2 more placed in isolation in West Bengal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA

Two more persons were on Tuesday admitted to an isolation ward in a State-run hospital with fever and cough – symptoms associated with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) – a senior health department official said.

Both have travel histories to Indonesia and Malaysia and were admitted to Beliaghata ID Hospital, he said. Blood samples and throat swabs of the suspects have been collected and test reports are expected by evening, the official said. He said three out of four other patients admitted at the isolation ward of the hospital tested negative for COVID-19, while a re-examination would be conducted on the fourth patient, he said.

Another person, who had returned from Saudia Arabia on Saturday and admitted at Beliaghata ID Hospital on Sunday, tested positive for swine flu. "He has been kept under observation," the official said.

COVID-19: Manipur closes international gates at Moreh

District authorities, security forces instructed to close down all entry points

IBOYAIMA LAITHANGBAM
IMPHAL

The legalised border trade with Myanmar came to a grinding halt from Tuesday as the Manipur government closed both the international gates I and II at Moreh, Manipur's border town.

An order issued by H. Gyan Prakash, the special secretary (Home), Manipur, says that the preventive measure was taken to check possible outbreak and transmission of coronavirus in Manipur. Crossing the international gates by all sections of people through these gates is prohibited. The order says that all district authorities and security forces have been instructed to close down all entry points.

On Monday, the troops of 43 Assam Rifles deployed along the border had banned crossing of the border. Only a few people are going to Myanmar and entering Manipur through these gates manned by officials of Manipur and Myanmar. Majority of the traders bring their goods to Manipur through other parts of the border. An official source says that the sealing of the international border will be extended to Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh which have a common border with Myanmar.

There have been local media reports saying that just one or two officials check the people coming from Myanmar. As there is no crowd control system near the international gates, the possibility of contracting the disease is high. Besides, reports say that those wanting to enter Manipur are stranded for hours as the doctors are yet to arrive from Imphal.

Health officials said that the tests conducted on 12 suspect persons were found to be negative. One Indian coming to Imphal was lodged in the isolation ward of the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences, Imphal. Medical Superintendent C. Arunkumar said the patient was improving and said that he may be discharged soon.

There are two isolation wards in the two medical colleges, RIMS and JNIMS, in Imphal.

Chief Minister N. Biren had already given approval for the construction of a full-fledged isolation ward on the RIMS complex to meet any eventuality.

He also appealed to the people to shorten the Holi festival which is a five-day carnival in Manipur.

Restricted flow: Only a few people are going to Myanmar and entering Manipur through these gates. ▪ FILE PHOTO

Jharkhand police to look into video by news channel editor

'Attempt to disrupt communal harmony won't be tolerated'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
RANCHI

The Jharkhand police is probing a video doing the rounds on social media where the editor of a Hindi news channel is seen exhorting people to "economically boycott rioters", official sources said on Tuesday.

Taking to Twitter, Chief Minister Hemant Soren said the government has taken cognisance of the event, and asserted that any attempt to disrupt communal harmony will not be tolerated.

A CMO official said Mr. Soren asked police to initiate a probe after the video went viral on Twitter.

Suresh Chavhanke, the editor of Sudarshan News, had shared the video of an event on the microblogging site where he is heard asking the saffron-clad attendees to take an oath to boycott "rioters" by refusing them jobs and not buying things from them.

Suresh Chavhanke, in his tweet, also said that the mayor, former Ministers, businessmen and industrialists undertook the pledge at a city hotel. He requested netizens to take a similar oath and share the video.

Shortly after the video went viral, #ArrestSureshChavhanke trended on Twitter, following which Mr. Soren said appropriate action would be taken after investigation.

"The government has taken cognisance of the event & this particular 'speech'.@JharkhandPolice is investigating the matter & appropriate action deemed fit will be taken soon. There will be 'Zero Tolerance' for anyone who attempts to disrupt communal harmony & brotherhood in Jharkhand," Mr. Soren tweeted.

Hemant Soren

Probe ordered into advocate's death

Kin and lawyers allege Roy died due to medical negligence

SYED SAJJAD ALI
AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb on Tuesday ordered a magisterial probe into the 'mysterious' death of an advocate. He announced the decision after visiting the residence of the deceased.

Bhaskar Deb Roy, 30, was found lying unconscious outside a school at Dhaleswar here on Friday. His motorbike allegedly met with an accident, leaving him injured.

Fire Service personnel took him to the GBP Hospital after being alerted by locals. He died within a few hours.

Mr. Roy's family and advocates alleged that he died due to medical negligence as he was left unattended at the hospital. They also suspected foul play in the alleged accident inflicting injuries in the legs of Mr. Roy.

Protest by lawyers

A large number of lawyers staged a demonstration in front of the police headquarters seeking proper investigation into the death. They also held candlelight vigil in the city. Police were initially reluctant to register FIR on charge of medical negligence, but later relented after receiving an order from the Chief Judicial Magistrate.

Former Chief Minister Manik Sarkar and incumbent Law Minister Ratan Lal Nath also visited Mr. Roy's residence and consoled the family.

Mr. Deb, during his visit to Mr. Roy's residence, assured the grieving family members of all possible help from the government. He said the West Tripura District Magistrate would probe the issue.

Team set up

The Health department has also constituted a four-member team to look into the alleged negligence committed in the hospital.

Meanwhile, the Tripura High Court on Tuesday began hearing a PIL plea seeking the court's intervention for a high-level probe into the advocate's death. Chief Justice Akil Qureshi asked the police to submit all relevant documents on Wednesday to resume hearing.

10 drown, 3 die in accident after Holi celebrations in Odisha

12 injured in clash triggered by altercation over rash driving in Cuttack district

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BHUBANESWAR

At least 10 people drowned while bathing and three were killed in a road accident after Holi celebrations in Odisha on Tuesday.

Two more people, who were swept away while taking bath in Mahanadi river in Cuttack and in Budalibandh Dam in Balasore district, were yet to be traced.

Separately, at least 12 people were injured in a group clash during Holi celebrations in Athagarh area of Cuttack district, the police said.

Giving details of the drowning cases, the police said three youths drowned at Kenduguda dam in Gunupur in Rayagada district, while two schoolchildren died while bathing in Kathjodi river near Cuttack.

A man drowned in a pond at Aul in Kendrapara district, a woman drowned in Puri canal at Balianta near Bhubaneswar.

A youth was swept away in Mahendra Tanaya river at Parlakhenmundi in Gajapati district and died, while another died in Indravati dam in Nabarangpur district, the police said.

In a similar incident in Salepur area of Cuttack district, a man drowned in the Chitrotpala river following Holi celebrations.

The police said three persons were killed in a road accident while returning home after attending a Holi feast at Kaimati Chhak in Dhenkanal district. The motorcycle they were riding dashed against a roadside tree and the three were rushed to a hospital where doctors declared them dead, police said.

The deceased were identified as Shubra Saswat Routray from Rameswarapur area under Town Police limits, Dharmananda Dehuri from Kaimati and Kailash Sahu from Achhanda village.

In the clash in Cuttack district, at least 12 people were injured. The clash during Holi celebrations was triggered by an altercation over rash driving. All the injured have been hospitalised.

Four children drown in W.B.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KRISHNAGAR

Four children drowned in a pond in Nadia district while taking bath after celebrating Dol Jatra, the festival of colours in West Bengal, police said on Tuesday.

The children included two siblings.

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LEGAL NOTICE

BEFORE THE HON'BLE ADDITIONAL DISTRICT COURT - I, ALAPPUZHA

E.P. No: 321/2017

Decree Holder : Mr. Jayagopal. R, M/s Sivaganga Enterprises, Kollamparambil Building, Ponnad P.O, Mannenchery, Alappuzha, Kerala

Judgement Debtor : M/s Excell Glasses Ltd., Pathirappally, Alappuzha

Name and address of the Judgement Debtor

Prasanth Somani, Managing Director, M/s Excell Glasses Ltd, Parijath House, First Floor 1076, Dr. E. Moses Road, Worly, Mumbai, Pin:400 018

Whereas the above named Decree Holder has filed an Execution petition against you in award No: O.A.No. 34/2015 of Micro Small Enterprises Facilitation Council, Kerala seeking relief of recovering the defaulted payment etc. The above case is posted to 19.03.2020 for your appearance.

Hence you are hereby directed to appear before this Court either in person or through pleader failing which the above case will be heard and determined in your absence placing you as Exparty.

Given under my bound and seal of the court on this 5th day March 2020.

By order of the court

Peter J. Kurishinkal
Advocate, Alappuzha

LEGAL NOTICE

BEFORE THE HON'BLE ADDITIONAL DISTRICT COURT - I, ALAPPUZHA

E.P. No: 322/2017

Decree Holder : Mrs. Baby Smitha, M/s Sri Durga Enterprises, Kollamparambil Building, Avalookunnu.P.O, Alappuzha, Kerala

Judgement Debtor : M/s Excell Glasses Ltd., Pathirappally, Alappuzha

Name and address of the Judgement Debtor

Prasanth Somani, Managing Director, M/s Excell Glasses Ltd, Parijath House, First Floor 1076, Dr. E. Moses Road, Worly, Mumbai, Pin:400 018 (and factory at Udaya Nagar, Pathirappally, Alappuzha, Kerala, Pin: 688521)

Whereas the above named Decree Holder has filed an Execution petition against you in award No: O.A.No. 35/2015 of Micro Small Enterprises Facilitation Council, Kerala seeking relief of recovering the defaulted payment etc. The above case is posted to 19.03.2020 for your appearance.

Hence you are hereby directed to appear before this Court either in person or through pleader failing which the above case will be heard and determined in your absence placing you as Exparty.

Given under my bound and seal of the court on this 5th day March 2020.

By order of the court

Peter J. Kurishinkal
Advocate, Alappuzha

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CENTRAL RAILWAY

MECHANIZED HANDLING OF BOOKED PARCELS AND LUGGAGE PACKAGES

Name of Works : Mechanized Handling of booked Parcels and Luggage Packages at Mumbai CSMT & LTT Railway Station, which includes loading / unloading for SLRs / Brake Vans / AGC / LWLRRMs of passenger, M / Exp trains, stacking and shifting as instructed by the CPS / Railway Administration.

