



WORKAHOLIC MANUSHI

Former beauty queen Manushi Chhillar says she worked hard to play Princess Sanyogita in *Prithviraj*

LEISURE P2



MILESTONE MOMENT

Star light, star bright, the James Webb Space Telescope sees its first star and even takes a selfie

INTERNATIONAL P10



INDIA EVES GO DOWN

Suzie Bates's century helps New Zealand women beat India evens by 64 runs in the first ODI in Queenstown

SPORTS P12

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Girl forced to attend classes, ends life

Malkangiri: In a shocking incident, a Class IX girl ended her life by consuming poison when her family members allegedly forced her to attend physical classes at Bhimarangi village under Sindhirimal panchayat in Malkangiri district Saturday. Ana Ray, a student of Satiguda Girl's High School, was at home for over two years as the school remained closed owing to Covid-19. As the government reopened the schools recently, her family wanted her to attend physical classes, Friday. However, she was reluctant to go to school and later consumed poison on the fateful day. Ana was admitted to the district headquarters hospital where she succumbed Saturday.

Industrialist Rahul Bajaj passes away

Mumbai: Former chairman of Bajaj Group Rahul Bajaj passed away in Pune Saturday, a company official said. He was 83. Bajaj was not keeping well for quite some time and passed away at around 2:30pm Saturday, the official said. His last rites will be performed Sunday. He is survived by two sons, Rajiv Bajaj and Sanjiv Bajaj, and a daughter Sunaina Kejriwal. He had resigned from his position of non-executive director and chairman at Bajaj Auto April 30 last year. Rahul Bajaj was honoured with Padma Bhushan, India's third-highest civilian award, in 2001. **P11**

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IPL AUCTION

ISHAN KISHAN HITS JACKPOT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



People perform 'Surya Namaskar' at a yoga camp organised by 'Patanjali Yoga Pitha Pariwar' at Sixth Battalion Ground near OMP Square in Cuttack, Saturday **OP PHOTO**

Bangalore, Feb 12: Jharkhand's flamboyant wicketkeeper-batter Ishan Kishan was well on his way to become the biggest buy of the IPL mega auction here Saturday with Mumbai Indians retaining him for more than ₹15 crore while his India teammate Shreyas Iyer also clinched a staggering deal of over ₹12 crore from Kolkata Knight Riders. MI waited for the second session to engage in a bidding war with Sunrisers Hyderabad, eventually shelling out ₹15.25 crore (USD 2 million plus) to retain Kishan's services. "I'm really excited to be back at MI. I know everyone has treated me there like a family so I am really happy to be there and I hope to give my best to the team. Thank you so much," said the 23-year-old Kishan. **MORE P12**

₹22,842cr biggest bank fraud ever

The CBI conducts searches at 13 locations including Surat, Bharuch, Mumbai and Pune and recovers incriminating documents



The bank had first filed a complaint November 8, 2019 on which the CBI had sought some clarifications March 12, 2020. The bank filed a fresh complaint in August that year. After 'scrutinising' for over one and a half years, the CBI acted on the complaint filing an FIR February 7. The company was sanctioned credit facilities from 28 banks and financial institutions led by ICICI Bank with the SBI having exposure of ₹2468.51 crore, the officials said. The Forensic Audit by Ernst and Young has shown that between 2012-17, the accused colluded together and committed illegal activities including diversion of funds, misappropriation and criminal breach of trust, they said. It is the biggest bank fraud case registered by the CBI. Funds were used for purposes other than for which they were released by banks, it said. The loan account was declared as non-performing asset

(NPA) in July 2016 and fraud in 2019. In its complaint, the State Bank of India said ABG Shipyard Ltd (ABGSL) is the flagship company of the ABG Group which engaged in the business of ship building and ship-repair. The ABGSL being a major player in Indian ship building industry operates from shipyards are located at Dahej and Surat in Gujarat with capacity to build vessels up to 18,000 dead weight tonnage (DWT) at Surat Shipyard and 1,20,000 dead weight tonnage (DWT) at Dahej Shipyard. The company has constructed over 165 vessels in the last 16 years including specialised vessels like the newspaper carriers. Self-discharging and loading bulk cement carriers and floating cranes with class approval of all international classification societies like Lloyds, American Bureau of Shipping, Bureau Veritas, IRS, DNV, the complaint said. "Global crisis has impacted the shipping industry due to fall in commodity demand and prices and subsequent fall in cargo demand. The cancellation of contracts for a few ships and vessels resulted in piling up of inventory. This has resulted in paucity of working capital and caused significant increase in the operating cycle," the complaint said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

You know the issues at hand. Now, tell me, who should I complain to: Govt or Nehru?

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP. MAX	28.4°C	27.5°C
TEMP. MIN	15.7°C	15.5°C
Humidity	87%	76%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Fog/mist in the morning

State submits nine witnesses in tribunal

MAHANADI DISPUTE



New Delhi, Feb 12: The state has submitted a list of witnesses in the Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal (MWDIT) to examine them in connection with the river water disputes. Odisha proposed nine witnesses to examine in the tribunal during the hearing of the matter. Meanwhile, Chhattisgarh has proposed seven witnesses to examine. Former Member of Central Water Commission ME Haque will depose for assessment of water availability in Mahanadi Basin. Former CWC Chairman Rajesh Kumar will depose for planning and regulation in Chhattisgarh for ensuring water at the inter-state border. Former chief engineer of state Water Resources department Harmohan Pradhan will depose for development and operation of Hirakud Reservoir, Mahanadi Delta. Similarly, others are former engineer-in-chief DoWR RC Tripathy, Central Ground Water board former scientist Gulab Prasad, former Dean of College of Agriculture Dibakar Naik, former director of GRIDCO Prashant

Kumar Pradhan, former director of Institute of Economic Growth Manoj Kumar Panda and former member of National Green Tribunal PC Mishra. Significantly, a three-judge bench of the tribunal headed by Supreme Court judge Justice AM Khanwilkar and comprising Justices Indrmeet Kaur and Rabi Ranjan asked both the states to collect documents from Union ministries and posted the matter for hearing March 13. Earlier, the tribunal had in December last year directed both Odisha and Chhattisgarh to submit a list of witnesses whom they propose to examine. It is to be mentioned here that Odisha and Chhattisgarh have filed petitions in the tribunal in respect of sharing of Mahanadi river water. Odisha in its petition claimed that Chhattisgarh has constructed several barrages on the river obstructing the water flow to Odisha. Odisha has sought a stay on the construction and operation of barrages being built on Mahanadi river and also for maintaining specific flow of water during the non-monsoon months- November to May.

Wildlife Protection Bill has big loopholes: Ramesh

PETA urges Centre to remove what they termed as cruel captive elephant trade and the misnomer 'vermin' from the proposed amendments

Environment, Forest and Climate Change, said, "The Standing Committee has a very complicated task of examining the 50 amendments proposed. We hope to complete this exercise in the next 45 days." The Committee received over 70 responses from experts and institutions on the proposed amendment. "Frankly, this is what the Ministry should have done in the first place," he said. There has been widespread outrage against the proposed amendments and activists have been critical of the government's intention and the hurried manner in which it was set to be passed since it was introduced in the Parliament in December last year. It was a protest letter by Jairam Ramesh to Lok Sabha speaker which ensured that



the government sent the Amendment Bill to the Standing Committee. One of the stakeholders, the People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has urged the government to remove what they termed as cruel captive elephant trade and also the misnomer 'vermin' from the proposed amendments.

After submitting its proposals to be considered for the Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2021, to the Parliamentary Standing Committee, appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to remove provisions from the Bill that would allow cruel commercial trade of captive elephants, a practice universally condemned. The PETA also demanded to remove the provision that declares wild animals as 'vermin' - a term that denies society's understanding of the nature of wildlife - thereby allowing their killing. "The definition of 'vermin' is archaic and declaring certain wild animals 'vermin' in order to kill them in human-wild animal conflict

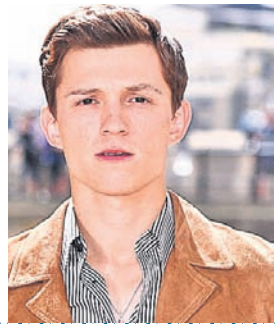
areas is a colonial concept which violates Articles 14, 21, 51-A(g), and 48A of the Constitution of India," PETA India said and recommended that the government implement the already established humane, scientific, and effective alternative methods for preventing and mitigating human-animal conflicts. PETA India, however, welcomed the increased penalties for wildlife related crimes. In a statement, it also commended the Union government for including a new chapter for Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Appendix species in the Bill, in order to confer them protection in the country. **MORE P3**

NIA raids in Odisha, 3 other states over terror funding

New Delhi, Feb 12: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Saturday carried out searches at multiple locations including Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh in connection with a Maoist terror funding case. The NIA, in coordination with Bihar STF and CRPF, conducted searches at 26 locations of the accused and suspects in the districts of Jehanabad (8), Patna rural (2), Arwal (1), Nalanda (1), Gaya (8), Nawada (1) and Aurangabad (2) in Bihar; Koderma (1) district in Jharkhand, Bhubaneswar (1) and Nellore (1) in Andhra Pradesh. The case pertains to a network

of terror financing being operated by CPI (Maoist) cadres and Over Ground Workers (OGWs) in Magadh region of Bihar, the official of the NIA said. Three country-made pistols, one .315 bore rifle, 59 live rounds, several digital devices, Naxal literature, incriminating documents and 4 kg of suspected narcotics have been seized, the NIA official said, adding that further investigation in the case continues. Attempts are being made to raise funds for procurement of arms and ammunition and recruitment of new cadres in liaison with incarcerated Naxals and OGWs in order to revive and strengthen Naxal activities in this region, the official said.

leisure



TOM HOLLAND HAS A LOT IN COMMON WITH MARK WAHLBERG

Hollywood star Tom Holland and filmmaker Mark Wahlberg joined forces to star in the new *Uncharted* movie, and in spite of their age difference, the actor says they're actually quite similar in a lot of ways.

