

BRIEF



A doctor checks eyes of a sadhu at free eye testing camp at a transit camp for the Gangasagar Mela, in Kolkata, Saturday.

Mishap

Jaipur: Five people, including an elderly woman and a boy, were killed and two others injured when a car in which they were travelling collided head-on with a bus in Rajasthan's Nagaur district on Saturday, police said. The accident occurred in the morning due to dense fog, they said. The car was on its way to Jodhpur from Nagaur while the bus was going towards Bikaner.

Busted

Muzaffarnagar: Police officials in Muzaffarnagar on Saturday said they raided an illegal arms factory and seized a cache of weapons and ammunition. A person has been arrested after the crackdown on the factory in Tandera village under Kakroli police station limits, they said. They did not name the person. The seized weapons include 13 pistols, two guns and 15 barrels. Besides these, a set of semi-prepared weapons were also seized, police said.

Shot dead

Porbandar: A former Army man allegedly gunned down two persons during a clash between two groups of a community in Gujarat's Porbandar town, police said on Saturday. An offence has been registered against 11 persons, including a local BJP councillor and his son, for the incident that took place on Friday night, an official said.

Virtual mode

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court has said that it would continue hearing cases through the virtual mode till February 11. According to an office order dated January 12, the district courts would also hear matters only through the video conferencing mode till then. "In continuation of this court's office order dated 30.12.2021, as directed by Hon'ble the Chief Justice, the existing system of hearing of cases in this court [including the courts of Registrar and Joint Registrar (Judicial)] as well as in the district courts in Delhi shall continue till 11.02.2022," the latest order said.

Suicide

Kota (Raj): A 17-year-old girl from Bihar, preparing for NEET UG, allegedly jumped to death from the sixth floor of her hostel here on Saturday morning, police said. The girl, identified as Shikha Yadav, took the extreme step after having an argument with her father over including books and other study material while he was packing so that they could leave for their home, they said.

Weather
High 24 Low 11

ASSEMBLY POLLS

EC extends ban on public rallies, roadshows

Till Jan 22
New Delhi Jan 15 (PTI):

Amid a surge in COVID-19 cases, the Election Commission on Saturday extended its ban on physical rallies and roadshows until January 22 in the five poll-bound states, saying it will subsequently review the situation and issue fresh instructions.

The poll panel, however, granted a relaxation for the political parties to the extent that indoor meetings of maximum 300 people or 50 per cent of the capacity of the hall, or the prescribed limit set by state disaster management authorities can be held, an official statement said.

The EC said it took the decision after considering the present situation, facts and circumstances, as also the inputs received in the virtual meetings it held on Saturday with the Union health ministry, chief secretaries and health secretaries and the chief electoral officers of the poll-bound states.

"No roadshows, padayatra, cycle, bike, vehicle rally and processions shall be allowed till 22 January, 2022. Commission shall subsequently review the situation and issue further instructions accordingly," the statement said.

No physical rally of political parties or candidates, including probable candidates, or any other group related to election will be allowed till 22 January, it said.

However, the Commission said "indoor meetings of maximum of 300 persons or 50 per cent of the capacity of the hall" or the prescribed limit set by state disaster management authorities (SDMA) will be allowed.

The poll watchdog directed political parties to ensure the compliance of Covid-appropriate behaviour and guidelines and Model Code of Conduct during the activities connected with elections.

On Friday, the SP held at a large public meeting in

the compound of the party office in Lucknow, defying Covid norms.

An official in Lucknow had said the local administration is investigating the "violation".

The poll panel directed state and district administrations to ensure compliance of all instructions related to the poll code and to the pandemic control measures.

While announcing the poll schedule for Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand Manipur, Goa and Punjab on January 8, the EC had taken an unprecedented step of banning public rallies, roadshows and similar physical campaigning events till January 15.

Mumbai logs highest one-day COVID-19 deaths

Mumbai, Jan 15 (PTI):

Mumbai on Saturday reported 11 new coronavirus-related deaths, the highest single-day toll since July 29 last year, and 10,661 fresh infections, the civic body said. As many as 21,474 patients were discharged, taking the total of recoveries to 8,99,358. The number of new infected patients has been decreasing for the last three days, as per the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's (BMC) data. Further, only 722 of the new 10,661 patients found during the day were admitted to hospitals, which raised the number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients to 5,962. As many as 8,955 or 84 per cent of the new patients were asymptomatic. The city on July 29, 2021, had reported 13 deaths and the mortality figure had started declining after that. Mumbai had reported 16,420 new COVID-19 cases on Wednesday, 13,702 cases on Thursday and 11,317 on Friday, thus showing a steady decline.

Kohli steps down as Test captain

Cape Town, Jan 15 (PTI):

Virat Kohli on Saturday dropped a bombshell by quitting Test captaincy following the unexpected series defeat against South Africa.

Kohli was appointed Test captain back in 2014 when M S Dhoni stepped down in the middle of the series against Australia.

"Every thing has to come to a halt at some stage and for me as Test captain of India, it's now. There have been many ups and also some downs along the journey but there has never been lack of effort or lack of belief," Kohli wrote in a statement which he posted on Twitter, taking



everyone by surprise.

His shock announcement came a day after India lost the Test series in South Africa 1-2.

Kohli led India to the top of world rankings and during his tenure, the team recorded a memorable series win in Australia. The 33-year old had recently quit as T20 captain and was later sacked at ODI captain by the BCCI.

Elephant kills woman in Surajpur forest

Surajpur, Jan 15:

A 22-year-old woman was trampled to death by a wild elephant in the forest near her village in Chhattisgarh's Surajpur district on Saturday, officials said.

The incident occurred around 8 AM when the woman, identified as Paan Kunwar, was grazing her goats and collecting woods in the forest near Ghui village, said BS Bhagat Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Surajpur forest division. She suddenly came face to face with a tusker which trampled her to death, he said. Surajpur, a neighbouring district of Korba, is located over 300 km away from the state capital, Raipur.

An immediate aid of Rs 25,000 has been provided to the kin of the deceased, the DFO said, adding that the

About the incident

The incident occurred around 8 AM on Saturday when the woman, identified as Paan Kunwar, was grazing her goats and collecting woods in the forest near Ghui village. She suddenly came face to face with a tusker which trampled her to death.

remaining compensation of Rs 5.75 lakh will be given later. Human-elephant conflicts in the northern part of Chhattisgarh had been a major cause of concern for the last decade while the menace has further spread its footprint in some districts of the central region in the last few years. The districts which have been facing this menace mainly are Surguja, Raigarh, Korba, Surajpur, Mahasamund, Dhamtari, Gariaband, Balod, Balrampur and Kanker.

STARTUPS, BACKBONE OF INDIA

PM for innovating for India, from India

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday 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.

"Our startups are changing the rules of the game. I believe that startups are going to be the backbone of New India," he said interacting with youngsters from the world of startups through video conference. "Let us innovate for India, innovate from India."

India, he said, has over 60,000 startups with 42 unicorns.

The government is focusing on three aspects - first, to liberate entrepreneurship and innovation



from the web of government processes, bureaucratic silos; second, creating an institutional mechanism to promote innovation; and third, handholding of young innovators and young enterprises, he said.

Narrating successes during the recent years, he said 28,000 patents were

granted last year as compared to 4,000 patents in 2013-14. Against registration of 70,000 trademarks in 2013-14, 2.5 lakh trademarks have been registered in 2020-21.

Similarly, in the year 2013-14, where only 4,000 copyrights were granted, last year their number has crossed 16,000.

Over 7 lakh shortlisted for railway's NTPC Level 2 exam

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

The railways has shortlisted over seven lakh candidates for 35,281 posts for the Non-Technical Popular Categories (NTPC) Level 2 exam, the national transporter said on Saturday.

It said shortlisting of candidates has been done separately for each level based on options exercised and the educational qualifications of the candidates. "For second stage computer based test (CBT) of each level, candidates have been called 20 times the community-wise vacancies notified against each RRB (Railway Recruitment Board).

"In case multiple candidates have obtained same marks at the cut-off, all have been called," it said.

Based on merit obtained in second stage CBT, can-

didates will be shortlisted for third stage exam in which eight times the number of vacancies will be called. "The final result will contain unique list of 35,281 notified vacancies and no candidate will be appointed against more than one post.

"A candidate who has been shortlisted for high level post cannot be debarred for appearing in second stage CBT of lower level post," it said.

Earlier the shortlisting was done 10 times the vacancy, however, this time it is 20 times the vacancy for second stage, officials said.

According to the RRB NTPC exam dates, the CBT 2 exam is scheduled to be conducted on February 14 and 18, 2022. The RRB will release the RRB NTPC admit card for CBT 2 tentatively by last week of January 2022.

WAR SKILL DISPLAY



Army jawans display their war skills during the Army Day Parade, at KM Cariappa Parade Ground, in New Delhi, Saturday.

INDIAN ARMY'S MESSAGE

'Won't let any attempt to change status quo along India's border'

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

The Indian Army's message is clear that it will not let any attempt to unilaterally change the status quo along the country's borders succeed, Army Chief Gen M M Naravane said on Saturday.

In his address at the Army Day Parade here, he said last year was extremely challenging for the Army and cited the developments on the northern borders with China.

Army Day is observed on January 15 to mark Field Marshal K M Cariappa taking over as the first Indian



Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, replacing his British predecessor in 1949.

Referring to the eastern Ladakh standoff, Gen Naravane said that to keep the situation under control, the 14th round mili-

tary-level talks were held between India and China recently. He said joint efforts at various levels have led to disengagement in many areas which in itself is a constructive step.

Gen Naravane said that on the basis of mutual and equal security, efforts would continue to find a solution to the current situation. He asserted that the morale of the soldiers deployed on snow-capped mountains for the country's security was sky-high. "Our patience is a sign of our self-confidence, but no one should make the mistake of testing it," Gen Naravane said.

COVID SURGE

Only 24k people allowed to attend R-Day parade

New Delhi, Jan 15:

Approximately 24,000 people will be permitted to attend the Republic Day parade on January 26 this year given the COVID-19 situation in the national capital, sources in the defence establishment said on Saturday.

In 2020, before the pandemic struck India, around 1.25 lakh people were permitted to attend the parade, they noted.

Last year's Republic Day parade took place amid the Covid pandemic and close to 25,000 people were allowed to attend it, sources

mentioned. Like last year, this time too the parade may not have any foreign dignitary as the chief guest due to the pandemic, they said, adding India was planning to invite the leaders of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan.

Out of the approximately 24,000 people who will be attending the parade this year, 19,000 would be invited and the rest would be the general public, who can purchase tickets, sources said. All COVID-19 protocols will be followed at the parade.

PM ON 'PARIKSHA PE CHARCHA'

'Opportunity to discover emerging trends in world of education'

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

Urging students, parents and teachers to register for this year's 'Pariksha Pe Charcha', Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the initiative provides the opportunity to connect with India's dynamic youth and discover emerging trends in the world of education.

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Thursday invited students, teachers and parents to participate in the 5th edition of "Pariksha Pe Charcha 2022" and get a chance to be men-

tored by Prime Minister Modi. In a tweet, Modi said, "Exams are approaching and so is 'Pariksha Pe Charcha 2022.' Let's talk stress-free exams and once again support our brave #ExamWarriors, their parents and teachers."

"I urge you all to register for this year's #PPC2022," he said, sharing the link for registration.

"Personally, 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' is a fantastic learning experience. I get the opportunity to connect with our dynamic youth, understand their challenges and aspirations better," Modi

said. It also gives the opportunity to discover the emerging trends in the world of education, the prime minister said. The first edition of the prime minister's interaction programme with school and college students "Pariksha Pe Charcha 1.0" was held at the Talkatora Stadium on February 16, 2018.

In the subsequent editions of the programme, students, parents, teachers from across the nation and also from overseas interacted with him to discuss and overcome the stress emerging out of examinations in order to celebrate life.

Second phase of Ram temple foundation to be completed by Jan end

Ayodhya, Jan 15:

The construction work of Ram temple in Uttar Pradesh's Ayodhya is under way in full swing and the second phase of its foundation work would be ready by January end, officials have said.

"A part of the foundation completed. Work is under process for second foundation, it will be completed within month of January," Champat Rai, general secretary of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust told media persons.

He further informed that the construction work of the temple goes on 24x7.

Recently, a 3D animation film showing the process of the ongoing construction work of the Ram temple in Ayodhya was released online. "Through YouTube, we've tried to show ongoing construction work of Ram Mandir with the help of a 3D movie," Rai said. The main temple is being built in a total area of 2.7 acre while the total built up area is 57,400 square feet.

The length of the temple would be 360 feet and width 235 feet. The total height of the temple including the peak would be 161 feet and there would be three floors to it, each with a height of 20 feet.

Adherence of covid protocol vital during child's birth

BSP bags award for best supporting organisation



● At National Convention For Quality Circle

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 15: SAIL-Bhilai steel Plant has bagged the "QCFI-Best supporting organisation award (Public Sector)" to propagate Quality Concepts activities in the organisation. The award was given at Coimbatore by Quality Circle Forum of India at the National

Convention for Quality Circle (NCQC) 2021 held at Coimbatore. SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant had sponsored 48 teams in NCQC 2021, out of which 31 teams got Par-Excellence award and 16 teams got Excellent award. One team got Distinguish award. As many as 497 organizations participated in NCQC 2021. As many as 522 Teams physically presented case studies while 1508 teams presented case studies through virtual mode.

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 15: It is not necessary that the baby of a Covid positive pregnant woman will also have the infection, especially as long as it's in the stomach. The baby in the mother's womb is safer from corona infection.

However, there is a possibility of getting Covid infection if the protocol is not followed after child's birth, said Dr Rashmi Bhure of Health and Family Welfare Department and Medical Incharge of Home Isolation Department in Durg district.

Dr Rashmi Bhure said, "Covid infection is increasing very fast in Durg district. Every effort is

being made by the Health Department and the district administration to prevent the spread of infection. In such a situation, if there is a pregnant lady in the house, then there is no need to panic.

By following the covid protocol, one can save not only the pregnant woman but also her unborn child from covid infection. Further, even if a pregnant woman is Covid positive or had suffered infection earlier, there is no need to panic. To avoid a contagious disease like covid, one just needs to be aware and alert. Pregnant women should always stay in touch with the doctor and follow his/her recommendations."



Dr Rashmi Bhure clarified that pregnant women should not be brought to the hospital unnecessarily. Family must try to consult a doctor online. The immunity of pregnant women is less than others. Therefore, pregnant

women should pay special attention to cleanliness.

After touching anything, they must wash their hands with soap for 40 seconds and keep the mask on. They must consume seasonal fruits, green vegetables, milk etc regularly. They must consult a doctor before getting the vaccine. Even after getting infected, they must continue taking pregnancy medicines like iron, folic acid and calcium tablets. If the pregnant woman has a vaccine dose left, she can get it.

Even if the mother is or has been covid positive, she must feed the baby. Taking care of cleanliness, breastfeeding has to

be done while wearing a mask. They must keep in mind that droplets of sneeze or cough should not fall on the child. They should not hide information about being Covid positive and give complete information to the team of Home Isolation.

Special emphasis is being given by the Ministry of Health to promote institutional deliveries. Health workers are also instructed by the health department to encourage institutional deliveries. There is a free arrangement by the state government to take Covid positive women to Covid Hospital for delivery. Mitamin and ANM help them in this task. Special facility is available at

District Hospital Durg for the delivery of Covid positive mothers.

Pregnant women should follow the covid protocol, take sunlight everyday, Sanitize the things which are brought from outside; Use outside items only after 3 days; move out of the house only in an urgent situation; Get regular check-ups done, if possible give samples at home; Give complete information to the team of Home Isolation. They must avoid the cooked food brought from the market; do not engage in negative discussions; Avoid going to crowded places; and pregnant women should not be taken to the hospital unnecessarily.

BSP's M & HS dept begins covid testing at new centre in Sector 1 Hospital

Bhilai, Jan 15: The Medical & Health Services (M & HS) Dept of SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant that has been carrying out COVID testing at JLN Hospital & Research Centre near the Chest Ward, has now extended its COVID testing facility to BSP Sector 1 Hospital. This will enable faster testing of employees and their dependents and also reduce the load on the testing centre at JLN Hospital.

Rapid Antigen Test and Tru-Nat testing is being done at the new COVID testing facility that has begun functioning at BSP Sector 1 Hospital from January 15, 2022. COVID tests were done for 5 persons at this new testing centre today. The timings for COVID tests at this new testing centre in Sector 1 Hospital are from 09:00 hrs to 13:00 hrs from Monday to Saturday.

Commissioner inspects testing arrangement at Railway Station



Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 15: The passengers arriving from other cities are being tested for Covid 19 at the railway stations. Bhilai Municipal Corporation Commissioner Prakash Surve visited the Power House Railway Station and took stock of the testing facility. He inquired about the number of tests being done per day.

The security personnel informed that as soon as the passengers alight from the train, they are asked to

line up in queue for covid testing. Security personnel help the passengers in getting the tests done. BMC Commissioner instructed the team that if any person is found positive during the investigation, medicines should be provided to them immediately. For this purpose, the testing team must have an ample stock of medicines. Commissioner asked the security personnel to work diligently and ensure that all the people arriving from outside in the railway station could be

tested for Covid. CPM Tushar Verma said that on Saturday, a total of 42 people got tested at Kosanagar Urban Primary Health Center, 59 people got tested at Baikunthdham Urban Primary Health Center, 27 Covid tests were done at Khursipar Primary Health Center, and a number of people were tested at Junwani, Smriti Nagar, Khursipar, Sector 1 to HUDCO, and other places. 119 people were tested for Covid at Power House Railway Station. Out of all these, one person was found positive at Power House Railway Station. The team immediately provided the medicine to the patient. It is noteworthy that Mayor Neeraj Pal is in constant touch with the officials on telephone for covid combat operations. He has emphasized on testing, tracing, treatment and vaccination.

Bar & Rod Mill creates new records in TMT Rolling

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 15: The graph of production at SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant's Bar & Rod Mill has been steadily rising after its recent capital repairs. The Modex unit has created yet another day record on January 14, 2022 by rolling 1486 billets into TMT Bars of 20 mm diameter.

This is the best ever production in any TMT Bar profile since inception. The previous best day record was 3007 tonnes on January 03, 2022 when the Mill rolled 1455 billets into TMT Bars of 16 mm diameter.

The Mill also set a new shift record of rolling on January 14, 2022 with 1172 tonnes of TMT 20 mm bars rolled from 570 numbers of billets in night shift. The



previous best shift record was 1144 Tonnes of TMT 20 mm bars rolled from 557 numbers of billets on January 12, 2022.

Director I/c BSP, Anirban Dasgupta, Executive Directors Works, Anjani Kumar visited Bar & Rod Mill on Saturday to congratulate the Mill leadership and collective for the Mill's

record performance. They expressed confidence that the Mill collective would keep up the good performance with the support of associated shops and departments.

The leadership and collective of the modern Bar & Rod Mill have been working to further improve processes and work practices so as to ensure

that its customers get the best and desired quality of products.

CGM BRM, Mukesh Gupta stated that the record performance is the result of team work, timely maintenance and support from associated shops and departments. The BRM team is firmly committed to achieve all targets, he stated.

SSTC becomes Zonal Head under Tech Saksham Program

Run by Edunet in association with Microsoft and SAP in Chhattisgarh



Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 15: Shri Shankaracharya Technical Campus has become the Zonal Head of Microsoft in Chhattisgarh. This is because of hard efforts of the learned faculty members & Management officials. Tech Saksham is a joint skill development program run by Microsoft, SAP & Edunet.

Department of IT, Shri Shankaracharya Technical Campus (SSTC) organized 03 days Faculty development program on Artificial Intelligence under Tech Saksham Program as zonal head. This program was especially for faculty members of AICTE affiliated institutes from the Chhattisgarh state. Microsoft Certified Trainers from Edunet Foundation Avinash Seth

& Vinay meticulously covered well planned modules of Artificial Intelligence.

Here it needs a mention that Tech Saksham Program (TSP) is a top-up program that uses experiential learning in sciences, computer applications, vocational areas, and engineering, by imparting critical skills. The course content modules of the program were divided into 3 days, covering the subject Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Programming in Python. During these 3 days the hands on sessions were conducted by the trainers for the various algorithms of AI.

Total sixty faculties from Chhattisgarh state attended this training program. Participants paid their gratitude towards the coordinators for organizing such learning program in online mode.

Institute level coordinator Dr Jaspal Bagga, Vice Principal SSTC in her inaugural session stated the importance of upgradation of faculties in thrust areas in her welcome address. Dr Latika Pinjarkar HoD Department of Information Technology and the Coordinator of this FDP spoke about the objectives and outcomes of the program.

Dr P B Deshmukh Director Shri Shankaracharya Technical Campus congratulated coordinators for organizing such faculty development program on the Emerging technical area. Chairman IP Mishra & President Jaya Mishra, Shri Gangajali Education Society congratulated & encouraged for successful organization and completion of this Faculty Development Program.

CEO praises women self help groups of Kurmigundra

30 women of seven SHGs growing vegetables in 20 acres land

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 15: Women of village Kurmigundra are growing vegetables on a large scale on a 20-acre sprawling bari and meeting the demands of the local market. District Panchayat CEO Ashwini Dewangan conducted an inspection at this village and praised the women.

He said that Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel has a vision of creating self-supporting villages in line with Gandhiji's dreams of Suraji villages. Women are planting vegetables and are making good income. The demand of the local market is also being met and the children are also getting adequate nutrition.

CEO urged them to ac-



celerate this work. CEO said that the women here are doing a great job. Other groups will also take inspiration and work in this direction. On the occasion, the CEO also planted fruit bearing plants in the bari. CEO specifically discussed livestock development. He said that artificial insemination should be done in large numbers.

This will lead to breed improvement and rapid in-

crease in milk production. Secondly, along with this other livelihood support work like poultry farming will also have to be promoted. The more additional income opportunities are created, the faster rural development will happen.

He said that Gauthan is being developed as a livelihood centre. He asked the women to explore the market demands and find out the items which can be produced locally with a lit-



tle training. Accordingly, training arrangements will be made. Along with this, experts will also give information about how to create brand value.

CEO appreciated the women for rapidly adopting the innovations. He further said that Gauthan committees have also been formed to promote the works of Gauthan. Whatever decision the Gauthan Committee takes for progress, it should be

implemented on a war footing so that the Gothans can move towards self-reliance.

CEO conducted a meeting of the Veterinary Officer and employees of Janpad Panchayat Patan and instructed to make arrangements for the chicken sheds in gauthans of Khamharia, Sikola, Bharar, Kikirmeta, Parsahi, Gadadih, Kapsi, Ufra, Kesara, Gabdi, Khudmudi and Mahuda.

Nikhilesh Sahu elected President of Regional Sahu Mitra Sabha, Sec 5

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 15: The election of office bearers of Regional Sahu Mitra Sabha, Sector 5 for the triennial tenure was conducted in a cordial atmosphere as per the revised unified rules of Chhattisgarh Pradesh Sahu Sangh, Raipur and District Sahu Sangh, Bhilai Nagar. General election process was conducted under the directions of Election Observers Haridwarika Sahu (President District Sahu Sangh, Bhilai Nagar), Amol Das Sahu (General Secretary, District Sahu Sangh, Bhilai Nagar), Munna Lal Sahu (Executive President, Sahu Mitra Sabha, Bhilai Nagar), Manjusha Sahu (Vice-President) and Khed Ram Sahu (Treasurer Sahu Mitra Sabha, Bhilai Nagar). Nikhilesh Sahu (Former President, Sec 5)



and Manoj Kumar Sahu (Office Secretary, District Sahu Sangh, Durg) were in fray. Nikhilesh Sahu got 51 votes and Manoj Sahu got 22 votes. In this manner, Nikhilesh Sahu was elected president for the second consecutive triennial term. Dhruv Kumar Sahu for Vice President (Male) and Madhuri Sahu for Vice President (Female) were elected unopposed. The swearing-in of the re-elected office bearers was also conducted by observers. Senior members of the unit including

Banshilal Gurupanchayan, Amar Singh Sahu, Tikaram Sahu, Shri Revaram, Hariram, Ramkumar Sahu, Vinod Kekte, LK Sahu and Bhushan Lal Sahu were specially present in the programme. Damar Singh Sahu, Balgovind Sahu, Arun Sahu, Sharda Gurupanchang, Sandhya Sahu, Prabha Sahu, Meera Sahu, Shaibala Sahu, Jyoti Sahu, Aarti Sahu, Hemlata Sahu, Jhanik Sahu, Thaneswari Sahu, Umeshwari, Pramila, Damayanti, Pushpa, Chavan Sahu, Murlidhar Sahu, Khembai,

Kumari Sabhyata, Saroj, Bhagwati Sahu, Sitaram Sahu, Purushottam Sahu, Devanand Sahu, Krishna Kumar Sahu, Dinesh Sao, Banshilal Ganjir, Durga Sahu, Jitendra Baghel, Amit Sahu, Ghazi Ram Sahu, Deepak Sahu, Sevak Ram Sahu, Ojaswi Sahu, Hemant Sahu, Nakul Sahu, Vinod Sahu, Kamdev Sahu, Anandram Sahu, Suresh Kumar Sahu, Dushyant Sahu, Ajay Sahu, Mithlesh Sonboir, PR Sahu, Budh Sahu, Ghanaram Sahu and other members of Sahu Samaj extended best wishes to the elected office bearers. Khedram Sahu, Dameshwar Bharti, Manharan Sahu, Devendra Sahu, Sanat Sahu, Balram Kalihari, Purushottam Sahu, Sevak Ram Sahu, and Sitaram Sahu played vital role in organising the elections.

OBITUARY

Antaryami Senapati



Bhilai: Ex-DGM of SMS - BSP, Antaryami Senapati left for heavenly abode at the age of 78 years. He breathed last during treatment at ICU of JLN Hospital, Sector 9. Funeral procession will be taken out from his residence situated at Maitrikunj, Risali at around 10:00 hrs on January 16 and last rites of the mortal remains will be performed at Risali Muktidham. Ex-Officers Association (BSP) President SR Das and other office bearers have expressed heartfelt condolences.

Paddy will be purchased from all the registered farmers: CM

Duration of paddy procurement can be extended if required

Alleges that days of BJP in UP are numbered

Central Chronicle News



charged whether it is BJP at the Centre or in the state, they are least bothered about the common men and it is for this reason that many BJP leaders and MLAs are quitting the party in UP and this gives clear-cut indications that days of BJP are now numbered.

Speaking to section of

media persons at the Airport CM Bhupesh Baghel before leaving for Delhi commenting about charges by BJP on paddy purchase said that the state government has purchased paddy equivalent to what was purchased by BJP and till date around 70 lakh MT of paddy has been purchased and its lifting is also

going on. Though there were some minor hindrances due to sudden change in weather in some of the paddy purchase centres.

