

BRIEF



Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Supriya Sule's saree catches fire during an event, in Pune, Sunday.

Sule escapes

Pune: Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) MP Supriya Sule's saree accidentally caught fire during an event in Maharashtra's Pune on Sunday. In a statement, Sule later said that she is safe and there was no reason to worry. The Baramati MP was at an event in Hinjawadi to inaugurate a karate competition, when her saree caught fire while she was garlanding a small statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. "At the inauguration of a karate competition, my saree accidentally caught fire."

Technical glitch

Dhar (MP): The helicopter carrying Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday landed in Manawar town of Dhar district from where it had taken off sometime back due to a technical glitch, police said.

Woman rescued

Banihal/Jammu: Responding swiftly to a distress call, Army troops waded through four to six feet snow for over 14 kms to evacuate a pregnant woman to hospital in Ramban district of Jammu and Kashmir, a defence spokesperson said on Sunday.

Weather
High 29 Low 14

68 killed in Yeti Airline plane crash

Fate of 5 Indians not known
Kathmandu, Jan 15 (PTD):

At least 68 people were killed when a Nepalese passenger plane with 72 people onboard, including five Indians, crashed into a river gorge while landing at the newly-opened airport in central Nepal's resort city of Pokhara on Sunday in the country's deadliest plane crash in more than 30 years.

Yeti Airlines' 9N-ANC ATR-72 aircraft took off from Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport at 10:33 am and crashed on the bank of

Nepalese rescue workers and civilians gather around the wreckage of a passenger plane that crashed in Pokhara, Nepal, Sunday.



the Seti River between the old airport and the new airport minutes before landing, according to the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN).

A total of 68 passengers and four crew members were on board the aircraft. The flight time between Kathmandu and Pokhara is 25 minutes.

"So far, dead bodies of 68 people have been recovered from the crash site," an official at the Search and Rescue Coordination Committee of the CAAN told PTI over the phone.

However, the dead bodies are yet to be identified, he added. Efforts are on to recover four more bodies, he said.

CBI arrests additional DRM

Bribery case
New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTD)

The CBI has arrested an additional divisional railway manager posted in Guwahati and six others, including a middleman and a hawala operator, in an alleged Rs 50-lakh bribery case, officials said on Sunday. Jitendra Pal Singh, a 1997-batch Indian Railways Service officer, was arrested after a person identified as Hari Om was caught while allegedly accepting the bribe on behalf of the officer, they said. "It was alleged that the accused (Singh) had entered into a conspiracy with the

intention of showing undue favours to private contractors for awarding of contract agreements, preparation of measurement book, processing of running account bills, early release of payment against pending bills and for the ongoing work of construction in Northeast Frontier Railway as well as for the early release of security deposits and bank guarantees," a CBI spokesperson said in a statement. The CBI has alleged that Singh regularly demanded and accepted bribes from various contractors when he was posted as chief engineer, construction, in New Jalpaiguri.

SC to hear on Monday plea on Joshimath subsidence

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTD):

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a plea seeking the court's intervention to declare the crisis in Uttarakhand's Joshimath as a national disaster.

According to the cause list of January 16 uploaded on the apex court website, a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices P S Narasimha and J B Pardiwala would hear the petition filed by Swami

Avimuktshwaranand Saraswati. Joshimath, the gateway to famous pilgrimage sites like Badrinath and Hemkund Sahib and international skiing destination Auli, is facing a major challenge due to land subsidence.

Joshimath is sinking gradually with huge cracks developing in houses, on roads and fields. Many houses have tilted and are sinking, locals said. On January 10, the top court had refused urgent hearing of the plea,

saying there are "democratically elected institutions" to deal with the situation and all important matters should not come to it. It had listed Saraswati's plea for hearing on January 16.

"Everything important need not come to us. There are democratically elected institutions to look into it. We will list it on January 16," the CJI had said, after the counsel appearing for the petitioner had mentioned the plea and sought its urgent listing.

'I belong to middle class, understand their pressures'

Sitharaman days before Budget
New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTD)

Ahead of the Union Budget, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Sunday that she was aware of the pressures of the middle class but also recalled that the present government has not imposed any fresh taxes on them.

Sitharaman will present Union Budget for 2023-24 in the Lok Sabha on February 1 amid expectations that the



government will raise the income tax limit and provide relief to the middle class taxpayers, besides others. "I too belong to the middle class so I can understand the pressures of the middle class. I identify myself with the middle class so I know," she said while

speaking at a function organised by the Panchjanya magazine, an RSS-associated weekly.

In the same breath, the minister reminded the audience that the present Modi government has not imposed any fresh taxes on the middle class. Also, she added, income of up to Rs 5 lakh is exempt from the income tax.

She said the government has taken various measures like developing the metro rail network in 27 cities and building 100 smart cities to promote ease of living.

Protest against vandalism of Chh'garh church

Ranchi, Jan 15 (PTD):

Hundreds of people from the Christian community in Ranchi took to the streets on Sunday in protest against the alleged attack on Christians in Jharkhand and vandalism of a church in neighbouring Chhattisgarh. Men and women, under the aegis of the Jharkhand Christian Youth Association (JCYA), took out the rally from GEL Church compound here to the Morabadi ground. The placards had messages such as "stop the attack on churches" and "stop dividing in the name of religion".

MAKAR SANKRANTI FESTIVAL



People fly kites on the bank of the River Yamuna behind Taj Mahal celebrating Makar Sankranti festival, in Agra, Sunday.

Airports under UDAN scheme to get comprehensive armed security cover

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTD)

More than 60 airports operational in tier-two and tier-three cities under the Centre's regional connectivity scheme UDAN will soon be brought under a comprehensive anti-terror security cover of armed CISF personnel with the deployment of around 1,650 troops, officials said.

The proposal is awaiting final policy sanction from the home ministry. The bu-

reau of civil aviation security (BCAS), in consultation with the ministry of civil aviation and the CISF, finalised the proposal for the "very important security measure" required for the safety of passengers taking flights from small air terminals across India.

Some airports such as Shimla which are under the regional connectivity scheme, are being guarded by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) while

the rest are secured by various state police forces or their special armed units and there is no uniform policy.

The regional connectivity scheme was launched under the name of UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) on October 21, 2016, by the Union government to stimulate regional air connectivity and make air travel affordable to the masses residing in tier-2 and tier-3 cities and towns. The civil aviation

ministry is the regulating agency while the Airports Authority of India (AAI) is responsible for implementing the ambitious scheme of the Narendra Modi government. According to the fresh blueprint accessed by PTI, 57 security personnel will be deployed at each of the airports operational under the UDAN scheme, with 27 armed personnel drawn from the CISF and the rest sourced from certified private security agencies.

EC to demonstrate remote voting machine to parties on Monday

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTD)

The Election Commission will showcase the remote electronic voting machine (RVM) prototype for migrant voters to representatives of political parties on Monday.

The poll panel has invited eight recognised national parties and 57 recognised state parties for a demonstration on Monday morning.

The letter states that they have been invited for a "discussion on improving voter participation of domestic migrants using remote voting." During the demonstration of the remote EVM, members of EC's Technical Expert Committee will also be present. While inviting parties for the demonstration of the prototype, the poll panel had also issued a concept note on the technology. Parties were also asked to give in writing their views by end of January on issues such as changes required on the law to allow use of RVM.

If implemented after stakeholder consultations, migrant voters do not need to travel to their home districts to exercise their franchise.

Terminology counting of votes cast at remote booths and their trans-

Most opposition parties have decided to oppose proposal: Digvijaya

New Delhi: Most of the Opposition parties have decided to oppose the Election Commission's proposal on remote electronic voting machine (RVM) as it is sketchy and not concrete, senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh said on Sunday. He made the remarks after a meeting of Opposition parties that was attended by leaders of the Congress, JD(U), CPI, CPI(M), National Conference, JMM among others. Singh said there are huge political anomalies in the proposal for remote voting machine with things like the definition of migrant labourers not clear. The meeting came a day before the Election Commission showcases the remote electronic voting machine (RVM) prototype for migrant voters to representatives of political parties.

mission to the returning officer in other states as a "technological challenge", Election Commission officials had earlier said RVMs will be developed as "a robust, failproof and efficient stand-alone system" based on existing electronic voting machines and will not be connected to the internet.

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Girl commits suicide at ophthalmology clinic in Sector 6

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 15: A 20-year-old girl allegedly committed suicide by hanging self at an ophthalmology clinic in A-Market, Sector 6. The girl was found hanging on the first floor of the clinic. She took this extreme step after an altercation with her boyfriend on mobile phone. Police have lodged a case and investigations are on.



same clinic.

According to information, the incident occurred at Dr Verma's Eye Clinic in A-Market, Sector 6. The deceased is identified as Shilpi Thakur (20). She was working at Verma's clinic for the last three months. Her elder sister Shweta also works in the

On Saturday evening while closing the clinic, Shweta tried to contact her sister but she did not receive the call. Believing that Shilpi would have returned home, Shweta closed the clinic and went home. When she did not find her younger sister at



home, the family started searching for her.

Later they informed Dr Verma that Shilpi was missing. As Shilpi also had a set of keys of the clinic, the family and Doctor Verma reached the clinic. They made a call on Shilpi's mobile and soon realised that it was

ringing on the first floor of the clinic.

They moved to the first floor of the clinic and found Shilpi hanging. On information, a police team reached the spot and the body was sent for autopsy after preparing an inquest. Further investigations are on.

Legal Aid Defense Counsel System inauguration today

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 15: On the instructions of National Legal Services Authority New Delhi and Chhattisgarh State Legal Services Authority Bilaspur, Legal Aid Defense Counsel office will be inaugurated on January 16. Chief Justice / Chief Patron and Executive Chairman, Chhattisgarh State Legal Services Authority and Justices will virtually join this programme from the video conferencing room of Chhattisgarh High Court.

The Legal Aid Defense Counsel office has been set up separately in the Nyay Sadan of the District Legal Services Authority. Chhattisgarh State Legal Services Authority issued

an order for contractual appointment of Chief / Deputy / Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsel for the Legal Aid Defense Counsel system.

In compliance with the said order, a total of 14 applications for Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel, 33 applications for Deputy Chief Legal Aid Counsel and 101 applications for Assistant Legal Aid and Defense Counsel were received.

Chhattisgarh State Legal Services Authority Bilaspur has selected Sudarshan Singh Mahalwar as Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel; K Jagapati Rao as Deputy Chief Legal Aid and Defense Counsel; Kamal Kishore Verma as Deputy Chief Legal Aid and

Defense Counsel; Om Chauhan as Assistant Legal Aid and Defense Counsel; Saurabh Shendre as Assistant Legal Aid and Defense Counsel and Deepmala Magendra as Assistant Legal Aid and Defense Counsel.

The selected counsels will be present in the office of the Legal Aid Defense Counsel System established in the District Legal Services Authority, Durg on working days and will work for the parties by providing legal advice and legal assistance.

Especially in criminal cases, on demand by the needy party, they will represent them as advocates and will provide their services by appearing in the court for quick redressal. District Legal Services

Authority Secretary Ashish Dahariya informed that the first National Lok Adalat of the year 2023 is being organized on February 11, 2023. In addition to the court cases in the National Lok Adalat, the cases of Family Court, Labor Court, Permanent Public Utility Lok Adalat, Revenue Courts will be kept for hearing.

Cases of the amount recoverable by Electricity Department, Telecom Department, Municipal Corporation, Financial Institution and pre litigation cases will also be heard. Pre-sitting is being organized for the pre-litigation cases before listing them for hearing in Lok Adalat. Pre-sitting will be held from February 01 to 03.

30 youth depart for Mysore under Tribal Youth Exchange Programme



Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 15: Under the 14th Tribal Youth Exchange Programme, Border Security Force has selected and sent 30 tribal youth including 15 boys and 15 girls from Kanker for a tour to Mysore. It is the first group of tribal youth sent on tour of other cities under this programme.

The group of 15 boys and 15 girls is being accompanied by one female and two male officers / personnel of Border Security Force. BSF is organis-

ing fourteen such tours this year. Under this exposure visit, the tribal youth will be able to understand the cultural ethos, language, lifestyles of the people depicting Socio-economic and Cultural Development and Development process unity in the diversity aspect of our national life.

They will be exposed to the technological and industrial advancement that have taken place in different states of the country with focus on various developmental activities, skill development, educational and

employment opportunities available there.

They will be sensitized about their rich traditional & cultural heritage. This programme will help the tribal youth to develop emotional linkages with their peer groups in other parts of the country and enhance their self esteem. IG Indraj Singh (BSF Frontier Headquarters, Special Operations, Chhattisgarh) and DIG (Intelligence) Dinesh Murmu have extended greetings and best wishes to the selected youth.

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 15: In house facilities built in house in SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant's Plate Mill for enhancing production volumes of thicker plates to make the most of market opportunities was inaugurated by Director in charge, BSP Anirban Dasgupta on January 14, 2023. Plate Mill of SAIL-Bhilai is known worldwide for producing quality plates at par with international standards. The Mill currently produces plates in thickness sizes from 10 mm to 120 mm.

The Mill that produces a wide range of both garden variety and special steel plates has supplied special naval grade plates for aircraft carrier INS Vikrant and other warships of Indian Navy. The Mill has also rolled out plates in desired thickness for use in



satellite launch vehicles of India's Space Mission.

With rapid growth being witnessed in infrastructure sector involving construction of tall and heavy structures, demand for thicker plates i.e. thickness more than 40 mm has increased. Moreover, thicker grade of plates fetches better net sales realisation (NSR) per tonne. In order to make the most of oppor-

tunities, both in domestic and export market, Team Plate Mill has augmented its facility and developed an alternative route for enhancing production volumes of thicker plates.

At present, Plate Mill is producing upto 10,000 T of heavy plates per month. For enhancing the production, Plate Mill has under the guidance of Anirban Dasgupta, Director 1/c

BSP and Anjani Kumar, ED (Works) improved its facilities for production of heavy plates.

Plate Mill Team led by RK Bisare, CGM (Plate Mill), extended the charging side roll tables of Cooling Bed- 5 by 15 meters to handle Heavy Plates, exclusively. Further, fabrication of new boom was done for lifting of plates with mag-

net from extended roll table and transporting to trailers for further finishing at Shipping Bay.

In the Shipping bay, a bed for gas cutting of plates, inspection bed with full UT facilities has been added for finishing of enhanced production volumes and despatch of heavy plates. This feat has been achieved under Bisare's leadership and with support of associated shops and departments in record time of 45 days.

On January 14, 2023, Director 1/c BSP Dasgupta inaugurated and dedicated the facilities for operation. Dasgupta also applauded the exemplary efforts of Mechanical Shops, Civil Engineering Department, EDD, Structural Shop and Machine Shops (MARS) in completing the challenging job with in house facilities and expertise in record time.

NSS Unit of Science College takes out cycle rally

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 15: The National Service Scheme Unit of Durg Science College organised a cycle rally to mark the occasion of National Youth Day, the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda with the aim of inspiring people to use cycle as a means of communitating so as to remain young forever.

The use of cycle not only saves energy but also helps the body to remain fit and healthy. Therefore, one should use cycle as regularly as possible. The rally was flagged off by Dr Rajendra Choubey, Principal in-



charge of the college. Under the guidance and inspiration of the Principal, Programme Officer Prof Janendra Dewan, the cycle rally reached Hemchand Yadav University amidst slogans of National Service Scheme reverberating the entire route. Registrar Bhupendra Kuldeep, Dr

Preeti Lal addressed the rally at Hemchand Yadav University.

The duo in their address exhorted the NSS students and added that it being the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, the source of inspiration for youth, they take a resolution that to try to give their

best for the nation and the society. Thereafter, the rally reached Malviya Nagar Square and then covering Raipur Naka, the rally reached back to the College.

A lecture was organised there at the College on the contribution of Swami Vivekananda in which the students of National

Service Scheme Unit, Sanskrit Department, Yoga Department, Botany, Psychology Department participated enthusiastically. Senior professors of the college Dr AK Khan, Dr Abhinav Surana, Dr Shakeel Hussain, Dr Rakesh Tiwari, Dr Prachi Singh, Dr Neera Singh, Dr Shailesh Chandrakar were present. NSS Officer Prof Janendra Dewan expressed gratitude to all the guests. Senior volunteers Paras, Mridul Nirmal, Prashant, Khumendra Sahu, Ashish, Aanchal, Aastha extended valuable support in making the programme successful.

Ramteke shares problems of SC / ST officers with Parliamentary Committee



Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 15: The Parliamentary Committee on Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes conducted a meeting with the representatives from all the 16 units of SAIL at Panaji in Goa during January 11 to 13. Parliamentary Committee President and Lok Sabha MP Kirit Premjibhai Solanki and members of the Parliamentary Committee including Chhedi Paswan, Goddeti Madhavi, Dr V Sivadadan, Upendra Singh Rawat, Gautam Singh Damar, Ashok Mahadeorao Nete, Pratima Mandal, Jagannath Sarkar, Neeraj, Anil Firojia, Ajay Tamta and other members were present. SAIL SC-ST Employees Federation Central Committee, New Delhi, National President Sunil Kumar Ramteke shared the problems of the em-

ployees with them. Ramteke said that very few SC/ST officers get promoted to the post of senior officers. There is no transparency in this system. There is no SC/ST officer in the post of director in charge. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Award should be started in every unit of SAIL which should be equivalent to the Nehru Award. He demanded that in foreign training priority should be given to SC/ST employees and officers. He added that if any kind of training is given in SAIL, the participation of SC/ST employees should be ensured with priority.

The guideline of MSME is not followed in SAIL. Necessary guidelines should be given so that SC / ST can get contracts, representatives of Federation should be included in CSR activity of SAIL. Any SC / ST officer has not received the post of Chief General Manager in CMO

(Central Marketing Organization). Ramteke demanded that the post of Chief General Manager should be given to a SC / ST officer. He further said that the lease process should be started in each unit of SAIL and reservation should be given to SC/ST employees in the license process.

On behalf of the Federation, Central Vice President MK Abhimanyu, Joint Secretary Jagdish Chura, Secretary Dilip Kumar, Executive Member Chandrakant Ranjan, Joint General Secretary Gauranga Mandal, Jayprakash Kumar, Babarao Moon, Organizing Secretary Vice President Sudesh Gautam, Gautam Das, Upendra Sinku, General Secretary Miss Babita, Srinivas, Ujjwal Mandal, Sundar Krishnan, Sharad Chandra Pariksha, SK Sunke and office bearers of the federation were present.

Youth Festival: Durg University declares results of inter college competition

● VC to award winners at a function in Tagore Hall of the University today

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 15: Hemchand Yadav University (Durg University) has declared the result of 14 different competitions organised across 7 different colleges under the Inter College Youth Festival 2023. All the winners who secured first, second and third positions will be awarded by vice chancellor Dr ArunaPalta, at a function to be held in Tagore Hall, Hemchand Yadav University, Durg Campus at 14: 30 hrs on January 16, 2023. Dr Prashant Srivastava, Dean Student Welfare giving this information revealed that the observers and the judges had submitted the result of the competitions in sealed envelope to the University which was opened after the approval from Dr ArunaPalta, Vice Chancellor.

Dr Palta thanked each of the colleges for organising the competition in 14 streams and said that without the active participation of the principals, professors, participants and employees of both the organising and participating colleges, the inter-college youth festival could not

have been successfully organized. Dr Srivastava informed further that according to the decision given by the judges, in solo classical singing Nupur Sanjana Daan of St Thomas College stood first, Sampada Sanjay of Shri Shankaracharya Mahavidyalaya Junwani stood second, and Aabhas Jha of Rungta College of Arts and Science, Durg stood third. In group singing Hindustani, Shri Shankaracharya Mahavidyalaya, Junwani team stood first, St Thomas College Bhilai second and Government VYT PG College Durg team stood third. In solo classical dance, AishwaryadaKurm of Sandipani Academy, Achhoti, stood first Palak Upadhyaya of Shri Shankaracharya Mahavidyalaya Junwani stood second, and N Akanksha of Bhilai Mahila Mahavidyalaya secured the third position. In folk dance group/tribal dance competition the team of Govt VYTPG College Durg secured the first position, while the team of Government DanveerTularam Post Graduate College, Utai college second

and while the third place was jointly occupied by the team of Bhilai MahilaCollege, Bhilai and Royal College, Rajnandgaon. According to Dr Srivastava, the team of Ketan Singh, Devendra Janghel and Yashwant Kumar of Kalyan PG College Bhilai won first position in quiz competition. The team of Sandeep Kumar, Vivek Dubey and Vivek Sharma of Swami Shri Swaroopnand College, HUDCO Bhilai stood second. In the debate competition, Arifa Siddiqui of Govt Indira Gandhi College Vaishalinagargot first position in favour and Rajneet Kaur got first position in against. Ankita Vaishnav Paksha of Khalsa College, Durg and Priya Goyal of St Thomas College stood second re-

spectively. Neha Rai of Swami Shree Swaroopnand College, HUDCO stood third in favour and Jitendra Kumar of Royal College, Rajnandgaon stood in against. In the skit (drama) competition, the team of Seth Badrial Khandelwal Education College, Durg got the first position, the team of Swami Shri Swaroopnand College, HUDCO Bhilai got the second position and Shankaracharya College, Junwani Bhilai got the third position. In on the spot painting competition Abhishek Sharma of Shri Shankaracharya College Junwani stood first, Alok Patela of KhubchandBaghel Government College Bhilai 03 stood second and Riya Barle of Govt Patankar Girls College, Durg stood third. In the collage making competition made from clippings of newspapers and magazines, Abhishek Sharma of Shankaracharya College, Junwani stood first, Vidya Bharti of Bhilai Maitri College, Risali stood second and Ramandeep Kaur of KhubchandBaghel Government College Bhilai 03 stood third. In

poster making competition Varsha Yadav of Government Adarsh College, Dhanorastood first, Kiran Sonber of Govt Patankar Girls College, Durg stood second and Soman Yadav of Government ChandulalChandrakar College, Dhamdha got the third position. In the Rangoli competition, Lekhran Patel of Government College, Arjundastood first and Leeladhar Kumbhkar of Government Late Thakur Ji Maharaj Mahavidyalaya, Thankamharia stood second while Nikita Ambadeh of Government Digvijay Mahavidyalaya, Rajnandgaon stood third. Aditya, a student of Bhilai Nair Samajam, secured the first position in Mehendi competition while Nishi Jain of Govt VYTPG College, Durg stood second and ShriyaTamarkar of Bhilai MahilaMahavidyalaya stood third. In sugam sangeet competition Suchita Thakur of Shankaracharya College, Junwanistood first, Tapas Maiti of Sai College Sector 06 Bhilai stood second and Alisha Tirkey of Government VYT PG College, Durg secured the third position.

Congress imposed emergency in Chhattisgarh: Raman

Says NSA implemented under pressure from Sonia Gandhi



protest against NSA.

According to Dr Singh, NSA is implemented in an unusual law and order situation. Congress used to tell in state legislative assembly about better law and order in the state, he said. He asked whether law and order has gone out of control of Congress government in the state.

According to Dr Singh any individual can be arrested without bail provision in NSA which was enacted in 1970 by the then Congress government. Congress has again tried to

impose emergency in form of NSA, he alleged. He once again said that NSA was implemented under communal appeasement policy, to encourage conversion in the state. Other BJP leaders including party's state president Arun Sao, former Minister Rajesh Munat and media head Amit Chimnani were talked to the media.

Imposition of undeclared emergency in Chhattisgarh was started long ago by enacting a law to crush democratic movements, but this has doubled

It is the law of the Center, BJP should abolish it: Baghel

Raipur, Jan 15: NSA is the law of the country. If BJP has objection on it should get it abolished since it has its government at the Centre, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel said in reaction to BJP's objection to implementation of National Security Act in 31 districts of Chhattisgarh.

BJP leaders say that tribals who have converted should not get the benefits of Scheduled Tribes and they hold rallies, but why doesn't BJP government at the centre brings the law?

According to the Chief Minister, the issue of reli-

gious conversion is not confined to only one state' rather it is related to all the states. 'Who is stopping the Centre from bringing the law? What is the point of taking out rally and inciting people?' he asked.

Baghel charged BJP with deriving pleasure out of seeing people to fight. BJP leaders do not talk about positive; rather they only talk about destructing and fighting. On NSA the Chief Minister said 'we have not enacted the law in the assembly, nor have we taken any decision in the cabinet, it is a renewal'.

the anger of all sections of the public, said the BJP leaders, adding that fearing intense public anger state

government now created undemocratic and emergency-like situation on the pretext of NSA.

AARTI AT KHARUN RIVER



On occasion of 'Makar-Sankranti', denizens and 'Pujari' offered prayers to lifeline of capital city 'Kharun-River' here on Sunday.

Govt preparing to recover 700 cr through paddy: BJP

Raipur, Jan 15: Charging the Bhupesh government with preparing to illegally recover Rs 700 crore through paddy procurement in the state BJP state spokesman Sandeep Sharma said that complaints of large scale irregularities in weight and measurement of paddy in societies were being received from all over the state. He alleged 8 quintal more paddy was procured from a farmer in Mahasamund which caused loss of Rs 20000. Sharma alleged that Bhupesh Government allowed farmers for loot. Congress government has planned to collect Rs 700 crore from farmers of state through more weight and measurement, he said.

Information given to officers, employees about stress management

Two-day workshop organized by National Health Mission and NIMHANS



Programme. Dr E Arvind Raj, an expert from National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru informed the participants about the ways to create coordination between work and home through various experiments. He also explained in detail how to

do home and office work better by reducing the stress level.

Dr Surendra Pambhoi, Joint Director, National Health Mission, underlining the usefulness of the workshop, said that organizing such workshops from time to time helps the officers and employees in better management



of their lives and they can learn to perform their tasks without stress. Many senior officers of National Health Mission

including Dr Mahendra Singh, Deputy Director of Mental Health Program also participated in the workshop.

Two nabbed with 80 kg 'Ganja' worth Rs 16 lakh

Raipur/ Mahasamund, Jan 15: Mahasamund police has nabbed two interstate drug smugglers with 80 kg 'Ganja' worth Rs 16 lakh being carried in Hyundai Creta vehicle being transported from Odisha to Madhya Pradesh. It was on instructions by the SP Dharmendra Singh that Singhoda police was directed to take firm action and based upon which the police force was deployed in all entry and check-points.

It was on checking various vehicle, one Hyundai Creta vehicle bearing CG 04 -LK-5040 was stopped near Rehatikhola on HN-53 and



search was carried out. The police found 80 Kg 'ganja' being packed in a plastic bag and when inquired as to where they are bringing, they informed that from Odisha and were taking it to MP.

Both the accused were booked under section 20 (B) of Narcotics Act by Komakhan thana and taken into arrest. Raigarh: Another

youth bringing 3.500 kg 'Ganja' worth Rs 24,500 in Scooty Mastero vehicle was coming to Raigarh on the NH and the accused Laxmiprasad Chandra S/o Ramkumar Chandra (23), R/o Jashpur Kachar Thana Kosir District Sarangarh -Bhilaigarh. The police seized the Scooty and 'ganja' and took action under NDPS Act.

Mock placements at NIT Raipur

Raipur, Jan 15: National Institute of Technology Raipur's, Sahyog - The Mentorship Club started off their Mock Placements event on 14th January 2023 under the guidance of Dr. Ravi Jade, Faculty In-Charge, Sahyog. Students across all the branches from all the years actively participated in the same. The competition is decided to be conducted in 3 rounds - Online Screening, Group Discussion and Personal Interviews, in hybrid mode.

Day 1 saw a highly enthralling participation by numerous students across the college. Day 1 being the Screening Round was split into 2 levels of Aptitude Test and Written Test respectively, and covered questions for 1st year B.TECH Students, Software Development

Engineer, Core and Analyst roles. Deep logical and analytical Aptitude-based and Coding questions were asked to test the calibre of the students.

A highly competent panel will further filter out the best candidates from this round and promote them to subsequent rounds of Group Discussion and Personal Interview that will be conducted on 15th and 21st January 2023 respectively.

The Mock Placements will come to an end on 21st January 2023. This competition will inevitably serve to be a great drilling and testing opportunity to all the students for honing their basic requisite skills for actual placements by painting a clear picture of how intense the current competition is.

MBBS 1st year students take 'Charak Shapath' oath

Raipur, Jan 15: The MBBS 1st year students in Pt Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Medical College, Raipur were made to take 'Charak Shapath' oath at white coat ceremony held in presence of Public Health and Family Welfare and Medical Education Minister TS Singhdeo at Late Atal Behari Vajpayee Memorial New Auditorium on January 13, 2023. Vice Chancellor of Ayush University Dr Ashok Chandrakar, Director Medical Education Dr Vishnu Dutt, Dean of the Medical College, Dr Tripti Nagriya and Superintendent of Ambedkar Hospital, Dr SBS Netam were prominently present at the func-



tion.

Director Medical Education Dr. Vishnu Dutt administered 'Charak Shapath' oath to the students. As many as 180 students raised their right hands to repeat the words spoken by Dr Dutt.

Addressing the students, Chief Guest TS Singhdeo said the oath take by the students would serve as a guiding principle for them during their service in the years

to come. The form of God is often seen in the form of a doctor, he said.

"You have earned your place by passing such tough exams according to your ability. By becoming doctors you will get opportunity to do a great service to humanity. The work of doctors is very important in the society", Singhdeo said in his address to the students.

Vice Chancellor Dr Ashok Chandrakar re-

ferred to the new guidelines issued by the National Medical Commission and congratulated the students. White coat is an identity of doctors, he said adding that more than four thousand doctors have so far come out of this college and are bringing laurels to their institute in the country and abroad. Dean Dr Tripti Nagaria also addressed the students. Medical Teachers Association President Dr Arvind Neral informed moral and ethical values and principles to be followed in medical profession. Association secretary Dr Jaya Lalwani conducted the programme. Medical Education Unit President Dr Manju Singh proposed a vote of thanks.

Trainee officers of IFS meet CM



Raipur, Jan 15: Trainee officers of Indian Forest Service (IFS) of Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy, Dehradun called on Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel at his official residence here on Saturday. The Chief Minister called for plantation of more and more fruit trees in place of timber in the forest to provide employment to the residents, boost their income and also protect the forest. This will also stop migration and reduce the

burden of population in the cities, he said.

Appreciating scheme pertaining to minor forest produce processing in Chhattisgarh Bharat Jyoti, Director General of Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy, Dehradun said that this is a unique scheme which has improved the standard of living of the forest dwellers. This scheme should be implemented in other states of the country as well, he said.

Photo Exhibition of Ch'garh Govt's flagship schemes organised

At Cosmo Expo-2023 in Shriram Business Park



sector have been included in this expo. Cultural evenings are also being organized daily at Cosmo Expo.

A photo exhibition based on the flagship schemes of state government has also been organised at the venue by the Public Relations Department. Important schemes like Suraji Gaon Yojana, Rajiv Gandhi Gramin Bhoomihin Krishi Mazdoor Nyaya Yojana, Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyaya Yojana, Rajiv Yuva Mitan Club, Forest Produce Procurement and Godhan Nyaya Yojana have been displayed attractively. Information about the schemes is also being provided through

LED screens. Pamphlets and brochures related to the schemes are also being distributed to the people visiting exhibition. Programs based on Chhattisgarh's traditional songs and music are also being displayed in the stall.

Food court to tantalise taste buds with 45 stalls

The Raipur Foodie Lovers will indulge the taste buds of visitors at the expo. There is a separate large dome with 45 stalls that have been set up for food court. Here people will get an opportunity to relish the cuisine of different states of the country as well as Chhattisgarhi cuisine.

From rifle to pen: 6 surrendered Naxalites prepare for Class 10 exam

By TIKESHWAR PATEL

Raipur, Jan 15 (PTI) : After having once wielded a rifle in his arms, Karan Hemla is now holding a pen and preparing for the Class 10 examination in Chhattisgarh in the hope of a better future.

The 26-year-old surrendered Naxalite had to quit studies after violence erupted with the start of the 'Salwa Judum' anti-Naxal movement in Bastar division in 2005.

Hemla is now thrilled about getting an opportunity to resume education and fulfil his dream of becoming literate.

He is one of the six surrendered Naxalites — three men and as many women — who after laying down their arms live at the Police Lines in Kawardha city of Kabirdham district.

They have submitted forms for the Class 10 state open school examination as part of the district police's initiative to educate

them. The surrendered Naxalites, including two couples, had been active in forests along the Chhattisgarh-Madhya Pradesh border in Kabirdham district and turned themselves in before the police between 2019 and 2021.

Hemla, a native of Kakekorma village in the Maoist-hit Bijapur district, was studying in Class 7 at an ashram school in 2005 when the Salwa Judum movement began.

"Several schools in the interiors of Bastar division were shut and students were forced to discontinue their studies out of fear," Hemla told PTI.

Before he could resume his studies, local Naxalite leaders took him and another boy Bhima (who later surrendered in Andhra Pradesh) along and forcibly inducted the duo into the banned outfit in 2009, Hemla said. He was promoted as a di-

visional committee member in 2016 and shifted to the Maharashtra-Madhya Pradesh-Chhattisgarh (MMC) zone of Naxalites, where he worked with top leader Milind Teltumbde, who was gunned down in an encounter with the police in 2021.

Hemla and his wife Anita (22), who was also a Naxalite, fled from a camp in 2019 and surrendered to live a normal life.

"Both of us were keen on studying. My wife learned to write while working in the sangthan (a Naxalite outfit). After surrendering, we wanted to pursue education and we are doing so now with the help of local police," Hemla said.

Another surrendered Naxalite couple — Manglu Veko (28) and Rajes alias Vaonja (25) — was also delighted about getting the opportunity to study.

Veko said Bastar has been battling against the Left Wing Extremism

(LWE) for more than three decades and the violence has resulted in disruption of education for many like him.

Veko, who hails from Bhairamgarh area in Bijapur, joined the banned outfit at the age of 19 in 2013 and surrendered in 2020.

His wife Vanoja quit the outfit with him and the couple have a child.

Veko said he wants to get a job after completing his education to provide a better life to his child.

Talking to PTI, Kabirdham Superintendent of Police Lal Umed Singh said after the surrendered Naxalites expressed their desire to study, they were provided books and helped to apply for the Class 10 open exam.

They will be provided free coaching as well, he said.

"Education is a key factor in the development of a person. It will help the surrendered cadres to connect

with the outside world and they can pursue self-employment or apply for government jobs in the future," Singh said.

The surrendered Naxalites were part of 'Vistar' platoons, active in Kanha-Bhoramdeo division since 2017-18 and tasked with expanding the base of the banned organisation in the area, he said.

The Kanha-Bhoramdeo division covers parts of Kabirdham in Chhattisgarh and Mandla, Balaghat and Dindori districts of neighbouring Madhya Pradesh.

However, the number of Naxalites drastically declined in the last couple of years in this region and around 21 are left active in this pocket, the official claimed.

Between 2018 and 2022, three Naxalites were killed in Kabirdham and seven were gunned down in the adjoining districts in separate actions by security personnel, he added.

CM Baghel announces various devp works worth Rs 97.30 cr

In Pali Tanakhar Assembly Constituency
In Bhent Mulaqat Program

Korba, Jan 15: Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel gifted a bounty of various developmental works worth Rs. 97.30 cr, under the Bhent Mulaqat program, in the Korba district's Pali Tanakhar Assembly Constituency on Saturday. Baghel inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for 59 works. This included the inauguration of 22 works and laying the foundation of 37 works. Under these, the Chief Minister inaugurated three works under the



Public Works Yojana, 12 works under the Janpad Panchayat under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak

Panchayat Pali, and 1 under the Health and Family Welfare Department.

Similarly, the foundations for two works under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, four works under Janpad Panchayat Pali, 11 works under the Rural Engineering Services Department, one work under the Chhattisgarh State Renewable Development Agency, two works under Public Health Engineering Department, two works under Water Resources Department, two works under Scheduled Tribes and Schedules Castes Development Department, and 13 works under the Education Department were also laid.

Swami Vivekananda introduced a new ethical thought process: V-C HNLU

Raipur, Jan 15: Hidayatullah National Law University (HNLU) a premier law university in the country organized Second Swami Vivekananda Memorial Lecture 2023 on January 12, 2023, at 5:30 pm on the occasion of the National Youth Day. Swami Atmapriyananda, Pro-Chancellor, Ramakrishna Mission, Educational and Research Institute was the Chief Guest for the event and spoke on the topic of 'Ethical Values in Contemporary Times: Revisiting the Teachings of Swami Vivekananda'. Opening Remarks for the programme was delivered by Prof. Dr. VC Vivekanandan, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, HNLU and the Concluding Remarks was delivered by Prof. Dr. Uday Shankar,



Registrar, HNLU.

Prof. Dr. V.C. Vivekanandan, Vice-Chancellor, HNLU in his Opening Remarks said that "Swami Vivekananda introduced a new ethical thought process where cultivating the virtues one has for they will be bearing the roots bearing the sweet fruits in due season. More than legal it is the ethical quotient which is crucial in contemporary times"

Swami Dr. Atmapriyananda, began his discussion by pondering upon the notion of religion as envisaged by

Swami Vivekanandaji and emphasized upon the power of an individual to be an infinite self in themselves. For this he encouraged individuals to realize their inner strength both physical and most importantly he focused on the power of intellectual thoughts which is often articulated in one's speech. Ethics therefore according to him is not a set of do's and don'ts but rather a balance between one's heart and in one's self..and hence we should Worship all beings as manifestations of God.'

The concluding remarks were delivered by Prof. Dr. Uday Shankar, Registrar, HNLU. The Webinar was hosted as a part of the annual memo-

rial lecture series which was instituted in 2022. The Inaugural Swami Vivekananda Memorial Lecture was delivered by Bhupesh Baghel, Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh who virtually unveiled the statue of Swami Vivekananda at HNLU and delivered the inaugural lecture on the topic of 'Rule of Law as a Foundation for National Building'. The programme was anchored by Prateek Munjal & Garima Agarwal, Student Convener and Vice-Convener of Literary and Debating Committee, HNLU. The programme was attended by over 250 participants comprising of faculties, students and staff of HNLU, ITM University. It was hosted on Cisco WebEx and was telecast live on YouTube.

'Teachers should be responsible like mothers'

Bilaspur, Jan 15: Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alok Kumar Chakrawal delivered a lecture 'National Education Policy 2020 and Quality Initiatives' at an event organized on January 09, 2023 at 4.30 pm by National Education Policy-2020 Task Force Committee and Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) of Guru Ghasidas University (A Central University). The event started with a welcome of the guests with presentation of saplings. The Director IQAC, Prof. A.S. Randive delivered the welcome address.

In the lecture organized at Silver Jubilee Auditorium, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Chakrawal said that the role of teacher is very important in any educational



institution. In the National Education Policy-2020, special emphasis has been laid on developing and nurturing the relationship between teachers, students, and education. Teachers perform the vital task of molding and shaping the students. A teacher is successful only if he has a sense of responsibility like that of a child's mother. The Vice-Chancellor,

Prof. Chakrawal said that there is no age bar for learning and teaching. Teachers who create their own path and identify inscribe new lessons for the students. Addressing the teachers in the New Year, he said that Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya is being talked about with adoration in the entire academic world. Professor Chakrawal stressed that

we must make the environment of this university such that it becomes capable of attracting more youth.

