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BRIEF



A monkey looks at his reflection in a two-wheeler's rear-view mirror, in New Delhi, Monday.

Bus service

Bhubaneswar: Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Monday launched affordable bus services under the Location Accessible Multi-modal Initiative' (LaccMI) in five more districts of the state. Subarnapur, Cuttack, Jharsuguda, Kandhamal and Sambalpur were added to the list of LaccMI, officials said.

Arrested

New Delhi: The CBI arrested an enforcement officer of the EPFO on Monday while allegedly receiving a bribe of Rs 2 lakh from a software company which had received funds of more than Rs 3 crore under the central government's Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana, officials said.

Uphold

Kochi: The Kerala High Court on Monday upheld the conviction of the accused in the T P Chandrasekharan murder case of 2012. It also dismissed the appeal of the convicts challenging the trial court order sentencing them. A Division Bench of Justices A K Jayasankaran Nambiar and Kauser Edappagath set aside the acquittal of the two other accused and convicted them for criminal conspiracy in the case related to the murder of Revolutionary Marxist Party (RMP) leader Chandrasekharan on Onchiyam on May 4, 2012.

Injured

Panaji: Goa Minister Subhash Phal Desai on Monday said he was injured when a mob attacked him with stones after he unveiled a statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj at a village in South Goa. There was heavy police presence in Sao Jose De Areal village near Margao town on Sunday after some people installed a statue of the Maratha king, while another group took objection.

Weather

High **33** Low **21**

MARKET

NIFTY **22,122.25** ▲

SENSEX **72,708.16** ▲

BULLION

GOLD **61,993**

SILVER **71,480**

REJECTED

Farmers' body dismisses Centre's 5-year MSP contract offer

New Delhi, Jan 19:

Amid a tense stand-off between the government and farmers, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha - an umbrella organisation of farmer unions not directly linked to those leading this round of protests - has rejected a five-year contract to buy three types of pulses, maize, and cotton at the old MSP. The SKM on Monday evening criticised the proposal as "diverting and the focal demands of farmers", and insisted on nothing less than the purchase of "all crops (23, including the above five) with guaranteed procurement (as) promised in the BJP manifesto (before the) 2014 general election". This procurement, the SKM stressed should be based on the C2+50 per cent MSP, or minimum support price, formula of the Swaminathan Commission and not the existing A2+FL+50 per cent method. The SKM also criticised the government-led in this instance by



Farmer leader Rakesh Tikait speaks during 'Kisan Mazdoor Mahila Mahapanchayat', in Ghaziabad, Monday.

three union ministers, including Agriculture Minister Arjun Munda - for a lack of transparency through the four rounds of talks so far. And finally, the SKM has also demanded the government make progress on other demands, which include loan waivers, no hike in electricity tariffs, and the withdrawal of police cases filed during the 2020/21 protests, when protesting farmers had violent clashes with security personnel. There has also been no progress, the SKM said, on demands

like a comprehensive public sector crop insurance scheme and a monthly pension of ₹ 10,000 to farmers over the age of 60. A demand to prosecute Home Minister Ajay Mishra Teni in connection with the deaths of farmers in Uttar Pradesh's Lakhimpur Kheri - has also not been resolved.

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha is not the farmer body at the head of these protests, which are led by a non-political offshoot with the same name. Nevertheless, as a large federation of farmer unions, it can influence those farmers who participated in Sunday's meeting with the government.

In the overall narrative of the farmers' protests, this is crucial because those now at Shambhu on the Punjab and Haryana border - and speaking to the government - are seeking additional support, and getting the SKM on-board will add a good deal of muscle in attempts to bargain with the authorities.

Class 8 student commits suicide



Deceased student.

Ambikapur, Feb 19: A 14-year-old student of a private school committed suicide in Surguja district, police said on Monday. The incident has come days after a Class 6 student of the same school committed suicide, citing harassment by a teacher. The girl was found hanging in an under-construction house in a locality under the Gandhinagar police station area on Sunday night, station

Second incident in one month

About the incident...

The girl was found hanging in an under-construction house in a locality under the Gandhinagar police station area on Sunday night. She was a Class 8 student at a private school.

house officer Ashwini Singh said. She was a Class 8 student at a private school, he said. No suicide note has been found so far, and an accidental death report was registered, the official said.

On February 6, a Class 6 student of the same school was found hanging from the ceiling in a room at her house in the Darripara area under the Manipur police station limits.

Govt to discuss demands for Ladakh's statehood, inclusion in 6th Schedule

New Delhi, Feb 19 (PTI):

The Centre agreed on Monday to discuss threadbare the demands for Ladakh's statehood, the inclusion of the Union Territory in the 6th Schedule of the Constitution and the setting up of an exclusive public service commission for the high-altitude region.

The agreement was arrived at a meeting held here between the High Powered Committee (HPC) for Ladakh headed by Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai and a 14-member delegation of the Apex Body of Leh (ABL) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), representing various organisations of the Union Territory. "The meeting decided to discuss threadbare our main demands: statehood

for Ladakh, inclusion of Ladakh in the 6th Schedule of the Constitution and the constitution of the exclusive public service commission for Ladakh on February 24," according to a joint press release issued by the ABL and KDA. The two organisations from Ladakh also decided to call off "for the time being" their plan to go on a hunger strike from Tuesday "in view of this significant development".

The meeting resolved to constitute a joint sub-committee for carrying forward the exercise to look into the details of the demands. "We have, accordingly, set up the sub-committee with the following members: Thupstan Chhewang, Chering Dorjay Lakrook and Nawang Rigzin Jora, representing the ABL, and Qamar Ali Akhoun, Asgar Ali Karbalai and Sajjad Kargili, representing the KDA," the release said.

The other demands of the delegation include two Lok Sabha seats (one for Kargil and one for Leh) and job opportunities for the residents of the Union Territory, sources said. Ladakh currently has one Lok Sabha constituency. Ladakh, which no longer has any Assembly constituency, was earlier part of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

New Delhi, Feb 19 (PTI):

Observing that "horse-trading is taking place", the Supreme Court has said it would peruse on Tuesday the ballot papers of the Chandigarh mayoral polls and the entire video-recording of the counting day, and directed the registrar general of the Punjab and Haryana High Court to depute a judicial officer to bring the records safely to Delhi.

The top court, on February 5, rapped Returning Officer Anil Masih, who conducted the mayoral polls, observing that it was obvious that he had defaced the ballot papers and that he should be prosecuted, adding that his action amounted to "murder" and a "mockery" of democracy.

A bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud

PM to dedicate IIT Bhilai permanent campus today

New Delhi, Feb 19 (PTI):

In a boost to the education sector, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate campuses of three IITs - Jammu, Both Gaya and Visakhapatnam - and lay the foundation stone of several projects worth over Rs 13,000 crore on Tuesday. The projects which will be dedicated in-

clude a permanent campus of IIT Bhilai, IIT Tirupati, IIT Jammu, IIT-DM Kancheepuram; Indian Institute of Skills (IIS) - a pioneer skill training institute on advanced technologies - in Kanpur; and two campuses of Central Sanskrit University in Uttarakhnad's Devprayag and in Agartala, Tripura.

'Policy to deal with career progression of women army officers'

New Delhi, Feb 19 (PTI):

The Centre informed the Supreme Court on Monday a detailed policy on career progression of women officers in the Indian Army will be in place by March 31, 2024.

A bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud took note of the submission of senior advocate R Balasubramanian, appearing for the Centre, and directed that an updated status report be filed on this by April 1.

"By March 31, 2024, a detailed policy will be in place on career progression of women officers

By Mar 31

and command in regular major unit," Balasubramanian told the bench, also comprising Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra.

Senior advocate V Mohana, representing some women officers, said all 225 male officers who were promoted have been granted command position in regular major units.

She said out of 108 women officers, only 32 were granted command position in regular units. On December 4 last year,



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the apex court was told that deliberations were underway to formulate a policy to deal with the issue of career progression of women officers in the Indian Army and for considering their promotion from the rank of colonel to brigadier.

The top court had then granted the Army time till March 31, 2024 for drawing up a policy pursuant to an earlier direction on career progression of women officers.

Some women Army officers have alleged discrimination in promotion from the rank of colonel to brigadier. In a landmark

verdict on February 17, 2020, the top court had ordered permanent commission for women officers in the Army, rejecting the Centre's stand on their "physiological limitations" as being based on "sex stereotypes" and calling it "gender discrimination against women".

The apex court had directed that all serving Short Service Commission (SSC) women officers have to be considered for permanent commission irrespective of them having completed 14 years or, as the case may be, 20 years of service within three months.

SC calls for Chandigarh mayoral poll ballots, video

New Delhi, Feb 19 (PTI):

Observing that "horse-trading is taking place", the Supreme Court has said it would peruse on Tuesday the ballot papers of the Chandigarh mayoral polls and the entire video-recording of the counting day, and directed the registrar general of the Punjab and Haryana High Court to depute a judicial officer to bring the records safely to Delhi.

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A bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud

'Govt helping farmers to take agriculture on a new path'

Lucknow, Feb 19 (PTI):

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday that his government was helping farmers to take agriculture on a new path, and laid focus on natural farming and millets.

Addressing an event in Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh, the prime minister emphasized the importance of working towards a common goal of having Indian food products on dining tables across the globe. His remarks came amid a protest by a section of farmers over their various demands such as a legal guarantee for minimum support price for crops.

"We are assisting and encouraging farmers to take our country's agriculture on a new path," he said. He emphasised the



PM Modi speaks during the 4th groundbreaking ceremony of UP Global Investors' Summit, in Lucknow, Monday.

focus on natural farming and millets. "This is the right time for investment in superfoods like millets," he said.

He cited the emergence of large-scale natural farming along the banks of the Ganges in Uttar Pradesh, which not only benefits farmers but also helps preserve the purity

'No new zoo, safari without SC approval'

New Delhi, Feb 19 (PTI): Any fresh proposal for opening a zoo or starting a 'safari' on forest land will now require the approval of the Supreme Court, which on Monday issued a slew of directions for forest conservation across the country.

The top court took note of the submission that the definition of forest under the 2023 amended law on conservation leaves out nearly 1.99 lakh sq km of forest land from the ambit of 'forest' which can be used for other purposes.

Dealing with a batch of petitions challenging the amendments to the forest conservation law of 2023, a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra directed the state governments and union territories to provide the details of the forest land within their jurisdiction to the Centre by March 31 this year.

The top court said the Ministry of Environment,

Forest and Climate Change will put all the details on "forest like area, unclassified forest land and community forest land", to be provided by the states and UTs, on its website by April 15.

"No Zoos/Safaris to be notified in forests lands without prior approval...any proposal for the establishment of zoo/safaris referred to in the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 owned by Govt or any authority in forest areas other than protected areas shall not be finally approved save and except with the prior permission of this court," it said.

In its interim order, the bench asked the states and UTs to act as per the definition of "forest" as laid down by the top court in the 1996 judgment in the case of TN Godavaran Thirumulpad vs Union of India.

It noted that the process of identifying land recorded as forests in government records is going on as per the amended law.

which are now being exported in significant quantities, and pitched for collective efforts to take Indian food items to people across the world.

The prime minister encouraged entrepreneurs to form partnerships with farmers, underscoring the government's efforts in empowering small-scale farmers through farmer producer organisations and cooperative societies, which present opportunities for mutually beneficial partnerships.

"Benefit to farmers and agriculture is good for your business too," Modi told the investors.

He also referred to the Bharat Ratna award to former prime minister Chaudhary Charan Singh.

"Just a few days ago, our government had the privilege of awarding Bharat Ratna to the messiah of farmers, Chaudhary Charan Singh," he said.

Biker's stunt video lands him in trouble

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Feb 19: On the basis of a video shared on social media, police took action against a biker, who performed a stunt on a busy road. Police produced his case before the court after which the biker had to pay a fine of Rs 6000.

Later, the stunt biker apologised and appealed to other youth not to perform stunts on bikes. Common people can send videos / photos of traffic violators on traffic help number 94791-92029.

On the instructions of Superintendent of Police, Satish Thakur, Traffic Police Durg has issued a



Shukla and under the leadership of Deputy Superintendent of Police, Traffic, Satish Thakur, Traffic Police Durg has issued a

helpline number for common citizens for complaints and suggestions related to traffic.

On February 16, police received a video of a two-

wheeler rider (CG 07 CR 1638), who was standing on the bike's seat and driving carelessly on the busy road near Maroda Over Bridge. On the instructions of senior officials, Traffic Police searched the bike owner and his address.

Later, the bike owner was called to the traffic headquarters along with the vehicle. The bike was seized and presented before the court. The court imposed a fine of Rs 6,000. Police conducted counselling after which the stunt rider appealed to other riders not to perform stunts or ride carelessly.

St Thomas College conducts community service 'Gyaan Daan'

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Feb 19: The PG Department of Economics, St Thomas College Bhilai conducted community service "Gyaan Daan" at Government Primary School Ruabandha. The initiative taken by the Department from 2016 to till date with a view to provide Free of Cost Service to society as a Gyaan Daan.

This academic session started from August 2023 to February 2024. BA (Economics) students Dhiriti, Tanushree, Prabhjot of BA 2nd year



and Muskan, Syed Suleiman, Kritika and Tripti of BA 1st year are engaged in teaching primary students.

To create interest among kids, BA students not only engaged them in the academics but also involved them in the ex-

tracurricular activities. This program has been successfully carried out with the cooperation of school teachers Head Mistress Sarita Mandare and other staff.

Administrator Dr Joshi Varghese and Principal Dr MG Roymon of St Thomas

College Bhilai appreciated the admirable service provided to primary school. For smooth conduction of this service is continuously supported and guided by HOD of the Department Dr Aparna Ghosh, faculties Dr Kiran Bala Das and Aparna Dutta.

Prime Minister to inaugurate IIT Bhilai today

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Feb 19: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is going to inaugurate IIT in Bhilai. It will be inaugurated on February 20 2024 at 11.00 am through video conferencing.

Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh Vishnu Deo Sai will participate in the program. Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of State (Independent Charge) Dr Jitendra Singh, Lieutenant Governor, Jammu and Kashmir



Narendra Modi

Manoj Sinha and Lok Sabha MP Durg Vijay Baghel will attend the programme.

Shakti Aanya: special programme organized for women employees

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Feb 19: The HRD department of BSP organized two days sessions under the Shakti Aanya program, a special program for women employees. This program focused on training the women executives of Bhilai Steel Plant to think about their careers and how they can reach higher positions.

