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BRIEF

Devotees participate in the Thaipooyakavadi festival at Major Ulloor Sree Balasubramonya Swami temple, in Thiruvananthapuram, Tuesday.

Rescue

- **Srinagar:** The Army rescued around 30 civilians after their vehicles came under an avalanche triggered by recent snowfall in border district of Kupwara in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Tuesday. A vehicle carrying civilians got stuck on the Tangdhar-Chowkibal axis on Monday, following which the nearest Army unit was alerted and a rescue operation launched, they said.

Busted

- **Bulandshahr:** With the arrest of one accused, police on Tuesday claimed to have busted an illegal arms factory in the forest of Bhansoli village in the district. Ten finished and 12 half-finished illegal weapons have been recovered from the illegal unit under Kotwali Dehat Police Station area, Superintendent of Police (City) Surendranath Tiwari said.

Fire

- **Kolkata:** A fire broke out at an abandoned cinema hall in Mallickbazar area of Kolkata on Tuesday, a fire official said. The blaze erupted around 2.25 PM, and five fire tenders doused it in 30 minutes, he said. Nobody was injured in the fire that broke out at the top floor of the abandoned 'Park Show House' in Beniapukur police station area, he said. "The cooling process is underway. The reason behind the fire is yet to be ascertained," he added.

Bail

- **New Delhi:** The Delhi High Court has granted bail to two directors of an app-based taxi company, accused of duping hundreds of people of Rs 250 crore after promising them huge returns on investing in the firm. Justice Subramonium Prasad enlarged the two accused on bail noting that they have been in custody for over a year now and their continued custody was no longer required. Both the petitioners have been in custody for over a year now. Charge sheet as well as supplementary charge sheet have been filed, and all the evidence available is documentary in nature and in custody of the investigating agency.

Weather

High 25 Low 11

MARKET

NIFTY	18,113.05 ▼
SENSEX	60,754.86 ▼

BULLION

GOLD	47,925
SILVER	62,817

MAJOR SUCCESS

Four naxals killed in two encounters

- **One jawan injured**

Sukma/Konta, Jan 18:

Four naxals including two women were killed in two separate encounters with security forces in Sukma district and along the state's border with Telangana on Tuesday morning, police said here.

A woman rebel who was carrying a reward of Rs 5 lakh on her head was among them.

Earlier, Chhattisgarh police had said that four naxals were killed in the operation along the Telangana-Chhattisgarh border, but later the number was revised to three.

A team of the special anti-naxal Greyhounds unit of Telangana Police had launched an operation in the forests of Bijapur (Chhattisgarh) and Mulugu (Telangana) districts," Inspector General of Police (Bastar range) Sundarraj P told PTI. They had received intelligence about a large gathering of the naxals' Telangana State Committee cadres including Divisional Committee Member (DVCM) Sudhakar and his associates in the area, he said. A joint team of District Reserve Guard (DRG) and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) from Bijapur was also sent to cordon off the area and assist the Greyhounds, the IG added. Around 7 am, the Greyhounds team got engaged in a gun-battle with the ultras in a forest near Semaldodi (district Bijapur) and Kariguttalu-Penugolu (district Mulugu) villages. Initial reports said at least four ultras had been neutralized," the senior official said. Later, the bodies of three naxals including a woman were recovered, Sundarraj added.

An SLR (Self Loading Rifle), INSAS rifle, a single-bore weapon, ten rocket launchers and other articles were recovered from the spot, he said. A Greyhounds jawan sustained injuries. He was airlifted to Warangal and later airlifted to Hyderabad for better treatment," the IG said, adding that the jawan was said to be out of danger. Search operation was still underway in the area, located over 450 km away from the Chhattisgarh capital Raipur, he said.

Mulugu district police also confirmed the recovery of three bodies.

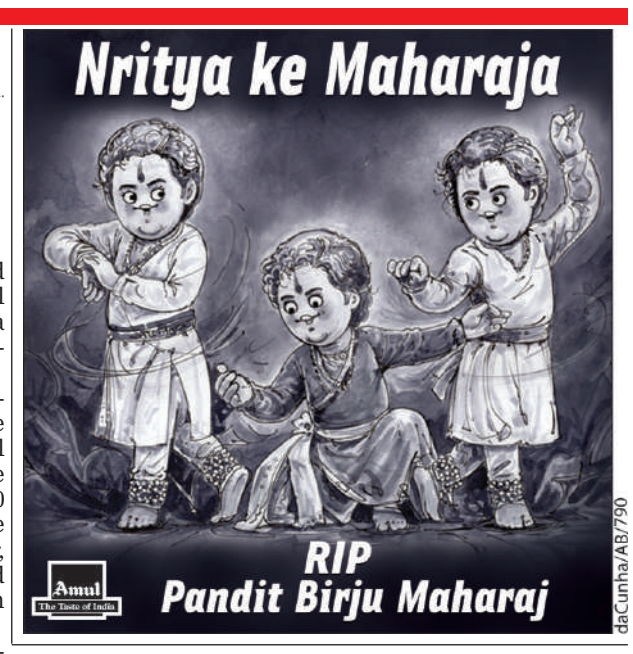
In Sukma district of Chhattisgarh a woman naxal was killed, officials said. Superintendent of Police Sunil Sharma told PTI that DRG personnel from Sukma, Dantewada and Bastar districts participated in the operation.

Police had received information about the presence of top Divisional Committee Members of the CPI (Maoist) and 35-40 cadres in the forest on the tri-junction of Bastar, Dantewada and Sukma and launched an operation on Monday night, he said.

Around 6.45 am, a gunfight broke out on Marjum hills under Tongpal police station limits.

The body of a woman identified as Munni, an area committee member of the naxals who carried a reward of Rs 5 lakh on her head was recovered from the spot," Sharma said.

No security personnel was injured in the operation, he added.



SBI RESEARCH

'Third wave may peak in next three weeks'

New Delhi, Dec 18:

The third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to peak much earlier than anticipated and may take a maximum of three more weeks, even though the share of rural districts in new caseloads has increased significantly since December, says a report.

The optimism comes from the massive decline in new caseloads in the top 15 districts which had the maximum infections, SBI Research said in a report on Tuesday.

Infections in the top 15 districts have declined to 37.4 per cent in January, from 67.9 per cent in December.

The report, however, admitted that 10 of these top 15 districts are major cities and among them Bengaluru and Pune still have higher infection rates. The overall share of rural districts in new cases has increased to 32.6 per cent in January, from the lowest of 14.4 per cent in December, the report noted.

In comparison to the US, this is too low, where the new cases have soared by 6.9 times even though it has double-vaccinated over 80 per cent of its eligible population. Another point of optimism stems from the fact that India has fully vaccinated 64 per cent of the eligible population, while 89 per cent of the eligible population have been given the first dose.

Currently the 7-day median average of vaccination is 70 lakh. Rural vaccination share in total vaccination is now at 83 per cent, indicating that the rural populace may be largely protected in the current wave. Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, MP, Telangana and Uttarakhand have already vaccinated more than 70 per cent of their eligible population with double doses. However, Punjab, UP and Jharkhand are still lagging.

COVID EFFECT

Only 5,000-8,000 people to be allowed to attend R-Day parade

- **Vaccination mandatory**

New Delhi, Jan 18 (PTI):

The number of people allowed to attend the Republic Day parade this year is likely to be curtailed to approximately 5,000-8,000 due to the COVID-19 situation, with seats reserved for construction workers, frontline health workers and others, senior officials of the defence ministry said on Tuesday. Only double vaccinated adults and children above the age of 15 who have taken at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine will be allowed to enter, they said, adding children below 15 years will not be permitted to attend the event. The officials said the parade would start at 10.30 AM instead of 10 AM to provide better visibility. They said the number of people that would be allowed to attend the Republic Day parade this year is to be curtailed by 70-80 percent to approximately 5,000-8,000 due to the ongoing COVID-19 wave.

DISHONOUR TO TRICOLOUR

MHA flags 'perceptible lack of awareness' about Flag Code

New Delhi, Jan 18 (PTI):

Ahead of Republic Day, the Centre has highlighted "a perceptible lack of awareness" among government organisations, agencies and people about the laws, practices and conventions that apply to display of the national flag and asked states to ensure that the tricolour is not dishonoured.

In a communication to all states and union territories, the home ministry said that action must be taken to ensure that only paper flags are used by the public while attending cultural and sports events and such flags are disposed of in private, consistent with its dignity.

The ministry said the national flag represents hopes and aspirations of the people of the country and hence should occupy a position of honour and there is universal affection and respect for, and loyalty to, the flag.

"Yet, a perceptible lack of awareness is often noticed amongst people as well as organisations or agencies of the government, in regard to laws, practices and conventions that apply to display of the national flag," it said. According to the Flag Code of India, the national flag made of paper may be waved by public on occasions of important national, cultural and sports events.

"You are requested to ensure that on the occasions of important national, cultural and sports events, flags made of paper only are used by the public and such paper flags are not discarded or thrown on the ground after the event. Such flags are to be disposed of, in private, consistent with the dignity of the flag," the communication said.

DANCING FOR GLORY

Haryana school students perform during the rehearsal for the upcoming Republic Day parade, on a cold winter morning in New Delhi, Tuesday.

DECLINE IN COVID TESTING

Enhance testing: Govt to states

New Delhi, Jan 18 (PTI):

Flagging a decline in the number of COVID-19 tests in many states and union territories, the Centre has asked them to enhance testing so that an effective track of the spread of the pandemic can be kept and immediate citizen-centric action can be initiated.

In a letter to states and UTs on Monday, Additional Secretary in the Union Health Ministry Arti Ahuja advised them to pay attention to this aspect immediately and increase the testing in a strategic manner keeping in view the trend of case positivity in specific areas.

A healthworker collects a nasal swab sample for COVID-19 test at a hospital in Amritsar, Tuesday.

She highlighted that Omicron, which has been designated by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a variant of concern, is currently spreading across the country.

Referring to the ministry's earlier letters and the Home Ministry advisory of December 27 last year laying out the broad framework of pandemic management in the context of Omicron, Ahuja said testing remains a key and crucial component.

"However, it is seen from the data available on the ICMR portal that testing has declined in many states and union territories," she wrote.

She said in all advisories on testing issued by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), including the latest on January 10, the basic objective remains early detection of cases for quick isolation and care.

In addition, testing remains a key strategy for pandemic management as it helps in identification of new clusters and new hotspots of infection which can in turn facilitate immediate action for containment such as setting up of containment zones, contact tracing, quarantining, isolation and follow-up.

This can enable the state and district administrations to curb the spread of infection. Also this will ensure reduction in mortality and morbidity. "Progression of disease to a severe category can be averted by strategic testing of those who are at high risk and more vulnerable, as well as in areas where the spread is likely to be higher," Ahuja said.

PMO TELLS HC

PM CARES Fund: No curb on use of PM's name, photo, image of flag

Mumbai, Jan 18 (PTI):

The Prime Minister's Office on Tuesday told the Bombay High Court there was no restriction on the use of the prime minister's name and photograph as well as the image of the national flag and emblem for the PM CARES Fund.

In an affidavit submitted before a division bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice M S Karnik, PMO Under Secretary Pradeep Srivastava said the PM's photograph, name and national emblem were also used in the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF).

The affidavit was filed in response to a petition filed by Congress worker Vikrant Chavan seeking deletion of the prime minister's name and photograph from the PM CARES Fund. It had also sought the deletion of images of the national flag and emblem from the official website of the Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM CARES) Fund. The plea claimed the usage of the prime minister's photograph and the image of the national flag and emblem were in violation of the Constitution as well as The Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act. In its affidavit, the PMO said, "I say that PM CARES Fund and PMNRF are both chaired by the Prime Minister. As the name, photograph of Prime Minister and National Emblem are being used for the PMNRF, they are also being used for the PM CARES Fund."

It said the Flag Code of India, 2002, which brings together all laws, conventions, practices and instructions regarding display of the national flag, provides that there shall be no restriction on its display by general public, private organizations, educational institutions and so on, except to the extent provided in Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act.

WAGES PAID TO DEAD PERSON

Rs 70 crore scam in Sukma forest division

Konta, Jan 18:

Sukma district, which is known as the most Naxal affected district of the state, has been in the headlines all the time. For the past few years, concocted stories of alleged development happening in Sukma are being seen and heard everywhere, but the ground reality has nothing to do with these stories even remotely.

The book full of success stories that the responsibilities of this district came to fore before the world, its condition is like a book whose cover is very positive and golden, but the inner pages have been licked by termites. These termites are none other than officers sitting on responsible posts of various departments of this district who are cutting silver under the guise of Naxalism. Corruption is being done on a large scale in the departments which are directly related to the general public like agriculture, horticulture, health, education, district construction committee and panchayats.

Forest division, where wages of about Rs 70 crore made under CAMPA scheme in the last three years have come under the scanner. Sukma Forest Division, where new records have been created for corruption, an incident has come to the fore, which has destroyed all the previous records of corruption. Almost the entire area of all the forest areas of the forest division is affected by Naxalism. In areas like Kistaram, Jagargunda, Golapally and Konta, all the work is being done on paper only, the information of which is not hidden from anyone. The latest case is from the relatively less Naxal-affected Dornapal area. Here, in the afforestation and construction works being done by the Forest Department from the post of CAMPA, the laborers who are being paid as laborers for the last three years, they do not even live here. Hundreds of people from the inner village either moved to relief camps or later settled in Telangana, fearing the conflict emanating from the Salwa Judum.

Various organisations extend support to retrenched workers of CCM College

Bhilai, Jan 18:

Various trade unions and other organisations have extended support to the struggle of the retrenched workers of Chandulal Chandrakar Memorial Medical College, Kachandur. On Tuesday, representatives of various organisations attended a meeting at the dharna pandal of the workers located in front of the college main gate. Representatives of various organizations, trade unions and farmers' associations from Rajnandgaon, Durg, Bhilai and Raipur extended their support to the agitators. Following the Covid protocol, the meeting began at 11:00 hrs on the day. The office bearers of various organizations unanimously passed a resolution in support of the agitators. They requested the Chief Minister to spare some time to meet the aggrieved workers and solve their employment problem immediately. If the government fails to initiative positive steps, the organisations will resort to aggressive agitation.

At the outset, the agitating workers accorded musical welcome to the representatives of various organisations. Dhanush, Devraj, Sumit and Lomesh, office bearers of the Public Health Employees Union, gave detailed information about the progress of their struggle. They informed how they were illegally retrenched after the acquisition of the institution by the state government. They also explained about the problems they are facing after being sacked off from the job. It needs to be mentioned here that soon after the acquisition of the college by the government; the existing employees were fired by introducing a black law. The aggrieved workers are agitating for the last four-five months without any salary. Senior labour and Janwadi leaders including DVS Reddy and Shant Kumar from CITU (CP-M); Vinod Kumar Soni from AITUC (CPI); Puran Sahu from Pragatisheel Kisan Sangh; Surendra Mohanty from Loktantrik Ispat evam Engineering Mazdoor Union; Rajendra Parganiha from House Lease Samyukt Sangharsh Samiti; Ramakant Banjare and Virendra Uikey from Rajnandgaon District Kisan Sangh; Jaiprakash Nair from Janwadi Safai Kamgar Union; Mohammad Ali and Dhananjay from Pragatisheel Cement Shramik Sangh; Neera from Mahila Mukti Morcha and Bhimrao Bagde from Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha addressed the agitators and inspired them to struggle continuously till goal is achieved. The programme was conducted by Kaladas Dahariya of Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha. Chitralekha, Anita, Raj Kumari, Lokeshwari, Anil, Amit, Dhanush, Devraj, Misi, Monika, Sheela, Leela, Lomesh, Geeta and other aggrieved workers were present.

MiC members take charge of their respective offices

Bhilai, Jan 18:

The members of Mayor in Council of Bhilai Municipal Corporation took charge of their respective offices on Tuesday. MLA Devendra Yadav, Mayor Neeraj Pal and Speaker Girwar Bunty Sahu accompanied all the Mayor-in-Council members to their offices and gave them charge of the office. Bhilai Municipal Corporation Commissioner Prakash Surve, Additional Commissioner Ashok Dwivedi and Deputy Commissioner Sunil Agrahari were especially present on this occasion. DCC Chief Mukesh Chandrakar was also present. MLA Devendra Yadav shared the experiences of his tenure as Mayor.

Later, Mayor Neeraj Pal chaired a meeting of MIC members and discussed various issues for the development of the city. He stated that in the present situation, the

Covid Combat is on the top priority. Along with this, all the members were made aware of the responsibilities for the development of Bhilai city. All the 14 members of the Mayor-in-Council took their charges on the day.

It could be recollected here that Mayor Neeraj Pal constituted the MiC on January 13. Finance, Accounts and Audit department has been given to Mannan Ghaffar Khan, General Administration and Legislative Affairs Department - Sandeep Nirankari, Urban Planning and Building Permission Department - Saket Chandrakar, Public Works Department - Ekansh Banchor, Water-Works Department - Keshav Choubey, Revenue Department - Shiju Anthony; Food, Public Health and Sanitation Department – Laxmipati Raju; Fire, Electrical and Mechanical Department – Lalchand Verma, Poverty Alleviation and Social Welfare Department – Chandrashekhar Gavai, Women and Child Development Department – Meera Banjare, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Welfare Department – Malti Thakur, Education, Sports and Youth Welfare Department - Aditya Singh, Environment and Horticulture Department - Neha Sahu, Culture Tourism, Recreation and Heritage Protection Department - Rita Singh Gera. All of them have started handling their work.

Under the new arrangement, a separate room has also been prepared for holding the MIC meeting. Following the instructions of Mayor Neeraj Pal, room number-26 has been prepared for the meetings of MIC. The meetings of the Mayor in Council were earlier held in the Mayor's Chamber. Furniture was to be rearranged frequently for holding the meetings. Considering the situation, the Mayor has now made a separate arrangement for the MIC meetings.

Durg District feted for appreciable contribution in AFFDF

Collector Dr Sarveshwar Narendra Bhure receives honour

Bhilai, Jan 18:

Raipur and Durg districts have been honoured for their commendable contribution to the Armed Forces Flag Day Fund (AFFDF). Governor Anusuiya Uikey honoured Durg District Collector Dr Sarveshwar Narendra Bhure for this contribution.

She said that this fund works for the help of ex-servicemen and their families. To raise a contribution for this fund is an honour to the soldiers who have made their indelible contribution towards the security of the country. Raipur and Durg districts have made commendable contribution in this fund. Congratulating the Collector of Durg District, the Governor said that works have been done promptly on the subjects related to soldiers.

It is a commendable initiative, she added. Through this fund, cooperation is provided towards meeting the needs of ex-servicemen. The Governor said that our soldiers are protecting our borders.

We all have the responsibility to take care of their families. It is noteworthy that the Governor honoured both the districts for the commendable work done in the year 2019-20 and the year 2020-21.

Mahadev Kawre takes charge as Commissioner of Durg Division

Bhilai, Jan 18:

On Tuesday, senior IAS officer Mahadev Kawre took charge as Commissioner of Durg Division. On reaching the divisional office in Durg, he was accorded warm welcome by Deputy Commissioner Monika Kaudo, Ajay Mishra and other officers and employees of the office. Divisional Commissioner Kawre took introduction from the officials. After assuming the charge, he inspected various sections of the office. He inquired about the status of corona infection and vaccination in the district. He questioned the CMHO about the measures being taken at the Covid Care Center for the treatment of infected patients.

Right from the first day, the Divisional Commissioner was seen very active in the office. He interacted with the officials and inquired about the departmental activities, administrative activities and public welfare schemes run by the government. After assuming office, Kawre stated that his main task is to give shape to sensitive, transparent and accountable administration. He visited Shree Dhanwantri Generic Medical Stores in view of the present pandemic situation. He visited various medical stores and oversaw the availability of medicines and other arrangements. He spoke with customers visiting the Medical Store and inquired about the availability of medicines. Thereafter, he visited the JRD School premises to know about the status of Covid vaccination in the district. He took stock of the vaccination center set up here and inquired about the status of the ongoing vaccination.

He expressed happiness over the Mega Campaign "Vaccine Near Me" run in the district and said that this is a continuous process, so there is a need to maintain this pace of vaccination. Later, he visited Gauthan in village

Chandkhuri to oversee the government's ambitious project "Narva, Garwa, Ghurva, Bari". He met various self-help groups working in Gauthan and also got information related to the operation of Gauthan. The women of the Self Help Group gave their introduction and detailed the Divisional Commissioner about the processes related to the production of vermicompost manure. The women informed that till now they have earned an amount of Rs 5 lakh through vermicompost manure.

District Panchayat CEO Ashwini Dewangan accompanied the Divisional Commissioner during the visit. He apprised the Divisional Commissioner about the various innovations to be done in Chandkhuri Gonthan. He added that Chandkhuri Gaunthan is a complete unit in itself. Along with the shelter of animals, there is a system of fodder and drinking water for cattle. Vermicompost manure, Anjola, dung collection centre, fodder collection centre, shed for poultry, dubri for fish farming are available here.

Divisional Commissioner was glad to know that 52 Gram Panchayats have also received training through this Gaunthan. He took stock of vermicompost manure beds, poultry sheds and fish farming dubris. Kawre said that for the activities conducted in Gonthan, different self-help groups should be given opportunity so that maximum benefits of schemes could reach to the people. In order to be transparent in the procedure, he asked the SHGs to maintain a daily register and laid special emphasis on the maintenance of charts for poultry and fisheries. He asked the training department to provide guidance in this regard. He suggested that Anjola can be served to the poultry also. After talking to the women of self-help groups, he came to know that some farmers have got the maximum income around Rs 1 lakh. They have used this income to construct byre shed and purchasing equipments. Kawre said that these schemes of the government have brought a big change in the rural life. These schemes will definitely bring strong changes in the economic condition of the common people. Sudha Das, Deputy Director of Fisheries Department, SS Rajput, Deputy Director of Agriculture Department and CP Mishra from Animal Husbandry Department and other officers and employees were present.

People in large number get vaccinated on first day of mega campaign

Public representatives and officials inspect vaccination centers

Bhilai, Jan 18:

A large number of people got vaccinated on Tuesday, on the first day of the two-day vaccination campaign. The Health Department had made special preparations for this campaign.

The vaccination teams had reached their places since morning and people came in large numbers to get vaccinated. Mahadev Kawre, the new Commissioner of Durg Division who took charge today also inspected the vaccination centres.

He reached the JRD School Vaccination Center and also interacted with the beneficiaries who had come for vaccination. He also took information from the team of Health Department. District Panchayat CEO Ashwani Devangan also inspected the vaccination drive in rural areas. He inspected the vaccination works in Jewara and Samoda. The commissioners of Durg, Bhilai and Risali urban bodies also inspected the vaccination drive by reaching various spots.

The District Panchayat CEO took information about the vaccination by reaching the vaccination centers in the Panchayat Bhawan of Gram Panchayat Jevra, School of Gram Panchayat Samoda and health centers of Gram Panchayat Kachandur.

He was informed that priority is being given to three categories in vaccination, in which the first category are the frontline workers and those who are more than 60 years. The second category is those who have taken the first dose and those who have to take the second dose. Along with this, the children of 15 years to 18 years of the school will be vaccinated.

The vaccination mega campaign received great response within the limits of Bhilai Municipal Corporation on Tuesday. Mayor Neeraj Pal visited the vaccination centres, took stock of the vaccination status and encouraged people to get the vaccine shots. He met the senior citizens who had come to get the booster dose. MiC member Sandeep Nirankari and Aditya Singh accompanied him. Bhilai Municipal Corporation Commissioner Prakash Surve also inspected the vaccination centers and gave necessary instructions to the officials.

Vaccination campaign will continue on January 19 as well. On January 19, people of all age groups will be vaccinated. 58 centers earmarked for vaccination of first and second dose, booster dose and children of 15 to 18 years age group. The facility of all types of vaccinations will be available for all categories in a single center. Nodal Officer Sunil Agrahari said that on January 19, a target of 100 percent vaccination has been set.

Vaccination centers have been set up in the ward. Each zone commissioner has been given the responsibility for vaccination. Wide publicity is being done in the corporation areas through public announcement and other means. The vaccination centres are PHC Junwani Khamharia, Behind UPHC Kosanagar Community Health Centre, Siyan Sadan Radhika Nagar, Mangal Bazar Kohka Community Hall, Shiv Mandir Kanji House, BNS School Sector 08, PHC Vaishali Nagar, Ganesh Manch Dome Shed Housing Board, UPHC Baikunthdham, Bapu Nagar PHC, Mangal Bazar Chhawani, Khursipar UPHC, Ganesh Manch Power House Market, Sat Vijay Auditorium Sector 05, Utkal Cultural Council Sector 06, Road 18 Sector 07, Siyan Sadan HUDCO, Near Hanuman Mandir , Sparsh Hospital Contractor Colony, Pulse Hospital Nehru Nagar, Chandulal Hospital Nehru Nagar, Shankaracharya Hospital, Manav Seva Samiti Sector 09, BM Shah Hospital Shastri Nagar, Karuna Hospital Nandini Road, Bhilai Nursing Home Supela, Shreyas College of Nursing Supela, Rungta College Of Nehru Nagar, MJ College Of Nursing Junwani, Gada Chowk Ambedkar Nagar, Surya Mall Nehru Nagar, Railway Station Power House, Supela Rain Basera and Sabzi Market, Boria Gate Market, Kanji House Supela, Mahila Mahavidyalaya Sector 09, Chhawani Thana Power House Market, Cultural building Anda Chowk Khursipar, Sai College Sector 06, Durga Manch Ghasidas Nagar, Nehru Bhavan Supela, Government Higher Secondary School Khursipar Zone 02, MGM School Sector 06, JP Nagar School Camp 02, Happy Public School Vaishalinagar, Government Higher Secondary School Kohka, KPS Nehru Nagar, Pt Nehru Higher Secondary New Khursipar, DPS Junwani, Sri Shankara Vidyalaya Sector 10, Government Higher Secondary School Chhawani, Government Higher Secondary School Supela, Government Higher Secondary School Vaishalinagar, Sri Shankaracharya School HUDCO, Shakuntala Vidyalaya Ramnagar, Chaita Maidan Premnagar and Suryakund Pond Jawahar Nagar.

In Risali Municipal Corporation a total of 1200 people got vaccinated for corona protection in 23 centers on the first day of the vaccination campaign. The number of people taking booster dose was 170. Mayor Shashi Sinha reached the vaccination centers set up in different wards on Tuesday and took stock of the arrangements. For smooth conduct of the campaign, Commissioner Ashish Devangan dispatched the Vaccinators and corporation staff from the Primary Health Center in his presence. He remained in the field till the vaccination process was started.

It is worth mentioning that the corporation administration had set up a total of 23 centers for vaccination against Covid. In these centers, Mayor Shashi Sinha along with Councillors Seema Sahu and Jamuna Thakur continued to take stock of the arrangements till evening. The councillors played an important role in bringing awareness about the vaccine.

The councillors not only conducted door-to-door contact, but also motivated the adolescents in the age group of 15 to 18 years to get vaccinated.

Encourage common people to join army: Ms Uikey

Raipur, Durg Collectors rewarded for contributing to flag day fund

Guv chairs State Management Committee meeting of Amalgamated Special Fund

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 18: While addressing the 13th meeting of the State Management Committee of Amalgamated Special Fund of Sainik Welfare Board, Chhattisgarh, held in the conference hall of Raj Bhavan, Governor Ms Anusuiya Uikey said that efforts should be made to collect maximum funds on the flag day. She called for seeking cooperation from other organizations in this besides encouraging the common people to join the army and encouraging the daughters to move forward.