Referring to the Shiksha Samagam Conference organized in Varanasi in the first week of July under the National Education Policy 2020, the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Chakrawal said that the honorable Prime Minister of the country, Narendra Modi had shared the concept of 'Lab to Land and Land to Lab', in which higher educational institutions should work for the upliftment of the society and pass on the practical benefits of learning to the society. Along with this, he also emphasized on making various positive social activities a part

of the curriculum. Changes made in PhD regulations are one of the initiatives in implementing the National Education Policy 2020 in the university in its entirety.

On this occasion, the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Chakrawal and the guests on the stage released the poetry collection 'Satpura ki Pagdandiyan' by Dr. Ramesh Gohe, Assistant Professor, Department of Hindi. At the end of the program, vote of thanks was given by the Registrar, Prof. Manish Srivastava. Dr. Neeraj Kumari, Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry, conducted the program. Deans, heads of departments, teachers and officers of various schools were present on this occasion.

Assembly Speaker, former CM to be included in Shankaracharya's religious meeting

Jagdalpur, Jan 15: Peethadhiswar Jagatguru Shankaracharya Swami Nischalanand Saraswati of Govardhan Peeth Puri is coming to the Holy land of Mother Danteshwari in Bastar on Feb 6, 2023. Speaker of Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly Dr. Charandas Mahant, former Chief Minister Dr. Raman Singh, Chairman of Chhattisgarh Fish Welfare Board MR Nishad will participate in Shankaracharya's three-day stay and religious event in Jagdalpur from Feb 6 to 8, 2023.

He has given consent to attend the religious meeting organized on February 7, 2023 at the local Lalbagh ground. Whereas on



February 6, 2023, at 5 pm, the Chhattisgarh government's Excise, Industry and Bastar in-charge Minister Kawasi Lakhma, Tribal Development Authority President Lakheshwar Baghel, including Parliamentary Secretary Rekhchand Jain, Indravati Development Authority

Vice President Rajeev Sharma will welcome Shankaracharya to the city at 5 pm. Former Minister and BJP State General Secretary Kedar Kashyap, former MLA Santosh Bafna, and other public representatives, former public representatives have agreed to attend.

Newly elected Kadma Sarpanch enters Congress fold

Jagdalpur, Jan 15: In the three-

Congress government and the

level by-election of Gram Panchayat Kadma in Bastar district, the newly elected Sarpanch Samli Kashyap today expressed her desire to join the Congress by visiting the residence of Chitrakot MLA Rajman Benzam. The Sarpanch informed about the demands of his constituency while entering the Congress. MLA Rajman Benzam congratulated the newly elected Sarpanch. The MLA welcomed Sarpanch's entry into Congress-fold by presenting her with party's stole and assured to fulfill all the demands of the Gram Panchayat.

Kashyap said that at present, under the leadership of the

regional MLA, development in the area is taking place at double the speed. Every small and big problems of the Gram Panchayats are resolved immediately when the Regional MLA reaches the table. Villagers of Kadma Panchayat have believed in me and have elected me as the Sarpanch of this Gram Panchayat and so my first responsibility is the development of the village, that's why I voluntarily joined the Congress party today. During this Sarpanch's husband Mahadev Kashyap, Chansing Patel, Senior Congress Deputy Sarpanch Mahendra Thakur, Ramnath Kashyap, Hiralal Patel, Sanjay Patel and others were present.

Auto rally taken out on road safety week for public awareness

Jagdalpur, Jan 15: On the third day of Road Safety Week, a rally of auto vehicles was taken out for traffic awareness. Road Safety Week is going to start from Jan 11th till 17th. During the rally, people were made aware by shouting slogans like 'do not drink alcohol and drive', 'caution removed accident happened', 'follow traffic rules', 'road safety-life protection'. The rally was taken out from all the intersections and main roads of the city. More than 200 auto drivers participated in the auto awareness rally.

Traffic in-charge Shivshankar Gendale said that for a week



people are being informed about traffic rules by the police, transport department and district administration. An awareness rally on auto and bike was taken out from City Kotwali on Jan 13 on occasion of the Road Safety Public Awareness week.

Several programs will be organized in this seven-day campaign during the Road Safety Week. During this, pamphlets of road safety rules are also being distributed among the people. He told that efforts are being made to prevent accidents by installing dummy cutouts on accident prone areas and national highways, so that any incident accident can be prevented. Along with this, efforts are being made to convey the message of not driving at high speed.

Two drugs smugglers arrested with 20.5 kg Ganja

Jagdalpur, Jan 15: The Nagarnar police of the district arrested a female Vimla and a male Gulab Chand resident of Hisar Haryana, a Ganja smuggler in a passenger bus near Dhanpunji Forest Naka. A total of 20.5 kg Ganja was seized from the possession of arrested Vimla and Gulabchand. Both the accused were bringing Ganja from Orissa and were traveling in the bus carrying Ganja in bags. After legal proceedings against the accused, they were sent on judicial remand.

CSP Vikas Kumar told that the Nagarnar police

had received information about illegal smuggling of Marijuana by the informer: Based on the information, a team was formed under the leadership of station in-charge Jayaprakash Gupta. Passenger bus coming from Odisha towards Jagdalpur was stopped



by blockade near Dhanpunji Forest Naka. The bags of both Vimla and Gulab Chand, R/of Hisar Haryana were searched in the said bus. On searching, a total of 20.5 kg of intoxicant ganja was recovered from different bags of both.

Swamiji was a legendary and spiritual master of true Vedanti: Hota

Teachers, students celebrate Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary as National Youth Day

Bemetara, Jan 15: Swami Vivekananda birth anniversary was celebrated at Allons Public School on Thursday. This day is also celebrated as the National Youth day. The program was started by lighting a lamp in front of the portrait of swami Vivekananda and worshipped him by Dr. Satyajit Hota, Principal, teachers and all the students. The original speech of Swami Vivekananda delivered at Chicago was heard by the students on this occasion.

Anvita Kiran Dubey, Himani Narwal, Khushi Sahu of Class X, Riya Tandon of class IX, Samresh Mohanty of Class II and Dr. Jagendra Kumar Kulmitra delivered their speeches on the role of Swami Vivekanand. Dr. Satyajit Hota, teachers and students prayed in front of the immortal soul of Swami ji to get the right



path and strength for getting developed India. The students of the class XII participated in the games under the aegis of Rahul Solanki from the sports department.

The audience appreciated the performance of the students in the games.

Dr. Satyajit Hota, Principal called Swami Vivekananda as the true source of inspiration for the young generation of India. He told to have a universal tolerance and acceptance. He called Swami Vivekananda as an Indian Hindu monk, philosopher, author, religious teacher, the messenger and youth

icon of Indian Vedanta and the chief disciple of the Indian mysticism. Swamiji was a well-known legendary and spiritual master of the true Vedanti. He had touched the height of worshiping and penance. He had unwavering faith in God that whatever he used to speak was all Veda's sentences. His memory power was so sharp that whatever he read once, he used to get completely photographic memory and also did a lot of work in less time of his life, which will be remembered by the whole world for ages. Vivekananda will always remain relevant for

every era and country because he was a yogi of amazing talent. Vivekananda appeared in front of the world as a miraculous enlightened scholar after acquiring a lot of knowledge and science in a very short time. His every action is exemplary for every human being. His teachings are acceptable to every age, child, old and young. Sages Aurobindo Ghosh and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan were followers of Swami Vivekananda, talking to another Noble laureate Roman Ronald, Rabindranath Tagore said, "If you want to know India,

study Vivekananda." Indian National activist Netaji considered Swamiji as his spiritual teacher. He called Swami Ji a "Full-blooded masculine personality and a fighter to the core of being."

National Youth Day is a special day dedicated to the youth of India who have the potential to make the future of the country better and healthier. He wanted to see India as a developed country. Swami Ji was called to the World Religion Assembly organized in Chicago, America, where he addressed the sisters and brothers and gave a historic speech.

The whole atmosphere echoed with thunderous applause listening to his speech. The conscience of all of us teachers and students will also experience joy by following the instructions given by Swami Vivekananda and guiding the path of education, in the same state we will experience joy from family to society and from society to nation and Will be able to communicate joy from the nation to the world through education. He ad-

ministered the oath to the students and teachers to abide by the truth and loyalty to follow the path told by Swamiji. He announced the sermon of Swami Ji, "Arise, awake and stop not until the goal is reached". He said that we can make our life happy and successful by imbibing the thoughts of Swami Vivekananda. The whole world will be indebted to him. He called that Swami Ji emphasized men making nation building education. He emphasized - "Service to man is service to God. Freedom and equality are the champions of women education."

The program aroused the ambition of the students to bring universal tolerance, universal acceptance and equality for seeing our country as a developed country. Pushpalata Patle, Renuka Kale, Anurag Tripathi and Balbir Singh also helped in the celebration of this program. Kamaljit Arora, Chairman, Pushkal Arora, Director, Sunil Sharma, Administrator wished this memorable event.

DEO Bijapur inspects schools of Bhopalpatnam block



Bijapur, Jan 14: District Education Officer (DEO) Bijapur BR Baghel in Bhopalpatnam Block assessed the educational quality of children by conducting a surprise inspection of Swami Atmanand School Bhopalpatnam, Primary School Ramapuram, Secondary School Ramapuram, Pota

Cabin School Tarlaguda, Chandur and received information regarding preparation of the upcoming exams. In the inspection important instructions were given to strengthen the school system in regards of education by taking information about teacher system and basic facilities.

ABVP Kasdol unit celebrates National Youth Day

Central Chronicle News

Kasdol, Jan 15: Various programs were organized on Swami Vivekananda Jayanti Kasdol Under the auspices of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad Kasdol unit. A youth festival was organized on the auspicious occasion of Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary and National Youth Day on January 12.

ABVP, the world's largest student organization, has been celebrating National Youth Day with great enthusiasm considering Swami Vivekananda as its inspiration. Various competitions were organized in different genres like Rangoli, Mehndi, painting, card making, and chess, carom, in which the students of schools



and colleges of the area participated enthusiastically. A lot of enthusiasm was seen among the students who participated in

the competition and the Chief Guest was Bharat Das Manikpuri, Sarpanch Gram Panchayat Chharchhed, headed by Subhash Sahu along with Himanchal Paikra Sarpanch Representative Mudpar, Rajkumar Patel Sarpanch Representative Kanjia, Nisha Jaiswal State Executive Member ABVP.

Highlighting the biography of Swami Vivekananda, the speakers in the program asked the students to follow the path shown by Swami Vivekananda. Sneha Yadav, Veena Jaiswal, Pritam Jaiswal, Abhishek Navarange, Meenakshi Vaishnav, Meenakshi Bairagi, Falguni Soni, Prakriti Jaiswal, Sahetri Navratna, Kajal, Shivam, Rajeshwar and many others were present.

Villagers reprimand the quality of PMGSY road

Central Chronicle News

Balod, Jan 15: Under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, a road is being constructed from village Madhya Katta in Balod district and here agitated villagers have handed over a complaint letter to the collector for investigation and appropriate action against the road construction and warned of chakka-jam for usage of substandard material.

The villagers told through the complaint letter that the work is being done there by the contractor Katare through Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, and only sub quality material is being used by their engineers and employees, so there is opposition. Rural Sarpanchs



and office bearers are also being misled by the contractor and 5% asphalt rick has been used there and no cleaning has been done there, they said. The villagers said that here we have to come and go through this road daily, if the quality of the road remains the same then we will have to face problems, so the villagers have demanded to take proper action by making it quality. The villagers further said that we have come here with the demand of the road and if the demand is not met then we will block the road and go to the Chief Minister because we have to walk on this road and we cannot compromise on the quality, not the arbitrary of the contractor.

Villagers are availing benefits of the public facility camp

- In Naxal-affected areas
- Health check-up camp and treatment of villagers organised

Central Chronicle News

Konta, Jan 15: In order to provide quick benefits to the villagers of the public welfare schemes and programmes of the State Government, as per the instructions of the Industry Minister Kawasi Lakhma and guidance of Collector Haris S., the administration organised public convenience health check-up camps continuously in different villages of the district.

Earlier, a public facilitation



camp was organized for the villagers of Pidmel, Kamaram and Ramaram, coming under highly sensitive remote Naxal infested area of Konta block. In this series, by organizing a public facilitation camp in Chintalnar village of Konta block from Jan 11, the departments are providing information about the public welfare schemes

of the state government to the villagers and providing quick benefits.

In the Chintalnar Public Facilitation Camp, the villagers of 11 nearby Gram Panchayats are being provided the benefits of public welfare schemes and programs of the government. Pension, ration card, Ayushman card, Aadhar card etc. are being made in

this camp. Along with this, free medicines are being distributed and treated by the Health Department team at the camp site after health check-up of the villagers.

Collector Haris S. in the weekly time-limit meeting has directed the officials to organize a public facilitation camp in village Chintalnar and provide maximum benefits of public welfare schemes to the people of the area. In compliance of which the Chitlanaar Jan Suvidha Camp was successfully in the presence of Konta SDM Bansingh Netam, Tehsildar Rupesh Markam, Konta Janpad Panchayat CEO Kailash Kashyap and other officers-employees.

Embezzlement of funds in NPS raised in DLCC meeting

- That of Education workers

Central Chronicle News

Gourella, Pendra, Marwahi, Jan 15: The matter of embezzlement of crores of rupees in the NPS amount of education workers has been raised in the meeting of the consultation committee. The first meeting of the District Level Consultative Committee was organized under the direction of Collector Richa Prakash Chaudhary, in which the matter of embezzlement of crores of rupees by the district office Pendra in the amount of NPS pension of education workers was raised, after which the officials have been directed



to conduct an inquiry in this regard and take necessary action.

On Wednesday, a meeting of the District Level Officers' Consultative Committee with all the employees' organizations of the district was held in the meeting hall of the project office under the chairmanship of Additional Collector BC Ekka. In this meeting, District General Secretary of Staff Officer Jaiswal raised the matter

that from the year 2012, 10% amount was deducted from the salary of education workers to be deposited in NPS pension account, but a huge amount was embezzled by not depositing it in NPS account.

Raising the issue of pensionless assistant teacher Ram Singh Marabi of LB cadre of Marwahi block who retired after serving for 25 years, he said that his pension case should be resolved immediately. In this case, the DEO directed the

BEO to redress the matter immediately and give a written reply to the victim.

In the meeting, Additional Collector BC Ekka, DEO NK Chandra, District Treasury Officer Shrivastava, CEO Dr. Sanjay Sharma, BEO Sanjeev Shukla, Dilip Patel, RN Chandra, along with various employees' organization officials, Teacher Congress District President Surendra Singh, Third Class Employees Union District President Kamal Khan, Staff Officer Federation District General Secretary Satya Narayan Jaiswal, Federation General Secretary Akash Rai, Vishwas Govardhan, Teachers Association District President Mukesh Kori were present.

School under open sky in village Kajra

**Central Chronicle News**

Berla, Jan 15: The primary school operated in Kajra, a dependent village of Gram Panchayat Dongitarai of Saja assembly constituency, is being used as a classroom for 46 students studying in class one to five for several months.

Here the children have not been able to get even

the basic facilities, and the primary school is proving to be an example of government apathy, where the children are afraid to sit in dilapidated buildings and study under the open sky.

Looking at the condition of the building, these days classes are being held in the vacant school grounds. About 46 children are enrolled in the government primary school run in vil-

lage Kajra, and the students are not made to sit owing to the.

There is a school building but due to dilapidation the children are not being seated there and in view of the condition of the building, the school was being run in a private house for the last two years due to apprehension that some untoward incident might happen. Nilesh Chandravanshi, BEO Saja, said that he is posted newly; he is yet to look into the matter.

What officer says: The old building of the school has become weak since last April, after which the children were taught in a private house, but since last Diwali the family members have vacated them, now they are teaching in the verandah or in the ground. Maneka Tiwari, Head Reader Primary School Kajra

Secretary Health and Family Welfare inspects PHC's

**Central Chronicle News**

Gourella-Pendra-Marwahi, Jan 15: Chhattisgarh Government's Health and Family Welfare Secretary Prasanna R was on a district visit, here along with District Collector Richa Prakash Chaudhary and visited various health centers including District Hospital, Community Health Center Pendra and inquired about health facilities.

Prasanna inspected the outpatient department, vaccination room, operation theater, female maternity ward, neonatal intensive care unit, PNC ward, eye

examination room, dental room, pathology, male and female ward and kitchen room and with the patients who came for treatment in the hospital and inquired about the satisfactory treatment and gave necessary instructions to civil surgeon Dr. B.P. Chandra.

Secretary Mr. Prasanna also inspected the newly constructed Sub Health Center, Primary Health Center Amadand and Primary Health Center Navagaon in village Belpat.

He instructed the newly appointed nurses to get delivery training, to ensure safe delivery of pregnant women in health centers, to benefit from various schemes run by the health department as per their eligibility. Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr. Prabhat Chandra Prabhakar and District Program Manager Vibha Toppo were also present during the inspection.

Vishal Mandai Fair organized

Central Chronicle News

Nandini-Ahiwara, Jan 15: Shri Ram Krishna Jagruti Manch Nandini Ahiwara organized Chhattisgarh level Raut Nacha competition two days Madhai Fair for the 29th year consecutively.

The chief guest of the said program was Guru Rudra Kumar, Cabinet Minister, presided over by P.Ekka GM, Natwar Lal Tamarkar, President Municipal Council, Ahiwara, S. Jamukar G.M. Nandini Mines, Suraj Soni G.M. and others. In the Raut dance competition, Radhakrishna Raut Nacha Mandali village Khajri (Ghumka) of Rajnandgaon won the first place, and was given eleven thousand rupees by the committee and Jai Shri Radhekrishna Ras Leela Ahir dance troupe, village Masul, was given nine thousand rupees by



the committee, in the second place, Krishna Kanhaiya Ahir dance troupe village Manpur (Khapri), got Rs 8000 from the committee, Jai Sahda Dev Raut dance party village Harduva (Ghumka) got Rs. 6000 cash prize by the committee, Adarsh Raut Nacha Party Village Nandauri and Jai Krishna Raut Nacha Party Village Potia who have been given Rs.5000 cash prize each.

On this occasion, the chairman of the commit-

tee, Haldhar Chandrakar, general secretary D.D. Patel, Treasurer Bisahu Das Manikpuri, Mohan Sahu, Sushil Kumar Sahu, Chowaram Verma, Nand Lal Tamarkar, Bhupendra Kumar Verma, K.K. Sidar, Dau Anand Tamarkar, Rahul Chandel, Kishore Jain, B.L. Sahu, Dhanshyam Sahu, Hridesh Chandel, Vem Prakash, MC Katare, Dina Sahu Congress Seva Dal Block President Ram Pal Navik etc were present.

Culture Minister Bhagat inspected site for Film City

- At Birbira in Mahasamund
- State government has implemented a new film policy, 2021

Central Chronicle News

Mahasamund, Jan 15: Culture Minister Amarjeet Bhagat visited the site for the construction of a film city in Birbira village, Mahasamund district, on Wednesday. Significantly, the Chhattisgarh state government has developed a new film policy 2021 to encourage the Chhattisgarh film industry. The film policy includes numerous concessions for filmmakers, directors, and artists.

Sites for the creation of Film City in various districts of the state, including Naya Raipur, are being selected in order to provide a comprehensive format to the

Chhattisgarhi film industry, such as South Indian, Marathi, Bengali, and other provinces. In this view, a team of officers led by Minister Bhagat inspected the land in Birbira village of Mahasamund district.

Culture Minister stated that the Chhattisgarh Film Policy has benefited hundreds of artists, technicians, producers-directors, and local people involved in the state's film industry. During the inspection, the Culture Minister stated that a good location for a film city is important. Culture and tourism will gain a distinct national character as a result of Film City.

The creation of Film City will enhance the number of tourists at neighboring tourist destinations. Along with this, the local youngsters will have access to an increasing number of job opportunities. Mr. Bhagat, stated that there are numerous locations in



Chhattisgarh that are ideal for filming. Along with the film policy and the state government's initiatives have now created such an atmosphere, which has raised the interest of filmmakers from other states in Chhattisgarh.

According to the Culture Minister, the state government's goal in establishing a film city in Chhattisgarh is to encourage Chhattisgarh film production, to develop Chhattisgarh as a key center

for film shooting, and to attract investors in the manufacturing sector. This will also encourage private investment in the film industry.

Along with the artists here engaging the audience, there will be a sense of Chhattisgarhi culture through films. Similarly, films on the state's art and culture will be transformed into serials and web series. Incentives have been planned for the same. He stated that the journey of

Chhattisgarhi films began in 1965 with "Kahi Debe Sandesh" and "Ghar-Dwar".

Meanwhile, Collector of Mahasamund district, Nilesh Kumar Kshirsagar, who was present at the inspection, stated that approximately 327 acres of revenue land are being identified here. Birbira village is about 4-5 kilometers from the National Highway. Sirpur, Kodar Reservoir, Baranvapara, and other tourist attractions are located about 50 kilometers from Raipur.

On this occasion, the Chief Minister's Culture Advisor Gaurav Dwivedi, Vice-Chairman of the State Animal Welfare Board Alok Chandrakar, Central Area Tribal Development Authority member Mohit Dhruv along with other people's representatives of culture department and senior officials of the district administration were also present.

RELIANCE HOME FINANCE LIMITED		POSSESSION NOTICE	
Branch Office: 1st Floor, C 2466, Vallabh Nagar, Near Sant Gyaneshwar School, Raipur, Chhattisgarh-492001. Registered Office: - 11th Floor, The Ruby, Plot No-29, Ruby Mills Compound, Senapati Bapat Marg, Dadar West, Mumbai - 400028		(As per Rule 8(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002)	
Whereas the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Reliance Home Finance Ltd. under the Securitization, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (2) read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued Demand Notices upon the Borrowers/Co-borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.			
The borrower/Co-borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Co-borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates.			
The Borrower/Co-borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Reliance Home Finance Ltd.			
Name of the Borrower / Address	Co-Borrower / Guarantor Name	Date & Amount mentioned as per Demand Notice	Date of Symbolic Possession
Ram Chandra Yadav Shop 57 Ward 27 T Market Sector 11 Zone 1 Khursipar Bhilai - 490011	Dharam Raj Yadav Shop No.56 B Shashtri Market Scheme Under Commercial Ward No. 37 Nandini Road, Chhaoni Npn Bhilai- 490001	09th November, 2022 Rs.24,67,177 /- (Rupees Twenty Four Lac Sixty Seven Thousand One Hundred and Seventy Seven only) as on 07th November, 2022	12th January, 2023 Rs.24,89,113/- (Rupees Twenty Four Lac Eighty Nine Thousand One Hundred and Thirteen only) as on 09-January-2023
All that Shop/ Commercial Structure measuring 387.6 sq. ft., Plot no- 56, Group-B, Khursipar Zone-1, situated at Mouza- Chhaoni, Shastri Market, Nandini Road, Chandra Sekhar Azad Nagar, Bhilai Scheme under Commercial Ward-37, Nagar Palika-Bhilai, Tehsil & District- Durg, State- Chhattisgarh. The property is butted and bounded by: In North- Chhanne, In South- Property of Devendra Kumar Jain, In East- Road, In West- Road			
The Borrower/Co-borrowers/Mortgagor(s) attention is invited to the provision of Section 13(6) of the SARFAESI Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.			
Place : Bhilai, C.G. Date : 12.01.2023		Dipanjay Roy Choudhury (Authorized Officer) Reliance Home Finance Ltd.	

BRIEF



A member of a contingent of the Army's Madras Regiment marches past during the 75th Army Day celebrations at Govinda Swamy Parade Ground in Bengaluru, Sunday.

Illegal slaughter

Bulandshahr (UP): Police have arrested a soap factory owner along with a man accused of animal theft and illegal slaughter; officials said on Sunday. Stolen cattle, carcasses, 27 tonnes of animal fat and animal skin were seized following the arrests, they said. Additional Superintendent of Police Surendra Nath Tiwari said, "Arif, accused of animal theft and slaughter, and Amit Ahuja, owner of soap making factory, were arrested on Saturday night." "During interrogation, Arif confessed that he used to sell animal parts to the soap factory owner. The animal fat is believed to be used in making soaps," the officer said.

Inmate dies

Shahjahanpur (UP): A 60-year-old inmate in the district jail here died allegedly of illness, officials said on Sunday. Ram Bharose, lodged in the jail since November last year in a murder case, died on Saturday night, Jail Superintendent Mijaji Lal told PTI. He was suffering from pulmonary disease and was admitted to the jail hospital since November, Lal said. As his health deteriorated on Saturday night, he was taken to medical college where he succumbed during treatment, the officer said. The family of the deceased have been informed and further procedures are being done by the jail administration, he said.

Father-son arrested

Bhadohi: A man and his son were arrested for allegedly attempting suicide at a relative's house in Uttar Pradesh's Bhadohi district, police said on Sunday. The incident took place in Ugapur market area under Aurai police station limits on Saturday evening, they said. Phool Chand Gupta is embroiled in a property dispute with his brother Virendra Gupta.

Secretariat complex

Hyderabad: Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao will inaugurate the State's new Secretariat here on February 17. Rao, popularly known as KCR, will open the Telangana State Secretariat complex named after B R Ambedkar. "It has been decided to inaugurate the newly constructed 'Dr B R Ambedkar Telangana State Secretariat Building' on February 17 on the day of the birthday of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao.

Row over Odisha Gov's suggestion favouring entry of foreigners in Puri temple

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15 (PTI)

Odisha Governor Ganeshi Lal has stoked a controversy by suggesting that foreigners should be allowed entry into the Jagannath temple of Puri, with several traditionalists and political leaders criticising the proposal and rejecting it outright.

Former minister Bijay Mohapatra said centuries-old traditions of the temple should not be tinkered with.

"Everyone, including non-Hindus, can have a darshan of the sibling deities — Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Lord Jagannath — when they step out of the temple on the occasion of Ratha Jatra every year. There

should not be a dispute over such matters," the BJP leader maintained.

Several servants in Puri echoed Mohapatra.

Senior Congress MLA Suresh Routray said "interferences in religious practices should be avoided". Lal, while addressing a function at Utkal University on Thursday, had said, "If the foreigners are meeting the Gajapati Maharaja of Puri, servants and the shankaracharya, there is no point in depriving them of Lord Jagannath's darshan inside the temple. It is a suggestion."

The 12th century shrine, one of the four dhams, bars the entry of non-Hindus.

A sign board at the temple gate states, "Only

Hindus are allowed."

A Puri based socio-cultural organisation, Shree Jagannath Sena, had staged a protest against the governor's remark in the temple town on Saturday.

"We have a lot of respect for the governor. But his proposal is unacceptable. He should refrain from the commenting on sensitive issues linked to faith and religion," Sena convener Priyadarshan Pattnaik said. Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA), a government body that oversees the upkeep and maintenance of the temple and its operations, is yet to issue a statement on the matter.

The governor, who left for Ujjaini in Madhya Pradesh earlier on Sunday,

could not be reached for his reaction.

A Raj Bhavan spokesperson, on being approached, said that the "governor has just made a suggestion, and nothing beyond that. He did not give any order."

Meanwhile, Odisha former minister Damodar Rout came out in support of Lal's suggestion and said there should be no restriction on the darshan of the deities by anyone, as Lord Jagannath is the "master of the universe".

"Lord Jagannath is regarded as the origin of all religions. Guru Nanak came here for a darshan of the deity. Similarly, Sri Chaitanya visited Puri in 1508 and propagated Vaishnavism on his return."

HC orders joint survey of street near Sarai Rohilla Railway Station on plea to shut 'illegal' eateries

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI)

The Delhi High Court has ordered a joint survey of an area near Sarai Rohilla Railway Station by police, fire department and MCD on a plea claiming that the running of "illegal" eateries was creating a nuisance in the residential area.

The high court said after the joint survey, authorities shall file a report as to what steps have been taken to ensure that residents don't face any danger or inconvenience.

If eateries occupy public space, it is the duty of the police to ensure that the space is not blocked and people can walk and vehicles can pass and that

there is way for the fire tenders, Justice Prathiba M Singh said. The high court was hearing a plea by Puran Chand, who resides in the lane opposite Sarai Rohilla Railway Station, seeking the shutting down of illegal eateries running in the area as they create a nuisance and disturb the peace of the residential area. He said the vendors use footpaths and public spaces for tandoors and chula bhatti for their eateries without following fire safety and pollution norms which poses grave danger to the life of residents in the vicinity.

The petitioner said when he confronted one of the dhaba owners, he was threatened and added that

the street is the only access to Sarai Rohilla Railway Station.

The Delhi government was represented by advocate Arun Panwar.

Authorities said no fire licences were found to be there with the eateries vendors and challans have been issued to them. They also said that fire safety norms have to be adhered to by them and they need to apply for fire safety certificates.

Regarding the fire safety issue, the court said there is no doubt that the area has to be surveyed by Delhi Police and fire department along with the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and a joint report shall be filed.

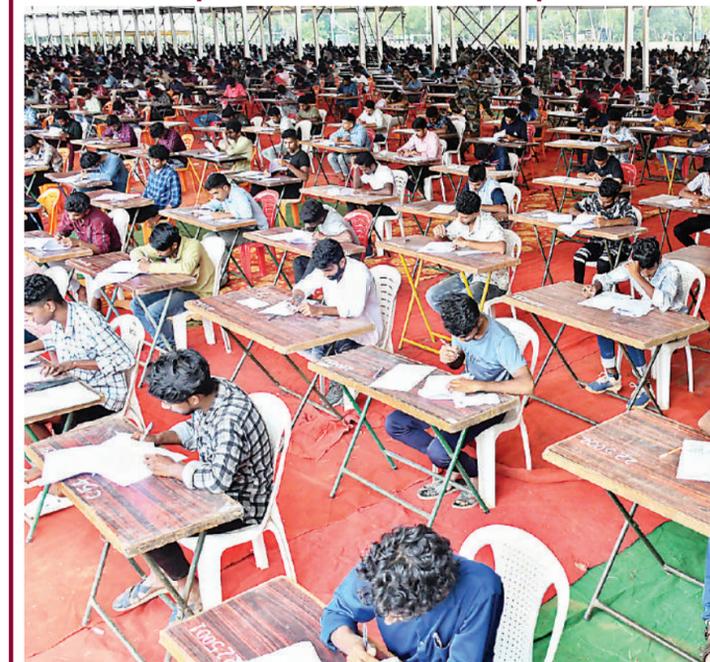
SIT rules out terror angle in J-K prisons chief murder

Jammu, Jan 15 (PTI)

Ruling out terror angle in the sensational murder of H K Lohia, a former director general of Jammu and Kashmir prisons, in October last year, the police investigation in the case has found accused Yassir Ahmad was driven by "deep grudges" against high-ranking officials.

The Jammu and Kashmir crime branch Special Investigation Team that carried out a detailed probe, including a Narco analysis on Ahmed, concluded he was disturbed over self-assumed noncompliance of promises of a government job in lieu of services he rendered as a domestic help to Lohia, an official said.

AGNIVEER ENTRANCE



Candidates appear in the Common Entrance Examination for Agniveer (Army), at the Pangode Military Station in Thiruvananthapuram, Sunday.

The sensational murder of Lohia, a 1992-batch IPS officer, had raised many eyebrows especially after a little-known terror group, Peoples Anti-Fascist Front (PAFF), claimed responsibility. It was dismissed by police as mere tactics of these outfits to own "everything shamelessly".

During a detailed enquiry, the official said, the police could not find any link between Ahmed and any terror group. His detailed journey over the two years, after he left his home at Halla Dandrat of Ramban district in Jammu, was also chalked out.

The charge sheet said the accused, during the narco analysis conducted in Gujarat, showed that he had "deep grudges"

against authorities and felt "betrayed", they said.

Ahmed, who has been charged under 302 (murder), 201 (destruction of evidence) and 4/25 of Arms Act (using petrol to burn the body and destroy evidence), had been working at a private residence of Lohia since February last year.

The accused considered the deceased as a "symbol of authority" and killed him with a butcher knife and poured petrol to burn his body, the officials said.

The accused also made an unsuccessful attempt to commit suicide afterwards by hanging himself from the roof. However, the belt could not sustain the weight of his body, the officials said, adding during investigation this fact could not be corroborated.

Lohia was found dead at his makeshift residence on the outskirts of Jammu on October 3.

Ahmed, 23, was arrested for the murder next day after fleeing the scene of the crime under the cover of darkness.

Police had issued a statement in which they said "during investigation, all cogent evidence (oral, documentary, circumstantial, expert and technical) were collected by the SIT. Besides, a narco analysis test of the accused was also conducted at DFSL Gandhinagar in Gujarat". Police had registered a FIR on October 3 and later the matter was handed over to the crime branch.

Perpetrators behind Rajouri terror attack will pay heavy price: LG

Jammu, Jan 15 (PTI)

Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday said the perpetrators responsible for the recent terror attack on a village in Rajouri district will have to pay a heavy price for their heinous action.

Addressing the people of the Union Territory in his monthly radio programme Awaaz Ki Awaaz, the Lt Governor said the whole nation stands united in the fight against terrorism.

Seven people belonging

to a particular community were killed and 14 others injured in a twin strike by terrorists at Dhangri village of Rajouri on January 1 and 2.

Paying tributes to civilians who lost their lives in the terror attack, Sinha said concrete measures are being taken to ensure families of martyrs live a life of dignity.

"Perpetrators will have to pay a heavy price for their heinous action. The whole nation stands united in the fight against terror," he said. He said, "We

have entered a New Year united in step and united in resolve. We have triumphed over several challenges and achieved new milestones in several sectors of the economy in 2022. "The new initiatives have helped fulfil the aspirations of the common man. Today, the goal before us is clear. With active public participation, we are treading the path of rapid, inclusive, equitable and sustainable development of Jammu Kashmir," he added. He said people's participation

is needed for effective implementation of projects on the ground.

Sharing inspiring stories of the citizens selflessly serving humanity, the Lt Governor made special mention of women change-makers who are driving socio-economic change in the society.

"Women are key drivers of social transformation we also must draw inspiration from those who are shining examples of Nari Shakti and empowering others economically and socially," he said.

Assembly polls must take place in J-K: Farooq

Srinagar, Jan 15 (PTI)

Assembly elections must take place in Jammu and Kashmir as lieutenant governor's administration cannot resolve the issues of the people, National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah said on Sunday.

Speaking to reporters in Baramulla district in north Kashmir, Abdullah also said the elections lead to the formation of people's government.

"Elections must take place. Elections lead to the formation of people's government and resolve their issues. A lieutenant governor cannot do that," he said. On Monday's meet-

ing called by the Election Commission of India to demonstrate a prototype to enable remote voting for migrant workers and students, the former Union minister said that NC will also attend it.

"Let them invite. Our party will also go. We will listen to what they have to say, we will also say what we have to," he said.

Asked about VDC members in Rajouri being provided weapons to fight militants, the former J-K chief minister defended the move, saying the militancy has to be fought.

"It is not something new and weapons were given in our time (when the NC ruled J-K) as well. The mil-

itancy has to be fought," he said.

To a reporter's question that if Sonia Gandhi would be on stage when the Bharat Jodo yatra reaches here, would the issue of the restoration of Article 370 be taken up, Abdullah retorted "you care a lot about (Article) 370".

He said the yatra was for removing the hatred between communities across the country.

"What is the yatra for? It is for removing the hatred between religious communities, that we all Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and Buddhists — live together is what the yatra is working for.

SNOW HILL



People play with snow at a snow-covered area, at Patnitop hill station, in Jammu, Sunday.

Parties busy formulating strategies, stitching alliances ahead of assembly polls

Agartala, Jan 15 (PTI)

Battle lines have been drawn for elections to the 60-member assembly in Tripura, with the opposition CPI(M) and the Congress, after much deliberations, joining hands to take on arch rival BJP, which has already announced that it intends to retain its alliance with regional tribal outfit IPFT.

The Tipra Motha, a newly floated tribal party that swept the autonomous district council polls within months of its formation, is still scouting for a partner to fight the elections, as its demand for a separate state 'Tiprasa' has found no support from any of the major parties in the state.

The TMC, which rejigged its entire organisation in the state last month, has said that it was ready to go it alone. The saffron camp, which was able to dislodge the ensconced Left regime, is harping on its "double-engine" development benefit, riding on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal, to

woo voters, while the Left, now a pale shadow of its formidable self, along with the CPI(M), is seeking a comeback in the state, resting on two broad planks — corruption and lawlessness.

CPI(M) state secretary Jitendra Choudhury said his party and the Congress are carefully formulating a seat-sharing strategy, "keeping in mind people's aspirations and the need to defeat the BJP".

"Law and order has completely collapsed in the state and people's voices are being choked. They want the BJP's rule to end in the state. Giving due respect to their wish, we have decided to fight the election jointly. Defeating the BJP is our prime agenda," he said.

Congress leader Mukul Wasnik, appointed by the AICC as senior observer in poll-bound Tripura, claimed that the BJP may try taking resort unfair means once they fail to get adequate votes. "We have to ensure that doesn't happen. The BJP is a threat to democracy," he added.

The saffron party, taking a dig at the CPI(M)-Congress alliance, said that it came as no surprise, as the two parties had always maintained relations covertly, while projecting themselves as opponents.

"So far, they have maintained friendly relations covertly. In fact, the CPI(M) could rule Tripura for 25 years because of its understanding with the Congress," BJP state president Rajib Bhattacharjee alleged.

Chief Minister Manik Saha, who had been addressing public gatherings over the past few weeks, makes sure that he gives a list of achievements of the BJP government over the past five years at every such rally.

The party, which underwent a brand makeover from replacing the chief minister less than a year before the elections, had launched the statewide 'Jana Vishwas Yatra' recently to garner support, with Union Minister Amit Shah flagging it off.

Miss USA R'Bonney Gabriel wins Miss Universe competition

Louisiana, Jan 15 (AP):

R'Bonney Gabriel, a fashion designer, model and sewing instructor from Texas who competition officials said is the first Filipino American to win Miss USA, was crowned Miss Universe on Saturday night.

Gabriel closed her eyes and clasped hands with runner-up Miss Venezuela, Amanda Dudamel, at the moment of the dramatic reveal of the winner, then beamed after her name was announced.

Thumping music rang out, and she was handed a bouquet of flowers, draped in the winner's sash and crowned with a tiara on-stage at the 71st Miss Universe Competition, held in New Orleans.

The second runner-up was Miss Dominican Republic, Andreina Martinez.



Miss USA R'Bonney Gabriel reacts as she is crowned Miss Universe during the final round of the 71st Miss Universe Beauty Pageant, in New Orleans.

In the Q&A at the last stage of the competition for the three finalists, Gabriel was asked how she would work to demonstrate Miss Universe is "an empowering and progressive organization" if she were to win. "I would use it to be a transformational

leader," she responded, citing her work using recycled materials in her fashion design and teaching sewing to survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence. "It is so important to invest in others, invest in our community and use your unique

talent to make a difference," Gabriel continued. "We all have something special, and when we plant those seeds to other people in our life, we transform them and we use that as a vehicle for change."

According to Miss Universe, Gabriel is a former high school volleyball player and graduate of the University of North Texas. A short bio posted on the organization's website said she is also CEO of her own sustainable clothing line.

Nearly 90 contestants from around the world took part in the competition, organizers said, involving "personal statements, in-depth interviews and various categories including evening gown & swimwear."

Miss Curacao, Gabriela Dos Santos, and Miss Puerto Rico, Ashley Carino, rounded out the top five finalists.

