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'Vikas ka damru' played in Kashi for 10 yrs: PM

Varanasi, Feb 23 (PTI):

Prime Minister Narendra Modi invoked Lord Mahadev's blessings in Kashi while affirming that his constituency had witnessed the 'damru' of development playing in the last 10 years.

"Kashi is the capital of all knowledge, today that power and form of Kashi is emerging again. This is a matter of pride for the whole of India. We all are just instruments, the one who does it in Kashi is Mahadev. Wherever there are blessings of Mahadev, that earth becomes prosperous," PM Modi said while addressing a gathering at BHU in Varanasi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation of several projects worth more than Rs 13,000 crore in his parliamentary constituency of Varanasi on



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with UP CM Yogi Adityanath and others during dedication ceremony of Kashi Complex of Banas Dairy Plant, in Varanasi, Friday, Feb. 23.

Friday. According to an official statement, these projects include multiple roads, a cooking gas bottling plant, a milk processing unit, and a silk fabric printing common facility centre for weavers. For the textiles sector of Varanasi, Modi laid the foundation stone of a National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIIFT).

He also laid the foundation of a new medical college and the National Centre of Ageing at Banaras Hindu University. Modi inaugurated the Srigra Sports Stadium Phase-1 and District Rifle Shooting Range.

He inaugurated various development works around Sant Ravidas Janmasthan worth about Rs 32 crore, and laid the foundation stone of Sant Ravidas Museum.

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Man enters IAF station posing as wing commander

New Delhi, Feb 23 (PTI):

A 39-year-old man was arrested for allegedly entering the Palam Air Force Station in the Delhi Cantonment area posing as a wing commander of the IAF, police said on Friday. A senior police officer said that the accused, identified as Vinayak Chadha, wanted to get his father treated at the dental hospital of the air force station. Deputy Commissioner of Police (southwest) Rohit Meena

said police were informed about the incident on Wednesday.

The accused was held by the air force staff while he was trying to enter the restricted area the DCP said. He said the man entered the air force dental hospital on Thimmaya Road by posing as a wing commander.

He breached the first layer of security using a forged identity document but was caught later by air force security staff, Meena said.

Modi has presented Varanasi on global map: Adityanath

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday said by giving development projects worth thousands of crores of rupees to Kashi in the last 10 years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has presented the holy town on the global map in a new form. In his address on the occasion, Adityanath praised the prime minister. According to an official statement, he said, "Today, once again the prime minister has arrived with schemes worth thousands of crores. Banas Dairy has been built at a cost of Rs 650 crore. It seems it is like a modern pilgrimage for farmers involved in animal husbandry," Adityanath added that "this dairy has become a new centre for honouring and preserving the faith of India, along with increasing income".

Youngsters protesting against paper leak, Modi misleading them: Rahul

New Delhi, Feb 23 (PTI):

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday said youngsters from Lucknow to Prayagraj have taken to the streets against the alleged paper leak in police recruitments, while Prime Minister Narendra Modi is "misleading" them in Varanasi.

He also shared a video on X of youngsters protesting on the streets against the paper leak in police recruitment exams and said Modi is lecturing them about their own backyard. "From Lucknow to Prayagraj, youngsters are on the streets over the paper leak in police recruitments. And just 100 km away in Varanasi, the prime minister is misleading them..." Gandhi said in a post in Hindi on the microblogging platform. "In typical



Banarasi style, Modiji is telling 'Nani about nani-hal', he said, in an apparent reference to lecturing people about their own backyards.

In a relentless attack on the opposition, Modi said in Varanasi on Friday that these parties are instigating people in the name of caste and making them fight against each other. He also hit out at Gandhi for his "drunk men" on Varanasi roads remark, saying those not in their senses are terming youngsters "nasheri" (addicts).

Locals resort to violence in Sandeshkhali

Kolkata, Feb 23 (PTI): Fresh protests rattled the troubled enclave of Sandeshkhali in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district on Friday, as enraged locals vented their ire by torching the property of TMC leaders accused of tormenting villagers besides staging demonstrations against perceived police inaction towards the perpetrators.

During the unrest, residents barricaded roads with logs and set them on fire to block the entry of police vehicles into Jhupkhali area of Sandeshkhali. Tensions persisted for the second consecutive day, with reports of TMC leaders being assaulted and their residences being ransacked.

Responding to the situation, Director General of Police (DGP) Rajeev Kumar, for the second consecutive day, went to the troubled region and pledged firm action against those responsible for the unrest.

Policeman injured, tear gas shells fired as cops, farmers clash



Farmers burn effigies during the 'Black Day' protest at the Punjab-Haryana Shambhu border, in Patiala district, Friday, Feb. 23

Chandigarh, Feb 23, (PTI):

A police officer was injured Friday in a pitched battle between protesting farmers and cops in Khedi Chwpaata in Haryana's Hisar. Visuals showed a chaotic and volatile situation; police - escorted by riot personnel in full gear - can be seen taking people into custody while farm-

ers surrounded them.

The violence - in which tear gas shells were fired and police resorted to a lathi charge, while protesters threw stones - broke after the farmers were stopped from marching to Khanauri on the Punjab border.

They were headed to join thousands others who have gathered there, and

SKM observes 'black day', burns effigies of BJP leaders

The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) observed a "black day" on Friday and burnt effigies of BJP leaders in protest against the Haryana Police's action against agitating farmers camping at two of the state's border points. The call was given by the SKM on Thursday to mourn the death of Shubhkar Singh, who died in clashes between the Haryana Police and farmers from Punjab.

at the Shambhu border crossing, ahead of a 'Delhi Chalo' march to demand a legal guarantee for MSP, or minimum support price, and waiver of farm loans, pensions, and all-back of increased electricity rates, among other things. Earlier today a 62-year-old farmer died in Khanauri after suffering a cardiac arrest.

BRIEF



The Maitreya Buddha statue, coming up at Buri along the Indo-Bhutan border, under Lumla constituency of Arunachal Pradesh.

Charred to death

Bareilly: Four girls in the age group of three-six years were charred to death after a fire broke out in a hut here on Friday, police said. The incident happened in the Nawada Bilsandi village, they said. District Magistrate Ravindra Kumar said three girls -- Priyanshi (3), Manvi (6) and Naina (5) -- died on the spot while another girl, Neetu (6), was seriously injured and taken to the hospital.

Two held

New Delhi: Two men were arrested for allegedly duping a government employee of over Rs 90,000 on the pretext of redeeming credit card points, police said on Friday. The victim, in his complaint, alleged that the fraudsters contacted regarding redeeming points on his credit card.

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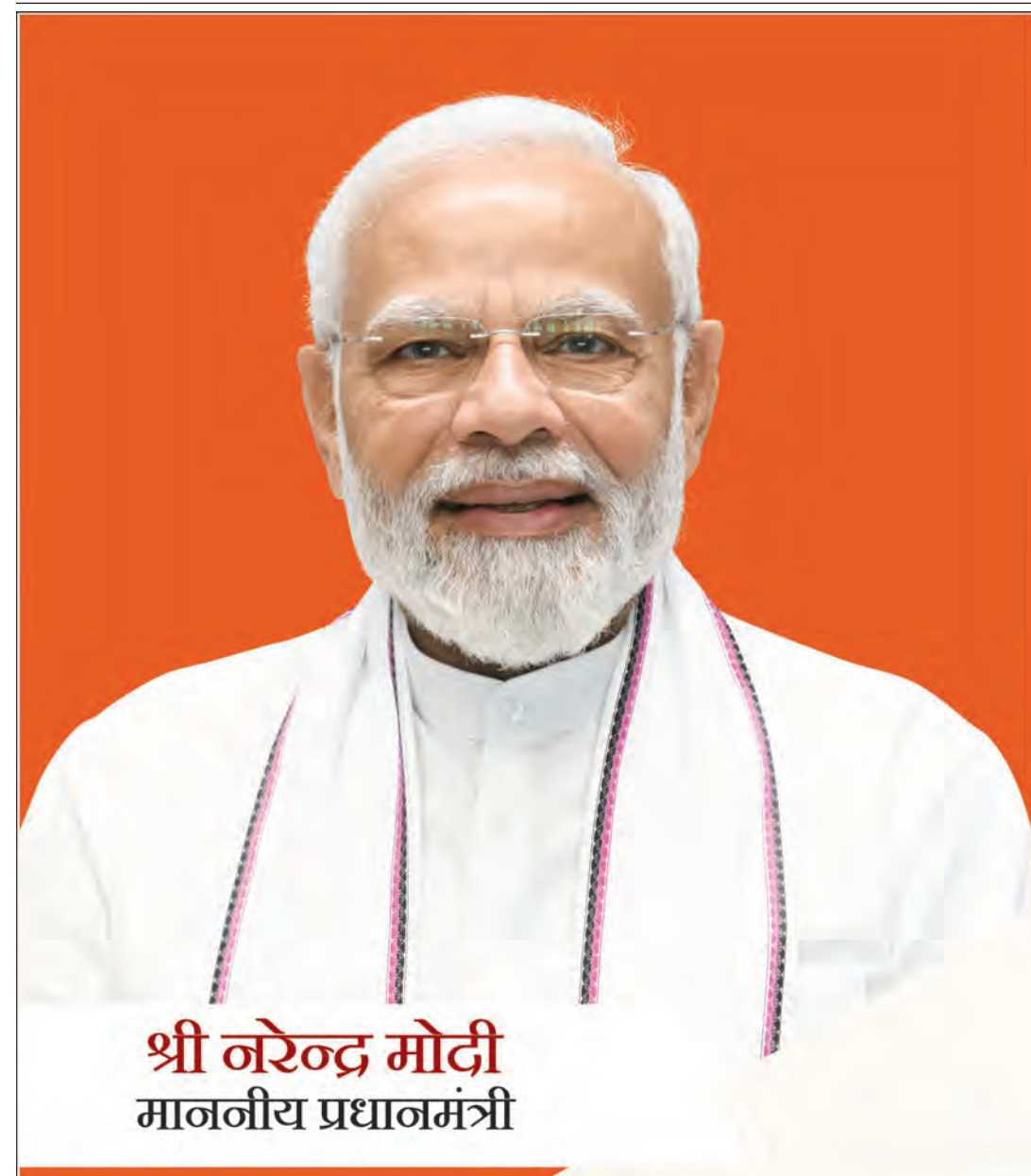
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10 परियोजनाओं का उद्घाटन, लोकार्पण एवं शिलान्यास

दिनांक 24 फरवरी 2024, दोपहर 12:30 बजे

(डीडी न्यूज पर कार्यक्रम का सीधा प्रसारण)

लोकार्पण एवं उद्घाटन

- 15,799 करोड़ रुपए की परियोजना लारा सुपर क्रिटिकल थर्मल पावर प्लांट स्टेज-1 (2x800MW)
- 907 करोड़ रुपए की लागत से राजनांदगांव जिले के 9 गांवों के 451 एकड़ क्षेत्र में निर्मित 100 मेगावाट एसी/155 मेगावाट डीसी सौर ऊर्जा प्रोजेक्ट
- 583 करोड़ रुपए लागत की 2 परियोजनाओं भिलाई में 50 मेगावाट सोलर पावर प्लांट और बिलासपुर- उसलापुर फ्लाईओवर
- रायगढ़ क्षेत्र में 217 करोड़ रुपए की लागत के ओपन कास्ट प्रोजेक्ट अंतर्गत बरौद कोल हैंडलिंग प्लांट
- दीपका क्षेत्र में 211 करोड़ रुपए की लागत की ओपन कास्ट प्रोजेक्ट अंतर्गत दीपका कोल हैंडलिंग प्लांट
- रायगढ़ क्षेत्र में 173 करोड़ रुपए की ओपन कास्ट प्रोजेक्ट अंतर्गत छाल कोल हैंडलिंग प्लांट
- अंबिकापुर से शिवनगर तक 52 किलोमीटर लंबाई की सड़क और बनारी से मसनियाकला तक 56 किलोमीटर लंबी सड़क (राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग- 49)

शिलान्यास

- रायगढ़ में लारा सुपर क्रिटिकल थर्मल पावर प्लांट स्टेज-2 (2x800MW) का शिलान्यास

छत्तीसगढ़ को परियोजनाओं से लाभ

- उच्च कार्यक्षमता के साथ कम कोयले में ज्यादा विद्युत उत्पादन, प्रदूषण में कमी के साथ विकसित होते भारत की ऊर्जा-माँग की पूर्ति
- अक्षय ऊर्जा का उपयोग कर बड़े सौर ऊर्जा प्लांट से शून्य प्रदूषण के साथ राज्य व देश की घरेलू विद्युत माँग की पूर्ति
- रेलवे फ्लाईओवर के निर्माण से अतितीव्र माल ढुलाई संभव जिससे जिसों की कीमत में कमी
- ओपन कास्ट कोल हैंडलिंग प्लांट से शीघ्रता से कोयले का उत्पादन व ट्रांसपोर्ट संभव, बचेगा पैसा और ऊर्जा क्षेत्र को निर्बाध फ्यूल सप्लाई
- राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग से जुड़ेगे अब तक उपेक्षित स्थान, सड़क से आर्थिक उन्नति और विकास

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डबल इंजन की सरकार

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यह क्वीआर कोड स्कैन करें



मुख्यमंत्री कार्यालय का
कॉन्टैक्ट पैनल सॉफ्टवेयर
करने के लिए
यह क्वीआर कोड स्कैन करें

Uproar in State assembly over murder of tribal family in Kabirdham

Raipur, Feb 23: The Chhattisgarh assembly witnessed noisy scenes on Friday with the main opposition Congress demanding resignation of Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma over the alleged murder of three members of a tribal family in Kabirdham district. Proceedings had to be adjourned twice and Congress MLAs were suspended after they trooped into the well of the House.



A couple belonging to the Baiga tribe and their minor son died in a fire in Kabirdham district last month. The Baigas fall in the 'Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups' category. Former chief minister Bhupesh Baghel and other Congress legislators raised the issue in the Zero Hour, demanding a discussion.

Amid the uproar that followed, Speaker Raman Singh adjourned the proceedings for five minutes. When the proceedings resumed, the Speaker read

out the adjournment motion notice of the opposition party and asked the concerned minister to give a reply. As deputy CM Vijay Sharma who holds the home portfolio was not present, Health Minister Shyam Bihari Jaiswal made a statement on his behalf.

Budhram Baiga, his wife Hirmati and their son Jonhu Ram died on January 15 after a fire engulfed their hut in Maathpur village under Kukkur police station area, Jaiswal said.

