



JUST MARRIED

Actor Dia Mirza, who married to entrepreneur Vaibhav Rekhi Monday, shares a few of her unseen wedding photos

LEISURE

P2



JUNTA PROMISES POLLS

Myanmar's military junta says it will hold polls and hand over power, denies its ouster of an elected govt

INTERNATIONAL

P10



INDIA LEVEL SERIES

Axar Patel's five-wicket haul helps India win the second Test and level the 4-match series against England

SPORTS

P12

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CM lays stone for Rkl stadium

THE FACILITY TO BE CALLED 'BIRSA MUNDA HOCKEY STADIUM' WILL HOST A NUMBER OF 2023 WORLD CUP MATCHES

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Feb 16: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, on a one-day visit to Sundargarh Tuesday laid the foundation stone of a world class hockey stadium here. He said the facility to be called the 'Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium' will host a number of 2023 World Cup matches.

The stadium site is located within the sprawling campus of the Biju Patnaik University of Technology. The site is adjacent to the Rourkela air strip where commercial flights are expected to start soon. The hockey stadium will be a new benchmark in global stadium design for hockey, offering one of the finest spectator experiences in the world and, with a chaired seated capacity exceeding 20,000. It will become the largest hockey stadium in India.

This will be a model of green, functional, cost effective design. Designed to deliver the best match day atmospherics in the world, each seat will have uninterrupted sightlines and the spectators will be closer to the pitch than at any other hockey stadium in the world.



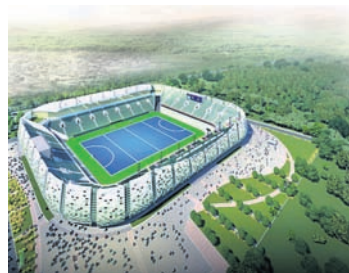
Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik laying the foundation stones of the world-class hockey stadium and other projects through a remote control as ST secretary VK Pandian, standing to his right, claps at the BPUT campus in Rourkela, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

Working closely with Hockey India (HI), all aspects of the technical and operational compliances have been

met to provide a seamless facility to host the World Cup. Referring Rourkela city as a 'City of Hopes', Naveen said

the city reminds him of the association of Biju Babu (Patnaik) with the city. Starting from Rourkela Steel Plant



A replica of the proposed hockey stadium in Rourkela

to NIT, all the places in the city have the memories of Biju Babu. People not only from Odisha but also from neighbouring states visit this city in search of livelihoods, said the CM. Describing the progress achieved during his tenure, he said while the state's budget was only '2,800 crore in 2000, projects worth '5,000 crore have been launched for Sundargarh district alone on a single day. The CM also thanked the members of Mission Shakti for their involvement in the progress of the state. He mentioned Jayanti Ekka of Balishankara area, saying she became the cynosure of all eyes at a 'Make-in-Odisha' conclave.

Spike in fuel prices

PNN & AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 16: Petrol and diesel prices continued to rise Tuesday, the eighth consecutive day when the retail prices have risen across the country, with oil on the boil in global markets and both crude and product prices seeing a big spike. Accordingly, oil marketing companies raised the pump price of diesel by a high level of 35 paise per litre and petrol by another 30 paise per litre in Delhi. With this increase, petrol is now priced at ₹89.29 a litre and diesel ₹79.70 a litre in the capital.

In the last seven days, the price has gone up by ₹2.36 per litre for petrol while diesel rate has risen by ₹2.91 a litre. Across the country as well the petrol prices increase ranged from

PRICES IN CITY

PETROL ₹89.98 (+0.30)
DIESEL ₹86.84 (+0.39)

26-32 paise per litre and diesel price 30-35 paise per litre depending on the level of local taxes on the two petroleum products. In Mumbai, petrol price is just ₹4 per litre short (₹95.75 a litre) touching the three digit mark of ₹100 per litre for the very first ever anywhere in the country. Diesel prices in the city are closing on ₹90 a litre (₹86.72 a litre).

In all other metros, petrol is over ₹90 a litre mark while diesel is well over ₹80 a litre barring Delhi. Premium petrol has crossed ₹100 per litre mark in several cities of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh and very close to the levels in Maharashtra.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



5kg gold ornaments donated to Srimandir



PURI: A devotee Tuesday donated gold ornaments weighing around 5 kg to Srimandir on the occasion of Basanta Panchami, sources said. The devotee concerned donated gold ornaments weighing 4.858 kg and silver ornaments weighing 3.876 kg to the shrine, said an official of the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA). The donated ornaments include Srimukha Padma, Jhoba and Tataki for Lord Jagannath and His siblings Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra, added the temple official. The devotee handed over the ornaments to SJTA chief administrator Krishan Kumar in the presence of Srimandir Managing Committee members.

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	52104.17 ↓ 49.96
NIFTY	15313.50 ↓ 1.20
DOLLAR	73.09 ↑ ₹0.07
EURO	88.24 ↑ ₹0.17
GOLD	₹47,177 ↓ ₹64
SILVER	₹69,839 ↓ ₹290

WEATHER	
	BHUB CTK
MAX	35.7°C 34.2°C
MIN	19.3°C 18.0°C
Humidity	91% 90%
Rainfall	Nil Nil
Forecast	
Mainly clear sky	

Rehab plan for Netaji bus terminal released

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: The state government has come out with a rehabilitation and resettlement policy for people who will likely be affected by the proposed Netaji bus terminal and expansion of the Cuttack ring road.

The revenue and disaster management department released the policy following its approval by the Chief Minister. The revenue divisional commissioner (RDC) was asked to acquire land for the two important infrastructure projects of the Cuttack city.

The Cuttack ring road will be expanded into a six-lane standard road from Sikharpur to Link Road via Chahata and Khannagar while Netaji bus terminal will be developed at Khannagar. Under the rehab and resettlement policy, all residential and commercial units having clear titles of land would be acquired through direct purchase method prescribed by the state

government while compensations will be given as per provision of the right to fair compensation and transparency in land acquisition, rehabilitation and resettlement Act 2013. In case the land cannot be acquired through direct purchase, the land acquisition provisions will be applied. Assistance of ₹1 lakh per family and commercial units will be given in two installments for expenses related to transportation. Families other than slum dwellers having residential houses on encroached government land in the project area will get compensation as per market value. They will get ₹2,57,475 as rehabilitation grant and ₹50,000 immediate aid for transport and shifting of their materials.

For displaced slum dwellers, the government has offered ₹50,000 one-time assistance, free transportation and food allowance for eight days. Such families will get a 15 square feet of plot with all basic amenities free of cost.



Bedi removed as Pondy LG amid crisis in Cong govt



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 16: In a sudden development, Lieutenant Governor of Pondicherry Kiran Bedi was removed from her post Tuesday night at a time when the Union Territory was witnessing a political crisis following the resignation of Congress MLAs from the V Narayanasamy government.

A brief communique issued by Rashtrapati Bhavan spokesman Ajay Kumar Singh said the President has directed that Bedi "shall cease to hold the office of the Lieutenant-Governor of Pondicherry".

President Ram Nath Kovind gave the additional charge of the UT to Telangana Governor Tamilsai Soundararajan "with effect from the date she assumes charge of her office, until regular arrangements for the office of Lieutenant-Governor of Pondicherry are made".

The direction from the President comes amid the political crisis where the ruling Congress-led government has been reduced to a minority after one more MLA quit the party Tuesday.

MP: 45 die as bus falls into canal near Satna

AGENCIES

Sidhi/Rewa (MP), Feb 16: At least 45 people, including 20 women, were killed when a packed bus skidded off the road and plunged into a canal in Madhya Pradesh's Sidhi district Tuesday morning, a senior official said. The accident took place near Patna village, around 80 km from the Sidhi district headquarters, when the ill-fated bus was on its way to Satna from Sidhi, he said.

A search operation involving State Disaster Response Force personnel and local authorities was still on at the site, the official said. Rescuers have retrieved 45 bodies from the canal so far, said Rewa Divisional Commissioner Rajesh Jain, under whose jurisdiction the accident took place. "A total of 45 bodies - 24 of men, 20 women and a child - have been fished out of the Bansagar canal until now," he said, adding a magisterial probe has been ordered to ascertain the cause of the accident.

"Seven persons managed to swim to safety," he said. The packed bus, coming from Sidhi and going to Satna, veered off the road and rolled down the canal which is part of the Bansagar project at around 8:30 AM, said Inspector General (Rewa zone) Umesh Joga. Prime Minister



An NDRF team carries out rescue operation after an overcrowded bus plunged into a canal in Sidhi district of MP, Tuesday.

Narendra Modi expressed grief at the "horrific" bus accident and approved an ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh each for the next of kin of those who lost their lives.

Modi said, "The bus accident in MP's Sidhi is horrific. Condolences to the bereaved families. The local administration is actively involved in rescue and relief work." Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan expressed grief over the tragedy and announced an ex-gratia of ₹5 lakh each to the kin of the deceased. "I have also sent Water Resources Minister Tulsiram Silawat and MOS for Panchyat Ramkhalawan Patel to the spot," Chouhan said.

3 die as van turns turtle in Gajapati

R UDAYAGIRI: At least three people were killed and 40 hurt after a mini truck they were travelling in overturned near Kankadaguda Square under this police limits in Gajapati district, Tuesday. The deceased were identified as Jayant Dalabehera, 20, Gayatri Rait, 18, and Gayatri Mandal, 4, of Jamdiha village. Jayanti and Gayatri Raita died on the spot while Gayatri Mandal succumbed at MKCG. Reports said 28 critically injured persons are undergoing treatment at MKCG. The driver fled the scene.

Twitter alarmed as Oz mulls takeover warrants

IF PASSED, THE BILL WILL LET LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES TAKE CONTROL OF A PERSON'S ONLINE ACCOUNT FOR THE PURPOSES OF GATHERING EVIDENCE ABOUT SERIOUS OFFENCES

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 16: Facing intense political heat in India, Twitter has raised an alarm at an upcoming surveillance bill in Australia that has proposed a new account takeover warrant which, if passed, will let law enforcement agencies take control of a person's online account for the purposes of gathering evidence about serious offences.

The Surveillance Legislation Amendment (Identify and Disrupt) Bill 2020 would hand over three new warrants to the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) to deal with

online crime on social media platforms.

The Surveillance Bill contains three new types of warrants - Data Disruption Warrants, Network Activity Warrants and Account Takeover Warrants.

Twitter, however, is more concerned about the account takeover warrant and in its reply to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCS) review into the Surveillance Bill 2020, the micro-blogging platform said the proposed computer warrants are "antithetical" to democratic law.

"Twitter is concerned that the proposed Bill will allow law enforcement direct access to data re-



gardless of the location of the server, without requiring knowledge of such access being provided to the service provider, and in the case of Account Takeover Warrants, absent the agreement of an appro-

priate consenting official of the relevant foreign country where the warrant would be enforced," the company elaborated in its reply.

According to the company, the account takeover warrants pose sweeping expansions to surveillance powers and covert activities that "could impact Twitter's platform and operations inside and outside of Australia".

A law enforcement officer would be authorised to take control of one or more accounts and access account-based data in addition to adding, copying, deleting, or altering account credentials.

The Department of Home Affairs has confirmed that an account

takeover warrant is designed to be used in circumstances where law enforcement officers have a person's account credentials, but the person has not given his or her permission for law enforcement to use the account.

According to the Australian government, "the account takeover power will allow officers to take over online accounts and gather evidence about a person's online criminality and their associate's activity. Through the new account takeover warrant, AFP and ACIC will be authorised to take control of a person's online account to gather evidence leading to prosecutions of a serious offence".

Principal gets death rap for raping pupil

AGENCIES

Patna, Feb 16: The owner-cum-principal of a private school here has been awarded death sentence by a court for raping an 11-year-old student who became pregnant and had to undergo an abortion.

Although the girl survived, special PCCSO judge Awadesh Kumar was of the view that the accused, Raj Singhania alias Arvind, was guilty of an offence that was "most heinous" and "rarest of rare", and hence deserved no leniency.

The court also slapped him with a fine of ₹one lakh and sentenced for life an accomplice Abhishek Kumar on whom a fine of ₹50,000 was imposed.

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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

ARIES
Today nostalgia tinges your mood, and this reflects in your dealings at work, where others see your softer side. You even spend carefully, seeming to be wiser regarding your savings. Ganesha sees profits for cashiers and money lenders.

TAURUS
The time you previously spent on certain activities may not yield results as expected, predicts Ganesha. You will be reluctant to travel today. Your may find yourself wanting more space and freedom of expression. A stroll with your sweetheart, hand in hand, may be the highlight of your day, says Ganesha.

GEMINI
Today, it's time to meet those who are close to you, and maybe even those who were close to you at some point of time. Also, it's time to revive old friendships, old memories and sink into nostalgia. You may want to buy a valuable historic artefact, says Ganesha.

CANCER
Today, you are likely to achieve something that you have badly wanted for a long time. It is very likely that you will get very emotional in the moment of victory today, predicts Ganesha. Your arrogance and overconfidence can throw you off track. You had better keep your emotional balance once you are through the victory lap.

LEO
Unlike Dennis or Calvin, expect your sometimes haughty and mostly naughty kids to behave 'just right' at the right time. It's not that children like to break rules, they just want to have some fun, reminds Ganesha. Keep this in mind while you go about arranging for special classes to improve their academic skills and performance.

VIRGO
Ganesha foretells that you will start off on a long, arduous path to success. Some tough work will play a vital role in your progress. Don't cut corners, and your labours will pay rich dividends and you will reap due rewards.

LIBRA
Nothing overshadows your love for your children today. And love is precisely what drives you incessantly to give them the best possible of everything. Be it special classes for that extra edge in education, or a visit to a holy place to seek divine blessing, you will do it all today.

SCORPIO
It's the same old rut today, says Ganesha. Nothing new, nothing exciting. People from the opposite sex, however, may bring you out of the routine and try to enliven your spirits, predicts Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS
Those around you will be impressed by the leader in you. You are the general and others will rally at your call to arms. And all the while, you swing your sword and make your way to the top, defying all odds. Do not forget to let people have their own time and space. This will not only help you progress, but will boost their morale too.

CAPRICORN
Despite repeated failures, very few realise that the key to success is in having the patience of a saint. Vexation invariably leads to an outburst which, in turn, can ruin your reputation and future prospects in innumerable ways. Today, Ganesha advises you to keep your calm and smile back even if faced with an adverse situation. Doing as directed may help you overcome troubles and take the right decisions.

AQUARIUS
You will tackle complicated issues with infinite ease! But you will also find people passing the buck onto you. It irks you no end, having to take the blame for others' mistakes. But here's a chance, says Ganesha, to turn a weakness into a strength.

PISCES
You could swing both ways today! Fortunately, this allows to nothing more sinister than the mix of the introvert and the extrovert that you are. So, between a quiet evening out by yourself at a classical music concert, or performing on the dance floor at the local disc – take your pick, says Ganesha.



GERARD BUTLER SAYS HE IS A CONTROL FREAK

Hollywood star Gerard Butler admits being a control freak. Butler was serving as a producer for the film, *Greenland*, when he enjoyed the chance to have a more hands-on role in the project.

RONAN KEATING YEARNs TO GET BACK ON STAGE

International pop sensation Ronan Keating says the Covid pandemic brought him closer to his family, and gave him time to write new music, though he yearns to get back on the stage and perform live.



Dia shares unseen wedding photos

Mumbai: Actress Dia Mirza Tuesday posted snapshots from her wedding to Mumbai-based entrepreneur Vaibhav Rekhi. The couple had tied the knot Monday.

"Love is a full-circle that we call home. And what a miracle it is to hear its knock, open the door and be found by it. Sharing this moment of completion and joy with you...my extended family. May all puzzles find their missing pieces, may all hearts heal and may the miracle of love continue to unfold all around us," Dia wrote with the wedding photographs she posted on Instagram for her extended family.

In one of the photos, Dia and Vaibhav can be seen exchanging garlands, while in another photo, they take 'pheras', in yet another photo, the bride and groom are seated in front of the holy fire while an elderly female priest recites mantras. Industry colleagues and netizens showered love and wishes. This is Dia's second marriage. She was married to filmmaker Saahil Sangha from 2014 to 2019.

Vicky confesses being a 'pro procrastinator'

Mumbai: Actor Vicky Kaushal has revealed a secret about himself. He confesses being a pro procrastinator, along with a snapshot on Instagram from a magazine shoot Tuesday.

"Pro procrastinator," ran his two-word caption with the image.

Vicky, who keeps creating buzz being spotted with 'good friend' Katrina Kaif at various dos, has his plate full with several films lined up.

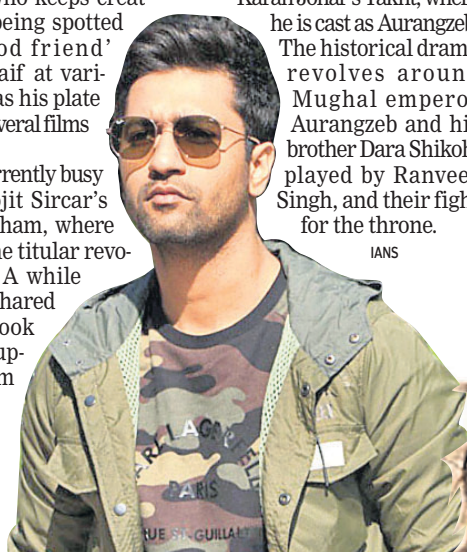
He is currently busy with Shoojit Sircar's *Sardar Udham*, where he plays the titular revolutionary. A while back, he shared the first look from his upcoming film *The Immortal*.

Ashwatthama. Written and directed by Aditya Dhar, the film is expected to go on floors later this year.

Vicky will also be seen sharing screen space with former beauty queen Manushi Chhillar in an untitled project.

His other upcoming film is Karan Johar's *Takht*, where he is cast as Aurangzeb.

The historical drama revolves around Mughal emperor Aurangzeb and his brother Dara Shikoh, played by Ranveer Singh, and their fight for the throne.



40 is new 20 for Indian female actors

The first season of the Sushmita Sen starrer 'Aarya' was appreciated immensely, and she is gearing up to return on season two of the crime thriller drama

A significant sign that the Indian film industry is evolving is the fact that storytellers are coming up with scripts that have 40-plus actresses as leading ladies, in films, OTT space as well as the television screen.

Here's looking at popular stories that capture tales of womanhood in all its maturity.

