



### BRIEF



CJI D.Y. Chandrachud with his family during his visit to Amrit Udyan on the premises of Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi, Sunday.

### Evacuate

**Jammu:** Five families were shifted to a school building after their houses developed cracks following an expansion work on a highway in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district. A resident told reporters that the cracks were developed after cutting activity was carried out by a construction company on the highway as a result of which the hill began to slide down in the Basti area. It also slid down due to rain, he said.

### Threat calls

**Akola:** Shiv Sena (UBT) MLA Nitin Deshmukh, who represents Balapur Assembly constituency in Maharashtra's Akola district, alleged that he received threat calls by two unidentified persons on Sunday morning. Talking to reporters, he also claimed that the callers threatened him in the name of a Union minister from the state and his son.

### 'Maha aarti'

**Thane:** Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Sunday visited Malang Gad fort near Kalyan in Thane district of the state and performed 'maha aarti' at the Machhindranath temple atop it. A fair is held annually on the fort on the occasion of Magh Purnima, which is being celebrated on Sunday. Thousands of devotees take part in the annual fair.

### Inaugurate

**Bengaluru:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be visiting Karnataka on Monday to inaugurate 'India Energy Week 2023' in Bengaluru, during which he will launch E20 fuel, a blend of 20 per cent ethanol with petrol, and dedicate to the nation the HAL's helicopter factory in Tumakuru. He will also lay the foundation stone of various development initiatives during the visit. This will be Modi's third visit to the poll-bound state in less than a month.

### Holy dip

**Prayagraj:** Around 20 lakh devotees took a dip in the waters of the holy Sangam here on Sunday on the occasion of "Maaghi Purnima", officials said. Sangam is the confluence of three rivers the Ganga, Yamuna and mythical Saraswati. "There was a crowd of people from 4 am itself. By noon, around 20 lakh people have taken a dip at Sangam. Many people had reached the venue on Saturday night itself," an official said.

**Weather**  
High 31 Low 12

## 'Cong's 85th plenary session to be game changer for Indian politics'

Raipur, Feb 05:

All India Congress Committee general secretary K C Venugopal on Sunday claimed the three-day 85th plenary session of the party to be held in Raipur from February 24 will be a "game changer" for Indian politics.

Venugopal along with senior party leaders Pawan Bansal and Tariq Anwar reached Chhattisgarh's capital to take stock of preparations for the plenary session to be held at the Rajyotsava Sthal in Nava Raipur.

Talking to media persons at the airport here, Venugopal said, "We have come here to take stock of the preparations for the plenary session scheduled to be held from February



K C Venugopal to media persons at the airport here.

24 to 26. This plenary is going to be a game changer of Indian politics."

To a query, he targeted the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party at the Centre said, "The BJP is only spreading lies in the country. They talked about Bharat Jodo Yatra too. The yatra became one of the

biggest political movements in the country. The entire BJP was against it. The BJP can do politics."

The Bharat Jodo Yatra led by Congress MP Rahul Gandhi began on September 7, 2022 from Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu and concluded on January 30, 2023 in

### What Venugopal said...

"We have come here to take stock of the preparations for the plenary session scheduled to be held from February 24 to 26. This plenary is going to be a game changer of Indian politics." To a query, he targeted the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party at the Centre said, "The BJP is only spreading lies in the country. They talked about Bharat Jodo Yatra too. The yatra became one of the biggest political movements in the country. The entire BJP was against it. The BJP can do politics."

Srinagar. As Venugopal, Bansal and Anwar arrived at the Raipur airport on Sunday, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, his cabinet colleagues and state Congress chief Mohan Markam were among those present to welcome them.

## Elephant found dead in Raigarh

■ 6th fatality in 4 months

Raigarh, Feb 05:

A nearly 70-year female elephant has been found dead at a forest in Raigarh district, with officials suspecting the jumbo died of age-related complications.

The carcass was found on Saturday in the forest adjoining Gersa village under Dharamajgarh forest division. Soon after being alerted, forest personnel rushed to the spot and the autopsy was conducted by a team of veterinarians. Prime facie it seems the elephant died due to age-related complications. However, the exact cause of the death will be known once the autopsy report is received," the official said.

### About the tusker....

The carcass was found on Saturday in the forest adjoining Gersa village under Dharamajgarh forest division. Soon after being alerted, forest personnel rushed to the spot and the autopsy was conducted by a team of veterinarians. Prime facie it seems the elephant died due to age-related complications. However, the exact cause of the death will be known once the autopsy report is received.

With this incident, six elephants have died in the district in the last four months, he added. Chhattisgarh has reported death more than 70 elephants in the last five years due to various causes including ailments, age and electrocution, officials said.

### CHILD MARRIAGE

2,278 arrested in three days

Guwahati, Feb 05 (PTI):

The Assam Police continued with its crackdown on child marriage in the state for the third day in a row, with the number of arrests touching 2,278 on Sunday.

A police statement said the arrests were made based on 4,074 FIRs across the state. At least 139 people have been apprehended in Biswanath, followed by 130 in Barpeta and 126 in Dhubri, the statement said.

Other districts where over 100 arrests have been made are Baksa (123) and Bongaigaon and Hojai (117 each), it maintained. Dhubri registered the highest number of FIRs against child marriages at 374 cases, followed by Hojai at 255 and Morigaon at 224. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had on Saturday asserted that the drive against child marriage will continue till the next assembly elections in 2026.

## Plea to review verdict on demonetisation filed in SC

New Delhi, Feb 05 (PTI)

A plea seeking a review of the judgement that upheld the Centre's 2016 decision to demonetise Rs 1,000 and Rs 500 currency notes was filed in the Supreme Court on Sunday.

A five-judge Constitution bench, in a 4:1 majority verdict, on January 2 had given its stamp of approval, saying the decision-making process was neither flawed nor hasty. The review plea was filed by lawyer ML Sharma, one of the 58 petitioners who had moved the top court challenging the demonetisation exercise announced on November 8, 2016.

Sharma, in his review plea, contended that the

bench did not consider his "written arguments" in its verdict on the batch of pleas which led to "serious injustice and miscarriage of justice".

"It is, therefore, most respectfully prayed that ... may be pleased to: (i) Review the Judgment..." it said. Observing that the scope of judicial review in matters of economic policy is "narrower", a five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice S A Nazeer, since retired, had said there has to be great restraint in matters of economic policy and the court will not interfere with any opinion formed by the government if it is based on the relevant facts and circumstances or on expert advice.

### ■ For gambling, money laundering

New Delhi, Feb 05 (PTI):

In a major crackdown, the Central government has initiated the process to ban and block 138 betting apps and 94 loan lending apps with Chinese links on an 'urgent' and 'emergency' basis, top government sources said on Sunday.

Ministry of electronics and Information Technology is learnt to have taken the decision based on the recommendations of the ministry of home affairs. As per

### MAJOR CRACKDOWN

## Govt bans 138 betting, 94 loan apps with China links

### What official said....

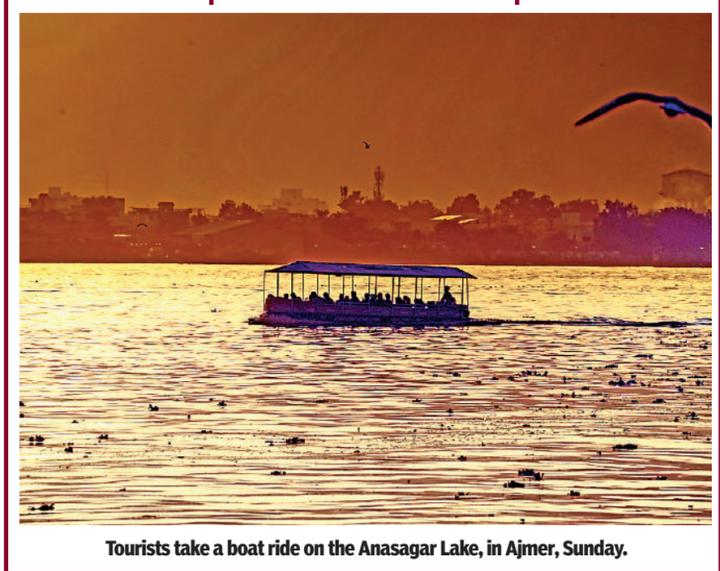
"The order to block 138 apps that were involved in betting, gambling and money laundering were issued last evening. Separately, an order to block 94 apps engaged in unauthorised loan service has also been issued. These apps were being operated from offshore entities, including Chinese. They were posing a threat to the economic stability of the country," the official, who did not wish to be named, told PTI. The official did not disclose the name of the apps that have been blocked. An official query sent to MeitY did not elicit any immediate response.

sources, the MHA recommended the MeitY this week to ban and block these apps, and the ministry subsequently initiated the process as per communication.

The move was taken after confirming that these apps attract Section 69 of the IT Act as they contain material which is prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India.

The action behind the move is based on several complaints of extortion and harassment of common people who had availed small amounts of loans through the mobile apps being run by those entities and persons.

### RELAXING TIME



Tourists take a boat ride on the Anasagar Lake, in Ajmer, Sunday.

## US Airlines offloads cancer patient in Delhi

New Delhi, Feb 05:

### What airline claimed....

The airline, in its official statement, said that its Customer Relations team has reached out to Sengupta to refund the unused portion of her ticket. "On Jan. 30, prior to the departure of American Airlines flight 293 from Delhi to New York, a disruptive customer was removed from the aircraft for failure to follow crew member instructions. Our Customer Relations team has reached out to the customer to refund the unused portion of their ticket," the airline said, adding that a probe into the matter is underway.

A female cancer patient, who recently underwent a surgery, was allegedly off-loaded from a New York-bound flight of American Airlines at Delhi airport after she sought assistance from a flight attendant to keep her hand-bag in overhead cabin. The incident was reported on January 30, and it came to light after the United States-based traveller, identified as Meenakshi Sengupta, lodged a complaint against the flight attendant accusing them of refusing to help her put the handbag weighing more than 5 pounds in the overhead cabin as she was unable to do so because of weak limbs.

## Huge opportunity: Sqdn Ldr Chaturvedi

■ First woman IAF pilot to participate in aerial wargame abroad

New Delhi, Feb 05 (PTI)

Weeks after scripting history by becoming the first woman fighter pilot of the Indian Air Force (IAF) to take part in an aerial wargame abroad, Squadron Leader Avani Chaturvedi says flying combat aircraft is exciting and the sky is the limit for young people wanting to pursue a career in the force.

Chaturvedi, a Su-30MKI pilot, was part of the IAF contingent that participated in a 16-day mega air combat exercise with the Japan Air Self Defence Force (JASDF) at the Japanese airbase of



Hyakuri from January 12 to 26. "It is always a good experience to participate in flying exercises, especially with a foreign air force. This is more so because this was the first time that I was involved in an international exercise. It was a huge opportunity for me and a wonderful learning experience," Chaturvedi told PTI. The exercise, "Veer Guardian-2023", was the first such wargame between the IAF and the JASDF with a focus on air

combat manoeuvring, interception and air-defence missions. "I would like to convey to all the young, aspiring girls and boys that the sky is the limit for you. The IAF is a wonderful career option and flying fighter aircraft is really exciting," Chaturvedi said.

"I would like to tell all IAF aspirants that you should set your eyes on the goal and go for it with dogged determination," she said when asked how arduous was the path for her to become a fighter pilot. A B.Tech in computer science, Squadron Leader Chaturvedi was among the first three women fighter pilots commissioned into the IAF in June 2016. The other two were Bhawana Kanth and Mohana Singh.

## Ramdev booked for provocative remarks

■ At meet of seers in Barmer

Barmer, Feb 05 (PTI)

An FIR was registered on Sunday against Yoga guru Ramdev for allegedly promoting enmity and outraging religious feelings over his provocative remarks at a meeting of seers in Rajasthan's Barmer district, police said.

The FIR was registered at Chauhan police station based on a complaint filed by a local resident, Pathai Khan, a police officer said.

According to Chauhan police station SHO Bhutaram, the case was registered under IPC sections 153A (promoting enmity between different

### What Ramdev said....

At the meeting of seers on February 2, Ramdev accused Muslims of resorting to terror and abducting Hindu women while comparing Hinduism to Islam and Christianity. He alleged that the two faiths were obsessed with conversion while Hinduism taught its followers to do good.

groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence), 295A (deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs) and 298 (uttering, words, etc., with deliberate intent to wound the religious feelings of any person).

## FIR against ex-cricketer Kampli on charge of assaulting wife

Mumbai, Feb 05 (PTI):

### Police action..

Mumbai Police have registered an FIR against former Indian cricketer Vinod Kampli for allegedly assaulting and abusing his wife in an inebriated state at his home in suburban Bandra, officials said on Sunday.

Two police personnel went to Kampli's flat on Sunday and served a notice to him, asking him to appear before them to record his statement.

No arrest has been made so far in connection with the alleged incident which took place on Friday, an official from Bandra police station said. Kampli's wife Andrea in her police complaint alleged that he threw the handle of a cooking pan at her due to which she suffered a head injury, he said. The incident took place between 1 pm and 1.30 pm on Friday when Kampli reached his flat allegedly under the influence of alcohol and started abusing his wife, he said. Their 12 year-old son, who was present at that time, intervened in the fight, but Kampli went into the kitchen, brought the handle of a broken frying pan

Two police personnel went to Kampli's flat on Sunday and served a notice to him, asking him to appear before them to record his statement. Based on her complaint, the Bandra police on Friday registered the FIR against Kampli under Indian Penal Code Sections 324 (voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons) and 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace).

and allegedly threw it on his wife due to which she got injured, the official said quoting the complaint. Kampli's wife later went to the Bhabha Hospital for a medical examination. Based on her complaint, the Bandra police on Friday registered the FIR against Kampli under Indian Penal Code Sections 324 (voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons) and 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace), the official said. In February last year, Kampli was arrested for ramming his car into the gate of his residential society in Bandra. He was later released on bail.

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## Mahadev Book Branch busted in Greater Noida

Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Jan 05:** Durg Police continued its operation against online betting Mahadev Book and busted its branch which was being operated at Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh. The accused were doing transactions through various bank accounts. 03 laptops, 15 mobiles, etc were recovered from the possession of 09 accused.

Police are going to conduct micro analysis of obtained bank accounts and mobile numbers. The accused are being quizzed to collect information in respect of persons conducting this illegal activity in other states.

Superintendent of Police (Durg) Dr Abhishek Pallava informed that they are conducting a special



operation against the online cricket betting rackets. Joint teams of Anti Crime and Cyber Unit and various police stations are making efforts to trace the people involved in online betting rackets.

During the previous raids, evidence was col-

lected in relation to other persons associated with the online betting Mahadev app. In this sequel, Police got information about some people who were operating a branch of Mahadev Book in Greater Noida.

Acting on this tip off, a

team of Durg Police conducted a raid at Greater Noida. The team arrested nine persons red handed while operating the online betting racket in a house and recovered 03 laptops, 15 mobiles, etc from them.

The accused are identified as Lokesh Kalwani

(32) son of Suresh Kumar a resident of Bhatapara; Abhishek Singh (37) son of Akhileshwar Singh a resident of Shanti Nagar Bhilai; Vishal Kushwaha (24) son of Ramapati Kushwaha a resident of Ganesh Nagar, Jamul; Ankush Verma (25) son of Dilip Verma a resident of Camp-1, Chhawani; Akash Sahu (24) son of Yashwant Sahu a resident of Hardware Line, Supela; Ankit Kannoja (24) son of Prakash Kannoja a resident of Vaishali Nagar; Vaibhav Singh (24) son of Vaidehi Sharan Thakur a resident of Tikrapara Bilaspur; Shubham Rao (19) son of A Jagannath Rao a resident of HSCL Colony Sector 6; and B Ashish (20) son of Bittu Rao a resident of Khursipar, Bhilai.

## Option of EPF-95 for working & retired personnel launched in SAIL portal

Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Feb 05:** SAIL management has issued an order on February 04, 2023 regarding the enhanced pension of EPS-95 to the working and retired personnel who are eligible for enhanced pension as per the order of EPFO.

It needs to be mentioned here that according to the order passed by the Supreme Court on November 04, 2022 for providing social security, the workers have been given the option of getting pension on the basis of their

actual salary.

Efforts on this subject were going on for the last few years through the joint platform of NCOA by SEFI, as a result of which this promising result has been achieved.

After the order of the Supreme Court and the order of EPFO, SEFI was urging the SAIL management to start proper preparations. In this regard, an order has been issued by the SAIL management. According to this order, the personnel can see the calculation of their total dues in respect

of EPS-95 by visiting the web link. For this login, the pan number and password will be the date of birth.

Responding to this order, SEFI President Narendra Kumar Banchole said that compliance of this order will pave the way for the retired employees to get respectable pension amounts while the present employees will get a secure future. In this context, this process will be conducted under the instructions issued by EPFO.

## Roads in BMC limits to become dust free and smooth

Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Feb 05:** The work of renovation and maintenance of roads in Bhilai Municipal Corporation area is being done vigorously. In this sequel, the work of renovation of road from South Gangotri railway crossing to under bridge Subhash Chandra Chowk is being done at a cost of Rs 60 lakh.

Bhilai Mayor Neeraj Pal visited the site and inspected the quality of the road and gave necessary guidelines to the concerned agency. He said that the road construction work should be done within the stipulated time limit, any kind of negligence in the quality will not be tolerated.

Corporation's engineer Arpit Banjare was asked to make a proposal to develop Azad Chowk. Local



residents and businessmen expressed happiness over this initiative of BMC. They asserted that this work was very necessary as it will become convenient to ply on the roads now.

Here it needs a mention that the work of maintenance of roads in Bhilai

Municipal Corporation area is going on at a fast pace, a time limit has been fixed for this.

It is informed that with its limited resources BMC is trying to provide better facilities for transportation for all the local residents, everyone's co-operation is needed.

Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Feb 05:** Miraj Entertainment Limited, which runs a cinema theatre at Civic Centre in Bhilai under its brand name Miraj Cinemas, has clarified that they have no money dispute (pending dues) with the Bhilai Steel Plant and the authorities of Bhilai Steel Plant have not taken any action directly against Miraj Entertainment Limited. In a press communiqué, Miraj Entertainment Limited has clarified that they had entered into an agreement with Bhilai based Mr Surana and Mr Kothari to run the Miraj Cinema at their property located in Civic Centre, Bhilai. This theatre was constructed on the land leased by Bhilai Steel Plant to Mr Surana and

Mr Kothari. The actual dispute was between the Original Lessees (Mr Surana and Mr Kothari) and the Lessors (Bhilai Steel Plant) consequent to which the theatre complex was sealed.

It needs to be mentioned here that the Enforcement Department of BSP's Town Services Department had sealed the land and building in which Miraj Cinema was being run in Civic Centre, Bhilai. There was a long pending dispute between the land Lessees (Mr Surana and Mr Kothari) and the Lessors (Bhilai Steel Plant) over the unpaid dues of about



Rs 6.92 crores. On Saturday, the Enforcement Department executed the decree passed by the Estate Court in favour of Bhilai Steel Plant and sealed the premises in which Miraj Cinema and a Gym were being run.

Miraj Entertainment

Limited has clarified that their company is in no way concerned with the issue. They are operating and managing the theatre under an agreement with the Owners Mr Surana and Mr Kothari. The issue per se is between the owners, who are the purported Lessees of the

land in which the theater is located and Bhilai Steel Plant who are the Lessors. There is some property title dispute between the Original Lessees and the Lessors and after protracted litigation between the parties the Estate Court has declared the Original Lessees as illegal occupants of the subject plot of land which has been seized. Miraj Entertainment Limited representative Gaurav Gupta asserted that Miraj Entertainment Limited are in no manner connected with the issue of seizure of the theatre and the name of Miraj Cinemas was unnecessarily tarnished. He added that they respect law and order completely and cooperate with the authorities in every possible way.

## BSP action was not against Miraj Entertainment Limited

## Age is no barrier to joy and happiness

Elderly people recollect school days after 55 years

Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Feb 05:** Age is just a number and it cannot be a barrier to joy and happiness, opined the elderly citizens after reliving their school days after about 55 years. The former students of Higher Secondary School, Sector 7 organised a picnic and recollecting the fun and joy they had during school picnics.

After a very long gap, they contacted each other and decided to organise a picnic on the banks of River Sheonath at Pisegaon. They enjoyed the company of schoolmates under the shade of gooseberry, mango and banyan trees.

The arrangements of this family picnic were done under the supervision



of Kapoor Singh Parihar and Shrikant Ghule. They cooked together and enjoyed the food. Neeta Gupta, Snehlata Parihar, Lakshmi, Meenakshi Verma, Mrs Ghule and others

conducted various games including house, musical chair, fugga phod etc. They realised that age cannot be a barrier to joy and happiness. They could not have been able to jump

and run like young age, but their childhood friendship was clearly visible. No one was concerned about their status and position. All the participants were of the age group between 66 to 70

years. In the company of school mates, they forgot their health problems. Everyone left for their respective homes with the desire to meet again soon.

## SEFI reiterates demand for Strategic Merger of Steel PSUs

Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Feb 05:** SEFI has reiterated its demand of strategic merger of Steel Sector PSUs instead of disinvestment and privatisation. Steel Executive Federation of India (SEFI), which is duly recognized by the Ministry of Steel, is the apex national body representing around 20000 officers of SAIL, RINL, MECON, NMDC and NISP. SEFI has been asserting that the strategic merger of PSUs will prove to be very beneficial in national interests.

SEFI Chairman Narendra Kumar Banchole said that Steel PSUs are contrary to Private sector Steel plants as they all

have been rendering service to the Nation. PSUs practice ethical business by strictly following all statutory compliances like Safety, Health, Environment, Various Taxes, CSR and many more. By this, PSUs spend more and therefore should not be compared to private companies. The "Service to the Nation" cannot be termed as "Business" in true sense. The Steel PSU's are back-bone of the country they have been key players for making India a Developing Country. SEFI expressed its strong resentment over the proposed disinvestment of Steel PSUs and demand for a strategic merger of the PSU sector. Strategic

merger of NMDC Nagarnar - RINL - SAIL as a single entity under the Ministry of Steel can synchronise the complete business model of these PSUs. Government can also extract maximum benefits from this more competitive and efficient Steel venture by curtailing the administration and control at one place. Through a letter, SEFI has requested the Minister of Finance (State) Dr Bhagwat Karad to kindly consider their request for merger of Steel PSU's to protect these national assets. The country has also witnessed the services rendered by CPSE's during COVID Pandemic times, SEFI added.

## Much awaited Chief General Manager promotion list released

Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Feb 05:** In BSP, 20 General Managers have become Chief General Managers. SAIL Management has released the list of officers to be promoted to the post of Chief General Manager on February 05, 2023. In this promotion, a total of 71 officers in SAIL were promoted as Chief General Managers, out of which 20 Chief General Managers were promoted from Bhilai Steel Plant.

Expressing happiness over this promotion, SEFI Chairman, and President of the Officers' Association, Narendra Kumar Banchole has congratulated all the newly promoted Chief General Managers. SEFI President expressed hope that the promoted executives will contribute in setting new

levels of progress and excellent performance, so that Maharatna Company SAIL could achieve new heights in its production, productivity and profitability. Along with this, SEFI Chairman thanked the SAIL management and BSP management for satisfactory coverage and sensitive adjustment of transfers.

The newly promoted Chief General Managers of Bhilai Steel Plant include AK Joshi, AK, Shankar, DK Badopadhyay, GP Singh, HK Pathak, Jitendra Kumar, KC Mishra, Munish Goyal, Pratyush Sharma, Pankaj Puri, Pradeep Kumar Mishra, Pranay Kumar, RB Gaharwar, RG Dalal, Rakesh Joshi, Sudhir Kumar, Sushmita Dey and from Medical Department - Dr Kaushalendra Thakur, Dr Rajeev Pal and Dr Vinita Dwivedi.

## Shapath Foundation organises 'Thank You Bhilai'



Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Feb 05:** Social organisation, Shapath Foundation organised a colourful programme Thank You Bhilai just like previous years with the aim being to look back on the achievements and express gratitude to the city of Bhilai. The venue of the celebration was Shaheed Park, Sector-05 Bhilai.

The Chief Guest on the occa-

sion was Mahadev Kavre, Divisional Commissioner Durg while NK Banchole, President, BSP Officers Association, M Ravindranath Chief Medical Officer Sector 9 & Sameer Swarup Chief General Manager Mines Rowghat were present as special guests.

The program was started with Sadbhavana cross country race (male and female) which was flagged off by the chief



guest. Thereafter, about 2000 colorful balloons were released in the sky with the slogan of Thank You Bhilai. Prominent personalities who have brought laurels not only in the state but also in the country and abroad, were honoured with "Bhilai Ratna", including IP Mishra (Education), S Swaminathan Iyer (Industry and Trade), Daljit Singh posthumously for social service, Jagannath Yadav

(Sports), Rajeshwar Rao (Environment), Dr Sanjeev Issar (Medical), Nalini Srivastava (Literature), Sonali Chakraborty (Women Empowerment), Rajni Rajak (Arts & Music). In the field of social service, 10 institutions were honoured with the Vishisht Seva Samman for their dedicated work, including Sarvadharm Seva Sanstha, Sant Nirankari Charitable Foundation, Jan



Samarpan Seva Sanstha, Geet Vitaan Kala Kendra, Darul Rahat Alima Social Society, Aggarwal Samaj Bhilai, Shakti Pravaah Udaan Ek Manzil, Gurdwara Management Committee Nehru Nagar, All India Telugu Community Welfare Association and Sneh Sampada. For the first time, a question-and-answer competition was also organised with the audience with city of Bhilai

as the central theme which was conducted by journalist Yashwant Sahu. At the outset, welcome address was given by President of Shapath Foundation Ashok Gupta. While the report of the organization was narrated by patron Virendra Satpathy and vote of thanks was addressed by Amitabh Bhattacharya and Anil Shukla conducted the programme.

## Budget will help India become a global leader: Meghwal

### Highlights merits of budget

**Raipur, Feb 05:** The union budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will make the country a global leader, Union Minister of Culture and Parliamentary Affairs, Arjun Ram Meghwal said in a press conference held at BJP state office in Kushabhau Thackeray Complex on Sunday.

With increase in the amount for 'Pradhan Mantri Awaas' in the budget a large number of houses will be built in the country which will create more job opportunities for the construction labourers, he said while highlighting the nuances of the general budget. According to Meghwal the budget was presented with a focus of inclusive development. Budget is a technical subject and those who do not understand it,



are saying that the MGN-REGA fund has been cut which is not the case at all, said Meghwal.

He said that the initial provision made in MGN-REGA was decided on the basis of review and there would be a provision of supplementary amount as per the requirement. Those who are saying that MGNREGA fund has been cut, should know who will get the benefit of the increase in 'Pradhan Mantri Awaas' fund, he said.

Charging Chhattisgarh Chief Minister with spreading confusion he said that Congress should study the budget estimates of Manmohan government's MGNREGA and

the figures of Modi government's budget estimates of the center and accordingly keep such figures in front of the public. Looking at the agriculture sector, there is a provision of Rs 20 lakh crore for loans, he said while discussing the specifics of the budget. Chhattisgarh is inhabited by people of all castes including a large number of tribal, he said adding that special status that should have been given to 12 castes, was not given and no arrangement was made for water, house, and education to them. By including such people in the category of tribal, a provision of budget of Rs 15,000 crore has been made for them as well, he said.

A provision has also been made in the budget to

provide free legal aid to the poor prisoners, Meghwal said, adding that if they are innocent they will come out to join mainstream and contribute to the development of the country like other citizens after their acquittal with the legal aid.

According to him India is leading in 5G. The technological development that India has made is in front of everyone, he said. 'Vishwa Karma' is a new experiment in the budget, he said, adding that manual laborers would be brought under the ambit of 'Vishwa Karma' and provided resources. 'India is a world guru in Yoga and Ayurveda. In medical science, we developed the vaccine during the COVID pandemic and also served humanity in the world. India will lead in all areas. For India to become a developed nation, this is the budget for inclusive development', said Meghwal.

provide free legal aid to the poor prisoners, Meghwal said, adding that if they are innocent they will come out to join mainstream and contribute to the development of the country like other citizens after their acquittal with the legal aid.

## Three national leaders take stock of preparations



### By Congress for 3-day 85th National Plenary Session in Nava Raipur

**Raipur, Feb 05:** Preparations for the Congress 85th National Plenary Session in state capital of Chhattisgarh are in full swing and to take stock of the preparations, the National Treasurer Congress Pawan Bansal, In-Charge General Secretary KC

Venugopal and general secretary Tariq Anwar arrived here on Sunday morning and visited the venue.

At the Airport, the office bearers were welcomed by CM Bhupesh Baghel, PCC Chief Mohan Markam, Minister Shiv Kumar Daharia, Tamradhwaj Sahu, and other ministers, MLAs and PCC office bearers and party workers in large number.

During this speaking to media persons KC Venugopal said that they

have come to see the preparations for the three-day AICC 85th National Plenary Session to be held in Nava Raipur on Feb 24, 25 and 26 and it could be a game-changer. The party leaders first visited the Circuit House and from there they left for Nava Raipur at the proposed venue for the Plenary Session. At 3:00 pm they reviewed about the preparations made and then all three left for Delhi by evening flight.

## Absconding accused nabbed from Amritsar

### In cheating people of funds worth Rs 8 cr

**Raipur, Feb 05:** One of the absconding accused for last 8 yrs and Director of a Chit Fund Company Swarna Singh has been nabbed by the Raipur police from Medical Avenue of Majhita Road, near Amritsar of Punjab. Singh was operating through Greendlay Forest India Limited Company and Greendlay's Projects and Development from a small office near Banstall in capital city and had cheated people of Raipur and nearby areas of funds worth Rs 8 crore and ran away. Complaints against him were lodged in many thanas of capital city.

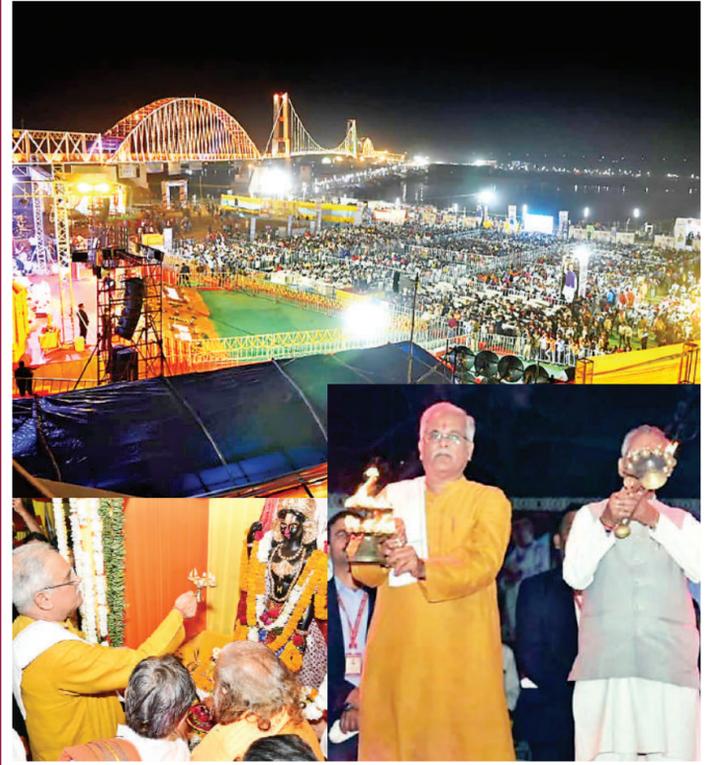
The case is that of Golebazar area. The complainants in their complaint have charged that the Directors of Greendlay Forest India Limited, Greendlay's Projects & Developers viz. Alok Kumar Bhadra, Santosh Sikadar, Swarna Singh and other have



cheated the applicant and others by making attractive offers to double or triple their income with investment in their Chit Fund Company and by doing so got deposit worth Rs 8 crore and ran away.

A case under section 420, 467, 468, 471, 409, 120B, 34 of IPC and under section 10 of The Prize Chits Money Circulation Scheme Act was filed against them. In this case, Director AK Bhadra, and agent Krishna Prasad have been arrested and others were absconding. The police through its inquiry got confirmation about Swarna Singh's presence in Amritsar and so located his spot and nabbed him and is now being brought to Raipur on Transit remand.

## PUNNI MELA



Top: Colourful lighting has been done for the Rajim Maghi Punni mela starting from Sunday in Rajim. CM and others offer prayers at the confluence of three rivers and to Lord Shri Rajiv Lochan at the temple.

## Dharna venue shifted to Naya Raipur, near Rajyotsav

### For demonstrators of 100+ and those below 100 can stage peaceful protest at Budhatalab

**Raipur, Feb 05:** For any large-scale dharna or demonstration, the district administration has shifted the venue to Naya Raipur at Tuta village in front of Rajyotsav ground. So for any dharna of 100 plus persons will now be held in Naya Raipur, sector-23 in Gram Tuta, in front of Rajyotsav Ground and order in this regard was released by the Collector late in the evening.

District Collector Dr Sarveshwar Bhure informed that keeping in mind the public sentiments, the dharna venue at



city's Budhatalab has been shifted to Naya Raipur, in front of Rajyotsav Maidan and order in this regard has been issued. Now only the demonstrations or protest below 100 persons will be held at the old dharna venue, near Budhatalab and that too in a peaceful manner. For strength above 100 the dharna venue will be Naya Raipur.

It is notable here that due to frequent demonstrations and protest by the demonstrators at Budhatalab there was traf-

fic -jam like situation in Sarafa Bazar, City Kotwali, Satti Bazar, posing problems to passer-bys due to heavy traffic pressure and it was also affecting the commercial activities. Presently all the government related works of the state government are carried out from the state secretariat in Nava Raipur and since majority of the demands of the demonstrators are related to state government, therefore the dharna venue has been shifted there.

## India will emerge as biggest economic power after America and China: Meghwal



**Raipur, Feb 05:** If Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel wants to run government on the basis of communists he will not be able to do it because Swami Vivekananda had said that communism will end, Union Culture and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Arjun Meghwal said here today. Meghwal, who came to explain the budget to the intellectuals, criticized the previous governments regarding the budget.

Meghwal, while talking on the Union Budget at a hotel on VIP Road here said, "If the state government makes any proposal, it will build a museum or something in the name of Swami Vivekananda so that people can take inspiration to move forward." According to him Asia will lead the world in the 21st century and if this happens then the country leading Asia should be India. "Our budget is the one to make this vision a reality", he said.

He said that earlier the budget of the country was not taken as a priority as it was presented at 5 pm. Atal ji's government rescheduled budget presentation at 11 am. Even then this budget continued to be presented on the last day of February i.e. 28 or 29 February.

"Prime Minister Modi started presenting this budget on February 1, so that the provi-

sions made in the budget can be spent on time. Earlier governments used to take a long time to get the budget passed start spending late. Now everything is done through planning, this is also an economic reform", he said.

According to Meghwal budget amount was not fully utilized in previous regime. Modi government is spending a lot of money and connectivity of the country is being improved a lot, he said, adding that work is being done on roads, airports and even in hilly areas. Work is in progress to make transportation easier through water as well, he said and added that with all these schemes, India will become world guru.

The Union Minister said, after Covid-19, the economies of many developed countries collapsed and their GDP remained only one or two percent but India emerged as the fastest developing country in the whole world. In times to come, India will be the biggest economic power after America and China, he said.

According to Meghwal consumption is a very important part for growth in GDP and many schemes like Pradhan Mantri Awaas are increasing the country's consumption. Cement, sand, bricks will be sold with implementation of Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana,

he said, adding that people will get wages, paint and varnish items will be used. "After the house is built, people will also buy TV, fridge. These are such schemes which increase the consumption of many things at once and people of every class get benefit from this", he said.

The conference of intellectuals was attended by MP Sunil Soni, former Ministers Punnullal Mohile, Ajay Chandrakar, Amar Agrawal, BJP state general secretary Kedar Kashyap, treasurer Nandan Jain, Naresh Gupta, Amit Chimnani, Nishchay Bajpai, Rajesh Agrawal, Ganesh Shankar Mishra and representatives of CA Association, CS Association, Chamber of Commerce, CAT, Bar Association, Income Tax Bar Association and several social organisations.

