



BRIEF



A man shifts red chili peppers at a farm in Shertha village, in Ahmedabad, Tuesday.

Maha budget

Mumbai: The budget session of the Maharashtra legislature will be held in Mumbai between March 3 and March 25. The annual budget will be tabled on March 11, an official said on Tuesday. Earlier, a discussion was held to host the budget session in Nagpur but due to the MLA hostel there being used as a COVID care centre the government has decided to hold it in Mumbai, which is the norm, the official added.

Booked

Neemuch (MP): A case of sedition has been registered against a minor college student from Jammu and Kashmir, studying in Madhya Pradesh's Neemuch city under a central government's scholarship scheme, for allegedly posting an objectionable video regarding the 2019 Pulwama terror attack, an official said on Tuesday.

Bail

New Delhi: A Delhi court has granted bail to former CBI sub-inspector Abhishhek Tiwari in a case related to the alleged leak of the probe agency's preliminary enquiry (PE) report purportedly giving clean chit to Maharashtra's ex-Home Minister Anil Deshmukh. Special judge Sanjeev Aggarwal granted relief to Tiwari, noting that the co-accused -- Deshmukh's lawyer Anand Daga and his social media Manager Gajendra Tuman -- having almost similar role have already been released on bail.

House fire

Shimla: Ten people suffered burns on Tuesday when a fire broke out at a house in Himachal Pradesh's Mandi district, a state disaster management official said. The incident took place in Ramnagar. All the injured were admitted to Medical College Hospital Nerchowk in Mandi district for treatment. The fire brigade doused the flames. The exact cause of the fire is being ascertained, the official said.

Detained

Patna: Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) chief, Chirag Paswan was detained by Patna police along with his supporters during a protest march demanding the suspension of the Nitish Kumar government here on Tuesday. The march had begun at the historic Gandhi Maidan and Paswan and his supporters were detained near the Income Tax roundabout as they were proceeding to Raj Niwas (governor's house).

Weather
High 30 Low 16

MARKET
NIFTY 17,352.45
SENSEX 58,145.05

BULLION
GOLD 49,390
SILVER 62,780

FODDER SCAM CASE

Lalu convicted

Rs 139 crore Doranda treasury embezzlement case
Sentencing on Feb 21
Ranchi, Feb 15 (PTI):



Rashtriya Janta Dal (RJD) Chief Lalu Prasad Yadav leaves the special CBI court where he appeared in connection with the fodder scam case against him, in Ranchi, Tuesday.

Judge Sudhanshu Kumar Shashi. Prasad, who was

present in the court, was taken into custody and arguments on the quantum of his sentence will be heard on February 21. The CBI counsel had earlier said the court will hear the arguments on sentence on February 18. Welcoming the court's decision, BJP Rajya Sabha MP and former Bihar deputy chief minister Sushil Kumar Modi, one of the petitioners in the fodder scam matter in the Patna High Court, said justice has finally been served to those who "pushed the state into darkness" for 15 years. Prasad had earlier been sentenced to 14 years in jail in four other fodder scam cases. The final case was related to withdrawals of Rs 139.35 crore from Doranda treasury during his tenure as the chief minister of undivided Bihar. "Of the 99 ac-

Justice delivered....
Welcoming the court's decision, BJP Rajya Sabha MP and former Bihar deputy chief minister Sushil Kumar Modi, one of the petitioners in the fodder scam matter in the Patna High Court, said justice has finally been served to those who "pushed the state into darkness" for 15 years. Prasad had earlier been sentenced to 14 years in jail in four other fodder scam cases. The final case was related to withdrawals of Rs 139.35 crore from Doranda treasury during his tenure as the chief minister of undivided Bihar.

PTI. On Prasad's plea, directions were given to the jail superintendent and RIMS director to take necessary action keeping in mind his health, he said. The ebullient leader suffers from multiple ailments, including renal problems. The CBI had examined 575 witnesses in the case, and filed charge sheet against 170 people. However, only 99 accused including Prasad faced trial which had commenced in 1996. In the course of the 22-year-long trial, 55 accused died, while eight turned government approvers. As many as six accused are still absconding. Prasad was accompanied to the court by his daughter and Rajya Sabha MP Misa Bharti. Many RJD leaders and workers also thronged the court premises.

Bastar Cafe to open in Raipur, Delhi



Raipur, Feb 15:

To promote selling-cum-marketing of coffee being cultivated in Bastar region, the state government is going to open Bastar Cafe in Raipur and Delhi. "Soon the Bastar Cafe, which is currently operational in Chhattisgarh's Jagdalpur, is going to have its footprint in Raipur and Delhi," officials said on Tuesday. The move is aimed at promoting the sale and marketing of coffee being cultivated in the Bastar region. For the marketing of coffee produced in Bastar, the government is going to sign a memorandum of un-

derstanding (MoU) with private companies, the officials said. A decision in this regard was taken in the meeting of Chhattisgarh Tea-Coffee Board chaired by the state's Agriculture and Water Resource Minister Ravindra Choubey. Meanwhile, the minister has directed the officials concerned, to prepare a project after conducting a survey so that cultivation of coffee could be promoted. The minister also assured of ensuring the installation of a machine for the processing of harvested coffee beans through DMF (District Mineral Foundation) fund.

Cabinet approves preparations for India's G20 presidency

New Delhi, Feb 15 (PTI):

The Union Cabinet on Tuesday approved setting up of a G20 secretariat to put in place arrangements required for India's presidency of the prestigious grouping. India will hold the Presidency of the G20 from December 1 to November 30, 2023. India will host the G20 summit next year. "The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, today approved the setting up of a G20 Secretariat and its reporting structures, which will be responsible for implementation of overall policy decisions and arrangements needed for steering India's forthcoming G20 Presidency," the government said in a state-

ment. G20 is the premier forum for international economic cooperation that plays an important role in global economic governance. "As per practice, a G20 Secretariat is being established to handle work relating to substantive / knowledge / content, technical, media, security and logistical aspects of India's G20 Presidency," according to the statement. "It will be manned by officers and staff from the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Finance, and other relevant line Ministries / Departments and domain knowledge experts," it said. The government said the secretariat will be functional till February 2024.

Coal crisis Gehlot taps Sonia to get mines started in Chh'garh

New Delhi, Feb 15 (PTI):

Warning of a power crisis in the state, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has tapped Congress President Sonia Gandhi for the second time in three months to get Chhattisgarh to speed up clearances for mining coal for power plants. Power generation units in Rajasthan have an allocation of coal from mines in Chhattisgarh but delays in state-level clearances have stalled most of them. Gehlot first wrote to Sonia Gandhi on December 1, 2021, and then again on February 10, according to copies of the letters sent by PTI. "Rajasthan state may suffer power crisis due to outage of 4,340 MW power

plant on the ground of non-availability of coal" from a block in Chhattisgarh, Gehlot wrote to his party president in the latest letter. This, he said, "might adversely reflect on the performance of the government of Rajasthan and create a precarious situation as both states are governed by Congress". "May I request you to kindly intervene and advise the Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh to ensure arranging all the requisite pending approvals" for the coal blocks to enable Rajasthan "to start mining activities at the earliest to avoid a power crisis in the state in future", he added. Parts of Rajasthan had witnessed several hours of power cuts in September and October 2021 after coal-

stock depleted at power plants that supply electricity to the state. Gehlot wrote to Gandhi after his letters to his Chhattisgarh counterpart Bhupesh Baghel did not cut much ice. In 2015, the central government had allocated three coal blocks in the Sarguja district of Chhattisgarh to Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Ltd (RVUNL) but only one of them has been able to commence production. The other two blocks are stuck in procedural delays. RVUNL produces 15 million tonnes of coal from Parsa East and Kanta Basan (PEKB) block and the opening of other Parsa and Kente Extension blocks will double the production.

'Corbevax is safe, will be administered in two doses'

New Delhi, Feb 15:

Chairman of Covid-19 Working Group of NTAGI, Dr NK Arora on Tuesday (February 15) said that the Covid-19 vaccine Corbevax is a safe vaccine and will be administered with two doses like other vaccines. "Corbevax is a safe vaccine and local reactions are also less. The antibody level of this vaccine is also very high. Overall Corbevax is a very useful vaccine. It will have 2 primary doses just like other vaccines in India," told Dr Arora to ANI. This comes after India's apex drug regulatory body Drugs Controller

General of India's Subject Expert Committee on Monday (February 14) granted the restricted emergency use authorisation to Biological E's Covid vaccine Corbevax for adolescents in the 12 to 18 years age bracket. However, the approval is subject to certain conditions, said a source familiar with the development.



Dr NK Arora

BEAUTY OF TAJ



Foreign tourists visit the Taj Mahal on a warmer sunny day, in Agra, Tuesday.

Will approach SC: Rakesh Tikait

Lakhimpur Kheri, Feb 15 (PTI):

Farmer leader Rakesh Tikait on Tuesday said the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) will approach the Supreme Court over the Lakhimpur Kheri violence episode in which eight people, including four farmers, were killed. Ashish Mishra, the son of Union Minister Ajay Mishra 'Teni', is a key accused in the case and the Allahabad High Court granted him bail on February 10. Ashish was expected to walk out of the jail on Tuesday. Tikait, a prominent face of the farmers' stir and the

Ashish Mishra walks out of jail on bail

After over four months, Union minister Ajay Mishra's son Ashish Mishra was released from jail here on Tuesday evening after fulfilling bail conditions pronounced by the Allahabad High Court. He has been released from jail after completion of bail formalities, Lakhimpur Kheri Jail Superintendent P P Singh told reporters. Ashish Mishra had been lodged in the jail since October 10 last year in the case related to the killing of four farmers in the violence that had erupted in the course of farmers' agitation in Tikonia in the district. The Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court had last week granted bail to Ashish Mishra in the case.

national spokesperson of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU), which is part of the SKM, also hit out at the BJP amid ongoing assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh. The whole country and whole world watched the most infa-

amous Lakhimpur Kheri episode of Ajay Teni and Ashish Teni, who despite having committed a heinous crime gets bail within three months. Everybody is seeing that and he will walk out of jail today, Tikait told re-

porters, adding the SKM would approach the Supreme Court. "So is such dictatorial government needed, or this type of system needed in which someone who mows down people under a vehicle walks out of jail within three months. How will they behave with the public in times to come? These are our issues that people need to understand, the farmer leader said. He claimed there was a power outage during the online court hearing in the case when the prosecution was making its point but the whole point could not be kept before the court.

MONEY-LAUNDERING CASE

ED raids Dawood's sister, 10 other places in Mumbai

Mumbai, Feb 15:

The Enforcement Directorate on Tuesday conducted raids at the residence of Dawood Ibrahim's sister Haseena Parkar in Mumbai in connection with the money-laundering case. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday conducted multiple searches in Mumbai as part of a money laundering probe linked to the operations of the underworld, illegal property deals and hawala transactions, official sources said. The sources also stated that these searches are being conducted in a re-



Police stand guard at Gardan Hall building during a raid by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case against Dawood Ibrahim, in Mumbai, Tuesday.

cently registered money-laundering case. "The ED is carrying out searches at several places linked to the people associated with the underworld, in Mumbai,

in a money-laundering case. Some underworld fugitives and politicians are also under investigation," the sources added. About 10 locations are being covered in Maharashtra's capital city and the action is being conducted under sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. The ED action is based on a recent FIR filed recently by the National Investigation Agency against 1993 Mumbai blasts mastermind and fugitive gangster Dawood Ibrahim and some independent intelligence inputs received by the former agency, they said.

ANOTHER JOLT TO CONG

Former Law Minister Ashwani Kumar quits party

New Delhi, Feb 15 (PTI):

Former Law Minister Ashwani Kumar on Tuesday resigned from the Congress, ending his 46-year-long association with the grand old party. Kumar sent his resignation to Congress President Sonia Gandhi this morning, saying he can best serve national causes outside the party fold. "Having given my thoughtful consideration to the matter, I have concluded that in the present circum-

stances and consistent with my dignity, I can best subserve larger national causes outside the party fold," Kumar said in his resignation letter. "I am accordingly quitting the party after a long association of 46 years and hope to proactively pursue public causes inspired by the idea of transformative leadership, based on the dignitarian promise of a liberal democracy envisioned by our freedom fighters," the former Rajya Sabha MP also said.



'Congress lacks inspirational leadership'

Former Law Minister Ashwani Kumar, who resigned from the Congress on Tuesday in the midst of the election cycle, said the grand old party had lost touch with the ground reality and no longer reflected the national mood. In a no-holds-barred interview to PTI after quitting the Congress, the 69-year-old former Rajya Sabha MP from Punjab said he had reached his limits of perseverance in the party, which, he said, lacked inspirational leadership and is facing an existential challenge. He also accused the party of

Blind murder mystery solved after four months

Bhilai, Feb 15:

With the arrest of two ruffians, Police claimed to have solved a blind murder incident which occurred in Amlshwar Police Station. Charred body of an unidentified person was found in village Amlideeh about four months ago. The third accused is absconding and cops are trying to trap him.

It needs to be mentioned here that on November 01, 2021, a charred body was recovered from the fields in village Amlideeh. After preparing the inquest, police had kept the body at the mortuary of Supela Hospital for identification. Efforts were made to get the body identified by sharing information on social media also but the deceased remained unidentified. During the investigation, a post-mortem of the unidentified man's body was done on November 06 by the team of doctors. Autopsy report revealed that the man was strangled to death and later the body was set on fire. Accordingly, an FIR was lodged under sections 302, 201, 120 B of IPC.

While addressing media persons here at Police Control Room on Tuesday, SSP Badri Narayan Meena informed that taking the matter into serious cog-



nizance, he had instructed the team of Amlshwar Police Station to carry out investigations and trap the accused. Under the supervision of Additional Superintendent of Police (City) Sanjay Kumar Dhruv, Additional Superintendent of Police (Rural) Anant Sahu, Police Sub-Divisional Officer (Patan) Devansh Rathore and Deputy Superintendent of Police (Crime) Nassar Siddhiqui, the investigation team collected information about the missing persons and found that one Sheikh Mehraruddin of Bhilai 03 was missing. His relatives were called for identification and on the basis of the clothes, thread tied on the wrist and chappals,

her daughter identified the body. The deceased was Sheikh Mehraruddin alias Tunton (40) son of Sheikh Munrudin a resident of Gandhi Nagar, Pulia Para, Bhilai 3.

Police discovered that the deceased was of criminal tendencies. About six months ago, he had entered into a fight with one Mohammad Ashraf of Bhilai 03. At that time, he had set ablaze a car which was parked in front of Ashraf's house. Ashraf was taken into custody and during interrogation, he confessed to have committed the crime. He disclosed that for taking revenge, he was willing to kill Mehraruddin. On October 31, Asraf, Sandeep Patil, and Rahul

Chaurasia were consuming liquor near railway tracks in Bhilai 3. In the meanwhile, Mehraruddin alias Tunton moved across that place. The accused intercepted him and strangled him to death. After killing him, they loaded the dead body in a Maruti Suzuki car bearing registration number CG 04 AM 3559 and moved towards the rural areas through Sirsagate, Auri, Bhatagaon and reached Amlideeh. They dumped the body on the roadside in the fields and set it ablaze using petrol. They took another route for returning back.

Police have arrested Mohammad Ashraf and Sandeep Patil alias Setti in connection with this murder. The third accused Rahul Chaurasiya is at large. Police have seized Honda Activa (CG 07 AH 7918) and Maruti Suzuki car (CG 04 H 3559), which were used in the crime. The accused were produced before the court and have been sent to jail on judicial remand.

Inspector Gopal Vaishya (SHO, Amlshwar), ASI Yashwat Srivastava, ASI Purna Bahadur, Head Constable Sunil Verma, Constable Santosh Gupta, Panne Lal, Anup Sharma, Shamim Khan and Cyber Cell staff played vital role in solving the case.

Prateek Meshram brings laurels to the state at national level

Student of Government School Maroda Tank

Bhilai, Feb 15:

That talent does not require any facilities. This has been translated into reality by Prateek Meshram, a student studying in Government Higher Secondary School, Maroda Tank. The model made by student Prateek Meshram was selected to represent the state of Chhattisgarh at the national level in the 47th and 48th Jawaharlal Nehru National Science, Mathematics and Environment Exhibition organized by NCERT at the national level. The student has achieved this important achievement under the guidance and inspiration of school's physics lecturer Sushmita Mishra. Giving information in this context, the student's guide Sushmita Mishra, tells that it is a matter of pride that Prateek Meshram's model got selected in the 47th



and 48th Jawaharlal Nehru National Science, Mathematics and Environment Exhibition for children organized by NCERT, New Delhi from February 08-11, 2022. It is for the first time that the model made by a student of government school was selected to represent the state of Chhattisgarh. It is

worth mentioning that student Prateek Meshram with the special guidance and support of Sushmita Mishra, created and demonstrated models for educational games and mathematical modeling. The model has been ranked in "Exhibits of 2020 and 2021" page no 89 which is a significant

achievement. It may be noted that Prateek Meshram, a promising student of the school, has been getting the first position in the State Level Science, Mathematics and Environment Exhibition for two consecutive years. It is worth mentioning that in the 18th State Level Science, Mathematics and Environment Exhibition which was organized in Kanker district, student Prateek Meshram secured first position in mathematics exhibition. Similarly, in the 19th State Level Science, Mathematics and Environment Exhibition, which was organized in Surajpur district, Prateek got the first position in the mathematics exhibition. The student and the teacher have been congratulated by the school principal Mitra Roychoudhury who also wished them a bright future.

SNGVB acknowledges Janvee's success in NEET

Bhilai, Feb 15:

SNGVB rose to new heights with glorious success of Janvee Thakur's notable performance at NEET 2021. The future medico was acknowledged by NB Lalson Patron (SNGDS), VK Babu School Manager, Santosh Kumar



TR (VP Org), K Sunil Kumar (The School Principal) and Dr Komal Bedi (Vice Principal) with a souvenir. The whole SNG fraternity extended their Heartiest Congratulations for the outstanding performance of Sngian Brand Ambassador Janvee Thakur.

NRIs extend monetary assistance for treatment of Baby Amayra



Bhilai, Feb 15:

Members of North America Sahu Association and All America Chhattisgarhi Group have provided monetary assistance of Rs 55000 for treatment of a girl child who is suffering from birth deformity. On Tuesday, the cheque was handed over to the needy family at District Collectorate.

Rupali Mahtari Gudi Bahuddeshiya Sanstha Bhilai President Shanta Sharma informed that New York (USA) resident

Vibhashri Sahu came to know about the problems being faced by the parents of Baby Amayra. At the time of birth, the baby suffered some deformity due to which her left hand is not working properly. The doctors have suggested long term physiotherapy treatment for the baby. The underprivileged family required monetary assistance for her treatment. Vibhashri Sahu initiated to help the family after which North America Sahu Association and All America Chhattisgarhi Group contributed Rs

55000 for the baby's treatment.

The cheque was handed over the family in presence of District Collector Dr Sarveshwar Narendra Bhure; New Press Club of Bhilai President Bhavana Pandey, Rupali Mahtari Gudi Bahuddeshiya Sanstha Bhilai President Shanta Sharma, Treasurer Malti Yadav, Legal Advisor Dr Sushila Yadav, Dr Suresh Singh, Baldev, Jayant, Dr Singh, Vijayalakshmi Sharma, PS Chauhan and other office bearers of the organisation.

Cop convinces missing girl to return back home

Bhilai, Feb 15: Handling the case of missing girl very tactfully, Head Constable Yogesh Chandrakar of City Kotwali Durg managed to convince her for returning back home.

The girl has returned back from Rajasthan of her own. About six months ago, the girl had fled from home after which her family members had lodged a missing report. It needs to be mentioned here that a 21-year-old girl had fled from home without telling anything to anybody. Recently, on directions of SSP Badri Narayan Meena, ASP (City) Sanjay Dhruv and CSP (Durg) Jitendra Yadav had instructed the SHOs to resolve the pending cases. In this sequence, Durg City Kotwali SHO Inspector Bhushan Ekka took personal interest in this case and instructed Head Constable Yogesh Chandrakar to search for the missing girl. Investigation team took assis-



tance from Cyber Cell. The call details of the girl were analyzed after which Head Constable Yogesh Chandrakar managed to contact the missing girl on mobile phone. Yogesh spoke to her and managed to convince her for returning back. The missing girl returned back and reached Durg Police Station

after which the case was disposed off. The relatives of the missing girl were very happy with this initiative of the Investigating Officer Head Constable Yogesh Chandrakar. Inspector Bhushan Ekka, Head Constable Yogesh Chandrakar and Cyber Cell played a commendable role in this case.

Sneha Singh of SRI School selected for INSPIRE Awards-MANAK



Bhilai, Feb 15: Sneha Singh of SRI School Kumhari has been selected for INSPIRE (MANAK) award for the year 2021-22, for her innovative work of child friendly snack serving tray.

'Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research' (INSPIRE) scheme is one of the flagship programmes of Department of Science & Technology (DST), Government of India. The INSPIRE Awards - MANAK (Million Minds Augmenting National Aspirations and Knowledge), being executed by DST with National

Innovation Foundation - India (NIF), an autonomous body of DST, aims to motivate students in studying in classes 6 to 10. The objective of the scheme is to target one million original ideas/innovations rooted in science and societal applications to foster a culture of creativity and innovative thinking among school children.

Vice Chairman Shri Rawatpura Sarkar Lok Kalyan Trust, Dr JK Upadhyay; Director Kumhari Campus MK Shrivastava, Principal SRI School Aarati Mishra congratulated to student.

Tributes paid to Pulwama martyrs



Bhilai, Feb 15:

The Mahila Samiti, Nehrunagar West remembered the 44 brave soldiers of CRPF who laid their lives in lines of the duty in Pulwama. The Samiti paid tributes to the jawans at Maharana Pratap Udyan (Nehru Nagar west). In the programme children of the neighborhood also participated enthusiastically and took an oath that they would grow up to join

the army and serve the country. On this occasion, Garden Conservator VN Pandey paid tribute by lighting a lamp. Others who paid tribute were Committee President Sushma Jhamb, Mona Vij, Kiran Vaidya, Madhu Srivastava and Madhuri Agarwal. The children who expressed their solidarity were Jhanvi, Aman, Rudra Pratap, Ajitesh and Kanha among others.

1426 villagers benefitted at Civic Action Programme

Bhilai, Feb 15:

167th Battalion of Border Security Force organised a Civic Action Programme at its Company Operated Bases (COBs) in Mandagaon and Badejharkata in Kanker on Tuesday. An elderly lady formally inaugurated the programme which was organised at the helipad.

Chief Medical Officer (Sector Headquarters, Durg) Dr Bharti Sen, 2IC Raj Kamal and 2IC Vishal Joshi were specially present. About 1426 villagers of Mandagaon, Badejharkata, Middle, Mendra Nagaida including sarpanch Gayata Patel attended the programme. Volleyball matches and cultural programmes were organised

on the occasion. Stationery, blankets, water tanks, sports items, agricultural tools and daily use items worth Rs 5.56 lakhs were distributed among the villagers. 273 people were treated at the medical camp and medicines worth Rs 32854 were distributed. Villagers have appreciated the initiatives of the Border Security Force.



Hindu organisations take out Nyay Yatra



Bhilai, Feb 15:

Protesting against the lathicharge on Hindutva activists, the members of Bajrang Dal and other organisations took out a Nyay Yatra on Tuesday. The procession was taken out from New Bus Stand in Durg while moved to IGP Office in 32 Bungalows. Here, they submitted a memorandum demanding action

against the policemen responsible for lathicharge on Hindutva activists.

