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BRIEF



Women perform Kulvi Naati at Manali Winter Carnival, in Manali, Thursday.

Market fire

New Delhi: A fire broke out at New Lajpat Rai market opposite the Red Fort in Chandni Chowk here early on Thursday, Delhi Fire Services officials said. There were no casualties in the incident, they said. The fire engulfed around 60 'khokas' (kiosks) in the market, police said. A call about the fire at New Lajpat Rai Market was received around 4.43 am and 13 fire tenders were rushed to the spot, said Delhi Fire Services Director Atul Garg said.

Suicide

Bulandshahr: A couple here allegedly committed suicide by consuming a poisonous substance, police said Thursday. They were married four years. They were residents of Alipur Chitosna village of BB Nagar Police Station limits and they consumed a poisonous substance late Wednesday night, the police said. They were taken to a private hospital in Meerut for treatment where they died.

Lifer

Muzaffarnagar: A Special POCSO Court here on Thursday sentenced a 27-year-old man to life imprisonment for raping and killing a minor girl last July. The accused Sunil Kumar was also imposed with a fine of Rs 45,000 in addition to the sentence awarded by Judge Sanjiv Kumar Tiwari. Kumar was convicted under sections 376, 302, and 201 of the Indian Penal Code, and 5 and 6 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

Markets shut

New Delhi: Two markets in the national capital were ordered to be shut for a certain period in view of "violation of COVID containment guidelines, according to an official order. It said the breach may have caused "super-spreading" of the coronavirus. The office of the Karawal Nagar SDM on January 5 ordered closure of Sonia Vihar 2nd Pusta Market and Mukund Vihar Market, Karawal Nagar, from 4 pm January 6 till 10 am January 7, or till further orders, whichever is earlier. The order said the containment restrictions were applicable for all, except shops dealing with essential goods and services.

	Weather
High 28	Low 14
MARKET	
NIFTY	17,745.90
SENSEX	59,601.84
BULLION	
GOLD	47,565
SILVER	60,659

PM'S PUNJAB VISIT

Union cabinet discusses security breach

■ Ministers seek exemplary action

New Delhi, Jan 06 (PTI)

The Union cabinet is learnt to have discussed on Thursday the issue of security breach during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Punjab, with several ministers expressing concern over the development and seeking "exemplary action" in the matter, sources said.

They said all the ministers expressed anguish over the "major security breach" during Modi's visit to the Congress-ruled state on Wednesday, with some demanding strong action. The cabinet meet-



Union I & B Minister Anurag Thakur briefs the media on Cabinet decisions, at NMC in New Delhi, Thursday.

ing, chaired by the prime minister, was held after a week's gap. It started with several ministers raising the issue and expressing anguish over the manner in which the Congress government in Punjab has

dealt with it. "A number of ministers also felt that there should be exemplary action in the matter, so that such events are never repeated again. They also said that never before has a prime minister's security been compromised in this manner," a minister said on the condition of anonymity. The sources said the issue is being discussed at the highest level and the Union home minister may take some exemplary action to avoid the recurrence of such an event.

Modi also met President Ram Nath Kovind and briefed him on the security breach during his visit to Punjab, drawing his concern over the serious lapse. "President

Ram Nath Kovind met Prime Minister Modi at the Rashtrapati Bhavan today and received from him a first-hand account of the security breach in his convoy in Punjab yesterday. The President expressed his concerns about the serious lapse," the president's secretariat wrote on Twitter.

"Called on Rashtrapati Ji. Thankful to him for his concern. Grateful for his good wishes, which are always a source of strength," Modi said in a tweet after his meeting with Kovind.

Earlier, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu spoke to the prime minister and expressed his deep concern over the incident.

POLL-BOUND STATES

EC reviews Covid, law and order situation

■ Stresses on need for vaccinations

New Delhi, Jan 06 (PTI)

The Election Commission on Thursday reviewed the Covid situation with the Union health secretary and health experts, collecting inputs on necessary safety measures to be ensured during the democratic exercise and emphasising the need for vaccination of all eligible people in five poll-bound states, sources said.

In a separate meeting,

Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case

Court allows Sudha Bharadwaj, out on bail, to shift to Thane

Mumbai, Jan 06 (PTI)

A special court here on Thursday allowed activist Sudha Bharadwaj, recently released on bail in the Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case, to live in the neighbouring Thane district instead of Mumbai.

Bharadwaj was granted bail by the Bombay High Court in December 2021, three years after her arrest.

The special court for National Investigation Agency (NIA) cases, while passing the release order, had said that she shall not leave Mumbai without permission.

The activist later filed

an application seeking permission to live in her friend's house in Thane, stating that finding accommodation in Mumbai was expensive.

Special Judge D E Kothalkar on Thursday granted the plea.

The court also took on record the address where she would be living, and directed her to report to the Vartak Nagar police station in Thane city every fortnight.

The investigating officer is at liberty to verify the correctness of the address and inform the senior police inspector of Vartak Nagar police station, the court said.

Kashmir confirmed the intention of the Centre to "convert J&K into a military garrison". According to an order issued in Jammu on 31 December 2021 by the Tourism Department of Jammu and Kashmir, 1,034 kanals (approximately 52 hectares) of land at the famous ski-resort of Gulmarg and 354 (approximately 18 hectares) kanals in Sonamarg, another popular destination in Ganderbal district, were declared as "strategic areas" for the use of armed forces in the region.

The armed forces can undertake infrastructure development even in ecologically fragile areas which are declared as "strategic areas" by the government.

DPD president Mehboba Mufti criticised the government move, saying the allocation of huge tracts of land to armed forces in tourist areas of J&K is breached, the

KEEPING AWAY COLD



People warm themselves around a bonfire during a cold winter day, in Amritsar, Thursday.

Adani group to supply imported coal to NTPC

New Delhi, Jan 06 (PTI)

Billionaire Gautam Adani's port-to-energy conglomerate on Thursday said it had won a contract to supply imported coal to state-owned electricity generator NTPC but played down its significance saying the volume of 1 million tonnes was small.

NTPC has awarded the contract to the company for the supply of 1 million tonnes of imported coal to its various power plants, Adani Enterprises said in a stock exchange filing.

The contract, it said, was awarded by NTPC through "an elaborate bidding process (that) started in the end of October 2021, followed by reverse bidding and negotiations."

HIGHEST IN 8 MONTHS

15,097 new Covid cases in Delhi

■ Positivity Rate 15%

New Delhi, Jan 06

Delhi on Thursday reported over 15,000 cases of coronavirus in 24 hours - the highest since May 8. The national capital's daily cases jumped a whopping 41.5 per cent in a day as 15,097 infections were detected in the city. This comes a day after the city witnessed its biggest single-day spike - 10,665 cases - in nearly eight months. The positivity rate has surpassed 15 per cent.

Six related deaths were recorded in the same period. Delhi, one of the worst-hit states by the Covid pandemic, has been producing a tidal wave of cases over the past few days, a surge that is believed to be driven by the highly transmissible

Omicron variant of the virus. The spike in Covid cases is also being accompanied by higher numbers of hospitalisations.

The number of patients in hospitals in Delhi has increased from 247 on January 1 to 531 on January 4, according to the latest data. In the last three days, the number of patients on oxygen support has increased from 94 to 168 and those on ventilators from four to 14. 1,116 out of the 12,104 oxygen beds for Covid patients are occupied in Delhi hospitals, while 72 ICU beds with ventilators have patients, reported news agency PTI.

Earlier in the day, state Health Minister Satyendar Jain had said that Delhi would likely report around 14,000 fresh cases today. The minister, however, ruled out the possibility of a lock-

down in the national capital. "Covid cases in Delhi have seen a sharp rise in the past few days. Many more cases have come, today it is going to be near 14,000," Mr Jain had said, attributing the rise to increased testing.

"We are conducting the maximum number of tests in the country."

Reassuring the people of Delhi about the city's preparedness to deal with the spike, the minister said Delhi is in a "comfortable position" in terms of hospital bed occupancy.

"Currently, the death ratio is 1 in 1,000. The situation is fine as compared to last time. Yesterday we had 9,000 free beds, today it has become 12,000, so our preparations are complete. We are now conducting close to 90,000 tests," he said.

'BJP politicising issue of security breach during PM's Punjab visit'

Raipur, Jan 06 (PTD)



Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Thursday accused the BJP of politicising the issue of security breach during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Punjab and dubbed it as a conspiracy to defame the Congress government in that state.

Denying security lapses on part of the Punjab government, Baghel also asked the prime minister whether he will take action against central security agencies for making a sudden change in his travel plan.

In a major security lapse, the prime minister's convoy was stranded on a flyover due to a blockade by protesters in Ferozepur on Wednesday. He returned from poll-bound Punjab without attending any event, including a

rally. Punjab CM Charanjit Singh Channi has denied any security lapse or political motive behind it and said his government is ready for an inquiry.

The PM's security is the topmost priority irrespective of the party he belongs to. There should be no mistake in it. But, the statements being given by BJP leaders and Union ministers

are unfortunate, Baghel sought to know.

Farmers from Punjab were on a protest for 14 months against farm laws. Seven hundred farmers were "martyred" (allegedly) during protest, he claimed.

Rs 12,000-CR OUTLAY

Govt approves Green Energy Corridor Phase-II

New Delhi, Jan 06 (PTD)

mission lines and approx. 27,500 Mega Volt-Amperes (MVA) transformation capacity of substations," an official statement said.

The scheme will facilitate grid integration and power evacuation of about 20 GW of renewable energy (RE) projects in seven states - Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

Announcing the decision, Union Minister Anurag Thakur said the second phase will be implemented during 2021-22 to 2025-26 financial years.

The minister added that 80 per cent of the phase one work has been completed.

long-term energy security of the country and promote ecologically sustainable growth by reducing the carbon footprint.

Besides, it will generate large direct and indirect employment opportunities for both skilled and unskilled personnel in power and other related sectors, the statement said.

This scheme is in addition to GEC Phase-I which is already under implementation in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

The CFA will help in offsetting the intra-state transmission charges and keep the power costs down. Thus, the government support will ultimately benefit the end users, it added.

The scheme will help in achieving the target of 450 GW installed RE capacity by 2030.

It will also contribute to

the

HATE SPEECH CASE

Kalicharan Maharaj sent in judicial custody

Pune, Jan 06 (PTI)

Pune Police had arrested Kalicharan alias Abhijit Sarag from Raipur.

A case has been registered against Kalicharan Maharaj, right-wing leader Milind Ekbote, Captain (retired) Digendra Kumar and others at Khadak police station here. They are accused of making inflammatory speeches during an event in the city, in judicial custody.

He was produced in the court after his one-day police custody got over. Judicial Magistrate (First Class) M A Shaikh remanded him in judicial custody.

The police did not press for more custody.

A bail application was also filed, and it would be heard on Friday, said his lawyer Amol Dange.

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70 ha land in Gulmarg, Sonamarg declared 'strategic areas'

■ Army can take control of the patch now

Srinagar, Jan 06 (PTD)

The Jammu and Kashmir government has declared nearly 70 hectares of land in Gulmarg and Sonamarg tourist resorts of the valley as "strategic areas", paving the way for the armed forces to take control of these land patches.

The armed forces can undertake infrastructure development even in ecologically fragile areas which are declared as "strategic areas" by the government.

DPD president Mehboba Mufti criticised the government move, saying the allocation of huge tracts of land to armed forces in tourist areas of J&K is breached, the

order said. "Corp Commander shall ensure that the orders, if any passed by an hon'ble court/tribunal in this regard, are strictly adhered to," the order reads.

This was the first notification issued by the administration of the union territory after the amendment to Jammu and Kashmir Development Act 1970 by the Union Home Ministry in October 2020 through an executive order.

The Administrative Council headed by the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir gave its nod to the amendment to the Control of Building Operations Act 1988 and the J&K Development Act, 1970 to provide for special dispensation for carrying out construction activities in strategic areas.

INC's Neeraj Pal becomes fifth Mayor of Bhilai



Girwar Bunty Sahu elected Speaker

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 06: Senior Corporator and Congress leader Neeraj Pal has been elected as the fifth Mayor of Bhilai Municipal Corporation while the first time Corporator Girwar Bunty Sahu has been elected as the Speaker. With this, Congress succeeded in forming the local government at Bhilai.

On the other hand, BJP suffered cross-voting for

the second consecutive day, BJP has 24 Corporators in Bhilai Municipal Corporation but its Mayoral and Speaker candidates got only 22 votes. It clearly indicates that two of the BJP corporators have voted for Congress or Independent candidates.

Earlier on Wednesday at Risali, three of the BJP Corporators did cross voting at Risali Municipal Corporation.

The subsequent sabotage by the party cadre has raised worries of the BJP top leadership as there is a very close contest in Jamul

Municipal Council, which is going to witness polling for the post of President and Speaker on January 07. Dishonesty of even a single Corporator can change the game here.

At the outset, the programme in Bhilai Municipal Corporation began with the oath taking ceremony of all the 70 newly elected Corporators. District Collector Dr Sarveshwar Narendra Bhure administered the oath to them. District Guardian Minister Mohammad Akbar, MLA Devendra Yadav, DCC

President Mukesh Chandrakar, Member of Parliament Vijay Baghel, MLA Vidyaratna Bhasin and other dignitaries were present.

Thereafter the process of filing nominations for the post of Mayor, Speaker and Appeal Committee began at the same venue. All the Congress Corporators moved to a nearby hotel with the Guardian Minister and Bhilai Nagar MLA where final discussion for its candidates was conducted.

The party selected senior Corporator Neeraj Pal

as its Mayoral candidate while first time Corporator Girwar Bunty Sahu was fielded for the post of Speaker. On coming to know about the party's decision, senior woman leader and Sector 10 Corporator Subhadra Singh revolted and even announced to resign from party membership.

With her supporters, she reached the nomination filling venue and started preparation to file mayoral nomination as an independent candidate. However, she did not get any introducer and was

unable to file the nomination. On the other hand, senior party leaders managed to convince her and diffuse the tension.

On the other hand, BJP fielded senior corporator Mahesh Verma for the post of Mayor and Shyam Sundar Rao for the post of Speaker. The independent corporators also fielded their candidates for both the posts. Yogesh Sahu filed nomination for Mayor's seat while Anita Ajay Sahu filed nomination for the post of Speaker. It needs to be mentioned here that out of 70

Corporators, 37 are from INC, 24 from BJP and nine are independent.

Out of the nine independents, five had already given support to INC. In this manner, INC had managed to gather support of 42 corporators. However the results declared after counting were astonishing for BJP as the party suffered cross-voting of two Corporators.

