

**FREE AYANAR TRADERS**  
**Opening**  
**BEST PRICE**

**NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)**  
**SAFETY MEASURES**

### Thought for today

*Always wear the costume of humility and you will receive the love and co-operation of others.*

### Counseling for vacant seats in ALC

Port Blair, Dec 14: The fourth counselling for the vacant seats available in the first year of the B.A., LL.B., Degree Course in Andaman Law College will be conducted on Dec 16 at 9 am in Andaman Law College, Port Blair. The interested candidates of all the categories including general are requested to attend the above mentioned counselling session. Seats will be allotted on the merit of the candidates only. Any representation from candidates who failed to attend counselling on the said date will not be entertained thereafter, the Principal (i/c), Andaman Law College, said in a release.



Port Blair, Dec 14: The Member of Parliament of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Mr. Kuldeep Rai Sharma has requested the Minister of Health and Family Welfare, New Delhi to allow Andaman and Nicobar Administration to continue Andaman & Nicobar Islands Scheme for Health Insurance (ANISHI) for the residents of Andaman and Nicobar Islands in place of Ayushman Bharat Scheme, as a special case, until proper medical treatment facilities for all the serious diseases are created in the Hospitals in A&N Islands.

In a letter addressed to the Minister of Health and Family Welfare, New Delhi, the Member of Parliament mentioned that a commendable scheme namely Andaman

## Continue ANISHI scheme for Islanders: MP urges Centre

& Nicobar Islands Scheme for Health Insurance (ANISHI) was introduced in Andaman and Nicobar Islands in 2015 for treatment of patients suffering from serious diseases at mainland as referred by the GB Pant Hospital, A & N Islands.

He added that permanent residents of these islands with family income up to Rs. 3 lakhs rupees per annum were eligible for treatment under this scheme. The Member of Parliament pointed out that the Health Insurance scheme (ANISHI) provided cashless treatment up to Rs. 5 lakhs per patient per illness which included indoor and outdoor treatments and free travel expenses for patients with one attendant. Critically ill patients, if referred under the scheme to travel by flight, used to be entitled for reimbursement of the air ticket

for patient and one attendant.

He informed the Minister that later this scheme was stopped in 2020 and presently patients suffering from serious diseases are being sent to the mainland only under Ayushman Bharat Scheme. The Member of Parliament pointed out that although the Ayushman Bharat Scheme provides free treatment to BPL patients, but this scheme is not suited for Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

He mentioned that as Andaman and Nicobar Islands are situated nearly 1200 KM away from Chennai and Kolkata travelling by flight is the only option for islanders to reach Mainland India, in absence of passenger ships. For referred patients, in most of the cases it becomes unaffordable to travel to Mainland India for specialized treatment due to high

airfare. Most of the islanders, living in remote islands are poor that they often find it difficult to travel to Port Blair for treatment. The Member of Parliament added that under ANISHI scheme they used to get travel expenses for patients and one attendant but under Ayushman Bharat Scheme no such travel expense is given.

He pointed out that under Ayushman Bharat Scheme patients are being asked to pay for all medical tests before treatment in Mainland Hospitals, which again becomes unaffordable for the most of the patients, who as per present rule, are from BPL category. In normal cases these medical tests cost nearly Rs. 20,000 per patient. However, under ANISHI scheme all costs of medical tests were also included, the Member of Parliament added.

### CBSE Schools advised to form Culture and Heritage Clubs

Port Blair, Dec 14: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has suggested Heads of all affiliated schools to establish Culture and Heritage Clubs for formally taking up classical/folk music, dance, arts, crafts and other culture activities to inspire students to appreciate the intrinsic value of our national heritage.

The Society for the Promotion of Indian Classical Music and Culture among Youth (SPIC MACAY) has been rendering services in this field for the last 44 years and creates opportunities for the students to enjoy the performances and interactive sessions rendered by renowned artists and artisans. SPIC MACAY will extend their resources as Knowledge Partners to Culture and Heritage Clubs in schools. "All Heads of the

Schools have been requested to coordinate with SPIC MACAY to avail maximum benefit of this opportunity, at contact details of Nodal Person of SPIC MACAY: The National Coordinator (Schools), 41/42, Lucknow Road, Near Vishwavidyalaya Metro Station, Delhi-110054, E mail: heritageclub@spicmacay.com, Mobile: @spicmacay.com, Mobile/WhatsApp: +91 6263556213, Website: https://spicmacay.org," the Board said in a circular.