Bajrang Dal convenor Ratan Yadav stated that the administration was hurting the religious sentiments of the people. When the people were peacefully protesting against the administration's move of removing the Lord Hanuman Temple due to road construction, the cops should

not have resorted to baton charge. He added that the religious place of another religion is also coming in the path of road construction but the administration is willingly exempting that place. He added that such discrimination was unfair and unjust. He further demanded departmental action against the cops who were responsible for baton charge on demonstrators.

Complete construction work of CM House on time: Sahu



P.W.D. Minister inspects under construction buildings in Naya Raipur

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Feb 15: Public Works Minister Tamradhwaj Sahu inspected the construction works in Naya Raipur today. He inspected the under-construction Raj Bhavan,

Chief Minister's residence, ministerial residence and residence buildings for departmental officers and instructed the officials of the Public Works Department to complete the work within the stipulated time. Administrative approval of Rs 591 crore 75 lakh has been given for the construction of residential buildings in Sector-18 (Sector-24) of Naya Raipur. During inspection of the works under construction,



Public Works Minister Sahu instructed the departmental officers to complete the work on time. Officials of the Public Works Department informed that the work of Chief Minister's residence will be completed by December 2022 and all the ministerial residences will be completed by March 2023. For greenery in the area, Royal Palm saplings will be planted and 10,000 saplings will be planted. Sahu also in-

spected the works of building construction, water supply, sanitary fittings and electrification and directed the departmental officers to complete them on time. Chief Engineer of Public Works Department, VK Bhattapahari, Chief Engineer Dnyaneshwar Kashyap, Chief Engineer (E&M) GS Mandavi, Superintending Engineer Vijay Singh Korram and other senior officers were present.

Youth anger erupts against Assam CM



BJP's mentality is to make low level statements: Padhi

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Feb 15: Youth Congress' anger has erupted against Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for his recent indecent remarks against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. Chhattisgarh Pradesh Youth Congress today burnt an effigy of Assam Chief Minister under the leadership of State President Purnachand

Koko Padhi in protest against his indecent remarks. National Spokesperson Subodh Haritwal said that today on the instructions of Padhi, youth Congress workers all over the state have burnt effigy of Assam Chief Minister condemning the his low level statement. According to Padhi, it is mentality of BJP to make such a low level statements. The Bharatiya Janata Party has boycotted decency in politics, he said, adding that this despicable statement of Himanta Biswa Sarma and the silence of Prime

Minister Modi and senior BJP leaders on this statement make it clear that they also fully agree in such low statements. The BJP has now become the flag bearer of low level politics, whose main mantra has been to hide its failures by raising fingers on others. In fact, the leaders of the BJP have started getting upset with their own failures and have started making such rhetoric. It is clear that now the downfall of BJP has started.

Among those present during today's programme were Pasjaman Bagh, Renu Mishra, Ashraf Hussain, Akashdeep Sharma, Vidhi Namdev, Guljeb Ahmed, Md Azhar, Ashish Dwiwedi, Abhijit Tiwari, Indu Verma, Rahul Kar, Satish Singh, Manharan Verma, Soma Thakur, Swapnil Mishra, Bhavesh Shukla, Ashish Chandrakar, Shantanu Jha, Mithilesh Yadav, Palash Malhotra, Fahim Khan, Shivam Tiwari, Tirath Sahu, Vishal and other Youth Congress office bearers and workers.

All preparations made for Rajim Punni Mela from today



Rajim, Feb 15: All the preparations for the famous Rajim Madhi Punni fair in sacred city of Rajim to continue till Mahashivratri has been completed a day before here on Tuesday evening. The officers from district administration were involved in its preparations for last one week and it was just four days back only Home Minister Tamradhwaj Sahu conducted inspection of the Mela site and gave necessary instructions to District Collector Namrta Gandhi.

The people of Rajim city and nearby started gathering for Madhi Punni Holy dip at the confluence of three rivers since Tuesday evening and the work of Holy Dip will start from Wednesday morning at 4:00 am and would continue till afternoon.

This year also Madhi Punni Mela will be held under the shadow of coro-

Punni; 24 Feb for 'Janaki Snan' and on March 1 on Mahashivratri, when thousands of devotees would take the Holy Dip and this will conclude the month-long Madhi Punni Mela.

Just near the spectators gallery, a huge dome has been constructed for government exhibition and programmes. Opposite 'Mama-Bhancha' mandir, control room has been formed. In the river, road has been constructed using sand and stone and either side of the roads shops have been erected.

This time 'sadhus-sants' have not been invited, rather local Sadhus-sants will be present and 'Sant-Samgam' will be held from Feb 24 to March -1 and during which there will be discourses by the "Sadhus-Sants".

The Vidhan Sabha Speaker Dr Charandas Mahant will inaugurate the Rajim Punni Mela on Feb 16 by lighting a 'diya' opposite Lord Shri Rajiv Lochan's idol. All the government programmes and arrangements have been made at the mela venue near the river.

Six liquor shops around venue of Rajim Maghi Punni Mela to remain closed

Raipur, Feb 15: According to the announcement of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, six country and foreign liquor shops around the venue of Rajim Punni Mela will remain closed from 16 February to 01 March 2022. An order to this effect has been issued by the Commercial Tax (Excise) Department at Mahanadi Bhawan (Mantralya). Collectors of Gariaband, Dhamtari and Raipur districts have been directed to strictly implement this order.

According to the order issued by the Commercial Tax (Excise) Department, a total of 06 country and foreign liquor shops will remain closed from 16 February to 01 March 2022 during Rajim Maghi Punni Mela.

'COLOURFUL BOATS'



The authorities have allowed sailing of colourful and lighted boats in Kharun during night hours till 8:00 pm.

Meeting today over establishment of C-Mart

Raipur, Feb 15: A meeting will be held on February 16 at Collectorate Conference Hall over establishment of C-Mart. Collector Sourabh Kumar will preside over the meeting which is scheduled to begin at 12 pm. He asked all the concerned officers to be present at the scheduled place and time for the meeting.

BJP leaders stage massive protest

Condemns police action on silent BJP protestors

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Feb 15: BJP Raipur district organised massive dharna at city's dharna venue and in this BJP National Vice President and ex-CM Dr Raman Singh, Leader of Opposition in VS Dharamlal Kaushik, ex-Minister and MLA Brijmohan Agrwal, Rajesh Munat, BJP district President Srichand Sundrani and other office bearers from district and all over state were present.

BJP leaders staged protest against the provocative statements and anti-party statements against BJP in the social media over the protest incident by BJYM against Congress leader on his Raipur arrival and showing of black-flags at 6 different places.

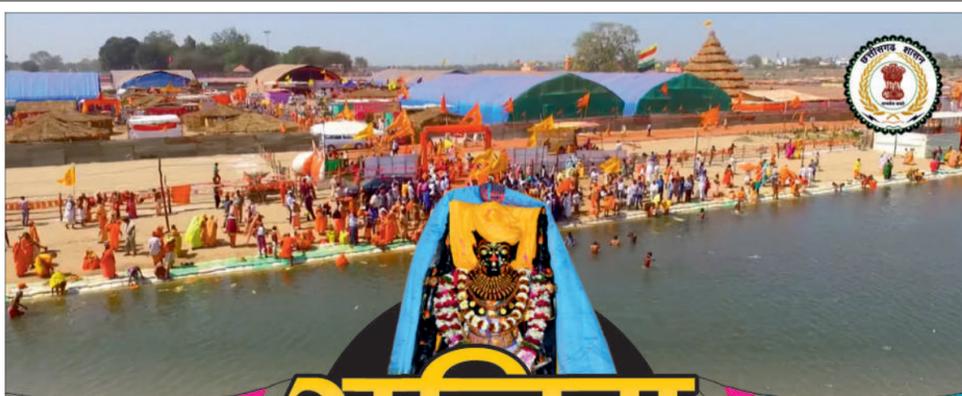
Two days after this BJP party workers tried to stop the Congress workers from flashing black-flags to Union Minister Jyotiradiya Scindia and despite peaceful attempts the Congress leaders getting enraged entered into verbal dialogue with senior party leader and ex-Minister and on this police tried to arrest the workers and were taken to VS thana and as per

nexus with Police thana in-charge four persons reaches there and enter into physical fighting with senior party leader and Ex-Minister inside the thana itself. BJP leaders charged that in this entire incident the role of police was suspicious and it appears as if they (police) were acting like government's agent.

Addressing hundreds of workers in the dharna, BJP National V-P

Raman Singh questioned the reasons behind BJP taking to streets and holding such major dharna. He said despite adopting democratic methods, the party workers of BJP succeeded in showing black-flags to Rahul Gandhi and questioned as to why the Congress is so fearful of such silent protest. Terming the incident against BJP leader and workers as an attempt to settle the

issue, Raman charged that this arrest was done as if they are goondas or dacoits. He termed the democratic method of protest as one's constitutional right and termed the action by police on BJP workers as condemnable an act. Other BJP leaders and ex-Ministers also addressed the gathering and strongly protested the Congress move against the party leaders.



राजिम माधी पुन्नी मेला

16 फरवरी - 01 मार्च, 2022

प्रथम स्नान

16 फरवरी 2022

माधी पुन्नी

दूसरा स्नान

23 फरवरी 2022

जानकी जयंती

तीसरा स्नान

01 मार्च 2022

महाशिवरात्रि



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Speed up the work of Jal Jeevan Mission: Sahoo



Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 18: Additional Chief Secretary, Public Health Engineering Department, Mr. Subrat Sahoo inspected the works of tap water being delivered from door to door under Jal Jeevan Mission in village Bhithikala, Sukhri and

Kalapara of Ambikapur district. He directed the officers that by expediting the works of Jal Jeevan Mission, the work of providing tap water to the homes of the villagers should be done on priority. The Additional Chief Secretary talked to the villagers during the inspection and advised them to

take advantage of the facility of tap water and take the responsibility of its care. He directed the officers to organize gram sabhas in the panchayats in which they should be made aware about the proper use of tap water and its care. He said that the villagers should be given the collective re-

sponsibility of protecting the tap water being installed in front of the house.

During the inspection of tap water in village Kalapara, Additional Chief Secretary talked to Sarpanch Mrs. Biloso Markam and asked people to make people aware about tap water so that people can take maximum benefit of it. He also visited the newly constructed water tank and chlorination room at Kalapara. After this, he inspected the Government Pre-Secondary School, Kalapara, located near the water tank.

Under the Jal Jeevan Mission, tap facility will be provided in all schools, Anganwadi centers, hospitals and villages of the district. Necessary action is being taken by the Public Health Engineering Department for this. Collector Mr. Sanjeev Kumar Jha, CEO of Zilla Panchayat Mr. Vinay Kumar Langleh, and senior officers were present on the occasion.

Frequent accidents becoming cause of concern



Four-wheeler dashed against pole on Khairagah road, passengers narrowly escape

Demand for by-pass road linking Maharashtra via Bortalav still pending

Central Chronicle News

Dongargarh, Feb 15: The main road from heart of city to Kawardha and from Dongargarh to Nagpur and Dongargarh to Maharashtra via Bortalav is turning into accidental zone and cause of concern for the vehicle riders. It was on Sunday itself that a child died on this road

and on Monday also though a four-wheeler being driven carefully avoided an accident, but the vehicle dashed against an electric pole, causing damage both to the vehicle and the pole.

So in view of such situations arising on this route, the then former CM Raman Singh has

granted sanction for construction of a by-pass road in 2015 as per request from then President Pitamber Swamy of Mandir Trust Samiti and other citizens and even granted sanction of Rs 33.40 cr under LWE Scheme and under RRP-2, it was included in the priority list of proposed

works. The state's PWD in its letter to Under Secretary Home Ministry GoI on 17 June 2015 mentioned about sanction of by-pass road from Dongargarh to Bortalav to Chouthana, Barritola, Bacherabhata, Karwari to Khairagarh. President of Trust and other citizens have urged the then CM to carry out construction of by-pass road connecting Gondia, Dongargarh, Khairagarh, Kawardha and Rajnandgaon via Gram Chouthana, B h a r i t t o l a , Bachedabhata, Karwari. On this the then MLA Sarojini Banjare had granted her sanction and the then former CM Raman Singh had also forwarded letter o the Under Secy. Home Ministry GoI giving his consent.

Rashtriya Bajrang Dal formed in Dhamdha

● In presence of Annu Rana

Dhamdha, Feb 15: In order to promote awareness about Hindutva and to teach women about their personal safety over increasing atrocities against women from Hindu religion, that National Woman Council Durg Division President of Rashtriya Bajrang Dal Annu Rana arrived here on one-day tour to Dhamdha. She met the party workers of Bajrang Dal in large number and held talks about expansion of the organisation in the city. The formation of



Hindu organisation Rashtriya Bajrang Dal in Dhamdha was held on Tuesday and through this awareness will be created among Hindu women.

On this occasion Bajrang Dal activists and party workers were present in large number. On this occasion Kanhaiya Sahu, Ram Lal Yadav, Deena Yadav, Raja Yadav, Ashok Yadav, Dulari Mishra, and other male and female party workers were present in large number.

Sirpur Mahotsav on Feb 16-17

Mahasamund, Feb 15: On occasion of 'Maadh Poornima' at state's historical site 'Sirpur' the two-day 'Sirpur Mahotsav' will be held from Feb 16-17. The chief guest of Mahotsav will be Minister for Tourism and culture, Food & Civil Supplies Corporation Amarjeet Bhagat will inaugurate it on Feb 16 and the chief guest at the conclusion of the Mahotsav will be Minister for Home, PWD, Jail, Tourism, Religious Trust and Endowments and in-charge of the District Tamradhwaj Sahu. During this special guests will be LS MP

M a h a s a m u n d Chunnilal Sahu, Parliamentary Secy and MLA Vinod S Chandrakar, MLA Khallari Dwarkadheesh Yadav, President State Forest Devp Corporation and MLA Basna, Devendra Bahadur Singh, VP SC Authority and MLA Saraipali Kismatlal Nand, President CG Rajya Beej & Krishi Vikas Nigam Agni Chandrakar, President District Panchayat Usha Patel, VP Laxman Patel, President Janpad Yatendra Sahu, Sarpanch Gram Panchayat Sirpur Lalit Dhruv and others.

BJP corporators stage silent protest

● On not being invited for special meeting of Nagar Palika

Central Chronicle News

Takathpur, Feb 15: In a special meeting of Nagar Palika and in this the BJP corporators were informed that they cannot participate in the question-hour session. So getting annoyed over the same, all the BJP corporators under leadership of Leader of Oppn Ishwar Dewangan boycotted the entire meeting proceedings and staged dharna within Nagar Palika premises in silent manner.



BJP corporators alleged.

Set aside this in the special meeting convened on Monday, the BJP corporators were not allowed to take part and neither any of their questions were included in the agenda and by doing so they are openly violating the democratic and constitutional rights of elected public reps.

When the BJP corporators said that in last two years LED bulbs are unavailable; no issue of ration card sanctioned about a year back in Council meeting; exploitation of poor in the name of payment of installment in the name of PMAY and for pension cases, mutation of shops and buildings; capturing of CMO and

One corporator of BJP not in dharna

Out of 7 elected BJP corporators, six took part in the dharna and only the BJP corporator of ward NO. 11 Shiv Dewangan was not present. To a question as to how he did not participated, Dewangan giving lame accuse said that he was not informed about it.

What officer says

The special meeting was held as per rules and no questions were received on behalf of the BJP corporators for this meeting. Abubhav Singh- CMO Nagar Palika-Takathpur.

Engineering cell of Nagar Palika by a person in particular; withdrawals based upon fake bills; payment during corona period without purchasing of materials; cleaning and sanitation at its worst; below-quality construction work, free selling of illegal plot-

ting; corruption worth lakhs in the name of cleaning of 'Pachreha' nullah; carelessness in cleaning work in Maa Parmeshwari garden and other issues, all the BJP corporators were not invited and due to which they were all forced to stage silent protest.

Collector annoyed over pace of construction work

That of road widening, drainage from Guest Hostel to Bodhghat Chowk

Central Chronicle News

Jagdarpur, Feb 15: Collector Rajat Bansal expressed annoyance over the pace of tarring and drainage construction under the ongoing road widening and construction work from Guest Hostel to Bodhghat Chowk in city. For this he directed to issue show-cause notice to the Sub-Engineer and other concerned officers of



PWD and to the contractor Suresh Arora.

Bansal along with officers reached the site of construction and took stock of progress made. Issuing warning to the officers he said that under any

circumstances there should be progress within a week's time in this work. Bansal directed SDM Dinesh Nag to present the progress report of construction work as well. During this he also

hailed the support from local citizens in the road widening work. Collector also directed the Contractor Suresh Arora to complete the pending work at the earliest.

It is notable here that under road-widening work from Guest Hostel to Bodhghat Chowk, there is about 10 mts expansion on either side of the road. During this Collector inspected the ongoing tarring and road drainage work to the officers and contractor. On this occasion Commissioner Nagar Nigam Prem Patel, EE PWD Rajiv Batra and other officers were present.

Jawans of 29th ITBP Battalion donate blood

As tribute to martyrs of Pulwama incident

Kondagaon, Feb 15: The officers and jawans of 29th Battalion of ITBP posted in Kondagaon district in the memory of martyrs of Pulwama incident donated blood in District Hospital under leadership of Commandant 29th ITBP Battalion Samar Bahadur Singh. In this the Blood



Bank officer Nagesh and Kamal hailed the decision on part of jawans of 29th ITBP Battalion. On this occasion Dy. Commandant 29th ITBP Battalion Neeraj Singh also donated blood

and gave assurance that in the near future also if any person requires blood in emergency, then the ITBP jawans will always be ready to donate blood.

It is notable here that the officers and jawans of this 29th Battalion ITBP are performing operational duties at their workplace and also creating awareness among the local people through variety of programmes.

SPORTS ROUND UP

Ch'garh starts practice ahead of Ranji Trophy match



Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Feb 15: Chhattisgarh Cricket team on Tuesday started practice for the Ranji Trophy Cricket tournament match to be played at Guwahati against Jharkhand from February 17 onwards.

Apart from Jharkhand, the visiting Chhattisgarh would be playing matches against Tamil Nadu and Delhi from February 24 and from March 3 respectively. After completing the mandatory quarantine, the Chhattisgarh team started practice session.

Harpreet Singh Bhatia led Chhattisgarh team has several key players including Akhil Hearwadkar, Anuj Tiwari, Sumit Ruikar, Amandeep Khare, Ajay Mandal, Ashutosh Singh, Ian Costner, Md Shahbaj Hussain, Pankaj Rao, M Ravi Kiran, Sanidhya Hurkat, Sanjit Desai, Shahwan Khan, Shakib Ahmed, Shashank Singh, Shubham Agrawal, Saurabh Majumdar, Veer Pratap Singh and Vishwas Mallick. Former Ranji Player Devendra Bundela is Team Coach, informs a press release issued here.

Accused arrested with stolen bike, scooty

● Was looking for customer in Premnagar

Central Chronicle News

Kondagaon, Feb 15: The Kondagaon Police arrested the accused involved in selling of stolen motorcycle and Jupiter Scooty here on Tuesday. Giving information in this regard TI Archana Dhurandhar informed that it was on tip from an informer that a person is looking for customer to sell a stolen motorcycle and Jupiter Scooty in Premnagar in



city. So the Police acted promptly and seized 1 stolen Hero Honda motorcycle without any registration number and 1 piece Jupiter Scooty bearing No. CG 17 K 8457. The accused Lucky Kashyap S/o Sadaram

Kashyap, Caste Bhatara, (19), R/o Opp Balaji Mandir, Atal Awas Tetarkutti, Jagdalpur (Thana- Bodhghat) District Bastar, was arrested under section 41 (1) and 379 of IPC and later produced in the court and sent to jail.

Homage to Guru Ravidas

Amitava Basu

Guru Ravidas a poet-saint of the 15th century was part of the Bhakti Movement of medieval India, which sought to bring social and religious reform. He was born near Varanasi. Though the exact date of birth of Guru Ravidas is not known, his birthday is traditionally celebrated on the auspicious full moon day in the month of Magha of the Hindu calendar, which corresponds to the month of February of the Gregorian calendar. Guru Ravidas spread the message of love and kindness. He denounced discrimination between

people on account of caste and religion. He explained God is omnipresent and resides in every human being. He wrote "You are me, and I am You — what is the difference between us? We are like gold and the bracelet, or water and the waves". Guru Ravidas stressed that every individual is equal irrespective of caste, creed, colour, and religion.

Guru Ravidas rejected fasts, ablutions, pilgrimages, and practicing rituals as means of worshiping God. Instead, he persuaded to follow the path of righteousness, and chant the name of God. He wrote "The Name alone is the Truth...It was true in

the beginning and shall remain true in the end. It destroys all sins and sufferings...."

The teachings of Guru Ravidas are significant for the entire humankind, and are relevant even in today's world, which is afflicted by religious divide and social apartheid. Guru Ravidas envisioned a society with people living in harmony and without any sort of discrimination. He envisaged a world bereft of fear, vulnerability and law based on equality and welfare of all as principle for governance. He wrote "Grieve not is the name of my town. Pain and fear cannot enter there",

116 stolen mobile phones returned

To its customers as surprise gift by Balod Police

Balod, Feb 15: The people who have lost hope of getting back their stolen mobile phones got a surprised gift from District Police. Such people were called to SP's office on Tuesday and extended greetings on return of their mobile phones. SP informed that a total of 116 mobile phones worth Rs 13.0 lakh were handed over to its owner. It was on scanning of all



the complaints related to stolen mobile phones received by the Cyber Cell that they were closely investigated and a recovery campaign was launched for the stolen mobiles. As a result of this it brought back the smile on

the face of people who have lost their mobile phones. During this all the people who got benefitted expressed gratitude towards District SP and Addl.SP and officers and employees of the Cyber Cell, Balod Police.

BRIEF

Squads

■ **Srinagar:** Jammu and Kashmir Police launched two women's squads for ensuring the safety and security of women in the city. The squads will be patrolling around coaching centres, schools, colleges and other vulnerable areas in Srinagar. They will also be in touch with administrators of the educational institutions and coaching centres for immediate action in case of any emergent requirement, will work in coordination with PCR vans.

Denied

■ **Gurugram:** A local court for the third time dismissed the bail plea of suspended IPS officer Dheeraj Setia, who is accused of being involved in a multi-crore heist. He who continues to remain at large. As a cumulative implication of above discussed peculiar facts and circumstances of matter in hand, it becomes clear that this was not simple case of cycle theft but big multi-crore burglary.

Census

■ **Chennai:** A Red-headed Bunting, a rare passerine migratory species from Central Asia sighted at Annamalai Tiger Reserve, was among the numerous birds spotted during the second phase of the synchronised inland water bird survey of Tamil Nadu 2022 done. Covering 339 wetlands in 25 districts, including the popular Vedanthangal sanctuary, the survey was carried out to estimate population of resident and migratory waterbirds.

Shoots

■ **Chhindwara:** A pastor allegedly shot at and injured a stray dog with his air gun after the canine ate fowls and didn't leave his house located near a church compound in Chhindwara district of Madhya Pradesh. Rupesh Uike, who is in his late 20s, is a pastor of a church in Ramakona village in the district. He shot at and injured a stray dog using an air gun for not leaving his house, City Superintendent of Police Motilal Kushwaha told PTI.

Suicide

■ **Noida:** A 19-year-old aspiring chartered accountant died after he allegedly jumped off the balcony of his ninth-floor flat in Noida. The young man apparently slipped into depression since he was unable to clear the foundation exam for CA for the second time, the officials said, citing a purported suicide note found from him. Incident took place in a society in Sector 74 of the city with a resident alerting the police about someone falling down.

