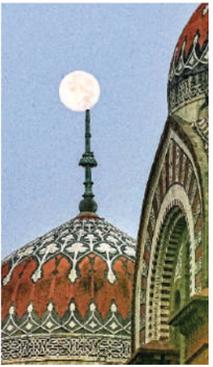


BRIEF



Full moon appears in the sky in Chennai, early Sunday morning.

Mishap

Hailakandi: Two picnickers were killed and 11 others injured in a road accident in Assam's Karimganj district, a police officer said on Sunday. The vehicle the picnic party was travelling in fell into a ditch in Ratabari area on Saturday evening, the officer said.

Detach

Kolkata: The coupling between two coaches of 12871 Howrah-Titlagarh Ispat Express got detached on Sunday while entering Santragachi station, a South Eastern Railway official said here.

Magh Mela

Prayagraj: 'Kalpvasis' or devotees turned out in large numbers in the city for the month-long Magh Mela after a gap of two years owing to coronavirus outbreak, even as the authorities implemented a slew of measures to prevent the spread of the disease at the fair venue.

Weather

High 26 Low 8

TALE OF HORROR

Joshimath declared landslide-subsidence zone

Over 60 families evacuated

Dehradun, Jan 08 (PTD):

Joshimath has been declared a landslide-subsidence zone and over 60 families living in uninhabitable houses in the sinking town have been evacuated to temporary relief centres, a senior official said on Sunday.

At least 90 more families have to be evacuated. The local administration has set up relief centres at four-five places in the Himalayan town, Garhwal Commissioner Sushil Kumar said. Meanwhile, District Magistrate (DM)



A building tilts following landslides at Joshimath in Chamoli district.

Himanshu Khurana went from door to door in the affected area to assess the damage and appealed to people living in houses that have developed cracks to move to the relief centres. Joshimath has been declared a landslide-subsidence zone. More than 60 families living in uninhab-

itable houses in the sinking town have been evacuated to temporary relief centres, Kumar told PTI.

Considering the extent of the damage, at least 90 more families will have to be evacuated as soon as possible, he said. Kumar, who has been camping in Joshimath since Thursday,

Shankaracharya Matth develops cracks

The situation in Joshimath remains grim as one of the Hindu monasteries, the Shankaracharya Matth in Jyotirmath area, has also developed cracks in many places over the past 15 days, triggering a scare in the religious institute. According to the Jyotirmath administration, these cracks have increased in the last 15 days.

heads a committee tasked with monitoring the situation on the ground level. There are a total of 4,500 buildings in Joshimath and 610 of these have developed huge cracks, making them unfit for habitation, he said.

Tusker electrocuted

Mahasamund, Jan 08: An elephant died of electrocution in Mahasamund district after it came in contact with a live wire laid by poachers to trap wild animals, a forest official said on Sunday.

The incident took place on Saturday night near Kodar dam in Mahasamund forest range when two male jumbos, named ME-1 and ME-5, were moving through the area, Divisional Forest Officer, Mahasamund division, Pankaj Rajput said.

The two tuskers had entered Mahasamund from neighbouring Gariaband district on January 6 and were heading towards Sirpur area, he said. When the elephants were in the area which comes under the Forest Development Corporation near Kodar dam, ME-5 came in contact with a live iron wire laid for the purpose of poaching wild animals and got electrocuted, the official said.

RELIGIOUS CONVERSION

Five more held for clash in Narayanpur

Narayanpur, Jan 08:

Police on Sunday arrested five more persons in connection with a clash between two groups over alleged religious conversion in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur district, an official said. With this, so far eight people have been arrested in connection with the incident which took place in Gorra village under Edka police station limits on January 1. Inspector General of Police (Bastar Range) Sundarraj P said.

The police had on January 3 arrested three persons. Five more persons arrested on Sunday have been identified as Preamsagar Netam (48), Lacchu Karanga (32), Santuram Dugga (35), Punuram Dugga (45) and

Total 8 arrested so far

With this, so far eight people have been arrested in connection with the incident which took place in Gorra village under Edka police station limits on January 1. The police had on January 3 arrested three persons.

Rajman Karanga (46), all residents of Narayanpur district, the official said. They were produced before a local court which sent them to judicial custody, he said.

Three separate cases were registered at Edka police station following complaints received from tribals, tribal Christians and police about alleged attacks on them, police said.

AI PEEING INCIDENT

Airline's response should have been much swifter: Tata

Mumbai, Jan 08 (PTD):

Tata Group Chairman N Chandrasekaran admitted on Sunday that Air India's response to the incident of a drunk passenger allegedly urinating on a woman on one of its international flights last year should have been "much swifter".

In a statement, which came days after the aviation regulator DGCA

pulled up the Tata Group-owned full-service carrier, Chandrasekaran also said that "we fell short of addressing this situation the way we should have."

In a shocking incident, an inebriated man allegedly urinated on a female co-passenger, a senior citizen in her seventies, in the business class of Air India New York-New Delhi flight on November 26 last year. The accused Shankar

Mishra was arrested by the Delhi Police from Bengaluru on Saturday.

"The incident on Air India flight AI102 on November 26, 2022, has been a matter of personal anguish to me and my colleagues at Air India. Air India's response should have been much swifter. We fell short of addressing this situation the way it should have been, Chandrasekaran said in

the statement on Sunday.

"The Tata Group and Air India stand by the safety and well-being of our passengers and crew with full conviction. We will review and repair every process to prevent or address any incidents of such unruly nature," he added in the statement.

DGCA has said Air India's conduct in handling the incident was "unprofessional".

Kathua Gangrape-murder Case

Juvenile declared adult by SC

New Delhi, Jan 08 (PTD):

Shubam Sangra, declared an adult by the Supreme Court order of 2018, the sessions court of Pathankot will be hearing the case and the appellate court would be the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

Sangra was also shifted from a Juvenile Home to the regular Kathua Jail after the crime branch served the Supreme court order of November 22 in which he was declared an adult. The Crime Branch charge sheet detailed Sangra's alleged involvement in the horrific crime. It said Sangra was responsible for an overdose of sedatives forcibly administered to the eight-year-old, rendering her "incapacitated" to resist sexual assault on her as well as her murder. "She

was forcefully administered five tablets of Clonazepam of 0.5 mg each on January 11, 2018 which is higher than the safe therapeutic dose. Subsequently more tablets were given...The signs and symptoms of an overdose may include drowsiness, confusion, impaired coordination, slow reflexes, slowed or stopped breathing, coma (loss of consciousness) and death," a medical expert was quoted as saying in the charge sheet.

The peak concentration of clonazepam is achieved in the blood after one hour to 90 minutes of oral administration and its absorption is complete, "irrespective of administered either with or without food", according to the concluding opinion.

The Minister, according to a government release, said that all districts have been alerted and everyone should follow directions issued by the Health department. The release said that the Health department was monitoring for fever and other symptoms among people in the affected areas. Symptoms of the infection in humans include severe upper back pain, fever, cough, shortness of breath, cold and blood in the sputum, it said. Those at risk of the infection should get in touch with the nearest health center or a doctor on noticing any of these symptoms or if they have respiratory problems, the release said.

It also said that bird flu or avian influenza is an infectious viral disease found in birds which is not usually transmitted to humans. But it can infect in rare cases due to a mutation in the virus, it said.

Bird flu in Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 08 (PTD): In the wake of bird flu cases being reported in the State, Kerala Health Minister Veena George on Sunday said there was no cause for concern, but precautions need to be taken for preventing transmission of the infection to humans.

The Minister, according to a government release, said that all districts have been alerted and everyone should follow directions issued by the Health department. The release said that the Health department was monitoring for fever and other symptoms among people in the affected areas. Symptoms of the infection in humans include severe upper back pain, fever, cough, shortness of breath, cold and blood in the sputum, it said. Those at risk of the infection should get in touch with the nearest health center or a doctor on noticing any of these symptoms or if they have respiratory problems, the release said.

It also said that bird flu or avian influenza is an infectious viral disease found in birds which is not usually transmitted to humans. But it can infect in rare cases due to a mutation in the virus, it said.

Therefore, those who come into contact with birds — infected and healthy — should take preventive measures like wearing gloves, face masks and washing hands frequently, the release said. The disease can affect all kinds of birds like chicken, duck, quail, goose, turkey and ornamental birds, it said.

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Elderly couple killed in road accident

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 08: An elderly couple was killed in a road accident which occurred on the bridge of River Sheonath on the intervening night of Sunday. The couple was returning from Anjora on a scooter when they were hit by a rashly moving car.

The man and his wife suffered fatal injuries and succumbed on the spot. The car driver escaped from the spot after the mishap. Later, police searched and arrested the accused car driver.

According to information, the deceased were Gyandhand Lekhwani (56) and his wife Vandana Lekhwani (45), residents of Polsaypara, Durg. They had gone to attend some function at Prithvi Palace in Anjora on their

**Accused car driver**

scooter bearing registration number CG07-BU-9101.

Around 23:30 hrs on Saturday, they were returning back home on the scooter when a rashly moving car came on the wrong side and hit Lekhwani's scooter. Gyandhand and his wife Vandana suffered fatal in-

juries and died on the spot. The accused car driver left his vehicle and escaped.

On information, police reached the spot and the bodies were sent for autopsy after preparing an inquest. The car bearing registration number CG07-BF-5195 was seized and police collected infor-

mation about its owner.

On the basis of the registration details, police contacted the owner after which the accused driver Sunny Singh of Azad Mohalla, Camp-1, Bhilai was booked under the provisions mentioned in sections 279, 304 (A) of IPC and Section 151 of CrPc.

SEFI seeks restoration of special allowance for mines officers

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 08: SEFI has demanded from the Ministry of Steel to restore the special allowance for working in difficult areas for the executives positioned in Mines. The officials of SEFI have requested the Union Minister of State for Steel, Faggan Singh Kulaste and Steel Secretary NN Sinha in this regard.

Through a letter, SEFI raised the pending issues of mine officials and demanded to start the Special Allowance (Difficult Area Service Allowance) in the third pay revision for the executives of SAIL Mines and NMDC.

It needs to be mentioned here that earlier on December 12, 2022, a dele-

gation of SEFI had discussed this issue with the Union Minister of State for Steel, OSD (Steel) and the Joint Secretary.

The Ministry of Steel, as per the DPE's order no 2(77)/09-DPE (WC) GL-XII/2010 dated 22/06/2010, had issued an order to provide difficult area special allowance to the officers working in SAIL mines for working in challenging / difficult postings.

According to these orders, 10% of the basic salary was paid to the officers working in the mines as special allowance for difficult areas. The mines of SAIL and NMDC are still operating in the same condition and the urban facilities, education and medical facilities in these places are very pathetic. The offi-

cers working in these places are bound to migrate their families to any developed cities to avail education and medical facilities uninterrupted.

The third pay revision committee has recommended in point no 3-16-13/vi/c, to provide remote area special allowance to the officers working in difficult conditions. But the Ministry of Steel vide order no F.No. 3(1)/2022 - Finance dated 29/09/2022, has discontinued the inaccessible area special allowance for the officers of SAIL. The officers working in difficult conditions are extremely disappointed with this order.

In this context, SEFI Chairman Narendra Kumar Banchoke, while presenting arguments in

support of continuation of special allowance to the officials working in the mines, said that the mines of SAIL and NMDC are mostly located at remote places where the medical, education and township facilities are not available.

Affected by left wing extremism along with lack of basic facilities, the officers working in the mines are demoralized due to non-reinstatement of special allowances.

This may have an impact on the performance of the company. Therefore, in order to maintain a better performance of the company, special allowance is very necessary to increase the morale of the officers of mines. He appealed to reinstate this allowance.

Bada Talab being developed as recreational centre with Rs 16 cr

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 08: Over Rs 16 crore is being spent to develop the Bada Talab of Kumhari as a recreational centre. The bullet toy train will be the centre of attraction for the children. The main entrance gate will have an eagle and two elephants to welcome the visitors.

Recently, Collector Pushendra Kumar Meena visited the Bada Talab located at the heart of Kumhari. Bada Talab is being converted into a recreation place for the citizens of the area at a cost of 16 crores. It will be inaugurated soon by Chief Minister Bhopesh Baghel.

The Collector took information regarding the progress of the work from the concerned officers dur-



ing his inspection and also instructed them to complete the remaining work soon. He also directed to improve the front view of the entrance of Bada Talab so that the people passing by can get an idea of the beauty of Bada Talab.

He asked the concerned authorities to lay special emphasis on flower beds and plantations so that the visitors feel that they are close to nature. Apart from this, he also inspected 08

food stalls located inside the perimeter of Bada Talab. He asked to give the tender of food stalls to such food chains or shopkeepers, who can maintain a variety of food, taste and hygiene.

Along with this, he instructed the concerned officer to engage 7 to 10 gardeners regularly for the maintenance of plants and flower beds so that the maintenance of the garden could be done regularly.

A Bullet Toy Train will run at the Bada Talab entertainment venue. This train will have a seating capacity of 48 people. This will be a special attraction for children, in which they will be able to ride the magnetic bullet train while enjoying the musical fountain and other fun activities.

There will be an eagle, two elephants and green walking tunnel, sea-link bridge etc at the entrance.

An eagle and two elephants will be permanently installed at the entrance to welcome the visitors to Bada Talab.

Along with the natural beauty of the pond within the recreational area, a green walking tunnel, fountain, laser show with video projection, spike light, flower bed, play section for children and sea link bridge are being constructed in Bada Talab. This will be the center of attraction for all the visitors coming to Bada Talab.

Apart from this, the Collector also inspected the Kukda pond, where he directed the concerned officers to clean the pond, paint the temples and plant shady trees. SDM Brijesh Kumar Kshatriya, CMO Jitendra Kushwaha and other officers were present.

Suspect arrested in threatening letter case

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 08: On the basis of the CCTV footage, police have arrested a suspect in the threatening letter case in which a renowned transporter had received death threats. SP Dr Abhishek Pallava informed that the letter was sent by post.

Accordingly, police traced its origin and found the letter box in which the letter was posted. CCTV footage of a nearby place was examined in which a suspect was seen approaching on a bike and posting a letter in the letter box.

On the basis of this



gating the suspect.

It needs to be mentioned here that Bhilai based renowned transporter and President of Truck Trailer Steel Association, Inderjeet Singh (Chhotu) had received an anonymous death threat. The postal letter was sent to his office in Hathkhaj.

On his complaint, Old Bhilai Police Station lodged an FIR under section 507 of IPC. The letter written in Hindi language contained threatening remarks against Inder's life. Taking the matter into serious cognizance, police protection was also provided to Inderjeet Singh.

Sanjay Rungta appointed Chairman of APPIC

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 08: A meeting was held with representatives of all regions of Association of Private Professional Institutions of Chhattisgarh (APPIC), in which representatives of many new pharmacy institutes also attended the meeting. The association elected Sanjay Rungta, Chairman, Sanjay Rungta Group of Institutions as President, Shailendra Jain, Chairman Raipur Institute of Technology, Raipur as General Secretary and Ashish Jaiswal, Chairman Chouksey Group of Institutions, Bilaspur was unanimously nominated as Treasurer and best



wishes were given. Sanjay Rungta told that all pharmacy and engineering institutes can join Association of Private Professional Institutions of Chhattisgarh (APPIC) so that there is wider representation.

The only objective of the Association of Private Professional Institutions of Chhattisgarh (APPIC) is

to redress the grievances of all the private institutions running in the state. All the members unanimously assured that they will always be ready for the development of private professional institutions. The meeting ended after expressing full confidence to lead in a better way under the guidance of Sanjay Rungta.

Congenital heart disease screening camp held

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 08: Congenital Heart Disease Screening Camp was organised at District Hospital under the guidance of Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr JP Meshram and Civil Surgeon cum Chief Hospital Superintendent Dr Yogesh Kumar Sharma and leadership of Dr Divya Srivastava (Nodal Officer RBSK) and District Program Manager Padmakar Shinde.

Dr Sameet Raj Prasad, Pediatrician, Cardiologist of SMC Heart Institute, Dr Ajay Chaurasia and Dr Gaurav Jain, specialist doctor of the hospital, Durg conducted the camp in which 34 children suffering from congenital heart disease were examined. Out of them, 3 children were identified for surgery.



After 1 year, 16 children have to be re-examined. Echo test of 15 children was found to be normal.

Apart from this, 9 children with other diseases were registered. In which 3 children had eye problems, who were registered for spectacles, 1 congenitally deaf child was consulted for further treatment by ENT specialist Dr Rinu Tiwari, and 1 child with traumatic cataract

was found, whose eyes were treated in the district hospital.

Consultation for treatment by the ophthalmologist of the department and 4 children with other diseases were registered for consultation and treatment by the pediatrician. From April 2022 till now, 69 children have been registered in DEIC under Chirayu Scheme, under Ayushman Bharat



Scheme. 5 children have undergone cochlear implant and are getting regular speech therapy in DEIC so that they could be able to hear like other normal children and lead a normal life.

Complicated surgery for congenital heart disease was done on 35 children. 8 children were operated for congenital cataract, 11 children for cleft lip and palate, 10 children for her-

nia and urogenital surgery were done free of cost by Dr Kalpana Zep, eye surgeon of the eye department in District Hospital Durg.

69 children who had congenital malformation will now be able to lead a normal life with the help of Chirayu Scheme. The DEIC team and Chirayu team made a special contribution in making this camp successful.

Sri Sankara Vidyalaya junior wing celebrates 'Kanaka Dhara'

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 08: Sri Sankara Vidyalaya, Sec X, celebrated its 34th Annual Day (junior wing) 'Kanaka Dhara-2023' on January 06, 2023 amidst great liveliness and enthusiasm. SV Nandanwar, CGM (Internal Audit), Bhilai Steel Plant, was the esteemed chief guest.

He was escorted by the dignitaries, the Principal. The function commenced with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp and garlanding the portraits of goddess Saraswati and the holy patron of the school, the Parmacharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham, Sri Jayendra Saraswati Swamikal.

Principal, Bipin Deshmukh accorded a warm welcome to all on the behalf of Sri Sankara fraternity. He tabled the annual school report. V Ramchandran, President Sri Sankara Education Society acknowledged the chief guest and focused on the futuristic career avenues for the present generation. He urged the parents to guide their wards in a right direction. The Chief Guest, SV Nandanwar addressed the gathering with his words of wisdom. He was happy with the progress of the school. He emphasized that small children can be moulded at an early age



by knowing the quality of each child. The students exhibited their mastery through the different cultural fiesta. The function was well attended by the parents, students, invited dignitaries, members of PTA, other members of the management and distinguished guests.

The Cultural Programme based on the varied Indian Cultural heritage comprised of a welcome song, teachers group song, Sunderkand Recital, Onam dance guided by Rajani Vijayan and Rajani Nair, Janmashtami by Sanchita Saxena, Navratri by Shikha Verma, Hareli by Roshni and Megha,



Kawwali by Tarannum. This was followed by melodious group songs guided by Devyani Vyas, Vandana Mishra, Sanjay Kodra and Doman Verma. Marathi Dance guided by Anjana Dutta, Shivratri dance by Kavita Pradeep, dance on Holi theme presented by Yamini, Sankranti by Sheela

Singh, Suwa Raut Nacha by Shanti. An impressive English Drama "Impact of Social Media" portraying how the social media is affecting student's life directed by Rita Tah, Vijayashri, Varsha and Harshita enthralled the audience. A dance drama "Kalyugi Bachche" based on par-

enting was organized by Shubhangi, Harshita and Vandana Sharma. The importance of teachers was presented through a group dance guided by Reshmi Deshmukh. A special thanks to Meeta Shukla and Akhilesh Kashyap for stage decoration.

To continue the charm of the evening the programme followed with the Ramp Walk (Bride and groom) directed by Savita Anil and Inderjeet Kaur; Hindi Drama (Dakiye Ki Kahani) directed by Priyanka, Neelam, Snigdha, Joshi and Vanaja, dance (Rang De Basanti) directed by Sarojini and Nandita, Teri Mitti Me Mil Java (Group dance) direct-

ed by Rupa and Vanaja, patriotic dance (Aisa Desh Hai Mera) directed by Amina and Prema. The group dance of classes III to V was choreographed by Reshmi Deshmukh. A special thanks to Meeta Shukla and Akhilesh Kashyap for stage decoration.

The event was successfully conducted under the able guidance of Harish Chandra Chhatwani, Head Mistress Sobha Nair & Usha Suresh. The school Head Mistress Sobha Nair proposed the vote of thanks. The event was ably conducted by Anita Verma, Roshni, Sikha Verma, Joshi Mary, V Harshita and Master Krish. The programme concluded with the National Anthem.

Ch'garhia Olympics to be organised every year: CM

To promote local traditional Ch'garhia games

Makes announcement for awards to be given to top three at cluster, block, district, divisional and state-level sports competitions

CM inaugurates state-level Ch'garhia Olympics



CM made a declaration to present prizes to top three winners in the cluster, block, district, divisional and state-level competitions of Chhattisgarhia Olympics.

CM started the state-level Kabaddi competitions with a toss. In this inaugural function, Minister for Sports & Youth Welfare Umesh Patel, Food Minister Amarjeet Bhagat, Chairman CHB Kuldeep Juneja, Mayor RMC Ejaz Debhar, Chairman Chhattisgarh Tourism Board Atal Shrivastava, Chairman

Chhattisgarh Yuwa Aayog Jitendra Mudaliar were present.

Addressing the divisional-level sports winners at the stadium, CM said that it is in order to preserve the sporting art in traditional Chhattisgarhi and to take it forward that this Olympic has been started. There is lot of enthusiasm among the people of the state for this Olympics and in this right from children, to elders including women and youth took part with great enthusiasm. A good atmosphere related to traditional sports got created

in the villages and even women took part in these sports in large number. The women who went to inlaws place after marriage, also participated in these sports. CM informed that in the 'Bhent-Mulaquat' in Gram Mulmula of Janjgir-Champa district, a 40 year old woman came along with 'Gedi' and informed that she is winner in this sport and added that it should be organised every year. CM informed that Chhattisgarhia Olympics started on 6 Oct and in this a young girl of 6 yr took part in the 'Fugadi' and a 65 year old woman ran in the 'Gedi competition'.

Minister for Sports & Youth Welfare Umesh Patel in his welcome speech said that it on CM's initiative that the traditional sports of rural areas which were vanishing have been restarted through this Chhattisgarhia Olympics. It is under CM's leadership that Chhattisgarhia culture is being promote

and under this with holidays on Teej and other local festivals, all these are being organised in enthusiastic manner.

25 lakh individuals took part at rural level, 1.30 in urban level

Additional Chief Secretary Sports & Youth Welfare Renu Pillai informed that in this state-level competition, around 1900 players are participating and this will go on till Jan 10, 2023. From rural areas, more than 25 lakh individuals take part in this Olympics and around 1.30 lakh from urban areas. She informed that sports like 'Fugadi', 'Billas', 'Bhanwara', 'Bati', 'Kabaddi', is being organised in Balbir Singh Juneja stadium. In the outdoor stadium, sports like 'Sankhali', 'Rassakasi', 'Langadi', 'Pitthul', 'Gedi Daud' is being organised at Sapre School sports like 'Kho-kho', Gilli-danda and at Swamy Vivekanand Stadium Kota, long jump and 100 mt race is being organised.

FLOWER EXHIBITION



Flowers, fruits and vegetables of different varieties are on display at the two-day Flower-Fruit, Veg exhibition at Gandhi Garden here on Sunday.

Clash between Congress and BJP workers

Raipur, Jan 08: National Students Union of India-a student wing of Congress has come out in support of development of 'Youth Hub'. To this end a foot march was taken out on Sunday. Meanwhile report has come about clash between workers of NSUI and BJYM. The situation was brought under

control after police intervention. BJP is staging protest demonstration against development of Youth Hub near Science College here. Former Minister Rajesh Munat and several other BJP leaders are on indefinite dharna in protest against development of Youth Hub.

Review meeting of district planning committee on 10th

Raipur, Jan 08: The meeting of the District Planning Committee is going to be held on January 10 at 1 pm in the Red Cross Building, Collectorate premises under the chairmanship of In-Charge Minister Ravindra Choubey. Land use modification in layer-one, two and three will be discussed in detail under the Nava Raipur Atal Nagar Vikas Yojana year 2031 in the meeting.

Millet be included in the grains distributed under the 'NFSA': Baghel

Writes to PM

State govt be allowed to collect millet crops at the minimum support price

and subsidized food grains being given to the students of ashram-hostels.

Baghel in his letter to Prime Minister has called for decision regarding the collection of Millet crops at the minimum support price. He asked for providing Millet to the State Governments at a subsidized rate for use in schemes related to grain distribution and nutritional food. The Chief Minister has written in the letter that on the initiative of the Government of India, the year 2023 has been declared as the 'International Millet Year' by the United Nations.

Millet crops can play an important role in controlling anemia and malnutrition. Unfortunately, due to the lack of marketing system in the past years, there has been a decrease in the production of millet crops in the country, he said.

Giving information about the measures to promote millet crops in Chhattisgarh, Baghel informed about establishment of 'Millet Mission' to promote the production of millet crops in Chhattisgarh.

Arrangements have been made for collection of 'Kodo, Kutki and Ragi', produced in the state with declaration of a minimum support price of Rs. 10,000, he said, adding that arrangements have also been made for their marketing. An input subsidy of Rs 9,000 per acre is also being given to millet growers in the state, he said, adding that in no state of the country, so much assistance is being given to the producers of millet crops. With all such measures, the area and production of millet crops have increased more than two times in the state in the last two years, he added.

Six in theft case nabbed, jewellery seized



Sakti, Jan 08: Sakti police has nabbed six accused involved in Rs 6 lakh theft case from a house in Gram Sarkara under Malkharouda thana. The accused have broken the lock of the main gate and all four rooms and ran away with jewellery and cash worth Rs 5.89 lakh. The police had filed case against unknown and taken the matter under investigation. Four suspects were taken into arrest and seriously interrogated and after which all four accepted the crime.

During interrogation

the accused informed that on intervening night of Jan-3-4, they broke open the lock of abandoned house and ran away with all the cash and jewellery. To sell the jewellery, the accused Gaurishankar Gavel (42) was handed over the entire lot. He sold the stolen jewellery to one Rajendra Kumar Soni (55) under Kusmunda thana area of Korba district. Accused RK Soni is having a jewellery shop in Anand Nagar in the name of RK Jewellers.

It was as per statement by Gaurishankar Gavel, RK Soni was taken into arrest and along with his four friends of Gaurishankar viz. Bhupesh Sahu (21), Prem Lal Sahu (38), Bunty Sahu (21), and Rahul Sahu (28) and all accused are from Sarkara village.

Chhattisgarh Cong slams Shah for crime, corruption remarks against Baghel govt at Korba rally

Raipur, Jan 08: The Congress slammed Union Home Minister Amit Shah for claiming on Saturday that the Bhupesh Baghel government in Chhattisgarh had made progress only in the rising number of crimes against women as well as corruption. Shah was speaking at a Bharatiya Janata Party rally in Korba, some 215 kilometers from here, earlier in the day.

Hitting back, Sushil Anand Shukla, head of the state Congress' communication wing, said, "Union Minister Shah has insulted the mothers and sisters of Chhattisgarh by making false statements

during his speech in Korba. Shah said cases of rape have increased in the state but the NCRB (National Crime Records Bureau) data released by his own department shows rape cases have halved after the Congress was elected to power." "The state has reported a decline of 80 per cent in the incidents of Naxalite violence. How can a person occupying such an important post lie," Shukla asked.

While Shah attributed availability of rice in Chhattisgarh to 'Chaur Wale Baba', the Congress leader Shukla blamed 'Chaur Wale Baba' for scam of Rs 36,000 crore in Civil

Supplies Corporation. Amit Shah should study that after the formation of the Congress government in Chhattisgarh, everyone, rich and poor, gets cheap rice, Shukla said, adding that ration cards of 65 lakh people have been made in Chhattisgarh. The people of Chhattisgarh have not forgotten the 15 years of BJP's corruption and misrule, he said. Why Amit Shah remained silent on the election promises of the Modi government?, he asked. While Modi government is about to complete nine years, yet the public is tired of dreaming of 'Acche Din' (good days).

IAS cadre review in state pending with Centre

Last review done in 2016 and provision for review to be done every 5 yrs

is demanding IAS cadre review soon for last many years, so that the state-level officers will get chance of promotion.

Ch'garh demands 8.5% hike
The Officers of IAS in Chhattisgarh government have demanded 8.5% hike in the cadre. Few days back in the video-conferencing meeting with DOPT and UPSC, the objective behind demand for this hike was explained. So far the cadre review of IAS officers in Chhattisgarh has been done thrice. In view of formation of new districts and administrative units, proposal for demand of hike of 8.5% (around 24 new posts) has been given.

Shortage of IAS officers
The shortage of IAS officers in Chhattisgarh is being felt for long. Out of total 197 posts of IAS officers in state, so far only 167 are employed and more than a dozen officers serving in the Centre under central deputation or inter-state services. At present 26 posts of IAS officers are lying vacant in the state.

No COVID-19 case, death reported in Ch'garh

Raipur, Jan 08: No COVID-19 case or death was reported in Chhattisgarh on Saturday, which kept the tally and toll unchanged at 11,77,760 and 14,146, respectively, a health official said. The recovery count rose by five and reached 11,63,612, leaving the state with two active cases, he added. So far, 1,88,49,329 coronavirus tests have been conducted in the state, including 1,377 during the day, a government release said.

It is need of hour to nurture humans connection with nature: CM

CM inaugurates flower, fruit and vegetable exhibition

Organized at the Gandhi-Nehru Udyan Raipur

Raipur, Jan 08: It is the need of the hour that we nurture our connection with nature, said Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Sunday. Recalling the coronavirus pandemic situation, he said that people in urban areas were more affected by the Coronavirus, while people connected to nature were less affected by the deadly virus. After recovering from Covid, now people have become more health conscious.

He was addressing the inaugural programme of the three-day flower, fruit, vegetable exhibition and competition organized at Gandhi-Nehru Udyan in Raipur. On this occasion, he visited various stalls of the exhibition. A beautiful exhibition of colorful flowers, fruits, vegetables and medicinal plants has been put up here.

This exhibition has been organized by 'Prakriti Ki Ore Society Raipur', Department of Horticulture, Indira



Gandhi Agricultural University, Jindal Steel & Power Limited, in collaboration with Raipur Municipal Corporation.

Chief Minister boosted the morale of the organizers saying that people are having a pleasant experience in this exhibition for years because of your hard work and dedication. There are many new things to know and understand for nature lovers through this exhibition.

After taking a look at the exhibition, Chief Minister Shri Baghel said that various species of trees and plants ranging in age from 5 to 50 years, bonsai, gooseberry, lemon, greens and vegetables including the

48-year-old banyan tree has been displayed in this exhibition. He added that with a little effort, fruits and vegetables useful for the house can be grown on the roofs of our houses. There is a special attachment with the trees planted by oneself.

On this occasion, the Chief Minister presented mementos and certificates to Smt. Meghna Jain Tadela in the large garden category, Swati Shukla in medium garden category, Alka Bhargava in small garden category, Bharti Bhaskar in terrace garden category, Vivek Gautam for best garden. He also released the yearbook of Krishna Public School.

Divyang Sadhna Dhand, director of Kala Sadhna Sansthan, presented her sketch to the Chief Minister. Medicinal plants have also been displayed in the exhibition by the Medicinal Plants Board.

Culture Minister Amarjeet Bhagat, Chairman CHB Kuldeep Juneja, CM's Agriculture Advisor Pradeep Sharma were also present on the occasion as special guests. The welcome speech was given by Daljit Bagga, President of Prakriti Ki Ore Society. The Chief Minister honored the organizers and judges of this exhibition and competition by presenting mementos

Polling for vacant posts of panchayat today

Raipur, Jan 08: Voting will be held on January 9 for one post of panch and sarpanch in district panchayat Abhanpur, two posts of panchayat in Dharsinwa district, one district panchayat member in Tilda, one post of panchayat and three posts of sarpanch in Arang district of Chhattisgarh. The voting process for the election will run from 7 am to 3 pm. A total of 32 polling stations have been set up for this. The government

has declared a public holiday on this day in all government institutions and offices in the respective areas. On the instructions of Collector and District Election Officer Dr Sarveshwar Bhure, training has been given with formation of polling teams at the district level. Polling station-wise sector officers and sector magistrates have also been appointed. A total of nine routes have been fixed for conducting the elections.

Three-day sports festival concludes

At Salem English Medium School

Raipur, Jan 08: Three-day sports festival of Salem English School concluded here on Saturday. On this occasion the chief guest was Rev Ajay Umesh James, Bishop CG Diocese Chairman CDBE and Idrish Gandhi President CG Urdu Academy and Sunil Martin was the guest of honour.

In the beginning of the programme, the Choir girls presented welcome song under guidance of Ankit

Belson and P Solomon. Thereafter Umesh James booted the morale of students towards sports.

In the cultural programme, girls of Class 1 and 9th performed 'Bhangada' and girls of 9th and 12th also presented Chhattisgarhi dance and it enthralled the audience. Odiya dance was presented by students under guidance of teacher Rupali Yadav. Variety of sports competitions marked closure of the sports festival and prizes were distributed to the winners.

Department, staff play a key role in conservation of forest: Akbar

Forest Minister Akbar congratulated 66 officers promoted to the post of Forest Kshetrapal in Star Alankaran prog

Training certificates distributed to newly appointed 8 forest rangers

Raipur, Jan 08: Forest and Climate Change Minister Mohammad Akbar congratulated the 66 officers who were promoted from deputy forest ranger to forest rangers in the Star Alankaran program organized at his residence office in Shankar Nagar, Raipur today. During this, he also provided training certificates to the newly appointed 08 trainee forest rangers in the department after completing their training. On this occasion, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief of Forest Force Sanjay Shukla, and senior officials including



Chhattisgarh State Renewable Energy Development Agency (CREDA) member Kanhaiya Agarwal were present.

Addressing the Star Alankaran program, Forest Minister Akbar said that Chhattisgarh is a rich state in terms of forest wealth, and the department and its staff have an important contribution towards the conservation, promotion and development of forests. In view of this, during the last four years, many important decisions have been taken by our state government in

the interest of the department as well as the staff working here. Under this, the work of promotion of officers and employees in the department is being done continuously in regular order and all the works are being completed within the stipulated time.

Forest Minister said that as a result of increased work efficiency and better implementation of government schemes in Chhattisgarh, the image of the Forest Department is in better shape and is continuously improving. During the

last four years in the Forest Department, not only the conservation and promotion of forests has been done, but continuous work is also being done in the direction of the progress of the forest dwellers here. This is the reason why Chhattisgarh has consistently topped the country in the collection and processing of minor forest produce. During this period, Forest Minister Mr. Akbar also emphasized on the department's contribution towards restricting human movement in the elephant-menace-affected areas. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief of Forest Force Shukla also addressed the program.

On this occasion Addl. PCCF Kaushalendra Kumar, Premkumar, Arun Pandey, CCF J.R.Nayak, R.K.Pandey, Jt. Secretary Forest Devendra Bhardwaj and DFO Vishwesh Jha and State Office bearers of Forest Service Association, Ranger Association, Forest Employees Association were present.

