



Maa Tarini Temple will be consecrated at Belasundari Village, Ramachandrapur, Keonjhar on 9th and 10 th february with all Rituals and rites....

Uttar Pradesh will see one-on-one fight between BJP, SP with Akhilesh Yadav winning: Mamata Banerjee

LUCKNOW(KCN): Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday said that like West Bengal Assembly polls Uttar Pradesh will see a one-on-one fight between the BJP and the Samajwadi Party with



Akhilesh Yadav emerging victorious. At a joint press conference with SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, Banerjee tweaked the "khela hobe" campaign anthem of her party for last year's Assembly polls to 'Khela Hoga' (the game is on) and stressed that if "Bengal can

do it (defeat BJP), so can Uttar Pradesh". Asked if she has plans of contesting the 2024 general elections from Uttar Pradesh, the West Bengal chief minister replied that she would talk to Akhilesh Yadav about it.

She, however, evaded questions on whether she will be the prime ministerial face in the 2024 elections.

About the Uttar Pradesh election, Banerjee, who defeated the BJP in the high-octane assembly polls in her state last year, said, "If Yogi (Adityanath) Ji comes to power, he will eat you up politically as well as economically." "He does not know anything and hence he is going (away). Let him go. A person, who wants to go should be allowed to go." She egged on the people to defeat the BJP without paying heed to the caste equation.

"I understand elections. I have been a seven-time MP and three-time

BJP, alliance partners want to build 'Nawan' Punjab: PM Modi

CHANDIGARH(KCN): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said that BJP and the NDA government at the Centre aimed to create a 'Nawan Punjab.'

leged that the Congress indulged in the massacre of Sikhs. "But we got the guilty of genocide punished," he said. The Congress could not even keep

said. Modi asserted that the BJP and NDA always stood with the Sikh traditions. "BJP always stands for the Sikh community. After some days, I'll

outstanding work. I especially want to appeal to the youth that this is the time to make the right decision and together we will build Nawan Punjab," he said.



Addressing the first virtual rally for poll-bound Punjab for assembly segments of Ludhiana and Fatehgarh Sahib parliamentary constituencies in which 18 assembly segments fall, PM Modi, while referring to the 1984-anti-Sikh riots, al-

Kartarpur Sahib in India while the BJP opened the way to Kartarpur. "The Congress could not even keep Kartarpur Sahib in India. But we opened the way to Kartarpur. We will form border area development authority in Punjab soon," he

visit Punjab to meet the people," he said. ALSO READ | Punjab elections: BJP manifesto promises to waive debt of farmers, grant aid for landless "BJP's goal is to create a 'Nawan Punjab.' We have the vision and a track record of

"Today Punjab does not need hollow promises. It needs the honest intentions of the NDA government. Today Punjab needs modernization at every stage. This work is beyond the capacity of the Congress and those who have taken a task to convert Delhi into Jhuggi Jhompri," said Modi while targeting the Congress and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). Modi asked whether these elections are meant only for just forming a new government. "Are these elections only for



BSP supremo Mayawati lambasts Congress government in Punjab, calls it 'anti-Dalit'

NAWANSHAHR(KCN): stalwarts like Dr B R BSP supremo Ambedkar and BSP Mayawati on Tues- founder Kanshi Ram

virodhi party" (anti-Dalit party), she said the party had always

the then Congress government at the Centre did not announce even a day's mourning on the death of Kanshi Ram. "Dalits had to wait for V P Singh government at the Centre to implement the recommendations of Mandal Commission Report and conferred Bharat Ratna on Dr B R Ambedkar," she said.



day lashed out at the successive Congress governments at the Centre and in Punjab for their alleged anti-Dalit stance and policies. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) decided to have an alliance with the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) in Punjab for the February 20 polls so that aspirations of Dalit

could be fulfilled, she said. Kickstarting her party's and its alliance SAD-BSP's election campaign at a "Chon Jan Sabha" at Dana Mandi here, she said time had come when Congress government in Punjab too needs to be shown the door. Terming Congress "a jabardast Dalit

been against the weaker and deprived sections including adivasis, Dalits and backward classes. "Congress because of its anti-Dalit and anti-poor stance neither conferred Barat Ratna on Dr B R Ambedkar nor on Kanshi Ram though they qualified for it in all respects," she lamented, adding that

Continuing her anti-Congress diatribe, she said the party, after having been thrown out of the Centre and in majority of the states, has now started "natakaji" (theatrics) of being pro-Dalit and pro-backward classes. Referring to Rahul Gandhi announcing Charanjit Singh

Naveen Axe on Five More

Bhubaneswar(KCN): Continuing its zero tolerance towards corruption policy, the State Government has given compulsory retirement to five more officials.

The officials include one engineer, a CDPO, Anganwadi Supervisor, one police inspector and one revenue supervisor. With this, so far, 146 officials have been suspended or sent on retirement by the Government for indulging



in corrupt practices. Assistant Engineer of Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), Baripada, Santosh Kumar Das, is facing a corruption case. Odisha Vigilance had arrested him for possessing disproportionate assets amounting to Rs 2.80 crores including Rs 41.77 lakh cash. His properties include a two-storey building

in Bhubaneswar, a flat in Sailashree Vihar, a half-constructed building in Kalinga Vihar and three flats in Balasore.

Child Development Project Officer (CDPO) of Balikuda in Jagatsinghpur district, Sarala Dei, is also facing a corruption case. She had been apprehended by vigilance while demanding and accepting a bribe of Rs 20,000. During the vigilance raids, it was revealed that she is in possession of 5 housing plots in Bhubaneswar, one plot in Pipili and two more plots in Jagatsinghpur.

Similarly, Anganwadi supervisor of Balikuda, Pratima Sahu, who faces corruption charges, has been told to go on retirement. She was also arrested by vigilance while accepting bribe. Ramchandra Behera, police inspector of Police Training College in Angul, who is facing several allegations of inefficiency and indiscipline, has also been asked to step down from the service.

Moreover, Revenue Supervisor Hrudanand Sahu, working in tehsildar office in Keonjhar district, has been asked to go on retirement on corruption charges. He was nabbed by the vigilance while accepting a bribe of Rs 20,000 from a complainant.

It may be noted that the government recently dismissed a senior IFS officer and a senior IAS officer on corruption charges.

Spending Limit For Urban Poll Candidates

Bhubaneswar(KCN): After enhancing the spending limit for candidates during Panchayat elections, the State Election Commission (SEC) has increased the poll expenditure limit for Councilors, Corporators, Chairpersons and Mayors.

Aditya Prasad Padhi, State Election Commissioner held discussion with senior officials of SEC and has taken this decision after taking into consideration various aspects on election spending. Accordingly he directed officials to communicate the decision of the Commission.

"In exercise of the powers conferred under Sub-Section (1) of Section 17-A of the Odisha Municipal Act, 1950 and Section-82 of Odisha Municipal Corporation Act, 2003 and having consulted the State Government, the SEC, Odisha hereby revises as follows the limit on expenditure that may be incurred by

a candidate either by himself or through any person authorized by him for election as

lakh and Rs 12 lakh, respectively. Similarly, the expenditure limit for candi-

Councilor and Chairperson posts.

Similarly, the candidates contesting for Councilor and Chairperson in NACs/Municipalities having a population up to 50,000 can now spend upto Rs 50,000 and Rs 2 lakh, respectively.

The SEC is taking all steps to conduct the election to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) soon after the Panchayat Polls. The Commission has convened a meeting with all political parties on February 10 to ensure smooth conduct of the urban poll. The delimitation of wards, reservation seats and all other formalities required to conduct the ULB election has already been completed. The draft electoral roll will also be out on February 10. According to sources, the Commission is very likely to announce the schedule for the urban election in the State after holding meeting with political parties for smooth conduct of election in the urban areas of the State.



Councillor/Corporator/Chairperson/Mayor to a NAC/ Municipality/ Municipal Corporation," the Commission said in an order.

Now, the candidates contesting for the post of Corporator and Mayor in three municipal Corporations—Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Berhampur can spend a maximum Rs 2

dates contesting for Councilor and Chairperson in Municipalities having a population above 1 lakh set at Rs 1 lakh and Rs 5 lakh, respectively.

For the Municipality having a population between 50,000 to 1 lakh, the expenditure limit is Rs 75,000 and Rs 3 lakh for the candidates standing for

Thief since 1986, man lands in jail for 71st time

CUTTACK(KCN): Hemant Kumar Dash has made a career out of thievery. In the last 36 years, the 59-year-old 'crook' has reportedly committed 110 thefts and has criminal cases pending against him in Odisha, West Bengal, and Maharashtra.

Hemant was arrested by Badamabadi police on Monday. "I have been to jail at least 70 times," said the impenitent man, a resident of Hatasahi in Old Town under the jurisdiction of Bhubaneswar urban police district (UPD).

DCP Prateek Singh said Hemant was arrested based on the complaint of one Pratap Chandra Das of Bikash Nagar. Pratap, who in his FIR, had stated that some unknown miscreants had burgled gold jewelry worth Rs 3 lakh and Rs 50,000 cash by breaking into his house and rented office on

January 29. During the investigation, Hemant's involvement in the crime was established and he was subsequently arrested.