## IIM holds MDP for CAs



**Raipur, Feb 05:** Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Raipur is at present conducting a management development program (MDP) aimed at equipping the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India's (ICAI) meritorious young professionals with management knowledge and procedural skills which will help them in their careers. The participants in this MDP are the 77 rank-holders who are among the top 100 candidates in the immediate past round of ICAI's examina-

tions. The MDP inauguration ceremony took place on January 30, 2023 and was attended by ICAI officials. Through this MDP, the top talent in the field of accounting is being trained in various important areas such as understanding self and others, emotional intelligence, time management, managing stress, attaining well-being, building teams, developing trust, motivating subordinates through goal-setting, job enrichment, and fairness, using influence

constructively, practicing positive and impactful leadership, crisis management, problem solving, ethics and decision-making, effective communication, public speaking, and negotiation skills. These MDP inputs are likely to contribute to personal development and professional effectiveness of the participants. The entire MDP is being taught by the resource persons of Indian Institute of Management Raipur.

Indian Institute of Management Raipur, in accordance with its mission of enhancing management excellence in the nation and facilitating the nation-building, views this MDP for the top-ranking Chartered Accountants as a contribution to enhancing the effectiveness of a very important category of professionals - Chartered Accountants - in India.

## BSS observes 128th birth anniversary of Swami Pranavananda



**Raipur, Feb 05:** On Sunday at Bharat Sevashram Sangh Pranavanand Academy premises, Yugacharya Shrimat Swami Pranavanand Maharaj's 128th Arvibhav Jayanti and 'Shri Maghi Purnima' was celebrated with religious fervour. Yagya rituals, aarti, religious discourse, bhajan kirtan by members of Sunhari Yaadein Musical Group was conducted on this occasion. Clothes were distributed to the poor.

Mahant Shri Ved Prakash Maharaj from Lakshmi Narayan Trust graced the occasion as the chief guest. Swami Shivrupanand Maharaj, Swami Sureshanand Maharaj and Swami Pranand Maharaj performed the puja rituals. Guardians, Monks and devotees and students, in large numbers, were present in the school premises. The program was concluded with the distribution of Bhog Prasad.

## State's TT team for Junior, Youth declared

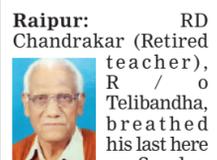
**Raipur, Feb 05:** The state's Table Tennis (TT) team for the 84th Inter-State Youth and Junior National Championship to be held in Chennai from Feb 8 to 16 has been declared. For the above championship, MLA Raipur (North) and Chairman CHB Kulddeep Juneja declared the Chhattisgarh's team for Junior and Youth (Boys & Girls) here on Sunday. On this occasion Sharad Shukla and Pradeep Joshi and other office bearers extended greetings to all the selected players and hoped for best of their performances. To take part in this championship, the state's

Junior and Youth (Girls) team will be leaving on Feb 6 and that Junior and Youth (boys) team on Feb 11. The team's coach is Miraj (Raipur) and Manager is Geetanjali Pathak (Durg). The team declared is as follows: Youth (Boys)- (Under-19): Karan Malhotra (Raipur); Ramji Kumar (Raipur); Vishal Dekate (Raipur); Arjun Malhotra (Raipur). Addl Entry- Harshit Kedia (Raipur) and Siddha Dhuppada (Raipur). Youth (Girls)- (under 19): Anchal Bareth (Raipur); Pragya Pathak (Durg); Avni Sharma

(Raipur); Aditi Khuntia (Bilaspur). Addl. Entry- Arjun Malhotra (Raipur); Harshit Kedia (Raipur); Siddha Dhuppada (Raipur). Junior (Boys)- (Under-17): Ramji Kumar (Raipur); Vishal Dekate (Raipur); Karan Malhotra (Raipur); Aman Verma (Durg). Addl. Entry- Arjun Malhotra (Raipur); Harshit Kedia (Raipur) and Siddha Dhuppada (Raipur). Junior (Girls)- (under-17): Aditi Khuntia (Bilaspur); Suchi Verma (Durg) and Tisa Hardel (Durg); Pragya Pathak (Durg). The above information was given by Vinay Baiswade.

## OBITUARY

### RD Chandrakar



**Raipur:** RD Chandrakar (Retired teacher), R / o Telibandha, breathed his last here on Sunday. He was 85. The final rites were held at crematorium in Shatabdi Nagar, Raipur. He was father of Srikant, Ramakant, and Umakant Chandrakar.

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## Distribution of subsidy of more than Rs 1.5 cr to 888 beneficiaries

### Under Electric Vehicle Policy

10% subsidy on the price of the vehicle to promote electric vehicles in Ch'garh

**Raipur, Feb 05:** Under the Electric Vehicle Policy 2022 in the state, the subsidy is being distributed continuously to the beneficiaries by the Transport Department. In this context, distribution of subsidy amounting to Rs 01 crore 55 lakh 90 thousand 515 is going on to 888 electric vehicle owners. Before this, under the first phase, subsidy worth more than Rs.80 lakh has been distributed to 404 beneficiaries across the state in the month of

December. In this regard, Transport Minister Mr. Mohammad Akbar said that every possible initiative is being taken to promote electric vehicles in Chhattisgarh as per the intention of Chief Minister Mr. Bhupesh Baghel. Under this, any person who buys an electric vehicle can get subsidy from the state government. For this, the vehicle seller dealer has to give his account number and IFS code. 10 percent of the value of the vehicle, subject to a maximum of Rs 1.5 lakh, will be directly transferred by the Transport Department to the account of the electric vehicle buyer.

Transport Minister Mr. Akbar has also informed that in view of the global problem of air pollution

at present, there is a dire need to promote more and more electric vehicles. In view of this, all possible help is being provided by the state government to encourage the mission related to electric vehicles in Chhattisgarh. In this context, subsidies are being distributed to attract customers towards electric vehicles, which will continue. He said that the state government is providing various facilities and necessary help to the people to encourage the use of electric vehicles. According to the information received from the Transport Commissioner Mr. Dipanshu Kabra, at present, distribution of subsidy amounting to more than one and a half crore rupees is going on to 888

electric vehicle owners from different districts of the state. In the subsidy being distributed now, the maximum subsidy of Rs 72 lakh 78 thousand has been provided to 401 beneficiaries in Bilaspur, Rs 40 lakh to 201 beneficiaries in Raipur and Rs 10 lakh to 86 beneficiaries in Balodabazar. Similarly, Rs 12 lakh 4 thousand to 74 beneficiaries in Durg, Rs 4 lakh 64 thousand to 43 beneficiaries in Janjgir, Rs 3 lakh 82 thousand to 36 beneficiaries in Jashpur, Rs 3 lakh 25 thousand to 26 beneficiaries in Gorela-Pendra-Marwahi, distribution of subsidy amounting to Rs. 7 lakh 40 thousand to 18 beneficiaries in Mahasamund and Rs. one lakh 69 thousand to 3 beneficiaries in Mungeli.

## CM visits Sadguru Kabir Saheb Temple



**Raipur, Feb 05:** Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel reached the temple of Sadguru Kabir Saheb located at Panthashree

Huzur Mukundamaninam Saheb Satsang Bhawan in Kharsia here on Friday. Here paid obeisance to

Sadguru Kabir Saheb and offered prayers according to the rituals. Assembly Speaker Dr Charandas Mahant, Home

Minister Tamradhwaj Sahu, Higher Education Minister Umesh Patel were present on the occasion.

## Historic decision to restore old pension scheme: Bhagat

## Warm welcome to Cong SC/ST cell leaders

## Annual Tech-festival Aavartan inaugurated



Participated in the new year meeting and prize distribution ceremony of the Officers-Employees Federation

**Raipur, Feb 05:** Food and Culture Minister Mr. Amarjit Bhagat said that officers-employees and people's representatives will together discharge the responsibility for the progress of the state, only then the dream of 'Garhbo Nava Chhattisgarh' will come true. Minister Mr. Bhagat was addressing the New Year meeting and prize distribution ceremony organized under the aegis of the Gazetted Officers and Employees Union at the Head of the Department's office premises located in Naya Raipur Indravati Bhawan. At the function, Minister Bhagat felicitated the players of the Nava Raipur Premium League Tournament by giving them medals and certificates. Minister Bhagat said that the officers and employees are engaged in official work every day. Due to this, their mind gets bored many times, cultural and recreational programs should be organized along with work, so that new energy can be communicated in them. He said that Chief Minister Mr. Bhupesh Baghel has given an opportunity to the officers-employees to work with new energy and enthusiasm by giving them two days off in a week. He said that the Chief Minister has restarted the old pension

scheme with the aim of providing security to the old age of the officer-employees and their families. This is an important and historic decision in the interest of the employees. Food Minister Bhagat said that during the Covid-19 period, when people were struggling to save lives from the Corona epidemic, then with the cooperation of the state government, the officers and employees were engaged in saving the patients by risking their lives. Mr. Bhagat said that there are many states in India which have cut the salaries of their employees during the Corona period, but Chief Minister Mr. Bhupesh Baghel did not cut the salaries of his officers and employees keeping in mind their interest. He said that during the Corona period, the Chief Minister worked for the people of the state by distributing free and cheap ration to the people under the Universal PDS. He said that earlier there used to be different types of ration cards, but after coming to power, our government worked to ensure availability of same ration card and ration for both rich and poor.

**Raipur, Feb 05:** In a meeting of Adivasi Congress and SC/ST cell at Rajiv Bhawan, National Coordinator SC/ST Raju Saheb, Chhattisgarh Congress Incharge Kumar Shaileja, Adivasi Congress National President Shivaji Rao Moghe, National VP Deepak Vajji, PCC President Mohan Markam and other leaders were present, informs Adivasi Congress dis-



trict president Bhavani Singh Markam. All the leaders were given a floral welcome by Adivasi Congress state president Janak Dhruv. Markam informed, leaders were welcomed all the way from the airport to Rajiv Bhawan. In the programme Pavan Ratre, Sashi Bhagat, Ghanshyam Vishwakarma and others were present.

**Raipur, Feb 05:** National Institute of Technology Raipur inaugurated its annual tech-festival 'Aavartan 22-23' on Saturday. The Chief Guest for the inauguration ceremony was Manoj Khare, MD, CSPDCL. Dr. Samir Vajpayee encouraged students to involve themselves with extracurricular activities which will help them form natural problem solving skills among them. Dr. (Mrs.) AB Soni explained how such events investigate the potential within students by providing real life technical challenges. Manoj Khare passed on his vision of building sustainable and environmentally friendly

technologies to solve people's problems by this generation of engineers. He wished great success to Team Technocracy and hoped for new sustainable technologies to emerge through events like Aavartan. Day 01 of Aavartan included a science exhibition, known as 'Vigyaan' where teams of students proposed their solutions to the problem statements



provided by the institute. Working models and prototypes on topics like Groundwater data analysis and visualization, A robot helper for carrying luggage at bus and railway stations, A chatbot to address various hostel issues and provide support, Quick count of trees using flying drones, and many more were presented by students from institutions all across India.

advantages of using Chemoports rather than traditional cannulas. The ports can stay in place as long as the physician recommends. So, unlike cannulas, one doesn't need to replace it frequently and thus have lesser visits to the hospital. A study indicates that 92% of the patients had an improved quality of life with Chemoports. Committed to patient safety 'PortShala', a medical education program for healthcare professionals has aimed to create awareness on Chemoports that may provide advantages to patients' lifestyle and comfort, as well as the long-term health of the veins of hands and arms. On successful completion of two years PortShala announces a microsite <https://www.bdportshala.com> for healthcare professional and patients.

## Chemoports changing the course of chemotherapy for cancer patients

**Raipur, Feb 05:** Chemotherapy is one of the common treatment lines for cancer that is aimed at killing cancer cells, to prevent it from spreading, and to slow the growth rate. This process also shrinks the size of the tumour. For the intravenous delivery, the drugs need to be given through a Vascular Access Device (VAD). There are 3 main types of these devices, a humble I.V. cannula, PICC line

or a Chemoport. VADs can be placed in the veins in the arm, elbow or a large vein of neck, chest or groin. A Chemoport is an advanced VAD that is surgically placed under the skin for easy and repeated access. Dr. Mou Roy, Director Surgical and Clinical Oncology, said, "Chemo Ports offer high clinical benefits to not just the patient but also to the healthcare practitioners who can facilitate an

enhanced course of treatment for cancer patients. Chemo Ports can help reduce patient risks in two ways: limited hospital visits and lower infection probability that occurs from other IV devices or catheters. It is vital that patient care and safety be placed at a high pedestal to ensure minimum complication or side-effects during the course of treatment." Oncologists all over the world are recognizing the

advantages of using Chemoports rather than traditional cannulas. The ports can stay in place as long as the physician recommends. So, unlike cannulas, one doesn't need to replace it frequently and thus have lesser visits to the hospital. A study indicates that 92% of the patients had an improved quality of life with Chemoports. Committed to patient safety 'PortShala', a medical education program for healthcare professionals has aimed to create awareness on Chemoports that may provide advantages to patients' lifestyle and comfort, as well as the long-term health of the veins of hands and arms. On successful completion of two years PortShala announces a microsite <https://www.bdportshala.com> for healthcare professional and patients.

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## Annual function held at Patel Vidya Mandir

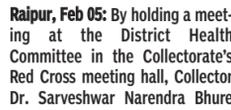
## Camps will be set up in rural locations for differently-abled persons

## Application process for Haj-2023 to be started from next week



**Raipur, Feb 05:** The annual function and teachers' felicitation was held at Patel Vidya Mandir school Raipur on Saturday. Journalist Sanjeev Gupta and state president of Kosariya Patel Marar Samaaj Rajendra Nayak commenced the function by lighting of the ceremonial lamp. This was followed by presentation of the annual report, cultural programme and prize distribution by the chief guest. Various performances like 'Bollywood pop', Rani Laxmibai's epic, 'Social Media Awareness', presented by the students mesmerised the audience. The function concluded with the vote of thanks and singing of the National Anthem. The management of the school congratulated everyone for the smooth conduct of the function.

**Raipur, Feb 05:** By holding a meeting at the District Health Committee in the Collectorate's Red Cross meeting hall, Collector Dr. Sarveshwar Narendra Bhure provided the required directives to health officials. He requested that the recruitment procedure for various positions within the National Health Mission be completed. Given instructions, he asked for the district's health center facility to be finished as quickly as possible. District Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Akash Chikara, Assistant Collector, Jayant Nahata, Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr. Mithilesh Chowdhary, and other medical officers were at the meeting. During the discussion, while examining maternal health, he directed the Chirayu team to give comprehensive care to children with critical illnesses. Similarly,



directed to inspect and test children with hearing impairment, vision impairment, and heart illness, as well as manage correct treatment. Do it in conjunction with women and child development, and social welfare. He also directed to set up camps in rural locations for people that are differentlyabled. He also directed that institutional deliveries be expedited. He requested that primary healthcare delivery points be expanded. He expressed his concern with the lack of delivery in health centers and directed that it be improved in the coming month. Along with this, he asked all the block medical officers to review health centers institution-wise and



bring progress in this regard. Meanwhile, during the review meeting, the team was directed under the R.B.S.K. program to visit the school as per the action plan and update the entry of 100 percent of the screened children on the portal. He mentioned making spectacles mandatory for children whose vision is poor during the screening. Similarly, medical colleges, district hospitals, and civil hospitals, associated with the Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan should provide all primary healthcare facilities to the women. The Collector mandated that all women covered by the Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan should receive sonography, which

had not previously been done. The Collector stated the average number of patients in each Haat bazaar should be increased and also reviewed Mukhyamantri Haat Bazar Clinic Yojana. Additionally, the Collector point wise reviewed newly constructed buildings, payment of Janani Suraksha Yojana beneficiaries, Parivar Kalyan ke lakshy, and entry in the RCH portal, health program review, National T.B eradication program, leprosy program, health and wellness review, the progress of tobacco control program, mental health program, Hamar Clinic, Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, Dr. Khubchand Baghel swasthy sahayata yojana. Prior to this, The Collector instructed all the concerned officers to follow the instructions given according to the target.

**Raipur, Feb 05:** Haj Committee of India, Chairman, Government of India Mr. P. Abdullahkutty reviewed the Haj arrangements of the state by reaching the office of the Chhattisgarh State Haj Committee during his stay in Raipur. Chhattisgarh State Haj Committee Chairman Mohammad Aslam Khan informed about the Haj arrangements being made by the State Haj Committee and the facilities provided by the state government. Haj Committee of India, Chairman, Government of India Mr. P. Abdullahkutty appreciating all the Haj arrangements and the facilities being provided to Haj pilgrims, he assured that the process of applications for Haj 2023 would be started from next week. On the special demand of the



State Haj Committee, he assured to provide all possible facilities to the Hajis of the state. Chhattisgarh State Haj Committee Chairman Mohammad Aslam Khan and members Haj Committee of India, Chairman, Government of India Mr. A. P. Abdullahkutty was presented with a bouquet and a state pot. On this occasion, State Haj Committee Chairman Mohammad Aslam Khan, especially R.D.A. Vice President Mr. Shiv Singh Thakur, Former Vice President of Urdu Academy Mrs. Najma Azim, Haj Committee Member Maulana Dr. Qari Imran Ashrafi, Maulana Qari Syed Ashfaq Ahmed Anjum, Mr. Shamim Akhtar, Mr. Mohammad Imran, Dr. Mrs. Rubina Alvi, Secretary Mr. Sajid Memon were present.

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## Assembly Speaker Dr. Charandas Mahant inaugurated RIPA in Pendri Gauthan

**Janjgir-Champa, Feb 05:** Speaker of Chhattisgarh Vidhansabha Dr. Charandas Mahant inaugurated RIPA Yojana at Pendri Gauthan under Janjgir-Champa district. While inaugurating Poojan Samagri Unit, Kosa Unit, Mushroom Unit in Gauthan under



RIPA scheme, the Speaker discussed with the concerned beneficiaries about the work being done by them. On this occasion, various public representatives including Chairman of Gau Sewa Ayog Rajeshree Mahant Ramsunder Das, Municipality President Bhagwan Das Gadhewal, Collector

Richa Prakash Chaudhary, Superintendent of Police Vijay Aggarwal, District Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Dr. Jyoti Patel were present. Meanwhile, On October 2, the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel launched the state-level Mahatma Gandhi Rural

Industrial Park Scheme (RIPA) in all districts. Shaded livelihood activities in the district have begun today to connect villagers with employment under RIPA. This will enable the women and youth of Pendri and surrounding areas to gain self-employment and improve their economic situation.



**BRIEF**



**Union Home Minister Amit Shah during his visit to Thakur Anukulchandra's Satsang Ashram in Deoghar district, Sunday.**

**Suicide**

**■ Indore:** A 27-year-old nurse allegedly committed suicide by giving herself an overdose of anaesthesia due to a failed love affair in Madhya Pradesh's Indore city, police said on Sunday. Pooja Ganjan allegedly committed suicide by injecting herself with an overdose of anaesthesia at her house two days ago, inspector Sanjay Shukla of Aerodrome police station told PTI.

**Bomb blast**

**■ Kolkata:** The death of a Trinamool Congress worker and injury to the brother of a ruling party panchayat chief in a bomb blast at Margram in Birbhum district led to a blame game among political parties on Sunday. While immediate family members of the deceased Newton Sheikh alleged that Congress supporters were responsible for the attack, West Bengal Congress president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said the party has little presence at Margram to be able to involve in any kind of physical attack.

**Close shave**

**■ Mumbai:** Popular television actor Urvashi Dholakia's car met with an accident in Maharashtra's Thane district adjoining Mumbai, but she did not suffer any injury, a police official said on Sunday. The accident took place on Saturday in Kashimira locality when a school bus carrying children dashed against the actor's car from behind while she was on way to a studio in Mira Road area for shooting, the official said.

**Acquit**

**■ Thane:** A court in Thane district has acquitted a 40-year-old man accused in a case under the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA), giving him the benefit of doubt. Special Judge A N Shirsikar, hearing cases pertaining to the MCOCA, in the order on Saturday held that the prosecution failed to prove the charges against the jailed accused, Mohammad Nadeem Merchant alias Nadeem Chikna, defence counsel Poonit Mahimkar said on Sunday.

**Threaten**

**■ Jammu:** Residents of Dhangri in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district on Sunday expressed concern over the "failure" of security agencies in tracing the terrorists behind the twin attacks in the village and demanded justice for the victims. The villagers threatened to go on a hunger strike if the security agencies are unable to eliminate the terrorists within the next 15 days.

## KCR invokes Shivaji in Maha

**● BRS vows to form farmers' govt**

Nanded (Maharashtra), Feb 05 (PTI)

Recalling Chhatrapati Shivaji's achievements, Telangana Chief Minister and BRS President K Chandrasekhar Rao on Sunday said his party will take a pledge at Shivneri, the erstwhile Maratha ruler's birthplace, to form a government for farmers' welfare in the country. Speaking at a public meeting here, he said within 10 days, the BRS' party vehicles will go to every village in all 288 Assembly constituencies in Maharashtra to form farmers' committees. "We will visit the birthplace of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj at Shivneri, bow our head and take oath for making a farmers' government. The process to make farmers'



**BRS President and Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao addresses party joining meeting, in Nanded, Sunday.**

committees in entire Maharashtra will begin," he said. Leaders belonging to various political parties joined BRS and KCR, as Rao is known as, welcomed them by offering pink scarves. "Within a few days, BRS party work will start in Maharashtra. Within eight to 10 days, BRS vehicles will come to the village in Maharashtra. Committees will be formed. In order to unite

farmers in Maharashtra which has 288 Assembly constituencies, all 288 vehicles will start at once," he further said. "I request you (farmers) to unite. I will also visit western Maharashtra, Vidarbha and north Maharashtra," Rao added. Pointing out that Maharashtra has recorded the highest number of farmers' suicides in the country, BRS president and Telangana Chief

Minister Chandrasekhar Rao said here on Sunday that the time has come for peasants to take the reins of the country. Addressing Bharat Rashtra Samithi's (BRS) first public meeting outside Telangana at Nanded, he said political parties and leaders are winning in polls but people are losing. "That's why BRS slogan is 'Abki baar, kisan sarkar' (This time around, a government for the farmers). If we unite, it is not impossible.

In our country, farmers constitute more than 42 per cent and if the number of farm labourers is also added to that it will be more than 50 per cent which is sufficient to form government", Rao said. "Today, time has come. 75 years is a long period. Farmers should also be able to write and make rules," he said.

## 'Unaccounted' cash of Rs 6 lakh recovered

**● In poll-bound Ramgarh**

Ramgarh (Uttarakhand), Feb 05 (PTI)

The Jharkhand Police have recovered "unaccounted" cash of Rs 6 lakh from a car in poll-bound Ramgarh district, an official said on Sunday.

The recovery was made at a check post on the Ranchi-Patna National Highway in Chutupalu valley late on Saturday night when the car was on its way to Ramgarh from Ranchi's Lapung area.

"The police seized unaccounted cash of Rs 6 lakh during a checking drive," Returning Officer for the Ramgarh assembly by-poll, Md Javed Hussain, told

PTI. The occupants of the car were not able to produce valid documents for carrying cash, the official said, adding that the travellers claimed that they had plans to buy some machines.

An investigation has been initiated, and no one has been arrested, he said.

The district administration has set up a panel, headed by deputy development commissioner (DDC) Nagendra Kumar Sinha, to enquire into the cash seizure cases, another official said.

In view of the upcoming assembly by-poll, as many as six check posts have been set up in national and state highways and other roads passing through Ramgarh for "checking of

illegal flow of cash, arms, ammunition, liquor and other things that can influence the by-election", Hussain, also Ramgarh sub-divisional officer, said.

The process of filing nomination is underway and will conclude on February 7.

The Ramgarh by-poll will be held on February 27 and the counting of votes will be on March 2.

Unaccounted cash of Rs 1 lakh was earlier recovered from senior AJSU party leader Roshanlal Chaudhary's car in a check post on the Ramgarh-Bokaro highway.

Chaudhary however, had claimed that cash was being ferried to his father-in-law in Ranchi's Silli for an urgent need.

## J&K's fruit industry to get a boost with high-density plantation

Jammu, Feb 05 (PTI)

Jammu and Kashmir is all set to revolutionize its fruit industry with the introduction of high-density plantation (HDP) and production of quality planting material, a move that will help increase farmers' income, an official said.

By producing quality planting material of elite varieties for different fruit crops, the industry will be able to harness its full potential and contribute significantly to the economy of Jammu and Kashmir, Additional Chief Secretary, Agricultural production

**GAME CHANGER**

Department, Atal Dulloo said.

The project aims to enhance the production capacity of planting material to 111 lakh in the first five years, develop 390 hectares of nurseries in public and private sectors, rejuvenate 2,000 hectares of orchard areas, and produce planting material to cover 5,500 hectares under HDP of 12 fruit crops.

HDP alone has the potential to increase productivity and income in apple, walnut, and other fruit crops

by more than twice the current levels, he noted.

"The goal is to make Jammu and Kashmir a self-reliant bio-economy by harnessing the economic potential of its diversified fruit crops," he told PTI. Dulloo highlighted that the current lack of quality planting material in the UT limits the potential of the fruit industry and costs the region approximately Rs 500 crore in imports, which also brings in new pests and diseases. "The mission of the project is to domestically produce quality planting material, reduce imports, prioritize high-den-

sity plantation of fruit crops, transform old orchards into more productive orcharding systems, and diversify the JK fruit industry to capture the national and international market." The department of horticulture in collaboration with the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST) and Indian Council of Agricultural Research-Central Institute of Temperate Horticulture (ICAR-CITH), have come together to provide technological intervention for this new project.

## Musharraf gifted birth certificate during 2005 India visit

New Delhi, Feb 05 (PTI)

Pakistan's former military ruler General Pervez Musharraf, the architect of the 1999 Kargil War, was born at a civic hospital in Delhi in undivided India.

He received his birth certificate over six decades later during his visit here in 2005.

Musharraf died in Dubai on Sunday at the age of 79 after battling an incurable disease. He lived in self-imposed exile in the UAE to avoid criminal charges against him in Pakistan.

Born on August 11, 1943, a turbulent time of the Second World War and India's freedom movement had gained momentum, Musharraf migrated to the newly formed Pakistan with his family after the Partition in 1947. According to old



**In this Sunday, April 17, 2005 file photo, Pakistan's then President Pervez Musharraf receives his birth certificate from then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in New Delhi.**

records, he was born at a civic-run hospital here, now known as the Mrs Girdhari Lal Maternity Hospital which comes under the Municipal Corporation of Delhi.

Located near the Kamla Market in the heart of Delhi, it is one of the oldest hospitals in the city and has served largely people residing in old Delhi. "His (Musharraf's) fam-

ily lived in old Delhi, and two hospitals are near it — Victoria Zenana Hospital (renamed Kasturba Hospital after Independence) in Daryaganj and Girdhari Lal Maternity Hospital.

"We knew that he was born in Delhi, and today learned from news reports that he died in Dubai," a former senior civic official told PTI.

When Musharraf visited India as Pakistan's president in April 2005, the government of India had given him a special gift — his birth certificate.

The senior civic official, who retired in 2011, said, in the 1940s and even in 2005, things were birth and death records were kept manually. "It must not have been an easy job to look for the birth certificate of the 1940s after over 60 years," he said.

## TMC releases manifesto for Tripura polls

**● Promises 'Bengal model of development'**

Agartala, Feb 05 (PTI)

The Trinamool Congress released its manifesto for the Tripura assembly elections on Sunday, promising 2 lakh new jobs, Rs 1,000 per month for school students in classes 4 to 8 and unemployed youths, and social welfare schemes on the lines of those in West Bengal.

The manifesto was launched a day ahead of party chief Mamata Banerjee's visit to the state. The TMC is fighting 28 assembly seats in the February 16 election.

Addressing a press conference, West Bengal education minister Bratya Basu said that if the party is voted to power in the



**TMC MP Sushmita Dev along with others releases party's manifesto for the upcoming Tripura Assembly elections, in Agartala, Sunday.**

state, it will create 2 lakh jobs in five years with 50,000 new jobs in the first year itself.

"All vacant posts in the government departments will be filled up on mission mode," he said.

"The TMC will provide assistance of Rs 1,000 per month to jobless youths, and 10,323 retrenched teachers will also get the

benefit until their legal matter is resolved," he said.

The TMC promised a skill university, student credit cards and easy loans for those who want to pursue higher education.

"Rs 1,000 annual stipend will be given to the students in classes 4 to 8," he said.

## STREET SCHOOL



**Street children attend a class at a city pavement, in Kolkata, Sunday.**

## School students chip in to eradicate penury

**● In Alappuzha district**

Alappuzha(Ker), Feb 05 (PTI)

School students in Kerala's Alappuzha have embarked on an ambitious mission to eradicate absolute poverty in the coastal district.

Under the initiative titled 'Children for Alleppey' a batch of 100 students will adopt one struggling family each in Alappuzha and donate items, including food every month to them, from February 6 onwards.

The idea, also aimed at teaching the children lessons on sharing and community service, was mooted by Alappuzha district collector, V R Krishna Teja. The district administration has identified 3,613 economically disadvantaged families and decided to link them with government as well as private schools. "Through this

programme, Alappuzha will become the first district in the country where the extremely poor families will be uplifted. In other words, there will be no more extreme poverty in Alappuzha from February 6," Teja told PTI.

The identity of the beneficiary families will be kept confidential by the district administration. Elaborating on the initiative, Teja said with the support of the district panchayat, MLAs and ministers from the district, the first Monday of every month will be observed as 'community service day' in schools.

"On the first Monday, we encourage the children to bring food or other items which can be used. Such items will be collected in a box. Students can bring pulses, or soap or toothpaste or atta or any random useful item other than rice and cash. If a school of 300 students

adopted three extremely poor families, the items collected will be segregated and given to them."

The initiative drew overwhelming response from schools in the district.

"Even some schools have decided to adopt one family for every 50 students. We want students to learn the happiness of sharing, even if it's a small thing," Teja said. The district collector noted that rice was not required as it is given to the needy through the public distribution system.

"Even if the item is small, it should be given in kind and not in cash. It's perfectly fine if some students cannot contribute. We have nominated one teacher in each school as a community service coordinator and a student as community service leader. Everything will be coordinated through community service clubs," the collector said.

## Pervez Musharraf: Architect of Kargil War, nearly led to Indo-Pak war

Islamabad, Feb 05 (PTI):

Pakistan's former military dictator General Pervez Musharraf, the architect of the Kargil War, topped the democratically-elected government in a bloodless military coup in 1999 and ruled the country for nine years with an iron fist during which he also tried to project himself as a progressive Muslim leader.

Born in a middle-class family of Urdu-speaking Mohajir parents in Delhi, Musharraf later migrated to Pakistan after the Partition in 1947. He spent his final years in self-exile in the UAE battling a rare disease. He died in the Gulf country after a prolonged illness on Sunday.

The 79-year-old retired general was the main architect of the Kargil War that took place months after then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif signed a historic peace accord with his Indian counterpart Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Lahore.

After his failed misadventure in Kargil, Musharraf deposed the then Prime Minister Sharif in a bloodless coup in 1999 and ruled Pakistan

from 1999 to 2008 in various positions first as the chief executive of Pakistan and later as the President.

Musharraf, who announced elections in 2008 under domestic and international pressure, was forced to resign as president following the polls and went into self-imposed exile in Dubai.

In 2010, he formed his own party, All Pakistan Muslim League and declared himself as the party President. He voiced his opinion of actively taking part in Pakistan's politics sometime in the future.

He returned to Pakistan in March 2013 to contest polls after living in self-exile for about five years, but was hauled to court in different cases - including the 2007 assassination of former premier Benazir Bhutto, treason under article 6 of Pakistan constitution and murder of Bugti tribe chief Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti.

In 2006, on the orders of Gen Musharraf, the Pakistan Army killed former junior interior minister and Governor of Balochistan Bugti and



over two dozen of his tribesmen, leading to widespread unrest in the area and a surge in the Baloch nationalist sentiment in the province bordering Iran, Afghanistan and the Arabian Sea with strategically important port of Gwadar.

In 2019, Musharraf was sentenced to death in absentia by a special court which found him guilty of high treason, for imposing a state of emergency on November 3, 2007, by keeping the Constitution in abeyance.

The judgement angered the country's powerful Army that has ruled over Pakistan for most of the period since its existence. It was the first time a former top military official had faced such a sentence for

treason in Pakistan. The death sentence was later annulled by the Lahore High Court.

Musharraf, who was living in Dubai since March 2016, was also declared a fugitive in Benazir Bhutto murder case and Red Mosque cleric killing case.

During his tenure, Pakistan saw some structural reforms - ranging from economic and social sector to administrative and political restructuring.

Musharraf allied with America in the war against terror after the 9/11 attacks on the US. He cracked down on Islamist groups and banned dozens of radical outfits, in an effort to project himself as a moderate and progressive Muslim leader. However, his move angered radicals and he even escaped assassination attempts in later years.

Musharraf had visited India for the failed Agra summit in 2001 and made two more visits in 2005 as President to watch an India-Pakistan One-day Cricket match and in 2009 to attend a media event after shedding power.

Musharraf, the second

of three brothers, was born in Delhi on August 11, 1943. He spent his early years in Turkey, from 1949 to 1956, as his father Syed Musharraf-ud-din was posted in Ankara.

On his return from Turkey, Musharraf studied at Saint Patrick's High School, Karachi, and then from F. C. College, Lahore. He joined the Pakistan Military Academy in 1961 and was commissioned in the Artillery Regiment in 1964.

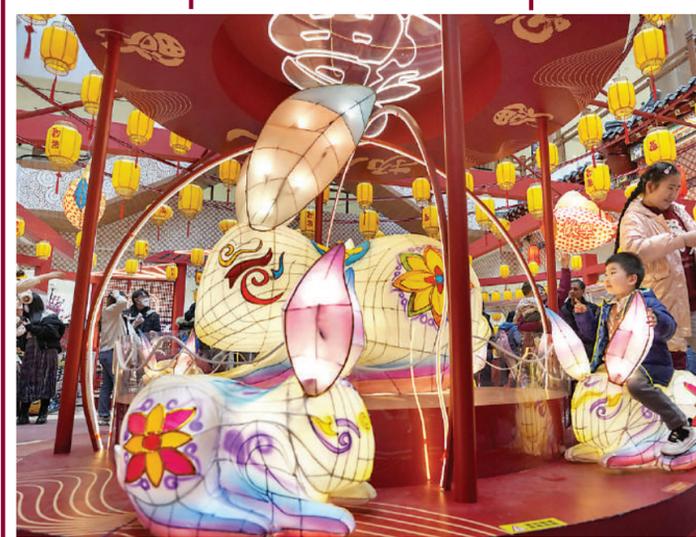
He fought in the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965 as a young officer, and also participated in the Indo-Pak War of 1971 as a Company Commander in the Commando Battalion.

Musharraf rose to the rank of General and was appointed as the Chief of Army Staff on October 7, 1998 by then prime minister Sharif.

He was given additional charge of Chairman Joint Chiefs Staff Committee on April 9, 1999. Six months later, he toppled the Sharif government and became the head of the state designated as Chief Executive.

Musharraf got married in 1968 and has two children, a son and a daughter.

### LANTERN FESTIVAL



Children have fun on rabbit shaped-electric powered lantern decorations on display inside a shopping mall in Beijing, Sunday. The Lantern Festival, the end of the Lunar New Year holiday period, falls on Sunday.

### Woman raped at gun point by two men in Pak: Official

Islamabad, Feb 05 (PTI):

A woman was allegedly raped at gun point by two armed men in a park here, police said on Sunday.

The incident happened on Thursday in Islamabad's F-9 area when the victim along with a male friend was strolling in a park when two armed men stopped them and forcibly took both to a nearby thicket, revealed

the FIR registered by the police. "They separated the woman from her male friend. When she tried to shout, they slapped her and threatened to bring six to seven more friends. The two in turn raped her and also asked the victim about what she does for a living and warned her to "not come to the park at this time," said the police, citing the FIR. They returned her everything

which they earlier snatched and even gave her 1,000 Pakistani rupees to keep quiet and then ran away. The victim took courage and went to the police station at 11:40 pm the same night and told police about her tragedy.

She was taken to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences hospital where her medical check-up was conducted that proved the rape.

### Rishi Sunak makes 'special gesture' by joining India-UK security dialogue

London, Feb 05 (PTI):

In a "special gesture", British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak joined a UK Cabinet Office meeting here between National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval and British counterpart Tim Barrow.

Sunak highlighted the UK government's support to deepen strategic partnership in areas such as trade, defence and science and technology during the meeting on Friday.