Sushmita Sen in *Aarya*

The first season of the web series was appreciated immensely, and Sushmita is gearing up to return on season two of the crime thriller drama. "We always end up doing things differently. Especially at my age, I am able to wholly grasp the value of doing things differently," she said earlier.

Supriya Pilgaonkar in *Janani*

Supriya will soon be seen in the TV show *Janani*, which tells the story of a woman who is widowed, and faces the harsh realities of the world with a new perspective. She returns to television with the show, as a woman who faces a sudden jolt in life.



Shefali Shah in *Darlings*

The Shah Rukh Khan film production will hit the screen later this year. While the shooting has yet to begin, the story explores the relation of a mother-daughter duo. Actress Alia Bhatt will be seen essaying the role of Shefali's on-



Kajol, Tanvi Azmi in *Tribhanga*

This trilingual film, which recently dropped in the OTT space, has three generations of women in a family, played by Tanvi

Azmi, Kajol and Mithila Palkar. The story revolves around Kajol's character, a celebrated actress, discovering many truths about her estranged mother; an author; after the latter slips into a coma.

Suchita Trivedi in *Indiawaali Maa*

Actress Suchita Trivedi came back to the limelight with *Indiawaali Maa*. Her character, of a mother trying to win back the affection of her son living in London, was high on emotional quotient.

Rupali Ganguly in *Anupamaa*

The actress is loved by the television viewing audience as the titular character in the show. Her simple, adjusting nature on screen has made *Anupamaa* a much-loved character.

AGENCIES



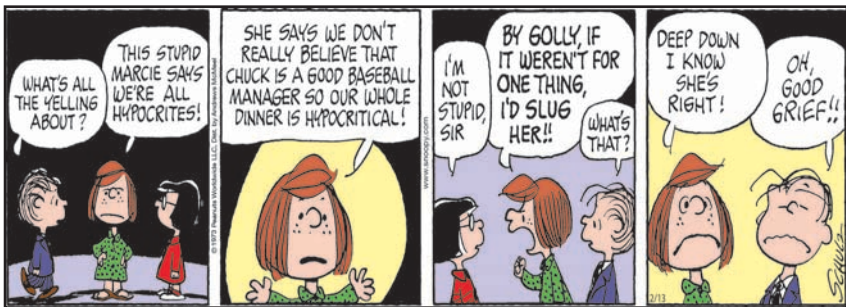
Deepika introduces her 'alter egos'

Mumbai: Actress Deepika Padukone has captured her many moods at dance in a new video she posted on social media for fans. In the Instagram video, Deepika is dressed in a powder pink pant, nude crop top and a lime coloured shrug (inset). The video has edits of Deepika's many versions as she dances.

"Me...And all my alter egos!" she wrote Monday evening, along with the quirky video. The actress has a busy year ahead. She will be seen in Shakun Batra's upcoming yet-untitled film that also stars Siddhant Chaturvedi and Ananya Pandey. Deepika will also be seen in an untitled film with Amitabh Bachchan and Prabhas, and she has a role in 83 starring husband Ranveer Singh. She will also unite with Bollywood star Hrithik Roshan for the first time in the action adventure *Fighter*, directed by Siddharth Anand.



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

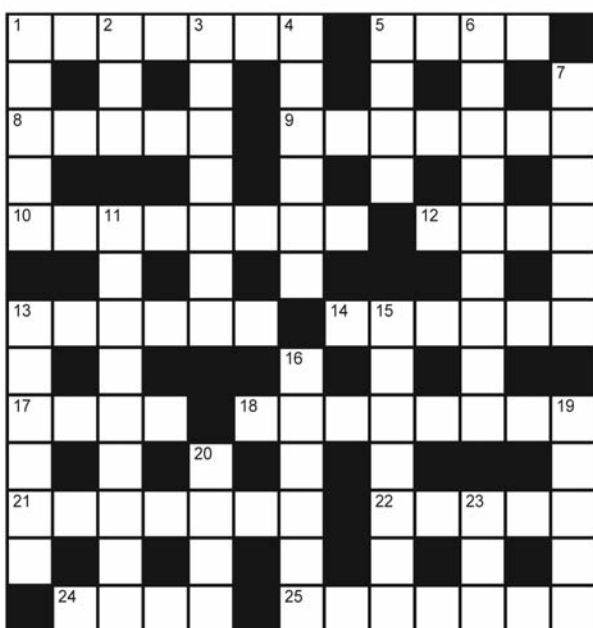


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 "Get lost!" (4,3)
5 Fellow
8 Vacuous
9 Took a chance
10 Wall hanging
12 Fairy tale villain
13 Voracious eels
14 Colossus of Rhodes, e.g.
17 Hammer's target

- 18 Screenwriter's creation
21 Worship
22 Food fish
24 Nipper
25 South West Africa, now

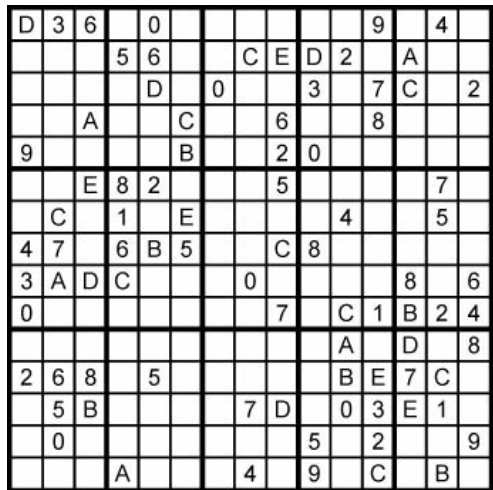
Down

- 1 French seaport
2 Microwave
3 Amazing adventure
4 Model's asset

- 5 Deep sleep
6 Amphibious reptile
7 Stick to
11 Frugality
13 Praying insect
15 Dickens boy (4,3)
16 Filter
19 Port of old Rome
20 Assistant
23 Heavenly body

SUDOKU

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

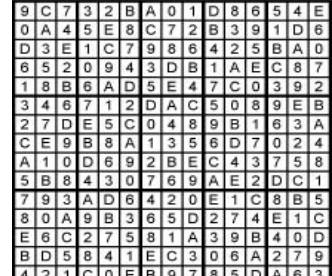


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

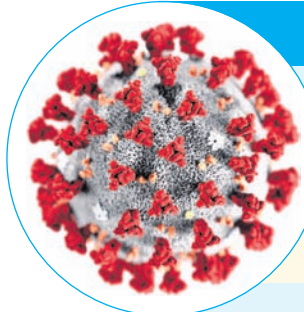


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



OBEY RULES, STAY SAFE

Women traffic police personnel create awareness on road safety norms in Dargha Bazar area of Cuttack, Tuesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	10,98,04,337	8,43,83,601	24,22,218
India	1,09,25,710	1,06,33,025	1,55,813
Odisha	3,36,322	3,33,700	1,912

CS for mobile towers on govt lands, buildings

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: The state government has directed all the departments to dispose of pending applications for construction of mobile towers on government lands and buildings.

Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra has recently written to all the departments in this regard.

“Considering the heightened importance of digital communication infrastructure in socio-economic development, you are requested to issue instructions to the field functionaries under the administrative control of your department declared as ‘Designated Officers’ for time-bound disposal of applications for installation of mobile towers on government land and buildings in a proactive and positive manner,” Mahapatra said in his letter.

The state government has allowed construction of mobile towers on government properties under the Odisha Mobile Towers, OFC (optical Fibre cable) and related Telecom Infrastructure Policy, 2017.

Get documents ready for Kotia fight, Koraput Collector told

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: To present its stand in the Supreme Court on Kotia issue, the state government has asked the Koraput District Collector to prepare all documents related to three disputed villages of the gram panchayat.

The Revenue and Disaster Management department has asked the Collector to furnish all relevant land records of the bordering villages including conduct of Parliament and Assembly elections and development programmes of the state government.

The state government will have a virtual meeting with the Advocate on Record (AOR) Sibbo Sankar Mishra of the apex court Wednesday. The state government desired that optimum efforts should be made to defend the interest of the state. The next hearing on the case is scheduled for February 19.

Meanwhile, Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MLA Soumya Ranjan Patnaik said the border dispute emerged due



TERRITORIAL DISPUTE

The Revenue and Disaster Management department has asked the Koraput Collector to furnish all relevant land records of the bordering villages including conduct of Lok Sabha and Assembly elections and development programmes of the state government

The state govt will have a virtual meeting with the AOR Sibbo Sankar Mishra of the apex court Wednesday

to administrative negligence.

“The issue could have been resolved if efforts were made at the grassroots level much earlier. Just because I am in the ruling party, I am not the person to blindly say all things happening in the party are right,” Patnaik said.

“I accept negligence on the part of the administrative machinery. However, even though it is late, the government is braced to fight for the issue,” the MLA said.

Though the border row is a long pending issue, it is not new in India, he said, adding, many states have border disputes with their neighbouring states.

“Due to inefficiency in state leadership, the neighboring state conducted election in Odisha,” said Congress leader Narasingha Mishra. He thanked Patnaik for accepting the administrative failure on the issue. He (Patnaik) should raise the issue in the Assembly, the Congress leader added.

Earlier, the Odisha government had moved the Supreme Court seeking contempt of court proceedings against Andhra Pradesh, mentioning in its petition that the apex court had earlier ordered to maintain status quo in the disputed area of Kotia.

Sec 144 clamped on Chandrabhaga fairground

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, Feb 16: The district administration has imposed Section 144 on Chandrabhaga fairground to check congregation in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic.

“Section 144 would be imposed on the fairground from 11am February 18 to 1pm next day. The annual Magha Saptami Mela would be organised in strict adherence to Covid-19 norms,” said an official



of the district administration. The Special Relief Commissioner

of state has directed the district administration to hold the Chandrabhaga fair with the presence of only 500 people. Any unauthorised entry into the fairground would invite stern action, said the official.

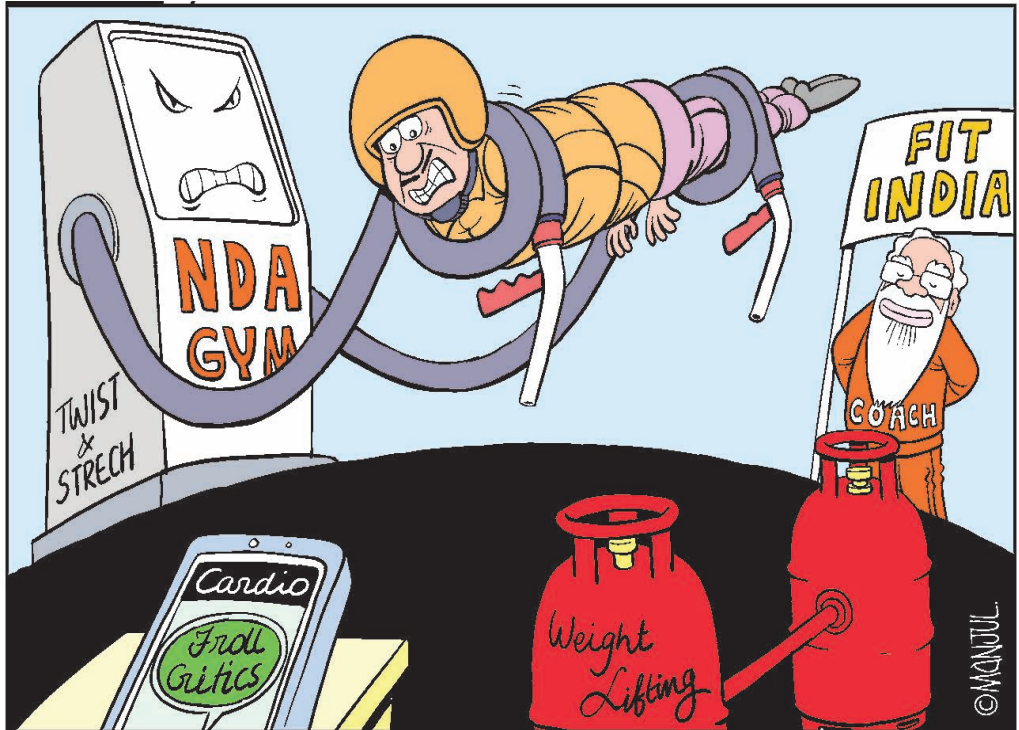
“Some locals, a few priests, government officials and media persons are allowed to visit the fairground. The devotees are requested to cooperate with the administration for smooth organisation of

the fair,” added the official.

As per the tradition, Lord Tribeniswara, Lord Aisaneswara and Lord Dakshineswara embark on a grand procession to the Tirtha Mandap at Chandrabhaga on the auspicious occasion.

The deities are then taken for a customary bath early in the morning. The devotees take a dip in the holy pond before the sunrise and offer their obeisance to the Sun God.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



BJP cynical about hockey stadium

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Tuesday attacked the state government for flaunting the foundation stone laying ceremony for country's largest hockey stadium and raised questions over timely completion of the project.

The saffron leaders also said that the BJD-ruled government has never cared for the area and that the dwindling political representation from the area in Parliament and Assembly has compelled the regional party to camp in the area.

BJP leader Jual Oram said, “80 per cent of the funding in this

80 pc of the funding for the project will be borne by the Centre and there are also doubts on the 20 per cent funding from the state
JUAL ORAM | BJP LEADER

(hockey stadium project) will be borne by the Centre and there are also doubts on the 20 per cent funding from the state. The state government has done precious little for Sundargarh's development.”

He also said, “Their MLAs and MPs in the district used to rule earlier but now the region has hardly any minister from the area.

The number of MLAs and MPs of the ruling party representing the region has dwindled. The BJD has lost its significance in the area slowly.”

Party leader Lekhashri Samantsinghar also took a dig at the government and cited the previous track record of the government.

She said, “There is no money required to declare a project or lay the foundation stone. To implement projects, it requires strong will power and determination which the Chief Minister is lacking. In the two decades of the government, it laid several foundation stones while several projects flourished in the course of time.”

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15% health workers yet to take shots

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: Despite multiple extensions of dates for vaccination against Covid-19, 15 per cent of the healthcare workers are yet to be inoculated in the state, data from the state Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department claimed.

As per the data, in the maiden phase of the vaccination drive, the government had planned to vaccinate altogether 3,38,700 health workers. However, till now a total of 2,88,226 (85 per cent) healthcare personnel were vaccinated while the remaining 15 per cent are yet to take the shots.

The state government had decided to end the first phase of vaccination drive by February 10 for the healthcare workers. However, it extended the drive for three more days. Later, with the relaxation from the Union government the drive has been extended till February 25.

This comes at a time when the second round of vaccination for the health workers has already started in the state. By the end of February 16, the government has seen a total of 10,590 health workers taking the vaccine jabs.

At the same time, out of the 2,04,469 identified frontline workers, a total of 1,29,655 persons have received the vaccination in the ongoing first round of vaccination. A total of 63.4 per cent of the front-



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However, till now a total of 2,88,226 (85 per cent) healthcare personnel were vaccinated while the remaining 15 per cent are yet to take the shots

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By the end of Feb 16, the govt has seen a total of 10,590 health workers taking the vaccine jabs

line workers have already taken the vaccine.

Nevertheless, the government is trying hard to cover the frontline workers as well as health care workers under the drive. The state

Tuesday saw a lower turnout in the second round of vaccination meant for healthcare workers.

The government Tuesday was able to achieve 41.3 per cent of its target of vaccinating healthcare

State logs 60 new Covid cases, one fresh fatality

State's Covid-19 tally climbed to 3,36,322 Tuesday after 60 more people tested positive for the virus, while one fresh fatality pushed the death toll to 1,912, a Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department official said.

Thirty-six new cases were reported in quarantine centres, while 24 infections were detected during contact tracing, he said.

Puri district recorded the highest number of new cases at 13, followed by Sundargarh and Sambalpur districts at nine each.

"Regret to inform the demise of 73-year-old female Covid positive patient of Keonjhar district who was also suffering from Diabetes Mellitus, Hypertension &

Hypothyroidism," the H&FW department tweeted.

Fifty-three coronavirus patients have died due to comorbidities so far. The positivity rate stands at 4.17 per cent.

Khurda district, under which Bhubaneswar falls, has so far reported the highest number of fatalities at 336, followed by Ganjam (248) and Sundargarh (173).

Puri district recorded the highest number of new cases at 13, followed by Sundargarh and Sambalpur districts at nine each

The state now has 720 active cases, while 3,33,637 people have recovered from the disease so far.

Gajapati district continued to remain coronavirus-free for the fourth day

Tuesday: The coastal state has so far tested over 80.61 lakh samples for Covid-19, including 17,329 Monday.

The H&FW department, however, said that there was not a single case of adverse effects noticed during the Covid vaccination drive Tuesday.

Sarathi gets HC nod for pravachan

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Feb 16: The Orissa High Court has allowed self-styled godman Sarathi Baba aka Santosh Roul to preach sermons (Pravachan) while hearing a petition filed by the latter.

Justice Chittaranjan Das, however, made it clear that Roul cannot do this till June-end. Besides, the court has put restriction on the congregation of more than 200 people during the preaching by Roul.

Moreover, the audience should follow Covid-19 protocol, said the HC. The self-styled godman was

released from jail in July 2019 after the HC granted him bail in a cheating case. However, the court had barred him from preaching and organising any meeting.

Besides, the HC had barred him against holding of any rally or procession and entering Barimula Ashram in Kendrapara. This apart, the self-styled godman had been asked not to influence any witness and destroy the evidences.

Recently, Roul filed a petition in the HC and prayed for the permission to preach as he had been facing financial difficulties.



Light to moderate rain likely for 3 days: IMD

Bhubaneswar: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Tuesday said light to moderate rain and lightning are likely to occur at some places of the state during next three days. Thunderstorm with lightning is very likely to occur at one or two places of Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Deogarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Angul, Bolangir, Nuapada and Bargarh districts, Wednesday. Similarly, some places of Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Deogarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Nuapada, Bargarh, Bolangir, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Dhenkanal, Angul, Boudh, Sonepur, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Nabarangpur district will witness light to moderate rain. Thunderstorm with lightning would occur in Sundargarh, Deogarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Angul, Dhenkanal, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Cuttack, Boudh and Kandhamal districts, Thursday. At the same time, light to moderate rain or thundershower is likely to occur at a few places of north interior Odisha, the IMD said.

Siblings in soup for deceitfully getting Army jobs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: Two siblings from Dhenkanal have landed in soup after the duo was caught getting jobs in Indian Army using forged documents. The authorities at 120 Battalion of Bihar regiment have lodged two separate complaints against the brothers at Kharavel Nagar police station here and Dhenkanal Sadar police station.