Linesman

■ **Mathura:** A contractual linesman died from electrocution while repairing power cables in Mathura district of Uttar Pradesh. "Linesman Vishnu was rushed to nearby K M Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead." Superintending Engineer Prabhakar Pandey said.

'Centre did not fulfil promises to farmers despite PM's word'



Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait during a press conference, in Lakhimpur, Tuesday.

Lakhimpur Kheri, Feb 15 (PTI):

The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) on Tuesday alleged the Centre has not worked for fulfilling its promises towards farmers despite announcement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as it appealed to people of Uttar Pradesh to "punish the BJP".

In a press conference of the SKM here, farmer leader Shivkumar Sharma 'Kakkaji' said the government had made several as-

surances, including over the issue of minimum support price (MSP) for crops, in the wake of the farmers' protest but failed to deliver. Among the promises were that all cases lodged against protestors would be taken back, families of those who died during the agitation will get financial compensation, farmers will be kept out of the ambit of electricity bills, Sharma, flanked by BKU leader Rakesh Tikait, told reporters. There is also

provision for punishment and penalty on stubble burning but assurance was given for removing the clause of punishment and the most important issue was a law to guarantee MSP but no committee has been formed yet for that also, he said.

Sharma said the prime minister had on November 19, 2021 announced that a committee would be formed for MSP but that has not happened yet. Although Agriculture Minister Narendra Tomar made a rhetorical remark in Parliament in the last session that the government is seeking permission for it from the Election Commission, he noted. A committee could have been formed on the basis of the announcement by the prime minister and there would have been no effect on the Election Commission, he claimed.

Former bureaucrat in fray against political heavyweights

Amritsar, Feb 15 (PTI):

Former IAS officer Jagmohan Singh Raju has jumped into the electoral battlefield from the Amritsar East seat, promising all-around development of the constituency which looks just like a 'pind', or village, to him due to its "pathetic condition". BJP candidate Raju, a political greenhorn, is pitted against political heavyweights Punjab Congress chief Navjot Singh Sidhu and Shiromani Akali Dal leader Bikram Singh Majithia. Promising all-around development of the Amritsar East seat, he rues about its "pathetic condition". I could never imagine that an important place of Punjab looks like a 'pind' (village). There are broken



Jagmohan Singh Raju being welcomed by BJP supporters in Amritsar East.

roads, no system for garbage collection, electricity wires are hanging, unorganized construction, no drinking water. It has been a very sad experience to see all these things, complains Raju. Raju, born and brought up in Punjab, had joined the IAS at the age of 21 years in 1985 and was allotted the Tamil Nadu cadre. He served in many

positions at the Centre and Tamil Nadu state. Before jumping into the poll battle, Raju, who was holding the position of additional chief secretary, took voluntary retirement recently from service after putting in his 37 years. He was to retire in April 2023. "My commitment towards serving Punjab has always been there

AGAINST EXCISE POLICY



Congress protest against new liquor and excise policy of Delhi Government, near residence of Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal, in New Delhi, Tuesday.

Congress-GFP alliance will get majority in Goa: Congress

TMC says it will win more seats with MGP

Panaji, Feb 15 (PTI):

The Congress on Tuesday claimed its alliance with the Goa Forward Party (GFP) would get a majority in the 40-member Goa Assembly, while the BJP would secure than 10 seats in the state.

Goa witnessed 78.94 per cent voter turnout during polling. The counting of votes is scheduled on March 10.

Addressing a press conference, Goa Pradesh Congress Committee president Girish Chodankar said people came out in large numbers to vote "against the



Goa SEC displays some posters created by students.

BJP". The Congress-GFP alliance will comfortably surpass the majority figure of 21 seats in the House, while the BJP will be restricted to less than 10 seats, he claimed.

On Tuesday, the Congress held a meeting

with all its candidates in the state capital Panaji to review the polling percentage in their respective constituencies.

Congress Goa desk in-charge Dinesh Gundu Rao and GFP chief Vijai Sardesai were present during the meeting.

Vaccine Cert not required to visit Jagannath Temple from Feb 21

Puri, Feb 15 (PTI):

Keeping in view the declining trend of COVID-19 infections across the country, the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) has decided that from February 21 devotees will not be required to carry double-dose vaccination certificate to enter the 12th shrine, a top official of the SJTA said. Based on the opinion of the Chhattisa Nijog (apex body of servitors) meeting, it has been decided to withdraw mandatory production of complete vaccination certificate or negative RT-PCR test report by devotees from February 21 for entry into the Shree Jagannath Temple at Puri, SJTA chief Administrator Krishan Kumar said. He said the decision is taken keeping in view

the decline in the COVID-19 cases and peoples' sentiment. "Most of the people have been administered vaccine at least twice, the temple administration has decided to relax the curbs," Kumar said.

The temple was reopened for public on February 1 after a brief closure of 20 days. Now devotees were required to bring their photo ID card, along with final certificate for COVID-19 vaccination or negative RT-PCR test report within 98 hours prior to the visit to the temple. The SJTA chief administrator said that devotees will not be required to carry double-dose vaccination certificate to visit the temple from February 21. Also devotees are not needed to take RT-PCR certificate to go inside the temple.

'Switched from khaki to khadi to serve people better'

● Sarojini Nagar constituency has high rises and farms

Lucknow, Feb 15 (PTI):

Changing his uniform from khaki to khadi, former Enforcement Directorate (ED) officer Rajeshwar Singh, who is in the poll fray from the BJP, says he joined politics as working for the people as a bureaucrat posed several restrictions.

The former high-profile officer hardly found any time to learn the nuances of politics as the BJP nominated him as a candidate from Sarojini Nagar in Lucknow, days after the government accepted his plea for Voluntary Retirement from Service.

The Sarojini Nagar Assembly constituency will go to polls in the fourth



Rajeshwar Singh during election campaign.

phase on February 23 along with other constituencies of Lucknow.

Wasting no time, the ex-cop donned the role of netaji and found himself campaigning from door-to-door in the constituency.

I was a police officer. It was something very dear

to me, but I have now chosen politics. I want to work in such a manner that I don't regret my decision of leaving the force, he told PTI during the campaign trail. Speaking further, Singh said, There are several restrictions when you are in a job.

Victim urges HC to hear her in Dileep plea against further probe

Kochi, Feb 15 (PTI):

The victim in the 2017 actress assault case on Tuesday urged the Kerala High Court to hear her also in connection with actor Dileep's plea opposing the further probe being carried out by the police in the matter.

In view of the impleadment plea on behalf of the victim, the high court adjourned the matter to February 21.

The actor in his plea against further investigation in the case has alleged that it was a "willful attempt" to protract the trial in that matter.

The actor, in his plea filed through advocates Philip T Varghese and Thomas T Varghese, has contended that further investigation in that case was not permissible as a



Kerala High Court

final report had been filed in November 2017, charges were framed in January 2020 and only one prosecution witness — one of the investigating officers — remained to be examined.

The petition has alleged that under the guise of further investigation, "a series of vindictive acts" were being carried out by the police.

One instance of such acts was the allegedly false case foisted on the actor and other male members

of his family accusing them of conspiring to murder police officers investigating the actress assault case, the petition has claimed.

It has sought quashing of the report, filed by the police in the trial court, allegedly containing the statement of Balachandra Kumar and further proceedings pursuant to the same.

Kumar had recently made some startling revelations against Dileep in

the actress assault case through the media.

He has also claimed that there is evidence including digital ones to prove that Dileep had influenced the witnesses.

The actor's latest plea has also sought a declaration that further probe being carried out in that case was illegal and a direction to the trial court to "eschew" the same from the record.

The actress-victim, who has worked in Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam films, was abducted and allegedly molested in her car for two hours by some persons who had forced their way into the vehicle on the night of February 17, 2017 and later escaped in a busy area. The entire act was filmed by those persons to blackmail the actress.

NGT raps Maha Govt over discharge of waste into Godavari

New Delhi, Feb 15 (PTI):

The National Green Tribunal has rapped the Maharashtra government for failing to prevent the discharge of municipal waste into the river joining Godavari at Trimbakeshwar.

A bench comprising NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel and Justice Sudhir Agarwal said generation of sewage is in the range of 4.5 million litres per day while arrangement for treatment is only for 1 MLD sewage. The Remaining untreated sewage is being discharged into the river which is not fit even for bathing as per primary water quality criteria but may be drunk by humans and other living beings to the detriment of their health, it said. "We place on record our strong disapproval of the inhuman conduct of the State of

Maharashtra and its concerned officer for such a situation and proposing action by August, 2023 in spite of repeated orders of this Tribunal in the last more than two years.

"We have not found any reason why such action could not have been taken earlier in view of Supreme Court orders of 2017 and why erring officers are not being prosecuted as directed by the Supreme Court. Disciplinary action appears to be an eye wash and wholly inadequate and not against senior officers who are real culprits for the situation," the bench said. Regrettably, the authorities do not appear to have taken the trouble even to read the order, it added. "Information on cleaning of drains used for dumping sewage and garbage has not been given. Details of the quantity of sewage generated from ad-

joining areas and the progress on underground sewerage needs to be ascertained so as to ensure remedial action. Comprehensive plan for Trimbakeshwar has to be in place, as directed earlier," the bench said.

The NGT said that direct discharge of sewage containing both organic and inorganic pollutant into the river Godavari is highly detrimental to the ecology and environment.

"Let the Chief Secretary, Maharashtra ensure satisfactory action in the light of above said observations, including meaningful coercive action against erring officers which may include prosecution, apart from disciplinary action as per directions of the Supreme Court, quoted earlier. Compliance affidavit of status as on April 30, 2022 be filed by e-mail," the bench said in a recent order.

BRIEF

Decrees

Brasilia: Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro has issued two decrees to drive gold prospecting with a focus on the Amazon rainforest...

Myanmar

Bangkok: Myanmar will not participate in this week's meetings in Cambodia of foreign ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations...

Visit

Jerusalem: Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett travelled to the Gulf state of Bahrain, cementing ties between the new allies...

Russians scoff at Western fears of Ukraine invasion

Moscow, Feb 15 (AP):

While the US warns that Russia could invade Ukraine any day, the drumbeat of war is all but unheard in Moscow...

The Kremlin has cast the US warnings of an imminent attack as 'hysteria' and 'absurdity'...



Two women drink sitting in a cafe inside the GUM department store in Moscow, Russia.

'doorstep' and its refusal to hear Moscow's concerns has struck a chord with the public...

Foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov bemoaned what he described as US 'hysteria' about an allegedly imminent invasion...

The US says that Russia has concentrated over 130,000 troops east, north and south of Ukraine...

Russian officials have angrily denied any plans to attack Ukraine and dismissed Western concerns about the buildup near the country...

Pressure mounts to curb US lawmakers stock trading

Washington, Feb 15 (AP):

Amid a steady drip of damaging headlines, pressure is building for Congress to pass legislation that would curtail lawmakers' ability to speculate on the stock market...

Trading in Congress has long been criticized by government watchdogs, who say the access to non-public information creates a temptation for lawmakers to prioritize their own finances over the public good...

But public anger has mounted since the first tremors of the pandemic, when some lawmakers were caught buying and selling millions of dollars worth of stock after being warned about the coming disruption from the virus...



Corruption in politics of US.

by surprise. Now, with the November election fast approaching and members of both parties embracing reform, congressional leaders are getting on the bandwagon...

Plastic, chemical pollution beyond planet's safe limit

Production volumes need to come down

Zurich, Feb 15 (AFP):

The torrent of man-made chemical and plastic waste worldwide has massively exceeded limits safe for humanity or the planet, and production caps are urgently needed...

There are an estimated 350,000 different manufactured chemicals on the market and large volumes of them end up in the environment...

"The impacts that we're starting to see are large enough to be impacting crucial functions of planet Earth and its systems", Bethanie Carney Almroth, co-author of a new study told AFP in an interview...

PROTEST WITH SIGNS



View of signs during a protest of Alianza Migrante migrants organization against US President Biden's administration migration policies in Baja, Mexico.

Afghans safer, poorer, less hopeful under Taliban rule

Kabul, Feb 15 (AP):

Afghanistan has undergone a dramatic transformation in half a year of Taliban rule. The country feels safer, less violent than it has in decades...

months-long Taliban military campaign to take control of provincial areas, many of which fell with hardly a fight.

The sight of armed Taliban fighters roaming the street still jars and frightens residents. But women have returned to the streets, and many young men have put on Western clothes again after initially shedding them for the traditional shalwar kameez...

Tuesday marks six months since the Afghan capital of Kabul was ceded to the Taliban with the sudden and secret departure of the country's US-backed president. The takeover of Kabul had been preceded by a

South Korean COVID deaths rise

Seoul, Feb 15 (AP):

South Korea reported its highest number of COVID-19 deaths in a month Tuesday as US health authorities advised Americans to avoid traveling to the country...

The 61 deaths reported by the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency on Tuesday was

the highest daily tally since the 74 reported on Jan. 19, when the country was emerging from an outbreak driven by the delta variant.

While omicron so far seems less likely to cause serious illness or death, the greater scale of the outbreak is fueling concerns that hospitalizations and fatalities could spike in coming weeks.

The 57,177 new cases reported by the KCDC was another one-day record and more than a 12-fold increase from the levels seen in mid-January...

to avoid travel to the country or to make sure they are fully vaccinated if traveling is necessary. Park Hyang, a senior South Korean Health Ministry official, said the country's hospital resources remain stable, with less than 27% of intensive care units designated for COVID-19 currently being occupied.

कार्यालय, उपसंचालक, शासकीय आयुर्वेद फार्मसी, रायपुर (छ.ग.)

ई-मेल - gov.ayurvedicpharmacy@gmail.com दूरभाष एवं फैक्स क्रं. - 0771-2263437

निविदा विज्ञापन क्रमांक 154 दिनांक 10.02.2022 उपसंचालक, शासकीय आयुर्वेद फार्मसी, रायपुर (छ.ग.) की ओर से निर्माताओं तथा अधिकृत विक्रेताओं से कच्ची औषधियाँ (अश्वगंधा, अग्निमंथ, आंवला (मुदुली रहित), कटेरी (बकी), कटेरी (छोटी), काली मिर्च, गोधुन (छोटा), दालचीनी, निशोध, पादला, पिपली (छोटी), पुरनपर्णी, गोदन्ती पाषण मुलेठी, लवंग, शालपर्णी, सोना पाठा (शयानक), सौंफ (हरी), एवं हरद (मुदुली रहित)) प्रदाय करने हेतु मोहरबंद निविदाएं आमंत्रित की गई हैं।

निविदा विक्री की अंतिम तिथि, दिनांक 02.03.2022 समय - सायं 04 बजे तक निविदा डाक से प्राप्त होने/ दिनांक 03.03.2022 समय - दोपहर 02 बजे तक निविदा जमा करने की अंतिम तिथि

स्थान - कार्यालय, उपसंचालक, शासकीय आयुर्वेद फार्मसी, जी.ई. रोड, आयुर्वेदिक कालेज केम्पस, रायपुर (छ.ग.)

उपसंचालक, शासकीय आयुर्वेद फार्मसी रायपुर (छ.ग.) G-67817/1

CHHATTISGARH STATE POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY LTD.

(Government of Chhattisgarh Undertaking) CIN: U40108CT2003SGC015822 OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (EITC)

Telephone: (0771) - 2574 123, Fax: (0771)-2574 125 Website: www.cspdc.co.in e-mail: gis@cspe.co.in 07-01/EITC/Network/Tr-323/2181, Raipur Dated -14-Feb-2022

1. Sealed offers are invited from experienced bidder for -

Table with columns: Tender No., Particulars, Tender Document Fee, EMD, Due Date & time of submission.

1. For further details & downloading the Tender document, please visit at our web site www.cspdc.co.in/tender/ tender notices / central offices and e-bidding portal.

SAVE ELECTRICITY S-31467/1 Executive Director (EITC)

Activist jailed by Egypt sees wider struggle for rights

Ramallah, Feb 15 (AP):

Ramy Shaath, who was released from an Egyptian jail last month, is an outspoken opponent of Arab dicta-



Ramy Shaath

torships and Israeli rule over the Palestinians, and is part of a generation of activists who see them as two sides of the same coin. He was never told why exactly Egyptian authorities confined him to a packed and filthy cell for over two and a half years.

It's also a major departure from the approach of the Palestinian leadership, which includes his father, Nabil Shaath, an 83-year-old veteran peace negotiator.

कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम विलासपुर (छ.ग.)

ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट तृतीय निविदा सूचना

नगर पालिक निगम विलासपुर के जोन क्र.08 अंतर्गत सहाम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु ऑनलाइन (Online) तृतीय निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है:-

Table with columns: क्र., नि.क्र., सिरक नं., कार्य का विवरण, अनुमानित लागत (रु. लाख में), निविदा दाखल/सबमिट करने की अंतिम तिथि.

उपरोक्त कार्य की निविदा की सामान्य शर्तें, धरोहर राशि, विस्तृत निविदा विज्ञापन, निविदा दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी ई प्रोक्वोरमेंट वेबसाइट https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in से डाउनलोड की जा सकती है।

जोन आयुक्त, जोन कार्यालय क्र.08 न.पा.नि. विलासपुर (छ.ग.) Green City, Clean City, Dream City.

Mineral Resources Department, Government of Chhattisgarh

Directorate of Geology & Mining Indravati Bhawan, Block-4, Second Floor, Nawa Raipur Atal Nagar, Raipur, Chhattisgarh - 492002, India.

14 February 2022 Notice Inviting Tender Invitation of bids for grant of Mining Lease for Iron Ore Mineral blocks

In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 10(b) of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, its subsequent amendments and in accordance with the Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2015 and its subsequent amendments notified thereunder, Mineral Resources Department, Government of Chhattisgarh has identified the following Mineral Blocks for the purpose of grant of Mining Lease (ML) through electronic auction and hereby invites bids in digital form only from eligible bidders.

Table with columns: Sr, Name of the Block, Mineral, District, Area (Ha.), Tender Fees (INR).

*Excluding GST Terms and conditions, deadlines etc. for participating in the electronic auction are provided in the Tender Document. The Model Tender Document for the mineral blocks and mineral block summary are available free of cost in electronic form and can be downloaded from the website of MSTC Ltd.

Those interested and eligible for bidding can participate in the bidding only after online purchase of the Tender Document on payment of the non-refundable tender fee as mentioned above excluding Goods and Service Tax (GST) shall be payable at 18% of tender fee, from the website of e-auction platform provider MSTC Ltd. Bidder shall be able to make payment of the Tender Document fee through RTGS/ net banking (through the payment gateway of e-auction platform). After registration at MSTC website, interested & eligible bidders can purchase the Tender Document. On successful registration, eligible bidders will obtain Login ID and password necessary for participation in the e-auction process.

Last date for online purchase of Tender Document is 06-04-2022 and the last date for submission of the bid is 15:00 Hours IST on 07-04-2022. Any further communications, amendments etc. shall be available on the above website of MSTC and the websites of Mineral Resources Department, Government of Chhattisgarh.

Director Geology & Mining Chhattisgarh G-67802/1

कार्यालय - कार्यपालन अभियंता लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी, खण्ड - जशपुर (छत्तीसगढ़)

ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना

एकूत पंजीयन प्रणाली अन्तर्गत उपयुक्त श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु आमंत्रित (Online) निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है:- कार्य का नाम :- जशपुर जिले के निम्नलिखित विकासखण्डों में एकल ग्राम नलज प्रदाय योजना अन्तर्गत 63 से 75 मि.मी. व्यास के HDPE पाईप एवं 20 मि.मी. व्यास के कंयोजिट पाईप एवं 90 मि.मी. व्यास के यूपीवीसी पाईप 6810 kg/cm, संश्लेषण सहित प्रदाय कर जोड़ने, बिछाने, इन्टरकनेक्शन टैरिफ्ट क्लोसीनेटड ब्यापना, क्लोसीनेटड रन, सीच रन, रैपवेपन, पॉस्ट गल कनेक्शन एवं अन्य संबंधित समस्त कार्य, 6 माह ट्रायल रन सहित स्वीकृत मोड्यूल अनुसार।

Table with columns: क्र., निविदा क्र./दिनांक/सिरक नं., योजना का नाम, अनुमानित लागत (रु. लाख में), अमानत राशि (रु. में).

उपरोक्त निर्माण कार्य की ऑनलाइन (Online) निविदा दिनांक 28.02.2022 तक आमंत्रित की जाती है। जल जीवन मिशन कार्य की सामान्य शर्तें, विस्तृत निविदा विज्ञापन, निविदा दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट वेब पोर्टल https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in पर देखी जा सकती है।

कार्यपालन अभियंता लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड जशपुर (छत्तीसगढ़) G-67813/2



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Factors affecting inflation

Retail inflation in India continued to pick up in January, rising to the highest since June 2021. Consumer Price Index inflation stood at 6.01 percent in January 2022, compared to 5.56 percent in December, according to data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation. On a month-on-month basis, retail inflation fell by 0.3 percent. Inflation in food and beverages rose to 5.58 percent compared to 4.5 percent in December. Core inflation was unchanged at 6.19 percent. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das reiterated that the inflation trajectory in India was on a downward slope since October and despite global crude oil prices having spiked in recent weeks the central bank had taken into account all scenarios. Multiple factors are affecting retail inflation rate. The price of oil has skyrocketed to seven-year highs this month amid escalating tensions between Russia and Ukraine, and analysts are warning the price surge will only get worse if the world's second-largest oil producer invades Ukraine exacerbating decades-high inflation and sending ripple waves across markets. The prices of fuel will rise once assembly elections are over in five states. The soaring cost of vegetable oils is an ever-growing threat to India's efforts to bring inflation under control. India has limited options in the near term. Any further reduction in import duties won't ease price. Food inflation has become increasingly persistent in recent years implying any shock will have a much longer impact on inflation. Furthermore, a wide range of products have contributed to food inflation at different points in time, reflecting the diverse nature of drivers of food inflation. These have ranged from high international prices, surge in demand for high value products due to rising income and diversification of diet, high minimum support prices and increase in prices of key inputs. Indian companies across consumer categories such as daily household goods, apparel and lifestyle products, and electronics have flagged inflation as the biggest concern for the upcoming fiscal, more crucial than even spurring demand. Apparel and footwear makers are now trying to offset inflation by altering designs and using alternate materials as price hikes have hit their sales, as consumers are not buying due to retail inflation. India is the top producer of milk, pulses, livestock, fisheries and poultry, and the second largest producer of fruit, vegetables, rice, wheat and sugarcane. Yet, rising food prices pose the toughest macroeconomic challenge to the country. Economists blame higher taxes, a widening fiscal deficit, RBI easy monetary policy and supply constraints during the pandemic for a sharp rise in prices. The government has offered little aid to households except free foodgrains for the poor. Households suffered job losses, fall in incomes and a sharp rise in prices. Variation in inflation is seen to be clearly contributed by food inflation. However, food and fuel inflation are generally believed to be structural as their demand is less elastic to prices. Hence price rise is more supply related and, therefore, somewhat insensitive to monetary policy. If economists seek guidance from inflationary expectations numbers in India, they are far removed from the inflation that is realised later. The segment of population where food accounts for 80 percent of expenditure is not only most sensitive segment from the viewpoint of inflation but are also vulnerable to slow down in output growth and employment.