Reiterating the importance of holistic education for the all-round development of the students and the support extended by co-scholastic activities such as music, dance and art towards achieving the same, the Board said that providing opportunities for students to nurture and develop

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## ANTCC Prez demands security for islanders

**'Jobs, infra, roads, age-relaxation in govt. job'**

Port Blair, Dec 14: The President of ANTCC has submitted a memorandum to the Home Minister Mr. Amit Shah wherein he has highlighted various issues being faced by the islanders. The most important issues of 100% job for islander, filling-up of vacant posts in the government sector, completion of NH road, age relaxation, etc. were raised by Mr. Rangalal Halder. Mr. Rangalal Halder has also submitted a set of demands to the Lieutenant Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Island which includes 100% job reservation, filling up the vacancies, completion of NH Road, one time age

relaxation, immediate conducting of PRI & PBMCE election. The President gave a time frame of one month to resolve these issues failing which the Congress Party will sit on HUNGER STRIKE till the issues are resolved.

He has also appealed to the youth to take part in the signature campaign for 100% job reservation for islanders. Youth interested in signing for the signature campaign may contact Mr. Tanmay Mallick - 9933221110, Mr. M A Sajid - 9679528684, Mr. Abhishwan Ghosh - 9791024059 or Mr. Sajid Shan - 7063974765 and make this campaign a grand success.

### Conveners of Matua Religious Community for ANI appointed

Port Blair, Dec 14: The Matua Community of Andaman & Nicobar Islands has expressed gratitude to Mr. Subrata Thakur, Maha Sanghadhipati and Mr. Shantanu Thakur, Sanghadhipati of All India Matua Maha Sangha (AIMMS), Thakur Nagar, Thakur Bari, West Bengal and Minister of State, Govt. of India, for appointing Mr. Sudhir Biswas, son of Late Manindra Nath Biswas, resident of Prothrapur as Chief Convener of Matua Religious Community of Andaman & Nicobar Islands (ANI).

Four other persons have also been appointed as Deputy and Joint Conveners in October this year for the upliftment and welfare of the Matua Community with enrichment of mutualism and ideology of Matua religious in these islands. Mr. Binoy

Krishna Sarkar of Shaheed Dwipee has been appointed as Deputy Convener, while Mr. Haridas Jaishar of Choudhury, Mr. Haridas Biswas of Tugapur and Mr. Minnal Chandra Halder of Billy ground have been appointed as Joint Conveners. AIMMS is a non Political Matua Religious Organization and a religious, social, economic and cultural organization. "On behalf of the peoples and devotees of Matua community of these islands, we congratulate Mr. Sudhir Biswas and his team on the appointments. We hope under the leadership of the persons, the Matua religious and Matua community will be enriched in these islands," said Mr. Mahananda Goswami, President/Secretary of Shri Shri Guru Chand Mission, A & N Islands.

## Candle Light Tribute to CDA General Bipin Rawat



Port Blair, Dec 12: Baruva Abhyudaya Sangham, Sree Sree Near Kamangama Temple, in coordination with the Haddo residents paid homage to India's first CDS Gen. Bipin Rawat, Mrs. Madhulika Rawat and 11 other Defence personnel who lost their

lives in a helicopter crash IAF's Mi-17V5 on 8th December near Concor, Tamil Nadu. A gathering of Haddo residents of Port Blair Executive members of Baruva Abhyudaya Sangham (A Community foundation of Baruva Villagers) Haddo, and K Ganeshan

Ex. Chairperson, PBMC P. Deendabandhu, T. Somashekar Rai, T. Neendranath, T. Eswar Rao, Smti M. Brindawathi, Smti. K. Dilliamma with a volunteers guided the candle light march on today 14-12-2021 evening 6.30pm in loving

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### ANI Secretary of VHP meets Minister



Port Blair, Dec 14: A delegation led by Mr. Manoj Kumar Sirohi, Secretary of VHP, A&N Islands met the Minister of State for Animal Husbandry, Fisheries &

Dairy on Sunday at Circuit House, Atanta Point. He demanded introduction of Helpline number 24 x 7 for saving Cow / Bulls and other cattle. The Secretary, VHP

also urged the Minister to consider establishment of a modernised Animal Treatment hospital with equipped Ambulance facility in all

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### Swachh Technology Challenge

Port Blair, Dec 14: The Ministry of Housing and Urban



Affairs (MOHA), has launched a nationwide Swachh Technology Challenge as part of the Azadi@75 Swachh Survekshan 2022, under the Swachh Bharat Mission - Urban 2.0 on 6th December, 2021, in order to promote an enabling environment for enterprise development in the waste management sector. The Challenge aims to capitalize on the skills and expertise the space to

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### India votes against move to enable climate change discussions at Security Council

Port Blair, 14th Dec, 2021: As expected, Indian Monday voted

against a draft resolution seeking to create a formal space for climate

change-related discussions at the UN Security Council. The resolution fell through following a veto from Russia.

