



REMEMBERING MOM

Janhvi Kapoor has shared a note Sridevi wrote to her, on the occasion of the superstar's death anniversary

LEISURE P2



DECISION OVERRULED

A judge has banned Joe Biden's administration from enforcing a 100-day moratorium on deportations

INTERNATIONAL P10



WOODS INJURED

Golfer Tiger Woods suffers multiple injuries after car accident in Los Angeles suburbs Tuesday morning

SPORTS P12

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 324 | www.orissapost.com

BHUBANESWAR | THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25 | 2021

12 PAGES | ₹4.00

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I am under tremendous pressure. We can't afford to lose in a stadium with this name

SHORT TAKES

2 militants killed in J-K's Anantnag

Srinagar: Two unidentified militants were killed Wednesday in an encounter with security forces in Anantnag district in Jammu and Kashmir, police said. Security forces launched a cordon and search operation in Shalgul forests in Srigufwara area of the district following information about the presence of militants there, a police official said. He said the search operation turned into an encounter after militants opened fire on the security forces. The official added that the identity and group affiliation of the slain militants was being ascertained.

Naravane wary of China's plans

New Delhi: China has a habit of creeping forward, making very small incremental moves, to achieve its objectives, Indian Army Chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane said here Wednesday. He added that this strategy will not work with India while speaking at a webinar. "China slowly creeps forward and occupies land without aggression. However, that will not work with India," Naravane warned. "China is in the habit of creeping forward making very small incremental changes that go unnoticed and are never contested. So China is able to grab land quietly," he added.

Kerala govt decides to withdraw cases

Thiruvananthapuram: Under pressure from numerous quarters, the Pinarayi Vijayan government in Kerala decided Wednesday to withdraw cases against protesters on the Sabarimala temple issue and also against those involved in anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) agitations. The Kerala Cabinet decided to withdraw the cases as they did not have any serious criminal ramifications. Incidentally, Vijayan was forced to take this decision after the Congress-led opposition said if they return to power, they would withdraw all these cases. P9

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX		VARIATION
SENSEX	50781.69	▲ 1030.28
NIFTY	14982.00	▲ 274.20
DOLLAR	73.04	▼ ₹0.17
EURO	88.28	▼ ₹0.14
GOLD	₹46,430	▼ ₹372
SILVER	₹69,355	▲ ₹14

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
MAX	38.0°C	36.6°C
MIN	16.8°C	16.5°C
Humidity	85%	49%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Mainly clear sky	

INDIA TAKE CONTROL AS SPINNERS DOMINATE SHOW

AXAR'S SIXER SINKS ENGLAND



AGENCIES

Ahmedabad, Feb 24: Axar Patel's (6/38) devastating bowling bundled England out for 112 before Rohit Sharma's (57 batting, 82b, 9x4) languid elegance shone through that handed India the edge on the opening day of the day-night pink ball third Test here Wednesday.

The spin combination of left-arm spinner Axar and off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin (3/26) exploited the turning Motera pitch at the newly-inaugurated Narendra Modi stadium to the full and England's first innings folded in just 48.4 overs after the visitors opted to bat. In reply India were 99 for three at stumps. However, more importantly, England picked up the wickets of Cheteshwar Pujara (0) and Virat Kohli (27). The other batsman to be dismissed was Shubman Gill (11). Jack Leach (2/27) was the spinner to trouble India the most.

Before this, it was a nightmare that unfolded for England with the 47-run stand for the third wicket being their best. They lost their last six wickets in the second session. The last seven wickets yielded just 38 runs.

BRIEF SCORES

England 112 (Zak Crawley 53, Axar Patel 6/38, Ravichandran Ashwin 3/26); **India 99 for 3** (Rohit Sharma batting 57). Match to continue.

This was after Ishant Sharma, only the second Indian fast bowler after Kapil Dev to play in 100 Tests, fittingly took the first wicket in the third over to open the floodgates for the hosts. He was accorded a guard of honour by his teammates after being felicitated by President Ram Nath Kovind and Home Minister Amit Shah ahead of his landmark game.

In reply to a below par score, India negotiated the opening spells of the much-vaunted England seamers James Anderson and Stuart Broad without any damage in the tricky twilight period. Anderson and Broad did not get the desired movement with the pink ball and the dew factor did not have a big role either.

But Jofra Archer (1/24) gave England the breakthrough in the 15th over with Gill, trying a pull shot from the off stump. He top-edged to Zak Crawley to end the 33-run opening partnership. Pujara was out soon after and the ship was steadied by Rohit and Kohli who added 64 runs for the third wicket.

Kohli was dropped by Ollie Pope when he was on 24. Pope also put down a difficult chance offered by Rohit when the batsman was on 52.

After Ishant had taken the first wicket, it was an Axar-Ashwin show. The duo bamboozled the England batsmen to complete the submission. Crawley (53, 84b, 10x4) was the lone exception and hit a delectable half-century.

Crawley's brilliance was, however, neutralised by the Indian spinners as England were left reeling at 81 for four going into tea after an exciting opening session.

Two wickets fell in as many overs after the resumption of the second session, with Ashwin and Patel taking one each, to reduce England to 81 for six.

Ashwin sent Pope's (1) off-stump cartwheeling with a beauty of a delivery, bowling round the wicket, before Axar trapped Ben Stokes (6) leg before in the next over with a ball that spun in.

Jofra Archer (11) and the others did not last long as the Indian spinners mopped up the tail quite efficiently.

India will need to win at least one of the remaining two Tests to reach the World Test Championship (WTC) final. The hosts have taken control of the game on the first day itself and it now is for them to build on it. If India are to take a sizeable first innings lead, Rohit will have to play crucial role while the others bat around him.

JSW Cement

Start Strong. Grow Stronger.

1800 266 266 1 (tollfree)

+2 EXAMS TO START MAY 18

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash announced Wednesday the dates of upcoming Plus II examinations in Odisha. The examinations will start May 18 and end June 12 while the practicals will be conducted between April 29 and May 8, the minister informed. Dash also said that vocational courses for students will start May 28 this year.

However, there will be a change in the routine of papers for the examinations. Usually, the Plus II exams begin with the English paper. However, this year it will start with the physics paper, Dash informed. This decision was taken keeping in mind the preparations of the Science students for various entrance tests. The Arts and Commerce students will begin their exams with the English paper, May 19. The English exams for students

■ Approximately 3.50 lakh students to appear in Plus II exams

■ Instead of English, students will sit for the Physics paper on the first day of the exams

of the Science stream will be conducted May 31.

Approximately 3.50 lakh students are expected to appear in the exams this year.

Exams in Mathematics and Home Science papers will be held May 22. It will be followed by Accountancy (May 24), Political Science (May 26), Business Mathematics and Statistics (May 27), History (May 28) and Chemistry (May 29).

Economics, Personal Management exams for Arts and Business Management students will be conducted June 1. Dates of the other examinations are available on the Council of Higher Secondary Education's (CHSE) website.

PIHU MISSING CASE

Police detain mom on way to state capital

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Police prevented Wednesday the mother of the two-year-old missing Pihu (Subhalaxmi Nayak) from visiting the state capital. The child belonging to Madhusudanpur village under the Binjharpur police limits of Jajpur has been missing since the past six months. Sources said that her mom was detained by the police in Cuttack.

Pihu's mother Monalisa Nayak was on her way to the state capital in a private bus Wednesday morning. However, a team from the Chauliaganj police station intercepted the vehicle near OMP Chhak in Cuttack and whisked her away in a marked vehicle. Sources said that Monalisa was initially taken to the Chauliaganj police station and questioned for about an hour. Thereafter she was taken to an undisclosed location, sources stated.

It should be stated here that Monalisa has been constantly blaming the police for their inability to trace Pihu. She was planning to stage a protest in front of the Odisha Legislative Assembly where the



FILE PHOTO

Budget Session is currently on.

Monalisa managed to speak to the media for a brief while when she was detained. "I was going to Bhubaneswar to obtain a permission letter for sitting on dharna outside the Odisha Assembly," she said.

A series of suicide attempts have been made outside the Odisha Assembly in the run up to and during the budget session which is still underway. May be in a bid to avoid recurrence of such untoward incidents, the police stopped Monalisa from visiting the state capital.

Pihu had gone missing August 9, last year while playing in front of her house. Since then she has remained untraceable. Monalisa had also met the SP at his office in Panikoi, October 12 and sought her help in tracing Pihu.

BORDER DISPUTE WITH ANDHRA PRADESH

Opposition slams 'weak' govt

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Opposition BJP and Congress party members Wednesday blamed the state government for the ongoing border dispute issue with Andhra Pradesh and other states.

Participating on the debate on admissibility of an adjournment motion over border dispute, Leader of Opposition, Pradipta Kumar Naik pointed out that Odisha has border dispute with four states involving over 96 villages.

"We don't see any action by the Odisha government to resolve the issue. In Kotia panchayat, the dispute is over 21 villages and the Andhra Pradesh government has recently conducted polls in that locality," said Naik. He said that he along with a BJP delegation from the state visited the Kotia area. He alleged that most of the villages lacked basic facilities like transportation, roads, power supply and drinking water.

The Odisha government has neglected the people residing there. Due to lack of Odia medium schools, people don't understand the language. On the other hand, the Andhra Pradesh government is providing better facilities to them, Naik added.



BJP MLA Jay Narayan Mishra blamed the border disputes on the 'weak' leadership of the government. He said taking advantage of this situation neighbouring states are encroaching on Odia territory. "Either the district collector or the sub-collector should visit the disputed area each month to address grievances of the people. Odia teachers should be appointed in all schools located in border areas," Mishra said.

Participating in the motion, Congress MLA Tara Prasad Bahinipati said the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) is not concerned about the people in Odisha.

"Under BJD rule, land and water bodies are not safe. The govern-

ment should have deployed police force and prevented the Andhra government from conducting panchayat polls in Kotia. An all-party meeting should be called to discuss the issue," said Bahinipati.

In his reply, Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Sudam Marndi said Odisha has border disputes with four states in seven districts. The districts are Koraput, Balasore, Mayurbhanj, Ganjam, Gajapati, Keonjhar and Nuapada.

On the Kotia issue, Marndi said the state government has moved the Supreme Court by filing a contempt petition and sought four weeks time from the apex court to reply to the claims made by Andhra Pradesh government.

Panigrahi gets conditional bail

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Feb 24: The Orissa High Court granted Wednesday conditional bail to Gopalpur MLA Pradeep Panigrahi in the case registered against him by the Crime Branch in Odisha. Panigrahi was granted bail on furnishing of bail bonds of ₹5,00,000 each with two sureties and ₹24 lakh cash security.

However, there will be no relief for the legislator immediately. He will not be able to walk out of Jharpada jail in Bhubaneswar, as another case filed against him by the State Vigilance over corruption charges is pending. Odisha Crime Branch had arrested the MLA December 3, last year in connection with a case registered with the Cyber police station. He was arrested under Sections 419, 420, 467, 468, 469, 471, 120-B of the IPC and Section 66C/66D of IT Act.

Panigrahi was arrested after complaints surfaced that he collected money from people on behalf of Akash Pathak, son of suspended IPS officer Abhay Pathak, on the false promise of providing jobs in a company. This case relates to impersonation, cheating, forgery, criminal conspiracy and other cyber offences by Akash, the Crime Branch had earlier said.

FOR MODI, BJP FORGETS 'IRON MAN'

AGENCIES

Ahmedabad, Feb 24: The BJP went the Congress way Wednesday by renaming the biggest cricket stadium in the world after Prime Minister Narendra Modi here. And in that the party did not even spare its own icon Sardar Patel. The BJP has always criticised the naming of various monuments, airports and stadia after members of the Nehru-Gandhi family. However, it treaded the same path and renamed the Sardar Patel stadium as Narendra Modi stadium.

While inaugurating the stadium, President Ram Nath Kovind also justified the renaming. "This stadium



THE NEWLY-BUILT MOTERA STADIUM

was conceptualised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi when he was Chief Minister of Gujarat. He was president of the Gujarat Cricket Association at that time," Kovind said in his address after the inauguration.

President Kovind inaugurated the stadium in the presence of Home Minister Amit Shah and Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju and a host of other dignitaries.

1,32,000

Total number of spectators that the Motera stadium can accommodate

₹800 crore

The amount spent for building the stadium

63 acres

The total area required to build the stadium in Motera

"We have decided to name it after the country's Prime Minister. It was Modi ji's dream project," said Shah after the inauguration. However, naming the cricket stadium after Modi, did not go down well with a number of political parties. BJP's rivals and critics accused the party of "insulting" Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, a freedom icon and India's first Home Minister. "Stunning Motera Cricket Stadium Kudos. However Sardar Vallabhai Patel, great son of India, whose name was used extensively to imply he wasn't given his due, we now see his name erased from the stadium," tweeted Shiv Sena leader Priyanka Chaturvedi.

MOTERA CRICKET STADIUM RENAMED AFTER PRIME MINISTER

COINCIDENCE!

NEW DELHI: In a dig Wednesday at a cricket ground in Gujarat being renamed after Narendra Modi, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi again invoked his 'Hum do humare do' jibe. He claimed that the truth was out with the stadium having the prime minister's name and two ends being named after corporate houses. "Beautiful how the truth reveals itself. Narendra Modi stadium - Adani end - Reliance end. With Jay Shah presiding," Gandhi tweeted, with the hashtag "HumDoHumareDo". Incidentally it has been alleged that both Reliance Industries and Adani Group have the blessings of the Modi government.

FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshaSpeaks.com™
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES

Today you will have to give in to your spouse's demands for improving the environment at home. In your own interest it will be advisable, says Ganesha, to hasten the measures needed to be taken and stay focussed on them as you are the one who is guilty of neglect.

TAURUS

Be prepared for taking instant decisions and acting promptly on them. Today you are likely to meet several such situations Ganesha is pleased to see that you have the acumen and experience to deal with such contingencies.

GEMINI

You will be faced with a slew of demands from various people today, and you will find it difficult to meet all of them. However, you will be able to meet the requirements that need to be met to salvage the day. People will praise your intelligence and creativity, says Ganesha.

CANCER

Minor ailments like cough and cold may bother you, warns Ganesha. So avoid cold or sweet items. People admire your helpful nature. Take special care of your health, says Ganesha.

LEO

You are advised to be more attentive to your work today. You will try to do the best work possible by putting in your maximum efforts. However, the results might turn out to be lower than your expectations.

VIRGO

In all likelihood you will indulge in some writing or artistic work, which will bring about wonderful results. As you are passionate about these things, you may convert them into your hobbies, if you are not involved in them as a professional.

LIBRA

Ganesha says you will give more importance to your family and there may be concerns about the health of a family member. There may be news from abroad regarding the health of a close family member, which may disturb you today.

SCORPIO

A cloud of emotions surrounds you today and you would like to spend the entire day in introspection and self-analysis. You will try to raise your bar at professional level. Your far sightedness and capability to understand human psychology promises a leader in you, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

You are all set to groom your skills as a professional. Talking about work, determination and dedication are likely to rule you today. Putting your heart and soul, your work speaks volumes about your efforts. Appreciation, though slow in pace, is on its way to encourage you.

CAPRICORN

New projects and partnership will keep you busy today, says Ganesha. If a meeting is scheduled, you may be praised vociferously for your ability to make the right decision at the right time. You may also bag rewards for the commendable efforts you'd put in the past.

AQUARIUS

You know how to examine the nuts and bolts of every assignment or project, and it consumes your resources to a great extent. But, like a stitch in time saves nine, your meticulous planning minimises the chances of a loss or a failure, feels Ganesha.

PISCES

You could find yourself re-establishing contact with long lost friends abroad, possibly on matters of business. You will also likely find yourself attending social events. There is a possibility that those who are unmarried, may find their match in these social settings.



CHRISSY TEIGEN ASKS PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN TO UNFOLLOW HER

Model Chrisey Teigen requested the official Twitter account of the President Of United States Joe Biden to unfollow her. Tiegien is known for her frequently raunchy tweets. She used to be one of 13 people followed by @POTUS on Twitter, reports *dailymail.co.uk*.

AS A TEEN BARRYMORE WAS 'OUT OF CONTROL'

Hollywood star Drew Barrymore was admitted to a psychiatric ward as a teenager when she went out of control. Drew's mother had her admitted to a facility when she was 13 because her behaviour was getting out of control, a report said.



Priyanka shares memes on herself

Mumbai: The fan-made memes on Priyanka Chopra Jonas is flooding social media and the actress is having a good laugh on herself.

Priyanka has been posting a string of memes on Instagram stories all through Wednesday, featuring her in a quirky ball-shaped costume.

A user compared Priyanka's look as a new pokemon named Priyankemon, while another imagined her as a ball that Virat Kohli was

about to catch during cricketing action. Others fashioned blow horns, hot air balloons and parachutes out of Priyanka in her bloated costume.



Users turned her into a green firecracker and a puffer fish. One meme read: "When mom says 'boriya bistar samet aur nikal jaa yahan se' (when mom says, 'pack your bag and get out of here')." The actress thanked fans for making her day. She wrote on Instagram stories: "Too funny.. Thanks for making my day guys."

The costume is one of many that Priyanka wore during a video call with the internet sensation dog, Tika.

Amitabh hints at new beginnings

Mumbai: Legendary icon Amitabh Bachchan Wednesday spoke of new beginnings, dropping hint that a big announcement is in the offing.

Big B penned a rhyme with names of his upcoming films like *Chehre*, *Jhund* and *Brahmastra*, and wrote about following up these projects with something new.

He tweeted in Hindi: "*Chehre*

Jhund Brahmastra hai kuch aane wale pal, jald shuru honge kuch aur, futenge nariya!"

Big B also shared a photograph where he can be seen playing football. Incidentally, the upcoming *Jhund*, directed by Nagraj Manjule, is about how the protagonist, played by Big B, uses football to instill a sense of responsibility and purpose in the lives of a bunch of slum kids. The film is slated for June 18.

His next release is *Chehre*, co-starring Rhea Chakraborty and Emraan Hashmi. The film has been confirmed for theatrical release in April 30.

Big B also features in Ayan Mukerji's forthcoming venture *Brahmastra* alongside Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt, and the Ajay Devgn directorial film *MayDay*.



Janhvi shares Sri's handwritten note

Mumbai: Actress Janhvi Kapoor Wednesday shared a note her mother Sridevi wrote to her, on the occasion of the late superstar's third death anniversary.

The note, which Janhvi shared on Instagram, read: "Love you my labbu. You are the best baby in the world."

Janhvi captioned it: "Miss u" Sridevi died aged 54 February 24, 2018, by

drowning accidentally in a bathtub in a hotel in Dubai, where she went for a family wedding.

Starting her career at the age of four in the devotional film Thunaivan, Sridevi worked in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Hindi movies. For her great contribution to the country's art and cinema, she was honoured with the National Award and Padma Shri.