BLADE RUNNER 2049 SEQUEL SERIES IN DEVELOPMENT

A live-action *Blade Runner* sequel series is in development at Amazon. According to *variety.com*, titled *Blade Runner 2099*, the series will serve as a follow-up to the *Blade Runner* sequel *Blade Runner 2049*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
A favourable day as any can be, says Ganesh. You are happy and content with what you have, and you've planned and are working towards what you want. A romantic date may prove interesting or throw up a controversy — decide where you want to take it.

TAURUS
This is one of those days when you don't go well, warns Ganesh. No matter how hard you try you may not be able to keep problems and difficulties at bay. You may not be pleased or comfortable doing what has been assigned, or required, and could simply sit sullenly, doing nothing. Do not, therefore, take up anything difficult or complex.

GEMINI
Your highly competitive nature will push you to perform better and better. You don't even know what being second best means. Getting in touch with like-minded people will only make your resolve stronger. Your desire to be the best will make you take interest in everything that can help you improve.

CANCER
Your business acquaintances will come forward in the manner that may seem nothing short of some divine intervention. This means that they will virtually save your neck from the guillotine, predicts Ganesh. You will grow wiser in your spending ways, as you will know what to buy and what not to buy.

LEO
Motivating people through your own actions is one way; the other is to let your words do the talking. Both are equally effective, says Ganesh. With a bit of help from the stars, today, it is your words that shall hold more weight than your actions, as you make optimum use of your presentation skills.

VIRGO
In all likelihood, you will be eager to grab the monetary challenges that come your way, as they only enhance your desire for success. You will bring up new ideas and better methods of tackling the challenges on hand. Ganesh gives you an assurance that your present business views will do you a world of good.

LIBRA
Some days you get the carrot, while on others, it is the stick! Today is going to be one of those 'stick' days when it comes to dealing with your seniors, foresees Ganesh. It would be wise to delay auction bids or sealed tenders. Sometimes, waiting patiently is the best policy, especially if you are a job aspirant. Do not expect immediate success.

SCORPIO
You shall follow all things to the dot today. Your approach will be methodical and robotic. It is likely that you shall symbolise the saying, 'Actions speak louder than words'. Your powers of persuasion will help you amass the confidences of many, predicts Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
A day full of caution, warns Ganesh. There are chances that your heart will find its partner, forcing you to fall in love. You may be cupid's next prey. However, watch your steps, as the initial stages of a relationship may be fragile and need to be handled with care. Also, it's time to guard your reputation.

CAPRICORN
It will be one of those mundane days with nothing remarkable happening on any front. But don't be disheartened, advises Ganesh; planetary movements indicate there may be a change coming soon, most likely a good one.

AQUARIUS
You do have a way with words and today, you may succeed with your gift of the gab! But Ganesh says that your confused feelings may come in the way of your triumphant achievement. Also, sentiments may lead to a disastrous outcome. Sounds familiar?

PISCES
The fount of your creativity spurts today like there is no tomorrow. For lesser mortals, it takes inspiration, perspiration and a lot of desperation to come up with something creative. You, on the other hand, keenly remember the lessons from your past efforts, and use them today to scale new heights, says Ganesh.

PREPPING FOR GANGUBAI

Alia made to watch Meena Kumari films

Mumbai: Actor Alia Bhatt says she watched a lot of classic Hindi films, particularly those featuring Meena Kumari, to prepare for her role in *Gangubai Kathiawadi* as director Sanjay Leela Bhansali wanted her to channel the old world charm and grace that the heroines of that era had.

Alia also saw Shabana Azmi-starrer *Mandi*, a Shyam Benegal film that featured her mother Soni Razdan, American period drama *Memoirs of a Geisha* and other old Indian films as part of her preparation.

The upcoming period drama features Alia in the title role of Gangubai, one of the most powerful, loved and respected madams from Mumbai's red-light area Kamathipura during the 1960s.

"He (Bhansali) wanted me to watch Meena Kumari's work a lot, her expressions... the way she would sing a song, although I am not going all out singing songs in the movie. There is certain sadness in her eyes, but there is a power to her face. He would say, 'See her face, which is so full'... I also watched *Mandi*," Alia told PTI.

Another instruction from the director for the actor was to 'eat' and 'be happy on the sets'.

"I had the most amount of food on the sets. During the shoot of *Gangubai Kathiawadi*, I was eating all my favourite 'ghar ka' (homemade) food. I had a great time."

"Being an actor is one thing and being a heroine is another. I have been referred to watch these films and whenever I do, I only have admiration, whether it is for Waheeda Rehman ji, Shabana Azmi ji, Madhubala ji... The way they would do these long shots, it gives you goosebumps. Somehow, we have lost that charm of presenting a heroine like that, that old-world charm."

Gangubai Kathiawadi, which the actor calls her 'most creatively satisfying experience', came her way after two previous collaborations with Bhansali fell through.

Bhansali reportedly wanted Alia, known for *Highway*, *Uda Punjab*, *Raazi* and *Gully Boy*, for a film titled *Balika Vadh* when she was just 11. Then, there was *Inshallah* with Salman Khan that didn't work out. The actor admits she was 'heartbroken' when *Inshallah* got shelved.

"But Sanjay sir, being true to his words, said I should take a break and that he has something for me. I went on a holiday and when I came back, he presented this script to me, which he had for a couple of years," said Alia.

AGENCIES



'Worked hard on myself to play Princess Sanyogita'

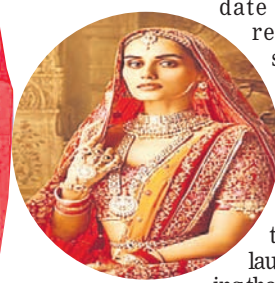
Mumbai: Former beauty queen and debutante Manushi Chhillar currently awaits the release of her maiden film *Prithviraj*. She says she worked harder on herself to play Princess Sanyogita in the movie.

Prithviraj is based on the life and valour of the fearless and mighty king Prithviraj Chauhan. Actor Akshay Kumar is essaying the role of the legendary warrior who fought valiantly against merciless invader Muhammad of Ghor. Manushi has been cast opposite Akshay as Prithviraj's love Princess Sanyogita.

Manushi says, "I'm ecstatic that we now have a date for *Prithviraj's* release on the big screen. It is the ultimate theatrical entertainer that needs to be watched in its full glory. I have been fortunate enough to have gotten this kind of launchpad and I'm hoping that I have done justice to the opportunity that I have got."

She adds, "I worked hard to get the part and I know that I worked on myself harder to play the role of Princess Sanyogita. It was a huge responsibility. I'm thrilled that people are appreciating how I'm looking in the film. I hope that they love how I have performed too because that's going to be my true test on screen."

Prithviraj is directed by Chandraprakash Dwivedi. It will be released worldwide June 10.



Ananya reflects on her on-screen character 'Tia' from *Gehraiyaan*

Mumbai: Actress Ananya Panday is currently making heads turn with her on-screen portrayal of Tia in *Gehraiyaan*. The film is being well received by the audience and critics alike. Ananya has surely made a strong mark in front of experienced actors at such a young age. The actress also feels, Tia is one such character, she would keep with her for a lifetime.

Recently the actress took to her social media handle and shared some stills of *Tia* from the film, expressing her attachment to the character. In the caption, she wrote, For her, it comes as a treat in her life, and the different emotions that she imbibed in herself are something she would like to stay with.

"The many moods of TIA — she was such a treat to play — her innocence, patience, insecurity, maturity, vulnerability, loyalty, love, heartbreak — will stay with me forever. #GehraiyaanOnPrime out now"

With *Gehraiyaan* Ananya put forward her great potential to portray such deep layered character and she has done absolute justice with it.

Meanwhile, on the work front, the actress is all set to make her pan India debut alongside Vijay Deverakonda in *Liger* and will also be seen in *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* which is again with Siddhant Chaturvedi and Adarsh Gourav.

Badhaai Do all set to release in UAE

Mumbai: The Rajkumar Rao and Bhumi Pednekar-starrer *Badhaai Do*, whose storyline revolves around a lavender wedding of convenience, is all set for a release in UAE. The movie, however, will not be screened in Sharjah.

After receiving the Censor certificate, the film will be screened in only night shows in UAE for persons above 21 years of age.