In the mayoral contest, INC's Neeraj Pal got 44 votes; BJP's Mahesh Verma got 22 votes and independent Yogesh Sahu got only four votes. In the

contest for Speaker's position, INC's Girvar Bunty Sahu got 44 votes, BJP's Shyam Sundar Rao got 22 votes and independent Anita Ajay Sahu got only 04 votes.

The appeal committee was unanimously elected. Members of the appeal committee are Ravishankar Kurre (INC); Anju Sinha (INC); Bhojraj Sinha (BJP) and Rajendra Kumar (Independent). After declaration of results, District Collector handed over the certificates to the winning candidates.

Independents make their presence felt from the first day

Submit a charter of nine demands

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 06: The independent candidates of Bhilai Municipal Corporation made their presence felt from the first day itself by fielding their candidates for the post of Mayor and Speaker.

Later when the INC was busy in celebration and BJP in introspection, the independents led by senior corporator Bashisth Narayan Mishra submitted a charter of nine demands at the office of BMC Commissioner. Through this charter of demands, they tried to highlight the prominent public interest issues of the citizens of Bhilai. The demands in-



clude reduction of Property Tax by 50%; reduction of power bills by 50%, ensuring clean drinking water to every household; renewal of lease; construction of Canal Road from Camp-2 to Rani Avanti Bai Square; rejuvenation of JLN Hospital Sector 9; establishing Swami Atmanand English

Medium Schools at 65 schools of BSP; and action against the people responsible for weakening the financial condition of Bhilai Municipal Corporation. Independent Corporators Bashisth Narayan Mishra, Yogesh Sahu, Anita Sahu and Rajendra Kumar were present.

Online Slogan Writing & Quiz Competition held in Rungta Public School



Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 06: As a part of the British Council International Dimension in Schools (IDS) Activity, online Slogan writing competition and online Quiz competition were held for students of Middle wing of Rungta Public School, under the aegis of Sanjay Rungta Group of Institutions.

The competitions were organised to develop awareness about environment conservation among the children of that age-group. The minutely planned activities were preceded by concept building sessions in the form of Power Point

Presentations and Group Discussions conducted by the Subject Teacher, Shilpi Ganguly. This helped to create immense interest among the students on the various aspects of conservation and Bio-diversity.

They enthusiastically participated in the competitions that provided them a platform to explore the diverse flora and fauna of the world and the key concepts of conservation. The CEO of the school Arup Mukhopadhyay appreciated the efforts of the students under the guidance of their teachers and encouraged them to develop a scientific aptitude.

Safety Campaign for Contractual Workers launched through Games



Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 06: SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant is committed to fully ensure safety of its employees and contract workers. In order to keep contract workers glued to Safety norms, a new campaign has been launched recently.

Anjan Kumar, ED (Works) in the presence of CGMs and senior officials witnessed the 'Safety campaign' through the game of Snakes and Ladders.

'Snakes and Ladders' that has been specially created keeping in mind safety parameters.

Contract workers participated in the campaign organised as part of the Safety Awareness Month. Dangers and Preventive measures were explained to the contract workers through the game of Snakes and Ladders. Awareness will be created for contract workers and their families through the game of Snakes and Ladders. Additional Collector listened to the

Material Recovery Department creates multiple production records

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 06: Material Recovery Department of SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant has kept up its excellent performance by creating records for best December month, best-ever calendar year and best-ever April-December performance.

Anirban Dasgupta, Director I/c (BSP) congratulated the MRD collective and urged them to continue the momentum of production by creating records in the coming future. Gyanesh Jha, HoD (MRD) gave his best wishes to the MRD collective for future challenges. BP Rao, CGM (MRD), who has joined BSP from Dokar Steel Plant was given a

warm welcome by the MRD officials. Anjani Kumar, ED (Works) praised the employees of MRD for the achievements and stated that the records have been created due to the collective efforts and hard work of all employees. He laid em-

phasis on a safe work environment while continuing to convert waste into wealth for the plant. Best ever December month performance since inception has been recorded in Boria Complex of MRD in Dec 2021. Records have been created for material

despatch and generating revenue surpassing the previous record of December 2020. In the calendar year 2021, total volume of 5,10,281 T material despatch was made breaking the previous records of 2,76,397 T in the calendar year 2020 and register-

ing a significant growth of 85%. In the financial year 2021-22, MRD despatched 3,31,607 T of Material in April to December 2021 period, crossing the previous record of 2,14,065 T in corresponding period of 2020-21.

MRD department has been continuously making records for the last 15 months due to the collective efforts and perseverance of MRD employees, guidance by SN Abidi, CGM I/c (Services) under the leadership of GM Gyanesh Jha, GM (MRD). SN Abidi expressed confidence that MRD will continue its record production under the leadership of BP Rao, CGM (MRD) in the future.

Collector releases calendar of Health Department



Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 06: Collector Dr Sarveshwar Narendra Bhure on Thursday released the calendar of health department. Pictures and materials related to achievements of health department in Durg district have been shared in the calendar. These include, efforts made for Covid control, work being done on new medical facilities in the district hospital, other facilities in health centers and new infrastructure in the field of health. The Health Department delegation met the Collector on Thursday regarding its release. The collector expressed his

appreciation after seeing the contents of the calendar. CMH Dr Gambhir Singh Thakur told the Collector that every year the calendar is published in the district by the Health Department. Efforts are being made to issue a calendar on a different theme every time and through this inform about the expansion of health facilities in the district. On this occasion Civil Surgeon cum Superintendent Dr P Balkishore, District Malaria and Immunization Officer Dr CBS Banjare, Radiologist of District Hospital Dr Arun Sahu, executive members of Jeevan Deep Samiti Dilip Thakur and Dushyant Devangon were also present.

COVID-19 and new Omicron variant have been enumerated.

A number of measures have been enlisted vide BSP Circular dated January 05, 2021. The measures include guidelines that all meetings and training programmes shall be conducted on virtual mode only. No visitor will be allowed to enter plant premises/offices of Bhilai Steel Plant with immediate effect. Maitri Bagh and Zoo will remain closed till further orders. Social, cultural, religious gatherings including sports events and rallies are now prohibited as per the guidelines issued by State Authorities. Also, employees are advised to refrain from gathering together within work premises,

corridors and canteens.

BSP management has urged employees to be safe, secure and follow social distancing norms. The management urges employees to compulsorily wear masks, follow proper sanitisation and wash hands regularly. Employees have been advised to use stairs instead of lifts as far as possible. Employees should desist from spreading rumours or misinformation which is detrimental to the interest of the organization.

Employees are advised strongly to avoid unnecessary travel which may lead to spread of infection. Employees performing inter-state/inter-national inward travel on or after 04-01-2022, should have nega-

tive RT-PCR test report for the time period within 72 hours of arrival at Head Quarter. Employees will need to submit RT-PCR report at the time of joining.

BSP is making concerted efforts and steps in the context of the COVID 19 pandemic so that all measures are taken to control the pandemic. The management has been issuing guidelines and circulars from time to time and employees are their families are advised to adhere to all such guidelines. Violation of any Government Directives and/or guidelines issued by BSP on COVID-19 by any employee will be viewed seriously. Cooperation and care will certainly help in controlling the spread COVID-19.

Collector releases calendar of Health Department



suggestions of the representatives and assured to consider them in the formulation of the strategy.

CMHO Dr Gambhir Singh Thakur informed about the current situation of corona infection and urged all to take maximum precaution.

The office bearers of the Chamber of Commerce expressed their support to the district administration for Covid combat. They suggested considering the practical aspects related to the sector for which the rules are to be drawn up. For example, restaurant timings are slightly different from other shops. They

demanded to increase the Testing facilities and include the representatives of Chambers in the war room meetings so that the customers and the traders can be benefited. They assured to extend all possible support to the administration including participation in awareness campaigns.

IMA representatives said that there have been reports of new variants like Omicron in the country. There is a need to make people aware about the symptoms of the new variant. IMA assured to work in the direction of dissemination of

awareness material prepared by the district administration and health department. They also assured to cooperate with the health department.

Office bearers of social organizations and NGOs said that like the previous waves, this time also they are committed to help the people. Social organizations assured to open Covid Care Centres if the number of cases increases. NGP representatives suggested imposing a fine on people who do not wear masks and utilize the fine amount in providing masks to them.

The representatives of the workmen and farmers said that the daily earners are dragged to suffering end in case of lockdown. The administration should make preparations in advance as the possibility of such a situation is approaching fast.

Additional Collector said that the economically weaker section is the first priority of the administration and they are fully committed in this direction.

The media persons said that

In view of the increasing cases of Covid 19, the District Collector has issued orders on Thursday to increase the restrictions. As per the new order, there will be a night curfew from 21:00 hrs to 06:00 hrs. There will be a relaxation for loading/unloading of goods at wholesale market and vegetable markets. Petrol Pumps, Medicine Shops, delivery of medicines and ambulances are also exempted. Hotels, restaurants, dhabas, bakery items, food court and other eateries will operate till 23:00 hrs. Home delivery of food items is allowed till 23:00 hrs. Dhabs on national highway and other main roads will be able to serve the bus, truck and other passenger vehicles during night also. There will be a total ban on the public programmes. All the schools, aanganwadi centres, libraries and swimming pools will remain closed. Vaccination of 15 to 18 age group children will continue at school premises with strict compliance of covid guidelines and social distancing norms. Malls, Gyms, Cinema Halls, Hotels, Restaurants, Auditoriums and Marriage halls will operate with one-third capacity. It is mandatory to conduct Covid test for people suffering from cold, cough, fever, dysentery, vomiting and body ache. They will stay in home quarantining till receiving the negative report. Containment zones will be created in localities where the higher number of patients is found. Plenary action will be taken against the people who violate the norms or did not cooperate with the officials/personnel deployed on the tasks of monitoring, testing, treatment, etc.

often the misconceptions about Corona spread rapidly. In such situations, the Health Department can clarify the situation with the help of the media to eliminate the confusion. Additional Collector said that the media has an important role in controlling the pandemic. The administration will continuously promote the IEC (Information, Education, Communication) activity through the media, she said.

'Ch'garh model of development proves its credibility again'

Chhattisgarh ranks 4th among the states with the lowest unemployment rate in the country

CMIE releases the data

Unemployment rate in Ch'garh is only 2.1%, whereas National Unemployment 7.7%

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 06: Center for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) Organization has recently released the data of unemployment rates in the states of the country, which has once again proven the effectiveness and credibility of the Chhattisgarh Model of Development. According to the data released, Chhattisgarh ranks fourth among the states with the lowest unemployment rate in the country.

Unemployment rate in Chhattisgarh at present is 2.1 percent. CMIE has released this data after studying the situation in December 2021.

According to CMIE data, Karnataka has the lowest unemployment rate in the country i.e. 1.4 per cent, whereas Haryana has the highest unemployment rate in the country i.e. 34.1 per cent.

It is noteworthy that three years ago, under the leadership of Chief Minister Mr. Bhupesh Baghel, a new model of development was adopted to achieve the goal of inclusive development. This model of development was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's vision of Gram Swaraj. Under this model, economic connectivity between the villages and cities was emphasized. For economic empowerment of the villages, various innovative schemes and programmes including Suraaji Gaon Yojana, Narva-Garva-Ghurva-Bari programme, Godhan Nyay Yojana, Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyay Yojana, Rajiv

Gandhi Gramin Bhoomeen Krishi Mazdoor Nyay Yojana, establishment of Rural Industrial Parks, collection and value addition of forest produce, entrepreneurial skill development, etc. are being implemented under this new Chhattisgarh Model of development. As a result, Chhattisgarh remained untouched by the nationwide economic recession during the first and the second wave of COVID-19. Even then the unemployment rate in Chhattisgarh remained under control. Now, as per the newly released data, steep rise in the unemployment rate of the country is a major cause of concern, while the unemployment rate of Chhattisgarh has shrunk to 2.1%. Gujarat holds the second rank in the country with the unemployment rate of 1.6% and Odisha has the third lowest unemployment rate in the country with 1.6%.

According to the new data released by CMIE, the unemployment rate in various states is as follows:

3.4 percent in Madhya Pradesh (seventh lowest in the country), 4.9 percent in Uttar Pradesh, 5.8 percent in Assam (12th rank in terms of unemployment), 27.1 per cent in Rajasthan, 17.3 in Jharkhand and 16 percent in Bihar. According to the report, the unemployment rate in the country was 6.52 percent, as on January 2021 last year, under which urban unemployment rate was 8.9 percent and rural unemployment rate was 5.81 percent. And as on December 2021, the unemployment rate in the country reached 7.7 percent, with the urban unemployment of 9.1 percent and the rural unemployment rate of 7.1 percent.

The Center for Monitoring Indian Economy Organization has been building the database for 45 years by conducting continuous studies in the fields of Indian economy, foreign exchange, agriculture, industry etc. and the data released by this organization is considered to be authentic.

16 district level water testing laboratories of Ch'garh gets NABL accreditation

Ch'garh achieves unprecedented success in drinking water quality testing work under Jal Jeevan Mission

Preparations of remaining eight districts for NABL accreditation completed

Supply of pure drinking water is being ensured under Jal Jeevan Mission

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 06: Chhattisgarh state has achieved unprecedented success in drinking water quality testing work under the Jal Jeevan Mission with as many as 16 district

level water laboratories now been accredited by National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL).

This includes water testing laboratories in Durg, Balod, Rajnandgaon, Kabirdham, Bemetara, Balodabazar, Bilaspur, Raigarh, Korba, Mungeli, Kanker and Jagdalpur districts. The remaining eight districts have also applied for NABL accreditation.

Efforts are also being made by Jal Jeevan Mission for NABL accreditation of sub-division level laboratories by March 2022. Through the Jal Jeevan Mission, the general public of the state has got the facility of getting their private source water tested from the NABL accredited laboratories of their respective district

headquarters. Besides, the state has also set new records in the field of testing drinking water sources in rural areas through FTK with training programmes being completed in 11,642 (98.8 per cent) of Gram Panchayats. So far, 79,689 women have been trained in water testing as 'Jal Bahini' in 11,642 Gram Panchayats. The chemical water testing of 3,13,501 i.e. 65 per cent drinking water sources has been done so far this year.

Meanwhile, domestic tap connections have been provided to 7,66,733 families (15.78 per cent) in the state so far and as per the instructions of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, about two lakh households have been provided domestic connections under the banner of 'Aaj Pani Ki Kya Kahani Hai'. Besides, public awareness about drinking water safety is also being spread under this campaign.

