NEWS IN BRIEF – DEC 31, 2015

1. **Cess you pay often unused or diverted: CAG:New Delhi:** A significant part of the cesses and other levies that you pay the government have remained unutilised or have been diverted for other purposes, the federal auditor has noted and questioned the rationale of imposing such levies. The comptroller and auditor general (CAG), in its comments on the Union Accounts for 2014-15, has listed half a dozen such funds the government has created over the past decade where amounts to the tune of around Rs 3 lakh crore have been collected. The auditor has observed that these funds, meant for specific social causes, have been diverted to other uses or simply remained unutilised.[TOI p1]

2. **R&D cess: Govt used just Rs. 542cr of Rs. 4,900cr in 17 yrs: New Delhi:** A significant part of the cesses and other levies that you pay the government have remained unutilised or have been diverted for other purposes, the federal auditor has noted and questioned the rationale of imposing such levies.[TOI p17]

3. **Sharif says time to set aside hostilities : New Delhi:** Days after PM Narendra Modi’s impromptu halt at Lahore, his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday said it was “high time“ India and Pakistan set aside their hostilities.”Spirit of goodwill generated with Modi’s visit will continue... It has been agreed that we will restart the dialogue between Pakistan and India,” Sharif told reporters at Zhob airport in Balochistan.[TOI p1]

4. **ISI luring military veterans via fake ‘welfare agencies’:New Delhi:** With several ISI-linked spy rings being exposed in recent weeks, including the arrest of IAF man K K Ranjith on Tuesday, it has come to light that Pakistan’s infamous intelligence agency is floating fake ex-servicemen organisations to lure former personnel of the forces to ferret “authentic“ information about serving officers and troop movement.[TOI p8]

5. **Trans-south Asian road, rail grid may be a reality : NEW DELHI:** Fancy a road trip from Agartala to Kabul via Lahore? A train journey to the scenic green plains of Chittagong in Bangladesh or a family vacation in Colombo travelling through Chennai? Seamless travel via road or rail across south Asia may be a reality soon if the current season of India-Pakistan goodwill holds.[HT p1]

6. **I-T list `shames’ 18 with Rs 1,152cr dues : New Delhi:** The Income Tax department has made over two dozen additions to its list of defaulters, “naming and shaming“ on Wednesday 18 people who together owe taxes to the tune of Rs 1,152 crore. The list is the third released this year.
identifying defaulters who are either untraceable or have inadequate assets to pay off their dues. It takes the number of publicly identified defaulters to 67 with total tax dues of over Rs 3,100 crore.[TOI p8]

7. No suspension of IAS officers without PM nod : New Delhi IAS officers working under the central government can now be placed under suspension only with approval of the PM, according to new All India Services (Discipline and Appeal) Amendment Rules, 2015. "IAS officers working under central government shall only be suspended on the recommendations of the central review committee, as amended, with the approval of the minister-in-charge of the department of personnel and training (DoPT)," say the revised rules. DoPT is directly under PM Modi, though he is assisted by minister of state Jitendra Singh.[TOI p10]

8. CPM must woo youth, shun TMC bashing : New Delhi : A crowd sourced public rally of lakhs of voluntary participants is as much a spectacle as it is politically reassuring, especially when the party has nothing to celebrate and only its anxieties to air.[TOI p11]

9. Tape nails Jogi for walkover in polls, Cong seeks Raman scalp, Party Slaps Notice On Former CM : New Delhi: Former Chhattisgarh chief minister Ajit Jogi might have finally run into some serious trouble with the Congress leadership with the member facing disciplinary action for allegedly plotting in cahoots with BJP to ensure withdrawal of a Congress nominee in a September, 2014 assembly bypoll.[TOI p12]

10. Sonia sets poll agenda for Congress in Kerala : VarkalaKottayam: Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Wednesday set the poll agenda for her party when she lamented the betrayal of Sree Narayana Guru and attempts being made to capture his legacy by communal ideologists. Inaugurating the 83rd annual Sivagiri pilgrimage at Varkala, Sonia made a veiled attack on BJP's bid to garner Ezhava votes by joining hands with Vellapally Natesan. “The sole motive of communal ideologists is political power by means of spreading prejudice and by dividing our society," she said.[TOI p12]

