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NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)
SAFETY MEASURES

Thought for today
To use punctuation marks on paper is easy but can you put a full stop to waste thoughts?

COVID-19 status in isles
 Port Blair, Jan 20: The RT-PCR test conducted on 124 passengers who arrived here yesterday, 43 positive cases have been detected.
 See... Page 02

Private media continues to face financial hardship, time to stop private advts in DT

Port Blair, Jan 20: Print media in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands has registered a sharp dip in the advertisements as well as circulation figures. During this hard time when print media in the islands is suffering heavy losses, instead of coming out in support of the private print media, the UT administration has decided to double standards while dealing with private print media and the official mouthpiece. While the Daily Telegraphs, the state gazette is released full page government tenders and notices on a every day basis, private print media, particularly private dailies are denied advertisements. In the past few days, private media were released only minimum government advertisements in comparison to The Daily Telegraphs. As a result of this, except a few private dailies, most of the private print media, suffering revenue loss, have stopped their publication. To add to the injuries, the focus of the UT administration was to support the official mouthpiece 'The Daily Telegraphs'. During the lockdown period when most of the private media were struggling to survive, the official media was given priority in every aspect. Besides issuing press releases on a regular basis, the government media was also issued government tenders on a regular basis. Here, the people of the islands should know that the official media does not have any financial issue as it is run by the government. The Daily Telegraph is a government department and the staff salaries and other expenditures incurred in publishing this newspaper is borne entirely by the government. The situation of private print media has not improved even after the unlock period. Due to slow down
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MP demands electric connection for flood lights placed at Guptapara Ground

Port Blair, Jan 20: The Member of Parliament of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Mr. Kuldeep Rai Sharma today met the Director of Rural Development Mr. Vinay Kumar Jindal and requested him to provide electric connection to the flood lights, which have been already installed in the playground of Guptapara Village, in front of Humferygunj Police Station. He mentioned that a large number of youths of nearby villages utilize the ground for sports and other recreational activities on a daily basis and once the flood lights become operational, youths of the region will be able to utilize the ground even in late evening and night hours. The Member of Parliament said that sports and other related activities are good means to keep youths of our Islands engaged in constructive activities and will certainly save them from drugs and other addictions. The Director of Rural Development assured the Member of Parliament to provide necessary electric connection to the flood lights as soon as possible and necessary directions were given immediately over phone by him.

Supreme Court upholds validity of OBC quota in NEET admissions

New Delhi, Jan 20: The Supreme Court on Thursday pronounced its decision upholding the constitutional validity of providing 27% quota to Other Backward Classes (OBC) in NEET All India Quota (AIQ) seats for undergraduate and postgraduate medical courses, saying "reservation is not at odds with merit". A Bench led by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud observed that 'merit' could not be narrowed to the
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Third covid wave: Why is India not seeing severe illness, deaths/ ICMR chief explains

New Delhi, Jan 20: We have been able to prevent severe illnesses and deaths due to Covid-19 in the third wave due to the high vaccination coverage across the country, said the central government on Thursday.
 It also informed that 94% of India's adults have been administered the first anti-Covid dose. In the 15-18 years age group, around 52% have received their first dose of the vaccine. "Vaccines have remained beneficial in India. Deaths have considerably reduced due to vaccinations. In this third surge of Covid-19, we are currently not witnessing severe illness and deaths due to high vaccination uptake," said Dr. Balram Bhargava, director-general of ICMR, during a press briefing. Further, government officials said that vaccination coverage will be expanded for those under 15 years of age based on scientific evidence. "As scientific evidence evolves, we will be expanding the coverage of vaccination. We will take a decision on the basis of scientific data," said Rajesh Bhushan, the Union health secretary. Speaking about the coronavirus situation in the country, the officials said that 11 states and union territories have more than 50,000 active Covid-19 cases and 515 districts are reporting an average case positivity of over five percent. In addition to this, they informed that Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Odisha, Delhi and Rajasthan are among the top
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CBSE Term I Results 2022: Know Class 10, 12 result declaration process

