

Malda singer to represent India at UK music conference

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

MALDA, 2 DECEMBER

A resident of Malda, Shib Shankar Choudhury, has become the first Indian to present a paper in the Innovation in Music Conference-2019 to be held at the University of West London in the UK later this week.

Choudhury, who practices creative music, will be among the 60 others working in musicology around the globe to present a paper in the conference, and he has already left for the UK. He has also been given a 10-year Visa to visit the UK at any point of time up to 1 December 2029.

“The moment is a proud one not only for him and Malda, but for the entire country,” family sources said today.

While leaving Malda for his flight to London from Kolkata, Choudhury said, “This is a very special moment for me as I have been picked up by a panel of judges of exquisite talents in music. To represent my country on such a big stage is something I could have only dreamt of.”

Choudhury, who is the head of the English and



Humanities department at the Ghanikhan Choudhury Institute of Education and Technology in English Bazaar, has already produced and composed eight songs in English and recorded them in Kolkata and Mumbai, and which have been digitally mixed by Trevor Gibson, a Grammy winning sound engineer and a British actor in Birmingham in the UK.

According to Gibson, Choudhury's songs have diverse yet rich musical arrangements and strong progression. As per the schedule of the conference, Choudhury will be presenting his paper before the judges on 7 December in the Weston Hall-1 of the University.

Biplab Dhar, a veteran musician of Malda, who trained Choudhury earlier, said, “He is a rare talent and I wish him all the best.”



AVIJIT ROY

A youth from a small town in Malda in West Bengal has risked his career as a lecturer in a reputed institution, loosened his purse strings and more so dared to tread on the path no one of his ilk has tried to take so far. Shib Shankar Choudhury, who is associated with the Ghani Khan Choudhury Institute of Engineering and Technology (GKCIET) in Malda district, has already taken a big stride and has prepared a music album consisting of eight English songs that speak of different subjects. The songs recorded in Kolkata and Mumbai are now being digitally mixed and mastered in the Circle Studios owned by Trevor Gibson, a Grammy Award-winning sound engineer, in Birmingham in the UK. Choudhury, who is the head of the English and Humanities Department at the GKCIET, is now waiting for the album to be ready and released, with hopes that his songs will be picked by film directors, producers, top musicians or anyone in the field concerned.

"There has been no looking back, as I have done everything to spread my music, my words and my cry of the soul among the masses," Choudhury says.

The young man is making true what former Indian President APJ Abdul Kalam had once said-- "Dream is not that which you see while sleeping, it is something that does not let you sleep." Choudhury has worked day in and day out and put in a lot of hard work and struggle to finally prepare the music album, while he is only days away from a likely international acclaim.

"Ever since my youth, I used to listen to and enjoy music videos of various pop artists like Madonna, Michael Jackson, U2, Westlife, Bryan Adams, Boyzone, Backstreet Boys, Elton John, Fleetwoodmack, Roxette, Enrique, etc through MTV or VH1 TV channels. And that's how one of my friend's brothers, who lives in the US, gave me a bunch of cassettes/tapes of pop songs of Hollywood in 2000. Their songs moved me and instilled in me a heartfelt desire to be popular like them and become a singer, songwriter and producer," Choudhury says.

"My passion for singing and writing lyrics comes from deep within my soul, mind and heart. I write and compose my songs



All for the love of Western MUSIC

Shib Shankar Choudhury, a lecturer in Malda, has prepared a music album consisting of eight English songs, recorded in Kolkata and Mumbai, which are now being digitally mixed and mastered in the Circle Studios owned by Trevor Gibson, a Grammy Award-winning sound engineer, in Birmingham in the UK

simultaneously, and I do it with all of me, putting everything I can into it to convert my feelings and experiences into a piece that imitate emotions," he adds.

He says justice, injustice, spirituality, morals, love, betrayal, loyalty, sacrifice, deception, decay, fall or rise, anguish, atonement, lust, cruelty etc, all such major emotions and their interplay motivate him to express such interplay in a form of rhythm.

Choudhury's first track, 'Ride,' is a romantic love song representing a strong bond of a couple while they are promising each other to be faithful forever during a long drive in an old carina wintry night underneath the silver moonlight.