This transformative event is dedicated to celebrating and empowering women in all facets of life, fostering an environment that encourages personal and professional growth. As many as 21 women executives from E-1 to E-4 grade participated in this training program.

This session was organized by the Five Female

Executives Shabanam Shweta, DGM (Projects), Lalitha, AGM (PSD), Smita Jain, AGM (F&A), Komal Mehra, AGM (Contract cell) and Neeraja Sharma, AGM (INCOS) who were selected for and then trained under SAIL level AANYA program.

It is noteworthy that only 27 women executives were selected for this special program by the SAIL management, and five among these female executives from BSP were part of this innovative program.

BSP's HRD department is training the non-executive women employees also under the AANYA initiative. This two-day session was focused on crucial subjects of profession-



al and personal life, including work-life balance, tiny habits that help in managing assignments, leadership skills, communication skills, teamwork, and breaking through the glass ceiling.

Notably, this forum was

launched to inspire, educate, and encourage women to reach new heights in their careers and personal lives. HRD believes in the power of education and empowerment to drive positive change.

Nisha Soni, CGM

(HRD&BE) inaugurated the training programme on 16th February 2024 and spoke on the aim and significance of the special program. The valedictory ceremony of the Shakti Aanya program was graced by Dr

Ravindranath M, CMO I/c (M&HS).

Dr Ravindranath congratulated the participants and said that together, we can inspire and support women to break barriers and build a future where every woman can achieve her fullest potential.

The informative and enriching session proceedings were summarized by Amulya Priyadarshi, GM (HRD), who also proposed the vote of thanks. The session was compered by Avanthi Vuchula, Manager (HRD).

It is noteworthy that the HRD department of BSP organizes various special programs for women employees throughout the year under the umbrella 'SHAKTI'.

Free Health Camp at Deobaloda

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Feb 19: Bhilai Steel Plant, conducts several public welfare activities as part of its organizational social responsibility towards the community in and around its areas of operations. The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Department of the Plant organized a one-day free Health Camp, at Model Steel Village Deobaloda on February 17, 2024.

A total of 46 villagers, including 13 men, 26 women, and 07 Children from Model Steel Village Deobaloda, availed free health services at the day-long Health Camp. Free medicines were also distributed to villagers attending the camps at both Deobaloda.

The Medical Team from CSR department, comprising, Dr Savita, Pharmacist



Khilawan Kumbhkar, Nurse Rekha Dev, for Blood-Sugar and BP examination, and Shambhu Dayal, for registration, volunteered their services for the Medical Camp at Model Steel Village Deobaloda. Sita Sinha from the CSR department was present during the Health Camp at this Health Camp.

It is noteworthy that Health Camp is one of the

prime initiatives, through which BSP's CSR Department has contributed substantially towards Public Health & Medicine. The CSR Department of Bhilai Steel Plant, conducts health camps from time to time in the adjoining areas or mines, with the aim of ensuring adequate Medical and health facilities to the communities within which it works.

Petty contractor nabbed for stealing electric wires

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Feb 19: With the arrest of five ruffians, police claimed to have busted a gang of wire thieves. The accused had stolen 450 meters of aluminium wire from 09 poles. Police was receiving regular complaints regarding theft of power cables and wires in Patan area.

On the instructions of Inspector General of Police, Ram Gopal Garg, the team of Durg Police led by Jitendra Shukla, ASP (City) Abhishek Jha, and ASP (Rural) Anurag Jha is making efforts to trace the people involved in thefts and other property crimes.

Under the supervision of Sub-Divisional Officer of Police (Patan) Devansh Singh Rathore, the team of Patan Police led by



Inspector Rajendra Kumar Yadav started tracing the suspects. In this sequel, they received a tip off regarding some suspects. Police team swung into action and 05 persons were arrested.

They were moving in a pickup vehicle (CG 07 CA 2444). When they were unable to give a satisfactory reply, they were brought to

the police station and strictly interrogated. During interrogation, they confessed to stealing electric wires from nine electric poles in Village Amapendri Khar Ruhi.

The main accused Chandrahas Sonkar is a petty contractor in the Abhanpur electricity department. He admitted to committing theft along

with his accomplices. The accused get CSEB vehicles registered and do contract work during the day and steal wires at night. They were booked under the provisions mentioned in Section 379, 34 of IPC, Section 3 of Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act and Section 139 of Electricity Act.

The accused are identified as Chandrahas Sonkar (39) son of Kunj Bihari Sonkar; Jitendra Yadav alias Golu (30) son of Gopi Yadav, Nohar Lal Sonkar (38) son of Panna Lal Sonkar; Naveen Yadav (21) son of Gokul Yadav, and Lakshmi Narayan Nishad (21) son of Janak Ram Nishad, a resident of village Raveli, Post Parsada, Police Station Mujgahan, District Raipur.

Child hit by reversing car dies at hospital

Bhilai, Feb 19: In a shocking incident, a two-and-a-half year old child died in an accident late evening on Sunday. He was hit by a reversing car, which was being driven by his uncle. According to information, the incident occurred at Shastri Nagar, Chhawani.

On Sunday evening, Vinod Soni's elder brother was reversing his car. Suddenly, Vinod's child Sagar came out of the house and ran towards the rear end of the car. After being hit by the reversing car, the child fell down and suffered head injury. The child was rushed to BM Shah Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries. Police have lodged an FIR and investigations are on.

Former Head of Coke Ovens shares insights

Into working at BSP, challenges overcome and mantras for success

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Feb 19: Ever since Bhilai Steel Plant began its operations thousands of men and women have toiled hard to give their best to the organisation. The history of Bhilai Steel Plant is not just about those who laid the foundations of this Plant in the late 50s and early 60s and in the decades after, it is also about all those who have given their lifetime working to expand capacities, modernise steel making operations and bring in new and improved systems in the functioning of different shops and departments.

While it is impossible to reach out to all the retired employees to learn about their experiences and contribution, an attempt is being made to contact some senior officers who have exited the organisa-

tion upon superannuation in recent years. The objective is to hear from them about how the decisions and actions they took along with their respective teams impacted the organisation, and what they would like to share with those who have succeeded them.

We begin this series with one such person, Gurugubelli Atchuta Rao who spent his entire work life in BSP in the Plant's Coke Oven & Coal Chemicals Dept after joining BSP in August 1985. Having worked in different capacities, Rao who retired as CGM of the same department in May 2022 shares his insights.

Let us hear from him about what he has to say to those still in service and about some of the biggest challenges he faced and how these were overcome with the help of his team.

Here we reproduce Rao's replies to some questions

Q. You would have gained rich experience of working in different capacities during your career. What would you like to say for the benefit of those presently engaged in similar capacities in Bhilai Steel Plant? A.

Simply put, people should think positive and move on. You will get all the required resources and support from Management if you move in the right direction. One should have dedication and self confidence to take up big tasks. Once you get into the task, it becomes simple and easy.

Q. Bhilaitians have always strived to do better in their own respective fields of working. In your capacity as leader of your team/department, you would have taken certain initiatives for the benefit



of your department and Plant. Can you share some examples where you and your team took such steps? Pls also specify how these actions have benefitted the Plant.

A. Earlier the coke oven batteries were taken mostly for hot repairs which used to extend the life of batteries only for 2 to 3 years, but smoke emitted through chimneys from the hot-repaired oven wall joints was above CECEB Norms.

flow horizontal coolers for COB#7&8.

Replacement of ammonium Sulphate Plant 1 with Clause Reactor Plant for COB#1 to 6 area, refurbishment/ replacement of coke oven gas lines in planned manner for the entire CO & CCD and strengthening/ replacement of coal & coke conveyor galleries are among the other initiatives taken.

Another step taken was provision of a nitrogen network for CCD, specially ETPs (electrostatic tar precipitators) where occurrence of fires were more. The list goes on.

These actions have benefited the Plant by eliminating black smoke from chimneys in coke ovens as a measure in pollution control and strengthening safety in coal chemical departments.

Q. SAIL-BSP has reached new heights of ex-

celle in various parameters in the last few decades. After such a long innings in Bhilai, how do you look back on your own personal contribution to the organisation?

A. I am fully satisfied with contributing and doing my bit for the organisation, which I must say, has given me a lot in return. My personal contributions for strengthening the work culture, health of equipment in coke ovens, safety, pollution control etc will definitely help the organisation to reach greater heights.

Q. Pls share your views on how performance of the shop/department where you have worked for the longest duration, can be improved.

A. It is a gradual process. The work culture of coke ovens is laudable. However, the talent pool is slowly dwindling in coke

ovens for which initiatives need to be taken to inject young blood at all levels starting from Operators to Managers. This will help in improving performance of both the department and Plant.

Q. Pls also share your own personal views on work life balance in Bhilai Steel Plant vis a vis other organisations in the steel industry with which you are familiar

A. Work life balance becomes normal if crisis management is avoided. What I mean is timely actions for upkeep of the health of the Plant will help in creating a conducive work atmosphere. If the plant runs smoothly, the work life balance will be automatically taken care of. Further, implementation of projects should be done in a time bound manner for making life of managers easy.

Admn reshuffle: PSC exam controller Vasnaik shifted to Bastar

SAS Officer Tanuja Salam to be Director Sports & Youth Welfare

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Feb 19: In a significant administrative reshuffle, the state government on Monday issued fresh posting orders of 8 State Administrative Officers (SA) here. Chhattisgarh Public Service Commission (CPSC) Examination Controller Arti Vasnaik has been shifted to Bastar as Deputy Commissioner in Divisional Office whereas the 2008 batch SAS Officer Tanuja Salam has been posted as new Director Sports & Youth Welfare from the department of Public Health & Family Welfare. Similarly,

Raipur District Upper Collectors Gajendra Singh Thakur and Virendra Bahadur Panchbhai have been shifted to Sukma and Narayanpur respectively in Bastar. Deputy Commissioner Akhilesh Sahu has been shifted as Chief Executive Officer of Bilaspur District Panchayat whereas Dhamtari Upper Collector Ravi Kumar Sahu has been shifted to Mahasamund.

2015 batch SAS Officer Pranav Singh posted as Additional Managing Director at Chhattisgarh Co-operative Marketing Federation Nava Raipur has been shifted to Sarguja as Deputy Commissioner whereas Under Secretary Revenue Umesh Kumar Patel has been posted as Joint Collector at Jashpur.

6 IPS Officers given fresh postings

Raipur, Feb 19: State Government on Monday issued fresh posting orders of the Indian Police Services (IPS) 74 RR batch after their training at various districts. According to the information received, 2021 batch IPS Officer Aman Kumar Jha has been posted as City Superintendent of Police Raipur whereas Akash Kumar Shukla has been shifted from Raipur to Raigarh as CSP, Chirag Jain from Sarguja to Durg as CSP, Ravindra Kumar Meena from Bastar to Korba as CSP, Rohit Kumar Shah to Sarguja, Udit Pushkar to Jagdalpur and Umesh Prasad Gupta as CSP Bilaspur.

CEO calls for maintaining credibility, transparency and fairness of elections

Training of Returning, Assistant Returning and Deputy District Election Officers for Lok Sabha elections

Raipur, Feb 19: Maintaining the credibility, fairness and transparency of elections is the test of qualification of an election officer, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Mrs Reena Baba Saheb Kangale said here today. This should be reflected in every work of the election officer, she said while addressing the inauguration of the certification program of Returning Officers and Assistant Returning Officers organized as per the instructions of the Election Commission of India before the Lok Sabha General Elections.

A two-day orientation program for the newly appointed District Election Officers and Deputy District Election Officers also started today. Mrs. Kangale called for working towards better and easier elections in the Lok Sabha Elections-2024 like



the previous Assembly Elections-2023. On the occasion of the inauguration of both the trainings, Additional Chief Electoral Officer Nilesh Kumar Mahadev Kshirsagar, Joint Chief Electoral Officers PS Dhruv and Dr KRR Singh and senior officials of the Chief Electoral Officer's office were present.

According to Kangale instructed to ensure fair and transparent elections by working on the information given during the training on the responsibilities of District Returning Officer and Returning Officer, revision of voter list, model



and VVPAT, facilities for polling team and disabled voters, paid news, media and media monitoring committee, vote counting and declaration of results, as well as use of information technology and vote counting applications.

The five-day certification program for Assistant Returning Officers is being conducted by the India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM) from February 19 to February 23 at the Chhattisgarh Administration Academy, Nimora. As many as 11 Returning Officers, 15 District Returning Officers, 33 Deputy District Election Officers and 90 Assistant Returning Officers are participating in the training.



code of conduct and other important topics.

National level master trainers Dr KRR Singh, US Agrawal, Pranav Singh, Shrikant Verma, Pulak

Bhattacharya and Mrs Geeta Dewan and experienced state level trainers are providing information on the use of Electronic Voting Machine (EVM)

RMC budget to be presented in general body meeting on 21st Feb

Raipur, Feb 19: Raipur Municipal Corporation secretariat has organized a meeting on 21st February in the general auditorium of the Municipal Corporation Headquarters building, Mahatma Gandhi Sadan in accordance with the order of Speaker Pramod Dubey. Action will be taken to confirm the proceed-

ings of the previous general meeting. After this, there will be a question hour, in which the questions asked by the corporators and their answers will be processed.

The duration of question hour is fixed as per rules. After the question hour, the annual budget of the Municipal Corporation Raipur for

the financial year 2024-25 will be presented. Mayor Aijaz Dhebar will present the Mayor's address on the annual budget for the financial year 2024-25 in the corporation general body meeting. The set agendas will be discussed in the general body meeting of the Municipal Corporation as per the rules.

Lt Gen Ashok Jindal joins AIIMS-R as Executive Director

Established Early Intervention Centre for Special Children and the State-of-the-Art Accident & Emergency Centre in Delhi

Param Vishisht Seva Medal awardee Lt Gen Jindal instrumental in the revival of the Liver Transplant Program in Army Hospital Delhi



Faculty Members and Officers of AIIMS Raipur welcoming Lt Gen Ashok Jindal

Executive Director on Monday. After his joining, Lt Gen Jindal motivated all faculty members and employees to focus on patient-centric services and research on emerging challenges in the health care sector.

Lt Gen Ashok Jindal is a graduate of the Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC) in Pune. He did

his MD in Community Medicine and Diploma in Industrial Health from AFMC, Pune, and was awarded a PhD from the prestigious JNU, Delhi. He holds the distinction of being the first doctor to be awarded the Yuddh Seva Medal by the President of India for the skilful management of battle casualties during an attack by Pakistan at a height of 19000 feet on Siachen Glacier in 1987.