Investigation revealed that the deceased had at-

tended a function at a relative's house in the village the previous night when Budhram had an altercation with some persons over a piece of land, he said.

Based on the statements of eyewitnesses and forensic evidence, 13 persons including two women were arrested and a boy was detained in connection with the alleged murder on Thursday, the minister said. After Jaiswal made the statement, the Speaker refused to allow a discussion on the adjournment notice. Congress legislators accused the police of

trying to cover up the incident and claimed that attempts were made to protect the accused who were arrested more than a month after the crime. Congress legislators then started sloganeering, demanding suspension of the district collector and resignation of the home minister. Opposition MLAs also entered the well of the House and were automatically suspended. The Speaker then adjourned the proceedings for five minutes.

Some opposition MLAs also displayed posters containing messages in support of their demands, to which the Speaker objected.

The Congress MLAs then sat on the floor of the well and recited the prayer 'Raghupati Raghav Rajaram'. Later, they staged a protest in front of Mahatma Gandhi's statue on the legislature's premises and boycotted the rest of the assembly proceedings.

Assembly passes resolution expressing gratitude to PM Modi

● For Ram temple consecration

Raipur, Feb 23: The Chhattisgarh legislative assembly on Friday passed a resolution expressing gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP-led Centre for the consecration of the Ram temple in Ayodhya last month.

State Dharmik Nyas (religious trust) and Dharmsva department Minister Brijmohan Agrawal presented the resolution in the House.

"Chhattisgarh is Lord Ram's 'nanihal' (home of maternal grandparents). It had been Ram Van Gaman Marg, the route taken him during his exile. Lord Ram is worshipped by three crore people of the state," the resolution stated.

On behalf of every citizen of Chhattisgarh, the House expresses its gratitude for the consecration of the Ram temple in Ayodhya by the prime minister, which the people had waited for nearly 500

years, it said.

The minister pointed out that the Opposition Congress MLAs were absent during a discussion on the resolution in the House.

Earlier in the day, Congress MLAs boycotted the proceedings of the House after the chair refused to allow their demand for a discussion on the murder of three members of a Baiga tribe family in Kabirdham district last month.

The consecration of Ram Lalla in Ayodhya was a historic event, and several countries had admired it, Agrawal said.

"It is unfortunate for the Congress that it is not present for this discussion. If the Congress members had opposed the resolution in the House, people would have taught them a lesson, and if they had supported it, their party would have taught them a lesson," he said.

After discussion in the absence of Congress MLAs, the House unanimously passed the resolution.

Issue of health facilities echoes in Ch'garh Assembly

Raipur, Feb 23: The issue of health echoed on the 14th day of the budget session of Chhattisgarh Assembly today. MLA Indrakumar Sao asked for information about the schemes of the health department. According to him the benefits of health schemes are not available in serious diseases. He said commissions were being taken for referrals from government hospitals. Health Minister Shyam Bihari Jaiswal said that the government had a shortage of experts.

Raising the issue of health facilities in Gariaband MLA Janak Dhruv asked a question regarding the vacant posts in the setup of community health centers operated in Devbhog of Gariaband district. How many community centers are there in Devbhog development block, MLA asked? Information was sought from the Health Minister regarding how many posts are vacant in the setup of the department and when will the appointments be made on those posts. The

MLA also raised the issue of death of people due to kidney in Supabeda in the House. As many as 135 people have died due to kidney disease in Supebeda, he said. The minister replied that doctors had been appointed in Supebeda.

Health Minister Shyam Bihari Jaiswal, while answering the MLA's questions, said, there was no community center in Devbhog development block of Gariaband district, but the number of primary health centers was 3. He said that 22 sub-health centers were also operational. Apart from this, there is a setup of 100 beds, he said, adding that five doctors have been appointed on 22nd February itself. The process of recruitment to vacant posts is going on in the setup of the department, he said.

Earlier, as soon as the proceedings of the House started, tribute was paid to Acharya Shri Vidyasagar Maharaj ji. Assembly Speaker Dr Raman Singh paid tribute. After this, the House observed two minutes silence and paid tribute. The proceedings of the House were adjourned for five minutes.

Issue of 'Shodhpeeths' in universities raised in Assembly

Raipur, Feb 23: BJP MLA Ajay Chandrakar raised the issue pertaining to 'Shodhpeeths' in state universities in Chhattisgarh Assembly today. Minister Brijmohan Agrawal admitted that 'Shodhpeeths' did not work in the last five years. Chairmen were not appointed in many Shodhpeeths including Guru Ghasidas Shodhpeeth, he said, adding that previous government only misled in the name of

Chhattisgarhi.

On the 14th day of the budget session of Chhattisgarh Assembly, BJP MLA Ajay Chandrakar asked a question regarding Shodhpeeths in universities of the state. In response, Brijmohan Agrawal said that the objective of the formation of Shodhpeeths had not been completely fulfilled. Ever since the Shodhpeeths were formed, posts remained vacant, he noted. On this the MLA

questioned that when they did not fulfill the objective then why was an amount of more than Rs 146 crore given as grant in 3 years? The minister said that universities received grants, but no grants had been given to 'Shodhpeeths'.

Ajay Chandrakar, citing three books published by Kabir Development Communication Study Center under Kushabhau Thakre Journalism and Mass Communication

University, Raipur - Sant Kabir ka Itihaas, Sant Kabir ka Chhattisgarh and Kahat Kabir, said that 3 books on Sant Kabir were magically written in one year. 'Where was it printed from? If there are no employees and officers, then how did the printing happen?', he asked.

Minister Brijmohan Agrawal said that he also felt that the three books had been written with magic. The matter would be looked into, he said.

Leader of Opposition Dr Charandas Mahant asked about the name of the learned author. 'If the book has been published then distribute it in the House, otherwise tell the actual situation', he said. Is the book only written or is it also printed? he asked. On this the minister said that he had already given the answer. The department will find out about these three books, he said. 'If we get the book we will distribute it', he said.

Elderly man sleeping in a shop murdered

Raipur, Feb 23: The murder of an elderly person was reported in Kharora police station area of the capital Raipur. Dular Verma (55), resident of village Kanaki, was murdered by unidentified persons. His dead body was found in his own shop on Friday morning. After the information, Kharora police reached the spot. Police have registered a case of murder against unidentified murderers and started investigation. Kharora police station in-charge Satendra Shyam said that the body of the elderly man was recovered from the shop in the morning. The crime was committed by pelting stones on the head. Investigation into the matter was started. The old enmity is being investigated. According to the police, the deceased elderly owned a 'paan' shop. The information about the murder of the old man came to light when his son reached the shop in the morning and saw his dead body soaked in blood lying there.

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Nyota Bhojan: a concept to encourage community participation in PM POSHAN

Event organised in Teligundra of Patan

Bhilai, Feb 23:

In Chhattisgarh, an invitation for lunch / dinner is called Nyota. It is based on the Indian tradition of serving food to a large number of people on various festivals or occasions such as anniversaries, birthdays, marriages and national festivals etc. Chhattisgarh Government has introduced the concept of Nyota Bhojan under which people can provide nutritious and tasty food to children in the form of extra food items or full meals on occasions such as festivals.

As per the instructions of the Government of Chhattisgarh, Nyota Bhojan was organised at the Government Primary and Middle School, Teligundra of Patan



Block. A newly married couple - Prateek Sahu and Bhumika Sahu hosted the lunch of the school children and made it a memorable moment of their married life. In this Nyota Bhojan program, pulses, rice, bananas and sweets

were served to the children. All the children happily ate the food. The school staff along with the guests also had lunch with the children. School coordinator Jainendra Ganjeer, Head Master Mannu Verma and

development block education officer TR Jagdalle were present.

Nyota Bhojan is completely voluntary and people of the community or any social organization can either organize a complete meal or contribute food items like sweets, snacks, fruits or sprouts etc. as additional nutritional supplements. The "Nyota Bhojan" (invitation meal) is not a substitute for the meals provided in the school, but is only a supplement to the meals provided in the school.

To encourage community participation in the Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman Yojana (PM POSHAN), the concept of Nyota Bhojan has also been introduced in the state of Chhattisgarh, in which children benefiting from the Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman Yojana are given

nutritious and tasty food in the form of additional food items or a complete meal. Under this program common people can provide additional items or complete meals in the form of sweets, snacks, fruits etc on special occasions. Under this scheme, people can also provide kitchen utensils. The Nyota Bhojan will help develop a sense of belonging among the community. This will help in increasing the nutritional value of food provided under PM POSHAN. This will help in developing mutual coordination between the school and the local community and will help in creating a feeling of equality among children of all community sections. The Nyota Bhojan will help in further strengthening the immunity through supplementary nutrition.

Coloniser and Chollywood actor Manoj Rajput arrested

Bhilai, Feb 23:



Durg based coloniser and Chollywood actor Manoj Rajput has been arrested on charges of repeatedly raping a minor girl on promise of marriage. On victim's complaint, an FIR was lodged at GRP Station in Old Bhilai under section 376, 377 of IPC and POCSO Act. The actor has been arrested.

It needs to be mentioned here that Manoj Rajput is a renowned land dealer of Durg City and owns the firm Manoj Rajput Layouts. He owns hundreds of acres of land on the sides of Nehru Nagar Anjora Bypass and has sold hundreds of plots after developing the land. After achieving success in the real estate business, he produced a Chollywood movie "Goon Ke Hero Shahar ma Hero" under the banner of Manoj Rajput Films. This movie was his biopic and he acted in the lead role.

According to the complainant, Manoj Rajput first raped her in the year 2011 when she was a minor. Rajput was known to her family and he often visited their residence in Railway Colony, Old Bhilai. Finding her alone one day, Rajput raped her and asked her not to tell anything to anybody. On the promise of marriage, Rajput raped her repeatedly. Later, the girl realised that she is being sexually exploited on a fake promise of marriage, she narrated the happenings to her family

after which they reached GRP Police Station and lodged an FIR.

It can be recollected here that in the month of January this year, a farmer had lodged an FIR against Manoj Rajput for beating him black and blue. The farmer had sold his land to Manoj Rajput and when he reached Rajput's office for money, Rajput and his bouncers beat him with rods and sticks. Earlier to this during 2017-18, he was arrested on charges of illegal plotting, grabbing government land, etc.

Mahtari Vandan Yojana: Claim - objection list published

Bhilai, Feb 23:

About 80,000 women from Bhilai Municipal Corporation area have submitted applications to get benefit under the scheme Mahtari Vandana Yojana. The claim objection list for the same has been published on February 2 in all the zone offices and 148 Anganwadi centers across Bhilai Municipal Corporation. Beneficiaries can review the list regarding their application and submit their claim objection form to the nearest Anganwadi center within three days.

Giving information, Nodal Officer of the scheme in Bhilai Corporation area,

Preeti Singh and Project Officer Shilpa Tiwari said that a total of 80,000 applications have been received for which online entry has been done. The claim objection list has been published from February 23-25, 2024 in all the zone offices of the Municipal Corporation and 148 Anganwadi centers across Bhilai Municipal Corporation. Beneficiaries' bank accounts are not linked to Aadhaar, information about which is being given to the beneficiaries through Anganwadi centres, so that the beneficiaries can get their bank accounts linked to Aadhaar on time and get the benefit of the amount sent by the government on the stipulated date.

Risali Corporation: Nine get Ujjwala gas connection

Bhilai, Feb 23:

In the third phase of Vikas Bharat Sankalp Yatra, a camp was organised in Talpuri and Pragati Nagar under Risali Corporation on Friday. Mayor Shashi Sinha spoke about setting up a camp with the aim of providing benefits to all. About 2500 people had reached the camps organized at different places.

Mayor Shashi Sinha said that through Vikas Bharat Sankalp Yatra Camp, not only the schemes of the government are being publicised but the beneficiaries are also getting benefits. Stalls of about ten schemes ranging from Aadhaar card update were set up in the camp. The number of people who got Aadhaar up-



dated and error corrected in the camp was high. When Divyang Ghanshyam Soni reached the camp in Pragati Nagar, on the instructions of Commissioner Ashish Dewangan, his case was completed on priority basis.

At the outset, Risali Mayor inaugurated the camp with traditional lighting of the lamp. Councilor Savita Dhawas, Jamuna Thakur, Mamta Yadav, Sarika Sahu, Tikam Singh, Dharmendra Bhagat, Rama Sahu, Shailendra Sahu, MP representative Deepak Pappu Chandrakar, Mandal president Shailendra Shende, Raju Janghel, Dashrath Sahu, Vicky Soni, Ajit Chaudhary etc were present. The guests were welcomed by Corporation Secretary Rohit Sahu and Jagarnath Kushwaha.

Parwat receives Youth Icon award

Bhilai, Feb 23:

#BhilaicandO Parwat Foundation President and State BJYM leader Atul Parwat has been honoured with Chhattisgarh Youth Icon Award. CM Vishnu Deo Sai gave away the award during a function held at Hotel Sayaji in Raipur. Atul was selected for this award for his remarkable social service and giving a new identity to Hindu New Year in the state to make the youth aware about religion.



SSM organises blood donation camp

Bhilai, Feb 23:

Shri Shankaracharya Mahavidyalaya (SSM), Junwani Bhilai in collaboration with "Saana Blood Donation and Component Centre" organised a blood donation camp in the college campus on Thursday. College faculty and students participated in large numbers. The entire event was organised with the help of Gurmeet Singh, Alumni (Computer Department).

Dr J Durga Prasad Rao (Academic Dean) of Shri Shankaracharya Mahavidyalaya, said that the camp was organized to create awareness among the general public about the importance of blood donation. It is a



global call for people to come forward and donate blood voluntarily. Dr Archana Jha, Principal of the college online stated that despite the technological advancements, there remains no alternative to blood and one unit of blood can save as many as three lives.

The event was organised to promote and spread awareness about the importance of blood donation amongst everyone. Total foot count was 27. This noble cause camp was supervised by Dr KJ Mondal, Dr Shilpa Kulkarni and other staff members.

Dr Nandini Chandravanshi's painting exhibition inaugurated

Bhilai, Feb 23:

A three-day solo exhibition of paintings made by Dr Nandini Chandravanshi was inaugurated at Nehru Art Gallery, on February 22, 2024, by Mukesh Kumar Gupta, CGM (BRM). Chief Guest Gupta was accompanied by his spouse and family members. More than 70 beautiful paintings depicting flora and fauna, Hindu Gods and Goddesses, Chhattisgarh tourist spots, folk culture, and paintings conveying social messages have been put on display in the exhibition, organized by the Public Relations Department of SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant.