Asking for more loans from friendly countries is embarrassing, says Pak PM

Lahore, Jan 15 (PTI):

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that it was embarrassing for him to seek more loans from friendly countries, saying it was not a permanent solution for the cash-strapped country's economic challenges.

Addressing the passing out ceremony of probationary officers of the Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS) here in the capital of Punjab province on Saturday, Prime Minister Sharif regretted that during the past 75 years, different governments whether headed by political leadership or military dictators could not address the economic issues. Sharif said it really embarrassed him to ask for further loans while lauding the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the financial support, Geo News quoted him as saying. He said that seeking foreign



loans was not the right solution to address Pakistan's economic challenges as the loans would have to be eventually returned. The prime minister said that sustainable development goals (SDGs) could be achieved and foreign loans avoided had their "bus could have moved at a fast pace" and on the right track.

Pakistan is battling to fix its economic and political fissures amidst a parochial political rivalry

between former premier Imran Khan and the current government headed by Sharif. During Sharif's recent visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed announced a grant of a further USD 1 billion loan to Pakistan. Saudi Arabia and the UAE are the two key supporters of Pakistan who come to its rescue when the chips are down. The country faces a serious crisis as its foreign

reserves are down to USD 5.8 billion, the lowest since February 2014. The reserve includes deposits worth USD 5 billion from Saudi Arabia and China with specific conditions of use. Pakistan's economic situation is facing severe headwinds with inflation being forecast to stay high between 21-23 per cent and the country's fiscal deficit widening by more than 115 per cent in the first four months (July-October) of the current fiscal year.

The country with an economy of Rs 350 billion is in dire need of foreign aid to reduce its current account deficit as well as ensure enough reserves to meet its debt obligations.

Pakistan's economy has been on a downhill because of the political crisis, plummeting rupee, inflation which is at an unprecedented high, added to it last year's devastating floods, and a global energy crisis which has further worsened the situation.

Pakistan's Punjab Assembly dissolves; nominations for caretaker CM asked by Jan 17

Lahore, Jan 15 (PTI):

Pakistan's Punjab Assembly on Saturday evening stood dissolved after Punjab Governor Balighur Rehman refused to sign an advice of Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi.

Elahi on the "wish" of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf chairman Imran Khan on Thursday had sent the advice to dissolve the assembly. As the governor did not sign the dissolution summary, it stood dissolved 48 hours (Saturday evening) from the time the CM sent it to governor as

per the Constitution. The governor said in a tweet: "I have decided not to become part of the process leading to the dissolution of Punjab Assembly. I would rather let the Constitution and law take its own course. Doing so will not hamper any legal process as the Constitution clearly provides a way forward."

The governor also invited CM Elahi and Leader of the Opposition in the PA, Hamza Shahbaz (son of prime minister Shehbaz Sharif), to start the process of the appointment of the caretaker chief minister.

He asked them to submit their nominations by January 17.

Elahi, a joint candidate of ousted premier Imran Khan's party Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) and PML-Q, signed the dissolution of the PA summary hours after he managed to obtain a vote of confidence. Imran Khan said the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly will also be dissolved in a couple of days. The move is aimed at pushing the PMLN-led federal government to call snap polls. Khan says only fresh polls can steer the country out of economic crisis.

UN: Afghan bank's cash remarks misleading, unhelpful

Kabul, Jan 15 (AP):

The UN criticised Afghanistan's Taliban-controlled central bank for making "misleading and unhelpful" remarks about cash destined for humanitarian work.

It comes amid growing tension between the global body and the country's rulers over bans on female education and employment.

The UN uses the money mostly to provide millions of Afghans with critical humanitarian assistance, flying in cash because of banking disruptions since the Taliban seized power in August 2021.

Foreign aid stopped after the takeover. World governments imposed sanctions, halted bank transfers and froze billions more in Afghanistan's currency reserves, unwilling to work with the Taliban, given their rule in the late 1990s and their refusal to educate girls and allow women to work.

The Taliban have, in the last 18 months, barred females from education beyond sixth grade, including university, from public spaces and from most employment.

Most recently, they barred women from working at national and inter-

national non-governmental organisations.

That has drawn condemnation from the UN, aid agencies and foreign governments and raised concerns that Afghans will suffer and even die if female workers continue to be excluded from humanitarian work.

The Taliban show no signs of reversing these edicts, despite repeated calls to do so and visits from high-level UN and other foreign officials.

Their chief spokesman says authorities will not allow un-Islamic activities in Afghanistan and that politics should be kept out of humanitarian

aid. The UN in Afghanistan issued a statement late Saturday in response to a tweet from the Taliban-controlled central bank, which said a package of USD 40 million was deposited in a commercial bank in the Afghan capital, Kabul.

It posted a photo of wads of cash.

"Da Afghanistan Bank (the Afghan central bank) appreciates any principled move that will bring currency to the country and help the needy in the society," the tweet said.

But the UN said its cash is placed into designated accounts in a private bank

and distributed directly to its agencies and a small number of "approved and vetted" humanitarian partners in Afghanistan.

"None of the cash brought is deposited in the Central Bank of Afghanistan nor provided to the Taliban de facto authorities by the UN," the world body said in a statement.

"Announcements by non-UN entities about UN fund shipments are misleading and unhelpful."

The United Nations has flown in around USD 1.8 billion in funds for the UN and its partners to carry out their work since December 2021.

US CDC appoints Indian-origin Nirav Shah as second-in-command

Washington, Jan 15 (PTI):

Nirav D Shah, an Indian-origin epidemiologist, has been appointed Principal Deputy Director at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, making him the second-in-command at the national public health agency.

Shah, who is in his mid-forties, is currently the Director of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Shah will assume the new role, second in leadership under US CDC Director Rochelle Walensky, in March.

His appointment as Principal Deputy Director comes as part of a planned, broader overhaul



of that agency announced by the US CDC Director in August of last year.

Shah previously served as president of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials between March 2021 and September 2022, Politico newspaper reported.

Maine Governor Janet Mills in a statement said: "I take comfort, as Maine

people should, in knowing that the U.S. CDC and the American people at large will soon become the beneficiaries of his leadership. Dr. Shah, on behalf of the people of Maine, thank you from the bottom of my heart."

Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Commissioner Jeanne Lambrew appointed Director Shah to his current role as head of the Maine CDC in June of 2019, with the mission of rebuilding the agency and the State's public health infrastructure.

"Since his arrival in Maine before the pandemic, and every day throughout it, Dr. Shah has been a trusted advisor to me and

an extraordinary leader of the Maine CDC. But even more than that, he was a trusted advisor and a leader to the people of Maine during one of the greatest public health crises of our time," said Governor Mills.

"I strongly believe that Maine's nation-leading success in confronting the pandemic is due in large part to Dr. Shah's leadership, and there is no doubt in my mind that he saved the lives of many Maine people," Mills added.

Shah said he was sad to leave the Maine CDC.

"I'm thankful for the opportunity that Governor Mills and Commissioner (Jeanne) Lambrew provided me to serve the people of Maine," he said.

Storm-battered California gets more wind, rain and snow

Los Angeles (US), Jan 15 (AP):

Storm-battered California got more wind, rain and snow on Saturday, raising flooding concerns, causing power outages and making travel dangerous.

Bands of rain with gusty winds started in the north and spread south, with more storms expected to follow into early next week, the National Weather Service said.

More than 68,000 utility customers were without electricity on Saturday morning, a number that was cut by more than half during the afternoon, according to poweroutage.us.

Flood warnings were issued for the region north of San Francisco Bay, including Marin, Napa, Sonoma and Mendocino counties.

To the south, warnings



In an aerial view, a home is seen submerged in floodwater as the Salinas River begins to overflow its banks on in Salinas, California. Several atmospheric river events continue to pound California with record rainfall and high winds.

were posted for parts of counties including San Mateo and Santa Cruz, where the tiny community of Felton Grove along the San Lorenzo River was ordered evacuated.

An evacuation order also was issued for residents of the Wilton area in semirural southeast-

ern Sacramento County. Authorities cited the threat of flooding from the Cosumnes River.

The swollen Salinas River swamped farmland in Monterey County, and to the east, flood warnings were in effect for Merced County in the agricultural Central Valley, where

Gov. Gavin Newsom visited to take stock of storm problems.

"The reality is that this is just the eighth of what we anticipate will be nine atmospheric rivers - we're not done," Newsom said at a briefing with local leaders where he urged people to be vigilant about safety for the next 24 to 48 hours.

"This is happening all across California but I want to say ... you guys are disproportionately taking the brunt of it, and if you feel that way you're right," Newsom said.

President Joe Biden declared a major disaster in the state and ordered federal aid to supplement local recovery efforts in affected areas.

Slick roads, snow and whiteout conditions plagued highways through the Sierra Nevada.

Nepal PM Prachanda says he will visit India soon

Kathmandu, Jan 15 (PTI):

Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' has said that he will visit India soon on his first foreign trip after assuming the top executive post of the country for the third time.

The 68-year-old CPN-Maoist Centre leader, thought to be close to China, was sworn in as the Prime Minister for the third time on December 26 last year after he dramatically walked out of the pre-poll alliance led by the Nepali Congress and joined hands with opposition leader K P Sharma Oli.

"I will be visiting India soon," Prachanda told senior editors on Saturday during his first interaction with select journalists after winning the vote of confidence on Tuesday. He



said that preparations are going on at the diplomatic level for the same.

"The concerned embassies are making preparations for my visit," he told the journalists at Baluwatar, the official residence of the Prime Minister.

However, the Nepal government is yet to officially announce the Prime Minister's visit to India.

The date and itinerary of the visit are yet to be finalised.

"We are working towards finalising the date and detailed programmes as well as the agenda of the visit in coordination with our counterparts," an official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

"Visiting a neighbouring country by the Prime Minister after assuming the position is a normal process and internally we are always prepared for that," the official added.

Prachanda had also paid official visits to India during his earlier tenures as the Prime Minister of Nepal.

In July last year, Prachanda visited India at the invitation of BJP President JP Nadra. Nepali Prime Ministers traditionally choose New Delhi for their first foreign visit after being sworn-in. But Prachanda after being elected prime minister for

the first time in 2008 went off the beaten track to visit Beijing for the Olympics inaugural ceremony without first travelling to India.

He, however, in his second stint as a prime minister first travelled to India on a state visit in September, 2016.

Prachanda's visit will happen only after the election of the new President, two leaders of the CPN (Maoist Centre) who are familiar with the developments told. The Kathmandu Post newspaper: "However, if the Indian side insists on the visit before the new President is elected, the trip may even take place earlier," one of them said.

The presidential vote is due in February as the term of President Bidya Devi Bhandari expires in March-end.

Pak prez Alvi to ask PM Shehbaz Sharif to obtain vote of confidence: Imran Khan

Lahore, Jan 15 (PTI):

Pakistan's ousted prime minister Imran Khan has said President Arif Alvi will soon ask Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to face a vote of confidence, as he stepped up efforts to press the government for snap polls.

"Shehbaz Sharif tested us in Punjab and now it's his turn to prove whether he enjoys a majority in the National Assembly or not," Khan made these remarks during a media interaction here and also in an interview on Hum News TV on Saturday.

"In the first, Shehbaz will be tested for a trust vote... and later we have other plans for him," the chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-ie-Insaf said, cit-



ing differences in the federal coalition as the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) threatened to quit over the issue of local body polls in Karachi and Hyderabad.

President Alvi belongs to Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) and the federal coalition is surviving on a very thin majority. MQM-P has seven members in the National Assembly, if it decides to quit the Shehbaz government can-

not survive.

Khan has already said that he will sacrifice both Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assemblies to push the federal government to announce snap polls. Khan says only fresh polls can steer the country out of the economic crisis.

The federal government, however, insists that general elections will be held after the completion of the tenure of the government in August.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's Punjab Assembly has automatically been dissolved on Saturday after the province's Governor Balighur Rehman refused to sign the summary sent by Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi to disband the provincial

legislature. Elahi, a joint candidate of ousted premier Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party and the PML-Q, signed the dissolution of the Punjab Assembly summary hours after he managed to obtain a vote of confidence.

Imran Khan said the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly will also be dissolved in a couple of days.

Khan was ousted from power in April last year through a vote of no-confidence.

Meanwhile, PML-N supreme leader Nawaz Sharif presided over a party meeting in Lahore on Saturday evening through a video link from London where he has been living in a self-exile since November 2019.



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Economic slowdown to haunt India the next two years

India would be going downhill for the next two years, if Global Economic Prospect just released by the World Bank is of any indication. GDPs for 2023 and 2024 have been revised down to 6.6 per cent and 6.1 per cent respectively, which are below 0.5 and 0.4 per cent compared to its earlier estimates made in June 2022. Obviously, it would push up the poverty level, especially the extreme poverty level in the country, which would remain a major concern, especially at a time of rising joblessness. South Asia continues to be adversely affected by spillovers from the invasion of Ukraine, rising global interest rates, and weakening growth in key trading partners. Regional growth is estimated to have slowed to 6.1 per cent in 2022 and is projected to slow further to 5.5 per cent in 2023 – below previous projections on global spillovers – before picking up to 5.8 per cent in 2024. It is worth mentioning that the region's average growth during the first two decades of this century was 6.5 per cent. Risks to the outlook continue to be tilted to the downside, including further pressure from tightening global financial conditions; higher-than-projected inflation leading to lower real incomes and spending; and the reemergence of financial sector stress. Dwindling international reserves and rising sovereign spreads increase the risk of more economies falling into crisis. Three countries in the region – Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka – have already witnessed a substantial rise in poverty led by deterioration in economic conditions. Many households are consuming less nutritious food, and rolling electricity blackouts have become common as fuel has been rationed. Widening external current accounts deficits and a combination of limited foreign exchange buffers have encouraged Bangladesh and Pakistan to approach International Monetary Fund (IMF) for help in bolstering foreign exchange reserves and mitigating external financing pressures. In parallel, governments of the region have tightened fiscal policies and, in some cases, imposed import controls and food export bans. In India, which accounts for three-fourths of the region's output, growth expanded by 9.7 per cent on an annual basis in the first half of the current fiscal 2022-23, reflecting strong private consumption and fixed investment growth. However, consumer inflation spent most of the last year above the Reserve Bank of India's upper tolerance limit of 6 per cent, prompting the policy rate to be raised by 2.25 percentage points between May and December. India's goods trade deficit has more than doubled since 2019, and was \$24 billion in November, with deficits for crude petroleum and petroleum products to the tune of \$7.6 billion and other commodities, for example, ores and minerals at \$4.2 billion, accounted to the widening of the deficits. Between June and December, region's currencies depreciated against the US dollar by an average of 10 per cent above the emerging developing economies (EMDE) average. In conjunction with rising global commodity prices, consumer price inflation has continued to rise, and one-year-ahead inflation expectations remain well above central bank targets. India used its international reserves at \$550 billion in November, which was 16 per cent of its GDP, to curb excess exchange rate volatility helping to limit Rupee depreciation, and its sovereign spread has remained broadly stable at 1.4 per cent in December, similar to average levels in the five years before the pandemic. In spite of falling growth rate, World Bank finds the region's GDP growth still robust, which reflect robust growth rate in India, Maldives, and Nepal. However, the deteriorating global environment will weigh on investment in the region. For India, the outlook says, the slowdown in global economy and rising uncertainty will weigh on export and investment growth. Government has increased infrastructure spending and various business facilitation measures, however, will crowd-in private investment and support expansion of manufacturing capacity. World Bank has projected to slow India's growth in 2023-24 to 6.6 per cent before falling back toward its potential rate of just above 6 per cent. However, India is expected to be the fastest growing economy of the seven largest EMDEs. The outlook has pointed out that countries in the regions are also turning to more restrictive fiscal and monetary policies to address rising domestic and external imbalances and financing pressures at a time when growth in already slowing globally and output gaps are widening in several regional economies. In India, monetary and fiscal tightening over the forecast horizon is expected to be less pronounced than in much of the rest of the region, as adequate policy buffers have provided breathing room to support the ongoing recovery and boost public investment. However, risks to the outlook remain predominantly to the downside, including those related to the repercussions of the invasion of Ukraine, tightening global financing conditions, legacies from the pandemic, and country-specific vulnerabilities. Potential for crises is also rising.

THE FUTURE OF HEALTHCARE

Dr Krishna Kumar, Vepakomma

The increasing rise in chronic illnesses such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease, particularly in industrialized nations, has dramatically increased the demand for smart healthcare solutions in recent decades. Hospitals are looking for innovative strategies to improve the services provided in a more cost-effective manner while maintaining the quality and safety as a top priority as patient demands keep rising. The concept of a "smart hospital" is currently popular in healthcare, driven by information technology (IT) and artificial intelligence (AI). Consequently, smart hospitals make extensive use of modern technologies. A wide range of emerging technologies, including telemedicine, genomics, augmented/virtual reality, 3-D printing, precision medicine, robots, and artificial intelligence, can be effectively incorporated into healthcare delivery from the perspective of the supply chain. Smart hospitals provide seamless technology integration to support the delivery of healthcare in order to provide the connected care that patients expect from top institutions. Smart hospitals use AI (Artificial Intelligence) and analytics to translate data from devices and workflows into useful insights using their connected infrastructure. This data-driven methodology allows for quicker, more accurate diagnosis, better patient care, and more informed decision-making. Factors such as technological advancements, increased healthcare spending, a sedentary lifestyle, more awareness, and a high acceptance rate of new technologies are driving the growth of the global smart hospital market. Because of the development of smart hospitals, the entire healthcare delivery system is transforming, and this transformation will accelerate over the next few years.

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

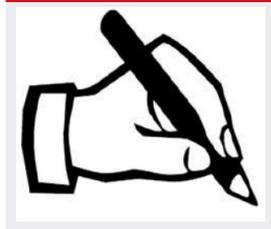
CAMEL FESTIVAL



Bikaner: A tourist with Rajasthani artist performs dance during the International Camel Festival, in Bikaner, Sunday, Jan. 15.

A BUDGET FOR BHARAT

ANIL PADMANABHAN



This year's Union Budget—the 11th in a row from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA)—is being presented in the backdrop of exceptional circumstances. Not only is a deeply divided world facing an unprecedented economic challenge that is being compounded by climate change, this is also the last regular Budget ahead of the general election next year. Ever since the covid-19 pandemic struck in 2020, the world has been subjected to repeated shocks of unprecedented magnitude—the Russia-Ukraine conflict, followed by the ratcheting up of interest rates by the United States Federal Reserve, and most recently the fresh surge in the covid-19 pandemic in China. The combined impact of the pandemic, geopolitical tensions, drying up of global liquidity and the commodity price shocks has brought the world—including the United States, the largest economy—dangerously close to a recession. However, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, will have cause for cheer. India continues to challenge this grim global narrative with its economy poised to log an impressive 6.5-7 percent growth in 2022-23. Even better, the Finance Minister has sufficient

cause to believe that this is largely the outcome of the policy playbook the NDA adopted since it assumed power in 2014.

The New Playbook

Since it assumed power nine years ago, the NDA has sought to pivot the Indian economy. These policy changes have been appreciated and validated most recently, by the global investment banks, World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. It began with the rollout of the Goods and Services Tax (GST)—the single biggest indirect tax reform—which, for the first time, economically unified the country. The GST principle, 'One Nation, One Tax', made the economy more efficient by dramatically reducing friction. Not surprisingly, monthly gross GST collections now average over Rs 1 lakh crore—in November the accruals to the exchequer was Rs 1.45 lakh crore.

To incentivise and revive private sector investments the union government slashed corporate tax rates to 22 percent from the prevailing 30 percent; in addition, it fixed a lower rate of 15% for companies incorporated after 2019—this scheme is extended till 2023. Similarly, the passage of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) in 2016, helped with the mitigation of the legacy bad debts of commercial banks. According to the Economic Survey of 2021-22, financial creditors recovered Rs 2.55 lakh crore, of the Rs 7.94 lakh crore debt owed to banks, at the end of 30 September 2021. This repair of the financial sector, which also included capitalisation of bank balance sheets, restored the ability of commercial banks to lend.

The NDA also undertook a major ideological reset after it formalised the policy of privatisation—the

most recent example was the sale of Air India to the Tata group. Simultaneously the union government has taken to monetisation of idle assets owned by the public sector to generate funds for big-ticket Greenfield infrastructure projects—the underlying strategy is to crowd-in private investment.

The pursuit of fiscal prudence, unlocking of financial resources and buoyancy in tax collections has provided the wherewithal to the FM to fund infrastructure projects and the covid-19 relief packages. More importantly, it is now evident that the structural reforms which improved economic efficiency, proved to be a buffer against the economic devastation unleashed by the pandemic.

Digital Public Goods

The Indian economy also received an unexpected boost from the rapid rollout of Digital Public Goods (DPGs) like Aadhaar, Unified Payments Interface (UPI), CoWin, Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), Account Aggregators, Health Stack and Open Credit Enablement Network (OCEN), over the last decade. These DPGs have been created as an open digital ecosystem, which enables the private sector to use these digital rails to create innovations in payments, health care and so on. At the same time, by dramatically lowering the cost of entry, these DPGs accelerated formalisation of the economy and democratised access to identity, covid-19 jobs, payments, credit and more recently e-commerce.

These public digital rails have also been used by the union government to accelerate the rollout of the Direct Benefits Transfer, estimated to be cumulatively over Rs25 lakh crore. The resulting disintermediation has also prevented

leakages and savings to the exchequer upwards of Rs 2 lakh crore. Further, these beneficiaries have become key stakeholders in the Indian economy—where previously they were outside looking in.

Pandemic Blues

The onset of the covid-19 pandemic, consequent lockdown of the economy caused immense distress to both lives and livelihoods, not just in India but the entire world. Unlike other nations though, India did not opt for a fiscal stimulus to revive the economy. Instead it pursued a calibrated strategy, wherein it initially focused on saving lives and then gradually put the spotlight on livelihoods—even while it bolstered the material basis of the vulnerable segments by rolling out the free food grain scheme for 80 crore people; which has now been extended till December 2023.

While this extraordinary social safety net together with the big push for providing electricity, drinking water, sanitation and housing for all, succeeded in mitigating damage to those at the bottom of the pyramid, the structural reforms has made the economy more efficient. The impact is yet to manifest itself as the Indian economy was busy repairing the damage caused to the banking sector by an unprecedented surge in bad debts. Further, the back-to-back setbacks beginning with the pandemic, dampened the recovery process. However, with these one-off shocks fading the economy is poised for a rebound, providing a healthy backdrop for this year's Budget.

Over to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. (Anil Padmanabhan is a freelance journalist who tweets @capitalcalculus.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Blindness is a limit!

A lunatic also laughs to hear of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Saumitra Khan's saying that Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi was a reincarnation of Swami Vivekananda. But the people wonder how the MP Khan has forgotten that under PM Modi's nose more than 1300 butchered in 2002 Gujarat carnage, and not yet apologized. Whereas, Swami Vivekananda believed "Jibe prem kore jei jon, sei jon sebiche ishwar" (Those who serve others serve the Lord in the true sense). Agreeing as a PM of the country he tried to change his image through various government schemes (particularly two-thirds population of the country are served with almost free ration), even though such excessively admiring comments as these tend to create anti-Modi sentiments. Blindness is a limit! Mr. Khan should not forget that through his statement he not only insulted Swami Vivekananda, but a much bigger insult to PM Modi.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee, Faridabad

Far reaching SC decisions

In one day, two far reaching decisions by Supreme Court and one is related to hate speech and second is related to TRP rating of electronic media and both matters are causing concerns. On hate speech Supreme Court had already clarified that it can not frame any law but can only reevaluate. The Central Government had informed the Supreme Court that it intend to amend the law to deal with the menace. We are contemplating a separate amendment to the Criminal Procedure Code. That is the stand of the Union of India. The views of the stakeholders have been sought regarding amendments to the criminal laws, Additional Solicitor General of India KM Nataraj told a Bench led by Justice KM Joseph while hearing petitions against hate speech. However, terming it a legislative process, the Bench which also included Justice BV Nagarathna; said ultimately it was for the Parliament to decide with regard to the media. Nataraj said TV channels were following self-regulation and unless something serious affecting the national interest or security the Centre would not step in. Recording the Centre's stand on the issue, the Bench issued notice on an application seeking to make all states as parties to the case. The Bench disapproved of the manner in which TV channels conducted their debates and pulled up News Broadcasters and Digital Association (NBDA) for failing to ensure absence of bias. "Everything is driven by TRP. TV Channels are competing against each other. They sensationalise things, serve an agenda. You create divisions in society because of the visual element. The visual medium can influence you much more than a newspaper," said Justice Joseph.

Yash Pal Ralhan, Jalandhar

Far Right Coup Attempt In Brazil Sends Ominous Signal To Latin American Left

By Satyaki Chakraborty

The storming of the Congress building and the Presidential Palace in Brazil by the far right supporters of the defeated president Jair Bolsonaro on January 8 is a wake up call to the progressives of Latin America to unite for fighting the right offensive which has been launched in the countries that have elected the left wing presidents in the last two years. On Sunday night, thousands of supporters of Jair Bolsonaro stormed Congress, the Presidential Palace, and the Supreme Court in Brasilia. Descending on the country's capital, the far-right mob called for the resignation of the newly elected president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, and for the intervention of the military to halt the peaceful and democratic transfer of power.

The attempted coup drew immediate parallels to the January 6 insurrection in the United States two years ago, when Trump supporters invaded Capitol Hill. Both had been fueled by widespread misinformation that the elections were rigged and by a dangerous far-right leader who inspired their supporters into authoritarian action. The difference is that while the defeated Donald Trump was in the White

House on January 6, 2021, on January 8, 2023, Bolsonaro was holidaying in his comfort villa in Florida. Though he was forced to say that he did not inspire the storming of the government buildings by his supporters, his statement had a rider, the protesters had right to demonstrate.

The entire development starting with the mobilization before the military headquarter and asking the army top brass to remove Lula who took over as the new president only on January 1 had so much signs of anti-democratic behavior that all the heads of western democracies, even the far right Italian prime minister condemned the storming and asked the protesters to abide by the electoral verdict. US president Joe Biden came out strongly against the far right insurrection attempts saying that the electoral verdict had to be respected. He extended his support to the president Lula.

Importantly, most of the heads of the left wing governments of Latin America came out in solidarity with the president Lula and extended their full support to the Brazilian leader in fighting the far right forces which are aiming to destroy the democratic fabric in the Latin American region. They took the January 8 coup attempt as a seri-

ous development in Latin American polity since last year the elected president Pedro Castillo was removed from Peru and earlier Argentinian vice president Fernandez Kitchener was arrested for corruption charges. Though Lula's position is different, and both Castillo and Kitchener made some mistakes, still the moot point is that the far right is attacking the Left in a systematic manner and they are becoming more and more aggressive after their defeats.

As Left wing Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn candidly says the January 8 coup attempt does not just strike fear into the hearts of those who remember the scenes in Washington. It strikes fear into the hearts of those who live with the memory of fascism, authoritarianism, and militarism in their own land. Not least because Bolsonaro himself has openly expressed support for Brazil's twenty-one-year dictatorship, telling an interviewer that "you'll never change anything in this country through voting. Nothing. Absolutely nothing." Bolsonaro denies any role in the insurrection. However, by frequently raising doubts about the integrity of the election and by refusing to attend Lula's inauguration (breaking with custom for the outgoing president

to hand the sash to the incoming president), there is no doubt that Bolsonaro's most extreme supporters have been emboldened by his contempt for democratic processes.

In Latin America, though in the latest phase, the left leaning presidents were elected in a number of countries, the national assemblies have still been dominated by the rightwing and other anti-left forces. So it has been a Herculean task for many presidents to get their programmes approved by the parliamentarians. That is causing delay leading to the frustrations among the common people who are looking for a big change. The insurrection attempt is also a reminder of the additional barriers that left-wing governments must overcome to achieve real change. Lula campaigned on a platform of social justice, indigenous rights, and an end to deforestation. The vested interests can not wait for the Brazilian president to consolidate. They are rallying behind the deposed president Bolsonaro who still represents the main opposition leader of the combined right. The need is therefore to mobilise every section of the anti-right population of Brazil – trade unions, students, civil society and all parties having confidence in transfor-

mation in favour of people's programme to support the Lula government. The task of the combined Left has become tougher.

As the political observers in Brazil mention the coup attempt, is not just about Lula, nor even the millions who voted for him. It's about the right of the Brazilian people to live in a free, fair and peaceful society, and a right not to live in fear that the violent and bloody dictatorship will return. Those who stormed Congress did not just launch an assault on Lula and his supporters. They launched an assault on democracy and on the Brazilian masses. That is why Lula's present battle to protect his government is not just his own, it is the battle of the entire Latin American left wing governments and the masses supporting them. It is the battle in which the left wing people and the other forces who believe in democracy, have to rally on a common goal. The Mexican president Obrador earlier emphasized that Latin American nations have to be have a common perspective on their polity and development and fight jointly those forces who want to block the progress in the continent. After coup attempt in Brazil, this is the need of the hour.

BRIEF

Just Dial

New Delhi: Local search platform Just Dial has reported over three-fold jump in its consolidated net profit at Rs 75.32 crore in the third quarter that ended December 31, 2022. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 19.39 crore in the October-December quarter a year ago, Just Dial said in a regulatory filing. Just Dial's net revenue from operations was up 39.32 per cent to Rs 221.37 crore during the quarter under review as against Rs 158.89 crore of the corresponding quarter last year.

Flybig

New Delhi: Regional carrier Flybig on Sunday started service from Itanagar to Guwahati. The carrier has commenced flight from Hollongi in Arunachal Pradesh to Guwahati in Assam. "Itanagar is the 10th destination on Flybig network; while the third destination in Arunachal Pradesh alone. Flybig also flies six days a week to Tezu and seven days to Pasighat in Arunachal Pradesh from Guwahati," it said in a release. The direct morning flight from Itanagar to Guwahati will be operated on all days except Wednesday.

Liquor makers

New Delhi: The Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC) has written to the Delhi Government seeking removal of rules that allegedly discriminate against Indian-made products and promote imports in the forthcoming excise policy for 2023-24. Suggesting measures for the incorporation in the forthcoming excise policy for the next financial year, the representative body of the Indian alcoholic beverage manufacturers urged for improvement in norms of ease of doing business, simplification of new product launch process and digitization of all operational processes.

IT biggies

New Delhi: India's IT services heavyweights delivered between 14-20 per cent on-year growth in topline for December quarter, as they raised guard on global uncertainties and choppy verticals, but remained hopeful that costs as well as business considerations will drive tech demand. The tech earnings season began with large IT companies - Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Infosys, Wipro and HCL Technologies - declaring their Q3 report card this week, amid analysts' gloomy prognosis around slow-down in advanced economies and fear of geopolitical flare-ups.

Business quiz

Lucknow: The Uttar Pradesh government will organise UP GIS 23 Headliner Business Quiz competition on February 4-5 in the run-up to the Global Investors Summit. The quiz will be held at the Indira Gandhi Pratishthan, Lucknow, an official statement said here. The competition has three different categories - Business Quiz, India Quiz and India Quiz (School). The winner in each category will get cash prize of up to Rs 80,000.

IIFCL gives wings to aviation sector: MD

Extends Rs 6,630 crore loans for development of airports

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

To support the massive growth in the aviation sector, the India Infrastructure Finance Company Limited (IIFCL) has extended a credit of Rs 6,630 crore for the development of six major airports in the country and looks forward to increasing its exposure in the coming years, said its managing director P R Jaishankar.

Bullish on the growth of the aviation sector in the country, he said, the IIFCL also given in-principle approval of Rs 638 crore for the development of a greenfield airport in Andhra Pradesh.

Over the past few years, India has seen massive growth in the airport sector, with increasing invest-



ments from both government and private sector, thanks to a rising proportion of middle-income households, infrastructure build-up at leading airports and supportive policy framework. "With an aim to finance development of world class airport infrastructure in India, IIFCL has, till date, sanctioned Rs 6,630 crore to six major airports in India in Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Navi Mumbai, Noida (Jewar) and the newly developed Manohar International Airport in Goa,"

Jaishankar told PTI. IIFCL is present in almost all major airports of the country, he said. "These airports are of national importance and have been facilitating and improving connectivity across the nation. We are committed to supporting the government in its mission to improve connectivity for the masses and lower down the logistics cost to benefit the economy at large," he said.

He further said, IIFCL will continue to extend its support to develop world class airport infrastructure in India and exploring opportunities in funding the greenfield airport projects, as well as Maintenance, Repairs and Overhaul (MRO) facilities under PPP mode by way of term loan, subscription to bonds, refinancing, or credit enhancement etc.

Highlighting the importance of the airport sector, Jaishankar said it holds

the potential to provide a huge positive impact on the economy, with an economic multiplier of 3.1 and employment multiplier of 6.

To meet the growing demand for air travel in India, he said, it has become imperative to increase the capacity of airport infrastructure.

According to reports, investments worth over Rs 85,000 crore are in the pipeline for airport infrastructure in India during FY23 FY27.

This includes ongoing capacity expansion at major private airports, investments by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) of Rs 25,000 crore for development of AAI-operated airports, around Rs 30,000 - 35,000 crore is 21 new greenfield airports across the country and about Rs 17,000 crore by the Adani Group towards development of six airports acquired from AAI.

BMW sees huge growth potential in India

Mumbai, Jan 15 (PTI):



German luxury carmaker BMW is increasing its focus on India, buoyed by the best-ever annual sales in 2022 as it sees "huge growth potential for market leadership" here given the low penetration.

Driven by the highest ever number of launches (26), and pent-up demand arising from the pandemic-induced lockdowns, BMW India sold 35 per cent more cars (BMW and Minis combined) in 2022 at 11,981 units (of which 11,268 were BMWs), making it the highest ever deliveries in its history since its entry in 2007.

Its two-wheeler brand Motorrad also had its best-ever sales delivering 7,282 units, a full 40 per cent growth on-year. Though India is likely to overtake Japan to become the third largest auto market in the world after China and the US in 2022 selling more than 4.25 million units, there is nothing to write home about the luxury seg-

ment which is just about 1 per cent. Of this, the car volume stood at 3.8 million in 2022, excluding the units sold by luxury carmakers Mercedes, BMW and Volvo, according to data shared by industry body SIAM last week.

"I am happy that in 2022 India became one of our fastest growing markets in terms of volumes clocking the best-ever sales since our entry in 2007 and growth rates for all our brands here. I am pretty confident that India will continue to surprise us in 2023 as well," Jean-Philippe Parain, senior vice-president for Asia Pacific, Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa at the BMW Group, told PTI.

Despite such record numbers, he said "India is not among the top 10 markets for us globally. But it has huge potential for faster and higher growth and become a lead market for us." He did not offer a timeline for the same.

When it comes to volumes, "India volume has never been so high and so is our optimism, which comes from the strong fundamentals of the very resilient economy, pro-growth policies of the government and the conducive regulatory environment," Parain said.

To build on the record growth, BMW has lined up as many as 18 launches for 2023 across its three brands the mother brand BMW, the Mini and the bike brand Motorrad. Parain said, adding three of the new launches will be electric to further build on its market leadership here. It already has three models on the road, making it the largest player in the luxury EV space.

Repos expects to grow three-fold this fiscal to Rs 185 cr; raise Rs 300 crore

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

Ratan Tata-backed energy distribution startup Repos is expected to grow by close to three-fold to Rs 185 crore in the current fiscal on account of increased traction for its service among business-to-business clients, a top official of the firm said.

Repos Energy founder and CVO Aditi Bhosale Walunj told PTI at the Auto Expo 2023 that the company is in the process of raising Rs 300 crore to fund expansion of business across India as well as a platform to offer carbon-neutral fuels such as ethanol and electric vehicle chargers.

"We have been fortunate

enough to have Mr Ratan Tata as our initial investor. Last fiscal year we did business of Rs 65 crore. Our business has been growing multifold. This fiscal we expect our top line to be around Rs 185 crore," Walunj said.

She said that the company's fuel distribution platform is mainly built around the delivery of diesel but it is now adding new fuels to the platforms to make it available at the doorsteps of end consumers with the help of technology. "Like ATMs, we are providing mobile fuel stations. It is helpful for enterprises to get fuel at the doorstep, check fuel theft, monitor fuel consumption etc. We are now

present in 280 cities across India where we have deployed over 2,000 mobile fuel stations. Now we are in the process of raising Rs 300 crore which we will use to further expand our presence and develop technology for the distribution of carbon neutral fuels," Walunj said.

Repos recently onboarded management expert Ram Charan on its advisory board for mentoring the company towards growth path. With 40 years of experience, Charan has been a consultant to global organisations like Toyota, GE, Bank of America, Honeywell, Aditya Birla Group, Novartis, Fast Retailing (Uniqlo), and Matrix.

India's Russian oil imports top 1 mn barrels a day in Dec

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):



India's import of crude oil from Russia increased further in December 2022, topping 1 million barrels per day for the first time ever as Moscow remained its top oil supplier for the third month in a row, according to data from energy cargo tracker Vortexa.

Russia, which made up for just 0.2 per cent of all crude oil India imported in the year to March 31, 2022, supplied 1.19 million bpd in December.

This was higher than 909,403 bpd crude oil India imported from Russia in November and 935,556 bpd in October 2022. The previous record for most crude oil imports from Russia was in June 2022 when India bought 942,694 bpd, accord-

ing to Vortexa. Russia, which in October 2022 for the first time surpassed traditional sellers Iraq and Saudi Arabia to take the No.1 spot, now makes up for 25 per cent of all oil imported by India. The imports peaked as a price cap was agreed upon by the EU on Russian seaborne oil. Russian oil is available at much lower than USD 60 per

barrel cap agreed, industry sources said. India is the world's third-largest oil-consuming and importing nation. It imports 85 per cent of its crude oil needs. Crude oil is converted into fuels like petrol and diesel at refineries. According to Vortexa, an energy intelligence firm, India imported 803,228 bpd of oil from Iraq in December and 718,357 bpd from Saudi

Arabia. The United Arab Emirates overtook the US to become India's fourth largest supplier, selling 323,811 bpd oil in December 2022. The United States supplied 322,015 bpd, down from 405,525 bpd in November 2022. India's appetite for Russian oil swelled ever since it started trading on discount as the West shunned it to punish Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine.

According to S&P Global Commodity Insights, India is aiming to pursue an oil import policy that will witness robust inflows from both the US and Russia in the foreseeable future, while stepping up efforts to diversify the crude basket even further to cushion the impact of any supply shock going ahead.

Govt extends tenure of Bank of Baroda MD Sanjiv Chadha

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

The government has extended the tenure of managing director (MD) and CEO of Bank of Baroda (BoB) Sanjiv Chadha for about five months till June 30.

The order dated January 14, 2023 comes ahead of his three-year tenure that ends on January 19. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the proposal of the Department of Financial Services for extending the term of Chadha till June 30, 2023, when he attains 60 years, the retirement age, sources said.

Meanwhile, the Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB), the headhunter for directors of state-owned banks and fi-



ancial institutions, on Saturday recommended elevation of Executive Director (ED) Debadatta Chand as managing director of Bank of Baroda. Besides, the Bureau recommended Union Bank of India ED Rajneesh Karnatak for the position of MD & CEO in Bank of India. The final decision on the FSIB recommendation would be taken by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Coal India should aim at providing electricity to nation at 'just price': Chairman

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):



State-owned CIL chief Pramod Agrawal has said that the coal behemoth should aim at providing electricity to the county at "just price" as 80 per cent of the company's supplies is directed towards coal-based power plants.