Doval was in London for an annual bilateral strategic dialogue on his way back from Washington, where he met US counterpart Jake Sullivan for similar talks.

"A special gesture by PM Rishi Sunak to join for a while the India-UK NSA dialogue between Sir Tim



Barrow and Mr Doval at Cabinet Office," the Indian High Commission in London and Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) tweeted late on Saturday, with reference to the meeting. "Deeply value PM's assurance of his government's full support to deepen strategic partnership in trade, defence, S&T. Look forward to visit of Sir Tim to India soon," it noted. The security dialogue comes against the backdrop of the controversial BBC documentary, India: The Modi Question, which the Indian

government has condemned as biased propaganda.

The UK has responded in Parliament to diaspora protests across the country over the two-part series by declaring the BBC as a media outlet "independent in its outlet" and reiterating its commitment to enhance ties with India. "We recognise how this portrayal of the Indian government has played out in India.

I made it clear that the BBC is independent in its output, that the UK regards India as an incredibly important international partner and that we will be investing heavily in that relationship in the coming decades," UK Foreign Secretary James Cleverly told the House of Commons earlier last week.

### China threatens repercussions

Washington/Beijing, Feb 05 (PTI):

The US military has downed the suspected Chinese spy balloon over the Atlantic Ocean and launched a mission to recover all the equipment from its debris, drawing a strong reaction from China which on Sunday warned of repercussions over America's use of force against its civilian unmanned airship.

At the direction of President Joe Biden, the US military at 2.39 pm EST on Friday shot down the Chinese surveillance balloon in the Atlantic Ocean, some six miles (9.65 kms) away from the US shores in South Carolina, with no



In this photo provided by Brian Branch, a large balloon drifts above the Kingstown, N.C. area, with an airplane and its contrail seen below it. The United States says it is a Chinese spy balloon moving east over America at an altitude of about 60,000 feet (18,600 meters).

damage to the life and properties of Americans, a senior defence official told reporters in Washington.

Fighter aircraft from Langley Air Force Base in

Virginia inspired a single missile into the balloon, causing it to crash into the ocean within the US territorial airspace, said the official, adding that as of now

there are no indications that any people including US military personnel, civilian aircraft or maritime vessels were harmed in any way.

"I told them to shoot it down," Biden told reporters in Hagerstown, Maryland.

"On Wednesday, when I was briefed on the balloon, I ordered the Pentagon to shoot it down as soon as possible. They decided — without doing damage to anyone on the ground — the best time to do that was as it got over water, outside within the 12-mile limit," Biden said.

Responding to the downing of the balloon, China expressed strong dissatisfaction and opposition towards the US use of force to attack China's civilian unmanned airship, state-run Xinhua news agency cited a statement from the Chinese

Foreign Ministry as saying on Sunday.

"The US insisting on the use of force is an obvious overreaction and a serious violation of international practice. China will resolutely uphold the relevant company's legitimate rights and interests, at the same time, reserving the right to take further actions in response," said the Foreign Ministry statement in Beijing.

The Chinese side has, after verification, repeatedly informed the US side of the civilian nature of the airship and conveyed that its entry into the United States due to force majeure was totally unexpected, the statement said, noting the Chinese side has clearly asked the US side to properly handle the matter in a calm, professional and restrained manner.

### Nepal's RSP withdraws from coalition government of PM Prachanda

Kathmandu, Feb 05 (PTI):

The Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) on Sunday decided to withdraw from Nepal's ruling coalition after Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" refused to reinstate the party's flamboyant chairman Rabi Lamichhane as the home minister after he recently re-acquired his citizen-

ship. The decision was taken after a joint meeting of RSP's central members and lawmakers.

Lamichhane, 48, was elected from Chitwan-2 constituency during the elections held in November last year.

He subsequently lost the status of a lawmaker following a verdict by Nepal's Supreme Court on

January 27, which stated that the citizenship certificate he produced to contest the parliamentary election was invalid, according to the Kathmandu Post newspaper.

Subsequently, he also lost his ministerial portfolio and the presidency of the party because one needs to be a Nepali citizen to hold those positions, it said. On January 29, he

re-acquired his citizenship, following which he met Prachanda and demanded that he be restored to his former Cabinet position, the report said. But the Nepal Prime Minister was in no mood to relent, it added.

Lamichhane was appointed Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister on December 26 last year.

### 16 killed, 66 injured in multi-vehicle collision in China

Beijing, Feb 05 (PTI):

At least 16 people were killed and 66 others injured after a multi-vehicle collisions occurred in central China's Hunan province, a media report said on Sunday.

The accidents happened on Saturday evening when a total of 49 vehicles collided within 10 minutes on the Xuchang-Guangzhou Highway in the Hunan province's Changsha city, the state-run CGTN's news



portal reported. "In the accident 16 people were killed and 66 others injured," said the re-

port, quoting the local traffic police department.

All the injured people have been sent to hospitals, among them eight were seriously injured but are in a stable condition.

The Ministry of Emergency Management has sent a working team to the site to guide the handling of the accidents, the report said.

An investigation into the matter and the settlement of the aftermath are currently underway.

### Pope makes final bid for peace, forgiveness in South Sudan

Juba (South Sudan), Feb 05 (AP):

Pope Francis made a final appeal for peace in South Sudan on Sunday as he celebrated Mass before tens of thousands of people to close out an unusual mission by Christian religious leaders to nudge forward the country's recovery from civil war.

On the last day of his African pilgrimage, Francis begged South Sudanese people to lay down their weapons and forgive one another, presiding over Mass at the country's monument to independence hero John Garang before an estimated 70,000 people, including the country's political leadership. "Even if our hearts

bleed for the wrongs we have suffered, let us refuse, once and for all, to repay evil with evil," Francis said. "Let us accept one another and love one another with sincerity and generosity, as God loves us."

His message aimed to revive hopes in the world's youngest country, which gained independence from the majority Muslim Sudan in 2011 but has been beset by civil war and conflict.

President Salva Kiir, his longtime rival Riek Machar and other opposition groups signed a peace agreement in 2018, but the deal's provisions, including the formation of a national unified army, remain largely unimplemented and fighting has

continued to flare.

"We have suffered a lot," said Natalima Andrea, a 66-year-old mother of seven who wiped a tear from her eye as she waited for Francis' Mass to begin. "We need a permanent peace now and I hope these prayers would yield to lasting peace." In a bid to spur the process along, Francis was joined on the novel ecumenical peace mission by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, and the moderator of the Church of Scotland, the Rt. Rev. Iain Greenshields. The aim of the Catholic, Anglican and Presbyterian leaders was to push Kiir and Machar to recommit themselves to the 2018 deal.

### Liz Truss attempts dramatic political comeback with swipe at Rishi Sunak

London, Feb 05 (PTI):

Britain's former prime minister Liz Truss, who has the ignominy of being the country's shortest serving in the top job at just 49 days, on Sunday made a dramatic attempt at a comeback to frontline politics with an indirect swipe at successor Rishi Sunak's policies.

Truss, whose mini-budget in September last year was widely blamed for setting the UK on a spiralling economic downturn, claims she was never given a "realistic chance" to implement her tax-cutting vision for growth.

In a lengthy essay in 'The Sunday Telegraph', the former party leader admitted she was not "blameless" but argued that her mandate as the Conservative Party leader



was not respected and that her premiership was the casualty of the "left-wing economic establishment".

"I wanted to become prime minister to change things, not to manage decline or to preside over our country sliding into stagnation," she writes.

"In the medium term, I believed my policies would have increased growth and therefore reduced debt. Five-year forecasts are

treated as accurate predictions and therefore filling the gap' becomes the imperative of government policy. As a result, the government is forced to make economically detrimental decisions, such as raising corporation tax, based on uncertain forecasts that may not come to fruition," she said, indirectly referencing the Sunak-led government's policies.

The timing of Truss' essay, just as Sunak marked his first 100 days as British Prime Minister this week, is widely being seen as the now backbench MP's attempt at keeping her dream of returning to the front benches alive ahead of a general election expected next year.

She reflected on the "deeply disturbing" moment she had to sack her

chancellor, Kwasi Kwarteng, despite his "brave" economic package widely known as the disastrous mini-budget, which ultimately precipitated her exit from Downing Street after her own party MPs turned on her. She writes: "I am not claiming to be blameless in what happened, but fundamentally I was not given a realistic chance to enact my policies by a very powerful economic establishment, coupled with a lack of political support."

"I assumed upon entering Downing Street that my mandate would be respected and accepted. How wrong I was. While I anticipated resistance to my programme from the system, I underestimated the extent of it."

The 47-year-old former

Tory leader, who had defeated Sunak in the leadership election in early September, announced her resignation within weeks. The party MPs then overwhelmingly backed the British Indian leader to take over after a speeded-up leadership race with Penny Mordaunt, now a member of the Sunak Cabinet.

Sunak's Business Secretary, Grant Shapps, came out in defence of the government on Sunday in response to the essay. The minister said that while Truss had the right priorities, she failed because she did not try to deal with the "big structural issues" first and bring soaring inflation under control as a priority a pledge Sunak made on taking charge a day after Diwali on October 25, 2022.



## CENTRAL Chronicle

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### What really worries Indians about Adani's empire

A small US investor firm has challenged the Indian behemoth, the Adani group, and shaken it to its foundations. The Hindenburg Research, a short selling firm, brought out a 129-page report on the Adani group marshalling evidence of all the funding operations and offshore activities of the 578 subsidiaries and shell companies linked to the seven listed companies of the Adani group. The report states that this is the "biggest con in corporate history". The report lays bare the complex network of funds and shell companies, some of them in Mauritius, Cyprus and UAE which have been used for manipulating the share prices of the listed companies and to shift money on to their balance-sheet "to maintain the appearance of financial health and solvency in the midst of high debts and few liquid assets". The report estimates that the valuations for the Adani companies were overstated as much as 85 per cent. The report accuses the Adani group of having "engaged in brazen stock manipulation and accounting-fraud scheme". The Adani group responded by calling the Hindenburg report a "calculated attack on India". Having no worthwhile defence to put up, the Adani group sought cover under nationalism to cover its flanks. It declared that this was an attack on "independence, integrity and quality of Indian institutions and the growth story and ambition of India". The effect of the Hindenburg report was instant. In the week following the report, the Adani group lost \$67 billion, or, around Rs 5.6 lakh crore of market capitalisation in the stock market. Gautam Adani himself has lost about \$ 50 billion of his wealth and from being the third richest man in the world, he has fallen to the fifteenth position. The fraudulent dealings of the Adani group are of great concern to the people because, over the years, what have been looted are the country's natural resources and public funds. The Adani group has become the largest private operator of ports, airports and the biggest in grain warehousing and controls a fifth of power transmission and the cement industry. It is the largest thermal power private producer in the country with large stake in coal mining. Much of its acquisitions and assets have been facilitated by loans from nationalised banks and investment from institutions like the Life Insurance Corporation. Around Rs 80,000 crores of funds from LIC are invested in Adani companies and 40 per cent of all loans taken by the group from banks are through the State Bank of India. The crash in the share prices of the Adani group companies are, therefore, a threat to the people's savings and public funds. The meteoric rise of the Adani group and its rapid expansion has not gone unquestioned in India. Over the years, many serious questions and accusations were leveled at the way in which Gautam Adani went about building his empire. Charges of over-invoicing of coal imports, opaque offshore funding of his companies, gross violation of environmental norms and bending of rules and regulations to get projects through were frequently raised in the media and by business analysts. The real lessons from the Adani-Hindenburg saga should not be obscured in the welter of charges about stock manipulation, money laundering and accounting fraud and counter-charges regarding the conspiracy to malign India's top most industrialist. Adani's wealth which was Rs 50.4 thousand crore in 2014 increased to Rs 10.30 lakh crore by 2022. But for the citizens of this country, who are seeing their livelihoods threatened by the communal-corporate nexus, it is essential that the Adanis be held accountable for the plunder and ill-gotten gains.

### Budget to save health from deadly tobacco

Rajender Kumar Sharma

The country's budget for the financial year 2023-24 has been announced. On which discussions are going on the politics of votes from the opposition side, but the most positive step taken in this budget is to increase the National Disaster Contingent Duty (NCCD) fee on cigarettes and tobacco products. This is the first time in three years that the National Calamity Contingent Duty (NCCD) duty on tobacco products has been increased by 16 per cent. Perhaps the government believes that the increase in revenue from their sale can be used to implement the country's development projects. The second benefit would be that the cost of tobacco products would reduce and discourage their use. That is, due to being expensive, its users will decrease. If this happens, it will be a pleasant consequence of increasing the duty on tobacco products. According to a news item, there is a provision to increase the rate of increase in cigarettes of different types and lengths from Rs 30 per thousand to Rs 90 per thousand cigarettes. The increase in the National Calamity Contingent Duty (NCCD) fee of tobacco products is sure to have a direct impact on the stock market as well. According to the Economic Times report, India is among the 182 countries that have signed the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. It has recommended a tax (duty) of at least 75 per cent on the wholesale price of all tobacco products, although currently India has a tax of 52.7 per cent on cigarette, 22 per cent on bidi and 63.8 per cent on chewing tobacco, which is still away from 75 percent. Nearly 270 million adults and adolescents aged 15 years and above (29% of all adults) use some form of tobacco, according to the Global Adult Tobacco Survey - India 2016-17 report. The most common form of tobacco is smokeless tobacco and the commonly used products are khaini, gutkha, betel nut with tobacco, and zarda. India is the second largest consumer and third largest producer of tobacco. Tobacco use is a major killer factor for many chronic diseases, including cancer, lung disease, heart disease, and stroke. It is one of the leading causes of death and illness in India and accounts for approximately 1.35 million deaths every year. Various types of tobacco products are available in the country at very low prices. According to a study published in the international journal Lancet in May 2021, an average of one million people die every year due to smoking in India. This figure has increased by 58.9 percent in the last 30 years. In countries where 6 lakh people died in 1990 due to smoking tobacco, that number has increased to 10 lakh in 2019. Globally, tobacco use is one of the biggest health threats. It not only causes loss of life and property but also has to pay a heavy social and economic cost. The total economic cost attributable to tobacco use from all diseases in India for persons aged 35 years and above was approximately Rs 1.77 lakh crore or US\$ 27.5 billion in 2017-18. In this term this budget should be welcomed by all who are struggling to save life from the poison of tobacco but Govt. should keep an eye on storage & black marketing of tobacco and its products, it is obvious that when rates will increase, some people might try to take advantage.

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

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

### MAGH PURNIMA

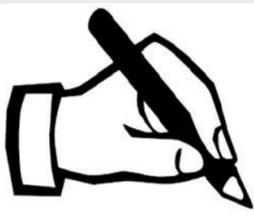


Devotees return after completing their kalvas on the 'Magh Purnima', at the bank of river Ganga, in Prayagraj, Sunday, Feb. 5.

## Saint Ravidas was a mystic poet, social reformer, and spiritual teacher



PRIYANKA SAURABH



Most of the Ravidasis follows Sikhism and believe in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib. This sect of Ravidasis mainly resides in the Malwa region of Punjab. Teacher Ravidas was an Indian mystic, poet, social reformer, and spiritual master who contributed significantly to the Bhakti movement through devotional songs, poetry, and spiritual teachings. He also wrote 40 poems for the Adi Granth, the holy book of Sikhism. Guru Ravidas lived a very simple life as a cobbler, which was assigned to him by the Seva God. Guru Ravidas was one of the greatest spiritual teachers to have blessed India. He led a very simple life as a maker and repairer of shoes which he was assigned to him by the Seva God.

In the 15th to 16th centuries CE, Ravidas, also known as Raidas, was an Indian mystic poet-saint who led the Bhakti movement. He was a poet, social reformer, and spiritual figure who was revered as a guru (teacher) in the contemporary regions of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, and Haryana. The particulars of Ravidas's life are disputed and unknown. He is believed to have been born around 1450 AD. He advocated the removal of caste and gender-based social barriers and encouraged cooperation in the pursuit of individual spiritual freedom. Devotional verses of Ravidas are found in the Guru Granth Sahib, the holy book of the Sikhs. There are many poems of Ravidas in Panch Vani Shastra of the Dadu Panthi style of Hinduism. He is also the main character of Ravidasiya.

Very little information is available about Ravidas's life. According to scholars, he was born in 1450 AD and died in 1520 AD. Another name of Guru Ravidas was Guru Raidas. He was born in the village of Sir Gobardhan, which is close to Varanasi, in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. Sri Guru Ravidas Janmasthan is the present name of his birthplace. His mother was Mata Kalsi, and Santokh Das was his father. His parents belonged to the untouchable Chamara

caste as they worked in the leather industry. Although he initially worked as a leather worker, he soon started spending most of his time engaging in spiritual activities on the banks of the river Ganges. After that, he spent most of his time with ascetics, sadhus, and Sufi saints. Ravidas had married Lona Devi at an early age. His son Vijay Das was born. One of the earliest biographies of many Bhakti movement poets, Anantadas Parakai, which is still in existence, discusses the birth of Ravidas. According to the medieval era, literature such as Bhaktamal, Guru Ravidas was a student of the Brahmin Bhakti poet Ramananda. He is generally considered a recent contemporary of Kabir.

Nevertheless, the ancient literature Ratnavali claims that Guru Ravidas received spiritual teachings from Ramananda and belonged to the Ramanandi Sampradaya lineage. During his life, his views and popularity grew, and writings indicate that Brahmin members of the priestly upper caste once bowed before him. He traveled widely, staying at Hindu temples in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, and the Himalayas. He discarded the Saguna (with attributes, and images) forms of the Supreme Being and focused on the Nirguna (essence, without qualities) form. His creative hymns in regional

languages that inspired others resulted in people from all backgrounds seeking lessons and mentorship from him. Most academics agree that Guru Nanak - the founder of Sikhism, met Guru Ravidas. The Adi Granth contains 41 poems by Guru Ravidas, and the Sikh doctrine holds them in high esteem. These poems are one of the earliest sources of his thoughts and literary works. The Sikh biography known as Prembodhi is another important source of lore and stories related to the life of Ravidas.

He is listed as one of the Seventeen Saints of the Indian religious tradition in his work, which was written in 1693, more than 170 years after the death of Guru Ravidas. Chapters of Guru Ravidas can be found in both Anantadas and Nabhadasi's Bhaktamal. From the seventeenth century. Most other written sources about Ravidas's life, including those by Ravidasis (followers of Guru Ravidas), were written in the early 20th century, or about 400 years after his death. Exceptions to this rule are the texts and texts of the Sikh tradition and the Hindu Dadupanthi traditions. Ravidas was one of the saints whose lives and poems were included in this work, also known as Parakas (or Parchis). Over time, new copies of Anantadas's Persian manuscripts were made, some of them in other regional Indian languages.

According to Vinnand Calvert, around 30 manuscripts of Anantadas's biography on Guru Ravidas have been discovered, in various places across India. These four manuscripts are dated respectively 1662, 1665, 1676, and 1687, and are all complete. The 1687 edition systematically inserts verses with caste-related statements at various places in the text, new allegations that Brahmins are persecuting Guru Ravidas, notes on Ravidas's untouchability, claims that Kabir imparted ideas to Ravidas, Ridicule of nirguni and saguni ideas, and other textual corruption: Anantadas's Cleaner Critical Form of Parsi indicates that the Bhakti movement has more commonality between the ideas of Ravidas, Kabir, and Sen than previously believed, according to Calvert, who wrote the 1676 edition. All these entries are from the critical edition of his biography of Ravidas. The textual sources on Ravidas have also been questioned by Khare, who says that there are no "readily available and reputable textual sources" on Ravidas's portrayal of Hindus and untouchables.

Two early sources of Guru Ravidas's writings are the Sikh Adi Granth and the Panchvani of the Hindu warrior-ascetic organization Dadupanthis. The Adi Granth contains forty poems by Ravidas, and he is one of 36 authors who contributed to this important Sikhism text. This collection of poetry from the Adi Granth addresses a variety of topics, including how to deal with oppression and war, how to end the war, and whether or not one is willing to give up one's life for the right cause. In his poetry, Ravidas addresses issues such as the definition of a just society, one without second or third-class citizens, the need for objectivity, and the identity of a true yogi. Many poems written by Indian poets of a later era have been respectfully attributed to Ravidas, although Guru Ravidas had nothing to do with these poems or the concepts contained in them, as with the authorship of other Indian Bhakti saint-poets and Western literature.

The themes of the Nirguna-Saguna Chakra, as well as concepts from the Nath Yoga school of Hinduism, feature in Guru Ravidas's lyrics. He often uses the term "sahaj", which refers to a mystical state in which the truths of the many and the one are united. Ravidas's poetry is filled with themes of boundless love and devotion towards God, who is depicted as Nirguna. The themes of Nanak's poetry are largely parallel to the nirguna bhakti concepts of Ravidas and other notable north Indian saint-poets in the Sikh tradition. According to Karen Pechilis, most post-modern scholars believe that the teachings of Guru Ravidas are a part of the Nirguna philosophy of the Bhakti movement.

There is a theosophical debate between Kabir and Ravidas on the character of the Absolute, specifically if Brahman (the ultimate reality, the eternal truth) is a separate anthropomorphic incarnation or a monistic unity, in several manuscripts discovered in Rajasthan and the north. Kabir supports the first position. On the contrary, Ravidas says that both are based on the second assumption. In these texts, Kabir initially wins and Ravidas accepts that Brahman is monistic, but Kabir refuses to accept the worship of a heavenly incarnation until the very end (Saguna Garbhadhana).

(Research Scholar in Political Science, Poetess, independent journalist and columnist. Views are personal.)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Tributes to Vani Jairam

Playback singer Vani Jairam (78) one of India's most versatile voices, was found dead in her residence (after police broke open the door and found her dead) due to an injury in her forehead. Who will forget national award-winning legendary playback singer Padma Bhushan Vani Jairam's (78) Humko Mann Ki Shakti Dena, which became a school prayer since the release of the song in 1971 and continues to be even now. The versatile artist recently completed 50 years as a professional singer and had recorded more than 10,000 songs in nearly 1000 films. Not only this Vani Jairam has a number of songs in nineteen languages including Bengali, Bhojpuri, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Tamil, Telugu, Tulu and Urdu to her credit. In her breakthrough with the Hindi film Guddi (1971) directed by Hrishikesh Mukherjee, she recorded three songs in the film amongst which the song "Bole Re Papihara", became a talk-of-the-town song and gave her instant recognition. This versatile singer Vani Jairam has not only won National Film Awards for Best Female Playback Singer thrice, but also received State awards from Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Gujarat, and Odisha. The song "Mere Tu Giridhar Gopal" in Meera (1979), composed by Pandit Ravi Shankar, won her first Filmfare Award among the three she has won. Vani Jairam is no more but her song is always lingering in the mind of her fans. Rest In Peace. Om Shanti.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee, Faridabad

#### Let Modi and Rahul contest on one seat in 2024

Supreme court had clarified that it is not in our domain to pass any order to bar a person for contesting from two seats and only parliament can pass such law. Before the amendment, candidates could contest from any number of constituencies. The government had said the restriction to two constituencies was reasonable enough, and there was no need to change the law now. The Election Commission had, in an affidavit in 2018, supported the petition. It had informed the Supreme Court that it had proposed an amendment to Section 33(7) in July 2004. The poll body had pointed out that "there have been cases where a person contests election from two constituencies, and wins from both. In such a situation he vacates the seat in one of the two constituencies. The consequence is that a by-election would be required from one constituency involving avoidable expenditure on the conduct of that bye-election". The poll body concluded that the "law should be amended to provide that a person cannot contest from more than one constituency at a time". The poll body had even suggested that a candidate should deposit an amount of Rs 5 lakh for contesting in two constituencies in an Assembly election or Rs10 lakh in a general election. The amount would be used to cover the expenses for a by-election in the eventuality that he or she was victorious in both constituencies and had to relinquish one. Let Modi and Rahul contest on one seat in 2024 and lead by example.

YASH pal Raihan, Jalandhar

## 'AGE' - WHAT A GREAT LEVELLER!

Kajal Chatterjee

"Oh, East is East and West is West and never the two shall meet - Till earth and sky stand presently at God's Great Judgement seat - But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth. When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth" --- Rudyard Kipling (The Ballad of East and West). In the same vein can an "elite" Nobel Laureate serving as Professor in Harvard University (West) meet at the same platform with a "mere" Group D bank employee of Kolkata (East). No way as far as glamour social/official position world-wide recognition and personal CV are concerned. However, a recent visit to a bank enabled me to experience a sight involving that Group D employee which instantly transported my mind to a Nobel Laureate settled in the far West ie UK.

By appearance, this gentleman is balding and physically vulnerable. Either he is on the verge of retirement

or has aged prematurely. He is in charge of updating the passbooks. Behind a glass screen he sits opposite a computer and performs the job comparatively with a bit more time than required. Slowly he inputs the number of the account through the keyboard while glancing at the passbook repeatedly. That day as I reached the Bank to update my passbook, I noticed 4-5 persons in the queue. As I stood at the rear, I noticed that the others were expressing feelings of frustration. Is it because of the comparative slowness of that gentleman? Then I gathered that there has been some sort of glitch in the computer. And he is trying all sorts of keys with output being nil. As time passed, the frustration of the customers ahead of me increased.

After all efforts turned futile, the gentleman at the counter stood up and appeared to approach the personnel at the adjacent cabin to seek help. As the vulnerable man got up and was walking towards the adjacent cabin in a limping gait, one of the "valiant" customers remarked with utmost vitriol in his tongue --- "This fellow can't even walk straight.

Yet these oldies are occupying the posts, earning huge salaries and assured of life-time pension as well. In contrast, no jobs for the youth brigade". It goes without saying that the rest of the people in the surroundings much applauded his vitriolic talk. In the meantime the "oldie" returned with a "young colleague" and the latter started to employ his tricks to get the computer "normalised". My body could have waited further to see whether the computer returned back to normal mode and got my passbook updated.

But my heart failed to stay there for a single second more in that vitiated environment because of the deluge of the caustic remarks directed at the vulnerable gentleman despite no fault of him (the only consolation remains that thanks to the glass screen acting as the shield, those vulgar rude talks didn't reach his ear). Yes computers can get "hanged" anytime anywhere and it is not expected (least from a Group D personnel) that all will promptly solve it. Yet so churning of poison directed at the vulnerable fellow. As I was returning, thinking about the growing insensi-

tivity of the society towards the sector of population who are deemed to be weak. May I know which profession/sector/institution in the whole country forms the model of accountability and performance. As a citizen of the society, do we receive all our dues and entitlement from all quarters?

And most importantly, do we all contribute to our best with utmost honesty and efficiency whatever be our profession. But far from demanding accountability from those who are in powerful seats, far from introspecting about one's own contribution to the society; all are engaged in redirecting their frustration and anger towards the vulnerable, more so if they are "oldies". Is there any guarantee that all "young" persons can promptly rectify computers if they suffer glitches! Is it a "sin" to get "aged". Aren't the parents of the self-declared youth brigade aged? Will not today's "youth" be bound to get aged in the future. And it forms the duty of the Government to create job openings for the youth; how can one demand a senior employee to voluntarily retire to yield place to new. Actually a society

gets judged by how it treats its elders. And we can get a taste of this society through this very yardstick that this is the exact platform where that Group D gentleman can meet Amartya Sen in absolute equal terms.

For his "sin" of protesting against communalism, Sen gets regularly castigated by leaders of a particular outfit through choicest words and abuses. Yes one holds full right to oppose his comments, but why not such opposition coming through furnishing of logic in a civilised tone. Rather Sen often gets attacked in that most vulnerable psychologically-shattering spot i.e. age! "It's Sir's age speaking, not his mind!" --- vitriol of a "young" MP a few years ago. It implies that Sen should "shut up" as he has "lost his mind" because of "age".

Though that Group D gentleman and Nobel Laureate in Economics Professor Amartya Sen reside at almost opposite ends of the earth with zero similarities; yet all differences of Border Birth and Breed get promptly vanished when two aged persons draw the ire of their detractors rendering them to an absolutely equal platform.

**BRIEF**

**CIAL**

**Kochi (Kerala):** The Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) has successfully completed a trial of the first phase of Digi Yatra, which would enable a biometric boarding system for seamless passenger movement. Its implementation would enable e-gate at the first-level security points which would facilitate the passengers' entry to the terminal by showing their bar-coded boarding pass at the kiosks, CIAL said. Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyothiraditya Scindia visited CIAL's facilities on Saturday and expressed satisfaction with the maintenance of the airport.

**FMCG**

**New Delhi:** Major FMCG companies feel the demand slump has bottomed out and there are green shoots of recovery in the rural markets, which has been under stress since the last few quarters. With abating commodity price pressures, firms such as HUL, Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCP), Dabur, Marico and Emami expect a gradual recovery in consumption going forward and are increasing upfront marketing investments in advertising and promotion (A&P). In the third quarter ended December 31, 2022, the companies reported growth in the urban markets.

**FPIs**

**New Delhi:** Foreign investors pulled out Rs 28,852 crore from Indian equities in January, making it the worst outflow in the last seven months, primarily due to attractiveness of the Chinese markets. This came following a net investment of Rs 11,119 crore in December and Rs 36,238 crore in November, data with the depositories showed. Going ahead, FPI flows are expected to remain volatile as Indian equities continued their large under-performance compared to global markets, Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research(Retail), Kotak Securities, said.

**Tata Power**

**New Delhi:** Tata Power aims to operationalise its solar cell and module facility being set up in Tamil Nadu by December-end of this year, the company's CEO & MD Praveer Sinha said. In July 2022, Tata Power inked a pact with the Tamil Nadu government to invest Rs 3,000 crore for setting up a new facility to manufacture solar cells and modules in Tirumelveli district of the state. The construction work is going on in full swing.

**5G service**

**Itanagar:** The 5G service was launched in the Arunachal Pradesh capital Itanagar, ushering in an era of ultra high-speed internet on mobile phones. Chief Minister Pema Khandu launched the 5G service by Airtel and Reliance Jio here on Saturday, an official communique said on Sunday. Khandu termed the launch of 5G service in the state capital, as the beginning of a revolution in the use of digital services in the fields of education, health-care, agriculture and public service delivery.

## India's focus should be on reducing dependence on China: Suman Bery

**New Delhi, Feb 05 (PTI):**



NITI Aayog vice chairman Suman Bery on Sunday said that India's focus should not be on overall trade deficit with China, instead it should be on reducing New Delhi's dependence on Beijing for certain critical inputs.

According to Bery, the right response is to diversify to other sources of supply for critical inputs including active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and supply chain for renewables.

China is the world's largest producer and exporter of APIs and many of the Indian companies depend on imports of the ingredients to produce

various formulations.

"India's focus should not be on the trade deficit with China. It should be on our dependence on China for certain critical inputs," he told PTI. He was asked what measures India should take to reduce its rising trade deficit with China. He said it is unfortunate that in the last seven years, the larger powers, both the US and China have chosen to weaponise trade interde-

pendence. "It is unfortunate that China, which is a very competitive source of intermediate goods, is also a power with which we have some military difficulty that puts a different kind of complexion," he said. Indian and Chinese troops clashed along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Tangang sector of Arunachal Pradesh on December 9 and the face-off resulted in "minor injuries to a few personnel from both sides. According to recent data released by the Chinese customs, the trade between India and China touched an all-time high of USD 135.98 billion in 2022, while New Delhi's trade deficit with Beijing

crossed the USD 100 billion mark for the first time despite frosty bilateral relations.

To reduce the trade deficit with China, Bery suggested that India should formulate a sector-by-sector strategy.

Bery said Chinese enterprises are looking for markets and they want to hold on to the Indian market. "And to do that, they should be prevented from being monopolists, by the way," Bery emphasised. China's exports to India climbed to USD 118.5 billion, a year-on-year increase of 21.7 per cent. During 2022, China's imports from India dwindled to USD 17.48 billion, a year-on-year decline of 37.9 per cent.

**This is a growth-oriented budget: Chauhan**  
**Mumbai, Feb 05:**

"This is a growth-oriented budget, one of the best in years, with a focus on both infrastructure and job creation, while reducing income tax for pretty much everyone, and lots of money to states. The fiscal deficit has been reduced from 6.4% to 5.9% of GDP, with a clear path to reach 4.5% in next three years.

The focus on infrastructure, as seen in the rising capex outlay from Rs7.5 lakh crore to Rs10 lakh crore, combined with PM Gati Shakti and this Government's ability to execute, would be visible through roads, railways, ports and airports and would translate into demand for basic materials like cement and steel on one hand, and consumption goods from all sections of the society, jobs on the other.

## Centre likely to hike dearness allowance by 4 pc to 42 pc

**New Delhi, Feb 05 (PTI):**

The central government is likely to increase dearness allowance (DA) for its over one crore employees and pensioners by four percentage points to 42 per cent from existing 38 per cent as per the agreed formula for the purpose.

The dearness allowance for employees and pensioners are worked out on the basis of the latest Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW) brought out by the Labour Bureau every month. The Labour Bureau is a wing of the Labour Ministry.

Talking to PTI, All India Railwaymen Federation, General Secretary, Shiva Gopal Mishra said, "The CPI-IW for December 2022 was released on January 31,

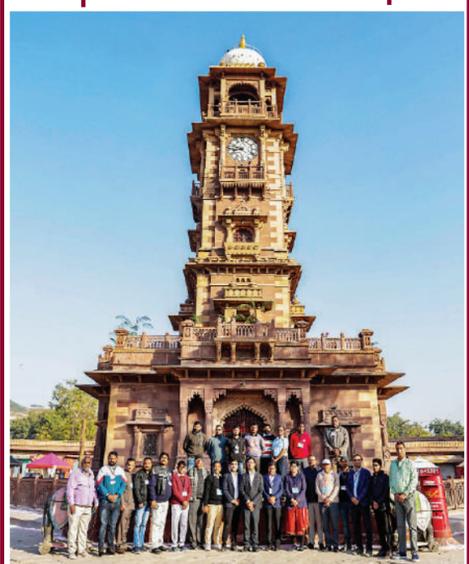
2023. The dearness allowance hike works out to be 4.23 per cent. But the government does not factor in hiking DA beyond decimal point. Thus DA is likely to be increased by four percentage points to 42 per cent."

He further explained that the expenditure department of the Finance Ministry will formulate a proposal to hike DA along with its revenue implication and will put up the proposal before the Union Cabinet for approval.

The DA hike will be effective from January 1, 2023.

Presently over one crore central government employees and pensioners are getting 38 per cent dearness allowance. Last revision in DA was done on September 28, 2022, which was effective from July 1, 2022.

### G20 DELEGATES



G20 delegates at the Clock Tower during a heritage walk, in Jodhpur.

### Nine of top-10 firms add Rs 1.88 lakh cr in m-cap

**■ ITC biggest gainer**

**New Delhi, Feb 05 (PTI):**

Nine of the 10 most valued firms together added Rs 1.88 lakh crore in market valuation last week, with ITC emerging as the biggest gainer. The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 1,510.98 points or 2.54 per cent last week. Barring Reliance Industries Limited, rest nine firms including Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HDFC Bank, Infosys and ICICI Bank were the gainers from the top-10 list. The combined market valuation gain of the nine firms was at Rs 1,88,366.69 crore. The market valuation of ITC rallied Rs 43,321.81 crore to reach Rs 4,72,353.27 crore. Infosys added Rs 34,043.38 crore, taking its valuation to Rs 6,72,935.25 crore.

## RBI likely to settle for 25 basis points repo rate hike: Experts

**Mumbai, Feb 05 (PTI):**

With retail inflation showing signs of softening and the US Fed moderating the pace of increase in its benchmark interest rate, the Reserve Bank is likely to settle for a smaller 25 basis points repo rate hike in its forthcoming bi-monthly monetary policy due later this week. In its December monetary policy review, the central bank had raised the key benchmark interest rate (repo) by 35 basis points (bps) after delivering three back-to-back increases of 50 bps.

Since May last year, the Reserve Bank has increased the short-term lending rate by 225 basis points to contain inflation, mostly driven by ex-

ternal factors, especially global supply chain disruption following the Russia-Ukraine war outbreak.

RBI's rate-setting panel - Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) - will start its three-day deliberations on the next set of monetary policy on Monday. The decision will be announced on February 8.

Kotak Institutional Equities in a report said the global inflation environment is gradually turning benign although inflation is still well above every central bank's target. Inflation will likely moderate further in the next few months, leading to the end of the rate hiking cycle by first half of 2023 and possible rate cuts

in late-2023/early-2024.

"However, given large global uncertainties, central banks' levers for supporting growth through monetary easing remain limited, thereby risking higher rates for an extended period.

