

## Sarat Patnaik: New OPCC Chief

New Delhi(KCN): Veteran Congress Leader Sarat Patnaik has been appointed as new PCC President of Odisha.

This is his second term as OPCC Chief as he was PCC President from 2001-04.

Most loyal and confidant of 10Janpath, New Delhi, Mr.Patnaik has been appointed by All India Congress Committee (AICC) President Sonia Gandhi, said K C Venugopal in a Press Note.

While accepting resignation of Niranjan Patnaik, the outgoing OPCC Chief, AICC has recorded appreciation for the Senior Patnaik. Mr.Patnaik had served as State Youth Congress President of Odisha.

Active in Student Politics, he was Law College President, Sambalpur. 1979 -80.

Later he became General Secretary NSUI,Odisha, and became Joint Secretary Youth Congress and later became General Secretary Youth Congress and elevated to Vice President of Odisha Youth Congress.

He attended World Youth Festival in North Korea 1989.

He became President of Pradesh Youth Congress Odisha from 1992 till 1996.

For the two terms Elected as MP from Balangir, 1991 and 1996.

Later he became General Secretary OPCC, went up in ladder to become Vice President PCC.

He became OPCC Chief for four years and scaled up the activities of Congress in Odisha.

Mr.Patnaik became AICC Secretary and worked sincerely for the party.

As Member of Parlia-

ment from Balangir, he took up development works like KBK Yojana, Lower Suktel and Lower Indra irrigation project, Balangir - Khorda Railway line, included in 8th five years plan.

Mr.Patnaik took up developmental work for implementation of Kharkhara Barrage, Central School at Balangir, setting up of Navodaya Vidyalaya at Belpada of Balangir and in Nuapada.

Starting DMU train Titlagarh to Raipur. All Blocks in Balangir was included as ICDS Blocks.

When Mr.Patnaik took up the issue of KBK, P

V Narasimha Rao as Prime Minister of India visited Balangir district and Nuapada district and declared KBK Yojana at Kalahandi.

Mr.Patnaik was also took up the issue with Former Prime Minister of India H D Deve Gowda and later he visited Nuapada and Balangir district to declare Lower Suktel and Lower Indra astwo major irrigation projects to be taken up on priority basis.

When Shrimati Sonia Gandhi President of AICC visited also drought prone areas Belpada block of Balangir district, Mr.Patnaik accompanied her.

Mr.Patnaik is a widely accepted leader from Western Odisha and having grass root connect. So AICC President has appointed him to revive the Congress Organization in the State and unite the leaders in interest of the party and State.

Interestingly The Samaja, New Delhi Bureau has long ago predicted the appointment of Sarat Patnaik, when every one was clueless about the new OPCC Chief of Odisha.



## India commits to a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region: PM Narendra Modi in Tokyo

TOKYO(KCN): India on Monday expressed its commitment to a free, open and inclusive Indo-

Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF). Speaking at the launch ceremony, he

Gujarat. The prime minister underlined the need for finding a common and creative solutions to tackle

Timeliness.

"India is committed to a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region and believes that deepening economic engagement among partners is crucial for continued growth, peace and prosperity," the statement said.

India is keen to collaborate with partner countries under the IPEF and work towards advancing regional economic connectivity, integration and boosting trade and investment within the region, it added. With the launch of the process to establish the IPEF, partner countries will begin discussions focusing on strengthening economic cooperation and achieving shared goals.

The statement further

## At World Health Assembly, India expresses dismay over WHO's excess mortality report

NEW DELHI(KCN): India on Monday expressed dismay and concern over the WHO's recent report on all-cause excess mortality estimates, saying authentic data published by the statutory authority has not been taken into account.

Addressing the World Health Assembly, Union

Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya conveyed the collective disappointment of the Central Council of Health and Family Welfare, a representative body of health ministers from all states of India, which had passed a unanimous resolution re-

garding the approach and



Pacific region and pitched for deepening of economic engagement among partners with a view to achieve the goal of continued growth, peace and prosperity, an official statement said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in an event here at the launch of discussions for an

economic challenges of the Indo-Pacific region. Modi also expressed India's commitment towards working with all countries of the region for an IPEF which is both inclusive and flexible. He said that the foundation of resilient supply chains must be 3Ts - Trust, Transparency and

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## Police Verifying BJD MP Conduct

Cuttack(KCN): Twin City Police has said that it was verifying allegations against Governing BJD MP

Mr.Mishra told Media here. The DCP also said that a case was earlier registered at Purighat

video viral of his statement with the intention to hurt her feelings as a woman. She alleged that by

tranged wife Varsha Priyadarshini, but only if fans gave him the permission to do so, while in the second, he elaborated on the reason which forced him to file a case for divorce from his wife.

Anubhav filed for divorce in the Patiala House Court in New Delhi in July 2020. This was revealed after Varsha filed a case of domestic violence at the Cuttack Sub-divisional Judicial Magistrate (SJD) court on 7 August, 2020, accusing the actor of torturing her physically and mentally.

On MP's video, BJD Kendrapara District Observer Debashis Samantray said that the video speaks more about his personal problem and not on the welfare of the people of his constituency.

The BJD MP was not seen in many party programs and even during electioneering of the recently concluded Rural and Urban polls.



Anubhav Mohanty lodged by his estranged wife and cine actress Varsha Priyadarshani. Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Cuttack, Pinak Mishra said that the fresh FIR against the MP is being analyzed and legal action will be taken in accordance with the law if the charges are found cognizable.

"We have acknowledged the complaint filed by Varsha Priyadarshini at Purighat police station. We will analyze the content of the FIR and take action accordingly,"

Police Station against the MP by his actress wife. "We are also taking into consideration the subsequent complaints being made by her. Action will be taken after analyzing whether contents are cognizable or non-cognizable offence," he said.

In her FIR at the Purighat police station on Sunday, Varsha Priyadarshini accused her husband of posting videos on social media and creating fabricated stories about her. She also alleged that the Kendrapara MP posted and made a

making insulting comments on her in the videos, Anubhav was also tarnishing her public image. Varsha said her husband has been conspiring for quite some time to tarnish her image in public.

"He is trying to violate the 'Right to Live with Dignity' by telling baseless stories on social media," the estranged wife, who is facing a divorce case, said.

The Parliamentarian has released two videos. In the first video titled 'untold story', he promised to spill the beans about the discord with his es-

## US says 20 countries offer new arms packages for Ukraine



WASHINGTON(KCN): Some 20 countries offered new security assistance packages for Ukraine to battle

invading Russian forces in a meeting of allies on Monday, US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin announced.

"Today was a very successful meeting," Austin said. "Many countries are donating critically needed artil-

lery ammunition, coastal defence systems and tanks and other armoured vehicles."