He has been awarded the Lt Gen BD Varma Silver Medal, the Army Commanders Award twice for best paper, and the Saroj Jha Award. He has 30 research publications to his credit and was nominated as a member of the Task Force for evaluation of the HIV/AIDS program in Maharashtra by UNICEF.

Lt Gen Jindal has been

faculty for WHO Fellowships in 'Entomology', 'Research Methodology', and 'Epidemiology'. He has been the editor of 'Standard Treatment Guidelines: Medical Management and Costing of Select Conditions', a book produced in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and WHO. He is also editor of the 'Manual of Health of the Armed Forces'.

In his 39 years of Army service, Lt Gen Jindal has been a professor at AFMC Pune and a professor and HoD at Army College of Medical Sciences in Delhi, besides serving in the United Nations in Cambodia. He was awarded the 'Ati Vishisht Seva Medal' by the President of India in 2022 for exemplary leadership in restructuring

medical resources in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh during operations and management of the COVID-19 pandemic.

He was instrumental in the revival of the Liver Transplant Program, establishment of Early Intervention Centre for Special Children and the State-of-the-Art Accident & Emergency Centre in Army Hospital (Research & Referral), New Delhi. On Republic Day 2024, he was awarded the Param Vishisht Seva Medal by the President of India for distinguished service of the most exceptional order.

After his joining, Lt Gen Jindal interacted with all Deans and HoDs and motivated them to provide state-of-the-art medical services to patients coming from different states in AIIMS-R.

Apex Committee meeting of State Water and Sanitation Mission concludes

Raipur, Feb 19: The meeting of the Apex Committee of the State Water and Sanitation Mission was held at Mantralaya (Mahanadi Bhawan) through video conferencing under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Amitabh Jain. The physical and financial progress under Jal Jeevan Mission was reviewed in the meeting. Similarly, the implementation of group water supply schemes along with the updated status of water supply schemes recommended by the sub-committee of the State Water and Sanitation Mission were also reviewed. The Chief Secretary

instructed the officers of Jal Jeevan Mission to work by coordinating with the officers of various departments of the state government. The Chief Secretary gave instructions to the officials regarding providing water supply under running water in all the schools, Anganwadi, Gram Panchayat buildings, health centers and ashram schools. Similarly, under Jal Jeevan Mission, the updated status of tap water for every house for the year 2023-24 was reviewed in detail. Officials were told in the meeting that under the community-based single source scheme, ac-

tion is being taken to provide drinking water to the families living in about 451 settlements of Dhamtari, Jashpur, Korba, Mahasamund and Narayanpur. The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary of Panchayat and Rural Development, Niharika Barik, Secretary of Finance Department, Ankit Anand, Mission Director Jal-Jeevan Mission, Sunil Jain, Chief Engineer, Public Health Engineering, ML Agrawal and officers from Rural Development Department, Women and child development, health, education and other departments.

Collector takes stock of preparations for Rajim Kumbh



Instructions given to ensure arrangements for the devotees

Raipur, Feb 19: Collector Dr Gourav Singh reached Nayapara of Abhanpur tehsil this morning and took stock of the preparations for Rajim Kalp Kumbh in the area of Raipur district besides giving necessary instructions. He told the officials to make all arrangements for

the devotees coming to Kumbh. He directed the municipal officials to maintain cleanliness and form a monitoring team for this. The Collector directed the Food Department to complete the entire process of the 'Dal-Bhat' Center so that it can be started on time. Besides, instructions were given to the PHE department to make arrangements for drinking water, toilets and allotment of shops in an organized

manner. He said that the pond to be built in the district for Rajim Kumbh Kalpa should be cleaned properly. Old vehicles should be removed from the roadside and construction materials should be kept inside so that traffic remains orderly, he said, adding that barricades should be installed along the roads near the river. Dr. Singh asked the Railways to put railway track in order so that there is no problem in parking.

He directed to form a joint team of Police Administration, Revenue and Municipal Council for continuous monitoring of Rajim Kumbh Mela. The Collector also took stock of the construction work of Rajim-Abhanpur Highway in Abhanpur and gave necessary instructions. Municipal Corporation Commissioner Abinash Mishra, District Panchayat CEO Vishwadeep were present on this occasion.

Drone technology a boon for high level investigation and immediate sample reporting in remote areas

Drone test flight of 40 km distance organized for blood sample transportation

Raipur, Feb 19: Rajmata Smt Devendra Kumari Singhdeo Government Medical College, Ambikapur Chhattisgarh, was selected for the Government of India's pilot project Use of Drone Technology in Health Service Delivery. Under this, blood samples will be collected from the Community Health Center Udaipur at the Government Medical College through drone and after examination, the report will be sent to the Community Health Center Udaipur.

For its implementation, the first drone trial was conducted on Monday at Rajmata Smt Devendra Kumari Singhdeo Government Medical College, as an experiment in the first phase. Blood samples and samples for OT culture were sent for testing by drone from Udaipur Community Health Center, 40 km away from Medical College.

Many tests are not done in the labs of community health centers located in



remote areas of Surguja and Bastar region and they have to be sent to the nearest referral centers.

Udaipur from Medical College Ambikapur where its successful landing was done at Jhirmiti

loaded into the drone and the drone was sent back to the Medical College, Ambikapur.



In such a situation, drone facility can prove to be a boon for patients. In the trial test, the drone took 30 minutes to reach

Stadium Ground in Udaipur. Within 15 minutes, the blood sample, which weighed approximately 600 grams, was

For this project, two drone sisters of self-help groups were sent to Delhi for training in drone operation. Of them one Drone Didi has been trained for Udaipur and one Drone Didi for Ambikapur for the work of sample loading and unloading. If this project proves a success, it will be implemented in all the districts of the state. Providing facilities for immediate testing and sample reporting to patients admitted from remote areas through air transport can prove to be a boon for Surguja district.

New industrial policy of state will be based on agriculture and forests: Industry Minister Dewangan

Raipur, Feb 19: The annual Global Summit was organized by the Indian Chamber of Business and Commerce on Saturday at Dr. Ambedkar Auditorium, Janpad Road, New Delhi. The annual Global Summit was organized by the Rural Economic Forum and the Ministry of MSME, Government of India.



Minister Lakhman Lal Dewangan participated in the Annual Global Summit held in New Delhi.

Chhattisgarh State Commerce, Industry and Labour Minister Lakhman Lal Dewangan participated in the said program along with the delegation. On this occasion, Minister Dewangan said that if we make the farmers of the country self-reliant, then we will definitely have to focus on agriculture based industries. Chhattisgarh state is an agriculture based state, that is why it

is called the rice bowl. Chhattisgarh state is covered with 44% forests and agriculture and forests will definitely play a major role in developing the rural economy.

Minister Dewangan said that in the new industrial policy of

Chhattisgarh state, a policy will definitely be kept to promote agriculture, horticulture and forest based industries, so that the farmers of the state and the people living in tribal areas can get direct benefits from it. This will increase the value addition

of agricultural production of the state. Chief guest of the program Narayan Rane, Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India also participated in the programme. On this occasion, he said that the policy will have to be made keeping this in mind the development activities of the future. This initiative of Indian Chamber of Business and Commerce will definitely play an important role.

On this occasion, along with Minister Lakhman Lal Dewangan, other representatives of Korba Municipal Corporation, Corporator Narendra Dewangan, Prafulla Tiwari, Narendra Patanwar, General Manager CSIDC, OP Banjare were also present.

Virtual foundation stone laying of court building and employee residences by Chief Justice

Raipur, Feb 19: Chief Justice Ramesh Sinha of Chhattisgarh High Court joined virtually at 11:00 am on February 18, 2024 at 11:00 am, through video conferencing, to inaugurate the new court building near bus stand Champa in Champa of Janjgir Champa district. The foundation stone on the court building was laid on Sunday. In the said program, in addition to the Civil Court building Champa, the foundation stone of the Civil Courts Akaltara, Navagarh, Sakti, Malkhauda, Dabhra, Jaiapur and the new employee residential complex Janjgir was also laid. Meanwhile, Port-Folio Judge of the district Mr. Partha Pratim Sahu was present at the venue and performed Bhoomi Pujan and laid the foundation stone of the buildings.



Sinha in his address said that work is being done in collaboration with the State Government to provide infrastructure to the Court and initiatives have also been started for this. He said that we have

to provide a better working environment in the courts of the state. This project is an important step towards providing court building and accommodation for the judicial officers/employees so that they do not have to face any difficulties in getting the court building and accommodation. He instructed the officers and engineers of the concerned department to complete this project with better quality and within the stipulated time frame. He also asked the judicial officers and the District Magistrate to continuously monitor this project to ensure quality.

He said that a well-equipped residential colony for judicial employees in any district is encouraging and infuses new energy, which

increases their work efficiency and the new colony in the district should be such that it proves to be an example for the state.

Justice Partha Pratim Sahu, the special guest of the Bhoomi Pujan and foundation stone laying ceremony, Chhattisgarh High Court and Portfolio Judge Janjgir Champa, on this occasion, congratulated the judicial officers, district administration officers, police officers and court employees, including the district administration and police administration present employees. While addressing, he also extended best wishes for the construction of court buildings and residential houses. On this occasion, District and Sessions Judge Mr. Suresh Kumar Soni welcomed the

Chief Justice and Portfolio Judge for giving the gift of new court buildings and a residential colony with all facilities to Janjgir Champa district. The foundation stone was laid by special guest Justice Partha Pratim Sahu while performing Bhoomi Pujan after the program with full rituals. Rajendra Verma, Chief Justice of the Family Court along with other judges and employees of the Family Court and District Court were also present in the program of Bhoomi Pujan and foundation stone laying ceremony of the residential colony for the proposed new Behavioral Court building and judicial employees. The vote of thanks in the program was given by Mrs. Pallavi Tiwari, Second Additional Sessions Judge, Janjgir.

Archaeologists of country gave lectures on historical and archaeological heritage of Chhattisgarh

National Seminar on 'History of Chhattisgarh - National Perspective' held

Raipur, Feb 19: On the second day of the National Research Seminar on 'History of Chhattisgarh - National Perspective' organized by the Directorate of Archaeology, Archives and Museums under the Department of Culture, three academic sessions were organized at Mahant Ghasidas Memorial Museum, Raipur. In the seminar, historians and archaeologists of the country gave detailed lectures on the historical and archaeological heritage of Chhattisgarh.

In the seminar, Dr. Alka Yadav of Bilaspur read research papers on the tradition of Naga Sadhus in Kankali Math of Raipur. Tijmar Pal on Thakur Dev Vivah and Ghanshyam Nag of Kondagaon read re-

search papers on Limau Raja of Bade Dongar. Rahul Kumar Singh gave a larger perspective of the memorials of the deceased and Professor R.N. Vishwakarma presented a lecture on Chhattisgarh's contribution to Indian art.

In the seminar, Dr. Anamika Sharma of Raipur presented research papers on role of tribal women in Indian politics. Ajay Chaturvedi of Surguja presented fighters of Surguja in Indian independence, Om Prakash Soni of Dantewada presented the historical and cultural study of Phagun Madai in Indian folk festivals, Mahasamund. Dr. Vijay Sharma of the district read a research article on public awareness whereas Dr. K.K. of Raipur Agarwal presented a lecture on the development of political consciousness in Chhattisgarh and Dr. Mahendra Kumar Mishra of Odisha presented a lec-

ture on Jagannath, the symbol of cultural relationship between Chhattisgarh and Odisha.

In the seminar, archaeologist Dr. Kamta Prasad Verma of Madhya Pradesh discussed Tripuri Kalchuri architecture in Surguja region. Dr. Devendra Kumar Singh and Priya Sharma of Amarkantak discussed the ruins and crafts of Kotesar Nagoi temple in Korba district. Dr. Bhenu discussed rock paintings of Bastar. Presented his research on Chhayavad. Dr. Dinesh Nandini Parihar of Raipur gave a lecture on the national importance of the ancient path system of Chhattisgarh and Dr. Praveen Kumar Mishra, Director of Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, gave a lecture and guided the researchers. Historians, archaeologists and researchers from different states of the country were present in the seminar.

Demand to start direct flight service between Raipur-Ayodhya



Raipur, Feb 19: There is great enthusiasm among the devotees to have darshan of Lord Shri Ram in Ayodhya. In view of this, the government is running a special Aastha train. On Sunday, the third batch left from across the district. The arrival of passengers going to Ayodhya started at Bilaspur railway station since morning. According to the information, the State BJP President met the Union Civil Aviation Minister and gave a letter demanding to start direct flights from Raipur to Ayodhya Dham. He also expressed his gratitude to the Union Minister for starting regular Indigo flight service from

Jagdulpur from March 31. The state BJP president wrote in his letter, Chhattisgarh is the land of Mata Kaushalya, that is why we all consider Lord Shri Ram as our nephew. Ram Lalla's grand and divine life is honored at Shri Ram's birthplace. There is a lot of support and trust in the state towards the Prime Minister. Now the scheme to provide darshan of Shri Ram Lala to the party workers has also started. Since there is no direct flight from Raipur to Ayodhya, devotees are facing a lot of difficulty in air travel. Due to which the people of the state are demanding a direct flight from Raipur to Ayodhya by direct air service, apart from saving time and money of the passengers and devotees, it will also be convenient to visit the temple of Lord Shri Ram.

Take action against those who violates traffic rules: SP

Raipur Police to run a campaign

Raipur, Feb 19: SP Santosh Kumar Singh said that take action against whoever violates the traffic rules, even if it is his own vehicle or driver. Strictly issue the challan and recover the fine. He appealed to everyone to set an example for others by wearing a helmet while riding a two-wheeler and wearing a seat belt while driving a car. He was holding a review meeting of officers and employees posted in traffic in the meeting room of the traffic headquarters building.

On the occasion, SP took necessary information from the officers and employees present regarding the smooth operation of the city's traffic system. Besides, instructions were given to make better arrangements and take strict action against drivers who violate traffic rules. In the meeting, SP also instructed the officers



and employees to strictly follow the traffic rules and said that it is necessary to protect one's body. When we follow the rules ourselves, we will get moral strength to give the message to the common people. He asked the employees to wear clean uniforms and behave well with the common citizens while on duty. If any driver misbehaves, then immediately inform the police station in-charge or the patrolling of the nearest police station.

