OPINION 6

GAME BNP IS PLAYING

BANGLADESH ELECTIONS:

WORLD 8

US, ISRAEL DISCUSS WHEN TO

SCALE BACK GAZA COMBAT

MONEY 10

SENSEX BREACHES 71K MARK;

NIFTY SURGES TO FRESH RECORD

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DHONI'S NUMBER 7 JERSEY RETIRED, SAYS SHUKLA 12 SPORTS

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY DECEMBER 16, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3

the pioneer

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Parliament stalled as BJP, Opp clash over breach

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

The tiff between the BJP-ruled Centre and Congress-led Opposition parties escalated on Friday, with the latter not allowing the functioning of Parliament, even as the former asserted that the high-level probe on the Parliament security breach is underway. The functioning of the Lok Sabha and THE Rajya Sabha was completely washed out as Opposition MPs continued with their protest, demanding a statement on the issue from Home Minister Amit Shah and a discussion in both Houses.

The treasury bench had low attendance as most of the BJP leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Cabinet members, were in Jaipur to attend the oath ceremony of the new Chief Minister.

Sources informed The Pioneer that several rounds of high-level meetings at the Secretary and MHA levels were conducted to prepare a comprehensive report on the incident and to strategise ways to prevent similar incidents at key government buildings.

The Opposition members also protested the suspension of their 14 MP colleagues after they raised their demand for a statement from Shah on the security breach and a discussion thereafter on Thursday. The protest was also joined by former Congress president Sonia Gandhi. Amid demands from Opposition leaders for a statement from the Home



Congress MP Sonia Gandhi with suspended MPs during the Winter session of Parliament in New Delhi on Friday

Minister on the incident, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Prahlad Joshi stated that both Parliament buildings fall under the purview of the Lok Sabha

"Both the buildings are under the speaker's purview. We are following the speaker's order. A high-level enquiry is going on. Saying that we will not allow the House to function... They

(opposition) should behave responsibly," he said.

Union Minister Anurag Thakur hit out at the Opposition parties, saying they are trying to politicise the Parliament security breach matter and using it as an House excuse halt proceedings.

After losing the elections in three States, the Opposition is three States, the Opposition is trying to find an excuse to halt allegation that the Centre is

the proceedings of the House. They are creating obstacles, even as the Speaker of the House spoke to the representatives of the Opposition parties, took their suggestions, and also assured improvement in security. It can be clearly seen that they are trying to do politics," Thakur

trying to suppress its voice, Joshi said, "No one is trying to suppress anyone's voice; it is their opinion. I want to say, come and debate. Two bills are listed today. On Monday, there are three important bills to replace the IPC, the CrPC, and the Evidence Act. We want a detailed discussion. We have allotted 15

hours. In a major security breach on the anniversary of the 2001 Parliament terror attack on Wednesday, two men jumped into the Lok Sabha chamber from the public gallery during the Zero Hour, released yellowcolored smoke from canisters, and shouted slogans before being overpowered by the MPs. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MP Raghav Chadha said the Opposition leaders are ready to wait for the probe report, but the home minister should come to the House and make a statement on the incident.

"I believe not just the opposition, but those on the treasury benches should also urge the home minister to make a statement. On one hand, they say they will get back PoK (Pakistanoccupied Kashmir), Aksai Chin, and they cannot even protect Parliament," Priyanka Chaturvedi of the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) said. According to sources, during their floor coordination meeting on Friday morning, leaders of the INDIA parties decided to continue their aggressive stance in Lok Sabha as well as Rajva Sabha

Police dig for accused political, terror links

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

After apprehending the prized catch, mastermind Lalit Mohan Jha, in the Parliament security breach case, the Delhi Police, along with other probe agencies, is investigating the political affiliations of all the accused named in the FIR. Additionally, probe sleuths said the accused will be interrogated to ascer-tain whether they had any association with an enemy country or a terrorist organisation.

The investigation will also focus on determining who assisted them in conducting a reconnaissance of the entire Parliament security system and who guided them in obtaining visitor entry recommendations.

The Delhi Police claim Lalit has confessed that the accused met many times to hatch a conspiracy to breach Parliament security. "We need him to confront the accused with each other, to locate the mobile phones, to take him to the hotel where he stayed for 4 days, and to know the financial transactions and funding behind the attack," police sources said. Lalit Mohan Jha was the mastermind of the Parliament security breach case, said police.



Lalit Jha, key accused in the recent Parliament security breach, being produced at the Patiala

House Court in New Delhi on Friday Ranjan Dimri I Pioneer

In a remand application, the Delhi Police said Lalit's custodial interrogation was required for indepth probe to unearth the larger conspiracy behind the attack, involvement of other persons, and

to find the actual motive. After a brief hearing, Special NIA Judge Hardeep Kaur sent Lalit to seven days of police custody. The Delhi Police had sought his 15-day

Continued on Page 2

No support for **Khalistan in US: Indian American** Sikh leader

PTI WASHINGTON

Aprominent Indian-American Sikh leader has said that there is no support for the Khalistan movethe US neither in the government nor in the community. Jassee Singh from the Sikhs of America organisation also urged the Modi Government to provide a comprehensive developmental package for Punjab to address key challenges being faced by the State, including the problem of illicit drugs

among the youths.
"Modi Government's relationship with the Sikhs and the things that he has done for this community is unprecedented as compared previous the governments. There is no doubt about that," Singh

told PTI in an interview. "At the same time, there are several Sikh issues that need to be addressed. This includes the atrocities against the Sikhs in the 1984 riots. No Sikhs would forget

this," Singh said. The Modi Government has tried its best to address the concerns of the Sikhs, but there are a number of issues that he still needs to address, he said adding that the PM needs to establish a direct relationship with the Sikh community in India and the world and not through middlemen like the

Akalis and the Badals. Continued on Page 2



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being greeted by Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma during the latter's swearing-in ceremony in Jaipur on Friday. First-time MLA Sharma was sworn in 12 days after the party ousted the Congress in the Assembly polls. Sharma, a BJP State general secretary, took charge on the day he turned 57. Along with him, Diya Kumari and Prem Chand Bairwa were sworn in as Deputy Chief Ministers by Governor Kalraj Mishra. All three took the oath in Hindi. Ashok Gehlot was the only Congress leader who attended the ceremony held in front of the iconic Albert Hall

No stay on Mathura mosque survey: SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to stay the Allahabad High Court's decision allowing a court-monitored survey of the Shahi Idgah adjoining the Krishna Janmabhoomi temple in Mathura on an oral plea by the Muslim side and asked them to challenge the order by way of

Thursday allowed a court- of the high court transferring monitored survey of the Shahi Idgah and agreed to the appointment of an advocate commissioner to oversee the

survey of the mosque

premises. A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and SVN Bhatti deferred until January 9 the hearing on a plea filed by the Committee of Management

to itself all matters related to the dispute pending before a

Mathura court.

"List the special leave petition on January 9. All the contentions and issues will be considered on the said date In case petitioners have any grievance, it will be open to them to file a challenge in accordance with law," the

Trust Shahi Masjid Idgah an appeal. The high court had on bench ordered. Continued on Page 2 challenging the May 26 order

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi was colder than the hill stations Shimla and Mussoorie on Friday, owing to continuous snowfall in the mountains for the past few days. On Friday, Delhi witnessed its coldest morning of the winter so far, with the minimum temperature dropping to 4.9 degrees Celsius, four

degrees below normal. Delhi and its surrounding areas will experience severe cold wave-like conditions around Christmas, with light rain expected in northern

India, leading to a drop in at 4.9 degrees, the lowest Celsius. The IMD has daytime temperatures.

According to the latest weather bulletin by the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Delhi's Safdarjung observatory recorded a minimum temperature of 4.9 degrees Celsius. The mercury reached a high of 24.1 degrees Celsius, which is one notch above the season's average, as indicated in the IMD's weather bulletin.

Meteorology and Climate Change vice-president Mahesh Palawat mentioned in a post on X, "Delhi shivers

minimum of the season. Delhi is colder than Shimla."

On Thursday, Delhi recorded a minimum temperature of 6.2 degrees Celsius, marking the lowest for this season so far. According to IMD data, Delhi was colder than certain mountainous locations in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

The minimum temperature in Delhi on Wednesday was recorded at 7.4 degrees Celsius, on Tuesday at 6.8 degrees Celsius, and on Monday at 6.5 degrees forecasted that no significant change in minimum temperatures is expected across the country in the next four to five days. In Delhi, the minimum temperature is likely to be around 6 or 7 degrees over the weekend, with shallow fog expected in the morning.

According to the IMD, a disturbance is western anticipated around December 16 and 17, which may lead to snowfall in the hills and rain in the plains.

Continued on Page 2

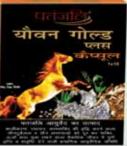
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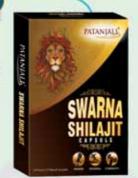
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Congress to sound bugle for 2024 in Nagpur on Dec 28

TN RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI

In an effort to enthuse, ready its cadres and sound the bugle for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the Congress has organised a massive rally in Nagpur on December 28 on the occasion of its foundation day. Billed as a mega rally to be

party president Mallikarjun

Kharge, Congress Parliamentary Party President Soniaji Gandhi, party leaders President Rahul Gandhi, Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi, all chief ministers of the party, the Congress expects a turn-out of 10 lakh party workers from across the

The rally is being seen as a move by the Congress to reenergise its cadres after it fell short of expectations in the recent State Assembly polls in five states where it managed to capture power in Telangana while it lost out in the states of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan despite the hype of a possible victory it had built in the runup to the polls.

Giving details of the grand rally planned on December 28, All

India Congress Committee's Organization General Secretary K Č Venugopal said In Nagpur that the public support for the Congress was increasing across the country. The Congress had increased its vote shares in the states that went to the Assembly polls. "After Assembly polls. Karnataka, we captured power in Telangana with a clear majority," he said.

Coming down heavily on the ruling BJP at the Centre, Venugopal charged that Narendra Modi government was ruling the country in a dictatorial manner.

Alluding to the recent security breach in Parliament.

Venugopal wondered as to the country would be safe if the Parliament -- the temple of democracy - "has been attacked twice so far and both times under the BJP govern-

Venugopal said that it was sad state of affairs that 14 MPs were suspended from House when they asked questions about the security breach in Parliament. "However, no action was taken against the BJP MP who had iven passes to these attackers," he said

Maharashtra Congress Nana Patole, who addressed the news conference with Verugopal, said: "We are expecting 10

lakh people from across the state for the rally in Nagpur,"

He said that the congress leaders, functionaries, workers, Mahila Congress, Youth Congress, NSUI, all cells and departments of the party were working towards making this rally a success.

"We are just three to four months away for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, we expect that this will serve to create great enthusiasm and infuse new energy among the Congress workers. The Nagpur rally will be historic. We expect it to mark the beginning of a change in the country," Patole said Earlier, Venugopal addressed

the senior state party leaders at a meeting held at a five star hotel in Nagpur, where leaders like AICC organisational general secretary Mukul Wasnik, Patole, State Legislature Congress Party Leader Balasaheb Thorat, Opposition Leader Vijay Wadettiwar, former chief ministers Ashok Chavan and Prithviraj Chavan were prominent among those

Supply chain management is new sunrise industry: Experts

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Millions of jobs are available across the counter for the unemployed while an equal number or more opportunities await entrepreneurs to launch their own ventures in the supply chain management and logistics sectors in the country. More than the manufacturing and services industries, the Supply Chain Management and Logistics fields have emerged as the sunrise sectors of the nation's economy, according to veterans in the business.

"This is not our own words. Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India, has endorsed this fact in his speeches. It is for the youth and entrepreneurs to make use of the opportunity," says K Ramachandran Nair, vice president, Indian Institute of Materials Management (West Zone). He said that opportunities are galore in the sector and people with educational qualifications as well as skills need only to tap the avenues for well paid jobs in these sectors.

While graduates in engineering and management are assured of high paid jobs in the booming supply chain logistics sector, even school dropouts who pos-

Workshop on

cyber security

collaboration

sess heavy duty and commercial vehicles driving licenses stand to get jobs as drivers and

delivery executives. World trade is increasing by leaps and bounds. The goods imported have to be delivered to the consignees while materials to be exported have to be taken to the ports for trouble free loading into the ships. "The statistics provided by the commerce ministry itself prove that business in this sphere has become vibrant," said Nair. He also pointed out the hi-tech trucks and medium sized commercial vehicles manufactured in India as further proof of the ever-growing supply chain and logistics sector. What we see right now is a flourishing Information Technology revolution in late 1990s and early 2000s," said Nair.

Professional managers who know the inside game of the supply chain logistics branch of the industries hold the keys to success. "The professional who has the answer to solutions like where, when and how the materials for the business could be procured is the key player in the business. He has to get the input from the logistics person about how the same could be transported to the work site for a trouble-free operation of the venture," said Nair. Supply Chain Management

(SCM for short) is a vital function in any organization

which affects the bottom line of any organization. This contributes directly to the profit of any organization. Main function of the SCM is buying at the right price, right source and right time. It is the SCM department that maintains the vendor management such as life long relationships between companies and suppliers. A robust SCM is a measure of the healthiness of any organization," said Nair. The icing on the cake is the

emergence of women in this branch hitherto dominated by men. The recently held award evening at Pune for professionals in the field of supply chain management saw woman walking away with top honors much to the surprise of their men counterparts. Sharmila Kesarkar, head, supply chain, Jehangir Hospital, Pune and Esquire Healthcare and Logistics are names which would be heard frequently in the coming decades. Suhas Gawas, chairman, Indian

Institute of Materials Management, Pune, said all that the engineering and management degree holders have to do is to tone up their skills with various training programs held

Security upped in Bengal House

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

 $B_{\text{Biman Banerjee has}}^{\text{engal Assembly Speaker}}$ directed the security agencies to beef up security inside the State Assembly premises. The decision comes in the wake of the Lok Sabha smoke bomb

"No assembly members, staff and journalists will be allowed to enter the premises without their identity cards. The West Gate will be meant for visitors only. They will be allowed to stay inside the assembly premises for two hours only, Banerjee has said. "Police will question if a vis-

itor is found overstaying inside the Assembly premises," he said, adding even the entry and exit of the vehicles

will be strictly monitored. The decision was taken in an emergency meeting where it was also decided to install CCTV cameras at the gates. "Vehicles of members will not be allowed to enter the assembly unless they have designated stickers. No additional police personnel will be allowed inside the lobby of the assembly other than the security personnel for the MLAs," the Speaker said.

Incidentally Chief Minister

Mamata Banerjee too had on Thursday reviewed the police arrangements at the state secretariat 'Nabanna'. According to sources the Chief Minister found some security guards absent at the gates following which she directed the senior officers concerned to look

into the matter.

Massive crackdown on banned PLFI in 4 States, two arrested

The National Investigation Agency Friday arrested two persons in a massive crackdown on proscribed People's Liberation Front of India (PLFI) in Jharkhand, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and New Delhi, an official said. An Indian Army uniform, along with arms, ammunition, incriminating documents and electronic devices, Rs 3 lakh in cash and jewellery were seized during the raids at 23 locations, mostly in Iharkhand, in a case of extortion and levy collection by the

terror group, a spokesperson of the agency said. The people targeted during the crackdown were all cadres and sympathizers of PLFI, a banned terror organization, the official said, adding they were involved in a conspiracy to carry out violent acts and commit terror activities. Of the locations raided, 19 are in Jharkhand's Gumla, Ranchi, Khunti, Simdega Palamu and West Singhbhum districts, two in New Delhi and one each in Bihar's Patna and Madhya Pradesh's Siddhi district, the spokesperson

organised PIONEER NEWS SERVICE The Taiper Economic Cultural Center (TECC) in India in collaboration with the United States (US) Embassy

and the United Service Institution of India organised a workshop on collaboration on Cyber Security under the Global Cooperation and Training Framework (GCTF) on December 11-12, 2023. According to a TECC Press note, It was conducted in a hybrid seminar cum interactive discussion format, covering core aspects of cyber-security, information infrastructure and processes need to sustain the increasingly digital base of economic activity and development. The workshop was aftended by key policy makers, technical specialists, and the private background.

The opening remarks by DG BK Sharma of USI highlighted the efforts being made by the USI and about its Cyber Centre of Excellence in collaboration with CyberPeace Foundation. H.E. Baushuan Ger, Taiwan Representative to India stressed on the need for collaborative efforts to counter the growing threat of cyber-related attacks. Especially Taiwan, India and US will have General Elections in 2024, cooperation on cyber threats among democratic and like-minded countries is crucial for our shared prosperity and securi-

No support for Khalistan in US: Indian American Sikh...

From Page 1

Responding to a question he said, "No. The majority of Sikhs don't support the Khalistan

Observing that India's growth story makes every overseas Indian proud, Singh said it is time that the Centre gives some "better package" for the State of Punjab, its youth and its people. "More should be done for the youth of Punjab," he said. "There is a need to stop the migration of youth outside India and provide them with employment and business opportunities," he said.

Responding to a question on the recent American allegations that an Indian official was involved in a plot to assassinate a separatist Sikh leader, a US national, in the United States, Singh said in the long term this is unlikely to have an impact on the bilateral ties.US federal prosecutors last month charged Indian national Nikhil Gupta with working with an Indian government employee in the foiled plot to kill Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, a Sikh extremist who is an American and Canadian citizen. An unnamed Indian official also appeared in an indictment along with the Indian national, who the Department of Justice alleges hired someone in the US to assassinate Pannun.

"Everybody knows what has been going on in the past few weeks, with the Department of Justice filing a charge sheet against Nikhil Gupta and accusing the government of India. But this should not be seen as a support for a separatist Khalistani movement in the US, Singh said.

"This was an action taken by the US government to protect their own citizens. The separatist happens to be a US citizen, so they came in defence of a US citizen for extrajudicial killings," he said.

ICMR to test SARI samples with focus on children

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

mid reports of a surge in China, the Virus Research and Diagnostic Laboratories (VRDL) network under the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has been asked to test all samples of severe acute respiratory infection (SARI), with a particular focus on samples from children, the Government told Parliament on Friday.

Further, a list of priority viral and bacterial agents (including mycoplasma pneumoniae), for which the samples need to be tested, has been shared with the VRDL network, Minister of State for Health S P Singh Baghel said in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha. "While WHO, in the context of



China, has not recommended any trade/travel restrictions, the health ministry continues to maintain a close watch over the evolving situation in China, as well as globally," Baghel

He said the World Health Organisation (WHO), in statements issued on November 22 and 23, reported an increase in the incidence of Influenza-like Illness (ILI) in northern China that has been witnessed since

October. It has been attributed to a rise in the circulation of known pathogens (including influenza, mycoplasma pneumoniae, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and SARS-CoV-2) by Chinese authorities, the minister added.

The WHO has also reported clusters of undiagnosed pneumonia among children in northern China.

Chinese authorities have not reported detecting any unusual or novel pathogens or unusual clinical presentations, but a general increase in respiratory illnesses due to multiple known pathogens, Baghel said.

The health ministry, in an advisory issued on November 25, requested all states and Union territories to review their public health and hospital preparedness and response capacities, including a review of the requisite human resource, hospital beds, testing capacities, availability of medical countermeasures and adequate provisioning of infection-control practices at health facilities.

No stay on Mathura mosque survey...

From Page 1

committee, who said the high court has been considering interlocutory applications "far reaching having ramifications" in the matter and passing orders, that the order of the high court passed on Thursday has not been formally challenged before it. Ahmadi said the high court is entertaining application after application even as the issue of its jurisdiction to transfer to itself all matters related to the dispute is under challenge before the apex court. Ŕhanna, Justice

refusing to interfere with the high court order passed on Thursday said, "How can we stay the order which is not

before us? You challenge the order, then we will see." The bench told senior Ahmadi said the high court The Supreme Court will be on and hence they could not file an appeal. When Ahmadi pointed out the Supreme Court is going on a winter break from Monday and the high court may pass orders in the matter, Justice Khanna said, "Please tell the high court that this matter is listed on January 9 in the Supreme Court. That will be enough." Justice Khanna said if the petitioners still have any grievances related to the dispute, they can mention them for urgent listing even during the winter break after following the due process.

is passed," Justice Khanna told

advocate Huzefa Ahmadi, order was uploaded on its winter break from December

"You know the procedure for mentioning the matter during vacations if any adverse order

arrested before being handed

over to the Special Cell, the

Based on the investigation so

far, the police stated that the

December 13 security breach

is a well-planned attack, even

unit of the city police.

counter-terror

specialized

Ahmadi.

On November 10, the top court had refused to stay the proceedings before the high court on suits related to the Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah dispute, saying it will not be appropriate for it to interfere with the high court order without hearing

In Mathura, Bal Krishna through Hindu Sena chief Vishnu Gupta and others had filed a suit in the court of Civil Judge Senior Division (III) for shifting of the Shahi Masjid Idgah, which they claim was constructed on a part of the 13.37 acre land of the Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi

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PD(217)C

Delhi chill outshines

On December 23, 24, and heavy snowfall is to Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat, bringing drizzle plains of northwest India, and light rainfall. Thick fog the national capital was the

C-2129

will likely cover these states, keeping temperatures low during the day. Western impact disturbances are cyclonic temperatures in Punjab, storms that bring winter rains to northern India. Among the locations in the

third coldest this morning with Hisar in Haryana claiming the top spot with a slightly lower minimum temperature of 4.2 degrees Celsius. Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh also recorded a temperature of 4.6 degrees. the national capital was the

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Police dig for accused political...

Lalit, who had been on the run after the incident on Wednesday, surrendered before a police station in the New Delhi district on Thursday night.

Police said Jha's custodial interrogation was required for 'in-depth investigation to unearth the larger conspiracy attack, involvement of other persons, and to find the actual motive behind the attack. Jha disclosed that they wanted

to create anarchy in the country to compel the government to meet their demands. He took the phones of other accused to hide them and destroy evidence as part of the larger conspiracy. He disclosed that he threw his phone away on the way from Jaipur to Delhi," police informed the court. Public Prosecutor Akhand

Pratap Singh, representing the Delhi Police, submitted that Lalit had disclosed his involvement. He also mentioned that the accused persons in the case belong to places

various locations. Singh further stated that the mobile phones, allegedly destroyed by the accused, have to be recovered.

Special Judge Hardeep Kaur remanded Jha in Delhi Police custody based on an application moved by the prosecution, asserting that he was required for questioning to unearth the entire conspiracy. During the brief hearing, the prosecutor informed the court that Lalit was arrested on Thursday night and underwent a detailed interrogation.

"He disclosed how he is the mastermind of the entire conspiracy... He is required to unearth the entire conspiracy and the modus operandi," the public prosecutor told the court while seeking his remand for 15 days. Police also mentioned that he needs to be questioned about a phone he was using, which has not been traced yet. Lalit, accompanied by a man,

turned himself in at the

Kartavya Path police station

in the national capital last

though the accused are all from different states. On Thursday night, senior police officials, including two Deputy Commissioners of Police (DCP) and Additional Commissioners of Police, interrogated Lalit Jha, during

which he narrated the whole

incident to officials. Delhi Police's Special Cell has also detained two more people, including one from Rajasthan. The two have been identified as Mahesh and Kailash, and their detention comes after the arrest of Jha, the fifth accused described as the mastermind behind the

În its first information report (FIR) in the Parliament security breach case, Delhi Police mentioned that the two persons who opened smoke canisters in the Lok Sabha

chamber had smuggled them in cavities cut into the left sole of custom-made sports shoes supported by thick rubber

The pamphlets that the duo— Manoranjan D and Sagar Sharma—carried into the Lok Sabha had the picture of a fist against the backdrop of a tricolour, a slogan in Hindi, and a slogan in English on the Manipur violence issue.

According to the FIR, the smoke canisters, which were opened inside and outside Parliament, had warnings and instructions to "wear goggles and gloves" while opening. A cavity was cut into the left sole of the LCR-made greycolored sports shoes of Sagar Sharma. The thickness of the soles was increased by affixing additional rubber to support the cavity, it stated, adding that Manoranjan D's sports shoes too had a similar cavity in the left sole. Police said the right sole of the shoe was also found partly cut. The used creative color smoke was stated to be burst by Sagar Sharma and Manoranjan D

inside the Lok Sabha well.

