



BRIEF

GOOD MORNING MUMBAI



Fishermen row their boat in the Arabian Sea in the backdrop of a LED advertisement board on a vessel, in Mumbai, Sunday.

Wall collapse

Budaun: Two people were killed and three others injured here on Sunday after a wall of a house collapsed on them when they were sitting near a bonfire, police said. The incident took place in Ibrahimpur Gadh village in Sahsawan area when people had gathered at the residence of one Naresh Pal (55) to mourn the death of his granddaughter, they said.

Judicial custody

Dehradun: A Haridwar court on Sunday sent Yati Narsinghanand, organiser of the controversial Dharma Sansad in Haridwar, to 14-day judicial custody. He has been booked under Sections 295 (A) and 509 of the Indian Penal Code and sent to Roshnabad Jail, Haridwar police station SHO Rakinder Singh Kathait said.

Major fire

Hyderabad: A massive fire broke out at the heritage Secunderabad Club building here in the early hours of Sunday damaging most parts of the structure, police said. However, there were no casualties, they said. A police patrol team noticed the blaze at around 3.15 AM and alerted the Fire department and seven fire engines including one from the Army were rushed to the spot and flames were extinguished by 6 AM, a police official told PTI.

Suicide

Jaipur: A 31-year old woman allegedly hanged herself to death over torture by her husband and in-laws in Ajmer, police said on Sunday. The incident took place Saturday night, they said. According to a suicide note left behind by the woman, she was harassed by her husband, who is living in Germany, and his parents staying in Ajmer's Kishangarh area. The victim, Anuradha, got married to Aniruddha three years ago.

Booked

Fatehpur: A case has been registered against three persons, including a village head, after four cows were found dead at a cowshed run by the state government in this Uttar Pradesh district, officials said on Sunday. The case was registered on Saturday in connection with the deaths of the cows at the Nandi Gaushala in Karsuma village under Bahua development block of the district. Chief Development Officer Satyaprakash on Sunday said the case was registered against village head Kalavati, panchayat secretary Lalit Gautam and supervisor Suresh Kumar.

Weather
High 24 Low 12

ONE YR OF COVID VACCINATION

'70% adults fully vaccinated'

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

Seventy per cent of India's adults have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 while 93 per cent received the first jab, said Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya while launching a postage stamp on indigenously developed vaccine Covaxin to mark one year of the inoculation drive.



mined and he kept encouraging and motivating the scientists and companies.

This is a proud moment for Indians and the entire world is amazed by the country's Covid inoculation drive, he said at the commemorative postage stamp release event.

Addressing the programme through a video link, Mandaviya said some people tried to sow confusion over the vaccination drive but Prime Minister Narendra Modi was determined

"India has been able to achieve the milestone of administering over 156 crore doses despite such a huge population and diversity."

"On the occasion of completion of one year of the Covid vaccination drive, a postage stamp has been released on the vaccine indigenously developed jointly by the ICMR and Bharat Biotech, realis-

ing Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji's dream of self-reliant India," Mandaviya said.

He also congratulated all scientists on the occasion. "Our prime minister encouraged scientists to carry out research and develop an indigenous Covid vaccine and held discussions with vaccine manufacturing companies and offered them support.

"There was no dearth of manpower or brainpower. What was needed was the ability to identify the potential in the country for coming up with vaccines," he said. The government and the private sector worked in tandem on vaccine research and in nine months a Covid vaccine was indigenously developed while the process of granting authorisations to jabs was also simplified,

the minister said.

"A certain section of people attempted to sow confusion over the vaccination drive but the prime minister was determined and he kept on encouraging and motivating the scientists and companies. Thus, the vaccine manufacturing and the inoculation drive progressed at a steady pace," the minister stated.

The countrywide vaccination drive was rolled out on January 16 with health-care workers getting inoculated in the first phase. Vaccination of frontline workers started from February 2.

The next phase of the COVID-19 vaccination commenced from March 1 for people over 60 years of age and those aged 45 and above with specified comorbid conditions.

Lakshya beats world champion Loh



New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

India's Lakshya Sen secured his maiden Super 500 title by winning the Yonex-Sunrise India Open with a stunning straight-game victory over reigning world champion Loh Kean Yew of Singapore in the men's singles final here on Sunday. The 20-year-old Sen, who had claimed his maiden world championships medal with a bronze in Spain last month, produced a fine performance to outshine the fifth seeded shuttler 24-22 21-17 in the summit clash that lasted 54 minutes. In a repeat of last year's Dutch Open final, the Indian ensured that he had the last laugh this time around.

'Jabs saving lives, livelihoods'

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

Lauding India's COVID-19 vaccination drive as it completes a year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said it has added great strength to the fight against the pandemic and has resulted in saving lives and protecting livelihoods.



people being vaccinated in remote areas, or our health-care workers taking the vaccines there, our hearts and minds are filled with pride," he said.

When the pandemic first struck, not much was known about the virus. However, our scientists and innovators immersed themselves in developing vaccines, he noted.

India feels proud that our nation has been able to contribute to fighting the pandemic through vaccines, Modi tweeted.

"I salute each and every individual who is associated with the vaccination drive," he said, adding that the role of our doctors, nurses and healthcare workers is exceptional. "When we see glimpses of

The prime minister asserted that India's approach to fighting the pandemic will always remain science based. Health infrastructure is also being augmented to ensure that fellow citizens get proper care, he said, asking people to keep following all COVID-19 related protocols.

MAMATA WRITES TO MODI

'Shocked on Bengal's tableau exclusion from R-Day parade'

Kolkata, Jan 16 (PTI):

Expressing shock over the Centre's decision to exclude West Bengal's tableau, which was set to highlight contributions of freedom fighters, from the upcoming Republic Day Parade in Delhi, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging him to reconsider the decision as people of the state would be "pained" by the move.

Bengal from the ensuing Republic Day Parade. It is even more baffling for us that the tableau was rejected without assigning any reasons or justifications," Banerjee said in a two-page letter to Modi. The proposed tableau was set to commemorate the contributions of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and his INA on his 125th birth anniversary year, the CM said. "I may like to inform you that all the people of West Bengal are deeply pained by this attitude of the central government. It is shocking to find that the contribution of its valiant freedom fighters finds no place in the nation's ceremony to celebrate the occasion of the Republic Day on the 75th year of our Independence.

Banerjee also said that no reason was cited for the tableau's rejection. "I have been profoundly shocked and hurt by the decision of the Government of India to abruptly exclude the proposed tableau of the Government of West

WORLD BANK EDUCATION DIRECTOR

'No justification now for keeping schools closed in view of COVID-19'

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

There is no justification now for keeping schools closed in view of the pandemic and even if there are new waves, closing schools should be the last resort, according to the World Bank's Global Education Director Jaime Saavedra.



"There is no relation between opening schools and spread of coronavirus. There is no evidence linking the two and there is no justification now to keep the schools closed. Even if there are new waves of COVID-19, closing schools should be the last resort," Saavedra told PTI in an interview from Washington.

He also asserted that it does not make sense from public-policy perspective to wait till children are vaccinated as there is "no science" behind it.

and shopping malls open and keep schools closed. There is no excuse," he added.

According to various simulations by the World Bank, health risks for children if schools are opened are low and the cost of the closure is extremely high. "During 2020, we were navigating in a sea of ignorance. We just didn't know what is the best way of combating the pandemic and the immediate reaction of most countries in the world was let's close schools. Time has passed since then and with evidence coming in from late 2020 and 2021, we have had several waves and there are several countries which have opened schools," he said.

UP ELECTION CAMPAIGN

CM Baghel booked for 'flouting' Covid norms

New Delhi, Jan 16:

A police case was filed against Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel and several others on Sunday for violating Covid safety protocols while campaigning for the Congress in Noida ahead of next month's Uttar Pradesh Assembly election.



The case was filed after a complaint from the District Election Officer, who wrote to the Assistant DCP (Noida Police) to flag violation of orders banning the gathering of five or more people in order to minimise the spread of the coronavirus.

next month - parties going door-to-door must have only five members per campaigning team. A FIR, or first information report, has been registered at the police station in Noida's Sector 113, with charges relating to violation of Section 144 and under sections of the Epidemic Act.

Also, as per rules announced by the Election Commission last week - ahead of polls in five states

HEINOUS CRIME

Woman tortured with burning cigarette butts, gang-raped in Indore

Indore, Jan 16 (PTI):

A 32-year-old woman was allegedly gang-raped and tortured by her husband and four of his friends in Madhya Pradesh's Indore district, police said on Sunday, adding that five accused were arrested.

Hubby and 4 men held

About the victim

Woman, hailing from Chhattisgarh, got married to an Indore-based man after meeting him on a matrimonial site. However, the man is already married. The woman claimed that she was brutalised by her husband and others who performed unnatural sex and also singed her private parts with cigarettes. They also threatened to kill her when she resisted the sexual assault.

The woman claimed that she was brutalised by her husband and others who performed unnatural sex and also singed her private parts with cigarettes. They also threatened to kill her when she resisted the sexual assault, an official said quoting the FIR. The alleged gang-rape occurred at

a farmhouse under the Shipra police station area of Indore between November 2019 and October 2021, the official said. He said the woman, hailing from Chhattisgarh, got married to an Indore-based man

after meeting him on a matrimonial site. However, the man is already married, the police sub-inspector said.

The complainant told the police that she somehow escaped from the farmhouse and travelled to her parent's home in Chhattisgarh. But one of the accused men followed her there intending to harm her, the official added. Five men, including the victim's husband, were booked under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and were arrested from various areas of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, he said, adding that further investigation is underway.

CARE FOR UNDERPRIVILEGED



A volunteer teaches underprivileged children in an open classroom, in Moradabad, Sunday.

ECI allows mediapersons to cast vote through postal ballot

Chandigarh, Jan 16 (PTI):

The Election Commission of India has allowed journalists to cast their votes through postal ballot facility, according to an official statement of the office of Punjab chief electoral officer on Sunday.

press conference, had asked Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Punjab Dr S Karuna Raju to include them in absentee voters so that they can cast their votes using the postal ballot facility," it said.

Raju said any absentee voter wishing to vote by postal ballot has to make an application to the returning officer in Form-12D, giving all requisite particulars and get the application verified by the nodal officer appointed by the organisation concerned. He said any voter opting for postal ballot facility would not be able to cast a vote at the polling station.

Voting for Punjab's 117 assembly seats will be held on February 14 and the counting of votes will take place on March 10. The ECI has allowed mediapersons, authorised by the poll body, to exercise their franchise using postal ballot facility, said the statement. "Mediapersons, during a

'Omicron, Delta pandemics going parallelly'

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

Omicron is a "deviant" from the COVID-19 pandemic progression script and so it must be postulated that two pandemics are going on side by side, one by the Delta and close relatives and the other by the latest variant of concern, said noted virologist Dr T Jacob John.



was Wuhan-D614G... We shall see as the pandemic progresses," John, a former director of the ICMR's Centre of Advanced Research in Virology, said.

Speaking to PTI on how the pandemic can now be expected to progress, he pointed out that Omicron is not "fathered, or mothered, by Wuhan-D614G, Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, Kappa or Mu and That much is for sure". "So in my opinion, this is a variant of unknown proximal parentage but great great grandparent

D614G refers to an amino acid mutation in this protein that has become increasingly common in SARS-CoV-2 viruses from

around the world. "Since Omicron is illegitimate or 'deviant' from COVID-19 pandemic progression script, we must think of two pandemics going on side by side -- Delta and close relatives, and Omicron and its variants in future. "Diseases caused by them are also different. One is Pneumonia-hypoxia-mulitorgan damage disease but the other an upper/middle respiratory disease that pushes pre-existing chronic disease or old age beyond the wall," he said.

Asked if the peak of the third wave has been reached since cases have started plateauing in some places, John said metro cities started first and will finish first.

IIT MADRAS ANALYSIS

India's 'R value' drops to 2.2 between Jan 7 and 13

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

India's 'R-value', which indicates how rapidly COVID-19 is spreading, was recorded at 2.2 between January 7 and 13, a drop from the previous two weeks, according to a preliminary analysis by IIT Madras.

What is R value..

The R value marks the number of people an infected person can spread the disease to. A pandemic is considered to end if this value goes below 1.

The R value of Mumbai was 1.3, Delhi 2.5, Chennai 2.4 and Kolkata 1.6, according to the analysis by IIT Madras' Department of Mathematics and Centre of Excellence for Computational Mathematics and Data Science headed by Prof Neelesh S Upadhye and

Prof S Sundar. It was close to 2.9 nationally from December 25 to December 31 while it was 4 between January 1 and 6. The R value marks the number of people an infected person can spread the disease to. A pandemic is considered to end if this value goes below 1.

Bhilai Mayor instructs for arranging bonfires in view of inclement weather

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 16: Neeraj Pal, Mayor of Bhilai Municipal Corporation, has given instructions to make arrangements for bonfires in all the zones under the corporation limits to provide relief from the havoc due to changing weather and cold wave. Although the weather had opened earlier, but for the last few days it has been cloudy, and cold wave has taken a grip.

The Mayor has instructed that in places like railway station and bus stand, the traffic remains active till late night, and also people who earn daily and spend more time on the footpath, there is a need of



bonfire for such people. Apart from this, the corporation is also arranging bonfires at crowded places, square-intersection and major public places.

Mayor Neeraj Pal said that bonfire proves to be very beneficial to save from cold. The system of bonfire will continue to

relief from cold by distributing blankets to the needy.

Bonfires have been arranged at major traffic points of the city like Sector 6A Market, the basti near Sector 7 station, at three places in Civic Centre, Kurud Bazar Chowk, Om Shanti Om Chowk, Rajiv Nagar, Vaishali Nagar Gol Market, Power House Railway Station, near Sheela Complex, Jawahar Nagar Rickshaw Stand, Subhash Chowk near Employment Exchange, Gada Chowk Supela, Bhilai Nagar Railway Station, Supela Ghari Chowk, Rickshaw Stand near Chandra Maurya, and Nehru Nagar Chowk among others.

provide relief to the people in public places from the chilling cold.

Earlier, the Corporation Commissioner Prakash Surve had distributed blankets to the needy in the city. In compliance with the instructions, all the zone commissioners have done the work of providing re-

Bhilai Chamber launches 'No Mask - No Sale' campaign

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 16: Under the leadership of Chhattisgarh Chamber of Commerce and Industries State General Secretary Ajay Bhasin and Bhilai Chamber President Gargi Shankar Mishra, "No Mask - No Sale" campaign was launched in various markets of Bhilai. The campaign was inaugurated from Akash Ganga Market.

Along with the team of Bhilai Chamber and the team of Yuva Chamber, the shopkeepers and customers were made aware about covid protocol and stickers were pasted in the shops with slogan of "No mask - No sale".



Keeping in mind the third wave of Corona, Bhilai Chamber appealed the traders that in order to avoid the situation of lockdown in Bhilai, we all should follow the Covid protocol issued by the government in the shops. Stickers were pasted door

to door in each shop of Supela, Chouhan Estate, Chandra Mourya Talkies and other places. Shopkeepers were informed about the campaign. Youth Chamber President Ankit Jain, Youth Team In-charge Dilip Kesarwani, Zone 3

in-charge Vinay Singh, Sunil Mishra, Harish Sharma, Akshay Gupta, Ankit Bansal, Gulshan Grover, Nishu Pandey, Amar Jeet Yadav and other members were involved in this campaign, informed office in-charge Sunil Mishra.

Speaker and MiC member visit Avanti Bai Sarovar



Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 16: On Sunday, Bhilai Municipal Corporation Speaker Giriwar Bunt Sahu and MiC Member Aditya Singh (Corporator of Radhika Nagar) visited the Veerangana Rani Avanti Bai Lodhi Sarovar.

They met the local and tried to get appraised about the public expectations. They interacted with the

people and discussed about the cleanliness workers at the pond and beautification plans. **Bhilai** - Durg Lodhi Samaj President Uttam Chandel, Paras Janghel, Praveen Janghel, Kishore Verma, Anil Verma, Ashok Verma, Om Prakash Janghel, Churaman Janghel, Manoj Rajput, Santosh Rajput and people those who visit here for morning walk were present.

BSP-OA expresses concern over allotment of BSP quarters to third parties

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 16: Officers Association of Bhilai Steel Plant has expressed concern over the excessive allotment of BSP quarters to third parties in Sectors 8, 9, 10 & Hospital Sector. Unauthorised occupancy in the bigger quarters of BSP has also increased significantly.

OA has demanded from the Director In-charge of Bhilai Steel Plant to review the current status of quarter occupancy and take appropriate steps for protecting the quarters from illegal occupancy.

OA President Narendra Kumar Banchhor said that it is an important issue which is assuming alarming proportion in Bhilai Township area. During last 20 years, it has been observed that third party allotment and unauthorised occupation of BSP quarter has increased to a great extent in areas like Sector-8, 9, 10 & Hospital Sector which are mainly executive quarters of BSP.

The houses allotted to third parties are not vacated by allottees even after their retirement or transfer. It is on record

that vacation by third party is almost zero percent. The Town Services Department, in spite of their best efforts is not able to get the unauthorised occupation vacated.

As a result of unauthorised occupation, our executives have to stay in houses which are lower/inferior to their actual eligibility. This is very disappointing, painful and de-motivating for the employees those who are not availing HRA which is in the range of Rs 8000-16000.

This third party allotment of executive quarters has played vital role

in demotivating the employees, sparked unrest and severe disappointment among our team Bhilai. In the view of all above, BSP OA requested the Director In-charge of Bhilai Steel Plant to intervene towards third party allotment of quarters, especially in sector 8,9,10 & hospital sectors and review of third party quarters allotted in last few years.

This will ensure that executives will have better choices for their allotment of houses which will be significant morale booster in this difficult time.

Timings & Location of Vaccination for different age Groups notified

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 16: COVID Vaccination is being carried out at Sector 1 Hospital on regular basis by the Medical & Health Services Dept of SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant. Timings and location of vaccination from January 14, 2022 for different age groups at BSP Sector 1 Hospital have been notified by M & HS Department.

Accordingly, booster dose of COVID 19 vaccination for those in the age group of 60 and above will be administered in front of OPD of Cancer Department in BSP Sector

1 Hospital from 09:00 hrs to 13:00 hrs and from 14:00 hrs to 17:00 hrs every day.

COVAXIN will be administered to children in the age group 15 to 18 years near Casualty in BSP Sector 1 Hospital from 09:00 hrs to 13:00 hrs.

COVID 19 vaccination will be administered to CISF personnel and front-line workers near Casualty Emergency in BSP Sector 1 Hospital from 14:00 hrs to 17:00 hrs.

COVID 19 vaccination will be continued to be administered to those in age group 18 years to 59 years near Cancer Ward of BSP Sector 1 Hospital.

Sanjay Umak elected VHP Durg District President

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 16: A meeting of Vishwa Hindu Parishad was held in the auditorium of Hotel Himalaya Park in the presence of the office bearers of Chhattisgarh. State President Santosh Golchha, Working P r e s i d e n t Chandrashekhar Verma, Kamal Rathore from Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Bajrang Dal's State Convener Ratan Yadav and State Joint Secretary Nandu Sahu were specially present in the meeting.

After the address of the guests, Vishwa Hindu Parishad Chhattisgarh State President Santosh Golchha announced the executive committee of



Sanjay Umak

Durg district. The responsibility of Durg District President of Vishwa Hindu Parishad was given to Sanjay Umak, Managing Director of Indu IT School. Umak is presently working as the President of Gau Vansh Rakshak Samvardhan Parishad of Vishwa

Hindu Parishad. For the last several years, he is providing free ambulance service for the cattle.

It is worth mentioning that Umak is also the Secretary of Independent Schools Association Bhilai Durg, President of Shri Sai Baba Welfare Trust Bhilai as well as in the State Unit of Chhattisgarh Private School Management Association. Umak's work area will be Bhilai, Patan, Dhamdha, Charoda, Kumhari, Jamul in Durg district.

In the meeting, State President Golchha also announced other office bearers of the Durg district executive committee. Gautam Jain has been nominated Vibhag

Sampark Pramukh; Anil Gurjar - Vibhag Mantri, and Sanjay Tiwari - Vibhag Sah-Mantri of Vishwa Hindu Parishad.

In Bajrang Dal, Ravi Nigam - Vibhag Sanyojak; Rahul Chaurasia - Vibhag Sah-Sanyojak; Amar Chand Surana - Working President, Dr Mansi Gulati - Vice President, Praveen Rai - Vice President, Baiju Dewar - Vice President, Kamal Sao - Secretary, Manish Vaishnav - Joint Secretary; Rakesh Bhushan Sahu - Joint Secretary; Apoorva Singh - co-convenor; Deepak Yadav - co-convenor; Mayank Umre - co-convenor and Ravi Bharti has been nominated as Co-convenor.

HLSSS condemns Enforcement Team for applying pressure tactics

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 16: An urgent meeting of House Lease Samyukt Sangharsh Samiti (HLSSS) was held at Shakti Sadan on Sunday. Discussion was held on the incidents which occurred in the last couple of days in which the Enforcement Team of the Town Services Department of BSP visited the residences of the retired employees and tried to create pressure to vacate the houses.

The members expressed ire and condemned the activities of the Enforcement Squad of the Town Services Department. HLSSS leaders stated that the BSP management should stop harassing the retired employees unnecessarily. On the occasion of Golden Jubilee of Bhilai, the former Union Steel Minister on February 09, 2008 had announced in a public meeting that the 6th phase of the house lease will be introduced. The sixth phase



of the house lease scheme has also been approved by the SAIL Board in its 340th meeting on 25 July 2008 at New Delhi. On the basis of these announcements only, the retired employees are holding the company quarters under the retention scheme. HLSSS is continuously struggling for the benefits of the retired employees and uphold the words of Union Minister and SAIL Board. HLSSS leaders stated that the BSP Management must realise

that the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act 1971 has not been enacted only for the Retention Holders but for all the illegal occupants and unauthorised occupants. It is clearly mentioned in the Act to take action against the illegal occupants of the company's land or building or part of the building, garden, housing premises, in which illegal constructions have been made, for additional construction lease or lease for

more beneficial use in the houses. HLSSS members stated that it is unfair to apply the provisions of this act in cases of retired employees, who are holding the quarters under the Retention Scheme.

On January 29, 2021, it was decided in a meeting between former ED (P&A) Dubey and Bhilai MLA Devendra Yadav and HLSSS office bearers in presence of senior officials of Town Services Department that the retired employees are the members of Bhilai fraternity and their residence shall not be vacated. Now after getting the exemption in the dues, the retention holders are making payments of rent. A cordial atmosphere is being created and they are also helping in revenue growth, but the management is creating tension among the retention holders by sending enforcement teams to their houses. HLSSS members stated that if the situation persists, they would launch an aggressive agitation.

SRGI, RCDSR organises cleanliness drive at Ranidhara Waterfall, Kawardha



Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 16: The Interns of RCDSR organised cleanliness drive "SWACHCH 2022" at Ranidhara Waterfall, Kawardha. As a part of their extension activity & service towards the community. The Interns were on an educational field trip to Kawardha district for visiting heritage tourist spots like Boramdev Temple & Ranidhara Waterfall. Here at the Ranidhara Waterfall the interns of SRGI, RCDSR spread the awareness among other tourists & motivated them for not use plastics or other non-biodegradable material that pollute the environment. The Interns along with the faculties cleaned up the

area & handed the waste material to municipal corporation authority for proper disposal. The Chairman of SRGI, Sanjay Rungta expressed his happiness and praised the Rungta inters & Faculties for organizing this cleanliness drive. The dean RCDSR, Dr Karthik Krishna also congratulated Interns for the successful campaign & added that the "Cleanliness was next to Godliness". And this cleanliness campaign must not end here & be propagated for building up & healthy & clean nation. Dr Reena Kulshrestha, Sharit Shekhar & Dr Shruti Bhatnagar along with 50 interns united for this cause & also pledged that they will always contribute to this cause.

SAIL issues order for revised cafeteria perks

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 16: In the wage revision of SAIL executives, the Perks / Allowances were reduced from 46% to 35% of the revised basic pay. Considering the need of clear modalities to operationalize the clause of, SEFI had requested the SAIL Management to issue an order in this regard. As the financial year was approaching closure, a reworking of cafeteria perks options was required so that employees can avail benefit of non-taxable perks. Accordingly, SAIL has issued an order in this regard.

As per the order issued on January 14, the percentage and perks / allowances under cafeteria approach wef FY 2021-22 onwards was reviewed and revised. The executives shall opt perks / allowances from Cafeteria Basket with a maximum limit of 35% of revised Basic Pay through online mode. The order allows - Meal Coupon / Voucher / card - upto 5%; Education

Hostel Allowance - upto 5%; Professional Updation Allowance - upto 2%; Conveyance / Transport Allowance - 5%; Allowance for Maintaining Car / Vehicle and Chauffeur - 5%; Uniform Allowance - upto 4%; Washing Allowance - upto 2%; Attendant for Residential Office - upto 5%; LTC/LLTC - upto 15%; Internet / Communication allowance - upto 5%; Club Membership Allowance - upto 5%; and Special Allowance (House Perks Tax) - 5% to 10%.

The aggregate of the above allowances which can be opted by an executive is a maximum of 35%. All executives are required to compulsorily opt for Perquisites / Allowances at SI Nos 5 or 6, 7 and 8. All executives, who are availing house accommodation owned by the company are required to compulsorily opt for Special Allowance. For maintaining motor car of Engine cubic capacity below 1.6 liters / above 1.6 litres, an amount of Rs



1800 / Rs 2400 per month is allowed exemption as per Rule 3(2A)) of the Income Tax Rules. Further, an amount of Rs 900 per month is allowed in respect of other vehicles (two-wheelers)

An additional amount of Rs 900 per month is allowed if the executive has engaged chauffeur/driver for driving and maintaining his motor car for official and personal use.

Tax on House perk will be computed by CPRS System as per provisions of Income Tax Act/Rules, out of which 500/o of the House perks will be borne

by the Company and the balance 50% will be recovered from the employee and adjusted in Special Allowance.

Any changes in provisions of the Income Tax Act / Rules in respect of perquisites and allowances shall be deemed to be applicable w.e.f from the date of their implementation.

Employees who do not submit the proofs as required would be ineligible for Income Tax Exemptions.

Employees shall be solely responsible for their income tax declarations, and

shall be required to retain a copy of their declaration(s) along with necessary documentary proofs for submission to Authorities including Income Tax Authorities/ SAIL as and when required.

The responsibility of submitting the correct claim shall vest with the employees and in case of any notice from the Income Tax Department due to a wrong claim, the same would be payable by the employee along with applicable interest and penalty.

Income Tax Exemption, mentioned above, may not be available in the New Income Tax Regime u/s 115 BCA of the Income Tax 1961, as applicable from FY 2020 - 21 onwards.

Employees should submit options for perks and allowances in the format prescribed in Annexure-I to pay Section. Employees should submit undertaking online as per Annexure-II and submit duly signed hard copy along with and documentary proofs as required to Pay Section.