MK Gupta inaugurated the exhibition by lighting a Ceremonial Lamp in the presence of Dr Nandini



Chandravanshi, other Senior Officials, personnel of Bhilai Steel Plant's BRM and Public Relations Departments, Art Club members, citizens, and art lovers in large numbers.

Chief Guest Gupta, CGM (BRM) took a keen interest in the paintings, featured in the exhibition, and interacted with Dr Nandini Chandravanshi. Gupta penned his views in

the visitor's book stating "Dr Nandini may have taken up painting as a stress relieving activity, however in just 45 years, her understanding of, colours, brushstrokes, and artistic vision is no less than that of a skilled and trained artist. Her paintings are a collection of all the colours of life, which earns her a place among versatile artists. On behalf

of the SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant fraternity, I wish Dr Nandini Chandravanshi a bright future in the field of painting".

Dr Nandini Chandravanshi, (MBBS, MD), the Director of City Hospital, Janjgir, Chhattisgarh, is a pediatrician. Dr Chandravanshi is a self-motivated artist, who started pursuing this art as a stress-manage-

ment activity, which now has become a routine of her life. She believes that her approach to expressing emotions and spreading happiness helped her greatly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each brushstroke on the vibrant canvas tells a story, says Dr Chandravanshi.

Working in acrylic form on canvas, Dr Nandini is an expressive artist covering a wide range of depictions of nature, expressionistic, religious, modern art, folk art, and portraiture. Formerly, Dr Nandini has presented her solo exhibition at Lokayat Art Gallery, Delhi, and Nehru Center Art Gallery, Worli, Mumbai. This three-day painting exhibition will be open to the public till February 24, 2024 from 17:30 hrs to 20:30 hrs.

BSP's Mines bag 18 awards in Mines Environment & Mineral Conservation Week 2023-24

Bhilai, Feb 23:

The Concluding Ceremony of the 07th Mines Environment and Mineral Conservation Week 2023-24 (MEMC Week 2023-24), under the aegis of the Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM), Raipur Region, was hosted by SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant. The Concluding Ceremony and Prize Distribution Functions were organised at Mahatma Gandhi Kala Mandir, Civic Centre Bhilai, on February 11, 2024. Piyush Narayan Sharma, Chief Controller of Mines I/c (MDR-Indian Bureau of Mines, Nagpur) was the Chief Guest on this occasion, while Dr YG Kale, Controller of Mines (Central Zone- IBM, Nagpur), was present as Special Guest. Devdurlabh Dash, Regional Mining Geologist (IBM Raipur) and



Coordinator (MEMC Week 2023-24) announced the awards in Poster Competition, Slogan Competition, Stall Awards, MEMC Week 2023-24 Awards, Paryavaran-Bandhu and Theme Awards in A-1 Category and A-2 Category, B-Category, C-Category, and other categories. The winners were felicitated by the dignitaries and guests.

Rajhara Mechanized Mine performed exceptionally well in the A-2 category and won a total of 5 first prizes with significant overall performance in Plantation, Mineral Conservation, Mineral Beneficiation, and Environment Monitoring categories.

In the A-1 category, Dalli-Jharandalli Mechanized Mine bagged

a total of 5 awards, which include First Prize for Mineral Beneficiation and Publicity Propaganda, Second Prize for Environment Monitoring, and Third Prize for Sustainable Development and Overall Performance.

In the A-2 category, the Mahamaya-Dulki Iron Ore Mines won two second prizes for Mineral Conservation and Mineral

Beneficiation, while the Rowghat Iron Ore Mines bagged a total of two 'Third Prizes' in the A-2 category for Systematic and Scientific Development and Sustainable Development.

Under the B category, BSP's Nandini Limestone Mines was awarded 3rd Prize in all three categories including Waste Dump Management, Mineral

Conservation, and Reclamation/Rehabilitation.

Roopram Verma (Master Technician) Environment Department, MVT Center Rajhara was felicitated with the Parivartan-Bandhu Award in the individual awards category, for his exemplary work in the field of environment conservation. The stall based on the Slime Beneficiation Plant,

IOC Dallirajhara was awarded the first prize in the stall exhibition.

Thus, SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant bagged a total of good 18 awards in various categories in the 07th Mines Environment and Mineral Conservation Week 2023-24 (MEMC Week 2023-24).

The flag hoisting ceremony of the 07th Mine Environment and Mineral Conservation Week under the aegis of IBM, Raipur Region was organized at Hotel Sayaji, Raipur, on January 07, 2024. A total of seven inspection teams constituted from various mines, for inspection of Mines of the region, were flagged off by Prem Prakash, Regional Controller of Mines (IBM Raipur) and Patron (MEMC Week 2023-24) was the Chief Guest on this occasion. This year's theme for the MEMC Week 2023-24 is 'Clean Mines Green Mines'. As many as 138 representatives from 67 mines of Chhattisgarh also took part in the one-day General Body Meeting of the 07th MEMC Week 2023-24.

this inspection, the team evaluated the mines as per the mark sheet of MEMC Week 2023-24.

It is noteworthy that SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant's Iron Ore Complex (IOC) Dalli Rajhara also hosted the General Body Meeting (GBM) of 7th Mines Environment and Mineral Conservation Week 2023-24 (MEMC 2023-24) under the aegis of Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM), Raipur Region, on October 13, 2023. Prem Prakash, Regional Controller of Mines (IBM Raipur) and Patron (MEMC Week 2023-24) was the Chief Guest on this occasion. This year's theme for the MEMC Week 2023-24 is 'Clean Mines Green Mines'. As many as 138 representatives from 67 mines of Chhattisgarh also took part in the one-day General Body Meeting of the 07th MEMC Week 2023-24.



मोदी की गारंटी
विष्णु का सुशासन



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हम ही संवारेंगे

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Shri Narendra Modi
Honorable Prime Minister

Ramotsav

Rajim Kumbh (Kalp)

24 February to 8 March 2024

Kumbh Kalp Mahotsav Organized
in the Ancient City of Rajim located at
the Triveni Sangam of
the Mahanadi, Pairi and Sondhur River



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all the visiting Saints

Paru Snan

Magh Purnima- 24 February, Janaki Jayanti- 4 March
Mahashivratri- 8 March



Shri Vishnu Deo Sai
Honorable Chief Minister

सबका साथ, सबका विकास, सबका विश्वास और सबका प्रयास

PM Modi to inaugurate first Mile Connectivity projects of SECL today

Korba, Feb 23:

In line with India's commitment to strengthening energy security and furthering sustainable development, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to virtually inaugurate three key first Mile Connectivity Projects of South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL), a Coal India Subsidiary under Ministry of Coal, in Chhattisgarh tomorrow. These projects, valued at over Rs 600 crore, mark a significant step towards faster, eco-friendly, and efficient mechanized coal evacuation.

uation.

The Dipka OCP Coal Handling Plant, located in SECL's Dipka Area, stands out as a key project constructed at a cost exceeding Rs. 211 Crore. With an annual coal handling capacity of 25 MT, the project features an overground bunker capacity of 20,000 tons and a 2.1 km long conveyor belt, facilitating the rapid loading of 4,500 - 8,500 tons of coal per hour. Moreover, the project will ensure eco-friendly transportation by minimizing road-based coal movement between the pit and rail

sidings, thereby curbing carbon emissions. This will not only benefit the environment but also enhances operational efficiency by significantly reducing rake loading time to less than an hour.

Another noteworthy project is the Chhal OCP Coal Handling Plant in SECL's Raigarh Area, built at a cost of over 173 crores. With a capacity to handle 6 MT of coal annually, it includes an overground bunker, a conveyor belt spanning 1.7 km, and a Silo with a capacity of 3,000 tons.

Additionally, the Baroud

OCP Coal Handling Plant at SECL Raigarh Area, designed to handle 10 MT of coal annually, has been completed at a cost of Rs. 216 crores. Equipped with an overground bunker capacity of 20,000 tons and a 1.7 km conveyor belt, the project features a rapid loading system capable of loading 5000-7500 tons of coal per hour, significantly streamlining the loading process and contributing to operational efficiency.

Aligning with the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan, these projects demonstrate commitment to provide multi-

modal connectivity and enhancing coal infrastructure across the region. By generating local employment opportunities and ensuring efficient energy supply, they play a pivotal role in the socio-economic development of the area.

Embracing the principles of environmental sustainability, the First Mile Connectivity (FMC) projects minimize reliance on coal transportation via roads, thus reducing traffic congestion, road accidents, and environmental impact.

Naxal camp busted after two encounters

■ Along Bijapur-Dantewada border

Bijapur, Feb 22 (PTI):

A Naxalite camp on the Bijapur-Dantewada border in Chhattisgarh was busted by security forces following two encounters with the ultras, officials said on Thursday.

The operation was part of an anti-Naxal operation launched by a joint team of the District Reserve Guard (DRG) of Bijapur and Dantewada, Special Task Force (STF) and 202nd battalion of CRPF's elite

Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) on Tuesday, an official said.

The operation was launched following a tip off about the presence of 70-80 Naxalites of 'Gangalur area committee' of the outlawed CPI(Maoist) in the hills of Pidiya and Itawar villages on the Bijapur-Dantewada border, said Bijapur Superintendent of Police Jitendra Kumar Yadav.

"Sensing the presence of the patrolling team, the Maoists opened indiscriminate fire near

Itawar village on Wednesday. They fled after security forces retaliated. Another gun battle took place near the jungle of Lendra-Korcholi villages when the security forces were returning," the SP said.

He said a Maoist camp was busted and items like uniforms, a solar plate, medicines etc were recovered.

Blood stains at the spot suggest some Naxalites were injured in the gun battle but it seems their colleagues managed to take them away from the area, he added.

Swami Shri Nischalanand Saraswati to enrich religious gathering in Tilda-Neora

Tilda-Neora, Feb 23:

The revered advocate of Hindu nationalism, His Holiness Anant Vibhushit Shankaracharya Swami Shri Nischalanand Saraswati Ji, is scheduled to grace Chhattisgarh with his presence as part of the Rashtrantkarsh campaign.

Swami Ji will embark on this divine journey, commencing from Raipur Airport at 10.30 am on February 28th, destined for Gram Panchayat Mura of Tilda Block.

Preparations are in full swing at Gram Panchayat Mura under the Tilda Block area of Raipur district. His Holiness will participate in a series of religious events, including a darshan and seminar program at Gram Panchayat Mura on Thursday, 29th February.

The highlight of the visit is a grand religious gathering slated to take place at Pandit Lakhnail



Mishra Pre-Secondary School premises at 11.00 am. Additionally, on March 01, Swami Shrinishchalanand Saraswati Maharaj will lead a program encompassing darshan, seminar, and education at Ganesh Shankar Mishra Niwas from 11 am to 01 pm.

The organizer of this auspicious event, retired IAS officer and Chhattisgarh BJP convenor Ganesh Shankar Mishra, has confirmed Swami Shrinishchalanand Saraswati Maharaj's itinerary, including departure from Tilda Railway Station at 3 pm.

Mesmerizing violin performance enthralls Khairagarh University

■ Eminent violinist Pandit Indradeep Ghosh presents brilliant musical display

Khairagarh, Feb 23:

Indira Kala Sangeet University in Khairagarh witnessed a captivating violin presentation on February 22, organized by the Tantri Department. Renowned violinist Pandit Indradeep Ghosh (USA) graced the event with a spell-binding performance, accompanied excellently by Dr. Hari Om Hari on the tabla.

The presentation garnered praise from Vice Chancellor Padmashree Dr. Mamta (Mokshada) Chandrakar, who lauded the musicians for their outstanding talent. Notable personalities including folk singer Kavita Wasnik, Chhattisgarh's famous singer Dilip Shadangi, and retired Dean Prof. Dr.



Himanshu Vishwaroop were also present, alongside university students and researchers like Dr. Naman Dutt.

Under the guidance of Vice Chancellor Dr. Chandrakar and Registrar Prof. Dr. Neeta Gaharwar, the event coordinator Vivek Navare ensured the success of the program. Pandit Ghosh also engaged with students, providing theoretical insights into tantric instruments and addressing their queries.

The evening session featured Pandit Ghosh's captivating violin performance, drawing a large audience of students and researchers. Dr. Hari Om Hari's skillful tabla accom-

paniment added to the spectacle, making it a memorable musical experience for all attendees.

In this interesting program, all the Deans of the University, Dr. Yogendra Choubey, Dr. Prof. Rajan Yadav, Lokpal Prof. Dr. Kashinath Tiwari, Assistant Registrar Rajesh Gupta, Assistant Professor Dr. Liteshwar Verma, Dr. Diwakar Kashyap, Dr. Jagdev Netam, Dr. Shiv Narayan More, Dr. Manas Sahu, Dr. Shivali Singh Bais, Dr. University family including Ashutosh Chaurse, Public Relations Officer Vinod Dongre, students-researchers, teachers, officers, employees participated.

Three feared dead as portion of abandoned coal mine caves in

Korba, Feb 23 (PTI):

Three persons were feared dead after a portion of an abandoned coal mine caved in at Korba district in Chhattisgarh on Thursday, police said. Two other persons managed to come out of the mine, they said. The incident took place shortly after 3 pm when the victims illegally entered the abandoned open cast mine of South Eastern Coalfields Ltd (SECL) in Dipka area under

Hardi Bazar police station limits to fetch coal, a senior police official said. As per preliminary information, five people were engaged in illegal excavation of coal from the mine when suddenly a portion of it collapsed and they got trapped under the debris, he said. Soon after being alerted about the collapse, teams of mine management, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and police reached the post and launched a rescue operation, the official said. Two of the five men managed to come out of the debris, but three others remained trapped, he said. Efforts were on to locate the trio, but chances of their being alive are very slim, he said.

86 hostels of Balod district celebrate CM's birthday with 'Nyota Bhoj'



■ Children enjoyed their meal, celebrated Chief Minister's birthday with cake cutting

Balod, Feb 23:

'Nyota Bhoj' was organized in all 86 hostels of Balod district to commemorate the birthday of Chief Minister Shri Vishnu Deo Sai. The children enthusiastically enjoyed the meal as they celebrated the Chief Minister's birthday. Delicious dishes including rice, dal, green vegetables,

pickles, papad, kheer, puri, and halwa were served to the children.

It is worth mentioning that 'Nyota Bhoj' is based on community participation. This occasion allows individuals to share their joy with children by inviting them to partake in a special meal. Community members or social organizations can contribute to providing complete meals on various occasions including festivals, anniversaries, birthdays, weddings, and national festivals.