One lakh pensioners of Ch'garh need relief from Section 49

Pensioners from all over the country in Raipur for their demands

Raipur, Jan 08: Pensioners said that the state government is not giving relief in dearness allowance and is not even repealing section 49. One lakh pensioners of the state are still waiting to get relief in this issue. Pensioners said that Madhya Pradesh government has also proposed to repeal Section 49, but no decision has been taken in Chhattisgarh so far. The pensioners told that they should get complete exemption in income tax, along with this exemption should also be given in train-bus fare. Along with this, the triennial national convention of the Indian State Pensioners' Federation began at Niranjan Dharamshala, VIP Road, on various issues. Friday was the last day of this session. Association General Secretary Virendra Namdev said that in this convention, a resolution was passed in the interest



of pensioners for necessary action from the Central and State Governments. He told that there are five lakh pensioners in Madhya Pradesh and one lakh in Chhattisgarh and pensioners of both the regions are worried. In the proposal in the interest of pensioners, mainly complete exemption in income tax, abolition of section 49 for distribution of pensionary obligations pending for the last 22 years between Madhya Pradesh and

Chhattisgarh, exemption in rail-bus travel, retirement in June-December. The person should be given the benefit of increment, death grant, eligibility for additional pension at the age of 65, exemption from income tax, five percent reservation in land-building-flat allotment. In the national convention of pensioners, the former Chief Minister of the state Dr. Raman Singh said that the state government is doing injustice by withholding dearness re-

lief to the pensioners. The state government is not serious about repealing Section 49. On this occasion, the two-day program was inaugurated by Chhattisgarh Public Relations Retired Additional Director Subhash Mishra, President of National Indian Pensioners Federation CH Suresh, Chhattisgarh State President of Indian State Pensioners Federation JP Mishra and others were present.

Small and medium income families to get houses at affordable prices

CHB fulfilled the promise of 'dream-home'

Registration for booking houses began on Jan 4, 2023

Raipur, Jan 08: According to the instructions of the Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, eight new schemes were started at the 72nd Board meeting on 28 December 2022 by the Chhattisgarh Housing Board (CHB) as an attempt to provide the residents of the state with better and affordable housing, where the registration for 6 big cities in the state began on 4 January 2023. Now people can get housing at affordable rates after registering.

The 6 cities where the housing scheme has started are as follows: Rajiv Nagar Awas Yojana in Aarang in Raipur district, Rajiv Nagar Awas Yojana in Selud Patan in Durg, Samanya Awas Yojana in Godhi Tamnar in Raigarh,



Atal Awas Yojana in Machewa in Mahasamund district, Samanya Awas Yojana in Mahamaya Nagar in Ratanpur.

The Chairman Chhattisgarh Housing Board Kuldeep Juneja said that as they had recently promised to provide good housing at affordable rates to the state's residents, they have started the Rajiv Nagar Awas Yojana, under which the construction of cellular buildings has started, including independent houses in Selud Patan in district Durg and Arang in Raipur district, Samanya Awas Yojana in Badhamuda, Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi, independent houses in Raigarh

district. People can click on the website

www.cghb.gov.in and book homes at affordable rates. They can also call the toll free number, 1800-121-6313, to receive more information on this matter. For all these schemes, online application forms will be filled out for the booking of homes, and the registration fee will be paid through a payment gateway. Online applications will be accepted until 31 March 2023 through the website www.cghb.gov.in.

It is noteworthy that the Chhattisgarh Housing Board was honored by the Scoch Group in the Low Cost Housing field on 19 December 2022. On the subject of the Chhattisgarh Housing Award in the field of Low Cost Housing, Board Chairman Mr. Kuldeep Singh Juneja said that for people with lower income groups, more such schemes will be developed, so that the state's residents can get more affordable and better housing.

CAF & DRG foiled Maoists plan

25 kg IED recovered in the middle of the road

Near Munda Talab between Bechupal-Atepal on Nelsnar-Mirtur-Gangalore main road

Safely removed from the spot by the team of BDS Mirtur and deactivated

Bijapur, Jan 08: On Jan 7 on the Nelsnar-Mirtur-Gangalore road, the team of DRG, Thana Mirtur and Camp Etepal CAF 9/C Company had come out on Area Domination, Road Patrolling.

During the operation of road patrolling and demining, a 25 kg IED planted by the Maoists in the middle of the road near Munda Talab between Bechupal-Atepal was recovered by the security forces. The IED was connected to the command system whose switch was placed 100 meters away.

The special thing in this



IED planted by the Maoists was that the IED and the electric wire were wrapped in carbon so that the IED could not be detected by the metal detector; the alertness of the security forces, the intelligence recovered the IED, which was recovered on the spot by BDS Mirtur and it was deactivated by the team.

Instructions given to stop mud excavation

In Gram Panchayats of Malgaon Chhui mine

Instructions given thru video conferencing

Jagdalpur, Jan 08: On December 2, 2022, an unpleasant accident occurred due to sudden caving in of land in village Malgaon of Bakavand development block of Bastar district. In this accident, 6 people died and 3 villagers were injured. A team was formed to investigate the matter. A meeting of the team formed in connection with the investigation of the said incident was organized through video conferencing on Saturday. Dr. RP Mishra of the



Central Pollution Control Board, Collector Chandan Kumar, SSP Jitendra Meena were present in the meeting organized under the chairmanship of Addl. Chief Secretary, Government of Chhattisgarh, Housing and Environment under the order given by the National Green Tribunal.

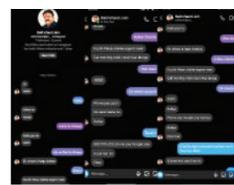
During the discussion in the meeting, instructions were given to stop the excavation of mud in the gram panchayats. Instructions have been

given to take standard measures of Mineral Act, Labor Act, Environment rules and safety in the sanctioned mining areas of Gram Panchayats, so that there is no loss of life and property due to any untoward accident in future. In any Gram Panchayat under District Bastar, soil touched by the villagers is excavated, then concerned Tehsildar, nearest Police Station, Mineral Department or mobile number 7587343963 have been asked to inform.

MLA's Instagram ID hacked

MLA Rekhchand Jain files complaint with cyber cell

Jagdalpur, Jan 08: Along with the common people, now VIPs are also coming under the attack of cyber thugs in Bastar. The latest case has come to the fore of Jagdalpur MLA and Parliamentary Secretary Rekhchand Jain. His Instagram ID was hacked by cyber thugs. After this,



the cyber fraud started demanding money by sending messages to Jain's followers.

Some conscious people informed about this to MLA Jain. As soon as Jain received the informa-

tion, he complained about the matter in the cyber cell of Jagdalpur and appealed to the people through social media that if any such message reaches him, it should not be considered correct and should be reported on Instagram's ID.

MLA Rekhchand Jain told that while complaining about the matter in cyber cell, he has asked to take action against the guilty thugs while recovering the ID.

BJP will celebrate Andhra-cultural festival on Jan 22



Jagdalpur, Jan 08: While implementing the new action plan to strengthen the Bharatiya Janata Party organization and increase its mass base, the BJP along with the Andhra community will celebrate the Andhra-Cultural Festival on Jan 22. In which along with cultural activities, prominent people of Andhra society will also be honored.

A meeting was called at the BJP district office to finalize the preparations for the event in the presence of State Convenor of

'Ek Bharat, Shrestha Bharat' Action Plan Shrinivas Rao Maddi and BJP District President Rup Singh Madavi. In which discussions were held on holding an early meeting with the leaders of Andhra society and giving suggestions and advice to the program in a grand manner.

State convenor Srinivas Rao Maddi told that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the One India, Best India action plan is being implemented to unite and strength-

en the country. People of different societies reside in India, all have their own social and cultural superiority. This is a program to connect with and glorify them, to spread the message that we are one. In the first form, it has been decided to organize cultural and social events with Andhra society. Yogendra Paday, Ramashray Singh, B Jairam, Narasimha Rao, Suresh Gupta, Avinash Srivastava, Alok Awasthi and others were present in the preparatory meeting held at the BJP office.

Echocardiography test service commenced in the district hospital



Jashpurnagar, Jan 08: To provide relief to cardiovascular patients of the district, An echocardiography machine has been installed in the Jashpur district hospital under the guidance of Collector Dr. Ravi Mittal. Earlier, cardiovascular patients of the district had to go to Medical College Raipur for this test but after the installation of an echocardiography machine, the facility of echocardiography test has been made available in the district hospital Jashpur, due to which the heart related patients and especially children can avail quick medical test facility of echocardiography in their district itself.

It is noteworthy that as

per the instructions of Collector Dr. Ravi Mittal, Echocardiography test services will be provided to children with heart disease on the first and third Thursday of every month under the guidance of specialist doctors namely Dr. Praveen and Dr. S.L. Siddharth.

Adult cardiovascular patients can also avail the facility of echocardiography test services on these days. On the first Thursday after the commencement of this test facility, 11 patients have been registered in the district hospital and a total of 10 patients have been undergone echo test and 3 children have been identified for surgery.

Maoists kill member of the Koya tribe

Konta, Jan 08: On the night of Jan 4, 2022, members of the Konta Area Committee of the Maoist party brutally killed a member of the tribe named Soyam Subbaiah of Koya caste living in Burkankota village. Maoists have a habit of leaving letters after killing. The letter was, as usual, stamped with the dead man as a police informer. In fact, the police system does not have an informant system and there are no informants as individuals.

In fact, Poyam Subbaiah was a member of the Maoist militia and worked for the Maoist party for many years. It's too bad, after using him for years and killing him as an informer.



In the recent past, there have been incidents of not bowing down to the Maoists' taunts and abuses, sometimes opposing the Maoists and somewhere turning against the force. Realizing that the Maoist party does not exist in Many, they are drawn to a situation where they cannot believe how vulnerable the party is, even their shadow.

What officer says

All you Maoist militia members realize one thing that Maoist party will employ you and will kill you in the end like they killed Poyam Subbaiah. One day you too will be called an informer. Police appeals to understand this truth.

Satish Kumar (IPS) - SP, Alluri Sitamaraju District, Paderu.

Continuous action on ticket brokers by RPF

In 2022, 90 cases of ticket brokering were registered and 96 ticket brokers were arrested

Central Chronicle News

Bilaspur, Jan 09: The railway administration has provided the facility of self - booking of travel tickets from personal ID at home through IRCTC to get rid of the queues at the ticket counters and to provide quick tickets and promote the cashless system.

Facility In order to turn it into a profit, some people contact ticket brokers to make train tickets with their personal IDs and sell them at a higher price, especially during festive seasons and summer vaca-



tions. With an aim to check these ticket brokers and to stop this illegal trade, under the guidance of the Inspector General - cum - Principal Chief Security Commissioner and under

the direction of the Senior Divisional Security Commissioner, all the RPF post in-charges of Bilaspur Division are conducting regular operations against illegal ticket bro-

kers.

In this sequence, on 29.12.2022, Sujeet Kumar, the director of a shop called Suvidha Service of Khongapani Chirmiri, was arrested and action was taken under Section 143 of the Railway Act after he was found to be trading in illegal tickets. This action was taken by RPF post Manendragarh.

It is noteworthy that during the year - 2022 Railway Security Force Bilaspur Division conducted a continuous campaign against those illegally trading railway travel tickets and registered a total of 90 cases under section 143 of the Railway Act totaling 2825 travel tickets (valued at Rs 2886068.00). A total of 96 accused have been arrested and taken into custody.

Chherchera festival celebrated in every village

Central Chronicle News

Arang, Jan 08: The first festival of Chhattisgarh and the symbol of agricultural culture, the festival of Chherchera Punni were celebrated with pomp in almost every village. Meanwhile, there was a lot of enthusiasm especially among the children and youth regarding the Chherchera festival and children and youth groups went from house to house asking for Chherchhera.

The people of the house where the children reached kept donating paddy and money according to their own accord. There is no restriction of any caste religion on this festival, this festival is considered very holy and auspicious in the State and is a defining festival of Chhattisgarhi folk culture from urban areas to



rural areas.

This festival is a symbol of mutual brotherhood and affection and it is believed that donating is an act of great virtue and with this belief, farmers celebrate Chherchera festival to participate in great virtue by donating their paddy. As per tradition, when the

children go to ask donations, they sing in a loud voice "Chheri ke chhera chherchhera... Mai kothi ke dhan la herhera". After listening to the song, the people of the house understand that someone has come to beg for chherchhera, and accordingly give donations. Farmers believe

that by donating, happiness and prosperity remains in their house and there is a belief in rural areas that in ancient times, where the kings used to donate money, the common people used to donate paddy and rice kept in their storerooms to welcome prosperity.

04 trains to be operated by diverted routes

NI work for commissioning of double line in Medtard - Jodhpur rail section of Jodhpur Division

Central Chronicle News

Bilaspur, Jan 08: Pre - NI / NI work will be carried out for double line work between Medta Road - Pipad Road - Rai Ka Bagh Palace stations of Jodhpur Division of North Western Railway. As a result of this the following 04 trains related to South East Central Railway will run on di-

verted routes:

1. On 08th and 15th February 2023 Puri bound train number 20813 Puri - Jodhpur Express will run via Phulera - Ajmer - Marawad - Jodhpur route.
2. On 11th and 18th February 2023, train number 20814 Jodhpur - Puri Express departing from Dhapur will be diverted and will run via Dhapur - Marwar - Ajmer - Fulera.
3. Train number 20843 Bilaspur - Bhagat Ki Kothi Express depart-

ing from Bilaspur on 06, 07, 13 and 14 February 2023 will run via diverted route Phulera - Ajmer - Marwar - Bhagat Ki Kothi.

All these trains will stop at Ajmer and Marwar stations for the convenience of passengers.

Women commandos reactivated under Mission Purna Shakti

Central Chronicle News

Gunderdehi, Jan 08: under the direction of Inspector General of Police Durg Range Durg Dr. Anand Chhabra, under the guidance of Superintendent of Police Balod Dr. Jitendra Kumar Yadav and under the supervision of Addl. SP Harish Rathore and Somsai Maurya DSP under "Mission Purna Shakti" women commandos were reactivated by organizing a camp in Gunderdehi police station premises.

The women commandos were reactivated by placing a batch of "Mission Purna Shakti Mahila Commandos" in police station Gunderdehi, who will

join forces with the police to take action against people consuming liquor in public places in their respective villages.

As per information, Women commandos in the police station area are to be given training from time to time regarding prevention of crime related to women and cyber awareness regarding legal rights.

In her address to the C o m m a n d o e s , Padmashree Shamshad Begum (Women Commando Patron) told in her address that women commandos were formed to avoid and apprehend small crimes like drinking alcohol, drug addiction in the villages of the region. Addressing the women



commandos, Addl. SP Harish Rathore said that in the past there has been a special contribution by

the women commandos in keeping an eye on the criminal activities in the village and at present,

making women commando's active will play a pivotal role in curbing crimes.

SP Dr. Jitendra Yadav, while addressing the women commandos, said that crimes against women and children related to domestic violence, dowry harassment, cyber crime, and cyber fraud, human trafficking all will be preliminarily handled by the commandos' assisting the department.

In this program, Inspector Madhusudan Nag, Inspector Dileshwar Chandravanshi Cyber Cell in-charge, Sanjeevan Sahu, Netram Pal, P.R. Rumal Churendra Police Station Gunderdehi staff and 200 women commandos were present.

Vigilance of the police brings missing boys home

Central Chronicle News

Dongargarh, Jan 08: Three minor children (boys) missing from Village Khallari for the last few days were successfully traced by the Police Department and its timely vigilance.

According to information, the family members of the children had written a report in Dongargarh police station and after registering the report, the vigilance of the Dongargarh Police Department helped to trace the three children and handed them over to their relatives.

According to information provided by Dongargarh police Sohaga Bai Kanwar husband Ramu Ram Kanwar age 50 years Sakin Khallari po-



lice station Dongargarh came to the police station on January 3 and filed a report that on December 31 at around 02:30 both her son and another child of

the village, all three residents of Khallari have gone somewhere without informing.

In view of the seriousness of the case, the infor-

mation of the incident was immediately reported on the direction of the senior officers, under the guidance of the station in-charge Dongargarh

Inspector Surendra Swarnakar, the missing three minor children were continuously searched.

During the address search, on January 6, they were reported to be in the empty storage room of village Mundgaon, and all the three minor children were recovered safely and handed to their parents.

On enquiry, it was found that the children left the house of their own free will without informing their parents, and wandered to village Dhandongari Mandai, village Bodela Mandai and lived in parawat (Husk storage room) in village Rangkathera.

The role of Dhannalal Sinha, Mahadev Sahu, Sanjay Yada, Manoj Harmukh in the case proceedings is commendable.

Farmers not getting funds under PMKSNY

Even after updation of their Aadhar

Central Chronicle News

Dhamtari, Jan 08: Even after Aadhar verification, the eligible 16000 farmers are not getting the amount under the PM Kissan Samman Nidhi Yojana (PMKSNY) in the district. There is no update in their account, even after submitting the application. In such conditions they are made to wander to the office of the agriculture department and the bank.

On Thursday, when farmer Dinesh Sahu, Harinarayan Patel, Vishwanath Sahu reached the Collectorate, they informed that Aadhar verification has been carried out along with updating of

their maps, Kh. No., Bank's passbook at the Choice Centre.

In the beginning, the amount was getting transferred into their account, but right since they got the Aadhar updation done the amount is not being credited. If it is for this reason that they are made to wander to agriculture department and the Bank.

It is notable here that in order to strengthen the economic conditions of small and medium farmers, the central government had started PMKSNY. Under this the farmers who are having less than 5 acre land, will be getting total of Rs 6000 per year in three different in-

stallments. As per the 10th agriculture survey, there are about 1.55 lakh such small farmers and out of which 94,927 are registered farmers and out of which 77,817 farmers are eligible for this scheme.

What officer says

Under the PM Kissan Samman Nidhi Yojana the registered farmers on updation of their Aadhar will be getting the amount credited. At present payment is being made on behalf of the Aadhar. Monesh Sahu, Dy. Director Agriculture Deptt.

Clash Over 'Religious Conversion'

Children living in shelter camp worried about education

Tikeshwar Patel

Narayanpur, Jan 08: Mohanti Salaam, a Class 9 student, has been living in a shelter camp in tribal-dominated Narayanpur district for the last 21 days after a clash between members of two communities over alleged religious conversion in her remote Borawand village.

She lost her books and clothes when her family was allegedly evicted from the village following the clash, which took place amid the discord brewing for some time between the Christian and non-Christian communities in the district. Salaam says she wants to pursue studies and return to her village to be able to go school. She is among more than

30 children living in the shelter camp set up in the Indoor Stadium in Narayanpur city after their families were allegedly forced to leave their villages for converting to Christianity. This is now affecting their studies.

"We have been living in the Indoor Stadium since December 18. We were evicted from our village. We have lost our books and clothes. I keep thinking how I will get back to my school. I want to study," Salaam told PTI. Eleven school children from Borawand village are living with their families in the shelter camp.

On December 18, 2022, a large number of tribal Christian families from 14 villages in Benoor area of Narayanpur staged a

protest in front of the district collector's office, claiming they were assaulted by miscreants and evicted from their villages for following the Christian faith. The district administration had then assured to take necessary action into the matter and shifted them to the temporary shelter and arranged basic amenities for them.

Though they have got shelter, their mental agony is far from over. The parents of the children living in the shelter camp are worried how the kids will be able to continue their education.

"The future of our children is at risk. They saw our houses being vacated. They are not able to attend school. They hear keeping that people (tribal

Christians) are being driven away from their houses and it scares them," said Narasbati Netam, a woman living in the shelter camp. "We are worried about the disruption of their studies," said Netam, who hails from Bhatpal village.

At the same time, she lauded the children for showing resilience at such a difficult time and helping each other to recover from this challenging phase. The children who are in higher classes have been teaching the younger kids with whatever study material is available in the shelter camp, she said.

Netam said activities like learning poems and playing badminton in the shelter camp have been helping the children to

overcome the trauma. "But how long will it go? The administration should take immediate steps to ensure our return to our native places," she added.

The families living in the shelter camp are mostly from Kudargaon, Borawand, Bhatpal and Bhandapal villages in Benoor area. Ajay Kumeti, a teacher at a government primary school in Kudargaon village, said around 10 children are not attending the school since the clash took place last month.

These children have shifted to Narayanpur city along with their families, he said. Narayanpur Collector Ajeet Vasant said the district administration has been making efforts to ensure the return of the af-

ected families to their villages and at the same time arrangements are being made for the studies of children in the shelter camp.

"I have instructed education department officials to send local school teachers to the camp. The priority is to address the issue of studies of students who are in Classes 10 and 12 and have to appear for the board exams," Vasant told PTI on Sunday.

At the same time, the administration is holding discussions with members of both the communities and the effort is to shift these families to their native villages in the next three-four days, he said.

"We have convened a meeting on Monday of local public representa-

tives, village heads, Gaita (priest) of village in tribal areas) of 68 village panchayats in the district to discuss the situation so that no fresh clash occurs and everyone lives in harmony. After the meeting, villagers living in the shelter camp will be shifted to their homes," he said.

There have been reports of unrest in various villages in Benoor area of the district for the last two months over the issue of alleged religious conversion. On January 2, a church was vandalised and six police personnel, including an IPS officer, were injured, in Narayanpur city during a protest by a group of tribals against the alleged religious conversion in the tribal-dominated area.

Shahid Khan appointed State Gen. Secy.

Of BJP's minorities cell

Balod, Jan 08:

Shahid Khan has been appointed as the State General Secretary of Minorities Cell of BJP for the second time. He has proved that he is a dedicated and hard working worker of BJP. It is notable here that Shahid Khan had been working with ABVP earlier and then in different posts in BJP and fulfilled the responsibilities given. On being appointed as State General Secretary of Minorities Cell, Shahid Khan has expressed gratitude towards all the senior party leaders and said that he would continue to work as per the instructions given by the party. The next target of BJP is to re-establish BJP's government in the state and carry out speedy development of Chhattisgarh and associate more and more persons from the minorities with the BJP. On this appointment, the BJP's leaders have extended greetings to Shahid Khan and this included senior leader Yashwant Jain, Rakesh Yadav, Krishnakant Pawar, Raja Diwan, Leela Sharma, Suresh Nirmalkar, Amit Chopda, Satosh Kaushik, Narendra Sonwani, Pankaj Ahuja, Rakesh Bafna, Mohan Kalihari, Deepak Dewangan and others.



Shahid-Khan

BRIEF



Firefighters douse a fire that broke out at a shop, Janjikar Street, in Mumbai.

Fire

Mumbai: A fire broke out in a two-storey building in Masjid Bunder area of south Mumbai at 8:15pm on Saturday was extinguished almost three hours later at 11pm, though there were no reports of anyone getting injured, a civic official said.

Plea

New Delhi: A seer has moved the Supreme Court seeking that the crisis in Uttarakhand's Joshimath, where cracks have appeared in hundreds of houses, be declared as a national disaster.

Crisis

Gopeshwar: Eleven more families in Joshimath were moved to safe locations on Saturday as the number of houses developing cracks in the sinking town rose to 603, officials said. The number of families who have so far been evacuated stands at 65 with another 11 moving to temporary relief camps on Saturday from houses that had developed cracks. Chamoli district disaster management officer N K Joshi said.

Crime

New Delhi: A girl in northeast Delhi's north Ghonda area on Saturday allegedly shot at a 50-year-old woman against whose son a case of sexual assault was registered based on her complaint in 2021, police said.

Encounter

Jammu: The army has shot dead two terrorists near the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, officials said on Sunday. The terrorists were killed in the Balakote sector of the district late Saturday, they said.

Ashram flyover closed for traffic

Delhi Police issues traffic advisory

New Delhi, Jan 08 (PTI):

The Delhi Police has issued a traffic advisory suggesting alternate routes for commuters since the Ashram flyover has been closed for traffic for the construction of a connecting road, officials said.

In continuation to the previous advisory on December 30 about the linking of the Ashram flyover with the DND flyway, it has been suggested that commuters coming from C V Raman Marg take a right turn at Taimur Nagar cut, Ring Road to

reach Sarai Kale Khan, NH-24, Ghaziabad and Noida.

Those coming from New Friends Colony, Sukhdev Bihar, Shaheen Bagh, Sarai Julena, and Jamia have been advised to follow Mathura Road, Modi Mill Flyover, Outer Ring Road, Lala Lajpat Rai Marg to reach Lajpat Nagar Market, AIIMS and Dhaura Kuan.

Commuters from Lajpat Nagar, Defence Colony, Jangpura, Bhogal, and CGO Complex have been advised to follow Lala Lajpat Rai Marg, Outer Ring Road, Modi Mill Flyover, Mathura Road, Sarita Vihar, Badarpur and Faridabad, the advisory

said. The advisory further advised motorists from Noida to follow Kalindi Kunj, Jasola and Sarita Vihar, to reach IGI Airport, Outer Ring Road, IIT, and Chirag Delhi. Those coming from IGI Airport, Outer Ring Road, IIT, Chirag Delhi are advised to follow Modi Mill Flyover Mathura Road, Sarita Vihar, Jasola, Kalindi Kunj to reach Noida and Badarpur.

The motorists from Ghaziabad, Noida via NH-24 and the ITO side (Ring Road) are advised to follow Barapullah Flyover to reach Lajpat Nagar, Defence Colony, AIIMS and Dhaura Kuan, the advisory stated.

Delhi Traffic Police has identified the prominent spots and proposed locations for traffic diversion and an adequate number of traffic signages have been affixed there, it said.

A total of 70 traffic police personnel and 16 marshals from PWD have been deployed on the entire stretch. In coordination with the PWD, the works of road re-carpeting, widening, and installation of traffic signal at the Taimur Nagar cut have been done, the advisory said. A contractor had told PTI the work to link the Ashram flyover with the DND Flyway is going on round the clock and will be wrapped up in 45 days.

GANGA VILAS CRUISE



The Ganga Vilas cruise at Ram Rekha Ghat ahead of its flagging off by PM Narendra Modi on Jan. 13, in Buxar district of Bihar, Saturday.

Officer held for 'misusing post'

Oppn parties claim arrest made at cremation ground

Chandigarh, Jan 08 (PTI)

The Vigilance Bureau Saturday said it has arrested S P Singh, the executive director of the Punjab State Industrial Export Corporation (PSIEC), who was booked for allegedly conniving with other officials of the corporation to provide undue benefit to a realtor firm. The Opposition parties slammed the AAP government in the state, claiming Singh was arrested

from the cremation ground in Mohali when he was performing the last rites of his father and veteran journalist N S Parwana. Earlier in the day several political leaders, including Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and his Haryana counterpart Manohar Lal Khattar consoled Parwana's demise. Khattar was present at Parwana's cremation.

A Vigilance Bureau spokesperson said Singh

had been booked for allegedly conniving with other officials of the PSIEC in the case of transferring an industrial plot in violation of norms and causing huge loss to the state exchequer. He would be produced before a court here on Sunday, the spokesperson said. "Highly insensitive and cruel to arrest a son when he was cremating his father. The SAD condemns the AAP government for interfering in the last rites of veteran journal-

ist N S Parwana and arresting his son from the cremation ground," Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal said in a tweet. Punjab Vigilance Bureau had recently registered a case against former minister Sunder Sham Arora, an IAS officer and 10 other government officials for allegedly transferring an industrial plot to a realtor firm and allowing it to establish a township by cutting plots in violation of norms.

'Making every effort to provide adequate power for agricultural activities'

Jaipur, Jan 08 (PTI)

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot Saturday said the Rajasthan government is making every effort to provide adequate electricity for agricultural activities and instructed officials to ensure that power supply to farmers is not affected under any circumstances.

If required, purchase of electricity from power exchange and other sources should be ensured, he said at a meeting to review the status of power supply in the state.

Officials of the electricity department informed the chief minister that the state is not getting additional power supply from the power exchange at present because of the closure of some power generation units in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab and an increase in demand in other states.

They also said that the power demand has also increased since Rajasthan has received no rain this winter so far, due to an increase in the agricultural area and a rise in agricul-

tural power connections after the last Rabi season.

According to an official statement, it was informed in the meeting that the power supply to industries has to be cut to ensure adequate power supply for domestic and agricultural purposes, but this cut will be abolished as soon as power supply becomes normal.

The chief minister urged the industries to follow the instructions of the power companies and cooperate with them in case of power cuts.

End 'mindless compliances': PM Modi

Launches Aspirational Block Programme

New Delhi, Jan 08 (PTI)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday launched the Aspirational Block Programme on the lines of a similar exercise aimed at developing backward districts and asserted that India is focussing on the four pillars of infrastructure, investment, innovation and inclusion to be a developed country.

Chairing the second national conference on chief secretaries from states on its third and last day, Modi said the entire world is looking to India to bring stability to the global supply chain and asked them to take steps for making the MSME sector "global champions" and a part of the global value chain.

He said the country can take full advantage of this

only if states take lead by maintaining focus on quality and making decisions with an "India-first" approach, according to a statement.

The prime minister also called upon the chief secretaries to focus on ending "mindless compliances" and outdated laws and rules.

At a time when India is initiating unparalleled reforms, there is no scope for overregulation and mindless restrictions, he tweeted. Modi said the states should focus on pro-development governance, ease of doing business, ease of living and provision of robust infrastructure.

"We should move towards self-certification, deemed approvals and standardisation of forms," he said, according to a statement.

The prime minister also spoke about the development of both physical and social infrastructure along

PM TO CHIEF SECYS

with a focus on the enhancement of cyber security.

He also tweeted, "With the eyes of the world being on India, combined with the rich talent pool of our youth, the coming years belong to our nation."

"Strengthening our MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) sector is important for the country to become self-reliant and to boost economic growth," Modi said, adding that equally important is to popularise local products.

The prime minister also discussed the significance of 2023 being the International Year of Millets and steps to enhance the popularity of their products.

In his address, the prime minister recalled the development "milestones"

since the last conference in June 2022, citing India getting the presidency of G20, becoming the fifth biggest global economy, rapid registration of new startups, foray of private players in the space sector, launch of National Logistics Policy and the approval of National Green Hydrogen Mission.

To make MSMEs globally competitive, they should have access to finance, technology, market and for skilling, the statement quoting Modi said.

He also spoke about bringing more MSMEs on board the GeM portal.

Discussing the success of the cluster approach in the development of MSMEs, he said the linkage of MSME clusters and self-help groups can be explored for promoting unique local products and

getting GI tags registration for them, associating it with the endeavour of 'one district one product'.

This will give a fillip to the "vocal for local" campaign, Modi said, adding states should identify their best local products and help them attain national and international stature.

He also cited the example of 'Ekta Mall' at the Statue of Unity in Gujarat. Modi emphasised on data security and the criticality of having a secure technology infrastructure for the seamless delivery of essential services. He said states should adopt a strong cyber security strategy and added that this investment is like an insurance for the future.

The prime minister also stressed on development of coastal areas and said the vast Exclusive Economic Zone of the country is equipped with resources and offers tremendous opportunities.

One dead after portion of ground floor collapses

In Delhi's Sadar Bazar

New Delhi, Jan 08 (PTI)

A 35-year-old man died and three were injured after a portion of the ground floor and staircase of a four-storey building collapsed in north Delhi's Sadar Bazar area on Saturday, officials said.

According to fire officials, they received information about the incident at 6:28 pm, following which two fire tenders were rushed to the spot.

Police said a sudden sound and dust with the structural collapse of stairs occurred at an undergarments shop in the Qutub Road area.

"The one injured moved to Hindu Rao Hospital has reportedly succumbed to injuries," Deputy Commissioner of Police

(north) Sagar Singh Kalsi said.

The deceased has been identified as Gulab, a resident of Sitamarhi in Bihar. He was a labourer, who also worked for the owner of the shop, he added. According to an eyewitness, the collapse was accompanied with a blast-like sound, hearing which people started running away from the site.

Another witness named Harjeet Singh Chhbara said, "There was a loud noise, but the reason behind it is not clear. The shop, where it happened, is next to my store. When we came here, there was smoke." A purported CCTV footage of a spot near the incident site showed a momentary jolt caused by the loud noise. It was followed by a cloud of dust. People can also be seen running away from the site after the bang.

CARE FOR BIRDS



A child feeds pigeons at Marina beach, in Chennai, Sunday.

DWMS platform bags top 'Digital India' award

Developed by Digital University Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 08 (PTI): The Digital Workforce Management System (DWMS), developed by a state-run university, on Saturday received the prestigious 'Digital India' platinum icon award.

The DWMS, developed by a team headed Ajith Kumar R, the Director of the Centre for Digital Innovation and Product Development under Digital University Kerala (DUK), received the honour. The award was received by him along with P V Unnikrishnan, member secretary of K-DISC and Riyas P M, Manager of Kerala Knowledge Economy Mission, from President Droupadi Murmu at a function in New Delhi today.

Kerala won the platinum icon award in the category of digital collaboration with startups, a DUK statement said. DWMS is a futuristic platform developed for Kerala Knowledge Economy Mission (KKEM),

a Kerala Development and Innovation Strategic Council (K-DISC) initiative that connects all stakeholders in creating a knowledge-based ecosystem, it said. Kumar said that the DWMS is developed as a 'platform of platforms', which integrates many features like onboarding, profiling, curation of job seekers, skill assessment, and matching.

Other features include knowledge assessment, robotic interview, personality development, English language assessment, e-learning, career counselling and career guidance among others, he said. "DWMS Connect is a highly rated mobile app developed by Digital University which facilitates these entire features into one app," he added. DWMS allows job seekers to fine-tune their career preferences while presenting the employers technological edge to select the ideal candidate with the right skill set, he said.

Saji Gopinath, Vice Chancellor of Digital University Kerala, said DWMS is a platform of platforms with a multi-layered architecture.

'Bade log hain': PK on Rahul's 'Bharat Jodo Yatra'

Motihari (Bihar), Jan 08 (PTI)

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' on Saturday won grudging praise, couched in sarcasm, from political strategist-turned-activist Prashant Kishor.

The IPAC founder, who is on a padayatra in his home state Bihar, was asked by journalists in Motihari about parallels, if any, he saw between his own effort and the marathon march of Gandhi.

"Bade log hain (they are big people). Compared with them, I am a nobody," said Kishor whose 'Jan Suraj' campaign in Bihar came after a lengthy round of failed negotiations with the top leadership of the Congress, which he had wanted to join and was confident of reviving using his professional skills. "Rahul Gandhi is on a 3,500 km-long march. For me, kilometers do not matter. I have been walking non-stop since October. But I do not want to show it off as evidence of my physical fitness," Kishor

remarked, with thinly veiled sarcasm.

Dubbed an "opportunist" by the political mainstream in Bihar, the former strategist insisted that he had infused his campaign with a "purity of intent".

"It is like the austerities of Chhath. One can have a sip of water. But true devotees do not make such a compromise and complete a gruelling 36 hour-long fast," he said, with a rhetorical flourish.

"Not for me breaks during the New Year or visits to my home. Nor do I agree to hitch short rides on my way to the next destination," said Kishor in an obvious dig at the Congress leader.

Notably, Kishor first came in limelight after handling Narendra Modi's spectacularly successful campaign in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. He called it a day as a professional strategist after the 2021 assembly polls in West Bengal where his client, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, registered her biggest-ever victory.

Still open' to ceasefire agreement with Pakistan government, says TTP chief

Peshawar, Jan 08 (PTI):

The chief of the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has said that his group is "still open" to a ceasefire agreement with the Pakistan government, according to media reports.