Police file FIR in Parliament security breach case

complaint along with aforesaid

mentioned persons namely Sagar Sharma and Manoranjan

D. He also handed over shoes

of both the alleged and their Aadhar cards," the FIR stated.

According to FIR, The used

canisters were given serial no

1,2,3 & 4 and the unused was

given serial number 5. All

these canisters are bearing

warnings always wears goggles

and gloves, never used indoor

or enclosed spaces, 18+ uses

and sale do not post or take on

airplanes" Another instruction

was found as" FOR USED IN

SUPERVISE ARENAS ONLY'

In a major security breach on

the anniversary of the 2001

Parliament terror attack, Sagar

and Manoranjan jumped into

the Lok Sabha chamber from

the public gallery during Zero

Hour on Wednesday, released

yellow gas from canisters and

shouted slogans before being overpowered by the MPs.

Around the same time, two

others -- Amol Shinde and

Neelam Devi -- sprayed

coloured gas from canisters

made in China.

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

¬he Delhi Police in its first information report (FIR) in the Parliament security breach case has mentioned that the two persons who opened smoke canisters in the Lok Sabha chamber had smuggled them in cavities cut into the left sole of custom-made sports shoes supported by thick rub-ber layers. The pamphlets that the duo, Manorajan D and Sagar Sharma, carried into the Lok Sabha had the picture of a fist against the backdrop of a tricolour, a slogan in Hindi and a slogan in English on the Manipur violence issue.

According to the FIR, the smoke canisters, which were opened inside and outside Parliament, had warnings and instructions to "wear goggles and gloves" while opening. A cavity was cut into the left sole of the LCR-made grey coloured sports shoes of Sagar Sharma. The thickness of the soles was increased by affixing additional rubber to support the cavi-ty, it stated, adding that Manoranjan D's sports shoes too had a similar cavity in the left sole. Police said the right sole of the shoe was also found partly cut. The used creative color smoke were stated to be burst by Sagar Sharma and



Manoranjan D inside the Lok Sabha well.

The FIR stated the pair of sport shoe of Sagar Sharma of LCR make grey colour where in, a cavity was found created by cutting the inside sole of left foot shoe. "The thickness of the sole of shoes is also found increased by affixing additional rubber sole at the bottom to support the cavity. The pair of shoe along with a pair of light khakhi colour socks, was kept in a transparent plastic box sealed with the seal of SC. The pair of sport shoe of Manoranjan D of SRY make dark greyish colour where in, a cavity is found created by cutting the inside sole of left foot shoes," it said

The FIR further mentions the inside sole of the right foot shoe was also found partly cut. The

AD fund in 2021-22, 2022-23

and 2023-24. Recently, the

government enhanced it to Rs 7 crore from the existing Rs 4

The MLALAD fund was pro-

from 2017-18 to undertake

development works in their

constituencies. An amount

in 2018-19 as per decision by

the allocation for the next

financial year, the minister

Ås per Delhi government

data, Rs 280 crore were allo-

cated under the MLALAD

fund, in the 2021-22 financial

year out of which Rs 223

crore were spent. In 2022-23,

Rs 300 crore was allocated out

of which Rs 222 crore were

spent. In 2013-24, out of Rs

300 crore, Rs 103 crore was

spent and Rs 197 crore were

in balance.

the Delhi government.

crore, he stated.

thickness of the sole of shoes was also found increased by affixing additional rubber sole at the bottom to support the cavity. The pair of shoes along with blue socks was kept in another transparent plastic box and was sealed with the seal of SC. Both the boxes were taken into possession as a piece of evidence through a separate seizure memo. The two used wet canisters of creative color smoke type colorsmoke 003 yellow color which were burst by the alleged Sagar Sharma and Manoranjan D inside the Lok Sabha well area were also kept in a plastic box which was

"I along with inspector Vinay Kumar, officiating SHO PS

sealed with the seal of SC and

taken into possession as a piece

of evidence through a seizure

Parliament Street, and other staff reached the office of the while shouting "tanashahi nahi chalegi" outside Parliament director of security of the new premises. Police have filed ter-Parliament House Building rorism charges under the strinwhere Omkar Singh, Deputy gent UAPA against the four Director(S) Lok Sabha was present. "He handed over the

Police said the other two accused -- Amol Shinde and Neelam -- were nabbed with four used and an unused coloured smoke canister. All these canisters bore a reminder to the users to wear goggles and gloves and never use those in indoor or enclosed spaces, they

Earlier in the day, Delhi Police's

Special Cell has detained two more people, including one from Rajasthan, on Thursday night. The two have been identified as Mahesh and Kailash and their detention comes after the authorities nabbed Lalit Mohan Jha, the fifth accused who is being described as the mastermind behind the plan. They had allegedly helped Lalit Mohan Jha -- thought to be the brain behind the security breach plan -- go into hiding after the incident, a source said. Jha, who had been on the run after the incident on Wednesday, walked to a police station in the New Delhi district on Thursday night and is now being interrogated by a counter-intelligence team, a

Violent anarchy cannot hijack vibrant democracy, says Naqvi

In an apparent reference to the Lok Sabha security breach incident, former Union minister and senior BJP leader Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Friday said "violent anarchy" cannot hijack "vibrant democ-

He also said the robustness of

constitutional rights and the

mantra of fundamental duties have transformed Bharat into an unbeatable democracy. Naqvi made these assertions while addressing a programme organised by Institute of Constitutional Parliamentary Studies at Law University. In a major security Wednesday jumped into the Lok Sabha chamber from the

Faculty, North Campus, Delhi breach, two persons on visitors' gallery, shouted slogans and released yellow smoke from canisters that triggered panic and chaos in the House. The "debacle of dynasty" and "dominance of constitutional sovereignty" has made India a

which is enlightening the whole world with its democratic values, Naqvi said. The strength of the Constitution and the commitment of any individual can elevate any ordinary citizen of India to the highest office, he

"It is a testament to our constitutional and democratic values that Narendra Modi, who belongs to a poor and backward family, has been elected twice as the prime minister of the world's largest democracy and his efficiency in the discharge of duties has made him a global brand of good governance," the BJP leader said. Modi has become a "global hero" through his commit-

transform", Naqvi said. The "weightage to family back-ground" has been replaced by the "balance sheet of hard work, honesty and performance" as a criteria of success,

Naqvi further said technology and connectivity revolution has made the world smaller and the competition bigger. Most democratic countries of the world are assessing their constitutional rights, duties and parliamentary activities by keeping in mind India's democratic, economic, constitutional and political activities,

Noting that India has the highest number of elections in the world, he said every two months some part of the country remains in election mode. Despite this, the increasing passion and enthusiasm of people towards the festival of democracy in every election makes India's democracy dynamic and vibrant, Naqvi

Local area development fund for each Delhi MLA raised to ₹7 crore



The MLA Local Area Development (MLALAD) fund for each Delhi legislator has been raised from Rs 4 crore to Rs 7 crore. Delhi Urban Development Minister Saurabh Bharadwai informed this in the House during the winter session of the Delhi Assembly on Friday.

Giving reply to a question on MLALAD funds asked by a member of the House, Bharadwaj said that an amount of Rs 110 crore has revised estimates of budget 2023-24. The remaining 100 crore will be allocated in the budget for the next financial

The minister further said that each MLA of the Delhi Assembly was provided Rs 10 crore under the MLALAD funds during 2018-19 and 2019-20. Due to COVID, no fund was allocated to any MLA during 2020-21.

After COVID, each MLA was provided Rs 4 crore as MLAL-

AAP MLAs raise slogans against BJP over regularisation of MCD workers **STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

rhe Delhi Assembly was ▲ adjourned on Friday after AAP MLAs trooped down to the well of the House raising slogans against the BJP for allegedly opposing the regular-isation of Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD)

After the House resumed post lunch, there was a short-duration discussion under rule 55 of the Delhi Assembly on the vided to the Delhi MLAs Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) allegedly obstructing the regularisation of the workers of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). Earlier, BJP MLAs were marshalled out of of Rs 4 crore was provided to the MLAs in 2017-18 which the Delhi Assembly on Friday, after they alleged that 203 was later raised to Rs 10 crore homeless people have died in The unspent amount of the city during the winter sea-MLALAD fund of an MLA son so far and demanded that speak on the issue in the House. Later, BJP MLAs protested at the premises of the Assembly, raising slogans against the

> Speaking in the House, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA and MCD in-charge Durgesh Pathak said, "What the BJP could not do when it was in power in the MCD for 15 years was accomplished by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in just six months. Pathak highlighted the achieve

ments of the AAP-led MCD, including regularisation of the civic body's workers and disbursal of salaries on the first

day of the month.
"The MCD workers used to earlier protest at the Civic Centre, Jantar Mantar, Mayor House. They did not get their salaries for eight months. It was in August, within six months of the AAP coming to power, that time. This happened after 13 years," he said while alleging that the BJP is opposed to MCD workers' regularisation and has even approached the court over the issue.

Earlier, responding to a query by an MLA about the number of trees planted and the decrease in pollution levels in the last five years, Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai said the national capital has the largest green belt at 23.6 per cent among big metro cities,

and asserted that pollution levels in the city have reduced since 2014 through sustained efforts. On the issue of pollution, Rai shared the data on PM10 and PM2.5 levels, saying on average there has been a 31 per cent reduction in pollution levels since the formation of the AAP government.

Consequent to recent Parliament breach, the Delhi heavy layer of security on Friday with curbs on movement and a thorough checking of vehicles and passes.

The passes were issued after proper authorisation and verification through the Directorate of Information and

"Adequate number of Delhi Police and para military personnel were deployed. They were monitoring movement of people and vehicles outside the Vidhan Sabha.

BJP urges Kejriwal to speak in House on issue of death of 203 homeless people

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP and the AAP ■ Government indulged in a war of words on Friday after the saffron party alleged that 203 homeless people have died in the city this winter so far and demanded that Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal speak on the issue in the House. The issue resonated inside the

Delhi Assembly and even outside it. The BJP cited a report from Delhi Police, which said during the past month, 203 homeless people have died on the streets of the national cap-

Hitting back, Delhi Urban Development minister Saurabh Bharadwaj said the photos (of the deceased) are from November when winter was yet to begin here.

"Also, these photos clearly show marks of serious injuries, either killed in accidents or were murdered," Bharadwaj said after the House proceedings were adjourned for the day. After the Delhi Assembly resumed post-lunch, a shortduration discussion under Rule 55 commenced during which it was alleged that the BJP was obstructing the regularisation of the sanitation workers of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Ramvir Singh

Bidhuri gave a notice for a calling-attention motion on the alleged death of 203 homeless people in Delhi during the ongoing winter season.

'We demand that Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal provide answers on the issue in the House," Bidhuri said.

Speaker Ram Niwas Goel rejected the calling-attention motion given by Bidhuri and said he would look into the Delhi Police report and then take a decision. He directed that the BJP MLAs be marshalled out after they refused to back down in their demand. Bidhuri also alleged that 12 notices were given by BJP MLAs on issues faced by the people of Delhi but not one was accepted for discussion. Later in a statement, Bidhuri said the police report covers the data from November 13 to December 13. "The Delhi discuss any issue concerning the public, and it is not holding itself accountable for the deaths of 203 people in Delhi," he said. Bidhuri demanded that the Delhi chief minister be summoned to the assembly to

Addressing a press conference, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva, said due to the "callous" attitude and "neglect" of the Delhi government and its DUSIB depart-

give a statement on this mat-

ment, hundreds of homeless people die every year in Delhi due to cold. "Every year, despite repeated

rebuke from the court and reports in the newspapers, the Delhi government is not providing adequate funds for food to the night shelters here," Sachdeva said.

Sachdeva said the Delhi government's Winter Action Plan requires the authorities to provide the homeless with a safe place so that they do not get sick in the cold. However, due to the negligence of the Kejriwal government, it is already December 15 and 90 per cent of the permanent and temporary night shelters here are in bad condition.

Responding to the allegations, Bharadwaj accused the BJP of misleading the country by speaking lies. 'Whoever lives in Delhi,

have been saying for the past year that the BJP, through organizations like DDA, Railways, and ASI, renders thousands homeless in Delhi. Recently the Central government's Árchaeological Survey of India (ASI) near Tughlaqabad Fort displaced thousands of poor people without considering what would happen to them in the harsh winter," he told reporters.

Students against JNU new manual on holding protest inside campus

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

utting across party lines, the JNU students' outfits on Friday registered their protest against the varsity's revised manual prohibiting and penalising protests on campus within 100 metres of the academic buildings, among other restrictions, and demanded its withdrawal. The ABVP's Jawaharlal Nehru

University (JNU) unit burnt an effigy of the varsity administration while protesting against the manual calling it "dictatorial" and "anti-student". "The JNU is an open and lib-

eral university, where the students have the right to freely express their opinions. However, the administration is attempting to strip away this right," said Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) Unit Secretary Vikas Patel.
"The ABVP calls on the

administration to retract the Code of Conduct and collaborate with the students to create a new one that respects the democratic values and safeguards the students' rights," he

Earlier in the day, several stu-



mitted a memorandum to Vice Chancellor Santishree Pandit to cease all ongoing inquiries against the students related to protests alleging that they have been served notices despite her assurance to revolve the

The JNUSU, supported by 11 members of the different students' outfits and hostel presidents, in the letter to the vice chancellor demanded that all disciplinary actions against the students ordered by the Chief Proctor Office (CPO) should be rescinded and the new varsity manual be withdrawn. The students' outfits have also demanded an announcement

University Students' Union (JNUSU) elections.

We, the students of Jawaharlal Nehru University, are writing to you to register out strong protest and indignation at the series of vindictive actions initiated by the JNU administration against various elected representatives and activists," the letter read. The letter added that the revised CPO manual, which penalises 28 types of misconduct at the JNU, "militates" the students' democratic right to protest for

their rights. Responding to the students' allegations, the V-C said the inquiries are underway for the students who were involved in rule violation as per the High Court's orders, while fines imposed on several other students during the 2019 fee hike protests were waived by her.

The show cause notices have been issued to those students, who were found involved in rule violation as per the High Court order. We can't do contempt of the

court by not abiding to the rules. I have waived the fines imposed on many students for protesting over fee hike in 2019. But if they continue to break the rules then necessary action as per the rules and regulations will be taken, she said. The vice-chancellor's office

also clarified that the new rules in the varsity manual released in November after the executive council's approval will not apply to old cases of rule violation by the students.
"Any act of rule break after the

revised manual came into force will be penalised as per the regulations outlined in the manual. The old and ongoing cases will not be examined based on the new rules," a senior official

LG refuses Atishi proposal to review his decision on Bamnoli land acquisition

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenanı Governor(LG) Vinai Kumar Saxena has turned down Vigilance Minister Atishi's proposal for reviewing his earlier stand with regards to charges made by her in a Preliminary Report' (on 14.11.2023), against Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar and Divisional Commissioner Ashwani Kumar in Bamnoli land acquisition matter.

Giving details here on Friday, officials said Saxena noted that the resubmitted file was nothing but re-spinning of theories by the Minister and there were no new facts presented to buttress her illogical arguments.

It appears that the entire exercise/intention for resubmission of the file was only an attempt to mislead the general public and the Courts from the core issue for reasons best known to the Minister, the LG said. The LG, disposing the earlier file on 19.11.2023, containing the preliminary report submitted by Atishi and forwarded to him by Chief Minister Arvind

Kejriwal had in a reasoned order held that the report submitted by her was half baked, incorrect, based on preconceived assumptions and presumptions, malafide and, therefore, held the role of the Chief Secretary and the Divisional Commissioner above board in the aforesaid matter.

He had accordingly turned down the proposal to remove them from their posts and order any further inquiry, saying that an inquiry was already underway by the CBI and any such step as suggested by the Minister and the Chief Minister would hamper the ongoing investigation instead of facilitating it.

Subsequently on 22.11.2023, Atishi had resent the proposal to "review his position on the preliminary report". The LG, considering the fact that the matter of allegations made by the AAP Government and its Ministers were under consideration by the Delhi High Court in a plea of defamation made by the Chief Secretary, waited for the verdict and thereafter disposed the file

into multi speciality hospital

Patel Chest to be converted

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi University Executive Council on Friday decided to convert the north campus landmark Patel Chest Hospital into a multispeciality hospital on a 12.76 acre land in Dhaka village near Kingsway Camp in north Delhi

The 1268th meeting of the Executive Council (EC), under the chairmanship of DU Vice-Chancellor Prof. Yogesh Singh approved allotment of 12.76 acres of land for a multi-specialty hospital.

Prof. Yogesh said that there is a strong need to expand and upgrade VPCI so that treatment for serious diseases, including pulmonary diseases, can be provided under one roof. He said that the expansion and upgradation of VPCI will go a long way in providing quality diagnostic and research facilities for pulmonary diseases. The Vice Chancellor said that the matter has been discussed in great detail and several meetings were also held in this regard to obtain the views of the faculty members of VPCI and suggestions of external experts.

Along with this, allotment of

land for the construction of University College of Medical Sciences building and hospital was also considered. The members were informed that the need for construction of the college building and hospital has been felt in view of the fact that despite more than five decades of existence, it has still not been able to get its land and

Not only this, the limited space in the GTB Hospital campus is hindering the ambitious expansion of the college, thereby hindering it from taking the college to the next level of excellence. A request has been received from the college to allot 40-50 acres of land for construction of college and hospital building with facilities and infrastructure.

Another significant aspect noted was the Delhi Government's letter to the Central Government regarding 12 colleges funded by the Delhi Government. The formation of an EC Committee on this issue was suggested by the Vice Chancellor which was passed unanimously. The Vice Chancellor said that this is a very important issue and hence the matter needs to be looked

In Modi presence, Bhajan takes oath as Rajasthan CM

 $F_{\text{Sharma was sworn in as the}}^{\text{irst-time MLA Bhajan Lal}}$ Chief Minister of Rajasthan at a ceremony attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP's top leadership on Friday, 12 days after the party ousted Congress in the assembly polls.

Sharma was administered the oath by Governor Kalraj Mishra during a ceremony at the Ramnivas Bagh in Jaipur. Sharma, who celebrated his 56 birthday coinciding with the swearing-in ceremony, is the 15th chief minister of Rajasthan and also among the youngest leader to attain the

Along with him, Diya Kumari and Prem Chand Bairwa were

ministers. The outgoing chief minister Ashok Gehlot attended the ceremony held in front of the historic Albert Hall. A large gathering of BJP MLAs and workers from across the state witnessed it. Senior BJP leader and former CM Vasundhara Raje Scindia was also present on the occa-

Modi said the new chief minister of Rajasthan is a dedicated BJP worker who made commendable efforts to strengthen the party, and wished him the very best in fulfilling people's aspirations. "Birthday greetings to Rajasthan's CM Bhajan Lal Sharma Ji. A dedicated party Karyakarta for years, he has made commendable efforts to

Ministerial journey, I wish him the very best in fulfilling people's aspirations," the prime minister said.He also conveyed his wishes to Diya Kumari and Prem Chand Bairwa, who were sworn in as deputy chief ministers.

As Sharma, Diya Kumari and Bairwa took the oath, BJP supporters raised slogans of 'Jai Shri Ram' and 'Modi-Modi'. Ahead of the ceremony, Sharma offered prayers at the Govind Devji temple in the state capital and fed cows at the Pinjrapol Gaushala on Tonk road. The new CM's family mem-

bers and supporters also accompanied him. Sharma visited another temple after this. The BJP leader then went strengthen BJP across the state. to his residence at Balaji Tower



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Rajasthan Governor Kalraj Mishra, CMdesignate Bhajan Lal Sharma during the swearing-in ceremony of the Chief he sought the blessings of his

He also visited a Shiv temple on the premises before leaving for the oath-taking ceremony. In a video shared on social media, Sharma and his wife can be seen cleaning the feet of the elderly with water and take blessings from them. After swearing in ceremony, Sharma assumed office amid chanting of vedic mantras. After Sharma sat on the CM's chair, Raje put her hand on his head to bless him. In turn, Sharma stood and offered sweets to Raje and others. Prior to Sharma assuming office, the department of personnel issued orders to temporarily appoint three IAS officers to the chief minister's office.

party, is from Bharatpur district and won the Sanganer constituency of Jaipur with a margin of 48,081 votes. He holds a master's degree in Political Science. Rajasthan got a chief minister from the Brahmin caste after 33 years of Late Hari Deo Joshi (Congress) ruling the state in 1973-77, 1985-1988 and 1989-

The swearing-in ceremony was also attended by BJP president J P Nadda, Union Ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and several other senior leaders of the party. Newly appointed chief minister of Madhya Pradesh Mohan Yadav, Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Dhami, Gujarat CM

Shinde, Goa CM Pramod Sawant and Deputy Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Keshav Prasad Maurya were in attendance. Vasundhara Raje, who was the frontrunner for the chief minister's post, was seen sitting alongside Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.

Seers and mahants from different places attended the ceremony as well. Gehlot, was seen talking to Shekhawat during the ceremony. During the election campaign, Gehlot repeatedly Shekhawat, accusing him of being involved in the Sanjivani Credit Co-operative Society 'scam'. Shekhawat, in turn, has filed a defamation case against Gehlot.

More manpower, X ray machines in place to unclog airport: Scindia

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

To tackle congestion at airports amid rising passenger traffic, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Friday said manpower, X-ray machines, departure entry gates, check-in and immigration counters have been increased at airports. Besides, guidelines are in place to ensure adequate allocation of space for passenger-related activities at terminal buildings.

Overall capacity has been enhanced at 16 airports, including Delhi and Mumbai, compared to December last year. In December last year, there was heavy congestion at various airports, including Delhi, following which the ministry took various measures to address the

Operators of airports in Delhi, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Chennai were directed to identify the bottlenecks in passenger processing and augment their capacities.

Similar directions were also issued to operators of 10 other airports -- Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Goa, Patna, Jaipur, Guwahati, Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Trivandrum and Cochin.

At a briefing in the national capital, Scindia said various measures have been taken to tackle congestion, including that a VIP lounge was demolished at Delhi airport and in that space, X-ray machines

While the CISF workforce has been increased by 31 per cent to 24,733, the number of XBIS (X-ray Baggage Inspection System) at security checkpoints has gone up 37 per cent to 321 at these airports.

Further, departure entry lanes have increased 46 per cent to 312, while the check-in counters rose 24 per cent to 1,633.Also, the Bureau of Immigration (BoI) counters at these 16 airports have gone up 24 per cent to 1,002. As per the ministry, 1,451 BoI personnel have been deployed at the air-

The count of passengers at these airports increased 10 per cent to 12.06 million in November compared to the year-ago period, the ministry said. According to the ministry, space for business establishments and commercial lounges at airports is subject to space availability to meet passenger facility requirements for projected future growth.

Space allocation for commercial activities is to be planned on the principle of 'to be on the way' and 'not in the way' to ensure smooth flow of passengers, it said.

The lack of sufficient airport infrastructure, inadequate Xray screening machines, CISF and immigration manpower, the grounded airline were given ticularly at peak hours were two weeks, the airfare situation identified as among the key factors for the congestion last year. Digi Yatra facility, which is based on facial recognition to financial woes, mainly trigtechnology, has been launched gered by Pratt & Whitney at 13 airports, and that has also

helped in easing congestion. The minister has been reviewing the mitigation measures on a weekly basis with the identified airport operators and the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) to avoid congestion at airports.

Among other measures Scindia said that expanded terminal building at Hyderabad airport, restructuring of the pre-embarkation security check area in Mumbai airport by the addition of three more security lanes and a soon-to-be-completed new terminal building at Lucknow airport will help these airports to handle more passengers efficiently.

Amid concerns in certain quarters that airfares are high, Scindia said the tariff monitoring unit at the DGCA monitors the fares on 60 routes in different buckets.

In June, it was high season for air travel, and also one airline stopped operations, which was a double whammy.