### Odisha Mo-Parivar Organized Blood Donation Camp & Collects 58 Units Blood

Khordha (KCN): Continuing its selfless social service Odisha Mo-Parivar under the guidance of MLA, Khordha, Joytrindra Nath Mitra, organized blood donation camp at PWD, IB, Khordha, has collected 58 units of blood through its Jeevan Bindu programme. The chief guest of the occasions Convenor Odisha Mo-Parivar Arup Pattnaik inaugurated the camp. Inspired by the Chief Minister Naveen Pattnaik the blood donation camp was organized by the Odisha Mo-Parivar. Its main goals is to maintain a consistent balance of blood supply. Khordha District Odisha Mo-Parivar Co-ordinator Dillip Kumar Hota Co-ordinated the programme. 51 women voluntarily donate their blood in this camp. Total 58 units of blood collected in this camp. In this camp BJD, State joint Secretary, in charge Odisha Mo-Parivar, Rudra Narayan Samantaray, Khordha District, BJD, observer,

Kailash Chandra Patra, BMC, ward no-45, Corporator, Amresh Jena, BJD, Bhubaneswar Organization District General Secretary Badri Narayan Mishra, President Zilla Parishad, Khordha, Mrs. Rupa Shree Rani Gumarsingh, Chairman Khordha Municipality, Mrs. Kanaka Lakshmi Mohanty, Vice-Chairman, Sourya Ranjan Mohanty, BJD, Khordha, Town President, Md. Arif, Biju Mahila Janta Dal, State Vice-President, Mrs. Basanti Mohapatra, Khordha District Biju Mahila Janta Dal, President, Mrs. Geetanjali Patsani, Vice-Chairman Khordha Panchayat Samiti, Prakash Samantaray, BYJD, State Secretary Rudra Nath Dutta, BJD, Khordha, District Vice-President, Bibhu Prasad Sahoo, BJD, Khordha, District General Secretary, Lalit Mohan Mohapatra and all the BJD, councillor of Khordha Municipality and the BJD, leaders of Khordha Assembly Constituency were present and encourage the blood donors.

### Career Counselling Programme organized by Pragyan Foundation, Kolkata

Kolkata (KCN): On 21st May 2022 a Career Counseling Program was organized by



Pragyan Foundation & Charon Disha. In this program more than 100 students participated from Bankra, Pilkhana, Tikiapara, Shibpur, Kazipara and Bakultala. Janab Nishat Parvez IPS, Inspector General of Police North Bengal took session for more than an hour for the bright future of the students. Janab Syed Khalid Meraj, Controller and Examiners of Vidyasagar School of Social Work, Vidyasagar University gave job related information to the students about Professional and Academic field. Janab Zahid Mahmood, Ex-

IAS Allied & Advocate, gave valuable information and especially told the girls to pursue Law. Mr. Sachin Jalan, Director of



Dreamzone, School of Creative Studies gave Information about Fashion Designing. Janab Md. Shakil, Advocate, Calcutta High Court, Riya Adhikari Banerjee, Md. Rehan Quraishi, Grade - A Gazetted Officer of Audit and Accounts Finance Department, Government of West Bengal and Mr. Manoj Kumar, Asia's Top Motivator and Memory Builder also gave speech to the students.

The Chief Guest of the program Dr. Suresh Kumar Agarwal, Chancellor, Pragyan International University, Ranchi Jharkhand, India interacted with the students and advised them to obey their parents and study properly so that they can have a better future. The program was a huge success. Everyone present on the occasion was awarded with Participation Certificate.

### IIT Delhi declared as the winner while Kolkata's Rituparna becomes the sole female finalist in the world at TCS CodeVita 2022 Season 10

Kolkata (KCN): TCS CodeVita 2022 is a prestigious event that was held from 11th March. A global coding challenge that has been designed by TCS to promote skill development and the spirit of innovation among the students, every year the competition witnesses participation of more than 350000 students worldwide.

after clearing Round 2 whose results were

who have been selected for the Grand

gender as well. Passionate about cod-



declared on 21st April.

Final which was organized on 15th May 2022.

While Kalash Gupta from IIT Delhi was declared as the winner in TCS CodeVita 2022 Season-10 today, Rituparna Padira

ing, Rituparna sees herself among the top programmers in the world. "I love coding and this competition has boosted my confidence a lot. I was really surprised when I officially received

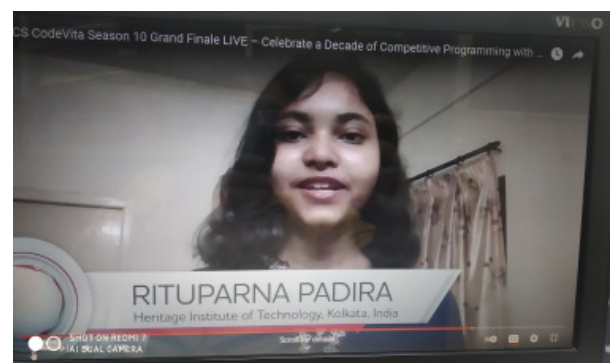


Rituparna Padira from B.Tech- Computer Science Engineering, Batch-2023, qualified for the Grand Finale at TCS CodeVita Season-10

Today the final results were declared and we feel proud to state that Rituparna becomes the sole female finalist among the top 30 finalists

was declared as the sole female finalist among the 30 top finalists across the world making not only Bengal proud but also the feminine

mail yesterday from TCS and could not believe my eyes that I am among the top 30 finalists in the world," said Rituparna.



### Champua called for indefinite shutdown demanding Kendriya Vidyalaya

Barbil (KCN): The Champua Vikash Parishad has staged a sit-in protest against the administration's non-cooperation in setting up an approved Kendriya Vidyalaya in Champua

the approval of the Central Government and with the approval of the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan. Although land has been identified twice in the NAC area, land has not been

of Kendujhar district. In protest, the organization has called for an indefinite shutdown of Champua from today. The people of Champua have given their full support on the first day of the Champua Bandh celebrations demanding the Kendriya Vidyalaya. All shops, markets, businesses, etc. in the city are closed, with the exception of only two wheeled vehicles. The closure has disrupted traffic in neighbouring Jharkhand. Trucks are parked on National Highway 50. Due to the closure, buses have been stranded. In Champua, the district collector was instructed to provide land for the establishment of a Kendriya Vidyalaya with

provided to date due to the district administration's non-cooperation attitude. According to the Champua Vikas Parishad, the district administration has decided to set up a Kendriya Vidyalaya at Kalika Prasad, 10 km from Champua. However, the Champua Vikas Parishad has demanded that the district administration should take steps to establish in Champua instead of Kalikaprasad. The agitation will last for three days. The organization has warned that it will be extended indefinitely if the district administration does not comply.