Another track is 'Witness', a song about the rise and fall of a 'hero' who predicts he will die in the arms of the 'Holy Spirit.' The other track is called 'Path,' which is about salvation through one's deeds, while 'Amorphous,' speaks about an immaculate dream of a person who imagines to be united with the infinity of universe and goes against infidels.

'Lost' is a motivational song, while in 'Battle Zone,' a warrior predicts the third world war and describes the cruel conspiracy of politicians who bait innocent lives. 'Betrayed,' the other track, talks about a person who is guilty of betraying his beloved. This betrayal is a cause of moral suffocation for the person and is weeping for every wrong he has committed, but still loves his beloved. 'Evil,' the final song is about a person haunted by the evil.

On the contrary, speaking about the highly rich Indian classical music, Choudhury reveals that in spite of the profound respect he has for traditional Indian classical music, it was the pop music in the English language sung by various artists of Europe and America that attracted him since childhood.

Apart from being a vocalist and lyricist, Choudhury has also presented one of his research papers in 'EOPop2019' at the Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, in Ireland this July, considered to be the toughest one in the field.

Malda, rather the whole of India, is now on the threshold of witnessing a new sensation in the international level, and if all goes as planned, this young man who hails from the so-called middle-class family in Malda may soon find a place among the stars in Hollywood.



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In Covid times, Malda man sings of human-nature ties

AVIJIT ROY
MALDA, 18 JULY

Pained by people's misery across the globe due to the Covid-19 pandemic, a youth from Malda who is a lecturer in a reputed institution has come up with a song on the present crisis. The song is all set to be released internationally from Australia.



Shib Shankar Choudhury, who has in the past released songs from England, has now tried to "peep into the heart" of the coronavirus through his song titled 'I am virus.' The songwriter blames the present situation on human beings as he says they were "cruel" to Mother Nature.

The song is ready for worldwide distribution by an American distributor, CDBaby, in digital platforms like iTunes, Apple Music, Spotify, Pandora, YouTube, Amazon and many more for global acclaim.

"It is a conflict between human activities and the revenge of the invisible coronavirus. Coronavirus may be natural or man-made, and this is still under investigation, but the way we were crushed by the impact of this tiny virus is beyond our modern efforts and imagination and has signified that we humans are still under the control of Mother Nature," Mr Choudhury said.

According to him, the entire mes-

sage of the song is based on that fact and talks of the need for humans to mend their ways.

"We have to remove our access to poison of greediness and lust to give space to others before probing our skills and technology. And if we change ourselves, the virus will leave us forever. I wanted to just share my opinions through this song (it may be acceptable or may be rejected) it's all upon music lovers. This was the reason I made it," Mr Choudhury said. According to him, he recorded the vocals from the studio owned by Biplab Dhar, a renowned guitarist and musician of north Bengal, and sent to Steve Robin, who owns The Barn Studio in Queensland near Brisbane in Australia for production of the track or music arrangements.

"I have tried to keep the mood and production of the song positive. I tried to let Shib's message

of the song be the most important thing. I gave it a rhythm with a forward momentum, to help us to remember, as we deal with the crisis to keep pushing and striving. For all of the negative impacts the pandemic has caused, I have found it important to look for a different and positive way of doing things. For me, working with Shib was one of those ways. We come from very different parts of the world, but both of our cultures have had to deal with the same issue," Mr Robin said in an email message.

Mr Dhar, who has been working with Mr Choudhury for long, said, "Shib is very talented and a man to do something out of the normal course. He will be more mature as a singer with more experience and I wish him all the best. Everyone should lend their ears to this beautiful song with deep underlying thoughts and emotions."

Himelaven chef set to ju...



Malda musician presents paper in Stockholm on autoethnography

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

MALDA, 20 JUNE

In his ongoing contribution to pop music and research, Dr Shib Shankar Chowdhury, a resident of Jhaljhalia in English Bazaar, and professor in the Ghanikhan Choudhury Institute of Education and Technology (GKCIET), presented his paper on autoethnography and composition for innovative creation about the pandemic at the 'Innovation Music 2022' at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, Sweden, on 18 June.