India and Russia were the only countries to have opposed the draft resolution; China abstained. The draft resolution, sponsored by Ireland and Nigeria, sought to enable the Security Council to take up routine discussions on climate change from the perspective of its impact on

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## Good governance Day observed by State BJP Unit

Port Blair, Dec 14: Good governance Day is observed annually on December 25. The day is also celebrated to commemorate the birth anniversary of India's former Prime Minister, Shri. Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji, who was very committed towards providing transparent, effective and accountable governance to the people of this country.

With regards to the above

programme a press conference was held today at Bjp Bhawan, Middle Point. Shri M. Vinod, Prabhari, State

Media cell welcomed the media persons

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## COVID-19 Vaccination going smoothly in isles

Port Blair, Dec 14: The vaccination drive is continuing smoothly in A&N Islands. As per data available, a total of 5,76,729 beneficiaries have been vaccinated so far in A&N Islands, out of the target beneficiaries of 2,81,603 (approx.). A total of 1,76,873 eligible people in the age group of 18 to 44 years have been vaccinated till date. A total of 2038 people were vaccinated in these islands on Monday. 1760

beneficiaries were vaccinated in South Andaman District, out of which 106 beneficiaries were in the age group of 18-44 years. Similarly, 245 beneficiaries were vaccinated in North & Middle Andaman District out of which 12 beneficiaries were in the age group of 18-44. 33 beneficiaries were vaccinated in Nicobar District out of which 5 beneficiaries were in the age group of 18-44.

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# EDITORIAL

## The Andaman Express

15 December 2021

### Poland Emergency

Poland's communist leaders, declaring that the independent trade union Solidarity had pushed the country to the brink of civil war, proclaimed a state of emergency and established military rule on December 13. The Solidarity union chief, Lech Walesa, held high-level talks with communist officials hours after the emergency was declared, a government spokesman said. "Walesa is not arrested and not interned," he added. "He is being treated with all due respect. He is considered the head of Solidarity and Solidarity's activities have only been suspended." In an emotional announcement, the party leader and Prime Minister, General Wojciech Jaruzelski, said other Solidarity officials, former communist leaders and dissidents had been rounded up and interned. The communist rulers also suspended a wide range of civil liberties.

Moraji's offer

Former prime minister Moraji Desai offered to lead a nationwide non-cooperation movement against Congress (I) "misrule" and sought the peoples' cooperation in this venture. Speaking at a public meeting organised by the Janata Party in Ahmedabad soon after the end of the national council session, Desai said he could sacrifice his life in the cause of democracy and clean public life. Referring to the party's decision to forge opposition unity, he was emphatic that the Janata Party would not break up again if different parties came together. Desai said that care would be taken while admitting in to the party those who had brought about its downfall. Desai advised the people not to be disheartened by the deteriorating political situation but to face it boldly.

Bengal cyclone

The death toll in Thursday's cyclone ravages in the Sunderbans of the 24-Parganas district and parts of Midnapore district has now reached 95, as more casualty reports were coming in on December 13. Returning from her visit to the devastated areas, 24-Parganas district magistrate Ranu Ghosh, told UNI that she feared the death toll could be even higher.

### ANI Secretary of VHP..

districts for in-house treatment, providing Cattle lifting (Modern Crane facility) - Light Vehicle (modernized) Vehicle, prohibition on Cow & Bull slaughtering as No Modern Slaughterhouse exists here, conduct of disciplinary proceedings against Govt. Veterinary Doctors who issued

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certificate for slaughtering in the past 5 years, construction of Cattle In-house Maintenance pound for keeping all Overaged cattle instead of recommending for slaughtering and providing Cattle feeds in a subsidised low costing, based on Aadhar seeded cattle to each Farmer/Household/Entrepreneur.

### Low Pressure over ..

pressure/depression is lying in the equatorial region between 0° and 7°N. Therefore, the system lacks support of Coriolis Force, very essential for strengthening of weather perturbations. Higher the latitude, more is the magnitude of Coriolis force. Practically, it is zero at equator and negligible between 5°N and 5°S. Accordingly, this weather system is not likely to grow in to any significant system. On the contrary, this will weaken over Strait of Malacca and Malay Peninsula up to 20°December

onward. As a weak low associated with feeble cyclonic circulation, the system will move away from Andaman Sea and head for Gulf of Thailand and adjoining landmass. It is expected to get filled up by 22-December.

Under the influence of this system, Andaman and Nicobar Islands may have heavy rains on 20° and 21°December. Rains will not be very intense and continuous, as the islands will be placed at a safe distance from the core area of the system.

### India votes against move..

peace and conflicts worldwide. As often, the appropriate UN forum to discuss all matters on climate change is the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), on whose climate change (UNFCCC), with more than 190 members met multiple times every year, including at a two-week annual conference towards the end of the year.