ECHS Polyclinics and CSD Canteens have been set up even in remote districts of Chhattisgarh, the Governor said. She urged Sainik Welfare Board to provide coaching facility to the youth for recruitment in army, para-military forces and police. She expressed confidence that the decisions taken by the Sainik Welfare Board in the meeting would help in the welfare works of ex-servicemen and their families.

Ms Uikey suggested skill upgradation for the families of soldiers saying that this would enable them to become self-reliant and give employment to others. The Governor also urged to follow the instructions given by the government to protect against Covid infection. Collector of Raipur district, Sourabh Kumar and Collector of Durg district, Dr Sarveshwar Narendra Bhure were awarded the Governor's Trophy for the highest contribution to the Armed Forces Flag Day Fund in the year 2019-20 and the year 2020-21.

Raipur district was awarded the first prize and Durg district was awarded the second prize. District Sainik Welfare Officer of Raipur district, Captain Anurag Tiwari (Retd.) was awarded first prize and District Sainik Welfare Officer of Durg district, Captain Purnendu Vidyanta (Retd.) was awarded the second prize.

Approval was granted to increase the amount of financial assistance from Rs 3000 to Rs 7000 per month for medical treatment given to non-pensioners/widows of World War II, increase the amount of financial assistance given to orphan children of ex-servicemen/widows (up to two children only) from Rs.10,000 to Rs.25000 and providing lifetime financial assistance to mentally ill children of ex-servicemen/widows (for sons and unmarried daughters).

It was also agreed to increase the rates of education scholarship for the children of ex-servicemen/widows, increase the income limit from Rs.10 thousand to Rs.25 thousand for financial assistance being given to the widows of ex-servicemen for buying sewing machines and increase the amount of financial assistance being given to widows for treatment of cancer from Rs.25 thousand per annum to Rs.50,000 per annum. Approval was given to prepare software for implementation of online application for digitization of data of ex-servicemen/widows and for providing financial assistance from the amalgamated special fund. The meeting was also addressed by Amrit Kumar Khalkho, Secretary to the Governor. Vice Chairman and Chief Secretary, Sainik Welfare Board, Chhattisgarh, Amitabh Jain, Additional Chief Secretary, Home Department Subrat Sahoo, COSA Commander Prashant Chouhan, General Officer Commanding of Madhya Bharat Area, Lt. Gen. S. Mohan, Secretary, Kendriya Sainik Board, Rakesh Gulati, Director General, Resettlement, New Delhi, Major General Sharad Kapoor were present. Director of the Directorate of Sainik Welfare Chhattisgarh, Brigadier Vivek Sharma, Legal Advisor to the Governor RK Agrawal, Deputy Secretary Deepak Kumar Agrawal were also present on the occasion.

PLASTIC WASTE

With people resorting to drinking out in public near liquor shops and eateries, the plastic waste is lying out in the open raising questions on concerned authorities.

Vaccination camp for differently abled teenagers in age group of 15-18 years

Raipur, Jan 18: Akansha Lions Institute of Learning and Empowerment, Raipur and Lions Club Raipur are jointly organizing vaccination camp on January 20 for vaccination of differently abled (Divyang) teenagers in the age group of 15-18 years. The camp is being organized at Akansha Lions Institute of Learning and Empowerment, Raipur premises with the help of Department of Health Services. As many as 100 to 150 Divyangjans are expected to be immunized. Lions Club Raipur is taking this initiative to cover vaccination of these differently abled teenagers, who otherwise find difficulty to get vaccinated

No tableaux presentation in R-Day celebrations

In view of COVID-19

Main function to be held at Police Prade Ground

Governor Anusuiya Uikey to unfurl tricolour

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 18: The main function of Republic Day in the capital Raipur will be held on 26 January 2022 at 9 am at Police Parade Ground Raipur. Governor Ms Anusuiya Uikey will unfurl the tricolor and give a message to the public. A guard of honor will be given by the contingents of police and paramilitary forces. Colorful balloons will be flown in the ceremony. Prizes and medals given by various departments will be distributed in the function.

Collector Saurabh Kumar held a meeting of district officials regarding the main function of Republic Day. Following the instructions given for the prevention and control of Covid-19, the responsibility was handed over to the officers of various departments to celebrate Republic Day celebrations in a joyful and dignified manner. Common citizens can also observe the ceremony along with the invited guests.

According to the Collector instructions have been given to follow guidelines issued to protect against Covid-19 like wearing masks, social distance etc. In view of the spread of Covid-19 and the new variant of Covid "Omicron", there will be no presentation of tableaux in this year's Republic Day celebrations. Similarly, cultural programmes of school children will also not be organized.

The Collector has asked to complete the programmes to be organized on Republic Day in all government/semi-government offices located in the capital before 8 am. For this, all the office heads will hoist the national flags in their respective offices at 7:30 am. The flag hoisting will be done in the collectorate at 8 am. Rehearsals will be held on January 24 at 9 am. He has asked all the officers to be present during the rehearsal at 8:30 am.

Public functions will not be organized at Tehsil/District Panchayat level. The flag hoisting will be done by the President of Janpad Panchayat in Janpad Panchayat offices, Janpad Panchayat President in Janpad Panchayat offices and Mayor/Speaker in urban bodies. The national anthem will be sung collectively by the Sarpanch in the panchayat headquarters and by the head of the villages in the large villages.

School students will not gather in the programmes at district, block and panchayat level. School children's programmes and other cultural programmes will not be organized. On the night of 26 January, all the government buildings in the district would be illuminated.

DPIIT virtual meeting on e-commerce, CAIT remained vocal & e-commerce companies silent

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 18: CAIT National Vice President Amar Parwani, chairman Mangelal Maloo, Amar Gidwani, State President Jitendra Doshi , States Working President Vikram Singh Deo, Parmanand Jain, Vashu Makhija, State General Secretary Suriender Singh, State Working General Secretary Bharat Jain, State Treasurer Ajay Agrawal and state media incharge Sanjay Choubey informed that in a virtual meeting organised by DPIIT of the Ministry of Commerce on e-commerce policy framework, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) strongly argued for a robust and unambiguous e-commerce policy essentially having an empowered Regulatory Authority on the pattern of TRAI. Beside, CAIT, the meeting was attended by All India Consumer Products Distributors Federation (AICPDF), Retailers Association of India, Laghu Udyog Bharti, Federation of Small Industries (FISME) and others whereas prominent e-commerce players, Amazon, Flipkart, Tata, Reliance, Udan, Pepperfry, Shopclue, Snapdeal etc also attended the meeting which was chaired by Additional Secretary of DPIIT, Anil Agarwal along with several other senior officials of the Ministry. CAIT National Vice President Mr. Amar Parwani and State President Mr. Jitendra Doshi informed speaking at the meeting advocating for a well defined coupled with definite parameters e-commerce policy regretted that the explicit provisions of Press Note 2 of the FDI Policy has been continuously violated by foreign funded e-commerce companies right under the nose of the Government and no action has been taken against them so far. He said that the e-commerce policy should have clear stipulations about transparent operations of e-commerce platforms, easy accessibility and adequate grievance redressal system, non-discriminatory access of marketplace platforms to all stakeholders and value chain, avoidance of conflict of interest between marketplace platforms, sellers & various service providers on the platform.

GP Singh sent to jail for 14 days on judicial remand

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 18: The suspended IPS GP Singh was produced in the Special Court of Leena Agrawal amidst high security by team of ACB sleuths and court has sent him to jail on judicial custody for 14 days.

It is notable here that GP Singh was arrested from Gurugram in Haryana last on Jan 11 and after which he was brought to Raipur by road and produced in the Special Court on Jan 12 from where he was taken on Police remand for 2 days.

On completion of this police remand, again suspended IG GP Singh was produced in the Court on Jan 14 and here his Police remand was extended for four days till Jan 18.

Sources informed that the suspended IG's lawyer Kamlesh Pandey moved a plea in the local court requesting the court not to shift him to Raipur central jail. But the EOW Counsel Amrito Das however countered the please saying that where they should keep GP Singh as he had been Range IG in Raipur and Durg and as SP in Bilaspur and Jagdalpur and all these jails have accused arrested by GP Singh during his official stunts in these districts. Thus the accused has no right to decide or ask as to which jail he should be sent, as the court's decision stands full and final, EOW counsel said.

Construction of Complex in Nava Raipur done without analyzing market demand: Akbar

- **Holds erstwhile state govt responsible for it**

Raipur, Jan 18: Minister for Housing and Environment Mohammed Akbar said that Nava Raipur Development Authority (NRDA) which is unable to pay the loan and interest on the very property to the Bank is having rates above the hot property in the city. He categorically said that nobody is purchasing such costly property in a city without any population and proper rehabilitation and market. Akbar held the erstwhile BJP government in the state responsible for the same.

Addressing a press conference at his official residence in Shankar Nagar,

Housing Minister Mohammed Akbar informed that the very property which the Bank has taken over in Nava Raipur has got a retail complex in it. This has been constructed at the cost of Rs 262.31 cr and since the cost of construction is very high, the property here is being sold at the rate of Rs 9425 per sq. ft. This rate is very high compared to property's built-up rate in heart of Raipur city at Shyam Plaza in Pandri, Magneto Mall in Telibanadha and others.

Akbar informed that the actual carpet area available for selling in the complex in Nava Raipur is 2.64 lakh sq. ft and out of which only 10% i:e 0.27 lakh sq. ft. of the carpet area has been sold off. Around 6% i:e 0.17% lakh sq. ft. carpet area has been given on monthly rent and still 2.20 lakh sq.ft of carpet area in this building is available for sell or rental.

The Housing Minister informed that the allocation of the available built-up area is done through bidding, but due to high rates and low in the real estate business, it could not be sold within time-limit. Mohammed Akbar said that it is without analyzing the actual demand of property in Nava Raipur and without any survey, massive investment has been done and since the very decision of erstwhile government to get the construction done at higher rates, such a situation has arise and for this former CM Dr Raman Singh is responsible.

Loan of Rs 169 cr taken from Union Bank

Mohammed Akbar informed that this retail complex has been constructed on 2.659 hect landin Kayabandha and Baroud. For this retail complex and for development of commercial activities, a loan of Rs 169 cr was taken from Union Bank. After getting the loan, the construction was started in June 2016 and it got completed on 31 Dec 2018. So far 20.71 cr worth of loan has been repaid to the Bank and as on 30 June 2021, a total loan of Rs 158.29 crore is still outstanding. Housing Minister Akbar said that if the construction would have been carried out as market demand then such a situation would not have arose. The carpet area of that building would have got sold out at market rate easily. But the construction was done at higher rate and due to which carpet area could not be sold at the rate offered. Akbar charged that in this case if any person is responsible than he is former CM Dr Raman Singh and his policies. Former CM made investment of state's fund into construction of complex on a property which is not having any market demand.

NYK organises HIV/AIDS awareness programme

Raipur, Jan 18: Nehru Yuva Kendra Raipur Chhattisgarh, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India and Chhattisgarh State AIDS Control Committee, Raipur organised awareness generation workshops on HIV AIDS and its prevention in Borsi, Risda, Mopka Nipania, Palari, Barnawapara, Girra in Balodabazar. More than 600 youth and 50 youth clubs were sensitised about the HIV AIDS.

Youths were apprised about HIV AIDS its causes, symptoms and prevention measures along with other sexually transmitted diseases. Youth were informed that that having unprotected sex led to infection of HIV others means could be transfusion of infected blood, injection of infected person and pregnant mother to their unborn children through their womb. Given the rise in cases in Chhattisgarh, it is imperative that youth must be senisitised about important issues of HIV AIDS, said by Arpit Tiwari, District Youth Officer, Nehru Yuva Kendra Raipur Chhattisgarh.

The services provided by the central and state government for the people suffering from this disease were also discussed. Youth were apprised about the ICTC centre for testing and checking at district and block level. In addition, safety clinic has been established in the district hospital for the diagnosis and information of sexually transmitted infections and other genital problems. Furthermore, youth were informed about the National Helpline Number 1097 wherein the functioning and operation Mobile Application 1097 for disseminating information among the masses were also discussed.

After polling, counting of votes will be done at the polling station

Voting will be held for 17 posts of Panch, 7 of Sarpanch and 1 post of Janpad in the district

Raipur, Jan 18: Panchayat by-elections for various posts in four districts of Raipur district will be held on Thursday, January 20. Voting for this will be done from 7 am to 3 pm in the designated polling stations. After the poll is over, the counting of votes will be done at the polling station venue. It is noteworthy that State Election Commission, has announced bye-election for Raipur district to fill a total of 64 vacant posts of 53 Panch, 9 of Sarpanch and 2 posts of Janpad Panchayat member. For this, no nomination papers were presented for 4 posts of Panch and 1 of Sarpanch. Nomination letter rejected for 1 vacant post of Sarpanch. Candidates elected in unopposed election on 32 posts of Panch and 1 post of Janpad Panchayat member in total 33 posts in the district. In this way, voting will be done on 17 posts of Panch, 7 of Sarpanch and 1 of Janpad Panchayat member in this way. Under this, voting will be held for 9 posts of Panch in Dharsiwan district in Gram Panchayat Kukera, Manohara, Pavani, Manabasti, Dhaneli (Sa), Banarsi, Dhaneli (Bhat), Siltra and Sankri. In Tilda district, voting will be held for 2 posts of Panch in Gram Panchayat Chhataud and Navagaon. Similarly, polling will be held for 1 gram panchayat Nakta in Arang district, Chhataud and Navagaon in Tilda district and Panch in Pipraud, Bendri and Bhotidih gram panchayats in Abhanpur district. Here 2516 voters will exercise their franchise.

Polling will be held for the post of Sarpanch in Parsada, Devgaon and Manpur under Dharsiwa district. Similarly, voting will be held for the post of sarpanch in Majitha, Banarsi and Gullu of Arang district and Nayakbandha of Abhanpur district under Arang district. 12588 voters will exercise their franchise for these posts. Similarly, citizens of village panchayat Manikcheri, Hasda and Tokaro of Abhanpur district will vote for district member. For this 5901 voters will exercise their franchise.

For this in the district, 9 in Dharsiwa district, 9 in Tilda, 15 in Arang and 17 in Abhanpur, thus a total of 50 polling stations have been set up. The General Administration Department of the State Government has declared a public holiday for the government institutions/offices located in the constituencies on January 20th, Thursday, the day of polling. The Commercial Tax Excise Department declared dry period/day to keep all the country liquor and foreign liquor retail shops located in the respective polling/counting place area from 48 hours before the end of polling in the constituencies till the end of polling/counting on January 20.

Successful implementation of flagship schemes of govt tops priority: Singh

Officers should work with team spirit without stress

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 18: The new collector of the district, Mr. Doman Singh, in the first meeting of the officers organised after assuming charge here on Tuesday, said that the successful implementation of the flagship schemes of the state government would be the top priority of the district administration. He stressed on the successful implementation of schemes in the form of mutual coordination and team spirit by getting stress free from the officers. In the time-limit meeting, taking a long meeting of the officers, apprised them of the proposed action plan for all round development of the district and raising the standard of living of the people and instructed them to work accordingly. District level officers including District Panchayat CEO Dr. Fariha Alam Siddiqui, Additional Collector Mr. Rajendra Gupta were present in the meeting. Before the meeting, the new collector got acquainted with all the officers.

Collector Doman Singh said that the opening of government offices in the district would start with the national anthem. In the morning at 10.30 am, the officers and employees together will start the work in the office with the national anthem. This will improve the working hours as the office opens on time. Cleanliness drive will also be run in government offices on holidays. On the second and third Saturdays, the officers and employees will give the message of cleanliness by cleaning their offices and premises. He said that a concrete campaign would be started from February 1 to make anemia-free women healthy and well-nourished in the district. Treating Anganwadi as a center, 6-7 malnourished women from each gram panchayat will be brought under its ambit. In the first phase, about 15 thousand malnourished women in the district will get the benefit in the form of hot food. He said that the purchase of cow dung should be started in all the Gouthans of the district. The people of our district must also get the benefit of the important scheme of the state government. Collector Singh, while reviewing the flagship schemes of the state government in detail, gave directions to the officers for better results in these. He said that at present 9 days are left for the procurement of paddy. Officers should take care that the farmers should not face any problem during this period. No registered farmer should be deprived of selling paddy. He also asked for speedy disposal of pending pattas under Forest Rights. While reviewing the Chief Minister's Haat Bazar Clinic, he directed to benefit about one hundred patients per camp. Dhanwantri Medic Shop scheme to open affordable and generic medicine shops has been asked to be started in all urban bodies. At present, this scheme has been started in 5 out of 9 urban bodies of the district. Under the Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Bhumiless Mazdoor Nyay Yojana, 24429 applications were received in the district. Out of these, 17194 applications have been found correct after verification, which have been sent to the state government.

DIGGING FOR PIPES

RMC is carrying out digging for laying of new pipeline in all the wards of city.

Akbar donates paddy to farmers of Nava Raipur

Assures to consider demands of Kisan Manch Committee

Raipur, Jan 18: Forest and Climate Change Minister Mr. Mohammad Akbar donated paddy with great humility and respect to the farmers of Nava Raipur, who came to his official residence office at Shankarnagar to ask for Chherchera, on the occasion of the holy festival of Chherchera. On this occasion, he extended his greetings and best wishes to all the officers and farmers of the Kisan Manch Committee on the occasion of Chherchera festival and Shakambhari Jayanti. Minister Akbar said that Chherchera festival has special significance in the life of Chhattisgarh. This festival is a symbol of charity and social harmony. Today, our farmer brothers associated with Kisan Manch Samiti, are taking forward the rich culture of Chhattisgarh by asking for chherchera on this holy festival. On this occasion, office bearers and members of Kisan Manch Committee handed over a memorandum to Minister Akbar regarding the demands of rehabilitation and resettlement in Nava Raipur.

Minister Akbar discussed with the Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel and officials of Nava Raipur Development Authority regarding the demands of the farmers and assured them that their demands would be properly resolved.

Anil Pusakar appointed state co-ordinator of IMJU

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 18: Senior journalist of Indian Media Journalists Union (IMJU) Anil Pusadkar has been appointed as the State Coordinator of Chhattisgarh state. On getting such a major responsibility, Anil Pusadkar said that despite many oragnisations of journalists in the state, a need for a strong organization was strongly felt.

His journalists colleagues were asking him to take initiative in this regard for quite some time.

On getting this responsibility, Anil Pusadkar has expressed gratitude towards IMJU National President Bala Bhaskar and General Secy. Rohitash Sen. He said that it is exuding confidence on him by the above two, he has been handed over the responsibility for expansion of this organization in the state and he hoped that with due support of his journalistic colleagues he would be able to meet upto the new organisation's expectations.

School, Colleges, Ashrams, closed till further orders

Collector issues order for govt offices as well

Central Chronicle News

Kondagaon, Jan 18: With rise in number of Covid-19 cases in the Kondagaon district, Collector Pushpendra Kumar Meena has issued order and directed to close all the Schools and hostels in the dsitrict. Under this all the students in the government aided and non-govt aided schools, ashrams, Anganbadi centres, libraries, coaching centres will remain closed till further orders.

As per the Covid-19 guidelines, all the Class III and IV category employees in all the government and semi-government offices will work with 1/3rd presence and rest of the employees would work from home.

The entry of general public in the government offices will remain banned, but the head of the department or the office will make arrangements to accept the applications of common men outside the office and would have to resolve their grievances well on time, so that general public do not face any inconvenience.

As per the order, private institutions and central government operated offices like Banks, Insurance companies, Finance companies and others would also work with 50% presence and the rest would work from home.

In Kondagaon district the organisation of weekly 'haat-bazar', shops in the daily market, 'pasara' and other such facilties too have been organised ensuring proper physical distancing and wearing of masks by all.

Awardees of Pt. Baban P Mishra Smriti Samman declared

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 18: In the Pt. Baban Prasad Mishra Smriti Samman programme organized jointly by Chhattisgarh Hindi Sahitya Parishad, Sangwari Social Media Samooh and Shri Sainath Foundation has declared names of awardees for the above honour. It is on situation getting normal after the corona wave-3 that the award presentation will be organized. The four persons who have been selected for the above award are Journalist – Babulal Sharma for Pt. Baban Prasad Mishra Journalist award; Litterateur – Prakash Patangivar; writer Ankita Jain Netaji Anand Singhania Samiti Yuwa Sahitya Ratna Samman and mountaineer Naina Dhakad with Sangwari Samman.

Ojaswi Sancheti earns laurels for the state

Receives Master of AI degree

Raipur, Jan 18: Ojaswi Sancheti, resident of Raipur and daughter of Sanjay and Arpana Sancheti, received Master of Artificial Intelligence degree from Adinburg Scoltland University (UK). She topped in her examination and earned laurels for the country and state. Her success has been hailed by her family members and friends.

Children foresee bright future due to operation of English school

- **Swami Atmanand Eng Medium School steps towards a golden future**

Konta, Jan 18: Education is the reflection of progress of every society and country. At present, the building of Government Boys Higher Secondary School, Konta, of Konta block of Sukma district, is being developed and operated in this campus for the resolution of excellent education. The excellent English medium government school of Konta block was started on 02 August 2021. But this institution is being operated from 6th January 2022 in the new campus. This school complex is equipped with all facilities.

The Swami Atmanand Government English Medium School Scheme was launched in the state on 1 November 2020 by the Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on the occasion of Rajyotsava. The aim of which is to make efforts to provide better education to the children in English medium. Under an innovative effort of the Government of Chhattisgarh, School Education Department, Swami Atmanand Excellent English Medium School was started in the state on 01 November 2020. Konta block of Sukma, remote Vananchal district of Chhattisgarh has also been included in this episode from 02 August 2021. Swami Atmanand Government English Medium School, Konta was inaugurated by State Industries Minister Kawasi Lakhma.

The dreams of the children of poor families got wings

Such parents who were not able to get their children educated in expensive English private school due to weak financial condition, this excellent English medium government school in Konta has given a golden opportunity for better education of talented children from poor families. Where efforts are being made to promote study and teaching in English medium with the aim of providing free national level education to children, through English medium and to enhance the talent of the students and make them capable of all kinds of competitions at the national level. Is. Special care is being taken to facilitate study and teaching in this excellent English medium school of Konta block of Sukma district. In this school of the district, state-of-the-art library, computer and science lab, smart classes as well as complete facility of online education will be available. In the present level, classes from class I to XI are conducted by Chhattisgarh Board's class of English medium. Where at present 10 lecturers, 06 teachers, 04 assistant teachers, 03 science assistants, 01 computer teacher, 01 library teacher and 7 more employees are working. At present 137 students are studying.

It is noteworthy that most of the students are such who have taken admission in Swami Atmanand English Medium School leaving any other private school. Along with this, children from remote Vananchal villages like Mundpalli, Misma, Jagargunda, Punpalli, Kankerlanka students from Naxal affected villages have also taken admission in this institution.

Swami Atmanand Excellent English Medium School has an attractive class, where study is taught every day according to the systematic time table. For the all-round development of the children, facilities are being made to give a new dimension to their creativity through sports and other co-curricular and artistic activities in excellent academic environment. Principal and secondary school head teacher have been selected on deputation by selecting excellent teachers to give quality teaching and disciplined nature of school management. The students of the institution have also made the school proud by proving their talent in the competitions held at the block and district level. In the meeting of parents held recently, the parents/guardians expressed their happiness and said that now we are sure about the future of our children. With this important step started by the Government of Chhattisgarh, every section of the society will realize their dreams with complete equality and the future of the children will be golden.

Gupta presents the book 'Environment and Global Warming' to Governor

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 18: Governor Ms. Anusuiya Uikey was presented a book titled "Environment and Global Warming" by Mr. RN Gupta, retired Engineer-in-Chief, Public Health Engineering Department of Chhattisgarh State. The Governor said that this book would prove helpful in making the common people aware of the environment. The Governor conveyed his best wishes to Mr. Gupta for the publication of the book. Gupta said that this book contains details of all scientific facts related to global warming and environment. Along with this, topics like green gas house, ozone layer, global effect and increase in temperature are included. Conservation of nature has been urged through the book. It is worth mentioning that other books written by Mr. Gupta include 'Chhattisgarhi Sanskirti me talab', 'Katghare me hum', and articles on water and environment subjects have been published. Along with this, he has been felicitated with the National Level Jal Nirmalta Award for his excellent work in the field of water and environment.

Governor distributed blankets to class IV employees, security personnel

Raipur, Jan 18: Governor Ms. Anusuiya Uikey distributed blankets to the workers, security personnel and class IV employees of Raj Bhavan in view of the adverse climatic condition. On this occasion, the Governor urged the social organizations to come forward to help the needy and help as much as possible.

IIIT-NR holds Chhattisgarh MSME Resilience Award 2021

An initiative to acknowledge the innovative practices by MSMEs and Start-ups in the State

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jan 17: Growth and sustainability of MSMEs and start-up are vital for the prosperity of an economy. Underscoring upon the significance of this sector, IIIT-Naya Raipur has undertaken a study with the support of the State Planning Commission Chhattisgarh to understand the resilience strategies (innovative practices) applied by MSMEs/Start-ups in Chhattisgarh during COVID-19 to overcome the challenges faced due to the temporary freezing of business. One of the deliverables of the project was to honor some of the key MSMEs who have responded to this crisis with their inherent strength, innovation, and resilience.

Nominations have been invited for this resilience award from the business owners and founders. A large pool of nominees from the various part of Chhattisgarh have applied, and few of them were shortlisted for the final rounds. Based on multipleparameters, a committee comprising experts from different domains selected 10 participants as final awardees. Ten finalists were felicitated in the event, and a coffee table book was documented with the studies and efforts of the selected MSME featured in it. Welcoming all the participants and audience, Dr. Pradeep Kumar Sinha, Director-IIITNR,emphasized the innovation and entrepreneurship culture currently being nurtured at the institute. He also referred to the various initiatives institutes took in entrepreneurship to help build state human resources.

On this occasion, Vice Chairman of State Planning Commission, Chhattisgarh Ajay Singh was the Chief Guest of the event. He appreciated the MSME sector's development of Chhattisgarh and congratulated all the winners. He also suggested looking into the challenges MSMEs face in the State and creating a better ecosystem for nurturing them through policy interventions.

Awareness about traffic created among school students

By Traffic department in Govt HS School, Dahikonga

Kondagaon, Jan 18:

Traffic awareness programme was organised by the Traffic police department in Government HS School in Dahikonga located near Jagdalpur-Kondagaon road.

Under this the Traffic in-charge TI Rohit Kumar Banjare and other staff gave information to students about high-speed driving, driving vehicles without wearing helmet; not using seat belt while driving four-wheeler; driving in drunken state; violating traffic norms and others. As per information in this regard, as per orders from SP Divyang Patel and instructions from Addl.

SP Rahul Dev Sharma and under guidance of DSP Dr Bhuneshwari Paikra, efforts are being made by the traffic police to reduce road accidents on NH-30 and other roads.

Under this school students of Govt HS School Dahikonga in Kondagaon area were informed about the traffic rules and regulations through a projector.

The department informed students about not to drive any vehicle without valid licence and documents; drive wearing helmet; use seat belt in four-wheeler; do not drive in intoxicated state; do not use mobile or any other instrument while driving; look carefully at all traffic board signals; give information about deaths due to road accidents; do not allow minors to drive any vehicle, do not drive three on two-wheeler and other such information.

On this occasion TI Traffic in-charge RK Banjare, constbale Santosh Kodopi, Vikas Pandey and Rajendra Markam were present.

Surprise inspection of Paddy Procurement Centers

Mahasamund, Jan 18:

Director of Food and Civil Supplies Department and MD State Warehousing Corporation Abhinav Aggarwal conducted a surprise inspection of paddy procurement centers, collection centers and warehouses of Omkarband and Pithora block of Baghbahra block of Mahasamund district.

