

## AIIMS-Bhubaneswar to start renal transplant from August

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): AIIMS Bhubaneswar is likely to start kidney trans-

Besides, the AIIMS is also going to have a dedicated burn and plastic ward, new trauma and emergency care units. The projects are on schedule, added Dr Tripathi.



plant services from August. The national institute has already received the required permission from the State government to start the service. After SCB Medical College and Hospital at Cuttack, AIIMS will be the second public health facility to perform renal transplant in the State. A team of specialists and nurses have been trained at Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh.

In-charge Director Prof Mukesh Tripathi said equipment and infrastructure are almost ready for the much-awaited renal transplant service at the national institute. "Directorate of Medical Education and Training (DMET) of the State has already given its nod. A dedicated team has been formed to manage the transplant unit. If everything goes as per plan, the procedure will start soon," he said.

Addressing the foundation day ceremony, AIIMS Jodhpur Director Prof Sanjeev Misra said the Bhubaneswar facility has become one of the most trusted health institutions in eastern India. In the first decade of its illustrious journey, he said, the institute has achieved many milestones. AIIMS to start kidney transplant

Be it patient care, research or other social welfare activities, it has earned many accolades and been able to cater to people of Odisha as well as neighbouring states. Prof Misra stressed collaboration of technology for digital innovation in health care services, medical education and research.

AIIMS Bhubaneswar Director (Designate) Prof Ashutosh Biswas emphasised on better team work to treat as many patients without any hesitation. AIIMS Bhubaneswar is the second in the country after Delhi and the only AIIMS whose foundation stone was laid by former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee. It has a foot-fall of around 4,500 patients every day.

## Putin heads to Tehran for talks with leaders of Iran, Turkey

TEHRAN(KCN): Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to Iran starting Tuesday is intended to deepen ties with regional heavyweights as part of Moscow's challenge to the



United States and Europe amid its grinding campaign in Ukraine. In only his second trip abroad since Russian tanks rolled into its neighbour in February, Putin is scheduled to meet with Iranian and Turkish leaders. **CONTINUED ON: P-7**

## Cabinet nod for policy to transform Odisha into a leading destination for IT investment

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): The State Cabinet chaired by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Tuesday approved Odisha IT Policy 2022 to transform Odisha into a leading destination of investment for Information Technology in the country.

The new policy will also help the State secure a prominent position on the global map as a preferred IT outsourcing destination propelling employment opportunities and inclusive growth.

The State government has offered specific incentive for IT parks. As announced in the policy, 25% of fixed capital investment will be provided as capital subsidy limited to Rs 20 crores and 15% of the cost of developing solar power plant subject to maximum of Rs 25 lakh will be reimbursed.

Greenfield IT Parks will be eligible for 100% reimbursement of stamp duty/registration fee/conversion fee. Similarly, a subsidy of 30% of the fixed capital investment in buildings and infrastructure, excluding the cost of land subject to a maximum of Rs 3 crore will be given to eligible IT units.

Companies/Units investing in the area of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Cyber Security, Extended Reality (XR), Automation, Blockchain, Big Data, Cloud Computing, Internet of Things (IoT), Machine Learning (ML), Clean-tech, Edu-tech, Agri-Tech, Health-tech and other emerging technologies

will be eligible for additional incentive. The eligible IT units will be entitled to get an interest subsidy at 5% per annum on term loans availed from recognised financial institutions and banks, subject to a ceiling of maximum Rs 10 crore per year for a period of five years from the date of commencement of commercial operation.

The State government has also exempted electricity duty and electrical inspection fee for five years. There will be reimbursement of electricity tariff at 30% for three years capped at Rs 35 lakh per unit. IT units with up to 40 employees will get sub-



## Presidential polls: NDA's Droupadi Murmu gets 100 per cent votes from BJD and BJP

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): The strategy drawn by the ruling BJD and BJP to get maximum votes from Odisha in favour of NDA Presidential candidate Droupadi Murmu seems to have succeeded.

The proactive campaign of the BJD in favour of Murmu has also exposed the fissures in the Opposition Congress camp with one of its MLA's voting for the NDA nominee defying the party guidelines. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had announced that at-

tempts will be made to ensure all votes from Odisha are in

had held training sessions for party MPs and MLAs. The Chief

and Rajya Sabha assembled at the party office in Parliament



favour of Murmu. The BJD had left nothing to chance to ensure that not a single vote was re-

jected for which it Minister was the first to vote followed by ministers and party MLAs.

Similarly, all BJD MPs from Lok Sabha and proceeded together to cast their votes. BJD has 12 Lok Sabha and 10 Rajya Sabha MPs. **CONTINUED ON: P-7**

## Odisha Assembly sees noisy scenes over GST on puffed, flattened rice



BHUBANESWAR(KCN): Odisha Assembly on Monday witnessed noisy scenes over Centre's decision to levy 5 per cent GST on puffed rice (mudhi), flattened rice (chuda) and several other items consumed by the poor. As soon as the House assembled for the day, Congress members rushed to the well protesting the decision.

Raising the issue, Congress member Suresh Kumar Routray demanded that the State government should bear the burden to spare the poor people from its effect as price of puffed rice and flattened rice will increase. Making a statement in response, Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari said the State government cannot do anything about imposition of GST.

sidies on the rental of incubation space for a maximum of three years based on their incubation space.

Reimbursement up to Rs 1400 per seat per month for co-working space in designated IT Parks and Incubation Centers approved by the Government and Rs 1000 per seat per month

5 lakh per annum will be provided to women, SC-ST and entrepreneurs with disability.

The government has approved 100% exemption of stamp duty on first transaction and 50% exemption on second transaction on lease/sale agreement of land or built-up space. The eligible units will be entitled to get 100% reimbursement of conversion fee and registration fee for the first transaction.

Reimbursement of 100% state component of GST (SGST) for a period of five years in Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) area and for a period of seven years in non-BDA area subject to 100% of their fixed capital investment has been allowed under the policy.

Recruitment assistance will be provided at Rs 10,000 per newly recruited employee at executive level who are domiciles of Odisha with a maximum limit of Rs 10 lakh per unit for a period of three years. There is also a provision of additional Rs 1000 per employing women, SC/ST and physically challenged employees.

As per the policy, 100% reimbursement of the expenditure incurred towards contribution for ESI and EPF of employees of IT units who are domicile of Odisha up to Rs 5 crore per annum will be provided for a period of three years. For investment in non-BDA area, reimbursement would **CONTINUED ON: P-7**

## Leading lifestyle D2C brand Sleepyhead announces Bollywood Superstar Ranveer Singh as their first-ever Brand Ambassador

Kolkata(KCN): India's fastest-growing D2C furniture start-up brand Sleepyhead, announces Bollywood superstar Ranveer Singh as their first-ever brand ambassador. The brand plans to launch a 360-degree digital national campaign with the Bollywood icon



to headline their pan-India expansion as a complete home lifestyle brand. Sleepyhead is a D2C furniture and home décor brand focused on bringing design-first, high quality products at accessible prices for new age home shoppers. This collaboration will be pivotal for the brand to achieve their milestone of becoming a 1000 Cr brand by 2025 and be the go-to home lifestyle brand for young India. Speaking on the brand's growth journey, Mathew Joseph, CEO & Co-Founder, said, "Sleepyhead's mission is to make everyday living fun and fabulous through thoughtfully designed products. Ranveer Singh is India's youngest superstar and quintessential style

icon making him the perfect choice to represent our brand. He personifies the brand's quirk, commitment towards quality and eye for unique designs. Combining the magic of Ranveer with our extensive portfolio expansion, we are supercharging our growth trajectory and aiming to capture the lion's share of the furniture and home décor market online."

On the association, Arha Padman, Head of Brand Marketing, Sleepyhead, said, "It is the perfect time to welcome Ranveer Singh as our Brand Ambassador, as Sleepyhead is witnessing an incredible transformation. From dominating the mattress market with the revolutionary Bed-In-A-Box concept, we now rapidly growing in the furniture and home décor space. In our upcoming campaign with Ranveer we will be launching a new trademarked technology in our dominant category – mattress, along with a new range of enviably stylish sofas and recliners.