Coal India (CIL) accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal supply and three quarters of the country's power generation is coal-based. In a recent message to its employees, Agrawal who is the chairman and managing director of CIL said that "our role is to supply assured energy at affordable costs".

Stating that as there is a sizeable scope for energy expansion in the country for the next few decades, he said that the company has a

greater responsibility to shoulder. "Aim for even loftier heights in the last quarter of the financial year and make FY23 momentous by shattering the annual targets as well. And, not rest there. Once we achieve 700 MT production target that should be a benchmark base for further growth," he said.

Agrawal asked the employees to make a concerted effort in meeting the country's energy and developmental goals with unrelenting com-

mitment. "All the three performance parameters - production of 479 MTs (million tonnes), supplies of 508 MTs and OBR of 1,155 M, Cu.M, till December, were ahead of the respective progressive targets. What makes this milestone special is the formidable scale of targets, which we were able to breach. However, much more needs to be done," the message said.

CIL will achieve 1 billion tonnes of coal production target by 2025-26 as against the earlier timeline of 2023-24 in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Coal output by CIL in current financial year is expected to be 700 MT and there would be additional output of 200 MT from other sources, the coal ministry had earlier said.

FPIs withdraw Rs 15,000 cr from equities in 2 weeks of Jan

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

Foreign investors flooded around Rs 15,000 crore worth of Indian equities in the first two weeks of January amid risks of Covid in some parts of the world and recession worries in the US.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have been adopting a cautious stance towards Indian equity markets for the past few weeks.

Going forward, FPIs flows are expected to remain volatile even as inflation continued its downward trajectory both globally and domestically, Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd, said.

According to the data with the depositories, FPIs

have made a net withdrawal of Rs 15,068 crore from the Indian equity markets during January 2-13. Only two of the 10 trading days in January to date saw net purchases.

This came following a net inflow of Rs 11,119 crore in December and Rs 36,239 crore in November.

Overall, FPIs pulled out Rs 1.21 lakh crore from the Indian equity markets in 2022 on aggressive rate hikes 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 FPIs in terms of flow and withdrawal from equities comes following a net investment in the preceding three years.

AUTO EXPO 2023



People gather at the Auto Expo 2023, in Greater Noida.

Toyota to roll out products based on multiple technologies to cater to varied customer segments

Greater Noida, Jan 15 (PTI):

Toyota Kirloskar Motor aims to roll out products based on multiple clean technologies while also reinforcing its internal combustion engine based model range to cater to all kinds of emerging customer requirements in the country, according to company's Managing Director Masakazu Yoshimura.

Termining India as one of the most important markets for Toyota globally, he noted that the automaker will keep rolling out products based on eco-friendly technologies considering various factors such as the country's energy mix, consumer needs and infra-



structure readiness. The automaker, while acknowledging the government support in manufacturing in terms of various schemes like Faster

Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles (FAME II) and Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes, also pitched for a

carbon-based taxation system. In an interaction with PTI on the sidelines of the Auto Expo here, Yoshimura noted that the automaker is conscious of the fact that a huge amount of forex goes into the import of fossil fuels.

"So that is perhaps one of the biggest problems for the country. So, we are trying to do whatever possible to support what the government wants to solve," he stated.

He further said: "We are only a manufacturing, sales and marketing entity. So the area is quite limited but what we can do with new technology, new products, that's perhaps the area we can focus on."

Sidharth Malhotra shares his fond memories with cast of 'Mission Majnu'

Actor Sidharth Malhotra, who went through a host of workshops and conducted rigorous research to understand the psyche of a RAW agent 'Mission Majnu', has shared his fond memories with the movie cast.

Netflix's 'Mission Majnu', is a film inspired by true events, in which Sidharth Malhotra will be seen uncovering one of India's most important missions in the 1970s alongside Rashmika Mandanna, Kumud Mishra and Sharib Hashmi and Shantanu Bagchi.

Sidharth Malhotra said, "I have always been in awe of their work and watched almost every movie they have been a part of. Kumud sir is extremely chatty on set and the way he slipped in and out of his character the minute we were in action was very intriguing. I personally feel like he had the best character arc in the film and I'm really excited to see what the viewers feel about it."

"Sharib is extremely entertaining on and off camera and not only is he an excellent actor, but also a

great singer. I am extremely glad I got to work with both of them!"

On set, Sidharth built a great rapport with the cast and crew of Mission Majnu and had one of the best and most memorable shooting experience.

On working with Rashmika Mandanna and Shantanu Bagchi, Sidharth said, "Shantanu has made his debut with Mission Majnu and I've been in awe of him seeing his sincerity towards his work. We used to constantly keep pulling his leg for having a little diary where he would sketch every single shot of the film. He is an extremely visual director and I love that about him."

"Rashmika and I had such an effortless friendship on set and I would love to work with her again. She is a fitness freak and we made our own makeshift gym on set to workout together in between shots. I am really happy she played the role of Amrin and cannot wait to see the viewers' reaction to our pairing."

The espionage-thriller 'Mission Majnu' is set to drop on Netflix on January 20.

John Legend, wife Chrissy Teigen are proud parents once again, welcome third baby

Grammy winner John Legend and his wife Chrissy Teigen's family just got a little bigger as the couple welcomed another baby.

The baby was born on Friday (pacific standard time), the proud father confirmed hours after his child's arrival, reports People magazine. Legend, 43, told a crowd at a private concert that they welcomed "the little baby."

"What a blessed day," he said. The singer added that while he "didn't get a lot of sleep" he "feels energised" after spending "a lot of time" at the hospital. Attendees of the special event immediately headed to social media to share the big baby news.

"@johnlegend just told us he had a baby this



morning," one concert-goer wrote, quoted by People. The birth of their baby comes after the couple experienced a heartbreaking pregnancy loss in October 2020. The couple is already parents to son Miles Theodore, a lit-

tle over 4 years in age, and daughter, Luna Simone, 6-years old.

Speaking with People in March, the multi-hyphenate talked about his family's preparation for their new addition. "We're all excited," Legend said,

"and, you know, my kids are old enough to really be aware of what's happening, so they're really anticipating having a new sibling in their lives. And I think they'll be good at being a big sister and big brother."

Actors share fondest Kite Flying memories

Makar Sankranti, also known as the Kite festival, is celebrated across India with much fanfare. People fly kites and marks the arrival of spring. This year, &TV artists (including Aayudh Bhanushali (Krishna, Doosri Maa), Yogesh Tripathi (Daroga Hattu Singh, Hattu Ki Ultan Paltan), and Shubhangi Atre (Angoori Bhabhi, Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai)) share their kite flying experiences and memories during this auspicious festival.

Shubhangi Atre, essaying Angoori Bhabhi in &TV show Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai, says, "During Makar Sankranti, our whole family gather in my hometown Indore. We prepare the special festival meal called Sankranti Bhoj. We also give out small gifts, such as til-gur ke laddoo, fruits, dry khichadi, etc., to the poor. I enjoy kite-flying a lot as well. We organise a small competition which



brings us all together and is great fun. During this time, at least one stray kite would find its way to my terrace. Whenever a kite is cut loose, it falls to the ground, and I and my friends just rush toward the falling kite like kids. We also spend hours trying to resurrect kites which are cut loose with the hope that it might fly once again and challenge other kites in the sky. For us, kite becomes a symbol of inspiration and hope to restore the lost glory.

Why Anil Kapoor loves working in ensemble projects

Bollywood actor Anil Kapoor, who is set to play a powerful philanthropist in the upcoming streaming series 'The Night Manager', loves working with an ensemble cast. Over the years, Anil has starred in several ensemble films like 'Salaam-e-Ishq', 'Humko Deewana Kar Gaye', 'Darna Zaroori Hai', 'Race' franchise and 'Dil Dhadakane Do'.



Sharing what he loves most while doing ensemble projects, the actor said: "When you're working on a show for so long, you invariably create a lot of memories and form a lot of bonds. We have our internal jokes which will remain internal, we shared a lot of laughs and some emotional moments as well. I really enjoyed working with the cast and crew, Aditya, Sobhita, Sandeep, Priyanka, Saswata Chatterjee, Tillotama Shome and Ben Jasper." He said further: "Everyone was fantastic! When you spend more than a year together telling a story then there will be a lot of fun and emotional moments, there will be a lot of anger, sometimes frustration and sometimes jokes flying around. Overall it was

a very enriching and creatively satisfying experience."

Produced by The Ink Factory and Banijay Asia, created and directed by Sandeep Modi and co-directed by Priyanka Ghosh, 'The Night Manager' is a high-octane thriller wrapped in lavish drama and picturesque sights, and also stars Aditya Roy Kapur. The series will soon bow on Disney+ Hotstar.

Actor Sai Ketan Rao unveils secrets about his new upcoming show

'Mehndi Hai Rachne Wali' a hit show from Star Plus, 'Three Half Bottles' from Zee 5 and famous Telugu feature film 'Pelli Kuturu Party' fame Sai Ketan Rao stated that his upcoming television show is a story spinning in Amritsar, Punjab and has a love-revenge drama in which he is playing the role of the main lead character named 'Raunak Reddy' who is having two cultures with him where one half is of Delhi and another half is of Hyderabad.

The show is been shot in Mumbai and Amritsar. The shooting has already begun in the third week of December. He will be seen sharing the screen space with actor Amandeep Sidhu. Sai Ketan Rao was approached for this show in the month of August, by Sandip Sikchand, the creative producer of the show. The show is produced by Sol Productions. The mockshoot for this show went on for a month and since it was a very difficult task, Sai Ketan Rao had to really work very

hard to grab this main lead role. The main lead of the show cannot disclose much about his character currently as he doesn't want to give away the suspense. It will be a great treat to the eyes of the audience to watch this love-revenge drama.

He mentions that he is enjoying shooting for the show though it is a new working environment, but it is always a pleasure to work with a new team as it helps an individual to develop better acting skills.

Rao aspires to do various other platform works like films, web series in regional languages and foreign languages other than the television shows. This will be a great exposure for the actor and he wishes to also work in Hindi and Tamil films. The actor even wants to work in Telugu films as he has love for both Bollywood and Tollywood.

Sai Ketan Rao is a fitness freak and an early riser. In spite of having a tight shooting schedule of nearly 12-13 hours he does remove time for his fitness regime.



Vibhav Roy gets candid about his ott projects

With an outstanding new series scheduled to debut on January 23, 2023, Star Bharat is all ready to enthrall its audience. The new show will be made by Film Farm Productions. Vibhav Roy has been cast by the show's producers to play an important part. He is renowned for his work as many different characters in a number of well-known shows and on-demand services. He will now appear as 'Som' in the upcoming Star Bharat television show 'Meri Saas Bhoot Hai.' Vibhav Roy has contributed to numerous important projects on the OTT platform. After spending almost 4 years



away from television, he is making a comeback with a new mainstream drama on Star Bharat. Vibhav discussed the reasons behind his extended absence from television.

Katy Perry vows to become 'grandma pop star'

Katy Perry has vowed to still be a pop star when she's grey and old. The 38-year-old singer told Gwyneth Paltrow on her 'goop' podcast: "I wanna be a grandma pop star. You don't see a lot of grandmas or grandpas in my field, but I'm going to be one of them. I wanna do it for my daughter, for my family, my partner. A lot of people don't get out alive in both our businesses."

Meanwhile, Katy recently revealed she has to be careful not to become "fat Elvis" in Las Vegas, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

The 'Roar' hitmaker started her Sin City residency 'Play' at the new Resorts World hotel on the strip at the very end of December 2021, and she



has created a performing schedule which gives her plenty of downtime, so she has to be careful not to give into the indulgences on offer in Vegas just like rock 'n' roll icon Elvis

Presley did when he had a residency in the 1970s.

Speaking on the 'Smartless' podcast, she joked: "It's three weeks on and then sometimes six to nine weeks off. It's really

easy to become 'fat Elvis' in between." However, the pop superstar is glad for the balance she's struck between the residency and her home life, as it allows her to spend more time with her fiancé Orlando Bloom and their two-year-old daughter Daisy. She explained: "I do it in three week instalments. It allows me the ability to drop my daughter off at preschool, and then mommy goes to work and comes back home the next day." "It's such a great routine. It's something that pop stars love to do and check off the box. Also, I great to create an incredible crazy, crazy show that I can't tour with because I couldn't possibly move all these absurd props that are on the stage."

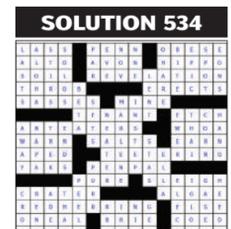
CROSSWORD

535



- ACROSS**
- Depots (abbr.)
 - Milk measure
 - Private teacher
 - Camper's home
 - At all times
 - All kidding
 - Interested by
 - Enrolled
 - Vacation spot
 - Cameron Diaz, e.g.
 - Distinctive manner
 - Arctic shelter
 - Skirt length
 - 50-50 chance (hyph.)
 - Football field
 - Farm measure
 - Music performance
 - What attics are used for
 - Lincoln, et al.
 - Brief joke (hyph.)
 - Zany
 - Magician's rod
 - Accomplishing

- DOWN**
- Mixes
 - Doctrine
 - Restless
 - Bar seat
 - Sassy
 - Common contraction
 - Not pos.
 - Test
 - Skin art
 - Operator
 - Fatigue
 - Lyric poems
 - Cincinnati team
 - Aberdeen native
 - Send payment
 - Adored one
 - Card game
 - Nest egg (abbr.)
 - Eastern garment
 - Glance at
 - Craving
 - Look closely
 - Metric weight
 - Musician _____ McEntire
 - Cooled
 - Phonograph record
 - Glitch
 - Twice five
 - More senior
 - Possess
 - Modifies
 - Horseback sport
 - Tiny landmass
 - Fathers
 - Wrathful
 - Narrow boat
 - Plant stalks
 - _____ upon a time...
 - Stadium cheers
 - Expires
 - Additional
 - Throat-clearing sound
 - Indignation
 - Mister



India crush Sri Lanka by 317 runs, win series 3-0

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 15 (PTI):

India thrashed Sri Lanka by a record 317 runs in the third ODI to clinch the three-match series 3-0 here on Sunday. Virat Kohli and Shubman Gill scored sublime centuries to help the hosts post an imposing 390 for five.

Pacer Mohammed Siraj (4/32) then blew away the Sri Lankan top-order as India skittled out the visitors for 73 in 22 overs. Kohli remained not out on 166 off 110 balls, while Gill struck 116 off 97 deliveries.

Opting to bat after winning the toss, opener Gill and skipper Rohit Sharma (42) put on 95 runs in 15.2 overs, before Kohli struck his 46th ODI century and 74th overall in international cricket to consolidate the Indian innings. Kohli and Gill shared 131 runs for the second wicket.

Skipper Rohit Sharma (42 off 49) and Gill (116 off 97) laid the platform for a massive total with a 95-run opening partnership before Kohli (166 not out off 110) did the needful with his 74th international

hundred and 46th in the 50-over format.

Kohli, who had ended a nearly three year wait for an international hundred in the Asia Cup last year, is back to his best and has been scoring hundreds at will in a World Cup year.

The 34-year-old is now only three short of equalling Sachin Tendulkar's record of 49 centuries. What is remarkable is his conversion ratio as he got to his 46th ton in 259 innings while Tendulkar had taken 452 innings to get to 49 centuries.

Before Kohli took over, Gill had played some high quality strokes en route to his second ODI hundred.

The 23-run over from Lahiru Kumara in the initial stage of the innings got India going. After Rohit flicked him for a six over deep mid-wicket, Gill collected four straight boundaries off Kumara, three on the off side and one was a leg side flick off a full toss.

Rohit too was looking good at the other end but got out against the run of play while trying one of his signature shots, the front foot pull.

India, England play out goalless draw in hockey World Cup

Indian Hockey players walking back after the match against England ended in draw during FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023, in Rourkela, Odisha.



Rourkela, Jan 15 (PTI):

India and England played out a hard-fought goalless Pool D match of the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup here on Sunday.

There was hardly anything to separate between the world no.5 India and sixth-ranked England as both the teams failed to break the deadlock after 60 minutes of intense battle.

The draw, however, ensured the top spot for England in Pool D on account of a better goal difference than India.

Both India and England made a winning

start to their campaigns. While England thrashed Wales 5-0, India defeated Spain 2-0 in their tournament opener.

India will take on Wales, the lowest ranked side in the pool, in their final group match on January 19 in Bhubaneswar while England will up against Spain.

In the other match of the pool, Marc Reyna and Marc Miralles struck a brace each as Spain outplayed Wales 5-1 in a Pool D match to register their first win in the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup here on Sunday. Reyna sounded the board in the 16th

and 38th minutes from field efforts, while Miralles scored in the 32nd and 56th minutes. Skipper Alvaro Iglesias (22nd) was the other goal getter for the winners. Wales' lone goal was scored by James Carson in the 52nd minute. While Spain recorded their first win in the tournament, it was Wales' second loss on the trot. Spain had earlier lost 0-2 to hosts India in their tournament opener, while Wales were defeated 0-5 by England. Spain will take on England in their final pool match on January 19 in Bhubaneswar, while Wales will face India.

Virat Kohli
Runs **166**
Balls **110**
Fours **13**
Sixes **8**

Brief scores

India: 390/5 in 50 overs (Virat Kohli 166 not out, Shubman Gill 116; Kasun Rajitha 2/81).
Sri Lanka: 73 all out in 22 overs (Nuwanidu Fernando 19; Mohammed Siraj 4/32).

Is ODI cricket dying? asks Yuvraj as poor turnout marks Ind-SL series

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 15 (PTI):

Poor turnout for the third and final ODI between India and Sri Lanka here on Sunday raised serious questions about the relevance of the 50-over format, with former star Yuvraj Singh also flagging concerns.

The match was rendered inconsequential after India took an unassailable lead by winning the first two games of the heavily one-sided series. India is scheduled to host the ODI World Cup later this year, and the many empty chairs at the Greenfield International Stadium did not make for good viewing. "... But concern for me half empty stadium? Is one day cricket dying?" Yuvraj, India's 2011 World Cup-winning hero, asked on Twitter as Shubman Gill closed in on a century in the company of Virat Kohli, who remained unbeaten on a scintillating 110-ball 166. The stadium, which saw a packed house in its only other ODI - a rain-affected match between India and West Indies in 2018 - wore a near-desolate look thanks to the lukewarm re-



sponse from the locals. Only about 20,000 spectators turned up in the 38,000-capacity stadium for Sunday's match. Kerala Cricket Association media manager Krishna Prasad blamed it on several factors including the "lack of interest" for ODIs. "We never had a half-empty stadium. There are several reasons. We don't see much interest in ODIs nowadays," Prasad told PTI. "Moreover, the series was done and dusted in Kolkata (with India taking an unassailable 2-0 lead), and with the opponents being Sri Lanka many people chose not to come to the stadium." Tickets were priced at Rs 1000 and Rs 2000 for the match.

Worked on my speed and variations: Lakshya Sen

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

Star India shuttler Lakshya Sen has worked on his "speed and variations" to be battle ready for the new season as he seeks title triumphs in the Asian and European circuits to seal a Paris Olympic berth at the earliest.

Sen began 2022 with his maiden Super 500 title at the India Open and claimed a silver medal at the All England Championships, besides securing the Commonwealth Games gold and playing a part in India's monumental Thomas Cup win.

The 21-year-old from Almora feels that the time is just right for him to push the envelope further in another busy season, comprising big-ticket events such as the Asian Games and the World Championships.

"This is the right time for me. If I can maintain this ranking and keep improving, I have a good chance to qualify. Unfortunately, last time I



was close to qualifying but few events didn't happen due to COVID-19 but those are all learning experiences," Sen told PTI in an interview.

"I'm mainly focusing on my fitness. After my nose surgery, my fitness went down but I got time during the off-season to get it

back. I worked a lot on my speed, quickness in attacking and variation from the backcourt. I am steadily working on my defence.

"Playing the big events gave me a lot of confidence. I have experienced playing in the top circuit. So I will try to remain injury-free and play freely in

the event." Sen underwent a nose surgery for a deviated nasal septum after the World Championships in August. In December, he was in Dubai to train with new coach Anup Sridhar, Anders Antonsen and Sameer Verma.

"I have to plan the season properly as lots of important events are coming up. I have to pick and choose the right ones. It will be all about maintaining a good ranking and pre-tournament and off-season training to keep myself fit.

"I plan to play three events in Asia and three in Europe in next few months. Once Olympic qualification starts in May, I have to see how I do and take a call as the season goes ahead. My target is to qualify in the first half so that I can plan the rest of the tournaments better." Sen had suffered a narrow defeat in the season-opening Malaysia Open and will compete in the India Open and the Indonesia Masters Super 500.

Deepika back in top-16 in archery trials



Kolkata, Jan 15 (PTI):

Making a comeback about a month after becoming a mother, three-time Olympian Deepika Kumari made the top-16 cut by finishing ninth in the first open archery selection trials for the Asian Games, World Championships and World Cups, here on Sunday.

Deepika shot a total of 2597 points out of a maximum 2880 in the eight rounds of 70-metre distance in the women's recurve section. Deepika's husband and India number one

Atanu Das, who was sidelined from the Indian team last year, finished second with a score of 2749 to make the top-16 in the men's recurve section. B Dhiraj topped the pool with 2767 points, while former Olympians Tarundeep Rai, Pravin Jadhav and Jayanta Talukdar also made the cut. The only casualty was that of reigning national champion Sachin Gupta, who fell by the wayside finishing 19th. The top-16 will be pitted against each other in round-robin matches to decide the top-eight over the next two days.

Jadeja set for Ranji comeback to prove fitness ahead of Australia series

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

Premier India all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, who withdrew from the Asia Cup last September to undergo a right knee surgery, is set to make a comeback in Saurashtra's final round of Ranji Trophy fixture against Tamil Nadu in Chennai beginning January 24.

The 34-year-old, who is currently doing rehab at the National Cricket Academy, has been picked in a 17-member squad for the first two Tests in the highly-anticipated four-match series against Australia slated to begin in Nagpur from February 9.

However, his availability is subject to fitness as a call on Jadeja is likely to be taken during the



course of the four-day game.

"It will be good if he plays for Saurashtra. Probably he will, but I don't have any further de-

tails," Saurashtra Cricket Association president Jaydev Shah told PTI.

Jadeja has not played any competitive cricket since the T20I against Hong Kong in the Asia Cup on August 31 and his previous first-class match was the rescheduled one-off Test at Edgbaston against England last July.

Jadeja reportedly has started to bowl and bat from earlier this week as he's winding up his rehab at the NCA. The left-handed batter is seen as a vital cog in India's line-up, especially in absence of Rishabh Pant at No 5 or 6 in the middle-order.

His leftarm spin could also come handy alongside ace offspinner Ravichandran Ashwin in the four-match series that will determine India's fate to make a successive World Test Championship final appearance.

Struggling South Africa mulls split-coaching; Conrad, Walter likely options

Durban, Jan 15 (PTI):

Struggling South Africa are likely to rope in Shukri Conrad and Rob Walter in a split coaching set up in a bid to revive their fortunes in International cricket.

Conrad recently was at the helm of South Africa's Under-19 side, while Walter was the head coach of Central Districts in New Zealand.

The duo are expected to be unveiled as South Africa's new coaches on Monday, reported ESPNcricinfo.

Lance Klusener was the "frontrunner" to coach the white ball side but following his withdrawal on Monday, the duo would be "preferred" to current interim coach Malibongwe Maketa, former West Indies director of cricket Richard Pybus and former

national assistant coach Adi Birrel (who applied for the red-ball job only).

One of the two will be put in charge of the white-ball format as he will have to take charge immediately ahead of South Africa's three World Cup Super League matches against England from January 27 to February 1.

South Africa had crashed out of the T20 World Cup after shocking loss to the Netherlands in last November and also face the challenge of qualifying for the ODI World Cup slated in India in October and November.

They also endured two crushing defeats to Australia recently to jolt their World Test Championships final hopes. They face the West Indies in two Tests at home from February 28-March 12.

India series will be acid test for Cummins: Border

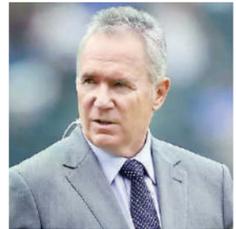
Melbourne, Jan 15 (PTI):

Australian great Allan Border is mighty impressed with Pat Cummins' captaincy but said the upcoming four-Test series against India will be his real "acid test and the final frontier".

Australia will begin the marquee Test series at Jamtha from February 9 as they eye their first series win in India in 19 years.

"That is going to be the acid test for him and the team," Border was quoted saying by ABC Sport.

Having been elevated to the hot seat after Tim Paine's sudden resignation ahead of the Ashes 2021, the Aussie pace spearhead has had a golden run.



away from home last year.

The results meant Australia are favourites to make their maiden World Test Championships final. The India series will be the last series in the WTC calendar before they take on England in the Ashes with an eye to win on opposition soil for the first time since 2001.

"The next 12 months is the real test for that side and Pat's captaincy in particular because India is just about the last frontier for the Australian cricket

team. "We haven't won there very often. It's a hard place to play and a hard place to win and England is the same," the 67-year-old said.

The former Australian skipper said initially he was apprehensive about Cummins leading the Test side but he has ensured that it didn't affect his bowling.

"I was not as keen to see a fast bowler (appointed captain), not necessarily the individual but more just the fact that he's our number-one fast bowler. But he's proved so many people wrong and he's handled that so well," Border said.

"Maybe the make-up of the team has helped, where he's got quite a few senior players that he can bounce things off and they can sort of take over to a certain degree when he's got the ball in his hand when he's bowling.

Kapil Sibal hails Bharat Jodo Yatra

Rahul made people realise how important unity is for country

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

Former Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Sunday hailed the Bharat Jodo Yatra, saying Rahul Gandhi has been able to bring together disparate elements of society and make them realise how important it is to ensure unity in the country. Sibal, who quit the Congress last year, said the party's Kanyakumari to Kashmir Yatra "optically" seems to have succeeded and gotten the support of non-Congress elements as well.

In an interview with PTI, Sibal said conceptually the Yatra is a "wonderful idea". "I think that he (Rahul), during the course of his march, has been able to bring together disparate elements of society and make them realise

how important it is to ensure unity in our country and that respect for diversity is at the heart of our nation moving forward," the former Union minister said. "Yes, Bharat Jodo Yatra is something that needs to be lauded. Now as far as its political impact is concerned, I think people are confusing the concept behind the yatra and relating it to a pure political act which I don't think it is," said Sibal.

He said what the yatra intends to do is to show to the people that there are two ideologies that they should choose from, with 'Bharat Jodo' being the one end of the spectrum as opposed to the other end "which we all know is represented by whom".

Sibal, who was among the leaders of the group of 23 that had written to

Rahul-led Bharat Jodo Yatra resumes from Jalandhar

Jalandhar, Jan 15 (PTI): Scores of people joined the Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Yatra as it resumed from the Khalsa College Ground here on Sunday after remaining suspended for 24 hours in view of the death of Congress MP Santokh Singh Chaudhary. Chaudhary died on Saturday after suffering a cardiac arrest during the Bharat Jodo Yatra. He was cremated at his native Dhaliwal village in Jalandhar on Sunday. Gandhi also attended the cremation. Gandhi offered prayers at Devi Talab temple in Jalandhar before the resumption of the march.

As the march resumed around 3 pm, singer Sidhu Moosewala's father Balkaur Singh walked with Gandhi for some distance. Shubdeep Singh Sidhu, popularly known as Sidhu Moosewala, was shot dead in Punjab's Mansa district in May last year. Punjab Congress chief Amrinder Singh



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with Balkaur Singh, father of singer Sidhu Moosewala, during Bharat Jodo Yatra, in Jalandhar, Sunday.

Raja Warring, Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Partap Singh Bajwa, former chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi, MLA Pargat Singh and other party leaders took part in the march. The yatra will halt for the night in Adampur. The Punjab leg of the march began on Wednesday from Sirhind in Fatehgarh Sahib. The yatra took a break on Friday in the wake of the Lohri festival. The

march, which started from Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu on September 7, will conclude in Srinagar by January 30, with Gandhi hoisting the national flag in the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir. It has so far covered Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.

Congress chief Sonia Gandhi in 2020 seeking large-scale organisational

reforms, had quit the party last year and was re-elected to the Rajya Sabha

from Uttar Pradesh with the support of the Samajwadi Party.

Don't need Shah to tell us about revolutionaries' role in freedom movement: Tushar Gandhi

Kozhikode, Jan 15 (PTI):

Mahatma Gandhi's great grandson Tushar Gandhi has said there is no need for Union Home Minister Amit Shah to talk about the contribution of armed revolutionaries in the country's freedom movement as "Bapu" himself had acknowledged their role. Shah had recently said only one type of narrative of a non-violent movement during the freedom struggle has been "forced through education, history and legends", whereas India's independence was a result of collective efforts, including the contribution of armed revolutionaries.

"We do not need an Amit Shah to say these things. Shah needs to say these things because he does not have anything to say about

himself or the ideology he is spawned out of. Bapu himself had acknowledged that independence was not achieved only because of his attempts," Tushar Gandhi said at the ongoing sixth edition of the Kerala Literature Festival (KLF) on Friday.

"He (Mahatma Gandhi) had given credit to everybody, even the earlier attempts by revolutionaries. He had acknowledged the contribution of Netaji (Subhas Chandra Bose) also," he added.

Talking about his latest book, "The lost diary of Kastur, My Ba", Tushar Gandhi said Bapu was an ordinary human being like anyone else and that is why he has not referred to him as "Mahatma" in the book. According to the 62-year-old author, the "Mahatma"

identity is unbelievable and one needs to understand Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the ordinary human being who rose beyond his capabilities to achieve things.

"When we put him on the pedestal of a Mahatma, we convince ourselves that he was a Mahatma and could do all those things, and we do not need to do any of these things because we are ordinary human beings. He was as ordinary as anyone of us and yet he did what he did, and that is what we need to bring back to people," he noted. The book, a reproduction of a rare diary of Mahatma Gandhi's wife Kasturba Gandhi, is a day-to-day account of a tumultuous nine-month period of her life, from January to September of 1933.

Mayawati says BSP to go it alone in assembly, LS polls

Lucknow, Jan 15 (PTI):

BSP chief Mayawati on Sunday ruled out an alliance with any party for the assembly polls in various states and the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. She also made a strong pitch for the use of ballot papers in elections. Key states of Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Telangana would go to polls this year, besides states from the northeast.

Speaking to reporters here on her 67th birthday, the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister said, "I would like to make it clear that in the assembly elections of Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan and in the Lok Sabha elections, which will be held next year, the BSP will not forge a coalition with any party and will contest the polls on its own

strength."

Mayawati said it became necessary for her to make the announcement as the Congress and some other parties, as part of a "conspiracy", are allegedly trying to create an impression that they will be forging an alliance with the Bahujan Samaj Party.

"In electoral alliances forged once or twice in Uttar Pradesh and other states, barring Punjab, their (allies) votes were not transferred to us, due to which the BSP suffered losses," she said. "Hence, our party has decided to contest the assembly polls and Lok Sabha polls on its own," she said.

The BSP and the Samajwadi Party (SP) had forged an alliance in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Of the alliance partners, the BSP was the biggest gainer with 10 seats. Akhilesh Yadav's SP won five seats and the smallest of the part-

ners, Rashtriya Lok Dal, couldn't open its account. Mayawati exuded confidence that her party's vote base is intact.

"As far as the vote base of the BSP is concerned, it has not eroded. But sometimes there are other sections such as OBCs, minorities and upper castes who get misled due to poll promises. The party had to suffer losses in the last elections," she said. The BSP chief said electronic voting machines (EVMs) should be replaced with ballot papers.

"There are doubts in the minds of people regarding EVMs and there is an apprehension that they may be prone to glitches," she said. "The CEC (chief election commissioner) and the Centre should come forward and hold elections using ballot papers. It will be known how many voters are with them and how many voters are with us," she said.

SC expresses displeasure over inordinate delay in dealing with convict's plea for premature release

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

Expressing displeasure over the "inordinate delay" by the authorities in dealing with a murder convict's plea for premature release, the Supreme Court has warned the Director General of Prisons of Uttar Pradesh and others of using the "coercive arm of law" if other such instances are brought to its notice.

The apex court observed that the application for premature release has remained pending since September 2019 and, as per the custody certificate issued by the senior superintendent of police of central jail, Fatehgarh, on January 5 this year, the convict has undergone a total custody of 15 years and 14 days without remission.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y

Chandrachud and Justice P S Narasimha observed that in view of the settled position of law laid down by the top court, such applications are required to be considered on the basis of policy as it stood on the date of the conviction.

"If a more liberalised regime has been brought into effect subsequently, this should also be considered," the bench said in its January 13 order, adding, "In the present case we find no reason or justification for the inordinate delay in dealing with the application of the petitioner for premature release."

The apex court asked the Director General of Prisons to take all necessary steps to ensure that the application for premature release is duly considered and disposed of within one month from the date of its order.

It said an affidavit of

compliance be filed before the court by February 15.

"The Director General of Prisons and all concerned authorities are placed on notice that this court would be constrained to take recourse to the coercive arm of law if other instances indicating recalcitrance of the authorities in dealing with such applications are brought to the notice of the court," the bench said.

The top court was dealing with a plea filed by the petitioner seeking premature release. It noted in its order that the petitioner was convicted in February 1984 for the offences punishable under section 302 (murder) read with section 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code and was sentenced to life imprisonment.

It also noted the application for premature release

was sent to the District Magistrate, Unnao, on September 2, 2019 and forwarded to the prison headquarters by the DM on October 25 last year. The bench said the prison headquarters, on December 6 last year, directed the superintendent of district jail, Ghaziabad, to make available the updated details of the co-accused prisoners.

"The proposal has been sent to the prison headquarters for reconsideration on December 28, 2022 by the Senior Superintendent of the Central Jail, Fatehgarh," the bench noted. It said the counter affidavit filed on the record indicates the application has remained pending since September 2019 for well over three years and three months and this delay is "without any reason or justification".

"Since this court has, while taking notice of the sorry state of affairs in the matter of the release of convicts who have undergone long terms of imprisonment, issued directions to the Director General of Prisons, UP in an earlier case, we are not in these proceedings taking up the issue which is pending consideration," it said.

The bench, which disposed of the plea, gave liberty to the counsel for the petitioner to mention the matter for revival in case of non-compliance of the direction. While hearing a separate matter on January 5, the apex court had asked the UP Director General of Prisons to file an affidavit in his personal capacity giving details about the steps taken so far to grant the benefit of remission to convicts in the state in pursuance of its earlier judgement.

'Gujarat poll result sends message that Modi will be re-elected PM in 2024'

Gandhinagar, Jan 15 (PTI):

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said the result of the recently-concluded Gujarat Assembly elections is important not just for the state but for the entire country as it has sent a message that Narendra Modi will be re-elected as the prime minister in 2024.

In a veiled reference to the opposition Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party, Shah said the people of Gujarat, by helping the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) retain power with a record number of seats in the state, responded to those who tried to defame the state and Prime Minister Modi.

"The people of Gujarat have worked to end the poison of casteism and slapped those making empty, false and alluring promises. The people of Gujarat have responded to those who tried to defame Gujarat and Narendra Modi," Shah said at a function here to inaugurate and lay the foundation stones of various projects.

"This result is important not for Gujarat alone. There will be (Lok Sabha) elections in 2024, and the entire country is prepared to once more make Narendra Modi the prime minister," he said.

This message of Gujarat has reached from Kashmir to Kanyakumari (north to south in the country) and



Union Home Minister Amit Shah speaks during the inauguration of Gujarat State Bharat Scouts and Guides training centre, in Ahmedabad, Sunday.

from Dwarka to Kamakhya (west to east) that "Modi Saheb will again become the prime minister in 2024," the senior BJP leader said. Shah said there is no need to

elaborate on the works done by the BJP government for the development of the state, as people respond to it in the election.

"There is not a single state where one party has

ruled uninterrupted for 27 years. Gujarat is the only state where the BJP has ruled (for 27 years and more)," he said. Shah said when the Gujarat elections were announced, the Congress claimed this time it was its chance. "People from Delhi also arrived here with the promise of giving this and that for free," he said.

Despite all this, when the result was announced, the BJP emerged the winner with a record number of 156 seats (out of the total 182 in Gujarat), he said. Every single worker of the BJP in the state is indebted to the people for their support and feels proud of this fact, the Union minister said. The party won 34 out

of the 40 seats reserved for the Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste candidates in the state, he said.

Prime Minister Modi worked not just to provide basic facilities at the village level, but also did many works to make Gujarat number one in the world, by way of construction of the world's tallest Statue of Unity (in Narmada district), the biggest stadium named after Narendra Modi (Ahmedabad) and Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (Gandhinagar), Shah said. Talking about the virtues of cleanliness, Shah said unless people work together, no government can make a village or a city clean.

Chouhan anguished over use of objectionable language against him during Karni Sena protest

Bhopal, Jan 15 (PTI):

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday expressed anguish over the use of objectionable language against him and his family during a protest by the Karni Sena in Bhopal.

A 30-year-old Karni Sena activist from Haryana was arrested on Thursday for allegedly raising objectionable slogans against Chouhan during the protest in the state capital over their various demands, a police official said on Saturday.

A video had surfaced on social media in which the man was heard shouting slogans in obscene language against the CM during a protest by the outfit at Jamboree Maidan in BHEL township here a few days back.

On Sunday, Chouhan in a Twitter post expressed distress over the incident without naming the Karni Sena.

"Recently, indecent language was used during an agitation. The people have the right to criticise the Chief Minister, but the use of indecent language for the mother (Chouhan's mother) who passed away years ago in my childhood has disturbed me," the CM tweeted.

He said an apology has been sought in this matter.

"I also pray to my mother, wherever she is, to forgive these children.

I have no grudge against them now. You all are our own and if someone our own commits any mistake then they cannot be separated," he said.

In another tweet, Chouhan said he is committed to the welfare of all and has worked for the development of all sections of the society and will continue to do so in the future.

After the video of the protest in Bhopal surfaced, Karni Sena's office-bearers in MP tendered an apology over the use of such language and said those people were not part of the main protest.

The Karni Sena held a four-day protest from January 8 in support of their 21 demands, including no arrest to be made without a probe into the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act cases, reservations be given only once to a family (one generation), and to curb inflation.

Two more hotels lean towards each other in Joshimath

Dehradun/Joshimath, Jan 15 (PTI):

Two more hotels were dangerously leaning towards each other while wider cracks have appeared near Auli ropeway and in other areas of land subsidence-hit Joshimath on Sunday.

Also, the flow of water increased from a suspected underground channel burst in JP Colony in the Marwari area of the town after a temporary decline a couple of days back. Muddy water has been percolating down from it constantly since January 2 but experts are not sure

about its origins.

Disaster Management Secretary Ranjit Kumar Sinha said a constant vigil is being maintained on the pace of water percolation in the area which has been fluctuating.

The process of demolishing two adjacent hotels Malari Inn and Mount View which were declared unsafe was still underway. Around 100 metres from the site, two more hotels - Snow Crest and Comet - have tilted dangerously towards each other and have been vacated as a precautionary measure.



People at a medical camp organized by authorities for people affected by the landslides, at Joshimath in Chamoli, Sunday.

"The gap between the two hotels was around four feet earlier but now

it has narrowed to just a few inches with their roofs nearly touching

each other," Puja Prajapati, daughter of Snow Crest owner, said. Wider cracks have appeared near the Joshimath-Auli ropeway whose operation was suspended over a week ago when land subsidence aggravated.