'Chintan Diwas' commemorated with all-religious prayer

■ At Swami Atmanand Government Higher Secondary School

Raipur, Feb 23:

Swami Atmanand Government Higher Secondary School in Lalpur (Raipur) resonated with the spirit of unity and harmony as it observed "Chintan Diwas" with a special "Sarva Dharma Prarthana" on the birth anniversary of Lord Baden Powell, the revered father-founder of Scouts.

Under the guidance of Principal Anjulata Saraswat, students and teachers came together to offer prayers for the welfare of the world, drawing inspiration from the teachings of Lord Baden Powell. The event aimed to instill values of discipline, service, and brotherhood among the participants.

Addressing the gathering, Principal Anjulata



Saraswat highlighted the significance of Scouts as a global organization promoting character and skill development. The celebration of Lord Baden Powell's birthday as a "contemplation day" symbolized the school's commitment to fostering interfaith understanding and unity.

Devendra Aglave, Principal of Government Pre-Secondary School in Lalpur, praised the Scout-Guide movement for its role in personality and skill de-

velopment among students. Also, 10 marks are given to the Governor's Award winner in Scout-Guide, and 15 marks to the President's Award winner by the Board of Secondary Education, bonus marks in 10th, 12th board examination.

In the program, teachers Sushma Kulkarni, Mahima Singh, Niranjana Ramteke, Kavita Sarkar, Purnima Sahu, teacher Pramod Kumar Sahu, M.Ed., student teacher Rakesh Kumar Rajak,

Rajeshwari Patel, Radhika Soni, and B.Ed student teachers Parvati Dhruv, Chandrakala Jain, Jaswant Todre, Durga Gharendra, Girija Sahu, Deepesh Dewang, Arvind Kumar Modekar, Pyarelal Kanwar, Neeraj Baghel, Hemdhar Sahu, Amarnath Markam, made important contributions to the program. Student teacher Neeraj Baghel threw light on the biography of courageous Lord Baden Powell.

CMC Mayor and MiC members submit memo to Collector

■ Demanding lifting of stay on Mangal Bhavan by SECL mgmt

Chirmiri, Feb 23:

The members of Mayor-in-Council along with the Mayor Chirmiri Municipal Corporation (CMC) Kanchal Jaiswal and CMC Speaker Gyatri Birha met the Collector MCB D. Rahul Venkatat in the Collectorate premises on Thursday and registered their protest and expressed annoyance.

Mayor Kanchal Jaiswal in the memorandum submitted to the Collector said that the Mangal Bhavan being built as per public convenience and facilities of resident of Domanhill in Chirmiri has been stopped through stay by SECL management, despite the fact that



this Mangal Bhavan has been sanctioned as per intentions of the government. She further said that nearby to this Mangal Bhavan is the building of regional community, increasing the beauty of the city. So in such conditions, the stay by SECL management, despite the fact that

derstanding. It is as per orders from the state government that this 'Mangal Bhavan' is being constructed and which indirectly will benefit the residents of the city directly. But the stay put by SECL management, the construction work has come to a grinding halt. Further in the memoran-

dum submitted the CMC Mayor said that in view of public facilities at the Mangal Bhavan under construction and other development works in Chirmiri, there is need to remove the stay by SECL Management, so that the development of city can move ahead and this tops state government's priority.

Two nabbed in case of car theft

Dhamtari, Feb 23:

The complainant OK Markam, S/o Dalsingh Markam (30), R/o Guhannullah came to thana on Feb 19 that on the night of Feb 17, his Echo white coloured car bearing No. CG-23-0414 standing in front of his house with Chassis No. MA3ERLF150 0409029, worth around Rs 1.50 lakh was stolen by some unknown persons.

On seeing the CC TV camera footage on Feb18, two thieves with blue-coloured and a red-coloured cloth on their face were seen opening the door of the Van at around 2:26 in the night and the two were dropped by a person in a red-coloured Hero Honda bike bearing No. CG 04-HQ-2608, from some distance from house of Shiv Kumar. A report was filed under section 379 of IPC and matter was taken into investigation.

During investigation, a eye-view map of the site was prepared and the abandoned



motorcycle bearing No. CG-23-0414 found in nearby place was seized and brought to the thana.

On investigation, the police got tip from an informer that the accused Moh. Sarfaraz S/o Moh. Safar (23) and Vasim Qureshi S/o Ilayas (24), R/o Gram Pacheda, Abhanpur district Raipur (C.G.) are involved in it a notice under section 41 A was issued and both were called to thana. On serious interrogation the accused accepted their crime and based upon their statement the Grey coloured ECHO Van bearing No. CG 05 AK 9830 and

Sarfaraz White Coloured ECHO Van bearing No. CG 23-0414 were seized from their locations.

On completion of interrogation, a case under section 34 of IPC was added against them and both were taken into arrest. In the above action, TI Dugali SI Amit Baghel, constable Gokul Ram Sinha, Ramayan Kanwar, Prakash Soni, Cyber Cell Dhamtari in-charge SI Ramesh Sahu, Head constable Devendra Rajput, constable Mukesh Mishra Virendra Sonkar, Krishna Patil, Anand Katakwar, Kamal Joshi played an important role.

Four accused nabbed in an attempt for theft case

■ From SECL Katkona mines area

Chirmiri, (MCB), Feb 23:

The complainant Vinod Kumar, Dy GM (personnel) SECL Katkona Coallery filed a complaint on Feb 19 coming to Thana Patna that on Feb 18 unknown persons breaking down the 'Muhada Slab' of Coal Mines 3-4 in the night and tried to enter inside and it was informed to the police.

A special team was formed as per instructions by SP Korea Suraj Singh Parihar and under direction of Addl. SP Monika Thakur and SDOF Kavita Thakur. The team regularly conducted inquiry in this regard and got tip from an informer that seem local persons in well-planned manner are planning to steal away copper from Coal Mine in Gram Katkona. It was based



upon the information, the police on finding location of the accused nabbed four accused viz. Vijay Singh, Karan Agaria, Sagrajeet Jha and Mankeshwar Harijan along with cutter machine and other equipments

from their residence and were brought to Thana for interrogation.

All the above four accused accepted that they tried to conduct theft in the mine and it was on arrival of the guard and other staff, that they left

and ran away towards the jungle.

Prepared plans while in jail
TI Thana Patna Sheetal Sidar on strict interrogation from accused was informed that they were sent to jail for different crimes

and on release of the accused Mankeshwar Harijan, he helped to get release of other three accused and after their coming out, they planned this theft. Accused Vijay Thana Patna was in jail on charges of theft of copper from SECL Katkona coallery and is history sheeter in case of loot and all have faced crime charges.

In the above case, trainee DSP Ravikant Sahare, TI Patna Inspector Sheetal Sidar, Cyber Cell in-Charge Inspector Vinod Paswan, Asst. Central Katkona in-charge head constable Brijesh Singh, Thana Baikunthpur constable Bhanu Pratap Singh, Thana Patna constable Ramayan Singh, Sandep Sai, Amal Kujur, Ajay Mishra and from Cyber Cell- Sajal Jaiswal, Shivam Sinha gave valuable contribution.



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Strategic Partnership Navigating Shared Challenges

The revelation by Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane regarding American assistance during the prolonged standoff along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) underscores the evolving nature of the India-US relationship. Aramane's acknowledgment of critical intelligence and situational awareness provided by the United States reflects a significant milestone in the bilateral ties, shaped by the emergence of Chinese regional hegemony. Over the past 25 years, this relationship has transitioned from mere economic cooperation to a strategic partnership, driven by shared security concerns and mutual interests. The convergence of interests in defense, digital technology, and manufacturing serves as a strong foundation for maintaining robust ties between India and the US. While economic factors undoubtedly play a role in fostering this relationship, it is India's growing economic and strategic significance that truly enables closer collaboration with the United States. The recent visit of Army Chief Gen Manoj Pande to the US, coupled with discussions on bilateral issues and enhancing mutual commitment to global peace and security with his American counterpart Gen Randy George, exemplifies the depth of engagement between the two nations. Furthermore, US Ambassador Eric Garcetti's call for exploring the co-development of military hardware highlights the potential for further strengthening defense cooperation. However, amidst these promising developments, it is essential to address lingering suspicions regarding strategic alignments. Both India and the US must work towards dispelling any notion of clandestine engagements with China that could undermine trust and cooperation between them. The maturity exhibited by India in not expressing resentment towards Washington's high-level engagements with Beijing signifies a pragmatic approach to diplomacy. This maturity is grounded in the unwavering support and assistance provided by the US during critical junctures, such as the standoff along the LAC. Despite challenges and occasional irritants, such as the Gaurpatwant Singh Pannun case, the trajectory of bilateral relations remains positive, with ongoing talks on the co-production of defense items making steady progress. Collaborations between India and the US extend beyond defense and encompass a wide array of sectors, underscoring the multifaceted nature of their partnership. As both nations navigate complex geopolitical realities, they recognize the importance of standing together to address shared challenges. The strategic partnership between India and the US is not merely transactional but rooted in shared values, interests, and a commitment to upholding a rules-based international order. Looking ahead, it is good for India and the US to deepen their cooperation across various domains while remaining vigilant against external pressures that seek to undermine their relationship. By fostering greater trust, transparency, and communication, both nations can solidify their strategic partnership and effectively tackle emerging threats and challenges in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond. The India-US relationship has evolved significantly over the years, driven by a convergence of strategic interests and shared values. As they navigate the complexities of an evolving geopolitical landscape, both nations must continue to nurture their partnership, ensuring that it remains resilient and responsive to emerging challenges.

Divisive Dilemma CAA again in limelight

Yash Pal Ralhan



Once again, the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) finds itself at the center of heated debate and apprehension. Amidst promises of its imminent notification by Home Minister Amit Shah, concerns loom large, particularly within the Muslim community. The prolonged agitation at Shaheen Bagh and its reverberations during the Delhi assembly elections serve as poignant reminders of the deep-seated apprehensions surrounding this contentious legislation. The very timing of the CAA's potential notification, just ahead of crucial elections, raises eyebrows. It's no secret that political parties often exploit sensitive issues for electoral gains, and the BJP stands poised to reap political dividends if the CAA is implemented promptly. However, amidst the political posturing, it's essential to revisit the rationale behind the CAA. The plight of minority communities in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan underscores the urgent need for protective measures. The dwindling populations of Hindus and Sikhs in these nations, coupled with reports of persecution and forced conversions, paint a grim picture of religious intolerance. The Assam conundrum provides another dimension to the debate. Decades of unchecked immigration from Bangladesh have irrevocably altered the demographic landscape, stoking tensions and threatening the indigenous population's very existence. While Assam grapples with its identity crisis, the CAA presents a ray of hope for persecuted minorities seeking refuge in India. Yet, amidst these complexities, legitimate concerns regarding the CAA's constitutional validity and its potential to disenfranchise Muslims persist. The principle of equality enshrined in Article 14 of the Constitution stands in stark contradiction to the selective provisions of the CAA. Moreover, fears of majoritarianism and communal polarization further exacerbate the anxieties surrounding this legislation. The inflammatory rhetoric from certain quarters only serves to exacerbate these fears. Derogatory remarks likening illegal migrants to "termites" and ominous promises of establishing a Hindu Rashtra do little to assuage concerns about inclusivity and secularism. The reluctance of several chief ministers to implement the CAA underscores the widespread apprehension regarding its implications. Under the provisions of the CAA, non-Muslim immigrants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan stand to gain expedited citizenship if they arrived in India before December 31, 2014. While proponents argue for the humanitarian imperative of protecting persecuted minorities, skeptics caution against the potential for demographic engineering and communal discord. Amidst international scrutiny and reservations from various quarters, India must tread cautiously. Upholding the principles of democracy and secularism is paramount, and any perception of injustice or discrimination must be addressed earnestly. The echoes of past admonishments from global leaders serve as sobering reminders of the importance of safeguarding minority rights. As the government deliberates on the implementation of the CAA, it must heed the voices of dissent and engage constructively with apprehensions. Balancing the imperative of protecting persecuted minorities with the principles of inclusivity and secularism is no easy task. Yet, it is imperative for the nation's unity and integrity. In the crucible of this divisive dilemma lies the true test of India's democratic ethos and commitment to pluralism. Let us navigate these turbulent waters with wisdom, empathy, and a steadfast commitment to justice for all.

Central Chronicle invites articles, write-ups, and comments on a wide range of issues for our editorial page. Submissions should be between 800-900 words in length. In addition, we welcome letters to the editor for this page. While letters may be edited for clarity, we aim to preserve the integrity of the original message, and ask that they be kept to around 50-60 words. Submissions can be sent via email to editorcentralchronicle@gmail.com.

MARD MEMBERS PROTEST



Maharashtra State Association of Resident Doctors (MARD) members holding placards stage a strike over allowance issue, outside Government Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) in Nagpur.

Sant Ravidas: Kranti Jyoti Yugpuruush

ER. PRABHAT KISHORE



India has witnessed the birth of a number of Avatars, Sants and powerful spiritual personalities who have illuminated this Holy land with their succinct teachings and awakened the masses about the real essence of Bhakti. Satguru Ravidas was one of the renowned Sant of Bhakti Aandolan, who created an enduring impetus through his devotional songs and verses. He was the leading stars of Sant Parampara or Nirgun Sampraday and valued the worship of formless God.

Born on Maghi Purnima of Vikrami Samvat 1433 at Shri Govardhanpur village (now renamed as Sri Guru Ravidas Janma Sthan) in Kashi in a Dalit family, Gurujee was the backbone of the Bhakti Aandolan. He fought against discrimination based on caste, creed and colour and taught lesson of universal brotherhood. Because of his untouchable social status, he has now become an important figure for downtrodden sections of the society, although his followers are also from the upper castes like Krishna-Bhakt Meerabai, the Rajput queen of Chittoor. He is considered to

be spiritual Guru of Meerabai, which she had expressed through her verse "Guru Milya Ravidas Ji, Dini Gyan Ki Gutki; Chot Lagi Nijnam Hari Ki, Mharey Hivrey Khatki".