Talking about the association, Bollywood icon Ranveer Singh said, "For me home is the ultimate happy place. A well curated home balances your creative energy as well as your comfort needs. I loved how Sleepyhead furniture brought alive thoughtful designs, great looks and high quality to make everyday living easy and exciting. I am stoked to be part of this journey and help them bring alive their vision of making Indian homes fun and fabulous".

So far, Sleepyhead has received cumulative funding of 200 Cr INR, with initial funding from Lighthouse Funds in 2018 and a growth round in 2021 from Norwest Venture Partners. The brand reported a revenue of 150 Cr INR at the end of the fiscal year 21-22.

## Plan for Migration Arrest

Bhubaneswar: In order to arrest distress migration in the 20 migration prone Blocks of four Districts namely Balangir, Bargarh, Kalahandi & Nuapada, the State Cabinet ap-



proved a new State Sector Scheme named as State Support to MGNREGS: The job seekers under MGNREGA in the 20 migration prone Blocks of the four Districts will be paid additional wages over and above the notified wage rate under MGNREGA to be commensurate with the notified minimum wage rate for the unskilled workers in the State per person per day. The differential amount (i.e. Notified minimum wages for the unskilled workers in the State – Notified wage rate under MGNREGA) per person per day will be borne by the State Government under the new State Sector Scheme. The State Government will provide additional 200 days of work over and above the guaranteed 100 days of work mandated under the

MGNREG Act, 2005 in the 20 migration prone Blocks of the four Districts. The entire cost towards payment of wages @ unskilled wage rate notified by the State Government per person per day, beyond the guaranteed 100 days of wage employment under MGNREGA will be borne by the State Government under the new Scheme. The Cabinet today approved the tender for construction of Kansariganda in-stream storage structures across river Rushikulya near village Barada in Ganjam block at an amount of Rs.149.60 crore. The work is planned to be completed in 36 months.

This storage structure will enhance the water availability and will fulfil the drinking & domestic requirement of the people of 16 villages of Chhatrapur and Ganjam blocks, Chhatrapur NAC, Ganjam NAC and Berhampur city of Ganjam district. Besides, the storage will be utilised for fishery development spread over an area of 164.00 Ha. along with livestock farming, irrigation, industrial water demands and recreational purposes with improvement of socio economic condition of the local people, officials said. Similarly, the Government has taken a decision for implementation of Baselisahi Dharamsala project, a low-cost boarding and lodging facility for the tourist and visitors especially Senior citizens in the Heritage city of Puri under Augmentation of Basic Amenities and Development of Heritage and Architecture (ABADHA) scheme. The State Cabinet has approved the Turnkey Tender of lowest negotiated Turnkey bid s Shreejkrupa Projects Limited amounting to Rs 135.60 crore. The State Cabinet has also decided to provide Government land measuring Ac. 9.685 dec. in Mouza Khordha under Khordha Tahasil of Khordha district to Ministry of Culture, Government of India for construction of Paika Memorial in the memory of Paika Rebellion at the foothills of Barunei Hill, the battle ground of Paika Bidroha with free of premium, capitalized value and incidental charges. Similarly, the panel has also decided to provide Government land measuring Ac. 9.795 dec in Mouza-Ramachandrapur under Jatni Tahasil to Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) for public utility purpose.

## Capacity Building programme for teachers at DAV Public School, Kalinga Nagar

Bhubaneswar(KCN): The three day Capacity Building Programme of secondary level teachers of science under the aegis of Regional Training Centre, DAV Institutions, Odisha Zone at DAV Public School, Kalinga



Nagar, Bhubaneswar has been concluded. More than 47 science teachers of 15 DAV schools of Odisha Zone participated in this programme. Principal Mr Bipin Kumar Sahoo chaired the inaugural meeting and principal of DAV, Nimapara Mr M.M Haque and Principal of DAV, Jajpur Town Mr Debabrata Pradhan coordinated and assessed the participants. Attending the programme as resource persons, Dr Pragnya Nopani Founder of



Satapathy of Regional Science Center, Bhubaneswar discussed on how can a conducive learning environment be created inside the classrooms for effective teaching of science. Similarly the teacher trainees highlighted about different scientific concepts like electrical circuit, Mandellian theory, Pascal's theory etc through different activities. Apart from this, the resource persons also talked about different play way and fun-filled methods to teach science to the students. The programme was smoothly conducted by the cooperation of all the staff members.



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## Cabinet Clears Jal Jeevan Projects

Bhubaneswar(KCN): The State Cabinet headed by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Tuesday approved tenders for mega water supply projects worth Rs 1165 crore. The State Cabinet has taken a decision for execution of Mega Piped Water Supply Project with a cost of Rs 261.97 crore to provide safe drinking water in Koraput District out of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) funding. By execution of the project, around 1,61,902 people of 167 villages under 31 GPs of two Blocks of the District will be benefited. On this account, 90516 people of 82 villages under 15 GPs of Jeypore



JAL JEEVAN MISSION  
Har Ghar Jal

Kundra Block of the District will be provided with safe drinking water. The Cabinet has approved another tender worth Rs 114.68 crore for execution of Mega Piped Water Supply Project to

## Odisha government to augment public health facilities for COVID

BHUBANESWAR: After spending hundreds of crores for facilities developed in partnership with private hospitals for COVID care in the last two years, Odisha government has finally decided to strengthen public health facilities for COVID treatment. In view of the rising number of COVID-19 infections and non functioning of private dedicated COVID Hospital (DCH) at district level, the State government has decided to augment facilities in district headquarters hospitals (DHHs) and medical college and hospitals (MCHs). As per the decision taken at a high level meeting, each DHH and MCH will have a DCH facility having general oxygen beds, Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and High Dependency Unit (HDU). While SCB MCH at Cuttack, MKCG MCH at Berhampur and VIMSAR at Burla will have 40 beds including ICU, HDU, OT and labour room, the rest MCHs will have 20 beds with ICU facility. All DHH will have 20 beds including ICU/HDU and 20 beds, including five ICU/HDU will be considered as one unit. Initially, each government hospital will have a facility of one unit which can be expanded or incremented by adding one more unit when 50 per cent (pc) of available beds are filled up. When the number of patients admitted is less than 10, the facility will be

provide safe drinking water in Rayagada District

Another mega drinking water project of Rs 431.10 crore has been approved by the Cabinet to provide safe drinking water to 4,32,916 people of 544 villages under 85 GPs of 04 Blocks of the Jagatsinghpur district.

Besides, the panel has given its seal of approval for another tender of Rs 356.68 crore for execution of another Mega Drinking Water Supply project in Angul District out of JJM funding. By execution of the projects, around 2,19,309 people of 555 villages under 47 GPs of 02 Blocks of the District will be benefited.

managed by in-house staff of the MCH or DHH. For smooth management of the DCHs, the CDMOs and MCH Superintendents have been allowed to recruit additional manpower. As decided, one doctor and two nursing officers will be recruited per shift for 20 beds besides one pharmacist and one lab technician per shift for 100 beds.

In addition, a nursing officer in a ratio of 1:3 for ICU, one each per shift for OT and labour room will be recruited.

The medical colleges will be provided with one transport vehicle each while the DHH will be provided with transport vehicles as per caseload. The municipal corporations will get dead body carriers.

Similarly, dedicated ambulances will be provided to SCB MCH, MKCG MCH, VIMSAR, Capital Hospital and all municipal corporations. Director of Health Services Dr Bijay Mohapatra said barring the SUM COVID Hospital where 90 beds have been kept ready, private DCHs may not be required now as the number of patients being hospitalised is very few. Only about one pc of the total active caseload is in hospital isolation, he added.