OBITUARY

Deepak Kumar Sahu



Bhilai: Retired BSP executive Deepak Kumar Sahu left for heavenly abode at the age of 79 years on Sunday. Funeral procession will be taken out from his residence situated at Street 11, Smriti Nagar on January 17 around 12:00 hrs and last rites of the mortal remains will be performed at Ramnagar Muktidham. He was the founder of Bhelwa Talab Hasya and Yoga Club and an active member of Bharat Vikas Parishad. He was the father of Sandeep Sahu. Members of Bhelwa Pond Club including Anil Daga, VN Pandey, GL Sahu, Anil Bharadwaj, SN Modi, OP Agrawal, SC Goel, Bansu Agrawal, Pramod Tiwari, Subhash Sao, Ajay Shukla, Rajesh Sahu and others have expressed condolences.

Cong to take up digital membership campaign

To appoint Chief Enroller and encrollers at district and block level soon

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 16: The virtual meeting of PCC was held here on Sunday and in this the PCC State in-Charge PL Punia and PCC Chief Mohan Markam, AICC membership in-charge K Raju, Secretary Chandan Sahu, Saptgiri Shankar Ulka, MP Jyoti Mani were conducted the meeting online.

In the meeting AICC digital membership in-charge K Raju gave information in detail about the digital membership. So from now onwards, apart from mem-



bership books, Congress will also be launching membership campaign through digital medium. For this Raju informed that Congress has prepared an App and it can be downloaded from Google Playstore. For this, Congress will be appointing chief enroller and enrollers at block and booth level. It is from Jan 21-22 that training of Chief

Enroller will be done. The persons taking membership under this campaign will have to give information about their vote ID, name, age, caste, photo and others through the App.

On getting party's digital membership, the members will be issued digital Identity Card and which can be downloaded. PCC State in-Charge PL

Punia, Chandan Yadav, Jyoti Mani also addressed the virtual meeting. PCC Chief Mohan Markam conducted the online meeting and he assured the seniors that Chhattisgarh Congress would give best of its performance under digital membership all over the country. We hopefully would be able to complete the target set before the deadline, Markam added.

The vote of thanks was proposed by PCC gen. secy. Chandrashekhar Shukla and it was coordinated by IT Cell Chief Jaiwardhan Bissa. In the meeting DCC District Presidents gave valuable suggestions and it was attended by DCC district presidents and PCC office bearers in large number.

BOATING



As the chilled weather got over, people flocked to enjoy their Sunday sharing boating with near & dear ones in Kharun.

Instructions to collect full address and 2 other contact numbers

Of persons coming for COVID tests

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 16: Corona virus disease has been declared a contagious disease by the World Health Organization. COVID testing centres are being operated on the orders/ instructions of Government of India, General Administration Department and Health Department of Government of Chhattisgarh.

After receipt of the test reports of the patients, it is being seen that during the covid testing, the clear address and contact number of the patients are not clearly mentioned and that it created difficulties in contact tracing and sampling of the patients.

The Additional Collector has directed all the Covid-19 testing centers to take advance action after taking the full residential address and 2 other contact numbers of the persons coming for the COVID-19 test so that if the person is positive, the persons coming in contact with that positive patients can be traced.

16 booked under gambling act

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 16: The capital police is taking strict action against the gamblers in the city and under this 16 were nabbed while gambling and a cash of Rs 63,000 was seized from their possession. This case is under Azad Chowk Thana.

Police informed that some persons were reported to have been playing 'gambling' near Nanku Garage, in Ramsagarpara area of Azad Chowk Thana. Based upon report, the police raided the place and nabbed all 16 gamblers and cash of Rs 63,140 was seized from their possession. Case under gambling act has been filed against all 16 accused.

Illicit relations with friend's wife led to murder

Raipur, Jan 16: In case of body of youth found in a place under Dharshiwa Thana near capital city, the police arrested the accused as per the reports after the post-mortem that he has been strangled to death. The Police informed that Manoj Kumar of Mohada village was murdered in Raipur by one of his friend and it was learnt that the murdered had illicit relations with the wife of the accused and due to which the accused finding a chance murdered Manoj. Both the accused and murdered used to work in Fortune Company and on the day of the incident after coming out from the factory,

both got heavily drunk and finding a chance accused Raja murdered Manoj. The murdered youth was identified as Manoj Kumar R/o Alol District Ludhiana, Punjab and the wallet found in his pocket had Aadhar Card bearing his UID and that was how he was identified. It is notable here that the victim used to work as foreman in Fortune Company under Dharshiwa Thana and he was reported missing all of sudden for last two days. No missing report was lodged, but the police came to know that the murderer was not coming to the Company and that is how the case came to fore.

Filing of FIR shows BJP's frustration: Cong

Raipur, Jan 16: Congress publicity chief Susheel Anand Shukla said that CM Bhupesh Baghel following the EC's guidelines was conducting election campaigning going door-to-door of electorate only with 5 persons and during this he strictly adhered to covid-19 protocol. Despite this, filing of FIR against him shows how fearful BJP is about party's campaigning in UP. He said that the amount of public response to CM's meetings and address, be it in Banaras or Gorakhpur and other places, has left PM Modi and other BJP leaders having sleepless night. Shukla charged that the BJP can go to any level in order to stop CM Bhupesh Baghel from campaigning in UP and prior to this it was holding him stranded in Lucknow Airport and then it was stopping him from entering Lakhimpur and now the officers of Yogi govt have filed false FIR against him.

Six out of every 10 OPD patients found COVID positive

In Ambedkar Hospital

Infection to the lungs very less, home isolation only for three days after fever is over

Raipur, Jan 16: COVID situation is continuously worsening. The effect of COVID infection is being seen in the OPD of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar Memorial Hospital Raipur. Six out of every 10 patients visiting special OPD of flu (related to cold, cough and fever) are being found COVID positive. The special OPD is being conducted by the Medicine Department of Hospital. At the same time, 50 per cent patients in the flu OPD of the district hospital are found COVID infected.

According to Doctors

this time the speed of corona infection is very fast. Infected patients are complaining of high fever for three to five days. After that the fever is going down. In such a situation, the government has also kept the period of home isolation for seven days. If the fever recovers late, then in addition to its recovery, home isolation can be done for days. According to Doctors this time the corona infection is reaching the lungs very rarely.

People whose condition is getting worse due to infection are those who already have some kind of disease or don't get the vaccine. Due to inclement weather, the patients of cold, cough, fever have increased a lot. Since the corona infection has also spread in the community six out of every 10 patients coming to the OPD of flu are getting infected.

Air NCC cadets give folk dance presentation



On the last day of National Youth Week

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 16: National Youth Week which got underway on Sunday at 'google meet' witnessed participation

by Air NCC cadets. At the onset Air NCC Commanding Officer Wing Commander Rajat Gupta threw light on the works of Swami Vivekananda. Cadet Agrani Shrivastav presented Punjabi dance, Cadet Sneha Tiwari presented Gujrati dance, Cadet Sargent Anchita

Mukherjee, Cadet Sargent Sana Kujur, Corporal Samayak, Cadet Rudransh Choubey, Cadet Harshvardhan and their team presented song to boost themoral of youths. Cadet Rudransh dressed as Swami Vivekananda gave the presentation of Vivekananda's speech in Chicago.

The quiz programme on google meet was based on Vivekananda. In this programme apart from 75 cadets, JWO of NCC Dileep Kumar and Dr V K Choubey also joined through the meet.

The entire programme was designed and implemented by Cadet Under Officer Ashita Agrawal, Cadet Warrant Officer Omja Shukla and cadet Sargent Megha Mishra.

Two nabbed with 40 kg 'Ganja' worth Rs 4 lakh

Police seized drugs, Ertiga vehicle and two mobiles of accused

Central Chronicle News

Janjgir-Champa, Jan 16: It was on tip from an informer to TI Champa Inspector Manish Singh Parihar that two in Ertiga vehicle are carrying drugs and are in search of a customer to sell off their drugs near Kurda Siwni turn. On this it was under direction of Addl.SP Anil Soni and SDOP Padamshri Tawar, TI Champa MP Tiwari led a team to the place informed and found a white coloured Ertiga parked by

the road-side with two persons sitting in it.

When inquired from two sitting in Ertiga vehicle bearing No. CG 10 NC 1135 they refused to disclose anything and when the search was done the police found 1 kg packet of Ganja. Further when the two were psychologically questioned, the accused Nurkeshwar Chandra informed that they have brought 40 kg Ganja from Odisha and had kept it secretly hidden in the house of Govinda Rathore. The Police raided the residence of Govinda Rathore and seized 39 packets kept in two plastic bags full of 'Ganja'.

The police arrested all the three accused viz. NP Chandra S/o Balkrishna

(32) R/o Beldula Thana Jaijapur; Shatruhan Sharma S/o Gati Sharma (33), R/o Kotadabri Champa and Govinda Rathore R/o Bazar Chowk, Siwni thana Champa.

The Police also seized 40 kg 'ganja' worth Rs 4 lakhs and the vehicle Ertiga bearing No. CG 10 NC 1135 worth Rs 5 lakhs and being used to transport and two mobiles totaling Rs 9 lakh. In the above action, TI MS Parihar, Inspector Muneswar Tiwari, Fulseance Tirki, Rakesh Tiwari, Jitendra Parihar, A Chaturvedi, MP constable Shyama Jaiswal, Santosh Pandey, constable Ishwari Rathore, Umesh Vaishnav, Ayub Khan and other gave valuable support.

Food Secretary inspects FCI warehouse at Rajnandgaon

Rice millers instructed to expedite paddy lifting and custom milling

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 16: Secretary, Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Department, Topeshwar Verma, today inspected the godown of Food Corporation of India at Rajnandgaon. He was accompanied by Director Food Abhinav Agarwal, Collector Taran Prakash Sinha and General Manager of Food Corporation of India Bakhbal Bir Singh.

Taking information regarding the location and

stack in the Food Corporation of India's godown, Secretary Topeshwar Verma inspected stack plan, quality of rice deposited and rake point. The quality of rice was found to be good during inspection. He directed to give additional godown of Civil Supplies Corporation at Dongargarh to the Food Corporation of India so as to facilitate deposition of rice for the rice millers.

Secretary Verma instructed the rice millers of the district to lift the paddy procured in support price and speed up custom milling. He asked the millers to deposit the rice with the Food Corporation of India and the Civil Supplies Corporation expe-

ditiously. Officials said that 602269 metric tonnes of paddy has been procured in the district in support price.

Nearly 134195 metric tonnes of paddy has been lifted from the collection centers and 112166 metric tonnes of paddy has been lifted by rice millers from the societies. Out of this 18700 metric tonnes of rice has been deposited by the rice millers in the Food Corporation of India and 12370 metric tonnes in the Civil Supplies Corporation.

Sub-Divisional Officer Revenue Arun Verma, District Marketing Officer Gajendra Rathore, Assistant Food Officer Bhuneshwar Chelak and other officers were present.

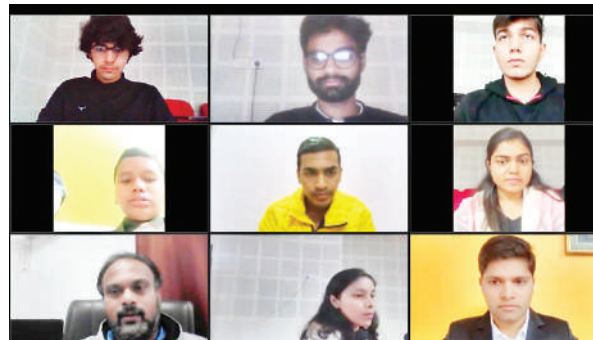
IIIT Naya Raipur hosts SCInTFIC-2k22 in virtual mode

Raipur, Ja 16: IIIT Naya Raipur hosted the fifth edition of its school student-centric annual event SCInTFIC-2k22: Science & Technology over Fiction, in virtual/online mode, on Saturday.

The event was inaugurated with the lighting of lamp ceremony by Dr. Rajarshri Mahapatra, Dean (Academics). Students from numerous schools across the country participated in the event online. "SCInTFIC" is a science & technology showcase and exhibition designed for school students. It aims to motivate the students to learn about the latest technological advancements and innovations happening in and around the world. SCInTFIC works towards projecting a positive image of technology in their minds by empowering them to develop strategic cases to solve real-world problems.

After four successful years of SCInTFIC, the fifth edition was conducted in a virtual mode in light of the current pandemic scenario. Like previous year, this year also IIIT Naya Raipur received an overwhelming response to the event from all across the nation. This year, there were a total of six themes namely- Agricultural and Rural Development, Disasters Management, Healthcare and Sanitation; Post Covid challenges, Safety and Security; Women and Child, Smart Living, and Smart Education.

Dr. Rajarshri Mahapatra in his inaugural address threw light on how IIIT-NR emphasizes on sharing the technological expertise and know-how of the institute through its students and faculty members for the betterment of society. He also welcomed the



eminent guest speakers of the event and wished the participants to have an enriching day.

The event comprised of a series of informative sessions wherein various tech clubs gave presentations on various advanced fields of Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, IoT/Drones, Cyber security, and Coding. These workshops aimed

to inspire and inculcate curiosity among school children about Science and Technology and make them more informed.

The Three guest speakers were also present namely Kalpit Veerwal, founder and CEO Acadboost, Sahil Sharma, Co-Founder: SUPROS and Inverted Prism and Pulkit Jain, Co-Founder, Head of product,

Voidantu. The speakers talked about Science and Technology and they also provided counseling to class 12 students Ideathon 5.0 also returned this year with over 82 submissions from schools across India. After rigorous deliberation, 52 ideas were shortlisted and invited to compete in the final round. We saw submissions from schools in Raipur, Lucknow, Haryana, Ahmedabad and Delhi, illustrating the national appeal of the contest. The winner teams in the senior and junior category in two sections namely idea based and prototype are:

There were four external judges along with internal judges to judge the competition. The competition is held in four tracks and each track was judged by one external and one internal judge. Track 1 was judged by External Judge Mr. Avishke Pal,

Application Engineer and Scientist, Texas Instruments and Internal Judge Dr. Lakhindar Murmu, Track 2 was judged by External Judge Dr. Rabisankar Roy, Scientist, GE Global Research and Internal Judge: Dr. Rahul Amin, Track 3 was judged by External Judge: Mr. Shiv Narin Sarkar, Manager, Central Electronic Limited and Internal Judge Dr. Maifuz Ali and Track 4 was judged by External Judge: Dr. Sajal Sarkar, Scientist, Powergrid Corporation of India and Internal Judge Dr. Debanjan Das.

Jr. Category: Track 1: Name - Om Tembhare, (Idea based), School - Krishna Public School International Naya Raipur Project - Floating House, Name - Aastha(Prototype), School - O. P. Jindal school

Project - Save Earth Save Life Track 2: Name :-SreyaSubhas (Prototype) Hot Meals, School - Podar International School Raipur Chhattisgarh Names- TeshuGandecha, Aarnav Rai, SubhrahkanyaSarmab and SahanaPallavasya (Idea Based) Amity International school, Naya Raipur, Cell phone Operated Land Rover, **Sr. Category: Track 3:** Name: Shreyas Yadav (prototype)School - Krishna Public School International Project - Treatment of waste and generating clean and green fuel Name :AnjaniGoswami(Idea Based), Delhi Public School Risali, Bhillai, Project - Detection of Driver Drowsiness using Eye blink sensor **Track 4:**

Name: VineetPrajapati and Sneha Pandey(Idea Based), Bhavan's R.K. SardaVidyaMandir, Project - Detect FM Name: Aditya Jha and Avni Yadav (Idea Based), BharatiyaVidyaBhavan's R.K. SardaVidyaMandir, Project - SmartReflex Safety Band- A Novel And Simple Approach To Ensure Women Safety. Among the above winners, the best idea and best prototype were also awarded. The best idea was awarded to Shreyas Yadav and the second prize was awarded toVineet Narayan Prajapati and Sneha Pandey. The entire event was coordinated by Dr. Bipin Chandra Mandi of IIIT-Naya Raipur with the support of the Director of IIIT-NR, Dr. Pradeep K. Sinha, and the entire faculty and staff members.

Our main goal is to bring benefits of devp upto last mile of state: Akbar

Minister performs Bhoomi Pujan of 28 road construction works worth Rs 1.59 crore in six gram panchayats of Bodla Janpad Panchayat

Central Chronicle News



Raipur, Jan 16: State Minister for Forest, Transport, Housing and Environment and Kawardha MLA, Mr. Mohammad Akbar on Saturday announced Rs. 2 crore 8 lakh for 34 different works, connecting the tribal and Baiga-dominated Bodla villages of Bodla block with the mainstream of development. In which on Saturday, through video conferencing, he performed Bhoomipujan of 28 road construction works to be done in six gram panchayats under Janpad Panchayat Bodla at a cost of about one crore 59 lakh rupees. Out of the work

done today under the Chief Minister's Sugam Sadak Yojana, a total of 4 works costing Rs 16.13 lakh in village panchayat Piparkhunta of Bodla development block under Kawardha assembly constituency, total 6 work cost Rs 22.15 lakh in gram panchayat Chendradadar. A total of 08 works costing Rs 81.90 lakh in Gram Panchayat Marghi, 5 works cost Rs 17.21 lakh in Gram Panchayat Larbakki, total 01 work cost Rs 12.53 lakh in Gram Panchayat Labda, 4 works cost Rs 8.95 lakh in Gram Panchayat Amanara. While addressing the

Bhoomi Pujan program, Forest Minister Mohammad Akbar said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, work is being done by our government to bring the benefits of development to the last mile of the state. Under this, village located in remote Vananchal is being connected with the mainstream of development. He said that due to the construction of 28 different roads in the forest areas of P i p a r k h u n t a , Chenderdadar, Swampy, Larbakki, Labda, Amanara, village panchayats of Bodla block,

Baiga and tribal families living in the forest areas of the district, neglected for years, have good transportation facilities. He said that the Chhattisgarh government is committed to connect the people of forest dwellers, tribals, special backward Baiga tribes living in Vananchal in the mainstream of development. Forest Minister Mr. Akbar informed that as soon as the present government was formed in Chhattisgarh, Chief Minister Mr. Bhupesh Baghel took a concrete decision in the interest of lakh of families living in Vananchal of the

state, instead of 7 types of minor forest produce, 52 types of minor forest produce to be purchased. Similarly, the rate of Mahua has been increased from Rs.17 to Rs. 30. The standard bag of tendupata has been increased from Rs 2500 to Rs 4 thousand. Similarly, 52 types of minor forest produce including Sal seed, Harra, Chironji, kernels, Jamunbeej, Belguda, Dhanaiful, Kusmi, Lac, Giloy, Charota seed, Van Tuls, Karanj seed are now being purchased in the state. Lakhs of families residing in Vananchal are getting direct benefit from the purchase of forest produce on support price by the Chhattisgarh government. He has said that action plans have been made to connect the people living in Vananchal with farming. Now, Koda-Kutki and Ragi are also being purchased by the Chhattisgarh Government at support price through all primary minor forest produce cooperative societies.

PO IFS offices pay courtesy call to CM

Raipur, Jan 16: The officers of the probationary Indian Police Service of Chhattisgarh cadre RR-73 had a courtesy call on Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel at his residence office here this evening. Chief Minister Baghel congratulated all the probationary officers and inquired about their home state, educational background from them. The Chief Minister also discussed with the officers about the problems being faced in the implementation of government schemes on the ground in their home state. Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel told the probationary IPS officers that for development along with social justice, economic empowerment of all sections is



also necessary. DSP Training Police Headquarters, Raju Gupta told the Chief Minister that IPS officers on probation, Ms. Robinson Guria, banker Vaibhav, Rajnala Smrutnik, Ms. Pooja Kumar, Vikas Kumar, Mayank Gurjar, Sandeep Patel, Prabhat Kumar would be posted in the districts on January 17. Chief Minister Mr. Baghel gave sweets to all the officers and

congratulated them for their first posting and new responsibilities. The Chief Minister said that the period of training and first posting are unforgettable in the life of an IPS officer. He told the officers to use the information given during the training and the guidance of senior officers and provide better service to the public.

'ROKO-AUR-TOKO CAMPAIGN'



Workers of 'Roko-aur-Toko' campaign were requesting people to wear mask and follow Covid-19 guidelines in view of increasing cases.

Industry Minister inaugurates cooperative bank



With the opening of the bank, the years old demand of the residents has been fulfilled

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 16: State Commerce and Industry Minister Kawasi Lakhma on Saturday inaugurated the branch of District Co-operative Central Bank in village Amabeda of Antagarh block of Kanker district. It is worth mentioning that with the opening of a cooperative bank in Amabeda, the years old demand of the residents has been fulfilled, it will be the 13th district cooperative central bank branch of Kanker district and 46th district cooperative central bank branch of Bastar division.

ment is working in the interest of all the villages, poor, farmers and labourers. The rate of tendu leaves has been increased from Rs.25 hundred to Rs.4 thousand per standard bag by the government. Arrangements have also been made to buy minor forest produce. Lakhma said that under the Rajiv Gandhi Gramene Bhumihheen Krishi Mazdoor Nyay Yojana, an assistance of Rs.6 thousand would be given to the landless families every year. Devgudi, a symbol of faith of tribals and Ghotul, a carrier of tradition, is being constructed by the government in Bastar division. Schools which were closed due to Naxal activities are being restarted. In Bastar division, provision has been made to provide government jobs at the local level, for this, junior selection boards have been constituted. The honorarium of Panchayat representatives is also being increased by the government. On this occasion, Lakhma announced to construct the boundary wall of the building of Higher Secondary School, Ambeda. Presiding over the program, local MLA Mr. Anoop Nag said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Mr. Bhupesh, the Chhattisgarh government is constantly trying to solve the problems of Antagarh and Amabeda region.

With this bank, farmers and villagers of 90 villages of Amabeda zone, including 21 forest villages, will be benefitted. People here will no longer need to go to Keshkal, Kanker or Antagarh, 30 km away to get banking facilities. Addressing the function, the Chief Guest of the program, Excise Minister Kawasi Lakhma said that Chhattisgarh government is a government working in the interest of farmers. He said that with the opening of a branch of a cooperative bank in this zone, people would get banking facilities, as well as farmers would also get credit facilities for agricultural works. Lakhma said that under the Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyay Yojana, input subsidy is being given to farmers who take other profitable crops instead of paddy. Apart from this, arrangements have been made to buy Kodo, Kutki, Ragi along with declaring the support price. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, the Chhattisgarh govern-

1,066 polling stations set up for upcoming Panchayat polls

2 security personnel and 1 health worker will be deployed along with the polling parties in every polling booth

Four different colored ballot papers to be used for polls

18 types of documents will be accepted as ID proof for voting

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 16: Preparations are on full swing for the upcoming three-tier Panchayat elections which are going to be

held in Chhattisgarh on January 20. Under the three-tier Panchayat general and by-polls, 733 candidates are in fray for 330 'Panch' posts, 455 for 152 'Sarpanch' posts, 88 for 27 posts of Janpad member and 12 for 03 posts of Zila Panchayat members. State Election Commissioner Thakur Ram Singh has appealed all the voters to contribute their bit in strengthening the democracy by exercising their franchise. He said that the polls will be held amid strict adherence to the Covid-19 protocols to avoid spread of infection. He urged voters to mandatorily wear face masks, follow social distancing in polling stations and to use hand sanitizer before and after casting their votes. 1066 polling stations

have been set up for Panchayat polls. As many as 1066 polling stations have been set up for the upcoming elections. Instructions have been issued by the Chhattisgarh State Election Commission to strictly abide by Covid 19 protocol in the polling stations. Two security personnel and one health worker have also been deployed along with the polling parties in all the polling booths. It will be mandatory for each member of the polling parties to adopt all safety measures like use of face masks, hand sanitizers, gloves and maintain social distancing. Four different colored ballot papers to be used for polls. Four different colored ballot papers will be used

for the three-tier Panchayat general and by-polls. There will be white ballot paper for Panch post, blue for Sarpanch, yellow for Janpad member and pink for Zila Panchayat member. 18 types of documents will be accepted as ID proof for voting. Chhattisgarh State Election Commission has approved 18 types of documents that will be accepted as ID proof for voting. This includes: - 1. Voter ID card i.e. EPIC card issued by the Election Commission of India. 2. Bank Post Office Passbook having Photo 3. Passport 4. PAN Card 5. Aadhar Card 6. Photo Identity cards issued by State / Central Government, Public Sector Undertaking or Local Body to their officers

and employees 7. Pension document with photo 8. MGNREGA Job Card 9. Health Insurance Scheme (Smart) Card having Photo 10. Driving License 11. Freedom Fighter Photo Identity Card 12. Marksheet of Class X and XII issued by Central or State Board of Secondary Education having photo. 13. Photo Identity Cards issued to advocates by Bar Council 14. Disability certificate having photo 15. Valid Ration card issued by Chhattisgarh Government having photo 16. Student ID card having photo issued by college or school 17. Arms license having photo 18. Voter ID slip generated online by the software SEC-ER developed by the Chhattisgarh State Election Commission.

Every possible initiative is being taken by the state govt

Raipur, Jan 16: According to the intention of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, every possible initiative is being taken by the state government and district administration to ensure last-mile delivery of government schemes. In this line, South Bastar (Dantewada) District Collector Deepak Soni and Superintendent of Police Siddharth Tiwari reached village Nahari, a highly sensitive area of Kuakonda development block today. They interacted with the villagers to redress their grievances.



arrangements are being made for ration, agricultural machines, salons, and public service centers. Goat, chicken, pig, and quail will be distributed to the beneficiaries interested in self-employment. The collector said that it is the aim of the government to take the schemes of the government even to the far flung village of the area, to provide their benefits to the villagers. He informed that many development works in the village are in pipeline. Along with this, the administration is making best possible efforts to ensure that villagers get benefit of every scheme of the government.

He added that many works have been approved here under MNREGA. He interacted with the villagers and enquired about the basic facilities being provided by the government. He asked the villagers about their agricultural work and informed them about procurement of Kodo, Kutki and Ragi at the support price in the district. He urged the villagers to take benefit of the camps being organized for making Aadhar and ration card besides appealing them to follow Covid-19 protocols. The villagers put forth their demands for many development works in the village. Addressing the demands,

instructions were given to the Gram Panchayat to fix the water tank on the spot itself. As soon as the camp started, the road construction work started in Nahari area. Expressing their happiness, the villagers thanked the district administration. Mr. Soni informed that the camp has started here, where villagers will be linked with employment. Many works are being done to connect the lower class families with self-employment. He also talked about providing grant under the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh Yojana for the people of Nahari village to work in groups. He also informed the villagers that works worth Rs 9 crores have been approved in 6 Panchayats around Aranpur. With the formation of a ration shop, now the facility of distribution of ration will be available in the village Panchayat itself. Earlier the villagers had to go to Aranpur Panchayat which is 10 km away to get ration.

