



CM apprises PM of steps taken to fulfil poll promises

Centre releases Rs 2485.79 cr to Chhattisgarh

New Delhi, Dec 23:

Newly elected Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday and apprised him of the steps being taken by his government to fulfil the party's poll promises, official sources said.

Deputy chief ministers Arun Sao and Vijay Sharma accompanied Sai in the meeting with Modi at



PM Modi with CM Vishnu Deo Sai and his deputies Arun Sao and Vijay Sharma during a meeting, in New Delhi, Saturday.

his residence. During the meeting, the chief minister apprised Modi of the steps being taken by the

Chhattisgarh government to fulfil the promises made by him during the assembly elections. They also dis-

cussed the formation of the state cabinet, the sources said. Sharing pictures of the meeting, Sai said in a post on X that he had a detailed discussion with the prime minister regarding various public welfare schemes related to development, progress and public interest of Chhattisgarh and received his guidance.

"Under the able guidance of the prime minister, the double-engine government of the BJP will definitely establish new records of service, good governance, public welfare and development in the state," the chief minister added in his post.

Chidambaram to head Cong's Manifesto Committee

For 2024 LS polls

New Delhi, Dec 23 (PTI):

The Congress constituted its Manifesto Committee for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls on Friday and appointed former Union minister P Chidambaram as its chairman. Former Chhattisgarh deputy chief minister T S Singh Deo has been made the convenor of the important panel. The 16-member panel includes Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. Former Union ministers Anand Sharma, Jairam Ramesh and Shashi Tharoor are also part of the committee. Senior Congress leader and former Manipur deputy chief minister Gaikhangam and the party's deputy leader in the Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi are also in the committee, along with All India Professionals Congress chief Praveen Chakravarty.

Singh Deo made convenor....

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Search underway for terrorists; govt announces compensation

Jobs to kin of 3 civilians killed

Jammu, Dec 23 (PTI):

The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Saturday announced compensation and jobs to the kin of the three civilians who were found dead in Poonch district as a massive search operation was underway to track down terrorists behind the recent ambush on two Army vehicles that left five soldiers dead. The three men, aged between

POONCH AMBUSH

Search underway for terrorists; govt announces compensation

Jobs to kin of 3 civilians killed

Jammu, Dec 23 (PTI):

One terrorist was killed as army troops guarding the International Border (IB) scuttled an infiltration attempt here early Saturday, officials said. The operation happened when a group of four heavily-armed terrorists was noticed sneaking into this side from across the IB in the Khour sector of Akhnoor in the early hours, the officials said.

27 and 42, were found dead under "mysterious circumstances" on Friday.

Teenager stabs classmate to death

Hazaribag, Dec 23 (PTI):

A 14-year-old boy celebrating his birthday has been stabbed to death by his classmate in Jharkhand's Hazaribag district, police said on Saturday. The incident took place in Hazaribag Lake area on Friday evening, Lohsinghna Police Station officer-in-charge Bipin Kumar Yadav said, adding the cause of the incident is yet to be ascertained. The

boy received grievous knife injuries on his abdomen and was taken to Sheikh Bikhari Medical College and Hospital, from where he was referred to RIMS Ranchi for better treatment but he succumbed to his injuries on the way. The deceased's father on Saturday lodged an FIR against the prime accused and four other boys accusing them of killing his son, following which the main accused was arrested, Yadav added.

Merchant vessel with 21 Indians hit by drone

In Arabian Sea

New Delhi, Dec 23 (PTI):

A suspected drone attack on a merchant vessel with 21 Indian crew in the Arabian Sea off India's west coast caused an explosion on Saturday but there was no report of any casualties in the incident, according to military sources and a maritime agency. A P-8I maritime patrol aircraft, deployed by the Indian Navy after the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, or UKMTO, reported the incident, ascertained the safety of the vessel and its crew, Indian military sources said. An attack by Uncrewed Aerial System (UAS) on a vessel 200 nautical miles South West of Veraval, India, caused "an explosion and fire", the UKMTO said on its website. Indian Navy officials said a maritime patrol aircraft sent to the area flew overhead the merchant vessel and established contact with it.

BJP MEET

Party eyes big boost in vote share

To score 'overwhelming' win in 2024

New Delhi, Dec 23 (PTI):

The BJP has set its sights on an "overwhelming" win in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi asking key organisational leaders to work towards boosting the party's vote share by 10 per cent, sources said.

Addressing the BJP's national office-bearers and state presidents on the concluding day of the two-day brainstorming meet on Saturday, Home Minister Amit Shah said that the BJP's performance should leave the opposition "stunned", the sources said.

With the opposition INDIA bloc planning to put up a one-on-one fight against the BJP, Modi called for raising the BJP's



Karti Chidambaram appears before ED

In money laundering case

New Delhi, Dec 23 (PTI):

Congress MP Karti Chidambaram on Saturday appeared before the Enforcement Directorate for his questioning in a money laundering case linked to the issuance of visa to some Chinese nationals in 2011, official sources said. The ED case stems from a CBI complaint. The agency recorded the statement of the 52-year-old MP from Sivaganga Lok Sabha seat in Tamil Nadu, under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). Karti had earlier said the ED probe was a "fishing and roving" enquiry and that he has earlier submitted documents to the agency. He sought more time to collect documents as he skipped appearance on December 12 and December 16.

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Rakshak Trophy Cricket tournament inaugurated

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Dec 23: Rakshak Trophy Cricket Tournament is being organized by Frontier Headquarters, Border Security Force (Special Operations), Chhattisgarh from December 23rd to 25th 2023 in Sector-01 Cricket Ground. This tournament is being organised by the officers, subordinate officers and jawans of Frontier Headquarters under the guidance of Satish S Khandare, IPS, Inspector General.

The tournament was inaugurated on Saturday by former international volleyball player, SR Jakhar (DGM), BSP. On this occasion, Ajay Agarwal,



Deputy Inspector General, BS Pange, Deputy Inspector General / Principal Staff Officer; Ratan Lal Bagadia, Deputy Inspector General (Communication); ND Mow, Commandant (Administration) of Frontier Headquarters

Border Security Force (Special Operations) Chhattisgarh, were present along with other officers. This tournament is being organized under the supervision of Manisha Kumar Sinha, Assistant C o m m a n d a n t (Administration).

The first match of the tournament was played between the cricket teams of Bank of Baroda and Durg Police, in which the cricket team of Durg Police was victorious. The final match of Rakshak Trophy will be played on December 25 at 02:00 pm.

The tournament is witnessing participation of enthusiastic players from 08 teams and audiences from all sections of the society. This initiative of BSF underlines the commitment of BSF to engage with the public in a positive and inclusive manner. Through this tournament, the Border Security Force aims to strengthen trust, understanding and cooperation with the citizens.

1137 people file applications at VBSY Camp

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Dec 23: More than 6000 people reached the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra (VBSY) camps organized in Kosa Nagar and Sanjay Nagar on Saturday. 1137 people filled the forms of various schemes at the camps.

The camp of Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra was organized near Radhakrishna Mandir in Kosa Nagar and Sanjay Nagar Pond Ground. BJP District President Brijesh Bijpuriya, MIC member Sandeep Nirankari, Chandrashekhar Gavai, C o r p o r a t o r Chandeshwari Bandhe, Ravi Shankar Kurre, Collector Pushpendra Meena and Commissioner Rohit Vyas formally inaugurated the camp by lighting lamps. 1137 people filled applications of various government schemes



like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Swanidhi Yojana, Ration Card, Ujjwala Yojana, Vishwakarma Yojana, Women and Child Development, District Health Department, Aadhar Card, Pension Scheme, Mudra Loan, Ayushman Card etc. In the camp, beneficiaries of various schemes of the government, Lakshmi

Mishra, Sadhna Tamrakar, Abdullah Ahmed, M Anita, K Kameshwari, Balkrishna Pandey, Rajkumar Prasad, Vishnu Prasad, Neelmani Gaikwad, Kewant Lal, Dasmal Sahu expressed their views. Citizens, public representatives, officers and employees took pledge to make India a developed nation.

Boys and girls of the government school staged a Chhattisgarhi cultural programme. On December 24, the camp will be organized in Contactor Colony Supela and Mangal Bazar Kohka. Former Corporator Lalita Pillai, Santosh Srirange and Shankar Lal Dewangan have been invited in the programme.

SPARSH-4: Fashion show and Bollywood night today

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Dec 23: To make the year 2023 memorable, a grand fashion show and Bollywood night "SPARSH-4" is being organised in Durg by the renowned organization of Chhattisgarh, Megh Ganga Group. Famous Bollywood actor Sharman Joshi will attend this program. The grandeur of the programme has become a topic of discussion in twin-city Bhilai-Durg. People are making efforts to get the entry passes of this program.

This event has been organized by Avish Educom, Life Care, Mahavir Jewelers and Jaydeep Gas Agency Bhilai run by Megh Ganga Group. Megh Ganga Group Chairman Manish Parakh said that the fashion show and Bollywood night SPARSH-4 is being or-

ganized in Durg on December 24. This event will be at par with the grand events organised in metro cities.

The event will be held at Prithvi Palace. Bollywood actor Sharman Joshi will be the show-stopper at the event. All preparations have been made to make it a grand programme. Durg MLA Gajendra Yadav, Bhilai Nagar MLA Devendra Yadav, Vaishalinagar MLA Rikesh Sen, Durg Mayor Dheeraj Bakliwal and CRM-HPLC Pankaj Prakash Ratnaparkhi will attend the programme as guests.