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel said that bad weather for the past few days has affected the ongoing process of paddy procurement on support price in the state. But farmers need not to worry about this situation, because as soon as the weather gets better, paddy procurement at the procurement centers will be expedited. In view of the present situation, Chief Minister Baghel has asked Agriculture Minister Ravindra Choubey to review the arrangements for paddy procurement and take the necessary steps in

this regard.

Chief Minister has said that paddy will be procured from all the registered farmers in the state. For this, instructions have been given to further expand the procurement system in the procurement centers. As soon as the weather improves, arrangements will be made to expedite the procurement of paddy from the farmers. He has said that the last date for procurement of paddy in the state is January 31, and the State Government is making every possible effort to achieve 100% of the paddy procurement target, but if required, the stipulated period of paddy procurement can be extended for the convenience of the farmers.

REHEARSAL



Rehearsal for R-Day parade is in full swing at local Police Parade ground here on Saturday.

FIR to be lodged against 19 people in district under Epidemic Act

For hiding information from administration even after testing positive for Coronavirus and putting lives of others in danger by roaming outside District Administration appeals to people to give correct information on the portal link

<http://homeisolation.cgovid19.in> or on the control room number 07712445785, 7880100331,

7880100332 if they test positive for Coronavirus

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 15: Collector and District Magistrate, Sourabh Kumar, while giving strict instructions to take strict action against the violators of Epidemic Act in Raipur district, has directed to register a criminal case with the police. As many as 19 such Covid positive patients have been identified in the district who have hidden their information by giving wrong telephone, address or by not registering themselves on the home isolation portal. So much so that they

have put the health and life of others in danger by coming out of their homes even after being positive. Even during the attempts of the administration to contact these people, they deliberately did not give correct information about themselves. Now FIR will be lodged against such people. Following the instructions of Collector Sourabh Kumar, action has been started in all the sub-divisions of the district including Municipal Corporation, Raipur, Birgaon. So far, 19 such persons have been identi-

fied in Raipur district, who have hidden information of testing positive for corona virus and have also deliberately not registered themselves on the home isolation portal <http://homeisolation.cgovid19.in>. Such patients have put the life and health of others at risk by going out of their houses in violation of the rules of home isolation.

Now FIR will be registered against such irresponsible patients in the concerned police station. According to the information, action is being taken against nine patients of Raipur Municipal Corporation area, six of Mandir Hasaud, one from Arang, one from Abhanpur and two patients of Tilda to register an FIR in the respective police station. An appeal has been made by the Raipur district administration to the common citizens that if they feel the

symptoms of corona, they must go for COVID testing, stay on isolation till the test report comes. If the test report is positive, if there are common symptoms of corona, then should stay at home isolation and immediately inform the portal link <http://homeisolation.cgovid19.in> or Raipur District Control Room phone number 07712445785, 7880100331, 7880100332. District administration team makes all arrangements for doctor, medicine, necessary assistance and hospitalization in emergency situation to patients registered on the portal. A certificate is also issued by the administration on completion of home isolation due to registration on the portal. Action will be taken against all such patients who are negligent and endanger the health and life of others after testing positive.

Ra 75000 withdrawn from complainant's bank account in 6 installments

Raipur, Jan 15: In a sensational fraud reported in Telibandha police station, unidentified fraud has reportedly siphoned Rs 75000 from the complainant's bank account in six separate installments without the complainant being sent any message or OTP. Complainant Rajesh Kumar Rajak came to know about the siphoning of amount from his bank account where he recently got updated his passbook. Police meanwhile have registered under Section 420 PIC against unidentified fraud and further investigation is now underway.

One arrested under Excise Act

Raipur: Urla police on Friday night arrested a man from Acholi locality under Excise Act after he was nabbed carrying 20 bottles of country liquor. Identified as Raju Pal, the accused was immediately taken to police station where he was later booked under Section 34-2 of Excise Act.

Singhdeo launches e-Panchayat web portal

Multiple modules will be available on a single portal

Portal will be effective in implementation, monitoring, evaluation and training of departmental plans



ing the state digitally empowered in the field of e-governance. He said that with this the state would move forward in the direction of political-social empowerment. It will also help in achieving the objectives of Panchayati Raj.

Singhdeo congratulated and extended best wishes to all the stakeholders including the departmental officers and the people of the state for this initiative. On the occasion of the launch of the portal, Commissioner of Panchayat and Rural Development Department Avinash Champawat, Departmental Secretary R. Prasanna, Special Secretary and MNREGA Commissioner Mr. Mohammad Kaiser Abdulhaq were also present. During the launch of the portal, Panchayat and Rural Development Minister Singhdeo took in-

formation from the officials about the process of payment of salaries of Panchayat Secretaries through the portal. He also inquired about the availability of data related to probation, promotion as well as information related to all the basic facilities available in the villages and access of benefits of government schemes by each family. Departmental officials said that the availability of data related to facilities including salaries of Panchayat Secretaries is on the portal. Some new information is being added. On this, Singhdeo suggested that the complete data base of each family including basic facilities in every street and locality of the village should be updated by March 31, on the basis of which all services can be made available in those gram panchayats by making plans.

Accountant booked for embezzling firm's Rs 40 lakh

Raipur, Jan 15: In a blatant case of embezzlement registered in Ganj police station, the absconding accountant has allegedly embezzled Rs 40 lakh from the complainant's firm.

According to police, complainant Dikesh Kumar Sahu is an employee of M/s Vigre Solution India during entire last had allegedly embezzled Rs 40 lakh from the firm before fleeing from the office. The bungling of amount from the firm's account came to light only recently the internal auditing of the firm after which a complaint was lodged against the absconding accused. Police meanwhile have registered an offence under Section 409 IPC against the accused and further investigation is now underway.

Preetam Ram Tirki appointed as Director

Raipur, Jan 15: MLA Preetam Ram Tirki has been appointed as the Director in the Board of Directors of Chhattisgarh Medical Services Corporation (CMSC) and as the President of the Board till further orders.

One arrested under Arms Act

Raipur: DD Nagar police on Saturday arrested a youth under Arms Act from Changorabhata locality after he was nabbed carrying a knife. Identified Viraj Singh, the accused was immediately taken to the police station where he was booked under Section 25 of Arms Act.

3 arrested for forging fake letters to defame minister

Raipur, Jan 15: Rakhi police on Saturday arrested three persons for allegedly preparing fake letters and circulating the Public Education Directorate. The mastermind of his fraud attempt is a retired DEO of Chhattisgarh. Taking strong note submitted complainant by Ashutosh Chavre, deputy director in Public Education Directorate, lodged complaint in Rakhi police station that fake letters are being circulated in the Directorate to fraudulently defame several officials and even the departmental minister. Registering an offence under Section 419, 469 IPC, police launched an investigation and soon succeeded in pinning retired DEO Gaidandal Chandrakar who instantly denied of any wrong doings.

However police continued investigation against him and reached the post office from where the fake letters were being circulated. Police then detained the accused for further interrogation and in the process recovered two fake diaries in which the hand writing was identically matched with that of the accused. Finding no way to escape, Chandrakar confessed police of being in collusion with Sanjay Singh Thakur and Kapil Kumar Devdas. It was these two reportedly helping Chandrakar and police have also recovered from them several un-posted letters. Police is now investigating the matter and all three accused are being interrogating further.

'Pension Adalat' programme by EPFO on Jan 17

Raipur, Jan 15: Employees' Provident Fund Organisation, Regional Office, Raipur, Chhattisgarh organises "Pension Adalat" programme for the virtual hearing towards redressal of the grievances received from pensioners by the Regional P.F. Commissioner. The time schedule of the programme for EPF Pensioner scheduled for January 17, 2022 is from 2.30 pm to 3.30 pm. The pensioners have to follow the link to participate in the programme. They have to download 'Google Meet App' from Google Play Store or App Store and forward a valid Whatsapp no. along with gmail address to the EPFO office through return email so that the

joining link of the Virtual meeting should be forwarded to pensioners at the time of the meeting. Pensioners should forward the requisite documents/submission/evidences to this office either through return e-mail or be ready to upload the same during or after the said virtual hearing. The concerned pensioners are requested to send their specific grievance to whatapp no. 07712583890 of the office. It should also be noted that the complete PF Account number/PPO number and other necessary and relevant service details/particulars along with available documentary evidences in support to the grievance should explicitly be mentioned/enclosed.

'Employment Mission' will be formed in Ch'garh

Raipur, Jan 15: In order to create 12 to 15 lakh new employment opportunities in Chhattisgarh in the next five years, the state government has decided to form Chhattisgarh Employment Mission headed by Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel. Chief Secretary Amitabh Jain will be its Vice President and Principal Secretary, Alok Shukla will be the Chief Executive Officer of the mission. Various senior officers including the Managing Director of the Minor Forest Produce Association will be its members.

In the last three years, many innovative programs have been started in the state with the objective of promoting employment in all the districts,

which have created a large number of permanent employment opportunities and have improved the income and standard of living of the people. Along with the initiatives of Chhattisgarh Herbals, effective implementation of programs like Godhan Nyay Mission, Tea Coffee Board, giving agricultural status to pisciculture and lac production, rural industrial park, millet mission and commercial plantation, new employment opportunities have been created in the state. There are unlimited possibilities. Through the mission, coordination of the above new programs will be developed with the skill development programs conducted in urban and rural areas. Also the IITs, triple

I.T IIM, NIT located in the state and other expertise institutions will be leveraged in creating new employment opportunities. Other members of the mission will be Director Industries, Director Technical Education, Employment and Training, Director Fisheries, Managing Director Village Industries, Hand Crafts Development Board, Khadi Board, Managing Director State Rural Livelihood Mission, Chief Executive Officer Godhan Nyay Mission, Chief Executive Officer of the mission, Alok Shukla has been directed by the state government to prepare and submit an action plan regarding the mission within a month.

COVID-19: Ch'garh records 6,153 new cases, 5 deaths

Raipur, Jan 15: Chhattisgarh's COVID-19 count rose to 10,50,228 on Friday with an addition of 6,153 fresh infections, while the death toll rose to 13,639 after five more patients succumbed to the infection in the state, an official said. The state's case positivity rate was 10.21 per cent, he said. The rate indicates the percentage of people who test positive for the virus of those overall who have been tested. On Thursday, Chhattisgarh had recorded 6,015 cases and seven deaths. The number of recoveries reached 10,05,727 after 197 people were discharged from hospitals, while 3,886 others completed their home isolation during the day, the official said.

The state now has 30,862 active cases. Raipur district reported 1,859 new infections, taking the caseload to 1,71,445, including 3,158 deaths. The district has 8,369 active cases, the official said. Raigarh recorded 949 cases followed by Durg 854, Korba 444, Bilaspur 391, Janjgir-Champa 243, Rajnandgaon 209 and Jashpur 188, among other districts, he said. With 60,257 swab samples examined during the day, the number of COVID-19 tests in the state went up to 1,55,40,009, the official said. Chhattisgarh's coronavirus figures are as follows: Positive cases 10,50,228; new cases 6,153; death toll 13,639; recovered 10,05,727; active cases 30,862, total tests 1,55,40,009.

Show cause notice to 120 officers, employees

For negligence in contact tracing work

Raipur, Jan 15: Collector and District Magistrate Raipur Sourabh Kumar has given show cause notices to 120 officers and employees for negligence in the work of contact tracing. Quarantine and sampling work is to be done by the Health Department within 6 hours of the knowledge of the corona positive patient. These officers and employees were put on duty in this work. They were not present in the auditorium at

New Circuit House, Raipur under the order nor have they discharged the responsibilities entrusted on them. This act is a clear violation of the Civil Services Conduct Rules 1965 and has hindered the work of disaster management.

Collector and District Magistrate said in the show cause notice that for indiscipline and obstructing the disaster management work, why disciplinary / penal proceedings should not be initiated against them by deducting the salary of the period of absence. Giving the last opportunity to these

officers, he has directed them to immediately appear before the team head in the auditorium at New Circuit House, Raipur and submit the response to the show cause notice within three days before the nodal officer/assistant nodal officer. Action will be taken against them under Chhattisgarh Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules 1966 and Sections 51 to 80 of Disaster Management Rules 2005 and Epidemic Diseases Act 1897 for not submitting the reply within the stipulated time period.

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State Election Commissioner reviews polling preparations

For three-tier Panchayat polls Instructs officials to ensure 100% adherence to Covid-19 protocol

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 15: State Election Commissioner Thakur Ram Singh reviewed the preparations for the elections to be held on January 20 under the three-tier Panchayat elections by taking a meeting of the Observers and Deputy District Election Officers on Thursday. In this meeting held through video conferencing, he said that elections are the biggest strength of democracy. It is the responsibility of the commission to conduct elec-

tions from time to time to elect its public representatives, but with the global pandemic Covid-19, conducting elections is a very challenging task. For this, there is a great need for the cooperation of the officers and employees engaged in the election work as well as the general public. We all have a responsibility to vote safely. In view of the increasing infection of Covid-19, he instructed to take extra precautions. The State Election Commissioner said that there should be no shortage of polling team to conduct the polls, so keep sufficient reserve team ready by training additional people. He said that if any person included in the polling party has any symptoms like cold, cough, cold, fever etc., then give relief to them and prepare additional personnel by training

them so that there is no hindrance in the election work. He said that it is mandatory for all the people involved in the polling party to have complete vaccination, if they are eligible for booster dose, then they should also get the booster dose done. The State Election Commissioner said that the guidelines issued by the commission from time to time should also be followed.

Covid-19 guideline to be followed in polling stations

The Election Commissioner said that there should be adequate arrangements for social distancing, sanitization etc. in the polling stations. Like the urban body elections, health workers will be stationed in each polling station in the Panchayat elections too. No person will be debarred from voting due to

Covid-19 infection, but if any infected person is willing to vote, then he will be able to vote wearing PPE kit but he will have to give prior information about it in sufficient time. The voter will have to arrange the PPE kit himself. Covid-19 infected persons will be able to vote last.

Make the villagers aware for safe voting

The State Election Commissioner said that the Jago voters (Jago Campaign) villagers should be motivated for safe voting. He said that inform the villagers about the measures to prevent from Covid-19. If anyone in the village has a complaint of cold, cold etc., then explain to him about what safety measures he has to vote. Ensure maximum participation of villagers in the awareness campaign.

Bring promptness in reporting of election work

The State Election Commissioner directed all the District Election Officers to ensure that all necessary reports are sent to the Commission on time. If there is any problem at the ground level, then inform the commission immediately. He said that today is the technological age and all the officers and employees are well aware of the importance of timely reporting. He said whether it is voting, counting of votes or other information

related to the election, about which it is necessary to inform the commission, make sure to inform the commission immediately. He said that this is a very small election but all of you have to work with full responsibility keeping zero error. The State Election Commissioner said that in relation to the promotion of the candidates, additional guidelines have also been issued by the Commission, under which a ban has been

imposed on meetings, rallies, processions and any such activity in which there is a possibility of crowd gathering. Officers engaged in election work should keep all these things in mind, if anyone is found violating the guidelines, then necessary action should also be taken on them. The training of polling parties, arrangement of polling material, security and law and order were also reviewed. It is noteworthy that on

January 20, under the three-tier Panchayat general and by-election, voting will be held for 330 Panch, 152 Sarpanch, 27 Janpad members and 3 Zilla Panchayat members. Secretary Mr. Rimijuis Ekka, Deputy Secretary Dr. Santosh Kumar Devangan, Under Secretary Mr. Alok Srivastava, Mr. Pranay Verma, Joint Director Finance Mr. Jerome Ekka, Staff Officer Mr. M. Prajapati were also present in the meeting.

TRAFFIC POLICE IN ACTION



Traffic police took action against the two-wheeler riders not having valid documents and driving licence and imposed penalty against them.

Arpana Sancheti receives Master of AI degree

From Scotland University



Raipur, Jan 15: Arpana, resident of Raipur and daughter of Sanjay and Arpana Sancheti, received Master of Artificial Intelligence degree from Adinburg Scotland University (UK). She topped in her examination and earned laurels for the country and state. Her success has been hailed by her family members and friends.

Control room of Raipur district admn is operating 24 hrs

To help corona patients Help and complete information is being received from the control room's phone- 07712445785, 788100331, 788100332

Doctors, counselors are encouraged by talking to Corona patients

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 15: Control room is being operated by Raipur district adminis-

tration to provide immediate help to every corona affected patient. The team of doctors, counselors and staff appointed here under the guidance of Collector Saurabh Kumar is engaged in helping patients 24 hours through this control room. 150 employees are deployed under the leadership of Dr. Anjali Sharma, the nodal officer. This team works to meet the needs of every patient undergoing treatment for corona by staying in home monitoring (isolation). General information is being made available to the patients through telecommunication of the control room of the district administration - 07712445785, 788100331, 788100332. To provide

medical assistance in home monitoring to the patients, assistance is being provided through 6 telephone numbers of home monitoring number 7566100283, 7566100284, 7566100285, 788100313, 788100314, 788100315. By contacting these telephone numbers, patients and their families can get help in every way related to home monitoring. By contacting this control room, such patients who are unable to contact their personal doctor due to any reason or who need medical consultation, they also get necessary consultation by contacting the duty doctor appointed here. If there is a need to send a patient from home isolation to the hospital, this

team of control room of Raipur district administration also arranges for ambulance, coordination for admission to the concerned hospital. During home isolation, this control room of the district administration also performs the important task of giving information related to the availability of medicines, corona test to the patient. This control room motivates the patients to follow the corona protocol rules along with making the patients aware about the food and diet during the illness. This control room, which provides continuous service for 24 hours, can be contacted at any time for assistance during corona infection.

Aman of Korba and Shaurya of Dhamtari to get state gallantry award

Jury took the decision under the chairmanship of Minister Anila Bhedia

Raipur, Jan 15: Aman Jyoti Zahire of Korba district and Shaurya Pratap Chandrakar of Dhamtari district have been selected for the state gallantry award. They will be felicitated by Governor Ms. Anusuiya Uikey at the main function of Republic Day on January 26 in the capital Raipur. The Jury Committee of Chhattisgarh State Child Welfare Council under the chairmanship of Women and Child Development Minister Mrs. Anila Bhedia has announced the names of both for gallantry awards. Shaurya Pratap Chandrakar and Aman Jyoti Zahire have been selected on the recommendation of the Jury Committee. Showing courage, these children have saved the lives of others with their understanding, without caring about their own lives. Both will be given a citation and sil-



ver medal in cash amount (by cheque) of Rs 15,000 each.

Aman Jyoti put his life at stake, saved friend's life

Aman Jyoti of Korba district had put his life at stake to save his friend. This incident is of August

01, 2021 on Friendship Day. At around 02 in the afternoon, to celebrate the birthday of one of his friends, Sahil had gone for a picnic near the waterfall of Parsakhela Dam, a picnic spot 20 km away from Korba. Meanwhile, Ashish Thakur, a student of class

12th, went to the shore to wash his hands and feet before the waterfall. There he slipped and fell in the rock and started flowing in the strong current of water. Due to the deep gorge ahead, there was a danger of falling in it. All the friends were horrified to see Ashish flowing in the dangerous slippery rock and the swift current of the water. Ashish did not know how to swim and started shouting save-save. Amanjyoti, a 15-year-old student, jumped into the waterfall and saved Ashish, who was older than him. Aman also did not know how to swim, but thinking that he would try to save the friend in any way, he jumped into the

water. Aman caught his friend Ashish while floating among the rocks in the water. After holding Ashish for a while, another friend Dipanshu reached, they both brought Ashish to the shore. Ashish had fainted as he was swept away by the strong current of water. Bringing him to the shore, he took out the water filled in Ashish's stomach. Aman's wisdom and courage saved the life of his friend Ashish. Due to the strong current of water and hitting the rocks, the bone of Aman's hand had slipped. He also suffered severe injuries to his arms, legs, throat and chest. All the friends reached the district hospital with Ashish and Aman. After treatment here, when everyone returned home safely, everyone praised Aman's courageous actions.

Shaurya stopped the current from spreading and saved people's lives

This incident is of June 13 2021. Around 11.00 in the morning, Resident Bhushan Chandrakar, Mahendra Tarak, Parasram Sahu,

Yogeshwar Sahu, Doman Patel, Vijay all resident of village Senchuva, Post-Chest, District- Dhamtari were cleaning and doing necessary work in the field around 11 am in the morning. At the same time, the electric wire passing through the field collided with the nearby tree located in the field and caught fire, due to which the branch of the tree started burning. At the same time, Shaurya Pratap Chandrakar went to see the field with his father Bhushan Chandrakar. Seeing the tree burning, Shaurya shouted loudly for everyone to get out of the field and soon informed the line man Surendra Dhruv to turn off the electrical power on the phone in the electricity office. A major accident was averted due to power outage. The field was full of water. The electric current could spread due to the water. Due to the understanding and foresight of Shaurya Pratap Chandrakar, the lives of all those present there were saved. The local people praised this act of bravery.

So far more than 68.65 lakh MT paddy procured in the state

Raipur, Jan 15: In the current season of procurement of paddy on support price in Chhattisgarh, 68 lakh 65 thousand 139 metric tonnes of paddy has been purchased from 17 lakh 07 thousand 974 farmers in 2484 paddy procurement centers of the state till today evening. So far, 65.38 percent of the estimated target of paddy procurement by the state government has been On the initiative of Chief Minister Mr. Baghel, along with the purchase of paddy this year, fast lifting of paddy for custom milling is also being done. 33.63 lakh metric tonnes of paddy has been lifted through D.O. and T.O. procured. Officials of the Food Department said that D.O. has been issued for 31 lakh 20 thousand metric tonnes of paddy purchased on support price. About 26 lakh 19 thousand metric tonnes of paddy has been lifted by the millers from the procurement centers.

Similarly, T.O. for transportation of 13 lakh 12 thousand metric tonnes of paddy so far has been issued. Against which 7 lakh 44 thousand metric tonnes of paddy has been lifted from the committees. Janjgir-Champa district ranks

first in the state in terms of procurement of paddy on support price till January 13. There, 6 lakh 09 thousand 324 metric tonnes of paddy has been purchased. On the other hand, Rajnandgaon district ranks second in paddy procurement in the state. There, 6,01,528 metric tonnes of paddy has been procured. Mahasamund district is at the third position in the state in the procurement of paddy today. In Mahasamund district, 4 lakh 77 thousand 258 metric tonnes of paddy has been procured. According to the information received from the Food Department, till January 13, 1,14,144 MT in Bastar district, 46,892 MT in Bijapur district, 10,988 MT in Dantewada district, 2,13,751 MT in Kanker district, 1 in Kondagaon district on support price till January 13. 05,823 MT, Narayanpur district 16,174 MT, Sukma district 31,319 MT, 3,63,608 MT in Bilaspur district, 48,245 MT in Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi district, 1,07,155 MT in Korba district, 2,86,069 MT in Mungeli district, 3,86,261 MT in Raigarh district, Balod district 3,78,715 metric tonnes of paddy were procured.

OBITUARY



Sanjay Surana

Bemetara: Ratan Talkies owner Sanjay Surana passed away on Saturday. He was member of Central Circuit Cine Association. Theatre business suffered a big loss due to sudden demise of Sanjay Surana.

Dr Shivhare nominated 'Global Diabetic Forum' founder president

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 25: Renowned diabetic specialist of Raipur Dr Raka Shivhare has been nominated as founder president of 'Global Diabetic Forum'. The recently concluded web conference of 'Global Diabetic Forum' was inaugurated by State Health Minister T S Singhdev and honoured the doctors and social organisations for their good work in the field of diabetes. Dr Shivhare said, "this corona pandemic



needs to be tackled by the diabetic professionals and would share their research work. The forum also honoured 'Badhte Kadam' of Raipur and Little Star Foundation of Katni for their social work.

CAIT filed objections in CCI for Amazon

Raipur, Jan 15: CAIT National Vice President Amar Parwani, chairman Mangal Maloo, Amar Gidwani, State President Jitendra Doshi, States Working President, Vikram Singh Deo, Parmanand Jain, Vashu Makhija, State General Secretary Suriender Singh, State Working General Secretary Bharat Jain, State Treasurer Ajay Agrawal and state media incharge Sanjay Choubey informed the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) has filed a petition before the Competition Commission

of India seeking to block the transaction which has been entered into by Amazon where they will acquire 100% shareholding in Cloudtail. The petition has been filed through its lawyer Abir Roy of law firm Sarvada Legal, providing instances wherein Amazon gives preference to Cloudtail and such preference will only become more pronounced after this transaction, which would have a destabilizing effect on the e-commerce market of India.

CAIT National vice President Mr. Amar Parwani & State

President Mr. Jitendra Doshi informed the petition provides evidence to show Cloudtail charges less fees/commission and is a preferential seller on the platform, and with a 100% acquisition of Cloudtail, a preferred seller and the marketplace at its e-commerce portal, Amazon will cause an adverse effect on the market. A marketplace like Amazon, which is supposed to be fair and neutral and as per rules have to be purely a technology providing forum for conducting e-commerce activities by the sellers who are

registered with its portal, continues to unabashedly distort the entire ecosystem. This transaction is not only in violation of competition law but is also a violation of FDI norms too. Amazon has proposed to completely acquire Prione by acquiring all the shares held by Hober Mallow Trust. Presently, Prione is controlled by Hober Mallow Seventy Six percent (76%) of the share capital of Prione is held by Hober Mallow. Amazon Asia-Pacific Resources Pvt Ltd already owns 23% of the share capital of Prione, and Amazon

Eurasia Holdings S.a.r.l. owns 1% of the share capital of Prione. Therefore, Amazon holds 24% stake in Prione as of today. However, by acquiring the shares of Hober Mallow, Amazon and its affiliated entities would have 100% stake in Prione. Cloudtail India Pvt Ltd (Cloudtail) is a 100% subsidiary of Prione and is also presently the largest seller on Amazon's e-commerce platform. Therefore, the proposed combination raises some concerns from the viewpoint of competition law-said the Mr. Parwani & Mr. Doshi.

SDM administers oath to NPP President Hemendra Goswami



In a simple programme adhering to Covid-19 guidelines

Mungeli, Jan 15: The newly elected President Mungeli Nagar Palika Parishad (NPP) Hemendra Goswami was administered oath in a simple programme in NPP Mungeli here on Friday and on the

first day he started the work with laying of stone for developmental works.

Prior to assuming office as NPP President, Hemendra Goswami had earlier worked as acting-President here for a short time. It was in the elections held on Jan 5 that he won the post with 15 votes.

Hemendra Goswami was administered oath at the hands of SDM Amit Kumar in a simple programme. It is adhering to Covid-19 guidelines and in view of increasing number of cases that this oath ceremony was held. During this Congress corporator and Aldermen along with Gyatri Anand Dewangan, Soni Anand Jangde and Mona Nagre were present.