### Kolkata's Sourav & Subhrojyoti bag multiple offers from 5 prestigious IITs

Kolkata (KCN): IIT Guwahati and IIT Madras. Subhrojyoti

in Biotechnology and Bioengineering from IIT Guwahati. He has also been offered to pursue M.Tech in Biotechnology and Biochemical Engineering from IIT Kharagpur.



Subhrajyoti Ghosh, B.Tech- Biotechnology, Batch-2022 who secured an All India Rank 13 in GATE 2022 examinations in Biotechnology had bagged multiple offers from 5 prestigious IITs which are IIT Kharagpur, IIT Bombay, IIT Delhi, IIT Guwahati and IIT Madras and M.Tech

PhD in Genetic Engineering Or Cancer Biology from IISc. Sourav wants to grab his offer in data science and cp computational at IISc but still wants to weigh other opportunities in terms of future prospects. "A proud moment for the entire Heritage family and he had been working hard to crack the IITs for a long time," said Mr. P. K. Agarwal, CEO, Heritage Group of Institutions, Kolkata

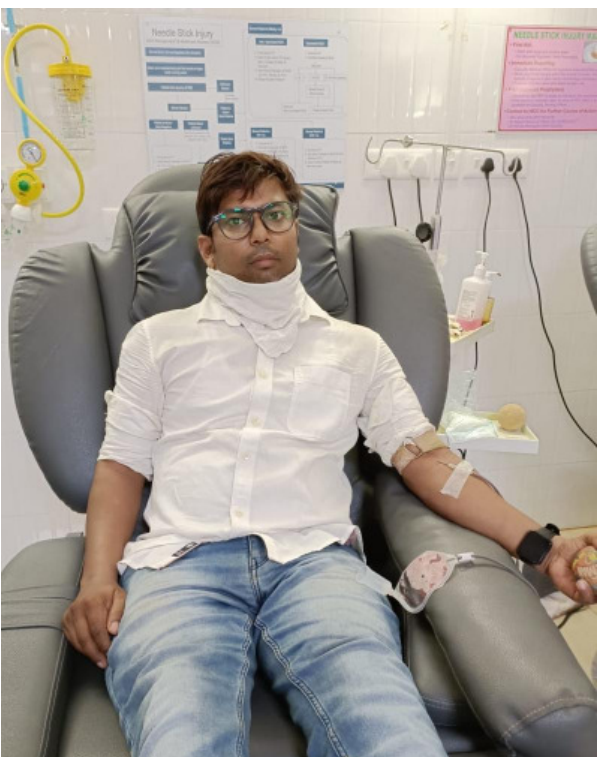


### 4th marriage anniversary celebrated by Udaya Ranjan Das and his wife by Blood Donation Seva

Cuttack Sadar(KCN) - Leading social organization Bishnupriya Charitable Trust Odisha (BCT) Cuttack & Kendrapara branch coordinator youth Social worker Udaya Ranajan Das and his wife pious lady Anasuya Mahakul celebrated their fourth marriage anniversary by donating blood which is the example to entire youth mass. In this camp Jiban Bindu Jajpur District coordinator Er.Bimal Chandra, Er.Avilash Das, Natyakara Ashok Pattnaik, Saswat Engineering Plumbing Head of department Ashok

Sethi, BCT Pipili branch coordinator

Pradip Lenka, Susanta



Hemant Das, Poet Er. Sevak Srikanta, Jagabaliya Youth Association coordinator

Sethi, Subash Behera, Pabitra Sethi, Khirod Mohapatra, Banarai Gagarai,

Gopi Gagarai, Ranjit and all team present with paid congratulation and encourage him. For information blood donor hero Mr. Udaya Ranjan the son of Educationalist Umesh Chandra Das, Ranubala Das for his variety Social work, Corona pandemic time distribution of Sanitizer & nose mask, Plantation work awarded by Utkal Youth Trust Bangalore, Saraswati Kalaprasad Kandarpur, Muhana Sahitya Sansad Mumbai, Utkal Vikash Parisad Cuttack Sadar, Dayanidhi Prativa Bikash Pratistatan 42 Mouza etc.

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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.

## Places of Worship Act, 1991 must remain untouched

Despite the short and succinct Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, (PWA), the Supreme Court has refused



to stay a survey done by Hindu radicals of the Gyanvapi mosque in the holiest of cities, Varanasi also known as Benares. The controversy over the Gyanvapi mosque - Kashi

Vishwanath temple has been raked up to divert the attention of the people from the fact that the number of jobs created cannot accommodate a burgeoning workforce.

In 2019, the Allahabad high court ordered a stay on an ASI survey sought by the votaries of the temple dedicated to Lord Shiva because the PWA specifically excluded the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid controversy. This law was enacted in 1991 by the Congress government soon after the rathayatra started on September 25, 1990 and culminated at Ayodhya on October 30, 1990, fueling religious passions throughout the country.

This concise law with just eight sections forms part of the basic structure of the Constitution as it is a product of secularism as declared in the preamble. Nevertheless, it has been challenged in the apex court on the grounds that it violates the fundamental right to profess, practice and propagate religion under Article 25 which is a fundamental right available to aliens as well as the citizens of India. Interestingly, the Supreme Court has admitted the petition filed by former BJP spokesperson, Ashwini Upadhyay, who practices law in the Supreme Court and directed the Centre to file its response to the challenge.

The PWA was enacted just before the

demolition of the Babri Masjid in

**Dr Olav Albuquerque**

1992 when top politicians Uma Bharati, L.K. Advani who studied law in Mumbai and former chief minister, Devendra Fadnavis were present, by their own admission. Fadnavis declared he went to jail for 18 days and faced a lathi-charge during the demolition of the mosque at Ayodhya.

But law has to keep changing with the changing needs of society. This will include the religious sentiments of the Hindu majority which is why Upadhyay has argued that the PWA flouts the fundamental right of judicial review under Article 226 of the Constitution so that the "illegal barbarian acts of invaders, will continue in perpetuity." He has cleverly used the *raison d'être* of the PWA which is a creature of the preamble to argue that it violates fundamental rights. The Supreme Court not only admitted this petition with related petitions in 2021 but asked the Central government to file its say on Affidavit to the reliefs claimed. Till date, it appears the government has not done so.

But to return to the present, the bench comprising Justices Dhananjay Chandrachud and P.S. Narasimha have both played a major role in the Ayodhya imbroglio. Justice Chandrachud was part of the five-judge bench which delivered the Ayodhya verdict while Justice Narasimham was a senior advocate who led the Ayodhya arguments before the Supreme Court. He was the ninth senior advocate to be elevated from the bar to the bench. He will take over as the 56<sup>th</sup> CJI on May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2028.