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# Disney's Marvel unit files lawsuits to keep rights to 'Avengers' characters from copyright termination

WASHINGTON: Disney's Marvel unit has filed lawsuits to including Stan Lee, Steve Ditko and Gene Colan. Marvel has faced terminations from termination provisions of copyright law, authors or their



acquire full control of 'Avengers' characters including Spider-Man, Iron Man, Black Widow and others. According to The Hollywood Reporter, the complaints come against the heirs of some late comic book geniuses in-

The legal document seeks "declaratory relief that these blockbuster characters are ineligible for copyright termination as works made for hire." Reportedly, if Marvel loses, Disney would have to share ownership of characters worth bil-

Hollywood Reporter. Patrick Ditko, Don Larry also filed Rico and Keith termination notices to Dettwiler. The cases will focus on the creation of famous comic book characters and who should be deemed the statutory author. One of the complaints filed on Friday asserted, "Marvel had the right to exercise creative control over Lieber's contributions and paid Lieber a per-page rate for his work." If the plaintiffs win, Disney would have to share profits with the others and hold on to at least a share of character rights as co-owners. As per The Hollywood Reporter, the termination provisions of copyright law only apply in the United States, allowing Disney to continue to control and profit from foreign exploitation.

## 'Kanyadaan' an outdated ritual or important custom? Alia Bhatt's ad sparks debate

The bride, pretty, radiant and in red, sits in front of the sacred fire, her family, the groom and his parents around her, the love flowing like a balmy breeze. And in that arguably most precious moment, she looks into the camera and asks, "why must a woman be commodified through the custom of 'kanyadaan' literally 'donating a daughter'." The ad for a lehenga brand featuring Bollywood star Alia Bhatt as the much-indulged daughter and granddaughter has fired debate on social media platforms and elsewhere on the age-old tradition of giving away the daughter.

modities to be given away or 'donated.' Women have agency, selfhood and can make decisions about their lives on their own so my wedding reflected exactly that by not including a ritual like 'kanyadaan'," the actor told PTI. She even engaged a female priest for her wedding to emphasise gender equality. "It is time for young couples to define how they want to get married and if their ceremony is truly representative of their personalities and love for each other," said the actor, who is also the United Nation's National Goodwill Ambassador from India. The ritual of giving away the bride is, of course, not just about Hindu weddings.

away and you have nothing to do with me anymore. You're severing ties like I'm some object basically that you're giving away. My parents did understand it but the issue was 'this is how it is, has been and will be'." Actor Kangana Ranaut was among those who disagreed. Criticising the ad in an Instagram post, she said, "Humble request to all brands. Don't use religion, minority, majority politics to sell things. Stop manipulating naive consumers with shrewd divisive concepts and advertising. Please stop mocking Hindus and their rituals." One of the Twitter users echoed similar sentiments.

Many term it Hindu phobic for casting aspersions on a ritual that is part of the warp and weft of society, others appreciate it for calling out the patriarchy that underscores the custom and there are those that feel it should have gone even further in its rejection. "There is a growing number of young women who are beginning to think about the issue, especially as increasing number joins the workforce, has access to ideas (via social media etc) that are critical of 'women as property' concept. This ad reflects that," sociologist Sanjay Srivastava told PTI. In the 1.41 minute ad, Bhatt, the self-assured woman of today who also does a selfie pout with her father while at the 'mandap', recalls her lifetime of 'othering' in a monologue - her fond grandmother saying she would one day go to her own home, her father not reacting when people called her "paraya dhan" (alien property) and her mother calling her a 'chidiya' which would fly away one day.



"Our traditions are not regressive, your mindsets surely are! Kanyadaan is a sacred tradition, where a father/parent parts with their most precious and cherished daughter, a bitter-sweet emotional moment filled with hopes, promises and dreams," the user wrote. Women's rights activist Shabnam Hashmi said the attacks on the ad "reflects the highly patriarchal mindsets of our society". "It is a very progressive advertisement and raises important questions of women's dignity and equality," Hashmi told PTI.

The Manyawar ad ends with the grooms' parent also joining in in the ritual (though it is unclear whether they too are giving away their son) and Bhatt's bride saying it should be 'kanyamaan' (respect for the girl child) and not 'kanyadaan', and asking, "Am I a thing to be given away?" Her angst finds a wide echo. Actor Dia Mirza, who decided to do away with the rituals of both "bidai" and "kanyadaan" when she got married to businessman Vaibhav Rekhi, said they wanted the wedding to reflect their "beliefs and not outmoded ideas." "Neither of us believes that women are com-

It is also a vital part of a Christian wedding service where the father walks down the aisle with his daughter and "hands her over" to the waiting groom. Brought up on tradition and a diet of popular culture, including movies, both Indian and western, many women have now begun to question the patriarchal traditions of wedding ceremonies across societies. Mumbai-based IT analyst Meghna Trivedi, who got married in February last year, said the ritual of 'kanyadaan' does not make sense in today's day and age but had to undergo the ritual anyway. Trivedi, a Gujarati who married a Punjabi, said she asked the priest to find another way but he maintained 'kanyadaan' is a "must". "What you mean by 'kanyadaan' is that you're giving away your daughter to somebody else and that is something you have to do in your life and it's related to your duties as a parent that now your daughter belongs to another family," she told PTI. "But I'm still my parents' daughter after I got married. 'Kanyadaan' is like you're giving me

important questions of women's dignity and equality," Hashmi told PTI. Sociologist Shrivastava added that people reacted negatively because there is an increasing intolerance against anything that is seen to question 'Indian traditions'. The reaction, he said, also reflects a "male anxiety" about the changes that are happening in addition to the current climate where it has become difficult to question anything Indian/Hindu. There were also those who felt the ad didn't go far enough. "The idea should not be to perpetuate the custom but to break away from it," said a young woman, who welcomed the ad and the questioning of traditions but would have preferred that it didn't end with the parents of both sides taking part in it. A radical break would have been more effective in sending out the message, she said. However, a debate reflects a churn. And in that sense, any discussion is welcome, even if it has unlikely beginnings in an ad for a bridal lehenga.

## Frail political parties derail parliamentary democracy

Soon after the Udaipur killing, the RSS held a three day meeting of its Prant Pracharakas and senior workers from across the country in Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan. The meeting was also attended by representatives from the BJP and other Sangh affiliates to discuss the barbarity that Udaipur witnessed

and the intensity of the precariousness that the Hindus in the country have been thrown into, despite a humongous political victory in their favour. It was not long ago did the Congress party convene its Chintan Shibir in Udaipur and both the meetings by the RSS and the Congress were held with special purposes. The RSS might have found potential reasons to strategise an ouster of the Ashok Gehlot led Congress government in the upcoming state elections, which the Sangh feels remained passive throughout the unfolding of the gruesome killing and while the chilling waves of horror emanated from the state. And for the Congress, its Chintan Shibir should have been an occasion to deeply delve into the anomalies that the arrogance of the most powerful dynasty of the party landed it with, and find solutions to resolve the dissension and dissatisfaction among its cadre.

The BJP this time held its national conclave deep down in the south in the city of Hyderabad recently. The party's executive meeting was to mainly focus on what it identified as a push for electoral victories in the south. Except Karnataka, the other South Indian states remained uphill territories for the party which predominantly have been under the control of the local satraps. Unable to hit the area with its usual political narratives of Hindi, Hindu and Hindutva, the party proposed to enter the scenario with a new recital- the 'dynasty politics'. By bad mouthing on the political dynasties, the BJP aptly

targets its arrows on Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) in Telangana and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu. The BJP is ready to wait for Andhra Pradesh as Jagan Mohan Reddy is not an untouchable for the party. And for Kerala, the state not being an electoral laboratory of any particular family, the BJP should frame different narratives to fit the political dynamics of the state. Nipping its winning aspirations in the bud, local coalitions, both the LDF and the UDF have so far been capable of keeping the BJP behind the fence. All the three conclaves had their own significance and cognizance with regard to their respective organisational structure and goals.