Some of the routes operated by stabilised, the minister said. No-frills carrier Go First stopped flying in early May due engine issues.

Defence Ministry inks contract with **Bharat Electronics** for Electronic Fuzes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Defence Ministry on Friday inked a contract with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Pune, for pro-curement of Electronic Fuzes for the Indian Army for a period of 10 years, at a total cost of Rs 5,336.25 crore.

As part of the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' vision, this contract has been signed for ammunition procurement Manufacture of Ammunition for Indian Army by Indian Industry', a Government initiative for long term require-

ment of 10 years. The aim of the project is to build up ammunition stocks to minimise imports, achieve selfsufficiency in ammunition manufacturing, obtain critical technologies and secure stock affected by supply chain disruption.

Electronic Fuzes are an integral component of medium to heavy calibre artillery guns which provides sustained artillery firepower for military operations. The Fuzes will be procured for usage in artillery guns which are capable of lethal engagements in various kinds of terrain including high altitude areas along the Northern Borders.

Electronic Fuzes will be manufactured by the BEL at its Pune and upcoming Nagpur Plant. The project will generate lakh man days and encourage active participation of Indian Industries including MSMEs in ammunition manufacturing and broaden ammunition manufacturing ecosystem in

Viral infections can be major drivers of chronic diseases: Research

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Don't belittle most viral infections by regarding them as somewhat inconsequential, for they can be major drivers of chronic diseases. This is what a team of researchers found as they noted that people hospitalised with seasonal influenza also can suffer long-term, negative health effects, especially involving their lungs and airways as in the case with the Covid-19. The study comparing the viruses that cause Covid-19 and the flu also revealed that in the 18 months after infection, patients hospitalized for either Covid-19 or seasonal influenza faced an increased risk of death, hospital readmission, and health problems in many organ systems. Further, the time of highest risk was 30 days or later after initial infection, said the findings published in The Lancet Infectious Diseases.

However, the overall risk and occurrence of death, hospital admissions, and loss of health in many organ systems are substantially higher among Covid-19 patients than among those who have had seasonal influenza. The study is conducted by

researchers from Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis and the Veterans Affairs St. Louis Health Care 'The study illustrates the high

toll of death and loss of health following hospitalization with either Covid-19 or seasonal Ziyad Al-Aly, a clinical epidemiologist at Washington University.

"It's critical to note that the health risks were higher after the first 30 days of infection. Many people think they're over



discharged from the hospital. That may be true for some people. But our research shows that ooth viruses can cause longhaul illness. The statistical analysis spanned

up to 18 months post-infection and included a comparative evaluation of risks of death, hospital admissions and 94 adverse health outcomes involving the body's major organ systems. "A review of past studies on Covid-19 versus the flu focused

on a short-term and narrow set

of health outcomes," said Al-

Aly, who treats patients with-

in the VA St. Louis Health Care

System and is an assistant professor of medicine at Washington University. "Our novel approach compared the long-term health effects of a vast array of conditions. Five years ago, it wouldn't have occurred to me

to examine the possibility of a

"A major lesson we learned from SARS-CoV-2 is that an thought to only cause brief illness also can lead to chronic disease. This revelation motivated us to look at long-term outcomes of Covid-19 versus

flu," he said. "We wanted to know whether

and to what degree people with flu also experience longterm health effects," Al-Aly said. "The big answer is that both Covid-19 and the flu led to long-term health problems, and the big aha moment was the realization that the magnitude of long-term health loss eclipsed the problems that these patients endured in the early phase of the infection. Long Covid is much more of a health problem than Covid, and long flu is much more of a health problem than the flu." However, the overall risk and occurrence of death, hospital admissions, and loss of health in many organ systems are substantially higher among

influenza, Al-Aly said. Regarding both viruses, patient vaccination status did not affect

Covid patients than among

those who have had seasonal

Those in the Covid-19 cohort were hospitalized during the pre-delta, delta and omicron

During the overall 18-month Covid-19 faced a 50% higher risk of death than those with seasonal influenza. This corresponded to about eight more deaths per 100 persons in the COVID-19 group than among those with the flu.

Indian **Coast Guard** partners with Uber



NEW DELHI

The Indian Coast Guard on Friday here announced an exclusive partnership with Uber to redefine maritime mobility solutions, delivering efficient, reliable, and secure transportation for the official travel and daily commute of Indian Coast Guard officers, staff, and their families nation-

Giving details, Coast Guard officials said through this pioneering alliance, Uber's cuttingedge ride-sharing technology will seamlessly integrate into the operational fabric of the Indian Coast Guard via Uber for Business.

This innovative approach reflects the Coast Guard's commitment to embrace modern solutions for transformative change and elevating the overall travel experience for its dedicated personnel.

Coast Guard chief Rakesh Pal highlighted the importance of this partnership in addressing the evolving travel needs of Officers, personnel and their families. Emphasizing Uber's spoke of the dedicated Uber account for Indian Coast Guard personnel (offering exclusive benefits such as zero cancellation fees, access to premium ride categories, and premium customer support).

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Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the defencient of the oxide pation. the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property will be a subject to the charge of CICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.		Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Ashok Kumar/ Harish Kumar Sharma/ LBDEL00005448345/ LBDEL00005448346	Flat No.511, 5th Floor, Tower H, Oxirichsunskriti Phase II, Situated at Sector 33, Tehsil Tijara Bhiwadi, Rajasthan Alwar/ Dec 11, 2023	July 14, 2023 Rs. 35,60,890/-	Delhi & NCR/ Alwar
2.	Megha Kaul/ Yougal Handa/ LBDEL00005152133	Flat No-806, 8th Floor, Tower H, Oxirich Sanskriti Phase-II Situated at Sec-33, Tehsil Tijara Bhiwadi, Distt-Alwar, Rajasthan/ Dec 11, 2023	May 07, 2022 Rs. 23,01,059/-	Delhi & NCR/ Alwar
3.	Pradeep Rawat/ Paramjit Rawat/ LBDEL00004913438	Flat No.904, 9th Floor, Tower H, Oxirich Sunskriti Phase II, Situated at Sector-33, Tehsil Tijara Bhiwadi, District Alwar, Rajasthan/ Dec 11, 2023	May 18, 2023 Rs. 19,84,591/-	Delhi & NCR/ Alwar
4.	Arun Vats/ Pooja Sharma/ LBDEL00004881455/ LBDEL00004864255	Flat No H-907, 9th Floor, Tower H, Oxirich Sunskriti Phase-II, Village Tijara, Bhiwadi District Alwar/ Dec 11, 2023	June 19, 2021 Rs. 15,45,942/-	Delhi & NCR/ Alwar
5.	Rajiv Arora/ Aakriti Arora/ LBGUR00005074388	Flat No D-7103, 2nd Floor, RLF, "The Park", Block D, Sector-54, Bhiwadi/ Dec 11, 2023	April 26, 2023 Rs. 9,03,683/-	Delhi & NCR/ Bhiwad
6.	Virendra Kumar Upadhyay/ Preeti Upadhyay/ LBDEL00005671345	Flat No. 402, 4th Floor, Tower T9, Aagman Society, Mujeri, Sector-70, Opp. Imt Tehsil Ballabgarh District, Faridabad, Haryana/ Dec 12, 2023	July 31, 2023 Rs. 17,88,370/-	Delhi & NCR/ Jaunpu
7.	Paramjit Singh/ Rajinder Kaur Banga/ LBDEL00001530424/ LBNOD00005144083/ LBDEL00005143800/ LBNOD00005240483	Plot Bearing No-626, Sec-21-A, Urban Estate, Haryana Faridabad/ Dec 12, 2023	June 20, 2023 Rs. 82,43,132/-	Delhi & NCR
8.	K G Anand/ K V Govinda Krishnan/ LBGHZ00002369039	Flat No Sepang- 1403 14th Floor, Oasis Grand Stand, Situated at GH-01, TS 01B, Sector 22 D, Yamuna Expressway, Gautam Budh Nagar, Noida / Dec 12, 2023	July 19, 2023 Rs. 11,06,302/-	Delhi & NCR
9.	Indu Devi/ Uma Shankar/ Om Shankar Detective and Safety Pvt Ltd/ LBNOD00002578355	Flat No. 702, Tower No D-1, 7th Floor, Neotownm Plot No. Gh-03, Techzone Iv, Greater Noida West, Distt Gautam Budh Nagar, Up/ Dec 12, 2023	August 31, 2017 Rs. 38,77,092/-	Delhi & NCR
10.	Gaurav Kapoor/ Gitanjali Sharma/ LBDEL00002444962	Flat No. E-101, 1st Floor, Newtech La Galaxia, Hra -11, 1A, Surajpur Site C, Greater Noida/ Dec 12, 2023	December 30, 2017 Rs.38,07,070/-	Delhi & NCR

the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002. Date: December 16, 2023

Authorized Officer

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Rakesh Mishra/ Saroj Mishra/ LBALD00003351395	House No.102K/8B (Present No.102K/8A) Naini Dadri New Market District Allahabad Arazi No.195 Pargana Arial Tehsil Karchhna District Allhabad Uttar Pradesh/ December 13, 2023	July 28, 2023 Rs. 10,33,310/-	Allahabad/ Delhi

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002

Date: December 16, 2023 Place: Delhi

Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited

PHYSICAL POSSESSION NOTICE Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the belowmentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Physical Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Company/ Neeraj Yadav/ Babita/ Jitender Yadav/ '159005002868	Khewat No. 91,92,93,94,95,96,97,98,99 Kita 15 Total Mesuring Area 45 Kanals 7 Marlas Having Its 104/ 863 Share I.E 11 Marla 5 Sarsai Situated at Nooni Kalan, Tehsil Narnaul Distt Mahendragarh Vide Registered Transfer of Immovable Property Within Blood Relation Deed No. 2163 Dated 30-10-2020 Immovable Property Issued By Sub Registrar Office Narnaul Mutation Number 1544 Dated 9-11-2020 Issued By Revenue Athority Nooni Kalan/ December 13, 2023	December 06, 2022 Rs. 20,85,916.00/-	Namaul

I ne above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002. Date: December 16, 2023

Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited

Delivering Covid 19 vaccine to respiratory tract may lead to improved protection: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

 $D_{
m cine}^{
m elivering}$ the Covid-19 vaccine directly to the respiratory tract, the primary site of entry inS-CoV-2 infection, may lead to improved protection against the disease, a study in monkeys has found. The study is published in the journal Nature.

"The failure of the current generation of S-CoV-2 vaccines delivered by the intramuscular (IM) route to block infection likely relates to their inability to induce robust mucosal immune responses at the portal of entry," said study corresponding author Dan H. Barouch, from Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC), US.

"In this study, we demonstrated that novel immunisation strategies can markedly increase mucosal immunity in non-human primates and improve protective efficacy against a mucosal virus challenge," Barouch said. The study, published in the

journal Nature, suggests that it may be possible to improve protection against COVID-19 by delivering the vaccine directly to the respiratory tract. Barouch and colleagues primed 40 adult rhesus macaques with the Ad26 Covid-19 vaccine (Janssen/Johnson & Johnson)

administered intramuscularly

(IM) - like a shot in the arm

adults typically receive.

A year later, the animals received a booster. Of the total, three groups received either a dose of the Ad26 vaccine via the IM route, the intranasal (IN) route (delivered via nasal spray) and the intratracheal (IT) route (delivered by nebuliser or inhaler). The fourth group received a

dose of the bivalent mRNA vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech) by the IN route. A sham group received no boosters. When the macaques were

later challenged with a high dose of the virus, the researchers sampled the animals' blood, nasal, and lung fluids to monitor their immune responses.

They found that the Ad26 booster administered via the IT route provided near complete protection against a highdoseS-CoV-2 challenge and induced greater mucosal immunity than it did via the IN or IM route.

In contrast, mRNA IN boosting proved ineffective, suggesting that improved formulations will likely be required for effective mucosal delivery of mRNA vaccines, researchers said.

'Taken together, these data demonstrate that novel immunisation strategies can markedly increase mucosal immunity in non-human primates and improve protective efficacy against a mucosal virus challenge," said Barouch.

SC setback for Abhishek Banerjee

SAUGAR SENGUPTA

n yet another judicial embarrassment for Trinamool Congress second-in-command Abhishek Banerjee, the Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain his plea seeking transfer of a case related to the infamous recruitment scam from the Court of Justice Amrita Sinha of Calcutta High Court. The Court also turned down his request for a gag order on media coverage of the Court proceedings so as to save him

PTI ■ GANDHINAGAR

Union minister of state for housing and urban affairs Kaushal Kishore said

on Friday that the ongoing

rapid urbanisation in India

could lead to nearly half of

the country's population liv-

ing in cities in the next few

Kishore made the remarks

during his address at the

'Livable Cities of Tomorrow',

a pre-Vibrant Gujarat

Summit event, that com-

menced on Friday morning at Mahatma Mandir Convention Centre in

The 10th edition of the

Vibrant Gujarat Global

Investor Summit, which will

pitch the state as the most

favourable investment desti-nation, will be held here in

Koshore said Prime Minister

Narendra Modi has already

launched various schemes

for the welfare of city

dwellers keeping in mind

he future influx of people in

"Earlier, 20 per cent of our

population lived in cities,

while 80 per cent in villages.

Now, the share of the urban

population stands at 30 per

cent, while 70 per cent live in

"Today, we are seeing a trend wherein people want to own

a house in the city (where

they work) and in their vil-

lage too," said the minister in

"The way cities are being

developed and urbanisation

is picking up pace in the

country, we expect that the

ratio of the urban and rural

population will be 50:50 in

the next few decades, which

means nearly half of the population will be living in

cities. In view of this, PM

Modi has already launched

various schemes for the city hospitality.

rural areas.

his address.

January next year.

decades.

Gandhinagar.

The possible role of Banerjee --- who is also the nephew of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee --- in the multi-tiered school level recruitment scam is being investigated by the Enforcement Department. Referring to certain observations "unnecessarily made" by Justice Sinha's Bench the TMC leader's counsel said that such observations were being reported on front pages of newspapers causing "his reputation is being torn to shreds." In view of his argument, Banerjee's counsel requested the Apex Court to issue a gag

order restraining live-stream-

dwellers," said Kishore.

One such project launched

by Modi was the 'Light

House project' of providing

affordable and durable

homes to the urban popula-

tion, he said, adding that

these houses can withstand

The minister said that PM

Modi is closely monitoring

the progress made in 100

urban pockets under the

Smart Cities Mission, which

was announced by him in

After assuming office in 2014

for the first time, Modi start-

ed working on a project to

provide houses to everyone

and launched two schemes

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yoina-

Urban and Pradhan Mantri

Awas Yojna-Gramin, said

"Around four crore families

from rural as well as urban

areas of the country have

already been allocated homes

with all the basic amenities

under PM Awas Yojana and

the allotment process is still

He informed the audience

that Modi was also instru-

mental in creating awareness

about cleanliness by launch-

ing the 'Swachh Bharat

Mission-I' and 'Swachh

Bharat Mission-II' pro-

To fight climate change and

reduce pollution in cities,

Kishore said, his department

has already launched a pro-

ject to provide electric pub-

On the occasion, Gujarat

Chief Secretary Raj Kumar

informed the audience that

the Diamond Research and

Mercantile City or DREAM

City near Surat, being devel-

oped as a smart city, will

house nearly 5 lakh people

once completed and create

nearly 2 lakh jobs in sectors

like diamond, textiles and

lic transport buses.

rammes.

Kishore.

earthquakes too.

Half of Indians will be

living in cities in a few

decades, says Minister

ing of the court proceedings as if possible transferring the case to some other Bench.

Justices Sanjiv Khanna and SVN Bhatti, however, refused to issue the gag order directing the appellant to move the Division Bench of the High Court if they would prefer to do so. Banerjee has been uncomfort-

able with certain media reports that quoted Justice Sinha's Obiter Dicta (passing comments) asking the source of the TMC leader's source of income. Referring to the 5,000-page property documents submitted by Banerjee to the ED the



Judge had said that prima facie there was a coincidence between the quantum jump in his assets from 2014 which incidentally was the year when recruitment scam started. The Judge had directed the ED to look into such facts of the mat-

As the Judge's remarks were boldly reported in the leading media, Banerjee moved the Apex Court to restrain the media-streaming and publication of the Court proceedings. As also transfer the hearing to some other Court. Reacting to the Supreme Court

order senior counsel and CPI(M) Rajya Sabha MP Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya said, "they want to control the judges but they don't know that

the Judges act according to the law and when they get adverse orders they make adverse comments against the judges .. now we will ask him (Banerjee) and his party to give a list of judges of his choice ... we will defeat them there also."

BJP state spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya said "both Congress and the TMC will first commit big scams and then stop investigation ... this is an ideal case where they are trying to hide behind law .. but they will not be able to do so ... today's order has once again proved that we are moving in the right direction."

could not be spent on these taluks by the end of 2014-15,

He added that Dharwad-based

Centre for Multi-disciplinary

the Chief Minister rued.



Assam Police in touch with NIA to probe blasts: DGP

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Assam Police is in touch with the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to probe the three recent blasts and a team is on its way to the state, Director General of Police GP Singh said on Friday.

'We will discuss the recent blasts with the NIA and central intelligence agencies and will chalk out a future course of action accordingly, the DGP said on the sidelines of a meeting at the Kaziranga National Park.

Those who carried out the blasts will be identified, apprehended and the strongest possible action will be taken against them, Singh said.

ULFA(I) has claimed responsibility for Thursday night blast near the gate of army station in Jorhat district as well as that in Tinsukia on November 22 and Sivasagar on December 9, all near security establishments.

In a statement on Friday, ULFA(I) said the indigenous people had no cause to panic as the outfit is not against them but are carrying out the blasts due to the alleged efforts of DGP Singh to establish the outfit's demand as a "law and order problem and not a political issue". The DGP in response to the ULFA(I)'s allegations said they 'always refer to me and if they have a cause, they can always target me'. 'I live in Kahilipara and my

office (DGP headquarters) is in Ulubari, (both in Guwahati). They can come and target me. Why are they harassing the common people by lobbing a grenade here and there, he said. During the last few months,

police have been involved in the investigation of several important cases like the Commission (APSC)'s cashfor-jobs scam, the call centre case and others but 'if such incidents of blasts continue, then the force will have to be development", he said.

diverted to control the situation and it will be the common people who will be the ultimate sufferer," the DGP said. A 'mild blast' had occurred on Thursday night in a dustbin near the army gate in Lichubari area of Jorhat but there was no casualty or dam-A massive search operation

has been launched in the district and also in areas adjoining Jorhat to nab the culprits. Meanwhile, acting on a tip-off, police recovered a locally made hand grenade from Hijuguri Lankeshwar Gohain Nagar in Tinsukia. The area has been cordoned

off and demarcated with a NIA team likely to arrive at the spot on Saturday to conduct further investigations, a police official said. Security has been tightened

and patrolling intensified across the Upper Assam dis-

statement on Sunday also "claimed responsibility for the two recent blasts in Tinsukia and Sivasagar" which was carried out in response to the 'arrogance' of the DGP.

A grenade blast took place near an army camp at Dirak in Tinsukia on November 22 following which one person was arrested but the police did not confirm the details of the sound of an explosion heard near a CRPF camp on December 9. Following the ULFA's earlier statement, the DGP had posted in 'X' that every personnel of Assam Police, Army & CAPF take oath under the National Flag to protect the integrity and

'We are committed to wipe out the remnants of terrorism

Karnataka Government to set up high-powered committee to study status of backward taluks: CM PTI BELAGAVI

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday announced that a high-powered committee led by a renowned economist would be constituted to study the status of backward taluks in the

"I am going to constitute a high-powered committee headed by a known economist of the State," Siddaramaiah said during a discussion in the Karnataka Assembly on the development of north

PM to address

Basanagouda Patil Yatnal welcomed the decision but asked the Chief Minister to set a deadline to the panel to furnish the report.

In response, the Chief Minister said it will be asked to submit its report in six months Siddaramaiah said a panel

headed by renowned economist D M Nanjundappa had in 2002-03 recommended that the 114 backward taluks should be given funds to the tune of Rs 31,000 crore. While Rs 2,000 crore a year

should be given as special



remaining Rs 15,000 crore should be raised from the state budget to end disparity with taluks, Nandjundappa panel had recommended. "But the recommendation came into effect only in 2007-08", he added.

Development Research (CMDR) too had given its report on the backward taluks and its findings were no different from the one given by the Nanjundappa committee.
According to Siddaramaiah, funds to the tune of Rs 46,453.96 crore were allocated for the development of backward taluks from 2007-08 till date, out of

The amount of Rs 31,000 crore

Centre has allocated ₹3,378 crore to Himachal during past one year: BJP

the state, elections, rural and

which only Rs 32,433 crore had

PTI SHIMLA

Hitting out at the Congress dispensation for claiming that the Centre has not sent any financial assistance to the state, Himachal Pradesh BJP chief Rajiv Bindal on Friday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government has allocated Rs 3,378 crore from December 11, 2022, till date. Bindal said that the state received a total amount of Rs 1,603.8 crore from the Central government during the financial year 2023-24

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader added that the Central government has given over Rs 1,140 crore to the state from December 11, 2022 till March 31, 2023.

any kind of social development and public welfare schemes like Pradhan Mantri Sadak



Ayushman Bharat, National

Bindal said that the funds Congress leaders should be heads of state disaster fund, district magistrate projects, amount. The Congress party compensation for revenue will get nothing by misleading losses, special assistance to the public," said Bindal.

urban local bodies grant, national disaster relief fund and assistance in the form of He added that apart from this, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs had on December 12 "approved additional financial assistance of Rs 633.73 crore from the National Disaster Response Fund for Himachal Pradesh". The state BJP chief alleged

that the Congress government has a habit of lying and they tend to falsely deny any kind of financial assistance allocated by the Centre to the State.

"The figures that we shared today are not small and the

ULFA(I) had in an e-mail

sovereignty of the country.

that impedes growth of our state. And for that, if we have to sacrifice our life, we shall waver from our determination to use full might of law against those who stand in path of our state's growth, progress and

gathering of 2 lakh women in Kerala

PTI THRISSUR (KER)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address a mass gathering of two lakh women from various walks of life here on January 2.

The meeting has been titled 'Sthree Shakthi Samgamam' and is organised by the Kerala unit of BJP to congratulate PM Modi for successfully passing the Women's Reservation Bill in both houses of Parliament, party's state chief K Surendran said on Friday. This event will be the first of its

kind, not only at the state level but also nationally, following Surendran told reporters. Women from diverse backgrounds, including Anganwadi teachers, ASHA workers, entrepreneurs, MGNREGA and neighbourhood network workers and social and cultural activists will participate in the event at Thekkinkadu ground

"The Prime Minister will participate in the programme, and the objective is to showcase Kerala's greetings to the PM under whose leadership the Women's Reservation Bill was passed," he said.

The BJP chief claimed that no other political party in the southern state has ever organised such a massive gathering of women. In response to a question, Surendran mentioned that during his visit, the PM would participate only in this programme.

Nutrition Mission and Education Campaign," he said in a press statement issued

Himanta extends peace offer to ULFA hardline faction

Final touches are being given to a peace agreement with the ULFA's pro-talks group and it is likely to be signed this month or in January, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Friday and also extended offer of talks to the outifit's hardline faction.

Talking to reporters here after holding talks with Intelligence Bureau (IB) Director Tapan Deka and National Investigation

Agency (NIA) Director Dinkar Gupta, Sarma said they discussed security-related matters. The NIA director briefed the chief minister about the Rohingya infiltration issue in which Assam had registered a case and raids were carried out by the agency in as many as 44 places across the Northeast.

Chief Minister Sarma said the Centre and the state government are pursuing talks with the Paresh Baruah-led ULFA(I) (the hardline faction) seriously, while impede growth and develop-

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

final touches are being given to the peace agreement with the pro-talks ULFA faction led by Aranbinda Rajkhowa and this is likely to be signed this month or in January.