This two-judge bench of Justices Chandrachud and Narasimhan has sought to strike a balance between the two

warring communities in the

Gyanvapi mosque-Kashi Vishwanath temple dispute by ordering the Varanasi district magistrate to ensure the site where the shivling was reported to have been found, should be protected. Despite repeated pleas by the Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee, the two-judge bench refused to stay the survey of the mosque. This by itself does not violate the PWA which only prohibits changing the character of any religious place of worship and thereby ensures that all civil or criminal proceedings which do so directly or indirectly abate. What is disquieting is the fact that the decision of the two-judge bench may be cited as setting a precedent of sorts to allow surveys of mosques which allegedly have remnants of temples within their premises.

Such decisions which do not interpret the law by enunciating a principle on which the decision is given are not reported in the law journals and should normally not be treated as a precedent. Media reports claim the Allahabad high court has recently admitted petitions challenging the "religious character" of mosques which allegedly have remnants of ancient temples within their premises or in the vicinity.

Such media reports must be verified. Assuming there is some truth, this would contravene sub-section 2 of section 4 of the PWA which preserves the religious character of all places of worship within India as they existed on August 15, 1947. And there can be no doubt that the PWA is a product of the basic features of the Constitution as it emanates from Article 25.

There are two million temples distributed throughout the length and breadth of India, some of which have fallen into

disuse due to paucity of *shebait*s to manage the property vesting with the deity. For unlike the Abrahamic religions, Hindus are unique in their belief that God resides within the deity, apart from permeating the universe. The gist of the dispute in the Gyanvapi-Kashi imbroglio is that a Shivling was found during a court-ordered survey of the mosque.

Whether the PWA will be struck down or not is difficult to predict. What can be inferred from the row kicked up is that India's secularism is utopian. It is as real as judicial independence which is a chimerical because the judiciary is dependent on the executive for its infrastructure and salaries which are drawn from the Consolidated Fund of India and of the states.

With changing governments, laws change to suit the convenience of ruling political parties. This is because the laws they enact are tailored to cater to their constituencies. So, the message sent across is that all minorities within India learn that dissent too needs the consent of the majority. This is the archetypal model of Hindutva.

This is why the striking down of the PWA will prove disastrous to the secular nature of this country and catapult India into becoming a theocratic state with an illusion of democracy. This is precisely what a section of the seers and sages want to accomplish by injecting religion into politics and politics into religion.

Proving the Marxian axiom that religion is the food of politicians and the opium of the masses.

Dr Olav Albuquerque holds the M.Sc, LL.M (silver medallist) and a Ph.D in media law. His degrees are from the University of Mumbai. He 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.

## Ecological Preservation Is The Need Of The Hour

World Earth Day is a reminder for us to consider Planet over Profit, to be alert



about the drastic changes that the entire sphere is facing with hazardous consequences.

Still, there is time at our disposal to curb such callous behaviour towards the blue planet.

Why are we intentionally destroying ourselves by our hands, by creating a hot wall around the world? Inside the boiled circle, we are adapting without any choice.

Isn't it ridiculous?

Why do men deliberately ransack their fortune?

There is no answer to this mystery!

Hence, instead of weakening our value system, we should imbibe certain ideologies to change the entire scenario.

Adopt three Golden rules

Reuse, Recycle and Reduce

Reduce global warming by selecting cycles instead of vehicles.

Reuse plastic and equivalent things to lessen the load of industrial units.

Recycle the products for the sustain-

**Dr Sudipta Mishra**

able development of lives.

At least embark on the path to control the use of electronic devices by not choosing air conditioners. Try to regulate such non-eco-friendly behaviour towards humanity. Be careful about carbon emissions by opting to work from home and switch from an ultra-modern lifestyle towards a simple life by reducing the impact of technology in our day-to-day life. Let's take a pledge to create harmony with nature. Nature has been a great so-lace for the well-being of humanity.

From years of research, it has been verified that nature and human beings go parallel with a flow by rendering a supportive hand to each other. Nature plays a vital role in shaping the cognitive as well as physical nourishment of mankind. Spending time in the wilderness gives us immense pleasure that can boost our attention and confidence. For sure nature nurtures our mental health.

Simply, walking on grass or listening to the cuckoo's mellifluous song offers us a natural rejuvenation.

But where are we going?

We are destroying nature for our self-interests. Although, in pandemic situations, our government has created drastic changes in redeveloping forests of distant regions.

Due to lack of movement during lockdown, we have curbed the amount of carbon emissions. Still, miles to go before taking an exit from this mechanical world.

As conscious citizens, we have to take major steps to ensure afforestation instead of encouraging the practice of forest fires without any reason.

As half of our living beings directly or indirectly feed on nature and we don't have any right to snatch their habitat for our lusty interests.

Unless and until we make a change in our lifestyle, we cannot obtain a conclusive result regarding this crisis. On this Earth day, let's get back to our old days when we were in nature's control. In those days, we were completely dependent on nature. We had never been so cruel to nature. From climbing trees to arranging food

and tracing shelters amid the bosom of wilderness, we used to continue our lives with the support of nature.

But now, with a monstrous and destructive mindset, we have alienated ourselves from nature. We think of our well-being as a separate entity from nature. By demolishing the forest we want to construct a different Paradise. Amicably, we are inviting our end to such vulnerable activities.

Still, there is time to change our perception by becoming one with nature.

Let's protect our blue planet by preserving the forests and wildlife with a firm promise. Let's recreate a bond between us. Don't chase behind an unknown fortune by neglecting the eternal bliss of life. Do not run after immediate success by mutilating the present natural surroundings like a fool. Let's not invite our downfall.

Be single-minded and focus on the current crisis of life like carbon emissions, ecological uncertainty, global warming, destruction of marine life, and the depletion of the Ozone layer. Just embrace the wildlife to enlighten the darker effects of deforestation and globalisation...

# PM Modi joins US President Joe Biden in launch of Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity

TOKYO: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday joined US President Joe Biden in the launch of a US-initiated trade framework aimed at deeper cooperation among like-minded countries in areas like clean energy, supply-chain resilience and digital trade. The rollout of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) by the US came as part of Washington's efforts to push forward a strong economic policy for the Indo-Pacific to counter