Guru ji was a great follower of Lord Ram and Krishna and his writings are full of names like Ram, Raja Ramchandra, Krishna, Govind, Raghunath, Hari etc. He was the true messenger of God. He took birth on earth to save the true Dharma, as at that time the social as well religious pattern was distressed due to several man-made discriminations over social beliefs, castes, colour etc. He taught that one is not identified by his caste or beliefs in God, but is known for his Karma (great work). "Ravidas Janma Ke Karnai, Hot Na Kou Neech; Nar Kun Neech Kari Dari Hai, Ochhe Karam Ki Keech" (No one is inferior by birth, but his doings make him inferior. So, always focus on great deeds). On the tune of Bhagwad Gita, he preached in his own version as "Karam Bandhan Mein Bandh Rahiyo, Phal Ki Na Tajjiyo Aas; Karma Manush Ka Dharma Hai, Sat Bhakha Ravidas". (i.e. Always per-

form your duty and do not desire its fruit, because duty is our Dharma and Fruit is our destiny")

Regarding untouchability and discrimination, he spread the message that God has created man and not man has created the God. So, every human being has equal right on this earth. "Tohi Mohi, Mohi Tohi, Antar Kaisa; Kanak Katik Jal Tarang Jaisa", i.e. There is no difference between you (God) and me as there is no difference between the Gold & its ornament, and water & its ripples. He expressed his feeling as "Let us make this world without any discrimination and race like colour." Sant Ravidas had given a variety of spiritual and social messages through his writings. He said "If you can not do well, at least do not harm others. If you can not live like a flower, at least do not live like a thorn". He gave emphasis for education by saying "Avidya Ahit Keen, Taatay Vivek Deep Bhava Maleen" (i.e. Lack of education has caused us great harm and it has eclipsed our rationale).

Sant Ravidas is revered by both Hindus and Sikhs. He expressed his passion and love for Waheguru through his poetry and music. Nearly 40 of his sacred hymns have been made an integral part of the Sikh scripture, the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji by the 5th Guru Arjun Dev Ji. He is known as the inventor of Gurumukhi Lipi (script) and entire Sikh Vani is written in Gurumukhi. Although, after some untoward incidents, the Ravidasia Samaj has parted itself from Sikhism and replaced Guru Granth Sahib with Amritvani having nearly 240 hymns of Ravidas. The Panch Vaani text of the Hindu

Warrior-ascetic group of Dadupanthi tradition within Hinduism also includes numerous poems of Ravidas.

Ravidasji was a great saint and preferred to live as a common man. Gurujee's teachings of equality and brotherhood in the society are the greatest inspiration to us. There will not be unity among human beings, without abolishing the caste system. "Jati Jati mein Jati Hai, Jo Ketan Ke Pat; Ravidas Manush Na Jud Sakai, Jab Tak Jati Na Ja". He had propounded and advocated the concept of Begumpura (Be-Gum-Pura) or a city without sorrow (Gum), which would be stateless, classless, casteless and where there would be no discrimination. "Begam Pura Sahar Ko Nao, Dukh Andohu Nahi Tihi Thao". He expressed his pivotal message as "Aisa Chahun Raj Main, Jahan Milai Saban Ko Anna. Chhote Bade Sab Sam Base, Ravidas Rahe Prasanna."

He cautioned the people against unwanted customs and beliefs. In one of his hymn he pointed out "Man Changa To Kathauti Mein Ganga" (i.e. If your heart is pious, then the Holy river is right in your tub and you need not go anywhere else to take a dip). The teaching of Guru never fails and his word never goes wrong. He is the true source of light in life. The valuable teachings of Sant Shiromani Guru Ravidas are a great treasure for those who are heading on the divine path of Bhakti to get liberated from all the shackles.

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

Religious Tourism: An Effective Tool for Increasing Job Opportunities and Economy



Dr. Manmohan Prakash

India may not be a Sanatan Rashtra according to the Constitution, but it is a Sanatan Rashtra based on the majority of Indians following this religion. In the current decade, the people of the country have developed the courage to support Sanatan Dharma, its values, and culture without fear. However, there are still very few people using indecent language about Sanatan Dharma and its scriptures. Looking at the number of followers, most state and central governments have started seeing the path of employment and self-employment generation in tourism and are thus promoting the same. To attract tourists from India and abroad and to strengthen the economy, governments are making such places attractive and intensifying efforts to equip them with all facilities. In fact, strengthening the country's econo-

my through tourism is not a new idea; foreign countries have been using this idea for a long time and considering tourism as an industry. Some well-known countries that are flourishing due to tourism are UAE, Malaysia, Mauritius, Europe, South Africa, Maldives, etc.

Although tourism or travel for the pleasure of oneself or the family has always been a hobby of the wealthy, in India, religious travel is the dream of both the poor and the rich. Sanatanis wish to visit 'Char Dham,' 'twelve Jyotirlingas,' fifty-one 'Shakti Peethas,' and 'Ashtavinayak' once in their lifetime. Similarly, followers of other religions like to visit their religious places. The specialty of India is that it has been the mother of Sanatan, Jain, Buddhist, and Sikh religions; hence, there are more religious places to visit.

In the last decade, looking at the opportunity of employment, self-employment, and business in religious tourism, the central and state governments have made unprecedented development to increase the facilities in religious cities, religious places, places of worship, and nearby areas to make the journey of tourists to these places easy, convenient, attractive, and comfortable. These places are being provided with good rail, road, and air connectivity. Care is being taken to make available all kinds of small and big essential items, especially focusing on a good and comfortable stay, tasty and

healthy food, and good and affordable transportation services. Modern hotels, dharamshalas, and resorts are being constructed at religious places and surrounding areas. Attention is being given to purification and maintenance of water resources, ghats are being constructed, safety measures, and cleanliness are being taken into consideration. New townships are being born, old townships are being developed and expanded. All these acts are leading to social and economic upliftment of people of every religion, caste, and language at the local level, and hope to continue in the future as well. Looking at the development happening at these places and the employment and business opportunities being created, it seems that the people here may no longer have to migrate for livelihood.

To promote religious tourism, a new Ramlala temple has been constructed on Shri Ram Jann Bhoomi in Ayodhya Dham and is open for darshan. Shri Kedarnath Dham has been redeveloped, Char Dham Yatra, Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, Amarnath Yatra have been made easy, Kartarpur Sahib Corridor has been built, Kashi Vishwanath Dham has been redeveloped, a part of the Mahakal Lok at Mahakal temple has been opened to visitors, Shankaracharya Teerth has been built in Omkareshwar, etc. Helicopter services have been made available to many religious places,

and at many religious places, ropeways (e.g., Hemkund Sahib Ropeway, Girnar Ropeway, etc.) have been constructed. Pavagadh in Gujarat, the town of one of the Shakti Peethas, has been redeveloped, a plaque has been unveiled at the Dehu Vitthal Rukmini Temple in Maharashtra. In Rameswaram Island, India's first vertical lift bridge has been constructed to connect K. Mandapam to the city, the expansion of Kamakhya temple corridor and renovation of six temples of the complex have been planned, the beauty of the deserted religious places in Kashmir is being restored (in this direction, the 300-year-old Raghunath temple in Dalgate, a church in Dalgate, and a mosque in Srinagar have been selected as smart projects to restore their original form), Shiva temple in Gulmarg has been renovated, worship at Martand Sun Temple in Anantnag has been started. Worship has also started at Sheelnath Temple from Basant Panchami 2021. The international Buddhist pilgrimage site of Kushinagar (site of Buddha's Mahaparinirvana), which is a Buddhist circuit center point (which includes the pilgrimage sites of Lumbini, Sarnath, Gaya), is developing into a Buddhist circuit. In Pandharpur, the development of Palki Marg has made the way to Pandharpur easier, heritage lighting has been done in the Modhera Sun Temple of Gujarat, the scheme for

100% solarization of Konark Sun Temple and Konark city has been launched, the Swadesh Darshan of the Central Government scheme was launched. A 1.5 Km Samudra Darshan Path (under Prasad Scheme) is being constructed. Big religious places like Kalki Dham are on the way to development. Many state governments are providing religious trips to the elderly people. The idols of Gods and Goddesses that had reached foreign countries from India through illegal means are coming back to India. Grand temples are also taking shape on foreign lands. Recently, the Sanatan Temple in Abu Dhabi has been inaugurated by the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi. This temple is an example of social harmony in the world because the Muslim ruler donated the land, Christian architecture prepared its design, and the Hindu organization BAPS provided the funds. In Bahrain too, land for Hindu mandir has been made available by the ruler.

Temples are being renovated in Cambodia and other countries. Not only this, in most of the countries of the world, Sanatan festivals have started being celebrated with great zeal and enthusiasm. When religious places and their associated cities are developed and transformed into tourist cities, it is important for the local administration and tourists to take care that the environment, rituals, and culture here do not get polluted.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Language Inclusivity Concerns

I fail to clearly understand important SMS that have frequently been sent to me by the Reserve Bank of India as they are in Hindi. I could only gather that these contain guidelines about how to save ourselves from online fraud but unable to absorb valuable instructions in those SMS. The RBI must not forget that as per the 2001 census nearly 60 per cent of Indians speak a language other than Hindi. If the RBI has to use Hindi, it should stick to India's three language policy. The disastrous path that Pakistan followed to impose the language of its western part on East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) should not be adopted by India. It is a matter of concern that one language dies every 14 days as powerful groups impose their languages on speakers of less powerful groups. The Centre should treat all 22 Indian languages of the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India equally and refrain from imposing Hindi on non-Hindi speakers.

Sujit De, Kolkata

Agricultural Anguish

The recent death of farmer Shubhkaran Singh at the Khanauri border, accompanied by numerous injuries among protesters, fuels renewed agitation within the farming community. Blame falls squarely on the government, which obstructs peaceful protests, neglecting democratic principles. This betrayal may sway the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, with the BJP risking electoral consequences.

MK Nair Raipur

Suppressing Dissent

The use of rubber bullets and tear gas by Haryana Police against protesting farmers is deplorable. Employing drones to dispense tear gas risks grave harm to demonstrators. The tragic loss of a young farmer underscores the urgency to prevent further casualties. Authorities must refrain from stifling dissent, including censoring anti-government posts on social media. Such actions violate fundamental rights and impede free speech.

Surya Kumar Yadav, Paton

Protester Persecution

Shubhkaran Singh's tragic demise, leaving his family bereft, amid the peaceful farmers' agitation, is deeply saddening. Authorities must cease treating protestors as extremists. The Centre must empathize with their plight and address their grievances. Police brutality witnessed at Shambhu and Khanauri borders is unjustifiable. The use of force against peaceful demonstrators amounts to an assault on democracy.

Rakesh Gupta, Korba

BRIEF

New CFO



Kolkata: The board of private lender Bandhan Bank approved the appointment of Rajeev Mantri as the chief financial officer (CFO) and key managerial personnel (KMP) with immediate effect. The bank said in a statement that Abhijit Ghosh will head the finance and accounts division of the bank and also be a part of the senior management. Mantri has been a veteran banker with over 25 years of experience in banking and finance across India, Singapore and UAE.

Rights issues

New Delhi: South Indian Bank on Thursday said the board of the bank has approved a rights issue raise of up to Rs 1,151 crore to fund business growth. The board has approved proposal for issuance of 5,231.85,254 rights issue on fully-paid up basis for an amount aggregating up to Rs 1,151.01 crores assuming full subscription with respect to rights equity shares, South Indian Bank said in a regulatory filing.

Carbon capture



Singrauli (MP): National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Vindhyachal will establish a carbon capture plant this year, an official said on Thursday. Once ready, the plant is expected to be the country's first to capture carbon dioxide emitted from a power plant and convert it into methanol, which will be used in the boiler operations of the unit, Executive Director of the NTPC's Vindhyachal Project E Satya Phani Kumar said. The station is dedicated not only to electricity production but also to rural development, the welfare of displaced persons, and environmental conservation, he said, adding that the project achieved 89 per cent Plant Load Factor (PLF).

Hope that countries will come to WTO meet with positive attitude like India: Goyal

New Delhi, Feb 23:

India on Friday expressed hope that other countries will come to the WTO meet in Abu Dhabi with a positive attitude and listen to the concerns of developing nations for providing free and fair solutions to their problems. Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal also said that though the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has played an important role in setting robust rules for global trade, there are significant problems in the organisation. Trade ministers of 164 countries will gather in Abu Dhabi, UAE from February 26 to discuss a range of issues pertaining to areas such as agriculture, fisheries subsidies, and a moratorium on imposing customs duty on e-commerce trade. "I do hope that other countries will also come to the table



with a positive attitude as does India...(I do hope that) other countries are also willing to listen to us and other less developed and developing countries' concerns and give free and fair solutions to the problems," Goyal said at the Raisina Dialogue here. He added that with all its problems, difficulties, short-comings, and fault-lines, the Geneva-based multi-lateral body has played an important role in setting robust rules of business, and fair play

among trading nations.

It also provides a platform, where all the member countries hold dialogue or debate on different trade-related issues and come up with solutions. However, "there are significant problems, there are concerns about how it will operate, there is an attempt to even introduce elements into the WTO which are certainly not a part of world trade as such. "So India is very much engaged with all the partner countries bilaterally, in smaller groups and at the larger forums (also) to ensure that the guiding principles on which the WTO was formed are respected and maintained and continue to help us to have a free and fair trade across the world," he added. Developed nations are pushing to start talks on new issues like trade and environment, labour, and MSME in the WTO.