Station →	Mumbai CSMT	LTT
Open E-Tenders - Two Bid System, Tender Notice No.	BB/C/124/PLHand/CSMT/20 dated 06.03.2020	BB/C/124/PLHand/LTT/20 dated 07.03.2020
Estimated Cost of the Work, including GST	₹ 5,08,32,837/- (₹ Five crore eight lakh thirty two thousand eight hundred thirty seven only) (Including GST)	₹ 4,06,73,328/- (₹ Four Crore Six lakhs seventy three thousands three hundred twenty eight only) (Including GST)
Earnest Money / EMD	₹ 4,04,200/- (₹ Four Lakh Four Thousand Two Hundred only)	₹ 3,53,400/- (₹ Three Lakhs Fifty Three Thousand Four Hundred Only)
Cost of the Tender Form (Non-refundable)	₹ 10,000/- (₹ Ten Thousand Only) (Tender Document Cost and EMD to be paid electronically only)	₹ 10,000/- (₹ Ten Thousand Only) (Tender Document Cost and EMD to be paid electronically only)
Last date & Time of uploading & opening of tender	Uploading upto 15.00 Hrs. on 01.04.2020, opening immediately after closing hours on 01.04.2020.	Uploading upto 15.00 Hrs. on 08.04.2020, opening immediately after closing hours on 08.04.2020.
Completion period of the work & Validity of the Offer	2 years from the date of entering into contract, 120 days.	
Pre-bid meeting date, time & venue	on 19.03.2020 at 15.00 Hrs. in DCM (Goods) office, above Railway Reservation Center, Mumbai CSMT.	
Website details	For further details please refer tender document on : www.ireps.gov.in	

Further Addendum / Corrigendum, time extension, clarification etc. in connection with the subjected tender, if any, will only be uploaded in the website. Bidders should regularly visit the website to keep themselves updated.

1350

Railway Helpline 139 | RPF Security Helpline 182

WESTERN RAILWAY

PROCUREMENT - TRACK MACHINES

Chief Engineer (TMC), Western Railway, HQ Office, Churchgate, Mumbai 400020, invites e-tender as per the details given below: **e-Tender No.:** W641/22/18/84-B. **Name of the Work:** Procurement of different types of Bearings for Track Machines. Make: SKF/HMT/FAG/KOYO/IKO/MB/INA/ZWZ/Kershaw/Precision/QUN. **Approximate Cost:** ₹ 2,60,449.76. **EMD:** ₹ 5,210/-. **Tender Closing Date: 07.04.2020 at 11:00 hrs. Tender Opening Date: 07.04.2020 at 11:15 hrs.** Regarding detailed notice containing cost of tender document (non-refundable), EMD, eligibility criteria, similar nature of work, detailed tender conditions. Please visit **www.ireps.gov.in.** Manual offers will not be considered.

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WESTERN RAILWAY

VARIOUS WORKS

Deptt. Commercial. **Executive:** Sr. DCM. Tender Notice No. & Date: **CA11_Intrain_PAS_2020** dated **05.03.2020. Work and Location:** Tender for intrain commercial publicity, social awareness message & instrumental music through Public Announcement System inside 73 no.s of EMU rakes for a period of 5 years over Mumbai Division of Western Railway. **Advertising Value Reserve Price p.a.:** ₹ 1,12,65,659/-. **Approx. Cost of Work for 5 years:** ₹ 5,98,91,947/-. **EMD:** ₹ 11,97,900/-. **Cost of Tender Form:** ₹ 10,000/-. **Site where Tender form available:** https://www.ireps.gov.in **Completion period:** 5 years. **Date & Time of Submission and Opening:** On 17.4.2020 at 15.00 hrs.

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WESTERN RAILWAY

MODIFICATION WORK

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (Sub), Western Railway, Mumbai Central, Mumbai 400008, invites e-Tender No. **EL/SUB/SS/538/WA(RT-2)** dt: **05.03.2020** to the following electrical work: **Name of the Work:** Modification of Base/Trolly including Epoxy block of 25 KV CT of Vishal Make in TSS,SP, SSPs of Suburban between CCG-VR section of Mumbai Division. **Estimated Cost of Work:** ₹ 45, 26,588.60. **EMD:** ₹ 90,500/-. **Completion Period:** 9 Months. **Cost of Tender Documents:** ₹ 3,000/-. **Date & Time of Submission and Opening:** On 02.04.2020 upto 15.00 hrs. and at 15.30 hrs. at the above said address. **Website Particulars:** www.ireps.gov.in **Validity of Offer:** 45 days from the date of opening

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(Hydraulic Engineer's Department)
No. DyHE/PPC/11495/Panjrapur of 06.03.2020

e-TENDER NOTICE

The Commissioner of Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai invites online tenders for the following works on "Percentage Rate Basis" from the eligible bidders. The Bid Start Date & time and Bid End Date & time is specified in the detailed tender notice on M.C.G.M.'s website under Tender section.

Sr. No.	Bid no.	Name of the work
		PANJRAPUR
1.	7100176496 Panjrapur	Protection & Maintenance of Dead and Dangerous trees at Pise Panjrapur Complex for the period of two years.

The intending tenderers shall visit the Municipal website at http://portal.mcgm.gov.in for further details of the tender.

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Request for Proposal -RFP

The undersigned invite (RFP) for the selection of System Integrator.
Last date for submission of Documents is - **20.04.2020 @ 3 PM.**

For details please visit :-

a) www.tenders.tn.gov.in
b) www.investingintamilnadu.com
c) www.easybusiness.tn.gov.in

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CENTRAL RAILWAY

SUPPLY, TRANSPORTATION, LOADING, UNLOADING, STORING AND FILLING OF DRY SCREENED SAND IN SAND BOXES

Tender No. BB/TRSO/Sand Filling/20-22. Name of Work : Supply, Transportation, Loading, Unloading, storing and filling of dry screened sand in sand boxes of Electric / Diesel Locomotives of the crew changing Locations and checking of sander working and attention of Electric / Diesel locomotive sand gears in suburban and non suburban area for period of two years (730 Days). **Location** : Mumbai Division; **Estimated Cost** : ₹ 13,89,10,368/-; **Earnest Money Deposit** : ₹ 8,44,600/-; **Cost of Tender From** : ₹ 10,000/-. **Completion Period** : 02 years; **Address of the Office** : Sr. DEE (TRSO) BB, IInd Floor, Annexe Building, above Reservation Centre, Central Railway, Mumbai CSMT. **Closing Date of Tender** : 30.03.2020, 11.00 Hrs. **Website from where Tender can be downloaded : www.ireps.gov.in**

1348

RPF Security Helpline 182

WESTERN RAILWAY

VARIOUS WORK

Divisional Railway Manager (WA), Western Railway, 6th Floor, Engg. Deptt., Mumbai Central, Mumbai 400008, invites e-Tender as per details given below: **Sr. No. 1. Executive:** Sr.DEN (Co)BCT. **Tender Notice No. & Date: BCT/19-20/422** dtd. **06-03-2020. Work and Location: CCG-VR Sec:** Dewatering during monsoon 2020 in various section of Mumbai division. **Approx. Cost of Work:** ₹1,04,81,280/-. **EMD:** ₹ 2,02,400/-. **Date & Time of Submisison and Opening:** On 02.04.2020 upto 15.00 hrs. and at 15.30 hrs. **Sr. No. 2. Executive:** Sr.DEN (Co)BCT. **Tender Notice No. & Date: BCT/19-20/423** dtd. **06-03-2020. Work and Location: Vasai Road, Naigaon, & Bhayander:** Supply of potable drinking water by tanker to Vasai Road colony, stations, service building, Naigaon colony along with newly constructed quarters at Bhayander & Bhayander Rest house for a period of two.years. **Approx. Cost of Work:** ₹1,65,60,691.20. **EMD:** ₹ 2,32,800/-. **Date & Time of Submisison and Opening**: On 07.04.2020 upto 15.00 hrs. and at 15.30 hrs. For further details, please visit **www.ireps,gov.in** Manual offers will not be considered.

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WESTERN RAILWAY

VARIOUS WORK

Divisional Railway Manager (WA), Western Railway, 6th Floor, Engg. Deptt., Mumbai Central, Mumbai 400008, invites e-Tender as per details given as follows. **Sr. No. 1. Tender Notice No. & Date:** BCT/19-20/424 dtd 06.03.2020. **Work and Location: Virar-Surat Sec:** Hiring of Multi-Utility Vehicle in connection of various utility shifting work of DFC-in CPM-CSTM section at DRD. **Approx. Cost of Work:** ₹ 9,15,104.35. **EMD:** ₹ 18,300/-. **Sr. No. 2. Tender Notice No. & Date:** BCT/19-20/425 dtd 06.03.2020. **Work and Location: Virar-Surat Sec:** Flange clearance of track for prevention of track circuit failure in Monsoon. **Approx. Cost of Work:** ₹ 30,48,000/-. **EMD:** ₹ 61,000/-. **For Sr. No. 1 and 2: Executive:** Sr. DEN(North)BCT. **Date & Time for Submission and Opening:** On 02.04.2020 upto 15.00 hrs. and at 15.30 hrs. For further details, please visit **www.ireps,gov.in** Manual offers will not be considered.

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WESTERN RAILWAY

HIRING OF TRUCK

Tender Notice No. & Date: EL/Maint/81/774/WA/14 dt. 03.03.2020. **Work and Location: Mumbai Division -** Hiring of 01 No. Truck for Electrical Power Department for 2 years. **Approx. Cost of Work:** ₹ 19,27,704/-. **EMD:** ₹ 38,600/-. **Completion Period:** 2 Years. **Date & Time of Submission and Opening:** On 06.04.2020 upto 15.00 hrs. and at 15.30 hrs. Please visit our website **www.ireps.gov.in** to download the tender document, corrigendum and further details.

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Markets bounce back after crash

S&P 500 futures rally over 4%, treasury yields up sharply; Europe's shares jump 3-4%, Asia ends higher

REUTERS
LONDON

Oil and equity markets staged solid rebounds on Tuesday after the previous day's pummelling, with signs of coordinated action by the world's biggest economies to cushion the economic impact of coronavirus helping pull investors out of panic mode.

Brent roared back as much as 10% on hopes a supply cut deal could be rescued, while most benchmark government bond yields were off record lows as hopes for stimulus in the face of the epidemic boosted risk sentiment. Wall Street main markets wasted little time in recouping at least 2% of the 7% they had slumped on Monday, one of their worst days on record.

The oil and gas and mining sectors were leading the charge for Europe as oil recovered some of Monday's 25% fall following what had appeared to be the complete breakdown of a crucial global oil pact between OPEC and Russia.

Scope for hope: The Shanghai Composite Index traded 2.1% higher as new domestic COVID-19 cases in China tumbled. ▪AP

Yields on benchmark U.S. 10-year Treasury debt more than doubled to 0.7% and those on German Bunds jumped around 20 basis points at one point as investors pared some safe-haven holdings, though they were beginning to ease again.

Supporting the mood was a pledge from U.S. President Donald Trump on Monday to take "major" steps to protect the economy and float the idea of a payroll tax cut with congressional Republicans.

Japan said it would spend another 430.8 billion yen ($4.1 billion) to ease the effects of the coronavirus outbreak and Italy's deputy economy minister announced that mortgage payments would be suspended as the country deals with the second highest number of cases outside China.