11. Karnataka council polls: Cong wins 13 seats, BJP 6 : Bengaluru: In an impressive show, the Congress on Wednesday bagged 13 of the 25 Karnataka legislative council seats for which elections were held on December 27. The BJP had to settle for a single-digit victory tally of six. The JD(S) won four seats and independents, two. The elections had seen a free flow of gifts –smart phones, tablets, costly saris and cash -from the parties to the voters. The parties had cited the lack of any ceiling on expenditure to justify their largesse.[TOI p12]
12. Council Polls: Cong 3, Sena 2, Others 1 Each : MUMBAI: Major political parties retained their respective strength in Maharashtra legislative council after the recent round of elections to seven local authorities constituencies, the results of which were declared on Wednesday. The Congress won three seats, Shiv Sena two, while the NCP, BJP and an Independent bagged one seat each. The elections to the seven local authorities constituencies of the state legislative council were held on Sunday in which 15 candidates were in the fray.[ET p2]

13. A Shot in the Arm for Sidda as Cong Bags 13, BJP Manages Only 6: Bengaluru : The rural voters continue to be the BJP’s Achilles heel as the Congress bagged 13 of the 25 seats in the Karnataka legislative council elections held on December 27. Gram panchayat members are the bulk of voters in these elections, besides those elected to urban local bodies, the legislative assembly and Parliament. While the Congress managed to win 13 of these seats, including two in BJP bastions of Shivamogga and Dakshina Kannada, the saffron party managed to get only six. The results indicate that the pro-Congress trend continues in rural areas.[ET p2]

14. AAP’s Rajya Sabha Debut in 2018 : AAP will be eligible for three Rajya Sabha seats in January 2018 when the term of Congressmen Janardan Dwivedi, Parvez Hashmi and Karan Singh gets over. With just over two years to go, some AAP leaders are already eyeing the Upper House and reinforcing their loyalty to Arvind Kejriwal. These are former journalists Ashish Khetan and Ashutosh, and AAP founder member Sanjay Singh. Banker Meera Sanyal and model Gul Panag are also waiting.[ET p2]

15. Centre helps revival of ailing Haldia petro : Kolkata : This New Year gift from the Narendra Modi government may help script Mamata Banerjee’s first industrial turnaround story. The Union Finance Ministry has agreed to grant a four-year extension to Haldia Petrochemicals Ltd (HPL) to meet its export obligations that should take care of its financial liability to the tune of approximately Rs 2,300 crore.[IE p11]

16. Committed to building Ram mandir: Mahesh : Bulandshahr (UP) Union minister Mahesh Sharma has said that his government is committed to building Ram Temple at Ayodhya but would wait for the Supreme Court verdict or arrive at a “mutual understanding” on constructing the temple. He said it is the “dream” of the people of the country to see Ram Mandir built as early as possible.[TOI p14]

17. Solar mission gets Rs 5,000 cr boost : New Delhi : The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) Wednesday approved scaling up of the budget for implementing Grid Connected Rooftop systems up to 2019-20 under National Solar Mission (NSM) from Rs 600 crore to Rs

18.Cong asks BJP to sack Raman : New Delhi : The Congress on Wednesday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to sack Chhattisgarh chief minister Raman Singh for allegedly influencing and using money against party candidate Manturam Pawar to make him withdraw from the Assembly byelection last year in the light of revelations in an audio-taped conversation.[AA p2]

19.NDA inaction on graft irks RSS chief : Kochi : Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat is reported to have said that the Sangh is upset with the Narendra Modi government's inaction on tackling corruption and bringing back black money stashed away in tax havens abroad and warned the BJP that it will be held answerable by people on this count in the 2019 general elections.[AA p2]

20.Cong ready to forge pre-poll alliances : New Delhi : The Congress is willing to have pre-poll alliances with like-minded parties against the BJP and parties friendly to the BJP in the coming state Assembly polls, but a final call would have to be taken by the AICC group on pre-poll alliances.[AA p2]