Rare works of top Indian artists at upcoming NY auction series

Early works of Tyeb Mehta, known as the pioneer of Indian modernism, are estimated to fetch nearly ₹6 crore

AGENCIES

Over 750 objects from 5,000 years of art spanning all epochs and categories of Asian art from Chinese archaic bronzes through Japanese and Korean art to modern and contemporary Indian painting, will go under the hammer in a series of auctions at the Asian Art Week by auction house Christie's in March in New York.

Of the seven auctions, at least three include Indian works of art, including a significant painting by the pioneer of Indian modernism Tyeb Mehta, titled *Confidant* and painted in 1962 (estimated to fetch between Rs 4.34 crore - Rs 5.79 crore).

According to the auction house, important Gandharan sculptures from a private Japanese collection, including a magnificent 3rd to 4th-century gray schist figure of Buddha Shakyamuni among the highlights.

In the 'South Asian Modern + Contemporary Art' auction on March 17, early works of Tyeb Mehta (*Confidant*, 1962) and Francis Newton Souza (*Family*, 1946) are included. Also included are exceptional examples by modern masters Maqbool Fida Husain, Sayed Haider Raza and Narayan Shridhar Bendre.

A diverse contemporary section includes impressive prints and a sculpture by Zarina, and significant works by the region's most renowned practitioners like Atul Dodiya, Anju Dodiya, Ranjani Shettar, Jitish Kallat and Subodh Gupta, to name a few.

Part two of the same auction includes a significant collection of works by Benodebehari Mukherjee (1904-1980) from the Mrinalini Mukherjee Foundation. Ethereal landscapes by this pioneer of modern Indian art are complemented by a group of figurative works and nature studies representing every phase of his career. Particularly important are collages, sketches and prints from the final stage of his life, executed after the artist's complete loss of eyesight.

Christie's also says that it continues to leverage digital tools to extend access to key bidding areas and provide global audiences with opportunities to view auctions.

The online sale includes excellent modern works on paper by artists MF Husain, Francis Newton Souza, Manjit Bawa, Prabhakar Barve and Jogen Chowdhury, alongside those by their mentors and pioneers of regional schools like Abdul Rahman Chughtai, Walter Langhammer, Nek Chand, Kamrul Hasan and Chittaprosad Bhattacharya.



A representative image

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

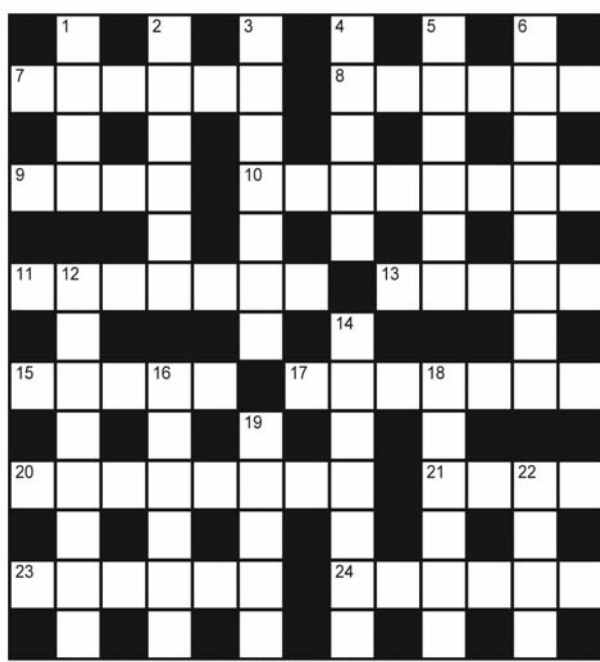


BREVITY



FUN post

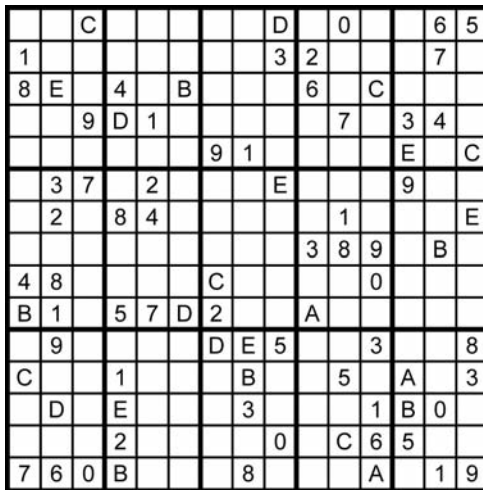
CROSSWORD



- Across
- 7 Aromatic herb
 - 8 Drinking glass
 - 9 Emanation
 - 10 Ditties
 - 11 Trade stoppage
 - 13 Up and about
 - 15 Uneasy feeling
 - 17 Stocky coarse-furred burrowing rodents
 - 20 Punter's choice, at times (4,4)
 - 21 Karate blow
 - 23 Wound
 - 24 Bounty
 - 5 Homes
 - 6 Abandoned ship
 - 12 Rainy seasons
 - 14 Snare
 - 16 Register (4,2)
 - 18 Brilliantly coloured parrots
 - 19 Blind followers
 - 22 Fairy tale villain
- Down
- 1 Lima's land
 - 2 Turkish capital
 - 3 Peacock's pride
 - 4 Like a gymnast

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column and box must contain the numbers 0 to 9 and the letters A to E.



SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

SUDOKU

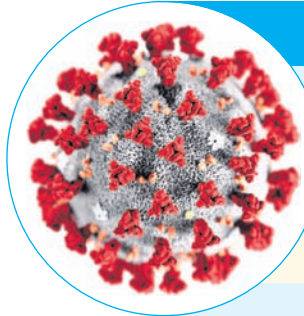


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



DRAMA FESTIVAL

Artistes from Vijayawada perform Telugu play *Madhuparkalu* at the 23rd Kalinga Natya Mahotsav at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	11,28,30,372	8,84,11,422	25,00,261
India	1,10,30,176	1,07,26,702	1,56,567
Odisha	3,36,835	3,34,243	1,914

‘Kalia’ money went to 1.04L bogus beneficiaries: Min

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: The state government has identified more than 1.04 lakh ineligible beneficiaries under the Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (Kalia) scheme, Agriculture and Farmers’ Empowerment Minister Arun Kumar Sahoo told the Assembly, Wednesday.

Replying to a written question of BJD’s Khandapada MLA, Soumya Ranjan Patnaik, the Agriculture minister said that the state government has so far identified 56,14,707 eligible and 1,04,076 ineligible beneficiaries under the ambitious scheme.

Responding to another question of the ruling party’s Bhandaripokhari MLA, Prafulla Samal, Sahoo said that as many as 36,50,873 small and marginal farmers and 17,04,733 landless agricultural labourers have so far availed



As many as 36,50,873 small and marginal farmers and 17,04,733 landless labourers have so far availed the benefit of the scheme

the benefit of the scheme. The financial assistance is being sent directly to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries, the Agriculture minister told the House.

Sahoo added that genuine beneficiaries, who are yet to be included under the scheme, can apply through the dedicated website with required documents.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has recently provided financial assistance of Rs 1,272 crore under the scheme to over 53 lakh farmers in the state.

Kalia scheme was launched in 2019 to support small, marginal and landless farmers in the state. After the launch of the Centre’s Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan), the state government reduced the financial assistance under the Kalia scheme to Rs 4,000 per annum from Rs 10,000.

However, actual cultivators (share-croppers) who are landless, if any, continue to get the assistance of Rs 10,000 annually under the Kalia scheme, as they are not considered under PM-Kisan, said the minister.

1,932 pvt schools in state: Dash

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash Wednesday informed the Assembly that 1,932 private English medium schools at elementary level are operational in the state.

Replying to a question by Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Narasingha Mishra, Dash said that a total of 5, 14,437 students are studying in these schools.

As per the government norms, the student-teacher ratio in primary schools is 30:1 and in upper primary schools 35:1. Accordingly, there are 25,163 trained teachers working in these schools.

As per available data, 10,703 students belonging to EWS category are studying in private English medium schools free of cost as per provision in Right To Education (RTE) Act.

The minister said that now the government has issued guidelines for admission of EWS category children in private schools through online.

Agri minister picks holes in Centre’s MSP formula

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Agriculture and Farmers’ Empowerment Minister Arun Kumar Sahoo Wednesday said the Centre should implement the recommendations of MS Swaminathan Committee while fixing the minimum support price (MSP) for several agricultural produce.

During the question hour in the Assembly, Sahoo said the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) at the Centre is fixing the MSP for various agricultural produce including paddy



ARUN SAHOO | AGRICULTURE MINISTER

in the country. The Commission fixes the MSP after consulting various states and considering the ex-

penditure on use of labour, seed, irrigation facility, fertilizer, pesticides, interest on the invested money etc, he said.

However, the CACP is fixing the MSP for paddy taking national average cost into consideration. As a result, states like Odisha are bearing losses, the minister said.

“Instead of fixing the MSP on the basis of national average, the Centre should fix it state wise so that farmers can be benefited,” he opined.

As per state government’s estimation, the production cost of paddy is estimated at Rs 2,344 per quintal.

With the 25 per cent addition (as profit), the price will be Rs 2,930 per quintal. Accordingly, the state Assembly has passed a resolution unanimously to put pressure on the Centre for fixing the MSP at Rs 2,930.

The state government had repeatedly raised the demand before the Centre writing letters five times. However, the Centre is yet to take any action, Sahoo further said.

Recently, a proposal was moved in the Cabinet and subsequently sent to the Centre for fixing the MSP accordingly, the minister added.

ROBUST NETWORK SYSTEM LAUNCHED FOR RD DEPT

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: As part of 5T initiative, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday launched the Multi-Protocol Label Switching Virtual Private Networking (RD-MPLS VPN) System for Rural Development (RD) department on virtual mode.

Speaking on the occasion, Naveen said that this networking system will provide internal connectivity to the offices of the department at local level, where internet connectivity is inadequate.

The RD department, which has the mandate for rural infrastructure development, is connecting its 247 offices through its own networking system called RD MPLS Network.

All the offices starting from Lok Seva Bhawan to sub-divisions will be connected under single network with uninterrupted internet facility, he said.

The Chief Minister expressed happiness over the department’s efforts to strengthen 5T initiative to bring in transformative changes by introducing technology intensive applications.

He said that the RD department

TECHNOLOGY BOOST

All offices starting from Lok Seva Bhawan to sub-divisions will be connected under single network with uninterrupted internet facility

The new system would avoid human interface and thus bring in more efficiency and transparency in the management of the entire work cycle

The system will connect to 247 offices with Lok Seva Bhawan

CM advised officials to prioritise time factor in 5T initiative and closely monitor and complete projects on time

is already implementing web-based applications for an array of services including tendering, maintenance management, works and accounts management, financial management, grievance redressal and several other services.

He said the new system would avoid human interface and thus bring in more efficiency and transparency in the management of the entire work cycle.

Patnaik hoped that the department will work more dedicatedly and efficiently with the application of these technologies to serve the people better.

He advised the department to ensure that the 5T principle of “time” is given priority and all the projects are closely monitored and

completed within time lines with a sense of urgency.

The department has developed infrastructure facilities with over 1 lakh km of rural roads, facilities on 60 lakh square metres of area, 1,400 completed bridges and 600 bridges under construction. The system will help closely monitor the progress and maintenance of these infrastructure projects.

Rural Development Minister Susanta Singh said that the department is committed to improving the rural infrastructure following the vision of the Chief Minister. The new networking system will further the mandate of 5T initiative, he added. Secretary to Chief Minister (5T) VK Pandian moderated the programme.

ASI to repair Mahalaxmi temple at Srimandir

Puri: The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) would conduct repairs to the Mahalaxmi temple located in the Srimandir complex from March this year. The temple roof was leaking and water seepage was reported during the rains. The ASI superintendent said the ongoing replastering work of Meghanada Wali would be completed soon. The reinstallation of CCTVs in the temple compounds would be done, according to Ajay Kumar Jena, the administrator of the temple. Extensive damages to CCTV and other installations like solar power panels installed in the temple were reported during the cyclonic storm Fani in 2019. Jena said ₹80 lakh has been paid to the state police housing corporation to reinstall the CCTV network.

Handicrafts expo kicks off in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Textiles, Handlooms & Handicrafts Minister Padmini Dian Wednesday inaugurated the state-level Handicrafts Exhibition-2021 organised by Directorate of Handicrafts and Cottage Industries at the Exhibition Ground here.

Around 110 stalls were exhibited with 50 kinds of handicrafts. The fair will conclude March 2. Interacting with Orissa POST, Dian said, “Our handicrafts are popular globally and after the pandemic this fair is going to help out our artisans who were in financial crisis. The state government has offered improved tools and equipment, bank assistance, infrastructure support and many more to sustain these artisans. We are hoping to get a business of Rs 1 crore at this



Handlooms and Handicrafts Minister Padmini Dian (2nd from L) along with departmental secretary Shubha Sarma visits stalls at the expo

platform.” From pottery to appliqué and from sabai grass work to many more amazing handicrafts were showcased while maintaining Covid-19 guidelines. The participating districts were Puri, Nayagarh,

Keonjhar, Jajpur, Balasore, Subarnapur, Baragarh, Sambalpur, Dhenkanal, Khurda, Mayurbhanj, Cuttack, Nabrangpur, Ganjam, Kandhamal, Kalahandi, Koraput, Raygada and Bhadrak.

SUSHANT KUMAR PANDA ‘GOVT POLICIES LED TO GROWTH OF THE START-UPS IN STATE’



Bharat Masala founded by Surendranath Panda started as a micro enterprise in 1999 with one small spice grinding unit. Later, the unit expanded and became known as Jay Bharat Spices Pvt Ltd. At present, the company employs more than 700 staff in its various factory locations and provides livelihood to 10,000 people directly and indirectly throughout the country. During an interaction with **Orissa POST**, the company’s MD **Sushant Kumar Panda** shared the journey of his spice firm.



Tell us about the journey of growth of your brand

At a time when big and established spice brands ruled the market, we canalized our efforts in the direction of providing spices of high quality and purity to our customers at comparatively cheaper prices. Commitment to quality, better customer service and customer satisfaction were the core objectives of the company that made our products popular among customers and helped the company in the rise of its turnover and profitability. Our spice products are processed at Ramdaspur, Baranga, Cuttack in technologically advanced “cryogenic spice grinding plants” in – 196° C which ensures unique taste, aroma, purity and zero-contamination. This plant is the only one in eastern India which is truly world class. Similarly, our pasta products (Macaroni, Fusilli and Penne) are made in state-of-the-art Italian pasta plants.

Your focus in this competitive market

The spice domain is fiercely competitive and every single day there is entry of a new brand in the market. Added to it is the fluctuation in raw material prices and availability during off-season i.e. non-harvesting season. Therefore, our focus is on calculated inventory management and timely raw material procurement. We have also expanded our distributors and marketing network in Odisha as well as in other states.

Your future plans

We are in the process of setting up four production lines to manufacture ready-to-eat snacks and cold storage project. The state government has accorded clearance to this project and has sanctioned 4.20 acres at Ramdaspur. The ultra modern plants with cutting edge technology will produce a variety of crispy snacks to flavor the taste buds of our customers.

The effect of Covid on your firm

The covid pandemic has badly impacted businesses, industry and economy particularly the MSME sector. Our company has also been severely affected in terms of raw material availability, production, sales, manpower availability, payment realizations and finances. However, we kept our factories running without lay-offs or pay-cuts and continued our relentless service to people.

and the hard work and dedication of directors.

Do you get enough support from the state govt?

Liberalized industrial policy, single window clearance, fast-track industrial approvals have been instrumental for the quantum growth of industries and start-ups in the state and we are deeply indebted to the state government and the Chief Minister without whose patronage our factory would not have seen the light of the day.

Suggestion to budding entrepreneurs

In the present day, job opportunities in the government sector as well as private sector have shrunk. Therefore, we would encourage youths of the country to start small/micro enterprises or start-ups for which our state government has already created conducive environment, infrastructure and resource persons. The “Make in Odisha” movement of our Chief Minister is a praise-worthy initiative which will inspire the youths of today.

Portal for admission of EWS students

Parents or guardians need to visit the RTE Paradarshi portal and select the schools for admission of their wards

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: School and Mass Education (S&ME) Minister Samir Ranjan Dash Wednesday formally launched online portal, RTE Paradarshi, for the admission of economically weaker sections (EWS) category of students in private schools.

The launching ceremony was organised at Odisha School Education Programme Authority (OSEPA) office here.

As per the rules, all the private schools who have obtained certificate of recognition (COR) from the state government will have to register themselves in the portal and ensure 25 per cent reservation of seats for the EWS students, the S&ME minister said.

“Parents or guardians of the eligible children will have to visit the portal and select from multiple schools for admission of their wards and complete other formalities,” added the minister.

Of the 25 per cent seats, 10 per cent will be reserved for children belonging to SC/ST and SEBC categories. Besides, 5 per cent seats will be reserved for the children not having any home or settled place or those belonging to disadvantaged sections. Similarly, 10 per cent seats will be reserved for the children whose parents belong to BPL category or listed in any poverty alleviation programme of the government, elaborated the minister.



S&ME Minister Samir Ranjan Dash along with officials launches the portal

Earlier, the S&ME department had announced dates for admission of EWS category students in 25 per cent seats in private schools for the academic year 2021-22 through the RTE Paradarshi portal.

The department released the calendar of activities regarding the functioning of online system for implementation of Section-12(1)(c) of the RTE Act, 2009.

As per the Act, private schools must reserve 25 per cent of their seats for EWS children from the neighbourhood and provide them

with the challenges and move forward. The success story of “Bharat Masala” has been scripted by hundreds of workers who have put in their blood and toil to this organization

the children whose parents belong to BPL category or listed in any poverty alleviation programme of the government

admission from Class I onwards. As per the calendar, the first round of student registration will be conducted from March 3 to 15. The online lottery and school allotment for the first round will be carried out March 30.

The first round of admission will be done from April 3 to 12. The second round student registration will be from April 15 to 20 and second round school admission will be from April 27 to 30.

QUOTA BREAK-UP

Of the 25% seats, 10% will be reserved for children belonging to SC/ST and SEBC categories

5% seats will be reserved for the children not having any home or settled place or those belonging to disadvantaged sections

10% seats will be reserved for the children whose parents belong to BPL category or listed in any poverty alleviation programme of the government

Online classes for UG 1st year students

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: As Covid-19 situation has not come under complete control, the Higher Education department informed the universities and colleges to conduct online classes for undergraduate (UG) First Year students from March 1, 2021.

In a letter to all the vice-chancellors of state universities and principals of all government and non-government degree colleges, Principal Secretary of Higher Education department Saswat Mishra said that physical classes have started for Final Year UG and PG students from January 11 and for PG First Year students and UG pre-final year students February 10. "As Covid-19 situation has not come under total control, it may not be possible to commence physical classes for UG First Year students who have taken admission recently," Mishra said.

If teaching for these students is not started immediately, they will heavily lose on the academic front. Therefore, all are advised to start online classes for UG First Year students from March 1, he added.

Earlier, after remaining shut for months, colleges and universities in the state welcomed the pre-final year UG and First Year PG students amid strict adherence to Covid-19 guidelines February 10.