He said the peace agreement with the pro-talks ULFA group will incorporate political, economic and cultural safeguards as well as land rights. Extending an olive branch to the

Baruah-led faction, the chief minister said violence will

India successfully flight tests

ment, and it is in the greater interest of the state and its people that ULFA(I) come to an amicable settlement once and for all. "Violence is futile and will push the clock of development back. It will vitiate the atmosphere at a time when Assam is on a roll with investments pouring into the state," he said.

The meeting between Sarma and the directors of the IB and the NIA took place at the Assam House here and it lasted for more than an hour.

Former IB special director A K Mishra, who is presently the advisor to the government on Northeast affairs, also met the chief minister.

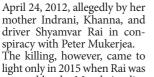
Sarma said during his five-day visit to the national capital, he called on the president, the vice president, the prime minister, the Union home minister twice. the Union finance minister, the Union petroleum and natural gas minister, the Union coal and mines minister and the Union health minister.

CBI lists former Mumbai top cop Rakesh as unrelied witnesses

The Central Bureau of ■ Investigation (CBI) has submitted a list of 23 witnesses it would not be examining against former media executive Indrani Mukerjea and other accused in connection with the killing of her daughter Sheena Bora.

The CBi in the list that includes Mumbai's former police commissioner Rakesh Maria and other police officials said they would not be examined in the trial as they were "unrelied wit-

Indrani and her two former husbands - Peter Mukerjea and Sanjeev Khanna - are accused of being involved in the killing of Sheena Bora, Indrani's daughter from her first relation. Sheena (24) was murdered on



arrested by the Mumbai police in another case. At the time, Maria was the city police commissioner and had

supervised the probe. The case was later transferred to

the CBI Indrani had earlier this year

sought the court to direct the CBI to submit a list of witnesses it was going to examine. In April, the agency had submitted a list of 92 witnesses who

would be examined. Indrani and Peter's daughter Vidhi Mukerjea's name did not figure in that list. Her name was also not includCBI on Thursday. There appears to be some ambi-

guity about whether Vidhi would be examined by the CBI against her mother as her statement is a part of the agency's chargesheet in the case. Apart from Maria, the other

persons who have been included in the "unrelied witnesses' list are Dinesh Kadam, who was the investigating officer from city police, Satyanarayan Chaudhary, joint commissioner of police (law and order), and then Zone 9 DCP, and S S Wagh and Supriya Channey, both jailors.

Indrani's lawyers had in the past, soon after her arrest, claimed that Maria had interfered with the probe and that she was being implicated.

desi high speed flying wing UAV nautical test range in Chitradurga," the ministry

The Defence Ministry on ☐ Friday said a successful said.

flight trial of an indigenous high-speed flying-wing unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) was carried out in Karnataka's Chitradurga that propelled India into an elite it said. club of nations to have the technology to produce such a platform.

The autonomous flying wing technology demonstrator has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

"The DRDO has successfully carried out a flight trial of autonomous flying wing technology demonstrator, an indigenous high-speed flyingwing Unmanned Aerial

The successful flying demonstration of this autonomous stealth UAV is a testimony to maturity in the technology readiness levels in the country,

With this flight in the tailless configuration, India has joined the elite club of countries to have mastered the controls for the flying wing technology," the Defence Ministry said. Defence Minister Rajnath

Singh has complimented the DRDO, the armed forces and the industry for the successful flight trial of the system. He said the successful development of such critical technologies indigenously will fur-

ther strengthen the armed This UAV is designed and

developed by DRDO's Aeronautical Development Establishment. The ministry said the maiden

flight of this aircraft was demonstrated in July 2022, followed by six flight trials in various developmental configurations using two in-house manufactured prototypes.

'These flight tests led to achievements in the development of robust aerodynamic and control system; integrated real-time and hardware-inloop simulation, and state-ofthe-art ground control stations," it said.

"The team had optimised the avionic systems, integration and flight operations towards

the final configuration," the ministry added. The aircraft prototype, with a complex arrowhead wing platform, is designed and manu-

factured with lightweight car-

bon prepreg composite material developed indigenously. "Also, the composite structure, impregnated with fibre interrogators for health monitoring, is a showcase of 'Aatmanirbharta' in aerospace technology," the ministry said. The autonomous landing of this high-speed UAV, without the need for ground radars/infrastructure/pilot, showcased a unique capability demonstration, allowing take-off and landing from any runway with surveyed coordinates," it said.

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PAPER WITH PASSION-

Handle with care

A touchy legal journey looms ahead with Allahabad HC allowing a survey to settle Shahi Idgah dispute

■n the Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi case, the Allahabad High Court has granted permission for the appointment of an advocate commissioner to survey the Shahi Idgah In Mathura. It is in response to the petitioners' assertion that the mosque, in close vicinity of Krishna Janmabhoomi, contains artefacts indicating its past as a Hindu temple. The High Court's decision to allow the Gyanvapi-style survey of Shahi Idgah arises from a protracted dispute between the Hindu and Muslim communities regarding the ownership and origin of the site and has the potential to reignite passions. The objective of the court is to arrive at an informed and impartial decision based on historical records and archaeological findings. The Shahi Idgah, located near the Krishna Janmabhoomi has been a focal point of dispute for decades. Both Hindu and Muslim communities have presented historical evidence supporting their respective claims, and the survey aims to unravel the historical background of Shahi Idgah. While legal pro-

ceedings are crucial for amicably resolving disputes, the politicisation of religious issues carries severe consequences for communal harmony.

The larger issue at the moment is not who is right and will win the case but its implications on the social fabric of our nation. Given the fact that general elections are round the corner and the Ram temple is likely to be inaugurated in January, the chances of overwhelming religious sentiment polarising the electorate are rather high. The court may have the duty and right to dispense legal recourse but we all know that it does pose a risk of inflaming communal tension and chaos. It was indeed a decision of the same court that result-

ed in the opening of the Ram temple in Ayodhya. The Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi is still a bone of contention; Mathura only adds to the charged sentiment. The dangers associated with communal politics are many. It heightens religious sensitivities, creating an environment where communities feel threatened or marginalised. This heightened tension can lead to protests, violence and an overall disruption of the social fabric. Communal politics fosters polarisation and division among communities. This division undermines the rich cultural and social diversity that has been a defining feature of India's pluralistic society. Then there is a high chance of political interference in legal matters which can complicate the resolution process. It may influence public opinion and put undue pressure on the judiciary, potentially compromising the impartiality of legal decisions. We are already going through challenging times where society is getting polarised. It is crucial for all stakeholders, including political leaders, to approach this issue with sensitivity and responsibility. Prioritising dialogue, understanding and respect for diversity is essential to ensure lasting communal harmony. In the pursuit of justice, it is imperative to avoid actions that may inadvertently exacerbate religious tensions and sow the seeds of discord among citizens of our great nation.



Bangladesh elections: Game BNP is playing HIRANMAY KARLEKAR



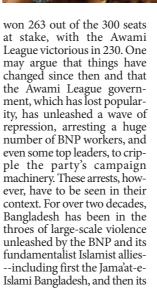
BNP insist on a caretaker government conducting the elections expecting that it would not be able to squash violence before and during the polling

lections to Bangladesh's (National Parliament), scheduled to be held on January 7, have attracted global attention. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the principal political opponent of the ruling Awami League led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has announced that it will boycott the elections because these are not being held under an independent caretaker government. In a despatch, Reuter's Ruma Paul has quoted the BNP's Senior Joint Secretary-General, Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, as saying, "We reject with utter disgust the schedule announced by spineless Election Commission to take away democracy and the voting rights of the people through another farce (sic) election like in the past at the behest of Sheikh Hasina."

According to the BNP, its boycott will deprive the elections of legitimacy. The fact is that the decision not to contest has been the BNP's: the Awami League government did not prevent it from participating. These elections will, therefore, lack legitimacy only if the grounds for the BNP's boycott are justified. Hence, a further question: are there genuine reasons for believing that the elections will not be free and fair unless conducted by a caretaker government? Consider the results of the last

three general elections. The parliamentary elections of 2014 and 2019 were held under Awami League governments. The BNP contested in the former but not in the latter. In 2014, the Awami League and its allies won 245 out of the 300 directly elected seats in the parliament, with the Awami League winning 234. In 2019, the Awami League-led alliance won 288 of the 300 seats, with the Awami League winning 259. The BNP and its allies have alleged that both elections were rigged, with many arguing that Sheikh Hasina's party and its allies could not otherwise have won such massive majorities.

i ne argument falls flat if one considers the results of the 2008 parliamentary elections held under a caretaker government. The Awami League and its allies had iated to Al Qaeda in the Indian



reincarnation, the Bangladesh

Jama'at-e-Islami. Simultaneously, there was a surge in fundamentalist Islamist terrorist strikes. The Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami-Bangladesh (HUJIB), Jama'atul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB), terrorist organisations all, had grown very strong when the BNP-Jama'at coalition government was in power from 2001 to 2006. Their suppression following intense international pressure, has been followed by the rise of two other terror ist organisations-- Ansar-al Islam, earlier known as Ansarullah Bangla Team, affil-



IN THE ABSENCE OF

STRONG ACTION, THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE VIOLENCE WHO REMAIN ACTIVE, CAN CREATE **WIDESPREAD** DISORDER ON JANUARY 7 TO INTIMIDATE PEOPLE, **PARTICULARLY** HINDUS, INTO NOT VOTING

Subcontinent (AQIS), and percentage of voting can then Daesh, affiliated to the parent be cited to claim that people Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). They have played a major role in the murder of bloggers, which began with the killing of Ahmed Rajib Haider in Dhaka on February 15, 2013. Other killings followed. Those murdered included not only bloggers but LGBT activists, Shias, Hindus and academics — indeed, all opposed to religious bigotry and supportive of humanism, free and fair. secularism and rationalism. The fundamentalist Islamist terrorist groups are bitterly opposed to Sheikh Hasina and the Awami League for acting resolutely against terrorism, particularly after the dastardly attack on the Holey Artisan Bakery in Dhaka on July 1, 2016, in which 20 persons, including 18 foreigners and women, were savagely killed along with five terrorists killed by Bangladeshi Army

have boycotted the elections, which, therefore, have been farcical. The success of their efforts would depend on how strongly Bangladesh's Election Commission, which will conduct the elections, deals with their violence. Firm action would doubtless trigger loud allegations of democracy being slaughtered. These have to be ignored if elections are to be Finally, did the BNP insist on a caretaker government con-

ducting the elections expecting that the latter would not be able to squash violence before and during the polling? It might have thought that the caretaker government, under pressure to show that it was independent and not favouring the Awami League, would hesitate to take strong action. It might also have been believed that the United States' announcement that it will impose visa restrictions on Bangladeshis responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the democratic election process in Bangladesh, may inhibit it from acting with the necessary firmness. All this is doubtless speculation. But speculations some times lead to facts.

(The writer is a consultant editor with the Pioneer, *views are personal)*

Social barriers in shifting towards sustainable mobility ASHALI BHANDARI

India must incorporate the needs of excluded communities to ensure all have access to affordable transportation

¬ackling transportationrelated greenhouse gas emissions is an urgent priority in India's ambition to achieve net zero. Globally, passenger road vehicles are the largest contributor to mobility emissions. In India, about 14% of the total emissions are mobility-linked, however, this may change as car ownership is expected to increase by 9-14-fold by 2050. To curtail the projected increase in emissions, it is essential that we not only adopt electrified modes of transport but also consider reduced private vehicle usage by switching to alternative modes, such as public transportation.

In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in building high-quality public transportation infrastructure in the country, especially metro rail systems (Metro). **Decoding social barriers**

Apart from systemic barriers, such as poor infrastructure for persons with disabilities, senior citizens and caregivers, several social barriers prevent people from using the Metro. By decoding these through a behavioural science approach, i.e. understanding the heuris-



uals use to make decisions) and using behavioural nudges (subtle cues designed to influence people's behaviour), we can impact urban mobility

Firstly, people think that first and last-mile connectivity is a 'high effort' and an 'unpleas-ant experience' due to long distances, poorly lit routes, and encroached walking paths. However, it is worth noting that memories of such unpleasant experiences may be recalled more easily and are often stressed by other people's descriptions. Secondly, non-Metro users prefer personal vehicles due to factors like connectivity, security queues, waiting time, and navigation challenges. Two behavioural biases play a role here: (a) people often

public transportation due to the 'illusion of control' over the route and the time taken to reach the destination, and (b) they often use hyperbolic discounting - prioritising short-term benefits like the comfort and convenience of private vehicles over longterm collective benefits like reducing emissions

Thirdly, personal vehicles are seen as status symbols, whereas the Metro is not aspira-

tional Enabling equitable access for excluded communities Beyond enabling a shift from private vehicles, improving the quality and service of sustainable mobility modes, like public transportation, has wider societal benefits. According to the 2011 Census, only 16% of Indians use private vehicles as their primary mode of commute; 54% of the population uses public transit or nonmotorised modes such as walking or cycling. However, investments in road infrastructure have generally been accorded primacy over investments in public transportation, walking and cycling infrastructure. This has resultchoose personal cars over ed in limited provision of





RONIKA POSTARIA

public transportation infrastructure, poor access for many communities and concerns about quality, comfort and safety. New investments in public transport services, like e-buses and metro rail must address concerns of the urban poor to improve their access to opportunities.

Beyond a technological approach

Currently, Indian policy strongly promotes the advancement of public transportation in cities such as the National Urban Transportation Policy and the Metro Rail Policy, outlining the pathways for financing, building, operating and maintaining accessible public transportation services. However, social planning, especially the promotion of behavioural and normative shifts, is lacking. Social planning for transportation can improve user demand by understanding values, atti-tudes and beliefs that frame people's modal choices.

(Ashali is Senior Urban Planner and Ronika Postaria is, Research Associate at, Ashoka University; views expressed are personal)

PEN IS MIGHTIER THAN SWORD

Sir — Using pen and paper for note-taking helps boost memory and the ability to understand, more so than laptops and PCs. Pens don't win battles. And swords don't write poems. Mightly is the hand that knows when to pick the pen and when to pick the sword. A writer is perfecting the art of putting the right words in his style of writing and thereby making out an excellent article.

The reader will have to create a taste of word power, as the last word of Shashi Tharoor shapes and provides a platform for youngsters to use the best vocabulary and learn the art of putting out the best in a planned and prescribed way as we all consider that the pen is mightier than a sword. Writing is intimidating to many people, particularly those who don't write for a living or regularly. The good news is that writing doesn't have to be agonizing, and almost anybody can improve their writing skills with a little discipline and a willingness to learn.

Jayanthy Ramani | Mumbai **SECURITY LAPSE IN PARLIAMENT**

Sir —The unprecedented security breach in the Parliament has left the entire nation in a state of shock and disbelief. Can entering a highly protected building be that simple? The infraction cannot be seen as a singular event, but a stark reminder of the vulnerabilities that exist even in the most guarded locations of the country. It is all the more disturbing that the incident took place on a day marked by solemn tributes to the victims of the 2001 Parliament attack, adding a layer of grim irony to the sacred institution.

The fact that one of the intruders almost reached the Speaker's Chair underscores the severity of the breach. The Parliament security breach is a wake-up call to the nation, and it highlights the need for constant vigil, robust security frameworks, and swift action to prevent any compromises to the nation's security. As inves-

COP28 ends on a positive note

commandos. There is reason

to believe that these elements

have been active in the vio-

lence the BNP has unleashed,

demanding that the forth-

coming elections be held

under a caretaker govern-

ment. In the absence of strong

action, those responsible for

the violence who remain active

can create widespread disorder

on January 7 to intimidate peo-

ple, particularly Hindus, into

not voting. The resultant poor

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

OP28, which was going on in Dubai since November 30, ended on December 12. Given the impending crisis of global warming, it has become necessary for the world to limit the temperature rise to the target of 1.5 degrees. The like-minded developing countries (LMDCs) and least developed countries (LDCs) at the conference would be happier with the attitude of the OPEC countries. Even if a draft is made, it will not be clear, universally accepted

and will not achieve the goal. Rich countries need to understand some basic things. It is true that according to the IEA, methane contributes 30% to the greenhouse gas problem. Farming is responsible for 25% of its emissions. But it would be wrong to give it priority among all the causes of global warming because the economy of poor countries depends on weak agriculture. Carbon dioxide indeed remains in the environment for centuries after emission, while methane only 12 years.

But methane affects the ozone layer a lot and it has immense power to absorb energy, hence the danger from it is greater. Rice farming, food and biomass, as well as livestock release a lot of methane into the air. But India or many such countries can neither give up dependence on rice cultivation nor change the method of farming. In view of this problem of agricultural-based countries, industrialised countries will have to focus on reducing other reasons for increasing temperature. Ignoring this will make consensus difficult and once again the conference will appear to be intellectually ruminating on making a vague proposal.

N Mateeni | Mumbai

from this incident and beef up our defences against any such future threats. Meanwhile, if the ruling BJP is serious about the incident, in a nonpartisan manner it must take proper action against the party's MP from Mysuru Pratap Simha, who is said to have issued visitor passes

to the intruders. Raganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

RISING INFLATION

Sir — India's retail inflation, based on the Consumer Price Index, rose to a threemonth high of 5.55 per cent in November from 4.87 per cent in October. To check the inflation, the government has recently taken a host of steps to boost the supply of food items like wheat, sugar onion etc. The RBI in the December monetary tigations continue, it is crucial to learn policy statement has anticipated an

increase in the prices of key vegetables which may push inflation higher in the near -term. To check further inflation, if the prices of petroleum products are reduced, the prices of other essential commodities will automatically fall, as this will reduce transportation costs and provide nationwide relief from inflation.

Besides crude oil prices which are at a 3month low, with prices down 4% this week, the excise duty was Rs. 9.20 on every litre of petrol and Rs. 3.46 on every litre of diesel in May 2014 while the excise duty right now is Rs. 19.90 on petrol and Rs. 15.80 on diesel which need

SK Khosla | Chandigarh

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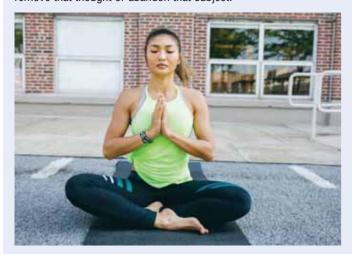
FIRST COLUMN MINDFULNESS IS NOT MEDITATION

Mindfulness is practised to overcome ill-will, restlessness, laziness, and procrastination



■ indfulness means seeing, not seeking. We live a life dominated by our passions of hatred and greed. Due to this, we cling to objects, places, people, and memories, creating a distorted perspective of the world we inhabit. Because of our distorted perception, we perceive worldly things as "I, me, mine," fostering an authoritative personality or a domineering attitude over others. This is responsible for delusional thoughts like "he or she must listen to me," making it difficult for us to accept contradictory situations. The maturity of a "let it go" behaviour is unable to develop because of this.

There is a beautiful discourse that the Buddha gave to an ascetic named Bahiya Daruchariya, who was from present-day Nallasopara. He sought guidance from Buddha to attain enlightenment. However, since Buddha was on alms rounds, he promised to share his teachings upon his return. Daruchariya, feeling a sense of urgency, expressed that life is uncertain, and the timing of death is unpredictable. He fervently requested the Buddha to provide guidance. Even a brief teaching, he insisted, would be something he could meditate upon. Hence, the Buddha advised Daruchariya to train himself to see things as he is seeing them, hear as he is hearing and think as he is thinking. To perceive things without adding defilements and to understand them as they truly are. However, as we all can observe, seeing often involves experiencing pleasure or displeasure and craving for it, thus burdening oneself. To truly see is to see without attachment, avoiding the creation of any greed or hatred towards any object, place, person, or memory. Even if a sensation arises, you should be aware of the associated greed or hatred and the object toward which it is directed so that you can remove that thought or abandon that subject.



However, if you are not watching your thoughts with their rooted emotions, i.e., greed or hatred or delusion, then it is "Michha Sati," i.e., wrong mindfulness. Nowadays, this misunderstanding is widespread. Most people understand mindfulness as watching their anxiety and stress, considering it a stress reduction therapy, especially in Western society. However, it is a misinterpretation.

While you may experience benefits for a particular time, the anxiety and stress will resurface because the root cause remains. Anyone who is not using mindfulness to remove rooted emotions such as greed and hate are practising wrong mindfulness. A practitioner of meditation once asked Bhikkhu Ananda, one of Buddha's closest disciples, whether the Buddha considered every type of technique helpful for meditation. Bhikkhu Ananda replied, "No, the Buddha does not consider every meditation technique but only those techniques or practices that help eradicate greed, hatred, and delusion." These emotions are the root cause of conflicts, distress, anxiety, and suffering according to the Buddha's teaching.

The observations of the famous psychoanalytic therapist Mark Epstein conclude that "people practicing mindfulness are not benefiting as they should because they misunderstand it." The second most misunderstood concept of mindfulness is that people consider it a meditation. but it is not. It is just a base for developing concentration and meditation, i.e., Jhana States. Mindfulness is practised to overcome illwill, restlessness, laziness, and procrastination, aiding in more effective meditation

(The writer is a Buddhist monk; views are personal)

The battle that forged British dominion in India

The Battle of Plassey in 1757 resulted in the establishment of British colonial dominance in the Indian subcontinent, writes SAUNAK MOOKERJEE



he year 1757 is significant in the history of Bengal because of the emergence of British rule in this region and the beginning of the anticipated decline of the Mughal Empire in the East. Although a lot has been written about Nawab of Murshidabad Siraj ud Daula's defeat by the British representative Robert Clive of the British East India Company by Western historians such as Vincent Smith, very little is known about the historical accounts by Bengali regional historians, who detail the positive attributes, intelligence and skills of a regional king called Raja Krishnachandra of Nadia, a district in the state of West Bengal with a highly influential cultural history.

It is located about a hundred kilometres from Kolkata and over ninety kilometres from Murshidabad. Vincent Smith in his famous work The Oxford History of India (first published in 1919 by Oxford Clarendon Press) mentions characters such as Siraj ud Daula, Clive, Amin Chand, and Mir Jafar as principal figures while Kumudnath Mullick, a Bengali regional hisorian, through his work makes it clear that without having King Krishnachandra as the chief of the conspiracy assembly, chosen by Murshidabad elites, to negotiate with the English, it would have been a difficult task to defeat Nawab in the battle of Plassey. The Bengali historian Kumudnath Mullick informs: Siraj ud Daula ascended the throne in 1756 after the death of the famous Nawab of Bengal Alivardi Khan. Unlike his grandfather, Alivardi, Siraj was rude to his well-wishers, ministers or officials at prominent positions in his kingdom. As a result, they became his enemy and decided to hatch a conspiracy by taking sides with the British. Meanwhile, Siraj had given shelter to the ruler of Dhaka Rajballab. Rajballab's family was also given shelter in Murshidabad by the Nawab.

Rajballab rose against the East India Company and this was appreciated by Nawab. The information of Rajaballab's shelter reached British East India. The intention of spreading the information was to overthrow Siraj ud Daula and appoint Siraj's uncle Mir Jafar as the Nawab of



BOTH THE FORCES MET EACH OTHER AT PLASSEY. AMID THE HEAVY FIRING OF CANNONS. HORSES AND BRUTAL KILLING. IT SEEMED FOR A

WHILE THAT MIR JAFAR DID NOT KEEP UP THE TRUST OF THE BRITISH

Murshidabad. It is said that the conspiracy was hatched at Jagat Seth's house. The plan to replace Siraj with Mir Jafar was supported by rich merchants and significant people of Murshidabad such as Jagat Seth, Raja Mahendra (Durlabhram), Raja Ramnarayan and Raja Krishnadas. Since the decision to overthrow Nawab resulted in debate, they took advice from Krishnachandra, the ruler of Nadia. A letter was sent to King Krishnachandra. Krishnachandra immediately called upon suggestions from the distinguished ministers in his court such as Kaliprasad Singha. The informa-

tion in the letter read: "The cruel-ty inflicted by Nawab of Murshidabad has resulted in people leaving their house and property in fear of Nawab. Nawab does not take suggestions from anyone. As the situation at Murshidabad is worrisome we thus approach you for a solution. We hope that you will be able to offer us a solution but this will be possible if your Majesty can meet us at Murshidabad." Kaliprasad was nominated to attend the meeting. Krishnachandra decided to travel to

Murshidabad only after the return of Kaliprasad. He was invited at Jagat Seth's house in Murshidabad where prominent people of the assembly gathered and Raja Krishnachandra was made the chief.