China's aggressive strategy on trade in the region. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in an event in Tokyo today to launch discussions for an Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF)," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said. The event also saw virtual presence of leaders of other partner countries such as Australia, Brunei, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The MEA said that the IPEF seeks to strengthen economic

a declaration of a collective desire to make the Indo-Pacific

laborate with partner countries under the IPEF and work



# Beijing bristles at Biden's 'yes' for US military intervention in Taiwan

BEIJING: A surprised and agitated Beijing on Monday denounced President Joe Biden's assertion that the US would intervene militarily along with Japan if China invaded self-ruled Taiwan, which effectively jeopardises Chinese President Xi Jinping's plan of national integration. Taiwan's integration with the Chinese mainland is the major political plank of Xi, 68, who is widely expected to be endorsed for an unprecedented third term in power this year by a once-in-a-five-year congress of the ruling Communist Party scheduled to meet in the next few months. So far successive US administrations maintained what was officially termed as strategic

shadow over Xi's oft-repeated forceful assertions to integrate the estranged island with the mainland. Xi, who enjoys the status of the ruling Communist Party founder Mao Zedong, is currently bracing for an unprecedented third term, doing away with the two-five-year-terms convention followed by all his predecessors. Reports from Taipei quoted Taiwan's Foreign Ministry welcoming Biden's comments for "reaffirming" Washington's "firm commitment to Taiwan" and would deepen cooperation with countries including the US and Japan. "The challenges China poses to the security of the Taiwan Strait have aroused great concern to the international community," a

conomic partnership amongst participating countries with the objective of enhancing resilience, sustainability, inclusiveness, economic growth, fairness and competitiveness in the Indo-Pacific region. In his comments during the launch ceremony, Prime Minister Modi said that the announcement of the IPEF is

cific region an engine of global economic growth. The Prime Minister called for finding common and creative solutions to tackle economic challenges of the Indo-Pacific region. He also expressed India's commitment towards working with all Indo-Pacific countries for an IPEF which is both inclusive and flex-

the foundation of resilient supply chains must be 3T's - Trust, Transparency and Timeliness. "India is committed to a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region and believes that deepening economic engagement among partners is crucial for continued growth, peace and prosperity," the MEA said. "India is keen to col-



ambiguity of tacitly backing Taiwan, while publicly asserting commitment for the One China policy. "We deplore and reject the US remarks". Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a media briefing here soon after Biden unequivocally stated Washington's new stand shedding the successive US Presidents' strategic ambiguity on Taiwan, an estranged self-ruled island which steadfastly stood against Beijing's attempts to integrate with the mainland. Biden outlined the US new policy in Tokyo while addressing a joint press conference with the Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida saying that America will stand with Japan and other nations to not let China forcibly take over Taiwan. Wang reiterated that "Taiwan is an inalienable part of the Chinese territory and the Taiwan question is purely China's internal affair, which brooks no foreign interference." "On issues bearing on China's core interests including its sovereignty and territorial integrity there is no room for compromise or concession", he said and warned that "China will take firm actions to safeguard its sovereignty and security interests. We will be true to our word". He urged the US to earnestly abide by the "One China policy", recognising Taiwan as part of the Chinese mainland and refrain from sending a wrong message to Taiwan's independence forces. Wang also took exception to Biden comparing any action by China to forcibly take over Taiwan similar to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. "The Taiwan question and the Ukraine issue are fundamentally different. To compare those two is absurd", he said. Observers say Biden's stand to militarily defend Taiwan against Chinese aggression will strengthen pro-independent forces led by Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen and cast a

spokesperson of Taiwan's Foreign Ministry said. "Our government's firm determination to defend Taiwan's freedom, democracy and security has never changed," the spokesperson said. In the video clips of Biden's press conference, the US leader struck a nuanced stand on Washington's policy on Taiwan, post-Russian invasion of Ukraine where America was not militarily involved. Biden said "if there is no rapprochement between Ukraine and Russia and sanctions are not sustained in many ways, then what signal does it send to China about attempting to take Taiwan by force". "They are already flirting with danger by flying so close and all the manoeuvres they are undertaking", he said referring to frequent attempts by Beijing to send hundreds of military aircraft into Taiwan's airspace to intimidate Taipei. "The US made the commitment, we support the One China policy that does not mean China has the jurisdiction to use force to take over Taiwan", Biden said. "We stand firmly with Japan and other nations to not let that happen. I expect it will not happen, it will not be attempted", he said. "My expectation is a lot of it depends on how strongly the world makes it clear that this kind of action is going to result in long-term disapprobation by the rest of the community" Biden said. When asked if the US is willing to get involved militarily to defend Taiwan, Biden said "yes". "That is the commitment we made. Here is the situation: we agree with the One China policy. We signed on to it and all the attendant agreements made from there". "But the idea that it can be taken by force is just not appropriate, it will dislocate the entire region and be another action similar to what happened in Ukraine. So, it is a burden that is even stronger", he said.



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# Bahrain Odia Samaj Celebrates Utkal Divas

Manama(KCN): Bahrain Odia Samaj (BOS) celebrated Utkal Divas – 2022 with pomp and



splendour recently. To mark the occasion the ceremony venue, The Auditorium inside Indian Club was decked up aesthetically and was wearing the look of a Mini Odisha. The distinguished gathering include members and relatives of BOS, Non Resident Indians, Officials of Indian Embassy and members of Diplomatic Core belonging to different Countries. The Odia Community in Bahrain had a special reason to go for a massive and cheerful celebration because, Utkal Divas ob-



ervation is taking place in offline after a long gap of two years due to corona disruption. The Festival commenced with the lighting of ceremonial lamp by the Invited Guests. The recital of National Anthems of Bahrain and India as well as the State Anthem of Odisha, 'Bande Utkal Janani', witnessed the



total audience on their legs with rapt attention. Delivering his welcome address the president of Bahrain Odia Samaj Dinesh Mohanty narrated the spectacular charitable and social services rendered by BOS during covid period. Particularly Shri Mohanty was highly appreciating the praiseworthy role

played by the members of BOS in distributing essential food materials among stranded Odia families during first wave of virus ,



then ensuring their safe evacuation to Odisha and mobilising funds to assist Indian Embassy in sending medical equipments to India during the acute second wave time. Exhibiting his extraordinary oratory skill, the Chief Guest Rajya Sabha MP and Member of Parliamentary Consultative Committee for Ministry of External Affairs, Sujeet Kumar mentioned about the all round splendid development made in Odisha during last two decades. Specially, Shri Kumar cited the ex-

ample of Mission Shakti which has been responsible in accelerating the economic growth of rural and urban Odisha through socio – economic empowerment of women. Attending the Festival as Guest of Honour leading Odia Industrialist and Chairman of ASMACS Group Dr Dev Loknath Mohanty



gave a clarion call to NROs to spread the message of Odisha's rich art, unique heritage, vibrant Culture and beautiful language throughout the Globe. Guest of Honour Renowned Film Maker Akshay Kumar Parija highlighted the intrinsic viability and large scale acceptability of

Odia cinemas and worldwide acclamation of Odissi Dance. Honourable Guest the second



secretary of Indian Embassy H.E. Ihtas Aslam congratulated the BOS for celebration of Utkal Divas and stressed on the need of organising these kind of cultural exchange programmes regularly.



The dignitaries present include Noted Bahrain Kathak Dancer Khalil Al Assar, Representatives of Gulf Co - ordination Council, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kalingan and various other Indian Communities Associations based in Bahrain.