The Director after inspection instructed the District Marketing Officer to speed up the transportation of paddy and the Nodal Officer, District Central Co-operative Bank to ensure systematic maintenance of the paddy in the procurement centers. Make stacking of paddy purchased in all paddy procurement centers and cover them with capcover and all officers should inspect and monitor the paddy procurement centers, he instructed.

District Collector Doman Singh asked all the SDMs of the district to ensure arrangements by holding a meeting of paddy procurement center incharges and nodal officers. Paddy should not be damaged by rain; drainage should be made mandatory for the protection of paddy and cape covers should be kept in sufficient number in all the paddy procurement centers, he said.

He also advised to abstain from water stagnation in the centre. Regarding the spread of Covid infection, he said that the spread of corona infection is increasing rapidly; therefore before entering the paddy procurement center, posters regarding mandatory masking should be made available.

The officers and committee managers were asked to speed up the paddy procurement system, with due protection from rain and lifting of paddy in the district, by the Collector.

On this occasion, Assistant Food Officer, District Mahasamund Anil Joshi, Sanjay Sharma, District Marketing Officer Jaidev Soni, District Manager Nan Deepika Sinha, Officer of District Co-operative Bank Mahasamund G. N. Sahu were present.

Huge loss to farmers due to unseasonal rains

Anwari, Jan 18: The unseasonal rains in Anwari, Bhaisbod in the region last week has come as big blow to the farmers as their crops have got badly damaged and it would be difficult for them to meet-up even the expenditure cost.

The farmers of the region have taken up crop of 'masoor', 'chana', 'sarson' and other oilseeds and pulses and which has got completely damaged due to unexpected rains. The vegetable growers too have faced huge loss on account of the same. Due to heavy rains and hailstorm over the last one week, the paddy, oilseeds, pulses and vegetable crops of the farmers have got badly damaged. The paddy crop has fallen and the crop of oilseeds, pulses, vegetable too has got badly damaged. The crop of 'sarson', 'masoor', 'lakhadi', 'Aalsi', 'Urad', 'Batari', 'Arhar', 'Chana' and others too have got badly damaged and it is going to cost heavily to farmers and it would be difficult for them to meet up even the expenditure cost. Many a vegetable growers in the region too seems to be annoyed as rains have played spoilsports causing huge damage to crops of lady finger, cabbage, peas, tomato, 'semi','Navagol', and others. With rainwater getting clogged in the farms, it has started rotting the crop taken and the farmers are left with no option but to wait for right amount of compensation and waiver in loan, if the state government permit.

Patel Kosaria Samaj observe 'Maa Shakambari Jayanti'

By offering prayers to the Goddess

Birkoni, Jan 18:

Maa Shakambhari Jayanti was observed at Shakti Mandir near Patel Community centre in Gram Birkoni here on Monday. It is adhering to Covid-19 protocol and maintaining social distancing the members of Patel samaj gathered at 10:00 am and decorated the idol of Goddess Shakambhari with decorative items. It was amidst raising of slogans in favour of 'Jai Maa Shakambhari', 'Jai Marara Samaj' that prayers were performed at Community building.

On this occasion all the social families of Patel Kosaria Samaj offered prayers to Maa Shakambhari and paid obeisance to the Goddess. On this occasion Balram Patel, Girdhari Patel, Heeralal Patel, Madan Patel, Keshav Patel, Ghanshyam Patel were present. To make this programme successful, Bhagwat Patel, Tukesh Patel, Kaushal Patel, Pitamber Patel, Lalaram Patel, Omkar Patel, Mohan Patel, Inku Patel and others gave valuable support.

Jaitkhambh dedicated in Gram Penditarai

Nandini-Ahiwara, Jan 18: The dedication of Jaitkhambh with District fund of District Panchayat member Durg was done at Gram Panchayat Penditarai by District Panchayat member Chandrakala Manhar at the cost of Rs 4 lakh and the foundation for 'Nal-Jal Yojana' was also laid at the cost of Rs 65 lakhs.

The chief guest of the programme was Bhuneshwar Baghel of SC Development Authority, MLA Bemetara VS Ashish Chabda, special guest was Nagar Palika Ahirwara Natwar Tamrakar, Janpad Panchayat member, Ashok Patel, Dhanraj Banjare, Oni Mahilang and others were present. President SC Development Authority has granted sanction of Rs 16.50 lakh for cosntruction of drainage and community building and MLA has also given assurance to sanction funds for construction 400 mts road under Mukhyamantri Sugam Sadak Yojana.

New Year calendar released in memory of Yagyasini Devi

Churrikala, Jan 18:

The calendar of new year was released in the name of Yagyasini Devi by corporator of ward No 9 of Nagar Panchayat Churrikala Heeralal yadav. This ward is named after ex-MLA Tanakhar Late Yagyasini Devi W/o 'Jamindar'- Late Bhuwanpal Singh.

The calendar was released at the hands of voter Ramnarayan Dubey former Alderman and retired teacher; corporator Ramsharan Sahu, Sheshban Goswami, Padmu Yadav, Devi Prasad Pandey, Mantu Maharaj.

On this occasion Retired teacher Ramnarayan Dubey hailed the works of ward corporator and said that this is for the first time that Yagyasini Devi , W/o Late Bhuwanpal Singh has been remembered and a new calendar has been released on her name and by publishing the same the ward corporator has presented a good example for others. Corporator Ramsharan Sahu also hailed the initiatives taken.

Girl commits suicide in Achouli

Dongargarh, Jan 18:

Punita Gupta, a 25-yrs old daughter of well-known businessman Ram Sajeevan Gupta of Gram Achouli near city committed suicide and this news created sensation in the entire village.

The complainant Yogesh Gupta gave information about the same to Dongargarh police that the girl has committed suicide and on getting this information, the police reached the village to conduct investigations. The body of the girl has been sent for post-mortem and it is learnt that the girl got engaged just few days back and her marriage was due on Jan 25.

Children observe 'Cher-chera' going door-to-door

Katagi, Jan 18: The festival of 'Cher-chera' was observed with great fun-far and enthusiasm in the village. On occasion of 'Paush Poornima', the rituals were performed and since it is observed as day of donations (cherchera) in the form of grains, vegetables, cash, fruits etc, there was lot of enthusiasm among the youths and children of the village, as they went in groups to houses of different persons and sought 'cher-chera'. This festival is observed on arrival of paddy after 'Minjai' and since there is huge storage of paddy crop in the houses, the villagers donate the same as per rituals.

Aspire Home Finance Corporation Limited

ASPIRE HOME FINANCE

Motilal Oswal Tower, Rahimtullah Sayani Road, Opposite ST Depot, Prabhadevi, Mumbai-400025.
Email :- info@ahfcl.com CIN :- U65923MH2013PLC248741

POSSESSION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY/IES)

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Aspire Home Finance Corporation Ltd. under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets & in compliance of Rule 8(1) of Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued demand notice/s on the date mentioned against each account calling upon the respective borrower/s to repay the amount as mentioned against each account within 60 days from the date of notice(s)/date of receipt of the said notice/s.

The borrower/s having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower/s and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property/ies described herein below in exercise powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules on the dates mentioned against each account.

The borrower/s in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies and any dealing with the property/ies will be subject to the charge of Aspire Home Finance Corporation Ltd., for the amount and interest thereon as per loan agreement. The borrowers' attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Sr. No.	Loan Agreement No. /Name of the Borrower/Co Borrower/Guarantor	Demand Notice date & Amount	Date of possession Taken	Description of the Property/ies mortgaged
1.	LXRAI00417-180058197 Bhagya Laxmi Banjare & Narendra Banjare	26-03-2019 for Rs. 16,83,508/-	14-01-2022	Plot No 257/1 Part P.H No 103 R.N.M Raipur - 1 Ward No 13 Shahid Bhagat Singh Ward Wake Mouje Tatibandh Raipur 492001 Chhattisgarh

Place : Chhattisgarh
Dated : 19-01-2022

Sd/-
Authorized Officer,
(Aspire Home Finance Corporation Ltd.)

यूनियन बैंक Union Bank of India

Samta Conoly Branch, Raipur (C.G.)

POSSESSION NOTICE [Rule - 8 (1)] (SYMBOLIC)

Whereas the Authorized Officers of **Union Bank of India**, **Samta Colony Branch, Raipur** under Securitizations and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notice dated to the following borrowers/ guarantors/ mortgagors calling upon them to repay the amount mentioned in the Notices within 60 days from the date of said Notices.

The Borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors having failed to repay the amount, Notices are hereby given to the borrowers/guarantor(s)/mortgagor in particular and the public in general that Authorized Officer has taken possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 9 of the said rules on today dated **13.01.2022**.

The Borrowers/guarantor(s)/mortgagor in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of Union Bank of India, for the amounts and interests and incidental expenses and costs and charges thereon as mentioned below –

A- Name of the Borrowers B- Name of the Branch	Description of Secured Assets	1. Date of Demand Notice 2. Outstanding (in Rs.)
A 1. M/s Nav Durga traders. 1- Mr. Bhagwan Das Dulani S/o Shri Sundar Das Dulani, 1. Mr. Avinash Dulani S/o Bhagwan Das Dulani. 2. Ms. Somya Dulani W/o Lt. Mr. Rajesh Dulani, 3.Miss Roshita Dulani D/o Mr. Rajesh Dulani, 4. Mr. Hardik Dulani S/o Lt Rajesh Dulani (Legal Heirs). B- Samata Colony	Commercial office/shop bearing no. **211** on the 2nd floor , super buildup area 545 Sq. ft. comprised in part of Kh. No. 175/3 & 176/4 situated at " Dolphin chamber " Mouja Pandritarai, Mahatma Gandhi ward, ward No. 25, PH. No. **109/39**, RIC Raipur -1, Tahsil and Distt. Raipur C.G. owner **Shri Bhagwan Das Dulani S/o Sundar Das Dulani , Smt. Somya Dulani W/o Lt. Rajesh Dulani & Ms. Roshita Dulani D/o Lt. Rajesh Dulani.**	**01.07.2021** **₹ 36,44,935.00** + interest from **30.04.2021** + Legal & Other charges
1. M/s Shakti Roadways 2. Mr. Rakesh Agrawal B- Samata Colony	EM of CSIDC Lease hold Industrial Plot Amenities B Part area **19500** sq. fts. Industrial Area Village- Birkoni, tehsil and District- Mahasamund leased to **Shri Rakesh Agrawal** for petrol pump unit (99 years Lease Period 29-09-2012 to 28-09-2111).	**01.07.2021** **₹ 71,80,390.00** + interest from **01.06.2021** + Legal & Other charges
1. Mr. Salim Umrani 2. Mr. Imran Umrani 3. Mr. Rafique Umrani B- Samata Colony	Residential house situated on plot No.25 Kh. No.721/1 PC No.106B Samata Co-op housing society Ltd, Samata Colony, Chiruldih Raipur Area 4000 Sq. Ft. name of owner **Mr. Salim Umarani S/o Mr. Abdul Gaffar Umarani.**	**03.06.2021** **₹ 30,14,644.76** + interest from **31.05.2021** + Legal & Other charges

Date: 13.01.2022, Place: Raipur (C.G.) Authorized Officer/Union Bank of India

बैंक ऑफ इंडिया Bank of India BOI

DEVENDRA NAGAR BRANCH: Shopper's Paradise, Surana Complex, Behind City Centre Mall, Pandri, Raipur
Phone No.-0771-2582242, E-mail-devendrangr.raipur@bankofindia.co.in

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Properties)

[Under Rule-8(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002]

Whereas,

The undersigned being the authorized officer of the **Bank of India,** Devendra Nagar Branch under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, **2002** and in exercise of powers conferred under Section **13(12)** read with Rule **3** of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, **2002** issued a demand notice calling upon the following borrower's to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being detail as mentioned here under, within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Section **13(4)** of the said Act read with rule **8** of the said rules as mentioned below.

The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of **Bank of India**, Devendra Nagar Branch for an amount detail given as below.

Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)	Description of the Properties	Demand Notice	Amount Due
M/s. Shivam Traders, Prop.- Mrs. Sampa Sisodia W/o. Mr, Hemant Kumar (Principal Debtor) Resident of Purani- basti, Vishwakarma Line, Raipur (C.G.)	All that Part and Parcel of the Property Consisting of Shop/ Flat/ Flat No. 61/150-486, Kh No. 1825, PH No. 106A, Situated at Ward No.61, Mahant Laxminarayan Das, Mouza-Khas, RNM and District-Raipur. Admeasuring 738 Sq.ft. in the name of Mrs. Malti Sisodiya W/o. Mr. Amar Nath Sisodiya: **Boundaries:** North-Part B, South-Ravi Prasad Sisodia, East-Dhanmati Vidya Mandir, West-Road	Date 01.01.2018 **Possession Notice** Date 14.01.2022	**₹ 9,48,581.67/-** (Nine Lakh Forty Eight Thousand Five Hundred and Eighty One Rupees and Paisa Sixty Seven Only) and interest + Other expenses

Date: 19.01.2022, Place : Raipur Authorized Officer, **Bank of India**

AXIS BANK

AXIS BANK LTD.
Asset Sales Centre, 2nd Floor, Chawla Chambers
Opp. New Bus Stand, Jeevan Bima Marg, Pandri, Raipur - 492004

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)

(As per Appendix IV read with rule 8 (1) of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002)

Whereas, the undersigned being the **Authorised Officer of the Axis Bank Ltd.,** under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice calling upon the Borrower (s) / Guarantor (s) to repay the amount mentioned in the notice along with contractual rate of interest plus penal interest, charges, costs etc. within 60 days from the date of the said notice.

The Borrower (s) / Guarantor (s), having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower (s) / Guarantor (s), in particular and the public, in general, that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said Rules on the date mentioned herein after.

The Borrower (s) / Guarantor (s), in particular, and the public, in general, are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **Axis Bank Ltd.,** for an amount mentioned in the notice along with interest thereon and penal interest, charges, costs etc. from date of demand notice.

The Borrower's attention is invited to the provisions of Sub Section (8) of Section 13 of the SARFAESI Act, 2002 in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Name & Address of Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s)	Description of the Immovable Property (Secured Assets)	a) Amount Due as of Notice Date b) Date of Demand Notice c) Date of Possession
1. **M/s. Balaji Sales, Through Proprietor Usha Gyanchandani,** R/o. Mahalaxmi Enclave, Sihawa Road, Dhamtari, District - Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh, Pin - 493773 2. **Usha Gyanchandani,** W/o. Dharmendra Gyanchandani 3. **Chuhad Mal Gyanchandani** S/o. Tara Chand Gyanchandani 4. **Dharmendra Gyanchandani** S/o. Chuhad Mal Gyanchandani **All are (2, 3 & 4) R/o.** Amapara Chowk, Ward No. 12, District - Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh, Pin - 493773	Residential Property at Part of Parcel of Property Bearing Nazul area of Property 145 Sq. Mtr., Plot No. 10/2, and 11/1, Part of Nazul Sheet No. 31D, At Amapara, Tehsli and District - Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh. **Boundries :** East - Yash Daily Needs, North- Other's Property, West - Eadha Swami Dayal, South - Road.	a) **Rs. 88,32,802.90** (Rupees Eighty Eight Lakh Thirty Two Thousand Eight Hundred Two and Ninety paisa only) as on 30.09.2018 under Loan A/c. No. 916030056009142 being the amount due on termination of the agreement (this amount includes interest till 30.09,2018) and further interest thereon b) **07.10.2021** c) **15.01.2022**

Date : 19.01.2022
Place : Raipur

Authorised Officer
Axis Bank Ltd.

Notice under section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (The Act)

S. NO	Name of Borrower(s) (A)	Particulars of Mortgaged property/ (ies) (B)	Date Of NPA (C)	Outstanding Amount (Rs.) (D)
1	LOAN ACCOUNT NO. HHLRPR00290141 1. ABDUL RAHIM SOLANKI 2. RUKSHANA BANO SOLANKI 3. FIROZ SOLANKI	KH. NO. 195/22, WAKE MOUJA- MATHPURENA, P. H. NO. 105, RNM- RAIPUR-1, W. NO. 52, , CHANDRASHEKHAR AZAD, RAIPUR, CHHATTISGARH - 492001	19.11.2021	Rs. 9,98,627.19/- (Rupees Nine Lakhs Ninety Eight Thousand Six Hundred Twenty Seven and Paise Nineteen Only) as on 19.11.2021
2	LOAN ACCOUNT NO. HHLRPR00417965 1. JITENDRA KUMAR SINGH 2. TARA SINGH	PLOT NO L-165, RALAS ROYAL PARK, PART OF KH NO 1310/6-7-8-9, MOUJA PARSADA, PH NO 04, RNM BHILAI 3, TAHSIL PATAN, DURG, CHHATTISGARH - 490001	19.11.2021	Rs. 4,25,503.92/- (Rupees Four Lakhs Twenty Five Thousand Five Hundred Three and Paise Ninety Two Only) as on 19.11.2021
3	LOAN ACCOUNT NO. HHERPR00219423 1. PRASHANT KUMAR JENA 2. RASHMITA JENA	PART OF KH NO 314 PLOT NO C-11/14 DHEBAR CITY HOMES GRAM MATHPURENA PH NO 105 RNM -1, CHANDRA SHEKHAR AJAD WARD NO 52, RAIPUR, CHHATTISGARH - 492001	19.11.2021	Rs. 6,02,393.51/- (Rupees Six Lakhs Two Thousand Three Hundred Ninety Three and Paise Fifty One Only) as on 19.11.2021
4	LOAN ACCOUNT NO. HHERPR00219428 1. SONAL SINGH 2. PRASHANT SINGH	PART OF KH NO 314 PLOT NO C-11/16 DHEBAR CITY HOMES GRAM MATHPURENA, PH NO 105 RNM -1, CHANDRA SHEKHAR AJAD WARD NO 52, RAIPUR, CHHATTISGARH - 492001	19.11.2021	Rs. 5,84,785.18/- (Rupees Five Lakhs Eighty Four Thousand Seven Hundred Eighty Five and Paise Eighteen Only) as on 19.11.2021

That the above named borrower(s) have failed to maintain the financial discipline towards their loan account (s) and as per books of accounts maintained in the ordinary course of business by the Company, Column D indicates the outstanding amount. Due to persistent default in repayment of the Loan amount on the part of the Borrower(s) the above said loan account has been classified by the Company as Non Performing Asset (as on date in Column C) within the guidelines relating to assets classification issued by Regulating Authority. Consequently, notices under Sec. 13(2) of the Act were also issued to each of the borrower.

In view of the above, the Company hereby calls upon the above named Borrower(s) to discharge in full his/their liabilities towards the Company by making the payment of the entire outstanding dues indicated in Column D above including up to date interest, costs, and charges within 60 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which, the Company shall be entitled to take possession of the Mortgaged Property mentioned in Column B above and shall also take such other actions as is available to the Company in law.

Please note that in terms of provisions of sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the SARFAESI Act, "A borrower can tender the entire amount of outstanding dues together with all costs, charges and expenses incurred by the Secured Creditor only till the date of publication of the notice for sale of the secured asset(s) by public auction, by inviting quotations, tender from public or by private treaty. Further it may also be noted that in case Borrower fails to redeem the secured asset within aforesaid legally prescribed time frame, Borrower may not be entitled to redeem the property."

In terms of provision of sub-Section (13) of Section 13 of the SARFAESI Act, you are hereby prohibited from transferring, either by way of sale, lease or otherwise (other than in the ordinary course of his business) any of the secured assets referred to in the notice, without prior written consent of secured creditor.

Place: RAIPUR/BHILAI/PATAN DURG

Sd/-
For Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd.
Authorized Officer

BRIEF

Constitutes

- **Bhubaneswar:** The Odisha government has constituted a Task Force to check drug trafficking and drug abuse. The main function of the Task Force, to be headed by former Odisha DGP Abhay, will be to formulate a state policy within the context of National Policy on Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 2012, the home department said in a resolution.

Decongest

- **Shillong:** Meghalaya Cabinet approved the shifting of the State Secretariat building which houses the offices of the Meghalaya government to the New Shillong Township (NST). State government has already acquired 807.7 acres of land in the NST and that a foundation stone for the new building will be laid on January 21, to mark the 50th year of Meghalaya becoming a state. Decision was made taking into consideration the traffic congestion.

Surrenders

- **Pune:** A man accused of cheating investors and who was on the run for the past few days surrendered before police in Solapur in Maharashtra. Vishal Phate, accused of cheating investors to the tune of several crore in Barshi tehsil there, was booked along with his wife, parents and brother and was absconding since January 9. Phate, who was accepting deposits since 2019 and was at times promising returns as high as 28 per cent.

Postponed

- **Kolkata:** The International Kolkata Book Fair was postponed by a month due to a surge in Covid-19 cases and municipal election, and now it will start from February 28, the organiser said. The decision was made after consultation with the state government, President of Publishers and Book Sellers Guild Tridib Chatterjee told PTI.

Busted

- **Muzaffarnagar:** An illegal arms manufacturing unit was busted in a village here with seizure of several firearms. Fifteen pistols, one rifle, and one gun were recovered from a brick kiln during a raid in Bhanwara village which comes under Ratanpuri Police Station area. During the raid one man was nabbed while one other managed to escape, said local SHO Rakesh Sharma.

Rescued

- **Hoshiarpur:** A leopard was rescued from a trap by a team of the forest and wild life department in village Sherpur Gulind. The team was called to rescue the leopard trapped in the forest area by a seasonal creek. It took four hours for the team to rescue the leopard. The trap was laid by someone to catch some wild animals, which come to the area in search of food. Service of the veterinary officer was also taken to tranquilize.

Political parties hit virtual campaign trail

New Delhi, Jan 18 (PTI):

Snappy hashtags, peppy tunes and quick repartee, political parties have taken their campaign to the virtual world with great aplomb as five states go to elections next month under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Wordsmiths and artists of different parties are working overtime to deliver punches and counter punches in their bid to reach out to voters through different platforms ranging from Facebook to YouTube.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) unveiled its campaign song for Uttar Pradesh based on the popular Sri Lankan number 'Manike Mage Hithe' rendered by Yohani De'Silva.

Punjab Lok Congress virtual campaign poster.

'Sabki mann ki yeh bhasha, yahan do-do hain aasha, yahi Modi, Yahi Yogi, upyogi, sahyogi' (This is in everyone's heart, there are two hopes Modi and Yogi and they are useful and cooperative) goes the BJP campaign song that highlights the riot free five years, improved power supply, and construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya under the Yogi Adityanath government in the state. The song was shared by BJP and its leaders on their social media accounts last week. 'Aayegi phirse BJP', is the catchline of the song that features snippets of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the chief minister. The Samajwadi Party has different songs, including one in the Awadhi dialect, 'Khadeda Hoibe' (will chase away) that talks of driving off BJP from power in the state.

In Goa, the Trinamool Congress launched its campaign song in Konkani — 'Ailo don fulancho kaal, Goenchi Navi Sakal' (the era of two flowers is here, it's a new dawn for Goa) — in its bid to connect with the electorate.

STUDENTS' PROTEST

Students activists protest against Patna University senate meeting, in Patna, Tuesday.

Army's help brings major improvements in Govt school near LoC

- **Events organised based on theme of national integration**

Jammu, Jan 18 (PTI):

Just three kilometers from the Line of Control (LoC), a government school with an enrolment of over 200 students in Mendhar sector of Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district has witnessed major improvements thanks to the local army unit which has come forward to help the youngsters to achieve their dreams. The endeavour of Mendhar Gunners under the aegis of White Knight Corps has been to bring the school at par to national standards despite the school being on the LoC and amid the COVID-19 restrictions, Jammu-based Army PRO Lt Col Devender Anand said.

Sports meet at Government High School, Dharana.

Government High School, Dharana, located in the serene hills of the Mendhar is far away from the hustle and bustle of Poonch city where children can easily absorb knowledge and grow in all aspects of life, he said. The students from this school generally come from impecunious families whose primary occupation is daily labour, which had wide implications on the students like lack of exposure to the modern outside world, the officer said.

Lt Col Anand said Mendhar Gunners, the local Army unit on regular interaction with the locals, discerned the issue at hand and immediately sprung into action to assist. "Our school is along the LoC but we are being provided with all those facilities which are available in all city schools, for example, we have a library with all kinds of study material and volleyball courts to play during our games period, which is something we all look forward to, 15-year-old Fathima, a student of class nine, said.

'Minorities sidelined in Congress leadership'

Kannur, Jan 18 (PTI):

CPI(M) Kerala State secretary and senior politburo member Kodiyeri Balakrishnan on Tuesday alleged that leaders belonging to minority communities were neglected and sidelined in the Congress in line with the party scion Rahul Gandhi's speech in Jaipur calling for establishing what he called as a rule of Hindus in the country after ousting the "Hindutva" government at the Centre.

Alleging that the Congress even sidelined its prominent minority faces, including Ghulam Nabi Azad, Salman Khurshid and KV Thomas, from the national-level leadership as part of the party's new policy, he claimed this issue was being discussed widely in the Congress organisation. Accusing the Congress of discontinuing the representation of people from minority communities in the Congress's Kerala leadership, Balakrishnan sought to know whether the move was part of the new policy announced by Gandhi in Jaipur. "The question is whether minorities are being sidelined in the Kerala unit of the Congress as well. When K Karunakaran became the Chief Minister in 1982, veteran leader A L Jacob was made the KPCC president. When AK Antony became the Chief Minister, K Muraleedharan was elected president. When Oommen Chandy became the Chief Minister, Mullappally Ramachandran became the president", the CPI(M) leader said and sought to know the reason for changing that norm. Slamming Balakrishnan's statement, the Congress accused the CPI(M) of creating communal divide in society for political gains.

Kodiyeri Balakrishnan

The CPI(M) leader made the statement at a press conference here two days after he told the CPI (M) Thiruvananthapuram district conference that the Congress which upholds secularism excluded minorities at the Kerala leadership of the party.

'Modi incarnation of God like Lord Ram and Lord Krishna'

MP AgriMin Kamal Patel

- **Born to end despair: MP minister**

Bhopal, Jan 18 (PTI):

Madhya Pradesh Agriculture Minister and BJP leader Kamal Patel termed Prime Minister Narendra Modi an "incarnation of God", saying he was born to end the atmosphere of despair, like Lord Ram and Lord Krishna, created due to the rise in "atrocities" committed by Congress, corruption, and the destruction of the country's culture.

Speaking to reporters in Harda, Patel said that the tasks accomplished by PM Modi like leading India on the path of becoming "Vishwa Guru", ridding the country of corruption, and ensuring the public welfare wouldn't have been accomplished by an ordinary person. Whenever any crisis descended upon India and tyranny increased, then it is said in our religion and culture that God takes avatar in a human form, Patel said. He said Lord Ram had taken avatar in a human form and established 'Ramrajya' by killing demon Ravan and defeating other evil powers, and protecting the people.

Patole slams BJP over 'beat up, badmouth Modi' video protests

Nagpur, Jan 18 (PTI):

Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole on Tuesday said the BJP was protesting over his video with the "Modi" reference to divert attention from real issues the people were facing. The video was widely circulated on Monday after a television channel aired it and Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis tweeted about it, though Patole had clarified that the Modi referred to in his conversation with villagers of Bhandara district was not the prime minister but a local goon.

Speaking to reporters in Nagpur, Patole said the goon he was referring to has been detained by Bhandara police but the BJP was still in protest mode despite COVID-19 norms to divert people's attention and vitiate the atmosphere. The Congress knows the dignity of the post of prime minister and it was the BJP that was damaging the image of Maharashtra with such protests, he added. The Congress' district level leaders will file complaints against BJP leaders indulging in these protests, which were lowering the dignity of the post of prime minister, Patole warned.