Post-mortem of person done after police intervene

On his death after consuming of liquor with pesticide

Central Chronicle News

Khairagarh, Jan 15: A elderly person succumbed to consuming of poison along with liquor mid-way to Khairagarh Government Hospital and after which the family members directly took back home and were making preparations for performing final rites on Friday morning.

On getting information in this regard, the Police administration reached the village and stopped the final rites preparations and handed over the body to family members after its post-mortem.

As per information in



this regard, one Dayaram Mahima S/o M Mahima, (55), R/o Gram Pathan Jurlakala under Khairagarh thana had consumed 250 ml pesticide along with liquor on Jan 13 at 5:00 pm.

With his condition deteriorating rapidly he was rushed to Civil Hospital Khairagarh and where after his primary treat-

ment, the doctors referred him to District Hospital. But failing to get any vehicles, the family members took him to hospital in their private vehicle and he collapsed near village Badhaitola. After this the family members brought him back to home and had started preparations for performing final rites on Friday morning.

On getting information in this regard the Police and local administration approached the family members in the village and got his post-mortem done at Civil Hospital and then handed over the body to family members.

Dr Pankaj Vaishnav who conducted the post-mortem of Dayaram informed that the deceased is yet to come and then only exact reasons behind death would be known. It was probably due to some domestic problems that the person had consumed pesticide along with liquor and which resulted in his death.

Two nabbed while operating 'satta'



Cash of Rs 13000 seized along with 'satta-patti'

Central Chronicle News

Khairagarh, Jan 15: Khairagarh Police arrested two 'satta' operators as per tip from an informer on Thursday. It was on SP's instructions, a team under leadership of TI RK Sahu was formed and reaching the site at Meerabai Chowk, arrested one Atul

Singh alias Gudda while making bid before a number along with the 'satta-patti' and seized cash of Rs 7670 from his possession and 2 'satta-pattis'.

In the same way in another incident, the accused Kmal Sharma S/o Ratan Lal Sharma was nabbed while writing 'satta-patti' ner Bharat Electronic Shop' in Itwari Baza and seized cash of Rs 4750 from him. The Police booked both of them under section 4 (1) of Gambling Act.

Commissioner inspects Balco and NTPC Covid Containment Zone

Central Chronicle News

Korba, Jan 15: Municipal Commissioner Kuldeep Sharma here inaugurated the Covid Containment Zone, in Balco Hospital and NTPC. He took stock about the status of corona investigation being done in the hospitals, number of positive cases, availability and distribution status of medicines given to the positive patients etc. and gave necessary directions to the hospital management.

In view of the increasing infection of Corona, the administration is working on a full alert mode, along with Covid investigation being done at the hospitals and other designated places of the Health Department, as well as in the hospitals run by public and industrial establishments.

Commissioner Kuldeep Sharma along with Chief Medical Health Officer of the district, Dr B.B. Borde and S.D.M. Mr. Paikra visited NTPC hospital and Balco Covid centre, during which he inspected



the arrangements of the hospitals intensively besides taking information about the Covid investigation being done in the hospitals and the daily positive cases and distribution of medicines etc.

He instructed the officials said that the number of tests done daily, number of positive patients and distribution of medicines should be made available daily to the zone commissioner of the corporation and the concerned officers of the corporation administration.

Commissioner Sharma also inspected the newly

constructed hospital and its arrangements by Balco Management, and he inspected the Isolation Ward, General Ward, Male and Female Ward, ICU, Donating and inquired about the availability of oxygen cylinder etc.

The Commissioner also reached the outer place of the hostel premises and discussed with the caretaker and officials of the child management and directed them that no person should go out of the Containment Zone and outsiders should not enter inside as per protocol.

Sufficient bundles of gunny bags available in district: DMO

Central Chronicle News

Jagdalpur, Jan 15: The paddy purchase on MSP by Bastar district administration from farmers is going on smoothly through Societies. District Marketing Officer (DMO) informed that it is due to ensuring of sufficient gunny bags policy in each society by the state government that there is no shortage of gunny bags till date.

He informed that as against the target of purchase of 1.61 lakh MT of paddy, so far 1.14 lakh MT paddy has been purchased from 24,489 farmers till Jan 13. As per target balance paddy of 48,676 MT is expected to be purchased in coming days and for this 2434 'gathans' of gunny bags will be required.

Presently 2907 'gathans' (bundles) of gunny bags are available in the centre and 1637 are there in PPCs and 1270 are in godown of MARFED. So there are sufficient numbers of gunny bags available for purchase of remaining quantity of paddy from the farmers.

Shopkeepers take stake in hoarding and spreading rumors

Central Chronicle News

Mungeli, Jan 15: As Covid cases continue to rise in the region, the prices of essential commodities apart from prices of Tobacco Gutka, Panmasala and other products continue to rise as many shopkeepers have taken to hoarding and spreading rumors of

a proposed lockdown through direct rumor spreading and hoarding.

The administration has kept itself isolated from the developments. After spreading rumors of lockdown many traders are selling stuff like Gutka used extensively in the state at a price of 500-600 rupees against the actual price of Rs. 190 per

unit. While lovers of Beedi rolls, another favourite among the rural population, is also being sold at a higher price and duplicates of the same are also circulating in the market.

Trades have hoarded goods like sugar salt, oil, pulses, legumes vegetables and tubers, leading to a direct rise in prices

both in rural and urban regions of the district. Rise of Rs 5-15 has been reported in almost every second essential commodity product in the region. Many alert citizens have sought the administrations intervention into the matter and asked for proposals of regulations against hoarding of essential goods.

CEO demand 31 percent Dearness Allowance

Central Chronicle News



Arang, Jan 15: On the provincial call of Chhattisgarh Employees-Officers Federation, under the leadership of teshil convener of the Federation Manik Lal Mishra, the presidents and office bearers of all the organizations affiliated to the Federation of Arang development block, following the rules of Covid-19, have demanded 31 percent dearness allowance similar to the center. A memorandum was submitted to the sub-divisional offi-

cer Arang Atul Vishwakarma in the name of the Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh Government regarding the house rent allowance and other 14-point pending demands. On this occasion, Federation co-convenor Tapendra Bais, General Secretary Santilal Sahu, Secretary Anita Soni, Co-Secretary Arvind Vaishnav, President of the clerical class government employees union Keshav Kumar Dahria, Pitambar Das Manikpuri, Dhanesh Kumar Baghel, Motilal Sahu, Thansingh from

Health Employees Union. Chandrakar, Lalit Sahu, President of Chhattisgarh Teachers Association Upendra Deshlahare, Bhukhan Lal Chandrakar, President of Chhattisgarh Lecturers Association G.R. Tandon, Vijay Chandrakar, Rahul Joshi from Chhattisgarh Patwari Union, HL Yadav from Treasury Officers Association, Hemant Chelak from State Third Class Government Employees Union, Sanjay Chandrakar, Jiteshwar Devangan, Ramkumar Sinha from Chhattisgarh Third Class Government Employees Union, including those affiliated to the Federation were present. Before handing over the memorandum, the employees-officers raised their voice by raising slogans expressing their anger for the fulfillment of their fundamental rights, dearness allowance and other pending demands.

PUBLIC NOTICE

(In Relation of Immovable Property Commercial Shop bearing Khassa No. 275, Comprising Area 498 Sq. Ft. Property Situated at Village Bhanpuri, Banjar Mata Ward, Ward No. 05, P. H. No. 039, R.I.C. Raipur-1, Tahsil & District Raipur (C.G.). This is to inform to General Public that the Original Previous Sale Deed Dated 08.06.2000, Vide Book No. A-1, Volume No. 24169, at Pages 61 to 70, Document Sl. No. 820 (Ka), Registered in the Office of Sub-Registrar, Raipur (C.G.) the same Sale Deed duly executed by Shri Mahesh Wadhvani S/o Shri Asudamal Wadhvani in favour of Shri Laxman Das Bajaj, S/o Shri Shadamal Bajaj has been lost/Misplaced by Present owner Smt. Usha Bajaj W/o Shri Laxman Das Bajaj. Written intimation duly given in the Police Station, Khantalar, District Raipur (C.G.) on 15.01.2022, for Lost of above Sale Deed by the property owner Smt. Usha Bajaj W/o Shri Laxman Das Bajaj. Now, Smt. Usha Bajaj W/o Shri Laxman Das Bajaj has applied for Loan from My Client, Central Bank of India, Khantalar Branch, Raipur (C.G.), if any Person/Bank/Corporation/Society/Institution/ Govt. or No Govt. Authority etc., having an interest in the above Property or any part thereof, may make their claims/objections with documentary proof to the undersigned office within 07 Days from the Date of Publication, without any reference to such claim and the same, if any shall be considered as waived & My client shall be able to create mortgage on said property. Place- Raipur Date - 15.01.2022 Ashutosh Mishra Office Address - Flat No. F-3, Modern Complex, Motibag Chowk, Raipur (C.G.) Landline No. 0771-2222042 Mobile - 9425548998

Public Notice

This is to inform to the public that the original Previous Sale Deed dated 03/02/2001 is registered in the office of Sub-Registrar Raipur Vide Book No. A/1, Volume No. 46054, Serial No. 4440/Ga, Page No. 20 to 27 executed by Shri Govind Ram Udasi S/O Late Shri Bhai Madan Das Udasi R/O LIG 1704, Veer Sawarkar Nagar, Raipur (C.G.) in favour of Shri Santosh Kumar Tiwari S/O Shri Tilak Dhari Tiwari R/O LIG 498, Veer Sawarkar Nagar, Raipur (C.G.) & two more Agreement & Sale deed Dated 24/01/2008 is registered in the office of Sub-Registrar Raipur Vide Book No. A/1, Volume No. 46057, Serial no. 1509, 1908/Ga, Page No. 58 to 66 & 51 to 57 executed by the C.G. Griha Nirman Mandal in favour of Shri Govind Ram Udasi S/O Late Shri Bhai Madan Das Udasi R/O LIG 1704, Hirapur, Raipur (C.G.) for Part of Kh. No. 2381, 475, 481, 482/1, 482/2, 482/7, 57/92, 429/1, 482/4, Plot No. LIG 1704, Slice III, Area 518.29 Sq. Ft. Situated at Jarvai alias Heerapur, CGHB, Veer Sawarkar Nagar Ward No. 01, P.C. No. 103, RIC- Raipur (C.G.) in respect of property owner has been lost/Misplaced by Owner Shri Pradeep Tiwari S/O Shri Tilakdhari Tiwari R/O LIG 498, Veer Sawarkar Nagar, Raipur (C.G.). The FIR has been placed for lost of the above said Sale deeds by the owner. Now Shri Pradeep Tiwari has applied for loan from India Shelter Finance Corporation Ltd. hereby invites claims & objections, if any, for the mortgage the above said property within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice along with relevant proofs and documents supporting the claim in my office. If no objections are received within above mentioned time, without any reference to such claims and the claims if any shall be deemed to have been given up or waived. Raipur Vijay Shankar Tiwari Dated 14/01/2022 779, 'Gauri - Kesar Kuni', Sundar Nagar, Raipur (C.G.) Phone 0771-2242945, Mobile 94252-08945, Mobile 90390-08945

Bank of Baroda E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Properties. Includes details of properties for sale, such as residential flats and houses, with their respective areas, locations, and auction dates. The notice is for an E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Properties under the securitisation and reconstruction of financial assets and enforcement of security interest act, 2002.

Fl terms news about plastic rice as false rumour

Central Chronicle News

Jagdalpur, Jan 15: Fortified rice full of nutrients is being distributed in the Schools and Anganbadi centres in Bastar district including among the Aspirational district. Food Inspector Ajay Yadav informed that some people have spread false rumour about plastic rice being distributed in Schools and Anganbadi centres and the same on testing by the Food

department was found to be incorrect. In the testing it has come forward that the rice being distributed in Schools and Anganbadi centres for mid-day meals and to institutions run by Integrated Women and Child Development Department through Fair Price shops (FPS) is highly nutritious 'Fortified Rice'. This rice has more quantity of 'iron', 'Folic Acid', 'B Complex', 'Vitamin A', Zinc compared to normal rice

and it is very much essential for physical and mental development. He informed that in the Schools and Anganbadi centres in Bastar district apart from regular rice, fortified rice too has been distributed in the month of August. He made an appeal to avoid false rumour about fortified rice full of nutrients being falsely promoted by few as plastic rice and asked to outrightly ignore such rumour.

BRIEF

Deck launched

Mumbai: The first Orthotropic Steel Deck (OSD) span of the Mumbai Trans-Harbour Link (MTHL) project, which will link south Mumbai with Navi Mumbai, was launched successfully, officials said. The span, 119 meters in length, weighs 1,331 metric tons, MMRDA said. It was part of 'Package-1' which involves the construction of a 10.38 km long bridge across the Mumbai Bay including Sewri Interchange at Mumbai side of sea.

Gang busted

Faridabad: The Faridabad police busted an interstate gang and nabbed four of its members for allegedly duping people on the pretext of providing them with fake holiday packages after posing as bank employees. Police said the accused duped over 55 people in different states. Rs 35,000 cash, one POS machine, computer, printer, 17 mobile phones and 18 SIM cards procured using fake IDs have been recovered from their possession.

FIRs lodged

Noida: The Gautam Buddha Nagar police commissionerate registered a total of 12,609 FIRs in cases of crimes in pandemic-hit 2021 — the second highest in the last five years, official data has revealed. Sharing the annual data, which marked two-years of the commissionerate system, the police claimed a declining trend in serious crimes. Previous highest number of first information reports (FIRs) was logged in 2019 with 12,610 cases.

ED attaches

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) said it has attached assets worth Rs 2.07 crore of a former Himachal Pradesh deputy drug controller as part of money laundering probe against him linked to charges of alleged bribery and possession of disproportionate assets. A provisional order has been issued under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) against accused, Kapil Dhiman. Eight immovable properties were attached.

Two held

New Delhi: Customs officers have arrested two persons for smuggling gold worth Rs 7.5 lakh and Rs 10 lakh in fake currency. The Customs officers recovered 24 (Twenty four) pieces of silver plated cylindrical shaped of gold totally weighing 175 grams having tariff value Rs 7,65,089 and FICN (Fake Indian Currency Notes) of face value Rs 10 lakh from the pair.

Section 144

Mathura: Apprehending unlawful activities in the district, prohibitory orders under Section 144 were promulgated here with immediate effect, top district authorities said. Prohibitory orders will remain in force till March 12, Navneet Singh Chahal, District Magistrate Mathura said.

Turn to natural farming as fertilisers causing ill-effects'



Union Home Minister Amit Shah observing organic vegetables during a function in Ahmedabad on Saturday.

● **Half of farmers in Amit Shah's constituency to take natural farming**

Ahmedabad, Jan 15 (PTD):

Pointing out that the overuse of chemical fertilisers is creating an ad-

verse impact on the quality of land, water and human health, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday urged farmers to launch a "new green revolution" in India by adopting natural farming methods.

He said the overuse of chemical fertilisers is turning the farmland in-

fertile and therefore, adoption of natural farming methods is vital to restore the land quality, increase agricultural production and make farmers prosperous.

Shah was virtually addressing farmers after launching the logo of the Gujarat government's initiative for natural farming, its mobile application and e-vans to market the produce grown using the natural farming methods through a chain of Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs).

He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recognised chemical fertilisers as a major crisis, and started looking for options to stop its use while also aiming to increase the agriculture production, reduce water consumption and bring prosperity for cultivators.

Senior citizen loses over Rs 11 lakh to cyber fraudsters



Mumbai, Jan 15 (PTD):

A senior citizen was allegedly duped of over Rs 11 lakh by cyber fraudsters when she tried to recover the money she had lost while ordering pizza and dry fruits online, police said on Saturday. The fraud came to light when the woman ap-

proached the BKC Cyber police station with a complaint recently, an official said.

Based on the complaint, an FIR under section 420 (cheating) and other relevant provisions of the IPC and Information Technology Act has been registered against unidentified persons, he said.

As per the complaint, the woman, who is a resident of suburban Andheri, had ordered pizza online in July last year, and while paying for it on her phone, she lost Rs 9,999. Similarly, on October 29, the complainant lost Rs 1,496 while placing an order for dry fruits online, the official said. In a bid to recover the money she had lost in both these instances, the woman contacted a phone number she found during her search on Google, he said.

KPCC chief claims YC activists have no role in SFI worker's murder

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 15 (PTD):

Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) chief K Sudhakaran on Saturday continued to criticise the ruling CPI(M) over the recent killing of Dheeraj Rajendran, an activist of its student wing SFI, and claimed that the arrested Youth Congress activists have no connection with the incident. Alleging that the 21-year-old youth was a victim of the Marxist party's "violent politics", the Kannur MP said even witnesses did not say that the arrested YC activists had stabbed him. Playing a purported voice clip of some students, who are said to have witnessed the incident that happened at the Government Engineering College in Idukki last week, he told reporters here that none of



NDRF personnel with their trained dogs on beach of Sagar Island, during Gangasagar mela 2022 in South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal, Saturday.



K Sudhakaran

them said who had stabbed the deceased man. How could the responsibility of the crime be attributed to the YC activists, he asked during a meet-the-press programme here. Sudhakaran claimed that the Kerala Students Union (KSU) and YC activists did not go after anyone to attack them and asked why the police were reluctant to rush the injured Rajendran to hos-

pital. Urging police to find out the "real" culprits, he also rejected the criticism that he did not mourn the youth's death. "The loss of a human life is a sad incident. My mind is not made of stone and iron... I am a person who can understand the pain of his family members. But it was the CPI(M) that tried to celebrate his death by buying land to build a memorial in his name soon after the incident," Sudhakaran charged. Rajendran's family came from the Congress background, he claimed and said he really wanted to visit and console them.

Taking a dig at the ruling party, the Kannur strongman also said the CPI(M) also did not mind organising a mega 'thiruvathirakkali', a traditional group dance, while mourning the student activist's death.

Weekend restrictions back in J-K amid COVID-19 surge

RT-PCR or RAT Covid tests for symptomatic incoming passengers

Jammu, Jan 15 (PTD):

The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Saturday imposed "complete restriction on non-essential movement" during weekends in the Union Territory amid a surge in Covid cases that rose by 2,456 a day earlier.

District authorities swung into action immediately, closing down markets and asking people to return to their homes. Announcing the decision of the State Executive Committee (SEC), which met under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary

AK Mehta, officials said night curfew and online mode of teaching in schools and colleges will continue.

After a weekly review of the COVID-19 situation, Mehta said there was a need for additional steps besides continuing with the existing Covid containment measures in all districts given the uneven trend in daily cases as well as rising positivity rate.

"There shall be a complete restriction on non-essential movement during weekends in entire Jammu and Kashmir," Mehta said in his latest order. Following the order, Deputy Commissioner of Jammu Anshul Garg, in a tweet, said the complete restrictions on non-essential movements in the district is from Fridays 9 pm to Mondays 6 am.

Former Punjab minister Joginder Mann joins AAP



Joginder Mann joins AAP, with Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal in Chandigarh on Saturday.

Chandigarh, Jan 15 (PTD):

Ahead of the Assembly elections, former Punjab minister Joginder Singh Mann joined the Aam Aadmi Party on Saturday, a day after snapping his 50-year-old ties with the Congress. AAP leader and Punjab co-incharge

Raghav Chadha said that Mann's induction will give a huge boost to the party in the state.

"Inspired by Arvind ji's vision, Punjab's former cabinet minister and three-time MLA Joginder Singh Mann ji joins AAP ending his 50-year-old association with Congress. He was presently chairman of Punjab Agro Industries Corp. "His induction will give a huge boost to the party's unit in Punjab," Chadha said in a tweet and also posted a photo showing Mann joining the AAP in the presence of the party's national convener Arvind Kejriwal.

A leader from the Scheduled Caste community, Mann was miffed with the Congress over "no action" against perpetrators of alleged multi-crore post-matric SC

scholarship scam and non-grant of district status to Phagwara.

He resigned from the Congress and as the chairman of Punjab Agro Industries Corporation.

In an emotive letter to Congress president Sonia Gandhi, the three-time MLA from Phagwara, who served as a minister in the Cabinets including those of Beant Singh, Rajinder Kaur Bhattal and Amarinder Singh, said he had a dream that he would die as a Congressman.

"But with Congress patronising the guilty of the post-matric scholarship scheme, my conscience doesn't allow me to stay here," he had said.

Voting for Punjab's 117 assembly seats will be held on February 14 and the results will be declared on March 10.

ED attaches journalist's property in money laundering case

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTD):

The Enforcement Directorate on Saturday said it has attached a Delhi-based journalist's residential property worth Rs 48.21 lakh in connection with a money laundering probe linked to the alleged leakage and supply of sensitive information to Chinese intelligence officers.

A provisional order has been issued under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) to attach the property of freelance journalist Rajeev

Sharma in the national capital's Pitampura area, the ED said in a statement.

Sharma, who was arrested by the agency in July last year, was granted bail in the case by the Delhi High Court last week. The agency said its probe found that "Sharma had supplied confidential and sensitive information to Chinese intelligence officers, in exchange for remuneration thereby compromising the security and national interests of the country". "Such remuneration for Rajeev Sharma was

being provided by a Mahipalpur based shell company that was run by Chinese nationals like Zhang Cheng alias Suraj, Zhang Lixia alias Usha and Qing Shi along with a Nepali national Sher Singh alias Raj Bohara. "This Chinese company was acting as a conduit for the Chinese intelligence agencies to provide remuneration for persons like Rajeev Sharma..." the ED said in the statement. The remuneration, it claimed, was being paid in cash through carriers as well as through cash deposits.

MP Govt bans visitors from meeting jail inmates till March end

Bhopal, Jan 15 (PTD):

In view of the rising cases of COVID-19 in Madhya Pradesh, the state government has banned visitors from meeting prison inmates till the end of March this year in an attempt to prevent the spread of infection. An order to this effect was issued by the state jail department. "In a bid to prevent the spread of the

pandemic inside the prisons, the visits of friends, family members and acquaintances of jail inmates will remain banned till March 31. The jail inmates will continue to avail the facility of e-meeting (through video calls) and incoming phone calls," the order read.

From November 1 last year, visitors were allowed to meet the inmates of jails in the state after a decline in

coronavirus cases.

In March 2021, after the announcement of the coronavirus-induced lockdown, the jail department had banned prison visits till October end last year.

Considering a spike in the infection cases again, the Madhya Pradesh government has already announced that all schools and hostels for Classes 1 to 12 in the state will remain shut

till January 31. Besides the closure of schools, the state government has also banned all religious and commercial fairs and rallies, additional chief secretary (Home) Dr Rajesh Rajora had said.

Only 250 people are now allowed to attend political, cultural, religious, social, educational, entertainment and other such events, he said.

गुजराती

वधु चाहिये

वधु चाहिये- गुजराती 41/5'11", सेल्फ बिजनेस, मिडिल, छोटा परिवार सभी गुजराती/ उच्च जाति बंधन नहीं, मैरिज व्यूरो क्षमा. संपर्क करें- मो.-98271-14645, 9131139179. (248042)

सामान्य

वर चाहिये

49/5'4" गवर्नमेंट प्रधानाचार्य/ एम.ए., बी.ई.डी. पी.एच.डी. / सैलरी- 72,000/- महिला हेतु वर चाहिए/ अविवाहित, तलाकशुदा, विधुर/ घरजमाई, नौकरी पेशा स्वीकार- 9118033508. (53013)

बंगाली

वर चाहिये

बंगाली वर चाहिए- बंगाली कन्या (क्षत्रिय) (डी.ओ.बी. 25-06-1996) 5'11" अपोलो में स्टाफ नर्स के पद में कार्यरत हेतु शिक्षित वर की आवश्यकता है-मोबा. 99774-64252, 62647-69759 (N556460)

मध्यम वर्गीय वर चाहिए/ अविवाहित, तलाकशुदा, विधुर/ घरजमाई, नौकरी पेशा स्वीकार- 8085619006, 8109052849. (53014)

48/5'6" फरिस्ट विभाग में अधिकारी आय 10 लाख हेतु वर चाहिए घरजमाई, अनपढ़, अनमैरिड, तलाकशुदा, विधुर, बच्चे मान्य प्रस्ताव शीघ्र 09179472796 07898410145 (53017)

आवश्यक सूचना

पाठकों को परामर्श दिया जाता है कि वे किसी भी विज्ञापन के अनुसार, कार्य करने से पूर्व सुचित जांच कर लें. वर-वधु के स्तर, आय, आय संबंधी विवरण के संबंध में विज्ञापनदाताओं द्वारा किये गये दावों और वर्णनों को लिये यह समाचार पत्र समर्थक अथवा उत्तरदायी नहीं है.

NAVABHARAT METRIMONIAL Rate Card

	One Sunday	Two Sunday	Three Sunday	Four Sunday
All C.G.+Odisha	500/-	900/-	1200/-	1400/-
All C.G.+Odisha+MP/MH	800/-	1500/-	2000/-	2400/-
All C.G.+Odisha+MP+MH	1000/-	1800/-	2600/-	3000/-

Contact: 0771-3000139, 8871246900

BRIEF

Contingency

Stockholm: A top military chief in Sweden said that there is increased Russian activity in the Baltic Sea which deviates from the normal picture, leading the Scandinavian nation's military to raise its preparedness. Sweden, which is not part of NATO, has among other things noticed a number of landing craft from Russia's northern navy which have been entering the Baltic Sea. A guard platoon was seen walking in the harbour of Visby.

Charged

New York: Three women are facing federal charges of attacking an airline security worker who tried to block them from boarding a flight at New York's John F Kennedy Airport in September because of what prosecutors say was problematic behaviour, including a refusal to wear a face mask properly. The three were released on 25,000 bond each after arraignment. Two defendants' attorneys declined to comment on case.

Queen

Copenhagen: Denmark's Queen Margrethe has marked her 50 years on the throne of Europe's oldest ruling monarchy, with some of the planned festivities postponed for September due to the pandemic. The outbreak, which also stopped public celebrations for the popular monarch's 80th birthday in 2020, forced several guests to stay away from the two-day celebrations. They included Margrethe's younger sister, former Queen Anne-Marie.

Corruption

Bangkok: Myanmar's military-installed government has filed five new corruption charges against ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi in connection with granting permits to rent and buy a helicopter, a legal official said. Suu Kyi, who has been detained since military takeover, is already being tried on five other corruption charges. Each is punishable by up to 15 years in prison and a fine. She has also been charged with other offenses.

Leak

Warsaw: Poland's Defense Ministry said that a massive leak from a military equipment database includes only publicly available information and is not harmful. The ministry said that the database found online is a list from a body responsible for making purchases for Poland's military. In preliminary findings, it blamed the leak on negligence by employee of inspectorate responsible for purchases, adding there was no breach of security.