In November last year, the TTP called off an indefinite ceasefire agreed with the government in June 2022 and ordered its militants to carry out attacks on the security forces.

The TTP, which is believed to have close links to al-Qaeda, has threatened to target top leaders of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's PML-N and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari's PPP if the ruling coalition continued to implement strict measures against the militants.

However, the dreaded outfit insisted that it has not scrapped the ceasefire agreement with the gov-

ernment. "We held talks with Pakistan mediated by Islamic Emirates of Afghanistan. We are still open to the ceasefire agreement," the Dawn newspaper quoted TTP chief Mufti Noor Wali Mehsood as saying in a video on Saturday.

Mehsood's change in stance comes amid reports that he has sought guidance from religious scholars in Pakistan.

In the video message, Mehsood said his outfit is "open to guidance" from Pakistan's religious scholars if they believe "the direction of our jihad" is wrong, according to the Express Tribune newspaper.

"If you find any problem in the jihad that we waged [against this global infidel agenda], if you believe we have changed our direction, that we have gone astray, then you're requested to guide us. We're always ready to listen to

your arguments happily," the TTP chief said.

Mehsood's comments come amid a sharp uptick in violence across Pakistan.

On Saturday, Pakistan police arrested five TTP terrorists during intelligence-based operations in the country's Punjab province.

Over 5,000 tribesmen took out a rally on Friday in Wana, the headquarters of the South Waziristan tribal district, against the growing unrest, terrorism, and kidnappings in their areas.

The protest comes amidst rising terrorist attacks in the country, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces that are believed to have been carried out by TTP militants.

The TTP, also known as the Pakistan Taliban, was set up as an umbrella group of several militant outfits in 2007.

Its main aim is to impose its strict brand of Islam across Pakistan.

Pakistan had hoped that the Afghan Taliban after coming to power would stop the use of their soil against Pakistan by expelling the TTP operatives but they have apparently refused to do so at the cost of straining ties with Islamabad.

The TTP has been blamed for several deadly attacks across Pakistan, including an attack on army headquarters in 2009, assaults on military bases and the 2008 bombing of the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad. In 2012, Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai was attacked by TTP. In 2014, the Pakistani Taliban stormed the Army Public School in the north-western city of Peshawar, killing at least 150 people, including 131 students. The attack sent shockwaves across the world, and was widely condemned.

SELF-PROPELLED HOWITZER



A boy plays atop a self-propelled howitzer in the 'Patriot' military park in Kronstadt, outside St. Petersburg, Russia.

UN envoy meets with Afghan higher-ed chief over ban on women Pak needs USD 30 billion to cover short and long-term needs of flood victims: Shehbaz Sharif

Kabul, Jan 08 (AP):

A top UN envoy met with the Taliban-led Afghan government's higher education minister Saturday to discuss the ban on women attending universities.

Markus Potzel is the first international official to meet with him since the ban was introduced last month.

Taliban authorities on Dec 20 ordered public and private universities to close for women immediately until further notice. It triggered widespread international condemnation, including from Muslim-majority countries such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey.

Higher Education Minister Nida Mohammad Nadim has defended the ban, saying it is necessary to prevent the mixing of genders in universities and because he believes some subjects violate Islamic principles.

That ban was followed



This photo provided by Taliban Higher Education Ministry, UN officials meet with Taliban Higher Education Minister in Kabul, Afghanistan. The U.N. envoy met with the Taliban-led Afghan government's higher education minister to discuss the ban on women attending universities.

days later by a ban on Afghan women working for national and international non-governmental groups, another decision that caused global condemnation and the suspension of work by major aid agencies.

The UN mission in

Afghanistan said that Potzel called for the urgent lifting of these bans in his meeting with Nadim, saying the country is entering a new period of crisis.

"Taliban bans on female education & work for aid agencies will harm all Afghans," the mission

said. Nadim told Potzel the ministry was working for the development and improvement of Afghans, with the protection of Islamic and national values, according to information shared by ministry spokesman Ziaullah Hashmi. He said oppo-

nents were criticizing the implementation of Islamic affairs, using education as an argument to achieve their "evil goals."

"We need to make sure there is no place for them to criticize and, at the same time, fulfill the wishes of Afghans who have made sacrifices for Islamic rule and the implementation of Sharia rules in the country," Nadim told Potzel at the meeting.

He also said Afghanistan's rulers will not accept anyone's demands in the form of pressure against Islamic principles.

Potzel thanked Nadim for his time, saying the higher education of any country has a direct impact on the economic situation of that country, according to the ministry spokesman.

The envoy promised to cooperate in the development of Afghanistan's higher education and shared his plan for female education with Nadim.

Islamabad, Jan 08 (PTI):

Pakistan needs about USD 30 billion to cover the short and long-term needs of the victims of last year's floods that claimed about 1,700 lives, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said, as he sought the international community's support ahead of a key donors conference.

More than 33 million were affected due to massive floods hitting the country last summer, leaving many at the mercy of international donors.

Sharif's comments came as he sought the support of the global community ahead of an international conference being jointly hosted by Pakistan and the UN in Geneva on Monday.

Sharif in an article in The Guardian, a British daily newspaper, wrote that a comprehensive roadmap for post-flood reconstruction and rehabili-

tation, to be presented at the conference, has been developed with the assistance of the World Bank, the UN, the Asian Development Bank and the European Union.

He said the roadmap essentially envisages a two-pronged response to deal with the ravages of the flood.

The first part relates to meeting the immediate challenges of recovery and reconstruction, requiring minimum funding of USD 16.3 billion over a period of three years. He said Pakistan would meet half the funding from its own resources but "will count on the continued assistance of our bilateral and multilateral partners to bridge the gap".

The second part outlines Pakistan's long-term vision for building climate resilience that would require an investment of USD 13.5 billion over a 10-

year period, he argued.

Shehbaz urged world leaders, representatives of international development organisations and friends of Pakistan to signal support and solidarity with a country that is grappling with a natural disaster that is not of its making.

The Prime Minister also expressed confidence that the Geneva conference marks only the beginning of a long and arduous journey, but a substantive outcome will reassure millions of imperiled people that the international community will help them rebuild their lives.

The conference aims to garner support from the international community for the flood-affected people and Pakistan has lobbied extensively to get maximum support from the international community as it struggles to provide support to the affected people.

Pakistan frees 524 Afghan migrants from Karachi jail

Karachi, Jan 08 (AP):

Hundreds of Afghan migrants, including women and children, have been released from a jail in the southern Pakistani port city of Karachi, Afghan authorities said Saturday.

Pakistani police in multiple raids last month detained at least 1,200 Afghan nationals who entered Karachi without

valid travel documents.

The arrests brought criticism from around Afghanistan after images of locked up Afghan children circulated online. The detentions underscored the strained relations between the two South Asian neighbors. The 524 released Afghan nationals include 54 women and 97 children, Afghanistan's embassy in Islamabad said.

A video shared by the embassy on Twitter showed women and children behind the main gate of the prison, waiting to be released under supervision of Pakistani and Afghan authorities. Another video showed men seated in a bus ready to depart for Afghanistan.

Millions of Afghans fled to Pakistan during the 1979-1989 Soviet occupation of their country,

creating one of the world's largest refugee populations. Since then, Pakistan has been hosting Afghans, urging them to register themselves with the United Nations and local authorities to avoid any risk of deportation. According to a recently conducted U.N.-backed survey, 1.3 million registered Afghan refugees are residing in Pakistan.

Pak police arrest 5 TTP terrorists from Punjab

Lahore, Jan 08 (PTI):

Pakistani police arrested five terrorists belonging to the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan outfit during intelligence-based operations in Punjab province on Saturday.

According to the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of Punjab police, the terrorists were arrested in Lahore, Okara, Mandi Bahaudin, Faisalabad and Layyah districts of Punjab.

"Explosive material, suicide vests, weapons and banned literature have been recovered from the possession of the arrested

terrorists," the CTD said in a statement.

It, however, did not mention in the statement that the arrested terrorists have any direct link with the killers of two officials of Pakistan's spy agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). On January 3, ISI Multan region Director Naveed Sadiq and Inspector Nasir Abbas were allegedly shot dead by their TTP "source" (suspected killer) Umar Khan in Khanewal, about 375 kilometres from Lahore. It is standard practice for intelligence officials to cultivate sources among terrorist networks to thwart their terror

plans. Both ISI officers were working to bust a terror network in south Punjab. The banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Lashkar-e-Khorasan, an offshoot of al-Qaeda, took responsibility for the attack. The CTD and intelligence agencies have intensified their operations in Punjab after the killing of two officers.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condoled the death of the ISI Director. The premier pledged to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country.

The TTP, also known as the Pakistan Taliban, was set up as an umbrella

group of several militant outfits in 2007. Its main aim is to impose its strict brand of Islam across Pakistan. The TTP has been blamed for several deadly attacks across Pakistan, including an attack on army headquarters in 2009, assaults on military bases and the 2008 bombing of the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad.

Last month, the Pakistan Army commandos killed 25 Taliban militants during an operation to free anti-terrorism police officers who were held hostage inside Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's CTD compound in Bannu for three days.

CULTURAL GROUP KAMBA CUA



Members of the Paraguay-African cultural group Kamba Cua carry a San Balthazar statue during celebrations in his honor, one of the Three Kings, on Epiphany in Fernando de la Mora, Paraguay, early Sunday, Jan. 8. The annual procession is a tradition that keeps Paraguay's Afro-descendants connected with their African roots through ancestral dance, drumming and customs.

China welcomes first batch of international travellers

Following scrapping of quarantine norms

Beijing, Jan 08 (PTI):

China on Sunday welcomed international travellers and returning residents without the need to quarantine for the first time in three years, even as infections surge after it scrapped its stringent zero-Covid policy.

The first flights under China's new "no quarantine" rules for international travellers landed at airports in Guangzhou and Shenzhen in southern Guangdong province early on Sunday morning, state-run CGTN TV reported.



Officials said 387 passengers were aboard two flights from Toronto and Singapore on the day the country ended its strict COVID-19 restrictions for travellers.

On Sunday, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region resumed cross-border travel

with the Chinese mainland. Many other Chinese borders also saw cross-border travel.

At the Shanghai Pudong International Airport, a man surnamed Jiang, who was the first to complete the immigration procedures told reporters

that "it is very convenient all the way from exit hatch to border inspection and clearance," the report said. Last month, China announced it was lifting COVID-19 restrictions that mandated international arrivals undergo nucleic acid tests and quarantine.

Inbound travellers only need to take a PCR test within 48 hours before departure, and they no longer need to apply for a health code from Chinese diplomatic and consular missions. The Chinese government on Saturday ordered the release of people detained over a host of coronavirus-related incidents.



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Gold marching towards historical high

2023 may well be a year of gold. This is because despite several negatives the yellow metal has outperformed everything else. And with the New Year expected to unravel all that traditionally has worked in favour of gold, this asset class appears to be non-stoppable right now. IMF has warned that a third of the global economy is likely to fall into recession this year. Eurozone and Britain have already shown signs of such a crisis. And this is very much the likely scenario in the United States. Stock markets have already seen a blood bath and further falls are indicated in the days to come. Central banks persisting with their tightening plans and more uncertainties are staring at the world as it descends deeper into recession. These are conditions that gold feasts on. There were a series of negatives for gold, specifically, in 2022. Fed raised rates at the second most aggressive pace last year; the US dollar index surged 30 percent in 17 months. Most significantly, the rise in the US dollar and real interest rates was much greater than that recorded for 2013 and even larger than in 2008, the year when global financial crisis struck hard. But last year gold declined only 19 percent compared to 30 percent and 34 percent in 2008 and 2013 respectively. Gold enthusiasts revel at the performance of gold despite strong bearish fundamentals and aver that the yellow metal is only roughly 10 percent away from its historical high despite heavy headwinds of the past nine months and nothing seems to be capable of stopping it from breaking out to a new all-time high. That would be the most remarkable breakout in half a century's time. The World Gold Council notes in its outlook for 2023 that the global economy is at an inflection point after being hit by various shocks over the past year and going forward, this interplay between inflation and central-bank intervention will be key in determining the outlook for gold's performance. The council cites economic consensus that calls for weaker global growth akin to a short, possibly localised recession; falling – yet elevated – inflation; and the end of rate hikes in most developed markets. The environment carries both headwinds and tailwinds for gold. It notes that a mild recession, coupled with weaker earnings, has historically been gold-positive while further weakening of the dollar as inflation recedes could also provide support for gold. Additionally, geopolitical flare-ups should continue to make gold a valuable tail risk hedge. Also, a likely improvement in Chinese economic growth should boost consumer gold demand. Elaborating on the bumpy economic ride ahead, the council warns about many signs of weakening output due to the speed and aggressiveness of hiking moves by central banks, with consensus forecasts putting global GDP to rise by just 2.1 percent this year. Excluding the global financial crisis and Covid, this would mark the slowest pace of global growth in four decades and meet the IMF's previous definition of a global recession – i.e. growth below 2.5 percent. The council lists four key factors which will have a bearing on gold's performance, at least two of which are positive for the metal. These include economic expansion, which is positive form the point of view of consumption and risk and uncertainty, both of which are positive for investment in gold. The other factors are opportunity cost, which is negative for investment and momentum, which is contingent on price and positioning. It has been found that gold typically does well during times of recession. Delivering positive returns during five of the seven recessions in the past. A sharp retrenchment in growth is sufficient for gold to do well, particularly if inflation is also high or rising. A dollar peak has historically been good for gold, yielding positive gold returns 80 percent of the time. The council's latest Gold Demand Trends report reveals that gold demand in the third quarter of 2022 hit 1,181 tonnes, up 28 percent year-on-year. Strong demand pushed the year-to-date total to its pre-Covid levels. Gold demand was bolstered by consumers and central banks, although there was a notable contraction in investment demand. Jewellery consumption continued to rebound and is now back to pre-pandemic levels, reaching 523 tonnes, 10 percent higher compared to the third quarter of 2021. Much of this growth was spearheaded by India's urban consumers who drove up demand 17 percent to 146 tonnes. Similarly impressive growth was also seen in much of the Middle East, with Saudi Arabian jewellery consumption up 20 percent since the third quarter of 2021, and United Arab Emirates up 30 percent for the same period. Chinese jewellery demand also saw a modest 5 percent increase, driven by improved consumer confidence and a dip in the local gold price, prompting the release of some pent-up demand.

Successful rooftop solar power plants

Neat and clean carbon emission-free power is the prime focus area of GoI and no effort is being left to achieve a 50 percent cut in overall emissions as signed and committed by India during the Paris summit. The introduction and subsequent sale of around five lakh electric vehicles is clearcut vision and success story of environmental concerns and protection, and further introduction of hydrogen vehicles now, again the cleanest of fuels available, is right step put forward by the Government. In addition to these, now attention is on the power sector, specifically in cities where almost all weather sun is available. Solar-powered plants have been installed against a targeted 200MW by end of 2024. The response to the collective sixty five percent subsidy from the centre thousands showing interest and local administration is roping in more vendors in addition to the present twenty to clear the backlog and cut short future waiting periods. It is easy to install setup provided by trained manpower and is going to play an important role in overcoming electricity demand and supply shortage in future. It takes both time, investment and manpower to develop a 200MW hydro or thermal power station, in fact, years with additional environmental concerns, but solar-powered plants of 200MW electricity will be installed in no time. The scheme is for other cities also as it seems going to be much above the targeted 200MW. The only concern is grid connectivity, net-metering in non-smart metered areas. Coordination at all levels between different Government agencies is a must for this scheme to be a success story.

CHENNAI MARATHON 2023



Participants run during the Freshworks Chennai Marathon 2023, at Napier Bridge, in Chennai, Sunday, Jan. 8.

Informal employment sans social security on the rise in India

DR. GYAN PATHAK



The first week of 2023 has brought the signs of the beginning of even higher level of unemployment in India at 8.4 per cent than 8.3 per cent in December 2022 which was 15 months high. It is indeed a bad news, but not so bad as the Modi government's trick to show the actually falling formal employment as provisionally rising month after month. EPFO's annual report of 2021-22 tabled in the Parliament of India in December has revealed that only 46.34 million members contributed during the year, as against 48.92 million in the pre-pandemic year 2019-20. It meant that the actual formal employment as measured by EPFO contribution had fallen by 2.58 million. It was a fall of 5.3 per cent. However, the through monthly provisional EPFO data, Modi government tried to prove month after month that formal employment was rising. The provisional monthly data showed that the members contributing in the EPFO increased by almost 20 million by 2021-22, while it actually fell by 2.58 million.

It clearly shows that EPFO's monthly data is not reliable, for it is always provisional, and it undergoes several revisions that substantially alter the actual position of formal employment in the country. There may be some motif of the Modi government behind releasing monthly inflated data to present a comparatively rosy current trend on the employment front.

For example, the latest provisional payroll data of EPFO was released on 20th December, 2022 that highlighted 12.94 lakh net members in the month of October 2022. Year-on-year comparison of payroll data reflects an increase of 21,026 in net membership in October, 2022 as compared to the corresponding month during last year in 2021. As per data, around 2,282 new establishments have started complying for the first time under the Employees' Provident Funds & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 ensuring social security cover to their employees. However, nobody knows, what will happen to this data after several revisions during 2022-23, the final data of which would be available only after a year.

As the annual report for 2021-22 reveals, the formal employment in India has been on the decline since 2019-20, and the country is still struggling to reach that level. It means the employment with social security coverage of provident fund has been on the decline, and informality in the labour

market is on the rise.

In recent AITUC convention it was claimed that informal employment has risen to 97 per cent of the total workforce, much more than the earlier government estimate of 90 per cent. It means only a fraction of the workforce in India are in formal employment with social security coverage such as EPFO's membership.

Unemployment rate last year in January was 6.56 per cent which rose to 8.3 per cent in December, and now average 8.4 per cent in the first week of 2023, as per the CMIE data. Urban unemployment was highest in the last 16 months in December at 10.9 per cent. Rural employment also rose from 5.83 per cent in January 2022 to 7.44 per cent in December. According to CMIE data, unemployment rate of January 6 on 30 day moving average was 8.3 per cent in the country, with urban unemployment 9.8 per cent and Rural unemployment 7.5 per cent.

Labour participation rate (LPR) rose in December to 40.5 per cent from 39.6 per cent in November, and 39 per cent in October. It means, 7 million more people added to workforce in November compared to October, and another 10.6 million joined the workforce in December. It has created some hope among the unemployed to get a job, and hence they have been searching for one, that in turn has increased the unemployment rate.

Moreover, if we dive deep into the methods of calcula-

tion, we can put it in another way. The 10.6 million addition into the workforce does not mean all of them have been employed. According to the CMIE data, only 8.4 million actually found job while 2.2 million joined the ranks of the unemployed. Similarly, 7 million joined the workforce in November, but only 5.5 million found employment and 1.5 million added to the unemployed people. It shows how both the unemployment and employment rate can rise simultaneously.

In December total employment in India was 410 million which is the highest level of employment since January 2020. However, the employment rate in proportion of the working age population is still very low. It was 36 per cent in October 2022, which rose to only 36.4 per cent in November, and 37.1 per cent in December.

About 27.8 million unemployed people were looking for employment in September 2022, which rose to 33.4 million in October, 35 million in November and 37.1 million in December, as per the CMIE data. The number of job seeking persons are most likely to rise in coming months amidst deceleration of economic growth in the country, which urgently needs to be human centred. The challenge is to create large number of decent formal salaried jobs with social security coverage, which has been on the decline since demonetisation of 2016, and worsened during the last three years of the pandemic.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Effective utilisation of industrial waste needed

We know that industries also produces waste products which is hazardous for environment. Dumping of the waste products in a isolated location is of great challenge. We came to know that roads are getting constructed using plastic wastes which is good for suppressing environmental pollution. A recent invention of Plastic roads opens up a new challenge that why can't road construction can also utilise wastes from industries such as Fly ash from thermal power plants, waste from rubber industries, used sands i.e. in shell molding from foundries, kiln dust from cement industries, Waste engine oil from automobile industries, slag produced in furnace from steel industries, Dust from marble industries, waste from glass industries etc. If industrial waste can be effectively utilised in road construction it not only helps in controlling the environmental pollution but also improves the economy of the country. In this direction a lateral thinking is need by central government.

Vijaykumar H K, Raichur

Keep it uniform

Our Constitution guarantees right to equality to all citizens without any discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, colour, community, religion, region or any other consideration. This right should not be on paper alone, but implemented in actual practice too. Religious customs and traditions should be flexible and modified with advancing times. Many religious gurus in the bygone era used to believe that earth is flat, but now it is accepted by all that it is round. Therefore, in accordance with Article 44 and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), Uniform Civil Code should be framed so that all citizens can lead a respectful and dignified life. Irrational practices not in sync with equal rights should be rectified.

Subhash Vaid, New Delhi

Think and speak

Ministers, MPs, MLAs and other public officials are expected to be more careful in their speeches lest they should emit the venom of hate and hurt a particular person or a group of people. Since they are a part of the government and in a way represent the ruling party, they should observe restraint on their vocabulary and exhibit respect for the discordant voices. It is imperative that the people at the helm of affairs should not allow anybody the licence to spew inflammatory and disparaging remarks. They should not be condoned in the name of 'personal comments'.

Chaman Arora, Ferozpur City

Diaspora: Reliable partners for India's progress in Amrit Kaal

Vinod Chandrashekhar Dixit



9th January is celebrated on every year as Pravasi Bharatiya Divas to mark the contribution of Overseas Indian community in the development of India. This day was chosen as the day to celebrate this occasion since it was on this day in 1915 that Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest Pravasi, returned to India

from South Africa, led India's freedom struggle and changed the lives of Indians forever. The first PBD was held in January 2003 in New Delhi. So far 13 editions of the PBD Convention have been held, the last in Gandhinagar, Gujarat in January 2015 which coincided with the 100th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's return from South Africa. It is also known as Non-Resident Indian (NRI) Day is celebrated to strengthen the engagement of the overseas Indian community with the Government of India and reconnect them with their roots.

The 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention is being organized in partnership with the Madhya Pradesh Government from 08-10 January 2023 in Indore. The theme of this PBD Convention is "Diaspora: Reliable partners for India's

progress in Amrit Kaal" Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) convention is the flagship event of the Ministry organized every year since January 2003, with a view to connect India to its vast Indian Diaspora and bringing their knowledge, expertise and skills on a common platform. From 2003 to 2015, this was celebrated like a festival commemorating the Indian Diaspora and dedicating it to them. Indian youth and their Diaspora counterparts should come together in developing strong networks, to lead to partnerships in trade, industry, entrepreneurship and social work. The event also serves as a platform to discuss concerns and issues related to the Indian Diaspora around the globe.

The little-known event is also known as 'Non-Resident Indian Day' as it marks the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa in the year

1915 on January 9. It also acknowledges the contribution of Indian community living abroad in the development of India. Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is celebrated over three days from January 7-9.

According to our Prime Minister Narendra Modi Indian immigrants went abroad looking for opportunities, but today, that situation had changed drastically. In the global context today, India has huge strength and capital. PBD is the most suitable time and hilarious atmosphere to all Indians in India or abroad to come together and work together for strengthening economy. It's good to have such gathering of NRI but should have long term results for the working class who bring foreign remittance.

The event holds much importance as it also helps in extensive networking among the Indian community who

attend it from various parts of the world. Pravasi Bharatiya Divas programme serves as a platform for them to share their valuable experiences in various fields, be it economic or social.

The point of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is to showcase India's unity and present the country as a transnational nation that incorporates the 30-million strong Diaspora and is built upon supposedly shared cultural values in a fictional historical continuum. India can become a superpower and had the potential to become a spiritual and cultural hub. Today India has changed and there are many new opportunities, all kinds of opportunities to earn and make a very good living. Let us on the day Pavasi Bharatiya Divas; pledge to make our contribution when the entire process of development that is taking place in India.

BRIEF

Biocon

New Delhi: Biotechnology major Biocon on Saturday said the US health regulator has issued a complete response letter for Biocon Biologics' application for Insulin-R, a proposed biosimilar for diabetes treatment. The US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) issues a Complete Response Letter (CRL) to convey to a company that its initial review of an application is complete and it cannot approve the application in its present form.

Jaiprakash Associates

New Delhi: Jaypee Group's flagship firm Jaiprakash Associates has defaulted on loans of Rs 4,059 crore, comprising both the principal and interest amount. In a regulatory filing, Jaiprakash Associates Ltd (JAL) said the company on December 31 defaulted on repayments of principal amount Rs 1,713 crore and interest of Rs 2,346 crore.

DWMS

Thiruvananthapuram: The Digital Workforce Management System (DWMS), developed by a state-run university, on Saturday received the prestigious 'Digital India' platinum icon award. The DWMS, developed by a team headed by Ajith Kumar R, the Director of the Centre for Digital Innovation and Product Development under Digital University Kerala (DUK), received the honour. The award was received by him along with P V Unnikrishnan, member secretary of K-DISC and Riyas P M, Manager of Kerala Knowledge Economy Mission, from President Droupadi Murmu at a function in New Delhi today.

DPIT

New Delhi: The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIT) is working on formulating a policy for auction of salt land to private players, sources said. The department had received requests from different ministries, departments, state governments, central and public sector enterprises for transfer of land owned by the Government of India through the Office of the Salt Commissioner, at places other than Mumbai and its suburbs, for public purposes. Sources said that the department is finalising a draft policy on auction of salt land to private players.

Discoms

New Delhi: Total outstanding dues owed by electricity distribution companies (discoms) to power producers almost halved to Rs 62,681.68 crore in January, compared to Rs 1,21,030 crore in same month in 2022. Experts said this substantial reduction in the discoms' total outstanding is mainly due to various steps taken by the government, like implementation of late payment surcharge rules and providing facility of equated monthly installments (EMIs) to utilities.

Total business to cross Rs 2 lakh crore milestone soon: Punjab & Sind Bank MD

New Delhi, Jan 08 (PTI):

Punjab and Sind Bank is expected to cross Rs 2 lakh crore business milestone soon on the back of robust growth in loans, its managing director Swarup Kumar Saha said.

In the third quarter of the current financial year, he said, the bank has witnessed a credit growth of 17 per cent to Rs 78,049 crore.

"Topline growth is in line with our guidance while other key parameters like asset quality and slippages are also under control," he told PTI.

The bank's current account and savings accounts increased by 11.33 per cent to Rs 36,460 crore at the end of the third quarter.

The total business rose by 12.26 per cent to Rs 1.87 lakh crore at the end of



Swarup Kumar Saha

December 31, 2022, Saha said. Talking about new initiatives, Saha said the bank has recently partnered with SBI Card to launch co-brand credit cards for its customers.

Available in three variants — PSB SBI Card ELITE, PSB SBI Card PRIME and PSB SimplySAVE SBI Card — will have access to a wide suite of exclusive privileges. The bank is in the

transformational stage of diversifying into different third-party goods, and the addition of the credit card business to the current portfolio of products will help in both attracting new customers and keeping its current clientele, he said.

The bank will soon introduce digital pre-approved personal loans in three clicks through its mobile app.

Through the mobile app, Saha said, the bank is going to start sourcing loan products to be availed by MSME, Mudra, housing and other loans.

On the liability side, the bank has raised the interest rate on deposits and made it attractive beginning January 1, he noted.

Opening an FD account through the digital app will get an incremental 0.25 per cent above the card rate, he added.

Auto Expo returns after 3 years; some prominent cos to skip event

New Delhi, Jan 08 (PTI):

India's flagship motor show Auto Expo returns this week after three years having been hit by the pandemic, albeit some of the major manufacturers staying away from the event. The likes of Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai, Tata Motors, Kia India, Toyota Kirloskar and MG Motor India will lead the traditional automakers at the show at Greater Noida that will witness five global launches and 75 product launches and unveils.

Yet, others such as Mahindra & Mahindra, Skoda, Volkswagen and Nissan along with luxury car makers like Mercedes-Benz, BMW and Audi will

be conspicuous by their absence in the biennial show that was originally scheduled to be held in 2022 but was postponed to this year due to Covid-19.

Also, the visibility of main two-wheeler makers such as Hero MotoCorp, Bajaj Auto and TVS Motor Co will be restricted to their displays of flex fuel prototype vehicles at the Ethanol pavilion.

Nevertheless, this edition of the Auto Expo, which kicks off with press days on January 11-12 followed by general public days from January 13-18, 2023, will see a much larger participation of newer startup players, specially in the electric vehicles segment.

Gem, jewellery industry seeks abolition of import duty on raw material for lab-grown diamonds in Budget

New Delhi, Jan 08 (PTI):

Gem and jewellery exporters on Sunday urged the government to announce support measures like the abolition of import duty on raw material for lab-grown diamonds and jewellery repair policy to promote the sector and boost shipments in the forthcoming Budget.

The industry also suggested the introduction of presumptive taxation on diamond sales at special notified zones and the introduction of the proposed DESH bill, which seeks to replace the existing law for special economic zones. Seeking a kind of "diamond package" in the forthcoming Budget, the

TURMERIC HARVEST



Karad: Farm workers harvest turmeric at a field in Karad, Sunday, Jan. 8.

Indo-Bangla Friendship Pipeline likely to be commissioned in February

Guwahati, Jan 08 (PTI):

The ambitious 130-km long Indo-Bangla Friendship Pipeline (IBFPL), constructed at a cost of Rs 377.08 crore, is likely to be commissioned by next month, official sources said on Sunday.

The international oil pipeline, IBFPL, will carry fuel from Assam-based Numaligarh Refinery Ltd's (NRL) marketing terminal at Siliguri in West Bengal to the Parbatipur depot of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC). The mechanical works of the bilateral project, being funded by India, was completed on December 12 last year, a senior official of NRL told

PTI on condition of anonymity. "We have set the commissioning target completion in February 2023," he added.

The ground breaking ceremony for the 130-km IBFPL was held in September 2018 in the presence of Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh through video conferencing.

"The project is in a true sense an engineering marvel. We faced lots of hurdles but with mutual cooperation and technological understanding between the two countries, this international project will see the light of the day," another senior executive of the Northeast's largest refiner said.



industry said in light of the high inflation and economic crisis in the US and Europe and frequent lockdowns in China, the exports of diamonds and jobs in Surat have been impacted. The conventional source of rough diamonds across the world faces threats of deposit depletion, which also contribute

to the exponential increase in the cost of extraction. Industries have thus found lab-grown diamonds to be a profitable alternative.

These lab-grown or man-made diamonds (LGDs) are grown inside a lab using cutting-edge technologies under specific parameters.

FLYING CAR



The functional prototype Aska A5 eVTOL flying car folds its front wings during the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, Nevada.

MoRTH confident of achieving highway construction target of 12,000 km this fiscal: Secy Alka Upadhyaya

New Delhi, Jan 08 (PTI):

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) is confident of achieving the highways construction target of 12,000 kilometres for the current fiscal as the pace of construction has increased, its secretary Alka Upadhyaya said on Sunday.

Upadhyaya further said the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has already realised around Rs 2,850 crore through Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT) mode in phase 2, and phase 3 is in the advanced stage to realise the target by the end



of the current financial year. "Extended monsoon has dampened the pace of National Highway construction. "However, the pace of construction has increased, and we are sure that the given targets shall be met by March

2023," she told PTI in an interview.

The ministry has constructed 4,766 km of National Highways up to November 2022-23 compared to 5,118 km constructed till November 2021-22.

The award figure is 5,382 km till November 2022-23 compared to 5,578 km a year ago.

The ministry has constructed 10,237 kilometres in 2019-20, 13,327 kilometres in 2020-21 and 10,457 kilometres in 2021-22.

In 2023, Upadhyaya said NHAI would prioritise awarding of new projects and speed up construction to complete the awarded projects.

Q3 earnings from IT majors, macro data to drive markets this week: Analysts

New Delhi, Jan 08 (PTI):

Trend in the equity market will be guided by a host of factors lined up this week, including inflation numbers, IIP data and quarterly earnings from IT majors, analysts said.

Global cues, movement of the rupee, Brent crude oil and foreign funds will also influence Dalal Street this week, they added.

"We have important macroeconomic numbers this week, as our IIP and CPI inflation will be announced on January 12. On the same day, China and the US will also come out with their inflation figures. "The Q3 earnings season will kick off with IT major earnings this

week, including TCS, Infosys and HCL Tech," said Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd.

Last week, the Sensex lost 940.37 points or 1.55 per cent, while the Nifty declined 245.85 points or 1.36 per cent.

The Indian equity markets have begun the New Year on a slightly cautious note, in line with the global markets, continuing the trend visible in December 2022, said Milind Muchhala, Executive Director, Julius Baer India.

Concerns over inflation and unabated foreign fund outflows played spoilsport for the domestic equity market last week.

FPIs begin New Year in sell-off mode; withdraw Rs 5,900 cr from equities in a week

New Delhi, Jan 08 (PTI):

Foreign investors of-flooded nearly Rs 5,900 crore from the Indian equity markets during January 2-6. In fact, foreign investors have been selling for 11 consecutive days, taking the cumulative selling to Rs 14,300 crore. This came following a net inflow of Rs 11,119 crore in December and Rs 36,239 crore in November.

Overall, FPIs have made a net withdrawal of Rs 1.21 lakh crore from the Indian equity markets in 2022 on an aggressive rate hike by the central banks globally, particularly the US Federal Reserve, volatile crude, rising commodity prices along with Russia and Ukraine conflict.

This was the worst year for the FPIs in terms of

data with the depositories, FPIs have made a net pull out of Rs 5,872 crore from the Indian equity markets during January 2-6. In fact, foreign investors have been selling for 11 consecutive days, taking the cumulative selling to Rs 14,300 crore. This came following a net inflow of Rs 11,119 crore in December and Rs 36,239 crore in November.

The latest outflow in January could be attributed to the concerning cues emanating from both global as well as domestic quarters. "Increasing concerns over re-emergence of Covid in some parts of the world and recession worries in the US have been keeping FPIs away from emerging markets like India," Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research at Morningstar India, said. Also, in the midst of the ongoing uncertainty, many investors would have also chosen to book profits with Indian markets, touching all-time highs in the recent past.

flow and withdrawal from equities comes following a net investment in the preceding three years.

The investment will be made over the period of the next 12 to 18 months, he said. In December 2022, the steelmaker acquired debt-laden Monnet Power for Rs 410 crore through the insolvency route. The 1,050 megawatts (MW) under-construction coal-based power project is located near JSPL's steel plant in Angul, Odisha. "We will invest fresh investment of up to Rs 1,500 crore to make the plant operational. The amount will be invested over the period of the next 12-18 months," Jha told PTI. Once completed, the new asset will provide power to JSPL's steel plant in Angul, which is in expansion mode, he said. The coal for Monnet Power will be sourced from the Utkal B1 and B2 mines of JSPL.

JSPL to invest Rs 1,500 crore to make Monnet Power project operational: MD Bimlendra Jha



New Delhi, Jan 08 (PTI):

Jindal Steel and Power Limited (JSPL) will invest up to Rs 1,500 crore to make recently-acquired Monnet Power operational, its Managing Director Bimlendra Jha said.

The investment will be made over the period of the next 12 to 18 months,

he said. In December 2022, the steelmaker acquired debt-laden Monnet Power for Rs 410 crore through the insolvency route.

The 1,050 megawatts (MW) under-construction coal-based power project is located near JSPL's steel plant in Angul, Odisha.