The accused were identified as Pradyumna Behera and his younger brother Prasanna Behera of Kaimati area in Dhenkanal district.

According to sources, Prasanna joined the services as a Sepoy impersonating Pradyumna Behera with the forged documents of his elder brother November 15, 2009. Meanwhile, his sister-in-law and the wife of Pradyumna revealed the real identity of Prasanna before the Army authorities and accused Prasanna of forging the documents of Pradyumna.

Upon receipt of the allegations, the battalion set up a court of enquiry to check the veracity. The Army officers also found the alle-

Fraudster cheats ex-serviceman

A fraudster has duped one ex-serviceman of around Rs 4 lakh on the pretext of providing him a plot in Jatni area. The victim, Bibek Ranjan Prusty, has lodged a complaint with Badagada police in this regard. According to the complaint, September 18, 2014, Prusty, a former Indian Air Force jawan, entered into an agreement with Sunil Behera who promised to arrange a plot at Gaudakshipur in Jatni for Prusty. Prusty agreed to pay Behera Rs 1.80 lakh as advance and the remaining Rs 3.20 at the time of plot registration. Prusty paid the advance amount to Behera. Meanwhile, Behera took another Rs 2.50 lakh from Prusty under various pretexts. However, the victim is yet to get his plot.

gations made by Prasanna's sister-in-law to be true and that he had joined the services identifying himself as Pradyumna.

Meanwhile, it has also come to the fore that Pradyumna also joined the Indian Army with the forged doc-

Fake journo dupes MBBS aspirant, held

BHUBANESWAR: The Commissionerate Police Tuesday arrested a 34-year-old man on charges of posing as a journalist and duping a student of Rs 20 lakh on the promise of facilitating her with an MBBS seat at a premier state-run medical college and hospital.

A senior Nayapalli police official said that they have arrested Sunil Samantray, a resident of Subrat Apartment in Kalarahanga area under Chandrasekharpur police limits here, on the complaint lodged by Krushna Prasad Udgata.

According to the official, Samantray, a history-sheeter, targeted students appearing for medical and engineering entrance ex-

aminations.

"In the latest case, Samantray introduced himself as a journalist of a web channel and approached Udgata to help him secure an MBBS seat in MKCG Medical College and Hospital at Berhampur for the latter's daughter in September last year. The accused took Rs 20 lakh from Udgata and provided him with a fake admission letter," said the official quoting the police complaint.

It was only February 14 when Udgata realised the fraud and approached the police.

"A case (79/21) has been registered. A sport utility vehicle has been recovered from his possession," the official pointed out.

uments of Prasanna.

Sources claimed that a case has been registered against Pradyumna at the Dhenkanal Sadar police station as well. He was allegedly dismissed from services February 15, 2021. The Kharavel Nagar police

have started probe into the matter after registering a case on the complaint lodged by the Army officials.

On the other hand, a close relative of the siblings rubbished the allegations and claimed no wrongdoing by the brothers.



Srimandir priests consecrate woods for the construction of chariots on the occasion of Basanta Panchami, Tuesday

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

By virtue this affidavit before the Executive Magistrate, Bari, Jajpur,

Dt.03.02.2021, I am Hemalata Rout

W/o. - Shyama Sundar Rout, Village - Bandhapada, Post - Rajapur, P.S. - Bari, Ramachandrapur, Dist. - Jajpur, Odisha change my name from Hemalata to Hemalata Rout for all purposes.

By virtue this affidavit before the Executive Magistrate, Bari, Jajpur,

Dt.09.02.2021, I am Sasmirekha Nayak

W/o. - Biswajit Sahoo, Village - Benjarapur, Post - Mandari, P.S. - Bari, Ramachandrapur, Dist. - Jajpur, Odisha change my name from Sasmirekha Sahoo to Sasmirekha Nayak for all purposes.



Artistes perform at 10th Odissi Nrutya Sangeeta Samman hosted by Nrutyangana at Bhanja Kala Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

IN SYNC

Eco-friendly Saraswati idol at Dhauili craft college

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: The students of Dhauili Art and Craft College celebrated Saraswati puja amidst great fanfare Tuesday. The key attraction of this year's puja was the eco-friendly Saraswati idol prepared by the students.

The 5-ft high idol was made of Halfa grass or Kusha of 10 kg, 5 kg dry banana leaves, 5 kg coconut leaves and other natural products. Interacting with Orissa POST, Dean of the college Panchanan Samal said, "Students wanted to exhibit their creativity and made this eco-



friendly idol of Goddess Saraswati which took them eight days. We had followed all the Covid guidelines while preparing the idol. Students who have made this are Rajeswar

Mahapatra, Arpita Das, Gatikrushna Nayak, Jagannath Swain, Saraswati Angiria, Jaydratha Mandal, Biswadeep Biswal and Jyotirdev Singh. The idol was made under the guidance of Manas Ranjan Nayak and me."

The beauty of the idol drew attention of many residents of Dhauili village who visited the college while maintaining social distance and wearing masks. It may be noted that Dhauili art and Craft College has been trying to give eco-friendly environment message to the society through its art work and social activities.

State outfits to join Rail Roko stir

Bhubaneswar: Farmer outfits in the state have decided to join the 'Rail Roko' agitation called by Sanyukta Kisan Morcha, the umbrella body to organise the farmer protests in the national capital. The local outfits Tuesday said that plans are afoot to join the Rail Roko agitation February 18 to press for demands to amend the three controversial farm laws of the Union government. "A nation-wide rail roko will be organised by Sanyukta Kisan Morcha to demand the repeal of the anti-farmer agricultural laws. Extensive preparations are underway in Odisha to make it a success, said Suresh Panigrahi, state general secretary of the All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordinating Committee," the outfit said.

Guv unveils Utkal Alumni Assn website

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: Governor Ganeshi Lal inaugurated the website of Utkal University Alumni Association at Raj Bhawan here Tuesday.

The Governor praised the activities of the varsity alumni association. "There was no substitute to the joy one experiences by providing service to others. The alumni association's great efforts have been reflected in various initiatives. The process of trading

through the alumni website and its associated information are quite fruitful," he said.

Utkal University Alumni Association president Bijay Kumar Patnaik informed about the goals, objectives and approaches of the association. "The university needs to create conducive environment for student and improve the quality of education," Patnaik said.

Highlighting the success of the university's plastic-free campaign, Patnaik said that the alumni association would be instrumental in the



development of the varsity. Association general secretary

Ashok Kumar Das sought everyone's cooperation, support and involvement in the development of the university. Utkal University Vice-Chancellor Sabita Acharya said that active cooperation from members of the alumni association would be helpful for the development of the varsity. Former students' union treasurer Dillip Kumar Bisoiy and vice-president Devendra Kumar Das, Governor's secretary Pramod Kumar Meherda and others were present at the inauguration.

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JUMBO DEATHS

Locals fear septicemia outbreak

DURING THE LAST TWO WEEKS, SIX ELEPHANTS HAVE DIED AT KARLAPAT WILDLIFE SANCTUARY IN KALAHANDI DISTRICT

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatana, Feb 16: After the death of six elephants due to septicemia in Karlapat wildlife sanctuary in Kalahandi district within 14 days, the Forest department is on its toes. At the same time, fears of septicemia spreading in nearby human settlements has become a cause of concern for locals and the healthcare authorities, a report said.

Most of the jumbo casualties were found near water bodies. Health officials say consumption of creek and stream water may trigger the spread of septicemia

A team of health officials has collected samples of water from a nullah where elephants were found dead. Consumption of the creek water may cause septicemia in humans. So, people are being sensitised about the possible health hazard

PRATAP KUMAR BEHERA | CDMO, KALAHANDI



Representative pic

The clinical signs usually progress rapidly from fever and depression to death, within hours to a few days

Because the disease course is so short, few animals can be treated in time, and recovery is rare

In areas where animals have no immunity, severe disease is expected to occur in all ages

ABOUT THE DISEASE

Hemorrhagic septicemia is a bacterial disease that mainly affects cattle and water buffalo, and is an important cause of livestock mortality in tropical regions of Asia, Africa and the Middle East

It also occurs occasionally in other animals and has caused severe outbreaks in endangered saiga antelope in Kazakhstan

One outbreak in 2015 killed more than half the saiga population

Young animals are mainly affected in endemic regions, and outbreaks are particularly common during rainy weather, when the organism can spread readily

among people in the locality.

Now, the Health department has started organising health camps in peripheral villages. Apart from health check-ups, the officials are making people aware about not using the creek water to prevent septicemia that has reportedly claimed lives of six elephants in a

short span.

Meanwhile, a team of health officials has collected samples of water from a nullah where elephants were found dead, said CDMO Pratap Kumar Behera.

“Consumption of the creek water may cause septicemia in humans. So, people are being sen-

sitised about the possible health hazard,” he added.

According to the 2018 census, the sanctuary had played host to 17 elephants.

Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Kalahandi South Division Ashok Kumar and his team and veterinary doctors are camping in the

Probe into torture of four minors in Chitrakonda PS starts

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, Feb 16: Malkangiri Collector Tuesday directed the District Child Protection Unit to probe into the charge of four minor boys allegedly being tortured and given electric shock at the Chitrakonda police station in the district.

Accordingly, the DCPO accompanied by the district law officer visited the houses of minors in Chitrakonda and conducted a probe by interacting with their family members. A report will be prepared on their visit and submitted to the Collector, the DCPO said.

According to reports, the minors were released from the custody and handed over to their family members after a court granted them bail late Monday night. One of the minors having no surviving family members was rehabilitated at a child protection centre in Berhampur.

Reports said that police picked up the four boys from their houses last Saturday on charge of theft from a provision store. The boys were accused of stealing biscuits and some food products from the

shop.

The four were allegedly subjected to brutal torture in the custody for the next three days and also given electric shock instead of producing them before the juvenile justice board within a period of 24-hours, family members alleged.

Two of the minors are aged 13 years while one is 15 years and another is 16 years old. The policemen thrashed them mercilessly and also gave electric shock. The minors were found bleeding from nose and mouth due to the inhuman torture, a local resident of Chitrakonda alleged.

However, Chitrakonda police station IIC, Surya Prakash Nayak dismissed the allegations. He said that the four committed burglary from a shop. An investigation indicated the involvement of the four boys in the theft and termed the charges baseless and untrue as the accused are habitual offenders, Nayak said.

The four also alleged that they were beaten by outsiders at the police station. The police official also said that the stolen goods have been recovered from the houses of the accused.



LEARNING INITIATION



A priest is initiating a kid into learning during Saraswati Puja in Berhampur, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

3 arrested for extortion while posing as Maoists



The arrested accused

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, Feb 16: One person and two minors were arrested for extorting money from a villager by posing as Maoists at Dudkaranja under M Rampur police limits in Kalahandi district, cops informed Tuesday.

According to the police, the villager, a liquor shop owner, had found two posters pasted close to the front door of his house February 8 morning. It asked the shop owner to deposit Rs 20,000 in a bank account failing which he would be punished by the Maoists. Out of fear,

the villager deposited the said amount to the account number given on the poster.

However, he also lodged a report with the police. The police began investigating into the case. They kept a watch on the account number given in the poster. When the entire amount was recently withdrawn, the cops zeroed in on the trio.

First they were detained for questioning. After a session of interrogation all the three were arrested. Some Maoist posters were also seized from their possession. The police are yet to reveal the identities of the three accused.

Man, his mother, sister held for killing wife in Sambalpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

Redhakhole, Feb 16: A man, his mother and sister were arrested Tuesday for allegedly killing his wife by setting her on fire here in Sambalpur district. The trio was produced in a local court Tuesday and remanded to judicial custody as their bail pleas were rejected.

Runu Behera, daughter of Krushna Behera, a resident of Madhapur village in Angul district married Basant Behera, son of Siba Behera of Govindpur village under Redhakhole police limits April 19, 2017. The marriage was solemnised as per the Hindu traditions and Krushna had met all the demands made by Basant's family.

However since marriage, Basant and his family members had been pressurising Runu to bring more money from her father, sources said. They had also been torturing



her as Runu did/could not conceive. Basant and the in-laws then decided to eliminate Runu, sources added.

The deceased was cooking December 29 when Basant, his mother Bhumi and sister Namita doused her with kerosene and set her on fire. Hearing her painful cries, locals rushed to the house

and rescued her. She was taken to VIMSAR in Burla. Later, she was shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack as her condition worsened.

Runu however, showed signs of recovery. She was released from the hospital and she returned to her parents' house February 2. However, her condition again deteriorated a few days later and she was admitted February 6 to the Angul DHH. She breathed her last on the same day.

It was only after Runu's death that her father Krushna lodged an FIR at Redhakhole police station accusing the deceased's husband, mother-in-law and sister-in-law of killing her.

Registering a case under sections 498 (A), 294, 302, 304 (A)/34 IPC, the police conducted an investigation into the case and arrested the three accused.

Biofloc farming turns a money spinner for Bhuban youths

In traditional fish farming methods, fish consumes very little amount of feed supplied to them in the water. The wasted feed degrades and turns into toxic metabolites. It pollutes the water and affects the surrounding environment with the stench it emanates as well

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhuban, Feb 16: Fishery business is flourishing in Bhuban NAC and its peripheral areas of Dhenkanal district. More and more youths are taking up pisciculture through biofloc method and making handsome earning, a report said.

Notably, biofloc-based farming system is a new technology for the promotion of intensive fish/ shrimp production in a limited area without significantly increasing the usage of the basic natural resources

of water and land.

Fishery in such way has been a lucrative business for many people in Bhuban and its peripheral areas, providing a better livelihood option for them.

These farmers are growing varieties of fishes in limited space or small ponds with encouragement and technical support of the Fisheries department.

The report said scores of youths, who had migrated out of the state from the district had returned to the district after outbreak of the Covid pandemic. They had lost their jobs with imposition of lockdowns and restrictions.

Many of them did not want to go back to their workplaces. They looked for alternative option for earning. The youths took interest in biofloc method of fish farming to be self sufficient. Now, they have become successful.

A number of youths have adopted fish farming at Arbinda Marg, Gadamahampur, Nuasahi, Mahulapal, Ananatapur and Dhalapada.

Besides, some farmers of Laxmidharpur and Mrudanga have



Earlier, I was into utensil making and trading. It was difficult to earn from it. Then I started cultivating mushroom and fish farming. A fish farmer of Bhadrak has helped me in providing technical support. In phases, I have made 10 ponds

DILLIP KUMAR SAHU | FISH FARMER, GADAMAHAMPUR NUASAH

Fish farming is making youths self-sufficient. The government is encouraging youths to adopt fishery through biofloc with low investment and high gains

SAPNALIPSA SAHU | ASSISTANT BLOCK FISHERIES OFFICER, BHUBAN

made it a profitable business by investing Rs 15 lakh in this farming.

Some other farmers in the area are now keen to do this farming. They have applied for the government assistance.

The government has been en-

couraging fishery and providing Rs1.5 lakh as financial assistance for pond, and other instruments and buying fingerlings.

The government is contributing 60 per cent of subsidy to SHGs (women, SC and ST category) and

40 pc subsidy for male farmers.

Many farmers observed that this method of farming is far better than traditional fish farming in big ponds. A person having small land-holding (as small as 150-200 square metre of land) and having either municipal piped water supply or bore well water supply can establish this business with a small investment.

It may be noted here that the state government has been promoting intensive aquaculture through biofloc technology in fisheries so as to provide employment to people during the pandemic and period.

A scheme to this effect provides livelihood support to entrepreneurs, unemployed youth and interested progressive fish farmers to increase fish production in each block of the state. The scheme is most suitable for youths who face unemployment during the pandemic.

Biofloc system is suitable for growing freshwater fish species such as GIFT Tilapia, Magur, Pangasius, Anabas, Common Carp and others depending on local market demands.

In biofloc technology, the waste

organic matter in the tank, such as feed waste, is digested using probiotics (helpful bacteria) and carbon source such as molasses and gets converted to fish feed.

Dillip Kumar Sahu of Gadamahampur Nuasahi said that he was enthused to do fish farming after watching fishery videos on YouTube.

“Earlier, I was into utensil making and trading. It was difficult to earn from it. Then I started mushroom and fish farming. A fish farmer of Bhadrak has helped me providing technical support. In phases, I have made 10 ponds,” he added.

There is huge profit in biofloc fishing farming. This has created scope of direct and indirect earning for many people. Within three months, fish can be grown and is ready for sale, said Chandan Kumar Mallik, an assistant in a local fish farm.

“Fish farming is making youths self sufficient. The government is encouraging youths to adopt fishery through biofloc with low investment and high gains,” said Sapnalipsa Sahu, assistant block fisheries officer of Bhuban.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender Notice No. eT-M-KUR-ROH-PRDP-132-21

NAME OF WORK : OUTSOURCING OF WAGON ROUTINE OVERHAULING WORKS AT ROUTINE OVERHAULING (ROH) SHED, PARADEEP FOR A PERIOD OF TWO YEARS.

Advertised Value (₹) : 3,92,39,561.86

Period of Completion : 24 Months.

Bidding Start Date : 18.02.2021.

Date and time of closing of tender : 1530 hrs of 04.03.2021.

Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

Complete details including e-tender documents are available at <http://www.ireps.gov.in>.

Sr. Divisional Mechanical Engineer
PR-550/L/20-21 Khurda Road

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender No.: 37-KUR-TRD-OT-2020-21
Dt.: 08.02.2021

Name of the Work : IMPROVEMENT OF RELIABILITY OF TRACTION POWER SYSTEM BY PROPER EARTHING ARRANGEMENTS IN TRACTION SUB STATIONS (TSSs), SECTIONING PARALLELING POSTS (SPs) AND SUB SECTIONING PARALLELING POSTS (SSPs) IN KHURDA ROAD (KUR) DIVISION.

Approximate Value : ₹ 48,17,237.50

Tender closing date & time: upto 1300 hrs. of 03.03.2021.

Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

Complete details & tender documents will be available at website www.ireps.gov.in

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRD),
PR-541/L/20-21 Khurda Road

The fly that touches honey cannot use its wings; so too the soul that clings to spiritual sweetness ruins its freedom and hinders contemplation. **SRI AUROBINDO**

Ultimate Form

The Indian citizen is under attack. Today, the country is witnessing two very vocal segments of the population. Notwithstanding the quiet and faceless majority, the smaller two factions have decided to be either supportive of the government or be critiques. The attack seems to be a continuous process wherein not only was the cash saved by individuals and enterprises snatched away through the process of demonization but also the incessant increase in fuel and cooking gas prices which are happening without any connect with international prices. The system has been made to work in a fashion whereby individual's fundamental rights are being erased blatantly. It is not just Disha Ravi who matters but it is the style of functioning that has been let loose on the nation. One cannot fault any single individual in government for the misdeeds that have become rampant across this vast nation. While a particular political party or a couple of its leaders are being held responsible for all the breaches occurring in relation to civility and humanity in administration, the undeniable fact remains that it is the common citizen whose thinking process and attitude is getting reflected by those at the helm of the government.

The most recent event that showcases the situation prevailing in India is that of the Union government looking for volunteers to report unlawful anti-national activities that are taking place online. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) already has a programme titled Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) which was delegated the responsibility of keeping vigil on illegal online activities. The current powers that be, understandably, are now feeling the heat of social media turning their narratives upside down. While it is this same SocMed that they had used earlier to win their own elections, the present situation seems to be going out of hand for them. With international celebrities also jumping into the fray against the Indian government, those in power seem desperate to stem the domestic anti-tirade. With the ineptness of the Indian police being known to all, it is obvious the I4C is incapable of handling the onslaught.

State surveillance is a highly controversial issue globally. The Fundamental Rights enshrined in the Indian Constitution have the primary task of protecting the citizen from attacks by the government. Now, the government by announcing the creation of a new volunteer force which will report on unlawful and anti-national activities taking place online has taken a major step towards destruction of these very Rights. This idea has already been put into effect. Jammu & Kashmir and Tripura have been chosen by the MHA for pilot projects. According to reports, these volunteers will be prohibited from publicly announcing their association with MHA. This implies you will never know if your next door neighbor is spying and squealing on you. Those who volunteer to spy on fellow citizens will obviously have their political exposures and leanings verified by appropriate government agencies. Unwritten though it may be, evidently, those who tow the party line shall get selected and paid a handsome secret salary from the tax payers' money. In other words, you will be paying to be spied on yourself. While words such as rape, child pornography and terrorism are being used as smokescreens, the last but most important word, obviously, is anti-national activities. This will leave every citizen helplessly exposed to unknown spies capable of destroying any individual's life. This is the ultimate form of divisive governance.

WISDOM CORNER

- Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago. **WARREN BUFFETT**
- When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it. **HENRY FORD**
- When something is important enough, you do it even if the odds are not in your favour. **ELON MUSK**

WORDSWORTH

Malarkey

Malarkey is meaningless talk, nonsense or foolishness. It's still known in the US and to a lesser extent in the UK and elsewhere, but where this odd-looking word comes from is decidedly uncertain. What we do know is that it began to appear in the US in the early 1920s in various spellings, such as malaky, malachy, and mullarkey. Its first known user was the cartoonist TA Dorgan, in 1922, but it only began to appear widely at the end of the decade. By 1930, Variety could pun on it: "The song is ended but the Malarkey lingers on." Various theories have been advanced. Eric Partridge pointed to the modern Greek word malakia but he formed a group of one. His later editor, Paul Beale, noted the London expression Madame Misharty, the personification of sales talk, exaggerated claims, and wild predictions, a name that was supposedly that of a fortune teller. But this is stretching a possible linguistic link to breaking point and, in any case, we know it started life in North America. Others point to the family name Malarkey, though who the eponymous member of the tribe might have been whose Irish-derived gift of the gab could have given rise to the name remains unknown. Jonathon Green likewise suggests a Irish origin in mullachan, a strongly-built boy or ruffian, though this, too, seems a stretch of meaning. We'll just have to settle for the unsatisfactory "origin unknown".

Mallemaroking

Mallemaroking was the carousing of seamen on board Greenland whaling ships. You must agree that no true student of the English language can afford to be without this choice specimen of exact usage. Not, you will note, just any seamen aboard any ships, but whalers in the Greenland waters, who were — it seems — always ready for a bit of merry-making in between hunting the Greenland right whale. The whale's name was another term from the same fishery, too mundanely derived to deserve much attention from word historians, since it was merely the whale found around Greenland that was the right one to hunt, mainly because it floated when dead. Mallemaroking owes its survival almost entirely to its curious form and peculiarly precise nature. There is small chance that you will find it unselfconsciously used as the right word in the right place. It is the preserve almost solely of those wordsmiths who write about weird words, a sad degeneration of status in whose reduction my own small part is all too obvious. This is a rare exception: Clusters of Indians huddled around bonfires of driftwood that had floated down the mighty Yukon. It was a time of roistering and wrestling and tug-of-war contests under the midnight sun, a time of "mallemaroking," as the whalers called their drunken sprees (In the Kingdom of Ice, by Hampton Sides, 2014). The word is sometimes said to derive from mallemmuck or mallemmo, Dutch words for several large oceanic birds, such as the fulmar or petrel. Dictionaries today prefer to point to another Dutch word, mallemerok, a foolish woman or tomboy. All three come from mal, foolish or silly, plus — in the case of the last word — a derivative of French marotte, an object of foolish affection. How this skittish Dutch lady found her way to Greenland, and gave her name to the carousing of whalers, must be left to the imaginations of readers.

LOL
Have a life after death

"Do you believe in life after death?" the boss asked one of his employees. "Yes, Sir," the new recruit replied. "Well, then, that makes everything



just fine," the boss went on. "After you left early yesterday to go to your grandmother's funeral, she stopped in to see you."

FOCUS PANDEMIC RESPONSE

EUROPE’S PAROCHIALISM

The European Union has changed its economic policy for the better by agreeing on a €1.8 trillion (\$2.2 trillion) post-pandemic stimulus plan to be financed directly through the EU budget. In particular, more than half of the package – which comprises the EU’s long-term budget and the €750 billion Next Generation EU recovery fund – is earmarked for forward-looking public spending. The plan is bold and impressive. There will be support for research and innovation via the Horizon Europe programme, and for climate and digital transitions through the Just Transition Fund and the Digital Europe Programme, respectively. The package will also establish a new health programme, EU4Health, and a Recovery and Resilience Facility to disburse most of the Next Generation EU funds. And a hefty sum will be allocated to social protection, including income support for workers and the unemployed. Such a policy shift is surely to be welcomed, because it lays the foundations for a more viable economic union. But in a fundamental sense, European leaders – much like their US counterparts – still don’t get it. Just as the stimulus measures announced by US President Joe Biden’s new administration are predominantly aimed at the US economy, the EU package expresses solidarity within Europe, with little concern for the rest of the world. To be sure, the EU’s big stimulus represents a significant step toward the fiscal union without which the bloc’s monetary union will inevitably be brittle, unstable, and crisis-prone. Such fiscal integration had also seemed essential during the debt crises faced by Greece, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, and Italy from 2010 onward, but Germany and other wealthier member states rejected the idea. Individual European governments had already spent significant sums in response to the pandemic, under the gaze of a European Central Bank that had suddenly taken a much more benign view of borrowing by member states. By adopting a stimulus package that involves explicit joint borrowing and fiscal transfers between countries, EU member states seem to have overcome a historic taboo of European integration. What changed in Europe? First and foremost, the sheer scale of the Covid-19 pandemic and the economic damage it caused – including in some of the bloc’s larger economies, like France and Italy – concentrated policymakers’ minds regarding the need for urgent common action. The crisis has forced them into forms of integration and expressions of regional solidarity that were once thought impossible, no matter how necessary they might have been. Brexit probably also helped, because the United Kingdom had traditionally opposed EU-level fiscal expansion. Whatever the reason, securing agreement on such a package from the EU’s fractious membership was a significant achievement. But greater unity has also reinforced Europe’s belief that it can go it alone in charting a path out of the crisis. With its own house in order, the thinking goes, the EU can ignore or not worry too much about how the rest of the world is faring. This highlights the starkly unequal nature of Covid-19 policy responses more generally. Advanced economies introduce massive fiscal packages generously underwritten by central banks, while depriving most developing countries of the conditions that would enable similar macroeconomic responses. Such a stance is short-sighted and counterproductive. The immediate and serious challenges of the pandemic and global employment stagnation cannot be resolved or even properly addressed unless they are dealt with globally. What could the EU (and the United States) do differently? For starters, they could set aside just a small fraction of their large stimulus packages to eliminate bilateral debt owed by poorer countries, and actively pursue sovereign-debt resolution for private creditors. More broadly, they must stop thinking of foreign aid as a gift or charity, and instead allocate funds for global public investment to meet common international goals. And they could immediately work toward significantly expanding developing economies’ access to foreign exchange through a large new allocation of Special Drawing Rights by the International Monetary Fund. Above all, the EU and the US could immediately end the horrifically unequal access to Covid-19 vaccines, which sums up the Union’s wrongheaded approach. Although European media rarely mention this – the EU sought to bypass the fair distribution system established by the Covid-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility (COVAX), and purchase vaccines directly from pharmaceutical firms, thus denying supplies to the rest of the world. Worse, by insisting on preserving pharmaceutical companies’ patent rights for vaccines developed with government subsidies and on the back of public research, the EU is helping to prevent the expansion of vaccine production to levels that would enable the entire world to be rapidly immunised. It would be far better to suspend patent rights or even allocate compulsory licenses to producers in countries like India with proven vaccine-manufacturing capacity. This would dramatically increase global supply and reduce the risk of dangerous coronavirus mutations, thus ensuring a much quicker end to the pandemic. The idea that the EU can emerge from the Covid-19 crisis while the rest of the world flounders will quickly be proved wrong. Even for wealthy regions like Europe, any plausible vision of a sustainable post-pandemic future necessarily requires international solidarity.

The writer, Executive Secretary of International Development Economics Associates, is Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

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Jayati Ghosh

ALTHOUGH EUROPEAN MEDIA RARELY MENTION THIS - THE EU SOUGHT TO BYPASS THE FAIR DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM ESTABLISHED BY THE COVAX, AND PURCHASE VACCINES DIRECTLY FROM PHARMACEUTICAL FIRMS, THUS DENYING SUPPLIES TO THE REST OF THE WORLD

IN JEST THIS

Airport living has many benefits



Melvin Durai

IF YOU'RE GOING TO LIVE AT THE AIRPORT, YOU NEED TO LOOK LIKE THE TYPE OF PERSON WHO WOULD RATHER BE SOMEWHERE ELSE

Airports have been both a source of joy and sadness for me. The sadness has come when I've had to bid farewell to members of my family. It usually means being away from them for weeks, months or even years. It also means hoping and praying that they travel safely, and that their pilots were not trained at "Virtual Learning Flight School."

The joy came mostly when I was a child. Watching airplanes land and takeoff excited me, and the excitement was even greater when I was boarding a plane myself. The destination didn't really matter — I could be flying to Kazakhstan and I'd be excited.

While large planes thrilled me as a child, what continues to captivate me about airports are the travellers. I love to watch people as they arrive, depart, or just sit and wait for a flight. Without feeling like an intruder, I can witness a variety of emotions: joy when a traveller is reunited with a friend or family member; sadness when they bid adieu to loved ones; frustration when their flights are delayed, anger when the airport Wi-Fi stops working.

"Don't worry," I want to tell



them when their flights are delayed. "At least you get to spend more time at the airport. Airports are great. Look at all the restaurants and newsstands you can visit. Look at the all the strangers you can watch. Look at all the luggage carts you can ride."

If I were stuck in an airport for a day or two, I'd probably make the most of it. I'd find a comfortable spot to sleep and spend the rest of my time watching people. I might even serve as an unofficial security officer, alerting the authorities to any suspicious behaviour: "There is a man in the departure lounge who has been looking at his phone nonstop for three hours. He is speaking in an Australian accent and shouting things like, 'I'm never going to eat

Indian food again' and 'How the hell can we lose to them at home again?'"

Spending a day or two in an airport would not bother me much, but spending a few months would probably drive me crazy. That's why I found the story of Aditya Singh fascinating. Singh, a 36-year-old man who left India to get a master's degree at Oklahoma State University in America, was arrested in mid-January at Chicago's O'Hare Airport for an unusual crime: living in the airport for three months.

He had left Los Angeles on October 19, boarding a flight to Chicago, where he was apparently intending to catch another flight to return to India. At least that's what he told his friends, but no one knows if he actually purchased

a ticket or was just looking for a large rent-free home.

Singh had been in America for five years and his visa was expiring, according to a report in the Chicago Tribune. Found by police living in the secure area of the airport, he told them that he was afraid to fly because of the coronavirus pandemic.

But a friend named Mary Steele shared a different story. Singh had sent her a text that said, "I need to complete my karmic lessons that I'm learning here." He enjoyed speaking to travellers in the airport and sharing his Buddhist and Hindu beliefs with them. "This is a wonderful, good-hearted man," Steele said.

Strangers often bought him food and he avoided detection partly by wearing an airport ID badge that an operations manager had lost.

But Singh was eventually caught, not because he was unruly at the airport but perhaps because his beard got a little too unruly. He began to look like a homeless person. If you're going to live at the airport, you need to look like the type of person who would rather be somewhere else.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

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Remarkable feat

Sir, The Indian spin-trio with fabulous tons from Rohit Sharma and R Ashwin wrote history Tuesday when they defeated the visiting England team by a clear margin at Chepauk. The first Test encounter had gone in favour of the Root Eleven, but this did not deter the promising youngsters from the home side to level it at one-one. Credit goes to Ashwin specifically who did the magic in his home turf and literally became the 'Chennai Super king'. The team management equally shares honours as they made the right decision to bring in Axar Patel and Kuldeep Singh to assist Ashwin for strengthening the spin attack. The formation of a winning combination did in fact make the magic when the pitch at Chepauk behaved differently for both batsmen and bowlers from India who convincingly beat the visitors by outshining in all departments of the game. As two more matches are to be played in the series at Ahmedabad, it remains to be seen if the hosts can repeat the performances as they did in Chennai when the experts were speculating otherwise. Even if the game of cricket is dubbed as that of uncertainty Indians could do as was expected of them. This Test match would be in the name of Ashwin for a long time as he has done his best to do away with pressure from all and sundry. **Sanjib Das, CUTTACK**

Sensible ruling

Sir, The Madras High Court has given a sensible ruling that drivers of the bigger vehicles cannot be always held responsible for accidents. It is not always the case that drivers of bigger vehicles or smaller vehicles will be at fault in accident cases. More often than not, accidents have occurred due to the fault of the victims not following the traffic rules properly. This is a case relating to one by name Govindaraju who died in 2011 when he and three of his friends were travelling on a single two-wheeler in violation of the traffic rules. Two-wheelers are meant not for more than two persons. The victim is said to have tried to overtake a lorry when he, unable to control his two-wheeler with three persons behind, rammed against a TNSTC bus bumper. Accidents are bad patches in the service of the drivers in government or government-owned departments. While sympathy goes to the families of victims, the drivers of the vehicles, big or small, should not be harassed if the victims are guilty of violation of traffic rules. **KV Seetharamaiah, HASSAN(KARNATAKA)**

Maha CM warns of fresh lockdown as caseload surges



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 16: Concerned over the recent surge in COVID-19 cases in Maharashtra, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray Tuesday asked citizens to strictly follow government-mandated guidelines on masks and social distancing or be prepared to face another round of lockdown.

After reporting 4,092 COVID-19 cases last Sunday, highest single-day tally in more than a month, Maharashtra registered 3,663 new cases Tuesday, 461 of them in Mumbai.

This was the seventh straight day when the state's daily count remained above the 3,000-mark, indicating a steady rise in infections as compared to the previous few weeks.

Expressing concern over the lackadaisical attitude in following COVID-19-related safety protocols in the wake of phase-wise lifting of restrictions, he said it was up to citizens to decide if they want to go into a complete lockdown again to curb the spread of the infection.

"It is up to the people of the state to decide if they want a lockdown or live freely with some restrictions. Wear face masks and avoid crowds or else (you) will need to go into a lockdown again," Thackeray said. Alarmed over the surge in COVID-19 cases in the last few days in some districts, Thackeray held a review meeting with divisional commissioners and collectors through video conferencing to take stock of the situation.

Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar was among those present on the occasion. The CM asked the administration to ensure safety norms like wearing face masks in public and social distancing are followed and authorised officials to take action against offenders.

"People may have become com-

placent but the authorities should not (drop guard)," Thackeray said and asked the administration to regularly sanitise and disinfect public places.

Mobile vans should be used in rural areas to increase the number of COVID-19 tests, the chief minister said.

Speaking at the meeting, Thackeray said, non-implementation of COVID-19 safety SoPs is a serious matter.

"The administration should contact commercial establishments and organisations and check if they are following SoPs. Wherever necessary, declare containment zones."

He stressed on the need for contact tracing of each patient in areas where COVID-19 cases are rising.

"Contact tracing must be done in a targeted manner. At least 20 contacts of each patient should be traced and tested," the CM suggested.

Police permission will be required for organising marriage functions, Thackeray said.

"Marriage ceremonies held up for the last one year have resumed...Social gatherings and parties have also begun without any safety rules. Timings of hotels and restaurants have been extended but safety norms have been neglected," Thackeray said, adding local authorities should keep a vigil on crowding and take immediate action wherever necessary. Banquet hall owners should be punished if anybody is found moving in the premises without a face mask, he said.

The chief minister said agitations, public meetings and processions should not be permitted given the present COVID-19 situation. He said the authorities should cancel permits and licences of halls and auditoriums where safety SoPs are not followed during marriages and other social functions.

Politics agog as Mithun hosts Bhagwat

THE MEETING HELD UNDER TIGHT POLICE SECURITY COMES AHEAD OF THE ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA'S PLANS TO ANNOUNCE THE DATES FOR THE MUCH-ANTICIPATED WEST BENGAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, Feb 16: When Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat early Tuesday met National Award winning actor Mithun Chakraborty at his residence, it naturally ended up triggering intense speculation in political circles.

Bhagwat, 70, came-a-calling on Chakraborty at his bungalow in the picturesque Madh area of Malad west suburb, fuelling theories of the star's potential comeback to active politics after a five-year hiatus.

The duo spent close to two hours at the Chakraborty residence in the presence of the actor's entire family, though it is not known what may have exactly transpired in the morning 'chai pe charcha'.

However, after giving a warm send-off to Bhagwat, the 70-year-old bearded dancing-cum-action star, sporting a dark woollen cap,



firmly dismissed all rumours of his possible return to politics in a soft tone.

The acclaimed actor gently added that Bhagwat, whom he met in Uttar Pradesh last October, had paid him a return visit. Earlier, the duo had also met in Nagpur, where the RSS headquarters are located.