Census

Zagreb: A population census conducted last year in Croatia has shown that almost 10 percent less people live in the European Union country compared to a decade ago, according to preliminary results. The census has listed 3.8 million citizens compared to 4.2 million in the previous population count in 2011, said Lidija Brkovic from the national statistics office. They needed to be in-

Volcano erupts near Tonga, islanders rush to escape waves

Wellington, Jan 15 (AP):

An undersea volcano erupted in spectacular fashion near the Pacific nation of Tonga on Saturday, sending large waves crashing across the shore and people rushing to higher ground.

There were no immediate reports of injuries or the extent of the damage as communications with the small nation remained problematic. Video posted to social media showed large waves washing ashore in coastal areas, swirling around homes and buildings.

New Zealand's military said it was monitoring the situation and remained on standby, ready to assist if asked.

Satellite images showed a huge eruption. The



Tsunami waves hit Tonga islands in Pacific Ocean.

Tonga Meteorological Services said a tsunami warning was in effect for all of Tonga. Authorities in the nearby island nations of Fiji and Samoa also issued warnings, telling people to avoid the shoreline due to strong currents and dangerous waves.

The Islands Business news site reported that a convoy of police and military troops evacuated

Tonga's King Tupou VI from his palace near the shore. He was among the many residents who headed for higher ground.

The explosion of the Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai volcano was the latest in a series of spectacular eruptions.

A Twitter user identified as Dr. Faka'iloatonga

Taumoeofolau posted video showing waves crashing ashore.

'Can literally hear the volcano eruption, sounds pretty violent,' he wrote, adding in a later post: 'Raining ash and tiny pebbles, darkness blanketing the sky.' Earlier, the Matangi Tonga news site reported that scientists observed massive explosions, thunder and lightning near the volcano after it started erupting.

The site said satellite images showed a 5-kilometer (3 mile) wide plume of ash, steam and gas rising up into the air to about 20 kilometers (12 miles). More than 2,300 kilometers (1,400 miles) away in New Zealand, officials were warning of storm surges from the eruption.

North Korea says it test launched missiles from train



Missile test from train in North Pyongan Province, North Korea.

Seoul, Jan 15 (AP):

North Korea on Saturday said it test-launched ballistic missiles from a train in what was seen as an apparent retaliation against fresh sanctions imposed by the Biden administration.

The report by the North state media came a day after South Korea's military said it detected the North firing two missiles into the sea in its third weapons launch this month.

The launch came hours after Pyongyang's Foreign Ministry issued a statement berating the United States for imposing new sanctions over the North's previous tests and warned of stronger and more explicit action if Washington maintains its confrontational stance.

North Korea in recent months has been ramping up tests of new missiles designed to overwhelm missile defences in the region amid pandemic-related border closures and a

freeze in nuclear diplomacy with the United States.

Some experts say North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is going back to a tried-and-true technique of pressuring the United States and neighbours with missile launches and outrageous threats before offering negotiations meant to extract concessions.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said the exercise was aimed at checking the alert posture of its army's rail-borne missile regiment. The troops swiftly moved to the launch site after receiving the missile test order on short notice and fired two tactical guided missiles that accurately struck a sea target, the report said.

The North's Rodong Sinmun newspaper published photos of what appeared to be two different missiles soaring above from rail cars engulfed in smoke.

Pakistan to offer permanent residency scheme

For rich foreign nationals to boost weak economy

Islamabad, Jan 15 (PTI):

Pakistan has decided to offer a permanent residency scheme for wealthy foreign nationals, including Sikhs living in the US and Canada, Afghans and Chinese, to attract investment and boost its flagging economy and national growth, it emerged on Saturday.

Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry through a tweet announced that the new scheme was in line with the new National Security Policy, which was formally launched by Prime Minister Imran Khan. In line with new National Security Policy, through which Pakistan declared geo-economics as the core of its national security doctrine, the government has decided to allow permanent residency scheme for foreign nationals, the new policy allows foreigners to get permanent resident status in lieu of investment, the tweet said.

The Express Tribune newspaper reported that while sharing the background of the scheme, a key federal minister said that one of the purposes of opening the PR scheme was to attract rich Afghans, who were moving to Turkey, Malaysia and some other countries following the fall of Kabul last August.



Fawad Chaudhry

centivised, Chaudhry said. In addition, the minister said, the scheme targets the Sikhs living in Canada and USA, who were willing to invest in religious sites, especially in Kartarpur Corridor but had no option to do so.

He said the third objective of the scheme was to incentivise the Chinese nationals, who wish to move or establish industrial units in Pakistan.

It's a historic step for the first time in the history of Pakistan foreigners are being allowed to invest in the real estate sector, he said. The Cabinet on Tuesday had directed the finance and interior ministries to sit with the Board of Investment and deliberate upon a scheme where foreign citizens could be facilitated in buying properties in Pakistan.

In just three days, the government has given a go-ahead to the scheme in an attempt to bring in billions of dollars in foreign exchange. Citing Turkey's example, which recently allowed foreigners to buy properties in the country, the information minister had termed the project a game-changer, saying that the foreigners would be able to buy houses, hotels and invest in real estate once the scheme was approved.

Diplomatic solution over Ukraine raises chance of limited war

Russia can deploy missiles at Donbas or Crimea

Paris, Jan 15 (AFP):

The failure of the United States and Russia this week to find a diplomatic solution to fizzing tensions over Eastern European security has increased the chance of a new Russian attack on Ukraine even if full-scale war is far from inevitable, analysts say.

Russia stands accused of having massed some 100,000 troops close to the Ukrainian border, as it seeks a commitment from the West that the pro-EU former Soviet state will never join NATO.

Senior Russian and US officials this week held talks in Geneva but there was no hint of any breakthrough, with



A man displays a Chinese calligraphy to mark the coming Chinese Lunar New Year of Tiger at the Confucius temple in Taipei on Saturday.



A Russian tank T-72B3 fires as troops take part in drills at the Kadamovskiy firing range in the Rostov region in southern Russia.

Washington warning by the end of the week Moscow could stage a false flag operation within weeks to precipitate an invasion. "We have information that indicates Russia has already repositioned a group of operatives to conduct a false-flag operation in eastern Ukraine," said Jen Psaki, the White House press secretary.

"The operatives are trained in urban warfare and in using explosives to carry out acts of sabotage against Russia's own proxy forces."

Ukraine was meanwhile hit by a blistering cyberattack and blamed by the West on Russia and which some analysts feared could be the prelude to an attack.

Moscow responded to the ousting of Ukraine's former pro-Russia president in 2014 by seizing in a lightning military operation the Ukrainian Black Sea peninsula of Crimea, an annexation never recognised by the international community.

It then backed separatists who took control of two eastern Ukrainian regions in an unsolved conflict that has left over 13,000 dead. NATO has made clear that it will never rule out the possibility that Ukraine could join the alliance, even if analysts see this as a very remote chance for now.

"Regrettably war is more likely. We've reached a real impasse," said Melinda Haring, deputy director of the US-based Atlantic Council's Eurasia Center. "As things stand, the Russian and US positions are irreconcilable."

Romania pushes to add climate change education in schools

Bucharest, Jan 15 (AP):

Romania's president wants to add sections on climate change and environmental issues to the national school curriculum to enable students to learn more about the challenges the world faces from climate change.

President Klaus Iohannis on Tuesday launched a public debate over a 141-page proposal and attended a meeting at the presidential palace on it with Prime Minister Nicolae Ciuca, Romania's environment and education ministers, teachers, students and nongovernmental organisations. The report suggests increasing the

amount of climate change and environmental education that students receive, creating a national network of 10,000 environmental "mini inspectors", supporting nature-based activities, and creating digital learning materials on climate change. Longer-term goals in the report include improving the sustainability of school infrastructure and cutting schools' carbon footprints in half by 2030.

Education is one of the pillars of improving the response to climate change, as education leads to changes in human behaviour, in the sense of a greater responsibility to protect nature and the future of society as a whole, Iohannis said Tuesday.

What we want more than anything else is to pave the way for a change of mindset...we all want a clean, waste-free environment, he added.

कार्यालय परिवहन आयुक्त, छत्तीसगढ़

परिवहन विभाग अंतर्गत स्मार्ट कार्ड आधारित ड्रायविंग लायसेंस, वाहन पंजीकरण एवं अन्य आईटी संबंधी कार्यों के संबंध में

निविदा सूचना

TD/03/TC/2021 नवा रायपुर-अटल नगर, दिनांक - 14.01.2022
कार्य:- परिवहन विभाग अंतर्गत स्मार्ट कार्ड आधारित ड्रायविंग लायसेंस, वाहन पंजीकरण प्रमाण पत्र एवं अन्य आईटी संबंधी कार्यों के संबंध में निविदा जारी किया जाता है।

निविदा जमा करने की अंतिम तिथि: में परिवर्तन कर दिनांक 21/01/2022 को दोपहर 03.00 बजे तक किया गया है।
निविदा की टेक्निकल बिड खोलने की तिथि 22/01/2022 समय 11.30 बजे

वित्तीय निविदा खोलने की तिथि पृथक से जारी की जायेगी।
उपरोक्त निविदा सूचना की पूरी जानकारी विभागीय वेबसाइट <https://cgtransport.gov.in> पर उपलब्ध है।
G-66834/1

कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता लोक निर्माण विभाग, रायपुर संभाग क्र. - 1, रायपुर

मैनुअल पद्धति से प्रथम निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना

विज्ञापन क्रमांक 305/एन.आई.टी.-40/टी.सी./21-22/ रायपुर, दिनांक 12/01/2022
कार्य का विवरण अनुमानित राशि (लाखों में)
S/R, MOW, Deposit & Other Work of Various Roads under Survey Sub Division Raipur 19.90

निविदा प्रपत्र प्राप्त करने की अंतिम तिथि - 04.02.2022
2. उपरोक्त निर्माण कार्यों की निविदा की सामान्य शर्तें, धरोहर राशि, विस्तृत निविदा विज्ञापन, निविदा दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी कार्यालयीन अवधि में कार्यालय से प्राप्त की जा सकती है। साथ ही यह जानकारी विभागीय वेबसाइट www.cg.nic.in/pwdrprajur में Live Tender के अंतर्गत निविदा प्रपत्र में उपलब्ध। इनका अवलोकन संबंधित संभाग कार्यालय में किया जा सकता है।

कार्यपालन अभियंता लोक निर्माण विभाग संभाग क्र. - 1 रायपुर
G-66834/1

छत्तीसगढ़ शासन, जल संसाधन विभाग कार्यालय मुख्य अभियंता महानदी गोदावरी कछार, रायपुर (छ.ग.)

ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट निविदा सूचना
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(प्रथम आमंत्रण)
सिस्टम निविदा क्रमांक 90653/निविदा सूचना क्रमांक 12/वलेलि/2021-22
वेबसाइट दिनांक 14.01.2022

निम्नलिखित कार्यों के लिए दिनांक 04.02.2022 17:30 तक ऑनलाइन निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं:-

कार्य का नाम: बेमेतरा जिले के विकासखण्ड-साजा की चारमाटा जलाशय के शीर्ष कार्य का मरम्मत एवं नहरों का रिमाडिंग तथा लाइनिंग कार्य मुख्य नहर आर.डी. 0 मी. से 2400 मी. बांयी तट नहर आर.डी. 0 मी. से 3600 मी., दांयी तट नहर आर.डी. 0 मी. से 4950 मी. चौरमाटा माईनर आर.डी. 0 मी. से 1095 मी. एवं 01 नग.क.आर.बी. का निर्माण कार्य।
अनुमानित लागत: ₹. 279.69 लाख

अन्य विवरण एवं विस्तृत निविदा छत्तीसगढ़ शासन की ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट वेबसाइट <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> पर दिनांक 21.01.2022 समय 17.31 बजे से देखे तथा डाउनलोड किये जा सकते हैं।
नोट: निविदा में भाग लेने हेतु टेकेंदारों को ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट वेबसाइट <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> पर नामांकित/पंजीयन तथा लोक निर्माण विभाग की एकीकृत पंजीयन प्रणाली के अंतर्गत टेकेंदार को उपयुक्त श्रेणी में पंजीयन कराना अनिवार्य है।

कार्यपालन अभियंता जल संसाधन संभाग, बेमेतरा कृते - मुख्य अभियंता, महानदी गोदावरी कछार जल संसाधन विभाग, रायपुर (छ.ग.)
G-66879/1



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Pakistan's policy in context

Pakistan, in its first-ever National Security Policy (NSP) launched by Prime Minister Imran Khan, makes it imperative for itself to deter war and defend the country's territorial integrity and sovereignty at "all costs" by using all elements of national power. The NSP 2022-26, with references to India, has been framed after seven years of diligent and rigorous analysis and consultations led by the National Security Division. The full 110 page NSP document will remain classified. However, a shorter, nearly 50 page version is being published. NSP in its major policy guideline says: "Deter war through all elements of national power; while exercising our right to self-defence if war is imposed." For the first 30 years after their independence, their security policy was India-centric, resulting in three major wars in 1948, 1965 and 1971 respectively. In the late eighties, not only did anti-India sentiment increase manifold, but was also badly influenced by the jihadi mindset of General Zia-ul-Haq who made religious extremist elements an integral part of Pakistan's policy. From context of India, Pakistan is seeking to deflect attention from its cross border terror policy of low intensity warfare as economic, political and social situation in Pakistan is becoming worse. Citizens in Pakistan are feeling bleak conditions with no economic, political or social security. Meanwhile, the 'Global Risks Report 2022' had listed five risks facing Pakistan with top risk of the debt crisis, followed by extreme weather events, failure to stabilise price trajectories, failure of cyber security measures and human-made environmental damage. Pakistan has asked the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to delay a board meeting meant to consider the country's sixth review until the end of January. Pakistan has been so far unable to pass recommended fiscal tightening measures tied to the funds' release. Pakistan has gained nothing from its 40-year patronage of terrorism as the fulcrum of its 'foreign policy'.

Pakistan government is undergoing a "paradigm shift from geo-political contestation to geo-economic cooperation". Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi had told the country's diplomatic missions abroad, pointing out the interconnectedness of financial health and national security. The worsening macroeconomic fundamentals and aggravating sentiments have played havoc with three major markets of Pakistan's economy, whereby they are not ready to buy the government-sponsored narrative on the economic front. Alarming, three markets, including the stock market, money market and exchange rate, are not reciprocating positively to the economic narrative being built by Pakistan's economic managers, so downside continues at an accelerated pace. Pakistan formed a troika of bankrupts in Malaysia, Turkey and itself. It was designed to wean away Sunni Islamic authority from Saudi Arabia towards Turkey. Turkey aspired to be the new caliphate. But the effort was doomed. Pakistan's parlous state is only getting worse. The stage is set for the handiest distraction. Things may be coming to a head shortly. The National Intelligence Council's (NIC) Strategic Futures Group, a US think-tank, fears terror attacks and miscalculations could trigger a war between China, India, and Pakistan within five years. The former chief of Pakistan's tax agency, Shabbir Zaidi, had said that the Islamist nation has gone bankrupt and that the government had been lying about the country's prosperity. Speaking at Hamdard University, the former chairman of the Federal Board of Revenue said that the country was not in a state of 'going concern', an accounting terminology referring to a business that is operating and making a profit. NSP of Pakistan cannot change the situation unless it changes track from a nation based on terror ideology.

Plantations are not forests

India's forest and tree cover has risen by 2,261 square kilometres in the last two years with Andhra Pradesh growing the maximum forest cover of 647 square kilometres, according to the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2021. Total tree and forest cover in the country includes an increase of 1,540 square kilometres of forest cover and 721 square km of tree cover compared to the 2019 report. But the report seems to be deceptive as plantations cannot be called as forests, which implies biodiversity loss. India's forest cover growth has slowed to an eight-year low in 2021, with just 0.22 percent increase over 2019, down from 0.85 percent in 2013 and 0.94 percent in 2017, the highest in the last decade. The highest amount of forest cover reduction is happening in the Northeast (N-E) states, which host some of the world's richest and unique biodiversity. The Forest Survey of India defines 'forest cover' as all lands of a hectare or more with tree patches with canopy density of more than 10 percent, including green patches like orchards and plantations. These are outside 'Recorded Forest Areas' (RFA) which is land regarded as forests in government records. This covers all lands, irrespective of legal ownership and land use. 'Recorded forest area' includes only those areas recorded as forests in government records and includes pristine forests.

India felled over 1.10 crore trees over 5 years to 2020 and it also diverted large swathes of forest land for development and other purposes. So with changes in the methodology of calculating forest area, India has been able to show an increase in the overall forest cover on paper without an actual increase in forest cover. This is being done so India can achieve its target of 33 percent forest cover 2022, which it has clearly failed to. Compensatory afforestation has been touted as a solution to the loss of forests to development activity. Afforestation is broadly of two types, naturally regenerated forests, which research shows are far more effective at absorbing carbon, and plantation forests, which are generally of the same age and the same species. Looking at it purely from a carbon accounting perspective, the new plantation cannot compensate for the loss of carbon stocks and other ecosystem services provided by old-growth forests in any realistic timeframe. Choice of tree species for a new plantation often is chosen without due consideration of wider ecological value. Clearly plantations cannot be substitute for actual forests with diverse trees.

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

HOMAGE TO VALOUR



Jawans pay homage at the National War Memorial to mark the 74th Army Day, remembering the valour in defence of India, in New Delhi.

Soils from city parks are important hotspots of microbial diversity

SAHANA GHOSH



City parks and residential gardens have a unique functional microbiome with more potential human and plant pathogens, and fewer plant-symbionts than neighbouring natural ecosystems, according to a study that unpacks the soil microbiome of global urban green spaces. The findings indicate that warmer cities support larger proportions of plant pathogens, which could make fighting against city park pests, more difficult and economically challenging in the future, said study lead author Manuel Delgado-Baquerizo. Densely populated cities host a higher proportion of key antibiotic resistance genes, demonstrating that climate and socio-economic conditions can influence the microbes inhabiting city parks and gardens. The study also reports that soils from urban green spaces harbour a higher proportion of microbes tied to methane production and nitrogen dioxide emissions compared with natural ecosystems, suggesting that urban greenspaces could potentially be important sources of greenhouse gas emissions (methane and nitrous oxide) to the atmosphere. 'These results, together with the fact that many urban ecosystems are over-fertilised and watered, suggest that city parks could play a role as regulators of greenhouse emissions. However, further investigations are needed to better understand the role of urban greenspaces in providing nature-based solutions and control emissions,' Delgado-Baquerizo from Spain's Universidad Pablo de Olavide, told. City parks and gardens are 'living ecosystems' and not ecological deserts, said researchers on the media release on the studv. stressing that

every green spot accounts for conserving soil biodiversity. 'In the past, it was shown that the human gut has a particular microbiome; likewise, city parks and gardens have a very distinctive soil microbiome that we are just starting to understand,' Delgado-Baquerizo said.

Researchers examined soil samples from different types of urban green spaces and comparable neighbouring natural ecosystems in 56 cities from 17 countries across six continents. In India, researchers from Banaras Hindu University (BHU) looked at Durgapur, Agra and Mirzapur as part of the global work. Over five hundred species of archaea, bacteria, fungi, and protists were characterised in the soils of urban parks across the globe. Sixty-eight percent of the global population is set to live in cities by 2050, increasing the environmental and social stresses for the billions of humans living in urban areas. India is projected to double its urban dwellers from 400 million in 2011 to 800 million by 2050 which means urban green spaces for physical and mental wellbeing of residents will be critical. The realities of climate change for urban areas are underscored by the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that warns on future urbanisation amplifying projected air temperature change in cities regardless of the characteristics of the background climate, increasing minimum temperatures likely to be large as the global warming. Additionally, it emphasises that impact assessments and adaptation plans in cities require high-spatial-resolution climate projections along with models that represent urban processes, ensemble dynamical and statistical downscaling, and local-impact models. In India, urban green spaces have garnered support in policy (including the Green India Mission, Nagar Van Scheme) and political will in recent years but there is a need to plan for these restoration projects considering the larger landscape and in discussion with key stakeholders to not infringe on local rights and plan interventions and species that are ecologically appropriate, as well as develop better monitoring systems, shared Ruchika Singh, Director - Sustainable

Landscapes & Restoration, at World Resources Institute India (WRI India).

For example, the National Mission for a Green India (Green India Mission or GIM), launched in 2014, is one of the eight Missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC). GIM focusses on multiple ecosystem services such as biodiversity, water, biomass, preserving mangroves, wetlands, critical habitats etc. along with carbon sequestration. One of its aims is to improve forest and tree cover across 0.2 Mha in urban and peri-urban areas. The policy emphasises the setting up of local citizen groups to maintain and monitor urban green spaces. It seeks the support of institutions, businesses, and corporates to achieving the target. 'However, implementation of GIM has been slow, with the scheme achieving only 2.8 percent of its overall target between 2015 and 2020. In addition to being underfunded, the scheme has faced criticism for lacking consideration around local soil and other ecological conditions,' Singh told. Jay Prakash Verma at BHU's Institute of Environment and Sustainable Development, one of the co-authors of the global study, said soils of urban parks supported a significantly greater proportion of Gammaproteobacteria, Deltaproteobacteria, Bacteroidetes, Gemmatimonadetes, Ascomycota, Mucoromycota, Chlorophyta and Amoebozoa than natural ecosystems. Once this cycling of SOC and other nutrients is disrupted it may lead to the emission of greenhouse gases like CO₂, methane and nitrous oxide. 'If we keep adding synthetic nutrients and that too in higher proportions, this may lead to change in the microbiome and consequently disturb the recycling of elements like carbon and nitrogen,' said microbial ecologist Praveen Rahi, who was not associated with the research.

The research, says Rahi, is 'an eye-opener' for governments and policymakers, to treat the local biodiversity (both above and below-ground) with respect and adopt technologies to maintain it, especially since the findings spotlight that urban greenspaces, globally, are very homogeneous? they are very similar, support similar mi-

crobial species and often have large portions of land covered by intensively managed lawns. The urban green-space tax included fungal and oomycete plant pathogens such as Fusarium intricans, Pythium rostratifungens, Pythium uncinatum, and fungal decomposers such as Mortierella elongata, archaeal nitrifiers such as Nitrososphaera sp., bacteria such as Streptomyces and Pseudomonas spp., and multiple species of bacteria-feeding amoebae. For a healthy soil microbiome, Verma recommends using more bio-fertilisers, green manure, farmyard manure, compost, and crop residues but advises against using contaminated or sewage water for irrigation of city parks gardens because such water sources have many disease-causing microbes. An organic framework is more sustainable. More research on urban green spaces, their management and links to human health is required. How we think about microbes beneath our feet in city parks and gardens matters because human exposure to soil microbes is beneficial to human health by promoting effective immunoregulation functions and reducing allergies. Some soil microbes (e.g., Mycobacterium, Listeria, and Fusarium spp.) can also endanger the sustainability of urban greenspaces and animal, human, and plant health. In 2017, scientists put forth the Microbiome Rewilding Hypothesis which proposed that 'restoring biodiverse habitats in urban green spaces can rewind the environmental microbiome to a state that helps prevent human disease as an ecosystem service.' Recent research spanning urban greenspaces in Australia, the United Kingdom and India showed that after exposure to city parks, the diversity of microbes on the skin and nose of sampled adults increased and the microbial composition became more similar to environmental sources which could have implications in reducing the development of non-communicable diseases. Although the importance of soil microbial ecology for the prediction of future climate impacts has been recognised, Verma adds that it remains a challenge to integrate with landscape-scale climate models.

(Sahana Ghosh likes to write on climate change, biodiversity, environmental health, planetary health.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Parliamentary conduct

The budget of session of parliament is going to commence soon. Most of the TV channels conduct intuitive talk shows for a few days prior to the start of each parliamentary session and conclude that the coming session would be a stormy one. But it has been observed time and again that in the name of the stormy session a disparate group of opposition MPs begin to indulge in disruptions in the House with sloganeering, rushing to the Speaker's podium, snatching and tearing papers etc., from day one, throwing parliamentary decorum to the winds. The public eagerly waits for the periodical session to see productive debates on people-centric issues but they are upset and angry because they are unable to see anything of decent debates and deliberations. The legislators appear to forget that they are elected representatives of people and are under solemn oath to serve them to remain thankful and grateful to their respective electors. Sadly, the MPs' shameful conduct on the floors of parliament is not different from what the stubborn peasants' leaders had been crazily doing by blocking all routes to and from the Delhi region by squatting on the outskirts of National Capital Territory. One hopes our MPs will very soon cast off their atrocious behaviour and constructively get down to the parliamentary business. It is also imperative that the party in power has to come out of its sombre state to bring order in parliament for justifying spending of huge taxpayers' money on the session. The ruling party cannot pretend that it is unaware of the tricky ploy of opposition to not allow parliament to function and frustrate Government's initiatives to carry out its developmental programme by enacting relevant legislation in time. The present mess demands that the ruling party will strengthen its floor coordination mechanism in the Houses by keeping a channel of communication with the oppositions for resuming normal parliamentary function.

Pannalal, via email

Excess toll

As per media report India's actual Covid-19 toll could be six times the reported figure, with a study published in the Science journal estimating it to be 3.2 million. A total of 483,178 Covid-19 deaths have been officially recorded so far since the pandemic began. No doubt India has been overwhelmed by a devastating second wave of the pandemic in the last April & May, though the government has no records of the number of actual pandemic deaths. But as per media the corpses were evidence of a massive discrepancy between the official Covid-19 death figures and the actual numbers on the ground. Whatsoever, now the Supreme Court (SC) has approved the Centre's scheme of granting Rs 50,000 ex-gratia compensation for all those who died due to Covid-19 in India. But the big question: who are those liable to get the ex-gratia compensation? Though SC said 'The ex-gratia assistance shall continue to be provided for deaths that continue to occur post the date of judgment', a total of 483,178 Covid-19 deaths have been officially recorded so far since the pandemic began. But what happened to India's actual Covid-19 toll, which was 3.2 million (mostly poor)? Is the Modi government and the SC ever thinking about those six times excess toll? As per the SC order, shall the district authorities take remedial steps to have the cause of death corrected. Hope, after losing one's near and dear one, any kin of the deceased shall not be deprived an amount of Rs 50,000 and it will be over and above the amounts paid by Centre and state under various benevolent schemes. People hope that the Modi government should not differentiate between the official and actual Covid19 toll.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee, Faridabad



WHAT THEY TWEET!



virender thapar@Thapar77Thapar
Feel almost liberated after getting my booster dose - will feel fully liberated only after masks off is ordered. Kindly help by every 1 wearing the mask. So many r not wearing!