Human trafficking shame on civilisation: Guv

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: A set of five user-friendly handbooks on human trafficking for duty officers in Odisha was released by Governor Ganeshi Lal.

Releasing the book at an event organised by anti-trafficking NGO Prajwala, the US Consulate General Hyderabad and Kalinga Fellowship, Lal said the focus should be on spreading spiritual awareness about human existence to stop this inglorious practice.

He said human trafficking is a dangerous phenomenon and shame on human civilization, which needs to be eradicated at any cost. These handbooks represent a unique effort to collate existing laws, policies and judgments that empower duty officers to effectively tackle cases of human trafficking keeping the victim at the centre of focus, the Governor opined.

Achyuta Samanta, MP and founder of KIIT and KISS, said human trafficking is an organised crime which requires a collective approach to combat it effectively.

Padmashree Sunita Krishnan and founder of Prajwala said the lack of multi-stakeholder convergence in the implementation of the existing legal statutes and government schemes are multiple factors that have contributed to the growth of organized crime.

The handbooks will provide the officers with an accessible, comprehensive tool, she said. David Moyer, Public Affairs Officer, US Consulate Hyderabad called for more concentrated action to check the crime.

CLASSIFIED
AFFIDAVIT

I, Nirupama Jena spouse of Army Service No. 15661952A, HAV(TTC), Govinda Chandra Pradhan, Army AD College, PIN - 928992, C/o. 99APO, Vill- Nuapada, P.O.- Inkardandha, Tahasil/Dist.- Angul, have changed my DOB from 17.05.1979 to 17.05.1975 vide affidavit Dt.23.02.2021 before the Notary Public, Berhampur, Ganjam.

Get ready for 3rd phase vax drive: DMs told

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: The Health department Wednesday started preparations for inoculation of elderly population in the third phase of Covid-19 vaccination drive.

In a letter to the Collectors and Commissioners of urban local bodies (ULBs), the state Health department has directed them to start making preparations for smooth roll out of the plan. It also provided them documents of operational strategy for the same.

"The Union government has communicated that the vaccination of next priority group of elderly population and persons with comorbidities would start in March 2021. In view of anticipated high number of beneficiaries to be vaccinated, all the public health facilities from tertiary level medical colleges, district headquarters hospitals, sub divisional hospitals, CVHCs, PHC and health and wellness centres should be prepared for offering Covid-19 vaccination services," the order from the Health department read.

It also suggested them several ways to keep their areas ready to facilitate vaccination. The department said that the session should be planned for five days a week and Sundays should not be used for the vaccination drive.

It also asked the district administrations to keep alternate vaccinators and verifiers for identification and training of Covid-19 vaccinators and asked them to refrain from using ANMs from regular health system for vaccination as they would provide uninterrupted routine health services.

The Collectors have been asked to ensure upto seven mobile vaccination teams in each block/urban unit for conducting sessions in a phased manner. They have also been asked



In a letter to the Collectors and Commissioners of ULBs, the Health department has directed them to start making preparations for smooth roll out of the plan

The department said that the session should be planned for five days a week and Sundays should not be used for the vaccination

It also asked the district administrations to keep alternate vaccinators and verifiers for identification and training of Covid-19 vaccinators

STATE LOGS 68 FRESH COVID-19 CASES

State's Covid-19 caseload Wednesday surged to 3,36,835 after 68 more people tested positive for the infection, a senior Health department official said.

The Covid-19 death toll remained at 1,914 as no fresh fatality due to the disease has been reported since February 19, the official said.

Of the 68 new cases, 40 were reported from different quarantine centres in 21 of the state's 30 districts,

while the remaining 28 were local contact cases.

It is for the third consecutive day that the state recorded over 60 new infections. It had reported 62 and 69 cases Tuesday and Monday respectively.

Khurda district, of which the state capital Bhubaneswar is a part, reported the highest of nine new cases followed by Sambalpur (7) and 6 cases each were reported

from Balasore, Bolangir and Sundergarh districts. All the 21 districts reported new cases in single digit, said the official.

Meanwhile, Dhenkanal and Kandhamal districts have turned coronavirus free as no active cases existed in their jurisdictions.

As many as 53 other Covid-19 patients have so far succumbed to comorbidities in the state, the official pointed out.

BMC opens nCoV testing centre at City airport

With Covid-19 cases increasing elsewhere, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), Wednesday, opened a testing centre at Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) here.

"It has been decided that a testing centre was made operational at the BPIA Wednesday. Two teams have been deployed there to oversee any symptomatic patient. Mandatory thermal screening for all passengers will be conducted upon arrival at the airport. Symptomatic passengers will be subject to tests immediately," said BMC Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary.

Moreover, the civic authority has decided to restart four testing camps that were earlier closed following a dip in positive cases.

"The situation in Odisha is not alarming yet as there has not been a spike in the number of positive cases since last one month. However, we are alert and keeping a close watch on the situation," said Chaudhary adding that all the testing centres and Covid-19 hospitals across the state are in operation.

Meanwhile, the BMC has also decided to implement Covid-19 appropriate behaviour in the city limits. The enforcement squad is also ordered to strictly ensure the norms. It can be mentioned here that the civic authority has collected about Rs 25,000 fines from different areas as Khao Galli, Market Building, ID market and Patia market in last two days.



File photo of a Covid testing centre in Bhubaneswar

Forestry students demand change in recruitment rule



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Students of College of Forestry at OUAT here Wednesday staged a protest urging the state government to set 4-year BSc degree in Forestry as minimum qualification for recruitment to key posts like forest range officer, assistant conservator of forests, assistant manager of Odisha Forest Development Corporation (OFDC)

and junior manager of OFDC.

The students of BSc and MSc Forestry, OUAT also wrote a letter to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik through the Registrar of the university seeking his intervention in implementing their demand.

Roshan Patel, a Fourth Year student of Forestry said that 1/3rd of Odisha's geographical area is covered under natural forests and a huge additional area under plan-

tations by farmers, industries, Forest department, OFDC and various other agencies.

He said that these vast resources and plantations are contributing immensely to sustenance of the entire human and animal population of the state. "For enhancing the productivity of such resources and ensuring sustained supply of goods and services to a steeply rising population, it is essential to induct more technical man power with forestry background instead of non-forestry graduates in recruitment of some key posts like forest range officer, ACF, assistant manager and junior manager of OFDC."

Sourav Shekhar Nanda, another agitating student, said, "We will continue our protest until the demand is fulfilled and will also send letters to all the ministers, MPs and MLAs in this regard."

Incentive for marrying differently-abled hiked

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: The state government has enhanced the amount of incentive for marrying a specially-abled person (divyang) from Rs 50,000 to Rs 2,50,000 per eligible couple, an official said.

"The incentive amount under the scheme has now been enhanced from Rs 50,000 to Rs 2,50,000 per eligible couple," Bhaskar Sharma, commissioner-cum-secretary of Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) department, wrote to all the district Collectors.

The department also issued a revised guideline for facilitating and encouraging such marriages.

Sharma in the letter to district collectors February 23 mentioned that during implementation of this scheme, some operational problems were brought to the notice of the department, for which the incentive for marrying persons with benchmark disabilities has been enhanced from Rs 50,000 to Rs 2.5 lakh.

A cash incentive award can be given to either of the spouses with benchmark disability if the other person marries a person with benchmark disability. The bridegroom and



THE BRIDEGROOM AND THE BRIDE MUST HAVE COMPLETED 21 AND 18 YEARS OF AGE, RESPECTIVELY AT THE TIME OF THE MARRIAGE

WHILE BOTH OF THE SPOUSES SHOULD BE RESIDENTS OF ODISHA, THEY CAN APPLY ONLINE AT SSPEED@GOV.IN

the bride must have completed 21 years and 18 years of age, respectively at the time of the marriage, the guideline said.

The guideline clearly mentioned that spouses should not have availed of the incentive award under this scheme earlier and such wedding should be dowry free.

While both of the spouses should be residents of Odisha, they can apply online at sspeed@gov.in, the official said.

Padmashri Batakrushna feted at aquaculture field day

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: A field day on aquaculture was organised at Aquaculture Field School (AFS) at Sarakana of Baliana in Khurda district Wednesday wherein an interaction was conducted between farmers and scientists.

A team of scientists from ICAR-CIFA participated in the interface, sources said.

The scientists attended to the queries related to fish production instantly in local language and collected feedback from the fish farmers on how they managed aquaculture during Covid-19 pandemic.

Around 80 fish farmers participated in the event. The fish farmers were also made aware about the latest breakthrough in freshwater aquaculture and related enterprises.

On the occasion, fish farmer Padmashri Batakrushna Sahu was felicitated for acting as a role model for others in practicing scientific fish farming.

Sahu, a farmer from Sarkana village of Khurda's Baliana block, started pisciculture in 1986. He trained many farmers in spawn production through traditional



An artist paints a mural on cyber security near PMG Square in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

OP PHOTO



Padmashri Batakrushna Sahu being felicitated for acting as a role model for others in practicing scientific fish farming

OP PHOTO

breeding methods. He also imparted training to students of several colleges in state. Sahu was conferred with Padmashri in 2020, sources said.

Sahu was felicitated by BP Mohanty, Assistant Director General (Inland Fisheries) of ICAR at the event. Mohanty congratulated Sahu for his long association with ICAR-CIFA.

Sahu also briefly described about his 40 years of association with fisheries and CIFA.

"In the initial years, scientists from KVK and CIFA visited my farm and guided me in breeding and other activities. Whatever little I achieved is only because of CIFA," Sahu said.

ICAR-CIFA director SK Swain, during his address, urged the fish farmers to follow advanced practices for sustainable fisheries. He also encouraged the fish farmers to draw advantage from the AFS. The ICAR-CIFA had piloted the first AFS at Sarakana in 2009.

City hottest place in state for 2nd straight day

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: The day temperature continued to witness a steady rise in Odisha with capital city Bhubaneswar emerging as the hottest place in the state for the second consecutive day with a maximum temperature of 38 degrees Celsius Wednesday.

The Capital city recorded a day temperature of 37.3 degrees Celsius, Tuesday Apart from Bhubaneswar, nine places in the state recorded day temperature above 35 degrees. The mercury soared to 36.8 in Baripada, 36.6 in Cuttack, 36.5 in Nayagarh, 36.4 in Bolangir and 35.7 in Angul.

The temperature in Bhubaneswar remained 4 degree above normal and it will rise further from March. It is expected to touch 40 degree, the India Meteorological Department said.

The overall temperature across Odisha is likely to rise by 2-3 degrees in the coming 3-4 days, said HR Biswas, chief scientist of the IMD regional centre Bhubaneswar.

"The maximum temperature near 40 degree during February is not that unusual. If we analyse the temperature of this period for the last 10 years, it remained 37 to 38 degrees. In 2019, temperature was 39.4 degree February 23. In 2016, 40.9 degree temperature was recorded February 20," he said.

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

Acharya Vihar-DayalAgency-9437135727, **A.P. Tours and Travel**, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, **Aurobindo Market**-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, **Airport Road**-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, **Anish Infotech**- Tankapani Road-9861341488, **Bapuji Nagar**- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, **Baramunda Rental Colony**-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, **Baramunda Housing Board Colony**-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, **Cuttack Road**-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, **District Center (Chandrasekharpur)**-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, **Forest Park**-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, **IRC Village**-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, **Janpath-Krupajali Book Store**-7978646669, **Jaydev Vihar**-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, **Jagannath Mobile Point**- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, **Kanan Vihar**-Auro Electronics-8260697560, **Khandagiri**- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, **KIIT Road**-Jugad Jn-9338545031, **Laxmi Sagar**-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, **Lewis Road**-Spider Web-7809186415, **Metro Satellite City**-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, **Madhusudan Nagar**-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, **Maa Santoshi travels**- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, **Nayapalli**- The Cake Room- 7873660137, **Near Mayfair Lagoon**-Cookiemart-9439491273, **Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels**-9668284823, **Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate**- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, **Net Square**- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, **Priyadarshini Market**-Astro Point-9938134346, **R.N. General Store**-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, **Sahid Nagar**- Maa Communication- 9437353424, **Sahini General Store**- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, **Satya Nagar**-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, **Samantapur**- Download Point-7504557743, **Sailashree Vihar**-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, **Saheed Nagar**-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, **Siripur**-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, **Sushree fashion**- Jagmara-9938714347, **Shree Vision**- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, **Unit-3**-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, **Unit-7**- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, **VSS Nagar**-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, **XIMB Square**-LD Books-9658061373.

Dangling danger in jumbo corridor

POST NEWS NETWORK

Boinda, Feb 24: Seven elephants died after coming in contact with loosely hanging electric wires at Kamalang in Dhenkanal October 27, 2018. Since then, there has been a question mark on safety of these animals due to dangling wires passing through in the elephant corridors of Angul district.

Thereafter, the state government had issued an order to keep live wires at safe height so that animals can't touch it. Despite this directive, there are electricity wires still hanging precariously at different places in Handapa range under Athamallik forest division.

For one year, high tension wires are loosely hanging in elephant corridor from Kurumatap via Gundurinali to Similia. The energy department has not taken any step to set thing right and ensure safe movement of elephants in the area.

Locals, wildlife activists and ecologists have expressed concern over the issue. Utter negligence for the safety of elephants has caused resentment among people of Gundurinali.

The villagers on their own had pushed up the dangling wires by bamboo poles.

"Elephants are routinely moving in the area. A 3KV LT line of an irrigation project has been drawn in the area. The wires are dangling dangerously. We had apprised the



officials of the TPCODL office, but no step is being taken to uplift the wires to a safe height," villagers lamented.

Though they have raised the wire with support of bamboo, they hang loosely after a gust of wind.

Tikan Sahu, Arun Sahu, Dhaneswar Sahu of Gundurinali village said that for a long time, the elephant corridor is fraught with dan-

ger from hanging wires.s Mishap can happen anytime if things are not set tight in time, they noted.

Sumant Behera, sarpanch of Kurumatap, said the electricity office was issued a letter to keep the wires at safe height, but no step has been taken till date.

Besides, 11 KV wires are hanging dangerously at Rainali, Kantapada, Maimura and Tapadola areas. In

Peril that lurks

Following electrocution of 7 jumbos in Dhenkanal in 2018, the state government had issued an order to keep live wires at safe height so that animals can't touch it. Despite this directive, there are electricity wires still hanging precariously at different places in Handapa range under Athamallik forest division

For one year, high tension wires are loosely hanging in the elephant corridor from Kurumatap via Gundurinali to Similia. The energy department has not taken any step to set things right to ensure safety of elephants in the area

2012, Enzen agency had taken up the maintenance of the transmission lines. In 2020, Tata company had taken up its maintenance, but it has not set the things right, the villagers alleged.

They demanded that the elephant corridor be made safe as soon as possible, Athamallik DFO Ananda S said the TPCODL has been intimidated through a letter to raise the height of all LT and 11KV lines with high utility poles in the elephant corridor.

SDO of TPCODL, Sipak Das said that step will be taken soon to keep the dangling transmission wires at safe height in the elephant corridor.

FM VC says education campuses can drive entrepreneurship

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar/Balasore, Feb 24: Vice Chancellor, Fakir Mohan University, Prof Dinabandhu Sahoo, said that application of science and technology combined with traditional knowledge will boost growth and development of the state. It will also preserve and propagate our culture.

"The desire, expectations and aspirations of students and youth need to be addressed. Everybody needs a job and government cannot provide jobs to everybody. Therefore, we in the university and colleges need to take pro-active steps to create job opportunities for all. Entrepreneurship development is the need of the hour, Sahoo said, while speaking at the "Brewing Entrepreneurship" in collaboration with KIIT-TBI, Bhubaneswar and Start Up Odisha.

"University and educational institutions are best places to nurture new ideas and they can help in developing entrepreneurship," Sahoo noted.

Dr Mrutyunjay Suar, CEO of KIIT-TBI, Bhubaneswar, said job creation and thinking beyond the traditional way is the need of the hour. Prasanta Biswal of Start-Up Odisha, Dr.Mrutyunjay Sahu, co-founder of a start-up company and Dr Padmalita Routray from the management department and in-charge placement cell also spoke on the occasion.



Artistes perform at a workshop on classical status of the 'Sanchar art' form involving both dance and music in Sambalpur

Ganjam to have 4,782 AWC buildings

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, Feb 24: The Integrated Child Development Scheme will get a further boost in Ganjam amid allegations that infrastructure shortcoming has been plaguing the child welfare scheme. The district administration has decided to construct buildings of 4782 Anganwadi centres.

This was revealed at a review meeting chaired by Collector Vijay

Amruta Kulange. The BDOs were directed to ensure smooth and right execution of projects and schemes in the district.

The DRDA in Ganjam has laid stress on desiltation of drains in 92 panchayats. The PD has said desiltation work of the drains should be completed by March 15.

From next week, 22 teams will start stock-taking of various projects in villages. The teams will make surprise visits to villages

and see the progress of the works.

It was decided that from the next fiscal, fertilizers will not be purchased for plantation. The compost to be prepared from garbage in villages will be used for plantation. The administration has emphasized on creating more workdays under MGNREGS for rural populace by setting a target to create 29288962 workdays this year.

Till Monday, 21057649 workdays have been created in the district.

Villagers attack forest personnel in Mayurbhanj

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Feb 24: Forest personnel of Udala range were attacked by over 20 villagers at Jamudiha area in Mayurbhanj district Tuesday night.

According to reports, the officials were returning to the Udala range office with two guns and Sambar meat seized from a poacher in Jamudiha village after conducting a raid.

Around 70 poachers had killed two Sambars in Similipal National Park earlier in the day. Forest staff raided the village and seized of two guns and over 30kg of Sambar meat, when they were hurled stones.

73-yr-old woman defies age, provides livelihood to 30



POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Feb 24: Age is just a number for this 73-year-old woman from Jhadiapada in this town who surprised everyone by carving a niche for herself in a male's domain of food catering business, a report said.

The woman identified as Santoshini Mishra, wife of late Gopal Krushna Mishra, has not only earned a name for herself but has been able to provide livelihood to over 30 persons in the town.

She is a much sought after person to cook food and re-

lated services.

At a time when men and women of her age lead the life of a recluse, she has defied age to become self-reliant – an example for others to emulate. She dishes out tasty food to people and in return earns money for herself and others in her team.

She is known as Santoshini Nani in the town and can cook any type of food depending on the choice of the organiser which has helped her earn the love and affection of people in the area.

She has been doing this work for 50 years and can pre-

pare food for over 5000 people at any given point of time. Her team comprises 30 men and women who help her in preparing food, cutting vegetables, grinding spices and catering food to the invited guests on the basis of order.

However, her entry into the business was not at all smooth. She was initially confined to the four walls of her home looking after her two sons.

However, things took a turn after her husband Gopal Krushna Mishra was afflicted with heart problem while the earnings from a betel shop-their only source of livelihood– fell short to fully meet the family expenses.

She decided to supplement her husband's income and entered into food catering business. Soon food prepared by her became a talk of the town for its distinct taste and she started getting more orders from people.