CMO Avish Parakh said that preparations for the fashion show and Bollywood night SPARSH-4 are being done by the students and staff for the last one month. He also informed that their institution Life Care has state-of-the-art facilities for modern health re-



lated tests, which include Advance MRI-3 Tesla Scanner, 128 Slices Cardiac CT Scanner, 4D Sonography, CBCT (Dental CT Scan) and Advanced Pathology Services. All health facilities are available to the patients under one roof. Avish Educom CEO Nilesh Parakh said that Avish Educom is successfully running in Durg, Raipur and

Bhubaneswar. The students here are creating records using new technology. Students are being trained and linked to employment in the industry through new technology. Avish Educom is famous for its art and technology. The objective of the organization is to connect people with employment along with skill development. The

courses have been created keeping in mind the awareness of modern India and giving importance to designing as per the interest of the youth.

Group director Nitish Parakh said that their organization has 25 years of experience. Youth trained by the organization are joining employment across the country including Chhattisgarh. This is a big achievement for the organization. Chhattisgarh's Institute of Academic and Industrial Travel 35000 Sq.ft, Wi-Fi Campus, Industry Specific Courses, Sports Events, Smart Lab and AC Class Rooms, IT Certified Trainers, World Class CourseWare, Free Career and Home Counselling, Personality Development Sessions, etc. The organization is training the youth with 70% practical and 30% theory learning.

Rikesh announces Rs 10 lakh for Satsang Samiti



Bhilai, Dec 23: Vaishali Nagar MLA Rikesh Sen attended the three-day spiritual satsang being organ-

ized in Ram Nagar Ward-26. The satsang has been organized by the Nav Uday Satsang Committee, Amen Mata Mahila Mandal. After attending the

Satsang, MLA Rikesh Sen announced Rs 10 lakh from the MLA fund for the construction of access road and building of the Samiti.

Gayatri Mahayagya begins with Kalash Yatra

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Dec 23: Under the auspices of All World Gayatri Pariwar, Shantikunj Haridwar, "5 Kundiya Gayatri Mahayagya and Shiv Mahapurana Katha" is being organized by the villagers and Gayatri Pragyapeeth Samiti in Dhanora. The religious event was inaugurated on Saturday at Bazar Chowk, Dhanora.

The religious rituals like Punsavan, Namkaran, Annaprasan, Mundan, Vidyarambh, Diksha, Yajnopavit, marriage etc will be organized. The programme began with a grand Kalash Yatra.

A large number of women and girls partici-



ated in the Mangal Kalash Yatra which began at 15:00 hrs on Saturday. Women carrying Kalash on their heads marched across the village, fetched water

from the pond and returned back to the Yajna venue. Children dressed as Lord Shiva and Lord Ram - Lakshman were the centre of attraction.

Singing devotional songs, the women participated in the Kalash Yatra. The program concluded in the evening after the Dev Sthapana and Kalash Sthapana.

Female drug peddler nabbed with psychotropic drugs

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Dec 23: Police arrested a female drug peddler and recovered a huge cache of psychotropic drugs from her possession. A total of 4800 pieces of Alprazolam Rlam 0.5 tablets worth Rs 45,000 were seized from her.

Under the direction of SSP Ramgopal Garg and supervision of ASP (City) Abhishek Jha and CSP Mani Shankar Chandra, a team of Durg Police led by Trainee DSP Aanksha Pandey and Inspector Vijay Yadav (SHO, Mohan Nagar) is taking action against the people involved in illegal activities of drug peddling and smuggling. In this se-

quel, they received a tip off regarding a woman, Aaksha Khandelwal, a resident of Shankar Nagar Durg. She was peddling drugs in the vacant plot of Rajendra Sahu in Shankar Nagar Durg. After informing the senior officers about the information, a police team was formed and sent to the spot. The team found a woman of the same appearance as described by the informer, in the vacant plot of Rajendra Sahu in Shankar Nagar Durg. On spotting the cops, she tried to escape but the cops managed to take her in custody. She was identified as Akanksha Khandelwal (31)



daughter of Gopal Khandelwal, a resident of Shankar Nagar, Durg. She was searched in front of the witnesses. A total of 4,800 pieces of Alprazolam Rlam 0.5 tablets worth around Rs 45,000 were found in 08 boxes kept inside a white colored bag of the accused.

The drugs were confiscated in front of witnesses. The accused was found to have committed a crime under Section 8, 22 (c) 27 (a) of the Narcotics Act and was duly arrested. The arrested accused was sent to jail on judicial remand.

Inspector Vijay Yadav (SHO, Mohan Nagar), Sub Inspector Preeti Jaiswal, Sub Inspector Laxman Singh Thakur, Head Constable Ajay Vishwakarma, Javed Khan, Female Head Constable Monica Gupta, Constable Sachin Singh, Abhishek Yadav, Nasir Baksh, Gaur Singh, Vedram Bande and Kamlesh Yadav played a vital role in arresting the accused.

Power supply to be affected in some areas of Township

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Dec 23: The Town Electrical Engineering Dept. (TEED) under SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant's Town Services Department chalks out an annual preventive maintenance plan each year to minimize breakdowns and enhance the reliability of the system to ensure uninterrupted power supply in the township.

As per the Annual Maintenance Plan for 2023-24, there will be a planned shutdown for preventive maintenance of the HT system during the period from December 2023 to March 2024, to carry out several maintenance jobs and take corrective action.

As per the maintenance schedule, power supply will be affected in the fol-

lowing areas of the township every day from 10:00 hrs to 01:30 hrs from December 26th to 30th, 2023.

The power supply shall be affected in Sector-08, and some parts of Sector-07 on December 26, and at Sector-05 and Indra Place (Civic Centre) on December 27 respectively. On December 28, 2023, the power supply shall be affected in Sector-01 and some parts of Sectors-06&02.

The power supply shall be affected in 32 Bungalows and some parts of Sector-07 on December 29, while in some parts of Sector-06, on December 30, 2023, from 10:00 hrs to 01:30 hrs.

Electrical Engineering Dept has appealed to residents to cooperate. All the residents are requested to take note of the same.

Mar Baselios Vidhya Bhawan celebrates Annual Day 'Vibrancy 2023'

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Dec 23: Mar Baselios Vidhya Bhawan, Kailash Nagar, celebrated its annual function Vibrancy with zeal on December 21 and 22, 2023. The first day was marked as the annual function of our Senior Wing and the Chief Guest for this day was a distinguished figure Prof Dr GA Ghanshyam, Directorate of Higher Education, Chhattisgarh, Raipur. The Guest of Honour was Rikesh Sen, MLA Vaishali Nagar. The program started by colourful Goan dance by class VI students, followed by welcome song and the traditional lamp lighting by Chief Guest and other dignitaries.

Welcoming of the guest was done by School Head Girl, Tulsi Sadhwani. The Chief Guest shared his experience on NEP 2020 and moral values affected by artificial intelligence. Principal Fr Jacob Thomas presented annual



report of the school. The Chief Guest was felicitated by Vice President, Fr Thomas Ramban. The Chief Guest and Guest of Honour handed out the certificates and prizes to the winners and toppers in various categories. Special prize "Mar Theodosius Memorial Award" was presented to Ganga Surbhi Jaiswal of Class XII. She stood 2nd in MGM Group of Institutions in CBSE Examination 2023. Sanskar Chauhan of

Class XII was awarded for participating in International Powerlifting held in Nepal. The most important part of the event was the science exhibition in which many working models were displayed by the students which was guided by Deepa Justin, Uma Maheshwari, Binu Varghese and Seema Mishra. The show stopper of the program was the Nukkad Natak based on "Perspective of Education" that was a

thought provoking program for all the audience. The program was conducted by Nancy Victor and Vote of Thanks was proposed by Achsa Joshi of Class XII.

On December 22, 2023, the Chief Guest was Dr Prashant Shrivastava, Dean, Student's Welfare, Hemchand Yadav University, Durg for Annual Day celebration of Junior Wing. Guest of Honour was Neha Sahu, Ward Councillor, Nagar Nigam, Bhilai. The Chief

Guest was felicitated by the Treasurer, Fr Aju K Varghese and Principal Fr Jacob Thomas. The program began with a welcome song followed by the traditional lamp lighting by the Chief Guest and other dignitaries. Fr Jibin Johnson, Secretary of MBVB, welcomed all the dignitaries and the audience. The Prizes were given by Fr Dr Joshi Varghese and Fr Dr PS Varghese. The program that mesmerized the audience was presented by

Class II students on Girl Child Education. And other attractive cultural programs captivated the audience. The theme of this year was based on Education, Morality and Culture and students excelled in bringing out their best. All the parents, teachers and supporting staff attended the program. The event was conducted by Deepa Justin and Vote of Thanks was proposed by Harshita Soni of Class XII. The celebration concluded with National Anthem.

Chhattisgarh Govt gears up for Good Governance Day Celebrations on Vajpayee's birth anniversary

Week-long cleanliness campaign to be initiated in all urban areas on 25th Dec

Newly elected public representatives and general public to pledge for good governance

Raipur, Dec 23: In commemoration of the birth anniversary of the Former Prime Minister Bharat Ratna Late Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Chhattisgarh will observe 'Good Governance Day' on December 25. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai has directed the distribution of the pending paddy

bonus amounting to Rs 3716 crore 38 lakh 96 thousand, for the Kharif marketing years 2014-15 and 2015-16 to the state's farmers on this day.

As part of efforts to encourage paddy-producing farmers, the state government has allocated funds for the 'Dhaan Utpadan Protsahan Yojna' (Paddy Production Incentive Scheme) in its supplementary budget. The Good Governance Day programme will commence at 10 am at Atal Chowk in urban bodies, with newly elected public representatives and the general public taking a pledge to 'establish good governance.' The event will also include garlanding the portrait of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and the tradi-

tional lighting of the lamp.