Ananth Krishnan@ananthkrishnan
India imported more from China in 2021 (a record \$97.5 billion) than the entire two-way trade in pre-pandemic 2019 (\$92.8 billion). Total trade in 2021: \$125.6 billion (up 35% from '19) India's imports: \$97.5 billion (up 30%) India's exports to China: \$28.1 billion (up 56%)



Saurav Jha@SJha1618
The two Himalayan buffers of Nepal and Bhutan are all important when it comes to the defence of the North Indian plains. This was known to the British, which is why they always perked up when Qing China began its games there. Otherwise, they were happy to concede Tibet.



Prashant Kumar@scribe_prashant
It's NOT mild at all. Have been down with high fever, terrible cough and cold and bone breaking body pain for the past 3 days. The RTPCR has come out positive. Isolated. Don't take this wave lightly. Mask up! Take care!

Tisha Dogra@TishaDogra
Lifeline of Himachal- HRTC



Anil Swarup@swarup58
Irrespective of which party some politicians join just before the elections, their ultimate objective is to join, & quite a few of them do join, the Ruling Party.....That is the best way to keep the skeletons safe in their cupboard. Isn't it?

Harsh Goenka@hvgoenka
What happened in '21 1. Strong performance by IT, pharma and chemical sector 2. Rural demand weak 3. The strong got stronger, weak got weaker 4. Stock prices at high levels 5. Two groups grew phenomenally stronger 6. Unemployment increased 7. Geopolitics uncertainty continued.

BRIEF
Hikes

New Delhi: Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Saturday said it has increased prices of its models by up to 4.3 per cent with immediate effect to partially offset the impact of the rise in input costs. The company has enhanced prices across its models in the range of 0.1 per cent to 4.3 per cent owing to increase in various input costs. The weighted average price increase in showroom prices (Delhi) across models is 1.7 per cent. The new prices are effective from Saturday. MSI sells a range of cars from Alto to S-Cross priced between Rs 3.15 lakh and Rs 12.56 lakh, respectively.

Subsidiary

New Delhi: Future group's stake in Amar Chitra Katha Pvt Ltd (ACKPL) has increased to 68.72 percent post conversion of debentures into equity. After the conversion, Future Consumer Ltd holds a majority stake in ACKPL, the publishers of Amar Chitra Katha comics, said a regulatory filing by the Future group firm. "Post allotment of the equity shares as aforesaid, the company holds 68.72 per cent of the paid equity share capital of ACKPL and accordingly ACKPL has now become a subsidiary of the company," said Future Consumer Ltd.

Minerals

New Delhi: Industrialist Anil Agarwal-owned mining major Vedanta Group said it is exploring investment opportunities in the mineral sector of Saudi Arabia. The company is already in discussions with stakeholders in Saudi Arabia, which is aiming to become a mineral hub in the Middle East, Vedanta said in a statement. Vedanta plans to invest in the mineral sector in Saudi Arabia. The company is in discussions to identify investment opportunities in Saudi Arabia, which aims to transform itself into a mineral hub in the Middle East.

Investment

New Delhi: The country's largest two-wheeler maker Hero MotoCorp said its board has approved to further invest up to Rs 420 crore in electric two-wheeler company Ather Energy. The company's board has approved the investment in one or more tranches. Prior to the proposed investment, the company's shareholding in Ather Energy stood at 34.8 per cent (on a fully diluted basis). After the investment, the shareholding will increase and the exact shareholding will be determined upon completion of the capital raising round by Ather, Hero MotoCorp stated. "In keeping with our vision 'Be the Future of Mobility', we are working on a variety of emerging mobility solutions. The company aims to expand the Hero MotoCorp brand promise and make EV ownership a convenient, hassle-free, and rewarding experience for customers across the world.

Budget to offer more fiscal support to economy

Amid uncertainty from COVID-19 third wave

Mumbai, Jan 15 (PTI):

The rising uncertainty from the third wave of the pandemic will force the forthcoming Budget to push the fiscal pedal more to support the fragile recovery, and print in 6.5 per cent fiscal deficit as the government is likely to budget for around Rs 42 lakh crore of capex next fiscal, says a brokerage report. Budget 2022 will be presented on February 1.

Budget 2021 had pegged the fiscal deficit at 6.8 per cent or Rs 12.05 lakh crore for FY22, down from 9.5 per cent in FY21 when also it had borrowed Rs 12 lakh crore but in percentage terms it soared given the massive 7.3 per cent contraction of the economy in the year.

The FY21 deficit jumped after government in May



2020 raised its gross market borrowing target for the fiscal to Rs 12 lakh crore from Rs 7.8 lakh crore budgeted in February 2020 after the pandemic scuppered all the budgetary numbers.

The government is expected to continue to push on the fiscal pedal to support the economy. While the fiscal deficit could be revised upwards modestly to 7.1 per cent from 6.8 per cent budgeted for in FY22, stronger nominal GDP growth will keep government on the deficit glide path announced in the current budget, Rahul

Bajoria, managing director and chief economist at Barclays India, said in a note. Accordingly, the consolidated fiscal deficit will reach 11.1 per cent of GDP this fiscal (Centre's at 7.1 per cent and states' at 4 per cent), it said, warning that fiscal consolidation will take longer.

Combined fiscal deficits will decline only gradually over the next five years towards 7 per cent of GDP, he added.

For FY23, he pencilled in a consolidated deficit of 10.5 per cent of GDP, with 6.5 per cent for the Centre, marginally up from 6.3 per

cent estimated in Budget 2021. The government is expected to estimate Rs 17.5 lakh crore or 6.5 per cent of GDP in fiscal deficit in FY23, which would allow it to raise spending to more than Rs 41.8 lakh crore, according to Bajoria.

Not envisaging any rapid fiscal consolidation, he expects borrowing needs to stay elevated, with the government borrowing Rs 16 lakh crore next fiscal (up from Rs 12 lakh crore this financial year).

He attributed the higher deficit to increased welfare spending and production linked incentive schemes which will remain key fiscal priorities of the new Budget.

Prioritising capital expenditure is crucial for cementing the fragile growth revival as states are likely to cut capital expenditure (capex) in lieu of losing out on protected GST compensation funds, amid weak private investment.

Online Davos event tackles big themes for COVID, China, climate

Geneva, Jan 15 (AP):



The coronavirus pandemic has forced the World Economic Forum's annual meeting of world leaders, business executives and other heavyweights to go virtual for the second year in a row, but organizers still hope to catapult the world into thinking about the future with a scaled-down online version this week.

The gathering, an online alternative to the event typically held in the Swiss ski town of Davos, will feature speeches by the leaders of countries including China, India, Israel, Japan and Germany as well as panel discussions with business, government and philanthropy figures like Dr Anthony Fauci, the top U.S. infectious disease expert who will talk about COVID-19, and Bill Gates and John Kerry, who are expected to discuss climate change. Organizers still hope their plans for a larger in-person gathering can go ahead this summer. In a

speech Monday, Chinese dictator Xi Jinping could well again tout changes that Beijing says are opening the state-dominated economy and reject complaints that it wants to detach from international trade. One of those neighbours with tense ties to China is India, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi also takes the virtual floor Monday, just two months after Modi's government made a rare retreat on an agricultural reform bill that drew huge protests from farmers. It's impossible for the Davos crowd to overlook the health crisis that has upended its plans for the last two years.

The pandemic gets a top billing on Monday, with Fauci and the CEO of vaccine maker Moderna join-

ing a panel discussion that addresses what's next for COVID-19, which has taken several big turns as the omicron variant sweeps the globe.

On Tuesday, World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus is certain to promote his often-repeated call for greater vaccine equity at a panel on the subject. Many developing countries remain far behind their rich counterparts when it comes to access to vaccines due to intellectual property restrictions. Climate change and energy along with a regional look at Latin America get top billing Wednesday, with a speech by the Saudi energy minister and a look at how the world transitions from its dependence on fossil fuels. Kerry, the special envoy for climate under US President Joe Biden, joins Davos stalwart Gates recent author of "How to Avert a Climate Disaster" on a panel on climate innovation.

Spread of Omicron cases may disrupt global supply chain

Kolkata, Jan 15 (PTI):

Engineering Export Promotion Council of India has expressed concern that the spread of Omicron, the new variant of coronavirus, may once again disrupt the global supply chain, which could lead to a slowdown in trading activities.

Exports of engineering goods registered a 38 per cent year-on-year growth in December, 2021 to USD 38.4 billion.

The sustained growth momentum demonstrates the sector is well on track to grow its market share in the global trade, EEPIC India chairman Mahesh Desai said in a statement on Friday. "While the order pipeline has been remarkably good, we could see some slowdown if Omicron disrupts the global supply



chain. In the recent weeks, we have seen some signs of volatility and uncertainty due to the ongoing pandemic wave across the world but by putting suitable policy measures in place, the government could provide cushion to trade and business," Desai said. He called for urgent action on part of the government to reduce soaring raw

material prices and logistics costs. "We hope that in the upcoming budget, the government will take appropriate measures to reduce the cost of primary steel, copper, aluminium and other raw materials. This will be a major relief for the sector which is dominated by micro, small and medium enterprises," he said.

Industrial, warehousing space leasing up 35%, supply rises 64%

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

Leasing of industrial and warehousing spaces across eight major cities went up by 35 per cent during 2021 to 35.1 million square feet, driven by higher demand from third-party logistics and e-commerce players, according to Savills India.

The leasing stood at 26 million square feet in the previous calendar year.

Property consultant Savills India highlighted in a report that fresh supply rose 64 per cent to 36 million square feet from 22 million square feet during the period under review.

Third-party logistics (3PL) players and e-commerce companies continued to drive warehousing



demand, accounting for 62 per cent of the total absorption in 2021, followed by manufacturing sector at 14 per cent.

Among the major eight cities in India, Delhi-NCR led with the highest absorption in 2021 at 8.1 million square feet, followed

by Pune at 6.5 million square feet. Mumbai and Bengaluru saw absorptions of 6 million square feet and 4.6 million square feet, respectively.

Apart from eight major cities, Savills India reported that leasing of industrial and warehousing space

stood at 8.6 million square feet in 11 tier II, III cities while new supply was at 8.9 million square feet.

The comparative figures of tier II and III cities were not available.

Savills noted that the rental values remained stable in 2021 across the major cities.

New projects were delivered with improved specifications and of high quality environmental, health and safety (EHS) standards.

The market witnessed 4,200-plus acres of manufacturing and warehousing land transactions across tier I and tier II cities. The industrial and logistics sector witnessed investments exceeding USD 1.5 billion in 2021.

Axis Mutual Fund launches 'Axis Debt Index Fund'

Mumbai, Jan 15:

Axis Mutual Fund, one of the fastest growing fund houses in India, announced the launch of their new fund offer - 'Axis CPSE Plus SDL 2025 70:30 Debt Index Fund'. It is a target maturity Index Fund whose benchmark maturity date is April 30, 2025. The new fund will track the CRISIL IBX 70:30 CPSE Plus SDL - April 2025 benchmark and the portfolio is specifically designed to invest predominantly in AAA rated Central Public Sector Undertakings and SOV-rated SDL securities.

The scheme seeks to provide returns that closely correspond to the total returns of the securities as represented by the underlying index. The

CRISIL IBX 70:30 CPSE Plus SDL - April 2025 index contains 2 components as on the base date of index that are rebalanced every quarter. On the launch of the NFO, Chandresh Nigam, MD & CEO, Axis AMC said, "As a fund house that is deeply entrenched in its philosophy of 'responsible investing' in quality assets, we aim at facilitating well-rounded solutions for investors. The launch of Axis CPSE Plus SDL 2025 70:30 Debt Index Fund' aligns with our endeavor to strengthen our passive product suite over time. By offering investors an attractive debt strategy within the passive space, we want to introduce robust products that are relevant in the current context."

RBI proposes new norms of banks' investment portfolio

Classification and valuation to align with global standards

Mumbai, Jan 15 (PTI):

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) proposed new norms for the classification and valuation of the investment portfolio of banks, with a view to align them with the global prudential framework and accounting standards.

According to the proposed norms, the investment portfolio of banks will be divided into three categories held-to-maturity (HTM), available for sale (AFS), and fair value through profit and loss ac-



count (FVTPL).

Within FVTPL, held-for-trading (HFT) shall be a sub-category aligned with the specifications of 'Trading Book' as per the Basel-III framework.

The new bank portfolio classification norms will come into effect from April 1, 2023, the RBI paper said, while inviting comments on a discussion

paper in this regard from stakeholders by February 15.

The new norms propose to bridge the gap between the existing guidelines and global standards and practices with regards to classification, valuation and operations of the investment portfolio of commercial banks.

The extant instructions pertaining to the prudential norms on the classification and valuation of the investment portfolio are largely based on the Report of Informal Group on Valuation of Banks' Investment Portfolio (Convenor: TC Nair), which was submitted in 1999.

HDFC Bank standalone net profit rises 18% to Rs 10,342 cr in Dec qtr

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

The country's largest private sector HDFC Bank on Saturday reported an 18.1 per cent rise in its standalone net profit at Rs 10,342.20 crore for the quarter ended December 2021, helped by healthy non-interest income and fall in bad loans provisioning. The bank had registered a net profit of Rs 8,758.29 crore in the corresponding quarter of the last fiscal year.

Total income on a standalone basis rose to Rs 40,651.60 crore in the October-December quarter of FY22, as against Rs 37,522.92 crore in the same

period of FY21, HDFC Bank said in a regulatory filing. Its non-interest income comprised nearly 31 per cent of net revenues at Rs 3,183.6 crore during Q3 FY22, up by about 10 per cent from a year ago.

Net interest income (interest earned minus interest expended) rose by 13 per cent to Rs 18,443.50 crore from Rs 16,317.60 crore. The advances grew at 16.5 per cent reaching new heights driven through relationship management, digital offering and breadth of products. New liability relationships added during the quarter remained at all time high, the lender said.

Reduced wheat sowing good sign as farmers shifting to oilseeds

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

Amid a surplus wheat stock, reduction of wheat sowing across the country marginally to 336.48 lakh hectare so far in the 2021-22 rabi season is a good sign as farmers have shifted to oilseeds, Agriculture Commissioner SK Malhotra said.

An increase in oilseed acreage will help the country, which is dependent on edible oil imports.

Sowing of rabi (winter) crops is nearing completion and some areas may come under wheat where sugarcane was harvested late, Malhotra told PTI. Planting of rabi crops



like wheat begins in October and harvesting from April onwards. Wheat was sown in 340.74 lakh hectare in the year-ago period. "We have enough wheat

stock in our godown. It is a good sign that the wheat area is getting reduced. The area under wheat has shifted to oilseeds, which is very much required," Malhotra said.

Bengaluru in world's top 5 locations for tech investments

London, Jan 15 (PTI):

The year 2021 was a record one for venture capitalist (VC) technology sector investments in India, which jumped from ranking fourth globally in 2020 to third, according to new research released in London. The analysis conducted jointly by London & Partners and Dealroom Co found that Bengaluru continued to lead India's tech charge, attracting USD 18.6 billion to rank fifth in the world's top global cities for tech VC investment. Overall, Indian tech VC investment grew nearly three times from USD 14.9 billion in 2020 to USD 44.6 billion in 2021 a year of a worldwide record high for such investments at USD 675 billion.

Telcos seek refund of Rs 35,000 cr input tax credit, GST waiver

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

Telecom operators want the government to refund input tax credit (ITC) of around Rs 35,000 crore, reduce levies and waive GST on licence fees and spectrum usage in the upcoming Budget.

According to pre-Budget recommendations of telecom industry body COAI, whose members include Vodafone Idea, Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio, the telecom sector wants the government to suspend universal service obligation fund (USOF), which financially supports rollout of telecom services in the rural area, to reduce burden on the serv-



ice providers. "Refund unutilised ITC of Rs 35,000 crore of the industry, which cannot be utilized in the near future. The current market dynamics have led to the accumulation of massive ITC. The credit would further increase with the upcoming significant capital expenditure to further enhance customer experience and achieve the vision of Digital India," COAI said. At present, licence fees

paid by the telecom operators is calculated as 8 per cent of revenue earned from telecom services, technically called adjusted gross revenue (AGR).

The government has removed several revenue heads that were part of AGR as well as abolished spectrum usage charges (SUC) on radiowaves that will be purchased in the future auctions as part of the telecom reforms. "We thank the Government for the recent forward-looking structural and procedural reforms, which we believe will not only bring stability and sustainability to the sector but will also facilitate the digital needs of the citizens.

What! Haseena Malik dead? Did ASI Mira shoot her?



The viewers are in for a shocking twist as Sony SAB's Maddam Sir will see a never-seen-before dramatic turn this week. S.H.O. Haseena Malik, who has won a million hearts with her emotional intelligence at par while solving challenging cases, will be seen getting shot in the upcoming episodes by ASI Mira.

In a quest to solve an intriguing case which involves her previous love interest Rahul, Haseena Malik gets accidentally shot by ASI Mira, who has been hacked by someone and is commanded to kill her. What led to this unfortunate turn of

events? Would this be an end to the loving character of Haseena Malik? Stay tuned to find out in this week's episode!

Gulki Joshi, essaying the role of S.H.O. Haseena Malik said, "This is by far one of the biggest and the most dramatic tracks in the show. Haseena Malik has created a special place in people's hearts and this plot will take them by surprise. There are mixed emotions as we shoot this track, but its paving way for an interesting storyline. This sequence will truly be an edge of the seat moment for the audience and I'm sure they'll be hooked to their

screens."

Pankhuri Awasthy, essaying the role of ASI Mira said, "This is indeed a surprising highpoint for us as a team as well as the audience. ASI Mira gets hacked and is commanded to shoot Haseena Malik. As the Mahila Police Thana will be in a state of complete shock, a lot of drama will follow from here. I'm excited as we go along shooting for the upcoming sequences and unravelling it for our fans." It gets even more interesting from here! Tune-in to watching Maddam Sir, every Monday to Saturday 7:30 PM and 10:30 PM only on Sony SAB.

Genda Agarwal to die in 'Ghar Ek Mandir-Kripa Agrasen Maharaja Ki'?

The end of one of the most pivotal characters in television shows leads to shock and much drama. In the upcoming track of &TV's Ghar Ek Mandir-Kripa Agrasen Maharaja Ki, a critical situation leads to Genda (Shrenu Parikh) being shot by a bullet. Viewers, who have developed a sense of attachment with the character over a period, find it emotionally difficult but are also glued to their screens to know what happens next!

Kundan Agarwal (Sai Ballal), Varun (Akshay Mhatre) and Shivam (Vivaan Shah) put in a collective effort and successfully got their hands on the evidence, which proves Siddhant's ill-doing. While Siddhant



Sinha (Ankit Bathla) invites the Agarwals to his party and humiliates them in every possible

way, Genda hatches a plan to unveil Siddhant's reality. Siddhant pulls out a gun and fires on

the family as the hot-headed man he is. Genda does not think twice and jumps in front of the bul-

let. When contacted to check if it is the end of Genda in the show, Shrenu Parikh said, "For Genda, family comes first. No matter the situation, she is always there to protect her loved ones. But this time, while protecting them, she has put her own life in danger and gets hit by a bullet. I cannot officially comment more about the track. I am aware of how much people are attached to this character, and all I can promise is that the show will continue to present interesting tracks and twists to keep the viewers entertained."

Watch Ghar Ek Mandir-Kripa Agrasen Maharaja Ki at 9:00 pm, airing every Monday to Friday only on &TV.

Anjana Vasani joins 'Killing Eve' cast

Indian-born Singaporean Lactress Anjana Vasani, whom many will remember from 'Spider-Man: Far From Home', has been newly cast in Season 4 of the BBC America action thriller series 'Killing Eve'. Season 4 will debut on February 27.

Camille Cottin, the French actress most recently seen in Ridley Scott's 'House of Gucci', has been upped to a series regular and the Royal Shakespeare Company's Robert Gilbert finds himself in the cast, where French celebrity actress Marie-Sophie Ferdane will now be a recurring guest star, reports 'Variety'.

The series follows MI6 spy Eve Polastri (Sandra Oh) as she chases down international assassin Villanelle (Jodie Comer). Cottin plays Hélène, the highest-up revealed member of The Twelve, an or-



ganisation that hires assassins to commit murders. Vasani will play Pam, a young new assassin in training whose work in the family funeral business granted her solace from her relationship with her bullying brother, notes 'Variety'. Vasani is best known for starring in the Channel 4 sitcom 'We Are Lady Parts' as Amina, and has also appeared in 'Cyrano' and 'Mogul Mowgli'.

Popular onscreen couple '#RaYa' - Ram and Priya - express their delight on 'Bade Achhe Lagte Hain 2' crossing the threshold of 100 episodes. Actors Nakuul Mehta and Disha Parmar, who play Ram and Priya, seem excited as their show has successfully completed 100 episodes.

Talking about how elated she is on the show crossing the 100-episode mark, Disha 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! 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 absolutely unbelievable that we are a hundred episodes old already!"

Nakuul also echoed the feelings of his co-star saying: "It's 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 to the wonderful ensemble I get to jam with each day on set."

"I want to thank our fans for supporting our journey and for helping us reach here. Here's to a hundred, even a thousand more episodes! May we always stay in the hearts of our audiences and may we keep giving them reasons to keep coming back to #RaYa," he concludes.

'Bade Achhe Lagte Hain 2' airs on Sony Entertainment Television.



Disha Parmar delighted as 'Bade Achhe Lagte Hain 2' crosses 100 episodes

'Kabhi Kabhie Ittefaq Sey' is a feel-good show

Versatile Actor Mehul Nisar needs no introduction. Being part of the industry for more than 22 years now, Mehul has outshined in the various roles he has portrayed to date. He plays Chanchal Chacha (Hero's Uncle and Big Role) in the show 'Kabhi Kabhie Ittefaq Sey'

Excerpts of interview:
Tell us something about your character in the show 'Kabhi Kabhie Ittefaq Sey'?

I play the character of the youngest sibling from the Kulshrestha family. I play Chanchal Chacha who is in his mid-forties but considers himself to be a youngster and bonds with the younger gen-

eration of the Kulshrestha family. Chanchal is a very jovial and happy-go-lucky kind of person. He is very close to Anubhav and both are more like friends than Chacha & Bhatija.

Tell us about the various preparations that you have done for your character in the show?

This show is a very different one. The characters are in a very realistic zone. As an actor, a lot of times you have to unlearn what you have learned. Chanchal's character has a lot of fun and masti but at the same time, he is not overly loud in doing so. I have tried to balance my performance to be as close as to the realistic zone.

'Gupta Niwas' - chronicles daily life of a middle-class family

Drama, humour, and emotions; all weaved perfectly into an 8-episode series in the latest fun-packed, light-hearted family drama, Gupta Niwas by WATCHO, one of India's fastest-growing OTT platforms. Gupta Niwas depicts the topsy-turvy life of a dysfunctional middle-class family of seven members from Allahabad and how they navigate through their daily inconveniences. Streaming in Hindi, this series is sure to take its viewers through a multitude of emotions.

Set against the backdrop of Allahabad, the show chronicles the daily life of an Indian middle-class family, their problems, and how they despite their differences, figure out ways to stick together. Gupta Niwas's Director Mohit Srivastava has beautifully unfolded every tiny detail of the



characters highlighting each one's struggle, journey, and resolution. The web series comes from Crescendo Music & Viral Entertainment production house.

The stellar cast includes Mohan Kant, Sudhir Kumar, Maleeka R.Ghai, Aditya Raghuvanshi, Yashaswi Shinde, Sheeba Azhar Samrat, Vikas

Kumar, and Monika Chowdhury.

Bringing in a unique assortment of snackable content cutting across all genres, WATCHO offers many original shows including web series like Jaampur, Papa Ka Scooter, Aghaat, Cheaters - The Vacation, Sarhad, Mystery Dad, JaalSaazi, It's My Pleasure, 4 Thieves, Love Crisis, Ardhasatya, Chhoriyan, Rakhta Chandana. There are also original influencer shows like Look I Can Cook and BikharehainAlfaaz. Available across screens (Android & iOS devices, Dish SMRT devices, and Fire TV Stick) and at www.WATCHO.com, WATCHO presently provides over 35 plus original shows, 150 plus exclusive plays, and 100 plus live channels in Hindi, Kannada, and Telugu regional languages.

HOROSCOPE SUNDAY JANUARY 16

Aquarius: Jan 21 - Feb 18

You are armed with good communication skills, and like always, it will come to your aid today, too. There is one problem though. You are not clear about your emotions and it may make your arms blunt, foresees Ganesha. Make sure that you are able to identify your feelings and don't make any disastrous decisions based on that confusion.

Gemini: May 22 - June 21

You face a hectic and demanding day today. You will spend your entire day wondering how best to channelise your energy and enthusiasm. You may be prone to extreme mood swings as well. Meditative techniques should help you keep your mind calm, says Ganesha.

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 23

Ganesha says today you will try to be adept in your favorite subject. Today you will be buying artistic things too. If there are any legal proceeding going on then the results will be in your favor. You shall be a success in everything that you touch today. Your artistic streak will come to the fore today and you will develop an interest in the fine arts.

Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

Your energy and enthusiasm will know no bounds today, as everything seems to fall into place, seemingly on its own. You will blaze a new trail at the work-place. Certain tough calls may leave you off-balance momentarily, but you will come out of it with flying colours. For those who are in artistic professions, fame could come knocking on your door, says Ganesha.

Cancer: June 22 - July 22

In order to protect the feelings and sentiments of those dear to you, you may tend to hide your emotions under the garb of a calm demeanor, predicts Ganesha. In the afternoon, you may set out on a short trip out of town. In the evening, you may spend a handsome sum of money to make yourself look better.

Scorpio: Oct 24 - Nov 22

A series of events at work front may keep you busy throughout the day. You may be unable to manage the clutter and confusion created by too many things at the same time. However, you emerge a fighter because of your power of resilience. Ganesha advises to go slow, yet steady; take one problem at a time and sort it out.

Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 20

You are inclined to overprotect your private life, especially regarding relationships. Moreover, exciting things are on the cards for you today! You will also make a last ditch effort to complete some pending work.

Leo: July 23 - Aug 23

You will be filled with extra-ordinary self-confidence and will be able to take on huge risks. Sports persons will be able to make a lot of progress in their fields. You will square off against any obstacles in your way using your entire might. While it is a good day for you, keep a curb on your speculations, says Ganesha.

Sagittarius: Nov 23 - Dec 31

You rule your hear today, predicts Ganesha. You are likely to become an expert in reading people's mind. Everything is fair in love and war, is what you believe! Win over your sweetheart and set out on a journey toward destination unknown, says Ganesha.

Taurus: Apr 21 - May 21

Be careful, says Ganesha. All your calculations and conclusions, plans and moves are likely to go haywire. Time and again, you could fail and, ultimately, get frustrated. Even simple and obvious things are likely to get you worked up. Knowing that you are basically gentle, benign and large hearted, your friends and elders will rally round and provide you the help and advise you need.