Dr Chowdhury, who is a singer, songwriter, composer and producer, has also presented his paper on '21st Century Anglo American Women and Their Pop Songs' in the conference on Ethnographic study on Expression and Affect organised by the British Forum for Ethnomusicology (BFE) and Royal Music Association (RMA) in the University of Plymouth on 6 January.

Dr Choudhury, who had been engaged in research of songs and who has already published nine international songs, said his song 'I am virus' had been selected for the latest presentation. "My self-released song came out in July 2020, based on the pandemic and lock down. I recorded 'I am virus' at The the Barn Recording Studios, Brisbane, Australia, and is produced by Steve Robin. It got selected for the presentation as a research-based song at 'Innovation Music 2022,' a leading international con-



ference, as the most innovative song for its production, technology, theme," Dr Chowdhury said over the telephone from Stockholm.

The young music enthusiast and researcher from a small town like English Bazaar is now collaborating with world famous Air Studios, London, for his three English language songs, which have been already mixed by noted mix-engineer Goetz Botzenhardt at Tileyard Studios, London, under the management of Air Studios London.

The Integrity Publishing Limited, UK, has published these three new songs on 17 June from England. "A very enjoyable and listenable song with a tinge of 70 singer-songwriter to it.

The quirky middle section is an unexpected and interesting departure from this, adding a dynamic twist. All in

all a really great tune," the author of the Oxford Pocket Dictionary, Jon Hird, has commented on the song 'I am virus.' 'I am virus' is not only about the coronavirus, but about human behaviour towards nature and animals that reflects how we need to become in terms of thoughts, perspectives and deeds.

Shib has marvellously presented the metaphysical ideas through his composition. "Great production indeed," commented Jan-Erik Eriksson, Chairman, Swedish Sound Engineers Society, Stockholm.

According to Biplab Dhar, a cultural activist in Malda, it is indeed very good to see a Malda man reaching such heights. "He deserves every bit of it, which I know from the experience I have of working with him. I wish Dr Chowdhury every success in life," he said.



'Double flower' vs 'double leaf' in Siliguri polls

MANAS R BANNERJEE
SILIGURI, 7 JANUARY

Almost all hardcore Trinamool Congress leaders, who are contesting the Siliguri Municipal Corporation (SMC) elections as Independent candidates, have managed the symbol 'double leaf' to beat the party's official candidates fighting the polls with party symbol the 'double flower.'

Although former minister and senior TMC leader Gautam Deb had managed one rebel leader Nikhil Sahani, who had filed his nomination papers for ward 18 as an independent candidate, many other disgruntled leaders, are contesting the polls as independents. Mr Sahani withdrew his nomination yesterday.

Paying no heed to Mr Deb's request, Bijender Kapur, alias Masum, is contesting the elections from ward 1 with the symbol 'double leaf.' Eight candidates, including four independents, are contesting the polls in the ward.

Significantly, Rina Das, who has challenged the local Trinamool leadership, is contesting from ward 39 as an independent candidate, and has also managed the 'double leaf' symbol to battle it out with 'double flower' holder Pinky Saha.

It may be noted here that former minister, Mr Deb, who is also contesting the SMC polls from ward 33, today inaugurated the election office of Pinky Saha there and campaigned for her.

Another TMC leader, Mallika Debnath, having failed to manage a ticket, is contesting the elections from ward 46 with her symbol 'double leaf.'

Seven independent candidates are contesting the SMC elections with the 'double leaf' symbol.

Interestingly, another senior TMC leader is contesting the elections from ward 24 by showcasing his symbol 'bicycle' against an elderly official TMC candidate, Pratul Chakraborty. In ward 24, five candidates are in the fray, including BJP candidate Shankar Ghosh, who is the Siliguri MLA.

On the other hand, some independent candidates are contesting the polls by showcasing their symbol, the rising sun. One of them is TMC leader Bijan Sarkar, who is contesting from ward 33, where Mr Deb is contesting. A total of five candidates are contesting there—the four others from the CPIM, Congress, TMC and BJP.

After finalization of candidatures and allotment of the symbols, records show that Siliguri residents will witness a triangular fight in 11 of the 47 wards. Such a fight is set to take place in ward 8, 10, 11, 13, 16, 19, 21, 27, 30, 36 and 38.