Earlier, when certain countries in the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Jordan, banned the screening of

Chloe Zhao's sci-fi adventure drama, *Eternals*, because of the refusal of its makers to delete certain gay-themed scenes, the UAE had allowed the film's release.

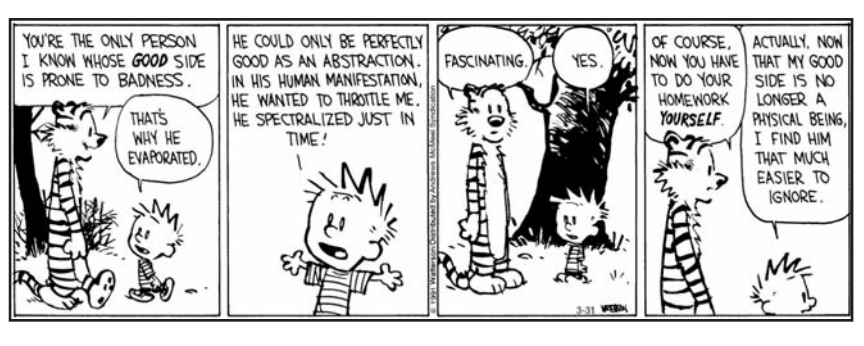
Although *Badhaai Do* has no obvious expressions of same-sex love, as in the case of the *Eternals* characters Ben and Phastos kissing each other, it clearly has an LGBTQ+ theme, which is not acceptable in the Middle East.



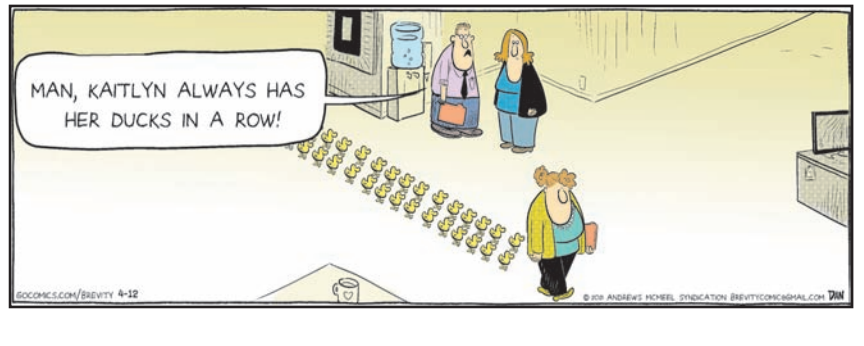
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

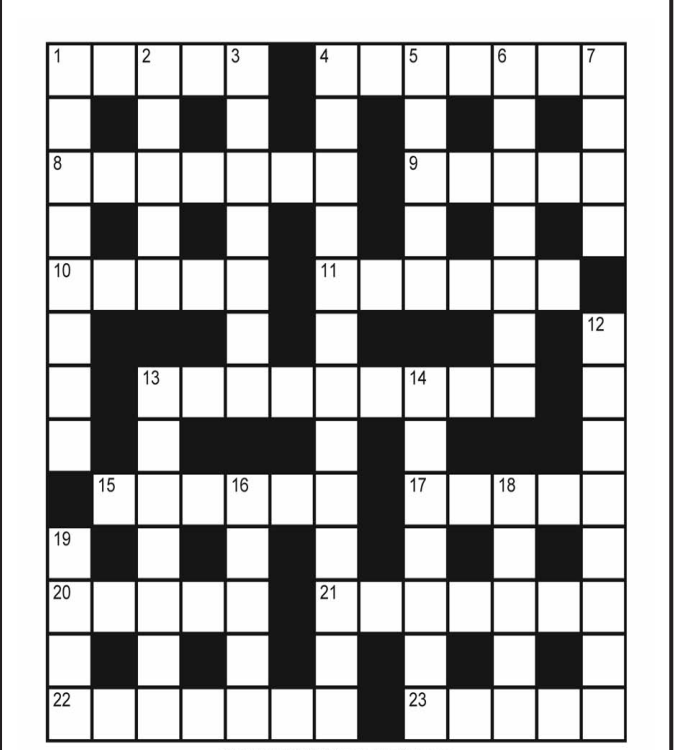


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



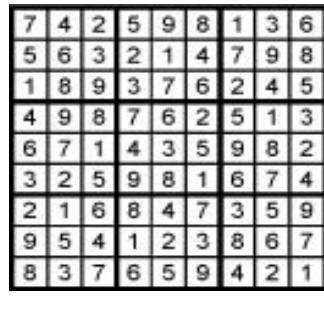
- Across**
- 1 Spiral shell
 - 4 Medium
 - 8 Drive back
 - 9 Venomous snake
 - 10 Snockered
 - 11 Emcees' lines
 - 13 Capital of Iceland
 - 15 Billy clubs
 - 17 Beguile
 - 20 Kind of joint
 - 21 Hot rock
 - 22 Patio
 - 23 Long for
- Down**
- 1 Soft leather
 - 2 Sherpa's home
 - 3 Vacation
 - 4 Kind of result, maybe (6,7)
 - 5 Brewer's need
 - 6 Finnan haddie
 - 7 Succotash ingredient
 - 12 Tortellini topping
 - 13 Atomic pile
 - 14 Motel sign
 - 16 Alpha's opposite
 - 18 Bouquet
 - 19 Exclude

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



SOLUTIONS

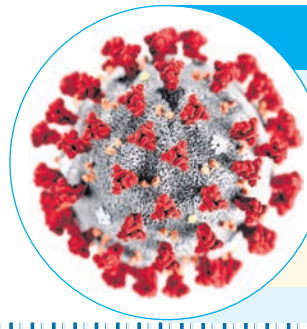


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



RURAL POLLS

The Cuttack district administration arranges buses to carry polling officials to various places for the three-tier panchayat elections



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	40,96,53,894	32,99,11,851	58,23,367
India	4,25,86,544	4,14,68,120	5,07,981
Odisha	12,76,114	12,53,914	8,862

PROBE NEEDED ON LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL RESOLUTION: PATRO

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: Seeking a probe to find out what happened to the copy of Odisha Assembly's resolution on legislative council, "sent to the Centre over four years ago", Speaker SN Patro Saturday said the state would write to the Union government again in this matter. Patro had Friday expressed shock over Union minister Kiren Rijiju's recent assertion that the Centre had no record of any proposal for formation of the legislative council, and said that the resolution was forwarded way back in 2018, having received the Assembly's approval.

“The government will write two letters to the Centre again, attaching the resolution passed by the Odisha Assembly September 18, 2018, for the establishment of the legislative council
”
SN PATRO | SPEAKER

"The government will write two letters to the Centre again, attaching the resolution passed by the Odisha Assembly September 18, 2018, for the establishment of the legislative council," Patro told reporters here.

One letter would be forwarded to Parliament by the state government and the other he would directly send to Rijiju, the Union law and justice minister, the speaker explained.

"We will also urge the law minister to conduct a probe and find out who had furnished inaccurate information to him in the matter," Patro said.

Rijiju, while replying a written question by BJD MP Prasanna Acharya on Thursday, said that as per record, no resolution was received by the Centre on the creation of a legislative council in Odisha.

Wider talks a must before changes in biodiversity laws

WHILE THE BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY ACT IS RELATIVELY RECENT, THE WILDLIFE PROTECTION ACT IS AROUND FIVE DECADES OLD AND IT REQUIRES SOME CHANGES AND UPDATE

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, Feb 12: The Centre, last year, introduced two Bills in Parliament to amend the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 and the Wildlife Protection Act (WLP), 1972. The two Bills were introduced in Parliament without much public consultation.

The Biological Diversity Act, 2002 regulates the use of biological resources and their accessibility and benefits while the Wildlife Protection Act (WLP), 1972 deals with the protection of wild animals from trade, poaching or other threats.

While the Biological Diversity Act is relatively recent, the Wildlife Protection Act is around five decades old and it requires some changes and update. The two Bills have been referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committees for scrutiny.

Orissa POST talks to several environmentalists and experts about the two Bills and what changes would usher in if these Bills were passed by Parliament.

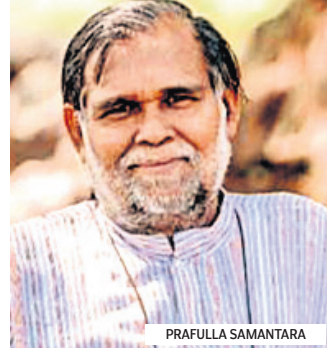
Water and climate change expert Ranjan Panda said these two



Acts are very important for the protection of biodiversity and wildlife. Massive public consultation and thorough scrutiny are a must before effecting any changes to these Acts.