Her husband died eight years back but by then she has established herself as a person to depend on for good food. Her two sons are settled but she does not like to ask for money from them and vows to continue working till her last breath.

Cotton transported to Bangladesh by train from Junagarh

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, Feb 24: Sambalpur railway division has been able to dispatch cotton to Bangladesh from Junagarh Road railway station, a report said. The matter came to the fore after cotton rakes were loaded for Bangladesh from Junagarh Road station, Wednesday. The first rake of cotton in this season has been loaded from Junagarh Road Station to Benapol (BEN) in Bangladesh with 42 BCN wagons weighing around 2471 tonnes. This was stated here by divisional railway manager Pradeep Kumar.

Railway sources said transportation of cotton products by train is economically beneficial to consignors. Besides trains are safer and faster for transporting such farm products to the neighboring country. Kumar appreciated the efforts of officers and staff in capturing this long lead traffic to Bangladesh.



After setting up of a business development unit by the railways, regular interactions are being made with freight customers to communicate the policies, incentives, and measures adopted by railways, Kumar added.

Woman, son trampled to death by tusker

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Feb 24: Amid rising cases of elephant attacks in the state, a woman and her minor son were trampled to death by a tusker at Gadakuna village under Bhojpur forest range of Mohoda panchayat Tuesday night.

The woman's husband, who also came under attack of the rampaging jumbo, has been admitted to Burla hospital with serious injuries, reports stated.

The reports added, a family of three, Prasanta Munda (40) his wife Rina Munda (35) and son Sahil Munda (10) lived in a mud hut near a brick kiln where he worked near Akharadanapada village.

At 3.30 am, a tusker from the nearby forest barged into the hut, breaking the walls. Awakened by the noise, Prasant rushed out of the hut and tried to distract the elephant. But the tusker turned towards him and attacked him with its trunk. Prashant suffered serious injuries in the attack.

While Prasant ran for his life, the tusker allegedly slammed the mother-son duo on the ground, causing their death instantly.

Prasant managed to survive the attack with injuries. He was later

Green Mahanadi Mission flounders

HARDLY 1,600 OUT OF 16,000 SAPLINGS HAVE SURVIVED



POST NEWS NETWORK

Attabira, Feb 24: Nearly 16,000 saplings were planted under the Sabuja Mahandi Mission on 10 hectares at Udepur under Bheden block of Bargarh district in 2018-19. In two years, 1600 trees have hardly survived in the land for lack of post-plantation maintenance that points to failure of the green mission, a report said.

The mission's project was executed under the MGNREGS while the Bargarh forest division was looking after the plantation area. Most of the saplings have died.

Besides, plantation was done along Udepur-MCL mine road in 2020-21 at a cost of ₹66,000. Most of the samplings have died due to lack of maintenance. Locals alleged that cores of rupees were spent for the plantation, but given

the poor survival of saplings, the mission has failed in Bheden block.

Notably, the state government had launched 'Green Mahanadi Mission' June 6, 2018. It was aimed at creating a green belt with a width of 1 km on both sides of the Mahanadi beginning from its source and till its tail end in Paradip.

The bid was to rejuvenate the Mahanadi, Tel and Ib rivers and increase their recharge capacity by massive plantation.

The mission entails plantation over 75,760 hectare of government land besides 47,470 hectare of private land. Two crore saplings, including fruit-bearing trees, were to be planted on both sides of the river during 2018-19 fiscal.

When asked about the failure of the mission, Bargarh ranger Mahendra Patra said the matter will be investigated soon.

2 RPF men hurt in attack by coal mafia

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, Feb 24: Two railway protection force (RPF) personnel were critically injured after they were attacked by coal mafia at Mato area in Bhadrak Wednesday.

The attack took place when an 8-member RPF squad carried out a raid at Palashpur. They had seized coal near a brick kiln. At this time, staff of the brick kiln and locals made an organized attack on the RPF men.

They also pelted bricks at the van. The injured were identified as Mukesh Kumar and Purna Chandra Panda. The injured were admitted to the district headquarters hospital. Meanwhile, RPF assistant commissioner AG Farooq and other police officials started an investigation into the incident.

OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, ASKA (GANJAM)	
(Email: askanac@gmail.com, Ph.No.-06822-273068)	
L.No.576/2021/NAC,	Dated 24.02.2021
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST	
The Executive Officer, N.A.C. Aska on behalf of N.A.C., Aska invites 'Expression of Interest' from Controllor & Auditor General Empanelled Audit firms for auditing of annual accounts for the year 2013-14 to 2019-20 of NAC, Aska, Dist.- Ganjam. The expression of interest should indicate the audit fees, taxes, T.A./D.A. and accommodation charges, if any, separately with detail biodata of the firm and it should reach in the above mentioned address in sealed envelopes through registered/express post on or before 4th March, 2021 by 12 Noon. The minimum fee of audit and criterion for selection is given hereunder. The EO will be opened in the same day at 3.30 P.M. The interested party on their authorized representatives may attend the same.	
The authority reserves all the right to accept/reject any or all the "EOI" without assigning any reason thereof.	
TECHNICAL CRITERIA FOR SELECTION	
CRITERIA	MARKS
Nos. of CA in the firm	Upto 10 Nos.-10 marks 11 to 20 Nos.-20 marks
Nos. of years of establishment of firm	Upto 15 years-10 marks 15-25 years-15 marks 25-35 years- 20 marks
Turnover per annum	Above 35 years-25 marks Upto 20 lakh-10 marks 21 to 40 lakh-15 marks Above 40 lakh-20 marks
Audit experience (Maximum 30 marks)	Govt. Audit each organization-5 marks PSU. Audit each organization-5 marks 5 marks
Head office in Odisha	
SCOPE OF WORKS: Preparation of financial statements (i.e. income & expenditure account, balance sheet, all schedules to income and expenditure and balance sheet, receipt payment account and trial balance etc. and Bank reconciliation statement audited from 2013-14 to 2019-20 (Year wise). Terms & conditions: 1. Audit fees per year - Rs.30,000/- (Rupees thirty thousand). 2. Necessary documents such as GSTIN/PAN/Registration of firm / CAG empanelled certificate or documents should be attached. 3. All documents should be attached as indicate in the criteria for selection.	
Sd./- Executive Officer, N.A.C., Aska	

BERHAMPUR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, GANJAM	
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)	
L. No. 2923/X-E-3-7/2019	Date: 23.02.21
Invitation for Bids	
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH E-PROCUREMENT	
Bid Identification No. BMC (BAM) 235/2020-21	
No. C-527/-	
1	The Municipal Commissioner, Berhampur, invites percentage rate bids in ONLINE MODE only, as per annexure "A"
2	Nature of work : Building work
3	No. of work : 1 No.
4	Bid Cost. : The bidders shall remit online the cost of bid document for amount through the process as mentioned in the DTCN as per Annexure "A"
5	E.M.D. : The bidder shall remit online the Earnest Money Deposit/Bid Security at the rate of 1% of the estimated cost put to tender as mentioned under DTCN. Bidders desirous to hire machineries or equipments from outside the State or owned but deployed outside the State are required to remit online 2% of the amount put to tender as Bid Security. Exemption from EMD is permissible as per local provisions of Govt. of Odisha as per Annexure "A"
6	Class of Contractor : As per the Annexure "A"
7	Availability of Bid Documents in the website : From 15.05 hrs. of Dt.24.02.21 to 17.00 hrs. of 04.03.21
9	Date & Time of Opening of Technical Bids : 11.30 hrs. onwards on Dt. 06.03.21
10	Date & Time of opening of financial bids : Shall be intimated to the responsive Technically qualified bidder after evolution of Technical bids.
10	Mode of submission of tender : Tender should submitted Online in www.tendersorissa.gov.in
11	The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website : https://tendersodisha.gov.in. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website only.
Sd./- Commissioner, Berhampur Municipal Corporation	
OIPR-13035/11/0038/2021	
Berhampur, Odisha	

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RWS&S DIVISION, BHANJANAGAR-761126				
Phone No.06821-241026(O)/241079(R), Fax No.: 06821-241026/240056				
e-mail: eerwss_bnj@nic.in, eerwssbnj2009@gmail.com				
No.O-1126 Govt. of Orissa "e" Procurement Notice				
Bid Identification No. E.E._RWS&S_67/2020-21				
1. The Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Bhanjanagar, Ganjam on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in Single Cover system according to the norm of 'e' procurement system in online mode for providing 100% functional TAP connection for different PWS Schemes in Ganjam District from the eligible contractors as per DTCN.				
2. Nature of work : Supplying all labour T&P and materials for construction, testing, Commissioning of RCC ESR construction of valve chamber, 100% house connection laying of distribution of pipeline etc. for different PWS schemes in the Ganjam District.				
3. No. of tender : 09 Nos.				
4. Tender paper cost : Rs.4000/- to 6000/-				
5. Tender cost : 6.19 lakhs to 43.66 lakhs				
6. Class of contractor : D, C & B				
7. Date and time of availability of bid document in the portal : Dt.26.02.2021 at 11.00 A.M. to 04.02.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.				
8. Date of opening of bid : Dt.06.03.2021 at 11.00 A.M.				
9. Period of completion : 90 (Ninety) days to 150 (One hundred fifty) days.				
10. The bidders have to participate in online bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website https://tendersorissa.gov.in				
Sd./- Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Bhanjanagar				
OIPR-25021/11/0041/2021				

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA				
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, KALAHANDI RWS&S DIVISION, BHAWANIPATNA				
e-mail: eerwsskld@gmail.com, eerwss_kld@nic.in, Phone No.: 06670-230784				
INVITATION OF BID THROUGH e-TENDERING				
Bid Identification No.-40/EE/RWSS/2020-21/Bpt Dated.22.02.2021				
01. Name of the work: As per ANNEXURE-A				
No.O-1139				
Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender online for bidding on office hour only		Date of opening (Technical bid)
		From	To	
1	2	3	4	5
Executive Engineer, Kalahandi RWS&S Division, Bhawanipatna	40/EE/RWSS/2020-21/ Bpt Dated-22.02.2021	01.03.2021 10.00 A.M.	08.03.2021 05.30 P.M.	09.03.2021 10.00 A.M. onwards
Cost of tender paper & payment of EMD to be made online payment system. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal http://tenderodisha.gov.in. The original documents should be scanned and uploaded.				
OIPR-25005/11/0019/2021				
Sd./- Executive Engineer, Kalahandi RWS&S Division, Bhawanipatna				

“The existence of poverty is the proof of an unjust and ill-organised society, and our public charities are but the first tardy awakening in the conscience of a robber.”
SRI AUROBINDO



NO HAPPY COWS

India has the world's largest number of cattle. They are not being worshipped in temples, they are not ambling through the countryside eating as they move. They are being hit by farmers in whose fields they come to eat, they are being thrown acid on by urban fruit sellers, they are being poisoned and taken away by people who strip their skin for leather; they are being kept tied in filthy small stalls for milk, they are being put onto overcrowded trucks and taken for illegal slaughter; they are being herded into jails called gaushalas, where they stand in their own faeces, till they fall down dead of starvation. They eat plastic, they drink from filthy gutters, they are hit by passing cars. There are no happy cows or buffaloes in India.

Since 2014, when the BJP government came in with a vow towards stopping the export of meat, India has been the world's largest exporter of cow meat (beef), even surpassing Brazil. Both countries now account for almost 40 per cent of the world's cow meat production. And we are the largest milk producer in the world across the globe, outranking the EU, the US, and China.

Most cows and buffaloes do not breed naturally anymore. As a person who hires hundreds of vets, I know that they may know nothing at all about diagnosis and medicine, but all of them know about artificial insemination. This is the primary focus of all veterinary colleges.

To keep the milk and meat going, India has a large national breeding programme. Semen is extracted from bulls and sent across the country to be used by practically all those in the business of milk, to begin with, and meat later. Eighty per cent of all dairy cows are impregnated artificially. In natural breeding, one ejaculation produces one or two calves at most. A study was done on the industry of sperm farming, and frozen semen technology between 2014 and 2016 (Journal of Human Animal Studies, Yamini Narayanan, 2018). Apart from studying the documentation and doing hundreds of interviews with people involved in semen production, industry policy, and animal protection, the authors also studied the government-owned semen stations in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, seeing firsthand the process of semen extraction, quality assessment, storage, and transportation to dairies. There, the semen would be used to artificially inseminate cows. A single semen extraction can produce hundreds of calves, since it is divided into amounts just sufficient to ensure conception. So many Indians have stopped drinking milk because they are outraged about the abuse of dairy cows and male calves. But most are unaware of the extreme cruelties involved in sperm extraction.

The study found that bulls are taken at 18 months and tethered by their noses in small groups in barns with little space, or kept singly in isolation in small stalls for years. They become frustrated and agitated, and the ropes in their noses are used to control them, causing wounds and often maggot infestations. Each bull goes to the semen extraction centre twice a day, four days a week. A dummy cow is propped up and the bull has to mount her and ejaculate into an artificial, temperature-controlled vagina. Bulls that won't, or can't perform undergo the painful process of electro-ejaculation. This procedure uses a 12-24-volt jolt of electricity applied through a probe in the rectum. It is called "human-assisted extraction of semen" and was started in the late 1960s. (Imagine a man being made to ejaculate by having an electric rod shoved into his anus - twice a day for years). A single ejaculation provides 500 to 600 sperm 'doses,' each containing 20 million sperm. This happens to each bull for 5-10 years (depending on his semen output and quality) and then he is sent to slaughter. The semen is deep frozen in liquid nitrogen and then sent round India. This ghastly invasive reproductive technology was the reason for the "success" of the White Revolution, or Operation Flood, in the 1970s, making India a leading milk producer - but exchanging quality for quantity. Milk has never been of that same purity and quality ever again.

Indian animal husbandry departments have more than 60 frozen-semen farms and about 77,000 artificial insemination centres. There are no rules, no animal welfare protection for these bulls. The psychological and physical traumas of bulls are treated as irrelevant to semen extraction. What is the effect of electro-ejaculation on the bull's body? The rod or probe in the rectum has ring electrodes, that is, electrodes which surround the barrel of the probe. These electrodes stimulate nerves other than those required for electro-ejaculation. In particular, the nerves of the muscles in the hind limb are affected, resulting in strong contractions of the muscles of the legs, thighs and back. These contractions are severe enough with, some types of probes, to cause haemorrhage and bruising of affected muscles and stiffness for a few days.

In studies done on the physiological distress changes in the plasma, cortisol level of animals were checked as an indicator of the degree of distress being experienced by animals. Plasma cortisol levels rose sharply in bulls 15 minutes after electro-ejaculation and remained elevated for 2-4 hours, showing extreme distress (Source: Electro-ejaculation: a welfare issue? Surveillance Vol.22). The Netherlands and Denmark have banned this practice due to its cruelty.

None of these farms - like most everything in the animal husbandry sector - run properly. Bulls should be examined for optimum physical health. They should be fed extremely well, exercised and kept happy in order to ensure optimal semen quality. This does not happen in a single centre. Most of the bulls are sick, underfed, never exercised and very rarely checked for disease. So what has happened? India has a much lower rate of success than other countries, using artificial insemination, in spite of having the world's largest artificial bovine reproductive breeding centres. The bulls are kept badly and the semen being sent round is often diseased, causing abortions in the cows. This has a direct bearing on human health, and the spread of tuberculosis has been directly linked to the brucellosis in milk cattle which comes through the semen. There are many more diseases that come through this extracted semen, and I will write about them in the next column.

Put yourself in the place of the bull. As long as you drink milk, this is what will happen to this young virile animal. Do you want to be responsible for this terrible cruelty?

To join the animal welfare movement contact gandhim@nic.in, www.peopleforanimalsindia.org

WISDOM CORNER

- “If you know the enemy and know yourself you need not fear the results of a hundred battles.”** **SUN TZU**
- “Our own self-realisation is the greatest service we can render the world.”** **RAMANA MAHARSHI**
- “One is never afraid of the unknown; one is afraid of the known coming to an end.”** **JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI**

WORDSWORTH

■ Maritorious

This means being fond of one's husband, the partner to uxorious, of a man who is fond of his wife to the point of dotting excess. The only example of the word on record is in Bussy D'Ambois, a tragedy by George Chapman of 1607, in which he coins the word to make a bad pun: "Dames maritorious ne're were meritorious". John Keats' poem, On First Looking into Chapman's Homer, refers to the same man, who made a famous translation of the Greek work. Dryden thought little of Chapman's play, finding in it "a dwarfish thought dressed up in gigantic words, repetition in abundance, looseness of expression, and gross hyperboles; the sense of one line expanded prodigiously into ten; and, to sum up all, incorrect English, and a hideous mingle of false poetry and true nonsense". The word is from Latin maritus, husband.

FOCUS PANDEMIC

VACCINE ASSUMPTIONS



Swee Kheng Khor

JUST AS THE US AND THE SOVIET UNION ENGAGED IN SPACE AND ARMS RACES DURING THE COLD WAR, AMERICA AND CHINA COULD ENTER A VACCINES RACE

Vaccinating the world against Covid-19 is one of mankind's most critical non-war-time efforts ever. Many countries have developed ambitious, politically sensitive, and carefully sequenced vaccination plans, but executing them successfully will be a challenge. To succeed, policymakers should build three realistic assumptions into their vaccination planning for 2021 and beyond.

First, delays are inevitable. More than two months after the world's first Covid vaccine injection on December 8, 2020, hopes of a rapid rollout are fading in many countries. Production holdups have triggered European Union threats of legal action and export restrictions. And there are several reasons to expect further delays.

For starters, the manufacturing constraints are daunting. Firms must scale up or repurpose factories to produce billions of doses annually, and vaccine supply chains are still being built even as they are being stretched. For example, the Pfizer/BioNTech and CureVac vaccines use lipid nanoparticles manufactured by the same supplier.

Moreover, capacity expansion through technology transfer - say from AstraZeneca to Thailand's Siam Biosciences - involves legal and technical hurdles. If new coronavirus variants reduce current vaccines' effectiveness, vertically integrating the research-to-manufacturing process may enable a faster and more agile response.

Other legal and regulatory obstacles also could cause delays. Many countries have signed bilateral advance purchase agreements (APAs) with vaccine manufacturers. But APAs may be difficult to enforce, and international law must evolve rapidly for dispute resolution to be effective.

The UK's regulator was the first to approve the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine because it benefited from rolling data submissions from clinical trials - an opportunity that should be accorded to other regulators, regardless of market size or wealth. A new approval



Policymakers need to add in three assumptions into their immunisation plans: delays are inevitable, inequality will increase, and vaccine procurement could be a proxy for geopolitics

process may be needed for vaccine variations in response to new coronavirus variants, perhaps modeled after the abbreviated approval pathway for seasonal variations in influenza vaccines.

Furthermore, a population-wide vaccination programme poses formidable logistical challenges and will require an all-of-society effort. Governments may need to provide around-the-clock or drive-through vaccination facilities, with proper cold-chain support, while a robust adverse-event reporting system must accompany adequate indemnity protections. Wastage, sabotage, and weaponised vaccine hesitancy may occur. But countries can mitigate these potential problems by planning properly and learning from one another.