Similarly, voters set to witness a four-pronged battle in 21 wards—2, 4, 7, 9, 12, 15, 17, 18, 20, 23, 25, 28, 29, 31, 32, 35, 37, 40, 43, 44 and 45.

Significantly, the CPIM-led Left did not field candidates in wards where the Congress

had won the seats in the last term. However, in many seats, the Congress is contesting in places where the CPIM, RSP, CPI and FB have fielded their candidates.

It may be noted that CPI (ML) Liberation is contesting the elections in ward 7, the lone seat, where there is no other Left candidate. On the other hand, in ward 11, both the Left and the Congress have not fielded candidates. In a triangular fight, an independent candidate, Santosh Devi Singhal, is contesting against both the TMC and the BJP.

Interestingly, in ward 6 where former mayor Asok Bhattacharya is contesting, four other candidates are there to share the minority votes. When the TMC has fielded Alam Khan, both the Congress and the BJP have nominated Shanawaz Hussain and Noor Jahan Ansari, respectively. One Md Raju is also contesting there as an independent candidate.

BJP SC candidate disqualified

Meanwhile, the BJP has decided to support Ranjit Biswas, an independent candidate, who is contesting the elections in ward 46, after authorities rejected the candidature of BJP candidate Malati Roy (Scheduled Caste woman candidate). The BJP has claimed that the authorities had accepted Ms Roy's SC certificate in 2015, when she contested the SMC polls and won from ward 1, but "maliciously" rejected the same this time around.



The land issue in Garidhura is not a political issue or an issue to be fought with party flag

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Siliguri Municipal Corporation election candidate Asok Bhattacharya of the CPI-M campaigns in Ward 6. TMC candidate for the polls Ranjan Sarkar campaigns in ward 15, in Siliguri on Friday. ■ PULAK KARMAKAR

Patients in home isolation, hosp occupancy minimal

SANKHA GHOSH
SILIGURI, 7 JANUARY

Given the surge in the number of people contracting Covid-19, around 250 persons are in home isolation in Darjeeling district presently, officials have said.

According to health department officials, the hospital bed occupancy rate is, however, minimal.

Sources at the department estimated that around 235 persons were in home isolation till 6 January.

"Our monitoring cells at the block, civic body and district levels are keeping a close watch on the overall situation. At the same time, we have already readied two safe homes in case of any requirement," said the district chief medical

officer of health, Dr Tulsi Pramanik. A 70-bed safe home at Batasi near Siliguri and another 50-bed home will primarily cater to Covid-19 patients with mild symptoms, it is learnt.

"The mechanism has been in place to ensure that patients get better monitoring. With the number of cases going up, home isolation has also gone up. We advise people not to go for self medication, blood investigation, undergo chest X-ray or CT scan without consulting doctors," said a health department official.

The district has witnessed a surge in cases, along with other places in the state. Many health workers, officials, and doctors associated with the North Bengal Medical College and Hospital in Siliguri

are in home isolation after they contracted the virus, officials have said.

On 5 January, the Union health ministry issued revised guidelines, saying that Covid patients with mild symptoms should stay in home isolation for a minimum period of seven days, if they have no fever for three successive days. They will, however, continue to wear masks, the guidelines say. Many Covid patients had earlier alleged slackness on the part of the health department when it came to monitoring their condition. They did not even call them to inquire, they alleged.

Covid cases surge

Darjeeling district reported 238 fresh cases of Covid-19. The Siliguri Municipal Corporation (SMC) covering

14 wards under Jalpaiguri district logged 104 cases, health department officials said today. The corporation area (33 wards) that falls in Darjeeling district recorded 85 cases, with Matigara block topping the tally with 65 new cases.

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No.90 Dt.06.01.2022

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		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Keonjhar	Building Online NCB No.333	13.01.2022 at 11:00 AM	28.01.2022 up to 5:00 PM	27.01.2022 up to 5:00 PM	28.01.2022 at 11:00 AM	Will be intimated later

*Further details can be seen from the website : www.tendersorissa.gov.in

Sd/- Chief Construction Engineer
R.W. Circle, Keonjhar

Tour group urges CM to reopen tourist spots



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
DARJEELING, 7 JANUARY

The Eastern Himalaya Travel and Tour Operators' Association (EHTTOA) has written to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, urging her to reopen tourist spots. The state government has closed all tourist spots as part of the fresh restrictions it put in place from 3 January in view of the rising Covid-19 cases in the state.