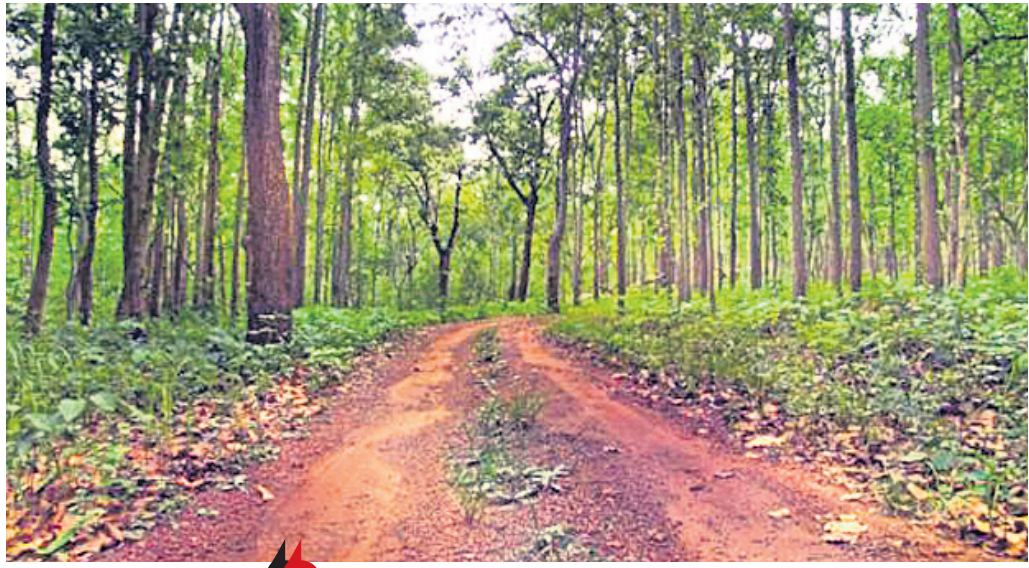
"But, the problem is that the government is more concerned about ease of doing business than protection of environment. The issues related to biodiversity and wildlife are no more a priority area for the government. Creation of sanctuary is not enough for the conservation of wildlife. The conservation of natural resources is vital for combating climate change and health hazards," he added.

Environmental activist Prafulla Samantara alleged that the Centre



was trying to dilute the two Acts and bring certain amendments to favour the corporate houses. "With the passing of these Bills, the corporate houses will have easy access to our natural resources. The proposed amendments are a step forward to privatise the natural resources. This will destroy the indigenous knowledge about medicinal plants of the forest," he said.

In recent times, we have seen that the government is supporting big corporate houses by compromising the life and livelihood of local communities, alleged Samantara. "The residents of Dhinkia in Jagatsinghpur district are facing brutality from the authorities due to their opposition to the transfer of large patches of land to certain corporate houses," he claimed.



With the passing of these Bills, the corporate houses will have easy access to our natural resources. The proposed amendments are a step forward to privatise the natural resources. This will destroy the indigenous knowledge about medicinal plants of the forest

PRAFULLA SAMANTARA | ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST

The proposal to consult the Gramsabha and forest dwellers for management of sanctuaries is a good step. The current law excludes the locals from the management of the sanctuaries and national parks. The proposal to involve the local communities in the management of sanctuaries will certainly help in the conservation of wildlife through indigenous knowledge

SANKAR PRASAD PANI | NGT LAWYER

National Green Tribunal (NGT) lawyer Sankar Prasad Pani said



the proposed amendment to the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 is a major step to bring changes to a 50-

year-old law. The very objective and scope of the law has been expanded from protection to conservation and management of wildlife. This is a conscious decision of the ministry to emphasize on a holistic approach to the wildlife.

"There are many positive aspects in the proposed amendments. The proposal to consult the Gramsabha and forest dwellers for management of sanctuaries is a good step. The current law excludes the locals from the management of the sanctuaries and national parks. The proposal to involve the local communities in the management of sanctuaries will certainly help in the conservation of wildlife through indigenous knowledge," he added.

Environmentalist Sudarshan Das said the proposed amendments



will do more harm than good with regard to the protection of wildlife and biodiversity. In recent times, the government is trying to bring changes and amendments to several Acts to help the corporate houses. The Interstate River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2019 is an example in this regard.

Wildlife Crime Control Bureau member Bijaya Kumar Kabi said



there is a need to strengthen the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 to check incidents of poaching and trade of wildlife species. "We have to strengthen the implementation and enforcement of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 to protect wild animals from poachers and smugglers. The law should treat the crime against humans and animals equally and the culprits should get equal punishment," he added.

Environmentalist Jaya Krushna Panigrahi said laws



need to withstand the scrutiny of time. The WLP, 1972 has been amended several times since its promulgation but the BDA, 2002 is yet to see its fullest implementation.

"Many environmental activists apprehend that the provisions of the proposed amendments may weaken the potential of the Acts and they have criticised the government for not inviting suggestions from the public. Now, the two Bills have been referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee and the Joint Parliamentary Committee respectively. The best option before the committees is to have wider consultations with the experts and scientists working in the fields of wildlife and biodiversity. The objective is to incorporate additional measures for reinforcing the protection of wildlife and their habitats," he said.

40 platoons of force for Prez's security

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, Feb 12: The district administration will deploy 40 platoons of police force and 200 officials for the two-day visit of President Rama Nath Kovind to the Holy City here, starting February 19.

A decision to this effect was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Collector Samarth Verma here Saturday. The President is scheduled to visit Srimandir and Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya mutt in the city here. He will also participate in an event at Saradhahali, sources said.

The Collector asked the officials to repair some major roads of the city for the high-profile visit

The District Collector, meanwhile, asked the officials concerned to repair some major roads of the city for the high-profile visit. He also directed the officials to ensure uninterrupted power supply and arrange a team of health staff to meet any eventuality.

"President Ram Nath Kovind's visit coincides with the voting for the three-tier panchayat elections

in Puri Sadar area. We will deploy adequate police force for both purposes," said Puri Superintendent of Police Kanwar Vishal Singh.

Elaborating on the arrangements for President's Srimandir visit, Verma said the administration would ban devotees' entry to the 12th century shrine for some time to ensure foolproof security for the first citizen of the country.

The administration has also decided to issue identity cards to the sadhus and employees of Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya mutt for their participation at the religious ceremony at Saradhahali.

Spurt in unregulated street food in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 11: With more and more people liking street foods, the state capital is witnessing a rise in number of illegal and unregulated roadside eateries dishing out adulterated food.

As per sources, the rise in demand for food through online platforms coupled with loss of livelihood has spurred increase in small scale food and snack shops here. With no permits, these eateries are reportedly said to prepare and sell food in unhygienic conditions.

"During inspections it was found that these food stalls have been giving food that did either expire or were not being prepared under hygienic conditions. Moreover, many have been found running without a trade license. We have sealed more than 100 shops over past three years but many more have crept up lately owing to the pandemic," said a former BMC official.

It can be mentioned that ahead of the New Year and festival celebrations, the civic authorities had collected fines of up to Rs50 lakh and ordered to seal about 50

roadside eateries that were found operating without trade license or indulging in unhygienic and unsafe food preparations. In fact, the BMC Friday raided Shri Krishna Sweets near DAV Chandrasekharpur and fined Rs2,000 for sale of stale food which is under gross violation of Food and Safety Standards Act.

"Apart from being mindful of the surroundings where the food is being made and served one should also keep in mind that these street foods have a high level of sugar, fat and salt in it. Regular consumption

of them can lead to severe health complications. It can also cause food-borne diseases due to ease of contamination by pathogenic and non-pathogenic microorganisms," explained Subrat Das, a gastroenterologist here.

Sources also said with invention of online food platforms, the quality check for food has gone for a toss. "Many lost their livelihood during Covid and opened small food stalls with their modest savings. However, to earn profits a few such eateries have compromised on quality," the official added.

Post-jab workout bumps up antibodies: Study

IN THE STUDY, THE RESEARCHERS ALSO TESTED WHETHER PARTICIPANTS COULD GET THE SAME BUMP IN ANTIBODIES WITH JUST 45-MINUTES OF EXERCISING. THEY FOUND THAT THE SHORTER WORKOUT DID NOT INCREASE THE PARTICIPANTS' ANTIBODY LEVELS



“Our preliminary results are the first to demonstrate that a specific amount of time can enhance the body's antibody response to the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine and two vaccines for influenza
”
MARIAN KOHUT | LEAD AUTHOR & RESEARCHER, IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY, USA

had a BMI in the overweight or obese category. During 90 minutes of exercise, they focused on maintaining a pace that kept their heart rate around 120-140 beats per minute rather than distance.

In the study, the researchers also tested whether participants could get the same bump in antibodies with just 45-minutes of exercising. They found that the shorter workout did not increase the participants' antibody levels.

As to why prolonged, mild-to-moderate-intensity exercise could improve the body's immune response, Kohut said there could be multiple reasons. Working out increases blood and lymph flow, which helps immune cells circulate. As these cells move around the body, they're more likely to detect something foreign, the researcher said.

WORKING OUT INCREASES BLOOD AND LYMPH FLOW, WHICH HELPS IMMUNE CELLS CIRCULATE

AS THESE CELLS MOVE AROUND THE BODY, THEY'RE MORE LIKELY TO DETECT SOMETHING FOREIGN

post-immunisation. The researchers, including lead author Marian Kohut from Iowa State University, found similar results when

they ran an experiment with mice and treadmills.