SP said that strictest action should be taken against careless drivers who drive after consuming alcohol and make noise of firecrackers in Bullet vehicles. There is a need to launch a special campaign against such drivers and arrest them. Take strict action against vehicles parked with no parking on major roads within the city. If law and order situation arises while on duty, immediately inform the police control room or senior officer, so that criminal incidents can be stopped before they happen. If you find any person's activity suspicious, inform your authorities. He also listened to the problems of officers and employees. A d d i t i o n a l Superintendent of Police Traffic Sachindra Kumar Choubey, Deputy Superintendent of Police Traffic Gurjit Singh, Sushanto Banerjee, Karan Kumar Uke and all traffic police station in-charges were present in the meeting.

MoU worth Rs 1.27 lakh crore failed to take off during Congress regime

Not even 10 percent investment took place

Raipur, Feb 19: Most of the MOUs made with industries from 2019 to 2023 during the Congress rule have lapsed. The previous government had claimed an investment of Rs 1.27 lakh crore, but even 10 percent investment could not be successful in the state. The Industry Minister has presented a report on this in response to a question in the Assembly session on February 15.

In response to the question, Industries Minister Lakhmanlal Dewangan said that an investment of Rs 1 lakh 27 thousand 329 crore was claimed to provide employment to 1 lakh 38 thousand people, but at present only 8,454 people have got employment. Out of the contracts signed with 216 industries, at present production has started in only 25 industries.

The Industries Minister gave this answer in response to the question of BJP MLA Ajay Chandrakar in the Assembly. Among the producing industries, employment was proposed in 10,665 industries, out of which that too could not be completed 100 percent. Of the 216 companies, 160



were state level, 54 were national level and 2 were foreign companies.

Industrial Policy 2019-2024 was implemented during the Congress regime, out of which most of the provisions of the industrial policy could not be implemented. On this matter, the delegation of the industrial union said that in the previous government, neither land could be obtained nor the process of subsidy, interest grant and land allotment could be completed under the industrial policy. Due to many reasons the contract could not succeed. Sponge Iron Association President Anil Nachrani said that the biggest problem was the availability of land. Public hearings remained stuck in the districts. General Secretary of Rolling Mill Association, Banke Bihari Agarwal said that if there is a better policy, there is immense potential for investment in the state. There should be effective implementation of the provisions mentioned in the industrial policy.

According to the information received from the Industries Department, the MoU of 192 industries is still effective, that is, the deadline of the contract has not expired. There is a possibility of investment of Rs 94,000 crore, out of which 1.15 lakh people can get employment. However, it depends on the intentions of the industry groups whether they would like to extend the contract or not.

In comparison to the Congress government, the BJP government is working on a new industrial policy to attract industries. According to Industry Department officials, measures are being taken in the new industrial policy to overcome the problems of previous industrial policies.

Chhattisgarh's Industries Minister Lakhmanlal Dewangan said, the new industrial policy of the state government will be released by November 2024. We will remove the problems faced by the previous government regarding establishment of industries and investment. The industrial groups which had expressed their desire to invest in the state during the tenure of the previous government. If they want to invest, facilities will be provided to them.

University and board exams to start in March



Raipur, Feb 19: The annual examinations of Pt. Ravi Shankar Shukla University are starting from March 5. 10th and 12th board exams are also starting from March 1. Due to both the examinations starting simultaneously, many private students are facing difficulty in getting the examination centre. Many colleges and schools are located on the same campus. Due to the college and school being on the same campus, the seating capacity is less, due to which the colleges are not taking centers for private students.

The college management said that we will first arrange for the meeting of our regular students and in the space left, we will give the opportunity to other college or private students to take the examination. Daga College and Mahant College, operating in the middle of the city have schools running in the premises of both the colleges.

The building of both school and college is also the same. Students do not

face any problem in reaching these colleges. Apart from this, the colleges and schools running in Gudhiyari and Amlidih are also running in the same building. Due to non-availability of examination centers for private students in the city, they will have to go to distant colleges and appear for the examination. This time the number of students has also increased due to the annual examination being held in two shifts.

Till now, due to annual examination being held in three shifts, students used to get divided, but this time it is not so. Examinations starting from March 5: The annual examinations of the university are starting from March 5, which will continue till May. UG second and third year examinations will start from 5th, while the final year examinations are proposed from March 15th.

About 86 thousand students will appear as private students in the university examination. Private students appear in the examination in both UG and PG. This time, about one lakh 46 thousand students will appear in the annual examination, out of which about 60 thousand are regular students. The remaining approximately 86 thousand students appear in the examination as private.

Will win more seats than BJP in Lok Sabha elections: Deepak Baij

Raipur, Feb 19: State Congress President and MP Deepak Baij said that Congress will perform better than BJP in Chhattisgarh in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. BJP is worried that the assembly elections are going to be repeated in the state. The people of the state want to know what happened to the promises made by BJP and Narendra Modi to the people of the country in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections? The 10 years of Modi government will be remembered as a monument of breaking the promises of BJP.

State Congress President and MP Deepak Baij said that this time in the Lok Sabha elections the people will vote to get rid of the Modi government. Modi had promised that good days would come. The days of Modi's departure have come but the good days have not come. Promised to bring back black money from abroad. Vijay Mallya, Lalit Modi, Nirav ran away with the country's money with the connivance of the Modi government, and the Modi government kept watching. Black money did not come from abroad. The vote was taken by promising to get Rs 15 lakh in every person's account,



leave alone Rs 15 lakh, not even a single penny came.

State Congress President and MP Deepak Baij said that BJP makes election promises before the elections to cheat the public and after winning the elections, calls them 'jumlas'.

This is the real character of BJP. Even in 2014, Modi had promised the people of the country to reduce inflation in 100 days. It was promised to provide employment to 2 crore youth every year. It was promised that Rs 15 lakh will be deposited in the account of every citizen. There was also a promise to double the income of farmers but even after forming the government for 10 years, none of the promises were fulfilled. Now to cheat the people of Chhattisgarh, by throwing new 'jumlas',

they have given Modi's guarantee. But the public has understood the character of both BJP and Modi. BJP is losing the elections badly in the state.

State Congress President and MP Deepak Baij said that there was only talk of zero tolerance against corruption and the Modi government itself was involved in corruption in the Rafale defense deal. Modi government failed to make appointment to the post of Lokpal as per UPA law. Modi government remains the protector of Adani's corruption. There was a promise of providing employment to two crore youth every year, but due to GST and demonetization, crores of jobs were snatched away, what happened to the two crore jobs which were to come every year? 10 crore people were to get employment in 5 years but unemployment increased. There was deception in implementing the Women's Reservation Bill. One Rank One Pension has failed. Could not control inflation, rising prices of gas, petrol and diesel increased during Modi rule. According to the Swaminathan Committee report, farmers could not be paid double the cost.

Legal literacy camp organized in Mudhipar school

Collector's dynamic initiatives transforming JNV



Khairagarh, Feb 19: Government Higher Secondary School in Mudhipar witnessed a transformative event with the organization of a Legal Literacy Camp, aimed at enlightening students about their legal rights and responsibilities. Under the guidance of Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) Guru Prasad Dewangan, the camp focused on the importance of strategic planning for achieving success. Dewangan emphasized the need for clear goal-setting, resource identification, and maintaining focus to avoid distractions.

During his address to the students, Guru Prasad Dewangan, emphasized the seriousness of ragging, terming it a legal offense. He condemned the practice wherein senior students in colleges and universities engage in disrespectful behavior towards newcomers to flaunt their superiority. Dewangan underscored the alarming nature of ragging, stating that it often escalates into indecent acts and methods, sometimes resulting in mental or physical torture for new students. He reiterated the importance of eradicating ragging altogether, emphasizing that such behavior should neither be condoned nor tolerated. Dewangan elaborated on the provisions of the POCSO Act, emphasizing that even in cases where sexual intercourse with a minor occurs with their consent as part of a romantic relationship, the law still applies. He clarified that ignorance of the law cannot serve as a defense in such cases, and courts cannot grant leniency based on this argument. Dewangan highlighted the detrimental impact of youth lacking awareness about the legal consequences, stating that lives and careers are often ruined as a result. He emphasized the importance of educating youth and future generations about these laws, particularly

within educational institutions like schools and colleges. Dewangan stressed the need for proactive efforts to raise awareness and prevent legal infractions among the youth. Furthermore, Dewangan shed light on the alarming rate of motor accidents caused by reckless driving, stressing the importance of vehicle insurance to mitigate financial losses. Paralegal volunteer Golu Das Sahu provided insights into cybercrime prevention, equipping students with knowledge to navigate the digital landscape safely. The event, organized under the direction of Chairman of the District Legal Services Authority Rajnandgaon, Alok Kumar, garnered enthusiastic participation from Principal KM Qureshi, RL Banjare, dedicated teachers, and a large cohort of students. Through initiatives like these, Mudhipar School aims to foster a generation of well-informed and law-abiding citizens, contributing to a brighter future for the community.

In a move towards educational enhancement, Collector Ranbir Sharma orchestrated a pivotal meeting of the School Management Committee at Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya in Gram Panchayat Bahera. Commencing the day's proceedings, Collector Sharma, adorned in humility, graced the school with his presence, offering floral tributes to the revered statue of Mother Saraswati. Addressing the eager students, Sharma delivered a motivational discourse, urging them to embrace diligence and perseverance, encapsulating his wisdom with the adage, "If you have the strength, go ahead." Emphasizing the importance of holistic development, he enlightened the students about the four dimensions of personality: mental, physical, social, and moral roles. A literary interlude ensued, with Class VIII student Sakshi Sinha reciting verses from Rashmirathi, captivating the audience with her eloquence. Transitioning



Bemetara, Feb 19: In a move towards educational enhancement, Collector Ranbir Sharma orchestrated a pivotal meeting of the School Management Committee at Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya in Gram Panchayat Bahera. Commencing the day's proceedings, Collector Sharma, adorned in humility, graced the school with his presence, offering floral tributes to the revered statue of Mother Saraswati. Addressing the eager students, Sharma delivered a motivational discourse, urging them to embrace diligence and perseverance, encapsulating his wisdom with the adage, "If you have the strength, go ahead." Emphasizing the importance of holistic development, he enlightened the students about the four dimensions of personality: mental, physical, social, and moral roles. A literary interlude ensued, with Class VIII student Sakshi Sinha reciting verses from Rashmirathi, captivating the audience with her eloquence. Transitioning

from inspiration to action, the Collector, along with the District Education Officer and other officials, embarked on an inspection of the children's hostel. Identifying safety concerns, directives were issued to address hazards promptly, including the rectification of a perilous spot and the renovation of the campus pond. Demonstrating an ardent commitment to environmental stewardship, Collector Sharma championed green initiatives, advocating for a clean campus environment and the

establishment of a vibrant kitchen garden. His unwavering dedication to sustainability was epitomized by the symbolic act of tree planting, fostering a verdant landscape for generations to come. The Collector envisaged a thriving academic ecosystem, directing the installation of a solar power plant and the development of an art museum. With meticulous attention to detail, Sharma oversaw the progress of ongoing construction projects, ensuring timely completion and quality assurance.

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Mass ideal marriages of 86 couples held in Ahiwara

District development takes center stage in Collector's review meeting



Nandini Ahiwara, Feb 19: In a remarkable initiative under the Women Child Development Project, Ahiwara Municipal Council orchestrated a mass ideal marriage ceremony for 86 couples, held at Recreation Club, Nandini Nagar. The event, conducted under the Chief

Minister Kanyadan Scheme, witnessed chanting of mantras and participation from the Gayatri Parivar. Amidst the rhythmic welcome of musical instruments, the couples were seated in the pavilion, and the marriages were solemnized as per Hindu customs. Vijay Baghel, MP

Durg, graced the occasion as the chief guest, while Natwar Tamrakar, President of Ahiwara Municipality, presided over the event. The ceremony was attended by esteemed dignitaries including Ravi Shankar Singh, Chandrakala Manhar, Shivkumari Kushwaha,

and others. MP Vijay Baghel lauded the Chief Minister Kanyadaan Yojana, urging widespread participation in the initiative to promote affordable marriages. He extended blessings to all the newlywed couples, emphasizing the scheme's importance in fostering communal wel-

Dream of poor parents come true: Natwar Tamrakar

Manendragarh, Feb 19: President Natwar Lal Tamrakar echoed similar sentiments, expressing delight over the realization of dreams for 86 couples. He advocated for collective ideal marriages as a means to circumvent extravagant ceremonies, extending his heartfelt wishes to all the newlyweds. The successful execution of the event garnered praise for Ajay Sharma, Shailesh Thakur, Ranjana Thakur, and others involved. Their efforts were hailed as pivotal in organizing such a significant event, with discussions already underway for future iterations.

District development takes center stage in Collector's review meeting

Manendragarh, Feb 19: Collector D. Rahul Venkat spearheaded a pivotal monthly review meeting of the district's urban bodies, underscoring a collaborative approach to address pressing issues and pave the way for progress. The meeting, convened with key stakeholders including CMOs, engineers, and accountants from Municipal Corporation, Municipality, and Nagar Panchayat, delved into multifaceted strategies aimed at enhancing the district's infrastructure and fostering community welfare. Amidst detailed discussions, Collector Venkat underscored the imperative of presenting accurate information regarding setup approvals, staffing, and vacant positions within the

urban bodies. Emphasizing transparency and accountability, he directed officials to conduct drone surveys in collaboration with Patwaris to meticulously map government and private lands, facilitating informed decision-making and efficient land management practices. A pivotal aspect of the meeting centered on the identification of suitable locations for vital amenities such as bus stands and parking spaces, with a keen focus on alleviating congestion and ensuring seamless mobility within Municipal Corporation Chirmiri and other urban areas. Collector Venkat's directives regarding temporary vending zones and waste management initiatives reflect a proactive stance towards urban rejuvenation and sustainable growth. Addressing crucial con-

cerns surrounding water management and sanitation, the Collector urged officials to devise comprehensive action plans, ensuring regular water supply and efficient waste disposal mechanisms. Notably, instructions were issued to prioritize repairs to water systems ahead of the summer season, mitigating potential water shortages and safeguarding community well-being. In attendance were esteemed officials including Municipal Corporation Commissioner B.S. Markam, Municipal Council and Nagar Panchayat CMOs Ishaq Khan, Tarun Kumar Ekka, and other dedicated professionals, collectively reaffirming their commitment to steering the district towards a brighter and more prosperous future.