During interrogation, he confessed to having committed the theft and revealed that he had disposed of the gold ornaments to one Baidanath Sahu of Dahapatana within Baranga police limits.

Police arrested Baidanath and recovered the stolen jewelry from him. From Hemant, Rs 22,000 cash was recovered.

Singh informed that Hemant has been engaged in theft and burglary since 1986. After his arrest, mediapersons confronted Hemant and asked him if he will ever give up stealing. "I am not sure. I will decide once I am released from prison," said an unrepentant Hemant with an air of nonchalance.

14 Lakh Students Attended Classes Day One

Bhubaneswar (KCN): All schools across 30 Districts of Odisha have been reopened for physical classes for students from Standard - VIII to XII today, thanks to the decision of the State Government to open schools.

Principal Secretary School & Mass Education, Bishnupada Sethi, who took up the efforts for opening of schools in an organized manner in Post Covid Pandemic for benefit of the stu-

Elementary Schools (Class-VIII) in Kendrapara district. Other districts including Angul, Bolangir, Cuttack, Deogarh and Keonjhar have also registered good attendance in Class VIII on the first day.

Moreover, a good number of students also attended classes at the Odisha Adarsha Vidyalayas.

Both doses of Covid-19 vaccine have been



dents. Team School & Mass Education took proactive steps for opening physical classes. On the first day 14,42,790 students attended classes at 37,533 schools including those run by Schools & Mass Education Department, SC, ST Development Department and private organizations. A total of 24,45,407 students have been enrolled in these schools.

In the district of Deogarh, the school attendance in Higher Secondary was maximum with 85 per cent while there was a good attendance in Higher Secondary level in some other districts including Balasore, Bolangir, Jharsuguda, Kendrapara, Keonjhar and Sambalpur.

In Secondary classes, Deogarh district attained 91 per cent of attendance while districts like Angul, Kendrapara, Keonjhar, Cuttack, Ganjam, Rayagada and Bargarh have also witnessed good attendance.

Highest of 77 per cent students attended in

inoculated to all teachers and other staff in all schools while 55 per cent of 15 to 18 years school students have received vaccine dose, so far. The remaining students will also be covered under the vaccination drive soon, officials said.

Prior to the opening of schools, teachers and other staff undertook cleaning and sanitization work on the weekend. The reopening of the schools has been appreciated by students, parents and community in particular.

The teachers have been instructed to adhere to Covid Appropriate Behavior like Thermal Scanning, Physical Distancing and Wearing of Mask. The teachers and supervisory officials have further been asked to report any health related issues of the children and the staff to appropriate authorities for urgent attention. A special Cell has been opened at OSEPA and in the S & ME Department to monitor the current school reopening issues.

MCL Sends 46 % Coal To Odisha Industries

New Delhi(KCN): Union Coal Minister Pralhad Joshi Monday said that about 46 Percent of the total coal dispatched by Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) was supplied to industries in Odisha.

Giving a written reply to a question asked by BJD MP Amar Patnaik in Parliament, Joshi said supply of coal to local industries including Captive Power Plants (CPPs) having Fuel Supply Agreement (FSA) with Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) is being done as per their Annual Contracted Quantity (ACQ) mentioned in their Agreement.

In addition, coal is also being supplied to local industries (including CPPs) under different schemes.

During the current fiscal (FY 2021-22), till December, MCL has produced 117.12 Million Tonne (MT) of coal while the total coal dispatched was 129.37 MT, he said. Out of the total coal dispatched by the MCL, 59.35 MT coal was supplied within Odisha which is about 46% of the total coal dispatched, Joshi said.

Further, he said, the coal supply to non-power industries

within Odisha has been 31.75 MT, which is about 54% of total coal supplied within Odisha. In 2021-22 (till De-

others have sought intervention of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to end the crisis. Utkal Chamber Of



cember), the materialization percentage for local CPPs in Odisha is about 60% against the ACQ mentioned in their FSA.

Additionally, 12.797 MT of coal have been supplied to local captive power plants till December 2021 under exclusive e-Auction scheme.

Notably, the State-based CPPs are facing a coal crisis due to inadequate supply of coal by the Central-PSU, MCL. Recently, various Industrial Associations of Odisha including UCCI and

Commerce & Industry Ltd (UCCI), an association of industries in Odisha has sought personal intervention of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik for adequate supply of coal to local industries.

UCCI president Brahma Mishra has written a letter to the Chief Minister, in this regard recently. In the letter, he thanked the CM for providing continued support in promoting industries in the State.

"We would like to

bring to your kind attention the current acute coal shortage situation in the state with many units having stock out or critical coal stock seriously affecting the viable operation of the industrial units," Mishra said in the letter.

Recently, the Odisha Assembly of Small and Medium Enterprises (OASME), in its letter to the CM, had said that the CPPs are getting just 40- 50% of the required coal supplies, creating a backlog of over 1500 coal rakes, since most of the available coal rakes are being diverted away from CPPs.

Odisha holds 25% of the total coal deposit of the country. Out of the 150 million tons of coal produced through Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL), 65% is being transferred to other states and only 35% is reserved for Orissa industries, against the actual minimum requirement of 55% for local CPPs, the association had mentioned.

Similarly, the Association of Industrial Entrepreneurs of Bhubaneswar (AIEBA) had also sought State Government's help to resolve the coal crisis

Liquor Ban On Polling & Counting Days

Cuttack(KCN): In the interest of free and fair Panchayat election, the State Excise Commissioner Ashish Kumar Singh has banned sale, transport and distribution of liquor in the respective Blocks during polling and counting of votes. Following the instruction of the SEC, Mr.Singh has written a letter to all Collectors to ensure closure of licensed premises for retail sale of foreign liquor, IMFL and country liquor in the constituency area and adjoining areas during the period of 48 hours ending with the hour fixed for the conclusion of poll up to day following the poll day. The polling is scheduled to be held on February 16, 18, 20, 22, and 24.

"This is in tune with Section 135C of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 which provides that no spirituous, fermented or intoxicating liquors or other substances of a like nature shall be sold, given or distributed at a hotel, eating house, tavern, shop or any other place, public or private, within a polling area within the respective Wards dur-

ing the period of 48 hours preceding the poll upto the day following the poll day," said Mr.Singh, adding this will include the dates of re-poll if any. As per the order, no Liquor shops, hotels, restaurants, clubs and other establishments selling / serving liquor will be permitted to sell/serve liquor to anyone whosoever, on the aforesaid days.

Non-proprietary clubs, star hotels, restaurants etc. and hotels run by anyone, even if they are issued different categories of licenses for possession and supply of Liquor, shall also not be permitted to serve liquor on these days. Similarly, the storage of liquor by individuals will be curtailed during the above period and the restrictions provided in the Excise-law on the storage of liquor in unlicensed premises shall be vigorously enforced.

In addition to the above, the Excise Commissioner asked the Collectors to take steps to prohibit sale of liquor in the areas adjoining the wards to forestall the chance of clandestine movement of liquor from the area,

had the restrictions not been in-force. Intensified joint raids by Excise, Police and Forest personnel will be carried out to avert any liquor related issue.



Similarly, the Collectors have been asked to declare counting days (February 26, 27 and 28) as Dry Day under section of the Odisha Excise Act, 2008 and the Odisha Excise Rules, 2017 ensuring closure of licensed premises for retail sale of foreign liquor, IMFL and country liquor within the respective Blocks on the days of counting.

The Commission has directed that no spirituous, fermented or

intoxicating liquors or other substances of a like nature shall be sold, given or distributed at a hotels, eating houses, tavern, shops or any other place, public or private

within the respective blocks as on the day of counting. As per schedule, the counting will be completed on the first day of counting in 15 Blocks as they have got one Zilla Parishad constituency in the Block.

