



# Divisional Commissioner serves show-cause notices to Deputy Directors

**Flaws in Gauthan of village Chandkhuri**

**Central Chronicle News**

**Bhilai, Jan 19:** Divisional Commissioner Mahadev Kawre issued show-cause notices to Deputy Director of Agriculture Department and Deputy Director of Livestock Development Department. Along with this, he also issued notice to ARO of Gauthan of village Chandkhuri. It needs to be mentioned here that on Tuesday, the Divisional Commissioner had inspected Chandkhuri Gauthan and found that the register / records were not being maintained properly.

Taking the flaws into cognizance, he issued notice to the concerned ARO. He also issued notices to the Deputy Directors and asked them to explain why they did not

monitor the matter.

During the visit at Chandkhuri Gauthan, the Divisional Commissioner had questioned about the number of animals visiting the Gauthan and the status of fodder production. When he did not get satisfactory reply, he had said that monitoring of Gauthan is not being done regularly by the departmental officers.

He said that NGGB is the most ambitious scheme of the government and is the backbone of rural development. Hence the works being done under this scheme should be monitored regularly. At the same time, the officials should examine that all the concerned registers / records are being updated and maintained properly.

Cow dung procurement should continue and Gauthans shall become a means of livelihood activities. The Divisional



Commissioner has said that according to the expectations of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, Gauthan should become self-supporting and become the center of livelihood activities. For this purpose, work will have to be done on a war footing. He said that the Gauthans will be reviewed regularly.

The status of fodder production, Godhan Nyay Yojna and other schemes will be reviewed. The offi-

cers should keep monitoring the activities continuously so that the villagers can get the maximum benefits of the scheme.

Divisional Commissioner had also oversaw the production activities going on here and said that according to the instructions given by the government, register / record entries must be made and innovative ideas should be implemented. Divisional

Commissioner has issued notices to the Deputy Director of Agriculture, Suresh Singh Rajput and the Deputy Director of the Animal Department, Dr MK Chawla. Notice has also been served to Rural Agricultural Extension Officer Archana Chakhiyar.

After serving the show cause notices, Divisional Commissioner commented that these schemes are public welfare schemes of the government. Any kind of negligence with these schemes will not be accepted. Due to these schemes, the economic condition of rural areas is developing and women are also getting employment through self-help groups.

Women are becoming an integral part of women empowerment in the state. Therefore, it is necessary that the welfare schemes of the government take shape in a positive direction.

# Ore Handling Plant B creates new record in Wagon Unloading

**Central Chronicle News**

**Bhilai, Jan 19:** SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant's Ore Handling Plant B (OHP-B) has added another feather to its cap by creating a new record of ever best unloading of 88 BOXNS wagons in a record time surpassing the previous best record of 74 wagons. This could be achieved under challenging circumstances of different rakes being placed at different intervals of time.

The feat could not be possible without the dedication, sincere hard working and commitment of team comprising of Jagdish Chandra Padhi, OCT and Tirupati Rao, OCT, and Satish Kumar, Manager under the guidance of AR Mandal, DGM under the excellence leadership of BL Chandwani,



CGM, OHP,

BL Chandwani, CGM, OHP gave away letters of appreciation to Jagdish Chandra Padhi, OCT and Tirupati Rao, OCT for their role in achieving this feat. Director I/c BSP, Anirban Dasgupta congratulated the team of

OHP B and associated departments for their performance.

Congratulating the entire team of OHP, Chandwani said credit for the shift record of wagon unloading goes to strategic planning and better execution of jobs.

# Monetary encouragement provided to meritorious Divyangs



**Central Chronicle News**

**Bhilai, Jan 19:** On Wednesday, Collector Dr Sarveshwar Narendra Bhure provided monetary encouragement to the

meritorious Divyangs. He handed over a cheque of Rs 5000 to Mansi Mishra for her excellent performance in class 12th exam.

A cheque of Rs 30000 was handed over to Hari



Shankar Sahu for qualifying the Mains Exam of Chhattisgarh Public Service Commission.

On the occasion, Collector Dr Sarveshwar Narendra Bhure congratulated both the beneficiar-

ies and wished them a bright future ahead. Deputy Director of Social Welfare Department, Donar Prasad Thakur was also present.

# Mayor Neeraj expresses displeasure over delay in development works

**Instructs to complete the construction works like toilet, Anganwadi and school within the prescribed limit at review meeting**

**Central Chronicle News**

**Bhilai, Jan 19:** Mayor Neeraj Pal took a review meeting of the development works going on in the area under Bhilai Municipal Corporation limits. At the meeting he made it clear that negligence in works related to public will not be tolerated. He instructed the officers to visit the field and get completed the development work within the time limit.

In the review meeting, the Mayor reviewed the progress of approved works in Zone 03 Mother



Teresa Nagar and Zone 04 Khursipar. The Mayor sought update directly from the Zone Commissioner, Assistant Engineers and Sub Engineers of both the zones. He instructed to complete the works announced by the Chief

Minister on top priority with special impetus on quality. He discussed in detail the major works going on in Zone 03 and 04 area and expressed his displeasure over the works that have not yet been started even after getting the approval and asked the offi-

cial to visit the field and get the work done and report on the progress. He directed to complete the works of public convenience like schools, toilets, Anganwadi within the stipulated time frame.

In the meeting, Speaker Girwar Bunty Sahu, MIC member and Public Works Department in-charge Ekansh Banchole, Superintending Engineer Deepak Joshi, Zone Commissioner Yesha Lahare and Engineer DK Verma, Sanjay Bagde and other employees were present.

# 90 Patwaris reshuffled in Durg

**Bhilai, Jan 19:**

On Wednesday, transfer orders were issued to 90 Patwaris of the district. They have been transferred and posted to other 'patwari halkas' of the district.

For the purpose of tightening the administrative works, Durg Collector Dr Sarveshwar Narendra Bhure had given instructions to the Sub-Divisional Officers. Accordingly, 34 patwaris have been reshuffled in Patan sub-division, 27 in Durg sub-division and 29 in Dhamdha sub-division.

It needs to be men-

tioned here that for the smooth conduct of the works, the state government had issued instructions to tighten up the administrative structure. Accordingly, all the SDMs have issued the transfer / posting order.

The District Collector is working continuously to ensure that the administrative works are being carried out smoothly and with transparency as per the intention of the government.

In the recent past, he inspected and reviewed the status of revenue works in all the tehsils. He reviewed the pend-

ing cases and also examined the status of disposal of applications.

Later, he directed all the SDMs to review the works of the 'Patwari Halkas' and take actions for ensuring proper arrangements to ensure smooth functioning of the administration.

An order in this regard has been issued on Wednesday. It could be recollected here that Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel has directed the officers to take immediate action to resolve the revenue related matters. Accordingly, monitoring is being done continuously to resolve the cases in Durg district.

# Slum dwellers seek rehabilitation before eviction

**Central Chronicle News**

**Bhilai, Jan 19:** Eviction of slum dwellers in Bhilai Charoda area is gradually becoming a matter of great concern. A number of families have settled on railway land in this area. Few days ago, the railway administration has issued notices to these slum dwellers.

All these families are from weaker sections and most of them are labourers. Durg MP Vijay Baghel has also intervened into the matter and raised the demand of rehabilitation of the affected family before eviction. In this regard, MP Baghel has written a letter to the Union Railway Minister and has requested him for not evicting the poor families without proper rehabilitation.

A large number of af-



ected people led by the Corporators of Municipal Corporation Bhilai Charoda met MP Vijay Baghel at his residence on Wednesday. These families reside in slums on railway land for the last 50 years in Bhilai Charoda's ward number 34 and 35 and G Cabin. The Corporators apprised the MP about the problems faced by the af-

ected families. All of them are from weaker sections and the Railways has issued notices to remove their hutments.

The local Corporators informed MP Baghel that people from weaker sections have settled in that area and have constructed huts and kutchha houses. No facility has ever been provided to these people

by the railway administration. However, the facilities of electricity, road, water, sanitation are being continuously provided in these wards by the municipal corporation. This area has developed after receiving the facilities from the Municipal Corporation.

Public representatives said that now these affected have been served notice

by the railway administration to remove their possession within 21 days and have warned of forced eviction thereafter. In such a situation, all these affected people have to deal with a lot of mental stress. They have no alternative place to reside. The school going children and women of these families will be badly affected from the forced eviction.

BCMC Corporator Nandni Jangde, Corporator Chandra Prakash Pandey and Corporator Lalit Yadav explained the woes of the people to MP Vijay Baghel. He has assured the Corporators to write a letter to the Union Railway Minister to apprise him about this matter and not to evict the poor families from the railway land without any proper rehabilitation.

# Bhilai Mayor inaugurates the fourth Dhanwantri Medical Store in city

**Central Chronicle News**

**Bhilai, Jan 19:** Bhilai Mayor Neeraj Pal on Wednesday inaugurated the fourth Dhanwantri Medical Store in the city by cutting the ribbon. He also became the first customer of the store by purchasing multivitamin tablets immediately after inaugurating the medical store.

Also present at the inaugural ceremony were Commissioner Prakash Surve, Speaker Girwar Bunty Sahu and Additional Commissioner Ashok Dwivedi and Superintending Engineer in-charge Deepak Kumar Joshi.

The mayor inquired

about the stock of medicines in the medical store. The store also had available cosmetic and herbal as well as other essential items. The fourth in the series of the Dhanwantri medical store in the city has been opened on Road No 18 near Anganwadi.

Earlier, the generic medical stores have been opened at Subhash Market Medical Line, Bhagwa Chowk Kurud and Mother's Market Power House in the city. These were inaugurated virtually by Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel.

In view of the demand for cheap and good quality medicines and to promote health schemes in the city, the Mayor on Wednesday



inaugurated another medical store.

Here it needs to mention that earlier on medi-

cines had to be purchased from medical stores in market at a much higher price, but now people are

getting medicines at a discount of about 55 percent, which includes both generic and branded medi-

icines.

Among those present at the inauguration were MiC members Ekansh Banchole, Sandeep Nirankari, Lalchand Verma, Aditya Singh, Neha Sahu, Mannan Ghaffar Khan, Rita Singh Gera, Mother Teresa Nagar Zone President Santosh Nath Singh Jalandhar, Councillor Satyadevi Jaiswal and Engineer Salman. On behalf of the corporation officials zone commissioner Yesha Lahare, executive engineer DK Verma, Assistant Engineer RK Sahu and Krishna Jangel, MS Sori, Sudama Parganiha and other officers/employees were present.

# Inspects Baikunthdham Hospital

Mayor Neeraj Pal also reached the 10-bed Baikunthdham Hospital after the launch of the medical store along with the MIC members. He took information about the mega vaccination campaign from the in-charge of Baikunthdham Hospital, Geeta Sinha. He also discussed things with the beneficiaries who had come to the hospital for vaccination. He also took details of the availability of oxygen in case of emergency, facility of Covid test and medicines. Dr Sinha explained in detail all the arrangements that have been made to fight Covid. Giving information about the launch of Shree Dhanwantri Yojna nearby, the Mayor said that in order to get cheap and high quality medicines, the people coming to the hospital should be motivated to buy medicines in the generic medical store, so that more and more people can be benefited from the scheme. He also made available the list of medicines of Dhanwantri Generic Medical Store to the hospital management.







## BRIEF

### Flag

**Mumbai:** A 31-year-old mentally unstable man was arrested for allegedly setting afire a BJP flag in Dadar in Mumbai. The incident took place at Agar Bazar in Dadar West at around 7 am and police was alerted by passersby. He was arrested under section 435 (mischief by fire or explosives) of the IPC and a probe has found the person is mentally unstable, the official informed.

### Lifer

**Baripada:** A court in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district sentenced a 32-year-old man to life imprisonment for killing a woman on the suspicion of being a witch eight years ago. Baripada Additional Sessions Judge Prabir Choudhary also imposed a fine of Rs 5,000 on the convict, Kanda Majhi. On Dec 14, 2014, Majhi killed Srimati Marandi with a sharp weapon near village in Baisinga as he suspected that she was practising witchcraft.

### Demolished

**Jammu:** The Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) demolished 10 illegally raised structures on footpaths outside the Government Medical College (GMC) hospital here. The anti-encroachment drive near the GMC and Chest Disease hospital in the heart of the city was conducted under the instructions of Commissioner, JMC, Avny Lavasa to clear the footpath and roadside obstructions, he said.

### Safety

**New Delhi:** The Jawaharlal Nehru University Teachers' Association (JNUTA) and the students' union accused the varsity administration of neglecting campus safety after a PhD student was allegedly molested there. They alleged that there has been a string of security lapses on the campus and pointed out that the accused in the January 2020 attack on teachers and students are yet to be arrested.

### Held

**Gurugram:** Two more members of a gang involved in stealing and trafficking infants were arrested, and a six-month-old girl child was rescued from them. With these arrests, the police have nabbed 13 people of the gang. The arrested were identified as Anand and Baby, residents of Alwar in Rajasthan. While Baby used to steal infants and sell them to Anand, the latter would also 'purchase' children from the poor and labourers, police said.

### Approved

**New Delhi:** The Delhi Development Authority's budget for 2022-23 was approved with allocations being made for ongoing housing projects, key civic infrastructure works and for Ph-IV of the Delhi Metro. The budget with an annual outlay of Rs 7,933 crore — with receipts being projected at Rs 7,943 crore — was approved in an online meeting of the Authority, chaired by Lt Governor Anil Bajjal, also the chairman of the DDA.

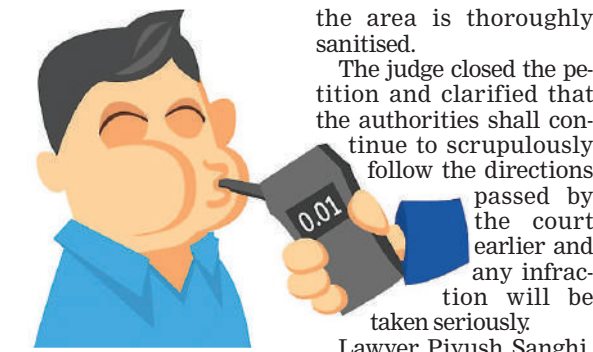
## HC refuses plea by ATCs concerning breath analyser tests

**Board had recommended that one machine would be used per person**

**New Delhi, Jan 19 (PTI):**

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday refused to entertain a petition by Air Traffic Controller (ATC) Guild India against the conduct of random breath analyser (BA) tests on five per cent of the controllers on duty at the airports amid the ongoing covid pandemic.

Justice V Kameswar Rao, who said that he was not inclined to interfere with the procedure, noted that not more than six persons are to be tested in an hour, and even in big airports, five per cent of ATCs comes down to only three to four persons. Everyone must be tested...



(It takes) one minute for the test. In six minutes (out of an hour) everyone is through. I am not inclined, the judge said. I do not see any reason to entertain the writ petition, the judge said.

Advocate Anjana Gosain, appearing for the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), submitted that BA tests were being conducted in accordance with the earlier directions passed by the court and after each test,

the area is thoroughly sanitised.

The judge closed the petition and clarified that the authorities shall continue to scrupulously follow the directions passed by the court earlier and any infraction will be taken seriously.

Lawyer Piyush Sanghi, appearing for the petitioner Association, contended that as per the earlier order passed the court, only two per cent of the ATCs can be allowed to take the BA test at random, and thus the aviation authority cannot increase the number to five per cent at a time when there is a surge in COVID-19 cases.

He also claimed that the BA test was being held in a closed area which is also used for airport ground staff and cabin crew.