"We expect the RBI MPC to hike policy rate by 25 bps to 6.5 per cent, followed by a prolonged wait-and-watch approach, as it assesses the lagged impact of monetary tightening on growth and inflation," it said.

The RBI has been tasked to ensure that retail inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent. However, it failed to keep the inflation rate below six per cent for three consecutive quarters beginning January 2022.

## Tata Motors aims to operationalise Ford's Sanand plant in 12-18 months

**New Delhi, Feb 05 (PTI):**



Tata Motors is looking to commence operations at the Gujarat-based manufacturing plant it acquired from Ford, over the next 12-18 months to scale up its production capacity, according to its head of passenger vehicle business.

The automaker earlier this month completed the acquisition of Ford India's manufacturing plant at Sanand through a subsidiary. In August last year, the company had announced that its arm Tata Passenger Electric Mobility Ltd (TPEML) would acquire Ford India Pvt Ltd's (FIPL) Sanand plant, Gujarat for Rs 726 crore.

Tata Motors had earlier noted that with its manufacturing capacity nearing saturation, the acquisition is timely and a win-win for all stakeholders. The

Sanand plant has a manufacturing capacity of 3 lakh units per annum, which is scalable to 4.2 lakh units per annum.

TPEML is in the process of making necessary investments to reconfigure the plant to adapt to the Mumbai-based automaker's existing and future vehicle platforms. The unit is adjacent to the existing manufacturing facility of Tata Motors at Sanand.

In an analyst call, Tata Motors Managing Director - Passenger Vehicle and Electric Vehicles Shailesh Chandra said the company also has the ability to

debottleneck capacities at its two existing facilities at Pune and Sanand by an additional 10-15 per cent.

"We are targeting to operationalise the Ford plant in 12 to 18 months," he noted when asked about the production capacity at the company's disposal.

Chandra noted that the company's production capacity currently stands at around 50,000 units a month. To a query regarding the company's preparedness to transition its product range to conform to second phase of BSVI emission norms, he said: "It is on track and ahead of the deadline."

### ABFRL inducts Ananya and Aryaman as directors

**Mumbai, Feb 05:**

The Board of Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail, at its meeting held today, inducted Ms. Ananya Birla and Aryaman Vikram Birla as Directors. Ms. Ananya Birla and Aryaman Vikram Birla come with rich and varied experience straddling entrepreneurship and business building. The board believes that ABFRL will benefit from their new-age insights and business acumen. Commenting on their appointment, Kumar Mangalam Birla, Chairman Aditya Birla Group said, "Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail has built a formidable portfolio of fashion brands across multiple categories and formats, covering all major segments of Indian apparel market. In the last few years, the company has entered multiple new emerging segments such as Ethnicwear - including partnerships with Indian designers, luxury, sportswear and new age businesses through its digital venture TMRW.

## IREDA, WAPCOS to hit capital markets next fiscal: DIPAM Secy

**New Delhi, Feb 05 (PTI):**

The government is targeting to launch the initial public offering (IPO) of clean energy lender IREDA and state-owned engineering consultancy firm WAPCOS in the next fiscal, DIPAM Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey said.

The proceeds from the stake sales would form part of the Budgeted disinvestment kitty of Rs 51,000 crore for the next fiscal.

"IREDA is lined up for initial public offering (IPO) next fiscal. DRHP for WAPCOS has already been filed," Pandey told PTI. The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) manages government equity holding in public sector companies. WAPCOS, an engineering consultancy and construction services firm under the Jal Shakti



Tuhin Kanta Pandey

Ministry, had in September last year filed draft papers with market regulator Sebi for launching an IPO by selling 3.25 crore shares held by the government. The company's revenue from operations stood at Rs 2,798 crore, while net profit was Rs 69.16 crore in 2021-22. The IPO of the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) was approved by the Cabinet in 2017. Under the listing proposal, IREDA had planned

to issue fresh 13.90 crore shares. In January last year, the Cabinet approved Rs 1,500 crore equity infusion in IREDA to raise its lending capacity and also create additional employment opportunities. IREDA, a mini ratna company under the administrative control of MNRE (Ministry of New and Renewable Energy), was set up in 1987 to work as a specialised non-banking finance agency for the renewable energy sector.

## Govt hikes windfall tax on crude oil, export of diesel, ATF

**New Delhi, Feb 05 (PTI):**

The government has hiked windfall profit tax levied on domestically-produced crude oil as well as on the export of diesel and ATF, in line with firming international oil prices, according to an official order. The levy on crude oil produced by companies such as Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has been increased to Rs 5,050 per tonne from Rs 1,900 per tonne, the order dated February 3, said. Crude oil pumped out of the ground and from below the seabed is refined and converted into fuels like petrol, diesel and aviation turbine fuel (ATF). The government has also hiked the tax on export of diesel to Rs 7.5 per litre from Rs 5, and the same on overseas shipments of ATF to Rs 6 a litre from Rs 3.5 a

litre. The new tax rates came into effect from February 4. The levy on both domestic crude oil and fuel exports is now off the lows it had hit last month. Tax rates were cut at the last fortnightly review on January 17, following softening in global oil prices.

International oil prices have since then firmed, necessitating the hike of a windfall tax. India first imposed windfall profit taxes on July 1, joining a growing number of nations that tax super normal profits of energy companies. At that time, export duties of Rs 6 per litre (USD 12 per barrel) each were levied on petrol and ATF and Rs 13 a litre (USD 26 a barrel) on diesel. A Rs 23,250 per tonne (USD 40 per barrel) windfall profit tax on domestic crude production was also levied.

## ONGC to ramp up exploration for oil, gas

**New Delhi, Feb 05 (PTI):**



India's top oil and gas producer ONGC is pivoting a four-pronged strategy of ramping up exploration efforts, quickly bringing discovered resources to production, raising recovery from existing fields and increasing collaborations with experts to reverse years of decline in output, its new chairman Arun Kumar Singh said.

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is keen to induct internationally renowned exploration firms as strategic partners in difficult areas such as deepsea and bring-in experts who can help raise productivity from ageing and mature fields such as prime Mumbai High, Singh told

PTI in an interview here. ONGC, which contributes around 71 per cent to India's domestic production, has reported a gradual decline in output for over a decade now primarily because its fields are old and ageing.

It produced 21.707 million tonnes of crude oil, which is refined to produce petroleum products like petrol and diesel, and 21.68 billion cubic meter (bcm) of natural gas, which is used to produce electricity, manufacture fertilizer and as CNG in automobiles. "We are focusing on

three key areas: deepwater exploration, monetising the discovered fields on fast-track and enhancing production from producing fields through enhanced oil recovery and improved oil recovery techniques. "We are looking for collaborations mainly for deepwater exploration. We are also open to partnerships in the other two areas, if substantial value additions are brought by the partners," he said.

Technologically, ONGC is strong in shallow waters. "We know Mumbai High like the back of our hands. However, if partners can add value to our business, they are welcome. We are looking forward to all such collaborations in the India Energy Week in Bengaluru during February 6-8, 2023," he said.

## India ranks third in world 'start-up' ecosystem: Anurag Thakur

**Jammu, Feb 05 (PTI):**

Union Minister Anurag Singh Thakur on Saturday said India is now the hub of 'Start-up' ecosystem in the world, ranking third with 90,000 'Start-Ups' and 107 unicorn companies worth 30 billion dollars.

The Minister for Information and Broadcasting, and Youth Affairs and Sports was speaking at the valedictory function of 36th Inter-University North Zone Youth Festival (Antarnaad) under the aegis of Association of Indian Universities (AIU) at the Jammu University.

More than 1,000 participants from 18 universities across the country participated in the week-long festival. "India is now the hub of 'Start-up' ecosystem in the world, ranking third with



90,000 'Start-Ups' and 107 unicorn companies worth 30 billion dollars which has been possible only by the contribution of India's youth," the minister said. Thakur said the world is looking towards New India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi as India is now the biggest exporter of vaccines, biggest exporter of mobile phones and defence equipment. He said for sustainable growth, the sustainable investment is required for the development of green economy leading to green jobs.



## India focussed on clash against Pak: Harmanpreet

Cape Town, Feb 05 (PTD):

The Women's Premier League auction is just around the corner but India are firmly focussed on their T20 World Cup opener against Pakistan as they aim to emulate the U19 girls' title-winning feat, insisted skipper Harmanpreet Kaur. The WPL action is slated to be held on February 13 in Mumbai, a day after India's T20 World Cup opener against Pakistan.

"Before that [the auction], we have a very important game and we are just going to focus on that," Harmanpreet said at the T20 World Cup captains' press conference.

"The World Cup is more important than anything else. Our focus is on the ICC trophy. These things will keep coming, and as a player, you know what's important for you and how you need to keep your focus."

"We are all mature enough and know what is important for us," she added.

Led by Shafali Verma, the Indian team won the inaugural U19 T20 World Cup last month and the senior side wants to add another ICC title in India's trophy cabinet.

"After watching the U19 World Cup, we are motivated to do what they have done. They have motivated us to do well, they have done it and we have not done it yet," Harmanpreet said.



The captains pose with the trophy with the Table Mountain at the back.

**'Auction during the WC will be awkward'**

New Zealand skipper Sophie Devine and her Australian counterpart Meg Lanning feel the WPL auction being held in the first week of the T20 World Cup will be awkward. Devine labelled it the "elephant in the room" as she feels players will struggle to not think about it. All Indians competing in the T20 World Cup, which starts on Friday, and several international players have put in their names for the WPL auction. "It's going to be awkward some people are going to get picked up, some won't, and you're going to get a value attached to what you're worth, which as human beings isn't the nicest thing, but it's also a job and it's what we've put our names in for," Devine said. "It's such a unique experience, I think you'd be naive to think that it's not going to be a distraction, it's just how you handle that. But I just think it's such an enormous step forward for women's cricket and I'm really looking forward to it (but) there's a World Cup going on at the same time, so how we manage that is (going to be important)."

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ated to do what they have done. They have motivated us to do well, they have done it and we have not done it yet," Harmanpreet said.

"It was a very special moment for all of us and after watching the U19s

many of the girls back home will also want to play cricket and that's always our aim to motivate young girls who can come and play cricket."

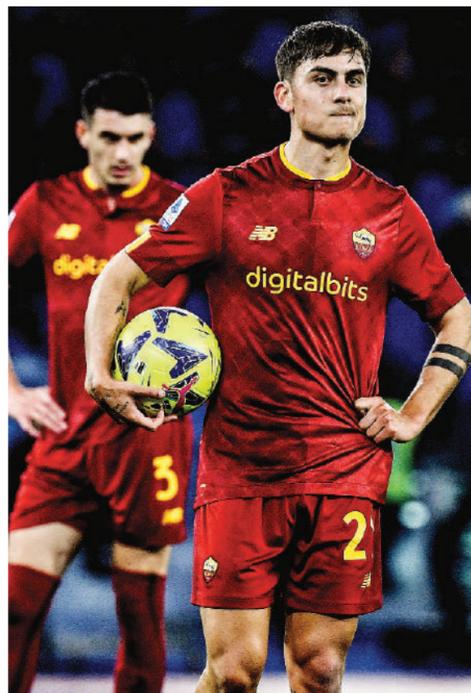
The flamboyant Indian skipper hoped that the WPL will play a similar role in contributing to the growth of Indian women's cricket like the Women's Big Bash and The Hundred have done in Australia and England.

"It's a really big day for all of us because we have been waiting for years and years now. The next two or three months are very important for women's cricket. We have seen how the WBBL and the Hundred have helped their countries improve their cricket. Hopefully, the same will happen for our country."

Having played in the Kia Super League, WBBL and Hundred, Harmanpreet is keen to see Indian youngsters getting the opportunity to rub shoulders with international stars.

"That is something which has a very different feeling. When I got that opportunity, it was the biggest life-changing moment. Other girls will also experience this. It will be a great opportunity to improve cricket and grow the game."

## Early goals send Roma to 2-0 win over Empoli in Serie A



AS Roma's Argentinian forward Paulo Dybala reacts during the Italian Serie A football match between AS Roma and Empoli at the Olympic stadium in Rome.

Milan, Feb 05 (AP):

Two almost identical goals in the opening six minutes set Roma on the way to a comfortable 2-0 win over Empoli in Serie A. Roma moved level on points with second-placed

Inter Milan, which hosts defending champion AC Milan in the derby on Sunday.

Roma was two points ahead of Lazio. Atalanta and AC Milan. Atalanta lost at Sassuolo 1-0 and ended the match with nine

men. "In the first 25-30 minutes, we looked like a team who could win the league," Roma scorer Tammy Abraham said. "We just need to continue like this and keep winning. Paulo (Dybala) is a very special and talented player. We work well together. Today, he assisted me, and it's nice to keep sharing the assists and goals. He's brought that experience that we needed."

Jos Mourinho's team was looking to bounce back from a humiliating cup exit to Cremonese midweek.

And it got off to the perfect start when Roger Ibaez headed in a corner from Dybala less than two minutes in.

Roma doubled its lead four minutes later when Dybala floated in another corner from the left for Abraham to head home.

Matters almost got worse for Empoli immediately after the break but goalkeeper Guglielmo Vicario pulled off a fantastic triple save.

He first parried Dybala's volley and then got up quickly to keep out Gianluca Mancini's follow-up. With Vicario still on the ground, Abraham seemed certain to head in the rebound from point-blank range but the goalkeeper stuck up his leg to incredibly stop that, too.

## Ashu clinches bronze as other wrestlers disappoint in Zagreb



Zagreb, Feb 05 (PTD):

Asian Championships bronze medallist Ashu clinched the 67kg bronze medal for India in the Greco Roman category on the concluding day of the Zagreb Open Ranking Series here on Sunday.

The 23-year-old grappler added a second bronze to India's tally, defeating Lithuania's Adomas Grigaliunas 5-0. Under-23 world champion, freestyle wrestler Aman Sehrawat, had won the men's 57kg bronze in the inaugural day.

Ashu, who had lost Iran's Reza Mahdi Abbasi

9-0 in the qualification round, came back strongly in the repechage bouts, defeating Hungary's Adam Phoilec 8-0 before overcoming Norway's Haavard Joergensen 9-0 to make the bronze-medal round.

The Indian had three points in the first period and two in the second as the judges declared a win by decision.

Another Indian Greco-Roman wrestler Sagar lost his 63kg repechage round bout to Austria's Aker Schmid Al Obaidi after his quarter-final rival, Iran's Aref Hossein Khoun Mohammadi, entered the final.

## Pakistan threatens to pull out of World Cup in India

Karachi, Feb 05 (PTD):

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman, Najam Sethi has reportedly told BCCI secretary Jay Shah that his country wants to host the Asia Cup and if the tournament is moved out, Pakistan will not send its team for the men's ODI World Cup in India.

Sethi's comments are on similar lines as his predecessor Ramiz Raja, who had reiterated that Pakistan could boycott the 50-over World Cup in India this year if the Asia Cup issue between the two cricket boards wasn't resolved.

Pakistan was originally allotted the Asia Cup in September this year, but Shah, who is the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) president, had said in October last year that the Indian team will not tour Pakistan for the continental tournament due to diplomatic tensions. The ACC is expected to shift the Asia Cup from Pakistan and decide on the alternate venue in March.

However, a well-informed source in the PCB told PTI that during the ACC executive board meeting held in Bahrain on

Saturday, Sethi made Pakistan's stance on the Asia Cup very clear to Shah that his country "will not forgo the hosting rights of either the Asia Cup or the Champions Trophy in 2025".

"Sethi has made his stance very clear (to Shah) and he went to Bahrain after meeting Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif last Tuesday. Apparently, he has discussed the matter with the PM before going to Bahrain," the source said.

"Sethi was clear that the Asia Cup is a multi-team event and the Pakistan government is willing to give security assurances to the Indian team. So, there is no reason for the BCCI to not send its team to Pakistan in September this year," the source added.

"Sethi also made it clear that if the BCCI cannot get clearance from its government for the Asia Cup, Pakistan will also not travel to India for the (ODI) World Cup."

The source added that Sethi told the meeting in Bahrain that if India didn't come to Pakistan, then both countries could play their matches in the two multi-team event at offshore venues.

## Hazlewood set to miss first Test



New Delhi, Feb 05 (PTD):

Recovering from an achilles injury, Australia pacer Josh Hazlewood is set to miss the opening Test against India in Nagpur and also remains a doubtful starter for the second game in Delhi.

The 32-year-old had sustained the injury on his left leg after bowling in the rain-affected Sydney Test against South Africa last month. "Not sure about the first Test. It's still a few days away but it's sneaking up pretty quickly," Hazlewood was quoted as saying by 'Cricbuzz' before

Australia's final session at the KSCA Stadium in the outskirts of Bangalore on Sunday

"Second one is obviously straight after as well. So, we'll play it by ear over the next week and next few days and hopefully Tuesday goes well," added the pacer, who is likely to have his first bowl in Nagpur on Tuesday.

The opening Test begins on February 9 and if he misses out, Scott Boland might get his first overseas Test. Australia is already without Mitchell Starc for the first Test as the pacer is nursing a finger injury. "Just a bit of workload management at the moment. Just managing the Achilles. I was bowling a fair bit leading into the tour at home and sort of just pushing up against it," Hazlewood said. "Probably wasn't recovering as well as I would have liked between each session so thought we'd give it a few days here straight of the bat and try and get over the hump and have a bowl from Tuesday on (in Nagpur) and hope it goes well."

## Emphasis is on slip fielding: Dravid

Nagpur, Feb 05 (PTD):

The Indian team is focussing on fielding, especially slip catching, ahead of the opening Test against Australia beginning here on February 9, head coach Rahul Dravid said on Sunday.

The performance of India's slip fielders has been an area of concern in the past and Dravid said the team is trying to strengthen the slip cordon during its preparatory camp here ahead of the four-match Test series. "Everyone looks in really good shape. It's nice to get the Test team together again. We had a lot of white-ball cricket over the last month or so," Dravid said in a video posted by the BCCI on twitter.

"Some of those boys, shifting from white-ball to red-ball, it's nice for them to just have that extended period in the nets. The surfaces have been really good as well," he said. India are conducting their training sessions at the VCA Stadium in Civil Lines



with the first Test scheduled at the VCA Jamtha Stadium on Thursday.

"Fielding side of things as well, that has been really important as well. The close-in catching which we think is going to become a really important part of the series."

"There's a lot of emphasis and focus on close-in catching, slip fielding, things like that when you are on the road all the time and don't get time to build and work on those things."

With the team on the road all through the year, Dravid said there is hardly any time to work with the players and hence it was quite exciting to get this one week ahead of the series.

## Messi helps French leader PSG beat Toulouse 2-1

Paris, Feb 05 (AP):

After Lionel Messi's second-half goal helped a lackluster Paris Saint-Germain beat Toulouse 2-1 to move eight points clear at the top of the French league, the team was urged to lighten their superstar's load.

Messi struck with a typical curling strike in the 57th minute following a move with Morocco right back Achraf Hakimi, who drew PSG level late in the first half after free kick specialist Branco van den Boomen put Toulouse ahead in the 20th.

PSG was without injured forwards Kylian Mbapp and Neymar and relied heavily on Messi, who hit the post during stoppage time. Without Messi, who has hit 98 goals for Argentina, PSG would have struggled more.

"Messi was a very important driving force for us,



Paris Saint-Germain's Argentine forward Lionel Messi kicks the ball during the French L1 football match between Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Toulouse FC at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris.

given his goal and the chances he created. I'm asking the team to play for him and to work for him. He must be relieved of certain duties," coach

Christophe Galtier said. "His teammates must intensify their efforts to win the ball back and to create spaces, so that he can spray around his passes which

are so rare." PSG needs Messi with Bayern Munich coming up on Feb. 14 in the first leg of their round-of-16 game in the Champions League. Mbapp is out for at least three weeks after sustaining a left thigh tear. Neymar is having treatment for a sore adductor and missed his second straight game. PSG's injury woes increased when Portugal midfielder Renato Sanches went off injured early with a thigh injury.

PSG had lost two and drawn one of its previous five matches, and fell behind in the 20th when Van den Boomen's free kick from the right flew past stranded goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma into the left corner.

After Marquinhos hit the post with a header from Messi's corner, PSG equalized with a fine 20-meter strike from Hakimi in the 38th.

## Blast in Quetta; Babar Azam, Afridi moved to safety

Quetta, Feb 05 (PTD):

Top Pakistani cricketers, including captain Babar Azam and Shahid Afridi, among others, were taken to the safety of the dressing room after a terror attack a few miles down the road where they were playing on Sunday. An exhibition match of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) at the Nawab Akbar Bugti Stadium was halted for some time following an explosion in the Police Lines area, which left five people injured.

A senior police officer said that rescue work had been completed at the site and the injured had been taken to hospital. The outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement on Sunday. It stated that the security officials were targeted in the blast.

The exhibition match between PSL sides Quetta Gladiators and Peshawar Zalmi was organised by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) under pressure from Baloch fans that Quetta also get the status of a PSL venue.

## Davis Cup: India relegated to World Group II

■ Losing Play-off 2-3 to Denmark

Hilleroed, Feb 05 (PTD):

The Indian Davis Cup team was relegated to the World Group II for the first time since the new format was launched in 2019 after losing the play-off tie 2-3 to Denmark, who were single-handedly carried by Holger Rune as the world number nine won three matches for the hosts.

The tie levelled at 1-1, India needed to win the doubles but the pair of Yuki Bhambri and Rohan Bopanna lost 2-6 4-6 in just 65 minutes to the home team combo of Rune and Johannes Ingildsen.

The equation requiring India to win both the reverse singles to stay in World Group I, Nagal put a brave fight but lost 5-7 3-6 in one hour and 37 min-



Prajnesh Gunneswaran of India returns the ball to Elmer Moeller of Denmark during their tennis match of the Davis Cup World Group I Play-Offs First Round in Hilleroed, Denmark.

utes in the first reverse singles.

That defeat gave Denmark an unassailable 1-3 lead and pushed India to World Group II.

Prajnesh Gunneswaran then took court in the dead rubber against Elmer Moeller and won 6-4 7-6(1) in one hour and 39 minutes.

On Friday, Nagal had erased a one-set deficit to pip August Holmgren 4-6 6-3 6-4 in two hours and 27 minutes to make it 1-1 after Bhambri lost the opening singles 2-6 2-6 to the rising teen sensation Rune.

Bhambri has quit singles and now plays only doubles on tour.

## AEROBATIC DISPLAY



Indian Air Force's aerobatics team Surya Kiran performs during an aerobatic display at Shankhumukham in Thiruvananthapuram, Sunday.

## 'Sports recognised from athletes' perspective'

Jaipur, Feb 05 (PTI):

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said his government is encouraging youngsters to pursue a career in sports and the ministry's budget has been increased almost three times since 2014.

There was no lack of passion and talent for sports among the youth in India but it was the unavailability of resources and support from the government that created hindrances in the past, he said and underlined that these issues are now being addressed.

"In the Amrit Kaal of independence, the country is forging new definitions and creating a new order," the prime minister said, noting that sports is finally being viewed from the athletes' perspective and

not from the government's.

"Our government is attentive that no youth should be left behind due to shortage of money," the prime minister said, adding the Centre is now supporting the best-performing players by providing them up to Rs 5 lakh annually.

Modi was addressing virtually the 'Jaipur Mahakhel' sporting event being organised by Lok Sabha MP from Jaipur Rural and former Union minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore.

Nothing is impossible for the youngsters of India



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the participants of Jaipur Mahakhel via video conferencing from New Delhi, Sunday.

and every objective becomes easier when the strength of their capabilities is realised and they are given adequate encouragement, the prime minister said.

He said that today's youth does not want to re-

main confined to just one field due to their multi-talented and multi-dimensional capabilities.

"We are encouraging youngsters to pursue a career in sports. Initiatives like TOPS (Target Olympic Podium Scheme)

are benefiting youngsters in preparing for major sporting events. The Sports Budget of the country has increased almost three times since 2014," he said.

He said that the Sports Ministry has been allocated a budget of Rs 2,500 crore this year compared to 800-850 crore before 2014.

He said that more than Rs 1000 crore have been allocated to the Khelo India campaign alone which will be spent on the development of sports facilities and resources in the country.

Noting that the land of Rajasthan is known for the passion and vigour of its youths, the prime minister said that history is proof that they have turned battlefields into sporting arenas with their valour.

## Uncertainty persists in Joshimath as residents await permanent rehabilitation

Joshimath, Feb 05 (PTI):

It has been more than a month since Bharti Devi left her home which was damaged due to cracks after the soil began sinking in Joshimath in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand. Now the septuagenarian spends half her day near her now-abandoned home which she misses regularly and other half at the sub-divisional office, hoping to receive some positive news about their permanent rehabilitation.

Bharti Devi is currently living in a temporary relief camp at an abandoned army barrack. She was among the first families of Joshimath whose houses

became uninhabitable after the land-subsidence situation began aggravating. "The land beneath our home began to sink on January 2 and by the very next day our house had become uninhabitable. All this happened suddenly," she said.

"We and nearly half a dozen neighbouring families picked up whatever we could from our homes and took refuge in a nearby school which was closed at that time. But now it has been opened and we have been ousted from there as well," she added. Each night weighs heavy on her as she struggles to sleep.

The future seems uncertain for the people of Joshimath whose lives continues to reel under the impact of land subsidence

that hit this city tucked away in the mountains more than a month ago.

Still awaiting permanent rehabilitation, many residents who were using a primary school in the Singhdhar ward as a temporary shelter had to move to an abandoned army barracks after the school was reopened.

They fear that with the arrival of pilgrims for the Char Dham yatra in April and May, they will be deprived of even this accommodation. Bharti Devi's family is among the oldest residents of the Singhdhar ward.

"Our ancestors settled here soon after Joshimath came into existence. The settlement in this area is almost as old as them," she said pointing towards

three ancient streams flowing near her erstwhile home. Since February 1, these families are living in the deserted army barracks in the same ward.

Another resident in his 70s, Shival lived next to Devi. While his house, perched precariously on a rock with cracks, is not as ramshackle as hers, the fields below have developed huge cracks.

Shival spends the nights in the army barracks and strolls around his old house during the day. His wife Vishweshwari Devi also accompanies him to their damaged house to look after their cattle. "How can we be secure if our cows are not. We don't just need a home for ourselves but also a shelter for our cattle," she said.

## NOBEL LAUREATE TO STUDENTS

## 'Let curiosity be your guiding force'

Kolkata, Feb 05 (PTI):

Calling upon young students to never cease in their quest to learn, Israeli Nobel laureate Prof (Dr) Ada E Yonath has urged them to inculcate the habit to ask in order to broaden their horizons.

Yonath is the first woman in 45 years to win the Nobel for Chemistry in 2009 for her pioneering work on the structure of ribosomes, which are found in all cells. The ribosome is a major bacterial target for antibiotics, and her work has led to new antibiotics and a better understanding of antibiotic resistance.

"Your curiosity will be your guiding force, to fire your passion for the quest of scientific knowledge," said Yonath, the 83-year-



A student of Adamas University receives degree from Nobel Laureate Prof. Ada E. Yonath, a Crystallographer from Israel, in North 24 Parganas.

old director of the Helen and Milton A Kimmelman Center for Biomolecular Structure and Assembly of

the Weizmann Institute of Science. Addressing the convocation of Adamas University at Barasat in

North 24 Parganas district on Saturday, she said knowledge cannot be acquired if there is no interaction among people.

Yonath, the chief guest at the Convocation, stated that interaction whets curiosity while curiosity enriches grey cells.

The Nobel laureate said all young scientists follow the broad rule of curiosity.

Yonath called upon the young scientists to share their knowledge by publishing what they learned as that will only broaden their horizons.

University Chancellor Prof Samit Roy said Adamas was collaborating with national and international educational institutions to facilitate global exposure and enrich the knowledge of the academic and corporate world.

## 'RSS conspiring to make Pralhad Joshi K'taka CM'

Bengaluru, Feb 05 (PTI):

JD(S) leader H D Kumaraswamy on Sunday claimed that RSS was conspiring to make Union Minister Pralhad Joshi the Chief Minister of Karnataka along with eight deputies, after the Assembly polls, and alleged that the latter lacks culture and divides society.

Hitting back, BJP State president Nalin Kumar Kateel said the JD(S) leader's statement against the RSS is unbecoming of a former Chief Minister, and his claims about 8 or 9 Deputy Chief Ministers are borne out of a mindset that is rooted in dynastic politics.

"A conspiracy in the RSS is under way to make Pralhad Joshi the Chief



H D Kumaraswamy

Minister of the State after the Assembly polls. Joshi does not belong to a culture that is most prominent in southern Karnataka," Kumaraswamy said.

Speaking to reporters here, he said, "... Certain decisions have been taken by the RSS to make him the Chief Minister, so he has begun to attack

us." Criticising the dynasty politics and alleged infighting in the first family of that JD (S) for a ticket, Joshi, while addressing special State executive meet of the BJP on Saturday, said 'Pancharantna Yatra' has been taken up, 'Navagraha Yatre' should have been undertaken instead. As 8-9 members of the party patriarch H D Deve Gowda's immediate family are in politics. "...all dramabaazi, will they improve the State," he asked.

Reacting to this, Kumaraswamy today said the public response to Pancharatna schemes of JD (S) has created a fear among the BJP, so they are speaking about his party and family.

## RELIGIOUS GATHERING



Devotees pay obeisance to Lord Dwarkadheesh on the occasion of Magh Purnima at Dwarkadheesh temple, in Mathura, Sunday.

## Indian textbook courted controversy

New Delhi, Feb 05 (PTI): Former Pakistan president Pervez Musharraf, who died on Sunday, was once listed among "six great personalities" of the world in a Class 3 textbook in India which was withdrawn following a controversy. The book - "Naitik Shiksha, Samanya Gyan Evam Yoga" - being taught at a private school in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur featured the former military dictator, considered the architect of the 1999 Kargil War with India, among "six great personalities" in one of the chapters and also carried his picture. The District Bar Association (DBA) had strongly objected to the chapter and complained to the district authorities in this regard, following which Christ Asha School at Awadhपुरi withdrew the book in 2015. "This is highly objectionable. Under the Musharraf regime in Pakistan, the Kargil War took place, in which many Indian soldiers lost their lives," the DBA had said.

## CHILD BRIDE RECOUNTS CRACKDOWN

## 'There was a knock on the door at 2 am'

Morigaon (Assam), Feb 05 (PTI):

Nimee's eyes do not sparkle with the joy of new motherhood, instead, they reflect the fear, insecurity and sense of foreboding that stalks her village in Assam's Morigaon district.

Rezina Khatun stares vacuously into the distance - trying to make sense of the sudden apocalypse, which has struck her till-now happy world.

While Nimee is among the thousands of child brides whose husbands were arrested in a state-wide crackdown against child marriage by the Assam Police over the last two days, Rezina is a mother whose son's romantic

escapade, which had ended with marriage, has landed him in jail now.

In the drive against child marriage, police had till Saturday arrested 2,258 people, including Hindu and Muslim priests who conducted such weddings. Police said there is a list of a total 8,000 accused.

The police had registered 4,074 cases of child marriage in less than a fortnight after the state Cabinet decided on January 23 to arrest offenders, besides launching an extensive awareness campaign against the menace.

"There was a knock on the door around 2 am on Thursday. We opened the door and found policemen



A 'child bride' with her child, amid Assam government's statewide crackdown on child marriages, in Morigaon district.

outside. They took away my husband," Nimee told PTI in a feeble voice, as her one-and-half-month-old son cried in her arms just as he had when his father was being arrested.

The 17-year-old had

eloped and tied the knot with Gopal Biswas, who is in his twenties, more than a year back, and were starting off their family with the husband providing for them by selling pakoras and other

savouries.

The names of those affected were changed to protect their identities.

"We barely earn enough to feed our own families. Who will look after Nimee and her son? She has been inconsolable, barely eating anything. The child is also getting sick now," said Yudhishter, Gopal's elder brother, who lives in the same house along with their aged parents.

Rezina's son Rajibul Hussain was picked up from their home around 6 pm on Thursday, barely a few minutes after he had reached home with his father after returning from a trip to Kerala, where they had gone to bring back his injured uncle.

## TRADITIONAL METHOD TO CURE AILMENTS

## Two deaths reported in Shahdol, faith healer booked

Shahdol, Feb 05 (PTI):

Shahdol district in Madhya Pradesh has reported its second child death allegedly due to branding with a hot iron as part of a woman faith healer's traditional method to cure ailments, officials said on Sunday.

A 3-month-old girl who was admitted in the government-run medical college here on Wednesday and shifted to a private facility for treatment after being branded 20 times with a hot iron, died late Saturday night, Chief Medical and Health Officer RK Pandey said.

The child has been identified as Shubhi Kol, daughter of Suraj Kol, a resident of Samatpur village under Sinhpur police station limits, he added.

On Friday, the body of a two-and-half-month-old girl was exhumed after dying in similar circumstances.

The infant's mother, a resident of Kathotia village in Sinhpur, had told authorities the child was unwell and she took her to a woman faith healer who branded her more than 50 times with a hot iron.

The child died in

Shahdol Medical College on Wednesday, officials had earlier said.

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डॉ. ज. शास्त्रन से मान्यता प्राप्त

आर.के.सी.के. शास्त्रन, चौबे कालोनी एवं पारसेडी नाका, धमती रोड कलकत्ता मॉल के पास, रायपुर कॉल: 9827143060/8871003060

Ajay Advt.

### BRIEF



CJI D.Y. Chandrachud with his family during his visit to Amrit Udyan on the premises of Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi, Sunday.

### Evacuate

**Jammu:** Five families were shifted to a school building after their houses developed cracks following an expansion work on a highway in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district. A resident told reporters that the cracks were developed after cutting activity was carried out by a construction company on the highway as a result of which the hill began to slide down in the Basti area. It also slid down due to rain, he said.

### Threat calls

**Akola:** Shiv Sena (UBT) MLA Nitin Deshmukh, who represents Balapur Assembly constituency in Maharashtra's Akola district, alleged that he received threat calls by two unidentified persons on Sunday morning. Talking to reporters, he also claimed that the callers threatened him in the name of a Union minister from the state and his son.

### 'Maha aarti'

**Thane:** Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Sunday visited Malang Gad fort near Kalyan in Thane district of the state and performed 'maha aarti' at the Machhindranath temple atop it. A fair is held annually on the fort on the occasion of Magh Purnima, which is being celebrated on Sunday. Thousands of devotees take part in the annual fair.

### Inaugurate

**Bengaluru:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be visiting Karnataka on Monday to inaugurate 'India Energy Week 2023' in Bengaluru, during which he will launch E20 fuel, a blend of 20 per cent ethanol with petrol, and dedicate to the nation the HAL's helicopter factory in Tumakuru. He will also lay the foundation stone of various development initiatives during the visit. This will be Modi's third visit to the poll-bound state in less than a month.

### Holy dip

**Prayagraj:** Around 20 lakh devotees took a dip in the waters of the holy Sangam here on Sunday on the occasion of "Maaghi Purnima", officials said. Sangam is the confluence of three rivers the Ganga, Yamuna and mythical Saraswati. "There was a crowd of people from 4 am itself. By noon, around 20 lakh people have taken a dip at Sangam. Many people had reached the venue on Saturday night itself," an official said.

**Weather**  
High 31 Low 12

## 'Cong's 85th plenary session to be game changer for Indian politics'

Raipur, Feb 05:

All India Congress Committee general secretary K C Venugopal on Sunday claimed the three-day 85th plenary session of the party to be held in Raipur from February 24 will be a "game changer" for Indian politics.

Venugopal along with senior party leaders Pawan Bansal and Tariq Anwar reached Chhattisgarh's capital to take stock of preparations for the plenary session to be held at the Rajyotsava Sthal in Nava Raipur.

Talking to media persons at the airport here, Venugopal said, "We have come here to take stock of the preparations for the plenary session scheduled to be held from February



K C Venugopal to media persons at the airport here.

24 to 26. This plenary is going to be a game changer of Indian politics."

To a query, he targeted the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party at the Centre said, "The BJP is only spreading lies in the country. They talked about Bharat Jodo Yatra too. The yatra became one of the

biggest political movements in the country. The entire BJP was against it. The BJP can do politics."

The Bharat Jodo Yatra led by Congress MP Rahul Gandhi began on September 7, 2022 from Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu and concluded on January 30, 2023 in

### What Venugopal said...

"We have come here to take stock of the preparations for the plenary session scheduled to be held from February 24 to 26. This plenary is going to be a game changer of Indian politics." To a query, he targeted the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party at the Centre said, "The BJP is only spreading lies in the country. They talked about Bharat Jodo Yatra too. The yatra became one of the biggest political movements in the country. The entire BJP was against it. The BJP can do politics."