Virgo: Aug 24 - Sept 22

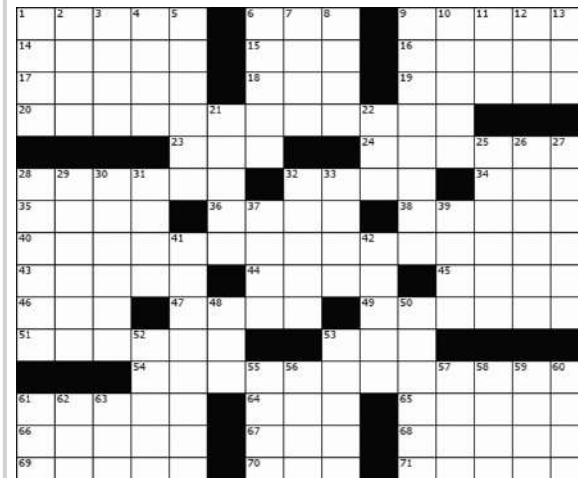
A la Sisyphus, you may realise the futility of your efforts and constant failure in achieving success. But do not despair, says Ganesha. Recharge your imagination, inquisitiveness and intelligence and focus on your long-term goals, says Ganesha.

Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 20

By and large, your life today will be dull. But, there isn't something unfavourable or negative about it, assures Ganesha, as the planetary movements signal a change, probably a positive one, happening in the near future. So, keep your chin up and get ready for a better tomorrow.

CROSSWORD

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ACROSS

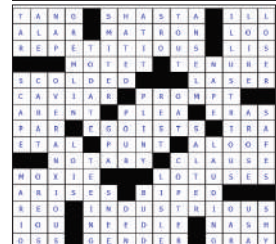
- Budweiser rival
- Canadian prov.
- One of the Alou brothers
- Grade school subj.
- Internet address, briefly
- Dumbfound
- One-edged sword
- Turkish title
- David Copperfield's forte
- "The Force will be with you, always"

DOWN

- El _____, Texas
- Ray Stevens' "Ahab the _____"
- Netanyahu, familiarly
- Be in a snit
- Serf
- Show fear, in a way
- Prompt
- Verve
- Boy Scout gathering
- Alternative to chat-room communications
- Movie stars' union (abbr.)
- Rapid-fire rifle
- Word on wine bottles
- Dorothy, to em
- Prefix meaning "egg"
- Discomfort
- Des _____

- "Is this a dagger which _____ before me...?" (Macbeth)
- Supplement, with "out"
- Lap dog, commonly
- Evaluate
- Seal again, in a way
- Sault _____ Marie
- Emulate Ethel Merman on stage
- Eva or Zsa Zsa
- Building extension
- Tippy transport
- Ooze forth
- Sports "zebra"
- Synthetic fiber
- Doled
- Extinct bird of New Zealand
- "The Duke" of film
- Creates, as a gorge
- Master roll
- Quick on the _____
- Where the first "piggy" went
- Ballerina's exercise
- Flooring wood
- "¿Cómo _____usted?"
- Outer coconut layer
- Salted bird of Egypt
- Salted and smoked, as herring
- Big name in hotels
- Snaky swimmer
- Dugong or manatee
- Residence
- _____ drugs (bacterial treatment largely replaced by antibiotics)
- Full gestation period
- Bread spread
- V.I. Warshawski creator Paretsky
- Exclusively
- When both hands are up?
- Wildier in Hollywood
- Jeweler's item
- Borden's weapon
- Nevertheless

SOLUTION 187



India Open: Lakshya Sen enters final, to face World Champion Loh Kean Yew

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

World championship bronze medallist Lakshya Sen entered his maiden World Tour Super 500 summit clash on Saturday with a come-from-behind win over Malaysia's Ng Tze Yong at the Yonex-Sunrise India Open, here.

Third seed Sen, ranked 17 in the world, will face reigning world champion Loh Kean Yew of Singapore in the summit clash on Sunday in a repeat of Dutch Open final last year.

The 20-year-old from Almor, who had joined his mentor Prakash Padukone, B Sai Praneeth and Kidambi Srikanth as a medallist at the World championships last month, notched up a 19-21 21-16 21-12 win over the world number 60 Yong in a thrilling semifinal clash.

"It is a good feeling to play my first super 500 final at my home country.



The first game was pretty close, I did some errors which cost me. But I kept my calm in the second and third game and managed to pull out," Sen said after

the match. Loh, seeded fifth, was given a walkover in the other semi-finals by Canada's Brian Yang after developing a sore throat and headache.

Sen will be itching to set the record straight after losing the Dutch Open final to Loh. Overall, the duo has a 2-2 head-to-head record with Sen losing two of the last three meetings.

"Both of us are playing well, it will be a good match tomorrow and I am really looking forward to playing him," Sen said about his final clash.

Both shuttlers showed their attacking prowess during the last four clash.

Sen made his opponent move across the court with his returns and used his smashes to good effect to open up a four-point lead at 10-6 after being 2-4 down initially.

The Indian entered the interval at 11-8 after Yong went wide.

After the break, Sen came up with some stiff smashes to bother the Malaysian but he couldn't sustain the pressure as Yong made it 14-14. The

Malaysian left Sen wrong-footed with a precise net shot to take the lead.

Yong then won a video referral to take a two point lead at 16-14. Sen controlled the proceeding thereafter to claw back at 17-17.

However, Yong grabbed two game points when a return of serve from Sen went wide and sealed it comfortably.

Yong carried the momentum in the second game, opening up a 4-1 advantage. Sen did well to erase the deficit but Young ensured he had his nose ahead at the break.

Resuming at 9-11, Sen continued his pursuit to turn things around. He drew parity at 13-13 and crafted his way to a 19-16 lead with a powerful drive away from the forehand of his opponent. A net error from Yong gave Sen four game points and he sealed it when Yong again erred at the net.

Badosa beats French Open champ Krejckikova for Sydney title

Sydney, Jan 15 (API):

Paula Badosa claimed her third career title on Saturday when she upset French Open champion Barbora Krejckikova 6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (4) in the final of the Sydney Tennis Classic.

The fifth-seeded Spaniard won a vital mini-break in the third-set tiebreaker to close out the match in 2 hours, 22 minutes.

Badosa used her strong serve to good effect, recording 12 aces including six in a commanding first set.

Third-seeded Krejckikova rallied in the second set, breaking Badosa's serve twice. Both had a service break in the final set before Badosa got the winning edge in the decisive tiebreaker.

It was another long match for Krejckikova, who outlasted Anett Kontaveit in 2 hours, 30 minutes on Friday.

Badosa improved to 3-0 in WTA tournament finals. The 24-year-old from Spain won titles last year at Belgrade and Indian Wells to finish 2021 ranked ninth. Krejckikova of the Czech



Republic is the No. 4 seed at the Australian Open and will face Andrea Pekovic of Germany in the first round, while the eighth-seeded Badosa meets Ajla Tomljanovic of Australia.

At the Adelaide International, unseeded Madison Keys claimed her first WTA Tour singles title since 2019 when she beat Alison Riske 6-1, 6-2 in an all-American final.

The former world No. 7 and 2017 U.S. Open finalist had beaten third-seeded compatriot Coco Gauff 3-6,

6-2, 7-5 in a semifinal Friday to reach her first Tour final since Brisbane in 2020.

She needed only 66 minutes to beat her regular practice partner in the first all-American final on the WTA Tour since Serena Williams beat Jessica Pegula at Auckland in 2020.

Wielding a powerful forehand from the baseline and moving well, Keys took the first set in only 27 minutes and broke Riske twice in the second set to claim her sixth career title and first since Copenhagen in 2019.

Shubman Gill likely to be middle-order enforcer

Vihari and Iyer to fight for other slot

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

The supremely-talented Punjab batter Shubman Gill will lend solidity to the Indian middle-order when a major reshuffle is expected to force struggling Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane out of the Test team.

The reshuffle is likely to happen in the wake of India's shock 1-2 defeat against an unfancied South Africa.

India's next Test assignment is a two-match series against Sri Lanka, starting February 25 in Bengaluru and at least two middle-order slots will be up for grabs.



Rohit Sharma is expected to be fit for that Test series and will take up his opening slot alongside KL Rahul. Gill has mostly played as an opener but once he recovers from his shin injury and makes himself available, it is expected that both team management and the selectors will

pick him as a specialist middle-order batter. Pujara and Rahane's exit from the national side is certain. They can only save their places if coach Rahul Dravid puts his foot down and asks the selection committee to give the out-of-form duo one last chance. But if that happens, it is un-

derstandably going to cause a lot of heartburn to all the deserving youngsters, who might feel severely let-down for not getting the break at the right moment in their respective careers.

"I think both Pujara and Rahane will be dropped from the team for the Sri Lanka series. Shreyas Iyer and Hanuma Vihari will both play," Sunil Gavaskar said while commentating on India-South Africa series. "We'll have to see who plays at number three. Hanuma Vihari may take Pujara's place and Shreyas Iyer could be number five in place of Rahane, but we will have to see. Nevertheless, I think there will certainly be two spots up for grabs against Sri Lanka," Gavaskar was also heard saying.

DRS controversy gave us a window to chip away at target: Elgar

Cape Town, Jan 15 (PTI):

South African skipper Dean Elgar said the DRS controversy offered them a "window" to have a go at the target with the Virat Kohli-led Indian team getting distracted by their on-field chatter during the series-deciding third Test.

The left-handed opener's LBW decision by umpire Marais Erasmus was overturned after HawkEye showed the ball trajectory going over the stumps.

It led to tempers fraying in the Indian camp with skipper Kohli along with his deputy KL Rahul and senior offspinner Ravichandran Ashwin mocking the South African broadcasters



"SuperSport" on stump microphone.

Chasing 212 in tough Newlands conditions, South Africa were 60 for one in the 21st over when Elgar got the

window period, especially yesterday (Thursday) for us to score a little bit freer and obviously, chip away at the deficit that we needed," Elgar said after their series-clinching seven-wicket win here on Friday. "It worked out well in our hands, it played nicely into our hands. For a period of time, they actually forgot about the game and they were challenging a bit more of the emotional side of what Test cricket has to offer." Asked about the controversy, Elgar said: "Loved it. It was obviously maybe a team that was under a little bit of pressure and things weren't going the way which they obviously were quite used to of late.

Bhavani Devi losses in Fencing World Cup

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

Indian fencers, including Olympian Bhavani Devi, bowed out of the women's individual sabre event of the World Cup after losing their respective contests in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Bhavani Devi, ranked 55th in the world, had received a bye in the round of 128 but she suffered a 8-15 loss to Spain's Elena Hernandez in the next round to exit the competition.

The 28-year-old from Chennai, the first Indian to participate at the Olympics, secured victories in four matches in the

group stage, while lost one. One match was called off.

Among other Indians in fray, Anitha Karunakaran and Josna Christy Jose couldn't cross the round of 128. While Karunakaran lost 3-15 to Russia's Dariya Drozd, Jose lost to Spain's Araceli Navarro by a similar scoreline.

The men's and women's Team World Cup will get underway at the same venue on Monday.

Bhavani Devi may compete in the next women's World Cup in Plovdiv, Bulgaria from January 28 to 29. There are two more World Cups in Greece (March 4 to 5) and Belgium (March 18 to 19).

Australia takes lead to 152 runs in Hobart

Hobart, Jan 15 (AP):

England's bowlers pegged back Australia with three wickets under the Hobart lights on Saturday night, but the hosts reached the close of play on three for 37 with a lead of 152 runs after an eventful second day of the fifth Ashes Test.

The 8,711 crowd at Bellerive Oval witnessed the day of 17 wickets over the day as Australia were dismissed for 303 in the opening session and England's first innings ended on 188 under the floodlights of the night session. There was still time for England to remove David Warner for a pair; Marnus Labuschagne for five and Usman Khawaja



Pat Cummins is congratulated by teammates after dismissing England's Dawid Malan during their Ashes cricket test match in Hobart Saturday.

for 11 as the visiting bowlers got movement and bounce out of the pink ball.

Warner was dismissed by

Stuart Broad for the 14th time in Broad's Test career; as the seamer became England's most prolific

bowler in Ashes Tests with his 129th wicket.

Steve Smith, who had scored 17 not out, and night-watchman Scott Boland, unbeaten on three, will resume on Sunday looking to build on Australia's lead and put the hosts on course to wrap up the series 4-0.

Pat Cummins had earlier taken 4-45 as the vanguard of Australia's attack, as England's batting once again crumbled in the face of unbridled pace.

England made a calamitous start with Rory Burns run out with only two runs on the board, and none of the English batsmen looked like getting close to a second century of the series for the tourists.

India drops to 5th in WTC standings after Newlands loss

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

India's seven-wicket loss to South Africa in the series-deciding third Test has cost them a top four spot as Virat Kohli and his men slipped to the fifth position in the World Test Championship standings.

India, the runners up of the inaugural edition of the WTC, are currently placed fifth in second cycle with a 49.07 percentage of points won (PCT), which is taken into account rather than the points earned.

India have played nine Tests in the second cycle of WTC, winning four, losing

three and drawing two. They have 53 points, the highest among all teams so far.

After the second Test India were in fourth position with 55.21 PCT and South Africa were one slot behind with a PCT of 50. But the win in the Newlands Test has helped South Africa (66.66 PCT) rise to the fourth spot. Currently, Sri Lanka leads the standings with a 100 PCT followed by Australia (83.33) and Pakistan (75). Reigning champions New Zealand, who drew a two-match series with Bangladesh at home earlier this week, are placed sixth with a PCT of 33.33.

Australia, Sri Lanka register wins on day one of U-19 World Cup

Georgetown, Jan 15 (PTI):

Australia and Sri Lanka logged their first points at the U-19 World Cup after registering comfortable victories over West Indies and Scotland, respectively, on the opening day here.

While Australia notched up a six-wicket win over West Indies, Sri Lanka beat Scotland by 40 runs in two Group D matches on Friday.

A disciplined Australian bowling unit first bundled out hosts West Indies for a paltry 169 and then returned to overhaul the target, scoring 170 for four in 44.5 overs with Teague Wyllie hitting a 129-ball 86, studded with eight hits to the fence. For WI, skipper Ackeeem Auguste top-scored with a



Teague Wyllie anchored Australia's chase against the West Indies with a responsible 129-ball 86 in their opening match of the Under-19 World Cup in Georgetown, Guyana.

67-ball 57. In the other match, Sri Lanka, opting to bat, were all out for 218 in

45.2 overs but their bowling unit led by Dunith Wellalage (5/27) rose to the occasion to

bundle out Scotland for 178 with 8 balls to spare. Opting to bat after winning the toss, the West Indies were off to a disastrous start as they found themselves reeling at 12 for three in the sixth over at the Providence Stadium, with pacer Tom Whitney and leg-spinner William Salzman doing the damage. Auguste joined wicket-keeper Rivaldo Clarke (37 off 42 balls) in the middle and the two stitched together a partnership of 95 runs for the fourth wicket, steadying the innings in the process.

However, the home team suffered another collapse following the dismissal of Clarke by Indian-origin spinner Nivethan Radhakrishnan (3/48) in the 22nd over.

Djokovic back in detention, continues to fight deportation

Melbourne, Jan 15 (AP):

Novak Djokovic was reported to be back in immigration detention Saturday after his legal challenge to avoid being deported from Australia for being unvaccinated for COVID-19 was moved to three judges of a higher court.

A Federal Court hearing has been scheduled for Sunday, a day before the men's No. 1-ranked tennis player and nine-time Australian Open champion was due to begin his title defense at the first Grand Slam tennis tournament of the year.

Police closed down a lane behind the building where Djokovic's lawyers are based and two vehicles exited the building mid-afternoon local time on Saturday. In television footage, Djokovic could be



seen wearing a face mask in the back of a vehicle near an immigration detention hotel.

The Australian Associated Press reported that Djokovic was back in detention. He spent four nights confined to a hotel near downtown Melbourne before being released last Monday when he won a court challenge on proce-

dural grounds against his first visa cancellation. Immigration Minister Alex Hawke on Friday blocked the 34-year-old Serb's visa, which was originally revoked when he landed at a Melbourne airport on Jan. 5.

Deportation from Australia can lead to a three-year ban on returning to the country, although

that may be waived, depending on the circumstances. Djokovic has acknowledged that his travel declaration was incorrect because it failed to indicate that he had been in multiple countries over the two weeks before his arrival in Australia.

But the incorrect travel information is not why Hawke decided that deporting Djokovic was in the public interest.

His lawyers filed documents in court on Saturday that revealed Hawke had stated that Djokovic is perceived by some as a talisman of a community of anti-vaccination sentiment.

Australia is one of the most highly vaccinated populations in the world, with 89% of people aged 16 and older fully inoculated for COVID-19.

JALLIKATTU EVENT



People participate in the Jallikattu event as part of the Pongal celebrations, in Trichy, Saturday.

UP ASSLY POLLS

Sitting BJP MLAs make way for Adityanath, Maurya

Lucknow, Jan 15 (PTI):

Sitting BJP legislators have made way for Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and his deputy Keshav Prasad Maurya to contest from the Gorakhpur Urban and Sirathu assembly seats in the Uttar Pradesh elections.

While four-time MLA Radha Mohan Das Agarwal has been replaced by Adityanath in Gorakhpur Urban seat, Sheela Prasad paved way for Maurya in Sirathu in Prayagraj district in the list of 107 candidates released by the BJP for the first two phases of polls.

Mukesh Chaudhary has benefited from the exit of former minister Dharam Singh Saini with the party naming him from Nakur constituency in Saharanpur. Adityanath

will be contesting the assembly polls for the first time. Maurya was an MLA from Sirathu in 2012. While releasing the list of nominees in Delhi, Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan told reporters that the BJP's list has 63 sitting MLAs, while 20 have made way for others.

The present ministers who figured in the list are Laxmi Narayan Chaudhary (Chhata in Mathura), Suresh Rana (Thana Bhavan in Shamli), Shrikant Sharma (Mathura), Suresh Khanna (Shahjahanpur), Kapildev Aggarwal (Muzaffarnagar), Atul Garg (Ghaziabad), Anil Sharma (Shikarpur in Bulandshahr), Sandeep Singh (Atrauli in Aligarh), GS Dharmesh (Agra Cantt), Gulabo Devi (Chandausi in Sambhal),

Baldev Singh Aulakh (Bilaspur in Rampur) and Mahesh Gupta (Budaun).

Former minister Dharampal Singh has been fielded from Aonla (in Bareilly) assembly constituency. Former Uttarakhnd governor and now BJP vice-president Baby Rani Maurya, a Dalit, has been fielded from Agra (rural). Pankaj Singh, son of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, will again contest from Noida seat. Sitting BJP MLA Sangeet Som has been given ticket from Sardhana (in Meerut).

Highlighting the BJP's outreach to marginalised communities, Pradhan said the party has fielded a Dalit candidate from a general category seat and will give tickets to more such people in the next lists for the Uttar Pradesh polls.

Vice Prez Naidu calls for strengthening joint family system



Chennai, Jan 15 (PTI): Vice president M Venkaiah Naidu on Saturday called for strengthening the joint family system and the tradition of respecting elders, which are the core aspects of the nation's civilisational values.

Underlining the important role played by elders in a family in guiding and advising the younger members, Naidu said the inter-generational bonding helps in protecting and promoting the value system.

An official release said he virtually interacted with the inmates of an elderly home at Nellore (Swarna Bharat Trust) in Andhra Pradesh on the occasion of the Sankranti festival.

He enquired about the inmates' well-being and the amenities available to them. He complimented the staff and officials of the Trust for their initiatives.

Reflecting on the importance of festivals in Indian culture, Naidu underscored that youths should understand the significance of festivals like Sankranti in celebrating the nature's bounties, bringing families together and ushering in peace and harmony in society. The vice president is currently in Chennai.

Sexual abuse by inmate at govt's children home

Counsellor suspended

Latur, Jan 15 (PTI):

A counsellor at a Maharashtra government-run children's home has been suspended allegedly for dereliction of duty after some inmates complained of sexual abuse by a 16-year-old boy at the facility in Latur city, an official said on Saturday.

A complaint of alleged sexual abuse of at least four of the seven boys at the shelter home for or-

phan children, located in the Gawli Nagar area, was registered at the Vivekanand Chowk police station on December 14 last year, following which the inmates were shifted to another children's home. Harsha Deshmukh, Deputy Commissioner, Women and Child Development, reached Latur from Pune for investigation.

A confidential report in this regard was submitted to the commissioner of the department, Rahul More, she said. The counsellor, identified as Suryakant Munde, was suspended while a propos-

al has been sent to the secretary of the department for the suspension of Raman Telgote, the superintendent of this children's home.

Action will be taken against other accused also. Sexual abuse of children is a very serious issue. During my two-day visit to Latur, I met the children. I have submitted a report to the commissioner. After that, counsellor Suryakant Munde was suspended by the commissioner. A proposal for action against superintendent Raman Telgote has been sent to the secretary, Deshmukh added.

MP agri varsity develops new varieties of oats, wheat, rice

Jabalpur, Jan 15 (PTI):

A state-run agricultural university in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur has developed new varieties of oats, wheat, rice and niger crop, which are suitable for production in other states as well, an official said on Saturday.

The Jawaharlal Nehru Krishi Vishwavidyalaya (JNKVV) has developed two varieties each of oats and wheat, one type of rice and three varieties of niger, which have been notified by

the Centre as being suitable for production, the university's vice-chancellor Dr P K Bisen said. The Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare had issued a gazette notification on January 3 in this regard, he said.

Seeds of these new crop varieties will be made available to farmers shortly. This will ensure quality production of crops and generate more income," Bisen said.

The new varieties were tested over a period of three years in various

agro-climatic conditions in specific crop-growing areas of various states, said Dr G K Koutu, director of research services at the JNKVV.

These new crops possess a combination of several desirable traits such as high-grain yield, resistance to diseases, good grain quality and short duration harvest, he said.

Of the two new varieties of oats, JO 05-304 is suitable for production in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, while JO 10-

506 can be produced in Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand, eastern region of Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Manipur, he said.

The new varieties of wheat MP 1323 and MP 1358 and rice JR 10 can be grown in specific areas of Madhya Pradesh, he said.

Three varieties of niger (ramtil) JNS 521, JNS 2015-9 and JNS 2016-1115 are suitable for irrigated and non-irrigated areas of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, Dr Koutu added.

EC reschedules polls to 4 municipal corporations in WB

Kolkata, Jan 15 (PTI): The West Bengal Election Commission on Saturday postponed polls to four municipal corporations by three weeks to February 12 in the wake of rising COVID-19 cases. According to a notification issued by the SEC, polls to Siliguri Municipal Corporation, Chandernagore Municipal Corporation, Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation and Asansol Municipal Corporation would now be held on February 12 instead of January 22. Polling will be held from 7 am to 5 pm it said. Earlier in the day, the state government sent a letter to the SEC, giving its consent to reschedule the election dates, owing to the present pandemic situation. The Calcutta High Court had also asked the commission to explore the possibility of postponing the civic polls by four to six weeks in view of the surge in cases.

ARMY DAY PARADE



Special Forces commandos march past during the Army Day Parade, at KM Cariappa Parade Ground, in New Delhi, Saturday.

ARMY DAY PARADE

Indian Army unveils new combat uniform

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

The Indian Army on Saturday unveiled a new combat uniform that is comfortable, climate friendly and features a digital disruptive pattern.

A contingent of commandos of Parachute regiment, wearing the new uniforms, took part in the Army Day parade that was conducted at the Cariappa ground here.

The uniform, which features a mix of colours including olive and earthen, has been designed taking into considerations aspects like areas of deployment of the troops and climatic conditions in which they operate.

The new uniform has been designed after analysing combat uniforms of armies of various other countries, in association with National Institute of Fashion Technology, sources said. This uniform is more comfortable and it would be worn in all types of terrains, they said. The digital disruptive

pattern is designed with help of computer aid, they said.

The shirt in the new uniform does not have to be tucked in the trouser, the sources said. The shirt in the old uniform had to be tucked in.

The sources said the new uniforms would not be available in the open market.

Biography to tell hitherto untold stories of Netaji

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

A new biography of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose attempts to bring a fresh perspective on a host of issues, including his thoughts on independent India's development, the problem of communalism, geopolitics, his own political ideology and how he negotiated with the political parties, revolutionary societies and the government.

"Bose: The Untold Story of An Inconvenient Nationalist", authored by researcher and founder of pressure group Mission Netaji, Chandrachur Ghose, will be released in February by Penguin Random House India under its Viking imprint.

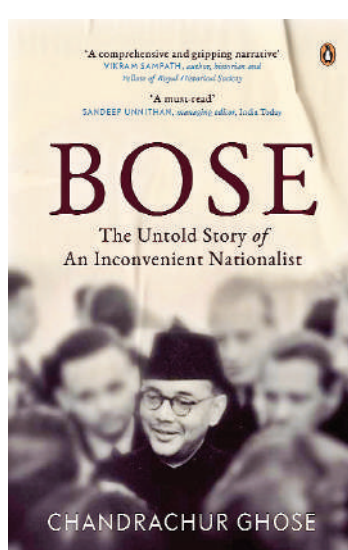
According to the publishers, the book is poised to open a window to many hitherto untold and unknown stories of Netaji coinciding with his 125th birth anniversary.

"The book throws light on Bose's intense political activities around the revolutionary groups in Bengal, Punjab, Maharashtra and the United Provinces; his efforts to bridge the increasing communal divide and his influence among the splintered political landscape; his outlook on and relations with women; his plunge into the depths of spirituality; his penchant for covert operations; and his efforts to engineer a rebellion among the Indian armed forces," a

statement said. One of the most sensitive issues that has prevented India's political parties and successive governments from talking much about Bose is joining the Axis camp during the second world war, it said.

"While Jawaharlal Nehru and other prominent Congress leaders publicly denounced the move, the Communist Party of India went on a prolonged vilification campaign.

"Sardar Patel issued instructions to Congress leaders to defend the INA soldiers without eulogising their leader.



Vilified by the Western media and largely cold-shouldered by Indian official establishment and in-

telligentsia, the alternative political language of Bose has remained outside India's mainstream political discourse," the publishers said.

Ghose said Bose is among the most misunderstood icons of modern India because much information about his work and his ideas have either remained unutilised or inaccessible.

"The alternative which emanates from his thoughts and activities to the officially sponsored Gandhian-Nehruvian paradigm that has been used to define the India project has not received the attention that it deserves. Most importantly, the central role played by Bose and the Indian National Army

in accelerating the end of the British Raj still remains officially unacknowledged," he says.

Ghose says his book "demolishes the stereotyping of Bose as a brave warrior with an authoritarian streak, who was so consumed by the aim to free India that he didn't pay much attention to the problem of reconstruction of free India".