New Delhi, Jan 20: CBSE Term I Results 2022 is awaited. The result when released by the Central Board of Secondary Education will be available on the official site of CBSE on cbse.gov.in. The result for Class 10, 12 will also be available after declaration on the official site of CBSE results on cbseresults.nic.in.
 The Board has decided that the Term I result will be released in
 the form of marks scored by the candidates and that no student who
 appeared for the examination will
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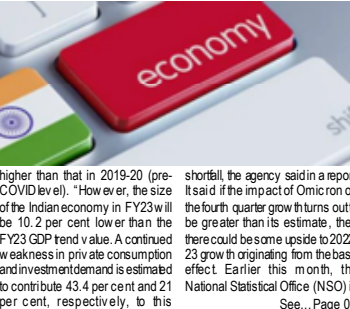


Vaccination drive continuing smoothly in isles

Port Blair, Jan 20: The vaccination drive is continuing smoothly in A&N Islands. As per data available, a total of 6,02,225 beneficiaries in the age group of 18 and above have been vaccinated so far in A&N Islands. Similarly, 18,691 beneficiaries have been vaccinated in the age group of 15 to 18 years against the target beneficiaries of 23,000. The number of beneficiaries administered precautionary dose of vaccine so far stood at 35,171. A total of 715 eligible beneficiaries were vaccinated in A&N Islands yesterday. 585 beneficiaries were vaccinated in South Andaman District, out of which, 108 beneficiaries were in the age group of 15-18 years while 63 beneficiaries were in the age group of 18-44 years. 84 beneficiaries were vaccinated in North & Middle Andaman District, out of which, 29 beneficiaries were in the age group of 15-18 years while 7 beneficiaries were in the age group of 18-44 years. 46 beneficiaries were vaccinated in Nicobar District, out of which, 13 beneficiaries were in the age group of 15-18 years while 1 beneficiary was in the age group of 18-44 years.

India Ratings projects economy to grow at 7.6% in FY23

New Delhi, Jan 20: India Ratings and Research on Thursday said the country's economy is likely to grow at 7.6 per cent year-on-year in 2022-23. The agency said after a gap of two years, the Indian economy will show a meaningful expansion, as the GDP in 2022-23 is expected to be 9.1 per cent higher than that in 2019-20 (pre-COVID level). "However, the size of the Indian economy in FY23 will be 10.2 per cent lower than the FY23 GDP trend value. A continued weakness in private consumption and investment demand is estimated to contribute 43.4 per cent and 21 per cent, respectively, to this shortfall, the agency said in a report. It said if the impact of Omicron on the fourth quarter growth turns out to be greater than its estimate, then there could be some upside to 2022-23 growth originating from the base effect. Earlier this month, the National Statistical Office (NSO) in
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Delhi Hits 43 Deaths, Highest Since June; Cases 10% Lower Than Yesterday

New Delhi, Jan 20: Delhi today reported 43 Covid deaths, which is the highest number of deaths due to the viral infection since June 10 last year when 44 people had died. The national capital logged 12,306 new Covid cases, which is 10.7 per cent lower than yesterday's number (13,785). The number of total Covid cases in the city is 17,60,272. The positivity rate (the number of cases detected per 100 tests) dropped to 21.48 per cent from 23.8 per cent a day before. Total deaths stand at 25,503. The death rate is now 1.45 percent.
 18,815 Covid patients were discharged in the last 24 hours, the total number of discharged patients is 16,66,039. The number of infections in the national capital has seen a marked decline over the last few days, except for yesterday when the capital saw a spike.
 On Tuesday, the city registered 11,684 cases, on Monday, it was 12,587 cases, on Sunday it was 18,286, on Saturday
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DCC President interacts with peoples of Bambooflat

Port Blair, Jan 20: The villagers of Bambooflat Panchayat poured out their problems and issues with the District Congress Committee President Mr. V.K. Abdul Aziz during an interaction programme organised on Wednesday night. Majority of the villagers expressed their problems to the DCC President and urged him to use his good office to convey it to the
 Administration and get them resolved. The villagers and local leaders brought to the notice of DCC
 President about the issues relating to pending development works.
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When Will Vaccination For Children Under 15 Begin? What Centre Said