Initially, some Muslim elites of the assembly offered him several suggestions but the farsighted and able ruler Krishnachandra arrived at a decision- "In my opinion, we need to unite our armies and they must be led by capable generals. We must also unite with the English as they are powerful and their support will help us to overthrow the present Nawab and thus accomplish our mission. Moreover, I maintain a cordial relationship with the English,

hence I can attempt to persuade them to accept our proposal." This information has not been mentioned in any historical account or texts but it has been known through word of mouth among the people living in Nadia that Krishnachandra, after discussions at Murshidabad, arrived at Kalighat in Kolkata to worship Goddess Kali and also met the British. This meeting was the first step towards the freedom of the people living in oppression under Siraj at Murshidabad. The meeting resulted in the establishment of trust between the English and Mir Jafar. Jafar was provided three thousand soldiers for the Battle of Plassey against Nawab. These soldiers were sent to Nadia where they were stationed for a while and later were joined by Krishnachandra's soldiers. The name of this regiment came to be known as Lal Paltan.

On 22nd June 1757, the soldiers reached Murshidabad after crossing the river Bhagirathi and jungle Lakshabag near the river. The Bengali term for Plassey is 'Polashi' since the adjoining region where the battle was fought had several 'Polash' trees. Nawab reached with thirtyfive thousand soldiers, fifty thousand horsemen and forty cannons. However, the number did not matter to the enemy soldiers as most of them were led by Nawab's generals, Mir Jafar and Durlabhram.

On Thursday 23rd June 1757 both the forces met each other at Plassey. Amid the heavy firing of cannons, neighing of horses and brutal killing it seemed for a while that Mir Jafar did not keep up the trust of the British. They anticipated that if Jafar did not keep up the promise then they either win over Bengal or leave it having been badly defeated and crushed.

However, the anticipated outcomes

what Smith provides. A gist of his account: Clive has been praised as a soldier turned statesman. His real claim to fame is neither as a statesman nor soldier but as a dynamic leader of men. He had, says Roberts, 'a certain rough-hewn, almost elemental force

and tireless energy which made him a true pioneer of empire. He had the gift of inspiring others, the ability to improvise and the strength to persevere in all the circumstances. Mir Jafar became a party to the Seths and Hindu officers and Clive took action.

There followed the treaty by which Mir Jafar promised to confirm the Company's privileges, to pay a million pounds as compensation for the loss of Calcutta and half a million pounds to its European inhabitants. By private agreement, in addition, there were to be large consolations for the Chief Company officers. Clive left Calcutta on 22nd June: his army of eight hundred Europeans

and two thousand two hundred Indians faced the Nawab's motley and disaffected fifty thousand. Despite previous South Indian experience Clive was doubtful of the issue and showed on the eve of the battle almost the only sign of the irresolution in his life.

The battle was little more than a cannonade and was settled first by Kilpatrick's unauthorized advance and then by Siraj's headlong fight. Mir Jafar, like Stanley of Bosworth, looked on from a distance, appearing cautiously the next day to reap the expensive fruits of his circumspect treachery. On the 28th Clive installed him on the mansard at Murshidabad and four days later Siraj, captured by the new Nawab's (Mir Jafar) son Miran, was executed. A new era had begun.

(The author is a freelance writer,

E-waste management: A multidimensional, strategic perspective

Managing e-waste is a global challenge that requires collaborative efforts from governments, businesses, and individuals

¬he escalating volumes of e-waste globally and in India, stand as a testament to the rapid advancements in the electronics industry. However, this surge in ewaste, a byproduct of our digital age, necessitates a concerted effort towards responsible disposal and management. However, while addressing the e-waste challenge primarily seems like an environmental concern, it presents a significant economic opportunity.

Collaborative Effort Managing e-waste poses major challenges for governments, businesses, and individuals across the globe, yet sincere and concerted efforts from key stakeholders in this realm, including governments, manufacturers, recycling companies, consumers, and non-



governmental organizations (NGOs), and a strategic approach could help resolve the issue effectively. Governments are crucial to setting regulatory frameworks, enforcing e-waste management laws, and providing incentives for sustainable prac-

Consumers could make conscious efforts to raise their awareness levels, make informed purchasing decisions, practice responsible disposal of e-waste, and participate in recycling programs. NGOs and Environmental Groups could play a key role in advocacy, education, and raising awareness about the impacts of e-waste. They could also persuade corporations and governments to adopt more sustainable practices and

Technological Innovation

Technological innovation must be accepted as indispensable in the efforts to address e-waste challenges. Designing products that can be easily disassembled at the end of their useful lives would be a fundamental step, and could involve using standardized parts, reducing the use of hazardous materials, and creating products that are readily repairable and upgradable. Sourcing materials sustainably, including using recycled materials, can significantly reduce environmental impact. Innovation also extends to designing energyefficient products, minimizing the environmental footprint of

production processes and electronic gadget usage.

Sustainable manufacturing

strategies E-waste often contains a mix of precious materials and hazardous chemicals and presents a challenge in manufacturing. Sustainable manufacturing strategies, such as using recyclable materials and adopting circular economy principles, could help reduce ewaste. Further, proper e-waste disposal and recycling require specialised infrastructure, including recycling plants. However, such infrastructure is not universally available. Setting up this infrastructure is a collaborative effort that involves governments and private sector players.

Economic & Industrial Policy E-waste management, along with being an environmental concern, is also an economic and industrial policy issue. mental impact of products Ensuring the quality of e-

Establishing a formal e-waste management infrastructure is vital for developing a circular economy. Initiatives like the Right to Repair framework, championed by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs (MCA) in India, offer consumers costeffective repair options instead of purchasing new products. Supporting producers, brand owners, and importers in their EPR is another critical aspect. Strategic Growth

The e-waste management sector is witnessing a significant increase in awareness regarding rising e-waste volumes and the need for responsible disposal. Large brand owners now have substantial e-waste collection targets. Strategic growth, however, would necessitate considering the environ-

throughout their life cycle, and strategic planning would have to include end-of-life disposal and recycling options. **Grassroots Empowerment** Engaging with local communities, especially marginalized

ones, is essential to understanding their needs and concerns. Again, providing equal access to e-waste management services, regardless of socio-economic status, is crucial. This includes setting up collection points and recycling facilities in all neighbourhoods and offering health and safety education. Generating employment opportunities in the ewaste management sector for marginalised and informal communities can promote

Quality Assurance

waste management processes is vital for success. Certifications, rigorous training, and building competent teams are essential components. Overcoming attrition challenges and maintaining consistency are key to achieving quality assurance. Thought Leadership

In the realm of e-waste management, visionary outlooks are needed to address challenges and envision a sustainable future. Industry knowledge is essential, as facts and figures drive informed decisions. Coherence and integration are essential to convey a comprehensive message, and strategic insights help in over-coming hurdles.

(The writer is Managing Director, RLG Systems India Pvt Ltd. Views are personal)

US and Israel discuss when to scale back Gaza combat

AP RAMALLAH

The United States agrees with Israel that the fight against Hamas will take months, but officials are discussing the timetable for scaling back from high-intensity combat to more precise ways of targeting the militant group's leaders, a top US envoy said on Friday amid growing American unease about the mounting death toll

Following talks with Israeli officials, US national security adviser Jake Sullivan met with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to discuss the besieged enclave's postwar future, which, according to a senior US official, could include bringing back Palestinian security forces driven from their jobs in Gaza by Hamas in its

American and Israeli officials have been vague in public about how Gaza will be run if Israel achieves its goal of ending Hamas control - and the idea, floated as one of several,

Washington offered some detail on its vision for security arrangements in the enclave.

the pioneer

Any role for Palestinian security forces in Gaza is bound to elicit strong opposition from Israel, which seeks to maintain an open-ended security presence there and says it won't allow a postwar foothold for the Abbas-led Palestinian Abbas-led Palestinian Authority, which administers parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank but is deeply unpop-ular with Palestinians. In meetings with Israeli leaders on Thursday and Friday, Sullivan discussed a timetable

Sullivan discussed a timetable for winding down the intense combat phase of the war.

Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant told Sullivan that it would take months to destroy Hamas, but did not say whether his estimate referred to the current phase of heavy airstrikes and ground battles.

Sullivan said on Friday that "there is no contradiction between saying the fight is going to take months and also



Protesters calling for an Israeli ceasefire in Gaza block an intersection in Boston, Thursday

saying that different phases will take place at different times over those months, including the transition from the highintensity operations to more targeted operations."

He said he discussed a timeline with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israel's War Cabinet, and that

such conversations would continue during an upcoming visit by US Defence Secretary Lloyd

The offensive, triggered by the unprecedented October 7 Hamas attack on Israel, has flattened much of northern Gaza and driven 80 per cent of Gaza's population of 2.3 million from their homes. Displaced people have squeezed into shelters mainly in the south in a spiralling humanitarian crisis.

US President Joe Biden's administration has expressed unease over Israel's failure to reduce civilian casualties and its plans for the future of Gaza, but the White House continues to

offer wholehearted support for Israel with weapons shipments and diplomatic backing.

"I want them to be focused on how to save civilian lives," Biden said Thursday when asked if he wants Israel to scale down its operations by the end of the month. "Not stop going after Hamas, but be more care-

A deadly Hamas ambush on Israeli troops in Gaza City this week showed the group's resilience and called into question whether Israel can defeat it without wiping out the entire

Israel's air and ground assault over the past 10 weeks has killed more than 18,700 Palestinians, according to the Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza. Thousands more are missing and feared dead beneath the rubble.

The ministry does not differentiate between civilian and combatant deaths. Its latest count did not specify how many were women and minors, but they have consistently made up around two-thirds of the dead in previous tallies.

On Friday morning, communications services, which telecommunications provider Paltel said Thursday were cut due to ongoing fighting, still appeared to be down across Israeli airstrikes and tank

shelling continued overnight shelling continued overnight and into Friday, including in the southern city of Rafah, part of the shrinking areas of tiny, densely populated Gaza to which Palestinian civilians had been told by Israel to evacuate. At least one person was killed, according to an Associated Press journalist who saw the body arriving at a local hospital. Israelis remain strongly supportive of the war and see it as necessary to prevent a repeat of October 7, when Palestinian militants attacked communities across southern Israel, killing around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking some 240 hostage. A total of 116 soldiers have been killed in the ground offensive, which began Öctober

The Israeli military on Friday confirmed the recovery of the bodies of three hostages. Two were soldiers, both aged 19, and the third was a 28-yearold dual French-Israeli national kidnapped from a music festival.

More than 100 hostages have been freed, most during a cease-fire last month in exchange for the release of 240 Palestinian prisoners held by

Sullivan met Friday with Abbas, who lost control of Gaza when Hamas drove out his security forces in 2007. The takeover came a year after Hamas defeated Abbas' Fatah party in parliament elections and the rivals failed to form a unity government. A senior US official said that Sullivan and others have discussed the prospect of having those associated with the Palestinian Authority security forces before the Hamas takeover serve as the "nucleus" of postwar peace-

keeping in Gaza.

Denmark widens terror probe that coincides with arrests of alleged Hamas members

Copenhagen (AP): Denmark is holding two people in custody and four others are the target of a terrorism investigation, a prosecutor said Friday, in a case that coincided with an arrest in the Netherlands and several in Germany of alleged Hamas members.

Authorities in Germany said three people arrested there were suspected of preparing for attacks on Jewish institutions in Europe. Danish authorities say that one person was arrested in the Netherlands, but it wasn't clear if there were any ties to the Hamas investigation in Germany.

Denmark hasn't cited an alleged Hamas link in its investigation. The two people being held in Denmark were ordered to remain in pretrial detention until January 9. Danish media identified them as a man in his 50s and a 19-year-old woman.

Danish intelligence agency PET on Thursday announced the arrests of three people on suspicion of plotting to carry out "an act of terror." One of them, identified by Danish media as a 29-year-old man, was released, prosecutor Anders Larsson said early tody hearing at a Copenhagen court. Larsson also said that four other people were held in "pretrial custody in absentia," but he didn't say whether authorities knew their whereabouts or if an active search for them was underway. Without elaborating, he said there was "still someone at large."

None of the suspects can be identified because of a court order, and the custody hearing was held behind "double closed doors" - meaning no details were available about the case, which is shrouded in secrecy. It was not immediately clear if and how the Danish and the German arrests were connected. German prosecutors allege that the three men detained in Germany on Thursday were tasked with finding a previously set-up underground Hamas weapons cache in Europe.

2 trains collide in Beijing, 515 hurt as well as eye and head injuries,

Atotal of 515 people were taken to the hospital, including 102 with broken bones, when two metro trains callided in heavy energy in collided in heavy snow here in China's capital, authorities said The accident on Friday. occurred when slippery tracks prompted emergency braking of the leading train, and the rear train, following from a downhill section, slid and failed to brake effectively, resulting in a collision, the Beijing Municipal Commission of Transport said in a statement

The accident took place on Thursday night in the city's mountainous west on an above-ground portion of the Changping line - which serves the city's northern region, including the hi-tech hub of Xierqi and the Ming Tombs. After the accident, 515 people were sent to the hospital for examination, among whom 102 were found with fractures,



the state-run Xinhua news agency reported on Friday. It added that no fatalities were recorded in the accident.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said officials are verifying whether any foreigners were among the injured.

As of Friday, 423 people had left the hospital, 25 were under medical observation,

and 67 others were hospitalised, the Municipal Commission said, adding that an investigation team has formed to further probe into the cause of the accident and evaluate the emergency

The Chinese capital prides itself on running the world's busiest metro rail, with 27 lines carrying about 13 million

passengers. Metro trains run in gaps of about a minute during peak hours. During the past three days, the subway trains have been experiencing heavy rush as the government advised commuters to use public trans-port due to the heavy snowstorms in the city and northern China since Monday. The local government has advised the residents in the city to stay indoors while schools and outdoor entertainment facilities

The accident was a nightmare for hundreds of passengers in both trains as videos posted on social media showed people moaning due to pain caused by injuries while others attempted to exit through the mangled remains of the metro trains.One passenger told The Economic Observer newspaper that he felt a sudden jolt before the lights in the carriage went out. Some people had fallen over, and glass panes were broken, the commuter said. There were also reports of fractures, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported.
The subway authorities

said the conductor rail had lost electricity on part of the line, leading to sudden stoppages for some trains and delays for others. The cause of the power failure is not yet known. Chinese President Xi

Jinping urged all-out efforts in emergency response and ensuring a warm and safe winter for the people. He urged relevant regions and departments to step up to their responsibilities and make detailed precaution-

Beijing Communist Party Secretary Yin Li and the city's mayor, Ying Yong, inspected the accident scene and checked on the subway's operations and emergency plans. Yin also visited injured

passengers at Jishuitan Hospital, as well as the Beijing Traffic Management Bureau, to inspect transport across the

US reaches H-1B cap for fiscal year 2024

Washington (PTI): The US from October 1 to September has received a sufficient number of petitions needed to reach a cap for the much-sought-after H-1B foreign work visas for the fiscal year 2024, a federal agency has announced. The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.

countries like India and China. US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in a statement on Thursday said it has received a sufficient number of petitions needed to reach the congressionally mandated 65,000 H-1B visa regular cap and the 20,000 H-1B visa US advanced degree exemption, known as the master's cap, for fiscal year 2024. The US federal government's fiscal year runs

Technology companies depend

on it to hire tens of thousands

of employees each year from

"We will send non-selection notices to registrants through their online accounts over the

next few days," USCIS said. USCIS said it will continue to accept and process petitions that are otherwise exempt from

Petitions filed for current H-1B workers who have been counted previously against the cap and who still retain their cap number are exempt from the FY 2024 H-1B cap. The federal agency will continue to accept and process petitions filed to extend the amount of time a current H-1B worker may remain in the United States; change the terms of employment for current H-1B workers; allow current H-1B workers to change employers; and allow current H-1B workers to work concurrently in additional H-1B

Prince Harry wins GBP 1,40,000 against British tabloid publisher

declared it was a "great day for truth as well as accountability" after a London High Court judge ruled that he had been a victim of phone hacking by a British tabloid and awarded him damages of GBP Fifth in line to the British

throne as the younger son of King Charles III, Harry and his wife, American actor Meghan Markle live in the USA and has been facing continued media scrutiny over multiple issues connected with his private life. Harry, 39, had named three

Mirror Group Newspapers (MGN) newspapers – the 'Mirror', the 'Sunday Mirror' and the 'People' – in his lawsuit.

Justice Timothy Fancourt ruled that Harry was probably only hacked to a modest extent from the end of 2003 to April 2009. He said the Duke of



Sussex's case was therefore 'proved in part," with 15 of the 33 articles presented in court found to be the product of phone hacking or other unlawful information gathering.

There was a tendency for the Duke in his evidence to assume that everything published was the product of voicemail interception because phone hacking was rife within Mirror Group at the time. But phone hacking was not the only journalistic tool at the time and his

claims in relation to the other 18 articles did not stand up to careconcluded.

The court found that within MGN, principal board directors, senior executives, and editors such as Piers Morgan "clearly knew about or were involved in these illegal activities."

"Today is a great day for truth, as well as accountability. The court has ruled that unlawful and criminal activities were carried out at all three Mirror group newspaper titles on a habitual and widespread basis for more than a decade," noted Prince Harry in a statement read out by his lawyer outside the court. "This case is not just about hacking - it is about a systemic practice of unlawful and appalling behaviour, followed by cover-ups and destruction of evidence, the shocking scale of which can only be revealed through these proceedings," his statement added.

Ballistic missile fired from Yemen strikes cargo ship in Red Sea

ballistic missile fired from Arebel-held territory in Yemen struck a Liberianflagged cargo ship Friday in the Red Sea near the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, an assault that apparently sought to target a vessel struck earlier, a U.S. defense official said. The official identified the vessel as the MSC Palatium III and said it remained unclear if anyone was hurt. The missile apparently was aimed at the Al Jasrah, which was set on fire by a projectile earlier Friday, the official said. Another missile launched in the salvo missed both ships.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence matters. MSC, the vessel's operator, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen did not immediately acknowledge

a campaign by the Houthi rebels, who have claimed responsibility for a series of missile assaults in recent days that just missed shipping in the Red Sea and its strategic Bab el-Mandeb Strait. The attacks are a response

the Israel-Hamas war and the pounding air-and-ground offensive targeting the Gaza Strip, though the links to the ships targeted in the rebel assaults has grown more tenuous — or nonexistent — as the attacks continue. The private intelligence

firm Ambrey also confirmed the earlier attack on the Al

"The projectile reportedly hit the port side of the vessel and one container fell overboard due to the impact," Ambrey said. "The projectile caused a fire on deck' which

United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, which monitors Mideast shipping lanes, also acknowledged the first attack, warning vessels to exercise caution. The UKMTO said there had been no reported casualties from the attack on

the Al Jasrah. The Al Jasrah is operated y German-based shipper Hapag-Lloyd, which said no crew member had been hurt in the attack.

"Hapag-Lloyd will take additional measures to secure the safety of our crews," the company said, without elabo-

It wasn't clear if the attack involved a drone or a missile. Ambrey noted that Hapag-Llovd "is known to have offices in the Israeli ports of Ashdod,

On Thursday, the Houthis

fired a ballistic missile that ing through the strait.

The day before that, two missiles fired from Houthiheld territory missed a commercial tanker loaded with Indian-manufactured jet fuel near the key Bab el-Mandeb Strait. Also near the strait, a missile fired by Houthis on Monday night slammed into a Norwegian-flagged tanker in the Red Sea.

Global shipping has increasingly been targeted as the Israel-Hamas war threatens to become a wider regional conflict — even during a brief pause in fighting during which Hamas exchanged hostages for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel. The collapse of the truce and the resumption of a punishing Israeli ground offensive and airstrikes on Gaza have raised the risk of more sea attacks.

said Thursday on the sidelines

of a news conference in Beijing

that China had acted as a medi-

ator for a cease-fire between the

maximum restraint, actively

ease the situation on the ground,

promptly manage sporadic con-

frontation events and together

realize the soft landing of the sit-

uation in northern Myanmar."

UK police overjoyed after British teen missing for six years found

AP ■ LONDON

UK police said on Friday that they are "relieved and overjoyed" to learn that a teenager found walking along a road in southwestern France is a British boy who went missing six years ago. Greater Manchester Police said the teen claiming to be Alex Batty had held a video call with his grandmother, Susan

Caruana. "Whilst she is content that this is indeed Alex, we have further checks to do when he returns to the United Kingdom," Assistant Chief Constable Chris Sykes said.

He said police were "still establishing the full circumstances around his disappearance and where he has been all these years." Our main priority now is to see Alex returned home to his family in the UK



Batty, now 17, went on vacation to Spain in 2017 with his mother and grandfather, who are not his legal guardians, and failed to return to his family in the Manchester area. A delivery driver spotted the adolescent looking lost and haggard by the side of a road near

Toulouse on Wednesday night

and drove him to a police sta-The driver, Fabien Accidini,

said the teenager told him he had been "kidnapped" and was living in a "spiritual community" in Spain before moving to France about two years ago. Accidini told Sky News the teen told him he had decided to leave because "he just wanted to live a normal life, to see his grandmother again and to have a normal future — that's the word that he used."

Ohio clinics want abortion ban to strike down permanently briefly went into effect when the

Ohio (US) (AP): Abortion clinics in Ohio are pushing for a court to strike down abortion restrictions now that voters have enshrined abortion rights into the state Constitution, arguing that even the state's Republican attorney general says the amendment invalidates the ban.

The push comes on the heels of an amendment that Ohio voters approved last month that ensures access to abortion and other reproductive health care. It took effect last week.

A law signed by Republican Gov. Mike DeWine in April 2019 prohibited most abortions after the first detectable "fetal heartbeat." Cardiac activity can be detected as early as six weeks into pregnancy, before many women know they are pregnant The law had been blocked

through a federal legal challenge,

landmark 1973 Roe v. Wade decision was overturned, and then was again put on hold in county court. Republican Attorney

General Dave Yost appealed that ruling to the state Supreme Court, which is reviewing the case, but he declined to take up the question of whether abortion is legal under the state constitu-That was left to be litigated

at the county level. In response to a request for

comment, Yost's office referred to a statement from Dec. 7 on where things stand, writing, "the state is prepared to acknowledge the will of the people on the issue, but also to carefully review each part of the law for an orderly resolution of

Fighting continues in Myanmar despite China saying it arranged cease-fire spokesperson Mao Ning had

Haifa and Tel Aviv."

AP BANGKOK

 $R^{
m eports}$ from Myanmar said there was continuing fighting Friday in the northeast of the country between the military government and an alliance of ethnic minority armed groups, even after China announced that the two sides had reached agreement on a cease-fire at meetings it had brokered.

Clashes have been raging in the northern part of Myanmar's Shan state since October 27, when the Arakan Army, the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, branding themselves the Three Brotherhood Alliance, launched a coordinated offensive. MeKong News, an online news site reporting from the Shan state, said on its Facebook page that the army was carrying out

air strikes and firing heavy

area around 105-Mile Trade Zone in Muse, a major city that is a border crossing point with The report said that accord-

ing to town residents, the Three Brotherhood Alliance forces had occupied a strategic hill near the trade zone on Thursday evening after heavy fighting. There were similar reports

in other Myanmar media, including Khit Thit news, but no way to independently confirm them

Maj Gen Zaw Min Tun, spokesperson of the ruling military council, was quoted in the state-run Myanma Alinn newspaper on Friday as saying that there was fighting in the areas between Namhkam township and the 105-Mile Trade Zone in Muse, about 30 kilometers (19 miles) to its east.

army and the alliance, and that there had been a notable deescalation of fighting in the area near the border with China. She said China has provided support and facilitation for dialogue and the meetings had "reached agreement on a number of arrangements, including the temporary cease-fire and maintaining the momentum of dialogue." "China hopes that relevant parties in Myanmar can speed up efforts to implement what has been agreed, exercise

Mao Ning said.