Representatives of EHTTOA, which is an apex body of tour operators with more than 250 members from West Bengal, Sikkim, along with neighbouring countries of Nepal and Bangladesh, met Darjeeling District Magistrate S Ponnambalam on the matter and handed him a letter meant for Miss Banerjee.

"With the Covid pandemic going on for two years, it has had a great impact on the tourism industry and the people associated with it. We are demanding that tourist spots be opened by allowing 50

percent leeway. Bookings are getting cancelled with everything closed," said EHTTOA member Rajesh Chettri.

The letter to the CM, on the other hand, says: "Covid has had a massive socio-economic impact on our society and especially on the tourism and hospitality sector. As the situation was slowly getting better in the last few days, Covid cases have again surmounted to dangerous levels and quite rightly the state government has issued restriction orders."

"We fully understand the restrictions and as responsible citizens we will strictly abide by the guidelines. However, we request that like the order has given some leeway to other sectors of the entertainment fraternity with operations allowed at 50 percent occupancy, the same should be done for the tourism and hospitality sector," said the letter. It also adds that this would ensure some flow of tourists and that the stakeholders could sustain their families.

South Dinajpur district set to top state in mustard production

SRIKANTA THAKUR
BALURGHAT, 7 JANUARY

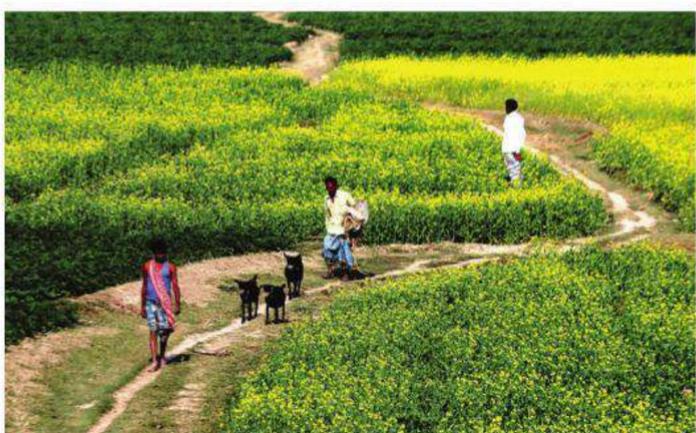
A ban imposed by the central and state governments on wheat cultivation within five km of the border with Bangladesh has come as a boon for farmers in South Dinajpur district.

Thanks to the restrictions, the farmers have started cultivating mustard seed in their fields, and as per the agriculture department's report, the district is now set to produce the highest amount of mustard seed in the state and set a record.

The agriculture department has urged the state government to arrange for markets for the mustard seed, in lack of which farmers could have problems selling their produce. The government issued an order, banning wheat cultivation within five km from the Bangladesh border, in the year 2016 to avoid the wheat blast disease, a fungal infection that is said to have travelled to some bordering villages in the past few years and posed the threat to the entire country.

As per the state government's instructions, farmers of the bordering areas were given mustard seed and different kind of pulses as an alternative.

As per records at the district agriculture office, wheat in South Dinajpur, especial-



ly in Harirampur, Kushmandi, Gangarampur and Tapan blocks, was a major crop after paddy. In 2016, wheat was cultivated in 60,000 hectares of land, while the same was 49,000 hectares in 2017. In 2018, the area came down to 25,000 hectares of land.

"On the other hand, the cultivation of mustard seed has been increased by 50 percent, and the total land on which the crop is cultivated is 80,000 hectares," an official source said.

The price of mustard oil in the market is Rs 180 to 200 per litre, and it is increasing every month, helping farmers to get higher prices of raw must-

ard. "As a result, the production of mustard has increased this time. However, in case of high yield of mustard, the Department of Agriculture is officially helping with mustard seeds. Recently, in South Dinajpur district, an initiative is being taken to send mustard to the mills in the district itself, without sending it outside," the source added.

According to a farmer in the Balurghat block, Sudhan Barman, the market price of mustard seeds is very good. "The cost per litre of mastered oil is also very high. So farmers are gainers here. However, we need a good market to sell

our produce," he said.