New Delhi, Jan 20: The Union Health Ministry will decide about COVID-19 vaccination for children less than 15 years of age only after scientific evidence, said Rajesh Bhushan, Health Secretary while addressing a press briefing on Thursday. From January 16, 2021, COVID-19 vaccination has been started and rolled out based on scientific evidence and assumptions of protecting the most vulnerable people. So, as the scientific evidence evolved, we will be expanding the coverage of vaccination. We will take a decision on the basis of scientific evidence for below 15 years old children," Mr Bhushan said. Further, Dr V.K. Paul, Member (Health) Niti Aayog
 explained, "COVID-19 vaccination for 12 years old is our next goal. These decisions will only be taken after scientific information and scientific decision. We are working on it also."
 Earlier, the official sources reported ANI that vaccination for those under 15 years of age has not been yet taken by the Union Health Ministry.
 The Central government also informed that 72 per cent of India's adult population is fully vaccinated whereas around 52 per cent of children in the 15-18 years age group have been inoculated with the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine. Meanwhile, the health officials said that the adolescents in the age group
 of 15-18 years are actively participating in the COVID-19 vaccination drive. On Monday, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya also said that over 3.5 crore teenagers between the age limit of 15 to 18 years have received the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. "Amazing enthusiasm among young India for COVID-19 vaccination. Over 3.5 crore children between the 15-18 age group have received 1st dose of the COVID vaccine since January 3. Congratulations to all my young friends who have got vaccinated," the health minister tweeted.
 So far, India has administered 3.45 crore first doses of COVID-19
 See... Page 02

by taking under advantage of the trust reposed in him by the daughter ravished the chaste of his daughter and jeopardized her future prospect. The plight of the victim/survivor and the shock suffered by her can be well visualized. The victim girl/survivor with efflux of time would live the traumatic experience and will always be haunted by the memory of unfortunate incidents." The case dated to 25.04.2018 when the victim girl made complaint that she was staying with her parents and her father on repeated occasions committed rape upon her and whenever she used to miss her
 periods, her father used to force her to consume pills like in the month of April 2018 once again she conceived and was given with pills to terminate pregnancy but the pills could not work and she was taken to a Private Hospital where it was detected that she has half abortion, thus the matter was referred to G.B. Parth Hospital and there she has to undergo MTP for half abortion. The victim girl frightened, thereafter, gathered courage and rushed with all papers and narrated the atrocity underwent by her to the then
 See... Page 02

Death condoled

Port Blair, Jan 20: The Bharbar Association have condoned the sudden demise of Sri S Pandian, aged 67 yrs, R/o Chennai who died on 19th Jan 2022, at Chennai. May the almighty give strength to the bereaved family members to bear this irreparable loss. The association has prayed for peace to the departed soul. Inserted by L Vellamsamy, V Lelavilamsamy R/o Delanipur.

Bairagi raises anganwadi related issues with CS

Port Blair, Jan 20: Mr. Ajoy Bairagi, State President, Bharatiya Janata Party, Andaman and Nicobar Islands has written a letter to the Chief Secretary, Andaman and Nicobar Administration informing him of issues with the Anganwadi Centres. Mr. Bairagi in his letter has
 mentioned that during his recent visit to Swaraj Dweep the general public raised the issue of Anganwadi Centres and informed that the Anganwadi Staff are not paid on time and the children are also not getting the nutritional supplements and snacks from the last six months. He further mentioned that on enquiry he came
 to know that the situation is same in almost all the islands and also some Anganwadi Centres are about to close down due to non-payment to private owners. Mr. Ajoy Bairagi mentioned that it is a matter of concern and requested the Chief Secretary to enquire on the matter and resolve it on priority.