Efforts are being made to turn this into a mass movement by running a social media campaign in the state under the Jal Jeevan Mission from December 23 to January 26. As a part of this campaign, wide publicity is being done of best practices being adopted by different districts under the banner of 'Aaj Pani Ki Kya Kahani Hai'. Besides, public awareness about drinking water safety is also being spread under this campaign.

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IBITF logo launched at IIT Bhilai



Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 06: The IIT Bhilai Innovation and Technology Foundation (IBITF) officially launched their logo at IIT Bhilai, with the initiatives of carrying out transnational research and establishing world-class R&D in specific technological verticals. It will also host the

Technology Innovation Hub (TIH) for the Financial Technologies (FinTech) area.

Anirban Dasgupta, Director In-Charge, Bhilai Steel Plant, graced the occasion as the chief guest. He mentioned that the collaboration between IIT Bhilai and BSP could spur a lot of innovative solutions for the students and faculty members of IIT Bhilai, as well as for the nation. He added that the Bhilai Steel Plant can provide a test bed for the deployment of these research results.

Prof. Rajat Moona, Director, IIT Bhilai, talked about the importance of the logo as it provides an

identity to IBITF and mentioned that Bhilai Steel Plant can help research scholars and faculty to carry out cutting edge advancements in their fields based on real-life problems, bridging the gap between theory and practice.

Dr. B. K. Murthy, CEO, IBITF, presented a brief overview of the various schemes and functions proposed by IBITF, while Dr. Prashant Agnihotri, Assistant Professor, IIT Bhilai, welcomed the guests and presented a brief genesis of the company. Prof. Santosh Biswas, Project Director and a faculty member of IIT Bhilai concluded the session with a vote of thanks.

here, 36 commercial department staff and specifically those directly dealing with public lost their lives during the second corona wave. If sources are to be believed, Group 4 staff have been pressed into service in UTS counters following transfer of trained ticket counter staff. This has also been strongly objected by the union. The union alleged that when the higher officials of division railway have preferred to opt for Work from Home, how can the commercial staff who are vulnerable to Covid threat are being transferred to remote locations. It needs to be mentioned

Lapses on part of power department, innocent electrocuted

Central Chronicle News

Konta, Jan 06: In village Birla of Sukma district, the general public of village Birla is suffering due to the helpless system of electricity department. Despite several complaints, the department is being ignored.

One such case of negligence of the electricity department is that the main line of electricity is at a height of about 6 feet from the ground in the village panchayat Birla Road Para of Konta block. On Thursday, Madkam Joga, 10-year-old son of Madkam Hidma, a resident of Gram Panchayat Birla, was playing near a cement electric pole, a short distance away from the house. While playing, he came in contact with the wire as the wire was down. After which he was rescued with the help of local people. The left side of the body suffered severe burns due to being hit by the wire. The villagers immediately contacted for an ambulance, but the solution to the ambulance was bad. After which the family members informed about the incident to CRPF Camp 228 Battalion located in Manikonta, 3 km from Birla. Hearing this, immediately through an am-



bulance of CRPF camp, he was taken to Community Health Center Konta for first aid. After first aid in the hospital, he was referred to Sukma district hospital for better treatment. Villagers say that because of this shabby, loose and dangling wires, there is always an atmosphere of fear.

Complaint has been made by the local people many times. Local people and relatives allege that this electric wire is only 6 feet away from the ground for several months. This complaint has also been made to the Engineer of the Electricity Department many times, even after that no one has paid any attention to this.

Tanisha from KPS creates history



chosen.

The Indian Computing Olympiad (ICO) or INOI is a nationwide competition organized annually by the Indian Association for Research in Computing Science (IARCS), a leading research institute which recognizes the impact of computer science in school education. Algorithms are the driving force of the information age that we live in. Participating in the Indian Computing Olympiad exposes young students to the exciting world of algorithms and programming. The goal of this multi stage nationwide competition running since 2002, is to identify school students with outstanding skills in algorithms & computer programming and select the Indian team for the International Olympiad in Informatics (IOI), to be held in Indonesia for 2022. The management and school dignitaries are delighted with this achievement and have expressed their best wishes for the future success of the student.

About 25 students are selected through INOI to attend the International Olympiad in Informatics Training Camp (IOITC). This is a fully residential training camp of 10-15 days held in May-June. At the end of this training, the Indian team to IOI is



Those riding without mask are being fined by persons authorised on behalf of RMC to avoid spread of corona virus.

FINE IMPOSED



Program Officer of NSS appointed in CU

Central Chronicle News

Bilaspur, Jan 06: For smooth operation of various activities of National Service Scheme of Guru Ghasidas

Vishwavidyalaya (Central University), Bilaspur, Dr. Sushma Jaiswal, Assistant Professor, CSIT has been appointed Women Program Officer in the UTD unit in place

of Dr. Namita Sharma, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics. In the School of Physical Sciences unit Dr. M.P. Sharma, Assistant Professor,

Department of Physics has been appointed as Male Program Officer in place of Dr. Santosh Singh Thakur, Assistant Professor of Physics Department.

Third phase of the CM's nutrition campaign will start from Jan 10

Campaign will be run in 364 Anganwadis of the district where the rate of malnutrition is more than 13 percent

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 06: The third phase of Mukhyamantri Suposhan Abhiyan will start in the district from January 10. In this phase, 364 such Anganwadi centers in different blocks of the district, where the rate of malnutrition among children in the age group of six months to six years is more than 13%, those centers have been selected.

Here, in the hot cooked nutritious food being given to children of three

to six years of age, 1659 pregnant women in Anganwadis, eggs or soybeans will now be given. Apart from this, 1577 malnourished children of six months to three years and 1224 lactating mothers will also be given hot cooked nutritious food along with boiled egg or soyabean. It is worth noting that in these 364 Anganwadis, the number of moderately and severely malnourished children is 2725. These include 1295 in Nagari, 604 in Kurud, 552 in Magarlod, 209 in Dhamtari Rural and 65 in Dhamtari Urban. Collector Mr. Elma took a meeting of the Women and Child Development Department on Wednesday and asked the supervisors to do continuous monitoring in all the Anganwadi centers including these identi-

fied Anganwadi centers and ensure that severely malnourished children are sent to the Nutrition Rehabilitation Center. There are a total of 45 beds in the district with four Nutrition Rehabilitation Centers. He clearly said that the waiting list should be prepared 15 days in advance to send the children to the Nutrition Rehabilitation Center. He also asked the Chief Medical and Health Officer to ensure 100% bed occupancy in all Nutrition Rehabilitation Centers. District Program Officer, Women and Child Development Department Mr. MD Nayak informed that according to Weight Festival July 2021, 13.31 percent children in the district were found malnourished and 59.60 percent women in the age group of 15 to 49 years

are suffering from anemia. The third phase of Mukhyamantri Suposhan Abhiyan is being started to rid these children and women from malnutrition and anemia. The collector has stressed upon the departmental staff to counsel the parents among themselves to remove malnutrition among the children, so that the children eat nutritious food and help in nurturing them by changing the behavior in the lifestyle. On this occasion Chief Executive Officer, District Panchayat Mrs. Priyanka Mahobia, Project Officer of Women and Child Development Department, Supervisor, Chief Medical and Health Officer, officers of Ayurveda, Horticulture Department were present.



balance of CRPF camp, he was taken to Community Health Center Konta for first aid. After first aid in the hospital, he was referred to Sukma district hospital for better treatment. Villagers say that because of this shabby, loose and dangling wires, there is always an atmosphere of fear.

Complaint has been made by the local people many times. Local people and relatives allege that this electric wire is only 6 feet away from the ground for several months. This complaint has also been made to the Engineer of the Electricity Department many times, even after that no one has paid any attention to this.

BRIEF**Launch delayed**

Mathura: The movement of electric buses in Vrindavan has been kept in abeyance for a couple of days owing to technical issues. The basic reason for the delay is charging points, which are in the process of being set up, an official said. Parties associated with setting up the charging points have been instructed to complete the work on war footing. Another hurdle being faced is that height of buses is more than ground clearance.

Man held

Mumbai: A 29-year-old man has been arrested from Ahmedabad in connection with a highway robbery case in Mumbai last month and around Rs 23 lakh in cash, part of the loot, has been recovered from his possession. According to the official of the Samta Nagar police station in Mumbai, the man, identified as Ajay Bogekar, was arrested. He is the third accused to be arrested, the official said. Many more are involved in robbery.

Injured peacock

New Delhi: Prompt action by Delhi Police personnel saved the life of a peacock found lying on a road after being electrocuted in north Delhi's Burari, police said. A team from the Burari police station rescued the peacock after being informed about it over phone and rushed it to a bird hospital, they said. The national bird was immediately taken to the hospital by the team.

DRI seizes

Indore: The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has seized 1,575 kg ganja or cannabis worth Rs 3.15 crore from a truck near Indore city in Madhya Pradesh and arrested two peddlers. DRI's Indore unit intercepted the truck with the registration number of Andhra Pradesh. The cannabis was found hidden under the sacks of salt. The packets containing ganja (cannabis) weighing 1,575 kg valued at Rs 3.15 crore were recovered.

Two cubs

Panna: A tigress has given birth to two cubs in Madhya Pradesh's Panna Tiger Reserve (PTR), a senior forest department official said. The three-year-old tigress - P-213 (62) - gave birth to two cubs in the first litter and they were captured on cameras for the first time recently. Panna Tiger Reserve (PTR) field director Uttam Kumar Sharma said.

Zoo closed

New Delhi: The Delhi zoo has been closed to visitors for an indefinite period in view of an alarming spike in coronavirus cases in the capital. An official said the zoo was closed to the public but a few people who had already bought tickets online were allowed. The link for booking tickets online on website has been disabled. The zoo reopened for visitors on August 1 last year, more than two months after it was shut due to a rise in Covid cases.

Three accused in stoning, burning of man held

Simdega, Jan 06
(PTI): Three people accused in the recent stoning and burning of a 32-year-old man in Jharkhand's Simdega

illegally felling trees for stealing and smuggling wood, which is against local tribal traditions. Police had booked 13 identified accused and 25 other unknown



district were arrested on Thursday, police said. Sanju Pradhan was stoned to death and his body set on fire by a mob barely 100 metres from his home near Besrajara Bazar on Tuesday on the charges of

people in the case. "Three accused named in the FIR were arrested on Thursday. A manhunt has been launched to nab the others. None of the guilty people will be spared," Superintendent of Police

Shams Tabrej told PTI. The accused have been booked for murder, rioting with deadly weapons and unlawful assembly. Chief Minister Hemant Soren had asked the deputy commissioner to investigate the matter and inform him after taking legal action. The incident took place barely a fortnight after the Jharkhand Assembly passed the Prevention of Mob Violence and Mob Lynching Bill, 2021, which aims at providing "effective protection" of constitutional rights of people and the prevention of mob violence in the state. Eyewitnesses said Pradhan's wife tried to stop the villagers from taking the drastic action but her husband was lynched before her eyes. Police teams from Kolebira, Thethaitangar, and Bano were prevented to reach the spot and the locals initially refused to hand over Pradhan's body to the law enforcers.

Case against HAV leader, activists for provocative slogans



Valsan Thillankeri

ised by the Hindu Aikya Vedi, a Sangh outfit, on Wednesday demanding action against "extremist forces" operating in Kerala.

Besides Thillankeri, cases were registered against over 200 activists of the outfit, they said.

Thillankeri is the working president of the Hindu Aikya Vedi.

According to police, the alleged provocative slogans were raised during the protest march organised by them in the town.

The march was held from bank road to stadium corner in the politically volatile district.

The case was registered under various sections of IPC including 143 (Unlawful Assembly) and 147 (Punishment for rioting), police said.

According to police, the alleged provocative slogans were raised during the protest march organised by them in the town.

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BRIEF

Cancels classes

Chicago: Chicago school leaders in US cancelled classes for a second consecutive day after failing to reach agreement with the teachers union over COVID-19 safety protocols in the nation's third-largest school district. The Chicago Teachers Union sought to revert to remote instruction during the latest surge of infections and while both sides hammered out a deal. But Chicago Public Schools leaders have said remote learning didn't work.

Border attack

Beirut: Unknown perpetrators attacked a group of UN peacekeepers in southern Lebanon, vandalising their vehicles and stealing official items from them. Such scuffles with UN peacekeepers are not uncommon in southern Lebanon since the peacekeeping force was expanded following the 2006 war between Israel and the Lebanese militant Hezbollah group.

Trudeau calls

Toronto: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau called videos of a party on a recent Sunwing Airlines flight from Montreal to Cancun, Mexico, a slap in the face to those who have tried to stay safe during the pandemic and said that Canada's airline regulator is investigating. Videos of the Dec 30 flight shared on social media appear to show passengers not wearing masks as they gather in close proximity, singing and dancing.

Committee approves

Jerusalem: A local Israeli committee approved plans for the construction of more than 3,500 settler housing units in east Jerusalem, nearly half in a particularly controversial area, according to Peace Now, an anti-settlement monitoring group. Peace Now said the construction of the homes would largely cut off the city from the southern part of the occupied West Bank, further complicating any efforts to create a functioning Palestinian state.

Two killed

Madrid: Two construction workers were killed after being buried under the roof of a school that collapsed, Spanish authorities said. No students were in the building in the northern city of Gijón with Spain's children still enjoying their winter holidays. Emergency workers took several hours to recover both bodies from under the debris. Two other workers were injured when the roof came down on them.

Cruise short

Miami: Hundreds of passengers who embarked on an 11-day cruise from Miami were returned to port after less than two days at sea because several dozen crew members got infected with COVID-19. The pandemic also prompted a last-minute cancellation of another cruise that was scheduled to depart.

Dozens of protesters killed in Kazakhstan

Moscow, Jan 06 (AP):

Dozens of protesters were killed in Kazakhstan in attacks on government buildings and at least a dozen police officers died, including one who was found beheaded, authorities said Thursday.

There were attempts to storm buildings overnight in the country's largest city, Almaty, and dozens of attackers were liquidated, police spokeswoman Saltanat Azimbek said. She spoke on state news channel Khabar-24.

The reported attempts to storm the buildings came after widespread unrest in the city, including seizure of the mayor's building, which was set on fire.

State news channel Khabar-24 cited the city commandant's office as saying Thursday that another 353 law enforcement officers were injured in addition to the 12 killed.



A burned-out car is seen on a square near an administrative quarter in central Almaty on Thursday.

Kazakhstan is experiencing the worst street protests the country has seen since gaining independence three decades ago.

A Russia-led military alliance, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, said early Thursday that it would send peacekeeper troops to Kazakhstan at the request of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. Kazakhstan has been

rocked by intensifying protests that began on Sunday over a sharp rise in prices for liquefied petroleum gas fuel.