"We will invest fresh investment of up to Rs 1,500 crore to make the plant operational. The amount will be invested over the period of the next 12-18 months," Jha told PTI.

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The coal for Monnet Power will be sourced from the Utkal B1 and B2 mines of JSPL.

Jenna Ortega-starrer 'Wednesday' will return with Season 2

The Jenna Ortega-starrer web-series 'Wednesday' has been renewed for Season 2, on Netflix. The eight-episode first season of the series centred on the titular 'Addams Family' character, originally debuted on November 23, reports Variety. Netflix announced shortly thereafter that the series set a new platform record for most hours viewed for an English language series, in its first week with over 341 million hours. Since then, the show has grown to become the second biggest English language season of television on Netflix with over 1.2 billion hours viewed within its first 28 days, among other streaming series records. Jenna Ortega stars as Wednesday Addams in the horror comedy series. Per the official first season description, the show centres on Wednesday's "years as a student at Nevermore Academy." "She attempts to master her emerging psychic ability, thwart a monstrous killing spree that has terrorised the local town, and solve the supernatural mystery that embroiled her parents 25 years ago, all while navigating her new and very tangled relationships at Nevermore." Along with Ortega, the cast of Season 1 included Gwendoline Christie, Jamie McShane, Percy Hynes White, Hunter Doohan, Emma Myers, Joy Sunday, Naomi J. Ogawa, Moosa Mostafa, Georgie Farmer, Riki Lindhome, and Christina Ricci. Catherine Zeta-Jones appeared as Morticia Addams alongside Luis Guzman as Gomez and Isaac Ordonez as Pugsley. Alfred Gough and Miles Millar developed the series and also served as co-showrunners and executive producers. Tim Burton directed the first four episodes and is also an executive producer on the series. Steve Stark of Toluca Pictures, Andrew Mittman of 1.21 Entertainment executive produce, along with Kevin Miserocchi of the Tee and Charles Addams Foundation, Kayla Alpert, Jonathan Glickman of Glickmania, Gail Berman, Tommy Harper, and Kevin Lafferty, MGM Television is the studio. "It's been incredible to create a show that has connected with people across the world, said Gough and Millar. "Thrilled to continue Wednesday's tortuous journey into season two. We cannot wait to dive head first into another season and explore the kooky spooky world of Nevermore. Just need to make sure Wednesday hasn't emptied the pool first."

'MasterChef India' finally announces its Top 16 home cooks!

In the quest to find India's ultimate 'MasterChef', Sony Entertainment Television and SonyLIV have brought to the viewers a delightful treat this year, the culinary reality show 'MasterChef India!' The show that airs every Monday to Friday at 9:00 pm, is the most revered cooking reality show that had travelled across India and witnessed many aspiring home cooks present a platter of delectable dishes that were not only appealing to the sight but also tingled the tastebuds. Judges by eminent Chefs - Ranveer Brar, Garima Arora and Vikas Khanna, the home cooks were evaluated based on the 'TIP' approach i.e Taste, Innovation and Presentation. Based on these core aspects, the Top 16 home cooks have finally begun their journey from

the Top 36; from being a tastemaker to a change-maker in the realm of food. Making the celebration of food even grander will be the exquisite 'MasterChef India kitchen' where many dreams will turn into reality and unique stories will come alive. After various rounds of auditions across the country the Top 36 contestants were selected with various grooming sessions and multiple challenges put forward by the renowned chef and judges of which, the Top 16 home cooks have finally been chosen. Ready to make a mark, the Top 16 contestants who were selected and got personalised aprons bearing their names are: Priyanka Kundu Biswas from Kolkata, Aruna Vijay from Chennai, Urmila Jamnadas from Mumbai, Priya Vijan from

Bangalore, Dyuti Banerjee from Kolkata, Avinash Patnaik from Bhubaneswar, Santa Sarmah from Jagiroad Vill Amlight, Nazia Sultana from Guwahati, Gurkirat Singh from Sirsa, Yashu Verma from Gazipur City, Kamaldeep Kaur from Ludhiana, Sachin Khatwani from Lucknow, Suvarna Vijay Bagul from Mumbai, Deepa Chauhan from Bangalore, Nayanjyoti Saika from Tinsukia, and Vineet Yadav from Lucknow.

There will be a lot of twists and turns which the home cooks will have to brave. Who will brave the kitchen fires and win the grand title of being a 'MasterChef India?' To know more, tune in to 'MasterChef India,' every Monday to Friday at 9:00 pm only on Sony Entertainment Television and streaming on Sony Liv.



Why Manasi was initially reluctant to play mom, but 'took it up as a challenge'

In actress and debutante producer Manasi Parekh's recent release 'Kutch Express', she plays a teenage mother. However, she had inhibitions taking on the role at first.

'Kutch Express' also stars Ratna Pathak Shah, Viraf Patel and 'Taare Zameen Par' fame Darsheel Safary. Manasi Parekh donned the producer's hat along with singer husband Parthiv Gohil.

Manasi, plays a teenage mom to actor Darsheel Safary on camera for the first time.

Talking about her role, she said: "I was initially reluctant to play the mother of a teen-



er in the film because I feared that I would be typecast. But in an age where a Vidya Balan plays a mother to an Amitabh Bachchan, I realised that the audience ultimately connects to the story and the performance and nothing else. So I immediately jumped onto the role & took it up as a challenge."

Manasi talks about her role: "The movie definitely revolves around the mother son relationship but with a twist. In this case, the mother is learning new things from the son and is getting awakened because of the son. So that was a beautiful relation to convey."

Anuj Saini to make his B'wood debut with 'Gandhi Godse-Ek Yudh'

Anuj Saini, who has predominantly worked in television commercials, is all set to make his debut in Hindi cinema with Rajkumar Santoshi's 'Gandhi Godse-Ek Yudh'. The debutant took to his social media to share his first look poster from the movie.

Anuj Saini sharing his first look from 'Gandhi Godse-Ek Yudh', said: "Dreams do come true. So so happy & emotional to share my first look from my first film #GandhiGodseEkYudh. Thank you so much everyone for your constant love & support. A big thank you to my direc-



tor Mr Raj Kumar Santoshi Sir @rajkumarsantoshi.official for believing in me. See you at a big screen near you. Save the date 26th January 2023." Anuj will

be playing the role of a young boy opposite Tanisha Santoshi and has an interesting yet crucial role in the film.

The film depicts the war of two opposite ideologies between Mahatma Gandhi and Nathuram Godse. Releasing in cinemas on January 25, 2023. 'Gandhi Godse - Ek Yudh' is set between 1947 and 1948. The film is produced by Manila Santoshi under Santoshi's Production House and Music is by famed composer A.R. Rahman with sound design by Resul Pookutty and it's set to be released in theatres on January 26, 2023.

Featuring five songs, Kangana calls 'Emergency' a 'musical drama'

Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut said that her upcoming film 'Emergency', based on the 1977 national Emergency, is a "musical drama" and has five songs in it.

On Saturday, Kangana took to her social media story and shared a BTS picture from the sets of 'Emergency' and captioned it: "Choreographer on set today.. The director can take it easy ha...by the way we have 5 songs in #emergency it's a musical drama."

"I don't know why people don't expect songs in Emergency...I love music, I might just have the longest song ever above 10 mins..For interval block..And great music tagging gvpkrakash and krutimahesh."

The Padmashree Actress had earlier informed through her social media page that Music composer G.V. Prakash and lyricist Manoj Muntashir have been roped in for the music of 'Emergency'. Kangana is not only playing the lead in the upcoming film but also producing and directing it.

'Emergency', directed by Kangana Ranaut, will also see her essaying the role of former Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi. The film will



tell the story of independent India's biggest political event when the Emergency was imposed in the country by her.

The 21-month period of Emergency was in effect from 1975 to 1977, officially issued by President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed under Article 352 of the Constitution because of prevailing "internal disturbance". It was withdrawn on March 21, 1977.

Popular Hindi words that are spoken globally

Hindi is spoken widely and is currently becoming a popular language. Vishwa Hindi Diwas is observed every year on January 10 to promote the Hindi language across the globe. &TV artists, including Aayudh Bhanushali (Krishna, Doosri Maa), Himani Shivpuri (Katori Amma, Happu Ki Ultan Paltan), and Shubhangi Atre (Angoori Bhabi, Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai), talk about some of the commonly used Hindi words across the globe. Shubhangi Atre, essaying Angoori Bhabi in &TV's Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai, says, "Hindi is a multifaceted language, often hailed for its simplicity and spontaneity. Several Hindi words, as well as other Indian words, are now a part Oxford dictionary and used common-



ly. On a trip to Indonesia, I saw many people aware of the language and its com-

mon word usage. Words such as Shukriya, Guru, Namaskar, Pyjama, Shanti, Yoga, Swagat etc., were spoken easily, and I could see how these words are a part of their lingo. It was truly amazing. Also, when I was exploring the street food of Indonesia, I came across the Indonesian term for tea, "chai," and it gave me a very homely feeling. "I am so glad that Hindi has made its way globally, and some Hindi and Sanskrit words have become very common and have increased in popularity."

Watch Doosri Maa at 8:00 pm, Happu Ki Ultan Paltan at 10:00 pm, and Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai at 10:30 pm, airing every Monday to Friday only on &TV!

'Riding a bicycle is a therapy for me'

Cycling, for many, is the preferred form of cardio workout that offers a wealth of benefits. Radio jockey turned actor Mohit Sharma, who essays the role of Manoj in &TV show Doosri Maa, who is also a professional cyclist, loves cycling and always takes time out from his busy schedule to pedal and finds it therapeutic.

Talking about his love for cycling Mohit Sharma, essaying Manoj in Doosri Maa says "During my school days, I used to enjoy cycling with my friends. We all had a great time roaming the streets.

However, as time passed, we all started riding bikes and driving cars. However, after the lockdown, I decided to relive my childhood memories by purchasing a bicycle. It was one of the wisest decisions I ever made. At that time, I got time to ride my cycle and explore the empty streets of Jaipur, old temples, monuments, and enjoys all



the infrastructure in my neighbourhood. I would have missed these beautiful sights sitting in my car. I used to search water bodies and natural areas on Google Maps near me and reach there on my cycle. It helped me

discover many things which I never knew before. It is during that time that I discovered a beautiful pond near my house. I also discovered a 300-year-old temple and met a Masterji from a nearby village who has lived

there since the year of independence. Thanks to cycling, I now know many such beautiful locations where I go, sit, and relax." Cycling is now not only his hobby but also a way of life to stay healthy. Mohit adds, "It is important to be physically fit and mentally strong.

As part of my fitness routine, I start my day with cycling. I chose cycling to stay fit physically, but it has now evolved into a therapy for me. Cycling relieves my stress and anxiety and makes me happy. When I am cycling, focusing on the road or my cadence helps me develop concentration and awareness of the present moment. I can cycle for more than 50 kilometers now and compete in various cycling marathons and races."

Watch Mohit Sharma as Manoj in Doosri Maa, airing every Monday to Friday at 8:00 pm only on &TV!

CROSSWORD

528



ACROSS

- Misfortunes
- Band instrument
- Characteristic
- Soak through
- Memo letters
- Therefore
- Liquid rock
- Engaged in festivities
- Eternally
- School playtime

DOWN

- Tiny landmass
- Take off
- Prying bar
- Scanty
- Mexican dish
- Client
- Hay unit
- Big monkey
- Menace
- Response
- Initial stake
- Sherbets
- Koppel and Kennedy
- Sis's sibling
- Fix
- Minus
- Small landmasses
- Fern "seed"
- Theme

- Opposite of WNW
- Plant life
- Covert
- Whatever
- Chores
- Cavern
- Unspoiled
- Political uprising
- Forest plant
- Old saying
- Many (2 wds.)
- Conduct
- Back tooth
- Audition tape
- Circular current

SOLUTION 527



Delayed debut, struggles made me hungrier: Surya

Rajkot, Jan 08 (PTI):

Suryakumar Yadav was well past 30 when he made his India debut, but the swashbuckling batter says his belated selection had only strengthened his resolve and made him even hungrier to succeed in top-flight.

Surya produced yet another incredible knock in the shortest format — a 51-ball 112 not out — as India outplayed Sri Lanka by 91 runs in the third T20I to secure a memorable 2-1 series win here on Saturday.

"It does make me even more hungrier (sic) now," Surya told India head coach Rahul Dravid when asked if the long wait has taught him to value his success a lot more.

"I mean the amount of domestic cricket I have played, I have always enjoyed playing that for my state side Mumbai and I always try to put up a show."

"Enjoyed batting even there as well. Yes it was a little challenging in the last few years but kept telling myself this is why you play this game, enjoy it, the passion for this game kept me driving so I just kept going."

The interaction between the two was organised by



BCCI TV. "It is lovely to have someone here with me who, as a young kid growing up, did not watch me bat. And I hope you didn't, I am sure you didn't," Dravid started the chat on a lighter note, to which Surya replied, "No,

I did watch (you bat)." Surya's batting is a stark contrast to the way Dravid played his cricket, and the former India captain was alluding to that only.

Dravid then asked if he could pick one or two knocks that he feels are his

best.

"It is actually difficult for me to pick any one innings... I enjoyed batting in all the difficult situations where I went into bat. I just enjoyed myself, whatever I did in the last one year. I have been doing the same thing again."

"As I said before as well, I just try to enjoy and express myself as much as possible. In those difficult situations, teams try to pull the game off. I try to take the game on. If it works well for me and the team, I'm happy," said Surya.

The middle-order batter's century was his third in the format in just seven months, making him the first player in the history of the game to score three T20I hundreds when not opening the batting.

So how many shots from his bat are pre-determined?

"I mean obviously in this format you have to be a little bit pre-determined, and at the same time you have to have another stroke as well if the bowler is a step ahead of you during that time. But yes, I try to play to the field what fielders are in, what bowler can bowl at that time and it works out."

South Africa hang on to draw in 3rd Test against Australia

Sydney, Jan 08 (AP):

Australia started the day needing 14 wickets for an unlikely victory and a South African series clean sweep but could only muster six as the Proteas batting finally showed some grit to force a draw in the third Test at at Sydney Cricket Ground.

The hosts toiled under some welcome sun in a match that was frequently impacted by weather delays and while it achieved its first aim on Sunday of enforcing the follow on after bowling South Africa out for 255, further inroads proved few and far between.

At stumps South Africa was 106-2 in its second innings having lost Dean Elgar again cheaply to complete a miserable series for the skipper and Heinrich Klaasen was the only wicket to fall in the final session.

Josh Hazlewood took five wickets over the two South Africa innings in his return to the team after missing three tests with injury, while Pat Cummins bowled with menace throughout the final day to claim four wickets.

Earlier, Australia ended South Africa's first in-



Australia's captain Pat Cummins (C) holds the trophy as he poses with team mates after the third cricket Test match between Australia and South Africa at the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) in Sydney on January 8.

nings rearguard resistance shortly after lunch and enforced the follow-on.

As he did in the first innings Cummins (1-16) made the initial breakthrough, again having Elgar (10) caught down the leg side.

It completed a miserable series for the Proteas skipper who made just 56 runs in six innings after scores of 3, 2, 26, 0, 15, 10 for an average of just over 9. After surviving multiple televi-

sion reviews from a luckless Nathan Lyon, Heinrich Klaasen's luck finally ran out when Hazlewood (1-9) found a way through the batter's defense to bowl him for 35.

Sarel Erwee (42 not out) and Temba Bavuma (17 not out) saw the tourists to the close without further loss and South Africa's first drawn test in 47 matches.

Earlier Sunday, Hazlewood took 4-48 as the

host's eventually broke South Africa's resistance and bowled them out for 255, still 20 runs short of the follow-on target despite it being their highest score of the series.

Marco Jansen took several fearsome body blows from Cummins early in the day in a courageous innings of 11 from 78 balls before his resistance was finally ended from the unlikely source of Travis Head's part-time spin.

Sabalenka wins women's final at Adelaide International

Adelaide, Jan 08 (AP):

Second-seeded Aryna Sabalenka claimed her 11th WTA Tour singles title but her first in almost two years when she overcame qualifier Linda Noskova 6-2 7-6 (4) in the women's final at the Adelaide International.

In doing so she ended an extraordinary run by the 18-year-old Noskova who beat third-seeded Daria Kasatkina and former Australian Open champion Viktoriya Asarenka in the main draw on the way to her first final.

Sabalenka didn't drop a set all week and seemed set for another comfortable win when she took out the first set on Sunday. But Noskova was much more competitive in the second, holding serve and putting pressure on Sabalenka's serve, especially with her powerful backhand returns.

"I want to congratulate (Noskova) on an amazing week," Sabalenka said. "I think you're going to have



a great future and 100 percent appear in many more finals." Sabalenka's last single title came in Madrid in May 2021 but she went without a title in 2022 despite reaching three finals. She ended the year ranked fifth after qualifying for the season-ending WTA Finals in Fort Worth where she lost in the final to Caroline Garcia.

Sabalenka now has won three tournaments in the first week of a season after Shenzhen in 2019 and Abu Dhabi in 2021.

Davis beats Garcia by TKO, retains WBA lightweight title

Washington, Jan 08 (AP):

Gervonta Davis defended his WBA world lightweight championship, beating Hector Luis Garcia by TKO early Sunday morning after eight rounds.

Davis shrugged off a slow start to improve to 28-0 with 26 KOs and hand Garcia his first professional loss in his 17th match. Garcia held in tough with Davis early but could not answer the bell for the ninth round.

The Baltimore native fighting in his second hometown is scheduled to face Ryan Garcia in April in one of boxing's most anticipated showdowns of the year.

But first, "Tank" Davis had to get through Garcia, the Dominican who he said "earned his spot" thanks to a strong 2022.

After the sellout crowd of 19,731 waited until just before 1 a.m. for the start



Gervonta Davis punches Hector Luis Garcia in their WBA World Lightweight Championship bout at Capital One Arena in Washington, DC.

of the main event, Davis and Garcia waited a little longer to get going, starting with a couple of low-event rounds and very few punches thrown. Davis found his groove in the fourth round, landing several jabs and bringing fans to their feet.

An altercation in the stands ringside led the

referee to stop the action midway through the eighth round, as Davis and Garcia were distracted by the disturbance. The fight resumed for more than a minute, and Davis put on a show until the bell, landing enough blows to end the match.

The fight headlined Showtime's first major

event at the building now known as Capital One Arena since Mike Tyson's final bout in 2005 against Kevin McBride.

It was in danger of being called off when Davis was arrested and charged with domestic violence in late December, before the woman who called police put out a statement on social media days later saying Davis "did not harm me or our daughter."

Davis said he was not worried about the fight not happening, saying he just wanted to clear his name.

In the co-feature, Jaron "Boots" Ennis won the interim IBF welterweight championship by unanimous decision against Ukraine's Karen Chukhadzian, going the distance for the first time in his career to remain unbeaten at 30-0. The fast-rising Philadelphia native had never gone beyond six rounds before.

Naomi Osaka withdraws from Australian Open

Melbourne, Jan 08 (AP):

Two-time champion Naomi Osaka has confirmed she will not play at the Australian Open, adding her name to a growing list of notable withdrawals.

Organizers confirmed in a tweet on Sunday that Japan's Osaka, the Open champion in 2019 and 2021, will not be playing in Melbourne.

"Naomi Osaka has withdrawn from the Australian Open. We will miss her at #AO2023," the tweet said.

The 25-year-old Osaka's ranking has slipped to 47 and she hasn't played since September after withdrawing during the second round in Tokyo. She won her first round match at that tournament when Australia's Daria Saville withdrew after one game with a knee injury.

Osaka won only one completed match since May and was beaten in the first round of her three previous tournaments, including the US Open at



which she also is a two-time champion.

Last week she posted pictures on social media of a trip to Europe with her United States rapper boyfriend Cordae and had been considered unlikely to play in the first Grand Slam of the season.

Ukraine's Dayana Yastremska has been promoted to the main draw in her place.

Osaka took a mental health break after missing the 2021 French Open and later said she had been struggling with depression and anxiety for several years. Her absence from Melbourne adds to uncertainty over when or if she will resume her career.

Juventus extends winning run to 8 with win over Udinese



Juventus' Italian forward Federico Chiesa (R) challenges Udinese's Brazilian defender Rodrigo Becao during the Italian Serie A football match between Juventus and Udinese at the Juventus stadium in Turin.

Milan, Jan 08 (AP):

Juventus stretched its winning streak to eight matches when it scraped past Udinese 1-0 in Serie A. Danilo scored four minutes from time thanks to a fabulous assist from Federico Chiesa. Massimiliano Allegri's team has also not conceded a goal in its past eight matches despite being

rocked by a bookkeeping scandal during the break when the club's board of directors resigned en masse and the Turin prosecutor's office requested indictments.

Juventus moved into second place in Serie A, a point above defending champion AC Milan, which hosts Roma on Sunday. Inter Milan was three points behind Juventus

after being held to 2-2 at Silvio Berlusconi's Monza. The Bianconeri were four points behind Serie A leader Napoli, which visits Sampdoria on Sunday. The two meet in Naples on Friday. "There's a good game waiting for us but we have to take it one step at a time," Allegri said.

"Today, what mattered was to win, to consolidate our position in the top four: 'Napoli is going at an infernal pace. We'll keep a low profile. Seasons are decided in the last two months.' There was a moving tribute to Gianluca Vialli before kickoff in Turin as well as a minute's silence, which preceded all matches in Serie A this weekend.

Vialli, who died on Friday, helped Juventus to a Serie A title and the European Cup during a four-year stint. "This is a win for him," Chiesa said. The Juventus players also wore black armbands, while there were many banners in the stands dedicated to Vialli as well as chants from the supporters.

Nehra made a big difference to my captaincy at GT: Pandya

Rajkot, Jan 08 (PTI):

There has been no looking back for Hardik Pandya since he led Gujarat Titans to an IPL triumph in their maiden appearance last year, and the new Indian T20I skipper credits his franchise coach Ashish Nehra for making "a big difference" to his captaincy.

Coming back from a long injury layoff, the premier all-rounder was made the Gujarat skipper in a bold move by the first-timers.

But Pandya, who had led only once at senior level in a tour game against Australia, proved his detractors wrong and led by example.

"What has been very important from Gujarat point of view is the kind of coach I worked with. Ashish Nehra made a big difference in my life, because of our mindsets. We might be two different personalities, but we have very similar cricketing thoughts," Pandya said after leading India to a 2-1



India's captain Hardik Pandya carries the champions trophy at the end of the third Twenty20 international cricket match between India and Sri Lanka at the Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium in Rajkot.

series win over Sri Lanka here on Saturday. "Because I was with him, it added value to my captaincy.

Newcastle humbled in FA Cup again

London, Jan 08 (AP):

Even having club soccer's richest owners cannot improve Newcastle's pitiful record in the FA Cup. Newcastle was humbled by a lower-league opponent in the third round of the famous old competition for the second straight year under its Saudi owners, losing at third-tier Sheffield Wednesday 2-1 on Saturday.

At the same stage last year, Newcastle was beaten at home by another third-tier club, Cambridge United. Yet the northeast team was still in the early days of the new era then.

Now, it is a rising force in the Premier League, in third place and fighting to reach the Champions League.



Sheffield Wednesday's English striker Michael Smith (L) vies with Newcastle United's English midfielder Sean Longstaff (R) during the English FA Cup third round football match between Sheffield Wednesday and Newcastle United at Hillsborough Stadium in Sheffield, northern England.

because top-flight survival is their priority. Newcastle's elimination was a big surprise, with Josh Windass scoring for Sheffield Wednesday in the 52nd and 65th minutes

before Bruno Guimaraes pulled one back in the 69th. Newcastle has advanced beyond the fourth round of the FA Cup only once since 2006 in the 2019-20 season.

'Naga solution should come fast, election is nearing'

Dimapur (Nagaland), Jan 08 (PTD):

The Janata Dal (United) has said that the solution to the decades-old Naga political issue should come at the earliest so that the process of the upcoming assembly polls in Nagaland can be held on schedule. The mandate of the 2018 polls was 'Election for Solution', JD(U) Rajya Sabha MP, Aneel Prasad Hegde, said here.

The JD(U) believes that the reason for the failure to resolve the Naga political issue is "political instability" in the northeastern state, Hegde said on Saturday. The resolution for the problem is fundamental for lasting peace



Aneel Prasad Hegde

and prosperity of the Nagas, he said. To find a solution to the issue, the Centre and the NSCN(IM) signed a framework agreement on August 3, 2015, in presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The framework agree-

ment came after over 80 rounds of negotiations spanning 18 years, with the first breakthrough in 1997 when the ceasefire agreement was sealed after decades of insurgency in Nagaland which started soon after Independence in 1947.

Besides the framework agreement with the NSCN(IM), the Centre also inked an Agreed Position with Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs) comprising seven organisations (NNPGs) in December 2017.

However, the final solution is yet to see the light of the day mainly because of the unwillingness of the government to accept

the NSCN(IM)'s persistent demand for a separate flag and constitution. After a long gap, talks between the two sides began in September last year.

Hegde said demanding President's Rule in Nagaland, instead of holding elections and providing a stable government, was not appropriate as the need of the hour is the solution to the vexed problem. The Rising People's Party (RPP), a Nagaland political outfit formed in 2021, last month urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to impose President's rule, alleging that the state has been the worst performer under several parameters.

LOW VISIBILITY



A commuter walks on a bridge amid low visibility due to a thick layer of fog on a cold winter morning, at New Town in Kolkata, Sunday.

UNIQUE INITIATIVE

School principal offers free air travel to students

Figuring in Board exam merit list

Chandigarh, Jan 08 (PTD):

When four students of a government school in Punjab's Ferozepur district featured in the merit list of the state board exams, ending a 12-year wait, the overjoyed principal did not hesitate to fulfil their wish of air travel.

Rakesh Sharma, the principal of Shaheed Gurdas Ram Memorial Senior Secondary School (Girls), at Zira in Ferozepur, is paying for the air travel expenses of students from his own pocket.

According to Sharma, the students of the 10th

and 12th classes of the school had not been making it to the merit list of the Punjab School Education Board exams for the last 12 years.

To motivate students to work hard on their studies, Sharma asked them about their wishes which he would fulfil if they make the cut.

"The students wished for 'Jahaaz da jhoota' (travel by air) and I told them it is my commitment to fulfil their wish," Sharma said.

"I announced in a prayer meeting that if any student of 10th or 12th class secures merit positions in board exams, I will ensure

air travel for any destination of their choice within the country," he added.

Most of the students of the school belong to poor and middle-class families.

"By the grace of God, four students - two of 10th class and two of 12th class - secured merit positions in the final exams," an elated Sharma said.

"Two twelfth-class students, Bhajanpreet Kaur and Simranjeet Kaur, went to Goa from Amritsar on a flight in November last year. Both of them attended the India International Innovation and Invention Expo (INEX-2022) in Goa," Sharma said.

International Kite Festival inaugurated

● 68 countries to participate

Ahmedabad, Jan 08 (PTD):

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel on Sunday inaugurated the International Kite Festival 2023 here, which will see the participation of around 125 kite flyers from 68 countries based on the G-20 theme "One Earth, One Family, One Future".

Apart from international participants, 65 kite flyers from 14 states in India and 660 from different parts of the state will also take part in the week-long event, which will culminate on January 14.

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, the kite of development of Gujarat has been crossing new heights for two consecutive decades," Patel said while inaugurating the event at Sabarmati riverfront here.

The kite festival is an opportunity to touch the sky and reach new heights. Kites are a symbol of progress, prosperity, and flight, he said.

Patel further said the kite industry has got a boost under Modi's leadership when the latter was the chief minister, and has grown from a Rs 8-10 crore industry some two decades ago to Rs 625 crore one, and has given employment to 1.30 lakh people.

UP Govt launches campaign to make urban bodies

On par with global standards

Lucknow, Jan 08 (PTD):

The Uttar Pradesh government has launched a statewide 100-day 'UP Global City' campaign to make urban bodies of the state on par with global standards, an official release said on Sunday. The campaign was launched by Urban Development Minister Arvind Kumar Sharma on Saturday.

"The campaign, launched in all 762 urban bodies of the state, looks at improving cleanliness and air quality, ensuring proper garbage disposal, beautification and installation of adequate signages on roads, among others, to make the urban

system of the state on par with global standards," the release said. During the campaign, work on increasing urban facilities and beautifying the cities will be done on a war footing in all the districts of the state.

Sharma said Global Investors Summit will be organised in the state in February as well as G-20 events in which thousands of people, including heads of state, diplomats, rulers, administrators, industrialists and other dignitaries, will participate.

He also said that a three-month 'Swachh Dhaba' campaign is being run from January to

March, 2023 for disposing the garbage coming out of dhabas, restaurants, hotels and other small 'gumtis' in the state.

"Similarly, from January 14 to 24, under the 'Swachh Virasat Abhiyan', cleanliness work will be taken up in all tourist and historical places, monuments and religious places with people's participation," the minister said.

"... from February 1 to March 31, a campaign will be launched for door-to-door garbage collection in the state. Besides, a marathon race will be organised on January 21 in the context of the G-20 conference," he added.

CELEBRATION TIME



Kozhikode team celebrates with the trophy after being adjudged the overall champions during the 61st Kerala School Kalosavam, in Kozhikode, Saturday evening.

TN CM bats for reviving Sethusamudram project

● To achieve economic prosperity

Chennai, Jan 08 (PTD):

The ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu has called for reviving the Sethusamudram Ship Canal project in the wake of the Centre's claim on the presence of the real form of Ram Setu in Rameswaram.

Chief Minister M K Stalin batted for reviving the project for economic prosperity of the nation and enhancing the freight handling capacity of Indian ports.

The project, which was started on July 2, 2005 at an estimated cost of Rs 2,500 crore, came to a

standstill after protests by environmentalists and Hindu activists against the demolition of the Ram Setu, a symbol of heritage.

The DMK had in the run-up to the 2021 Assembly election promised to complete the project when it comes to power for bringing economic benefits for southern Tamil Nadu.

Accusing the BJP government at the Centre of shelving the project under religious pretext, the Chief Minister said there would have been tremendous development had the project launched during the UPA regime been allowed.

"You know who stopped the Sethusamudram ship

canal project. It was the BJP. Union Minister Jitendra Singh had informed the Rajya Sabha that it can't be said for sure that Ram Setu existed in Rameswaram," he said after launching the autobiography of former Union minister and senior DMK leader T R Baalu, 'Pathaimara Payanam', here on Saturday night.

Baaluu was the key force behind the Centre launching the project. "Had this project not been shelved, then Tamil Nadu would have benefited a lot," Stalin claimed at the event. "Not only Tamil Nadu but the project would have been the pride of India," he said.

YOUTH PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS

Thakur asks young diaspora to innovate, invest in India

Indore, Jan 08 (PTD):

Union Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs Minister Anurag Thakur on Sunday appealed to the young Indian diaspora to innovate, invest and initiate their ideas in India. Speaking at the inaugural function of the Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) as part of commencement of the three-day PBD convention, Thakur said India became the fifth largest economy in the world in 2022 by overtaking those who ruled the country for 200 years.

Australia's Member of Parliament Zaneta Mascarenhas was the guest of honour at the Youth Pravasi Bharatiya

Divas. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar were also present. Addressing the gathering, Thakur urged the young Indian diaspora to "innovate, invest and initiate ideas in India".

In the year gone by, India became the third largest nation with start-ups, he said. When the world was fighting the pandemic, Indian youth saw an opportunity for launching start-ups, he added. The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention is being held in physical mode for the first time since 2019. The last PBD convention in 2021 was held virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Afghan national stranded abroad without visa

■ For 2 yrs
■ Family in India awaits his return for 'happily ever after' of two years

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 08 (PTD):

We miss him a lot, we want him to join us soon - a heartbreaking plea to the Indian government by a nine-year-old girl awaiting return of her father, an Afghan national and a post-doctoral fellow in the University of Kerala who is stranded abroad for over two years for want of visa, so that they can live "happily ever after".

Gulabmir Rahmany, a post-doctoral fellow in the Sociology department of

the university, went to Afghanistan in 2020 to renew his visa and to collect data in connection with his post-doctoral research on that country. Unfortunately for him, the United States troops stationed there since 2001 began their withdrawal in 2020 and the Taliban took over the country.

What was supposed to be a routine exercise of visa renewal, turned into a nightmare for Rahmany's family as the Indian government cancelled visas of those in Afghanistan in view of the change in the geopolitical scenario and resultantly, he was stranded there. He also attempted to come to India via Iran, but has had no luck till now and is still waiting in Tehran for nearly an year to secure a visa.

"My research topic was related to Afghanistan

and I went there for data collection. I also had to renew my visa. However, the political situation changed in Afghanistan and I was stranded there," Rahmany said.

"I got a visa to Iran and went there so that I can go back to India from there. But I am stranded in Tehran in Iran for nearly a year as the Indian embassy is refusing to issue me a visa," he said while speaking to PTI from Iran on a WhatsApp call which was frequently disconnected due to poor internet connectivity.

Professor Sabu Joseph, Director of the varsity's Centre for Global Academics (CGA), who is aware of Rahmany's predicament, said that while stranded abroad, his family - wife and three kids - were having a tough time here. Rahmany's wife,

Zamzama, who is pursuing PhD in Physics from University of Kerala, narrated the ordeal she has undergone while trying to manage her studies, household chores and take care of her children's needs in the absence of her husband in the last two years.

"I got infected with COVID-19 and had to be quarantined at home as there was no one to take care of my children. I have to do all household chores, take the children to hospital when required, go buy groceries, all that I have to do on my own along with my studies. I cannot do research from home as I also have lab work.

"It is not easy. I am always tired. I have health issues. Sometimes I want to leave everything and go away but that is not possible," she said with an ex-

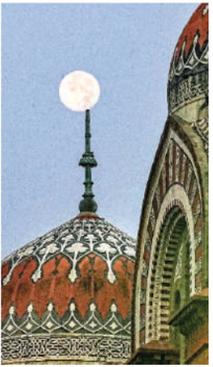
asperated laugh. "We miss him a lot. We are not able to speak to him properly due to internet issues there. Our mother cannot take care of us on her own. We want him to join us soon, so that we can live happily ever after," Rahmany's nine-year-old daughter, amidst sobs, said.

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BRIEF



Full moon appears in the sky in Chennai, early Sunday morning.

Mishap

Hailakandi: Two picnickers were killed and 11 others injured in a road accident in Assam's Karimganj district, a police officer said on Sunday. The vehicle the picnic party was travelling in fell into a ditch in Ratabari area on Saturday evening, the officer said.

Detach

Kolkata: The coupling between two coaches of 12871 Howrah-Titlagarh Ispat Express got detached on Sunday while entering Santragachi station, a South Eastern Railway official said here.

Magh Mela

Prayagraj: 'Kalpvasis' or devotees turned out in large numbers in the city for the month-long Magh Mela after a gap of two years owing to coronavirus outbreak, even as the authorities implemented a slew of measures to prevent the spread of the disease at the fair venue.

Weather
High 26 Low 8

TALE OF HORROR

Joshimath declared landslide-subsidence zone

Over 60 families evacuated

Dehradun, Jan 08 (PTI):

Joshimath has been declared a landslide-subsidence zone and over 60 families living in uninhabitable houses in the sinking town have been evacuated to temporary relief centres, a senior official said on Sunday.