CONVICTION UNDER POCSO ACT

Port Blair, Jan 20: A Special Court (POCSO) in South Andaman presided by the Honble Special Judge (POCSO) Shri. Raja Chatterjee, today on 20.01.2022 sentenced a 49 years old man, a resident of Dhankihani Village, with the life conviction who committed repeated rape upon his own daughter in Special Case No. 29 of 2019. Pronouncing the order on Thursday, Special Judge (POCSO) of South Andaman District observed that "father is fortress and trustee of his daughter, in the instant case, he said father by way of betraying the trust and
 by taking under advantage of the trust reposed in him by the daughter ravished the chaste of his daughter and jeopardized her future prospect. The plight of the victim/survivor and the shock suffered by her can be well visualized. The victim girl/survivor with efflux of time would live the traumatic experience and will always be haunted by the memory of unfortunate incidents." The case dated to 25.04.2018 when the victim girl made complaint that she was staying with her parents and her father on repeated occasions committed rape upon her and whenever she used to miss her
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21 January 2022

Pak Drone With Drugs Taken Down By Border Force In Punjab

Amritsar: BSF troops engaged the Pakistani drone by firing on it and also illuminated the area by firing illumination bombs, according to the border guarding force.

The Border Security Force (BSF) has foiled another attempt of smuggling of contraband by engaging a 'flying object' coming from Pakistan in Punjab's Amritsar Sector and seized heroin over 7 kg dropped by it in the area.

The nefarious attempt of anti-national elements to smuggle contraband was thwarted by the BSF troops on the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday.

"On the intervening night of 19/20th January 2022, alert BSF troops heard the humming sound of a flying object coming from Pakistan. Troops as per drill engaged the object by firing on it and also illuminated the area by firing illumination bombs. As per Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), all sister agencies were informed," said the BSF. As the BSF

troops heard the sound of dropping from the flying object, the BSF said, the area was cordoned and seven packets of suspected heroin were recovered from the area during a search operation conducted in the morning.

The gross weight of the heroin was approximately 7.250 kg, said the BSF, a border guarding force mandated to guard 3,323 km India-Pakistan border as well as curb illegal activities like smuggling of contraband and Fake Indian Currency Notes (FICN) among other activities.

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"Vigilant BSF troops, despite adverse climatic conditions, once again foiled the nefarious attempts of anti-national elements to smuggle contraband. BSF is committed in the fight against drugs," the BSF further said.



NOTICE

I, SHRI KALIPADA ROY, S/O- Late Pran Krishna Roy, R/O- Kishorinagar, Under Diglipur Tehsil, North & Middle Andaman District the recorded tenant of the Occupancy Right landed properties comprising in new Holding No- 37, bearing Sy. No- 21/1, measuring an area 1.92 hectares, classified as P-I & bearing Sy. No- 21/2, measuring an area 0.03 hectares, classified as House site & land bearing Sy. No.- 8, classified as Hilly, measuring an area of 1.7800 hectares, total measuring 3.7300 hectares, situated at Kishorinagar village, under Diglipur Tehsil, North & Middle Andaman

I, therefore through this notice inform the general public not to deal with in respect of the abovesaid land in any manner and inspite of this notice, if any person is dealing with the said property, then in that event the said person/s, shall have to bear the consequences at their own cost.

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Kishorinagar

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SSC CGL Exam Notification 2022, Assistant & Other Vacancies, Apply Online @ ssc.nic.in

SSC CGL Exam Notification 2022 | Combined Graduate Level Examination | Various Vacancies | Last Date: 23.01.2022 | SSC CGL Recruitment Notification @ ssc.nic.in
SSC CGL Exam Notification 2022: Staff Selection Commission (SSC) has released Combined Graduate Level Examination on 23.12.2021. As per SSC CGL exam notification (No. 3/6/2021-P&P-I (Vol.-I)), the commission has announced Group B & Group C vacant positions in different Ministries/ Departments/ Organizations of India. SSC CGL exams will be conducted to fill up the following posts such as Assistant Audit Officer, Assistant Accounts Officer, Assistant Section Officer, Assistant, Inspector, Assistant Enforcement Officer, Sub Inspector, Superintendent, Research Assistant, Divisional Accountant, Auditor, Tax Assistant & Other posts. Online registration link is available from 23.12.2021 at www.ssc.nic.in. Candidates who willing to work under Central Government may apply online for SSC CGL exam 2021 notification. The last date to submit the online form is 23.01.2022.