The protests began in the country's west but spread to Almaty and the capital Nur-Sultan. Tokayev vowed to take harsh measures to quell the unrest and declared a two-week state of emergency for the whole country, expanding one that had been announced for both the capital

of Nur-Sultan and the largest city of Almaty that imposed an overnight curfew and restricted movement into and around the urban areas. The government resigned in response over the unrest.

Although the protests began over a near-doubling of prices for a type of liquefied petroleum gas that is widely used as vehicle fuel, their size and rapid spread suggested they reflect wider discontent in the country that has been under the rule of the same party since gaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

Tokayev claimed the unrest was led by terrorist bands that had received help from unspecified other countries. Kazakhstan, the ninth-largest country in the world, borders Russia to the north and China to the east and has extensive oil reserves that make it strategically and economically important.

North Korea claims second successful test of hypersonic missile

Seoul, Jan 06 (AP):

North Korea claimed Thursday to have conducted the second successful test flight of a hypersonic missile, days after leader Kim Jong Un vowed to bolster his military forces despite p a n d e m i c - r e l a t e d difficulties.

This launch, the North's first known weapons test in about two months, indicates the country will press ahead with plans to modernise its nuclear and missile arsenals rather than return to disarmament talks anytime soon.

The official Korean Central News Agency said the Central Committee of the ruling Workers' Party

expressed great satisfaction at the results of the missile test, which was observed by leading weapons officials. Hypersonic weapons, which fly at speeds in excess of Mach 5, or five times the speed of sound, could pose crucial challenges to missile defence systems because of their speed and maneuverability. It's unclear whether and how soon North Korea could manufacture such a high-tech missile, but it was among a wish-list of sophisticated military assets that Kim disclosed early last year, along with a multi-warhead missile, spy satellites, solid-fuelled long-range missiles and underwater-launched nuclear missiles.

WALKING OVER SNOW



People walk in the snow, feeling freezing conditions and covered in snow, in Tokyo, Japan on Thursday.

Brazil to vaccinate kids, stops short of demanding scripts

Brasilia, Jan 06 (API):

Vaccination of Brazilian children between the ages of 5 and 11 will begin in January, without the demand for prescriptions from doctors the government had previously signalled, officials from the health ministry have announced.

The government's guidelines come almost three weeks after the health regulator authorised use of Pfizer's shot for children, setting off backlash from none other than President Jair Bolsonaro. After sowing doubt about the efficacy of the vaccine and refusing to be vaccinated himself last year, in recent weeks the president staked out a position opposing vac-



Children hold Portuguese messages "Vaccine is a right! Vaccine is safe! Vaccine yes!" in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

cines for kids and warning of possible side effects.

A study released in late December by US health authorities confirmed that serious side effects of the Pfizer vaccine in children ages 5 to 11 are rare. The

results were based on approximately 8 million doses dispensed to youngsters in this age group.

Taking a cue from Bolsonaro, his health ministry last month published an online questionnaire

about the issue, and some of the president's supporters also leery of the vaccine actively engaged on messaging apps trying to pressure people to swing the results. They failed: the majority of the survey's almost 100,000 participants opposed the need for a doctor's script, a health ministry official said in a public hearing on Tuesday, without providing figures. Speaking to reporters, Minister Queiroga also didn't disclose what percentage of respondents opposed prescriptions.

Minister Queiroga also didn't disclose what percentage of respondents opposed prescriptions. With regard to the prescription, a public consultation was done. We heard society, specialists, said Queiroga. It isn't backtracking; it is part of the decision-making process.

Democracy won in US on Jan 6 last year: Pelosi

Washington, Jan 06 (AP):

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi had a singular message for Americans and the world on the eve of the anniversary of the horrific attack on the Capitol: Democracy won.

In an interview with The Associated Press, inside the Capitol where a mob loyal to Donald Trump had laid siege, Pelosi said it's time for the country to turn to its better angels, draw from history and ensure a day like Jan 6 never happens again.

"Make no mistake, our democracy was on the brink of catastrophe," Pelosi told the AP. Democracy won that night," she said. "These people, because of the courageous work of the Capitol Police and Metropolitan Police and others, they were deterred in their action to



Nancy Pelosi

stop the peaceful transfer of power. They lost.

The speaker lead Congress on a day of remembrance at the Capitol, with President Joe Biden speaking, and historians and lawmakers sharing remembrances throughout the day though few Republicans were expected to attend.

This has to be a period of remembrance, of reconciliation, Pelosi said,

drawing on the example set by Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln said, With malice toward none, with charity toward all" as the Civil War was ending. "We have to extend the hand of friendship.

The deadly insurrection stunned the country, and the world, as rioters ransacked the Capitol, some in hand-to-hand combat with police, after a defeated President Trump exhorted them to fight as Congress was certifying the Biden's election. Pelosi said no one could have imagined a US president calling for an insurrection, but there's now an enormous civics lesson learned as to what a president is capable of, she said. I think now people are alerted to the fact that there can be rogue presidents."

Republicans are mostly staying away from the remembrance events.

They downplay the assault and blame Democrats for not fortifying the Capitol.

Rep. Kevin McCarthy of California, the House minority leader, said in a letter to colleagues that Democrats are using the anniversary as a partisan political weapon to further divide our country.

Pelosi, the California congresswoman, who made history 15 years ago as the first female speaker of the House and has become one of the most powerful leaders ever to have held the gavel said she bears absolutely no sense of responsibility for the current divisions in Congress, or the country.

After having twice led the House to impeach Trump, she said her message to those who assaulted the Capitol despite naysayers during the Civil War — to underscore national unity.

Australia, Japan sign defence pact amid Chinese threat

- It will give provide thrust to quad along with India, US



Sydney, Jan 06 (AP):

The leaders of Japan and Australia signed a landmark defence agreement Thursday that allows closer cooperation between their militaries and stands as a rebuke to China's growing assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida met in a virtual summit to sign the Reciprocal Access Agreement, the first such defence pact signed by Japan with any country other than the United States.

The agreement follows more than a year of talks between Japan and Australia aimed at breaking down legal barriers to allow the troops of one country to enter the other

for training and other purposes.

Japan is our closest partner in Asia as demonstrated by our special strategic partnership Australia's only such partnership, Morrison said.

An equal partnership, shared trust between two great democracies committed to the rule of law, human rights, free trade and a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Kishida hailed the

Syria must answer twenty questions on its chemical weapons

United Nations, Jan 06 (AP):

Western nations accused Syria of refusing for eight years to clear up 20 outstanding issues about its undeclared research, production and possible weaponisation of unknown quantities of chemical weapons.

US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield told the UN Security Council the world should not be fooled by Syria's veneer of cooperation while it deliberately delays and obstructs answers to the international chemical weapons watchdog.

France's UN Ambassador Nicolas De Riviere went further, saying Syria is not only not cooperating with the

Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons but it has continued to use chemical weapons.

And these facts must be qualified as crimes against humanity, he said.

Syria joined the Chemical Weapons Convention in September 2013, pressed by its close ally Russia after a deadly chemical weapons attack that the West blamed on Damascus. A Security Council resolution adopted at that time endorsed the decision of the OPCW, which implements the convention, to destroy Syria's chemical weapons program and banned Syria's use, development, production or acquisition of chemical weapons.

Taliban not to allow any fencing along Durand Line by Pakistan

Islamabad, Jan 06 (PTI):

Afghanistan's Taliban regime has said that it will not allow fencing by Pakistan in any form along the Durand Line, issuing a stern warning to Islamabad, amid escalating tensions between the neighbouring countries on the contentious issue of border fencing, a media report said.

We (Taliban) will not allow the fencing anytime, in any form. Whatever they (Pakistan) did before, they did, but we will not allow it anymore. There will be no fencing anymore, Mawlawi Sanaullah Sangin, Commander of the Taliban, told Afghanistan's Tolo News.

Sangin's sharp reaction comes following Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi's comments earlier this week, when he said this issue would be resolved peacefully through diplomatic channels. Certain miscreants are raising the issue unnecessarily, but we are looking into it. We are in contact with the Afghan government. Hopefully, we would be able to resolve the issue diplomatically, Qureshi said during a press conference in Islamabad on Monday.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, E/M CIRCLE, RAIPUR (C.G.)

e-Procurement Tender Notice

Online tenders are invited on behalf of Governor of Chhattisgarh from contractors. Registered contractor class in "D" & above C.G. P.W.D. For Form "A" (Percentage Rate Tender) in new Registration system (unified Registration system) for the following work :-

NIT.No.	Name of work	Probable amount of contract	Last date of bid submission
74/SE E/M/2021-22 (II Call) System Tender No. 90141	STALLATION, TESTING AND COMMISSIONING OF VRV/VRF AIR-CONDITIONING SYSTEM AT AUDITORIUM HALL HALL IN COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) SHANKAR NAGAR Raipur	Rs. 42.86 Lacs	19-01-2022

Note:-
The tender documents can be downloaded from the web-portal <http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>. Only those contractors/bidders, interested in bidding shall pay the tender document cost online.

Superintending Engineer P.W.D., E/M Circle Raipur (C.G.)
G-66544/1

विकास का वादा-मन्त्री इरादा आपकी थी चाह, हमने बनाई राह Credible Chhattisgarh विवरणीय भूत्तान्तर

CENTRAL Chronicle

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Psychological defence agency

Reacting to China's unfurling of its national flag at the Galwan Valley, Minister of State for External Affairs Meenakshi Lekhi said the Indian military is handling the situation and China is getting a befitting response. This is the first official response from the Ministry of External Affairs on the issue. Rahul Gandhi had asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to break the silence over the Chinese incursions in Galwan. The videos of China and India unfurling flags forms part psychological warfare. India should emulate establishing a psychological defence agency as initiated in Sweden. Sweden launched a new agency at the beginning of the year aimed at defending itself against disinformation, propaganda, and 'psychological warfare.' The Psychological Defence Agency, as it is being called, raises the stakes in the global battle over misinformation and poses the question: What exactly should governments do when they think the battleground is their citizens' minds? This question isn't new, but is seen as an increasingly urgent policy debate as democracies struggle to preserve freedom of expression rights while combating influence campaigns by governments and other actors that use the internet to rapidly share false information. Many countries have long operated state-affiliated media organizations, which can greatly vary in terms of accuracy and journalistic freedom. But online misinformation campaigns can make it much harder to tell the source of propaganda efforts. Meanwhile, many authoritarian regimes are also using similar language about defending against misinformation to frame their own efforts at controlling dissent. The Swedish agency describes its mission as involving both actually identifying misinformation as well as building community resilience to harmful influence campaigns through education. It is headed by Swedish diplomat Henrik Landerholm.

In an interview with Swedish radio after his appointment was announced, Landerholm pointed to Russia, China, and Iran as sources of misinformation campaigns targeting the country. Swedish officials have been warning of the increasing threat of false information for years. The country also faced Russian attempts to interfere in recent elections, leading the government to mount a coordinated effort to combat such campaigns. That push, which included training thousands of civil servants about responding to misinformation as well as working with journalists and social media companies to limit its spread, helped model a role for the new agency. Landerholm sought to differentiate the agency and the country's prior efforts to counter disinformation from Orwellian propaganda efforts. 'This is not the Ministry of Truth or a State Information Board like we had during the Cold War,' Landerholm said. 'We want to protect freedom of opinion in our country.' The psychological warfare of China against India is not recent but goes back in history and it encompasses an enormous snare of deception and fabrication. Now, the government should establish a separate agency as shown by Sweden. China's sabre-rattling has become more discordant and to a temporary observer the military dispute would appear impending. Whereas, in fact Beijing is pursuing its conventional strategy of psychological warfare to eventually urge India to concede without any actual armed conflict. China's vindictive war, bombast and impractical prerequisites for advocating conferences is evidently different from the strategies of diplomacy and negotiation prescribed by the Indian government to solve the conflicts without any violence.

Reintroducing cheetahs

After becoming extinct in 1952, cheetah is all set to return to India as the central government launched an action plan under which 50 of these big cats will be introduced in the next five years. Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav launched the action plan at the 19th meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) saying, the Cheetah that became extinct in independent India, is all set to return. Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh was all prepped to welcome the African cheetahs, a project that has been a decade in the making last year. The team of experts delegated to carry out the project was about to leave for Namibia, but had to return from the airport as travel restrictions kicked in. Known as 'hunting leopards' during the colonial era, Asiatic cheetahs were wiped out in India by hunting, a gradual decline in prey base and habitat degradation. The last cheetah was shot in 1947 and it was officially declared extinct in India in 1952. Today just about 40-50 individuals survive in central Iran, where it's a protected animal. The IUCN lists it as a critically endangered species. The fact that these African spotted animals are being introduced in India could be a cause of concern. They are entering an unknown habitat and familiarising them with their new home, making them adaptable, and preventing feline infection, may be a challenge. With government support, wildlife conservationists-scientists, disease ecologists and veterinarians could monitor these cats to keep zoonotic diseases at bay.

The country will again be home to cheetahs. As a beginning, it's probably good that they are being sent to a protected area. Globally, cheetahs are listed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, with around 6,674 individuals, most of them in Africa, left. Plans to reintroduce cheetahs to the Indian landscape were first mooted in the 1970s and have been brought up off and on since. These included plans to exchange Asiatic cheetahs for Asiatic lions with Iran, and, in 2009, even cloning the animals. Experts, however, are concerned about the complexities of introducing a different subspecies to new ecological settings, biodiversity issues and disease risks, and whether there's enough space at the chosen site for a big cat like the cheetah to survive and establish a healthy habitat. Grasslands are an important part of this debate. The cheetah, described as a low-density, high-habitat animal, requires a substantial amount of space. If everything falls into place this time, Kuno will host 4 big cats: Lions, Tigers, Cheetahs and Leopards. But, can these animals coexist comfortably in the same habitat? This has never occurred anywhere else before. The cheetah reintroduction will definitely be a boon for wildlife tourism but it may also pose a threat to the inter-species and human-wildlife conflict.

Central Chronicle welcomes, articles, write ups, comments on different issues for editorial page (800-900 words), Letter to editor for this page. It can be sent by e-mail at: editor@centralchronicle@gmail.com

The letters can be edited or rewritten for clarity of thoughts.

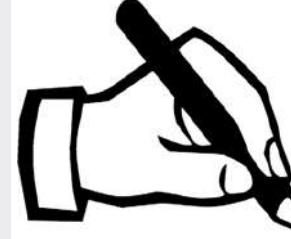
WELL MAINTAINED ARCHITECTURE



Lobby of well maintained Hotel Nacional de Cuba, in Havana, it is one of Cuba's historic buildings in eclectic style of architecture.