21.Remark on 'talent pool' puts BJP leader in spot : New Delhi : Amid speculation that Prime Minister Narendra Modi could go for a Cabinet expansion and reshuffle soon, reported remarks by BJP vice-president Vinay Sahasrabuddhe have created a controversy. The BJP leader was quoted saying that the ruling party has a “smaller talent pool” compared to the Congress.[AA p2]

22.Shrinking Cong in RS will aid GST : New Delhi : Sounding hopeful, Union finance minister Arun Jaitley on Wednesday said the Goods and Services Tax (GST) bill will be cleared as the strength of the main Opposition party is “shrinking” in the Rajya Sabha. Mr Jaitley also hit back at the Opposition party’s “trinity” remarks and reminded that “gods don’t vote in Parliament but MPs do”.[AA p2]

23.Cabinet takes note of India, Oz N-deal : New Delhi : The India-Australia civil nuclear cooperation agreement, which had been signed by both the nations in 2014, was on Wednesday taken note of by the Union Cabinet. Basically, the Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, "took note" of the administrative arrangements of implementing the deal, which came into force in November.[AA p4]
24. ‘Shrinking Cong strength in RS to aid GST passage’: New Delhi:
Hitting back at Congress's 'Trinity' remarks, finance minister Arun Jaitley
on Wednesday said Gods don't vote in Parliament, and GST will happen
as the strength of main opposition party is "shrinking" in the Rajya Sabha.
He said Congress would lose on numbers in the next round of bi-annual
elections for the Rajya Sabha and even the number of UPA-nominated
supporters in the House would come down. Congress member Anand
Sharma had recently said the April 1, 2016 deadline for rolling out Goods
and Services Tax (GST) would not be met “even if the trinity of Gods -
Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh -descend on earth" because the government
was yet to complete preparatory work for the new indirect tax regime.[TOI
p14]

25. Jaitley attacks trade unions inspired by Left : NEW DELHI:
Attacking the Leftist ideology, Union finance minister Arun Jaitley on Wednesday
attacked trade unions that borrow from the philosophy, designating them
obsolete and unacceptable. He said the time had come to push for
economic growth and benefits accrued from a growing economy need to
be shared with workers.[HT p12]

26. Ex-chief wants a decent burial for minority panel : NEW DELHI:
Former National Commission for Minorities (NCM) chairman Tahir
Mahmood has questioned the panel's utility and suggested a "decent
in Major Affairs, he said the NCM has failed to bring positive changes in
the lives of minorities in India.[HT p15]

27. JD(U) asks Lalu to not lecture on governance : PATNA:
A day after RJD chief Lalu Prasad gave pointers on managing the law and order
situation in Bihar to his ally and Bihar CM Nitish Kumar, the CM's party
JD(U) asked him to not sermonise on governance issues.[HT p15]

28. Modi’s surprise Pak visit may spur two-way trade : NEW DELHI:
Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s surprise halt in Lahore may prove to be
shot in the arm for Indo-Pak economic relations, which similar to the
political ties between the two countries is not in the pink of health.[HT p19]

29. Global economy, pvt investment, agriculture main challenges: Jaitley
NEW DELHI: Subdued global economy and moderate private sector
investment will continue to pose challenge in the next year, finance
minister Arun Jaitley said. “As I speak at the end of the year, the current
engines, which are driving the economy will continue, and beyond that the
three downsides are global economy, a moderate private sector and
agriculture," he said here.[HT p17]
30. BJP hijacking our social reformers: Sonia: TH
IRUVANANTHAPURAM: Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Wednesday came down heavily on “communal forces” that are allegedly trying to hijack the legacy of social reformers in their quest for power. In an apparent reference to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), she accused them of attempting to divide the society on the lines of community and caste to reap political dividends.[HT p12]