The 4.5 km ropeway, considered one of Asia's largest, connects Joshimath located at 6000 ft with the skiing destination of Auli at an altitude of 9000 feet. A crack around four inches wide and 20 feet long has appeared near the walls in the ropeway premises,

ropeway engineer Dinesh Bhatt said. A hotel owner in Singdhar ward said the cracks in the area widened on Saturday night.

The water flow from an unknown source in the Marwari area has increased from 190 Litre Per Minute (LPM) to 240 LPM. It had decreased from 550 LPM in the beginning to 190 LPM on January 13. Many houses were damaged in varying degrees in the land subsidence areas while water from the aquifer was constantly flowing down with great force.

BRIEF



Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Supriya Sule's saree catches fire during an event, in Pune, Sunday.

Sule escapes

Pune: Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) MP Supriya Sule's saree accidentally caught fire during an event in Maharashtra's Pune on Sunday. In a statement, Sule later said that she is safe and there was no reason to worry. The Baramati MP was at an event in Hinjawadi to inaugurate a karate competition, when her saree caught fire while she was garlanding a small statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. "At the inauguration of a karate competition, my saree accidentally caught fire."

Technical glitch

Dhar (MP): The helicopter carrying Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday landed in Manawar town of Dhar district from where it had taken off sometime back due to a technical glitch, police said.

Woman rescued

Banihal/Jammu: Responding swiftly to a distress call, Army troops waded through four to six feet snow for over 14 kms to evacuate a pregnant woman to hospital in Ramban district of Jammu and Kashmir, a defence spokesperson said on Sunday.

Weather
High 29 Low 14

68 killed in Yeti Airline plane crash

Fate of 5 Indians not known

Kathmandu, Jan 15 (PTD):

At least 68 people were killed when a Nepalese passenger plane with 72 people onboard, including five Indians, crashed into a river gorge while landing at the newly-opened airport in central Nepal's resort city of Pokhara on Sunday in the country's deadliest plane crash in more than 30 years.

Yeti Airlines' 9N-ANC ATR-72 aircraft took off from Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport at 10:33 am and crashed on the bank of

Nepalese rescue workers and civilians gather around the wreckage of a passenger plane that crashed in Pokhara, Nepal, Sunday.



the Seti River between the old airport and the new airport minutes before landing, according to the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN).

A total of 68 passengers and four crew members were on board the aircraft. The flight time between Kathmandu and Pokhara is 25 minutes.

"So far, dead bodies of 68 people have been recovered from the crash site," an official at the Search and Rescue Coordination Committee of the CAAN told PTI over the phone.

However, the dead bodies are yet to be identified, he added. Efforts are on to recover four more bodies, he said.

CBI arrests additional DRM

Bribery case

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTD)

The CBI has arrested an additional divisional railway manager posted in Guwahati and six others, including a middleman and a hawala operator, in an alleged Rs 50-lakh bribery case, officials said on Sunday. Jitendra Pal Singh, a 1997-batch Indian Railways Service officer, was arrested after a person identified as Hari Om was caught while allegedly accepting the bribe on behalf of the officer, they said. "It was alleged that the accused (Singh) had entered into a conspiracy with the

intention of showing undue favours to private contractors for awarding of contract agreements, preparation of measurement book, processing of running account bills, early release of payment against pending bills and for the ongoing work of construction in Northeast Frontier Railway as well as for the early release of security deposits and bank guarantees," a CBI spokesperson said in a statement. The CBI has alleged that Singh regularly demanded and accepted bribes from various contractors when he was posted as chief engineer, construction, in New Jalpaiguri.

SC to hear on Monday plea on Joshimath subsidence

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTD):

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a plea seeking the court's intervention to declare the crisis in Uttarakhand's Joshimath as a national disaster.

According to the cause list of January 16 uploaded on the apex court website, a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices P S Narasimha and J B Pardiwala would hear the petition filed by Swami

Avimuktshwaranand Saraswati. Joshimath, the gateway to famous pilgrimage sites like Badrinath and Hemkund Sahib and international skiing destination Auli, is facing a major challenge due to land subsidence.

Joshimath is sinking gradually with huge cracks developing in houses, on roads and fields. Many houses have tilted and are sinking, locals said. On January 10, the top court had refused urgent hearing of the plea,

saying there are "democratically elected institutions" to deal with the situation and all important matters should not come to it. It had listed Saraswati's plea for hearing on January 16.

"Everything important need not come to us. There are democratically elected institutions to look into it. We will list it on January 16," the CJI had said, after the counsel appearing for the petitioner had mentioned the plea and sought its urgent listing.

'I belong to middle class, understand their pressures'

Sitharaman days before Budget

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTD)

Ahead of the Union Budget, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Sunday that she was aware of the pressures of the middle class but also recalled that the present government has not imposed any fresh taxes on them.

Sitharaman will present Union Budget for 2023-24 in the Lok Sabha on February 1 amid expectations that the



government will raise the income tax limit and provide relief to the middle class taxpayers, besides others. "I too belong to the middle class so I can understand the pressures of the middle class. I identify myself with the middle class so I know," she said while

speaking at a function organised by the Panchjanya magazine, an RSS-associated weekly.

In the same breath, the minister reminded the audience that the present Modi government has not imposed any fresh taxes on the middle class. Also, she added, income of up to Rs 5 lakh is exempt from the income tax.

She said the government has taken various measures like developing the metro rail network in 27 cities and building 100 smart cities to promote ease of living.

Protest against vandalism of Chh'garh church

Ranchi, Jan 15 (PTD):

Hundreds of people from the Christian community in Ranchi took to the streets on Sunday in protest against the alleged attack on Christians in Jharkhand and vandalism of a church in neighbouring Chhattisgarh. Men and women, under the aegis of the Jharkhand Christian Youth Association (JCYA), took out the rally from GEL Church compound here to the Morabadi ground. The placards had messages such as "stop the attack on churches" and "stop dividing in the name of religion".

MAKAR SANKRANTI FESTIVAL



People fly kites on the bank of the River Yamuna behind Taj Mahal celebrating Makar Sankranti festival, in Agra, Sunday.

Airports under UDAN scheme to get comprehensive armed security cover

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTD)

More than 60 airports operational in tier-two and tier-three cities under the Centre's regional connectivity scheme UDAN will soon be brought under a comprehensive anti-terror security cover of armed CISF personnel with the deployment of around 1,650 troops, officials said.

The proposal is awaiting final policy sanction from the home ministry. The bu-

reau of civil aviation security (BCAS), in consultation with the ministry of civil aviation and the CISF, finalised the proposal for the "very important security measure" required for the safety of passengers taking flights from small air terminals across India.

Some airports such as Shimla which are under the regional connectivity scheme, are being guarded by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) while

the rest are secured by various state police forces or their special armed units and there is no uniform policy.

The regional connectivity scheme was launched under the name of UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) on October 21, 2016, by the Union government to stimulate regional air connectivity and make air travel affordable to the masses residing in tier-2 and tier-3 cities and towns. The civil aviation

ministry is the regulating agency while the Airports Authority of India (AAI) is responsible for implementing the ambitious scheme of the Narendra Modi government. According to the fresh blueprint accessed by PTI, 57 security personnel will be deployed at each of the airports operational under the UDAN scheme, with 27 armed personnel drawn from the CISF and the rest sourced from certified private security agencies.

EC to demonstrate remote voting machine to parties on Monday

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI)

The Election Commission will showcase the remote electronic voting machine (RVM) prototype for migrant voters to representatives of political parties on Monday.

The poll panel has invited eight recognised national parties and 57 recognised state parties for a demonstration on Monday morning.

The letter states that they have been invited for a "discussion on improving voter participation of domestic migrants using remote voting." During the demonstration of the remote EVM, members of EC's Technical Expert Committee will also be present. While inviting parties for the demonstration of the prototype, the poll panel had also issued a concept note on the technology. Parties were also asked to give in writing their views by end of January on issues such as changes required on the law to allow use of RVM.

If implemented after stakeholder consultations, migrant voters do not need to travel to their home districts to exercise their franchise.

Termining counting of votes cast at remote booths and their trans-

Most opposition parties have decided to oppose proposal: Digvijaya

New Delhi: Most of the Opposition parties have decided to oppose the Election Commission's proposal on remote electronic voting machine (RVM) as it is sketchy and not concrete, senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh said on Sunday. He made the remarks after a meeting of Opposition parties that was attended by leaders of the Congress, JD(U), CPI, CPI(M), National Conference, JMM among others. Singh said there are huge political anomalies in the proposal for remote voting machine with things like the definition of migrant labourers not clear. The meeting came a day before the Election Commission showcases the remote electronic voting machine (RVM) prototype for migrant voters to representatives of political parties.

mission to the returning officer in other states as a "technological challenge", Election Commission officials had earlier said RVMs will be developed as "a robust, failproof and efficient stand-alone system" based on existing electronic voting machines and will not be connected to the internet.

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Girl commits suicide at ophthalmology clinic in Sector 6

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 15: A 20-year-old girl allegedly committed suicide by hanging self at an ophthalmology clinic in A-Market, Sector 6. The girl was found hanging on the first floor of the clinic. She took this extreme step after an altercation with her boyfriend on mobile phone. Police have lodged a case and investigations are on.



same clinic.

According to information, the incident occurred at Dr Verma's Eye Clinic in A-Market, Sector 6. The deceased is identified as Shilpi Thakur (20). She was working at Verma's clinic for the last three months. Her elder sister Shweta also works in the

On Saturday evening while closing the clinic, Shweta tried to contact her sister but she did not receive the call. Believing that Shilpi would have returned home, Shweta closed the clinic and went home. When she did not find her younger sister at



home, the family started searching for her.

Later they informed Dr Verma that Shilpi was missing. As Shilpi also had a set of keys of the clinic, the family and Doctor Verma reached the clinic. They made a call on Shilpi's mobile and soon realised that it was

ringing on the first floor of the clinic.

They moved to the first floor of the clinic and found Shilpi hanging. On information, a police team reached the spot and the body was sent for autopsy after preparing an inquest. Further investigations are on.

Legal Aid Defense Counsel System inauguration today

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 15: On the instructions of National Legal Services Authority New Delhi and Chhattisgarh State Legal Services Authority Bilaspur, Legal Aid Defense Counsel office will be inaugurated on January 16. Chief Justice / Chief Patron and Executive Chairman, Chhattisgarh State Legal Services Authority and Justices will virtually join this programme from the video conferencing room of Chhattisgarh High Court.

The Legal Aid Defense Counsel office has been set up separately in the Nyay Sadan of the District Legal Services Authority. Chhattisgarh State Legal Services Authority issued

an order for contractual appointment of Chief / Deputy / Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsel for the Legal Aid Defense Counsel system.

In compliance with the said order, a total of 14 applications for Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel, 33 applications for Deputy Chief Legal Aid Counsel and 101 applications for Assistant Legal Aid and Defense Counsel were received.

Chhattisgarh State Legal Services Authority Bilaspur has selected Sudarshan Singh Mahalwar as Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel; K Jagapati Rao as Deputy Chief Legal Aid and Defense Counsel; Kamal Kishore Verma as Deputy Chief Legal Aid and

Defense Counsel; Om Chauhan as Assistant Legal Aid and Defense Counsel; Saurabh Shendre as Assistant Legal Aid and Defense Counsel and Deepmala Magendra as Assistant Legal Aid and Defense Counsel.

The selected counsels will be present in the office of the Legal Aid Defense Counsel System established in the District Legal Services Authority, Durg on working days and will work for the parties by providing legal advice and legal assistance.

Especially in criminal cases, on demand by the needy party, they will represent them as advocates and will provide their services by appearing in the court for quick redressal. District Legal Services

Authority Secretary Ashish Dahariya informed that the first National Lok Adalat of the year 2023 is being organized on February 11, 2023. In addition to the court cases in the National Lok Adalat, the cases of Family Court, Labor Court, Permanent Public Utility Lok Adalat, Revenue Courts will be kept for hearing.

Cases of the amount recoverable by Electricity Department, Telecom Department, Municipal Corporation, Financial Institution and pre litigation cases will also be heard. Pre-sitting is being organized for the pre-litigation cases before listing them for hearing in Lok Adalat. Pre-sitting will be held from February 01 to 03.

30 youth depart for Mysore under Tribal Youth Exchange Programme



Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 15: Under the 14th Tribal Youth Exchange Programme, Border Security Force has selected and sent 30 tribal youth including 15 boys and 15 girls from Kanker for a tour to Mysore. It is the first group of tribal youth sent on tour of other cities under this programme.

The group of 15 boys and 15 girls is being accompanied by one female and two male officers / personnel of Border Security Force. BSF is organis-

ing fourteen such tours this year. Under this exposure visit, the tribal youth will be able to understand the cultural ethos, language, lifestyles of the people depicting Socio-economic and Cultural Development and Development process unity in the diversity aspect of our national life.

They will be exposed to the technological and industrial advancement that have taken place in different states of the country with focus on various developmental activities, skill development, educational and

employment opportunities available there.

They will be sensitized about their rich traditional & cultural heritage. This programme will help the tribal youth to develop emotional linkages with their peer groups in other parts of the country and enhance their self esteem. IG Indraj Singh (BSF Frontier Headquarters, Special Operations, Chhattisgarh) and DIG (Intelligence) Dinesh Murmu have extended greetings and best wishes to the selected youth.

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 15: In house facilities built in house in SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant's Plate Mill for enhancing production volumes of thicker plates to make the most of market opportunities was inaugurated by Director in charge, BSP Anirban Dasgupta on January 14, 2023. Plate Mill of SAIL- Bhilai is known worldwide for producing quality plates at par with international standards. The Mill currently produces plates in thickness sizes from 10 mm to 120 mm.

The Mill that produces a wide range of both garden variety and special steel plates has supplied special naval grade plates for aircraft carrier INS Vikrant and other warships of Indian Navy. The Mill has also rolled out plates in desired thickness for use in



satellite launch vehicles of India's Space Mission.

With rapid growth being witnessed in infrastructure sector involving construction of tall and heavy structures, demand for thicker plates i.e. thickness more than 40 mm has increased. Moreover, thicker grade of plates fetches better net sales realisation (NSR) per tonne. In order to make the most of oppor-

tunities, both in domestic and export market, Team Plate Mill has augmented its facility and developed an alternative route for enhancing production volumes of thicker plates.

At present, Plate Mill is producing upto 10,000 T of heavy plates per month. For enhancing the production, Plate Mill has under the guidance of Anirban Dasgupta, Director 1/c

BSP and Anjani Kumar, ED (Works) improved its facilities for production of heavy plates.

Plate Mill Team led by RK Bisare, CGM (Plate Mill), extended the charging side roll tables of Cooling Bed- 5 by 15 meters to handle Heavy Plates, exclusively. Further, fabrication of new boom was done for lifting of plates with mag-

net from extended roll table and transporting to trailers for further finishing at Shipping Bay.

In the Shipping bay, a bed for gas cutting of plates, inspection bed with full UT facilities has been added for finishing of enhanced production volumes and despatch of heavy plates. This feat has been achieved under Bisare's leadership and with support of associated shops and departments in record time of 45 days.

On January 14, 2023, Director 1/c BSP Dasgupta inaugurated and dedicated the facilities for operation. Dasgupta also applauded the exemplary efforts of Mechanical Shops, Civil Engineering Department, EDD, Structural Shop and Machine Shops (MARS) in completing the challenging job with in house facilities and expertise in record time.

NSS Unit of Science College takes out cycle rally

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 15: The National Service Scheme Unit of Durg Science College organised a cycle rally to mark the occasion of National Youth Day, the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda with the aim of inspiring people to use cycle as a means of commutating so as to remain young forever.

The use of cycle not only saves energy but also helps the body to remain fit and healthy. Therefore, one should use cycle as regularly as possible. The rally was flagged off by Dr Rajendra Choubey, Principal in-



charge of the college. Under the guidance and inspiration of the Principal, Programme Officer Prof Janendra Dewan, the cycle rally reached Hemchand Yadav University amidst slogans of National Service Scheme reverberating the entire route. Registrar Bhupendra Kuldeep, Dr

Preeti Lal addressed the rally at Hemchand Yadav University.

The duo in their address exhorted the NSS students and added that it being the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, the source of inspiration for youth, they take a resolution that to try to give their

best for the nation and the society. Thereafter, the rally reached Malviya Nagar Square and then covering Raipur Naka, the rally reached back to the College.

A lecture was organised there at the College on the contribution of Swami Vivekananda in which the students of National

Service Scheme Unit, Sanskrit Department, Yoga Department, Botany, Psychology Department participated enthusiastically. Senior professors of the college Dr AK Khan, Dr Abhinav Surana, Dr Shakeel Hussain, Dr Rakesh Tiwari, Dr Prachi Singh, Dr Neera Singh, Dr Shailesh Chandrakar were present. NSS Officer Prof Janendra Dewan expressed gratitude to all the guests. Senior volunteers Paras, Mridul Nirmal, Prashant, Khumendra Sahu, Ashish, Aanchal, Aastha extended valuable support in making the programme successful.

Ramteke shares problems of SC / ST officers with Parliamentary Committee



Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 15: The Parliamentary Committee on Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes conducted a meeting with the representatives from all the 16 units of SAIL at Panaji in Goa during January 11 to 13. Parliamentary Committee President and Lok Sabha MP Kirit Premjibhai Solanki and members of the Parliamentary Committee including Chhedi Paswan, Goddeti Madhavi, Dr V Sivadadan, Upendra Singh Rawat, Gautam Singh Damar, Ashok Mahadeorao Nete, Pratima Mandal, Jagannath Sarkar, Neeraj, Anil Firojia, Ajay Tamta and other members were present. SAIL SC-ST Employees Federation Central Committee, New Delhi, National President Sunil Kumar Ramteke shared the problems of the em-

ployees with them. Ramteke said that very few SC/ST officers get promoted to the post of senior officers. There is no transparency in this system. There is no SC/ST officer in the post of director in charge. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Award should be started in every unit of SAIL which should be equivalent to the Nehru Award. He demanded that in foreign training priority should be given to SC/ST employees and officers. He added that if any kind of training is given in SAIL, the participation of SC/ST employees should be ensured with priority.

The guideline of MSME is not followed in SAIL. Necessary guidelines should be given so that SC / ST can get contracts, representatives of Federation should be included in CSR activity of SAIL. Any SC / ST officer has not received the post of Chief General Manager in CMO

(Central Marketing Organization). Ramteke demanded that the post of Chief General Manager should be given to a SC / ST officer. He further said that the lease process should be started in each unit of SAIL and reservation should be given to SC/ST employees in the license process.

On behalf of the Federation, Central Vice President MK Abhimanyu, Joint Secretary Jagdish Chura, Secretary Dilip Kumar, Executive Member Chandrakant Ranjan, Joint General Secretary Gauranga Mandal, Jayprakash Kumar, Babarao Moon, Organizing Secretary Vice President Sudesh Gautam, Gautam Das, Upendra Sinku, General Secretary Miss Babita, Srinivas, Ujjwal Mandal, Sundar Krishnan, Sharad Chandra Pariksha, SK Sunke and office bearers of the federation were present.

Youth Festival: Durg University declares results of inter college competition

● VC to award winners at a function in Tagore Hall of the University today

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jan 15: Hemchand Yadav University (Durg University) has declared the result of 14 different competitions organised across 7 different colleges under the Inter College Youth Festival 2023. All the winners who secured first, second and third positions will be awarded by vice chancellor Dr ArunaPalta, at a function to be held in Tagore Hall, Hemchand Yadav University, Durg Campus at 14: 30 hrs on January 16, 2023. Dr Prashant Srivastava, Dean Student Welfare giving this information revealed that the observers and the judges had submitted the result of the competitions in sealed envelope to the University which was opened after the approval from Dr ArunaPalta, Vice Chancellor.

Dr Palta thanked each of the colleges for organising the competition in 14 streams and said that without the active participation of the principals, professors, participants and employees of both the organising and participating colleges, the inter-college youth festival could not

have been successfully organized. Dr Srivastava informed further that according to the decision given by the judges, in solo classical singing Nupur Sanjana Daan of St Thomas College stood first, Sampada Sanjay of Shri Shankaracharya Mahavidyalaya Junwani stood second, and Aabhas Jha of Rungta College of Arts and Science, Durg stood third. In group singing Hindustani, Shri Shankaracharya Mahavidyalaya Junwani stood second, and N Akanksha of Bhilai Mahila Mahavidyalaya secured the third position. In folk dance group/tribal dance competition the team of Govt VYTPG College Durg secured the first position, while the team of Government DanveerTularam Post Graduate College, Utagi College second

while the third place was jointly occupied by the team of Bhilai Mahila College, Bhilai and Royal College, Rajnandgaon. According to Dr Srivastava, the team of Ketan Singh, Devendra Janghel and Yashwant Kumar of Kalyan PG College Bhilai won first position in quiz competition. The team of Sandeep Kumar, Vivek Dubey and Vivek Sharma of Swami Shri Swaroopnand College, HUDCO Bhilai stood second. In the debate competition, Arifa Siddiqui of Govt Indira Gandhi College Vaishalinagargot first position in favour and Rajneet Kaur got first position in against. Ankita Vaishnav Paksha of Khalsa College, Durg and Priya Goyal of St Thomas College stood second re-

spectively. Neha Rai of Swami Shree Swaroopnand College, HUDCO stood third in favour and Jitendra Kumar of Royal College, Rajnandgaon stood in against. In the skit (drama) competition, the team of Seth Badrial Khandelwal Education College, Durg got the first position, the team of Swami Shri Swaroopnand College, HUDCO Bhilai got the second position and Shankaracharya College, Junwani Bhilai got the third position. In on the spot painting competition Abhishek Sharma of Shri Shankaracharya College Junwani stood first, Alok Patela of KhubchandBaghel Government College Bhilai 03 stood second and Riya Barle of Govt Patankar Girls College, Durg stood third. In the collage making competition made from clippings of newspapers and magazines, Abhishek Sharma of Shankaracharya College, Junwani stood first, Vidya Bharti of Bhilai Maitri College, Risali stood second and Ramandeep Kaur of KhubchandBaghel Government College Bhilai 03 stood third. In

poster making competition Varsha Yadav of Government Adarsh College, Dhanorastood first, Kiran Sonber of Govt Patankar Girls College, Durg stood second and Soman Yadav of Government ChandulalChandrakar College, Dhamdha got the third position. In the Rangoli competition, Lekhran Patel of Government College, Arjundastood first and Leeladhar Kumbhkar of Government Late Thakur Ji Maharaj Mahavidyalaya, Thankamharia stood second while Nikita Ambadeh of Government Digvijay Mahavidyalaya, Rajnandgaon stood third. Aditya, a student of Bhilai Nair Samajam, secured the first position in Mehendi competition while Nishi Jain of Govt VYTPG College, Durg stood second and ShriyaTamarkar of Bhilai MahilaMahavidyalaya stood third. In sugam sangeet competition Suchita Thakur of Shankaracharya College, Junwanistood first, Tapas Maiti of Sai College Sector 06 Bhilai stood second and Alisha Tirkey of Government VVT PG College, Durg secured the third position.

Congress imposed emergency in Chhattisgarh: Raman

Says NSA implemented under pressure from Sonia Gandhi



protest against NSA.

According to Dr Singh, NSA is implemented in an unusual law and order situation. Congress used to tell in state legislative assembly about better law and order in the state, he said. He asked whether law and order has gone out of control of Congress government in the state.

According to Dr Singh any individual can be arrested without bail provision in NSA which was enacted in 1970 by the then Congress government. Congress has again tried to

impose emergency in form of NSA, he alleged. He once again said that NSA was implemented under communal appeasement policy, to encourage conversion in the state. Other BJP leaders including party's state president Arun Sao, former Minister Rajesh Munat and media head Amit Chimnani were talked to the media.

Imposition of undeclared emergency in Chhattisgarh was started long ago by enacting a law to crush democratic movements, but this has doubled

It is the law of the Center, BJP should abolish it: Baghel

Raipur, Jan 15: NSA is the law of the country. If BJP has objection on it should get it abolished since it has its government at the Centre, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel said in reaction to BJP's objection to implementation of National Security Act in 31 districts of Chhattisgarh.

BJP leaders say that tribals who have converted should not get the benefits of Scheduled Tribes and they hold rallies, but why doesn't BJP government at the centre brings the law?

According to the Chief Minister, the issue of reli-

gious conversion is not confined to only one state' rather it is related to all the states. 'Who is stopping the Centre from bringing the law? What is the point of taking out rally and inciting people?' he asked.

Baghel charged BJP with deriving pleasure out of seeing people to fight. BJP leaders do not talk about positive; rather they only talk about destructing and fighting. On NSA the Chief Minister said 'we have not enacted the law in the assembly, nor have we taken any decision in the cabinet, it is a renewal'.

the anger of all sections of the public, said the BJP leaders, adding that fearing intense public anger state

government now created undemocratic and emergency-like situation on the pretext of NSA.

AARTI AT KHARUN RIVER



On occasion of 'Makar-Sankranti', denizens and 'Pujari' offered prayers to lifeline of capital city 'Kharun-River' here on Sunday.

Govt preparing to recover 700 cr through paddy: BJP

Raipur, Jan 15: Charging the Bhupesh government with preparing to illegally recover Rs 700 crore through paddy procurement in the state BJP state spokesman Sandeep Sharma said that complaints of large scale irregularities in weight and measurement of paddy in societies were being received from all over the state. He alleged 8 quintal more paddy was procured from a farmer in Mahasamund which caused loss of Rs 20000. Sharma alleged that Bhupesh Government allowed farmers for loot. Congress government has planned to collect Rs 700 crore from farmers of state through more weight and measurement, he said.

Information given to officers, employees about stress management

Two-day workshop organized by National Health Mission and NIMHANS



Programme. Dr E Arvind Raj, an expert from National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru informed the participants about the ways to create coordination between work and home through various experiments. He also explained in detail how to

do home and office work better by reducing the stress level.

Dr Surendra Pambhoi, Joint Director, National Health Mission, underlining the usefulness of the workshop, said that organizing such workshops from time to time helps the officers and employees in better management



of their lives and they can learn to perform their tasks without stress. Many senior officers of National Health Mission

including Dr Mahendra Singh, Deputy Director of Mental Health Program also participated in the workshop.

Two nabbed with 80 kg 'Ganja' worth Rs 16 lakh

Raipur/ Mahasamund, Jan 15: Mahasamund police has nabbed two interstate drug smugglers with 80 kg 'Ganja' worth Rs 16 lakh being carried in Hyundai Creta vehicle being transported from Odisha to Madhya Pradesh. It was on instructions by the SP Dharmendra Singh that Singhoda police was directed to take firm action and based upon which the police force was deployed in all entry and check-points.

It was on checking various vehicle, one Hyundai Creta vehicle bearing CG 04 -LK-5040 was stopped near Rehatikhola on HN-53 and



search was carried out. The police found 80 Kg 'ganja' being packed in a plastic bag and when inquired as to where they are bringing, they informed that from Odisha and were taking it to MP.

Both the accused were booked under section 20 (B) of Narcotics Act by Komakhan thana and taken into arrest. Raigarh: Another

youth bringing 3.500 kg 'Ganja' worth Rs 24,500 in Scooty Mastero vehicle was coming to Raigarh on the NH and the accused Laxmiprasad Chandra S/o Ramkumar Chandra (23), R/o Jashpur Kachar Thana Kosir District Sarangarh -Bhilaigarh. The police seized the Scooty and 'ganja' and took action under NDPS Act.

Mock placements at NIT Raipur

Raipur, Jan 15: National Institute of Technology Raipur's, Sahyog - The Mentorship Club started off their Mock Placements event on 14th January 2023 under the guidance of Dr. Ravi Jade, Faculty In-Charge, Sahyog. Students across all the branches from all the years actively participated in the same. The competition is decided to be conducted in 3 rounds - Online Screening, Group Discussion and Personal Interviews, in hybrid mode.

Day 1 saw a highly enthralling participation by numerous students across the college. Day 1 being the Screening Round was split into 2 levels of Aptitude Test and Written Test respectively, and covered questions for 1st year B.TECH Students, Software Development

Engineer, Core and Analyst roles. Deep logical and analytical Aptitude-based and Coding questions were asked to test the calibre of the students.

A highly competent panel will further filter out the best candidates from this round and promote them to subsequent rounds of Group Discussion and Personal Interview that will be conducted on 15th and 21st January 2023 respectively.

The Mock Placements will come to an end on 21st January 2023. This competition will inevitably serve to be a great drilling and testing opportunity to all the students for honing their basic requisite skills for actual placements by painting a clear picture of how intense the current competition is.

MBBS 1st year students take 'Charak Shapath' oath

Raipur, Jan 15: The MBBS 1st year students in Pt Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Medical College, Raipur were made to take 'Charak Shapath' oath at white coat ceremony held in presence of Public Health and Family Welfare and Medical Education Minister TS Singhdeo at Late Atal Behari Vajpayee Memorial New Auditorium in the medical college on January 13, 2023. Vice Chancellor of Ayush University Dr Ashok Chandrakar, Director Medical Education Dr Vishnu Dutt, Dean of the Medical College, Dr Tripti Nagriya and Superintendent of Ambedkar Hospital, Dr SBS Netam were prominently present at the func-



tion.

Director Medical Education Dr. Vishnu Dutt administered 'Charak Shapath' oath to the students. As many as 180 students raised their right hands to repeat the words spoken by Dr Dutt.

Addressing the students, Chief Guest TS Singhdeo said the oath take by the students would serve as a guiding principle for them during their service in the years

to come. The form of God is often seen in the form of a doctor, he said.

"You have earned your place by passing such tough exams according to your ability. By becoming doctors you will get opportunity to do a great service to humanity. The work of doctors is very important in the society", Singhdeo said in his address to the students.

Vice Chancellor Dr Ashok Chandrakar re-

ferred to the new guidelines issued by the National Medical Commission and congratulated the students. White coat is an identity of doctors, he said adding that more than four thousand doctors have so far come out of this college and are bringing laurels to their institute in the country and abroad. Dean Dr Tripti Nagaria also addressed the students. Medical Teachers Association President Dr Arvind Neral informed moral and ethical values and principles to be followed in medical profession. Association secretary Dr Jaya Lalwani conducted the programme. Medical Education Unit President Dr Manju Singh proposed a vote of thanks.

Trainee officers of IFS meet CM



Raipur, Jan 15: Trainee officers of Indian Forest Service (IFS) of Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy, Dehradun called on Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel at his official residence here on Saturday. The Chief Minister called for plantation of more and more fruit trees in place of timber in the forest to provide employment to the residents, boost their income and also protect the forest. This will also stop migration and reduce the

burden of population in the cities, he said.

Appreciating scheme pertaining to minor forest produce processing in Chhattisgarh Bharat Jyoti, Director General of Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy, Dehradun said that this is a unique scheme which has improved the standard of living of the forest dwellers. This scheme should be implemented in other states of the country as well, he said.

Photo Exhibition of Ch'garh Govt's flagship schemes organised

At Cosmo Expo-2023 in Shriram Business Park



sector have been included in this expo. Cultural evenings are also being organized daily at Cosmo Expo.

A photo exhibition based on the flagship schemes of state government has also been organised at the venue by the Public Relations Department. Important schemes like Suraji Gaon Yojana, Rajiv Gandhi Gramin Bhoomihin Krishi Mazdoor Nyaya Yojana, Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyaya Yojana, Rajiv Yuva Mitra Club, Forest Produce Procurement and Godhan Nyaya Yojana have been displayed attractively. Information about the schemes is also being provided through

LED screens. Pamphlets and brochures related to the schemes are also being distributed to the people visiting exhibition. Programs based on Chhattisgarh's traditional songs and music are also being displayed in the stall.

Food court to tantalise taste buds with 45 stalls

The Raipur Foodie Lovers will indulge the taste buds of visitors at the expo. There is a separate large dome with 45 stalls that have been set up for food court. Here people will get an opportunity to relish the cuisine of different states of the country as well as Chhattisgarhi cuisine.

From rifle to pen: 6 surrendered Naxalites prepare for Class 10 exam

By TIKESHWAR PATEL

Raipur, Jan 15 (PTI) : After having once wielded a rifle in his arms, Karan Hemla is now holding a pen and preparing for the Class 10 examination in Chhattisgarh in the hope of a better future.

The 26-year-old surrendered Naxalite had to quit studies after violence erupted with the start of the 'Salwa Judum' anti-Naxal movement in Bastar division in 2005.

Hemla is now thrilled about getting an opportunity to resume education and fulfil his dream of becoming literate.

He is one of the six surrendered Naxalites — three men and as many women — who after laying down their arms live at the Police Lines in Kawardha city of Kabirdham district.

They have submitted forms for the Class 10 state open school examination as part of the district police's initiative to educate

them. The surrendered Naxalites, including two couples, had been active in forests along the Chhattisgarh-Madhya Pradesh border in Kabirdham district and turned themselves in before the police between 2019 and 2021.

Hemla, a native of Kakekorma village in the Maoist-hit Bijapur district, was studying in Class 7 at an ashram school in 2005 when the Salwa Judum movement began.

"Several schools in the interiors of Bastar division were shut and students were forced to discontinue their studies out of fear," Hemla told PTI.

Before he could resume his studies, local Naxalite leaders took him and another boy Bhima (who later surrendered in Andhra Pradesh) along and forcibly inducted the duo into the banned outfit in 2009, Hemla said. He was promoted as a di-

visional committee member in 2016 and shifted to the Maharashtra-Madhya Pradesh-Chhattisgarh (MMC) zone of Naxalites, where he worked with top leader Milind Teltumbde, who was gunned down in an encounter with the police in 2021.

Hemla and his wife Anita (22), who was also a Naxalite, fled from a camp in 2019 and surrendered to live a normal life.

"Both of us were keen on studying. My wife learned to write while working in the sangthan (a Naxalite outfit). After surrendering, we wanted to pursue education and we are doing so now with the help of local police," Hemla said.

Another surrendered Naxalite couple — Manglu Veko (28) and Rajes alias Vaonja (25) — was also delighted about getting the opportunity to study. Veko said Bastar has been battling against the Left Wing Extremism

(LWE) for more than three decades and the violence has resulted in disruption of education for many like him.

Veko, who hails from Bhairamgarh area in Bijapur, joined the banned outfit at the age of 19 in 2013 and surrendered in 2020.

His wife Vanoja quit the outfit with him and the couple have a child.

Veko said he wants to get a job after completing his education to provide a better life to his child.

Talking to PTI, Kabirdham Superintendent of Police Lal Umed Singh said after the surrendered Naxalites expressed their desire to study, they were provided books and helped to apply for the Class 10 open exam.

They will be provided free coaching as well, he said.

"Education is a key factor in the development of a person. It will help the surrendered cadres to connect

with the outside world and they can pursue self-employment or apply for government jobs in the future," Singh said.

The surrendered Naxalites were part of 'Vistar' platoons, active in Kanha-Bhoramdeo division since 2017 and tasked with expanding the base of the banned organisation in the area, he said.

The Kanha-Bhoramdeo division covers parts of Kabirdham in Chhattisgarh and Mandla, Balaghat and Dindori districts of neighbouring Madhya Pradesh.

However, the number of Naxalites drastically declined in the last couple of years in this region and around 21 are left active in this pocket, the official claimed.

Between 2018 and 2022, three Naxalites were killed in Kabirdham and seven were gunned down in the adjoining districts in separate actions by security personnel, he added.

CM Baghel announces various devp works worth Rs 97.30 cr

In Pali Tanakhar Assembly Constituency
In Bhent Mulaqat Program

Korba, Jan 15: Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel gifted a bounty of various developmental works worth Rs. 97.30 cr, under the Bhent Mulaqat program, in the Korba district's Pali Tanakhar Assembly Constituency on Saturday. Baghel inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for 59 works. This included the inauguration of 22 works and laying the foundation of 37 works. Under these, the Chief Minister inaugurated three works under the



Public Works Yojana, 12 works under the Janpad Panchayat under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak

Panchayat Pali, and 1 under the Health and Family Welfare Department.

Similarly, the foundations for two works under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, four works under Janpad Panchayat Pali, 11 works under the Rural Engineering Services Department, one work under the Chhattisgarh State Renewable Development Agency, two works under Public Health Engineering Department, two works under Water Resources Department, two works under Scheduled Tribes and Schedules Castes Development Department, and 13 works under the Education Department were also laid.

Swami Vivekananda introduced a new ethical thought process: V-C HNLU



Raipur, Jan 15: Hidayatullah National Law University (HNLU) a premier law university in the country organized Second Swami Vivekananda Memorial Lecture 2023 on January 12, 2023, at 5:30 pm on the occasion of the National Youth Day. Swami Atmapriyananda, Pro-Chancellor, Ramakrishna Mission, Educational and Research Institute was the Chief Guest for the event and spoke on the topic of 'Ethical Values in Contemporary Times: Revisiting the Teachings of Swami Vivekananda'. Opening Remarks for the programme was delivered by Prof. Dr. VC Vivekanandan, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, HNLU and the Concluding Remarks was delivered by Prof. Dr. Uday Shankar,

Registrar, HNLU.

Prof. Dr. V.C. Vivekanandan, Vice-Chancellor, HNLU in his Opening Remarks said that "Swami Vivekananda introduced a new ethical thought process where cultivating the virtues one has for they will be bearing the roots bearing the sweet fruits in due season. More than legal it is the ethical quotient which is crucial in contemporary times"

Swami Dr. Atmapriyananda, began his discussion by pondering upon the notion of religion as envisaged by

Swami Vivekanandaji and emphasized upon the power of an individual to be an infinite self in themselves. For this he encouraged individuals to realize their inner strength both physical and most importantly he focused on the power of intellectual thoughts which is often articulated in one's speech. Ethics therefore according to him is not a set of do's and don'ts but rather a balance between one's thoughts and speech. Hence, he opined that 'Vedantic Self is in one's heart and in one's self..and hence we should Worship all beings as manifestations of God.'

The concluding remarks were delivered by Prof. Dr. Uday Shankar, Registrar, HNLU. The Webinar was hosted as a part of the annual memo-

rial lecture series which was instituted in 2022. The Inaugural Swami Vivekananda Memorial Lecture was delivered by Bhupesh Baghel, Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh who virtually unveiled the statue of Swami Vivekananda at HNLU and delivered the inaugural lecture on the topic of 'Rule of Law as a Foundation for National Building'. The programme was anchored by Prateek Munjal & Garima Agarwal, Student Convener and Vice-Convener of Literary and Debating Committee, HNLU. The programme was attended by over 250 participants comprising of faculties, students and staff of HNLU, ITM University. It was hosted on Cisco WebEx and was telecast live on YouTube.

'Teachers should be responsible like mothers'

Bilaspur, Jan 15: Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alok Kumar Chakrawal delivered a lecture 'National Education Policy 2020 and Quality Initiatives' at an event organized on January 09, 2023 at 4.30 pm by National Education Policy-2020 Task Force Committee and Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) of Guru Ghasidas University (A Central University). The event started with a welcome of the guests with presentation of saplings. The Director IQAC, Prof. A.S. Randive delivered the welcome address.



In the lecture organized at Silver Jubilee Auditorium, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Chakrawal said that the role of teacher is very important in any educational institution. In the National Education Policy-2020, special emphasis has been laid on developing and nurturing the relationship between teachers, students, and education. Teachers perform the vital task of molding and shaping the students. A teacher is successful only if he has a sense of responsibility like that of a child's mother.