Nana Patole

Meanwhile, the BJP on Tuesday held protests in Thane and Palghar districts against Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole in connection with a video in which he is purportedly heard saying he will beat up and badmouth "Modi".

The video was widely circulated on Monday after a television channel aired it and Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis tweeted about it, though Patole had clarified that the Modi referred to in his conversation with villagers of Bhandara district was not the prime minister but a local goon.

Telangana to introduce English medium in Govt schools

Hyderabad, Jan 18 (PTI):

The Telangana cabinet has decided to introduce English medium in all government schools in the state from the academic year 2022-23 and regulate fee in private schools, junior and degree colleges. A decision to this effect was taken at a meeting convened, an official release said. The cabinet has constituted a subcommittee of ministers headed by Education Minister Sabita Indra Reddy to study and prepare guidelines on the issues. At the meeting, the cabinet also gave its nod to Mana Vooru Mana Badi (Our Village-Our School) scheme at a cost of Rs 7289 crore for better infrastructure facilities and quality education in the government schools. The cabinet felt that the parents in rural areas are ready to send their children to the government schools if medium of instruction is in English. Hence, the cabinet decided to have English as the medium of instruction in the government schools and to develop infrastructure accordingly, the release said. The government also decided to draw up an action plan to train teachers to impart education in English to students at the primary level, to make environment in the schools attractive for the children, keep the premises clean and tidy, improve the mid day meal programme.

Congress Govt only laid foundation stones: Dhami

Dehradun, Jan 18 (PTI):

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Tuesday said the Congress government only laid foundation stones of projects and left them at that while the BJP government was completing the ones it had started.

Taking a dig at Congress leaders for often trying to grab credit for development works done over the past five years of the BJP rule in the state, Dhami said that is the difference between the two parties.

"You (Congress) only laid the foundation stones of projects during your time and left them at that while we begin and complete them," Dhami said at a virtual rally here.

Work is underway on a war footing on all the projects that the BJP took up after taking over whether it is Kedarnath reconstruction, Chardham all weather road or the much awaited Rishikesh-Karnaprayag rail line, he said. The Centre under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has sanctioned projects worth Rs 1.5 lakh crore for Uttarakhand over the past five years out of which work on many has already begun, Dhami said "Two phases of reconstruction work at Kedarnath has already been completed while work has already begun on projects to be taken up in the third. The reconstruction work at Badrinath in accordance with a masterplan is also in the process," he said. The Dehradun airport has been upgraded already from its earlier capacity of accomodating 250 people at a time to 1600 people, and it is now on its way to becoming a world class airport. He mentioned the unprecedented work done in the road sector and credited the "double engine" government for all the infrastructural projects initiated over the past five years. Dhami also attacked the Congress for its "disregard" for the armed forces saying how its leaders had called late Gen Bipin Rawat a "streetside hooligan" and how the party was now installing his posters at its poll rallies for electoral gains.

Pushkar Singh Dhami

Records show Bihar Doc took five Covid vaccine shots, probe ordered

Patna, Jan 18 (PTI): The Bihar government has ordered an investigation after records showed that a Patna-based civil surgeon was administered five shots of the COVID-19 vaccine.

The civil surgeon, Dr Vibha Kumari Singh, however, said she had taken the jab thrice as per rules.

Singh also claimed that someone else managed to get vaccine shots using her PAN card details, and called for a probe.

According to the CoWIN portal, she received the first dose on January 28, 2021 and was fully vaccinated by March last year.Government records showed Singh was also jabbed on February 6, 2021 using her PAN card information, and for the fourth time on June 17 that year.

Cartoonist Narayan Debnath, creator of 'Bantul The Great',dies

Kolkata, Jan 18 (PTI):

Cartoonist Narayan Debnath, the creator of Bengali comic characters 'Bantul The Great', 'Handa Bhonda' and 'Nonte Phonte', died in Kolkata on Tuesday morning after a prolonged illness, said the hospital where he was undergoing treatment.

He was 97 and survived by two sons, a daughter and a granddaughter.

Debnath, who was handed the Padma Shri award while undergoing treatment at the hospital, died at 10.15 am, his family said.

He was put on ventilator support as his condition deteriorated after being admitted to the hospital on December 24.

Cartoonist Narayan Debnath

In his career spanning over six decades, Debnath created comic characters such as 'Bantul The Great', 'Handa Bhonda' and 'Nonte Phonte' — all of which are household names in Bengal.

Condoling the death, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Debnath brightened several lives through his works, cartoons and illustrations.

"His works reflected his intellectual prowess. The characters he created will remain eternally popular. Pained by his demise. Condolences to his family and admirers. Om Shanti," Modi tweeted.

The first comic strip of 'Handa Bhonda' was published in 1962 in Bengali children's magazine 'Suktara', brought out by Deb Sahitya Kutir.

It was followed by 'Bantul The Great' (1965) and 'Nonte Phonte' (1969).

Debnath continued working till the age of 93 when the last comic strip of 'Nonte Phonte' was published in the 2017 Durga Puja issue of Suktara.

BRIEF

Care

- **Conakry:** Former Guinean President Alpha Conde left the country for medical treatment in the United Arab Emirates after spending more than four months in the custody of the military junta that overthrew him, witnesses said. No details were given on his diagnosis, though witnesses at the airport in Conakry, the capital. There was no immediate confirmation, though officials had announced earlier that Conde wasn't in good health.

Apologises

- **London:** Prime Minister Boris Johnson's wife, Carrie, was forced to apologise for "momentary lapse" over COVID-19 lockdown rules during a friend's party in 2020, even as the so-called partygate scandal continues to pile pressure on her husband's leadership prospects. The 33-year-old mother of Johnson's one-year-old son Wilfred and one-month-old daughter Romy was pictured hugging her friend during party at a private members' club.

Membership

- **Islamabad:** Pakistan's election body temporarily suspended membership of around 150 federal and provincial lawmakers, including Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry and Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, over their failure to submit details of their assets and liabilities. Last year, at least 154 members were suspended by Election Commission of Pakistan but all of them submitted tax details and their membership restored.

Scraps

- **Brussels:** European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said that she has cancelled her in-person appointments at the European Parliament this week after her driver tested positive for COVID-19. Von der Leyen said she was already in Strasbourg, France, for the plenary when she was told of the news and immediately headed back to European Union headquarters in Brussels.

Dismissed

- **London:** An Indian-origin chief inspector in London's Scotland Yard police force has been dismissed for "gross misconduct" without notice following an investigation by the Metropolitan Police's Directorate of Professional Standards (DPS). Davinder Kandohla was found to have breached Standards of Professional Behaviour, amounting to "gross misconduct", in relation to honesty and integrity, authority, respect and courtesy.

Convicted

- **Paris:** French far-right presidential candidate ric Zemmour was convicted of inciting racial hatred over 2020 comments he made about unaccompanied migrant children. A Paris court ordered Zemmour to pay a fine of 10,000 euros (more than USD 11,000) and several thousand euros in damages to anti-racist groups.

Volcanic ash delays aid to Tonga as scale of damage emerges

Wellington, Jan 18 (AP):

Thick ash on an airport runway was delaying aid deliveries to the Pacific island nation of Tonga, where significant damage was being reported days after a huge undersea volcanic eruption and tsunami.

New Zealand's military is sending much-needed drinking water and other supplies, but said the ash on the runway will delay the flight at least a day. A towering ash cloud since Saturday's eruption had prevented earlier flights. New Zealand also sent a navy ship to Tonga Tuesday with another planned to leave later in the day and pledged an initial 1 million New Zealand dollars ($680,000) toward recovery efforts.

Satellite image of Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha befor and after volcano eruption in Tonga.

Australia sent a navy ship from Sydney to Brisbane to prepare for a support mission if needed.

Communications with Tonga have been extremely limited, but New Zealand and Australia sent military surveillance flights to assess the damage, with aerial photos showing the vibrant Tongan landscape transformed by the ash into a gray moonscape.

UN humanitarian officials and Tonga's government 'report significant infrastructural damage around Tongatapu,' UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

'There has been no contact from the Ha'apai Group of islands, and we are particularly concerned about two small low-lying islands Mango and Fonoi following surveillance flights confirming substantial property damage,' Dujarric said.

New Zealand's High Commission in Tonga also reported 'significant damage' along the western coast of the main island of Tongatapu, including to resorts and along the waterfront area. The commission said Tonga police had confirmed two deaths from the tsunami, including one who was a British national.

Satellite images captured the spectacular eruption, with a plume of ash, steam and gas rising like a giant mushroom above the South Pacific. Tsunami waves of about 80 centimeters (2.7 feet) crashed into Tonga's shoreline, and crossed the Pacific, causing minor damage from New Zealand to Santa Cruz, California. The eruption set off a sonic boom that could be heard as far away as Alaska.

AIR STRIKES DAMAGE

Yemenis inspect the damage following overnight air strikes by the Saudi-led coalition targeting the Huthi rebel-held capital Sanaa, on Tuesday.

Djokovic's deportation exposes Australian border debate

An office for immigration into Australia at an embassy.

Melbourne, Jan 18 (AP):

Weary after two years of some of the harshest COVID-19 border restrictions in the world, many Australians wanted Novak Djokovic kicked out of their country for travelling to a tennis tournament in their country without being vaccinated.

But the backdrop to the government's tough line on the defending Australian Open champion and Prime Minister Scott Morrison's description of the expulsion as a "decision to keep our borders strong" dates to nearly a decade ago. It also shines a light on Australia's complicated, and strongly criticized, immigration and border policies.

Back in 2013, the border issue wasn't unvaccinated foreigners like Djokovic but thousands of asylum seekers from Asia, the Middle East and Africa who flocked to Australia on rickety fishing boats from Indonesian ports.

Now, with the next election due by May, Djokovic has become the new focus of the government's claim to a tough stance on border protection that leaders hope will win votes. The opposition, meanwhile, argues that Djokovic has exposed government failures in border control and its pandemic response.

Refugee activists say the tennis star's treatment exposes the harsh treatment of dozens of others detained because of visa issues.

Widespread anger followed a Djokovic post on social media on January 4 that said he had been granted exemption permission to fly quarantine-free to Australia to play tennis. He had been approved by an automated visa application process days earlier.

Djokovic arrived at a time when some Australians' overseas relatives still aren't able to visit because their COVID-19 vaccine types aren't recognized by Australian authorities.

Sri Lanka's leader vows rights reforms as debt crisis looms

Colombo, Jan 18 (AP):

Sri Lanka's leader on Tuesday promised human rights reforms and justice for missing persons from the country's civil war, after years of resisting calls for such measures.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa was speaking before a new session of Parliament as the Sri Lankan government looks for international support in dealing with a heavy fiscal and debt crisis.

We reject racism. What this government wants is to equally protect the honour and rights of all citizens, Rajapaksa said.

Therefore I urge politicians who still incite people against each other for political gains to refrain from doing so. The Sri Lankan leader added he was willing to take suggestions from the international community on human rights issues.

Gotabaya Rajapaksa

Since being elected president in 2019, Rajapaksa has sidestepped calls to investigate missing persons from the civil war. Families of victims allege that many of the missing were taken by the military for being involved with separatist rebels toward the end of the conflict.

Government forces crushed the Tamil Tiger fighters in 2009 ending the movement for an independent state for minority Tamils. Both sides were accused of grave human rights violations.

In earlier speeches, Rajapaksa has projected himself as a leader of the majority Buddhist Sinhalese and emphasised the fact that he was elected predominantly by their votes.

The Sri Lankan government's refusal to address or investigate human rights and war crimes allegations from the civil war has been a source of tension in its relations with many Western countries and neighbouring India.

Sri Lanka is currently negotiating financial assistance from India, which has 80 million ethnic Tamils itself and has looked to support the rights of minority Tamils in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka's foreign reserves were around USD 1.6 billion at the beginning of 2022, barely enough for a few weeks of imports. Drawing from these funds, the government was making arrangements to pay for matured bonds worth USD 500 million this week.

Sri Lanka also has foreign debt obligations exceeding USD 7 billion this year.

The currency shortage has resulted in severe shortages of imported goods and people standing in long queues for milk powder, cooking gas, kerosene and other essentials. In his speech, Rajapaksa promised to reform a harsh anti-terrorism law that has been in force since 1979 that allows for lengthy detentions without trial. He also promised to return over military-occupied lands from the civil war to their civilian owners. According to initial UN estimates about 100,000 people were killed in the quarter-century civil war. Another UN experts panel said later some 40,000 ethnic Tamil civilians may have been killed in just the last few months of fighting.

Illegal gold mining stokes indigenous divisions

Brasilia, Jan 18 (AP):

The mining encampment that stretches across a mountainside in Brazil's Amazon is dotted with plastic tarpaulin covers. Under them, dozens of men toil in rocky pits, excavating sacks of ore to be transported by truck. Gold will be extracted from the ore.

Of all places this squatter settlement shouldn't exist, it's here: in Brazil's northernmost Roraima state that doesn't permit gold prospecting, inside one of the nation's Indigenous reserves where mining activity is illegal and on the flanks of this mountain Serra do Atola that traditional leaders of the Macuxi people hold sacred.

Nevertheless, a recent visit by The Associated Press at the invitation of local leaders from the Maturuca and Waromada villages found the illegal mining site back up and running just months after authorities shut it down.

Wildcat gold miners transport sacks of rocks out of the Raposa Serra do Sol Indigenous reserve where gold mining is illegal in Roraima state, Brazil.

That the miners have returned in droves underscores the insatiable lure of gold and the fact they are being encouraged to keep up their work including by the nation's president.

Such relentless pressure is rekindling long-standing divisions in local communities here on the Raposa Serra do Sol reserve about the best path forward for their collective well-being. Some local leaders see gold mining and other extractive activities as a potential boon for the area that could bring jobs and investments in one of Brazil's poorest states. Others see the mining as defiling the land on the reserve by polluting the waters, stripping bare the land, as well as upending centuries-old cultural traditions.

An AP investigation found that illegal landing strips and unauthorized airplanes have helped miners carry out tons of gold mined on Indigenous lands. The gold ends up in the hands of brokers, some of whom are under investigation by authorities for receiving gold from illegal mining. The gold is refined in Sao Paulo before becoming part of the global supply chain where it is used in products such as smartphones and computers.

As Shiite rivals jostle in Iraq, Sunni, Kurdish parties targeted

Baghdad, Jan 18 (AFP):

As Iraq's Shiite leaders jostle to secure a majority in the newly-elected parliament, Sunni and Kurdish minorities have been caught up in a spate of warning grenade attacks, analysts say.

In recent days, unknown attackers have hurled grenades at Kurdish and Sunni targets including political party offices and a lawmaker's home — groups that could help Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr win the critical parliamentary majority needed to make his choice of prime minister.

"It is a way of punishing the forces that have allied with Moqtada Sadr to form a parliamentary majority," said political scientist Ihsan al-Shammari.

"Their message is political," he added, calling the attacks "part of the mode of political pressure" adopted by some groups. In multi-confessional and multi-ethnic Iraq, the formation of governments has involved complex negotiations since the 2003 US-led invasion toppled dictator Saddam Hussein.

Iraqi onlookers gather at the scene of an explosion outside the Kurdish Cihan Bank in the Karrada district.

No single party holds an outright majority, so the next leader will be voted in by whichever coalition can negotiate allies to become the biggest bloc — which then elects Iraq's president, who then appoints a prime minister.

In previous parliaments, parties from Iraq's Shiite majority have struck compromise deals to work together and form a government, with an unofficial system whereby the prime minister is Shiite, the president is a Kurd and the speaker of parliament is Sunni.

North Korean missile tests signal return to brinkmanship

Seoul, Jan 18 (AP):

Grappling with pandemic difficulties and US-led sanctions over his nuclear ambitions, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un could be reviving his 2017 playbook of nuclear and missile brinkmanship to wrest concessions from Washington and his neighbours. North Korea's short-range missile launches were its fourth round of missile tests this month and signaled a refusal to be ignored by the Biden administration, which has focused more on confronting bigger adversaries such as China and Russia. The tests could also reflect a growing urgency in its need for outside relief after its economy decayed further under the severe sanctions and two years of pandemic border closures, experts say. The two missiles launched near the capital, Pyongyang, followed a resumption of railroad freight traffic with China that had been suspended over pandemic concerns, in what is likely an attempt to revive the desperate economy. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said that trade between Dandong in China and Sinuiju in North Korea will be maintained while pandemic controls stay in place.

While North Korea is likely to continue showcasing its weapons in the coming weeks, it could keep things relatively quiet before the opening of the February Winter Olympics in China, its main ally and economic lifeline, launching known short-range missiles rather than more provocative systems.

Texas synagogue hostage taker had stayed in area shelters

Colleyville, Jan 18 (AP):

An armed man who took four people hostage during a 10-hour standoff at a Texas synagogue had spent time in area homeless shelters in the two weeks leading up to the attack, and was dropped off at one by someone he appeared to know.

Malik Faisal Akram, a 44-year-old British national who authorities identified as the hostage-taker, was brought to the shelter in downtown Dallas on Jan. 2 by a man who hugged him and had conversations with him, said Wayne Walker, CEO and pastor of OurCalling, which provides services to homeless people.

He was dropped off by somebody that looked like he had a relationship with him, said Walker, who said they'd turned photos and video over to the FBI.

Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker told CBS Mornings that he'd let Akram into Congregation Beth Israel on Saturday morning because he appeared to need shelter. The synagogue is in Colleyville, a city of about 26,000 people located 30 miles (48 kilometers) northwest of Dallas. Cytron-Walker said the man wasn't threatening or suspicious at first, but later he heard a gun click as he was praying.

The rabbi and three other men were participating in the service that was being livestreamed when they were taken hostage. The first hostage was released shortly before 5 p.m. Cytron-Walker and two others escaped around 9 p.m., when Cytron-Walker threw a chair at the gunman.

The exit wasn't too far away, Cytron-Walker said. I told them to go. I threw a chair at the gunman, and I headed for the door. And all three of us were able to get out without even a shot being fired.

Akram was killed after the hostages ran out. Authorities have declined to say who shot Akram, saying it was still under investigation. Video of the standoff's end from Dallas TV station WFAA showed people running out a door of the synagogue, and then a man holding a gun opening the same door just seconds later before he turned around and closed it. Moments later, several shots and then an explosion could be heard.

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Wealthy richer than past royalty

Combined fortunes of billionaires in India more than doubled during the Coronavirus pandemic and their count shot up by 39 percent to 142. Also, the wealth of the 10 richest persons in the country is enough to fund school and higher education of children in the country for 25 years, the inequality survey released by Oxfam India at the World Economic Forum's (WEF) online Davos Agenda summit, noted. If the wealth of the first 100 billionaires is accumulated, they could fund the National Rural Livelihood Mission scheme, responsible for creating Self Help Groups for women, for the next 365 years. The present-day wealthy billionaires of India are far richer than erstwhile royal rulers like 'maharajas' and 'nawabs' of past princely states. But it appears that wealth is generated by exploitation and not shared for India's progress. It further said that the inadequate governmental expenditure on health, education and social security has gone hand-in-hand with a rise in the privatisation of health and education, thus making a full and secure COVID-19 recovery out of reach for the common citizen. Growing dependence on digital processes in the last two years of Coronavirus pandemic has given rise to the risks posed by cybersecurity threats globally, while at the same time widespread youth disillusionment, digital inequality and fracture of inter-state relations are some of the key risks for the Indian economy. Risks of growing social cleavages will continue to be exacerbated by the pandemic and experts are cautioning that the global economic recovery will likely be uneven and potentially volatile over the coming years. Fracture of interstate relations, debt crises in large economies, widespread youth disillusionment, failure of technology governance and digital inequality are the top five risks identified for the Indian economy by the WEF's executive survey. While the average wealth of an Indian household is worth Rs 9,83,010, the report said that the bottom 50 percent of the country's population own 'almost nothing', with an average wealth of Rs 66,280. The middle class is also relatively poor, owning 29.5 percent of the total wealth of the country. The wealthiest 1 percent population of India alone owns 33 percent of the country's total wealth. Deregulation and liberalisation policies implemented for India's economy since the mid-1980s has led to one of the most extreme increases in income and wealth inequality observed in the world. Without adequate focus on policy change, India faces a threat of leaving behind large part of its population in this road to recovery, not to mention bear the brunt of inequalities even further. India needs to revisit the labour distribution in country and rethink formal and informal structures at a policy level. There is a need to enhance the social security mechanisms for informal workers. The rationale for equality may seem obvious, but it means nothing unless justice is the basis of development. The need for careful planning has increased because the factors to be taken into account are more complex now. Earlier a model based on resources and their exploitation may have been the norm, now one also has to think in terms of needs and the carbon space available to provide them.

Electric aviation dreams

Jet fuel or ATF price this week was hiked by 4.2 percent - the second increase in rates this month warranted by firming international oil prices, but petrol and diesel prices remained unchanged for the 72nd day in a row. Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) price was hiked by Rs 3,232.87 per kilolitre, or 4.25 percent, to Rs 79,294.91 per kl in the national capital, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. This is bound to affect air travel ticket prices. Flying will become expensive. Several large companies and startups across the world are dreaming the idea for development of electric powered aircrafts for short haul flights and city air taxis. But it is unlikely to make air travel cheaper as long-haul flights will continue to use oil powered engines. Electric aircraft are powered by electricity via one or more electric motors which drive the propellers. In this type of aircraft, electricity is supplied via a variety of methods. The electric aircraft industry is currently in the introduction stage of the industry life cycle and is expected to witness its growth stage during 2021-2030. Having all-electric aircraft for short-haul flights would indeed be great, and it would provide critical services to millions of travellers living in small towns. Still, it would make only a minor contribution to what is truly a gigantic business. Air traffic surged from 28 billion passenger-kilometres (pkm) in 1950 to 2.8 trillion pkm by the year 2000, a 100-fold rise. It then rose to nearly 9 trillion pkm before the pandemic intervened. Trillions of passenger-kilometres could be added so rapidly thanks to the advent of wide-body airplanes carrying 300 to 500 passengers per plane between the continents. Large turbofan engines powering these planes are fuelled by aviation kerosene that provides nearly 12,000 watt-hours per kilogram. In contrast, today's best commercial Li-ion batteries deliver less than 300 Wh per kg, or just 40th the energy density of kerosene. Even when taking into account the higher efficiency of electric motors, the effective energy densities go down to about 20th part. That's more than better batteries can bridge within the next decade or two. Moreover, the airline industry requires massive investments. Pre-COVID estimates indicated that between 2018 and 2038 the combined market for new planes, together with the cost of their maintenance, repair, and associated training services, would be on the order of USD 16 trillion. Such enormous outlays require long planning horizons, embedded in commitments to specific designs and aircraft orders. This means that the industry's next few decades have already been decided. Because the average lifespan of both single-aisle and wide-body planes is just over 20 years, forthcoming purchases of new planes will expand the existing fleet at least by half and all of the large airliners will rely on oil jet engines.

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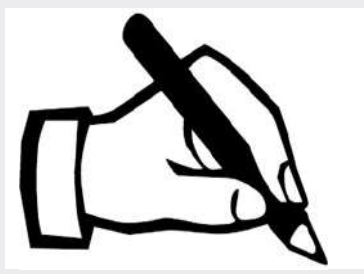
The letters can be edited or rewritten for clarity of thoughts.

ICE SCULPTURE FESTIVAL

A family visits the Ice Sculpture Festival in the Pustevny mountains, in East Moravia, Czech Republic.

Tough time ahead due to non-performing assets of banks

SATISH SINGH



The Reserve Bank of India in its second financial stability report has projected an increase in the Non-Performing Asset (NPA) of banks. The central bank believes that the Omicron variant of the corona virus can have a negative impact on the economy. According to the Reserve Bank, rising inflation is also one of the reasons to mounting NPA. According to the Financial Stability Report, the NPA of banks may increase from 8.1 percent to 9.5 percent by September 2022, which was 6.9 percent in September 2021.

However, according to the Governor of the Reserve Bank, Shakti Kant Das, the financial position of the banks as of now is good. Banks have performed well during the pandemic period due to the expedient policies of the government and the policy support of the Reserve Bank of India and relevant measures taken by the central bank during the pandemic. During this, the financial market has also remained stable. Therefore, the Reserve Bank is confident that the banks will easily deal with the NPA. Earlier, in its first financial stability report, the Reserve Bank of India had said that by March 2022, the GNPA of banks could be 9.80 percent and if the situation worsens then it can reach the level of 11.22 percent.

By March 2021, the NPA of scheduled commercial banks had come down by Rs 61,180 crore to Rs 8.34 lakh crore, as against Rs 8.96 lakh crore in March 2020. In March 2021, the gross NPA (GNPA) of banks was 7.5 percent of total advances, while the net NPA were 2.4 percent. This shows that the banks performed well during the corona pandemic. The GNPA of listed banks stood at Rs 8.11 lakh crore in June 2021 and declined by 2.5 percent over the previous year, as compared to Rs 8.32 lakh crore in June 2020. Public sector banks performed better than private banks on this parameter. Their GNPA declined by 4.2 percent, while that of private sector banks rose by 3.3 percent. The net NPA of public sector banks declined by 4 percent during this period, while the net NPA of private sector banks grew at the rate of 22 percent.

Almost all public sector banks have performed well in the first quarter of the current financial year as well. During this period, the collective net profit of listed banks grew by 61 percent year-on-year basis, while the net profit of public sector banks grew by 140 percent year-on-year to Rs 14,012 crore from Rs 5,847 crore.

At the same time, the net profit of private sector banks increased by 28 percent to Rs 18,083 crore from Rs 14,127 crore. In the area of operating profit also, the performance of public sector banks has been better. Their operating profit grew 6 percent, nearly doubling that of private banks. In the June quarter, fee income of public sector banks grew by 35 percent, while that of private sector banks by 20.5 percent.

It has been written in the preface of the Financial Stability Report that the Indian economy was devastated due to the second wave of Corona virus, but now the recovery of the economy is clearly visible, but it is believed that the Omicron variant of Corona virus can again damage the Indian economy badly, as its proliferation capacity is very fast.

Even though the percentage of death from omicron variant is low, but due to its unprecedented ability to spread, it can prove to be more dangerous than the delta variant. For example, if 100 people have been infected with the Delta variant and 10 percent of them die, then 20 to 30 times more people i.e., 2000 to 3000 people will be infected with the Omicron variant. if only 1 percent of 2000, infected with this variant die, the death toll will be 20, which will be twice the number of people who died from the delta variant.

According to the latest Financial Stability Report of the Reserve Bank of India, private investment has still not reached the level before the corona period, which shows that the income of the common people has also not reached the level before the corona period and they are spending less. Rising inflation is also putting a dent in the pockets of the common people. People are not able to spend due to low income and inflation. To overcome this to some extent, there is a need to coordinate between demand and supply, but the relevant mechanisms are not able to take further action on this front. Mismanagement is also one of the potent reasons to mounting inflation.

Due to higher imports than exports, the current account deficit (CAD) in the second quarter of the current financial year stood at USD 9.3 billion, which is 1.3 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP), whereas current account deficit in the first quarter of the current financial year stood at USD 6.6 billion, which was 0.9 percent of GDP. According to the Reserve Bank of India, the widening of the current account deficit in the second quarter of the financial year 2021-22 is due to the widening of the trade deficit to USD 44.4 billion, from USD 30.7 billion in the previous quarter. The current account deficit is likely to be above USD 25 billion in the third quarter of FY 2021-22, while the current account deficit in the financial year 2021-22 is likely to be 40 to 45 billion dollars or 1.4 percent of GDP.