Modi to virtually inaugurate state-of-the-art KV today

Workshop on Wild Animal Conservation and Fire Safety

In Kabirdham Collector inspects preparations for virtual inauguration

Kawardha, Feb 19: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually inaugurate the new Kendriya Vidyalaya building located at Maharajpur in Kabirdham district of Chhattisgarh on February 20. This much-awaited event will witness the participation of Chhattisgarh's Deputy Chief Minister and Home Minister Vijay Sharma alongside MP Santosh Pandey, who have been specially invited to grace the occasion. The construction, including the



Kendriya Vidyalaya building and employee residential quarters, amounts to a commendable Rs 20.56 crore investment, reflecting the government's commitment to providing quality education infrastructure. Collector Janmejaya Mahobe, ensuring meticulous arrangements for the inauguration, personally inspected the preparations

along with District Panchayat CEO Sandeep Agarwal. Their supervision underscores the dedication to ensuring a seamless virtual ceremony that befits the importance of this educational milestone. The completion of the new Kendriya Vidyalaya campus stands as a testament to the collaborative efforts of Deputy Chief Minister

Vijay Sharma and MP Santosh Pandey. Their relentless advocacy and support have brought this project to fruition, promising enhanced educational facilities for the district's students. Principal Sushil Kumar highlighted the journey of the Kendriya Vidyalaya, with its foundation stone laid in 2017. Currently accommodating students up to class 11, the school boasts an enrollment of 486 students, comprising a balanced mix of boys and girls. The new campus features state-of-the-art classrooms and ample space for extracurricular activities, including sports and cultural events, ensuring a holistic learning experience for all.

Plagdalpur, Feb 19:

A workshop addressing wild animal conservation and fire safety was convened in Kutumsar village, underscoring the importance of environmental stewardship. Attendees included departmental officers, employees, members of the Eco Development Committee, and village Sarpanchs. Discussions focused on forest fire prevention and wildlife preservation in the Kanger Valley and its adjacent forest regions. Over 100 participants from 20 eco-development committees engaged in the workshop, reviewing last year's action plans for fire management and outlining strategies for the up-



coming year. Noteworthy efforts were highlighted, such as the implementation of patrolling teams by committees like Kamanar and Nagalsar, demonstrating a proactive approach to forest protection. Dhamshel Ganveer,

Director of Kanger Ghati, lauded the collective endeavors of communities in forest fire prevention. Last year, eight committees successfully averted forest fires in areas like Koleng, Topar, Gopapadar, and others, showcasing the effica-

cy of community-driven initiatives. To enhance early warning systems, committee members are integrated into the Forest Survey of India's fire alert mechanism, ensuring swift response to potential threats.

Decline of naxal influence in Bastar division

14 security caps installed in the core area of Naxalites in three and a half months

Jagdalpur, Feb 19: The grip of Naxalism in Bastar division is steadily weakening as affected areas witness a notable reduction in insurgent activities. Recent reports from law enforcement indicate a significant step forward in this regard. Over the past three and a half months, beginning in November 2023, authorities have initiated strategic security meas-

ures to address the prevailing challenges. Among these efforts, the installation of new security outposts in Bijapur district stands out as a critical development. Notably, in Bijapur district, caps have been installed in Palanar, Dumripalnar, Chintavagu, Kavaddgaon, Mutvedi, and Gundam, while in Sukma district, the new caps include Muller, Paria, Salatong, Mukrajokoda, Duled, and Tekalgudem. Simultaneously, significant security measures have been implemented in Purvi and Kanker districts. A total of 14 new security caps, known as Panidobir,

have been established in these areas. Particularly vulnerable was Purvati, situated on the border of Bijapur and Sukma districts, previously serving as the Naxalites' military battalion headquarters. Authorities have established a camp in the former stronghold of the Naxalite government, bolstering security measures in the region. Additionally, a tactical headquarters has been set up by the police and armed forces, marking a pivotal step in neutralizing Naxal influence. Presently, only two areas remain accessible to Naxalites in the



Bastar division: the Indravati Tiger Reserve National Park in Bijapur district and the sparsely populated region of Abujhmad. These locations serve as potential hideouts for the dwindling Naxal presence. Efforts to combat Naxalism extend beyond security operations. Local communities are benefiting from infrastructure development initiatives, including the construction of roads, bridges, and electrification projects. Moreover, essential services such as ration shops, Anganwadi centers, healthcare facilities, and educational resources are being pro-

vided to enhance the well-being of residents. Innovative safety caps are being installed regularly for the purpose of benefiting. In this connection, with the joint installation of a new security cap on February 16 by CRPF/STF/Cobra/DRG /Bastar Fighter and local police under Jagargunda police station in the border area of Bijapur and Sukma, almost the last base of Naxalites was destroyed. Anmit has put the nail in the coffin of the area. Bastar Inspector General Sundarraj P. underscored the commitment of the Bastar Police, local administra-

tion, and security forces to promote the holistic development and safeguard the lives and property of the region's residents. With the establishment of new camps and concerted efforts, positive outcomes are anticipated in the near future. Emphasizing the importance of maintaining law and order in the Bastar division, IG Sundarraj affirmed the collective resolve to foster a positive identity for the region. Through collaborative endeavors and effective governance, Bastar aims to overcome challenges and create a safe and prosperous environment for its inhabitants.



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Combating Anti-Indian Violence

Upholding Diversity in the US

The incidents of violence against Indians in the United States have sparked widespread concern and condemnation, prompting the White House to reaffirm its commitment to preventing such attacks. The Biden administration's acknowledgment of the issue is a welcome step, but more concrete action is needed to address the underlying factors contributing to these tragic incidents. The surge in the Indian diaspora's presence in the US in recent years is undeniable. With a significant increase in Indian students choosing American universities, there has been a corresponding rise in the number of Indian immigrants. However, this influx has been marred by a disturbing trend of unnatural deaths among Indian-origin individuals, particularly students. The deaths of several Indian students since the beginning of the year have sent shockwaves through the community, raising questions about safety and security in the US. While some of these incidents may be attributed to unfortunate accidents or isolated criminal acts, there are troubling signs of racial targeting and discrimination. In one alarming case, a victim narrowly escaped with his life, highlighting the dangers faced by individuals who may be perceived as different or foreign in the US. The prevalence of gun violence and the glamorization of criminal lifestyles in certain segments of American society further compound these concerns, underscoring the need for vigilance and precaution among newly arrived Indians. Beyond individual acts of violence, there exists a broader societal issue of prejudice and xenophobia towards those who do not fit the traditional mold of white or African-American Americans. Sikhs, in particular, have been targeted in hate crimes, with their turbans erroneously associated with terrorism. Such incidents not only pose a threat to the safety and well-being of individuals but also undermine the values of diversity and inclusivity that the US claims to uphold. The recent surge in hate crimes, as evidenced by FBI statistics, underscores the urgency of addressing these deep-seated prejudices and misconceptions. While the White House has condemned violence based on race, gender, or religion, more proactive measures are needed to combat systemic discrimination and promote tolerance and acceptance. It is not enough to merely protect individuals like Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, whose actions have been deemed terrorist activities by India; the focus must also be on safeguarding the broader Indian community, which has made invaluable contributions to the US economy and society. As the Biden administration grapples with domestic and international challenges, it must prioritize the protection of all individuals within its borders, regardless of their background or nationality. Upholding the principles of liberalism and diversity requires more than just rhetoric; it demands concrete actions to address systemic inequalities and ensure the safety and well-being of all residents. Only through collective efforts can the US truly fulfill its promise of being a beacon of freedom and opportunity for people of all backgrounds.

Unveiling Digital Wellbeing

Insights from the DQL Index

Dr Krishna Kumar Vepakomma



Recognizing the pivotal role of digital wellbeing in shaping our overall welfare across work, education, and leisure is crucial for a comprehensive sense of wellbeing in our daily lives. Gabriele Racaityte-Karasauske, Surfshark's spokesperson, emphasizes the seamless integration of the digital transformation into our global daily routine, influencing various facets of life. She underscores the importance of identifying strengths and areas needing attention in a nation's digital quality of life, highlighting the purpose of the DQL Index. The progress of Digital India has experienced significant transformations recently. According to a recent revelation, India secured the 52nd position out of 121 countries in the Digital Quality of Life Index survey conducted by Surfshark, a cybersecurity firm. The assessment encompassed critical factors such as internet quality, affordability, e-infrastructure, e-government, and e-security. India's digital progress is evident as it climbed seven places from 59th to 52nd, attributed to a substantial improvement in internet quality. Notably, India ranks 16th globally in internet quality, with a 36% increase over the global average. Mobile internet speed experienced a staggering 297% growth, driven by widespread 5G roll-out, while fixed broadband speed saw a modest 16% increase. Despite these advancements, internet affordability remains a challenge. India holds the 28th rank, requiring individuals to invest 1 hour and 48 minutes monthly for a fixed broadband line and 44 minutes and 22 seconds for mobile internet access. Examining the pillars of the DQL Index, India's e-infrastructure ranks 91st, indicating a need for improvements in digital public infrastructure. The G20 forum recently highlighted an increased adoption of digital public infrastructure globally. In the realm of e-government, India secures the 35th position, reflecting government initiatives like Digital India and Skill India. However, in terms of e-security, India is ranked 66th, facing security risks with 91% of companies experiencing ransomware attacks. In India, adapting to the changing digital landscape is essential, and bridging the digital divide is critical for nations to capitalize on opportunities in the digital age. The DQL Index, a key tool, evaluates 121 countries based on five crucial parameters, providing insights into the quality of digital life and highlighting the continuous global need for improvements.

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TOURISTS IN INDIA GATE



Tourists on the Kartavya Path near the India Gate in New Delhi, Monday, Feb. 19

Caste Census : Tool for development with justice

ER. PRABHAT KISHORE



People's voice for a complete Caste-based Census is gaining momentum in various corners of the country. In the absence of a caste census, the country is relying upon 90-year old data to formulate its holistic developmental policies and schemes for backward and deprived sections of the society. Caste and social justice are interlinked to each other and Caste census will help the government to implement welfare schemes, with the pious motto of 'Jiski Jitni Bhagidari , Uski Utini Hissedari'.

For a welfare government, it is a constitutional obligation and commitment for the inclusive growth of the weaker sections of the society. So, Caste Census is vital for social equity. A section of people argue that it may allow social tension to develop between communities in the country. Such fictional argument of a handful casteist forces is creating hurdles in way of all-round development with social justice. If religion-based and language-based census had not created division and hatred in the society as per their claim, how a complete caste-based census can create differences in the society?

Actually the various census, conducted after independence, can not be termed as casteless, since not only castes of Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribes are being recorded, but religion-based census too is being conducted. It is beyond the perceive of the people that why the Centre is hesitating on a complete Caste-based Census, enumerating OBCs too.

The reference to Caste Census is found in the Rigveda and Kautilya's Artha Shastra; although Caste or Class categorisation was not so nasty as are being seen today. Systematic caste-wise enumeration of population was introduced by the Registrar General of India in 1881 under British Rule, which continued till 1931. In the 1941 census too, the caste-wise figures were collected, but the exercise was curtailed due to World War-II and final data could not be published. In 1951, the Census exercise was revamped drastically and recording of caste, except SCs and STs, was abandoned. Thus 1931 Census, which included Pakistan and Bangla Desh territories too, became the last caste-based census in India.

The first Backward Classes Commission, headed by Kaka Kalelkar, has recommended in its report of 1955 for undertaking caste-wise enumeration of population in Census 1961. The second Backward Classes Commission, i.e. Mandal Commission has highlighted that the report is based on 1931 Census data, which is not adequate and hence next, i.e. 2001, Census should be caste-based. The commission had no way other than to assume inter se rate of population growth of various communities & religious groups over the last half a century to be remaining the same. But this was far from reality. The census records of the years 1951 and 2011 reveal that the population of Hindu has decreased from 84.1% to 79.30%, whereas that of Muslim has increased from 9.8% to 14.23%.

Similarly, the population of SC and ST has increased from 14% to 16.63% and 6.23% to 8.61% respectively. Obviously, the assumption of constant decadal growth of all communities is a farce.

In December 1996, the H. D. Deve Gowda Cabinet has taken decision for caste-wise enumeration in Census 2001. But in 2001, the Vajpayee-led NDA government scuttled the decision on the plea of so-called caste-biases. In June 2010, The UPA government had made a commitment for caste census after discussion in both Houses of Parliament. But instead of adding a column in the main decadal Census of 2011, a separate Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC) was initiated, whose final report was neither concluded nor made public. On 31st August 2018, after reviewing progress for Census 2021, the then Home Minister has promised for collecting data on OBCs first time, but the Government took U-turn in Lok Sabha in 2021 saying No to it.

The demand for a complete caste-based census emerges every time in Parliament, when it is due. Usually, such demand comes from OBCs and other deprived sections of the society and it is constantly & aggressively opposed by the representatives from upper castes, who are dominating the power share despite having nominal population share and are afraid of losing their age-long monopoly.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is leading the chorus for Caste Census and all political as well as social institutions are in its favour. The proposal for caste census in 2021 was unanimously passed by the Bihar Vidhan Sabha on 17th February 2019 and again on 27th February 2020. Such a resolution has also been passed in Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha on 8th January 2021. Last year Odisha became third state to urge the centre for holding enumeration of Socially and Educationally Backward Classes along with a general census in 2021. Presently Telangana state is all set for caste census in the state. The

National Commission for Backward Classes has also urged the government for the same. But, as Central Government has not accepted the proposal, the various State Governments should come forward to conduct the exercise on their own resources on the pattern of Bihar and Karnataka.

It may be noted that the Karnataka High Court and the Supreme Court had directed the Karnataka State government to provide the latest percentage of a particular caste in the total population of the state, whenever the government plans to extend reservation facility to a particular caste. So, the State government decided to conduct the caste census to know the current status of various castes in the state. The Maharashtra State Commission for Backward Classes (MSCBC) has recommended for Socio Economic and Caste Census by the State government. Bihar state has already conducted caste census and rescheduled and enhanced the reservation percentage as per the outcome of socio-economic status.

Caste Census at national level is the need of the hour, as the unavailability of reliable and authentic data regarding the exact population of each segment of the society, geographical area of their spread & density is posing a huge challenge in ensuring focused and outcome-specific planning. The latest data and statistics are the essential tool for policy-making and research, as it helps the policy-makers to determine the target and direct the course of policies & actions. With the fresh assessment of the caste-wise population, the economic deprivation levels of different castes in various states could be determined and it would help to tailor reservation policy to ensure equitable representation of all of them.