31. BJP `bombs' Didi's growth claims, Says Only Bomb-Making Industry Booming, Calls TMC Govt An Extension Of CPM Era: New Delhi: BJP on Wednesday termed the Mamata Banerjee government as an extension of the Left Front's 34-year "misrule" and said West Bengal was only witnessing growth of “bomb-making” industry and the “syndicates” run by supporters of the ruling Trinamool Congress.[TOI p17]

32. In 19 months, NaMo govt failed on all fronts: Cong : New Delhi: Congress on Wednesday said the Modi government has failed on all fronts from economy to foreign affairs and its 19-month rule is marked by over-centralisation of power. The opposition party, while rejecting the government charge about blocking its development agenda, charged the BJP regime of having failed to revive the economy. “Whether the non-passage of a bill (GST) can be held responsible for “free-fall” of the economy?” asked Congress spokesman Anand Sharma. [TOI p17]

33. BJP hits back, calls it `anti-development' : New Delhi: Hitting back at Congress after it termed the Modi dispensation a “failure” on all counts in 2015, BJP on Wednesday termed the main opposition party as “anti-poor and anti-development” and cited a host of figures and schemes to project the Centre's “will” to fulfil its promises. Noting India's “high” growth rate, BJP said it is a global acknowledgment that it will become the fastest-growing country and slammed Congress for disrupting Parliament to stall the government's development and reforms agenda.[TOI p17]

34. Engrs seek transfers out of Bihar: Gadkari: New Delhi: Road transport and highways minister Nitin Gadkari on Wednesday said that government engineers to go to Bihar are not willing to go to Bihar and the state government has to do more to improve its law and order situation.[TOI p19]

35. After Bihar loss, BJP focuses on `corrective' steps in UP : New Delhi: BJP's failure to enthuse the "most backward" voters in the Bihar polls despite having gained their support in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections has a bearing on the party's efforts to wrest power in UP in 2017 and more generally in terms of a possible dilution of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's OBC credentials.[TOI p19]
36. EC calls for probe into Chhattisgarh tape row: RAIPUR / NEW DELHI: Chhattisgarh chief minister Raman Singh was caught in a poll-fixing controversy with the election commission on Wednesday calling for an urgent inquiry into a taped conversation that alleges his son-in-law bribed a Congress candidate to withdraw from an assembly bypoll in September 2014.[HT p1]

37. Centre announces eight-fold hike in solar energy grant: NEW DELHI: The government took its push for clean energy to a new high on Wednesday, increasing more than eight times its financial assistance to set up rooftop solar panels connected to the grid and clearing the civil nuclear deal with Australia.[HT p1]

38. Gadkari: Poor road, traffic engineering causing chaos: New Delhi: Road transport minister Nitin Gadkari on Wednesday blamed poor road and traffic engineering for the daily chaos on city roads. In an interview to TOI he said while Centre won't oppose Delhi government's “odd and even” experiment since the intervention is aimed at making Delhi better and check air pollution, he said his ministry is taking steps to reduce congestion and pollution substantially in the next two years.[TOI p2]

39. AAP targets Jaitley with 4-yr-old letters: New Delhi: Aam Aadmi Party upped the ante on Wednesday, accusing Union finance minister Arun Jaitley of trying to stop a probe against the Delhi & District Cricket Association (DDCA) some four years ago. To back up their allegations, they produced two letters purportedly written by Jaitley to top Delhi Police officers asking them to stop any investigation. DDCA hit back, saying AAP's allegation was “baseless and malicious” and came up with documents to buttress its claims.[TOI p1]

40. Sex ratio dips, Jains & Sikhs buck trend: New Delhi: Two religious communities of India, Sikhs and Jains, have turned the corner on child sex ratio while all others showed further dips, as did the national average, according to fresh Census 2011 data released on Wednesday. Child sex ratio is the number of girls aged 0-6 years for every 1,000 boys in the same age group. It is a crucial measure for India where preference for sons and smaller families has driven the number of girls and women to unnaturally low levels in the past several decades. The child sex ratio for the whole country now stands at 918, dipping further from 927 in 2001, and reaching the lowest level since 1961.[TOI p1]