According to Premanka Goswami, executive editor at Penguin and the commissioning editor of the book, this new biography of Netaji opens a window to many complex aspects associated with him, which largely remains untold and therefore unknown for a long time.

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BRIEF



A doctor checks eyes of a sadhu at free eye testing camp at a transit camp for the Gangasagar Mela, in Kolkata, Saturday.

Mishap

Jaipur: Five people, including an elderly woman and a boy, were killed and two others injured when a car in which they were travelling collided head-on with a bus in Rajasthan's Nagaur district on Saturday, police said. The accident occurred in the morning due to dense fog, they said. The car was on its way to Jodhpur from Nagaur while the bus was going towards Bikaner.

Busted

Muzaffarnagar: Police officials in Muzaffarnagar on Saturday said they raided an illegal arms factory and seized a cache of weapons and ammunition. A person has been arrested after the crackdown on the factory in Tandera village under Kakroli police station limits, they said. They did not name the seized weapons include 13 pistols, two guns and 15 barrels. Besides these, a set of semi-prepared weapons were also seized, police said.

Shot dead

Porbandar: A former Army man allegedly gunned down two persons during a clash between two groups of a community in Gujarat's Porbandar town, police said on Saturday. An offence has been registered against 11 persons, including a local BJP councillor and his son, for the incident that took place on Friday night, an official said.

Virtual mode

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court has said that it would continue hearing cases through the virtual mode till February 11. According to an office order dated January 12, the district courts would also hear matters only through the video conferencing mode till then. "In continuation of this court's office order dated 30.12.2021, as directed by Hon'ble the Chief Justice, the existing system of hearing of cases in this court [including the courts of Registrar and Joint Registrar (Judicial)] as well as in the district courts in Delhi shall continue till 11.02.2022," the latest order said.

Suicide

Kota (Raj): A 17-year-old girl from Bihar, preparing for NEET UG, allegedly jumped to death from the sixth floor of her hostel here on Saturday morning, police said. The girl, identified as Shikha Yadav, took the extreme step after having an argument with her father over including books and other study material while he was packing so that they could leave for their home, they said.

Weather
High 24 Low 11

ASSEMBLY POLLS

EC extends ban on public rallies, roadshows

Till Jan 22
New Delhi Jan 15 (PTI):

Amid a surge in COVID-19 cases, the Election Commission on Saturday extended its ban on physical rallies and roadshows until January 22 in the five poll-bound states, saying it will subsequently review the situation and issue fresh instructions.

The poll panel, however, granted a relaxation for the political parties to the extent that indoor meetings of maximum 300 people or 50 per cent of the capacity of the hall, or the prescribed limit set by state disaster management authorities can be held, an official statement said.

The EC said it took the decision after considering the present situation, facts and circumstances, as also the inputs received in the virtual meetings it held on Saturday with the Union health ministry, chief secretaries and health secretaries and the chief electoral officers of the poll-bound states.

"No roadshows, padayatra, cycle, bike, vehicle rally and processions shall be allowed till 22 January, 2022. Commission shall subsequently review the situation and issue further instructions accordingly," the statement said.

No physical rally of political parties or candidates, including probable candidates, or any other group related to election will be allowed till 22 January, it said.

However, the Commission said "indoor meetings of maximum of 300 persons or 50 per cent of the capacity of the hall" or the prescribed limit set by state disaster management authorities (SDMA) will be allowed.

The poll watchdog directed political parties to ensure the compliance of Covid-appropriate behaviour and guidelines and Model Code of Conduct during the activities connected with elections.

On Friday, the SP held at a large public meeting in

the compound of the party office in Lucknow, defying Covid norms.

An official in Lucknow had said the local administration is investigating the "violation".

The poll panel directed state and district administrations to ensure compliance of all instructions related to the poll code and to the pandemic control measures.

While announcing the poll schedule for Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand Manipur, Goa and Punjab on January 8, the EC had taken an unprecedented step of banning public rallies, roadshows and similar physical campaigning events till January 15.

Mumbai logs highest one-day COVID-19 deaths

Mumbai, Jan 15 (PTI):

Mumbai on Saturday reported 11 new coronavirus-related deaths, the highest single-day toll since July 29 last year, and 10,661 fresh infections, the civic body said. As many as 21,474 patients were discharged, taking the total of recoveries to 8,99,358. The number of new infected patients has been decreasing for the last three days, as per the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's (BMC) data. Further, only 722 of the new 10,661 patients found during the day were admitted to hospitals, which raised the number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients to 5,962. As many as 8,955 or 84 per cent of the new patients were asymptomatic. The city on July 29, 2021, had reported 13 deaths and the mortality figure had started declining after that. Mumbai had reported 16,420 new COVID-19 cases on Wednesday, 13,702 cases on Thursday and 11,317 on Friday, thus showing a steady decline.

Kohli steps down as Test captain

Cape Town, Jan 15 (PTI):

Virat Kohli on Saturday dropped a bombshell by quitting Test captaincy following the unexpected series defeat against South Africa.

Kohli was appointed Test captain back in 2014 when M S Dhoni stepped down in the middle of the series against Australia.

"Every thing has to come to a halt at some stage and for me as Test captain of India, it's now. There have been many ups and also some downs along the journey but there has never been lack of effort or lack of belief," Kohli wrote in a statement which he posted on Twitter, taking



everyone by surprise.

His shock announcement came a day after India lost the Test series in South Africa 1-2.

Kohli led India to the top of world rankings and during his tenure, the team recorded a memorable series win in Australia. The 33-year-old had recently quit as T20 captain and was later sacked at ODI captain by the BCCI.

Elephant kills woman in Surajpur forest

Surajpur, Jan 15:

A 22-year-old woman was trampled to death by a wild elephant in the forest near her village in Chhattisgarh's Surajpur district on Saturday, officials said.

The incident occurred around 8 AM when the woman, identified as Paan Kunwar, was grazing her goats and collecting woods in the forest near Ghui village, said BS Bhagat Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Surajpur forest division. She suddenly came face to face with a tusker which trampled her to death, he said. Surajpur, a neighbouring district of Korba, is located over 300 km away from the state capital, Raipur.

An immediate aid of Rs 25,000 has been provided to the kin of the deceased, the DFO said, adding that the

About the incident

The incident occurred around 8 AM on Saturday when the woman, identified as Paan Kunwar, was grazing her goats and collecting woods in the forest near Ghui village. She suddenly came face to face with a tusker which trampled her to death.

remaining compensation of Rs 5.75 lakh will be given later. Human-elephant conflicts in the northern part of Chhattisgarh had been a major cause of concern for the last decade while the menace has further spread its footprint in some districts of the central region in the last few years. The districts which have been facing this menace mainly are Surguja, Raigarh, Korba, Surajpur, Mahasamund, Dhamtari, Gariaband, Balod, Balrampur and Kanker.

STARTUPS, BACKBONE OF INDIA

PM for innovating for India, from India

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday 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.

"Our startups are changing the rules of the game. I believe that startups are going to be the backbone of New India," he said interacting with youngsters from the world of startups through video conference. "Let us innovate for India, innovate from India."

India, he said, has over 60,000 startups with 42 unicorns.

The government is focusing on three aspects - first, to liberate entrepreneurship and innovation



from the web of government processes, bureaucratic silos; second, creating an institutional mechanism to promote innovation; and third, handholding of young innovators and young enterprises, he said.

Narrating successes during the recent years, he said 28,000 patents were

granted last year as compared to 4,000 patents in 2013-14. Against registration of 70,000 trademarks in 2013-14, 2.5 lakh trademarks have been registered in 2020-21.

Similarly, in the year 2013-14, where only 4,000 copyrights were granted, last year their number has crossed 16,000.

Over 7 lakh shortlisted for railway's NTPC Level 2 exam

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

The railways has shortlisted over seven lakh candidates for 35,281 posts for the Non-Technical Popular Categories (NTPC) Level 2 exam, the national transporter said on Saturday.

It said shortlisting of candidates has been done separately for each level based on options exercised and the educational qualifications of the candidates. "For second stage computer based test (CBT) of each level, candidates have been called 20 times the community-wise vacancies notified against each RRB (Railway Recruitment Board).

"In case multiple candidates have obtained same marks at the cut-off, all have been called," it said.

Based on merit obtained in second stage CBT, can-

didates will be shortlisted for third stage exam in which eight times the number of vacancies will be called. "The final result will contain unique list of 35,281 notified vacancies and no candidate will be appointed against more than one post.

"A candidate who has been shortlisted for high level post cannot be debarred for appearing in second stage CBT of lower level post," it said.

Earlier the shortlisting was done 10 times the vacancy, however, this time it is 20 times the vacancy for second stage, officials said.

According to the RRB NTPC exam dates, the CBT 2 exam is scheduled to be conducted on February 14 and 18, 2022. The RRB will release the RRB NTPC admit card for CBT 2 tentatively by last week of January 2022.

WAR SKILL DISPLAY



Army jawans display their war skills during the Army Day Parade, at KM Cariappa Parade Ground, in New Delhi, Saturday.

INDIAN ARMY'S MESSAGE

'Won't let any attempt to change status quo along India's border'

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

The Indian Army's message is clear that it will not let any attempt to unilaterally change the status quo along the country's borders succeed, Army Chief Gen M M Naravane said on Saturday.

In his address at the Army Day Parade here, he said last year was extremely challenging for the Army and cited the developments on the northern borders with China.

Army Day is observed on January 15 to mark Field Marshal K M Cariappa taking over as the first Indian



Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, replacing his British predecessor in 1949.

Referring to the eastern Ladakh standoff, Gen Naravane said that to keep the situation under control, the 14th round mili-

tary-level talks were held between India and China recently. He said joint efforts at various levels have led to disengagement in many areas which in itself is a constructive step.

Gen Naravane said that on the basis of mutual and equal security, efforts would continue to find a solution to the current situation. He asserted that the morale of the soldiers deployed on snow-capped mountains for the country's security was sky-high. "Our patience is a sign of our self-confidence, but no one should make the mistake of testing it," Gen Naravane said.

COVID SURGE

Only 24k people allowed to attend R-Day parade

New Delhi, Jan 15:

Approximately 24,000 people will be permitted to attend the Republic Day parade on January 26 this year given the COVID-19 situation in the national capital, sources in the defence establishment said on Saturday.

In 2020, before the pandemic struck India, around 1.25 lakh people were permitted to attend the parade, they noted.

Last year's Republic Day parade took place amid the Covid pandemic and close to 25,000 people were allowed to attend it, sources

mentioned. Like last year, this time too the parade may not have any foreign dignitary as the chief guest due to the pandemic, they said, adding India was planning to invite the leaders of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan.

Out of the approximately 24,000 people who will be attending the parade this year, 19,000 would be invited and the rest would be the general public, who can purchase tickets, sources said. All COVID-19 protocols will be followed at the parade.

PM ON 'PARIKSHA PE CHARCHA'

'Opportunity to discover emerging trends in world of education'

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

Urging students, parents and teachers to register for this year's 'Pariksha Pe Charcha', Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the initiative provides the opportunity to connect with India's dynamic youth and discover emerging trends in the world of education.

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Thursday invited students, teachers and parents to participate in the 5th edition of 'Pariksha Pe Charcha 2022' and get a chance to be men-

tored by Prime Minister Modi. In a tweet, Modi said, "Exams are approaching and so is 'Pariksha Pe Charcha 2022.' Let's talk stress-free exams and once again support our brave #ExamWarriors, their parents and teachers."

"I urge you all to register for this year's #PPC2022," he said, sharing the link for registration.

"Personally, 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' is a fantastic learning experience. I get the opportunity to connect with our dynamic youth, understand their challenges and aspirations better," Modi

said. It also gives the opportunity to discover the emerging trends in the world of education, the prime minister said. The first edition of the prime minister's interaction programme with school and college students "Pariksha Pe Charcha 1.0" was held at the Talkatora Stadium on February 16, 2018.

In the subsequent editions of the programme, students, parents, teachers from across the nation and also from overseas interacted with him to discuss and overcome the stress emerging out of examinations in order to celebrate life.

Second phase of Ram temple foundation to be completed by Jan end

Ayodhya, Jan 15:

The construction work of Ram temple in Uttar Pradesh's Ayodhya is under way in full swing and the second phase of its foundation work would be ready by January end, officials have said.

"A part of the foundation completed. Work is under process for second foundation, it will be completed within month of January," Champat Rai, general secretary of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust told media persons.

He further informed that the construction work of the temple goes on 24x7.

Recently, a 3D animation film showing the process of the ongoing construction work of the Ram temple in Ayodhya was released online. "Through YouTube, we've tried to show ongoing construction work of Ram Mandir with the help of a 3D movie," Rai said. The main temple is being built in a total area of 2.7 acre while the total built up area is 57,400 square feet.

The length of the temple would be 360 feet and width 235 feet. The total height of the temple including the peak would be 161 feet and there would be three floors to it, each with a height of 20 feet.

SDM administers oath to NPP President Hemendra Goswami



first day he started the work with laying of stone for developmental works.

Prior to assuming office as NPP President, Hemendra Goswami had earlier worked as acting-President here for a short time. It was in the elections held on Jan 5 that he won the post with 15 votes.

Hemendra Goswami was administered oath at the hands of SDM Amit Kumar in a simple programme. It is adhering to Covid-19 guidelines and in view of increasing number of cases that this oath ceremony was held. During this Congress coparator and Aldermen along with Gyatri Anand Dewangan, Soni Anand Jangde and Mona Nagre were present.

In a simple programme adhering to Covid-19 guidelines

Mungeli, Jan 15: The newly elected President Mungeli Nagar Palika Parishad (NPP) Hemendra Goswami was administered oath in a simple programme in NPP Mungeli here on Friday and on the

Post-mortem of person done after police intervene

On his death after consuming of liquor with pesticide

Central Chronicle News

Khairagarh, Jan 15: A elderly person succumbed to consuming of poison along with liquor mid-way to Khairagarh Government Hospital and after which the family members directly took back home and were making preparations for performing final rites on Friday morning.

On getting information in this regard, the Police administration reached the village and stopped the final rites preparations and handed over the body to family members after its post-mortem.

As per information in



this regard, one Dayaram Mahima S/o M Mahima, (55), R/o Gram Pathan Jurlakala under Khairagarh thana had consumed 250 ml pesticide along with liquor on Jan 13 at 5:00 pm.

With his condition deteriorating rapidly he was rushed to Civil Hospital Khairagarh and where after his primary treat-

ment, the doctors referred him to District Hospital.

But failing to get any vehicles, the family members took him to hospital in their private vehicle and he collapsed near village Badhaitola. After this the family members brought him back to home and had started preparations for performing final rites on Friday morning.

On getting information in this regard the Police and local administration approached the family members in the village and got his post-mortem done at Civil Hospital and then handed over the body to family members.

Dr Pankaj Vaishnav who conducted the post-mortem of Dayaram informed that the post-mortem report of the deceased is yet to come and then only exact reasons behind death would be known. It was probably due to some domestic problems that the person had consumed pesticide along with liquor and which resulted in his death.

Two nabbed while operating 'satta'



Cash of Rs 13000 seized along with 'satta-patti'

Central Chronicle News

Khairagarh, Jan 15: Khairagarh Police arrested two 'satta' operators as per tip from an informer on Thursday. It was on SP's instructions, a team under leadership of TI RK Sahu was formed and reaching the site at Meerabai Chowk, arrested one Atul

Singh alias Gudda while making bid before a number along with the 'satta-patti' and seized cash of Rs 7670 from his possession and 2 'satta-pattis'.

In the same way in another incident, the accused Kmal Sharma S/o Ratan Lal Sharma was nabbed while writing 'satta-patti' ner Bharat Electronic Shop' in Itwari Baza and seized cash of Rs 4750 from him. The Police booked both of them under section 4 (1) of Gambling Act.

Commissioner inspects Balco and NTPC Covid Containment Zone

Central Chronicle News

Korba, Jan 15: Municipal Commissioner Kuldeep Sharma here inaugurated the Covid Containment Zone, in Balco Hospital and NTPC. He took stock about the status of corona investigation being done in the hospitals, number of positive cases, availability and distribution status of medicines given to the positive patients etc. and gave necessary directions to the hospital management.

In view of the increasing infection of Corona, the administration is working on a full alert mode, along with Covid investigation being done at the hospitals and other designated places of the Health Department, as well as in the hospitals run by public and industrial establishments.

Commissioner Kuldeep Sharma along with Chief Medical Health Officer of the district, Dr.B.B.Borde and S.D.M. Mr. Paikra visited NTPC hospital and Balco Covid centre, during which he inspected



the arrangements of the hospitals intensively besides taking information about the Covid investigation being done in the hospitals and the daily positive cases and distribution of medicines etc.

He instructed the officials said that the number of tests done daily, number of positive patients and distribution of medicines should be made available daily to the zone commissioner of the corporation and the concerned officers of the corporation administration.

Commissioner Sharma also inspected the newly

constructed hospital and its arrangements by Balco Management, and he inspected the Isolation Ward, General Ward, Male and Female Ward, ICU, Donating and inquired about the availability of oxygen cylinder etc.

The Commissioner also reached the outer place of the hostel premises and discussed with the caretaker and officials of the child management and directed them that no person should go out of the Containment Zone and outsiders should not enter inside as per protocol.

Sufficient bundles of gunny bags available in district: DMO

Central Chronicle News

Jagdulpur, Jan 15: The paddy purchase on MSP by Bastar district administration from farmers is going on smoothly through Societies. District Marketing Officer (DMO) informed that it is due to ensuring of sufficient gunny bags policy in each society by the state government that there is no shortage of gunny bags till date.

He informed that as against the target of purchase of 1.61 lakh MT of paddy, so far 1.14 lakh MT paddy has been purchased from 24,489 farmers till Jan 13. As per target balance paddy of 48,676 MT is expected to be purchased in coming days and for this 2434 'gathans' of gunny bags will be required.

Presently 2907 'gathans' (bundles) of gunny bags are available in the centre and 1637 are there in PPCs and 1270 are in godown of MARFED. So there are sufficient numbers of gunny bags available for purchase of remaining quantity of paddy from the farmers.

Shopkeepers take stake in hoarding and spreading rumors

Central Chronicle News

Mungeli, Jan 15: As Covid cases continue to rise in the region, the prices of essential commodities apart from prices of Tobacco Gutka, Panmasala and other products continue to rise as many shopkeepers have taken to hoarding and spreading rumors of

a proposed lockdown through direct rumor spreading and hoarding.

The administration has kept itself isolated from the developments. After spreading rumors of lockdown many traders are selling stuff like Gutka used extensively in the state at a price of 500-600 rupees against the actual price of Rs. 190 per

unit. While lovers of Beedi rolls, another favourite among the rural population, is also being sold at a higher price and duplicates of the same are also circulating in the market.

Trades have hoarded goods like sugar salt, oil, pulses, legumes vegetables and tubers, leading to a direct rise in prices

both in rural and urban regions of the district. Rise of Rs 5-15 has been reported in almost every second essential commodity product in the region. Many alert citizens have sought the administrations intervention into the matter and asked for proposals of regulations against hoarding of essential goods.

SDM presides COVID-19 control meeting

Number of traders and public representatives take part

Central Chronicle News

Arang, Jan 15: Atul Vishwakarma, the sub-divisional officer in the Municipal Council Arang, took a meeting of businessmen and public representatives regarding the increasing Covid infection in the region. He discussed control and regulatory parameters with the traders and representatives, while emphasizing on vaccination personal and community wise.

Instructions were given to use masks and sanitizers regularly to prevent the



spread of the infection, believed to be in its third wave spread. He also instructed the traders not to increase the price of essential commodities and not to do unnecessary storage. On the complaint of Corona infected family members doing

business, the sub-divisional officer said that if any such case comes to the notice, immediately inform the concerned authorities.

On behalf of the traders, the chairman of the market committee, Shrawan Agarwal assured the admin-

istration that all the traders will follow the necessary instructions, as per the norms of the administration. All the councilors and aldermen of the Municipal Cooperation and businessmen of the city were present on this occasion.

Navka Vihar festival held on the banks of Shabri river Mata

Central Chronicle News

Konta, Jan 15: 'Navka Vihar' festival was organized on Jan 13 on the banks of Shabri river Mata on the holy occasion of 'Mukhoti Ekadashi' in Konta town of Sukma district. In this, mainly Lord Shri Ram and Mata Sita are circumambulated in the Shabari river thrice in a boat in the form of laughter and the month Aarti of Mata Shabri is performed by invoking Mata Shabari. In Konta on Thursday evening, Lord Shri Ram's Vaishnava Aalaya Ram Mandir was visited by devotees from Oriya Para with great gaiety in palanquins.

Among the organizers, the entire Konta Shabari beach was decorated with lights and the whole sky was lit up with fireworks and Akash Jyoti. Harish Kawasi, who arrived as the chief guest, worshipped Lord Shri Ram by the President, District Panchayat Sukma and Raju Sahu, President



Municipality Sukma, Harish Kawasi, Raju Sahu and Deva Madvi were given a warm welcome by the organizers.

Local leagues believe that by worshipping Mata Shabri by worshipping Lord Shri Ram in Navka Vihar, there is no loss of life or property due to floods during the rainy days, so Shabari by giving the boat a swan look and decorating it very beautifully. Efforts are made to appease Mata Shabari by offering Maha Aarti by circumambulating the river. This ion rises from caste and religion, people of all religions celebrate together in a grand manner.

CEO demand 31 percent Dearness Allowance

Central Chronicle News

Arang, Jan 15: On the provincial call of Chhattisgarh Employees-Officers Federation, under the leadership of teshil convener of the Federation Manik Lal Mishra, the presidents and office bearers of all the organizations affiliated to the Federation of Arang development block, following the rules of Covid-19, have demanded 31 percent dearness allowance similar to the center. A memorandum was submitted to the sub-divisional officer Arang Atul Vishwakarma in the name of the Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh Government regarding the house rent allowance and other 14-point pending demands. On this occasion, Federation co-convenor Tapendra Bois, General Secretary Santlal Sahu, Secretary Anita Soni, Co-Secretary Arvind Vaishnav, President of the clerical class government



employees union Keshav Kumar Dahria, Pitambar Das Manikpuri, Dhanesh Kumar Baghel, Motilal Sahu, Thansingh from the Health Coordinator Employees Union. Chandrakar, Lalit Sahu, President of Chhattisgarh Teachers Association Upendra Deshlahare, Bhukhan Lal Chandrakar, President of Chhattisgarh Lecturers Association G.R. Tandon, Vijay Chandrakar, Rahul Joshi from Chhattisgarh Patwari Union, HL Yadav from Treasury Officers

Association, Hemant Chelak from State Third Class Government Employees Union, Sanjay Chandrakar, Jiteshwar Devangan, Ramkumar Sinha from Chhattisgarh Third Class Government Employees Union, including those affiliated to the Federation were present. Before handing over the memorandum, the employees-officers raised their voice by raising slogans expressing their anger for the fulfillment of their fundamental rights, dearness allowance and other pending demands.

FI terms news about plastic rice as false rumour

Central Chronicle News

Jagdulpur, Jan 15: Fortified rice full of nutrients is being distributed in the Schools and Anganbadi centres in Bastar district including among the Aspirational district. Food Inspector Ajay Yadav informed that some people have spread false rumour about plastic rice being distributed in Schools and Anganbadi centres and the same on testing by the Food

department was found to be incorrect. In the testing it has come forward that the rice being distributed in Schools and Anganbadi centres for mid-day meals and to institutions run by Integrated Women and Child Development Department through Fair Price shops (FPS) is highly nutritious 'Fortified Rice'. This rice has more quantity of 'iron', 'Folic Acid', 'B Complex', 'Vitamin A', Zinc compared to normal rice

and it is very much essential for physical and mental development. He informed that in the Schools and Anganbadi centres in Bastar district apart from regular rice, fortified rice too has been distributed in the month of August. He made an appeal to avoid false rumour about fortified rice full of nutrients being falsely promoted by few as plastic rice and asked to outrightly ignore such rumour.

Online competitions held on Swami Vivekananda Jayanti

Central Chronicle News

Pandariya Jan 15: On the occasion of Swami Vivekananda Jayanti Yuva Utsav, VHP Bajrangdal District Kabiridham organized online rangoli, painting, speech, essay and dress code competition, in which the children of the city participated. Bhoomi Sonwani, Kritika Rajput, Anubhav Rajput, Geetu Sahu, Kunal Soni, Priya Soni, Swayam Srivastava, Durgeshwari Sahu, Abhilasha Mishra, Akanksha Singh, Swati Tandon, Sakshi Sharma, Bharti Chandravanshi, Shradha Sharma, Priyanka Sharma, Bhavna Sahu bagged prizes in painting while Shradha Sharma and Abhilasha



Mishra got prizes in rangoli. In speech competition Bhumi Sonwani, Priya Soni, Kunal Soni, Nitya Gupta, Ujjwal Sharma, Mihir Khatari, Vishnu Patel, Yukta Sharma got prizes in Dress Code and Kunal Soni, Ujjwal Sharma in Essay. Pratishta Shukla, Durgeshwari Sahu,

Akanksha Singh, Payal Chandravanshi, Shivani Gupta, as well as the city's senior citizen Rohit Pathak also participated in this by expressing their views. Bajrang Dal district co-convenor Sumeet Tiwari told that Swami Vivekananda is the inspiration of today's youth; he had raised the flag of India and Hindutva all over the world. Due to Covid protocol, an online competition was organized and this type of event works to connect the younger generation with Hindutva and patriotism, he said. District Gauraksha Prabhuk Mrigendra Rajput, Apendra Choubey, District Security Rahul Rajput were involved in this event.

बैंक ऑफ इंडिया Bank of India Vyapar Vihar Branch: Zone-1, Plot-22, Vyapar Vihar, Bilaspur - 495004 (C.G.) Phone: 07752-262404

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Properties)
[Under Rule-8(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002]

Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Bank of India, Vyapar Vihar Branch under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of Powers conferred under section 13(2) read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 issued Demand Notice on the dates, mentioned against each Account (given below) calling upon the Borrowers/ Guarantors / Mortgagees to repay the amount as mentioned against each account within 60 days from the date of notices / date of receipt of the said notices. The Borrowers/ Guarantors / Mortgagees having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers/ Guarantors / Mortgagees and the public in general that the undersigned has taken of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under sub-section (4) of section 13 of the said Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002 on the date mentioned below.

The Borrower's/ Guarantors' / Mortgagee's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

The Borrowers/ Guarantors / Mortgagees in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of Bank of India for the amounts and interest thereon.