"Our preliminary results are the first to demonstrate that a specific amount of time can enhance the body's antibody response to the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine and two vaccines for influenza," said Kohut. The researchers also said the study's findings could directly benefit people with a range of fitness levels.

Nearly half of the participants in the study, published in the journal Brain, Behavior and Immunity,

On the occasion of Saraswati Puja

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of the **quote**

BJP is the only party which is faithful to its ideas and believes in collectiveness. Except BJP, all parties have become family-run parties



JP NADDA | BJP PRESIDENT

Some leaders are not happy that a party worker like me has reached this post. They feel only specific people should occupy this post. That is the reason they are spreading such rumours



PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CM

Before Independence, the word 'darbar' was connected to royalty, while in the present times, it is associated with democracy. The modern concept of 'darbar' promotes transparency, which is the most important aspect of good governance in a democratic system



RAM NATH KOVIND | PRESIDENT



The state will not implement power reforms being pushed by the Centre
K. CHANDRASEKHAR RAO |
TELANGANA CM

INDIA TO SHOWCASE TEJAS

India will showcase its indigenously developed Tejas light combat aircraft at the four-day Singapore Air Show next week



HIJAB ROW

Motivated comments not welcome: India

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 12: India Saturday rejected criticism by some countries over the simmering dress code row in certain educational institutions in Karnataka and said that "motivated comments" on the country's internal issues are not welcomed.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said that those who know India well would have a proper appreciation of the realities. "A matter regarding dress code in some educational institutions in the State of Karnataka is under judicial examination by the High Court of Karnataka," he said.

"Our constitutional framework and mechanisms, as well as our democratic ethos and polity, are the context in which issues are considered and resolved. Those



Muslim women hold placards and shout slogans, while wearing burqa in a protest, in support of female Muslim students in Karnataka

who know India well would have a proper appreciation of these realities. Motivated comments on our internal issues are not

welcome," he said.

Bagchi's response came when asked by the media about comments by some countries on dress code in some educational institutions in Karnataka. US Ambassador-at-large for International Religious Freedom (IRF) Rashad Hussain on Friday said that hijab bans in schools "violate religious" freedom.

"Religious freedom includes the ability to choose one's religious attire. The Indian state of Karnataka should not determine permissibility of religious clothing. Hijab bans in schools violate religious freedom and stigmatize and marginalize women and girls," he tweeted.

PIL in SC seeks common dress code

New Delhi: Amid the ongoing hijab row, a plea has been moved in the Supreme Court seeking direction to the Centre and states to implement a "common dress code" in registered and state recognised educational institutions in order to secure social equality assure dignity and promote national integration. The plea filed by Nikhil Upadhayay, a resident of Ghaziabad, said that the role of universal education for strengthening the social fabric of democracy through provisions of equal opportunity to all has been accepted since the inception of our republic. "Thus, a common dress code is not only necessary to enhance the values of equality, social justice, democracy and to create a just and humane society but also essential to curtail the biggest menace of casteism communalism classism radicalism separatism and fundamentalism," said the plea filed through advocate Ashwani Kumar Dubey.

NCB busts narco network operating on 'darknet'

Four cases have been lodged in the matter and 17 seizures were made during this country-wide operation, officials said

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: The NCB has arrested 22 people, including software engineers, a financial analyst, an MBA graduate and one of their own personnel as it busted a pan-India drug trafficking network that uses the 'darknet' and cryptocurrency to courier narcotics at home.

The federal anti-narcotics agency unearthed three major drug markets - DNM India, DRED, and The Orient Express - running on the hidden web world after a four-month operation in Delhi-NCR, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Assam, Punjab, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Rajasthan.

Four cases have been lodged in the matter and 17 seizures were made during this country-wide operation, officials said. The recreational drugs were being sourced from countries like the USA, UK, Netherlands and Poland using courier services and also the India Post network, said Narcotics Control Bureau deputy director-general

for northern region Gyaneshwar Singh at a press conference here.

"The network was busted after a long operation that was initiated after a drug parcel was intercepted by us in Kolkata." "Our special investigation team that conducts cyber patrolling to check the usage of darknet has busted three big networks being run in the country using the darknet, anonymous cryptocurrency transactions and pseudonymous social media profiles," Singh said.

Darknet denotes the hidden Internet platforms that can only be accessed using specialised software and pre-configured communication protocols for anonymous communication. Drugs cartels and syndicates are known to use this to stay under the radar of law enforcement agencies.

Singh claimed that the use of courier parcels for drugs delivery has increased following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Twenty-two people, including four women, have been arrested and they are in judicial custody. One person has been granted interim bail to attend an exam, Singh said.

The accused are in the age group of 20-35 years. They include engineers, software experts, a doctor, financial consultants, businessmen, an MBA, a musician and some school dropouts.

It's not all love and roses as Goa braces for Valentine's Day polls

In the 2017 Assembly polls, the BJP ended up with just 13 seats, despite winning 32.48 per cent vote share, more than four per cent of the share cornered by the Congress which won 17 seats

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Panaji, Feb 12: Love and roses will not form the backdrop for this Valentine's Day in Goa, which is headed for a tough electoral contest, where the ruling BJP and the Congress, continue to be the focal point in state politics, even as newer, more aggressive parties appear to have

been relegated to the margins.

A total of 11,56,464 voters are eligible to cast ballot in the February 14 assembly polls, where the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party is looking to fight off severe anti-incumbency accumulated over its successive governments headed by former Chief Minister late Manohar Parrikar and his successor Pramod Sawant.

The BJP is, however, confident of victory, with its leaders claiming that the party's pitch of a "double-engine government" winning favour with the electorate, especially with nearly Rs. 25,000 crore in central funds pumped into the state since Prime Minister Narendra Modi assumed power in the national capital in 2014.

"Goa has been in a position to get unprecedented central government funding for the last eight years because of the double engine government with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Centre and



Samajwadi Party supporters hold party flags during a public meeting of SP president Akhilesh Yadav, ahead of the second phase of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, at Loda Baheri village in Budaun

Election campaign time limits eased

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: The Election Commission Saturday further relaxed COVID-19-induced restrictions on the assembly poll campaign in five states, allowing padayatras with a limited number of people and increasing the number of hours campaigning can take place in a day.

According to the poll panel, elec-

tion campaign can now be conducted between 6 am and 10 pm instead of earlier 8 am to 8 pm. This will give candidates and parties four more hours to campaign in a day.

Citing the rise in COVID-19 cases, the poll panel had imposed a ban on physical rallies, roadshows and padayatras when it announced the assembly poll schedule for Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Punjab

and Manipur on January 8.

The commission has been reviewing the pandemic situation periodically and allowing some relaxations. According to an EC statement, political parties and candidates can campaign outdoor with a maximum of 50 per cent of the capacity of the designated open spaces or the limit prescribed by state disaster management authorities, whichever is less.



a BJP government in the state. Goa has witnessed development as never before in that period," according to state BJP president Sadanand Shet Tanavade.

In the 2017 assembly polls, the BJP ended up with just 13 seats, despite winning 32.48 per cent vote

share, more than four per cent of the share cornered by the Congress which won 17 seats.

This time round though, controversy-ridden tenures led by Sawant and Parrikar - the latter ruled from a hospital bed before he died in March 2019, may impact

the party's fortunes. The absence of Parrikar, who shepherded and strategised the party's rise to power, high profile internal rebellions led by Parrikar's own son Utpal and ex Chief Minister Laxmikant Parsekar as well as the party's inability to seal a pre-poll alliance with the Maharashtra Gomantak Party - BJP and the MGP share the traditional Hindu conservative vote base - may also cost the ruling party dear.

The Congress on the other hand, which had lost both face and MLAs - 15 of the party's legislators quit since 2017 out of which 13 joined the BJP - has fielded 80 per cent new faces in the elections.

The party has departed from its almost ritualistic tradition of allotting tickets to established heavy weights and habitual defectors. In order to regain popular traction, the opposition party also put up a 'grand' show of its candidates pledg-

Mamata forms new panel to stem rift



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, Feb 12: In a significant development, Trinamool Congress Chairperson and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Saturday dissolved all the existing posts in the party and formed a 20-member national working committee after holding a meeting with some senior party leaders at her Kalighat residence.

The name of the new office-bearers will later be announced by Mamata Banerjee herself. The significant announcement came at a time when there were rumours that the party's All-India General Secretary, Abhishek Banerjee, is likely to step down from all organisational responsibilities allegedly because of differences with some senior party leaders.

"Mamata Banerjee was re-elected as the Chairperson of the party recently where she announced a small committee to look after party affairs. Today (Saturday), a meeting of that com-

mittee was held where she announced our new national working committee," said senior Trinamool leader Partha Chatterjee.

He added that Mamata Banerjee will later appoint the new office-bearers and accordingly it would be sent to the Election Commission of India.

Among the leaders who found a place in the national working committee are Amit Mitra, Partha Chatterjee, Subrata Bakshi, Sudip Bandopadhyay, Abhishek Banerjee, Anubrata Mondal, Aroop Biswas, Firhad Hakim, Yashwant Sinha, Asima Patra, Chandrima Bhattacharjee, Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar, Sobhande Chattopadhyay, Sukhendu Sekhar Roy, Moloy Ghatak, Jyotipriya Mallick, Goutam Deb, Buluchik Baraik and Rajesh Tripathi.