Chinese position over Ukraine

The long term implications and ramifications of a conflict in Europe will be immensely debilitating and destabilising for Russia. The only country that is benefitting from this intensifying confrontation in Ukraine is China. There is no reason for Xi Jinping to show his cards now. And this is because many Chinese commentators believe that Russia is using military tensions over Ukraine to negotiate with the West and will not invade. Chinese analysts have noted that it makes no sense that Russia has massed troops near Ukraine for months. This long period has afforded the United States, United Kingdom, and NATO time to flow troops to the region and prepare potential sanctions against Russia, increasing the costs of a potential invasion. China has had a healthy and positive relationship with Ukraine. If China provides clear, public guarantees of support to Russia now and conflict does not break out in Ukraine, then China would have damaged its relationship with Ukraine without needing to. Currently, China's positions on Ukraine and Russia provide Beijing with a range of political, economic, and military options to assist Moscow if needed. At the same time, if tensions de-escalate, Beijing has left itself ample room to continue relations with Ukraine. There is more at stake for Xi if conflict erupts over Ukraine. China would be forced to take a position and choose a side. This would test China's relationship with Russia. Similarly, the United States, Europe, and even countries in the Indo-Pacific may recalibrate relations with China based on Beijing's response. China has been Ukraine's top trade partner since 2020 and views Ukraine as a critical entry point for its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) ambitions. Agricultural exports from Ukraine have also become important for China in the wake of the China-US trade war. A BRI trade and investment centre opened in Kyiv in 2018 and Chinese companies have been investing in Ukraine's ports. Given Xi's calls for the PLA to prepare for the worst and be prepared to fight wars, he cannot discount the possibility that China might find itself in a situation similar to Russia in the future having to use military force against a neighbour that is backed by the United States and an international coalition. This could be over Taiwan, the Senkakus, the Spratlys, or along the China-India border. China will wait until they nationally believe they are militarily ready. Until then, China will be watching global crises like the one over Ukraine to update their analysis about American power, and concern about the aggregation of any perception of American lack of strategic resolve long-term will be felt in countries like India and Japan.

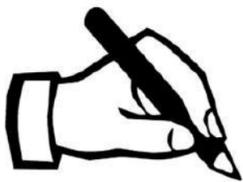
Central Chronicle welcomes articles, write ups, comments on different issues for editorial page (800-900 words), Letter to editor for this page. It can be sent by e-mail at: editor@centralchronicle@gmail.com
The letters can be edited or rewritten for clarity of thoughts.

FINISHING WALL MURAL



An artist gives finishing touches to a wall mural depicting prominent freedom fighters in New Delhi.

Growth oriented monetary review

**SATISH SINGH**

Keeping in view the global uncertainty, high rate of inflation, waning effect of Omicron and accelerating economic activity, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) kept the policy rates unchanged in its monetary review on February 11, 2022 to further accelerate the growth momentum. This is the 10th monetary review, when the repo rate has been kept at 4.0 percent and the reverse repo rate at 3.35 percent. Repo is the rate at which the Reserve Bank of India provides cash to commercial banks for their immediate needs, whereas, at the reverse repo rate, the central bank takes cash from banks for a day. After the monetary review, there was a decline in bond yields. Ten-year government bond yields fell 7 basis points to 6.73 percent as there was uncertainty over yields in the bond market due to higher cash inflows. Since, now keeping the policy rates unchanged, the inflow of cash into the market will remain the same, hence, a decline in bond yields was observed. At present, the average net daily consumption level of cash under the RBI's liquidity adjustment facility is Rs 7.6 lakh crore, which is insufficient to absorb excess liquidity. The Sensex closed at 58,926, up 460 points on the Reserve Bank's soft stance. Nifty also closed at 17,606 with a gain of 142 points. The Nifty Financial Services and Realty indices rose one per cent each. In fact, keeping the policy rates unchanged, the

possibility of reduction in credit flow was eliminated and the possibility of continuation of the bullish trend in economic activity increased, due to which the stock market took an upward trend. Here, due to the increase in credit demand, large public sector banks have revised their credit growth target for the financial year 2021-22, as the demand of credit in the corporate sector and small and medium enterprises has increased due to the weakening of Omicron. After crossing 7.00 percent level in November, 2021, the credit growth of scheduled commercial banks increased to 9.2 percent year-on-year basis till the end of December 2021, whereas in December, 2020, its growth rate was 6.6 percent on year-on-year basis. According to the MPC, high indicators of economic activity such as manufacturing and services PMI, consumption of finished steel and sales of tractors, cars and two-wheelers remain low level, which needs to be accelerated by keeping the lending rate unchanged or slashed it reasonably. Since inflation remains at a high level, the central bank opted to keep the policy rates unchanged instead of reducing them. The Reserve Bank of India has projected the GDP growth rate at 7.8 percent for the financial year 2022-23, while the Economic Survey had projected a growth rate of 8.00 to 8.5 percent. The reason for the caution on the GDP growth forecast by the

Reserve Bank is due to Omicron having a negative impact on economic activity during the third week of November 2021 to January 2022. Well, there is still a little fear of Omicron, which may finish by the end of February. The Reserve Bank has projected retail inflation to be 5.3 percent in the current financial year, 4.5 percent in the financial year 2022-23. Thus, inflation in the current quarter will remain at the higher level of the target range, while it will moderate from the second half of the next financial year. However, keeping the policy rates unchanged by the Reserve Bank is a bit surprising, as the price of crude oil has reached USD 90 a barrel in the international market and the central banks of other countries have increased the policy rates in view of the rise in inflation. As per RBI Governor Shri Shakti Kant Das, the nature of inflation in India is different as compared to other countries, therefore, it is irrelevant to compare with other countries in the matter. In the Monetary Review, it has been announced to increase the limit of e-rupee digital vouchers from Rs 10,000 to Rs 1.00 lakh, so that the scope of use of such vouchers can be increased and delivery of various government services can be done to the beneficiaries at fast pace. According to the Reserve Bank, e-Rupee can be used multiple times i.e., it can be used till the voucher amount is completely exhausted. According to the Governor of Reserve Bank of India, Shri Shakti Kant Das, it is difficult to tell exact time for introducing Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), but it will start in the financial year 2023 according to the announcement made in the budget. In order to issue digital currency, the central bank will have to amend sections 2 and 22 of the Reserve Bank of India Act. Only after that the central bank can start a pilot project for its development. According to Mr. Das, digital

currency cannot be issued in haste, as various aspects of vigilance are yet to be worked out in view of the cyber security risks. It is worth noting that in the general budget for the financial year 2022-23, the finance minister had talked about issuing a digital rupee by the Reserve Bank in the year 2023 on the basis of blockchain technology, so that the digital economy in India can be strengthened. The price of the CBDC will be the same as the current currency note and it will be issued by the central bank. The digital rupee can also be replaced with the normal rupee, but its form will be digital. The CBDC is expected to be successful in reducing the existing exposure of depositors to banks and also reduce defaults during the settlement process being used by various institutions. Also, the cost of cross-border payments from CBDC will also be reduced. During the monetary review, the Governor of the Reserve Bank, Shaktikanta Das warned the users of cryptocurrency that it is not a legal currency in India and the government or the Reserve Bank of India or any other bank of the country will not be responsible for the loss in its investment. Therefore, crypto investors should trade crypto at their own risk. Together, Das also described crypto as a major threat to the Indian economy. He said that there is a danger of becoming a parallel economy in the country as well as it can also encourage terrorist, illegal etc. activities. Even after the Corona pandemic, India's economy is growing at the fastest pace in the world. Therefore, in order to sustain this momentum, it is necessary that the central bank continues its soft stance, so that credit flows remain accelerating, demand and supply hasten and the pace of growth can be accelerated. (Satish Singh is senior columnist and editor of in-house Journal of SBI 'Aarthik Darpan').

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Social work

Social service is alive because great people selflessly strive for social service without seeing their physical ailments. There are corrupt people who are cheating people and there are true social workers who are passionate about social service. One wants money while the other is aware of the duty of service to society and acts accordingly. There are also those who just let go of the verbal bubble that 'I want to do social work' and actually snatch bread from the mouths of the needy. When one is born as a human being social debt and paternal debt are also two debts along with the rest of the debt. How we can make the birth of a man meaningful. If we go beyond 'I, my home, my friends, my family, my relatives' and accept society as one family, then also our human birth will be meaningful. No matter how rich a person is, he does not take anything with him when he dies. Their real capital (deposit) is to make a place in the hearts of the people. What have you achieved by helping the country and society in your lifetime? People know all these things. But how many people behave like this? The answer is not difficult. It will also be noticed when you look at yourself instead of looking around. There is no denying that in India, money is spent like water in elections even if it is a rural election. Keeping this in mind, India is not far from a period of massive social transformation if the money spent during that period is spent on needy people. But who thinks so? It is not a good thing that social workers have to face many difficulties for financial help. It is not normal to serve the needy even if there is no post by the constitution. If your spirits are high, then it is possible to face every difficulty? Nowadays many people have weekend holidays. Along with this, if there is any other holiday then most people go on a picnic. Because to remove fatigue from work and take rest. If their footsteps will turn towards social service organizations, see their work closely, understand them closely and participate with them. It will surely be inspirational to others. It's important to see what can contribute to everyone's happiness instead of the narrow-minded 'I am happy? Today's generation which accepts modernity does not listen to their parents & makes their own ideas come true. This makes them stumble sometimes, though it is an experience. If parents are listened to at an elementary level the time for stumbling will not come. Because when this happens it is the parents who have to face it because they also suffer mental pain due to the suffering of the child that they never show. Jayesh, via email



WHAT THEY TWEET!

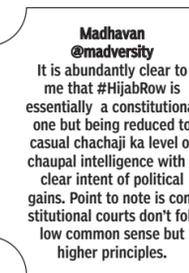


Nitin Sethi@nit_set
The kind of ridiculous opinion writing on India's climate priorities. Merely using climate change like a hash tag without understanding either the science, politics or ethics of the subject. There are many other reasons to alter agri and water systems. Not by carbon taxing agri!

anshul@anshgupta64
As a store of value, cryptocurrencies like bitcoin have given impressive returns so far, but so did tulips in 17th century Netherlands. Cryptocurrencies are very much like a speculative or gambling contract working like a Ponzi scheme.



Yashwant@YashwantSinha
India under Modi is facing multiple crises. Now global factors have taken over. We are in for very bad days with a govt which has no idea of what to do. The collapse of the stock and rupee markets today is only a beginning. Fasten your seat belts.



Madhavan@madversity
It is abundantly clear to me that #HijabRow is essentially a constitutional one but being reduced to casual chachaji ka level of chaupal intelligence with a clear intent of political gains. Point to note is constitutional courts don't follow common sense but higher principles.



Harsh Goenka@hvgoenka
An organic 'House in the landscape' in Moscow #beautiful #architecture



ranjana.banerji@ranjana
Pick up the pieces. Prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet. Maybe tomorrow I can come back, interact, be part of this life again. That's TS Eliot's reference, of course. Not all of us are rightwing historians who cannot attribute what they borrow.

Amarjyoti@AmarjyotiBorah
Criticizing BJP Govt doesn't mean one is supporting the Congress party, & Criticizing the Congress party or Congress govts in the states doesn't mean one is a BJP supporter. Many of us who criticize BJP, had criticized the then Congress Govt also-we were not supporting BJP then.

BRIEF

Deploy



New Delhi: Park+ and electric vehicle charging network firm, goEgoNetwork on Tuesday announced a collaboration to deploy EV charging infrastructure in India. Park+ CEO Amit Lakhota said low penetration of chargers is biggest factor discouraging EV sales.

Pre-seed

New Delhi: Indonesia-based agri-tech startup Semaai on Tuesday said it has raised USD 1.25 million (Rs 8.75 crore) in a funding round. The pre-seed funding round was led by Surge, Sequoia Capital India's rapid scale-up program for startups in India and Southeast Asia, and Beenext. While Semaai primarily operates in Central Java, Indonesia, a large part of the funding will be channeled into expanding product teams in India itself.

Funding



Mumbai: Join Ventures has raised USD 10 million (over Rs 75 crore) in series-A funding from leading investors. Founder Tarun Joshi said it is into celebrations with its IGP.com, Interflora that sells premium flowers and Masqa that promotes indulgent foods.

Likely

New Delhi: India and the UAE are likely to sign a free trade agreement (FTA) on February 18, under which both the countries could give duty-free access to a number of products from different sectors, sources said. In September last year, India and UAE had formally launched negotiations on the pact, officially dubbed as the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).

Raises



New Delhi: Kenko Health on Tuesday said it has raised USD 12 million (around Rs 90 crore) in a funding round led by Sequoia Capital. Co-founder Aniruddha Sen said we hope to add both affordability and accessibility to quality healthcare in India.

Doubles

New Delhi: Computer chip company AMD said the acquisition of fabless semiconductor company Xilinx will double its presence in India. AMD has acquired Xilinx for USD 35 billion, which is the biggest acquisition deal in the semiconductor segment.

Exports jump 25.28% to \$34.5 bn in Jan

Trade deficit widens to \$17.43 bn

New Delhi, Feb 15 (PTI):

India's exports in January rose 25.28 per cent to USD 34.50 billion on account of healthy performance by mainly engineering, petroleum and gems and jewellery sectors, even as trade deficit widened to 17.43 billion, according to data released by the commerce ministry on Tuesday. Imports grew by 23.54 per cent to USD 51.93 billion during the month under review. Trade deficit, difference between imports and exports, stood at USD 14.499 in January 2021. Cumulatively, exports increased by 46.73 per cent to



USD 335.88 billion during April 2021-January 2022, from USD 228.92 billion in the corresponding period a year ago.

Imports during the April-January period expanded by 62.65 per cent to USD 495.75 billion. Trade deficit stood at USD 159.87 billion during the ten-month period as against USD 75.87 billion in the same period a year earlier. According to the data, gold imports in January 2022 dipped by 40.52 per cent to USD 2.4 billion. Crude oil imports rose by

26.9 per cent to USD 11.96 billion in January.

Exports of engineering, petroleum and gems and jewellery in January 2022 increased by 24.11 per cent, 95.23 per cent and 13.64 per cent to USD 9.2 billion, USD 4.17 billion and USD 3.23 billion, respectively.

Pharmaceuticals exports, however, dipped by 1.15 per cent to USD 2.05 billion in January.

Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) Vice President Khalid Khan said that going by the current rate of growth, India will exceed USD 400 billion exports target for this fiscal.

FIEO President A Sakthivel, however, said that imports clocking USD 51.93 billion during the month with a growth of

23.54 per cent, is a point of "concern and should be analysed".

The data also showed that the estimated value of service export for January stood at USD 26.91 billion, exhibiting a positive growth of 54.95 per cent over the same month last year. Imports rose by 60.32 per cent to USD 15.83 billion.

"The estimated value of services export for April-January 2021-22 is USD 209.83 billion, exhibiting a positive growth of 25.31 per cent vis-a-vis April-January 2020-21 (USD 167.45 billion)...imports for April-January 2021-22 is USD 121.16 billion exhibiting a positive growth of 27.69 per cent vis-a-vis April-January 2020-21 (USD 94.88 billion)," it said.

Rupee surges 29 paise at 75.31 against USD, gold gains Rs 32

Mumbai, Feb 15 (PTI):

The rupee snapped its four-day losing streak to close 29 paise higher at 75.31 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, tracking a recovery in domestic equities and weakness of the American currency overseas.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened on a weak note at 75.60 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 75.31 and a low of 75.72. It finally settled at 75.31, a rise of 29 paise over its previous close.

On Monday, the rupee had slumped by 24 paise to close at an over nine-week low of 75.60. Meanwhile,

the dollar index, which measures the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.37 per cent to 96.01.

However, the surge in the rupee was restricted amid elevated crude oil prices and geopolitical tensions, traders said.

Gold in the national capital on Tuesday gained marginally by Rs 32 to Rs 49,619 per 10 grams, capping gains with correction in global gold prices and rupee appreciation, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the precious metal settled at Rs 49,587 per 10 grams. Silver, in contrast, declined Rs 440 to Rs 63,474 per kg from Rs 63,914 per kg in the previous trade.

The Indian rupee closed 29 paise higher at 75.31 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday.

In the international market, gold was trading 0.5 per cent down at USD 1,861 per ounce. Silver was trading marginally lower at USD 23.65 per ounce.

"Spot gold prices for 24 carat gold at Delhi held up by Rs 32 capping gains with correction in global gold prices and rupee appreciation," Tapan Patel, senior analyst (commodities) of HDFC Securities, said. Gold prices on Tuesday rose Rs 127 to Rs 50,043 per 10 grams in the futures trade as speculators created fresh positions amid a firm spot demand.

Despite rising inflation, RBI unlikely to hike rates till Aug

Mumbai, Feb 15 (PTI):

Despite retail inflation rising to 6.01 per cent in January, and likely to remain elevated till April, a foreign brokerage report expects RBI to leave key policy rates unchanged throughout the first half of 2022.

Swiss brokerage UBS Securities India sees the policy to change only from the second half wherein the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) may deliver a 50 basis points hike in the second half starting from the August policy.

The official data released showed that retail inflation spurred to a seven-month high in January at 6.01 per cent but lower than the previous high of 6.26 per cent in June 2021. Wholesale inflation stayed in double-digit at 12.96 per cent. The government also revised upwards the CPI inflation for



December 2021 to 5.66 from 5.59 per cent. Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das had said the rise in inflation was primarily due to statistical reasons, especially in the third quarter of FY22, and the same base effect will play in different ways in the coming months.

Das had said the RBI has already factored in high inflation numbers in its recent bi-monthly monetary policy, and retail inflation in January above 6 per cent "should not surprise or create any alarm".

Hero HF Deluxe become 'Milage Ka Hero'

Mumbai, Feb 15:

Customers of Hero HF Deluxe, country's most economical and one of the most popular and affordable commuter segment motorcycle have achieved an impressive mileage of over 100 kmpl at an event organized in Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh.

'Milage Ka Hero' a specially curated event was organized with an aim to spread awareness around HF Deluxe riding capabilities and mileage. The contest was an opportunity for HF Deluxe owners to get better acquainted with the motorcycle and calculate the mileage per kilometer and also get recognized in the process. To extract the maximum mileage, HF customers were given riding tips before the run. The mileage was calculated electronically in front of the customers, and every cus-

tomers' mileage exceeded 100 kmpl. I am quite happy and satisfied with my HF Deluxe and its excellent mileage. Its engine is great. I would definitely request my friends to take HF Deluxe. - Kailash Gupta, 25, Mechanic I am extremely happy to get mileage of 100+ even after running for four years. My confidence in the hero has increased. I would advise my family and friends to take the hero doll. ShatruganSahu, 24, Farmer I have got mileage of 100+ KMPL. I am quite happy to get this average. I have been riding Hero's bike for 4 years and am quite happy and satisfied? Sukhi Ram Yadav, 28, Washing Supervisor Equipped with BSVI complaint engine, HF Deluxe is powered with advanced Programmable-Fuel-Injection and XSens technology.

Kia drives in Carens starting at Rs 8.99 lakh

New Delhi, Feb 15 (PTI):

Automaker Kia India on Tuesday launched its fourth product - Carens - in the domestic market, with the introductory price ranging between Rs 8.99 lakh and Rs 16.99 lakh (ex-showroom).

The three-row model featuring six and seven seating options, which the company refers to as a recreational vehicle (RV), competes with the likes of Maruti Suzuki XL6, Hyundai Alcazar, Mahindra XUV700 and Tata Motors Safari.

Kia India already sells Seltos, Sonet, and Carnival in the domestic market.

The Kia Carens comes powered by a 1.5 petrol, 1.4 litre petrol, and 1.5 diesel powertrains mated with three transmissions - 6MT, 7DCT, or 6AT. The petrol versions of the model are



priced between Rs 8.99 lakh and Rs 16.99 lakh, while the diesel trims are tagged between Rs 10.99 lakh and Rs 16.99 lakh.

The company claims a fuel efficiency of 16.5 km per litre on the petrol variants and 21.3 km per litre with diesel trims.

"Since inception, we have remained focused on adding value to Indian customers' driving experiences through our groundbreaking vehicles and services.

"The Carens is a true Kia, offering best in class features, immaculate design and practicality, a wide range of variant choices at a compelling

WATCHO continues growth momentum

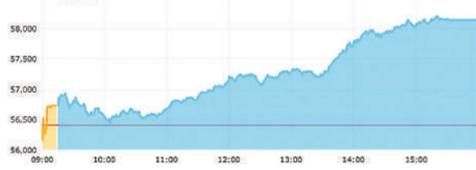
New Delhi, Feb 15:

WATCHO, one of India's fastest-growing OTT platforms, continues to report steady growth and has now achieved the significant milestone of a 45 million cumulative user base in India.

Launched in 2019, WATCHO today offers a plethora of short-format content across genres and caters to the needs of viewers across the spectrum. There are Live TV offerings, new-age original content for those who are looking for variety, and user-generated videos on SWAG for exhibiting talent. WATCHO brings original content to the viewers with its on-the-go snackable video content, so the brand proposition of "Fun Fatafat" has resonated very well with young audiences across the country. Commenting on the achievement Anil Dua, Executive Director & Group CEO, Dish TV India Ltd, said, "We are delighted to have achieved this milestone of 45 million users on our platform.

Sensex zooms over 1,700 pts to reclaim 58K-level

Mumbai, Feb 15 (PTI):



The BSE gauge Sensex zoomed past the 58,000-mark by rebounding over 1,700 points and the Nifty recaptured the 17,000-level on Tuesday after a massive plunge in the previous session.

The 30-share Sensex surged 1,736.21 points or 3.08 per cent to end at 58,142.05 recouping the losses suffered on Monday. Likewise, the NSE Nifty soared 509.65 points or 3.03 per cent to settle at 17,352.45. On the Sensex chart, all 30 shares closed with gains - with Bajaj Finance, SBI, Bajaj FinServ, L&T and Titan rising as

much as 5.13 per cent.

"As the street went into trade after Monday's biggest single-day fall in the last ten months, investors were left thinking whether the template has indeed changed. A confluence of headwinds is now weighing on the minds of investors even as we had a massive pull back rally led by autos, banks, IT and FMCG," said S Ranganathan, Head of Research at LKP Securities.

The narrative for the day, however, was the fact that investors used the correction to their advantage, thereby triggering short covering amid encouraging export data for the month of January, he added.

Additional capital support to IDBI Bank may impact LIC

New Delhi, Feb 15 (PTI):

Any additional fund infusion by LIC in its associate, IDBI Bank, may have an adverse effect on the financial condition of the insurance behemoth, according to the recently filed draft prospectus.

LIC had infused Rs 4,743 crore into IDBI Bank on October 23, 2019 using policyholders' funds while the bank further raised Rs 1,435.1 crore on December 19, 2020 by way of a qualified institutional placement (QIP).

IDBI Bank has come out of the prompt corrective action framework since March 10, 2021, subject to compliance with certain conditions and continuous monitoring, as per the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) of



state-owned Life Insurance Corporation (LIC).

The government expects to mobilise about Rs 63,000 crore from the proposed Offer-for-Sale (OFS) to meet the lower disinvestment target of Rs 78,000 crore for the current financial year.

"In light of its financial condition and results of operations, we believe that IDBI Bank does not need to raise further capital at this time. However, if IDBI Bank requires additional capital prior to the expiry

of the applicable five-year period and it is unable to raise capital, we would be required to infuse additional funds into IDBI Bank, which may have an adverse effect on our financial condition and results of operations," as per the DRHP.

The five-year period would end in November 2023, as LIC got the approval letter from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on November 2, 2018 to acquire the additional equity shares in IDBI Bank. IDBI Bank became a subsidiary of LIC with effect from January 21, 2019 following the acquisition of an additional 827,590,885 equity shares in IDBI Bank, which resulted in the life insurer owning 51 per cent of the outstanding shares in the bank. On December 19, 2020,

IDBI Bank was reclassified as an associate company due to the reduction of LIC shareholding to 49.24 per cent following the issuance of additional equity shares by IDBI Bank in a qualified institutional placement.

