journalists of India, Rajiv Gandhi National Excellence Award by Global Indian Association, Felicitation by Odisha Pradesh Harijan Samiti etc. He has been honored on various other forums as well.

Nitesh Kumar became Peace Ambassador for IACDWG

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Several types of Social work by UVP At Cuttack Sadar

Cuttack Sadar (KCN): Cuttack sadar based leading social organisation Utkal Vikash

tion camp, orfan home seva, old age home seva, providing drinking water in summer time, the li-



Parisad(UVP) doing continuous variety of social work on the guidance of Honourable President Er. Prakash Chandra Sethi respectively. For the betterment of society the seva work at all panchayat, villages like lighting work, Plantation in all areas, Corona awareness with nose mask sanitizer distribution, Blood donation camp, Organ dona-

library house development at rural area with creat readers for literature growth, awarded to students for their best quality, awarded to athletic, poet, social worker, corona warriors team as many type of seva is going on. The President Er. Sehi requested the public to join with dedication in this great social work at Cuttack Sadar then we can do wonders for society.

Receipt warning for dealers

Cuttack: Automobile dealers cannot charge any amount from a customer without giving a proper receipt. An order on this effect has been issued to all the RTOs with an instruction to take action against the defaulting dealers.

In a press note, State Transport Authority, Odisha has informed that starting Jan 1st, 2022, Odisha Transport Department is issuing Driving License and Registration Certificate of vehicles in digital mode. Resultantly, the fee of registration of vehicles payable by purchaser has been reduced from Rs.282 to Rs.140 vide Commerce & Transport (Transport) Department Notification No.10900/T dtd.21.12.2021. However, it is learnt that some dealers are not passing on this benefit to the customers and continue to charge the earlier fees. Therefore this order has been issued.

It has been alleged that some vehicle dealers are charging extra amount from customers who are buying two or four-wheelers. The government charges only registration and tax amount for new vehicles and hence, distributors should charge only that and not take any extra amount in the name of handling charges etc. If they need to charge any amount for a value added service a proper receipt has to be issued for the same. The order further says that that it is mandatory for all the dealers to display details of payment to be made by purchaser for each category of vehicle on a notice board on a conspicuous place in their showroom clearly visible to customers.

SUM removes bony tail

Bhubaneswar(KCN): Neurosurgeons at the Institute of Medical Sciences and SUM Hospital, SOA's faculty of medicine here, have come

known case of a bony human tail in thoracic area, Prof. (Dr.) Ashok Kumar Mahapatra, eminent neurosurgeon and Vice-Chancellor of

end of spine in Coccygeal region, he said adding this one, however, was located in the thoracic area. Prof. (Dr.)

sitting which was conducted on November 25 last and had been doing well. It is a rare case and needs to be reported to increase public



across a rare human tail which is said to be the first bony tail in thoracic region to be reported in the world.

SOA, told newpersons on Thursday. Human tail is a rare congenital condition and 195 such cases have been reported in the world so far but true bony human tail is exceedingly rare and 26 cases have been reported and all at the lower

Mahapatra, who along with neurosurgeon Dr. Rama Chandra Deo, conducted the surgery to remove the tail, said it was a unique case of true thoracic bony human tail in a new born baby. The baby successfully underwent three surgeries in one

awareness. Neurosurgeon Dr. S o u b h a g y a Panigrahi was also present at the press conference. Most people are not born with a tail because the structure disappears or absorbs into the body during fetal development and forms the vestigial tail bone or Coccyx, he said.

Paddy Procurement Mandi Inaugurated in Khordha



Khordha (KCN): For collecting paddy from farmers of Khordha Block a paddy procurement mandi was launched at Kanpur Primary Co-operative Society here. Collector Khordha Sangram Keshari Mohapatra

inaugurated the Mandi. Speaking at the inaugural programme Collector Mr. Mohapatra informed that for current fiscal 2021-22 districts first mandi was inaugurated today. Farmers can enable fetching

their paddy here and asked supply department and the co-operative agency who is conducting the mandi delivering good service to visiting farmers. In the district of Khordha 139 Primary Co-op-

erative society open paddy procurement mandi. The function was attending by Civil Supply Officer (CSO) Khordha, Secretary Kanpur Primary co-operative society and other officials were present.

Senior executive were confronted brutal attack by villagers in Thakurani mines



Barbil.13th Dec(KCN).Some senior executives of Jagannath Steel were deadly attacked by the local villagers as per report.. Anil Rahi, senior vice president (operation) and GM (HR) JyotiPatra were sustained serious injuries. Due to the serious condition of both of them, they were shifted to some private hospitals for better treatment. According to the allegation of the villagers, these two officers used to ignore the local educated unemployed youth in

the appointment. They used to pursue employee to work for long hours, deduct their salary, suspend them for minor mistake and too terminate illegally. Jagannath steel is working as MDO in Arcelor Mittal Nippon steel company 's Thakurani mines under Joda mining zone of Keonjhar district in Orissa state. Similarly other staffs are too demanding to management to arrest the culprits to boost up their morals.

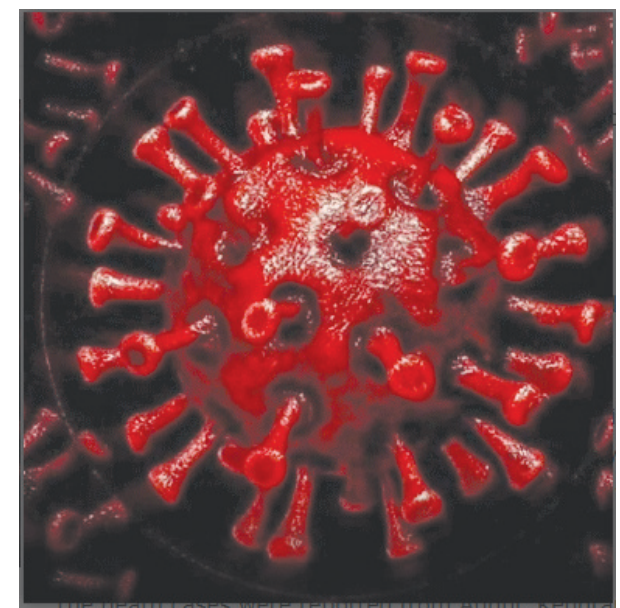
Covid Cases Cross 10K Mark

Bhubaneswar(KCN): With the passing of each day, the Covid cases go on increasing in the State. Today, the cases have crossed the 10,000 mark as the State registered 10,059 fresh cases during the last 24 hours.

Sambalpur (570). With the new cases, the active caseload in Odisha reached

past 24 hours. The daily test positivity rate (TPR) of Odisha has also in-

State. The infection rate is expected to go further up and reach a peak in the next few days, he said.



According to the Health Department, out of 10,059 freshly infected persons, 872 belong to the age group of 0 to 18 years. While 5,833 were detected in quarantine, another 4,226 are local contact cases.

44,349. The Health department has confirmed the death of another three persons due to the virus. The death cases were reported from Angul, Kendrapara and Nayagarh districts. A total of 81,065 samples were tested in the State in the

increased to 12.40 per cent from 11.76 per cent reported yesterday. The TPR was 10.25% on the previous day (January 11).

"The hospitalization rate remained quite low as compared to the second wave. However, we are continuing to strengthen our healthcare infrastructure, medicine and oxygen supply as no one can predict the virus," Mohapatra said.