## BJP walking on thin ice in Bengal amid infighting, bickerings

**Kolkata, Jan 19 (PTI):**

Plagued by infighting and exodus, the West Bengal BJP, which is still licking its wounds after the assembly poll defeat, is staring at bleak prospects in the state as senior leaders engage in feud off and on social media, leaving little time for the party's growth. Churnings in the Bengal BJP had started after the recent organisational revamp, with several senior leaders and party legislators openly criticising the top brass over its decisions.

All damage control efforts seem to be hitting the wall of late as the house stands divided. "Yes, there have been some issues, few people are not happy... but



**BJP MLA Lakshan Ghorui during a blanket distribution function in Durgapur on Wednesday.**

we are hopeful that the problems will be sorted out very soon," BJP state spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya said. Sources in the BJP said that the party, which had been fighting hard to keep

its flock together after former union minister Babul Supriyo and five legislators, including its national vice president Mukul Roy, switched over to the TMC, is facing an "inner-party rebellion" as leaders an-

## MP decides to slash booze rates at airports, selected shops



**A liquor retailer in Bhopal.**

**Bhopal, Jan 19 (PTI):** In the new Excise Policy for the next Financial Year, the BJP government in Madhya Pradesh has decided to allow the sale of liquor at all airports in the state and select supermarkets in four big cities, and issue home bar licenses to those earning Rs one crore or more annually. In the Excise Policy 2022-23, approved by the state Cabinet, the government also decided to

slash retail prices of liquor by 20 per cent in a bid to "make them practical". Explaining the rationale behind the proposed cut in rates of alcohol, an official said that the prices will become competitive with neighbouring states. Meanwhile, the opposition Congress took a swipe saying the state government is not willing to provide any relief to common people by slashing

**MPCC president Kamal Nath slammed state government**

taxes on fuel but is reducing the prices of liquor. The Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan also cleared the Madhya Pradesh Heritage (Traditional) Liquor Policy. Under the new Excise Policy, counters selling liquor can be opened at all the airports in MP while licenses for (opening) such outlets can now be issued in select supermarkets in Indore, Bhopal, Jabalpur and Gwalior at a fixed fee, an official statement said. Now, a home bar license will be issued at an annual fee of Rs 50,000 to applicants with an annual individual income of Rs one crore or more, it said.

## AP Govt seeks donations to build school infra

**Amaravati, Jan 19 (PTI):**

The Andhra Pradesh government has decided to raise funds from donors, both national and international, as it urgently requires over Rs 6,300 crore to ramp up infrastructure in schools for implementing the National Education Policy-2020. Also, with its plan to get all the 44,500-plus government schools in the state affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education, requisite physical infrastructure needs to be built. There are 44,519 state-run schools in AP with 66,846 rooms at present. As per the infrastructure standards for foundation and foundation-plus schools and high schools, and also the norms of the CBSE, the total requirement of rooms in these schools is 1,15,472.



**A government school in Vizianagaram District, Andhra Pradesh.**

We need to build 48,626 additional rooms in these schools. An estimated Rs 6,321.38 crore is required for that. Hence, we have decided to seek donations from different quarters, a top official told PTI. A Government Order on the modalities of donation would be issued soon, he said. The government also requires a School Maintenance Fund of Rs

450 crore per annum but the amount is being deducted from the beneficiaries of Ammavodi freebie scheme at the rate of Rs 1,000 each. Under Ammavodi, the government has been paying Rs 15,000 each annually to about 44.5 lakh mothers for sending their kids to school. Since last year, the government has been crediting only Rs 14,000 each into the mothers' accounts

## VACCINATION VAN



**Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar flags off a COVID-19 vaccination van in Chandigarh on Wednesday.**

## Delhi Police asks Clubhouse app about organiser's details

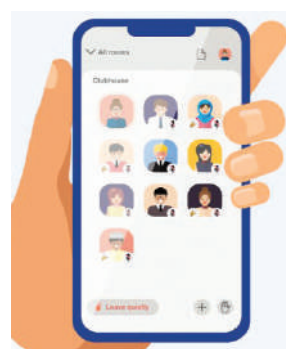
**Obscene comments against women case**

**New Delhi, Jan 19 (PTI):**

The Delhi Police on Wednesday wrote to Clubhouse app seeking details about the organiser of the alleged audio chat group in which some "obscene comments were made against Muslim women", official sources said.

The development comes a day after the Delhi Police's Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations unit which works under the supervision of Special Cell filed a FIR against the unknown persons in the matter.

The FIR was registered just hours after the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) issued a notice to



the Delhi Police demanding action against some people who made "obscene comments against Muslim women" on the app.

"A case has already been registered in the matter under relevant sections of Indian Penal Code. We have also written to

Clubhouse app seeking details about the organiser of the alleged audio chat group in which some "obscene comments were made against Muslim women" an official source said.

The sections include 153A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony), 295A (deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs) and 354 A (sexual harassment and punishment for sexual harassment), according to police.

## Bommai recovers from COVID, says decision on relaxing curbs likely

**Bengaluru, Jan 19 (PTI):**

Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Wednesday said his government will re-examine the COVID-19 curbs that are in place, and will take a decision regarding relaxation, including the weekend curfew on January 21.

The Chief Minister, who had tested positive for COVID on January 10, has resumed his day-to-day work from office, after recovery. "On Friday, I will hold a meeting with experts, and will re-examine the curbs that have been enforced," he said.

Speaking to reporters here, he said, "The COVID numbers are increasing, but it has not put a load on



**Karnataka CM Basavaraj Bommai working through video conferencing.**

hospitals with very less admissions, attention should be given to OPD (Outpatient Department), with all this, let's see what experts have to say."

Asked whether the weekend curfew will be withdrawn, the CM main-

taind that all those things will be decided after consulting the experts and going through their report. He said based on the trends in different countries and states, experts have estimated that the cases may

peak in the state by January end and February first week.

To a question, why discussion on relaxing curbs when the cases are expected to peak, he said, "the general feeling that it (infection) is like a flu, and not much hospitalization is taking place, so day-to-day activities can be allowed by following COVID rules. Experts are examining it, they will place things before us on Friday. Following which we will make a decision."

With surge in cases, the Karnataka government had last week decided to extend the existing COVID curbs such as night curfew and the weekend curfew till the end of January.

## Vaccination team treks snowy mountains to reach villagers

**Srinagar, Jan 19 (AP):**

In a Himalayan village of Jammu and Kashmir, young health worker Masrat Farid packed her bag with vaccines on a frigid morning in January as strong winds swept snow through the air.

She is part of a team of health workers undertaking a door-to-door campaign in the region to deliver vaccine shots to teens and boosters to old people in remote mountain villages. "We have to fight the infection. We have to keep going," Farid said as she made her way through the knee-high snow in Gagageer, a hamlet lying between forests. Farid and her colleagues have vaccinated thousands in the last year, mostly in villages



**Safia Banoo, receives vaccine for COVID-19 from Masrat Farid of J&K health department, in Gagageer village.**

that they reach by trekking long distances across rugged countryside. But bone-chilling cold and snowy inhospitable terrain are not their only obstacles. Some residents are still vaccine-hesitant and winning

their trust is more difficult than braving the Himalayan winter. "Most young girls are hesitant, fueled by misinformation and mistrust," Farid said during a recent vaccination drive in a snow-covered mountain village.

BRIEF

Wildfires

Billings: The Biden administration plans to significantly expand efforts to stave off catastrophic wildfires that have torched areas of the US West by more aggressively thinning forests around areas called hotspots where nature and neighbourhoods collide.

Extends

Jerusalem: Israel has extended the detention of a Palestinian teenager with a rare neuromuscular disorder who has been held without charge for a year in what authorities refer to as administrative detention, his father said.

Test

Jerusalem: Israel said it has successfully tested a system designed to intercept ballistic missiles outside the earth's atmosphere. The Arrow Weapon System is part of an array of missile defenses Israel has developed in recent years to protect itself in any future conflict with arch-enemy Iran or regional militant groups, such as the Lebanese Hezbollah or the Palestinian Hamas.

Foiled

Waesaw: Poland's Border Guard authorities say that almost 600 attempts by migrants at crossing the border from Belarus have been foiled so far this year. The attempts have continued since their peak in the fall, but the number of registered tries has dropped significantly, to dozens a day from nearly a thousand a day in November.

Japan widens COVID curbs, including in Tokyo, as cases surge



A woman stands in front of a mask-clad lion statue outside a department store in Tokyo's Ginza district.

Tokyo, Jan 19 (AP):

The Japanese government will place Tokyo and a dozen other areas under new restrictions for COVID-19 effective Friday, allowing local leaders to shorten hours for eateries, as a surge in omicron cases threatens to paralyze society. A government-commissioned experts' panel on Wednesday approved a plan to put the 13

areas under a three-week restraint through Feb. 13, said Economy Revitalization Minister Daishiro Yamagiwa, who is also in charge of virus measures. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida is expected to officially announce the new measures at a government taskforce meeting later Wednesday. Japan has so far resisted the use of lockdowns to fight the pandemic and instead has

focused on requiring restaurants and bars to close early and not serve alcohol, and asking the public to wear masks and practice social distancing, as the government seeks to minimize damage to the economy. Japan had been gradually expanding social and business activity since an earlier wave of infections subsided in September, which experts say was largely due to the country's rapid progress in rolling out the initial two doses of vaccines.

But experts say breakthrough infections by the omicron variant are more common. The fast-spreading variant has caused a number of medical workers and others to self-isolate after testing positive or coming into close contact with someone who has. Sharply rising infections have already begun to paralyze hospitals, schools and other sectors in some areas.

Throwaway economy thwarting climate goals



An aerial view shows rubbish and waste left by fly-tippers in Blackburn, north west England.

Issue remains significant blind spot for governments

London, Jan 19 (AFP):

Countries are neglecting the massive impact of the "throwaway" economy on planet-warming emissions, according to research published Wednesday that calculated more than half a trillion tonnes of virgin materials have been consumed since

the 2015 Paris climate deal. From clothing to food, planes to buildings, research by the organisation Circle Economy estimates that 70 percent of greenhouse gas emissions are linked to the manufacturing and use of products. But in its annual report on the state of the world's

use of materials, researchers said national climate pledges to reduce emissions focus narrowly on fossil fuel use and ignore the mounting global appetite for stuff. Matthew Fraser, head of research at Circle Economy, said the report aimed to look beyond just fossil fuel use



An activist holds a sign reading "Argentine Sea Without Oil" during a demonstration against a project for offshore oil drilling off the coast of Mar del Plata, Argentina.

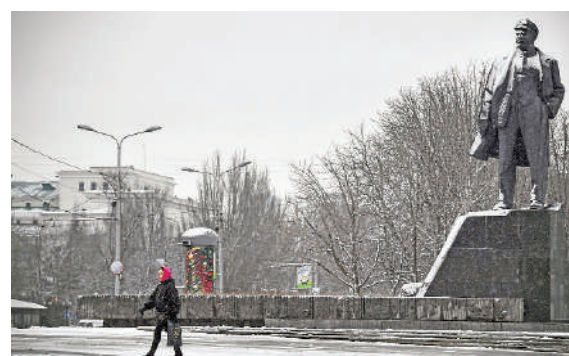
US, allies pledge unity on Russia, to do what isn't as clear

Action includes banning Russia from SWIFT banking system

Washington, Jan 19 (AP):

President Joe Biden has rallied European allies to pledge as one that they will take tough measures against Russia if it rolls troops into Ukraine. But when it comes to what exactly the United States and Europe are willing to do, the allies don't look as ringingly united.

Militarily, for example, the United States, Turkey and Britain have stood out for supplying or agreeing to supply anti-tank missiles, armed drones, naval warships and other weapons, along with money to help Ukraine build its defenses. But key ally Germany appears averse to any such direct military aid — so much so



A woman walks past statue of Lenin in Donetsk, the capital of self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic (PDR) in eastern Ukraine.

that a British military flight taking weapons to Ukraine on Monday flew around German airspace rather than taking the most direct route through it. While Biden has warned Russian President Vladimir Putin of economic consequences 'like none he's ever seen' if Russia invades Ukraine, some major European allies have demonstrated less enthusiasm for huge economic penalties, which could damage some European economies, or put in jeopardy the Russian natural gas Europeans need to stay warm this winter. During weeks of intense diplomacy, Russian leaders have dismissed the allies' pledge of a united stand against Russia. In reality, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov protested, it's the US calling the shots, the Europeans falling in line.

CHHATTISGARH STATE POWER TRANSMISSION COMPANY LIMITED, RAIPUR (A Government of Chhattisgarh Undertaking) (A Successor Company of CSEB)

PUBLIC NOTICE

In compliance to the provisions under Section 62 and 86(1) of the Electricity Act-2003 and Chhattisgarh State Electricity Regulatory Commission (Terms and Conditions for determination of tariff according to Multi-Year Tariff principles and Methodology and Procedure for determination of Expected revenue from Tariff and Charges) Regulations, 2021, Chhattisgarh State Power Transmission Company Limited (CSPTCL) has filed a petition (No-02 of 2022) for final True-up of FY-2020-21, Aggregate Revenue Requirement (ARR) for control period FY 2022-23 to FY 2024-25 and determination of Transmission Tariff proposal for FY 2022-23 before the Hon'ble Commission.

CSPTCL has requested to approve ARR of Rs.955.16 Cr. for true-up of FY 2020-21 and also requested to approve ARR of Rs. 1121.78Cr., 1256.83 Cr. & 1624.49 Cr. for FY 2022-23, FY 2023-24 & FY 2024-25 respectively.

Copies of the tariff petition are available at Chhattisgarh State Electricity Regulatory Commission's office, New Shanti Nagar, Raipur and at the office of the Chief Engineer(C&RA),CSPTCL, Danganiya, Raipur which can be purchased on any working day on payment of Rs.300/-& may also be obtained by post on payment of additional charge of Rs.50/-.

Persons intending to file objections / suggestions relating to the tariff proposals of CSPTCL may send the copies of objections / suggestions with documents and evidence in support thereof directly to Chief Engineer(C&RA). CSPTCL, Danganiya, Raipur and to Secretary, Chhattisgarh State Electricity Regulatory Commission's office, New Shanti Nagar, Raipur within 21 days of the date of publication of this notice. Advance copies of objections / comments may also be sent to CSPTCL at fax no - 0771-2574698 and to CSERC at fax no - 0771-4073553.

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY No.W/BSP/Homeo/22/BSP, Date: 18.01.2022. NOTIFICATION

Short notification is issued for Walk - In - Interview for Engagement of 02 Homeopathic Practitioners purely on contract basis for One Year, 01 Post for Bilaspur and 01 Post for Shahdol.

For more details i.e eligibility, qualification, age experience and other term and conditions may please log in to South East Central Railway website http://www.secr.indianrailways.gov.in. (About Us - Division/Workshop-Bilaspur-Personnel-Notification(Click) CPRI/10/314 For Sr. Divt. Personnel Officer/Bilaspur. f South East Central Railway @secrail

कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता, लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खाण्ड, कोण्डगांव जिला - कोण्डगांव (छ.ग.) (Phone no. 07786 - 296071, Email id - eekon-phe-cg@gov.in)

--: ई-प्रोक्चोरमेंट निविदा सूचना :-

छत्तीसगढ़ की राज्यपाल की ओर से जिला कोण्डगांव में एकीकृत पंजीयन प्रणाली अंतर्गत सक्षम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निम्नलिखित निर्माण कार्य हेतु ऑनलाईन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है:-

Table with 5 columns: क्र. (Sl. No.), निविदा क्रमांक एवं दिनांक (Bid No. & Date), कार्य का नाम (Name of Work), तिरस्त्र निविदा क्रमांक (Bid No.), कार्य की अनुमानित लागत (क. लाख में) (Estimated Cost in Lakhs). It lists 15 construction projects with details like 'कुकाड़गारकपाल रेट्रोफिटिंग नलजल प्रदाय योजना' and 'कमेला रेट्रोफिटिंग नलजल प्रदाय योजना'.