The second assumption is that Covid vaccines will aggravate global inequality in 2021. All OECD countries except Turkey have procured more doses than their population needs; Canada, for example, has enough for nearly six times its population. This "vaccine apartheid," as UNAIDS Executive Director Winnie Byanyima calls it, means that rich countries will most likely achieve widespread vaccination coverage and economic recovery sooner, leaving poor countries far behind.

Covid vaccination programmes could also worsen inequalities within countries, just as the pandemic itself has already disproportionately affected ethnic minorities, women, immigrants, and the poor. The WHO recommends vaccinating frontline health workers and the elderly first, but some advocate giving priority to ethnic minorities or the poor.

Meanwhile, wealthy elites could secure early vaccinations through the private sector, the black market, or "vaccine tourism." Big businesses may purchase vaccines for their employees or lobby for them to be given priority as "essential workers"; Amazon and Uber are already doing so. And "vaccination passports," if implemented, could be discriminatory.

Mitigating this inequality risk will require a multi-layered approach. The United Nations General Assembly and Security Council must govern global public goods more actively, while US President Joe Biden's administration needs to provide thoughtful and inclusive global leadership. Governments must sustain the financial and political support that the Covid-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility needs to make vaccines available everywhere in the world. And citizens, civil-society groups, and media must remain vigilant to prevent unequal vaccine distribution. Lastly, policymakers should assume that procurement decisions could become a proxy for the US-China rivalry. Geopolitics

is already influencing public procurement, notably in some Western countries' decision to bar the Chinese telecommunications firm Huawei from their 5G networks. When it comes to vaccines, geopolitics could encroach on decision-making criteria like data, quality, availability, value, and cost.

Vaccines could also feature in the US-China competition over global standards, which already encompasses artificial intelligence, smart cities, and lithium batteries. Covid vaccines may require new standards for research methods, primary endpoints in trials, clinical outcomes, and production. Just as the US and the Soviet Union engaged in space and arms races during the Cold War, America and China could enter a vaccines race with the aim of gaining scientific prestige, standard-setting authority, soft power, and financial rewards.

Competition is good if it gives countries a choice of cheap, cutting-edge vaccines. But it could turn ugly if superpowers weaponise vaccine supplies, prices, or patents, or use them as bargaining chips in "vaccine diplomacy."

If that happens - if choosing vaccines means choosing sides - small and medium-size powers can adopt a hedging strategy or "vaccine portfolio" approach, as Australia, Malaysia, and Singapore are doing already. But this could still leave countries caught in a bind if they are forced to choose whether to weight their portfolios toward the US or China. To escape the bind, such countries could use international mechanisms like COVAX, or band together for pooled procurement using models like the Pan American Health Organisation's Revolving Fund or UNICEF's initiatives to strengthen vaccine procurement.

Covid vaccines offer a welcome glimmer of hope after a bleak first year of the pandemic. But translating this hope into effective action will require policymakers to be resourceful in mitigating delays, inequality, and geopolitical risk.

The writer is a Malaysian physician.
©PROJECT SYNDICATE

SPECTRUM NATION

Cong split & emergence of 'foreign hand'



Saeed Naqvi

DEMONISATION OF 'URBAN NAXALS' IS A CRUDE VARIANT ON THE THEME PURSUED BY THE CONGRESS SINCE ITS EARLIEST DAYS IN POWER

I had no business to forget Badshah Khan's 130th birthday this February, having been his press secretary when he came on a year's "healing mission" as guest of both political camps led by Indira Gandhi and Jayaprakash Narayan.

The international system is trying to compose itself today. It was dividing itself sharply during the Pashtun leader's visit. Just as India became salient to regional play then, it will by force of circumstances, become part of the new regional piousette.

The Indian Independence Act, 18 July 1947, was part of the world order being shaped as part of the Cold War which began in 1945. Pakistan was incorporated into the Baghdad Pact, CENTO, and such like military alliance as the bulwark against the Soviet Union. On India was conferred the elaborate task to secure a liberal democratic polity which would keep nefarious ideas like Communism and Marxism at bay. Demonisation of 'Urban Naxals' is a crude variant on the theme pursued by the Congress since its earliest days in power. Remember how Indira as Congress President (Nehru was the PM) had President's rule imposed to dismiss the world's first communist government elected by the ballot box in Kerala. The EMS

Nambudiripad government had been voted in 1957. Indira sought US Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker's help to discredit this government by helping organise street protests. This would give the centre an excuse to dismiss the government and impose President's rule. This operation was revealed by Bunker in a Podcast at Columbia University. This brings me to Badshah Khan's visit in 1969 when Indira, as PM, played a hand ideologically quite the opposite of what she did in Kerala a decade earlier. She split the Congress, weaning away the party bosses close to capitalists and proceeded to nationalise banks. The correspondent of the Times London, Peter Hazellhurst, summed up Indira succinctly: she is a little Left of self interest.

As a matter of fact she had, at this stage, moved more than a 'little' to the Left. Not only did she have in her cabinet a once card carrying member of the Communist Party, Mohan Kumaramanglam, but he became an influence on her. This leftward lurch reached a climax when Soviet advisers helped New Delhi's 1971 Bangladesh operations. The high Soviet profile in these operations was the principal reason for Nixon-Kissinger to order the 6th fleet in the Bay of Bengal, as a check. The fierce East-West competi-

tion induced a parallel internal Right-Left competition. As her comfort level with the Left increased, the powerful Congress satraps, expelled by Indira clasped the hands of compulsive anti-communists, anti-Congress, Hindu nationalist, all on the capitalist page, under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan. It came to be known as the Bihar movement for 'total revolution.'

Although the Bihar movement projected itself as anti-corruption, it was primarily aimed at seeking regime change at the Centre and the state to give advantage to anti-Left forces in Bihar where the communists and a Left inclined Congress-I (I stood for Indira) had retained their power. It was the thrust of the JP movement combined with the Allahabad High Court judgement unseating Indira. She imposed Emergency in 1975.

Conspiracy theorists advanced a rightwing plot. Indira had walked straight into post-Emergency elections, which colleagues like PN Dhar advised her to undertake. These, held in 1977, brought to power the Janata Party, consisting of every political formation under JP's banner, including the tallest leaders of what is today the BJP - Atal Behari Vajpayee and LK Advani. The Right had got the opening it was eyeing.

During her brief political wilderness, Indira spoke at length of the 'foreign hand' in Indian politics. This was in continuation of the 'foreign hand' chant sustained by her handpicked Congress President, Shankar Dayal Sharma. Sharma's 'foreign hand' inspired Swatantra Party leader, Piloo Mody, to come to Lok Sabha wearing a placard - "I am a CIA agent."

An Agatha Christie like twist to this tale was my conversation with Chester Bowles in the US. Afflicted by galloping Parkinson's disease, Bowles used to whisper into a pipe which his secretary decoded. When he heard of allegations in the Lok Sabha about the CIA having placed a device on the Nanda Devi to spy on the Chinese, Bowles sat up from his reclining position. "But Indira had asked me to."

Indian independence coincided with the Cold war. Continuous interplay between external and internal was built into the script. And now that world order, unrecognisably smudged during the Trump years, is reshaping itself with Biden's inauguration, what lies in store for Indian politics which was fractured in two during Badshah Khan's 1969 visit?

The writer is a senior commentator on political and diplomatic issues. **IANS**

Long arm of law

Sir, The arrest of the main culprit in the sensational Anjana Mishra gangrape case after 22 years of the crime and 19 years of the court verdict shows that law has long arms and crime haunts the culprit life-long. Helping a culprit to avoid arrest is also a crime. The police should take strict actions against the family members of the culprit. The law of the land is supreme.

Gopal Mittal,
BHUBANESWAR

Protect our planet

Sir, Our beautiful world has been going through numerous problems. In the recent 'one-on-one' on CNN, Bill Gates was seriously talking about the climate crisis across the globe and immediate steps needed to stop the problem escalating into a catastrophic form. I had recently bumped into an informative yet heartrending article about climate migration in the New York Times Magazine online. That serious article was shedding light on climate migration caused by climate crisis. Countries from Central America and Latin America like Mexico and Guatemala have been facing issues like crop failure and climate refugees. Many reports have confirmed that such countries as Guatemala have been literally in the midst of climate change-related issues despite being home to vast green areas and natural vistas. One can say the long-lasting political impasse and ineffective regimes have only added to the problems. Thinking of crop failure due to the climate crisis, it is high time to stop overlooking such serious issues and take steps to mitigate. The food we have been taking and the economic boom each country has been pining for are all interrelated. Should we really want to protect our planet, then it is crucial to save countries like Guatemala and their inhabitants from climate crises. The international community should work towards this one goal taking all the steps possible.

P. Senthil Saravana Durai, MUMBAI

Bail for Disha

Sir, A Delhi Court granting bail to Disha Ravi, arrested in connection with the toolkit case, must cheer all those who stood by the 22-year-old activist during her nine-day ordeal. The court termed the evidence against the activist "scanty and sketchy" and rightly pointed out that arresting people just because they disagree with government policies is not right. The court also found nothing on record to suggest that Disha subscribed to any secessionist idea, contrary to the cops' sedition charge.

NJ Ravi Chander,
BANGALORE

OrissaPOST
B-15, Rasulguri Industrial Estate,
Bhubaneswar-751010

UP Assembly passes Bill on religious conversion amid din

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Feb 24: Amid protests by the Opposition, the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly Wednesday passed by voice vote a Bill aimed at curbing religious conversions by fraudulent or any other undue means, including through marriage.

The Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Bill, 2021 seeks to replace the ordinance promulgated in November last year that provides for imprisonment up to 10 years and a maximum fine of Rs 50,000 for violators.

The Bill was passed in the House even as Aradhana Misra, the Congress Legislative Party leader and Lalji Verma, the leader of BSP in the Assembly, protested.

Under the Bill, a marriage will be declared 'null and void' if the conversion is solely for that purpose, and those wishing to change their religion after marriage need to apply to the district magistrate.

The Bill mainly envisages that no person shall convert, either directly or indirectly from one religion to another by use or practice of mis-



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath speaks during the Budget Session of UP Assembly, in Lucknow, Wednesday.

representation, force, undue influence, coercion, allurement or by any fraudulent means or by marriage nor shall any person abet, convince or conspire such conversion.

The onus to prove that the conversion has not been done forcibly will lie on the person accused of the act and the convert, it said.

An aggrieved person, his/her

parents, brother, sister, or any other person who is related to him/her by blood, marriage or adoption may lodge an FIR about such conversion, according to the Bill.

BJP leaders had said the legislation intends to counter alleged attempts to convert Hindu women to Islam in the guise of marriage, which right-wing Hindu activists refer to as 'love jihad'.

Separate farm Budget in Raj from 2022

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, Feb 24: Focusing on agriculture, health and education without imposing any new taxes, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot Wednesday presented the first paperless Budget 2021-22 in the state Assembly.

Gehlot, who also holds the finance portfolio, announced free distribution of sanitary napkins for girls, and said that the agriculture Budget will be announced separately from next year.

The other significant announcement made by the Chief Minister was of bringing in a Universal Health Coverage worth Rs 3,500 crore for all residents of Rajasthan under which each family will get an insurance benefit of Rs 5 lakh by paying an annual premium of Rs 850.

The distribution of free sanitary napkins shall cost Rs 200 crore to the state exchequer, he said, adding that free of cost uniforms for students till Class 8 and free books for students from 6 to 8 will be distributed in the state which will cost Rs 470 crore to state exchequer.

He also announced the implementation of the Rajasthan Model of Public Health under which the Right to health Bill will be implemented. He further made declaration for bringing in the film tourism promotion policy which will be implemented to promote Rajasthan as a film destination. Rs 500 crore was announced to boost tourism in the Budget.

The deferred salaries of state government employees shall also be reimbursed, he added and said that mobile vet service will be started on 108 model.

The Chief Minister also announced new girls' colleges in name of MLAs who passed away recently in four districts namely, Rajsamand, Sahada, Sujargarh and Vallabh Nagar. Also, he announced a 10 per cent reduction in the DLC rates. The stamp duty on the property up to Rs 50 lakh has also been reduced from 6 to 4 per cent.

In his Budget speech, Gehlot said the COVID-19 pandemic had a huge impact on school education and the entire academic year turned out to be a "zero year". "Back

to School programme will be launched to bridge the gap of learning intervals of the students under which study material will be provided to the students and the students will be made comfortable towards classes," the chief minister said. Free school uniforms for government school students of the state up to class 8 and free books for class 6 to 8 students would be provided under the "Back to School programme" for which the state government will spend Rs 470 crore, he said. Gehlot said smart TVs would be installed at all the government secondary and senior secondary schools and Kasturba Gandhi Residential

schools of the



Raje attends key BJP meet after long hiatus

The former CM had been maintaining a distance with state BJP chief Satish Poonia and his team and had not visited the party office for the past six months

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, Feb 24: National vice-president Vasundhara Raje Tuesday attended the BJP core group meeting for the first time ever since Satish Poonia was appointed as state party president.

The meeting continued for around three hours and discussed many crucial strategies to corner the ruling government in view of bypolls scheduled on four seats in forthcoming month. It also discussed the letter which was sent by around 20 MLAs (from Raje's camp) to the national president and state president alleging that they have not been given a chance to speak in the Assembly.



In fact, Raje had been maintaining a distance with Poonia and his team and had not visited the party office for the past six months.

Recently Raje followers organised a special gathering in Kota urging the high command to anoint her as the CM face.

Also, a new team was announced on social media called Vasundhara Raje team for districts. This group has been pitching her as the CM face for Assembly polls 2023.

It needs to be mentioned that

Raje and Poonia were together in Delhi February 21 during the organisational meeting which was attended by PM Narendra Modi amid other senior party leaders.

Sources said that party leaders had asked the leaders to work in proper coordination.

Soon after the meeting, speculation was rife over whether Raje will attend the core group meeting.

However, Raje gave her consent to party workers soon after the

meeting in Delhi that she shall be coming to attend the core group meeting.

On her way to Rajasthan from Delhi Tuesday, she was accorded a warm welcome at various places due to which she came late to the office.

Party officials said that efforts are being made to resolve the differences within the party.

Meanwhile, Rajasthan in-charge Arun Singh announced in the meeting that national president JP Nadda shall be coming to Jaipur March 2 where he shall address the party working committee.

Addressing the press conference after the meeting, he said that massive protests shall be staged at division and tehsil level from March 6 to 14 across the state against the rising electricity tariffs, poor law and order arrangements etc in the state among other issues. He praised Poonia and said that the state BJP team is performing well under him. Besides Arun Singh and Raje, the other senior members who attended the meeting included national general secretary Alka Singh, Leader of Opposition Gulabchand Kataria, state organisation general secretary Chandrashekhar, Deputy Leader of Opposition Rajendra Rathore, Union minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Kailash Chaudhary, among others.

Exodus continues from UP Congress

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Feb 24: The exodus from the Congress continues unabated in Uttar Pradesh.

The state Congress general secretary Brahma Swaroop Sagar has now resigned from the party, alleging groupism and indiscipline.

Sagar, who was given the important organisational assignment, left the party on Tuesday, the day when Priyanka Gandhi Vadra was addressing a 'Kisan Panchayat' in Mathura.

Sagar was in the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) earlier and had joined the Congress ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. Though he lost the elections, Sagar was given the important assignment in the party.

Sources said that the party's increasing reliance on turncoats is responsible for the exodus.

"This trickle will soon turn to stream as the next Assembly elections approach. Leaders now see no future in the Congress because there is no dialogue with the leadership and the functioning has become completely centralised. Priyanka Gandhi has eyes and ears only for her coterie," said a disgruntled party leader. Some of the leaders who have parted ways with the Congress in recent times, are all those who were welcomed from other parties. Qaisar Jahan, Ramakant Yadav, Savitribai Phule, R.K. Chaudhary, Jai Narain Tiwari and Virendra Singh are those who have left Congress to join the Samajwadi Party.

Women to have ownership of houses in rural UP

Under the state govt scheme, registration certifying ownership of a residential accommodation in rural areas will be done in the name of a woman in the family



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Feb 24: In a landmark decision, women in rural areas in Uttar Pradesh will now get the ownership of their houses.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has ordered that in the second phase of 'Mission Shakti', the registration of Gharuani (document certifying ownership of a residential accommodation in rural areas), will be done in the name of a woman in the family.

The government spokesman said that this step will empower women to a great extent and give them a sense of security and financial stability.

The chief minister has also or-

dered setting up of a Mahila Thana in the rural areas for speedy redressal of complaints lodged by women. He also said that women self-help groups should be given the charge of maintaining community toilets in rural areas at the earliest.

Programmes under the second phase of Mission Shakti will now begin from February 26 in view of the International Women's Day March 8.

The chief minister has directed district magistrates to prepare a road map for the next year to continue the programme even after April 2021.

Manoj Kumar Rai, director, women welfare department and

nodal officer, Mission Shakti, said, "Women and girls still suffer discrimination and gender inequality. Effective communication helps overcome these situations."

He said that a special social and behavioural change communication module has been prepared and public awareness programmes will be conducted through this in March.

The discussion will also focus on the women cyber-crime cell, cyber bullying and cyber stalking, setting up a women's safety committee under community policing, facility for first aid at women help desks, release of old inmates and those who are physically disabled from jail.

Year after pandemic outbreak, Taj City limps back to normalcy

Hospitality industry continues to struggle as foreign visitors are not coming due to the suspension of international flights

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Agra, Feb 24: Almost a year after the Covid-19 pandemic hit the country, the Taj City is slowly limping back to normalcy, though the hospitality industry continues to struggle as foreign visitors are not coming due to the suspension of international flights.

Though commercial activities in the city have picked up some momentum, educational institutions report poor attendance. Parents of

school kids are reluctant to send their wards to schools, due to Covid fear.

District authorities have once again appealed to people to continue following Covid guidelines and not to lower the guards.

District magistrate P.N. Singh counselled people to wear masks and observe social distancing to stall the surge of the second wave of the pandemic. In the past fortnight, the daily numbers have seen a drastic drop. In the past 24 hours only

one case was reported in the district. The number of active cases now is only 14. Since February 2020 there have been 174 deaths. The total number of cases so far has been 10,526. The recovery rate now is 98.20 per cent. The number of samples tested so far is 5,36,367.

The state health department is presently focused on large-scale surveillance of families.