Cuba's architecture offers blueprint for how to build more with less

WESAM AL ASALI



Around the world, there's a conjoined crisis of climate change and housing shortages, two topics at the top of the list of discussions in the recent COP26 climate summit in Glasgow. Construction and buildings account for more than one-quarter of global greenhouse gas emissions. Meanwhile, according to a September report by Realtor.com, the US alone is short 5.24 million homes. Addressing both crises will require building structures more sustainably and more efficiently. But this isn't the first time architects and governments have had to deal with dwindling resources and the task of housing large numbers of people. In 1959, an armed revolt led by Fidel Castro ousted Cuba's military dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. As part of a broader plan to improve the quality of life for millions of Cubans, Castro's new government sought to develop a program to mass-produce new housing, schools and factories.

In the years that followed, however, this dream clashed with difficult realities. Sanctions and supply chain disruptions had created a shortage of conventional building materials. Architects realized they needed to do more with less and invent new construction methods using local materials. In an article that I co-authored with architect and engineer Michael Ramage and architect Dania Gonzalez Couret, we explored the creative challenges of this period by focusing on a specific structural element that these Cuban architects soon seized upon: the tile vault. Tile vaulting is a technique that flourished in the eastern

Mediterranean after the 10th century. It involves constructing arched ceilings made of multiple layers of lightweight terra cotta tiles. To build the first layer, the builders use fast-setting mortar to glue the tiles together with barely any temporary support. Afterward, the builder adds more layers with normal cement or lime mortar. This technique doesn't require expensive machinery or use of a lot of timber for formwork. But speed and craftsmanship are paramount.

Because of its affordability and durability, tile vaulting spread to different parts of Europe and the Americas. It became known as Guastavino tiling in the US a nod to Spanish architect Rafael Guastavino, who used the technique in over 1,000 projects in the US, including the Boston Public Library and New York's Grand Central Station. In Cuba, tile vaults were famously used to build the National Art Schools, or Escuelas Nacionales de Arte. Fidel Castro advocated for the construction of the five schools on what, before the revolution, had been a golf course in Cubanacan, a town west of Havana. Designed by Ricardo Porro, Vittorio Garatti and Roberto Gottardi, the schools integrate terra cotta shells and arches with the site's green landscape. They were long thought to be the only tile vault buildings in post-revolution Cuba. However, we discovered that the National Art Schools are only the tip of the iceberg. From 1960 to 1965, a range of vault experiments and projects took place across the country.

Shortly after the revolution, architects and engineers at the Ministry of Construction known as MICONS went to Camagüey, a province known for its terra cotta brick-making, to learn more about the craft. One of these architects, Juan Campos Almanza, then a recent graduate of the University of Havana, led the research team. As an experiment, he built a load-bearing vault on the grounds of the Azorin brick factory. It was a success. He went on to use the design to construct

affordable and elegant beachfront homes in Santa Lucía, north of Camagüey, using the same vault design. Brick-and-tile vault construction appeared to be a promising solution to build replicable and cost-effective ceilings. The Centre of Technical Investigations, an agency tasked with developing housing, schools and factories, used Almanza's research to construct its own vaulted offices. An outdoor space nearby famously called 'El Patio del MICONS' became a staging ground for more structural experiments. In El Patio, craftspeople, engineers and architects worked together to develop affordable vaulted buildings, while teachers at El Patio's tile masons' school taught building techniques to cohorts of apprentices.

Vaulted buildings and homes soon started cropping up across the country. In 1961, Juan Campos Almanza completed his first housing projects in Altahabana, a new neighbourhood located near Havana, building simple barrel vaults on prefabricated beams. Similar designs were used for more beachfront houses, schools and factories. In his report about the Altahabana pilot project, Campos defined his method as 'tradicional mejorado,' or 'improved traditional construction' a mix of conventional building methods with some prefabricated elements. This way, he argued, builders could gain the best of both worlds: The construction, some of it built by hand, was fast and replicable. And it didn't require a lot of materials and preexisting infrastructure. The best example of this construction method is the vaulted Pre-University Centre at Liberty City, the site of a former US Army base. The structure was designed in 1961 by Josefina Rebollar, who at the time was a third-year architecture student.

Only a couple of miles from the Schools of Art, Rebollar's design was completed in 18 months. It was made up of two circular vaulted buildings, with conical vaults and prefabricated beams, with an undulating two-story classroom building between the two

circles. These exciting new construction methods didn't last long. In 1963, Havana hosted the conference for the International Union of Architects. That year's theme was Architecture in Developing Countries. The conference gave Cuban architects an opportunity to reflect on their recent experiences. The Ministry of Construction pushed to end what it viewed as a period of experimentation, mass housing, they argued, demanded industrialized construction. Buildings started being made in factories and then assembled on site. Skilled and specialized labour, like vault-building, was no longer seen as an asset but an obstacle, since vault builders were difficult to find in the country's remote areas, and novice builders required extensive training.

Yet the story of these buildings offers lessons for designing with scarcity. The ability to experiment is important. Coordination among builders, governments and architects is crucial. And craftsmanship matters, too, whether it's tile vaulting or traditional carpentry. For too long, buildings that required craftsmanship have been thought of as overly expensive pet projects that deployed techniques better suited for a different era. But the Cubans were able to show that craftsmanship can be developed, scaled up and combined with technological advances. Today, a handful of promising initiatives show how the craft of tile vaulting can serve for the low-carbon construction of buildings or engineered ceiling systems. Back in Cuba, tile vaulting is now being taught in the Escuela Taller Gaspar Melchor, a training centre in Havana's historical centre. Cuba's vaulted architecture reflects the relationship between necessity and invention, a process that many people mistakenly think of as automatic. It isn't. It is a relationship based on perseverance, trial and error and, above all, passion. Look no further than what Juan Campos Almanza and his peers left behind on the island: beautiful, replicable buildings, many of which are still standing today.

(Wesam Al Asali is Global Fung Postdoctoral Fellow, Princeton University in US.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Price rise

It is a bitter truth that the State governments have not taken a different approach to address the mounting economic concerns and when people have found their incomes drastically reduced after the outbreak of the pandemic, there has been an artificial rise in the prices of essential commodities. At a time when the situation needs pragmatic handling, the uncontrolled price hike has crippled normal life. Undeniably, the pandemic has rendered many youths jobless and hence aggravated the unemployment scenario in the state. Sadly enough, the plight of these people seems to be missing from the priority list of the government's policy. It's indeed unfortunate on the part of the policymakers and leaders of the state to pretend to be unaware of the sufferings and hardships of the masses caused by the price hike. It is time the government consulted the eminent economists of the state and found out effective means to control the price hike at the earliest and hence relieve its citizens.

Dipendra, via email
Corruption in education

It is now as clear as daylight that almost ninety-nine per cent of heads of government educational institutions are involved in corruption directly or indirectly. But why? It has probably two reasons, one is an ardent personal desire for modern luxurious life and the other is a circumstantial compulsion. Personally, I have met so many government educational institutions' heads who are free from covetousness but circumstances compel them to follow the path of corruption. It is known to all that the government and UGC are giving some annual grants from primary schools to the university level for the purpose of infrastructure and other academic development. And as per rules, all the heads of the institutions have to submit utilization certificates (UCs) to their respective authorities. The authorities have an entrenched notion that the heads have misused and pocketed some of the funds. To see the weakness of the heads some of the officials demand money against each government grant instead of making spot verification about the utilization of the funds. If any head is firm not to give any bribe to the officials then he will have to bring the same expenditure vouchers from two-three shops and his file may be given for audit. Some auditors have also the same notion that the heads have misused the funds. The heads have no time to move about after the auditor or the vouchers as they are to look after the academic side of the institutions. So, most of the heads try to manage the officials by offering money and thus they open the path of corruption by stealing a small portion for themselves also. So, the government should form a strong vigilance team that will monitor only the proper utilization of government funds of the educational institutions. Otherwise, the existing system will produce more corrupt heads of educational institutions.

Harsha Mohan, via email

WHAT THEY TWEET!



Rahul Mathur@Rahul_J_Mathur

The safest gift to send someone is a nice notebook or diary - almost everyone I've met uses a paper & pen to take notes. Great way for companies to get useful branded merch into the hands of customers or prospective customers!



The Monk@
swordshammer

It's a shame on us, v can put blame on Politicians 4 communalising, but at the same time, a close vigil is required. I always question parents who r making their infants addictive 2 technology, n request otrs 2 keep a watch on young n spend time with them.



KBS Sidhu@kbssidhu1961

'These days when someone asks 'Are you coming to the party?' one doesn't immediately understand whether they are talking of a bash or a political party.' #Punjab #PunjabPolitics



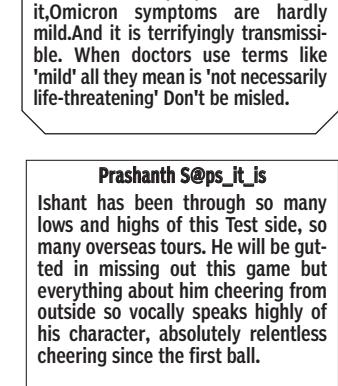
Ankan Roy@Ankaninfra

A major feat on India's National Waterway 1! A 250-ton Goliath Gantry Crane



Wolf Packs@TheLegateIN

Report: Pak Army ISPR has fired more than 70% of its social media influencer team. Pak has decided to reduce ISPR run SM campaigns & instead promote its propaganda, anti-India agenda through think-tanks (IPRI, ISSI, CASS, NIMA, CSSPR etc). Tie-ups envisioned with western lobbyists.



Stop calling Omicron-COVID 'mild'. Judging by all the accounts I have heard from people who have got it, Omicron symptoms are hardly mild. And it is terrifyingly transmissible. When doctors use terms like 'mild' all they mean is 'not necessarily life-threatening'. Don't be misled.

Prashanth S@ps_it_is

Ishan has been through so many lows and highs of this Test side, so many overseas tours. He will be gutted in missing out the game but everything about him cheering from outside so vocally speaks highly of his character, absolutely relentless cheering since the first ball.

BRIEF

Acquires stake



New Delhi: IndiaMART on Thursday said it has invested about Rs 133.5 million via its wholly-owned subsidiary Tradezeal Online Pvt Ltd to acquire a 26.01% stake in EasyEcom. IndiaMART's Brijesh Kumar Agrawal said it will make commerce easy for merchants.

Highest ever

New Delhi: SJVN's power stations have clocked the highest ever 1,480 MU (million units) of electricity generation in the October-December quarter of 2021-22. SJVN has surpassed the previous record of 1,343 MU in the corresponding period of FY 2019-20, from all its power stations, Nand Lal Sharma, Chairman and Managing Director, SJVN said.

Create solutions



Mumbai: Yojee has teamed up with Here Technologies to create a unique operations intelligence solution to transform warehouse management for global companies. MD Yojee Ed Clarke said this data intelligence is crucial in improving overall warehouse productivity.

CS exits

New Delhi: Ujjivan Small Finance Bank on Thursday said Chanchal Kumar has resigned from the position of Company Secretary and Compliance Officer of the bank. In a regulatory filing, Ujjivan Small Finance Bank said Kumar resigned on January 5, 2022.

Electric powertrains



Mumbai: Omega Seiki Mobility (OSM) on Thursday announced strategic collaboration with Korean EV powertrain maker Jae Sung Tech to manufacture electric powertrains in India.

To set

New Delhi: Hero Future Energies and Ohmni International on Thursday announced a strategic partnership to set up 1,000 MW of green hydrogen production facilities in India, the UK and Europe. Ohmni will be responsible for the design, construction, and operations and maintenance of the hydrogen production facilities.

Third wave of COVID-19 to pose risk to asset quality of banks

Mumbai, Jan 06 (PTD):

The threat of third wave of COVID-19 poses high risks to banks asset quality, especially the restructured loan book, according to a report by domestic rating agency ICRA.

Besides bad loans, lenders are likely to see challenges on profitability and solvency fronts due to the disruption caused by the Omicron variant of coronavirus, the agency said. It also sees a 15-20-basis point uptick in restructuring requests from the borrowers.

The agency's Vice-President (Financial Sector Ratings) Anil Gupta said, "With the increased spread of the new COVID-19 variant, i.e. Omicron, there is a high possibility of the occurrence of a third wave." He added that a third wave poses a high risk to the



performance of the borrowers that were impacted by the previous waves and hence poses a risk to the improving trend of asset quality, profitability and solvency.

Gupta also said banks restructured most of the loans with a moratorium of up to 12 months. "Hence, the restructured book is likely to start exiting the moratorium from Q4 FY2022 and Q1 FY2023." During the two waves of the pandemic, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced Resolution Framework 1.0 and 2.0 to provide relief to the

borrowers and banks.

With incremental restructuring under Covid 2.0 scheme, the overall standard restructured loan book for banks increased to 2.9 per cent of standard advances as on September 30, 2021, (two per cent as on June 30, 2021), the report said.

Most of this restructuring includes borrowers impacted by Covid 1.0 and 2.0. The agency said the restructuring under Covid 1.0 scheme is estimated at 34 per cent (or Rs 1 lakh crore) of the total standard restructured loan book of Rs 2.85 lakh crore for banks as on September 30, 2021.

And, under Covid 2.0, it is estimated to be at 42 per cent or Rs 1.2 lakh crore. The balance comprised micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and other restructuring, it said.

Rupee falls 11 paise at 74.49 against USD, gold tumbles Rs 284

Mumbai, Jan 06 (PTD): The rupee on Thursday slumped 11 paise to close at 74.49 (provisional) against the US dollar, tracking the strength of the American currency in the overseas market after hawkish US Fed minutes. Investors saw minutes from the Federal Reserve meeting as a sign that the US central bank might hike interest rates faster than anticipated to cool inflation, and this could lead to outflows from the domestic markets, forex traders said.

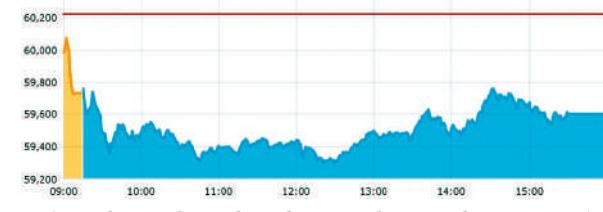
At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency opened down at 74.44 and witnessed an intra-day high of 74.32 and a low of 74.51 against the US dollar. The local unit finally settled at 74.49, down 11 paise over its previous close of 74.38. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.05 per cent up at 96.22. "Dollar gained against most Asian currencies as the market assessed the US Fed's hawkish views."