One of the lesser discussed aspects of climate change is its impact on international peace and security, a direct effect of climate-induced food and water shortages, loss of land or livelihoods, or migration. The sponsors, and supporters, of the draft resolution argued that this had implications for the UN field missions deployed to maintain peace and security, and therefore, two as subject appropriate to be taken up at the Security Council.

India, China and Russia had been opposing this move from the beginning, arguing that Security Council interventions on climate change will undermine the UNFCCC process, and provide disproportionate influence to a handful of developed countries on

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climate change decision-making. Explaining its decision to vote against the draft resolution, India said UNFCCC already offered an "elaborate and equitable architecture" with equal voice for every country and adequate recognition of every country's "national circumstances".

"We, therefore, need to ask ourselves what is it that we can collectively do under this draft resolution which we cannot achieve under the UNFCCC process," Tiwari said. "Why is it that one needs a UN Security Council resolution to take action on climate change when we have commitments made under UNFCCC towards concrete climate action? The honest answer is that there is no real requirement for this resolution except for the purpose of bringing climate change under the ambit of Security Council, and the reason for that is now decisions can be taken without involvement of most of developing countries and without recognising consensus." And all this can be done in the name of preserving international peace and security."

### CBSE Schools advised..

their innate creative talents is a responsibility of the school and society in general. Performing arts and fine arts help the students develop aesthetics, balance, self-fulfilment etc. Also, in this fast-changing globally connected world,

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it is crucial to strengthen the cultural roots by preserving, promoting and popularizing national heritage. The ideal way to do this by encouraging the students to develop a taste and interest in classical folk music, dance and art, the Board said.

# 49% INDIAN COMPANIES PLANNING TO HIRE IN JANUARY-MARCH: SURVEY

Indian employers have robust hiring intentions for the next three months, with 49 per cent of companies planning to add more staff in the January-March quarter, as employers are positive about achieving sustained post-pandemic recovery, a survey said on Tuesday.

According to the latest ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey, hiring sentiment in India is the strongest reported in eight years, improving by five percentage points in comparison with the prior quarter and by 43 percentage points when compared with this time one year ago.

The survey of 3,020 employers noted that 64 per cent expect to increase their staffing levels, 15 per cent anticipate a decrease and 20 per cent do not anticipate any change, resulting in a seasonally adjusted net employment outlook of 49 per cent.

The net employment outlook is derived by taking the percentage of

employers anticipating an increase in hiring activity and subtracting from this the percentage of employers expecting a decrease in hiring activity.

"India registered a V-shaped recovery owing to increased consumer

spending, educational sector opening up and the governments sustained efforts to accelerate vaccination coverage, thereby breaking the virus chain," Sandeep Gulati, managing director, ManpowerGroup India said.

Gulati further added that "the boost in hiring outlook reflects employers' sustained confidence in achieving a post-pandemic recovery. The 'Great Resignation' is additionally impacting the hiring sentiment in companies especially in the IT and technology sectors".

However, due to the skill gap, talent shortage continues to prevail and it has become increasingly difficult for companies to find and hire the right talent, Gulati said, adding that "Coupled with that is the new variant that is seemingly creating volatility for the administrators".

Employers in large organisations report the most optimistic outlook with 51 per cent intending to hire in the first quarter compared with 25 per cent in small companies. Employers in the north report

the strongest hiring intentions for January-March quarter, followed by south and west. When asked about mandating vaccines, the survey revealed that 91 per cent of employers will mandate double vaccination and require proof for all staff while 3 per cent will allow individuals to decide.

The survey further noted that digital roles are most in demand. IT, technology, telecom, communications and media reported the strongest outlook (60 per cent), followed by restaurants and hotels (56 per cent) and banking, finance, insurance and real estate (52 per cent). According to the survey, more employers are embracing the blend of work at office and work from home. Corporates expect to adopt hybrid working for 51 per cent of finance and accounting and 49 per cent of human resource staff, while 45 per cent of production and manufacturing staff is expected to be at the workplace all the time.



### Swachh Technology ..

find cost-effective and implementable technology solutions that can be adopted and replicated at scale across urban India.

As per the challenge toolkit, 04 basic thematic areas bring challenge viz. Social inclusion, Zero dump, Plastic Waste Management, Transparency in solid waste management & sanitation and any other. Top 03 solutions across the country will be felicitated with an award in the Swachh Survekshan 2022 Award ceremony. The competition will be assessed at City level, the best submission will be recommended for State ULB Level

assessment and the best 03 State/ULB level entries will be recommended for National Level assessment.