State director health services, Bijay Mohapatra said the infection rate is on an upward trend in the

Only 6.51 per cent occupancy in general beds, 12.51 per cent in ICU and 3.62 per cent ventilator beds in the State till date, he informed. Further, the director added that steps are being taken taking the positivity rate, hospitalizations & death rate into consideration.

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Vikrant Massey's 'Cargo' to be screened at South by Southwest festival in US



MUMBAI(KCN): Vikrant Massey-starrer "Cargo" will have its North American premiere at the 2020 edition of South by Southwest (SXSW) festival. The science fiction film, written and directed by Arati

Kadav, also features Massey's "Mirzapur" co-star Shweta Tripathi and actor Nandu Madhav. The story revolves around a lonely demon Prahastha who has been working on a spaceship for years for the Post Death

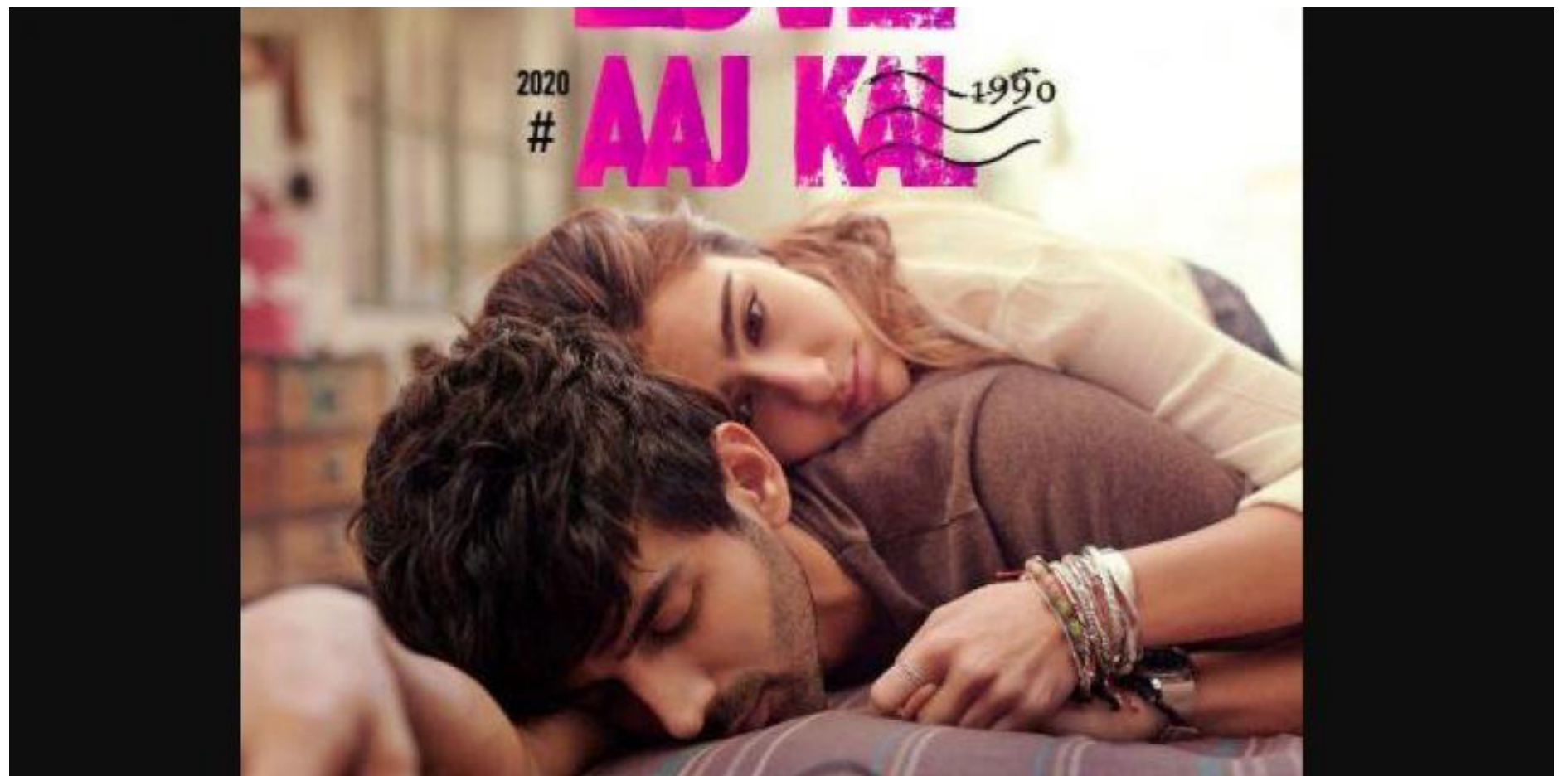
Transition services with the help of a female astronaut where dead people are recycled for rebirth. "Cargo" will be screened under the Global section of the film festival which will run from March 13 to 21.

Vikrant, who most recently featured alongside Deepika Padukone in "Chhapaak", said it makes him "proud" that the film has been chosen for the prestigious film gala. "Cargo" is one of the first Indian sci-fi

films to be there. And I feel blessed for receiving so much applause not just from the country but across the world. People have loved Chhapaak, they have embraced it with open arms and now 'Cargo' being selected

at this big a platform, I feel really fortunate," the actor said in a statement. "Cargo", which had its India premiere at the 2019 MAMI Film Festival under the spotlight section, is produced by Arati, Navin Shetty, Shlok Sharma and Anurag Kashyap.

First look of Imtiaz Ali's Love Aaj Kal two released



Kartik Aryan and Sara Ali Khan are the new romantic pair in Imtiaz Ali's Love Aaj Kal. Yes, the film's titled just that, not Love Aaj

Kal 2 or Aaj Kal. In a poster, we get a glimpse of their characters, Veer and Zoe, nodding off on top of each other. The poster also re-

veals the film's timeline, which will run from 1990 to 2020. "Meet Veer and Zoe, captured in their element. It's in these

simple, candid moments that love plays peekaboo, right? Love Aaj Kal," Imtiaz wrote. "Meet Veer and Zoe. Come get wound up

in our whirlwind wonderland Love Aaj Kal trailer out tomorrow," Sara added. The new Love Aaj Kal was shot in

Himachal Pradesh, Mumbai, and Rajasthan. The sequel also stars Randeep Hooda. The film is slated for Valentine's Day release.

No proof to link Netflix's '13 Reasons Why' to high US suicide rates: Study

NEW YORK(KCN): Contrary to the findings of a 2019 study that associated the Netflix series "13 Reasons Why" with an increase in monthly suicide rates among youth after the show's release, a new analysis finds no evidence to draw such a link. The reanalysis, published in the journal PLOS ONE, revealed that after controlling for the dramatic increase in adolescent suicide in recent years, the show's release had no clear effect. "Our reanalysis casts

considerable doubt on the show having an effect on boys," said study author Dan Romer and research director of the Annenberg Public Policy Centre (APPC) from the University of Pennsylvania in the US. The reanalysis found that the increase in the suicide rate for boys observed in the original study by Jeffrey Bridge and colleagues for three months after the series' release was no longer evident after controlling for the ongoing trend in adolescent suicide.