Similarly, 126 Blocks have two Zilla Parishad constituencies each and their counting will be completed on February 26 and 27 while counting in remaining Blocks will be done on all the three days of counting

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Vikrant Massey's 'Cargo' to be screened at South by Southwest festival in US



MUMBAI(KCN): Vikrant Massey-starrer "Cargo" will have its North American premiere at the 2020 edition of South by Southwest (SXSW) festival. The science fiction film, written and directed by Arati

Kadav, also features Massey's "Mirzapur" co-star Shweta Tripathi and actor Nandu Madhav. The story revolves around a lonely demon Prahastha who has been working on a spaceship for years for the Post Death

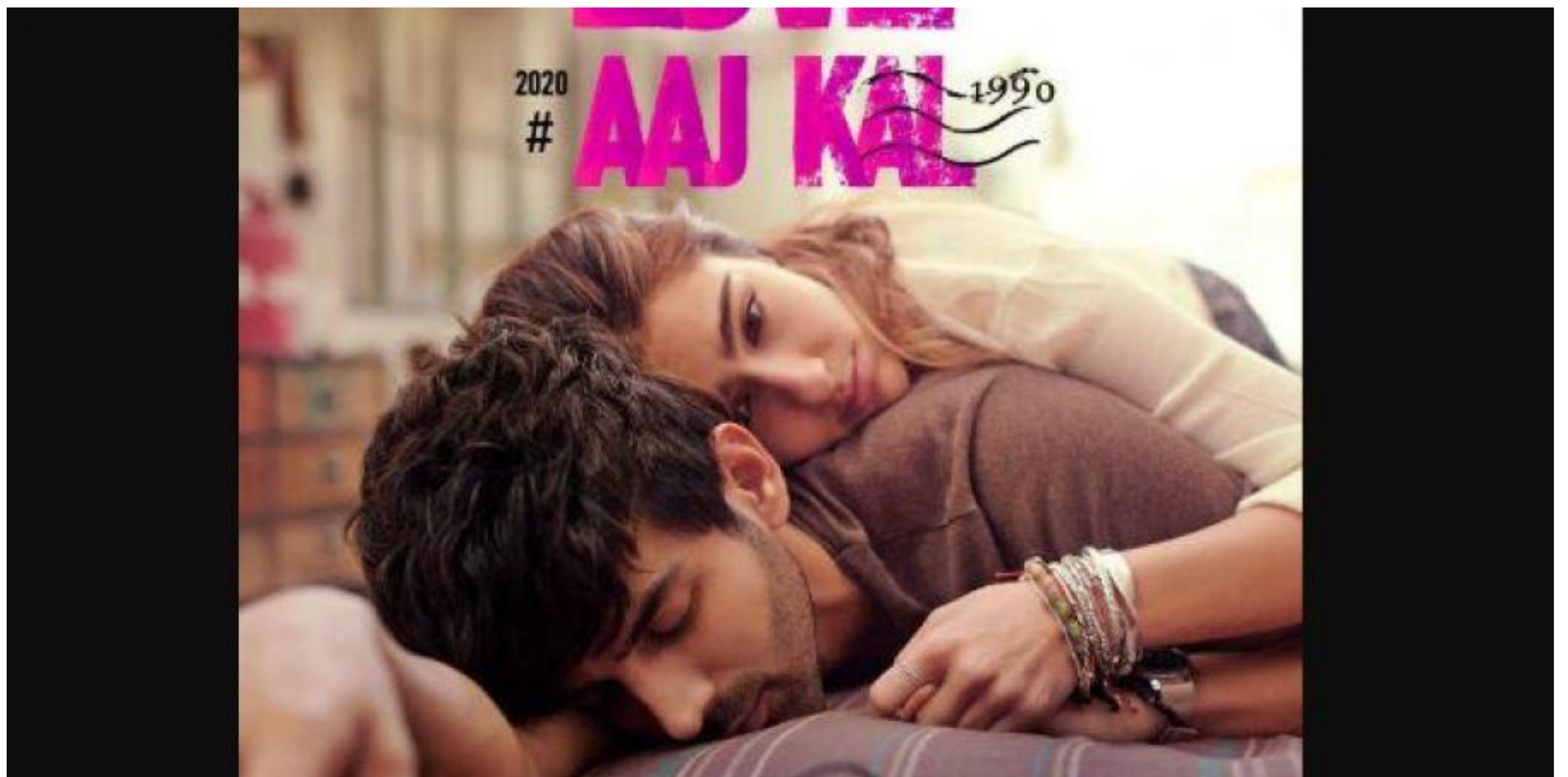
Transition services with the help of a female astronaut where dead people are recycled for rebirth. "Cargo" will be screened under the Global section of the film festival which will run from March 13 to 21.

Vikrant, who most recently featured alongside Deepika Padukone in "Chhapaak", said it makes him "proud" that the film has been chosen for the prestigious film gala. "Cargo" is one of the first Indian sci-fi

films to be there. And I feel blessed for receiving so much applause not just from the country but across the world. People have loved Chhapaak, they have embraced it with open arms and now 'Cargo' being selected

at this big a platform, I feel really fortunate," the actor said in a statement. "Cargo", which had its India premiere at the 2019 MAMI Film Festival under the spotlight section, is produced by Arati, Navin Shetty, Shlok Sharma and Anurag Kashyap.

First look of Imtiaz Ali's Love Aaj Kal two released



Kartik Aryan and Sara Ali Khan are the new romantic pair in Imtiaz Ali's Love Aaj Kal. Yes, the film's titled just that, not Love Aaj

Kal 2 or Aaj Kal. In a poster, we get a glimpse of their characters, Veer and Zoe, nodding off on top of each other. The poster also re-

veals the film's timeline, which will run from 1990 to 2020. "Meet Veer and Zoe, captured in their element. It's in these

simple, candid moments that love plays peekaboo, right? Love Aaj Kal," Imtiaz wrote. "Meet Veer and Zoe. Come get wound up

in our whirlwind wonderland Love Aaj Kal trailer out tomorrow," Sara added. The new Love Aaj Kal was shot in

Himachal Pradesh, Mumbai, and Rajasthan. The sequel also stars Randeep Hooda. The film is slated for Valentine's Day release.

No proof to link Netflix's '13 Reasons Why' to high US suicide rates: Study

NEW YORK(KCN): Contrary to the findings of a 2019 study that associated the Netflix series "13 Reasons Why" with an increase in monthly suicide rates among youth after the show's release, a new analysis finds no evidence to draw such a link. The reanalysis, published in the journal PLOS ONE, revealed that after controlling for the dramatic increase in adolescent suicide in recent years, the show's release had no clear effect. "Our reanalysis casts

considerable doubt on the show having an effect on boys," said study author Dan Romer and research director of the Annenberg Public Policy Centre (APPC) from the University of Pennsylvania in the US. The reanalysis found that the increase in the suicide rate for boys observed in the original study by Jeffrey Bridge and colleagues for three months after the series' release was no longer evident after controlling for the ongoing trend in adolescent suicide.

In addition, the increase seen during the first month of the release began the month prior to the release, making it difficult to attribute the rise to the show. The reanalysis found no effects in the subsequent months of that year. The original time-series analysis of suicide rates found an additional 195 suicide deaths among boys ages 10 to 17 during the nine months following the series' release, on March 31, 2017, but did not find a similar result among adoles-

cent girls. Romer said he questioned that finding for two reasons: "First, contagion would be expected to be stronger for girls than boys because this show focuses on the suicide of a high school girl. Second, the prior analysis didn't take into account strong secular trends in suicide, especially in boys from 2016-2017." When the first season of the Netflix show appeared in 2017, it created widespread concern that its graphic portrayal of a teenage girl's suicide

would lead to imitation among vulnerable young people, especially adolescent girls. The first such study found evidence of a jump in suicides among boys ages 10 to 17 in the three months following the show's release, but no effect for girls. Romer said that analysis relied on a forecasting method to project the likely trend in suicide for 2017. But that forecast failed to anticipate the actual trend. A second study by different researchers, published in JAMA

Psychiatry had a similar problem, Romer said. That study found an effect in boys and girls 10 to 19 years old in the three months following the series' release. But it similarly failed to control for the secular trend in suicide, again making it difficult to separate the effects of the show from the trend. APPC's reanalysis did find a modest rise in the suicide rate among adolescent girls during the first month following the release of "13 Reasons Why," but it was not statistically reliable, the researchers said.

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National Education Policy and the Education Budget 2022

The Education Budget 2022 has been increased by 11.86% from the previous year with a significant fund allocation for digital education and skill development. As the National



Education Policy completes one year of its implementation, an increase of Rs.11054 crore from the previous year needs to be taken with the right spirit. NEP 2020 is all set to change India's education system. A

growing economy, with an ambitious generation of learners, India has the real potential to systematically reinvent its abilities and move ahead breaking all obstacles. It is a reform with tangible and assertive steps designed to ward off anomalies. Imprint of perfect expertise is visible throughout the draft. Beginning his formal education at the age of three, a child is prepared to get ready for the real task in the next five years, which means, the Anganwadis and other institutions to cater pre-primary education will have to equip themselves to set the scene right. In his most criticized comment on the education system of Kerala, one of the most celebrated actors in the Malayalam film industry had to face the ire of the Kerala Women's Commission. The actor courted controversy after he said in a TV programme that pre-primary children in Kerala were at a disadvantageous position with regard to education, as they were initiated to the process of pre-primary learning by uneducated and untrained Anganwadi teachers. He had to face the fury of the Commission as he compared the pre-primary learning in the state with developed countries such as Japan, where highly qualified teachers taught Kindergarten kids. Actor Srinivasan, a famous Marxist liberal was warned by the Kerala Women's Commission terming his opinion misogynistic. The actor wanted more training be imparted to the workers and more

educated women be enrolled in the Anganwadi sector.

More than 66000 workers are employed in about 33000 Anganwadis in the state.

The NEP 2020 makes proposals to strengthen the infrastructure of Anganwadi centres with modern learning materials. With this, the Anganwadi teachers and the system of pre-schooling became part of the formal schooling. But reality on the ground is not so encouraging. We have a scanty resource mobilization at present when it comes to the strengthening of the pre-primary education system. There are various reasons contributing to the dismay. From choosing a place to establish Anganwadis to the recruitment of teachers to the facilities available, the dominant element visible across the system is laxity. Unfortunately, a large number of Anganwadis in many areas in India fail to conduct regular classes for at least three hours every day. Anganwadi workers are supposed to play the most prominent role in providing basic education, nutrition and ensuring health in rural India. As per the policy, the Anganwadi workers are to undergo certificate and diploma programme to strengthen their abilities in pre-primary teaching. Consistent and straightforward efforts are to be taken to bring the system to an unshakable track.