At least 90 more families have to be evacuated. The local administration has set up relief centres at four-five places in the Himalayan town, Garhwal Commissioner Sushil Kumar said. Meanwhile, District Magistrate (DM)



A building tilts following landslides at Joshimath in Chamoli district.

Himanshu Khurana went from door to door in the affected area to assess the damage and appealed to people living in houses that have developed cracks to move to the relief centres. Joshimath has been declared a landslide-subsidence zone. More than 60 families living in uninhab-

itable houses in the sinking town have been evacuated to temporary relief centres, Kumar told PTI.

Considering the extent of the damage, at least 90 more families will have to be evacuated as soon as possible, he said. Kumar, who has been camping in Joshimath since Thursday,

Shankaracharya Matth develops cracks

The situation in Joshimath remains grim as one of the Hindu monasteries, the Shankaracharya Matth in Jyotirmath area, has also developed cracks in many places over the past 15 days, triggering a scare in the religious institute. According to the Jyotirmath administration, these cracks have increased in the last 15 days.

heads a committee tasked with monitoring the situation on the ground level. There are a total of 4,500 buildings in Joshimath and 610 of these have developed huge cracks, making them unfit for habitation, he said.

Tusker electrocuted

Mahasamund, Jan 08: An elephant died of electrocution in Mahasamund district after it came in contact with a live wire laid by poachers to trap wild animals, a forest official said on Sunday.

The incident took place on Saturday night near Kodar dam in Mahasamund forest range when two male jumbos, named ME-1 and ME-5, were moving through the area, Divisional Forest Officer, Mahasamund division, Pankaj Rajput said.

The two tuskers had entered Mahasamund from neighbouring Gariaband district on January 6 and were heading towards Sirpur area, he said. When the elephants were in the area which comes under the Forest Development Corporation near Kodar dam, ME-5 came in contact with a live iron wire laid for the purpose of poaching wild animals and got electrocuted, the official said.

RELIGIOUS CONVERSION

Five more held for clash in Narayanpur

Narayanpur, Jan 08:

Police on Sunday arrested five more persons in connection with a clash between two groups over alleged religious conversion in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur district, an official said. With this, so far eight people have been arrested in connection with the incident which took place in Gorra village under Edka police station limits on January 1. Inspector General of Police (Bastar Range) Sundarraj P said.

The police had on January 3 arrested three persons. Five more persons arrested on Sunday have been identified as Preamsagar Netam (48), Lacchu Karanga (32), Santuram Dugga (35), Punuram Dugga (45) and

Total 8 arrested so far

With this, so far eight people have been arrested in connection with the incident which took place in Gorra village under Edka police station limits on January 1. The police had on January 3 arrested three persons.

Rajman Karanga (46), all residents of Narayanpur district, the official said. They were produced before a local court which sent them to judicial custody, he said.

Three separate cases were registered at Edka police station following complaints received from tribals, tribal Christians and police about alleged attacks on them, police said.

AI PEING INCIDENT

Airline's response should have been much swifter: Tata

Mumbai, Jan 08 (PTI):

Tata Group Chairman N Chandrasekaran admitted on Sunday that Air India's response to the incident of a drunk passenger allegedly urinating on a woman on one of its international flights last year should have been "much swifter".

In a statement, which came days after the aviation regulator DGCA

pulled up the Tata Group-owned full-service carrier, Chandrasekaran also said that "we fell short of addressing this situation the way we should have."

In a shocking incident, an inebriated man allegedly urinated on a female co-passenger, a senior citizen in her seventies, in the business class of Air India New York-New Delhi flight on November 26 last year. The accused Shankar

Mishra was arrested by the Delhi Police from Bengaluru on Saturday.

"The incident on Air India flight AI102 on November 26, 2022, has been a matter of personal anguish to me and my colleagues at Air India. Air India's response should have been much swifter. We fell short of addressing this situation the way it should have been, Chandrasekaran said in

the statement on Sunday.

"The Tata Group and Air India stand by the safety and well-being of our passengers and crew with full conviction. We will review and repair every process to prevent or address any incidents of such unruly nature," he added in the statement.

DGCA has said Air India's conduct in handling the incident was "unprofessional".

Kathua Gangrape-murder Case

Juvenile declared adult by SC

New Delhi, Jan 08 (PTI):

Shubam Sangra, declared an adult by the Supreme Court order of 2018, the sessions court of Pathankot will be hearing the case and the appellate court would be the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

Sangra was also shifted from a Juvenile Home to the regular Kathua Jail after the crime branch served the Supreme court order of November 22 in which he was declared an adult. The Crime Branch charge sheet detailed Sangra's alleged involvement in the horrific crime. It said Sangra was responsible for an overdose of sedatives forcibly administered to the eight-year-old, rendering her "incapacitated" to resist sexual assault on her as well as her murder. "She

was forcefully administered five tablets of Clonazepam of 0.5 mg each on January 11, 2018 which is higher than the safe therapeutic dose. Subsequently more tablets were given...The signs and symptoms of an overdose may include drowsiness, confusion, impaired coordination, slow reflexes, slowed or stopped breathing, coma (loss of consciousness) and death," a medical expert was quoted as saying in the charge sheet.

The peak concentration of clonazepam is achieved in the blood after one hour to 90 minutes of oral administration and its absorption is complete, "irrespective of administered either with or without food", according to the concluding opinion.

The Minister, according to a government release, said that all districts have been alerted and everyone should follow directions issued by the Health department. The release said that the Health department was monitoring for fever and other symptoms among people in the affected areas. Symptoms of the infection in humans include severe upper back pain, fever, cough, shortness of breath, cold and blood in the sputum, it said. Those at risk of the infection should get in touch with the nearest health center or a doctor on noticing any of these symptoms or if they have respiratory problems, the release said.

It also said that bird flu or avian influenza is an infectious viral disease found in birds which is not usually transmitted to humans. But it can infect in rare cases due to a mutation in the virus, it said.

Therefore, those who come into contact with birds — infected and healthy — should take preventive measures like wearing gloves, face masks and washing hands frequently, the release said. The disease can affect all kinds of birds like chicken, duck, quail, goose, turkey and ornamental birds, it said.

Bird flu in Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 08 (PTI): In the wake of bird flu cases being reported in the State, Kerala Health Minister Veena George on Sunday said there was no cause for concern, but precautions need to be taken for preventing transmission of the infection to humans.

The Minister, according to a government release, said that all districts have been alerted and everyone should follow directions issued by the Health department. The release said that the Health department was monitoring for fever and other symptoms among people in the affected areas. Symptoms of the infection in humans include severe upper back pain, fever, cough, shortness of breath, cold and blood in the sputum, it said. Those at risk of the infection should get in touch with the nearest health center or a doctor on noticing any of these symptoms or if they have respiratory problems, the release said.

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Elderly couple killed in road accident

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 08: An elderly couple was killed in a road accident which occurred on the bridge of River Sheonath on the intervening night of Sunday. The couple was returning from Anjora on a scooter when they were hit by a rashly moving car.

The man and his wife suffered fatal injuries and succumbed on the spot. The car driver escaped from the spot after the mishap. Later, police searched and arrested the accused car driver.

According to information, the deceased were Gyandhand Lekhwani (56) and his wife Vandana Lekhwani (45), residents of Polsaypara, Durg. They had gone to attend some function at Prithvi Palace in Anjora on their



Accused car driver



scooter bearing registration number CG07-BU-9101.

Around 23:30 hrs on Saturday, they were returning back home on the scooter when a rashly moving car came on the wrong side and hit Lekhwani's scooter. Gyandhand and his wife Vandana suffered fatal in-

juries and died on the spot. The accused car driver left his vehicle and escaped.

On information, police reached the spot and the bodies were sent for autopsy after preparing an inquest. The car bearing registration number CG07-BF-5195 was seized and police collected infor-

mation about its owner.

On the basis of the registration details, police contacted the owner after which the accused driver Sunny Singh of Azad Mohalla, Camp-1, Bhilai was booked under the provisions mentioned in sections 279, 304 (A) of IPC and Section 151 of CrPc.

SEFI seeks restoration of special allowance for mines officers

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 08: SEFI has demanded from the Ministry of Steel to restore the special allowance for working in difficult areas for the executives positioned in Mines. The officials of SEFI have requested the Union Minister of State for Steel, Faggan Singh Kulaste and Steel Secretary NN Sinha in this regard.

Through a letter, SEFI raised the pending issues of mine officials and demanded to start the Special Allowance (Difficult Area Service Allowance) in the third pay revision for the executives of SAIL Mines and NMDC.

It needs to be mentioned here that earlier on December 12, 2022, a dele-

gation of SEFI had discussed this issue with the Union Minister of State for Steel, OSD (Steel) and the Joint Secretary.

The Ministry of Steel, as per the DPE's order no 2(77)/09-DPE (WC) GL-XII/2010 dated 22/06/2010, had issued an order to provide difficult area special allowance to the officers working in SAIL mines for working in challenging / difficult postings.

According to these orders, 10% of the basic salary was paid to the officers working in the mines as special allowance for difficult areas. The mines of SAIL and NMDC are still operating in the same condition and the urban facilities, education and medical facilities in these places are very pathetic. The offi-

cers working in these places are bound to migrate their families to any developed cities to avail education and medical facilities uninterrupted.

The third pay revision committee has recommended in point no 3-16-13/vi/c, to provide remote area special allowance to the officers working in difficult conditions. But the Ministry of Steel vide order no F.No. 3(1)/2022 - Finance dated 29/09/2022, has discontinued the inaccessible area special allowance for the officers of SAIL. The officers working in difficult conditions are extremely disappointed with this order.

In this context, SEFI Chairman Narendra Kumar Banchole, while presenting arguments in

support of continuation of special allowance to the officials working in the mines, said that the mines of SAIL and NMDC are mostly located at remote places where the medical, education and township facilities are not available.

Affected by left wing extremism along with lack of basic facilities, the officers working in the mines are demoralized due to non-reinstatement of special allowances.

This may have an impact on the performance of the company. Therefore, in order to maintain a better performance of the company, special allowance is very necessary to increase the morale of the officers of mines. He appealed to reinstate this allowance.

Bada Talab being developed as recreational centre with Rs 16 cr

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 08: Over Rs 16 crore is being spent to develop the Bada Talab of Kumbhari as a recreational centre. The bullet toy train will be the centre of attraction for the children. The main entrance gate will have an eagle and two elephants to welcome the visitors.

Recently, Collector Pushendra Kumar Meena visited the Bada Talab located at the heart of Kumbhari. Bada Talab is being converted into a recreation place for the citizens of the area at a cost of 16 crores. It will be inaugurated soon by Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel.

The Collector took information regarding the progress of the work from the concerned officers dur-



ing his inspection and also instructed them to complete the remaining work soon. He also directed to improve the front view of the entrance of Bada Talab so that the people passing by can get an idea of the beauty of Bada Talab.

He asked the concerned authorities to lay special emphasis on flower beds and plantations so that the visitors feel that they are close to nature. Apart from this, he also inspected 08

food stalls located inside the perimeter of Bada Talab. He asked to give the tender of food stalls to such food chains or shopkeepers, who can maintain a variety of food, taste and hygiene.

Along with this, he instructed the concerned officer to engage 7 to 10 gardeners regularly for the maintenance of plants and flower beds so that the maintenance of the garden could be done regularly.

A Bullet Toy Train will run at the Bada Talab entertainment venue. This train will have a seating capacity of 48 people. This will be a special attraction for children, in which they will be able to ride the magnetic bullet train while enjoying the musical fountain and other fun activities.

There will be an eagle, two elephants and green walking tunnel, sea-link bridge etc at the entrance.

An eagle and two elephants will be permanently installed at the entrance to welcome the visitors to Bada Talab.

Along with the natural beauty of the pond within the recreational area, a green walking tunnel, fountain, laser show with video projection, spike light, flower bed, play section for children and sea link bridge are being constructed in Bada Talab. This will be the center of attraction for all the visitors coming to Bada Talab.

Apart from this, the Collector also inspected the Kukda pond, where he directed the concerned officers to clean the pond, paint the temples and plant shady trees. SDM Brijesh Kumar Kshatriya, CMO Jitendra Kushwaha and other officers were present.

Suspect arrested in threatening letter case

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 08: On the basis of the CCTV footage, police have arrested a suspect in the threatening letter case in which a renowned transporter had received death threats. SP Dr Abhishek Pallava informed that the letter was sent by post.

Accordingly, police traced its origin and found the letter box in which the letter was posted. CCTV footage of a nearby place was examined in which a suspect was seen approaching on a bike and posting a letter in the letter box.

On the basis of this



gating the suspect.

It needs to be mentioned here that Bhilai based renowned transporter and President of Truck Trailer Steel Association, Inderjeet Singh (Chhotu) had received an anonymous death threat. The postal letter was sent to his office in Hathkhaj.

On his complaint, Old Bhilai Police Station lodged an FIR under section 507 of IPC. The letter written in Hindi language contained threatening remarks against Inder's life. Taking the matter into serious cognizance, police protection was also provided to Inderjeet Singh.

Sanjay Rungta appointed Chairman of APPIC

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 08: A meeting was held with representatives of all regions of Association of Private Professional Institutions of Chhattisgarh (APPIC), in which there representatives of many new pharmacy institutes also attended the meeting. The association elected Sanjay Rungta, Chairman, Sanjay Rungta Group of Institutions as President, Shailendra Jain, Chairman Raipur Institute of Technology, Raipur as General Secretary and Ashish Jaiswal, Chairman Chouksey Group of Institutions, Bilaspur was unanimously nominated as Treasurer and best



wishes were given. Sanjay Rungta told that all pharmacy and engineering institutes can join Association of Private Professional Institutions of Chhattisgarh (APPIC) so that there is wider representation.

The only objective of the Association of Private Professional Institutions of Chhattisgarh (APPIC) is

to redress the grievances of all the private institutions running in the state. All the members unanimously assured that they will always be ready for the development of private professional institutions. The meeting ended after expressing full confidence to lead in a better way under the guidance of Sanjay Rungta.

Congenital heart disease screening camp held

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 08: Congenital Heart Disease Screening Camp was organised at District Hospital under the guidance of Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr JP Meshram and Civil Surgeon cum Chief Hospital Superintendent Dr Yogesh Kumar Sharma and leadership of Dr Divya Srivastava (Nodal Officer RBSK) and District Program Manager Padmakar Shinde.

Dr Sameer Raj Prasad, Pediatrician, Cardiologist of SMC Heart Institute, Dr Ajay Chaurasia and Dr Gaurav Jain, specialist doctor of the hospital, Durg conducted the camp in which 34 children suffering from congenital heart disease were examined. Out of them, 3 children were identified for surgery



After 1 year, 16 children have to be re-examined. Echo test of 15 children was found to be normal.

Apart from this, 9 children with other diseases were registered. In which 3 children had eye problems, who were registered for spectacles, 1 congenitally deaf child was consulted for further treatment by ENT specialist Dr Rinu Tiwari, and 1 child with traumatic cataract

was found, whose eyes were treated in the district hospital.

Consultation for treatment by the ophthalmologist of the department and 4 children with other diseases were registered for consultation and treatment by the pediatrician. From April 2022 till now, 69 children have been registered in DEIC under Chirayu Scheme, under Ayushman Bharat



Scheme. 5 children have undergone cochlear implant and are getting regular speech therapy in DEIC so that they could be able to hear like other normal children and lead a normal life.

Complicated surgery for congenital heart disease was done on 35 children. 8 children were operated for congenital cataract, 11 children for cleft lip and palate, 10 children for her-

nia and urogenital surgery were done free of cost by Dr Kalpana Zep, eye surgeon of the eye department in District Hospital Durg.

69 children who had congenital malformation will now be able to lead a normal life with the help of Chirayu Scheme. The DEIC team and Chirayu team made a special contribution in making this camp successful.

Sri Sankara Vidyalaya junior wing celebrates 'Kanaka Dhara'

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 08: Sri Sankara Vidyalaya, Sec X, celebrated its 34th Annual Day (junior wing) 'Kanaka Dhara-2023' on January 06, 2023 amidst great liveliness and enthusiasm. SV Nandanwar, CGM (Internal Audit), Bhilai Steel Plant, was the esteemed chief guest.

He was escorted by the dignitaries, the Principal. The function commenced with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp and garlanding the portraits of goddess Saraswati and the holy patron of the school, the Parmacharya of Kanchi Kamakotti Peetham, Sri Jayendra Saraswati Swamikal.

Principal, Bipin Deshmukh accorded a warm welcome to all on the behalf of Sri Sankara fraternity. He tabled the annual school report. V Ramchandran, President Sri Sankara Education Society acknowledged the chief guest and focused on the futuristic career avenues for the present generation. He urged the parents to guide their wards in a right direction. The Chief Guest, SV Nandanwar addressed the gathering with his words of wisdom. He was happy with the progress of the school. He emphasized that small children can be moulded at an early age



by knowing the quality of each child. The students exhibited their mastery through the different cultural fiesta. The function was well attended by the parents, students, invited dignitaries, members of PTA, other members of the management and distinguished guests.

The Cultural Programme based on the varied Indian Cultural heritage comprised of a welcome song, teachers group song, Sunderkand Recital, Onam dance guided by Rajani Vijayan and Rajani Nair, Janmashtami by Sanchita Saxena, Navratri by Shikha Verma, Hareli by Roshni and Megha,



Kawwali by Tarannum. This was followed by melodious group songs guided by Devyani Vyas, Vandana Mishra, Sanjay Kodra and Doman Verma. Marathi Dance guided by Anjana Dutta, Shivratri dance by Kavita Pradeep, dance on Holi theme presented by Yamini, Sankranti by Sheela

Singh, Suwa Raut Nacha by Shanti. An impressive English Drama "Impact of Social Media" portraying how the social media is affecting student's life directed by Rita Tah, Vijayashri, Varsha and Harshita enthralled the audience. A dance drama "Kalyugi Bachche" based on par-

enting was organized by Shubhangi, Harshita and Vandana Sharma. The importance of teachers was presented through a group dance guided by Reshmi Deshmukh. A special thanks to Meeta Shukla and Akhilesh Kashyap for stage decoration.

To continue the charm of the evening the programme followed with the Ramp Walk (Bride and groom) directed by Savita Anil and Inderjeet Kaur; Hindi Drama (Dakiye Ki Kahani) directed by Priyanka, Neelam, Snigdha, Joshi and Vanaja, dance (Rang De Basanti) directed by Sarojini and Nandita, Teri Mitti Me Mil Java (Group dance) direct-

ed by Rupa and Vanaja, patriotic dance (Aisa Desh Hai Mera) directed by Amina and Prema. The group dance of classes III to V was choreographed by Reshmi Deshmukh. A special thanks to Meeta Shukla and Akhilesh Kashyap for stage decoration.

The event was successfully conducted under the able guidance of Harish Chandra Chhatwani, Head Mistress Sobha Nair & Usha Suresh. The school Head Mistress Sobha Nair proposed the vote of thanks. The event was ably conducted by Anita Verma, Roshni, Sikha Verma, Joshi Mary, V Harshita and Master Krish. The programme concluded with the National Anthem.

Ch'garhia Olympics to be organised every year: CM

To promote local traditional Ch'garhia games

Makes announcement for awards to be given to top three at cluster, block, district, divisional and state-level sports competitions

CM inaugurates state-level Ch'garhia Olympics



CM made a declaration to present prizes to top three winners in the cluster, block, district, divisional and state-level competitions of Chhattisgarhia Olympics.

CM started the state-level Kabaddi competitions with a toss. In this inaugural function, Minister for Sports & Youth Welfare Umesh Patel, Food Minister Amarjeet Bhagat, Chairman CHB Kuldeep Juneja, Mayor RMC Ejaz Debhar, Chairman Chhattisgarh Tourism Board Atal Shrivastava, Chairman

Chhattisgarh Yuwa Aayog Jitendra Mudaliar were present.

Addressing the divisional-level sports winners at the stadium, CM said that it is in order to preserve the sporting art in traditional Chhattisgarhi and to take it forward that this Olympic has been started. There is lot of enthusiasm among the people of the state for this Olympics and in this right from children, to elders including women and youth took part with great enthusiasm. A good atmosphere related to traditional sports got created

in the villages and even women took part in these sports in large number. The women who went to inlaws place after marriage, also participated in these sports. CM informed that in the 'Bhent-Mulaquat' in Gram Mulmula of Janjgir-Champa district, a 40 year old woman came along with 'Gedi' and informed that she is winner in this sport and added that it should be organised every year. CM informed that Chhattisgarhia Olympics started on 6 Oct and in this a young girl of 6 yr took part in the 'Fugadi' and a 65 year old woman ran in the 'Gedi competition'.

Minister for Sports & Youth Welfare Umesh Patel in his welcome speech said that it on CM's initiative that the traditional sports of rural areas which were vanishing have been restarted through this Chhattisgarhia Olympics. It is under CM's leadership that Chhattisgarhia culture is being promote

and under this with holidays on Teej and other local festivals, all these are being organised in enthusiastic manner.

25 lakh individuals took part at rural level, 1.30 in urban level

Additional Chief Secretary Sports & Youth Welfare Renu Pillai informed that in this state-level competition, around 1900 players are participating and this will go on till Jan 10, 2023. From rural areas, more than 25 lakh individuals take part in this Olympics and around 1.30 lakh from urban areas. She informed that sports like 'Fugadi', 'Billas', 'Bhanwara', 'Bati', 'Kabaddi', is being organised in Balbir Singh Juneja stadium. In the outdoor stadium, sports like 'Sankhali', 'Rassakasi', 'Langadi', 'Pitthul', 'Gedi Daud' is being organised at Sapre School sports like 'Kho-kho', Gilli-danda and at Swamy Vivekanand Stadium Kota, long jump and 100 mt race is being organised.

FLOWER EXHIBITION



Flowers, fruits and vegetables of different varieties are on display at the two-day Flower-Fruit, Veg exhibition at Gandhi Garden here on Sunday.

Clash between Congress and BJP workers

Raipur, Jan 08: National Students Union of India-a student wing of Congress has come out in support of development of 'Youth Hub'. To this end a foot march was taken out on Sunday. Meanwhile report has come about clash between workers of NSUI and BJYM. The situation was brought under

control after police intervention. BJP is staging protest demonstration against development of Youth Hub near Science College here. Former Minister Rajesh Munat and several other BJP leaders are on indefinite dharna in protest against development of Youth Hub.

Review meeting of district planning committee on 10th Raipur, Jan 08: The meeting of the District Planning Committee is going to be held on January 10 at 1 pm in the Red Cross Building, Collectorate premises under the chairmanship of In-Charge Minister Ravindra Choubey. Land use modification in layer-one, two and three will be discussed in detail under the Nava Raipur Atal Nagar Vikas Yojana year 2031 in the meeting.

Millet be included in the grains distributed under the 'NFSA': Baghel

Writes to PM State govt be allowed to collect millet crops at the minimum support price

Raipur, Jan 08: Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel has written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging him to take initiative to promote the production and consumption of millet crops and to make it a mass movement. In the letter, the Chief Minister has asked for inclusion of 20 to 25 percent quantity of millet crops in subsidized food grains being distributed under the 'National Food Security Act', mid-day meal program, nutrition food provided by the Women and Child Development Department

and subsidized food grains being given to the students of ashram-hostels.

Baghel in his letter to Prime Minister has called for decision regarding the collection of Millet crops at the minimum support price. He asked for providing Millet to the State Governments at a subsidized rate for use in schemes related to grain distribution and nutritional food. The Chief Minister has written in the letter that on the initiative of the Government of India, the year 2023 has been declared as the 'International Millet Year' by the United Nations.

Millet crops can play an important role in controlling anemia and malnutrition. Unfortunately, due to the lack of marketing system in the past years, there has been a decrease in the production of millet crops in the country, he said.

Giving information about the measures to promote millet crops in Chhattisgarh, Baghel informed about establishment of 'Millet Mission' to promote the production of millet crops in Chhattisgarh.

Arrangements have been made for collection of 'Kodo, Kutki and Ragi', produced in the state with declaration of a minimum support price of Rs. 10,000, he said, adding that arrangements have also been made for their marketing. An input subsidy of Rs 9,000 per acre is also being given to millet growers in the state, he said, adding that in no state of the country, so much assistance is being given to the producers of millet crops. With all such measures, the area and production of millet crops have increased more than two times in the state in the last two years, he added.

Six in theft case nabbed, jewellery seized



Sakti, Jan 08: Sakti police has nabbed six accused involved in Rs 6 lakh theft case from a house in Gram Sarkara under Malkharouda thana. The accused have broken the lock of the main gate and all four rooms and ran away with jewellery and cash worth Rs 5.89 lakh. The police had filed case against unknown and taken the matter under investigation. Four suspects were taken into arrest and seriously interrogated and after which all four accepted the crime. During interrogation

the accused informed that on intervening night of Jan-3-4, they broke open the lock of abandoned house and ran away with all the cash and jewellery. To sell the jewellery, the accused Gaurishankar Gavel (42) was handed over the entire lot. He sold the stolen jewellery to one Rajendra Kumar Soni (55) under Kusmunda thana area of Korba district. Accused RK Soni is having a jewellery shop in Anand Nagar in the name of RK Jewellers.

It was as per statement by Gaurishankar Gavel, RK Soni was taken into arrest and along with his four friends of Gaurishankar viz. Bhupesh Sahu (21), Prem Lal Sahu (38), Bunty Sahu (21), and Rahul Sahu (28) and all accused are from Sarkara village.

Chhattisgarh Cong slams Shah for crime, corruption remarks against Baghel govt at Korba rally

Raipur, Jan 08: The Congress slammed Union Home Minister Amit Shah for claiming on Saturday that the Bhupesh Baghel government in Chhattisgarh had made progress only in the rising number of crimes against women as well as corruption. Shah was speaking at a Bharatiya Janata Party rally in Korba, some 215 kilometers from here, earlier in the day. Hitting back, Sushil Anand Shukla, head of the state Congress' communication wing, said, "Union Minister Shah has insulted the mothers and sisters of Chhattisgarh by making false statements

during his speech in Korba. Shah said cases of rape have increased in the state but the NCRB (National Crime Records Bureau) data released by his own department shows rape cases have halved after the Congress was elected to power." "The state has reported a decline of 80 per cent in the incidents of Naxalite violence. How can a person occupying such an important post lie," Shukla asked.

While Shah attributed availability of rice in Chhattisgarh to 'Chaur Wale Baba', the Congress leader Shukla blamed 'Chaur Wale Baba' for scam of Rs 36,000 crore in Civil

Supplies Corporation. Amit Shah should study that after the formation of the Congress government in Chhattisgarh, everyone, rich and poor, gets cheap rice, Shukla said, adding that ration cards of 65 lakh people have been made in Chhattisgarh. The people of Chhattisgarh have not forgotten the 15 years of BJP's corruption and misrule, he said. Why Amit Shah remained silent on the election promises of the Modi government?, he asked. While Modi government is about to complete nine years, yet the public is tired of dreaming of 'Acche Din' (good days).

IAS cadre review in state pending with Centre

Last review done in 2016 and provision for review to be done every 5 yrs

Raipur, Jan 08: The proposal of cadre review in order to increase the number of posts of IAS officers in the state is still pending with the central government for last two years. The state government has already sent its proposal for cadre review to sanction new posts of IAS officers. The last cadre review in Chhattisgarh was done in 2016 and there is provision to review cadre every five years.

Presently there are total of 197 posts of IAS sanctioned for Chhattisgarh and after cadre review, the quota for direct recruitment and promotion will also increase and it will directly benefit the officers from State Administrative Services (SAS).

On the other hand, State Administrative Services (SAS) officers' Association

is demanding IAS cadre review soon for last many years, so that the state-level officers will get chance of promotion.

Ch'garh demands 8.5% hike The Officers of IAS in Chhattisgarh government have demanded 8.5% hike in the cadre. Few days back in the video-conferencing meeting with DOPT and UPSC, the objective behind demand for this hike was explained. So far the cadre review of IAS officers in Chhattisgarh has been done thrice. In view of formation of new districts and administrative units, proposal for demand of hike of 8.5% (around 24 new posts) has been given.

Shortage of IAS officers The shortage of IAS officers in Chhattisgarh is being felt for long. Out of total 197 posts of IAS officers in state, so far only 167 are employed and more than a dozen officers serving in the Centre under central deputation or inter-state services. At present 26 posts of IAS officers are lying vacant in the state.

It is need of hour to nurture humans connection with nature: CM

CM inaugurates flower, fruit and vegetable exhibition Organized at the Gandhi-Nehru Udyan Raipur

Raipur, Jan 08: It is the need of the hour that we nurture our connection with nature, said Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Sunday. Recalling the coronavirus pandemic situation, he said that people in urban areas were more affected by the Coronavirus, while people connected to nature were less affected by the deadly virus. After recovering from Covid, now people have become more health conscious.

He was addressing the inaugural programme of the three-day flower, fruit, vegetable exhibition and competition organized at Gandhi-Nehru Udyan in Raipur. On this occasion, he visited various stalls of the exhibition. A beautiful exhibition of colorful flowers, fruits, vegetables and medicinal plants has been put up here.

This exhibition has been organized by 'Prakriti Ki Ore Society Raipur', Department of Horticulture, Indira



Gandhi Agricultural University, Jindal Steel & Power Limited, in collaboration with Raipur Municipal Corporation.

Chief Minister boosted the morale of the organizers saying that people are having a pleasant experience in this exhibition for years because of your hard work and dedication. There are many new things to know and understand for nature lovers through this exhibition. After taking a look at the exhibition, Chief Minister Shri Baghel said that various species of trees and plants ranging in age from 5 to 50 years, bonsai, gooseberry, lemon, greens and vegetables including the

48-year-old banyan tree has been displayed in this exhibition. He added that with a little effort, fruits and vegetables useful for the house can be grown on the roofs of our houses. There is a special attachment with the trees planted by oneself.

On this occasion, the Chief Minister presented mementos and certificates to Smt. Meghna Jain Tadela in the large garden category, Swati Shukla in medium garden category, Alka Bhargava in small garden category, Bharti Bhaskar in terrace garden category, Vivek Gautam for best garden. He also released the yearbook of Krishna Public School.

Divyang Sadhna Dhand, director of Kala Sadhna Sansthan, presented her sketch to the Chief Minister. Medicinal plants have also been displayed in the exhibition by the Medicinal Plants Board.

Culture Minister Amarjeet Bhagat, Chairman CHB Kuldeep Juneja, CM's Agriculture Advisor Pradeep Sharma were also present on the occasion as special guests. The welcome speech was given by Daljit Bagga, President of Prakriti Ki Ore Society. The Chief Minister honored the organizers and judges of this exhibition and competition by presenting mementos

Polling for vacant posts of panchayat today

Raipur, Jan 08: Voting will be held on January 9 for one post of panch and sarpanch in district panchayat Abhanpur, two posts of panchayat in Dharsinwa district, one district panchayat member in Tilda, one post of panchayat and three posts of sarpanch in Arang district of Chhattisgarh. The voting process for the election will run from 7 am to 3 pm. A total of 32 polling stations have been set up for this. The government

has declared a public holiday on this day in all government institutions and offices in the respective areas. On the instructions of Collector and District Election Officer Dr Sarveshwar Bhure, training has been given with formation of polling teams at the district level. Polling station-wise sector officers and sector magistrates have also been appointed. A total of nine routes have been fixed for conducting the elections.

Three-day sports festival concludes

At Salem English Medium School

Raipur, Jan 08: Three-day sports festival of Salem English School concluded here on Saturday. On this occasion the chief guest was Rev Ajay Umesh James, Bishop CG Diocese Chairman CDBE and Idrish Gandhi President CG Urdu Academy and Sunil Martin was the guest of honour.

In the beginning of the programme, the Choir girls presented welcome song under guidance of Ankit

Belson and P Solomon. Thereafter Umesh James booted the morale of students towards sports.

In the cultural programme, girls of Class 1 and 9th performed 'Bhangada' and girls of 9th and 12th also presented Chhattisgarhi dance and it enthralled the audience. Odiya dance was presented by students under guidance of teacher Rupali Yadav. Variety of sports competitions marked closure of the sports festival and prizes were distributed to the winners.

Department, staff play a key role in conservation of forest: Akbar

Forest Minister Akbar congratulated 66 officers promoted to the post of Forest Kshetrapal in Star Alankaran prog

Training certificates distributed to newly appointed 8 forest rangers

Raipur, Jan 08: Forest and Climate Change Minister Mohammad Akbar congratulated the 66 officers who were promoted from deputy forest ranger to forest rangers in the Star Alankaran program organized at his residence office in Shankar Nagar, Raipur today. During this, he also provided training certificates to the newly appointed 08 trainee forest rangers in the department after completing their training. On this occasion, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief of Forest Force Sanjay Shukla, and senior officials including



Chhattisgarh State Renewable Energy Development Agency (CREDA) member Kanhaiya Agarwal were present.

Addressing the Star Alankaran program, Forest Minister Akbar said that Chhattisgarh is a rich state in terms of forest wealth, and the department and its staff have an important contribution towards the conservation, promotion and development of forests. In view of this, during the last four years, many important decisions have been taken by our state government in

the interest of the department as well as the staff working here. Under this, the work of promotion of officers and employees in the department is being done continuously in regular order and all the works are being completed within the stipulated time.

Forest Minister said that as a result of increased work efficiency and better implementation of government schemes in Chhattisgarh, the image of the Forest Department is in better shape and is continuously improving. During the

last four years in the Forest Department, not only the conservation and promotion of forests has been done, but continuous work is also being done in the direction of the progress of the forest dwellers here. This is the reason why Chhattisgarh has consistently topped the country in the collection and processing of minor forest produce. During this period, Forest Minister Mr. Akbar also emphasized on the department's contribution towards restricting human movement in the elephant-menace-affected areas. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief of Forest Force Shukla also addressed the program.

On this occasion Addl. PCCF Kaushalendra Kumar, Premkumar, Arun Pandey, CCF J.R.Nayak, R.K.Pandey, Jt. Secretary Forest Devendra Bhardwaj and DFO Vishwesh Jha and State Office bearers of Forest Service Association, Ranger Association, Forest Employees Association were present.

One lakh pensioners of Ch'garh need relief from Section 49

Pensioners from all over the country in Raipur for their demands

Raipur, Jan 08: Pensioners said that the state government is not giving relief in dearness allowance and is not even repealing section 49. One lakh pensioners of the state are still waiting to get relief in this issue. Pensioners said that Madhya Pradesh government has also proposed to repeal Section 49, but no decision has been taken in Chhattisgarh so far. The pensioners told that they should get complete exemption in income tax, along with this exemption should also be given in train-bus fare. Along with this, the triennial national convention of the Indian State Pensioners' Federation began at Niranjan Dharamshala, VIP Road, on various issues. Friday was the last day of this session. Association General Secretary Virendra Namdev said that in this convention, a resolution was passed in the interest



of pensioners for necessary action from the Central and State Governments. He told that there are five lakh pensioners in Madhya Pradesh and one lakh in Chhattisgarh and pensioners of both the regions are worried. In the proposal in the interest of pensioners, mainly complete exemption in income tax, abolition of section 49 for distribution of pensionary obligations pending for the last 22 years between Madhya Pradesh and

Chhattisgarh, exemption in rail-bus travel, retirement in June-December. The person should be given the benefit of increment, death grant, eligibility for additional pension at the age of 65, exemption from income tax, five percent reservation in land-building-flat allotment. In the national convention of pensioners, the former Chief Minister of the state Dr. Raman Singh said that the state government is doing injustice by withholding dearness re-

lief to the pensioners. The state government is not serious about repealing Section 49. On this occasion, the two-day program was inaugurated by Chhattisgarh Public Relations Retired Additional Director Subhash Mishra, President of National Indian Pensioners Federation CH Suresh, Chhattisgarh State President of Indian State Pensioners Federation JP Mishra and others were present.