41. Mahesh: Govt committed to Ram temple: New Delhi: Days after the unloading of stones in Ayodhya reignited the row over temple construction, Union culture minister Mahesh Sharma has said the Centre is committed to building the Ram temple. "Our party and government have given their mandate... We want to build Ram Mandir but we will either
follow the SC’s order or come at a common conclusion (consensus),” he said at a function in Bulandshahr on Tuesday. [TOI p1]

42. BJP has no hand in collecting stones at Ayodhya : Sharma : New Delhi : After grabbing headlines for most of the year, it is perhaps fitting that Union Minister of State for Culture Mahesh Sharma is cautious on every point. In an interview to The Hindu, he says construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya is “the dream of the people of India and what is articulated by our party [Bharatiya Janata Party] is that there should be a Ram temple in Ayodhya — of course, after a decision by the court or through mutual agreement by all parties.” [The Hindu p1]

43. Centre pushing to revive NATGRID, looking for CEO : New Delhi : The Union government is set to make an aggressive effort to accomplish one of the most ambitious intelligence projects in recent memory, which failed to take off during United Progressive Alliance rule. Conceived in the wake of the 2008 Mumbai attacks, the National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID) is a centralised agency which stores sensitive personal information on citizens from almost two dozen agencies to be made available for counter-terror investigations. [The Hindu p1]

44. Centre counts on Big Data to grow biotech : New Delhi : By harnessing the power of Big Data and promoting the manufacturing of laboratory equipment, the Department of Biotechnology expects biotechnology to be at the foundation of a $100-billion industry by 2025, rising from the current $7-$10 billion. [The Hindu p1]

45. CIC seeks information on Sanjiv Chaturvedi : New Delhi : The Central Information Commission (CIC) has directed the Prime Minister's Office to disclose all information about whistle-blower Indian Forest Service officer Sanjiv Chaturvedi, including the action taken against individuals who allegedly leaked such information to those facing a probe by the CBI and CVC. [The Hindu p5]

46. Chhattisgarh Poll-fixing kicks up political storm : Raipur : The alleged leaked tapes of conversations between senior Congress leader and former Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh Ajit Jogi, his son Amit Jogi, his “associates” and Puneet Gupta (son-in-law of Chief Minister Raman Singh) to “fix” a by-election last year kicked up a political storm in Chhattisgarh and in Delhi on Wednesday. [The Hindu p9]

47. J&K Separatist Leader Masrat Alam Re-arrested : JAMMU: Separatist leader Masrat Alam was re-arrested outside Kot Bhalwal Jail here late Tuesday evening. He was released after the Jammu and Kashmir high court quashed his detention under the Public Safety Act (PSA). “Masrat
Alam was re-arrested late last evening outside Kot Bhalwal Jail,” a senior police officer told IANS on Wednesday.[ET p2]

48. PDP, BJP on collision course over flag issue : Srinagar : The ruling coalition partners, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the BJP, on Wednesday once again seemed set on a collision course over Jammu and Kashmir’s separate constitutional status, with the upcoming Assembly session scheduled for next month. Just four days after the High Court directed giving equal importance to the State flag on official buildings, Deputy Chief Minister Nirmal Singh hinted at opposing it.[The Hindu p12]

49. Why were they not prosecuted, asks Kirti Azad : Firing a fresh salvo at the beleaguered Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA), former Test cricketer and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Kirti Azad on Wednesday alleged that the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) report on the association was not acted upon.[The Hindu p12]

50. How a bank became a club : New Delhi : The Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) on Wednesday struggled to counter the allegations from BJP Member of Parliament Kirti Azad regarding the Syndicate Bank being converted into a private club in order to continue its participation in the local cricket league. “The club has been restored to the bank,” claimed DDCA acting president Chetan Chauhan at a press conference here.[The Hindu p12]

51. AAP vs centre: DDCA president moved Rs 1.55 cr to firms not found at listed addresses : New Delhi : Delhi and District Cricket Association president S P Bansal, who figures in the 2011 letter purportedly written by then DDCA president Arun Jaitley to then Delhi Police chief B K Gupta released by Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) today, has been under the scanner for a year over allegations of financial impropriety involving Rs 1.55 crore.[IE p1]