In preparation for the celebration, the state government has instructed the cleaning and necessary repairs of the existing 'Atal Stambh' in urban bodies by December 25. Besides, a week-long cleanliness campaign in urban areas will kick off on December 25. On Good Governance Day, 'Atal Sandhya' will be organized in all urban bodies across the state. The event will feature a Kavi Sammelan, a poetry reading dedicated to Atal ji, 'Atal Vichar Sangoshthi', an essay competition, and an exhibition focusing on the life, personality, and work of the late Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Kavi Sammelan on 'Veer Bal Diwas' on 26th Dec



Raipur, Dec 23: A grand 'Kavi Sammelan' is going to be organized with the title "Nava Suruj" by the Culture Department of Chhattisgarh Government, 'Samajik Chetna Manch' and 'Shivasha Foundation' on Tuesday, 26th December, on "Veer Bal Diwas" at Balbir Singh Juneja Indoor Stadium, Budhapara, Raipur. Last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced to celebrate December 26 as 'Veer Bal Diwas' on the birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the 10th Guru of the Sikhs and the founder of the Khalsa Panth.

Among the four sons of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the two elder sons had bravely sacrificed their lives in the battle of Chamkaur, while the two younger sons were imprisoned alive by

Mughal Subedar Wazir Khan for not accepting Islam. Kavi Sammelan (poet's conference) is being organized in honor of these brave children who, even in their childhood, gave more importance to religion, truth and their Guru's teachings than their lives. Noted poet Dr Kumar Vishwas, Padmashree Dr Surendra Dubey and other famous poets of the country will pay tribute to martyrdom of two elder sons of Guru Gobind Singh ji through their poems. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai will be present on the occasion as chief guest. The function will be presided over by Deputy Chief Ministers Arun Sai and Vijay Sharma. Om Mathur and Chhattisgarh Assembly Speaker Dr Raman Singh will be present as special guests.

Over 2600 eligible citizens directly benefited from Central Govt schemes

● Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra Camp in Ward 16 of Zone-1



Raipur, Dec 23: A one-day camp under the Central Government's philanthropic Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra campaign was held in Veer Shivaji Ward No. 16 of Raipur Municipal Corporation's Zone-1 falling under Raipur West Assembly Constituency. Information about various public welfare schemes including PM Swanidhi, PM Vishwakarma, Ayushman Card, PM Ujjwala, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana of the Central Government was provided to the people at the camp.

Raipur West MLA Rajesh Moonat, Ward Number 18 Corporator Mrs. Godavari Gajju Sahu, Superintending Engineer of Municipal Corporation Rajesh Sharma, Executive Engineer Rajesh Rathore, Zone 1 Commissioner NR Chandrakar, Executive Engineer Gajaram Kanwar along with officials of various government depart-

ments including Municipal Corporation, Raipur District Administration, dignitaries, social workers, women and youth were present at the camp. More than 2600 eligible citizens directly benefited from various public welfare schemes of the Central Government in the camp organized in Ward 16 in the first shift of the day today. More than 5000 citizens came to the camp and got information about the public welfare schemes of the Central Government.

Moonat directly observed the arrangements in the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra Camp of Veer Shivaji Ward by visiting all the stalls and told to concerned government officials that no eligible citizen should be deprived of

getting the full desired benefits of any public welfare scheme of the Central Government. A public health awareness camp was organized in the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan Camp of Veer Shivaji Ward No. 16, in which doctors examined the health of more than 850 citizens and gave them medical advice along with medicines. More than 1300 citizens took a pledge to make India a developed nation. As many as 460 eligible citizens got benefit of PM Ujjwala Yojana and 870 eligible citizens got benefit of PM Vishwakarma Yojana. More than 70 citizens narrated story of success in their own words. More than 60 citizens participated in the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra Quiz Competition.

Over 6,216 Ayushman cards issued to beneficiaries during the Gram Panchayat level camp



● Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra

Raipur, Dec 23: 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra' has been launched with the objective of disseminating information about the Government of India's public welfare schemes to the masses. As part of this initiative, camps are being organized in various gram panchayats of Balod district, where information about different

schemes is being provided to the people. The focus is on educating the public about schemes including Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, Ayushman Card, Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, KCC, and others to ensure maximum beneficiaries avail themselves of the benefits.

Since December 16, 2023, Ayushman cards

have been distributed to a total of 6216 beneficiaries in the camp. Additionally, 96 beneficiaries have received new gas connections under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana. Moreover, 143 beneficiaries were enrolled under Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, and 139 beneficiaries were registered under Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana. In line with the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, installment amounts were disbursed to a total of five beneficiaries. Furthermore, the camp processed applications from 16 farmers for sanctioning KCC loans.

Chief Justice Sinha conducts surprise inspection of all sections of High Court, Judicial Academy, ADR Building

Raipur, Dec 23: Chhattisgarh High Court Chief Justice Ramesh Sinha conducted a surprise inspection of all the sections of the High Court, Chhattisgarh State Judicial Academy and ADR Building. He admired the clean and conducive environment of the Judicial Academy and expressed satisfaction over the cleanliness of the ADR building. Chief Justice Sinha instructed all the section heads to pay more attention to the cleanliness of their section. The Chief Justice also directed the Additional Registrar (Admn) and officials of the PWD Department present to pay special attention to cleanliness and maintenance and directed the Registrar

General to remove the deficiencies found in various branches. He directed all the officers and employees of various sections of the registry to be present on time, work in a timely manner and complete the tasks with discipline.

On December 22, Chief Justice Sinha had conducted surprise inspection of the district courts of Raipur and four remote districts of Chhattisgarh, Kondagaon, Keshkal, Kanker and Balod. In his short tenure of just 8 months, the Chief Justice inspected all the district courts of Chhattisgarh. All the judicial officers of the Registry and Academy including Registrar General Arvind Kumar Verma are present.

Sachin Pilot made general secretary in-charge of Chh'garh



Raipur, Dec 23: The Congress on Saturday appointed Sachin Pilot the general secretary in-charge of Chhattisgarh replacing Kumari Selja. The appointments come two days after a meeting of the Congress Working Committee (CWC), party's highest decision-making body, which was chaired by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and attended by senior leaders, including Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi. Pilot, a former deputy chief minister of Rajasthan, replaces Kumari Selja, who has now been given the charge as general secretary in-charge of Uttarakhand, the statement said.

BBPS's annual sports gala unwraps a tapestry of young triumphs



Sipat, Dec 23: The Annual Sports Day at Bal Bharati Public School (BBPS) Sipat unfolded as a resounding success for the pre-primary students on 20th December, Wednesday. The distinguished gathering included Ramanath Pujari - CGM - NTPC Sipat, as the Chief Guest and Archana Pujari - President - Sangwari Mahila Samiti, as the Guest of Honour. Notable attendees also featured Arun

Varshney, General Manager - Operations and Maintenance, Jayprakash Satyakam, Deputy General Manager - Human Resources, Praveen Ranjan Bharti, Manager - Human Resources and members of the Parent-Teacher Association.

The event commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the torch by the chief guest and a symbolic release of pigeons marked the official inauguration.

Thereafter, students who participated in regional and national-level sports competitions paraded with torches, creating a vibrant display of sportsmanship. The little igniting spirits from the pre-primary section conveyed messages of healthy living, happiness, unity in diversity and strength through a lively march past. Following this, separate competitions were organized for boys and girls. Outstanding performers securing the first, second and third positions were honoured with certificates and medals. Also a special event, needle and thread race was organized for parents, fostering spirited participation and celebrating victories. During his welcoming address, Shalabh Nigam, the school's principal, highlighted the significance of sports and exercise for a promising future.

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Please file your Annual Return in FORM GSTR-9* and FORM GSTR-9C# for F.Y. 2022-2023

Before Due Date

***Taxpayers required to file FORM GSTR-9**
All GST taxpayers having Aggregate Annual Turnover above ₹ 2 Crore (during F.Y. 2022-2023) except the following:

- ✓ Input Service Distributor
- ✓ TDS Deductor
- ✓ TCS Collector
- ✓ Casual Taxable Person
- ✓ Non-Resident Taxable Person

#Taxpayers required to file FORM GSTR-9C
Taxpayers whose Aggregate Annual Turnover is above ₹ 5 Crore (during F.Y. 2022-2023) are required to file a self-certified reconciliation statement in FORM GSTR-9C along with Annual Return in FORM GSTR-9

Late Filing of FORM GSTR-9 and FORM GSTR-9C will attract late fee

Please Scan for details on GST Annual Returns

Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs

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Give top priority to PMAY work: CM

● **Vishnu Deo Sai's video conference with Collectors**



Secretary Amitabh Jain also participated in the video conferencing.

Chief Minister Sai said that as soon as the new government is formed in the state, a big decision has been taken to provide Prime Minister House to 18 lakh people and to give two years' outstanding bonus amount to 12 lakh farmers. He instructed the collectors to immediately prepare a list of all the people eligible for housing. Sai also gave necessary instructions regarding the preparations for Good Governance Day to be celebrated in the state on December 25th.

The Chief Minister also reviewed the current situation of Corona in the state with senior officials of the Health Department and all the collectors. In view of the increasing cases of Corona in the country, he instructed to strictly follow the guidelines issued by the Government of India for its prevention and precaution.

He asked to test as many samples of people with possible symptoms of Corona as possible every day. He also asked to conduct mock-drills in hospitals to check the arrangements required for the treatment of Corona.

Deputy Chief Minister Arun Sao told all the collectors in video conferencing to ensure that the instructions of the Chief Minister are followed. The law and order situation in the state should be good. The people of the state should not face any kind of problem. Every scheme of the government should reach the people in a good way. He said that all officers should use their abilities and capabilities in the interest of the public. Pay special attention to the work that has been stalled since the code of conduct came into effect for the assembly elections. I hope that you will work with new energy and enthusiasm keeping in mind the needs of the people.