Srinagar. As Venugopal, Bansal and Anwar arrived at the Raipur airport on Sunday, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, his cabinet colleagues and state Congress chief Mohan Markam were among those present to welcome them.

## Elephant found dead in Raigarh

■ 6th fatality in 4 months

Raigarh, Feb 05:

A nearly 70-year female elephant has been found dead at a forest in Raigarh district, with officials suspecting the jumbo died of age-related complications.

The carcass was found on Saturday in the forest adjoining Gersa village under Dharamajgarh forest division. Soon after being alerted, forest personnel rushed to the spot and the autopsy was conducted by a team of veterinarians. Prime facie it seems the elephant died due to age-related complications. However, the exact cause of the death will be known once the autopsy report is received," the official said.

### About the tusker....

The carcass was found on Saturday in the forest adjoining Gersa village under Dharamajgarh forest division. Soon after being alerted, forest personnel rushed to the spot and the autopsy was conducted by a team of veterinarians. Prime facie it seems the elephant died due to age-related complications. However, the exact cause of the death will be known once the autopsy report is received.

With this incident, six elephants have died in the district in the last four months, he added. Chhattisgarh has reported death more than 70 elephants in the last five years due to various causes including ailments, age and electrocution, officials said.

### CHILD MARRIAGE

2,278 arrested in three days

Guwahati, Feb 05 (PTI):

The Assam Police continued with its crackdown on child marriage in the state for the third day in a row, with the number of arrests touching 2,278 on Sunday.

A police statement said the arrests were made based on 4,074 FIRs across the state. At least 139 people have been apprehended in Biswanath, followed by 130 in Barpeta and 126 in Dhubri, the statement said.

Other districts where over 100 arrests have been made are Baksa (123) and Bongaigaon and Hojai (117 each), it maintained. Dhubri registered the highest number of FIRs against child marriages at 374 cases, followed by Hojai at 255 and Morigaon at 224. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had on Saturday asserted that the drive against child marriage will continue till the next assembly elections in 2026.

### MAJOR CRACKDOWN

## Govt bans 138 betting, 94 loan apps with China links

■ For gambling, money laundering

New Delhi, Feb 05 (PTI):

In a major crackdown, the Central government has initiated the process to ban and block 138 betting apps and 94 loan lending apps with Chinese links on an 'urgent' and 'emergency' basis, top government sources said on Sunday.

Ministry of electronics and Information Technology is learnt to have taken the decision based on the recommendations of the ministry of home affairs. As per

### What official said....

"The order to block 138 apps that were involved in betting, gambling and money laundering were issued last evening. Separately, an order to block 94 apps engaged in unauthorised loan service has also been issued. These apps were being operated from offshore entities, including Chinese. They were posing a threat to the economic stability of the country," the official, who did not wish to be named, told PTI. The official did not disclose the name of the apps that have been blocked. An official query sent to MeitY did not elicit any immediate response.

sources, the MHA recommended the MeitY this week to ban and block these apps, and the ministry subsequently initiated the process as per communication.

The move was taken after confirming that these apps attract Section 69 of the IT Act as they contain material which is prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India.

The action behind the move is based on several complaints of extortion and harassment of common people who had availed small amounts of loans through the mobile apps being run by those entities and persons.

## FIR against ex-cricketer Kampli on charge of assaulting wife

Mumbai, Feb 05 (PTI):

Police action..

Mumbai Police have registered an FIR against former Indian cricketer Vinod Kampli for allegedly assaulting and abusing his wife in an inebriated state at his home in suburban Bandra, officials said on Sunday.

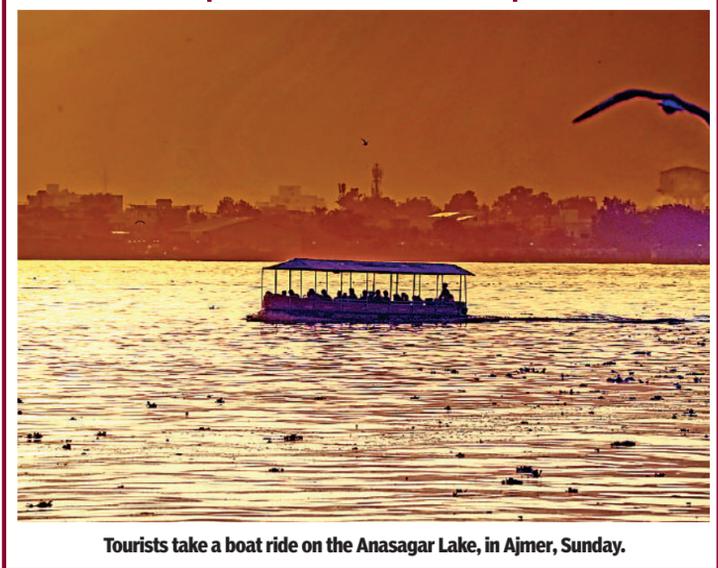
Two police personnel went to Kampli's flat on Sunday and served a notice to him, asking him to appear before them to record his statement. Based on her complaint, the Bandra police on Friday registered the FIR against Kampli under Indian Penal Code Sections 324 (voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons) and 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace).

No arrest has been made so far in connection with the alleged incident which took place on Friday, an official from Bandra police station said. Kampli's wife Andrea in her police complaint alleged that he threw the handle of a cooking pan at her due to which she suffered a head injury, he said. The incident took place between 1 pm and 1.30 pm on Friday when Kampli reached his flat allegedly under the influence of alcohol and started abusing his wife, he said.

Their 12 year-old son, who was present at that time, intervened in the fight, but Kampli went into the kitchen, brought the handle of a broken frying pan

and allegedly threw it on his wife due to which she got injured, the official said quoting the complaint. Kampli's wife later went to the Bhabha Hospital for a medical examination. Based on her complaint, the Bandra police on Friday registered the FIR against Kampli under Indian Penal Code Sections 324 (voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons) and 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace), the official said. In February last year, Kampli was arrested for ramming his car into the gate of his residential society in Bandra. He was later released on bail.

### RELAXING TIME



Tourists take a boat ride on the Anasagar Lake, in Ajmer, Sunday.

## US Airlines offloads cancer patient in Delhi

New Delhi, Feb 05:

### What airline claimed....

The airline, in its official statement, said that its Customer Relations team has reached out to Sengupta to refund the unused portion of her ticket. "On Jan. 30, prior to the departure of American Airlines flight 293 from Delhi to New York, a disruptive customer was removed from the aircraft for failure to follow crew member instructions. Our Customer Relations team has reached out to the customer to refund the unused portion of their ticket," the airline said, adding that a probe into the matter is underway.

A female cancer patient, who recently underwent a surgery, was allegedly off-loaded from a New York-bound flight of American Airlines at Delhi airport after she sought assistance from a flight attendant to keep her hand-bag in overhead cabin. The incident was reported on January 30, and it came to light after the United States-based traveller, identified as Meenakshi Sengupta, lodged a complaint against the flight attendant accusing them of refusing to help her put the handbag weighing more than 5 pounds in the overhead cabin as she was unable to do so because of weak limbs.

## Huge opportunity: Sqdn Ldr Chaturvedi

■ First woman IAF pilot to participate in aerial wargame abroad

New Delhi, Feb 05 (PTI)



Hyakuri from January 12 to 26. "It is always a good experience to participate in flying exercises, especially with a foreign air force. This is more so because this was the first time that I was involved in an international exercise. It was a huge opportunity for me and a wonderful learning experience," Chaturvedi told PTI. The exercise, "Veer Guardian-2023", was the first such wargame between the IAF and the JASDF with a focus on air

combat manoeuvring, interception and air-defence missions. "I would like to convey to all the young, aspiring girls and boys that the sky is the limit for you. The IAF is a wonderful career option and flying fighter aircraft is really exciting," Chaturvedi said.

"I would like to tell all IAF aspirants that you should set your eyes on the goal and go for it with dogged determination," she said when asked how arduous was the path for her to become a fighter pilot. A B.Tech in computer science, Squadron Leader Chaturvedi was among the first three women fighter pilots commissioned into the IAF in June 2016. The other two were Bhawana Kanth and Mohana Singh.

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# Mahadev Book Branch busted in Greater Noida

**Central Chronicle News**

**Bhilai, Jan 05:** Durg Police continued its operation against online betting Mahadev Book and busted its branch which was being operated at Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh. The accused were doing transactions through various bank accounts. 03 laptops, 15 mobiles, etc were recovered from the possession of 09 accused.

Police are going to conduct micro analysis of obtained bank accounts and mobile numbers. The accused are being quizzed to collect information in respect of persons conducting this illegal activity in other states.

Superintendent of Police (Durg) Dr Abhishek Pallava informed that they are conducting a special



operation against the online cricket betting rackets. Joint teams of Anti Crime and Cyber Unit and various police stations are making efforts to trace the people involved in online betting rackets.

During the previous raids, evidence was col-

lected in relation to other persons associated with the online betting Mahadev app. In this sequel, Police got information about some people who were operating a branch of Mahadev Book in Greater Noida.

Acting on this tip off, a

team of Durg Police conducted a raid at Greater Noida. The team arrested nine persons red handed while operating the online betting racket in a house and recovered 03 laptops, 15 mobiles, etc from them.

The accused are identified as Lokesh Kalwani

(32) son of Suresh Kumar a resident of Bhatapara; Abhishek Singh (37) son of Akhileshwar Singh a resident of Shanti Nagar Bhilai; Vishal Kushwaha (24) son of Ramapati Kushwaha a resident of Ganesh Nagar, Jamul; Ankush Verma (25) son of Dilip Verma a resident of Camp-1, Chhawani; Akash Sahu (24) son of Yashwant Sahu a resident of Hardware Line, Supela; Ankit Kannoja (24) son of Prakash Kannoja a resident of Vaishali Nagar; Vaibhav Singh (24) son of Vaidehi Sharan Thakur a resident of Tikrapara Bilaspur; Shubham Rao (19) son of A Jagannath Rao a resident of HSCL Colony Sector 6; and B Ashish (20) son of Bittu Rao a resident of Khursipar, Bhilai.

# Option of EPF-95 for working & retired personnel launched in SAIL portal

**Central Chronicle News**

**Bhilai, Feb 05:** SAIL management has issued an order on February 04, 2023 regarding the enhanced pension of EPS-95 to the working and retired personnel who are eligible for enhanced pension as per the order of EPFO.

It needs to be mentioned here that according to the order passed by the Supreme Court on November 04, 2022 for providing social security, the workers have been given the option of getting pension on the basis of their

actual salary. Efforts on this subject were going on for the last few years through the joint platform of NCOA by SEFI, as a result of which this promising result has been achieved.

After the order of the Supreme Court and the order of EPFO, SEFI was urging the SAIL management to start proper preparations. In this regard, an order has been issued by the SAIL management. According to this order, the personnel can see the calculation of their total dues in respect

of EPS-95 by visiting the web link. For this login, the pan number and password will be the date of birth.

Responding to this order, SEFI President Narendra Kumar Banchole said that compliance of this order will pave the way for the retired employees to get respectable pension amounts while the present employees will get a secure future. In this context, this process will be conducted under the instructions issued by EPFO.

# Roads in BMC limits to become dust free and smooth

**Central Chronicle News**

**Bhilai, Feb 05:** The work of renovation and maintenance of roads in Bhilai Municipal Corporation area is being done vigorously. In this sequel, the work of renovation of road from South Gangotri railway crossing to under bridge Subhash Chandra Chowk is being done at a cost of Rs 60 lakh.

Bhilai Mayor Neeraj Pal visited the site and inspected the quality of the road and gave necessary guidelines to the concerned agency. He said that the road construction work should be done within the stipulated time limit, any kind of negligence in the quality will not be tolerated.

Corporation's engineer Arpit Banjare was asked to make a proposal to develop Azad Chowk. Local



residents and businessmen expressed happiness over this initiative of BMC. They asserted that this work was very necessary as it will become convenient to ply on the roads now.

Here it needs a mention that the work of maintenance of roads in Bhilai

Municipal Corporation area is going on at a fast pace, a time limit has been fixed for this.

It is informed that with its limited resources BMC is trying to provide better facilities for transportation for all the local residents, everyone's co-operation is needed.

**Central Chronicle News**

**Bhilai, Feb 05:** Miraj Entertainment Limited, which runs a cinema theatre at Civic Centre in Bhilai under its brand name Miraj Cinemas, has clarified that they have no money dispute (pending dues) with the Bhilai Steel Plant and the authorities of Bhilai Steel Plant have not taken any action directly against Miraj Entertainment Limited. In a press communiqué, Miraj Entertainment Limited has clarified that they had entered into an agreement with Bhilai based Mr Surana and Mr Kothari to run the Miraj Cinema at their property located in Civic Centre, Bhilai. This theatre was constructed on the land leased by Bhilai Steel Plant to Mr Surana and

Mr Kothari. The actual dispute was between the Original Lessees (Mr Surana and Mr Kothari) and the Lessors (Bhilai Steel Plant) consequent to which the theatre complex was sealed.

It needs to be mentioned here that the Enforcement Department of BSP's Town Services Department had sealed the land and building in which Miraj Cinema was being run in Civic Centre, Bhilai. There was a long pending dispute between the land Lessees (Mr Surana and Mr Kothari) and the Lessors (Bhilai Steel Plant) over the unpaid dues of about



Rs 6.92 crores. On Saturday, the Enforcement Department executed the decree passed by the Estate Court in favour of Bhilai Steel Plant and sealed the premises in which Miraj Cinema and a Gym were being run. Miraj Entertainment

Limited has clarified that their company is in no way concerned with the issue. They are operating and managing the theatre under an agreement with the Owners Mr Surana and Mr Kothari. The issue per se is between the owners, who are the purported Lessees of the

land in which the theater is located and Bhilai Steel Plant who are the Lessors. There is some property title dispute between the Original Lessees and the Lessors and after protracted litigation between the parties the Estate Court has declared the Original Lessees as illegal occupants of the subject plot of land which has been seized. Miraj Entertainment Limited representative Gaurav Gupta asserted that Miraj Entertainment Limited are in no manner connected with the issue of seizure of the theatre and the name of Miraj Cinemas was unnecessarily tarnished. He added that they respect law and order completely and cooperate with the authorities in every possible way.

# BSP action was not against Miraj Entertainment Limited

# Age is no barrier to joy and happiness

**Elderly people recollect school days after 55 years****Central Chronicle News**

**Bhilai, Feb 05:** Age is just a number and it cannot be a barrier to joy and happiness, opined the elderly citizens after reliving their school days after about 55 years. The former students of Higher Secondary School, Sector 7 organised a picnic and recollecting the fun and joy they had during school picnics.

After a very long gap, they contacted each other and decided to organise a picnic on the banks of River Sheonath at Pisegaon. They enjoyed the company of schoolmates under the shade of gooseberry, mango and banyan trees.

The arrangements of this family picnic were done under the supervision



of Kapoor Singh Parihar and Shrikant Ghule. They cooked together and enjoyed the food. Neeta Gupta, Snehlata Parihar, Lakshmi, Meenakshi Verma, Mrs Ghule and others

conducted various games including house, musical chair, fugga phod etc. They realised that age cannot be a barrier to joy and happiness. They could not have been able to jump

and run like young age, but their childhood friendship was clearly visible. No one was concerned about their status and position. All the participants were of the age group between 66 to 70

years. In the company of school mates, they forgot their health problems. Everyone left for their respective homes with the desire to meet again soon.

# SEFI reiterates demand for Strategic Merger of Steel PSUs

**Central Chronicle News**

**Bhilai, Feb 05:** SEFI has reiterated its demand of strategic merger of Steel Sector PSUs instead of disinvestment and privatisation. Steel Executive Federation of India (SEFI), which is duly recognized by the Ministry of Steel, is the apex national body representing around 20000 officers of SAIL, RINL, MECON, NMDC and NISP. SEFI has been asserting that the strategic merger of PSUs will prove to be very beneficial in national interests.

SEFI Chairman Narendra Kumar Banchole said that Steel PSUs are contrary to Private sector Steel plants as they all

have been rendering service to the Nation. PSUs practice ethical business by strictly following all statutory compliances like Safety, Health, Environment, Various Taxes, CSR and many more. By this, PSUs spend more and therefore should not be compared to private companies. The "Service to the Nation" cannot be termed as "Business" in true sense. The Steel PSU's are back-bone of the country they have been key players for making India a Developing Country. SEFI expressed its strong resentment over the proposed disinvestment of Steel PSUs and demand for a strategic merger of the PSU sector. Strategic

merger of NMDC Nagarnar - RINL - SAIL as a single entity under the Ministry of Steel can synchronise the complete business model of these PSUs. Government can also extract maximum benefits from this more competitive and efficient Steel venture by curtailing the administration and control at one place. Through a letter, SEFI has requested the Minister of Finance (State) Dr Bhagwat Karad to kindly consider their request for merger of Steel PSU's to protect these national assets. The country has also witnessed the services rendered by CPSE's during COVID Pandemic times, SEFI added.

# Much awaited Chief General Manager promotion list released

**Central Chronicle News**

**Bhilai, Feb 05:** In BSP, 20 General Managers have become Chief General Managers. SAIL Management has released the list of officers to be promoted to the post of Chief General Manager on February 05, 2023. In this promotion, a total of 71 officers in SAIL were promoted as Chief General Managers, out of which 20 Chief General Managers were promoted from Bhilai Steel Plant.

Expressing happiness over this promotion, SEFI Chairman, and President of the Officers' Association, Narendra Kumar Banchole has congratulated all the newly promoted Chief General Managers. SEFI President expressed hope that the promoted executives will contribute in setting new

levels of progress and excellent performance, so that Maharatna Company SAIL could achieve new heights in its production, productivity and profitability. Along with this, SEFI Chairman thanked the SAIL management and BSP management for satisfactory coverage and sensitive adjustment of transfers.

The newly promoted Chief General Managers of Bhilai Steel Plant include AK Joshi, AK, Shankar, DK Badopadhyay, GP Singh, HK Pathak, Jitendra Kumar, KC Mishra, Munish Goyal, Pratyush Sharma, Pankaj Puri, Pradeep Kumar Mishra, Pranay Kumar, RB Gaharwar, RG Dalal, Rakesh Joshi, Sudhir Kumar, Sushmita Dey and from Medical Department - Dr Kausaleendra Thakur, Dr Rajeev Pal and Dr Vinita Dwivedi.

# Shapath Foundation organises 'Thank You Bhilai'

**Central Chronicle News**

**Bhilai, Feb 05:** Social organisation, Shapath Foundation organised a colourful programme Thank You Bhilai just like previous years with the aim being to look back on the achievements and express gratitude to the city of Bhilai. The venue of the celebration was Shaheed Park, Sector-05 Bhilai. The Chief Guest on the occa-

sion was Mahadev Kavre, Divisional Commissioner Durg while NK Banchole, President, BSP Officers Association, M Ravindranath Chief Medical Officer Sector 9 & Sameer Swarup Chief General Manager Mines Rowghat were present as special guests. The program was started with Sadbhavana cross country race (male and female) which was flagged off by the chief



guest. Thereafter, about 2000 colorful balloons were released in the sky with the slogan of Thank You Bhilai. Prominent personalities who have brought laurels not only in the state but also in the country and abroad, were honoured with "Bhilai Ratna", including IP Mishra (Education), S Swaminathan Iyer (Industry and Trade), Daljit Singh posthumously for social service, Jagannath Yadav

(Sports), Rajeshwar Rao (Environment), Dr Sanjeev Issar (Medical), Nalini Srivastava (Literature), Sonali Chakraborty (Women Empowerment), Rajni Rajak (Arts & Music). In the field of social service, 10 institutions were honoured with the Vishisht Seva Samman for their dedicated work, including Sarvadharm Seva Sanstha, Sant Nirankari Charitable Foundation, Jan



Samarpan Seva Sanstha, Geet Vitaan Kala Kendra, Darul Rahat Alima Social Society, Aggarwal Samaj Bhilai, Shakti Pravaah Udaan Ek Manzil, Gurdwara Management Committee Nehru Nagar, All India Telugu Community Welfare Association and Sneh Sampada. For the first time, a question-and-answer competition was also organised with the audience with city of Bhilai

as the central theme which was conducted by journalist Yashwant Sahu. At the outset, welcome address was given by President of Shapath Foundation Ashok Gupta. While the report of the organization was narrated by patron Virendra Satpathy and vote of thanks was addressed by Amitabh Bhattacharya and Anil Shukla conducted the programme.

## Budget will help India become a global leader: Meghwal

### Highlights merits of budget

**Raipur, Feb 05:** The union budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will make the country a global leader, Union Minister of Culture and Parliamentary Affairs, Arjun Ram Meghwal said in a press conference held at BJP state office in Kushabhau Thackeray Complex on Sunday.

With increase in the amount for 'Pradhan Mantri Awaas' in the budget a large number of houses will be built in the country which will create more job opportunities for the construction labourers, he said while highlighting the nuances of the general budget. According to Meghwal the budget was presented with a focus of inclusive development. Budget is a technical subject and those who do not understand it,



are saying that the MGNREGA fund has been cut which is not the case at all, said Meghwal.

He said that the initial provision made in MGNREGA was decided on the basis of review and there would be a provision of supplementary amount as per the requirement. Those who are saying that MGNREGA fund has been cut, should know who will get the benefit of the increase in 'Pradhan Mantri Awaas' fund, he said.

Charging Chhattisgarh Chief Minister with spreading confusion he said that Congress should study the budget estimates of Manmohan government's MGNREGA and

the figures of Modi government's budget estimates of the center and accordingly keep such figures in front of the public. According to him the budget estimate of Modi government is very high and if the demand increases, more provisions can be made in the supplementary budget because MGNREGA is a demand-driven scheme. The spirit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is to make India a global leader and budget has been presented in the same spirit, he said.

In 'Amrit Kaal', there is a vision that India should become a developed nation and make progress in technology, economy and other

fields, said the Union Minister.

Looking at the agriculture sector, there is a provision of Rs 20 lakh crore for loans, he said while discussing the specifics of the budget. Chhattisgarh is inhabited by people of all castes including a large number of tribal, he said adding that special status that should have been given to 12 castes, was not given and no arrangement was made for water, house, and education to them. By including such people in the category of tribal, a provision of budget of Rs 15,000 crore has been made for them as well, he said.

A provision has also been made in the budget to

provide free legal aid to the poor prisoners, Meghwal said, adding that if they are innocent they will come out to join mainstream and contribute to the development of the country like other citizens after their acquittal with the legal aid.

According to him India is leading in 5G. The technological development that India has made is in front of everyone, he said. 'Vishwa Karma' is a new experiment in the budget, he said, adding that manual laborers would be brought under the ambit of 'Vishva Karma' and provided resources.

'India is a world guru in Yoga and Ayurveda. In medical science, we developed the vaccine during the COVID pandemic and also served humanity in the world. India will lead in all areas. For India to become a developed nation, this is the budget for inclusive development', said Meghwal.

## Three national leaders take stock of preparations



### By Congress for 3-day 85th National Plenary Session in Nava Raipur

**Raipur, Feb 05:** Preparations for the Congress 85th National Plenary Session in state capital of Chhattisgarh are in full swing and to take stock of the preparations, the National Treasurer Congress Pawan Bansal, In-Charge General Secretary KC

Venugopal and general secretary Tariq Anwar arrived here on Sunday morning and visited the venue.

At the Airport, the office bearers were welcomed by CM Bhupesh Baghel, PCC Chief Mohan Markam, Minister Shiv Kumar Daharia, Tamradhwaj Sahu, and other ministers, MLAs and PCC office bearers and party workers in large number.

During this speaking to media persons KC Venugopal said that they

have come to see the preparations for the three-day AICC 85th National Plenary Session to be held in Nava Raipur on Feb 24, 25 and 26 and it could be a game-changer. The party leaders first visited the Circuit House and from there they left for Nava Raipur at the proposed venue for the Plenary Session. At 3:00 pm they reviewed about the preparations made and then all three left for Delhi by evening flight.

## Absconding accused nabbed from Amritsar

### In cheating people of funds worth Rs 8 cr

**Raipur, Feb 05:** One of the absconding accused for last 8 yrs and Director of a Chit Fund Company Swarna Singh has been nabbed by the Raipur police from Medical Avenue of Majhita Road, near Amritsar of Punjab. Singh was operating through Greenday Forest India Limited Company and Greenday's Projects and Development from a small office near Banstall in capital city and had cheated people of Raipur and nearby areas of funds worth Rs 8 crore and ran away. Complaints against him were lodged in many thanas of capital city.

The case is that of Golebazar area. The complainants in their complaint have charged that the Directors of Greenday Forest India Limited, Greenday's Projects & Developers viz. Alok Kumar Bhadra, Santosh Sikadar, Swarna Singh and other have



cheated the applicant and others by making attractive offers to double or triple their income with investment in their Chit Fund Company and by doing so got deposit worth Rs 8 crore and ran away.

A case under section 420, 467, 468, 471, 409, 120B, 34 of IPC and under section 10 of The Prize Chits Money Circulation Scheme Act was filed against them. In this case, Director AK Bhadra, and agent Krishna Prasad have been arrested and others were absconding. The police through its inquiry got confirmation about Swarna Singh's presence in Amritsar and so located his spot and nabbed him and is now being brought to Raipur on Transit remand.

## PUNNI MELA



Top: Colourful lighting has been done for the Rajim Maghi Punni mela starting from Sunday in Rajim. CM and others offer prayers at the confluence of three rivers and to Lord Shri Rajiv Lochan at the temple.

## Dharna venue shifted to Naya Raipur, near Rajyotsav

### For demonstrators of 100+ and those below 100 can stage peaceful protest at Budhatalab

**Raipur, Feb 05:** For any large-scale dharna or demonstration, the district administration has shifted the venue to Naya Raipur at Tuta village in front of Rajyotsav ground. So for any dharna of 100 plus persons will now be held in Naya Raipur, sector-23 in Gram Tuta, in front of Rajyotsav Ground and order in this regard was released by the Collector late in the evening.

District Collector Dr Sarveshwar Bhure informed that keeping in mind the public sentiments, the dharna venue at



city's Budhatalab has been shifted to Naya Raipur, in front of Rajyotsav Maidan and order in this regard has been issued. Now only the demonstrations or protest below 100 persons will be held at the old dharna venue, near Budhatalab and that too in a peaceful manner. For strength above 100 the dharna venue will be Naya Raipur.

It is notable here that due to frequent demonstrations and protest by the demonstrators at Budhatalab there was traf-

fic -jam like situation in Sarafa Bazar, City Kotwali, Satti Bazar, posing problems to passer-bys due to heavy traffic pressure and it was also affecting the commercial activities. Presently all the government related works of the state government are carried out from the state secretariat in Nava Raipur and since majority of the demands of the demonstrators are related to state government, therefore the dharna venue has been shifted there.

## India will emerge as biggest economic power after America and China: Meghwal



**Raipur, Feb 05:** If Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel wants to run government on the basis of communists he will not be able to do it because Swami Vivekananda had said that communism will end, Union Culture and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Arjun Meghwal said here today. Meghwal, who came to explain the budget to the intellectuals, criticized the previous governments regarding the budget.

Meghwal, while talking on the Union Budget at a hotel on VIP Road here said, "If the state government makes any proposal, it will build a museum or something in the name of Swami Vivekananda so that people can take inspiration to move forward." According to him Asia will lead the world in the 21st century and if this happens then the country leading Asia should be India. "Our budget is the one to make this vision a reality", he said.

He said that earlier the budget of the country was not taken as a priority as it was presented at 5 pm. Atal ji's government rescheduled budget presentation at 11 am. Even then this budget continued to be presented on the last day of February i.e. 28 or 29 February.

"Prime Minister Modi started presenting this budget on February 1, so that the provi-

sions made in the budget can be spent on time. Earlier governments used to take a long time to get the budget passed start spending late. Now everything is done through planning, this is also an economic reform", he said.

According to Meghwal budget amount was not fully utilized in previous regime. Modi government is spending a lot of money and connectivity of the country is being improved a lot, he said, adding that work is being done on roads, airports and even in hilly areas. Work is in progress to make transportation easier through water as well, he said and added that with all these schemes, India will become world guru.

The Union Minister said, after Covid-19, the economies of many developed countries collapsed and their GDP remained only one or two percent but India emerged as the fastest developing country in the whole world. In times to come, India will be the biggest economic power after America and China, he said.

According to Meghwal consumption is a very important part for growth in GDP and many schemes like Pradhan Mantri Awaas are increasing the country's consumption. Cement, sand, bricks will be sold with implementation of Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana,

he said, adding that people will get wages, paint and varnish items will be used. "After the house is built, people will also buy TV, fridge. These are such schemes which increase the consumption of many things at once and people of every class get benefit from this", he said.

The conference of intellectuals was attended by MP Sunil Soni, former Ministers Punnulal Mohile, Ajay Chandrakar, Amar Agrawal, BJP state general secretary Kedar Kashyap, treasurer Nandan Jain, Naresh Gupta, Amit Chimnani, Nishchay Bajpai, Rajesh Agrawal, Ganesh Shankar Mishra and representatives of CA Association, CS Association, Chamber of Commerce, CAT, Bar Association, Income Tax Bar Association and several social organisations.

## IIM holds MDP for CAs



**Raipur, Feb 05:** Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Raipur is at present conducting a management development program (MDP) aimed at equipping the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India's (ICAI) meritorious young professionals with management knowledge and procedural skills which will help them in their careers. The participants in this MDP are the 77 rank-holders who are among the top 100 candidates in the immediate past round of ICAI's examina-

tions. The MDP inauguration ceremony took place on January 30, 2023 and was attended by ICAI officials. Through this MDP, the top talent in the field of accounting is being trained in various important areas such as understanding self and others, emotional intelligence, time management, managing stress, attaining well-being, building teams, developing trust, motivating subordinates through goal-setting, job enrichment, and fairness, using influence

## State's TT team for Junior, Youth declared

**Raipur, Feb 05:** The state's Table Tennis (TT) team for the 84th Inter-State Youth and Junior National Championship to be held in Chennai from Feb 8 to 16 has been declared. For the above championship, MLA Raipur (North) and Chairman CHB Kulddeep Juneja declared the Chhattisgarh's team for Junior and Youth (Boys & Girls) here on Sunday. On this occasion Sharad Shukla and Pradeep Joshi and other office bearers extended greetings to all the selected players and hoped for best of their performances. To take part in this championship, the state's

Junior and Youth (Girls) team will be leaving on Feb 6 and that Junior and Youth (boys) team on Feb 11. The team's coach is Miraj (Raipur) and Manager is Geetanjali Pathak (Durg). The team declared is as follows: Youth (Boys)- (Under-19): Karan Malhotra (Raipur); Ramji Kumar (Raipur); Vishal Dekate (Raipur); Arjun Malhotra (Raipur). Addl Entry- Harshit Kedia (Raipur) and Siddha Dhuppada (Raipur). Youth (Girls)- (under 19): Anchal Bareth (Raipur); Pragya Pathak (Durg); Avni Sharma

(Raipur); Aditi Khuntia (Bilaspur). Addl. Entry- Arjun Malhotra (Raipur); Harshit Kedia (Raipur); Siddha Dhuppada (Raipur). Junior (Boys)- (Under-17): Ramji Kumar (Raipur); Vishal Dekate (Raipur); Karan Malhotra (Raipur); Aman Verma (Durg). Addl. Entry- Arjun Malhotra (Raipur); Harshit Kedia (Raipur) and Siddha Dhuppada (Raipur). Junior (Girls)- (under-17): Aditi Khuntia (Bilaspur); Suchi Verma (Durg) and Tisa Hardel (Durg); Pragya Pathak (Durg). The above information was given by Vinay Baiswade.

## BSS observes 128th birth anniversary of Swami Pranavananda

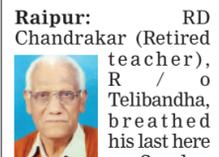


**Raipur, Feb 05:** On Sunday at Bharat Sevashram Sangh Pranavanand Academy premises, Yugacharya Shrimat Swami Pranavanand Maharaj's 128th Arvibhav Jayanti and 'Shri Maghi Purnima' was celebrated with religious fervour. Yagya rituals, aarti, religious discourse, bhajan kirtan by members of Sunhari Yaadein Musical Group was conducted on this occasion. Clothes were distributed to the poor.

Mahant Shri Ved Prakash Narayan from Lakshmi Narayan Trust graced the occasion as the chief guest. Swami Shivrupanand Maharaj, Swami Sureshanand Maharaj and Swami Pranavanand Maharaj performed the puja rituals. Guardians, Monks and devotees and students, in large numbers, were present in the school premises. The program was concluded with the distribution of Bhog Prasad.

## OBITUARY

### RD Chandrakar



**Raipur:** RD Chandrakar (Retired teacher), R / o Telibandha, breathed his last here on Sunday. He was 85. The final rites were held at crematorium in Shatabdi Nagar, Raipur. He was father of Srikant, Ramakant, and Umakant Chandrakar.

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## Distribution of subsidy of more than Rs 1.5 cr to 888 beneficiaries

### Under Electric Vehicle Policy

10% subsidy on the price of the vehicle to promote electric vehicles in Ch'garh

**Raipur, Feb 05:** Under the Electric Vehicle Policy 2022 in the state, the subsidy is being distributed continuously to the beneficiaries by the Transport Department. In this context, distribution of subsidy amounting to Rs 01 crore 55 lakh 90 thousand 515 is going on to 888 electric vehicle owners. Before this, under the first phase, subsidy worth more than Rs.80 lakh has been distributed to 404 beneficiaries across the state in the month of

December. In this regard, Transport Minister Mr. Mohammad Akbar said that every possible initiative is being taken to promote electric vehicles in Chhattisgarh as per the intention of Chief Minister Mr. Bhupesh Baghel. Under this, any person who buys an electric vehicle can get subsidy from the state government. For this, the vehicle seller dealer has to give his account number and IFS code. 10 percent of the value of the vehicle, subject to a maximum of Rs 1.5 lakh, will be directly transferred by the Transport Department to the account of the electric vehicle buyer.

Transport Minister Mr. Akbar has also informed that in view of the global problem of air pollution

at present, there is a dire need to promote more and more electric vehicles. In view of this, all possible help is being provided by the state government to encourage the mission related to electric vehicles in Chhattisgarh. In this context, subsidies are being distributed to attract customers towards electric vehicles, which will continue. He said that the state government is providing various facilities and necessary help to the people to encourage the use of electric vehicles. According to the information received from the Transport Commissioner Mr. Dipanshu Kabra, at present, distribution of subsidy amounting to more than one and a half crore rupees is going on to 888

electric vehicle owners from different districts of the state. In the subsidy being distributed now, the maximum subsidy of Rs 72 lakh 78 thousand has been provided to 401 beneficiaries in Bilaspur, Rs 40 lakh to 201 beneficiaries in Raipur and Rs 10 lakh to 86 beneficiaries in Balodabazar. Similarly, Rs 12 lakh 4 thousand to 74 beneficiaries in Durg, Rs 4 lakh 64 thousand to 43 beneficiaries in Janjgir, Rs 3 lakh 82 thousand to 36 beneficiaries in Jashpur, Rs 3 lakh 25 thousand to 26 beneficiaries in Gorela-Pendra-Marwahi, distribution of subsidy amounting to Rs. 7 lakh 40 thousand to 18 beneficiaries in Mahasamund and Rs. one lakh 69 thousand to 3 beneficiaries in Mungeli.

## CM visits Sadguru Kabir Saheb Temple



**Raipur, Feb 05:** Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel reached the temple of Sadguru Kabir Saheb located at Panthashree

Huzur Mukundamaninam Saheb Satsang Bhawan in Kharsia here on Friday. Here paid obeisance to

Sadguru Kabir Saheb and offered prayers according to the rituals. Assembly Speaker Dr Charandas Mahant, Home

Minister Tamradhwaj Sahu, Higher Education Minister Umesh Patel were present on the occasion.