Interestingly, most of the members of the national working committee belong to Mamata camp, indicative enough that the Chief Minister is keen to establish her control over the party.

NCB, Navy seize drugs worth ₹2K cr

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 12: The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and the Indian Navy, in a joint operation have busted a drug trafficking racket and have seized around 529 kg of very high quality of hashish, 234 kg of finest quality of crystal Methamphetamine and some quantity of Heroin, valued at ₹2,000 crore.

This is the first such operation on high seas. The present seizure has dealt a blow to drug syndicates based out of our neighbouring country and using maritime route for trafficking drugs in India and other countries.

A senior NCB official said that the seized drugs are valued at Rs 2,000 crore in international market, however the official didn't reveal the names of those behind the racket.

"The input regarding trafficking of drugs on high seas was developed by the NCB and was shared with Naval Intelligence Unit, leading to a joint operation. This was carried out under the supervision of seniors and we recovered huge cache of drugs," said an NCB official.

The official said that special unit of the NCB Headquarters have been continuously working on various such intelligence inputs and it will be our endeavour to carry out more such operations in future in collaboration with the naval forces.

ing before gods and on affidavits over not switching parties in their term as MLAs, if they are elected.

"In this election, the old Congress is actually the BJP, TMC and the AAP. They have taken away all the old Congress leaders who have destroyed the party. The new Congress going to the elections has 80 percent new faces. We are confident of winning a majority this time," state Congress president Girish Chodankar said.

Both parties initially appeared to be in shock at the initial volleys served by the AAP and the TMC, who had aggressively heckled the primary players, with promises of freebies, jobs. The impact of the freebies promised by the two new players have also rubbed off on the two major players.

The Congress has now promised Rs 6,000 to each economically backward family, while the BJP has promised three free LPG gas cylinders.

of the day quote

The ministry is ready with a result-oriented action plan for the welfare and upliftment of the members of scheduled tribes with a substantial increase in its budgetary allocations for 2022-23

ARJUN MUNDA | TRIBAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

The Uniform Civil Code is the need of the hour and it should be discussed both in Parliament and in the society

GIRIRAJ SINGH | BJP LEADER

The BJP will receive positive mandate in the five state assembly polls for its development works and welfare measures for the poor

NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER

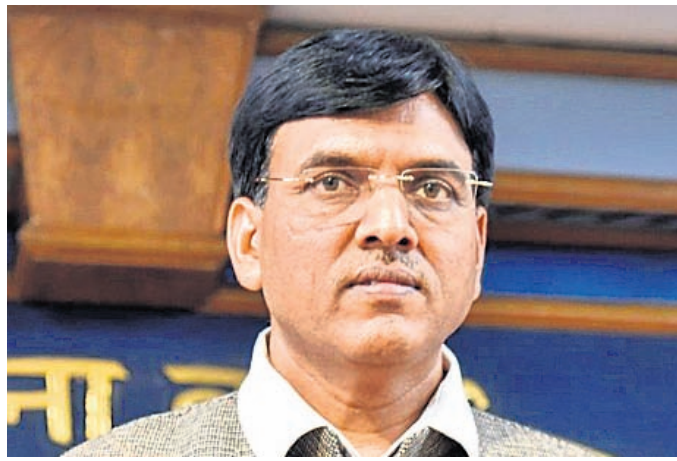
Govt spent ₹250 cr on vaccine research

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Gandhinagar Feb 12: Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said Saturday that the Central government has spent ₹250 crore on research for developing vaccines to counter the Covid-19 virus.

Mandaviya was addressing a programme titled 'Shri Kamalam' to explain the benefits of the Union Budget 2022-23 at the Gujarat BJP headquarters here. "The Centre spent and shared ₹250 crore with private research institutes working on developing Covid vaccines. We started taking action long back as we knew that vaccination was the key to fight the global pandemic. In order to develop vaccines, research was needed. In April 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called upon the scientists of both government and private institutes and encouraged them to develop vaccines. Irrespective of whether they succeeded, the Centre supported them with funding.

"As a result, our scientists developed indigenous Corona vaccine, parallel to the other devel-



oped countries, and the nationwide vaccination drive was rolled out on January 16, 2021. We also started manufacturing rapidly and before the third wave struck, we vaccinated a large section of the population. We have achieved 96 per cent vaccination for the first dose, and 77.5 per cent for the second dose. Experts say that in India, 99.31 per cent of vaccinated people (first and second dose) were kept safe from Covid-19 due to vac-

nation," Mandaviya said. Stating that India is a vast country with so many cultural, social and financial diversities, the Health Minister said, "So we have made the Budget an all inclusive and comprehensive one with a long-term vision, considering a period of 25 years. This is the vision of the Prime Minister, and that is why we are saying that the Budget is for the 'Amrit Kaal'.

"We also identified 53 raw ma-

We are not criticising him, but we saw an irony.

The irony of the matter is that right next to the site of the PM's helipad, a bus stop was to be built, and it hasn't come up in 20 years

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CM

RICH TRIBUTES

The Indian Army Saturday paid rich tributes to the seven soldiers who died earlier this week after being trapped in an avalanche in Arunachal Pradesh



UNPRECEDENTED MOVE

Dhankhar prorogues West Bengal Assembly

According to constitutional experts, there is no instance in recent history that a Governor proroguing a session of the Assembly without the consent of the Speaker of the Assembly or the Chief Minister of the state

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, Feb 12: In an unprecedented move, West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar prorogued the state Legislative Assembly from February 12, implying that the state government will have to take permission from the governor for the next session and it should begin with his speech.

"In exercise of the powers conferred upon me by sub-clause (a) of clause (2) of article 174 of the Constitution, I, Jagdeep Dhankhar, Governor of the State of West Bengal, hereby prorogue the West Bengal Legislative Assembly with effect from 12 February, 2022, the Governor in his order wrote.

Prorogation is discontinuing a session of Parliament or a legislative Assembly without dissolving it.

The prorogation order before the important budget session which is likely to commence from the end of February or early March is significant because the ruling party was mulling to bring motion against Governor Dhankhar during the upcoming session, accusing him of interfering in the day-to-day activities of the state government.

According to constitutional experts, there is no instance in recent history that a Governor proroguing a session of the Assembly without the consent of the Speaker of the Assembly or the Chief Minister of the state.

The move came after on Friday, TMC Rajya Sabha MP Sukhendu Sekhar Ray had submitted a Substantive Motion under Rule 170 in the Rajya Sabha, urging President Ram Nath Kovind to remove Jagdeep Dhankhar as West Bengal Governor.

"This is an unprecedented move. The Governor has overstepped his constitutional duties because there should be a gap of six months be-



tween two sessions of the state Assembly. No Governor of the country has ever done this before. Earlier, he was not giving his consent to several bills and now, he has prorogued the Assembly. This is completely unjust. The state government should move the court against this," Trinamool Congress MP said.

According to political experts, the order of prorogation is a result of the prolonged conflict between Dhankhar and the state government where the governor has repeatedly alleged that his letters are not replied, his queries are not answered and his constitutional authority is continuously undermined by the Speaker and the state government.

The governor had also alleged that the bureaucracy, including the chief secretary and the DGP, had failed to present themselves despite several reminders.

The rift between the governor and the chief minister reached a flashpoint after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee recently blocked the Governor on Twitter for purportedly tagging her in all of his posts, criticising her administration. The Governor has been targeting the state government over a host of issues and seeking information and reports regarding appointments to various posts.

SHORT TAKES

Two engineers die

Bhopal: Two railway employees died and three were injured after a section of an under-construction under bridge collapsed in Sagar district of Madhya Pradesh. At the time of the incident, several workers and some senior railway employees were carrying out construction works. Sources said railway department was carrying out construction work on an under-bridge of the railway track in Sumari village. Workers and railway engineers were carrying out digging. Around 9:30 p.m. on Friday, a train passed through the track (over under-construction under bridge) due to which, a huge portion of soil collapsed and labourers and railway employees got buried under the debris.

Woman injured

New Delhi: Delhi Police has arrested two people involved in a snatching incident in Shahdara district which had left a woman grievously injured. The accused were identified as Manish, alias Rishi, and Mohit Gupta, alias Kikky, both residents of Patparganj in Delhi. Of the two accused, Manish was found as a habitual and full time robber with 106 previous involvements of snatching. The incident took place around 1 p.m. on February 7, when the complainant alongwith her sister-in-law was going on an e-rickshaw to attend a marriage function.

Telangana cop killed

Hyderabad: A policeman was killed when a gun went off accidentally in Telangana's Bhadradi Kothagudem district Saturday, police said. The incident occurred when Santosh was engaged in a post-protection weapon drill at a police station in the early hours of the day. A police officer said that he died on the spot due to the gunshot injury in the head. The incident took place in Kachanapalle police station in Yellandu mandal. Santosh was examining weapons after the night duty when the misfire happened.