Some of the biggest global investment banks, including JP Morgan, Citi and Barclays, now expect the Federal Reserve to cut U.S. interest rates to zero in the coming months as part of a mass global move to provide some ballast and liquidity to the financial system.

"As of today, we believe that markets have gone from being overly complacent to overly pessimistic," the chief investment officers of Europe's largest asset manager Amundi wrote in a note to clients.

"Our central case, instead, is one of a temporary setback, although more prolonged compared to what we were expecting a month ago, followed by a recovery," they added.

Oil suffered its sharpest drop since the 1991 Gulf war and global stocks plunged on Monday after Saudi Arabia launched a crude price war with Russia, further rattling investors already anxious about the spread of coronavirus.

Tuesday's market fight back had begun to gain traction in Asia. Japan's Nikkei had ended the day up 0.85%, after earlier touching its lowest level since April 2017.

Australia's index closed up 3.1% as some went hunting for bargains in beaten down stocks.

China's benchmark Shanghai Composite Index traded 2.1% higher as new domestic coronavirus cases tumbled and President Xi Jinping's visit to the epicentre of the epidemic lifted sentiment.

Oil surges on hope of economic stimulus

Russia may smoke peace pipe with OPEC

REUTERS
LONDON

Oil prices surged by around 8% on Tuesday, a day after the biggest rout in nearly 30 years as investors eyed the possibility of economic stimulus and Russia signalled that talks with OPEC remained possible.

U.S. President Donald Trump on Monday said he will be taking "major" steps to gird the U.S. economy against the impact of the spreading COVID-19 outbreak, while Japan's government plans to spend more than $4 billion in a second package of steps to cope with the virus.

Brent crude futures were up $2.80, around 8%, to $37.16 a barrel by 7.24 p.m. IST, after hitting a session high of $38.22 a barrel.

West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude gained $2.42, or around 8%, to $33.55 a barrel, after hitting a high of $34.60.

Black Monday

Both benchmarks plunged 25% on Monday, dropping to their lowest levels since February 2016 and recording their biggest one-day percentage declines since January 17, 1991, when oil prices fell at the outset of the first Gulf War.

Trading volumes in the front-month for both contracts hit record highs in the previous session after three years of cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Russia and other major oil producers to limit supply fell apart on Friday, triggering a price war for market share.

Saudi, the world's biggest oil exporter, escalated tensions with plans to supply 12.3 million barrels per day (bpd) in April, well above current production levels of 9.7 million bpd, Saudi Aramco CEO Amin Nasser said.

April's crude supply will be "300,000 barrels per day

over the companys maximum sustained capacity of 12 million bpd," Mr. Nasser said in a statement.

Joint steps with Russia

Russian Oil Minister Alexander Novak said he did not rule out joint measures with OPEC to stabilise the market, adding that the next OPEC+ meeting was planned for May-June.

But in response, Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister said he did not see a need to hold an OPEC+ meeting in May-June if there was no agreement on what steps should be taken to deal with the impact of the COVID-19 on oil demand and prices.

"I fail to see the wisdom for holding meetings in May-June that would only demonstrate our failure in attending to what we should have done in a crisis like this and taking the necessary measures," Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said.

"Price wars and pandemics are nothing new to the commodity markets, but both occurring simultaneously is something we have yet to witness in our careers," RBC analysts said.

Crude was also supported by hopes for a settlement to the price war and potential U.S. output cuts, although analysts warned gains may be temporary as oil demand continues to be hit by COVID-19 outbreak, which has spread beyond China and prompted Italy to implement a nationwide lockdown.

TVS Motor dividend at ₹1.40 a share

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

TVS Motor Company on Tuesday said its board had approved payment of a second interim dividend of ₹1.40 per share.

The interim dividend declared will be paid on or after March 20 to the shareholders who hold shares at the close of working hours on March 18, the Chennai-based two-wheeler maker said in a regulatory filing.

"At the meeting of the board of directors of the company held today (Tuesday), the board declared a second interim dividend for the financial year ending March 31, 2020, at the rate of ₹1.40 per share (140%) on 47,50,87,114 equity shares of ₹1 each fully paid up, absorbing a sum of ₹80 crore, including dividend distribution tax," it said. Last month, it had declared a dividend of ₹2.1 per share.

TCS declares dividend of ₹12 per share

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) on Tuesday said its board had approved payment of an interim dividend of ₹12 per share for the financial year 2019-20.

In a regulatory filing, the company said that "the interim dividend shall be paid on Tuesday, March 24, 2020, to the equity shareholders of the company" existing as on March 20, which is the record date fixed for the purpose.

The company's board of directors met on Tuesday and "have declared an interim dividend of ₹12 per equity share of ₹1 each of the company," it said.

Thermal coal imports for 2019 rise 12.6%

Lower production by Coal India spurs trend; coking coal registers decline

REUTERS
NEW DELHI

India's thermal coal imports rose 12.6% to nearly 200 million tonnes in 2019, government data reviewed by Reuters showed, reflecting the second straight year of growth in shipments of the fuel despite attempts by the government to cut imports.

Coal is among the top five commodities imported by India, the world's largest consumer, importer and producer of the fuel.

Imports of thermal coal – mainly used for power generation – jumped 12.6% to 197.84 million tonnes in 2019. However, imports of coking coal – used mainly in the manufacturing of steel – fell marginally, following two straight years of increase, government data showed.

Thermal coal imports rose for the second straight year despite attempts by the government to cut imports. ▪REUTERS

India imported 51.33 million tonnes of coking coal in 2019, down from 51.63 million tonnes in 2018, the data showed.

While higher coal imports may be bad news for the Indian government, they benefit international miners such as Indonesia's Adaro Energy, U.S. coal miner Peabody Energy Corp and global commodity merchants such as Glencore.

Indonesia top supplier

Indonesia accounted for nearly 60% of India's thermal coal imports in the April-December period, government data showed, while South Africa accounted for 22% and Russia and Australia accounting for over 5% each.

Rainfall, outages hit CIL

Traders said coal imports grew largely due to lower production by Coal India Ltd., whose output fell for five consecutive months ended November due to the highest annual rainfall in 25 years and frequent outages including strikes by workers and locals.

Higher coal shipments to India were also due to increased imports by Indian utilities, whose imports rebounded after a three-year slide, mainly due to increased purchases by an Adani Power plant in western India.

Yes Bank allows inward NEFT, IMPS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Crisis-hit Yes Bank said customers could now make payments towards credit cards and loans through other bank accounts, days after important banking services were curtailed after the RBI imposed a moratorium on the lender.

The announcement comes as panic gripped the bank's customers, who queued up before ATMs and bank branches to withdraw money. They were not even able to access Internet banking and other services such as digital payments through another party's platform. "Inward IMPS/NEFT services have now been enabled," Yes Bank tweeted.

Shared economy at $2 bn by end-2020

Co-working, co-living, shared mobility, furniture rentals account for a chunk

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The shared economy in India is estimated to be an about $2 billion industry by the end of the current year, according to a recent report by Maple Capital Advisors.

The 'shared economy' includes segments such as co-working (Awfis, WeWork India), co-living (Stanza Living, OYO Life, Oxford Caps), shared mobility (Uber, Ola, Shuttl) and furniture rental (Furlenco, Rentomojo.)

As per the report titled 'Shared Economy – India Story,' with high mobile penetration, high millennial concentration and an aspirational population, Asia has the highest willingness to use shared assets.

"India mirrors Asia trends in these aspects and is thus poised for high growth and adoption of shared services," it added.

In 2019, the segment was

About $3.7 billion has been infused in India so far, and similar investments are expected in the next 2 years. ▪R. RAVINDRAN

estimated to be over $1.5 billion in size in India.

Market size

The market size for the co-working sector is pegged at $500 million, while that for co-living is estimated to be $400 million, shared mobility at over $630 million, and furniture rental at $200 million. The report noted that about $3.7 billion worth of capital has been infused in India in such services till now, adding that a similar amount is expected to be infused in the next couple of years.

"Given the growth, potential profitability and momentum, we expect significant IPOs and private funding in the next 2-3 years," it added.

"India is at the cusp of a shared economy revolution. We are already witnessing phenomenal growth in this segment with both international companies and homegrown start-ups vying for market share. Even as the space is nascent, over $3.7 bn has been invested in this space and we expect this to accelerate from here, on the back of compelling demand and unit economics," Pankaj Karna, MD, Maple Capital Advisors, said.

The report added, "In this era of growing concern on climate, wastage, resource scarcity and population intensity (especially in the developing world), the shared economy seems to be a sustainable, scalable and efficient form of addressing these concerns."

BMW unveils new X1 at ₹35.90 lakh

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

BMW India announced the launch of its new X1 at an introductory price of ₹35.90 lakh, going up to ₹42.90 lakh.

Being produced at its Chennai factory, the updated version is available in BS VI diesel and petrol variants at all BMW dealerships across India, the company said in a statement.

"The BMW X1 has established and owned the dominant position in the premium compact sports activity vehicle (SAV) segment. The X1 fits in perfectly with the attitude and lifestyle of modern ambitious future leaders, who are redefining success – personally and professionally," said Rudratej Singh, president and CEO, BMW Group India.

Dell and Mindtree confirm one case each of COVID-19

Affected persons are employees who returned from overseas

MINI TEJASWI
BENGALURU

Dell Technologies and Mindtree Ltd. have confirmed one COVID-19 case each from among their employees who returned from overseas.

Dell on Tuesday confirmed that two of its employees were tested for the virus following their return trip from the U.S. which included a visit to the company's headquarters in Round Rock, Texas. "One employee tested negative, another tested positive and has since been placed in quarantine," the company said.

Mindtree said its staffer who had returned from an overseas trip tested positive for the virus on Tuesday.

Dell Technologies president and MD Alok Ohrie said in an employee broadcast

Alok Ohrie

that the team member who tested positive for COVID-19 would not return to work until cleared by medical officials and that the leadership was in contact with the team member to ensure required support.

Team members in Bengaluru who may have come in contact with the affected employee are now working remotely, the company said in a statement.

Paneesh Rao, chief people officer, Mindtree Ltd., said, "The employee, along with his family members, is under quarantine and medical supervision. All measures are being taken to provide the best of medical care to him and his family. The employee isolated himself upon return from the trip and did not visit the office or meet any other Mindtree colleagues."

With all the confirmed COVID-19 cases in Karnataka being IT employees and their family members, tech firms across the country are now on high alert.

On March 3, Intel said one of its employees in the city had potentially been exposed and was under quarantine.

ZoloStays to raise $100 mn for expansion

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

ZoloStays Property Solutions, a co-living and home rental start-up, is in talks with private equity investors to raise $100 million to fund its expansion plans, said a top executive.

"Co-living is one of the most viable and sustainable ways of living that we can create for the future," said Nikhil Sikri, co-founder and CEO, Zolostays.

The firm had already raised $35 million through three rounds of funding.