"Additionally, the RBI in its Approval Letter has stipulated that either IDBI Bank or LIC Housing Finance Limited, our Associates, will have to cease conducting housing finance activity within a period of five years from the date of the Approval Letter and that housing finance activity shall be conducted only by one entity," it said. The impact of complying with this requirement of the RBI may have an adverse effect on the financial condition, results of operations and cash flows, it said.

Indian IT sector to grow 15.5% to USD 227 bn

Mumbai, Feb 15 (PTI):

India's IT sector is set to grow at 15.5 per cent the fastest in over a decade to USD 227 billion in FY22, as the pandemic pushes up demand for digitisation at companies across the world, industry grouping Nasscom said on Tuesday.

The revenue growth is much higher than the 2.3 per cent achieved in FY21 in the immediate aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, and double that of the pre-pandemic FY20, Debjani Ghosh, the president of Nasscom, told reporters at its strategic review. Global IT spends grew at 9 per cent to USD 1.9 trillion in the period. She termed FY22 the first when overall revenues crossed USD 200 billion - as a year of resurgence for the sector, as against FY21 which tested its resilience. The body which ceased an over two-decade old practice of giving out an estimated growth for the next



fiscal a few years ago now aims to take the overall revenues to USD 350 billion by 2026, Ghosh said, seeking some help from the policy-makers. The first USD 100 billion mark was achieved in 30 years, while the next came within a decade, she said. At a time when the country is struggling with joblessness which is playing out with challenges on streets as well, the industry added 4.5 lakh new jobs to take the overall number of direct jobs to 51 lakh. About 44 per cent of the new jobs, or nearly 2 lakh employment opportunities, were for women, who now constitute 18 lakh workers in the sector which is giving flexible ways of working under the 'hybrid model'.

Retail sales affected by COVID-19 restrictions

New Delhi, Feb 15 (PTI):

Retail sales in January this year suffered due to the restrictions imposed by states to curb the third wave of the coronavirus pandemic. Retailers Association of India (RAI) said on Tuesday. In its latest business survey, RAI said retail sales last month were at 91 per cent of the pre-pandemic sales levels of January 2019, as well as that of January 2020.

In terms of region, East zone witnessed the biggest drop last month with a 13 per cent decline, as compared to January 2019, followed by West at 11 per cent decline and North with a drop of 8 per cent. South zone was the least impacted registering a 2 per cent decline, as compared to January 2019, RAI said.

We continue our association with the magic of the sport: Kartik

New Delhi, Feb 15:

Seagram's Royal Stag is proud to announce its collaboration as Official Sponsor of the West Indies cricket team for the ongoing tour to India. Team West Indies is synonymous with performance that is enhanced by natural Caribbean flamboyance, and this style fits in perfectly with the Royal Stag brand philosophy - "It's your life. Live it large." True to its iconic status and love for the 'gentleman's game', Royal Stag is all set to root for these cricketing titans who are loved by cricket aficionados across India.

Cricket has always been central to Royal Stag's brand communication. Over the years, the brand's continuous association

with the world's top cricketers and teams has bolstered its engagement with cricket lovers across the country. This year, Royal Stag raises a toast to the game by associating with a team that plays with heart and passion, and celebrates its successes with style, panache, and exuberance - a perfect alignment with the brand core. Speaking on the sponsorship, Kartik Mohindra, CMO, Pernod Ricard India, said "For a whole generation of cricket fans, West Indies embodied the perfect blend of unmatched talent, positive attitude and unparalleled flair. In the last decade, the team has rediscovered that unique spirit and has players who have helped the Caribbean win two T20 World Cups.

Renault Kiger gets 4-star adult safety rating

New Delhi, Feb 15 (PTI):

Automaker Renault on Tuesday said its sub-four metre compact SUV Kiger has received four-star safety rating for adult occupant safety by Global NCAP, the foremost global car assessment programme.

Five stars indicates the highest score while zero star rating points to the minimum score during the vehicle crash test. "Safety is of paramount importance for Renault and all our products meet and exceed the requisite safety standards set by Indian regulatory authorities. "Kiger combines the best Renault has to offer: our expertise in innovative cars and in-depth knowledge of customer needs," Renault India Operations Country



CEO and Managing Director Venkatram Mamillapalle said in a statement.

The four-star rating by GNCAP reiterates the company's commitment to bringing technologically advanced products which are safe yet trendy, he added.

"Our GNCAP achievements on both Kiger and Triber are a testament to our strong commitment towards offering products that can deliver the highest global standards of safety, accessible to Indian customers, Mamillapalle stated.

Tamannaah on 'Gurthunda Seethakalam': Romantic drama demands you be more empathetic

On the occasion of Valentine's Day, the makers of pan-India film 'Gurthunda Seethakalam' released the trailer on Monday. The film's actress Tamannaah Bhatia says a romantic drama demands one to be more empathetic and soft.

Starring alongside Satyadev, the film will narrate the story of finding true love in today's age and era.

While sharing her excitement, Tamannaah said: "There is a certain charm in the love story,

'Gurthunda Seethakalam'. It makes you connect to the characters instantly. Working on the film with Satyadev was an incredible experience. "A romantic drama demands you to be more empathetic and soft, and I had the best time exploring the same nuances as an actor."

He added: I am really looking forward to the film's release because I am sure it will resonate with the audience."

Apart from 'Gurthunda Seethakalam', Tamannaah has 'F3' and 'Bhola Shankar' in the South and 'Plan A Plan B' and 'Yaar Dost' in Bollywood.



Sreeleela as Pranavi in Ravi Teja's 'Dhamaka'

Actress Sreeleela's first-look poster from her upcoming movie 'Dhamaka' was revealed earlier on Monday. On the occasion of Valentine's Day, the makers unveiled the poster introducing the 'Pelli SandaD' actress as 'Pranavi'.

The poster features the lead pair Ravi Teja and Sreeleela, as they appear to be completely immersed in an interesting conversation. The makers unveiled this cute poster, as a celebration of the duo's love saga in the upcoming movie. Ravi Teja and Sreeleela starrer 'Dhamaka' comes with an interesting tagline - 'Double Impact'. As the movie will gear up with the upcoming shooting schedules, the makers promise to update more interesting things. The film is being mounted on a grand scale by People's Media Factory and Abhishek Aggarwal Arts. TG Vishwa Prasad is producing the movie, while Vivek Kuchibhotla is the co-producer. 'Dhamaka' is helmed by Trinadha Rao Nakkina, and will also feature some well-known actors in vital roles and top-notch technicians handling different crafts.

Mahie Gill: Being a politician in real life is tougher than playing it on-screen

Actress Mahie Gill who has joined the Bharatiya Janata Party recently and also played a politician on-screen in the recently released web series 'Raktanchal 2' says encountering the real situation as a politician is very different from acting then in films and series.

Asked about her new career choice as a politician and Mahie told IANS: "Firstly it is just a coincidence that in 'Raktanchal 2' I played a politician and in reality also I joined politics. The timing was not quite planned. But I must say that when an actress becomes a politician, people's attitude

changes and not always fame helps to influence people to change their minds.

"Same people who love me for my acting, not necessarily love and support me as a politician. Initially, people are interested to come and meet me for selfies and the fact that they are meeting an actress. So I would say that playing a politician on-screen and meeting real people and real issues as a politician is very different and rather tougher." In the show she plays the character named Saraswati Devi and the story is set in the '90s era. Drawing the similarity from the story of the show and the present time in Indian politics, Mahie said, "when it comes to the show, I was excited to play Saraswati Devi because of the very fact that the story was set in the 90s era and I never played a politician in my career before. Back in the day, female representation in Indian politics in higher positions was quite a power struggle."

"Politics is mostly a male-dominated space where it was looked at almost like an insult for a man to take orders from a woman leader and follow her. Of course, now things have changed but still, female politicians with powerful profiles are underrepresented.

Madhuri shares her experience of watching her own movie

This Sunday, the cast of Fame Game - Madhuri Dixit, Manav Kaul, Sanjay Kapoor, Lakshvir Saran and Muskan Jaferi will be seen on The Kapil Sharma Show. The episode promises to be a laugh riot with candid banter and fun anecdotes. Kapil Sharma who was elated by the sheer presence of the 'Dhak-Dhak' girl couldn't stop himself from professing his happiness. In a conversation, Kapil mentioned how he watched Hum Aapke Hain Kaun in a theatre, in Amritsar; one year after the film was released and yet thoroughly enjoyed himself because of the ambience that was created - mirchi lights on the borders of the big screen, that lit up every time a song played. On hearing this, Madhuri was quick to add that 'ab wo mahaul nahi raha' and back in the day, they used to watch the movies with the audience 'chupke se'. She shared a fun 'kissa' from her own experience back in the day.

She shared, "Everyone was telling me how popular my song 'Ek Do Teen' had become and how much fun it was to watch it on the big screen in the theatre. So I decided that I will also go and watch it. I went to Chandan Cinema which is a single-screen theatre. I wanted to personally experience how the crowd reacts. We went inside and sat and I was in burqa. I was waiting for 'Ek Do Teen' and as the song started, we were sitting in the front row seats and from behind us, people were throwing coins towards the screen! All of that money was landing on our heads!"

That must have been quite an experience!



'Gargi is closest to what I am as a person'

She is not your ordinary heroine; she is an embodiment of true strength and power. She is Sony SAB's exclusive family drama Sab Satrangi's Gargi (Kangan Baruah) is here to inspire us as she is probably the most headstrong woman in town. Her confidence and fearless attitude is here to blow your mind. God created everybody differently so that the world appreciates the difference and Gargi is that flower in the bouquet who will complete it and give it a nice balance.

Growing up motherless, Gargi is overly attached to her

father, the great Daddy Khushwa (Satyajit Sharma), infamously known as the local don. She has never known what it feels like to have a complete family, although our girl is essentially fearless and has taught herself to be adequate in all situations. There is no denying that the Maurya family is an eccentric bunch and with Gargi's decisive presence in the household, it is going to be an absolute treat to the eyes. Gargi is not just a pretty face, what makes her charming is her mindfulness, her confidence, her determination, and she is here to break your bones if you ever dare to

cross her path. She is here to restore a happy balance in the Maurya family, and she is going to find a way to reach your heart as well!

One can say Gargi is very different from Manu. Manu (Mohit Kumar) is a true gentleman; we have all seen his chivalry and generosity showing up in every situation. On the other hand, Gargi is simply here to inspire everyone, especially the women and teach them to be decisive and confident with their lives.

We have always heard the saying "opposites attract" but can Gargi's fearless attitude compliment Manu's simple nature?

HOROSCOPE WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 16

Aquarius: Jan 21 - Feb 18

You plot and plan well today! A lot of your time, energy and money may go into less productive activities. But the quality of your work will near perfection. Keep it up, says Ganesh, it is this creativity which gives you an edge over others.

Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

Your powers of concentration and focus come to the fore. Your lucidity and eye for detail will save you from many a hassle that could have developed later on. The time that this will save your bosses and peers will bring you many accolades, says Ganesh.

Gemini: May 22 - June 21

Your intuition, physical and intellectual energy, and insight are at an all-time high today, Gemini. You'll probably want to spend much of the day alone, reflecting on your ideas and deciding how you want to put them to work for you. At some point, you may want to put your thoughts in writing.

Cancer: June 22 - July 22

You will put your family members above everything else. You will plan the entire day keeping them in mind. Your family will respond in kind and will make you feel loved and blessed. Your rivals will acknowledge your accomplishments and abilities.

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 23

Rub-a-dub and scrub and scrub: that is your motto today as you pay extra attention to sanitation. Call it the quirky side to you, but today, you may plan to wash your car, rearrange the furniture, and take up cleaning tasks in the afternoon.

Scorpio: Oct 24 - Nov 22

Your day will gravitate to being constructive today, predicts Ganesh. At work, your dedication will keep others on their toes; and you miles ahead. Marital bliss will be at its best. All in all, a colourful day, says Ganesh.

Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 20

Today you might feel homesick if you are out of station. And if you are contacting your family members, Ganesh suggests that you get in touch with your long-neglected friends too. Knowing that you are loved gives a different kind of pleasure.

Leo: July 23 - Aug 23

Ganesh foresees a mixed day for you. Your pecuniary problems may persist until later in the day, so your desire to see them sorted out is going to have to wait a little. However, chances are you may rake in money from various sources in the afternoon.

Sagittarius: Nov 23 - Dec 21

The positivity in you might well be clouded today. Quite probably, find yourself to be at your wits' end more often than not ere the day passes. Ganesh sees you sitting together with your better half and talking things out.

Taurus: Apr 21 - May 21

Your skills in managing professional relationships will play a vital role today. The atmosphere, the impression you create is going to mean a lot. Be professional, but be warm and cordial. This day you will be particularly concerned about the way others see and evaluate you.

Virgo: Aug 24 - Sept 22

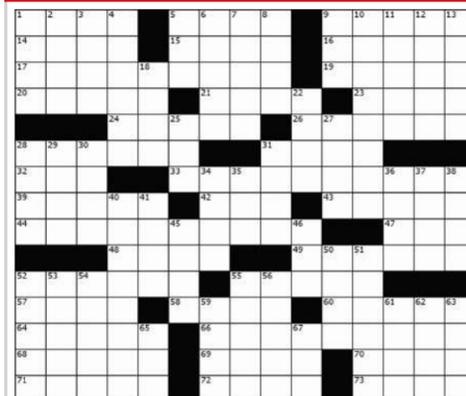
Speech-craft will be your potent weapon today, predicts Ganesh. The gift of gab was never more silvery, as you enchant your way into the hearts of the opposite sex sometime late in the day. Put-off work will be completed. Doctors and public servants will have a field day, predicts Ganesh.

Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 20

Those meddlesome neighbours of yours may suddenly come across as more seemly, and even if you can see through their ulterior motives, you will find yourself developing a good rapport with them, says Ganesh. Later in the day, you will indulge in literary works, which will provide food for thought.

CROSSWORD

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ACROSS

- House (Sp.)
- She, in Valencia
- Aromatic herb
- Scads (2 wds.)
- Lacking fat
- Texas landmark
- Declaration
- Festive events
- Theme
- Breather

DOWN

- Pen
- Uncouth
- Library patron
- 50-50 chance (hyph.)
- Fleshy fruit
- Tint
- Agent (2 wds.)
- Summits
- Doctors' group (abbr.)
- Moderately warm
- Speaking softly
- Final

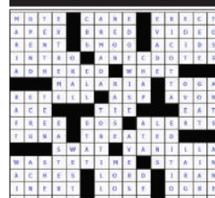
- Window part
- Off course
- Resources
- Hoarse
- Stretch across
- Revise text
- Wipe away
- Because
- Preventable
- Water mammal
- Powder mineral
- Astronaut _____ Armstrong
- Stop
- Confederate
- Recipe units (abbr.)

DOWN

- Hurl
- Palo _____
- Cleansing bar
- Storage spots
- Graceful tree
- Malicious looks
- Highway divisions
- Colony insects
- Sack
- Menu term (3 wds.)
- Mixed greens
- Picture
- Defeated candidate
- Beige
- Wood source
- Fourth mo.
- West's opposite
- Gradual warming
- That hurts!

- 18-wheeler
- Strategy
- Certain nobleman
- Pierre's buddy
- Copier
- Rocker _____ Turner
- Whirlpool
- Basic nature
- Barbecue rod
- If not
- Cooking fuel
- Made haste
- Oppressive ruler
- Business gp.
- Grudge
- December visitor
- Opponent
- Coral island
- Computer fodder
- Lincoln, et al.
- Petticoat
- Congers
- Poet's "before"
- Frosty

SOLUTION 214



Indian men lose 0-5 to Korea in Badminton Asia Team Championships

Shah Alam (Malaysia): The young Indian men's team, led by world championship bronze medallist Lakshya Sen, suffered an embarrassing 0-5 defeat against Korea in the opening group A match of the Badminton Asia Team Championships, here on Tuesday. A lot was expected from India Open winner Lakshya but the world number 13 Indian went down 11-21 19-21 to Jeon Hyeok Jin in 42 minutes. The pairing of Ravikrishna PS and Sankar Prasad Udayakumar, who had reached the finals of the Odisha Open, then slumped to a 8-21 10-21 defeat against Hwi Tae Kim and Kim Jaehwan as India lagged 0-2. World number 75 Kiran George, who had won his maiden super 100 crown in Odisha, then failed to get across Joo Wan Kim, losing 18-21 14-21 to Joo Wan Kim in 42 minutes as Korea grabbed an unassailable 3-0 lead.

Djokovic could skip French Open, Wimbledon



London: If forced to choose, Novak Djokovic said he would skip the French Open and Wimbledon, foregoing the chance to overtake Rafael Nadal's record haul of 21 Grand Slams titles, rather than get vaccinated against COVID-19. And the No. 1-ranked tennis player is also still smarting about being deported last month from Australia in a drama about his vaccination status that polarized opinion worldwide. Speaking in an interview broadcast Tuesday by the BBC, the 20-time Grand Slam champion said he is still not vaccinated, and prepared to sacrifice titles to stay that way. If need be, not defending his titles at Roland Garros and Wimbledon and missing other tournaments is the price that I am willing to pay," said the 34-year-old Serb, comments likely to further boost his hero-status among some opponents of vaccination.

Islamabad United beat Karachi Kings in PSL thriller

Lahore: Islamabad United's left-arm fast bowler Waqas Maqsood dropped a catch off his final ball but still ran out Chris Jordan of Karachi Kings to clinch a dramatic one-run victory in the Pakistan Super League. Karachi, led by Pakistan skipper Babar Azam, agonizingly finished on 190-8 for their seventh loss in a row and were eliminated from the playoff race with three league games still to go. Islamabad jumped to No. 3 with eight points from seven games behind table-toppers Multan Sultans (12 points) and Lahore Qalandars (10 points). Imad Wasim (55) and Pakistan Under-19 captain Qasim Akram (51 not out) had narrowed Karachi's target to eight runs off the final over with their 108-run sixth-wicket stand, thanks to at least three dropped catches by the sloppy Islamabad fielders.

Teen Carlos Alcaraz advances to round of 16 at Rio Open



Rio de Janeiro: Carlos Alcaraz of Spain beat countryman Jaume Munar 2-6, 6-2, 6-1, advancing to the round of 16 of the Rio Open clay court tournament. Alcaraz, who won his first professional title last year in Umag, also on clay, is ranked 29th. His first professional victory in the circuit also came in Rio de Janeiro, two years ago. I felt like home today, it is very hard to have that so far from where I came from," the 18-year-old said before a joyous Brazilian crowd. In other matches, Spain's Pablo And jar topped Uruguay's Pablo Cuevas 7-6 (2), 7-5. Another Spaniard, Pedro Martinez, eliminated China's Shang Juncheng 6-3, 6-4.

Washington ruled out of WI T20Is following hamstring strain

Kolkata: Spin-bowling all-rounder Washington Sundar was on Monday ruled out of the three-match T20 International series against the West Indies owing to a hamstring strain, adding to his never-ending woes. The All-India senior selection committee has named Kuldeep Yadav as Washington's replacement, the BCCI said in a statement. "All-rounder Washington Sundar suffered a left hamstring muscle strain during fielding in the third ODI against the West Indies played at the Narendra Modi Stadium on Friday. He is ruled out of the upcoming three-match Paytm T20I series to be played in Kolkata from 16th February," the BCCI said.



India aim to rebuild ahead of World Cup

Time for Ishans, Iyers to impress



Kolkata, Feb 15 (PTI):

Flush with exciting talent and focussed on the T20 World Cup in exactly eight months' time, the Rohit Sharma-led Team India would be aiming to get its combinations right when it takes on the West Indies in a three-match series beginning here on Wednesday.

India were the pre-tournament favourites but made a shocking group stage exit in the last T20 World Cup held in the UAE in October-November. The shambolic campaign exposed loopholes in the team combination and temperament, spoiling Virat Kohli's swansong as T20 skipper.

India will look to make amends and rebuild the side with a packed T20 calendar lined up ahead of the marquee event in Australia beginning October 16.

Rohit, under whom Mumbai Indians have won five IPL titles, would be looking to sort out issues such as the opening blues, the middle-lower order conundrum and also the bowling strategies.

And he will have a happy headache of plenty while trying to firm up the squad. Just the other day at the IPL mega auction, wicketkeeper-batter Ishan Kishan hit the jackpot by landing a Rs 15.25 crore deal with Rohit's franchise Mumbai Indians.

In fact, 10 players from the current squad landed massive deals and all eyes would also be on the likes of Shreyas Iyer (Kolkata Knight Riders Rs 12.25 crore), Harshal Patel (Royal Challengers Bangalore, Rs 10.75 crore) and Shardul Thakur (Delhi Capitals, Rs 10.75 crore).

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SQUADS:

India: Rohit Sharma (captain), Ishan Kishan, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, Surya Kumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant (wicket-keeper), Venkatesh Iyer, Deepak Chahar, Shardul Thakur, Ravi Bishnoi, Yuzvendra Chahal, Mohammed Siraj, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Avesh Khan, Harshal Patel, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Deepak Hooda, Kuldeep Yadav and Harpreet Brar.

West Indies: Kieron Pollard (captain), Nicholas Pooran (vice-captain), Fabian Allen, Darren Bravo, Roston Chase, Sheldon Cottrell, Dominic Drakes, Jason Holder, Shai Hope, Akeal Hosein, Brandon King, Rovman Powell, Romario Shepherd, Odean Smith, Kyle Mayers, Hayden Walsh Jr.

Match starts: 7 pm IST.

Unlike their flop show in the ODI series, the Kieron Pollard-led West Indies would look to give a strong fight to the hosts in their favourite T20 format.

Boasting of T20 specialists, the Windies came here after beating England 3-2 at home in a thrilling five-match series. They bat deep and with some aggressive hitters, the West Indies will hope to give India a tough fight. Jason Holder has been in fine form for them and took four wickets in four balls in the final ODI against England to return with career-best figures of 5/27.

With the chill in the air, dew can be a concern for both the teams at the Eden. The CAB has kept four pitches ready for the three matches to be played in five days.

Opening puzzle

First up would be the opening combination and who would be ideal to partner the skipper in the shortest format with his regular KL Rahul out with a left hamstring strain. Ishan opened in the first match of their preceding three-match ODI series against the Caribbean team in Ahmedabad but the skipper also tried out Rishabh Pant and Shikhar Dhawan. While Ishan may be the preferred choice, Rohit also has options in Maharashtra run machine Ruturaj Gaikwad who has been in red hot form but has only been warming the bench. Then there is Venkatesh Iyer, the KKR all-rounder who shot to prominence in the UAE leg of the last IPL as a big-hitting opener with 320 runs at an average of 40 and a strike rate of 125. He was just behind Gaikwad who had more runs (407) in this period. It will also be interesting if Virat Kohli comes out to open with Rohit to get among runs as he's been dealing with a lean patch.

Middle and lower order conundrum

India have a packed white ball calendar in the run up to their T20I World Cup opener against Pakistan on October 23. So, it would not be a bad play for the think tank to give some much deserved rest to the dashing Pant as Ishan seems to be a confirmed selection in the side. This will help Rohit try out both Shreyas Iyer and Suryakumar Yadav in the same XI. The duo was in fine form in the recently-concluded ODI series. Suryakumar was the top scorer in the ODI series with 104 runs at an average of 52.00, while Iyer scored a match-winning 80 in their 3-0 series sweeping win in the third ODI. India also have some exciting options lower down the order with the likes of Shardul Thakur, Deepak Chahar and Harshal Patel. Patel impressed with a fine cameo of 11-ball 18 to prop up India's total to a match-winning 184/7 from 140/6 in his only outing in the series against New Zealand just after the World Cup.