Small and medium income families to get houses at affordable prices

CHB fulfilled the promise of 'dream-home'

Registration for booking houses began on Jan 4, 2023

Raipur, Jan 08: According to the instructions of the Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, eight new schemes were started at the 72nd Board meeting on 28 December 2022 by the Chhattisgarh Housing Board (CHB) as an attempt to provide the residents of the state with better and affordable housing, where the registration for 6 big cities in the state began on 4 January 2023. Now people can get housing at affordable rates after registering.

The 6 cities where the housing scheme has started are as follows: Rajiv Nagar Awas Yojana in Aarang in Raipur district, Rajiv Nagar Awas Yojana in Selud Patan in Durg, Samanya Awas Yojana in Godhi Tamnar in Raigarh,



Atal Awas Yojana in Machewa in Mahasamund district, Samanya Awas Yojana in Mahamaya Nagar in Ratanpur.

The Chairman Chhattisgarh Housing Board Kuldeep Juneja said that as they had recently promised to provide good housing at affordable rates to the state's residents, they have started the Rajiv Nagar Awas Yojana, under which the construction of cellular buildings has started, including independent houses in Selud Patan in district Durg and Arang in Raipur district, Samanya Awas Yojana in Badhamuda, Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi, independent houses in Raigarh

district. People can click on the website

www.cghb.gov.in and book homes at affordable rates. They can also call the toll free number, 1800-121-6313, to receive more information on this matter. For all these schemes, online application forms will be filled out for the booking of homes, and the registration fee will be paid through a payment gateway. Online applications will be accepted until 31 March 2023 through the website www.cghb.gov.in.

It is noteworthy that the Chhattisgarh Housing Board was honored by the Scoch Group in the Low Cost Housing field on 19 December 2022. On the subject of the Chhattisgarh Housing Board receiving the Scotch Award in the field of Low Cost Housing, Board Chairman Mr. Kuldeep Singh Juneja said that for people with lower income groups, more such schemes will be developed, so that the state's residents can get more affordable and better housing.

CAF & DRG foiled Maoists plan

25 kg IED recovered in the middle of the road

Near Munda Talab between Bechupal-Atepal on Nelsnar-Mirtur-Gangalore main road

Safely removed from the spot by the team of BDS Mirtur and deactivated

Bijapur, Jan 08: On Jan 7 on the Nelsnar-Mirtur-Gangalore road, the team of DRG, Thana Mirtur and Camp Etepal CAF 9/C Company had come out on Area Domination, Road Patrolling.

During the operation of road patrolling and demining, a 25 kg IED planted by the Maoists in the middle of the road near Munda Talab between Bechupal-Atepal was recovered by the security forces. The IED was connected to the command system whose switch was placed 100 meters away.

The special thing in this



IED planted by the Maoists was that the IED and the electric wire were wrapped in carbon so that the IED could not be detected by the metal detector; the alertness of the security forces, the intelligence recovered the IED, which was recovered on the spot by BDS Mirtur and it was deactivated by the team.

Instructions given to stop mud excavation

In Gram Panchayats of Malgaon Chhui mine

Instructions given thru video conferencing

Jagdalpur, Jan 08: On December 2, 2022, an unpleasant accident occurred due to sudden caving of land in village Malgaon of Bakavand development block of Bastar district. In this accident, 6 people died and 3 villagers were injured. A team was formed to investigate the matter. A meeting of the team formed in connection with the investigation of the said incident was organized through video conferencing on Saturday. Dr. RP Mishra of the



Central Pollution Control Board, Collector Chandan Kumar, SSP Jitendra Meena were present in the meeting organized under the chairmanship of Addl. Chief Secretary, Government of Chhattisgarh, Housing and Environment under the order given by the National Green Tribunal.

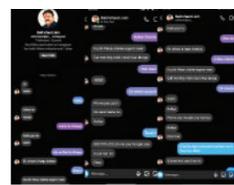
During the discussion in the meeting, instructions were given to stop the excavation of mud in the gram panchayats. Instructions have been

given to take standard measures of Mineral Act, Labor Act, Environment rules and safety in the sanctioned mining areas of Gram Panchayats, so that there is no loss of life and property due to any untoward accident in future. In any Gram Panchayat under District Bastar, soil touched by the villagers is excavated, then concerned Tehsildar, nearest Police Station, Mineral Department or mobile number 7587343963 have been asked to inform.

MLA's Instagram ID hacked

MLA Rekhchand Jain files complaint with cyber cell

Jagdalpur, Jan 08: Along with the common people, now VIPs are also coming under the attack of cyber thugs in Bastar. The latest case has come to the fore of Jagdalpur MLA and Parliamentary Secretary Rekhchand Jain. His Instagram ID was hacked by cyber thugs. After this,



the cyber fraud started demanding money by sending messages to Jain's followers.

Some conscious people informed about this to MLA Jain. As soon as Jain received the informa-

tion, he complained about the matter in the cyber cell of Jagdalpur and appealed to the people through social media that if any such message reaches him, it should not be considered correct and should be reported on Instagram's ID.

MLA Rekhchand Jain told that while complaining about the matter in cyber cell, he has asked to take action against the guilty thugs while recovering the ID.

BJP will celebrate Andhra-cultural festival on Jan 22



Jagdalpur, Jan 08: While implementing the new action plan to strengthen the Bharatiya Janata Party organization and increase its mass base, the BJP along with the Andhra community will celebrate the Andhra-Cultural Festival on Jan 22. In which along with cultural activities, prominent people of Andhra society will also be honored.

A meeting was called at the BJP district office to finalize the preparations for the event in the presence of State Convenor of

'Ek Bharat, Shrestha Bharat' Action Plan Shrinivas Rao Maddi and BJP District President Rup Singh Madavi. In which discussions were held on holding an early meeting with the leaders of Andhra society and giving suggestions and advice to the program in a grand manner.

State convenor Srinivas Rao Maddi told that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the One India, Best India action plan is being implemented to unite and strength-

en the country. People of different societies reside in India, all have their own social and cultural superiority. This is a program to connect with and glorify them, to spread the message that we are one. In the first form, it has been decided to organize cultural and social events with Andhra society. Yogendra Paday, Ramashray Singh, B Jairam, Narasimha Rao, Suresh Gupta, Avinash Srivastava, Alok Awasthi and others were present in the preparatory meeting held at the BJP office.

Echocardiography test service commenced in the district hospital



Jashpurnagar, Jan 08: To provide relief to cardiovascular patients of the district, An echocardiography machine has been installed in the Jashpur district hospital under the guidance of Collector Dr. Ravi Mittal. Earlier, cardiovascular patients of the district had to go to Medical College Raipur for this test but after the installation of an echocardiography machine, the facility of echocardiography test has been made available in the district hospital Jashpur, due to which the heart related patients and especially children can avail quick medical test facility of echocardiography in their district itself. It is noteworthy that as

per the instructions of Collector Dr. Ravi Mittal, Echocardiography test services will be provided to children with heart disease on the first and third Thursday of every month under the guidance of specialist doctors namely Dr. Praveen and Dr. S.L. Siddharth.

Adult cardiovascular patients can also avail the facility of echocardiography test services on these days. On the first Thursday after the commencement of this test facility, 11 patients have been registered in the district hospital and a total of 10 patients have been undergone echo test and 3 children have been identified for surgery.

Maoists kill member of the Koya tribe

Konta, Jan 08: On the night of Jan 4, 2022, members of the Konta Area Committee of the Maoist party brutally killed a member of the tribe named Soyam Subbaiah of Koya caste living in Burkankota village. Maoists have a habit of leaving letters after killing. The letter was, as usual, stamped with the dead man as a police informer. In fact, the police system does not have an informant system and there are no informants as individuals.



In the recent past, there have been incidents of not bowing down to the Maoists' taunts and abuses, sometimes opposing the Maoists and somewhere turning against the force. Realizing that the Maoist party does not exist in Manya, they are drawn to a situation where they cannot believe how vulnerable the party is, even their shadow.

What officer says

All you Maoist militia members realize one thing that Maoist party will employ you and will kill you in the end like they killed Poyam Subbaiah. One day you too will be called an informer. Police appeals to understand this truth.

Satish Kumar (IPS) - SP, Alluri Sitamaraju District, Paderu.

Continuous action on ticket brokers by RPF

In 2022, 90 cases of ticket brokering were registered and 96 ticket brokers were arrested

Central Chronicle News

Bilaspur, Jan 09: The railway administration has provided the facility of self - booking of travel tickets from personal ID at home through IRCTC to get rid of the queues at the ticket counters and to provide quick tickets and promote the cashless system.

Facility In order to turn it into a profit, some people contact ticket brokers to make train tickets with their personal IDs and sell them at a higher price, especially during festive seasons and summer vaca-



tions. With an aim to check these ticket brokers and to stop this illegal trade, under the guidance of the Inspector General - cum - Principal Chief Security Commissioner and under

the direction of the Senior Divisional Security Commissioner, all the RPF post in-charges of Bilaspur Division are conducting regular operations against illegal ticket bro-

kers.

In this sequence, on 29.12.2022, Sujeet Kumar, the director of a shop called Suvidha Service of Khongapani Chirmiri, was arrested and action was taken under Section 143 of the Railway Act after he was found to be trading in illegal tickets. This action was taken by RPF post Manendragarh.

It is noteworthy that during the year - 2022 Railway Security Force Bilaspur Division conducted a continuous campaign against those illegally trading railway travel tickets and registered a total of 90 cases under section 143 of the Railway Act totaling 2825 travel tickets (valued at Rs 2886068.00). A total of 96 accused have been arrested and taken into custody.

Chherchera festival celebrated in every village

Central Chronicle News

Arang, Jan 08: The first festival of Chhattisgarh and the symbol of agricultural culture, the festival of Chherchera Punni were celebrated with pomp in almost every village. Meanwhile, there was a lot of enthusiasm especially among the children and youth regarding the Chherchera festival and children and youth groups went from house to house asking for Chherchhera.

The people of the house where the children reached kept donating paddy and money according to their own accord. There is no restriction of any caste religion on this festival, this festival is considered very holy and auspicious in the State and is a defining festival of Chhattisgarhi folk culture from urban areas to



rural areas.

This festival is a symbol of mutual brotherhood and affection and it is believed that donating is an act of great virtue and with this belief, farmers celebrate Chherchera festival to participate in great virtue by donating their paddy. As per tradition, when the

children go to ask donations, they sing in a loud voice "Chheri ke chhera chherchhera... Mai kothi ke dhan la herhera". After listening to the song, the people of the house understand that someone has come to beg for chherchhera, and accordingly give donations. Farmers believe

that by donating, happiness and prosperity remains in their house and there is a belief in rural areas that in ancient times, where the kings used to donate money, the common people used to donate paddy and rice kept in their storerooms to welcome prosperity.

04 trains to be operated by diverted routes

NI work for commissioning of double line in Medtard - Jodhpur rail section of Jodhpur Division

Central Chronicle News

Bilaspur, Jan 08: Pre - NI / NI work will be carried out for double line work between Medta Road - Pipad Road - Rai Ka Bagh Palace stations of Jodhpur Division of North Western Railway. As a result of this the following 04 trains related to South East Central Railway will run on di-

verted routes:

1. On 08th and 15th February 2023 Puri bound train number 20813 Puri - Jodhpur Express will run via Phulera - Ajmer - Marwad - Jodhpur route.
2. On 11th and 18th February 2023, train number 20814 Jodhpur - Puri Express departing from Dhapur will be diverted and will run via Dhapur - Marwar - Ajmer - Fulera.
3. Train number 20843 Bilaspur - Bhagat Ki Kothi Express depart-

ing from Bilaspur on 06, 07, 13 and 14 February 2023 will run via diverted route Phulera - Ajmer - Marwar - Bhagat Ki Kothi.

4. Train No. 20844 Bhagat Ki Kothi - Bilaspur Express departing from Bhagat Ki Kothi on February 09, 11, 16 and 18, 2023 will be diverted via Bhagat Ki Kothi - Marwar - Ajmer - Phulera.

Central Chronicle News

Gunderdehi, Jan 08: under the direction of Inspector General of Police Durg Range Durg Dr. Anand Chhabra, under the guidance of Superintendent of Police Balod Dr. Jitendra Kumar Yadav and under the supervision of Addl. SP Harish Rathore and Somsai Maurya DSP under "Mission Purna Shakti" women commandos were reactivated by organizing a camp in Gunderdehi police station premises.

The women commandos were reactivated by placing a batch of "Mission Purna Shakti Mahila Commandos" in police station Gunderdehi, who will

join forces with the police to take action against people consuming liquor in public places in their respective villages.

As per information, Women commandos in the police station area are to be given training from time to time regarding prevention of crime related to women and cyber awareness regarding legal rights.

In her address to the C o m m a n d o e s , Padmashree Shamshad Begum (Women Commando Patron) told in her address that women commandos were formed to avoid and apprehend small crimes like drinking alcohol, drug addiction in the villages of the region. Addressing the women

Women commandos reactivated under Mission Purna Shakti



commandos, Addl. SP Harish Rathore said that in the past there has been a special contribution by

the women commandos in keeping an eye on the criminal activities in the village and at present,

making women commando's active will play a pivotal role in curbing crimes.

SP Dr. Jitendra Yadav, while addressing the women commandos, said that crimes against women and children related to domestic violence, dowry harassment, cyber crime, and cyber fraud, human trafficking all will be preliminarily handled by the commandos' assisting the department.

In this program, Inspector Madhusudan Nag, Inspector Dileshwar Chandravanshi Cyber Cell in-charge, Sanjeevan Sahu, Netram Pal, P.R. Rumal Churendra Police Station Gunderdehi staff and 200 women commandos were present.

Vigilance of the police brings missing boys home

Central Chronicle News

Dongargarh, Jan 08: Three minor children (boys) missing from Village Khallari for the last few days were successfully traced by the Police Department and its timely vigilance.

According to information, the family members of the children had written a report in Dongargarh police station and after registering the report, the vigilance of the Dongargarh Police Department helped to trace the three children and handed them over to their relatives.

According to information provided by Dongargarh police Sohaga Bai Kanwar husband Ramu Ram Kanwar age 50 years Sakin Khallari po-



lice station Dongargarh came to the police station on January 3 and filed a report that on December 31 at around 02:30 both her son and another child of

the village, all three residents of Khallari have gone somewhere without informing.

In view of the seriousness of the case, the infor-

mation of the incident was immediately reported on the direction of the senior officers, under the guidance of the station in-charge Dongargarh

Inspector Surendra Swarnakar, the missing three minor children were continuously searched.

During the address search, on January 6, they were reported to be in the empty storage room of village Mundgaon, and all the three minor children were recovered safely and handed to their parents.

On enquiry, it was found that the children left the house of their own free will without informing their parents, and wandered to village Dhandongari Mandai, village Bodela Mandai and lived in parawat (Husk storage room) in village Rangkathera.

The role of Dhannalal Sinha, Mahadev Sahu, Sanjay Yada, Manoj Harmukh in the case proceedings is commendable.

Farmers not getting funds under PMKSNY

Even after updation of their Aadhar

Central Chronicle News

Dhamtari, Jan 08: Even after Aadhar verification, the eligible 16000 farmers are not getting the amount under the PM Kissan Samman Nidhi Yojana (PMKSNY) in the district. There is no update in their account, even after submitting the application. In such conditions they are made to wander to the office of the agriculture department and the bank.

On Thursday, when farmer Dinesh Sahu, Harinarayan Patel, Vishwanath Sahu reached the Collectorate, they informed that Aadhar verification has been carried out along with updating of

their maps, Kh. No., Bank's passbook at the Choice Centre.

In the beginning, the amount was getting transferred into their account, but right since they got the Aadhar updation done the amount is not being credited. If it is for this reason that they are made to wander to agriculture department and the Bank.

It is notable here that in order to strengthen the economic conditions of small and medium farmers, the central government had started PMKSNY. Under this the farmers who are having less than 5 acre land, will be getting total of Rs 6000 per year in three different in-

stallments. As per the 10th agriculture survey, there are about 1.55 lakh such small farmers and out of which 94,927 are registered farmers and out of which 77,817 farmers are eligible for this scheme.

What officer says
Under the PM Kissan Samman Nidhi Yojana the registered farmers on updation of their Aadhar will be getting the amount credited. At present payment is being made on behalf of the Aadhar. Monesh Sahu, Dy. Director Agriculture Deptt.

Clash Over 'Religious Conversion'

Children living in shelter camp worried about education

Tikeshwar Patel

Narayanpur, Jan 08: Mohanti Salaam, a Class 9 student, has been living in a shelter camp in tribal-dominated Narayanpur district for the last 21 days after a clash between members of two communities over alleged religious conversion in her remote Borawand village.

She lost her books and clothes when her family was allegedly evicted from the village following the clash, which took place amid the discord brewing for some time between the Christian and non-Christian communities in the district. Salaam says she wants to pursue studies and return to her village to be able to go school. She is among more than

30 children living in the shelter camp set up in the Indoor Stadium in Narayanpur city after their families were allegedly forced to leave their villages for converting to Christianity. This is now affecting their studies.

"We have been living in the Indoor Stadium since December 18. We were evicted from our village. We have lost our books and clothes. I keep thinking how I will get back to my school. I want to study," Salaam told PTI. Eleven school children from Borawand village are living with their families in the shelter camp.

On December 18, 2022, a large number of tribal Christian families from 14 villages in Benoor area of Narayanpur staged a

protest in front of the district collector's office, claiming they were assaulted by miscreants and evicted from their villages for following the Christian faith. The district administration had then assured to take necessary action into the matter and shifted them to the temporary shelter and arranged basic amenities for them.

Though they have got shelter, their mental agony is far from over. The parents of the children living in the shelter camp are worried how the kids will be able to continue their education.

"The future of our children is at risk. They saw our houses being vacated. They are not able to attend school. They hear keeping that people (tribal

Christians) are being driven away from their houses and it scares them," said Narasbati Netam, a woman living in the shelter camp. "We are worried about the disruption of their studies," said Netam, who hails from Bhatpal village.

At the same time, she lauded the children for showing resilience at such a difficult time and helping each other to recover from this challenging phase. The children who are in higher classes have been teaching the younger kids with whatever study material is available in the shelter camp, she said.

Netam said activities like learning poems and playing badminton in the shelter camp have been helping the children to

overcome the trauma. "But how long will it go? The administration should take immediate steps to ensure our return to our native places," she added.

The families living in the shelter camp are mostly from Kudargaon, Borawand, Bhatpal and Bhandapal villages in Benoor area. Ajay Kumeti, a teacher at a government primary school in Kudargaon village, said around 10 children are not attending the school since the clash took place last month.

These children have shifted to Narayanpur city along with their families, he said. Narayanpur Collector Ajeet Vasant said the district administration has been making efforts to ensure the return of the af-

ected families to their villages and at the same time arrangements are being made for the studies of children in the shelter camp.

"I have instructed education department officials to send local school teachers to the camp. The priority is to address the issue of studies of students who are in Classes 10 and 12 and have to appear for the board exams," Vasant told PTI on Sunday.

At the same time, the administration is holding discussions with members of both the communities and the effort is to shift these families to their native villages in the next three-four days, he said.

"We have convened a meeting on Monday of local public representa-

tives, village heads, Gaita (priest) of village in tribal areas) of 68 village panchayats in the district to discuss the situation so that no fresh clash occurs and everyone lives in harmony. After the meeting, villagers living in the shelter camp will be shifted to their homes," he said.

There have been reports of unrest in various villages in Benoor area of the district for the last two months over the issue of alleged religious conversion. On January 2, a church was vandalised and six police personnel, including an IPS officer, were injured, in Narayanpur city during a protest by a group of tribals against the alleged religious conversion in the tribal-dominated area.

Shahid Khan appointed State Gen. Secy.

Of BJP's minorities cell

Balod, Jan 08:

Shahid Khan has been appointed as the State General Secretary of Minorities Cell of BJP for the second time. He has proved that he is a dedicated and hard working worker of BJP. It is notable here that Shahid Khan had been working with ABVP earlier and then in different posts in BJP and fulfilled the responsibilities given. On being appointed as State General Secretary of Minorities Cell, Shahid Khan has expressed gratitude towards all the senior party leaders and said that he would continue to work as per the instructions given by the party. The next target of BJP is to re-establish BJP's government in the state and carry out speedy development of Chhattisgarh and associate more and more persons from the minorities with the BJP. On this appointment, the BJP's leaders have extended greetings to Shahid Khan and this included senior leader Yashwant Jain, Rakesh Yadav, Krishnakant Pawar, Raja Diwan, Leela Sharma, Suresh Nirmalkar, Amit Chopda, Satosh Kaushik, Narendra Sonwani, Pankaj Ahuja, Rakesh Bafna, Mohan Kalihari, Deepak Dewangan and others.



Shahid-Khan

BRIEF



Firefighters douse a fire that broke out at a shop, Janjikar Street, in Mumbai.

Fire

Mumbai: A fire broke that out in a two-storey building in Masjid Bunder area of south Mumbai at 8:15pm on Saturday was extinguished almost three hours later at 11pm, though there were no reports of anyone getting injured, a civic official said.

Plea

New Delhi: A seer has moved the Supreme Court seeking that the crisis in Uttarakhand's Joshimath, where cracks have appeared in hundreds of houses, be declared as a national disaster.

Crisis

Gopeshwar: Eleven more families in Joshimath were moved to safe locations on Saturday as the number of houses developing cracks in the sinking town rose to 603, officials said. The number of families who have so far been evacuated stands at 65 with another 11 moving to temporary relief camps on Saturday from houses that had developed cracks. Chamoli district disaster management officer N K Joshi said.

Crime

New Delhi: A girl in northeast Delhi's north Ghonda area on Saturday allegedly shot at a 50-year-old woman against whose son a case of sexual assault was registered based on her complaint in 2021, police said.

Encounter

Jammu: The army has shot dead two terrorists near the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, officials said on Sunday. The terrorists were killed in the Balakote sector of the district late Saturday, they said.

Ashram flyover closed for traffic

Delhi Police issues traffic advisory

New Delhi, Jan 08 (PTI):

The Delhi Police has issued a traffic advisory suggesting alternate routes for commuters since the Ashram flyover has been closed for traffic for the construction of a connecting road, officials said.

In continuation to the previous advisory on December 30 about the linking of the Ashram flyover with the DND flyway, it has been suggested that commuters coming from C V Raman Marg take a right turn at Taimur Nagar cut, Ring Road to

reach Sarai Kale Khan, NH-24, Ghaziabad and Noida.

Those coming from New Friends Colony, Sukhdev Bihar, Shaheen Bagh, Sarai Julena, and Jamia have been advised to follow Mathura Road, Modi Mill Flyover, Outer Ring Road, Lala Lajpat Rai Marg to reach Lajpat Nagar Market, AIIMS and Dhaura Kuan.

Commuters from Lajpat Nagar, Defence Colony, Jangpura, Bhogal, and CGO Complex have been advised to follow Lala Lajpat Rai Marg, Outer Ring Road, Modi Mill Flyover, Mathura Road, Sarita Vihar, Badarpur and Faridabad, the advisory

said. The advisory further advised motorists from Noida to follow Kalindi Kunj, Jasola and Sarita Vihar, to reach IGI Airport, Outer Ring Road, IIT, and Chirag Delhi. Those coming from IGI Airport, Outer Ring Road, IIT, Chirag Delhi are advised to follow Modi Mill Flyover Mathura Road, Sarita Vihar, Jasola, Kalindi Kunj to reach Noida and Badarpur.

The motorists from Ghaziabad, Noida via NH-24 and the ITO side (Ring Road) are advised to follow Barapullah Flyover to reach Lajpat Nagar, Defence Colony, AIIMS and Dhaura Kuan, the advisory stated.

Delhi Traffic Police has identified the prominent spots and proposed locations for traffic diversion and an adequate number of traffic signages have been affixed there, it said.

A total of 70 traffic police personnel and 16 marshals from PWD have been deployed on the entire stretch. In coordination with the PWD, the works of road re-carpeting, widening, and installation of traffic signal at the Taimur Nagar cut have been done, the advisory said. A contractor had told PTI the work to link the Ashram flyover with the DND Flyway is going on round the clock and will be wrapped up in 45 days.

GANGA VILAS CRUISE



The Ganga Vilas cruise at Ram Rekha Ghat ahead of its flagging off by PM Narendra Modi on Jan. 13, in Buxar district of Bihar, Saturday.

Officer held for 'misusing post'

Oppn parties claim arrest made at cremation ground

Chandigarh, Jan 08 (PTI)

The Vigilance Bureau Saturday said it has arrested S P Singh, the executive director of the Punjab State Industrial Export Corporation (PSIEC), who was booked for allegedly conniving with other officials of the corporation to provide undue benefit to a realtor firm. The Opposition parties slammed the AAP government in the state, claiming Singh was arrested

from the cremation ground in Mohali when he was performing the last rites of his father and veteran journalist N S Parwana. Earlier in the day several political leaders, including Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and his Haryana counterpart Manohar Lal Khattar consoled Parwana's demise. Khattar was present at Parwana's cremation.

A Vigilance Bureau spokesperson said Singh

had been booked for allegedly conniving with other officials of the PSIEC in the case of transferring an industrial plot in violation of norms and causing huge loss to the state exchequer. He would be produced before a court here on Sunday, the spokesperson said. "Highly insensitive and cruel to arrest a son when he was cremating his father. The SAD condemns the AAP government for interfering in the last rites of veteran journal-

ist N S Parwana and arresting his son from the cremation ground," Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal said in a tweet. Punjab Vigilance Bureau had recently registered a case against former minister Sunder Sham Arora, an IAS officer and 10 other government officials for allegedly transferring an industrial plot to a realtor firm and allowing it to establish a township by cutting plots in violation of norms.

'Making every effort to provide adequate power for agricultural activities'

Jaipur, Jan 08 (PTI)

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot Saturday said the Rajasthan government is making every effort to provide adequate electricity for agricultural activities and instructed officials to ensure that power supply to farmers is not affected under any circumstances.

If required, purchase of electricity from power exchange and other sources should be ensured, he said at a meeting to review the status of power supply in the state.

Officials of the electricity department informed the chief minister that the state is not getting additional power supply from the power exchange at present because of the closure of some power generation units in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab and an increase in demand in other states.

They also said that the power demand has also increased since Rajasthan has received no rain this winter so far, due to an increase in the agricultural area and a rise in agricul-

tural power connections after the last Rabi season.

According to an official statement, it was informed in the meeting that the power supply to industries has to be cut to ensure adequate power supply for domestic and agricultural purposes, but this cut will be abolished as soon as power supply becomes normal.

The chief minister urged the industries to follow the instructions of the power companies and cooperate with them in case of power cuts.

End 'mindless compliances': PM Modi

Launches Aspirational Block Programme

New Delhi, Jan 08 (PTI)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday launched the Aspirational Block Programme on the lines of a similar exercise aimed at developing backward districts and asserted that India is focussing on the four pillars of infrastructure, investment, innovation and inclusion to be a developed country.

Chairing the second national conference on chief secretaries from states on its third and last day, Modi said the entire world is looking to India to bring stability to the global supply chain and asked them to take steps for making the MSME sector "global champions" and a part of the global value chain.

He said the country can take full advantage of this

only if states take lead by maintaining focus on quality and making decisions with an "India-first" approach, according to a statement.

The prime minister also called upon the chief secretaries to focus on ending "mindless compliances" and outdated laws and rules.

At a time when India is initiating unparalleled reforms, there is no scope for overregulation and mindless restrictions, he tweeted. Modi said the states should focus on pro-development governance, ease of doing business, ease of living and provision of robust infrastructure.

"We should move towards self-certification, deemed approvals and standardisation of forms," he said, according to a statement.

The prime minister also spoke about the development of both physical and social infrastructure along

PM TO CHIEF SECYS

with a focus on the enhancement of cyber security.

He also tweeted, "With the eyes of the world being on India, combined with the rich talent pool of our youth, the coming years belong to our nation."

"Strengthening our MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) sector is important for the country to become self-reliant and to boost economic growth," Modi said, adding that equally important is to popularise local products.

The prime minister also discussed the significance of 2023 being the International Year of Millets and steps to enhance the popularity of their products.

In his address, the prime minister recalled the development "milestones"

since the last conference in June 2022, citing India getting the presidency of G20, becoming the fifth biggest global economy, rapid registration of new startups, foray of private players in the space sector, launch of National Logistics Policy and the approval of National Green Hydrogen Mission.

To make MSMEs globally competitive, they should have access to finance, technology, market and for skilling, the statement quoting Modi said.

He also spoke about bringing more MSMEs on board the GeM portal.

Discussing the success of the cluster approach in the development of MSMEs, he said the linkage of MSME clusters and self-help groups can be explored for promoting unique local products and

getting GI tags registration for them, associating it with the endeavour of 'one district one product'.

This will give a fillip to the "vocal for local" campaign, Modi said, adding states should identify their best local products and help them attain national and international stature.

He also cited the example of 'Ekta Mall' at the Statue of Unity in Gujarat. Modi emphasised on data security and the criticality of having a secure technology infrastructure for the seamless delivery of essential services. He said states should adopt a strong cyber security strategy and added that this investment is like an insurance for the future.

The prime minister also stressed on development of coastal areas and said the vast Exclusive Economic Zone of the country is equipped with resources and offers tremendous opportunities.

One dead after portion of ground floor collapses

In Delhi's Sadar Bazar

New Delhi, Jan 08 (PTI)

A 35-year-old man died and three were injured after a portion of the ground floor and staircase of a four-storey building collapsed in north Delhi's Sadar Bazar area on Saturday, officials said.

According to fire officials, they received information about the incident at 6.28 pm, following which two fire tenders were rushed to the spot.

Police said a sudden sound and dust with the structural collapse of stairs occurred at an undergarments shop in the Qutub Road area.

"The one injured moved to Hindu Rao Hospital has reportedly succumbed to injuries," Deputy Commissioner of Police

(north) Sagar Singh Kalsi said.

The deceased has been identified as Gulab, a resident of Sitamarhi in Bihar. He was a labourer, who also worked for the owner of the shop, he added. According to an eyewitness, the collapse was accompanied with a blast-like sound, hearing which people started running away from the site.

Another witness named Harjeet Singh Chhbara said, "There was a loud noise, but the reason behind it is not clear. The shop, where it happened, is next to my store. When we came here, there was smoke." A purported CCTV footage of a spot near the incident site showed a momentary jolt caused by the loud noise. It was followed by a cloud of dust. People can also be seen running away from the site after the bang.

CARE FOR BIRDS



A child feeds pigeons at Marina beach, in Chennai, Sunday.

DWMS platform bags top 'Digital India' award

Developed by Digital University Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 08 (PTI): The Digital Workforce Management System (DWMS), developed by a state-run university, on Saturday received the prestigious 'Digital India' platinum icon award.

The DWMS, developed by a team headed Ajith Kumar R, the Director of the Centre for Digital Innovation and Product Development under Digital University Kerala (DUK), received the honour. The award was received by him along with P V Unnikrishnan, member secretary of K-DISC and Riyas P M, Manager of Kerala Knowledge Economy Mission, from President Droupadi Murmu at a function in New Delhi today.

Kerala won the platinum icon award in the category of digital collaboration with startups, a DUK statement said. DWMS is a futuristic platform developed for Kerala Knowledge Economy Mission (KKEM),

a Kerala Development and Innovation Strategic Council (K-DISC) initiative that connects all stakeholders in creating a knowledge-based ecosystem, it said. Kumar said that the DWMS is developed as a 'platform of platforms', which integrates many features like onboarding, profiling, curation of job seekers, skill assessment, and matching.

Other features include knowledge assessment, robotic interview, personality development, English language assessment, e-learning, career counselling and career guidance among others, he said. "DWMS Connect is a highly rated mobile app developed by Digital University, which facilitates these entire features into one app," he added. DWMS allows job seekers to fine-tune their career preferences while presenting the employers technological edge to select the ideal candidate with the right skill set, he said.

Saji Gopinath, Vice Chancellor of Digital University Kerala, said DWMS is a platform of platforms with a multi-layered architecture.

'Bade log hain': PK on Rahul's 'Bharat Jodo Yatra'

Motihari (Bihar), Jan 08 (PTI)

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' on Saturday won grudging praise, couched in sarcasm, from political strategist-turned-activist Prashant Kishor.

The IPAC founder, who is on a padayatra in his home state Bihar, was asked by journalists in Motihari about parallels, if any, he saw between his own effort and the marathon march of Gandhi.

"Bade log hain (they are big people). Compared with them, I am a nobody," said Kishor whose 'Jan Suraj' campaign in Bihar came after a lengthy round of failed negotiations with the top leadership of the Congress, which he had wanted to join and was confident of reviving using his professional skills. "Rahul Gandhi is on a 3,500 km-long march. For me, kilometers do not matter. I have been walking non-stop since October. But I do not want to show it off as evidence of my physical fitness," Kishor

remarked, with thinly veiled sarcasm.

Dubbed an "opportunist" by the political mainstream in Bihar, the former strategist insisted that he had infused his campaign with a "purity of intent".

"It is like the austerities of Chhath. One can have a sip of water. But true devotees do not make such a compromise and complete a gruelling 36 hour-long fast," he said, with a rhetorical flourish.

"Not for me breaks during the New Year or visits to my home. Nor do I agree to hitch short rides on my way to the next destination," said Kishor in an obvious dig at the Congress leader.

Notably, Kishor first came in limelight after handling Narendra Modi's spectacularly successful campaign in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. He called it a day as a professional strategist after the 2021 assembly polls in West Bengal where his client, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, registered her biggest-ever victory.

Still open' to ceasefire agreement with Pakistan government, says TTP chief

Peshawar, Jan 08 (PTI):

The chief of the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has said that his group is "still open" to a ceasefire agreement with the Pakistan government, according to media reports.

In November last year, the TTP called off an indefinite ceasefire agreed with the government in June 2022 and ordered its militants to carry out attacks on the security forces.

The TTP, which is believed to have close links to al-Qaeda, has threatened to target top leaders of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's PML-N and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari's PPP if the ruling coalition continued to implement strict measures against the militants.

However, the dreaded outfit insisted that it has not scrapped the ceasefire agreement with the gov-

ernment. "We held talks with Pakistan mediated by Islamic Emirates of Afghanistan. We are still open to the ceasefire agreement," the Dawn newspaper quoted TTP chief Mufti Noor Wali Mehsood as saying in a video on Saturday.

Mehsood's change in stance comes amid reports that he has sought guidance from religious scholars in Pakistan.

In the video message, Mehsood said his outfit is "open to guidance" from Pakistan's religious scholars if they believe "the direction of our jihad" is wrong, according to the Express Tribune newspaper.

"If you find any problem in the jihad that we waged [against this global infidel agenda], if you believe we have changed our direction, that we have gone astray, then you're requested to guide us. We're always ready to listen to

your arguments happily," the TTP chief said.