Bachelor's Degree holders can apply for SSC CGL exam 2021. Applicants must have attained the prescribed age limit. SSC CGL exam consists of Tier I & Tier II (Computer Based Exam), Tier III (Descriptive paper) & Tier IV (CPT/ Data Entry Speed Test). SSC CGL notification 2021 & apply online link for SSC recruitment are available at www.ssc.nic.in. Aspirants need to pay a fee via prescribed mode. CAJ/CAJ/ Degree in Law is desirable qualification to apply for this SSC CGL recruitment. Selected candidates will be appointed anywhere in India. Indicative syllabus & exam scheme are mentioned in official notification. More details of SSC CGL recruitment 2021 notification, syllabus, exam date, previous question paper, admit card, answer key, merit list, selection list, results and upcoming SSC exam notices will be uploaded at official website.

CMRL Recruitment 2022, Apply B.E Vacancies @ chennaimetrorail.org

CMRL Recruitment 2022 | General Manager, AGM & Other Post | 10 vacancies | Last date: 07.01.2022 & 22.01.2022 | Download Application Form @ chennaimetrorail.org

CMRL Recruitment 2021: Chennai Metro Rail Limited invites applications from qualified and experienced personnel for the appointment to the post of General Manager, AGM, JGM, DGM, Manager, DM and AM. These 10 vacancies will be assigned through CMRL recruitment. Candidates must be Indian citizen and must have completed B.E/ B.Tech are eligible to apply for this General Manager and other post. Before final submission of application form, candidate must review their application form carefully. The closing date of filled application form for General Manager is 22.01.2022 and other should be 07.01.2022.

Central government job seekers may download the CMRL recruitment application form and Chennai Metro Rail recruitment notification from official website. The CMRL will conduct the interview/ written test. Persons already working in Government/ PSU organizations should apply through proper channel. At the time of interview candidates should produce the NOC certificates. Candidates may send their filled application form along with the self-attested copies of certificates in support of educational qualification, experience certificate, birth certificates, community certificates and passport size photo and Bio data should be submitted to the proper channel. Related application form will not be considered for after the due date of application.

Details regarding Chennai Metro Rail jobs like educational qualification, age limit, selection process, & How to apply are provided above. Check out the latest current job notification is available at Daily recruitment site.

CAG Recruitment 2022, Apply 49+ Sr. Audit Officer & Other Vacancies @ cag.gov.in

CAG Recruitment 2022 | Sr. Audit officer & Asst. Audit Officer Post | 49+ vacancies | Closing Date: 21.01.2022 & 31.01.2022 | Download Application Form @ cag.gov.in

CAG Recruitment 2022: In this article, we have described the Latest Jobs of CAG Recruitment 2022 details. New Delhi has invited applications from eligible applicant for hiring 49+ vacancies. Post wise vacancy details are given below. Interested and eligible applicant should apply through online mode only. These 49+ vacancies will be allocated for the post of Sr. Audit officer, Asst. Audit Officer, Sr. Account Officer. Before final submission of application form, candidate must review their application form carefully. Selected candidate will get the pay matrix of level-8 & level-10. The last date to apply for the post of Sr. Audit Officer/ Sr. Account Officer (31.01.2022) and other post should be (21.01.2022).

Appointment will be based on deputation basis. The period of deputation can be extended / curtailed as per candidate performance. Central government job seekers may download the CAG recruitment notification from official website. Recruitment process may be based on written test/ interview. Experience in relevant field is eligible to apply. Candidates who satisfy the below condition may send their filled application form along with support documents/ certificates like bio data, photocopies, integrity certificate and vigilance certificate etc to reach the given below address. Read the below table to get the details of location, post name and organization name etc.