Swami Vivekananda had a vision for education. According to him, education is the manifestation of perfection already in man. Mahatma Gandhi also thought in the same line as he says that education should be the process of putting the best in body, soul and spirit. Thus, it is evident that the new narrative in the NEP directs us towards a different outlook which had been forgotten for long; reinvention of a value-based system of education with adequate elements of skill development assisted by modern technologies. The education system in the country has undergone multiple changes and amendments and recommendations since Independence. Various commissions had been

M.R. Lalu

set up to refurbish it. Yet, we lacked essence when it comes to its ability to deliver in comparison with developed countries. Now, a positive change is welcome with proper implementation put in place. Education system can bring about a variety of changes to society and the NEP passed in 1986 with its modifications in 1992 served good results throughout the last three decades. But marching with time, with new requirements in innovations and inventions with inclusive approach strengthening its frame and outlook altogether, NEP 2020 brings a smile on every face with a shimmer of hope visible. Attending the aspirations of a sizable young generation, helping them march with the massive developments in technology is a big challenge. We cannot deny the fact that employability is a serious issue that we face today as a country. It is said that in India, the top 10 IT companies are recruiting 6 percent of the total engineering graduates. A study in the IT sector was shocking, which tells that 94 percent of the engineering graduates in the country are not employable. This is because of the widening skill gap. Those who graduate in the field are not able to trek with the latest technological changes. In fact, many companies are initiating skill development programmes for their employees. Alarming, the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) states that nearly 200 engineering colleges have applied for closure in recent years. According to the Council, there is a decline of about 75000 engineering seats every year. The council has already approved the closure of about 400 colleges. When it comes to the other streams in graduation, many graduates are unable to write even basic sentences properly. With the 5+3+3+4 formula comes into practice, every child, as he reaches his fourth segment of this formula, enjoys a free will to follow whichever subject he feels like to study. The 10+2 formula has awkwardly compartmentalized students segregating them

to the 'meritorious science' versus the 'rest'. The multiple entry and exit points in higher education, as per the new policy, reduce the burden and stress of the students. The new academic credit bank will enable students to start from where they left without any loss. In its initiative, the policy advocates for education in the mother tongue in the first five years, which is a welcome move. This indeed is much criticized as a large number of people move from one state to another in search of jobs and the local languages change from state to state. Many are skeptical about this proposal as mostly proficiency in the English language is considered to be a requisite for employability and of course, a large number of parents want their children to gain proficiency in English at a younger age. The policy also provides equal opportunity and promotes meritocracy. To provide universal access to quality education, we have a long way to go. The budget allocates funds for major schemes such as Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan and for the creation of 'Exemplar Schools.' About 15000 schools in the country are to be converted into Exemplar Schools with quality education. Fund is also allocated for teachers training and adult education and for scholarships. Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States (STARS) is a new project with financial assistance from the World Bank aiming to improve the learning assessment systems. Obviously, it is a paradigm shift. In a new geopolitical scenario, a resurgent India is possible only through pertinent changes implemented in the education system which caters elements for progress consistently from the grassroots.

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Lata Mangeshkar - a Tribute (1929-2022)

[File contains invalid data | In-line.JPG]Lata Mangeshkar, who was born on September 29, 1929, died on 6th February, 2022, leaving everyone in a state of shock, was a well-known and well-respected playback vocalist. She sang in around thirty-six Indian languages and recorded songs for over a thousand Hindi films. Lata Mangeshkar was born on September 28, 1929, in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, to classical vocalist and theatre artist Pandit Deenanath Mangeshkar and Shevanti. Meena, Asha, Usha, and Hridaynath, her siblings, are all talented singers and musicians. Lata began acting at the age of five with Deenanath's theatre group, which performed musical plays. When she was five years old, she began singing and performing in her father Deenanath Mangeshkar's musical productions. She began offering music lessons to other students on her first day of school, and when the teacher requested her to stop, she was so angry that she resolved never to return to school. According to other stories, she dropped out of school because she would always attend to school with her younger sister Asha, which the school would frown upon.

Lata Mangeshkar's father died of heart disease when she was just 13 years old, leaving her as the family's sole earner. In the 1940s, she attempted to make a name for herself as a singer, recording her debut song in the Marathi film Kiti Hasaal (1942). The song was eventually cut from the film. She relocated to Mumbai in 1945, but it wasn't until the song 'Aayega anewala' from the movie Mahal (1949) that she became one of Hindi cinema's most sought-after voices. Master Vinayak, a family friend of the Mangeshkars who was caring for them after their father died, offered her a minor role in his debut Hindi film, Badi Maa, in 1945. Lata's father died of heart illness when she was 13 years old, in 1942. Lata's career was aided by Vinayak Damodar Karnataki, the proprietor of the Navyug Chitrapat film studio and a personal friend of hers. For Vasant Joglekar's Marathi film Kiti Hasaal, Lata sang the song "Naachu Yaa Gade, Khelu Saari Mani Haus Bhaari," composed by Sadashivrao Nevrekar (1942). It was, however, removed from the final cut. Following this, Vinayak cast her in the Marathi film 'Pahili Mangalaa-gaur (1942)' directed by Navyug Chitrapat. Dada Chandekar penned 'Natali Chaitraachi Navalai,' which she

performed. 'Mata Ek Sapoot Ki Duniya Badal De Tu'

Pratap Kishore Mohanty

was Lata's debut Hindi song, written for the Marathi film Gajaabhaau (1943). When Vinayak's company relocated its headquarters to Mumbai in 1945, Lata moved with him. She began taking music lessons from Ustad Aman Ali Khan of the Bhindi bazaar Gharana. She sang "Paa Lagoon KarJori" in Vasant Joglekar's Hindi film "Aap Ki Seva Mein" in 1946.



Vinayak's debut Hindi-language film, 'Badi Maa,' was released in 1945, and her sister Asha had tiny roles in it. In that film, she also sang the bhajan 'Maata Tere Charon Mein.' During the recording of Vinayak's second Hindi-language film, 'Subhadra,' she met Vasant Desai in 1946.

After Vinayak's death in 1948, Lata was taught by music director Gulam Haider. Sashadhar Mukherjee, a producer, was introduced to her by him. Mukerjee, on the other hand, criticized Lata's voice as "very thin." Producers and filmmakers would "fall at Lata's feet" and "ask

her" to sing in their films in the coming years. Haider predicted. Later, with the song 'Dil Mera Toda, Mujhe Kahin Ka Na Chhora' for the film 'Majboor' in 1948, Haider gave Lata her first huge break. It was a huge success. "Ghulam Haider is actually my Godfather." Lata proclaimed on her 84th birthday in September 2013. He was the first music director who fully believed in my abilities." 'Aayega Anewala' Mangeshkar has contributed her voice to many films and recorded over a thousand songs in over 36 Indian languages during her seven-decade career. Mangeshkar, the voice behind soulful numbers like 'Lag Jaa Gale' and 'Ajkal Paaon Zameen Par,' is one of the country's most revered vocalists. She has had a huge influence on Indian film music. Lata has been pushing the boundaries of music with her mind-boggling abilities since 1942. Lata has sung for a variety of actresses over the years, including Madhubala and Priyanka Chopra. She is most recognised for her diverse voice quality, and she has recorded a wide range of CDs (ghazals, pop, etc). Madan Mohan, R D Burman, the pair Laxmikant-Pyarelal, and A R Rahman are just a few of the famous music directors with whom Lata has collaborated. For 1960s films like Aap Ki Nazron Ne Samjha from Anpadh, Lag Jaa Gale, and Naina Barse Rim Jhim from Who Kaun Thi?, she paired up with Madan Mohan. Lata has performed almost 700 songs for Laxmikant-Pyarelal, including Naseeb's Mere Naseeb Mein and Asha's Sheesha Ho Ya Dil Ho. S D Burman recorded songs like Gata Rahe Mera Dil and Piya Tose in Guide (1965).

R D Burman's first and last songs, Chote Nawaab (1961) and Kuch Na Kaho in 1942: A Love Story (1994), were both performed by Lata. Popular tracks from her collaborations with A R Rahman include Luka Chupi from Rang de Basanti (2006) and O Paalanhaare from Lagaan (2001). The vocalist has provided her voice to a variety of timeless songs over the years, from Pyar Kiya To Darna Kya from Mughal-e-Azam (1960) to Ajeeb Dastaan Hai Yeh, from Dil Apna Aur Preet Parai (1960) to Rangeela Re from Prem Pujari (1970) or even Jiya Jale in Dil Se. Her most recent full-length record was for the 2004 film "Veer Zaara,"

produced by the late filmmaker Yash Chopra. Lata Mangeshkar, widely known as the Indian Nightingale, has received numerous awards including National Film Awards, BFJA Awards, Filmfare Award for Best Female Playback Singer, Filmfare Special Awards, and Filmfare Lifetime Achievement Award. Aside from this, she was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1969, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 1989, the Maharashtra Bhushan in 1997, the Padma Vibhushan in 1999, and the Bharat Ratna in 2001. (2007). From November 22, 1999, to November 21, 2005, she served in the Rajya Sabha.