The RSS, as of now, is unable to fine-tune the symphony of its usual Hindutva protector song. And the barbarity after the Nupur Sharma episode has turned its sympathisers whipping questions on the outfit's ability to protect the Hindutva ideology that it has been the founder and a propagandist since 1925. The Sarsanghchalak's remarks on the Gyanvapi controversy have probably brushed the emotions of a large number of Hindus under the carpet. Meaningfully fire-fighting the anger among the Hindus on what the Gyanvapi survey discovered; a shivling at the wash point of the controversial mosque – Bhagwat's efforts were to block the gushing Hindu emotions from further damaging the BJP government's image at the centre. An India without the BJP holding the power reins is unthinkable for the RSS at present. This is the reason that the Sangh, despite its understanding about Modi's towering popularity beyond the standards and definitions drawn by it, is now ready to compromise to walk an extra mile of disguised compassion on anything that comes against its interest of protecting the Hindu rights. Its silence on the arrests of sadhus who provoked communal amity in their gathering at Haridwar and its efforts to systematically distance itself from

**M. R. LALU**

all the controversial issues by assuming the image of a matured moderator, the RSS is trying to send messages across its critics to see it as a sovereign, seeking to present the liberal face of Hindutva. Spanning across its periphery of activities, the RSS accentuates by its gesticulations, a reality that has gone deeper into its reticence, that the popularity of Modi has brought the party out of the shadow of servitude that the RSS had once successfully managed to spread. The party has now managed to build its image astoundingly visible everywhere without much of its assistance coming from the RSS directly and the Sangh leadership is convinced of this truth. The political prosperity that the RSS and the BJP could individually, and to some extent collectively achieve should press the nerves of the Congress and other dynasties in India. The more they sit idle the more devastating would be their political future. What comes as an advantage to the BJP-RSS coalition is that it never supports dynasties and the workers from the local level to the national, stay upright and fight to save its ideological embankment fearless and dedicated. Political victory that this coalition could manage to win in the most populous state Uttar Pradesh for the second time has almost made its fortunes rock solid in the Hindi-cow-belt areas. The party's South India push should be seen as a calculative and achievable length that the party leadership has decided to pace forth. On the other hand, the Congress, with its Udaipur conclave declaring future course of action with inclusive and participatory endorsement has not taken much strides to bring about changes in its usual set of behaviour. The party often ends up committing the same mistakes of turning vituperative on Modi and thereby maligning the essence of India. Controversies surfacing on a daily basis on the party's intentions have often been pressing it hard to an incongruent, immature and despicable position. It is a victim of its own inter-

nal contradictions and a leadership without commitment and political maturity lands its feeble fortunes in frequent turmoil, exacerbating its internal conflicts further.

What is undeniable at this juncture is the absence of a common opposition checkmating the belligerent BJP from celebrating its paramourty. This was evident from the body language of the opposition parties who turned delirious on the BJP's decision on fielding Draupadi Murmu as its Presidential candidate. The Modi fiefdom could successfully break the capricious walls of opposition unity once again, bringing many among the opposition parties to its side and garner support for its choice for the candidacy. This will be repeated in the Vice President elections too. Mostly being disarrayed and enmeshed in the contrariness of a self-defeatist approach; the opposition parties will keep distance from each other indirectly paving way to what the BJP plans. The outcome is clear and visible; a country without a strong and creative opposition will run amok. The ruling alliance gaining more confidence from the pitfalls of the opposition will grow more perverse and go unquestioned. The monsoon session in the parliament will once again witness uproars and disruptions without anything meaningful happening there. An opposition, overthrown by its own ill-will, would remain unproductive and scared of being resourceful and sagacious on matters that the common men in the country are illusive about. India needs to redefine its parliamentary democracy with more voices from the opposition side creatively echoing the issues of people. The Congress should pull its resolve from the dungeons of an uncanny forgetfulness and dizzy mindset and try to pick pebbles of political fortunes by becoming a candid opposition.

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## Rare Chola-era inscription discovered at an ancient temple near Nellore

Nellore: A rare Telugu Chola-era inscription has been discovered in the premises of Sri Kailasanatha Temple at Vegur village in Kovuru mandal of Nellore district.

Dr Govindu Surendra, Professor of History at SKR Government Degree Col-

lege, Gudur and also a Stapathi, said that it was a rare inscription of the 21st reign of the first Kulottunga Chola Raja in 1169 AD. Dr Surendra said that he examined the stone inscription found in the vicinity of Veguru Sri Kailasanatha Temple follow-

**Pathri Rajasekhar**

the inscriptions found in South India, and the upper part of this inscription was famous for the two-faced Nandiswara with trident and ankusha (axe) line drawing on the opposite side. In the inscription, it is explained that if

He appealed to the officials of the Department of Endowment and State Archaeology to preserve these and hand over our history as a legacy to future generations.

Interestingly, the inscription was mentioned in the book 'A Collection of the Inscriptions on Copper Plates and Stones

in the Nellore District' published in 1905.

Dr Surendra said that he came to know about this when he contacted P. Munirathnam Reddy, Epigraphical Director, Mysore and Prof. B. Ramachandra Reddy of Puduchchery for insight into the inscription written in the ancient Tamil script.

Endowment Assistant Sthapathy P. Surendra, temple chairman Mogili Malli Karjuna, temple head priest Venkata Ramanaiah and local resident Todeti Mahesh and villagers were present when Dr Surendra examined the inscription on Sunday.



ing a request from villagers. It was written in the ancient Tamil script. The inscription pertains to land measuring 20 san kolu from 330 kuli land (details of land extent in the bygone era) donated by Sewan Boydan to Lord Kailasanatha shrine to perform special rituals during the new moon day. Dr Surendra said that it was rare among

anyone encroached on this land belonging to God, it would be as sinful as killing a cow on the banks of the Ganges, so the devotees of Maheshwar should protect this charity.

"Along with this very ancient inscription, there is another inscription in the records, but it is not available at present," the Professor said.

A rare stone inscription found at Sri Kailasanath temple in Veguru village of Kovur mandal in SPSR Nellore district. (DC Image) Rare Chola-era inscription discovered at an ancient temple near Nellore

### Letter to Editor

### Meta Platform Facing Human Rights Risk

Recently, the research done in our nation by Human Rights Impact Assessment (HRIA) agency on the Meta platform, which incorporates Facebook, Instagram, and Whatsapp discovered that these social medias are exposed to higher risks of human rights including limitations on the liberty of expression, information and risk of hatred that ignites malevolence due to the actions by third parties which largely appearing terrifying now. Also according to study these third parties intervention may also lead to hatred that instigate discrimination, violence, Indiscriminate rights; infringement of an individual's right to privacy as well as security of this platform. This unprecedented indepth research reports seems to be intimidating not only to Meta platform but also to other social media platforms. Furthermore this research report is exclusively of our nation. To overcome this HRIA has to develop recommendations regarding incorporating, monitoring, content moderation, product interventions and many more so that Meta platform can study them and use them as a regard to identify and guide relevant actions which fixes the issues swiftly that are reported as of now.

Vijaykumar H.K., Raichur

# British PM race: Rishi Sunak tops Tory MPs' latest vote, edges closer to final spot

LONDON: Rishi Sunak topped another round of voting on Tuesday to edge tally from Monday's 115, while Trade Minister Penny Mordaunt got 92 second spot. The final two candidates will be known after a fifth round of voting on to address his or her first Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) in the House



even closer to his place as one of two candidates who will go head-to-head to be elected the new Conservative Party leader and British Prime Minister, as Kemi Badenoch became the latest candidate to be out of the running. The British Indian former Chancellor received 118 votes in the fourth round of voting by his party colleagues, just shy of the 120-mark --- or one-third of Conservative Party MPs --- needed to confirm his place as one of the final contenders in the race to replace Boris Johnson. The 42-year-old leader increased his

votes and Foreign Secretary Liz Truss 86 votes leaving the race to clinch second place still open. Though Mordaunt holds on to her position with 10 more votes than Monday, Truss in third place has picked up the most votes since her last tally of 71. The elimination of former equalities minister Badenoch with 59 votes will now turn the focus on where her considerable support within the Tory members of Parliament will go, as those MPs are wooed by both Mordaunt and Truss to shore up their chances of grabbing that all-important

on Wednesday, at the end of which the race will be taken over by the Conservative Party headquarters to organise hustings in different parts of the UK. The focus will then be on convincing the Tory party membership base, estimated at around 160,000 voters, to cast their ballots in favour of one of the two remaining candidates. EDITORIAL | Will Rishi Sunak break the glass ceiling? Those votes will be counted towards the end of August for the winner to be announced by September 5, with the new incumbent at 10 Downing Street go-

of Commons on September 7. It has been an intense few weeks for the Tory party since Boris Johnson resigned on July 7, following the resignation of Sunak and multiple other Cabinet ministers who said they had lost confidence in his leadership in the wake of a series of scandals at the heart of his government. Johnson chaired his final Cabinet meeting as a caretaker Prime Minister this week and is expected to take his place as a backbench Tory MP when Parliament resumes under a new Tory leader in September.