The Vice-Chancellor,

Prof. Chakrawal said that there is no age bar for learning and teaching. Teachers who create their own path and identity inscribe new lessons for the students. Addressing the teachers in the New Year, he said that Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya is being talked about with adoration in the entire academic world. Professor Chakrawal stressed that

we must make the environment of this university such that it becomes capable of attracting more youth.

Referring to the Shiksha Samagam Conference organized in Varanasi in the first week of July under the National Education Policy 2020, the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Chakrawal said that the honorable Prime Minister of the country, Narendra Modi had shared the concept of 'Lab to Land and Land to Lab', in which higher educational institutions should work for the upliftment of the society and pass on the practical benefits of learning to the society. Along with this, he also emphasized on making various positive social activities a part

of the curriculum. Changes made in PhD regulations are one of the initiatives in implementing the National Education Policy 2020 in the university in its entirety.

On this occasion, the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Chakrawal and the guests on the stage released the poetry collection 'Satpura ki Pagdandiyan' by Dr. Ramesh Gohe, Assistant Professor, Department of Hindi. At the end of the program, vote of thanks was given by the Registrar, Prof. Manish Srivastava. Dr. Neeraj Kumari, Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry, conducted the program. Deans, heads of departments, teachers and officers of various schools were present on this occasion.

Assembly Speaker, former CM to be included in Shankaracharya's religious meeting

Jagdalpur, Jan 15: Peethadhiswar Jagatguru Shankaracharya Swami Nischalanand Saraswati of Govardhan Peeth Puri is coming to the Holy land of Mother Danteshwari in Bastar on Feb 6, 2023. Speaker of Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly Dr. Charandas Mahant, former Chief Minister Dr. Raman Singh, Chairman of Chhattisgarh Fish Welfare Board MR Nishad will participate in Shankaracharya's three-day stay and religious event in Jagdalpur from Feb 6 to 8, 2023.

He has given consent to attend the religious meeting organized on February 7, 2023 at the local Lalbagh ground. Whereas on



February 6, 2023, at 5 pm, the Chhattisgarh government's Excise, Industry and Bastar in-charge Minister Kawasi Lakhma, Tribal Development Authority President Lakheshwar Baghel, including Parliamentary Secretary Rekhchand Jain, Indravati Development Authority

Vice President Rajeev Sharma will welcome Shankaracharya to the city at 5 pm. Former Minister and BJP State General Secretary Kedar Kashyap, former MLA Santosh Bafna, and other public representatives, former public representatives have agreed to attend.

Newly elected Kadma Sarpanch enters Congress fold

Jagdalpur, Jan 15: In the three-

Congress government and the

level by-election of Gram Panchayat Kadma in Bastar district, the newly elected Sarpanch Samli Kashyap today expressed her desire to join the Congress by visiting the residence of Chitrakot MLA Rajman Benzam. The Sarpanch informed about the demands of his constituency while entering the Congress. MLA Rajman Benzam congratulated the newly elected Sarpanch. The MLA welcomed Sarpanch's entry into Congress-fold by presenting her with party's stole and assured to fulfill all the demands of the Gram Panchayat.

Kashyap said that at present, under the leadership of the

regional MLA, development in the area is taking place at double the speed. Every small and big problems of the Gram Panchayats are resolved immediately when the Regional MLA reaches the table. Villagers of Kadma Panchayat have believed in me and have elected me as the Sarpanch of this Gram Panchayat and so my first responsibility is the development of the village, that's why I voluntarily joined the Congress party today. During this Sarpanch's husband Mahadev Kashyap, Chansing Patel, Senior Congress Deputy Sarpanch Mahendra Thakur, Ramnath Kashyap, Hiralal Patel, Sanjay Patel and others were present.

Auto rally taken out on road safety week for public awareness

Jagdalpur, Jan 15: On the third day of Road Safety Week, a rally of auto vehicles was taken out for traffic awareness. Road Safety Week is going to start from Jan 11th till 17th. During the rally, people were made aware by shouting slogans like 'do not drink alcohol and drive', 'caution removed accident happened', 'follow traffic rules', 'road safety-life protection'. The rally was taken out from all the intersections and main roads of the city. More than 200 auto drivers participated in the auto awareness rally.

Traffic in-charge Shivshankar Gendale said that for a week



people are being informed about traffic rules by the police, transport department and district administration. An awareness rally on auto and bike was taken out from City Kotwali on Jan 13 on occasion of the Road Safety Public Awareness week.

Several programs will be organized in this seven-day campaign during the Road Safety Week. During this, pam-

phlets of road safety rules are also being distributed among the people. He told that efforts are being made to prevent accidents by installing dummy cutouts on accident prone areas and national highways, so that any incident accident can be prevented. Along with this, efforts are being made to convey the message of not driving at high speed.

Two drugs smugglers arrested with 20.5 kg Ganja

Jagdalpur, Jan 15: The Nagarnar police of the district arrested a female Vimla and a male Gulab Chand resident of Hisar Haryana, a Ganja smuggler in a passenger bus near Dhanpunji Forest Naka. A total of 20.5 kg Ganja was seized from the possession of arrested Vimla and Gulabchand. Both the accused were bringing Ganja from Orissa and were traveling in the bus carrying Ganja in bags. After legal proceedings against the accused, they were sent on judicial remand.

CSP Vikas Kumar told that the Nagarnar police



had received information about illegal smuggling of Marijuana by the informer: Based on the information, a team was formed under the leadership of station in-charge Jayaprakash Gupta. Passenger bus coming from Odisha towards Jagdalpur was stopped

by blockade near Dhanpunji Forest Naka. The bags of both Vimla and Gulab Chand, R/of Hisar Haryana were searched in the said bus. On searching, a total of 20.5 kg of intoxicant ganja was recovered from different bags of both.

DEO Bijapur inspects schools of Bhopalpatnam block



Bijapur, Jan 14: District Education Officer (DEO) Bijapur BR Baghel in Bhopalpatnam Block assessed the educational quality of children by conducting a surprise inspection of Swami Atmanand School Bhopalpatnam, Primary School Ramapuram, Secondary School Ramapuram, Pota

Cabin School Tarlaguda, Chandur and received information regarding preparation of the upcoming exams. In the inspection important instructions were given to strengthen the school system in regards of education by taking information about teacher system and basic facilities.

Swamiji was a legendary and spiritual master of true Vedanti: Hota

Teachers, students celebrate Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary as National Youth Day

Bemetara, Jan 15: Swami Vivekananda birth anniversary was celebrated at Allons Public School on Thursday. This day is also celebrated as the National Youth Day. The program was started by lighting a lamp in front of the portrait of swami Vivekananda and worshipped him by Dr. Satyajit Hota, Principal, teachers and all the students. The original speech of Swami Vivekananda delivered at Chicago was heard by the students on this occasion.

Anvita Kiran Dubey, Himani Narwal, Khushi Sahu of Class X, Riya Tandon of class IX, Samresh Mohanty of Class II and Dr. Jagendra Kumar Kulmitra delivered their speeches on the role of Swami Vivekanand. Dr. Satyajit Hota, teachers and students prayed in front of the immortal soul of Swami ji to get the right



path and strength for getting developed India. The students of the class XII participated in the games under the aegis of Rahul Solanki from the sports department.

The audience appreciated the performance of the students in the games.

Dr. Satyajit Hota, Principal called Swami Vivekananda as the true source of inspiration for the young generation of India. He told to have a universal tolerance and acceptance. He called Swami Vivekananda as an Indian Hindu monk, philosopher, author, religious teacher, the messenger and youth

icon of Indian Vedanta and the chief disciple of the Indian mysticism. Swamiji was a well-known legendary and spiritual master of the true Vedanti. He had touched the height of worshiping and penance. He had unwavering faith in God that whatever he used to speak was all Veda's sentences.

His memory power was so sharp that whatever he read once, he used to get completely photographic memory and also did a lot of work in less time of his life, which will be remembered by the whole world for ages. Vivekananda will always remain relevant for

every era and country because he was a yogi of amazing talent. Vivekananda appeared in front of the world as a miraculous enlightened scholar after acquiring a lot of knowledge and science in a very short time. His every action is exemplary for every human being.

His teachings are acceptable to every age, child, old and young. Sages Aurobindo Ghosh and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan were followers of Swami Vivekananda, talking to another Noble laureate Roman Ronald, Rabindranath Tagore said, "If you want to know India,

study Vivekananda." Indian National activist Netaji considered Swamiji as his spiritual teacher. He called Swami Ji a "Full-blooded masculine personality and a fighter to the core of being."

National Youth Day is a special day dedicated to the youth of India who have the potential to make the future of the country better and healthier. He wanted to see India as a developed country. Swami Ji was called to the World Religion Assembly organized in Chicago, America, where he addressed the sisters and brothers and gave a historic speech.

The whole atmosphere echoed with thunderous applause listening to his speech. The conscience of all of us teachers and students will also experience joy by following the instructions given by Swami Vivekananda and guiding the path of education, in the same state we will experience joy from family to society and from society to nation and Will be able to communicate joy from the nation to the world through education. He ad-

ministered the oath to the students and teachers to abide by the truth and loyalty to follow the path told by Swamiji. He announced the sermon of Swami Ji, "Arise, awake and stop not until the goal is reached". He said that we can make our life happy and successful by imbibing the thoughts of Swami Vivekananda. The whole world will be indebted to him. He called that Swami Ji emphasized men making nation building education. He emphasized - "Service to man is service to God. Freedom and equality are the champions of women education."

The program aroused the ambition of the students to bring universal tolerance, universal acceptance and equality for seeing our country as a developed country. Pushpalata Patle, Renuka Kale, Anurag Tripathi and Balbir Singh also helped in the celebration of this program. Kamaljit Arora, Chairman, Pushkal Arora, Director, Sunil Sharma, Administrator witnessed this memorable event.

ABVP Kasdol unit celebrates National Youth Day

Central Chronicle News

Kasdol, Jan 15: Various programs were organized on Swami Vivekananda Jayanti Kasdol Under the auspices of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad Kasdol unit. A youth festival was organized on the auspicious occasion of Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary and National Youth Day on January 12.

ABVP, the world's largest student organization, has been celebrating National Youth Day with great enthusiasm considering Swami Vivekananda as its inspiration. Various competitions were organized in different genres like Rangoli, Mehndi, painting, card making, and chess, carom, in which the students of schools



and colleges of the area participated enthusiastically. A lot of enthusiasm was seen among the students who participated in

the competition and the Chief Guest was Bharat Das Manikpuri, Sarpanch Gram Panchayat Chharchhed, headed by Subhash Sahu along with Himanchal Paikra Sarpanch Representative Mudpar, Rajkumar Patel Sarpanch Representative Kanjia, Nisha Jaiswal State Executive Member ABVP.

Highlighting the biography of Swami Vivekananda, the speakers in the program asked the students to follow the path shown by Swami Vivekananda. Sneha Yadav, Veena Jaiswal, Pritam Jaiswal, Abhishek Navarange, Meenakshi Vaishnav, Meenakshi Bairagi, Falguni Soni, Prakriti Jaiswal, Sahetri Navratna, Kajal, Shivam, Rajeshwar and many others were present.

Villagers reprimand the quality of PMGSY road

Central Chronicle News

Balod, Jan 15: Under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, a road is being constructed from village Madhya Katta in Balod district and here agitated villagers have handed over a complaint letter to the collector for investigation and appropriate action against the road construction and warned of chakka-jam for usage of substandard material.

The villagers told through the complaint letter that the work is being done there by the contractor Katare through Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, and only sub quality material is being used by their engineers and employees, so there is opposition. Rural Sarpanchs



and office bearers are also being misled by the contractor and 5% asphalt rick has been used there and no cleaning has been done there, they said. The villagers said that here we have to come and go through this road daily, if the quality of the road remains the same then we will have to face problems, so the villagers have dem

anded to take proper action by making it quality. The villagers further said that we have come here with the demand of the road and if the demand is not met then we will block the road and go to the Chief Minister because we have to walk on this road and we cannot compromise on the quality, not the arbitrary of the contractor.

Villagers are availing benefits of the public facility camp

- In Naxal-affected areas
- Health check-up camp and treatment of villagers organised

Central Chronicle News

Konta, Jan 15: In order to provide quick benefits to the villagers of the public welfare schemes and programmes of the State Government, as per the instructions of the Industry Minister Kawasi Lakhma and guidance of Collector Haris S, the administration organised public convenience health check-up camps continuously in different villages of the district.

Earlier, a public facilitation



camp was organized for the villagers of Pidmel, Kamaram and Ramaram, coming under highly sensitive remote Naxal infested area of Konta block. In this series, by organizing a public facilitation camp in Chintalnar village of Konta block from Jan 11, the departments are providing information about the public welfare schemes

of the state government to the villagers and providing quick benefits.

In the Chintalnar Public Facilitation Camp, the villagers of 11 nearby Gram Panchayats are being provided the benefits of public welfare schemes and programs of the government. Pension, ration card, Ayushman card, Aadhar card etc. are being made in

this camp. Along with this, free medicines are being distributed and treated by the Health Department team at the camp site after health check-up of the villagers.

Collector Haris S. in the weekly time-limit meeting has directed the officials to organize a public facilitation camp in village Chintalnar and provide maximum benefits of public welfare schemes to the people of the area. In compliance of which the Chitlanaar Jan Suvidha Camp was successfully in the presence of Konta SDM Bansingh Netam, Tehsildar Rupesh Markam, Konta Janpad Panchayat CEO Kailash Kashyap and other officers-employees.

Embezzlement of funds in NPS raised in DLCC meeting

- That of Education workers

Central Chronicle News

Gourella, Pendra, Marwahi, Jan 15: The matter of embezzlement of crores of rupees in the NPS amount of education workers has been raised in the meeting of the consultation committee. The first meeting of the District Level Consultative Committee was organized under the direction of Collector Richa Prakash Chaudhary, in which the matter of embezzlement of crores of rupees by the district office Pendra in the amount of NPS pension of education workers was raised, after which the officials have been directed



to conduct an inquiry in this regard and take necessary action.

On Wednesday, a meeting of the District Level Officers' Consultative Committee with all the employees' organizations of the district was held in the meeting hall of the project office under the chairmanship of Additional Collector BC Ekka. In this meeting, District General Secretary of Staff Officer Federation, Satya Narayan Jaiswal raised the matter

that from the year 2012, 10% amount was deducted from the salary of education workers to be deposited in NPS pension account, but a huge amount was embezzled by not depositing it in NPS account.

Raising the issue of pensionless assistant teacher Ram Singh Marabi of LB cadre of Marwahi block who retired after serving for 25 years, he said that his pension case should be resolved immediately. In this case, the DEO directed the

BEO to redress the matter immediately and give a written reply to the victim.

In the meeting, Additional Collector BC Ekka, DEO NK Chandra, District Treasury Officer Shrivastava, CEO Dr. Sanjay Sharma, BEO Sanjeev Shukla, Dilip Patel, RN Chandra, along with various employees' organization officials, Teacher Congress District President Surendra Singh, Third Class Employees Union District President Kamal Khan, Staff Officer Federation District General Secretary Satya Narayan Jaiswal, Federation General Secretary Akash Rai, Vishwas Govardhan, Teachers Association District President Mukesh Kori were present.

School under open sky in village Kajra

**Central Chronicle News**

Berla, Jan 15: The primary school operated in Kajra, a dependent village of Gram Panchayat Dongitarai of Saja assembly constituency, is being used as a classroom for 46 students studying in class one to five for several months.

Here the children have not been able to get even

the basic facilities, and the primary school is proving to be an example of government apathy, where the children are afraid to sit in dilapidated buildings and study under the open sky.

Looking at the condition of the building, these days classes are being held in the vacant school grounds. About 46 children are enrolled in the government primary school run in vil-

lage Kajra, and the students are not made to sit owing to the.

There is a school building but due to dilapidation the children are not being seated there and in view of the condition of the building, the school was being run in a private house for the last two years due to apprehension that some untoward incident might happen.

Nilesh Chandravanshi, BEO Saja, said that he is posted newly; he is yet to look into the matter.

What officer says: The old building of the school has become weak since last April, after which the children were taught in a private house, but since last Diwali the family members have vacated them, now they are teaching in the verandah or in the ground. Maneka Tiwari, Head Reader Primary School Kajra

Secretary Health and Family Welfare inspects PHC's

**Central Chronicle News**

Gourella-Pendra-Marwahi, Jan 15: Chhattisgarh Government's Health and Family Welfare Secretary Prasanna R was on a district visit, here along with District Collector Richa Prakash Chaudhary and visited various health centers including District Hospital, Community Health Center Pendra and inquired about health facilities.

Prasanna inspected the outpatient department, vaccination room, operation theater, female maternity ward, neonatal intensive care unit, PNC ward, eye

examination room, dental room, pathology, male and female ward and kitchen room and with the patients who came for treatment in the hospital and inquired about the satisfactory treatment and gave necessary instructions to civil surgeon Dr. B.P. Chandra.

Secretary Mr. Prasanna also inspected the newly constructed Sub Health Center, Primary Health Center Amadand and Primary Health Center Navagaon in village Belpat.

He instructed the newly appointed nurses to get delivery training, to ensure safe delivery of pregnant women in health centers, to benefit from various schemes run by the health department as per their eligibility. Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr. Prabhat Chandra Prabhakar and District Program Manager Vibha Toppo were also present during the inspection.

Vishal Mandai Fair organized

Central Chronicle News

Nandini-Ahiwara, Jan 15: Shri Ram Krishna Jagruti Manch Nandini Ahiwara organized Chhattisgarh level Raut Nacha competition two days Madhai Fair for the 29th year consecutively.

The chief guest of the said program was Guru Rudra Kumar, Cabinet Minister, presided over by P.Ekka GM, Natwar Lal Tamarkar, President Municipal Council, Ahiwara, S. Jamukar G.M. Nandini Mines, Suraj Soni G.M. and others. In the Raut dance competition, Radhakrishna Raut Nacha Mandali village Khajri (Ghumka) of Rajnandgaon won the first place, and was given eleven thousand rupees by the committee and Jai Shri Radhekrishna Ras Leela Ahir dance troupe, village Masul, was given nine thousand rupees by



the committee, in the second place, Krishna Kanhaiya Ahir dance troupe village Manpur (Khapri), got Rs 8000 from the committee, Jai Sahda Dev Raut dance party village Harduva (Ghumka) got Rs. 6000 cash prize by the committee, Adarsh Raut Nacha Party Village Nandauri and Jai Krishna Raut Nacha Party Village Raju who have been given Rs.5000 cash prize each.

On this occasion, the chairman of the commit-

tee, Haldhar Chandrakar, general secretary D.D. Patel, Treasurer Bisahu Das Manikpuri, Mohan Sahu, Sushil Kumar Sahu, Chowaram Verma, Nand Lal Tamarkar, Bhupendra Kumar Verma, K.K. Sidar, Dau Anand Tamarkar, Rahul Chandel, Kishore Jain, B.L. Sahu, Dhanshyam Sahu, Hridesh Chandel, Vem Prakash, MC Katare, Dina Sahu Congress Seva Dal Block President Ram Pal Navik etc were present.

Culture Minister Bhagat inspected site for Film City

- At Birbira in Mahasamund
- State government has implemented a new film policy, 2021

Central Chronicle News

Mahasamund, Jan 15: Culture Minister Amarjeet Bhagat visited the site for the construction of a film city in Birbira village, Mahasamund district, on Wednesday. Significantly, the Chhattisgarh state government has developed a new film policy 2021 to encourage the Chhattisgarh film industry. The film policy includes numerous concessions for filmmakers, directors, and artists.

Sites for the creation of Film City in various districts of the state, including Naya Raipur, are being selected in order to provide a comprehensive format to the

Chhattisgarhi film industry, such as South Indian, Marathi, Bengali, and other provinces. In this view, a team of officers led by Minister Bhagat inspected the land in Birbira village of Mahasamund district.

Culture Minister stated that the Chhattisgarh Film Policy has benefited hundreds of artists, technicians, producers-directors, and local people involved in the state's film industry. During the inspection, the Culture Minister stated that a good location for a film city is important. Culture and tourism will gain a distinct national character as a result of Film City.

The creation of Film City will enhance the number of tourists at neighboring tourist destinations. Along with this, the local youngsters will have access to an increasing number of job opportunities. Mr. Bhagat, stated that there are numerous locations in



Chhattisgarh that are ideal for filming. Along with the film policy and the state government's initiatives have now created such an atmosphere, which has raised the interest of filmmakers from other states in Chhattisgarh.

According to the Culture Minister, the state government's goal in establishing a film city in Chhattisgarh is to encourage Chhattisgarh film production, to develop Chhattisgarh as a key center

for film shooting, and to attract investors in the manufacturing sector. This will also encourage private investment in the film industry.

Along with the artists here engaging the audience, there will be a sense of Chhattisgarhi culture through films. Similarly, films on the state's art and culture will be transformed into serials and web series. Incentives have been planned for the same. He stated that the journey of

Chhattisgarhi films began in 1965 with "Kahi Debe Sandesh" and "Ghar-Dwar".

Meanwhile, Collector of Mahasamund district, Nilesh Kumar Kshirsagar, who was present at the inspection, stated that approximately 327 acres of revenue land are being identified here. Birbira village is about 4-5 kilometers from the National Highway. Sirpur, Kodar Reservoir, Baranvapara, and other tourist attractions are located about 50 kilometers from Raipur.

On this occasion, the Chief Minister's Culture Advisor Gaurav Dwivedi, Vice-Chairman of the State Animal Welfare Board Alok Chandrakar, Central Area Tribal Development Authority member Mohit Dhruv along with other people's representatives of culture department and senior officials of the district administration were also present.

Annual sports competition organized at SAGES Daupara

Central Chronicle News

Mungeli, Jan 15: The annual sports competition was organized on January 10 at Swami Atmanand Government English School, Daupara, with Municipality President Hemendra Goswami as chief guest and the program was presided over by District Education Officer Mrs. Savita Rajput.

First of all, the newly installed idol of Maa Saraswati was unveiled by the chief guest, and worshipped. Som Verma, chairman of the school development committee, councillor Shrikumar Thakur, members of the school development committee were present as special guests. Chief guest Municipality



President Hemendra Goswami asked some questions while encouraging the students, to which the students responded immediately, on which he congratulated the students as well as the school management.

On the request of Som Verma, Chairman of the School Development

Committee, the Municipality President announced to provide the necessary chair-table to the school. The President of the program, District Education Officer Savita Rajput, termed sports as an essential part of life along with studies, encouraged the students to move forward.

BRIEF



A member of a contingent of the Army's Madras Regiment marches past during the 75th Army Day celebrations at Govinda Swamy Parade Ground in Bengaluru, Sunday.

Illegal slaughter

Bulandshahr (UP): Police have arrested a soap factory owner along with a man accused of animal theft and illegal slaughter; officials said on Sunday. Stolen cattle, carcasses, 27 tonnes of animal fat and animal skin were seized following the arrests, they said. Additional Superintendent of Police Surendra Nath Tiwari said, "Arif, accused of animal theft and slaughter, and Amit Ahuja, owner of soap making factory, were arrested on Saturday night." "During interrogation, Arif confessed that he used to sell animal parts to the soap factory owner. The animal fat is believed to be used in making soaps," the officer said.

Inmate dies

Shahjahanpur (UP): A 60-year-old inmate in the district jail here died allegedly of illness, officials said on Sunday. Ram Bharose, lodged in the jail since November last year in a murder case, died on Saturday night, Jail Superintendent Mijaji Lal told PTI. He was suffering from pulmonary disease and was admitted to the jail hospital since November, Lal said. As his health deteriorated on Saturday night, he was taken to medical college where he succumbed during treatment, the officer said. The family of the deceased have been informed and further procedures are being done by the jail administration, he said.

Father-son arrested

Bhadohi: A man and his son were arrested for allegedly attempting suicide at a relative's house in Uttar Pradesh's Bhadohi district, police said on Sunday. The incident took place in Ugapur market area under Aurai police station limits on Saturday evening, they said. Phool Chand Gupta is embroiled in a property dispute with his brother Virendra Gupta.

Secretariat complex

Hyderabad: Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao will inaugurate the State's new Secretariat here on February 17. Rao, popularly known as KCR, will open the Telangana State Secretariat complex named after B R Ambedkar. "It has been decided to inaugurate the newly constructed 'Dr B R Ambedkar Telangana State Secretariat Building' on February 17 on the day of the birthday of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao.

Row over Odisha Gov's suggestion favouring entry of foreigners in Puri temple

Bhubaneswar, Jan 15 (PTI)

Odisha Governor Ganeshi Lal has stoked a controversy by suggesting that foreigners should be allowed entry into the Jagannath temple of Puri, with several traditionalists and political leaders criticising the proposal and rejecting it outright.

Former minister Bijay Mohapatra said centuries-old traditions of the temple should not be tinkered with.

"Everyone, including non-Hindus, can have a darshan of the sibling deities — Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Lord Jagannath — when they step out of the temple on the occasion of Ratha Jatra every year. There

should not be a dispute over such matters," the BJP leader maintained.

Several servitors in Puri echoed Mohapatra.

Senior Congress MLA Suresh Routray said "interferences in religious practices should be avoided". Lal, while addressing a function at Utkal University on Thursday, had said, "If the foreigners are meeting the Gajapati Maharaja of Puri, servitors and the shankaracharya, there is no point in depriving them of Lord Jagannath's darshan inside the temple. It is a suggestion."

The 12th century shrine, one of the four dhams, bars the entry of non-Hindus.

A sign board at the temple gate states, "Only

Hindus are allowed."

A Puri based socio-cultural organisation, Shree Jagannath Sena, had staged a protest against the governor's remark in the temple town on Saturday.

"We have a lot of respect for the governor. But his proposal is unacceptable. He should refrain from the commenting on sensitive issues linked to faith and religion," Sena convener Priyadarshan Pattnaik said. Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA), a government body that oversees the up-keep and maintenance of the temple and its operations, is yet to issue a statement on the matter.

The governor, who left for Ujjaini in Madhya Pradesh earlier on Sunday,

could not be reached for his reaction.

A Raj Bhavan spokesperson, on being approached, said that the "governor has just made a suggestion, and nothing beyond that. He did not give any order."

Meanwhile, Odisha former minister Damodar Rout came out in support of Lal's suggestion and said there should be no restriction on the darshan of the deities by anyone, as Lord Jagannath is the "master of the universe".

"Lord Jagannath is regarded as the origin of all religions. Guru Nanak came here for a darshan of the deity. Similarly, Sri Chaitanya visited Puri in 1508 and propagated Vaishnavism on his return."

HC orders joint survey of street near Sarai Rohilla Railway Station on plea to shut 'illegal' eateries

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI)

The Delhi High Court has ordered a joint survey of an area near Sarai Rohilla Railway Station by police, fire department and MCD on a plea claiming that the running of "illegal" eateries was creating a nuisance in the residential area.

The high court said after the joint survey, authorities shall file a report as to what steps have been taken to ensure that residents don't face any danger or inconvenience.

If eateries occupy public space, it is the duty of the police to ensure that the space is not blocked and people can walk and vehicles can pass and that

there is way for the fire tenders, Justice Prathiba M Singh said. The high court was hearing a plea by Puran Chand, who resides in the lane opposite Sarai Rohilla Railway Station, seeking the shutting down of illegal eateries running in the area as they create a nuisance and disturb the peace of the residential area. He said the vendors use footpaths and public spaces for tandoors and chula bhatti for their eateries without following fire safety and pollution norms which poses grave danger to the life of residents in the vicinity.

The petitioner said when he confronted one of the dhaba owners, he was threatened and added that

the street is the only access to Sarai Rohilla Railway Station.

The Delhi government was represented by advocate Arun Panwar.

Authorities said no fire licences were found to be there with the eateries vendors and challans have been issued to them. They also said that fire safety norms have to be adhered to by them and they need to apply for fire safety certificates.

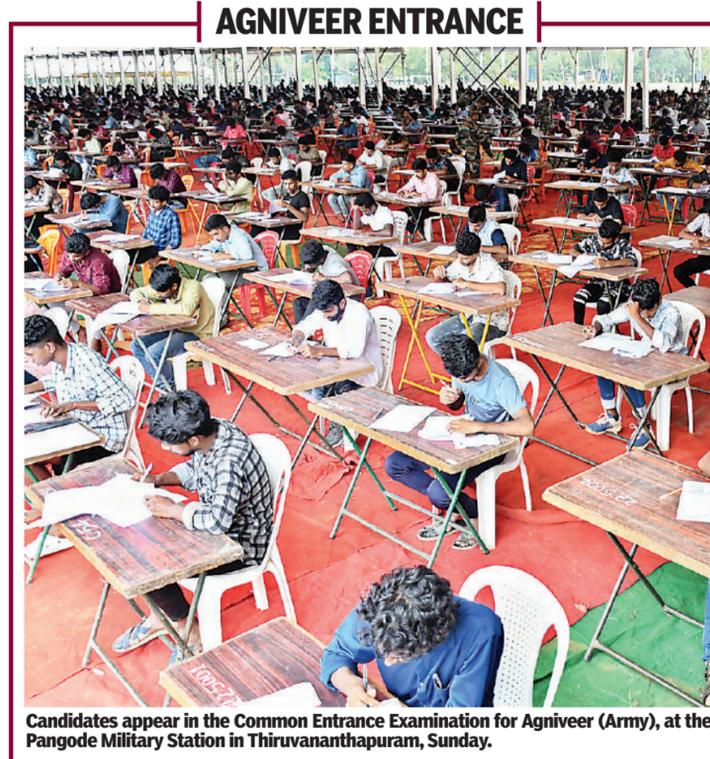
Regarding the fire safety issue, the court said there is no doubt that the area has to be surveyed by Delhi Police and fire department along with the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and a joint report shall be filed.

SIT rules out terror angle in J-K prisons chief murder

Jammu, Jan 15 (PTI)

Ruling out terror angle in the sensational murder of H K Lohia, a former director general of Jammu and Kashmir prisons, in October last year, the police investigation in the case has found accused Yassir Ahmad was driven by "deep grudges" against high-ranking officials.

The Jammu and Kashmir crime branch Special Investigation Team that carried out a detailed probe, including a Narco analysis on Ahmed, concluded he was disturbed over self-assumed noncompliance of promises of a government job in lieu of services he rendered as a domestic help to Lohia, an official said.



Candidates appear in the Common Entrance Examination for Agniveer (Army), at the Pangode Military Station in Thiruvananthapuram, Sunday.

The sensational murder of Lohia, a 1992-batch IPS officer, had raised many eyebrows especially after a little-known terror group, Peoples Anti-Fascist Front (PAFF), claimed responsibility. It was dismissed by police as mere tactics of these outfits to own "everything shamelessly".

During a detailed enquiry, the official said, the police could not find any link between Ahmed and any terror group. His detailed journey over the two years, after he left his home at Halla Dandrat of Ramban district in Jammu, was also chalked out.

The charge sheet said the accused, during the narco analysis conducted in Gujarat, showed that he had "deep grudges"

against authorities and felt "betrayed", they said.

Ahmed, who has been charged under 302 (murder), 201 (destruction of evidence) and 4/25 of Arms Act (using petrol to burn the body and destroy evidence), had been working at a private residence of Lohia since February last year.

The accused considered the deceased as a "symbol of authority" and killed him with a butcher knife and poured petrol to burn his body, the officials said.

The accused also made an unsuccessful attempt to commit suicide afterwards by hanging himself from the roof. However, the belt could not sustain the weight of his body, the officials said, adding during investigation this fact could not be corroborated.

Lohia was found dead at his makeshift residence on the outskirts of Jammu on October 3. Ahmed, 23, was arrested for the murder next day after fleeing the scene of the crime under the cover of darkness.

Police had issued a statement in which they said "during investigation, all cogent evidence (oral, documentary, circumstantial, expert and technical) were collected by the SIT. Besides, a narco analysis test of the accused was also conducted at DFSL Gandhinagar in Gujarat". Police had registered a FIR on October 3 and later the matter was handed over to the crime branch.

Perpetrators behind Rajouri terror attack will pay heavy price: LG

Jammu, Jan 15 (PTI)

Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday said the perpetrators responsible for the recent terror attack on a village in Rajouri district will have to pay a heavy price for their heinous action.

Addressing the people of the Union Territory in his monthly radio programme Awaaz Ki Awaaz, the Lt Governor said the whole nation stands united in the fight against terrorism.

Seven people belonging

to a particular community were killed and 14 others injured in a twin strike by terrorists at Dhangri village of Rajouri on January 1 and 2.

Paying tributes to civilians who lost their lives in the terror attack, Sinha said concrete measures are being taken to ensure families of martyrs live a life of dignity.

"Perpetrators will have to pay a heavy price for their heinous action. The whole nation stands united in the fight against terror," he said. He said, "We

have entered a New Year united in step and united in resolve. We have triumphed over several challenges and achieved new milestones in several sectors of the economy in 2022. "The new initiatives have helped fulfil the aspirations of the common man. Today, the goal before us is clear. With active public participation, we are treading the path of rapid, inclusive, equitable and sustainable development of Jammu Kashmir," he added. He said people's participation

is needed for effective implementation of projects on the ground.

Sharing inspiring stories of the citizens selflessly serving humanity, the Lt Governor made special mention of women change-makers who are driving socio-economic change in the society.

"Women are key drivers of social transformation we also must draw inspiration from those who are shining examples of Nari Shakti and empowering others economically and socially," he said.

Assembly polls must take place in J-K: Farooq

Srinagar, Jan 15 (PTI)

Assembly elections must take place in Jammu and Kashmir as lieutenant governor's administration cannot resolve the issues of the people, National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah said on Sunday.

Speaking to reporters in Baramulla district in north Kashmir, Abdullah also said the elections lead to the formation of people's government.

"Elections must take place. Elections lead to the formation of people's government and resolve their issues. A lieutenant governor cannot do that," he said. On Monday's meet-

ing called by the Election Commission of India to demonstrate a prototype to enable remote voting for migrant workers and students, the former Union minister said that NC will also attend it.

"Let them invite. Our party will also go. We will listen to what they have to say, we will also say what we have to," he said.

Asked about VDC members in Rajouri being provided weapons to fight militants, the former J-K chief minister defended the move, saying the militancy has to be fought.

"It is not something new and weapons were given in our time (when the NC ruled J-K) as well. The mil-

itancy has to be fought," he said.

To a reporter's question that if Sonia Gandhi would be on stage when the Bharat Jodo yatra reaches here, would the issue of the restoration of Article 370 be taken up, Abdullah retorted "you care a lot about (Article) 370".

He said the yatra was for removing the hatred between communities across the country.

"What is the yatra for? It is for removing the hatred between religious communities, that we all Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and Buddhists — live together is what the yatra is working for.

SNOW HILL



People play with snow at a snow-covered area, at Patnitop hill station, in Jammu, Sunday.

Parties busy formulating strategies, stitching alliances ahead of assembly polls

Agartala, Jan 15 (PTI)

Battle lines have been drawn for elections to the 60-member assembly in Tripura, with the opposition CPI(M) and the Congress, after much deliberations, joining hands to take on arch rival BJP, which has already announced that it intends to retain its alliance with regional tribal outfit IPFT.

The Tipra Motha, a newly floated tribal party that swept the autonomous district council polls within months of its formation, is still scouting for a partner to fight the elections, as its demand for a separate state 'Tiprasa' has found no support from any of the major parties in the state.

The TMC, which rejigged its entire organisation in the state last month, has said that it was ready to go it alone. The saffron camp, which was able to dislodge the ensconced Left regime, is harping on its "double-engine" development benefit, riding on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal, to

woo voters, while the Left, now a pale shadow of its formidable self, along with the CPI(M), is seeking a comeback in the state, resting on two broad planks — corruption and lawlessness.

CPI(M) state secretary Jitendra Choudhury said his party and the Congress are carefully formulating a seat-sharing strategy, "keeping in mind people's aspirations and the need to defeat the BJP".

"Law and order has completely collapsed in the state and people's voices are being choked. They want the BJP's rule to end in the state. Giving due respect to their wish, we have decided to fight the election jointly. Defeating the BJP is our prime agenda," he said.

Congress leader Mukul Wasnik, appointed by the AICC as senior observer in poll-bound Tripura, claimed that the BJP may try taking resort unfair means once they fail to get adequate votes. "We have to ensure that doesn't happen. The BJP is a threat to democracy," he added.

The saffron party, taking a dig at the CPI(M)-Congress alliance, said that it came as no surprise, as the two parties had always maintained relations covertly, while projecting themselves as opponents.

"So far, they have maintained friendly relations covertly. In fact, the CPI(M) could rule Tripura for 25 years because of its understanding with the Congress," BJP state president Rajib Bhattacharjee alleged.

Chief Minister Manik Saha, who had been addressing public gatherings over the past few weeks, makes sure that he gives a list of achievements of the BJP government over the past five years at every such rally.

The party, which underwent a brand makeover from replacing the chief minister less than a year before the elections, had launched the statewide 'Jana Vishwas Yatra' recently to garner support, with Union Minister Amit Shah flagging it off.

Miss USA R'Bonney Gabriel wins Miss Universe competition

Louisiana, Jan 15 (AP):

R'Bonney Gabriel, a fashion designer, model and sewing instructor from Texas who competition officials said is the first Filipino American to win Miss USA, was crowned Miss Universe on Saturday night.

Gabriel closed her eyes and clasped hands with runner-up Miss Venezuela, Amanda Dudamel, at the moment of the dramatic reveal of the winner, then beamed after her name was announced.

Thumping music rang out, and she was handed a bouquet of flowers, draped in the winner's sash and crowned with a tiara on-stage at the 71st Miss Universe Competition, held in New Orleans.

The second runner-up was Miss Dominican Republic, Andreina Martinez.



Miss USA R'Bonney Gabriel reacts as she is crowned Miss Universe during the final round of the 71st Miss Universe Beauty Pageant, in New Orleans.

In the Q&A at the last stage of the competition for the three finalists, Gabriel was asked how she would work to demonstrate Miss Universe is "an empowering and progressive organization" if she were to win. "I would use it to be a transformational

leader," she responded, citing her work using recycled materials in her fashion design and teaching sewing to survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence. "It is so important to invest in others, invest in our community and use your unique

talent to make a difference," Gabriel continued. "We all have something special, and when we plant those seeds to other people in our life, we transform them and we use that as a vehicle for change."

According to Miss Universe, Gabriel is a former high school volleyball player and graduate of the University of North Texas. A short bio posted on the organization's website said she is also CEO of her own sustainable clothing line.

Nearly 90 contestants from around the world took part in the competition, organizers said, involving "personal statements, in-depth interviews and various categories including evening gown & swimwear." Miss Curacao, Gabriela Dos Santos, and Miss Puerto Rico, Ashley Carino, rounded out the top five finalists.

Asking for more loans from friendly countries is embarrassing, says Pak PM

Lahore, Jan 15 (PTI):

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that it was embarrassing for him to seek more loans from friendly countries, saying it was not a permanent solution for the cash-strapped country's economic challenges.

Addressing the passing out ceremony of probationary officers of the Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS) here in the capital of Punjab province on Saturday, Prime Minister Sharif regretted that during the past 75 years, different governments whether headed by political leadership or military dictators could not address the economic issues. Sharif said it really embarrassed him to ask for further loans while lauding the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the financial support, Geo News quoted him as saying. He said that seeking foreign



loans was not the right solution to address Pakistan's economic challenges as the loans would have to be eventually returned. The prime minister said that sustainable development goals (SDGs) could be achieved and foreign loans avoided had their "bus could have moved at a fast pace" and on the right track.