The Port Blair Municipal Council (PBMC) invites City & State Level innovative solutions on solid waste & sanitation related issues from individuals, startups, companies, academic institutions, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Parastatals, etc. The more information of this Challenge is available on PBMC's website at <https://pbmc.gov.in> and the A&N Administrations page at <https://athtps://>

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www.andaman.gov.in For participation may visit to <https://forms.gle/xBRmNwFBVXpGGu09> or scan QR Code

## Pfizer Covid vaccine cuts Omicron hospitalisations by 70% in real-world study

Wales, 14<sup>th</sup> Dec, 2021: Two doses of Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine appear to have given 70% protection against hospitalisation in South Africa in recent weeks, a major real-world study on the potential impact of Omicron showed on Tuesday, as the country battles a spike in infections linked to the new variant.

This study released by South Africa's largest private health insurance administrator, Discovery Health, was based on more than 211,000 positive Covid-19 test results from 15 November to 7 December, around 78,000 of which were attributed to Omicron.

The 78,000 results are not confirmed Omicron cases, meaning the study is not able to draw

conclusive findings about the variant labelled "of concern" by the World Health Organization.

South African scientists have so far confirmed around 550 Omicron sequences, with the variant accounting for 78% of sequences from November, more than the previously dominant Delta variant.

South Africa alerted the world to Omicron late last month, triggering alarm that it could cause another surge in global infections, and leading to the imposition of travel restrictions on southern Africa. South Africa's daily infections have since risen to around 20,000 in recent days. Based on analysis by Discovery's clinical research and actuarial teams, and in collaboration

with South Africa's Medical Research Council (SAMRC), the real-world study calculated that two doses of Pfizer-BioNTech offered 70% protection against hospitalisation during the recent surge in cases and 33% protection against infection.

South Africa is using the Pfizer-BioNTech and Johnson & Johnson vaccines in its Covid-19 immunisation campaign, with more than 20 million Pfizer doses administered so far. It concluded that there was a higher risk of reinfection during the fourth wave than during previous waves and that the risk of hospitalisation among adults diagnosed with Covid-19 was 29% lower than during the country's first wave early last year.

## 7.3-Strong Earthquake Hits Indonesia, No "Threat of Tsunami"

**Earthquake In Indonesia: The USGS said the quake struck at a depth of 76 kilometres (47 miles) in the Flores Sea at 0320 GMT.**

Jakarta: A 7.3-magnitude earthquake struck eastern Indonesia on Tuesday, the US Geological Survey said, causing panic but no deaths or major damage were reported.

The epicentre was in the Flores Sea, north of East Nusa Tenggara province, where the quake sparked red alerting in the late morning (0320 GMT).

"I was in the field. People ran in panic. I am still... scared," said Nurani, a resident of Adonara island in the East Flores regency.

No significant damage or fatalities were immediately reported, but Indonesian authorities urged caution with more than a dozen smaller aftershocks detected.

One person was injured in Manggarai, East Nusa Tenggara, and a school building was damaged on Selayar island, national disaster agency spokesman Abdul Muhari said in a statement.

The impact of the quake was still being assessed, he added.

The intensity of the shaking sparked panic in many areas, with videos from some towns and villages shared on social media showing people running outside, some holding small children.

Streets were seen clogged with traffic as vehicles attempted to leave for safe locations.

The USGS placed the epicentre at a depth of 18.5 kilometres (11 miles), around 100 kilometres north of the Flores island town of Maumere, home to more than 80,000 people, where the quake disrupted coronavirus inoculations.

"People were receiving vaccines when the quake hit. They ran in panic," said Maumere resident Yulus Tara.

"There were more than 200 people... and the (vaccination) event stopped because of the quake."

Thousands in Maumere sought safety on higher ground, fearing a tsunami.

"We will stay here... because we are afraid of aftershocks," said Husni Tamrin.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center said the quake no longer posed a threat of tsunamis after earlier warning that such waves were possible within a 1,000-kilometre radius of the epicentre.

Indonesian authorities also lifted their tsunami warning. "I was checking my phone when the quake hit. I fell it for 30 seconds. It was

strong," said Alwan, a resident of Bulon in Southeast Sulawesi sea—one of the areas where the tsunami warning was issued.

Indonesia experiences frequent quakes and volcanic eruptions due to its position on the Pacific "Ring of Fire", an arc of intense seismic activity where tectonic plates collide that stretches from Japan through Southeast Asia and across the Pacific basin.

Among Indonesia's history of deadly quakes is a devastating 9.1-magnitude tremor in 2004 that struck off the coast of Sumatra and triggered a tsunami that killed 220,000 throughout the region, including about 170,000 in Indonesia.

The Boxing Day tragedy was one of the deadliest natural disasters in recorded history. In 2018, a powerful quake shook the island of Lombok and several more tremors followed over the next couple of weeks, killing more than 560 people on the holiday island and neighbouring Sumbawa.

Later that year, a 7.5-magnitude quake and a subsequent tsunami in Palu on Sulawesi island left more than 4,300 people dead or missing.