Sensex sinks 621 pts amid global sell-off

Mumbai, Jan 06 (PTD):

S&P BSE SENSEX 59,601.84 -621.31 -1.03%

06 Jan 22 | 16:00 | Close



On the other hand, IndusInd Bank, Bharti Airtel, Maruti, Titan and Bajaj Finance were among the gainers.

Stock exchanges in Europe also witnessed intense selling pressure in mid-session deals.

Foreign institutional investors remained net buyers in the capital market on Wednesday, as they purchased shares worth Rs 336.83 crore, as per exchange data.

In Asia, the Nikkei 225 in Tokyo fell 2.9% to 28,487.87 and the Shanghai Composite Index lost 0.2% to 3,586.08.

Power CPSEs Capex rises 47% to Rs 40k cr

New Delhi, Jan 06 (PTD):

The power ministry on Thursday said the state-owned firms (CPSEs) under it have incurred capital expenditure of Rs 40,395.34 crore during April-December 2021, which is 47 per cent higher year-on-year.

"CPSEs under Ministry of Power have incurred capital expenditure (Capex) of Rs 40,395.34 crore till the month of December during FY 2021-22. This is 47 per cent higher than the expenditure incurred during the corresponding period of FY 2020-21, a power ministry statement said.

Thus, the Capex performance of the ministry is significantly better compared to the previous year, it stated.

OPPO launches Enco M32

Mumbai, Jan 06:

constant endeavours. Crafted for those on the move, the Enco M32's balanced and nuanced sound allows you to enjoy every single beat with clear vocals. Its long battery life of 28hrs, hand-free operations, stylish snug fit and enhanced sound quality make it one of the best-in-class audio tools for a mobile lifestyle." The OPPO Enco M32 packs 10mm dynamic drivers that deliver balanced sound with discernible bass, clear mids and crisp highs. It supports the AAC audio format for enhanced sound quality over streaming. Additionally, its design includes an independent sound cavity that allows for a larger sound field while avoiding the noise caused by airflow thereby making the audio output purer.

Vedanta Aluminium Business, India's largest producer of aluminium and value-added products, has signed an agreement with GEAR (Gemini Equipment and Rentals Private Limited) India, to deploy one of the largest fleets of lithium-ion battery-powered electric forklifts, becoming the first in Indian aluminium industry to undertake such an initiative. The company shall commission 23 such forklifts in a phased manner over the next few months at its aluminium smelter in Jharsuguda, Odisha, which is one of the world's largest single-location aluminium smelters. Substituting

diesel-fuelled forklifts with this green fleet will reduce diesel consumption by more than 2.5 lakh litres annually, thereby ensuring GHG (greenhouse gas) emission savings of nearly 690 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent. Vedanta Aluminium currently operates a large fleet of forklifts for finished goods handling, material movement, etc. The new lithium-ion fork-

lifts will help maximise productivity of operations by enabling longer working cycles via rapid charging. Speaking about the partnership, Mr Rahul Sharma, CEO – Aluminium Business, Vedanta Limited, said, "Vedanta Aluminium is committed to achieving Net Zero Carbon emissions by 2050. Our partnership with GEAR to deploy one of India's

Omicron to hit Q4 GDP by 0.40%, dent FY-22 growth

Mumbai, Jan 06 (PTD): The Omicron variant spread will impact the January-March quarter GDP by 0.40 per cent and shave off 0.10 per cent from the FY22 growth, as many states resort to restrictions to limit infections, a domestic rating agency said on Thursday. Curbs in various forms such as reducing the capacity of market/market complexes and night/weekend curfews to check human mobility/contact have already started in several states, which are impacting economic activities, India Ratings and Research said in a note. The surge in cases seen over the last fortnight will have an adverse impact on the fourth-quarter GDP and the growth will come at 5.7 per cent during the quarter, which is 0.40 per cent lower than the earlier estimate of 6.1 per cent.

Demand in hotel industry to be curtailed in Q4 this fiscal

New Delhi, Jan 06 (PTD):

The demand in the hotel industry will be curtailed in the fourth quarter this fiscal, at least in January 2022, as the fresh COVID-19 wave with the Omicron variant dampening sentiments, rating agency Icra said on Thursday.

With a sharp rise in infections in the last one week and several states imposing partial lockdowns, hoteliers are witnessing cancellations in January 2022 bookings and the enquiries for the next few weeks have come down, Icra said in a statement. While the situation is evolving, the rating agency said, "Until the end of last month, there was only some cut-down in discretionary business travel.



Leisure travel largely remained unaffected in December and no major cancellations were witnessed".

Commenting on the situation, Icra Assistant Vice-President and Sector Head Vinutaa S said, "With the emergence of the Omicron variant and sharp rise in infections,

A month of complete lockdown will impact FY2022 pan-India occupancy by around 4 percentage points, she added.

Reliance raises USD 4 bn in India's largest foreign currency bonds issue

Interest on Notes will be payable semi-annually in arrears

New Delhi, Jan 06 (PTD):



This is the largest ever foreign currency bond transaction in India, eclipsing ONGC Videsh Ltd's USD 2.2 billion US dollar bonds issue of 2014.

Reliance raised USD 1.5 billion in a 10-year issue at a coupon or interest rate of 2.875 per cent, USD 1.75 billion in a 30-year deal at a 3.625 per cent rate and USD 750 million in a 40-year issue at a 3.75 per cent coupon rate.

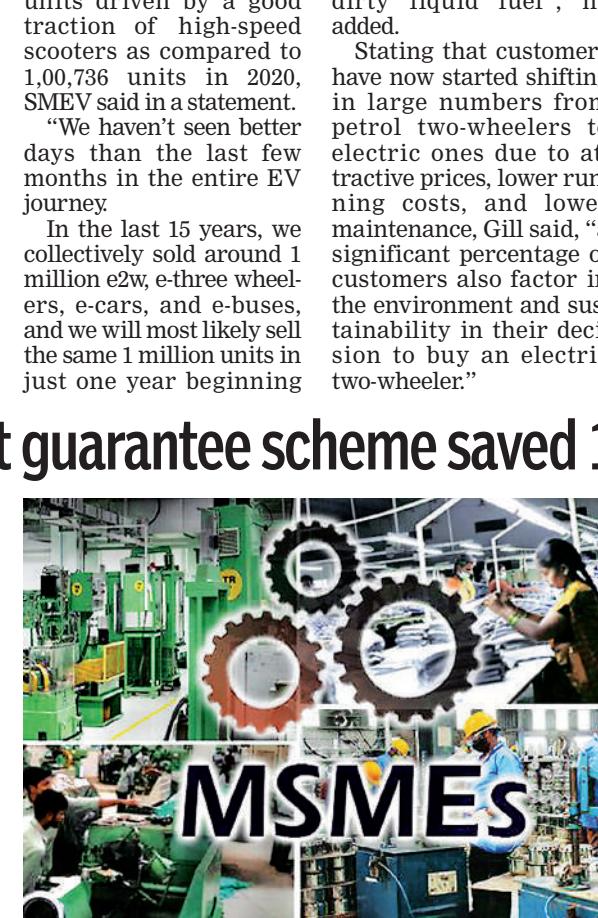
This is the first time any BBB-rated Asian company outside of

Japan has issued a 40-year dollar bond.

The bonds in 10-year, 30-year and 40-year maturities are due to repayment between 2032 and 2062.

Reliance plans to use the proceeds to retire some of the existing debt, including a USD 1.5 billion loan that is due to mature in February.

The company said the bonds carry coupons (interest rate) linked to US treasuries. The 10-year notes will carry a coupon rate that is 1.2 percentage points above the 10-year US treasury note, the 30-year bond will offer 160 basis points over the corresponding US government bond and the 40-year note will give 170 basis points over the respective US Treasury note.



lies (assuming four family members per worker including herself," it said.

Amongst the states, Gujarat has been the biggest beneficiary, followed by Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh, it said.

Under the scheme, 100 per cent guaranteed coverage is being provided by the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company (NCGTC) for additional funding of up to Rs 4.5 lakh crore to eligible MSMEs and interested Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency (MUDRA) borrowers in the form of a guaranteed emergency credit line (GECL) facility.

For this purpose, a corpus of Rs 41,600 crore was set up by the government, spread over the current and next three financial years.

During the period and this is equivalent to 14 per cent of the outstanding MSME credit being saved from becoming NPA.

"As per our analysis, if these units had turned non-performing, then 1.5 crore workers would have become unemployed. In effect, the ECLGS saved the livelihood for 6 crore fami-

Rafael Nadal wins opening match; Swiatek beats Fernandez

Melbourne, Jan 06 (AP):

Rafael Nadal began fine-tuning his quest for a 21st Grand Slam singles title at the Australian Open with a 6-2, 7-5 win over Ricardas Berankis 6-2, 7-5 on Thursday in a warm-up tournament at Melbourne Park.

Nadal, recovering from the coronavirus, showed no signs of sluggishness on Rod Laver Arena, although he was broken early in the second set and again when he served for the match.

"It's only the first match after a while. Honestly, I have been going through some difficult, challenging moments the past year-and-a-half," Nadal said, "but in general terms I am super happy to be back in competition."

"Of course it's important to start with a victory, (which) gives me the chance to play another time tomorrow, and that's the main thing at this mo-



ment because I didn't play for such a long time."

Earlier, former French Open champion Iga Swiatek advanced to the Adelaide International quarterfinals with a surprisingly easy 6-1, 6-2 win over 2021 U.S. Open run-

ner-up Leylah Fernandez.

The fifth-seeded Swiatek joined top-ranked Ash Barty in the last eight and will play two-time Australian Open winner Victoria Azarenka, who beat Priscilla Hon 6-3, 7-5.

Seventh-seeded Elina Rybakina and American Shelby Rogers, who beat No. 3 seed Maria Sakkari, have already set up a quarterfinal match.

The other last-eight matchup will feature Kaja Juvan, who upset No. 2-ranked Aryna Sabalenka

in the second round, against Misaki Doi or Anastasia Gasanova.

Sania-Nadiia pair enter semifinals of Adelaide International

Adelaide, Jan 6 (PTI) India's Sania Mirza and her Ukrainian partner Nadia Kichenok entered the women's doubles semifinals of the Adelaide International 1 WTA event after beating American Shelby Rogers and Heather Watson of Great Britain in a hard-fought contest here on Thursday. Sania and Nadia got the better of their rivals 6-1 6-10-5 in a quarterfinal tie that lasted 55 minutes. The Indo-Ukrainian duo will now face Australia combination of Ashleigh Barty and Storm Sanders in the last-four round of the WTA 500 event. Sania and Nadia had earlier knocked out second seeds Gabriella Dabrowski and Giuliana Olmos 1-6 6-3 10-8 in the first round. The Adelaide event is a tune up tournament for the Australian Open, starting January 17 in Melbourne.

Jemimah, Shikha dropped from India squad for Women's World Cup

New Delhi, Jan 06 (PTI):

Top-order batter Jemimah Rodrigues and seasoned pacer Shikha Pandey were on Thursday dropped from India's 15-member squad for the Women's ODI World Cup scheduled to be held in New Zealand from March 4 to April 3.

The selectors have rewarded performers of the Australia tour earlier this year with left-handed batter Yastika Bhatia making the cut alongside the pace duo of Meghna Singh and Renuka Singh. Rodrigues, who impressed in T20 leagues in England and Australia this year, was not consistent enough in international cricket. Shikha too has been ignored due to her inconsistent form.

Another top-order batter Punam Raut, who was a part of the team in England and Australia, has also been dropped with the selectors including more power-hitters in the side. Same squad has been named for the preceding five ODIs against hosts New Zealand beginning



February 11 before the World Cup. Veteran batter Mithali Raj will lead the team which will aim to go all the way after finishing runners-up in the last edition in 2017. Mithali is expected to retire after the World Cup. The likes of Smriti Mandhana, Deepti Sharma, Jhulan Goswami and the young Shafali Verma are automatic selections in the squad.

Speaking to PTI, former India captain Diana Edulji said a well-balanced side has been picked though she is a tad surprised by Shikha's omission.

"Jemimah should take this exclusion in her stride and come back stronger while Shikha not being picked is a bit of surprise as she would have been the other experienced pacer alongside Jhulan.

CA set to relocate COVID-affected BBL to Melbourne

Melbourne, Jan 06 (PTI):

with is unprecedented," Hockley told Australia's SEN Radio. "We'll be gradually centralising (the teams) into Melbourne."

"What that enables us (Cricket Australia) to do is if a team is significantly impacted, it gives us much more flexibility to be able to swap teams in and complete the fixture," he added.

The decision was revealed by CA CEO Nick Hockley, who said that they are planning to relocate all eight teams inside a bio-bubble in Melbourne as it will make it easier for the organisers to reschedule the fixtures in the event of postponement of matches due to any further COVID positive cases.

The BBL has witnessed an unprecedented COVID outbreak with numerous positive cases being reported across eight franchises, forcing postponement and last minute rescheduling of matches.

"What we're dealing

"We've faced some different timing challenges with test results coming back. It's not ideal. Obviously, we want everyone to have their full-strength team available."



Usman Khawaja celebrates making 100 runs against England during the second day of their Ashes cricket test match in Sydney, Thursday.

"A lot of time behind the scenes that people don't see. You never take anything for granted. never sure I was going to represent Australia again, never mind scoring

a hundred. I'm very grateful for another opportunity."

Stuart Broad took 5-101 and went a long way to vindicating his return to the team after being

omitted from the third Test at Melbourne that saw Australia humiliate England and retain the Ashes. At stumps, Haseeb Hameed and Zak Crawley were both on 2 not out, with the latter surviving being caught off a no-ball from Mitchell Starc as the tourists ended the day 403 runs behind Australia in the first innings.

Earlier, Khawaja completed his century from 201 balls with 11 boundaries in the final over before tea in front of his former home state crowd. He celebrated by holding both arms aloft, raising and pointing his bat toward his team and family members in the historic Members Stand at the Sydney Cricket Ground before embracing his skipper mid-pitch.

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"Those two particular clubs (Stars and Heat) have been heavily impacted," Hockley said.

"We've faced some different timing challenges with test results coming back. It's not ideal. Obviously, we want everyone to have their full-strength team available."

"Health Minister Greg Hunt said the visa cancellation followed a review of Djokovic's medical exemption by border officials who looked "at the integrity and the evidence behind it."

He said Djokovic was free to appeal the decision, "but if a visa is canceled, somebody will have to leave the country."

The president of Djokovic's native Serbia blasted the "harassment" of the star who was detained overnight at Melbourne Tullamarine Airport.