Chinese Foreign Ministry

EU membership boost for Ukraine Allies unaware of Kremlim but no new European assistance

The European Union failed to agree Thursday on a 50 billion-euro (USD 54 billion) package in financial aid that Ukraine desperately needs to stay afloat, even as the bloc decided to open accession negotiations with the war-torn country. The aid was vetoed by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, delivering another tough blow to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy after he failed this week to persuade US lawmakers to approve an additional USD 61 billion for Ukraine, mainly to buy weapons from the US.

The start of accession talks was a momentous moment and stunning reversal for a country at war that had struggled to find the backing for its membership aspirations and long faced obstinate opposition from Orban. Hungary's leader decided not to veto the accession talks, but then blocked the

aid package.
"I can inform you that 26 leaders agreed on the (budget negotiation)," European Council President Charles Michel said. "I should be very precise. One leader, Sweden, needs to consult its parliament, which is in line with the usual procedure for this country, and one leader couldn't agree." The decisions required unanimity among the EU's members

Still, Michel, who was chairing the Brussels summit, called the start of accession talks "a clear signal of hope for their people and our continent."

Although the process between opening negotiations and Ukraine finally becoming a member could take many years, Zelenskyy welcomed the agreement as "a victory for Ukraine. A victory for all of

Europe."

"History is made by those who don't get tired of fighting for freedom," Zelenskyy said. The financial package could not be endorsed after Orban vetoed both the extra money and a review of the EU budget. Ukraine is badly counting on the funds to help its damaged economy survive in the coming year. Michel said leaders would reconvene in January in an effort to break the deadlock.



European Council President Charles Michel addresses the media during EU summit in Brussels on Friday, December 15, 2023. The European Union decided on Thursday to open accession negotiations with Ukraine, a momentous moment and stunning reversal for a country at war that had struggled to find the backing for its membership aspirations and long faced obstinate opposition from Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban

Orban had warned before the summit that forcing a decision on the Ukraine issues could destroy EU unity. Decisions on enlarging the EU and on a review of its long-term budget, which contains the 50 billion euros (USD 54.1 billion) in aid for the government in Kviv, must be unanimous among all 27 member countries. Orban had also threatened to veto the start of accession talks but ultimately backpedaled.

Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo called the opening of membership discussions a black eye for Russian President Vladimir Putin. "It is a very clear message to Moscow. Us Europeans, we don't let go of Ukraine," he said.

Orban said that his opposition remained steadfast, but that he decided not to use his veto because the 26 other nations were arguing so strongly in favor. Under EU rules, an abstention does not prevent a decision from being adopted.

An EU official, who insisted on not being quoted by name because the summit negotiations were private, said Orban was "momentarily absent from the room in a preagreed and constructive manner" when the decision was made. Orban said he stepped aside since all of his counterparts were committed to putting Ukraine on the EU membership path, though their position did not change his

"Hungary's perspective is clear: Ukraine is not ready for us to begin negotiations on its EU membership. It's a completely illogical, irrational and improper decision" he said. Others lauded Orban's ges-

ture. They had been preparing for the summit spilling over into an extra day Saturday. "Certainly quicker than any of us expected," Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar said. "In fairness to Prime

Minister Orban, he made his case, made it very strongly. He disagrees with this decision and he's not changing his opinion in that sense, but essentially decided not to use the veto "I respect the fact that he he didn't do that, because it

would have put us in a very difficult position as a European Union," the Irish leader added. Belgium's De Croo had a slightly different take, saying he

thought Orban "didn't use his veto because he realized that it would be indefensible." At the same time as Ukraine, the EU leaders also

decided to open membership negotiations with Ukraine's neighbor Moldova. In the

announcement came totally unexpectedly after Orban did not block the move by his colleagues. A beaming Michel came down in the summit media room unscheduled and

United States, national securi-

ty adviser Jake Sullivan wel-

comed "the EU's historic deci-

sion to open accession negoti-

ations with Ukraine and

Moldova, a crucial step toward

fulfilling their Euro-Atlantic

with cautious optimism. "We

are Europe. Ukraine is Europe.

the center of Europe. I want us

to be given the status of a proud member of Europe," said Olha

Paradovska, a 70-year-old Kyiv resident. Ivan Olezhko, 19,

said the decision to start acces-

sion talks was long overdue. "If

everything goes well, I will be

happy, but we don't know what

the summit to take at least until

late Friday before any sort of

breakthrough might be

clinched, so the fateful

EU leaders had expected

will happen next," he said.

In Kyiv, the news was met

aspirations."

said "This is a historic moment, and it shows the credibility of the European Union. The strength of the European Union. The decision is made." He said the negotiations would open before a report will

be made to the leaders in

foe Navalny whereabouts

The whereabouts of impris-I oned Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny remained unknown on Friday, with penitentiary officials reporting that earlier this month he was moved from the region where he was serving time, but still not disclosing where he is, the politician's allies said. Navalny's lawyers haven't seen him since Dec. 6, his spokesperson Kira Yarmysh said on X, formerly known as

Navalny has been serving a 19-year term on charges of extremism in a maximumsecurity prison, Penal Colony No. 6, in the town of Melekhovo in the Vladimir region, about 230 kilometers (140 miles) east of Moscow. He was due to be transferred to a "special security" penal colony, a facility with the highest security level in the Russian peni-

are notorious for taking a long time, sometimes weeks, during which there's no access to prisoners and information about their whereabouts is limited or unavailable. Navalny could be transferred to one of a number of such penal colonies across Russia.

Navalny's lawyer was informed at a court hearing Friday that his client "left the Vladimir region" on Dec. 11, Yarmysh said in a tweet. 'Where exactly (he was moved to) — unclear," she wrote. Vyacheslav Gimadi, head

of the legal department at Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation, said on X that the information came from a penitentiary service statement that as read out in court. Navalny, 47, has been

behind bars since January 2021. As President Vladimir Putin's fiercest foe, he campaigned against official corruption and organized major anti-Kremlin

his return to Moscow from Germany, where he recuperated from nerve agent poisoning that he blamed on the Kremlin. Navalny has since been

handed three prison terms and spent months in isolation in the penal colony in the Vladimir region for alleged minor infractions. He has rejected all charges against him as politically motivated

His allies sounded the alarm last week, saying that Navalny's lawyers were not let into the penal colony to see him, letters to the politician were not being delivered and he was not appearing at scheduled court hearings via video link. Yarmysh said last Friday

that those developments were concerning given that Navalny recently fell ill and apparently fainted "out of hunger." She said he is being "deprived of food, kept in a cell without ventilation and has been offered min-

Gunmen kill 11 in attack on southeast Iran police stn

Dubai (AP): Suspected members of a separatist group killed 11 people and injured several others in a nighttime attack on a police station in southeastern Iran, state TV said Friday.

The deputy governor of Sistan and Baluchistan province, Ali Reza Marhemati, said senior police officers and soldiers were killed in the 2 am attack in Rask town, about 1,400 kilometers (875 miles) southwest of Tehran. He said police killed several of the attackers in a shootout.

State TV blamed the attack on Jaish al-Adl, a separatist group. In 2019, Jaish al-Adl claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing on a bus that killed 27 members of Iran's Revolutionary Guard force. In recent months, militants and small separatist groups in the predominantly Sunni region have attacked police stations as part of a low-level insurgency against the government.

Pak court notice to EC on Imran plea challenging disqualification

The Lahore High Court on Friday issued notice to Pakistan's top election body on former prime minister Imran Khan's plea challenging his fiveyear disqualification in the Toshakhana corruption case which would prevent him from contesting general elections in

A five-member bench also said it would first decide on the jurisdiction of the petition before it was formally heard but in the absence of the lawyer representing the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), adjourned the hearing not before issuing a notice to the

The ECP had on August 8 disqualified Khan, 71, currently lodged in Adiala Jail at Rawalpindi, following his conviction in the Toshakhana corruption case for concealing details of the gifts he received during his tenure as the prime minister. Khan wants his peti-tion to be heard on an urgent

general elections, the date for which has been announced as February 8 by the ECP.

Earlier, a trial court at Islamabad had found him guilty of "corrupt practices by hiding the benefits he accrued from the national exchequer willfully and intentionally."

On August 29, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) had suspended Khan's sentence in the case. "In a petition filed earlier this month, the former prime minister said the ECP, despite his clear explanations for the Toshakhana gifts, illegally de-seated him as a Member of the National Assembly (MNA) from Mianwali's NA-95 constituency and directed that a complaint be filed against him under the Elections Act 2017," Dawn.com reported.

Khan was elected to the National Assembly from Mianwali in Punjab province in 2018. He had also asked the court to set aside his disqualification for being unlawful so that he could contest the upcoming general elections.

Last week, a senior judge of the high court had referred the petition to the larger bench as it already seized an identical matter relating to the ECP proceedings against the former chairman of the PTI, the report said. Barrister Ali Zafar appeared in the court on behalf of Khan when the bench headed by Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan and comprising Justice Shams Mahmood Mirza, Justice Shahid Karim, Justice Shehram Sarwar Chaudhry and Justice Jawad Hassan, took up the plea.

Justice Bilal noted that the bench would first decide on the jurisdiction of the petition before it was formally heard. He inquired about the lawyer representing the electoral body and was later told that the ECP counsel was on leave. The judge then said that it would be inappropriate to hear the case in the absence of the lawyer, the newspaper said. At one point, highlighting the urgency of the peti-tion, Barrister Zafar stated that the ECP had given a date of

February 8 for the general elections, to which Justice Mirza said, "Your client was elected from Mianwali. How can the Islamabad High Court hear this case then? Present your arguments on this at the next

Last week, the IHC rejected Imran's application to withdraw his appeal against disqualification in the Toshakhana reference for him to pursue the matter in the LHC. The court subsequently issued notices to the ECP and adjourned the hearing. The bench also passed similar orders on a separate petition, filed by Khan, challenging the cancellation of the PTI's intra-party polls held last year. The plea had asked the LHC to declare that the intra-party elections conducted on June 10, 2022, were valid by the party's constitution.

Speaking to the media outside the LHC, Barrister Zafar said he hoped the issue would be resolved soon so that Khan could also take part in the upcoming elections.

5 killed in attack on police HQ, checkpost in Pakistan

PTI PESHAWAF

t least five law enforcement A officials were killed in mil itant attacks on a regional police headquarters and a checkpost in the restive northwest Pakistan on Friday that also killed four rebels, in an uptick in violence against security forces in the country.

The attacks come three days after terrorists killed 23 soldiers in the same region in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The first attack occurred at the Police Lines in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Tank district. Three policemen were killed and three others injured in the attack. Four militants were also killed, authorities said. A terrorist blew himself up at the main entrance of the police office and residence block and the others stormed in. The attack was claimed by a new militant group, Ansarul Jihad. In another attack, militants attacked the joint police and security forces check post in Nalla Bara tehsil in the Khyber tribal district in which two troops of the Frontier Constabulary were killed. Six people were also injured in the

Pak SC notice to ex-ISI DG in sacking of HC judge in 2018

PTI ISLAMABAD

_Tearing a case filed by a Hearing a case men sacked high court judge about his dismissal from service in 2018, Pakistan's Supreme Court on Friday issued a notice to former ISI chief Lt Gen Faiz Hameed to explain his position but spared ex-Army chief General Qamar Iaved Bajwa.

Former Islamabad High Court (IHC) judge Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui was sacked by President Årif Alvi in 2018 after a high-level constitutional body recommended his removal for making a scathing speech against the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Pakistan's top spy agency. While addressing the Rawalpindi District Bar Association on July 21, 2018, Siddiqui alleged that the ISI was manipulating judicial proceedings to constitute a panel of judges to get favourable decisions. A five-member larger bench of the court led by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa while hearing the case issued notice to Hameed and three others but refused to notify Bajwa with observation that he had prime facie nothing to do with the case. Siddiqui on Thursday submit-

ted a plea to the court to make Bajwa, Hameed, and four others a party to the case. The others include former brigadiers Irfan Ramay and Faisal Marwat, former IHC chief justice Anwar Kasi and former IHC registrar Arbab Arif. The court also refused to issue notices to Ramay, Kasi, and Arif, saying that they were not related to the case. Later, the court adjourned the hearing without fixing a date for the

next hearing.

When the five-member bench of the court, led by Chief Justice Isa, took up Siddiqui's case for hearing on Thursday, he had observed that Siddiqui should make those persons as respondents to the case who he claimed approached him to influence a favourable outcome in a case.

Lt Gen Hameed was the Director General of the ISI between 2019 and 2021 and was the head of the ISI's Counter Intelligence Wing from January 2017 to April 2019 when Siddiqui was sacked in 2018. Siddiqui made headlines in 2018 due to his controversial speech targeting the ISI. However, he soon found himself in hot waters and was removed in the same year by the Supreme Judicial

Council following complaints that he was guilty of miscon-

deed vide Registration No. 11290, dated-14.12.023 at Sr-Noida-I, CBN, U.P. executed by Sh. Jaswant Singh S/o Sh. Sumera & this above-hentioned Property is going to be Mortgage With Fed Bank Financial Services Limited. if any Person/Bank/Financial Institution having any Zlaim/Right, Lien, any objection whatsoever in egard to above property, should notified to the undersigned along with documentary evidence under address through registered A/D within O7 days from the date of publication of this notice ailing which any claim, lien or objection shall be leemed to have been walved. Vishal Mehan,

E-713, Karkardooma Court, Delhi -110092

4, Vol. No. 819, on pages 55-70, date 15.11.2019, SRO-V, Ghaziabad. Purchased I Mr. Ajab Singh same to be finance & mortgage I Ummeed Housing Finance Pvt. Ltd. To comply the requirements of BANKNDEC, we give this publication that if any Person having any type of claim to the publishing of the properties of the second of the properties. right/fille/interest/creating mortgage over the sa property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within days from today, failing which it shall be presume that the said property is free from all type Encumbrances, lien etc. Encumbrances, lien etc. Lucem Legal LLP B-93B, Second Floor, Opp. SBI Bank, Sector 2 Noida, UP-201301, Contact # 0120-4269379

Registered Office Address: Unit No.601, 6th Floor Piramal Amiti Building, Piramal Agastya

PUBLIC NOTICE

My Client Mr. Sandeep S/o Sh. Jaswant Singh is the owner of a residential two storey house of area Measuring 95 Sq. Yds. Situated in the old Abadi of Khasra No.-67, Village-Nagala Charandas, Pargana & Tehsil- Dadri, District-Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. vide registered gift deed vide Registration No. 11290, dated-14,12,2023 at Sr. Noida-1, GBN. U.P. excured by 4. Vol. No. 819, on pages 55-70, dated.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas M/s Signature Sattva Infra Technology Pvt. Ltd. has been granted Letter of Intent Memo No. LC-4484/Asstt/(RK)/2023/35215 dated 19-10-2023 issued by the o/o Director General, Deptt. of Town & Country Planning, Haryana, for setting up of a Residential Group Housing Colony under Clause 10.4 of the TOD Policy dated 09.02.2016 on land admeasuring 2.22 Acres consisting of 33 plots marked Pocket "D", forming part of 4.78 acres of land falling in license No. 99 of 2008 dated 14-05-2008 granted for an area measuring 13.716 acres in village Tikri Tehsil & Distt. Gurugram in Sector 48, GMUC. This land measuring 4.78 acres has been acquired by the company in open auction held by SICOM under SARFAESI ACT on account of default in loan repayments by the

And whereas the o/o Director, Town & Country Planning, Haryana, while granting the said LOI, has directed the company vide condition no. 9 of the said LOI, to invite objections/suggestions vide its Policy Memo no. Misc-2295/2021 /1775 dated 25-01-2021, over a period of atleast 30 days from the existing allottees of license No. 99 of 2008 dated 14-05-2008.

Objections/suggestions, if any, may be filed in the o/o Senior Town Planner, Deptt. Of Town & Country Planning, Haryana, Sector 14, Gurugram within 30 days from the issue of this notice failing which it shall be assumed that there are no objections to the proposed development.

> **Authorized Signatory** Signature Sattva Infra Technology Pvt. Ltd.



First Floor, Directorate of Panchayatiraj, Opp. IT Park, Sahastradhara Road, Dehradun Ref. No. 1825/I1-02(xix)-2/ITCO/URRDA/23 Dated: 14.12.2023

PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY)

e-Procurement Notice-22/2023-24 The Chief Engineer, URRDA on behalf of Governor of Uttarakhand invite: the item rate bids in electronic tendering system for construction of works

under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in the Districts of Pauri for 01 number of Packages with estimated cost totaling to Rs. 7.04 Crore including their maintenance for five years form the eligible contractor registered with PWD/ CPWD or equivalent*.

Date of release of Invitation for Bids through e-procurement: 16.12.2023. Availability of Bid Documents and mode of submission: The bid documents are available online and should be submitted online in www.pmgsytendersuk.gov.in. The bidder would be required to registe in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of the bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) form one of the authorized Certifying Authorities

The bidders are required to submit original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document as per provisions of Clause .4 B (ii) of ITB with CONCERNED CIRCLE OFFICES, mentioned in SBD/ MBD, only up to or before the time and date of the submission of the Bids (for World Bank funded works) and on a date not later than three working days after the opening of technical qualification part of the bid (for Regular PMGSY Works), either by registered post or by hand, failing which the bids shall be declared non-responsive No physical documents will be accepted after the closing date and time o submission of bids.

Last Date/ Time for receipt of bids through e-procurement: 29.12.2023 01:00 PM.

For further details please log on to www.pmgsytendersuk.gov.in

URRDA, Dehradun *Non Registered bidders may submit bids, however, the successfu

bidders must get registered in appropriate class with appropriate authorities before signing the contract. Note: For e-Procurement for any sort of queries 0135-2608125 number may be contacted 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM.

Janet Yellen says Trump administration's China policies left US more vulnerable Washington (AP): Treasury also neglecting relationships

Secretary Janet Yellen said former President Donald Trump's policies toward China left America "more vulnerable and more isolated" in the global economy, a rare jab by her at the front-runner for the Republican presidential nomination. Yellen, at a US-China Business Council event Thursday night, said the Trump administration "failed to make investments at home in critical areas like infrastructure and advanced technology, while

with our partners and allies that had been forged and strengthened over decades." Her comments come as the

US rebuilds its relationship with the Asian superpower, including a November meeting between US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping in San Francisco. The two nations agreed to curb the production of illicit fentanyl, a deadly component of drugs sold in the United States, and agreed to resume mil-

itary-to-military communications. "Proceeding purposefully and carefully to responsibly manage our economic relationship" is the Biden administration approach on China, she said.

Yellen, who rarely comments on the previous administration's approach on trade, said Trump-era policies on China "left America more vulnerable and more isolated in a competitive global economy that demands that nations take exactly the opposite approach."

duct. He challenged his removal from office, but the hearing was delayed. The case was last taken up for hearing

@ Piramal

(LC No. M0047350 of Noida Branch)

Date: 16-12-2023

Munindra Munindra (Borrower) Pintoo Yadav

(Co Borrower 1) Dhamendra Nath Yadav

Corporate Park, Kamani Junction, Opp Fire Station, LBS Marg, Kurla (West), Mumbai- 400 070. CIN: L65910MH1984PLC032639, Webside:www.piramalfinance.com Branch Address : Dhiraj Baug, Building "A" Ground & 1st Floor, Beside Axis Bank, Opp. **DEMAND NOTICE**

Monalisa Building, Agra Road, Hari Niwas Circle, Naupada, Thane (West) - 400 602

Under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement Of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with

Rule 3 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. The undersigned is the Authorised Officer of Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited (PCHFL) [formerly known as Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd.(DHFL)] under Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act). In exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Authorised Officer has issued Demand Notices under Section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the following Borrower(s) (the "said Borrower(s)"), to repay the amounts mentioned in the respective Demand Notice(s) issued to them that are also given below. In connection with above, notice is hereby given, once again, to the said Borrower(s) to pay to PCHFL, within 60 days from the publication of this Notice, the amounts indicated herein below, together with further interest as detailed in the said Demand Notice(s), from the date(s) mentioned below till the date of payment and/or realization payable under the loan agreement read with other documents/writings, if any, executed by the said Borrower(s). As security for due repayment of the loan, the following assets have been mortgaged to PCHFL by the said Borrower(s) respectively. **Demand Notice** Name of the Borrower(s)/ Date and Amount with NPA date Property No. 842 Old No. B-7/1 Gali No 7 1 B-Block Shahdara Kabir Nagar Village Babarpur

Branch) Jasad Khan (Borrower) Shahnaz Begum (Co Borrower 1)	Three Thousand Eight Hundred Eighty Eight Only) NPA (03-08-2023)	Block Shahdara Kabir Nagar Village Babarpur 110094
(LC No. M0126788 of Delhi Branch) Jasad Khan (Borrower) Shahnaz Begum (Co Borrower 1)	08-11-2023 /₹ 2414925 /-(₹ Twenty Four lakh Fourteen Thousand Nine Hundred Twenty Five Only) NPA (03-08-2023)	Property No. 842 Old No. B-7/1 Gali No 7 1 B- Block Shahdara Kabir Nagar Village Babarpur 110094
(LC No. M0202823 of Noida - Sector 2 Branch) Charan Singh (Borrower) Sonia Singh (Co Borrower 1)	08-11-2023 /₹ 1064911 /-(₹ Ten lakh Sixty Four Thousand Nine Hundred Eleven Only) NPA (08-08-2023)	Prop No. 197, Khasra No. 642, Gali Ganga Ram, Bara Thakur Dwara, Teliwara, Shahdara, Delhi 110032
(LC No. M0127741 of Delhi Branch) Subhash Nayak (Borrower) Shantilata Nayak (Co Borrower 1)	08-11-2023 /₹ 1503632 /-(₹ Fifteen lakh Three Thousand Six Hundred Thirty Two Only) NPA (03-08-2023)	Khasra No 165, Min Ambedkar Village Elaichipur Pargana Loni Ghaziabad Elaychipur Village Elaichipur Uttar Pradesh 201102
(LC No. M0234981 of Delhi Branch) Hitesh Kumar(Borrower) Pooja (Co Borrower 1)	08-11-2023 /₹ 3839972 /-(₹ Thirty Eight lakh Thirty Nine Thousand Nine Hundred Seventy Two Only) NPA (03-09-2023)	Property No 82, Galli No 2 Harijan Basti Village Neb Sarai Tehsil Hauz Khas Delhi 110030
(LC No. M0074914 of Delhi Branch) Sapna Sapna (Borrower) Jagpal Verma (Co Borrower 1)	08-11-2023 /₹ 1147796 /-(₹ Eleven lakh Forty Seven Thousand Seven Hundred Ninety Six Only) NPA (04-07-2023)	Plot No.5 Ground Floor Middle Back Side Middle Portion Slf Ved Vihar Jindal Road Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh 201102
(LC No. M0042532 of Delhi Branch) Rajender Kumar (Borrower) Ruby R (Co Borrower 1)	08-11-2023 /₹ 1200611 /-(₹ Twelve lakh Six Hundred Eleven Only) NPA (04-07-2023)	Plot No. D-8/9 Area, 264 Sqmtr 1:Dlf, Ankur Vihar Loni Ghaziabad, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh 201102
(LC No. M0217463 of Delhi - Pitampura Branch) Manish Seth (Borrower) Rashmi Seth (Co Borrower 1)	08-11-2023 /₹ 492777 /-(₹ Four lakh Ninety Two Thousand Seven Hundred Seventy Seven Only) NPA (03-08-2023)	Prop No- A-8/15A, Flat Pvt. No-201 Sf Without Roof Front Rhs Flat Block-A-8, Rana Pratap Bagh 110007
(LC No. M0149511 of Delhi Branch) Ajit Yadav (Borrower) Sujit Yadav (Co Borrower 1)	08-11-2023 /₹ 2003529 /-{₹ Twenty lakh Three Thousand Five Hundred Twenty Nine Only) NPA (03-08-2023)	Municipal No. D-2763 Old No. 26 Entire Second Floor Lalita Block Lalita Block, Shastri Nagar Delhi 110052
(LC No. PHLPDEL04000492 of Delhi Branch) Vinnu Tyagi (Borrower) Umesh Tyagi (Co Borrower 1)	08-11-2023 /₹ 7384466 /-(₹ Seventy Three lakh Eighty Four Thousand Four Hundred Sixty Six Only) NPA (03-09-2023)	Property No 294 Khasra No 107 1 Abadi Of Deh Of Old Lal Dora New Delhi Tyagi Chopal New Delhi Village Hastsal Delhi 110059
(LC No. M0034488 of Delhi Branch) Amit Shukla (Borrower) Pushpa Pushpa (Co Borrower 1)	08-11-2023 /₹ 3919430 /-(₹ Thirty Nine lakh Nineteen Thousand Four Hundred Thirty Only) NPA (03-08-2023)	Bearing Pvt. No. 8-B & 9B 1St 2Nd 3Rd Floor Portion With Roof Rights Khasra No. 23/25/2 Meer Singh Market Village Burari 110084
(LC No. M0033664 of Delhi Branch) Sunil Sunil (Borrower) Suman Suman (Co Borrower 1)	08-11-2023 /₹ 1272496 /-(₹ Twelve lakh Seventy Two Thousand Four Hundred Ninety Six Only) NPA (03-08-2023)	Plot No.B-49 Khasra No.228 Ugf 3 Ward No 101/524 Rail Vihar Extn. Village Sadullabad, Pargana-Loni, Tehsil-Loni,Dist Ghaziabad Uttar Parder 201102

(LC No. BLSA00005D37 of Rewari - Brass Market | 08-11-2023 /₹ 793888 /-(₹ Seven lakh Ninety

08-11-2023 /₹ 1894775 /-(₹ Eighteen lakh Ninety Four Thousand Seven Hundred

t No B-1212 12Th Floor La Casa Ghaziabad Part Of Ansal Apisushant Aquapolis Seventy Five Only) NPA (03-06-2023) Doondhaherra, Opp-Crossing Republik, Nh-24 Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh 201016 If the said Borrowers shall fail to make payment to PCHFL as aforesaid, PCHFL shall proceed against the above secured assets under Section 13(4) of the Act and the applicable Rules, entirely at the risks of the said Bor ences. The said Borrowers are pr under the Act from transferring the aforesaid assets, whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise without the prior written consent of PCHFL. Any person who contravenes or abets contravention of the provisions of the said Act or Rules made there under, shall be liable for imprisonment and/or penalty as provided under the Act.