### Good governance..

Shri. Ajay Baragi, State BJP President speaking about Shri. Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ji who was an Indian politician, extraordinary orator and writer. Infrastructure projects got a priority during the Vajpayee Ji years which later governments have maintained. Shri. Vishal Joly, National Executive Member, BJP also shared the working of present government under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi Ji is unbiased, transparent, development-oriented and public-centric. Many sustainable development projects for infrastructure and modern facilities initiatives have been laid down for our Islands viz. North & Middle

Andaman Bridge, Airport Project, OFC cable etc. Dr. Poonam Arora, State Coordinator, Good Governance briefed about the activities planned to celebrate the Good Governance Day by Bharatiya Janata Party, A & N Islands which will connect to the beneficiaries of various Govt. Schemes will be invited, facilitate and the State & local leaders will be educated and motivate them on Good Governance.

A contest will be organized for Young Indians (Age group: 18-25), where they can write Slogan/Poem showcasing #My Idea for Good Governance 2022. A campaign will

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be run from 16th - 25th December 2021 #MyStories #Beneficiaries, where any beneficiaries of Govt. Schemes can pen down or write their success stories to encourage more and more people to avail the benefits under the schemes. The winners of the contest will be announced in an event on 25th December 2021 at State BJP Karyalay, Middle Point, Port Blair. The 1st prize -Rs. 10,000/-, 2nd Prize -Rs. 8,000/- & 3rd Prize -Rs. 5,000/-. The last date of entries for the contest is 24th December 2021. All details regarding the contest can be seen at BJP Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram & Facebook handle from 16th onwards.

## Over 8.5 lakh Indians gave up citizenship in past 7 years till Sept 30: Govt

New Delhi, 14<sup>th</sup> Dec, 2021: More than 8.5 lakh Indians renounced their citizenship in the past seven years till September 30, the Centre informed the Lok Sabha on Tuesday citing data available with the Union ministry of home affairs.

Union minister of state for home affairs Nitya Rani said the Parliament on December 1 that 6,08,162 Indians gave up their citizenship in the past seven years till September 30. Of this, 1,11,287 people renounced their Indian citizenship this year itself till September 30. He added that 10,645 foreigners, mostly from Pakistan (7,782) and Afghanistan (795), applied for Indian citizenship between 2016 and 2020. He also said that more than 100 lakh Indians are currently living overseas. As many as 8,81,254 Indian nationals

have given up their citizenship since 2017, the government stated.

This development comes at a time when the Union home ministry

across the country soon after its initial notification in December 2019. One of the most prominent incidents among them was the Delhi riots, which resulted in bloodshed and injured over 200 people.

The CAA that was cleared to provide citizenship to Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, who crossed over to India till December 31, 2014, was termed unconstitutional and discriminatory by the opponents of the law. It was also accused of targeting Muslims and associating citizenship with faith in a secular nation like India.

The Bharatiya Janata Party-led central government has asked for another six-month extension till January 2022 to prepare the rules under CAA.

## Netflix slashes its India pricing, now available at Rs 149 per month

Port Blair, 14<sup>th</sup> Dec, 2021: Netflix is reducing its India pricing for the first time since the service's foray in 2016 as it looks to ramp up its user base amid intense competition and a rising appetite for digital content in the country.

The entry-level Basic plan, that allows subscribers to watch its shows and films in standard definition (SD) on a single mobile, tablet, computer or television screen at a time, has been slashed to Rs 199 per month from Rs 499 per month.

Meanwhile, the Standard tier which offers high-definition (HD) content along with support for two concurrent screens, has been reduced to Rs 499 per month from Rs 649 per month. The service's most expensive Premium tier that offers Ultra-high-definition (Ultra-HD) content with support for four concurrent screens, is now priced at Rs 649 per month, down from Rs 799 per month. Netflix's mobile-only

plan which was introduced in India in July 2019 at Rs 199 per month, will now be available for Rs 149 per month. The new pricing will be applicable from the user's next billing cycle. Monika Shergill, VP-Content, Netflix India, told Moneycontrol that they are also rolling out a new auto-upgrade feature for existing members starting December 14, wherein the service will show a pop-up that allows users to auto-upgrade their plan by the next time they are comfortable paying the existing prices.

For instance, if the user is on the old Rs 499 Basic plan and they confirm the upgrade, they will automatically be moved to the next tier 'Standard' which now has the same Rs 499 price. Alternatively, users can also decline the upgrade to avail the lower pricing.

Netflix's costly pricing has been one of the key roadblocks for the service's growth in the country, especially as it competes with rivals

such as Disney+ Hotstar, Amazon Prime Video, Zee Entertainment's ZEE5, and Sony Pictures Network's Sony Liv among others. While the company doesn't offer a country-wise breakup of its members, a recent report by independent research and consulting firm Media Partners Asia (MPA) had projected the service's subscriber base at 5.5 million by the end of 2021.