Supporters of Serbia's Novak Djokovic stand outside a quarantine facility where Djokovic is being detained in Melbourne, Australia, Thursday.

for this year's first major tennis tournament.

But national border authorities didn't accept the exemption, with the Australian Border Force issuing a statement saying Djokovic failed to meet entry requirements.

"The rule is very clear," Prime Minister Scott Morrison told a news conference.

"You need to have a medical exemption. He didn't have a valid medical exemption. We make the call at the border, and that's where it's enforced."

Health Minister Greg Hunt said the visa cancellation followed a review of Djokovic's medical exemption by border officials who looked "at the integrity and the evidence behind it."

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राजिम चलो



जय माँ कर्मा

राजिम चलो

जय माँ राजिम

जय भामाराहू

राजिम चलो



छत्तीसगढ़ प्रदेश साहू संघ, जिला साहू संघ गरियाबांद एवं राजिम भवित्वन मन्दिर समिति के संयुक्त तत्त्वावधान में भक्त माता राजिम जयंती महोत्सव, महाआरती भोग प्रसादी

7 जनवरी 2022

स्थान- त्रिवेणी संगम राजिम, कार्यक्रम समय: सुबह 10 बजे से 5 बजे तक

मान. भूपेश बघेल जी
मुख्यमंत्री, छ. ग. शासनमान. ताम्रध्वज साहू जी
गृह मंत्री, छ. ग. शासनमा. धनेन्द्र साहू जी
पूर्व पंचायती एवं विधायक अध्यक्षमा. अरुण साव जी
सांसद, विलासपुर लोकसभामा. चन्द्रलाल साहू जी
पूर्व सांसद, महासमुद्र लोकसभामा. चुनी लाल साहू जी
सांसद, महासमुद्र लोकसभामा. अर्जुन हिरण्यनी जी
प्रदेश अध्यक्ष
छ. ग. प्रदेश साहू संघदीपक तारारंद साहू
पूर्व अध्यक्ष, हस्त शिल्प बोर्डटहल साहू
महामंत्री, छ.ग. प्रदेश साहू संघसनद बन्दी साहू
महामंत्री, छ.ग. प्रदेश साहू संघश्रीमती लक्ष्मी साहू
उपायक्ष, छ.ग. प्रदेश साहू संघडॉ. ममता साहू
राष्ट्रीय महिला अध्यक्ष
अ. भा. तीलक साहू महासभासंदीप साहू
राष्ट्रीय युवा अध्यक्ष अ. भा. तीलक साहू महासभा
अध्यक्ष तेलवारी विकास बोर्ड छ. ग.

भक्त माता राजिम जयंती महोत्सव की हार्दिक बधाई एवं शुभकामनाएँ



दो गज दूरी - मास्क है जरूरी
हाथ धोये, सेनेटाइज उपयोग करते रहें



नोट : कोविड महामारी को ध्यान में रखते हुए, प्रदेश के समस्त साजातीय बन्धुओं से निवेदन है कि 7 जनवरी को अपने-अपने घरों में 5 दीप जलाकर व राजिम माता की अराधना कर राजिम जयंती मनाये

THIRD WAVE PREPARATIONS



A health worker arranges beds at Omandur Super Speciality hospital as part of preparations for the expected third wave of COVID-19, in Chennai, Thursday.

Nagaland tribal body intensifies agitation for creation of Shamator district

Kohima, Jan 06 (PTD):

The Yimkhiung Tribal Council (YTC) in Nagaland intensified its agitation on Thursday demanding declaration of Shamator as a district. Shamator is currently a subdivision in Tuensang district.

On Thursday, the council members held a rally at Shamator town with people from all age groups, including women, holding placards and banners, raising slogans and singing songs in their dialect reminding the government of its assurance to the people.

As part of its intensified agitation, the YTC has indefinitely banned the visits of government officials, researchers, and tourists, both domestic and international, to Fakim Wildlife Sanctuary, Mt Saramati, and stone caves at Mimi and Salomi, which fall under Shamator.

The council has also decided to shut down the Likimro Hydroelectric Project (LHEP) at Pungro indefinitely. The apex body of the Yimkhiung tribe has been holding peaceful protest rallies for three hours from 9 am to 12

noon daily since Monday in areas falling under its command to show resentment to the failure of the Nagaland government to deliver full-fledged district status to Shamator which had been assured by the government, YTC general secretary S Tsuyihba said.

Meanwhile, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Pungro, Abhinav Shivam, said the LHEP is a national asset and its obstruction will affect the people. The ADC also directed the YTC to immediately lift the shutdown.

After breach in his security

Ujjain, Jan 06 (PTD):

BJP workers in Madhya Pradesh, led by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and senior party leaders, on Thursday performed Mahamritunjay religious ritual at different temples in the state for the long life of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the wake of lapses in his security during Punjab visit.

Workers of the ruling party, led by Madhya Pradesh BJP president Vishnu Dutt Sharma, performed Mahamritunjay Jap' at the famous Mahakaleshwar Temple in Ujjain. Sharma and state high-

er education minister Mohan Yadav along with party workers took part in the ritual that involves chanting of vedic mantras and prayed for the long life of the PM at the temple dedicated to Lord Shiva which is also one of the 12 Jyotirlings in the country.

Terming the breach in Modi's security as a conspiracy of the Congress, Sharma told reporters after the ritual, Our Prime Minister has the blessings of Lord Mahakal and 130 crore people of the country. Such acts won't be able to harm him.

Such a thing has happened for the first time in the history of the country. It was a pre-planned conspiracy at the behest of the Congress leadership. Sharma targeted the

NEET-PG admissions

SC reserves order on plea regarding EWS quota

New Delhi, Jan 06 (PTD):

The Supreme Court on Thursday reserved its order on a plea related to the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) quota in connection with the NEET-PG admissions. A bench of justices DY Chandrachud and AS Bopanna asked the parties to file their written submissions for consideration. "We have been hearing this matter for two days, we must start counselling in national interest," the bench said.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the apex court that he would like to dispel the confusion that there is a change in the rules of the game midway. "Firstly, there is no change in the

rules of the game. The regime which is the subject matter of this challenge is already implemented since 2019 except in the All India Quota," he submitted. Senior advocates Arvind Datar and Shyam Divan appeared in the court on behalf of some of the candidates. Senior advocate P Wilson appeared for the Tamil Nadu government. The Centre had told the apex court on Wednesday that it would not accept a position whereby those falling in the OBC or the EWS category, whether before or after the exercise of revisiting the criterion of Rs 8 lakh annual income, are deprived of something that is legitimately due to them. The NEET-PG candida-

tes, who have challenged a July 29, 2021 notification for the implementation of the OBC and the EWS quotas from the 2021-22 academic year, opposed the government's justification of applying the Rs 8 lakh income criterion, saying no study has been conducted on it.

Large-scale protests were held by resident doctors of various hospitals under the banner of the Federation of Resident Doctors' Association (FORDA) in Delhi and other parts of the country over the delay in the NEET-PG counselling, which has been postponed due to the pendency of the case and the Centre deciding to revisit the criterion for the determination of the EWS quota.

Four booked for molesting woman NCP worker

Mumbai, Jan 06 (PTD): An offence has been registered here against the lawyer of former Maharashtra minister Anil Deshmukh and three others for allegedly molesting a woman worker of the NCP and sending a vulgar message about her on WhatsApp, police said on Thursday.

The Charkop police on Wednesday registered an FIR against Deshmukh's lawyer Inderpal Singh, NCP workers Mukesh Pujari, Manishankar Chohan and Dhananjay Chohan, an official said.

The 54-year-old complainant has alleged that in October 2021, Singh had used vulgar words for her in one of the party's WhatsApp groups, while three others molested her along with Singh at a party in the same month, he said.

MP BJP leaders perform ritual for PM



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan during a ceremony for the long life of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in Bhopal.

Omkareswar Temple (another Jyotirling) in Khandwa district, Nalkheda (Bagulamukhi Devi Temple) in Agar Malwa district and three temples in Indore. The prime minister, who was

travelling by road in Punjab on Wednesday, was stuck on a flyover for 15-20 minutes due to a blockade by some protesters, an incident the Union home ministry described as a "major lapse" in his security.

Soon, recharge mobiles, pay bills at 'RailWire' kiosks in 200 stations

New Delhi, Jan 06 (PTD):

Passengers in 200 railway stations across India will soon be able to recharge their mobiles, pay electricity bills, fill up Aadhaar and Pan card forms and even file taxes with help from Common Service Centre (CSC) kiosks to be set up by RailTel. The scheme has been operationalised in partnership with CSC e-Governance Services India Limited (CSC-SPV) and the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, RailTel said in a statement. The kiosks will be run by village level entrepreneurs (VLEs). "The services offered by CSC include booking of the travelling tickets

(train, air, bus etc.), Aadhar Card, Voter Card, Mobile recharge, Electricity bill payment, Pan card, Income tax, Banking, insurance and many more," the statement said. The kiosks have been named RailWire Saathi Kiosks -- RailWire is the brand name of RailTel's retail broadband service.

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Tourists ride on a sledge on a snow covered hill top after a fresh snowfall at Patnitop hill near Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, about 115 km from Jammu, Thursday.

TOURISTS' PARADISE

Bengaluru, Jan 6 (PTD):

The Intermediate Jet Trainer (IJT), designed and developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited for stage II training of IAF pilots, has successfully demonstrated the capability to carry out six turn spins to the left hand and right hand sides.

The IJT, conceived by HAL as a replacement to the ageing Kirans of IAF fleet, had completed demonstration of its capabilities in terms of altitude and speed envelope, load factor, satisfactory stall characteristics and limited armament capability as required by IAF, much earlier, an HAL statement said on Thursday. The only pending task was spin test

ing. During the course of spin testing, in 2016, the aircraft departed from controlled flight which brought the programme to a temporary halt, it said. However, HAL decided to proceed further to complete the spin testing.

The capability to enter and recover from spin is a necessity for a trainer aircraft in order to familiarise the trainee pilot to recognise departure from controlled flight and the actions required to recover from such situations, the statement noted. "Achieving satisfactory characteristics during spin and an assured recovery from spin form a part of very crucial flight tests due to its unpredictability", it said.

the 30th edition of the New Delhi World Book Fair (NDWBF), which was scheduled to be held at Pragati Maidan from January 8 to 16, has been postponed in view of the latest DDMA guidelines imposed following the surge in Covid cases driven by the fast-spreading Omicron variant, said the organisers in a statement.

To contain the spread of Covid, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) on Tuesday had decided to impose a weekend curfew in the city. The curfew will be in effect between 10 pm on Friday and 5 am on Monday.

The major publication houses like Penguin Random House India (PRHI) and Bloomsbury, which anyway were not participating in the up-

coming book fair, have welcomed the decision of the organisers of postponing the book fair in the present scenario.

While Krishna Naroo, vice-president (sales and marketing), Bloomsbury India, said they could foresee the decision of postponement amid the present Covid situation; Nandan Jha, senior vice-president (sales and product), PRHI commended NBT's "timely and prudent" decision to postpone the event, keeping in mind the current developments.

"We had discussed in detail when the advertisement of participation in the fair came out last year and took a conscious decision of not participating as we were not sure how

things are going to unfold amid this Covid situation," Naroo told PTI.

"The NDWF is a great opportunity for publishers to showcase their publications, and is a good time to interact with the customers in general ... so yes if it takes place three-four months down the line and we see a sense of normalcy coming back, we too might participate," he added.

That said, the announcement of postponement of the fair has come as a "bit of disappointment" for several small publishing houses, like Garuda Prakashan, which had a host of book launches and over half-a-dozen author events planned for the fair.

RPF saved 601 lives in 2021 on railway premises

New Delhi, Jan 06 (PTD):

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The RPF also ensured implementation of Covid-appropriate behaviour at trains and stations. Twenty-six RPF personnel died after contracting Covid while on duty, the statement said. During 2021, RPF personnel saved the lives of 601 people.

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BRIEF



Women perform Kulvi Naati at Manali Winter Carnival, in Manali, Thursday.

Market fire

New Delhi: A fire broke out at New Lajpat Rai market opposite the Red Fort in Chandni Chowk here early on Thursday, Delhi Fire Services officials said. There were no casualties in the incident, they said. The fire engulfed around 60 'khokas' (kiosks) in the market, police said. A call about the fire at New Lajpat Rai Market was received around 4.43 am and 13 fire tenders were rushed to the spot, said Delhi Fire Services Director Atul Garg said.

Suicide

Bulandshahr: A couple here allegedly committed suicide by consuming a poisonous substance, police said Thursday. They were married four years. They were residents of Alipur Chitosna village of BB Nagar Police Station limits and they consumed a poisonous substance late Wednesday night, the police said. They were taken to a private hospital in Meerut for treatment where they died.

Lifer

Muzaffarnagar: A Special POCSO Court here on Thursday sentenced a 27-year-old man to life imprisonment for raping and killing a minor girl last July. The accused Sunil Kumar was also imposed with a fine of Rs 45,000 in addition to the sentence awarded by Judge Sanjiv Kumar Tiwari. Kumar was convicted under sections 376, 302, and 201 of the Indian Penal Code, and 5 and 6 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

Markets shut

New Delhi: Two markets in the national capital were ordered to be shut for a certain period in view of "violation of COVID containment guidelines, according to an official order. It said the breach may have caused "super-spreading" of the coronavirus. The office of the Karawali Nagar SDM on January 5 ordered closure of Sonia Vihar 2nd Pusta Market and Mukund Vihar Market, Karawali Nagar, from 4 pm January 6 till 10 am January 7, or till further orders, whichever is earlier. The order said the containment restrictions were applicable for all, except shops dealing with essential goods and services.

	Weather
High 28	Low 14
MARKET	
NIFTY	17,745.90
SENSEX	59,601.84
BULLION	
GOLD	47,565
SILVER	60,659

PM'S PUNJAB VISIT

Union cabinet discusses security breach

■ Ministers seek exemplary action

New Delhi, Jan 06 (PTI)

The Union cabinet is learnt to have discussed on Thursday the issue of security breach during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Punjab, with several ministers expressing concern over the development and seeking "exemplary action" in the matter, sources said.

They said all the ministers expressed anguish over the "major security breach" during Modi's visit to the Congress-ruled state on Wednesday, with some demanding strong action. The cabinet meet-



Union I & B Minister Anurag Thakur briefs the media on Cabinet decisions, at NMC in New Delhi, Thursday.

ing, chaired by the prime minister, was held after a week's gap. It started with several ministers raising the issue and expressing anguish over the manner in which the Congress government in Punjab has

dealt with it. "A number of ministers also felt that there should be exemplary action in the matter, so that such events are never repeated again. They also said that never before has a prime minister's security been compromised in this manner," a minister said on the condition of anonymity. The sources said the issue is being discussed at the highest level and the Union home minister may take some exemplary action to avoid the recurrence of such an event.