India has moved to 5th spot from 10th in world in terms of economy: Nirmala

Maharajganj (UP), Feb 23:

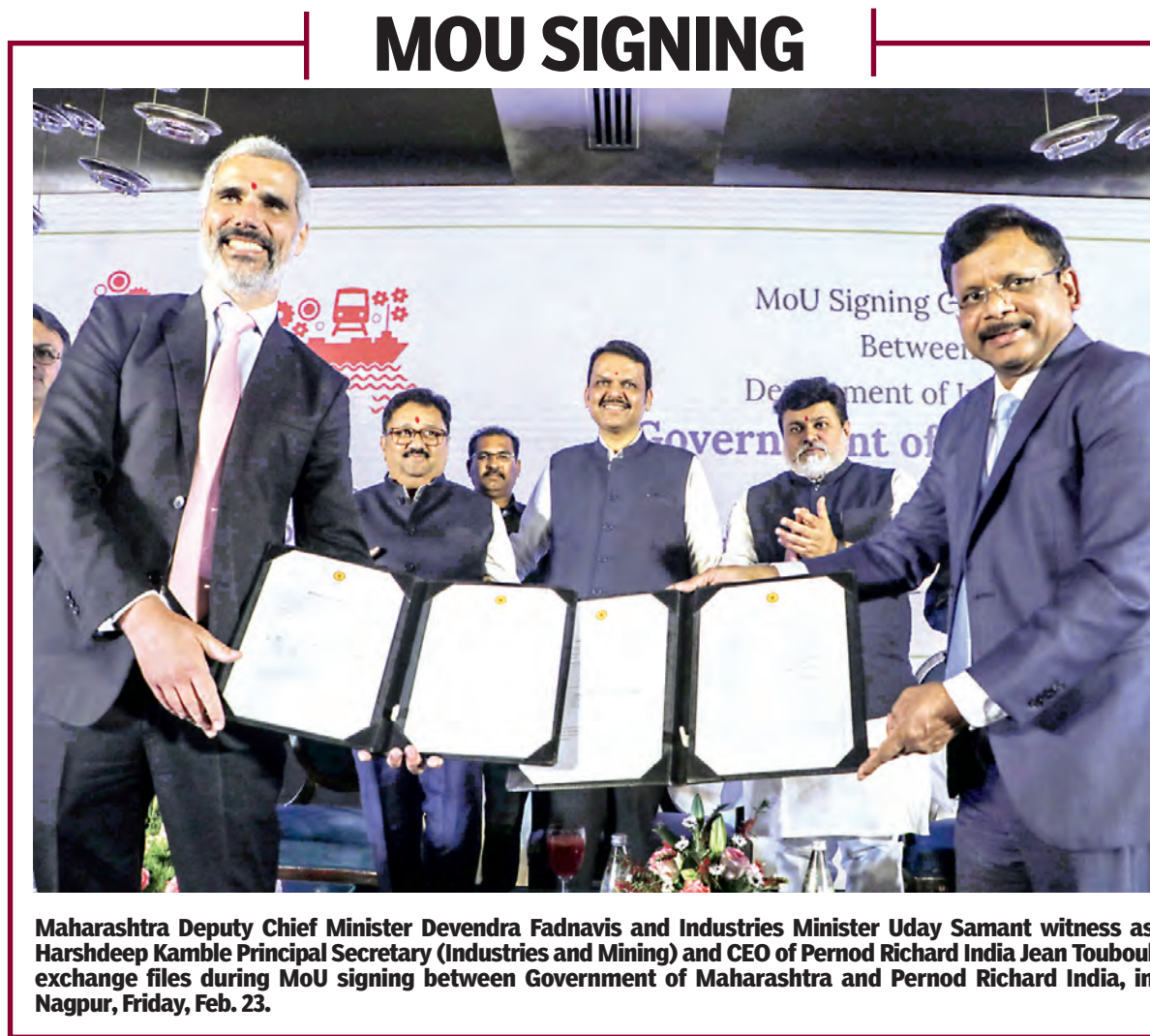
Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday said under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, India has moved up to the fifth position from the 10th spot in the world in terms of economy. "In the next year and a half, we will be at the third position," she said, adding that the standard of living of the citizens is better in a country that has a strong economy and everyone benefits from it. The senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader said this is the first government in the country that listens to people, then makes schemes and works to deliver the benefits of such schemes to people.



"The BJP is such a party in which even the smallest worker can reach the highest position by working for the party," she said. Claiming that the INDIA opposition bloc has disintegrated, Sitharaman said nothing is achieved by taking photographs. "They (Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav) have nothing left to say to the public. Prime Minister Modi has a lot in

New Delhi, Feb 23:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate India's largest textile event 'Bharat Tex' in the national capital on February 26. "Bharat Tex will be spread across 22 lakh sq ft exhibition area," with participation from 100 countries and more than 3,000 trade buyers, Secretary in the Textiles Ministry Rachna Shah said on Friday. "This is our effort at projecting Brand India before an international audience. This will showcase the entire strength of the textile ecosystem which is very unique to India," she added. An official statement from the Textile Ministry said 46 MoUs will be signed during the 4-day



Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Industries Minister Uday Samant witness as Harshdeep Kamble Principal Secretary (Industries and Mining) and CEO of Pernod Richard India Jean Touboul exchange files during MoU signing between Government of Maharashtra and Pernod Richard India, in Nagpur, Friday, Feb. 23.

PM Modi to inaugurate global textile expo on Feb 26



event beginning Monday, including international partnerships. Briefing the media, she also shared that the Textile Ministry is working with participants of the Rs 10,683 crore-linked Linked Scheme for the sector to resolve any issues and address genuine hardships. According to officials, the

ministry has received some feedback from the industry on expanding the coverage of the PLI scheme in terms of incentives. The Centre launched the PLI scheme with an approved outlay of Rs 10,683 crore to promote the production of man-made fibre (MMF) apparel, MMF fabrics and products of technical textiles in the country to enable the textiles industry to achieve size and scale and to become competitive. "We are always trying to resolve and working with our PLI participants to resolve any issues around that. Whatever demands we receive from them, we are trying to bring in as much flexibility as we can to address genuine hardships," Shah said.

India needs multi-pronged approach for ESDM sector: PwC India

Mumbai, Feb 23:

India needs a multi-pronged approach for the Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM) sector to leverage the momentum for value chain resilience, as the window of opportunity created by the current geopolitical context is very small, according to a report. "Decisive policy action is the need of the hour," said PwC India's report on 'The India Opportunity: Developing Resilient Electronics Supply Chains'. It noted that India is uniquely placed among global economies, having garnered goodwill as a reliable partner for countries across the world. "The country must now leverage this momentum

to ensure that its internal strategy and operations enable it to become future ready.

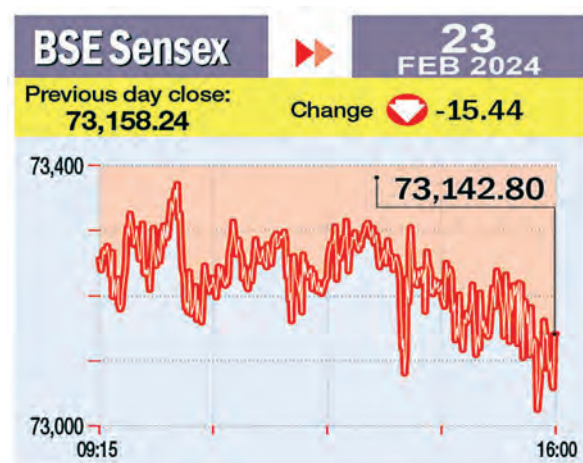
A multi-pronged approach is essential to ensure that the centre of the ESDM sector in India holds firm," the report said. Emphasising that the next decade will be crucial for this, given the window of opportunity for India to be a part of the value chain — created by the geopolitical context — is very small.

The report highlights the country's ascendancy in the global electronics market, particularly in mobile phones, consumer electronics, IT hardware, and electronic components, which account for over 70 per cent of the nation's domestic manufacturing output.

Sensex edges lower by 15 points, Nifty retreats from record highs to settle flat

Mumbai, Feb 23:

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty edged lower in a volatile trade on Friday, reversing early gains due to selling in IT and select banking shares. The 30-share BSE Sensex slipped 15.44 points or 0.02 per cent to close at 73,142.80 points with 17 of its constituents closing in the red and 13 in the green. The index opened higher but later slipped into losses due to profit-taking by investors. The barometer oscillated between a high of 73,413.93 and a low of 73,022 during the day. The broader Nifty of NSE closed lower by 4.75 points or 0.02 per cent at 22,212.70 points as gains in FMCG,



pharma and financial shares were offset by losses in IT and private bank shares. The 50-share barometer scaled a record high of 22,297.50 in intra-

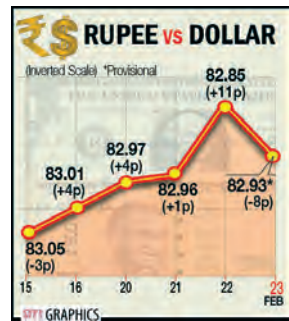
day trade. "Nifty opened higher but failed to sustain the morning momentum, leading to a closing at the day's low due to profit booking," Rupak De,

Senior Technical Analyst, LKP Securities, said. Among Sensex shares, HCLTech, Asian Paints, Maruti, JSW Steel, TCS, SBI, ITC and Bharti Airtel were the major losers. On the other hand, Bajaj Finserv, Mahindra & Mahindra, Titan, L&T and Wipro were the major gainers. "The domestic market paused momentarily today after reaching another record high earlier in the day, driven by positive signals from global markets," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said. The capital goods and industrial sectors showed strength, supported by advancements in manufacturing and services.

Mumbai, Feb 23:

The rupee consolidated in a narrow range and depreciated by 8 paise to close at 82.93 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, tracking a strong American currency and muted trend in domestic equities. Forex traders said the Indian currency depreciated as foreign fund outflows weighed on the rupee. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 82.87 and finally settled at 82.93 (provisional) against the dollar, down by 8 paise from its previous close. During the day, the rupee witnessed a range-bound movement. It saw an intra-day high of

Rupee falls 8 paise to close at 82.93 against US dollar



82.84 and a low of 82.96 against the American currency. On Thursday, the rupee had settled at 82.85 against the US dollar. The Indian rupee depreciated on Friday on dollar demand from importers. Elevated crude oil prices also weighed on the rupee, said Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst,

Sharekhan by BNP Paribas. "We expect the rupee to trade with a slight positive bias on positive global equities and soft US dollar. However, any bounce back in crude oil prices may cap sharp upside. Geopolitical tension in the Middle East may put pressure on rupee at higher levels," Choudhary said, adding that USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 82.60 to Rs 83.10. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was 0.05 per cent up at 104.00. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, was trading 1.33 per cent lower to USD 82.56 per barrel.

Leading Indian drone manufacturer enters US market

Washington, Feb 23:

India's drone industry has "leapfrogged" in the last 10 years, gaining pace after the COVID-19 pandemic, the CEO of a leading Indian drone manufacturer has said as his company has showcased its products in the highly competitive US market.

Indian drone manufacturing company IdeaForge, ranked fifth globally in the dual-use category of civil and defence, is entering the American drone market at a time when there is a reluctance to buy or acquire those made in China. Ankit Mehta, the CEO of IdeaForge, told PTI Videos in an interview that the Indian drone industry has

"leapfrogged in the last 10 years with an enabling environment from the Indian government." He said the sector gained pace after the COVID-19 pandemic. "I think before the pandemic, the rules and regulations around drones were fairly stringent, and they did not allow a lot of flexibility in terms of use and deployment," Mehta said. "But since the pandemic, the floodgates, in a way, have opened the adoption of technology, which has become wholehearted. Now people want to deploy drones for as many use cases as possible," he said. Drones had very restrictive regulations earlier, he said. "Now those regulations have become a little bit

more relaxed in terms of allowing the use of drones under a regulated environment, which is conducive for operations." "Therefore, we are seeing a lot of intent in terms of adopting the technology, and we are seeing a lot of regulatory support for doing that," Mehta said. "We also have in India a production-linked incentive scheme for drones. We have the fact that there is a ban on import of technology from outside so that Indian companies can develop the technology and be overall in an environment where we can demonstrate the capability of what Indian companies can do in this space," he said.

Reserve Bank asks NPCI to help continue operations of Paytm app

Mumbai, Feb 23:

Reserve Bank of India on Friday asked NPCI to examine the possibility of it becoming a third party application provider for continued UPI operations of the Paytm app. The central bank has barred Paytm Payments Bank from accepting further credits into its customer accounts and wallets after March 15, 2024. With an aim to ensure seamless digital payments by UPI customers using '@paytm' handle operated by the Paytm Payments Bank, RBI said it has asked the National Payments Corporation of

India (NPCI) to examine the request to become a Third-Party Application Provider (TPAP) for UPI channel for continued UPI operation of the Paytm app. The request has been made by One97 Communication Ltd (OCL), which owns the Paytm brand, RBI said in a statement.

For seamless migration of '@paytm' handle to other banks, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said NPCI may facilitate certification of 4-5 banks as Payment Service Provider (PSP) Banks with demonstrated capabilities to process high volume UPI transactions.

Kia recalls 4,358 units of Seltos to replace electronic oil pump controller

New Delhi, Feb 23:

Kia India on Friday said it is voluntarily recalling 4,358 units of a petrol variant of its mid-sized sports utility vehicle Seltos to replace the electronic oil pump controller. The company is recalling Smartstream G1.5 Petrol Seltos with IVT transmission, manufactured between February 28 and July 13, 2023, the South Korean automaker said in a statement. The recall has been prompted by a potential error in the electronic oil pump controller, which may impact the performance of the electronic oil pump in the specified transmission variant, it added. The company said it has informed the



Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH) about the voluntary recall initiative. Since the safety of car owners is a top priority, the company is proactively replacing the electronic oil pump controller in the affected units for a seamless own-

ership experience, the statement said. The automaker will directly reach out to the owners of the vehicles concerned to update them about the voluntary recall. Kia sells models, including Seltos, Sonet and Carens, in the Indian market.

PM to dedicate NTPC's 1600MW Lara thermal plant today

Kumbh Mela starts from today

Pile of sand accumulated in Chaubebandha Bridge



Central Chronicle News

Rajim, Feb 23: The country's famous Rajim Kumbh Mela will start from Saturday 24th February and though a lot of preparations are underway and some accomplished, but as per reports there is a pile of sand accumulated on both sides of the Chaubebandha Bridge.

There are as many bulges on the bridge as

there are pillars and unwanted speed breakers have been created here, which needs to be smoothened by adding fine gravel. Apart from these, asphalt has not yet been laid on the new fairground Chaubebandha road, which is causing major problems in transportation and vehicles will be diverted on this route for the entire next 15 days. The work of ghat construction

has been completed in this ground and a sub-station of the electricity department has also been built and at the same time Meena Bazaar has been established on the old fairground itself. The roads have not been constructed properly and people are facing problems and it was told that Rajim Parswani Chaubebandha bridge comes under Dhamtari PWD department.

District CEO meets beneficiaries of PMAY

Central Chronicle News

Bijapur, Feb 23: District Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Hemant Ramesh Nandanwar met the beneficiaries of PMAY and is continuously reviewing the scheme, as a target has been set to complete the incomplete houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana in the district by 31 March.

In this series, the District CEO is visiting the Gram Panchayats where the progress of the scheme is relatively less, meeting the beneficiaries and the ground staff, finding out the reasons behind the problems, solving the problems and directing the concerned to complete



the houses soon. Lately Nandanwar visited Gram Panchayat Itpal, Papanpal on Wednesday and met the beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Mr. Suryakant Gandharla and Mr. Kumma Chinna and took information about the

amount of installment received by them and asked them to complete the house soon. Bijapur District CEO Geet Kumar Sinha, block level officers of the Prime Minister's residence and Gram Panchayat staff were present.