The company is planning to raise $100 million to fund its expansion plans and investments in technology and talent.

'Too early to predict COVID-19 impact on global hiring'

Firms struggle to find people with right skills: ManpowerGroup

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

It is too early to predict the potential impact of COVID-19 on global hiring, says ManpowerGroup India, part of a U.S.-based workforce solutions firm.

The reality today is that unemployment remained low in many markets, the company said and added that organisations globally were still struggling to find people with the right skills.

An employment outlook study it conducted across 5,153 Indian enterprises revealed steady hiring trends for the upcoming three months. As per the study, mining and construction, wholesale and retail trade, and services sectors would lead the job market and small companies with employee strength in the 10-49 range are expected to hire more than others.

Most of these recruitments will take place in the east and north regions of the country.

Strong hiring trends

Workforce gains are anticipated in seven industry sectors during the coming quarter. Mining and construction employers report the strongest hiring intentions with a net employment outlook of 16% (growth). Respectable payroll gains are also forecast in two sectors with outlook of 15% in the wholesale and retail trade sector and 13% in the services sector.

New jobs in public administration, education, finance, insurance and real estate, transportation and utilities sectors are expected to grow as well. "There is a dearth of talent and companies are ready to pay premium wages for the right talent with the appropriate skills.

Employers are also upbeat about upskilling their existing talent strength," Sandeep Gulati, group MD of ManpowerGroup India said.

Revolt to set up ₹400-cr. e-motorbike unit

Company scouting for a suitable location in south India

N. ANAND
CHENNAI

Rahul Sharma, co-founder of Micromax Informatics Ltd., is planning to set up a second manufacturing unit for production of e-motorcycles and is scouting for a suitable place in the South.

"There has been no disruption in the automobile sector for the last 30 years, so we decided to do something new about two years ago," said Rahul Sharma, founder, Revolt Intellicorp. "That is when I switched over from mobiles to the mobility space," he said.

"We conceived this e-motorcycle to offer better products to consumers who aspire for good-looking vehicles combined with

Revolt Intellicorp launched the RV400 and RV300 e-motorcycles in Chennai. ▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

power and performance.

Affordable price

"When we gave vehicles at an affordable price with lesser total cost of ownership, maintenance cost and less fuel expenses compared with conventional bikes, about 30,000 users booked it without seeing it," he said.

Chennai is the fifth city where Revolt Intellicorp began selling its motorcycles and the first batch of e-motorcycles were sold out within hours, he said.

Currently, the waiting period for our bikes is three months and this will be brought down by the year end by increasing production," he said.

Hitting full capacity

Going by the trend, Revolt Intellicorp would be hitting full production capacity by the year end. It was time to take a call for setting up the second manufacturing unit, he said.

Company officials were in talks with State governments in the southern part of the country, he said.

Mr. Sharma established the first plant in Manesar, investing close to ₹500 crore.

Investment in the second unit would be in the range of ₹400 crore to ₹500 crore.

For many years, India was not a crypto-friendly nation... but a five million-plus strong pro-crypto community is now celebrating its new freedom

Toss a coin to the banker

IMAGING: M ARIVARASU

:: DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

Akshay Aggarwal had been waiting with bated breath to hear the verdict of the Supreme Court regarding crypto-currency, an encrypted, decentralised and digital medium of exchange. As the founder of Blockchained India, a pan-India community for crypto enthusiasts, this ruling means the most to him in terms of freedom of investment and of movement.

Finally, a verdict was made last Wednesday: 'SC rules curb on crypto-currency trade illegal', and thus the ban on trading in virtual currency, crypto-currency and Bitcoins was lifted. Judging from the excitement on social media and relevant online forums, it was as though a cataclysmic election win took place. Plus, with the ongoing Yes Bank crisis, some crypto-lovers such as Rohan Jethi simply tweeted, "Short banks. Long Bitcoin."

India's pro-crypto community is five million-plus strong, and interestingly, despite our population and online presence, India only accounted for around three percent of the global crypto-currency market before the ban. Surely, these figures could grow slowly as more currencies are created and more progressive discussions are held.

An excited Akshay admits he was quite nervous in the lead-up to the verdict. "I had a slight positivity though there was still disappointment in the regulators that penalised innovators because of their own narrow thought process."

Shinam Arora, who heads Pune-based Primechain Technologies, which facilitates self-building blockchain ecosystems, says, "I don't understand why RBI couldn't come up with a way earlier to monetise it. If they would have monetised it, it would have helped in our country's growth and economy so much by now. For example, they could have simply imposed a minimal charge towards cryptocurrency exchange."

A vast ecosystem

The umbrella of this technology is so vast that it is just impossible to enumerate the different sub-markets... almost like the fight club of banking, as in it exists but not many talk about it.

Crypto has its own exchange market like mainstream currency would, too. Akshay predicts the acceleration of crypto-neo-banks (a type of direct bank) which would speed things along, "I see sophistication and maturity coming in this industry," comments Aggarwal, "mainly because of increased demand, which will lead to increased competition. I am expecting a hundred more exchanges to open up in the next two years."

The entertainment scene could change too. myNK, India's first blockchain-powered global entertainment platform, foresees positivity. Founder Nitin Narkhede says, "The entertainment industry will be one of the early adopters of crypto. Crypto adoption can streamline many processes in film and music industries, create new financing options and improve payment models in the industry, thereby benefiting many smaller artistes and stakeholders. New payment mechanisms will find their way in the existing systems and new companies will emerge to cater to these requirements."

The gaming industry also sees a lot of interaction with crypto. Up until about two years ago, gaming platform Steam operated many transactions through such means but put a stop to it because of its ineffectiveness, and this could change given the massive Indian population on Steam.

Depiction of Bitcoin being accepted at a shop ▪

Though the battle is won, the war is far from over

What of education; do experts see a potential for schools and colleges to at least inform students about crypto-currency? Wilson Bright, who heads Bengaluru-based BlockSurvey, explains, "I think it would be wonderful to inform young people about the entirety of the banking ecosystem and state that there are alternatives! There is also the myth that to invest in Bitcoin, for example, you have to own one whole Bitcoin, so BlockSurvey hopes to inform and educate people about the value of owning your own transactional freedom and being proud of it. So this is the time to really get the conversation going because people will now be curious, so the first step is to get rid of misinformation."

Be realistic

However optimistic things look, such startups must be patient when it comes to acquiring funding after a barren time. While the situation is clearer *de justo*, the same might not be *de facto*; there are many mindsets to converse with. Aggarwal says, "Now in this extreme economic vulnerability, I don't think much is going to change with this one early positive indicator. This will definitely restore faith and bring confidence to Indian crypto-entrepreneurs; maybe early adoption results could even convince some investors to take bets on them."

Though the battle is won, the war is far from over. "Post SC ruling, if the review petition doesn't yield a negative result again, we shall push forward our goals of enabling mass adoption towards mobilising support from politicians," avers Aggarwal, "I see a lack of futuristic thinking towards use of technology generally, and I believe we need to identify or elect pro-tech champions to push positive regulations. We need to continually direct these debates to the right problem, that being of prohibiting only the negative use."

CURRENCY COUNT

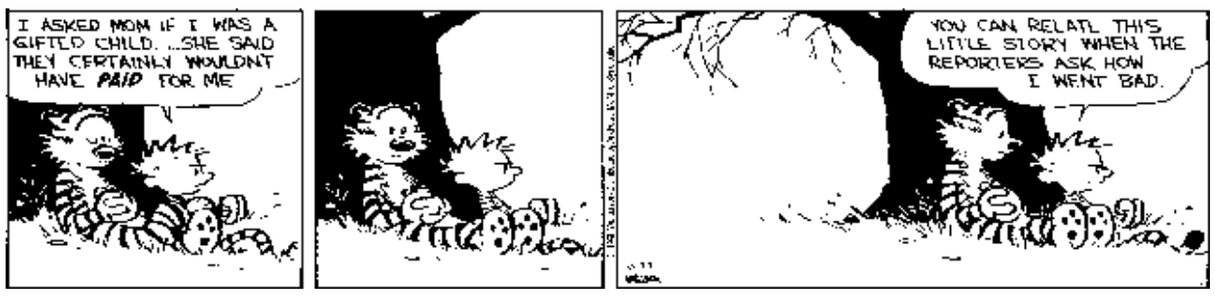
There are nearly 3,000 virtual currencies that investors can buy, of which over two dozen have a market cap that is in excess of $1.5 billion.

POOCH CAFE

PEANUTS

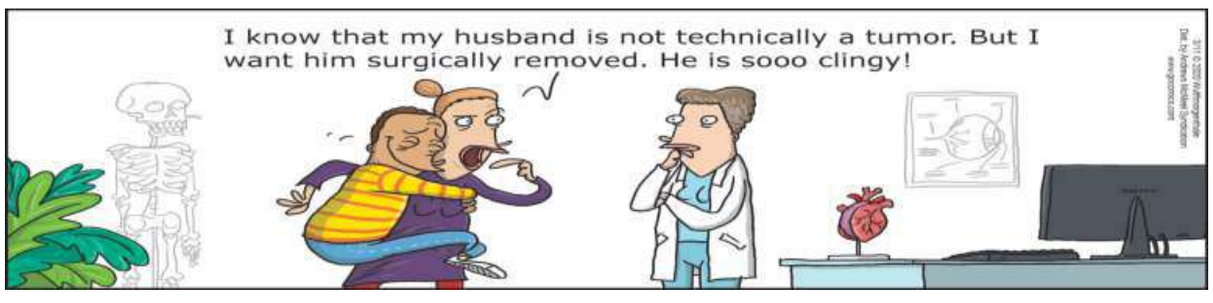
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE

CALVIN AND HOBBES

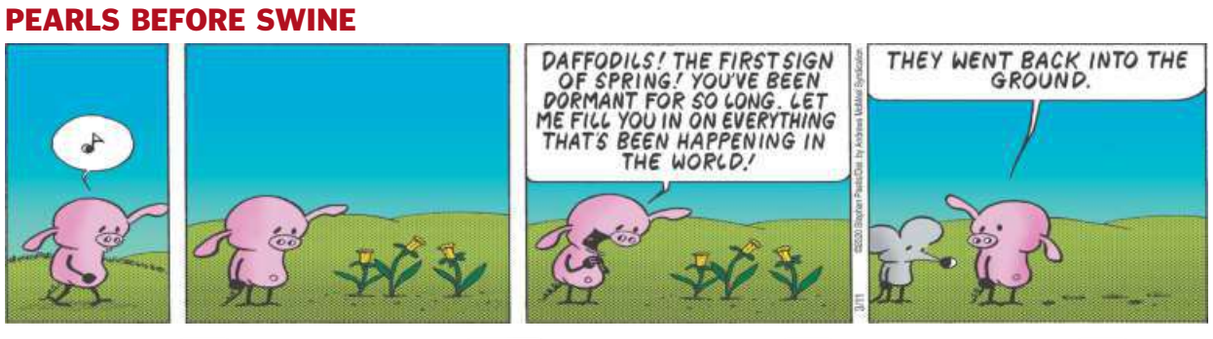


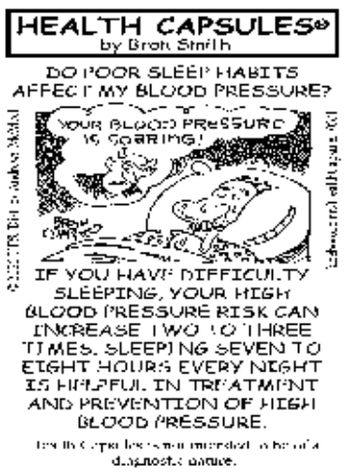
TIGER

WUMO



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE





THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13324

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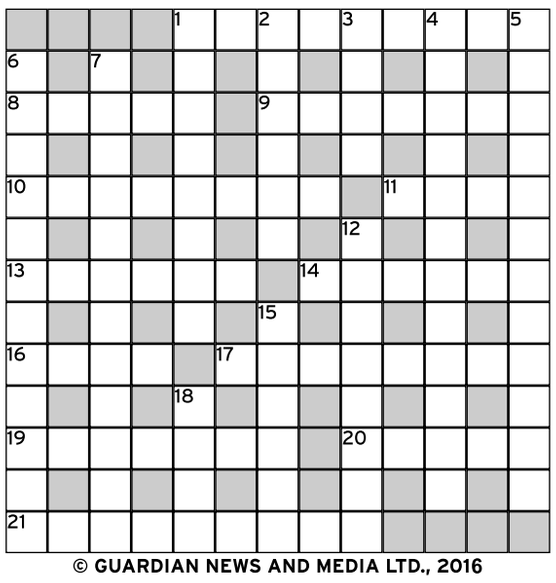

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Across
1 US state, capital Madison (9)
8 Smell (5)
9 Attacked (3,4)
10 Miscellaneous (8)
11 Bony structure of the foot (4)
13 Not far away (6)
14 Saying it isn't so (6)
16 Look for (4)
17 Ask about (8)
19 Futile (7)
20 Normal (5)
21 Drop off (2,2,5)

Down
1 (Storage for) clothes (8)
2 Family member (6)
3 Palindromic man's name (4)
4 Disdainful (12)
5 Casually (12)
6 South African city (12)
7 Nobel stalled (anag) – boxing award (8,4)
12 Get plums (anag) – part of a wicket (3,5)
15 Struggle (6)
18 Precious stones (4)

Solution will appear on March 12, 2020.

Solution No. 13323

P	O	S	Y		E	G	G	W	H	I	T	E
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MUMBAI THE HINDU
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2020

One night at the Qutub

Infusing his brand with hope and resilience, the rightful king of India Modern, Tarun Tahiliani, makes his 25th anniversary extra special

ROSELLA STEPHEN

Bring your walking shoes, reads the invitation. For an evening stroll in the Qutub Minar Complex. But with Tarun Tahiliani zipping in and out of rooms and nimbly up the stairs at his Gurugram atelier, that should have been a requisite for the entire day. TT (as the Delhi-based fashion designer is known in the industry) runs us through the installations – of recent innovations with brocade (New Brocade, he calls it), Jamdani, key pieces from summer wedding collections, his enviable archive room and 25 signature garments reinterpreted for the 25th year of his eponymous brand. We spot garments and accessories worn by famous actors, royalty and Indian supermodels. He talks about modernising Indian couture by making it lightweight, and encourages closer inspection of a 'new brocade' pink lehenga – soft, weightless and well-suited to the drape he mastered decades ago. Stragglers among the fashion scribes and influencers, lingering over tables bearing embellished clutches (from his mother's collection) and embroidered jewellery, are gently herded on. It is only mid-day, but the rather ambitious itinerary hadn't accounted for Mahashivratri traffic between us in Gurugram and the flagship store in Mehrauli. It appears Tarun's plan to get us to see the different processes, the toiles (mock-ups), and the embroidery units, will have to wait.

Message from the HQ

Designed about 12 years ago, by French architect Stephane Paumier, this expansive studio with exposed brickwork and vaulted skylights is where Tahiliani spends much of his day, with his workforce of about 950. At the entrance, two T-shaped pillars mimic the logo of his brand, while the arches inspired by the Islamic monuments in the capital, point to his passion for architecture and the synthesis of different cultures. Tarun, 57, that rare breed of designer who can promise relevance and longevity with his garments, is typically forthright. The Wharton-educated son of an Indian Navy admiral wishes aloud that the fashion industry would work together than against each other. When someone in the group brings up the legacy of his brand, he says, "Legacy is too pretentious a word. We have understood construction and draping". He talks about a time when specialists who draped (in India), never embroidered, when the tailoring was "so bad and the armholes so tight". He remembers how everyone wanted to design for "women in lycra petticoats who who ate three lettuces a day". That said, his studio is extremely conscious about fit. The TT Bride – he has dressed about 15,000 – wants her lehenga to be light enough to dance in all night. " And while we are not principally bridal, there is a push for us to do more – the boho bride, the gypsy bride, the khadi bride..." He admits they like to be a little sexy, a little sheer, often with a tulle veil anchored to the head with a single pin. His recent celebrity bride, actor Devika Bhise, who wore Tarun Tahiliani to almost all her Indian ceremonies, might be a case in point.

Open to influences

It isn't just his industry that Tahiliani is outspoken about. He has stated his views on the Citizenship Amendment Act, one of the few designers to do so. Supportive of his embroiderers, most of them Muslim, he recognises individual talent. Of recent reports that kaarigars are going back to their villages, amid growing unrest, he says, "Absolutely not. We are working at full capacity."

Masuma Naqvi, 34, who heads his Embroidery Concepts team, says Tarun encourages new learning, be it with draping, painting, embroidery or digital prints. Trips to museums and monuments in Agra, Jaipur and, last year, Egypt, are organised for a wider view of cultural motifs and architecture, which is then interpreted on the design floor. It is something she, with 10 years in the industry and a stint with Anju Modi, had not experienced earlier. "They bring something of their heritage, their understanding of art, their hand," explains Tarun, whose inspirations are wide-ranging, be it the Kumbh or, this year, the Qutub Minar.

On the one hand he remains faithful to both shape and drape, but he is also open to contemporary design intervention. Former associates like Amit Aggarwal have gone on to find independent success (Aggarwal's futuristic design vocabulary with recycled polymers and water-finished metallic chiffons, makes him one of the most interesting Indian designers to track today), and Tarun continues to mentor some of them.

Past meets present

The studio has large blow-ups from past photoshoots, mostly of all-time muse, Mehr Jesia. Jesia, who accompanies us later on the Qutub Minar walk, says she finds TT creations as relevant and wearable today as they were 25 years ago. Our visit ends with the big celebration at Tahiliani's home, featuring a South-Indian menu and some of his friends. It is, as his wife, Sailaja (or Sal), puts it, a typical day in her husband's life. "He goes to the studio, then the store, makes time for an evening walk in the Qutub Minar complex, and then comes home." It is a boring life, jokes Tahiliani. Then adds, "I always love, love, love walking in the Qutub Minar. Most of my friends in Delhi have not seen it (lit up at night), and I thought most of you would not have seen it either." It is also the perfect setting to think about divisive politics, our diversity, and a past we are proud of.

What stands out from this journey of 25 years?

● I think fashion is also about a deep engagement with the time and tide we live in. But I am particularly anxious and panicked about trying to keep our Indian-ness because when we are westernised, it is perceived as a higher value, and we have got to change that, we have got to own our Indian-ness. Nothing stands out more than to say you got to just keep swimming upstream with your convictions like the salmon going upstream; might seem suicidal but in a way you cannot help it, there is nothing else you can do.

Do comment on the hijacking of your India Modern?

● Nobody owns the paisley, nobody owns the *maang tikka* and nobody owns India Modern. I think that everyone has their own interpretation for lack of a better terminology, or for the fact that it is such a good term, everybody is free, and must engage to define what they think is India Modern. The more they do that the more vibrant our society will be. As long as it is done properly it is terrific!

You have often attempted a synthesis of cultures. The challenges doing this today?

● There is too much sensory overload and everybody is anyway in some bewildered mix... we have more urbanisation, single unit homes, single children and both parents working, there is very little time to transmit culture. Popular culture comes over phones, television and the internet and it is anyone's guess who is watching what. There is also no censorship which used to be there earlier, so peoples' minds are often unhinged. In this context, to keep harping on India may sound didactic, but it is what it is.

What went into creating the archive?

● We started organising [the archive] a few years back. We always stored swatches, sketches. It is an impressive body to look at.We have lost at least 15% of our very good quality swatches because embroiders would take them and not return them. Now we do not allow anything out. It is also a great thing for an embroider or younger designers to look at. Like the brands abroad, if this brand has to survive, a strong archive is a necessity. There are [also] boxes of patterns and artworks, and we have not got to them.

Plans for Jamdani and New Brocade?

● We work with wonderful people in West Bengal who are doing [Jamdani]. They are simple designs, so that the motifs that are used in Chikankari are used in Jamdani. I am dying to see Jamdani with Chikankari. Also, finally I have that softness and the dullness I like in our brocades. I [hope] to see them in every possible form. Some of the brocades I have seen people wear in some of [these] weddings...OMG, I am shocked to see that people [would] like to wear something that garish.

If 2018 was a year of disquiet for you, what is 2020 shaping up as?

● Mad recession, crazy disquiet on internal dissent and now the virus. I just have to roll with the punches.

The writer was at TT's 25 at the invitation of Tarun Tahiliani

(From far left) Tahiliani with Jesia, a TT ensemble, and a dress inspired by the outfit of a sadhu he spotted in Varanasi

4 EVENTS WORTH-YOUR-WHILE

THEATRE

Even Mists Have Silver Linings

In this play, we encounter a diversity of people and their stories — transgender parents separated from their children, gender non-conforming adventurists, cloistered housewives opening up to desire, fierce warrior princesses raised as men, and young urban millennials in same-sex love grappling with both loss and fulfilment.

TIME: 8.30 p.m.
VENUE: G5A Foundation for Contemporary Culture, Mahalaxmi
PHONE: 88792 08475

WORKSHOP

Cupcakes

Pastry shop, Love Sugar Dough, is organising a cupcake making workshop, where you can learn a bake a vareity of frosted cakes such as cappuccino wafer cupcake, mint hot chocolate cupcake, cherry blossom and Red velvet Ferrero Roche cupcake. The workshop is priced at ₹3500 plus 18% GST per person. For details check: foodhallcookerystudio.com

TIME: 3.30 p.m.
VENUE: Foodhall@Linking Road, Santacruz West
PHONE: 9769441711

CONCERT

Savitri Grier and Tom Poster

Violinst Savitri Grier and pianist Tom Poster will perform this evening. Grier performs recitals across Europe and has appeared as soloist with the Royal Philharmonic, Bournemouth Symphony, English Chamber Orchestra, London Mozart Players and Welsh National Opera. Poster has performed over 40 concertos ranging from Bach to Ligeti.