निविदा की सामान्य शर्तें, धरोहर राशि, विस्तृत निविदा विज्ञापि, निविदा दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी कार्यालयीन अवधि में कार्यालय से प्राप्त की जा सकती है, साथ ही यह जानकारी ई-प्रोक्चोरमेंट वेब पोर्टल http://e-procurement.gov.in पर तथा विभागीय वेबसाइट http://phecprocurement.gov.in से डाउनलोड की जा सकती है। डाउनलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि 04.02.2022 है।

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER P.W.D. (B&R) AMBIKPUR CIRCLE AMBIKAPUR

E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

Invitation Date :- 14.01.2022

- 01. For tender detail please visit http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in
02. Bid Due Date - 27.01.2022
03. Concern Division - Jashpur Division.

Table with 4 columns: S. No., N.I.T.No./Online No., System Number, Name of work, P.A.C. in lacks. It lists two items: 'BT Renewal Work of Pidi to Bartoli Road' and 'Construction of Prashasnik Bhawan and Main Gate at District Jail Jashpur'.

Superintending Engineer P.W.D. Ambikapur Circle Ambikapur

GOVERNMENT OF CHHATTISGARH, WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, WATER RESOURCES DIVISION, PENDRAROAD DISTT. - GOURELA-PENDRA-MARWAHI (C.G.)

e-Procurement Tender Notice

eProcurement Portal: https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in (FIRST-CALL) SYSTEM TENDER NO. 90680 / NOTICE INVITING TENDER NO. 12 /SAC/2021-22 DATED: 14.01.2022

Table with 4 columns: System Tender No., Group No., Name of Work, Probable amount of contract. It lists 'RENOVATION OF HEAD WORK AND C.C. LINING OF CANALS OF AURAPANI TANK SCHEME' with a value of Rs. 245.72 Lakhs.

The details can be viewed & downloaded online directly from the Govt. of Chhattisgarh Integrated e-Procurement portal (https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in) from dated 21-01-2022 at 17.31 hours (IST) onwards.

Note: All eligible/interested contractors/bidders are mandated to get enrolled on the integrated e-Procurement portal (https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in) and get approval on specific vendor class from PWD under centralized contractor/ supplier registration in order to download the tender documents and participate in the subsequent bidding process.

Note :- Election Code of Conduct has not been Violet. EXECUTIVE ENGINEER WATER RESOURCES DIVISION, PENDRAROAD (C.G.) For, Chief Engineer Hasdeo Basin Water Resources Deptt., Bilaspur (C.G.)

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT CALCUTTA INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY KHARAGPUR and INDIAN STATISTICAL INSTITUTE

jointly announce admission to the 2022 — 2024 Batch and invite application to the POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN BUSINESS ANALYTICS (PGDBA)

PGDBA is a two-year full time diploma program aimed at creating professionals who can fill the talent gap in the area of business analytics for multinationals and reputed domestic organizations. Details about eligibility criteria, application fee and mode of application are available at http://www.iitkgp.ac.in/pgdba

A Computer Based Admission Test will be held on March 27, 2022 and candidates shortlisted based on this test will be called for personal interview during May 2022\*. Reservation: As per the Government of India stipulations for SC/ST/OBC-NCL/EWS and Person with Disabilities (PwD). Application Start Date: January 20, 2022 Application End Date: February 15, 2022 Contact: pgdba@vgsom.iitkgp.ac.in, Tel: 03222-282312. \*Dates of the test and interview are subject to change depending upon the prevailing COVID condition. davp 39103/12/0011/2122





**BRIEF**

**Funding**



**New Delhi:** Lummo (previously known as BukuKas) on Wednesday said it has raised USD 80 million (about Rs 595.8 crore) in funding led by Tiger Global and Sequoia Capital India. CEO Krishnan Menon about conviction in the rapidly growing digital economy.

**Reduce**

**New Delhi:** State-run non-banking financial firms - Power Finance Corporation (PFC) and REC Ltd - have reduced their lending rates across all types of loans by 40 basis points. The reduction in rates has been possible due to lower cost of borrowings by these organisations. It is pertinent to note that PFC and REC are already providing short-term loans at interest rates as low as 6.25 per cent for continued efforts to remain competitive.

**Raises**



**New Delhi:** Dogsee Chew on Wednesday said it has raised Rs 50 crore in Series A round from Mankind Pharma along with existing investor, Sixth Sense Ventures. Founder Bhupendra Khanal said this such a giant is a huge vote of confidence for us.

**Logistics**

**Mumbai:** MatchLog, a container logistics optimisation platform, has raised USD 3 million (around Rs 22.3 crore) in a funding round from venture capital fund Blue Ashva Capital, Rainmatter Climate, and early-stage investor Capital-A. The capital raised in the pre-Series A round will be deployed to develop Matchlog's platform further for AI and machine learning-based pairing of cargo, grow multimodal share in addition to road transport.

**Invest**



**New Delhi:** Used two wheeler platform CredR on Wednesday said it will invest around Rs 110 crore in 2022-23 to expand its business. CEO Sasidhar Nandigam said, the pandemic was an unexpected boost to our business. Break in business allowed us to reposition.

**Foodtech**

**New Delhi:** Fresh produce food-tech venture, Pluckk has raised around Rs 37 crore seed capital in a funding round from Exponentia Ventures, a fund focussed on emerging business ideas in both B2C and B2B space, the company said on Wednesday.

# Economic recovery yet to attain durability

**■ Inflation causing stagflation risk**

**Mumbai, Jan 19 (PTD):**

Rating agency Icria on Wednesday said while there is some evidence of the economic recovery becoming broad-based in the third quarter of fiscal 2022, it is yet to attain the durability being sought by the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) as a precursor to policy transmission.

The agency expects the real GDP to expand 6-6.5 per cent year-on-year in the third quarter of FY2022 (+8.4 per cent in Q2 FY2022). It also sees the RBI maintaining the status quo in the upcoming monetary policy review to be held in February.

Its Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said economic activity rebounded in December 2021, even as many sectors continued to trail the performance



recorded in October 2021. Encouragingly, the quarterly data suggests a modest broad-basing of the recovery in Q3 FY2022, relative to Q2 FY2022, when compared to respective pre-COVID-19 volumes.

"However, the onset of the third wave of COVID-19 has triggered state-wise restrictions, which have expectedly interrupted the momentum in the ongoing month, reiterating that the recovery is yet to attain durability," Nayar said in a report released on Wednesday. The agency said the y-o-y performance

of 10 of the 15 high-frequency indicators improved in December 2021 compared to November 2021.

These include generation of GST e-way bills, non-oil merchandise exports, electricity generation, two-wheeler output as well as aggregate deposits and non-food credit of scheduled commercial banks.

The report further said the y-o-y performance of nine of the 15 high-frequency indicators in December 2021 trailed the growth seen in October

2021. FASTag toll collections and retail payments rose to all-time highs in December 2021, while the monthly mobility for retail and recreation rose above the level of baseline period for the first time since the onset of COVID-19, it said. Nayar further said that following the re-imposition of state-wise restrictions to curb the third wave of COVID-19, the early data for January 2022 is expectedly weak.

The daily average generation of the GST e-way bills dipped to 2.1 million during January 1-16, 2022, from 2.3 million in December 2021.

After a y-o-y growth in December 2021, the sales of petrol and diesel of state refiners slipped back to a contraction in the first half of January 2022. Even, the y-o-y growth in electricity demand eased to 1.9 per cent during January 1-16, 2022, from 2.8 per cent in December 2021, she said.

## Rupee 14 paise higher at 74.44 against USD, silver jumps Rs 1,603

**Mumbai, Jan 19 (PTD):**

The rupee snapped its 3-day losing streak to settle 14 paise higher at 74.44 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, tracking positive regional peers, even as the domestic equity market settled with significant losses.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened lower at 74.70 a dollar, registering a decline of 12 paise from the last close. During the day, it pared losses and witnessed an intra-day high of 74.32.

The domestic unit finally settled at 74.44 (provisional) against the American currency, up 14 paise over its last close. On Tuesday, the rupee

slumped by 33 paise to close at a two-week low of 74.58 against the US dollar.

"The Indian rupee gained the most in a week following stronger regional currencies. Domestic bond markets saw a recovery on suspected intervention by the central bank, which helped in rupee recovery," said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities.

Also, the relentless selling of dollars from corporates caused speculative unwinding of positions, Parmar said.

"Spot USD/INR is expected to consolidate within the 74.25 to 74.80 band in the coming days," he added.

Meanwhile, the US dollar index, which measures

the greenback's strength against the basket of six currencies, fell 0.11 per cent to 95.62.

Silver prices spurted by Rs 1,603 per kg while gold was marginally up in the local market here on Wednesday amid a weaker rupee, according to HDFC Securities.

Gold prices inched up by Rs 16 to Rs 47,878 per 10 grams. In the previous trade, the precious metal had settled at Rs 47,862 per 10 gram.

"Gold prices traded slightly higher following a weak rupee," according to Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities.

Silver jumped Rs 1,603 to Rs 63,435 per kg from Rs 61,832 per kg in the previous trade.

## Developers expect up to 30% rise in real estate prices

**New Delhi, Jan 19 (PTD):**

A significant percentage of real estate developers expect property prices to rise of up to 30 per cent this year due to sharp increase in rates of building materials, according to a survey conducted by realtors body CREDAI.

The Confederation of Real Estate Developers Associations of India (CREDAI) conducted the 'Real Estate Developers Sentiment Survey 2022' during December 30 to January 11, 2022. As many as 1,322 developer members participated in the survey.

Around 60 per cent developers foresee a price rise up to 20 per cent in 2022, due to increase in prices of building materi-



al, the report said. As per the survey findings, nearly 35 per cent of respondents expect prices to rise by 10-20 per cent, while 25 per cent of builders see up to 10 per cent hike in rates.

## NSE world's largest derivatives exchange for third straight year

**New Delhi, Jan 19 (PTD):**

The National Stock Exchange of India has emerged as the world's largest derivatives exchange for the third consecutive year in 2021 in terms of the number of contracts traded, according to the Futures Industry Association (FIA).

In addition, the exchange was ranked fourth by the number of trades in cash equities, as per the statistics maintained by the World Federation of Exchanges (WFE) for 2021.

In a statement on Wednesday NSE said it has ranked as the largest exchange globally in equity derivatives as well as currency derivatives by the number of contracts



traded. "It is a matter of great pride for us and our country that NSE has emerged as a global leader and achieved the distinction of being the largest derivatives exchange in the world for the 3rd consecutive year and the 4th largest exchange in cash equities by the number of trades," Vikram Limaye, MD & CEO, NSE, said.

The year 2021 witnessed the total registered investor base on NSE surpassing the 5-crore mark to reach a count of 5.5

## Koo unveils new features

**Mumbai, Jan 19:**

In an effort to empower, engage and inform voters before they cast their ballots in the upcoming Legislative Assembly Elections, micro-blogging platform - Koo - has announced a slew of hyper-local initiatives across multiple Indian languages. As the largest platform which enables online expression in Indian languages, the Koo App will undertake innovative feature enhancements and awareness campaigns to enhance voter confidence in the electoral process, and guide voters to make an informed decision while exercising their franchise. Koo will launch a dedicated section on the platform for live updates, news about candidates and parties and constituency-level announcements, which will be available in Hindi, Punjabi, Marathi, etc., for the benefit of voters from poll-bound states. In addition, Koo will offer Chat Rooms in native languages to facilitate healthy discussions and debates on election-related topics in real-time.

After a y-o-y growth in December 2021, the sales of petrol and diesel of state refiners slipped back to a contraction in the first half of January 2022. Even, the y-o-y growth in electricity demand eased to 1.9 per cent during January 1-16, 2022, from 2.8 per cent in December 2021, she said.

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## Big Bazaar introduces 'Sabse Saste Din Ab Aayenge'

**Mumbai, Jan 19:**

Big Bazaar, India's largest omni channel retailer begins 2022 with the biggest savings extravaganza of the year - Sabse Saste Din, from January 19th to 26th. This power packed sale will deliver to every Indian home the lowest prices on food, household items, electronics, fashion apparels, footwear, toys and many other categories for maximum savings. This year customers can avail all the offers not just in stores but also get it delivered home via the Big Bazaar app, shop.bigbazaar.com website and avail free home delivery in 2 hours. Along with lowest prices, customers will get fashion vouchers worth Rs.2500 on shopping anything worth Rs.2500.

## Exchange, fraud issues dampen cross-border biz for MSMEs

**■ MSMEs key to raising India's exports**

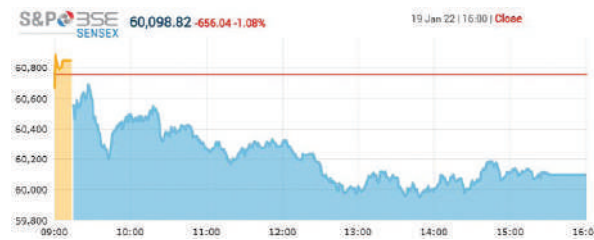
**New Delhi, Jan 19 (PTD):**

MSMEs have cited challenges related to high costs, exchange-related issues and concerns around frauds while doing business across borders, according to a survey.

To overcome such issues, MSMEs have been partnering with third-party online selling platforms, developing their own websites and apps, digitising internally for online selling, and adopting a global payment system, said PayPal's MSME Digital Readiness Survey in partnership with Edelman Data and Intelligence.

"98 per cent of the surveyed businesses have ex-

## Sensex, Nifty tanks around 1% as rate hike worries hit



**Mumbai, Jan 19 (PTD):**

Equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty tanked around 1 per cent on Wednesday due to sharp losses mainly in IT, banking and FMCG shares following a global rout in equities on rate hike worries.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined by 656.04 points or 1.08 per cent to close at 60,098.82, with 23 of its constituents ending in the red.

The broader NSE Nifty plunged by 174.65 points or 0.96 per cent to close at 17,938.40 points as 35 of its stocks closed with losses.

Infosys fell the most among Sensex stocks, declining by 2.85 per cent. Among other IT stocks, TCS fell by 1.87 per cent, Wipro by 1.52 per cent, and HCL Tech by 1.70 per cent. Asian Paints by 2.71 per

cent, HUL declined by 2.41 per cent, Bajaj Finance by 2.07 per cent, and Kotak Bank by 1.86 per cent.

Foreign investors remained net sellers in the Indian equity markets as they offloaded stocks worth Rs 1,254.95 crore on Tuesday, according to stock exchange data.

Asian stock markets declined in cautious trading with Tokyo's Nikkei 225 plunging nearly 3 per cent following losses on Wall Street. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 fell 1 per cent to 7,332.50.

South Korea's Kospi declined 0.8 per cent, the Shanghai Composite lost 0.3 per cent to 3,558.18. Hong Kong's Hang Seng inched up. France's CAC 40 added 0.1% to 7,138.95, while Germany's DAX shed 0.3% to 15,720.91. Britain's FTSE 100 sank 0.1% to 7,556.70.



pressed an interest to invest in more payment options. Of this, 95 per cent are looking to introduce newer ways of payment and 89 per cent are keen on optimising card payments. This is followed by optimization of services to accept digital wallets like PayPal (70 per cent)," it noted. The survey was conducted between October-November 2021, and assesses the impact of COVID-19 on small businesses that have an online presence. The results are based on in-

terviews with 250 business decision makers of India's small and medium enterprises, which are defined as having an annual turnover between Rs 5-250 crore.