The increase in trade deficit and current account deficit is increasing the pressure on the economy and due to this the government is not able to spend the required amount on various important items, due to which demand is not increasing. Since the increase in demand accelerates economic activity, therefore, the pace of recovery in the economy is slow. Due to increasing pressure on the economy, there will be a decrease in the income of the businessman and the common man, due to which people will not be able to pay the instalments and interest of their loan and due to this, there may be an increase in the NPA level.

It is true that the laws or institutions engaged in the recovery of NPA have not been able to give the expected results in the matter of recovery of NPA, but it is also true that recovery of NPA has already accelerated. In the last 6 years, banks have been successful in recovering more than Rs 5 lakh crore of NPA and can be expected to give better results on this front in the coming days as well.

In the current perspective, the possibility of increase in the NPA in the Financial Stability Report by the Reserve Bank of India can be justified, because at present, omicron virus variant is growing rapidly in every part of the country and inflation is also increasing. It is also true that there has been a significant improvement in the performance of banks in the recent past. Some big banks have also been successful in raising capital from the market.

In such a situation, it can be said that even though there is a possibility of increase in the NPA of the banks, but there will be no negative impact of the increased NPA on the banks, because they will tackle this easily.

(Satish Singh is senior columnist and editor of in-house Journal of SBI 'Aarthik Darpan'.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ECI extends

Election Commission of India (ECI) has extended the moratorium on open public rallies except with a relief that indoor meetings with presence of 300 people or 50 percent of the hall can be held with full protocols of COVID-19 and the onus of following norms shall be on political parties. The very much purpose of holding public rallies is to convince the floating or undecided voters in their favour. As far as 300 people are concerned all will be dedicated workers of the party and the undecided voters will remain untouched.It is a welcome move of ECI due to safeguarding public health had been prioritised over compaigning. Extending ban on political rallies till January 22 would definitely be frustrating for major political parties and their intending candidates and such curbs would mean shelving all plans to demonstrate support base as had been the norm in the past contrary to obvious dejection for the political class, for those citizens who fear that mass gathering of public at Election event would fan translation of the virus disease, the ECI's decision would be welcomed wholeheartedly for none would relish for deterioration of the pandemic situation as it would be consequently leading to curtailment of livelihood activities.as the country had faced previously also. Similar to all the virus containment measures, effective enforcement of the ban or relaxation would depend depend on diligence of officials who are entrusted to ensure that political parties comply with COVID-19 norms. Regardless of directing state and district authorities concerned to ensure full compliance with the standing orders, there is strong possibility that major political parties would find an escape route rather than acknowledge that the curbs are for the safety of all as could be evident from the ECI serving show cause notice to the Samajwadi party which reportedly held a large public meeting in the compound of the party office in UP, defying covid norms.

Yash Pal Ralhan, Jalandhar

Power disparity

Subansiri Hydroelectric Power project when completed will churn for the region 2000 megawatts of electricity. In a recent news it was reported that Assam will only get a meagre 25 megawatts of free electricity whereas Arunachal Pradesh will bag 262 megawatts of free electricity from the proposed 2000 megawatts. Arunachal getting 262 megawatts is not a concern but giving peanuts to Assam which has a population of more than 3 crore is kind of disrespectful. The trouble will be borne equal by both the states, then why this disparity between the two figures? Assam needs it more than Arunachal. I think it will be better that both the states talk this over a cup of tea.

Noopur Baruah, Tezpur

WHAT THEY TWEET!

Prakash Mallya @PrakashMallya
To test our brain's ability to multitask, try this out: 1. First count from one to ten out loud. 2. Then recite the alphabet from A to J out loud. 3. Now try combining them by rapidly switching between them: recite A1, B2, C3, and so forth out loud. What did you observe?

Diva Jain@DivaJain2
To all the politicians falling over themselves to welcome Tesla to their respective states, here is a primer on how China does it - 1. Subsidized land for setting up a "manufacturing" plant and NOT an "assembly" plant. 2. Cheap Govt backed funding to tune of $1.3 billion

Rezina Sultana @RezinaSultana9
My bro in law is a scientist, got award from the state govt, 10th, 12th topper, 1st class ,gold medalist , is a fantastic cook and often cooks Biriyani for his wife and family. Grow up Man.

Yusuf Unjhawala @YusufDFI
From PM's security to teleprompter or whatever, every effing thing is politicised. Tu tu main main, attack, counter-attack, toolkit. No side is a saint, so spare me your replies if you are going to finger point, irrespective of which side you are.

Ajayita@DoctorAjayita
Koi utha ke patak do yahan! Portofino, Italy.

Harsha Bhogle @bhogleharsha
Rishabh Pant's progress as a cricketer over the last 4 years has been extraordinary; as a matchwinning batsman, which gets talked about a lot, but even more so in recent times as a keeper which has been heartwarming. That might already be a lot on his plate for now.

Radhika Gupta@iRadhikaGupta
Perfect businesses exist on Excel. Perfect lives exist on Instagram. Perfect portfolios exist on Twitter. The real world has mistakes, ugliness, heartaches, assumptions gone wrong, gigantic failures, and yes, loss.Benchmark wisely.

BRIEF

Partners

- **New Delhi:** Ohmium International has partnered with IIT Madras Research Park (IITMRP) to accelerate Polymer electrolyte membrane (PEM) electrolyzer performance enhancements. CEO Arne Ballentine said it will enable rapidly translating advances in performance.

Licensing

- **New Delhi:** Branded jewellery maker Renaissance Global Ltd on Tuesday said it has inked a licensing agreement with the National Football League (NFL) of the US, to collaborate to design a unique branded jewellery collection using NFL intellectual property. The unique collection developed under the agreement will be marketed to consumers in the US.

Tickets

- **New Delhi:** EaseMyTrip on Tuesday said it has entered into a partnership with regional airline Flybig to sell the latter's tickets exclusively on its platform. EaseMyTrip CEO Nishant Pitti said air travel is witnessing a major boom and we are delighted to partner Flybig.

Float

- **New Delhi:** Radiant Cash Management Services, an integrated cash logistics player, and online education platform Veranda Learning Solutions have received the go ahead from capital markets regulator Sebi to float their initial public offerings (IPOs). The two companies, filed their preliminary IPO papers with Sebi between October and November and obtained the observation letter during January 10-11, update with Sebi showed.

Acquires

- **New Delhi:** Nazara Technologies on Tuesday said it will acquire a 55 per cent stake in programmatic advertising and monetisation company Datawrkz for about Rs 124 crore. Nazara CEO Manish Agarwal said deep data processing will emerge as winners.

Expand

- **New Delhi:** Agritech firm Arya.ag on Tuesday said it has raised USD 60 million (around Rs 450 crore) in equity and debt from investors to expand its business. It also raised debt financing from the US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), among others.

Bidding for CBM blocks to start on Feb 15, end on Mar 15

New Delhi, Jan 18 (PTI):

Bidding for 15 blocks offered in the first coal-bed methane (CBM) round in more than a decade will start on February 15 and end on March 15, the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH) said on Tuesday.

Bids under the Special CBM Bid Round-2021, which was launched in September last year, were originally due on February 20, 2022, but the deadline was postponed.

"Bid submission for Special CBM Bid Round-2021 will start on 15th February, 2022 and end on 15th March, 2022," DGH said in a notice.

The government has offered 15 blocks in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh for extracting gas from coal seams (CBM).

This is the first CBM bid round in more than a decade. The last round was held in 2010.

CBM is gas or methane found below coal seams in coal fields. It is similar to natural gas and can be used as fuel to fire power plants, run fertiliser units, or be used as CNG in automobiles.

The maximum number of five coal-bed methane (CBM) blocks have been offered in Madhya Pradesh, and two blocks each in Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Odisha. Three blocks are on offer in Chhattisgarh and one in West Bengal.

The government has awarded 29 CBM blocks in the previous four rounds of bidding.

"Companies are invited to bid for exploration, development and monetisation of 15 CBM blocks likely to contain both conventional and/or unconventional hydrocarbon resources, distributed in the sedimentary basins of India," DGH had said in the notice inviting offers in September last year.

All the 15 blocks are in Category-III basins that hold prospective resources to be explored and discovered.

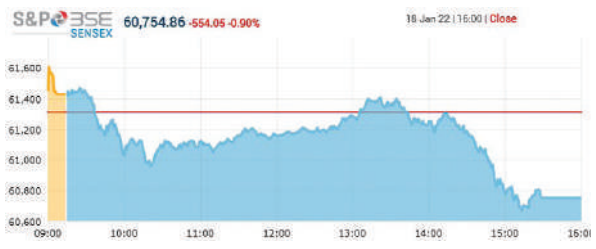
India's sedimentary basins are divided into three categories -- Category-I are basins with reserves being produced and exploited, and Category-II are ones with contingent resources to be developed and monetised.

Under the current CBM round, bidders offering to do maximum exploration work will be awarded the block, DGH had said.

The bid round is part of the government's attempt to raise domestic oil and gas production to cut reliance on imports. India imports roughly 85 per cent of its oil needs and about half of the gas requirement.

Prior to the CBM launch, the government offered 21 conventional oil and gas blocks for bidding in the sixth round under the Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP). Last date for bidding for these blocks is February 15, 2022.

Sensex tanks 550 pts; Nifty slumps below 18,150



Mumbai, Jan 18 (PTI):

Equity benchmark Sensex plunged by 554.05 points on Tuesday, tracking deep losses in realty, auto and metal stocks amid widespread selling pressure in global markets. The 30-share index slumped by 554.05 points or 0.90 per cent to end at 60,754.86. The broader NSE Nifty fell by 195.05 points or 1.07 per cent to 18,113.05.

Maruti was the top loser in the Sensex pack, shedding over 4 per cent, followed by Tech Mahindra, HCL Tech, Tata Steel, IndusInd Bank and L&T. Sectorally, Basic Materials, Telecom, Auto, Realty and Metal indices fell up to 2.76 per cent.

On the other hand, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Kotak Bank Dr Reddy's, Titan and Nestle India were the gainers.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul ended with losses, while Shanghai was positive. Stock exchanges in Europe were witnessing heavy selling pressure in mid-session deals.

Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude surged 1.13 per cent to USD 87.46 per barrel.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital market, as they sold shares worth Rs 855.47 crore on Monday, according to stock exchange data.

In Asian trading, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 advanced 0.7% to 28,333.52 as the government reported machinery orders rose in November as private investment and manufacturing activity improved during a lull in coronavirus outbreaks. Shipbuilders orders surged 170%.

Rupee slumps 33 paise at 74.58 against USD, gold declines Rs 23

Mumbai, Jan 18 (PTI):

Continuing its fall for the third consecutive session, the rupee on Tuesday slumped 33 paise to close at 74.58 (provisional) against the US dollar as strong American currency and elevated crude oil prices continue to weigh on investor sentiments.

Forex traders said muted domestic equities and dollar buying by banks on behalf of importers also dragged the local unit down.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency opened at 74.36 against the American currency and witnessed an intra-day low of 74.60 during the session.

The rupee finally settled at 74.58, down 33 paise over its previous close of 74.25 against the greenback.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.09 per cent up at 95.34.

"Higher crude oil prices and risk-off sentiments following a surge in bond yields are enough for the rupee to become the worst-performing currency among Asian currencies," said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities. Parmar added that "strong dollar demands have been seen from oil importers after Brent crude oil prices started quoting above USD 87 a barrel on the back of supply worries". "Going ahead, the pullback rally in USD/INR may continue for a few more days as sentiments turn favourable. Spot USD/INR has crossed and sustained above the near-term hurdle of 74.50, the 100 days simple average, has now opened the way for 75 levels while support has been shifted to 74.25," he said.

Gold price in the national capital on Tuesday dipped Rs 23 to Rs 47,814 per 10 grams, in line with weak international precious metal prices, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal settled at Rs 47,837 per 10 grams.

Silver was flat at Rs 61,835 per kg from Rs 61,836 per kg in the previous trade.

Jewellery industry urges Govt to reduce GST to 1.25%

- **Deposits accumulated by the banks are at around 11.1 tonnes**

Mumbai, Jan 18 (PTI):

The All India Gem and Jewellery Domestic Council (GJC) on Tuesday urged the government to reduce the rate of GST (goods and services tax) to 1.25 per cent.

In its pre-Budget 2022-23 recommendations to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, GJC has sought a cumulative GST rate of 1.25 per cent based on the revenue equivalence principle on gold, precious metals, gems and articles of jewellery made of such goods, the apex industry body said in a statement.

Currently, the GST rate for gems and jewellery is 3 per cent. The national industry apex body has also urged FM to raise the PAN card limit to Rs 5 lakh from Rs 2 lakh, as many households in rural India do not hold PAN cards and face difficulty in arranging minimum required jewellery in times of need, especially post-pandemic. GJC has urged the government that suitable clarification be issued on the minimum quantity of gold, which an individual can deposit under the gold monetisation scheme (GMS), without being questioned by any departmental authorities.

Further, the industry body requested that the EMI facility for the purchase of 22K gold jewellery should be allowed to the gems and jewellery industry, which in turn shall lead to a substantial growth of the business of the industry after the pandemic.

"Our industry has suffered a lot during these harsh times of the pandemic, and it is also identified as one of the 'stressed sectors' in KV Kamath's report.

"Hence, we have proposed changes in Section 40A of the Income Tax Act so that the existing daily cash limit of Rs 10,000 per day be increased to Rs 1,00,000 per day," GJC Chairman Ashish Pethe said.

GJC has also urged the government to waive off the bank commission (1-1.5 per cent) on the purchase of jewellery through credit cards, thus ensuring a good boost to the 'Digital India' for the gems and jewellery industry, he said.

Sony India announces the latest addition to its 1000X series

New Delhi, Jan 18:

Sony India announces the new WF-1000XM4 – the latest addition to the truly wireless category in the critically acclaimed 1000X series. The WF-1000XM4 earbuds take industry-leading noise cancelling and audio quality to the next level. Made to fit every ear, they offer a personalised experience that adjust to every situation. The WF-1000XM4 features industry leading noise cancellation technology. Personally, developed by Sony, the Integrated Processor V1 takes noise cancellation performance of Sony's acclaimed QN1e chip even higher. It also features high performance dual noise sensor microphones for excellent noise cancellation. A newly designed 6mm driver unit with a 20% increase in magnet volume also improves the WF-1000XM4's noise cancelling capabilities. The increase in magnet volume and the high compliance diaphragm gives improved performance in low frequencies and enhances noise cancelling by generating a high-precision cancellation signal to the low frequency range. It comes with Newly developed Noise Isolation Earbud Tips which provide an improved fit.

Third COVID wave could reduce housing finance cos' assets growth

Mumbai, Jan 18 (PTI):

Crisil Ratings on Tuesday said disruptions due to the third COVID wave could shave off as much as 200 basis points from the growth in assets under management of housing finance companies in the current and next financial years. However, growth would still be higher compared with average of around two per cent over fiscals 2020 and 2021 though slower than the broad-based 24 per cent logged between fiscals 2011 and 2019, it said in a report. "The third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic could slash as much as 200 bps (basis points) off Crisil Ratings' base case estimate of 9-11 per cent Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) in the AUM of housing finance companies for fiscals 2022 and 2023," the report said.

India on path of encouraging ease of doing business

New Delhi, Jan 18 (PTI):

Vedanta Chairman Anil Agarwal on Tuesday said India is on the path of encouraging ease of doing business and stressed that the government is production-minded and not revenue-minded.

In a tweet, Agarwal said trust, talent and technology are the cornerstones of the development.

"We fully agree with PM Shri Narendra Modi Ji at #DavosAgenda that it's the best time to invest in India. It is a great opportunity for entrepreneurs to identify partners and investors to collaborate with them, as general consciousness is that they'd like to work with local entrepreneurs," he tweeted.

Anil Agarwal

He also tweeted, "#India is definitely on the path of encouraging ease of doing business. Govt is production minded and not revenue minded."

Citing India's commitment to deep economic reforms and the ease of doing business, Modi on Monday asserted that this is the best time to invest in the country as policy-making is focused on the needs for the next 25 years for a 'clean and green' as well as 'sustainable and reliable' growth period.

In his special address to the World Economic Forum's online Davos Agenda 2022 summit, Modi underlined a host of reform measures undertaken by his government to stress that it has worked to reduce the administration's interference in business by deregulating many sectors and to clear the way for free trade agreements with different countries. India was once associated with 'License Raj', he had noted highlighting the measures, including the reduction of corporate tax to boost business and doing away with over 25,000 compliance requirements.

Motorola launches the moto g71 5G

New Delhi, Jan 18:

Motorola launched the brand-newmoto g71 5G, a smartphone powered with blazing-fast performance from the latest andIndia's first Snapdragon 695 5G processor, 13 5G Bands for True 5G connectivity and a brilliant 6.4" Amoled FHD+ Display. Priced at just Rs.18,999, moto g715Gis the only 5G smartphone in thesub-20K segment to offer an Amoled + display along with the maximum - 13 5G bands. The Qualcomm Snapdragon 695 5G processor comes withQC Adreno 619 6nm GPU Architecture with GPU Speed up to 975MHz. The chipset outperforms on popular benchmarks like AnTuTu*(v9 – 390K+) & Geek Bench (Single Core* – 700+ | Multicore* – 2550+) making it the fastest 5G processor in the sub 20K segmentin India. (*Source – Internal Testing & Nanoreview.net) Motorola's proprietary "ThinkShield for Mobile" gives business-grade security to the smartphone along with its signature ad-free, bloatware-free, near-Stock Android experience.

Loan moratorium demand for pandemic-hit hospitality sector

New Delhi, Jan 18 (PTI):

Hospitality industry body FHRAI on Tuesday said it has asked Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to consider a moratorium for loans taken by players in the sector and a special resolution framework for restructuring of loans as part of immediate measures to support the pandemic-battered industry.

In a representation submitted to the finance minister, Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) also sought moratorium extension of minimum one year for loans availed under Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) citing the successive waves and continued disruptions have created a volatile economic environment in the sector, making survival the key focus. Also, FHRAI said it has requested Sitharaman for working capital support with a guarantee from the Centre to banks and NBFCs.

It also demanded that Rs 60,000 crore loan guarantee scheme for the COVID-affected sector be notified with immediate effect and that there should be direct benefit transfer of basic pay to employees of the hospitality sector. The demands of the sector come ahead of Union Budget 2022-23, which will be presented in Parliament on February 1.

Commenting on the demands of the sector, FHRAI Vice-President Gurbaxish Singh Kohli said,"We are presently in the midst of the third wave and the industry just will not be able to sustain another storm. In anticipation of the extent of losses and to merely be able to survive the repercussions of the third wave, we request the FM finance minister) to immediately announce special measures for our sector."

Realme unveils the ultimate performer 9i

New Delhi, Jan 18:

Realme, India's fastest-growing smartphone brand, announced its Ultimate Performer, the realme 9i, equipped with the Qualcomm Snapdragon 680 processor. The realme 9i will be the first realme smartphone to be powered by the Qualcomm Snapdragon 680 which is based on 6nm process. The smartphone is power-packed with numerous advanced features like Dart Charging solution, massive battery, excellent nightscape camera, smooth adaptive display, and more to bring an unparalleled experience to young users.

Commenting on the occasion of the launch, Mr. MadhavSheth, CEO realme India, VP, realme, and President, realme International Business Group said, "Every Number series has brought new and exciting innovations and specifications to the users. Staying true to our legacy of 'Dare to leap,'we are elated to introduce the first entrant in the 9 series, the realme 9i, our Ultimate Performer, sporting the first Snapdragon 680, 6nm processor.

&pictures presents 'Khiladi Kumar Festival'

All through January viewers are in for Saturdays filled with thrill, drama, crime and unlimited high-voltage action with &pictures 'Khiladi Kumar Festival', featuring some of the best work of India's favourite Khiladi himself - Akshay Kumar! From trailblazing fight sequences to chartbusters, cult movies Khiladiyon Ka Khiladi, Sabse Bada Khiladi, Khiladi 786 and Mr. & Mrs. Khiladi will make for an ultimate watch list that every action-film enthusiast would look forward to.

Witness your favourite Khiladi fighting with THE Undertaker with the ground-breaking WWE theme as Akshay Kumar yet again proves to be a true heartthrob in Khiladiyon Ka Khiladi. The stunning Rekha is bound to put a love spell on you as she presents the formidable negative character Madame Maya perfectly that led her to win a Filmfare for the same. This complete surprise package of action, chemistry between Akshay Kumar and Rekha, awe-inspiring direction, breath-taking locations and a unique plot is all set to be screened on 22nd January at 8pm.

Let's end the fest on an iconic note! Next on the list is the all-time classic entertainer – Mr. & Mrs. Khiladi! After a host of blockbuster action films, it's time for a perfect David Dhawan comedy drama featuring Akshay Kumar, Kader Khan, Paresh Rawal and Juhi Chawla. The movie will take you on a hilarious quest for love on 29th January and you are bound to be left in splits.

Stay put as the 'Khiladi Kumar Festival' is all set to take you on a full on action-packed joyride till 29th January, only on &pictures!

Rasika to celebrate her birthday on sets of sports drama 'Spike'

Actress Rasika Dugal, who is known for shows like 'Mirzapur', 'Delhi Crime', 'Humorously Yours', will ring in a working birthday as she is currently shooting for the second schedule of the sports drama series 'Spike' in Palampur, Himachal Pradesh.

Commenting on her plans for the day, the actress said, "Being at the center of a sports drama is very exciting for me. On my birthday, I will be shooting for the series 'Spike' in the mountains."

Rasika sees the set as a beautiful contrast for her special day, "The thrilling chaos of a set accompanied by the beautiful calm of the hills. What more could I ask for?"

'Spike' marks Rasika's foray into the genre of sports drama as she will be seen essaying the role of a volleyball coach in the show. As part of her prep, she underwent training for the game for three months in Mumbai.

In addition, Rasika's upcoming projects include the second season of the International Emmy winner 'Delhi Crime' and 'Lord Curzon Ki Haveli'.

'I'm lucky to be blessed with this character'

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

Excerpts of interview:

Tell us something about your character in the show 'Kabhi Kabhie Ittefaq Sey'?

I play the character of the youngest sibling from the Kulshrestha family. I play Chanchal Chacha who is in his mid-forties but considers himself to be a youngster and bonds with the younger generation of the Kulshrestha family. Chanchal is a very jovial and happy-go-lucky kind of person. He is very close to Anubhav and both are more like friends than Chacha & Bhatija.

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

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

Have you taken any particular inspiration for your character? If yes, then tell us why and how has it helped you portray your character?

Like I have mentioned the show is a very feel-good show. It's got a feel-good factor which you have in films made by Basu Chatterjee and Hrishikesh Mukherjee. So to get nuances and understanding of my character, I had to revisit some of their films. And call it a coincidence but a lot of Chanchal Chacha's character is like what I am in real life.

Priyamani opens up on working with Ajay Devgn

National Award-winning actress Priyamani who gained pan-India popularity with the multiple award-winning web series 'The Family Man', opens up on her upcoming films 'Virata Parvam' and 'Maidaan'.

She shares her experience of working with two much-loved actors - Ajay Devgn and Rana Daggubati.

'Baahubali' fame Telugu star Rana and Priyamani worked together in the film 'Virata Parvam', a Venu Udugula directorial based on a real-life incident. Talking about working with the stars from two different film industries, Priyamani told IANS: "It is so exciting for me to work with both of them be it Ajay sir and Rana. I knew Rana for a long time and we met also socially but never worked together. Quite interestingly, in 'Virata Parvam' even though I am not playing the heroine of the film, I am playing a pivotal part.

"The story is set in the '90s and it is about a Naxal movement. There are actions, interesting turns of event and shows a socio-political chapter of that time, which is a reality too. Both of us are playing Naxals in the film and I am his second in command. Also, it was quite interesting that we shot this film, after 'Baahubali'. So it was a huge physical transformation that Rana went through because we all know how huge he became physically during the shoot of Baahubali! Since we had to speak a different dialect of Telugu in the film, we had a lot of rehearsals. I am also looking forward to see how the audience reacts to that"

R&B singer Raveena releases Bollywood-inspired track

New York-based R&B singer Raveena Aurora, who got the attention of the music industry with her debut album 'Lucid' (2019), has released what V Magazine calls an "upbeat track (that) merges Bollywood influences with psychedelic imagery".

Taking to Twitter to share her excitement over the music video shoot for 'Rush', which is what the new track is called, Raveena commented: "I really felt like a real life Bollywood princess in this music video shoot."

'Lucid', incidentally, was named one of the best best albums of 2019 by the music staff of NPR, America's public radio broadcasting corporation.

"I wrote 'Rush' a couple years back and the song was the genesis of me exploring a more intense marriage between Bollywood sounds and the pop/R&B music that I grew up on in America," the singer, who was born and raised in Queens, said in a statement.

According to V Magazine, "'Rush' marries Raveena's delicate vocals with thumping, Indian-inspired production."

Accompanying the newly-released song, is a music video that sees the singer take on the persona of Asha, a Punjabi space princess. V Magazine describes the "must-watch" video as "glorious" and "hypnotising".

"The song and video are centred around a character I created named Asha, a Punjabi space princess," the singer, a graduate of New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, explained in her statement. "(Asha) is transported to a distant planet and learns highly advanced spiritual intelligence from the beings that live there."

The singer concluded: "I wanted to create a campy ode to the colourful '80s Bollywood movies and '70s Western sci-fi movies that I'm obsessed with, complete with a choreographed dance sequence alongside Asha's alien friends."

'Don't feel the burden to be consistently funny'

Actor-comedian Simon Pegg, known for some of the most acclaimed comedy works like "Spaced", "Shaun of the Dead" and "Hot Fuzz", says he does not put himself under the pressure of always being the funny-man, even when he is aware that the audience expects that from him.

Pegg rose to prominence in the late '90s with the Edgar Wright-directed sitcom "Spaced", which the actor created and also starred in.

Over the years, the English star went on to feature in several other comedy films including "The World's End", "Friends" star David Schwimmer-directed "Run Fatboy Run" and the "Ice Age" adventure comedy movie franchise, in which he voices the character of Buck Wild, the one-eyed weasel.

In a Zoom interview with PTI, the 51-year-old actor said he cannot be one of those funny artistes who are forever in the switch-on mode.

"I don't feel the burden to be consistently funny. People do expect a certain something from you. My family, for instance, does not necessarily expect me to be funny, they often find me very unfunny to be honest. That pressure can come from within.

"Funny people who feel the need to be on all the time are probably battling something inside. I don't feel that way. I like being serious and quiet sometimes," he said. Pegg returns to the "Ice Age" franchise with the latest animated adventure, "The Ice Age Adventures of Buck Wild". The Disney+ Original movie is directed by John C Donkin and written by Jim Hecht, Ray DeLaurentis and Will Schifrin from a story by Jim Hecht.

The "Mission: Impossible - Fall Out" star said the global popularity of the "Ice Age" franchise -- which began in 2002 with its three principle and beloved characters Manny, Diego and Sid -- owes a lot to how sincerely it mirrors the realities of families across the world.

HOROSCOPE WEDNESDAY JANUARY 19

Aquarius: Jan 21 – Feb 18

Today is the day to turn dreams into reality and how! With your talent, wit, and intelligence you will make a great impression on everyone's mind, feels Ganesha. Icing on the cake will be the cash inflow. You know your cards and you play them well to your advantage. There may be a catch though, keep yourself guarded, advises Ganesha.

Pisces: Feb 19 – Mar 20

You will communicate with your friends or relatives living abroad today. There is a chance that these communications could translate directly into substantial gain for you. You will find yourself in the mood for socializing. You will likely invite friends over to dinner at your place in the evening, says Ganesha.