Details regarding CAG Sr. Audit officer & other jobs like educational qualification, age

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IN CONVERSATION

PM Modi To Host First India-Central Asia Summit On January 27



New Delhi, Jan 20 Prime Minister Narendra Modi will host the first India-Central Asia Summit in a virtual format on January 27, the Ministry of External Affairs announced today. The summit will be held with the participation of the

Presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, the MEA said in a statement. This will be the first engagement of its kind between India and the Central Asian countries at the level of leaders, it said. The first India-Central Asia

Summit is a reflection of India's growing engagement with the Central Asian countries, which are a part of India's "extended neighbourhood", the MEA said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid a historic visit to all Central Asian countries in 2015. Subsequently, there have been exchanges at high-levels at bilateral and multilateral forums. The inception of the India-Central Asia Dialogue at Foreign Ministers' level, the third meeting of which was held in New Delhi from December 18-20, 2021, has provided an impetus to India-Central Asia relations, the MEA said. The participation of the secretaries of National Security Councils of Central Asian countries in the Regional Security Dialogue

on Afghanistan held in New Delhi on November 10, 2021 outlined a common regional approach on Afghanistan, it said. During the first India-Central Asia Summit, the leaders are expected to discuss steps to take forward India-Central Asia relations to newer heights, the MEA said. They are also expected to exchange views on regional and international issues of interest, especially the evolving regional security situation. Promoted, listen to the latest songs, only on JioSaavn.com. The summit is symbolic of the importance attached by the leaders of India and the Central Asian countries to a comprehensive and enduring India-Central Asia partnership, the statement said.

Deep In Snow, Soldiers Patrol J&K Forward Areas, Check Infiltration

New Delhi, Jan 20 Back-deep into a tapestry of heavy snow, Indian soldiers brave extreme weather and inhospitable terrain to conduct patrolling and keep a 'hawk's eye' on infiltrating terrorists ready to sneak into this side of the Line of Control (LoC) in the Poonch sector. Sepoy Surinder Singh (named changed), walks through deep snow daily to man the listening post in forward area at a height of 7,000 feet along LoC in Poonch sector to keep vigil on the movement of infiltrating terrorists camped in launching pads across the border ready to sneak into this side, if they get slightest opportunity on the surveillance front.

"Snow fall or no snow - chilly winters or dangerous gorges - threat of attacks - our morale is high to keep around the clock vigilance along LoC. We are not scared of such situations and circumstances", a soldier guarding a forward post through his surveillance equipment tells the visiting journalists in Poonch. The troops had to battle with nefarious designs of cunning enemy troops and their snipers, terrorists waiting for opportunity to sneak in, and threat of attacks by Pakistan's border action teams (BATs) on one side and extreme cold climatic conditions, inhospitable terrain and deep gorges on their side of the borderline with Pakistan. Another soldier says that they have to fight snow, cold climatic



conditions and inhospitable terrains during long range patrolling to guard LoC.

"Visibility in cloudy and snow fall conditions along the LoC becomes so poor that we cannot see our own jaws even at a distance of some metres. At the same time, we have to protect ourselves from nefarious designs of Pakistan", he said.

Ahead of the winter, army prepares rope networks to forward and hilly posts to patrol the LoC with the help of these ropes, they said adding that they are armed with a new set of rifles including Israel made light machine guns 'Nagve NG-7' and high tech surveillance equipment.

NG-7 SLR, which in automatic mode has a rate of fire of over 600-700 rounds per minute and weighs over 8 kg, was inducted into Army along LoC last year as it can target up to one kilometer.

"Due to heavy snow fall, we move and patrol LoC with the help of the rope. It is put in place ahead of winters as a part of winter strategy," one Army man said.

Another soldier manning a high-altitude post at Hajipur bulge says that they have now real weapons, which had replaced old Indian INSAS rifle.

"It is effective weapon. It is an assault rifle. Its weight is 8.2 kgs. It has a one kilometer range. Its cycling fire rate is 600-800 rounds per minute", he said.

The Indian Army along with fighting the enemy has to secure their own safety in the changing weather conditions from time to time.

"The weather conditions can turn extreme and thus bunkers have been revamped. Now army personnel guarding the borderline have graded its bunker to Fiber Reinforced plastic (FRP) to sustain temperature changes," an Army

personnel said.