The major attractions of the cultural session were the scintillating musical renditions by celebrity singers duo Anindita Das and

captivante performances on the themes of Festivals and Fairs of Odisha like Pana



Sankranti, Kartik Purnima and Rath Yatra. The teens of BOS were at their creative best in presenting the Bollywood's hit dance numbers basing on the popular songs of Melody Queen



Lata Mangeshkar. The audiences were completely moved by the unique Fashion Carnival on the Handlooms of Odisha staged by male and female members of BOS. Ace anchors Prabodha Kumar Sarangi, Arpita Sahoo, Sunita Sukalyani, Manasi Mohapatra, Ratna Patnaik,



Abhijit Majumdar. The other noteworthy cultural presentations include the recital of Bande Utkal Janani, performances of Odissi, Sambalpuri and Bollywood dance in memory of Rishi Kapoor by the members of BOS. The Kids of BOS stole the show by their

Yashaswi Jena, Gargi Sarangi and Aditi Sahu presented and conducted the proceedings of the entire programme in a smooth and seamless manner. The Celebration also witnessed multimedia presentation showcasing the essence of Utkal Divas and fragrance of Odisha and Odias.

# Urge for Eco Village Creation

Bhubaneswar: A seminar was held at Hotel Mayfair about future prospects and implementation of Waldenwoods Eco village established by Waldenwoods Foundation, a Delhi based registered charitable trust. There were deliberations and detailed discussions in the interactive session. The trust is dedicated to rural upliftment by creating some Smart Eco Villages (Tourism Models) in rural areas. Presently Waldenwoods foundation has set up an eco-village in Kantamalia village in Dhenkanal

district of Odisha. Waldenwoods Foundation was founded in 2004 with the motto "Rural Empowerment with sustainable Development". The main focus is to reverse the trend of migration from the urban to the rural areas. Many modern amenities like electricity, safe water supply, telecommunication, transport, organic food, amusement, health services, healthy lifestyle, pollution-free environment and lots of fresh air in our Waldenwoods Eco Village (WEV). The seminar was held

under the presidentship of Dr Krushna Chandra Aich, chief advisor, Eco village. Shri Ramkrishna Dash, Founder Chairman, Waldenwoods foundation delivered the inaugural address. Shri Dash said that with creation of eco village, despite loss from impact of pandemic within short span of time many tourists from inside and outside the state visited this beautiful place. "We are hopeful that on coming days large numbers of people will get attracted to this site," he

said. In the current scenario, to tide over the impact of strong climate change and disastrous environment, human beings need to change



their lifestyle. There is need to further spread awareness necessary about safety of mother Earth. There is also need of to set up eco retreat centres by young entrepreneurs at different places. Mr Dash emphasised

on how public and private collectively can implement this project. He suggested the need for a well-planned programme to implement for holistic

development of rural areas and the need to take up "back to village" challenge'. "The Eco man" Shri Ramkrishna Dash was awarded with India Icon Award 2019 at Taj Kemp Gowda Bengaluru by film ac-

tress Dia Mirza. Shri Dash is the chartered president of only cause based club of rotary- 3262 whose main thrust area is Environment and Ecology called Rotary Club Bhubaneswar Eco. He is also the general secretary Eco of world body organisation called World Odisha Society. "The Eco Man" RK is dedicated for rural development and environmental since last two decades. He has rolled out a pilot project model Eco Village which is a small initiative to "package the Odisha" as an In-

ternational Eco tourism destination. Dr Sarat Chandra Acharya, former chairman of a Government of India's Navratna Company also attended the deliberation meeting. He gave valuable advice on how to take the non-government established first eco village initiative to greater heights. Former joint director of State tourism department Shri Utpal Pati also provided many valuable advices. Others present in the

event were Dr Sudershan Panda, Dr Niranjana Panda, Bikas Das, E K Patra, Chartered Accountant Anil Agrawal, Sanghamitra Jena, Puspanjali Senapati, Sireesh Verma, Niranjana Swain, Bishal Subudhi, Mohit Subudhi, Ajit Sarangi, K V Rao, Sibadutta Subudhi, Pankaj Gupta, Sudhansu Mohanty, Navneet Shah and many environmentalists who gave valuable suggestions. At last Prof Ashok Kumar Panda proposed vote of thanks.

# Biden launches Indo-Pacific trade deal, warns over inflation

TOKYO: President Joe Biden on Monday launched a new trade deal with 12 Indo-Pacific nations aimed at strengthening their economies as he warned Americans worried about high inflation that it was "going to be a haul" before they feel relief. The president said he does not believe an economic recession is inevitable in the US Biden, speaking at a news conference after holding talks with Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, acknowledged the U.S. economy has "problems" but said they were "less consequential than the rest of the world has."

He added: "This is going to be a haul. This is going to take some time," even as he rejected the idea a recession in the US was inevitable. The comments came just before Biden's launch of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, a new trade deal his administration designed to signal US dedication to the contested economic sphere and to address the need for stability in commerce after disruptions caused by the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Nations joining the U.S. in the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework are Australia, Brunei, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thai-

Russia.

The White House announced plans to build the economic framework in October as a replacement for the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which the U.S. dropped out of in 2017 under then-President Donald Trump.

Kishida, while welcoming the new Biden trade pact, said he hoped Biden would reconsider the United States' position on TPP.

"Our position remains unchanged," Kishida said. "We think it's desirable for the United States to return to the TPP."

The new pact comes at a moment when the administration believes it has the edge in its competition with Beijing. Bloomberg Economics published a report last week projecting U.S. GDP growth at about 2.8% in 2022 compared to 2% for China, which has been trying to contain the coronavirus through strict lockdowns while also dealing with a property bust. The slowdown has undermined assumptions that China would automatically supplant the U.S. as the world's leading economy.

"The fact that the United States will grow faster than China this year, for the first time since 1976, is a quite striking example of how countries in this region should be looking at the question of trends and trajectories," said the White House



land and Vietnam. Along with the United States, they represent 40% of world GDP.

The countries said in a joint statement that the pact will help them collectively "prepare our economies for the future" following disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

President Joe Biden meets with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at Akasaka Palace. (Photo IAP)

Biden and Kishida were joined by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi while representatives from the other countries appeared by video to help launch the pact. Modi was in Tokyo for Tuesday's meeting of the Quad, a security grouping that also includes the US, Japan and Australia.

The White House said the framework will help the United States and Asian economies work more closely on issues including supply chains, digital trade, clean energy, worker protections and anti-corruption efforts. The details still need to be negotiated among the member countries, making it difficult for the administration to say how this agreement would fulfill the promise of helping U.S. workers and businesses while also meeting global needs.

Critics say the framework has gaping shortcomings. It doesn't offer incentives to prospective partners by lowering tariffs or providing signatories with greater access to US markets. Those limitations may not make the US framework an attractive alternative to the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which still moved forward after the U.S. bailed out. China, the largest trading partner for many in the region, is also seeking to join TPP. "I think a lot of partners are going to look at that list and say: 'That's a good list of issues. I'm happy to be involved,'" said Matthew Goodman, a former director for international economics on the National Security Council during President Barack Obama's administration. But he said they also may ask, "Are we going to get any tangible benefits out of participating in this framework?"