Corruption grips 'Divyang Marriage Incentive Scheme'



Officials allegedly indulge in malpractices

Central Chronicle News

Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi, Jan 16: Mass irregularities have come to fore in 'Divyang Marriage Incentive Scheme'. The beneficiaries received half the sanctioned amount while other half was distributed among the officials of this department. In this malpractice, beneficiaries themselves are involved in malpractice. The marriage accomplished five years back was termed as recent marriage and the incentive amount from time to time for boosting their morale. The scheme also runs in GPM district but recent disclosure has unearthed irregularities and malpractice which is allegedly hatched by Deputy Director Social Welfare Arvind Gedam along with divyang mitan and beneficiaries. The matter came to fore when there was discrepancy in the incentive amount which was supposed to be distributed among the officials of this department and an audio in this regard surfaced up. Three cases came to fore which confirms the fact of irregularities which took place in this department. The first case is of Sewa Singh, resident of Dewar village who was given Rs 50,000 through cheque as part of incentive amount sanctioned by the department. Later the cheque was deposited in the bank by the departmental official through another divyang Ram Pratap and Rs 30,000 was withdrawn from the bank. The main point is divyang Sewa Singh was married five years back and it was shown by the department that the marriage took

place two months back. The second case is of divyang couple Jain Singh, resident of Anjani village. As part of marriage incentive amount the couple received Rs 50,000 each and divyang mitan Ramprasad posted in Gaurela Janpad Panchayat took Rs 30,000 each from the couple and handed over the amount to Deputy Director Arvind Gedam as per the conspiracy hatched earlier. These beneficiaries got married one-and-half years back and it was also not a recent marriage. The third case is of Gendal Gaur, resident of Chuktiani and marriage had taken place back. The officials and staff of Social Welfare Department are visiting the place of beneficiaries to return the commission amount. Now the Deputy Director of Social Welfare Department is distancing himself from the entire matter but divyang mitan Ramprasad accepted the distribution of commission and incentive amount among the officials of this department. The entire matter is being investigated personally by collector Namrata Gandhi and is expected that truth will come to fore.

The staff of the department continued to pressurize Gandal for taking their share and Gandal recorded the entire conversation in his mobile phone. Later he made all this conversations viral through different medium. The matter came to the knowledge of collector and he initiated an investigation into this matter. Now the officials and staff of Social Welfare Department are visiting the place of beneficiaries to return the commission amount. Now the Deputy Director of Social Welfare Department is distancing himself from the entire matter but divyang mitan Ramprasad accepted the distribution of commission and incentive amount among the officials of this department. The entire matter is being investigated personally by collector Namrata Gandhi and is expected that truth will come to fore.

“The selection of beneficiaries at the panchayat and janpad level is done by divyang mitan and he has role in their selection. The selected beneficiary received the incentive amount through cheque. The investigation is in progress on the basis of complaint.”

Arvind Gedam
Deputy Director
Social Welfare
Department

Kamlesh Sahu elected President

● Of Sahu Samaj Darbha circle

Central Chronicle News

Anwari, Jan 16: The elections of Sahu Samaj Darbha circle were held here in Sahu Samaj bhavan on Friday and in this Kamlesh Sahu was elected as the President of Sahu Samaj, Darbha circle by getting 29 votes and winning against his arch rival Teerath Sahu with 9 votes.

The elections for Sahu Samaj, Darbha circle were jointly conducted in the presence of three persons viz. Chitrnanjan Sahu President State Sahu Samaj; Manish



Sahu President District Sahu Samaj and Lakhan Sahu President Tehsil Sahu Samaj.

For the post of President Sahu Samaj Darbha region there was close fight between

Kamlesh Sahu and Teerath Sahu. Kamlesh won 29 votes and Teerath won 20 and in this way Kamlesh won the poll with 9 votes and got elected as President Sahu Samaj Darbha circle.

For the post of Vice-President Sahu Samaj Darbha- Tulendra Sahu won with narrow margin of 1 vote winning 25 votes and his rival Kamal Narayan Sahu getting 24 votes. For the post of fe-

male V-P, Chitrarekha Sahu also won with narrow margin of 1 vote getting 25 votes and her rival Kaushilya Sahu getting 24 votes. The return officer declared the election results.

President Darbha Santram Sahu, SVishwanath Sahu Tehsil Treasurer; KR Sahu, RR Sahu, Likesh Sahu, Lekh Ram Sahu, Sharda Loknath Sahu, Nagesh Sahu, Bhagi Ram Sahu, Rekh Ram Sahu, Bhuneshwar Sahu, Dularu Ram Sahu, TR Sahu, Radheshyam Sahu, Kamalnaryan Sahu and other office bearers of Samaj extended greetings to Kamlesh for the victory.

Draftsman suspended on charges of manipulating Government records

Central Chronicle News

Jagdalpur, Jan 16: Collector Rajat Bansal has suspended the draftsman posted in land-record branch of the Collectorate on charges of tampering and manipulating the government documents.

Collector Bansal had taken this action on charges of manipulations in land documents of Gram Khutpadar coming under Markel RI Mandal of Jagdalpur tehsil. Here a total of 3.50 acre land in Kh. No. 206/1 under the government head was allo-

cated in the name of Satish and that of 4 acre land in Kh. No. 206/2 in the name of Bhupendra and this was allocated for 'tree-patta'. So it is on finding the draftsman guilty prima-facie on charges of his selling the Nazul land by distorting the government records for passing on economic benefit to 'tree-pattadharis' by showing it as land owned by the two and issuing certified copy of 1954-55 'Adhikar Abhilekh'. So a case under rule -9 of Chhattisgarh Civil Services (Categorisation, Appeal,

Control) Act 1966 that draftsman Jagbandhu Kashyap has been suspended with immediate effect and along with this department inquiry too has been recommended.

During this suspension period, Jagbandhu Kashyap will be attached to district hq's office in the land-record branch, Jagdalpur and will continue to get DA as per eligibility. It is notable here that in this case the former Patwari Premkant Pandey too has been suspended and departmental inquiry is in process against him.

Dacoits run away with the locker and cash of Rs 9 lakh

From Govt run liquor shop on Bilaspur- Mungeli NH near Sargaon

Central Chronicle News

Mungeli, Jan 16: Dacoity took place in the government run liquor shop in Mungeli district and in this the dacoits first handcuffed two guards and failing to break the 185 kg locker, they ran away with the locker with cash of Rs 9 lakh in it.

There is a government run liquor shop functional in Sargaon area o Bilaspur- Mungeli National Highway and on Saturday night the employee closed down the shop and left two

guards behind to look after the shop. It was at around 1-2 in the night, 8-9 dacoits reached the shop and ran away with such a heavy locker.

Guards kept handcuffed and legs tied:

It is learnt that the dacoits were fully masked and covered up and on reaching the shop they first attacked the guard and made them bondage by handcuffing and tied their legs.

They warned the two that if they create noise, they will kill them. After this the dacoits tried to break open the locker in

the shop, but could not succeed and therefore ran away along with the locker having cash of Rs 9 lakh in it.

Broke down all CCTV camera and DVR:

As per information in this regard, in order not to leave any evidence or proof, they broke down CCTV camera and DVR installed in the shop and took it with them.

The dacoits even broke some part of the shop's roof. It is suspected that the dacoits reached there in some car and since it is not possible to carry

such heavy locker in small vehicle, they might have taken it in the car.

Guards inform cutting the rope in legs, hands:

In this case both the guards were handcuffed and also tied with rope in their legs and to which they somehow managed to open after lots of efforts.

It was on getting information that the police arrived on Sunday morning and so far police has not been able to find much of information in this case and said that investigation is going on.

22 teachers and students of JNV found Corona positive

● Total 78 found positive in Kondagaon district

Central Chronicle News

Kondagaon, Jan 16: The total number of corona positive cases in the district has now reached 132, as the number of corona cases are on the rise in the district. Under the third wave, the first corona blast was found in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV) on Jan 14, when 22 teachers and students were found to be positive. In addition to this by late in the evening on Jan 14,



total of 69 were found to be positive and with this number of positive cases shot up to 132.

As per information in this regard, there are total of 200 students studying in JNV and out of which testing of 39 students and teachers was done through

RTPCR last on Jan 14 and out of which 22 were tested positive. Out of these 5 were from teaching staff and 17 were students.

After this School was formed a mini containment zone and the covid testing and tracing of children is now in progress.

As per information in this regard from the health department, till late in the evening of Jan 15, a total of 69 persons were tested positive in Kondagaon district and in this 1 patient is from Farasgaon and 8 from Keshkal and 69 from Kondagaon block.

District body of Vaishya Tailik Sahu constituted

Central Chronicle News

Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi, Jan 16: Vaishya Tailik Sahu community unanimously formed their district working body. Keshav Sahu (Pendra) was unanimously elected district president, Mrs Sarita Ashwini Sahu was elected as president of Women Cell, Neelesh Sahu(Gaurela) was elected Youth Cell district president.

The state body congratulated the district office bearers and asked to soon announce the district office bearers.



Keshav Sahu



Sarita Sahu



Neelesh Sahu

Ashok Sahu of state body okayed the election of three office bearers of district bodies. In the meeting from the state body Vinod Sahu vice president Raipur,

Kamlersh Sahu vice president Jamul Bhalai, Nandkumar Sahu Balodabazar, Ramakant Sahu state president Bhalai and others were present.

Joint team conducts inspection for Coal Mega Project

Jointly by Revenue, Forest Department, MLA and Mayor and SECL officials

Central Chronicle News

Koriya, Jan 16: After major complication of the SECL agency finally a joint team of Revenue Department, Forest Department, SECL including Manendragarh MLA Dr. Vinay Jaiswal, Mayor Kanchan Jaiswal visited the proposed site and inspected and finally completed land acquisition for Coal Mega Project. Written agreement has been given to end the obstruction of other departments along with compensation so that soon coal will be fully exploited by moving ahead the big mega project of the city



which will involve coal mining for about 10 years.

In this work, the subordinate officers of the present departments have given their consent, putting an end to the coming

forward in carrying out this project. According to the decision taken the families occupying this land will be given a job by the SECL agency with compensation. It was also

agreed to beautify the temple complex on the said land by setting it up at another place. In this whole inspection work, the biggest demand of the residents of Bartunga Kalri,

who are becoming isolated from the city, were given consent for setting up a new road, which will be constructed for Bartunga Kalari via Ekta Nagar, Azad Nagar of Godripara.

The said land was also withheld due to non-consent of Forest Department as it was leased land of SECL Agency. It is noteworthy that Manendragarh MLA Dr. Vinay Jaiswal has expressed his strong displeasure over the complete exploitation of coal in Chirmiri city and the displacement of people in the city. The Union Minister has also been apprised of the whole matter.

Accused in tomato theft case arrested



● From Somani Durg district

Central Chronicle News

Simga, Jan 16: In theft incident of truck-load of 10 MT tomato worth Rs 3.13 lakhs mid-way in transportation from Sanjari (Navagaon) to Bengaluru, the police along with Cyber Cell nabbed the accused owner of truck Bhugunath Prajapati S/o Ramjatan Prajapati (55) R/o Jatour Thana Gudaki district Shivyan Bihar 'hal gram'-Tedesara Thana Somani District Rajnandgaon and was interrogated. He informed that earlier he had some controversy with

Jaishri Radhe Transporter over some issue and with intentions to defame him used fake registration plate of another truck and sold out 10 tonnes tomato of Anil Krishi Farm Sanjari Navagaon to a purchaser in openMandi in Rapad Ganja (UP) with help of his co-driver and shared the sold amount of Rs 1 lakh between each other and asked his co-driver to run away. On acceptance of this crime, the Navagaon police filed a case under section 420, 34 of IPC against the two and the accused Bhrugunath Prajapati was produced in the Court for judicial remand and he was sent to judicial custody.

Training imparted to team in-charges

● from 48 wards of Jagdalpur city
● On Tracing and Home Isolation for Covid positive patients

Central Chronicle News

Jagdalpur, Jan 16: With increase in number of corona positive cases and to gain effective control over it and seeing importance of tracing and home isolation, training was imparted to all the team in-charges of 48 wards of Jagdalpur city. In the training organised in the



'Prerna room' of Collectorate, Municipal Commissioner Prem Patel, SDM Dinesh Nag, Programme Manager Urban Health PD Bastaria, Asst. Director Kaushal Vikas Sharadchand Goud were present.

The training to all the team in-charges of 48 wards was given in two

shifts. During this the team in-charges were apprised about the instructions of the state government issued for Home Isolation and importance to identify and carry out testing and tracing of the persons who have come into contact with the corona infected.

Apart from this they were also informed about the importance of vaccination and to increase the pace of vaccination in order to ensure less of human lives in order to gain control over corona cases and to identify the persons who have been left out or have not got the vaccination done.

Janpad member supply hot cooked food to children

Of Anganbadi centre taking positive initiative



Central Chronicle News

Balod, Jan 16: With increase in number of corona positive cases, orders have been issued to close down all the Schools and Anganbadi centres and

amidst this supply of hot-cooked food to children in Anganbadi centre has become a big challenge.

So taking this into account, Janpad member Sanjay Bais made arrangements for lunch-boxes in order to ensure supply of hot-cooked food to homes of all the 155 children in all the Anganbadi centres and distributed the lunch-box to them. But with many children not having lunch-box, they were coming with utensils at home to get the food and seeing the same, Janpad member made arrangements for extra tiffin-boxes and ensure supply of hot-cooked food to their homes without any problems. With this small initiative the malnourished children got a ray of hope to get nourished food.

St. Xavier's Bharni emerges as winner

Central Chronicle News

Bilaspur, Jan 16: St. Xavier's High School, Bharni has added another feather in its cap, by winning ATL Space Challenge which was launched on 6th September 2021 by Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog in collaboration with Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) as part of the nation-wide celebration of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, an initiative of the Government of

India to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of progressive India and glorious history of its people, culture and achievements. The ATL Space Challenge saw enthusiastic participation from students and more than 2,500 entries were received wherein St. Xavier's Bharni's project found a place among top 75 innovations across India. The students of St. Xavier's Bharni under the mentorship of Dr. Madhu Sudan Patro, ATL in charge of the school opted for the topic which is being researched



by scientists and there is not a lot of information about it, Exoplanet Hunting. Exoplanet Hunting is the practice of finding and learning

more about the planets out of our solar system and galaxy. Some exoplanets like Kepler-186f, Kepler-62f, Kepler-452b, Kepler-

69c, Kepler-22b, etc.were discovered by Kepler Space Telescope; named after Johannes Kepler, a German astronomer, mathematician, astrologer, natural philosopher and writer on music. Already more than 2,500 exoplanets are discovered. Some experts say that when Earth will get out of the habitable zone of the sun, no one would be able to survive on this planet. Some of these exoplanets discovered like Kepler-22b are habitable for animals, humans & plants.

BRIEF

Car lifter

New Delhi: A 42-year-old man was arrested for allegedly stealing luxury cars on demand from the national capital and supplying the vehicles to UP and Kashmir. The accused was identified as Kunal alias Tanuj, a resident of Sangam Vihar here, they said, adding that he called himself 'Car Raja'. A resident lodged a complaint about the theft of his car. Police identified the accused and found that he ran an interstate gang to supply vehicles.

Cheating case

Pune: A case was registered against five persons for allegedly duping people of over Rs 5 crore by promising them hefty returns on their investments in Solapur town in Solapur district of Maharashtra. Prime accused, Vishal Phate and his wife are on the run, while his father and brother were arrested. At least six investors lodged the FIR at the Barshi police station under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), an official said.

Man held

Berhampur: Around 1,100 kg of ganja was seized and one person arrested in Odisha's Ganjam district. Acting on a tip-off, Excise personnel seized the cannabis worth Rs 55 lakh from an under-construction house near Ankuli, he said. The arrested person was suspected to have been transporting ganja to various states after procuring it from his native Gajapati district. An investigation is underway to find out the destination and procurement points.

Three held

Noida: Three men claimed to be illegal Bangladeshi migrants were arrested by the Special Task Force of the Uttar Pradesh Police for allegedly selling firearms and indulging in looting and theft. The force nabbed the three men from Jhansi, where they had been living illegally. TF was working on cases of Bangladeshi citizens living in Uttar Pradesh without proper documentation. The accused were held from Raksa Mod on road.

Hate campaign

Srinagar: Police said they have arrested a man on charges of hate campaign, bullying and anti-national activities from Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district. Mir Mushtaq Ahmad, resident of Bonora area of the south Kashmir district, was allegedly indulging in activities that are prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of the Union of India and Jammu and Kashmir, through his social media account.

Peddlers nabbed

Ghaziabad: Two alleged peddlers were arrested here with 19.5 kg ganja in their possession. The arrests were made by the Loni Border Police in a raid at a house in the Roop Nagar area, where they found the accused and a third making small pouches of the narcotic for retailing.

RLD leader Jayant accuses BJP of indulging in 'polarisation'

● **Key issue in polls would be farmers' distress**

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

Accusing the BJP of indulging in polarisation in the run up to the Uttar Pradesh polls, RLD chief Jayant Chaudhary on Sunday said the BJP is driving a "one gear-car" that is headed backwards, and asserted that the anti-Muslim rhetoric will not work as people are fed up of such politics.

The 43-year-old Chaudhary, whose party has tied up with the Akhilesh Yadav-led Samajwadi Party, also said he will not contest the upcoming polls in Uttar Pradesh and would instead focus on campaigning.



RLD chief Jayant Chaudhary (L) with newly inducted member Pramod Gaur.

In an interview to PTI, Chaudhary said the quitting of leaders from the ruling BJP in Uttar Pradesh to join the SP-RLD alliance ahead of polls shows that they were peaking at the right time and are an "attractive, viable alternative" that wants to represent the grassroots.

The Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) chief also expressed confidence that

Opposition votes would not get divided, asserting that it was a direct fight between the SP-RLD alliance and the BJP.

"Not only will the Opposition votes not get divided, there is a great confidence with which I can say that many people who voted for the BJP last time are in fact going to shift to our alliance with the SP. That is because the core issues of governance, leadership, and development have not been addressed over five years by the incumbent government," Chaudhary said.

Asked about the ministers, MLAs and leaders quitting the BJP to join the SP and RLD, he said the ticket seekers, sitting MLAs and people of political prominence joining the alliance was a sort of an indicator of the groundswell of support.

NCPCR chief calls for more taxes on tobacco products

● **Include OTT, films displaying their use**

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) chairperson Priyank Kanoongo has advocated increasing taxes on tobacco products as well as on films, OTT platforms and other media that display use of such items in any form.

He said affordability and easy availability of lethal tobacco products is harmful, especially for the youth, and an increase in taxes will not only make these products out of bounds, but the additional revenues earned can be used for the treatment and rehabilitation of those suffering from tobacco-related diseases.

Experts have called for



Priyank Kanoongo

making India free from tobacco during the National Youth Week, being celebrated from January 12-18 to mark Swami Vivekananda Jayanti.

Delivering the keynote address during the webinar 'Freedom From Tobacco: What India Wants' on the occasion of the National Youth Day, Kanoongo, who is the chairman of India's apex child rights body NCPCR,

advocated increase in taxes on a wide range of tobacco products. According to a statement, Kanoongo said that affordability and easy availability of such tobacco products is harmful, especially for the youth. The additional revenues earned from the increased taxes can be used for the treatment and rehabilitation of those suffering from tobacco-related diseases, he said. In addition to requesting increased taxes on a wide range of tobacco products, the NCPCR chief also suggested an increase in taxes on films, OTT (over-the-top), and other media that show use of tobacco in any form. "Imposition of greater taxation on media that displays use of tobacco will require people to pay more and help discourage glorification of tobacco products. The NCPCR has also re-

ANTI-ENCROACHMENT DRIVE



Workers operate an excavator to demolish a building during an anti-encroachment drive at Mithapur area, in Patna, Sunday.

Six 'jaat panchayat' members booked for ostracising couples

● **For inter-caste marriages**

Pune, Jan 16 (PTI):

A case has been registered against six members of a 'jaat panchayat' (group of caste leaders) in Sangli district of Maharashtra for allegedly ordering a social boycott of at least 13 couples for inter-caste marriages, police said on Sunday.

The jaat panchayat of Nandiwale community, a nomadic tribe, had given a fresh order of social boycott during its meeting held on January 9 at Palus in Sangli, they said.

A man, who is one of the victims and the complainant in the case, said these 13 couples had got married years back in different parts of the district.



Village Palus in Sangli district.

Inspector Vikas Jadhav of Palus police station said, "We have registered a case against six members of the jaat panchayat for allegedly socially boycotting 13 couples for marrying outside their community." A complaint in this connection was lodged by Prakash Bhosale (42), who said he himself had done inter-caste marriage in 2007, following which he was ostracised from the commu-

ty by the jaat panchayat. "There are several victims like me from our community, who were also boycotted for marrying outside the caste. In December last year, a meeting was convened by some members of the community at Karad (in Satara district), in which it was decided that these couples should be allowed to become a part of the community again. I was present at that meeting," he said.

WCC members meet Kerala women's panel chief

Kozhikode, Jan 16 (PTI):

The members of Women in Cinema Collective (WCC) on Sunday called on Kerala Women's Commission chairperson P Sathedevis to ensure justice for the survivor in the sexual assault case, involving Malayalam actor Dileep.

They also sought her intervention to make public the Hema committee report on the problems faced by women in film industry. Later, Sathedevis told the reporters that the Commission will ensure that every movie production house has an internal complaints committee.

"All institutions should have an internal complaint committee, but production houses do not have one. The commission came to know that most of the production companies



KWC chief P Sathedevis

lack the basic awareness regarding such a committee," she pointed out.

Sathedevis further said the internal complaint committee will instill confidence in young women who enter the film industry and the production houses have a responsibility to ensure their safety and security at work and "they are legally bound" to constitute such a panel.

WCC members Anjali Menon, Parvathy

Thiruvothu, Padma Priya, Deedi Damodaran, Padmini and Sayanora met the Chairperson at the government guest house in Kozhikode.

Asked about the Hema committee, the chairperson said it was only a study committee and not a commission constituted under the Enquiry Commission Act and hence there was no need to place its report in the Assembly.

"However, legislation is required to regulate and monitor the activities that take place in the movie industry. We hope a law will be brought by the Cultural department in the state," she said.

The Chairperson opined that the society should back the actor who faced sexual assault and condemned the social media slur faced by her.

Hamlet, James Bond, Iron Man join Assam Police to fight crime

● **Quick connect with the people has been particularly helpful**

Guwahati, Jan 16 (PTI):

From Hamlet and James Bond to Iron Man and Captain America — all have been "partners" of the Assam Police in fighting crime and generating awareness against social ills.

Not to forget the helping hand lent by 'DJ Lockup' in checking drunken driving, which has earned international recognition.

These heroes and super-heroes haven't stepped out of their fictional worlds, but are being featured in social media campaigns of Assam Police to connect more easily with the people in a bid to promote awareness, an ally to law enforcement.

Policing is all about action, or so one thinks until coming across the campaigns being churned out



A poster by Assam Police for social media.

by the state's police force with popular Hindi phrases — "Hum Do, Hamare Do" and "Ek Aur Ek Gyarah" — tweaked to get across the messages.

Police Commissioner of Guwahati Harmeet Singh told PTI, "Our idea is to work together with society and impress upon the people that following rules is in everybody's own interest."

"We wanted to connect with the people and we have been trying to put across our messages in a language and an idiom that is understood across generations and the entire spectrum," he said. Be it

the campaign against drunk driving on New Year's Eve or the one on helmets for two-wheeler riders, the messages have not just drawn praise but also inspired police forces in different parts of the country and even abroad, to launch similar campaigns. The campaign against drunk or rash driving on New Year's Eve, which featured a creative imitating a New Year's party poster, mentioning "special performance by DJ Lockup" and an invitation "not to be our guests", inspired not just police forces from other parts of the country — UP, Punjab and Shimla — but also from Uganda to post similar messages.

The latest campaign on wearing helmets by pillion riders with the phrase "Hum Do Hamare Do Helmet", has also been well-received by the people. The helmet safety campaign has seen a creative of Shakespeare's

Hamlet — "To be or not to be!", with the police urging the public "Don't be Hamlet. Always wear a Helmet". Another features photos of Iron Man and Captain America with the question "Your child's heroes go to work wearing a helmet. Do you?" James Bond joins Assam Police in a "No Time For Violence" appeal, while legendary Queen singer Freddie Mercury features in a tweaked poster of the film 'Bohemian Rhapsody', urging people not to fall victim to fake news and fact-check before forwarding any message.

The state police force's intensified 'war on drugs' campaign has also featured many eye-catching creatives and memes, including one in which the police appealed for people's support by stating, "Public aur Police Ek aur Ek Gyarah hai... aur Drugs ke karobar karnewalon ko Nau-Dogarah karna hai!"

TN police crack down on violators of COVID curbs

Chennai, Jan 16 (PTI):

Over Rs 3 crore has been levied as fine on violators of COVID curbs across Tamil Nadu and more than 300 vehicles have been seized for breach of night curfew in Chennai, police said on Sunday.

For violation of restrictions including those related to night curfew and lockdown on Sunday, a fine of Rs 3.45 crore has been imposed on violators across the State in a week since January 7, the State police said.

Over 1.64 lakh people have been fined for not wearing masks and nearly 2,000 people for not maintaining physical distance.



Police personnel verify documents of commuters during full lockdown in Chennai, Sunday.

People have also been fined for crowding (1,552).

From 10 PM on Saturday to 5 AM on Sunday, senior police officials led a patrol in the city, filed 103 cases and seized 307 vehicles (280

two-wheelers, 16 autorickshaws and 11 light motor vehicles) for violating COVID-19 guidelines and night curfew.

The cases have been filed against those have been roaming around the

city at night without any valid reason and for defying COVID norms, a police press release said.

A total of 312 vehicle checkpoints have been set up and 10,000 police personnel deployed to enforce the restrictions in Chennai city.

COVID curbs, including night curfew, have been in force since January 6 and so far, a fine of Rs 10,93,800 has been collected and 5,469 cases have been filed for not wearing face masks. A fine of Rs 13,500 has been levied for not maintaining social distance, the city police said.

Tamil Nadu on Saturday recorded 23,989 new virus cases and 11 fatalities.

Bihar hooch toll climbs to eleven

Bihar Sharif, Jan 16 (PTI):

Seven more people have died here after consuming spurious liquor, raising the toll to 11 in the headquarters of Nalanda district — to which dry Bihar's Chief Minister Nitish Kumar belongs.

According to Superintendent of Police, Nalanda, Ashok Mishra, the station house officer (SHO) of the police station concerned has been suspended and bodies of eight of the deceased have been handed over to family members after post mortem.

"Four people died in the early hours of Saturday while four others breathed their last in the evening.

Three more died on Sunday," he said.

"All deaths have taken place in Chhoti Pahari and Pahari Talli localities of the town. The SHO of Sohara has been suspended for being lax in keeping an eye on the activities in an area under his jurisdiction," added the SP.

Bodies of the three persons who died Sunday morning have been sent for post mortem. All bereaved family members have said that the deceased consumed liquor on Friday night. Sale and consumption of liquor is completely banned in Bihar since April, 2016.