Deputy Chief Minister

Vijay Sharma said in the VC that many major decisions have been taken in the state in the first eight days of government formation. The government and administration have to work together to deliver the benefits of these decisions to the people in a better way. He said that after Good Governance Day on December 25th, Veer Bal Diwas is to be celebrated on December 26th. The spirit of bravery will be awakened in children through Veer Bal Diwas. He instructed the collectors to prepare for it. Additional Chief Secretary of Health Department, Renu Pillay, Secretary Siddharth Komal Pardeshi, Secretary to the Chief Minister P. Dayanand, Commissioner of Health Department Dr. C.R. Prasanna, Special Secretary of Urban Administration and Development Department, Mr. Ayyaz Fakir Tamboli, Director of Health Services, Mr. Jaiprakash Maurya, Director of National Health Mission, Mr. Bhoskar Vilas Sandipan, Managing Director of CGMSC, Mr. Chhadrakant Verma and Nodal Officer of IDSP, Dr. Dharmendra Gahwai were present in video conferencing.

COURTESY VISIT



The Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai paid courtesy visit to the Vice President of India Jagdeep Dhankhar at V-P's official residence in New Delhi on Saturday. The Dy. CMs Arun Sao and Vijay Sharma also accompanied him.

CM directs financial aid of Rs 4 lakh each

● **For families of deceased in passenger bus accident**

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Dec 23: Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai

has directed officials concerned to extend financial aid of Rs 4 lakh to the families of each of the three passengers who lost their lives in a tragic passenger bus accident at Markatola Ghat in Balod district

today. Besides, he has directed to ensure proper medical treatment for the injured. Expressing his condolences to the grieving families, Chief Minister Sai conveyed deep sorrow over the un-

fortunate incident, describing the news of the three casualties in the Balod district accident as deeply saddening. He offered prayers for the speedy recovery of those injured in the accident.

Training given for self registration in RTI portal

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Dec 23: Training was given on Friday on the subject of self-registration in the RTI portal for Public Information Officers and First Appellate Officers at Mantralaya Bhawan and Head of Department Bhawan located in Naya Raipur.



The training was given by Chhattisgarh State Information Commission and National Informatics Centre. In this training, Secretary of State Information Commission Mr. G.R. Churendra, Deputy Secretary and Nodal Officer of General Administration Department Mrs. Mary Khes, Under Secretary of State Information Commission Mrs. Geeta Diwan, Section Officer Mr. Atul Verma, Mr. Ashok Maurya of NIC. The team provided guidance to Public Information Officers and First Appellate Authorities.

In the training workshop, the process of self-registration in the online portal, disposal of applications after on-boarding and the process of uploading were explained in detail through demo. The doubts of Public Information Officers and First Appellate Officers were also resolved in the training. The first appellate authorities were informed about viewing the onboard application and its disposal. The process for demanding fees online was explained. In the training workshop, Secretary of the State Information Commission, GR Churendra said that in compliance with the order of the Supreme Court and the instructions given by the state government, the work of self registration has to be completed in the month of December. He has advised the officers to be aware of the Right to Information rules and implement them well.

Stolen material recovered from possession of 2 minor children



Central Chronicle News

Jagdalpur, Dec 23: Two minor boys have been arrested who had stolen the mobile, smart watch and home theater kept in the shop by ripping off the sheet from the big shopkeeper Deepak mobile shop of the district. Evidence of crimes against minor children has been found. The stolen material like mobile, smart watch and home theater was seized from the possession of both of them and after the proceedings on Thursday, they were pre-

ferred on judicial remand before the Juvenile Justice Board.

According to the information received from the police, a crime was registered on the report of applicant Brijesh Verma and taken up for investigation. During the investigation, the accused was identified. The said team identified the suspect and arrested him. When taken into custody and interrogated, two minor children admitted to having committed the incident, from whose possession the entire stolen goods were recovered.

Bonus payment of Rs 3716 cr to be made to farmers on Dec 25

● **On National Good Governance Day**

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Dec 23: Chhattisgarh government has started rapidly implementing the guarantee given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. After the acceptance of Prime Minister's awas to more than 18 lakh families of the state and the implementation of purchasing 21 quintals of paddy per acre from the farmers at Rs 3100, now preparations for paying the two years' outstanding bonus to the farmers have started in full swing. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai has said that on the occasion of

National Good Governance Day, the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Bharat Ratna Late Atal Bihari Vajpayee, on December 25th, we will distribute the bonus of outstanding paddy of Kharif marketing year 2014-15 and 2015-16 to the farmers of the state. We will pay an amount of Rs 3716 crore 38 lakh 96 thousand.

It is noteworthy that as a guarantee from Modi, the government had promised to pay the dues of two years to the farmers of the state. To fulfill this promise, in compliance with the instructions of Chief Minister Sai, preparations have been started in full swing by the Agriculture Department. Under the

order issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, farmers will be paid a bonus (Paddy Procurement Incentive Scheme) at the rate of Rs 300 per quintal in lieu of the paddy procured at the support price in the above two years. The payment of bonus amount will be scheduled from state level to development block level on December 25th. On this occasion, Chief Minister Sai will communicate with the farmers through video conferencing. In the program organized at the development block level, certificates of paddy production incentive will also be provided to the beneficiary farmers by local public representatives and dignitaries.

CM expresses deep sorrow over demise of Smt. Premlata Sharma

Raipur, Dec 23: Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai expressed deep sorrow at the demise of Smt. Premlata Sharma, the mother of KK Sharma, senior journalist and former President of Raipur Press Club and. Sai expressed sympathy to bereaved family and prayed for peace to the departed soul.

Daga Girls' College celebrates annual day

Raipur, Dec 23: The annual function of Smt. Pramila Gokuldas Daga Girls' College, Kutchari Chowk, Raipur (C.G.) was held in the college premises on Saturday, 23 December 2023. The program started with lighting of the lamp and garlanding the idol of Goddess Saraswati. On this occasion, the Chief guest of the program, Prof. (Dr.) Sachchidanand Shukla, Vice Chancellor Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla University, Raipur described student life as the most important time of life. He also stated that belief



in self is the most necessary thing to make good use of

time and to create your own future. He also inaugurated

college magazine "AROHAN" along with other dignitaries present at dias.

Chairman of the program, Ajay Tiwari, while explaining the importance of education, emphasized on the multifaceted development of girl students' and sent best wishes for the further progress of the institution. The annual report was presented by the Principal of the college, Dr. Sangeeta Ghai. Thereafter, during the prize distribution, the students representing the national and state level sports competitions in the

session 2023-24 and the winning and runner-up teams of the college in the inter-college competition were honored with certificates, medals and prizes. During this, a colorful cultural program was presented by the college students. The cultural program started with performance of Ganesh Vandana. Krishna Leela, Ram Aayenge, along with traditional Chhattisgarhi, Panthi dance, Rajasthani, Gujarati, Marathi, Western dance were presented by the students.

Abhivyakti 2023 Unveils a Tapestry of Emotions with 'Navaras - Reflections of Emotions'



Raipur, Dec 20: The highly anticipated annual function, Abhivyakti 2023, unfolded with a symphony of emotions as students from Grade 1 to 12 showcased their artistic prowess under the theme "Navaras - Reflections of Emotions." The Mega Event, held at NH Goel World School, was inaugurated by the esteemed presence of renowned Bollywood actor Boman Irani, voice artist, photographer and screenplay mentor. The Occasion was graced by the Chairman Suresh Goel, Managing Director Rajendra Goel, Esteemed board members Narendra Goel, Anand Goel, Director Goel Group of Companies, Vijay Gupta, Chairman Beekay Industries, Director Administration SK Tomar, Principal Dr. Awinash Pandey and Vice Principal Preeti Sharma.

The heart of Abhivyakti 2023 was an awe-inspiring exhibition that brought to life the diverse emotions encapsulated in the concept of Navaras. From joy and love to sorrow and anger, students expressed themselves through a myriad of artistic forms, ranging from paintings to sculptures to haunted house, etc. The exhibition not only highlighted the creative brilliance of the students but also served as a testament to the nurturing and mentoring environment provided by the school. Adding to the grandeur of the event were the various club activities, that were meticulously presented in the exhibition, Igebra's Gen AI Master corner knocked the shoes off with their brilliant exhibits and Helen O' Grady dramatist students were stealing the show. Students passionately showcased their achievements and contributions in fields such as science, literature, music, and more. Students were awarded for their achievements in various curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, nationally and internationally. Sandli Vyas of grade 12 bagged the Student of the Year (Girls) and Isckon Jain of grade 12 as the Student of the Year (Boys) award. Best Hostel Boy Shivam Sultania, Best Hostel Girl Prisha Juneja, Best Sports Person Boys Vijay Yadav, Best Sports Person Girls Sanskriti Nayal and Ananya Pandey. NH Goel World School is celebrating its 15 years of excellence in school education.

Ryan celebrates talent and tenacity

● **Hosts inter-school athletic meet**

Raipur, Dec 23: Ryan Sports Club proudly organized the 3rd Ryan Inter school Chhattisgarh region Athletic Meet at Kota Stadium on December 21st and 22nd, 2023, an event that not only exemplifies the commitment to sports but also fulfilled the visionary aspirations of Chairman Sir Dr. A.F. Pinto. The meet witnessed enthusiastic participation from athletes across four schools Ryan Raipur, St. Xavier's Raipur, St. Xavier's Durg, and St. Xavier's Dhamtari.



The two-day extravaganza showcased a total of 70 events tailored for different age groups, ranging from 10 to 18 years. This extensive range of competitions ensured that every participant had a platform to showcase their athletic prowess and sportsmanship. The Zonal Athletic Meet at Kota Stadium was a testament to the enduring vision of Chairman Sir Dr. A.F. Pinto, who has consistently emphasized the importance of holistic development through sports. The event not only provided a platform for healthy competition but also fostered a spirit of camaraderie and discipline among the young athletes.

Athletes from St. Xavier's Dhamtari, Ryan Raipur, St. Xavier's Durg, and St. Xavier's Raipur competed passionately, representing their respective zones with pride. The diversity of events catered to various age groups, ensuring that every participant had a chance to shine and contribute to their schools overall performance. The Zonal Athletic Meet was graced by the esteemed presence of Chief Guest Satya Narayan Sharma (former MLA) who brought a wealth of experience and inspiration to the event. His address motivated the young athletes to pursue excellence, instilling in them the values of dedication, perseverance, and fair play.