In addition, the increase seen during the first month of the release began the month prior to the release, making it difficult to attribute the rise to the show. The reanalysis found no effects in the subsequent months of that year. The original time-series analysis of suicide rates found an additional 195 suicide deaths among boys ages 10 to 17 during the nine months following the series' release, on March 31, 2017, but did not find a similar result among adoles-

cent girls. Romer said he questioned that finding for two reasons: "First, contagion would be expected to be stronger for girls than boys because this show focuses on the suicide of a high school girl. Second, the prior analysis didn't take into account strong secular trends in suicide, especially in boys from 2016-2017." When the first season of the Netflix show appeared in 2017, it created widespread concern that its graphic portrayal of a teenage girl's suicide

would lead to imitation among vulnerable young people, especially adolescent girls. The first such study found evidence of a jump in suicides among boys ages 10 to 17 in the three months following the show's release, but no effect for girls. Romer said that analysis relied on a forecasting method to project the likely trend in suicide for 2017. But that forecast failed to anticipate the actual trend. A second study by different researchers, published in JAMA

Psychiatry had a similar problem, Romer said. That study found an effect in boys and girls 10 to 19 years old in the three months following the series' release. But it similarly failed to control for the secular trend in suicide, again making it difficult to separate the effects of the show from the trend. APPC's reanalysis did find a modest rise in the suicide rate among adolescent girls during the first month following the release of "13 Reasons Why," but it was not statistically reliable, the researchers said.

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Effective methods for Facial Hair removal- Shahnaz Husain

All women have light coloured body and facial hair, but some of it is thicker and grows faster than others

Generally, around 10% of women battle the problem of extensive, coarse and dark facial hair growth.

The unwanted hair growth in females is mainly caused due to hormonal or genetic disorder, stress, prescription drugs, higher than normal levels of male hormones in the body or a combination of various such factors.

Every woman wants to look beautiful, soft and smooth without any dark hair on face or other parts of body skin. The various products available in the market to get rid of thick facial hair can be expensive and irritate skin due to harsh chemicals.

There are many easy and safe methods to remove facial hairs though it may take some time to show results. Natural treatments are best remedies in removing unwanted facial hairs. Coarse and thick growth of hair, especially on the face, presents quite a problem, where beauty is concerned. All women are troubled by it, because it detracts from femininity.

Where removal of facial hair is concerned, it falls into two categories – temporary and permanent. The method should be chosen according to the quantity or thickness of hair, its location and rate of growth. It is also essential to get information about the advantages and disadvantages of the various methods. Temporary hair removal, as the term suggests, requires repeat treatments, as and when there is re-growth. Methods such as depilation, shaving, tweezing, threading, waxing, epilation, come under the temporary category. Several hair removal creams are available, which contain chemical ingredients to dissolve hair. However, chemical hair removal creams can sometimes cause skin discolouration (dark patches) and should preferably be avoided on the face, especially on the "upper lip" area, which is particularly sensitive. Needless to say, a hair removing cream should be patch-tested

before use. This is done by applying it on the inner arm. If there is a reaction within 10 to 15 minutes, it should not be used.

Dr. G.L.Mahajan



Home remedies do not remove hair, but may lessen growth over a period of time. Make a thick paste of sugar, lemon juice and water and apply it in the direction of hair growth. Wash off when it dries. Apply it once or twice a week. Or, 3 teaspoons of powdered barley

lemon juice. Apply and leave on for 20 minutes and then rinse off with water. Do this two

to three times a week. It is said to discourage hair growth over a period of time. Mix a tablespoon of honey, lemon juice each with five tablespoons of potato juice. Meanwhile, grind the lentils (soaked overnight) to a smooth paste. Add all the ingredients and apply the mixture for about 20 minutes on the affected area. Wash it off once it is completely dry. This paste makes a thin crust that helps in hair removal. Plus, potatoes help in bleaching the hair, making them less visible.

An effective and common facial hair removal method is threading. It is useful for shaping the eyebrows and also for removal of facial hair on areas like the upper lip and chin. There may be slight redness after threading, which reduces in a day. It is a popular method of hair removal. Tweezing is another method, where one hair is removed at a time. It is a suitable method for shaping the eyebrows, or to remove solitary hairs from the chin area, or eyebrows. However, a word of caution – hair from a mole must not be re-

moved without consulting a doctor.

Waxing can also be used for facial hair removal. Soft, strip waxing is useful. Roll on waxing kits are also available. It is said to be a breakthrough technology that may be used for facial hair. It is becoming popular as it is easy to use and also more hygienic. The results are also said to be longer lasting. This relatively new method has a roll-on applicator, which is placed in a device that heats the product, but at a low temperature. It is then rolled on the area and removed with a strip. It is said to be useful in removal of short facial hair.

Hair removal by laser is becoming increasingly popular as a permanent method. Laser produces an intense beam of light, which is absorbed by the hair follicles. The laser disables the hair follicle's ability to produce hair. The heat produced by the laser light is controlled by the operator. A strong laser light leads to more heat. That is why cooling devices are used to prevent damage to the rest of the skin. The advantage of a laser is that the laser light can scan broader areas. Therefore, fewer sessions may be required. It should be done under supervision of a doctor. The temporary known side effects are redness, swelling and itching. The main risk in laser treatment is the possibility of skin burns, due to excessive heat of the laser light. Regrowth occurs in some cases, but is slower and scantier. It is very important to find a good laser clinic. So, before choosing the clinic, it is essential to find out its reputation, by making enquiries and talking to people who have been through the treatment. It is an expensive procedure and one should also discuss the approximate number of sessions that may be needed. Laser can be used to remove hair from the entire face, or from particular areas, like upper lips, chin or cheeks. The time taken for the actual treatment is not much. As re-growth may occur, one may have to repeat the treatment after four or five months.

New Delhi

Dissenting judges now a rarity in the Supreme Court

Justice is an imaginary concept because those who get it are those who can pay top lawyers



while those who cannot, dare not approach a polyvocal Supreme Court. This is why law minister Kiren Rijju's axiom of a cordial relationship between the government and the judiciary is worrying. Perhaps that may explain why

the top court initially did not come to the migrants' rescue in 2020.

Justice Dhananjaya Chandrachud declared dissent is a must in democracy but he forgot to add that dissent among the judges who hear contentious cases like the Ayodhya and Rafale matters in which the government has a major stake, is equally important. Absence of dissent among the judges means the Supreme Court has ceased to be a polyvocal court and now speaks with one voice like the civil law countries such as Germany where judges deliver their judgments *in seriatim* which means nobody knows who has authored the judgment. The last judge who was known to dissent from his brother judges was Justice Jasti Chelameshwar who refused to attend collegium meetings to appoint judges until there was more transparency.

But today, his son, Bhushan Jasti Cehlameshwar has become one of the youngest additional advocate generals to be appointed by the Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy government in Andhra Pradesh. It is this same chief minister who alleged the present CJI N.V. Ramana was phoning up his parent high court to allocate cases against Reddy's government to benches which would deliver verdicts against him (Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy.)

Compare the alacrity with which retired Justice Indu Malhotra was appointed to probe the breach of security in Punjab for Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the tardiness of the apex court to issue directions in the

petitions against those at Haridwar in U.P.

Dr Olav Albuquerque

who called for genocide against the Muslims. What makes Rijju happy should make us unhappy. It took over 76 public intellectuals, like a retired Admiral of the Indian Navy, and retired Justice Madan Lokur to point out the Supreme Court seemed to have abdicated its responsibility to uphold the fundamental rights of civil society.

This may explain why today there are few dissenting judgments in the apex court which sits in benches of two or more unlike the 25 high courts where judges sit singly. Agreeing with the government is easy when the latter decides who will enter the Supreme Court. The government will never allow maverick judges like Akil Kureshi to enter the Supreme Court for consent guarantees ascent within the judiciary while great dissenters like the late Justice K. Subba Rao who dissented 48 times during his nine-year-term in the Supreme Court will never be replicated.