Sd/- (Authorised Officer)
Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited

Markets fire on all cylinders

Previous day close 21,182.70

Sensex breaches 71K mark; Nifty surges to fresh record

PTI MUMBAI

nchmark equity indices Burged more than 1 per cent to hit their new alltime highs on Friday, with the Sensex breaching the 71,000 mark, as domestic macroeconomic data and easing concerns over the US economic growth bolstered market sentiment.

Besides, heavy buying in IT, tech and metal counters amid sustained buying by foreign investors helped the domestic equities, traders said.

Rising for the third day running, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 969.55 points or 1.37 per cent to settle at its record closing high of 71,483.75. During the day, it surged 1,091.56 points or 1.54 per cent to 71,605.76, its all-time intra-day high level.

As many as 1,969 stocks advanced, while 1,801 declined and 118 remained unchanged. The Nifty climbed 273.95 points or 1.29 per cent to settle at its



new closing high of 21,456.65. During the day, it zoomed 309.6 points or 1.46 per cent to hit its record intra-day peak of 21,492.30. "The Nifty's upward momentum persists with the bulls maintaining control in the market. Achieving a new alltime high, the index has marked its seventh consecutive weekly gain," said Rupak De, Senior Technical Analyst, LKP Securities. On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,658.15 points or 2.37 per cent, while the Nifty climbed 487.25 points or 2.32 per cent. "The buoyancy continued in the

market as investors were expecting the clouds over US economic growth to recede by H2 CY24 $\,$ and that the economy would achieve a soft landing aided by normalisation in monetary pol icy. "The IT index outperformed on expectations of a rise in demand in the US economy," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial

A series of positive news -September quarter GDP growth rate of 7.6 per cent, manufacturing PMI rising to 56, Brent crude declining to USD 76 per barrel and FPIs turning buyers -- have helped markets reach record

Change (+273.95

peaks, analysts said. The US Federal Reserve keep ing its key interest rate unchanged and signalling rate cuts next year, along with continuous foreign fund inflows into the equity markets, have also fuelled the rally in stocks. HCL Technologies was the biggest gainer in the Sensex pack, rising 5.58 per cent, fol-lowed by Tata Consultancy Services and Infosys, State Bank of India, Tech Mahindra, Tata

Steel, NTPC and Wipro. In contrast, Nestle, Bĥarti Airtel, Maruti and ITC were among the In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.58 per cent and the midcap index dipped 0.07 per cent.

TOP GAINERS

542 HCL Tech

5.28 TCS

5.13 Infosys

HDFC Life

Bharti Airtel

SBI Life Insu

-0.94 - Bajaj Auto

Among the indices, IT jumped 4.41 per cent, teck rallied 3.64 per cent, metal (1.78 per cent), oil & gas (1.43 per cent), commodities (1.38 per cent), energy (1.15 per cent) and bankex (0.79 per cent). FMCG, auto, realty and services were the laggards. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong settled with gains, while Shanghai ended lower. European markets were trading on a mixed note. The US markets ended higher on Thursday.

on the back of a dovish stance by the US Federal Reserve, which has signalled around three rate cuts in the coming years, Devarsh Vakil, Deputy Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities. "Cash market volumes stood sharply higher (second highest ever) as compared to recent averages. PSU bank stocks extended gains for the eleventh consecutive trading session. The combined market value of all BSE-listed companies surged by Rs 2.76 lakh crore on Friday, marking an overall increase of Rs 8.55 lakh crore for the week, reaching Rs 357.78 lakh crore," he said. India's trade deficit narrowed in

November from a record high the previous month, as imports fell after demand slowed following the festive season, Vakil added. The rupee jumped by 27 paise to close at 83.03 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday following unabated foreign fund inflows and a record-breaking rally in domestic stocks. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) continued their buying momentum as they bought equities worth Rs 3,570.07 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.

India challenges WTO panel ruling in favour of EU on ICT import duties

India has appealed against a Iruling of the World Trade Organization's (WTO) trade dispute settlement panel in a case filed by the European Union against New Delhi's import duties on nine information and technology products. India's move came after both regions were not able to arrive at a mutually agreeable solution (MAS).

India and the EU have negotiated to arrive at a MAS for the past seven months, but the EU has now filed for adoption of panel report on December 7 and therefore, India has appealed against it on December 8 in the WTO," Additional Secretary in the commerce ministry Peeyush

Kumar told reporters here. As part of the MAS, the EU was seeking customs duty concessions on certain goods, which was not acceptable to India as it violates WTO rules.

These concessions can only be given in a free trade agreement, Kumar said.

In September, the two regions had asked WTO's dispute settlement body not to adopt a rul-ing against New Delhi's import duties on certain ICT products like mobile phones and compo-nents, base stations, integrated circuits and optical instruments till December 18, as both sides were engaged in bilateral talks to resolve the matter.

The panel in April had ruled that import duties imposed by India on certain information and technology (ICT) products violate global trading norms. "India notified its decision to appeal the panel report in the case brought by the European Union (EU) in 'India Tariff Treatment on Certain Goods'. The appeal was circulated to

WTO members on December 14," the WTO has said in a statement. In May, India filed another appeal in a similar dispute case initiated by Japan regarding the tariff treatment that India accords to certain goods in the

ICT sector. According to WTO rules, a WTO member or members can file a case in the Genevabased multilateral body if they feel that a particular trade mea-

The WTO's dispute settlement body (DSB) is one of the important arms. Besides monitoring global exports and importrelated rules, it adjudicates trade disputes between the member countries.

step to resolve a dispute. If both sides are not able to resolve the matter through consultation, either of them can approach for establishment of a dispute settlement panel.

appellate body.

is not functioning because of differences among member countries in appointing its already pending with this body, which is not functional, as the US has been blocking the appointment of the members. India hereby notifies DSB of its decision to appeal to the appellate body regarding certain the panel in the dispute 'India Tariff Treatment on Certain

India has sought review by the appellate body of the "errors of law and legal interpretation" by the panel in its report and find-

lenged the introduction of import duties by India on a wide range of ICT products, including mobile phones and components, base stations, integrated circuits and optical

The EU had claimed that the measures appear to be inconsistent with certain provisions of

sure is against the norms of the

Bilateral consultation is the first

The panel's ruling or report can be challenged at the WTO's

Interestingly, the appellate body

members. Several disputes are issues of law covered in the panel report and certain legal interpretations developed by Goods in the ICT sector," the communication submitted by India to the WTO said.

The EU, on April 2, 2019, chal-

instruments.

India's exports dip 2.83 per cent to \$33.9 billion in November

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's merchandise exports slipped by 2.83 per cent to USD 33.90 billion in November while the trade deficit narrowed to USD 20.58 billion, according to government data.

Imports also fell by 4.33 per cent to USD 54.48 billion in November, the data released by the commerce ministry on Friday showed.

Cumulatively, the country's merchandise exports in April-November FY2023-24 contracted by 6.51 per cent to USD 278.8 billion.

Imports were also down by 8.67 per cent to USD 445.15 billion in the eight-month period due to a fall in oil imports. Oil imports dipped to USD 113.65 billion as against USD 139.29 billion in April-November 2022-23. The trade deficit - difference

between imports and exports - during the eight-month period was USD 166.35 billion against USD 189.21 bilperiod last year.

Briefing reporters here,

Commerce Secretary Sunil

Barthwal said that given the global situation, India's export numbers are good. All key export sectors have recorded negative growth during the April-November period of this fiscal and that include petroleum products, gems and jewellery, chemicals, garments, and engineering goods.



Sectors which registered positive growth include electronics, iron ore, and phar-

The other import segments whose inbound shipments are contracted include coal, coke; pearls, precious and semi-precious stones; and

However, gold imports increased by 21 per cent to USD 32.93 billion. Electronic goods' imports have risen to USD 57.83 billion during April-November 2023-24 against USD 51.89 billion in the same period last year.

The gold imports in cent to USD 3.44 billion. Oil imports during the month, however, dipped by 8.47 per cent to USD 14.93 billion. Barthwal said the global trade is suffering but, "we are

holding the fort" He added that GDP growth of many countries are "not so high", interest rate regime is not softening, global conflicts are aggravating, irrespective of these issues, "we are doing

Entertainment, refuses to stay merger

hearing, directing Zee

Entertainment Enterprise Ltd

The private lender and the

non-banking financial compa-

ny have challenged the August 10 order of the Mumbai-bench

of the National Company Law

Tribunal (NCLT), which

approved the ZEEL-Culver Max

Entertainment merger, paving

the way for the creation of the

country's largest media entity.

The NCLT, in its order, dis-

missed some applications moved by financial institutions

opposing the move, including

those of IDBI Trusteeship, IDBI

Bank, Axis Finance, JC Flowers

Asset Reconstruction Co, and

both petitions on January 8 for Imax Corp.

NCLAT issues notice to Zee

to file a reply.

India's forex reserves jump \$2.816 bn to \$606.859 bn

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India's forex reserves jumped USD 2.816 billion to USD 606.859 billion in the week ended December 8, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said on

In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had risen USD 6.107 billion to USD 604.042 billion It can be noted that in October

2021, the country's forex kitty had reached an all-time high of USD 645 billion.

The reserves took a hit as the central bank deployed the kitty to defend the rupee amid pressures caused majorly by global developments since last year. For the week ended December 8, the foreign currency assets – a major component of the reserves — increased by USD 3.089 billion to USD 536.699

billion, the data said. Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units held in the foreign exchange reserves. Gold reserves were down USD 199 million to USD 47.13 billion during the week, the RBI said.

The Special Drawing Rights were down USD 63 million to USD 18.188 billion, the apex

bank said. India's reserve position with the IMF was down USD 11 million to USD 4.842 billion in the reporting week, the apex bank

This was challenged by IDBI

and Axis Finance before the

The matter was last listed on

December 6 for hearing, how-

ever, it was adjourned to

December 15 due to paucity of

In the last hearing on October

31, the matter was listed before

a different bench, which trans-

ferred both petitions to the

The bench had opined that

since the chairperson-led

bench is already hearing an insolvency appeal filed by IDBI

Bank against ZEEL, it would be

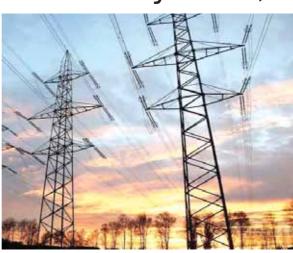
appropriate for the same bench

to hear these petitions also.

chairperson's bench.

appellate tribunal NCLAT.

Peak power demand to touch 366 GW by 2032, says official



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

 $P^{eak\ power\ demand\ in\ India}_{\ will\ increase\ to\ 366\ GW\ by}$ 2032 and 693 GW by 2047, a top official said.

This assumes significance in view of rising electricity consumption in the country as record high of 243.27 GW in

At the virtual launch of the US-India Energy Storage Task Force, Rakesh Kumar, Secretary of Central Electricity Authority, said, "Considering the projected electricity demand and energy requirement in the country, which is expected to grow in terms of peak demand to 277 GW by 2027; to 366 GW by 2032 and 693 GW by 2047." "Our country has a vision to reduce carbon emission inten-

sity by 45 per cent by 2030 from

2005 levels. And net zero by 2070," Kumar, India Co-Chair of the US-India Energy Storage Task Force, said in a statement. The US-India Energy Storage Task Force was launched virtually at a conference in India to make strides in global transformation in this area.

Energy Storage Task Force cials, industry representatives (ESTF) was established by the and other stakeholders to scale US Department of Energy (DOE) and the Indian Ministry of Power (MOP).

The India Energy Storage Alliance (IESA) has been appointed as the secretariat. In terms of energy requirement, India is expected to see growth from 1,512 billion units to 1,927 billion units by 2027;

2,473 billion units by 2032 and 4,600 billion units by 2047, Kumar said. Thereby, logging an expected nologies in India.

growth of about 8 per cent annual basis, he pointed out. Further, he said, "We have already tested a peak demand of 240 Gigawatt this year which was more than 8 per cent annual growth compared to the last year." IESA President Rahul

Walawalkar said, "There was a decision made to set up this joint task force focusing on energy storage given the critical role of energy storage for the growth of both, renewable energy transition as well as, emobility and other areas which are important for clean energy transition.

Walawalkar is also the manag-ing director of Customized Energy Solutions India.

The ESTF will report to the power and energy efficiency pillar under the US-India CSCP programme.

We are considering the vision and objective of the task force to facilitate ongoing and meaningful dialogue among the US peak power demand touched a The public-private US-India and Indian government offiup and accelerate the deployment of energy storage tech-nologies," Debi Prasad Dash, Executive Director at IESA and Secretary of US-India Energy Storage Task Force (ESTF), said.

Founded by Customized Energy Solutions (CES) in 2012, IESA is an industry alliance focused on the development of advanced energy storage, green hydrogen, and e-mobility tech-

BUSINESS BRIEF

CAB GETS NOTICE FOR NOT CARRY PARA SHOOTER issued notice to Ola Cabs for ill-treatment meted out to a para

shooter, Wing Commander Shantanu, a person with 80 per cent locomotor disability. In his complaint to the CCPD, the former Air Force officer stated that he booked an Ola cab to travel a small distance from Karni Singh Shooting Range, where he came to participate in the 1st Khelo India Para Games, to a location 3 kms away on Tuesday, the 12th December 2023. As there was no space in the rear boot space which was occupied by a CNG kit, his wife requested the driver to put the folded wheelchair in the back seat, which most of the sedan cab drivers allow. However, the driver aggressively behaved and asked the couple to get out of the cab as he wouldn't keep and carry the wheelchair in his car. Aggrieved and humiliated by this rude behaviour and crude language, the air force veteran approached the CCPD for action against the driver

NOTED AUTHORS GET AWARDS

Kattankulathur: BJP state President K Annamalai presented awards and citations worth Rs. 13 lakh to 11 Tamil writers and poets at the SRM Tamil Perayam event held at SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST), Kattankulathur. In his chief guest address, Annamalai said, "SRMIST aims at

promoting the Tamil language. This event celebrates Tamil writers who have contributed significantly to the language. It is important that we come together to support and appreciate their work in a forum like this. Addressing thousands of students the BJP State President said,

'My vision and aspiration for students is to excel in the field of technology. I encourage you not only to work in the tech industry but also to establish start-ups and provide employment opportunities. This will help India become a Superpower."

ONGC SHARED FINANCE SERVICES LAUNCHED

New Delhi: Energy Maharatna ONGC launched a significant business process initiative today with the inauguration of the ONGC Shared Finance Services in collaboration with IBM Consulting. This will centralise and standardise all vendor payments of ONGC, accelerating the processes for an enhanced 360-degree vendor experience. ONGC Chairman and CEO Arun Kumar Singh, inaugurated the Centre at Noida in the presence of ONGC Director (Finance) Pomila Jaspal, and IBM Consulting India/South Asia Country Managing Partner Kamal Singhani on 14 December 2023. The event also witnessed participation of MD OVL Rajarshi Gupta, ONGC Director (Exploration) Sushma Rawat, Director (Human Resources) Manish Patil, CVO ONGC Ranjan Prakash Thakur, Director (Finance) OVL Anupam Aggarwal, MRPL Director (Finance) Vivek Tongaonkar and senior leadership team of

NIPPON PAINT ACQUIRES VIBGYOR PAINTS New Delhi: Nippon Paint, the leading paint and coatings company

in Asia on Friday announced the 100 per cent acquisition of VIBGYOR Paints and Chemicals Pondicherry, a major supplier of paints and coatings in South India. After this acquisition, VIBGYOR Paints and Chemicals Pondicherry, with its established reputation and expertise in supplying high-quality paints to Indian Railways, will become a division of Nippon Paint India, leveraging its resources and reach to further its growth and market leadership. Sharad Malhotra, Director and President (Automotive Refinishes), Nippon Paint India, said the acquisition of VIBGYOR Paints and Chemicals marks a step forward in our India growth strategy. Besides helping us gain a strong foothold in the Indian Railways, this acquisition also enables us to expand our commercial vehicles and industrial paints business in the country"

Domestic air passenger traffic rise 9 per cent in November PTI ■ NEW DELHI lakhs as against 1,105.10 lakhs

Domestic air passenger traffic rose 9 per cent to more than 1.27 crore in November, according to official data released on Friday Last month also saw daily air

multiple times. IndiGo remained the country's largest domestic carrier but its market share declined to 61.8 per cent in November from 62.6 per cent in October.

traffic touching new highs

However, none of the scheduled carriers had an On-Time Performance (OTP) score of more than 80 per cent in November. Official data released by the

Directorate General of Civil

Aviation (DGCA) on Friday

showed that airlines flew 1.27 crore passengers in November compared to 1.17 crore in the year-ago period. This marks a growth of 9.06 per

cent on an annual basis "Passengers carried by domes-

tic airlines during January-November 2023 were 1,382.34

The domestic market share of SpiceJet rose to 6.2 per cent in November from 5 per cent in October. Its OTP stood at 41.8 per cent last month. Air India's domestic market share remained unchanged at

10.5 per cent in November while that of Vistara fell marginally to 9.4 per cent last month. In November, the share of

during the corresponding period of previous year thereby registering annual growth of 25.09

per cent and monthly growth

of 9.06 per cent," DGCA said.

Akasa Air and AIX Connect remained unchanged at 4.2 per cent and 6.6 per cent, respectively.

Steel Ministry holds review meeting on surging steel imports from China, Vietnam PTI ■ NEW DELHI steel imports from select counhour-long meeting, he said. the steel industry to the minhigher at 1.19 million tonnes (MT) against an export of

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Entertainment.

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal on

Friday issued notices to Zee

Entertainment Enterprise Ltd

(ZEEL) over the petitions filed

by IDBI Bank and AXIS

Finance against an NCLT order

that approved the media com-

pany's merger with Culver Max

However, a two-member

NCLAT bench comprising

Chairman Justice Ashok

Bhushan and Member Arun

Baroka declined to grant any stay

over the merger process during

The appellate tribunal

(NCLAT) has directed to list

the pendency of the hearing.

government has reviewed the steel import situation amid concerns raised by the domestic industry over the increased inward shipments, according to an industry official.

Steel players have been raising concerns with various ministries including steel and commerce over the surge in

tries like China and Vietnam. The Ministry of Steel on Wednesday held a meeting to review the import situation in the country, an industry executive said.

The meeting was chaired by steel secretary Nagendra Nath Sinha and attended by representatives of various steel companies. Several ministry officials also participated in the



"Steel makers informed the ministry that there has been a continuous surge in imports from countries like China and Vietnam despite the same type of steel being available in India," a Steel Ministry official said. When asked about the steps,

the official said any action can be initiated only after the study of details submitted by istry. They have also suggested a few measures including elimination of some duty cuts and tariff rate quota where prescribed limits are set for duty free inbound shipments. The matter would also be discussed with the ministries of Commerce and Finance accordingly.

According to SteelMint, steel imports in November were steel in October.

0.32 MT In October also, India's steel imports were higher at 0.46

MT in October 2023, compared to exports of 0.24 MT. Last month, Tata Steel CEO and MD T V Narendran had described the situation as a matter of concern as India became the net importer of

MOURINHO GETS AWAY WITHOUT TOUCHLINE BAN

Roma coach Jose Mourinho escaped a touchline ban after cooperating with the Italian soccer federations disciplinary prosecutor and was instead only fined 20,000 euros (USD 22,000) on Friday for labelling a referee unstable.

Before a recent match with Sassuolo, Mourinho questioned the abilities of referee Matteo Marcenaro.

"We had him three times as a fourth official and I don't think he has the emotional stability for games of this level," Mourinho said.

During the same news conference, Mourinho attacked Sassuolo forward Domenico Berardi, saying the player "exaggerates fouls to draw yellow

Mourinho later said his Italian wasn't proficient enough to explain certain

Roma was also ordered to pay a fine of 20,000 euros (USD 22,000), with the money from both the club and Mourinho going toward medical research.

Mourinho was suspended for two matches at the start of this campaign for comments about a referee at the end of last season. He was also banned for four matches by UEFA in June for verbally abusing the Europa League final referee in a stadium garage after Roma lost to Sevilla





Manavjit, Moudgil to make national return

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A ce shooters Manavjit Singh Sandhu and Anjum Moudgil will make their nation-al come back during next month's Asian Olympic quali-fiers in Jakarta and Kuwait City respectively

While the qualifiers for rifle and pistol events will be held in Jakarta, Indonesia, from January 5 to 18, the shotgun qualifiers will take place in Kuwait City

from January 12 to 23. India have fielded a 20-member rifle and pistol squad, while a 12 shooters will represent the country in the shotgun qualifiers. A total of 16 quotas for next year's Olympics at Paris are up for grabs in Jakarta for rifle and pistol events, while eight spots are available in the shotgun

The Indian shooters have already won 13 quota spots for Paris Games and will be looking to add to that tally in these tournaments

According to a National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) release, the squads have been selected on the basis of current domestic rankings and those who already have been qualified are left out.

In the Jakarta event, India will be looking to add to their pistol quotas in particular, given five more spots are still to be won. All the eight quota places in rifle events have already been secured.

In Kuwait, India have six quota places to aim for — four in skeet and two in trap shooting. Pistol shooter Gurpreet Singh will also be seen in action in Jakarta.