West Indies aim for improvements

Unlike their flop show in the ODI series, the Kieron Pollard-led West Indies would look to give a strong fight to the hosts in their favourite T20 format. Boasting of T20 specialists, the Windies came here after beating England 3-2 at home in a thrilling five-match series. They bat deep and with some aggressive hitters, the West Indies will hope to give India a tough fight. Jason Holder has been in fine form for them and took four wickets in four balls in the final ODI against England to return with career-best figures of 5/27.

Bishnoi will fancy his chances

Fresh from a stupendous comeback series in the ODIs, Yuzvendra Chahal will be India's regular spin option but it remains to be seen if exciting Rajasthan leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi gets a maiden call up. He was rewarded after an impressive run in the IPL and domestic circuit to be selected for the series. With Washington Sundar ruled out of the series with a hamstring injury, it remains to be seen if the youngster from Jodhpur will get his maiden international cap.

Dew factor, a concern?

With the chill in the air, dew can be a concern for both the teams at the Eden. The CAB has kept four pitches ready for the three matches to be played in five days.

Goswami-less India women lose to NZ in second ODI

Queenstown, Feb 15 (PTI):

India felt the absence of experienced pacer Jhulan Goswami as they failed to defend an imposing 270 to go down by three wickets in the second women's ODI against New Zealand here on Tuesday.

The loss meant that the visitors have now conceded a 0-2 lead in the five-match series.

Deepthi Sharma took 4 for 52 while her spin colleagues Poonam Yadav, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, and Harmanpreet Kaur took a wicket apiece.

But India failed in the pace department with Pooja Vastrakar and debutant Simran Bahadur leaking runs without taking any wickets.

The presence of Goswami, rested from this game to try out new talent, could have made the difference after Indian bat-



Amelia Kerr's century saw New Zealand through.

ters rose to the occasion to set a stiff target of 271 for

New Zealand despite the continued absence of star opener Smriti Mandhana, who on Tuesday came out of her extended stay in quarantine.

But Amelia Kerr made the difference with her unbeaten 119 off 135 balls with the help of seven fours as New Zealand surpassed the target with one over to spare by reaching 273 for 7.

The Indian bowlers lost the plot in the middle overs when they allowed Amelia Kerr and Maddy Green (52) to stitch a 128-run stand from 24.4 overs for the fourth wicket.

Green was dropped by Taniya Bhatia when on 23 while Kerr survived a few half chances towards the end of New Zealand run chase.

New Zealand did not have the best of starts as they were 55 for 3 in the ninth over.

Richardson, Finch and Maxwell take Australia to 3-0

Canberra, Feb 15:

Australia's enviable bowling depth was underlined in their comfortable six-wicket victory over beleaguered Sri Lanka in match three, as they clinched the T20I series in Canberra.

In a polished performance reminiscent of their T20 World Cup triumph, Australia's new-look attack without mainstays Pat Cummins and Adam Zampa restricted Sri Lanka to a lowly 121 for 6 with quick Kane Richardson picking up three wickets. Australia's batting wasn't nearly as ruthless, but they were never in danger and overhauled the paltry target in the 17th over. Sri Lanka's bid to stay alive in the series received a massive blow when star all-rounder Wanindu Hasaranga was ruled out after earlier in the day testing positive to Covid-19.

Apart from a stunning late onslaught in match two,



Sri Lanka's batting has barely fired a shot in this series. In a must-win match, Sri Lanka sought an aggressive

approach as they blasted 17 runs off the opening two overs in an eye-catching start.

But it was fool's gold with Danushka Gunathilaka's dismissal attempting a scoop shot triggering a slew of tame dismissals. Having served a seven-day isolation following a positive Covid-19 result, Kusal Mendis' sluggishness was understandable as he spooned a return catch to Agar.

In a major hole at 40 for 4, Sri Lanka were forced to rebuild through Chandimal and Dasun Shanaka. They started slowly before a flurry of late boundaries lifted Sri Lanka, but it wasn't nearly enough.

Once again, they rued a mishmash of a batting effort, which was either manic or stagnant. Tied down mid-innings, Sri Lanka were anchored to the crease and they finished with 56 dot balls which proved costly.

ICC Women's World Cup winner to pocket USD 1.32 million, double amount of 2017 edition

Dubai, Feb 15 (PTI):

The winners of the upcoming ICC women's World Cup in New Zealand will pocket a cash prize of USD 1.32 million, which is double the amount that was awarded to the victors of the 2017 edition in England.

The overall prize money pot has also seen an increase of 75 per cent, with the eight teams taking home a share of USD 3.5 million which is USD 1.5 million more than the previous edition, the ICC said on Tuesday.

The runners-up will take home USD 600,000, which is USD 270,000 more than India were rewarded in 2017 for finishing second best. The two losing semi-fi-

nalists will earn USD 300,000 each while the four teams who exit at the group stages will be awarded USD 70,000 -- up from the USD 30,000 prize from the previous edition.

Every group stage win will also earn the teams a reward of USD 25,000 per victory from a total pot of USD 700,000.

This marks an increase in the prize money during the Women's Cricket World Cup for consecutive editions. The prize money between the 2013 and the 2017 edition witnessed a tenfold increase, going up from USD 200,000 to USD 2 million.

Leave Virat alone: Rohit dismisses concerns around star batter's poor form



Kolkata, Feb 15 (PTI):

In no mood to talk about the prolonged lean patch that Virat Kohli is enduring, India captain Rohit Sharma on Tuesday said "everything will fall in place" if the chatter around him stops. Ahead of the T20 series against the West Indies starting

Mandhana out of MIQ, to join team for remainder of ODI series

Christchurch, Feb 15 (PTI):

Star batter Smriti Mandhana on Tuesday completed her extended stay in quarantine here and left for Queenstown to join the Indian women's cricket team for the remainder of the five-match ODI series against New Zealand.

Mandhana had missed the one-off T20 International and the two ODIs against New Zealand as she was in extended Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) along with two other players -- pacers Meghna Singh and Renuka Singh. Renuka is already out of quarantine while Meghna also came out of MIQ on Tuesday.

However, both Mandhana and Meghna may not be available for the third ODI here on Friday on fitness grounds as they have been in quarantine for long.



"Finally out of quarantine!! Can't wait to get back with the team," the 25-year-old Mandhana wrote on her Instagram handle, along with a picture of her with her luggage. In her absence, India had lost the one-off T20 International and the first two ODIs. The second ODI was played on Tuesday. Earlier, after the one-off T20I, batter Yastika Bhatia had informed about the stay in MIQ of Mandhana, Meghna Singh and Renuka Singh.

UP POLLS

'64.42% voting in 2nd phase'

Lucknow, Feb 15 (PTI):

An estimated 64.42 per cent voting was recorded in the second phase of the assembly elections in 55 constituencies spread over nine districts in Uttar Pradesh on Monday, according to the Election Commission.

Saharanpur recorded a turnout of 71.13 per cent, Bijnor 65.91, Moradabad 67.26, Sambhal 62.87, Rampur 64.26, Amroha 71.98, Budaun 59.24, Bareilly 61.67 and Shahjahanpur 59.34 per cent, a statement issued by the election office said here on Tuesday.

The same districts had recorded an average turnout of 65.53 per cent in the 2017 assembly polls and 63.13 per cent in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

A turnout of 62.4 per cent was recorded in the first phase of the seven-phase Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls on February 10.

The final turnout of the second phase could not be released by the poll officials till late in the night on Monday. They had said that over 60 per cent turnout was recorded at 5 pm.

As the polling got underway on Monday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other leaders had appealed to the people to vote in large numbers in the state, as well in Goa and Uttarakhand where single-day polling was held to elect their assemblies.

SP patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav, who has stayed away from cam-

paing, also sent out a brief video message to voters.

"I appeal that you (voters) lend your valuable support to the Samajwadi Party to help it win with a huge mandate," the 83-year-old leader, who is now in Delhi, said.

Of the 55 seats which went to poll in the second phase, the BJP had won 38 in the 2017 assembly polls, the SP bagged 15 and the Congress two. The SP and the Congress had contested the last assembly elections together.

Of the 15 seats then won by the SP, Muslim candidates were elected on 10.

Several areas that went to the polls in this phase have a sizeable Muslim population influenced by the Bareilly and Deoband

sects and are considered strongholds of the SP.

Prominent candidates in the fray in the second phase included former BJP minister Dharam Singh Saini, who joined the SP shortly before the elections, from Nakur and Uttar Pradesh Finance Minister Suresh Khanna from Shahjahanpur.

Besides senior SP leader Mohammad Azam Khan from his stronghold Rampur and his son Abdullah Azam from the Suar seat.

The younger Azam is contesting against Haider Ali Khan, the scion of the Nawabs of Rampur, trying his luck on a ticket from the Apna Dal (Sonelal), a BJP ally. He is the grandson of former MP Noor Bano.

TRIBUTES TO TARAPUR MARTYRS



Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar pays floral tribute to martyrs on Tarapur Martyrs Day, in Patna, Tuesday.

Ants found crawling on body of TB patient in govt hospital ward

Pune, Feb 15 (PTI):

Probe ordered

Relatives of a 22-year-old man, who died of TB at a state-run hospital in Solapur city in Maharashtra, on Tuesday claimed that ants were found crawling all over his body in the hospital ward. A senior hospital official said that prima facie ants were crawling on the bed of the patient as per nurses. An inquiry has been ordered into the incident. The deceased, Rakesh More, was admitted to the government-run hospital as he was suffering from disseminated tuberculosis on February 8. He died on Sunday afternoon. Hospital authorities called us around 3 PM on Sunday and informed

us about Rakesh More's death. When our relatives went to the hospital ward there were no ants on his body, but by 4.30 PM, when our family members reached the ward to receive the body, they found that there were ants all over his body," the aunt of the deceased claimed. She alleged that ants were on the eyes of the deceased and also all over his body. "When my son-in-law informed about him to the nurse, she told him to move the body from the ward as there were other patients admitted there. We insisted them clean the body but they did not pay any heed," she al-

leged. Dr Shakira Sawaskar, the officiating dean of the hospital, said an inquiry has been ordered. "This patient was treated at the hospital since February 8. He died around 3.30 pm on Sunday. His relatives were already informed that he was in critical condition. The relatives came around 4.15 pm. They informed us that they will arrange for the ambulance and will move the body," she said.

Dr Sawaskar also said that the body could have been shifted to the mortuary but since a mandatory form to move the corpse to the hospital mortuary was not signed by the patient's relatives the body remained in the ward till 6 PM.

Gurugram heist case

Court raises involvement of then CP

Gurugram, Feb 15 (PTI): A local court here raised the issue of the possible involvement of then Gurugram Commissioner of Police in a multi-crore heist last year. The court had on Monday for the third time dismissed the anticipatory bail plea of suspended IPS officer Dheeraj Setia, who is accused of being involved in the multi-crore heist. "Whether this whole illegal exercise had been done by the petitioner with the concurrence of the then Commissioner of Police, Gurugram who was his immediate senior or other higher police authorities, the same may also not be ascertained unless the petitioner is questioned into custody. "Even the then Commissioner of Police, Gurugram had passed the office order through which the additional charge of DCP (Crime) had been devolved upon the petitioner," the court of additional session judge Amit Sahrawat observed.

Delhi vs Centre

SC to hear plea relating to split verdict on control of services

On March 3

New Delhi, Feb 15 (PTI):

The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to hear on March 3 the AAP government's plea on the contentious issue of who should control administrative services in Delhi, the dispute arose out of a 2019 split verdict.

On February 14, 2019, a two judge-bench of Justices A K Sikri and Ashok Bhushan, both retired since recommended to the chief justice of India that a three-judge bench be set up to finally decide the issue of control of services in the national capital in view of its split verdict. Justice Bhushan had ruled the Delhi government has no power at all over admin-

istrative services. Justice Sikri, however, made a distinction. He said the transfer or posting of officers in top echelons of the bureaucracy (joint director and above) can only be done by the Central government and the view of the lieutenant governor would prevail in case of a difference of opinion for matters relating to other bureaucrats. The plea was mentioned for urgent hearing before a bench headed by Chief Justice N V Ramana by senior advocate A M Singhvi on behalf of the Delhi government.

The matter pertains to a question whether the Delhi government has some control and power over its IAS officers or not. This was fixed to be heard in 2020 and then in 2021

after Diwali vacation, Singhvi said. All right. Post on March 3, said the bench which also comprised justices A S Bopanna and Hima Kohli. On October 5, the CJI-led bench had said that it would set up a three-judge bench to hear after the Diwali vacation the AAP government's plea on the contentious issue of who should control administrative services in Delhi.

Following a five-judge Constitution bench judgement, police, land, and public order were to be under the control of the Centre and the rest of the subjects, including the services, should remain under the Delhi government, the Delhi government had said. Earlier, the top court, which was hear-

ing pleas on six matters about a long-running conflict between the Centre and the Delhi government, had given a unanimous order on the remaining five issues except for the control over services.

Both judges had agreed that the lieutenant governor will have control over the Anti-Corruption Bureau, as already notified by the Centre, and the power to appoint inquiry commissions would also rest with the Central government. On the other hand, the elected Delhi government will have the right to appoint public prosecutors, to decide land revenue matters, and also to appoint or deal with the electricity commission or board, the bench had ruled.

Hundreds join funeral procession of Surat woman killed by stalker

Surat, Feb 15 (PTI):

Nearly one thousand people on Tuesday joined the funeral procession of a woman college student, who was killed allegedly by a stalker here in Gujarat last week after she refused to enter into a relationship with him.

Some angry citizens also demanded death penalty for the accused.

Apart from the woman's family members and relatives, several prominent citizens, including former BJP MLA Praful Pansuriya, Aam Aadmi Party's Gujarat unit president Gopal Italia and former Patidar quota leader Alpesh Kathiria, also joined the

funeral procession. Many residents, some unable to control their emotions, lined up on a roadside and showered flower petals on the van which carried the mortal remains of Grishma Vekariya (21).

The funeral procession started from her house in Pasodara village near here in the morning and later reached the Ashwini Kumar crematorium in Surat city after covering a distance of about 10 km.

Many people from different walks of life joined the funeral procession on their motorbikes and in cars as a mark of sympathy towards the woman's family.

RELIGIOUS PROCESSION



Devotees take part in a religious procession on the eve of Guru Ravidas Jayanti, in Jalandhar, Tuesday.

14 wedding rings and a handcuff for Odisha's Don Juan

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15 (PTI):

He lured with love college teachers, even hard-boiled policemen and captious lawyers, as he went about striking middle-aged women desperate for companionship with cupid's arrow, marrying 14 of them across seven states over 38 years before running out of luck on Monday.

Ramesh Chandra Swain, the 66-year-old from a coastal village in Odisha's Kendrapara district, is now cooling his heels in a jail in judicial custody.

Swain, according to police, posed as a doctor posted as a deputy director general under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. His victims failed to see through

his fake identity and, as the adage goes, did just as the doctor ordered.

According to police, the sexagenarian duped his wives, three of whom live in Delhi, three in Odisha, two each in Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, and Assam, and one each in Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh, of lakhs of rupees before moving on to greener pastures.

"The police have so far located 9 of the 14 wives of the man and urged others to come forward. We suspect many women who were cheated by him are not coming forward because of social stigma. We appeal them to contact Odisha police," Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Bhubaneswar, U S Dash told reporters on Monday.

Burqa-clad girl asked to remove Hijab, boycotts exam

Bengaluru, Feb 15 (PTI):

The Hijab row continued to simmer in Karnataka on Tuesday over alleged denial of entry for girl students into schools with their headscarves on in some places, as one such girl announced boycotting her exam in response to the diktat. Scenes of angry parents of such children arguing with police and school authorities and an instance of a student trying to flaunt a saffron scarf as an apparent retaliation were also reported.

The Karnataka High Court, in its interim order last week restrained all the students from wearing saffron shawls, scarves, hijab and any religious flag within the classroom.

High schools were reopened across the state on Monday, even as there



A Muslim student (face blurred to protect identity), who boycotted the SSLC Preliminary Examination over Hijab controversy, leaves her school in Shivamogga, Tuesday.

were instances of students turning up in Hijab and burqa then, only to be denied entry or asked by officials to remove them, citing the High Court order.

On Tuesday, at a school in the district headquarters town of Shivamogga, a Burqa-wearing girl refused to write her exam

when the school authorities asked her to remove her Hijab first.

"We have grown up wearing Hijab since our childhood and we cannot give it up. I will not write the exam and I will go home," the girl told reporters.

In a government school

in Indavara village in Chikkamagaluru district, Muslim girls were not let inside the school and were asked to go back.

Soon, their parents reached the school and staged a protest. They barged into the campus, raised slogans and demanded that the order

should be given to them in writing. As the protest intensified, another student pulled out a saffron scarf from his school bag. On the direction of his teachers, he put it back inside.

Sensing the situation, the principal closed the school for the day.

In another institution in Chikkamagaluru town, tension prevailed over denial of entry to the students with hijab. Parents swarmed the school and questioned the school authorities how their children were not allowed inside.

Policemen deployed there told the crowd that there was a High Court order not to let anyone wearing Hijab or saffron scarves but the parents were not ready to listen and insisted that their wards be allowed to write the exam.

DFS to hire 11 retired fire officers as consultants

New Delhi, Feb 15 (PTI):

To strengthen manpower, ease workload

To ease increasing workload and to strengthen manpower, the Delhi Fire Service (DFS) plans to hire 11 retired fire officers for regular inspections at Covid-designated hospitals, besides engaging them for administrative and legal works of the department among other activities, fire officials said on Tuesday.

Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal also approved the proposal submitted by the fire department which is all set to hire its retired officers, below the age of 65, as consultants on contract basis through walk-in interviews which will commence from February 21, they said.

This development comes after the department issued an order recently stating that it proposes to avail the services of 11 retired fire officers of the DFS, not below the rank of station officer.

According to the DFS, the recruitment is being done to overcome shortage of staff and to strengthen the department which currently has multi-fold activities to handle, be it inspections, administrative or legal work.

The fire officials said that these officers, however, will not engage in

any kind of fire-fighting operations. When asked about the development, DFS Director Atul Garg told PTI that they have already got the LG's approval to avail the services of 11 retired officers, who belonged to the DFS and were below the age of 65 years.

They will join as fire officers but will not be engaged in any fire-fighting operations, he said.

"This will also help the fire department as the service of the retired officers will be availed in administrative and legal work, besides conducting inspections.

They will provide a helping hand to our current staff and ease their burden," Garg said.



BRIEF



A man shifts red chili peppers at a farm in Shertha village, in Ahmedabad, Tuesday.

Maha budget

Mumbai: The budget session of the Maharashtra legislature will be held in Mumbai between March 3 and March 25. The annual budget will be tabled on March 11, an official said on Tuesday. Earlier, a discussion was held to host the budget session in Nagpur but due to the MLA hostel there being used as a COVID care centre the government has decided to hold it in Mumbai, which is the norm, the official added.

Booked

Neemuch (MP): A case of sedition has been registered against a minor college student from Jammu and Kashmir, studying in Madhya Pradesh's Neemuch city under a central government's scholarship scheme, for allegedly posting an objectionable video regarding the 2019 Pulwama terror attack, an official said on Tuesday.

Bail

New Delhi: A Delhi court has granted bail to former CBI sub-inspector Abhishek Tiwari in a case related to the alleged leak of the probe agency's preliminary enquiry (PE) report purportedly giving clean chit to Maharashtra's ex-Home Minister Anil Deshmukh. Special judge Sanjeev Aggarwal granted relief to Tiwari, noting that the co-accused -- Deshmukh's lawyer Anand Daga and his social media Manager Gajendra Tumane -- having almost similar role have already been released on bail.

House fire

Shimla: Ten people suffered burns on Tuesday when a fire broke out at a house in Himachal Pradesh's Mandi district, a state disaster management official said. The incident took place in Ramnagar. All the injured were admitted to Medical College Hospital Nerchowk in Mandi district for treatment. The fire brigade doused the flames. The exact cause of the fire is being ascertained, the official said.

Detained

Patna: Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) chief, Chirag Paswan was detained by Patna police along with his supporters during a protest march demanding the suspension of the Nitish Kumar government here on Tuesday. The march had begun at the historic Gandhi Maidan and Paswan and his supporters were detained near the Income Tax roundabout as they were proceeding to Raj Niwas (governor's house).

Weather
High 30 Low 16

MARKET
NIFTY 17,352.45
SENSEX 58,145.05

BULLION
GOLD 49,390
SILVER 62,780

FODDER SCAM CASE

Lalu convicted

Rs 139 crore Doranda treasury embezzlement case
Sentencing on Feb 21

Ranchi, Feb 15 (PTI):

A special CBI court on Tuesday convicted RJD supremo and former Bihar chief minister Lalu Prasad in the Rs 139.5 crore Doranda treasury embezzlement case, the fifth and final case against him in the fodder scam.

The ailing 73-year-old politician will be lodged in Birsra Munda Central Jail in Ranchi after his plea to be admitted to the state-run Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) on medical grounds was rejected by the court of CBI



Rashtriya Janta Dal (RJD) Chief Lalu Prasad Yadav leaves the special CBI court where he appeared in connection with the fodder scam case against him, in Ranchi, Tuesday.

Judge Sudhanshu Kumar Shashi. Prasad, who was

present in the court, was taken into custody and arguments on the quantum of his sentence will be heard on February 21. The CBI counsel had earlier said the court will hear the arguments on sentence on February 18.

Welcoming the court's decision, BJP Rajya Sabha MP and former Bihar deputy chief minister Sushil Kumar Modi, one of the petitioners in the fodder scam matter in the Patna High Court, said justice has finally been served to those who "pushed the state into darkness" for 15 years.

Prasad had earlier been sentenced to 14 years in jail in four other fodder scam cases. The final case was related to withdrawals of Rs 139.35 crore from Doranda treasury during his tenure as the chief minister of undivided Bihar. "Of the 99 ac-

Justice delivered....

Welcoming the court's decision, BJP Rajya Sabha MP and former Bihar deputy chief minister Sushil Kumar Modi, one of the petitioners in the fodder scam matter in the Patna High Court, said justice has finally been served to those who "pushed the state into darkness" for 15 years. Prasad had earlier been sentenced to 14 years in jail in four other fodder scam cases. The final case was related to withdrawals of Rs 139.35 crore from Doranda treasury during his tenure as the chief minister of undivided Bihar.

quitted, while three-year jail terms have been pronounced for 34 accused. A total of 41 convicts have been sent to prison, CBI counsel BMP Singh told

PTI. On Prasad's plea, directions were given to the jail superintendent and RIMS director to take necessary action keeping in mind his health, he said. The ebullient leader suffers from multiple ailments, including renal problems.

The CBI had examined 575 witnesses in the case, and filed charge sheet against 170 people. However, only 99 accused including Prasad faced trial which had commenced in 1996.

In the course of the 22-year-long trial, 55 accused died, while eight turned government approvers. As many as six accused are still absconding.

Prasad was accompanied to the court by his daughter and Rajya Sabha MP Misa Bharti. Many RJD leaders and workers also thronged the court premises.

Bastar Cafe to open in Raipur, Delhi



Raipur, Feb 15:

To promote selling-cum-marketing of coffee being cultivated in Bastar region, the state government is going to open Bastar Cafe in Raipur and Delhi.

"Soon the Bastar Cafe, which is currently operational in Chhattisgarh's Jagdalpur, is going to have its footprint in Raipur and Delhi," officials said on Tuesday. The move is aimed at promoting the sale and marketing of coffee being cultivated in the Bastar region. For the marketing of coffee produced in Bastar, the government is going to sign a memorandum of un-

derstanding (MoU) with private companies, the officials said. A decision in this regard was taken in the meeting of Chhattisgarh Tea-Coffee Board chaired by the state's Agriculture and Water Resource Minister Ravindra Choubey

Meanwhile, the minister has directed the officials concerned, to prepare a project after conducting a survey so that cultivation of coffee could be promoted. The minister also assured of ensuring the installation of a machine for the processing of harvested coffee beans through DMF (District Mineral Foundation) fund.