The hooch tragedy comes barely two months after more than 40 people died

after consuming spurious liquor in four north Bihar districts. Meanwhile, state BJP president Sanjay Jaiswal, whose party shares power in the state, launched a fresh attack on the chief minister's party.

"JD(U) leaders would do well to acknowledge that the hydra-headed monster that is illicit liquor trade cannot be slain until the nexus of high officials, police personnel and liquor mafia is broken," said Jaiswal in a statement.

The BJP leader, who represents Pashchim Champaran in Lok Sabha, has been sore ever since a JD(U) spokesman took potshots at him for the hooch deaths in his constituency in November last year.

BRIEF

Cabinet

Beirut: Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group and its main Shiite ally said they are ending their boycott of Cabinet meetings after a three-month deadlock that has worsened the small nation's unprecedented economic meltdown. The two Shiite groups said in a joint statement they would attend Cabinet sessions to approve budget and measures for dealing with crisis, and to discuss a recovery plan due to economic deterioration.

Visits

Algiers: The UN envoy for the disputed Western Sahara visited refugee camps in Algeria housing those displaced by fighting decades ago, in a renewed effort to find a diplomatic solution for the territory. Staffan de Mistura's visit to camps in Smara, shown on Algerian state television, was met with skepticism by supporters of the Polisario Front, which seeks independence for Western Sahara. Morocco annexed it in 1975.

Blames

Rome: The discovery of African swine fever in northern Italy has Italian pork producers fearing significant damages to a major agricultural export. Earlier this month, a case of the virus, which can be deadly to pigs but doesn't harm humans, was detected in a wild boar in the Piedmont region in northwest Italy. Wild boars, whose meat is used in pasta sauces, are a popular prey for hunters in Italy. The nation has banned hunting in parts.

Faults

Rome: Italy's supreme court has faulted prosecutors for withholding evidence benefiting the key suspect in the Vatican's fraud and embezzlement trial in a parallel case in the Italian courts. The Court of Cassation ordered the Tribunal of Review to consider that evidence before deciding whether to uphold an international arrest warrant for Gianluigi Torzi, a London-based Italian broker who is wanted in both Italy and Vatican for crimes.

Bans

Islamabad: Pakistan's civil aviation authority announced a ban on serving snacks and meals in flights amid a dramatic surge in coronavirus cases predominantly by the Omicron variant. The directives came in line with the country's COVID-19 task force, the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC), which has said that the ban would be effective from January 17 and ensure other procedures such as wearing masks were implemented.

Reject

Belgrade: Environmental protesters demanding the cancellation of plans for lithium mining in western Serbia took to the streets again, blocking key roads and for the first time a border crossing.

Captor demanding terrorist release killed, hostages freed

Colleyville, Jan 16 (AP):

Four hostages are safe and their presumably Pakistani captor is dead after an hours long standoff that began when the man took over services at a Texas synagogue where he could be heard ranting on a livestream and demanding the release of a Pakistani neuroscientist who was convicted of trying to kill US Army officers in Afghanistan.

One hostage held at Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville was released during the standoff, three others got out, when an FBI SWAT team entered the building, authorities said. The hostage taker was killed and FBI Special Agent in Charge Matt DeSarno said a team would investigate the



An armored truck is parked near Colleyville Middle School amid hostage crisis in Colleyville, Texas.

shooting incident.

Video from Dallas TV station WFAA shows people running out a door of the synagogue, and then a man holding a gun opening the same door just seconds later, before he turns around and closes the door. Moments later, several rounds of gunfire can be heard, followed by the sound of an explosion.

FBI and police spokeswomen declined to answer questions about who shot the man.

DeSarno said the hostage taker was specifically focused on an issue not directly connected to the Jewish community, and there was no immediate indication that the man was part of any broader plan. But

DeSarno said the agency's investigation will have global reach. It wasn't clear why the attacker chose the synagogue.

Law enforcement officials who were not authorized to discuss the ongoing investigation and spoke to the AP on the condition of anonymity earlier said that the hostage-taker demanded the release of Aafia Siddiqui, a Pakistani neuroscientist suspected of having ties to al-Qaida. He also said he wanted to be able to speak with her, according to the officials. Siddiqui is in federal prison in Texas.

DeSarno said that the man had been identified but we are not prepared to release his identity or confirm his identity at this time.

Omicron exposes inflexibility of Europe's public hospitals



Nurse work in the intensive care unit of the Strasbourg University Hospital, eastern France.

Having capacity to accommodate surge is crucial

Strasbourg, Jan 16 (AP):

A World Health Organisation official warned last week of a closing window of opportunity for European countries to prevent their health care systems from being overwhelmed as the omicron variant produces near-vertical growth in

coronavirus infections. In France, Britain and Spain, nations with comparatively strong national health programmes, that window may already be closed.

The director of an intensive care unit at a hospital in Strasbourg is turning patients away. A surgeon at a London hospital describes a critical delay in a man's cancer diagnosis. Spain is seeing its determination to prevent a system collapse tested as

omicron keeps medical personnel off work.

There are a lot of patients we can't admit, and it's the non-COVID patients who are the collateral victims of all this, said Dr Julie Helms, who runs the ICU at Strasbourg University Hospital in far eastern France.

Two years into the pandemic, with the exceptionally contagious omicron impacting public services of various kinds, the variant's effect on medical facilities has many reevaluating the resilience of public health systems that are considered essential to providing equal care.

The problem, experts say, is that few health systems built up enough flexibility to handle a crisis like the coronavirus before it emerged, while repeated infection spikes have kept the rest too preoccupied to implement changes during the long emergency.

Bangladesh arrests brother of Rohingya insurgency leader

Dhaka, Jan 16 (AFP):

Bangladesh police said Sunday they had arrested the brother of a notorious insurgent leader whose organisation has been blamed for murders and drug trafficking in sprawling Rohingya refugee camps.

The country is home to around 850,000 members of the stateless Muslim minority, who live in patchwork and overcrowded settlements after fleeing systematic discrimination and violence in neighbouring Myanmar.

The Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army militant group has been accused of assassinating political opponents, running narcotics and instilling a climate of fear in the camps. Mohammad Shah Ali,



Mohammad Shah Ali

arrested by the elite Armed Police Battalion, is the half-brother of ARSA's infamous leader Ataulah Abu Ammar Jununi.

He was caught in a camp near the coastal city of Cox's Bazar with "arms and drugs," the battalion said in a statement.

Commanding officer Naimul Haque told AFP that Ali had admitted his links with ARSA and that "Ataulah was in regular

contact with him".

He also said police had rescued one person kidnapped by Ali, without giving further details.

A Rohingya refugee living in Nouakamp Mat camp confirmed the arrest to AFP.

"Everyone here is terrified by him," said Mohammad Salim. "(He) used to oppress us."

Nearly all of the Rohingya refugees living in the border camp arrived in the wake of a brutal Myanmar military crackdown — now subject to a genocide investigation at The Hague — that began after ARSA attacks on Myanmar police posts in 2017.

Ali's capture was the most high-profile arrest of an ARSA member since the group was accused of

murdering influential Rohingya community leader Mohib Ullah in September, and killing seven others at an Islamic seminary soon after.

Bangladesh authorities launched a dragnet in the camps after the murders, arresting hundreds of people. Tom Andrews, the UN special rapporteur for Myanmar, visited the camps last month and blamed ARSA for much of the crime committed there. There was no immediate comment from ARSA on this arrest.

But in a recent video message, Ataulah denied the group's involvement in the drug trade, instead accusing Bangladesh authorities of trafficking methamphetamine pills and blaming Rohingya refugees.

Tsunami threat recedes from huge Pacific volcanic eruption

Wellington, Jan 16 (AP):

The tsunami threat around the Pacific from a huge undersea volcanic eruption began to recede Sunday, while the extent of damage to Tonga remained unclear.

Satellite images showed the spectacular eruption that took place with a plume of ash, steam and gas rising like a mushroom above the blue Pacific waters. A sonic boom could be heard as far away as Alaska.

In nearby Tonga it sent tsunami waves crashing across the shore and peo-

ple rushing to higher ground.

The eruption cut the internet to Tonga, leaving friends and family members around the world still anxiously trying to get in touch to figure out if there were any injuries and the extent of the damage. Even government websites and other official sources remained without updates.

Aid agencies said thick ash and smoke was continuing to affect Tonga's air and water, and that authorities were asking people to wear masks and drink bottled water.

Dave Snider, the tsunami warning coordinator for the National Tsunami Warning Center in Palmer, Alaska, said it was very unusual for a volcanic eruption to affect an entire ocean basin, and the spectacle was both humbling and scary.

The tsunami waves caused damage to boats as far away as New Zealand and Santa Cruz, California, but did not appear to cause any widespread damage. Snider said he anticipated the tsunami situation in the US and elsewhere to continue improving.

WOMEN'S MARCH



Afghan women march as they chant slogans and hold banners during a women's rights protest in Kabul on Sunday.

Netanyahu negotiating plea deal in corruption trial

Tel Aviv, Jan 16 (AP):

Former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is negotiating a plea deal in his corruption case, a person involved in the talks said Sunday.

The deal, which could be signed as early as this week, could usher Netanyahu off the Israeli political stage for years, paving the way for a leadership race in his Likud party and shaking up Israel's political map.

Any deal would also absolve Netanyahu of an embarrassing and protracted trial that has gripped the nation and risks tarnishing his legacy. A spokesman for Netanyahu declined to comment.

Netanyahu is on trial for fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes in three separate cases. The former premier, now opposition leader, denies wrongdoing.

The person involved in the negotiations said the



Benjamin Netanyahu

plea deal would drop the bribery and fraud charges and scrap one case entirely. The person asked for anonymity because he wasn't authorised to discuss the details of the talks.

He said a plea deal would likely be announced in the coming days.

The person said a number of elements remained unresolved, including the inclusion of the charge of moral turpitude, which under Israeli law would ban Netanyahu from politics for seven years.

They were also deliberating whether Netanyahu would be forced to do community service under the deal.

Including moral turpitude would challenge Netanyahu's vows to return to lead the country after his 12-year reign was ended last year by a coalition of ideologically disparate parties with little in common other than its opposition to his leadership.

But Netanyahu, dubbed a political wizard for his ability to survive repeated attempts at ending his rule, could make a comeback when the ban expires. He would be nearly 80. His departure from the political scene would set off a leadership race in the Likud party, with several lawmakers already promising to run. Likud isn't expected to remain as dominant without Netanyahu, but would still be a major force under a new leader.

With Netanyahu gone, the more nationalist elements of the coalition could decide to break off from the fragile union and opt to join forces with their ideological brethren.

Netanyahu is charged in three separate cases. The first alleges that Netanyahu received gifts worth hundreds of thousands of dollars from wealthy associates.

In the second case, Netanyahu is accused of orchestrating positive coverage in a major Israeli paper in exchange for promoting legislation that would have harmed the news outlet's chief rival, a free pro-Netanyahu daily.

The third, nicknamed Case 4000, alleges that Netanyahu promoted legislation worth hundreds of millions of dollars to the owner of Israeli telecom giant Bezeq in exchange for positive coverage on its Walla news site.

Singapore's Omicron wave likely to see a fairly sharp peak

Singapore, Jan 16 (PTD):

Singapore's Omicron wave is likely to see a fairly sharp peak in the near term, similar to what South Africa had witnessed last month, which could push the number of infections in the affluent city-state to around 15,000 cases a day, a media report said on Sunday.

According to the Ministry of Health, 692 cases of the Omicron variant were reported in Singapore, of which 541 were locally transmitted and 15 were imported.

The number of COVID-19 cases have been steadily climbing in recent weeks here, with Omicron constituting a major proportion

of the new infections on a daily basis.

I would anticipate that we will see a fairly sharp peak, like what South Africa has had, and it will decay after that. It will only be after that point that we get to a stable number, with lower numbers of infections, the Straits Times newspaper reported, quoting an infectious disease modelling expert Alex Cook, who is an associate professor at the National University of Singapore's Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health.

Given the latest number of daily confirmed cases, Singapore could soon face an Omicron wave, with 10,000 to 15,000 cases a day

being a distinct possibility, the report said.

Just how steep the slopes of the next wave are will depend on the kind of restrictions Singapore have in place, it said.

"It could be that we have a lower, longer, slower burn, and we maintain the measures that we currently have in place," the report said, quoting Professor Cook. The Omicron variant was first identified in South Africa on November 25 last year, before it spread to other parts of the world. Despite Professor Cook's grim forecast, others like Professor Teo Yik Ying, Dean of the Saw Swee Hock School, sounded more upbeat.

Ethiopian diaspora torn by ethnic tensions in Tigray war

● Ethiopian PM transformed federal coalition into single party rule

Columbus, Jan 16 (AFP):

Thousands of miles away from the war in Ethiopia, the ethnic cracks have started to show in an Ethiopian church in Ohio, in a lawsuit between trustees and clergy.

The original trustees of the Holy Trinity Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church in Columbus have accused its clergy of switching the language of services from Amharic, the national lan-



Members of the Tigray diaspora in North America protest about their conflict with Ethiopia, near the State Department in Washington.

guage of Ethiopia, to Tigrinya, the language of the Tigray region. They say the clergy is taking

sides in a war between Tigray leaders and the Amhara, allied with the Ethiopian government,

with an estimated tens of thousands of dead.

The clergy in the church in Columbus, which is home to about 40,000 Ethiopian-Americans, says Tigrinya was added on as a language rather than replacing Amharic to better reach the congregation. Church leaders say the changes weren't political in nature. The tensions in the church reflect how the war in Ethiopia has fueled divides across the more than 3 million members of the diaspora. "The Ethiopian social fabric ... has been torn apart," said Tewodros Tirfe, chairman of the Amhara Association of America, based in North Carolina.



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Evolving startup culture

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called for innovating for India and from India to tackle challenges facing the country as he counted steps taken by the government in freeing entrepreneurs and innovation from bureaucratic silos. Referring to the future prospects, the Prime Minister said that as of now only half of India's population is online, therefore future possibilities are immense. He appealed to the startups to move towards villages also. Startup culture in India will only evolve if society's stance changes regarding business. Given that the vast majority of startups fail, Indian business culture must begin to examine its tolerance for founders' missteps and encourage the knowledge gained from failure to be applied to future success. In US with most developed startup culture in the world, failure is often seen as a natural stepping stone on the road to success. People may go to school to study one thing, take a job doing another, and then move around between companies and industries throughout their careers. In India, failure is frowned upon in every instance. Access to capital is more limited, causing startups to focus on monetization, revenue, and lean operations from the outset. Startups are usually funded only after they have a working product and a proven business model, with revenue. In other words, Indian investors are only going to give money if the business has already shown to make money for them. But this methodology can result in missed opportunities. Recent studies suggest that Indian firms risk losing significant business due to lack of adequate customer service. There's a tremendous opportunity for both startups and established companies to build and improve customer loyalty in India by adopting practices that are now considered standard within the US. There is a huge need for innovative solutions, particularly those that alleviate poverty and benefit a large number of people. Given the scale of India and its resource constraints, low-cost, high-impact solutions are required.

Technology startups play a crucial role in accomplishing this, because of their potential for scalability and exponential growth. The diversity of the Indian population has also been a major game-changer in the startup industry. While it offers the challenge of marketing products to people of various different languages, cultures, and regions, it also affords these startups the opportunity to grow enough to cater to a huge diversity of people. This trains a lot of these new companies to cater to the global audience, and thus increase their uptake. The countries that are most active in investing in the Indian startup ecosystem are Israel, Netherlands, Australia, Japan, England and France. The Indian startup scene is now relatively mature and has thousands of homegrown founders and employees across sectors, experience levels, and academic backgrounds. Going forward, we should see a lot more action in the Indian startup world, defined by the talent cultivated from within and their experiences and wealth. This could include more clusters from emerging unicorns, more community-led initiatives by founders for founders, and more serial entrepreneurs starting up again, and an increased capital flow for angel investing. Most startup founders are well-educated and come from well-off backgrounds in urban metro cities. However, as nearly 70 percent of the Indian population live in rural areas, the customers of the mass market tend to come from low-income backgrounds in villages. Due to different living environments, startups often have an insufficient understanding of the customers and their needs. The government needs to encourage people from villages to evolve in startup culture.

Volcanic implications

A large eruption of Hunga Tonga, a volcanic island of Tonga in the Pacific Ocean has occurred. The eruption caused tsunamis in Tonga, Fiji and American Samoa, tsunami warnings were issued in Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu, New Zealand, Australia, Japan, the United States, Canada, Mexico, Chile and Ecuador. Governments are not yet aware about implications of volcanic eruptions during climate change. Researchers have shown that human-caused climate change will have important consequences for how volcanic gases interact with the atmosphere. Large-magnitude eruptions will have greater effects as the climate continues to warm. However, the cooling effects of small- and medium-sized eruptions could shrink by as much as 75 percent. Since these smaller eruptions are far more frequent, further research is needed to determine whether the net effect will be additional warming or cooling. Where and when a volcano erupts is not something that humans can control, but as the atmosphere warms due to climate change, the plumes of ash and gas emitted by large, but infrequent, volcanic eruptions will rise ever higher. Climate change will also accelerate the transport of volcanic material, in the form of small, shiny droplets called volcanic sulfate aerosols from the tropics to higher latitudes. For large eruptions, the combined effect of these phenomena will cause the haze created by volcanic aerosols to block more sunlight from reaching Earth's surface, ultimately amplifying the temporary cooling caused by volcanic eruptions.

Volcanic plumes rise like hot air balloons: they keep rising to a height where they're naturally buoyant. Large tropical volcanoes have caused some of the world's most destructive natural disasters, with eruptions spewing out massive streams of harmful gases and hot debris that can wipe out everything in their path. Understanding discrepancies between the proxy-based product and a stand-alone climate model are critical for projecting how future volcanic eruptions may affect global climate, especially considering the added impacts of human-influenced climate change. There is growing scientific evidence that climate change may also play a role in geological phenomena such as earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions. And while there is still debate about what magnitudes these secondary effects of global warming may reach, there no longer seems to be any doubt that the risk is real. Glaciers and permanent ice sheets in the planet's polar regions exert enormous pressure on the bedrock, causing it to warp downward. As the ice melts and that weight is released from the Earth's crust, the land responds with a rebound, like slow, giant version of a trampoline. This rebound can have consequences.

MASK AS ESSENTIAL WEARABLE



A vendor selling facemasks and caps as wearables arranges the merchandise on display on a roadside stall on the outskirts of Hyderabad, Telangana.

Bureaucratic excessive greed and measures to control corruption



RUSEN KUMAR



A senior police officer of the state of Chhattisgarh has been arrested and an investigation is being done by interrogating him in corruption cases. He is alleged to have acquired disproportionate assets during his service. This disproportionate wealth is not of lakhs but worth crores of rupees. For what reasons can a police officer receive such a huge amount of money? This is not a new case of disproportionate assets being held by a high-ranking government official. Such incidents have become common in Indian democracy. Is asking for money by showing the fear of administrative power to the public, not an act of robbery? In our country, any high-ranking government official has all kinds of facilities officially available in more than enough quantity, but even then, why does he or she become greedy in excess? Such administrative problems are common in small states where there is a lack of political will. Politicians remain lost in their own separate world and taking advantage of this, administrative officials indulge in corruption. Why don't we accept that political people play a big role in administrative corruption?

Corruption is not taught in any school or university in India. It is a burning question that yet how any administrative officer can do this work very eff-

iciently. Where do the officials get the inspiration to do corruption, this is the basic question, which we should ask ourselves and the society. Corruption should not be tolerated in a democracy. Organized corruption is extremely harmful for any nation. We have to understand deeply that administrative corruption violates the fundamental rights of citizens. It should not be denied that greedy and corrupt officials can pose a serious threat to the internal security of the nation. However, administrative corruption is very organized in India. It has a fully developed system. It has many partners. Any corruption occurs only when everyone is interconnected from top to bottom. I don't want to confuse you with statistics. You will easily get the statistics of corruption by civil servants, but I am not interested in that. You read the newspaper; you will get this type of information from one or the other corner of the country. Where does the mindset of corruption come from? I would like to draw your attention to the back of this mindset. Why don't we understand that corruption is an organized crime?

We should keep a watch on the behavior and functioning of the administrative officers so that corruption can be stopped when it is indicated. How sad it is for us that high-ranking offi-

cers disregard their duties towards their nation and trample under their feet the rights of their own citizens. India is a liberal society; at the same time, it is also a forced and troubled society. Administrative officers know this very well and they take advantage of the spontaneity of the people. The people of India consider their politicians and administrative officers as their saviors. The two main causes of corruption that I see are too much gullibility and too much illiteracy among Indian citizens. Isn't administrative corruption a social problem in India? This is a burning question in my opinion. There are two common centers of corruption in India - the collectorate complex and the police headquarters. Corruption happening in the administrative field can be controlled only with strong political will. The law itself does not act, rather the law in India is governed by instructions.

Democracy in India is celebrating its 75th anniversary. Such incidents seem to be the result of our political failure. We have to understand fundamentally that the administrative officers in our country are controlled by the political administration. One reason I see even more is that there are certain caste classes in our country, which control our administrative system. They still have the mentality of making people slaves and they do not miss when they get a chance. A special political surveillance system should be made so that the spirit of corruption does not develop among the administrative officers. There are many such civil servants in our country who do public service with great skill. It is our great responsibility that good servants should get adequate respect in society. We need to pay a lot of attention to the training of administrative

officers. Administrative officers should have direct communication and contact with the public so that they can understand the condition and direction of Indian society. In a democracy, the people are paramount. Communication between the public and the administrative officers should be increased. How bad it is that many administrative officers do not like to talk to the public! Not only this but also, they consider meeting people a disgusting act. They communicate only with their particular class.

The behavior, understanding and thought of human beings are controlled by education and special training. Administrative officers should be aware of those actions due to which social and economic inequalities may increase in society. Through training and workshops, we should make the officers deeply aware of this. Public service is a social service of a high order; it should be freed from excessive personal greed. India has ample resources and arrangements for living. In a democracy, this has become even easier. There are hundreds of such welfare schemes, through which the lives of crores of people are going smoothly. As a citizen, we should lead a hard life and have full faith in the system of our nation. We should understand that any kind of extreme greed of ours can disturb our life, family, society and nation. In the world of psychology, excessive attachment to money is a mental illness. We should use money and resources for the welfare of the people. Wealth has great creative power. Administrative officers should play a great role in ensuring that there is an equitable distribution of wealth among the people. We must understand that the right to property is not a fundamental right in India.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Witness protection

The strident demand for a separate law to tackle increasing incidents of mob violence may not address the problem as anticipated by the public. This is because the multiplicity of laws in India is an impediment rather than a facilitator to curb crimes including the menace of mob violence. Instead, the states and also Central government should remove the shortcomings in existing laws, particularly Witness Protection Act and also address systemic issues related to an investigation by police. The key to ensuring quick and reasonable justice for victims of any crime is a thorough and impartial investigation by police to prepare a watertight case to withstand intense legal scrutiny. The biggest hurdle in this matter is lack of witnesses who voluntarily come forward to depose against the accused fearing reprisals and revenge subsequently by the accused as police are unable to afford round the clock protection to those witnesses. The inability of the police to inspire confidence in the public to cooperate in dealing with mob violence is to be blamed for this. When several cops present in the scene of violence couldn't stop a mob merciless beating, how can common citizens summon the courage to confront the hooligans? Herein lies the importance to implement the Witness Protection Act in true spirit by police as the past track record on this score is awful. The poor image and low credibility of police with the public are the connected issues the government has to grapple with seriousness if it really wants to stamp out the menace of mob lynching. As demonstrated in other lynching cases, police have completed the investigation and submitted the charge sheet in court without a law exclusively meant for mob violence. Therefore, the need of the hour is to deal with the underlying causes rather than adding another law. Unemployment, drug abuse and a tardy criminal justice delivery system are contributory factors for mob violence. Focused attention and resolute action are called for to address these risk factors in order to deal with mob violence effectively.

Rajiv, via email

Rename HCs

Whole system of continuing naming High Courts is confusing where some High Courts are still named after cities where these are situated. Indian cities Bombay, Madras, Allahabad have since been renamed as Mumbai, Chennai and Prayag respectively long time back. But High Courts located in these cities are still officially named after old names of these cities. System should be that names of High Courts may get auto-changed with change in names of cities. Best is that Union government should end the British legacy by naming all High Courts after names of states rather than on particular cities. Proposed legislation should incorporate feature that names of High Courts may be automatically changed with change in name of states or cities without needing any separate legislation.

Madhu Agrawal, Delhi

(Rusen Kumar is a renowned journalist, author and social leader.)



WHAT THEY TWEET!

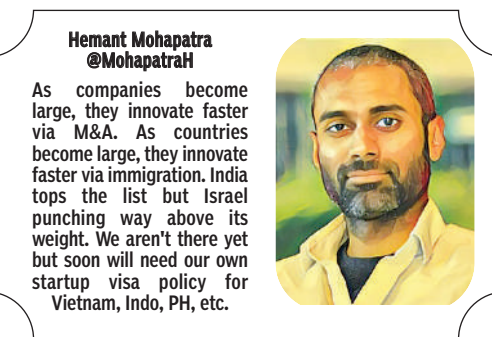


Kanwal Sibal@KanwalSibal
So has China in Europe. Question of spine. Europe is not a nation, is fractured within, Germany is an economic animal mainly, major EU countries compete with each other in China. China's coercion of a Lithuania shows contempt for EU.

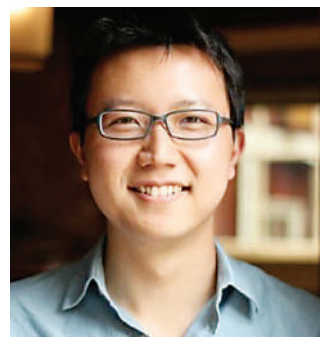
Rahul Raj@bhak_sala
Most of the unicorns celebrated in India are mostly fintech or aggregation platforms. This may be my personal bias, but I feel that manufacturing, automation and R&D startups need more support and recognition than what they get.



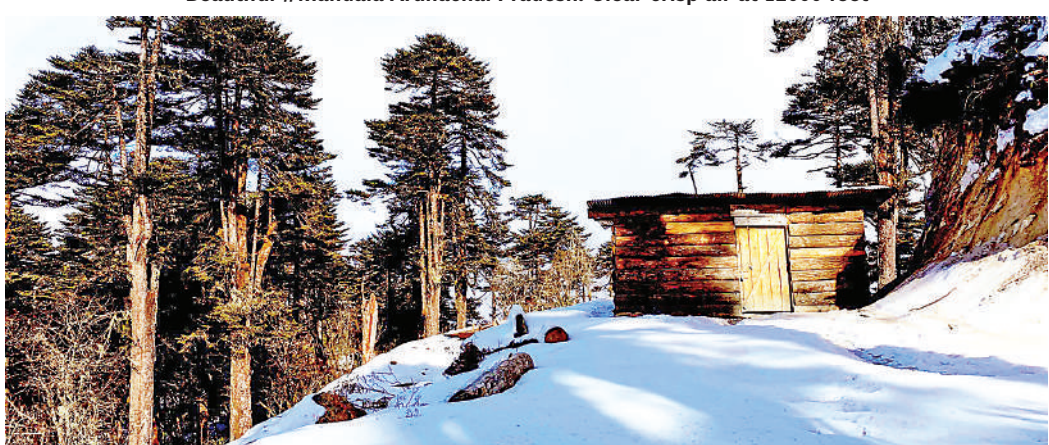
Suhasini Haidar@suhasinih
When being sensible is more reflective of a sense of compulsion...the same chest-thumping hawks who derided Mr Saran at his book launch for referring to the Siachen AGPL solution in his book, are today quite silent when the sitting Army Chief speaks of exactly the same thing!