Pakistan is battling to fix its economic and political fissures amidst a parochial political rivalry

between former premier Imran Khan and the current government headed by Sharif. During Sharif's recent visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed announced a grant of a further USD 1 billion loan to Pakistan. Saudi Arabia and the UAE are the two key supporters of Pakistan who come to its rescue when the chips are down. The country faces a serious crisis as its foreign

reserves are down to USD 5.8 billion, the lowest since February 2014. The reserve includes deposits worth USD 5 billion from Saudi Arabia and China with specific conditions of use. Pakistan's economic situation is facing severe headwinds with inflation being forecast to stay high between 21-23 per cent and the country's fiscal deficit widening by more than 115 per cent in the first four months (July-October) of the current fiscal year.

The country with an economy of Rs 350 billion is in dire need of foreign aid to reduce its current account deficit as well as ensure enough reserves to meet its debt obligations.

Pakistan's economy has been on a downhill because of the political crisis, plummeting rupee, inflation which is at an unprecedented high, added to it last year's devastating floods, and a global energy crisis which has further worsened the situation.

Pakistan's Punjab Assembly dissolves; nominations for caretaker CM asked by Jan 17

Lahore, Jan 15 (PTI):

Pakistan's Punjab Assembly on Saturday evening stood dissolved after Punjab Governor Balighur Rehman refused to sign an advice of Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi.

Elahi on the "wish" of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf chairman Imran Khan on Thursday had sent the advice to dissolve the assembly. As the governor did not sign the dissolution summary, it stood dissolved 48 hours (Saturday evening) from the time the CM sent it to governor as

per the Constitution. The governor said in a tweet: "I have decided not to become part of the process leading to the dissolution of Punjab Assembly. I would rather let the Constitution and law take its own course. Doing so will not hamper any legal process as the Constitution clearly provides a way forward."

The governor also invited CM Elahi and Leader of the Opposition in the PA, Hamza Shahbaz (son of prime minister Shehbaz Sharif), to start the process of the appointment of the caretaker chief minister.

He asked them to submit their nominations by January 17.

Elahi, a joint candidate of ousted premier Imran Khan's party Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) and PML-Q, signed the dissolution of the PA summary hours after he managed to obtain a vote of confidence. Imran Khan said the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly will also be dissolved in a couple of days. The move is aimed at pushing the PMLN-led federal government to call snap polls. Khan says only fresh polls can steer the country out of economic crisis.

UN: Afghan bank's cash remarks misleading, unhelpful

Kabul, Jan 15 (AP):

The UN criticised Afghanistan's Taliban-controlled central bank for making "misleading and unhelpful" remarks about cash destined for humanitarian work.

It comes amid growing tension between the global body and the country's rulers over bans on female education and employment.

The UN uses the money mostly to provide millions of Afghans with critical humanitarian assistance, flying in cash because of banking disruptions since the Taliban seized power in August 2021.

Foreign aid stopped after the takeover. World governments imposed sanctions, halted bank transfers and froze billions more in Afghanistan's currency reserves, unwilling to work with the Taliban, given their rule in the late 1990s and their refusal to educate girls and allow women to work.

The Taliban have, in the last 18 months, barred females from education beyond sixth grade, including university, from public spaces and from most employment.

Most recently, they barred women from working at national and inter-

national non-governmental organisations.

That has drawn condemnation from the UN, aid agencies and foreign governments and raised concerns that Afghans will suffer and even die if female workers continue to be excluded from humanitarian work.

The Taliban show no signs of reversing these edicts, despite repeated calls to do so and visits from high-level UN and other foreign officials.

Their chief spokesman says authorities will not allow un-Islamic activities in Afghanistan and that politics should be kept out of humanitarian

aid. The UN in Afghanistan issued a statement late Saturday in response to a tweet from the Taliban-controlled central bank, which said a package of USD 40 million was deposited in a commercial bank in the Afghan capital, Kabul.

It posted a photo of wads of cash.

"Da Afghanistan Bank (the Afghan central bank) appreciates any principled move that will bring currency to the country and help the needy in the society," the tweet said.

But the UN said its cash is placed into designated accounts in a private bank

and distributed directly to its agencies and a small number of "approved and vetted" humanitarian partners in Afghanistan.

"None of the cash brought is deposited in the Central Bank of Afghanistan nor provided to the Taliban de facto authorities by the UN," the world body said in a statement.

"Announcements by non-UN entities about UN fund shipments are misleading and unhelpful."

The United Nations has flown in around USD 1.8 billion in funds for the UN and its partners to carry out their work since December 2021.

US CDC appoints Indian-origin Nirav Shah as second-in-command

Washington, Jan 15 (PTI):

Nirav D Shah, an Indian-origin epidemiologist, has been appointed Principal Deputy Director at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, making him the second-in-command at the national public health agency.

Shah, who is in his mid-forties, is currently the Director of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Shah will assume the new role, second in leadership under US CDC Director Rochelle Walensky, in March.

His appointment as Principal Deputy Director comes as part of a planned, broader overhaul



of that agency announced by the US CDC Director in August of last year.

Shah previously served as president of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials between March 2021 and September 2022, Politico newspaper reported.

Maine Governor Janet Mills in a statement said: "I take comfort, as Maine

people should, in knowing that the U.S. CDC and the American people at large will soon become the beneficiaries of his leadership. Dr. Shah, on behalf of the people of Maine, thank you from the bottom of my heart."

Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Commissioner Jeanne Lambrew appointed Director Shah to his current role as head of the Maine CDC in June of 2019, with the mission of rebuilding the agency and the State's public health infrastructure.

"Since his arrival in Maine before the pandemic, and every day throughout it, Dr. Shah has been a trusted advisor to me and

an extraordinary leader of the Maine CDC. But even more than that, he was a trusted advisor and a leader to the people of Maine during one of the greatest public health crises of our time," said Governor Mills.

"I strongly believe that Maine's nation-leading success in confronting the pandemic is due in large part to Dr. Shah's leadership, and there is no doubt in my mind that he saved the lives of many Maine people," Mills added.

Shah said he was sad to leave the Maine CDC.

"I'm thankful for the opportunity that Governor Mills and Commissioner (Jeanne) Lambrew provided me to serve the people of Maine," he said.

Storm-battered California gets more wind, rain and snow

Los Angeles (US), Jan 15 (AP):

Storm-battered California got more wind, rain and snow on Saturday, raising flooding concerns, causing power outages and making travel dangerous.

Bands of rain with gusty winds started in the north and spread south, with more storms expected to follow into early next week, the National Weather Service said.

More than 68,000 utility customers were without electricity on Saturday morning, a number that was cut by more than half during the afternoon, according to poweroutage.us.

Flood warnings were issued for the region north of San Francisco Bay, including Marin, Napa, Sonoma and Mendocino counties.

To the south, warnings



In an aerial view, a home is seen submerged in floodwater as the Salinas River begins to overflow its banks on in Salinas, California. Several atmospheric river events continue to pound California with record rainfall and high winds.

were posted for parts of counties including San Mateo and Santa Cruz, where the tiny community of Felton Grove along the San Lorenzo River was ordered evacuated.

An evacuation order also was issued for residents of the Wilton area in semirural southeast-

ern Sacramento County. Authorities cited the threat of flooding from the Cosumnes River.

The swollen Salinas River swamped farmland in Monterey County, and to the east, flood warnings were in effect for Merced County in the agricultural Central Valley, where

Gov. Gavin Newsom visited to take stock of storm problems.

"The reality is that this is just the eighth of what we anticipate will be nine atmospheric rivers - we're not done," Newsom said at a briefing with local leaders where he urged people to be vigilant about safety for the next 24 to 48 hours.

"This is happening all across California but I want to say ... you guys are disproportionately taking the brunt of it, and if you feel that way you're right," Newsom said.

President Joe Biden declared a major disaster in the state and ordered federal aid to supplement local recovery efforts in affected areas.

Slick roads, snow and whiteout conditions plagued highways through the Sierra Nevada.

Nepal PM Prachanda says he will visit India soon

Kathmandu, Jan 15 (PTI):

Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' has said that he will visit India soon on his first foreign trip after assuming the top executive post of the country for the third time.

The 68-year-old CPN-Maoist Centre leader, thought to be close to China, was sworn in as the Prime Minister for the third time on December 26 last year after he dramatically walked out of the pre-poll alliance led by the Nepali Congress and joined hands with opposition leader K P Sharma Oli.

"I will be visiting India soon," Prachanda told senior editors on Saturday during his first interaction with select journalists after winning the vote of confidence on Tuesday. He



said that preparations are going on at the diplomatic level for the same.

"The concerned embassies are making preparations for my visit," he told the journalists at Baluwatar, the official residence of the Prime Minister.

However, the Nepal government is yet to officially announce the Prime Minister's visit to India.

The date and itinerary of the visit are yet to be finalised.

"We are working towards finalising the date and detailed programmes as well as the agenda of the visit in coordination with our counterparts," an official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

"Visiting a neighbouring country by the Prime Minister after assuming the position is a normal process and internally we are always prepared for that," the official added. Prachanda had also paid official visits to India during his earlier tenures as the Prime Minister of Nepal.

In July last year, Prachanda visited India at the invitation of BJP President JP Nadda.

Nepali Prime Ministers traditionally choose New Delhi for their first foreign visit after being sworn-in. But Prachanda after being elected prime minister for

the first time in 2008 went off the beaten track to visit Beijing for the Olympics inaugural ceremony without first travelling to India.

He, however, in his second stint as a prime minister first travelled to India on a state visit in September, 2016.

Prachanda's visit will happen only after the election of the new President, two leaders of the CPN (Maoist Centre) who are familiar with the developments told. The Kathmandu Post newspaper. "However, if the Indian side insists on the visit before the new President is elected, the trip may even take place earlier," one of them said.

The presidential vote is due in February as the term of President Bidya Devi Bhandari expires in March-end.

Pak prez Alvi to ask PM Shehbaz Sharif to obtain vote of confidence: Imran Khan

Lahore, Jan 15 (PTI):

Pakistan's ousted prime minister Imran Khan has said President Arif Alvi will soon ask Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to face a vote of confidence, as he stepped up efforts to press the government for snap polls.

"Shehbaz Sharif tested us in Punjab and now it's his turn to prove whether he enjoys a majority in the National Assembly or not," Khan made these remarks during a media interaction here and also in an interview on Hum News TV on Saturday.

"In the first, Shehbaz will be tested for a trust vote... and later we have other plans for him," the chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf said, cit-



ing differences in the federal coalition as the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) threatened to quit over the issue of local body polls in Karachi and Hyderabad.

President Alvi belongs to Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the federal coalition is surviving on a very thin majority. MQM-P has seven members in the National Assembly, if it decides to quit the Shehbaz government can-

not survive.

Khan has already said that he will sacrifice both Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assemblies to push the federal government to announce snap polls. Khan says only fresh polls can steer the country out of the economic crisis.

The federal government, however, insists that general elections will be held after the completion of the tenure of the government in August.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's Punjab Assembly has automatically been dissolved on Saturday after the province's Governor Balighur Rehman refused to sign the summary sent by Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi to disband the provincial

legislature. Elahi, a joint candidate of ousted premier Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party and the PML-Q, signed the dissolution of the Punjab Assembly summary hours after he managed to obtain a vote of confidence.

Imran Khan said the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly will also be dissolved in a couple of days.

Khan was ousted from power in April last year through a vote of no-confidence.

Meanwhile, PML-N supreme leader Nawaz Sharif presided over a party meeting in Lahore on Saturday evening through a video link from London where he has been living in a self-exile since November 2019.



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Economic slowdown to haunt India the next two years

India would be going downhill for the next two years, if Global Economic Prospect just released by the World Bank is of any indication. GDPs for 2023 and 2024 have been revised down to 6.6 per cent and 6.1 per cent respectively, which are below 0.5 and 0.4 per cent compared to its earlier estimates made in June 2022. Obviously, it would push up the poverty level, especially the extreme poverty level in the country, which would remain a major concern, especially at a time of rising joblessness. South Asia continues to be adversely affected by spillovers from the invasion of Ukraine, rising global interest rates, and weakening growth in key trading partners. Regional growth is estimated to have slowed to 6.1 per cent in 2022 and is projected to slow further to 5.5 per cent in 2023 – below previous projections on global spillovers – before picking up to 5.8 per cent in 2024. It is worth mentioning that the region's average growth during the first two decades of this century was 6.5 per cent. Risks to the outlook continue to be tilted to the downside, including further pressure from tightening global financial conditions; higher-than-projected inflation leading to lower real incomes and spending; and the reemergence of financial sector stress. Dwindling international reserves and rising sovereign spreads increase the risk of more economies falling into crisis. Three countries in the region – Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka – have already witnessed a substantial rise in poverty led by deterioration in economic conditions. Many households are consuming less nutritious food, and rolling electricity blackouts have become common as fuel has been rationed. Widening external current accounts deficits and a combination of limited foreign exchange buffers have encouraged Bangladesh and Pakistan to approach International Monetary Fund (IMF) for help in bolstering foreign exchange reserves and mitigating external financing pressures. In parallel, governments of the region have tightened fiscal policies and, in some cases, imposed import controls and food export bans. In India, which accounts for three-fourths of the region's output, growth expanded by 9.7 per cent on an annual basis in the first half of the current fiscal 2022-23, reflecting strong private consumption and fixed investment growth. However, consumer inflation spent most of the last year above the Reserve Bank of India's upper tolerance limit of 6 per cent, prompting the policy rate to be raised by 2.25 percentage points between May and December. India's goods trade deficit has more than doubled since 2019, and was \$24 billion in November, with deficits for crude petroleum and petroleum products to the tune of \$7.6 billion and other commodities, for example, ores and minerals at \$4.2 billion, accounted to the widening of the deficits. Between June and December, region's currencies depreciated against the US dollar by an average of 10 per cent above the emerging developing economies (EMDE) average. In conjunction with rising global commodity prices, consumer price inflation has continued to rise, and one-year-ahead inflation expectations remain well above central bank targets. India used its international reserves at \$550 billion in November, which was 16 per cent of its GDP, to curb excess exchange rate volatility helping to limit Rupee depreciation, and its sovereign spread has remained broadly stable at 1.4 per cent in December, similar to average levels in the five years before the pandemic. In spite of falling growth rate, World Bank finds the region's GDP growth still robust, which reflect robust growth rate in India, Maldives, and Nepal. However, the deteriorating global environment will weigh on investment in the region. For India, the outlook says, the slowdown in global economy and rising uncertainty will weigh on export and investment growth. Government has increased infrastructure spending and various business facilitation measures, however, will crowd-in private investment and support expansion of manufacturing capacity. World Bank has projected to slow India's growth in 2023-24 to 6.6 per cent before falling back toward its potential rate of just above 6 per cent. However, India is expected to be the fastest growing economy of the seven largest EMDEs. The outlook has pointed out that countries in the regions are also turning to more restrictive fiscal and monetary policies to address rising domestic and external imbalances and financing pressures at a time when growth in already slowing globally and output gaps are widening in several regional economies. In India, monetary and fiscal tightening over the forecast horizon is expected to be less pronounced than in much of the rest of the region, as adequate policy buffers have provided breathing room to support the ongoing recovery and boost public investment. However, risks to the outlook remain predominantly to the downside, including those related to the repercussions of the invasion of Ukraine, tightening global financing conditions, legacies from the pandemic, and country-specific vulnerabilities. Potential for crises is also rising.

THE FUTURE OF HEALTHCARE

Dr Krishna Kumar, Vepakomma

The increasing rise in chronic illnesses such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease, particularly in industrialized nations, has dramatically increased the demand for smart healthcare solutions in recent decades. Hospitals are looking for innovative strategies to improve the services provided in a more cost-effective manner while maintaining the quality and safety as a top priority as patient demands keep rising. The concept of a "smart hospital" is currently popular in healthcare, driven by information technology (IT) and artificial intelligence (AI) (AI). Consequently, smart hospitals make extensive use of modern technologies. A wide range of emerging technologies, including telemedicine, genomics, augmented/virtual reality, 3-D printing, precision medicine, robots, and artificial intelligence, can be effectively incorporated into healthcare delivery from the perspective of the supply chain. Smart hospitals provide seamless technology integration to support the delivery of healthcare in order to provide the connected care that patients expect from top institutions. Smart hospitals use AI (Artificial Intelligence) and analytics to translate data from devices and workflows into useful insights using their connected infrastructure. This data-driven methodology allows for quicker, more accurate diagnosis, better patient care, and more informed decision-making. Factors such as technological advancements, increased healthcare spending, a sedentary lifestyle, more awareness, and a high acceptance rate of new technologies are driving the growth of the global smart hospital market. Because of the development of smart hospitals, the entire healthcare delivery system is transforming, and this transformation will accelerate over the next few years.

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

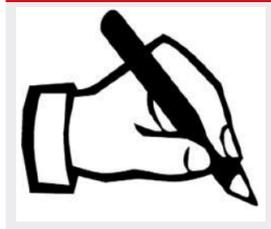
CAMEL FESTIVAL



Bikaner: A tourist with Rajasthani artist performs dance during the International Camel Festival, in Bikaner, Sunday, Jan. 15.

A BUDGET FOR BHARAT

ANIL PADMANABHAN



This year's Union Budget—the 11th in a row from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA)—is being presented in the backdrop of exceptional circumstances. Not only is a deeply divided world facing an unprecedented economic challenge that is being compounded by climate change, this is also the last regular Budget ahead of the general election next year. Ever since the covid-19 pandemic struck in 2020, the world has been subjected to repeated shocks of unprecedented magnitude—the Russia-Ukraine conflict, followed by the ratcheting up of interest rates by the United States Federal Reserve, and most recently the fresh surge in the covid-19 pandemic in China. The combined impact of the pandemic, geopolitical tensions, drying up of global liquidity and the commodity price shocks has brought the world—including the United States, the largest economy—dangerously close to a recession. However, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, will have cause for cheer. India continues to challenge this grim global narrative with its economy poised to log an impressive 6.5-7 percent growth in 2022-23. Even better, the Finance Minister has sufficient

cause to believe that this is largely the outcome of the policy playbook the NDA adopted since it assumed power in 2014.

The New Playbook

Since it assumed power nine years ago, the NDA has sought to pivot the Indian economy. These policy changes have been appreciated and validated most recently, by the global investment banks, World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. It began with the rollout of the Goods and Services Tax (GST)—the single biggest indirect tax reform—which, for the first time, economically unified the country. The GST principle, 'One Nation, One Tax', made the economy more efficient by dramatically reducing friction. Not surprisingly, monthly gross GST collections now average over Rs 1 lakh crore—in November the accruals to the exchequer was Rs 1.45 lakh crore.

To incentivise and revive private sector investments the union government slashed corporate tax rates to 22 percent from the prevailing 30 percent; in addition, it fixed a lower rate of 15% for companies incorporated after 2019—this scheme is extended till 2023. Similarly, the passage of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) in 2016, helped with the mitigation of the legacy bad debts of commercial banks. According to the Economic Survey of 2021-22, financial creditors recovered Rs 2.55 lakh crore, of the Rs 7.94 lakh crore debt owed to banks, at the end of 30 September 2021. This repair of the financial sector, which also included capitalisation of bank balance sheets, restored the ability of commercial banks to lend.

The NDA also undertook a major ideological reset after it formalised the policy of privatisation—the

most recent example was the sale of Air India to the Tata group. Simultaneously the union government has taken to monetisation of idle assets owned by the public sector to generate funds for big-ticket Greenfield infrastructure projects—the underlying strategy is to crowd-in private investment.

The pursuit of fiscal prudence, unlocking of financial resources and buoyancy in tax collections has provided the wherewithal to the FM to fund infrastructure projects and the covid-19 relief packages. More importantly, it is now evident that the structural reforms which improved economic efficiency, proved to be a buffer against the economic devastation unleashed by the pandemic.

Digital Public Goods

The Indian economy also received an unexpected boost from the rapid rollout of Digital Public Goods (DPGs) like Aadhaar, Unified Payments Interface (UPI), CoWin, Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), Account Aggregators, Health Stack and Open Credit Enablement Network (OCEN), over the last decade. These DPGs have been created as an open digital ecosystem, which enables the private sector to use these digital rails to create innovations in payments, health care and so on. At the same time, by dramatically lowering the cost of entry, these DPGs accelerated formalisation of the economy and democratised access to identity, covid-19 jobs, payments, credit and more recently e-commerce.

These public digital rails have also been used by the union government to accelerate the rollout of the Direct Benefits Transfer, estimated to be cumulatively over Rs25 lakh crore. The resulting disintermediation has also prevented

leakages and savings to the exchequer upwards of Rs 2 lakh crore. Further, these beneficiaries have become key stakeholders in the Indian economy—where previously they were outside looking in.

Pandemic Blues

The onset of the covid-19 pandemic, consequent lockdown of the economy caused immense distress to both lives and livelihoods, not just in India but the entire world. Unlike other nations though, India did not opt for a fiscal stimulus to revive the economy. Instead it pursued a calibrated strategy, wherein it initially focused on saving lives and then gradually put the spotlight on livelihoods—even while it bolstered the material basis of the vulnerable segments by rolling out the free food grain scheme for 80 crore people; which has now been extended till December 2023.

While this extraordinary social safety net together with the big push for providing electricity, drinking water, sanitation and housing for all, succeeded in mitigating damage to those at the bottom of the pyramid, the structural reforms has made the economy more efficient. The impact is yet to manifest itself as the Indian economy was busy repairing the damage caused to the banking sector by an unprecedented surge in bad debts. Further, the back-to-back setbacks beginning with the pandemic, dampened the recovery process. However, with these one-off shocks fading the economy is poised for a rebound, providing a healthy backdrop for this year's Budget.

Over to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. (Anil Padmanabhan is a freelance journalist who tweets @capitalcalculus.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Blindness is a limit!

A lunatic also laughs to hear of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Saumitra Khan's saying that Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi was a reincarnation of Swami Vivekananda. But the people wonder how the MP Khan has forgotten that under PM Modi's nose more than 1300 butchered in 2002 Gujarat carnage, and not yet apologized. Whereas, Swami Vivekananda believed "Jibe prem kore jei jon, sei jon sebiche ishwar" (Those who serve others serve the Lord in the true sense). Agreeing as a PM of the country he tried to change his image through various government schemes (particularly two-thirds population of the country are served with almost free ration), even though such excessively admiring comments as these tend to create anti-Modi sentiments. Blindness is a limit! Mr. Khan should not forget that through his statement he not only insulted Swami Vivekananda, but a much bigger insult to PM Modi.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee, Faridabad

Far reaching SC decisions

In one day, two far reaching decisions by Supreme Court and one is related to hate speech and second is related to TRP rating of electronic media and both matters are causing concerns. On hate speech Supreme Court had already clarified that it can not frame any law but can only reevaluate. The Central Government had informed the Supreme Court that it intend to amend the law to deal with the menace. We are contemplating a separate amendment to the Criminal Procedure Code. That is the stand of the Union of India. The views of the stakeholders have been sought regarding amendments to the criminal laws, Additional Solicitor General of India KM Nataraj told a Bench led by Justice KM Joseph while hearing petitions against hate speech. However, terming it a legislative process, the Bench which also included Justice BV Nagarathna; said ultimately it was for the Parliament to decide with regard to the media. Nataraj said TV channels were following self-regulation and unless something serious affecting the national interest or security the Centre would not step in. Recording the Centre's stand on the issue, the Bench issued notice on an application seeking to make all states as parties to the case. The Bench disapproved of the manner in which TV channels conducted their debates and pulled up News Broadcasters and Digital Association (NBDA) for failing to ensure absence of bias. "Everything is driven by TRP. TV Channels are competing against each other. They sensationalise things, serve an agenda. You create divisions in society because of the visual element. The visual medium can influence you much more than a newspaper," said Justice Joseph.

Yash Pal Ralhan, Jalandhar

Far Right Coup Attempt In Brazil Sends Ominous Signal To Latin American Left

By Satyaki Chakraborty

The storming of the Congress building and the Presidential Palace in Brazil by the far right supporters of the defeated president Jair Bolsonaro on January 8 is a wake up call to the progressives of Latin America to unite for fighting the right offensive which has been launched in the countries that have elected the left wing presidents in the last two years. On Sunday night, thousands of supporters of Jair Bolsonaro stormed Congress, the Presidential Palace, and the Supreme Court in Brasilia. Descending on the country's capital, the far-right mob called for the resignation of the newly elected president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, and for the intervention of the military to halt the peaceful and democratic transfer of power.

The attempted coup drew immediate parallels to the January 6 insurrection in the United States two years ago, when Trump supporters invaded Capitol Hill. Both had been fueled by widespread misinformation that the elections were rigged and by a dangerous far-right leader who inspired their supporters into authoritarian action. The difference is that while the defeated Donald Trump was in the White

House on January 6, 2021, on January 8, 2023, Bolsonaro was holidaying in his comfort villa in Florida. Though he was forced to say that he did not inspire the storming of the government buildings by his supporters, his statement had a rider, the protesters had right to demonstrate.

The entire development starting with the mobilization before the military headquarter and asking the army top brass to remove Lula who took over as the new president only on January 1 had so much signs of anti-democratic behavior that all the heads of western democracies, even the far right Italian prime minister condemned the storming and asked the protesters to abide by the electoral verdict. US president Joe Biden came out strongly against the far right insurrection attempts saying that the electoral verdict had to be respected. He extended his support to the president Lula.

Importantly, most of the heads of the left wing governments of Latin America came out in solidarity with the president Lula and extended their full support to the Brazilian leader in fighting the far right forces which are aiming to destroy the democratic fabric in the Latin American region. They took the January 8 coup attempt as a seri-

ous development in Latin American polity since last year the elected president Pedro Castillo was removed from Peru and earlier Argentinian vice president Fernandez Kitchener was arrested for corruption charges. Though Lula's position is different, and both Castillo and Kitchener made some mistakes, still the moot point is that the far right is attacking the Left in a systematic manner and they are becoming more and more aggressive after their defeats.

As Left wing Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn candidly says the January 8 coup attempt does not just strike fear into the hearts of those who remember the scenes in Washington. It strikes fear into the hearts of those who live with the memory of fascism, authoritarianism, and militarism in their own land. Not least because Bolsonaro himself has openly expressed support for Brazil's twenty-one-year dictatorship, telling an interviewer that "you'll never change anything in this country through voting. Nothing. Absolutely nothing." Bolsonaro denies any role in the insurrection. However, by frequently raising doubts about the integrity of the election and by refusing to attend Lula's inauguration (breaking with custom for the outgoing president

to hand the sash to the incoming president), there is no doubt that Bolsonaro's most extreme supporters have been emboldened by his contempt for democratic processes.

In Latin America, though in the latest phase, the left leaning presidents were elected in a number of countries, the national assemblies have still been dominated by the rightwing and other anti-left forces. So it has been a Herculean task for many presidents to get their programmes approved by the parliamentarians. That is causing delay leading to the frustrations among the common people who are looking for a big change. The insurrection attempt is also a reminder of the additional barriers that left-wing governments must overcome to achieve real change. Lula campaigned on a platform of social justice, indigenous rights, and an end to deforestation. The vested interests can not wait for the Brazilian president to consolidate. They are rallying behind the deposed president Bolsonaro who still represents the main opposition leader of the combined right. The need is therefore to mobilise every section of the anti-right population of Brazil – trade unions, students, civil society and all parties having confidence in transfor-

mation in favour of people's programme to support the Lula government. The task of the combined Left has become tougher.

As the political observers in Brazil mention the coup attempt, is not just about Lula, nor even the millions who voted for him. It's about the right of the Brazilian people to live in a free, fair and peaceful society, and a right not to live in fear that the violent and bloody dictatorship will return. Those who stormed Congress did not just launch an assault on Lula and his supporters. They launched an assault on democracy and on the Brazilian masses. That is why Lula's present battle to protect his government is not just his own, it is the battle of the entire Latin American left wing governments and the masses supporting them. It is the battle in which the left wing people and the other forces who believe in democracy, have to rally on a common goal. The Mexican president Obrador earlier emphasized that Latin American nations have to be have a common perspective on their polity and development and fight jointly those forces who want to block the progress in the continent. After coup attempt in Brazil, this is the need of the hour.

BRIEF

Just Dial

New Delhi: Local search platform Just Dial has reported over three-fold jump in its consolidated net profit at Rs 75.32 crore in the third quarter that ended December 31, 2022. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 19.39 crore in the October-December quarter a year ago, Just Dial said in a regulatory filing. Just Dial's net revenue from operations was up 39.32 per cent to Rs 221.37 crore during the quarter under review as against Rs 158.89 crore of the corresponding quarter last year.

Flybig

New Delhi: Regional carrier Flybig on Sunday started service from Itanagar to Guwahati. The carrier has commenced flight from Hollongi in Arunachal Pradesh to Guwahati in Assam. "Itanagar is the 10th destination on Flybig network; while the third destination in Arunachal Pradesh alone. Flybig also flies six days a week to Tezu and seven days to Pasighat in Arunachal Pradesh from Guwahati," it said in a release. The direct morning flight from Itanagar to Guwahati will be operated on all days except Wednesday.

Liquor makers

New Delhi: The Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC) has written to the Delhi Government seeking removal of rules that allegedly discriminate against Indian-made products and promote imports in the forthcoming excise policy for 2023-24. Suggesting measures for the incorporation in the forthcoming excise policy for the next financial year, the representative body of the Indian alcoholic beverage manufacturers urged for improvement in norms of ease of doing business, simplification of new product launch process and digitization of all operational processes.

IT biggies

New Delhi: India's IT services heavyweights delivered between 14-20 per cent on-year growth in topline for December quarter, as they raised guard on global uncertainties and choppy verticals, but remained hopeful that costs as well as business considerations will drive tech demand. The tech earnings season began with large IT companies - Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Infosys, Wipro and HCL Technologies - declaring their Q3 report card this week, amid analysts' gloomy prognosis around slow-down in advanced economies and fear of geopolitical flare-ups.

Business quiz

Lucknow: The Uttar Pradesh government will organise UP GIS 23 Headliner Business Quiz competition on February 4-5 in the run-up to the Global Investors Summit. The quiz will be held at the Indira Gandhi Pratishthan, Lucknow, an official statement said here. The competition has three different categories - Business Quiz, India Quiz and India Quiz (School). The winner in each category will get cash prize of up to Rs 80,000.

IIFCL gives wings to aviation sector: MD

Extends Rs 6,630 crore loans for development of airports

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

To support the massive growth in the aviation sector, the India Infrastructure Finance Company Limited (IIFCL) has extended a credit of Rs 6,630 crore for the development of six major airports in the country and looks forward to increasing its exposure in the coming years, said its managing director P R Jaishankar.

Bullish on the growth of the aviation sector in the country, he said, the IIFCL also given in-principle approval of Rs 638 crore for the development of a greenfield airport in Andhra Pradesh.

Over the past few years, India has seen massive growth in the airport sector, with increasing invest-



ments from both government and private sector, thanks to a rising proportion of middle-income households, infrastructure build-up at leading airports and supportive policy framework. "With an aim to finance development of world class airport infrastructure in India, IIFCL has, till date, sanctioned Rs 6,630 crore to six major airports in India in Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Navi Mumbai, Noida (Jewar) and the newly developed Manohar International Airport in Goa,"

Jaishankar told PTI. IIFCL is present in almost all major airports of the country, he said. "These airports are of national importance and have been facilitating and improving connectivity across the nation. We are committed to supporting the government in its mission to improve connectivity for the masses and lower down the logistics cost to benefit the economy at large," he said.

He further said, IIFCL will continue to extend its support to develop world class airport infrastructure in India and exploring opportunities in funding the greenfield airport projects, as well as Maintenance, Repairs and Overhaul (MRO) facilities under PPP mode by way of term loan, subscription to bonds, refinancing, or credit enhancement etc.

Highlighting the importance of the airport sector, Jaishankar said it holds

the potential to provide a huge positive impact on the economy, with an economic multiplier of 3.1 and employment multiplier of 6.

To meet the growing demand for air travel in India, he said, it has become imperative to increase the capacity of airport infrastructure.

According to reports, investments worth over Rs 85,000 crore are in the pipeline for airport infrastructure in India during FY23 FY27.

This includes ongoing capacity expansion at major private airports, investments by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) of Rs 25,000 crore for development of AAI-operated airports, around Rs 30,000 - 35,000 crore is 21 new greenfield airports across the country and about Rs 17,000 crore by the Adani Group towards development of six airports acquired from AAI.

BMW sees huge growth potential in India

Mumbai, Jan 15 (PTI):



German luxury carmaker BMW is increasing its focus on India, buoyed by the best-ever annual sales in 2022 as it sees "huge growth potential for market leadership" here given the low penetration.

Driven by the highest ever number of launches (26), and pent-up demand arising from the pandemic-induced lockdowns, BMW India sold 35 per cent more cars (BMW and Minis combined) in 2022 at 11,981 units (of which 11,268 were BMWs), making it the highest ever deliveries in its history since its entry in 2007.

Its two-wheeler brand Motorrad also had its best-ever sales delivering 7,282 units, a full 40 per cent growth on-year. Though India is likely to overtake Japan to become the third largest auto market in the world after China and the US in 2022 selling more than 4.25 million units, there is nothing to write home about the luxury seg-

ment which is just about 1 per cent. Of this, the car volume stood at 3.8 million in 2022, excluding the units sold by luxury carmakers Mercedes, BMW and Volvo, according to data shared by industry body SIAM last week.

"I am happy that in 2022 India became one of our fastest growing markets in terms of volumes clocking the best-ever sales since our entry in 2007 and growth rates for all our brands here. I am pretty confident that India will continue to surprise us in 2023 as well," Jean-Philippe Parain, senior vice-president for Asia Pacific, Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa at the BMW Group, told PTI.

Despite such record numbers, he said "India is not among the top 10 markets for us globally. But it has huge potential for faster and higher growth and become a lead market for us." He did not offer a timeline for the same.

When it comes to volumes, "India volume has never been so high and so is our optimism, which comes from the strong fundamentals of the very resilient economy, pro-growth policies of the government and the conducive regulatory environment," Parain said.

To build on the record growth, BMW has lined up as many as 18 launches for 2023 across its three brands the mother brand BMW, the Mini and the bike brand Motorrad. Parain said, adding three of the new launches will be electric to further build on its market leadership here. It already has three models on the road, making it the largest player in the luxe EV space.

Repos expects to grow three-fold this fiscal to Rs 185 cr; raise Rs 300 crore

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

Ratan Tata-backed energy distribution startup Repos is expected to grow by close to three-fold to Rs 185 crore in the current fiscal on account of increased traction for its service among business-to-business clients, a top official of the firm said.

Repos Energy founder and CVO Aditi Bhosale Walunj told PTI at the Auto Expo 2023 that the company is in the process of raising Rs 300 crore to fund expansion of business across India as well as a platform to offer carbon-neutral fuels such as ethanol and electric vehicle chargers.

"We have been fortunate

enough to have Mr Ratan Tata as our initial investor. Last fiscal year we did business of Rs 65 crore. Our business has been growing multifold. This fiscal we expect our top line to be around Rs 185 crore," Walunj said.

She said that the company's fuel distribution platform is mainly built around the delivery of diesel but it is now adding new fuels to the platforms to make it available at the doorsteps of end consumers with the help of technology. "Like ATMs, we are providing mobile fuel stations. It is helpful for enterprises to get fuel at the doorstep, check fuel theft, monitor fuel consumption etc. We are now

present in 280 cities across India where we have deployed over 2,000 mobile fuel stations. Now we are in the process of raising Rs 300 crore which we will use to further expand our presence and develop technology for the distribution of carbon neutral fuels," Walunj said.

Repos recently onboarded management expert Ram Charan on its advisory board for mentoring the company towards growth path. With 40 years of experience, Charan has been a consultant to global organisations like Toyota, GE, Bank of America, Honeywell, Aditya Birla Group, Novartis, Fast Retailing (Uniqlo), and Matrix.

India's Russian oil imports top 1 mn barrels a day in Dec

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):



India's import of crude oil from Russia increased further in December 2022, topping 1 million barrels per day for the first time ever as Moscow remained its top oil supplier for the third month in a row, according to data from energy cargo tracker Vortexa.

Russia, which made up for just 0.2 per cent of all crude oil India imported in the year to March 31, 2022, supplied 1.19 million bpd in December.

This was higher than 909,403 bpd crude oil India imported from Russia in November and 935,556 bpd in October 2022. The previous record for most crude oil imports from Russia was in June 2022 when India bought 942,694 bpd, accord-

ing to Vortexa. Russia, which in October 2022 for the first time surpassed traditional sellers Iraq and Saudi Arabia to take the No.1 spot, now makes up for 25 per cent of all oil imported by India. The imports peaked as a price cap was agreed upon by the EU on Russian seaborne oil. Russian oil is available at much lower than USD 60 per

barrel cap agreed, industry sources said. India is the world's third-largest oil-consuming and importing nation. It imports 85 per cent of its crude oil needs. Crude oil is converted into fuels like petrol and diesel at refineries. According to Vortexa, an energy intelligence firm, India imported 803,228 bpd of oil from Iraq in December and 718,357 bpd from Saudi

Arabia. The United Arab Emirates overtook the US to become India's fourth largest supplier, selling 323,811 bpd oil in December 2022. The United States supplied 322,015 bpd, down from 405,525 bpd in November 2022. India's appetite for Russian oil swelled ever since it started trading on discount as the West shunned it to punish Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine.

According to S&P Global Commodity Insights, India is aiming to pursue an oil import policy that will witness robust inflows from both the US and Russia in the foreseeable future, while stepping up efforts to diversify the crude basket even further to cushion the impact of any supply shock going ahead.

Govt extends tenure of Bank of Baroda MD Sanjiv Chadha

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

The government has extended the tenure of managing director (MD) and CEO of Bank of Baroda (BoB) Sanjiv Chadha for about five months till June 30.

The order dated January 14, 2023 comes ahead of his three-year tenure that ends on January 19. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the proposal of the Department of Financial Services for extending the term of Chadha till June 30, 2023, when he attains 60 years, the retirement age, sources said.

Meanwhile, the Financial Institutions Bureau (FSIB), the headhunter for directors of state-owned banks and fi-



ancial institutions, on Saturday recommended elevation of Executive Director (ED) Debadatta Chand as managing director of Bank of Baroda. Besides, the Bureau recommended Union Bank of India ED Rajneesh Karnatak for the position of MD & CEO in Bank of India. The final decision on the FSIB recommendation would be taken by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Coal India should aim at providing electricity to nation at 'just price': Chairman

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):



State-owned CIL chief Pramod Agrawal has said that the coal behemoth should aim at providing electricity to the county at "just price" as 80 per cent of the company's supplies is directed towards coal-based power plants.

Coal India (CIL) accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal supply and three quarters of the country's power generation is coal-based. In a recent message to its employees, Agrawal who is the chairman and managing director of CIL said that "our role is to supply assured energy at affordable costs".

Stating that as there is a sizeable scope for energy expansion in the country for the next few decades, he said that the company has a

greater responsibility to shoulder. "Aim for even loftier heights in the last quarter of the financial year and make FY23 momentous by shattering the annual targets as well. And, not rest there. Once we achieve 700 MT production target that should be a benchmark base for further growth," he said. Agrawal asked the employees to make a concerted effort in meeting the country's energy and developmental goals with unrelenting com-

mitment. "All the three performance parameters - production of 479 MTs (million tonnes), supplies of 508 MTs and OBR of 1,155 M, Cu.M, till December, were ahead of the respective progressive targets. What makes this milestone special is the formidable scale of targets, which we were able to breach. However, much more needs to be done," the message said.