Modi also met President Ram Nath Kovind and briefed him on the security breach during his visit to Punjab, drawing his concern over the serious lapse. "President

Ram Nath Kovind met Prime Minister Modi at the Rashtrapati Bhavan today and received from him a first-hand account of the security breach in his convoy in Punjab yesterday. The President expressed his concerns about the serious lapse," the president's secretariat wrote on Twitter.

"Called on Rashtrapati Ji. Thankful to him for his concern. Grateful for his good wishes, which are always a source of strength," Modi said in a tweet after his meeting with Kovind.

Earlier, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu spoke to the prime minister and expressed his deep concern over the incident.

POLL-BOUND STATES

EC reviews Covid, law and order situation

■ Stresses on need for vaccinations

New Delhi, Jan 06 (PTI)

The Election Commission on Thursday reviewed the Covid situation with the Union health secretary and health experts, collecting inputs on necessary safety measures to be ensured during the democratic exercise and emphasising the need for vaccination of all eligible people in five poll-bound states, sources said.

In a separate meeting,

the poll panel discussed the law and order situation in the five states - Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Punjab and Manipur - with Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla.

Elections are due in the five states and the Commission is expected to announce poll dates in the next few days.

Besides Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan, the meeting to assess the Covid situation was also attended by AIIMS director Randeep Guleria and ICMR's

Balram Bhargava, sources aware of the interactions said. The poll panel carried out a "complete review" of the Covid status and took inputs from medical experts on "safety measures to be ensured" during campaigning and polling. It stressed to the health secretary the need to ensure complete vaccination for all eligible persons, the sources said.

In an earlier meeting with Bhushan on December 27, the poll panel had asked him to ramp up the vaccination drive in the five states.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, today approved the scheme on Green Energy Corridor (GEC) Phase-II for Intra-State Transmission System (InSTS) for addition of approximately 10,750 circuit kilometres (ckm) of trans-

mission lines and approx.

27,500 Mega Volt-Amperes (MVA) transformation capacity of substations," an official statement said.

The scheme will facilitate grid integration and power evacuation of about 20 GW of renewable energy (RE) projects in seven states - Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

Announcing the decision, Union Minister Anurag Thakur said the second phase will be implemented during 2021-22 to 2025-26 financial years.

The minister added that 80 per cent of the phase one work has been completed.

The outlay of the first phase was Rs 10,142 crore.

The statement said the scheme (Phase-II) is targeted to be set up with total estimated cost of Rs 12,031.33 crore.

The Central Financial Assistance (CFA) will be 33 per cent of the project cost, that is Rs 3,970.34 crore.

The CFA will help in offsetting the intra-state transmission charges and keep the power costs down. Thus, the government support will ultimately benefit the end users, it added.

The scheme will help in achieving the target of 450 GW installed RE capacity by 2030.

It will also contribute to

said at a press conference here. Why the weather condition was not assessed when the PM's programme was prepared? Even when he took off from Delhi (for Punjab), were the agencies not aware of the weather condition? If the weather information was already there, then why weren't alternate arrangements made in advance?" he asked. The Punjab government had roped in 20 IPS officers and 10,000 police personnel for the PM's security at the places where it was sought. But, how come the plan was suddenly changed? Baghel sought to know.

Farmers from Punjab were on a protest for 14 months against farm laws. Seven hundred farmers were "martyred" (allegedly) during protest, he claimed.

Rs 12,0000-CR OUTLAY

Govt approves Green Energy Corridor Phase-II

New Delhi, Jan 06 (PTI)

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long-term energy security of the country and promote ecologically sustainable growth by reducing the carbon footprint.

Besides, it will generate large direct and indirect employment opportunities for both skilled and unskilled personnel in power and other related sectors, the statement said.

This scheme is in addition to GEC Phase-I which is already under implementation in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu for grid integration and power evacuation of about 24 GW of RE.

HATE SPEECH CASE

Kalicharan Maharaj sent in judicial custody

Pune, Jan 06 (PTI)

Pune Police had arrested Kalicharan alias Abhijit Sarag from Raipur.

A case has been registered against Kalicharan Maharaj, right-wing leader Milind Ekbote, Captain (retired) Digendra Kumar and others at Khadak police station here. They are accused of making inflammatory speeches during an event in the city, in judicial custody.

He was produced in the court after his one-day police custody got over. Judicial Magistrate (First Class) M A Shaikh remanded him in judicial custody.

The police did not press for more custody.

A bail application was also filed, and it would be heard on Friday, said his lawyer Amol Dange.

KEEPING AWAY COLD



People warm themselves around a bonfire during a cold winter day, in Amritsar, Thursday.

70 ha land in Gulmarg, Sonamarg declared 'strategic areas'

■ Army can take control of the patch now

Srinagar, Jan 06 (PTI)

The Jammu and Kashmir government has declared nearly 70 hectares of land in Gulmarg and Sonamarg tourist resorts of the valley as "strategic areas", paving the way for the armed forces to take control of these land patches.

The armed forces can undertake infrastructure development even in ecologically fragile areas which are declared "strategic areas" by the government.

DTP president Mehbooba Mufti criticised the government move, saying the allocation of huge tracts of land to armed forces in tourist areas of J&K is breached, the

order said. "Corp Commander shall ensure that the orders, if any passed by an hon'ble court/tribunal in this regard, are strictly adhered to," the order reads.

This was the first notification issued by the administration of the union territory after the amendment to Jammu and Kashmir Development Act 1970 by the Union Home Ministry in October 2020 through an executive order.

The Administrative Council headed by the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir gave its nod to the amendment to the Control of Building Operations Act 1988 and the J&K Development Act, 1970 to provide for special dispensation for carrying out construction activities in strategic areas.

Adani group to supply imported coal to NTPC

New Delhi, Jan 06 (PTI)

Billionaire Gautam Adani's port-to-energy conglomerate on Thursday said it had won a contract to supply imported coal to state-owned electricity generator NTPC but played down its significance saying the volume of 1 million tonnes was small.

"NTPC has awarded the contract to the company for the supply of 1 million tonnes of imported coal to its various power plants," Adani Enterprises said in a stock exchange filing.

The contract, it said, was awarded by NTPC through "an elaborate bidding process (that) started in the end of October 2021, followed by reverse bidding and negotiations."

HIGHEST IN 8 MONTHS

15,097 new Covid cases in Delhi

■ Positivity Rate 15%

New Delhi, Jan 06

Omicron variant of the virus. The spike in Covid cases is also being accompanied by higher numbers of hospitalisations. The number of patients in hospitals in Delhi has increased from 247 on January 1 to 531 on January 4, according to the latest data. In the last three days, the number of patients on oxygen support has increased from 94 to 168 and those on ventilators from four to 14. 1,116 out of the 12,104 oxygen beds for Covid patients are occupied in Delhi hospitals, while 72 ICU beds with ventilators have patients, reported news agency PTI.

"Currently, the death ratio is 1 in 1,000. The situation is improving compared to last time. Yesterday we had 9,000 free beds, today it has become 12,000, so our preparations are complete. We are now conducting close to 90,000 tests," he said.

THIRD WAVE PREPARATIONS



A health worker arranges beds at Omandur Super Speciality hospital as part of preparations for the expected third wave of COVID-19, in Chennai, Thursday.

Nagaland tribal body intensifies agitation for creation of Shamator district

Kohima, Jan 06 (PTD):

The Yimkhiung Tribal Council (YTC) in Nagaland intensified its agitation on Thursday demanding declaration of Shamator as a district. Shamator is currently a subdivision in Tuensang district.

On Thursday, the council members held a rally at Shamator town with people from all age groups, including women, holding placards and banners, raising slogans and singing songs in their dialect reminding the government of its assurance to the people.

As part of its intensified agitation, the YTC has indefinitely banned the visits of government officials, researchers, and tourists, both domestic and international, to Fakim Wildlife Sanctuary, Mt Saramati, and stone caves at Mimi and Salomi, which fall under Shamator.

The council has also decided to shut down the Likimro Hydroelectric Project (LHEP) at Pungro indefinitely. The apex body of the Yimkhiung tribe has been holding peaceful protest rallies for three hours from 9 am to 12

noon daily since Monday in areas falling under its command to show resentment to the failure of the Nagaland government to deliver full-fledged district status to Shamator which had been assured by the government, YTC general secretary S Tsuyihba said.

Meanwhile, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Pungro, Abhinav Shivam, said the LHEP is a national asset and its obstruction will affect the people. The ADC also directed the YTC to immediately lift the shutdown.

Workers of the ruling party, led by Madhya Pradesh BJP president Vishnu Dutt Sharma, performed Mahamartyunjay Jap' at the famous Mahakaleshwar Temple in Ujjain.

After breach in his security

Ujjain, Jan 06 (PTD):

BJP workers in Madhya Pradesh, led by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and senior party leaders, on Thursday performed Mahamartyunjay religious ritual at different temples in the state for the long life of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the wake of lapses in his security during Punjab visit.

Sharma and state high-

New Delhi, Jan 06 (PTD):

The Supreme Court on Thursday reserved its order on a plea related to the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) quota in connection with the NEET-PG admissions. A bench of justices DY Chandrachud and AS Bopanna asked the parties to file their written submissions for consideration. "We have been hearing this matter for two days, we must start counselling in national interest," the bench said.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the apex court that he would like to dispel the confusion that there is a change in the rules of the game midway. "Firstly, there is no change in the

rules of the game. The regime which is the subject matter of this challenge is already implemented since 2019 except in the All India Quota," he submitted.

Senior advocates Arvind Datar and Shyam Divan appeared in the court on behalf of some of the candidates. Senior advocate P Wilson appeared for the Tamil Nadu government. The Centre had told the apex court on Wednesday that it would not accept a position whereby those falling in the OBC or the EWS category, whether before or after the exercise of revisiting the criterion of Rs 8 lakh annual income, are deprived of something that is legitimately due to them. The NEET-PG candid-

ates, who have challenged a July 29, 2021 notification for the implementation of the OBC and the EWS quotas from the 2021-22 academic year, opposed the government's justification of applying the Rs 8 lakh income criterion, saying no study has been conducted on it.

Large-scale protests were held by resident doctors of various hospitals under the banner of the Federation of Resident Doctors' Association (FORDA) in Delhi and other parts of the country over the delay in the NEET-PG counselling, which has been postponed due to the pendency of the case and the Centre deciding to revisit the criterion for the determination of the EWS quota.

Four booked for molesting woman NCP worker

Mumbai, Jan 06 (PTD): An offence has been registered here against the lawyer of former Maharashtra minister Anil Deshmukh and three others for allegedly molesting a woman worker of the NCP and sending a vulgar message about her on WhatsApp, police said on Thursday.

The Charkop police on Wednesday registered an FIR against Deshmukh's lawyer Inderpal Singh, NCP workers Mukesh Pujari, Manishankar Chohan and Dhananjay Chohan, an official said.

The 54-year-old complainant has alleged that in October 2021, Singh had used vulgar words for her in one of the party's WhatsApp groups, while three others molested her along with Singh at a party in the same month, he said.

MP BJP leaders perform ritual for PM



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan during a ceremony for the long life of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in Bhopal.

Congress government in Punjab for failing to provide adequate security to the Prime Minister. A similar ritual was performed at the Gufa Mandir in Bhopal by Chouhan. Such rituals also took place at

Omkareswar Temple (another Jyotirling) in Khandwa district, Nalkheda (Bagulamukhi Devi Temple) in Agar Malwa district and three temples in Indore. The prime minister, who was

travelling by road in Punjab on Wednesday, was stuck on a flyover for 15-20 minutes due to a blockade by some protesters, an incident the Union home ministry described as a "major lapse" in his security.

Soon, recharge mobiles, pay bills at 'RailWire' kiosks in 200 stations

New Delhi, Jan 06 (PTD):

Passengers in 200 railway stations across India will soon be able to recharge their mobiles, pay electricity bills, fill up Aadhaar and Pan card forms and even file taxes with help from Common Service Centre (CSC) kiosks to be set up by RailTel. The scheme has been operationalised in partnership with CSC e-Governance Services India Limited (CSC-SPV) and the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, RailTel said in a statement. The kiosks will be run by village level entrepreneurs (VLEs). "The services offered by CSC include booking of the travelling tickets

(train, air, bus etc.), Aadhar Card, Voter Card, Mobile recharge, Electricity bill payment, Pan card, Income tax, Banking, insurance and many more," the statement said. The kiosks have been named RailWire Saathi Kiosks -- RailWire is the brand name of RailTel's retail broadband service.

TOURISTS' PARADISE



Tourists ride on a sledge on a snow covered hill top after a fresh snowfall at Patnitop hill near Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, about 115 km from Jammu, Thursday.

New Delhi World Book Fair 2022 postponed

New Delhi, Jan 06 (PTD):

this year. "In view of the latest DDMA guidelines, and the requests made by various stakeholders, the NDWBF 2022 has been postponed. The fresh dates will be announced separately," said National Book Trust (NBT), the organiser of the event, in the statement.

To contain the spread of Covid, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) on Tuesday had decided to impose a weekend curfew in the city. The curfew will be in effect between 10 pm on Friday and 5 am on Monday.

The major publication houses like Penguin Random House India (PRHI) and Bloomsbury, which anyway were not participating in the up-

coming book fair, have welcomed the decision of the organisers of postponing the book fair in the present scenario.

While Krishna Naroo, vice-president (sales and marketing), Bloomsbury India, said they could foresee the decision of postponement amid the present Covid situation; Nandan Jha, senior vice-president (sales and product), PRHI commended NBT's "timely and prudent" decision to postpone the event, keeping in mind the current developments.

"We had discussed in detail when the advertisement of participation in the fair came out last year and took a conscious decision of not participating as we were not sure how

things are going to unfold amid this Covid situation," Naroo told PTI.

"The NDWF is a great opportunity for publishers to showcase their publications, and is a good time to interact with the customers in general ... so yes if it takes place three-four months down the line and we see a sense of normalcy coming back, we too might participate," he added.

That said, the announcement of postponement of the fair has come as a "bit of disappointment" for several small publishing houses, like Garuda Prakashan, which had a host of book launches and over half-a-dozen author events planned for the fair.

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measures to ensure security of passengers, especially women, include train escorting, CCTV system at 840 stations and about 4,000 coaches, women escorts in women special suburban trains, regular drives against unauthorised passengers in women coaches, etc, are also being implemented.

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