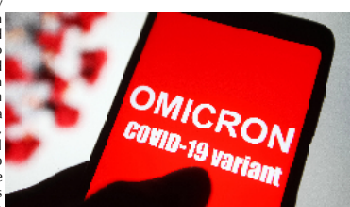
This includes testing a cheaper entry-level plan earlier this year, giving free weekend access to non-subscribers in December 2020, and testing weekly plans and discounted long-term subscription plans last year. It also made select shows and movies available for free to all users across the world in August last year.

The company has also ramped up its content programming in India, releasing its largest-ever roster of more than 40 original titles in March this year.



Anurag Agarwal, director, CSIR Institute Of Genomics and Integrative

However, it is likely to be high (transmissible) and comparable to Delta," Agarwal said that even though there is high immunity post-Delta and vaccination, Omicron may still spread faster due to the changes in spike protein. This highlights the need to



## CMYK



## IN CONVERSATION

## MGNREGS SOCIAL AUDIT HIT, KERALA SAYS FUNDS FROM CENTRE DELAYED

Social auditing, a crucial component of the flagship MGNREGS, has come to almost a standstill in Kerala, with a large number of resource persons quitting due to non-disbursement of wages and honorarium.

The financial crisis comes even as the audit, which is conducted every six months to check official records against ground realities, faces resistance from local-level politicians in many villages.

Kerala claims to have received only Rs 1.46 crore of its due share of Rs 9.33 crore for this year, and said salaries and honorarium for more than half a year are pending.

The funds for the social audit unit are released by the Union Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD). The MoRD did not respond to queries on the matter.

Kerala has 16,000 wards under 941 panchayats, and a social audit unit of these resource persons is stipulated for each panchayat. Recently the number of village resource persons, who are paid Rs 350 per day, per panchayat was reduced to two.

Kerala Social Audit Unit Director Dr N Ramakanthan said: "On account of the non-release of funds during the last financial year and inadequate release in the current fiscal, the social audit process in Kerala is facing a severe crisis. Of the due share of Rs 9.33 crore, the audit unit in Kerala has got only Rs 1.46 crore. A sizeable number of resource persons have quit for want of payment of wages. We are unable to recruit new hands at the village and block level."

Ramakanthan said they had taken up with the issue with the MoRD, and

the governing body of the social audit unit has decided to fill vacant posts anticipating allotment of funds.

Sources in the unit said the number of social audits conducted have been falling. In 2019-2020, 2,831 were held as against the mandatory figure of 16,000. "What is happening is only a concurrent audit, done with the work. Even that does not happen in all panchayats. Of 941 panchayats in the state, concurrent audit is held only in half," a source said.

Officials at the State MGNREGS Mission pointed out that independent audits were necessary to prevent irregularities. Incidentally, as a source pointed out, despite audits held from 2017 to 2020 pointing out several anomalies, "not a single paisa could be recovered from the erring parties".

Another hurdle in MGNREGS social audit in Kerala is the management information system template. Under the national-level plan, the basic field of activity is the village panchayat, whereas in Kerala it is the ward. "Every village panchayat in Kerala has 14 to 18 wards and the same number of gram sabhas. We have to resolve the systematic issue for uploading the reports in the management information system," an official said.



## Big Tech companies raise new global challenges, says IT minister Vaishnaw

Union telecom and IT minister Ashwini Vaishnaw listed Big Tech as one of the top 5 challenges being faced globally. Big technology organisations have a significant impact on democracy and society at large, he said on Monday at the

Partnership Summit organised by the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII). "They also have the power to change behavioural aspects and affect decision-making capabilities which makes a fundamental difference in the vital

activities of the country," he added. Vaishnaw had generally kept his silence when it came to Big Tech like Google, Facebook etc ever since he took over the high-profile cabinet slot from Ravi Shankar Prasad back in the

summer. His predecessor, of course, had spent the last few months of his ministry basking on Big Tech—first by passing the Intermediary Rules and then coming down harshly on Big Tech firms like Twitter which failed to comply with its stipulations at first.

He also noted that the challenge of cyber security has become a global phenomenon and as a society, it is imperative to establish a synergy amongst countries. "In its preparedness to overcome the threats being posed by cyber security, India has been consistently working towards bringing in relevant technology and investment in the country," he said. Under the aegis of the Digital India Initiative, which aims to provide universal internet access to the country's 1.3 billion population, the Ministry of Telecommunications has been undertaking several steps to ensure that connectivity is available even at the last mile. "As everything went digital, the pandemic made us realise the importance of digital connectivity and availability for all," Vaishnaw added.