"Do not speculate, I and Bhagwat have a spiritual connect. We had met in Lucknow and I had requested him to visit me whenever he visited Mumbai," Chakraborty said.

Engaging in a light friendly banter with mediapersons thronging outside his bungalow, close to the Arabian Sea in a cool green cor-

ner of north-west Mumbai, the actor revealed that "Bhagwat-ji is very fond of my family" and had promised to visit him whenever he would come to Mumbai.

To persistent queries about ending his 'political sanyas', Chakraborty laughed mischievously and said: "You are linking (this) because of the (West Bengal) elections. If there were no elections, you wouldn't..."

Saying a determined 'nyet' to politics, Mithun Da - as he is popular among his fans and admirers - said he would love to work with the poor but prefer to keep off any politicking. Reported to be close to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Chakraborty is a former

All India Trinamool Congress Party (AITCP) Rajya Sabha MP, but had quit in 2016 on health grounds.

Nevertheless, Mithun Da, a Bengali, remains immensely dear to the masses in his home state with which he maintains strong links, albeit apolitical. An RSS functionary in Mumbai endorsed the actor's stance, stating that "the meeting was purely private in nature and nothing more should be attached to it."

Interestingly, the Bhagwat-Chakraborty rendezvous, with tight police security, comes ahead of the Election Commission of India's plans to announce the much-anticipated West Bengal Assembly elections.

You are linking (this) because of the (West Bengal) elections. If there were no elections, you wouldn't....!

MITHUN CHAKRABORTY | ACTOR

Unscientific cutting of Himalayan soil leading to disasters: Geologist



If these companies want to work in the Himalayan region they need to acquire knowledge of geological susceptibility, geo hazards and glaciological studies from some known Himalayan experts before initiating any hydroelectric project in the region

TRIBHUVAN SINGH PANGTI | EX-ADG OF GSI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pithoragarh, Feb 16: Unscientific cutting of Himalayan soil by infrastructure projects is disrupting the fragile ecology of the region and causing disasters, warned a former official of the Geological Survey of India Tuesday.

Former additional director general of GSI Tribhuvan Singh Pangti, who was associated with the now demolished Rishiganga hydroelectric project for initial two years as a geologist, said the hydroelectric companies working in the Himalayas have no knowledge of land formation of the region due to which all projects are causing natural disasters.

"Separating layers of Himalayan soil with big machines without knowing fully about its characteristics is

doing grievous harm to the region," he said. "If these companies want to work in the Himalayan region they need to acquire knowledge of geological susceptibility, geo hazards and glaciological studies from some known Himalayan experts before initiating any hydroelectric project in the region," Pangti told PTI.

The state government needs to form a high powered committee of experts to advise on matters of all infrastructure projects in the Himalayan region, he said.

"If such an expert committee is not formed, projects being installed in the fragile Himalayan region are bound to invite natural calamities in the future which may even be bigger than the recent flash flood in Rishiganga," Pangti said.

A part of the Nanda Devi glacier broke off in Chamoli district

last week, leading to massive floods, recalling a 2019 study that warned about the dangers of climate change and said Himalayan glaciers have been melting twice as fast since the start of this century. The glacier collapse at Joshimath led to a massive flood in the Alaknanda river system and caused large-scale devastation in the upper reaches of the ecologically fragile Himalayas. Two years earlier in June 2019, a study spanning 40 years of satellite observations across India, China, Nepal and Bhutan, indicated that climate change is eating the Himalayas' glaciers. The study, published in the journal Science Advances in June 2019, shows that glaciers have been losing the equivalent of more than a vertical foot and half of ice each year since 2000 -- double the amount of melting that took place from 1975 to 2000.

"This is the clearest picture yet of how fast Himalayan glaciers are melting over this time interval, and why," said Joshua Maurer, a PhD candidate at Columbia University in the US.

While not specifically calculated in the study, the glaciers may have lost as much as a quarter of their enormous mass over the last four decades, said Maurer, lead author of the study. The study synthesised data from across the region, stretching from early satellite observations to the present. The data indicates that the melting is consistent in time and space, and that rising temperatures are to blame, the researchers said.

Temperatures vary from place to place, but from 2000 to 2016 they have averaged one degree Celsius higher than those from 1975 to 2000, they said.

Father Swamy had told NIA about planting of evidence, says colleague



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 16: Father Stan Swamy, an accused in the Elgar Parishad-Maoist link case jailed since October last year, had told the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on at least four occasions during his interrogation that fake evidence had been planted on his computer, the activist's colleague

Father Solomon said Tuesday. Solomon was speaking at an on-line press conference attended by family, friends, and lawyers of the 16 activists and academicians accused and currently in custody in the case.

He is director of Bagaicha Social Centre in Ranchi, Jharkhand, where Swamy worked.

The press conference was organised in the wake of a report by a United States-based digital forensics firm, which stated that an attacker used malware to infiltrate a laptop belonging to activist Rona Wilson before his arrest, and inserted at least 10 incriminating letters in his computer.

During his interrogation in Ranchi by the NIA between July and August last year, Swamy told the agency at least on four occasions

that he disowned the documents cited by the agency as incriminating, and that such documents might have been "intercalated" (to insert among existing elements), Solomon said.

"Some letters by the lokmanch had been edited, words had been added or inserted. For instance, a letter started with the greeting of johan that is common in Jharkhand.

But the unusual word 'lal' had been added. This made Stan raise questions on the authenticity of the documents," he claimed.

Senior advocate Mihir Desai, the counsel for several activists accused in the case,

Elgar Parishad-Maoists link case, who was also present at the press conference, said the digital firm's report punched a major hole in the prosecution's story as the latter consistently relied on electronic evidence in the case to oppose bail pleas, seek extension of custody. Those present at the press conference demanded that an independent probe be conducted into the malware report and the 16 arrested in the case be granted bail immediate bail.

A report by a US-based digital forensics firm had recently stated that an attacker used malware to infiltrate a laptop belonging to activist Rona Wilson before his arrest, and inserted at least 10 incriminating letters in his computer

International Vedic School to come up in U'Khand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dehradun, Feb 16: Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat Tuesday said an International Vedic School will be built on the banks of Bhagirathi in Tehri where students will be taught Sanskrit apart from Hindi and English languages.

Launching the Tehri lake festival on the occasion of Vasant Panchami, he said the institution will help the entire world learn about Indian culture.

Rawat said the future of Uttarakhand tourism lies in Tehri where lake festival will be held every year on Vasant Panchami.

A notification in this regard has been issued. He said the state gov-

ernment was in a dilemma on whether or not to hold the Tehri lake festival following the avalanche in Chamoli but finally it decided to simultaneously grapple with the challenge and move ahead.

He also prayed to Kedarnath and Badrinath for peace to the souls of those killed in the Chamoli disaster. Appealing to tourists to stay in Tehri for a few days and savour what the town offers, Rawat said it is being developed at a cost of Rs 1,210 crore.

Adventure sports like para gliding, para motor, para sailing boat, scuba diving, hot air balloon, kayaking, canoeing, high rope course and rock climbing are being organised as part of the Tehri lake festival.

'Rescue ops to continue till last victim is reached'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tapovan (U'khand), Feb 16: Amid fading hopes of the survival of those who went missing after a glacier disaster in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district 10 days ago, NDRF Commandant PK Tiwari Tuesday said search-and-rescue operations will go on in the flood-hit hydel project sites till the last victim is reached.

Asked about the chances of survival of those missing or trapped, the NDRF commandant said he cannot say anything with confidence but miracles do happen.

"We found a survivor in Himachal Pradesh even on the 10th day of a similar tragedy. There are miracles. But there are lakhs of metric tonnes of sludge in the tunnel. However, as a soldier and a rescuer, I can only say the operations will continue till the last victim is reached," Tiwari told PTI.

Describing the ongoing rescue operations at a tunnel of the damaged Tapovan-Vishnugad hydel project of the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) as unique, he said the muck-clearing exercise may take months, if not a year.

"The tunnel is four-km long. We have reached about 160-165 metres inside it and have to go beyond that. Sludge-clearing through a tunnel, which took eight to 10 years to be built, may take months, if not a year," he said.



Rescue operations continue inside the Tapovan Tunnel, following the glacier burst at Joshimath which triggered a massive flash flood February 7, in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand, Tuesday.

On drilling a hole in the lower tunnel parallel to the intake adit tunnel, from where bodies are being recovered since Sunday, Tiwari said it was punctured in the hope of locating the trapped with the help of a camera, as vacuum was expected because of the presence of some vehicle like a Bolero or a Scorpio car inside the tunnel at the time of the avalanche.

But it was realised later that

the tunnel, where 25-35 people were feared trapped, was also badly choked with sludge.

The rescue operations have to be suspended for a while whenever a body is found so as not to cause further harm to a decomposed body, Tiwari said.

However, he said the rescue operations at Raini, where a smaller hydel project was nearly demolished in the avalanche, were near-

ing conclusion.

"Since the start of the operations in Raini, our two teams have recovered 12 bodies. We are trying to reach a patch where villagers tell us there could be people. We will have the entire project site scoured by the end of the day," the NDRF commandant said.

He said considering the pace at which the huge volume of muck and slush hurtled down following

SDRF keeping eye on lake formation

DEHRADUN: The SDRF Tuesday said it is keeping a strict vigil around the Rishiganga river due to the formation of a lake five-six km above it after the recent glacial disaster in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district, despite the water body posing no immediate threat. Satellite pictures have recently confirmed the formation of the lake at a height of 14,000 feet in the catchment area of the Rishiganga, after which a State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) team was despatched to the location to check the facts. The team found that water is seeping from the lake in a natural way, reducing the chances of an outburst that can cause a fresh flood downstream. Still, the SDRF has deployed its men from the lake up to Raini and Tapovan to maintain a constant vigil, commandant of the force Navneet Bhullar, who led the team to the lake, said. Besides, sensors have also been installed in the area under the early warning system to keep an eye on the flow of water in the Rishiganga and Dhauliganga rivers. An eye is also being kept on the lake through satellites, Bhullar said.

the glacier burst in the Rishiganga river, it must have flown down bodies till Rudraprayag.

of the day quote

While India was making PPE KIT for the world, These people were making TOOL KIT against Indians. Shame!

GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT | UNION MINISTER

I agree with the statement, that Yediyurappa is surrounded by snakes and scorpions, but these snakes and scorpions are none other than his family members

BASANAGOUDA PATIL YATNAL | BJP MLA

It appears that those collecting donations for the construction of Ram Mandir have been separately marking the houses of those who paid money and those who did not

HD KUMARASWAMY | FORMER KARNATAKA CM

SHORT TAKES

BSP man shot dead in Azamgarh

Azamgarh (UP): A BSP leader was shot dead by unidentified assailants in Azamgarh district. The killing took place Monday night and the police have claimed that the murder is connected to a decades-old rivalry in Kundanpur village between the victim's and another family. The police said that the BSP leader, Kalamuddin, had a criminal background, and there were murder cases against him. Azamgarh SP Sudhir Kumar Singh said: "Kalamuddin had a criminal record, and had also been booked under the Gangsters Act. He had gone to jail twice in two murder cases. He had not been convicted in any of the cases. The murder is the result of a conflict between Kamran and Kalamuddin's families since 1984."

Multi-vehicle collision kills 5

Mumbai: At least five people were killed and five injured in a collision between multiple vehicles on Mumbai-Pune Expressway near Khopoli. The accident took place in the early hours of Tuesday when a truck rammed into two cars and another vehicle near Khopoli town on Pune-Mumbai Expressway in Maharashtra. he accident occurred near Khalapur toll plaza when the truck hit two cars and a goods vehicle from behind, police said., adding that the driver of the truck was speeding when he apparently lost his control over the wheel.

Jilted lover held for killing teenager

Noida (UP): A 25-year-old man has been arrested in Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida for killing a 15-year-old girl who had allegedly rejected his advances, police said Tuesday. Accused Sunil Yadav had recently moved into a rented accommodation in Surajpur area in the same building where the teenager lived with her family on rent, the police said. According to her family, she had gone missing February 8 while her father, elder brother and sister-in-law had gone out for work.

Man killed in leopard attack

Nagpur: A leopard killed a 40-year-old man in Chandrapur district of Maharashtra, a forest official said Tuesday. The incident occurred Monday late night near a mine area in Durgapur in east Maharashtra, he said. The deceased is identified as Naresh Sonawane, the official added.



My government is trying to rectify the "mistakes" of the previous governments which did not honour deserving warriors and leaders
NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

IAF GETS 'DESI' DOGS TO SCARE AWAY BIRDS FROM RUNWAYS

The Indian Air Force, for the first time, inducted the Mudhol Hound, an Indian breed of sight hound from Karnataka, to chase away birds and animals from the runways and reduce risk of bird-hits



Why Disha Ravi wanted to hold a strike every Friday

STARTED IN 2018 BY SWEDISH ENVIRONMENT ACTIVIST GRETA THUNBERG, FFF ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO HOLD A STRIKE EVERY FRIDAY TO FORCE THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE NOTICE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 16: In July 2020, three little-known environment groups came into the limelight after Delhi Police took down their websites and threatened to slap UAPA charges against them. One of them was the India chapter of "Fridays For Future" (FFF), whose co-founder Disha Ravi is currently in police custody in the toolkit case and for alleged links to Khalistani sympathisers abroad.

FFF India was then carrying out an email campaign against the draft Environmental Impact Assessment notification formulated by the Environment Ministry. The notification proposed reducing public consultation on projects and granting post-facto environmental clearance.



However, police described the contents of the FFF India website as "dangerous for the peace, tranquillity and sovereignty of India". In the notice issued July 8, 2020, Delhi Police had also said that the website contained "religious hatred content/material" and its contents attract the imposition of Section 18 (conspiracy or attempt to commit terror act) of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). Though Delhi Police soon withdrew the notice and the FFF website was up and running the next day, one thing was clear: the movement had come under the radar of agencies.

Started in 2018 by Swedish environment activist Greta Thunberg, FFF encourages students to hold a strike every Friday to force the gov-

ernment to take notice of climate change. The India chapter was founded a year later and now has presence in several major cities with around 150 full-time volunteers. FFF India often coordinates with like-minded environment groups in other countries as well.

As part of the global climate strike in September 2019, FFF conducted several marches in India. But the biggest was in Disha's hometown Bangalore, where thousands of youths participated.

Though it initially started off as a climate group, volunteers soon started involving themselves in other issues as well, sometimes political. FFF took part in protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Register of Citizens, and lately, the farmers' agitation in the National Capital

Planning farm protest toolkit would've been an honour: Friedrich

New Delhi: Pieter Friedrich, one of the several influencers accused of drafting and promoting the toolkit to amplify farmers' protest at the international stage, has claimed that he had no role to play in it. In a statement, issued Tuesday, Pieter Friedrich said that it would have been his honour to plan the farmers' protest toolkit, but he had nothing to do with it. "It would have been an honor to have planned the hashtags and the overall "Toolkit" for the Farmers Protest, being as I stand with all peaceful protestors around the world in their struggle against totalitarianism, and particularly with Indians. Yet, I had nothing to do with it....." his statement said. Pieter Friedrich also quoted former Union Minister and Congress leader P Chidambaram and said that "India is becoming the theatre of the absurd". "The entire incident, however, merely illustrated the truth of what former Home Minister P Chidambaram recently noted, "India is becoming the theatre of the absurd and it is sad that the Delhi police have become a tool of the oppressors." It's laughable that the entire world today - from a white Christian writer like myself to a Black Barbadian singer like Rihanna - are labeled as supporters of a fictitious Sikh separatist state," he said.



Region. But they are mostly engaged in raising climate awareness, cleaning lakes and parks, and conducting workshops on how to advocate and litigate pro-environmental issues.

Some of the major campaigns the organisation is involved in include protection of Mollem forest area in Goa, an elephant conservation zone in Uttarakhand, Aarey forest in Mumbai, Raika forest in Jammu and Dumna nature park in Madhya Pradesh. In October

2019, several FFF activists were among those arrested after clashes with police in Aarey Colony. The activists were protesting felling of thousands of trees for the Metro project.

On their website, the FFF describes itself as a "global people's movement for climate justice". "We at FFF India are inclusive and egalitarian, non-partisan, autonomous and decentralised movement. Climate strikes or marches are peaceful, non-violent ways to let

Can't use sedition law to 'quieten the disquiet': Court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: The sedition law cannot be used to "quieten the disquiet under the pretence of muzzling miscreants", a court in Delhi said while granting bail to two men accused of posting fake videos on Facebook on the farmer protests.

Additional Sessions Judge Dharmender Rana, while granting bail to Devi Lal Burdak and Swaroop Ram, who were arrested earlier this month for alleged sedition, said the use of Section 124 A (sedition) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) is a "seriously debatable issue" in the case before it.

The court said the law of sedition was a powerful tool in the hands of the state to maintain peace and order in society.

"However, it cannot be invoked to quieten the disquiet under the pretence of muzzling miscreants... In the absence of any exhortation, call, incitement or instigation to create disorder or disturbance of public peace by resort to violence or any allusion or oblique remark or even any hint towards this objective, attributable to the accused, I suspect that Section 124 A (Sedition) IPC can be validly invoked against the applicant," the judge said in the order Monday.

"In my considered opinion, on a plain reading of the tagline attributed to the accused, invocation of Section 124A IPC is a seriously debatable issue," the judge said.

According to the police, Burdak posted a fake video on his Facebook page with the tagline - "There is a rebellion in Delhi Police and around 200 police officials have given mass resignation."

However, the video was about another incident where some Home Guard personnel in khaki were protesting in Jharkhand, the police said.

The second accused, Ram, shared a separate video with a similar tagline. However, the video was about senior Delhi Police officer briefing personnel at the farmers' protest site and asking policemen to tackle the situation properly, the police said.

"I have personally seen the video in the court room wherein evidently a senior police officer of Delhi Police is raising slogans, in a very agitated tone, and a group of Delhi Police personnel are seen standing beside him. The background voices also suggest a very charged up atmosphere. It was informed by the investigating officer that the accused were not the author of the said post and they had merely forwarded it," the judge said.

The court then granted bail to both the accused and told them to join investigation whenever called by the police.