The pandemic began almost a year ago, when a local family of shoe exporters returning after celebrations in Italy, became victims of Covid-19. The lockdown brought life in the city to a halt and crippled the tourism industry which now is limping back to normalcy.



of the day quote

There is no concept of mixopathy, as claimed by a section of allopathic doctors. The idea behind allowing ayurvedic practitioners to perform medical surgeries and other functions is aimed at supporting the allopathic practice

SHRIPAD NAIK | UNION AYUSH MINISTER

But, there is a big difference in Puducherry and Maharashtra. The Chief Minister here is Uddhav Thackeray and the Shiv Sena is standing firmly with the two constituents of the (ruling) Maha Vikas Aghadi

SANJAY RAUT | MP, SHIV SENA

We were all in it together. We had our plan chalked out which we had discussed on what should be the way forward. Whatever has panned out has happened as a result of that. What we have achieved so far is very good

MANOJ MUKUND NARAVANE | CHIEF OF THE ARMY STAFF OF THE INDIAN ARMY

SHORT TAKES

Five held over quarry blast

Bangalore: Five people have been arrested in connection with the blast at a quarry in Chikkaballapura in which six people were killed, officials said. Two police officials have also been suspended in connection with the case, they said. Among those arrested are Raghavendra Reddy, one of the two partners of the quarry. He was arrested from Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh. Others arrested are said to be employees linked to the quarry. They are- Venkatesh Reddy, Praveen, Mohammed Riyaz Ansari (driver) and Madhusudan Reddy.

Rahul 'recruiting' agent of the BJP

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala's ruling CPI(M) Wednesday accused Rahul Gandhi of talking like "a recruitment agent of the BJP", a day after the Congress leader lashed out at the LDF government over various issues including gold smuggling through diplomatic channel. In a statement, the CPI (M) state secretariat claimed Gandhi did not even make a weak criticism of the BJP in his speech at the Congress rally Tuesday.

J&K records 74 new Covid cases

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir recorded 74 fresh COVID-19 cases Wednesday, taking the infection tally to 1,26,093, even as no fresh death due to the virus was reported in the past 24 hours, officials said. Out of the fresh cases, 20 were from the Jammu division and 54 from the Kashmir division of the Union Territory, they said. The officials said Srinagar district recorded the highest of 19 cases followed by 14 in Baramulla district and 11 in Udhampur district.

Sailor planned his kidnap-murder

Palghar: In a stunning revelation, the Palghar Police Wednesday contended that the Indian Navy sailor, who was said to have been kidnapped and burnt alive, may have "concocted" the story as he was in heavy debt. A fortnight after the death of Leading Seaman Surajkumar M. Dubey, 27, the Palghar Police have punched holes in his claims.



The new freebie scheme is only to hoodwink the people, particularly the women, as they clearly rejected the YSRC rule, as evident in the recent gram panchayat elections

NADENDRA MANOHAR | JANA SENA POLITICAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

CBSE REDUCES CLASS X SOCIAL SCIENCE SYLLABUS

The Central Board of Secondary Education has reduced the syllabus for the social sciences exam by providing relief to the students of Class 10 all over the country



NGT's 6-member panel to ready Polavaram-plan

The panel would prepare an action plan on dumping of muck near the Polavaram dam in Andhra Pradesh



The Andhra state pollution control board will also pay a sum of Rs 1 lakh to petitioner Andhra Pradesh native, Pentapati Pulla Rao to meet the litigation cost

The Committee will give its report within three months

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 24: The National Green Tribunal Wednesday formed a six-member committee to prepare an action plan on dumping of muck near the Polavaram dam in Andhra Pradesh.

A bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel noted that there is adverse impact of coffer dams on upstream areas and huge dumping of mucks has taken place without proper environmental management plan.

"We find that the issue needs to be addressed by preparing an appropriate action plan by a Committee with relevant Experts and headed by a former Judge," the bench said.

The NGT constituted a six member committee to be headed by Justice B. Seshasayana Reddy former Judge of the High Court of Andhra Pradesh and with nominees of the Union Environment Ministry, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Central Soil and Water Conservation Research Institute, Dehradun, IIT, Hyderabad and IIT-Delhi.

"The Committee will visit the site at least once and conduct public hearing, if necessary Except for such visit, it will be free to conduct proceedings online. The Committee will be at liberty to take the assistance of any other Experts/Organization," the bench

also comprising Justice S K Singh and expert member Nagin Nanda said.

The tribunal directed that the committee will compile information about the extent of generation and disposal of muck at the designated dumping sites and safety measures being adopted for the stability of the dumping sites.

It will also assess the damage to the environment and consider the question whether compensation for acquisition of land remains to be paid, the NGT said.

"The Committee may commence its functioning as far as possible within two weeks. The nodal agency will be the CPCB and the State PCB for coordination and compliance." "The State PCB and the District Magistrate concerned will provide logistic support. The State PCB will bear the requisite expenses for functioning of the Committee, in the first instance," it said. Honorarium of the Chairman of the Committee and non-official members may be determined by the Chairman, State PCB in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, the NGT said.

The Andhra state pollution control board will also pay a sum of Rs one lakh to petitioner Andhra Pradesh native, Pentapati Pulla Rao to meet the litigation cost.

The Committee may give its report as far as possible within three months, it said.

'No' offline exams for up to Class 8 in Delhi govt schools

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 24: The Delhi government issued guidelines to its schools Wednesday for the assessment of the students up to Class 8, ruling out offline examinations and instead, asking them to grade the students on the basis of projects and assignments.

The guidelines of the Directorate of Education (DoE) have been issued to the government-run and aided schools for assessment for the 2020-21 academic session, during which schools were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and all teach-

ing and learning activities were conducted online.

"Since no classroom teaching and learning has taken place at the primary and middle level, the formal mode of pen-and-paper assessment will be replaced by a subjectwise assessment of projects and assignments for Classes 3 to 8," said Rita Sharma, Additional Director of Education, Delhi.

For Classes 3 to 5, 30 marks will be for assessment based on worksheets, 30 for the assignments given in winter breaks and 40 marks for the assignments and projects provided from March 1 to 15.

dition of anonymity," It seems Majhi was inspired from several crime thrillers in Bollywood where the villains or criminals used Indian currency notes as a signal as a receipt for the safe passage of their smuggled items."

He said that the truck drivers associated with Majhi carried a Rs 20 note which used to be a signal for the others. "The Rs 20 note recovered from the drivers was a kind of signal. One of the angles point it towards the safe passage of the coal from Dhanbad to West Bengal and another angle can be a message to other mafias that they should not operate in their areas," he said.

Nitish hints at cracks in AIMIM

The Bihar CM was replying to the Guv's address in the Assembly and said that Akhtarul Iman demanded that Purnia be the state's capital, which Nitish rejected outright

AGENCIES

Patna, Feb 24: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar hinted that Hyderabad Member of Parliament (MP) Asaduddin Owaisi's All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimin (AIMIM) is on the verge of breaking up while speaking in the Bihar Assembly. Nitish launched a sharp attack on Akhtarul Iman, AIMIM Bihar state President and MLA, and said Owaisi would now be left all alone. At present, the AIMIM has five MLAs in the Bihar Assembly.

The Bihar Chief Minister was replying to the Governor's address in the Assembly Tuesday and said that Akhtarul Iman demanded that Purnia be the state's capital, which Nitish rejected outright.

Nitish said that people could reach Patna from anywhere in the state in just five to six hours,



I can't build any other capital. If anyone else becomes the Chief Minister after me, they can do whatever they wish. I cannot do such a thing

NITISH KUMAR | CM, BIHAR

adding that when Bihar and Jharkhand were part of a single state, then Ranchi was the state capital. The Chief Minister said, "I cannot build any other capital. If anyone else becomes the Chief

Vax for senior citizens, persons with co-morbidities from Mar 1

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 24: Everyone above 60 years of age and those over 45 years with comorbidities will be able to get COVID-19 vaccine from March 1 for free at government facilities and for a charge at many private hospitals, the government said Wednesday.

"It all depends on ministers when they want to go for vaccinations. They will have to choose the place where they want to take the jab," says Prakash Javadekar

The Cabinet, which met under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, took the decision on the next phase of the vaccination, Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said at a media briefing here.

"The second phase of the world's largest vaccination drive will start



from Monday in which anybody above 60 years, that may not be less than 10 crore people in India, and 45 years plus with comorbidities will be given vaccines in 10,000 government medical facilities and also over 20,000 private hospitals," he said. Around 27 crore people are expected to be covered in the second phase of vaccinations.

"Whoever goes to the government centre will be administered vaccine free of cost. The Indian government will pay for them. The government will purchase the necessary doses and will send them to all the states," Javadekar in-

formed. Those who want to get vaccination from private hospitals will have to pay, but the amount will be decided by the Health Ministry within the next three-four days as they are in discussions with manufacturers as well as hospitals, stated Javadekar.

Asked if people will have a choice on which vaccine - Covishield or Covaxin - they want to take, Javadekar said India is proud to have two vaccines which are both effective with proven efficacy.

A third vaccine - Russia's Sputnik V - has also applied for emergency use authorisation.

VALLEY READY



Staff members spray disinfectant at a school ahead of its reopening from March 1, 2021, at Pulwama of South Kashmir, Wednesday. All the educational institutions including schools, colleges and universities in J&K were closed in March last year in wake of the COVID-19 outbreak.

PTI PHOTO

This syndicate used ₹20 note as signal to smuggle coal

AGENCIES

Kolkata/New Delhi/Dhanbad, Feb 24: The story of absconding coal mafia kingpin Anup Majhi aka Lala, who is named in the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) FIR in an illegal coal smuggling case seems to be inspired from a Hindi crime thriller. Here, the Rs 20 note becomes instrumental in the safe passage of trucks laden with coal, officers related to probe said Wednesday.

A senior police officer in Jharkhand's Dhanbad district related to the investigation of the illegal coal smuggling case, told IANS on con-

dition of anonymity," It seems Majhi was inspired from several crime thrillers in Bollywood where the villains or criminals used Indian currency notes as a signal as a receipt for the safe passage of their smuggled items."

He said that the truck drivers associated with Majhi carried a Rs 20 note which used to be a signal for the others. "The Rs 20 note recovered from the drivers was a kind of signal. One of the angles point it towards the safe passage of the coal from Dhanbad to West Bengal and another angle can be a message to other mafias that they should not operate in their areas," he said.



The Rs 20 note used by Majhi's gang was from a specific note series, about which the other groups had little idea

If the trucks of other syndicate tried to enter that route then they could be easily identified as the notes handed over to them might be from another series

He said that the Rs 20 note used by Majhi's gang was from a specific note series, about which the other groups had little idea. If the trucks of other syndicate tried to enter that route then they could be easily identified as the notes handed over to them might be from another series, he pointed out.

The official said that the code in the form of value of Indian Currency used to change from time to time to keep the idea of receipts secret from other syndicates.

The CBI had registered a case against the alleged kingpin of the pilferage racket Majhi, Eastern Coalfield Ltd General Managers

Amit Kumar Dhar and Jayesh Chandra Rai, ECL chief of security Tanmay Das, area security inspector Kunustoria Dhananjay Rai, and SSI and security in-charge Kajora area Debashish Mukherjee.

Following the FIR, the CBI also questioned West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee's nephew Abhishek Banerjee's wife Rujira Banerjee and her sister Menka Gambhir in connection with the case earlier this week. Meanwhile, Dhanbad Senior SP Anees Vikrant Minz told IANS, "We were able to track the smuggling racket in the month of November last year."

of the day quote

There is a huge contrast in announcements and their realisation. The budget is just like a cut, copy and paste job. It is a cosmetic budget, which has a good face but intentions are not good



SATISH POONIA | BJP STATE PRESIDENT, RAJ

To begin with, the Counselling Cell of the DSEJ conducted a two-day online orientation-cum-training programme of faculty counsellors of Jammu division from winter zone. 500 faculty counsellors and psychological task force members were trained for conducting the test on the students



ANURADHA GUPTA | SCHOOL EDUCATION DIRECTOR, JAMMU

This will help bring focus towards the movement at a time when those asking questions to those in power are being targeted, attacked



ANJALI BHARDWAJ | RTI ACTIVIST

SHORT TAKES

Rajnath can help resolve impasse

Barabanki: Bharatiya Kisan Union president Naresh Tikait Wednesday called Defence Minister Rajnath Singh a “caged parrot” and said the farmers’ issues could be resolved if he is given the freedom to talk with them. He accused the BJP-led Central government of being “stubborn” over the three new laws, which farmer unions want repealed. The protesting farmers too are not ready to go back on their demands, he said.

Cabinet approves Prez rule in Pondy

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet Wednesday approved a proposal to impose President’s Rule in Pondicherry, days after a Congress-led government in the union territory lost power during a vote of confidence. Announcing the Cabinet decision, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar told reporters that the decision was taken as no party came forward to stake claim to form the government in Pondicherry following the resignation of the chief minister V Narayanasamy.

25K houses for EWS in Punjab

Chandigarh: Over 25,000 houses for the poor will be constructed in Punjab with the state cabinet Wednesday approving a new EWS policy in this regard, an official statement said. The developers and authorities will be required to develop five per cent of the project area for the economically weaker section (EWS) housing, it said.

Kerala to withdraw cases against Sabarimala, CAA protesters

THE STATE CABINET DECIDED TO WITHDRAW THE CASES AS THEY AREN’T SERIOUS CRIMINAL CASES

We all expected that the government would apologise to the people for having unleashed a police raj against the Sabarimala believers and then they should have withdrawn each and every case that was registered against the believers who protested over violation of temple traditions

KUMMANAM RAJASEKHERAN | BJP LEADER

AGENCIES

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 24: Under pressure from numerous quarters, the Pinarayi Vijayan government in Kerala Wednesday decided to withdraw cases against protesters on the Sabarimala temple issue and also against those involved in anti-Citizenship Amendment Act protests.

The state Cabinet decided to withdraw the cases as they are not serious criminal cases. Incidentally, Vijayan was forced to take this decision after the Congress-led opposition said if they return to power, they would withdraw all these cases.

Reacting to the Vijayan’s decision, Leader of Opposition Ramesh Chennithala said while he welcomes this decision, it came a bit late and the reasons why it has been made now is



known to all, hinting at upcoming Assembly polls.

But BJP leader Kummanam Rajasekheran said he fails to understand why the decision appears to have come with a rider that “serious criminal cases” will not be withdrawn.

“The government should first make things clear on which are those cases that fall under the serious category. We all expected that the government would apologise to the people for having unleashed a police raj against the Sabarimala believers and then they



The government is planning to enact a new law allowing only licence-holders to use explosive items. A decision will be taken after discussion with Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa

MURUGESH R NIRANI | KARNATAKA MINES AND GEOLOGY MINISTER

WILL SASIKALA PLEAD TRUCE WITH AIADMK

Expelled AIADMK leader VK Sasikala Wednesday appealed to “true followers” of late party supremo J Jayalalithaa to join hands and post a spectacular victory in the coming Tamil Nadu Assembly elections



Punjab ‘shamelessly’ protecting Mukhtar Ansari: UP tells SC

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 24: The Punjab government is “shamelessly” protecting gangster-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari, lodged in Rupnagar district jail in connection with an alleged extortion case, by not sending him to Uttar Pradesh to face trial in several cases, the UP government told the Supreme Court Wednesday.

A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan and R Subhash Reddy however took note of the submission of senior advocate Dushyant Dave, appearing for the Punjab government, seeking adjournment in the matter on personal grounds.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Uttar Pradesh government, said he has no objection to Dave’s plea for adjournment. The top court has posted the matter for hearing March 2.

During the hearing, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Ansari, said that he (Ansari) was “small fry” being cornered by the “might of the state”.

To this, Mehta said, “You (Ansari) are such a small fry that a state (Punjab) is shamelessly protecting you.” Ansari is lodged in district jail Rupnagar in Punjab since January 2019.

The UP government also filed written submissions in the top court stating that transfer of Ansari’s custody was meticulously planned and raised a strong suspicion of conspiracy to delay the proceedings before the Special Judge (MP/MLA), Allahabad.

The state government said it has “locus standi” to seek transfer of case pending before Judicial Magistrate Mohali, to the court of Special Judge (MP/MLA) Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, as UP is “party interested” under Section 406 of Code of Criminal Procedure (Power of Supreme Court to transfer cases and appeals).



“There is no specific provision for transfer of an under trial prisoner under Code of Criminal Procedure or Jail Manual still this Court can pass an order of transfer of Respondent No.3 (Ansari) to District Jail Banda, Uttar Pradesh considering the facts situation of the present matter by exercising jurisdiction under Article 142 of the Constitution of India,” the UP government said.

It said Ansari’s fallacious plea that he does not want to come to the state as his life is under threat, is contrary to the plea of Punjab which contends that the accused is unable to travel due to medical reasons. The conduct of Punjab is evident from the fact that neither Ansari has applied for default bail in past two years nor the Punjab police have filed the charge sheet even after two years of lodging the accused in jail, the UP government said.

“It is further appalling that Mukhtar Ansari has been operating his illegal activities in the state of Uttar Pradesh from within the jail maintained by the State of Punjab,” it said.

Delhi may face water shortage in March-April

The Bhakra-Nangal dam in Punjab, through which Delhi receives 220 MGD water daily, will remain shut for over a month for maintenance work

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 24: Though the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) has claimed to have made the necessary preparations to ensure adequate water supply in the city during the upcoming summer months, people in the national capital may face water shortage as the Bhakra-Nangal dam in Punjab, through which Delhi receives 220 MGD water daily, will remain shut for over a month for maintenance work.

“Due to repair and maintenance work, the Bhakra-Nangal dam in Punjab will be shut from March 3 to April 24, 2021,” a source in the Delhi government told IANS.

The source said that after receiving information about the closure of the dam for one-and-a-half months, the officials at the Delhi Jal Board are busy finding an alternate solution to ensure adequate water supply during this time period, when the mercury starts to soar in the national capital.

Replying to a query on whether the shutdown of the dam will affect water availability in Delhi, a senior official said on condition of anonymity, “Yes, it will have its effect. If the Bhakra-Nangal dam is shut, Delhi’s water availability could come down by 25 per cent. DJB produces around 930 MGD water daily through all its resources and if 220 MGD water, which comes from the Bhakra-Nangal dam, stops coming, water supply to the national capital is likely to get affected.”



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee addresses a public meeting, at Sahaganj in Hooghly district, Wednesday

Everyone knows what happened with him. Narendra Modi will meet an even worse fate, she said.

Trump lost the 2020 US presidential election to Joe Biden.

The chief minister also said that women in the BJP party are not safe and are “being made” to stay quiet. “There are several women in the BJP who cannot speak a single word about what is happening to them. In our party, we give proper respect to women,” she said.

Banerjee condemned the recent CBI interrogation of TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee’s wife in connection with a coal pilferage scam, saying it was an “insult to our women”.

“You are against me because I protest against your wrongdoings. You can kill me or do whatever you feel like... but you are insulting women... Getting into my house and alleging that a girl who is only 22-23 years of age, a housewife, is

a coal thief. Don’t you feel ashamed?” the TMC boss thundered.

She also accused the Central government of not allowing her government to acquire sick factories of Dunlop and Jessop in 2016, and claimed that BJP leaders stay at residences of Dunlop owner Pawan Ruia, against whom several cases are pending.

“They (BJP) will break your backbone if they come to power in West Bengal. They will finish your future and end your dreams. Bengal will rule Bengal. Gujarat will not rule Bengal. Goons will not rule Bengal,” the CM asserted.