Broadly speaking, there are three types of judgments, the majority judgments, the concurring judgments and the dissenting verdicts. Conservative judgments stay strictly within the law while the liberal judgments like the Ayodhya and Rafale judgments delivered by forward-looking judges who look forward to post-retirement sinecures.

These liberal judgments traverse beyond law to be influenced by economics, politics + religion of contemporary society. Even dissenting judges will not risk offending the same society from where they have been elevated, opined an advocate well-known for his dissenting arguments, Mathews Nedumpara, who founded the National Lawyers Campaign for Judicial Transparency and Accountability.

Majority verdicts are delivered by judges who agree, perhaps not infrequently, with the government perspective. Conversely, concurring judgments must give reasons which differ from the majority. But a dissenting judgment takes courage and skills to point out the flaws in the reasoning of their

brother judges. These dissenting judgments are scholarly expositions of the law upholding the people's rights against state oppression. Dissenting judges like Hidayatullah declared in the *habeas corpus* case that life existed before the Constitution came into force which was why it could not be suspended during an Emergency. Such dissenting judgments uphold democracy while majority verdicts may succumb to autocracy. The unanimous five-judge Ayodhya judgment was exactly what the government wanted. And the five judges celebrated their unanimous verdict at Taj Mansingh hotel in Delhi to uphold their conviviality. Two of them were future CJIs. Soon after he retired, CJI Sharad Bobde visited the RSS shrine at Nagpur which betrayed his ideology for an ideal judge keeps a blank mind. This is why great minds like those of the former CJIs Ranjan Gogoi, Sharad Bobde and our future CJI D.Y. Chandrachud find it much easier to conform than confront the government on emotive issues of religion, or foreign policy. This is why the Supreme Court junked a petition asking the judiciary to direct the Modi government to take action against China which used the Corona virus to commit genocide. And in Kerala, a judge imposed hefty costs on a litigant for daring to challenge Modi's mugshot on his vaccination certificate. Rarely, very rarely, and in secrecy, a chief minister may direct a judge what to write, as Justice Ranjan Gogoi confessed in his book, *Justice for the Judge*, describing how a former Assam chief minister Tarun Gogoi, told his (Justice Gogoi's) mother to influence his judgment. The government is interested in just 0.5 per cent of the cases before the apex court while it is indifferent to the rest.

Having judges like former Justice Arun Mishra in the Supreme Court who was unabashed admirer of Prime Minister Narendra Modi minimizes dissent just as the former CJI P.N. Bhagwati congratulated the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on her electoral success just as he congratulated the Janata Party prior to that. Judges like Arun Mishra

and Bhagwati may have always looked forward to their careers.

The last dissenting judgement which made waves was Jasti Chelameshwar's dissent in the NJAC case which struck down the 99th amendment and the NJAC Act as it encroached on judicial independence. Chelameshwar declared the collegium was a cabal of opacity where a CJI or some other senior judge proposed his own candidate for elevation as a judge with the favour being returned. Since October 2017, Chelameshwar succeeded in getting the then CJI Deepak Misra to upload collegium resolutions.

The next crop of seven future CJIs are also unlikely to challenge the diktat of populist governments. India's first-ever woman CJI will have a tenure of three months but she is no iron lady who will oppose tradition. Her counterpart in Pakistan, Justice Ayesha Malik, an Oxbridge elitist, has been appointed to Pakistan's Supreme Court despite strong opposition from President Abdul Latif Afridi and the Pakistan Bar Council. Like Justice Bangalore Nagarathna, she too may consent but not dissent.

And so, behind-the-scenes, a judge like Ranjan Gogoi is happy when his daughter marries the son of late Justice Valmiki Mehta just as Justice Shelat was allegedly unhappy when a brother of late Justice Bhagwati refused to marry his daughter, according to Supreme Whispers by Abhinav Chandrachud. These are human failings, which make us realize that judges like the rest of us, eat, drink and arrange marriages for their offspring with other judges' offspring in the hope that one day, their offspring might also make it to the Supreme Court.

It is all in the family, one might conclude.

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 and a Vice President of the National Lawyers Campaign for Judicial Transparency and Accountability. He topped the LL.M exam of the University of Bombay in 1990 and was a chairman question paper setter-cum-examiner of the same university.

Talks fail, Air India Express cabin crew to go on indefinite strike from January 15

KOCHI: The cabin crew of Air India Express, which was recently acquired by Tata Sons, will go on an indefinite strike from Saturday as the talks held with the assistant labour com-

missioner failed to yield any results. The Air India Express Employees Union (AIXEU) gave a call for an indefinite strike as the management curtailed the contract period of the cabin crew from five years to one year. The online meeting convened by assistant labour commissioner (central) Aneish Ravindra failed to yield results as the management refused to accept the demands

raised by the union. "The management refused to revise the contract period of the cabin crew," said AIXEU (BMS) president Vijaykumar KK. The commissioner has called for another

round of conciliatory talks on Friday. We have not withdrawn our strike notice yet. If the management continues their adamant stand on Friday, the cabin crew of Air India Express across the country will go on an indefinite strike," he said. According to the cabin crew, the management has reduced their contract period from five years to one year, while other staff and new recruits have



been provided a five-year contract. "The management said that the contract will be revised by Tata Sons after the takeover. There is no guarantee on the statement as we

Vijayakumar. Air India Express operates 86 flights per week from the state, both domestically and internationally. The strike will affect flight operations, causing inconvenience to passengers. Air India Express chief of HR T Vijaykrishnan and deputy chief of HR Satish Nair represented the management in the talks. Air India Express Employees Union president KK Vijayakumar, state secretary KV Madhukumar and Public Sector Federation deputy general secretary (BMS) PK Sathyan attended the meeting.

haven't received any official communication from Tata's end," said a cabin crew member. "This injustice has been meted out to the cabin crew who were part of the Vande Bharat mission that repatriated thousands of Indians stranded abroad during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is unfortunate that the management is trying to retrench the cabin crew by reducing the contract period," said

nience to passengers. Air India Express chief of HR T Vijaykrishnan and deputy chief of HR Satish Nair represented the management in the talks. Air India Express Employees Union president KK Vijayakumar, state secretary KV Madhukumar and Public Sector Federation deputy general secretary (BMS) PK Sathyan attended the meeting.

US hits North Korean officials with sanctions after missile test

WASHINGTON: The Biden administration on Wednesday slapped sanctions on five North Korean officials in its first response to Pyongyang's latest ballistic missile test and later announced it will also seek new U.N. sanctions. The Treasury Department said it was imposing penalties on the five officials over their roles in obtaining equipment and technology for the North's missile programs. In addition, the State Department ordered sanctions against another North Korean, a Russian man and a Russian company for their broader support of North Korea's weapons of mass destruction activities. The Treasury's moves came just hours after North Korea said leader Kim Jong Un oversaw a successful flight test of a hypersonic missile on Tuesday that he claimed would greatly increase the country's nuclear "war deterrent." Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, tweeted Wednesday night that following designations by Treasury and State the U.S. is also proposing U.N. sanctions in response to North Korea's six ballistic missile launches since September, "each of which were in violation of UN Security Council resolutions."

A U.S. diplomat said the U.S. is continuing to coordinate with its council partners on the proposed new sanctions.