Aries: Mar 21 – Apr 20

Today, you will feel mushy and forlorn. You will make special efforts to strengthen your relationships. You look upon commitment as a security for the future. As a result, you will develop strong, long-term bondings.

Taurus: Apr 21 – May 21

Be prepared for taking instant decisions and acting promptly on them. Today you are likely to meet several such situations Ganesha is pleased to see that you have the acumen and experience to deal with such contingencies. You will have no trouble finding the right solutions and seeing things through. Your exemplary managing skills will be noticed, appreciated and admired.

Gemini: May 22 – June 21

You will be faced with a slew of demands from various people today, and you will find it difficult to meet all of them. However, you will be able to meet the requirements that need to be met to salvage the day. People will praise your intelligence and creativity, says Ganesha.

Cancer: June 22 – July 22

Minor ailments like cough and cold may bother you, warns Ganesha. So avoid cold or sweet items. People admire your helpful nature. Take special care of your health, says Ganesha.

Leo: July 23 – Aug 23

You need to curb down on your expenses. You need to moderate the risks you take on in the share market. It is a good day for financial gains though. You need to understand the value of compromise, says Ganesha.

Virgo: Aug 24 – Sept 22

Family affairs will predominate today. They will even control your thoughts to the exclusion of everything else. Things will look up on the business front. You may spend time relaxing in the evening. Ganesha says a trip to a place of worship is on the cards.

Libra: Sept 23 – Oct 23

Ganesha says that there are chances that today you might start some long-pending renovation project for your house. You may decorate your home with new paintings and items. There may be guests over in the evening that will make you very happy. You may also go out for dinner with your family and friends or, more probably, with your sweetheart.

Scorpio: Oct 24 – Nov 22

You are all set to paint the town red as you feel romance and love creeping into your life slowly. You may bump into 'someone special' today and see love blooming for you. There are also chances of marriage proposals and meeting prospective candidates, says Ganesha.

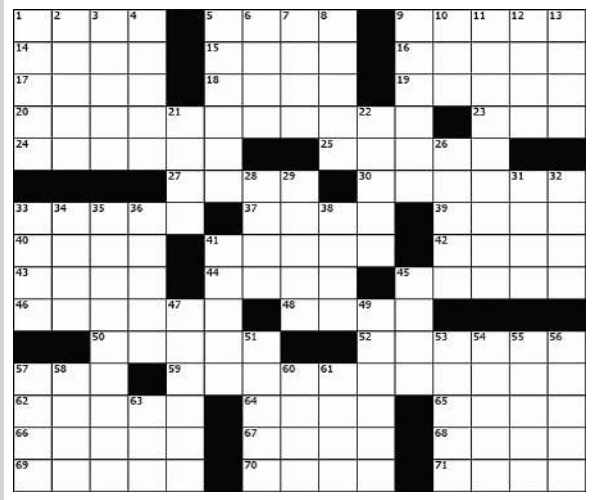
Sagittarius: Nov 23 – Dec 21

Tough times do not last, but tough people do, remember this fact and move ahead in life. Try to make the complicated life simpler by your optimistic approach. Speak up when it is required and don't get bogged down by unnecessary pressure.

Capricorn: Dec 22 – Jan 20

Today, you will remain unruffled by the commotion around you, says Ganesha. However, the emotions locked up inside you will probably cloud your power of reasoning and may leave you feeling a little lost. But this will only be a passing phase, and you will come out of the bewilderment in no time.

CROSSWORD 191



ACROSS

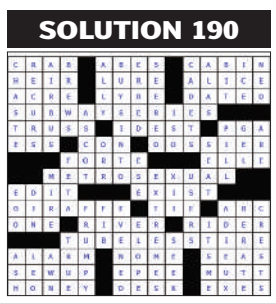
1. Mushroom parts
5. Burn slightly
9. MacKenzie of beer ads
14. Fashion magazine
15. Word that rhymes with its opposite
16. Rabbit fur
17. Hardly corpulent
18. Monumental
19. Enron Field athlete until 2002
20. Toss the dice
23. Go chop-chop?
24. They may be fixed or blank
25. This and that
27. Dynamic opening
30. Executor's concern
33. Surmise
37. Dark ___
39. Camelot lady
40. Extent of loss
41. Temple trademark
42. James Bond's school
43. Charles Lamb
44. Pub potables
45. Field
46. Predatory bird
48. Classical heptad
50. Fabulous writer
52. Not just again
57. Big burger
59. Bet a long shot
62. "Love"-ly word in a Stevie Wonder song
64. Sponge feature
65. They make waves
66. "Walk ___ in my . . ."
67. Related by blood
68. It may be about a foot?
69. Hall or Python
70. Baker's dozen of popes
71. ___ River, N.J.

Puzzle Grid

DOWN

1. Invaders conquered by Caesar
2. With ears pricked
3. Costa del Sol attraction
4. Honduran honorific
5. Kind of cake
6. A 36 of a famous measurement
7. Seed sheath
8. Film editor's right
9. Satisfies the thirst
10. Faux ___
11. Call one's bluff
12. Fraught with danger
13. It may be on the mountaintop
21. Proximal
22. The mating game
26. Rodeo attendee
28. Anjelica's husband in a '91 film
29. Mythical meanies
31. Suffix used to form abstract nouns
32. Poet St. Vincent Millay
33. Road for Nero
34. Vincent Lopez song
35. One way to make a decision
36. Tickle pink
38. Last word of an ultimatum
41. Yuletide song
45. New York City stadium name
47. Sea bird
49. Greek capital
51. Like some Vatican bulls
53. Settle down for the night
54. Craters of the Moon setting
55. Kind of drive
56. Lisper's hurdles
57. Palindromic address
58. Bullets and such
60. Pair, as oxen
61. Troika
63. Farthest or highest, briefly

SOLUTION 190



Medvedev advances, Fernandez out in 1st round

Melbourne, Jan 18 (AP):

The Australian Open started well for second-seeded Daniil Medvedev, one of the biggest potential beneficiaries of Novak Djokovic's deportation.

Aiming to be the first man in the Open era to win his second major title on his next Grand Slam appearance, Medvedev had a 6-1 6-4 7-6 (3) win over Henri Laaksonen on Tuesday in the first round at Melbourne Park.

Defending champion Djokovic was already back in Serbia, two days after losing his legal challenge to stay in Australia despite being unvaccinated against COVID-19, when Medvedev went onto Rod Laver Arena and raced through the first set in 26 minutes.

Nobody has dominated on that court like Djokovic, who was unbeaten in the nine finals he reached at the Australian Open. Medvedev was the most recent recipient of one of those beatings, losing last year's championship match. But he avenged that with his breakthrough major title at the U.S. Open, where his victory meant Djokovic's bid for a calendar-year Grand Slam finished one win short.

US Open champion Daniil Medvedev eased past Swiss battler Henri Laaksonen in his first round match.

"I like pressure," he said.

"Always want to do better than I did last year (but) it's not going to be easy." That's something Leylah Fernandez has had to confront. The 19-year-old Canadian lost 6-2 6-4 to 133rd-ranked wild-card entry Maddison Inglis in her first Grand Slam match since her runner-up finish at the US Open.

Fernandez made 30 unforced errors, dropped her serve three times and hit only eight winners on 1573 Arena against Inglis, who converted her third match point to complete her very first win in the main draw of a major.

"Today was just not a good day. Too many mistakes," Fernandez said.

She lost in the first round at last year's Australian Open to then defending champion Sofia Kenin.

For Fernandez, the venue and the vibe were a long way from her run to the final at Flushing Meadows, where she lost to Emma Raducanu. Raducanu was scheduled to play later Tuesday against 2017 US Open champion Sloane Stephens. The third-seeded Muguruza, meanwhile, kept a perfect streak intact when she won her first-round match at the Australian Open for the 10th straight time, beating No. 77-ranked Clara Burel 6-3 6-4 to open play on Rod Laver Arena on Day 2. A runner-up in Australia in 2020 to Kenin who was a first-round loser on Monday Muguruza said she's always extra cautious early in a big tournament.

"I am aware, I am aware," Muguzura said, laughing, when asked if she knew her Melbourne Park streak.

"Very tricky. You're always nervous going out there on Rod Laver, which I love, and starting a Grand Slam campaign. I've always gone through the first round.

Prannoy enters second round of Syed Modi badminton

Lucknow, Jan 18 (PTI):

India's HS Prannoy entered the second round of the men's singles competition at the Syed Modi International badminton tournament after registering a straight-game win over Ukraine's Danylo Bosniuk here on Tuesday.

On a comeback trail, the fifth seeded India took just 36 minutes to get the better of Bosniuk 21-14 21-18 in his opening clash.

A former top-10 player, Prannoy, who gave a good account of himself before being stopped by 20-year-old Lakshya Sen in the quarterfinals of the India Open last week, will next meet compatriot Priyanshu Rajawat, who got a first round walkover from Rahul Yadav Chittaboina.

However, the tournament was over for fourth seed Sameer Verma after he retired hurt against Ireland's Nhat Nguyen.

Sameer was training 2-7 in the first game before he decided to concede the match due to a calf muscle injury, which he had sustained in October last year.

Lakshya reaches career-high 13th, Satwiksairaj-Chirag pair too rises in BWF rankings

New Delhi: oung Lakshya Sen reached a career-high 13th in the latest badminton world rankings after winning the men's singles crown in the India Open, a title triumph in which also lifted the men's doubles duo of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty to eighth place. Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu and former world number one Kidambi Srikanth remained static at seventh and 10th spots, respectively, even as Satwiksairaj and Chirag moved up two places. Sen made a jump of four places, moving up from the 17th position with 66470 points to close in on reigning world champion Loh Kean Yew at 12th spot. Sen defeated Yew in the final of the India Open. Former world champion Sindhu maintained her seventh position with 90994 in the women's rankings while Srikanth remained in the 10th place with 69158 points in the men's chart.

All eyes on Kohli the batter as India take on SA in ODIs

Paarl (SA), Jan 18 (PTI):

The mighty Virat Kohli's presence in the Indian playing eleven as a mere player for the first time in seven years will be keenly followed while his potential successor in red-ball cricket, K L Rahul, will be judged for his captaincy in the three-match ODI series against South Africa beginning here on Wednesday.

Whether he is batting in the middle or fielding at the boundary line, Kohli's every move is tracked but some of that attention will now have to be shared by Rahul.

More importantly, will he be at his usual animated best on the field or will the cricketing world see a rather subdued Kohli after his stunning resignation from Test captaincy brought an end to his innings as official leader of the team across formats?

Rahul, who is leading the side in the absence of an injured Rohit Sharma, is expected to turn to Kohli for advice during the series. Not only Kohli has a major role to play as a batter, but as vice-captain Jasprit Bumrah said on the eve of the series, the star "will always be a leader" in the team.

Rahul batted in the middle-order against England but on the eve of the game, he made it clear that he will move back to the top of the order alongside Shikhar Dhawan in Rohit Sharma's absence.

Kohli will bat at his usual number three spot while there will be a toss-up between Suryakumar Yadav and Shreyas Iyer for the number four position.

Rishabh Pant is expected to come at number five while Venkatesh Iyer is set to make his 50-over debut as the all-rounder at six, having shown promise in the T20s against New Zealand. Iyer is also seen being as the sixth bowling option.

The two spinners likely to play are Yuzvendra Chahal and R Ashwin, who has made a comeback after more than four years.

Bumrah and Bhuvneshwar Kumar will share the load in the pace department while for the third pace option, the management could pick Deepak Chahar, Shardul Thakur or Prasidh Krishna.

KL hints to groom Venkatesh as 6th bowling option

Paarl (SA), Jan 18 (PTI):

India skipper KL Rahul on Tuesday hinted that all-rounder Venkatesh Iyer is likely to be groomed as the additional pace bowling option that the team has lacked ever since Hardik Pandya's back injury while declaring that he will open alongside veteran Shikhar Dhawan in the first ODI against South Africa here.

Rahul's media interaction was a clear indication that Ruturaj Gaikwad might have to wait for his turn and the pitch at Boland Park might prompt the team management to play both specialist spinners -- Ravichandran Ashwin and Yuzvendra Chahal. "In the past 12-15 months, I have batted in various positions because

that is what the team needed of me then and now with Rohit (Sharma) not being there, I will bat at the top of the order," the skipper informed ahead of the opening game.

A sixth bowler, preferably seam or pace option, has been India's major headache for past two and half years due to Pandya's injury and now the team management is "excited" looking at what Venkatesh brings to the table with his multiple skill-sets.

"Yes, Venkatesh Iyer has been very exciting since the time he has played for KKR in the IPL and then he joined us for the T20 series against New Zealand and he did well," Raul said.

K L Rahul set to lead Lucknow IPL franchise

New Delhi: K L Rahul will captain the yet-to-be-named Lucknow franchise in the upcoming IPL, a league source told PTI on Tuesday. It is learnt that Rahul is one of the players Lucknow has picked from the draft ahead of the mega auction on February 12 and 13 in Bengaluru. The other two are likely to be Australian all-rounder Marcus Stoinis and uncapped leg spinner Ravi Bishnoi. "Rahul will captain Lucknow. The team is deciding on the other two draft picks," an IPL source told PTI. Rahul led Punjab Kings for the past two seasons but did not want to stay at the franchise. Bishnoi was also with Punjab while Stoinis represented Delhi Capitals.

Unmukt Chand becomes first Indian cricketer to play in a BBL match

Melbourne, Jan 18 (PTI):

Former U-19 World Cup winning skipper Unmukt Chand on Tuesday became the first Indian cricketer to play in Australia's Big Bash T20 League as he made his debut for Melbourne Renegades.

The 28-year-old Chand, a right-handed batsman, made his BBL debut against Hobart Hurricanes in the BBL.

"The new colours suit you, @UnmuktChand9," Renegades tweeted.

Chand, under whose leadership India had won the ICC U-19 World Cup in 2012 in Australia, retired from all forms of Indian cricket in August last year, making him eligible to play leagues overseas.

After the Under-19 World Cup success, Chand led the India A team as well but never really graduated to the senior level.

Lewandowski wins FIFA best player vote ahead of Messi, Salah

Zurich, Jan 18 (AP):

Robert Lewandowski was voted the best men's player in the world, retaining the FIFA award he won last year despite being left off the ballot paper filed by runner-up Lionel Messi.

The Bayern Munich forward on Monday overturned the result last month of the Ballon d'Or prize where he placed second behind Messi, who finally led Argentina to a senior title at the 2021 Copa Am rica. Mohamed Salah of Liverpool placed third.

"I am very honoured to win this trophy,

Lewandowski said on a video link from Munich. The trophy was presented by club officials during the online ceremony hosted at FIFA headquarters in Zurich on Monday.

Lewandowski was the overwhelming choice of national team captains and coaches plus selected media in more than 200 countries, yet was almost caught by Messi, who got more than double the number of votes from fans worldwide than the Poland captain.

All three candidates voted as captains of their national teams, and Lewandowski ranked Messi second of his three choices. Salah had Lewandowski and Messi in his top three.

Messi did not pick either of his closest rivals in the voting. His top two choices were Neymar and Kylian Mapp , now his teammates since joining Paris Saint-Germain in August.

Good to have Quinton back in team: Bavuma

Paarl (SA), Jan 18 (PTI):

South Africa's white-ball captain Temba Bavuma on Tuesday said Quinton de Kock, after his sudden retirement from Test cricket, will have a point to prove in the three-match ODI series against India.

"It is good to see Quinny again. We obviously miss him in the Test team. He has made his decision (to quit) and it is a decision that we respect. Having Quinny again within team is good. Knowing Quinny, he will have a point to prove," Bavuma said during a virtual press conference. "I am sure he is also as excited as we are, to be in the team," added Bavuma in response to a question on how was it like to have de Kock back in the team after the drama surrounding his retirement from Tests in the middle of the series against India.

As the focus shifted to the ODI series against India, Bavuma said they are up against a strong side but ready for the challenge. "In terms of India, it is a strong white ball team. The ODI squad they put out... we will give the respect they deserve like we do to any other team. We know it is going to be tough considering the Test series. "Yeah, we have been preparing as well as we can to be ready for the challenge that comes up," Bavuma said.

Bopanna-Ramkumar pair handed direct entry into Tata Open doubles main draw

Pune, Jan 18 (PTI):

The Indian duo of Rohan Bopanna and Ramkumar Ramanathan were on Tuesday handed a direct entry into the doubles main draw of the fourth edition of Tata Open Maharashtra tennis tournament, beginning here on January 31.

The pair, which won the Adelaide International ATP-250 event earlier this month, earned a spot in the main draw with a combined ranking of 156. The direct acceptance list consists of 14 pairs with a cut off ranking of 250.

In the 2019 edition, the Asian Games champion star doubles player Bopanna lifted the title with Divij Sharan while Ramkumar had a semi-final finish in the last edition with Purav Raja. Now Playing together, Bopanna and Ramkumar will look to carry forward their brilliant start to the year when they return to Pune.

The 2020 Australian Open finalists Max Purcell and Luke Saville have also been included in the doubles main draw. The 23-year-old Australian Purcell has paired up with compatriot Matthew Ebden, who will be returning to Pune after featuring in the last edition with Indian great Leander Paes. Saville will play alongside John-Patrick Smith.

Among the players who have secured direct entries in both singles and doubles main draws are teenage sensation Lorenzo Musetti, 2018 US Open semi-finallist Radu Albot, Ricardas Berankis and Stefano Travaglia.

Former world No. 49 Illya Marchenko will be among the 11 direct acceptance entries into the singles qualifiers as they will fight for four main draw spots. The Ukrainian star Marchenko had beaten two-time Olympic champion and the former world No. 1 Andy Murray last year to clinch the ATP Challenger Tour title in Biella, Italy.

With cut-off at 173, Aleksander Vukic, who registered his career's first Grand Slam main draw win at Australian Open on Monday, and Christopher O'Connell are among the other players to feature in the singles qualifying rounds, which will be played on January 30 and 31.

ECB launches investigation into post-Ashes drinking session involving captain Root

Hobart, Jan 18 (PTI):

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has launched an investigation into a late night drinking session involving captain Joe Root after police were called to break up the post Ashes party at the team hotel here.

Veteran England pacer James Anderson and three Australian players Alex Carey, Travis Head and Nathan Lyon were also seen in a video as they got together to mark the end of the Ashes at the tourists' Hobart hotel, according to reports.

The ECB on Tuesday said it was investigating the incident.

"During the early hours of Monday morning, members of the England and Australia men's teams shared a drink in the team areas of the hotel in Hobart," the ECB said.

"The hotel management received a noise complaint by a hotel guest, and as is commonplace in Australia, the local police attended the scene," the statement said.

"When asked to leave by hotel management and the Tasmanian police, the players and management in question left and returned to their respective hotel rooms. The England party have apologised for any inconvenience caused." The video, which has gone viral, was allegedly taken by England assistant Graham Thorpe.

The players were seen being confronted by at least four police officers who told them to shut down the party and disperse.

"Lyon and Carey were still in their playing whites having capped off a 4-0 Ashes triumph over England the night before," 'Fox Sports' reported. "Tasmania police confirmed they were called to the Crowne Plaza hotel after 06:00 local time following a report of "intoxicated people" but said no further action would be taken." In the video, the group of players was asked to stop drinking and move inside from the rooftop terrace.

As per reports, a police officer can be heard saying: "Too loud. You have obviously been asked to pack up, so we've been asked to come."

"Time for bed. Thank you. They just want to pack up.

WFH has put working women under 'triple burden': Prez

New Delhi, Jan 18 (PTI):

Work from home during the Covid pandemic has its benefits but it has also put working women under a "triple burden", says President Ram Nath Kovind.

In a letter to young Indians published in the Manorama Yearbook 2022, he says women already have the double burden of paid work and "unpaid work", that is, domestic responsibilities.

"On top of that, as children attend school from home, their learning has to be supplemented by the parents, and that task usually falls on the mother," Kovind writes in the letter, titled "Arise, The Future Beckons".

"The new stress on family time should be welcome for male employees, so that they can share some of the responsibilities of their partners. In any case, studies show that hard work in itself can be even counterproductive and as the number of hours spent on work goes up, productivity comes down in some instances," he writes.

The President also says that the pandemic has taught us "exactly those lessons that will come handy for climate action".

The pandemic has been an unprecedented crisis, but it may as well be just a warning of a far bigger crisis that is looming over the horizon.

"Climate change is no longer a matter of scientific research and policy discussions; its impact is already tangible, and we are fast running out of time to keep global warming within feasible limits," he writes.

The decade of the 2020s, he says, could turn out to be the most decisive point. "The situation is dire and pessimism won't be out of place, but I remain hopeful." Kovind's hope stems from the fact that "we have seen what we are capable of when our collective existence was threatened by the coronavirus. COVID-19 has shown what humankind can do if all nations join hands and are guided by nothing other than concern for our common future coupled with respect for science". On career opportunities, he writes: "As average Indians in your twenties, the question of career is bound to be uppermost in your minds. Under social imperatives or under peer pressure, many of you often equate a 'career' with a 'job', preferably with the assurance of its continuity till superannuation. That is understandable. India's bureaucracy and public sector both require talented, hard-working youngsters."

But a job, Kovind says, need not mean a government or public-sector one only. "Our private sector has contributed immensely to the creation of wealth for all, and it would also need talent to take India's economy to new heights".

He stresses that a career need not mean a job.

"In the new century, many of our deeply held notions of 'work' were anyway undergoing changes, and COVID-19 only hastened that process. It forced movement restrictions and lockdowns on us, paralysing economies around the world. As a result, there were job losses and salary cuts, but there was also a rise in the 'gig economy'," he says.

He then goes on to say that in this "brave new world, a brave new breed of youngsters is seeking neither jobs nor the financial security of the routine nine-to-five work but a rightful recognition of and remuneration for their unique talents, for their creative vision, for their skills".

"Instead of safety, their preference is for flexibility. Instead of closing their options, they are exploring more alternatives," he writes.

Along with the gig economy, another trend in recent years, according to Kovind, is work-life balance — a phase when hard work alone was of paramount importance is over in many nations, organisations and sectors. Besides featuring important happenings of 2021, the yearbook also has articles by the likes of Shashi Tharoor, Suresh Prabhu and Paranjoy Guha Thakurta among others.

Chief Editor Mammen Mathew says the yearbook is "power-packed in more than 25 sections with interesting articles by eminent writers that capture the new trends".

TEMPORARY BAMBOO BRIDGE

Two wheeler riders on a temporary bamboo bridge constructed over River Brahmaputra to link with the ferry service to North Guwahati after decrease in the water level of the river, in Guwahati, Tuesday.

R-DAY TABLEAUX ROW

'No revision of decision on exclusion of TN, WB and Kerala tableaux'

- **Only 12 states selected**

New Delhi, Jan 18 (PTI):

The decision to not include the tableaux of Kerala, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu at the Republic Day parade will not be revised, senior officials of the Defence Ministry said on Tuesday and noted that a total of 12 states have been selected to display their models.

The remarks by the defence ministry officials came amidst ongoing controversy over the tableaux exclusion, prompting West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin to seek Prime Minister Narendra Modi's immediate intervention.

Some leaders of the non-BJP ruled states also alleged that the exclusion was an "insult" by the Centre. Reacting to the controversy, a senior defence ministry official said, "it is not possible to accept requests from these three states' and polite responses have been sent to their CMs explaining the long process of selection of tableaux." "It is not possible to revise or reconsider the decision as Tableau making process is a very long process and an expert committee takes these decisions sufficiently in advance," the official added.

EC adds new column to mention expenditure on digital campaigning

New Delhi, Jan 18 (PTI):

ELECTION EXPENDITURE

The Election Commission has added a new column in candidates' election expenditure returns to submit information on money spent on digital campaigning in the upcoming polls in five states.

The candidates used to mention money spent on digital campaigning in previous elections also, but this is for the first time that a dedicated column has been created to "capture" details of such expenditure. In a bid to check the spread of COVID-19, Election Commission has extended a ban on holding physical rallies roadshows and similar physical campaigning events till January 22.

With the ban on outdoor physical events in place, parties are using digital and online platforms to reach out to voters.

The new column has been created for the first time for elections in Uttar Pradesh Uttarakhand, Goa, Punjab and Manipur by tweaking the format of returns. "Parties and candidates (so far) used to disclose on their own such expenditure ... they used to provide details of expenditure on things like digital vans ... they used to show expenditure under this category. Now, a dedicated point has been created to capture such expenditure from this (set of) polls," a functionary explained.

The functionary said it is not for the first first time such disclosure by the candidates and parties will be made. "But the manner of disclosure now is dedicated," the functionary explained.

According to section 10A of the Representation of the People Act 1951, a candidate who fails to lodge his or her election expenditures within the prescribed time is liable to be disqualified by EC for a period of three years from contesting polls.

Year after voting in AP rural polls, Kotia villagers to vote in Odisha panchayat polls

Bhubaneswar, Jan 18 (PTI):

CLAIMS AND COUNTER CLAIMS

A year after voting in the Andhra Pradesh rural elections, residents of disputed villages in Kotia gram panchayat area will now exercise their franchise in the upcoming Odisha panchayat elections.

The Andhra Pradesh government had held rural elections in villages in Kotia gram panchayat area, claimed by both the states, in February last year despite the Odisha administration's objection citing a Supreme Court directive to maintain status quo in the disputed area.

"Residents of villages like Madkar, Daliamba, Barnapadu, Patusineri and Konadara under Kotia gram panchayat had voted in the Andhra Pradesh rural polls. Now, they will also vote in the Odisha panchayat elections," an official in Koraput district said. Odisha State Election Commissioner (SEC) A P Padhi has issued special directions to officials concerned for conducting peaceful polls in Kotia gram panchayat area in Koraput district, and Chitrakonda block of Malkangiri district, official sources said.

Padhi has issued the directions during a recent review of the situation in all the 30 districts of the state before holding the rural polls in mid-February, they said. Polling could not be held in two zilla parishads, comprising 18 gram panchayats, of Chitrakonda block in the 2017 panchayat elections due to the situation created by Left-wing Extremists. Special preparations be made to ensure that the election process starting with nominations are held smoothly in Chitrakonda block, Padhi was quoted as saying.

Maoist posters calling on people in tribal-dominated districts to boycott the panchayat elections were seized from some pockets, a senior police officer said. Similarly, Padhi has also asked the collector and SP of Koraput to lay special emphasis on conducting peaceful elections in Kotia gram panchayat in Pottangi block.

"The collectors and SP of the both the districts may appraise the prevailing situation in the aforesaid blocks," he added.

The dispute over the ownership of 21 of the 28 villages under Kotia gram panchayat had first reached the Supreme Court in 1968. In 2006, the apex court held that inter-state boundaries did not fall within its jurisdiction and only the Parliament could resolve them, as it imposed a permanent injunction on the disputed area.

PM interacts with BJP workers in Varanasi through NaMo app

Varanasi (UP), Jan 18 (PTI):

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday held an interaction with BJP workers of his Varanasi parliamentary constituency, exhorted them to vigorously conduct a micro-donation campaign with the aim to connect with people ahead of the Uttar Pradesh assembly election and reaffirmed the party's commitment to development.

Restoration of the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor, women empowerment, infrastructure and healthcare development were among the topics that came up for discussion during the interaction through the NaMo app.

Modi said, "The BJP is running a micro-donation campaign and a person can make a donation of even Rs 5."

He suggested a competition among booths to see which one can collect donations from the maximum number of people and added the aim is not to collect money but to connect with people.

The prime minister said elections are a test for political parties. "It is also a training camp for the development of workers.... Our focus should be on winning the election...there should also be expansion of the organisation and development of the workers. These two mantras we must remember," he said. "This is election time and we have to make people understand the power of each and every vote. Yogi-ji (Adityanath) and I are able to do so much because the people of UP have blessed us with their votes," he said. Assembly polls will be held in Uttar Pradesh in seven phases beginning February 10. Varanasi will vote in the seventh phase on March 7.