"MSMEs have called out certain challenges associated with doing business across borders like high costs (74 per cent), exchange-related issues (31 per cent), and fraud-related concerns (30 per cent)," it said.

The survey highlights the shift in consumer behaviour induced by lockdowns. It has paved way for purchasing from virtual stores. MSMEs have positively seen a 65 per cent increase in online buying from customers and close to 80 per cent shared that their consumers are more receptive to using different payments options, it observed.

## India's oil production continues to slip, down 2% in Dec

**New Delhi, Jan 19 (PTD):**

India's production of crude oil, which is refined to produce petrol and diesel, continued to decline in December 2021, with lower output from state-owned ONGC leading to a near 2 per cent drop, official data showed on Wednesday.

Oil production in December 2021 was 2.51 million tonnes, down from 2.55 million tonnes a year earlier and a target of 2.6 million tonnes. The output was, however, higher than 2.43 million tonnes production in November 2021.

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) - India's biggest producer, produced 3 per cent less crude oil at 1.65 million tonnes in

December due to delays in mobilising equipment at western offshore fields. Oil India Ltd (OIL) produced 5.4 per cent more crude oil at 2,54,360 tonnes.

India is 85 per cent reliant on imports to meet its crude oil needs as domestic output is insufficient to meet the demand.

During April-December - the first nine months of the current fiscal year - crude oil production fell 2.63 per cent to 22.3 million tonnes. ONGC produced 4 per cent less oil at 14.6 million tonnes. Natural gas production, however, rose by almost a fifth to 2.89 billion cubic meters (bcm) in December, mainly due to output from newer fields in the KG-D6 block, operated by Reliance Industries Ltd and BP plc.

## Tata Motors drives in CNG trims of Tiago, Tigor

**New Delhi, Jan 19 (PTD):**

Tata Motors on Wednesday forayed into the CNG segment with the launch of Tiago and Tigor trims, priced between Rs 6.09 lakh and Rs 8.41 lakh respectively (ex-showroom Delhi). The Tiago iCNG range is priced between Rs 6.09 lakh and Rs 7.64 lakh while the three variants of Tigor iCNG are tagged at Rs 7.69 lakh, Rs 8.29 lakh and Rs 8.41 lakh respectively. With the launch, the homegrown auto major plans to strengthen its position in the CNG market which has been growing at a fast pace. "It is very clear that the CNG



segment is going to witness a steep growth over the next few years. So, therefore in response to this rise in demand, we have chosen two models --Tiago and Tigor to roll out with factory fitted CNG," Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Managing Director Shailesh Chandra told PTI in an interaction. The demand for both economical personal mobility as well as greener, emission friendly mobility is rapidly rising, he

added. Chandra noted that the company has been witnessing very strong growth for its conventional product range and it needs to keep exploring for new growth opportunities in the market to give more options to the customers. "In this light, what we have seen is that the demand for CNG cars, especially in the last few years, has gone up tremendously. In the last fiscal the CNG car sales grew by around 60 per cent over the previous financial year (2019-20). In the first half of the current fiscal, the sales have grown by 97 per cent over the same period of 2020-21," he stated.

## NTPC top biomass user in India, consumes 58,000 MT

**New Delhi, Jan 19 (PTD):**

State-run power giant NTPC has emerged as the top biomass user, having co-fired about 58,000 MT of biomass, while tendering a total of 10.7 MMT over short-term and long-term basis, the power ministry said on Wednesday.

As on date, approximately 59,000 metric tonnes (MT) of biomass has been co-fired in thermal power plants in the country, while tenders for 12 million metric tonnes (MMT) are at different stages of process for short-term & long-term duration, the ministry said in a statement.

## Why just electric and not auto LPG, asks IAC

**New Delhi, Jan 19 (PTD):**

Indian Auto LPG Coalition (IAC), the nodal body for the promotion of Auto LPG in India, has questioned the 'disproportionate' policy focus on electric vehicles in the war against carbon emissions by vehicles, saying running automobiles on LPG offers equally worthy solution.

Almost 30 crore vehicles on Indian roads cannot be wished away, for which electric is simply not an option, it said adding with lower entry barriers, auto LPG far outshines EVs in terms



of infrastructure investment in the immediate term. While attaining self-reliance for lithium-ion or equivalent battery technology is too far away, auto LPG is way more affordable than buying new expensive

EVs. More importantly, 60 per cent of electricity still comes from fossil fuels which does not paint EVs in the best light, IAC said in a statement emphasising the need to consider well-to-wheel emissions for Auto LPG.

"There has been a periodic spotlight on the electric vehicles in the country envisaging a perfect future when so-called 'clean' electric vehicles would replace the heavily polluting carbon-based popular fuels such as petrol and diesel in our modes of transport and mobility.

## Vaani Kapoor wants her filmography to be as diverse as possible

Actress Vaani Kapoor, who recently essayed a trans woman in 'Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui', is consciously working on shaping up her filmography by choosing scripts and characters that are different from the league.

She hopes that her work in 'Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui' and her upcoming release 'Shamshera' where she will be seen opposite Ranbir Kapoor, will incite the confidence in film-makers about her craft. Talking about the same, she says, "I would like my filmography to be as diverse as possible and after showing my range as an actor in 'Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui' and 'Shamshera', I can only hope that filmmakers would feel extremely confident to approach me with any challenging role. I have always wanted to win over their trust and be a part of interesting cinematic visions of powerful film-makers." She adds, "I know that I will give it my everything to pull

off any character that I'm approached with to play on screen." Stating her opinion on the best thing about the profession of acting, the actress says, "The best thing about our profession is that one can get to become so many characters and live so many lives.



## 'Prachand Dev to cause huge havoc in Bhimrao's life'

Veteran actor Govind Khatri is now seen in &TV's Ek Mahanayak - Dr B.R. Ambedkar as Prachand Dev Ji - a self-appointed guardian of the upper caste who believes himself next to God. In this candid chat, the actor talks about following the show even before joining the team, his newly introduced character, his previous roles and more.

Excerpts from the interview:

**How would you define your character of Prachand Dev Ji?**

Prachand Dev Ji's entry will bring a lot of troubles and challenges in young Bhimrao's life. Somehow Bhimrao and his paths intervene, leading to huge ideological differences, with him plotting to cause huge havoc in Bhimrao's life. Prachand Dev Ji also finds a partner in Narrotam to fight against Bhimrao and his ideologies and resort to extreme humiliation and cruelty. Prachand Dev Ji's actions are backed by his evil agenda. However, the extreme steps adopted by Prachand Dev will only strengthen Bhimrao to face these compelling situations boldly, bringing to fore his evolved vision, indomitable perseverance, and determination. The mayhem that Prachand Dev creates in Bhimrao's life makes for an extremely emotional yet inspirational storyline for the viewers.

**Were you following the show even before joining the team?**



Ek Mahanayak - DR B.R. Ambedkar is one of the most well-known shows on Indian television right now and I have been watching it right from the beginning. Interestingly, I have been watching some of the earlier episodes again to understand the show better and as part of my preparation to essay the new character. Tune in to &TV to watch Ek Mahanayak Dr B R Ambedkar, airing every Monday to Friday at 8:30 pm.

## 'Spandan' wins big on Shark Tank India

Sony Entertainment Television's Indian adaptation of the globally renowned business reality format - Shark Tank has hit the right notes amongst aspirational individuals who have a vision and stake in India's future. Bringing forth some mind-blowing products created by bright minds, Shark Tank India has showcased the face of the blossoming entrepreneurial wave that has started in every nook and corner of our country. Amongst the power-packed pitches, one such venture that not only impressed the Sharks but



also left them teary-eyed was Sunfox Technologies' flagship product 'Spandan', a pocket-size portable instant ECG monitor. The Dehradun-based start-up got a deal of 1 crore for 6% equity from all the five sharks - Peyush Bansal, Ghazal Alagh, Vineeta Singh,

Anupam Mittal, and Namita Thapar. Around 20 lakh people lose their life due to cardiovascular diseases owing to the non-availability of monitoring equipment, lack of routine heart check-ups, and no early diagnosis. And, the scenario is worse in remote areas.

## I will get to learn a lot from Remo as this is my first show as a judge: Mouni Roy

Popular actress Mouni Roy has been roped in to join renowned choreographer Remo D'Souza in the panel of judges on dance reality show 'Dance India Dance Li'l Masters Season 5'. She says it is surely going to be a learning experience for her.

Mouni says: "I am sure I will get to learn a lot from Remo sir since this is my first show as a judge, and I am very eager to meet the contestants. I know for a fact that judging talented kids won't be an easy task, but I

will try my best and I hope I will be able to do justice to the responsibility."

The actress started her acting career with TV shows like 'Kyunki... Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi' and 'Devon Ke Dev... Mahadev'. She finally rose to fame with her performance in the supernatural thriller 'Naagin'.

Mouni adds in her new role as a judge she has to be careful while making comments on the contestants. "I am very excited to meet the super talented Li'l Masters who are known to floor everyone with their unimaginable dancing prowess at such a tender age. One really needs to take care of their emotions and I personally love kids a lot. So, I will be extra careful with my words while making my comments."

The auditions for 'DID Li'l Masters Season 5' have already started. Participants between the age group of 3 to 13 years will compete against each other to become the ultimate Li'l Master.

'DID Li'l Masters Season 5' will be coming soon on Zee TV.

Sunny Leone, who had incredible dance number hits with tracks like 'Auntiyaan Dance Karengi', 'Machli' and 'Panghat', for which she reunited with Baby Doll singer Kanika Kapoor, is in a happy space. The actress maintains that all the songs pushed her to do her best as all of them were very different from each other.

Elated with the love pouring her way, she says, "I see myself as an entertainer and I take great pride in my songs becoming raging hits. People have been loving the number. It's so overwhelming that my hard work has paid off."

Considered among the industry's most effortless dancers, Leone says she remembers training for most part of November to make sure each of these numbers have a different vibe to them. She adds, "Sometimes there is a tendency to replicate steps but each of these songs were designed so differently. It meant working on a different track every few days but I consciously wanted each of these to stand out. I am so happy with the response."

Ask her if there's a favourite and she signs off with a smile, "Why pick when you can groove to all?"

**Sunny Leone: I take great pride in my songs becoming raging hits**



## HOROSCOPE THURSDAY JANUARY 20

### Aquarius: Jan 21 - Feb 18

You will plan your day well. Good, says Ganesh, as it does away with the clutter in your schedule. That way, you will also get more time to do stuff you never came around doing it. So, bring out your old Cliff Richard records, and wipe clean your dusty LP player. You may finally get to revive old times!

### Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

A good day for investments and speculations, especially in the real estate markets. Your gains will outweigh the risks associated with your transactions. However, maintain some monetary reserves to invest in other opportunities, as even better times are around the corner. You will come across as a happy soul in the face of such good fortune, says Ganesh.

### Gemini: May 22 - June 21

You will be unable to cope with the flurry of demands made upon your time and person by those around you. You will try to break free of the rut and look for some new things to do in the evening. Some creative and constructive work will provide you with much needed respite from the demands of the day, says Ganesh.

### Cancer: June 22 - July 22

Your natural talents will be rewarded at work, predicts Ganesh. Later in the day, your peers will fully co-operate to help you achieve your goals. Your popularity will grow by leaps and bounds. But you should not let success get to your head.

### Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 23

Money matters may cause you some concern, at least till the latter half of the day, foresees Ganesh. After that, those financial troubles will make way for lucrative opportunities. Expect to make money from all quarters later in the afternoon. You shall be your own boss when it comes to making career decisions.

### Scorpio: Oct 24 - Nov 22

Athletes will achieve prime fitness and form today, says Ganesh. Engineers will design plans that will concentrate their resources on laying the foundation to new business ventures. Your social reputation will get a major boost later in the day.

### Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 20

Ganesh says that at the beginning of the day you will feel happy and will support your loved ones in good and bad times and talk to them in that regard. You will also try to reduce their worries by listening to their problems and finding solutions for them. In the afternoon, you will feel like staying in solitude for some time.

### Leo: July 23 - Aug 23

With your penchant for being almost surgical in your tasks, it seems there isn't a single blunder that escapes your trained eye. This fact comes to the fore today and helps you step into the limelight, especially at work, where your efforts get noticed and appreciated.

### Sagittarius: Nov 23 - Dec 21

Today will be a day when you are inclined not only to being upbeat but also firm, says Ganesh. In your line of work, you may get passionate about your views. But compromise is on the cards and that too without any harm to your dignity. Your better half will keep you occupied, says Ganesh.

### Taurus: Apr 21 - May 21

Your thoughts are not likely to remain focused in your business or profession. Ganesh sees them drifting from such issues and moving towards your home and family members. You will be keenly aware of the fact that you have been neglecting your family interests and affairs on account of your professional involvement.

### Virgo: Aug 24 - Sept 22

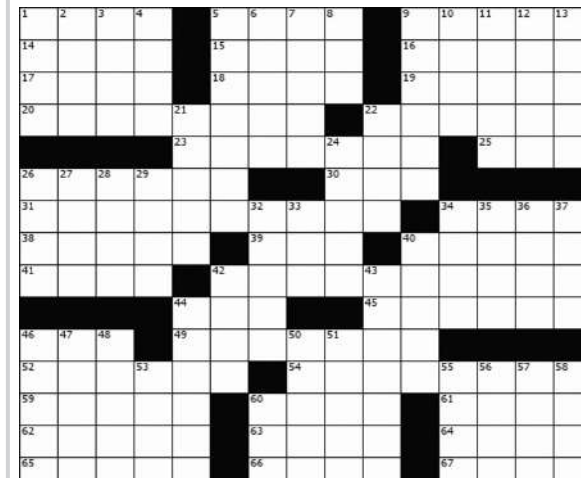
The day will bring in innovation and ingenuity on your part today. Expect a probable visit to a museum or a historical place, says Ganesh. Being frisky will help shape that body up a bit. Entertainment will work as a wonderful remedy to cure the wounds of an estranged relationship, says Ganesh.

### Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 20

Dreading the consequences of errors induced in the past, you will be extra cautious while working on important assignments and will try to save your skin, says Ganesh. This apart, you will spend a major part of the day worrying over career prospects and mulling a change of job.

## CROSSWORD

192



### ACROSS

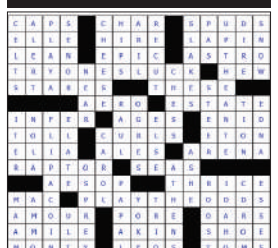
- Urge
- Stunned
- Business gp.
- Large brass instrument
- Show up
- Happen again
- Tiny particle
- Gator's kin
- blanche
- Most transparent

### DOWN

- Sch. groups
- Babe
- Band instrument
- Notre
- Emphasizes
- Most inferior
- Act the ham
- Christmas mo.
- Video game room
- Burn
- Beat it!
- Surpass
- Crawl
- Bowler's button
- Singer (2 Seeger)
- Appraises
- Like the Sahara
- Formal procession
- Went in
- Swab
- Appalled
- Consumed
- agent (2 wds.)
- Petticoat
- Small bay
- Certain poem
- Gardener's tool
- Poor grades
- District attorney

- Teacher's favorite
- Early car (2 wds.)
- loss (2 wds.)
- Sleazier
- Building cement
- Took into custody
- Shaquille
- Retirement accts.
- Gone
- Kingdom
- Presidential power
- Bestow
- Snaky letters
- Biblical garden
- Matured
- Kelly or Autry
- Healthy
- Pub potatoes
- Rich dessert
- Turmoil
- Potato
- Behind schedule
- Revered person
- Jaunty
- Make points
- Equal
- Ralph Waldo
- Biblical songs
- Love (Ital.)
- Hues
- Regions
- Risked
- Furious
- Fable
- Epic
- Tiny stick
- Roof part
- Tinted
- "Lost You"

### SOLUTION 191



## Osaka, Barty advance toward Australian Open showdown

Melbourne, Jan 19 (AP):

For the first set, Naomi Osaka's rediscovered love of the game meant it was anything but fun for Madison Brengle in the third round of the Australian Open.