## Historic decision to restore old pension scheme: Bhagat

## Warm welcome to Cong SC/ST cell leaders

## Annual Tech-festival Aavartan inaugurated



Participated in the new year meeting and prize distribution ceremony of the Officers-Employees Federation

**Raipur, Feb 05:** Food and Culture Minister Mr. Amarjit Bhagat said that officers-employees and people's representatives will together discharge the responsibility for the progress of the state, only then the dream of 'Garhbo Nava Chhattisgarh' will come true. Minister Mr. Bhagat was addressing the New Year meeting and prize distribution ceremony organized under the aegis of the Gazetted Officers and Employees Union at the Head of the Department's office premises located in Naya Raipur Indravati Bhawan. At the function, Minister Bhagat felicitated the players of the Nava Raipur Premium League Tournament by giving them medals and certificates. Minister Bhagat said that the officers and employees are engaged in official work every day. Due to this, their mind gets bored many times, cultural and recreational programs should be organized along with work, so that new energy can be communicated in them. He said that Chief Minister Mr. Bhupesh Baghel has given an opportunity to the officers-employees to work with new energy and enthusiasm by giving them two days off in a week. He said that the Chief Minister has restarted the old pension

scheme with the aim of providing security to the old age of the officer-employees and their families. This is an important and historic decision in the interest of the employees. Food Minister Bhagat said that during the Covid-19 period, when people were struggling to save lives from the Corona epidemic, then with the cooperation of the state government, the officers and employees were engaged in saving the patients by risking their lives. Mr. Bhagat said that there are many states in India which have cut the salaries of their employees during the Corona period, but Chief Minister Mr. Bhupesh Baghel did not cut the salaries of his officers and employees keeping in mind their interest. He said that during the Corona period, the Chief Minister worked for the people of the state by distributing free and cheap ration to the people under the Universal PDS. He said that earlier there used to be different types of ration cards, but after coming to power, our government worked to ensure availability of same ration card and ration for both rich and poor.

**Raipur, Feb 05:** In a meeting of Adivasi Congress and SC/ST cell at Rajiv Bhavan, National Coordinator SC/ST Raju Saheb, Chhattisgarh Congress Incharge Kumar Shaileja, Adivasi Congress National President Shivaji Rao Moghe, National VP Deepak Vajji, PCC President Mohan Markam and other leaders were present, informs Adivasi Congress dis-



trict president Bhavani Singh Markam. All the leaders were given a floral welcome by Adivasi Congress state president Janak Dhruv. Markam informed, leaders were welcomed all the way from the airport to Rajiv Bhavan. In the programme Pavan Ratre, Sashi Bhagat, Ghanshyam Vishwakarma and others were present.

**Raipur, Feb 05:** National Institute of Technology Raipur inaugurated its annual tech-festival 'Aavartan 22-23' on Saturday. The Chief Guest for the inauguration ceremony was Manoj Khare, MD, CSPDCL. Dr. Samir Vajpayee encouraged students to involve themselves with extracurricular activities which will help them form natural problem solving skills among them. Dr. (Mrs.) AB Soni explained how such events investigate the potential within students by providing real life technical challenges. Manoj Khare passed on his vision of building sustainable and environmentally friendly

technologies to solve people's problems by this generation of engineers. He wished great success to Team Technocracy and A hoped for new sustainable technologies to emerge through events like Aavartan. Day 01 of Aavartan included a science exhibition, known as 'Vigyaan' where teams of students proposed their solutions to the problem statements



provided by the institute. Working models and prototypes on topics like Groundwater data analysis and visualization, A robot helper for carrying luggage at bus and railway stations, A chatbot to address various hostel issues and provide support, Quick count of trees using flying drones, and many more were presented by students from institutions all across India.

Chemoports changing the course of chemotherapy for cancer patients

## Annual function held at Patel Vidya Mandir

## Camps will be set up in rural locations for differently-abled persons

## Application process for Haj-2023 to be started from next week



**Raipur, Feb 05:** The annual function and teachers' felicitation was held at of Patel Vidya Mandir school Raipur on Saturday. Journalist Sanjeev Gupta and state president of Kosariya Patel Marar Samaaj Rajendra Nayak commenced the function by lighting of the ceremonial lamp. This was followed by presentation of the annual report, cultural programme and prize dis-

tribution by the chief guest. Various performances like 'Bollywood pop', Rani Laxmibai's epic, 'Social Media Awareness', presented by the students mesmerised the audience. The function concluded with the vote of thanks and singing of the National Anthem. The management of the school congratulated everyone for the smooth conduct of the function.

**Raipur, Feb 05:** By holding a meeting at the District Health Committee in the Collectorate's Red Cross meeting hall, Collector Dr. Sarveshwar Narendra Bhure provided the required directives to health officials. He requested that the recruitment procedure for various positions within the National Health Mission be completed. Given instructions, he asked for the district's health center facility to be finished as quickly as possible. District Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Akash Chikara, Assistant Collector, Jayant Nahata, Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr. Mithilesh Chowdhary, and other medical officers were at the meeting.

During the discussion, while examining maternal health, he directed the Chirayu team to give comprehensive care to children with critical illnesses. Similarly,



directed to inspect and test children with hearing impairment, vision impairment, and heart illness, as well as manage correct treatment. Do it in conjunction with women and child development, and social welfare. He also directed to set up camps in rural locations for people that are differentlyabled. He also directed that institutional deliveries be expedited. He requested that primary healthcare delivery points be expanded. He expressed his concern with the lack of delivery in health centers and directed that it be improved in the coming month. Along with this, he asked all the block medical officers to review health centers institution-wise and

bring progress in this regard. Meanwhile, during the review meeting, the team was directed under the R.B.S.K. program to visit the school as per the action plan and update the entry of 100 percent of the screened children on the portal. He mentioned making spectacles mandatory for children whose vision is poor during the screening. Similarly, medical colleges, district hospitals, and civil hospitals, associated with the Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan should provide all primary healthcare facilities to the women. The Collector mandated that all women covered by the Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan should receive sonography, which

had not previously been done. The Collector stated the average number of patients in each Haat bazaar should be increased and also reviewed Mukhyamantri Haat Bazar Clinic Yojana.

Additionally, the Collector point wise reviewed newly constructed buildings, payment of Janani Suraksha Yojana beneficiaries, Parivar Kalyan ke lakshy, and entry in the RCH portal, health program review, National T.B eradication program, leprosy program, health and wellness review, the progress of tobacco control program, mental health program, Hamar Clinic, Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, Dr. Khubchand Baghel swasthya sahayata yojana. Prior to this, The Collector instructed all the concerned officers to follow the instructions given according to the target.



**Raipur, Feb 05:** Haj Committee of India, Chairman, Government of India Mr. P. Abdullahkutty reviewed the Haj arrangements of the state by reaching the office of the Chhattisgarh State Haj Committee during his stay in Raipur. Chhattisgarh State Haj Committee Chairman Mohammad Aslam Khan informed about the Haj arrangements being made by the State Haj Committee and the facilities provided by the state government.

Haj Committee of India, Chairman, Government of India Mr. P. Abdullahkutty appreciated all the Haj arrangements and the facilities being provided to Haj pilgrims, he assured that the process of applications for Haj 2023 would be started from next week. On the special demand of the

State Haj Committee, he assured to provide all possible facilities to the Hajis of the state. Chhattisgarh State Haj Committee Chairman Mohammad Aslam Khan and members Haj Committee of India, Chairman, Government of India Mr. A. P. Abdullahkutty was presented with a bouquet and a state pot. On this occasion, State Haj Committee Chairman Mohammad Aslam Khan, especially R.D.A. Vice President Mr. Shiv Singh Thakur, Former Vice President of Urdu Academy Mrs. Najma Azim, Haj Committee Member Maulana Dr. Qari Imran Ashrafi, Maulana Qari Syed Ashfaq Ahmed Anjum, Mr. Shamim Akhtar, Mr. Mohammad Imran, Dr. Mrs. Rubina Alvi, Secretary Mr. Sajid Memon were present.

## Assembly Speaker Dr. Charandas Mahant inaugurated RIPA in Pendri Gauthan

**Janjgir-Champa, Feb 05:** Speaker of Chhattisgarh Vidhansabha Dr. Charandas Mahant inaugurated RIPA Yojana at Pendri Gauthan under Janjgir-Champa district. While inaugurating Poojan Samagri Unit, Kosa Unit, Mushroom Unit in Gauthan under



RIPA scheme, the Speaker discussed with the concerned beneficiaries about the work being done by them. On this occasion, various public representatives including Chairman of Gau Sewa Ayog Rajeshree Mahant Ramsunder Das, Municipality President Bhagwan Das Gadhewal, Collector

Richa Prakash Chaudhary, Superintendent of Police Vijay Aggarwal, District Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Dr. Jyoti Patel were present. Meanwhile, On October 2, the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel launched the state-level Mahatma Gandhi Rural

Industrial Park Scheme (RIPA) in all districts. Shaded livelihood activities in the district have begun today to connect villagers with employment under RIPA. This will enable the women and youth of Pendri and surrounding areas to gain self-employment and improve their economic situation.

## Farmers in elephant-affected areas will be free to tend to their crops without worry

- 33 solar high mast lights were installed in the Surajpur district's elephant-affected areas on CM's initiative
- During the Bhent-Mulaqat Abhiyan, the villagers of the Pratappur area made demands.

elephants arrive. Chief Minister Mr. Bhupesh Baghel, spearheaded the installation of 33 solar high mast lights in elephant-affected villages in the area.

It should be mentioned that during the Chief Minister's statewide "Bhent-Mulaqat" Abhiyan, the residents of Govindpur village in Surajpur district's Pratappur development block urged that solar high mast lights be installed in the elephant-affected areas. The villagers stated that because of the darkness in the village when the elephant arrived, they were forced to move to other locations to seek shelter in a safe location. Solar high mast lights will



assist them in moving toward a safe location.

At the villagers' request, the Chief Minister directed officers to install solar high mast lights on the spot. Following the Chief Minister's announcement, officials from the District

Administration, Forest Department, and CREDA visited the elephant-affected areas and chose a suitable location for the solar high mast. CREDA chose the location for the installation of 33 solar high mast lights.

Besides, Villagers in elephant-affected areas are pleased with the installation of solar high mast lights. Lighting has now been installed near the village's surrounding forests. They will be able to get advance notice of elephant arrivals using this method. Now, they will also not have to face the darkness on their way back from the fields in the evening. They will be able to care for the crop without fear, and it will be easier for them to travel to a safe location. The villagers expressed their appreciation and gratitude to the Chief Minister for his initiative in installing solar lights in elephant-affected areas.

## Magistrate ticket checking campaign launched

At Bilaspur station and Bilaspur-Akaltara section



Central Chronicle News

**Bilaspur, Feb 05:** Special Railway Magistrate Pawan Kumar Agrawal and Assistant Commercial Manager S Bhartiyan led a Magistrate ticket checking campaign which was conducted on February 02, 2023 at Bilaspur station and Bilaspur - Akaltara section. Commercial

Inspector, Chief Ticket Inspector, TTE staff, GRP and RPF staff were also involved in this campaign. As part of the campaign, ticket checking campaign was conducted in South Bihar Express from Bilaspur to Akaltara and in Ahmedabad Express from Akaltara to Bilaspur as well as at Bilaspur station. In this campaign, Rs

1,33,820 was collected as fine from a total of 229 cases. The railway administration urges the passengers to buy proper tickets for the journey and platform tickets before entering the railway premises. The railway administration appealed for the use of the footover bridge to move from one platform to another.

## Review meeting held in Bhopalpatnam

- Comprehensive review on various subjects including caste certificate, JNV entrance exam, others held



there is talk of disciplinary action if there is negligence in the discharge of duty.

It has been asked to work with team spirit and positive thinking for better education quality. In the meeting, Kandik Narayan, Block Education Officer,

Bhopalpatnam told all the heads of the institutions will be implementing the departmental schemes in a time-bound and effective manner; to benefit the students with positive results. Mr. Mirza Khan BRC Bhopalpatnam and all CACs of block were present in the meeting.

## Union Budget makes provision of Rs 8404 cr

- For SECR
- Comprehensive arrangements in the budget for the development of passenger facilities and infrastructure



In this series, the following provisions have been made in the budget 2023-24 for various items for South East Central Railway, which are as follows:-

Description	Budget Grant(cr)
New Line	2946
Gauge Conversion	86.51
Doubling	1962.43
Traffic Facilities - Yard Remodeling & Others	207.08
Computerization	1.73
Road Safety Works-Level Crossing	13.99
Road Safety Works-ROB/RUB	574.88
Track Renewals	610
Bridge Works, Tunnel works & Approaches	22
Signaling and Telecommunication works	158.07
Other Electrical Works incl. Traction Distribution works	228.15
Workshops including production Units	79.00
Staff Welfare	9.96
Passenger Amenities	248.37
Other Specialized Works (Road Safety Works-ROB/RUB)	16.45
Training/Human Resource Development ( Training /HRD)	0.66
Net provision	8403.98

stalls and retail outlets will be integrated in these stations so that passengers can get all these facilities at one place. Lift/escalator high level platform, toilets, one station one product stall, development of station circulating

area, beautification of stations with local art and culture etc. will be done for passenger amenities and station development in these stations.

The stations selected are Bhatapara, Bilhai Power House,

**Doubling, tripling and fourth line works to increase the capacity of lines**  
In order to give more speed to the infrastructure, approval has been given for the construction of new lines in the following railway sections. The total cost of all these projects is about Rs 1572 crore.

Sl. No.	New multi-tracking works	km
1.	Madwarani - Sargabundia Third Line	13
2.	Rajnandgaon - Dongargarh 4th line	31.2
3.	Dadhapara - Bilha Fourth Line	9.2
4.	Kharsian - Jharadih 4th Line	5.8
5.	Bilha - Dagouri 4th line	6.5
6.	Bhatapara - Hathbandh 4th Line	16
7.	Shahdol - Singhpur 4th Line	06
8.	Kargi - Salka third line	08
9.	Bhilai - Bhilai Nagar 4th Line	8.8
10.	Bhilai Nagar - Durg Link 4th Line	2.8
11.	Nipania - Bhatapara 4th line	14.4
	Total	121.7 km

**Stations Redevelopment**  
Bilaspur, Raipur and Durg main 03 stations in South East Central Railway have been identified under station redevelopment plan. Redevelopment of these 03 stations will be done on the lines of airport, multi-modal integration, regulated traffic movement, world class facility, new building with sustainable design will be constructed, in which provision of concourse facility, retail shop etc., restaurant etc. will be made.

## State govt embarks on mission to preserve the ancient culture: CM

- Kanker Medical College to bear name of former PM Late Smt. Indira Gandhi
- CM makes several announcements at the Gondwana Sammelan held in Bhanupratappur
- CM performs bhumi puja and inaugurated several development works worth Rs 14.47 cr in Bhanupratappur

Mandari' and one-day annual convention of Gondwana Samaj at Bhanupratappur under Kanker district. He announced to name Kanker medical college after former Prime Minister late Smt Indira Gandhi. On this occasion, the Chief Minister inaugurated and performed Bhumi Pujan of 146 development works worth Rs.14.47 crore.

This includes inauguration of 94 works worth Rs.9 crore 55 lakh and Bhoomipujan of 52 works worth Rs.4 crore 76 lakh. He also announced the re-naming of the sports ground at Bhanupratappur after former Deputy Speaker late Mr. Manoj Mandavi. Along with this, he also announced to give

Rs.10,000 each to Chalaki and Manjhi, Rs.10 lakh each for construction of street light, shed, and courtyard in Bhanupratappur. He instructed Kanker Collector for forwarding the proposal to renovate the dilapidated schools of Bhanupratappur to the state government.

Chief Minister Baghel at Bhanupratappur said that first of all, primitive culture emerged in the world. The state government is consistently trying to preserve the tribal culture and tradition. From 2019 till now 518 Devgudis have been constructed in the district at a cost of Rs 17 crore 82 lakh. Similarly, 173 Ghotuls were constructed at a cost of Rs 19 crore 91 lakh.



Mr. Baghel said that 'sewa' means service to human society, culture and nature. The work of preserving tribal culture is being done by the state government. The work of scripting all the tribal dialects of the state, preserv-

ing and saving folk dances, folk songs and traditional games are also being done. He further said that the country's largest millet plant has been started recently at Nathia Navagaon in Kanker district. The Chief Minister said

that to provide modern education to children of state, Swami Atmanand English Medium School Scheme has been implemented to open English medium schools. Farmers of Kanker district sold historic 40 lakh quintals of

paddy for the first time. Earlier in the state, the house floors were coated with cow dung, now the walls of the houses will also be painted with natural paint made from cow dung. Schools that were closed in Bastar are now opening again and for this, a budget provision of Rs.1 thousand crore has been made by the state government to renovate the schools. Excise Minister Kawasi Lakhma said in his address in the program that by promoting the cultivation of Kodo-Kutki and millets of Bastar, the state government is making efforts to make the tribals self-reliant. The government is doing the work of giving respect to the tribal tradition by making

Devgudis in every village. Former Madhya Pradesh Minister Ganga Potai, and Bhanu-pratappur MLA Mrs. Savitri Mandavi also addressed the program.

On this occasion, Parliamentary Secretary and MLA Shishupal Shori, Antagarh MLA Anoop Nag, District Panchayat President Hemant Dhruv, Member of Tourism Board Biresh Thakur, Member of Gau Seva Commission Narendra Yadav, Divisional Commissioner Shyam Dhawde, Inspector General of Police Sundarraj P., Collector Dr. Priyanka Shukla, SP Shalabh Sinha, DFO Alok Bajpai along with senior representatives of Gondwana community and local public representatives were present.

## 32 railway staff achieve superannuation

Central Chronicle News

**Bilaspur, Feb 05:** 32 railway staff working in various departments of South East Central Railway Bilaspur Division retired on the last day of January after completing their glorious railway service. All the retired employees were felicitated at the felicitation ceremony organized in the Divisional Railway Manager Auditorium. On this occasion, all the documents related to settlement payment, service commendation certificate and service medal etc. were provided to all retired employees by the efforts of Divisional Railway Manager Praveen



Pandey. Chief Office Superintendent (IT) informed the retired employees about the rules related to Umeed Card (Medical) and settlement. On this occasion, Divisional Personnel Officer Y

Choubey, Assistant Personnel Officer R. Sankaran, A Ramesh Babu, Assistant Divisional Finance Manager, Jadhav and other officers and retired, family welfare inspectors of

personnel and employees of Personnel Settlement Branch were present. Among the 32 railway employees retiring in the division, 05 from the Operations Department, 08 from the Engineering

Department, 02 from the Mechanical Department, 06 from the Electrical Department, 02 from the Commercial Department, 03 from the Personnel Department, 04 from the Accounts Department and 02 from the Signal and Telecommunication Department were present in the programme.

On this occasion, Divisional Railway Manager Praveen Pandey congratulated all the retired employees for their glorious railway service and asked them to spend their retired life happily taking special care of health and wealth.

## IGNTU launches recruitment drive

Central Chronicle News

**Amarkantak, Feb 05:** The Department of Social Work, IGNTU, Amarkantak under the aegis of Industry-Academia Initiative organized a recruitment drive in collaboration with the Gandhi Fellowship, Piramal Foundation on the 31st of January, 2023 at IGNTU premises. Resource Person of the program Durgesh Sharma, Program Leader, Piramal School of Leadership interacted with the students in depth and oriented about the Fellowship program.

Benefits of the program was availed by students of various Departments across the University. Current Gandhi Fellow and MSW, IGNTU alumni Dharmendra Patel shared his



experience with the program. Dean and HoD, Social Work Prof. Ranju Hasini Sahoo graced the occasion and applauded the initiative. Assistant Professors Dr. Ramesh B. and Dr. Krishnamani Bhagabati were the Coordinators of the

Program and Vikas Chandel, Research Scholar was the Student Coordinator. All MSW Final year students participated in the program. The program was highly appreciated by all participants and other Faculty Members.

## BRIEF



**Union Home Minister Amit Shah during his visit to Thakur Anukulchandra's Satsang Ashram in Deoghar district, Sunday.**

## Suicide

**■ Indore:** A 27-year-old nurse allegedly committed suicide by giving herself an overdose of anaesthesia due to a failed love affair in Madhya Pradesh's Indore city, police said on Sunday. Pooja Ganjan allegedly committed suicide by injecting herself with an overdose of anaesthesia at her house two days ago, inspector Sanjay Shukla of Aerodrome police station told PTI.

## Bomb blast

**■ Kolkata:** The death of a Trinamool Congress worker and injury to the brother of a ruling party panchayat chief in a bomb blast at Margram in Birbhum district led to a blame game among political parties on Sunday. While immediate family members of the deceased Newton Sheikh alleged that Congress supporters were responsible for the attack, West Bengal Congress president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said the party has little presence at Margram to be able to involve in any kind of physical attack.

## Close shave

**■ Mumbai:** Popular television actor Urvashi Dholakia's car met with an accident in Maharashtra's Thane district adjoining Mumbai, but she did not suffer any injury, a police official said on Sunday. The accident took place on Saturday in Kashmira locality when a school bus carrying children dashed against the actor's car from behind while she was on way to a studio in Mira Road area for shooting, the official said.

## Acquit

**■ Thane:** A court in Thane district has acquitted a 40-year-old man accused in a case under the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA), giving him the benefit of doubt. Special Judge A N Shirsikar, hearing cases pertaining to the MCOCA, in the order on Saturday held that the prosecution failed to prove the charges against the jailed accused, Mohammad Nadeem Merchant alias Nadeem Chikna, defence counsel Poonit Mahimkar said on Sunday.

## Threaten

**■ Jammu:** Residents of Dhangri in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district on Sunday expressed concern over the "failure" of security agencies in tracing the terrorists behind the twin attacks in the village and demanded justice for the victims. The villagers threatened to go on a hunger strike if the security agencies are unable to eliminate the terrorists within the next 15 days.

# KCR invokes Shivaji in Maha

● **BRS vows to form farmers' govt**

Nanded (Maharashtra), Feb 05 (PTI)

Recalling Chhatrapati Shivaji's achievements, Telangana Chief Minister and BRS President K Chandrasekhar Rao on Sunday said his party will take a pledge at Shivneri, the erstwhile Maratha ruler's birthplace, to form a government for farmers' welfare in the country. Speaking at a public meeting here, he said within 10 days, the BRS' party vehicles will go to every village in all 288 Assembly constituencies in Maharashtra to form farmers' committees. "We will visit the birthplace of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj at Shivneri, bow our head and take oath for making a farmers' government. The process to make farmers'



**BRS President and Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao addresses party joining meeting, in Nanded, Sunday.**

committees in entire Maharashtra will begin," he said. Leaders belonging to various political parties joined BRS and KCR, as Rao is known as, welcomed them by offering pink scarves. "Within a few days, BRS party work will start in Maharashtra. Within eight to 10 days, BRS vehicles will come to the village in Maharashtra. Committees will be formed. In order to unite

farmers in Maharashtra which has 288 Assembly constituencies, all 288 vehicles will start at once," he further said. "I request you (farmers) to unite. I will also visit western Maharashtra, Vidarbha and north Maharashtra," Rao added. Pointing out that Maharashtra has recorded the highest number of farmers' suicides in the country, BRS president and Telangana Chief

Minister Chandrasekhar Rao said here on Sunday that the time has come for peasants to take the reins of the country. Addressing Bharat Rashtra Samithi's (BRS) first public meeting outside Telangana at Nanded, he said political parties and leaders are winning in polls but people are losing. "That's why BRS slogan is 'Abki ki baar, kisan sarkar' (This time around, a government for the farmers). If we unite, it is not impossible.

In our country, farmers constitute more than 42 per cent and if the number of farm labourers is also added to that it will be more than 50 per cent which is sufficient to form government", Rao said. "Today, time has come. 75 years is a long period. Farmers should also be able to write and make rules," he said.

## 'Unaccounted' cash of Rs 6 lakh recovered

● **In poll-bound Ramgarh**

Ramgarh (Uttarakhand), Feb 05 (PTI)

The Jharkhand Police have recovered "unaccounted" cash of Rs 6 lakh from a car in poll-bound Ramgarh district, an official said on Sunday.

The recovery was made at a check post on the Ranchi-Patna National Highway in Chutupalu valley late on Saturday night when the car was on its way to Ramgarh from Ranchi's Lapung area.

"The police seized unaccounted cash of Rs 6 lakh during a checking drive," Returning Officer for the Ramgarh assembly by-poll, Md Javed Hussain, told

PTI. The occupants of the car were not able to produce valid documents for carrying cash, the official said, adding that the travellers claimed that they had plans to buy some machines.

An investigation has been initiated, and no one has been arrested, he said.

The district administration has set up a panel, headed by deputy development commissioner (DDC) Nagendra Kumar Sinha, to enquire into the cash seizure cases, another official said.

In view of the upcoming assembly by-poll, as many as six check posts have been set up in national and state highways and other roads passing through Ramgarh for "checking of

illegal flow of cash, arms, ammunition, liquor and other things that can influence the by-election", Hussain, also Ramgarh sub-divisional officer, said.

The process of filing nomination is underway and will conclude on February 7.

The Ramgarh by-poll will be held on February 27 and the counting of votes will be on March 2.

Unaccounted cash of Rs 1 lakh was earlier recovered from senior AJSU party leader Roshanlal Chaudhary's car in a check post on the Ramgarh-Bokaro highway.

Chaudhary, however, had claimed that cash was being ferried to his father-in-law in Ranchi's Silli for an urgent need.

## J&K's fruit industry to get a boost with high-density plantation

Jammu, Feb 05 (PTI)

Jammu and Kashmir is all set to revolutionize its fruit industry with the introduction of high-density plantation (HDP) and production of quality planting material, a move that will help increase farmers' income, an official said.

By producing quality planting material of elite varieties for different fruit crops, the industry will be able to harness its full potential and contribute significantly to the economy of Jammu and Kashmir, Additional Chief Secretary, Agricultural production

## GAME CHANGER

Department, Atal Dulloo said.

The project aims to enhance the production capacity of planting material to 111 lakh in the first five years, develop 390 hectares of nurseries in public and private sectors, rejuvenate 2,000 hectares of orchard areas, and produce planting material to cover 5,500 hectares under HDP of 12 fruit crops.

HDP alone has the potential to increase productivity and income in apple, walnut, and other fruit crops

by more than twice the current levels, he noted.

"The goal is to make Jammu and Kashmir a self-reliant bio-economy by harnessing the economic potential of its diversified fruit crops," he told PTI. Dulloo highlighted that the current lack of quality planting material in the UT limits the potential of the fruit industry and costs the region approximately Rs 500 crore in imports, which also brings in new pests and diseases. "The mission of the project is to domestically produce quality planting material, reduce imports, prioritize high-den-

sity plantation of fruit crops, transform old orchards into more productive orcharding systems, and diversify the JK fruit industry to capture the national and international market." The department of horticulture in collaboration with the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST) and Indian Council of Agricultural Research-Central Institute of Temperate Horticulture (ICAR-CITH), have come together to provide technological intervention for this new project.

## Musharraf gifted birth certificate during 2005 India visit

New Delhi, Feb 05 (PTI)

Pakistan's former military ruler General Pervez Musharraf, the architect of the 1999 Kargil War, was born at a civic hospital in Delhi in undivided India.

He received his birth certificate over six decades later during his visit here in 2005.

Musharraf died in Dubai on Sunday at the age of 79 after battling an incurable disease. He lived in self-imposed exile in the UAE to avoid criminal charges against him in Pakistan.

Born on August 11, 1943, a turbulent time of the Second World War and India's freedom movement had gained momentum, Musharraf migrated to the newly formed Pakistan with his family after the Partition in 1947. According to old



**In this Sunday, April 17, 2005 file photo, Pakistan's then President Pervez Musharraf receives his birth certificate from then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in New Delhi.**

records, he was born at a civic-run hospital here, now known as the Mrs Girdhari Lal Maternity Hospital which comes under the Municipal Corporation of Delhi.

Located near the Kamla Market in the heart of Delhi, it is one of the oldest hospitals in the city and has served largely people residing in old Delhi. "His (Musharraf's) fam-

ily lived in old Delhi, and two hospitals are near it — Victoria Zenana Hospital (renamed Kasturba Hospital after Independence) in Daryaganj and Girdhari Lal Maternity Hospital.

"We knew that he was born in Delhi, and today learned from news reports that he died in Dubai," a former senior civic official told PTI.

When Musharraf visited India as Pakistan's president in April 2005, the government of India had given him a special gift — his birth certificate.

The senior civic official, who retired in 2011, said, in the 1940s and even in 2005, things were birth and death records were kept manually. "It must not have been an easy job to look for the birth certificate of the 1940s after over 60 years," he said.

## TMC releases manifesto for Tripura polls

● **Promises 'Bengal model of development'**

Agartala, Feb 05 (PTI)

The Trinamool Congress released its manifesto for the Tripura assembly elections on Sunday, promising 2 lakh new jobs, Rs 1,000 per month for school students in classes 4 to 8 and unemployed youths, and social welfare schemes on the lines of those in West Bengal.

The manifesto was launched a day ahead of party chief Mamata Banerjee's visit to the state. The TMC is fighting 28 assembly seats in the February 16 election.

Addressing a press conference, West Bengal education minister Bratya Basu said that if the party is voted to power in the



**TMC MP Sushmita Dev along with others releases party's manifesto for the upcoming Tripura Assembly elections, in Agartala, Sunday.**

state, it will create 2 lakh jobs in five years with 50,000 new jobs in the first year itself.

"All vacant posts in the government departments will be filled up on mission mode," he said.

"The TMC will provide assistance of Rs 1,000 per month to jobless youths, and 10,323 retrenched teachers will also get the

benefit until their legal matter is resolved," he said.

The TMC promised a skill university, student credit cards and easy loans for those who want to pursue higher education.

"Rs 1,000 annual stipend will be given to the students in classes 4 to 8," he said.

## STREET SCHOOL



**Street children attend a class at a city pavement, in Kolkata, Sunday.**

## School students chip in to eradicate penury

● **In Alappuzha district**

Alappuzha(Ker), Feb 05 (PTI)

School students in Kerala's Alappuzha have embarked on an ambitious mission to eradicate absolute poverty in the coastal district.

Under the initiative titled 'Children for Alleppey' a batch of 100 students will adopt one struggling family each in Alappuzha and donate items, including food every month to them, from February 6 onwards.

The idea, also aimed at teaching the children lessons on sharing and community service, was mooted by Alappuzha district collector, V R Krishna Teja. The district administration has identified 3,613 economically disadvantaged families and decided to link them with government as well as private schools. "Through this

programme, Alappuzha will become the first district in the country where the extremely poor families will be uplifted. In other words, there will be no more extreme poverty in Alappuzha from February 6," Teja told PTI.

The identity of the beneficiary families will be kept confidential by the district administration. Elaborating on the initiative, Teja said with the support of the district panchayat, MLAs and ministers from the district, the first Monday of every month will be observed as 'community service day' in schools.

"On the first Monday, we encourage the children to bring food or other items which can be used. Such items will be collected in a box. Students can bring pulses, or soap or toothpaste or atta or any random useful item other than rice and cash. If a school of 300 students

adopted three extremely poor families, the items collected will be segregated and given to them."

The initiative drew overwhelming response from schools in the district.

"Even some schools have decided to adopt one family for every 50 students. We want students to learn the happiness of sharing, even if it's a small thing," Teja said. The district collector noted that rice was not required as it is given to the needy through the public distribution system.

"Even if the item is small, it should be given in kind and not in cash. It's perfectly fine if some students cannot contribute. We have nominated one teacher in each school as a community service coordinator and a student as community service leader. Everything will be coordinated through community service clubs," the collector said.

# Pervez Musharraf: Architect of Kargil War, nearly led to Indo-Pak war

Islamabad, Feb 05 (PTI):

Pakistan's former military dictator General Pervez Musharraf, the architect of the Kargil War, toppled the democratically-elected government in a bloodless military coup in 1999 and ruled the country for nine years with an iron fist during which he also tried to project himself as a progressive Muslim leader.

Born in a middle-class family of Urdu-speaking Mohajir parents in Delhi, Musharraf later migrated to Pakistan after the Partition in 1947. He spent his final years in self-exile in the UAE battling a rare disease. He died in the Gulf country after a prolonged illness on Sunday.

The 79-year-old retired general was the main architect of the Kargil War that took place months after then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif signed a historic peace accord with his Indian counterpart Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Lahore.

After his failed misadventure in Kargil, Musharraf deposed the then Prime Minister Sharif in a bloodless coup in 1999 and ruled Pakistan

from 1999 to 2008 in various positions first as the chief executive of Pakistan and later as the President.

Musharraf, who announced elections in 2008 under domestic and international pressure, was forced to resign as president following the polls and went into self-imposed exile in Dubai.

In 2010, he formed his own party, All Pakistan Muslim League and declared himself as the party President. He voiced his opinion of actively taking part in Pakistan's politics sometime in the future.

He returned to Pakistan in March 2013 to contest polls after living in self-exile for about five years, but was hauled to court in different cases - including the 2007 assassination of former premier Benazir Bhutto, treason under article 6 of Pakistan constitution and murder of Bugti tribe chief Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti.

In 2006, on the orders of Gen Musharraf, the Pakistan Army killed former junior interior minister and Governor of Balochistan Bugti and



over two dozen of his tribesmen, leading to widespread unrest in the area and a surge in the Baloch nationalist sentiment in the province bordering Iran, Afghanistan and the Arabian Sea with strategically important port of Gwadar.

In 2019, Musharraf was sentenced to death in absentia by a special court which found him guilty of high treason, for imposing a state of emergency on November 3, 2007, by keeping the Constitution in abeyance.

The judgement angered the country's powerful Army that has ruled over Pakistan for most of the period since its existence. It was the first time a former top military official had faced such a sentence for

treason in Pakistan. The death sentence was later annulled by the Lahore High Court.

Musharraf, who was living in Dubai since March 2016, was also declared a fugitive in Benazir Bhutto murder case and Red Mosque cleric killing case.

During his tenure, Pakistan saw some structural reforms - ranging from economic and social sector to administrative and political restructuring.

Musharraf allied with America in the war against terror after the 9/11 attacks on the US. He cracked down on Islamist groups and banned dozens of radical outfits, in an effort to project himself as a moderate and progressive Muslim leader. However, his move angered radicals and he even escaped assassination attempts in later years.

Musharraf had visited India for the failed Agra summit in 2001 and made two more visits in 2005 as President to watch an India-Pakistan One-day Cricket match and in 2009 to attend a media event after shedding power.

Musharraf, the second

of three brothers, was born in Delhi on August 11, 1943. He spent his early years in Turkey, from 1949 to 1956, as his father Syed Musharrafu-ud-din was posted in Ankara.

On his return from Turkey, Musharraf studied at Saint Patrick's High School, Karachi, and then from F. C. College, Lahore. He joined the Pakistan Military Academy in 1961 and was commissioned in the Artillery Regiment in 1964.

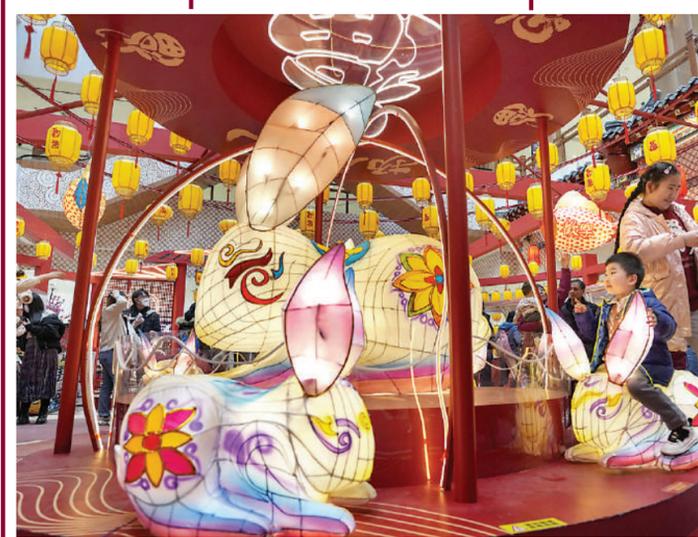
He fought in the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965 as a young officer, and also participated in the Indo-Pak War of 1971 as a Company Commander in the Commando Battalion.

Musharraf rose to the rank of General and was appointed as the Chief of Army Staff on October 7, 1998 by then prime minister Sharif.

He was given additional charge of Chairman Joint Chiefs Staff Committee on April 9, 1999. Six months later, he toppled the Sharif government and became the head of the state designated as Chief Executive.

Musharraf got married in 1968 and has two children, a son and a daughter.

## LANTERN FESTIVAL



Children have fun on rabbit shaped-electric powered lantern decorations on display inside a shopping mall in Beijing, Sunday. The Lantern Festival, the end of the Lunar New Year holiday period, falls on Sunday.