# UK sizzles on hottest day ever at 40C

LONDON: The UK broke an unwelcome record on Tuesday when Heathrow in south-west London recorded 40.2 degrees Celsius on the hottest day ever experienced in the country. The reading came soon after Surrey in south-east England had broken the record of the highest temperature ever since records began at 39 degrees Celsius. The previous record high temperature was 38.7C,

A high of 38.1C was reached in Suffolk, eastern England, on Monday, just short of the UK record of 38.7C set in 2019. Scotland and Wales are also forecast to see their hottest days on record after a scorching Monday, when the latter set a new high temperature mark at 37.1C. Network Rail issued a "do not travel" warning for Tuesday, affecting services travelling through the "red zone" under the Met Office warning map. Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said the UK's rail network could not cope with the extreme heat, adding that it would take "many years" before upgrades would mean services could handle the hotter climate. "The simple answer is no, the network cannot cope with the heat right now," he told the BBC. "In 40C heat, tracks can reach 50C, 60C, and even 70C, and there's a severe danger of tracks buckling and a terrible derailing. We are building new specifications, creating overhead lines that can withstand higher temperatures. But with the best will in the world, this is infrastructure which has taken decades to build, with some of our railways stretching back 200 years," he said. The country's infrastructure structured around cold temperatures has struggled to cope with the extreme heat since the weekend. Runways at Luton Airport and Royal Air Force (RAF) Brize Norton were also impacted by the heat on Monday, forcing aircraft to divert. There have been warnings of pressure on hospitals and ambulance services as temperatures are set to peak on Tuesday. Monday saw a number of schools close ahead of a scheduled annual summer break. Water companies in southern and eastern England have warned increased demand is leading to low pressure, and even interrupted supply, for some households. According to experts, heatwaves are becoming more likely and more extreme because of human-induced climate change. The world has already warmed by about 1.1C since the industrial era began, and temperatures are set to keep rising unless sharp cuts are made to carbon emissions.



set in 2019 at Cambridge Botanic Garden in eastern England. The Meteorological (Met) Office said the readings are provisional as the temperatures are expected to soar even further with other regions reporting their readings at different times of the day. The country was braced for "unprecedented" temperatures on Tuesday after the ongoing heat wave resulted in the hottest night on record at 26 degrees Celsius in parts of London overnight on Monday. The Met Office red warning of danger to life from extreme heat remains in place for much of central, northern, and south-east England, including the capital city. At least five people are believed to have drowned after attempting to escape the heat in rivers and lakes. "Tuesday will be a pretty unprecedented day, with the mercury possibly reaching highs of 41C in spots in England. This will make it the hottest day on record and the first time we have seen temperatures as high as 40C," said Rachel Ayers, a Met Office forecaster. "There are likely to be delays on roads, with road closures, as well as possible delays and cancellations to trains and maybe issues with air travel. This could pose a significant health risk to those stuck on services or roads during the heat," she said.

# UP govt plans to introduce Eligibility Test for Madrasa teachers' appointment

LUCKNOW: In order to bring about transparency in appointments and to give a boost to the teaching quality, the UP government is set to bring about a change in the appointment process of Madrasa teachers by introducing the Teachers Eligibility Test (TET) for those seeking appointment as teachers in institutions imparting Islamic education in the state.



Under the proposal, those seeking to teach in state madrasas will have to pass Madrasa Teachers Eligibility Test (MTET). The proposal aims at improving the teaching standard of the madrasas, especially, the non-Islamic subjects like Mathematics, Science, Social Science, and Computer. "This will also bring about transparency in the appointment of teachers," said a senior official of the UP Madrasa Board. So far, the Madrasa management authorities appoint the as-

pirants with a graduation degree coupled with B.Ed. As per the new proposal, the education department would organise MTET which would be different from the TET organised by the Basic Education Board of UP. Notably, during its first tenure, Yogi government had tried to bring many changes in Madrasa education system by introducing NCERT syllabus in 2018 so that the Madrasa stu-

dents can be well versed with all the contemporary subjects along with the Deeni Talim (Islamic aided Madrasas in which around 8400 teachers are appointed. State minister for Minority Welfare, Danish Azad Ansari said: "We are in the process of bringing in new system of appointment of Madrasa teachers through MTET. The proposal is already under consideration. The appointments through TET would be centralised and more transparent. We want to reassure that this system will not meddle with the Islamic Education being provided in Madrasas right now."

# WHO: COVID triples across Europe, hospitalisations double

LONDON: The World Health Organisation said Tuesday that coronavirus cases have tripled across Europe in the past six weeks, accounting for nearly half of all infections globally. Hospitalisation rates have also doubled, although intensive care admissions have remained low.

parts of the system so close to collapsing. Kamran Abbasi, of the BMJ and Alastair McLellan of the Health Service Journal wrote in a joint editorial that the UK government was failing to address persistent problems worsened by COVID, including ambulances lining up outside hospitals too overloaded to accept new patients.



In a statement on Tuesday, WHO's Europe director, Dr Hans Kluge, described COVID-19 as "a nasty and potentially deadly illness" that people should not underestimate. He said super-infectious relatives of the omicron variant were driving new waves of disease across the continent and that repeat infections could potentially lead to long COVID. WHO said the 53 countries in its European region, which stretches to central Asia, reported nearly 3 million new coronavirus infections last week and that the virus was killing about 3,000 people every week. Globally, COVID-19 cases have increased for the past five weeks, even as countries have scaled back on testing. "With rising cases, we're also seeing a rise in hospitalisations, which are only set to increase further in the autumn and winter months," Kluge said. "This forecast presents a huge challenge to the health workforce in country after country, already under enormous pressure dealing with unrelenting crises since 2020." Earlier this week, editors of two British medical journals said the country's National Health Service has never before had so many

They slammed the government's insistence that vaccines have broken the link between infections and hospitalisations. Although vaccines dramatically reduce the chances of severe disease and death, they have not made a significant dent on transmission. "The government must stop gaslighting the public and be honest about the threat the pandemic still poses to them and the National Health Service," the editors wrote. WHO released its fall strategy for COVID-19 on Tuesday. The UN health agency called for a second vaccine booster dose for anyone age 5 and up with weak immune systems, promoting mask-wearing indoors and on public transportation, and better ventilation in schools, offices and other places. Kluge said Southern Hemisphere countries were currently experiencing a very active flu season that, combined with COVID, was straining health systems. "We are likely to see a similar scenario in the Northern Hemisphere," Kluge said, warning that increased pressure could lead to business, travel and school chaos. He urged people to make their own decisions, even in countries where authorities have largely abandoned coronavirus restrictions. "We're all aware of the tools we have to keep ourselves safe, assess our level of risk and take the necessary steps to protect others if we get infected," Kluge said. "Just because a mask isn't mandated doesn't mean it's prohibited."

# State Unveils New IT Policy

Bhubaneswar(KCN): In an aim to attract more numbers of IT firms to invest in the State, Odisha Government has come up with a new IT Policy.

The State Cabinet chaired by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has approved 17 proposals including the new Odisha IT Policy 2022 here at its meeting held on Tuesday.

The State Government has been at the forefront in adoption of emerging technologies in IT to drive and transform governance in the state to positively impact the lives of its citizens.

In consonance with the 5T principles of good governance (Teamwork, Technology, Transparency, Time, Transformation), the State is all set to realize the vision of a digital democracy.

The vision of this policy is to transform



Odisha into a leading destination of investment for Information Technology in the country and position it prominently on the global map as a preferred IT outsourcing destination propelling employment opportunities and inclusive growth.