Hemant Mohapatra@MohapatraH
As companies become large, they innovate faster via M&A. As countries become large, they innovate faster via immigration. India tops the list but Israel punching way above its weight. We aren't there yet but soon will need our own startup visa policy for Vietnam, Indo, PH, etc.



Peter Yang@petergyang
Just had a call with someone on Forbes 30 under 30 list and came away really impressed. He shared with me how he made VP at a top tech company before age 30: 1. 4:30 AM wake up 2. Cold showers 3. Gratitude journal 4. Meditate 5. Dad owns tech company.



Zubin@zubin49
Beautiful #Mandala Arunachal Pradesh. Clear crisp air at 12000 feet

Sridhar Vembu@svembu
I come from a very ordinary background and wealth to me is a vehicle to help build our broader society, particularly our rural poor. People who attack me in crude vulgar terms make my resolve stronger. I am not going to be cowed down by such attacks.

BRIEF

ATMs



New Delhi: Indial Payments Ltd, which is currently rolling out 300-400 ATMs in a month, is hopeful of deploying over 20,000 such machines in next 4-5 years, MD CEO K Srinivas said on Sunday. It focuses on ensuring availability of cash in its rural ATMs.

Awaits

New Delhi: The proposed merger of debt-ridden Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Bank with Unity Small Finance Bank (USFB) is being examined and the process of amalgamation will start after the government approval. Various aspects of the scheme of amalgamation have been examined and the government would soon send its suggestions, if any, to the RBI. The RBI in December extended the restrictions.

Vocational

New Delhi: Common Services Centers (CSC) has launched the "Yogyata" mobile phone application to provide vocational education and skill enhancement opportunities to youth and citizens in rural areas. The Yogyata app will leverage CSCs massive reach and penetration in the target group while providing an opportunity to access courses that add skills and educational qualifications to increase employability by offering courses.

Deal

London: Tesla is turning to Mozambique for a key component in its electric car batteries in what analysts believe is a first of its kind deal designed to reduce its dependence on China for graphite. Elon Musk's company signed an agreement last month with Australia's Syrah Resources, which operates one of the world's largest graphite mines in the southern African country.

Projects

Mumbai: Sunteck Realty is on a Rs 22,000-crore potential revenue path by launching seven projects in and around the Mumbai metropolitan region over the next five to eight years. These projects are expected to make it one of the largest realtors in terms of the topline. The realty firm has built the first uber apartment tower Signature in the heart of the tony central business district of BKC last decade and is now home to biggest names.

Profit

New Delhi: Footwear retail chain Metro Brands has reported a 54.63 per cent jump in consolidated net profit to Rs 100.85 crore for the third quarter ended December 2021. It had posted a net profit of Rs 65.22 crore during the October-December quarter of the previous fiscal, Metro Brands Ltd (MBL), earlier known as Metro Shoes, said in regulatory filing.

Macroeconomic situation on recovery mode but facing stagflation

Aim should be to direct money into hands of poor

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

India's overall macroeconomic situation is in a recovery mode but the growth is concentrated at the top end, which is a worrying trend, according to former World Bank Chief Economist Kaushik Basu. Amid the rising inflationary trends, including the sharp increase in retail inflation last month, Basu, who has also served as Chief Economic Advisor to the Indian government during the UPA rule, said the country is facing stagflation and "very carefully curated policy interventions" are required to address the situation. Currently, Basu



Kaushik Basu

is a professor of Economics at the Cornell University in the United States. While the aggregate economy is growing, "the bottom half of India" is in recession, he said and noted that it was sad the country's policy over the last few years has been largely focused on big businesses. "India's overall macroeconomic situation is in recovery mode... The worry stems from the fact that this growth is concentrated at the top end," Basu

told PTI in an interview.

He also said the youth unemployment rate in the country touched 23 per cent, among the highest globally, even before the COVID-19 pandemic started. Workers, farmers and small businesses are seeing negative growth, he added.

While India's GDP is estimated to grow 9.2 per cent in 2021-22, Basu said since this comes after a contraction of 7.3 per cent in 2019-20 due to the pandemic, the average growth rate over the last two years is 0.6 per cent per annum.

The National Statistical Office (NSO) in its first advance estimate has projected a GDP growth of 9.2 per cent in April 2021 to March 2022 fiscal year while the Reserve Bank of India has forecast 9.5 per cent expansion during the same period.

Earnings to guide market momentum this week

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

The stock market's momentum will be guided by the ongoing quarterly earnings season, with Reliance Industries, HUL and Bajaj Finance among those scheduled to announce their results this week, analysts said. Focus would also remain on the COVID situation, global stock markets, investment pattern of foreign institutional investors (FIIs), rupee-dollar trend and Brent crude, they added. "The earnings season would gain pace this week and participants will be closely eyeing the results of some of the top names like Reliance, Ultratech Cement, Bajaj Auto, JSW Steel, Bajaj Finance, Asian Paints, Hindustan Unilever among others. "Before that, markets will first react to the earnings of two heavyweights - HCL Technologies and HDFC Bank in early trade on Monday," said Ajit Mishra, VP Research, Religare Broking.

Gold imports jump over 2-fold to USD 38 bn in Apr-Dec 2021

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):



India's gold imports, which has a bearing on the country's current account deficit (CAD), more than doubled to USD 38 billion during April-December this fiscal on account of higher demand, according to data of the commerce ministry. The imports stood at USD 16.78 billion in April-December 2020.

In December 2021, imports of the precious metal rose to USD 4.8 billion from USD 4.5 billion in the year-ago period. The surge in gold imports during the nine months contributed to the widening of the trade deficit to USD 142.44 billion against USD 61.38 billion in April-December 2020.

Similarly, silver imports also increased to USD 2 billion during April-December 2021 from USD 762 million in the same period of the previous fiscal. India is the world's

second-biggest gold consumer after China. The imports mainly take care of the demand by the jewellery industry. The gems and jewellery exports during the nine-month of the current fiscal grew by 71 per cent to about USD 29 million.

India's current account slipped into a deficit of USD 9.6 billion or 1.3 per cent of GDP in the September quarter, according to the Reserve Bank.

The current account, which records the value of exports and imports of goods and services, along with international transfers of capital, was in a surplus mode both in the quarter-ago and year-ago periods.

Fintech firms demand further liberalisation of tax regime

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

The fintech industry has urged Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to further liberalise the tax regime for financial sector startups in the forthcoming Budget, arguing that it has an immense potential to promote financial inclusion and generate significant employment opportunities.

The finance minister is scheduled to present Union Budget 2022-23 in Parliament on February 1. On expectations of the fintech industry from the Budget, Gaurav Jalan, CEO and Founder mPokket said all startups, including fintech firms, extensively use stock option to attract and retain talent.

However, employees of such fintech companies exercising their ESOP (employee stock owner-



ship plan) option would not only have to arrange the funds to buy the same but also pay around 35 per cent tax as well since the allotted shares are considered part of their package, he said.

"Tax collection at the time of sale of such shares, instead of collection on the employee's notional income, would resolve cash flow issues of employees and greatly help fintechs continue to attract and retain talent, thereby helping in the industry's overall growth," suggested Jalan.

Shruti Aggarwal, Co-founder, Stashfin said the government's digital push has opened the doors for

financial inclusion and the fintech revolution.

"I'd like for the Budget to have a dedicated focus on driving the fintech ecosystem in the country. Fintech industry has the ability to help propel the Indian economy to the place it rightly deserves," she said.

Just as priority sector lending helped priority sectors of the economy that may require credit and financial assistance from NBFCs, it will be beneficial for fintech startups if more segments are included that drive financial inclusion for citizens with limited credit footprint, Aggarwal said.

She further said currently the onlending by banks to NBFCs is allowed up to an overall limit of five per cent of individual bank's total priority lending.

Zero customs duty on ferronickel, higher import levy on flat products sought

Will encourage use of electric arc furnace

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

Ahead of the Union Budget, industry body FICCI has requested the government to reduce the basic customs duty (BCD) on ferronickel to zero and levy a higher duty of 12.5 per cent on the import of stainless steel flat products. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is scheduled to present the Union Budget for FY2022-23 on February 1, 2022.

In its budget recommendations, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FFICI) has also urged the government to continue with zero duty on stainless steel scrap after March 31, 2022. At present, while the BCD on ferronickel is 2.5



per cent, the same on stainless steel flat products is 7.5 per cent. On stainless steel scrap, zero customs duty is applicable up to March 31, 2022.

Putting its case for zero duty on ferronickel, Ficci said it is the most important raw material used in stainless steel making. The stainless steel industry meets the bulk of its nickel requirements through ferronickel and stainless-steel

scrap routes, as pure nickel is very expensive.

Due to the non-availability of ferronickel in the country, domestic stainless steel producers are forced to import it from countries like Japan, South Korea and Greece. This is because India is deficient in nickel ore, and therefore, there is no production of ferronickel within the country.

Besides, no customs duty is not applicable on fer-

ronickel originating from Indonesia and Japan due to India-ASEAN FTA and India-Japan CEPA.

On imposing a higher duty on stainless steel flat products, the body said, "There is a need for rationalizing these duties due to the various reasons".

According to Ficci, imports of stainless steel flat products have been rising over the last few months. From a monthly average of 34,105 tonnes in 2020-21, imports grew by an overwhelming 127 per cent to 77,337 tonnes in July 2021. These high imports are hurting the domestic industry, which has the capacity and capability to meet the entire domestic demand.

There is no need to depend on stainless steel imports, as the domestic industry can produce all the grades and thicknesses required by the end-users, it said.

Budget could consider levying TDS, TCS on crypto trading

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

The government could consider in the upcoming Budget levying TDS, TCS on sale and purchase of cryptocurrencies above a certain threshold and such transactions should be brought within the ambit of specified transaction for the purpose of reporting to income tax authorities, Nangia Andersen LLP Tax Leader Aravind Srivatsan said.

Also, a higher tax rate of 30 per cent should be levied on the income arising from the sale of cryptocurrency, similar to winnings from lottery, game shows, puzzle, etc, he said.

Speaking to PTI on what the Budget 2022-23, to be



unveiled by the government on February 1, could have in store for the crypto industry in India, Srivatsan said currently, India has the highest number of crypto owners globally, at 10.07 crore and as per a report it is expected that the investment by Indians in cryptocurrency

could touch USD 241 billion by 2030.

"A bill was expected to be presented during Winter Session of Parliament to regulate cryptocurrencies. However, it was not introduced, and it is now expected that the government may take up this bill

in the Budget Session. If the government does not prohibit Indians from dealing in cryptocurrencies, we expect that the government could introduce a regressive tax regime for cryptocurrencies," he noted.

He said considering the size of the market, the amount involved, and the risk coupled with cryptocurrencies, certain changes may be brought in the taxation of cryptocurrencies like bringing them under the provisions of tax deducted at source (TDS) and tax collected at source (TCS) above a threshold limit which will help the government get the "footprints of the investors".

Mall owners likely to offer relief to tenants amid pandemic

Multiplex operators are again severely hit by restrictions

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

Industry body SCAI on Sunday said mall owners will stand by their tenants as they did in the last two waves and are likely to offer relief to retail stores, food outlets and multiplexes amid the fresh COVID pandemic wave.

Shopping Centres Association of India (SCAI) is an industry body, representing the owners of shopping malls and centres. SCAI director Abhishek Bansal said some of the retailers have started approaching the



property owners, raising their concerns over the impact on their business after the restrictions imposed by local authorities after a sudden surge in the pandemic cases.

This is the third time it is happening, and developers and shopping centres have stood with their tenants and retailers in the last two waves. They will again stand with their partners in this third wave also, so that everyone tide

over this situation, Bansal told PTI. Large retail stores, restaurants, pubs, cafes, multiplexes operating in malls and shopping centres are approaching property owners, seeking waiver and concession in the rentals for January.

However, Bansal, who is also Executive Director, Pacific Malls, said the owners would take some time to decide over the relief.

A final decision in this regard would be taken after the end of this month after assessing the impact, as the restrictions imposed by the state government are changing every week, he added.

Earlier, the restrictions were only on timing and weekend operations, but now they have completely closed in-dining.

Eight of top-10 firms add Rs 2.34 lakh cr in m-cap

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

Eight of the 10 most valued companies together added a whopping Rs 2,34,161.58 crore in market valuation last week, with RIL, Infosys and TCS emerging as the lead gainers.

The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex last week zoomed 1,478.38 points or 2.47 per cent. The market valuation of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) jumped Rs 69,503.71 crore to reach Rs 17,17,265.94 crore.

Infosys added Rs 48,385.63 crore, taking its valuation to Rs 8,10,927.25 crore. The market valuation of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) zoomed Rs

42,317.15 crore to Rs 14,68,245.97 crore.

HDFC's valuation surged Rs 21,125.41 crore to Rs 4,91,426.13 crore and that of ICICI Bank gained Rs 18,650.77 crore to reach Rs 5,69,511.37 crore.

The market capitalisation (m-cap) of State Bank of India (SBI) advanced by Rs 15,127.22 crore to Rs 4,53,593.38 crore and that of Bajaj Finance rallied by Rs 10,291.28 crore to Rs 4,72,686.80 crore.

Bharti Airtel's valuation jumped Rs 8,760.41 crore to stand at Rs 3,95,810.41 crore. In contrast, the valuation of Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) declined by Rs 12,217.88 crore to Rs 5,55,560.85 crore.

National startup day validates role of startups in growth

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

National Startup Day is a validation of the role of startups in the growth of the country's GDP and strengthening India's position at a global stage, and will encourage young talent to see entrepreneurship as a primary career option, according to industry experts.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that the country will celebrate January 16 as National Startup Day, as he termed startups the "backbone" of new India and the engine that will power the nation's economic growth in the run up to the 100th year of



Independence. "National Startup Day is a validation of the role of startups in the growth of country's GDP and strengthening India's position at a global stage. This initiative will not only make startups mainstream but also encourage young talent from seeing entrepreneurship as a primary career option," Varun Saxena, founder and CEO of short video platform Bolo Live, said. The acknowledgment is a big morale booster for entrepreneurs - the new

job creators of the country, he added.

ValPro Director Neha Khanna highlighted that the startup ecosystem has seen maturity over the last decade, and new age-ventures are contributing significantly to the economy in multiple ways.

The contribution of startups include by way of large infusion of FDI in an asset class outside of public markets, export of products and services by the country, larger base of retail investors borne out of employees with respectable salaries and wealth creation tools such as ESOPs and being a key consumption market in the global economy.

PV exports from India rise 46% in April-Dec

Maruti Suzuki leads segment

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

Passenger vehicle exports from India increased 46 per cent in the first nine months of the current fiscal year, with Maruti Suzuki India leading the segment with dispatches of around 1.68 lakh units, as per the latest data by SIAM. The total passenger vehicle (PV) exports stood at 4,24,037 units in April-December 2021-22 as compared with 2,91,170 units in the same period a year ago. Passenger car shipments saw 45 per cent growth at 2,75,728 units while utility vehicle exports rose 47 per cent at

1,46,688 units during the period under review, the data by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers showed. Export of vans nearly doubled to 1,621 units in April-December 2021-22 as compared with 877 units in the same period last fiscal year. Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) led the segment during the period, followed by Hyundai Motor India and Kia India at the second and third positions, respectively. MSI, the country's largest carmaker exported 1,67,964 PVs in the period under review, almost triple as compared with 59,821 units in the same period of the previous fiscal year. Besides, the company shipped out 1,958 Super Carry (LCV) units during the nine-month period.

'Kashmir looked like a set from The Beauty And The Beast'

Aahana Kumra recently treated her followers with some beautiful pictures of herself from her trip to Kashmir. The actress had went there for a 10-day trip to celebrate the holiday period and bring in the Christmas and New Year there. Aahana returned to the city on January 2, but has been unable to get out of the hangover of Kashmir since.

"I planned the trip because I wanted to be somewhere beautiful for the New Years. I had never gone to Kashmir before, so it was my first time there and it was absolutely gorgeous. I stayed in Srinagar Gulmarg and Pahalgam, and was completely blown away by the beauty of all these places. I also stayed on a houseboat for a while and it was quite enchanting," shares Aahana. The actress insists that she did everything that would have been expected from her as a first time tourist in Kashmir. "I took the gondola rides and did all these snow sports. I also befriended a lot of local young boys and girls who told me about some lesser-known activities and asked me to visit these some not-so renowned but beautiful places," she says. Aahana also got to see such a heavy snowfall for the very first time and as expressed in her pictures from the snow, it brought out the child within her. "It was snowing very heavily when I reached, and the next day when I woke up, we had three feet of snow there. It was something that I had never seen before and it was so gorgeous," she informs. The actress admits that it was quite a wonderful trip for her and it is quite difficult to pin point just a few memorable moments, as every moment was extraordinary for her. "I got to meet the 3 RR battalion where I met 70 jawans. I wasn't allowed to take pictures with them but it was really surreal meeting them and to be in the cantonment area. It was that day only when my mom's health got very serious and she had to be admitted to the hospital for Covid."



Delighted on 'Bade Achhe Lagte Hain 2' crossing threshold of 100 episodes

With Sony Entertainment Television's adored show 'Bade Achhe Lagte Hain 2' crossing the 100 episodes mark, the fandom of its on-screen couple Ram (Nakuul Mehta) and Priya (Disha Parmar) has also reached greater heights. From anticipating on what will happen in the next episode or talking about their favorites "ships", 'Bade Achhe Lagte Hain 2' has most definitely made a cozy place for itself in the hearts of the viewers.

Talking about how elated she is about the show crossing the hundred episodes mark, Disha Parmar said, "Feels like it was only yesterday when I was first approached to play Priya in the show and now it's been a hundred episodes already! The term 'time flies' is true when you're surrounded by such wonderful people who make work exciting every day! With every episode, we have strived to give something new to the audience. With time, our character arches have beautifully evolved. Priya has given me a new meaning in life. She has given me so much love from the audience and even from my family members. It's ab-



olutely unbelievable that we are a hundred episodes old already!" Nakuul Mehta also echoed the feelings of his co-star saying, "Its definitely a milestone and the

journey has been beautiful and exciting. Ram is a very special character and I have loved bringing him alive on-screen for the viewers. Through my travels in the last few weeks,

it's been overwhelming to receive the love I have been getting for the show be it London or Delhi. Grateful for the wonderful ensemble I get to jam with each day on set.



Heena Panchal, who is best known for her stints on 'Bigg Boss Marathi Season 2' and the Hindi reality TV show 'Mujhse Shaadi Karoge', is quite excited to feature in the video for Punjabi singer Mannat Noor's 'Touch ka Phone'. The song also stars Abram Puttan and Varun Soni.

"I'm really delighted to act in such a beautiful song," Heena said. "The song is a New Year treat to my followers and a response to their good wishes. I will also look for more of such opportunities in the year ahead. I hope it is full of good work and appreciation for me."

The actress has also worked in South Indian movies such as 'Yagavarayinum Naa Kaakka' and 'Malupu'. She is better-known of course for her item songs 'Balam Bambai' and 'Bevda Bevda Zalo Mi Tight'.

Confident that 'Touch Ka Phone' will get the desired number of eyeballs, Heena said: "The way people are appreciating the song is just amazing. I hope it sets a new record in the music industry. Shooting for the song was an amazing experience. I would love to work with the makers again."

Heena Panchal grooves to 'Touch Ka Phone' on music video

Shilpa Rao thanks Shankar Mahadevan for her musical journey

Singer Shilpa Rao, who is known for lending her voice to charbuster tracks like 'Javeda Zindagi', 'Khuda Jaane', 'Manmarziyaan' and 'Bulleya' among many others, recently completed 15 years in the music industry. She credits music composer Shankar Mahadevan of Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy for being by her side and guiding her through her journey.

"Shankar Mahadevan sir has helped me alot in my journey because he sat me down and said first you start recording



for jingles that will give you your next step. He was the one person that really helped me when I first came to Mumbai and gave me my first break alongside Mithoon and Naresh ji (Mithoon's Father) for 'Anwar'," says Shilpa.

"From then, everyone from Vishal-Shekhar, Pritam, Rehman Sir, I mean the names are endless and there are so many people who have had that faith in me and given me that stage to be myself behind the mic and I am really very grateful for everything. I am grateful for their friendship and hope to put in some good work. I would like to thank all my fans. Without them it wouldn't be possible." Recollecting her life in Jamshedpur, she says: "For 18 years of my life in Jamshedpur, I was a very quiet kid and it was like that I never existed and even in school I was pretty invisible. If I would be in there or not would never make a difference, but everything changed after I moved to Mumbai." Expressing her gratitude to the 'Maximum City' and its people, the songstress shares: "I'm really thankful to Mumbai for shaping me into the person I am today, because it didn't matter what I was, where I was from and the only thing that mattered the most was how well I did my job. This city changed the way I looked at things and how I used to look at myself. It helped me remove all forms of conditioning and just focus and put in a lot of hard work on your craft and persistence. I want to thank every person who helped me in this journey of 15 years and many more years to come."

For Tamannaah, dance is how she expresses herself

Tamannaah Bhatia, who has been garnering a lot of positive responses for her performance in the just-released special dance number 'Kodthe' from the Telugu sports drama 'Ghani', has said that more than art, dancing is a form of expression for her.

While sharing her excitement, the actress said: "For me, dancing is more than an art. It is a form of expression. I enjoyed the entire process of shooting Kodthe for Ghani because it has an upbeat and unique vibe to it. It gives a great commentary on the film." Summing up her experience of working on the track, she said: "I had an incredible time bringing the vision of choreographers Piyush and Shazia alive on screen. I am sure the dance number will compel the audience to groove."

'Ghani' is a boxing drama written and directed by Kiran Korrapati and produced by Renaissance Pictures and Allu Bobby Company. The film also stars

Varun Tej as the titular character alongside Saiee Manjrekar, Jagapathi Babu, Upendra, Suniel Shetty and Naveen Chandra.

Tamannaah will also collaborate with Varun Tej for 'F3'. In addition, the actress also has 'Plan A Plan B' and 'Yaar Dost' in Bollywood. Apart from that she has 'Bhola Shankar' and 'Gurthundha Seethakalam' in Telugu.



HOROSCOPE MONDAY JANUARY 17

Aquarius: Jan 21 - Feb 18

You will hit the bull's eye, today. From the smallest to the biggest, all of your plans will turn into reality. Don't get disheartened if there are some obstacles on your path; you are fully armed to face the challenges and come out triumphant. Get yourself in the top gear, you will surely succeed, says Ganesha.

Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

For those looking for a promotion at the work-place, now is the time to ask for it. Freelancers could find interesting projects falling into their laps. Businesses are likely to see a surge in profits. No conflicts in personal life are indicated. Overall, a progressive and pleasant day awaits, says Ganesha.

Gemini: May 22 - June 21

You know where you are headed, and will redouble your efforts to reach your goals today. You are full of energy and enthusiasm, which helps you to achieve all your targets. You will receive unexpected gains owing to your hard work. Bountiful success will be yours at the end of a hard day's labour, says Ganesha.

Cancer: June 22 - July 22

Sentimentalism will be hinder your path of success. So, says Ganesha, give up too much sentimentalism. It can be quite a hazard in the future. You will win over people with the force of speech and polite approach.

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 23

Ganesha says that today you will get worried over petty matters and be tense. To get mental peace keep yourself occupied with religious or spiritual activity. Along with that if you go to some religious place you will gain mental peace, which will stay with you for a long time.

Scorpio: Oct 24 - Nov 22

You may be in a mood to build castles in the air today, says Ganesha. You may be caught up in a whirlpool of thoughts and nostalgia. However, you will soon realise that the time once gone, never comes back and so, you make up for the lost time by beginning the new chapter of your life from today itself.

Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 20

A favourable day as any can be. You are happy and content with what you have, and you've planned and are working towards what you want. A romantic date may prove interesting or throw up a controversy - decide where you want to take it.

Leo: July 23 - Aug 23

You will be able to influence people with your co-operative and accommodating attitude today. You will have discussions on various topics with people who come into contact with you. You will also come into contact with people who share the same mental wavelength as you do, says Ganesha.

Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 20

You are caught in a whirlpool of emotions, predicts Ganesha. You may come across many ups and downs today. However, nothing seems to deter you from your determination and dedication towards work.

Virgo: Aug 24 - Sept 22

There will be dirt on your shoulder today, so dust it off, says Ganesha, because every time you fall you will get up stronger than before. Your logic and analytical skills will help you find the necessary precision to accomplish tasks at work. You may spend the evening with a close friend or your beloved, engrossed in a stimulating conversation.

Taurus: Apr 21 - May 21

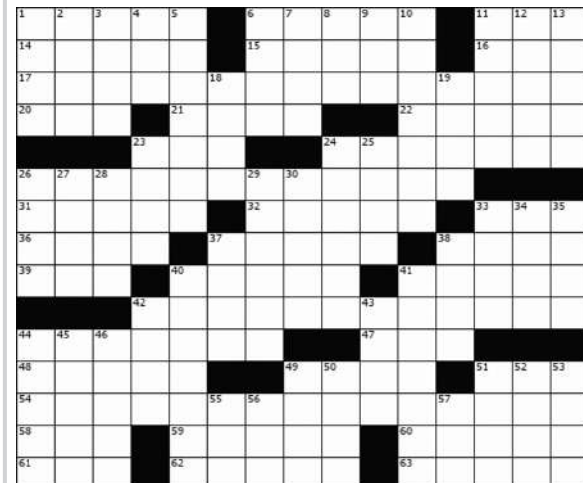
You can expect a pleasant, comfortable day at the office, today, so says Ganesha. You will be carrying out your work cheerfully and effortlessly. You could, later in the evening, have a strong urge to go out for dinner with your family and friends. If that does happen, you're certain to go for an after dinner movie, or an ice cream treat.