52. AAP waves Jaitley letters to police on closing DDCA cases : New Delhi : Responding to Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley’s assertion that he was not linked to alleged irregularities in the Delhi and District Cricket Association, the Aam Aadmi Party today released two letters purportedly written by him in 2011 and 2012 to Delhi Police, seeking to “close cases” against “certain office bearers of the DDCA”. [IE p1]
http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/aap-waves-jaitley-letters-to-police-on-closing-ddca-cases/#sthash.MgXe57od.dpuf

53. Oli’s China Visit Won’t Address Madhesi Concerns, The visit might allow Nepalese PM to play Beijing card against New Delhi, nothing
else :New Delhi : The announcement by Nepal's deputy PM Kamal Thapa that KP Sharma Oli may visit China on his first foreign trip as the prime minister next month may have caused some flutter, but New Delhi is of the opinion that no visit abroad will be productive unless his government amends the Constitution during the ongoing Parliament session to address the grievances of the agitating Madhesis.[ET p2]

54. 10 Janpath bigger than PM's 7 RCR, reveals RTI:New Delhi : Congress president Sonia Gandhi has one of the largest residences among politicians in the country, bigger than even the Prime Minister's official abode at 7 Race Course Road. President Pranab Mukherjee and VicePresident Hamid Ansari are the only others whose residences are more sprawling than the politically potent 10 Janpath. But while Rashtrapati Bhavan, the Vice-President's house and 7 RCR are official residences, Gandhi's home at 10 Janpath is specifically allotted to her, irrespective of her status as MP.[TOI p1]

DELHI NEWS
55. Odd-even violators won't get to park in city, says govt, Once Challaned, Cars Must Go Off Road In 2 Hrs : New Delhi: Commuters flouting the odd-even traffic restrictions coming into effect from Friday may find it difficult to park their vehicle. The Delhi government on Wednesday issued an order asking civic bodies and other agencies to prevent violators from accessing authorised parking spaces in the city. The road rationing measure, which aims to reduce the toxic levels of air pollution in the city, will be on trial from January 1 to 15. Government officials said parking attendants will be asked to strictly enforce the rule and will be told about exemptions to the order. Violating cars could even be towed away.[TOI p1]

56. DDCA for defamation case against Kejriwal : NEW DELHI: The Delhi and District Cricket Association said on Wednesday it would file defamation cases against chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, top Aam Aadmi Party leaders and suspended BJP MP Kirti Azad for making "wild and baseless" corruption allegations against it.[HT p12]

57. lashing Letters, AAP Claims Jaitley Pressurised Police; DDCA to Sue Kejriwal, Kirti, JAITLEY’S LETTER I would request you (police) to ensure that the matter is dealt with fairly & closed since the DDCA has done no wrong: New Delhi: The Aam Aadmi Party on Wednesday fished out two letters written by Arun Jaitley when he was the President of the DDCA, to claim he had pressurised the Delhi Police top to drop cases against the cricket body. This provoked sharp reactions from the DDCA as well as the BJP--with both dismissing charges, and the former deciding
to file defamation suits against AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, Kirti Azad and other AAP leaders.[ET p4]

58. Top Delhi govt babus to go on mass leave today: NEW DELHI: Trouble is brewing in the city bureaucracy with senior officers of the Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar Islands Civil Service (DANICS) deciding to go on mass leave on Thursday, protesting the "illegal" suspension of two colleagues by the AAP government.[HT p1]

59. Clean Air, Centre Asks NCR States: New Delhi: Just before the Delhi government's odd-even formula comes into effect, the Centre on Wednesday stepped in with the environment ministry shooting off a series of directions with timelines to state governments of Delhi, Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to control air pollution and improve the air quality in Delhi and NCR.[ET p3]