She began her career as an actress. She made her cinema debut in Pahili Mangalagaur (1942), followed by roles in Chimukla Sansar (1943) and Maajhe Baal (1944). (1944). She did admit, however, that she disliked acting and that applying make-up and laughing or sobbing as directed by the director was not something she appreciated. Aside from performing and singing, the diva founded her own production company in 1991 with the Gulzar-directed Lekin. In 2013, she also created her own record label. In 1999, the perfume Lata Eau de Parfum was created in honour of Lata Mangeshkar. She also worked at an Indian diamond company, where five of her creations sold for £100,000 each. She also contributed to the earthquake relief efforts in Her perfectly draped saree and firmly kept hair with a little circular 'bindi' in the middle of her forehead will remain carved in the memory of every Indian as much as her voice. In the film 'avatar,' she resembled a goddess. Generations have viewed Lataji as the incarnation of Goddess Saraswati for a reason. Lata Didi, as she is affectionately known throughout the country, has set standards that may never be equaled. Even if clones abound, singing will never be the same as hers. There are songs for every mood, every age, all seasons, festivals, celebrations, and all happy and sorrowful moments. She recorded everything from spiritually uplifting bhajans to peaceful romantic numbers to raunchy, pacy tracks during her 73-year career.

(Source- "In Search of Lata Mangeshkar" by Harish Bhimani, 1995 and Encyclopedia Britannica)

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No compromise on matters of territorial integrity: India to South Korea over Hyundai Pakistan row

NEW DELHI: India has summoned the South Korean ambassador over the "unacceptable" social media post by Hyundai Pakistan on the so-called Kashmir solidarity day and bluntly conveyed to him that there could be no compromise on the matter as it concerned the country's territorial integrity.

South Korean Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong spoke to his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar this morning and the Korean side regretted the offence caused to the people and government of India by the social media post. ALSO READ| Lawyer files complaint to MCA, against Hyundai, Kia, KFC, Pizza Hut over their post on Kashmir issue

Sending a tough message, External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said the South Korean envoy was summoned on

ALSO READ| Hyundai India clarifies over tweet on Kashmir by their Pakistani arm

"The offending post had been removed subsequently. The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea was summoned by the Ministry of External Affairs yesterday. The strong displeasure of the Government on the unacceptable social media post by Hyundai Pakistan was conveyed to him," he said.

The MEA spokesperson was responding to a media query on the issue. "It was highlighted that this matter concerned India's territorial integrity on which there could be no compromise. We expected the company to take appropriate action to properly address these issues," he said.

"Foreign Minister of Republic of Korea Chung Eui-yong called External Affairs Minister this



Monday and a "strong displeasure" of the government on the social media post was conveyed.

India expected the company to take "appropriate action" to properly address the issue, he stressed. Bagchi said the Indian ambassador in Seoul contacted the Hyundai headquarters and sought an explanation.

The MEA spokesperson said that India welcomes investments by foreign companies in various sectors, but, it is also expected that such companies or their affiliates will refrain from "false and misleading" comments on matters of sovereignty and territorial integrity. Tweets from accounts linked to Hyundai and its affiliate Kia Corp expressing solidarity with Kashmir separatists triggered outrage in India following which the South Korean firm said it has a "zero-tolerance" policy towards insensitive communication. "We had seen a social media post on the so-called Kashmir Solidarity Day was made by Hyundai Pakistan. Immediately after this social media post on Sunday, our Ambassador in Seoul contacted the Hyundai Headquarters and sought an explanation," Bagchi said.

UK considers deploying fighters, Royal Navy to protect southeastern Europe: Boris Johnson

LONDON: The UK is considering deploying Typhoon fighters and Royal Navy warships to protect southeastern Europe and reinforce the British battlegroup in Estonia, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson said.



"We are considering deploying RAF Typhoon fighters and Royal Navy warships to protect southeast-

The West will do more to help Ukraine defend itself, Johnson added, noting that the UK is preparing to reinforce the British-led Nato battlegroup in Estonia.

"Nato allies are agreed that we are willing to send more forces to guarantee the security of our allies on the eastern

flank. The foreign ministers of Latvia and Estonia have that it has no intention of invading Ukraine while stressing that it has the right to move its forces within its own territory.

Russia has also expressed concerns over NATO military activity near its borders and ongoing military support of Ukraine, including an increase in the number of Western instructors in the breakaway Donbas region. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that Moscow is not excluding that the "hysteria" around Ukraine fueled by the West is aimed at concealing Kiev's plans to sabotage the Minsk Agreements on Donbas.

called for extra support due to the Russian military build-up in Belarus. We stand ready to provide it," Johnson said. In the past few months, the West and Ukraine have accused Russia of amassing troops near the Ukrainian border in alleged preparation for invasion. Russia replied

morning. While they discussed several issues, the RoK Foreign Minister also conveyed that they regretted the offence caused to the people and Government of India by the social media post," he said. In a tweet, Jaishankar said: "Received a call from ROK FM Chung Eui-yong today. Discussed bilateral and multilateral issues as also the Hyundai matter."

Bagchi also referred to a statement issued by Hyundai Motors conveying its deep regret to the people of India and making it clear that it does not comment on political or religious issues. "India welcomes investments by foreign companies in various sectors. But, it is also expected that such companies or their affiliates will refrain from false and misleading comments on matters of sovereignty and territorial integrity," he said.

In Parliament, Union Minister Piyush Goyal said that the government has asked Hyundai Motors to be more forceful in its unequivocal apology over the matter. Hyundai had issued a clarification after it faced calls for a boycott of its cars, but there have been demands for the company to apologise unequivocally.

supremo said "our party's national executive is scheduled on February 10 which I will be attending. On 15th, I will visit Ranchi, appear before the court and return". Prasad has been convicted in fodder scam related cases. On February 15, the CBI court at Ranchi is expected to give its verdict in the Doranda Treasury case. If convicted, the Chief Minister of undivided Bihar in 1990s may

Lalu Prasad Yadav rubbishes speculation on leadership change, asserts he remains RJD boss

PATNA: Rashtriya Janata Dal president Lalu Prasad Yadav on Tuesday made it clear that he had no plans to loosen his grip over the party he founded

he might hand over the top party post to younger son and heir apparent Tejashwi Yadav. Sharing details of his itinerary, the RJD

end up in jail again. He was released on bail less than a year ago. Suffering from multiple afflictions like diabetes, heart and

The wily leader chuckled when asked about BJP MP Chhedi Paswan's remark about his bete noire Nitish Kumar which has rattled the Bihar



25 years ago, putting paid to speculations triggered by his frail health, old age and legal wrangles.

Prasad, who arrived on his home turf here after a gap of over two months, shared his thoughts before boarding his flight from Delhi.

"All this speculation is stupid," the otherwise jovial septuagenarian snapped when asked about reports in a section of the media suggesting that in Patna

kidney problems, Prasad has been spending most of his time at his Rajya Sabha MP daughter Misa Bharti's residence in the national capital, under strict medical supervision. The RJD chief sought to make light of the infighting within the ruling NDA in Bihar, over issues like special status for the state, but underscored that the demand was first raised when his party was in power.

Chief Minister's JD(U). "There can be no doubt that Nitish has no qualms about aligning with anybody for power", said Prasad in an indirect reference to Kumar's abandonment of RJD and return to NDA in 2017.

Upon reaching Patna, the colorful leader was greeted by a swarm of supporters at whom he nodded, seated in a wheelchair.

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Hockey World Cup venue has too much filth to clear

ROURKELA: A stench lingers around the under-construction hockey stadium, billed as India's largest with world-class facilities, on



the BPUT campus at Chhend Colony here. The proposed stadium will co-host the Men's Hockey World Cup in January next year but less than 100 metre away, piles of garbage sit in the landfill site of BPUT.

With hardly 11 months left for the showpiece event, apprehensions are being raised over the timely completion of the bio-mining project to reclaim the garbage dumping site and give it a makeover.

Those familiar with the project said on January 5, the Rourkela Municipal Corporation (RMC) invited a request for proposal (RFP) for bio-mining of legacy waste from the BPUT garbage dumping site through a management contract. On request of some prospective bidders, the RFP submission date has been extended till February 11 and on the same day, technical bids would be opened for evaluation.

If things go on expected lines, work orders could be issued in three-four weeks and suc-

cessful bidders would take 30-40 days to mobilise equipment, machinery, and logistics to start work by early or mid-April. If work is carried out in two shifts daily, the dumping site will be cleaned up in five months. However, work would not progress for at least three months during the monsoon. The RMC estimates the landfill site to have around 68,000 to 1 lakh tonne of mixed

waste. Spread over around 10 acre, the site is in use for over a decade for dumping of non-segregated municipal waste in absence of scientific disposal mechanism till recently. Reliable sources said with eight micro composting centres (MCCs) becoming functional, the volume of dumping of non-segregated waste has been reduced to 10-20 tonnes daily despite objection of the Odisha State Pollution Control Board. The bio-mining project envisages excavation of legacy waste in the first step followed by stabilising the garbage through bioremediation. Next comes segregation of excavated waste followed by sustainable management of the same through recycling, co-processing, and safe disposal.