Sl. No.	Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)	Description of the Propertie	Demand Notice	Amount Due
1.	M/s. Devine Industries Proprietor Mrs. Jasmeet Kaur W/o. Jasbir Singh Hora, Plot No. P-7, Industrial Area Tifra, Bilaspur (C.G.)	Equitable mortgage of immovable property of lease hold diverted land and commercial building situated at survey No./plot no. P-07, Tifra Industrial Area, District- Bilaspur (C.G.) Admeasuring 900 Sqft. in the name of M/s. Devine Industries Pro. Mrs. Jasmeet Kaur W/o.	04.06.2021 Possession Notice 13.01.2022	₹ 49,08,244.11 + uncharged interest thereon

Jasbir Singh Hora admeasuring 6000 Sqft. Registration No. A1/24206/79-97/4351 date 10.03.2014 with sub registrar Bilaspur and hypothecation of plant and machinery and stock and raw material. Boundaries: North- 40' wide road, South- Boundary of / area, East- Plot no. P-9, West- Plot No. P-06

Date: 15.01.2022, Place : Bilaspur (C.G.) Authorized Officer/Bank of India, Vyapar Vihar



CENTRAL Chronicle

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Pakistan's policy in context

Pakistan, in its first-ever National Security Policy (NSP) launched by Prime Minister Imran Khan, makes it imperative for itself to deter war and defend the country's territorial integrity and sovereignty at "all costs" by using all elements of national power. The NSP 2022-26, with references to India, has been framed after seven years of diligent and rigorous analysis and consultations led by the National Security Division. The full 110 page NSP document will remain classified. However, a shorter, nearly 50 page version is being published. NSP in its major policy guideline says: "Deter war through all elements of national power; while exercising our right to self-defence if war is imposed." For the first 30 years after their independence, their security policy was India-centric, resulting in three major wars in 1948, 1965 and 1971 respectively. In the late eighties, not only did anti-India sentiment increase manifold, but was also badly influenced by the jihadi mindset of General Zia-ul-Haq who made religious extremist elements an integral part of Pakistan's policy. From context of India, Pakistan is seeking to deflect attention from its cross border terror policy of low intensity warfare as economic, political and social situation in Pakistan is becoming worse. Citizens in Pakistan are feeling bleak conditions with no economic, political or social security. Meanwhile, the 'Global Risks Report 2022' had listed five risks facing Pakistan with top risk of the debt crisis, followed by extreme weather events, failure to stabilise price trajectories, failure of cyber security measures and human-made environmental damage. Pakistan has asked the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to delay a board meeting meant to consider the country's sixth review until the end of January. Pakistan has been so far unable to pass recommended fiscal tightening measures tied to the funds' release. Pakistan has gained nothing from its 40-year patronage of terrorism as the fulcrum of its 'foreign policy'.

Pakistan government is undergoing a "paradigm shift from geo-political contestation to geo-economic cooperation". Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi had told the country's diplomatic missions abroad, pointing out the interconnectedness of financial health and national security. The worsening macroeconomic fundamentals and aggravating sentiments have played havoc with three major markets of Pakistan's economy, whereby they are not ready to buy the government-sponsored narrative on the economic front. Alarming, three markets, including the stock market, money market and exchange rate, are not reciprocating positively to the economic narrative being built by Pakistan's economic managers, so downslide continues at an accelerated pace. Pakistan formed a troika of bankrupts in Malaysia, Turkey and itself. It was designed to wean away Sunni Islamic authority from Saudi Arabia towards Turkey. Turkey aspired to be the new caliphate. But the effort was doomed. Pakistan's parlous state is only getting worse. The stage is set for the handiest distraction. Things may be coming to a head shortly. The National Intelligence Council's (NIC) Strategic Futures Group, a US think-tank, fears terror attacks and miscalculations could trigger a war between China, India, and Pakistan within five years. The former chief of Pakistan's tax agency, Shabbir Zaidi, had said that the Islamist nation has gone bankrupt and that the government had been lying about the country's prosperity. Speaking at Hamdard University, the former chairman of the Federal Board of Revenue said that the country was not in a state of 'going concern', an accounting terminology referring to a business that is operating and making a profit. NSP of Pakistan cannot change the situation unless it changes track from a nation based on terror ideology.

Plantations are not forests

India's forest and tree cover has risen by 2,261 square kilometres in the last two years with Andhra Pradesh growing the maximum forest cover of 647 square kilometres, according to the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2021. Total tree and forest cover in the country includes an increase of 1,540 square kilometres of forest cover and 721 square km of tree cover compared to the 2019 report. But the report seems to be deceptive as plantations cannot be called as forests, which implies biodiversity loss. India's forest cover growth has slowed to an eight-year low in 2021, with just 0.22 percent increase over 2019, down from 0.85 percent in 2013 and 0.94 percent in 2017, the highest in the last decade. The highest amount of forest cover reduction is happening in the Northeast (N-E) states, which host some of the world's richest and unique biodiversity. The Forest Survey of India defines 'forest cover' as all lands of a hectare or more with tree patches with canopy density of more than 10 percent, including green patches like orchards and plantations. These are outside 'Recorded Forest Areas' (RFA) which is land regarded as forests in government records. This covers all lands, irrespective of legal ownership and land use. 'Recorded forest area' includes only those areas recorded as forests in government records and includes pristine forests.

India felled over 1.10 crore trees over 5 years to 2020 and it also diverted large swathes of forest land for development and other purposes. So with changes in the methodology of calculating forest area, India has been able to show an increase in the overall forest cover on paper without an actual increase in forest cover. This is being done so India can achieve its target of 33 percent forest cover 2022, which it has clearly failed to. Compensatory afforestation has been touted as a solution to the loss of forests to development activity. Afforestation is broadly of two types, naturally regenerated forests, which research shows are far more effective at absorbing carbon, and plantation forests, which are generally of the same age and the same species. Looking at it purely from a carbon accounting perspective, the new plantation cannot compensate for the loss of carbon stocks and other ecosystem services provided by old-growth forests in any realistic timeframe. Choice of tree species for a new plantation often is chosen without due consideration of wider ecological value. Clearly plantations cannot be substitute for actual forests with diverse trees.

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

HOMAGE TO VALOUR



Jawans pay homage at the National War Memorial to mark the 74th Army Day, remembering the valour in defence of India, in New Delhi.

Soils from city parks are important hotspots of microbial diversity

SAHANA GHOSH



City parks and residential gardens have a unique functional microbiome with more potential human and plant pathogens, and fewer plant-symbionts than neighbouring natural ecosystems, according to a study that unpacks the soil microbiome of global urban green spaces. The findings indicate that warmer cities support larger proportions of plant pathogens, which could make fighting against city park pests, more difficult and economically challenging in the future, said study lead author Manuel Delgado-Baquerizo. Densely populated cities host a higher proportion of key antibiotic resistance genes, demonstrating that climate and socio-economic conditions can influence the microbes inhabiting city parks and gardens. The study also reports that soils from urban green spaces harbour a higher proportion of microbes tied to methane production and nitrogen dioxide emissions compared with natural ecosystems, suggesting that urban green spaces could potentially be important sources of greenhouse gas emissions (methane and nitrous oxide) to the atmosphere. 'These results, together with the fact that many urban ecosystems are over-fertilised and watered, suggest that city parks could play a role as regulators of greenhouse emissions. However, further investigations are needed to better understand the role of urban green spaces in providing nature-based solutions and control emissions,' Delgado-Baquerizo from Spain's Universidad Pablo de Olavide, told. City parks and gardens are 'living ecosystems' and not ecological deserts, said researchers on the media release on the studv. stressing that

every green spot accounts for conserving soil biodiversity. 'In the past, it was shown that the human gut has a particular microbiome; likewise, city parks and gardens have a very distinctive soil microbiome that we are just starting to understand,' Delgado-Baquerizo said.

Researchers examined soil samples from different types of urban green spaces and comparable neighbouring natural ecosystems in 56 cities from 17 countries across six continents. In India, researchers from Banaras Hindu University (BHU) looked at Durgapur, Agra and Mirzapur as part of the global work. Over five hundred species of archaea, bacteria, fungi, and protists were characterised in the soils of urban parks across the globe. Sixty-eight percent of the global population is set to live in cities by 2050, increasing the environmental and social stresses for the billions of humans living in urban areas. India is projected to double its urban dwellers from 400 million in 2011 to 800 million by 2050 which means urban green spaces for physical and mental wellbeing of residents will be critical. The realities of climate change for urban areas are underscored by the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that warns on future urbanisation amplifying projected air temperature change in cities regardless of the characteristics of the background climate, increasing minimum temperatures likely to be large as the global warming. Additionally, it emphasises that impact assessments and adaptation plans in cities require high-spatial-resolution climate projections along with models that represent urban processes, ensemble dynamical and statistical downscaling, and local-impact models. In India, urban green spaces have garnered support in policy (including the Green India Mission, Nagar Van Scheme) and political will in recent years but there is a need to plan for these restoration projects considering the larger landscape and in discussion with key stakeholders to not infringe on local rights and plan interventions and species that are ecologically appropriate, as well as develop better monitoring systems, shared Ruchika Singh, Director - Sustainable

Landscapes & Restoration, at World Resources Institute India (WRI India).

For example, the National Mission for a Green India (Green India Mission or GIM), launched in 2014, is one of the eight Missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC). GIM focusses on multiple ecosystem services such as biodiversity, water, biomass, preserving mangroves, wetlands, critical habitats etc. along with carbon sequestration. One of its aims is to improve forest and tree cover across 0.2 Mha in urban and peri-urban areas. The policy emphasises the setting up of local citizen groups to maintain and monitor urban green spaces. It seeks the support of institutions, businesses, and corporates to achieving the target. 'However, implementation of GIM has been slow, with the scheme achieving only 2.8 percent of its overall target between 2015 and 2020. In addition to being underfunded, the scheme has faced criticism for lacking consideration around local soil and other ecological conditions,' Singh told. Jay Prakash Verma at BHU's Institute of Environment and Sustainable Development, one of the co-authors of the global study, said soils of urban parks supported a significantly greater proportion of Gammaproteobacteria, Deltaproteobacteria, Bacteroidetes, Gemmatimonadetes, Ascomycota, Mucoromycota, Chlorophyta and Amoebozoa than natural ecosystems. Once this cycling of SOC and other nutrients is disrupted it may lead to the emission of greenhouse gases like CO₂, methane and nitrous oxide. 'If we keep adding synthetic nutrients and that too in higher proportions, this may lead to change in the microbiome and consequently disturb the recycling of elements like carbon and nitrogen,' said microbial ecologist Praveen Rahi, who was not associated with the research.

The research, says Rahi, is 'an eye-opener' for governments and policymakers, to treat the local biodiversity (both above and below-ground) with respect and adopt technologies to maintain it, especially since the findings spotlight that urban green spaces, globally, are very homogeneous? they are very similar, support similar mi-

crobial species and often have large portions of land covered by intensively managed lawns. The urban green-space tax included fungal and oomycete plant pathogens such as Fusarium intricans, Pythium rostratifungens, Pythium uncinatum, and fungal decomposers such as Mortierella elongata, archaeal nitrifiers such as Nitrososphaera sp., bacteria such as Streptomyces and Pseudomonas spp., and multiple species of bacteria-feeding amoebae. For a healthy soil microbiome, Verma recommends using more bio-fertilisers, green manure, farmyard manure, compost, and crop residues but advises against using contaminated or sewage water for irrigation of city parks gardens because such water sources have many disease-causing microbes. An organic framework is more sustainable. More research on urban green spaces, their management and links to human health is required. How we think about microbes beneath our feet in city parks and gardens matters because human exposure to soil microbes is beneficial to human health by promoting effective immunoregulation functions and reducing allergies. Some soil microbes (e.g., Mycobacterium, Listeria, and Fusarium spp.) can also endanger the sustainability of urban green spaces and animal, human, and plant health. In 2017, scientists put forth the Microbiome Rewilding Hypothesis which proposed that 'restoring biodiverse habitats in urban green spaces can rewind the environmental microbiome to a state that helps prevent human disease as an ecosystem service.' Recent research spanning urban green spaces in Australia, the United Kingdom and India showed that after exposure to city parks, the diversity of microbes on the skin and nose of sampled adults increased and the microbial composition became more similar to environmental sources which could have implications in reducing the development of non-communicable diseases. Although the importance of soil microbial ecology for the prediction of future climate impacts has been recognised, Verma adds that it remains a challenge to integrate with landscape-scale climate models.

(Sahana Ghosh likes to write on climate change, biodiversity, environmental health, planetary health.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Parliamentary conduct

The budget of session of parliament is going to commence soon. Most of the TV channels conduct intuitive talk shows for a few days prior to the start of each parliamentary session and conclude that the coming session would be a stormy one. But it has been observed time and again that in the name of the stormy session a disparate group of opposition MPs begin to indulge in disruptions in the House with sloganeering, rushing to the Speaker's podium, snatching and tearing papers etc., from day one, throwing parliamentary decorum to the winds. The public eagerly waits for the periodical session to see productive debates on people-centric issues but they are upset and angry because they are unable to see anything of decent debates and deliberations. The legislators appear to forget that they are elected representatives of people and are under solemn oath to serve them to remain thankful and grateful to their respective electors. Sadly, the MPs' shameful conduct on the floors of parliament is not different from what the stubborn peasants' leaders had been crazily doing by blocking all routes to and from the Delhi region by squatting on the outskirts of National Capital Territory. One hopes our MPs will very soon cast off their atrocious behaviour and constructively get down to the parliamentary business. It is also imperative that the party in power has to come out of its sombre state to bring order in parliament for justifying spending of huge taxpayers' money on the session. The ruling party cannot pretend that it is unaware of the tricky ploy of opposition to not allow parliament to function and frustrate Government's initiatives to carry out its developmental programme by enacting relevant legislation in time. The present mess demands that the ruling party will strengthen its floor coordination mechanism in the Houses by keeping a channel of communication with the oppositions for resuming normal parliamentary function.

Pannalal, via email

Excess toll

As per media report India's actual Covid-19 toll could be six times the reported figure, with a study published in the Science journal estimating it to be 3.2 million. A total of 483,178 Covid-19 deaths have been officially recorded so far since the pandemic began. No doubt India has been overwhelmed by a devastating second wave of the pandemic in the last April & May, though the government has no records of the number of actual pandemic deaths. But as per media the corpses were evidence of a massive discrepancy between the official Covid-19 death figures and the actual numbers on the ground. Whatsoever, now the Supreme Court (SC) has approved the Centre's scheme of granting Rs 50,000 ex-gratia compensation for all those who died due to Covid-19 in India. But the big question: who are those liable to get the ex-gratia compensation? Though SC said 'The ex-gratia assistance shall continue to be provided for deaths that continue to occur post the date of judgment', a total of 483,178 Covid-19 deaths have been officially recorded so far since the pandemic began. But what happened to India's actual Covid-19 toll, which was 3.2 million (mostly poor)? Is the Modi government and the SC ever thinking about those six times excess toll? As per the SC order, shall the district authorities take remedial steps to have the cause of death corrected. Hope, after losing one's near and dear one, any kin of the deceased shall not be deprived an amount of Rs 50,000 and it will be over and above the amounts paid by Centre and state under various benevolent schemes. People hope that the Modi government should not differentiate between the official and actual Covid19 toll.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee, Faridabad



WHAT THEY TWEET!



virender thapar@Thapar77Thapar
Feel almost liberated after getting my booster dose - will feel fully liberated only after masks off is ordered. Kindly help by every 1 wearing the mask. So many r not wearing!

Ananth Krishnan@ananthkrishnan
India imported more from China in 2021 (a record \$97.5 billion) than the entire two-way trade in pre-pandemic 2019 (\$92.8 billion). Total trade in 2021: \$125.6 billion (up 35% from '19) India's imports: \$97.5 billion (up 30%) India's exports to China: \$28.1 billion (up 56%)



Saurav Jha@SJha1618
The two Himalayan buffers of Nepal and Bhutan are all important when it comes to the defence of the North Indian plains. This was known to the British, which is why they always perked up when Qing China began its games there. Otherwise, they were happy to concede Tibet.



Prashant Kumar@scribe_prashant
It's NOT mild at all. Have been down with high fever, terrible cough and cold and bone breaking body pain for the past 3 days. The RTPCR has come out positive. Isolated. Don't take this wave lightly. Mask up! Take care!

Tisha Dogra@TishaDogra
Lifeline of Himachal- HRTC



Anil Swarup@swarup58
Irrespective of which party some politicians join just before the elections, their ultimate objective is to join, & quite a few of them do join, the Ruling Party.....That is the best way to keep the skeletons safe in their cupboard. Isn't it?

Harsh Goenka@hvgoenka
What happened in '21 1. Strong performance by IT, pharma and chemical sector 2. Rural demand weak 3. The strong got stronger, weak got weaker 4. Stock prices at high levels 5. Two groups grew phenomenally stronger 6. Unemployment increased 7. Geopolitics uncertainty continued.

JALLIKATTU EVENT



People participate in the Jallikattu event as part of the Pongal celebrations, in Trichy, Saturday.

UP ASSLY POLLS

Sitting BJP MLAs make way for Adityanath, Maurya

Lucknow, Jan 15 (PTI):

Sitting BJP legislators have made way for Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and his deputy Keshav Prasad Maurya to contest from the Gorakhpur Urban and Sirathu assembly seats in the Uttar Pradesh elections.

While four-time MLA Radha Mohan Das Agarwal has been replaced by Adityanath in Gorakhpur Urban seat, Sheela Prasad paved way for Maurya in Sirathu in Prayagraj district in the list of 107 candidates released by the BJP for the first two phases of polls.

Mukesh Chaudhary has benefited from the exit of former minister Dharam Singh Saini with the party naming him from Nakur constituency in Saharanpur. Adityanath

will be contesting the assembly polls for the first time. Maurya was an MLA from Sirathu in 2012. While releasing the list of nominees in Delhi, Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan told reporters that the BJP's list has 63 sitting MLAs, while 20 have made way for others.

The present ministers who figured in the list are Laxmi Narayan Chaudhary (Chhata in Mathura), Suresh Rana (Thana Bhavan in Shamli), Shrikant Sharma (Mathura), Suresh Khanna (Shahjahanpur), Kapildev Aggarwal (Muzaffarnagar), Atul Garg (Ghaziabad), Anil Sharma (Shikarpur in Bulandshahr), Sandeep Singh (Atrauli in Aligarh), GS Dharmesh (Agra Cantt), Gulabo Devi (Chandausi in Sambhal),

Baldev Singh Aulakh (Bilaspur in Rampur) and Mahesh Gupta (Budaun).

Former minister Dharampal Singh has been fielded from Aonla (in Bareilly) assembly constituency. Former Uttarakhnd governor and now BJP vice-president Baby Rani Maurya, a Dalit, has been fielded from Agra (rural). Pankaj Singh, son of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, will again contest from Noida seat. Sitting BJP MLA Sangeet Som has been given ticket from Sardhana (in Meerut).

Highlighting the BJP's outreach to marginalised communities, Pradhan said the party has fielded a Dalit candidate from a general category seat and will give tickets to more such people in the next lists for the Uttar Pradesh polls.

Vice Prez Naidu calls for strengthening joint family system



Chennai, Jan 15 (PTI): Vice president M Venkaiah Naidu on Saturday called for strengthening the joint family system and the tradition of respecting elders, which are the core aspects of the nation's civilisational values.

Underlining the important role played by elders in a family in guiding and advising the younger members, Naidu said the inter-generational bonding helps in protecting and promoting the value system.

An official release said he virtually interacted with the inmates of an elderly home at Nellore (Swarna Bharat Trust) in Andhra Pradesh on the occasion of the Sankranti festival.

He enquired about the inmates' well-being and the amenities available to them. He complimented the staff and officials of the Trust for their initiatives.

Reflecting on the importance of festivals in Indian culture, Naidu underscored that youths should understand the significance of festivals like Sankranti in celebrating the nature's bounties, bringing families together and ushering in peace and harmony in society. The vice president is currently in Chennai.

Sexual abuse by inmate at govt's children home

Counsellor suspended

Latur, Jan 15 (PTI):

A counsellor at a Maharashtra government-run children's home has been suspended allegedly for dereliction of duty after some inmates complained of sexual abuse by a 16-year-old boy at the facility in Latur city, an official said on Saturday.

A complaint of alleged sexual abuse of at least four of the seven boys at the shelter home for or-

phan children, located in the Gawli Nagar area, was registered at the Vivekanand Chowk police station on December 14 last year, following which the inmates were shifted to another children's home. Harsha Deshmukh, Deputy Commissioner, Women and Child Development, reached Latur from Pune for investigation.

A confidential report in this regard was submitted to the commissioner of the department, Rahul More, she said. The counsellor, identified as Suryakant Munde, was suspended while a propos-

al has been sent to the secretary of the department for the suspension of Raman Telgote, the superintendent of this children's home.

Action will be taken against other accused also. Sexual abuse of children is a very serious issue. During my two-day visit to Latur, I met the children. I have submitted a report to the commissioner. After that, counsellor Suryakant Munde was suspended by the commissioner. A proposal for action against superintendent Raman Telgote has been sent to the secretary, Deshmukh added.

MP agri varsity develops new varieties of oats, wheat, rice

Jabalpur, Jan 15 (PTI):

A state-run agricultural university in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur has developed new varieties of oats, wheat, rice and niger crop, which are suitable for production in other states as well, an official said on Saturday.

The Jawaharlal Nehru Krishi Vishwavidyalaya (JNKVV) has developed two varieties each of oats and wheat, one type of rice and three varieties of niger, which have been notified by

the Centre as being suitable for production, the university's vice-chancellor Dr P K Bisen said. The Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare had issued a gazette notification on January 3 in this regard, he said.

Seeds of these new crop varieties will be made available to farmers shortly. This will ensure quality production of crops and generate more income," Bisen said.

The new varieties were tested over a period of three years in various

agro-climatic conditions in specific crop-growing areas of various states, said Dr G K Koutu, director of research services at the JNKVV.

These new crops possess a combination of several desirable traits such as high-grain yield, resistance to diseases, good grain quality and short duration harvest, he said.

Of the two new varieties of oats, JO 05-304 is suitable for production in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, while JO 10-

506 can be produced in Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand, eastern region of Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Manipur, he said.

The new varieties of wheat MP 1323 and MP 1358 and rice JR 10 can be grown in specific areas of Madhya Pradesh, he said.

Three varieties of niger (ramtil) JNS 521, JNS 2015-9 and JNS 2016-1115 are suitable for irrigated and non-irrigated areas of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, Dr Koutu added.

EC reschedules polls to 4 municipal corporations in WB

Kolkata, Jan 15 (PTI): The West Bengal Election Commission on Saturday postponed polls to four municipal corporations by three weeks to February 12 in the wake of rising COVID-19 cases. According to a notification issued by the SEC, polls to Siliguri Municipal Corporation, Chandernagore Municipal Corporation, Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation and Asansol Municipal Corporation would now be held on February 12 instead of January 22. Polling will be held from 7 am to 5 pm it said. Earlier in the day, the state government sent a letter to the SEC, giving its consent to reschedule the election dates, owing to the present pandemic situation. The Calcutta High Court had also asked the commission to explore the possibility of postponing the civic polls by four to six weeks in view of the surge in cases.

ARMY DAY PARADE



Special Forces commandos march past during the Army Day Parade, at KM Cariappa Parade Ground, in New Delhi, Saturday.

ARMY DAY PARADE

Indian Army unveils new combat uniform

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

The Indian Army on Saturday unveiled a new combat uniform that is comfortable, climate friendly and features a digital disruptive pattern.

A contingent of commandos of Parachute regiment, wearing the new uniforms, took part in the Army Day parade that was conducted at the Cariappa ground here.

The uniform, which features a mix of colours including olive and earthen, has been designed taking into considerations aspects like areas of deployment of the troops and climatic conditions in which they operate.

The new uniform has been designed after analysing combat uniforms of various other countries, in association with National Institute of Fashion Technology, sources said. This uniform is more comfortable and it would be worn in all types of terrains, they said. The digital disruptive

pattern is designed with help of computer aid, they said.

The shirt in the new uniform does not have to be tucked in the trouser, the sources said. The shirt in the old uniform had to be tucked in.

The sources said the new uniforms would not be available in the open market.

Biography to tell hitherto untold stories of Netaji

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

A new biography of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose attempts to bring a fresh perspective on a host of issues, including his thoughts on independent India's development, the problem of communalism, geopolitics, his own political ideology and how he negotiated with the political parties, revolutionary societies and the government.

"Bose: The Untold Story of An Inconvenient Nationalist", authored by researcher and founder of pressure group Mission Netaji, Chandrachur Ghose, will be released in February by Penguin Random House India under its Viking imprint.

According to the publishers, the book is poised to open a window to many hitherto untold and unknown stories of Netaji coinciding with his 125th birth anniversary.

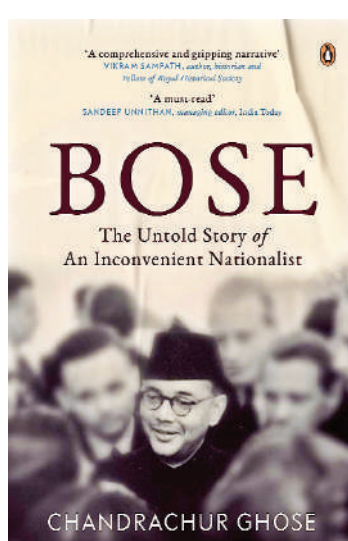
"The book throws light on Bose's intense political activities around the revolutionary groups in Bengal, Punjab, Maharashtra and the United Provinces; his efforts to bridge the increasing communal divide and his influence among the splintered political landscape; his outlook on and relations with women; his plunge into the depths of spirituality; his penchant for covert operations; and his efforts to engineer a rebellion among the Indian armed forces," a

statement said.

One of the most sensitive issues that has prevented India's political parties and successive governments from talking much about Bose is joining the Axis camp during the second world war, it said.

"While Jawaharlal Nehru and other prominent Congress leaders publicly denounced the move, the Communist Party of India went on a prolonged vilification campaign.

"Sardar Patel issued instructions to Congress leaders to defend the INA soldiers without eulogising their leader.



Vilified by the Western media and largely cold-shouldered by Indian official establishment and in-

telligentsia, the alternative political language of Bose has remained outside India's mainstream political discourse," the publishers said.

Ghose said Bose is among the most misunderstood icons of modern India because much information about his work and his ideas have either remained unutilised or inaccessible.

"The alternative which emanates from his thoughts and activities to the officially sponsored Gandhian-Nehruvian paradigm that has been used to define the India project has not received the attention that it deserves. Most importantly, the central role played by Bose and the Indian National Army

in accelerating the end of the British Raj still remains officially unacknowledged," he says.

Ghose says his book "demolishes the stereotyping of Bose as a brave warrior with an authoritarian streak, who was so consumed by the aim to free India that he didn't pay much attention to the problem of reconstruction of free India".

According to Premanka Goswami, executive editor at Penguin and the commissioning editor of the book, this new biography of Netaji opens a window to many complex aspects associated with him, which largely remains untold and therefore unknown for a long time.

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