One of the five North Koreans targeted by Treasury is based in Russia, while the other four are based in China. All are accused of providing money, goods or services to North Korea's Second Academy of Natural Sciences, which Treasury says is heavily involved in the country's military defence programs.

"The DPRK's latest missile launches are further evidence that it continues to advance prohibited programs despite the international community's calls for diplomacy and denuclearization," said Treasury's chief of terrorism and financial intelligence, Brian Nelson. He referred to the North by the acronym of its official name: the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The sanctions freeze any assets that the targets have in U.S. jurisdictions, bar Americans from doing business with them and subject foreign companies and individuals to potential penal-

ties for transactions with them. Shortly before the announcement, North Korea's state news agency reported that the latest missile launch involved a hypersonic glide vehicle, which after its release from the rocket booster demonstrated "glide jump flight" and "corkscrew manoeuvring" before hitting a sea target 1,000 kilometres (621 miles) away.

Photos released by the agency showed a missile mounted with a pointed cone-shaped payload soaring into the sky while leaving a trail of orange flames, with Kim watching from a small cabin with top officials, including his sister Kim Yo Jong.

The launch was North Korea's second test of its purported hypersonic missile in a week, a type of weaponry it first tested in September, as Kim Jong Un continues a defiant push to expand his nuclear weapons capabilities in the face of international sanctions, pandemic-related difficulties and deadlocked diplomacy with the United States.

The U.N. Security Council initially imposed sanctions on North Korea after its first nuclear test in 2006 and made them tougher in response to further nuclear tests and an increasingly sophisticated ballistic missile program. In 2018, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley said the sanctions had cut off all North Korean exports and 90% of its trade and disbanded the pool of workers which North Korea sent abroad to earn hard currency — but Pyongyang has managed to evade some measures.

China and Russia circulated a draft resolution in November urging the Security Council to end a host of sanctions against North Korea including a ban on exports of seafood and textiles, a cap on imports of refined petroleum products and a prohibition on its citizens working overseas and sending home their earnings. It stressed the economic difficulties in North Korea and said these and other sanctions should be lifted "with the intent of enhancing the livelihood of the civilian population." China and Russia are both veto-wielding members of the Security Council and whether they will support new sanctions on North Korea remains to be seen.

'Baby Shark Dance' becomes first video to cross 10 billion views on YouTube

SEOUL: 'Baby Shark Dance', a globally popular sing-and-

song, which was first released in June 2016 as part of the Korean

and No. 6 on the British Official Charts in 2019. Population Fund (UNFPA). By a simple calculation,



dance video for the megahit children's song of the same name, became the first video to garner more than 10 billion views in YouTube history, the song's creator has said. The South Korean track had an overwhelming lead over the runner-up, the music video for Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee's megahit 'Despacito', which has secured 7.7 billion views, reports Yonhap News Agency. The 'Baby Shark'

band Pinkfong's song series for children, has become a global phenomenon with its catchy tune and addictive lyrics, "Baby shark, doo, doo, doo, doo, doo, doo." The song set a new Guinness World Records title as the most-viewed video on YouTube by garnering 7 billion views in November 2020 and has since stayed on the throne for 15 consecutive months. It even made it to global music charts, ranking No. 32 on Billboard's Hot 100

Pinkfong said 10 billion is a huge number that surpasses the world's population of 7.8 billion announced by the United Nations

the number of views could show that all people living on the planet have seen the video at least once, the group added. Pakistan Taliban confirm ex-spokesman's death in Afghanistan PESHAWAR: The Pakistani Taliban on Thursday confirmed the weekend killing of a former spokesman in neighbouring Afghanistan and vowed to avenge the murder. The outlawed Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, which is known as TTP, announced on Twitter the death of the man known as Mohammad Khorasani, which is an alias. His real name was Khalid Balti. The confirmation comes days after Pakistani security officials said the former spokesman of TTP had been shot dead in Afghanistan's Nangarhar province. The TTP did not confirm the claim until Thursday. The current TTP spokesman, who also goes by the name Mohammad Khorasani, said on Twitter that Balti was killed on Jan.



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SP-RLD alliance announces first list of 29 candidates for Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections

NOIDA: The Samajwadi Party-Rashtriya Lok Dal alliance on Thursday

Madhusudan Sharma from Bah, Amarpal Sharma from Sahibabad, Aslam

Pritam Singh from Govardhan, Mahesh Kumar Jatav from Agra (Rural), Sikri

Prasad Suryavanshi from Khair, Prasann Chudhary from Shamli, Anil Kumar from Purqazi, Rajpal Singh Saini from Khatauli, Munshi Ram from Nahtaur and Ahmad Hameed from Baghat.

Of the 29 candidates announced Thursday, Babita Devi of the RLD is the lone woman nominee who will be putting up the electoral fight from Baldev assembly constituency.

Of the seats, Agra Rural, Agra Cantt, Baldev, Khair, Purqazi and Hapur are reserved for Scheduled Caste (SC) candidates. All these seats fall in western region of Uttar Pradesh and will go to polls in the first phase on February 10. The election results will be announced on March 10.



announced its first list of 29 candidates for the first phase of Uttar Pradesh assembly polls. Of the 29 seats, the SP has fielded candidates on 10 and the RLD on 19, according to a list shared on social media by the two parties which had announced a tie-up last year.

The SP has fielded Kunwar Singh from Agra Cantt,

Chaudhary from Dhaulana, Salman Saeed from Kol, Zafar Alam from Aligarh, Nahid Hassan from Kairana, Pankaj Malik from Charthawal, Shahid Manzoor from Kithaur and Rafeeq Ansari from Meerut. The RLD has fielded Pradeep Chaudhary (Guddu) from Sadabad, Tejpal Singh from Chhata,

Brijesh Chahar from Fatehpur, Rautan Singh from Khairagarh, Sudesh Sharma from Modinagar, and Madan Bhaiyya from Loni.

The RLD has also fielded Gajraj Singh from Hapur, Avtar Singh Bhadana from Jewar, Haji Yunus from Bulandshahr, Dilnawaz Khan from Syana, Bhagwati

Days after busting ISYF-backed terror module, Punjab Police seizes 2.5 kg of RDX

CHANDIGARH: Close on the heels of busting a terror module backed by the International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF), Punjab Police on Thursday said it has seized 2.5 kg of RDX, besides arms

and the DGP was quoted as saying in a statement issued by the state police.

Kumar was among the six ISYF operatives arrested by police on Monday. He has confessed to have hurled grenades

and the handler of this terror module, Sukhpreet Singh alias Sukh of Kharal village in Dinanagar.

According to the statement, since June-July last year, Rode has figured prominently in

of six of its operatives.

The Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar police had seized six hand grenades, a 9 mm pistol and a .30 bore rifle, along with live bullets and magazines, from the ar-



rested men. The ISYF is supported by Pakistan's intelligence agency ISI.

"In two instances, some unidentified persons had hurled hand grenades at Pathankot -- one grenade was hurled outside Triveni Dwar, outside the gate of Army cantonment at Pathankot, on November 21, 2021 at about 9 pm, while another one was hurled near Chakki Pull on November 11, 2021 at about 9:30 pm," police had said in a statement.

Separate FIRs in connection with the incidents were registered at the Pathankot Division 2 and Division 1 police stations respectively, they had said.

operationalising a series of terror modules through his network in Punjab and abroad. A large number of militant hardware, including RDX, tiffin IEDs, associated explosive material for assembling IEDs, hand grenades and firearms, as also narcotics have been pushed in by him from across the international border, mainly via drones and using his network of cross-border smugglers, the police said.