As per the policy, the State has announced to provide 25% of fixed capital investment as capital subsidy limited to Rs. 20 crores. The government would also provide 15% of the cost of developing solar power plant subject to a maximum of Rs. 25 lakhs will be reimbursed.

Greenfield IT Parks will be eligible for 100% reimbursement of stamp Duty/ Registration Fee/ Conversion Fee.

Capital investment subsidy of 30% of fixed capital investment in buildings and infrastructure, excluding the cost of land will be provided subject to a maximum of Rs.3 crore to eligible IT unit.

The Government has also announced interest subsidies for the IT firms. Eligible IT units will be entitled to get an interest subsidy at 5% per annum on term loans availed from recognized financial institutions and banks, subject to a maximum of Rs. 10 crores per year for a period of 5 years from the date of commencement of commercial operation. There is an exemption of electricity duty and electrical inspection fee for 5 years. There will be reimbursement of electricity tariff at 30% for 3 years capped at Rs. 35 lakhs per

unit.

Similarly, the eligible IT units with up to 40 employees will get subsidies on the rental of incubation space for a maximum of 3 years based on their incubation space. Further, reimbursement upto Rs. 1000 per seat per month for co-working space in designated IT Parks & Incubation Centers approved by Government and Rs. 1000 per seat per-month in notified private IT Park/IT Space, will be given.

The eligible IT units hiring building-on rent for operating their centers will be entitled for a subsidy of 75% of the actual rent paid or Rs. 20 per sq. ft. per month whichever is lower. An additional 25% lease rental limited to 5 lakhs per annum will also be provided to women, SC/ST, disabled Entrepreneurs.

In the Policy, the Government has also announced 100% exemption of stamp duty on the first transaction and 50% exemption on the second transaction on lease/ sale agreement of land or built-up space allotted by the Government. The eligible units will be entitled to get 100% reimbursement of conversion fee and registration fee for 1st transaction.

Reimbursement of 100% state component of GST (SGST) for a period of 5 years in Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) Area and for a period of 7 years in non -BDA Area will be provided to the IT firms subject to 100% of their Fixed Capital Investment (FCI).

Recruitment Assistance shall be provided at Rs. 10,000 per newly recruited employee at executive level who are domiciles of Odisha with a maximum limit of Rs. 10 Lakhs per unit for a period of 3 years.

Additional Rs. 1000 per employing women, SC/ST and Physically Disabled employees. 100% reimbursement of the expenditure incurred towards contribution for ESI and EPF of employees of IT units who are domiciles of Odisha up to Rs. 5 crore per annum for a period of 03(three) years. For investment in non-BDA areas, reimbursement would be up to Rs. 7crore will be provided.

The Government has also decided to provide reimbursement at 50% of internet bandwidth charges per annum subject to a maximum of Rs 5 lakhs per annum for a period of 2 years. Moreover, assistance of Rs. 20 lakhs for setting up of and maintenance of Biju Innovation Lab for 5 years will be provided.

The IT Policy will be in operation for 5 years from the date of its Gazette Notification or till it is substituted by another Policy.

The Cabinet has approved amendment to Odisha Mobile Towers, OFC (Optical Fibre Cable) and related Telecom Infrastructure Policy, 2017 to include 'deemed approval' clause.

## India top lender to crisis-hit Sri Lanka this year

COLOMBO: India has emerged as the top lender to Sri Lanka, extending USD 376.9 million worth of credit compared to USD 67.9 million by China in the first four months of this year to rescue the island nation from the unprecedented political crisis and economic turmoil.

Loans from India with USD 376.9 million were the highest foreign financing disbursements during the period of January 1 to April 30, 2022, according to Sri Lanka's Finance Ministry.

After India, Asian Development Bank (ADB) came in as the second largest lender with USD 359.6 million being disbursed in the first four months, followed by the World Bank with USD 67.3 million.

The total foreign financing disbursements made during the period amounted to USD 968.8 million, of which, USD 968.1 million was disbursed as loans while USD 0.7 million was disbursed by way of grants.

The majority of the disbursements were from the loan agreements signed with India, which is almost 39 per cent, followed by Asian Development Bank (37 per cent) and China (7 per cent), according to a report from the ministry.

The government had made arrangements to mobilise foreign financing of USD 1,550.5 million by entering into four agreements with foreign development partners and lending agencies from January 1 to April 30, 2022, to support the public investment

programme.

"This consists of USD 1,500.0 million of Export credit Facilities extended by the EXIM bank and State bank of India for import of essential commodities." The performance of mobilising foreign financing during the first quarter was greatly affected by the economic crisis of Sri Lanka, the ministry report said. India was the island nation's only source of assistance with the economic meltdown, the worst in the country's history, which kicked in during the early part of this year. Sri Lanka is expecting a bailout from the International Monetary Fund to secure the urgent need of USD 3-4 billion dollars for bridging finance. The country needs about USD 5 billion in the next six months to cover basic necessities for its 22 million people, who have been struggling with long queues, worsening shortages and power cuts.

The economic crisis also sparked a political crisis in the country after a popular uprising against the government forced Rajapaksa to flee the country and resign as president. India has been the principal source of foreign assistance to Sri Lanka this year.

On Friday, the Indian High Commission here reiterated that India will continue to stand with the people of Sri Lanka as they seek to realise their aspirations for prosperity and progress through democratic means and values as well as established institutions and a constitutional framework.

## Woman seeks Maharashtra CM's intervention to register FIR against Shiv Sena MP Shewale

MUMBAI: A 33-year-old Dubai-based woman has sought the registration of a First Information Report against Shiv Sena MP Rahul Shewale alleging he had raped her under the pretext of marriage and tweeted her complaint to Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

Dismissing the allegations against her husband, Shewale's wife Kamini termed them a "deliberate conspiracy" to tarnish the image of the Mumbai South Central MP who has been active in social and political life for more than 25 years.

In her complaint, the woman who runs a textile business has alleged that Mumbai Police had not registered the FIR despite recording her statement in the past.

She has alleged that Shewale has been "emotionally and mentally exploiting her" and raping her since 2020, a Mumbai Police official said on Tuesday. The woman alleged Shewale had established physical relations with her saying his relations with his wife are strained. He told her that the two will get divorced soon after which he will marry her, as per the complaint.

"The MP used to invite me for dinner at the MP House in Delhi whenever I used to come from Dubai. In October 2021, I posted a video and photo of me and Shewale on Instagram, following which he lodged an FIR against me in Sharjah and I was arrested. I spent 78 days in jail but I was acquitted later," the complainant woman said over the phone on Tuesday.

The woman, who is visiting Mumbai, claimed she had lodged a complaint of rape against Shewale in April this year at Sakinaka police station but no further action was taken.

"I came to know that Sakinaka Police have registered an FIR against me for extortion and other sections of the IPC on Shewale's complaint. I pro-

vided all the proof to the police and also approached the National Commission for Women. I request the chief minister to take action against Shewale and direct the police to register the FIR against him," she said.

Sakinaka police on July 11 registered an FIR against the woman on the charges of extortion, cheating, and defamation under the direction of a metropolitan magistrate's court in Andheri on the application filed by Shewale.

The MP had stated in his complaint that the woman had approached him under the pretext of seeking financial assistance for her business, but eventually started extorting money by threatening to defame him.

He had stated in his complaint that the woman was pressuring him to divorce his wife and marry her. Shewale also stated that he had met the woman through a close friend in February 2020.

In her statement, Kamini Shewale referred to the FIR registered against the woman in the Sakinaka police station in Mumbai.

"The woman had been threatening to kill me and my family members for the past few months. A case was also registered against her in Sharjah a few months ago for intimidation with intent to extort, defaming the image of a dignitary and she was also jailed for around 80 days. The woman has a criminal family background. Her brother is serving sentence in a Delhi jail for raping and murdering a woman. This is a deliberate conspiracy to tarnish the political and social reputation of MP Rahul Shewale," she stated.

Notably, 12 Lok Sabha members of the Shiv Sena, who have sided with CM Eknath Shinde, on Tuesday met Speaker Om Birla in Delhi and requested him to appoint Rahul Shewale in place of Vinayak Raut as the party's floor leader.