Kishida hosted a formal state welcome for Biden at Akasaka Palace, including a white-clad military honor guard and band in the front plaza. Reviewing the assembled troops, Biden placed his hand over his heart as he passed the American flag and bowed slightly as he passed the Japanese standard.

Kishida said at their meeting that he was "absolutely delighted" to welcome Biden to Tokyo on the first Asia trip of his presidency. Along with Biden, he drove a tough line against Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, saying it "undermines the foundation of global order."

ALSO READ: 'Don't underestimate resolve': China warns US President Joe Biden over Taiwan

Biden, who is in the midst of a five-day visit to South Korea and Japan, called the U.S.-Japanese alliance a "cornerstone of peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific" and thanked Japan for its "strong leadership" in standing up to

national security adviser Jake Sullivan.

The two leaders were also set to meet with families of Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea decades ago. The Japanese premier took office last fall and is looking to strengthen ties with the U.S. and build a personal relationship with Biden. He'll host the president at a restaurant for dinner.

The launch of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, also known as IPEF, has been billed by the White House as one of the bigger moments of Biden's Asia trip and of his ongoing effort to bolster ties with Pacific allies. Through it all, administration officials have kept a close eye on China's growing economic and military might in the region.

ALSO READ: Modi leaves for Quad Summit in Japan, bilateral talks with Biden also lined up

In September the U.S. announced a new partnership with Australia and Britain called AUKUS that is aimed at deepening security, diplomatic and defense cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. Through that AUKUS partnership, Australia will purchase nuclear-powered submarines, and the U.S. is to increase rotational force deployments to Australia.

The U.S. president has also devoted great attention to the informal alliance known as the Quad, formed during the response to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami that killed some 230,000 people. Biden and fellow leaders from the alliance are set to gather in Tokyo for their second in-person meeting in less than a year. The leaders have also held two video calls since Biden took office.

And earlier this month, Biden gathered representatives from nine of the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Washington for a summit. Biden announced at the summit the U.S. would invest some \$150 million in clean energy and infrastructure initiatives in ASEAN nations.

Taiwan — which has sought membership in the IPEF framework — isn't among the governments that will be included. Participation of the self-ruled island of Taiwan, which China claims as its own, would have irked Beijing. Sullivan said the U.S. wants to deepen its economic partnership with Taiwan, including on high technology issues and semiconductor supply on a one-to-one basis.

Biden also issued a stern warning to China over Taiwan, saying the U.S. would respond militarily if China were to invade the self-ruled island. "That's the commitment we made," Biden said. The U.S. recognizes Beijing as the one government of China and doesn't have diplomatic relations with Taiwan. However, it maintains unofficial contacts with Taiwan, including a de facto embassy in Taipei, the capital, and supplies military equipment to the island for its defense.

Biden's comments were likely to draw a sharp response from China, which has claimed Taiwan to be a rogue province.

A White House official said Biden's comments did not reflect a policy shift.

# Exim Bank, Japanese Bank sign USD 100 million loan agreement to fund healthcare projects

MUMBAI: Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) on Monday signed a USD 100 million loan agreement with Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), along with three Japanese private financial institutions -- MUFU Bank Ltd, Bank of Kyoto Ltd and Hachijuni Bank Ltd -- aimed at supporting the Indian healthcare sector for combating Covid-19.



The agreement was signed on Monday on the sidelines of the Quad Leaders' Summit, Exim Bank said in a release.

"The purpose of this facility is to support the Indian healthcare sector related to combating Covid-19, including but not limited to vaccine manu-

facturers, pharmaceutical companies, manufacturers of personal protective equipment, medical devices, hospitals, and other related activities," it said.

The development finance institution has been supporting the healthcare sector and all the segments in the pharmaceutical value chain.

Apart from supporting domestic expansion projects of the

companies in these sectors, the bank has also supported the overseas endeavours of various Indian companies in the healthcare sector, pharmaceutical companies, and biosimilar/biopharma (including life sciences) companies, among others.

Additionally, it has been supporting research and development, new product development and other related areas, it added.

**At World Health Assembly, India expresses dismay over WHO's excess mortality report**

Continued from page-1

methodology of the World Health Organization (WHO) on its excess mortality report.

In a report released on May 5, the WHO estimated that nearly 15 million people were killed globally either by the coronavirus or by its impact on overwhelmed health systems in the past two years, more than double the official death count of six million.

Most of the fatalities were in Southeast Asia, Europe and the Americas.

According to the report, there were 4.7 million Covid deaths in India -- 10 times the official figure and almost a third of Covid deaths globally.

"India would like to express its disappointment over the manner in which the report by WHO on all-cause mortality was prepared and published ignoring the concerns expressed by India and other countries over the methodology and sources of data, setting aside the country specific authentic data from the statutory authority of India," Mandaviya said in his address at the 75th session of the World Health Assembly at the WHO headquarters in Geneva.

Mandaviya exhorted India's commitment to build a more resilient global health security architecture.

"As highlighted by India's Prime Minister, there is a need to build a resilient global supply chain to enable equitable access to vaccines and medicines, streamlining WHO's approval process for vaccines and therapeutics and strengthen WHO to build a more resilient global health security architecture," he said. As a responsible member of the global community, India is ready to play a key role in these efforts, he added.

The minister noted, "India believes that this year's theme linking peace and health, is timely and pertinent because there can be no sustainable development and universal health and wellbeing without peace."

**India commits to a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region: PM Narendra Modi in Tokyo**

Continued from page-1

said India is keen to collaborate with partner countries under the IPEF and work towards advancing regional economic connectivity, integration and boosting trade and investment within the region.

The IPEF seeks to strengthen economic partnership amongst participating countries with the objective of enhancing resilience, sustainability, inclusiveness, economic growth, fairness and competitiveness in the Indo-Pacific region.

US President Joseph R Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio were also present on the occasion. The event also saw virtual presence of leaders of partner countries -- Australia, Brunei, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Prime Minister Modi, who is in Japan on a two-day visit to attend a summit of the Quad leaders at the invitation of his Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida, penned an op-ed on the vibrant relations between India and Japan in the Yomiuri Shimbun.

# Economic growth may have slowed to 3.5 per cent in Q4 FY22: Report

MUMBAI: The economic growth may have slowed to 3.5 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2021-22 from 5.4 per cent in the previous three-month period due to the impact of higher commodity prices on margins, the decline in wheat yields and on higher base, Icria Ratings said on Monday.

The agency said the hiccups in the recovery of the contact-intensive services attributable to the third wave of Covid-19 in the country



may have also affected the economic growth in the quarter.