RMC Commissioner Subhankar Mohapatra said the bio-mining project aims to reclaim the landfill site for the development of a park. Work on it would start soon and RMC is hopeful of completing the project before the mega hockey event.

CM Naveen Patnaik urges parents to send children to schools without fear

BHUBANESWAR: As schools across the State reopened on Monday, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik urged parents to send their children to classes.

Never ignore the safety norms like wearing masks, sanitation, and social distancing," he said. In his message for the teachers as classes from I to VII are set

other educational institutions. He advised the students not to panic and wear masks as a cautionary measure to defeat the virus. Stating that students

their proper care and ensure that they obey all safety norms. Schools were reopened for Class VIII and above on Monday along with colleges, ITIs, polytech-



In a video message to students, parents, and teachers, the Chief Minister called upon the students not to fear Covid and enjoy their time in the class. He, however, advised them to wear masks and use soap to wash their hands to protect themselves.

Advising the students to work hard day and night to compensate for the loss of learning during the pandemic, the Chief Minister said that there will not be any problem if they abide by the Covid norms. "We are all with you, but you will have to remain cautious.

to open from February 14, Naveen said, "I have entrusted you with resuming education and ensuring that students learn what they have missed in two years of closure of schools." He said that students are now the responsibility of teachers and asked the managing boards to take special care of them.

ALSO READ: Odisha: Schools, colleges to reopen from today
Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan also expressed happiness over the reopening of schools, colleges, and

attended schools on the first day with much enthusiasm, Pradhan advised teachers, parents, and guardians to take

NEET Bill passed by TN Assembly again at special session, to be sent to Governor rightaway

CHENNAI: The State Assembly, in its special session on Tuesday, passed the Bill seeking exemption from NEET for Tamil Nadu for the second time. The Bill will be sent to Governor RN Ravi rightaway for forwarding it to the President. Earlier, the Bill was passed on September 13, 2021 and the Governor, after 142 days, returned it to the Assembly Speaker for reconsideration. Moving the Bill in the State Assembly, Chief Minister MK Stalin expressed confidence that the Governor would forward the Bill to the President for getting his assent immediately. While the ruling DMK and its allies took exception to the Governor's decision to return the Bill, the AIADMK did not criticise the Governor but extended full support for passing it. However, the BJP MLAs staged a walk-out from the House at the beginning of the discussion itself.

nics, professional institutions, and universities. Hostels in colleges and universities were opened on Sunday.

Video of BJD leader doling out cash to voters ruffles Opposition feathers

MALKANGIRI: The Biju Janata Dal has come under scathing attack from the Opposition and been accused of 'murdering democracy' by influencing voters, after visuals of a ruling party member distributing cash to voters in Zilla Parishad Zone -III area of Kalimela block went viral on Monday.

In the video, the BJD district unit senior adviser Rajendra Kumar Panda was seen distributing cash to women at an election campaign meeting in Tatiguda village under Gumka panchayat limits, in presence of other party

tor of Kartanpali outpost were campaigning for the ruling party in Mathili.

However, BJD leader Rajendra Kumar Panda said he was handing over cash to the women as per the tribal tradition after they greeted them. Commenting on allegations of government staff campaigning for BJD, Sub-Collector and Zilla Parishad election officer Akshya Kumar Khemudu said he is not aware of the issue and no formal complaint has been received in this regard. "Once we receive a formal complaint, inquiry will be conducted and action taken as per law," he added.



leaders.

The entire incident was captured on camera by some onlookers in the village on Sunday. Sharing the video clip with the Collector and seeking action against the ruling party members involved, BJP leader and former Nabarangpur MP Balabhadra Majhi said, "BJD leader Rajendra Kumar Panda has been caught distributing cash in open in the meeting. People are seeing all this and will teach a lesson to the party."

Majhi also sought cancellation of the candidature of the BJD's nominee Pati Tapabana Baidya from Kalimela block ZP Zone-III. **ALSO READ:** BJP accuses SEC of showing favour to ruling BJD

On the other hand, former MLA and Congress leader Bhujabal Majhi has alleged that government employees are campaigning for ruling BJD in violation of the model code of conduct. As per Majhi's claims, a primary school teacher, CHC doctor, and assistant sub-inspec-

tor of Kartanpali outpost were campaigning for the ruling party in Mathili. However, BJD leader Rajendra Kumar Panda said he was handing over cash to the women as per the tribal tradition after they greeted them. Commenting on allegations of government staff campaigning for BJD, Sub-Collector and Zilla Parishad election officer Akshya Kumar Khemudu said he is not aware of the issue and no formal complaint has been received in this regard. "Once we receive a formal complaint, inquiry will be conducted and action taken as per law," he added. Audio clip adds to intra-party rift in BJD Jagatsinghpur: Internal rift within the BJD in Jagatsinghpur district has resurfaced with Anantapur sarpanch Ramesh Paital sharing an audio clip on the party's irregularities in candidate selection for the rural elections, on Sunday.

The clip revealed a conversation, purportedly between the president of Balikuda BJD unit Ratnakar Nayak and Paital against local MLA cum Water Resources Minister Raghunandan Das and his monopoly in selecting candidates for the panchayat polls.

Last month, Minister Das had reportedly 'forced' aspiring BJD candidates in Balikuda block to take a vow not to go against any party nominee after selection by the committee. Sources said Paital, who was a BJD aspirant for the Zilla Parishad member post, was ignored by the Minister and denied a party ticket, forcing him to contest as an Independent.

Paital was suspended for his anti-party activities. This apparently led Paital to leak the audio clip. "I was suspended without any show-cause notice which is illegal," he said. However, Nayak has rubbished the claims and termed the clip 'fake'.

Smart Sampling Technique helping in timely crop loss settlements: Union Minister

BHUBANESWAR: Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Empowerment Sobha Karandlaje has stated that the smart sampling technique (SST) provides accurate yield estimation of crops and is helping in timely insurance claim settlements of farmers in case of crop loss.

In response to the defective method of crop

it is being implemented since Kharif 2020 across the country for select major crops.

Under SST, yield attributing factors (remote sensing-based vegetation parameters) are used to stratify the cropped area into 4-5 categories (from healthy to poor) and then randomly select sample locations within each category proportion to the weightage of particular



cutting report system in Odisha raised in Lok Sabha, the Union Minister in a letter to BJP MP Suresh Pujari recently said, "This technique (SST) is an alternative to the old random selection of crop cutting experiments (CCEs) plot which is based on statistical random table irrespective of the proportion to the crop health."

She said SST was initiated on a pilot scheme in selected States including Odisha during Kharif 2018 to assess crop loss accurately and

ALSO READ: Climate-Smart Agriculture Footprints in Odisha

At present, SST points are being generated at Mahalanobis National Crop Forecast Centre (MNCFC) on the remote sensing-based vegetation parameters and ground-truthing (information collected on location) points provided by the State governments concerned. The information is then shared with State Remote Sensing Centres (SRSC).

Hyundai India clarifies over tweet on Kashmir by their Pakistani arm

NEW DELHI: South Korean car manufacturer, Hyundai, got embroiled in a controversy after their arm in Pakistan tweeted on expressing their solidarity with Kashmir. This was tweeted on February 5 as Pakistan celebrates it as Kashmir solidarity day.

great country. India is a second home to the Hyundai brand and we have a zero-tolerance policy towards insensitive communication and we condemn any such views. As a part of our commitment to India, we will continue our efforts towards the betterment of the country



This led to a war of words on social media, where most people demanded that Hyundai shut shop in India. One person tweeted that he cancelled the booking of his Hyundai car and opted for a Honda instead.

In the midst of this row, Hyundai India has issued a clarification.

"Hyundai Motor India has been committed to the Indian market for more than 25 years now and we stand firmly for our strong ethos of respecting nationalism.

"The unsolicited social media post linking Hyundai Motor India's offending our unparalleled commitment and service to this

as well as its citizens."

Hyundai sells the second-highest number of cars in India after Maruti and this backlash could dent their sales and exports.

Shiv Sena MP Priyanka Chaturvedi has tweeted, "so many wishy washy words are not needed. All you need to say is – we are unequivocally sorry."

The stakes for Hyundai are higher in India so they are naturally going to appease the Indian market and sentiment.

Against the 50 lakh cars that they sell in India (and nearly 10 lakh that they export) they sell less than 10,000 cars in Pakistan annually.

RBI begins three-day monetary policy meet to decide on key rates

MUMBAI: The Reserve Bank's rate-setting panel began its three-day deliberations on Tuesday to decide the next monetary policy in the backdrop of Budget 2022-23, inflationary concerns and evolving geo-political situation. Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das headed six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is scheduled to announce the policy reso-

lution on Thursday. The meeting was to start on Monday but it was postponed by a day in view of Maharashtra declaring public holiday on February 7 to mourn the death of legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar. It is widely anticipated that the MPC is likely to maintain the status quo on the benchmark interest rate or repo rate.



lution on Thursday. The meeting was to start on Monday but it was postponed by a day in view of Maharashtra declaring public holiday on February 7 to mourn the death of legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar. It is widely anticipated that the MPC is likely to maintain the status quo on the benchmark interest rate or repo rate.