(Author is a technocrat and academician. He holds Master in Engineering from M.N. Regional Engineering College, Allahabad/Prayagraj)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Agrarian Adversity

It's disheartening to witness mistreated farmers facing tear gas and rubber bullets while peacefully protesting justifiable demands—an affront to the farming community. The denial of Minimum Support Price (MSP) for crops remains a significant stumbling block, hindering progress and perpetuating injustice. Instituting a legal guarantee for MSP not only empowers growers to diversify their crops but also shields them from exploitation by corporate interests. Politicians' hollow promises offer little solace; true change requires genuine respect and care for the backbone of our agricultural sector—the farmers. It's time to prioritize their well-being and ensure they receive the dignity and support they deserve for their tireless contributions to society.

MK Nair, Raipur

Democracy Gagged

The Income-Tax department's demand on Congress, crippling its finances just before elections, reeks of political vendetta. A 45-day delay in tax filing warrants a Rs 210 crore penalty? This unprecedented action, coupled with the Supreme Court's verdict on electoral bonds, paints a chilling picture. Money in politics warps elections, and targeting the Opposition with dubious charges undermines democracy's very foundation. Can we afford to let accountability become a tool to silence dissent? Every stakeholder, but especially the ruling party, must uphold transparency and fair play.

Mohammad Taukir, Bettiah, Bihar

Red Herring?

India's exports show mixed signals: January saw a 3.1% rise to \$36.92 billion, but year-on-year, they lag 5%. Electronics shine with 20.7% growth, while labor-intensive sectors like textiles struggle. Imports grew 3%, but excluding oil and gems, they fell 2.3%. Red Sea fears seem unfounded, but long-term impact remains unclear. However, electronics and pharmaceuticals offer promising avenues, but broader concerns persist. Diversification and policy tweaks could unlock India's true export potential.

Tauqueer Rahmani, Mumbai

Ban Manja

The alarming rate of severe injuries and fatalities caused by Chinese manja demands immediate action. Despite the ban implemented in 2017, cases of animals and birds getting ensnared in this glass-coated string persist due to lax enforcement. It's imperative to impose strict penalties on violators. Collaborative efforts among government agencies, NGOs, and citizens are necessary to raise awareness about the string's dangers. Only through concerted action can we mitigate the devastating impact of this hazardous material on both wildlife and public safety.

Shiv Kumar Mishra, Raipur

Southern states' fears on delimitation: Balancing representation and justice



Yash Pal Ralhan

Delimitation, the process of redrawing electoral boundaries to ensure fair representation, has become a contentious issue in India, particularly for the southern states. Amidst fears of disproportionate parliamentary representation, these states are voicing their concerns, highlighting the potential consequences of population-based delimitation. This ar-

ticle delves into the intricacies of the debate, exploring the underlying fears, implications, and the quest for equitable representation.

Southern states, distinguished by their commitment to population control measures, fear being penalized under a population-based delimitation system. The apprehension stems from the possibility of losing parliamentary seats despite their proactive efforts towards national interest. This disparity in treatment between states following population control measures and those neglecting them raises questions of fairness and justice within the democratic framework.

Tamil Nadu's Assembly resolution against the central government's delimitation agenda marks a significant step in articulating the collective concerns of southern states. It underscores the urgency for the central government to address these apprehensions and safeguard the integrity of democratic processes. The resolution reflects not just a regional sentiment but a broader concern

for preserving the principles of fairness and representation in India's democratic fabric.

At the heart of the issue lies the looming threat of unequal parliamentary representation post-delimitation. Southern states anticipate a reduction in parliamentary seats, which they perceive as a form of penalization for their developmental initiatives. This apprehension is exacerbated by the projected gains for northern states that have not adhered to population control measures, creating a sense of injustice and imbalance in the allocation of parliamentary seats.

The potential ramifications of skewed representation extend beyond electoral politics, affecting the balance of power and resource allocation. Southern states, despite contributing significantly to the country's GDP, risk losing their voice and bargaining power in national decision-making processes. This disparity undermines the principles of federalism and democratic governance, necessitating a reevalua-

tion of delimitation criteria to ensure equitable representation.

The interplay between delimitation and other legislative agendas, such as the Women's Reservation Bill, further complicates the landscape. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin's apprehension that delimitation may undermine southern states' bargaining power underscores the broader implications of this issue beyond mere seat allocation. It underscores the need for a comprehensive approach that considers the intersectionality of various legislative agendas and their impact on regional representation.

Addressing the concerns raised by southern states requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders. The central government must acknowledge the legitimate apprehensions of southern states and work towards devising a more inclusive and equitable delimitation framework. This entails recalibrating delimitation criteria to reflect not just population dynamics but also developmental indices, ensuring fair representation for all states.

Furthermore, political parties across the South must unite in opposition to the current delimitation methodology, transcending partisan divides for the collective good. This concerted effort can amplify the voices of dissent, compelling the central government to reconsider its approach and uphold the tenets of democratic governance. It is imperative to foster regional consensus and solidarity in advocating for fair representation, thereby strengthening the democratic fabric of the nation.

In conclusion, the delimitation debate underscores the delicate balance between representation and justice in India's democratic landscape. Southern states' concerns regarding disproportionate parliamentary representation highlight the need for a reevaluation of delimitation criteria to ensure fairness and equity. By addressing these concerns and fostering regional consensus, India can uphold the principles of democratic governance and reinforce its commitment to inclusive representation for all states.

BRIEF

Investment



Kolkata: Union minister B.L. Verma on Monday said the central government has invested Rs 5 lakh crore in the North East since 2014, while Rs 11 lakh crore more will be pumped into the region for its all-round development. This part of the country holds immense investment potential, said the Minister of State for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER). "Already Rs 5 lakh crore has been invested by the government since 2014. While another Rs 11 lakh crore is underway for the region on developmental projects to improve infrastructure," Verma told PTI on the sidelines of the North East Investors Summit.

Tea exports

Kolkata: Tea exports from India have declined by 1.17 per cent to 207.14 million kgs in the January-November period of 2023, according to official data. The country shipped out 209.60 mkg of tea during a similar 11-month period of the previous year. During the calendar year 2022, the total tea exports were 231.08 mkg. Region-wise, exports from North India, comprising primarily the states of Assam and West Bengal, stood at 125.27 mkg, down from 132.21 mkg in the comparable periods of 2023 and 2022 respectively, the Tea Board data said. Shipments from South India during the first 11 months of 2023 increased to 81.87 mkg from 77.39 mkg in the previous similar period, according to the data.

Semiconductor plants



New Delhi: Two full-fledged semiconductor fabrication plants are going to come up in India very soon entailing multi-billion dollar investment besides several chip assembly and packaging units, Minister of Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar said. In an interview with PTI, the minister confirmed that the two projects include a USD 8 billion proposal submitted by Israel-based Tower Semiconductors and the other from Tata Group. "I am happy to share this with you and you are probably the first one I'm sharing this with. In the near term, two full-blown fabs are going to come up in India. These are going to be multi-billion-dollar fabs in the 65, 40 and 28-nanometer technology and there are going to be a host of other packaging proposals that we are evaluating," Chandrasekhar said.

Goyal confident of rate cut by RBI in coming months

New Delhi, Feb 19:

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Monday exuded confidence that the Reserve Bank will cut interest rates as inflation is under control. The RBI has been maintaining the benchmark interest rate at an elevated level of 6.5 per cent since February 2023. Goyal said that the economic fundamentals of the country are strong and inflation is under check. He said that the average inflation of 10 years in India is about 5 to 5.5 per cent. It was the best-performing decade and because of that, the interest rate came down "dramatically" and the central bank was strengthened and had the ability to bring down the interest rate. "Of-course in the last year and a half, post Ukraine-crisis, interest rates have again gone up by 250 basis points. But



now that inflation is pretty much in control, I suspect we will soon see the reversal of the rate hikes starting in India, whether it happens in the next or the second monetary policy from now. I think it's only a matter of time," Goyal said. In case the Reserve Bank goes for a reduction in the key short-term lending rate (repo), the cost of borrowings both for corporate as well as individuals, will go down, and hence EMIs. The RBI on February 8, for the sixth time in a row, left the key

policy rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent, which may keep the cost of borrowings for both individuals as well as corporates largely stable, and lowered the retail inflation projection to 4.5 per cent for next fiscal. The next bi-monthly monetary policy will be announced on April 5. The consumer price index was 5.1 per cent in January, down from 6.52 per cent in January 2023. The wholesale price index (WPI)-based inflation eased to a three-month low of 0.27 per cent in January, mainly due to moderation of food prices, including vegetables.

The minister was addressing 35 journalists from 19 Latin American and Caribbean countries here. He also said that the government's ambition is to increase the current USD 3.7 trillion economy to a USD 30-35 trillion economy by 2047.

India tops list for highest number of passengers at Dubai airport

● With 11.9 million arrivals

Dubai, Feb 19: India emerged at the top spot for the highest number of passengers flying through the Dubai International Airport, the world's busiest for international travel, with traffic totalling 11.9 million guests, the airport announced on Monday. According to a statement, the Dubai airport, known as DXB, surpassed not only its own yearly forecast but also pre-pandemic levels of traffic. In 2023, DXB witnessed a surge in passenger numbers, reaching 86.9 million passengers (86,994,365), an impressive



year-on-year increase of 31.7 per cent. It was just under a per cent higher than the passenger numbers recorded in 2019 (86.4 million), the numbers were driven by robust growth in the second half of the year during which the airport recorded a total of 45.4 million guests. With 7.8 million guests,

December was the busiest month in the fourth quarter during which the airport welcomed a total of 22.4 million guests, a year-on-year growth of 13.8 per cent compared to Q4 of last year. Q3 remained the quarter with the highest traffic since 2019 with 23 million guests while August, with 7.9 million

GLOBAL INVESTORS' SUMMIT



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during the 4th groundbreaking ceremony of UP Global Investors Summit, in Lucknow, Monday, Feb. 19.

NITI Aayog pitches for tax reforms

Mandatory saving plan, housing plan for elderly

New Delhi, Feb 19:

Government think tank NITI Aayog has pitched for tax reforms, mandatory saving plan, and housing plan for elderly in India, as the population of senior citizens is projected to reach 19.5 per cent of the country's population by 2050.

In a report titled 'Senior Care Reforms in India - Reimagining the Senior Care Paradigm', NITI Aayog said a national portal for senior care must be developed for senior citizens to provide easy access of services to them. "Since the social security framework in India is limited, most seniors depend on the income generated from their savings.

Variable interest rates result in the erosion of their income, sometimes even below sustenance levels. "Therefore, a regulatory mechanism is required to set a viable base rate for the interest accrued on senior citizen deposits," the report said.

The report emphasised that giving a further concession to older women will contribute to their financial well-being. The elderly in India currently comprises a little over 10 per cent of the population, translating to about 104 million, and is projected to reach 19.5 per cent of the total population by 2050. The report also suggested that the government should reassess the reverse mortgage mecha-

nism to increase liquidity for seniors and by making necessary amendments to the current reverse mortgage rules. "Tax and GST reforms, etc, on senior care products (needed) to increase the ease of adoption and safeguard the elderly population from the financial burden," the Aayog said.

Population ageing is a global phenomenon, and the number of people over 60 years of age has been rising rapidly across the world. India, too, is witnessing an exponential growth in the number and proportion of elderly people, coupled with decreasing fertility rate (less than 2.0) and increasing life expectancy (more than 70 years).

Trade industry wants PM to address unemployment, promote ease of doing business in J&K

Srinagar, Feb 19:

Welcoming Prime Minister Narendra Modi's upcoming visit to Jammu & Kashmir, the local industry on Monday said it expects the PM to address the key issue of unemployment and promote ease of doing business in the valley. "The Prime Minister's visit on Tuesday coincides with the inauguration of some prestigious projects which are destined to play an important part in the development of Jammu & Kashmir," the KCCI said in a statement. The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) highlighted that the lack of infrastructure and support to industry have been a key roadblock in the overall development of the union territory. The KCCI



looks up on the Prime Minister to implement his favourite 'Ease Of Doing Business' scheme in the UT, it said. While thanking the Prime Minister for accepting many of its suggestions in the past, the KCCI said, "it looks up to the Prime Minister with hope for considering suggestions critical for all round development of Jammu & Kashmir; more so, in view of the alarming rate at which the unem-

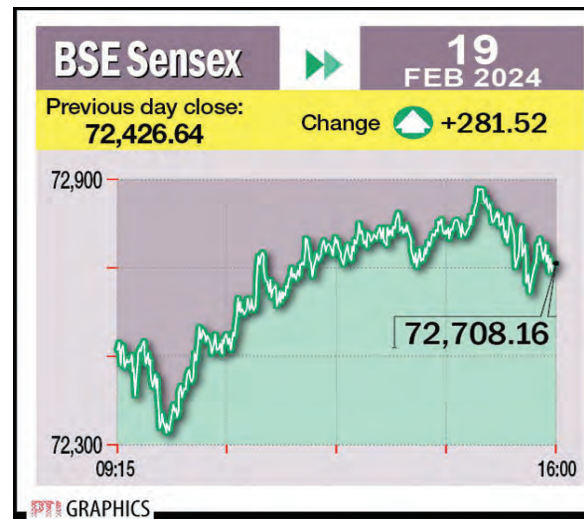
ployment rate has been growing." The KCCI said it would emphasize the implementation of the Prime Minister's favourite 'Ease Of Doing Business' scheme. "The lack of infrastructure, multiple industrial policies, and lack of support to local industries has put a spanner in the wheels of development/ growth of local industry," it said. The KCCI said Jammu & Kashmir has been returning to normalcy which has resulted in considerable growth in tourist footfall. "However, the ill-equipped existing Airport Terminal is causing tremendous difficulties to travellers. The Srinagar Airport needs to be expanded and upgraded to enable it to cater to the growing number of travellers," it added.

Stock markets advance for 5th day

■ Nifty hits record high, Sensex up 281 points

Mumbai, Feb 19:

Stock markets closed higher for the fifth consecutive day on Monday with the benchmark Sensex rising 281 points and Nifty scaling its fresh lifetime high driven by gains in financial and FMCG shares. The 30-share BSE Sensex rose by 281.52 points or 0.39 per cent to close at 72,708.16. As many as 17 Sensex shares advanced while 13 closed in the red. After a firm start, the index hit a high of 72,881.93 in day trade. The broader Nifty closed at its all-time high of 22,122.25 points, up by 81.55 points or 0.37 per cent from the last close. The 50-issue barometer also scaled its



intra-day record high of 22,186.65 helped by gains in pharma, banking and oil shares.