VOICES AGAINST FUEL PRICE HIKE

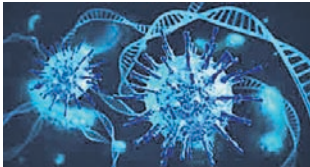


Members of Karnataka Rig Owners' Association stage a protest against fuel price hike at Nagarbhavi in Bangalore, Tuesday

SA, Brazilian variants of Covid-19 have entered India, says govt

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 16: This 2020 electron microscope image provided by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases - Rocky Mountain Laboratories shows SARS-CoV-2 virus particles which cause COVID-19, isolated from a patient in the US, emerging from the surface of cells cultured in a lab. Viruses are constantly mutating, with coronavirus variants circulating around the globe. India has recorded at least one



case of the Brazilian variant of COVID-19 and four cases of the South African variant, Director-General of Indian Centre for Medical Research Dr Balram Bhargava told media Tuesday. Addressing the COVID-19 media briefing, Dr Bhargava said that the

infected people and their contacts have been quarantined.

"ICMR-NIV is attempting to isolate and culture the South African variant of SARS-CoV-2, while the Brazilian variant of SAS-CoV-2 has been isolated and cultured at ICMR-NIV-Pune," Dr Bhargava said.

The ICMR chief said that India currently has 187 patients who have been infected with the UK variant of the COVID-19 virus. There have been no mortalities among the people infected with the UK variant.

Milk & music: How villages support protesting farmers

Makrauli, home to 4,000 people, is a hive of activity every morning with men and women bringing vegetables and wood to camp sites

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Makrauli, Feb 16: Blasting catchy pro-farmer songs from a speaker, an electric-blue tractor rattled down an Indian village road collecting pails of milk - just some of the donations sustaining massive protest camps outside New Delhi.

More than two months after the first farmers set up camps on the capital's borders, tens of thousands more have joined them, calling for the repeal of new agriculture laws.

The farmers, who have slept outdoors through the winter cold, are being supported by an army of small villages neighbouring Delhi.

"This campaign, this farmer movement, isn't theirs - those who are sitting there - alone," Sumit Arya, the 35-year-old head of Makrauli Khurd, a village about two hours' drive from the main protest sites, told AFP.

Makrauli, home to 4,000 people,

is a hive of activity every morning with men and women bringing vegetables and wood to collection points.

On Tuesdays, villagers carry small metal buckets full of milk freshly squeezed from their cows to the back of trailers, where men like Ajit Singh gently pour them into larger cans.

"We can't give our time there but we can take care of their food and water needs and whatever they need in winter," the 58-year-old farmer said as he sat on a bed of hay in a trolley.

Around him, villagers raised their fists and chanted "zindabad" ("long live"), in reply to someone yelling "kisan ekta" ("farmers united") - a rallying cry often heard at the protests.

The government says the agriculture sector needs to be modernised. But farmers fear the deregulation will place them at the mercy



Small villages surrounding Delhi have become a vital network of support for the huge farmer protest camps

of big corporations.

Farming has long been a political minefield in India, with nearly 70 percent of the 1.3-billion-strong population drawing their livelihood

from agriculture.

The protests - which turned deadly in late January when a tractor rally in Delhi turned into a rampage - have become one of the

biggest challenges to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government since it came to power in 2014.

Passion and community Since the start of the sit-in protests in late November, a support network has sprung up to care for the sprawling camps.

Tractors pulling trolleys laden with wood, rice, flour, sugar and vegetables leave villages like Makrauli on daily or weekly rotations for the camps.

They are joined by farmers and their families eager to spend the day or several nights at the sites.

"We strike up friendships... Two or three tractors keep going from our village to keep their spirits up," Ajay Punia, 18, said on a trailer en route to Delhi from Makrauli with 11 others aged 14 to 65.

The villagers played songs of resistance, as green and yellow farmer union flags and the Tricolour fluttered from the tractor.

DCW sends notice to Delhi Police

New Delhi: The Delhi Commission for Women has sent a notice to the Delhi Police on the arrest of 21-year-old climate activist Disha Ravi in the 'toolkit' case and sought a report on issues like why she was not provided a lawyer of her choice when produced before a court here. Taking cognisance of media reports, the panel in a statement, issued Tuesday, also said that Ravi was produced before a court in Delhi without a lawyer of her choice being present there. The activist was arrested from Bangalore Saturday by the Delhi Police for allegedly creating and sharing a protest toolkit backing the farmers' agitation against the Centre's new agrilaws. Ravi along with Mumbai lawyer Nikita Jacob and Pune engineer Shantanu Muluk created the toolkit and shared it with others to tarnish India's image, the Delhi Police had said Monday.

our national and state governments know of our demand to address the ongoing climate crisis and ecological breakdown," FFF says.

However, Disha and her associates Nikita Jacob and Shantanu Muluk now stand accused of creating and disseminating the farmers' agitation toolkit - a campaign information document - with Greta, who accidentally tweeted it February 4.

Cong govt in Puducherry loses majority

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Puducherry, Feb 16: The Congress government in the Union Territory lost its majority with another ruling party legislator resigning Tuesday, reducing the numbers of the party-led alliance to 14 in the Assembly with an effective strength of 28.

Seizing on the opportunity, the Opposition which also has 14 MLAs in the 33-member House, demanded the resignation of Chief Minister V Narayanasamy, saying his government was in minority.

However, Narayanasamy rejected the demand, claiming that his government continued to enjoy 'majority' in the assembly, which is set to go for polls in the next few months.

Congress MLA A John Kumar resigned from his MLA post and the party Tuesday, becoming the fourth legislator to quit the assembly since last month, dealing a blow ahead of the elections.

With Kumar's resignation, the strength of the Congress in the assembly has decreased to ten including Speaker. Its ally DMK has three members and an independent also supports the government.

The simple majority in the assembly with the reduced strength is 15. Polls are likely in April and the House's term ends June 8, 2021. The development came a day ahead of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's visit to the Union Territory to launch the party's campaign. The party position in the assembly as of Tuesday: Congress (ten), DMK three, All-India NR Congress seven, AIADMK four, BJP three (all nominated and have voting rights) and one independent. Four Congress MLAs have resigned while one member had been disqualified.

"I have resigned from the party as well. I am sending the letter to Puducherry Congress Committee chief AV Subramanian," Kumar, a confidante of Narayanasamy and who was elected from the Kamaraj Nagar segment in 2019 by-poll, told this news agency.

Party sources indicated that Kumar is likely to join the BJP, seen as a repeat of what is happening in West Bengal with the Trinamool Congress, though not on a similar scale here.

Last month, addressing a poll rally here, BJP national chief J P Nadda slammed the Congress for alleged rampant corruption and vowed to capture power in the union territory by winning 23 plus seats out of the 30.

The exodus of Congress MLAs started with the resignation of then Minister A Namassivayam and E Theppainjan last month with the two later joining the BJP.

of the day quote

Human Resource Development is a mere tool of education, it is not the foundation of education. It is the role and responsibility of education to ensure that our children are not considered as mere tools or instruments for the world but as thriving human beings

MANISH SISODIA | DELHI DY CHIEF MINISTER

A year ago people gave me the chance to serve the people of Delhi again. Despite it being a difficult year, Delhi government could successfully tackle Covid-19. We also made efforts to reduce Delhi's air pollution. We spoke to farmers and requested them to stop stubble burning and introduced new technology to find a solution. We are working 24x7 for making the lives of people easier and will continue working

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

We will expose the failures of the LDF government and previous UDF government. Both the LDF and the UDF have failed miserably

PRALHAD JOSHI | UNION MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Aizawl civic polls held peacefully

Aizawl: Election to the 19 wards of the Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) was held peacefully Tuesday, election officials said. Around 63.62 per cent of the 2.18 lakh voters exercised their franchise during the voting that took place from 7 am to 4 pm, they said. Mizoram Chief Minister Zoramthanga cast his vote at 7 am while state Congress chief and former chief minister Lal Thanhawla exercised his franchise at 11 am.

CBI conducts searches in Agra

New Delhi: The CBI has carried out searches in Uttar Pradesh's Agra in the case of a doctor who was found dead at her home in mysterious circumstances, and whose family accused her in-laws for killing her for dowry, officials said Tuesday.

2 PFI members held

Lucknow: Two members of the Popular Front of India (PFI) who were planning a series of terrorist attacks at various places in the country were arrested by the Uttar Pradesh Police's Special Task Force here Tuesday with a huge quantity of explosives, a senior officer said. The two are residents of Kerala and were recruiting members in different states to carry out the attacks, Additional Director General of Police (ADG), Law and Order, Prashant Kumar said.



I am the first MP who from the very beginning has been raising his voice that Rahul Gandhi should take up the leadership of the Congress party

RIPUN BORA | CONG ASSAM UNIT CHIEF

UP TO BOOST HERBAL CULTIVATION

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has issued directives to boost herbal and organic cultivation along the banks of the Ganga. He has said that the area for herbal cultivation will be increased to over 10 lakh hectares



WOMEN POWER



A contingent of women Delhi Police personnel march past during the 74th Raising Day parade at Kingsway Camp in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

Dragon packs up to leave

INDIA AND CHINA ARE ENGAGED IN A TEN-MONTH-LONG STANDOFF AT THE LINE OF ACTUAL CONTROL.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 16: Indian Army teams armed with drones and cameras are monitoring evacuation and dismantlement of military infrastructure by Chinese troops at Pangong Lake in Eastern Ladakh. Further, the disengagement process at both northern and southern banks of the Pangong Lake is expected to be complete by February 20.

The Indian Army team along with the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) team will physically verify and re-verify disengagement at Pangong Lake. "It will be a joint inspection team, both from Indian Army and Chinese PLA," said a senior government officer. The officer further stated that Indian Army teams will use drones and high-resolution cameras to check and record dismantlement of military infrastructure, especially created along Pangong Lake by Chinese troops. China has created a military garrison at Finger 7 where 13 jetties were stationed, long-range guns were positioned, bunkers were constructed and permanent structures

DISENGAGEMENT AT LAC



Indian and Chinese troops and tanks disengage from the banks of Pangong lake area in Eastern Ladakh where they had been deployed opposite each other for almost ten months now

PTI PHOTO

built to accommodate thousands of People's Liberation Army troops. "We will verify physically whether each and everything is dismantled and removed from the position. We will go up to Finger 8 to check if dis-

engagement is happening as per the agreed terms," the officer explained. The agreement states that Chinese troops will move back to Finger 8 and Indian troops will pull back to the Dhan Singh Thapa post

between Finger 2 and 3 of the north bank of Pangong Lake. Further, there would be a temporary moratorium on military activities, including patrolling to the traditional areas. The mountain spur jutting into the lake is referred to as Finger in military parlance. The north bank of the lake is divided into 8 Fingers. India has claimed its territory till Finger 8 and China disputes its claims till Finger 4. There have been regular face-offs between the two armies between Finger 4 and Finger 8, a distance of eight kilometres, on the northern bank of the lake. Further, Indian and Chinese troops are also falling back from eyeball to eyeball confrontation position in the South bank of the lake. In the southern bank of the lake, tanks that were separated less than 100 metres have been pulled back by forces of both countries.

India and China are engaged in a ten-month-long standoff at the Line of Actual Control. The confrontations began on the north bank of Pangong Lake, both in the waters and the bank as Chinese incursions increased in early May last year.

Drug trafficking thrives in Dark Net

'Dark Net' refers to the deep hidden internet platform that is used for narcotics sale, exchange of pornographic content and other illegal activities by using the secret alleys of the onion router (ToR) to stay away from the surveillance of law enforcement agencies

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 16: The role of the 'Dark Net' has been a major concern of India's drug law enforcement agencies with the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) itself admitting in a secret note that the medium is being used "increasingly" here by drug traffickers. The note, shared with a high-level committee consisting of 31 Parliamentarians, reveals that the changing pattern in the illegal trade is safer, compared to previous mediums used by the drug traffickers.

The medium is also used for "Pretty Good Privacy (PGP) encryption" -- an encryption programme that provides cryptographic privacy and authentication for data communication. PGP is used for signing, encrypting, and decrypting texts, e-mails, files, directories, and whole disk partitions and to increase the security of e-mail communications.

The note further mentions that Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) expertise and capacity to deal with this medium "need to be augmented".

Owing to its end-to-end encryption, 'Dark Net' is considered very tough to crack when it comes to investigating criminal activities being rendered over it. It is an overlay network within the internet that can only be accessed with specific software, configurations, or authorisation, and often uses a unique customised communication protocol.

In August last year, India discussed the misuse of the 'Dark Net' for drug trafficking during a webinar conference of BRICS nations.

In February last year, the NCB arrested a 21-year-old son of a retired army officer, Dipu Singh, the country's first 'Dark Net' narcotics operative who allegedly shipped hundreds of psychotropic drug parcels to the US, the UK, Romania, Spain and some other European nations using the dark web in the garb of sex stimulation medicines. Singh was arrested by the NCB which also recovered 12,000 tablets of various psychotropic drugs from his residence. A total of 55,000 psychotropic tablets that includes tramadol, zolpidem, alprazolam was also seized as part of this two-month-long operation that was conducted with cooperation from international agencies. Some other seizures in this case were made in Mumbai and the UK too. During the operation, 135 kg of different psychotropic tablets were seized, and four persons were arrested. Set up March 17, 1986 as the apex agency to coordinate actions of various central and state agencies on the issue, NCB is India's specialised anti-drug trafficking wing.

The MHA is also planning to "re-design" its "governance architecture" to deal with constant changing patterns of drug trafficking and its abuse and the need to develop skill of officers to respond to the challenges arising out of the same.



BIHAR COPS TO BE SACKED IF CAUGHT DRUNK

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, Feb 16: The NDA government in Bihar is facing heat following Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's directives that the authorities are to terminate police personnel "found in a drunken state".

The chief minister's directive came during a meeting with top officials of the Liquor Prohibition Department on Monday evening. This has created a huge stir in the state Home Department. The Bihar government is facing criticism for lack of strict implementation of the prohibition law. Liquor mafia is

rampant throughout the state and there has been significant seizure of large quantities of liquor in different districts. The chief minister has directed officials to advertise the stringent punishment that would be meted out to repeated offenders, liquor traders, consumers and liquor mafia so

that it can act as a deterrent. The Nitish Kumar government had mentioned phone numbers of law enforcement agencies on electric poles so that people could easily pass information about people involved in consumption, trade, transportation, storage, etc.



103 RESIDENTS OF B'LORE APARTMENT TEST COVID POSITIVE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Feb 16: As many as 103 residents, mostly aged above 60, of an apartment in a Bangalore suburb have tested positive for Covid-19 after attending a social gathering in their complex, officials said Tuesday.

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike Commissioner N. Manjunatha Prasad told reporters that 103 people out of 1,052 residents of the SNN Lake View Apartments in Bommanahalli tested positive.

"We have tested 1,052 residents of the apartment; one person is admitted in the hospital and others are in quarantine. The civic body had put in place various measures, including isolating and quarantining those who had tested positive and we have intensified contact tracing," he said in statement.

Bangalore civic body officials said that there was a party on February 4 in the apartment, in which most of the residents participated.

According to officials, the residents got to know that the infection had spread after some of them got themselves tested before a planned trip to Dehradun.

The Commissioner said that samples have been sent to the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences (Nimhans) to find the variant of the virus.

With 96 people who have tested positive above the age of 60 years, he said that the civic body was keeping watch on people with comorbidities, the elderly, pregnant ladies, children in the apartment. This is the second such cluster in Bangalore in the last three days.

WhatsApp messages, flirting by judge draw SC warning

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 16: The Supreme Court Tuesday made sharp observations on the conduct of a district judge from Madhya Pradesh, who sent offensive and inappropriate messages to a junior officer and justified this conduct as mere "flirting".

A former district judge from Madhya Pradesh moved the top court challenging the disciplinary proceedings initiated by the Madhya Pradesh High Court over the sexual harassment allegations made by a junior judicial officer.

Senior advocate Ravindra Shrivastava along with advocate Arjun Garg, representing Madhya Pradesh High Court, read out several WhatsApp messages sent by

the District Judge to junior lady officer. Shrivastava said he is a senior judicial officer; hence his conduct should have been more appropriate with the lady officer.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S.A. Bobde and comprising Justices A.S. Bopanna and V. Ramasubramanian said: "WhatsApp messages are quite offensive and improper. For a judge this conduct with junior officer - not acceptable." The bench queried that if they have some understanding with each other; is it good to go ahead? However, the bench added that the petitioner has already learnt a lesson and pointed at a settlement between the parties.

Shrivastava replied that the woman officer wanted a settlement, but the High Court committee prob-



ing this matter did not accept it. He added the petitioner has admitted that he was flirting with the lady. "What kind of judicial officer is this? We don't understand", added Shrivastava exclaimed. At this stage, the Chief Justice said it agrees with Shrivastava's submissions.

Senior advocate R. Balasubramanian, representing the district judge, submitted that the lady officer has withdrawn her complaint under the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Act, therefore the disciplinary proceedings by the High Court are not maintainable.

The bench queried Balasubramanian, the woman may have withdrawn the complaint, but the larger question is that whether the inquiry should be conducted by the High Court.

Balasubramanian, reiterated that the retired judicial officer told the High Court that the lady officer withdrew her complaint, yet departmental proceedings have been initiated against his client.

Chief Justice noted he may have thought that it is a private conversation, and the matter before the gender sensitisation committee came to an end after the lady declined to participate. The bench reiterated: "High Court wants to proceed, and it is duty bound to do so limited to disciplinary proceedings. What is there in law which can prevent

High Court proceedings?"

Shrivastava submitted that the High Court is proceeding with the matter even after the retirement of the petitioner, as it wanted to "send a strong message".

Balasubramanian argued that these charges were levelled during his client's promotion just to spoil his chances of being promoted. The Chief Justice replied that this phenomenon is ubiquitous. "All kinds of allegations come during promotion. We cannot generalise it. In this case there is allegation", observed the bench. Concluding the hearing, the Chief Justice said, "we are likely to make some sweeping observations in this case, you withdraw and contest the enquiry." After a detailed hearing in the matter, the top court adjourned the matter for a week.

international

of the day quote

As the UN Resident Coordinator to China, I look forward to leading the UN Country Team to work with the government to preserve this hard-won progress China has made as well as share China's vast experience to solve global development challenges and accelerate the drive to achieve the SDGs

SIDDHARTH CHATTERJEE | UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR IN CHINA

There is always another election to vindicate one's loss or validate forever one's rejection by the voting population

SALVADOR PANELO | PRESIDENTIAL LEGAL COUNSEL, PHILIPPINES

The company does not advocate nor condone hate; rather it advocates the right to private judgment and rejects the role of being the judge, jury and executioner

KEVIN MATOSSIAN | CEO, PARLER

SHORT TAKES

Rockets strike US base in Iraq

Baghdad: Rockets struck outside an airport near where U.S. Forces are based in northern Iraq late Monday, killing one U.S.-led coalition contractor and wounding at least eight other people, Iraqi security and coalition officials said, sparking fears of new hostilities. At least three rockets hit areas between the civilian Irbil international airport in the semi-autonomous Kurdish-run region and the nearby base hosting U.S. Troops at 9:30pm.