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# Telecom Dept hasn't reviewed spectrum pricing mechanism for captive users: CAG report

NEW DELHI: The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has pulled up the telecom department for not finalising policy on spectrum assignment for captive uses and flagged the absence of spectrum price review for captive users administratively. In its report titled 'Management of spectrum assigned on the administrative basis to government departments/agencies', the CAG asked the Department of

Telecom (DoT) to review the spectrum pricing mechanism for captive users to incentivise ministries, departments and agencies, and for maintaining spectrum management discipline. "They may consider differential pricing, depending on the features and usage of various spectrum bands," the CAG said in a report tabled in Parliament on Monday. It noted that despite receiving a legal

opinion (July 2021) on its own reference, regarding the method for allotment of spectrum for captive uses, including government departments, the department had not finalised the policy for allotment and assignment of spectrum for captive uses/other commercial services with the approval of the Digital Communications Commission. The DCC is the apex body for telecom policy formulation. "DoT had also not reviewed the pricing of

spectrum assigned on a commercial basis since its pricing.

was not reviewed for IMT (Inter-

national Mobile Telecommunications) use and have scope for commercial utilisation of spectrum," it said.

The DoT and Railways should monitor the completion of LTE (Long-Term Evolution) based network project in the 700 MHz band so that Railways vacate the spectrum in the 900 MHz band being used by them, and it is made available for commercial utilisation. "DoT in consultation with TRAI may take early action for the auction/ utilisation of IMT spectrum lying idle with them," the report said.

READ HERE | Adani may enter telecom space in future The Department of Space (DOS) and DoT should work together to identify a suitable technology solution in a manner that both services can co-exist in important frequency bands. "DoS needs to engage with client Departments and other potential users at an early stage before planning and launching the satellite capacity so as to minimise non-utilisation of spectrum resources," the CAG report said. The DoS, it felt, needs to establish a mechanism for assessing and reviewing the utilisation of spectrum in all bands, particularly in IMT bands and satellite bandwidth for ensuring optimal and efficient utilisation of assigned radiowaves. "DoS may consolidate spectrum-related information and make it available at a common platform for easy access and assessment of spectrum at Corporate Infocore level," said the report.

Besides, the DoT can ensure that public sector undertakings, such as ONGC and GAIL, use the assigned spectrum optimally and efficiently and surrender unutilised frequencies



## Putin heads to Tehran for talks with leaders of Iran, Turkey

Continued from page-1

uled to hold talks with Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan about the pressing issues facing the region, including the conflict in Syria and a UN-backed proposal to resume exports of Ukrainian grain to ease the global food crisis.

As the West heaps sanctions on Russia and the costly campaign drags on, Putin is seeking to bolster ties with Tehran, a fellow target of severe US sanctions and a potential military and trade partner.

In recent weeks, Russian officials visited an airfield in central Iran at least twice to review Tehran's weapons-capable drones for possible use in Ukraine, the White House has alleged.

But perhaps most crucially, the Tehran trip offers Putin a chance for a high-stakes meeting with Erdogan, who has sought to help broker talks on a peaceful settlement of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, as well as help negotiations to unblock Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea.

Turkey, a NATO member, has found itself opposite Russia in bloody conflicts in Azerbaijan, Libya and Syria. It has even sold lethal drones that Ukrainian forces have used to attack Russia.

But Turkey hasn't imposed sanctions on the Kremlin, making it a sorely needed partner for Moscow.

Grappling with runaway inflation and a rapidly depreciating currency, Turkey also relies on the Russian market.

The gathering has symbolic meaning for Putin's domestic audience as well, showing off Russia's international clout even as it grows increasingly isolated and plunges deeper into confrontation with the West. It comes just days after US President Joe Biden's visited Israel and Saudi Arabia, Tehran's primary rivals.

From Jerusalem and Jeddah, Biden urged Israel and Arab countries to push back on Russian, Chinese and Iranian influence that has expanded with the perception of America's retreat from the region. It was a tough sell. Israel maintains good relations with Putin, a necessity given Russian presence in Syria, Israel's northeastern neighbour and frequent target of its airstrikes.

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have declined to pump more oil beyond a plan approved by their energy alliance with Moscow.

But all the countries, despite their long-standing rivalries, could agree on drawing closer to counter Iran, which has rapidly advanced its nuclear program since former US President Donald Trump abandoned Tehran's atomic accord with world powers and reimposed crushing sanctions.

Talks to restore the deal have hit a deadlock. Backed into a corner by the West and its regional rivals, the Iranian government is ramping up uranium enrichment, cracking down on dissent and grabbing headlines with optimistic, hard-line stances intended to keep the Iranian currency, the rial, from crashing.

Without sanctions relief in sight, Iran's tactical partnership with Russia has become one of survival, even as Moscow appears to be undercutting Tehran in the black market oil

trade.

"Iran is (the) center of dynamic diplomacy," Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian wrote on Twitter, adding the meetings will "develop economic cooperation, focus on security of the region and ensure food security."

Fadahassein Maleki, a member of the Iranian parliament's influential committee on national security and foreign policy, described Russia as Iran's "most strategic partner" on Monday. His comments belied decades of animosity stemming from Russia's occupation of Iran during World War II, and its refusal to leave afterward.

In his fifth visit to Tehran, Putin will meet Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, with whom he has a "trusting dialogue", Putin's foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov said. He will also hold talks with President Raisi on issues including Tehran's nuclear deal, of which Russia is a key signatory.

The leaders met in Moscow in January and again last month in Turkmenistan.

The focus of the talks among the three presidents will be the decade-old conflict in Syria, where Iran and Russia have backed President Bashar Assad's government, while Turkey has supported armed opposition factions.

Russia intervened in the conflict in 2015, pooling efforts with Iranian forces and using its air power to shore up Assad's fledgling military.

Ushakov said the parties will discuss efforts to encourage a political settlement, while Erdogan is expected to take up Turkey's threats of a new military offensive in northern Syria to drive away US-backed Syrian Kurdish fighters from its borders.

The operation is part of Turkey's plan to create a safe zone along its border with Syria that would encourage the voluntary return of Syrian refugees.

In a meeting with Erdogan, Khamenei delivered a stern warning against the planned Turkish incursion.

"Any sort of military attack in northern Syria will definitely harm Turkey, Syria and the entire region, and will benefit terrorists," Iran's top leader said, stressing the need to "bring the issue to an end through talks."

Iran and Turkey signed a raft of preliminary agreements covering investment, diplomacy, media and business, among other fields, and pledged to triple bilateral trade, to \$30 billion. Raisi praised Erdogan's visit as a "turning point" in their relations.

In his speech, Erdogan called for solidarity in the fight against Kurdish militant groups as well as a network led by a US-based Muslim cleric whom Ankara accuses of orchestrating a failed coup in 2016.

Talks to lift a Russian blockade and get Ukraine's grain into global markets will also be on the agenda.

Last week, UN, Russian, Ukrainian and Turkish officials reached a tentative agreement on some aspects of a deal to ensure the export of 22 million tons of desperately needed grain and other agricultural products trapped in Ukraine's Black Sea ports by the fighting.

Tuesday's meeting between Putin and Erdogan could help clear the remaining hurdles, a major step toward alleviating a food crisis that has sent prices of vital commodities like wheat and barley soaring.

for captive users administratively, on for-

2012, though a Committee had recommended for a periodical review of the pricing policy in 2013," the CAG report said.

There was no differential pricing for spectrum, depending on features and usage of various spectrum bands assigned to users, it observed. "Buy from trusted sources only": Ahead of 5G rollout, Centre bars Chinese telecom equipment

"DoT may devise a policy on allotment and assignment of spectrum for captive users/other commercial usages in alignment with statements made in NDCP 2018 (National Digital Communication Policy) and end adhocism in allotment of spectrum to government departments/agencies," the report said.

It suggested that the DoT should establish a permanent set-up comprising all stakeholders for a periodical review of spectrum planning, availability, allotments, assignments and

This would expedite decisions for efficient management and optimal utilisation of spectrum in India.

"They may also ensure that an MIS (management information system) is put in place in DoT to get details of actual spectrum utilised by Government user departments and agencies," the CAG suggested.