Meanwhile, at the beginning of the rally, cricketer Manoj Tiwary and several Bengali actors including Kanchan Mallick and Sayani Ghosh, and Chairperson of the West Bengal Commission for the Protection of Child Rights, Ananya Chakraborti Chatterjee, joined the TMC in presence of Banerjee.

FIERY SHOW



Women commandos show their skills during their induction into the Uttarakhand Police following a training, in Dehradun, Wednesday

PTI PHOTO

of the day quote

There's one candidate to lead the budget department, and her name is Neera Tanden



JEN PSAKI | WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

Our supply is beyond what is needed by the citizens of Israel. We have more than enough to help where we can. It is mostly symbolic



BENJAMIN NETANYAHU | PRIME MINISTER OF ISRAEL

We know that the Taliban have had sanctuary in Pakistan. We know that they have an active diplomatic effort travelling to Moscow, travelling to Beijing, travelling to other countries. We know they travel in the Gulf. We know Iran has provided some material support



JOSEPH F. DUNFORD | FORMER CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, US

SHORT TAKES

Malaysia begins vaccinations

Kuala Lumpur: Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin received Malaysia's first Covid-19 vaccine shot Wednesday at the start of its inoculation campaign. "I did not feel anything at all. It was all over before I realised, just like a normal injection. Don't worry, come forward anytime," he said at a ceremony broadcast live. Malaysia, which has signed deals with several vaccine suppliers including Pfizer and AstraZeneca, aims to vaccinate up to 80 per cent of its 32 million people by next year. More than half a million health care and front-line workers will be given priority in the first phase.

Pak army kills Taliban man

Peshawar: Pakistani security forces have killed a Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) commander allegedly involved in the killing of four women aid workers in the restive North Waziristan district near the Afghan border. The local commander of a splinter group of the Pakistani Taliban, Hassan alias Sajna, was gunned down Tuesday after security forces raided a militant hideout in Mir Ali area of the restive tribal district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the Pakistani Army said in a statement.

62 dead in prison riots

Quito: Sixty-two inmates have died in riots at prisons in three cities in Ecuador as a result of fights between rival gangs and an escape attempt, authorities have said. Prisons Director Edmundo Moncayo in a news conference Tuesday said that 800 police officers have been helping to regain control of the facilities. Moncayo said 33 died at the prison in Cuenca in southern Ecuador, 21 in the Pacific coast city of Guayaquil and eight in the central city of Latacunga.

Thailand gets Chinese vax

Bangkok: Thailand Wednesday received the first batch of 200,000 doses of the coronavirus vaccine from China's Sinovac Biotech, as the country gears up to kick start its immunisation drive soon. The 200,000 doses, the first shipment among 2 million doses Thailand ordered from the Chinese biopharmaceutical firm, were delivered by a Thai Airways International cargo flight from Beijing to Bangkok. A second batch of 800,000 doses of the Sinovac vaccines is scheduled to arrive in Thailand next month.



The US-Japan security treaty is a product of the Cold War, which should not harm a third party's interest or endanger regional peace and stability

WANG WENBIN | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON, CHINA

EUROPE'S BIGGEST COCAINE SEIZURE

Germany and Belgium have seized 23 tonnes of cocaine in a record haul of the drug in Europe, German customs said Wednesday. The enormous amount of cocaine would have brought in several billion euros in street sales. This is the largest amount of cocaine ever seized in Europe



41 EUROPE-BOUND MIGRANTS DROWN IN MEDITERRANEAN



AGENCIES

Cairo, Feb 24: At least 41 people drowned over the weekend when their boat capsized in the Central Mediterranean, the UN said Wednesday, the latest shipwreck involving migrants fleeing conflict-stricken Libya and seeking better life in Europe.

The UN migration and refugee agencies said in a joint statement that the dead were among at least 120 migrants on a dinghy that left Libya February 18. The shipwreck took place two days later, it said.

A commercial vessel rescued the survivors and took them to the Sicilian port town of Porto Empedocle in Italy, they added.

The tragedy started when the dinghy took on water about 15 hours after the migrants embarked on their perilous voyage, the UNHCR said, citing testimonies from survivors. Within hours, at least six people fell into the sea and perished, and two others drowned while attempting to swim to a boat spotted in the distance.

Later, the commercial vessel Vos Triton arrived, and attempted to rescue survivors in what the UNHCR described as a "difficult and delicate operation." Many others died during the rescue operation, it said.

Only one body was recovered, and the missing included three children and four women, one of whom left behind a newborn baby currently in Lampedusa, it said.

The shipwreck was the latest along the Central Mediterranean migration route, where about 160 Europe-bound migrants have died since the beginning of 2021, the UN agencies said.

Biden's 100-day deportation pause banned

BIDEN PROPOSED THE 100-DAY PAUSE ON DEPORTATIONS DURING HIS CAMPAIGN AS PART OF A LARGER REVIEW OF IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT AND AN ATTEMPT TO REVERSE THE PRIORITIES OF FORMER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Houston, Feb 24: A federal judge late Tuesday indefinitely banned President Joe Biden's administration from enforcing a 100-day moratorium on most deportations.

US District Judge Drew Tipton issued a preliminary injunction sought by Texas, which argued the moratorium violated federal law and risked imposing additional costs on the state.

Biden proposed the 100-day pause on deportations during his campaign as part of a larger review of immigration enforcement and an attempt to reverse the priorities of former President Donald Trump. Biden has proposed a sweeping immigration bill that would allow the legalization of an estimated 11 million people living in the US illegally.



He has also instituted other guidelines on whom immigration and border agents should target for enforcement.

Tipton, a Trump appointee, initially ruled Jan 26 that the moratorium violated federal law on administrative procedure and that the US failed to show why a deportation pause was justified. A temporary restraining order the judge issued was set to expire Tuesday.

Biden has proposed a sweeping immigration bill that would allow the legalization of an estimated 11 million people living in the US illegally

Tipton's ruling did not require deportations to resume at their previous pace. Even without a moratorium, immigration agencies have wide latitude in enforcing removals and processing cases.

But in the days that followed his ruling, authorities deported 15 people to Jamaica and hundreds of others to Central America. The Biden administration has also continued

expelling immigrants under a separate process begun by Trump officials, who invoked public-health law due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The legal fight over the deportation ban is an early sign of Republican opposition to Biden's immigration priorities, just as Democrats and pro-immigrant legal groups fought Trump's proposals. Almost four years before Tipton's order, Trump signed a ban on travel from seven countries with predominantly Muslim populations that caused chaos at airports. Legal groups successfully sued to stop implementation of the ban.

It was not immediately clear if the Biden administration will appeal Tipton's latest ruling. The Justice Department did not seek a stay of Tipton's earlier temporary restraining order.

Putin warns of foreign efforts to destabilise Russia

AGENCIES

Moscow, Feb 24: Russia's President Vladimir Putin ordered the nation's top counterintelligence agency Wednesday to redouble its efforts to address what he described as Western attempts to destabilise the country.

Speaking at a meeting of top officials of the Federal Security Service, or FSB, the main KGB successor agency, Putin pointed at the "so-called policy of containment of Russia," charging that it includes efforts to "derail our development, slow it down, create problems alongside our borders, provoke internal instability and undermine the values that unite Russian society."

The Russian president added that those activities by foreign powers, which he didn't name, are aimed at "weakening Russia and putting it under outside control." Russia's relations with the West have plummeted to post-Cold War lows after Moscow's 2014 annexa-

tion of Ukraine's Crimea, Russian meddling in the 2016 US presidential election, and, most recently, the arrest of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny and a sweeping crackdown on protests demanding his release.

Navalny, Putin's most prominent critic, was arrested Jan 17 upon returning from Germany, where he spent five months recovering from a nerve-agent poisoning that he blames on the Kremlin. Russian authorities have rejected the accusation and accused Navalny of cooperating with Western intelligence agencies — claims which he has ridiculed.

Earlier this month, Navalny was sentenced to 2 and half years in prison for violating terms of his probation while convalescing in Germany. The sentence stems from a 2014 embezzlement conviction that Navalny has rejected as fabricated and the European Court of Human Rights has ruled to be unlawful.

Navalny's arrest has fueled a wave of protests that drew tens of thousands to the streets across Russia. The authorities have detained about 11,000 people, many of whom were fined or given jail terms ranging from seven to 15 days.

In the wake of the demonstrations, the Kremlin-controlled parliament has toughened the punishment for disobeying police and introduced new fines for funding demonstrations. Putin on Wednesday signed those new bills into law.

The so-called policy of containment of Russia includes efforts to derail our development, slow it down, create problems alongside our borders, provoke internal instability and undermine the values that unite Russian society

VLADIMIR PUTIN | PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA



SMOKY SUNUP



Smoke rises from the chimneys of houses on a frosty winter morning in the town of Tara in Omsk Region, Russia REUTERS

Conviction in landmark case in Syrian govt torture trial

AGENCIES

Berlin, Feb 24: A former member of Syrian President Bashar Assad's secret police was convicted Wednesday by a German court of facilitating the torture of prisoners in a landmark ruling that human rights activists hope will set a precedent for other cases.

Eyad Al-Gharib was convicted of accessory to crimes against humanity and sentenced by the Koblenz state court to 4 and half years in prison.

It was the first time that a court outside Syria ruled in a case alleging Syrian government officials committed crimes against humanity



German prosecutors invoked the principle of universal jurisdiction for serious crimes to bring the case that involved victims and defen-

dants who were in Germany.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the verdict represented a "historic juncture" that would send "real messages to all those who committed war crimes and crimes against humanity against the Syrian people and gives hope to the victims and their families that right will prevail."

The group, which has documented the decade-long war, urged Syrian refugees in Europe to come forth with any evidence and documents to courts to help more such cases. Al-Gharib could have faced more than a decade behind bars, but judges took into account mitigating factors, including his tes-

timony in court. The 44-year-old was accused of being part of a unit that arrested people following anti-government protests in the Syrian city of Douma and took them to a detention center known as Al Khatib, or Branch 251, where they were tortured.

Al-Gharib went on trial last year with Anwar Raslan, a more senior Syrian ex-official who is accused of overseeing the abuse of detainees at the same jail near Damascus.

Raslan is accused of supervising the "systematic and brutal torture" of more than 4,000 prisoners between April 2011 and September 2012, resulting in the deaths of at least 58 people.

Ghana 1st nation to receive COVAX vax

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Accra, Feb 24: Ghana has become the first country in the world to receive vaccines acquired through the United Nations-backed COVAX initiative with a delivery Wednesday of 600,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine made by the Serum Institute of India.

The vaccines, delivered by UNICEF, arrived at Accra's Kotoka International Airport early Wednesday and are part of the first wave of Covid-19 vaccines that



COVAX is sending to several low- and middle-income countries. Ghana is among 92 countries that have signed onto the COVAX programme, according to a statement by Ghana's acting Minister of

Information Kojo Opong Nkrumah.

The West African nation of 30 million has recorded 81,245 cases and 584 deaths since the beginning of the pandemic, according to figures from Ghana's Health Services Tuesday. Ghana's vaccination campaign will begin March 2 and will be conducted in phases among prioritised groups, beginning with health workers, adults of 60 years and over, people with underlying health conditions, frontline executive, legislature, judiciary, and their related staff, said Nkrumah.

Oz's antitrust chief claims win post FB standoff

AFTER TENSE NEGOTIATIONS PROMPTED FACEBOOK TO CUT OFF NEWS IN THE COUNTRY LAST WEEK, AUSTRALIA OFFERED A HOST OF TECHNICAL CONCESSIONS AND THE SOCIAL MEDIA GIANT SAID IT WOULD RESTORE NEWS

REUTERS

Canberra, Feb 24: The architect of Australia's laws forcing Google and Facebook to pay media companies for content claimed victory Wednesday, though critics said last-minute changes to appease Facebook favoured Big Tech over smaller news outlets.

After tense negotiations prompted Facebook to cut off news in the country last week, Australia offered a host of technical concessions and the social media giant said it would restore news as the revamped bill looked set to become law this week.

While Facebook said its concerns had been met and opposition lawmakers warned that smaller media players may be overlooked, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission Chair Rod Sims said the bargaining power imbalance had been righted.

"The changes the government's done are things that either don't matter much or are just to clarify things that, at least in Facebook's mind, were unclear," Sims, who helped draft the original laws, told Reuters.

"Whatever they say, they need news. It keeps people on their platform longer. They make more



money," he said.

The endorsement from Australia's top antitrust regulator will bolster the government's argument that its hardline approach worked and may offer encouragement to countries such as Canada and Britain which

have said they plan similar laws.

Other countries have introduced legislation forcing so-called Big Tech players to negotiate with media companies for licensing fees for links that draw traffic, and advertising revenue, to their platforms.

However, Australia will be the first country where a government arbitrator effectively sets the rates tech giants will have to pay if negotiations with media companies fail.

The last-minute changes include an extra two-month mediation period between any failed talks and state intervention and give the government discretion to release

Facebook from the process if it proves it has made a "significant contribution to the sustainability of the Australian news industry".

Facebook's vice president of global affairs, Nick Clegg, said the company had "erred on the side of over-enforcement" with its news blackout - which inadvertently blocked some government pages - because it needed to act quickly before the new legislation was introduced.

The agreed changes "mean fair negotiations are encouraged without the looming threat of heavy-handed and unpredictable arbitration," he wrote in a blogpost.

UK court to declare judgement on Nirav Modi extradition case



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, Feb 24: Wanted diamond merchant Nirav Modi, who remains behind bars in a London prison as he contests his extradition to India on charges of fraud and money laundering in the estimated USD 2 billion Punjab National Bank (PNB) scam case, will find out the UK court's ruling in the nearly two-year-long legal battle Thursday.

The 49-year-old is expected to appear via videolink from Wandsworth Prison in south-west London at Westminster Magistrates' Court, where District Judge Samuel Goozee is set to hand down his judgment on whether the jeweller has a case to answer before the Indian courts.

The magistrates' court ruling will then be sent back to UK Home Secretary Priti Patel for a sign off, with the possibility of appeals in the High Court on either side depending on the outcome.

of the day quote

Unification of government bond and corporate bond markets will enable the trading of such securities on the same platform, thereby utilising common infrastructure for trading, clearing, settlement and holding of securities

AJAY TYAGI | CHAIRMAN, SEBI

Reliance on China for APIs is there. We had the technology of making all kinds of APIs but over a period of time we lost that advantage. But now with production linked incentive scheme which covers APIs and coming up of manufacturing parks we are on the right path

SUDARSHAN JAIN | SECRETARY GENERAL, INDIAN PHARMACEUTICAL ALLIANCE

We are planning to launch our electric car in India in the second half of the year. It will be called the XC40 Recharge. It has already been in Europe and has been very successful (there)

CHARLES FRUMP | MD, VOLVO CAR INDIA

SHORT TAKES

‘Foodgrain output to rise 2 pc in 2020-21’

New Delhi: India's foodgrain production is estimated to rise 2 per cent in 2020-21 crop year to an all-time high of 303.34 million tonnes on better output of rice, wheat, pulses and coarse cereals amid good monsoon rains last year, the agriculture ministry said. Crop year runs from July-June. In the 2019-20 crop year, the country's foodgrain output (comprising wheat, rice, pulses and coarse cereals) stood at a record 297.5 million tonnes (MT).

DigiBoxx launched in Tamil Nadu

Chennai: India's first digital asset management platform provider 'DigiBoxx', under the Centre's ambitious 'Atmanirbhar' initiative, was formally launched in Tamil Nadu Wednesday, aimed at serving businesses and individuals. The platform, a Made in India product, offers digital file storage, sharing and management of saas product for businesses and users, a press release said.

Reckitt Benckiser posts 12% growth

New Delhi: British FMCG major RB Plc Wednesday said the large contribution from markets like India, where consumption of its hygiene products such as toilet cleaner Harpic jumped over three times in the COVID-impacted 2020, helped it to grow 11.8% to 13.99 billion British Pounds in the year. The company witnessed a volume growth of 9.6% in 2020, led by the strong performance of its disinfectant brands driving penetration and market share gains by the health segment, said RB.

MbPT aims signing pacts for ₹20K cr

Mumbai: Mumbai Port Trust (MbPT) is targeting to sign pacts entailing investments of over ₹20,000 crore by shipping and oil companies in the coming few days, a top official said Wednesday. Rajiv Jalota, chairman of the port, one of the oldest in India, said MoUs entailing over ₹7,500 crore in investments have already been signed in the last two days. The investment pacts, being signed in the run-up to the second Maritime India Summit to be held next week, will go beyond ₹20,000 crore, he said.



There is a funding gap in the post-retirement life and lots of people will not be earning but would need funds, so this (fund guarantee plan) is a grave issue that needs to be addressed

TARUN CHUGH | MD & CEO, BAJAJ ALLIANZ LIFE

₹15K cr BOOST FOR PHARMA SECTOR

The government Wednesday approved a PLI scheme for the pharmaceutical sector, entailing an outlay of ₹15,000 crore. The Union Cabinet, chaired by PM Narendra Modi, approved the scheme which will benefit domestic manufacturers and help create employment



Flipkart plans to deploy 25,000 EVs by 2030

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, Feb 24: A day after Amazon India said it has deployed nearly 100 Mahindra Treo Zor three-wheelers, e-commerce marketplace Flipkart Wednesday said it will deploy more than 25,000 electric vehicles in its supply chain by 2030.

Flipkart said it has already started piloting and deploying two-wheeler and three-wheeler electric



In this journey of making our logistics fleet completely electric by 2030, we will collaborate and work with leading local players to procure and deploy electric vehicles while supporting the required infrastructure growth

AMITESH JHA | SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, EKART AND MARKETPLACE, FLIPKART

vehicles in multiple locations for delivery across the country, including in

Kolkata, Guwahati and Pune, to name a few.

In 2020, Amazon India had announced that its fleet of delivery vehicles will include 10,000 electric vehicles by 2025 in India.

FinMin lifts embargo on private sector banks

All the private banks can now participate in government-related business

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 24: The finance ministry Wednesday allowed all private sector banks to participate in government-related business like collection of taxes pension payments and small savings schemes. At the moment, only few large private sector are allowed to conduct government-related business.

This step is expected to further enhance customer convenience, spur competition and higher efficiency in the standards of customer services, an official statement said.

"Embargo lifted on grant of Govt business to private banks. All banks can now participate. Private banks can now be equal partners in development of the Indian economy, furthering Govt's social sector initiatives, and enhancing customer convenience," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in a tweet.

Private sector banks, which are at the forefront of imbibing and implementing latest technology and innovation in banking, will now be equal partners in development of the Indian economy and in furthering the social sector initiatives of the government, the statement said.

"With the lifting of the embargo, there is now no bar on RBI for authorization of private sector banks (in addition to public sector banks) for Government business, includ-



Embargo lifted on grant of Govt business to private banks. All banks can now participate. Private banks can now be equal partners in development of the Indian economy, furthering Govt's social sector initiatives, and enhancing customer convenience

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

ing Government agency business. The Government has conveyed its decision to RBI," it added.