On Monday, police had said they had solved a case involving a recent grenade blast outside the gate of the Army cantonment in Pathankot by busting a major terror module backed by the ISYF with the arrest

in two separate incidents in Pathankot, according to the statement.

Senior Superintendent of Police, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar, Kanwardeep Kaur said following the revelations made by Kumar, teams were sent to Gurdaspur district and the explosive material was recovered.

According to the prime accused, it was to be used in assembling improvised explosive devices (IEDs). She said the consignment was provided to Kumar by the self-proclaimed chief of the ISYF (Rode), Lakhbir Singh Rode, who is presently residing in Pakistan, through his associate

Omicron Tally to 170

Bhubaneswar: The State has detected 67 fresh Omicron cases on Wednesday taking the total tally to 170. The Institute of Life Science (ILS), Bhubaneswar, has informed the Health and Family Welfare Department about detection of new Omicron cases after conducting genome sequencing of the samples. However, the details of new Omicron cases are yet to be revealed by the officials.

Meanwhile, the State has reported 8,778 fresh Covid cases on Wednesday taking the active caseload to 35,242.

As per the information shared on the State Covid dashboard, out of the 8778 cases, 792 are children below 18 years of age. Highest 2,615 cases were reported from Khurda district, followed by Sundargarh (1252),

Cuttack (766), Sambalpur (596), Mayurbhanj (338),

Districts like S a u n d a r g a r h , Khurda, Sambalpur



Balasore (231), Balangir (216), Puri (216) and Jharsuguda (203). Remaining districts have reported below 200 cases.

A total of 74,611 samples were tested in the State in the past 24 hours. The daily test positivity rate (TPR) increased to 11.76% from 10.25% recorded on the previous day.

and Cuttack have been put under red zone due to reporting of high number of cases while Balasore has been classified as yellow zone. Remaining 25 districts are under the green zone as these districts have below 1000 active cases.

The Covid infection rate is increasing in other countries and some other States too.

Here in Odisha also the cases are increasing and the TPR also increased to 11.7% as four to five districts reports high rate, said director of public health, Niranjan Mishra.

However, most of the people infected with the virus get mild symptoms or asymptomatic and rate of hospitalization & fatality and demand of ICU beds have remained very low, said Mishra, adding, "We can say the situation is totally under control now."

"As per our prediction, such scenario will continue to remain throughout January, February and some days of March," he said. All district collectors have been asked to adopt cluster containment strategy to break the chain of transmission of the virus, added the director.

Pakistan central bank panel recommends complete ban on cryptocurrency, related activities

ISLAMABAD: A panel of Pakistan's central bank has recommended a complete ban on cryptocurrency and other related activities in the country, according to a media report on Thursday, days after a top court ordered a probe into a USD 100-million digital currency fraud. After the scam became public, the Sindh High Court (SHC) directed the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to constitute a committee under the bank's Deputy Governor to probe the fraud.

The other members of the panel were from the ministries of finance, information-technology, the telecommunication authority, and the Security and Exchange Commission.

The court sought the committee's opinion on whether any form of cryptocurrency could be permitted under Pakistani law, The News International reported.

In its report, the committee suggested a complete ban on all cryptocurrency and other related activities in the country.

Based on a risk-benefit analysis, it has come

changes, stating that exchanges like Binance, OctaFx, among others, should be banned for their unauthorised operations, while proportionate and dissuasive penalties should be imposed on them. Meanwhile, a petitioner at the SHC opposed the recommendations.

The SHC's division bench, headed by Justice Mohammad Karim Khan Agha, directed the committee to send a copy of the report to the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Law.

The ministries will consider the same at joint meetings and reach a final decision whether or not cryptocurrency, in any form, can be allowed in Pakistan and, if so, what would be its regulatory framework.

The court directed the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Law to place a joint recommendation as to whether the business of cryptocurrency in any form can legally be carried out in Pakistan as this was also causing difficulty at this point in time for those persons engaged in it — keeping in view the Federal Investigation Agency's constant raids and



to light that the risks of cryptocurrencies "far outweigh" its benefits, the newspaper reported. The committee observed cryptocurrency was traded in speculation, where people could be enticed to invest for short-term capital gains.

The committee explained such enticement may result in the flight of precious foreign exchange reserves, as well as transfer of illicit funds from the country.

The committee said there must be a ban on unauthorised operations of cryptocurrency ex-

freezing of bank accounts.

The court directed Secretary Finance and Secretary Law, and other senior officers from the Ministry of Law to appear before it and file a report on the matter on April 11, according to the News International report.

Last week, the Federal Investigation Agency of Pakistan detected an online fraud of USD 100 million (Rs 17,587 billion) using a cryptocurrency and issued notice to the local representative of Binance - the world's largest cryptocurrency exchange.

Angel of the dead who gives dignity to unclaimed bodies

AHMEDABAD: Venilal Malwala has cremated over 10,000 unclaimed bodies in two decades in Gujarat's Surat. A 'jari' businessman, Malwala has neglected his business and spent his own money to give dignity to the

about Rs 1,000 on a cremation. "Despite conducting hundreds of funerals over the years, the ones I performed in the last two years during Covid-19 have shaken me. Their relatives were in hospital, but never came back



dead. "I have one regret. I could not save a man's life in 1998. He was injured in an accident and policemen delayed me in rushing him to the hospital. The man succumbed while police kept harassing me. That day, I decided to set up a trust to take care of the funeral of those who remain unidentified," he says. Malwala recently organised an exhibition of photographs of more than 1,700 corpses so that people might just find their missing ones. "We hold this exhibition in January every year where we display pictures of the people whom we have cremated. This helps many people to identify their loved ones whom we might have cremated as an unclaimed body," says Malwala. His Agni Dah Seva Kendra spends

to claim the bodies," he says. Shiv Nath Prasad Giri's son Vinod came from Uttar Pradesh to work in south Gujarat's Umargam factory, but suddenly he disappeared. "For a long time, there was no trace of Vinod. Then we came to know about the photo exhibition organised by Veni Bhai. We found our son in one of the photos. Venibhai helped us get a copy of the FIR from the Gujarat Police and also the death certificate," he says. Malwala receives at least 500 unclaimed body in a year from police and hospitals. "Every deceased person is given a bath and cremated after rituals," he says. "God has chosen me for this noble cause. I will continue to do this until I am alive."

State asks for Credit Boost

Bhubaneswar: Vishal Dev, Principal Secretary Finance has said that while Odisha Government is spending huge amount to build up a sustainable and resilient infrastructure for the State, Credit Support from the Banks are to go side by side, which will support the growth of Economy.

lized in the state is only 6 Percent. So it is highly required to bridge the gap in growth rate between the Deposit and Credit. The CD Ratio of the State was 62.20 Percent as on March 2021, urged Mr.Dev. He underscored the importance of the responsibility for increasing their CD Ratio should be taken by Banks, Lead Banks and District Administration jointly. Mr.Dev advised the Banks to achieve a CD Ratio of 60 Percent in respect of their rural and semi-urban branches separately, adding the banks should ensure that wide disparity in Ratios between different districts is avoided in order to minimize regional imbalance in credit deployment. Principal Secretary Finance has pointed out that Credit Dispensation in certain districts is very low, as a result of various factors such as lack of necessary infrastructure, varying ability of different regions to absorb credit. According to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Districts with Per Capita Priority Sector lending of less than Rs.6000 are classified as Credit Starved Districts. Six Districts of Odisha like Gajapati, Kandhamal, Kendrapara, Malkangiri, Nuapada and Nabarangpur are Credit Starved Districts. Here roles of all stakeholders including banks become very important. Mr.Dev said there is an urgent need to adopt a holistic approach through comprehensive interventions to enhance Ground Level Credit Flow (GLCF) by focusing on Credit Starved Districts. He also stressed on more credit flow for Aspirational Districts, which backward on various count and these districts are constrained by various physical, economic and social characteristics. Due to Covid-19 Indian Economy contracted by 7.7 Percent during 2020-21, while Odisha economy is contracted by 4.9 Percent during the same period, experts point out. As Covid-19 has severely impacted the economies all over the globe, country and the state, resulting severe contraction of economy, there is huge potential for infusion of more credit to hasten the process of development and ensure social justice, pointed out Mr.Dev.