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**10 TIPS TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS DO NOT RISK YOUR LIFE**

1. Avoid going to crowded places like malls, public areas, etc. if you are not essential.

2. Maintain a healthy diet, exercise, and get enough sleep.

3. Avoid touching your face, especially your eyes, nose, and mouth.

4. Avoid shaking hands with people and avoid touching objects they have touched.

5. Avoid going to public places if you are sick.

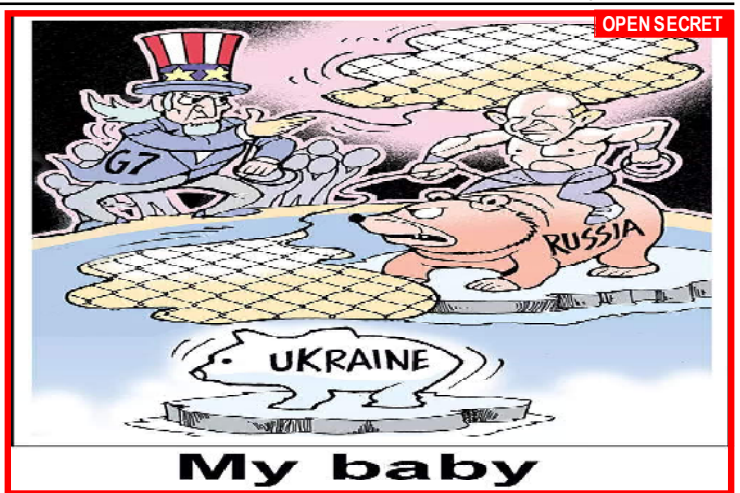
6. Avoid going to work if you are sick.

7. Avoid going to school if you are sick.

8. Avoid going to public places if you are sick.

9. Avoid going to work if you are sick.

10. Avoid going to school if you are sick.



Candle Light Tribute..

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memory of the deceased. Floral tributes were offered and a two minutes silence was observed for the decorated martyrs of Indian armed forces. Also, the gathering prayed to the Almighty to grant them eternal peace.

The freedom and liberty we enjoy are much because of the sacrifices made by valiant men and women of the tri-services at the borders of our nation.

## Union Environment Minister calls for innovative scientific steps to secure planet

Only collective global action can combat climate change and its challenges, Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav has said while calling for innovative and scientific steps to secure the planet.

In his keynote address at the recently concluded Sustainability Conclave, TargetNet Zero, a two-day event organised by Bombay Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Mumbai, Yadav said India has not contributed to climate change.

"We need innovative, scientific and urgent steps to secure our planet for future generations. India's announcement at COP26 to reach Net Zero by 2070 is a great step considering that our country is not the cause for climate change and has not been a historic contributor to greenhouse emissions," he said.

"Having said that, India as a responsible global power realises that only collective global action can combat climate change and its challenges," Yadav said.

Pointing out that India has been pursuing a gradual transition to NetZero while striking a balance between ecology, economic development and sustainability, he said the private sector plays an important role in the journey towards NetZero.

"I appeal to Bombay Chamber that your actions, resources, capacity to innovate and greater reach are vital to swiftly decarbonize sectors, infrastructure, value chains and the products and services they provide," the

minister said. "Private sector players are already playing a key role in this climate fight, with 64 Indian companies having pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions last year," he said in his virtual address.

Talking about investments, he said higher capital is expected to be diverted to companies at the forefront of climate transition with huge financing for companies lagging behind.

The Indian cement industry has already achieved one of the biggest low carbon milestones across the world. We must ensure that sustainable lifestyle and climate justice are at the core of this journey," Yadav said.

He reiterated that "we have not inherited this planet from our ancestors, but instead we have borrowed it from our children and hence must leave it green and clean".

In his address on the first day of the conclave, Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog said India's ambitious targets in COP26 should be studied in the context of consistent demand and domestic push towards clean technology.

"India is today investing billions of dollars in electric vehicle subsidy, ethanol blending and gasoline, solar PV and battery manufacturing," Kant said.

Energy transition in India is happening in four forms, increasing electrification, higher penetration of cleaner fuel in the energy mix, accelerated adoption of energy efficient technologies and driving digitalisation," he said.

Kant added, "The prime minister has announced that by 2047 when India completes 100 years of independence, we will become independent of fossil fuel imports."

"Technology and innovation can help address this difficult trade-off and solve developmental challenges by unlocking exponential scale and accelerating inclusion. The intersection of technology and innovation with sustainability can already be seen in paradigm-shifting solutions such as electric vehicles, solar power, carbon capture and storage technology, etc," he said.

Covering two days of dialogue and discussions on Target Net Zero, the Sustainability Conclave saw some of the country's leading CEOs sharing their insights on the topic.

The panelists included R Mukundan, MD & CEO, Tata Chemicals; Neeraj Akhouri, CEO, Holcim India and MD & CEO, Ambuja Cements Ltd; Anita Marangoly George, executive vice-president, deputy head - CDPO Global CDPO India and Anjali Bansal.

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