The DoT in consultation with all the departments should take proactive measures for the finalisation of recommendations of working groups and decisions of Secretaries for reassignment, re-allotment and reforming of the spectrum.

"In pursuance of NDCP 2018, DoT may coordinate with Government users to provide spectrum in substitute bands for users in 1427-1500 MHz and 2300-2400 MHz bands, harmonisation exercise in 2100 MHz, sharing of spectrum in 700 MHz band as these had been iden-

## Presidential polls: NDA's Droupadi Murmu gets 100 per cent votes from BJD and BJP

Continued from page-1

The BJP also ensured

that not a single vote of the party was rejected and nobody abstained from voting.

Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly Pradipta Kumar Naik arrived in a wheelchair to cast his vote in the Parliament house. He was accompanied by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. Naik has been admitted to a private hospital at New Delhi for post-COVID complications.

Besides, out of the two expelled BJD MLAs, former minister Pradip Panigrahy voted in favour of Murmu. However, Prashant Jagdev did not vote. Meanwhile, the total value of votes in the Presidential election in Odisha including 31 MPs, both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and 147 MLAs is 43,454.

The total value of BJD MPs and MLAs from the State is 31,388 for 112 MLAs, 12 Lok Sabha MPs and nine Rajya Sabha MPs. Besides, one of the expelled BJD MLA has also voted for Murmu. That comes to 149 vote value. Similarly, the total vote value of BJP Odisha is 9,578 including 3,278 of 22 MLAs and 6,300 of nine MPs.

The total vote value of Congress from the State will be 1,892, 8 MLAs and one MP. The value of votes received by Murmu from the State is 41,413 including that of Moqim and independent MLA Makaranda Muduli. Value of votes obtained by united Opposition candidate Yashwant Sinha will be 2,041 including eight Congress MLA, one Congress MP and one CPM MLA.

## Cabinet nod for policy to transform Odisha into a leading destination for IT investment

Continued from page-1

be up to Rs 7 crore.

IT units will get reimbursement at 50% of internet bandwidth charges per annum subject to a maximum of Rs 5 lakh per annum for a period of two years.

An assistance of Rs 20 lakh for establishment and maintenance of Biju Innovation Lab will be provided for five years. In order to promote Centre of Excellence (CoE) in engineering colleges and educational institutes in Odisha, various incentives will be provided in the form of marketing assistance, quality certification, patent registration, bandwidth connectivity assistance, interest and investment subsidy.

Odisha Cabinet nod to first ever electronics policy

The Odisha IT Policy 2022 will be in operation for five years from the date of its Gazette Notification or till it is substituted by another policy.

The State government has also amended Odisha Mobile Towers, OFC (Optical Fibre Cable) and related Telecom Infrastructure Policy, 2017 to promote telecommunication network and encourage establishment of modern telecom infrastructure to provide high speed internet in village level.

The 2017 policy does not have a 'deemed approval' clause, which results in delay in decision on grant of permission on erection of towers, micro communication equipment, in-building solutions and renders it non-aligned with the Indian Telegraph Right of Way Rules, 2016 that has made it mandatory to grant permission for underground and overhead telegraph infrastructure within 60 days of the application.

The amendment in the policy aims to incorporate deemed approval clause in the Odisha Policy, 2017 as per the Indian Telegraph Right of Way Rules, 2016 and also the amendments made in the rules in 2019.

## 'One of greatest players to play in all three formats': Ben Stokes on Virat Kohli



LONDON: England Test captain Ben Stokes has returned the compliment to Virat Kohli, saying he has always admired the energy and commitment that the Indian star brings to the field. Stokes had announced his retirement from ODI cricket on Monday, following which Kohli called the all-rounder "the most competitive bloke"

he has played against. "Look, Virat is going to go down as one of the greatest players to play the game in all three formats. He is a phenomenal player. And I have absolutely loved every time I have played against someone like him," Stokes told Sky Sports. ALSO READ | England Test captain Ben Stokes to retire

from ODI cricket "The energy and the commitment that he gives to the game is something I have always admired even before I started playing against him. When you play against guys like that, you understand sort of what it means to not just yourself but for everybody else who was lucky enough to play at the top level. "I am sure we will

have some other battles on the field. It was nice to hear what he (Kohli) said," said Stokes. Kohli, who has as many as 70 international hundreds under his belt, has not scored a century since November 2019. He struggled even in the recently concluded tour of England. He has been rested from the West Indies series beginning July 22.

## Belgium beats Italy to reach Women's Euro 2022 quarterfinals



BRUSSELS: Belgium reached the quarterfinals of the Women's European Championship for the first time after a 1-0 upset win over Italy also eliminated Iceland on Monday. Midfielder Tine de Caigny scored in the 49th minute and Belgium clung on to win. After the final whistle, Belgium had to wait for confirmation as Iceland drew with already-qualified France 1-1 after 12 minutes of added time. That sets up a quarterfinal for Belgium against Sweden on Friday. France was already assured of winning the group and plays the defending champion Netherlands on Saturday. After a cagey first half, de Caigny brought the game to life. Italy repeatedly failed to clear the ball from a free kick and de Caigny hit a powerful shot from just inside the penalty area. Italy had plenty of chances as striker and captain Cristiana Girelli cannoned a shot off the underside of the crossbar shortly after de

Caigny's goal, and substitute forward Giacinti hit a shot which deflected just wide of the post. Belgium captain Tessa Wullaert cracked a shot against the post in stoppage time. Iceland scored a penalty with the last kick of the game in the 12th minute of added time for the draw. The referee blew for the end of the game, denying Iceland the chance to seek a winning goal to qualify. France gave time to fringe players against Iceland but still took the lead with Melvine Malard's goal 43 seconds into the game, the quickest of the tournament so far. France twice celebrated being 2-0 ahead before having goals ruled out on video review. A second for Malard was found to be offside, and Grace Geyoro was found to have handballed before scoring in the 88th. Iceland would have qualified with a win over France, but it could have reached the quarterfinals with a draw or even a loss if Italy had leveled against Belgium, depending on the tie-breaker of yellow and red cards.

## IPL franchise owners buy all six teams in Cricket South Africa's new T20 league: Report

NEW DELHI: The Indian Premier League (IPL) franchises have bought all six teams in Cricket South Africa's upcoming new T20 league, the inaugural edition of which is scheduled for January 2023. It has been learnt that Mumbai Indians, Chennai Super Kings, Lucknow Super Giants, Sunrisers Hyderabad, Rajasthan Royals and one of the owners of Delhi Capitals have successfully bid for the franchises during the team's auction. According to the ESPNcricinfo report, CSK, through parent company Chennai Super Kings Sports Limited, made the highest bid to buy the Johannesburg franchise. Mumbai Indians, owned by Reliance Industries, bought the Cape Town franchise, while the Sun TV Group, which owns Sunrisers, bought the Port Elizabeth franchise. The RP Sanjeev Goenka group, which paid a record sum of Rs 7090 crore to buy the Lucknow IPL franchise late last year, picked up the Durban team, while Rajasthan Royals bought the Paarl team. Pretoria has been taken by Jindal South West Sports, which is headed by Parth Jindal, co-owner of the Delhi Capitals in IPL. The league will be run by Cricket South Africa in partnership with television broadcaster

SuperSport. The board is expected to make a formal announcement of the new owners and the cities they will represent once the paperwork is completed. Notably, this new tournament is CSA's third attempt to start a sustainable franchise-based T20 league after the failure of Global League T20 and the Mzansi Super League due to various reasons. OPINION | Is it a win or loss for IPL media rights winners? The new T20 league was set up as "top priority" by the CSA, which has risked South Africa's direct qualification for the 2023 ODI World Cup after they forfeit a three-match ODI series in Australia, last week. As per CSA, it had made the radical move for the "long-term sustainability of the game" in South Africa. Going ahead, the board will not organise any international cricket in South Africa after the New Year Test to create a window for the T20 league. "This new league promises to make a significant investment into both professional cricket and development in South Africa, along with a positive socio-economic and tourism injection into the country," CSA's chief executive officer Pholetsi Moseki said.

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