As many as 27 Nifty shares posted gains while 23 declined. Key stock indices closed in the green for the fifth straight day on

Monday, gaining around 2.3 per cent. Overall market capitalisation of BSE listed shares surged to Rs 391.69 lakh crore or USD 4.72 trillion, making investors richer by Rs 2.20 lakh crore. Among Sensex shares, Bajaj Finserv,

ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, Bajaj Finance, Sun Pharma, Maruti Suzuki, ITC, and Nestle were the lead gainers. On the other hand, L&T, Wipro, IndusInd Bank and TCS and Tata Motors were the lead losers. Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said, "Despite an unattractive risk reward, the broader market continued its out-performance in expectation of improvements in private capex and optimism about political stability. "Benign input costs and expectations of a pickup in rural demand will aid corporate earnings growth." Key Asian markets were mixed. Hong Kong's Hang Seng fell 0.8 per cent and Tokyo's Nikkei 225 lost 0.04 per cent while the Shanghai Composite index gained 1.4 per cent.

Govt not considering cut in import duty on rubber: Official

New Delhi, Feb 19:

The government is not considering any cut in import duty on rubber as of now as the differential between the local and international prices is maintained, a senior official said on Monday. "We have a differential already maintained for the imports that we are getting vis-a-vis the local production. "If you see the local price vis-a-vis international price...so there has been a differential maintained on account of that import duty. So I do not think there is any rethink on reducing import duties as of now," Additional Secretary in the commerce ministry Amardeep Singh Bhatia told reporters here. He was replying to a question

about the domestic user industry's demand to cut the duties and that of local producers against any duty reduction. Tyre makers are one of the major consumers of the commodity. Over 13 lakh rubber growers are there in the country. Kerala accounts for a major chunk of the production, which was 8.39 lakh tonne in 2022-23. Consumption during that fiscal was 13.5 lakh tonne. The gap is bridged by imports from countries such as Vietnam, Malaysia and other southeast asian nations. In order to regulate the import of natural rubber, the government had increased the duty on import of dry rubber to 25 per cent or Rs 30 per kg, whichever is lower from April 30, 2015.

ITDC looking for new business opportunities, strengthening regional offices: MD

New Delhi, Feb 19:

State-owned India Tourism Development Corporation Ltd is looking for new business opportunities besides strengthening its existing verticals as it seeks to carry forward the momentum of record financial performance of last fiscal, according to its Managing Director M R Syrem.

The company which offers hospitality, travel and tour, events and engineering related consultancy services, plans to strengthen its offices in Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata with an aim to develop these as regional hubs for its businesses.

"We want not to only expand but whatever we have now to take it a notch



further ahead, take it much higher and look at new business opportunities also for ITDC as a company," Syrem told PTI on the sidelines of the launch of the company's new mascot 'Adyant' and a fresh tagline. On the new business opportunities, he said, "We have won a bid for a new duty free shop at the Vizag

(Visakhapatnam) airport. We participated in the competitive bid and we have won it. It is a new thing which is coming up very soon." Sharing plans to strengthen India Tourism Development Corporation's (ITDC) regional offices to expand its business, he said at present the staffing at the company's offices in Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata is not reasonably strong with only one officer stationed in these regional offices.

"As a team we are studying how to develop the regional offices as also a regional hub so that we can take our business there as well.

There's not a business that cannot be taken in these places of the well," Syrem said.

India needs to grow at 9-10pc for 3 decades: Kant

● To be USD 35 trillion economy by 2047

Mumbai, Feb 19: India needs to grow at an annual rate of 9-10 per cent for around three decades and constant innovations to become a USD 35 trillion economy by 2047, India's G-20 Sherpa and former NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant said. "We are the fifth largest economy in the world and by 2027 we will surpass Japan and Germany to become the third largest economy in the world. And our aim is that by the time we turn 100 in 2047, India should be a USD 35 trillion economy," Kant said while addressing a session at Mumbai Tech Week (MTW) hosted by Tech

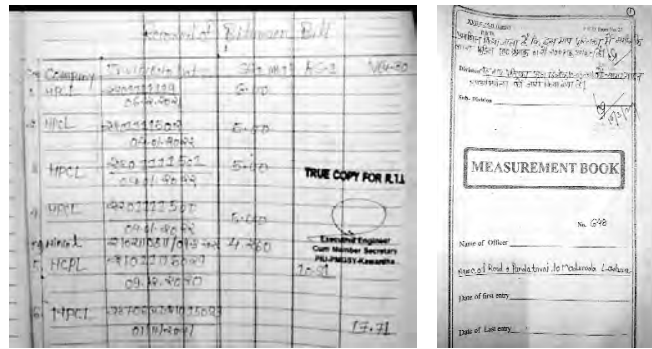


Entrepreneurs Association Mumbai (TEAM). Which means, India will become the second largest economy in the world, Kant stated. "And to be a USD 35 trillion economy means that we need to grow year after year for close to three decades by 9-10 per cent annually and this means that we need to do a lot of disruptions and constant innovation," he noted.

Alleged corruption unveiled in PMGSY road construction

Concerns raised over substandard road construction

District Panchayat Chairman highlights issues of poor infrastructure



In Kabirdham District

Central Chronicle News

Kawardha, Feb 19: The revelations of discrepancies and fraudulent practices in road construction projects under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) have brought Kabirdham district into the spotlight.

Concerns have been raised regarding Package No. CG-09-122, specifically the construction of the road from Pandatarai to Madmada Laduwa, where multiple irregularities

have been detected, casting doubt on the integrity of officers involved.

One of the glaring irregularities pertains to the timing of measurements and the release of Measurement Books (MBs). Shockingly, it has been discovered that measurements were recorded before the issuance of MBs, suggesting potential malpractice such as purchasing asphalt after bitumenization (BT). This alarming revelation has prompted complaints to higher authorities, raising questions about accountability and transparency in

the implementation of PMGSY projects.

In a concerning instance, the MB for the aforementioned road construction was issued by the Executive Engineer on 10/03/2021, whereas the evaluation was recorded on 16/01/2021, indicating even before the MB is issued the evaluation has been done. Such discrepancies point to the questionable conduct of officers and employees entrusted with overseeing project execution.

Furthermore, anomalies have been identified in the evaluation of specif-

ic construction components, such as the side shoulder of Wet Mix Macadam (WMM), where deviations from standard measurements have occurred.

For instance, in item No. 3.12 (A), the width of the WMM shoulder was reduced to 3 cm, ostensibly to provide undue financial benefits amounting to Rs 200, while adjustments were made in item number 3.12 (B) to favour the contractor.

Another troubling revelation involves the evaluation of Prime Quote pricing, documented on pages

82 to 87, dated 15/12/2021. Despite claims of SS-1 requirements totaling 22,057 tonnes, discrepancies emerge in billing records, with only one bill dated 06/12/2021, invoice No 2201111119 for 6.00 MT, while the remaining two bills dated 04/01/2022 are documented separately with invoice number 2201111502 and 2201111500 which is page No. 37 has been registered.

To hide the mistake, the evaluation work of item No. 5.7 (ii) has also been curtailed, due to which the contractor will be benefited, which has led to the demand for a high-level inquiry into the matter.

The matter is very old, I will be able to tell something only after seeing the file.

Jitendra Kumar Meshram Executive Engineer PMGSY Kabirdham

Central Chronicle News

Khairagarh, Feb 18: In a bid to address the ongoing challenges faced by residents in Khairagarh, District Panchayat Chairman Viplav Sahu has taken a proactive step by lodging a formal complaint with Collector Chandrakant Verma regarding the substandard construction of the Pandadah-Mudhipar road.

Sahu's grievance stems from the deteriorating condition of the 8-kilometer road, crucial for connectivity between Pandadah and Mudhipar villages, adjacent to the district headquarters.

This road, long-awaited by the communities spanning approximately 20 villages, was envisioned to streamline transportation, particularly for farmers and businessmen. However, despite initial optimism, the road's construction, completed in August 2023 after a lengthy wait, has left much to be desired.

Expressing dismay over the lack of quality and timely completion, Sahu points fingers at the Public Works Department and the contracted construction company for their apparent negligence and collusion.

The dilapidated condition of the road can be gauged from

the fact that it is difficult to drive even a two-wheeler comfortably. He highlights the prevalent issues of corruption, alleging a lack of oversight and accountability in the construction process.

In his complaint to Collector Verma, Sahu emphasizes the urgency of rectifying the situation, urging concrete actions against those responsible. His demands include a thorough investigation into the misconduct, stringent measures against erring officials and contractors, and expedited maintenance work to restore the road to its intended functionality.

Collector sets ambitious goals for educational excellence

Pushing for exceptional examination results in secondary education

Central Chronicle News

Mahasamund, Feb 19: District Collector Prabhath Malik convened a special review meeting at the District Office today, underscoring the imperative of achieving outstanding academic outcomes.

During the meeting, Collector Malik, alongside Mission Coordinator Kamal Narayan Chandrakar, Assistant Director Satish Nair, and Block Resource Coordinators (BRCs) from all development blocks, articulated his vision of elevating the annual examination results of both Class 10th and Class 12th to surpass the 90% and 95% benchmarks, respectively.

Emphasizing the pivotal role of motivation, he urged concerted efforts from educators, students, and parents alike. Additionally, he advocated for supplementary classes and strategic preparation aligned with examination blueprints to bolster students' performance.

Recognizing the administrative hurdles students often encounter, Malik mandated the timely issuance of caste certificates for all eligible students from Class 1st to Class 12th. This initiative aims to pre-



Prabhath Malik

empt any hindrances students might face in higher education due to documentation issues.

Furthermore, he underscored the necessity of basic amenities in educational institutions, including electricity, fans, gender-

segregated toilets, and access to clean drinking water. Any deficiencies in these provisions were to be promptly addressed, with a comprehensive list of requirements compiled for immediate action.

Collector also stressed punctuality among teaching staff, while advocating for the expansion of infrastructure wherever necessary to accommodate growing student populations. The meeting witnessed the active participation of BRC representatives from various blocks, including Mahasamund, Bagbahra, Pithora, Basna, and Saraipali, reflecting a unified commitment towards realizing the outlined objectives.

Amitabh Jain leads virtual meeting on key initiatives

Central Chronicle News

Khairagarh, Feb 19: Collector Chandrakant Verma and pertinent departmental officials engaged in a virtual meeting orchestrated by Chief Secretary Amitabh Jain, underlining progress across multiple fronts including the Mahtari Vandan Yojana, jail capacity management, and road safety protocols.

Amitabh Jain, alongside Divisional Commissioners, Collectors, CEOs of District Panchayats, and Corporation Commissioners, spearheaded discussions on advancing the Mahtari Vandan Yojana, a pivotal initiative aimed at maternal healthcare. Jain's directives underscored the imperative of



timely verification, application processing, and beneficiary list publication. With meticulous planning outlined by MBVV Secretary, online registration and subsequent procedural steps were set to be completed within specified timelines, fostering efficient program implementation.

Promoting road safety

Amidst deliberations on district jail capacities and infrastructural expansions mandated by the Supreme Court, Chief Secretary Amitabh Jain emphasized the judicious utilization of resources to meet burgeoning demands. Moreover, Jain advocated for robust road safety measures, advocating for citizen engagement initiatives and collaborative efforts with educational institutions, women's safety groups, and NGOs to promote helmet usage among two-wheeler riders. Post-meeting directives from Collector Chandrakant Verma underscored the importance of adhering to the outlined strategies, ensuring a seamless transition from discussion to action. The virtual conclave witnessed the active participation of Assistant Jail Superintendent Yogesh Kumar Banjara, SDM Renuka Ratre, MBVV Officer RK Jambulkar, E-District Manager Mithlesh Thakur, and other key stakeholders, underscoring a collective commitment towards the realization of shared objectives.

Guest lecture held at Ambedkar College's chemistry department

Central Chronicle News

Dongargaon, Feb 19: In a bid to foster academic enrichment and expand students' knowledge horizons, the Chemistry Department of Ambedkar College hosted a captivating guest lecture, under the stewardship of Principal Dr. B.N. Meshram and the dynamic leadership of Professor Chanchal Stella Kujur, Head of the Department of Chemistry.

The lecture, held in the esteemed presence of Dr. Hemlata Mohbe, a retired

principal renowned for her expertise, garnered eager anticipation from both faculty members and students alike. Dr. Mohbe assumed the role of the keynote speaker, delving into the intricacies of Mass Spectroscopy, a pivotal topic in the realm of chemistry.

With remarkable clarity and pedagogical finesse, Dr. Mohbe elucidated the principles, applications, and indispensable role of mass spectroscopy in modern scientific inquiry. Her lucid explana-

tions resonated profoundly with the audience, bridging the gap between theoretical concepts and practical utility.

The event witnessed an impressive turnout, with M.Sc. final year students of Chemistry keenly absorbing the invaluable insights shared by Dr. Mohbe. Additionally, the active participation of esteemed faculty members such as Archana Dewangan and Pawan Dewangan further enriched the discourse, fostering a collaborative learning environment.

Direct rail facility from Chh'garh to Arrah from today

Extension of South Bihar Express

Central Chronicle News

Bilaspur, Feb 19: In a move aimed at enhancing passenger convenience, Indian Railways has announced the extension of the 13288/13287 Rajendranagar-Durg-Rajendranagar, South Bihar Express service to Arrah Junction in Bihar.

Operated under the Danapur Railway Division of the East Central Railway, this extension will provide di-

rect rail connectivity between Chhattisgarh and Arrah, benefiting travellers starting February 20. Effective from the specified date, the 13287 Durg-Rajendranagar, South Bihar Express departing from Durg will now terminate at Arrah Junction instead of Rajendranagar.

Simultaneously, the 13288 Rajendranagar-Durg, South Bihar Express originating from Rajendranagar will commence its journey from Arrah to Durg, replacing its former route via Rajendranagar.

Workshop on Indigenous Sports and Yoga

Central Chronicle News

Rajim, Feb 19: A workshop aimed at promoting indigenous sports and yoga was conducted at the Regional Education Institute in Shyamala Hills, Bhopal.

The training program, aligned with the National Education Policy 2020, saw the participation of 20 teachers each from Chhattisgarh, Goa, and Madhya Pradesh. Among them was Chitrarekha Nagesh, a teacher at Government Higher Secondary School, Murmura.