CIL will achieve 1 billion tonnes of coal production target by 2025-26 as against the earlier timeline of 2023-24 in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Coal output by CIL in current financial year is expected to be 700 MT and there would be additional output of 200 MT from other sources, the coal ministry had earlier said.

FPIs withdraw Rs 15,000 cr from equities in 2 weeks of Jan

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

Foreign investors offloaded around Rs 15,000 crore worth of Indian equities in the first two weeks of January amid risks of Covid in some parts of the world and recession worries in the US.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have been adopting a cautious stance towards Indian equity markets for the past few weeks.

Going forward, FPIs flows are expected to remain volatile even as inflation continued its downward trajectory both globally and domestically, Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd, said.

According to the data with the depositories, FPIs

have made a net withdrawal of Rs 15,068 crore from the Indian equity markets during January 2-13. Only two of the 10 trading days in January to date saw net purchases.

This came following a net inflow of Rs 11,119 crore in December and Rs 36,239 crore in November.

Overall, FPIs pulled out Rs 1.21 lakh crore from the Indian equity markets in 2022 on aggressive rate hikes 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 FPIs in terms of flow and withdrawal from equities comes following a net investment in the preceding three years.

AUTO EXPO 2023



People gather at the Auto Expo 2023, in Greater Noida.

Toyota to roll out products based on multiple technologies to cater to varied customer segments

Greater Noida, Jan 15 (PTI):

Toyota Kirloskar Motor aims to roll out products based on multiple clean technologies while also reinforcing its internal combustion engine based model range to cater to all kinds of emerging customer requirements in the country, according to company's Managing Director Masakazu Yoshimura.

Terming India as one of the most important markets for Toyota globally, he noted that the automaker will keep rolling out products based on eco-friendly technologies considering various factors such as the country's energy mix, consumer needs and infra-



structure readiness.

The automaker, while acknowledging the government support in manufacturing in terms of various schemes like Faster

Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles (FAME II) and Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes, also pitched for a

carbon-based taxation system. In an interaction with PTI on the sidelines of the Auto Expo here, Yoshimura noted that the automaker is conscious of the fact that a huge amount of forex goes into the import of fossil fuels.

"So that is perhaps one of the biggest problems for the country. So, we are trying to do whatever possible to support what the government wants to solve," he stated.

He further said: "We are only a manufacturing, sales and marketing entity. So the area is quite limited but what we can do with new technology, new products, that's perhaps the area we can focus on."

Sidharth Malhotra shares his fond memories with cast of 'Mission Majnu'

Actor Sidharth Malhotra, who went through a host of workshops and conducted rigorous research to understand the psyche of a RAW agent 'Mission Majnu', has shared his fond memories with the movie cast.

Netflix's 'Mission Majnu', is a film inspired by true events, in which Sidharth Malhotra will be seen uncovering one of India's most important missions in the 1970s alongside Rashmika Mandanna, Kumud Mishra and Sharib Hashmi and Shantanu Bagchi.

Sidharth Malhotra said, "I have always been in awe of their work and watched almost every movie they have been a part of. Kumud sir is extremely chatty on set and the way he slipped in and out of his character the minute we were in action was very intriguing. I personally feel like he had the best character arc in the film and I'm really excited to see what the viewers feel about it."

"Sharib is extremely entertaining on and off camera and not only is he an excellent actor, but also a

great singer. I am extremely glad I got to work with both of them!"

On set, Sidharth built a great rapport with the cast and crew of Mission Majnu and had one of the best and most memorable shooting experience.

On working with Rashmika Mandanna and Shantanu Bagchi, Sidharth said, "Shantanu has made his debut with Mission Majnu and I've been in awe of him seeing his sincerity towards his work. We used to constantly keep pulling his leg for having a little diary where he would sketch every single shot of the film. He is an extremely visual director and I love that about him."

"Rashmika and I had such an effortless friendship on set and I would love to work with her again. She is a fitness freak and we made our own makeshift gym on set to workout together in between shots. I am really happy she played the role of Amrin and cannot wait to see the viewers' reaction to our pairing."

The espionage-thriller 'Mission Majnu' is set to drop on Netflix on January 20.

John Legend, wife Chrissy Teigen are proud parents once again, welcome third baby

Grammy winner John Legend and his wife Chrissy Teigen's family just got a little bigger as the couple welcomed another baby.

The baby was born on Friday (pacific standard time), the proud father confirmed hours after his child's arrival, reports People magazine. Legend, 43, told a crowd at a private concert that they welcomed "the little baby."

"What a blessed day," he said. The singer added that while he "didn't get a lot of sleep" he "feels energized" after spending "a lot of time" at the hospital. Attendees of the special event immediately headed to social media to share the big baby news.

"@johnlegend just told us he had a baby this



morning," one concert-goer wrote, quoted by People. The birth of their baby comes after the couple experienced a heartbreaking pregnancy loss in October 2020. The couple is already parents to son Miles Theodore, a lit-

tle over 4 years in age, and daughter, Luna Simone, 6-years old.

Speaking with People in March, the multi-hyphenate talked about his family's preparation for their new addition. "We're all excited," Legend said,

"and, you know, my kids are old enough to really be aware of what's happening, so they're really anticipating having a new sibling in their lives. And I think they'll be good at being a big sister and big brother."

Actors share fondest Kite Flying memories

Makar Sankranti, also known as the Kite festival, is celebrated across India with much fanfare. People fly kites and marks the arrival of spring. This year, &TV artists (including Aayudh Bhanushali (Krishna, Doosri Maa), Yogesh Tripathi (Daroga Hattu Singh, Hattu Ki Ultan Paltan), and Shubhangi Atre (Angoori Bhabhi, Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai)) share their kite flying experiences and memories during this auspicious festival.

Shubhangi Atre, essaying Angoori Bhabhi in &TV show Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai, says, "During Makar Sankranti, our whole family gather in my hometown Indore. We prepare the special festival meal called Sankranti Bhoj. We also give out small gifts, such as til-gur ke laddoo, fruits, dry khichadi, etc., to the poor. I enjoy kite-flying a lot as well. We organize a small competition which



brings us all together and is great fun. During this time, at least one stray kite would find its way to my terrace. Whenever a kite is cut loose, it falls to the ground, and I and my friends just rush toward the falling kite like kids. We also spend hours trying to resurrect kites which are cut loose with the hope that it might fly once again and challenge other kites in the sky. For us, kite becomes a symbol of inspiration and hope to restore the lost glory.

Why Anil Kapoor loves working in ensemble projects

Bollywood actor Anil Kapoor, who is set to play a powerful philanthropist in the upcoming streaming series 'The Night Manager', loves working with an ensemble cast. Over the years, Anil has starred in several ensemble films like 'Salaam-e-Ishq', 'Humko Deewana Kar Gaye', 'Darna Zaroori Hai', 'Racoori Hai', 'Racoori franchise and 'Dil Dhadakane Do'.



Sharing what he loves most while doing ensemble projects, the actor said: "When you're working on a show for so long, you invariably create a lot of memories and form a lot of bonds. We have our internal jokes which will remain internal, we shared a lot of laughs and some emotional moments as well. I really enjoyed working with the cast and crew, Aditya, Sobhita, Sandeep, Priyanka, Saswata Chatterjee, Tillotama Shome and Ben Jasper." He said further: "Everyone was fantastic! When you spend more than a year together telling a story then there will be a lot of fun and emotional moments, there will be a lot of anger, sometimes frustration and sometimes jokes flying around. Overall it was

a very enriching and creatively satisfying experience." Produced by The Ink Factory and Banijay Asia, created and directed by Sandeep Modi and co-directed by Priyanka Ghosh, 'The Night Manager' is a high-octane thriller wrapped in lavish drama and picturesque sights, and also stars Aditya Roy Kapur. The series will soon bow on Disney+ Hotstar.

Actor Sai Ketan Rao unveils secrets about his new upcoming show

'Mehndi Hai Rachne Wali' a hit show from Star Plus, 'Three Half Bottles' from Zee 5 and famous Telugu feature film 'Pelli Kuturu Party' fame Sai Ketan Rao stated that his upcoming television show is a story spinning in Amritsar, Punjab and has a love-revenge drama in which he is playing the role of the main lead character named 'Raunak Reddy' who is having two cultures with him where one half is of Delhi and another half is of Hyderabad.

The show is been shot in Mumbai and Amritsar. The shooting has already begun in the third week of December. He will be seen sharing the screen space with actor Amandeep Sidhu. Sai Ketan Rao was approached for this show in the month of August, by Sandip Sikchand, the creative producer of the show. The show is produced by Sol Productions. The mockshoot for this show went on for a month and since it was a very difficult task, Sai Ketan Rao had to really work very

hard to grab this main lead role. The main lead of the show cannot disclose much about his character currently as he doesn't want to give away the suspense. It will be a great treat to the eyes of the audience to watch this love-revenge drama.

He mentions that he is enjoying shooting for the show though it is a new working environment, but it is always a pleasure to work with a new team as it helps an individual to develop better acting skills.

Rao aspires to do various other platform works like films, web series in regional languages and foreign languages other than the television shows. This will be a great exposure for the actor and he wishes to also work in Hindi and Tamil films. The actor even wants to work in Telugu films as he has love for both Bollywood and Tollywood.

Sai Ketan Rao is a fitness freak and an early riser. In spite of having a tight shooting schedule of nearly 12-13 hours he does remove time for his fitness regime.



Vibhav Roy gets candid about his ott projects

With an outstanding new series scheduled to debut on January 23, 2023, Star Bharat is all ready to enthrall its audience. The new show will be made by Film Farm Productions. Vibhav Roy has been cast by the show's producers to play an important part. He is renowned for his work as many different characters in a number of well-known shows and on-demand services. He will now appear as 'Som' in the upcoming Star Bharat television show 'Meri Saas Bhoot Hai.' Vibhav Roy has contributed to numerous important projects on the OTT platform. After spending almost 4 years



away from television, he is making a comeback with a new mainstream drama on Star Bharat. Vibhav discussed the reasons behind his extended absence from television.

Katy Perry vows to become 'grandma pop star'

Katy Perry has vowed to still be a pop star when she's grey and old. The 38-year-old singer told Gwyneth Paltrow on her 'goop' podcast: "I wanna be a grandma pop star. You don't see a lot of grandmas or grandpas in my field, but I'm going to be one of them. I wanna do it for my daughter, for my family, my partner. A lot of people don't get out alive in both our businesses."

Meanwhile, Katy recently revealed she has to be careful not to become "fat Elvis" in Las Vegas, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

The 'Roar' hitmaker started her Sin City residency 'Play' at the new Resorts World hotel on the strip at the very end of December 2021, and she



has created a performing schedule which gives her plenty of downtime, so she has to be careful not to give into the indulgences on offer in Vegas just like rock 'n' roll icon Elvis

Presley did when he had a residency in the 1970s.

Speaking on the 'Smartless' podcast, she joked: "It's three weeks on and then sometimes six to nine weeks off. It's really

easy to become 'fat Elvis' in between." However, the pop superstar is glad for the balance she's struck between the residency and her home life, as it allows her to spend more time with her fiancé Orlando Bloom and their two-year-old daughter Daisy. She explained: "I do it in three week instalments. It allows me the ability to drop my daughter off at preschool, and then mommy goes to work and comes back home the next day." "It's such a great routine. It's something that pop stars love to do and check off the box. Also, I great to create an incredible crazy, crazy show that I can't tour with because I couldn't possibly move all these absurd props that are on the stage."

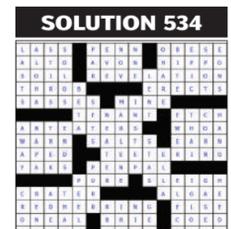
CROSSWORD

535



- ACROSS**
- Depots (abbr.)
 - Milk measure
 - Private teacher
 - Campers' home
 - At all times
 - All kidding
 - Interested by
 - Enrolled
 - Vacation spot
 - Cameron Diaz, e.g.
 - Distinctive manner
 - Arctic shelter
 - Skirt length
 - 50-50 chance (hyph.)
 - Football field
 - Farm measure
 - Music performance
 - What attics are used for
 - Lincoln, et al.
 - Brief joke (hyph.)
 - Zany
 - Magician's rod
 - Accomplishing

- DOWN**
- Mixes
 - Doctrine
 - Restless
 - Bar seat
 - Sassy
 - Common contraction
 - Not pos.
 - Test
 - Skin art
 - Operator
 - Fatigue
 - Lyric poems
 - Cincinnati team
 - Aberdeen native
 - Send payment
 - Adored one
 - Card game
 - Nest egg (abbr.)
 - Eastern garment
 - Glance at
 - Craving
 - Look closely
 - Metric weight
 - Musician _____ McEntire
 - Cooled
 - Phonograph record
 - Glitch
 - Twice five
 - More senior
 - Possess
 - Modifies
 - Horseback sport
 - Tiny landmass
 - Fathers
 - Wrathful
 - Narrow boat
 - Plant stalks
 - _____ upon a time..."
 - Stadium cheers
 - Expires
 - Additional
 - Throat-clearing sound
 - Indignation
 - Mister



India crush Sri Lanka by 317 runs, win series 3-0

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 15 (PTI):

India thrashed Sri Lanka by a record 317 runs in the third ODI to clinch the three-match series 3-0 here on Sunday. Virat Kohli and Shubman Gill scored sublime centuries to help the hosts post an imposing 390 for five.

Pacer Mohammed Siraj (4/32) then blew away the Sri Lankan top-order as India skittled out the visitors for 73 in 22 overs. Kohli remained not out on 166 off 110 balls, while Gill struck 116 off 97 deliveries.

Opting to bat after winning the toss, opener Gill and skipper Rohit Sharma (42) put on 95 runs in 15.2 overs, before Kohli struck his 46th ODI century and 74th overall in international cricket to consolidate the Indian innings. Kohli and Gill shared 131 runs for the second wicket.

Skipper Rohit Sharma (42 off 49) and Gill (116 off 97) laid the platform for a massive total with a 95-run opening partnership before Kohli (166 not out off 110) did the needful with his 74th international

hundred and 46th in the 50-over format.

Kohli, who had ended a nearly three year wait for an international hundred in the Asia Cup last year, is back to his best and has been scoring hundreds at will in a World Cup year.

The 34-year-old is now only three short of equalling Sachin Tendulkar's record of 49 centuries. What is remarkable is his conversion ratio as he got to his 46th ton in 259 innings while Tendulkar had taken 452 innings to get to 49 centuries.

Before Kohli took over, Gill had played some high quality strokes en route to his second ODI hundred.

The 23-run over from Lahiru Kumara in the initial stage of the innings got India going. After Rohit flicked him for a six over deep mid-wicket, Gill collected four straight boundaries off Kumara, three on the off side and one was a leg side flick off a full toss.

Rohit too was looking good at the other end but got out against the run of play while trying one of his signature shots, the front foot pull.

India, England play out goalless draw in hockey World Cup

Indian Hockey players walking back after the match against England ended in draw during FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023, in Rourkela, Odisha.



Rourkela, Jan 15 (PTI):

India and England played out a hard-fought goalless Pool D match of the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup here on Sunday.

There was hardly anything to separate between the world no.5 India and sixth-ranked England as both the teams failed to break the deadlock after 60 minutes of intense battle.

The draw, however, ensured the top spot for England in Pool D on account of a better goal difference than India.

Both India and England made a winning

start to their campaigns. While England thrashed Wales 5-0, India defeated Spain 2-0 in their tournament opener.

India will take on Wales, the lowest ranked side in the pool, in their final group match on January 19 in Bhubaneswar while England will up against Spain.

In the other match of the pool, Marc Reyna and Marc Miralles struck a brace each as Spain outplayed Wales 5-1 in a Pool D match to register their first win in the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup here on Sunday. Reyna sounded the board in the 16th

and 38th minutes from field efforts, while Miralles scored in the 32nd and 56th minutes. Skipper Alvaro Iglesias (22nd) was the other goal getter for the winners. Wales' lone goal was scored by James Carson in the 52nd minute. While Spain recorded their first win in the tournament, it was Wales' second loss on the trot. Spain had earlier lost 0-2 to hosts India in their tournament opener, while Wales were defeated 0-5 by England. Spain will take on England in their final pool match on January 19 in Bhubaneswar, while Wales will face India.

Virat Kohli
Runs **166**
Balls **110**
Fours **13**
Sixes **8**

Brief scores

India: 390/5 in 50 overs (Virat Kohli 166 not out, Shubman Gill 116; Kasun Rajitha 2/81).
Sri Lanka: 73 all out in 22 overs (Nuwanidu Fernando 19; Mohammed Siraj 4/32).

Is ODI cricket dying? asks Yuvraj as poor turnout marks Ind-SL series

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 15 (PTI):

Poor turnout for the third and final ODI between India and Sri Lanka here on Sunday raised serious questions about the relevance of the 50-over format, with former star Yuvraj Singh also flagging concerns.

The match was rendered inconsequential after India took an unassailable lead by winning the first two games of the heavily one-sided series. India is scheduled to host the ODI World Cup later this year, and the many empty chairs at the Greenfield International Stadium did not make for good viewing. "... But concern for me half empty stadium? Is one day cricket dying?" Yuvraj, India's 2011 World Cup-winning hero, asked on Twitter as Shubman Gill closed in on a century in the company of Virat Kohli, who remained unbeaten on a scintillating 110-ball 166. The stadium, which saw a packed house in its only other ODI - a rain-affected match between India and West Indies in 2018 - wore a near-desolate look thanks to the lukewarm re-



sponse from the locals. Only about 20,000 spectators turned up in the 38,000-capacity stadium for Sunday's match. Kerala Cricket Association media manager Krishna Prasad blamed it on several factors including the "lack of interest" for ODIs. "We never had a half-empty stadium. There are several reasons. We don't see much interest in ODIs nowadays," Prasad told PTI. "Moreover, the series was done and dusted in Kolkata (with India taking an unassailable 2-0 lead), and with the opponents being Sri Lanka many people chose not to come to the stadium." Tickets were priced at Rs 1000 and Rs 2000 for the match.

Worked on my speed and variations: Lakshya Sen

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

Star India shuttler Lakshya Sen has worked on his "speed and variations" to be battle ready for the new season as he seeks title triumphs in the Asian and European circuits to seal a Paris Olympic berth at the earliest.

Sen began 2022 with his maiden Super 500 title at the India Open and claimed a silver medal at the All England Championships, besides securing the Commonwealth Games gold and playing a part in India's monumental Thomas Cup win.

The 21-year-old from Almora feels that the time is just right for him to push the envelope further in another busy season, comprising big-ticket events such as the Asian Games and the World Championships.

"This is the right time for me. If I can maintain this ranking and keep improving, I have a good chance to qualify. Unfortunately, last time I



was close to qualifying but few events didn't happen due to COVID-19 but those are all learning experiences," Sen told PTI in an interview.

"I'm mainly focusing on my fitness. After my nose surgery, my fitness went down but I got time during the off-season to get it

back. I worked a lot on my speed, quickness in attacking and variation from the backcourt. I am steadily working on my defence.

"Playing the big events gave me a lot of confidence. I have experienced playing in the top circuit. So I will try to remain injury-free and play freely in

the event." Sen underwent a nose surgery for a deviated nasal septum after the World Championships in August. In December, he was in Dubai to train with new coach Anup Sridhar, Anders Antonsen and Sameer Verma.

"I have to plan the season properly as lots of important events are coming up. I have to pick and choose the right ones. It will be all about maintaining a good ranking and pre-tournament and off-season training to keep myself fit.

"I plan to play three events in Asia and three in Europe in next few months. Once Olympic qualification starts in May, I have to see how I do and take a call as the season goes ahead. My target is to qualify in the first half so that I can plan the rest of the tournaments better." Sen had suffered a narrow defeat in the season-opening Malaysia Open and will compete in the India Open and the Indonesia Masters Super 500.

Deepika back in top-16 in archery trials



Kolkata, Jan 15 (PTI):

Making a comeback about a month after becoming a mother, three-time Olympian Deepika Kumari made the top-16 cut by finishing ninth in the first open archery selection trials for the Asian Games, World Championships and World Cups, here on Sunday.

Deepika shot a total of 2597 points out of a maximum 2880 in the eight rounds of 70-metre distance in the women's recurve section. Deepika's husband and India number one

Atanu Das, who was sidelined from the Indian team last year, finished second with a score of 2749 to make the top-16 in the men's recurve section. B Dhiraj topped the pool with 2767 points, while former Olympians Tarundeep Rai, Pravin Jadhav and Jayanta Talukdar also made the cut. The only casualty was that of reigning national champion Sachin Gupta, who fell by the wayside finishing 19th. The top-16 will be pitted against each other in round-robin matches to decide the top-eight over the next two days.

Jadeja set for Ranji comeback to prove fitness ahead of Australia series

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

Premier India all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, who withdrew from the Asia Cup last September to undergo a right knee surgery, is set to make a comeback in Saurashtra's final round of Ranji Trophy fixture against Tamil Nadu in Chennai beginning January 24.

The 34-year-old, who is currently doing rehab at the National Cricket Academy, has been picked in a 17-member squad for the first two Tests in the highly-anticipated four-match series against Australia slated to begin in Nagpur from February 9.

However, his availability is subject to fitness as a call on Jadeja is likely to be taken during the



course of the four-day game.

"It will be good if he plays for Saurashtra. Probably he will, but I don't have any further de-

tails," Saurashtra Cricket Association president Jaydev Shah told PTI.

Jadeja has not played any competitive cricket since the T20I against Hong Kong in the Asia Cup on August 31 and his previous first-class match was the rescheduled one-off Test at Edgbaston against England last July.

Jadeja reportedly has started to bowl and bat from earlier this week as he's winding up his rehab at the NCA. The left-handed batter is seen as a vital cog in India's line-up, especially in absence of Rishabh Pant at No 5 or 6 in the middle-order.

His leftarm spin could also come handy alongside ace offspinner Ravichandran Ashwin in the four-match series that will determine India's fate to make a successive World Test Championship final appearance.

Struggling South Africa mulls split-coaching; Conrad, Walter likely options

Durban, Jan 15 (PTI):

Struggling South Africa are likely to rope in Shukri Conrad and Rob Walter in a split coaching set up in a bid to revive their fortunes in International cricket.

Conrad recently was at the helm of South Africa's Under-19 side, while Walter was the head coach of Central Districts in New Zealand.

The duo are expected to be unveiled as South Africa's new coaches on Monday, reported ESPNcricinfo.

Lance Klusener was the "frontrunner" to coach the white ball side but following his withdrawal on Monday, the duo would be "preferred" to current interim coach Malibongwe Maketa, former West Indies director of cricket Richard Pybus and former

national assistant coach Adi Birrel (who applied for the red-ball job only).

One of the two will be put in charge of the white-ball format as he will have to take charge immediately ahead of South Africa's three World Cup Super League matches against England from January 27 to February 1.

South Africa had crashed out of the T20 World Cup after shocking loss to the Netherlands in last November and also face the challenge of qualifying for the ODI World Cup slated in India in October and November.

They also endured two crushing defeats to Australia recently to jolt their World Test Championships final hopes. They face the West Indies in two Tests at home from February 28-March 12.

India series will be acid test for Cummins: Border

Melbourne, Jan 15 (PTI):

Australian great Allan Border is mighty impressed with Pat Cummins' captaincy but said the upcoming four-Test series against India will be his real "acid test and the final frontier".

Australia will begin the marquee Test series at Jamtha from February 9 as they eye their first series win in India in 19 years.

"That is going to be the acid test for him and the team," Border was quoted saying by ABC Sport.

Having been elevated to the hot seat after Tim Paine's sudden resignation ahead of the Ashes 2021, the Aussie pace spearhead has had a golden run.



away from home last year.

The results meant Australia are favourites to make their maiden World Test Championships final. The India series will be the last series in the WTC calendar before they take on England in the Ashes with an eye to win on opposition soil for the first time since 2001.

"The next 12 months is the real test for that side and Pat's captaincy in particular because India is just about the last frontier for the Australian cricket

team. "We haven't won there very often. It's a hard place to play and a hard place to win and England is the same," the 67-year-old said.

The former Australian skipper said initially he was apprehensive about Cummins leading the Test side but he has ensured that it didn't affect his bowling.

"I was not as keen to see a fast bowler (appointed captain), not necessarily the individual but more just the fact that he's our number-one fast bowler. But he's proved so many people wrong and he's handled that so well," Border said.

"Maybe the make-up of the team has helped, where he's got quite a few senior players that he can bounce things off and they can sort of take over to a certain degree when he's got the ball in his hand when he's bowling.

Kapil Sibal hails Bharat Jodo Yatra

Rahul made people realise how important unity is for country

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

Former Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Sunday hailed the Bharat Jodo Yatra, saying Rahul Gandhi has been able to bring together disparate elements of society and make them realise how important it is to ensure unity in the country. Sibal, who quit the Congress last year, said the party's Kanyakumari to Kashmir Yatra "optically" seems to have succeeded and gotten the support of non-Congress elements as well.

In an interview with PTI, Sibal said conceptually the Yatra is a "wonderful idea". "I think that he (Rahul), during the course of his march, has been able to bring together disparate elements of society and make them realise

how important it is to ensure unity in our country and that respect for diversity is at the heart of our nation moving forward," the former Union minister said. "Yes, Bharat Jodo Yatra is something that needs to be lauded. Now as far as its political impact is concerned, I think people are confusing the concept behind the yatra and relating it to a pure political act which I don't think it is," said Sibal.

He said what the yatra intends to do is to show to the people that there are two ideologies that they should choose from, with 'Bharat Jodo' being the one end of the spectrum as opposed to the other end "which we all know is represented by whom".

Sibal, who was among the leaders of the group of 23 that had written to

Rahul-led Bharat Jodo Yatra resumes from Jalandhar

Jalandhar, Jan 15 (PTI): Scores of people joined the Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Yatra as it resumed from the Khalsa College Ground here on Sunday after remaining suspended for 24 hours in view of the death of Congress MP Santokh Singh Chaudhary. Chaudhary died on Saturday after suffering a cardiac arrest during the Bharat Jodo Yatra. He was cremated at his native Dhaliwal village in Jalandhar on Sunday. Gandhi also attended the cremation. Gandhi offered prayers at Devi Talab temple in Jalandhar before the resumption of the march.

As the march resumed around 3 pm, singer Sidhu Moosewala's father Balkaur Singh walked with Gandhi for some distance. Shubdeep Singh Sidhu, popularly known as Sidhu Moosewala, was shot dead in Punjab's Mansa district in May last year. Punjab Congress chief Amrinder Singh



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with Balkaur Singh, father of singer Sidhu Moosewala, during Bharat Jodo Yatra, in Jalandhar, Sunday.

Raja Warring, Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Partap Singh Bajwa, former chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi, MLA Pargat Singh and other party leaders took part in the march. The yatra will halt for the night in Adampur. The Punjab leg of the march began on Wednesday from Sirhind in Fatehgarh Sahib. The yatra took a break on Friday in the wake of the Lohri festival. The

march, which started from Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu on September 7, will conclude in Srinagar by January 30, with Gandhi hoisting the national flag in the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir. It has so far covered Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.

Congress chief Sonia Gandhi in 2020 seeking large-scale organisational

reforms, had quit the party last year and was re-elected to the Rajya Sabha

from Uttar Pradesh with the support of the Samajwadi Party.

Don't need Shah to tell us about revolutionaries' role in freedom movement: Tushar Gandhi

Kozhikode, Jan 15 (PTI):

Mahatma Gandhi's great grandson Tushar Gandhi has said there is no need for Union Home Minister Amit Shah to talk about the contribution of armed revolutionaries in the country's freedom movement as "Bapu" himself had acknowledged their role. Shah had recently said only one type of narrative of a non-violent movement during the freedom struggle has been "forced through education, history and legends", whereas India's independence was a result of collective efforts, including the contribution of armed revolutionaries.

"We do not need an Amit Shah to say these things. Shah needs to say these things because he does not have anything to say about

himself or the ideology he is spawned out of. Bapu himself had acknowledged that independence was not achieved only because of his attempts," Tushar Gandhi said at the ongoing sixth edition of the Kerala Literature Festival (KLF) on Friday.

"He (Mahatma Gandhi) had given credit to everybody, even the earlier attempts by revolutionaries. He had acknowledged the contribution of Netaji (Subhas Chandra Bose) also," he added.

Talking about his latest book, "The lost diary of Kastur, My Ba", Tushar Gandhi said Bapu was an ordinary human being like anyone else and that is why he has not referred to him as "Mahatma" in the book. According to the 62-year-old author, the "Mahatma"

identity is unbelievable and one needs to understand Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the ordinary human being who rose beyond his capabilities to achieve things.

"When we put him on the pedestal of a Mahatma, we convince ourselves that he was a Mahatma and could do all those things, and we do not need to do any of these things because we are ordinary human beings. He was as ordinary as anyone of us and yet he did what he did, and that is what we need to bring back to people," he noted. The book, a reproduction of a rare diary of Mahatma Gandhi's wife Kasturba Gandhi, is a day-to-day account of a tumultuous nine-month period of her life, from January to September of 1933.

Mayawati says BSP to go it alone in assembly, LS polls

Lucknow, Jan 15 (PTI):

BSP chief Mayawati on Sunday ruled out an alliance with any party for the assembly polls in various states and the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. She also made a strong pitch for the use of ballot papers in elections. Key states of Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Telangana would go to polls this year, besides states from the northeast.

Speaking to reporters here on her 67th birthday, the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister said, "I would like to make it clear that in the assembly elections of Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan and in the Lok Sabha elections, which will be held next year, the BSP will not forge a coalition with any party and will contest the polls on its own

strength."

Mayawati said it became necessary for her to make the announcement as the Congress and some other parties, as part of a "conspiracy", are allegedly trying to create an impression that they will be forging an alliance with the Bahujan Samaj Party.

"In electoral alliances forged once or twice in Uttar Pradesh and other states, barring Punjab, their (allies) votes were not transferred to us, due to which the BSP suffered losses," she said. "Hence, our party has decided to contest the assembly polls and Lok Sabha polls on its own," she said.

The BSP and the Samajwadi Party (SP) had forged an alliance in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Of the alliance partners, the BSP was the biggest gainer with 10 seats. Akhilesh Yadav's SP won five seats and the smallest of the part-

ners, Rashtriya Lok Dal, couldn't open its account. Mayawati exuded confidence that her party's vote base is intact.

"As far as the vote base of the BSP is concerned, it has not eroded. But sometimes there are other sections such as OBCs, minorities and upper castes who get misled due to poll promises. The party had to suffer losses in the last elections," she said. The BSP chief said electronic voting machines (EVMs) should be replaced with ballot papers.

"There are doubts in the minds of people regarding EVMs and there is an apprehension that they may be prone to glitches," she said. "The CEC (chief election commissioner) and the Centre should come forward and hold elections using ballot papers. It will be known how many voters are with them and how many voters are with us," she said.

SC expresses displeasure over inordinate delay in dealing with convict's plea for premature release

New Delhi, Jan 15 (PTI):

Expressing displeasure over the "inordinate delay" by the authorities in dealing with a murder convict's plea for premature release, the Supreme Court has warned the Director General of Prisons of Uttar Pradesh and others of using the "coercive arm of law" if other such instances are brought to its notice.

The apex court observed that the application for premature release has remained pending since September 2019 and, as per the custody certificate issued by the senior superintendent of police of central jail, Fatehgarh, on January 5 this year, the convict has undergone a total custody of 15 years and 14 days without remission.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y

Chandrachud and Justice P S Narasimha observed that in view of the settled position of law laid down by the top court, such applications are required to be considered on the basis of policy as it stood on the date of the conviction.

"If a more liberalised regime has been brought into effect subsequently, this should also be considered," the bench said in its January 13 order, adding, "In the present case we find no reason or justification for the inordinate delay in dealing with the application of the petitioner for premature release."

The apex court asked the Director General of Prisons to take all necessary steps to ensure that the application for premature release is duly considered and disposed of within one month from the date of its order.

It said an affidavit of

compliance be filed before the court by February 15.

"The Director General of Prisons and all concerned authorities are placed on notice that this court would be constrained to take recourse to the coercive arm of law if other instances indicating recalcitrance of the authorities in dealing with such applications are brought to the notice of the court," the bench said.

The top court was dealing with a plea filed by the petitioner seeking premature release. It noted in its order that the petitioner was convicted in February 1984 for the offences punishable under section 302 (murder) read with section 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code and was sentenced to life imprisonment.

It also noted the application for premature release

was sent to the District Magistrate, Unnao, on September 2, 2019 and forwarded to the prison headquarters by the DM on October 25 last year. The bench said the prison headquarters, on December 6 last year, directed the superintendent of district jail, Ghaziabad, to make available the updated details of the co-accused prisoners.

"The proposal has been sent to the prison headquarters for reconsideration on December 28, 2022 by the Senior Superintendent of the Central Jail, Fatehgarh," the bench noted. It said the counter affidavit filed on the record indicates the application has remained pending since September 2019 for well over three years and three months and this delay is "without any reason or justification".

"Since this court has, while taking notice of the sorry state of affairs in the matter of the release of convicts who have undergone long terms of imprisonment, issued directions to the Director General of Prisons, UP in an earlier case, we are not in these proceedings taking up the issue which is pending consideration," it said.

The bench, which disposed of the plea, gave liberty to the counsel for the petitioner to mention the matter for revival in case of non-compliance of the direction. While hearing a separate matter on January 5, the apex court had asked the UP Director General of Prisons to file an affidavit in his personal capacity giving details about the steps taken so far to grant the benefit of remission to convicts in the state in pursuance of its earlier judgement.

'Gujarat poll result sends message that Modi will be re-elected PM in 2024'

Gandhinagar, Jan 15 (PTI):

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said the result of the recently-concluded Gujarat Assembly elections is important not just for the state but for the entire country as it has sent a message that Narendra Modi will be re-elected as the prime minister in 2024.

In a veiled reference to the opposition Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party, Shah said the people of Gujarat, by helping the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) retain power with a record number of seats in the state, responded to those who tried to defame the state and Prime Minister Modi.

"The people of Gujarat have worked to end the poison of casteism and slapped those making empty, false and alluring promises. The people of Gujarat have responded to those who tried to defame Gujarat and Narendra Modi," Shah said at a function here to inaugurate and lay the foundation stones of various projects.

"This result is important not for Gujarat alone. There will be (Lok Sabha) elections in 2024, and the entire country is prepared to once more make Narendra Modi the prime minister," he said.

This message of Kashmir has reached from Kashmir to Kanyakumari (north to south in the country) and



Union Home Minister Amit Shah speaks during the inauguration of Gujarat State Bharat Scouts and Guides training centre, in Ahmedabad, Sunday.

from Dwarka to Kamakhya (west to east) that "Modi Saheb will again become the prime minister in 2024," the senior BJP leader said. Shah said there is no need to

elaborate on the works done by the BJP government for the development of the state, as people respond to it in the election.

"There is not a single state where one party has

ruled uninterrupted for 27 years. Gujarat is the only state where the BJP has ruled (for 27 years and more)," he said. Shah said when the Gujarat elections were announced, the Congress claimed this time it was its chance. "People from Delhi also arrived here with the promise of giving this and that for free," he said.

Despite all this, when the result was announced, the BJP emerged the winner with a record number of 156 seats (out of the total 182 in Gujarat), he said. Every single worker of the BJP in the state is indebted to the people for their support and feels proud of this fact, the Union minister said. The party won 34 out

of the 40 seats reserved for the Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste candidates in the state, he said.

Prime Minister Modi worked not just to provide basic facilities at the village level, but also did many works to make Gujarat number one in the world, by way of construction of the world's tallest Statue of Unity (in Narmada district), the biggest stadium named after Narendra Modi (Ahmedabad) and Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (Gandhinagar), Shah said. Talking about the virtues of cleanliness, Shah said unless people work together, no government can make a village or a city clean.

Chouhan anguished over use of objectionable language against him during Karni Sena protest

Bhopal, Jan 15 (PTI):

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday expressed anguish over the use of objectionable language against him and his family during a protest by the Karni Sena in Bhopal.

A 30-year-old Karni Sena activist from Haryana was arrested on Thursday for allegedly raising objectionable slogans against Chouhan during the protest in the state capital over their various demands, a police official said on Saturday.

A video had surfaced on social media in which the man was heard shouting slogans in obscene language against the CM during a protest by the outfit at Jamboree Maidan in BHEL township here a few days back.

On Sunday, Chouhan in a Twitter post expressed distress over the incident without naming the Karni Sena.

"Recently, indecent language was used during an agitation. The people have the right to criticise the Chief Minister, but the use of indecent language for the mother (Chouhan's mother) who passed away years ago in my childhood has disturbed me," the CM tweeted.

He said an apology has been sought in this matter.

"I also pray to my mother, wherever she is, to forgive these children.

I have no grudge against them now. You all are our own and if someone our own commits any mistake then they cannot be separated," he said.

In another tweet, Chouhan said he is committed to the welfare of all and has worked for the development of all sections of the society and will continue to do so in the future.

After the video of the protest in Bhopal surfaced, Karni Sena's office-bearers in MP tendered an apology over the use of such language and said those people were not part of the main protest.

The Karni Sena held a four-day protest from January 8 in support of their 21 demands, including no arrest to be made without a probe into the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act cases, reservations be given only once to a family (one generation), and to curb inflation.

Two more hotels lean towards each other in Joshimath

Dehradun/Joshimath, Jan 15 (PTI):

Two more hotels were dangerously leaning towards each other while wider cracks have appeared near Auli ropeway and in other areas of land subsidence-hit Joshimath on Sunday.

Also, the flow of water increased from a suspected underground channel burst in JP Colony in the Marwari area of the town after a temporary decline a couple of days back. Muddy water has been percolating down from it constantly since January 2 but experts are not sure

about its origins.

Disaster Management Secretary Ranjit Kumar Sinha said a constant vigil is being maintained on the pace of water percolation in the area which has been fluctuating.

The process of demolishing two adjacent hotels Malari Inn and Mount View which were declared unsafe was still underway. Around 100 metres from the site, two more hotels - Snow Crest and Comet - have tilted dangerously towards each other and have been vacated as a precautionary measure.



People at a medical camp organized by authorities for people affected by the landslides, at Joshimath in Chamoli, Sunday.

"The gap between the two hotels was around four feet earlier but now

it has narrowed to just a few inches with their roofs nearly touching

each other," Puja Prajapati, daughter of Snow Crest owner, said. Wider cracks have appeared near the Joshimath-Auli ropeway whose operation was suspended over a week ago when land subsidence aggravated.

The 4.5 km ropeway, considered one of Asia's largest, connects Joshimath located at 6000 ft with the skiing destination of Auli at an altitude of 9000 feet. A crack around four inches wide and 20 feet long has appeared near the walls in the ropeway premises,

ropeway engineer Dinesh Bhatt said. A hotel owner in Singdhar ward said the cracks in the area widened on Saturday night.

The water flow from an unknown source in the Marwari area has increased from 190 Litre Per Minute (LPM) to 240 LPM. It had decreased from 550 LPM in the beginning to 190 LPM on January 13. Many houses were damaged in varying degrees in the land subsidence areas while water from the aquifer was constantly flowing down with great force.