Cabinet approves preparations for India's G20 presidency

New Delhi, Feb 15 (PTI):

The Union Cabinet on Tuesday approved setting up of a G20 secretariat to put in place arrangements required for India's presidency of the prestigious grouping.

India will hold the Presidency of the G20 from December 1 to November 30, 2023. India will host the G20 summit next year.

"The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, today approved the setting up of a G20 Secretariat and its reporting structures, which will be responsible for implementation of overall policy decisions and arrangements needed for steering India's forthcoming G20 Presidency," the government said in a state-

ment. G20 is the premier forum for international economic cooperation that plays an important role in global economic governance.

"As per practice, a G20 Secretariat is being established to handle work relating to substantive / knowledge / content, technical, media, security and logistical aspects of India's G20 Presidency," according to the statement.

"It will be manned by officers and staff from the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Finance, and other relevant line Ministries / Departments and domain knowledge experts," it said.

The government said the secretariat will be functional till February 2024.

Coal Crisis Gehlot taps Sonia to get mines started in Chh'garh

New Delhi, Feb 15 (PTI):

Warning of a power crisis in the state, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has tapped Congress President Sonia Gandhi for the second time in three months to get Chhattisgarh to speed up clearances for mining coal for power plants.

Power generation units in Rajasthan have an allocation of coal from mines in Chhattisgarh but delays in state-level clearances have stalled most of them.

Gehlot first wrote to Sonia Gandhi on December 1, 2021, and then again on February 10, according to copies of the letters sent by PTI.

"Rajasthan state may suffer power crisis due to outage of 4,340 MW power

plant on the ground of non-availability of coal" from a block in Chhattisgarh, Gehlot wrote to his party president in the latest letter. This, he said, "might adversely reflect on the performance of the government of Rajasthan and create a precarious situation as both states are governed by Congress".

"May I request you to kindly intervene and advise the Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh to ensure arranging all the requisite pending approvals" for the coal blocks to enable Rajasthan "to start mining activities at the earliest to avoid a power crisis in the state in future", he added.

Parts of Rajasthan had witnessed several hours of power cuts in September and October 2021 after coal-

stock depleted at power plants that supply electricity to the state.

Gehlot wrote to Gandhi after his letters to his Chhattisgarh counterpart Bhupesh Baghel did not cut much ice.

In 2015, the central government had allocated three coal blocks in the Sarguja district of Chhattisgarh to Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Ltd (RVUNL) but only one of them has been able to commence production. The other two blocks are stuck in procedural delays. RVUNL produces 15 million tonnes of coal from Parsa East and Kanta Basan (PEKB) block and the opening of other Parsa and Kente Extension blocks will double the production.

'Corbevax is safe, will be administered in two doses'

New Delhi, Feb 15:

Chairman of Covid-19 Working Group of NTAGI, Dr NK Arora on Tuesday (February 15) said that the Covid-19 vaccine Corbevax is a safe vaccine and will be administered with two doses like other vaccines.

"Corbevax is a safe vaccine and local reactions are also less. The antibody level of this vaccine is also very high. Overall Corbevax is a very useful vaccine. It will have 2 primary doses just like other vaccines in India," told Dr Arora to ANI.

This comes after India's apex drug regulatory body Drugs Controller



General of India's Subject Expert Committee on Monday (February 14) granted the restricted emergency use authorisation

to Biological E's Covid vaccine Corbevax for adolescents in the 12 to 18 years age bracket. However, the approval is subject to certain conditions, said a source familiar with the development.

BEAUTY OF TAJ



Foreign tourists visit the Taj Mahal on a warmer sunny day, in Agra, Tuesday.

Will approach SC: Rakesh Tikait

Lakhimpur Kheri, Feb 15 (PTI):

Farmer leader Rakesh Tikait on Tuesday said the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) will approach the Supreme Court over the Lakhimpur Kheri violence episode in which eight people, including four farmers, were killed.

Ashish Mishra, the son of Union Minister Ajay Mishra 'Teni', is a key accused in the case and the Allahabad High Court granted him bail on February 10. Ashish was expected to walk out of the jail on Tuesday. Tikait, a prominent face of the farmers' stir and the

Ashish Mishra walks out of jail on bail

After over four months, Union minister Ajay Mishra's son Ashish Mishra was released from jail here on Tuesday evening after fulfilling bail conditions pronounced by the Allahabad High Court. He has been released from jail after completion of bail formalities, Lakhimpur Kheri Jail Superintendent P P Singh told reporters. Ashish Mishra had been lodged in the jail since October 10 last year in the case related to the killing of four farmers in the violence that had erupted in the course of farmers' agitation in Tikonia in the district. The Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court had last week granted bail to Ashish Mishra in the case.

national spokesperson of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU), which is part of the SKM, also hit out at the BJP amid ongoing assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh. The whole country and whole world watched the most infa-

mous Lakhimpur Kheri episode of Ajay Teni and Ashish Teni, who despite having committed a heinous crime gets bail within three months. Everybody is seeing that and he will walk out of jail today, Tikait told re-

porters, adding the SKM would approach the Supreme Court.

"So is such dictatorial government needed, or this type of system needed in which someone who mows down people under a vehicle walks out of jail within three months. How will they behave with the public in times to come? These are our issues that people need to understand, the farmer leader said.

He claimed there was a power outage during the online court hearing in the case when the prosecution was making its point but the whole point could not be kept before the court.

MONEY-LAUNDERING CASE

ED raids Dawood's sister, 10 other places in Mumbai

Mumbai, Feb 15:

The Enforcement Directorate on Tuesday conducted raids at the residence of Dawood Ibrahim's sister Haseena Parkar in Mumbai in connection with the money-laundering case.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday conducted multiple searches in Mumbai as part of a money laundering probe linked to the operations of the underworld, illegal property deals and hawala transactions, official sources said.

The sources also stated that these searches are being conducted in a re-



Police stand guard at Gardan Hall building during a raid by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case against Dawood Ibrahim, in Mumbai, Tuesday.

cently registered money-laundering case. "The ED is carrying out searches at

several places linked to the people associated with the underworld, in Mumbai,

in a money-laundering case. Some underworld fugitives and politicians are also under investigation," the sources added.

About 10 locations are being covered in Maharashtra's capital city and the action is being conducted under sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

The ED action is based on a recent FIR filed recently by the National Investigation Agency against 1993 Mumbai blasts mastermind and fugitive gangster Dawood Ibrahim and some independent intelligence inputs received by the former agency, they said.

ANOTHER JOLT TO CONG

Former Law Minister Ashwani Kumar quits party

New Delhi, Feb 15 (PTI):

Former Law Minister Ashwani Kumar on Tuesday resigned from the Congress, ending his 46-year-long association with the grand old party.

Kumar sent his resignation to Congress President Sonia Gandhi this morning, saying he can best serve national causes outside the party fold. "Having given my thoughtful consideration to the matter, I have concluded that in the present circum-

stances and consistent with my dignity, I can best subserve larger national causes outside the party fold," Kumar said in his resignation letter.

"I am accordingly quitting the party after a long association of 46 years and hope to proactively pursue public causes inspired by the idea of transformative leadership, based on the dignitarian promise of a liberal democracy envisioned by our freedom fighters," the former Rajya Sabha MP also said.



'Congress lacks inspirational leadership'

Former Law Minister Ashwani Kumar, who resigned from the Congress on Tuesday in the midst of the election cycle, said the grand old party had lost touch with the ground reality and no longer reflected the national mood. In a no-holds-barred interview to PTI after quitting the Congress, the 69-year-old former Rajya Sabha MP from Punjab said he had reached his limits of perseverance in the party, which, he said, lacked inspirational leadership and is facing an existential challenge. He also accused the party of

Birth anniv of Sevalal Maharaj observed

**Konta, Feb 15:**

Like every year in all Tanda of All India Banjara Seva Sangh Sukma district, this year too, on Tuesday, 15 February 2022, the birth anniversary of Sant Sevalal Maharaj, the religious leader of the society, was celebrated with great pomp. It is to be known that Sevalal Maharaj was a religious leader and social reformer of Banjara society. Following the

Covid-19 guidelines on the birth anniversary of Sant Sevalal Maharaj, a revolutionary ideology social reformer of Banjara society, all the Banjara brothers of Sukma district in their respective Tanda villages, Dornapal, Chikpal, Gadiras, Keralapal, Tongpal, Gorgunda, Kosguda, Saints at the field level. The social rules of Sevalal Maharajji were worshiped, worshiped and offered food and prasad was distrib-

uted. In which all the officials of the male, female cell and youth cell of Banjara society were present, various socio-cultural programs were also organized by the Banjara society on the 283rd birth anniversary of Sant Sevalal Maharaj. In this birth anniversary, men and women of Banjara community of Sukma district gathered and celebrated with great pomp. Under the guidance of Mansingh Nayak, District President of

Banjara Samaj, all the tandos were offered food in the name of Sevalal Maharaj and folk dance was also performed by all the sections of the society. Gopal Singh Ajmera, President of Banjara Samaj District Sukma Youth Cell, who is always active in the social sector, said that due to the effective Section 144 in the district, canceling the grand event (convention) to be held at the district headquarters, in all the villages of Kovid. It was decided to celebrate following the rules. District media in-charge Sanjay Nayak said that for the third time in Dornapal, the birth anniversary festival of Sant Sevalal Maharaj was celebrated with great pomp in Dornapal as well as in view of the corona infection, this time in Sukma district headquarters in his own village Tanda area, all the Banjaras present on this occasion.

Strict instructions to improve the power supply system in the district

Koriya, Feb 15:

District Collector Kuldeep Sharma gave strict instructions to the Executive Engineer CSEB to improve the power system in the district in the weekly deadline meeting. Taking initiative in this direction, the Collector directed to get the mobile numbers of all 7 Junior Engineers written in the Gram Panchayats of the respective area of work and to give information to the people.

Along with this, he asked all the SDM and CEO, Janpad Panchayat to submit the status report of the transformer under their area and will also inform that people have contacted the department and will also submit information about the speedy action taken by the department. Collector Shri Sharma also instructed all the officers and employees of the Revenue Department to improve the working



style. Referring to the shortcomings found in the surprise inspection in Khadgwan SDM and Tehsil office in the past, he said that keeping the sensitivity towards the common people, their problems should be resolved on time. All tehsils will be inspected within the next 1 month, he said. Ensure that the cases of undisputed conversion, division and demarcation are resolved within the prescribed time limit under the Public Service Guarantee Act, otherwise penalty will be imposed on the concerned revenue officer, he stressed.

The Collector has instructed all the Panchayat nodal officers to inspect the Anganwadis between 11 am to 12 noon and the time has been fixed for distribution of eggs to children in Anganwadis. He directed the CMHO and the District Program Officer, Women and Child Development Department for mutual coordination to give the dosage of Albendazole and Iron syrup to the children in Anganwadi along with egg distribution. In the last time limit for monitoring the attendance of teachers in

schools, Collector Shri Sharma has given instructions, following which the education department has started monitoring at the cluster level. Geo-tagged photos are taken by the teachers while attending the school and sent to the cluster level. Time, location, latitude and longitude stickers are displayed inbuilt in geo tag photos, which gives real time information. An app is being developed to upload photos showing attendance. So that records can be kept. Currently monitoring is being done through WhatsApp.

Show cause notice to Anganbadi worker

Koriya, Feb 14: In a bid to keep the districts nutrition campaign in top priority, continuous monitoring is being done by District Collector Kuldeep Sharma, and in continuation to the monitoring, during the inspection in the Anganwadi of village Shrirampur under Kelhari Sector, the Collector had instructed the District Program Officer, Women and Child Development Department to take action after Anganwadi worker Munni Devi. In compliance of which show cause notice has been issued to Munni Devi and in the notice, mentioning the provisions of termination of service contained in the memorandum of Chhattisgarh Women and Child Development, it has been asked to appear and submit its reply within 3 days. Action will be taken to be removed from work in the time period or if the reply is not satisfactory. Taking the negligence in the implementation of the nutrition campaign very seriously, on the instructions of the collector, a show cause notice has been issued to the Supervisor Sector - Kelhari Smt. Savita Chandra and Project Officer Integrated Child Development Project Prabha Lakra.

Commissioner and DC jointly inspect offices

Of District Headquarters

Bilaspur, Feb 15: Commissioner of Bilaspur division Dr. Sanjay Alang inspected several government offices at Janjgir-Champa district headquarters today and gave necessary instructions to the concerned officials. Dr. Alang said that verification of page number of all registers of the office must be done and failure to verify the register

would be considered a serious negligence. Office Heads must do physical verification of their offices within the stipulated period, he instructed. Commissioner Bilaspur Division, Dr. Sanjay Alang here inspected the offices of District Panchayat, Social Welfare, Khadi Village Industries, DMF, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Deputy Director

Panchayat, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak and Rural Mechanical Services Division at District Headquarters Janjgir today and accompanying him was Collector Jitendra Kumar Shukla. Dr. Alang expressed deep resentment over non-observance of prescribed procedure of holding registration from Rural Mechanical Services

Division and Prime Minister's Road or in the divisional office. He asked Deputy Commissioner Archana Mishra to form division level inspection team and get all the offices inspected. The Commissioner also instructed District Panchayat CEO Gajendra Singh Thakur to get the physical verification of the offices of Rural Mechanics Service and Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Seva Sambhag done. Commissioner Dr. Alang's team carried out intensive inspection of inward and outward register, postage, establishment, service book, cash book, payment, purchase, stock register etc. in various functions. Concerned officials including SDM Kamlesh Nandani Sahu were present during the inspection.

State govt should coordinate with the Center: Sahu



Rajim, Feb 15: The state government should coordinate with the central government, and the budget is for all the sections of the society, said Chunilal Sahu, MP of Mahasamund Lok Sabha constituency. The Parliamentarian was addressing a press conference, here at the local rest house. He also informed that National Highway has been announced from Kurud to Visakhapatnam and the approval of National Highway from Abhanpur to Panduka and Dhurvagudi to Devbhog was received in the last

budget, and now work has started, and 25000 km of national highway will be built in this year's budget. The entire world economy has collapsed in the two and a half years of the Corona period, but India has received GST of 14000 crores, and our GDP has increased more than before, he said. Malnutrition will be removed by the arrangement of efficient Anganwadis, and the government has made the country free from open defecation by making toilets and Rs.48000 crores have been

arranged for 80 lakh houses to build pucca houses, and to ensure that everyone gets a pucca house by 2022-23, 80 lakh houses have been earmarked in the budget, he said. He further said that the state government is presenting the scheme by renaming it while the central government has made an effort to cover 8.60 crore families for the provision of clean water, tap water, and 3.8 crore families in the budget of 2022-23. During the press conference, scribes also questioned the fast rising demand of Rajim railway line and making Rajim a district too. Many BJP workers including BJP District Gariaband President Rajesh Sahu, District Panchayat members Rohit Sahu, Chandrashekhar Sahu, Rikesh Sahu were present.

MoU signed between IGNTU and Bhupal Nobles University, Udaipur

Amarkantak, Feb 15: Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak and Bhupal on 14 February 2022 with common goals relating to research activities for teaching creation and extension in Udaipur Tribal Areas and for development of mutual cooperation and exchange in the areas of collaborative research interest and expertise. Nobles University, Udaipur (Rajasthan) entered into a signed MoU. In which Professor Shriprakash Mani Tripathi, Vice Chancellor Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh and Professor N.

B. Singh, Vice Chancellor Bhupal Nobles University, Udaipur (Rajasthan) had an important role. On this occasion Professor N. B. Singh said that "Bhupal Nobles University, Udaipur (Rajasthan)" is striving to increase the level of education and research in Udaipur and its adjoining tribal areas, some similar work is done in Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak. Today, dialogue is necessary to take the tribes forward. This signed MoU between the two institutions will prove to be a milestone to link education with practice for tribal development.

Professor Prakash Mani Tripathi, Vice Chancellor Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh while addressing the virtual forum said that tribal subjects have been included in every curriculum of the university. There are many challenges in this field. Due to the presence of a university in this region, the level of education among the tribes has increased. In which such a signed MoU has a significant contribution. There is abundant knowledge hidden here, we need to take it out, to connect it with the modern education system, to connect their knowledge



with scientific knowledge. Entrepreneurship, partici-

patory and self-reliance combined with studies and research will enable financial inclusion, which is a must for this sector. The MoU signed with you will enable exchange of knowledge of the tribes of both the regions and will give new avenues to the students for research work. Due to which this signed MoU will prove to be effective and the new education policy will get a boost. Therefore, I wish you all the best for making your work flawless from Amarkantak.

In this online MoU function organized by MoU Cell, International Affairs Office, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak and Bhupal Nobles University, Udaipur (Rajasthan) Vice Chancellors and dignitaries joined. In which Professor Alok Shrotriya (Academic - Dean) welcomed the guests and all the members present on the occasion. In the welcome address, Prof. Shrotriya highlighted the development journey of Indira Gandhi National Tribal University since its inception. Also, he summarized the academic and research activities of Indira Gandhi National Tribal University. On behalf of the MoU cell, the

introduction of the MoU was presented by Prof. Naveen K Sharma. Thanks to all the visitors were given by the Registrar of the University, P. Siluvainathan. Prof AK Shukla senior most faculty member, Deans of various faculties and Heads of various departments and administrative staff were present and the key document was signed amidst the dignified presence of the dignitaries of Bhupal Nobles University, Udaipur (Rajasthan). The MoU ceremony was conducted by Dr. Vijay Pramanik, Member of MoU Cell, IGNTU Amarkantak.

Archeological department starts second session of excavation

**Aarang, Feb 15:**

Archeological excavation of the ancient mound, situated in village Rewa, located in Aarang Tehsil, under Raipur District has been

of the village the love lore of couple Lorik-Chanda is well known, and excavation was started by the department in the year 2018-19, under the co-direction of Purushottam Sahu. Then the excavation had brought to life the remains of the dead Stupa near Gujra Patak, near National Highway and the remains of the Chandi Mandir and Kali Basti, a place of archeological importance owing to its significance related to the mound considered holy by the villagers. A large number of villagers and recorders were present during the excavation process.

BJYM working committee meeting concludes

**Mungeli, Feb 15:**

BJP Yuva Morcha (BJYM) district Working Committee meeting concluded here at Atal complex, district BJP office, in which mainly Yuva Morcha State General Secretary and newly appointed Bilaspur division in charge Ritesh Gupta, District President Shailesh Pathak and other office bearers were present. Addressing the meet-

ing Ritesh Gupta, condemned the State government and pledged to unfurl the saffron flag in Mungeli, Lormi, Bilha and other regions. District President Shailesh Pathak, encouraged the workers to work united to bring the party back to power. Present were Anurag Singh, Madhav Tiwari, Happy Hoora, Rakesh Sahu, Mukesh Rohra, Mithelish Keshewani and scores of other party members.

Name Change

I want to inform that my old name Ashutosh Kumar Chanore S/o Shri Arvind Chanore, I have changed my name to Ashutosh Chanore S/o Shri Arvind Chanore Mahima Nagar Sirgitti Bilaspur (C.G.), in Future my all passport, Government and non government document, know and identify me in my new name Ashutosh Chanore S/o Shri arvind Chanore.

Ashutosh Chanore 9301187189

CHANGE OF NAME

IT IS INFORMED TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC THAT I, SRINIVAS MARUVADA S/O MARUVADA VISHWANADHAM RESIDENT OF B-3/503, VIJAYA REGENCY, VIJYAPURAM, SEEPAT ROAD, BILASPUR C.G. 495006 HAVE CHANGED MY OLD NAME SRINIVAS MARUVADA S/O MARUVADA VISHWANADHAM, SO IN FUTURE I SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED BY MY NEW NAME MARUVADA SATYA SURYA HANUMANTA SANYASI SRINIVAS S/O MARUVADA VISHWANADHAM IN ALL GOVERNMENT AND OTHER DOCUMENTS.

MARUVADA SATYA SURYA HANUMANTA SANYASI SRINIVAS B-3/503, VIJAYA REGENCY, VIJYAPURAM, SEEPAT ROAD, BILASPUR C.G. 495006

नाम परिवर्तन

मैं झरना क्षत्रीय (JHARNA KSHATRIYA) पिता विजय कुमार क्षत्रीय बदलकर नया नाम झरना क्षत्रीय गंगवानी (JHARNA KSHATRIYA GANGWANI) निवासी - House No. - 41 शांती लकड़ी टाल सिंधी कालोनी मेन रोड बलराम टाकीज जरहामाटा बिलासपुर (छ.ग.) रख ली हूँ।

अतः अब मुझे मेरे समस्त शासकीय /अर्द्धशासकीय एवं अन्य दस्तावेजों में नया नाम झरना क्षत्रीय गंगवानी (JHARNA KSHATRIYA GANGWANI) पिता विजय कुमार क्षत्रीय के नाम से जाना और पहचाना जाये।

शपथकर्ता
झरना क्षत्रीय गंगवानी
पिता विजय कुमार क्षत्रीय
निवासी - शांती लकड़ी टाल मेन रोड,
सिंधी कालोनी, बलराम टाकीज,
जरहामाटा बिलासपुर (छ.ग.)



CENTRAL Chronicle

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Factors affecting inflation

Retail inflation in India continued to pick up in January, rising to the highest since June 2021. Consumer Price Index inflation stood at 6.01 percent in January 2022, compared to 5.56 percent in December, according to data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation. On a month-on-month basis, retail inflation fell by 0.3 percent. Inflation in food and beverages rose to 5.58 percent compared to 4.5 percent in December. Core inflation was unchanged at 6.19 percent. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das reiterated that the inflation trajectory in India was on a downward slope since October and despite global crude oil prices having spiked in recent weeks the central bank had taken into account all scenarios. Multiple factors are affecting retail inflation rate. The price of oil has skyrocketed to seven-year highs this month amid escalating tensions between Russia and Ukraine, and analysts are warning the price surge will only get worse if the world's second-largest oil producer invades Ukraine exacerbating decades-high inflation and sending ripple waves across markets. The prices of fuel will rise once assembly elections are over in five states. The soaring cost of vegetable oils is an ever-growing threat to India's efforts to bring inflation under control. India has limited options in the near term. Any further reduction in import duties won't ease price. Food inflation has become increasingly persistent in recent years implying any shock will have a much longer impact on inflation. Furthermore, a wide range of products have contributed to food inflation at different points in time, reflecting the diverse nature of drivers of food inflation. These have ranged from high international prices, surge in demand for high value products due to rising income and diversification of diet, high minimum support prices and increase in prices of key inputs. Indian companies across consumer categories such as daily household goods, apparel and lifestyle products, and electronics have flagged inflation as the biggest concern for the upcoming fiscal, more crucial than even spurring demand. Apparel and footwear makers are now trying to offset inflation by altering designs and using alternate materials as price hikes have hit their sales, as consumers are not buying due to retail inflation. India is the top producer of milk, pulses, livestock, fisheries and poultry, and the second largest producer of fruit, vegetables, rice, wheat and sugarcane. Yet, rising food prices pose the toughest macroeconomic challenge to the country. Economists blame higher taxes, a widening fiscal deficit, RBI easy monetary policy and supply constraints during the pandemic for a sharp rise in prices. The government has offered little aid to households except free foodgrains for the poor. Households suffered job losses, fall in incomes and a sharp rise in prices. Variation in inflation is seen to be clearly contributed by food inflation. However, food and fuel inflation are generally believed to be structural as their demand is less elastic to prices. Hence price rise is more supply related and, therefore, somewhat insensitive to monetary policy. If economists seek guidance from inflationary expectations numbers in India, they are far removed from the inflation that is realised later. The segment of population where food accounts for 80 percent of expenditure is not only most sensitive segment from the viewpoint of inflation but are also vulnerable to slow down in output growth and employment.