TAURUS

1. Frigid and Torrid, e.g.
6. B.B. King's music
11. Summer cooler
14. Kind of acid
15. Theater divider
16. Ryan of 'City of Angels'
17. Body that sits in New York
20. ___-cone (icy treat)
21. Driver with a handle
22. Spring bloomer

CROSSWORD

189



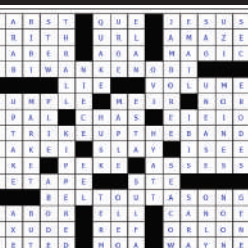
ACROSS

1. Frigid and Torrid, e.g.
6. B.B. King's music
11. Summer cooler
14. Kind of acid
15. Theater divider
16. Ryan of 'City of Angels'
17. Body that sits in New York
20. ___-cone (icy treat)
21. Driver with a handle
22. Spring bloomer
23. Lawyers charge
24. Most in need of liniment
26. Bonds, e.g.
31. Key material
32. Track events
33. Boar's beloved
36. Engaged in litigation
37. 'Around the World in 80 Days' author
38. Like an inaugural ball
39. Farm enclosure
40. Irritating to the nose
41. Buenos ___, Argentina

DOWN

1. Turns sharply
2. Straw in the wind
3. Muchacho
4. Ending of some hydrocarbons
5. Harry Potter's thing
6. Wrapped hay
7. Teller of stories
8. Letters on an American flattop
9. Upraised railroads
10. Is very angry
11. Walk leisurely
12. Sandwich shops
13. Pyramid site
18. Biblical brother
19. 'The Ghost and Mrs. ___'
23. Taken with (with 'of')
24. Plan for a meeting
25. Quaintly attractive
26. Disorderly accumulation
27. Border on
28. Young kangaroo
29. Come to light
30. Eagle's nest
33. Delhi wrap
34. Some roars of approval
35. Laundry
37. TV attachments
38. Special ability
40. Boom box attachments
41. Criticizes harshly
42. Pt. of EMS
43. Zilch
44. More than enough
45. Took a chance
46. Invalidates
49. Nimble
50. Mime finds
51. Wedding cake feature
52. Org. co-founded by Helen Keller
53. Word with Corn or Bible
55. Two-year-old
56. Big Band, for one
57. Blaster's need

SOLUTION 188



Australia beats England by 146 runs, completes 4-0 Ashes series

Hobart, Jan 16:

Australia completed a dominant 4-0 Ashes series victory over England on Sunday by winning the fifth day-night Test by 146 runs with two days to spare.

England, set a target of 271 for victory, crashed to 124 all out in the last session on the third day at Hobart, losing 10 wickets for 56 after Zak Crawley (36) and Rory Burns (26) combined in the best opening stand of the series by putting on 68 runs.

Fast bowlers Scott Boland (3-18) and Cameron Green (3-21) made an impact in their first Ashes series by sharing six wickets on a lively greenish wicket as England crumbled against pace for the second time in the match after being dismissed for 188 in the first innings in reply to Australia's score of 303.

Australia skipper Pat Cummins also had an im-



perfect in his second spell to finish with 3-42 on an eventful day that saw 17 wickets tumble for the second successive day in the game. Cummins, who grabbed the last two wickets off three balls, led from the front in his first series as Australia captain and grabbed 21 wickets.

"It's pretty crazy, even as a professional cricketer

these are the series you have in your diary a couple of years out," said Cummins.

"Really feels like we are building to something big. To have someone like Cameron Green in his second year to grow as a batter and bowler as well as some of the younger players can't wait to show our wares overseas, we

really judge ourselves in all conditions."

Earlier, Australia was bowled out for 155 just after the dinner break for an overall lead of 270 runs after it resumed from an overnight 37-3.

England paceman Mark Wood snared 6-37, utilizing short-ball tactics against the Australians to perfec-

tion. Alex Carey top-scored for Australia with 49 after getting two re-prieves.

"We've been outplayed in all areas and credit to Australia," said England captain Joe Root, who remained the tourists' lone fighter with 322 runs, behind only Travis Head (357) and Marnus Labuschagne (335) who led the home side.

"We've played good cricket in parts, just not been able to structure a whole game together it's pretty obvious we need to be putting more runs on the board (and) too often we've not given our bowlers enough to work."

Australia missed an early opportunity when Burns could have been out lbw in Mitchell Starc's second over, but Cummins chose not to go for a television referral as the replays suggested the ball crashing onto the top of the stumps.

Gavaskar wants Rishabh Pant to succeed Kohli as Test skipper

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

The legendary Sunil Gavaskar wants Rishabh Pant to succeed Virat Kohli as the next India Test captain as he believes a sense of responsibility will make the glovesman a better cricketer in all forms of the game.

Kohli surprised the cricket fraternity by quitting Test captaincy on Saturday evening, a day after losing the Test series in South Africa 1-2 to draw the curtains on a successful seven-year reign.

Gavaskar said he preferred Pant as he is an automatic choice for selectors across all formats of the game.

"It's going to be quite a debate as far as the selection committee is concerned as to who should be taking Indian cricket forward. First of all, it should be someone who is an automatic pick across all formats of the game. Once that happens, it will be a lot easier," Gavaskar told India Today.



"If you ask me, I am still staying, I would look at Rishabh Pant as next India captain."

"For one reason only, just like Rohit Sharma was given the captaincy of Mumbai Indians when Ricky Ponting stepped down, look at the change in his batting after that. Suddenly the responsibility of being captain made him convert those beautiful cameos of 30s, 40s and 50s into hundreds, 150s and 200s."

"I think that sense of responsibility given to Rishabh Pant will help him score many more of that wonderful hundred he scored at Newlands," he added.

Further explaining the rationale behind his pick,

Gavaskar cited the example of Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi, who achieved great success after taking over the captaincy at a very young age.

"Yes, I am saying that. Tiger Pataudi was captain at the age of 21 under adverse circumstances when Nari Contractor was injured. Look what he did after that. He took to captaincy like duck to water."

"I think what we have seen with Rishabh Pant as the captain of Delhi Capitals in the IPL, I do believe he has the capability of taking Indian cricket forward and making it a very exciting team to watch," he said.

Limited-overs skipper Rohit Sharma has emerged as the front-runner to take over Test captaincy from Kohli although he was not part of the South Africa series due to an injury. Rohit was recently made Test vice-captain, replacing Ajinkya Rahane.

In Rohit's absence, KL Rahul was Kohli's deputy in South Africa.

Djokovic leaving Australia after losing deportation appeal

Melbourne, Jan 16:

Novak Djokovic left Australia on Sunday evening after losing his final bid to avoid deportation and play in the Australian Open despite being unvaccinated for COVID-19. A court earlier unanimously dismissed the No 1-ranked tennis player's challenge to cancel his visa.

Djokovic, a 34-year-old from Serbia, said he was "extremely disappointed" by the ruling but respected it. Australian media reported Djokovic was seen upon arrival at Melbourne's airport. He left on an Emirates flight to Dubai, the same United Arab Emirates city he flew to Australia from.

He has won a record nine Australian Open titles, including three in a row, but this time won't even get the chance to try.

"I respect the Court's ruling and I will cooperate



Serbia's president urges Djokovic to come home

Belgrade: Serbia's president called on Novak Djokovic to return to his native country hours after the top-ranked tennis player lost his court battle to play at the Australian Open on Sunday and was deported. Djokovic's final destination was not immediately clear. He left the country after saying he was "disappointed" with losing his appeal against deportation and adding that he needs "some time to rest and to recuperate" after the 11-day saga.

with the relevant authorities in relation to my departure from the country," he said in a statement.

"Djokovic said he was 'uncomfortable that the focus had been on him

since his visa was first cancelled on arrival at Melbourne's airport on January 6.

"I hope that we can all now focus on the game and tournament I love."

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty on Sunday became the first team from country to win the Yonex-Sunrise India Open after toppling three-time world champions Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan, here.

The world number 10 Indian pair, which had won its first Super 500 tournament in Thailand in 2019, upset the top seeded Indonesian pair 21-16 26-24 in 43 minutes to make a rampaging start to the new season.

Coming into the match with a 1-3 head-to-head record, Satwik and Chirag dished out a brave effort as they staged off a fightback to reign supreme in the final.

From almost missing the tournament following a false COVID positive result to winning the title, it turned out to be an incredible start to 2022 for the



Indian pair, which accumulated valuable ranking points ahead of a busy season, which comprises some big-ticket events such as the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games.

The Indian pair started on a positive note and even through the

Indonesian combination clawed back, Satwik and Chirag ensured they are two points ahead at the first interval.

The Indians tried to engage their rivals in rallies and led 18-13 but the Indonesians reduced the deficit to 16-18 before Satwik and Chirag pre-

ailed in the opening game.

Fast-paced but short rallies were the norm in the second game as well as Ahsan and Satiawan grabbed a three-point lead at 9-6 early in the second game.

But the Indian pair again ensured they have the advantage at the break, grabbing a slender 11-10 lead. Sawtik and Chirag maintained the intensity in the rallies after the break to lead 15-13.

The world number two again drew parity at 17-17 but Satwik and Chirag moved to 19-17 when Ahsan erred at net. But Chirag went long next as it was 19-19. Indonesian managed to move to a game point with a tap by Ahsan.

What followed next was frequent exchange of points as both India and Indonesia earned and squandered their advantage positions in equal measure.

After a fierce battle, it was the Indian pair who showed better nerves to emerge victorious with the Indonesia squandering five game points.

Satwik and Chirag had won the Thailand Open Super 500 title in 2019, besides reaching the finals at French Open Super 750 the same year.

The duo also claimed the silver medal at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, besides winning the Hyderabad Open Super 100 and finishing runners-up at Syed Modi International in 2018.

Satwik and Chirag also played a crucial role in India earning the historic mixed team gold medal in the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

The Indian pair also had qualified for the Tokyo Olympics last year but couldn't cross the group stage despite winning two out of three games.

Thank you for supporting Test cricket so passionately: Warne to Kohli

Melbourne, Jan 16 (PTI):

Spin legend Shane Warne has thanked star batter Virat Kohli for "passionately supporting" Test cricket, a day after he stepped down as skipper of the Indian Test team.

Kohli on Saturday ended his seven-year reign as India's most successful Test captain, the move coming a day after an unexpected 1-2 series loss to South Africa. Under Kohli,



India won 40 out of 68 Tests, a record which made him one of the most successful Test captains in world cricket.

"Congrats @imVkohli on what you and your

team has achieved under your leadership and thank you for supporting test cricket so passionately and insuring that it stays the number 1 form of the game," Warne tweeted.

Kohli has been the most successful Test captain India has ever produced. After taking over the reins from Mahendra Singh Dhoni, he led India in 68 Test matches and secured 40 victories at a win percentage of 58.82.

As Test captain, he registered his first series win against Sri Lanka in 2015, a victory that India registered in the Emerald Island after 22 years.

Last year, Warne was all praise for Kohli after his team beat England by 157 runs in the fourth Test at The Oval to take an unassailable 2-1 lead in the five-match series.

Warne had then called Kohli the biggest superstar in world cricket.

Your legacy as captain will stand for benchmarks you set: Ashwin

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

"Your legacy as a captain will stand for the kind of benchmarks you have set," veteran spinner R Ashwin summarised Virat Kohli's spectacular Test captaincy stint as other members of the Indian cricket team also hailed the integrity and the vision of the talismanic leader.

Kohli, who took over from MS Dhoni midway



through the Australian tour back in 2014-15, on Saturday announced his decision to quit Test captaincy.

The 33-year-old leaves as the most successful

India captain in Test cricket with 40 wins from 68 matches with the highlight being the wins in Australia and England last year.

It was under Kohli that team India became a force to reckon with in all conditions and won overseas.

"Cricket captains will always be spoken about with respect to their records and the kind of triumphs they managed, but your legacy as a cap-

tain will stand for the kind of benchmarks you have set. There will be people who will talk about wins in Australia, England, SI etc etc," Ashwin tweeted.

"Wins are just a result and the seeds are always sown well before the harvest! The seeds you managed to sow is the kind of standard you set for yourself and hence set the expectations straight with the rest of us."

City opens up 13-point lead in EPL, Coutinho scores on debut

London, Jan 16:

For Pep Guardiola, the biggest challenge now will be convincing his Manchester City players the English Premier League title race is not over.

My job is to take it out from the brain and heads of my players, Guardiola said after City beat nearest rival Chelsea 1-0 on Saturday. To try not to believe what other people are going to say.

With City holding a 13-point lead, it's hardly surprising that people have already basically handed Guardiola's relentless team a sixth title in 11 seasons. After all, the defending champions are on a 12-match winning run in the

league after Kevin De Bruyne's brilliant curling strike in the 70th minute sealed victory at Etihad Stadium. City has lost two games all season it would have to lose at least three of its remaining 16 matches to drop out of first place and already has played all of the top teams away from home. Liverpool, in third place 14 points behind having played two games fewer, looks to be the only team realistically capable of stopping City. Even that is improbable, given City's form and pedigree. Chelsea was well beaten even if Thomas Tuchel's team didn't give up many chances against City, which dominated possession and kept the visitors penned in their own



half for much of the match. We won't give up, Tuchel said, "but if City keep on winning every game, nobody can catch them. Liverpool will look to trim the gap to City by beating Brentford at home on Sunday.

COUTINHO THWARTS UNITED
Philippe Coutinho marked his debut for Aston Villa with a late equalizer to complete a dramatic comeback in a 2-2 draw against Manchester United, for



whom Bruno Fernandes scored twice to put the visitors 2-0 ahead.

Coutinho, on loan from Barcelona, was involved in Jacob Ramsey's goal in the 77th before tapping home from inside the six-yard box five minutes later at a

raucous Villa Park. With Cristiano Ronaldo still missing because of a hip injury, Fernandes took center stage for seventh-placed United like last season before his Portugal teammates arrived. The playmaker opened the

scoring with a sixth-minute long-range strike that squirmed through the arms of goalkeeper Emi Martinez, and added a stunning second by crashing a shot in off the crossbar in the 67th.

It was the teams' second meeting in a week, after an FA Cup match on Monday won by United.

NORWICH OFF BOTTOM

Norwich is off the bottom of the league. Everton is plunging toward it.

A 2-1 home win over Everton lifted Norwich to 18th place and dragged the visitors into the relegation picture, while piling more pressure on their manager Rafa Benitez in the process. Everton supporters' frustrations with Benitez ap-

pear to be boiling over, with one fan seen running onto the field in the first half at Carrow Road and making his way toward the Spaniard before getting stopped by stewards.

There were calls for Benitez to leave the club before the game, with banners held aloft, and then Norwich scored two goals in quick succession an own goal from Michael Keane and Adam Idah's close-range strike to leave Everton reeling.

Richarlison pulled one back for the visitors shortly after coming on with an overhead kick, but Everton remains without a league win since the start of December and is 15th, six points above relegation zone.

SOCIAL DISTANCING NORMS FLOUTED



People flout social distancing norms as they visit a wholesale vegetable market on a cold winter morning, in Gurugram, Sunday.

'BJP imported workers to spread rumours, hatred'

Lucknow, Jan 16 (PTI):

Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday accused the BJP of importing workers from Gujarat to train its cadres in poll-bound Uttar Pradesh in spreading "hatred and rumours".

He asked the Election Commission to take cognisance of the issue and send them back, failing which, he said elections may not remain impartial. "None of our workers are from other states. I will ask my journalist friend to give me the list of people that have come from Gujarat. I will write to the Election Commission to send back also those who have arrived here from Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and

Chhattisgarh," he said.

Yadav said photos that are doing rounds on the social media convey that BJP workers from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state had arrived in Uttar Pradesh to spread "rumours, conspiracies, lies and hatred, besides distributing money".

The SP chief addressed journalists at the party office after inducting former Uttar Pradesh cabinet minister Dara Singh Chauhan and Apna Dal (Sonela) MLA RK Verma into the party.

Responding to Anurag Thakur's jibe that SP leaders were either "in jail or out on bail", Yadav asked journalists to look into the Union minister's records in various ministries. Welcoming former



Akhilesh Yadav

Kanpur Police Commissioner Asim Arun into the BJP fold, Thakur had on Sunday said those indulging in riots join the SP and those who crack the whip on rioters join the BJP.

Commenting on the former IPS officer, Yadav said he will move the Election

Commission demanding that those officials, who had been discharging duties with Asim Arun, be kept away from poll duties or else they too would "double up as BJP workers".

"I am hopeful that the Election Commission will act on such officials. If does not, it will raise questions on the Election Commission's sanctity," Yadav said.

Reacting to Yadav's comments, Uttar Pradesh BJP spokesperson Rakesh Tripathi told PTI, "Akhilesh Yadav heads a state party, and not a national party. He is afraid of the BJP and has been making baseless remarks... All these show that he is trying to establish reasons for his party's electoral loss."

NATIONAL START-UP DAY

Lack of pair of bullocks spurs Maha man to make small tractor

Aurangabad, Jan 16 (PTI):

A man in Maharashtra's Beed district has become a good example of the ingenuity that is powering start-ups in the country by building an 18 horsepower tractor to tide over the need for a pair of bullocks to help with farming.

Speaking to PTI on National Start-up Day, Namdev Anerav (36) of Pimpalner, some 160 kilometres from here, said the idea of a tractor with a width of just 1.5 feet and length of 5 feet came to him in 2008 after the need for a pair of bullocks was stalling farming on his

ancestral plot. "Big tractors cannot perform optimally on small plots. To overcome this limitation, I created this small tractor, which runs on petrol and diesel. After a long process of trial and error, I used my welding skills to build the first prototype in 2011-12. The final product can plough, remove grass, break clods of soil," he said.

"I need to deliver 40 such tractors in the next four months, for which I have employed seven people. I plan to start a full scale facility in Pimpalner to provide employment. I started with

Rs 1.10 lakh of my own and 28 investors put in Rs 8 lakh. The investment is worth Rs 1.10 crore now," he said.

The manufacturing unit had to be shifted from Pimpalner to Shendra in Aurangabad due to electricity supply issues, he said, adding that his product got patented in July last year.

Namdev's mentor and Marathwada Accelerator for Growth and Incubation Council (MAGIC) director Ashish Garde said MAGIC is India's first regional industrial association led incubator, which has 28 ideas under mentoring.

Than Singh's 'pathshala' features in first episode

Of Delhi Police's podcast

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

The story of a constable, who started his own school for slum children called "Than Singh ki Pathshala", was among the first ones to be featured on Delhi Police's podcast, "Kissa Khaki Ka", which was aired digitally on Sunday.

The weekly podcast will feature a series of unheard stories related to crime, investigation and humanity in an effort to connect with the masses and celebrate the extraordinary services rendered by Delhi Police.

Delhi Police is the first police force in the country to have its own pod-

cast. The personnel chosen to be featured during the podcast have displayed remarkable sincerity towards their duties and at the same time, carried out social and humanitarian services voluntarily. Their stories will be narrated by Vartika Nanda, a media educator and prison reformer.

According to the police, Than Singh was chosen for the first episode to highlight the difficult times he has braved and that he is still giving something back to the society.

Delhi Police has always strived to keep up with the policing benchmarks of the day, Deputy Commissioner of Police

(Special Branch) Suman Nalwa said, adding that communication is no longer about sharing information one way and it needs to be a conversation, an engagement.

"Through social media, we want to reach out to the masses, hear from them, understand what more could be done to share a mutual trust between us and the citizens. We are communicating in the language and style of respectful bonding. This way, we want to enhance last-mile policing," she said.

Detailing the story of Singh, Nanda talked about his daily routine post the duty hours.

"It was 5 pm. Than Singh was at the Red

Fort chowki. His duty hours were about to end but instead of going home, he would first head to his pathshala, where many children would be eagerly awaiting his arrival," the narrator said.

The children lovingly call it "Than Singh Ki Pathshala", which functions out of a small temple near the Red Fort.

Singh lived in a "jhuggi" (slum cluster) with his parents and used to go for ironing clothes with them. But he always wanted to study and get a good job. He also dreamt of teaching poor kids.

His dreams came true when he became a constable in Delhi Police.

In 2016, he started his

school with four children. Now, the school has 60 students.

Singh gives them pens and books and tries his best to fulfil their demands.

Due to the lockdowns clamped to curb the spread of COVID-19, many of the children left for their villages, but Singh continued with his "pathshala" with those who were in Delhi and during the troubled times of the pandemic, it was a source of joy for the kids.

Singh also tries to ensure that the children stay away from the world of crime. "Kissa Khaki Ka" will continue to feature such exceptional stories every week.

Alliance with BJP final: Sanjay Nishad

Nishad party will contest 15 seats in UP

Lucknow, Jan 16 (PTI):

Nishad party president Sanjay Nishad on Sunday said they will contest in 15 assembly constituencies in Uttar Pradesh as part of an alliance with the BJP, but the seats are yet to be finalised. Nishad said he will meet senior BJP leaders, including Amit Shah, in Delhi on Monday to finalise the constituencies where the party will field its candidates. "We have got 15 seats (out of 403 seats) to contest in alliance with the BJP. The seats are almost final. Most of the seats are in 'Purvanchal' (East UP) and some are in 'Paschimanchal' (West)."

"There are some seats which we want to change due to changing equations. We are focusing not only on seat but 'jeet' (victory),"

Nishad told PTI when asked about his proposed meeting with Union Home Minister Shah. The Nirbal Indian S h o s h i t Hamara Aam Dal, or Nishad party, was formed in 2016 and its leaders claim to enjoy support of the Nishad community, which is one of the Other Backward Classes (OBC).

Nishad said his party has built cadre base all over the state and has substantial influence in Gorakhpur, Ballia, Sant Kabir Nagar, Ambedkar Nagar, Jaunpur, Bhadohi, Sultanpur, Faizabad, Chitrakoot, Jhansi, Banda, Hamipur and Etawah dis-



Sanjay Nishad

tricts, among others. The party fielded 100 candidates in the last assembly election in 2017 in alliance with the Peace Party of India, Apna Dal and the Jan Adhikar Party, but could win just one seat - Gyanpur in Bhadohi district. Nishad, now a member of the Legislative Council, had contested the last assembly election from Gorakhpur Rural and came third.

In the 2018 Lok Sabha by-election, Sanjay Nishad's son Praveen Kumar Nishad was a Samajwadi Party candidate and wrested the Gorakhpur constituency

from the BJP which had been winning the seat since 1989. Praveen Kumar Nishad is now a BJP MP from Sant Kabir Nagar. The Nishad community is the second largest demographic group in Gorakhpur, the home turf of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Asked about the restrictions imposed by the Election Commission on physical rallies due to the coronavirus pandemic and how his party will deal with it, Sanjay Nishad said, "We have associated youth workers who extensively use social media and digital offices of the party is functional in 70 districts (out of total 75). We are active on social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp."

LOCKDOWN IMPACT



Deserted roads during full lockdown imposed by Tamil Nadu government to curb the spread of COVID-19, at T. Nagar in Chennai, Sunday.

'Over 1.47 lakh children lost their parents due to COVID and other reasons'

Since April 2020

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has informed the Supreme Court that a total of 1,47,492 children since April 1, 2020, have lost either their mother or father or both parents due to COVID-19 and other reasons.

Giving the details in a suo motu matter on children in need of care and protection due to loss of parents during the COVID-19 pandemic, the NCPCR said its figures are based on data uploaded by states and Union Territories on its

'Baal Swaraj Portal-COVID care' up to January 11. That it is most humbly reiterated that the data of children uploaded on the 'Baal Swaraj Portal-COVID care' by the States/UTs comprises of both categories of children, wherein the child has lost both or either of the parent to COVID-19 disease or otherwise from April 2020 onwards, the affidavit filed through advocate Swarupama Chaturvedi said. The Commission said the data uploaded up to January 11 showed the status of children in need of care and protection included orphans (10,094), lost either parent (1,36,910) and abandoned (488) taking the total

to 1,47,492. In the gender-wise break-up, the commission said, out of the 1,47,492 children, there are 76,508 boys, 70,980 girls and four transgender.

It said that the maximum number of children are between the age group of eight to 13 years (59,010), followed by children in the age group of 14 to 15 years (22,763) and age group of 16 to 18 years (22,626) and four to seven years (26,080). The Commission also gave the current status of shelter of children and said that maximum of the children are with their single parent - 1,25,205, while 11,272 children are with family members, followed by 8,450 with guardians.

'Pak mercenaries tricking J&K youth into terrorism'

Srinagar, Jan 16 (PTI):

Pakistani mercenaries operating in Jammu and Kashmir are tricking the youth into terrorism and using them as "terror mules" who can even be eliminated if they plan to shun the path of violence, senior security officials said on Sunday.

Referring to an encounter in Budgam earlier this month and the call details of 24-year-old Wasim Qadir Mir, a resident of Shahzadpora, the officials said he was the latest victim of the despotic behaviour of the Pakistani terrorists who eliminated him during a gunfight with security forces in village Zoiu in the central Kashmir district on January 6.

Mir along with his two Pakistani accomplices

were trapped in a cordon-and-search operation, leading to a fierce gunfight, they said, adding by dawn, it was common news that the security forces had eliminated yet another group of terrorists in an encounter but what was uncommon was the way the series of events unfolded during the encounter the preceding night.

"During the encounter Mir wanted to put down his arms probably with an aim to come out and surrender to the security forces but was forced by the two Pakistani terrorists to keep firing back."

"Details that emerged later including the post-mortem report further confirmed that Mir was actually killed by members of his own group, as a result of their failed attempts to re-

sist him from surrendering," a senior official involved in the gunfight said. Mir was a school dropout who initially worked as an Over Ground Worker and subsequently was recruited into the terror folds in December 2020 by JeM commander Saifulla alias "Lambu Bhai", a Pakistani terrorist.

Even though Mir's stint as an active terrorist was short, he had a long list of acts of terror attributed to him, including the Zewan attack in which three police personnel were killed and 11 others were injured on December 13 last year, the officials said.

They said it was probably his involvement in a long list of terror-related incidents that prevented him from re-joining the mainstream and eventually

when he was given an opportunity by the security forces to save his own life, he did not stand a chance at the hands of the very companions for whom he was working as the "terror mule".

He said as it would have exposed the facade of the so-called local freedom movement and also shown the great human tragedy that the valley has been subjected to for the last three decades by Pakistan-based terror groups.

"As far as Kashmir is concerned, Pakistan's modus operandi continues to remain the same over the years - infiltrate Pakistani terrorists into the valley in numbers, sizable enough to create and operate cellular groups of 3-4 terrorists, comprising at least one local boy," he said.

The official said Pakistan's strategic aim remains to mislead the global community and portray terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir as the result of a local uprising and an insurgent movement led by the local youth. They do it by creation of pseudo terror groups, namely Kashmir Tigers and The Resistance Front (TRF), which are only shadow outfits of banned terror groups like Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashker-e-Taiba respectively.

The shadow groups were created by ISI coupled with the tactical aim of ensuring that these local Kashmiri recruits provide the much-needed logistical support to the foreign terrorists and act as a conduit to keep terrorism in the valley alive.

BRIEF

GOOD MORNING MUMBAI



Fishermen row their boat in the Arabian Sea in the backdrop of a LED advertisement board on a vessel, in Mumbai, Sunday.

Wall collapse

Budaun: Two people were killed and three others injured here on Sunday after a wall of a house collapsed on them when they were sitting near a bonfire, police said. The incident took place in Ibrahimpur Gadh village in Sahsawan area when people had gathered at the residence of one Naresh Pal (55) to mourn the death of his granddaughter, they said.