The event commenced with a solemn prayer, setting the tone for a day filled with sportsmanship, dedication, and camaraderie.

The highlight of the opening ceremony was the symbolic release of balloons, signifying the spirit of unity and sportsmanship, by the esteemed Chief Guest, Satya Narayan Sharma. The colorful balloons soared into the sky, symbolizing the aspirations, dreams, and unity of the athletes gathered from various schools and clubs within the zone.

In an exhilarating culmination of sportsmanship and talent, Ryan International Raipur hosted the prize distribution ceremony for the Zonal Athletic Meet 2023, recognizing the exceptional efforts of participants and awarding the top-performing schools and athletes. The prize distribution ceremony was a momentous

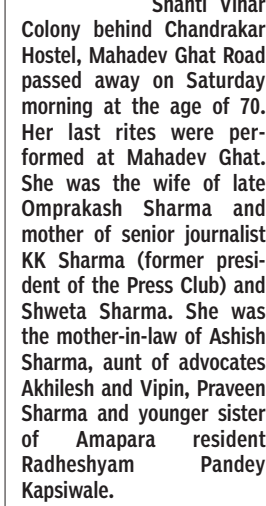
occasion, the participants were lauded for their outstanding performances and commitment to excellence. The ceremony commenced with a heartwarming tribute to all the athletes, highlighting their hard work and determination throughout the Zonal Athletic Meet.

The coveted trophies for the Best School and Runner-up were awarded to Ryan International School, Raipur (Best School) and St. Xavier's High School, (Runner up school), respectively, recognizing their overall outstanding performance and the cumulative achievements of their athletes. Mrs. Dhaneshwari Sharma, Principal, Ryan International School, Raipur expressed gratitude for the honor and emphasized the importance of sports in shaping the holistic development of students.

Obituary

● **Premalata Sharma**

Mrs Premalata Sharma (Sandi Arang Wale), resident of Shanti Vihar Colony behind Chandrakar Hostel, Mahadev Ghat Road passed away on Saturday morning at the age of 70. Her last rites were performed at Mahadev Ghat. She was the wife of late Omprakash Sharma and mother of senior journalist KK Sharma (former president of the Press Club) and Shweta Sharma. She was the mother-in-law of Ashish Sharma, aunt of advocates Akhilesh and Vipin, Praveen Sharma and younger sister of Amapara resident Radheshyam Pandey Kapsiwale.



RELIGIOUS GATHERING



Devotees wait in queues to offer prayers at the Parthasarathy temple on the occasion of 'Vaikuntha Ekadashi', in Chennai, Saturday.

Arunachal Governor calls to strengthen security apparatus

In insurgency-hit eastern districts

Itanagar, Dec 23 (PTI):

Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lieutenant General (Retired) K T Parnaik on Saturday called for strengthening the security apparatus in the state's insurgency-hit eastern districts of Tirap, Changlang and Longding.

The governor, during a meeting with a senior Assam Rifles officer at Raj Bhavan here, discussed ways and means to strengthen the security in the three districts.

The governor's call came after a series of kidnappings in Longding district over the last few months and the murder of

former MLA Yumsem Matey by unknown assailants near the India-Myanmar border in Tirap district on December 16.

Parnaik suggested real-time sharing of intelligence with other security forces, including state police, operating in the three districts.

The Assam Rifles sector commander briefed the governor on the security situation in the three districts and various goodwill projects undertaken by the force. He elaborated on the proactive role played by Assam Rifles in maintaining law and order in the eastern part of the state.

The state government on December 21 decided to transfer the case relating to the killing of Matey to

the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

The government has requested the Union Home Ministry to take up the matter of probe of the incident with the NIA, the state's Deputy Home Secretary Likha Sampu said.

Matey, a former Congress legislator, was shot dead by unidentified assailants when he went to Lazu with three of his supporters for some personal work. He had recently declared before his supporters that he would contest the 2024 assembly polls from Khonsa West constituency.

Matey was first elected as an MLA in 2009 on a Congress ticket. After losing the 2014 polls, he joined the BJP in 2015.

The state also witnessed a series of kidnappings in Longding district over the last few months. In all the cases, ransoms were demanded and the captives released after several days, with no clarity on whether the amounts were paid.

Militants of the Ang Maifaction of banned outfit NSCN-IM had abducted village chief Chopkhu Ganga (53) and gaon bura (village headman) Chijngsang Wangham (45) from Chop village in the district on November 28 for allegedly not paying a levy of Rs 50,000 to the outfit.

They were reportedly taken to Longpa village in neighbouring Myanmar and released on December 21 after remaining in captivity for nearly a month.

Marengo CIMS Hospital creates awareness about IPAH

Ahmedabad, Dec 23:

Lung Transplantation is the most complex medical endeavor undertaken by mankind. Marengo CIMS Hospital, Ahmedabad is a recognized Lung Transplant Centre.

Lung transplantation is a definitive treatment for Idiopathic Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension (IPAH), also known as Primary Pulmonary Hypertension (PPH), manifests in the second and third decades of life. It kills young people suddenly and is one of the causes of sudden cardiac (heart) death.

Symptoms of IPAH are shortness of breath, easy fatigability, chest pain, blackouts, and sudden cardiac death. These symptoms are progressive. Marengo CIMS Hospital therefore endeavors to create awareness of this dis-



Dr Jnanesh Thakkar

ease - Idiopathic Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension (IPAH). The Lung transplantation team consists of Dr Jnanesh Thakkar, Director, Lung Transplantations, Minimal Invasive Lung Transplantations, Marengo CIMS Hospital with Dr Dhiren Shah, Director, Heart Transplant & Cardiothoracic Surgery, Mechanical Circulatory

Support (MCS) and rest of the transplant team which consists of five other surgeons, 4 Anesthetists, and 5 Perfusionist to mention a few. The total number of transplantation team members exceeds more than 50.

Dr Jnanesh Thakkar, Director, Lung Transplantations, Minimal Invasive Lung Transplantations says, "The IPAH can be a combination influenced by genetic and environmental factors. There are treatments at the early stages of diagnosis that can help manage symptoms and improve the quality of life for a patient.

These may include medications to dilate the blood vessels, reduce blood clot formations, and alleviate symptoms. However, at end-stage failure of the lungs, a transplantation of the lungs from a cadaver

is a preferred option."

Marengo CIMS Hospital, Ahmedabad is the only hospital that offers Minimally Invasive Lung Transplantations (MLIT). This is compared to the standard procedure which is done by clamshell incision. A clamshell incision is a bilateral anterior thoracotomy with Transverse Sternotomy.

Simply means that this incision is a cut right across the chest. In Minimally Invasive Lung Transplantations, the cuts are made only on the sides. The sternum is not divided. The advantages of MLIT are less pain, quick recovery, and cosmetically loved by female patients. The scars are not seen from the front and the back or the side. It is only seen when she raises her hands as the incisions lie in the crease of her breasts.

J'hkhand prepared for any spurt in COVID-19 cases'

Ranchi, Dec 23 (PTI): Jharkhand is prepared to deal with any spurt in COVID-19 cases, although the situation is presently under control, a health official said on Saturday. No fresh coronavirus cases have been reported in the state since December 18, when two infections were detected in a Jamshedpur hospital, the official said. "In view of a rising number of coronavirus cases in some states, the Jharkhand health department has already conducted mock drills of functioning of oxygen plants and reviewed the number of beds available with oxygen support, non-oxygen support and those in the ICU as per directions of the Centre," Alok Trivedi, National Health Mission (NHM) Director in the state, told PTI. India saw a single-day rise of 752 coronavirus infections, the highest since May 21 this year, while active cases have increased to 3,420, according to Union Health Ministry data updated on Saturday.

'INDI Alliance set of leaders facing corruption charges'



Anurag Thakur

Bengaluru, Dec 23 (PTI):

The senior BJP leader's remarks came a day after the INDIA alliance held nationwide demonstrations against the suspension of 146 MPs during the Winter session for unruly behaviour in demanding a statement from Home

Minister Amit Shah on the Parliament security breach on December 13.

"Where is the alliance? They are struggling in Punjab, they are struggling in other states. They can't speak in one voice. They are a set of people facing corruption charges and have come together," Thakur, the Information and Broadcasting Minister, said. "They do not have a common ideology, they do not have a common minimum programme or a common candidate. There is no INDIA Alliance," Thakur said.

On the suspension of opposition MPs from Parliament, the minister said they were suspended for the activities which

were "barred by the Speaker". Thakur said all political parties had agreed that they would not bring placards inside the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha chambers in the new Parliament building. "When we entered the new Parliament House, the Speaker requested everyone to start with new traditions. Nobody should enter the lobby, nobody should tear papers and throw it at the chair, and no placards shall be brought inside the chamber," Thakur said.

The minister also said that the opposition leaders were demoralised after the election results in the three states and had decided to disrupt Parliament.

Preparations underway for JU convocation today

Kolkata, Dec 23 (PTI):

Preparations were underway at Jadavpur University here for hosting its annual convocation on Sunday, a senior official of the institute said. West Bengal Governor C V Ananda Bose, who is the ex-officio chancellor of the institute, and Education Minister Bratya Basu have been invited to attend the function, the official said.

The convocation, which is held on December 24 every year, was marked by uncertainty after the governor did not accord permission to hold the university's court meeting, which is crucial for host-

ing the event.

However, citing the Jadavpur University statute, which allows the state university to host the annual event every year on the same date, and the government's recent communication which called for holding the function as around 3,000 students are scheduled to get their degrees and certificates, the institution went ahead with the court meeting to discuss the modalities of the 66th convocation.

Registrar Snehamanju Basu told PTI that the university is yet to receive any response from the governor over the invitation to attend the function as the chief guest but the

authorities are hopeful that he will come.

"We are making all preparations for the convocation ceremony, scheduling the programmes. The certificates and citations for students and researchers have been readied. Many outstanding scholars have arrived in the city to attend the programme," she said.