Interacting with one of the 'karyakartas' (party workers), Prime Minister Modi asked him to expand the reach of the government's welfare schemes to farmers and said they should make farmers aware of the use of chemical-free fertilisers.

Modi also talked about several central schemes which are benefitting the people of Varanasi at large.

The prime minister said a section in the NaMo app, called 'Kamal Pushp', has stories about inspiring 'karyakartas' (party workers).

"The place we have reached today, for that about 3-4 generations of Jan Sangh leaders and workers have sacrificed their lives.

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CENTRAL Chronicle

Bilaspur, Wednesday, January 19, 2022 | Pages 12 | Price ₹ 3.00 | City Edition | Fastest growing English Daily of Chhattisgarh

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BRIEF

Devotees participate in the Thaipooyakavadi festival at Major Ulloor Sree Balasubramonya Swami temple, in Thiruvananthapuram, Tuesday.

Rescue

- **Srinagar:** The Army rescued around 30 civilians after their vehicles came under an avalanche triggered by recent snowfall in border district of Kupwara in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Tuesday. A vehicle carrying civilians got stuck on the Tangdhar-Chowkibal axis on Monday, following which the nearest Army unit was alerted and a rescue operation launched, they said.

Busted

- **Bulandshahr:** With the arrest of one accused, police on Tuesday claimed to have busted an illegal arms factory in the forest of Bhansoli village in the district. Ten finished and 12 half-finished illegal weapons have been recovered from the illegal unit under Kotwali Dehat Police Station area, Superintendent of Police (City) Surendranath Tiwari said.

Fire

- **Kolkata:** A fire broke out at an abandoned cinema hall in Mallickbazar area of Kolkata on Tuesday, a fire official said. The blaze erupted around 2.25 PM, and five fire tenders doused it in 30 minutes, he said. Nobody was injured in the fire that broke out at the top floor of the abandoned 'Park Show House' in Beniapukur police station area, he said. "The cooling process is underway. The reason behind the fire is yet to be ascertained," he added.

Bail

- **New Delhi:** The Delhi High Court has granted bail to two directors of an app-based taxi company, accused of duping hundreds of people of Rs 250 crore after promising them huge returns on investing in the firm. Justice Subramonium Prasad enlarged the two accused on bail noting that they have been in custody for over a year now and their continued custody was no longer required. Both the petitioners have been in custody for over a year now. Charge sheet as well as supplementary charge sheet have been filed, and all the evidence available is documentary in nature and in custody of the investigating agency.

Weather

High 25 Low 11

MARKET

NIFTY	18,113.05 ▼
SENSEX	60,754.86 ▼

BULLION

GOLD	47,925
SILVER	62,817

MAJOR SUCCESS

Four naxals killed in two encounters

- **One jawan injured**

Sukma/Konta, Jan 18:

Four naxals including two women were killed in two separate encounters with security forces in Sukma district and along the state's border with Telangana on Tuesday morning, police said here.

A woman rebel who was carrying a reward of Rs 5 lakh on her head was among them.

Earlier, Chhattisgarh police had said that four naxals were killed in the operation along the Telangana-Chhattisgarh border, but later the number was revised to three.

A team of the special anti-naxal Greyhounds unit of Telangana Police had launched an operation in the forests of Bijapur (Chhattisgarh) and Mulugu

(Telangana) districts," Inspector General of Police (Bastar range) Sundarraj P told PTI. They had received intelligence about a large gathering of the naxals' Telangana State Committee cadres including Divisional Committee Member (DVCM) Sudhakar and his associates in the area, he said. A joint team of District Reserve Guard (DRG) and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) from Bijapur was also sent to cordon off the area and assist the Greyhounds, the IG added. Around 7 am, the Greyhounds team got engaged in a gun-battle with the ultras in a forest near Semaldodi (district Bijapur) and Kariguttalu-Penugolu (district Mulugu) villages. Initial reports said at least four ultras had been neutralized," the senior official said. Later, the bodies of three naxals including a woman were recovered, Sundarraj added.

An SLR (Self Loading Rifle), INSAS rifle, a single-bore weapon, ten rocket launchers and other articles were recovered from the spot, he said. A Greyhounds jawan sustained injuries. He was airlifted to Warangal and later airlifted to Hyderabad for better treatment," the IG said, adding that the jawan was said to be out of danger. Search operation was still underway in the area, located over 450 km away from the Chhattisgarh capital Raipur, he said.

Mulugu district police also confirmed the recovery of three bodies.

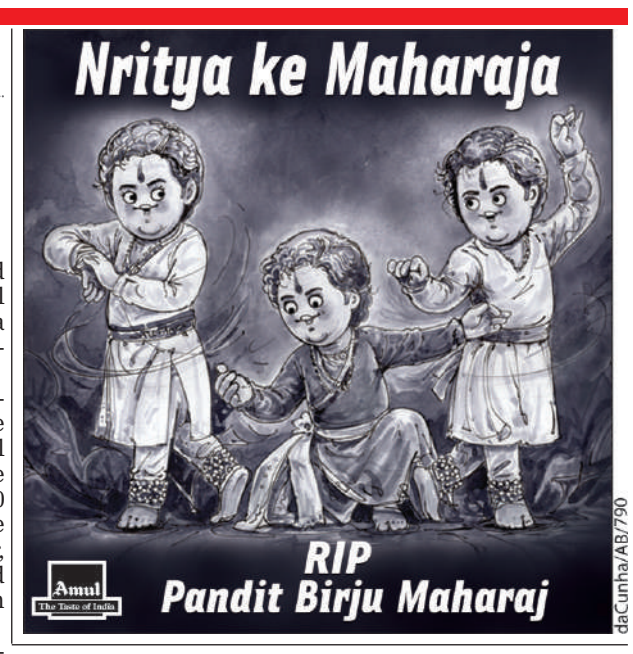
In Sukma district of Chhattisgarh a woman naxal was killed, officials said. Superintendent of Police Sunil Sharma told PTI that DRG personnel from Sukma, Dantewada and Bastar districts participated in the operation.

Police had received information about the presence of top Divisional Committee Members of the CPI (Maoist) and 35-40 cadres in the forest on the tri-junction of Bastar, Dantewada and Sukma and launched an operation on Monday night, he said.

Around 6.45 am, a gunfight broke out on Marjum hills under Tongpal police station limits.

The body of a woman identified as Munni, an area committee member of the naxals who carried a reward of Rs 5 lakh on her head was recovered from the spot," Sharma said.

No security personnel was injured in the operation, he added.



SBI RESEARCH

'Third wave may peak in next three weeks'

New Delhi, Dec 18:

The third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to peak much earlier than anticipated and may take a maximum of three more weeks, even though the share of rural districts in new caseloads has increased significantly since December, says a report.

The optimism comes from the massive decline in new caseloads in the top 15 districts which had the maximum infections, SBI Research said in a report on Tuesday.

Infections in the top 15 districts have declined to 37.4 per cent in January, from 67.9 per cent in December.

The report, however, admitted that 10 of these top 15 districts are major cities and among them Bengaluru and Pune still have higher infection rates. The overall share of rural districts in new cases has increased to 32.6 per cent in January, from the lowest of 14.4 per cent in December, the report noted.

In comparison to the US, this is too low, where the new cases have soared by 6.9 times even though it has double-vaccinated over 80 per cent of its eligible population. Another point of optimism stems from the fact that India has fully vaccinated 64 per cent of the eligible population, while 89 per cent of the eligible population have been given the first dose.

Currently the 7-day median average of vaccination is 70 lakh. Rural vaccination share in total vaccination is now at 83 per cent, indicating that the rural populace may be largely protected in the current wave. Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, MP, Telangana and Uttarakhand have already vaccinated more than 70 per cent of their eligible population with double doses. However, Punjab, UP and Jharkhand are still lagging.

COVID EFFECT

Only 5,000-8,000 people to be allowed to attend R-Day parade

- **Vaccination mandatory**

New Delhi, Jan 18 (PTI):

The number of people allowed to attend the Republic Day parade this year is likely to be curtailed to approximately 5,000-8,000 due to the COVID-19 situation, with seats reserved for construction workers, frontline health workers and others, senior officials of the defence ministry said on Tuesday. Only double vaccinated adults and children above the age of 15 who have taken at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine will be allowed to enter, they said, adding children below 15 years will not be permitted to attend the event. The officials said the parade would start at 10.30 AM instead of 10 AM to provide better visibility. They said the number of people that would be allowed to attend the Republic Day parade this year is to be curtailed by 70-80 percent to approximately 5,000-8,000 due to the ongoing COVID-19 wave.

DISHONOUR TO TRICOLOUR

MHA flags 'perceptible lack of awareness' about Flag Code

New Delhi, Jan 18 (PTI):

Ahead of Republic Day, the Centre has highlighted "a perceptible lack of awareness" among government organisations, agencies and people about the laws, practices and conventions that apply to display of the national flag and asked states to ensure that the tricolour is not dishonoured.

In a communication to all states and union territories, the home ministry said that action must be taken to ensure that only paper flags are used by the public while attending cultural and sports events and such flags are disposed of in private, consistent with its dignity.

The ministry said the national flag represents hopes and aspirations of the people of the country and hence should occupy a position of honour and there is universal affection and respect for, and loyalty to, the flag.

"Yet, a perceptible lack of awareness is often noticed amongst people as well as organisations or agencies of the government, in regard to laws, practices and conventions that apply to display of the national flag," it said. According to the Flag Code of India, the national flag made of paper may be waved by public on occasions of important national, cultural and sports events.

"You are requested to ensure that on the occasions of important national, cultural and sports events, flags made of paper only are used by the public and such paper flags are not discarded or thrown on the ground after the event. Such flags are to be disposed of, in private, consistent with the dignity of the flag," the communication said.

DANCING FOR GLORY

Haryana school students perform during the rehearsal for the upcoming Republic Day parade, on a cold winter morning in New Delhi, Tuesday.

DECLINE IN COVID TESTING

Enhance testing: Govt to states

New Delhi, Jan 18 (PTI):

Flagging a decline in the number of COVID-19 tests in many states and union territories, the Centre has asked them to enhance testing so that an effective track of the spread of the pandemic can be kept and immediate citizen-centric action can be initiated.

In a letter to states and UTs on Monday, Additional Secretary in the Union Health Ministry Arti Ahuja advised them to pay attention to this aspect immediately and increase the testing in a strategic manner keeping in view the trend of case positivity in specific areas.

A healthworker collects a nasal swab sample for COVID-19 test at a hospital in Amritsar, Tuesday.

She highlighted that Omicron, which has been designated by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a variant of concern, is currently spreading across the country.

Referring to the ministry's earlier letters and the Home Ministry advisory of December 27 last year laying out the broad framework of pandemic management in the context of Omicron, Ahuja said testing remains a key and crucial component.

"However, it is seen from the data available on the ICMR portal that testing has declined in many states and union territories," she wrote.

She said in all advisories on testing issued by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), including the latest on January 10, the basic objective remains early detection of cases for quick isolation and care.

In addition, testing remains a key strategy for pandemic management as it helps in identification of new clusters and new hotspots of infection which can in turn facilitate immediate action for containment such as setting up of containment zones, contact tracing, quarantining, isolation and follow-up.

This can enable the state and district administrations to curb the spread of infection. Also this will ensure reduction in mortality and morbidity. "Progression of disease to a severe category can be averted by strategic testing of those who are at high risk and more vulnerable, as well as in areas where the spread is likely to be higher," Ahuja said.

PMO TELLS HC

PM CARES Fund: No curb on use of PM's name, photo, image of flag

Mumbai, Jan 18 (PTI):

The Prime Minister's Office on Tuesday told the Bombay High Court there was no restriction on the use of the prime minister's name and photograph as well as the image of the national flag and emblem for the PM CARES Fund.

In an affidavit submitted before a division bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice M S Karnik, PMO Under Secretary Pradeep Srivastava said the PM's photograph, name and national emblem were also used in the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF).

The affidavit was filed in response to a petition filed by Congress worker

Vikrant Chavan seeking deletion of the prime minister's name and photograph from the PM CARES Fund. It had also sought the deletion of images of the national flag and emblem from the official website of the Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM CARES) Fund. The plea claimed the usage of the prime minister's photograph and the image of the national flag and emblem were in violation of the Constitution as well as The Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act. In its affidavit, the PMO said, "I say that PM CARES Fund and PMNRF are both chaired by the Prime Minister. As the name, photograph of Prime Minister and National Emblem are being used for the PMNRF, they are also being used for the PM CARES Fund."

It said the Flag Code of India, 2002, which brings together all laws, conventions, practices and instructions regarding display of the national flag, provides that there shall be no restriction on its display by general public, private organizations, educational institutions and so on, except to the extent provided in Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act.

WAGES PAID TO DEAD PERSON

Rs 70 crore scam in Sukma forest division

Konta, Jan 18:

Sukma district, which is known as the most Naxal affected district of the state, has been in the headlines all the time. For the past few years, concocted stories of alleged development happening in Sukma are being seen and heard everywhere, but the ground reality has nothing to do with these stories even remotely.

The book full of success stories that the responsibilities of this district came to fore before the world, its condition is like a book whose cover is very positive and golden, but the inner pages have been licked by termites. These termites are none other than officers sitting on responsible posts of various

departments of this district who are cutting silver under the guise of Naxalism. Corruption is being done on a large scale in the departments which are directly related to the general public like agriculture, horticulture, health, education, district construction committee and panchayats.

Forest division, where wages of about Rs 70 crore made under CAMPA scheme in the last three years have come under the scanner. Sukma Forest Division, where new records have been created for corruption, an incident has come to the fore, which has destroyed all the previous records of corruption.

Almost the entire area of all the forest areas of the forest division is affected by Naxalism. In areas like Kistaram, Jagargunda, Golapally and Konta, all the work is being done on paper only, the information of which is not hidden from anyone. The latest case is from the relatively less Naxal-affected Dornapal area. Here, in the afforestation and construction works being done by the Forest Department from the post of CAMPA, the laborers who are being paid as laborers for the last three years, they do not even live here. Hundreds of people from the inner village either moved to relief camps or later settled in Telangana, fearing the conflict emanating from the Salwa Judum.

Awareness about traffic created among school students

By Traffic department in Govt HS School, Dahikonga

Kondagaon, Jan 18:

Traffic awareness programme was organised by the Traffic police department in Government HS School in Dahikonga located near Jagdalpur-Kondagaon road.

Under this the Traffic in-charge TI Rohit Kumar Banjare and other staff gave information to students about high-speed driving, driving vehicles without wearing helmet; not using seat belt while driving four-wheeler; driving in drunken state; violating traffic norms and others. As per information in this regard, as per orders from SP Divyang Patel and instructions from Addl.

SP Rahul Dev Sharma and under guidance of DSP Dr Bhuneshwari Paikra, efforts are being made by the traffic police to reduce road accidents on NH-30 and other roads.

Under this school students of Govt HS School Dahikonga in Kondagaon area were informed about the traffic rules and regulations through a projector.

The department informed students about not to drive any vehicle without valid licence and documents; drive wearing helmet; use seat belt in four-wheeler; do not drive in intoxicated state; do not use mobile or any other instrument while driving; look carefully at all traffic board signals; give information about deaths due to road accidents; do not allow minors to drive any vehicle, do not drive three on two-wheeler and other such information.

On this occasion TI Traffic in-charge RK Banjare, constbale Santosh Kodopi, Vikas Pandey and Rajendra Markam were present.

Surprise inspection of Paddy Procurement Centers

Mahasamund, Jan 18:

Director of Food and Civil Supplies Department and MD State Warehousing Corporation Abhinav Aggarwal conducted a surprise inspection of paddy procurement centers, collection centers and warehouses of Omkarband and Pithora block of Baghbahra block of Mahasamund district.

The Director after inspection instructed the District Marketing Officer to speed up the transportation of paddy and the Nodal Officer, District Central Co-operative Bank to ensure systematic maintenance of the paddy in the procurement centers. Make stacking of paddy purchased in all paddy procurement centers and cover them with capcover and all officers should inspect and monitor the paddy procurement centers, he instructed.

District Collector Doman Singh asked all the SDMs of the district to ensure arrangements by holding a meeting of paddy procurement center incharges and nodal officers. Paddy should not be damaged by rain; drainage should be made mandatory for the protection of paddy and cape covers should be kept in sufficient number in all the paddy procurement centers, he said.

He also advised to abstain from water stagnation in the centre. Regarding the spread of Covid infection, he said that the spread of corona infection is increasing rapidly; therefore before entering the paddy procurement center, posters regarding mandatory masking should be made available.

The officers and committee managers were asked to speed up the paddy procurement system, with due protection from rain and lifting of paddy in the district, by the Collector.

On this occasion, Assistant Food Officer, District Mahasamund Anil Joshi, Sanjay Sharma, District Marketing Officer Jaidev Soni, District Manager Nan Deepika Sinha, Officer of District Co-operative Bank Mahasamund G. N. Sahu were present.

Huge loss to farmers due to unseasonal rains

Anwari, Jan 18: The unseasonal rains in Anwari, Bhaisbod in the region last week has come as big blow to the farmers as their crops have got badly damaged and it would be difficult for them to meet-up even the expenditure cost.

The farmers of the region have taken up crop of 'masoor', 'chana', 'sarson' and other oilseeds and pulses and which has got completely damaged due to unexpected rains. The vegetable growers too have faced huge loss on account of the same. Due to heavy rains and hailstorm over the last one week, the paddy, oilseeds, pulses and vegetable crops of the farmers have got badly damaged. The paddy crop has fallen and the crop of oilseeds, pulses, vegetable too has got badly damaged. The crop of 'sarson', 'masoor', 'lakhadi', 'Aalsi', 'Urad', 'Batari', 'Arhar', 'Chana' and others too have got badly damaged and it is going to cost heavily to farmers and it would be difficult for them to meet up even the expenditure cost. Many a vegetable growers in the region too seems to be annoyed as rains have played spoilsports causing huge damage to crops of lady finger, cabbage, peas, tomato, 'semi','Navagol', and others. With rainwater getting clogged in the farms, it has started rotting the crop taken and the farmers are left with no option but to wait for right amount of compensation and waiver in loan, if the state government permit.

Patel Kosaria Samaj observe 'Maa Shakambari Jayanti'

By offering prayers to the Goddess

Birkoni, Jan 18:

Maa Shakambhari Jayanti was observed at Shakti Mandir near Patel Community centre in Gram Birkoni here on Monday. It is adhering to Covid-19 protocol and maintaining social distancing the members of Patel samaj gathered at 10:00 am and decorated the idol of Goddess Shakambhari with decorative items. It was amidst raising of slogans in favour of 'Jai Maa Shakambhari', 'Jai Marara Samaj' that prayers were performed at Community building. On this occasion all the social families of Patel Kosaria Samaj offered prayers to Maa Shakambhari and paid obeisance to the Goddess. On this occasion Balram Patel, Girdhari Patel, Heeralal Patel, Madan Patel, Keshav Patel, Ghanshyam Patel were present.

To make this programme successful, Bhagwat Patel, Tukesh Patel, Kaushal Patel, Pitamber Patel, Lalaram Patel, Omkar Patel, Mohan Patel, Inku Patel and others gave valuable support.

Jaitkhambh dedicated in Gram Penditarai

Nandini-Ahiwara, Jan 18: The dedication of Jaitkhambh with District fund of District Panchayat member Durg was done at Gram Panchayat Penditarai by District Panchayat member Chandrakala Manhar at the cost of Rs 4 lakh and the foundation for 'Nal-Jal Yojana' was also laid at the cost of Rs 65 lakhs.

The chief guest of the programme was Bhuneshwar Baghel of SC Development Authority, MLA Bemetara VS Ashish Chabda, special guest was Nagar Palika Ahirwara Natwar Tamrakar, Janpad Panchayat member, Ashok Patel, Dhanraj Banjare, Oni Mahilang and others were present. President SC Development Authority has granted sanction of Rs 16.50 lakh for cosntruction of drainage and community building and MLA has also given assurance to sanction funds for construction 400 mts road under Mukhyamantri Sugam Sadak Yojana.

New Year calendar released in memory of Yagyasini Devi

Churrikala, Jan 18:

The calendar of new year was released in the name of Yagyasini Devi by corporator of ward No 9 of Nagar Panchayat Churrikala Heeralal yadav. This ward is named after ex-MLA Tanakhar Late Yagyasini Devi W/o 'Jamindar'- Late Bhuwanpal Singh.

The calendar was released at the hands of voter Ramnarayan Dubey former Alderman and retired teacher; corporator Ramsharan Sahu, Sheshban Goswami, Padmu Yadav, Devi Prasad Pandey, Mantu Maharaj.

On this occasion Retired teacher Ramnarayan Dubey hailed the works of ward corporator and said that this is for the first time that Yagyasini Devi , W/o Late Bhuwanpal Singh has been remembered and a new calendar has been released on her name and by publishing the same the ward corporator has presented a good example for others. Corporator Ramsharan Sahu also hailed the initiatives taken.

Girl commits suicide in Achouli

Dongargarh, Jan 18:

Punita Gupta, a 25-yrs old daughter of well-known businessman Ram Sajeevan Gupta of Gram Achouli near city committed suicide and this news created sensation in the entire village.

The complainant Yogesh Gupta gave information about the same to Dongargarh police that the girl has committed suicide and on getting this information, the police reached the village to conduct investigations. The body of the girl has been sent for post-mortem and it is learnt that the girl got engaged just few days back and her marriage was due on Jan 25.

Children observe 'Cher-chera' going door-to-door

Katagi, Jan 18: The festival of 'Cher-chera' was observed with great fun-far and enthusiasm in the village. On occasion of 'Paush Poornima', the rituals were performed and since it is observed as day of donations (cherchera) in the form of grains, vegetables, cash, fruits etc, there was lot of enthusiasm among the youths and children of the village, as they went in groups to houses of different persons and sought 'cher-chera'. This festival is observed on arrival of paddy after 'Minjai' and since there is huge storage of paddy crop in the houses, the villagers donate the same as per rituals.

DCC V-P lays stone for tribal community building

Dongargarh, Jan 17:

Foundation stone for Tribal Community Bhavan was laid in Gram Tingamali dependent upon Gram Mudhipar of Khairagarh block at the cost of Rs 6.50 lakh and another work of drainage construction at the cost of Rs 3.95 lakh in ward no. 5 was also sanctioned by SC Development Authority. The foundation stone was laid by DCC V-P Bhupendra Singh and Mudhipar BCC President Komal Sahu, state gen. secy. Vyapar Prakosth Gautam Chand Jain, sarpanch rep Ghanshyam Sinha. On this occcasion V-P SC Bhisham Burman, Maksoodhan Sahu, Tikam Sahu, Samay Thakur, Satrohan Sirdar, Pyarelal Thakur, Sunder Thakur, Santosh Kkunjam, Lalchand Verma and other citizens of the village were present.

MoU signed between CU and Indian Institute of Company Secretaries

Bilaspur, Jan 18:

Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya (Central University) Under the able leadership and efficient guidance of Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alok Kumar Chakrawal, an MOU was signed between Guru Ghasidas University and the Institute of Company Secretaries of India at 12 in the morning in the meeting hall of the Administrative Building. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the two organizations on the auspicious occasion of the Establishment Day in which all the representatives were introduced by Professor Ashok Kumar Mishra, Head of the Department of Commerce and were welcomed by the Company Secretary of Raipur Chapter Ms. Sneha Agarwal and the keynote speaker was Company Secretary, Mr. Pawanji Chandrak. After this, Mr. Suraj Meher, in-charge Registrar of Guru Ghasidas University, and Ms. Sneha Aggarwal, company secretary from Raipur chapter of Company Secretaries Institute of India, presented the concept note followed by the Dean, Professor Manish Srivastava who inspected the MOU. Along with this, the Vice Chancellor in charge of today's program, Professor Saxena, congratulated both the institutions and said that students of both the institutions will reach new heights and will get new opportunities as well as will be able to achieve new dimensions. It is under the guidance of Professor Alok Kumar Chakrawal, Vice Chancellor of Guru Ghasidas University, that continuous implementation of plans is being done for the developing the career and multifaceted development of the students. This MoU will help in setting new paradigms of cooperation, fairness, and creativity on both the maps. In the end, thanks were given to the Vice-Chancellor of Guru Ghasidas University, Professor Alok Kumar Chakrawal ji and to the visitors who came in person and those who connected virtually. In the program, the guidelines and other rules issued from time to time by various ministries of the Government of India, State Government and local administration related to the safety and prevention of Covid-19 were taken care of.

Vaccination campaign today

Nandini-Ahirwara, Jan 18: In the Covid vaccination campaign in Nagar Palika Parishad (NPP) Ahirwara to be organised on Jan 18 and 19, all the people left from vaccination in earlier camps will be covered. In this all the senior citizens above 60 yrs will get booster dose along with frontline workers and 2nd dose to persons in the age-group of 15-18 who have got the first dosage.

यूनियन बैंक Union Bank of India आन्ध्रा Andhra कार्पोरेशन Corporation

Branch- Rajbandha Maidan, Raipur (C.G.)

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)

WHEREAS

The Authorised Officer of Union Bank of India, Rajbandha Maidan Branch, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 had issued **Demand Notices** on **21.05.2021**, calling upon the Borrower(s) namely, **M/S. Grand Auto Capital (Borrower),Represented by its partners Mr Abhinav Rishi, Mr Ashok Rishi and Mrs Neetu Rishi Office Address:- Sector C Sirgitti, NH 200 Raipur Bilaspur Road, Bilaspur CG 495001**, to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice being **Rs. 8,12,69,637.51 (Rupees Eight Crore Twelve lakh Sixty Nine Thousand Six Hundred Thirty Seven and Fifty One Paise only)** + interest since **01.05.2021** + Legal & Other charges **only** together with interest within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notices.

The Borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount, Notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s)and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Sub-Section (4) of Section 13 of the Act read with Rule 8 of the said Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on this the **13th Day of January 2022**.

The Borrower(s) in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Union Bank of India for an amount of **Rs 8,12,69,637.51 (Rupees Eight Crore Twelve lakh Sixty Nine Thousand Six Hundred Thirty Seven and Fifty One Paise only)** + interest since **01.05.2021** + Legal & Other charges **only** in the said accounts together with costs and interest as aforesaid.

The Borrower's attention is invited to the provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

DESCRIPTION OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

All Piece & parcel of Lease hold industrial plot at Sirgitti, Sector C, bilaspur comprising area **1,05,420** sq ft property Situated at Mouja- Village Tifra, Industrial Area, R.I.C Bilaspur, Tahsil and Dist Bilaspur C G in the name **M/s Grand Motors**.

Date : **13.01.2022**
Place : Bilaspur (C.G.)

Authorised Officer
Union Bank of India

यूनियन बैंक Union Bank of India आन्ध्रा Andhra कार्पोरेशन Corporation

1st Floor, Infront of Gumber Petrol Pump
Vyapar Vihar Road, Bilaspur (C.G.) 495004

POSSESSION NOTICE [Rule - 8 (1)]

Whereas the Authorized Officers of **Union Bank of India, Regional Office, Vyapar Vihar, Bilaspur (C.G.)** under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notice of the following borrowers/guarantors/ mortgagors calling upon them to repay the amount mentioned in the Notices within 60 days from the date of said Notices.

The Borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors having failed to repay the amount, Notices are hereby given to the borrowers/guarantor(s)/mortgagor in particular and the public in general that Authorized Officer has taken possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 9 of the said rules on below mentioned dates.