Mr.Dev has urged upon the Bankers in the State to extend more and more credit as downward trend of Credit-Deposit (CD) Ratio is a major concern of the State Government. Mr.Dev was speaking in the State Level Banker's Committee (SLBC) Meeting held here recently. Principal Secretary Finance has pointed out that the Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of CD Ratio over the period of five years from 2015-16 to 2020-21 is Minus Four Percent. He pointed out that the CAGR of total deposit of the State over last five years is 12 Percent, whereas the CAGR of Credit Uti-

RBI governor Shaktikanta Das-headed FSDC sub-panel reviews economic situation amid COVID-19

MUMBAI: The FSDC sub-committee headed by Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Thursday reviewed the economic situation in the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic and resolved to keep a close watch on the unfolding developments with a view to ensure financial stability.

The meeting of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) Sub-Committee (FSDC-SC) was held via video conferencing and attended by all financial sector regulators including SEBI, IRDAI, PFRDA and IBBI.

"The members resolved to maintain a close watch on the unfolding developments and act proactively to ensure that financial institutions

Punjab CM Charanjit Singh Channi recites verse to wish PM Narendra Modi long life

Continued from page-1

respected to him, he added.

"Tum salamat raho qayamat tak, aur khuda kare qayamat na ho," he said in Hindi, reciting the verse to express his wishes for a long life to him.

The BJP has been attacking the Punjab government and the Congress over the breach in Modi's security during his visit last week, which had to be cut short, with its leaders alleging an attempt to physically harm the prime minister.

Channi had expressed his regret earlier as well but has insisted that there was no threat to Modi.

He has in fact mocked Modi over the issue at times.

A group of protesters had blocked Modi's route in what the Home Ministry had described a serious lapse in security as the prime minister remained stranded on the road for 15-20 minutes before returning.

PM stresses on vaccination, localised measures to contain Covid without affecting livelihood

Continued from page-1

senior citizens, the stronger our healthcare system will become," he said.

Modi asserted that it is very important to safeguard the economy and livelihood of common people while framing Covid strategies.

"There should be minimum damage to the livelihood of the common people, economic activities, and the momentum of the economy be maintained. It is very important to keep these things in mind while making any (containment) strategy," Modi said.

"So it would be better to focus more on local containment," he added.

Modi said 130 crore people of India will surely emerge victorious from the coronavirus pandemic with their collective efforts.

The doubts that were there earlier about Omicron are slowly getting cleared now, he noted. The Omicron variant is infecting the general public many times faster than the earlier variants, he added.

"We have to be alert, be careful, but we also have to take care that there should be no panic situation," Modi said.

"We have to see that in this festive season the alertness of the people and the administration does not fall short," he added.

The meeting came on a day India logged 2,47,417 new infections, the highest in 236 days, taking the total tally of COVID-19 cases to 3,63,17,927, which included 5,488 cases of the Omicron variant, according to the Union Health Ministry data.

Home Minister Amit Shah and Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya also attended the meeting.

Fresh curbs have been imposed in various parts of the country to check the spread of the highly transmissible virus.

Reviewing the Covid situation at a high-level meeting on Sunday, Modi had called for ensuring adequate health infrastructure at the district level and accelerating the vaccination drive for adolescents in mission mode.

The precaution vaccination drive for healthcare and frontline workers, besides those over 60 years of age with comorbidities, has also started.

Vaccination remains among the most effective means to fight Covid, Modi had said.

The prime minister had said that a meeting with the chief ministers be convened to discuss state-specific scenarios, best practices and the public health response.

and financial markets remain resilient amidst the challenges posed by the resurgence of the pandemic," the RBI said in a release.

The sub-committee reviewed the major developments in the global and domestic economy as well as in various segments of the financial system and discussed the assessments of members about the scenario emerging from the third wave of the pandemic.

Among others, it discussed various inter-regulatory issues and matters relating to the use of Aadhaar-based e-KYC and Aadhaar Enabled Payment System by regulated entities. It also reviewed the activities of various technical groups under its purview and the functioning of State Level Coordination Committees (SLCCs) in various states and Union Territories.

The meeting was attended Finance and Expenditure Secretary TV Somanathan, Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth, Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj, Corporate Affairs Secretary Rajesh Verma, IT Secretary Ajay Prakash Sawhney and Financial Stability and Development Council Secretary Shashank Saksena.

Other members of the Sub-Committee, including Ajay Tyagi, Chairman, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and Supratim Bandyopadhyay, Chairman, Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA), also attended the meeting.

Besides, RBI deputy governors Michael Debabrata Patra and T Rabi Sankar; and executive directors OP Mall, JK Dash and Rohit Jain participated in the meeting.

Vandita Kaul, Additional Secretary represented the Department of Financial Services; T Alamelu, Whole Time Member, Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) and Navrang Saini, Chairman (Additional Charge), Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) attended the meeting on behalf of their respective institutions.

Three dead, over 10 injured as Bikaner-Guwahati Express derails in Bengal, CM takes stock

Continued from page-1

Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee about the accident. Banerjee, who had spoken to the Jalpaiguri district magistrate, briefed the the prime minister about the relief and rescue operations.

TV footage showed several coaches lying sideways down the elevated track as rescue workers were seen trying to extricate the passengers. According to railway officials, six coaches were severely impacted.

"We felt a sudden shock. We were all rocking violently and luggage kept on upper berths tumbled all around," said a passenger.

A partially mangled coach got perched atop another under the impact, while a few bogies had hurtled down the slope and overturned.

Hundreds of people from nearby villages collected at the spot, and were seen lending a helping hand to passengers who had got trapped inside the collapsed coaches. Some of the bogies had got detached from the rest of the train under the impact, while wheels of some came off. As the news of the accident reached Jalpaiguri, siren-blaring ambulances arrived at the spot and the injured were seen being evacuated.

"In an unfortunate accident, 12 coaches of Bikaner-Guwahati Exp. derailed near New Maynaguri (West Bengal) this evening. Personally monitoring the situation for swift rescue operations," Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw tweeted.

"Spoke with Hon'ble PM and apprised him about the rescue operations," he added.

The Indian Railways has announced Rs 5 Lakh ex-gratia for those killed, Rs 1 lakh for the severely injured and Rs 25,000 for passengers who suffered minor injuries.

According to railway officials, since the accident occurred on the main line, all train movement towards Guwahati has been halted for the time being.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee spoke to district officials, and senior state government officials have rushed to the spot.

"Deeply concerned to hear about the tragic accident of the Bikaner-Guwahati Express in Maynaguri. Senior Officers of the State Government, DM/SP/IG North Bengal are supervising rescue and relief operations. Those injured will receive medical attention, as early as possible," she tweeted.