Aus approves AstraZeneca vax

Canberra: Australia's regulator Tuesday approved the AstraZeneca vaccine as its second for use against Covid-19. Pfizer's product will be available in Australia next week. It will be given in two doses three weeks apart, while AstraZeneca's will be administered in two doses 12 weeks apart. Prime Minister Scott Morrison said the Therapeutic Goods Administration, the regulator, found the AstraZeneca vaccine was safe and effective.

Burma migrants face deportation

Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia's government will repatriate 1,200 Myanmar migrants next week despite a military coup in their home country, but has assured that they will not include minority Muslim Rohingya refugees or those registered with the UN refugee agency. But the UN High Commissioner for Refugees voiced concern Tuesday that there may be vulnerable women and children among the group. Myanmar's leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, was detained as the military seized power on February 1, sparking protests in the country.

Hungary to get Chinese vax

Budapest: A shipment of a COVID-19 vaccine produced in China arrived in Hungary on Tuesday morning, making the country the first in the European Union to receive a Chinese vaccine. A jet carrying 550,000 doses of the vaccine, developed by the Chinese state-owned company Sinopharm, landed in Budapest after flying from Beijing. The shipment is enough to treat 275,000 people with the two-dose vaccine.



“Because we want this lockdown to be the last and we want progress to be cautious but also irreversible. So please continue to stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives

BORIS JOHNSON | PRIME MINISTER, UK

A HELICOPTER ON MARS

More than a century after the first powered flight on Earth, NASA intends to prove it's possible to replicate the feat on another world. Ingenuity, the small helicopter, is all set to arrive at the Red Planet Thursday with the astrobiology mission of Perseverance rover.



200 Indian-origin people occupy top positions in 15 countries

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Feb 16: More than 200 Indian-origin people occupy leadership positions in as many as 15 countries, including the US and the UK, building a legacy for future generations, according to a first-of-its-kind list by a US-based organisation working among the Indian diaspora. The 2021 Indiaspora Government Leaders List, which was released on Monday, had drawn from government websites and other publicly-available

resources to prepare the report to showcase the achievements of the community leaders across different sectors. It said that more than 200 leaders of Indian heritage have ascended to the highest echelons of public service in 15 countries across the globe, with over 60 of them holding Cabinet positions. It is a huge source of pride to have the first woman and first person of colour as the Vice President of the world's oldest democracy be someone of Indian heritage. We wanted to use this



seminal moment on Presidents' Day to highlight a host of others in the diaspora who also are in public service, said Indiaspora founder M R Rangaswami, a Silicon Valley-based entrepreneur and investor. He was referring to Kamala

Harris, the first woman Vice President of the United States.

These leaders are building a legacy for future generations, and one that extends beyond our community to all of the constituents and communities that they serve, Rangaswami said in a statement.

The list also includes diplomats, legislators, heads of central banks and senior civil servants from countries with significant histories of diaspora migration, such as Australia, Canada, Singapore, South Africa,

the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States.

It is an honour to be included on the 2021 Indiaspora Government Leaders List. As the longest-serving Indian-American member of Congress, I am proud to be a leader in the Indian-American community, which has become an integral part of American life and society," said Congressman Ami Bera, Chairman of the US House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia.

Myanmar junta guarantees fresh polls

The military has not given a date for a new election but it has imposed a state of emergency for one year

REUTERS

Naypyidaw, Feb 16: Myanmar's military junta guaranteed Tuesday that it would hold an election and hand over power; denied its ouster of an elected government was a coup or that its leaders were detained; and accused protesters of violence and intimidation.

The junta's justification of its Feb 1 seizure of power and arrest of government leader Aung San Suu Kyi and others came as protesters again took to the streets and after a UN envoy warned the army of 'severe consequences' for any harsh response to the demonstrations.

"Our objective is to hold an election and hand power to the winning party," Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun, spokesman for the ruling council, told the junta's first news conference since overthrowing Suu Kyi's government.

The military has not given a date for a new election but it has imposed a state of emergency for one year. Zaw Min Tun said the military would not hold power for long.

"We guarantee... that the election will be held," he told the nearly two-hour news conference, which the military broadcast from the capital, Naypyitaw, live over Facebook, a platform it has banned.

Asked about the detention of Nobel Prize winner Suu Kyi and the president, Zaw Min Tun dismissed



SUU KYI FACES NEW CHARGES

Naypyidaw: Police in Myanmar filed a new charge against ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi, her lawyer said Tuesday, in a move that may allow her to be held indefinitely without trial as part of an intensifying crackdown by authorities who seized power in a coup. Suu Kyi, who was deposed and detained in the military takeover Feb 1, already faced a charge of illegally possessing walkie-talkies — an apparent attempt to provide a legal veneer for her house arrest. Under the new charge, she is accused of breaking a law that has been used to prosecute people who have violated coronavirus restrictions, lawyer Khin Maung Zaw told reporters after meeting with a judge in a court in the capital, Naypyidaw.

the suggestion they were in detention, saying they were in their homes for their security while the law took its course.

He also said Myanmar's foreign policy would not change, it remained open for business and deals would be upheld.

The military will be hoping its reassurances will dampen the campaign of daily opposition to its rule and to the ousting Suu Kyi and her government. As well as the demonstrations in towns and cities across

the ethnically diverse country, a civil disobedience movement has brought strikes that are crippling many functions of government.

The unrest has revived memories of bloody outbreaks of opposition to almost half a century of direct army rule that ended in 2011 when the military began a process of withdrawing from civilian politics. But violence has been limited this time though police have opened fire several times, mostly with rubber bullets, to disperse protesters.

42 freed by govt forces from Taliban jail in Afghan

AGENCIES

Kabul, Feb 16: The Afghan National Army commandos have freed 42 people from a Taliban detention centre in Baghlan province, the country's Defence Ministry said Tuesday.

During a special operation of the Afghan National Army personnel, six national army soldiers, 19 policemen and 17 civilians have been freed from a Taliban hideout in Nawruzak area of Baghlan-e-Markazi district of Baghlan province Monday night, the ministry said in a statement, Xinhua news agency reported.

The statement said that the freed people would join their families soon.

This is the second Taliban detention center in two months in Baghlan that has been completely destroyed following the national army special operations, said the statement. The Taliban militants frequently set up temporary checkpoints in areas where security forces have weak presence.

‘N Korean hackers tried to steal Pfizer vax know-how’

REUTERS

Seoul, Feb 16: South Korea's intelligence agency has said North Korea attempted to steal information on coronavirus vaccines and treatments by hacking Pfizer Inc, a lawmaker briefed by the agency said Tuesday.

Digital espionage targeting health bodies, vaccine scientists and drug-makers has surged during the COVID-19 pandemic as state-backed hacking groups scramble to secure the latest research and information about the outbreak.

Ha Tae-keung, an opposition member of the parliamentary intelligence panel, said the pharmaceutical giant was among those hacked in the bid to steal information on vaccines and treatments.

"There were attempts to steal COVID vaccine and treatment technology during cyber attacks and Pfizer was hacked," he said.

Speaking to reporters after a briefing by the agency, Ha did not elaborate on the timing or success of the attempt, a transcript of his remarks reviewed by Reuters



showed. Ha's office confirmed his comments but gave no details.

Pfizer's offices in Asia and South Korea did not have an immediate comment. Tuesday's news comes after attempts last year by suspected North Korean hackers to break into the systems of at least nine healthcare firms, such as Johnson & Johnson, Novavax Inc, and AstraZeneca.

South Korea's National Intelligence Service (NIS) has said it had foiled attempts by its neighbour to hack into South Korean firms developing coronavirus vaccines. North Korea is often accused of turning to an army of hackers to fill its cash-strapped coffers amid international sanctions that ban most international trade with it.

India's dramatic drop in COVID cases leaves experts baffled

INFECTIONS BEGAN TO PLUMMET IN SEPTEMBER AND NOW THE COUNTRY IS REPORTING ABOUT 11,000 NEW CASES A DAY, COMPARED TO A PEAK OF NEARLY 100,000, LEAVING EXPERTS PERPLEXED

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New Delhi, Feb 16: When the coronavirus pandemic took hold in India, there were fears it would sink the fragile health system of the world's second-most populous country. Infections climbed dramatically for months and at one point India looked like it might overtake the United States as the country with the highest case toll.

But infections began to plummet in September, and now the

country is reporting about 11,000 new cases a day, compared to a peak of nearly 100,000, leaving experts perplexed.

They have suggested many possible explanations for the sudden drop — seen in almost every region — including that some areas of the country may have reached herd immunity or that Indians may have some preexisting protection from the virus.

The Indian government has also partly attributed the dip in cases to



mask-wearing, which is mandatory in public in India and violations

draw hefty fines in some cities. But experts have noted the situation is more complicated since the decline is uniform even though mask compliance is flagging in some areas.

It's more than just an intriguing puzzle; determining what's behind the drop in infections could help authorities control the virus in the country, which has reported nearly 11 million cases and over 155,000 deaths. Some 2.4 million people have died worldwide.

India, like other countries, misses

many infections, and there are questions about how it's counting virus deaths. But the strain on the country's hospitals has also declined in recent weeks, a further indication the virus's spread is slowing. When recorded cases crossed 9 million in November, official figures showed nearly 90% of all critical care beds with ventilators in New Delhi were full. On Thursday, 16% of these beds were occupied.

That success can't be attributed to vaccinations since India only

began administering shots in January — but as more people get a vaccine, the outlook should look even better, though experts are also concerned about variants identified in many countries that appear to be more contagious and render some treatments and vaccines less effective.

And, in India, the data is not as dramatic. A nationwide screening for antibodies by Indian health agencies estimated that about 270 million, had been infected.



Large streams of lava shoot into the night sky as Mount Etna, Europe's most active volcano, leaps into action, seen from the village of Fornazzo, in Catania, Italy, Feb 15

REUTERS PHOTO

of the day quote

Open innovation through partnerships globally is a priority for Michelin R&D. It enables us to accelerate and scale up mobility related innovative opportunities around data driven engineering and sustainable materials

ERIC PHILIPPE VINESSE | EXECUTIVE VP, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT - MICHELIN GROUP

We're going through one of the biggest transformations in Indian financial history – the Fintech Revolution – that will significantly alter the payment and banking experience of consumers and businesses now and in the years to come

AMITABH TEWARY | CHIEF INNOVATION OFFICER, RAZORPAY

India is an attractive investment destination and is poised to become a major player in the global supply chain in the electronics and IT products industry

RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD | MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS, ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

SHORT TAKES

JB Pany new ICC Odisha Chairman

Bhubaneswar: Director of Arrelic Reliability Pvt Ltd JB Pany has been appointed as the chairman of ICC Odisha State Council for the year 2021-22. Pany is an industry veteran with more than 35 years of professional experience. He is also the President of TIE (The Indus Entrepreneurs – a non-profit global network of entrepreneurs and professionals), Bhubaneswar. Pany also holds positions as Managing Director of Radiant Telesystems Limited and also Director of Swosti Group & Ortel Group.

ICICI Bank eyes 2 fintech firms

New Delhi: ICICI Bank Tuesday said it will buy stakes in two fintech companies – CityCash and Thillais Analytical Solutions – for a total cash consideration of ₹6.03 crore. CityCash is a bus transit-focused payments technology company which provides ticketing system technology to state transport corporations. Thillais Analytical Solutions operates a neo-banking platform Vanghee, which facilitates connected banking solutions for corporates and MSMEs, and helps banks deepen their customer relationships.

NBFCs' stressed assets worry

Mumbai: Stressed assets of non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) are likely to touch ₹1.5-1.8 lakh crore, or 6-7.5 per cent of their assets under management (AUM) by the end of this fiscal, says a report. However, the one-time COVID-19 restructuring window, and the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) restructuring scheme of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will limit the reported gross non-performing assets (GNPA).

Nureca IPO sees huge traction

New Delhi: The initial public offer of Nureca Limited, which is into the business of home healthcare and wellness products, was subscribed 14.77 times on the second day of subscription Tuesday. The ₹100 crore-public issue received bids for 2,07,03,200 shares against 14,01,595 shares on offer.



Given our extensive experience in providing affordable insulins globally, we believe we can contribute and support IDF in driving real policy and access actions that will transform lives and diabetes care

ALEXANDER ZACH | GLOBAL HEAD OF MARKET ACCESS & POLICY, BIOCON BIOLOGICS

BROOKFIELD INDIA REIT REGISTERS FLAT DEBUT

Shares of Brookfield India Real Estate Investment Trust listed with a premium of over 2 per cent on NSE against its issue price of ₹275. The IPO was subscribed eight times earlier this month



ICRA predicts recession ending

INDIA'S GDP IS EXPECTED TO GROW BY 0.7 PC IN Q3FY21; THE FORECAST SHOWS A TURNAROUND FROM THE 7.5 PC CONTRACTION IN Q2FY21

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 16: India's GDP is expected to record a year-on-year rise of 0.7 per cent in Q3FY21, thereby ending the recession created by the nationwide lockdown imposed last year to curb the spread of Covid-19, rating agency ICRA said Tuesday.

The forecast shows a turnaround from the 7.5 per cent contraction in Q2FY21, benefitting from a pickup in private consumption and government spending. Besides, the mild forecasted growth in Q3FY21 signifies that the economy has exited the Covid-19 pandemic-induced recession after two quarters.

ICRA expects the gross value added (GVA) at basic prices to have risen by 0.7 per cent in Q3FY21, in contrast to the 7 per cent contraction in Q2FY21.

According to ICRA's Principal



Encouragingly, almost all the non-agricultural lead indicators that we track recorded a continued, albeit uneven, improvement in volume terms in Q3 FY2021

ADITI NAYAR | PRINCIPAL ECONOMIST, ICRA

Economist Aditi Nayar:

"Encouragingly, almost all the non-agricultural lead indicators that we track recorded a continued, albeit uneven, improvement in volume terms in Q3 FY2021. This pickup benefitted from the continued unlocking of the economy, uptick in consumption during the festive season, as well as higher Central government spending. Moreover, most of the tracked indicators rebounded to a growth on a YoY basis in that quarter, although this was on the low base of Q3 FY2020."

But sectors such as aviation continued to contract in Q3 FY2021.

ICRA noted that the Index of Industrial Production recorded a sedate 1 per cent rise in the just-concluded quarter while rising raw material

prices contributed to lower margins in some sectors. However, the profitability for a large portion of the formal listed space remained healthy, benefitting from the cost-cutting measures that had been undertaken at the peak of the pandemic as well as rising volumes.

"In our assessment, the formal part of the Indian economy has

shrugged off the pandemic blues and is gaining traction at the cost of the smaller and less formal segment. This is hastening the process of the formalisation of the economy and contributing to a consolidation in favour of the larger and more reputed players in certain sectors."

"While the informal and contact-intensive sectors will certainly heal more gradually, the lack of adequate proxies constrains a deeper analysis of the state of their recovery," the rating agency said.

On a sobering note, the January 2021 round of RBI's Consumer Confidence Survey of respondents in 13 major cities indicated only a modest pickup in consumer sentiments. In contrast, healthy kharif output and crop procurement continued to buoy rural farm sentiment.

Moreover, the migration of labour back to urban areas is expected to have restarted remittances and added to the consumption of the non-farm part of the rural economy.

"ICRA expects that the revival in Central Government spending supported the Indian economy's exit from the recession in Q3 FY2021," Nayar said. Further, the government of India's capital expenditure and net lending increased by a significant 117.7 per cent in Q3 FY2021, in contrast to the contraction of 39.1 per cent in Q2 FY2021, he added.

Chandi Bhandar re-launched in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: Chandi Bhandar, the largest exclusive silver showroom of Odisha, was re-launched Tuesday in the city. Earlier it was launched in 2013.

Chandi Bhandar is the only brand that celebrates this multifaceted role and tries to give silver customers an uncompromised experience. It has the largest display of silver jewelry, be it payal or earrings or anklets or bangles, a place where one can easily try and choose her own piece. It is a constant quest to bring the best product to our customer, be it in design or the quality of the silver, an official said. The company also promised 90% return value on silver products.



The customer in turn has supported us with her trust which has encouraged us to expand our retail space, the official added.

On this occasion, another floor was added to the store in Sahid Nagar. Chandi Bhandar is offering flat 50% off on the making charge of a wide range of products in both our stores, at Shahidnagar and Patia, the official added. The offer is valid from February 16-28, 2021.

UTKARSH SMALL FIN BANK TIES UP WITH MASTERCARD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: Utkarsh Small Finance Bank Ltd (USFBL) Tuesday announced the launch of a debit card with Mastercard. The launch coincides with the Bank celebrating its 4th successful year of operations. The card will offer International benefits and features to Utkarsh Small Finance Bank's customers and provide shopping and dining privileges.

The collaboration will bring together Mastercard's technological expertise and innovation to Utkarsh Small Finance Bank's strong customer base. With this partnership, the cardholders will also have access to Mastercard benefits such as

lounge access, worldwide acceptance, insurance coverage, cash-back offers, concierge offers, and merchant offers. Mastercard has been a pioneer in digital payments safety and security. These cards will be enabled with best in class security features such as Safety Net for fraud risk monitoring.

Vikas Varma, Chief Operating Officer, South Asia, Mastercard said, "Mastercard is excited to partner with Utkarsh Small Finance Bank, which has customers based mostly out of tier II-III markets. Mastercard is committed to develop safe, secure and more convenient ways to make payments with technology and expertise."

Several websites 'are selling' fake Amazon reviews

COST OF THE FAKE REVIEWS STARTS FROM 5 POUND EACH AND SOME OF THE WEBSITES ARE SELLING THEM EVEN "IN BULK," THE BBC REPORTED CITING THE FINDINGS OF 'WHICH?'

AGENCIES

London, Feb 16: Several websites are selling fake reviews for goods sold on Amazon Marketplace, according to UK-based consumer group 'Which?'

Cost of the fake reviews starts from 5 pound each and some of the website are selling them even "in bulk," the BBC reported Tuesday, citing the findings of 'Which?'

The research found that these websites also promise free products in exchange of fake reviews.