The defending champion conceded only four points in the first four games Wednesday and rifled forehand winners seemingly at will as she breezed to 6-0 in a mere 20 minutes.

The second set started with Brengle celebrating a service hold like she'd finished a long-distance race, but gradually the No. 54-ranked American ground down Osaka to a stage in the seventh game where she finally converted a break-point opportunity after missing her first nine chances.

That triggered a change in the former No. 1-ranked Osaka, who responded by breaking back immediately and winning the last nine points to complete a 6-0, 6-4 victory.

She will next face Amanda Anisimova, a 20-year-old American who beat Olympic gold medalist Belinda Bencic 6-2, 7-5. The winner of that is likely to face top-ranked Ash Barty



Ash Barty

in the fourth round. Osaka won the Australian Open last year, her fourth Grand Slam title, but then withdrew from the French Open and skipped Wimbledon as she took a break for her mental health. She then was ousted early at the U.S. Open.

After a long off-season to reset, she's unbeaten in five matches in Australia this year. Asked how she rated her form, Osaka said that's not how she's approaching things.

Honestly I'm trying not to do that, she said in an on-court TV interview.

"I'm a bit of a perfectionist. If I compare myself with the past, I'll never be satisfied."

The goal for me is just to have fun ... (and) I think we're accomplishing that.

Since the draw for the first major of the year was made, a big focus has been on a potential encounter between Osaka and Barty, the 2021 Wimbledon and 2019 French Open champion who is aiming to be the first Australian woman since 1978 to win her home championship.

Barty was front and center when the tournament celebrated its inaugural

First Nations Day, albeit only for 52 minutes as she beat 142nd-ranked qualifier Lucia Bronzetti 6-1, 6-1.

It was nice for me to be a part of it in a way that I feel most comfortable, Barty, who has Indigenous heritage, said of the day dedicated to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia.

"Out on the tennis court is how I express myself as an athlete, it's how I'm able to express myself as a person as well."

On a day we're bringing cultures together, bringing people together ... it was great for me to be able to play a small role doing what I love.

Rafael Nadal didn't get it all his own way in the subsequent match on Rod Laver Arena, needing five match points before beating 126th-ranked German qualifier Yannick Hanfmann 6-2, 6-3, 6-4.

The sixth-seeded Nadal, aiming for a men's record 21st Grand Slam singles title, had two match points on Hanfmann's serve and two more on his own in the next game before finally clinching a spot in the third round when his rival sent a forehand long.

## Mandhana named in ICC T20I women's Team of the Year, no Indian in the men's side

Dubai, Jan 19 (PTI):

Star India opener Smriti Mandhana was on Wednesday named in the ICC T20 women's Team of the Year for her superlative show in the format in 2021 but no Indian made the men's side.

The stylish Southpaw, who is the Indian team's vice-captain in the format, was the country's highest scorer in the format in 2021 with 255 runs at an average of 31.87. The 25-year-old scored two fifties in the nine matches she played and got her team off to rapid starts regularly, as evident by her strike-rate of 131.44. While Mandhana was the only Indian, several members of the English side feature in the team with Nat Scriver being named captain.

The experienced England all-rounder produced many impactful performances throughout the year. Batting in the middle-order, Sciver scored a total of 153 runs, including one fifty, and she also picked up 10 wickets at an excellent average of 20.20. Accompanying Mandhana at the top is England's Tammy Beaumont. The 30-year-old's reliable presence at the top of the order helped England off to steady starts regularly. She played nine



matches and amassed 303 runs at an average of 33.66, including three fifties. Danni Wyatt, wicketkeeper Amy Jones and spinner Sophie Ecclestone are the other English players in the side.

Gaby Lewis of Ireland, South African trio of Laura Wolvaardt, Shabnim Ismail and Marizanne Kapp and Zimbabwe's Loryn Phiri make up the rest of the playing XI. There was no Indian representation in ICC Men's T20I Team of the Year 2021, which featured three Pakistanis including skipper Babar Azam, who has been named captain.

Apart from Azam, opener Mohammad Rizwan and Shaheen Afridi, who had a sensational T20 World Cup were name in the squad.

### Teams

**Women:** Smriti Mandhana (India), Tammy Beaumont (England), Danni Wyatt (England), Gaby Lewis (Ireland), Nat Sciver (c) (England), Amy Jones (England), Laura Wolvaardt (South Africa), Marizanne Kapp (South Africa), Sophie Ecclestone (England), Loryn Phiri (Zimbabwe), Shabnim Ismail (South Africa).  
**Men:** Jos Buttler (England), Mohammad Rizwan (Pakistan), Babar Azam (c) (Pakistan), Aiden Markram (South Africa), Mitchell Marsh (Australia), David Miller (South Africa), Tabraiz Shamsi (South Africa), Josh Hazlewood (Australia), Wanindu Hasaranga (Sri Lanka), Mustafizur Rahaman (Bangladesh), Shaheen Afridi (Pakistan).

All-rounder Mitchell Marsh and pacer Josh Hazlewood, who played a vital role in winning Australia's maiden T20 World Cup title, featured in the team while the trio of South Africans Aiden Markram, David Miller and Tabraiz Shamsi also made it to the playing XI.

Flamboyant wicketkeeper batter Jos Buttler was the sole member of the England team in the ICC side.

## Sania to retire after 2022 season, says body is wearing down



Melbourne, Jan 19 (PTI):

India tennis star Sania Mirza on Wednesday announced that 2022 will be her last season since her body is "wearing down" and motivation and energy for the everyday grind is not the same anymore.

Mirza, 35, had returned to tennis after giving birth to her son in March 2019 but her progress was later thwarted by the coronavirus pandemic.

Mirza made the retirement announcement after losing the Australian open women's doubles first round with partner Nadiia

Kichenok. "There's a bunch reasons for it. It's not as simple as 'okay I'm not going to play'. I do feel my recovery is taking longer, I do feel, considering my son is three years old, I'm putting him at risk by travelling so much with him, that's something I have to take into account," Mirza said at the post-match press conference.

"My body is wearing down. My knee was really hurting today and I'm not saying that's the reason we lost but I do think that it is taking time to recover as I'm getting older," she said.

## Bopanna and Mirza out of Australia Open men's and women's doubles

Melbourne, Jan 19 (PTI):

Veteran Indian players Rohan Bopanna and Sania Mirza were knocked out of the men's and women's doubles events of the Australian Open respectively, after losing their first round matches, here on Wednesday.

Bopanna and his French partner Edouard Roger-Vasselin lost in three sets to wild card pair of Christopher Rungkat and Treat Huey. They began confidently but lost momentum mid-way to lose 6-3 6-7(2) 2-6 in one hour and 48 minutes.

Mirza and her Ukrainian partner Nadiia Kichenok, on the other hand, lost 4-6 6-7(5) to Slovenian team of Tamara Zidansek and Kaja Juvan in one hour and 37 minutes. Kichenok was off-colour today as unforced errors kept flowing from her racquet throughout the contest.

The two Indians are, however, still alive in the first Grand Slam of the



season as they will compete in the mixed doubles. Bopanna has teamed up with Croatia's Darija Jurak Schreiber, while Mirza has paired up with American Rajeev Ram.

None of the four Indians, who competed in the singles Qualifiers, made it to the main draw.

Philippines' left-hander Huey's exceptional service games and net play was crucial in the outcome of the men's doubles match, while Indonesian Rungkat, who initially ap-

peared as the weak link, gradually upped his game.

Rungkat's hitting from the baseline improved remarkably as the match wore on. The Indo-French pair got the first break chance in the fourth game when Bopanna hit a crushing forehand winner past Huey at 15-30 on the serve of Rungkat, who could not put the ball across the net on the next point.

That break positioned Bopanna to serve out the set in the ninth game and he did that with ease, at

love, with his booming serves. Rungkat and Huey came out all guns blazing in the opening game of the second set, attacking Bopanna's serve and earned two breakpoints with a flurry of winners but could convert none.

Both the pairs held serves throughout the second set, which was decided by a tie-breaker.

In the 11th game, though, Roger-Vasselin and Bopanna earned two break chances but their rivals saved both. It was a winner from Roger-Vasselin and a Rungkat forehand error that put the wild cards 15-40.

The wild card pair reeled off six straight points in tie-breaker from 1-2 to level the match.

The momentum changed dramatically after that with Rungkat and Huey dominating the contest by breaking their rivals with ease. They raced to a 5-1 lead with a double break. The Indonesian then served out the match.

## Sindhu cruises into second round of Syed Modi International



Lucknow, Jan 19 (PTI):

Two-time Olympic medallist P V Sindhu stormed into the second round of the Syed Modi International Super 300 tournament with a dominating straight game win over fellow Indian Tanya Hemant in the women's singles competition here on Wednesday.

The 26-year-old from Hyderabad, who lost in the semifinals at India Open

Super 500 last week, thrashed Tanya 21-9 21-9 in a lop-sided contest at the Babu Banarasi Das Indoor Stadium. A former world champion, Sindhu will square off against USA's Lauren Lam, who managed to get past a fighting Ira Sharma 15-21 21-16. In another match, India's Kanika Kanwal overcame USA's Disha Gupta 21-15 16-21 21-6 to also make a winning start to her campaign.

## Ghana eliminated from African Cup in shock loss to Comoros



Comoros' forward Ahmed Mogni (C) celebrates with teammates after scoring his team's second goal during the Group C Africa Cup of Nations (CAN) 2021 football match between Ghana and Comoros at Stade Roudme Adjia in Garoua.

Garoua, Cameroon, Jan 19 (AP):

Four-time champion Ghana was eliminated in the group stage at the African Cup of Nations with a 3-2 loss to tournament debutant Comoros in a shocker that eclipsed a series of big surprises already in Cameroon.

Two days after defending champion Algeria was beaten by Equatorial Guinea for one of the biggest upsets in African Cup history, Ghana's collapse on

Tuesday provided a new, possibly better contender.

In a tumultuous game, Ghana fell behind in the fourth minute, had captain Andre Ayew harshly sent off in the 25th, and was 2-0 down in the 61st. The Ghanaians leveled with two goals in 13 minutes late in the game, only to concede again when Ahmed Mogni swept in his second in the 85th minute to give Comoros undoubtedly its biggest soccer moment ever. It sent Ghana home at the

bottom of Group C with a draw and two losses and its worst performance ever at the African Cup. Ghana is a traditional power of African soccer and has made at least the semifinals in six of the last seven African Cups and was last dumped out in the group stage in 2006. Its squad of players from top clubs was pitted against a Comoros team whose two-goal hero Mogni plays in the third division in France. Morocco won the group after a 2-2 draw with Gabon in another pulsating game. Morocco, which had already qualified, twice came from behind and snatched the point that won the group with a curling free kick from Paris Saint-Germain's Achraf Hakimi with six minutes to go. Gabon was missing its three best players with captain Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and midfielder Mario Lemina sent back to their clubs for more medical tests after suffering from the aftereffects of COVID-19. Forward Denis Bouanga was among a new group of players to test positive for the virus.

## Kohli, Pant and Bumrah move up in latest ICC Test rankings



Dubai, Jan 19 (PTI):

Indian star Virat Kohli on Wednesday moved up two places to seventh after scores of 79 and 29 in his last Test as captain in the latest ICC rankings for batters in the five-day format.

Wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant's unbeaten century in the second innings of the series-deciding third Test against South Africa lifted him 10 places to 14th, while fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah's six wickets in Cape Town took him back to the top 10 in the bowling chart.

Kohli decided to quit Test captaincy a day after India lost the three-match series against South Africa 1-2, ending his seven-year reign at the helm. In the latest weekly update that

takes into account the third match of the South Africa-India series in Cape Town which the hosts won by seven wickets to clinch the World Test Championship (WTC) series, Keegan Petersen has shot up 68 places to 33rd after match-winning scores of 72 and 82. He scored the maximum runs to claim the Player of the Series award, his 276-run aggregate helping him surge up after starting the series in 158th position. Temba Bavuma (up seven places to 28th) and Rassie van der Dussen (up 12 places to 43rd) are the other South Africa batters to advance while fast bowlers Kagiso Rabada (up two places to third) and Lungi Ngidi (up six places to 21st) have also made notable progress.

## With eye on quarterfinals spot, India seek winning start against Iran

### Women's AFC Asian Cup

Navi Mumbai, Jan 19 (PTI):

A FIFA World Cup play-off spot within their grasp, hosts India would seek a winning start against an under-prepared and lower-ranked Iran in their women's AFC Asian Cup campaign opener here on Thursday.

Hosting the continental showpiece for the second time after 1979, India would look to script history by qualifying for the quarterfinals of the 12-team tournament, which will see some of Asia's and world's best players in action.

India had finished runners-up twice - in 1979 and 1983 - and third in 1981.

A win against Iran at the DY Patil Stadium will assure India of at least a third-place finish in Group A. Besides the two top teams, two third-placed sides across the three groups will also qualify for quarterfinals. Iran are the lowest ranked team in the group which also has



## Two members of Indian team test COVID positive on eve of tournament

COVID-19 breached the Indian women's football team's bio-security bubble here on Wednesday ahead of the AFC Asian Cup with two players testing positive for the virus, forcing the organisers to shift them to a medical facility for isolation. "Two members of the Indian Women's Senior National Team for the AFC Women's Asian Cup India 2022 have tested positive for COVID-19, and are currently in isolation at a designated medical care facility," the All India Football Federation (AIFF) tweeted. "The AIFF prioritises the health and safety of its players, and are following all," the organising federation wrote in another tweet. One of the players would have featured in the starting XI in the campaign opener against Iran, a source close to the AIFF said.

China and Chinese Taipei. They are ranked at 70th in the world as against India's 55th. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Indian team had the luxury of a good number of exposure tours and international matches last year, including against former World Cup run-

ners-up side Brazil. These international match experience is expected to keep Thomas Dennerby's team in good stead even though the hosts are playing without star striker Bala Devi who is recovering from a surgery.

## MASS PRAYER



Devotees belonging to Brahmin community conduct a mass prayer for speedy recovery of those infected with COVID-19, in Varanasi, Wednesday.

## FINMIN TO MINISTRIES

# 'Restrict expenses within prescribed limit'

New Delhi, Jan 19 (PTI):

In a bid to maintain fiscal deficit within the targeted limit, the finance ministry has asked ministries and departments to restrict their expenses with the revised estimates. The communication comes ahead of the Union Budget 2022-23, likely to be unveiled on February 1.

In an office memorandum seeking proposals for the third and final batch of Supplementary Demands for Grants, the economic affairs department under the finance ministry asked the ministries and departments to submit their proposals by February 10.

"While processing proposals for supplementary grants, the grant-controlling authority must invariably identify savings available within the grant so that the infructuous or inflated supplementary demands are weeded out and the eventuality of surrender after obtaining supplementary grant is avoided," it said.

The proposal for Supplementary Demands for Grants may be projected after a thorough and objective assessment of additional requirements of funds, it said. "All the ministries and departments have been requested to contain the expenditure within the approved Revised Estimate ceilings," it said. The government estimates a fiscal deficit of 6.8 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in the current financial year ending on March 31.

Fiscal deficit is an indication of the government's borrowing to meet the shortfall between expenditure and receipts from taxes and other sources. The memorandum further said the demand proposal should be made after a thorough review of savings within the Grant.

"In cases where re-appropriation can be made without the requirement of Supplementary as per the extant provisions, no Supplementary proposal, including for a token amount, should be proposed. Such requirement may be met by re-appropriation of savings after obtaining approval of competent authority," it said.