Medical college in Kawardha taking roots

Efforts of Deputy CM Vijay Sharma

Central Chronicle News

Kawardha, Feb 23: With the special efforts of Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma, the preliminary process has started at the state government level to open a medical college in the much-awaited Kawardha of Kabirdham district. On the special request of Deputy Chief Minister Sharma, as per the wish of Chief Minister Vishnu Dev Sai, Commissioner of State Government, Medical Education Health Building, Nava Raipur, National Medical Sciences Commission to start a medical college with 50 seat admission capacity in



Kawardha district headquarters of Kabirdham district from Atal Nagar. It is said that it is necessary to conform to the prescribed parameters, therefore Commissioner Medical Education Health Building, Nava Raipur; Atal Nagar has issued a letter to the concerned

Principal asking him to inform the Directorate with clear information regarding the said matter. It is noteworthy that this demand of opening a medical college in Kabirdham district is very old and in accordance with public aspirations, Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma and MP Santosh Pandey are continuously making efforts to open a medical college in the district. The opening of a medical college in Kabirdham district will not only benefit the students of other districts of the state, but the students of neighboring Bemetara, Khairagarh, Mungeli will also get direct benefits.

Central Chronicle News

New Delhi, Feb 23 (PTI): Prime Minister Narendra Modi will dedicate NTPC's 1,600 MW Lara Super Thermal Power Station and lay foundation stone for another 1,600MW of the plant under Stage-II in Raigarh, Chhattisgarh, on Saturday.

While Stage-I of the station is built with an investment of approximately Rs 15,800 crore, the Stage-II of the project will be constructed on the available land of Stage-I, a power ministry statement said.

No additional land will be required for the expansion. Stage-II will entail an investment of Rs 15,530 crore. Prime Minister Modi will dedicate Stage-I (2x800 MW) of Lara Super

Thermal Power Station and lay foundation stone of Stage-II (2x800 MW) through video-conferencing on 24th February, 2024, it stated.

Coal for this pit-head power station/project will be supplied from NTPC's Talaipalli Coal block through Merry-Go-Round (MGR) system, thus ensuring the country with supply of low-cost electricity with 24x7 availability.

Equipped with highly-efficient Super Critical technology (for Stage-I) and Ultra Super Critical technology (for Stage-II), all the units will ensure relatively less Specific Coal Consumption and



Carbon-Dioxide emissions. While 50 per cent power from both Stage-I & II is allocated to the state of Chhattisgarh, the project will play a crucial role in improving the power scenario in several other states, such as Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Goa, Daman & Diu, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli. In another

statement, the NTPC said that the first solar project of its arm NTPC REL at Chhattargarh in Rajasthan declared commercial operation of 70 MW on 21st February 2024 (begins commercial power supply).

With this, it stated that the NTPC Group installed capacity has reached 73958 MW. At present, the NTPC-

REL has 17 projects under execution, with a total capacity exceeding 6000 MW.

With this, the total RE operational capacity of NTPC Group now stands at 3448 MW.

The slated full capacity of Chhattargarh Solar project is 150 MW and is expected to be commissioned by March 2024. The capacity was won under SECI-Tranche:III and the beneficiary of this project is Rajasthan.

This project is designed to generate 370 million units of energy per year, sufficient for 60,000 households, while also saving 3 lakhs tons of CO2 emissions every year and conserving 1000 MMTPA of water. This is adequate for over 5000 households in a year.

Academic calendar incomplete due to Negligence of college professor

Central Chronicle News

Bazar-Ataria, Feb 23: A case of negligence of a professor posted in the new college market of the district has come to light. According to the information, Pradeep Sahu, posted in Naveen Mahavidyalaya, Bazar Ataria, is a professor of Botany, whose continuous absence and non completion of the academic calendar has left the students in a lurch as the final examination is scheduled in the next 8-10 days.

Due to non-completion of the course, students are worried about their success in the examination and according to the students, the study of two



units is still incomplete, of the subject botany, whereas the Principal in-charge of the college had instructed the staff to complete the course by 25th February and start revision.

Villagers in this matter have opined that the college came into existence after a lot of struggle and

now the absence of staff is cause of worry. 131 students have taken admission in the new college in the first year itself and there is a lot of happiness among the students regarding this. Earlier, students of the area had to travel long distances to pursue higher education.

Korba residents to get benefit of Shri Ramlala darshan

- Devotees will be selected by district level committee

Central Chronicle News

Korba, Feb 23: District residents will now get the benefit of the much awaited Shri Ramlala Darshan (Ayodhya Dham) scheme of Chhattisgarh government and Shri Ram Lala Darshan Yatra Scheme has been implemented by Chhattisgarh Government with the aim of providing government assistance to the local residents to provide the facility of Ayodhya Dham Yatra.

Detailed guidelines have been issued to the collectors by the Tourism Department of the State Government for the implementation of Shri Ramlala Darshan

Scheme. According to the instructions issued, a district level committee will be formed under the chairmanship of the Collector for the selection of beneficiaries for the yatra and other work under the Shri Ramlala Darshan Yatra Scheme. Member Secretary, Chief Executive Officer of District Panchayat as well as Superintendent of Police, Social Welfare Department, Chief Medical and Health Officer, Hospitality Officer and one nominated member will be included as members in the committee. Apart from collecting the beneficiaries selected from Gram Panchayat and urban bodies at the district level, he will be responsible for arranging health check-up of the beneficiaries, providing tickets and taking them to the station.

Women are getting respect under MVY: Bohra

- MLA Pandaria demands opening of millet café

Kawardha, Feb 23: During the discussion on Women and Child Development Department in the budget for the year 2024-25, she said adding that the budget of Rs 2675 crore was allocated by the previous Congress government, compared to which this year our government has made almost double the budget for the safety, empowerment of women of the state and better health and nutrition of children, this is the sunrise of good governance in Chhattisgarh.

How sensitive the government is can be estimated from the budget of

Rs 5,683 crore made for the Women and Child Development Department in the budget for the year 2024-25, she said adding that the budget of Rs 2675 crore was allocated by the previous Congress government, compared to which this year our government has made almost double the budget for the safety, empowerment of women of the state and better health and nutrition of children, this is the sunrise of good governance in Chhattisgarh.

Bohra said that it is a moment of pride for me



Bhavna Bohra

that I have got the opportunity to present the cause of the women of my Pandariya area in the largest Panchayat Assembly of the state.

She also said that there are many mothers and sisters of Pandariya Assembly who are today fulfilling the responsibility of being the heads of their families and self-help group sisters are also doing excellent work in various fields.

In such a situation, to encourage them and provide them new employ-

ment opportunities, I demand to open Millet Café on the lines of Garh Kaleva in Pandariya, which will be operated by the women of the self-help group.

Along with this, Bhavna Bohra has also demanded to open a dedicated business complex for women in Pandariya Assembly where business women can become self-reliant by selling their products and various things.

Along with this, she has also demanded to give the work of sewing school dresses for students in schools to the women of women self-help groups, which will provide them additional financial benefits and will also help in the implementation of Narendra Modi's Lakhpati Didi scheme.

Kalash procession taken out in village Achhridih

Birkoni, Feb 23: On the occasion of completion of one month of Shri Ram Mandir Pran Pratistha ceremony on 22nd February in village Achhridih, Kalash Shobha Yatra and Prabhat Pheri were taken out under the auspices of Saraswati Shishu Mandir. The Yatra was inaugurated by offering prayers at Bazar Chowk School Council and the procession was taken out waving the saffron flag near the main road of the village, Sahu Para, Bhathapara, Patel Para, Yadav Para and the main road Achhridih Chowk. On the way back, public representatives addressed the program venue, in which Acharya Maithili Sharan Thakur called for lighting the lamp in the courtyard of the house in the evening.

Inauguration of Punjab National Bank ATM



Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Feb 23: Vice-Chancellor Professor Alok Kumar Chakrawal inaugurated the Punjab National Bank ATM facility. The development of continuous facilities for students on the university campus is underway.

This ATM, established in the Administrative

Building Complex of the university campus, will benefit all stakeholders of the university family. On this occasion, Prof. Manish Shrivastava, along with senior officials of Punjab National Bank, including Senior Manager Lalit Agrawal, Chief Manager Vivek Kumar Sharma, Deputy General

Manager Shyam Prakash Verma, and Deepak Kumar Sahu, Branch Manager of Punjab National Bank, University Branch, were present.

Various Deans of the Schools, department heads, faculty members, engineering department officials, and employees of Mecon Limited also attended the event.

Students to benefit from infrastructure devp: V-C

Foundation laid for four buildings with a cost of Rs 96 crore

Central Chronicle News

Bilaspur, Feb 23: On February 22, 2024, the foundation stone for four buildings, constructed at a cost of 96 crores, was laid at Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya (a Central University) by the Honorable Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alok Kumar Chakrawal. The University Registrar, Prof. Manish Shrivastava, was also present on the occasion.

Under the capable leadership and expert guidance of Vice-Chancellor Professor Alok Kumar Chakrawal, significant infrastructure development is underway in the university. Speaking at the foundation laying ceremony, Vice-Chancellor Professor Alok Kumar Chakrawal



stated that the university is an important center of knowledge. He emphasized the need for utilizing the available facilities optimally and striving to make the departments economically prosperous through consultancy and both small and large-scale projects. With the cooperation

and concerted efforts of all, the university is making rapid progress on the path of development.

On this occasion, the University Registrar, Prof. Manish Shrivastava, and Mr. R.K. Jain, Project Manager from Mecon Limited, along with other officials including the

deans of various schools, department heads, and engineers from the Engineering Section, expressed their views. Prior to this, Professor Chakrawal performed the foundation stone laying ritual and unveiled the foundation stone plaque. The program was conducted by the Special Officer of the Engineering Section, Prof. R.K. Choubey, and the vote of thanks was given by Prof. M.C. Rao.

Foundation Laying for Four Buildings

The Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA), under the Ministry of Education, Government of India, has approved the foundation laying for four buildings, namely, the Chemical Engineering Department building worth 23 crores,

the Computer Science Engineering Department building worth 23 crores, the building of Botany Department worth 20 crores, and a joint building for the Departments of Legal Science and Anthropology and Tribal Development worth 30 crores.

Construction by Govt's Mini Ratna Company, Mecon Limited

The construction of these buildings is being undertaken by Mecon Limited, a public sector undertaking under the Ministry of Heavy Industries, Government of India. Mecon Limited is set to complete the construction of all four buildings by August 2025. These buildings will be constructed at the ground and first floor levels.

Joe Root shunned 'Bazball' to save the day for England

Ranchi, Feb 23 (PTI):

Joe Root did not bring out the sweep shot until he faced his 115th ball on a clement Friday at Ranchi and unleashed only a solitary reverse sweep while constructing a slow-burning hundred to save the day for England.

Root's unbeaten 106 off 226 balls, which was made at a strike rate of 46.90, was, perhaps, the most anti-Bazball innings that might have been played in the Brendon McCullum era. But then Root needed to rediscover that dogged Yorkie inside him for himself and the team.

He entered the fourth Test against India on the back of 29, 2, 5, 16, 18, 7 in his last Test innings and that 18 in the first innings at Rajkot might have hurt him deeply.

England were at a dominant 224 for two, well in sight of India's first innings total of 445. But Root decided to reverse lap Jasprit Bumrah for Yashasvi Jaiswal to pull off a smart catch at slip.

His dismissal sparked an England collapse as the tourists were bundled out for 319, and India converted that lead into a record victory and a 2-1 series lead. It sparked the discussion about the careless side of Bazball, and Root's 50-plus average during the



India's Akash Deep celebrates the wicket of England's Zak Crawley

McCullum reign was not good enough to slow down the wagging fingers at him.

The 33-year-old needed an innings of substance for that, and he had to return to his original batting ways. Ian Chappell, a cricketing master-brain, offered a similar thought.

"Root had a bloody fine record playing normally, and he was a quick scorer

playing normally. I don't see why he's trying to change things drastically, and I've never believed you should play premeditated shots," Chappell told World Wide Sports.

Root did precisely that, curbing his desire for fancy. However, it is not that the former England captain cannot pull off the extraordinary.

He struck just nine



England's Joe Root celebrates his century.

boundaries, including a flowing drive through covers off Akash Deep to reach his 31st Test hundred, but lack of big hits never bothered him.

Root was content in taking those singles and twos to put his and the team's score on an upwardly mobile curve. His approach was more sanguine than flashy, but received its appreciation from the high

priests Ben Stokes and McCullum when they signalled thumbs up from the dressing room to celebrate his century.

The more cynical among us would point to the absence of the rested Bumrah for Root's success. But Test cricket is all about a match-up between possibilities, and none knows that better than Root.

UP Warriorz looking to do one better in WPL's second season: Alyssa Healy

Mumbai, Feb 23 (PTI):

Sri Lankan superstar Chamari Athapaththu's addition is a massive shot in the arm for UP Warriorz and offers a happy selection headache for the team, which has a lot of quality overseas options, said skipper Alyssa Healy on Friday.

Apart from Healy, the Warriorz have international stars such as Grace Harris, Sophie Ecclestone, Tahira McGrath, Danielle Wyatt and Athapaththu, who was a last minute replacement for England pacer Lauren Bell.

"It's a great signing for us. Obviously, having depth in our side with both bat and ball was really important. To add Chamari to that list of names that we've already got was a really great opportunity for us," Healy said during a virtual media interaction on Friday.

"It's going to be a really difficult conversation for management and myself as well as to who's playing in the eleven and what opportunities everyone's going to get. They're really good problems to have and she's in great form."

UP Warriorz finished third in the inaugural edition last year in March in a competition which was dominated by eventual winners Mumbai Indians and to a large extent by Delhi Capitals, with their aggressive approaches. "We're happy with the underdog tag in particular and go out there and knock off some of these big franchises and show them what we can do," Healy said. "We learnt last year that we can compete. A



lot of people, a lot of chatter around the competition probably wrote us off early and thought the big teams were going to run away with the competition.

"But the fact that our group probably underperformed at times but still managed to come away with wins and to finish third was a huge effort for us." The Alyssa Healy-led UP Warriorz will take on Royal Challengers Bangalore in their season-opener at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on Saturday.

"This season, especially at the auction, we've picked up some of the local players, which is really great signs heading into this season.

Hopefully we can continue to improve and obviously, hopefully go one or two better this season and hopefully get our hands on a trophy," she said.

Healy said it will be vital for the Indian players in the UP Warriorz camp to express themselves.

"For us, the learnings was all around just being able to compete, especially for some of the local players who have never played in a competition like this before (Or have) never played against some of the international players that they have. "I think some confidence on their end to be able to know that they can match it with the best, I think is in good stead," she said.

I always dreamt of being a cop: Deepti Sharma

New Delhi, Feb 23 (PTI):

It's not often that one gets to live a cherished professional dream after taking a completely different career path in life but Indian women's cricket team all-rounder Deepti Sharma counts herself among the lucky few after being appointed a DSP in Uttar Pradesh Police, something that she aspired for as a child.