Judicial custody

Dehradun: A Haridwar court on Sunday sent Yati Narsinghanand, organiser of the controversial Dharma Sansad in Haridwar, to 14-day judicial custody. He has been booked under Sections 295 (A) and 509 of the Indian Penal Code and sent to Roshnabad Jail, Haridwar police station SHO Rakinder Singh Kathait said.

Major fire

Hyderabad: A massive fire broke out at the heritage Secunderabad Club building here in the early hours of Sunday damaging most parts of the structure, police said. However, there were no casualties, they said. A police patrol team noticed the blaze at around 3.15 AM and alerted the Fire department and seven fire engines including one from the Army were rushed to the spot and flames were extinguished by 6 AM, a police official told PTI.

Suicide

Jaipur: A 31-year old woman allegedly hanged herself to death over torture by her husband and in-laws in Ajmer, police said on Sunday. The incident took place Saturday night, they said. According to a suicide note left behind by the woman, she was harassed by her husband, who is living in Germany, and his parents staying in Ajmer's Kishangarh area. The victim, Anuradha, got married to Aniruddha three years ago.

Booked

Fatehpur: A case has been registered against three persons, including a village head, after four cows were found dead at a cowshed run by the state government in this Uttar Pradesh district, officials said on Sunday. The case was registered on Saturday in connection with the deaths of the cows at the Nandi Gaushala in Karsuma village under Bahua development block of the district. Chief Development Officer Satyaprakash on Sunday said the case was registered against village head Kalavati, panchayat secretary Lalit Gautam and supervisor Suresh Kumar.

Weather
High 24 Low 12

ONE YR OF COVID VACCINATION

'70% adults fully vaccinated'

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

Seventy per cent of India's adults have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 while 93 per cent received the first jab, said Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya while launching a postage stamp on indigenously developed vaccine Covaxin to mark one year of the inoculation drive.

This is a proud moment for Indians and the entire world is amazed by the country's Covid inoculation drive, he said at the commemorative postage stamp release event.

Addressing the programme through a video link, Mandaviya said some people tried to sow confusion over the vaccination drive but Prime Minister Narendra Modi was determined and he kept encouraging and motivating the scientists and companies.

"India has been able to achieve the milestone of administering over 156 crore doses despite such a huge population and diversity," he said. The government and the private sector worked in tandem on vaccine research and in nine months a Covid vaccine was indigenously developed while the process of granting authorisations to jabs was also simplified,



ing Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji's dream of self-reliant India," Mandaviya said. He also congratulated all scientists on the occasion. "Our prime minister encouraged scientists to carry out research and develop an indigenous Covid vaccine and held discussions with vaccine manufacturing companies and offered them support.

"There was no dearth of manpower or brainpower. What was needed was the ability to identify the potential in the country for coming up with vaccines," he said. The government and the private sector worked in tandem on vaccine research and in nine months a Covid vaccine was indigenously developed while the process of granting authorisations to jabs was also simplified,

The countrywide vaccination drive was rolled out on January 16 with health-care workers getting inoculated in the first phase. Vaccination of frontline workers started from February 2.

The next phase of the COVID-19 vaccination commenced from March 1 for people over 60 years of age and those aged 45 and above with specified co-morbid conditions.

The minister said. "A certain section of people attempted to sow confusion over the vaccination drive but the prime minister was determined and he kept on encouraging and motivating the scientists and companies. Thus, the vaccine manufacturing and the inoculation drive progressed at a steady pace," the minister stated.

"The countrywide vaccination drive was rolled out on January 16 with health-care workers getting inoculated in the first phase. Vaccination of frontline workers started from February 2.

The next phase of the COVID-19 vaccination commenced from March 1 for people over 60 years of age and those aged 45 and above with specified co-morbid conditions.

Lakshya beats world champion Loh



New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

India's Lakshya Sen secured his maiden Super 500 title by winning the Yonex-Sunrise India Open with a stunning straight-game victory over reigning world champion Loh Kean Yew of Singapore in the men's singles final here on Sunday. The 20-year-old Sen, who had claimed his maiden world championships medal with a bronze in Spain last month, produced a fine performance to outshine the fifth seeded shuttler 24-22 21-17 in the summit clash that lasted 54 minutes. In a repeat of last year's Dutch Open final, the Indian ensured that he had the last laugh this time around.

'Jabs saving lives, livelihoods'

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

Lauding India's COVID-19 vaccination drive as it completes a year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said it has added great strength to the fight against the pandemic and has resulted in saving lives and protecting livelihoods.

When the pandemic first struck, not much was known about the virus. However, our scientists and innovators immersed themselves in developing vaccines, he noted.

India feels proud that our nation has been able to contribute to fighting the pandemic through vaccines, Modi tweeted.

"I salute each and every individual who is associated with the vaccination drive," he said, adding that the role of our doctors, nurses and healthcare workers is exceptional. "When we see glimpses of



people being vaccinated in remote areas, or our health-care workers taking the vaccines there, our hearts and minds are filled with pride," he said.

The prime minister asserted that India's approach to fighting the pandemic will always remain science based. Health infrastructure is also being augmented to ensure that fellow citizens get proper care, he said, asking people to keep following all COVID-19 related protocols.

MAMATA WRITES TO MODI

'Shocked on Bengal's tableau exclusion from R-Day parade'

Kolkata, Jan 16 (PTI):

Expressing shock over the Centre's decision to exclude West Bengal's tableau, which was set to highlight contributions of freedom fighters, from the upcoming Republic Day Parade in Delhi, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging him to reconsider the decision as people of the state would be "pained" by the move.

Banerjee also said that no reason was cited for the tableau's rejection. "I have been profoundly shocked and hurt by the decision of the Government of India to abruptly exclude the proposed tableau of the Government of West

Bengal from the ensuing Republic Day Parade. It is even more baffling for us that the tableau was rejected without assigning any reasons or justifications," Banerjee said in a two-page letter to Modi. The proposed tableau was set to commemorate the contributions of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and his INA on his 125th birth anniversary year, the CM said. "I may like to inform you that all the people of West Bengal are deeply pained by this attitude of the central government. It is shocking to find that the contribution of its valiant freedom fighters finds no place in the nation's ceremony to celebrate the occasion of the Republic Day on the 75th year of our Independence.

WORLD BANK EDUCATION DIRECTOR

'No justification now for keeping schools closed in view of COVID-19'

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

There is no justification now for keeping schools closed in view of the pandemic and even if there are new waves, closing schools should be the last resort, according to the World Bank's Global Education Director Jaime Saavedra.

Saavedra, whose team has been tracking the impact of COVID-19 on the education sector, says there is no evidence that reopening schools has caused a surge in coronavirus cases and that schools are not a "safe place".

He also asserted that it does not make sense from public-policy perspective to wait till children are vaccinated as there is "no science" behind it.



"There is no relation between opening schools and spread of coronavirus. There is no evidence linking the two and there is no justification now to keep the schools closed. Even if there are new waves of COVID-19, closing schools should be the last resort," Saavedra told PTI in an interview from Washington.

"It does not make sense to keep restaurants, bars

and shopping malls open and keep schools closed. There is no excuse," he added.

According to various simulations by the World Bank, health risks for children if schools are opened are low and the cost of the closure is extremely high.

"During 2020, we were navigating in a sea of ignorance. We just didn't know what is the best way of combating the pandemic and the immediate reaction of most countries in the world was let's close schools. Time has passed since then and with evidence coming in from late 2020 and 2021, we have had several waves and there are several countries which have opened schools," he said.

UP ELECTION CAMPAIGN

CM Baghel booked for 'flouting' Covid norms

New Delhi, Jan 16:

A police case was filed against Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel and several others on Sunday for violating Covid safety protocols while campaigning for the Congress in Noida ahead of next month's Uttar Pradesh Assembly election.

The case was filed after a complaint from the District Election Officer, who wrote to the Assistant DCP (Noida Police) to flag violation of orders banning the gathering of five or more people in order to minimise the spread of the coronavirus.

Also, as per rules announced by the Election Commission last week - ahead of polls in five states



next month - parties going door-to-door must have only five members per campaigning team.

A FIR, or first information report, has been registered at the police station in Noida's Sector 113, with charges relating to violation of Section 144 and under sections of the Epidemic Act.

CARE FOR UNDERPRIVILEGED



A volunteer teaches underprivileged children in an open classroom, in Moradabad, Sunday.

ECI allows mediapersons to cast vote through postal ballot

Chandigarh, Jan 16 (PTI):

The Election Commission of India has allowed journalists to cast their votes through postal ballot facility, according to an official statement of the office of Punjab chief electoral officer on Sunday.

Voting for Punjab's 117 assembly seats will be held on February 14 and the counting of votes will take place on March 10.

The ECI has allowed mediapersons, authorised by the poll body, to exercise their franchise using postal ballot facility, said the statement. "Mediapersons, during a

press conference, had asked Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Punjab Dr S Karuna Raju to include them in absentee voters so that they can cast their votes using the postal ballot facility," it said.

Raju said any absentee voter wishing to vote by postal ballot has to make an application to the returning officer in Form-12D, giving all requisite particulars and get the application verified by the nodal officer appointed by the organisation concerned. He said any voter opting for postal ballot facility would not be able to cast a vote at the polling station.

'Omicron, Delta pandemics going parallelly'

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

Omicron is a "deviant" from the COVID-19 pandemic progression script and so it must be postulated that two pandemics are going on side by side, one by the Delta and close relatives and the other by the latest variant of concern, said noted virologist Dr T Jacob John.

Speaking to PTI on how the pandemic can now be expected to progress, he pointed out that Omicron is not "fathered, or mothered, by Wuhan-D614G, Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, Kappa or Mu and That much is for sure". "So in my opinion, this is a variant of unknown proximal parentage but great great grandparent



Dr T Jacob John

was Wuhan-D614G... We shall see as the pandemic progresses," John, a former director of the ICMR's Centre of Advanced Research in Virology, said.

D614G refers to an amino acid mutation in this protein that has become increasingly common in SARS-CoV-2 viruses from

around the world. "Since Omicron is illegitimate or 'deviant' from COVID-19 pandemic progression script, we must think of two pandemics going on side by side -- Delta and close relatives, and Omicron and its variants in future. "Diseases caused by them are also different. One is Pneumonia-hypoxia-mulitorgan damage disease but the other an upper/middle respiratory disease that pushes pre-existing chronic disease or old age beyond the wall," he said.

Asked if the peak of the third wave has been reached since cases have started plateauing in some places, John said metro cities started first and will finish first.

IIT MADRAS ANALYSIS

India's 'R value' drops to 2.2 between Jan 7 and 13

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

India's 'R-value', which indicates how rapidly COVID-19 is spreading, was recorded at 2.2 between January 7 and 13, a drop from the previous two weeks, according to a preliminary analysis by IIT Madras.

The R value of Mumbai was 1.3, Delhi 2.5, Chennai 2.4 and Kolkata 1.6, according to the analysis by IIT Madras' Department of Mathematics and Centre of Excellence for Computational Mathematics and Data Science headed by Prof Neelesh S Upadhye and

What is R value..

The R value marks the number of people an infected person can spread the disease to. A pandemic is considered to end if this value goes below 1.

Prof S Sundar: It was close to 2.9 nationally from December 25 to December 31 while it was 4 between January 1 and 6.

The R value marks the number of people an infected person can spread the disease to. A pandemic is considered to end if this value goes below 1.

Kamlesh Sahu elected President

● Of Sahu Samaj Darbha circle

Central Chronicle News

Anwari, Jan 16: The elections of Sahu Samaj Darbha circle were held here in Sahu Samaj bhavan on Friday and in this Kamlesh Sahu was elected as the President of Sahu Samaj, Darbha circle by getting 29 votes and winning against his arch rival Teerath Sahu with 9 votes.

The elections for Sahu Samaj, Darbha circle were jointly conducted in the presence of three persons viz. Chitrnanjan Sahu President State Sahu Samaj; Manish



Sahu President District Sahu Samaj and Lakhan Sahu President Tehsil Sahu Samaj.

For the post of President Sahu Samaj Darbha region there was close fight between

Kamlesh Sahu and Teerath Sahu. Kamlesh won 29 votes and Teerath got 20 and in this way Kamlesh won the poll with 9 votes and got elected as President Sahu Samaj Darbha circle.

For the post of Vice-President Sahu Samaj Darbha- Tulendra Sahu won with narrow margin of 1 vote winning 25 votes and his rival Kamal Narayan Sahu getting 24 votes. For the post of fe-

male V-P, Chitrarekha Sahu also won with narrow margin of 1 vote getting 25 votes and her rival Kaushilya Sahu getting 24 votes. The return officer declared the election results.

President Darbha Santram Sahu, SVishwanath Sahu Tehsil Treasurer; KR Sahu, RR Sahu, Lkesh Sahu, Lekh Ram Sahu, Sharda Loknath Sahu, Nagesh Sahu, Bhagi Ram Sahu, Rekh Ram Sahu, Bhuneshwar Sahu, Dularu Ram Sahu, TR Sahu, Radheshyam Sahu, Kamalnaryan Sahu and other office bearers of Samaj extended greetings to Kamlesh for the victory.

Draftsman suspended on charges of manipulating Government records

Central Chronicle News

Jagdalpur, Jan 16: Collector Rajat Bansal has suspended the draftsman posted in land-record branch of the Collectorate on charges of tampering and manipulating the government documents.

Collector Bansal had taken this action on charges of manipulations in land documents of Gram Khutpadar coming under Markel RI Mandal of Jagdalpur tehsil. Here a total of 3.50 acre land in Kh. No. 206/1 under the government head was allo-

cated in the name of Satish and that of 4 acre land in Kh. No. 206/2 in the name of Bhupendra and this was allocated for 'tree-patta'. So it is on finding the draftsman guilty prima-facie on charges of his selling the Nazul land by distorting the government records for passing on economic benefit to 'tree-pattadharis' by showing it as land owned by the two and issuing certified copy of 1954-55 'Adhikar Abhilekh'. So a case under rule -9 of Chhattisgarh Civil Services (Categorisation, Appeal,

Control) Act 1966 that draftsman Jagbandhu Kashyap has been suspended with immediate effect and along with this department inquiry too has been recommended.

During this suspension period, Jagbandhu Kashyap will be attached to district hq's office in the land-record branch, Jagdalpur and will continue to get DA as per eligibility. It is notable here that in this case the former Patwari Premkant Pandey too has been suspended and departmental inquiry is in process against him.

Dacoits run away with the locker and cash of Rs 9 lakh

From Govt run liquor shop on Bilaspur- Mungeli NH near Sargaon

Central Chronicle News

Mungeli, Jan 16: Dacoity took place in the government run liquor shop in Mungeli district and in this the dacoits first handcuffed two guards and failing to break the 185 kg locker, they ran away with the locker with cash of Rs 9 lakh in it.

There is a government run liquor shop functional in Sargaon area o Bilaspur- Mungeli National Highway and on Saturday night the employee closed down the shop and left two

guards behind to look after the shop. It was at around 1-2 in the night, 8-9 dacoits reached the shop and ran away with such a heavy locker.

Guards kept handcuffed and legs tied:

It is learnt that the dacoits were fully masked and covered up and on reaching the shop they first attacked the guard and made them bondage by handcuffing and tied their legs.

They warned the two that if they create noise, they will kill them. After this the dacoits tried to break open the locker in

the shop, but could not succeed and therefore ran away along with the locker having cash of Rs 9 lakh in it.

Broke down all CCTV camera and DVR:

As per information in this regard, in order not to leave any evidence or proof, they broke down CCTV camera and DVR installed in the shop and took it with them.

The dacoits even broke some part of the shop's roof. It is suspected that the dacoits reached there in some car and since it is not possible to carry

such heavy locker in small vehicle, they might have taken it in the car.

Guards inform cutting the rope in legs, hands:

In this case both the guards were handcuffed and also tied with rope in their legs and to which they somehow managed to open after lots of efforts.

It was on getting information that the police arrived on Sunday morning and so far police has not been able to find much of information in this case and said that investigation is going on.

22 teachers and students of JNV found Corona positive

● Total 78 found positive in Kondagaon district

Central Chronicle News

Kondagaon, Jan 16: The total number of corona positive cases in the district has now reached 132, as the number of corona cases are on the rise in the district. Under the third wave, the first corona blast was found in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV) on Jan 14, when 22 teachers and students were found to be positive. In addition to this by late in the evening on Jan 14,



total of 69 were found to be positive and with this number of positive cases shot up to 132.

As per information in this regard, there are total of 200 students studying in JNV and out of which testing of 39 students and teachers was done through

RTPCR last on Jan 14 and out of which 22 were tested positive. Out of these 5 were from teaching staff and 17 were students.

After this School was formed a mini containment zone and the covid testing and tracing of children is now in progress.

As per information in this regard from the health department, till late in the evening of Jan 15, a total of 69 persons were tested positive in Kondagaon district and in this 1 patient is from Farasgaon and 8 from Keshkal and 69 from Kondagaon block.

District body of Vaishya Tailik Sahu constituted

Central Chronicle News

Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi, Jan 16: Vaishya Tailik Sahu community unanimously formed their district working body. Keshav Sahu (Pendra) was unanimously elected district president, Mrs Sarita Ashwini Sahu was elected as president of Women Cell, Neelesh Sahu (Gaurela) was elected Youth Cell district president.

The state body congratulated the district office bearers and asked to soon announce the district office bearers.



Keshav Sahu



Sarita Sahu



Neelesh Sahu

Ashok Sahu of state body okayed the election of three office bearers of district bodies. In the meeting with the state body Vinod Sahu vice president Raipur,

Kamlersh Sahu vice president Jamul Bhalai, Nandkumar Sahu Balodabazar, Ramakant Sahu state president Bhalai and others were present.

Joint team conducts inspection for Coal Mega Project

Jointly by Revenue, Forest Department, MLA and Mayor and SECL officials

Central Chronicle News

Koriya, Jan 16: After major complication of the SECL agency finally a joint team of Revenue Department, Forest Department, SECL including Manendragarh MLA Dr. Vinay Jaiswal, Mayor Kancharan Jaiswal visited the proposed site and inspected and finally completed land acquisition for Coal Mega Project. Written agreement has been given to end the obstruction of other departments along with compensation so that soon coal will be fully exploited by moving ahead the big mega project of the city



which will involve coal mining for about 10 years.

In this work, the subordinate officers of the present departments have given their consent, putting an end to the coming

forward in carrying out this project. According to the decision taken the families occupying this land will be given a job by the SECL agency with compensation. It was also

agreed to beautify the temple complex on the said land by setting it up at another place. In this whole inspection work, the biggest demand of the residents of Bartunga Kalri,

who are becoming isolated from the city, were given consent for setting up a new road, which will be constructed for Bartunga Kalari via Ekta Nagar, Azad Nagar of Godripara.

The said land was also withheld due to non-consent of Forest Department as it was leased land of SECL Agency. It is noteworthy that Manendragarh MLA Dr. Vinay Jaiswal has expressed his strong displeasure over the complete exploitation of coal in Chirmiri city and the displacement of people in the city. The Union Minister has also been apprised of the whole matter.

Accused in tomato theft case arrested



● From Somani Durg district

Central Chronicle News

Simga, Jan 16: In theft incident of truck-load of 10 MT tomato worth Rs 3.13 lakhs mid-way in transportation from Sanjari (Navagaon) to Bengaluru, the police along with Cyber Cell nabbed the accused owner of truck Bhugunath Prajapati S/o Ramjatan Prajapati (55) R/o Jatour Thana Gudaki district Shivani Bihar 'hal gram'-Tedesara Thana Somani District Rajnandgaon and was interrogated. He informed that earlier he had some controversy with

Jaishri Radhe Transporter over some issue and with intentions to defame him used fake registration plate of another truck and sold out 10 tonnes tomato of Anil Krishi Farm Sanjari Navagaon to a purchaser in openMandi in Rapad Ganja (UP) with help of his co-driver and shared the sold amount of Rs 1 lakh between each other and asked his co-driver to run away. On acceptance of this crime, the Navagaon police filed a case under section 420, 34 of IPC against the two and the accused Bhugunath Prajapati was produced in the Court for judicial remand and he was sent to judicial custody.

Training imparted to team in-charges

● from 48 wards of Jagdalpur city
● On Tracing and Home Isolation for Covid positive patients

Central Chronicle News

Jagdalpur, Jan 16: With increase in number of corona positive cases and to gain effective control over it and seeing importance of tracing and home isolation, training was imparted to all the team in-charges of 48 wards of Jagdalpur city. In the training organised in the



'Prerna room' of Collectorate, Municipal Commissioner Prem Patel, SDM Dinesh Nag, Programme Manager Urban Health PD Bastaria, Asst. Director Kaushal Vikas Sharadchand Goud were present.

The training to all the team in-charges of 48 wards was given in two

shifts. During this the team in-charges were apprised about the instructions of the state government issued for Home Isolation and importance to identify and carry out testing and tracing of the persons who have come into contact with the corona infected.

Apart from this they were also informed about the importance of vaccination and to increase the pace of vaccination in order to ensure less of human lives in order to gain control over corona cases and to identify the persons who have been left out or have not got the vaccination done.

Janpad member supply hot cooked food to children

Central Chronicle News

Balod, Jan 16: With increase in number of corona positive cases, orders have been issued to close-down all the Schools and Anganbadi centres and amidst this supply of hot-cooked food to children in Anganbadi centre has become a big challenge.

So taking this into account, Janpad member Sanjay Bais made arrangements for lunch-boxes in order to ensure supply of hot-cooked food to homes of all the 155 children in all the Anganbadi centres and distributed the lunch-

box to them. But with many children not having lunch-box, they were coming with utensils at home to get the food and seeing the same, Janpad member made arrangements for extra tiffin-boxes and ensure supply of hot-cooked food to their houses without any problems.

PPC's closed due to weather change and rains

Central Chronicle News

Rajim, Jan 16: Due to the changed weather and rains in all the government paddy procurement centers, the work of paddy procurement has stopped completely from Monday, last week as the ground is wet in all the centres. And due to non-lifting of the purchased paddy, the paddy is lying in the centres, which has been kept covered by the in-charge of the center with a temporary sheet. Prior to this, on 27-28 December last month, the procure-

ment work was kept closed due to cloudy and rain for 4 days. Currently too it is closed for 4 days. According to the information, only 66% of the paddy has been purchased and one lakh 8 thousand quintals of paddy is to be procured from 2781 registered farmers.

It should be noted that from December 1 this year, paddy procurement has been started in procurement centers on support price. There are 9354 farmers registered in seven procurement centers under District Co-operative Central Bank branch



Rajim, from whom 3 lakh 21 thousand 716 quintals of paddy are to be purchased from the farmers. But so far 2 lakh 13 thousand 716

quintals of paddy have been purchased, whose amount is 41 crore 44 lakh 81 thousand rupees. Paddy procurement in-charge

Komal Ram Sahu told that 1 lakh 42 thousand 130 quintals of paddy have been transported by millers for custom milling.

While 71 thousand 86 quintals have been transported to seven procurement centers including Rajim, Beltukri, Koma, Pokhara, Raksha, Basin, Shyam Nagar. State Minister of Indian Farmers Union, Bhuneshwar Sahu and District Panchayat member Chandrashekhar Sahu, in a statement, demanded from the Chief Minister that the last date for purchase of paddy be extended to 15 February.

CHANGE OF NAME

IT IS INFORMED TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC THAT I, GULAB S/O LATE GHDSHIRAM AGRAWAL RESIDENT OF WARD NO. 14, AMARPUR ROAD, PENDRA BILASPUR C.G. 495119 HAVE CHANGED MY OLD NAME GULAB S/O LATE GHDSHIRAM AGRAWAL, SO IN FUTURE I SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED BY MY NEW NAME GULAB AGRAWAL S/O LATE GHDSHIRAM AGRAWAL IN ALL GOVERNMENT AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

GULAB AGRAWAL
WARD NO. 14
AMARPUR ROAD,
PENDRA,
BILASPUR C.G.
495119



CENTRAL Chronicle

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Evolving startup culture

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called for innovating for India and from India to tackle challenges facing the country as he counted steps taken by the government in freeing entrepreneurs and innovation from bureaucratic silos. Referring to the future prospects, the Prime Minister said that as of now only half of India's population is online, therefore future possibilities are immense. He appealed to the startups to move towards villages also. Startup culture in India will only evolve if society's stance changes regarding business. Given that the vast majority of startups fail, Indian business culture must begin to examine its tolerance for founders' missteps and encourage the knowledge gained from failure to be applied to future success. In US with most developed startup culture in the world, failure is often seen as a natural stepping stone on the road to success. People may go to school to study one thing, take a job doing another, and then move around between companies and industries throughout their careers. In India, failure is frowned upon in every instance. Access to capital is more limited, causing startups to focus on monetization, revenue, and lean operations from the outset. Startups are usually funded only after they have a working product and a proven business model, with revenue. In other words, Indian investors are only going to give money if the business has already shown to make money for them. But this methodology can result in missed opportunities. Recent studies suggest that Indian firms risk losing significant business due to lack of adequate customer service. There's a tremendous opportunity for both startups and established companies to build and improve customer loyalty in India by adopting practices that are now considered standard within the US. There is a huge need for innovative solutions, particularly those that alleviate poverty and benefit a large number of people. Given the scale of India and its resource constraints, low-cost, high-impact solutions are required.

Technology startups play a crucial role in accomplishing this, because of their potential for scalability and exponential growth. The diversity of the Indian population has also been a major game-changer in the startup industry. While it offers the challenge of marketing products to people of various different languages, cultures, and regions, it also affords these startups the opportunity to grow enough to cater to a huge diversity of people. This trains a lot of these new companies to cater to the global audience, and thus increase their uptake. The countries that are most active in investing in the Indian startup ecosystem are Israel, Netherlands, Australia, Japan, England and France. The Indian startup scene is now relatively mature and has thousands of homegrown founders and employees across sectors, experience levels, and academic backgrounds. Going forward, we should see a lot more action in the Indian startup world, defined by the talent cultivated from within and their experiences and wealth. This could include more clusters from emerging unicorns, more community-led initiatives by founders for founders, and more serial entrepreneurs starting up again, and an increased capital flow for angel investing. Most startup founders are well-educated and come from well-off backgrounds in urban metro cities. However, as nearly 70 percent of the Indian population live in rural areas, the customers of the mass market tend to come from low-income backgrounds in villages. Due to different living environments, startups often have an insufficient understanding of the customers and their needs. The government needs to encourage people from villages to evolve in startup culture.