The cases that will be eligible to be incorporated under such demands include those where advances from the Contingency Fund of India have been granted. Besides, payments against court decree will be included as well in cases where the finance ministry has specifically advised moving of supplementary demand in the budget session, it said. The two-phase Budget session begins on January 31 and continues till April 8.

## HOPE BEHIND BARS

# 'Book throws light on lives of prisoners in Indian jails'

New Delhi, Jan 19 (PTI):

Bringing prisoners' lives and liberties to the heart of public debate and policies, a new collection of essays, "Hope Behind Bars: Notes from Indian Prisons", gives readers valuable insights into the vexed idea of incarceration.

The collection of essays -- written by a retired Supreme Court judge, former prison administrators, lawyers, journalists, academicians, researchers, a former prisoner and leaders of grassroots organisations -- is edited by Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) director Sanjoy Hazarika and head of CHRI's prison reforms programme Madhurima Dhanuka.

Published by PAN Macmillan India, the book aims to shed light on the "opaqueness of the system, making it not just more humane but also showing what can be achieved within the current ambit of the law, despite the infirmities of creaky and ineffective processes".

"A prison is a world of its own, where residents live without the support systems that those on the outside take for granted. Prisoners hope and will each day to be their last in confinement. We believe that the stories in 'Hope Behind Bars' provide insight into lives less ordinary," wrote the editors in the introduction of the book.

Retired Supreme Court judge Madan B Lokur, celebrated SC human rights lawyer Vrinda Grover, journalist Sunetra Choudhury and CHRI researchers Sabika Abbas, Sugandha Mathur and Amrita Paul are among the authors whose works are featured in the book.

It includes a powerful essay on the rights of vulnerable prisoners, write up on the challenges of establishing a prison training institute, the critical need to train prison officials and the gut-wrenching story of Wahid -- who spent ten years in prison on a terrorism case before a court pronounced him innocent -- where he talks of custodial violence, torture and police arbitrariness.

"Vrinda Grover traces how she navigated the ups and downs, twists and turns of the Hashimpura killings case, which took thirty years to conclude: the case involved the Uttar Pradesh Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC), which was charged with gunning down forty-two Muslims in the Hashimpura area of Muzaffarnagar, less than a hundred kilometres from New Delhi.

"The perils of prolonged judicial delays were underlined in this case three of the accused died during this period," wrote the editors while talking about one of the chapters in the book.

The trade union arm of the Trinamool Congress, INTTUC, on Wednesday said its Purba Medinipur district president has been removed in a message of "zero tolerance" towards anyone disrupting smooth functioning of the industries in West Bengal.

The action was taken against Sanjay Banerjee after authorities of Exide plant in Haldia alleged that production was hampered due to protests by casual labours on Monday.

# TMC trade union removes leader after disruption in Exide plant

Kolkata, Jan 19 (PTI):

Some contract workers created chaos and prevented others from joining work leading to the disruption in production. Without disclosing further details, Exide officials said production is back to normal on Wednesday.

Cabinet minister Moly Ghatak and Indian National Trinamool Trade Union Congress (INTTUC) state president Ritabrata Banerjee went to Haldia following the incident. We have suspended the

district INTTUC leader (Sanjay Banerjee) on corruption charges. We want to reiterate the stand of our Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee about zero tolerance towards anyone who will try to disrupt smooth functioning of industry in the state, Banerjee told PTI.

Sanjay Banerjee was also removed from his post and was replaced by Sibnath Sarkar, he said. Operations at Exide's Haldia plant have been normalised now, Ritabrata Banerjee said.

## AIG HOSPITALS STUDY

# '30% individuals lose vaccine-acquired immunity against COVID-19'

After 6 months

Hyderabad, Jan 19 (PTI):

As much as 30 per cent individuals lose vaccine-acquired immunity after six months, according to a study conducted by AIG Hospitals along with the Asian Healthcare Foundation on Vaccine Immunity.

The study was conducted on 1,636 healthcare workers who were fully vaccinated against COVID-19, a press release from AIG Hospitals said.

"Our study results were at par with other global studies where we found that almost 30 per cent individuals had antibody levels below protective immunity level of 100 AU/ml after six months. These individuals were majorly above 40 years with co-morbidities like hypertension and diabetes. Out of the total, 6 per cent did not develop any immune protection at all," Dr D Nageshwar Reddy, Chairman, AIG Hospitals said.

The results clearly indicated that with age, immunity waning is directly proportional which means that younger people have more sustained antibody levels than the elderly population.

One of the most important results of the study showed that people above 40 years with co-morbidities like hypertension and diabetes have significantly less antibody response after six months of getting fully vaccinated, the release further said.

However, considering the scale of our country, the 30 per cent people especially those with co-morbid conditions like hypertension, diabetes, etc., who are more prone to develop an infection after six months of getting fully vaccinated should also be considered for the prevention dose, Dr Reddy added.

At present, the nine-month gap for a precaution dose benefits 70 per cent of the population who can retain enough antibody levels beyond six months.

Agarwal, who was elected the assembly deputy speaker on the BJP's support had not formally joined the party and was technically still an SP MLA.

## Rebel SP MLA, elected assembly speaker quits his party

Lucknow, Jan 19 (PTI):

Uttar Pradesh assembly's Deputy Speaker Nitin Agarwal, a Samajwadi Party MLA who had been elected to the House's post on the BJP's support, formally quit the SP's membership.

"I have sent my resignation from the SP to its national president Akhilesh Yadav. I have also resigned from the assembly membership and from the post of deputy speaker," Nitin Agarwal told reporters here.

Agarwal, who was elected the assembly deputy speaker on the BJP's support had not formally joined the party and was technically still an SP MLA.

Agarwal, who was elected the assembly deputy speaker on the BJP's support had not formally joined the party and was technically still an SP MLA.

## FOOD FOR NEEDY



Volunteers distribute food among the needy at Centenary Wesley Church in Hyderabad, Wednesday.

## OBC RESERVATION

# SC directs Maha govt to submit data before SBCC

New Delhi, Jan 19 (PTI):

The Supreme Court Wednesday directed the Maharashtra government to submit data on Other Backward Classes (OBCs) to the SBCC to examine its correctness and make recommendations on their representation in elections for the local bodies.

The top court also directed the State Backward Classes Commission (SBCC) to submit the interim report to the authorities concerned in two weeks of receiving information from the state government.

"Maharashtra has asked this court to permit elections based on data already available to the state concerning other backward classes. Instead of examining the data, the appropriate step would be to present this data before a state appointed dedicated commission which can examine the correctness..."

"If it deems it appropriate, make recommendations to the state based on which further steps can be taken by the state or State Election Commission... The commission may submit the interim report if so advised to concerned authorities in two weeks from receipt of information/data from the state government," a bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar said.

The apex court clarified, however, that the list to be prepared by the state government concerning socially and educationally backward classes would be independent of the census carried out by the Centre.

"The information and data available to the state can be furnished to the dedicated commission which can take decisions about efficacy thereof and make recommendations to state government as may be necessary. This obviously would not complete the triple test exercise which has to be completed (as per 2010 judgement) before providing reservation of seats in local government for OBC category," said the bench, also comprising Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and C T Ravikumar.

This observation must also govern different states which are to proceed for elections of local govt, the top court, adding that until the triple test is complete, these seats will be treated as open category.

Senior advocate Shekhar Naphade, appearing for Maharashtra, submitted that the state has some data on the basis of which reservation can be sustained. He said there are elections in March and data is already before the commission.

"Your lordship may tell the commission to submit a report in two weeks so we can act on the March elections. Otherwise a large section of the community might go unrepresented," he said.

With regard to Madhya Pradesh, Additional Solicitor General K M Nataraj, appearing for the state, stated that the Election Commission has cancelled the Madhya Pradesh Panchayat Raj Evam Gram Swaraj (Amendment) Ordinance 2021 and assured that the new ordinance would be in accordance with apex court's directions.

Senior advocate P Wilson, appearing for one of the intervenors, said the OBC category does not have adequate representation. "We are happy with your lordship's decision to leave it to the commission."

A conspiracy has been hatched to trap me in this case, claimed Channi, referring to the ED raids conducted at the residence of his nephew on Tuesday. He alleged that attempts were being made by the federal probe agency sleuths to trap him in the case. Channi, accompanied by some ministers including Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, was addressing a press conference. ED sources said on Wednesday about Rs 10 crore cash has been seized during the raids conducted in an anti-money laundering investigation against illegal sand mining operations in Punjab that included about Rs 8 crore from the premises linked to Bhupinder Singh alias

# Punjab CM Channi alleges conspiracy to 'trap' him

## ED RAIDS

Handigarh, Jan 19 (PTI):

Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi on Wednesday accused the BJP-led central government of hatching a conspiracy to trap him in the case in which raids were conducted by the Enforcement Directorate at many places in the state. He alleged that whenever elections are to take place, the BJP government at the Centre uses agencies like the Enforcement Directorate (ED), Income Tax and others against political opponents to target and arm-twist them.

Honey, a nephew of Channi. Another about Rs 2 crore has been seized from the premises linked to a person identified as Sandeep Kumar; they said.

Reacting to the ED raid at his nephew's premises, Channi claimed that he was not even named in a 2018 FIR of the Nawanshahr (Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar district) Police. However, officials said the action has been initiated after taking cognisance of the 2018 FIR of the Nawanshahr Police and some other such police complaints against some companies and individuals alleged to be involved in the business of illegal sand mining in the state.



### BRIEF



A Black Kite bird perches on the finger of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's statue, in Kolkata, Wednesday.

### Unattended

**New Delhi:** Ahead of Republic Day celebrations, two unattended bags were found on Wednesday in east Delhi's Trilokpuri area, officials said. According to fire officials, they received a call at 1 pm regarding the bags near metro pillar number 59, block-15, Trilokpuri. Further details are awaited. Last week, an improvised explosive device (IED) stuffed with RDX and ammonium nitrate was found inside an unattended bag at the Ghazipur flower market.

### Suicide

**Jaipur:** A retired IRS officer allegedly committed suicide by consuming poison owing to domestic issues, police said on Wednesday. Shankar Lal Jain (64) was found dead at his factory that manufactures snacks in Bassi area earlier in the day. A suicide note was recovered from the spot, police said. Jain was upset as he was unable to marry off his children. His business was also going through a lean phase, they said.

### IEDs

**Seraikela:** A police team on Wednesday recovered 15 pressure cooker bombs, suspected to have been planted by Maoists, along a non-metalled road in a forest in Jharkhand's Seraikela-Kharswan district, a senior officer said. Shortly after the explosives were detected in Kaderango forest, a bomb disposal squad cordoned off the area and defused the IEDs, the officer said. According to the officer, the district police force has launched a massive anti-naxal operation here, on the directive of Superintendent of Police Anand Prakash.

### Mishap

**New Delhi:** A 30-year-old woman and her four children died after allegedly inhaling toxic smoke from an angithi (stove) kept in their room in Shahdara's Seemapuri area on Wednesday, police said. According to police, a PCR call was received at around 1.30 pm regarding four to five people lying unconscious in a room on the fifth floor of a house in Old Seemapuri. Upon reaching there, the woman and three of her kids were found dead while the fourth and the youngest one was taken to a hospital but declared dead by doctors, a senior police officer said.

Weather	
High	27
Low	12
MARKET	
NIFTY	17,938.40
SENSEX	60,098.82
BULLION	
GOLD	48,120
SILVER	63,918

## 'No foreign chief guest at R-Day this year'

New Delhi, Jan 19 (PTI):

This year there will be no foreign head of state or government as the chief guest for the Republic Day event, sources said on Wednesday.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic continuing and the cases rising, this would be the second year in a row when there would be no foreign leader as the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations.

"This year there will not be a Foreign Head of State or Head of Government as the chief guest for our Republic Day event," a source said.

There would be no foreign leader as the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations, but a day later Prime Minister Narendra Modi will host

### Restrictions imposed on charter flights, non-scheduled commercial flights

Restrictions have been imposed at the Delhi airport on charter flights and airlines' non-scheduled flights due to approaching Republic Day on January 26, stated a notice to airmen (NOTAM) issued by the Airports Authority of India (AAI). No landing or take off will be permitted from the Delhi airport for airlines' non-scheduled flights and general aviation companies' charter flights between 10.15 am-1.15 pm till January 24, the NOTAM noted. On Republic Day itself, non-scheduled flights and charter flights will not be allowed to land or take off from the Delhi airport between 7 am-1 pm and between 2 pm-6.30 pm, it mentioned. On January 29, due to Beating the Retreat ceremony, non-scheduled flights and charter flights will not be permitted to land or take off from the Delhi airport between 4 pm-7 pm, it noted. There will be no impact of NOTAM on the aircraft of the Indian Air Force, Border Security Force and the Indian Army's aviation wing, it mentioned. "State owned aircraft or helicopter can fly with the governor or chief minister of state," it noted. Scheduled flights of airlines will operate as usual, it mentioned.

the first India-Central Asia Summit in a virtual format on January 27.

The summit will be held with the participation of

the presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

### 5G SCARE

## Air India cancels 8 US flights

**DGCA working to overcome situation**

New Delhi, Jan 19 (PTI):

Air India cancelled eight flights on India-US routes from Wednesday onwards due to deployment of 5G internet in North America which could interfere with aircraft's navigation systems.

Meanwhile, DGCA chief Arun Kumar told PTI that the Indian aviation regulator was working "in close coordination with our carriers to overcome the situation" that has arisen due to 5G internet's deployment in the US.

US aviation regulator Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) had on January 14 said that "5G interference with the

aircraft's radio altimeter could prevent engine and braking systems from transitioning to landing mode, which could prevent an aircraft from stopping on the runway". Altimeter measures height of the aircraft above the ground. The band on which altimeter works is close to that on which 5G system works. Total three carriers - American Airlines, Delta Airlines and Air India - currently operate direct flights between India and the US.

American Airlines and Delta Airlines did not respond to PTI's queries regarding this matter.

Air India stated on Twitter that it won't be operate eight India-US flights on Wednesday "due to deployment of the 5G communications in the US".

## IndiGo planes avert mid-air collision over Bengaluru

New Delhi, Jan 19 (PTI):

Two IndiGo planes averted mid-air collision over the Bengaluru airport just after their take-off on the morning of January 9, senior officials of aviation regulator DGCA said on Wednesday.

The incident was not logged in any logbook and it was not reported by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) either, they said.

Meanwhile, DGCA chief Arun Kumar told PTI that the regulator is investigating the incident "and shall take strictest action against those found delinquent". IndiGo and the AAI did not respond to PTI's request for a statement on

**DGCA to probe, take strict action**

this matter. Officials of Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said that the two IndiGo planes - 6E455 (Bengaluru to Kolkata) and 6E246 (Bengaluru to Bhubaneswar) - were involved in breach of separation at Bengaluru airport.

Breach of separation happens when two aircraft cross the minimum mandatory vertical or horizontal distance in an airspace. Both these aircraft departed from the Bengaluru airport within a span of approximately 5 minutes on the morning of January 9, the officials mentioned.

### IIT KANPUR SCIENTIST

## India's third Covid wave likely to peak on Jan 23

New Delhi, Jan 19 (PTI):

The third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in India may peak on January 23 with daily cases likely to remain below the four lakh mark, according to a scientist at the Indian Institute of Technology-Kanpur.

Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata have already reached their peak in case numbers in the past seven days, said Manindra Agrawal, a professor at IIT Kanpur and one of the researchers associated with

the Sutra Covid model. The Sutra model has been used to track and predict Covid case numbers in the country since the beginning of the pandemic.