Mehsood's comments come amid a sharp uptick in violence across Pakistan.

On Saturday, Pakistan police arrested five TTP terrorists during intelligence-based operations in the country's Punjab province.

Over 5,000 tribesmen took out a rally on Friday in Wana, the headquarters of the South Waziristan tribal district, against the growing unrest, terrorism, and kidnappings in their areas.

The protest comes amidst rising terrorist attacks in the country, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces that are believed to have been carried out by TTP militants.

The TTP, also known as the Pakistan Taliban, was set up as an umbrella group of several militant outfits in 2007.

Its main aim is to impose its strict brand of Islam across Pakistan.

Pakistan had hoped that the Afghan Taliban after coming to power would stop the use of their soil against Pakistan by expelling the TTP operatives but they have apparently refused to do so at the cost of straining ties with Islamabad.

The TTP has been blamed for several deadly attacks across Pakistan, including an attack on army headquarters in 2009, assaults on military bases and the 2008 bombing of the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad. In 2012, Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai was attacked by TTP. In 2014, the Pakistani Taliban stormed the Army Public School in the north-western city of Peshawar, killing at least 150 people, including 131 students. The attack sent shockwaves across the world, and was widely condemned.

SELF-PROPELLED HOWITZER



A boy plays atop a self-propelled howitzer in the 'Patriot' military park in Kronstadt, outside St. Petersburg, Russia.

UN envoy meets with Afghan higher-ed chief over ban on women Pak needs USD 30 billion to cover short and long-term needs of flood victims: Shehbaz Sharif

Kabul, Jan 08 (AP):

A top UN envoy met with the Taliban-led Afghan government's higher education minister Saturday to discuss the ban on women attending universities.

Markus Potzel is the first international official to meet with him since the ban was introduced last month.

Taliban authorities on Dec 20 ordered public and private universities to close for women immediately until further notice. It triggered widespread international condemnation, including from Muslim-majority countries such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey.

Higher Education Minister Nida Mohammad Nadim has defended the ban, saying it is necessary to prevent the mixing of genders in universities and because he believes some subjects violate Islamic principles.

That ban was followed



This photo provided by Taliban Higher Education Ministry, UN officials meet with Taliban Higher Education Minister in Kabul, Afghanistan. The U.N. envoy met with the Taliban-led Afghan government's higher education minister to discuss the ban on women attending universities.

days later by a ban on Afghan women working for national and international non-governmental groups, another decision that caused global condemnation and the suspension of work by major aid agencies.

The UN mission in

Afghanistan said that Potzel called for the urgent lifting of these bans in his meeting with Nadim, saying the country is entering a new period of crisis.

"Taliban bans on female education & work for aid agencies will harm all Afghans," the mission

said. Nadim told Potzel the ministry was working for the development and improvement of Afghans, with the protection of Islamic and national values, according to information shared by ministry spokesman Ziaullah Hashmi. He said oppo-

nents were criticizing the implementation of Islamic affairs, using education as an argument to achieve their "evil goals."

"We need to make sure there is no place for them to criticise and, at the same time, fulfill the wishes of Afghans who have made sacrifices for Islamic rule and the implementation of Sharia rules in the country," Nadim told Potzel at the meeting.

He also said Afghanistan's rulers will not accept anyone's demands in the form of pressure against Islamic principles.

Potzel thanked Nadim for his time, saying the higher education of any country has a direct impact on the economic situation of that country, according to the ministry spokesman.

The envoy promised to cooperate in the development of Afghanistan's higher education and shared his plan for female education with Nadim.

Islamabad, Jan 08 (PTI):

Pakistan needs about USD 30 billion to cover the short and long-term needs of the victims of last year's floods that claimed about 1,700 lives, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said, as he sought the international community's support ahead of a key donors conference.

More than 33 million were affected due to massive floods hitting the country last summer, leaving many at the mercy of international donors.

Sharif's comments came as he sought the support of the global community ahead of an international conference being jointly hosted by Pakistan and the UN in Geneva on Monday.

Sharif in an article in The Guardian, a British daily newspaper, wrote that a comprehensive roadmap for post-flood reconstruction and rehabili-

tation, to be presented at the conference, has been developed with the assistance of the World Bank, the UN, the Asian Development Bank and the European Union.

He said the roadmap essentially envisages a two-pronged response to deal with the ravages of the flood.

The first part relates to meeting the immediate challenges of recovery and reconstruction, requiring minimum funding of USD 16.3 billion over a period of three years. He said Pakistan would meet half the funding from its own resources but "will count on the continued assistance of our bilateral and multilateral partners to bridge the gap".

The second part outlines Pakistan's long-term vision for building climate resilience that would require an investment of USD 13.5 billion over a 10-

year period, he argued.

Shehbaz urged world leaders, representatives of international development and humanitarian organisations and friends of Pakistan to signal support and solidarity with a country that is grappling with a natural disaster that is not of its making.

The Prime Minister also expressed confidence that the Geneva conference marks only the beginning of a long and arduous journey, but a substantive outcome will reassure millions of imperiled people that the international community will help them rebuild their lives.

The conference aims to garner support from the international community for the flood-affected people and Pakistan has lobbied extensively to get maximum support from the international community as it struggles to provide support to the affected people.

Pakistan frees 524 Afghan migrants from Karachi jail

Karachi, Jan 08 (AP):

Hundreds of Afghan migrants, including women and children, have been released from a jail in the southern Pakistani port city of Karachi, Afghan authorities said Saturday.

Pakistani police in multiple raids last month detained at least 1,200 Afghan nationals who entered Karachi without

valid travel documents.

The arrests brought criticism from around Afghanistan after images of locked up Afghan children circulated online. The detentions underscored the strained relations between the two South Asian neighbors. The 524 released Afghan nationals include 54 women and 97 children, Afghanistan's embassy in Islamabad said.

A video shared by the embassy on Twitter showed women and children behind the main gate of the prison, waiting to be released under supervision of Pakistani and Afghan authorities. Another video showed men seated in a bus ready to depart for Afghanistan.

Millions of Afghans fled to Pakistan during the 1979-1989 Soviet occupation of their country,

creating one of the world's largest refugee populations. Since then, Pakistan has been hosting Afghans, urging them to register themselves with the United Nations and local authorities to avoid any risk of deportation. According to a recently conducted U.N.-backed survey, 1.3 million registered Afghan refugees are residing in Pakistan.

Pak police arrest 5 TTP terrorists from Punjab

Lahore, Jan 08 (PTI):

Pakistani police arrested five terrorists belonging to the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan outfit during intelligence-based operations in Punjab province on Saturday.

According to the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of Punjab police, the terrorists were arrested in Lahore, Okara, Mandi Bahauldin, Faisalabad and Layyah districts of Punjab.

"Explosive material, suicide vests, weapons and banned literature have been recovered from the possession of the arrested

terrorists," the CTD said in a statement.

It, however, did not mention in the statement that the arrested terrorists have any direct link with the killers of two officials of Pakistan's spy agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). On January 3, ISI Multan region Director Naveed Sadiq and Inspector Nasir Abbas were allegedly shot dead by their TTP "source" (suspected killer) Umar Khan in Khanewal, about 375 kilometres from Lahore. It is standard practice for intelligence officials to cultivate sources among terrorist networks to thwart their terror

plans. Both ISI officers were working to bust a terror network in south Punjab. The banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Lashkar-e-Khorasan, an offshoot of al-Qaeda, took responsibility for the attack. The CTD and intelligence agencies have intensified their operations in Punjab after the killing of two officers.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condoled the death of the ISI Director. The premier pledged to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country.

The TTP, also known as the Pakistan Taliban, was set up as an umbrella

group of several militant outfits in 2007. Its main aim is to impose its strict brand of Islam across Pakistan. The TTP has been blamed for several deadly attacks across Pakistan, including an attack on army headquarters in 2009, assaults on military bases and the 2008 bombing of the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad.

Last month, the Pakistan Army commandos killed 25 Taliban militants during an operation to free anti-terrorism police officers who were held hostage inside Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's CTD compound in Bannu for three days.

CULTURAL GROUP KAMBA CUA



Members of the Paraguay-African cultural group Kamba Cua carry a San Balthazar statue during celebrations in his honor, one of the Three Kings, on Epiphany in Fernando de la Mora, Paraguay, early Sunday, Jan. 8. The annual procession is a tradition that keeps Paraguay's Afro-descendants connected with their African roots through ancestral dance, drumming and customs.

China welcomes first batch of international travellers

Following scrapping of quarantine norms

Beijing, Jan 08 (PTI):

China on Sunday welcomed international travellers and returning residents without the need to quarantine for the first time in three years, even as infections surge after it scrapped its stringent zero-Covid policy.

The first flights under China's new "no quarantine" rules for international travellers landed at airports in Guangzhou and Shenzhen in southern Guangdong province early on Sunday morning, state-run CGTN TV reported.



Officials said 387 passengers were aboard two flights from Toronto and Singapore on the day the country ended its strict COVID-19 restrictions for travellers.

On Sunday, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region resumed cross-border travel

with the Chinese mainland.

Many other Chinese borders also saw cross-border travel.

At the Shanghai Pudong International Airport, a man surnamed Jiang, who was the first to complete the immigration procedures told reporters

that "it is very convenient all the way from exit hatch to border inspection and clearance," the report said. Last month, China announced it was lifting COVID-19 restrictions that mandated international arrivals undergo nucleic acid tests and quarantine.

Inbound travellers only need to take a PCR test within 48 hours before departure, and they no longer need to apply for a health code from Chinese diplomatic and consular missions. The Chinese government on Saturday ordered the release of people detained over a host of coronavirus-related incidents.



CENTRAL Chronicle

Since 1974 Volume 10 No. 280

Gold marching towards historical high

2023 may well be a year of gold. This is because despite several negatives the yellow metal has outperformed everything else. And with the New Year expected to unravel all that traditionally has worked in favour of gold, this asset class appears to be non-stoppable right now. IMF has warned that a third of the global economy is likely to fall into recession this year. Eurozone and Britain have already shown signs of such a crisis. And this is very much the likely scenario in the United States. Stock markets have already seen a blood bath and further falls are indicated in the days to come. Central banks persisting with their tightening plans and more uncertainties are staring at the world as it descends deeper into recession. These are conditions that gold feasts on. There were a series of negatives for gold, specifically, in 2022. Fed raised rates at the second most aggressive pace last year; the US dollar index surged 30 percent in 17 months. Most significantly, the rise in the US dollar and real interest rates was much greater than that recorded for 2013 and even larger than in 2008, the year when global financial crisis struck hard. But last year gold declined only 19 percent compared to 30 percent and 34 percent in 2008 and 2013 respectively. Gold enthusiasts revel at the performance of gold despite strong bearish fundamentals and aver that the yellow metal is only roughly 10 percent away from its historical high despite heavy headwinds of the past nine months and nothing seems to be capable of stopping it from breaking out to a new all-time high. That would be the most remarkable breakout in half a century's time. The World Gold Council notes in its outlook for 2023 that the global economy is at an inflection point after being hit by various shocks over the past year and going forward, this interplay between inflation and central-bank intervention will be key in determining the outlook for gold's performance. The council cites economic consensus that calls for weaker global growth akin to a short, possibly localised recession; falling – yet elevated – inflation; and the end of rate hikes in most developed markets. The environment carries both headwinds and tailwinds for gold. It notes that a mild recession, coupled with weaker earnings, has historically been gold-positive while further weakening of the dollar as inflation recedes could also provide support for gold. Additionally, geopolitical flare-ups should continue to make gold a valuable tail risk hedge. Also, a likely improvement in Chinese economic growth should boost consumer gold demand. Elaborating on the bumpy economic ride ahead, the council warns about many signs of weakening output due to the speed and aggressiveness of hiking moves by central banks, with consensus forecasts putting global GDP to rise by just 2.1 percent this year. Excluding the global financial crisis and Covid, this would mark the slowest pace of global growth in four decades and meet the IMF's previous definition of a global recession – i.e. growth below 2.5 percent. The council lists four key factors which will have a bearing on gold's performance, at least two of which are positive for the metal. These include economic expansion, which is positive from the point of view of consumption and risk and uncertainty, both of which are positive for investment in gold. The other factors are opportunity cost, which is negative for investment and momentum, which is contingent on price and positioning. It has been found that gold typically does well during times of recession. Delivering positive returns during five of the seven recessions in the past. A sharp retrenchment in growth is sufficient for gold to do well, particularly if inflation is also high or rising. A dollar peak has historically been good for gold, yielding positive gold returns 80 percent of the time. The council's latest Gold Demand Trends report reveals that gold demand in the third quarter of 2022 hit 1,181 tonnes, up 28 percent year-on-year. Strong demand pushed the year-to-date total to its pre-Covid levels. Gold demand was bolstered by consumers and central banks, although there was a notable contraction in investment demand. Jewellery consumption continued to rebound and is now back to pre-pandemic levels, reaching 523 tonnes, 10 percent higher compared to the third quarter of 2021. Much of this growth was spearheaded by India's urban consumers who drove up demand 17 percent to 146 tonnes. Similarly impressive growth was also seen in much of the Middle East, with Saudi Arabian jewellery consumption up 20 percent since the third quarter of 2021, and United Arab Emirates up 30 percent for the same period. Chinese jewellery demand also saw a modest 5 percent increase, driven by improved consumer confidence and a dip in the local gold price, prompting the release of some pent-up demand.

Successful rooftop solar power plants

Neat and clean carbon emission-free power is the prime focus area of GoI and no effort is being left to achieve a 50 percent cut in overall emissions as signed and committed by India during the Paris summit. The introduction and subsequent sale of around five lakh electric vehicles is clearcut vision and success story of environmental concerns and protection, and further introduction of hydrogen vehicles now, again the cleanest of fuels available, is right step put forward by the Government. In addition to these, now attention is on the power sector, specifically in cities where almost all weather sun is available. Solar-powered plants have been installed against a targeted 200MW by end of 2024. The response to the collective sixty five percent subsidy from the centre thousands showing interest and local administration is roping in more vendors in addition to the present twenty to clear the backlog and cut short future waiting periods. It is easy to install setup provided by trained manpower and is going to play an important role in overcoming electricity demand and supply shortage in future. It takes both time, investment and manpower to develop a 200MW hydro or thermal power station, in fact, years with additional environmental concerns, but solar-powered plants of 200MW electricity will be installed in no time. The scheme is for other cities also as it seems going to be much above the targeted 200MW. The only concern is grid connectivity, net-metering in non-smart metered areas. Coordination at all levels between different Government agencies is a must for this scheme to be a success story.

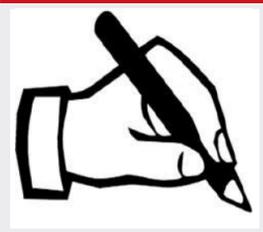
CHENNAI MARATHON 2023



Participants run during the Freshworks Chennai Marathon 2023, at Napier Bridge, in Chennai, Sunday, Jan. 8.

Informal employment sans social security on the rise in India

DR. GYAN PATHAK



The first week of 2023 has brought the signs of the beginning of even higher level of unemployment in India at 8.4 per cent than 8.3 per cent in December 2022 which was 15 months high. It is indeed a bad news, but not so bad as the Modi government's trick to show the actually falling formal employment as provisionally rising month after month. EPFO's annual report of 2021-22 tabled in the Parliament of India in December has revealed that only 46.34 million members contributed during the year, as against 48.92 million in the pre-pandemic year 2019-20. It meant that the actual formal employment as measured by EPFO contribution had fallen by 2.58 million. It was a fall of 5.3 per cent. However, the through monthly provisional EPFO data, Modi government tried to prove month after month that formal employment was rising. The provisional monthly data showed that the members contributing in the EPFO increased by almost 20 million by 2021-22, while it actually fell by 2.58 million.

It clearly shows that EPFO's monthly data is not reliable, for it is always provisional, and it undergoes several revisions that substantially alter the actual position of formal employment in the country. There may be some motif of the Modi government behind releasing monthly inflated data to present a comparatively rosy current trend on the employment front. For example, the latest provisional payroll data of EPFO was released on 20th December, 2022 that highlighted 12.94 lakh net members in the month of October 2022. Year-on-year comparison of payroll data reflects an increase of 21,026 in net membership in October, 2022 as compared to the corresponding month during last year in 2021. As per data, around 2,282 new establishments have started complying for the first time under the Employees' Provident Funds & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 ensuring social security cover to their employees. However, nobody knows, what will happen to this data after several revisions during 2022-23, the final data of which would be available only after a year. As the annual report for 2021-22 reveals, the formal employment in India has been on the decline since 2019-20, and the country is still struggling to reach that level. It means the employment with social security coverage of provident fund has been on the decline, and informality in the labour

market is on the rise. In recent AITUC convention it was claimed that informal employment has risen to 97 per cent of the total workforce, much more than the earlier government estimate of 90 per cent. It means only a fraction of the workforce in India are in formal employment with social security coverage such as EPFO's membership. Unemployment rate last year in January was 6.56 per cent which rose to 8.3 per cent in December, and now average 8.4 per cent in the first week of 2023, as per the CMIE data. Urban unemployment was highest in the last 16 months in December at 10.9 per cent. Rural employment also rose from 5.83 per cent in January 2022 to 7.44 per cent in December. According to CMIE data, unemployment rate of January 6 on 30 day moving average was 8.3 per cent in the country, with urban unemployment 9.8 per cent and Rural unemployment 7.5 per cent. Labour participation rate (LPR) rose in December to 40.5 per cent from 39.6 per cent in November, and 39 per cent in October. It means, 7 million more people added to workforce in November compared to October, and another 10.6 million joined the workforce in December. It has created some hope among the unemployed to get a job, and hence they have been searching for one, that in turn has increased the unemployment rate. Moreover, if we dive deep into the methods of calcula-

tion, we can put it in another way. The 10.6 million addition into the workforce does not mean all of them have been employed. According to the CMIE data, only 8.4 million actually found job while 2.2 million joined the ranks of the unemployed. Similarly, 7 million joined the workforce in November, but only 5.5 million found employment and 1.5 million added to the unemployed people. It shows how both the unemployment and employment rate can rise simultaneously. In December total employment in India was 410 million which is the highest level of employment since January 2020. However, the employment rate in proportion of the working age population is still very low. It was 36 per cent in October 2022, which rose to only 36.4 per cent in November, and 37.1 per cent in December. About 27.8 million unemployed people were looking for employment in September 2022, which rose to 33.4 million in October, 35 million in November and 37.1 million in December, as per the CMIE data. The number of job seeking persons are most likely to rise in coming months amidst deceleration of economic growth in the country, which urgently needs to be human centred. The challenge is to create large number of decent formal salaried jobs with social security coverage, which has been on the decline since demonetisation of 2016, and worsened during the last three years of the pandemic.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Effective utilisation of industrial waste needed

We know that industries also produces waste products which is hazardous for environment. Dumping of the waste products in a isolated location is of great challenge. We came to know that roads are getting constructed using plastic wastes which is good for suppressing environmental pollution. A recent invention of Plastic roads opens up a new challenge that why can't road construction can also utilise wastes from industries such as Fly ash from thermal power plants, waste from rubber industries, used sands i.e. in shell molding from foundries, kiln dust from cement industries, Waste engine oil from automobile industries, slag produced in furnace from steel industries, Dust from marble industries, waste from glass industries etc. If industrial waste can be effectively utilised in road construction it not only helps in controlling the environmental pollution but also improves the economy of the country. In this direction a lateral thinking is need by central government.

Vijaykumar H K, Raichur

Keep it uniform

Our Constitution guarantees right to equality to all citizens without any discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, colour, community, religion, region or any other consideration. This right should not be on paper alone, but implemented in actual practice too. Religious customs and traditions should be flexible and modified with advancing times. Many religious gurus in the bygone era used to believe that earth is flat, but now it is accepted by all that it is round. Therefore, in accordance with Article 44 and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), Uniform Civil Code should be framed so that all citizens can lead a respectful and dignified life. Irrational practices not in sync with equal rights should be rectified.

Subhash Vaid, New Delhi

Think and speak

Ministers, MPs, MLAs and other public officials are expected to be more careful in their speeches lest they should emit the venom of hate and hurt a particular person or a group of people. Since they are a part of the government and in a way represent the ruling party, they should observe restraint on their vocabulary and exhibit respect for the discordant voices. It is imperative that the people at the helm of affairs should not allow anybody the licence to spew inflammatory and disparaging remarks. They should not be condoned in the name of 'personal comments'.

Chaman Arora, Ferozpur City

Diaspora: Reliable partners for India's progress in Amrit Kaal

Vinod Chandrashekar Dixit



9th January is celebrated on every year as Pravasi Bharatiya Divas to mark the contribution of Overseas Indian community in the development of India. This day was chosen as the day to celebrate this occasion since it was on this day in 1915 that Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest Pravasi, returned to India

from South Africa, led India's freedom struggle and changed the lives of Indians forever. The first PBD was held in January 2003 in New Delhi. So far 13 editions of the PBD Convention have been held, the last in Gandhinagar, Gujarat in January 2015 which coincided with the 100th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's return from South Africa. It is also known as Non-Resident Indian (NRI) Day is celebrated to strengthen the engagement of the overseas Indian community with the Government of India and reconnect them with their roots. The 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention is being organized in partnership with the Madhya Pradesh Government from 08-10 January 2023 in Indore. The theme of this PBD Convention is "Diaspora: Reliable partners for India's

progress in Amrit Kaal" Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) convention is the flagship event of the Ministry organized every year since January 2003, with a view to connect India to its vast Indian Diaspora and bringing their knowledge, expertise and skills on a common platform. From 2003 to 2015, this was celebrated like a festival commemorating the Indian Diaspora and dedicating it to them. Indian youth and their Diaspora counterparts should come together in developing strong networks, to lead to partnerships in trade, industry, entrepreneurship and social work. The event also serves as a platform to discuss concerns and issues related to the Indian Diaspora around the globe. The little-known event is also known as 'Non-Resident Indian Day' as it marks the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa in the year

1915 on January 9. It also acknowledges the contribution of Indian community living abroad in the development of India. Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is celebrated over three days from January 7-9. According to our Prime Minister Narendra Modi Indian immigrants went abroad looking for opportunities, but today, that situation had changed drastically. In the global context today, India has huge strength and capital. PBD is the most suitable time and hilarious atmosphere to all Indians in India or abroad to come together and work together for strengthening economy. It's good to have such gathering of NRI but should have long term results for the working class who bring foreign remittance. The event holds much importance as it also helps in extensive networking among the Indian community who

attend it from various parts of the world. Pravasi Bharatiya Divas programme serves as a platform for them to share their valuable experiences in various fields, be it economic or social. The point of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is to showcase India's unity and present the country as a transnational nation that incorporates the 30-million strong Diaspora and is built upon supposedly shared cultural values in a fictional historical continuum. India can become a superpower and had the potential to become a spiritual and cultural hub. Today India has changed and there are many new opportunities, all kinds of opportunities to earn and make a very good living. Let us on the day Pavasi Bharatiya Divas; pledge to make our contribution when the entire process of development that is taking place in India.

BRIEF

Biocon

New Delhi: Biotechnology major Biocon on Saturday said the US health regulator has issued a complete response letter for Biocon Biologics' application for Insulin-R, a proposed biosimilar for diabetes treatment. The US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) issues a Complete Response Letter (CRL) to convey to a company that its initial review of an application is complete and it cannot approve the application in its present form.

Jaiprakash Associates

New Delhi: Jaypee Group's flagship firm Jaiprakash Associates has defaulted on loans of Rs 4,059 crore, comprising both the principal and interest amount. In a regulatory filing, Jaiprakash Associates Ltd (JAL) said the company on December 31 defaulted on repayments of principal amount Rs 1,713 crore and interest of Rs 2,346 crore.

DWMS

Thiruvananthapuram: The Digital Workforce Management System (DWMS), developed by a state-run university, on Saturday received the prestigious 'Digital India' platinum icon award. The DWMS, developed by a team headed by Ajith Kumar R, the Director of the Centre for Digital Innovation and Product Development under Digital University Kerala (DUK), received the honour. The award was received by him along with P V Unnikrishnan, member secretary of K-DISC and Riyas P M, Manager of Kerala Knowledge Economy Mission, from President Droupadi Murmu at a function in New Delhi today.

DPIIT

New Delhi: The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is working on formulating a policy for auction of salt land to private players, sources said. The department had received requests from different ministries, departments, state governments, central and public sector enterprises for transfer of land owned by the Government of India through the Office of the Salt Commissioner, at places other than Mumbai and its suburbs, for public purposes. Sources said that the department is finalising a draft policy on auction of salt land to private players.

Discoms

New Delhi: Total outstanding dues owed by electricity distribution companies (discoms) to power producers almost halved to Rs 62,681.68 crore in January, compared to Rs 1,21,030 crore in same month in 2022. Experts said this substantial reduction in the discoms' total outstanding is mainly due to various steps taken by the government, like implementation of late payment surcharge rules and providing facility of equated monthly installments (EMIs) to utilities.

Total business to cross Rs 2 lakh crore milestone soon: Punjab & Sind Bank MD

New Delhi, Jan 08 (PTI):

Punjab and Sind Bank is expected to cross Rs 2 lakh crore business milestone soon on the back of robust growth in loans, its managing director Swarup Kumar Saha said.

In the third quarter of the current financial year, he said, the bank has witnessed a credit growth of 17 per cent to Rs 78,049 crore.

"Topline growth is in line with our guidance while other key parameters like asset quality and slippages are also under control," he told PTI.

The bank's current account and savings accounts increased by 11.33 per cent to Rs 36,460 crore at the end of the third quarter.

The total business rose by 12.26 per cent to Rs 1.87 lakh crore at the end of



Swarup Kumar Saha

December 31, 2022, Saha said. Talking about new initiatives, Saha said the bank has recently partnered with SBI Card to launch co-brand credit cards for its customers.

Available in three variants — PSB SBI Card ELITE, PSB SBI Card PRIME and PSB SimplySAVE SBI Card — will have access to a wide suite of exclusive privileges. The bank is in the

transformational stage of diversifying into different third-party goods, and the addition of the credit card business to the current portfolio of products will help in both attracting new customers and keeping its current clientele, he said.

The bank will soon introduce digital pre-approved personal loans in three clicks through its mobile app.

Through the mobile app, Saha said, the bank is going to start sourcing loan products to be availed by MSME, Mudra, housing and other loans.

On the liability side, the bank has raised the interest rate on deposits and made it attractive beginning January 1, he noted.

Opening an FD account through the digital app will get an incremental 0.25 per cent above the card rate, he added.

Auto Expo returns after 3 years; some prominent cos to skip event

New Delhi, Jan 08 (PTI):

India's flagship motor show Auto Expo returns this week after three years having been hit by the pandemic, albeit some of the major manufacturers staying away from the event. The likes of Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai, Tata Motors, Kia India, Toyota Kirloskar and MG Motor India will lead the traditional automakers at the show at Greater Noida that will witness five global launches and 75 product launches and unveils.

Yet, others such as Mahindra & Mahindra, Skoda, Volkswagen and Nissan along with luxury car makers like Mercedes-Benz, BMW and Audi will

be conspicuous by their absence in the biennial show that was originally scheduled to be held in 2022 but was postponed to this year due to Covid-19.

Also, the visibility of main two-wheeler makers such as Hero MotoCorp, Bajaj Auto and TVS Motor Co will be restricted to their displays of flex fuel prototype vehicles at the Ethanol pavilion.

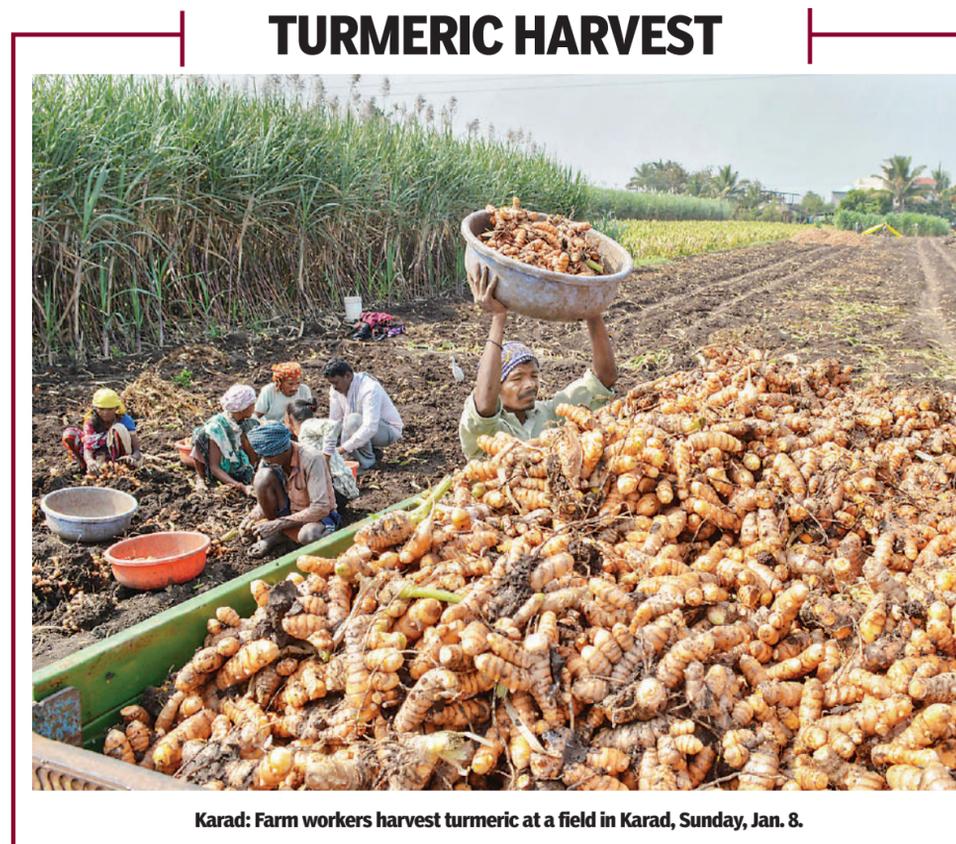
Nevertheless, this edition of the Auto Expo, which kicks off with press days on January 11-12 followed by general public days from January 13-18, 2023, will see a much larger participation of newer startup players, specially in the electric vehicles segment.

Gem, jewellery industry seeks abolition of import duty on raw material for lab-grown diamonds in Budget

New Delhi, Jan 08 (PTI):

Gem and jewellery exporters on Sunday urged the government to announce support measures like the abolition of import duty on raw material for lab-grown diamonds and jewellery repair policy to promote the sector and boost shipments in the forthcoming Budget.

The industry also suggested the introduction of presumptive taxation on diamond sales at special notified zones and the introduction of the proposed DESH bill, which seeks to replace the existing law for special economic zones. Seeking a kind of "diamond package" in the forthcoming Budget, the



Karad: Farm workers harvest turmeric at a field in Karad, Sunday, Jan. 8.



industry said in light of the high inflation and economic crisis in the US and Europe and frequent lockdowns in China, the exports of diamonds and jobs in Surat have been impacted. The conventional source of rough diamonds across the world faces threats of deposit depletion, which also contribute

to the exponential increase in the cost of extraction. Industries have thus found lab-grown diamonds to be a profitable alternative.

These lab-grown or man-made diamonds (LGDs) are grown inside a lab using cutting-edge technologies under specific parameters.

Indo-Bangla Friendship Pipeline likely to be commissioned in February

Guwahati, Jan 08 (PTI):

The ambitious 130-km long Indo-Bangla Friendship Pipeline (IBFPL), constructed at a cost of Rs 377.08 crore, is likely to be commissioned by next month, official sources said on Sunday.

The international oil pipeline, IBFPL, will carry fuel from Assam-based Numaligarh Refinery Ltd's (NRL) marketing terminal at Siliguri in West Bengal to the Parbatipur depot of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC). The mechanical works of the bilateral project, being funded by India, was completed on December 12 last year, a senior official of NRL told

PTI on condition of anonymity. "We have set the commissioning target completion in February 2023," he added.

The ground breaking ceremony for the 130-km IBFPL was held in September 2018 in the presence of Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh through video conferencing.

"The project is in a true sense an engineering marvel. We faced lots of hurdles but with mutual cooperation and technological understanding between the two countries, this international project will see the light of the day," another senior executive of the Northeast's largest refiner said.

FLYING CAR



The functional prototype Aska A5 eVTOL flying car folds its front wings during the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, Nevada.

MoRTH confident of achieving highway construction target of 12,000 km this fiscal: Secy Alka Upadhyaya

New Delhi, Jan 08 (PTI):

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) is confident of achieving the highways construction target of 12,000 kilometres for the current fiscal as the pace of construction has increased, its secretary Alka Upadhyaya said on Sunday.

Upadhyaya further said the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has already realised around Rs 2,850 crore through Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT) mode in phase 2, and phase 3 is in the advanced stage to realise the target by the end



of the current financial year. "Extended monsoon has dampened the pace of National Highway construction. "However, the pace of construction has increased, and we are sure that the given targets shall be met by March

2023," she told PTI in an interview.

The ministry has constructed 4,766 km of National Highways up to November 2022-23 compared to 5,118 km constructed till November 2021-22.

The award figure is 5,382 km till November 2022-23 compared to 5,578 km a year ago.

The ministry has constructed 10,237 kilometres in 2019-20, 13,327 kilometres in 2020-21 and 10,457 kilometres in 2021-22.

In 2023, Upadhyaya said NHAI would prioritise awarding of new projects and speed up construction to complete the awarded projects.

Q3 earnings from IT majors, macro data to drive markets this week: Analysts

New Delhi, Jan 08 (PTI):

Trend in the equity market will be guided by a host of factors lined up this week, including inflation numbers, IIP data and quarterly earnings from IT majors, analysts said.

Global cues, movement of the rupee, Brent crude oil and foreign funds will also influence Dalal Street this week, they added.

"We have important macroeconomic numbers this week, as our IIP and CPI inflation will be announced on January 12. On the same day, China and the US will also come out with their inflation figures. "The Q3 earnings season will kick off with IT major earnings this

week, including TCS, Infosys and HCL Tech," said Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd.

Last week, the Sensex lost 940.37 points or 1.55 per cent, while the Nifty declined 245.85 points or 1.36 per cent.

The Indian equity markets have begun the New Year on a slightly cautious note, in line with the global markets, continuing the trend visible in December 2022, said Milind Muchhala, Executive Director, Julius Baer India.

Concerns over inflation and unabated foreign fund outflows played spoilsport for the domestic equity market last week.

FPIs begin New Year in sell-off mode; withdraw Rs 5,900 cr from equities in a week

New Delhi, Jan 08 (PTI):

Foreign investors of-flooded nearly Rs 5,900 crore from the Indian equity markets during January 2-6. In fact, foreign investors have been selling for 11 consecutive days, taking the cumulative selling to Rs 14,300 crore. This came following a net inflow of Rs 11,119 crore in December and Rs 36,239 crore in November.

Overall, FPIs have made a net withdrawal of Rs 1.21 lakh crore from the Indian equity markets in 2022 on an aggressive rate hike by the central banks globally, particularly the US Federal Reserve, volatile crude, rising commodity prices along with Russia and Ukraine conflict.