Experts, however, are of the opinion that the MPC may change the policy stance from 'accommodative' to 'neutral' and tinker with the reverse-repo rate as part of the liquidity normalisation process.

If the RBI maintains status quo in policy rate on Thursday, it would be the tenth consecutive time since the rate remains unchanged.

The central bank had last revised the policy rate on May 22, 2020, in an off-policy cycle to perk up demand by cutting interest rate to a historic low.

According to Brickwork Ratings, the RBI may continue to hold the policy rates at current levels in the upcoming policy meeting.

"We expect the MPC to start increasing the policy rates beginning with normalising the policy corridor between repo and reverse repo

rate. We expect the RBI to hike the reverse repo rate in its April 2022 policy meeting," it said. The outlook on inflation and growth may remain unchanged for the current fiscal, while the statement is keenly awaited for its forward guidance on inflation and the GDP for the next fiscal, it added. The last MPC held in December 2021 had kept the benchmark interest rate unchanged at 4 per cent and decided to continue with its accommodative stance against the backdrop of concerns over the emergence of the new coronavirus variant Omicron. The MPC has been tasked by the government to keep inflation in the range of 2-6 per cent.

Citing the massive spike in credit growth during the first half and the steeper fall in deposits and the resultant rise in term money rates, coupled with the record high borrowings, an SBI report has called for a 20 bps increase in reverse repo rate outside the MPC ambit so that the central bank find buyers for the flooding new debt papers.

The budget 2023 has pegged the Centre's gross borrowing at a record Rs 14.3 lakh crore and for the FY22 at Rs 10.5 lakh crore, lower than Rs 13.5 lakh crore this fiscal, while together with the states, the gross borrowing will be Rs 23.3 lakh crore and net will be Rs 17.8 lakh crore, the report said.

The budget seeks to pay back Rs 3.1 lakh crore next fiscal, up from Rs 2.7 lakh crore this fiscal, it added. While during the first half of FY22 itself, signs of credit recovery became visible, the latest data for the week to January 14, 2022, shows all banks incremental credit grew by Rs 5.46 lakh crore, more than double of Rs 2.72 lakh crore in the same period last fiscal, the report said, adding as against this, the incremental deposit growth was only Rs 8.6 lakh crore, down from Rs 10.5 lakh crore.

Uttar Pradesh will see one-on-one fight between BJP, SP with Akhilesh Yadav winning: Mamata Banerjee

Continued from page-1

chief minister. I also know India. This time, division of votes is not going to happen in Uttar Pradesh.

"The BJP had tried it pretty hard in Bengal but it boiled down to one-on-one (contest between the TMC and BJP). Here also, it is going to be a head-on fight, and Akhilesh Ji is going to emerge victorious. The SP will win and it will be history," Banerjee said. She also said that every caste is a "pride" for her and that her heart cries for the poor.

"If you remove BJP from the state, we will remove them from the country. This is our promise. This time Akhilesh Yadav will win more than 300 seats. All the regional parties will unitedly remove the BJP from Delhi and this is our promise," Banerjee said.

She said that Akhilesh Yadav has enough strength to fight the BJP, but added that in a war everybody must be taken along.

Asked to comment on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's comments in Parliament on Tuesday that if there was no Congress, there would have been no Emergency in the country, Banerjee said, "This has become the super-grandfather of Emergency."

On whether she will appeal to the Bengali-speaking population in the state to vote for the Samajwadi Party chief, she replied, "Akhilesh (Yadav) will get the support."

"There will be 'Khela Hobe', and he will win. In Bengal, the BJP has been kicked out of the field. Here too they will be sent out. Akhilesh (Yadav) is not alone, the public is with him." She mocked the BJP's 'Sankalp Patra' for the 2022 Assembly polls, saying, "Whether it is a manifesto or 'money-festo', I don't know. The BJP has become a 'khatra' (danger) party."

To a question on whether she will campaign in Gorakhpur against Yogi Adityanath, the TMC supremo said that she will visit Varanasi and also address a meeting there on March 3. The Trinamool Congress has not fielded any candidate in Uttar Pradesh and is supporting the Samajwadi Party in the high-octane battle in the politically crucial state.

During the West Bengal Assembly elections in 2021, the SP had extended its support to the Mamata Banerjee-led party.

Yadav shares a very cordial relationship with Mamata Banerjee and had even attended the grand opposition meeting hosted by the TMC supremo in January 2019.

On his part, Akhilesh Yadav termed the BJP's allegation that 'jungle raj' would return in Uttar Pradesh in the SP makes a comeback a "propaganda".

Banerjee expressed her fondness for Mathura's famous 'pedaa' and that Uttar Pradesh and Bengal "share the common bond of Ganga, heart and culture".

Hitting out at the Centre over the Covid vaccination, she said, "They (BJP) said that Covid jabs were given by them. Where did the money come from? They are playing politics with public money."

In a veiled dig at BSP chief Mayawati, the Banerjee said, "I would like to tell the Dalit brothers and sisters that your leader does not work and she has surrendered before the BJP."

"They (BJP) went to Bengal and said that Mamata does not worship Goddess Durga. But, they got a slap on their face. UNESCO gave heritage status to Bengal's Durga Puja," she said. The BJP-led government repealed the three farm laws keeping an eye on the Assembly polls in the fice state and those might be brought back after the elections get over, she alleged.

BJP, alliance partners want to build 'Nawan' Punjab: PM Modi

Continued from page-1

making a chief minister? Are these elections for electing new ministers and new MLAs. No, these elections are for speeding up the state's development and bring Punjab out of the situation of uncertainty," he said.

He said the upcoming elections are for taking the state out of the situation of uncertainty and propelling development.

Without naming the AAP, Modi asked people to remain alert from such people and said that they made several speeches regarding the drug problem during the last elections in the state. "But they brought this problem to the youths of Delhi. Those people have again reached here and are wooing you for votes," said Modi. It was the BJP and its allies who are committed to the development of Punjab, the PM said while referring to 11 'Sankalps' (commitments) recently made for the state.

Markets nosedive as FIIs on selling spree ahead of RBI's policy stance

MUMBAI: Fund-based selling largely in frontline and large-cap stocks wiped out Rs 2.95 lakh crore in investor wealth. Benchmark indices Nifty fell by 302.7 points to 17213.6 while the Sensex tanked by 1024 points to 57621. FIIs sold a provisional Rs 1,157 crore on Monday, taking their sales in February to Rs 9,936 crore and in the fiscal year so far to Rs 7,3231 crore, including Monday's provisional figure, or well over \$9.5 bn. DIIs sold a provisional Rs 1,376 crore of shares. Financial, FMCG, and infra companies bore the brunt of selling with Sensex's losses led by the HDFC and Bajaj twins and Larsen & Toubro, which shed 3-4%. The uncertainty in the market was underscored by fear gauge India Vix rising by 8.14% to 20.44. "Today's losses were led by fund-based selling," said Siddharth Bhamre, director, alternative investments and research, InCred Equities. "Frankly, we didn't see this coming and will have to rework our outlook."

BSP supremo Mayawati lambasts Congress government in Punjab, calls it 'anti-Dalit'

Continued from page-1

Channi as the party's next Chief Minister's face of Punjab, she said though she was skeptical about the Congress returning to power in the state, "Channi would not be given a free hand in running his government if at all Congress returns to power".

"Remote control will remain in a non-Dalit's hands and even Channi could be shown the door once elections are complete," she said, adding that Congress named Channi as the chief ministerial candidate only in order to garner Dalit votes.

She criticized Chief Minister Channi too "who allegedly failed to see the Congress game plan in declaring him the chief minister's face", for not remembering Dalits' Guru, Guru Ravidas though he paid obeisance at a Mandir in Himachal Pradesh on being declared the next chief minister in case the Congress managed to return to power in Punjab.

She said she had full confidence that on attaining power, alliance's Chief Minister's face Sukhbir Badal would initiate pro-poor policies and programmes on the pattern of Uttar Pradesh (during BSP's rule) in Punjab to make the poor stand on their feet.

"The present Dalit chief minister, except making announcements, did not take any steps for the welfare of weaker sections," she alleged. Castigating BJP too for following "anti-Dalit, anti-farmer" policies, she said she was confident that none of the anti-farmer policies of the BJP would be implemented in Punjab on assuming power by the alliance.

All sections including the members of upper caste are "suffering due to wrong policies of BJP government" in the country, she said.

She appealed to the party cadres not to fall prey and to be wary of the "election-time promises" and 'bhay' (fear) of various parties and vote in favour of the alliance candidates across Punjab.

"Our party believes in giving results as has been shown during my terms as the chief minister in Uttar Pradesh," she said.

"If alliance on coming to power fulfils the aspirations of Kanshi Ram, it will be a great tribute to the BSP founder," Mayawati added.