Chinese position over Ukraine

The long term implications and ramifications of a conflict in Europe will be immensely debilitating and destabilising for Russia. The only country that is benefitting from this intensifying confrontation in Ukraine is China. There is no reason for Xi Jinping to show his cards now. And this is because many Chinese commentators believe that Russia is using military tensions over Ukraine to negotiate with the West and will not invade. Chinese analysts have noted that it makes no sense that Russia has massed troops near Ukraine for months. This long period has afforded the United States, United Kingdom, and NATO time to flow troops to the region and prepare potential sanctions against Russia, increasing the costs of a potential invasion. China has had a healthy and positive relationship with Ukraine. If China provides clear, public guarantees of support to Russia now and conflict does not break out in Ukraine, then China would have damaged its relationship with Ukraine without needing to. Currently, China's positions on Ukraine and Russia provide Beijing with a range of political, economic, and military options to assist Moscow if needed. At the same time, if tensions de-escalate, Beijing has left itself ample room to continue relations with Ukraine. There is more at stake for Xi if conflict erupts over Ukraine. China would be forced to take a position and choose a side. This would test China's relationship with Russia. Similarly, the United States, Europe, and even countries in the Indo-Pacific may recalibrate relations with China based on Beijing's response. China has been Ukraine's top trade partner since 2020 and views Ukraine as a critical entry point for its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) ambitions. Agricultural exports from Ukraine have also become important for China in the wake of the China-US trade war. A BRI trade and investment centre opened in Kyiv in 2018 and Chinese companies have been investing in Ukraine's ports. Given Xi's calls for the PLA to prepare for the worst and be prepared to fight wars, he cannot discount the possibility that China might find itself in a situation similar to Russia in the future having to use military force against a neighbour that is backed by the United States and an international coalition. This could be over Taiwan, the Senkakus, the Spratlys, or along the China-India border. China will wait until they nationally believe they are militarily ready. Until then, China will be watching global crises like the one over Ukraine to update their analysis about American power, and concern about the aggregation of any perception of American lack of strategic resolve long-term will be felt in countries like India and Japan.

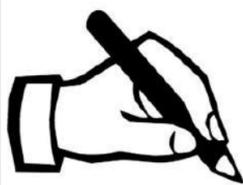
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The letters can be edited or rewritten for clarity of thoughts.

FINISHING WALL MURAL



An artist gives finishing touches to a wall mural depicting prominent freedom fighters in New Delhi.

Growth oriented monetary review

**SATISH SINGH**

Keeping in view the global uncertainty, high rate of inflation, waning effect of Omicron and accelerating economic activity, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) kept the policy rates unchanged in its monetary review on February 11, 2022 to further accelerate the growth momentum. This is the 10th monetary review, when the repo rate has been kept at 4.0 percent and the reverse repo rate at 3.35 percent. Repo is the rate at which the Reserve Bank of India provides cash to commercial banks for their immediate needs, whereas, at the reverse repo rate, the central bank takes cash from banks for a day. After the monetary review, there was a decline in bond yields. Ten-year government bond yields fell 7 basis points to 6.73 percent as there was uncertainty over yields in the bond market due to higher cash inflows. Since, now keeping the policy rates unchanged, the inflow of cash into the market will remain the same, hence, a decline in bond yields was observed. At present, the average net daily consumption level of cash under the RBI's liquidity adjustment facility is Rs 7.6 lakh crore, which is insufficient to absorb excess liquidity. The Sensex closed at 58,926, up 460 points on the Reserve Bank's soft stance. Nifty also closed at 17,606 with a gain of 142 points. The Nifty Financial Services and Realty indices rose one per cent each. In fact, keeping the policy rates unchanged, the

possibility of reduction in credit flow was eliminated and the possibility of continuation of the bullish trend in economic activity increased, due to which the stock market took an upward trend. Here, due to the increase in credit demand, large public sector banks have revised their credit growth target for the financial year 2021-22, as the demand of credit in the corporate sector and small and medium enterprises has increased due to the weakening of Omicron. After crossing 7.00 percent level in November, 2021, the credit growth of scheduled commercial banks increased to 9.2 percent year-on-year basis till the end of December 2021, whereas in December, 2020, its growth rate was 6.6 percent on year-on-year basis. According to the MPC, high indicators of economic activity such as manufacturing and services PMI, consumption of finished steel and sales of tractors, cars and two-wheelers remain low level, which needs to be accelerated by keeping the lending rate unchanged or slashed it reasonably. Since inflation remains at a high level, the central bank opted to keep the policy rates unchanged instead of reducing them. The Reserve Bank of India has projected the GDP growth rate at 7.8 percent for the financial year 2022-23, while the Economic Survey had projected a growth rate of 8.00 to 8.5 percent. The reason for the caution on the GDP growth forecast by the

Reserve Bank is due to Omicron having a negative impact on economic activity during the third week of November 2021 to January 2022. Well, there is still a little fear of Omicron, which may finish by the end of February. The Reserve Bank has projected retail inflation to be 5.3 percent in the current financial year, 4.5 percent in the financial year 2022-23. Thus, inflation in the current quarter will remain at the higher level of the target range, while it will moderate from the second half of the next financial year. However, keeping the policy rates unchanged by the Reserve Bank is a bit surprising, as the price of crude oil has reached USD 90 a barrel in the international market and the central banks of other countries have increased the policy rates in view of the rise in inflation. As per RBI Governor Shri Shakti Kant Das, the nature of inflation in India is different as compared to other countries, therefore, it is irrelevant to compare with other countries in the matter. In the Monetary Review, it has been announced to increase the limit of e-rupee digital vouchers from Rs 10,000 to Rs 1.00 lakh, so that the scope of use of such vouchers can be increased and delivery of various government services can be done to the beneficiaries at fast pace. According to the Reserve Bank, e-Rupee can be used multiple times i.e., it can be used till the voucher amount is completely exhausted. According to the Governor of Reserve Bank of India, Shri Shakti Kant Das, it is difficult to tell exact time for introducing Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), but it will start in the financial year 2023 according to the announcement made in the budget. In order to issue digital currency, the central bank will have to amend sections 2 and 22 of the Reserve Bank of India Act. Only after that the central bank can start a pilot project for its development. According to Mr. Das, digital

currency cannot be issued in haste, as various aspects of vigilance are yet to be worked out in view of the cyber security risks. It is worth noting that in the general budget for the financial year 2022-23, the finance minister had talked about issuing a digital rupee by the Reserve Bank in the year 2023 on the basis of blockchain technology, so that the digital economy in India can be strengthened. The price of the CBDC will be the same as the current currency note and it will be issued by the central bank. The digital rupee can also be replaced with the normal rupee, but its form will be digital. The CBDC is expected to be successful in reducing the existing exposure of depositors to banks and also reduce defaults during the settlement process being used by various institutions. Also, the cost of cross-border payments from CBDC will also be reduced. During the monetary review, the Governor of the Reserve Bank, Shaktikanta Das warned the users of cryptocurrency that it is not a legal currency in India and the government or the Reserve Bank of India or any other bank of the country will not be responsible for the loss in its investment. Therefore, crypto investors should trade crypto at their own risk. Together, Das also described crypto as a major threat to the Indian economy. He said that there is a danger of becoming a parallel economy in the country as well as it can also encourage terrorist, illegal etc. activities. Even after the Corona pandemic, India's economy is growing at the fastest pace in the world. Therefore, in order to sustain this momentum, it is necessary that the central bank continues its soft stance, so that credit flows remain accelerating, demand and supply hasten and the pace of growth can be accelerated. (Satish Singh is senior columnist and editor of in-house Journal of SBI 'Aarthik Darpan').

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Social work

Social service is alive because great people selflessly strive for social service without seeing their physical ailments. There are corrupt people who are cheating people and there are true social workers who are passionate about social service. One wants money while the other is aware of the duty of service to society and acts accordingly. There are also those who just let go of the verbal bubble that 'I want to do social work' and actually snatch bread from the mouths of the needy. When one is born as a human being social debt and paternal debt are also two debts along with the rest of the debt. How we can make the birth of a man meaningful. If we go beyond 'I, my home, my friends, my family, my relatives' and accept society as one family, then also our human birth will be meaningful. No matter how rich a person is, he does not take anything with him when he dies. Their real capital (deposit) is to make a place in the hearts of the people.

What have you achieved by helping the country and society in your lifetime? People know all these things. But how many people behave like this? The answer is not difficult. It will also be noticed when you look at yourself instead of looking around. There is no denying that in India, money is spent like water in elections even if it is a rural election. Keeping this in mind, India is not far from a period of massive social transformation if the money spent during that period is spent on needy people. But who thinks so? It is not a good thing that social workers have to face many difficulties for financial help.

It is not normal to serve the needy even if there is no post by the constitution. If your spirits are high, then it is possible to face every difficulty? Nowadays many people have weekend holidays. Along with this, if there is any other holiday then most people go on a picnic. Because to remove fatigue from work and take rest. If their footsteps will turn towards social service organizations, see their work closely, understand them closely and participate with them. It will surely be inspirational to others. It's important to see what can contribute to everyone's happiness instead of the narrow-minded 'I am happy'.

Today's generation which accepts modernity does not listen to their parents & makes their own ideas come true. This makes them stumble sometimes, though it is an experience. If parents are listened to at an elementary level the time for stumbling will not come.

Because when this happens it is the parents who have to face it because they also suffer mental pain due to the suffering of the child that they never show.

Jayesh, via email



WHAT THEY TWEET!

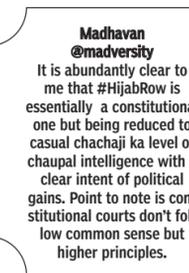


Nitin Sethi@nit_set
The kind of ridiculous opinion writing on India's climate priorities. Merely using climate change like a hash tag without understanding either the science, politics or ethics of the subject. There are many other reasons to alter agri and water systems. Not by carbon taxing agri!

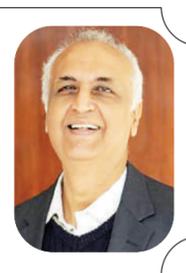
anshul@anshgupta64
As a store of value, cryptocurrencies like bitcoin have given impressive returns so far, but so did tulips in 17th century Netherlands. Cryptocurrencies are very much like a speculative or gambling contract working like a Ponzi scheme.



Yashwant@YashwantSinha
India under Modi is facing multiple crises. Now global factors have taken over. We are in for very bad days with a govt which has no idea of what to do. The collapse of the stock and rupee markets today is only a beginning. Fasten your seat belts.



Madhavan@madversity
It is abundantly clear to me that #HijabRow is essentially a constitutional one but being reduced to casual chachaji ka level of chaupal intelligence with a clear intent of political gains. Point to note is constitutional courts don't follow common sense but higher principles.



Harsh Goenka@hvgoenka
An organic 'House in the landscape' in Moscow #beautiful #architecture



ranjana.banerji@ranjana
Pick up the pieces. Prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet. Maybe tomorrow I can come back, interact, be part of this life again. That's TS Eliot's reference, of course. Not all of us are rightwing historians who cannot attribute what they borrow.

Amarjyoti@AmarjyotiBorah
Criticizing BJP Govt doesn't mean one is supporting the Congress party, & Criticizing the Congress party or Congress govts in the states doesn't mean one is a BJP supporter. Many of us who criticize BJP, had criticized the then Congress Govt also-we were not supporting BJP then.

UP POLLS

'64.42% voting in 2nd phase'

Lucknow, Feb 15 (PTI):

An estimated 64.42 per cent voting was recorded in the second phase of the assembly elections in 55 constituencies spread over nine districts in Uttar Pradesh on Monday, according to the Election Commission.

Saharanpur recorded a turnout of 71.13 per cent, Bijnor 65.91, Moradabad 67.26, Sambhal 62.87, Rampur 64.26, Amroha 71.98, Budaun 59.24, Bareilly 61.67 and Shahjahanpur 59.34 per cent, a statement issued by the election office said here on Tuesday.

The same districts had recorded an average turnout of 65.53 per cent in the 2017 assembly polls and 63.13 per cent in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

A turnout of 62.4 per cent was recorded in the first phase of the seven-phase Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls on February 10.

The final turnout of the second phase could not be released by the poll officials till late in the night on Monday. They had said that over 60 per cent turnout was recorded at 5 pm.

As the polling got underway on Monday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other leaders had appealed to the people to vote in large numbers in the state, as well in Goa and Uttarakhand where single-day polling was held to elect their assemblies.

SP patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav, who has stayed away from cam-

paing, also sent out a brief video message to voters.

"I appeal that you (voters) lend your valuable support to the Samajwadi Party to help it win with a huge mandate," the 83-year-old leader, who is now in Delhi, said.

Of the 55 seats which went to poll in the second phase, the BJP had won 38 in the 2017 assembly polls, the SP bagged 15 and the Congress two. The SP and the Congress had contested the last assembly elections together.

Of the 15 seats then won by the SP, Muslim candidates were elected on 10.

Several areas that went to the polls in this phase have a sizeable Muslim population influenced by the Bareilly and Deoband

sects and are considered strongholds of the SP.

Prominent candidates in the fray in the second phase included former BJP minister Dharam Singh Saini, who joined the SP shortly before the elections, from Nakur and Uttar Pradesh Finance Minister Suresh Khanna from Shahjahanpur.

Besides senior SP leader Mohammad Azam Khan from his stronghold Rampur and his son Abdullah Azam from the Suar seat.

The younger Azam is contesting against Haider Ali Khan, the scion of the Nawabs of Rampur, trying his luck on a ticket from the Apna Dal (Sonelal), a BJP ally. He is the grandson of former MP Noor Bano.

TRIBUTES TO TARAPUR MARTYRS



Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar pays floral tribute to martyrs on Tarapur Martyrs Day, in Patna, Tuesday.

Ants found crawling on body of TB patient in govt hospital ward

Pune, Feb 15 (PTI):

Probe ordered

Relatives of a 22-year-old man, who died of TB at a state-run hospital in Solapur city in Maharashtra, on Tuesday claimed that ants were found crawling all over his body in the hospital ward. A senior hospital official said that prima facie ants were crawling on the bed of the patient as per nurses. An inquiry has been ordered into the incident. The deceased, Rakesh More, was admitted to the government-run hospital as he was suffering from disseminated tuberculosis on February 8. He died on Sunday afternoon. Hospital authorities called us around 3 PM on Sunday and informed

us about Rakesh More's death. When our relatives went to the hospital ward there were no ants on his body, but by 4.30 PM, when our family members reached the ward to receive the body, they found that there were ants all over his body," the aunt of the deceased claimed. She alleged that ants were on the eyes of the deceased and also all over his body. "When my son-in-law informed about ants to the nurse, she told him to move the body from the ward as there were other patients admitted there. We insisted them clean the body but they did not pay any heed," she al-

leged. Dr Shakira Sawaskar, the officiating dean of the hospital, said an inquiry has been ordered. "This patient was treated at the hospital since February 8. He died around 3.30 pm on Sunday. His relatives were already informed that he was in critical condition. The relatives came around 4.15 pm. They informed us that they will arrange for the ambulance and will move the body," she said.

Dr Sawaskar also said that the body could have been shifted to the mortuary but since a mandatory form to move the corpse to the hospital mortuary was not signed by the patient's relatives the body remained in the ward till 6 PM.

Gurugram heist case

Court raises involvement of then CP

Gurugram, Feb 15 (PTI): A local court here raised the issue of the possible involvement of then Gurugram Commissioner of Police in a multi-crore heist last year. The court had on Monday for the third time dismissed the anticipatory bail plea of suspended IPS officer Dheeraj Setia, who is accused of being involved in the multi-crore heist. "Whether this whole illegal exercise had been done by the petitioner with the concurrence of the then Commissioner of Police, Gurugram who was his immediate senior or other higher police authorities, the same may also not be ascertained unless the petitioner is questioned into custody. "Even the then Commissioner of Police, Gurugram had passed the office order through which the additional charge of DCP (Crime) had been devolved upon the petitioner," the court of additional session judge Amit Sahrawat observed.

Delhi vs Centre

SC to hear plea relating to split verdict on control of services

On March 3

New Delhi, Feb 15 (PTI):

The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to hear on March 3 the AAP government's plea on the contentious issue of who should control administrative services in Delhi, the dispute arose out of a 2019 split verdict.

On February 14, 2019, a two judge-bench of Justices A K Sikri and Ashok Bhushan, both retired since recommended to the chief justice of India that a three-judge bench be set up to finally decide the issue of control of services in the national capital in view of its split verdict. Justice Bhushan had ruled the Delhi government has no power at all over admin-

istrative services. Justice Sikri, however, made a distinction. He said the transfer or posting of officers in top echelons of the bureaucracy (joint director and above) can only be done by the Central government and the view of the lieutenant governor would prevail in case of a difference of opinion for matters relating to other bureaucrats. The plea was mentioned for urgent hearing before a bench headed by Chief Justice N V Ramana by senior advocate A M Singhvi on behalf of the Delhi government.

The matter pertains to a question whether the Delhi government has some control and power over its IAS officers or not. This was fixed to be heard in 2020 and then in 2021

after Diwali vacation, Singhvi said. All right. Post on March 3, said the bench which also comprised justices A S Bopanna and Hima Kohli.

On October 5, the CJI-led bench had said that it would set up a three-judge bench to hear after the Diwali vacation the AAP government's plea on the contentious issue of who should control administrative services in Delhi.

Following a five-judge Constitution bench judgement, police, land, and public order were to be under the control of the Centre and the rest of the subjects, including the services, should remain under the Delhi government, the Delhi government had said. Earlier, the top court, which was hear-

ing pleas on six matters about a long-running conflict between the Centre and the Delhi government, had given a unanimous order on the remaining five issues except for the control over services.

Both judges had agreed that the lieutenant governor will have control over the Anti-Corruption Bureau, as already notified by the Centre, and the power to appoint inquiry commissions would also rest with the Central government. On the other hand, the elected Delhi government will have the right to appoint public prosecutors, to decide land revenue matters, and also to appoint or deal with the electricity commission or board, the bench had ruled.

Hundreds join funeral procession of Surat woman killed by stalker

Surat, Feb 15 (PTI):

Nearly one thousand people on Tuesday joined the funeral procession of a woman college student, who was killed allegedly by a stalker here in Gujarat last week after she refused to enter into a relationship with him.

Some angry citizens also demanded death penalty for the accused.

Apart from the woman's family members and relatives, several prominent citizens, including former BJP MLA Praful Pansuriya, Aam Aadmi Party's Gujarat unit president Gopal Italia and former Patidar quota leader Alpesh Kathiria, also joined the

funeral procession. Many residents, some unable to control their emotions, lined up on a roadside and showered flower petals on the van which carried the mortal remains of Grishma Vekariya (21).

The funeral procession started from her house in Pasodara village near here in the morning and later reached the Ashwini Kumar crematorium in Surat city after covering a distance of about 10 km.

Many people from different walks of life joined the funeral procession on their motorbikes and in cars as a mark of sympathy towards the woman's family.

RELIGIOUS PROCESSION



Devotees take part in a religious procession on the eve of Guru Ravidas Jayanti, in Jalandhar, Tuesday.

14 wedding rings and a handcuff for Odisha's Don Juan

Bhubaneswar, Feb 15 (PTI):

He lured with love college teachers, even hard-boiled policemen and captious lawyers, as he went about striking middle-aged women desperate for companionship with cupid's arrow, marrying 14 of them across seven states over 38 years before running out of luck on Monday.

Ramesh Chandra Swain, the 66-year-old from a coastal village in Odisha's Kendrapara district, is now cooling his heels in a jail in judicial custody.

Swain, according to police, posed as a doctor posted as a deputy director general under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. His victims failed to see through

his fake identity and, as the adage goes, did just as the doctor ordered.

According to police, the sexagenarian duped his wives, three of whom live in Delhi, three in Odisha, two each in Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, and Assam, and one each in Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh, of lakhs of rupees before moving on to greener pastures.

"The police have so far located 9 of the 14 wives of the man and urged others to come forward. We suspect many women who were cheated by him are not coming forward because of social stigma. We appeal them to contact Odisha police," Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Bhubaneswar, U S Dash told reporters on Monday.

Burqa-clad girl asked to remove Hijab, boycotts exam

Bengaluru, Feb 15 (PTI):

The Hijab row continued to simmer in Karnataka on Tuesday over alleged denial of entry for girl students into schools with their headscarves on in some places, as one such girl announced boycotting her exam in response to the diktat. Scenes of angry parents of such children arguing with police and school authorities and an instance of a student trying to flaunt a saffron scarf as an apparent retaliation were also reported.

The Karnataka High Court, in its interim order last week restrained all the students from wearing saffron shawls, scarves, hijab and any religious flag within the classroom.

High schools were reopened across the state on Monday, even as there



A Muslim student (face blurred to protect identity), who boycotted the SSLC Preliminary Examination over Hijab controversy, leaves her school in Shivamogga, Tuesday.

were instances of students turning up in Hijab and burqa then, only to be denied entry or asked by officials to remove them, citing the High Court order.

On Tuesday, at a school in the district headquarters town of Shivamogga, a Burqa-wearing girl refused to write her exam

when the school authorities asked her to remove her Hijab first.

"We have grown up wearing Hijab since our childhood and we cannot give it up. I will not write the exam and I will go home," the girl told reporters.

In a government school

in Indavara village in Chikkamagaluru district, Muslim girls were not let inside the school and were asked to go back.

Soon, their parents reached the school and staged a protest. They barged into the campus, raised slogans and demanded that the order

should be given to them in writing. As the protest intensified, another student pulled out a saffron scarf from his school bag. On the direction of his teachers, he put it back inside.

Sensing the situation, the principal closed the school for the day.

In another institution in Chikkamagaluru town, tension prevailed over denial of entry to the students with hijab. Parents swarmed the school and questioned the school authorities how their children were not allowed inside.

Policemen deployed there told the crowd that there was a High Court order not to let anyone wearing Hijab or saffron scarves but the parents were not ready to listen and insisted that their wards be allowed to write the exam.

DFS to hire 11 retired fire officers as consultants

New Delhi, Feb 15 (PTI):

To strengthen manpower, ease workload

To ease increasing workload and to strengthen manpower, the Delhi Fire Service (DFS) plans to hire 11 retired fire officers for regular inspections at Covid-designated hospitals, besides engaging them for administrative and legal works of the department among other activities, fire officials said on Tuesday.

Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal also approved the proposal submitted by the fire department which is all set to hire its retired officers, below the age of 65, as consultants on contract basis through walk-in interviews which will commence from February 21, they said.

This development comes after the department issued an order recently stating that it proposes to avail the services of 11 retired fire officers of the DFS, not below the rank of station officer.

According to the DFS, the recruitment is being done to overcome shortage of staff and to strengthen the department which currently has multi-fold activities to handle, be it inspections, administrative or legal work.

The fire officials said that these officers, however, will not engage in

any kind of fire-fighting operations. When asked about the development, DFS Director Atul Garg told PTI that they have already got the LG's approval to avail the services of 11 retired officers, who belonged to the DFS and were below the age of 65 years.

They will join as fire officers but will not be engaged in any fire-fighting operations, he said.

"This will also help the fire department as the service of the retired officers will be availed in administrative and legal work, besides conducting inspections.

They will provide a helping hand to our current staff and ease their burden," Garg said.