"We come back from duty guarding LoC and patrolling after six hours in this FRP bunker. We instantly feel comfortable from extreme chilly weather as the temperature is hot inside. We have heating arrangements as well inside", a soldier said.

He says inside it "we feel homelike conditions". Soldiers maintain that they had over 200 to 250 terrorists staged on launching pads across LoC in Nijapira area ready to infiltrate into this side.

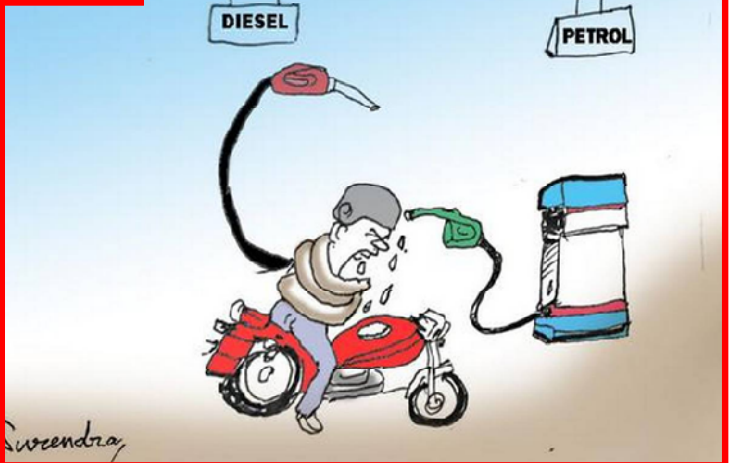
"We keep a continuous surveillance on their movement across through high tech equipments," army man deployed on a surveillance, said.

Pakistan tried to activate border belt off in border districts of Rajouri-Poonch in 2021 by pushing in more terrorists to engineer terrorists incidents in the area but the Indian Army foiled those bids.

Situation in the past year in Poonch-Rajouri sector has become fragile following series of encounters, and killing of half-a-dozen terrorists which has forced soldiers, officers and commanding officers to remain on their toes along the 225-km-long LoC.

A soldier manning a LMG post, bang on Zeroline in HP sub-sector pointed out in the dark and said in a defiant tone, "We will not be cowed down."

OPEN SECRET

Both Omicron And Delta Variants Causing Covid Surge: Kerala Health Minister
Kerala Health Minister Veena George also warned of stringent action against those unleashing false propaganda regarding the pandemic and vaccination through social media platforms.

New Delhi, Jan 20 Kerala Health Minister Veena George has cautioned people against the rapid spread of COVID-19 in the state during the third wave and said both Delta and Omicron variants of the virus are contributing to the ongoing unprecedented surge in daily cases. Though its severity is lesser, Omicron variant has the potential to spread the disease 5-6 times more than the Delta variant and so it should not be taken lightly. Every single person should adhere to Covid protocol strictly to keep the pandemic under control, she told reporters. Ms George also warned of stringent action against those unleashing false propaganda regarding the pandemic and vaccination through social media platforms. Stating that a section of people are spreading lies like Omicron is a 'natural vaccine' and so it was not dangerous to contract the infection, she said such campaigns were baseless.

Whatsoever be the variant, the basic characteristics of the novel coronavirus were the same and people should take extra care to



keep the disease at bay, the minister said. "Delta (variant) was the reason for more cases during the second wave. The third wave happened before it was completely over. Now, both Delta and Omicron are contributing to the surge in Covid cases," Ms George said.

Making it clear that the infectivity was very high these days, she said compared to the second wave, five percent more cases were expected during the third

wave. Stressing the need to follow health protocols without any fail in the present circumstances, the minister said vaccination was a defence against the infection, so everyone should take the jab at the earliest.

Urging people to avoid unnecessary hospital visits, she said aged people and those having co-morbidities should take more care. Rubbing news reports

stating that there was scarcity of essential medicines in the state, she said the health department was fully prepared to tackle the situation and the slight rush witnessed by hospitals of late was natural.

There are 3,107 ICU beds in government hospitals across the state while 7,468 are there in private sector health facilities. There are 2,293 ventilator beds in government hospitals and 2,432 in private hospitals, she added.

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