"Sad to hear Bikaner Guwahati express derailed near Jalpaiguri with reports of death and casualties," West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar tweeted, adding all agencies concerned were rendering full assistance in the rescue operations.

Final of 2022 Asian Champions League set to move to 2023

KUALA LUMPUR: The 2022 Asian Champions League is set to be decided in 2023 with a big split in match schedules for the east and west regions, the Asian Football Confederation said Thursday. Two reasons were cited for the new plan

"The Asian teams who are likely to qualify for the (World Cup) are expected to put in place extensive preparation plans for the competition," the AFC said, "and a need was felt to facilitate such tune-ups in the face of the uncertain situation and un-

duce a finalist by August. The west region — including teams from Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Iran — are now set to play the group stage in April and resume in the knockout rounds at the last-16 stage in February next year.

26 next year. Single-leg elimination games in central venues are proposed for the earlier knock-out rounds. The AFC said the new program must be ratified by its executive committee, and the group-stage draw is scheduled on Mon-



that would see the 2022 final played in February 2023 — travel challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic and unusual scheduling of the World Cup in Qatar during November and December. The proposed new Asian Champions League program aims to help national teams prepare with no games in the marquee club competition played during September and October.

foreseen risks. "Asia is looking for better results at its home World Cup after none of its five teams advanced from the group stage at the 2018 tournament in Russia. The AFC has now proposed a Champions League program that would see the east region — including teams from Australia, China, Japan and South Korea — play through the semifinal and pro-

All games are set to be played at centralized venues to limit international travel during the pandemic. "Travel procedures around Asia have become more challenging with new travel restrictions and protocols being introduced by several countries in efforts to prevent the spread of the omicron variant," the AFC said. The two-leg, home-and-away final is proposed for Feb.19 and

day. The new schedule means a FIFA Club World Cup for the 2022 continental champions would be played even deeper into the following year. The upcoming edition for the continental champions of 2021, including Chelsea and Palmeiras, is scheduled Feb.3-12 in the United Arab Emirates.

Saina, Prannoy, Sen enter second round of India Open

NEW DELHI: Former champion Saina Nehwal, world championships bronze medallist Lakshya Sen and comeback man HS Prannoy registered contrasting wins to progress to the second round of the India Open here on Wednesday. Commonwealth Games silver medallists Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty also made winning starts to their men's doubles cam-

made it to the quarterfinals at the world championships, got the better of Spain's Pablo Abian 21-14 21-7 and will next face Mithun Manjunath. Manjunath eked out a hard-fought 21-16 15-21 21-10 victory over France's Arnaud Merkle. "Extremely happy to win the first match. Pablo is a tricky player, a fighter but after the first 7-8 points, I could play much better," Prannoy said.



paign. Former World No. 1 Saina, who missed a lot of tournaments last year due to multiple injuries, moved to the second round after her opponent Czech Republic's Tereza Svabikova suffered a back injury and retired mid-way while lagging 20-22 0-1 in the opening round match. ALSO READ | Want to see what all injuries my body can cope with: Saina "Playing after so long gives you the match confidence.. how to pull out those points, because in practice you don't have the privilege to play points with the same intensity as you do in tournaments. The quality of some of the points I got today. I hope it somehow helps me tomorrow," Saina said after her match. Saina, who is seeded fourth, will meet compatriot Malvika Bansod, who defeated fellow Indian Samiya Imad Farooqui 21-18 21-9 in another match. The left-handed Nagpur shuttler had recently won the All India Senior ranking meet in Hyderabad. "I am really excited to play against Saina as it will be my first encounter with her, so really hoping to play well," said Malvika, who had been part of India's campaign at the Sudirman Cup and Thomas and Uber Cup Finals last year. On a comeback trail, Prannoy, a former world top 10 player, who had

Third seed Sen, who claimed the world championships bronze on debut last month, thrashed Egypt's Adham Hatem Elgamel 21-15 21-7 to set up a face-off with Sweden's Felix Burestedt. World No.10 men's pairing of Satwik and Chirag, seeded second, trounced fellow Indian combination of Chirag

Arora and Ravi 21-14 21-10 to also advance to the second round of the BWF Super 500 tournament at the KD Jadhav Indoor hall. Commonwealth Games bronze medallists Ashwini Ponnappa and N Sikki Reddy, seeded second, also entered the second round after prevailing 21-7 19-21 21-13 over compatriots Janani Ananthakumar and Divya R. Balasubramanian in women's doubles.

Among other Indians, Aakarshi Kashyap beat compatriot Anura Prabhudesai 21-14 21-14, while Rahul Yadav Chittaboina got a walkover after Spain's Luis Enrique Penalver's withdrawal. Kashyap will square off against Keyura Mopati, who has been promoted from reserve. Mopati beat fellow Indian Smit Toshniwal 15-21 21-19 21-8. Rahul will be pitted against Ireland's Nhat Nguyen, who knocked out Ajay Jayaram 19-21, 21-7 21-14 in another men's singles contest. Tanya Hemanth also got rid of Sai Uttejitha Rao Chukka 9-21 21-12 21-19 in another women's singles match. While Priyanshu Rajawat fell in the opening hurdle, losing 21-15 17-21 14-21 to Lucas Claerhout of France. PV Sindhu, Kidambi Srikanth and Sameer Verma had reached the second round on Tuesday.

I don't think you are conducting yourself extremely well: Dean Elgar told Kagiso Rabada to fire him up

JOHANNESBURG: South African skipper Dean Elgar has opened up about his behind the scene conversation with Kagiso Rabada that fired up the senior pacer to deliver a game-changing spell in the second Test against India. Rabada scalped six wickets, three in each innings, to play a pivotal role in South Africa's series-levelling seven-wicket win in the second Test on Thursday. During the post-match presentation, Elgar had said that "sometimes KG needs a rocket" and "there was something that happened behind the scenes but we're not going to get into that."

"I went up to KG and I said to him, 'You are an immensely respected cricketer within our group and at the moment I don't think you are conducting yourself extremely well,' Elgar said during the post-match press-conference. "I know what KG is capable of. When KG's got his tail up, there's no better bowler than him and I have experienced quite a few guys who have been part of this team. It was a good chat. "I can have those chats with KG and he responds extremely well. He takes it away, he lets it process and thinks about it overnight and then he comes back the next day with a scenario for me." Elgar had confronted Rabada after the first Test after he had gone wicketless on the first day but ended up with seven wickets. "He (Rabada) was the one who came to me and said what we spoke about: I hit the nail on the head," Elgar said.

"KG has got that attitude, and he's got the want and he wants to bowl and he wants to contrib-

ute in a massive way. You have to utilise that as a captain." The Proteas skipper said Rabada "can sometimes be a little bit too relaxed and he needs to understand that his performance on the field and his performance in the change-room is huge." South Africa coach Mark Boucher also revealed a "bit of a spark" was needed to get Rabada into the zone.

"There's certain guys - Dale Steyn was one of



them - who at certain times in his career need harsh words behind closed doors to bring the best out of him," Boucher told 'SuperSport'. "KG, that spell he bowled, broke the game open for us. There was a bit of a spark in the dressing room; maybe it was what was needed in order to get him into that space.

"And we know when KG is like that it's difficult to get the ball away from him. But also you want him on your side rather than the opposition team. "There were fair words that were said and I think he's taken it on board and we're hoping we can get him into that sweet spot again for the next Test because it can only bode well for us." The third and final Test begins at Cape Town on January 11.




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