According to Agrawal, COVID-19 cases will peak in Maharashtra, Karnataka, UP, Gujarat, and Haryana this week, while states like Andhra Pradesh, Assam, and Tamil Nadu may peak next week.

The daily peak cases are projected to peak on January 23 in India and

stay below the four lakh mark. Metro cities Delhi, Mumbai, and Kolkata have already peaked, Agrawal told PTI.

Trajectory with data up to 11th indicates the peak on 23th Jan with nearly 7.2 lakh cases per day. The actual trajectory is already deviating significantly, and the actual peak is unlikely to cross 4 lakh cases/day, Agrawal tweeted on Tuesday.

Agrawal had earlier predicted that the COVID-19 third wave will peak by January end.

### ARMY PATROLLING



Army jawans pose near the snow-covered border in Poonch, Wednesday

### STRATEGY FOR UP POLLS

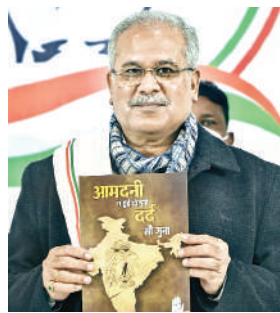
## 'Baghel meets Sonia, Rahul, Priyanka'

New Delhi, Jan 19 (PTI):

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel met Congress president Sonia Gandhi, former party chief Rahul Gandhi and party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra here on Wednesday, and discussed the strategy for the upcoming Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls.

Baghel, who has been appointed as the senior observer for the Uttar Pradesh polls by the Congress, met Sonia Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi at the former's 10, Janpath residence, while he called on Rahul Gandhi at his 12, Tughlaq Lane house, sources said.

During the meeting with the top Congress leaders, Baghel apprised them of the feedback he received during his recent Uttar



Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel at UPCC party office, ahead of UP assembly polls, in Lucknow, Wednesday.

Pradesh tour and also discussed the flagship schemes of Chhattisgarh that could be included in the party manifestoes for the upcoming Assembly polls in five states.

Schemes related to affordable generic medicines

and relief to farmers and the Godhan Nyay Yojana have been highly appreciated at the national level, the sources close to the Chhattisgarh chief minister said.

They added that Baghel has also invited the Gandhis to his son's wedding ceremony. The Congress believes that awareness has increased among people after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the government or the political party that takes better initiatives on this front stands a chance to get more political benefits, the sources said.

Baghel was on a tour of Uttar Pradesh recently, during which he took part in door-to-door campaigning for the Congress.

### COVID SURGE

## 84 IAS trainees at LBSNAA, Mussoorie test positive

**For COVID-19**

Dehradun, Jan 19 (PTI):

Eighty-four IAS trainees at Mussoorie's Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration have tested positive for the ovel coronavirus infection, officials said on Wednesday.

Those infected have been isolated and the rest quarantined at the academy. Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Manoj Upreti said.

A group of 480 IAS trainees, including those of allied services, arrived here on Sunday from Gujarat on way to the Academy, he said.

Reports of their RT-PCR tests conducted at the

Dehradun Railway Station on arrival have come positive, he said.

Meanwhile, 25 personnel at the state police headquarters here have also tested positive for the infection. DGP Ashok Kumar asked the infected personnel to take precautions besides asking those who had come into contact with them to undergo RT-PCR tests and quarantine themselves. As all police department personnel have received both doses of COVID-19 vaccine, all of them have mild symptoms only, the CMO said.

Uttarakhand had on Tuesday reported 4,482 positive cases, the highest single-day caseload in the state in eight months.

### MAJOR DECISION

## Cabinet sanctions Rs 974 cr to SBI for ex-gratia payment to borrowers

New Delhi, Jan 19 (PTI):

The government on Wednesday approved sanction of Rs 973.74 crore to State Bank of India (SBI) as reimbursement related to loan moratorium that was implemented in 2020 amid the pandemic.

This amount is for the payment of claims submitted by lending institutions (LIs) under the scheme for grant of ex-gratia to borrowers in specified loan accounts during the moratorium period announced by RBI in March 2020.

Briefing media on the Cabinet decision, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur said the Budget had made provision of Rs 5,500 crore for the scheme of ex-gratia payment of difference between compound interest and simple interest for six months to borrowers in specified loan accounts.

Of this, Rs 4,626.93 crore payment was made in 2020-21, he said, adding, additional claims of Rs 1,846 crore were received during the current financial year.

SBI was given Rs 873.07 crore towards reimbursement of ex-gratia between July 23 and September 22, 2021. To clear the remaining amount, Thakur said, the Union Cabinet has approved sanction of Rs 973.74 crore to SBI towards payment of these dues. "Operational guidelines for the scheme are already

issued with the approval of the Cabinet. The said amount of Rs 973.74 crore will be disbursed in accordance with the said operational guidelines," an official statement said.

On March 27, 2020, RBI announced a loan moratorium on payment of instalments of term loans falling due between March 1 and May 31, 2020, due to the pandemic. Later, the same was extended to August 31.

Financial and non-banking financial institutions were asked to credit the difference between compound and simple interest collected on loans of up to Rs 2 crore during the moratorium scheme in November 2020.

The Ministry of Finance has said that after crediting this amount, the lending institutions would claim reimbursement from the central government. SBI was made a nodal agency for reimbursement of claims.

By granting ex-gratia payment of difference between compound interest and simple interest during the six month moratorium period to distressed/vulnerable category of borrowers, irrespective of whether the borrower had availed of moratorium or not, the scheme would equitably help small borrowers bear the stress on account of the pandemic and get back on their feet, the statement said.

## Covid ban on Int'l passenger flights extended

**Till Feb 28**

New Delhi, Jan 19:

The suspension of scheduled international passenger flights in the country has been extended till February 28, aviation regulator DGCA said on Wednesday.

Scheduled international passenger flights have been suspended in India since March 23, 2020.

However, special passenger flights have been operating between India and approximately 40 countries since July 2020 under air bubble arrangements formed with them.

In a circular on Wednesday,

Directorate General of Civil Aviation stated: "The competent authority has decided to extend the suspension of scheduled international commercial passenger services to/from India till 2359 hrs IST of February 28, 2022."

This restriction shall not apply to international all-cargo operations and flight specifically approved by the DGCA, it mentioned.

Fights under air bubble arrangement will not be affected, it noted.

The DGCA had on November 26, 2021, announced that India will resume scheduled international passenger flights from December 15, 2021.





# CENTRAL Chronicle

Since 1974 Volume 9 No. 290

## Demographic trend

India's population is set to fall as its total fertility rate (TFR) or the average number of children born to a woman over her lifetime has dropped below replacement level for the first time and is now 2. This was revealed in the National Family Health Survey data for 2019-21 for phase-2 states along with all-India data. The replacement level TFR, at which a population exactly replaces itself from one generation to the next, is estimated to be 2.1. Rural TFR is above replacement level only in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand among the larger states and in Meghalaya, Manipur and Mizoram among the smaller states. With correct economic policies, India can accelerate economic growth as population growth is now stable. Need is to take balanced approach regarding demographic trend. In general, households tend to opt for smaller family sizes when the infant mortality rate declines – part of a complex web of reasons that has driven the demographic transition across large parts of India. The relationship between declining infant mortality rates and increasing female literacy is widely known in demography, and these are two of the primary proximate causes of declining fertility. India continues to have a large number of adolescents and youth. Hence, despite the decline in TFR, it will take some time for overall population growth in the country to slow down. It is critical that we make the most of this window of opportunity by investing in education, health and skill development for our youth. Enabling access to secondary and higher education as well as suitable opportunities for women to participate in the labour force, needs special focus. The TFR represents the average number of births per woman, and for reference, the UK has a TFR of 1.65 while the USA maintains a 1.70. India has now hit a national record low of less than 2.0, below the replacement rate threshold of 2.1, with some regions even reporting a TFR of 1.6. While the effect will not be an immediate downswing in population, it will slow the population growth significantly. Urbanisation is also an important reason for the decline. By 2030, as much as 41 percent Indians will be living in towns and cities. In the countryside, an additional family member is a helping hand but in cities raising a child is expensive. Also in cities, women have less social pressure to have more children. The survey shows the fertility rate at 1.6 percent in urban areas and 2.1 percent in rural India. The current moderate to slightly high fertility in a few categories of the population is because of lower education, higher infant mortality, preference for sons and lack of access to good quality family-planning services. It's time to stop playing politics over population and focus on the profound economic and social impacts of a slowing population growth. India has entered a demographic sweet spot that will continue for another three decades, half of India's population is under 29 years of age.

## Afghan identity

UN human rights experts have voiced grave concern over attempts by the Taliban in Afghanistan to steadily erase women and girls from public life, saying women from ethnic and religious minorities such as the Hazara, Tajik, Hindu and other communities are even more vulnerable in the war-torn country. Afghanistan never had a sense of national kinship despite a common religious faith but different community affiliations. The sense of identity in Afghanistan is derived from tribes such as Pashtuns, Tajiks and Hazaras, but what gradually emerged as the overpowering distinction was one of religion and sects. The Shia-Sunni divide was a historical legacy and so was the split of Sunnis between the radicals - who were totally against the US-led West and in favour of a revival of Islam of the period of the four 'Companions' of Prophet or the 'Pious Caliphs' - and the body of Islamists who advocated that the Islamic Republic, though rooted in Sharia, was capable of existing in 'competition not conflict' with the Western democracy. The overriding imprint of radical Islam on Afghanistan strengthened through the years of the US-led 'war on terror' is traceable to the Jihad launched by the leading Ulema of the times - Al Tijani in Algeria, Abdul Wahab in Arabia and Wahab's follower Shah Waliullah in India - against the Western encroachment on 'Muslim land', in the middle of the 19th century. Due to their numbers, the key groups in the Afghan power stakes are the Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras and the Uzbeks. The Pashtuns are based in the southern and southeastern parts of Afghanistan and also have a presence across the border in north-western Pakistan, where the core of the Taliban leadership is said to have moved following the US invasion. The Tajiks, who speak Dari, occupy the northern and western parts of the country and have their stronghold in the Panjshir valley. They have featured prominently in Afghan power struggles. Apart from Ahmad Shah Massoud, the leader of the Northern Alliance, there was Burhanuddin Rabbani, who served as Afghan president from 1992 to 1996 before Kabul fell to the Taliban. Abdullah Abdullah, who has ended second-best in multiple presidential elections and had entered a power-sharing agreement with Ghani after the last of them, in 2019, is of mixed Pashtun-Tajik ethnicity but is widely considered the latter. The Hazaras are mainly based in central Afghanistan. The group, which speaks a Dari dialect, has historically faced persecution at the hands of Afghan rulers, leading to their perception as 'the traditional underclass of Afghan society'. But their numbers meant that they maintained their stronghold. The chief leader of the Uzbeks, the ethnic group that occupies the northern parts of Afghanistan, along its border with Uzbekistan, is Abdul Rashid Dostum, a warlord known for frequently changing sides. A report by the Minority Rights Group International in 1992, when the country was caught in a violent contest for power among its various warlords and militia commanders following the Soviet departure, was entitled, 'Afghanistan: A Nation of Minorities'.

## GYEONGBOK PALACE



Visitors wearing face masks take a photo in the snow at the Gyeongbok Palace, one of South Korea's well-known landmarks, in Seoul, South Korea.

## India needs roads network and still reach net zero carbon target

**UMA KAMBHAMPATI & SUBHAM KAILTHYA**

One of the keys to China's economic renaissance over the past couple of decades is often overlooked. Namely, it has built a lot of roads. China's highways have more or less tripled from around 50,000km in 2000 to around 160,000km by the end of 2020. This means that in just two decades, China has added highways that are 20 percent longer than the entire US interstate highway system, and these make up about 40 percent of all roads in the country. India, too, has tripled its highways over the same duration, but the network is far less impressive. They are lower quality, narrower, less well maintained and only make up a very small part of the total system of roads in the country. This is arguably one of the reasons why its economy has substantially underperformed China's over the past 20 years: China's GDP grew 12-fold to be worth USD14.7 trillion by 2020, while India's grew six-fold to be worth USD2.6 trillion over the same period. So why has India been much poorer at building roads? And with Prime Minister Modi having just committed to reaching net zero emissions by 2070, is it possible to build roads and decarbonise at the same time?

China's massive road-building programme is immediately visible to visitors. The pace of investment in the network has accelerated since 2011. Not only that, the Chinese are planning to increase their highway network by another 50 percent by 2035. On paper, it looks as though India's road infrastructure is better. The cumulative road network is 5.9 million kms, which is longer than China (4.6 million kms), though slightly smaller than the US (6.7 million kms). The density of India's road network, at 1.62km of roads per square kilometre of land, is much higher than the US (0.68) or China (0.49) – though this is not surprising when you reflect that both these rivals are geographically three times larger than India. However, the quality of India's road infrastructure is very poor: only 3 percent of these roads are national highways, and 75 percent of highways are only two-lane. Roads are congested and road maintenance is under-funded. At the same time, 40 percent of the roads are dirt roads, and over 30 percent of villages have no access to all-weather roads. Many explanations have been given for India's inadequate road investment, including lack of funds and poor project management. An Economist article from 2017 blamed a litigious system that makes it hard for the government to requisition land, as well as many public-private partnerships stalling. We recently published a paper arguing that India's political system is another factor: Road-building is jointly the responsibility of the central government and each state. The central government rewards states which are politically aligned with the ruling party, particularly the core supporters. In addition, road building requires coordination between

states and central government to get around obstacles like land acquisition, planning permission and vetting of tenders all of which can delay projects and lead to huge cost overruns. The need for green transport infrastructure is another issue. All this requires the central government to cooperate with states from across the political spectrum. Investing in road infrastructure can catalyse growth in two ways. Like all Keynesian investments, it increases employment, incomes and therefore demand throughout an economy. For a country like India with relatively low incomes and an excess supply of labour, road-building can unlock growth quickly – particularly as a way of recovering from the COVID collapse. As John Maynard Keynes famously said of the importance of government spending during difficult times: 'The government should pay people to dig holes in the ground and then fill them up.' Roads also make economies more productive. They make it easier for people to get to work, for supply chains to function, and for companies to bring goods to market. Roads bring down transport costs, make everyone more confident that things will move from A to B, and reduce the need for companies to store costly inventory to avoid running out of supplies. According to a 2014 World Bank survey, one in ten Indian firms thought inadequate transportation infrastructure was a major obstacle to their growth. It is worth pointing out that improvements to India's roads have already increased productivity for companies over the past two decades despite the poor quality of the network as a whole. We found that a 1 percent increase in road density raised productivity by about 0.25 percent. This

achieved with greater investment. Indeed, India is now investing more in its road network for exactly these reasons – though the US and China are too. India is planning to construct 40km of highways every day in the current financial year, and intends to increase its highways by a third in the next few years. Given a large pool of unemployed labour, the conditions are ideal to do this. But the worry is that the same old obstacles get in the way: a report earlier this year by a parliamentary standing committee suggested that more than 800 road projects had been delayed, for instance. Then there are carbon emissions, which have the potential to significantly increase both from road-building and increased traffic. Modi's announcement at COP26 that India would not aim for net zero until 2070 signals that, in the short run, growth is likely to come first and it is obviously difficult for wealthier nations to argue that India should not have a world-class road network. Having said that, road-building has to go hand in hand with investing in technology to reduce emissions, including more electric and hybrid vehicles and a charging network to make electric cars viable. This needs to not only be an investment priority for India but for players like the US who have been working to assist developing countries to decarbonise. If India is to tap the potential of infrastructure development to stimulate growth, it needs to both make the green transition part of the programme and to look at the obstacles to making road-building succeed. With a state-of-the-art road network, India could achieve so much more.