## Woman raped at gun point by two men in Pak: Official

Islamabad, Feb 05 (PTI):

A woman was allegedly raped at gun point by two armed men in a park here, police said on Sunday.

The incident happened on Thursday in Islamabad's F-9 area when the victim along with a male friend was strolling in a park when two armed men stopped them and forcibly took both to a nearby thicket, revealed

the FIR registered by the police. "They separated the woman from her male friend. When she tried to shout, they slapped her and threatened to bring six to seven more friends. The two in turn raped her and also asked the victim about what she does for a living and warned her to "not come to the park at this time," said the police, citing the FIR. They returned her everything

which they earlier snatched and even gave her 1,000 Pakistani rupees to keep quiet and then ran away. The victim took courage and went to the police station at 11:40 pm the same night and told police about her tragedy.

She was taken to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences hospital where her medical check-up was conducted that proved the rape.

## Rishi Sunak makes 'special gesture' by joining India-UK security dialogue

London, Feb 05 (PTI):

In a "special gesture", British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak joined a UK Cabinet Office meeting here between National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval and British counterpart Tim Barrow.

Sunak highlighted the UK government's support to deepen strategic partnership in areas such as trade, defence and science and technology during the meeting on Friday.

Doval was in London for an annual bilateral strategic dialogue on his way back from Washington, where he met US counterpart Jake Sullivan for similar talks.

"A special gesture by PM Rishi Sunak to join for a while the India-UK NSA dialogue between Sir Tim



Barrow and Mr Doval at Cabinet Office," the Indian High Commission in London and Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) tweeted late on Saturday, with reference to the meeting. "Deeply value PM's assurance of his government's full support to deepen strategic partnership in trade, defence, S&T. Look forward to visit of Sir Tim to India soon," it noted. The security dialogue comes against the backdrop of the controversial BBC documentary, India: The Modi Question, which the Indian

government has condemned as biased propaganda.

The UK has responded in Parliament to diaspora protests across the country over the two-part series by declaring the BBC as a media outlet "independent in its outlet" and reiterating its commitment to enhance ties with India. "We recognise how this portrayal of the Indian government has played out in India.

I made it clear that the BBC is independent in its output, that the UK regards India as an incredibly important international partner and that we will be investing heavily in that relationship in the coming decades," UK Foreign Secretary James Cleverly told the House of Commons earlier last week.

## China threatens repercussions

Washington/Beijing, Feb 05 (PTI):

The US military has downed the suspected Chinese spy balloon over the Atlantic Ocean and launched a mission to recover all the equipment from its debris, drawing a strong reaction from China which on Sunday warned of repercussions over America's use of force against its civilian unmanned airship.

At the direction of President Joe Biden, the US military at 2:39 pm EST on Friday shot down the Chinese surveillance balloon in the Atlantic Ocean, some six miles (9.65 kms) away from the US shores in South Carolina, with no



In this photo provided by Brian Branch, a large balloon drifts above the Kingstown, N.C. area, with an airplane and its contrail seen below it. The United States says it is a Chinese spy balloon moving east over America at an altitude of about 60,000 feet (18,600 meters).

damage to the life and properties of Americans, a senior defence official told reporters in Washington.

Fighter aircraft from Langley Air Force Base in

Virginia inspired a single missile into the balloon, causing it to crash into the ocean within the US territorial airspace, said the official, adding that as of now

there are no indications that any people including US military personnel, civilian aircraft or maritime vessels were harmed in any way.

"I told them to shoot it down," Biden told reporters in Hagerstown, Maryland.

"On Wednesday, when I was briefed on the balloon, I ordered the Pentagon to shoot it down as soon as possible. They decided — without doing damage to anyone on the ground — the best time to do that was as it got over water, outside within the 12-mile limit," Biden said.

Responding to the downing of the balloon, China expressed strong dissatisfaction and opposition towards the US use of force to attack China's civilian unmanned airship, state-run Xinhua news agency cited a statement from the Chinese

Foreign Ministry as saying on Sunday.

"The US insisting on the use of force is an obvious overreaction and a serious violation of international practice. China will resolutely uphold the relevant company's legitimate rights and interests, at the same time, reserving the right to take further actions in response," said the Foreign Ministry statement in Beijing.

The Chinese side has, after verification, repeatedly informed the US side of the civilian nature of the airship and conveyed that its entry into the United States due to force majeure was totally unexpected, the statement said, noting the Chinese side has clearly asked the US side to properly handle the matter in a calm, professional and restrained manner.

## Nepal's RSP withdraws from coalition government of PM Prachanda

Kathmandu, Feb 05 (PTI):

The Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) on Sunday decided to withdraw from Nepal's ruling coalition after Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" refused to reinstate the party's flamboyant chairman Rabi Lamichhane as the home minister after he recently re-acquired his citizen-

ship. The decision was taken after a joint meeting of RSP's central members and lawmakers.

Lamichhane, 48, was elected from Chitwan-2 constituency during the elections held in November last year.

He subsequently lost the status of a lawmaker following a verdict by Nepal's Supreme Court on

January 27, which stated that the citizenship certificate he produced to contest the parliamentary election was invalid, according to the Kathmandu Post newspaper.

Subsequently, he also lost his ministerial portfolio and the presidency of the party because one needs to be a Nepali citizen to hold those positions, it said. On January 29, he

re-acquired his citizenship, following which he met Prachanda and demanded that he be restored to his former Cabinet position, the report said. But the Nepal Prime Minister was in no mood to relent, it added.

Lamichhane was appointed Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister on December 26 last year.

## 16 killed, 66 injured in multi-vehicle collision in China

Beijing, Feb 05 (PTI):

At least 16 people were killed and 66 others injured after a multi-vehicle collisions occurred in central China's Hunan province, a media report said on Sunday.

The accidents happened on Saturday evening when a total of 49 vehicles collided within 10 minutes on the Xuchang-Guangzhou Highway in the Hunan province's Changsha city, the state-run CGTN's news



portal reported. "In the accident 16 people were killed and 66 others injured," said the re-

port, quoting the local traffic police department.

All the injured people have been sent to hospitals, among them eight were seriously injured but are in a stable condition.

The Ministry of Emergency Management has sent a working team to the site to guide the handling of the accidents, the report said.

An investigation into the matter and the settlement of the aftermath are currently underway.

## Pope makes final bid for peace, forgiveness in South Sudan

Juba (South Sudan), Feb 05 (AP):

Pope Francis made a final appeal for peace in South Sudan on Sunday as he celebrated Mass before tens of thousands of people to close out an unusual mission by Christian religious leaders to nudge forward the country's recovery from civil war.

On the last day of his African pilgrimage, Francis begged South Sudanese people to lay down their weapons and forgive one another, presiding over Mass at the country's monument to independence hero John Garang before an estimated 70,000 people, including the country's political leadership. "Even if our hearts

bleed for the wrongs we have suffered, let us refuse, once and for all, to repay evil with evil," Francis said. "Let us accept one another and love one another with sincerity and generosity, as God loves us."

His message aimed to revive hopes in the world's youngest country, which gained independence from the majority Muslim Sudan in 2011 but has been beset by civil war and conflict.

President Salva Kiir, his longtime rival Riek Machar and other opposition groups signed a peace agreement in 2018, but the deal's provisions, including the formation of a national unified army, remain largely unimplemented and fighting has

continued to flare.

"We have suffered a lot," said Natalima Andrea, a 66-year-old mother of seven who wiped a tear from her eye as she waited for Francis' Mass to begin. "We need a permanent peace now and I hope these prayers would yield to lasting peace." In a bid to spur the process along, Francis was joined on the novel ecumenical peace mission by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, and the moderator of the Church of Scotland, the Rt. Rev. Iain Greenshields. The aim of the Catholic, Anglican and Presbyterian leaders was to push Kiir and Machar to recommit themselves to the 2018 deal.

## Liz Truss attempts dramatic political comeback with swipe at Rishi Sunak

London, Feb 05 (PTI):

Britain's former prime minister Liz Truss, who has the ignominy of being the country's shortest serving in the top job at just 49 days, on Sunday made a dramatic attempt at a comeback to frontline politics with an indirect swipe at successor Rishi Sunak's policies.

Truss, whose mini-budget in September last year was widely blamed for setting the UK on a spiralling economic downturn, claims she was never given a "realistic chance" to implement her tax-cutting vision for growth.

In a lengthy essay in 'The Sunday Telegraph', the former party leader admitted she was not "blameless" but argued that her mandate as the Conservative Party leader



was not respected and that her premiership was the casualty of the "left-wing economic establishment".

"I wanted to become prime minister to change things, not to manage decline or to preside over our country sliding into stagnation," she writes.

"In the medium term, I believed my policies would have increased growth and therefore reduced debt. Five-year forecasts are

treated as accurate predictions and therefore filling the gap' becomes the imperative of government policy. As a result, the government is forced to make economically detrimental decisions, such as raising corporation tax, based on uncertain forecasts that may not come to fruition," she said, indirectly referencing the Sunak-led government's policies.

The timing of Truss' essay, just as Sunak marked his first 100 days as British Prime Minister this week, is widely being seen as the now backbench MP's attempt at keeping her dream of returning to the front benches alive ahead of a general election expected next year.

She reflected on the "deeply disturbing" moment she had to sack her

chancellor, Kwasi Kwarteng, despite his "brave" economic package widely known as the disastrous mini-budget, which ultimately precipitated her exit from Downing Street after her own party MPs turned on her. She writes: "I am not claiming to be blameless in what happened, but fundamentally I was not given a realistic chance to enact my policies by a very powerful economic establishment, coupled with a lack of political support."

"I assumed upon entering Downing Street that my mandate would be respected and accepted. How wrong I was. While I anticipated resistance to my programme from the system, I underestimated the extent of it."

The 47-year-old former

Tory leader, who had defeated Sunak in the leadership election in early September, announced her resignation within weeks. The party MPs then overwhelmingly backed the British Indian leader to take over after a speeded-up leadership race with Penny Mordaunt, now a member of the Sunak Cabinet.

Sunak's Business Secretary, Grant Shapps, came out in defence of the government on Sunday in response to the essay. The minister said that while Truss had the right priorities, she failed because she did not try to deal with the "big structural issues" first and bring soaring inflation under control as a priority a pledge Sunak made on taking charge a day after Diwali on October 25, 2022.



## CENTRAL Chronicle

Since 1974 Volume 10 No. 307

### What really worries Indians about Adani's empire

A small US investor firm has challenged the Indian behemoth, the Adani group, and shaken it to its foundations. The Hindenburg Research, a short selling firm, brought out a 129-page report on the Adani group marshalling evidence of all the funding operations and offshore activities of the 578 subsidiaries and shell companies linked to the seven listed companies of the Adani group. The report states that this is the "biggest con in corporate history". The report lays bare the complex network of funds and shell companies, some of them in Mauritius, Cyprus and UAE which have been used for manipulating the share prices of the listed companies and to shift money on to their balance-sheet "to maintain the appearance of financial health and solvency in the midst of high debts and few liquid assets". The report estimates that the valuations for the Adani companies were overstated as much as 85 per cent. The report accuses the Adani group of having "engaged in brazen stock manipulation and accounting-fraud scheme". The Adani group responded by calling the Hindenburg report a "calculated attack on India". Having no worthwhile defence to put up, the Adani group sought cover under nationalism to cover its flanks. It declared that this was an attack on "independence, integrity and quality of Indian institutions and the growth story and ambition of India". The effect of the Hindenburg report was instant. In the week following the report, the Adani group lost \$67 billion, or, around Rs 5.6 lakh crore of market capitalisation in the stock market. Gautam Adani himself has lost about \$ 50 billion of his wealth and from being the third richest man in the world, he has fallen to the fifteenth position. The fraudulent dealings of the Adani group are of great concern to the people because, over the years, what have been looted are the country's natural resources and public funds. The Adani group has become the largest private operator of ports, airports and the biggest in grain warehousing and controls a fifth of power transmission and the cement industry. It is the largest thermal power private producer in the country with large stake in coal mining. Much of its acquisitions and assets have been facilitated by loans from nationalised banks and investment from institutions like the Life Insurance Corporation. Around Rs 80,000 crores of funds from LIC are invested in Adani companies and 40 per cent of all loans taken by the group from banks are through the State Bank of India. The crash in the share prices of the Adani group companies are, therefore, a threat to the people's savings and public funds. The meteoric rise of the Adani group and its rapid expansion has not gone unquestioned in India. Over the years, many serious questions and accusations were leveled at the way in which Gautam Adani went about building his empire. Charges of over-invoicing of coal imports, opaque offshore funding of his companies, gross violation of environmental norms and bending of rules and regulations to get projects through were frequently raised in the media and by business analysts. The real lessons from the Adani-Hindenburg saga should not be obscured in the welter of charges about stock manipulation, money laundering and accounting fraud and counter-charges regarding the conspiracy to malign India's top most industrialist. Adani's wealth which was Rs 50.4 thousand crore in 2014 increased to Rs 10.30 lakh crore by 2022. But for the citizens of this country, who are seeing their livelihoods threatened by the communal-corporate nexus, it is essential that the Adanis be held accountable for the plunder and ill-gotten gains.

### Budget to save health from deadly tobacco

Rajender Kumar Sharma

The country's budget for the financial year 2023-24 has been announced. On which discussions are going on the politics of votes from the opposition side, but the most positive step taken in this budget is to increase the National Disaster Contingent Duty (NCCD) fee on cigarettes and tobacco products. This is the first time in three years that the National Calamity Contingent Duty (NCCD) duty on tobacco products has been increased by 16 per cent. Perhaps the government believes that the increase in revenue from their sale can be used to implement the country's development projects. The second benefit would be that the cost of tobacco products would reduce and discourage their use. That is, due to being expensive, its users will decrease. If this happens, it will be a pleasant consequence of increasing the duty on tobacco products. According to a news item, there is a provision to increase the rate of increase in cigarettes of different types and lengths from Rs 30 per thousand to Rs 90 per thousand cigarettes. The increase in the National Calamity Contingent Duty (NCCD) fee of tobacco products is sure to have a direct impact on the stock market as well. According to the Economic Times report, India is among the 182 countries that have signed the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. It has recommended a tax (duty) of at least 75 per cent on the wholesale price of all tobacco products, although currently India has a tax of 52.7 per cent on cigarette, 22 per cent on bidi and 63.8 per cent on chewing tobacco, which is still away from 75 percent. Nearly 270 million adults and adolescents aged 15 years and above (29% of all adults) use some form of tobacco, according to the Global Adult Tobacco Survey - India 2016-17 report. The most common form of tobacco is smokeless tobacco and the commonly used products are khaini, gutkha, betel nut with tobacco, and zarda. India is the second largest consumer and third largest producer of tobacco. Tobacco use is a major killer factor for many chronic diseases, including cancer, lung disease, heart disease, and stroke. It is one of the leading causes of death and illness in India and accounts for approximately 1.35 million deaths every year. Various types of tobacco products are available in the country at very low prices. According to a study published in the international journal Lancet in May 2021, an average of one million people die every year due to smoking in India. This figure has increased by 58.9 percent in the last 30 years. In countries where 6 lakh people died in 1990 due to smoking tobacco, that number has increased to 10 lakh in 2019. Globally, tobacco use is one of the biggest health threats. It not only causes loss of life and property but also has to pay a heavy social and economic cost. The total economic cost attributable to tobacco use from all diseases in India for persons aged 35 years and above was approximately Rs 1.77 lakh crore or US\$ 27.5 billion in 2017-18. In this term this budget should be welcomed by all who are struggling to save life from the poison of tobacco but Govt. should keep an eye on storage & black marketing of tobacco and its products, it is obvious that when rates will increase, some people might try to take advantage.

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

### MAGH PURNIMA

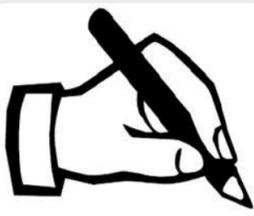


Devotees return after completing their kalvas on the 'Magh Purnima', at the bank of river Ganga, in Prayagraj, Sunday, Feb. 5.

## Saint Ravidas was a mystic poet, social reformer, and spiritual teacher



PRIYANKA SAURABH



Most of the Ravidasis follows Sikhism and believe in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib. This sect of Ravidasis mainly resides in the Malwa region of Punjab. Teacher Ravidas was an Indian mystic, poet, social reformer, and spiritual master who contributed significantly to the Bhakti movement through devotional songs, poetry, and spiritual teachings. He also wrote 40 poems for the Adi Granth, the holy book of Sikhism. Guru Ravidas lived a very simple life as a cobbler, which was assigned to him by the Seva God. Guru Ravidas was one of the greatest spiritual teachers to have blessed India. He led a very simple life as a maker and repairer of shoes which he was assigned to him by the Seva God.

In the 15th to 16th centuries CE, Ravidas, also known as Raidas, was an Indian mystic poet-saint who led the Bhakti movement. He was a poet, social reformer, and spiritual figure who was revered as a guru (teacher) in the contemporary regions of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, and Haryana. The particulars of Ravidas's life are disputed and unknown. He is believed to have been born around 1450 AD. He advocated the removal of caste and gender-based social barriers and encouraged cooperation in the pursuit of individual spiritual freedom. Devotional verses of Ravidas are found in the Guru Granth Sahib, the holy book of the Sikhs. There are many poems of Ravidas in Panch Vani Shastra of the Dadu Panthi style of Hinduism. He is also the main character of Ravidasiya.

Very little information is available about Ravidas's life. According to scholars, he was born in 1450 AD and died in 1520 AD. Another name of Guru Ravidas was Guru Raidas. He was born in the village of Sir Gobardhan, which is close to Varanasi, in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. Sri Guru Ravidas Janmasthan is the present name of his birthplace. His mother was Mata Kalsi, and Santokh Das was his father. His parents belonged to the untouchable Chamara

caste as they worked in the leather industry. Although he initially worked as a leather worker, he soon started spending most of his time engaging in spiritual activities on the banks of the river Ganges. After that, he spent most of his time with ascetics, sadhus, and Sufi saints. Ravidas had married Lona Devi at an early age. His son Vijay Das was born. One of the earliest biographies of many Bhakti movement poets, Anantadas Parakai, which is still in existence, discusses the birth of Ravidas. According to the medieval era, literature such as Bhaktamal, Guru Ravidas was a student of the Brahmin Bhakti poet Ramananda. He is generally considered a recent contemporary of Kabir.

Nevertheless, the ancient literature Ratnavali claims that Guru Ravidas received spiritual teachings from Ramananda and belonged to the Ramanandi Sampradaya lineage. During his life, his views and popularity grew, and writings indicate that Brahmin members of the priestly upper caste once bowed before him. He traveled widely, staying at Hindu temples in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, and the Himalayas. He discarded the Saguna (with attributes, and images) forms of the Supreme Being and focused on the Nirguna (essence, without qualities) form. His creative hymns in regional

languages that inspired others resulted in people from all backgrounds seeking lessons and mentorship from him. Most academics agree that Guru Nanak - the founder of Sikhism, met Guru Ravidas. The Adi Granth contains 41 poems by Guru Ravidas, and the Sikh doctrine holds them in high esteem. These poems are one of the earliest sources of his thoughts and literary works. The Sikh biography known as Prembodhi is another important source of lore and stories related to the life of Ravidas.

He is listed as one of the Seventeen Saints of the Indian religious tradition in his work, which was written in 1693, more than 170 years after the death of Guru Ravidas. Chapters of Guru Ravidas can be found in both Anantadas and Nabhadasi's Bhaktamal. From the seventeenth century. Most other written sources about Ravidas's life, including those by Ravidasis (followers of Guru Ravidas), were written in the early 20th century, or about 400 years after his death. Exceptions to this rule are the texts and texts of the Sikh tradition and the Hindu Dadupanthi traditions. Ravidas was one of the saints whose lives and poems were included in this work, also known as Parakas (or Parchis). Over time, new copies of Anantadas's Persian manuscripts were made, some of them in other regional Indian languages.

According to Vinnand Calvert, around 30 manuscripts of Anantadas's biography on Guru Ravidas have been discovered, in various places across India. These four manuscripts are dated respectively 1662, 1665, 1676, and 1687, and are all complete. The 1687 edition systematically inserts verses with caste-related statements at various places in the text, new allegations that Brahmins are persecuting Guru Ravidas, notes on Ravidas's untouchability, claims that Kabir imparted ideas to Ravidas, Ridicule of nirguni and saguni ideas, and other textual corruption: Anantadas's Cleaner Critical Form of Parsi indicates that the Bhakti movement has more commonality between the ideas of Ravidas, Kabir, and Sen than previously believed, according to Calvert, who wrote the 1676 edition. All these entries are from the critical edition of his biography of Ravidas. The textual sources on Ravidas have also been questioned by Khare, who says that there are no "readily available and reputable textual sources" on Ravidas's portrayal of Hindus and untouchables.

Two early sources of Guru Ravidas's writings are the Sikh Adi Granth and the Panchvani of the Hindu warrior-ascetic organization Dadupanthi. The Adi Granth contains forty poems by Ravidas, and he is one of 36 authors who contributed to this important Sikhism text. This collection of poetry from the Adi Granth addresses a variety of topics, including how to deal with oppression and war, how to end the war, and whether or not one is willing to give up one's life for the right cause. In his poetry, Ravidas addresses issues such as the definition of a just society, one without second or third-class citizens, the need for objectivity, and the identity of a true yogi. Many poems written by Indian poets of a later era have been respectfully attributed to Ravidas, although Guru Ravidas had nothing to do with these poems or the concepts contained in them, as with the authorship of other Indian Bhakti saint-poets and Western literature.

The themes of the Nirguna-Saguna Chakra, as well as concepts from the Nath Yoga school of Hinduism, feature in Guru Ravidas's lyrics. He often uses the term "sahaj", which refers to a mystical state in which the truths of the many and the one are united. Ravidas's poetry is filled with themes of boundless love and devotion towards God, who is depicted as Nirguna. The themes of Nanak's poetry are largely parallel to the nirguna bhakti concepts of Ravidas and other notable north Indian saint-poets in the Sikh tradition. According to Karen Pechilis, most post-modern scholars believe that the teachings of Guru Ravidas are a part of the Nirguna philosophy of the Bhakti movement.

There is a theological debate between Kabir and Ravidas on the character of the Absolute, specifically if Brahman (the ultimate reality, the eternal truth) is a separate anthropomorphic incarnation or a monistic unity, in several manuscripts discovered in Rajasthan and the north. Kabir supports the first position. On the contrary, Ravidas says that both are based on the second assumption. In these texts, Kabir initially wins and Ravidas accepts that Brahman is monistic, but Kabir refuses to accept the worship of a heavenly incarnation until the very end (Saguna Garbhadhana).

(Research Scholar in Political Science, Poetess, independent journalist and columnist. Views are personal.)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Tributes to Vani Jairam

Playback singer Vani Jairam (78) one of India's most versatile voices, was found dead in her residence (after police broke open the door and found her dead) due to an injury in her forehead. Who will forget national award-winning legendary playback singer Padma Bhushan Vani Jairam's (78) Humko Mann Ki Shakti Dena, which became a school prayer since the release of the song in 1971 and continues to be even now. The versatile artist recently completed 50 years as a professional singer and had recorded more than 10,000 songs in nearly 1000 films. Not only this Vani Jairam has a number of songs in nineteen languages including Bengali, Bhojpuri, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Tamil, Telugu, Tulu and Urdu to her credit. In her breakthrough with the Hindi film Guddi (1971) directed by Hrishikesh Mukherjee, she recorded three songs in the film amongst which the song "Bole Re Papihara", became a talk-of-the-town song and gave her instant recognition. This versatile singer Vani Jairam has not only won National Film Awards for Best Female Playback Singer thrice, but also received State awards from Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Gujarat, and Odisha. The song "Mere Tu Giridhar Gopal" in Meera (1979), composed by Pandit Ravi Shankar, won her first Filmfare Award among the three she has won. Vani Jairam is no more but her song is always lingering in the mind of her fans. Rest In Peace. Om Shanti.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee, Faridabad

#### Let Modi and Rahul contest on one seat in 2024

Supreme court had clarified that it is not in our domain to pass any order to bar a person for contesting from two seats and only parliament can pass such law. Before the amendment, candidates could contest from any number of constituencies. The government had said the restriction to two constituencies was reasonable enough, and there was no need to change the law now. The Election Commission had, in an affidavit in 2018, supported the petition. It had informed the Supreme Court that it had proposed an amendment to Section 33(7) in July 2004. The poll body had pointed out that "there have been cases where a person contests election from two constituencies, and wins from both. In such a situation he vacates the seat in one of the two constituencies. The consequence is that a by-election would be required from one constituency involving avoidable expenditure on the conduct of that bye-election". The poll body concluded that the "law should be amended to provide that a person cannot contest from more than one constituency at a time". The poll body had even suggested that a candidate should deposit an amount of Rs 5 lakh for contesting in two constituencies in an Assembly election or Rs10 lakh in a general election. The amount would be used to cover the expenses for a by-election in the eventuality that he or she was victorious in both constituencies and had to relinquish one. Let Modi and Rahul contest on one seat in 2024 and lead by example.

YASH pal Raihan, Jalandhar

## 'AGE' - WHAT A GREAT LEVELLER!

Kajal Chatterjee

"Oh, East is East and West is West and never the two shall meet - Till earth and sky stand presently at God's Great Judgement seat - But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth. When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth" --- Rudyard Kipling (The Ballad of East and West). In the same vein can an "elite" Nobel Laureate serving as Professor in Harvard University (West) meet at the same platform with a "mere" Group D bank employee of Kolkata (East). No way as far as glamour social/official position world-wide recognition and personal CV are concerned. However, a recent visit to a bank enabled me to experience a sight involving that Group D employee which instantly transported my mind to a Nobel Laureate settled in the far West ie UK.

By appearance, this gentleman is balding and physically vulnerable. Either he is on the verge of retirement

or has aged prematurely. He is in charge of updating the passbooks. Behind a glass screen he sits opposite a computer and performs the job comparatively with a bit more time than required. Slowly he inputs the number of the account through the keyboard while glancing at the passbook repeatedly. That day as I reached the Bank to update my passbook, I noticed 4-5 persons in the queue. As I stood at the rear, I noticed that the others were expressing feelings of frustration. Is it because of the comparative slowness of that gentleman? Then I gathered that there has been some sort of glitch in the computer. And he is trying all sorts of keys with output being nil. As time passed, the frustration of the customers ahead of me increased.

After all efforts turned futile, the gentleman at the counter stood up and appeared to approach the personnel at the adjacent cabin to seek help. As the vulnerable man got up and was walking towards the adjacent cabin in a limping gait, one of the "valiant" customers remarked with utmost vitriol in his tongue --- "This fellow can't even walk straight.

Yet these oldies are occupying the posts, earning huge salaries and assured of life-time pension as well. In contrast, no jobs for the youth brigade". It goes without saying that the rest of the people in the surroundings much applauded his vitriolic talk. In the meantime the "oldie" returned with a "young colleague" and the latter started to employ his tricks to get the computer "normalised". My body could have waited further to see whether the computer returned back to normal mode and got my passbook updated.

But my heart failed to stay there for a single second more in that vitiated environment because of the deluge of the caustic remarks directed at the vulnerable gentleman despite no fault of him (the only consolation remains that thanks to the glass screen acting as the shield, those vulgar rude talks didn't reach his ear). Yes computers can get "hanged" anytime anywhere and it is not expected (least from a Group D personnel) that all will promptly solve it. Yet so churning of poison directed at the vulnerable fellow. As I was returning, thinking about the growing insensi-

tivity of the society towards the sector of population who are deemed to be weak. May I know which profession/sector/institution in the whole country forms the model of accountability and performance. As a citizen of the society, do we receive all our dues and entitlement from all quarters?

And most importantly, do we all contribute to our best with utmost honesty and efficiency whatever be our profession. But far from demanding accountability from those who are in powerful seats, far from introspecting about one's own contribution to the society; all are engaged in redirecting their frustration and anger towards the vulnerable, more so if they are "oldies". Is there any guarantee that all "young" persons can promptly rectify computers if they suffer glitches! Is it a "sin" to get "aged". Aren't the parents of the self-declared youth brigade aged? Will not today's "youth" be bound to get aged in the future. And it forms the duty of the Government to create job openings for the youth; how can one demand a senior employee to voluntarily retire to yield place to new. Actually a society

gets judged by how it treats its elders. And we can get a taste of this society through this very yardstick that this is the exact platform where that Group D gentleman can meet Amartya Sen in absolute equal terms.

For his "sin" of protesting against communalism, Sen gets regularly castigated by leaders of a particular outfit through choicest words and abuses. Yes one holds full right to oppose his comments, but why not such opposition coming through furnishing of logic in a civilised tone. Rather Sen often gets attacked in that most vulnerable psychologically-shattering spot i.e. age! "It's Sir's age speaking, not his mind!" --- vitriol of a "young" MP a few years ago. It implies that Sen should "shut up" as he has "lost his mind" because of "age".

Though that Group D gentleman and Nobel Laureate in Economics Professor Amartya Sen reside at almost opposite ends of the earth with zero similarities; yet all differences of Border Birth and Breed get promptly vanished when two aged persons draw the ire of their detractors rendering them to an absolutely equal platform.

**BRIEF**

**CIAL**

**Kochi (Kerala):** The Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) has successfully completed a trial of the first phase of Digi Yatra, which would enable a biometric boarding system for seamless passenger movement. Its implementation would enable e-gate at the first-level security points which would facilitate the passengers' entry to the terminal by showing their bar-coded boarding pass at the kiosks, CIAL said. Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyothiraditya Scindia visited CIAL's facilities on Saturday and expressed satisfaction with the maintenance of the airport.

**FMCG**

**New Delhi:** Major FMCG companies feel the demand slump has bottomed out and there are green shoots of recovery in the rural markets, which has been under stress since the last few quarters. With abating commodity price pressures, firms such as HUL, Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCP), Dabur, Marico and Emami expect a gradual recovery in consumption going forward and are increasing upfront marketing investments in advertising and promotion (A&P). In the third quarter ended December 31, 2022, the companies reported growth in the urban markets.

**FPIs**

**New Delhi:** Foreign investors pulled out Rs 28,852 crore from Indian equities in January, making it the worst outflow in the last seven months, primarily due to attractiveness of the Chinese markets. This came following a net investment of Rs 11,119 crore in December and Rs 36,238 crore in November, data with the depositories showed. Going ahead, FPI flows are expected to remain volatile as Indian equities continued their large under-performance compared to global markets, Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research(Retail), Kotak Securities, said.

**Tata Power**

**New Delhi:** Tata Power aims to operationalise its solar cell and module facility being set up in Tamil Nadu by December-end of this year, the company's CEO & MD Praveer Sinha said. In July 2022, Tata Power inked a pact with the Tamil Nadu government to invest Rs 3,000 crore for setting up a new facility to manufacture solar cells and modules in Tirumelveli district of the state. The construction work is going on in full swing.

**5G service**

**Itanagar:** The 5G service was launched in the Arunachal Pradesh capital Itanagar, ushering in an era of ultra high-speed internet on mobile phones. Chief Minister Pema Khandu launched the 5G service by Airtel and Reliance Jio here on Saturday, an official communique said on Sunday. Khandu termed the launch of 5G service in the state capital, as the beginning of a revolution in the use of digital services in the fields of education, health-care, agriculture and public service delivery.

## India's focus should be on reducing dependence on China: Suman Bery

**New Delhi, Feb 05 (PTI):**



NITI Aayog vice chairman Suman Bery on Sunday said that India's focus should not be on overall trade deficit with China, instead it should be on reducing New Delhi's dependence on Beijing for certain critical inputs.

According to Bery, the right response is to diversify to other sources of supply for critical inputs including active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and supply chain for renewables.

China is the world's largest producer and exporter of APIs and many of the Indian companies depend on imports of the ingredients to produce

various formulations.

"India's focus should not be on the trade deficit with China. It should be on our dependence on China for certain critical inputs," he told PTI. He was asked what measures India should take to reduce its rising trade deficit with China. He said it is unfortunate that in the last seven years, the larger powers, both the US and China have chosen to weaponise trade interde-

pendence. "It is unfortunate that China, which is a very competitive source of intermediate goods, is also a power with which we have some military difficulty that puts a different kind of complexion," he said. Indian and Chinese troops clashed along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Tangang sector of Arunachal Pradesh on December 9 and the face-off resulted in "minor injuries to a few personnel from both sides. According to recent data released by the Chinese customs, the trade between India and China touched an all-time high of USD 135.98 billion in 2022, while New Delhi's trade deficit with Beijing

crossed the USD 100 billion mark for the first time despite frosty bilateral relations.

To reduce the trade deficit with China, Bery suggested that India should formulate a sector-by-sector strategy.

Bery said Chinese enterprises are looking for markets and they want to hold on to the Indian market. "And to do that, they should be prevented from being monopolists, by the way," Bery emphasised. China's exports to India climbed to USD 118.5 billion, a year-on-year increase of 21.7 per cent. During 2022, China's imports from India dwindled to USD 17.48 billion, a year-on-year decline of 37.9 per cent.

**This is a growth-oriented budget: Chauhan**  
**Mumbai, Feb 05:**

"This is a growth-oriented budget, one of the best in years, with a focus on both infrastructure and job creation, while reducing income tax for pretty much everyone, and lots of money to states. The fiscal deficit has been reduced from 6.4% to 5.9% of GDP, with a clear path to reach 4.5% in next three years.

The focus on infrastructure, as seen in the rising capex outlay from Rs7.5 lakh crore to Rs10 lakh crore, combined with PM Gati Shakti and this Government's ability to execute, would be visible through roads, railways, ports and airports and would translate into demand for basic materials like cement and steel on one hand, and consumption goods from all sections of the society, jobs on the other.

## Centre likely to hike dearness allowance by 4 pc to 42 pc

**New Delhi, Feb 05 (PTI):**

The central government is likely to increase dearness allowance (DA) for its over one crore employees and pensioners by four percentage points to 42 per cent from existing 38 per cent as per the agreed formula for the purpose.

The dearness allowance for employees and pensioners are worked out on the basis of the latest Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW) brought out by the Labour Bureau every month. The Labour Bureau is a wing of the Labour Ministry.

Talking to PTI, All India Railwaymen Federation, General Secretary, Shiva Gopal Mishra said, "The CPI-IW for December 2022 was released on January 31,

2023. The dearness allowance hike works out to be 4.23 per cent. But the government does not factor in hiking DA beyond decimal point. Thus DA is likely to be increased by four percentage points to 42 per cent."

He further explained that the expenditure department of the Finance Ministry will formulate a proposal to hike DA along with its revenue implication and will put up the proposal before the Union Cabinet for approval.

The DA hike will be effective from January 1, 2023.

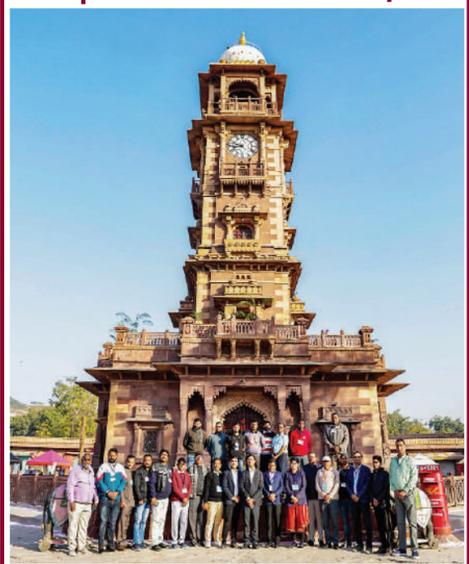
Presently over one crore central government employees and pensioners are getting 38 per cent dearness allowance. Last revision in DA was done on September 28, 2022, which was effective from July 1, 2022.

## Nuvoco Launches Tech Express

**Mumbai, Feb 05:**

Nuvoco Vistas Corp. Ltd., India's fifth-largest cement group and the leading cement player in East India, in terms of capacity, has launched Tech Express - an on-the-go site service. The company is introducing Fifty Tech Express Vehicles (Technical Mobile Vans) to provide on-site services to its customers in the markets of North, East and Central India for ensuring efficient construction processes. One of the most crucial construction operations is pouring concrete, which requires extra care. Tech Express is a value-added service that Nuvoco offers to its customers during concrete placement at no additional cost to ensure consistent and high-quality concrete. This vehicle is equipped with the necessary testing facilities and equipment for on-site evaluation of materials and is manned by Captain Nuvoco, a qualified civil engineer who can offer advice on best practices for construction.