TIME: 7 p.m.
VENUE: Experimental Theatre, NCPA, Nariman Point
PHONE: 6622 3737

THEATRE

Saat Teri Ekvees

This Gujarati play consists of seven monologues by women, each exploring themes like desire of survival, intimacy, being oneself, overcoming difficulties and love. Directed by Pratik Gandhi, the play features Binda Rawal, Preeta Pandya, Chitralekha Rathod, Tusharika Rajguru, Reeva Rach, Vaibhavi Upadhyay and Ami Trivedi. Entry is at ₹300.

TIME: 9 p.m.
VENUE: Prithvi Theatre, Juhu
PHONE: 26149546

Ton-up Vasavada consolidates Saurashtra

His 142-run stand for the sixth wicket with Pujara frustrates Bengal as the host reaches 384 for eight

RANJI TROPHY

Y.B. SARANGI
RAJKOT

Arpit Vasavada, Saurashtra's rescuer in the semifinal against Gujarat, played the role of a consolidator against Bengal to strengthen the host's position in the Ranji Trophy final at the Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium here on Tuesday.

Vasavada's second consecutive century (106, 287b, 11x4) within a week and his 142-run chanceless stand with childhood friend Cheteshwar Pujara (66, 237b, 5x4) on the second day enabled Saurashtra, resuming on 206 for five, to gather 178 runs in 79.1 overs and aggregate 384 for eight in its first innings at stumps.

Two wickets by Mukesh Kumar and one by Shahbaz Ahmed helped Bengal gain some control in the final session.

After Pujara – who retired on five overnight due to health issues – joined Vasavada, the left-right combination used their experience to make the task of surviving on a testing track look easy.

Rising to the occasion: Southpaw Arpit Vasavada notched up a crucial century on a sluggish and testing track. ▪ VIJAY SONEJI

Tremendous application

The two – looking to wear out the opposition – showed tremendous application on a slow surface even as the Bengal pacers bowled tight lines to do the containing job. The spinners posed a threat by capitalising on the natural wear and tear, and unpredictable bounce.

In the opening session, Vasavada bravely faced Akash Deep, whose hostile spell was peppered with bouncers on the left-hander's leg-stump, while Pujara had a fascinating duel with left-arm spinner Shahbaz.

Pujara, troubled by the odd ball that jumped suddenly, stepped out on numerous occasions and survived a few leg-before appeals. Bengal once went for a DRS review too, but in vain.

Vasavada, 29 overnight, played every ball on merit. He cut and drove confidently on the off-side.

Fourth hundred

Vasavada and Pujara defended solidly after lunch. The left-hander, who got to his half-century with a four, sent part-timer Anustup Majumdar to the point fence to notch up his fourth hundred of the season, including three on the same ground.

"We wanted to bat as long as possible and tire them out," said Vasavada.

Pujara, who narrowly escaped getting run out at the non-striker's end, scored his fifty by cutting Arnab Nandi to the boundary.

Bengal tasted success after 63.1 overs when Shahbaz had Vasavada stumped to end a five-hour long stand since morning.

Seven overs later, Pujara missed the line to an excellent Mukesh delivery that hit the back leg of the batsman.

With a hint of reverse swing, Mukesh removed Prerak Mankad in his next over.

The scores: Saurashtra — 1st innings: Harvik Desai c sub b Shahbaz 38, Avi Barot c Saha b Akash 54, Vishvarajsinh Jadeja b Akash 54, Arpit Vasavada st Saha b Shahbaz 106, Sheldon Jackson lbw b Porel 14, Cheteshwar Pujara lbw b Mukesh 66, Chetan Sakariya c Saha b Akash 4, Chirag Jani (batting) 13, Prerak Mankad lbw b Mukesh 0, Dharmendrasinh Jadeja (batting) 13; Extras (b-3, lb-10, nb-2, w-7): 22; Total (for eight wkts. in 160 overs): 384.

Fall of wickets: 1-82, 2-113, 3-163, 4-182, 5-206, 6-348, 7-358, 8-364.

Bengal bowling: Porel 26-10-51-1, Mukesh 38-8-83-2, Shahbaz 46-14-103-2, Akash 30-8-77-3, Nandi 17-3-45-0, Majumdar 3-0-12-0.

Umpire replaced

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
RAJKOT

On-field umpire C. Shamshuddin, who was hit by a freak throw during the first day of the Ranji Trophy final, will be replaced by Yeshwant Barde.

Shamshuddin, who was hit on his lower abdomen by a throw in the 66th over of the Saurashtra first innings, completed his duties for the day. Following a medical check-up on Tuesday, it was decided to substitute him on the field.

Piyush Kakkar, a BCCI umpire from the host association, did on-field duty with K.N. Ananthapadmanabhan in the morning session of the second day. After lunch, TV umpire S. Ravi took Kakkar's place and Shamshuddin took over as TV umpire.

According to SCA sources, Barde will replace Shamshuddin as on-field umpire and Ravi will go back to his TV umpire's role.

Irfan Pathan's day out

Takes India home against Sri Lanka

Cutting loose: Irfan Pathan hit six fours and three sixes in his match-defining innings. ▪ VIVEK BENDRE

LEGENDS T20

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NAVI MUMBAI

India lost Sachin Tendulkar off the third ball of the innings and Virender Sehwag shortly after while chasing Sri Lanka's modest 138.

Mohammad Kaif steadied a drifting ship with 46 off 45 balls (4x4, 1x6) before Irfan Pathan took charge.

His unbeaten 57 fashioned a five-wicket win for the hosts in the UnAcademy Road Safety World Series on Tuesday.

Pathan blasted six fours and three sixes in 31 balls, batting at No. 6, as India won in 18.4 overs.

The Lanka bowlers were in control till the lefthander cut loose. With the ball, Pathan had removed the dangerous Romesh Kaluwitharana for 21.

This was after Munaf Patel had sent back Tillakaratne Dilshan (23, 23b, 4x4), the Sri Lankan skipper top-edging to Kaif on the fence.

Marvan Atapattu reacted late to a Manpreet Gony delivery pitched short and the ball flew off the bat for a diving catch by wicketkeeper Sameer Dighe. Kaif and Pragyan Ojha, too, came up with superb catches.

Munaf was easily the best bowler on view, finishing with figures of 4-0-19-4.

The scores: Sri Lanka 138/8 in 20 overs (Munaf Patel 4/19) lost to India 139/5 in 18.4 overs (Mohd. Kaif 46, Irfan Pathan 57 n.o., Chaminda Vaas 2/5).

Welcome to Dharamshala!

Getting ready: The Indian players train for the ODI series against South Africa beginning at the picturesque venue on March 12. **Below:** Manish Pandey and Kuldeep Yadav landed in the city on Tuesday. ▪ BCCI & TWITTER

COVID-19: Sports events hit worldwide

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
NEW DELHI

The final round of the Hero Santosh Trophy 2019-20, scheduled to be played in Aizawl, has been postponed in wake of the novel coronavirus outbreak. This comes after an health advisory issued by the government with regards to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Lockdown in Italy

Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte announced the suspension until April 3 of all sporting events in the country, including the top-flight Serie A football league.

Questions remain about getting the season finished. At least three rounds of matches will need to be rearranged after April 3 before the end of the season scheduled for May 24.

There is little room for manoeuvre because of Euro 2020 beginning on June 12. And there are also concerns that Euro 2020, due to be hosted across 12 countries including Italy, might face an unprecedented cancellation.

LaLiga too confirmed on Tuesday that first and second division matches in Spain will be staged behind closed doors for at least two weeks.

Fans banned

Barcelona's Champions League round of 16 return match against Napoli scheduled for March 18 has been ordered to be played behind closed doors because of the coronavirus outbreak, both clubs announced Tuesday.

Organisers of the Miami Open tennis said the tournament was still set to go ahead, a day after the ATP/WTA Indian Wells event in California was cancelled due to coronavirus.

A brief statement released on Monday by the Miami organisers on Twitter said preparations for the March 23-April 5 event were "moving forward as scheduled."

Coronavirus has KSCA worried

ASHWIN ACHAL
BENGALURU

The Karnataka State Government expressed concern over the hosting of Indian Premier League (IPL) matches in Bengaluru, in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak.

"I have written to the Centre saying there are IPL matches scheduled to be held in Karnataka, and that Maharashtra has already taken a decision in this regard. We have asked for the Centre's guidance on what action we should take," Karnataka Medical Education Minister K. Sudhakar said.

Karnataka has so far reported four cases of coronavirus.

Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) is scheduled to play its first home match at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium on March 31.

RCB is set to play a total of seven home matches, extending till May 17.

The Karnataka State Cricket Association, meanwhile, will adopt a wait and watch policy.

"We have not received any official information about this till now. If there is anything that comes from the State government to us, we will pass it on to the BCCI.

"The KSCA only hosts the matches; the BCCI will take a decision," a senior KSCA official stated.

O'Brien pulls it off for Ireland

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
GREATER NOIDA

Kevin O'Brien hit a last-ball six as Ireland clinched a consolation Super Over win against Afghanistan in the third Twenty20 International here on Tuesday.

With three needed for a win off the final ball, O'Brien cleared the long-off fence to end his team's 12-match losing streak in T20s against the Afghans.

Ireland had made 142 for eight after electing to bat and Afghanistan, which won the series 2-1, replied with 142 for seven.

The scores:

Ireland 142/8 (Kevin O'Brien 26, Gareth Delany 37, Harry Tector 31, Naveen ul-Haq 3/21, Qais Ahmed 3/25) tied with Afghanistan 142/7 (Rahmanullah Gurbaz 42, Asghar Afghan 32, Delany 2/21, Simi Singh 2/37).

Super Over: Afghanistan 8/0 lost to Ireland 12/1.

Kevin O'Brien. ▪ AFP

India's day will come, but...

BETWEEN WICKETS

SURESH MENON

India Women choked in the World T20 final. That is not unusual, nor is it unheard of. The best have, at various times. While taking a penalty in soccer, for example, the great Diego Maradona choked at the 1990 World Cup. Greg Norman, who accomplished a 'Saturday Slam' in 1986, leading after the third round in all four golf Majors, lost on the final day in three of them. South Africa are yet to shake off the tag of 'chokers' in World Cups.

At the end of the final, Indian fans' emotions were mixed: there was disappointment, of course, but also sympathy, pride, keen anticipation for the future and satisfaction that India are indeed a world class team. Significantly, the one emotion missing was anger, despite what a commentator predicted.