60. 42-point action plan to clear air in a year, Centre To Act Against Officials At States' Behest: New Delhi: Amid reports of alarming level of air pollution in the capital, the Centre on Wednesday issued a 42-point action plan to handle the situation and directed Delhi and three neighbouring states--Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan--to implement them in right earnest. While some of these points are supposed to be implemented immediately, the others will be taken care of in a staggered manner ranging from 30 days to one year. The directions were issued under Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1981 that empowers the Centre to take action against erring officials after getting a non-compliance note from the states.[TOI p5]

61. CBI registers fresh graft case against arrested IAS officer: NEW DELHI: The CBI on Wednesday registered a fresh case on the charges of amassing disproportionate assets against senior IAS officer of Delhi government SP Singh, who is in judicial custody in connection with another corruption case filed by the agency.[HT p5]

62. Home ministry alerts defence as ISI targets ex-servicemen: NEW DELHI: The Union home ministry has alerted the ministry of defence about Pakistani spy agency ISI's efforts to trap ex-servicemen in the garb of providing job opportunities and financial aid for spying.[HT p7]

63. Modi tells babus to address land acquisition issues expeditiously: NEW DELHI: Expressing concern over big ticket infrastructure projects being hampered due to delays in land acquisition, Prime Minister Narendra Modi told bureaucrats on Wednesday to address such issues expeditiously.[HT p12]
64. CM urges children to promote formula, stop violators : NEW DELHI:
Pressure your parents and relatives to follow the odd even rule and ask them to get a pollution certificate for their cars immediately, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal told students of a government school on Wednesday as he sought their support in the odd-even traffic restriction policy.[HT p2]

65. Debate heats up over rebate to 2-wheelers : NEW DELHI:
The Delhi high court on Wednesday became the latest to question the government’s decision to exempt two-wheelers from the 15-day-long odd-even restriction, starting from January 1.[HT p2]

66. Explain exemptions for women, two-wheelers, court tells govt:
Hearing a batch of petitions, a bench headed by Justice Hima Kohli asked the Delhi government to clarify why women and two-wheelers had been exempted from the scheme meant to clear the Capital’s polluted air.[HT p2]

67. CM banks on student power to beat odds, Secures Children’s Pledge To Convince Parents, Relatives To Pool Cars: New Delhi:
Perhaps taking a cue from the emotive appeal of children in the campaign against bursting of firecrackers during Diwali, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal reached out to school students in the fight against pollution. He asked them to convince their parents, relatives and neighbors to opt for carpooling because public buses and the Delhi Metro were likely to be overcrowded during the 15-day odd-even driving experiment.[TOI p2]

68. Last-minute nursery rules for EWS kids worry parents, Fear Chaos And Corruption In Online Admission Process: New Delhi:
With the nursery admission process beginning on January 1, parents of the children from economically weaker sections (EWS) and disadvantaged groups (DG) categories are a worried lot. And they attribute it to the last-minute release of the guidelines which have divided the schools into two categories based on the application process --online and offline.[TOI p7]

69. Discoms unhappy as govt extends amnesty scheme: New Delhi:
The AAP government has extended the amnesty scheme for power defaulters for the second time, drawing a strong reaction from discoms. The scheme, which was launched in October for a month, was first extended till December 31. It will now run for another three months till March 31. Power companies say the move is not only unfair to those who make regular payments, but also encourages consumers to default.[TOI p7]

EDITORIAL/OPINION
70. Modi Meets World, The challenge for 2016 is to make foreign policy and trade walk together, not hang separately: Indrani Bagchi:
Until
Narendra Modi played Santa Claus with Nawaz Sharif, his 2015 would have been another hectic peripatetic year signing off with an inspiring speech to the new Afghan parliament. Modi’s ‘inbox’ for 2016 is now filling up rapidly, defying all good intentions to stay home next year. But first, his ‘outbox’. In a year when Modi zipped around the world but attracted some flak at home for being a ‘tourist’, a few things in his oreign policy went much beyond the measurement of investment billions his people throw around.[TOI p20]

71. The Congress has played its role responsibly: The second year of any government is a tough one. With the honeymoon period over and the waning lustre of electoral victory, the public starts to demand some measure of accountability of its elected leaders. A responsible government honours this legitimate expectation and holds itself up to scrutiny.[HT p16]