According to the South Dinajpur district chief agriculture officer, Dr Shuvendu Mandal, a huge amount of mustard is being cultivated in the district this year.

"Around 15,000 hectares of land has been increased for mustard cultivation. Earlier, wheat and boro paddy were cultivated in South Dinajpur district, but this time the amount of area for wheat and paddy has decreased a bit. Mustard is being cultivated instead. Due to the high prices of mustard in the market, most of the farmers are inclined towards mustard," Dr Mandal said.

Malda man's 'pop song' paper in UK conference



AVIJIT ROY
MALDA, 7 JANUARY

In a first, Malda youth Dr Shibshankar Choudhury, a singer, songwriter, composer and producer, has presented a paper on "21st Century Anglo American Women and Their Pop Songs" during a conference on "Ethnographic Study on Expression and Affect" organised by the British Forum for Ethnomusicology (BFE) and Royal Music Association (RMA) in the University of Plymouth yesterday.

Dr Choudhury, the assistant professor at the Ghani Khan Choudhury Institute of Education and Technology (GKCIET) in Malda, is also

chairing sessions in the Research Students Conference today and tomorrow. Dr Choudhury, who had been engaged in research of songs and has already published nine international songs, one of which has been selected to be presented in a conference of the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, Sweden, in the coming months.

"My self-released song came last year on July 2020, based on the pandemic and the lockdown. 'I am Virus' was recorded at The Barn Recording Studios, Brisbane, Australia, and is produced by Steve Robin. It got selected for presentation as a research-based song at the 'Innovation

Music 2022 World,' a leading international conference, as the most innovative song production. That is due to take place at the Royal College of Music, Stockholm, Sweden, in March," Dr Choudhury, who is presently in London, said over the telephone.

Further, this young music enthusiast and researcher from a small town like English Bazaar in Malda is collaborating with world famous Air Studios, London, for his upcoming English language songs, which have been already mixed by popular mix engineer Goetz Botzenhardt at Tileyard Studios, London, under the management of Air Studios.

"This is the first project or album from India under the management of world famous Air Studios, London, which was engaged in very big projects of Hollywood movies. Among these three songs of the project, one is on the Great Calcutta Killings in 1946 and the other is on the famous sloka from Geeta-Yadaya hi dharmasya," Dr Choudhury said.

According to Soumen Bhowmik, a cultural activist in Malda, it is good to see someone from Malda in the international platform and doing such innovative works like taking Indian culture to an international stage of repute. "I wish Dr Choudhury every success in life," he said.

Govt of Odisha
Department of Water Resources
Office of the Chief Engineer & Basin Manager, Mahanadi Brahmani & Baitarani System, Chandikhole

'e' Procurement Notice No. CE&BM, MBBS 06 of 2021-22 (On-line)

1 Name of the work : Protection to Scoured Bank on river Brahmani Right near village Jaduchandrapur from RD 1725 Mtr. to 2025 Mtr. and Back Side of Old Matia Mangala Temple from RD 3151 Mtr. to 3446 Mtr.

2 Total No. of Package : 1 No. Package

3 Tender Cost : Rs. 1248.57 Lakh (Approximately)

4 Cost of Bid Document : Rs. 10,000.00 (On-line payment)

5 Bid Security : "Bid Security Declaration" as per W.D.O.M No. 18281/W/07556900052021 (Pt.) dated : 31.12.2021

6 Class of Contractor : "SPECIAL" & "SUPER" Class Contractor

7 Period of Completion : 18 (Eighteen) calendar months

8 Other details are as follows:

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding		Date of Opening of Technical Bid (Cover-I)
		From	To	
Chief Engineer & Basin Manager, Mahanadi, Brahmani & Baitarani System, Chandikhole	CE&BM, MBBS AJUL 02 OF 2021-22	13.01.2022 at 10.00 hrs.	03.02.2022 up to 17.00 hrs.	04.02.2022 at 11.30 hrs.

9. e-mail id : cembbschandikhole@gmail.com

Further detailed conditions can be seen from the Govt. website www.tendersorissa.gov.in

Sd/- Chief Engineer & Basin Manager
Mahanadi, Brahmani & Baitarani System
Chandikhole

OIPR-32415/11/0008/2122