Union Bank of India advertisement for LIC Investment Building, Phase-III, Jivan Bima Marg, Pandri, Raipur (C.G.)

Union Bank of India advertisement for E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

HOMAGE TO CHARAN SINGH



LS Speaker Om Birla and other leaders pay homage to former prime minister Charan Singh on his birth anniversary, at the Central Hall of Samvidhan Sadan, in New Delhi, Saturday.

NAME CHANGE

It is informed to the general public that I, Ashok Kumar Jain S/o Pukhraj Golchha resident of H.No. - 9/352, Behind Mahavir Bhawan, Budhapara, Raipur (C.G.) have changed my old name Ashok Kumar Jain S/o Pukhraj Golchha so in future, I should be recognized by my new name that is Ashok Golchha S/o Pukhraj Golchha in all government and other documents. Ashok Golchha H.No. - 9/352, Behind Mahavir Bhawan, Budhapara, Raipur (C.G.)

आम सूचना

सर्वसाधारण को एताद द्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि सुरेश खोडवाणी एवं महेश खोडवाणी पिता द्वारा कादास खोडवाणी निवासी मकान नं. 50/688, राम मंदिर के पीछे, बंधुपारा, राहसील रायपुर, जिला रायपुर (छ.ग.) ने विकेता अजय तनवानी पिता अर्जुन दास तनवानी निवासी A-02, आनंद विहार, आनंद नगर, राहसील रायपुर, जिला रायपुर (छ.ग.) से विक्रेयशुद्ध सम्पत्ति जो कि सुवाख क्रमांक 4-41, रकबा 623.00 वर्गमीटर व खसरा नं. 126/4, 129/9, 156/6 का मांग, मौजा बुडुङ, रायपुर विकास प्राधिकरण कि नगर विकास योजना क्रमांक 04, य.ह.नं. 118/51, च.नि.मं. रायपुर-14-बोरियाखर्द, राहसील रायपुर, जिला रायपुर (छ.ग.) में स्थित सम्पत्ति, जो उप चर्चीक कार्यालय रायपुर में पंजीयन दिनांक 29/03/2019 दर्तायोज क्रमांक 8968 दंकर पंजीकृत किया गया है यह कि उपरोक्त वर्णित सम्पत्ति का सम्पत्ति धारण प्रमाण पत्र कि मूल प्रति जो कौसी गुप्त हो गयी है: अतः उपरोक्त संयोजक से जिरा किसी व्यक्ति, संस्था, बैंक, शासकीय एवं अर्द्धशासकीय प्रिकाय इत्यादि को कोई उतर, दावा या आपत्ति हो तो इस आम सूचना प्रकाशन के 3 दिवस (तीन दिवस) के भीतर मांग दर्तायोज के साथ लिखित अपत्ति नोड लिखे पत्र पर प्रस्तुत करें. समावधि पर्यंत बैंक के पास में स्थायिक बंकर करा लिया जायेगा एवं बाद में कौ गयी आपत्ति अर्थात् व शुच्य मानी जाएगी तथा येरे पक्षकार पर बंधनकारी नहीं होगा. सो सूचना लाने। रायपुर छ.ग. दिनांक 23/12/2023 मबदीय आशीष कुमार शर्मा (अधि.) सी-33, सेक्टर-1, देवेन्द्र नगर, रायपुर (छ.ग.)

Preserving Electoral Integrity

The amendments to the process of appointing the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (ECs) raise concerns about the integrity of India's electoral system. The removal of the Chief Justice of India from the selection panel in favor of political appointees is a contentious move that threatens the independence of the Election Commission. Upholding free and fair elections is crucial, and any changes to the appointment process should prioritize the credibility and impartiality of the EC. The government's decision to bypass the Supreme Court's order on this matter raises questions about the motives behind these amendments.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee,
Faridabad

Legal Reforms

The passage of three comprehensive criminal laws has raised concerns about their practical implementation. The hurried discussions and recommendations by a 31-member parliamentary committee have cast doubts on the fairness of the process. Mandating strict time limits for all aspects of the justice process, while well-intentioned, may be challenging given the limited police resources in India. Implementing these reforms effectively will be a significant test for the justice system, and rushing the legislative process without adequate deliberation is a cause for concern.

MK Nair, Raipur

Aussie Flavours in IPL

Australian Players have proven their strengths in IPL from the get-go and always they have been auctioned off high prices and now they have crossed all the expenses in IPL auction 2024. However, both teams (KKR and SRH) needed a good foreign pacer to lead the battery of some domestic players while coming into the auction room with a purse of Rs 34 crore. The Sunrisers management also might have taken into consideration Cummins' leadership qualities that has been quite evident this year, carrying Australia to triumph in World Cup and WTC Final. SRH shot down two birds with one stone a premier bowler and a thinking person who can contribute immensely to their leadership group. Can they vindicate the price tag then with a flurry of wickets?

MT.Farooqi, Chennai

KHELO INDIA YOUTH GAMES



Union Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports Anurag Thakur and Tamil Nadu Minister for Youth Welfare & Sports Development Udhayanidhi Stalin with former world chess champion Viswanathan Anand during the launch of the logo, mascot and torch of the Khelo India Youth Games 2023, in Chennai.

James Hadley Chase: His Themes and Plots



PROF. ANIL JAIN



Authors like James Hadley Chase have not been given a proper place in literature though they have a lot of flair for writing. It may be due to some prejudice or any other faculty of mind of the learned that despite being the writers of caliber they are deprived of their place in the literary world. James Hadley Chase is one of them. If we examine the novel of James Hadley Chase deeply we come to know that there is so much to be said for him and his talent.

James Hadley Chase (24 December 1906 - 6 February 1985) was an English writer. Chase novels bear a sound testimony to his encyclopedic range of knowledge. When one has written as many as ninety novels one needs familiarity of almost everything happening around. Chase has an in-depth understanding of civil and criminal laws of the world, diseases, international relations etc. His novels are full of such wisdom and awareness. His novels are written on a variety of subjects.

He is the master in the art of plot construction. There are plots and under plots in almost all his novels. The main plot is sensational and

melodramatic whereas the under plots are full of realism. Chase plots are dramatic in nature and so well constructed that some of his novels can be compared with Sophocles' play, Oedipus, The Rex which Aristotle has praised for its plot construction. The three unities of time, place and action have been followed very clearly. He has created Paradise City as Hardy has created 'Wessex' and Faulkner has created Yoknapatawpha country. Paradise city is a billionaire's playground. A complete map of Paradise city has been devised by him. The city has a very efficient police force. Many of his novels have been set in this background. Where the author thinks he does not need efficient police force he shifts the setting of his novel to some other place as he does in "Lay Her among the Lilies and Tell it to the Birds". The action of his novel is limited to a few days or a couple of weeks. He gives a detailed description of every moment. Not a single moment is left out. We know what Lepski was doing when Reynolds was burning the evidence of the murder in You Must be Kidding. The novels are written

from different points of view and the story always moves through dialogues and never through narration. It is another important feature of his skill as a novelist. His plays read like a drama.

Themes

Chase has written around ninety novels. These novels deal with a number of crime stories but within these stories run a number of themes on human predicament. These stories are not only interesting but very realistically highlighted.

Want to Stay Alive deals with the theme of human relationship. The story of the novel is a simple crime story but the basic theme of the novel is to describe the relationship between whites and black (to whom they call Seminole Indians).

You Must be Kidding deals with the psychological development of a character Crispin Gregg. It shows how our society, which is full of snobs, has affected the mental makeup of people. There are three factors which work behind the mental makeup of Crispin—the treatment of his mother Amelia Gregg towards his father, Cyrus Gregg; hereditary influence of his maternal uncle, Martin; and the circumstances in which he has been brought up.

There is one more novel which can be put in the category of psychological novel. It is Not Safe To Be Free. The novel is the story of Jay Delaney, the son of a famous Hollywood Film producer. Jay listens to whispers from within that he should murder a girl to test his ingenuity whether he could save himself from the police after ex-

cuting the girl.

Well Now, My Pretty is a story of casino robbery but the husband wife relations are beautifully drawn.

Have a Change of Scene deals with a story of crime but underneath runs the story of a town which is full of dirt and squalor. It is a beautiful satire on social work and social workers.

Come Easy, Go Easy deals with the theme of how money has corrupted the character of a person where a simple hearted person is cheated for the sake of money whom he had once saved from imprisonment.

Joker in the Pack shows the common man's faith in superstitions of voodoo and black magic. Such stories are very popular and believed throughout the world; not only illiterate but literates also believe in them. An Ace up My Sleeve investigates the life and problem of gay.

Have This One on Me investigates the inter-state relations that existed between two world power countries during the cold war.

Consider Yourself Dead deals with the theme of the psychology of an Italian girl who has gone so mentally sick that instead of living with her father she desires to be raped. It shows how absolutely corrupt the system has corrupted absolutely.

Mallory deals with the nostalgia that the revolutionaries suffer with and the problems they face in the foreign country and how the localities feel about them.