(Uma Kambhampati is Professor of Economics and Subham Kailthya is Teaching Fellow at University of Warwick, UK.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Mamata's ambition

Merciless Mamata Banerjee, also fondly known as Didi is no doubt the undisputed political leader of West Bengal. Her recent triumph in Assembly election in the state of West Bengal has propelled her to be chief of opposition alliance for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Seeing her propulsion into the national politics Mamata Banerjee has become overambitious. From West Bengal's state politics, she is now trying to form a united front against ruling BJP-led NDA, minus the Congress at the Centre. In this process, she has already started visiting non-BJP ruled states like Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan etc., in recent time. She minces no words to attack her bete noire Narendra Modi in any issue fair or foul. For her information I want to remind her that an exact similar type of attempt was made by one Chandra Babu Naidu, ex-CM of Andhra Pradesh, (son in law of NT Rama Rao) the then blue-eyed boy of the oppositions to topple the then government with the support of the opposition, which later on came down crashing into the ground. In present date Chandra Babu Naidu is a non-entity in state as well as nation's politics, in simple words he has become history. To be ambitious is good, but to be over ambitious it can boomerang badly. I wish Didi all the best.

Lanu Dutt, via email

### Exam experiments

Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) current objective type exams have brought in a lot of criticism from the student community as the papers were found very tricky, confusing and 'stress creating'. Students of class twelfth had the shock of their life when the English paper had them bewildered because of questions that were confusing and the option to be chosen, the students opine, were all similar and each answer was a valuable point in itself making the students very difficult to get the right one! Mathematics also had them tensed as it was lengthy and took time to get the answers! The problem was even raised in the parliament and a request was made to the Education Ministry to make evaluation liberal. He also expressed anguish as the students were totally depressed and mentally down and this can even affect their prospects also. The board had gone for such innovations in the past too and though some of its novelties had gone well with the students some did not. Now the board's experimentation of two semesters, as public examinations, and with difficult papers making the round undoubtedly has caused anxiety and apprehension among parents and students. The papers have caused a furore among the students, parents and teachers community spreading a sort of fear and panic and disappointment even among the very bright ones who are under severe pressure. Students who aimed for a centum now doubt whether they would be able to even score a pass mark in the subjects and what makes them tenser is the fact that the board had announced earlier that in a future situation if Covid crisis becomes critical and the exam in April is cancelled then the first-semester mark would be taken. The students cry that it would be a tough time for them when the results come as they would have to sweat a lot to get high marks in the second-semester exam if there is one. They also may find it hard to compete with state syllabus scorers who score more owing to a much easier set of questioning. What teachers and parents are worried about is that the board's new ideas and experimentation in question papers might result in more students opting for the state syllabus in the plus 2 levels in future. It is high time the board minimized its way of exploring and experimenting.

M Pradyu, via email



## WHAT THEY TWEET!

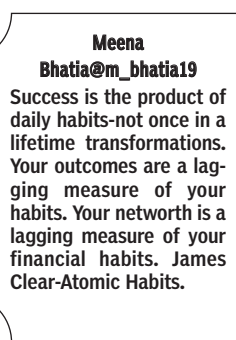


**Arvind Virmani@dravirmani**  
'Debt trap education,' and 'Debt trap diplomacy', share the problem of asymmetric information and Moral hazard; ie one side of the market has institutionally greater information and knowledge than the other, and can easily cheat the latter in the absence of an independent regulator!

**Anil Talwar@anitalwar2**  
As young offs we were always upto some prank or the other to unnerve our NCO instrs. During YO's, the tech classes were taken by NCO instrs. They always asked an initial question to link up to the main subject of the class. 'Tank kitne prakr ke hotey hain, koi ek?' Talwar saab.



**Raj Singh@RajSingNiranjan**  
Setting up of Hydro power plant below 25 MW is delicensed in India. Hence all states in India must be encouraged to set up as many hydro projects with MUST RUN status to help produce clean energy during monsoon. We must run such campaign to discuss with all stockholders.



**Meena Bhatia@m\_bhatia19**  
Success is the product of daily habits-not once in a lifetime transformations. Your outcomes are a lagging measure of your habits. Your network is a lagging measure of your financial habits. James Clear-Atomic Habits.



**Bharati Chaturvedi@Bharati09**  
Spot the weapon. No, it's not a gun. It fights climate change. #wetlands.



**Harini Calamur@calamur**  
Those tableaux (wtf don't we call them floats) remain about as interesting as they were when I was in the 3rd standard (a long time ago). why do we even have them? random people doing folk dances from the early days of DD such a supreme waste of time, energy, effort and bandwidth.

**Amar Sidhu@amarsidhu\_**  
Blindly aping the western way of life without thought and deliberation and running down your indigenous culture and calling it 'progressive' is resulting in chaos and will have its own pitfalls and consequences. Being in, and causing misery is hardly 'progressive'!

## MASS PRAYER



Devotees belonging to Brahmin community conduct a mass prayer for speedy recovery of those infected with COVID-19, in Varanasi, Wednesday.

## FINMIN TO MINISTRIES

# 'Restrict expenses within prescribed limit'

New Delhi, Jan 19 (PTI):

In a bid to maintain fiscal deficit within the targeted limit, the finance ministry has asked ministries and departments to restrict their expenses with the revised estimates. The communication comes ahead of the Union Budget 2022-23, likely to be unveiled on February 1.

In an office memorandum seeking proposals for the third and final batch of Supplementary Demands for Grants, the economic affairs department under the finance ministry asked the ministries and departments to submit their proposals by February 10.

"While processing proposals for supplementary grants, the grant-controlling authority must invariably identify savings available within the grant so that the infructuous or inflated supplementary demands are weeded out and the eventuality of surrender after obtaining supplementary grant is avoided," it said.

The proposal for Supplementary Demands for Grants may be projected after a thorough and objective assessment of additional requirements of funds, it said. "All the ministries and departments have been requested to contain the expenditure within the approved Revised Estimate ceilings," it said.

The government estimates a fiscal deficit of 6.8 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in the current financial year ending on March 31.

Fiscal deficit is an indication of the government's borrowing to meet the shortfall between expenditure and receipts from taxes and other sources. The memorandum further said the demand proposal should be made after a thorough review of savings within the Grant.

"In cases where re-appropriation can be made without the requirement of Supplementary as per the extant provisions, no Supplementary proposal, including for a token

amount, should be proposed. "Such requirement may be met by re-appropriation of savings after obtaining approval of competent authority," it said.

The cases that will be eligible to be incorporated under such demands include those where advances from the Contingency Fund of India have been granted.

Besides, payments against court decree will be included as well in cases where the finance ministry has specifically advised moving of supplementary demand in the budget session, it said. The two-phase Budget session begins on January 31 and continues till April 8.

## HOPE BEHIND BARS

# 'Book throws light on lives of prisoners in Indian jails'

New Delhi, Jan 19 (PTI):

Bringing prisoners' lives and liberties to the heart of public debate and policies, a new collection of essays, "Hope Behind Bars: Notes from Indian Prisons", gives readers valuable insights into the vexed idea of incarceration.

The collection of essays -- written by a retired Supreme Court judge, former prison administrators, lawyers, journalists, academicians, researchers, a former prisoner and leaders of grassroots organisations -- is edited by Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) director Sanjoy Hazarika and head of CHRI's prison reforms programme Madhurima Dhanuka.

Published by PAN Macmillan India, the book aims to shed light on the "opaqueness of the system, making it not just more humane but also showing what can be achieved within the current ambits of the law, despite the infirmities of creaky and ineffective processes".

"A prison is a world of its own, where residents live without the support systems that those on the outside take for granted. Prisoners hope and will each day to be their last in confinement. We believe that the stories in 'Hope Behind Bars' provide insight into lives less ordinary," wrote the editors in the introduction of the book.

Retired Supreme Court judge Madan B Lokur, celebrated SC human rights lawyer Vrinda Grover, journalist Sunetra Choudhury and CHRI researchers Sabika Abbas, Sugandha Mathur and Amrita Paul are among

the authors whose works are featured in the book.

It includes a powerful essay on the rights of vulnerable prisoners, write up on the challenges of establishing a prison training institute, the critical need to train prison officials and the gut-wrenching story of Wahid -- who spent ten years in prison on a terrorism case before a court pronounced him innocent -- where he talks of custodial violence, torture and police arbitrariness.

"Vrinda Grover traces how she navigated the ups and downs, twists and

turns of the Hashimpura killings case, which took thirty years to conclude: the case involved the Uttar Pradesh Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC), which was charged with gunning down forty-two Muslims in the Hashimpura area of Muzaffarnagar, less than a hundred kilometres from New Delhi.

"The perils of prolonged judicial delays were underlined in this case three of the accused died during this period," wrote the editors while talking about one of the chapters in the book.

# TMC trade union removes leader after disruption in Exide plant

Kolkata, Jan 19 (PTI):

The trade union arm of the Trinamool Congress, INTTUC, on Wednesday said its Purba Medinipur district president has been removed in a message of "zero tolerance" towards anyone disrupting smooth functioning of the industries in West Bengal.

The action was taken against Sanjay Banerjee after authorities of Exide plant in Haldia alleged that production was hampered due to protests by casual labours on Monday.

Some contract workers created chaos and prevented others from joining work leading to the disruption in production.

Without disclosing further details, Exide officials said production is back to normal on Wednesday.

Cabinet minister Moly Ghatak and Indian National Trinamool Trade Union Congress (INTTUC) state president Ritabrata Banerjee went to Haldia following the incident.

We have suspended the

district INTTUC leader (Sanjay Banerjee) on corruption charges. We want to reiterate the stand of our Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee about zero tolerance towards anyone who will try to disrupt smooth functioning of industry in the state, Banerjee told PTI.

Sanjay Banerjee was also removed from his post and was replaced by Sibnath Sarkar, he said. Operations at Exide's Haldia plant have been normalised now, Ritabrata Banerjee said.

## AIG HOSPITALS STUDY

# '30 % individuals lose vaccine-acquired immunity against COVID-19'

After 6 months

Hyderabad, Jan 19 (PTI):

As much as 30 per cent individuals lose vaccine-acquired immunity after six months, according to a study conducted by AIG Hospitals along with the Asian Healthcare Foundation on Vaccine Immunity.

The study was conducted on 1,636 healthcare workers who were fully vaccinated against COVID-19, a press release from AIG Hospitals said.

"Our study results were at par with other global studies where we found that almost 30 per cent individuals had antibody levels below protective immunity level of 100 AU/ml after six months. These individuals

were majorly above 40 years with co-morbidities like hypertension and diabetes. Out of the total, 6 per cent did not develop any immune protection at all," Dr D Nageshwar Reddy, Chairman, AIG Hospitals said.

The results clearly indicated that with age, immunity waning is directly proportional which means that younger people have more sustained antibody levels than the elderly population.

One of the most important results of the study showed that people above 40 years with co-morbidities like hypertension and diabetes have significantly less antibody response after six months of getting fully vaccinated, the release further said.

Individuals above 40 years with diabetes and hypertension of both genders may be at a higher risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection and these individuals should be prioritised for a booster dose after six months, AIG said.

At present, the nine-month gap for a precaution dose benefits 70 per cent of the population who can retain enough antibody levels beyond six months.

However, considering the scale of our country, the 30 per cent people especially those with co-morbid conditions like hypertension, diabetes, etc., who are more prone to develop an infection after six months of getting fully vaccinated should also be considered for the prevention dose, Dr Reddy added.

## Rebel SP MLA, elected assembly speaker quits his party

Lucknow, Jan 19 (PTI): Uttar Pradesh assembly's Deputy Speaker Nitin Agarwal, a Samajwadi Party MLA who had been elected to the House's post on the BJP's support, formally quit the SP's membership.

The SP MLA from Hardoi Sadar assembly seat said he has also quit as the MLA and deputy speaker of the House.

"I have sent my resignation from the SP to its national president Akhilesh Yadav. I have also resigned from the assembly membership and from the post of deputy speaker," Nitin Agarwal told reporters here.

Agarwal, who was elected the assembly deputy speaker on the BJP's support had not formally joined the party and was technically still an SP MLA.

## FOOD FOR NEEDY



Volunteers distribute food among the needy at Centenary Wesley Church in Hyderabad, Wednesday.

## OBC RESERVATION

# SC directs Maha govt to submit data before SBCC

New Delhi, Jan 19 (PTI):

The Supreme Court Wednesday directed the Maharashtra government to submit data on Other Backward Classes (OBCs) to the SBCC to examine its correctness and make recommendations on their representation in elections for the local bodies.

The top court also directed the State Backward Classes Commission (SBCC) to submit the interim report to the authorities concerned in two weeks of receiving information from the state government.

"Maharashtra has asked this court to permit elections based on data already available to the state

concerning other backward classes. Instead of examining the data, the appropriate step would be to present this data before a state appointed dedicated commission which can examine the correctness..."

"If it deems it appropriate, make recommendations to the state based on which further steps can be taken by the state or State Election Commission... The commission may submit the interim report if so advised to concerned authorities in two weeks from receipt of information/data from the state government," a bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar said.

The apex court clarified, however, that the list to be

prepared by the state government concerning socially and educationally backward classes would be independent of the census carried out by the Centre.

"The information and data available to the state can be furnished to the dedicated commission which can take decisions about efficacy thereof and make recommendations to state government as may be necessary. This obviously would not complete the triple test exercise which has to be completed (as per 2010 judgement) before providing reservation of seats in local government for OBC category," said the bench, also comprising Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and C T

Ravikumar. This observation must also govern different states which are to proceed for elections of local govt, the top court, adding that until the triple test is complete, these seats will be treated as open category.

Senior advocate Shekhar Naphade, appearing for Maharashtra, submitted that the state has some data on the basis of which reservation can be sustained. He said there are elections in March and data is already before the commission.

"Your lordship may tell the commission to submit a report in two weeks so we can act on the March elections. Otherwise a large section of the com-

munity might go unrepresented," he said.

With regard to Madhya Pradesh, Additional Solicitor General K M Nataraj, appearing for the state, stated that the Election Commission has cancelled the Madhya Pradesh Panchayat Raj Evam Gram Swaraj (Amendment) Ordinance 2021 and assured that the new ordinance would be in accordance with apex court's directions.

Senior advocate P Wilson, appearing for one of the intervenors, said the OBC category does not have adequate representation. "We are happy with your lordship's decision to leave it to the commission."

# Punjab CM Channi alleges conspiracy to 'trap' him

handigarh, Jan 19 (PTI):

Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi on Wednesday accused the BJP-led central government of hatching a conspiracy to trap him in the case in which raids were conducted by the Enforcement Directorate at many places in the state. He alleged that whenever elections are to take place, the BJP government at the Centre uses agencies like the Enforcement Directorate (ED), Income Tax and others against political opponents to target and arm-twist them.

A conspiracy has been

hatched to trap me in this case, claimed Channi, referring to the ED raids conducted at the residence of his nephew on Tuesday. He alleged that attempts were being made by the federal probe agency sleuths to trap him in the case. Channi, accompanied by some ministers including Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, was addressing a press conference. ED sources said on Wednesday about Rs 10 crore cash has been seized during the raids conducted in an anti-money laundering investigation against illegal sand mining operations in Punjab that included about Rs 8 crore from the premises linked to Bhupinder Singh alias

Honey, a nephew of Channi. Another about Rs 2 crore has been seized from the premises linked to a person identified as Sandeep Kumar; they said.

Reacting to the ED raid at his nephew's premises, Channi claimed that he was not even named in a 2018 FIR of the Nawanshahr (Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar district) Police. However, officials said the action has been initiated after taking cognisance of the 2018 FIR of the Nawanshahr Police and some other such police complaints against some companies and individuals alleged to be involved in the business of illegal sand mining in the state.