The workshop, titled "Training of KRP of



Western Region on East Indian Sports and Yoga with reference to NEP 2020," took place at the Regional Institute of Education of the National Council of Educational and Research.

Led by Professor Dr. Mahendra Baruah, the program ran from

February 10th to 14th. Sixty teachers, including Chitrarekha Nagesh, participated in the training as Key Resource Persons (KRP). These KRPs are now tasked with providing training in their respective provinces and districts, assuming the role of master trainers.

Farewell given to 12th class students in Rampur



Central Chronicle News

Anwari, Feb 19: A poignant farewell ceremony marked the culmination of academic endeavours for the students of class 12th at Government Higher Secondary School, Rampur, on February 16th.

Led by the esteemed head of the institution, RK Baghel, and joined by a host of dedicated educators including RK Tandon, HK Sahu, KK Verma, BK Nishad, JK Sahu, GK Sahu,

exercise teacher DK Sahu, MK Thakur, and S Agarwal, among others, the event was a testament to the enduring bonds forged within the school community. Amidst an atmosphere filled with nostalgia and optimism, faculty members and students alike gathered to bid a heartfelt adieu to the departing class. The occasion served as a fitting tribute to the collective achievements and cherished memories shared throughout

their academic journey. Expressions of gratitude and well-wishes resounded as each student was accorded a respectful farewell, accompanied by heartfelt hopes for a prosperous and fulfilling future. The ceremony not only celebrated the academic accomplishments of the graduating class but also underscored the unwavering support and guidance provided by the dedicated faculty members.

Municipality Chairman initiates Rapta bridge construction

Central Chronicle News

Pandariya, Feb 19: Pandariya Municipality embarked on a transformative journey with the initiation of new construction work on the much-awaited Rapta bridge, situated on the borders of Ward No. 11, 12, and Ward 15. Under the leadership of the Municipality Chairman, instructions were swiftly issued to commence this pivotal project, marking a pivotal moment in the city's ongoing quest for comprehensive development.

The auspicious occasion witnessed a solemn Bhoomi Pujan ceremony, led by Chariman representative Shiv Gaikwad and esteemed citizens of the ward, invoking blessings for the successful execution of the Rapta bridge

construction. With reverence and fervor, prayers were offered to Lord Ganesh, symbolizing auspicious beginnings and divine guidance for the monumental endeavor ahead.

The Rapta bridge, nestled in the picturesque locale of Bairag Para within the Pandariya Municipal Council, had languished in a state of disrepair for over two decades, severely impeding public mobility during inclement weather conditions.

Recognizing the urgent need for its restoration, meticulous planning and deliberations culminated in a formal proposal sub-



mitted to the government during the 2022-23 fiscal year.

Subsequently, the Urban Administration Department granted approval amounting to Rs 10 lakh 68 thousand for the construction of Rapta, underscoring the state's commitment to addressing critical infrastruc-

ture needs.

Of paramount significance, the Rapta bridge serves as a vital artery connecting Ward No. 11, 12, and Ward No. 15, facilitating seamless access for students to educational institutions such as Kanya Shala and Saraswati Shishu Mandir. Moreover, its strategic lo-

cation enables convenient transit for residents to essential facilities including the tehsil office, hospital, and agricultural produce market.

The dilapidated condition of the bridge had long been a source of inconvenience and peril, particularly during the monsoon season, prompting fervent appeals from the local populace for its reconstruction.

The groundbreaking ceremony witnessed an outpouring of support and appreciation from distinguished individuals including Municipality Chairman representative Shiv Gaikwad, former Municipality Vice President Ramkumar Thakur, retired educators Thakur Chandraveer Singh and Surendra Singh Raj, alongside a host of esteemed citizens.

Jaiswal and Co show experience is not everything as India unearth talent for future

New Delhi, Feb 19 (PTI):

Inexperience of India's batting line-up was flagged as a major concern following the shocking loss in the first Test but three games into the five-match series against England, the same fearless bunch has grabbed its chances to give the hosts a comforting 2-1 advantage.

Irrespective of what happens in the remaining two games, the series will be remembered for the coming of age of 22-year-old Yashasvi Jaiswal, who has bossed the English bowlers with back to back double hundreds at the top of the order.

While growing up, nothing came easy for Jaiswal and after getting his set of opportunities across formats, it is not surprising that the southpaw has shown an insatiable hunger for runs.

The way he constructed his innings in Rajkot not only belied his age, it was also a master-class in Test match batting. He was extremely watchful at the start of the innings before deciding to hit sixes at will including three off the great James Anderson in three different directions.

From the team's perspective, another big take-away from the Rajkot Test was the performance of debutants Sarfaraz Khan and wicketkeeper-batter Dhruv Jurel.

"Ye aaj kal ke bacche



(these kids of today)," quipped skipper Rohit Sharma, sharing a picture of the trio in his social media account, a day after the record win in Rajkot.

In the absence of Virat Kohli and KL Rahul, the middle-order looked extremely vulnerable but after finally getting his big break, Sarfaraz showed he belonged at the biggest stage from ball one and

piled on the runs like he did for years in domestic cricket.

Indian batters are not known for their sweep shots but in a welcome change, that is how Sarfaraz got most of his runs in the game.

He did not play the reverse that often but his conventional sweep and slog sweep off the spinners did fetch him a lot of

runs and at the same time, put pressure on the opposition.

Jurel's nimble work behind the stumps was hard to miss and was highlighted with his spectacular run out of in form England opener Ben Duckett in the second innings here.

With the bat, his supreme confidence was summed up best when he made a split second decision to play a ramp shot off express pacer Mark Wood and the ball sailed over the ropes.

Needless to say, Rohit was a pleased man and was quick to acknowledge the efforts of the inexperienced lot. On purpose, he did not gush over Jaiswal and Co, who have a long future ahead of them.

"It's a very good feeling to win a game like that and especially with such a young team as well. (We had) two debutants (Sarfaraz Khan and Dhruv Jurel) and not a lot of Test matches amongst the playing eleven as well.

"A lot of credit to these young boys who have come in and showed a lot of character. Looks like they actually belong here and they want to stay here as well," said Rohit after the massive win on Sunday.

The opposition, however, was more effusive in praise for Jaiswal with Duckett calling him a "superstar in the making".

KKR name Dushmantha Chameera as replacement for Gus Atkinson

New Delhi, Feb 19 (PTI):

Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) on Monday named Sri Lankan Dushmantha Chameera as a replacement for England pacer Gus Atkinson for the 2024 Indian Premier League.

Chameera will join KKR at a reserve price of Rs 50 lakh, the IPL organisers said in a statement.

The Sri Lankan speedster was a part of Rajasthan Royals and Royal Challengers Bangalore in the 2018 and 2021 seasons respectively.



He represented Lucknow Super Giants in the 2022 season, where he picked up nine wickets from 12 matches. Gujarat Giants and RCB name replace-

ments for WPL Rising star Kashvee Gautam, the most expensive uncapped Indian player in Women's Premier League (WPL), has been ruled out of the second edi-

tion owing to an injury. Gujarat Giants, who had secured the services of Kashvee for Rs 2 crore, have named Mumbai's Sayali Sathgare as a replacement at a reserve price of Rs 10 lakh.

India all-rounder Kanika Ahuja, too, has been ruled out of WPL 2024 owing to an injury.

Royal Challengers Bangalore have named Shraddha Pokharkar, Maharashtra's left-arm fast bowler as her replacement. She has been signed at a reserve price of Rs 10 lakh.

Our team balance has improved: RCB skipper Mandhana

New Delhi, Feb 19 (PTI):

RCB skipper Smriti Mandhana says her team's balance has improved considerably after acquiring new players and it should help them do a better job in the second season of the Women's Premier League (WPL), starting February 23.

Royal Challengers Bangalore had endured a tough inaugural season in 2023 as it lost six of the eight matches and finished fourth in five-team competition. The second season will be played in New Delhi and Bengaluru.

RCB had spent close to 2.5 crore to acquire services of many impact players like Ekta Bisht (left-arm spinner), Kate Cross (pacer), Georgia Wareham (leg-spinner), Sabbineni



Meghana (all-rounder), Simran Bahadur (medium-pacer), Sophie Molineux (left-arm spinner) and home-grown talent Shubha Sathesh (all-rounder).

"I would definitely want it to be better than the first season. From RCB's point of view, quite a few players were released and we

brought in new players. So, the balance has improved for sure, and we are hoping to live up to our potential," Mandhana told JioCinema.

The team had released seven players: Komal Zanzad, Poonam Khemnar, Preeti Bose, Sahana Pawar, Dane van Niekerk, Erin Burns, and Megan Schutt.

"The stylish batter said playing the domestic season has not only prepared her well for the upcoming WPL, it also she helped her identify a few good players.

"Playing in the domestic season helped me practice well and we saw quite a few girls against whom we've not played previously. I was able to recommend a few names to my franchise after seeing

these girls."

RCB had released a few

members and bought as

many as six new players

during the WPL auction

last December.

"Last year, when we

joined the team two days

before the tournament, we

didn't know about 90% of

the players. We didn't

know what they did and

what they didn't. This

year, it was important to

know their strengths and

weaknesses so that we can

play better. The WPL is a

short tournament and it's

difficult to change things

when it's on." Asked if she

considers RCB as title contenders,

the southpaw said: "We don't want to

think too far ahead. We

definitely want to do better

than last year and are

motivated to do it. The people

at our franchise are

World TT Championships

Indian women blank Uzbekistan 3-0, men lose to South Korea

Busan, Feb 19 (PTI):

Indian women's team eased past Uzbekistan while the men endured successive defeats with the loss to South Korea in the World Table Tennis Team Championships here on Monday.

Ayhika Mukherjee and Sreeja Akula were rested from the rubber, providing an opportunity to Archana Kamath and Diya Chitale. They both won their respective singles while senior teammate Manika Batra also had it easy against her opponent to make it a 3-0 win for India. Archana defeated Rimma Gufranov 11-7, 11-3, 11-6, while Manika stormed past Markhabo Magdieva 11-7, 11-4, 11-1. Diya on the other hand faced tough resistance before prevailing over Rozalina Khadjieva 11-6, 10-12, 11-4, 11-6. Having started off



their campaign with a 2-3 loss to China, Indian women's team now have secured two wins on the trot to occupy second spot in the Group 1 standings.

They will next face Spain in their concluding Group 1 league fixture on Tuesday. They earlier defeated Hungary 3-2.

The men's team of veteran Sharath Kamal, reigning national champion Harmeeet Desai and G Sathiyam lost their respective singles to go

down meekly in its third group stage tie against third seeds Korea.

Harmeeet, who is India's top-ranked player at 67, went down to world number 14 Jang Woojin 4-11, 10-12, 8-11. Sathiyam was then brushed aside by world number 16 Lim Jonghoon 5-11, 7-11, 7-11.

Sharath managed to put up a fight, taking the second game but couldn't capitalise on the momentum losing 9-11, 11-8, 6-11, 5-11 to Lee San Su.

New Delhi, Feb 19 (PTI):

Sarfaraz Khan's dominating performance against England's spinners in just his debut Test was no fluke. It was the culmination of over 15 years of hard work that involved playing 500 deliveries everyday under the watchful eyes of his zealous father Naushad Khan.

With two confident half centuries in his debut Test in Rajkot, Sarfaraz has shown that he is here to stay in the Indian team. The 26-year-old got his Test cap after years of toiling in the domestic circuit and also honing his skills at his father's 'Macho Cricket Club'.

The hard work and systematic planning of the past few years, especially during the two COVID-19 lockdowns, paid off against the likes of Tom Hartley, Joe Root and Rehan Ahmed in Rajkot. "It has taken playing 500



deliveries per day from off, leg and left-arm spinners across Oval, Cross and Azad Maidans in Mumbai," said a coach

who has seen the Mumbai's growth from close quarters.

"...during (COVID) lockdown, he undertook a car

Cannot be aggressive all the time, need to soak in pressure: Nasser Hussain

London, Feb 19 (PTI):

Former England captain Nasser Hussain and Michael Vaughan have criticised the team's 'Bazball' approach in the ongoing Test series against India, saying the visitors need to apply themselves based on match situation instead of being guided by a one-dimensional philosophy of aggression. India registered their biggest-ever Test win, annihilating England by 434 run in the third Test in Rajkot on Sunday. Chasing 557 to win, the tourists were bundled out for 122. The home side leads 2-1 in the five-match series with games left in Ranchi and Dharamsala. "This was the worst defeat under (Ben) Stokes and Brendon McCullum, and one that exposed their method. They cannot take the aggressive at every opportunity, they have to pick their moments," Vaughan wrote in his column for



"Telegraph.co.uk". Hussain echoed the sentiment. "Bazball is about being attacking but it is also about soaking up pressure," Hussain said on 'Sky Sports'.

In contrast, India's Yashasvi Jaiswal, who has two double hundreds in the series so far, Shubman Gill (91) and debutant Sarfaraz Khan played mature knocks in Rajkot, taking time to settle in before going for their strokes.

"They need to look at the way Jaiswal and Shubman Gill played on day three. They soaked up the pressure for 30 or 40 balls, and then they started to get boundaries.

Bumrah likely to be rested, fit-again Rahul set to be back for Ranchi Test

Rajkot, Feb 19 (PTI):

Lead India pacer Jasprit Bumrah is likely to be rested, while batter K L Rahul is expected to come back after recovering from a quadriceps injury, in the fourth Test against England beginning February 23 in Ranchi.

Bumrah is the leading wicket-taker in the five-match series with 17 scalps and singlehandedly bowled India to victory in the second Test. The hosts lead 2-1 in the five-match rubber.

"The team will travel to Ranchi tomorrow and Bumrah is likely to be given rest," said a BCCI source while also informing that Rahul is nearing full fitness and should be a part of the squad in Ranchi.

The decision to rest Bumrah doesn't come as a surprise considering he bowled 80.5 overs in the first three Tests.

As part of workload management, India had also rested Mohammed



Siraj from the second Test in Visakhapatnam before he returned to

play a part in India's record 434 run win over the visitors in Rajkot on Sunday.

India are well-placed to seal the series in Ranchi but if they are not able to, the home team will desperately need the services of Bumrah for the fifth and final Test in Dharamsala beginning March 7.

Rahul, who missed the second and third Test after complaining of pain in his right quadriceps, had reached 90 percent fitness last week, according to an insider. "He is reaching his match fitness and should be available for Ranchi Test," the source added.

Rahul was among India's best batters in the opening Test in Hyderabad before going down with the same injury that he suffered during the IPL last year.