## G20 DELEGATES



G20 delegates at the Clock Tower during a heritage walk, in Jodhpur.

## Nine of top-10 firms add Rs 1.88 lakh cr in m-cap

**■ ITC biggest gainer**

**New Delhi, Feb 05 (PTI):**

Nine of the 10 most valued firms together added Rs 1.88 lakh crore in market valuation last week, with ITC emerging as the biggest gainer. The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 1,510.98 points or 2.54 per cent last week. Barring Reliance Industries Limited, rest nine firms including Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HDFC Bank, Infosys and ICICI Bank were the gainers from the top-10 list. The combined market valuation gain of the nine firms was at Rs 1,88,366.69 crore. The market valuation of ITC rallied Rs 43,321.81 crore to reach Rs 4,72,353.27 crore. Infosys added Rs 34,043.38 crore, taking its valuation to Rs 6,72,935.25 crore.

## RBI likely to settle for 25 basis points repo rate hike: Experts

**Mumbai, Feb 05 (PTI):**

With retail inflation showing signs of softening and the US Fed moderating the pace of increase in its benchmark interest rate, the Reserve Bank is likely to settle for a smaller 25 basis points repo rate hike in its forthcoming bi-monthly monetary policy due later this week.

In its December monetary policy review, the central bank had raised the key benchmark interest rate (repo) by 35 basis points (bps) after delivering three back-to-back increases of 50 bps.

Since May last year, the Reserve Bank has increased the short-term lending rate by 225 basis points to contain inflation, mostly driven by ex-

ternal factors, especially global supply chain disruption following the Russia-Ukraine war outbreak.

RBI's rate-setting panel - Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) - will start its three-day deliberations on the next set of monetary policy on Monday. The decision will be announced on February 8.

Kotak Institutional Equities in a report said the global inflation environment is gradually turning benign although inflation is still well above every central bank's target. Inflation will likely moderate further in the next few months, leading to the end of the rate hiking cycle by first half of 2023 and possible rate cuts

in late-2023/early-2024.

"However, given large global uncertainties, central banks' levers for supporting growth through monetary easing remain limited, thereby risking higher rates for an extended period.

"We expect the RBI MPC to hike policy rate by 25 bps to 6.5 per cent, followed by a prolonged wait-and-watch approach, as it assesses the lagged impact of monetary tightening on growth and inflation," it said.

The RBI has been tasked to ensure that retail inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent. However, it failed to keep the inflation rate below six per cent for three consecutive quarters beginning January 2022.

## Tata Motors aims to operationalise Ford's Sanand plant in 12-18 months

**New Delhi, Feb 05 (PTI):**



Tata Motors is looking to commence operations at the Gujarat-based manufacturing plant it acquired from Ford, over the next 12-18 months to scale up its production capacity, according to its head of passenger vehicle business.

The automaker earlier this month completed the acquisition of Ford India's manufacturing plant at Sanand through a subsidiary. In August last year, the company had announced that its arm Tata Passenger Electric Mobility Ltd (TPEML) would acquire Ford India Pvt Ltd's (FIPL) Sanand plant, Gujarat for Rs 726 crore.

Tata Motors had earlier noted that with its manufacturing capacity nearing saturation, the acquisition is timely and a win-win for all stakeholders. The

Sanand plant has a manufacturing capacity of 3 lakh units per annum, which is scalable to 4.2 lakh units per annum.

TPEML is in the process of making necessary investments to reconfigure the plant to adapt to the Mumbai-based automaker's existing and future vehicle platforms. The unit is adjacent to the existing manufacturing facility of Tata Motors at Sanand.

In an analyst call, Tata Motors Managing Director - Passenger Vehicle and Electric Vehicles Shailesh Chandra said the company also has the ability to

debottleneck capacities at its two existing facilities at Pune and Sanand by an additional 10-15 per cent.

"We are targeting to operationalise the Ford plant in 12 to 18 months," he noted when asked about the production capacity at the company's disposal.

Chandra noted that the company's production capacity currently stands at around 50,000 units a month. To a query regarding the company's preparedness to transition its product range to conform to second phase of BSVI emission norms, he said: "It is on track and ahead of the deadline."

## ABFRL inducts Ananya and Aryaman as directors

**Mumbai, Feb 05:**

The Board of Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail, at its meeting held today, inducted Ms. Ananya Birla and Aryaman Vikram Birla as Directors. Ms. Ananya Birla and Aryaman Vikram Birla come with rich and varied experience straddling entrepreneurship and business building. The board believes that ABFRL will benefit from their new-age insights and business acumen. Commenting on their appointment, Kumar Mangalam Birla, Chairman Aditya Birla Group said, "Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail has built a formidable portfolio of fashion brands across multiple categories and formats, covering all major segments of Indian apparel market. In the last few years, the company has entered multiple new emerging segments such as Ethnicwear - including partnerships with Indian designers, luxury, sportswear and new age businesses through its digital venture TMRW.

## IREDA, WAPCOS to hit capital markets next fiscal: DIPAM Secy

**New Delhi, Feb 05 (PTI):**

The government is targeting to launch the initial public offering (IPO) of clean energy lender IREDA and state-owned engineering consultancy firm WAPCOS in the next fiscal, DIPAM Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey said.

The proceeds from the stake sales would form part of the Budgeted disinvestment kitty of Rs 51,000 crore for the next fiscal.

"IREDA is lined up for initial public offering (IPO) next fiscal. DRHP for WAPCOS has already been filed," Pandey told PTI. The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) manages government equity holding in public sector companies. WAPCOS, an engineering consultancy and construction services firm under the Jal Shakti



Tuhin Kanta Pandey

Ministry, had in September last year filed draft papers with market regulator Sebi for launching an IPO by selling 3.25 crore shares held by the government. The company's revenue from operations stood at Rs 2,798 crore, while net profit was Rs 69.16 crore in 2021-22. The IPO of the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) was approved by the Cabinet in 2017. Under the listing proposal, IREDA had planned

to issue fresh 13.90 crore shares. In January last year, the Cabinet approved Rs 1,500 crore equity infusion in IREDA to raise its lending capacity and also create additional employment opportunities. IREDA, a mini ratna company under the administrative control of MNRE (Ministry of New and Renewable Energy), was set up in 1987 to work as a specialised non-banking finance agency for the renewable energy sector.

## Govt hikes windfall tax on crude oil, export of diesel, ATF

**New Delhi, Feb 05 (PTI):**

The government has hiked windfall profit tax levied on domestically-produced crude oil as well as on the export of diesel and ATF, in line with firming international oil prices, according to an official order. The levy on crude oil produced by companies such as Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has been increased to Rs 5,050 per tonne from Rs 1,900 per tonne, the order dated February 3, said. Crude oil pumped out of the ground and from below the seabed is refined and converted into fuels like petrol, diesel and aviation turbine fuel (ATF). The government has also hiked the tax on export of diesel to Rs 7.5 per litre from Rs 5, and the same on overseas shipments of ATF to Rs 6 a litre from Rs 3.5 a

litre. The new tax rates came into effect from February 4. The levy on both domestic crude oil and fuel exports is now off the lows it had hit last month. Tax rates were cut at the last fortnightly review on January 17, following softening in global oil prices.

International oil prices have since then firmed, necessitating the hike of a windfall tax. India first imposed windfall profit taxes on July 1, joining a growing number of nations that tax super normal profits of energy companies. At that time, export duties of Rs 6 per litre (USD 12 per barrel) each were levied on petrol and ATF and Rs 13 a litre (USD 26 a barrel) on diesel. A Rs 23,250 per tonne (USD 40 per barrel) windfall profit tax on domestic crude production was also levied.

## ONGC to ramp up exploration for oil, gas

**New Delhi, Feb 05 (PTI):**



India's top oil and gas producer ONGC is pivoting a four-pronged strategy of ramping up exploration efforts, quickly bringing discovered resources to production, raising recovery from existing fields and increasing collaborations with experts to reverse years of decline in output, its new chairman Arun Kumar Singh said.

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is keen to induct internationally renowned exploration firms as strategic partners in difficult areas such as deepsea and bring-in experts who can help raise productivity from ageing and mature fields such as prime Mumbai High, Singh told

PTI in an interview here. ONGC, which contributes around 71 per cent to India's domestic production, has reported a gradual decline in output for over a decade now primarily because its fields are old and ageing.

It produced 21.707 million tonnes of crude oil, which is refined to produce petroleum products like petrol and diesel, and 21.68 billion cubic meter (bcm) of natural gas, which is used to produce electricity, manufacture fertilizer and as CNG in automobiles. "We are focusing on

three key areas: deepwater exploration, monetising the discovered fields on fast-track and enhancing production from producing fields through enhanced oil recovery and improved oil recovery techniques. "We are looking for collaborations mainly for deepwater exploration. We are also open to partnerships in the other two areas, if substantial value additions are brought by the partners," he said.

Technologically, ONGC is strong in shallow waters. "We know Mumbai High like the back of our hands. However, if partners can add value to our business, they are welcome. We are looking forward to all such collaborations in the India Energy Week in Bengaluru during February 6-8, 2023," he said.

## India ranks third in world 'start-up' ecosystem: Anurag Thakur

**Jammu, Feb 05 (PTI):**

Union Minister Anurag Singh Thakur on Saturday said India is now the hub of 'Start-up' ecosystem in the world, ranking third with 90,000 'Start-Ups' and 107 unicorn companies worth 30 billion dollars.

The Minister for Information and Broadcasting, and Youth Affairs and Sports was speaking at the valedictory function of 36th Inter-University North Zone Youth Festival (Antarnaad) under the aegis of Association of Indian Universities (AIU) at the Jammu University.

More than 1,000 participants from 18 universities across the country participated in the week-long festival. "India is now the hub of 'Start-up' ecosystem in the world, ranking third with



90,000 'Start-Ups' and 107 unicorn companies worth 30 billion dollars which has been possible only by the contribution of India's youth," the minister said. Thakur said the world is looking towards New India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi as India is now the biggest exporter of vaccines, biggest exporter of mobile phones and defence equipment. He said for sustainable growth, the sustainable investment is required for the development of green economy leading to green jobs.



## India focussed on clash against Pak: Harmanpreet

Cape Town, Feb 05 (PTD):

The Women's Premier League auction is just around the corner but India are firmly focussed on their T20 World Cup opener against Pakistan as they aim to emulate the U19 girls' title-winning feat, insisted skipper Harmanpreet Kaur. The WPL action is slated to be held on February 13 in Mumbai, a day after India's T20 World Cup opener against Pakistan.

"Before that [the auction], we have a very important game and we are just going to focus on that," Harmanpreet said at the T20 World Cup captains' press conference.

"The World Cup is more important than anything else. Our focus is on the ICC trophy. These things will keep coming, and as a player, you know what's important for you and how you need to keep your focus."

"We are all mature enough and know what is important for us," she added.

Led by Shafali Verma, the Indian team won the inaugural U19 T20 World Cup last month and the senior side wants to add another ICC title in India's trophy cabinet.

"After watching the U19 World Cup, we are motivated to do what they have done. They have motivated us to do well, they have done it and we have not done it yet," Harmanpreet said.



The captains pose with the trophy with the Table Mountain at the back.

**'Auction during the WC will be awkward'**

New Zealand skipper Sophie Devine and her Australian counterpart Meg Lanning feel the WPL auction being held in the first week of the T20 World Cup will be awkward. Devine labelled it the "elephant in the room" as she feels players will struggle to not think about it. All Indians competing in the T20 World Cup, which starts on Friday, and several international players have put in their names for the WPL auction. "It's going to be awkward some people are going to get picked up, some won't, and you're going to get a value attached to what you're worth, which as human beings isn't the nicest thing, but it's also a job and it's what we've put our names in for," Devine said. "It's such a unique experience, I think you'd be naive to think that it's not going to be a distraction, it's just how you handle that. But I just think it's such an enormous step forward for women's cricket and I'm really looking forward to it (but) there's a World Cup going on at the same time, so how we manage that is (going to be important)."

They have motivated us to do well, they have done it and we have not done it yet," Harmanpreet said.

"It was a very special moment for all of us and after watching the U19s

many of the girls back home will also want to play cricket and that's always our aim to motivate young girls who can come and play cricket."

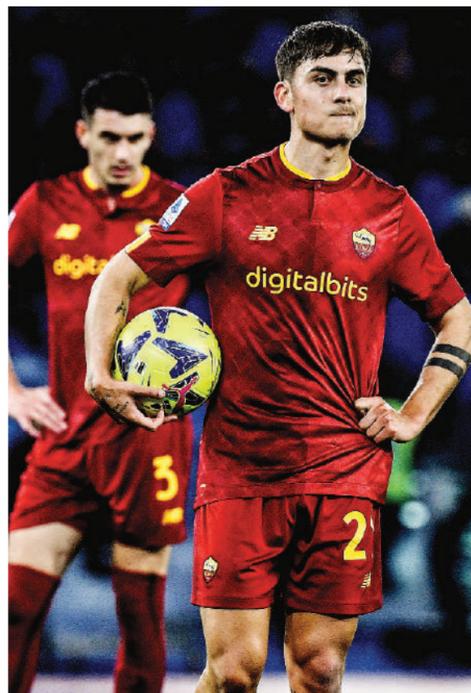
The flamboyant Indian skipper hoped that the WPL will play a similar role in contributing to the growth of Indian women's cricket like the Women's Big Bash and The Hundred have done in Australia and England.

"It's a really big day for all of us because we have been waiting for years and years now. The next two or three months are very important for women's cricket. We have seen how the WBBL and the Hundred have helped their countries improve their cricket. Hopefully, the same will happen for our country."

Having played in the Kia Super League, WBBL and Hundred, Harmanpreet is keen to see Indian youngsters getting the opportunity to rub shoulders with international stars.

"That is something which has a very different feeling. When I got that opportunity, it was the biggest life-changing moment. Other girls will also experience this. It will be a great opportunity to improve cricket and grow the game."

## Early goals send Roma to 2-0 win over Empoli in Serie A



AS Roma's Argentinian forward Paulo Dybala reacts during the Italian Serie A football match between AS Roma and Empoli at the Olympic stadium in Rome.

Milan, Feb 05 (AP):

Two almost identical goals in the opening six minutes set Roma on the way to a comfortable 2-0 win over Empoli in Serie A. Roma moved level on points with second-placed

Inter Milan, which hosts defending champion AC Milan in the derby on Sunday.

Roma was two points ahead of Lazio, Atalanta and AC Milan. Atalanta lost at Sassuolo 1-0 and ended the match with nine

men. "In the first 25-30 minutes, we looked like a team who could win the league," Roma scorer Tammy Abraham said. "We just need to continue like this and keep winning. Paulo (Dybala) is a very special and talented player. We work well together. Today, he assisted me, and it's nice to keep sharing the assists and goals. He's brought that experience that we needed."

Jos Mourinho's team was looking to bounce back from a humiliating cup exit to Cremonese midweek.

And it got off to the perfect start when Roger Ibaez headed in a corner from Dybala less than two minutes in.

Roma doubled its lead four minutes later when Dybala floated in another corner from the left for Abraham to head home.

Matters almost got worse for Empoli immediately after the break but goalkeeper Guglielmo Vicario pulled off a fantastic triple save.

He first parried Dybala's volley and then got up quickly to keep out Gianluca Mancini's follow-up. With Vicario still on the ground, Abraham seemed certain to head in the rebound from point-blank range but the goalkeeper stuck up his leg to incredibly stop that, too.

## Ashu clinches bronze as other wrestlers disappoint in Zagreb



Zagreb, Feb 05 (PTD):

Asian Championships bronze medallist Ashu clinched the 67kg bronze medal for India in the Greco Roman category on the concluding day of the Zagreb Open Ranking Series here on Sunday.

The 23-year-old grappler added a second bronze to India's tally, defeating Lithuania's Adomas Grigaliunas 5-0. Under-23 world champion, freestyle wrestler Aman Sehrawat, had won the men's 57kg bronze in the inaugural day.

Ashu, who had lost Iran's Reza Mahdi Abbasi

9-0 in the qualification round, came back strongly in the repechage bouts, defeating Hungary's Adam Phoilec 8-0 before overcoming Norway's Haavard Joergensen 9-0 to make the bronze-medal round.

The Indian had three points in the first period and two in the second as the judges declared a win by decision.

Another Indian Greco-Roman wrestler Sagar lost his 63kg repechage round bout to Austria's Aker Schmid Al Obaidi after his quarter-final rival, Iran's Aref Hossein Khoun Mohammadi, entered the final.

## Pakistan threatens to pull out of World Cup in India

Karachi, Feb 05 (PTD):

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman, Najam Sethi has reportedly told BCCI secretary Jay Shah that his country wants to host the Asia Cup and if the tournament is moved out, Pakistan will not send its team for the men's ODI World Cup in India.

Sethi's comments are on similar lines as his predecessor Ramiz Raja, who had reiterated that Pakistan could boycott the 50-over World Cup in India this year if the Asia Cup issue between the two cricket boards wasn't resolved.

Pakistan was originally allotted the Asia Cup in September this year, but Shah, who is the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) president, had said in October last year that the Indian team will not tour Pakistan for the continental tournament due to diplomatic tensions. The ACC is expected to shift the Asia Cup from Pakistan and decide on the alternate venue in March.

However, a well-informed source in the PCB told PTI that during the ACC executive board meeting held in Bahrain on

Saturday, Sethi made Pakistan's stance on the Asia Cup very clear to Shah that his country "will not forgo the hosting rights of either the Asia Cup or the Champions Trophy in 2025".

"Sethi has made his stance very clear (to Shah) and he went to Bahrain after meeting Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif last Tuesday. Apparently, he has discussed the matter with the PM before going to Bahrain," the source said.

"Sethi was clear that the Asia Cup is a multi-team event and the Pakistan government is willing to give security assurances to the Indian team. So, there is no reason for the BCCI to not send its team to Pakistan in September this year," the source added.

"Sethi also made it clear that if the BCCI cannot get clearance from its government for the Asia Cup, Pakistan will also not travel to India for the (ODI) World Cup."

The source added that Sethi told the meeting in Bahrain that if India didn't come to Pakistan, then both countries could play their matches in the two multi-team event at offshore venues.

## Hazlewood set to miss first Test



New Delhi, Feb 05 (PTD):

Recovering from an achilles injury, Australia pacer Josh Hazlewood is set to miss the opening Test against India in Nagpur and also remains a doubtful starter for the second game in Delhi.

The 32-year-old had sustained the injury on his left leg after bowling in the rain-affected Sydney Test against South Africa last month. "Not sure about the first Test. It's still a few days away but it's sneaking up pretty quickly," Hazlewood was quoted as saying by 'Cricbuzz' before

Australia's final session at the KSCA Stadium in the outskirts of Bangalore on Sunday

"Second one is obviously straight after as well. So, we'll play it by ear over the next week and next few days and hopefully Tuesday goes well," added the pacer, who is likely to have his first bowl in Nagpur on Tuesday.

The opening Test begins on February 9 and if he misses out, Scott Boland might get his first overseas Test. Australia is already without Mitchell Starc for the first Test as the pacer is nursing a finger injury. "Just a bit of workload management at the moment. Just managing the Achilles. I was bowling a fair bit leading into the tour at home and sort of just pushing up against it," Hazlewood said. "Probably wasn't recovering as well as I would have liked between each session so thought we'd give it a few days here straight of the bat and try and get over the hump and have a bowl from Tuesday on (in Nagpur) and hope it goes well."

## Emphasis is on slip fielding: Dravid

Nagpur, Feb 05 (PTD):

The Indian team is focussing on fielding, especially slip catching, ahead of the opening Test against Australia beginning here on February 9, head coach Rahul Dravid said on Sunday.

The performance of India's slip fielders has been an area of concern in the past and Dravid said the team is trying to strengthen the slip cordon during its preparatory camp here ahead of the four-match Test series. "Everyone looks in really good shape. It's nice to get the Test team together again. We had a lot of white-ball cricket over the last month or so," Dravid said in a video posted by the BCCI on twitter.

"Some of those boys, shifting from white-ball to red-ball, it's nice for them to just have that extended period in the nets. The surfaces have been really good as well," he said. India are conducting their training sessions at the VCA Stadium in Civil Lines



with the first Test scheduled at the VCA Jamtha Stadium on Thursday.

"Fielding side of things as well, that has been really important as well. The close-in catching which we think is going to become a really important part of the series."

"There's a lot of emphasis and focus on close-in catching, slip fielding, things like that when you are on the road all the time and don't get time to build and work on those things."

With the team on the road all through the year, Dravid said there is hardly any time to work with the players and hence it was quite exciting to get this one week ahead of the series.

## Messi helps French leader PSG beat Toulouse 2-1

Paris, Feb 05 (AP):

After Lionel Messi's second-half goal helped a lackluster Paris Saint-Germain beat Toulouse 2-1 to move eight points clear at the top of the French league, the team was urged to lighten their superstar's load.

Messi struck with a typical curling strike in the 57th minute following a move with Morocco right back Achraf Hakimi, who drew PSG level late in the first half after free kick specialist Branco van den Boomen put Toulouse ahead in the 20th.

PSG was without injured forwards Kylian Mbapp and Neymar and relied heavily on Messi, who hit the post during stoppage time. Without Messi, who has hit 98 goals for Argentina, PSG would have struggled more.

"Messi was a very important driving force for us,



Paris Saint-Germain's Argentine forward Lionel Messi kicks the ball during the French L1 football match between Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Toulouse FC at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris.

given his goal and the chances he created. I'm asking the team to play for him and to work for him. He must be relieved of certain duties," coach

Christophe Galtier said. "His teammates must intensify their efforts to win the ball back and to create spaces, so that he can spray around his passes which

are so rare." PSG needs Messi with Bayern Munich coming up on Feb. 14 in the first leg of their round-of-16 game in the Champions League. Mbapp is out for at least three weeks after sustaining a left thigh tear. Neymar is having treatment for a sore adductor and missed his second straight game. PSG's injury woes increased when Portugal midfielder Renato Sanches went off injured early with a thigh injury.

PSG had lost two and drawn one of its previous five matches, and fell behind in the 20th when Van den Boomen's free kick from the right flew past stranded goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma into the left corner.

After Marquinhos hit the post with a header from Messi's corner, PSG equalized with a fine 20-meter strike from Hakimi in the 38th.

## Blast in Quetta; Babar Azam, Afridi moved to safety

Quetta, Feb 05 (PTD):

Top Pakistani cricketers, including captain Babar Azam and Shahid Afridi, among others, were taken to the safety of the dressing room after a terror attack a few miles down the road where they were playing on Sunday. An exhibition match of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) at the Nawab Akbar Bugti Stadium was halted for some time following an explosion in the Police Lines area, which left five people injured.

A senior police officer said that rescue work had been completed at the site and the injured had been taken to hospital. The outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement on Sunday. It stated that the security officials were targeted in the blast.

The exhibition match between PSL sides Quetta Gladiators and Peshawar Zalmi was organised by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) under pressure from Baloch fans that Quetta also get the status of a PSL venue.

## Davis Cup: India relegated to World Group II

■ Losing Play-off 2-3 to Denmark

Hilleroed, Feb 05 (PTD):

The Indian Davis Cup team was relegated to the World Group II for the first time since the new format was launched in 2019 after losing the play-off tie 2-3 to Denmark, who were single-handedly carried by Holger Rune as the world number nine won three matches for the hosts.

The tie levelled at 1-1, India needed to win the doubles but the pair of Yuki Bhambri and Rohan Bopanna lost 2-6 4-6 in just 65 minutes to the home team combo of Rune and Johannes Ingildsen.

The equation requiring India to win both the reverse singles to stay in World Group I, Nagal put a brave fight but lost 5-7 3-6 in one hour and 37 min-



Prajnesh Gunneswaran of India returns the ball to Elmer Moeller of Denmark during their tennis match of the Davis Cup World Group I Play-Offs First Round in Hilleroed, Denmark.

utes in the first reverse singles.

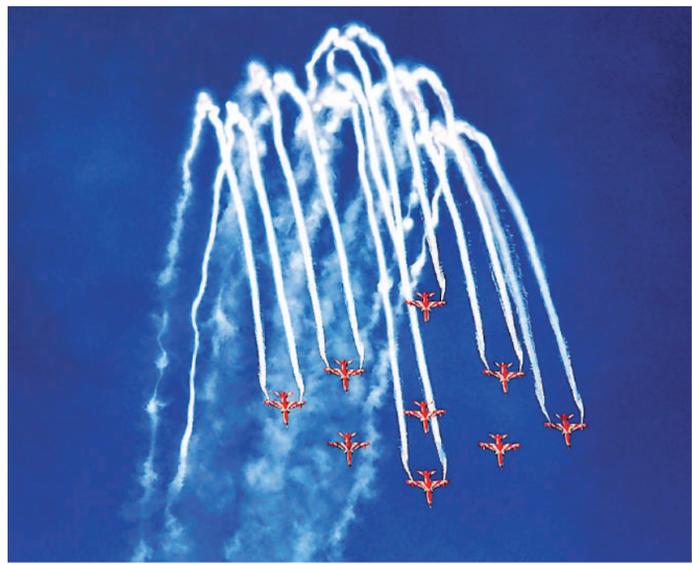
That defeat gave Denmark an unassailable 1-3 lead and pushed India to World Group II.

Prajnesh Gunneswaran then took court in the dead rubber against Elmer Moeller and won 6-4 7-6(1) in one hour and 39 minutes.

On Friday, Nagal had erased a one-set deficit to pip August Holmgren 4-6 6-3 6-4 in two hours and 27 minutes to make it 1-1 after Bhambri lost the opening singles 2-6 2-6 to the rising teen sensation Rune.

Bhambri has quit singles and now plays only doubles on tour.

## AEROBATIC DISPLAY



Indian Air Force's aerobatics team Surya Kiran performs during an aerobatic display at Shankhumukham in Thiruvananthapuram, Sunday.

## 'Sports recognised from athletes' perspective'

Jaipur, Feb 05 (PTI):

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said his government is encouraging youngsters to pursue a career in sports and the ministry's budget has been increased almost three times since 2014.

There was no lack of passion and talent for sports among the youth in India but it was the unavailability of resources and support from the government that created hindrances in the past, he said and underlined that these issues are now being addressed.

"In the Amrit Kaal of independence, the country is forging new definitions and creating a new order," the prime minister said, noting that sports is finally being viewed from the athletes' perspective and

not from the government's.

"Our government is attentive that no youth should be left behind due to shortage of money," the prime minister said, adding the Centre is now supporting the best-performing players by providing them up to Rs 5 lakh annually.

Modi was addressing virtually the 'Jaipur Mahakhel' sporting event being organised by Lok Sabha MP from Jaipur Rural and former Union minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore.

Nothing is impossible for the youngsters of India



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the participants of Jaipur Mahakhel via video conferencing from New Delhi, Sunday.

and every objective becomes easier when the strength of their capabilities is realised and they are given adequate encouragement, the prime minister said.

He said that today's youth does not want to re-

main confined to just one field due to their multi-talented and multi-dimensional capabilities.

"We are encouraging youngsters to pursue a career in sports. Initiatives like TOPS (Target Olympic Podium Scheme)

are benefiting youngsters in preparing for major sporting events. The Sports Budget of the country has increased almost three times since 2014," he said.

He said that the Sports Ministry has been allocated a budget of Rs 2,500 crore this year compared to 800-850 crore before 2014.

He said that more than Rs 1000 crore have been allocated to the Khelo India campaign alone which will be spent on the development of sports facilities and resources in the country.

Noting that the land of Rajasthan is known for the passion and vigour of its youths, the prime minister said that history is proof that they have turned battlefields into sporting arenas with their valour.

## Uncertainty persists in Joshimath as residents await permanent rehabilitation

Joshimath, Feb 05 (PTI):

It has been more than a month since Bharti Devi left her home which was damaged due to cracks after the soil began sinking in Joshimath in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand. Now the septuagenarian spends half her day near her now-abandoned home which she misses regularly and other half at the sub-divisional office, hoping to receive some positive news about their permanent rehabilitation.

Bharti Devi is currently living in a temporary relief camp at an abandoned army barrack. She was among the first families of Joshimath whose houses

became uninhabitable after the land-subsidence situation began aggravating. "The land beneath our home began to sink on January 2 and by the very next day our house had become uninhabitable. All this happened suddenly," she said.

"We and nearly half a dozen neighbouring families picked up whatever we could from our homes and took refuge in a nearby school which was closed at that time. But now it has been opened and we have been ousted from there as well," she added. Each night weighs heavy on her as she struggles to sleep.

The future seems uncertain for the people of Joshimath whose lives continues to reel under the impact of land subsidence

that hit this city tucked away in the mountains more than a month ago.

Still awaiting permanent rehabilitation, many residents who were using a primary school in the Singhdhar ward as a temporary shelter had to move to an abandoned army barracks after the school was reopened.

They fear that with the arrival of pilgrims for the Char Dham yatra in April and May, they will be deprived of even this accommodation. Bharti Devi's family is among the oldest residents of the Singhdhar ward.

"Our ancestors settled here soon after Joshimath came into existence. The settlement in this area is almost as old as them," she said pointing towards

three ancient streams flowing near her erstwhile home. Since February 1, these families are living in the deserted army barracks in the same ward.

Another resident in his 70s, Shival lived next to Devi. While his house, perched precariously on a rock with cracks, is not as ramshackle as hers, the fields below have developed huge cracks.

Shival spends the nights in the army barracks and strolls around his old house during the day. His wife Vishweshwari Devi also accompanies him to their damaged house to look after their cattle. "How can we be secure if our cows are not. We don't just need a home for ourselves but also a shelter for our cattle," she said.

## NOBEL LAUREATE TO STUDENTS

## 'Let curiosity be your guiding force'

Kolkata, Feb 05 (PTI):

Calling upon young students to never cease in their quest to learn, Israeli Nobel laureate Prof (Dr) Ada E Yonath has urged them to inculcate the habit to ask in order to broaden their horizons.

Yonath is the first woman in 45 years to win the Nobel for Chemistry in 2009 for her pioneering work on the structure of ribosomes, which are found in all cells. The ribosome is a major bacterial target for antibiotics, and her work has led to new antibiotics and a better understanding of antibiotic resistance.

"Your curiosity will be your guiding force, to fire your passion for the quest of scientific knowledge," said Yonath, the 83-year-



A student of Adamas University receives degree from Nobel Laureate Prof. Ada E. Yonath, a Crystallographer from Israel, in North 24 Parganas.

old director of the Helen and Milton A Kimmelman Center for Biomolecular Structure and Assembly of

the Weizmann Institute of Science. Addressing the convocation of Adamas University at Barasat in

North 24 Parganas district on Saturday, she said knowledge cannot be acquired if there is no interaction among people.

Yonath, the chief guest at the Convocation, stated that interaction whets curiosity while curiosity enriches grey cells.

The Nobel laureate said all young scientists follow the broad rule of curiosity.

Yonath called upon the young scientists to share their knowledge by publishing what they learned as that will only broaden their horizons.

University Chancellor Prof Samit Roy said Adamas was collaborating with national and international educational institutions to facilitate global exposure and enrich the knowledge of the academic and corporate world.

## 'RSS conspiring to make Pralhad Joshi K'taka CM'

Bengaluru, Feb 05 (PTI):

JD(S) leader H D Kumaraswamy on Sunday claimed that RSS was conspiring to make Union Minister Pralhad Joshi the Chief Minister of Karnataka along with eight deputies, after the Assembly polls, and alleged that the latter lacks culture and divides society.

Hitting back, BJP State president Nalin Kumar Kateel said the JD(S) leader's statement against the RSS is unbefitting of a former Chief Minister, and his claims about 8 or 9 Deputy Chief Ministers are borne out of a mindset that is rooted in dynastic politics.

"A conspiracy in the RSS is under way to make Pralhad Joshi the Chief



H D Kumaraswamy

Minister of the State after the Assembly polls. Joshi does not belong to a culture that is most prominent in southern Karnataka," Kumaraswamy said.

Speaking to reporters here, he said, "... Certain decisions have been taken by the RSS to make him the Chief Minister, so he has begun to attack

us." Criticising the dynasty politics and alleged infighting in the first family of that JD (S) for a ticket, Joshi, while addressing special State executive meet of the BJP on Saturday, said 'Pancharantna Yatra' has been taken up, 'Navagraha Yatre' should have been undertaken instead. As 8-9 members of the party patriarch H D Deve Gowda's immediate family are in politics. "...all dramabaazi, will they improve the State," he asked.

Reacting to this, Kumaraswamy today said the public response to Pancharatna schemes of JD (S) has created a fear among the BJP, so they are speaking about his party and family.

## RELIGIOUS GATHERING



Devotees pay obeisance to Lord Dwarkadheesh on the occasion of Magh Purnima at Dwarkadheesh temple, in Mathura, Sunday.

## Indian textbook courted controversy

New Delhi, Feb 05 (PTI): Former Pakistan president Pervez Musharraf, who died on Sunday, was once listed among "six great personalities" of the world in a Class 3 textbook in India which was withdrawn following a controversy. The book - "Naitik Shiksha, Samanya Gyan Evam Yoga" - being taught at a private school in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur featured the former military dictator, considered the architect of the 1999 Kargil War with India, among "six great personalities" in one of the chapters and also carried his picture. The District Bar Association (DBA) had strongly objected to the chapter and complained to the district authorities in this regard, following which Christ Asha School at Awadhपुरi withdrew the book in 2015. "This is highly objectionable. Under the Musharraf regime in Pakistan, the Kargil War took place, in which many Indian soldiers lost their lives," the DBA had said.

## CHILD BRIDE RECOUNTS CRACKDOWN

## 'There was a knock on the door at 2 am'

Morigaon (Assam), Feb 05 (PTI):

Nimee's eyes do not sparkle with the joy of new motherhood, instead, they reflect the fear, insecurity and sense of foreboding that stalks her village in Assam's Morigaon district.

Rezina Khatun stares vacuously into the distance - trying to make sense of the sudden apocalypse, which has struck her till-now happy world.

While Nimee is among the thousands of child brides whose husbands were arrested in a state-wide crackdown against child marriage by the Assam Police over the last two days, Rezina is a mother whose son's romantic

escapade, which had ended with marriage, has landed him in jail now.

In the drive against child marriage, police had till Saturday arrested 2,258 people, including Hindu and Muslim priests who conducted such weddings. Police said there is a list of a total 8,000 accused.

The police had registered 4,074 cases of child marriage in less than a fortnight after the state Cabinet decided on January 23 to arrest offenders, besides launching an extensive awareness campaign against the menace.

"There was a knock on the door around 2 am on Thursday. We opened the door and found policemen



A 'child bride' with her child, amid Assam government's statewide crackdown on child marriages, in Morigaon district.

outside. They took away my husband," Nimee told PTI in a feeble voice, as her one-and-half-month-old son cried in her arms just as he had when his father was being arrested.

The 17-year-old had

eloped and tied the knot with Gopal Biswas, who is in his twenties, more than a year back, and were starting off their family with the husband providing for them by selling pakoras and other

savouries.

The names of those affected were changed to protect their identities.

"We barely earn enough to feed our own families. Who will look after Nimee and her son? She has been inconsolable, barely eating anything. The child is also getting sick now," said Yudhishter, Gopal's elder brother, who lives in the same house along with their aged parents.

Rezina's son Rajibul Hussain was picked up from their home around 6 pm on Thursday, barely a few minutes after he had reached home with his father after returning from a trip to Kerala, where they had gone to bring back his injured uncle.

## TRADITIONAL METHOD TO CURE AILMENTS

## Two deaths reported in Shahdol, faith healer booked

Shahdol, Feb 05 (PTI):

Shahdol district in Madhya Pradesh has reported its second child death allegedly due to branding with a hot iron as part of a woman faith healer's traditional method to cure ailments, officials said on Sunday.

A 3-month-old girl who was admitted in the government-run medical college here on Wednesday and shifted to a private facility for treatment after being branded 20 times with a hot iron, died late Saturday night, Chief Medical and Health Officer RK Pandey said.

The child has been identified as Shubhi Kol, daughter of Suraj Kol, a resident of Samatpur village under Sinhpur police station limits, he added.

On Friday, the body of a two-and-half-month-old girl was exhumed after dying in similar circumstances.

The infant's mother, a resident of Kathotia village in Sinhpur, had told authorities the child was unwell and she took her to a woman faith healer who branded her more than 50 times with a hot iron.

The child died in

Shahdol Medical College on Wednesday, officials had earlier said.

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