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Electoral Reform

A Tug of War Between Powers

Yash Pal Rathna

The passage of the Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Bill, 2023, by the Lok Sabha has ignited a fierce debate in the political landscape. This contentious legislation aims to reform the appointment process of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (ECs). While the government applauds it as a crucial step towards streamlining the electoral machinery, the opposition sees it as a perilous move that may compromise the independence of the Election Commission. The heart of the controversy lies in the composition of the selection committee responsible for recommending candidates for the CEC and EC positions. The bill proposes a selection committee comprising the Prime Minister, the Union Cabinet Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition. Critics argue that this setup could lead to the appointment of individuals inclined towards the ruling party, thus eroding the neutrality of the Election Commission. To understand the backdrop of this legislation, one must recall the Supreme Court's recent ruling on the appointment process of the CEC and ECs. The court had stipulated that the President should make these appointments based on the advice of a committee composed of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Chief Justice of India. This directive was seen as an interim measure until a law was enacted by Parliament to govern the appointments. The government's argument for amending the bill centers on the principle of separation of powers enshrined in the Constitution. Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal asserted that the appointment of election commissioners is a vital executive function. He argued that this should be the prerogative of the executive branch of government, as laid out in Article 50 of the Constitution. In this context, the amendment to the bill designates the Law Minister to head the search committee, a role previously held by the Cabinet Secretary. While this change may have been made to streamline the process, it has raised concerns about undue political influence. Opposition parties have expressed apprehensions over these changes. They fear that the composition of the selection committee could lead to the appointment of individuals who might not act independently. These concerns have led to protests, with some even viewing the amendment as a blow to democracy. In response to these concerns, the government introduced amendments to address issues such as pay disparity and the removal process for the CEC and ECs. The revised bill maintains the salary and perks of the CEC and ECs at the level of a Supreme Court judge, aligning them with the importance of their roles. Additionally, the amendment shields the CEC and ECs from legal proceedings related to actions taken in the discharge of their official duties. While the government emphasizes the need to institutionalize and clarify the appointment process, critics believe that these amendments may have inadvertently politicized a crucial aspect of Indian democracy. The disagreement between the two sides reflects the complexities of a mature democracy like India. In this democratic journey, differences of opinion are natural and expected. However, the guiding principle should always be a commitment to democratic values and the preservation of the integrity and independence of constitutional bodies like the Election Commission. Ultimately, the true test of this legislation's impact will lie in how it is implemented and whether it strengthens or undermines India's electoral process.

(The views expressed above are the author's own. They do not necessarily reflect the views of Central Chronicle.)

Selfish MPs turned Parliament into a joke



Priyanka Saurabh

The country is disappointed with what has been happening in the Parliament for the last few days. Only by running Parliament can the government answer the opposition's questions properly. In the atmosphere of uproar, MPs do not get a chance to express their views. Even a child can understand how protest can be expressed by going to the well and stopping the proceedings of the House by raising slogans and creating a ruckus. A good thing will be said only when you put your questions clearly and the government can answer clearly. But what is even more worrying is that obstruction of Parliament has become the rule rather than the exception and our politicians have no compunction about it. This decline has occurred very rapidly in the last few years. MPs shout at each other, snatch and tear legislative

papers, and come to the middle of the House over small issues. In the past years, most of the bills have been passed without discussion. This is an abuse of the parliamentary system.

Now the opposition parties and some MPs have ruined the Parliament. It is common for both Houses to stall proceedings by creating unproductive uproar over personal agendas. Noise in the Parliament, sloganeering in the well, taking personal digs at each other, and sometimes even getting into a scuffle is a common picture of the Parliament today. After all, why has the behavior of political parties and MPs become so chaotic? Have the vested interests of the parties today made Parliament a joke?

Looking at the attitude of the MPs, it does not seem that they intend to allow development plans for the country. It seems as if the MPs have taken the entire parliamentary democracy hostage. Because the proceedings of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha are shown live on TV nowadays, the common man of the country also sees everything that is happening in the Parliament every day. After all, what image are the MPs presenting before the people? Just imagine what image is being created of you in the minds of the people of the country.

The reason for this decline indeed is that politics today has become a game of numbers due to which regional satraps exert pres-

sure to get their wishes done. They not only believe in bullying politics but also make the yardstick of a successful Parliament session "whose stick is his buffalo". Today, size has become more important than content, due to which scenes like street fights are seen in Parliament. Therefore, in this declining political culture and moral values, the content that influences politics is not found in parliamentary proceedings.

Overall, it seems that Parliament has now become just a scoring club. Many would know that Rs 2.5 lakh is spent on one minute of Parliament proceedings. In this way, an average expenditure of six crore rupees is incurred on one day's normal proceedings. The more the proceedings continue, the more the expenses increase. Just think where this money comes from. It comes from the pockets of the common people of the country. What could be a bigger joke in a democracy than the Parliament proceedings being stalled continuously or there being uproar intermittently throughout the day, yet Rs. 6 crores are spent in a day? Just imagine what can be done with Rs 6 crore. The fate of thousands of villages can be changed by the expenditure incurred on one day of Parliament proceedings. Lakhs of poor girls can get married. Small and cottage industries can improve the fortunes of thousands of youth. But MPs don't think about all this. Even if development plans are not made, personal interests must im-

prove. Have MPs become above the country?

One more thing, it is not the case that all the MPs are creating a ruckus. Those who are serious about their work are unable to do anything. The question is why MPs don't create an atmosphere every time. Do the MPs arrive only to create a ruckus? The MPs have paralyzed the Lok Sabha. The reality is that in a democracy, the people of the country directly elect the Lok Sabha. In such a situation, the indirectly elected House should respect the dignity of the House of the People i.e. Lok Sabha. It should not happen that every work done in the Lok Sabha is hampered.

All MPs should be allowed to speak about their constituencies in the Lok Sabha on fixed days, at least for three minutes each. MPs who repeatedly create ruckus should be identified and their list should be publicised. Such rules should be made that automatically certain action is taken against the MP who comes to the well waves the pamphlet or creates any kind of ruckus. Why do some MPs come back to the House after walking out? They do this only to show off, they have nothing to do with the development of the country.

He is not able to do anything in the Parliament and on the other hand the people of his Lok Sabha constituency are suffering because he is not able to solve their problems. After all, there is only a ruckus in the Parliament. Therefore, stop Parliament from

becoming an arena. Explain your point to the leadership also, do not blindly follow their every right or wrong order. The first duty of MPs is to preserve the dignity of the sacred temple of democracy. Perhaps these people do not understand the dangerous dimensions of making Parliament unimportant. Our Parliament is the cornerstone of our nation which represents the people and is expected to exercise sovereign oversight over our national interests. The Government is answerable to the Parliament and the existence of the Government depends on the confidence of the Lok Sabha in it. Therefore, the time has come that all our MPs should pay attention to how parliamentary democracy can be strengthened. Otherwise, the public will start ridiculing him. Our MPs should consider what kind of legacy they are leaving. Will they allow Parliament to collapse under the weight of its decline? We are seeing what is happening today. It is hoped that the MPs of the country and those who run the Parliament will soon realize how much hope the citizens of the country look for them. Also keeps him as an example on many occasions.

(Writer is a Research Scholar in Political Science, Poetess, Independent Journalist and columnist. The views expressed above are the author's own. They do not necessarily reflect the views of Central Chronicle.)

BRIEF

New inauguration



Tawang (Arunachal Pradesh) Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Saturday inaugurated the first five-star hotel in the state, Vivanta Tawang, at an altitude of above 10,000 feet close to the border with China. The hotel has 80 rooms and suites that offer mountain and valley views and the cosy ambience of heated wood floors and walnut veneer-adorned walls. Khandu said tourism in Arunachal now gets an iconic facility in Vivanta Tawang. He said the Vivanta Hotels are known for their elegance and hospitality and tourists can book rooms from December 26.

Service support

Chennai: European automaker Volkswagen India has extended its enhanced service support to affected customers in Tamil Nadu following the impact of heavy rains and flooding in the state, the company said on Saturday. The initiative, with effect from December 22, would offer service support to flood affected car owners including Roadside Assistance, special benefits on parts, labour costs and car care treatment among others.

National conference



New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will chair the 'third national conference of chief secretaries in the national capital next week, a senior government official said on Friday. The third national conference of chief secretaries will be held in Delhi from December 27-29 and it will be a significant step towards further strengthening the partnership between the Centre and state governments, the official told PTI.

Ground-breaking ceremony



Bhubaneswar: Terming Odisha as the Aluminium capital of India, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik presided over the ground-breaking ceremony for Aditya Alumina Refinery (HINDALCO) and an apparel unit to be set up by Utkal Alumina Social Welfare Foundation.

Inflation outlook likely to be clouded due to volatile food prices: RBI Guv

Mumbai, Dec 23:



The overall inflation outlook is expected to be clouded because of volatile and uncertain food prices, Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das said at the recent Monetary Policy Committee meeting. Governor Das-headed six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), which met on December 6 to 8, unanimously decided to keep the key interest rate (repo) unchanged at 6.5 per cent citing inflationary concerns. "The overall inflation outlook is expected to be clouded by volatile and uncertain food prices and intermittent weather shocks," the Governor opined, as per the minutes of the meeting released on Friday. He said that a resurgence of vegetable price inflation is likely to

push up food and headline inflation. "We have to remain highly alert to any signs of generalisation of price impulses that may derail the ongoing process of disinflation," he said. Das also stressed that in these circumstances, monetary policy has to be actively disinflationary and any shift in policy stance now would be premature and risky. Deputy gover-

nor and MPC member Michael Debabrata Patra too opined that monetary policy has to remain on high alert with a restrictive stance. "...the monetary policy reaction function needs to assign a higher weight to inflation relative to growth in a forward-looking sense," Patra said, while voting for a status quo on the policy rate and continuing with the stance of withdrawal of accommodation. RBI executive director and MPC member Rajiv Ranjan said the economy is running at full steam. Growth has been resilient and continuously surprising on the upside. "It is important to note that for the first time in Q2:2023-24, the fault lines in India's growth story since the pandemic tepid private investment and rural demand seem to be

gaining traction," he said. Ranjan also stressed that the best way monetary policy can support this high growth trajectory is by maintaining its commitment to price stability. The three government-appointed members on MPC - Shashanka Bhide, Ashima Goyal and Jayanth R Varma - too had voted for keeping the rate unchanged. The repo rate has remained at 6.5 per cent since April. According to the minutes, Bhide said given that inflation remains well above the target over the short term, with the projected headline CPI rate of above 5 per cent up to Q1: 2024-25, there is a need to continue the policy support for sustaining the trajectory to the target. Goyal opined that if inflation sustainably approaches 4 per cent

by the middle of 2024 real rates can easily become too high if nothing is done. "A repo of 6.5 per cent in 2018 and tight liquidity with headline inflation of around 4 per cent, even though core inflation was around 6 per cent, proved severely deflationary. Both headline and core inflation fell steeply over the next year," she said. MPC member Varma noted that current indications are that, after many difficult quarters, the economic environment is turning more benign in terms of both inflation and growth. The challenge for monetary policy is to facilitate this benign outcome where inflation trends down and growth remains robust, he said. The next meeting of the MPC is scheduled for February 6-8, 2024.