Young team

It is a young team which had done so well till that point, and had caused Australia's medium-pacer Megan Schutt to say before the match, "I just hate playing India – they've got the wood over me." It was not Aussie-like, and highlighted India's reputation.

India did extremely well to reach the title round in a format they aren't really comfortable with, and for this credit should go to the coach Woorkeri Raman and the spirit of the players who appeared to be a bunch that trusted one another and had fun together. There was too the unspoken confidence that if the top players didn't get runs, someone lower down would; likewise with the bowling. So what went wrong?

"High pressure environments induce a range of brain and body reactions," wrote Sian Bellock in his book on choking. "Your heart rate goes up, your adrenaline kicks in, and your mind starts to race – often with worries.

"When the worries begin, many people do something that seems quite logical on the surface: they try to control their performance. Unfortunately this increased control can backfire – especially for well-learned skills – because bringing your conscious awareness to skills that once operated outside your working memory can disrupt them."

Beilock is a cognitive scientist and the quotes are from *Choke: The Secret to Performing Under Pressure*.

It is not a difficult concept to understand. The speaker who suddenly loses it during a lecture, the model who abruptly seems incapable of taking a few steps on the ramp, the brilliant student who cannot remember his physics formula during an exam – we are familiar with them. "Choking is a suboptimal performance, not just poor performance. It's a performance that is inferior to what you can do and have done in the past and occurs when you feel the pressure to get everything right," according to Beilock.

Tension leads to mistakes

And that sums up the performance of an Indian team that had depth in batting, variety in bowling, yet played like a team that had lost self-confidence. When you are anxious or nervous, you tense up, and that leads to mistakes.

Starting the bowling with full tosses is a symptom of this, as were the two early catches put down by Shafali Verma and Rajeshwari Gayakwad – catches these fielders would have taken smilingly on another day. But that is sport! The real difference between the teams was in the level of fitness. Australia were far fitter, quicker, recovered better and took some terrific catches.

India did enough to suggest that they are future world champions. Two things need to fall into place, though. This column has been suggesting for a while now that the cricket board needs to seriously consider a Women's IPL. As Melbourne showed, create the excitement and the crowds will come.

India's men haven't won the T20 World title since the IPL was introduced in 2008, so you could point at that and say this is being too facile. But the women need more match practice, and better competition that the entry of players from the top teams promise.

The second issue to be looked at is appointing a psychologist. Modern teams have specialist coaches in the physical aspects of the game – bowling, batting, fielding, fitness. They need to have one who specialises in an equally important aspect – the mental.

Playing a final before a huge audience against a top team is its own pressure even before a ball is bowled. Even a team as experienced as the men's at the 2003 World Cup choked under that kind of pressure.

India have a fabulous women's team. It needs better support from the authorities. Women's contracts need to be looked at afresh. But its not just the money. We need to look no farther than Australia for guidance.

The Australian model

Last year Australia announced a "parental leave policy". Players are eligible for 12 months' paid parental leave and are guaranteed a contract extension for the following contract year. Also, partners of players who give birth are entitled to three weeks' paid leave.

There's more. Once a player returns after giving birth, travel support is provided for primary carers, including flights, accommodation and other travel expenses. This, till the child is four.

World champions evolve when we care.

Vikas and Simranjit make final

Panghal, Mary Kom, Pooja, Ashish and Lovlina take bronze

BOXING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AMMAN

A resolute Vikas Krishan (69kg) and Simranjit Kaur (60kg) advanced to the final with impressive victories but M.C. Mary Kom (51kg), Amit Panghal (52kg), Lovlina Borgohain (69kg), Pooja Rani (75kg) and Ashish Kumar (75kg) signed off with bronze medals at the Asian Olympic Qualifiers here on Tuesday.

All the seven have secured tickets to Tokyo.

Vikas fought with a cut sustained just below his left eyebrow before claiming a split decision victory over second seed Ablaikhan Zhussupov of Kazakhstan, a two-time World bronze-medallist.

Sachin still in fray

Sachin Kumar (81 kg) beat Manh Cuong Nguyen of Vietnam 4-1 in the first of his two box-off bouts to keep India in the hunt for its highest-ever Olympic quota haul.

However, in a major disappointment, six-time World champion Mary Kom lost to China's Chang Yuan, a former Youth Olympics champion, 4-1.

Also bowing out with a bronze was world silver-medallist and top seed Panghal, who went down to Hu Jianguan of China in a split decision.

Earlier, two-time World bronze-medallist and second seed Lovlina lost to third seed and 2018 World silver-medallist Gu Hong of China 5-0.

The results (semifinals): Men: 52kg: Hu Jianguan (Chn) bt Amit Panghal; **69kg:** Vikas Krishan bt Ablaikhan Zhussupov (Kaz); **75kg:** Eumir Marcial (Phi) bt Ashish Kumar.

Women: 51kg: Yuan Chang (Chn) bt M.C. Mary Kom; **60kg:** Simranjit Kaur bt Shih-Yi Wu (Tpe); **69kg:** Gu Hong (Chn) bt Lovlina Borgohain; **75kg:** Qian Li (Chn) bt Pooja Rani.

Getting through: Vikas Krishan used his jabs effectively to prevail over Kazakhstan's Ablaikhan Zhussupov. ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

TV PICKS

NBA: Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 5.30 a.m.
Ranji Trophy: Final, day three, Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 9.30 a.m.
All-England badminton championships: Star Sports 3, 2.30 p.m.
Bangladesh vs Zimbabwe: 2nd T20I, SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 5.30 p.m.
Legends World T20 Series: South Africa vs West Indies, Colors Cineplex (SD & HD), 7 p.m.
Champions League: Sony Ten 1 & Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 1.30 a.m. (Thursday)

IN BRIEF

Murray hands Bucks third straight defeat

LOS ANGELES

Jamal Murray scored 21 points as Denver Nuggets sent Milwaukee Bucks tumbling to a third straight defeat with a 109-95 victory on Monday.

The results: Hawks 143 bt Hornets 138 (OT); Nuggets 109 bt Bucks 95; Raptors 101 bt Jazz 92. AGENCIES

Ghosal stuns Rosner, makes last eight

LONDON

Saurav Ghosal stunned fifth seed Simon Rosner of Germany 13-11, 7-11, 11-4 and entered the quarterfinals of the St. James Place Canary Wharf Squash Classic, a PSA World Tour Gold event here late on Monday.

Vardy not ruling out England return

LONDON

Leicester City striker Jamie Vardy refused to rule out a return to the England side for Euro 2020 with first-choices Harry Kane and Marcus Rashford nursing injuries, but the 33-year-old said he had not discussed it with national coach Gareth Southgate. "Who knows? Gareth and I both agreed the door would still be open for whatever reason and then we would sit down and have a talk about it (if needed)." REUTERS

Abdumalik holds Harika

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LAUSANNE

Indian Grandmaster D. Harika was held to a draw by Zhansaya Abdumalik of Kazakhstan in the seventh round of the FIDE Women's Grand Prix chess tournament here. She remained on four points, half a point behind two Russians.

The results: (seventh round):

D. Harika 4 drew with Zhansaya Abdumalik (Kaz) 4; Alexandra Kosteniuk (Rus) 2 lost to Anna Muzychuk (Ukr) 4; Alexandra Goryachkina (Rus) 4.5 drew with Mariya Muzychuk (Ukr) 3.5; Nana Dzagnidze (Geo) 4 drew with Pia Cramling (Swe) 3.5 Ju Wenjun (Chn) 3 drew with Marie Sebag (Fra) 2.5; Alena Kashlinskaya (Rus) 4.5 drew with Antoneta Stefanova (Bul) 2.5.

Akbar Travels in last four

MUMBAI: Akbar Travels (Kerala) recorded a 2-1 win against Mumbai United in the quarterfinal of the 3rd late Shri Vishwanath Anchan Memorial Veterans Football tournament at the KSA ground, Cross Maidan.

The results (quarterfinals):

Akbar Travels 2 (K.T. Asahraf, P. Shibumon) bt Mumbai United 1 (Glen Moraes).

Central Railway 3 (Ishrat Kamal, Aziz Qureshi, Chirag Shaikh) bt Xaverites SC (Vile Parle) 1 (Lawrence Pereira).

Bagan regains I-League title in style

Diawara's spectacular strike does the trick; matches Dempo SC's record

AMITABHA DAS SHARMA
KALYANI

Babacar Diawara's spectacular 80th-minute finish ensured Mohun Bagan's crowning glory moment in the I-League at the Kalyani Stadium here on Tuesday. With the clash against Aizawl FC seemingly headed for a tame draw, Diawara's winner ensured the full three points took Bagan's tally to an unassailable 39 from 16 matches.

Bagan thus matched Dempo SC's record – set in the 2009-10 season – of claiming the league title with four rounds to spare. If the NFL – the previous version of the league – and I-League are considered together then Bagan has also equalled Dempo's tally of five titles. Dempo has three I-League and two NFL crowns while Bagan collected its second I-League title to add to the three NFL titles won previously.

Bagan, which will play in the ISL from next season having being acquired by ATK this year, thus made its last I-League season memorable.

Champs: Mohun Bagan made it a memorable final season in the I-League when it regained the title with four rounds to spare. ▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Drab affair

The first half was a drab affair with neither opponent showing enough attacking intent.

The possession-based football that Bagan mastered under its Spanish coach Kibu Vicuna this season was largely absent as the host lacked the initiative to break into the opposition defence.

Aizawl FC, meanwhile, did a fairly good job in defence employing two towering centre-backs – Ghanaian Joseph Adjei and Ugandan Juuko Richard – whose strong physical presence posed a big challenge for Bagan's attackers.

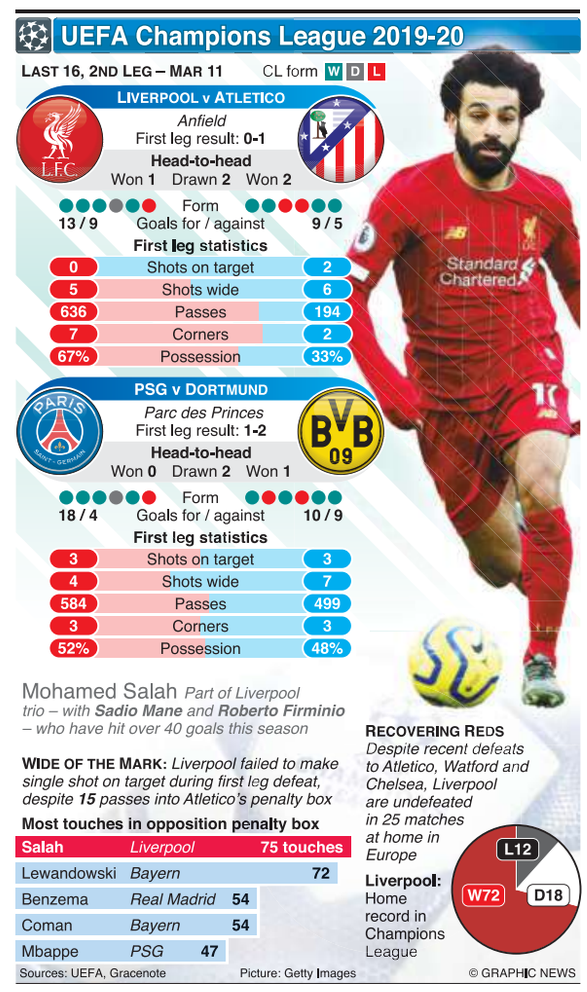
Aizawl, coached by Stanly Rozario, played the right game with regular counter-attacks that detained the host from going all out.