Volcanic implications

A large eruption of Hunga Tonga, a volcanic island of Tonga in the Pacific Ocean has occurred. The eruption caused tsunamis in Tonga, Fiji and American Samoa, tsunami warnings were issued in Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu, New Zealand, Australia, Japan, the United States, Canada, Mexico, Chile and Ecuador. Governments are not yet aware about implications of volcanic eruptions during climate change. Researchers have shown that human-caused climate change will have important consequences for how volcanic gases interact with the atmosphere. Large-magnitude eruptions will have greater effects as the climate continues to warm. However, the cooling effects of small- and medium-sized eruptions could shrink by as much as 75 percent. Since these smaller eruptions are far more frequent, further research is needed to determine whether the net effect will be additional warming or cooling. Where and when a volcano erupts is not something that humans can control, but as the atmosphere warms due to climate change, the plumes of ash and gas emitted by large, but infrequent, volcanic eruptions will rise ever higher. Climate change will also accelerate the transport of volcanic material, in the form of small, shiny droplets called volcanic sulfate aerosols from the tropics to higher latitudes. For large eruptions, the combined effect of these phenomena will cause the haze created by volcanic aerosols to block more sunlight from reaching Earth's surface, ultimately amplifying the temporary cooling caused by volcanic eruptions.

Volcanic plumes rise like hot air balloons: they keep rising to a height where they're naturally buoyant. Large tropical volcanoes have caused some of the world's most destructive natural disasters, with eruptions spewing out massive streams of harmful gases and hot debris that can wipe out everything in their path. Understanding discrepancies between the proxy-based product and a stand-alone climate model are critical for projecting how future volcanic eruptions may affect global climate, especially considering the added impacts of human-influenced climate change. There is growing scientific evidence that climate change may also play a role in geological phenomena such as earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions. And while there is still debate about what magnitudes these secondary effects of global warming may reach, there no longer seems to be any doubt that the risk is real. Glaciers and permanent ice sheets in the planet's polar regions exert enormous pressure on the bedrock, causing it to warp downward. As the ice melts and that weight is released from the Earth's crust, the land responds with a rebound, like slow, giant version of a trampoline. This rebound can have consequences.

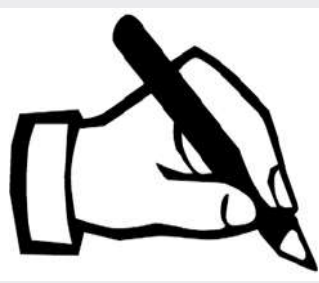
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The letters can be edited or rewritten for clarity of thoughts.

MASK AS ESSENTIAL WEARABLE



A vendor selling facemasks and caps as wearables arranges the merchandise on display on a roadside stall on the outskirts of Hyderabad, Telangana.

Bureaucratic excessive greed and measures to control corruption

**RUSEN KUMAR**

A senior police officer of the state of Chhattisgarh has been arrested and an investigation is being done by interrogating him in corruption cases. He is alleged to have acquired disproportionate assets during his service. This disproportionate wealth is not of lakhs but worth crores of rupees. For what reasons can a police officer receive such a huge amount of money? This is not a new case of disproportionate assets being held by a high-ranking government official. Such incidents have become common in Indian democracy. Is asking for money by showing the fear of administrative power to the public, not an act of robbery? In our country, any high-ranking government official has all kinds of facilities officially available in more than enough quantity, but even then, why does he or she become greedy in excess? Such administrative problems are common in small states where there is a lack of political will. Politicians remain lost in their own separate world and taking advantage of this, administrative officials indulge in corruption. Why don't we accept that political people play a big role in administrative corruption?

Corruption is not taught in any school or university in India. It is a burning question that yet how any administrative officer can do this work very ef-

ficiently. Where do the officials get the inspiration to do corruption, this is the basic question, which we should ask ourselves and the society. Corruption should not be tolerated in a democracy. Organized corruption is extremely harmful for any nation. We have to understand deeply that administrative corruption violates the fundamental rights of citizens. It should not be denied that greedy and corrupt officials can pose a serious threat to the internal security of the nation. However, administrative corruption is very organized in India. It has a fully developed system. It has many partners. Any corruption occurs only when everyone is interconnected from top to bottom. I don't want to confuse you with statistics. You will easily get the statistics of corruption by civil servants, but I am not interested in that. You read the newspaper; you will get this type of information from one or the other corner of the country. Where does the mindset of corruption come from? I would like to draw your attention to the back of this mindset. Why don't we understand that corruption is an organized crime?

We should keep a watch on the behavior and functioning of the administrative officers so that corruption can be stopped when it is indicated. How sad it is for us that high-ranking offi-

cers disregard their duties towards their nation and trample under their feet the rights of their own citizens. India is a liberal society; at the same time, it is also a forced and troubled society. Administrative officers know this very well and they take advantage of the spontaneity of the people. The people of India consider their politicians and administrative officers as their saviors. The two main causes of corruption that I see are too much gullibility and too much illiteracy among Indian citizens. Isn't administrative corruption a social problem in India? This is a burning question in my opinion. There are two common centers of corruption in India - the collectorate complex and the police headquarters. Corruption happening in the administrative field can be controlled only with strong political will. The law itself does not act, rather the law in India is governed by instructions.

Democracy in India is celebrating its 75th anniversary. Such incidents seem to be the result of our political failure. We have to understand fundamentally that the administrative officers in our country are controlled by the political administration. One reason I see even more is that there are certain caste classes in our country, which control our administrative system. They still have the mentality of making people slaves and they do not miss when they get a chance. A special political surveillance system should be made so that the spirit of corruption does not develop among the administrative officers. There are many such civil servants in our country who do public service with great skill. It is our great responsibility that good servants should get adequate respect in society. We need to pay a lot of attention to the training of administrative

officers. Administrative officers should have direct communication and contact with the public so that they can understand the condition and direction of Indian society. In a democracy, the people are paramount. Communication between the public and the administrative officers should be increased. How bad it is that many administrative officers do not like to talk to the public! Not only this but also, they consider meeting people a disgusting act. They communicate only with their particular class.

The behavior, understanding and thought of human beings are controlled by education and special training. Administrative officers should be aware of those actions due to which social and economic inequalities may increase in society. Through training and workshops, we should make the officers deeply aware of this. Public service is a social service of a high order; it should be freed from excessive personal greed. India has ample resources and arrangements for living. In a democracy, this has become even easier. There are hundreds of such welfare schemes, through which the lives of crores of people are going smoothly. As a citizen, we should lead a hard life and have full faith in the system of our nation. We should understand that any kind of extreme greed of ours can disturb our life, family, society and nation. In the world of psychology, excessive attachment to money is a mental illness. We should use money and resources for the welfare of the people. Wealth has great creative power. Administrative officers should play a great role in ensuring that there is an equitable distribution of wealth among the people. We must understand that the right to property is not a fundamental right in India.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Witness protection

The strident demand for a separate law to tackle increasing incidents of mob violence may not address the problem as anticipated by the public. This is because the multiplicity of laws in India is an impediment rather than a facilitator to curb crimes including the menace of mob violence. Instead, the states and also Central government should remove the shortcomings in existing laws, particularly Witness Protection Act and also address systemic issues related to an investigation by police. The key to ensuring quick and reasonable justice for victims of any crime is a thorough and impartial investigation by police to prepare a watertight case to withstand intense legal scrutiny. The biggest hurdle in this matter is lack of witnesses who voluntarily come forward to depose against the accused fearing reprisals and revenge subsequently by the accused as police are unable to afford round the clock protection to those witnesses. The inability of the police to inspire confidence in the public to cooperate in dealing with mob violence is to be blamed for this. When several cops present in the scene of violence couldn't stop a mob merciless beating, how can common citizens summon the courage to confront the hooligans? Herein lies the importance to implement the Witness Protection Act in true spirit by police as the past track record on this score is awful. The poor image and low credibility of police with the public are the connected issues the government has to grapple with seriousness if it really wants to stamp out the menace of mob lynching. As demonstrated in other lynching cases, police have completed the investigation and submitted the charge sheet in court without a law exclusively meant for mob violence. Therefore, the need of the hour is to deal with the underlying causes rather than adding another law. Unemployment, drug abuse and a tardy criminal justice delivery system are contributory factors for mob violence. Focused attention and resolute action are called for to address these risk factors in order to deal with mob violence effectively.

Rajiv, via email

Rename HCs

Whole system of continuing naming High Courts is confusing where some High Courts are still named after cities where these are situated. Indian cities Bombay, Madras, Allahabad have since been renamed as Mumbai, Chennai and Prayag respectively long time back. But High Courts located in these cities are still officially named after old names of these cities. System should be that names of High Courts may get auto-changed with change in names of cities. Best is that Union government should end the British legacy by naming all High Courts after names of states rather than on particular cities. Proposed legislation should incorporate feature that names of High Courts may be automatically changed with change in name of states or cities without needing any separate legislation.

Madhu Agrawal, Delhi

(Rusen Kumar is a renowned journalist, author and social leader.)



WHAT THEY TWEET!

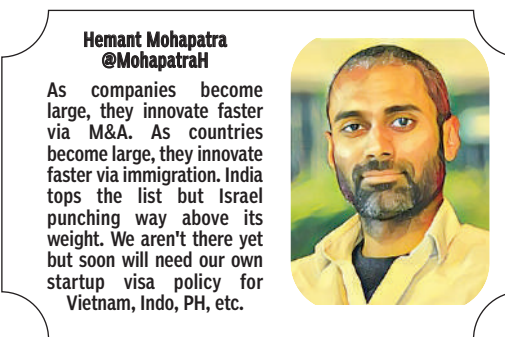


Kanwal Sibal@KanwalSibal
So has China in Europe. Question of spine. Europe is not a nation, is fractured within, Germany is an economic animal mainly, major EU countries compete with each other in China. China's coercion of a Lithuania shows contempt for EU.

Rahul Raj@bhak_sala
Most of the unicorns celebrated in India are mostly fintech or aggregation platforms. This may be my personal bias, but I feel that manufacturing, automation and R&D startups need more support and recognition than what they get.



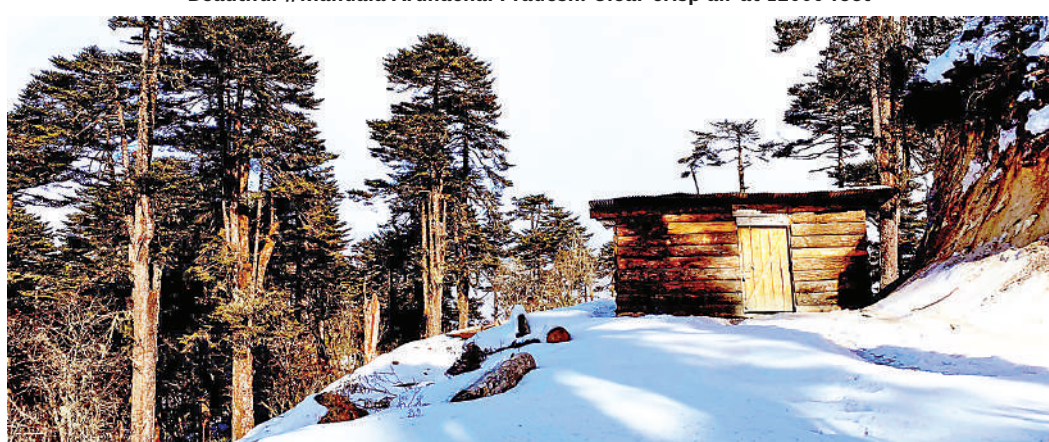
Suhasini Haidar @suhasinih
When being sensible is more reflective of a sense of compulsion...the same chest-thumping hawks who derided Mr Saran at his book launch for referring to the Siachen AGPL solution in his book, are today quite silent when the sitting Army Chief speaks of exactly the same thing!



Hemant Mohapatra @MohapatraH
As companies become large, they innovate faster via M&A. As countries become large, they innovate faster via immigration. India tops the list but Israel punching way above its weight. We aren't there yet but soon will need our own startup visa policy for Vietnam, Indo, PH, etc.



Peter Yang@petergyang
Just had a call with someone on Forbes 30 under 30 list and came away really impressed. He shared with me how he made VP at a top tech company before age 30: 1. 4:30 AM wake up 2. Cold showers 3. Gratitude journal 4. Meditate 5. Dad owns tech company.



Zubin@zubin49
Beautiful #Mandala Arunachal Pradesh. Clear crisp air at 12000 feet

Sridhar Vembu@svembu
I come from a very ordinary background and wealth to me is a vehicle to help build our broader society, particularly our rural poor. People who attack me in crude vulgar terms make my resolve stronger. I am not going to be cowed down by such attacks.

SOCIAL DISTANCING NORMS FLOUTED



People flout social distancing norms as they visit a wholesale vegetable market on a cold winter morning, in Gurugram, Sunday.

'BJP imported workers to spread rumours, hatred'

Lucknow, Jan 16 (PTI):

Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday accused the BJP of importing workers from Gujarat to train its cadres in poll-bound Uttar Pradesh in spreading "hatred and rumours".

He asked the Election Commission to take cognisance of the issue and send them back, failing which, he said elections may not remain impartial. "None of our workers are from other states. I will ask my journalist friend to give me the list of people that have come from Gujarat. I will write to the Election Commission to send back also those who have arrived here from Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and

Chhattisgarh," he said.

Yadav said photos that are doing rounds on the social media convey that BJP workers from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state had arrived in Uttar Pradesh to spread "rumours, conspiracies, lies and hatred, besides distributing money".

The SP chief addressed journalists at the party office after inducting former Uttar Pradesh cabinet minister Dara Singh Chauhan and Apna Dal (Sonela) MLA RK Verma into the party.

Responding to Anurag Thakur's jibe that SP leaders were either "in jail or out on bail", Yadav asked journalists to look into the Union minister's records in various ministries.

Welcoming former



Akhilesh Yadav

Kanpur Police Commissioner Asim Arun into the BJP fold, Thakur had on Sunday said those indulging in riots join the SP and those who crack the whip on rioters join the BJP.

Commenting on the former IPS officer, Yadav said he will move the Election

Commission demanding that those officials, who had been discharging duties with Asim Arun, be kept away from poll duties or else they too would "double up as BJP workers".

"I am hopeful that the Election Commission will act on such officials. If does not, it will raise questions on the Election Commission's sanctity," Yadav said.

Reacting to Yadav's comments, Uttar Pradesh BJP spokesperson Rakesh Tripathi told PTI, "Akhilesh Yadav heads a state party, and not a national party. He is afraid of the BJP and has been making baseless remarks... All these show that he is trying to establish reasons for his party's electoral loss."

NATIONAL START-UP DAY

Lack of pair of bullocks spurs Maha man to make small tractor

Aurangabad, Jan 16 (PTI):

A man in Maharashtra's Beed district has become a good example of the ingenuity that is powering start-ups in the country by building an 18 horsepower tractor to tide over the need for a pair of bullocks to help with farming.

Speaking to PTI on National Start-up Day, Namdev Anerav (36) of Pimpalner, some 160 kilometres from here, said the idea of a tractor with a width of just 1.5 feet and length of 5 feet came to him in 2008 after the need for a pair of bullocks was stalling farming on his

ancestral plot. "Big tractors cannot perform optimally on small plots. To overcome this limitation, I created this small tractor, which runs on petrol and diesel. After a long process of trial and error, I used my welding skills to build the first prototype in 2011-12. The final product can plough, remove grass, break clods of soil," he said.

"I need to deliver 40 such tractors in the next four months, for which I have employed seven people. I plan to start a full scale facility in Pimpalner to provide employment. I started with

Rs 1.10 lakh of my own and 28 investors put in Rs 8 lakh. The investment is worth Rs 1.10 crore now," he said.

The manufacturing unit had to be shifted from Pimpalner to Shendra in Aurangabad due to electricity supply issues, he said, adding that his product got patented in July last year.

Namdev's mentor and Marathwada Accelerator for Growth and Incubation Council (MAGIC) director Ashish Garde said MAGIC is India's first regional industrial association led incubator, which has 28 ideas under mentoring.

Than Singh's 'pathshala' features in first episode

Of Delhi Police's podcast

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

The story of a constable, who started his own school for slum children called "Than Singh ki Pathshala", was among the first ones to be featured on Delhi Police's podcast, "Kissa Khaki Ka", which was aired digitally on Sunday.

The weekly podcast will feature a series of unheard stories related to crime, investigation and humanity in an effort to connect with the masses and celebrate the extraordinary services rendered by Delhi Police.

Delhi Police is the first police force in the country to have its own pod-

cast. The personnel chosen to be featured during the podcast have displayed remarkable sincerity towards their duties and at the same time, carried out social and humanitarian services voluntarily. Their stories will be narrated by Vartika Nanda, a media educator and prison reformer.

According to the police, Than Singh was chosen for the first episode to highlight the difficult times he has braved and that he is still giving something back to the society.

Delhi Police has always strived to keep up with the policing benchmarks of the day, Deputy Commissioner of Police

(Special Branch) Suman Nalwa said, adding that communication is no longer about sharing information one way and it needs to be a conversation, an engagement.

"Through social media, we want to reach out to the masses, hear from them, understand what more could be done to share a mutual trust between us and the citizens. We are communicating in the language and style of respectful bonding. This way, we want to enhance last-mile policing," she said.

Detailing the story of Singh, Nanda talked about his daily routine post the duty hours.

"It was 5 pm. Than Singh was at the Red

Fort chowki. His duty hours were about to end but instead of going home, he would first head to his pathshala, where many children would be eagerly awaiting his arrival," the narrator said.

The children lovingly call it "Than Singh Ki Pathshala", which functions out of a small temple near the Red Fort.

Singh lived in a "jhuggi" (slum cluster) with his parents and used to go for ironing clothes with them. But he always wanted to study and get a good job. He also dreamt of teaching poor kids.

His dreams came true when he became a constable in Delhi Police.

In 2016, he started his

school with four children. Now, the school has 60 students.

Singh gives them pens and books and tries his best to fulfil their demands.

Due to the lockdowns clamped to curb the spread of COVID-19, many of the children left for their villages, but Singh continued with his "pathshala" with those who were in Delhi and during the troubled times of the pandemic, it was a source of joy for the kids.

Singh also tries to ensure that the children stay away from the world of crime. "Kissa Khaki Ka" will continue to feature such exceptional stories every week.

Alliance with BJP final: Sanjay Nishad

Nishad party will contest 15 seats in UP

Lucknow, Jan 16 (PTI):

Nishad party president Sanjay Nishad on Sunday said they will contest in 15 assembly constituencies in Uttar Pradesh as part of an alliance with the BJP, but the seats are yet to be finalised. Nishad said he will meet senior BJP leaders, including Amit Shah, in Delhi on Monday to finalise the constituencies where the party will field its candidates. "We have got 15 seats (out of 403 seats) to contest in alliance with the BJP. The seats are almost final. Most of the seats are in 'Purvanchal' (East UP) and some are in 'Paschimanchal' (West)."

"There are some seats which we want to change due to changing equations. We are focusing not only on seat but 'jeet' (victory),"

Nishad told PTI when asked about his proposed meeting with Union Home Minister Shah. The Nirbal Indian S h o s h i t Hamara Aam Dal, or Nishad party, was formed in 2016 and its leaders claim to enjoy support of the Nishad community, which is one of the Other Backward Classes (OBC).

Nishad said his party has built cadre base all over the state and has substantial influence in Gorakhpur, Ballia, Sant Kabir Nagar, Ambedkar Nagar, Jaunpur, Bhadohi, Sultanpur, Faizabad, Chitrakoot, Jhansi, Banda, Hamipur and Etawah dis-



Sanjay Nishad

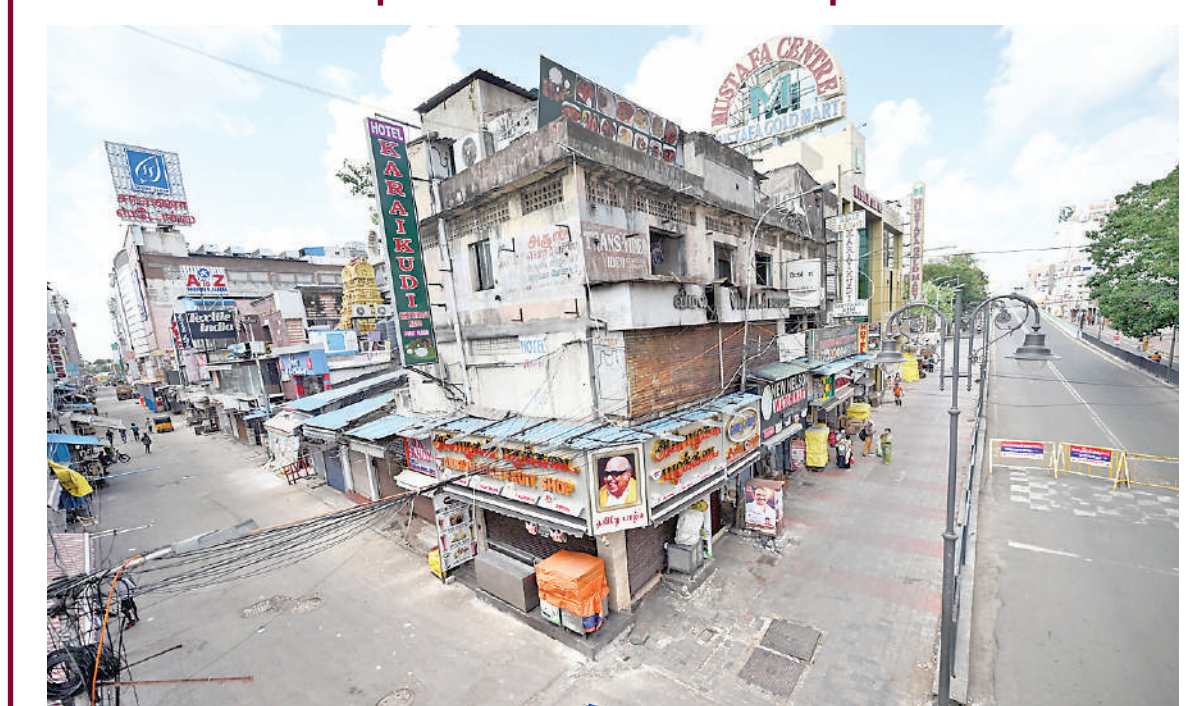
tricts, among others. The party fielded 100 candidates in the last assembly election in 2017 in alliance with the Peace Party of India, Apna Dal and the Jan Adhikar Party, but could win just one seat - Gyanpur in Bhadohi district. Nishad, now a member of the Legislative Council, had contested the last assembly election from Gorakhpur Rural and came third.

In the 2018 Lok Sabha by-election, Sanjay Nishad's son Praveen Kumar Nishad was a Samajwadi Party candidate and wrested the Gorakhpur constituency

from the BJP which had been winning the seat since 1989. Praveen Kumar Nishad is now a BJP MP from Sant Kabir Nagar. The Nishad community is the second largest demographic group in Gorakhpur, the home turf of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Asked about the restrictions imposed by the Election Commission on physical rallies due to the coronavirus pandemic and how his party will deal with it, Sanjay Nishad said, "We have associated youth workers who extensively use social media and digital offices of the party is functional in 70 districts (out of total 75). We are active on social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp."

LOCKDOWN IMPACT



Deserted roads during full lockdown imposed by Tamil Nadu government to curb the spread of COVID-19, at T. Nagar in Chennai, Sunday.

'Over 1.47 lakh children lost their parents due to COVID and other reasons'

Since April 2020

New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has informed the Supreme Court that a total of 1,47,492 children since April 1, 2020, have lost either their mother or father or both parents due to COVID-19 and other reasons.

Giving the details in a suo motu matter on children in need of care and protection due to loss of parents during the COVID-19 pandemic, the NCPCR said its figures are based on data uploaded by states and Union Territories on its

'Baal Swaraj Portal-COVID care' up to January 11. That it is most humbly reiterated that the data of children uploaded on the 'Baal Swaraj Portal-COVID care' by the States/UTs comprises of both categories of children, wherein the child has lost both or either of the parent to COVID-19 disease or otherwise from April 2020 onwards, the affidavit filed through advocate Swarupama Chaturvedi said. The Commission said the data uploaded up to January 11 showed the status of children in need of care and protection included orphans (10,094), lost either parent (1,36,910) and abandoned (488) taking the total

to 1,47,492. In the gender-wise break-up, the commission said, out of the 1,47,492 children, there are 76,508 boys, 70,980 girls and four transgender.

It said that the maximum number of children are between the age group of eight to 13 years (59,010), followed by children in the age group of 14 to 15 years (22,763) and age group of 16 to 18 years (22,626) and four to seven years (26,080). The Commission also gave the current status of shelter of children and said that maximum of the children are with their single parent - 1,25,205, while 11,272 children are with family members, followed by 8,450 with guardians.

'Pak mercenaries tricking J&K youth into terrorism'

Srinagar, Jan 16 (PTI):

Pakistani mercenaries operating in Jammu and Kashmir are tricking the youth into terrorism and using them as "terror mules" who can even be eliminated if they plan to shun the path of violence, senior security officials said on Sunday.

Referring to an encounter in Budgam earlier this month and the call details of 24-year-old Wasim Qadir Mir, a resident of Shahzadpora, the officials said he was the latest victim of the despotic behaviour of the Pakistani terrorists who eliminated him during a gunfight with security forces in village Zoiu in the central Kashmir district on January 6.

Mir along with his two Pakistani accomplices

were trapped in a cordon-and-search operation, leading to a fierce gunfight, they said, adding by dawn, it was common news that the security forces had eliminated yet another group of terrorists in an encounter but what was uncommon was the way the series of events unfolded during the encounter the preceding night.

"During the encounter Mir wanted to put down his arms probably with an aim to come out and surrender to the security forces but was forced by the two Pakistani terrorists to keep firing back."

"Details that emerged later including the post-mortem report further confirmed that Mir was actually killed by members of his own group, as a result of their failed attempts to re-

sist him from surrendering," a senior official involved in the gunfight said. Mir was a school dropout who initially worked as an Over Ground Worker and subsequently was recruited into the terror folds in December 2020 by JeM commander Saifulla alias "Lambu Bhai", a Pakistani terrorist.

Even though Mir's stint as an active terrorist was short, he had a long list of acts of terror attributed to him, including the Zewan attack in which three police personnel were killed and 11 others were injured on December 13 last year, the officials said.

They said it was probably his involvement in a long list of terror-related incidents that prevented him from re-joining the mainstream and eventually

when he was given an opportunity by the security forces to save his own life, he did not stand a chance at the hands of the very companions for whom he was working as the "terror mule".

He said as it would have exposed the fa ade of the so-called local freedom movement and also shown the great human tragedy that the valley has been subjected to for the last three decades by Pakistan-based terror groups.

"As far as Kashmir is concerned, Pakistan's modus operandi continues to remain the same over the years - infiltrate Pakistani terrorists into the valley in numbers, sizable enough to create and operate cellular groups of 3-4 terrorists, comprising at least one local boy," he said.

The official said Pakistan's strategic aim remains to mislead the global community and portray terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir as the result of a local uprising and an insurgent movement led by the local youth. They do it by creation of pseudo terror groups, namely Kashmir Tigers and The Resistance Front (TRF), which are only shadow outfits of banned terror groups like Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashker-e-Taiba respectively.

The shadow groups were created by ISI coupled with the tactical aim of ensuring that these local Kashmiri recruits provide the much-needed logistical support to the foreign terrorists and act as a conduit to keep terrorism in the valley alive.