The fake review business is continuing for quite some time despite a crackdown by the e-commerce giant.

"We remove fake reviews and



take action against anyone involved in abuse," an Amazon spokesman was quoted as saying by the BBC.

As per the research by 'Which?', sellers can buy these fake review packages for 15 pounds individually,

while the price of bulk packages starts at 620 pounds for 50 reviews which may go up to 8,000 pound for 1,000 reviews.

People who provide the fake reviews are often offered payments as

well as free or discounts on products, said the report.

Earlier, in 2019, an investigation by Daily Mail found sellers on the platform purchasing fake reviews for around 15 euro each.

The companies selling fake reviews to sellers were found relying on an army of "testers" who buy the products to post the four and five-star reviews online, said the report.

The investigation showed that the testers get the refund for the cost of purchasing the products, in addition to a small fee.

The testers used to buy the products so that the reviews they post get classified as "Amazon Verified Purchases".

SC issues notice to JSW Steel Ltd over ₹139.15 crore entry tax dues

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Feb 16: The Supreme Court Tuesday issued notice to the JSW Steel Ltd in a civil appeal filed by the state of Odisha seeking recovery of ₹139.15 crore allegedly pending on Bhushan Power and Steel Ltd as entry tax dues.

A three-judge bench of the apex court headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde and comprising Justices AS Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian asked the respondent to file response in four weeks.

The state of Odisha filed the civil appeal through advocate Sibbo



Sankar Mishra challenging the order of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal that had dismissed the appeal filed by the state claiming to recover a sum of approx ₹139.15 crore on account of entry tax dues from JSW Steel Ltd.

The state of Odisha filed the civil appeal challenging the order of the NCLAT

The state government contended in the petition that the suppression and concealment of claims to the tune of ₹139.15 crore is a material irregularity and amounts to serious fraud committed by Bhushan Power and Steel Ltd upon the state of Odisha causing substantial loss to the public exchequer.

Bitcoin vaults above \$50,000 for first time ever

AGENCIES

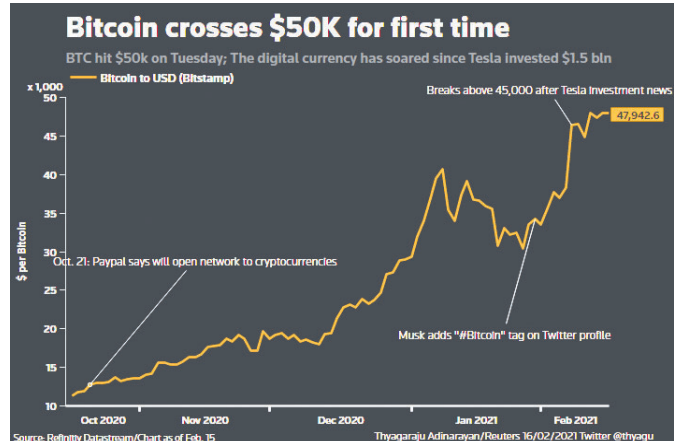
London, Feb 16: Bitcoin rose above \$50,000 Tuesday to a new record high, building on a rally fuelled by signs that the world's biggest cryptocurrency is gaining acceptance amongst mainstream investors.

Bitcoin hit a new high of \$50,602, and was last up 3.3% at \$49,537. It has risen around 72% so far this year, with most of the gains coming after electric carmaker Tesla said it had bought \$1.5 billion in Bitcoin.

It also said it would accept the currency as payment.

But Tesla was only the latest in a string of large investments that have vaulted Bitcoin from the fringes of finance to company balance sheets and Wall Street dealing desks, as U.S. firms and traditional money managers have started to buy the cryptocurrency.

"The recent market conditions and events both in the crypto space



and the financial world at large put such a price movement within the realm of possibility," said Jacob Skaaning of crypto hedge fund ARK36.

"However, I'd like to offer a word of caution: while my long-term outlook is bullish, massive price fluctuations along the way are only to be expected. Bitcoin is still extremely volatile."

The rush in 2021 by retail and institutional investors comes on top of a 300% rise last year as investors search for alternatives to the dollar because of the U.S. Federal

■ It has risen around 72% so far this year, with most of the gains coming after electric carmaker Tesla said it had bought \$1.5 billion in Bitcoin

■ Tesla also said it would accept the currency as payment

■ Many other U.S. firms and traditional money managers have started to buy the cryptocurrency

Reserve's 0% interest rates. It traded at a few hundred dollars only five years earlier.

What's more, analysts suggest Bitcoin's limited supply could boost further gains for the virtual asset and that's while the narrative of Bitcoin becoming the digital gold gains traction.

"If that narrative comes to fruition, then the growth potential is off the charts as \$50,000 per Bitcoin equates to a market cap of

roughly \$931 billion, which is almost 9% of gold," said John Wu, president at blockchain company Ava Labs.

"If BTC meets gold's market cap, then that would be at least \$500,000 per Bitcoin."

JPMorgan said in January that Bitcoin emerged as a rival to gold and could trade as high as \$146,000 if it becomes established as a safe-haven asset. That could mark a new dawn for the digital currency after years as a play for speculators and retail punters.

Bitcoin's liquid supply is continuing to decrease, as investors increasingly acquire and "hodl" the asset for the long term. "Hodl" is crypto slang for the act of an investor holding the asset instead of selling it.

Meanwhile, smaller cryptocurrency Ethereum edged 1.1% higher, just shy of its record high price of \$1,874.98.

Honda launches CB350RS, price starts at ₹1.96L

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: Revving up the mid-size 350-500cc motorcycle segment, Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India Pvt. Ltd. Tuesday announced global premier of the all new CB350RS.

An amalgamation of contemporary style and superior stance, CB350RS is the second new introduction in the CB family, which is 'Made in India for the World'. The CB350RS is priced starting at ₹1.96 lakh (ex-showroom, all India).

The CB350RS is powered by a 350cc, air-cooled 4-stroke OHC single-cylinder engine, which produces max power of 15.5 kW@5500 rpm. The advanced PGM-FI system using on-board sensors, constantly ensures optimum fuel delivery to the engine as per the riding conditions allowing efficient combustion and lesser emissions.

Segment First Assist and Slipper Clutch makes gear shifts smoother



while reducing clutch lever operation load ensuring less fatigue and more comfort during a rides that involve frequent shifting.

A vintage looking Segment First Advanced Digital-Analogue Meter integrates details like torque control, ABS, Side stand indicator with engine inhibitor, gear position indicator and battery voltage. Dual channel ABS prevents wheels from locking when brakes are applied in emergency or when operated on slippery roads ensuring a greater sense of confidence.

Badhai ho India, England B Ko harane ke liye (Congratulations India, for beating England B). You (England team) don't pick your best team in the hardest place to WIN a Test match, you actually cannot even show emotion to it

KEVIN PIETERSEN



REDEMPTION AT ITS BEST

Axar bags fifer in debut match as Indian spinners complete demolition job of England to level 4-Test series sealing a record 317-run victory

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Feb 16: Axar Patel and Ravichandran Ashwin predictably completed the annihilation of clueless England batsmen, emphatically bringing India back in contention for the World Test Championship (WTC) final with a series-levelling 317-run victory in the second Test here Tuesday.

Debutant Patel made full use of favourable conditions to bag 5/60 in 21 overs while Ashwin finished with a match-haul of eight wickets, not to forget his classy hundred with the bat.

They demolished England for a paltry 164 on the fourth day in pursuit of an impossible target of 482, giving India their biggest win over the tourists in terms of runs.

After a crushing 227-run defeat in the first Test, Virat Kohli couldn't have imagined a better comeback going into the crucial Day/Night Test in Ahmedabad in just over a week's time.

While critics, mostly from the English side, had panned the pitch but two hundreds and three fifties by the home team batsmen showed that it was all about understanding of conditions and brilliant application from the likes of Rohit Sharma, Ashwin, Kohli, Rishabh Pant and debutant Patel.

From the visitors' own ranks, No.9 Moeen Ali went on a six-hitting spree in his 18-ball 43 to show the ones above him in the order, how it is done on a dust bowl.

The Indian team currently are so strong that it could afford to rest their best pacer Jasprit Bumrah, miss out their premier all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja but yet make a telling statement, nullifying any advantage that England team might have possessed.

Opener Rohit should come in for special mention considering the start

that India needed after first Test disaster. Rohit set the tone and then it was a Test match that Ashwin will remember forever.

Young Pant, whose glove work at times invites unnecessary scrutiny, pulled off a lovely stumping to get rid of Dan Lawrence off Ashwin. Ashwin flighted one to entice Lawrence out of the crease and the ball turned and travelled between the batsman's legs.

Pant was unsighted for the better part as he moved down the leg and maintaining his balance, collected it to effect a smart stumping that would make even Wriddhiman Saha and all his ardent fans very happy.

Ben Stokes (8) has been famous pulling off Houdini acts but Tuesday, no such magic was in store against two top-quality slow bowling operators. Coming round the wicket, Ashwin got one to turn away as Stokes, with a forward defensive prod, tried to keep the ball down. But all he managed was an inside edge onto the pads and Kohli, who had placed himself at wide second slip, gleefully caught the loopy gift.

Root, as he waged a lonely battle, got a reprieve when his reverse sweep off Kuldeep Yadav, while batting on 32, was dropped by Mohammed Siraj stationed at deep point.

Axar finally got his reward when Ollie Pope (12) top edged while going for a slog sweep. There was a bit of extra bounce and that did Pope in with Ishant Sharma, the only fielder stationed at deep mid-wicket, taking an easy catch.

Ben Foakes, after a mem-

orable match behind the stumps, also didn't stay long as Kuldeep, the third spinner, had something to cheer as another mistimed sweep shot landed in the palms of the mid-wicket.

Root's two hours and 13-minute scrap finally ended when Axar got a classical left-arm spinner's dismissal. Having beaten Root's edge a number of times, he landed one successfully on the spot and as the England captain

pushed forward, the ball bounced enough and took an edge before flying into slips.

On a track, where a fifer was there for the taking, Axar removed Olly Stone to get his maiden fifer in his debut Test match just like his spin bowling partner Ashwin did nearly a decade ago and Narendra Hirwani around 33 years back.

Moeen with no worries in the world entertained himself with three successive sixes which was more of an audition for interested IPL franchises.

Fittingly it was another smart Pant stumping off Kuldeep that brought curtains down on a highly satisfactory outing for Kohli and company.

SCORECARD

India 1st innings 329
England 1st innings 134
India 2nd innings 286
England 2nd innings (overnight 53/3)

Dan Lawrence st Pant b Ashwin 26, Joe Root c Rahane b Patel 33, Ben Stokes c Kohli b Ashwin 8, Ollie Pope c Ishant b Patel 12, Ben Foakes c Patel b Kuldeep 2, Moeen Ali st Pant b Kuldeep 43, Olly Stone lbw b Patel 0, Stuart Broad not out 5; **Extras:** 7 (b-6, lb-1); **Total: 164 all out (54.2 overs).** **Fall:** 1/17 (Sibley), 2/49 (Burns), 3/50 (Leach), 4/66 (Lawrence), 5/90 (Stokes), 6/110 (Pope), 7/116 (Foakes), 8/116 (Root), 9/126 (Stone), 10/164 (Moeen). **Bowling:** Ishant Sharma 6-3-13-0, Axar Patel 21-5-60-5, Ravichandran Ashwin 18-5-53-3, Mohammed Siraj 3-1-6-0, Kuldeep Yadav 6-2-1-25-2.

R ASHWIN: As much as people were predicting things (about the pitch) from the outside, I thought the balls that was doing much wasn't getting wickets. It was the mind of the batsmen that got us wickets. I have been playing for years over here now and it takes pace and guile to do it. Keeping intent was very important

AXAR PATEL: To get a 5-wicket haul on debut is special. There was much happening on the pitch. It was about varying your speed and I just kept doing it. Forced the batsman to make mistakes. On the first day itself, it was turning. So, we bowled tight lines and got the rewards



POST MATCH REACTIONS

VIRAT KOHLI
Spin-friendly track: We didn't panic out there looking at the turn and bounce, we showed grit, got into the game and scored 600 runs in the game. We know our bowlers would do the job for us if we put up these runs.

English criticism of Chepauk wicket: If you looked at our second innings, we got 300 as well. It wasn't unfair if the toss went either way. Both teams should be in the game from the first session onwards, whether it is on spinning to seaming tracks, and that exactly was the case in this game.

Energy from crowd: The crowds make a big difference, this game was an example of the grit and determination this side shows and the crowd is a big part of that. If I am running in to bowl in this heat, I need people to motivate me. It is a perfect game for us.

Praising Pant: Rishabh has really worked hard in Australia, when he moves with the gloves you can see the difference in his reactions. He has shed a lot of weight and has worked hard on himself. It is showing, the way he kept with so much turn and bounce, credit to him. We want him to keep improving as a keeper because we know the value he brings to the team.

JOE ROOT
Completely outplayed: It has been an education for us, you could come up with conditions like these and we have to learn from this and find a way to score runs. We need to learn to build pressure and bowl six balls at one batsman. We don't get too far above our station when we win and we don't see it as doom and gloom when we have tough weeks like we have this time round. We've played some really good cricket over the recent past, in challenging conditions, very foreign conditions, and we've been, let's be honest, outplayed in all three departments this week.

Chepauk pitch: It was a challenging wicket. The toss was an important one to win, but it wouldn't guarantee a win either. India showed that you can score runs on it and found a way of managing the tricky surface. We have got to learn from that and take bits from India.

Still in the series: We are still very much in the series. We played three brilliant games coming into the Test match. We are very much alive and kicking.

Rotation policy: It is difficult and challenging but so is everything at the moment. In this time with COVID, with the amount of cricket that we've got and trying to manage all together is tough. But it is where we're at. And that's where we find ourselves and we just have to make sure that we get the best out of the players. And as I mentioned, we've got a very talented group of players. We've got a number of different options.

India jump to 2nd in WTC rankings

CHENNAI: The resounding 317-run win over England in the second Test here Tuesday propelled India to second in the World Test Championship (WTC) standings issued by the ICC. After the series-levelling win at Chepauk, India have 69.7 percentage of points (PCT) and 460 aggregate points, behind New Zealand (70.0 PCT and 420 points) who have already qualified for the WTC final to be held at the Lord's June. India need to win one more Test and at least draw another to make it to the WTC final. Australia are at the third spot with 69.2 PCT and 332 points while England are fourth with 67.0 PCT and 442 points.

Bairstow, Wood in; Moeen out
CHENNAI: England Tuesday brought in wicket-keeper Jonny Bairstow and pacer Mark Wood to their squad for the day/night Test against India, starting February 24 in Ahmedabad. The selectors also decided to send spin all-rounder Moeen Ali, who played in the second game, back to England as part of their rotation policy to manage workload of the players. Bairstow and Wood were given rest after the two-Test series against Sri Lanka.

Australian Open: Serena tops Halep; Osaka next

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Melbourne, Feb 16: As well as she played at the start of her Australian Open quarterfinal, Serena Williams suddenly was struggling early in the second set.

After one mistake against No.2 seed Simona Halep — who won the last time they played each other — Williams pointed at her racket strings and made a sour face, as if to make clear it wasn't truly her own fault. After another, Williams looked up at her guest box with palms up and asked, "What is happening?"

That dismay did not last long. Williams claimed the last five games and beat Halep 6-3, 6-3 Tuesday to return to the final four at Melbourne Park for the first time since she won the tournament in 2017.

Seeking a record-tying 24th Grand Slam title, Williams set up a show-down against No.3 Naomi Osaka, who will carry a 19-match winning streak into Thursday's semifinals.

This will be their fourth career matchup — all on hard courts — and Osaka leads 2-1, the most memo-



rable encounter, of course, coming in the final of the 2018 US Open.

Williams got into an argument with the chair umpire after her coach was caught trying to relay a signal — that's not allowed in Grand Slam play — and wound up being docked a game. Osaka's victory, which earned her first major title, closed with thousands of fans filling Arthur Ashe Stadium with boos and both of the athletes were in tears during the trophy ceremony.

There were no spectators Tuesday in Rod Laver Arena, because they've been banned from the tournament during a five-day government lockdown in response to a local rise in

COVID-19 cases (the applause and other crowd noise TV viewers are hearing is being added to the broadcast feed and isn't actually happening in the stadium).

That loss to Osaka in Flushing Meadows is part of an 0-4 record for Williams in Grand Slam finals since her last championship. Another one of those defeats came against Halep at Wimbledon in 2019.

In the men's quarterfinals in Melbourne, 114th-ranked qualifier Aslan Karatsev of Russia became the first man in the professional era to get to the semifinals in his first Grand Slam appearance, defeating No.18 seed Grigor Dimitrov 2-6, 6-4, 6-1, 6-2.

Karatsev will next face an eight-time Australian Open champion Novak Djokovic, who got the better of World No.5 Alexander Zverev 6-7(6-8), 6-2, 6-4, 7-6(8-6) in their round of 16 match.

In the first women's quarterfinal, Osaka overpowered 71st-ranked Hsieh Su-wei of Taiwan 6-2, 6-2, helped by serves that reached 122 mph (196 kph).

Four-star Nizams move to third in ISL standings

AGENCIES

Goa, Feb 16: A brilliant second half display from Hyderabad FC (HFC) helped them enter the top four (third) of the league table and end their two-game winless run. The Nizams overpowered Kerala Blasters 4-0 in their ISL encounter, Tuesday.

After a lackluster first half, Hyderabad FC came out with intent for the second 45. They started the second half on the front foot and two minutes into the half, Joel Chianese had a glorious chance to open the scoring. He though could not keep his effort on target.

However, 11 minutes later he redeemed himself by providing the assist for the opener in the 58th minute. A defensive error from both Bakary Kone and Costa Nhamoinesu allowed Chianese to set up Fran Sandaza who gave his side a well-deserved lead.

Four minutes later, another de-

TODAY'S MATCH

ODISHA FC
VS
FC GOA
Time: 7:30 pm
Telecast: Star Sports Network

fensive error saw Albino Gomes bring down Chianese inside the box. Sandaza stepped up to take the penalty and showed great coolness and swagger as he chipped one past Albino Gomes from the spot.

It was all Nizams in the second half as Blasters looked out of ideas. Four minutes before the regulation time, Aridane Santana put all questions and KBFC's season to bed as his bullet header killed the game and the glimmer of hope Blasters had. To compound more misery on the Manjappadas, Santana turned provider as Joao Victor found the back of the net.