The AAP too came in for severe criticism at her hands when she said that ground realities in Delhi were quite different than what was being claimed by the party in Punjab.

"The AAP failed miserably during the peak of coronavirus," she said.

She also sought to dispel the alleged misconception in the country that land of farmers were snatched and given to Dalits during her terms in Uttar Pradesh as the chief minister.

"Land of not a single farmer was given away to Dalits during her four tenures as Uttar Pradesh chief minister," she emphasized.

"Only government land was given". "Parivartan (change) for a better tomorrow is in your hands," she said, urging the audience to strengthen the hands of Sukhbir Badal.

She also wished former chief minister M and SAD patriarch Parkash Singh Badal a speedy recovery.

"Parkash Singh Badal is filled with a wish to serve the state till his last breath," she added. SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal who arrived a full one hour before the arrival of Mayawati on the stage, in his address heaped praise on Mayawati and criticized the Congress for "stalling various schemes and projects" including the "sacred memorial project" at Shri Kuralgarh Sahib near Garhshankar, a spot related with Guru Ravidas' visit during his lifetime.

Christian Eriksen knew he would play football again two days after cardiac arrest

LONDON: Christian Eriksen says he knew he would play football again just two days after suffering a cardiac arrest at last year's Euro 2020 as he starts a new chapter of his career with Brentford.

The Denmark playmaker collapsed on the pitch against Finland in June and on the way to hospital in Copenhagen he told his wife Sabrina that he would probably never play football again.

But the 29-year-old was fitted with an im-

Italy but he signed for Premier League side Brentford on the final day of the January transfer window.

Speaking to club media for the first time on Monday, he said: "On the way to the hospital I told Sabrina I may as well leave my boots here.

"It changed two days later. It was in the moment. I recognised what happened to me later on that night and the next few days.

"Then all the tests started and all the knowledge started to come in and all the questions were being asked 'Can I do this? Can I do that?' and listen to the doctors." Eriksen, who has signed a contract until the end of the season, said he had many tests to assess how his heart was reacting to physical training but the results were posi-

itive.

"Then, every month I could really push it and then I could play," he said. "But the feeling of getting to hear from the doctors that even with an ICD there are no limits and with your condition there are no limits... it just depends

on the diagnosis and how you feel about it." The former Tottenham midfielder has not played since the incident last year but has recently been training with the youth team at another of his previous clubs, Ajax.

- Frustration -

Eriksen said the long lay-off had been frustrating and it had been difficult even to watch matches. "The first few months you can't really do anything," he said. "You have to let it heal and let it wait and let it settle so you don't really do anything and then ever since the last four months really started doing the rehab programme."

He added: "Lately, a few months ago I started coming back. I touched a ball, I'm on a football pitch, smelled the grass, football boots, then everything starts coming back, the excitement to watch games, to be in the stadium, to be involved with the team." Manager Thomas Frank, who has hailed Eriksen as potentially Brentford's "greatest signing" said last week he hoped the player would be in action within "weeks".

The midfielder, who trained with his new team-mates for the first time on Monday, said he felt "very good" but that it would take time to get match-fit.

"Condition-wise and strength-wise I am in a very good place," he said. "It's only the football touch that needs to come back and really the game minutes and the training minutes to get up to speed. "I feel very good but we'll see with training how it feels, how it develops and how my body reacts."



plantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD) and doctors gave him hope he could return to the sport.

Eriksen was unable to continue his career with Inter Milan because rules do not permit footballers fitted with the device to play in

Journalist who spoke to Peng Shuai says doubts remain

BEIJING: It was the interview many sports journalists wanted: A sit-down with Chinese tennis star Peng Shuai, prepped and ready to talk for the first time with Western media about allegations she made of forced sex with a former top-ranked Communist Party official that triggered a global outpouring of fears for her safety. Marc Ventouillac, one of two journalists for French sports daily

lem with Peng Shuai. See? Journalists (came), they can ask all the questions they wanted. The interview, as well as a dinner Peng had with International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach and appearances she made at Olympic venues have shone a deliberate and controlled spotlight on the three-time Olympian and former top-ranked doubles player. On Tuesday, Peng sat with

in a statement. "As we would do with any of our players globally, we have called for a formal investigation into the allegations by the appropriate authorities and an opportunity for the WTA to meet with Peng — privately — to discuss her situation." Ventouillac said Peng "seems to be healthy." To secure the interview, organized through China's Olympic committee with help from the

that people around the world are concerned for her.

He believes that international support has helped protect her during the controversy. Someone not so well-known outside China likely would be in jail for such an allegation against a senior official, Ventouillac speculated.

In a lengthy post in November, Peng wrote that Zhang Gaoli, a former vice premier and member of the ruling Chinese Communist Party's all-powerful Politburo Standing Committee, forced her to have sex despite repeated refusals. The post, on her verified account on a leading Chinese social media platform, Weibo, also said they had sex once seven years ago, and that she developed romantic feelings for him after that. Zhang has not commented on the accusation.

"Originally, I buried all this in my heart," she wrote. "Why would you even come find me again, take me to your house and force me and you to have sexual relations?"

It was quickly scrubbed from her account. Peng told L'Equipe that she erased it but didn't give her reasons beyond saying: "Because I wanted to." She also said the post has been misunderstood.

"Sexual assault? I never said that anyone made me submit to a sexual assault," the newspaper quoted her as saying. "This post resulted in an enormous misunderstanding from the outside world," she also said. "My wish is that the meaning of this post no longer be skewed."



L'Equipe who spoke to Peng this week in a restrictive interview arranged with Chinese Olympic officials, says he is still unsure if she is free to say and do what she wants. "It's impossible to say," he said in English. "This interview don't give proof that there is no problem with Peng Shuai." China's intent, however, was clear to him: By granting the interview as Beijing is hosting the Winter Olympics, it appeared that Chinese officials hope to put the controversy to rest, so it doesn't pollute the event.

"It's a part of communication, propaganda, from the Chinese Olympic Committee," Ventouillac told The Associated Press on Tuesday, the day after L'Equipe published its exclusive. With "an interview to a big European newspaper, they can show: OK, there is no prob-

Bach and watched American-born Chinese freestyle skier Eileen Gu win gold at the women's big air event.

Ostensibly, the aim is to put to rest the question that fellow players and fans around the world have been posting online: Where is Peng Shuai?

"It's important, I think, for the Chinese Olympic committee, for the Communist Party and for many people in China to try to show: 'No, there is no Peng Shuai affair,'" Ventouillac said.

The women's professional tennis tour said the interview "does not alleviate any of our concerns" about the allegations she made in November.

"Peng took a bold step in publicly coming forth with the accusation that she was sexually assaulted by a senior Chinese government leader," Steve Simon, the WTA's chief executive, said

IOC, L'Equipe agreed to send questions in advance and publish her responses verbatim, in question-and-answer form. Originally allotted a half-hour, Ventouillac said they ended up getting nearly double that and asked all the questions they wanted, beyond the "8 or 10" they pre-submitted.

"There was no censorship in the questions," he said.

A Chinese Olympic committee official sat in on the discussion, translating Peng's comments from Chinese. The newspaper then used an interpreter in Paris to ensure the accuracy of the comments that it published in French on Monday. It was her first sit-down discussion with non-Chinese-language media since the accusation. Ventouillac said one of L'Equipe's aims for the interview was to show Peng face-to-face that "she is not alone" and

Ranji Trophy at COVID times: Five-day quarantine for teams, squad size capped at 30

NEW DELHI: The opening round of Ranji Trophy matches will begin from February 17 following a five-day quarantine and the squad size, including support staff, has been capped at 30 as the BCCI aims to stage the 38-team event across nine different bio-bubbles amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The BCCI had earlier announced that the Ranji Trophy, to be held after two years due to the pandemic, will take place in two phases, before and after the IPL. On Tuesday, the board issued "staging guidelines" to the nine host associations.

The five-page document, which is in PTI's possession, states that each squad can have a maximum of 30 members, including a minimum of 20 players, with the number of support staff capped at 10.

"20 players will be eligible for match fees (Playing XI will be eligible for 100 per cent while the remaining 9 will be entitled for 50 per cent)," the guidelines state, adding that two COVID reserves will be allowed per team. The opening round clash between defending champions Saurashtra and Mumbai in Ahmedabad will be a much anticipated one with Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane having been named in their respective teams.

Pujara on Tuesday made the Saurashtra squad while Rahane was named in the Mumbai team.

Both the seasoned batters are in dire need of big runs and a Ranji Trophy hundred could well help them get their Test careers back on track.

All the teams will assemble in their respective venues on February 10, following which the players will go into a mandatory five-day quarantine.

RT-PCR tests will be conducted on day two and day five, leaving teams two days for practice on February 15 and 16. The pre-quarterfinal, to be played in the first phase, will be a five-day affair from March 11. The teams who will take part in the sole round-of-16 clash will have to undergo a four-day quarantine. The second phase of Ranji Trophy, comprising quarterfinals, semifinals and final, will be held from May 30 as announced earlier. According to the guidelines, each team "is encouraged to have a physician to deal with COVID-19 related issues".




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