This was the worst year for the FPIs in terms of

data with the depositories, FPIs have made a net pull out of Rs 5,872 crore from the Indian equity markets during January 2-6. In fact, foreign investors have been selling for 11 consecutive days, taking the cumulative selling to Rs 14,300 crore. This came following a net inflow of Rs 11,119 crore in December and Rs 36,239 crore in November.

The latest outflow in January could be attributed to the concerning cues emanating from both global as well as domestic quarters. "Increasing concerns over re-emergence of Covid in some parts of the world and recession worries in the US have been keeping FPIs away from emerging markets like India," Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research at Morningstar India, said. Also, in the midst of the ongoing uncertainty, many investors would have also chosen to book profits with Indian markets, touching all-time highs in the recent past.

flow and withdrawal from equities comes following a net investment in the preceding three years.

The investment will be made over the period of the next 12 to 18 months,

JSPL to invest Rs 1,500 crore to make Monnet Power project operational: MD Bimlendra Jha



New Delhi, Jan 08 (PTI):

Jindal Steel and Power Limited (JSPL) will invest up to Rs 1,500 crore to make recently-acquired Monnet Power operational, its Managing Director Bimlendra Jha said.

The investment will be made over the period of the next 12 to 18 months,

he said. In December 2022, the steelmaker acquired debt-laden Monnet Power for Rs 410 crore through the insolvency route.

The 1,050 megawatts (MW) under-construction coal-based power project is located near JSPL's steel plant in Angul, Odisha.

"We will invest fresh investment of up to Rs 1,500 crore to make the plant operational. The amount will be invested over the period of the next 12-18 months," Jha told PTI.

Once completed, the new asset will provide power to JSPL's steel plant in Angul, which is in expansion mode, he said.

The coal for Monnet Power will be sourced from the Utkal B1 and B2 mines of JSPL.

Jenna Ortega-starrer 'Wednesday' will return with Season 2

The Jenna Ortega-starrer web-series 'Wednesday' has been renewed for Season 2, on Netflix. The eight-episode first season of the series centred on the titular 'Addams Family' character, originally debuted on November 23, reports Variety. Netflix announced shortly thereafter that the series set a new platform record for most hours viewed for an English language series, in its first week with over 341 million hours. Since then, the show has grown to become the second biggest English language season of television on Netflix with over 1.2 billion hours viewed within its first 28 days, among other streaming series records. Jenna Ortega stars as Wednesday Addams in the horror comedy series. Per the official first season description, the show centres on Wednesday's "years as a student at Nevermore Academy." "She attempts to master her emerging psychic ability, thwart a monstrous killing spree that has terrorised the local town, and solve the supernatural mystery that embroiled her parents 25 years ago, all while navigating her new and very tangled relationships at Nevermore." Along with Ortega, the cast of Season 1 included Gwendoline Christie, Jamie McShane, Percy Hynes White, Hunter Doohan, Emma Myers, Joy Sunday, Naomi J. Ogawa, Moosa Mostafa, Georgie Farmer, Riki Lindhome, and Christina Ricci. Catherine Zeta-Jones appeared as Morticia Addams alongside Luis Guzman as Gomez and Isaac Ordonez as Pugsley. Alfred Gough and Miles Millar developed the series and also served as co-showrunners and executive producers. Tim Burton directed the first four episodes and is also an executive producer on the series. Steve Stark of Toluca Pictures, Andrew Mittman of 1.21 Entertainment executive produce, along with Kevin Miserocchi of the Tee and Charles Addams Foundation, Kayla Alpert, Jonathan Glickman of Glickmania, Gail Berman, Tommy Harper, and Kevin Lafferty, MGM Television is the studio. "It's been incredible to create a show that has connected with people across the world, said Gough and Millar. "Thrilled to continue Wednesday's tortuous journey into season two. We cannot wait to dive head first into another season and explore the kooky spooky world of Nevermore. Just need to make sure Wednesday hasn't emptied the pool first."

'MasterChef India' finally announces its Top 16 home cooks!

In the quest to find India's ultimate 'MasterChef', Sony Entertainment Television and SonyLIV have brought to the viewers a delightful treat this year, the culinary reality show 'MasterChef India!' The show that airs every Monday to Friday at 9:00 pm, is the most revered cooking reality show that had travelled across India and witnessed many aspiring home cooks present a platter of delectable dishes that were not only appealing to the sight but also tingled the tastebuds. Judges by eminent Chefs - Ranveer Brar, Garima Arora and Vikas Khanna, the home cooks were evaluated based on the 'TIP' approach i.e Taste, Innovation and Presentation. Based on these core aspects, the Top 16 home cooks have finally begun their journey from

the Top 36; from being a tastemaker to a change-maker in the realm of food. Making the celebration of food even grander will be the exquisite 'MasterChef India kitchen' where many dreams will turn into reality and unique stories will come alive. After various rounds of auditions across the country the Top 36 contestants were selected with various grooming sessions and multiple challenges put forward by the renowned chef and judges of which, the Top 16 home cooks have finally been chosen. Ready to make a mark, the Top 16 contestants who were selected and got personalised aprons bearing their names are; Priyanka Kundu Biswas from Kolkata, Aruna Vijay from Chennai, Urmila Jamnadas from Mumbai, Priya Vijan from

Bangalore, Dyuti Banerjee from Kolkata, Avinash Patnaik from Bhubaneswar, Santa Sarmah from Jagiroad Vill Amlight, Nazia Sultana from Guwahati, Gurkirat Singh from Sirsa, Yashu Verma from Gazipur City, Kamaldeep Kaur from Ludhiana, Sachin Khatwani from Lucknow, Suvarna Vijay Bagul from Mumbai, Deepa Chauhan from Bangalore, Nayanjyoti Saika from Tinsukia, and Vineet Yadav from Lucknow.

There will be a lot of twists and turns which the home cooks will have to brave. Who will brave the kitchen fires and win the grand title of being a 'MasterChef India?' To know more, tune in to 'MasterChef India,' every Monday to Friday at 9:00 pm only on Sony Entertainment Television and streaming on Sony Liv.



Why Manasi was initially reluctant to play mom, but 'took it up as a challenge'

In actress and debutante producer Manasi Parekh's recent release 'Kutch Express', she plays a teenage mother. However, she had inhibitions taking on the role at first.

'Kutch Express' also stars Ratna Pathak Shah, Viraf Patel and 'Taare Zameen Par' fame Darsheel Safary. Manasi Parekh donned the producer's hat along with singer husband Parthiv Gohil.

Manasi, plays a teenage mom to actor Darsheel Safary on camera for the first time.

Talking about her role, she said: "I was initially reluctant to play the mother of a teen-



er in the film because I feared that I would be typecast. But in an age where a Vidya Balan plays a mother to an Amitabh Bachchan, I realised that the audience ultimately connects to the story and the performance and nothing else. So I immediately jumped onto the role & took it up as a challenge."

Manasi talks about her role: "The movie definitely revolves around the mother son relationship but with a twist. In this case, the mother is learning new things from the son and is getting awakened because of the son. So that was a beautiful relation to convey."

Anuj Saini to make his B'wood debut with 'Gandhi Godse-Ek Yudh'

Anuj Saini, who has predominantly worked in television commercials, is all set to make his debut in Hindi cinema with Rajkumar Santoshi's 'Gandhi Godse-Ek Yudh'. The debutant took to his social media to share his first look poster from the movie.

Anuj Saini sharing his first look from 'Gandhi Godse-Ek Yudh', said: "Dreams do come true. So so happy & emotional to share my first look from my first film #GandhiGodseEkYudh. Thank you so much everyone for your constant love & support. A big thank you to my direc-



tor Mr Raj Kumar Santoshi Sir @rajkumarsantoshi.official for believing in me. See you at a big screen near you. Save the date 26th January 2023." Anuj will

be playing the role of a young boy opposite Tanisha Santoshi and has an interesting yet crucial role in the film.

The film depicts the war of two opposite ideologies between Mahatma Gandhi and Nathuram Godse. Releasing in cinemas on January 25, 2023. 'Gandhi Godse - Ek Yudh' is set between 1947 and 1948. The film is produced by Manila Santoshi under Santoshi's Production House and Music is by famed composer A.R. Rahman with sound design by Resul Pookutty and it's set to be released in theatres on January 26, 2023.

Featuring five songs, Kangana calls 'Emergency' a 'musical drama'

Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut said that her upcoming film 'Emergency', based on the 1977 national Emergency, is a "musical drama" and has five songs in it.

On Saturday, Kangana took to her social media story and shared a BTS picture from the sets of 'Emergency' and captioned it: "Choreographer on set today.. The director can take it easy ha...by the way we have 5 songs in #emergency it's a musical drama."

"I don't know why people don't expect songs in Emergency...I love music, I might just have the longest song ever above 10 mins..For interval block..And great music tagging gvpkrakash and krutimahesh."

The Padmashree Actress had earlier informed through her social media page that Music composer G.V. Prakash and lyricist Manoj Muntashir have been roped in for the music of 'Emergency'. Kangana is not only playing the lead in the upcoming film but also producing and directing it.

'Emergency', directed by Kangana Ranaut, will also see her essaying the role of former Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi. The film will



tell the story of independent India's biggest political event when the Emergency was imposed in the country by her.

The 21-month period of Emergency was in effect from 1975 to 1977, officially issued by President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed under Article 352 of the Constitution because of prevailing "internal disturbance". It was withdrawn on March 21, 1977.

Popular Hindi words that are spoken globally

Hindi is spoken widely and is currently becoming a popular language. Vishwa Hindi Diwas is observed every year on January 10 to promote the Hindi language across the globe. &TV artists, including Aayudh Bhanushali (Krishna, Doosri Maa), Himani Shivpuri (Katori Amma, Happu Ki Ultan Paltan), and Shubhangi Atre (Angoori Bhabi, Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai), talk about some of the commonly used Hindi words across the globe. Shubhangi Atre, essaying Angoori Bhabi in &TV's Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai, says, "Hindi is a multifaceted language, often hailed for its simplicity and spontaneity. Several Hindi words, as well as other Indian words, are now a part Oxford dictionary and used common-



ly. On a trip to Indonesia, I saw many people aware of the language and its com-

mon word usage. Words such as Shukriya, Guru, Namaskar, Pyjama, Shanti, Yoga, Swagat etc., were spoken easily, and I could see how these words are a part of their lingo. It was truly amazing. Also, when I was exploring the street food of Indonesia, I came across the Indonesian term for tea, "chai," and it gave me a very homely feeling. "I am so glad that Hindi has made its way globally, and some Hindi and Sanskrit words have become very common and have increased in popularity."

Watch Doosri Maa at 8:00 pm, Happu Ki Ultan Paltan at 10:00 pm, and Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai at 10:30 pm, airing every Monday to Friday only on &TV!

'Riding a bicycle is a therapy for me'

Cycling, for many, is the preferred form of cardio workout that offers a wealth of benefits. Radio jockey turned actor Mohit Sharma, who essays the role of Manoj in &TV show Doosri Maa, who is also a professional cyclist, loves cycling and always takes time out from his busy schedule to pedal and finds it therapeutic.

Talking about his love for cycling Mohit Sharma, essaying Manoj in Doosri Maa says "During my school days, I used to enjoy cycling with my friends. We all had a great time roaming the streets.

However, as time passed, we all started riding bikes and driving cars. However, after the lockdown, I decided to relive my childhood memories by purchasing a bicycle. It was one of the wisest decisions I ever made. At that time, I got time to ride my cycle and explore the empty streets of Jaipur, old temples, monuments, and enjoys all



the infrastructure in my neighbourhood. I would have missed these beautiful sights sitting in my car. I used to search water bodies and natural areas on Google Maps near me and reach there on my cycle. It helped me

discover many things which I never knew before. It is during that time that I discovered a beautiful pond near my house. I also discovered a 300-year-old temple and met a Masterji from a nearby village who has lived

there since the year of independence. Thanks to cycling, I now know many such beautiful locations where I go, sit, and relax." Cycling is now not only his hobby but also a way of life to stay healthy. Mohit adds, "It is important to be physically fit and mentally strong.

As part of my fitness routine, I start my day with cycling. I chose cycling to stay fit physically, but it has now evolved into a therapy for me. Cycling relieves my stress and anxiety and makes me happy. When I am cycling, focusing on the road or my cadence helps me develop concentration and awareness of the present moment. I can cycle for more than 50 kilometers now and compete in various cycling marathons and races."

Watch Mohit Sharma as Manoj in Doosri Maa, airing every Monday to Friday at 8:00 pm only on &TV!

CROSSWORD

528



ACROSS

- Misfortunes
- Band instrument
- Characteristic
- Soak through
- Memo letters
- Therefore
- Liquid rock
- Engaged in festivities
- Eternally
- School playtime

DOWN

- Tiny landmass
- Take off
- Prying bar
- Scanty
- Mexican dish
- Client
- Hay unit
- Big monkey
- Menace
- Response
- Initial stake
- Sherbets
- Koppel and Kennedy
- Sis's sibling
- Fix
- Minus
- Small landmasses
- Fern "seed"
- Theme

- Opposite of WNW
- Plant life
- Covert
- Whatever
- Chores
- Cavern
- Unspoiled
- Political uprising
- Forest plant
- Old saying
- Many (2 wds.)
- Conduct
- Back tooth
- Audition tape
- Circular current

SOLUTION 527



Delayed debut, struggles made me hungrier: Surya

Rajkot, Jan 08 (PTI):

Suryakumar Yadav was well past 30 when he made his India debut, but the swashbuckling batter says his belated selection had only strengthened his resolve and made him even hungrier to succeed in top-flight.

Surya produced yet another incredible knock in the shortest format — a 51-ball 112 not out — as India outplayed Sri Lanka by 91 runs in the third T20I to secure a memorable 2-1 series win here on Saturday.

"It does make me even more hungrier (sic) now," Surya told India head coach Rahul Dravid when asked if the long wait has taught him to value his success a lot more.

"I mean the amount of domestic cricket I have played, I have always enjoyed playing that for my state side Mumbai and I always try to put up a show."

"Enjoyed batting even there as well. Yes it was a little challenging in the last few years but kept telling myself this is why you play this game, enjoy it, the passion for this game kept me driving so I just kept going."

The interaction between the two was organised by



BCCI TV. "It is lovely to have someone here with me who, as a young kid growing up, did not watch me bat. And I hope you didn't, I am sure you didn't," Dravid started the chat on a lighter note, to which Surya replied, "No,

I did watch (you bat)." Surya's batting is a stark contrast to the way Dravid played his cricket, and the former India captain was alluding to that only.

Dravid then asked if he could pick one or two knocks that he feels are his

best.

"It is actually difficult for me to pick any one innings... I enjoyed batting in all the difficult situations where I went into bat. I just enjoyed myself, whatever I did in the last one year. I have been doing the same thing again."

"As I said before as well, I just try to enjoy and express myself as much as possible. In those difficult situations, teams try to pull the game off. I try to take the game on. If it works well for me and the team, I'm happy," said Surya.

The middle-order batter's century was his third in the format in just seven months, making him the first player in the history of the game to score three T20I hundreds when not opening the batting.

So how many shots from his bat are pre-determined?

"I mean obviously in this format you have to be a little bit pre-determined, and at the same time you have to have another stroke as well if the bowler is a step ahead of you during that time. But yes, I try to play to the field what fielders are in, what bowler can bowl at that time and it works out."

South Africa hang on to draw in 3rd Test against Australia

Sydney, Jan 08 (AP):

Australia started the day needing 14 wickets for an unlikely victory and a South African series clean sweep but could only muster six as the Proteas batting finally showed some grit to force a draw in the third Test at at Sydney Cricket Ground.

The hosts toiled under some welcome sun in a match that was frequently impacted by weather delays and while it achieved its first aim on Sunday of enforcing the follow on after bowling South Africa out for 255, further inroads proved few and far between.

At stumps South Africa was 106-2 in its second innings having lost Dean Elgar again cheaply to complete a miserable series for the skipper and Heinrich Klaasen was the only wicket to fall in the final session.

Josh Hazlewood took five wickets over the two South Africa innings in his return to the team after missing three tests with injury, while Pat Cummins bowled with menace throughout the final day to claim four wickets.

Earlier, Australia ended South Africa's first in-



Australia's captain Pat Cummins (C) holds the trophy as he poses with team mates after the third cricket Test match between Australia and South Africa at the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) in Sydney on January 8.

nings rearguard resistance shortly after lunch and enforced the follow-on.

As he did in the first innings Cummins (1-16) made the initial breakthrough, again having Elgar (10) caught down the leg side.

It completed a miserable series for the Proteas skipper who made just 56 runs in six innings after scores of 3, 2, 26, 0, 15, 10 for an average of just over 9. After surviving multiple televi-

sion reviews from a luckless Nathan Lyon, Heinrich Klaasen's luck finally ran out when Hazlewood (1-9) found a way through the batter's defense to bowl him for 35.

Sarel Erwee (42 not out) and Temba Bavuma (17 not out) saw the tourists to the close without further loss and South Africa's first drawn test in 47 matches.

Earlier Sunday, Hazlewood took 4-48 as the

host's eventually broke South Africa's resistance and bowled them out for 255, still 20 runs short of the follow-on target despite it being their highest score of the series.

Marco Jansen took several fearsome body blows from Cummins early in the day in a courageous innings of 11 from 78 balls before his resistance was finally ended from the unlikely source of Travis Head's part-time spin.

Sabalenka wins women's final at Adelaide International

Adelaide, Jan 08 (AP):

Second-seeded Aryna Sabalenka claimed her 11th WTA Tour singles title but her first in almost two years when she overcame qualifier Linda Noskova 6-2 7-6 (4) in the women's final at the Adelaide International.

In doing so she ended an extraordinary run by the 18-year-old Noskova who beat third-seeded Daria Kasatkina and former Australian Open champion Viktoriya Asarenka in the main draw on the way to her first final.

Sabalenka didn't drop a set all week and seemed set for another comfortable win when she took out the first set on Sunday. But Noskova was much more competitive in the second, holding serve and putting pressure on Sabalenka's serve, especially with her powerful backhand returns.

"I want to congratulate (Noskova) on an amazing week," Sabalenka said. "I think you're going to have



a great future and 100 percent appear in many more finals." Sabalenka's last single title came in Madrid in May 2021 but she went without a title in 2022 despite reaching three finals. She ended the year ranked fifth after qualifying for the season-ending WTA Finals in Fort Worth where she lost in the final to Caroline Garcia.

Sabalenka now has won three tournaments in the first week of a season after Shenzhen in 2019 and Abu Dhabi in 2021.

Davis beats Garcia by TKO, retains WBA lightweight title

Washington, Jan 08 (AP):

Gervonta Davis defended his WBA world lightweight championship, beating Hector Luis Garcia by TKO early Sunday morning after eight rounds.

Davis shrugged off a slow start to improve to 28-0 with 26 KOs and hand Garcia his first professional loss in his 17th match. Garcia held in tough with Davis early but could not answer the bell for the ninth round.

The Baltimore native fighting in his second hometown is scheduled to face Ryan Garcia in April in one of boxing's most anticipated showdowns of the year.

But first, "Tank" Davis had to get through Garcia, the Dominican who he said "earned his spot" thanks to a strong 2022.

After the sellout crowd of 19,731 waited until just before 1 a.m. for the start



Gervonta Davis punches Hector Luis Garcia in their WBA World Lightweight Championship bout at Capital One Arena in Washington, DC.

of the main event, Davis and Garcia waited a little longer to get going, starting with a couple of low-event rounds and very few punches thrown. Davis found his groove in the fourth round, landing several jabs and bringing fans to their feet.

An altercation in the stands ringside led the

referee to stop the action midway through the eighth round, as Davis and Garcia were distracted by the disturbance. The fight resumed for more than a minute, and Davis put on a show until the bell, landing enough blows to end the match.

The fight headlined Showtime's first major

event at the building now known as Capital One Arena since Mike Tyson's final bout in 2005 against Kevin McBride.

It was in danger of being called off when Davis was arrested and charged with domestic violence in late December, before the woman who called police put out a statement on social media days later saying Davis "did not harm me or our daughter."

Davis said he was not worried about the fight not happening, saying he just wanted to clear his name.

In the co-feature, Jaron "Boots" Ennis won the interim IBF welterweight championship by unanimous decision against Ukraine's Karen Chukhadzian, going the distance for the first time in his career to remain unbeaten at 30-0. The fast-rising Philadelphia native had never gone beyond six rounds before.

Naomi Osaka withdraws from Australian Open

Melbourne, Jan 08 (AP):

Two-time champion Naomi Osaka has confirmed she will not play at the Australian Open, adding her name to a growing list of notable withdrawals.

Organizers confirmed in a tweet on Sunday that Japan's Osaka, the Open champion in 2019 and 2021, will not be playing in Melbourne.

"Naomi Osaka has withdrawn from the Australian Open. We will miss her at #AO2023," the tweet said.

The 25-year-old Osaka's ranking has slipped to 47 and she hasn't played since September after withdrawing during the second round in Tokyo. She won her first round match at that tournament when Australia's Daria Saville withdrew after one game with a knee injury.

Osaka won only one completed match since May and was beaten in the first round of her three previous tournaments, including the US Open at



which she also is a two-time champion.

Last week she posted pictures on social media of a trip to Europe with her United States rapper boyfriend Cordae and had been considered unlikely to play in the first Grand Slam of the season.

Ukraine's Dayana Yastremska has been promoted to the main draw in her place.

Osaka took a mental health break after missing the 2021 French Open and later said she had been struggling with depression and anxiety for several years. Her absence from Melbourne adds to uncertainty over when or if she will resume her career.

Juventus extends winning run to 8 with win over Udinese



Juventus' Italian forward Federico Chiesa (R) challenges Udinese's Brazilian defender Rodrigo Becao during the Italian Serie A football match between Juventus and Udinese at the Juventus stadium in Turin.

Milan, Jan 08 (AP):

Juventus stretched its winning streak to eight matches when it scraped past Udinese 1-0 in Serie A. Danilo scored four minutes from time thanks to a fabulous assist from Federico Chiesa. Massimiliano Allegri's team has also not conceded a goal in its past eight matches despite being

rocked by a bookkeeping scandal during the break when the club's board of directors resigned en masse and the Turin prosecutor's office requested indictments.

Juventus moved into second place in Serie A, a point above defending champion AC Milan, which hosts Roma on Sunday. Inter Milan was three points behind Juventus

after being held to 2-2 at Silvio Berlusconi's Monza. The Bianconeri were four points behind Serie A leader Napoli, which visits Sampdoria on Sunday. The two meet in Naples on Friday. "There's a good game waiting for us but we have to take it one step at a time," Allegri said.

"Today, what mattered was to win, to consolidate our position in the top four: 'Napoli is going at an infernal pace. We'll keep a low profile. Seasons are decided in the last two months.' There was a moving tribute to Gianluca Vialli before kickoff in Turin as well as a minute's silence, which preceded all matches in Serie A this weekend.

Vialli, who died on Friday, helped Juventus to a Serie A title and the European Cup during a four-year stint. "This is a win for him," Chiesa said. "The Juventus players also wore black armbands, while there were many banners in the stands dedicated to Vialli as well as chants from the supporters."

Nehra made a big difference to my captaincy at GT: Pandya

Rajkot, Jan 08 (PTI):

There has been no looking back for Hardik Pandya since he led Gujarat Titans to an IPL triumph in their maiden appearance last year, and the new Indian T20I skipper credits his franchise coach Ashish Nehra for making "a big difference" to his captaincy.

Coming back from a long injury layoff, the premier all-rounder was made the Gujarat skipper in a bold move by the first-timers.

But Pandya, who had led only once at senior level in a tour game against Australia, proved his detractors wrong and led by example.

"What has been very important from Gujarat point of view is the kind of coach I worked with. Ashish Nehra made a big difference in my life, because of our mindsets. We might be two different personalities, but we have very similar cricketing thoughts," Pandya said after leading India to a 2-1



India's captain Hardik Pandya carries the champions trophy at the end of the third Twenty20 international cricket match between India and Sri Lanka at the Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium in Rajkot.

series win over Sri Lanka here on Saturday. "Because I was with him, it added value to my captaincy."

Newcastle humbled in FA Cup again

London, Jan 08 (AP):

Even having club soccer's richest owners cannot improve Newcastle's pitiful record in the FA Cup. Newcastle was humbled by a lower-league opponent in the third round of the famous old competition for the second straight year under its Saudi owners, losing at third-tier Sheffield Wednesday 2-1 on Saturday.

At the same stage last year, Newcastle was beaten at home by another third-tier club, Cambridge United. Yet the northeast team was still in the early days of the new era then.

Now, it is a rising force in the Premier League, in third place and fighting to reach the Champions League.



Sheffield Wednesday's English striker Michael Smith (L) vies with Newcastle United's English midfielder Sean Longstaff (R) during the English FA Cup third round football match between Sheffield Wednesday and Newcastle United at Hillsborough Stadium in Sheffield, northern England.

because top-flight survival is their priority.

Newcastle's elimination was a big surprise, with Josh Windass scoring for Sheffield Wednesday in the 52nd and 65th minutes

before Bruno Guimaraes pulled one back in the 69th. Newcastle has advanced beyond the fourth round of the FA Cup only once since 2006 in the 2019-20 season.

'Naga solution should come fast, election is nearing'

Dimapur (Nagaland), Jan 08 (PTT):

The Janata Dal (United) has said that the solution to the decades-old Naga political issue should come at the earliest so that the process of the upcoming assembly polls in Nagaland can be held on schedule. The mandate of the 2018 polls was 'Election for Solution', JD(U) Rajya Sabha MP, Aneel Prasad Hegde, said here.

The JD(U) believes that the reason for the failure to resolve the Naga political issue is "political instability" in the northeastern state, Hegde said on Saturday. The resolution for the problem is fundamental for lasting peace



Aneel Prasad Hegde

and prosperity of the Nagas, he said. To find a solution to the issue, the Centre and the NSCN(IM) signed a framework agreement on August 3, 2015, in presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The framework agree-

ment came after over 80 rounds of negotiations spanning 18 years, with the first breakthrough in 1997 when the ceasefire agreement was sealed after decades of insurgency in Nagaland which started soon after Independence in 1947.

Besides the framework agreement with the NSCN(IM), the Centre also inked an Agreed Position with Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs) comprising seven organisations (NNPGs) in December 2017.

However, the final solution is yet to see the light of the day mainly because of the unwillingness of the government to accept

the NSCN(IM)'s persistent demand for a separate flag and constitution. After a long gap, talks between the two sides began in September last year.

Hegde said demanding President's Rule in Nagaland, instead of holding elections and providing a stable government, was not appropriate as the need of the hour is the solution to the vexed problem. The Rising People's Party (RPP), a Nagaland political outfit formed in 2021, last month urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to impose President's rule, alleging that the state has been the worst performer under several parameters.

LOW VISIBILITY



A commuter walks on a bridge amid low visibility due to a thick layer of fog on a cold winter morning, at New Town in Kolkata, Sunday.

UNIQUE INITIATIVE

School principal offers free air travel to students

Figuring in Board exam merit list

Chandigarh, Jan 08 (PTT):

When four students of a government school in Punjab's Ferozepur district featured in the merit list of the state board exams, ending a 12-year wait, the overjoyed principal did not hesitate to fulfil their wish of air travel.

Rakesh Sharma, the principal of Shaheed Gurdas Ram Memorial Senior Secondary School (Girls), at Zira in Ferozepur, is paying for the air travel expenses of students from his own pocket.

According to Sharma, the students of the 10th

and 12th classes of the school had not been making it to the merit list of the Punjab School Education Board exams for the last 12 years.

To motivate students to work hard on their studies, Sharma asked them about their wishes which he would fulfil if they make the cut.

"The students wished for 'Jahaaz da jhota' (travel by air) and I told them it is my commitment to fulfil their wish," Sharma said.

"I announced in a prayer meeting that if any student of 10th or 12th class secures merit positions in board exams, I will ensure

air travel for any destination of their choice within the country," he added.

Most of the students of the school belong to poor and middle-class families.

"By the grace of God, four students - two of 10th class and two of 12th class - secured merit positions in the final exams," an elated Sharma said.

"Two twelfth-class students, Bhajanpreet Kaur and Simranjeet Kaur, went to Goa from Amritsar on a flight in November last year. Both of them attended the India International Innovation and Invention Expo (INEX-2022) in Goa," Sharma said.

International Kite Festival inaugurated

● 68 countries to participate

Ahmedabad, Jan 08 (PTT):

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel on Sunday inaugurated the International Kite Festival 2023 here, which will see the participation of around 125 kite flyers from 68 countries based on the G-20 theme "One Earth, One Family, One Future".

Apart from international participants, 65 kite flyers from 14 states in India and 660 from different parts of the state will also take part in the week-long event, which will culminate on January 14.

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, the kite of development of Gujarat has been crossing new heights for two consecutive decades," Patel said while inaugurating the event at Sabarmati riverfront here.

The kite festival is an opportunity to touch the sky and reach new heights. Kites are a symbol of progress, prosperity, and flight, he said.

Patel further said the kite industry has got a boost under Modi's leadership when the latter was the chief minister, and has grown from a Rs 8-10 crore industry some two decades ago to Rs 625 crore one, and has given employment to 1.30 lakh people.

UP Govt launches campaign to make urban bodies

On par with global standards

Lucknow, Jan 08 (PTT):

The Uttar Pradesh government has launched a statewide 100-day 'UP Global City' campaign to make urban bodies of the state on par with global standards, an official release said on Sunday. The campaign was launched by Urban Development Minister Arvind Kumar Sharma on Saturday.

"The campaign, launched in all 762 urban bodies of the state, looks at improving cleanliness and air quality, ensuring proper garbage disposal, beautification and installation of adequate signages on roads, among others, to make the urban

system of the state on par with global standards," the release said. During the campaign, work on increasing urban facilities and beautifying the cities will be done on a war footing in all the districts of the state.

Sharma said Global Investors Summit will be organised in the state in February as well as G-20 events in which thousands of people, including heads of state, diplomats, rulers, administrators, industrialists and other dignitaries, will participate.

He also said that a three-month 'Swachh Dhaba' campaign is being run from January to

March, 2023 for disposing the garbage coming out of dhabas, restaurants, hotels and other small 'gumtis' in the state.

"Similarly, from January 14 to 24, under the 'Swachh Virasat Abhiyan', cleanliness work will be taken up in all tourist and historical places, monuments and religious places with people's participation," the minister said.

"... from February 1 to March 31, a campaign will be launched for door-to-door garbage collection in the state. Besides, a marathon race will be organised on January 21 in the context of the G-20 conference," he added.

CELEBRATION TIME



Kozhikode team celebrates with the trophy after being adjudged the overall champions during the 61st Kerala School Kalosavam, in Kozhikode, Saturday evening.

TN CM bats for reviving Sethusamudram project

● To achieve economic prosperity

Chennai, Jan 08 (PTT):

The ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu has called for reviving the Sethusamudram Ship Canal project in the wake of the Centre's claim on the presence of the real form of Ram Setu in Rameswaram.

Chief Minister M K Stalin batted for reviving the project for economic prosperity of the nation and enhancing the freight handling capacity of Indian ports.

The project, which was started on July 2, 2005 at an estimated cost of Rs 2,500 crore, came to a

standstill after protests by environmentalists and Hindu activists against the demolition of the Ram Setu, a symbol of heritage.

The DMK had in the run-up to the 2021 Assembly election promised to complete the project when it comes to power for bringing economic benefits for southern Tamil Nadu.

Accusing the BJP government at the Centre of shelving the project under religious pretext, the Chief Minister said there would have been tremendous development had the project launched during the UPA regime been allowed.

"You know who stopped the Sethusamudram ship

canal project. It was the BJP. Union Minister Jitendra Singh had informed the Rajya Sabha that it can't be said for sure that Ram Setu existed in Rameswaram," he said after launching the autobiography of former Union minister and senior DMK leader T R Baalu, 'Pathaimara Payanam', here on Saturday night.

Baalu was the key force behind the Centre launching the project. "Had this project not been shelved, then Tamil Nadu would have benefited a lot," Stalin claimed at the event. "Not only Tamil Nadu but the project would have been the pride of India," he said.

YOUTH PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS

Thakur asks young diaspora to innovate, invest in India

Indore, Jan 08 (PTT):

Union Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs Minister Anurag Thakur on Sunday appealed to the young Indian diaspora to innovate, invest and initiate their ideas in India. Speaking at the inaugural function of the Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) as part of commencement of the three-day PBD convention, Thakur said India became the fifth largest economy in the world in 2022 by overtaking those who ruled the country for 200 years.

Australia's Member of Parliament Zaneta Mascarenhas was the guest of honour at the Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar were also present. Addressing the gathering, Thakur urged the young Indian diaspora to "innovate, invest and initiate ideas in India".

In the year gone by, India became the third largest nation with start-ups, he said. When the world was fighting the pandemic, Indian youth saw an opportunity for launching start-ups, he added. The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention is being held in physical mode for the first time since 2019. The last PBD convention in 2021 was held virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Afghan national stranded abroad without visa

■ For 2 yrs
■ Family in India awaits his return for 'happily ever after' of two years

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 08 (PTT):

We miss him a lot, we want him to join us soon - a heartbreaking plea to the Indian government by a nine-year-old girl awaiting return of her father, an Afghan national and a post-doctoral fellow in the University of Kerala who is stranded abroad for over two years for want of visa, so that they can live "happily ever after".

Gulabmir Rahmany, a post-doctoral fellow in the Sociology department of

the university, went to Afghanistan in 2020 to renew his visa and to collect data in connection with his post-doctoral research on that country. Unfortunately for him, the United States troops stationed there since 2001 began their withdrawal in 2020 and the Taliban took over the country.

What was supposed to be a routine exercise of visa renewal, turned into a nightmare for Rahmany's family as the Indian government cancelled visas of those in Afghanistan in view of the change in the geopolitical scenario and resultantly, he was stranded there. He also attempted to come to India via Iran, but has had no luck till now and is still waiting in Tehran for nearly an year to secure a visa.

"My research topic was related to Afghanistan

and I went there for data collection. I also had to renew my visa. However, the political situation changed in Afghanistan and I was stranded there," Rahmany said.

"I got a visa to Iran and went there so that I can go back to India from there. But I am stranded in Tehran in Iran for nearly a year as the Indian embassy is refusing to issue me a visa," he said while speaking to PTI from Iran on a WhatsApp call which was frequently disconnected due to poor internet connectivity.

Professor Sabu Joseph, Director of the varsity's Centre for Global Academics (CGA), who is aware of Rahmany's predicament, said that while stranded abroad, his family - wife and three kids - were having a tough time here. Rahmany's wife,

Zamzama, who is pursuing PhD in Physics from University of Kerala, narrated the ordeal she has undergone while trying to manage her studies, household chores and take care of her children's needs in the absence of her husband in the last two years.

"I got infected with COVID-19 and had to be quarantined at home as there was no one to take care of my children. I have to do all household chores, take the children to hospital when required, go buy groceries, all that I have to do on my own along with my studies. I cannot do research from home as I also have lab work.

"It is not easy. I am always tired. I have health issues. Sometimes I want to leave everything and go away but that is not possible," she said with an ex-

asperated laugh. "We miss him a lot. We are not able to speak to him properly due to internet issues there. Our mother cannot take care of us on her own. We want him to join us soon, so that we can live happily ever after," Rahmany's nine-year-old daughter, amidst sobs, said.

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