Scindia asks airport operators to look at biometric models for smooth air travel

New Delhi, Dec 23:



The civil aviation ministry, which is taking measures to prevent congestion at airport in the upcoming festive season, has asked airport operators to look at the successful biometric models being used in other countries for smooth travel of air passengers. During a meeting with an advisory group, civil aviation minister Jyotiraditya Scindia asked airport operators to promote Digi Yatra, which provides for contactless, seamless movement of passengers at various check points at airports based on Facial Recognition Technology (FRT). Currently, Digi Yatra is available for domestic passengers at 13 airports, including Delhi, Mumbai and Varanasi. At the meeting on Tuesday, the airport operators were also tasked with

presenting biometric enabled models being successfully used in other countries, according to an official release. On December 15, Scindia said the Digi Yatra facility will be available at 25 more airports in 2024. The release said that a suggestion at the meeting was to integrate Digi Yatra for international passenger access for departures as well as arrivals. "With the upcoming season in mind, the minister emphasised on the importance of preventing congestion at airports."

EPFO adds 15.29 lakh members in October, higher by 18.2 pc on-year

New Delhi, Dec 23:

Retirement fund body EPFO added 15.29 lakh members on a net basis in October, up by 18.22 per cent compared to the same month last year, according to payroll data released. Around 7.72 lakh new members have come under the social security coverage of the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) in October 2023, an increase of 6.07 per cent over the year ago month, a labour ministry statement said. The EPFO's provisional payroll data released highlights that the EPFO has added 15.29 lakh net members in the month of October 2023, the ministry said. Among the newly joined members,

the age group of 18-25 years constitutes 58.60 per cent of total new members added during the month. This shows that the majority of the members joining the organised sector workforce are first-time job seekers in this age group. The data also showed that approximately 11.10 lakh members exited but rejoined the EPFO. These members have switched their jobs and rejoined the establishments covered under EPFO and opted to transfer their accumulations instead of applying for final settlement thus, extending their social security protection with the EPFO. A declining trend in the number of exits has been observed for the last four months, the

ministry observed. In absolute terms, the number of members exiting EPFO in October 2023 is the lowest in the last 12 months, it stated. Gender-wise analysis of payroll data represents that out of the total 7.72 lakh new members added during the month, around 2.04 lakh are new female members, joining EPFO for the first time. Also, the net female member addition during the month stood at around 3.03 lakh which is around 15 per cent higher compared with the corresponding month of the previous year. State-wise analysis of payroll data denoted that net member addition is highest in the five states of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Karnataka and Haryana.

Centre released Rs 900 crore in two installments to TN: FM

New Delhi, Dec 23:



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman interacts with Union Minister of State for Entrepreneurship, Skill Development and Electronics and Technology Rajeev Chandrasekhar during a meeting, in New Delhi.

Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the Centre has released Rs 900 crore in two installments to Tamil Nadu in the current financial year, to deal with the havoc caused by the unprecedented rainfall and flooding. A total of 31 people died in four southern districts owing to the heavy rainfall that occurred early this week, the Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister said. Briefing reporters here, the natural calamity has claimed human lives and caused damage to infrastructure and communication systems. Extending her con-

dolences to the bereaved family members, Sitharaman, who spoke in Tamil, said, "The amount of rainfall that should have occurred for the

whole year has been received in a single day. For example, if the total amount of rainfall is 50 cm in a place like Tuticorin, it has received the entire

amount of rainfall in one single day." Sitharaman said the Regional Meteorological Centre, Chennai has ultra-modern equipment including three dopplers and had forecast on December 12 itself that there would be heavy rainfall in the four districts - Tenkasi, Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli and Tuticorin on December 17. She was responding to Chief Minister M K Stalin's charge that the India Meteorological Department had failed to issue timely warnings about the extreme rainfall that battered four southern districts and it had issued a red alert two days after the downpour began.

Punjab FM Cheema asks banks to meet loan targets for startups by March

Chandigarh, Dec 23:



Punjab Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema on Friday asked banks to meet targets of disbursement of Mudra and other loans for startups in the state by March. He said emphasis should be given on schemes aimed at empowering the Scheduled Caste community and women. Cheema was chairing a meeting of PNB and other banks, along with Rajya Sabha MP Vikramjeet Singh Sahney, here, according to an official release. The meeting was convened to ascertain the quantum of loans extended by these banks for self-employment and startups under various schemes like Pradhan

Mantri Mudra Yojna (PMMY), Prime Minister Employment Programme (PMEGP), and National Urban Livelihood Mission, where the nationalised banks are supposed to extend the loan of Rs 50,000 to 2 crore young entrepreneurs.

India's alcoholic beverages exports to cross USD 1 bn in next few years

New Delhi, Dec 23:

The country's alcoholic beverages exports are expected to cross USD 1 billion in the next few years on account of increasing demand for spirits in global markets, a senior government official said on Thursday. As against the exports of USD 325 million in 2022-23, the outbound shipments from the sector touched USD 230 million during April-October this fiscal. Additional Secretary in the commerce ministry Rajesh Agrawal told reporters here. The global trade of these products is about USD 130 billion. "The demand for Indian spirits is increasing...It is expected

to go beyond USD 1 billion in the next few years. Indian beverages market is growing very fast and slowly demand for these brands across the world is also picking up," Agrawal said, adding that in the forthcoming three-day Indus Food show in Greater Noida (Uttar Pradesh), there will be a wine and spirits section. Over 2,500 global buyers, 5,000 domestic buyers and 86 retail chains would be participating in the show apart from over 120 foreign exhibitors. The world trade in the segment is being captured by Scotch (USD 13 billion). When asked if free trade agreements of India will help promote these exports, he said, "This is also one of

the areas where we are trying to negotiate upon...we are also trying to see the duty concessions that are required in various destinations, we get (that)". The condition that for a product to qualify as a whisky, it must be matured for a period not less than three years has not yet been resolved. The Indian industry claims that because of the warm climate in India, the product matures in one year and gives the same outcome. "The debate is still on whether we should brand it as Indian whiskey or look for a s c o t c h (brand)...International law in many countries prohibits that (one-year thing). It is an unresolved issue," he added.

Better profitability to support corporate rating headroom: Fitch

Mumbai, Dec 23:

Profit margins of domestic companies are likely to swell by 290 basis points over FY23 levels, boosted by lower raw material costs and rising volume led by local demand, despite faster capacity additions in some industries, which will lead to their rating upgrades next fiscal, says an international rating agency. In a report on the domestic corporates in particular and the economy in general, Fitch Ratings Friday said it seems the profit margins of the corporates it rates jumping by 290 bps above the FY23 levels. But it was quick to warn that a sharp or sus-

tained rise in energy prices, given the ongoing geo-political risks, presents downside risks to the projection. On the economy, it expects the country to be among the world's fastest-growing large sovereigns, with resilient GDP growth of 6.5 per cent in FY25, marginally down from a likely 6.9 per cent GDP print this fiscal. The higher growth will be buoyed by strong demand for cement, electricity and petroleum products. This along with the rising infrastructure spends will also boost steel demand. Car sales will continue to rise, despite a likely moderation after robust growth in 2023, said the report.

VINTAGE OVEN



A chef shows a vintage oven at The Bakery, established in 1830, of the Lalit Great Eastern hotel which was used to prepare cakes during the British era, ahead of Christmas, in Kolkata, Saturday, Dec. 23.

Lack of contribution to network costs from large traffic generating digital players a challenge: COAI

New Delhi, Dec 23:

The telecom industry faces a "major challenge" as large traffic-generating digital platforms do not contribute to network costs, COAI said on Friday asserting that the "conundrum" is placing undue burden on telcos, hampering their financial sustainability and impeding further investments into network enhancements. The large traffic-generating platforms, despite earning both from subscription fees and advertising revenues, do not contribute to the network costs financially, rued Cellular Operators' Association of India (COAI) whose prominent members include Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea. Telcos

have been demanding a fair share from such platforms, emphasising the need for equitable cost distribution amid rising infrastructure expenses and increasing costs of network deployment and maintenance. "Despite the overall growth of the sector, the industry faces a major challenge, revolving around the lack of contribution to network costs from Large Traffic Generating (LTG) digital platforms/players," COAI said in a note summing up the year. In the write-up citing the year-end perspective that highlighted among multiple things the "LTG conundrum", COAI Director General, SP Kochhar, said the situation places an undue burden on telcos, hindering their fi-

nancial sustainability and impeding further investments in network enhancements. "The recent bill introduced in the US Senate is also an acknowledgement of the need for high traffic generating 'Edge Service Providers' to contribute to the costs of delivering affordable broadband to all citizens and corroborates the stance of the Indian telecom sector," according to COAI. Industry stakeholders also look forward to a collaborative effort with LTGs to develop high-quality networks and a responsible fair-sharing model, ensuring sustainable growth for the entire digital ecosystem. The evolving regulatory landscape is also expected to play a

pivotal role in addressing challenges, and providing a supportive framework for innovation while maintaining fair competition, as per COAI. India's telecom sector witnessed significant developments in 2023, including "remarkable growth" propelled by the nationwide rollout of 5G, setting unprecedented benchmarks. With over 3.97 lakh of 5G BTS sites established in more than 738 districts until November, India has risen to become a global 5G leader. With 1.148 billion wireless subscribers as of August, the industry has witnessed a 1.9 per cent growth from the previous year, with the average data usage per subscriber soaring to 17.4 GB per month.