Even the gross value added (GVA) at basic prices (at constant 2011-12 prices) in Q4 FY2022 seems to have eased to 2.7 per cent from 4.7 per cent in Q3 FY2022, it said.

The National Statistical Office (NSO) will release the fourth quarter numbers of fiscal 2022 on May 31.

Icria's Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said Q4 was a challenging quarter, with the Omicron-fuelled third wave of Covid-19 arresting the momentum in contact-intensive services and pervasive pressure on margins from higher commodity prices. Moreover, the heatwave adversely affected wheat output in March 2022.

"We are apprehensive that both agriculture and industry will post a sub-1 per cent GVA growth in Q4 FY2022, whereas services growth will print at around 5.4 per cent," Nayar said.

The agency further said that the recent cut in excise duties on petrol and diesel will help boost sentiments and improve consumers' disposable incomes, while simultaneously cooling the CPI inflation.

Last week, the government had cut excise duty on petrol by a record Rs 8 per litre and that on diesel by Rs 6 per litre to give relief to consumers battered under high fuel prices that have also pushed inflation to a multi-year high. Retail inflation, as measured by consumer price-based inflation (CPI), accelerated to an eight-year high of 7.79 per cent in April.

"We are enthused by the recent excise duty cut on petrol and diesel, which has been complemented by VAT cuts by some states. This will bolster sentiment and create some cushion within stretched household budgets to undertake non-essential spending," Nayar said.

Icria projects the average CPI inflation for FY2023 at 6.5 per cent, pencilling in a 40 basis points repo rate hike in the June 2022 monetary policy review, amid a terminal rate of 5.5 per cent.

## Praful Patel requests FIFA chief Infantino to not ban India

NEW DELHI: Removed as the president of All India Football Federation by the Supreme Court, Praful Patel on Monday requested FIFA chief Gianni Infantino to not impose a ban on the country after the sports body was placed under a Committee of Administrators.

Last week, the SC appointed a three-member Committee of Administrators (CoA) to run the AIFF, virtually revoking the powers of its governing body headed by Patel while opening up the possibility of a FIFA ban for "external interference".

The three-member panel has been mandated to oversee the day-to-day affairs of the AIFF until elections are held under a new constitution.

"I would also like to point out that the Supreme Court has expressed a sense of urgency in resolving all the issues by July 2022. I request the AFC (Asian Football Confederation) and FIFA to not impose a suspension at this stage, but instead to consider this important aspect of the Supreme Court order and enter into a dialogue with the CoA to receive a commitment that the said timelines laid down by the Supreme Court would be respected and strictly followed without allowing for delays on any account," Patel said in his letter to Infantino.

A FIFA ban at this stage would mean the under-17 women's World Cup, scheduled from October 11-30, will be taken away from India.

India's 2023 Asian Cup qualifiers, scheduled in Kolkata next month, could also be hit.

"Noting that the appointment of the CoA

by the Supreme Court could be prima facie interpreted by both the AFC and FIFA as a case of undue third-party influence/judicial interference, I fear that a suspension by the AFC and/or FIFA will automatically prevent India and/or Indian clubs and players from participating in any international competitions, and deprive the AIFF



from receiving much-needed development funds at a crucial juncture of development for the game in India," Patel said.

"Any suspension of the AIFF would also jeopardise the upcoming AFC Asian Cup 2023 Qualifiers, which will be hosted by India from 8 June 2022 in the football-loving city of Kolkata and for which all preparations have been completed.

Further, the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup is scheduled to be held in three states across India from 11-30 October 2022, the first time ever a FIFA women's competition be held in India, and which is widely

expected to boost the women's game in the country."

Patel is well aware of FIFA's zero-tolerance policy on third-part interference.

"I also note that the AFC and FIFA have a zero-tolerance attitude towards undue third-party interference/influence and several member associations (Pakistan, Thai-

land, Indonesia, Kuwait, Maldives, Zimbabwe, Kenya, to name a few) have been suspended to restore their autonomy, and that a different standard cannot be applied in the case of the aiff.

ceptable by the AFC or FIFA." Patel's third term in office ended in December 2020 but he had clung to a SC case, which remained pending since 2017, to extend his executive committee's term while refusing to hold elections till the issue of a new constitution was settled by the top court.

"Further, noting that the draft AIFF Statutes prepared by the ombudsmen/CoA and circulated to the stakeholders needs to be in alignment with the AFC and FIFA Statutes, it is my duty to request you to expedite your feedback to the same, so that all comments can be tabulated per the Supreme Court order and placed before it by 30 June 2022," he further said in the letter. "I also appeal to experienced legal teams of the afc and fifa to guide the CoA, if approached and need be, in the revision of the aiff statutes."

On May 18, the SC appointed a CoA headed by former top court judge AR Dave to manage the affairs of the AIFF and frame a constitution in line with the National Sports Code and model guidelines.

A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud, Surya Kant and PS Narasimha said the CoA would comprise two earlier members -- Dr SY Qureshi, former Chief Election Commissioner and Bhaskar Ganguly, former captain of the Indian football team, besides Justice (retd) Dave.

## IPL Playoffs: Super Over could determine winner in case of disruptions

NEW DELHI: A could decide IPL 15's champions should rain gods play spoilsport and no play is possible in

the playoffs and inclement weather forecast for the city, the IPL has issued certain guidelines in case of rain-inter-

rupted games. While Gujarat Titans take on Rajasthan Royals in Qualifier 1 on Tuesday, Lucknow Super Giants will play Royal Challengers Bangalore at the same venue the next day in the Eliminator.

The second Qualifier and the final are slated to be played in Ahmedabad on Friday and Sunday respectively. "The number of overs in the playoff match may, if necessary, be

reduced so that each side has the opportunity to bat for five overs," the IPL guidelines read.

"For the Eliminator lar season shall be declared the winner of the relevant play-off match or final," it added.



regulation time. If not even an over a side is possible, the league standing will take precedence and will decide the winner, according to an IPL briefing note. This will also apply to Qualifier 1, Eliminator, and Qualifier 2, which do not have reserve days.

May 30 has been kept aside as a reserve day for the summit clash, which will begin at 8 pm. With the IPL moving to Kolkata for

and each Qualifier playoff matches, in the event that it is not possible to schedule a five-over match by the end of the extra time on an original day, the teams will, if conditions permit, play a Super Over to determine the winner of the relevant Eliminator or Qualifier match.

"If the Super Over is not possible "the team that finished highest in the league table after the 70 matches of the regu-

Qualifiers and the Eliminator, if one innings is complete but no play is possible in the second, the DLS method will come into play. If the final starts on May 29 that is at least one ball are bowled then the "match will resume at the point where it stopped on the previous day. For the avoidance of doubt, any match recalculations done without the match actually restarting on the previous night will be ignored."

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