The government has already announced its intent to privatise two public sector lenders, other than IDBI Bank, in the Budget 2021-22.

Sitharaman, while presenting Budget 2021-22 earlier this month, had announced the privatisation of Public Sector Banks (PSBs) as part of the disinvestment drive to garner ₹1.75 lakh crore.

"Other than IDBI Bank, we propose to take up the privatisation of two Public Sector Banks and one General Insurance company in the year 2021-22," she had said.

The government last year consolidated 10 public sector banks into four and as a result, the total number of PSBs came down to 12

from 27 in March 2017. As per the amalgamation plan, United Bank of India and Oriental Bank of Commerce were merged with Punjab National Bank, making the proposed entity the second-largest PSB.

Syndicate Bank was merged with Canara Bank, while Allahabad Bank was subsumed in Indian Bank. Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank were amalgamated with the Union Bank of India.

In a first three-way merger, Bank of Baroda merged Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank with itself in 2019. SBI had merged five of its associate banks - State Bank of Patiala, State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur, State Bank of Mysore, State Bank of Travancore and State Bank of Hyderabad - and also Bharatiya Mahila Bank effective April 2017.

BIZ BUZZ

Samsung Galaxy F62 to go on sale

Bhubaneswar: Samsung Galaxy F62 will go now on sale for the first time. The new model is available Samsung.com, Flipkart.com, Reliance Digital, My Jio retail stores and select retail stores. The smartphone is equipped with flagship exynos 9825 processor, 64 MP quad camera and with battery capacity 7000mAh. Galaxy F62 is priced at ₹23,999 for 6/128GB variant and ₹25,999 for 8/128GB variant. Galaxy F62 comes with an in-box Type-C 25W superfast charger that recharges the smartphone's 7000mAh battery in less than 2 hours.



SATYA MicroCapital provides relief to 4,000 families

Bhubaneswar: SATYA MicroCapital Ltd, one of the leading NBFC-MFIs in country has provided relief to over 4,000 families in the state through this benevolent initiative. Company's Deputy CEO Gaurangini Jain said, "SATYA has promptly supported the needy with its welfare initiatives. After the recent capital infusion of ₹153.25 crore, we are confident that it will more integrally extend its protective shield for safeguarding people against uncertainties pertaining to natural calamities and soaring healthcare expenses." The company has offered support by settling pre-hospitalisation to post-hospitalisation, in-patient treatment, day care treatment and medical expenses of similar sort.

Motorola unveils moto e7 power

Bhubaneswar: Motorola unveiled its popular e-series franchise the Moto e7 power. Moto e7 power is available at starting price of ₹7,499 and will be available from February 26. The model comes loaded with a 5000mAh battery, 6.5" Max Vision HD+ display, Fingerprint Sensor. It is available in two variants: 2GB / 4GB RAM and 32GB / 64GB storage and with a massive 5000 mAh battery. Moto e7power comes with superior 4GB / 2GB LPDDR4X RAM and a MediaTek Helio G25 Octa-core processor. It also comes equipped with 13MP Dual Camera.



‘Number of ultra-high net worth individuals to rise 63% in 5 yrs’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: The number of ultra-high net worth individuals (UHNWIs), with wealth of \$30 million or more, is expected to rise 63% over the next five years to 11,198 in India, the second fastest growth in the world, according to property consultant Knight Frank India report.

As per its Wealth Report 2021, there are currently 5,21,653 UHNWIs globally, of which India has 6,884 such individuals.

According to the report, the number of UHNWIs, those with \$30 million or more, around the world is predicted to grow by 27% between 2020-25 - taking this population to 6,63,483.

"India is expected to see an in-



credible growth of 63% by 2025, making it the second fastest growing country in terms of number of

UHNWIs. The number of UHNWIs in India is expected to grow by 63% in the next five years to 11,198 in

RACE TO RICHNESS

India is expected to see an incredible growth of 63% by 2025, making it the second fastest growing country

The billionaires club in India is expected to increase significantly by 43% to 162 by 2025 from the current 113 in 2020

Asia is likely to see the highest rise in the number of UHNWIs with the estimated growth of 39%

The rapid growth of ultra-wealthy population in India is much faster compared to the global average of 27%

2025," Knight Frank India said in a statement.

The billionaires club in India is expected to increase significantly by 43% to 162 by 2025 from the current 113 in 2020. The growth has outpaced global average growth of 24% and Asia average of 38% during this period.

The report predicts that in the regional context, Asia is likely to see the highest rise in the number of UHNWIs with the estimated growth of 39%. This will be led by Indonesia (67%) and India (63%).

"With the economic operability reaching high levels of its efficiency post the pandemic, India will be striding to make an entry into the \$5-trillion club in the next few years," said Shishir Bajjal,

Govt committed to selling non-strategic PSUs: PM Modi



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 24: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday made his strongest pitch for privatisation of non-strategic PSUs, saying the government has no business to be in business and sustaining loss-making units on taxpayers' money drains resources that could otherwise have been spent on public welfare schemes.

He said about 100 under-utilised or unutilised assets with public sector units (PSUs), such as those in the oil and gas and power sectors, will be monetised, creating ₹2.5 lakh crore of investment opportunities.

"It is government's duty to support enterprises and businesses. But it is not essential that it should own and run enterprises," the Prime Minister said at a webinar on the privatisation approach in the Budget for 2021-22.

The private sector brings in investment, global best practices, top-quality managers, changes in management and modernisation, he said, adding the money generated from the stake sales will be routed to public welfare schemes in areas like water and sanitation, education and healthcare.

DoT 5G hackathon: 100 concepts ready for trials



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: A total of 100 5G technology ideas are ready for trials in the country, an official of the Department of Telecom (DoT) said Wednesday. The DoT had organised a 5G hackathon a year ago in which it received over 1,000 applications for technologies that can be implemented on 5G network, DoT Deputy Director General RK Pathak said at a virtual event organised by Nokia, NIIT and industry body COAI.

"We organised a 5G hackathon and received two to the power 10 applications. We shortlisted 100 best suited ideas across 10 industry verticals.

"One can say they are ready for trials, not only in India but across the world. Our students, start-up, academia and industry, all are bullish on 5G technology," Pathak said.

He further said all the traditional job roles in the country will need to undergo training for creation of a new India.

"Opportunities for up-skilling and reskilling for jobs is going to be linear. Skillings for 5G is very important. While the government is making a lot of effort, we need cooperation from the industry," Pathak said.

‘Skidding’ pitch helps Patel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, Feb 24: India left-arm spinner Axar Patel Wednesday said his plan to bowl wicket-to-wicket on a ‘skidding’ Motera surface reaped rich dividends for him on the opening day of the day-night third Test against England here.

Patel and senior off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin exploited the turning Motera pitch at the newly-inaugurated Narendra Modi Stadium to the full to bundle out England for 112 in their first innings in just 48.4 overs after the visitors opted to bat.

Patel (21.46-38-6) grabbed his second five-for in his second Test while Ashwin (16-6-26-3) took three. “When things are going for you, you need to capitalise. My aim was to bowl wicket to wicket and use the help on offer. In Chennai, the ball was n’t skidding. But here it was skidding which resulted in more LBW decisions,” Axar said at the press conference after the day’s play.

“The pink ball had more glare, so it was skidding more after pitching. I got more skid on this wicket than Chennai.” Axar said he was confident of doing well here after his performance in the second Test in Chennai, where he picked up a five-wicket haul in his debut.

“I didn’t expect to pick six wickets on the opening day but obvi-



Axar Patel in jolly mood after getting rid of an England batsman in Motera, Wednesday

PIC: ESPNCRICINFO

“WHEN THINGS ARE GOING FOR YOU, YOU NEED TO CAPITALISE. MY AIM WAS TO BOWL WICKET TO WICKET AND USE THE HELP ON OFFER. IN CHENNAI, THE BALL WASN’T SKIDDING. BUT HERE IT WAS SKIDDING WHICH RESULTED IN MORE LBW DECISIONS. THE PINK BALL HAD MORE GLARE, SO IT WAS SKIDDING MORE AFTER PITCHING

AXAR PATEL

ously, I was confident after picking up five wickets in Chennai,” he said. “The Chennai performance gave me confidence that I can do well with pink ball and if the wickets supports, I can put the batsmen under difficulty.”

He revealed that contrary to expectations, the ball was not turning much and that’s why he and Ashwin concentrated on bowling at the stumps.

Axar said as the ball was skidding more, he focussed on under-cutting his deliveries. “The wicket was skidding so I was focussing more on under-cutting the ball. I tried to bowl a lot faster so that I can take more advantage with the new ball,” he said.

Woods seriously injured in crash



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Los Angeles, Feb 24: Tiger Woods crashed his SUV on sweeping, downhill road in the Los Angeles suburbs Tuesday morning, and doctors tried to stabilize ‘significant’ injuries to his right leg with rods and a combination of screws and pins.

Woods was driving to a television shoot when his SUV crashed into a median, rolled over and ended up on its side near a steep road known for wrecks, authorities said. Golf’s biggest star had to be pulled out through the windshield.

Woods’ foundation said in a statement he was awake, responsive and recovering in the hospital. Dr. Anish Mahajan, the chief medical officer at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, said Woods shattered the tibia and fibula bones of his lower right leg in multiple locations. Those injuries were stabilized with a rod in the tibia.

“Additional injuries to the bones in the foot and ankle required screws and pins,” Mahajan said in a statement released on Woods’ Twitter account late Tuesday night.

The lengthy surgery also reduced swelling. Woods was awake and recovering in his hospital room, the statement said.

A resident near the accident site called 911. A Los Angeles County sheriff’s deputy, the first on the scene, poked his head through a hole in the windshield to see Woods, his seatbelt fastened, sitting in the driver’s seat.

The single-car crash was another setback for Woods, the pre-eminent golfer of his generation who has spent the last decade in a cycle of injuries, self-inflicted personal problems and an arrest for DUI. Each time, he returned to the course and won.

Even at 45, Woods is among the more recognizable sports figures in the world and remains golf’s biggest draw. His 2019 Masters victory was seen as a transcendent comeback and further cemented his reputation for toughness and clutch performances.

Briefly Tuesday, the world paused and worried that Woods might be critically injured or worse. As it became clear that his life wasn’t in danger, the obvious question came out: Can he play golf again?

“As if his body hasn’t endured enough,” Jon Rahm, the No.2 player in the world, said from the Workday Championship in Florida. “I just

hope he can get out of the hospital after recovery and he can still play with his kids and have a normal life.”

No charges were filed, police said there was no evidence he was impaired and no one else was injured. It was the 10th surgery for Woods, who has suffered knee, back and neck problems for more than a decade.

Woods was in Los Angeles over the weekend as tournament host of the Genesis Invitational that ended Sunday, and then to film content for his sponsor, Discovery-owned GOLFTV. He was not playing while recovering from a fifth back surgery on Dec. 23.

Woods was alone in the SUV when it crashed into a raised median, crossed two oncoming lanes and rolled several times, authorities said at a news conference. Police said Woods was alert as firefighters pried open the front windshield to get him out.

Los Angeles County Sheriff Alex Villanueva said the airbags deployed and the inside of the SUV stayed mostly intact, which ‘gave him a cushion to survive the crash’.

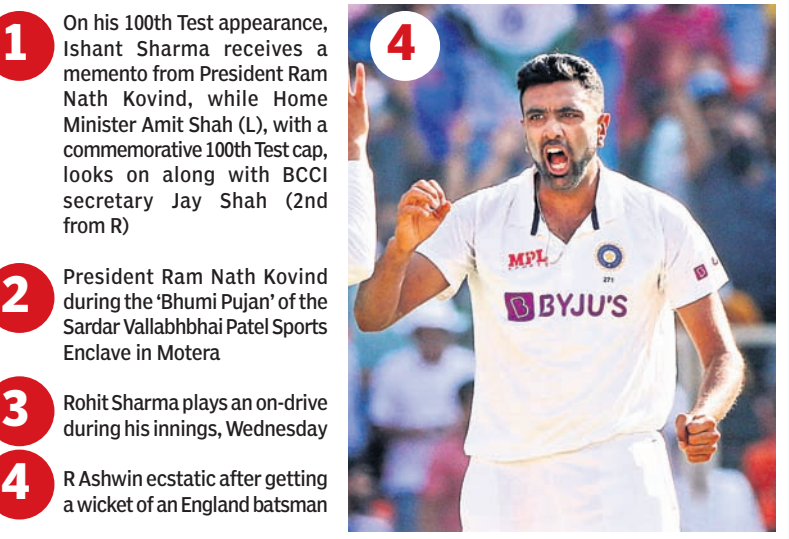
There was no immediate evidence that Woods was impaired. Authorities said they checked for any odor of alcohol or other signs he was under the influence of a substance and found none. They didn’t say how fast he was driving.

The crash happened about 7:15 am on a sweeping, downhill stretch of a two-lane road through upscale suburbs. Gonzalez, the first to get to the wreck, said he sometimes catches people topping 80 mph in the 45 mph zone and crashes are common. “I will say that it’s very fortunate that Mr. Woods was able to come out of this alive,” Gonzalez said.

Thoughts and prayers have come from everywhere — Jack Nicklaus and Michael Jordan, Mike Tyson, and former Presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump, who has played golf with Woods and awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2019.

Woods, who shares with Sam Snead the PGA Tour record of 82 career victories, had said during the Genesis Invitational television broadcast that he was awaiting one more test from his December 23 microdiscectomy surgery before learning if he could expand his work. Asked about playing the Masters April 8-11, Woods replied, “God, I hope so.”

MOTERA MUSINGS



Giroud bicycle-kick goal lifts Blues in CL

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bucharest, Feb 24: After his great overhead kick found the net to break the deadlock in a difficult match, all Olivier Giroud could do was wait.

Giroud’s 68th-minute bicycle-kick goal against Atletico Madrid were initially disallowed for off-side and it took nearly three minutes for video review to reverse the call and secure Chelsea the 1-0 away win in the first leg of the round of 16 of the Champions League Tuesday.

Giroud was clearly in front of the defenders when he pulled off his acrobatic shot and few Chelsea players complained when the linesman raised his flag, but VAR determined that the ball came from Atletico defender Mario Hermoso instead of Chelsea midfielder Mason Mount, thus annulling the offside.

The result kept Chelsea coach Thomas Tuchel unbeaten in eight matches since he took over the squad to replace Frank Lampard.

Atletico was the home team but the match was played in Bucharest, Romania, because of travel restrictions preventing visitors from Britain entering Spain. The sec-

Bayern thrash Lazio

Rome: Teenager Jamal Musiala became Bayern Munich’s youngest-ever goal scorer in the Champions League as he helped his team rout Lazio 4-1 in the first leg of the round of 16. Musiala also became the second-youngest player to score in the knockout stage of the competition when he netted Bayern’s second goal. Robert Lewandowski had earlier given Bayern the lead after a howler from Lazio and Leroy Sane put the defending champion firmly in control at the end of the first half. Francesco Acerbi netted an own goal at the start of the second half. Joaquin Correa scored a consolation for the Italian side.

ond leg will be March 17 in London. It was the second consecutive loss for Atletico after a seven-match unbeaten streak in all competitions. It was also the eighth straight game in which the Spanish club has conceded a goal, extending its worst run without a clean sheet since coach Diego Simeone arrived in late 2011.

Padikkal century helps Karnataka outclass Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 24: Devdutt Padikkal struck a splendid 152 (140b, 14x4, 5x6) to set the tone for Karnataka’s 101-run win over Odisha in their Vijay Hazare Trophy Elite Group C encounter in Bangalore, Wednesday. Odisha will next play Bihar Friday, while Karnataka face Kerala on the same day.

Odisha won the toss and invited Karnataka to bat first as the openers – Padikkal & skipper Ravikumar Samarth (60, 83b, 4x4) – put together 140 runs. Krishnamurthy Siddharth (41, 32b, 5x4, 1x6) also contributed with a handy knock, while Abhimanyu Mithun’s 17-ball unbeaten 40 (5x6) helped Karnataka post 329/5 in their 50 overs.

Pacer Suryakant Pradhan (2/53) bowled well, while Harshit Rathod (2/80) was the most expensive among the Odisha bowlers.

In response, Odisha were bowled out for 228 in 44 overs. Subhanshu Senapati (78, 92b, 3x4, 2x6) and Ankit Yadav (56, 63b, 6x4, 1x6) were the only batsmen to offer some resistance. Prasidh Krishna (3/46) and Shreyas Gopal (3/47) were excellent with the ball for Karnataka.

Bipin helps MCFC hammer OFC



AGENCIES

Goa, Feb 24: Bipin Singh bagged the first hat-trick of the season in the Indian Super League as Mumbai City FC (MCFC) hammered Odisha FC 6-1 in their match at the GMC Stadium in Bambolim, Wednesday.

Odisha FC were overwhelmed in the first half conceding three goals inside six minutes and the MCFC finished on top at the break with a 4-1 scoreline.

MCFC did not start off well as it was Odisha who took the lead. Diego Mauricio slotted home with

a bit of luck from the penalty spot to give his side the lead. It was after Ahmed Jahouh committed a foul inside the box when Mauricio was rushing towards the goal with the ball.

That lead though did not last long as Bartholomew Ogbeche headed home five minutes after that to bring his side back level terms.

It was all Islanders after that as they dominated Odisha. They turned the screws towards the end and in the 38th minute got the lead through some luck as Bipin was at the right place at the right time.

Ogbeche then got into the score-sheet again with yet another header and another assist by Ahmed Jahouh. Cy Goddard then showed his class and finished the half ensuring that the game is almost dead and buried before the sides enter the tunnel at halftime.

Two minutes after the restart, Bipin struck his second on the night as Ogbeche, who had a chance to go for his hat-trick, turned setter for his goal. Jahouh, on the other hand, had not the day he would had hoped for as he missed a spot-kick in the 84th.

Bipin’s night turned out to be a special one indeed as he bagged his hat-trick two minutes later. It was the first hat-trick in the competition this season.

Jyoti stuns world champ Kyzaiby, enters quarters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: Jyoti Gulia (51kg) upstaged two-time world champion Nazym Kyzaiby of Kazakhstan to enter the quarter-finals along with two others but three Indians bowed out after second-round losses in the 72nd Strandja Memorial Boxing Tournament in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Gulia prevailed 3-2 over Kyzaiby, a gold-winner from the 2014 and 2016 senior world championships. The Haryana-boxer is also a 2019 national champion. She will next take on Romania’s Perijoc Lacramioara Thursday.

Another Indian to enter the quarter-finals on the second day was Bhagyabati Kachari, who out-classed Russian opponent Anna Galimova 5-0 in the 75kg category.

In the men’s competition, Naveen Boora also progressed to the last eight stage with a 3-2 win over Armen Mashakaryan of Armenia B in the 69kg category.

However, Naveen Kumar (91kg) went down to France’s Wilfried Florentin 5-0, while Ankit Khatana (75kg) lost to Belarus’ Viktor Dziazhkevich 2-3. Sachin Kumar (81kg) endured a 0-5 defeat at the hands of Armenian Gor Nersesyan.