The Borrowers/guarantor(s)/mortgagor in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of Union Bank of India, for the amounts and interests and incidental expenses and costs and charges thereon as mentioned below.

A Name of the Borrowers B Name of the Branch	Description of Secured Assets	1. Date of Demand Notice 2. Outstanding (in Rs.) 3. Date of Possession
A. **M/s. Durga Furniture Mart Prop. Lachhaman Prasad Dewangan (Borrower) Mr. Ram Charan Dewangan (Co-Obligant)** B. **Manjhali Talab Champa.**	EMG of Residential Land & Building Sheet No. **31**, Plot No. **85/86**, at station road, Ward no. **19**, Champa, Teh- Champa, Distt- Janjgir- Champa (C.G) Landmark Near Jaipuriya Hotel. Area **1796.92** Sqft. **Boundaries: East-** Marwadi Dharmashala, **West-** Plot of Yogendra Shroff, **North-** PWD Residential Colony, **South-** Station Road.	1. **18.06.2021** 2. **₹ 35,72,733.90** (as on **18.06.2021**) + interest & other exp. 3. **12.01.2022**
A. **Mrs. Kanta Devi Sharma w/o Hanuman prasad Sharma (Borrower) Mr. Nitin Sharma s/o Hanuman Prasad Sharma (Co-Obligant)** B. **Manjhali Talab Champa.**	Property in Name of **Kanta Devi Sharma**, Urban Land-diverted Open Plot, Kh No **1779/1** Near Barpally Chowk Railway Station Road, ward no 21, **Bounded by- East:** Land of Govardhan Sindhi, **West:** Self Plot Kh No **1778/2** and **1779/9**, **North:** Land of kesharwani, **South:** land of Halima Khatun.	1. **05.08.2021** 2. **₹ 7,45,952.00** (as on **05.08.2021**) + interest & other exp. 3. **12.01.2022**
A. **M/s. Oxy real packaged drinking water Prop. Shri Sandeep Kumar Pandey (Borrower) Shri. Harnarayan Pandey S/O Devendra Pandey (Mortgagor/Guarantor)** B. **Manjhali Talab Champa.**	Plot Kh. No. **380/3**, Area **13080** sqft, at **M/s. Oxyreal Packaged Drinking water**, Village Pachori Tahsil- Champa, Distt- Janjgir Champa (C.G). Owner of property **Shri. Harnarayan Pandey**. **Boundaries: East-** WBM Road, **West-** land of Harnarayan, **North-** Land of Judawan, **South-** Land of Harnarayan.	1. **22.09.2021** 2. **₹ 24,85,991.77** (as on **22.09.2021**) + interest & other exp. 3. **12.01.2022**
A. **Mr. Dhanraj Dewangan S/o. Kamal Lal Dewangan (Borrower) Mrs. Tijmati Dewangan (Guarantor)** B. **Manjhali Talab Champa.**	Ope Plot (area **1417.00** Sqft.), Bhojpur Gali, Ward No. 19, Kh. No. **975/2**, Champa, Dist- Janjgir-Champa (C.G.) Owner- **Tijmati Dewangan W/o. Kamal Lal Dewangan**. **Boundaries: East-** Plot of Krishna Kumar, **West-** Road, **North-** Plot of Tulsi, **South-** Plot of Maniram.	1. **01.03.2021** 2. **₹ 9,02,808.00** (as on **09.01.2021**) + interest & other exp. 3. **12.01.2022**
A. **Mrs. Sunita Pandey, D/o Hari Narayan Pandey (Borrower) Mrs. Akansha Dubey D/o Mrs. Sunita Pandey (Co-Obligant)** B. **Bodri, Bilaspur.**	Flat no. T-5, Third floor, Shubh Regency, Ward no **7**, Chakarbhata, Mouza-Bodri, P.H. no. **1**, M.N. **3**, Khasra no. **343/2, 353/2, 343/1**, Tahsil- Bilha, Dist- Bilaspur (CG) 495220, admeasuring 404 Square ft. area, property in the name of **Mrs. Akansha Dubey**.	1. **08.04.2021** 2. **₹ 13,04,317.99** (as on **08.04.2021**) + interest & other exp. 3. **12.01.2022**

Date: 18.01.2022, Place: Bilaspur (C.G.) Authorized Officer/Union Bank of india

CENTRAL Chronicle

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Wealthy richer than past royalty

Combined fortunes of billionaires in India more than doubled during the Coronavirus pandemic and their count shot up by 39 percent to 142. Also, the wealth of the 10 richest persons in the country is enough to fund school and higher education of children in the country for 25 years, the inequality survey released by Oxfam India at the World Economic Forum's (WEF) online Davos Agenda summit, noted. If the wealth of the first 100 billionaires is accumulated, they could fund the National Rural Livelihood Mission scheme, responsible for creating Self Help Groups for women, for the next 365 years. The present-day wealthy billionaires of India are far richer than erstwhile royal rulers like 'maharajas' and 'nawabs' of past princely states. But it appears that wealth is generated by exploitation and not shared for India's progress. It further said that the inadequate governmental expenditure on health, education and social security has gone hand-in-hand with a rise in the privatisation of health and education, thus making a full and secure COVID-19 recovery out of reach for the common citizen. Growing dependence on digital processes in the last two years of Coronavirus pandemic has given rise to the risks posed by cybersecurity threats globally, while at the same time widespread youth disillusionment, digital inequality and fracture of inter-state relations are some of the key risks for the Indian economy. Risks of growing social cleavages will continue to be exacerbated by the pandemic and experts are cautioning that the global economic recovery will likely be uneven and potentially volatile over the coming years. Fracture of interstate relations, debt crises in large economies, widespread youth disillusionment, failure of technology governance and digital inequality are the top five risks identified for the Indian economy by the WEF's executive survey. While the average wealth of an Indian household is worth Rs 9,83,010, the report said that the bottom 50 percent of the country's population own 'almost nothing', with an average wealth of Rs 66,280. The middle class is also relatively poor, owning 29.5 percent of the total wealth of the country. The wealthiest 1 percent population of India alone owns 33 percent of the country's total wealth. Deregulation and liberalisation policies implemented for India's economy since the mid-1980s has led to one of the most extreme increases in income and wealth inequality observed in the world. Without adequate focus on policy change, India faces a threat of leaving behind large part of its population in this road to recovery, not to mention bear the brunt of inequalities even further. India needs to revisit the labour distribution in country and rethink formal and informal structures at a policy level. There is a need to enhance the social security mechanisms for informal workers. The rationale for equality may seem obvious, but it means nothing unless justice is the basis of development. The need for careful planning has increased because the factors to be taken into account are more complex now. Earlier a model based on resources and their exploitation may have been the norm, now one also has to think in terms of needs and the carbon space available to provide them.

Electric aviation dreams

Jet fuel or ATF price this week was hiked by 4.2 percent - the second increase in rates this month warranted by firming international oil prices, but petrol and diesel prices remained unchanged for the 72nd day in a row. Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) price was hiked by Rs 3,232.87 per kilolitre, or 4.25 percent, to Rs 79,294.91 per kl in the national capital, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. This is bound to affect air travel ticket prices. Flying will become expensive. Several large companies and startups across the world are dreaming the idea for development of electric powered aircrafts for short haul flights and city air taxis. But it is unlikely to make air travel cheaper as long-haul flights will continue to use oil powered engines. Electric aircraft are powered by electricity via one or more electric motors which drive the propellers. In this type of aircraft, electricity is supplied via a variety of methods. The electric aircraft industry is currently in the introduction stage of the industry life cycle and is expected to witness its growth stage during 2021-2030. Having all-electric aircraft for short-haul flights would indeed be great, and it would provide critical services to millions of travellers living in small towns. Still, it would make only a minor contribution to what is truly a gigantic business. Air traffic surged from 28 billion passenger-kilometres (pkm) in 1950 to 2.8 trillion pkm by the year 2000, a 100-fold rise. It then rose to nearly 9 trillion pkm before the pandemic intervened. Trillions of passenger-kilometres could be added so rapidly thanks to the advent of wide-body airplanes carrying 300 to 500 passengers per plane between the continents. Large turbofan engines powering these planes are fuelled by aviation kerosene that provides nearly 12,000 watt-hours per kilogram. In contrast, today's best commercial Li-ion batteries deliver less than 300 Wh per kg, or just 40th the energy density of kerosene. Even when taking into account the higher efficiency of electric motors, the effective energy densities go down to about 20th part. That's more than better batteries can bridge within the next decade or two. Moreover, the airline industry requires massive investments. Pre-COVID estimates indicated that between 2018 and 2038 the combined market for new planes, together with the cost of their maintenance, repair, and associated training services, would be on the order of USD 16 trillion. Such enormous outlays require long planning horizons, embedded in commitments to specific designs and aircraft orders. This means that the industry's next few decades have already been decided. Because the average lifespan of both single-aisle and wide-body planes is just over 20 years, forthcoming purchases of new planes will expand the existing fleet at least by half and all of the large airliners will rely on oil jet engines.

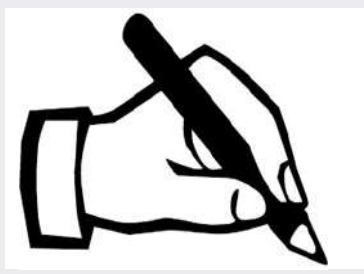
Central Chronicle welcomes, articles, write ups, comments on different issues for editorial page (800-900 words), Letter to editor for this page. It can be sent by e-mail at: editorcentralchronicle@gmail.com
The letters can be edited or rewritten for clarity of thoughts.

ICE SCULPTURE FESTIVAL

A family visits the Ice Sculpture Festival in the Pustevny mountains, in East Moravia, Czech Republic.

Tough time ahead due to non-performing assets of banks

SATISH SINGH



The Reserve Bank of India in its second financial stability report has projected an increase in the Non-Performing Asset (NPA) of banks. The central bank believes that the Omicron variant of the corona virus can have a negative impact on the economy. According to the Reserve Bank, rising inflation is also one of the reasons to mounting NPA. According to the Financial Stability Report, the NPA of banks may increase from 8.1 percent to 9.5 percent by September 2022, which was 6.9 percent in September 2021.

However, according to the Governor of the Reserve Bank, Shakti Kant Das, the financial position of the banks as of now is good. Banks have performed well during the pandemic period due to the expedient policies of the government and the policy support of the Reserve Bank of India and relevant measures taken by the central bank during the pandemic. During this, the financial market has also remained stable. Therefore, the Reserve Bank is confident that the banks will easily deal with the NPA. Earlier, in its first financial stability report, the Reserve Bank of India had said that by March 2022, the GNPA of banks could be 9.80 percent and if the situation worsens then it can reach the level of 11.22 percent.

By March 2021, the NPA of scheduled commercial banks had come down by Rs 61,180 crore to Rs 8.34 lakh crore, as against Rs 8.96 lakh crore in March 2020. In March 2021, the gross NPA (GNPA) of banks was 7.5 percent of total advances, while the net NPA were 2.4 percent. This shows that the banks performed well during the corona pandemic. The GNPA of listed banks stood at Rs 8.11 lakh crore in June 2021 and declined by 2.5 percent over the previous year, as compared to Rs 8.32 lakh crore in June 2020. Public sector banks performed better than private banks on this parameter. Their GNPA declined by 4.2 percent, while that of private sector banks rose by 3.3 percent. The net NPA of public sector banks declined by 4 percent during this period, while the net NPA of private sector banks grew at the rate of 22 percent.

Almost all public sector banks have performed well in the first quarter of the current financial year as well. During this period, the collective net profit of listed banks grew by 61 percent year-on-year basis, while the net profit of public sector banks grew by 140 percent year-on-year to Rs 14,012 crore from Rs 5,847 crore.

At the same time, the net profit of private sector banks increased by 28 percent to Rs 18,083 crore from Rs 14,127 crore. In the area of operating profit also, the performance of public sector banks has been better. Their operating profit grew 6 percent, nearly doubling that of private banks. In the June quarter, fee income of public sector banks grew by 35 percent, while that of private sector banks by 20.5 percent.

It has been written in the preface of the Financial Stability Report that the Indian economy was devastated due to the second wave of Corona virus, but now the recovery of the economy is clearly visible, but it is believed that the Omicron variant of Corona virus can again damage the Indian economy badly, as its proliferation capacity is very fast.

Even though the percentage of death from omicron variant is low, but due to its unprecedented ability to spread, it can prove to be more dangerous than the delta variant. For example, if 100 people have been infected with the Delta variant and 10 percent of them die, then 20 to 30 times more people i.e., 2000 to 3000 people will be infected with the Omicron variant. if only 1 percent of 2000, infected with this variant die, the death toll will be 20, which will be twice the number of people who died from the delta variant.

According to the latest Financial Stability Report of the Reserve Bank of India, private investment has still not reached the level before the corona period, which shows that the income of the common people has also not reached the level before the corona period and they are spending less. Rising inflation is also putting a dent in the pockets of the common people. People are not able to spend due to low income and inflation. To overcome this to some extent, there is a need to coordinate between demand and supply, but the relevant mechanisms are not able to take further action on this front. Mismanagement is also one of the potent reasons to mounting inflation.

Due to higher imports than exports, the current account deficit (CAD) in the second quarter of the current financial year stood at USD 9.3 billion, which is 1.3 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP), whereas current account deficit in the first quarter of the current financial year stood at USD 6.6 billion, which was 0.9 percent of GDP. According to the Reserve Bank of India, the widening of the current account deficit in the second quarter of the financial year 2021-22 is due to the widening of the trade deficit to USD 44.4 billion, from USD 30.7 billion in the previous quarter. The current account deficit is likely to be above USD 25 billion in the third quarter of FY 2021-22, while the current account deficit in the financial year 2021-22 is likely to be 40 to 45 billion dollars or 1.4 percent of GDP.

The increase in trade deficit and current account deficit is increasing the pressure on the economy and due to this the government is not able to spend the required amount on various important items, due to which demand is not increasing. Since the increase in demand accelerates economic activity, therefore, the pace of recovery in the economy is slow. Due to increasing pressure on the economy, there will be a decrease in the income of the businessman and the common man, due to which people will not be able to pay the instalments and interest of their loan and due to this, there may be an increase in the NPA level.

It is true that the laws or institutions engaged in the recovery of NPA have not been able to give the expected results in the matter of recovery of NPA, but it is also true that recovery of NPA has already accelerated. In the last 6 years, banks have been successful in recovering more than Rs 5 lakh crore of NPA and can be expected to give better results on this front in the coming days as well.

In the current perspective, the possibility of increase in the NPA in the Financial Stability Report by the Reserve Bank of India can be justified, because at present, omicron virus variant is growing rapidly in every part of the country and inflation is also increasing. It is also true that there has been a significant improvement in the performance of banks in the recent past. Some big banks have also been successful in raising capital from the market.

In such a situation, it can be said that even though there is a possibility of increase in the NPA of the banks, but there will be no negative impact of the increased NPA on the banks, because they will tackle this easily.

(Satish Singh is senior columnist and editor of in-house Journal of SBI 'Aarthik Darpan'.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ECI extends

Election Commission of India (ECI) has extended the moratorium on open public rallies except with a relief that indoor meetings with presence of 300 people or 50 percent of the hall can be held with full protocols of COVID-19 and the onus of following norms shall be on political parties. The very much purpose of holding public rallies is to convince the floating or undecided voters in their favour. As far as 300 people are concerned all will be dedicated workers of the party and the undecided voters will remain untouched.It is a welcome move of ECI due to safeguarding public health had been prioritised over compaigning. Extending ban on political rallies till January 22 would definitely be frustrating for major political parties and their intending candidates and such curbs would mean shelving all plans to demonstrate support base as had been the norm in the past contrary to obvious dejection for the political class, for those citizens who fear that mass gathering of public at Election event would fan translation of the virus disease, the ECI's decision would be welcomed wholeheartedly for none would relish for deterioration of the pandemic situation as it would be consequently leading to curtailment of livelihood activities.as the country had faced previously also. Similar to all the virus containment measures, effective enforcement of the ban or relaxation would depend depend on diligence of officials who are entrusted to ensure that political parties comply with COVID-19 norms. Regardless of directing state and district authorities concerned to ensure full compliance with the standing orders, there is strong possibility that major political parties would find an escape route rather than acknowledge that the curbs are for the safety of all as could be evident from the ECI serving show cause notice to the Samajwadi party which reportedly held a large public meeting in the compound of the party office in UP, defying covid norms.

Yash Pal Ralhan, Jalandhar

Power disparity

Subansiri Hydroelectric Power project when completed will churn for the region 2000 megawatts of electricity. In a recent news it was reported that Assam will only get a meagre 25 megawatts of free electricity whereas Arunachal Pradesh will bag 262 megawatts of free electricity from the proposed 2000 megawatts. Arunachal getting 262 megawatts is not a concern but giving peanuts to Assam which has a population of more than 3 crore is kind of disrespectful. The trouble will be borne equal by both the states, then why this disparity between the two figures? Assam needs it more than Arunachal. I think it will be better that both the states talk this over a cup of tea.

Noopur Baruah, Tezpur

WHAT THEY TWEET!

Prakash Mallya
@PrakashMallya
To test our brain's ability to multitask, try this out: 1. First count from one to ten out loud. 2. Then recite the alphabet from A to J out loud. 3. Now try combining them by rapidly switching between them: recite A1, B2, C3, and so forth out loud. What did you observe?

Diva Jain@DivaJain2
To all the politicians falling over themselves to welcome Tesla to their respective states, here is a primer on how China does it - 1. Subsidized land for setting up a "manufacturing" plant and NOT an "assembly" plant. 2. Cheap Govt backed funding to tune of $1.3 billion

Rezina Sultana
@RezinaSultana9
My bro in law is a scientist, got award from the state govt, 10th, 12th topper, 1st class ,gold medalist , is a fantastic cook and often cooks Biriyani for his wife and family. Grow up Man.

Yusuf Unjhawala
@YusufDFI
From PM's security to teleprompter or whatever, every effing thing is politicised. Tu tu main main, attack, counter-attack, toolkit. No side is a saint, so spare me your replies if you are going to finger point, irrespective of which side you are.

Ajayita@DoctorAjayita
Koi utha ke patak do yahan! Portofino, Italy.

Harsha Bhogle
@bhogleharsha
Rishabh Pant's progress as a cricketer over the last 4 years has been extraordinary; as a matchwinning batsman, which gets talked about a lot, but even more so in recent times as a keeper which has been heartwarming. That might already be a lot on his plate for now.

Radhika Gupta@iRadhikaGupta
Perfect businesses exist on Excel. Perfect lives exist on Instagram. Perfect portfolios exist on Twitter. The real world has mistakes, ugliness, heartaches, assumptions gone wrong, gigantic failures, and yes, loss.Benchmark wisely.

WFH has put working women under 'triple burden': Prez

New Delhi, Jan 18 (PTI):

Work from home during the Covid pandemic has its benefits but it has also put working women under a "triple burden", says President Ram Nath Kovind.

In a letter to young Indians published in the Manorama Yearbook 2022, he says women already have the double burden of paid work and "unpaid work", that is, domestic responsibilities.

"On top of that, as children attend school from home, their learning has to be supplemented by the parents, and that task usually falls on the mother," Kovind writes in the letter, titled "Arise, The Future Beckons".

"The new stress on family time should be welcome for male employees, so that they can share some of the responsibilities of their partners. In any case, studies show that hard work in itself can be even counterproductive and as the number of hours spent on work goes up, productivity comes down in some instances," he writes.

The President also says that the pandemic has taught us "exactly those lessons that will come handy for climate action".

The pandemic has been an unprecedented crisis, but it may as well be just a warning of a far bigger crisis that is looming over the horizon.

"Climate change is no longer a matter of scientific research and policy discussions; its impact is already tangible, and we are fast running out of time to keep global warming within feasible limits," he writes.

The decade of the 2020s, he says, could turn out to be the most decisive point. "The situation is dire and pessimism won't be out of place, but I remain hopeful." Kovind's hope stems from the fact that "we have seen what we are capable of when our collective existence was threatened by the coronavirus. COVID-19 has shown what humankind can do if all nations join hands and are guided by nothing other than concern for our common future coupled with respect for science". On career opportunities, he writes: "As average Indians in your twenties, the question of career is bound to be uppermost in your minds. Under social imperatives or under peer pressure, many of you often equate a 'career' with a 'job', preferably with the assurance of its continuity till superannuation. That is understandable. India's bureaucracy and public sector both require talented, hard-working youngsters."

But a job, Kovind says, need not mean a government or public-sector one only. "Our private sector has contributed immensely to the creation of wealth for all, and it would also need talent to take India's economy to new heights".

He stresses that a career need not mean a job.

"In the new century, many of our deeply held notions of 'work' were anyway undergoing changes, and COVID-19 only hastened that process. It forced movement restrictions and lockdowns on us, paralysing economies around the world. As a result, there were job losses and salary cuts, but there was also a rise in the 'gig economy'," he says.

He then goes on to say that in this "brave new world, a brave new breed of youngsters is seeking neither jobs nor the financial security of the routine nine-to-five work but a rightful recognition of and remuneration for their unique talents, for their creative vision, for their skills".

"Instead of safety, their preference is for flexibility. Instead of closing their options, they are exploring more alternatives," he writes.

Along with the gig economy, another trend in recent years, according to Kovind, is work-life balance — a phase when hard work alone was of paramount importance is over in many nations, organisations and sectors. Besides featuring important happenings of 2021, the yearbook also has articles by the likes of Shashi Tharoor, Suresh Prabhu and Paranjoy Guha Thakurta among others.

Chief Editor Mammen Mathew says the yearbook is "power-packed in more than 25 sections with interesting articles by eminent writers that capture the new trends".

TEMPORARY BAMBOO BRIDGE

Two wheeler riders on a temporary bamboo bridge constructed over River Brahmaputra to link with the ferry service to North Guwahati after decrease in the water level of the river, in Guwahati, Tuesday.

R-DAY TABLEAUX ROW

'No revision of decision on exclusion of TN, WB and Kerala tableaux'

- **Only 12 states selected**

New Delhi, Jan 18 (PTI):

The decision to not include the tableaux of Kerala, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu at the Republic Day parade will not be revised, senior officials of the Defence Ministry said on Tuesday and noted that a total of 12 states have been selected to display their models.

The remarks by the defence ministry officials came amidst ongoing controversy over the tableaux exclusion, prompting West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin to seek Prime Minister Narendra Modi's immediate intervention.

Some leaders of the non-BJP ruled states also alleged that the exclusion was an "insult" by the Centre. Reacting to the controversy, a senior defence ministry official said, "it is not possible to accept requests from these three states' and polite responses have been sent to their CMs explaining the long process of selection of tableaux." "It is not possible to revise or reconsider the decision as Tableau making process is a very long process and an expert committee takes these decisions sufficiently in advance," the official added.

EC adds new column to mention expenditure on digital campaigning

New Delhi, Jan 18 (PTI):

ELECTION EXPENDITURE

The Election Commission has added a new column in candidates' election expenditure returns to submit information on money spent on digital campaigning in the upcoming polls in five states.

The candidates used to mention money spent on digital campaigning in previous elections also, but this is for the first time that a dedicated column has been created to "capture" details of such expenditure. In a bid to check the spread of COVID-19, Election Commission has extended a ban on holding physical rallies roadshows and similar physical campaigning events till January 22.

With the ban on outdoor physical events in place, parties are using digital and online platforms to reach out to voters.

The new column has been created for the first time for elections in Uttar Pradesh Uttarakhand, Goa, Punjab and Manipur by tweaking the format of returns. "Parties and candidates (so far) used to disclose on their own such expenditure ... they used to provide details of expenditure on things like digital vans ... they used to show expenditure under this category. Now, a dedicated point has been created to capture such expenditure from this (set of) polls," a functionary explained.

The functionary said it is not for the first first time such disclosure by the candidates and parties will be made. "But the manner of disclosure now is dedicated," the functionary explained.

According to section 10A of the Representation of the People Act 1951, a candidate who fails to lodge his or her election expenditures within the prescribed time is liable to be disqualified by EC for a period of three years from contesting polls.

Year after voting in AP rural polls, Kotia villagers to vote in Odisha panchayat polls

Bhubaneswar, Jan 18 (PTI):

CLAIMS AND COUNTER CLAIMS

A year after voting in the Andhra Pradesh rural elections, residents of disputed villages in Kotia gram panchayat area will now exercise their franchise in the upcoming Odisha panchayat elections.

The Andhra Pradesh government had held rural elections in villages in Kotia gram panchayat area, claimed by both the states, in February last year despite the Odisha administration's objection citing a Supreme Court directive to maintain status quo in the disputed area.

"Residents of villages like Madkar, Daliamba, Barnapadu, Patusineri and Konadara under Kotia gram panchayat had voted in the Andhra Pradesh rural polls. Now, they will also vote in the Odisha panchayat elections," an official in Koraput district said. Odisha State Election Commissioner (SEC) A P Padhi has issued special directions to officials concerned for conducting peaceful polls in Kotia gram panchayat area in Koraput district, and Chitrakonda block of Malkangiri district, official sources said.

Padhi has issued the directions during a recent review of the situation in all the 30 districts of the state before holding the rural polls in mid-February, they said. Polling could not be held in two zilla parishads, comprising 18 gram panchayats, of Chitrakonda block in the 2017 panchayat elections due to the situation created by Left-wing Extremists. Special preparations be made to ensure that the election process starting with nominations are held smoothly in Chitrakonda block, Padhi was quoted as saying.

Maoist posters calling on people in tribal-dominated districts to boycott the panchayat elections were seized from some pockets, a senior police officer said. Similarly, Padhi has also asked the collector and SP of Koraput to lay special emphasis on conducting peaceful elections in Kotia gram panchayat in Pottangi block.

"The collectors and SP of the both the districts may appraise the prevailing situation in the aforesaid blocks," he added.

The dispute over the ownership of 21 of the 28 villages under Kotia gram panchayat had first reached the Supreme Court in 1968. In 2006, the apex court held that inter-state boundaries did not fall within its jurisdiction and only the Parliament could resolve them, as it imposed a permanent injunction on the disputed area.

PM interacts with BJP workers in Varanasi through NaMo app

Varanasi (UP), Jan 18 (PTI):

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday held an interaction with BJP workers of his Varanasi parliamentary constituency, exhorted them to vigorously conduct a micro-donation campaign with the aim to connect with people ahead of the Uttar Pradesh assembly election and reaffirmed the party's commitment to development.

Restoration of the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor, women empowerment, infrastructure and healthcare development were among the topics that came up for discussion during the interaction through the NaMo app.

Modi said, "The BJP is running a micro-donation campaign and a person can make a donation of even Rs 5."

He suggested a competition among booths to see which one can collect donations from the maximum number of people and added the aim is not to collect money but to connect with people.

The prime minister said elections are a test for political parties. "It is also a training camp for the development of workers.... Our focus should be on winning the election...there should also be expansion of the organisation and development of the workers. These two mantras we must remember," he said. "This is election time and we have to make people understand the power of each and every vote. Yogi-ji (Adityanath) and I are able to do so much because the people of UP have blessed us with their votes," he said. Assembly polls will be held in Uttar Pradesh in seven phases beginning February 10. Varanasi will vote in the seventh phase on March 7.

Interacting with one of the 'karyakartas' (party workers), Prime Minister Modi asked him to expand the reach of the government's welfare schemes to farmers and said they should make farmers aware of the use of chemical-free fertilisers.

Modi also talked about several central schemes which are benefitting the people of Varanasi at large.

The prime minister said a section in the NaMo app, called 'Kamal Pushp', has stories about inspiring 'karyakartas' (party workers).

"The place we have reached today, for that about 3-4 generations of Jan Sangh leaders and workers have sacrificed their lives.

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