Two thrashed

New Delhi: Two people were brutally thrashed by four men in Delhi over an old property dispute, an official here said Saturday. The four accused have been identified as Jagat (62), Harender (41), Sumit (29) and Amit (24). The police have however only arrested Jagat so far. Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) (Northeast) Sanjay Sain said that to make everyone fear him in the area, Jagat put up fake boards of advocate and BJP on display. "The matter will be taken up with the BJP officials and bar council," he said. Sharing details of the incident, the DCP said that the incident took place on Friday evening in northeast Delhi's New Usmanpur.

AP cops burn 2 lakh kg cannabis worth ₹500 crore

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Visakhapatnam, Feb 12: In what is believed to be the biggest operation of its kind, Andhra Pradesh police on Saturday destroyed more than two lakh kilograms of ganja (cannabis) valued at ₹500 crore.

The dried ganja was set afire at an event organised on a massive scale by the police Visakhapatnam district. Director General of Police D. Gautam Sawang lit one of the heaps of seized ganja to formally launch the event that was organised in an open area at Koduru village in Anakapalli mandal. Andhra Pradesh Police and Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB) Visakhapatnam district conducted the event.

The authorities pitched fancy tents and deployed drone cameras, speakers, sound systems for the well-organised programme. Personnel from the Disaster Response Force and fire services department were deployed besides a large number of policemen. Print and electronic media were also invited to cover the event. This is said to be the largest quantity of drugs destroyed anywhere in the country in one go.

The ganja was seized during the last two years at various places in north Andhra districts of Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam and also East Godavari.

According to police, the ganja was seized under operation Parivartan. The police registered 1,363 cases and arrested 1,500 accused including 562 from other states.

As part of the operation, the police also destroyed cannabis plants spread over 8,500 acres in the region during the last 15 months.

The Andhra-Odisha border area is notorious for large-scale ganja cultivation. In recent months, police in Telangana, Maharashtra, Karnataka and other states seized huge quantities of ganja while being transported from the region to different places in the country.

VENTING ANGER



Police detain Indian Youth Congress members who were staging a protest against Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sharma, outside Assam Bhawan in New Delhi

Set up 1 all-women PS in each district: Par panel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 12: A parliamentary panel has observed that the number of women in police forces is "abysmally" low, constituting just 10.3 per cent, and suggested at least one all-women police station be established in each district in the country.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Home Affairs, headed by Congress leader Anand Sharma, also said that a roadmap should be laid out to increase their representation in the police force to 33 per cent.

"The committee is anguished to note that women are abysmally under-represented in the police force as they constitute only 10.3 per cent of the police force," it said in its report submitted to Parliament this week.

The panel recommended that the MHA should advise states and



UTs to establish at least one all-women police station in each district. Further, the committee said, the appointment of women in police may be done by creating additional posts rather than converting vacant posts of male constables as it will also help in improving the police-population ratio

in the country. "Besides increasing the percentage of women in police, taking a cue from the defence forces where women are being assigned combatative roles, the MHA may also advise the states and UTs to give them important challenging duties central to the police, and not just du-

How virtual campaign generates jobs for youth

With the focus on virtual campaigning, majority of the candidates are hiring young people who can push their campaign on social media

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, Feb 12: The elections in Uttar Pradesh have created job opportunities, albeit temporary, for youth who are tech-savvy.

With the focus on virtual campaigning, majority of the candidates are hiring young people who can push their campaign on the social media. Most of the cyber-smart campaigners are either in college or just out of college. Samarth Gupta, an undergraduate, has been hired on a two-month contract by

a candidate in Lucknow. "The candidate wanted to hire me for one month because polling in Lucknow will be over on February 23 but I insisted on a two-month contract and he agreed. All I have to do is to post photographs of his campaign, create some slogans and retweet the posts of top leaders," he said.

Samarth is being paid a sum of ₹40,000 per month. Shalini Awasthi, who has done her Master's in public administration, is working for a woman candidate from the BJP and is being paid ₹50,000 for one month.

"Working for a BJP candidate is much easier because the party's IT cell provides a lot of content and I only need to retweet it or forward and share it. I also make sure that my client gets photographed well during her campaign-I sometimes accompany her-



and she is projected in a favourable light. So far, we have avoided commenting on contentious issues because we are also targeting the floating voters," she explained and added that special videos are also being made for Instagram accounts of her client.

There is a greater demand for youth who are well versed in

English too because that takes care of a bilingual campaign.

Shashwat Banerjee, an MBA student, has landed an assignment for social media management simply because he is a Bengali and knows the language. "There are a large number of Bengalis in the constituency of my client and he wants all his so-

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Home Affairs said that a roadmap should be laid out to increase their representation in the police force to 33%

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 12: Two days after the Border Security Force (BSF) seized 11 fishing boats in the Creek area, it arrested six Pakistani nationals Friday in the Harami Nalla area in Gujarat's Bhuj.

The BSF said that force's Creek Crocodile Commando teams were involved in a search operation in the area to look for the intruders. The Force officials said that the inclement weather, extreme marshy area, mangroves and tidal waters are making task of the troops challenging.

Officials said that after the arrest of the fishermen, search operation has been continued as they apprehend that more intruders likely to be there

The arrest of these Pakistani fishermen came after the search operation was in progress in the areas following the seizure of 11 Pakistani fishermen boats near around the Harami Nala. On February 9, during late afternoon, intrusion of Pakistani fishing boats and fishermen was reported. DIG BSF Bhuj immediately launched a massive search operation in the area spread over almost 300 sq km while the BSF IG Gujarat Frontier GS Malik reached Kutch from Gandhinagar and was personally monitoring the massive search operation.

BSF's three groups of commandos were air dropped by Air Force helicopter from three different directions; commandos have been closing in where the Pakistanis intruders might hide.

The officials also said that after the arrest of six Pakistani fishermen, search operation has been continued as they apprehend that more intruders likely to be there.

international

of the day quote

The United States will re-establish an embassy in the Solomon Islands in an effort to counter China's influence in the politically troubled Pacific island

China believes that the so-called Quad group cobbled together by the US, Japan, India and Australia is essentially a tool for containing and besieging China to maintain US hegemony

I'm also proud to announce today a series of new initiatives to boost the education and cultural ties between Australia and India. The initiatives are appropriately called the Maitri meaning friendship initiatives

SHORT TAKES

Iran doubts N-talks
Teheran: Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has said Iran never pins its hopes on the Vienna talks aimed at reviving the 2015 nuclear agreement, noting its reliance on its people and domestic potentials.

Balochs abducted
New Delhi: Pakistani security forces have abducted dozens of individuals from Panjur in Balochistan in the past few days after the massive attacks on security forces. The Voice for Baloch Missing Persons (VBMP) held a press conference in the Quetta Press Club Friday where VBMP General Secretary Sammi Deen Baloch addressed journalists and the public on the recent alarming developments in Balochistan, Balochistan Post reported.

US order flayed
Kabul: Demonstrators in Afghanistan's capital Saturday condemned President Joe Biden's order freeing up \$3.5 billion in Afghan assets held in the US for families of America's 9/11 victims - saying the money belongs to Afghans. Protesters who gathered outside Kabul's grand Eid Gah mosque asked America for financial compensation for the tens of thousands of Afghans killed during the last 20 years of war in Afghanistan. Biden's order, signed Friday, allocates another \$3.5 billion in Afghan assets for humanitarian aid to a trust fund to be managed by the UN to provide aid to Afghans.

Minor shoots family
Madrid: A 15-year-old boy has been arrested in Spain on suspicion of shooting dead his parents and 10-year-old brother following a row over bad school grades, police said Saturday. The incident occurred Tuesday evening in a rural area just outside Elche, about 20 kilometres (12 miles) from the southeastern port city of Alicante. It was not discovered until Friday night by a relative who turned up to check on them, a police spokesman said.



Our expectation is that the acute phase of this pandemic will end this year, of course with one condition, the 70 percent vaccination target is achieved by mid this year around June, July

TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS | DIRECTOR-GENERAL, WHO

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR BORIS

UK PM Boris Johnson has received a questionnaire from London's Metropolitan Police as part of the investigation into parties in Downing Street during Covid lockdowns. If he is found to have broken his government's own Covid rules, the embattled PM could be fined and will face even more pressure to stand down from his position



Putin, Biden plan high-stakes phone call

REUTERS

Washington, Feb 12: US President Joe Biden and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin will speak Saturday as Western nations warned a war in Ukraine could ignite at any moment.

Putin requested the telephone call between the leaders to take place Monday, a White House official said, but Biden wanted to conduct it sooner as Washington detailed increasingly vivid accounts of a possible attack on Ukraine.

Moscow has repeatedly disputed Washington's version of events, saying it has massed more than 100,000 troops near the Ukrainian border to maintain its own security against aggression by NATO allies.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken expressed hope that Putin would choose diplomacy but said Washington would impose swift economic sanctions if Moscow invades.

"I continue to hope that he will not choose the path of renewed aggression and he'll choose the path of diplomacy and dialogue," Blinken told reporters after a meeting with Pacific leaders in Fiji. "But if he doesn't, we're prepared."