Sharma, who hails from Agra, was named a DSP in UP Police last month and was felicitated by state chief minister Yogi Adityanath with a cash prize of Rs 3 crore for her performances in the last couple of years. Sharma was part of the teams that won the Asian Games gold last year and the Commonwealth Games



silver in 2022.

"I always dreamt of becoming a police officer. I used to see that it is a difficult job but I always wanted to wear that uniform once and wanted to see how it felt," Sharma told PTI Video.

"My parents also supported me that I should become a police officer. I and my family are really happy with this recogni-

tion," she said. The off-spinner was adjudged the women's international cricketer of the year for the 2022-23 season in the annual BCCI honours for her stellar run during the award period.

The 26-year-old picked up 38 wickets during the time and contributed 313 runs with the bat, including two half centuries, in the T20 format.

She is now gearing up for the Women's Premier League which begins on Friday in Bengaluru. Sharma said that she is aiming to do well in tandem with fellow spinner Sophie Ecclestone in the UP Warriorz team.

The Warriorz will open their campaign against Royal Challengers on Saturday.

Sharma and Ecclestone are currently sitting at the top of the international bowling rankings in T20s and will spearhead UP's attack.

India eye revenge against Australia in FIH Pro League

Rourkela: The Indian men's hockey team would look to leave behind last match's disappointment and lift its game to the next level to stop the mighty Australians' unbeaten run in a FIH Pro League match here on Saturday. The Indians played some exciting hockey against world No.1 Netherlands in their last match but lost 2-4 in shoot-out after the game ended in a 1-1 stalemate. India are currently placed fourth in the standings with 11 points from six matches, while Australia are unbeaten so far, registering six outright wins from as many games. Besides hoping to end their home campaign on a high, revenge will also be high on India's mind as they squandered a two-goal lead to lose 4-6 to the Kookaburras earlier this month in Bhubaneswar. But for that, the Harmanpreet Singh-led side will need to perform in unison in all departments of the game. In their last match, the Indians didn't have a very good day from penalty corners with the likes of Harmanpreet, Jugraj Singh and Amit Rohidas finding it difficult to get past Netherlands' first rusher.

Alanya (Turkey), Feb 23 (PTI):

Having played determined football to get the better of Estonia in their opening match, India would be looking forward to another successful outing when they face Hong Kong in the Turkish Women's Cup here on Saturday.

The 4-3 victory against Estonia was the first-ever for a senior Indian women's national team against an European side, and it would have raised the morale of the Chaoba Devi-coached side in the four-team round-robin tournament.

This will be India's fifth encounter against Hong Kong, ranked 79th in the FIFA rankings, and India would be buoyed by the fact that they have won all four previous games, netting 11 goals, while the opponents have managed just



two. In their most recent clash, a friendly in 2019, India won by a solitary goal courtesy Pyari Xaxa, who also found the net in India's victory against Estonia in the ongoing tournament.

India currently lead the table with three points and a goal difference of plus one, while Hong Kong are at the bot-

tom having yet to open their account and a goal difference of -1 after losing 0-1 to Kosovo. Coach Chaoba Devi said Hong Kong had made a marked improvement since they last played in 2019 and her team would not underestimate the opponents.

"We played against Hong Kong a while ago, but they have shown significant improvement since then. We watched their recent match against Kosovo, where they put up a good fight despite losing by only one goal," said Chaoba Devi on the eve of the match.

"So, we can't underestimate them. We need to focus on our finishing, as we could have scored more goals in our first match against Estonia if our finishing was better. Today, we will do some finishing drills in our training to prepare for the Hong Kong match and ensure the girls are ready to perform well. It's our time to win this tournament," added Chaoba Devi.

Xaxa, who was a junior when the two teams met in 2019, recollected that she had come off the bench in the second half to score the all-important goal against Hong Kong.

Smriti in confident space with her cricket: Luke Williams

Bengaluru, Feb 23 (PTI):

Smriti Mandhana finding a seamless sync with her twin duty of being the captain and premier batter of the side is intertwined with the fortunes of Royal Challengers Bangalore in the Women's Premier League Season 2, reckoned their head coach Luke Williams. In the first WPL season, Mandhana struggled under the weight of this two-fold role, and her batting suffered a considerable dip. The elegant left-hander could only manage 149 runs from eight matches, averaging a feeble 18 and at a strike-rate of 119.

"She's practising really well. She's in a really confident and happy space with her cricket and the leadership. Obviously, there's responsibility with captaining and opening the batting. "But she's got plenty of support from the team with lots of experienced seniors to help her and trying to really separate the two roles," said Williams on Friday, a day ahead of RCB's opening WPL 2024 match against UP Warriorz. The RCB had finished fourth in the five-team league



last season, and Williams said under the leadership of Mandhana the team looked much more settled this time. "I've been fortunate to have spent a fair bit of time with Smriti through my involvement at the Southern Brave (the Hundred team) as an assistant coach and we've had lots of conversations around the learnings and experiences from last (WPL) season both as a team and individual. "I think we've really taken on board some of those learnings (from previous year)," he said.

Australia beats New Zealand by 72 runs

In 2nd T20 to win 3-match series

Auckland, Feb 23 (AP):

Adam Zampa took four for 34 as Australia rolled New Zealand for 102 in 17 overs to win the second Twenty20 International by 72 runs Friday and take an insurmountable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

The Australians will head towards the T20 World Cup in the Caribbean and United States in June with more confidence after a comprehensive series win over New Zealand which is the world's second-ranked team. Australia won the first match by six wickets with a four off the last ball and the third match between the teams is at Eden Park on Sunday.

"It was a great win for Australia," captain Mitch Marsh said. "Our backs were against the wall and we thought we were probably 50 runs short. "But, the



Australia's paceman Josh Hazlewood (C) celebrates the wicket of New Zealand's Finn Allen.

way our bowlers came out and performed was outstanding. All of our teams over the last 12 months have been backed into a lot of corners and we've managed to find a way to get out of them. Tonight was another example of that."

Australia looked to have fallen short of a competi-

tive total when it was bowled out for 174 in 19.5 overs after being 72 for one at the end of the six-over power play.

Opener Travis Head blasted 45 from 22 balls including five sixes to give Australia a fast start as it battled after losing the toss. But, Lockie Ferguson took

four for 12 and Ben Sears two for 29 as the New Zealand seamers turned things around and provoked a sustained collapse of the Australian innings.

Australia lost six wickets for 59 runs in the last 9.5 overs. New Zealand's batting was depleted by the loss of Rachin Ravindra just before the start of play with a slight knee injury and Devon Conway suffered a thumb injury keeping wicket and was taken to hospital for X-rays. He returned to the ground when it was found there was no fracture.

Conway still was unable to bat and his opening partner Finn Allen had to take the gloves for the first time in his international career. Regardless of injuries, New Zealand collapsed in the face of outstanding Australian fast bowling on a fast and bouncy wicket.

Glenn Phillips and Josh Clarkson put on 45 for the fifth wicket in a brief display of defiance.

England spinner Rehan Ahmed to return home for personal reasons

Ranchi, Feb 23 (PTI):

Young England leg-spinner Rehan Ahmed will not take any further part in the five-Test series against India as he is returning home to address some urgent family matters.

The 19-year-old picked up 11 wickets at an average of 44 in the first three Tests of the series, including a six-wicket match haul in the second match in Visakhapatnam.

"Rehan Ahmed will return home for personal reasons with immediate effect from England Men's Test tour of India. He will not be returning to India," England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said in a statement on Friday.

"England will not be replacing Ahmed for the rest of the tour."

England on Friday replaced Ahmed with Shoaib Bashir in their playing XI for the fourth Test.



There is just one game remaining in the five-Test series and England have another spinner in their squad in left-arm twaker Tom Hartley, who is their highest wicket-taker so far in the tour with 16 scalps.

Bullet train project slowed down under Thackeray govt: Vaishnaw

● We'll try to make up for it

Mumbai, Feb 23:

The country's first bullet train project would have seen much progress by now had the then Uddhav Thackeray government in Maharashtra expedited permissions, said Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Friday, asserting that the high-speed line will usher in economic growth. Speaking to media persons while inspecting the work on the project here, Vaishnaw announced that the Surat-Bilimora section on the 508-km-long corridor between Mumbai and Ahmedabad could be operational by July-August 2026. The other sections will be opened one after the other



thereafter, he said. The bullet train corridor will have limited stop' and all stop' services. While the limited-stop trains will cover the distance between Mumbai and Ahmedabad in just two hours, the other service will take about 2 hours 45 minutes, the minister said. A total of 12 stations have been planned for the project, which is being implemented by the National High Speed Rail

Corporation Limited (NHSRCL). "Had the (then) Uddhav Thackeray government given all the permissions faster, this project might have progressed much ahead by now," Vaishnav said. He said as soon as the Eknath Shinde-Devendra Fadnavis (Shiv Sena-BJP) government came to power in the state, permissions were given in 10 days. The Maha Vikas Aghadi government

under Thackeray fell in 2022 after Shinde split the Shiv Sena with his rebellion. Shinde then aligned with the BJP to form the government and became the chief minister, with Fadnavis taking the deputy CM's post. The railway minister said that the 284-km-long bullet train corridor viaduct is ready in Gujarat, where work has progressed speedily. It is now happening at the same speed in Maharashtra as well, he said.

The Thackeray government, unfortunately, delayed the project much but they will try to "make up for it now", he said. High-speed rail projects should be seen from an economical standpoint and not as transport initiatives. With high-speed connectivity, areas like Mumbai, Thane, Vapi,

Surat, Vadodara, Anand and Ahmedabad will turn into a single economic zone and it will give them a "big economic boost", the railway minister asserted. To speed up tunnel construction, Vaishnaw said, innovations have been made and work was started from four points at a time. Of the four points two are shafts, one ADIT (additionally driven intermediate tunnel) and one final point at BKC (Bandra-Kurla Complex) station. He said that there are complexities and difficulties tied to the corridor as trains will run at 320 kmph on it. "But our biggest aim in this project is to understand this complete technology," he said. The bullet train corridor has a 21-km-long tunnel, including a 7-km under-sea stretch, he said, calling the work challenging.

Boost in businesses: Lord Ram helping us lead better life, say Ayodhya residents

Ayodhya (UP), Feb 23:

Deepak Pandey, a daily wage earner in Ayodhya, was planning to move to another city searching for a job a few years ago. He now plans to buy land in this Uttar Pradesh district and build a new home. Pandey lauds Lord Ram for the change in his financial situation that has been boosted further following the consecration ceremony of the Ram temple here last month. The 48-year-old lives in a three-room house in one of the alleys leading up to Ram Path, the main route for the devotees visiting the temple.



"I used to rent out one of the rooms for Rs 3,000 per month. Since the consecration ceremony on January 22, almost one lakh devotees have been visiting this Hindu holy town in Uttar Pradesh on a daily basis, according to the local administration. A huge number of these devotees come from outside the state. Like Pandey, the owners of almost every house in the alley have refurbished at least one room in their houses to offer to tourists as a

homestay facility. Pramesh Pandey stands at the entrance of an alley, asking devotees if they need a room to stay. "I have six rooms in three-four different buildings. I offer a room for Rs 1,400 to Rs 3,000 per day, depending on the rush of visitors," he said. Most of the residents of the alley do odd jobs or sell items that the devotees offer at the temple. "Lord Ram is showering his blessings on us. The god

comes here in the form of devotees and helps us lead a better life," said Jaswanti Sharma, a resident of another alley who runs a shop selling pictures of Ram and other souvenirs.

"The number of people visiting the town has gone up substantially since the new temple was opened. This has helped my business," she said. Many shop owners are expanding their shops by adding a new floor above the existing structures.

Prabhat Gupta, who runs a food joint, is busy handing out plates of hot dosas to people. He says "Jai Shri Ram" every time he hands over a plate to a customer. "The construction work for another floor has already started. If Lord Ram wishes, we will be able to host more customers once the construction is complete," he says. Apart from eateries and

shops selling puja items, offices of travel agencies and shops selling clothes, mobile phone accessories and gift items have started coming up on Ram Path. Local tour agencies have received a boost in their business. Umesh Singh, who owns one such agency, said, "We have been witnessing a spike in bookings for the last one month.

I hope this continues." Singh said he has hired two full-time drivers and placed an order for a new luxury tourist van. Nand Kumar Gupta, an office-bearer of the Ayodhya traders' union, said, "The rise in the number of devotees has certainly helped the businesses here. However, it is too early to assess the impact on businesses." Large buildings are being constructed along the road from Faizabad town towards Ayodhya.

ENJOYING FOOD



A squirrel eats a blooming flower of a yellow-silk cotton tree (Bombax Ceiba), in New Delhi.

CBI to arrest Kejriwal in few days, will serve him notice by evening: AAP

New Delhi, Feb 23:

The AAP on Friday claimed the CBI is planning to arrest Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the next few days and will serve him a notice by the evening. While the party did not say in which case Kejriwal is likely to be arrested, it said that this was being done to prevent the AAP from stitching an alliance with the Congress for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections as the BJP is scared of the two parties coming together. While there was no immediate response from the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to the



AAP's claims, the BJP said AAP leaders are trying to create confusion and generate sympathy for Kejriwal.

The Congress and the AAP are likely to have a seat-sharing pact in Delhi, Gujarat and Haryana for the Lok Sabha polls and

the talks between the two sides are in the final stages, sources said on Thursday. Addressing a press conference here, Delhi cabinet minister and senior AAP leader Saurabh Bharadwaj said as soon as reports of finalisation of seat-sharing talks between the Congress and the AAP started coming in, the ED sent a seventh summons to Kejriwal in the excise policy case. "We have learnt from reliable sources that the CBI is planning to arrest Kejriwal. The CBI will also serve a notice to Kejriwal either this afternoon or by the evening," Bharadwaj said.

Idli, chicken jalfrezi featured among foods with highest biodiversity footprint in new study

New Delhi, Feb 23: India's idli, chana masala and rajma featured in the top 20 dishes with the highest biodiversity footprint, along with chicken jalfrezi and chicken chaat, according to a new study analysing 151 popular local dishes from around the world. However, researchers found that dishes with beef as the main ingredient such as fraldinha - beef cut dish originating from Brazil - formed the bulk of the top 20. Chili con carne (spicy stew with chili peppers, beef and beans) and beef tartare were other such dishes. The scientists from National University of Singapore analysed lists of popular dishes taken from CNN.com and TasteAtlas.com to estimate their biodiversity footprints when globally and locally produced.

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