Good chance

Bagan created a good chance in the last minute of the opening half when Diawara released Tajikistan winger Komron Tursunov unmarked inside the box. The latter, however, failed to keep send attempt on target.

Bagan continued to struggle in the second half seeing most of its attacks fizzle out before the Aizawl FC box.

After a number of failed opportunities, emerging especially from set-piece situations, play-maker Joseba Beitia managed to create the opening that was finished brilliantly by Diawara. With this the Senegalese striker scored his 10th goal in 12 matches to become Bagan's top scorer this term.



CCFC motivated to do something special

Head coach Nawas says it's eager to do well against Maziya Sports & Recreation

AFC CUP

K. KEERTHIVASAN
CHENNAI

Chennai City FC (CCFC) hasn't had a good run in the I-League this season. However, that is not the team's concern now.

The focus is on its maiden AFC Cup campaign against Male-based Maldives team – Maziya Sports & Recreation – to be played at the Nehru Stadium here on Wednesday.

While CCFC qualified for the AFC Cup as the I-League champion last season, Maziya made it by winning the playoffs against Bengaluru FC (BFC) 4-3 on penalties after the two-leg contest ended 4-4 on aggregate.

CCFC head coach Akbar Nawas said his team was more than eager to prove itself.

"We are proud to be participating [in AFC Cup], and being the only Indian team, we are motivated to do something special.

The drill: Chennai City FC players hone their skills at a practice session in Chennai on Tuesday. ▪R. RAGU

Respect for opponent

"We respect them [Maziya] as they beat BFC, which is a competitive team. We can't underestimate them," he said at an interaction on Tuesday.

CCFC is coming back to Chennai after playing in the I-League for one season in 2016-17 before shifting base to Coimbatore in 2018-19.

Nawas felt playing here would be a big motivation.

"Everybody is excited to play their first AFC group game because we are playing in Chennai's Nehru stadium.

"It's a good motivation. We are looking forward to it," he said. Maziya's head coach Marjan Sekulovski said the team was prepared and will go for full points.

"It is our first game in the group stage. It will be difficult and [moreover] we don't know the strength of all the teams. [But] we always we play to win," he said.

Dismal record

Maziya is no stranger to Indian clubs in the AFC Cup. It has played Mohun Bagan and BFC six times across three seasons, but has lost five times.

With four teams in Group-E, including Bashundhara Kings (Bangladesh) and TC Sports Club (Maldives), every side will play three matches each at home and away. The top two will progress to the round-of-32.

Having not met earlier, both CCFC and Maziya will fancy their chances.

Leicester blanks Aston Villa

Vardy ends goal drought to become the league's top-scorer

EURO LEAGUES

AGENCIES
LONDON

Leicester City's Jamie Vardy ended his long scoring drought with two goals after coming off the bench as it returned to winning ways with a 4-0 drubbing of Premier League struggler Aston Villa at the King Power Stadium on Monday.

Leicester's goal-machine Vardy had not found the net since December but converted a penalty just past the hour to double Leicester's lead shortly after replacing Kelechi Iheanacho.

Harvey Barnes had opened the scoring before half-time after a dreadful misjudgement by Villa 'keeper Pepe Reina.

Vardy struck again after 79 minutes to take his league tally to 19 goals for the season before Barnes claimed his second.

Back in form: Jamie Vardy came off the bench to pump in two goals for Leicester City against Aston Villa. ▪AFP

It was the Foxes first win in five league games, ending a slump that had put its top-four place and hopes of qualifying for Champions League football next season in peril.

Caputo shines

Francesco Caputo scored a double as Sassuolo beat Brescia 3-0 on Monday in a match which could be the last in Serie A for a month because of the coronavirus epidemic. In an empty Mapei Stadium in Reggio Emilia, Caputo opened the scoring just before half time off a Gregoire Defrel cross. He added a second on the hour to bring his tally this season to 13 goals.

The results: Premier League: Leicester 4 (Barnes 40, 85, Vardy 63-pen, 79) bt Aston Villa 0.

Serie A: Sassuolo 3 (Caputo 45, 61, Boga 75) bt Brescia 0.

Sindhu looks to overturn a run of poor form

Seven Indians withdraw owing to coronavirus concerns

ALL-ENGLAND

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BIRMINGHAM

Undeterred by the coronavirus outbreak, Indian shuttlers will continue to chase glory at the All-England Championships beginning here on Wednesday, with reigning World champion P.V. Sindhu spearheading the campaign.

The season's first Super 1000 event witnessed a dramatic build-up in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak. In the United Kingdom, the number of cases has gone past 300 with five deaths so far.

Seven Indians, including H.S. Prannoy and World No. 10 men's doubles pair of Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, have withdrawn from the All-England.

The $1,100,000 BWF world tour event offers 12,000 ranking points to the winner and with Olympic qualification on the line, most of the top players will be seen in action at the Arena Birmingham.

While Sindhu, who is almost assured of an Olympic berth, will look to end a nearly two-decade-old title jinx at the All-England, former silver medallist Saina Nehwal and K. Srikanth will eye valuable points to squeeze inside the top 16 before the deadline for Olympic qualification ends on April 28.

Chief National coach P. Gopi Chand was the last Indian to win the championship, in 2001. Sindhu will look to overturn a run of recent poor finishes and emulate her mentor with the top medal.

World No. 6 Sindhu, who had reached the 2018 semifinals, will need to cut down on unforced errors and strengthen her defence as she opens against USA's Beiwen Zhang.

The 24-year-old is expected to take on Korea's Sung Ji Hyun if she crosses the opening hurdle.

Upbeat: P.V. Sindhu will be hoping to emulate mentor Gopi Chand and claim a maiden title at the All-England championships. ▪FILE PHOTO: NAGARA GOPAL

Langer in search of 'finisher' like Dhoni

CRICKET

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MELBOURNE

Australia's head coach Justin Langer says his team is desperately looking for a finisher in the mould of Mahendra Singh Dhoni or Michael Bevan in limited overs cricket.

The three-match ODI series against New Zealand, beginning on March 13, provides Australia an opportunity to test the depth in its middle order, and potentially hone in on batsmen who could fill the 'finisher' role.

"We've been fortunate in the past with a Mike Hussey or a Michael Bevan who are masters at it.

Master

M.S. Dhoni is a master of it, Jos Buttler has been brilliant at it for England," Langer was quoted as saying by ICC.

"What I've learned is everyone in the world is looking for it," he added.

Dhoni has won India innumerable matches from seemingly hopeless positions, and so have the likes of Bevan and Hussey.

Langer feels it is the right time for the potential candidates to seal the spot. The challenge starts with the upcoming ODIs against New Zealand.

"So it's a role that's there for someone to grab hold of," said Langer.

"No one at this stage has absolutely secured it, have they?

"But there are good opportunities there for someone to do that," he added.

Over the last year, as many as 13 batsmen have occupied positions 4-7 for Australia in ODIs, with nine different batsmen tried out at No.6.

M.S. Dhoni...fantastic finisher ▪FILE PHOTO: K.R. DEEPAK

Put the smile back, urges Binotto

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MELBOURNE

Ferrari Formula One boss Mattia Binotto on Tuesday urged his team to "put a smile on people's faces" at the Australian Grand Prix as Italy went into lockdown to combat coronavirus.

"At a difficult time for Italy and the world as a whole, as part of a global sport, it is our obligation to try and put a smile on people's faces as they prepare to watch the first race of the season," he said.

Morkel predicts 2-1 win for India

Boucher's guidance will fire up Proteas, says former all-rounder

SHAYAN ACHARYA
MUMBAI

As India gears up for a three-match One-Day International series against South Africa, starting on Thursday, former Proteas bowling all-rounder Albie Morkel predicts a 2-1 win for the home side.

However, he is confident that under new head coach Mark Boucher, South Africa will play some competitive cricket.

Tough task

"Even if a team is in top form, beating India in India is almost impossible. It's gonna be a tough series for them. India will win it 2-1, but South Africa should at least compete," Morkel told *Sportstar*.

In the city for the UnAcademy Road Safety World Series, representing South Africa Legends, Morkel said the recent ODI series win against Australia had helped the South Africans gain confidence. "We have got some young, exciting guys. Our batting is coming through and there are some young fast bowlers. International cricket is a tough place to learn your trade.

Albie Morkel. ▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

" So, it can also be to our advantage long-term," said Morkel, who quit international cricket last year.

"If you're a youngster, you just go out there and play. Whereas, more senior players might feel a bit more responsibility on their shoulders, and get tied up.

"We've got a good mix. Faf is back, but it's unfortunate that Rabada is injured. He would have added lot to our attack," he said.

Conducive conditions

Morkel also believes the conditions in Dharamsala and Kolkata will suit the visiting side, whereas Lucknow – which will host the second ODI – maythrow up challenges.

Having played in India in the past, Morkel knows the conditions well. "White-ball cricket is a completely different game.

"Normally, in India, the wickets are fantastic for white-ball cricket. The fields are small, and there are high-scoring games.

"That suits the South Africans style of play. That's why it's gonna be a competitive series," he stated.

First thing we need to change are the cars: Aditya

SPORTS REPORTER
CHENNAI

The co-founder of the X1 racing league, Indian racer Aditya Patel said new cars would be run in the upcoming season and that one round, as street racing, might be held at a different venue if the Buddh International Circuit (BIC) is unavailable.

BIC and Madras Motor Race Track (MMRT) hosted the league's inaugural season last year. Mechanical issues were reported with the cars used last season.

"We've kind of dissected everything, and realised the first thing we need to change are the cars. We are speaking to multiple people in India and abroad. I think, by the end of next month, we should have an idea [as to] in which direction we are going," he said on the sidelines of the CII Tamil Nadu Fitness & Sports Summit 2020 at the Taj Coromandel here on Tuesday.

Aditya Patel and Vijay Shankar. ▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"They [the cars] were tested. They came from abroad, actually. And that guy is reputed to have run these cars for many years. He has one of the most successful teams. But we're still waiting for the final report to come, as to what the issues with the cars were.

"We're just waiting for the BIC to come back with their verdict by the end of this month. Because, they have some issues."