Putin, jostling for influence in

RUSSIA-UKRAINE CRISIS

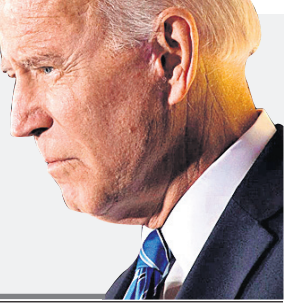
As tensions over an imminent invasion of Ukraine escalated sharply in a few days, the two leaders are expected to find a diplomatic solution to avert the crisis amid calls from various countries to their citizens to evacuate Ukraine immediately



Two calls in December between Biden and Putin produced no breakthroughs

Four-way talks in Berlin between Russia, Ukraine, Germany and France Thursday made no progress

Washington also expressed concern that Russia and China were cooperating at the highest level



post-Cold War Europe, is seeking security guarantees from Biden to block Kyiv's entry into NATO and missile deployments near Russia's borders.

Washington regards many of the proposals as non-starters but has pushed the Kremlin to discuss them jointly with Washington and its European allies.

Still, Biden, who will join the weekend call from the mountain-side presidential retreat in Camp

David, Maryland, has long believed that one-on-one engagement with Putin may be the best chance at a resolution.

Putin also plans to speak with French President Emmanuel Macron Saturday, according to Russia's TASS news agency.

US intelligence believes a rapid assault on Kyiv is possible and that Putin could order an invasion before the Winter Olympics

end Feb 20, Biden's national security adviser Jake Sullivan told reporters Friday, adding it remains unclear whether such a command has been given.

He said they had gathered sufficient troops near the border to invade the country and that they may initiate an aerial bombing.

On Twitter, Russia's Deputy UN Ambassador Dmitry Polyanskiy accused Washington of fanning "hysteria" and mounting a "panic campaign."

US sends 3,000 additional troops

Washington: The United States will send 3,000 additional troops to Poland, Poland's Defence Minister said late Friday, confirming an earlier Reuters report, as Russia held military exercises in Belarus and the Black Sea following the buildup of its forces near Ukraine. The additional troops will be sent to Poland in the coming days, four US officials told Reuters Friday. The deployment comes as Washington steps up warnings that Russia could be poised to invade Ukraine. Russia denies it plans to invade, saying it is defending its own security against aggression by NATO allies. Polish Defence Minister Mariusz Blaszczak wrote Twitter late Friday that Poland is ready to welcome the US troops anytime. The



soldiers are in addition to the 8,500 troops already on alert to be ready to deploy to Europe if needed and the nearly 3,000 American troops the administration said earlier this month it would deploy to Poland and Romania.

Ukraine's pensive message to citizens

Kyiv: Ukraine urged its citizens Saturday to keep calm and avoid panicking in the face of mounting worries that Russia is preparing to invade its neighbour. The appeal came a day after the United States and a host of European countries urged their citizens to leave Ukraine immediately because of the growing danger of a full-scale offensive by Russian forces encircling the former Soviet state. Kyiv has been trying to tone down the warnings coming out of Washington throughout the crisis. The Ukrainian government fears the US statements are hurting public morale and damaging the country's struggling economy by crimping business activity. "The armed force of Ukraine are constantly monitoring the situation and are ready to rebuff any encroachment on its territorial integrity and sovereignty," the foreign ministry said. "Ukrainian diplomats are in constant contact with all its key partners, swiftly receiving the information needed to prepare a well-timed response."

At the moment, it is critically important to remain calm, to consolidate inside the country, to avoid destabilising actions and those that sow panic

Wordle comes to rescue of 80-yr-old hostage for 21 hours

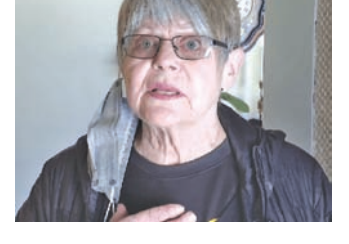
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lincolnwood (US), Feb 11: Police rescued an 80-year-old suburban Chicago woman who was held hostage for nearly 21 hours in large part because she couldn't text one of her daughters her daily Wordle score during the ordeal.

Denyse Holt and her oldest daughter, Meredith Holt-Caldwell, told reporters that Holt woke up about 1 am Sunday to the sight of a bloody and naked man armed with scissors in her Lincolnwood home.

Holt said the man threatened her life. Ultimately, after grabbing two knives from the kitchen, Holt said the man led her to a bathroom in the basement, barricading her inside using a chair for the next 17 hours.

"I was trying to survive, that's all," Holt told WBBM-TV. During that time, she couldn't communicate with the outside world or update her daughter as she usually does about her score on the popular online word game. And Holt-Caldwell, who lives in Seattle, became worried that her mother wasn't reading her texts or updating her about Wordle.



"I'm across the country and I noticed this," said Holt-Caldwell. Holt-Caldwell asked Lincolnwood police to make a well-being check and they rescued her mother from the bathroom. Officers found 32-year-old James H Davis III armed with knives in an upstairs bedroom and arrested him after a SWAT team responded and used a stun gun to subdue him, police said. "She's amazing," Holt-Caldwell told the Chicago Tribune of her mother. "She doesn't really know how she was able to remain that calm." Davis was taken to the Cook County Jail, where Friday he remained in custody.

FREEDOM CONVOY

Police clear blocking as injunction order defied



REUTERS

Windsor, Feb 12: Canadian police started clearing protesters blocking a bridge linking Canada and the United States more than 12 hours after a court order to end the blockade took effect, police said.

The Ambassador Bridge, North America's busiest land border crossing, had no traffic flowing for the fifth straight day Saturday morning. About 15 trucks, cars and pickup vans blocked traffic in both directions, choking the supply chain for Detroit's carmakers.

"We urge all demonstrators to act lawfully & peacefully," Windsor Police said in a tweet, asking commuters to avoid the areas affected by the demonstrations.

Police in black uniforms with yellow vests were seen moving behind the protesters cars on the bridge. Protesters have thinned from about 200 blocking the bridge Friday night.

Canada has been rocked by protests against the government's strict pandemic measures, including vaccine mandates, which have entered a third week.

The "Freedom Convoy" protests, started in the national capital Ottawa by Canadian truckers opposing a vaccine-or-quarantine mandate for cross-border drivers, entered its 16th day Saturday.

Protests have spread to three border points, including the Ambassador Bridge, strangling trade between the two countries.

SPECTACULAR ERUPTION



Europe's highest and most active volcano erupted in spectacular fashion late Thursday, lighting up the night sky with explosions and bright red molten lava

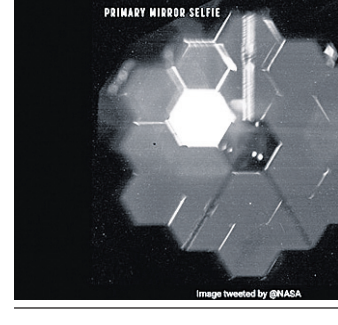
World's most powerful telescope sees its first star

The first picture sent back of the cosmos by the James Webb Space Telescope is far from stunning: 18 blurry white dots on a black background, all showing the same object HD 84406

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Washington, Feb 12: Star light, star bright, the James Webb Space Telescope has seen its first star (though it wasn't quite tonight) - and even taken a selfie, NASA announced Friday. The steps are part of the months-long process of aligning the observatory's enormous golden mirror that astronomers hope will

PHOTONS IN, SELFIE OUT



begin unraveling the mysteries of the early Universe by this summer. The first picture sent back of the cosmos is far from stunning: 18 blurry white dots on a black background, all showing the same object: HD 84406 a bright, isolated star in the constellation Ursa Major. But in fact it represents a major milestone. The 18 dots were captured

by the primary mirror's 18 individual segments - and the image is now the basis for aligning and focusing those hexagonal pieces. The light bounced off the segments to Webb's secondary mirror, a round object located at the end of long booms, and then to the Near Infrared Camera (NIRCam) instrument - Webb's main imaging device.

"The entire Webb team is ecstatic at how well the first steps of taking images and aligning the telescope are proceeding," said Marcia Rieke, principal investigator for the NIRCam instrument and regents professor of astronomy, University of Arizona, in a statement. "We were so happy to see that light make its way into NIRCam."

The image capturing process began February 2, with Webb pointing at different positions around the predicted location of the star. Though Webb's initial search covered an area of the sky about equal to the size of the full Moon, the dots were all located near the center portion, meaning the observatory is already relatively well positioned for final alignment.

To aid the process, the team also captured a 'selfie' taken not through an externally mounted camera but through a special lens on board

NIRCam. NASA had previously said a selfie wasn't possible, so the news comes as a welcome bonus for space fans.

"I think pretty much the reaction was holy cow," Lee Feinberg, Webb optical telescope element manager, told reporters in a call, explaining that the team wasn't sure it was possible to obtain such an image using starlight alone.

The \$10 billion observatory launched from French Guiana December 25 and is now in an orbit that is aligned with the Earth's around the Sun, 1.5 million kilometers away from our planet, in a region of space called the second Lagrange point.

Webb will begin its science mission by summer, which includes using its high resolution instruments to peer back in time 13.5 billion years to the first generation of galaxies that formed after the Big Bang.