Sri Karthik Sabari Raj (men's 10m air rifle), Ujjawal Malik (men's 10m air pistol) and Bhavya Tripathi (women's trap) will make their senior team

Three shooters — Tilottama Sen (women's 10m air rifle, ranked seventh), Shriyanka Sadangi (women's 50m rifle 3 positions, ranked seventh) and Bhowneesh Mendiratta (men's trap, ranked sixth), who are quota holders and not among the top three, have also been included in the squad to shoot in the RPO (ranking points only) category and will not be competing for medals.

Four other quota holders expressed their inability to participate in these competitions.



Ahlawat top Indian at T-22nd in Riyadh

PTI ■ RIYADH (SAUDI ARABIA)

Veer Ahlawat opened with a 1-under 70 to be the best placed Indian golfer at T-22 after the first round of the USD 1 million Saudi Open here.

S Chikkarangappa and Yuvraj Sandhu, who has gained his card through the Asian Development Tour for 2024, are lying T-32 with rounds of even par 71 each at the season-ending event on the Asian Tour.

back the years shooting a sevenunder-par 64 to take the lead His young amateur compatriot Ratchanon

Chantananuwat is tied second following a 66. TK is tied with Mexico's Luis

Carrera, while American Kevin Na, Korean Jung Chanmin and Australia's Todd Sinnott shot 67s on an unexpectedly windy day at the Par-71 Rivadh Golf Club. Ajeetesh Sandhu, who needs a good finish to get his 2024 playing rights, shot 2-over 73 and was T-60th as were Honey Baisoya and Karandeep Kochhar. Rashid Khan and Gaganjeet Bhullar had disappointing starts with both carding 5-over 76 each. They were T-94 and in danger of missing the cut.

Five-time PGA Tour winner Na came into this week feeling his game is in a good place and backed that up with a strong start. However, a missed sixfooter for birdie on the last hole cost him outright second place. Sweden's Henrik Stenson, one of the event's marquee players, came in with a 70

India need to pull up their socks against Spain **HOCKEY JUNIOR WC** not out of the tournament yet, game upfront.

PTI ■ KUALA LUMPUR

A profligate India will have to raise their game by leaps and bounds if they want to over-come a mighty Spain in the bronze medal play-off match of the junior men's hockey World Cup here on Saturday.

India wasted as many as 12 penalty corners to lose 1-4 against a clinical Germany in the semifinal on Thursday. The Indians would be morally

down but come Saturday, they can't afford to be wasteful against Spain, who defeated them 4-1 in the pool stages

On the other hand, Spain too would be hurting from 1-3 loss against France in the semifinal and would be looking to finish their campaign with at least a bronze medal.

Sports Ministry's Mission Olympic Cell (MOC) has approved racewalker Priyanka

Goswami's proposal to train in

Australia under coach Brent

Priyanka, who has qualified for

the Paris Olympics, will be training in a high-altitude train-

ing centre near Canberra, Australia and will also compete

in a few local competitions to

prepare for next year's continen-

The financial assistance will

cover Priyanka's airfare, board-

ing/lodging costs, expenditure

for sports science support,

coaching fee and out-of-pocket

allowance among other expen-

Besides Priyanka, the MOC

also approved proposals of

Target Olympic Podium Scheme

(TŎPS) development group

Greco Roman wrestlers Ashu (67kg), Suraj (55kg) and Ronit

Sharma (48kg) for an interna-

tional training camp in Almaty,

tal showpiece.

PTI NEW DELHI

Priyanka proposal to train

Kazakhstan.

expenditures

also been approved.

The government will cover the

costs of the three wrestlers

their coach, physiotherapist and

sparring partners' airfare and

boarding/lodging costs along

with out-of-pocket allowance for

the three grapplers among other

Shooter Bhowneesh Mendi-

ratta's proposal for financial

assistance towards a week-long

training camp with foreign

coach Daniele Di Spigno has

in Australia approved

The Indians would also be eyeing their fourth podium finish in the history of the tournament, having won gold twice (in 2001 Hobart and 2016 Lucknow), and a silver way back in 1997 in Milton Keynes, England.

side needs to do some soulsearching and produce its 'A' The tournament turned out to be a mixed bag for India as they

But for that the Uttam Singh-led

showed great determination to stun world no.4 Netherlands 4-3 in the quarterfinal. But they failed to carry on the momentum against six-time champions Germany, failing to utilise numerous scoring chances that came their way. India captain Uttam conceded

that they wasted chances galore

but said they are still in with a

chance of finishing on the podium and will prepare towards

"We got a lot of opportunities inside the circle (against Germany) but we missed a lot.

➤ Tovak Diokovic and Arvna Sabalenka were honored as the International Tennis Federation's 2023 ITF World

Champions after being the only

singles players to reach at least

the semifinals at all four Grand

Slam tournaments this season.

Djokovic, who finished at No. 1

in the ATP rankings for a

record-extending eighth time,

won the Australian Open,

French Open and U.S. Open to

We couldn't convert our chances. We tried to score from the set pieces but we couldn't convert,"

"We need to be more aware and not lose ball possession. We are

raise his major trophy total to a

men's-leading 24 and was the

went 56-7 and led the men's tour

This is his eighth ITF World

Champion award, also a record.

Sabalenka received the honor for

the first time after winning the

Australian Open for her first

Grand Slam title, finishing as the

runner-up at the U.S. Open

and making it to the semifinals

at the French Open and

with seven titles

bronze medal match is still there. Whatever has happened we can't change. Our entire focus will be on the next game." India's chief coach CR Kumar would be highly disappointed with the performance of his dragflickers and would be hop-ing that the likes of vice-captain Araijeet Singh Hundal, Shardanand Tiwari and Sudeep Chirmako deliver the goods on

We really would've loved to have been playing the final but now we just have to focus on what lies ahead of us. Finishing third in a World Cup also commands a lot of respect so we'll play the best hockey we can," Kumar said.

Uttam and Boby Singh Dhami too would look to lift their

Sabalenka made her debut at No

1 in the WTA rankings in

September, before finishing the

year at No. 2 behind Iga Swiatek,

Other ITF World Champions

the WTA Player of the Year.

Spain, on the other hand, have

never reached the final of the tournament. Their best result was a bronze medal in the 2005 edition in Rotterdam, beating India 6-5 on penalties after the match was tied at 1-1 at the end of regulation time.

Going by head-to-head record in the tournament, Spain hold an edge over India.

edge over india.

India and Spain have played eight times against each other in men's junior World Cup history with Spain winning five of those battles, the most recent result also going in the European result also going in the European nation's favour.

Meanwhile, Germany, who finished runner-up in the last edition in 2021 in Bhubaneswar, will play reigning bronze medal-

included Storm Hunter and

Elise Mertens in women's dou-

Salisbury in men's doubles,

Diede de Groot in the women's

wheelchair category, Alfie

Hewett in the men's wheelchair

category, Niels Vink in the quad

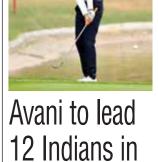
wheelchair category, and Alina

Korneeva and Joao Fonseca in

the juniors categories. ITF World

Champion selections place extra emphasis on Grand Slam events

and ITF international team



the Final stage of Q School

PTI ■ MARRAKECH (MOROCCO)

▼ndia's most talented amateur Avani Prashanth will be hoping to move into professional golf, when she tees up at the gru-elling five-round 90-hole Lalla Aicha Ladies European Tour Qualifying School tournament, starting here on Saturday.

in the 151-player field, which has golfers from 41 countries.

Avani, who as an amateur won a professional title on the Ladies European Tour Access Series, was also the winner of Queen Sirikit Cup individual and was fourth at the World Amateur Team Championships individual

She also strung together a series of Top-10 finishes on the LET events while playing on special

Another young Indian star looking to get to on the Tour full time is Pranavi Urs, who had a status on the Epson Tour (second rung Tour in the United States). The other leading Indian play ers will include Tvesa Malik, Amandeep Drall, Vani Kapoor, Ridhima Dilawari and Neha

the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour has also thrown up talents like Sneha Singh, who topped the domestic Hero Order of Merit, Seher Atwal, Durga

invitations.

Tripathi. The growth of Indian women on

Nittur, Ananya Datar and

Set of 6 Messi World Cup shirts sells for \$7.8 million

Novak, Aryna win ITF World Champion awards for 2023

AP ■ NEW YORK

Six jerseys worn by soccer superstar Lionel Messi during Argentina's winning run at last year's World Cup sold for USD 7.8 million, the auction house Sotheby's announced.

The final price for the shirts, each worn during the first half of one of Argentina's games at the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, is the highest price for an item of sports memorabilia this year, Sotheby's said.

Argentina defeated France in a penalty shootout after a 3-3 draw in the World Cup



final, winning its third World Cup. The victory, in which Messi scored two of Argentina's three goals, represented a crowning moment for one of the sport's greatest-

ever players. "These historic shirts are not only a tangi-

ble reminder of one of the most important moments in the history of sports, but are principally connected to the pinnacle moment in the career of the most decorated football player in history," Brahm Wachter, Sotheby's head of modern collectibles, said in a statement.

competitions

The shirts were on display at Sotheby's New York headquarters during the two-week online auction that ended Thursday. No information on the winning bidder was

Jasmine Shekar.

Premier League to have

AP CONGRESS (US)

The hands are in constant motion, yo-yoing the wheel left, right, left in small corrections and full turns. The feet dance in the cramped space above the floorboard, stabbing between clutch, gas and brake. The eyes dart back and forth across the desert landscape, detecting rocks, dips and humps, variations in sand color flashing into view like a real-life scene from "Mad Max." The brain deciphers the signals and takes action in milliseconds - a process completed every second or so for 12 or more hours a day.

A professional rally racer by trade, Austin Jones İooks more like a conductor while driving his car, tuning in to fluctuations in terrain so rugged a miscalculation could end in disaster.

"That's the thing with racing, especially rally racing: you lose focus for one second and that could be the difference of you

Dakar Rally winner Austin has extensive resume after just five years of racing

ending up on your roof in a ditch or making that turn and going on to the next one," said Jones, who goes by "AJ" to friends and family. "You can't let up for one second. You have to be 100% focused and that's probably the hardest part."

The Dakar Rally is arguably the most diabolical race on earth. Originally a circuit from Paris to Dakar, Senegal, the race has been run across Saudi Arabia since 2020. It's as much an endurance test as a race, drivers and their navigators covering roughly 8,000 miles through the unforgiving landscape of the Arabian Desert over 10 to 15 days.

Jones has won it twice. The 27-year-old claimed the totype models) earlier this year.



Dakar Rally title in 2022 with Brazilian co-driver Gustavo Gugelmin and followed it up with a win in the T3 class (pro-500, the San Felipe 250, a World Rally Raid T4 Championship, a

American to win Dakar twice. Jones' resume also includes wins at the Baja 1000 (twice), Baja SCORE championship and rallies in Andalusia, Kazakhstan and Abu Dhabi. All in five years

"The hardest part is the mental part, being able to stay focused all the time and listen to the calls to the co-driver," said Jones' father, Jesse. "At the same time you're reading the terrain, looking for things that are going to end your day, if you will."

Though a relative newcomer to the racing, Jones has been around it all his life. Jesse is an accomplished driver,

with wins in the Baja 500, San Felipe, the Primm 300, the Vegas to Reno race and a SCORE trophy truck champi-

AJ had little interest in his father's profession when he was younger, attending a handful of races. His focus was more on soccer, baseball, football and lacrosse, a sport that earned him a scholarship at San Diego State. Once he finished college, AJ wasn't sure what he wanted to do. The family trade was a natural fit, though he didn't get directly behind the wheel He went under the hood.

Working in his father's shop, AJ learned the inner workings of the car, how every part worked, to fix anything that broke. He came to understand the thresh olds for everything in the car; which parts could be pushed to

the limit, which couldn't.
The skill set has been a crucial component to AJ's success in rally races

Driving for the Red Bull Can-Am Factory Team, AJ has a team of engineers and mechanics who finely tune the car to his personal specifications.

its first female referee using female referees for years. In Germany, Bibiana Steinhaus

 $R^{\text{ebecca Welch will become}} \\ \text{the first female referee in the} \\$ Premier League when she takes charge of the match between Fulham and Burnley on Dec. 23, the competition said Thursday

Welch has already worked as the fourth official in the Premier League, for the match between Fulham and Manchester United on Nov. 4, and she was the first woman to referee matches in the second-tier Championship and FA Cup.

Welch has been a referee since 2010, initially balancing the role with her job in the National Health Service before becoming a full-time match official. Other countries have been

was the first woman to referee a Bundesliga game, in 2017. Steinhaus is married to Howard Webb, who is the current chief refereeing officer of the top refereeing body in England. French referee Stéphanie Frappart became the first

woman to take charge of a men's World Cup game when she handled Germany vs. Costa Rica in November last year, having previously done games in the Champions League and in the French league since 2019. The Premier League also said Sam Allison will become the first Black official to take charge of a match for 15 years when he referees Sheffield United vs. Luton on Dec. 26.

Deepti stars with all-round show

Deepti Sharma's stunning all-round show, a fifty and a fifer, provided India Women a perfect launching pad to record their maiden home victory in the traditional format over England after the second day of their one-off Test here Friday. After a patient 113-ball 67 in India's first-innings total of 428, Deepti destroyed England lineup with a sensational 5.3-4-7-5 spell helping the hosts take a massive 292-run lead. The visitors were bundled out for 136 in their first essay despite Nat Sciver-Brunt's composed 59. India did not enforce the followon and reached 186 for six in

their second dig at stumps, for an overall lead of 478. Deepti was at the heart of India's effort when they grabbed six England wickets for a mere 10 runs, that saw them tumbling

spectacularly from 108 for 3. As the game progressed, the DY Patil Stadium pitch offered turn and variable bounce for spinners, leaving the batters in a quandary. The day also saw 19 wickets falling from either side and 15 of them were grabbed by spinners.

Deepti, of course, was the star of the day, tormenting the English batters with her bag of tricks. The 26-year-old off-spinner began her destruction job getting rid of Danny Wyatt (19), who began with a string of



It was a classical off-spinner's dismissal as the English batter was caught at short leg for a bat-pad dismissal, and that also sparked

a shocking collapse. Deepti soon had Amy Jones (12) caught by Shafali Verma with the ball ricocheting off short-leg Smriti Mandhana's helmet, while Sophie Ecclestone was tad unlucky when a delivery from the Indian kept low to crash onto her wickets.

Kate Cross became Deepti's

fourth victim through a feeble return catch while Lauren Filer did not have any answer for her

The Indians were also proactive in the field with constant chirping around England batters and close-in catchers were placed in unorthodox positions to keep them rooted deep into the

Before Deepti came into picture, pacers Renuka Singh and Pooja Vastrakar kept England in check. Renuka produced a terrific incoming delivery for India's first breakthrough, sneaking one through the gate to clean up Sophia Dunkley (11).

In fact, incoming deliveries remained Renuka's go-to weapon throughout the first Vastrakar was driven for a four

by Heather Knight (11) but the right-arm seamer corrected her length to move one back into the England captain, pinning her in

front of the wickets. Sciver-Brunt resurrected England's faltering reply to some extent with a counter-attacking knock, notching up her fourth Test fifty. Sciver-Brunt imposed herself on Indian spinners and seamers alike, unleashing powerful hits to strike 10 fours in her 59 off 70 balls before Sneh Rana castled

Rana surprised Sciver-Brunt with one that turned in sharply from outside the off-stump.

India's progress in their second indias progress in their second innings was not smooth either as off-spinner Charlie Dean (4/68) and left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone (2/76) joined forces to trouble the Indian batters on occasions but despite that India already had moved so far abead in the game ahead in the game.

Mandhana (26) and Shafali (33) added 61 runs for the first wicket while Jemimah Rodrigues

Harmanpreet Kaur (44 not out) kept England at bay with an unbeaten 53-run stand with Pooja Vastrakar (17 not out) for the seventh wicket.

India also had to rejig their batting order since debutant and first-innings star Shubha Satheesh remained unavailable to bat owing to a finger injury. Earlier, after the first day's play saw batters making merry English spinners came to party through Ecclestone (3/67) as her quick strikes did not allow India build big after they resumed



Dhoni's number 7 jersey retired: Shukla

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The BCCI has decided to retire World Cup winning captain M S Dhoni's No.7 jersey to honour his rich contribution to Indian cricket. The iconic India captain last played for the country in the 2019 World Cup semifinal against New Zealand. He announced his retirement on August 15, 2020 and no other player has worn the No.7 shirt since then.

Even the great Sachin Tendulkar's No.10 has not been worn any other player since his retirement in 2013 except pacer Shardul Tahkur, who had opted for No.10 on his ODI debut against Sri Lanka in 2017 but was trolled heavily on social media.

No one since then has played with a jersey with number 10 written on the back.

According to BCCI vice-president Rajeev Shukla, the Board took the decision on Thursday. "He is a legendary player. His contribution to Indian as well as world cricket is immense. To honour his contribution, the decision to retire number seven has been taken by the BCCI," Shukla told PTI.

Retiring jerseys of the greats is

a phenomenon in another sports too. The Chicago Bulls retired the No.23 jersey worn by basket-ball legend Michael Jordan fol-

lowing his retirement. India wicketkeeper Dinesh Karthik, whose international career coincided with Dhoni's, was among the first ones to demand for the No.7 jersey to be retired after the World Cup winning captain's retirement in 2020. Both Karthik and Dhoni happened to play in that ill-fated World Cup semifinal against World Cup semifinal against New Zealand. "Hope the BCCI retires the No.7 jersey in white ball cricket," Karthik had posted back then.



South African pitches are suiting spinners: Kuldeep

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

Surprised by the spin on offer during the third T20I at The Wanderers here, Kuldeep Yadav said the South African wickets, generally known for their pace and bounce, are also suiting spinners in the ongoing tour. Kuldeep had a perfect 29th birthday on Thursday as he became only the second Indian et hauls in T20Is after Bhuvneshwar Kumar. He became the first Indian spinner to reach the landmark

"It turned out to be a special day. I have never thought about taking five wickets. I just wanted the team to win which is more important," Kuldeep said.

"I was concerned about my

bowling because I was playing after sometime, so wanted to get my rhythm. It was perfect today. The ball was coming out well from the hand and the conditions too suited the spinners a

Kuldeep returned with figures of 5/17 from 2.5 overs as India beat South Africa by 106 runs to help India finish the three-match T20 series tied at 1-1.

"To be very honest, the wickets are very good for the spinners. The good thing about these wickets are that the ball comes very quickly after pitching. So

sometimes, you have to vary your variations and if you get it right then it is very difficult to

pick," he added.
Kuldeep last played in South
Africa in 2018 but a knee injury
in 2021, for which he underwent surgery, halted his career for 6-7 months.

However, he successfully returned back to the field with a new technique.

after that, couple of years struggled with my injury and post surgery I came back and made a few changes in my bowling, especially in my runup. Trying to be more aggressive and just trying to bowl much straighter and focussing on

length," Kuldeep said. Just like his teammates, it took some time for Kuldeep to overcome the loss in the ODI World Cup final to Australia.

"Starting was really difficult. First 7 to 10 days were really tough. Whenever I was waking up, the thought of losing the World Cup final was haunting me. But life changes and moves on. I got an opportunity to play in South Africa, I last played here in 2018 so I knew the conditions well," he said.

"In cricket what you want never happens and you have to learn from them and implement those in future matches.

Hardik replaces Rohit as | West Indies beat England by 10 runs Mumbai Indians captain

Hardik Pandya was on Friday named Mumbai Indians captain in place of a highly-successful Rohit Sharma, who led the IPL giants to five trophies. The announcement from Mumbai Indians comes after Hardik made a return to the franchise last month, following a high-profile trade from Gujarat Titans, whom he led in the past two seasons

In a statement, Mumbai Indians said the change in leadership was part of their future planning and thanked Rohit for his exemplary service to the franchise.

Mumbai Indians are the most successful IPL franchise alongside Chennai Super Kings who both have won five titles each. Commenting on Hardik's appointment, Mahela Jayawardene, Global Head of Performance, Mumbai Indians said: "It staying true to the MI philoso-

riful Islam's counter-

Apunching fifty and a fiery

spell by left-arm pacer Maruf

Mridha helped Bangladesh

score a facile four-wicket win

over India to reach the final of

the ACC Under-19 Asia Cup

On a slightly double-paced pitch, Indian batters struggled

to get going before getting bundled out for 188 in 42.4

overs, with Musheer Khan (50)

and Murugan Abhishek (62)

doing all the scoring for them.

Maruf took 4 for 41 to give

early jolts to India in the sec-

Despite some jitters, Bangladesh went over the line

pretty comfortably in 42.5 overs

with Islam (94 off 90 balls)

PTI DUBAI

here Friday.

ond semifinal.

phy of being future-ready. "Mumbai Indians have always been blessed with exceptional leadership right from Sachin to Harbhajan and Ricky to Rohit, who while contributing to the

immediate success have always

had an eye on strengthening the team for the future. "It is in keeping with this philosophy that Hardik Pandya will assume captaincy of Mumbai Indians for the IPL 2024 season." Rohit, who recently led India to the ODI World Cup final, had been captaining the franchise since 2013 when they lifted first of their five IPL trophies.

The other titles under Rohit's captaincy came in 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2020. Mumbai Indians had made it to the play-offs in IPL 2023.

We express our gratitude to Rohit Sharma for his exceptional leadership; his tenure as the captain of the Mumbai Indians short of extraordinary

defending the Indian charge

However, Maruf kickstarted

India's poor day with a superb

opening spell. The pacer found

some bounce and swing

upfront to reduce India to 13

for three inside seven overs.

Openers Adarsh Singh, Arshin

Kulkarni and captain Uday

Saharan returned without trou-

But Musheer and Abhishek

shared an 84-run alliance for

the seventh-wicket to rescue

India from a precarious 61 for

They batted quite fluently and

Musheer brought up his fifty

off 59 balls with a single long-

off Mahfuzur Rahman.

bling the scorers much.

with an engaging innings.



AP ■ ST. GEORGE'S (GRENADA)

The West Indies pinned down England to win by 10 runs and take a 2-0 lead in their Twenty20 series.

The home side can clinch the series on Saturday in the third of five matches. England was hauled in on

Tuesday in Barbados, and elected to chase on Thursday in Grenada. The decision looked good early on when the West Indies was reduced to 54-4. But opener Brandon King anchored en 82 from 52 balls and captain Spinners Adil Rashid and Rehan runs to score.

Abhishek clobbered Sheikh

Jibon for a huge six over long-off to bring his fifty in 64 balls.

However, both the batters

departed without building fur-

ther as India sank to a modest

In reply, Bangladesh too made

a shaky start and were 34 for

But Islam found an able alley in

Ahrar Amin (44 off 101 balls)

as the duo milked 138 runs for

a stubborn fourth wicket stand

Islam was a bit circumspect to

begin with but once found his

range, the right-hander played

some delectable shots around

three in 9.4 overs.

to peg India back.

Rovman Powell's explosive 50 off 28 gave them 176-7 and a fighting chance. The chase was up and down for England. Gudakesh Motie tied down England with four straight overs of spin and returning 1-9. But his brilliance was almost undone by allrounder Andre Russell, who starred in Barbados in his first West Indies match in two years, but was a liability here. He conceded 66 runs, including 17 off the last over when England needed 28

West Indies started the match by

the park to deny Indian

Bangladesh lost a couple of

more wickets towards the end,

but that only created an artifi-

BRIEF SCORES:

India: 188 all out in 42.4 overs

(Murugan Abhishek 62, Musheer Khan 50; Maruf Mridha 4/41, Sheikh Jibon

2/29) lost to **Bangladesh:** 189

for 6 in 42.5 overs (Ariful

Islam 94, Ahrar Amin 44;

Nawan Tiwari 3/35) by 4 wick-

UAE STUN PAKISTAN

bowlers for a long while.

cial excitement.

Bangladesh beat India to enter final

UAE stun Pakistan to reach summit clash

Ahmed laid waste after Chris Woakes broke the opening stand between King and Kyle Mayers. But King was immovable and Powell was punchy. His six over long-on off Tymal Mills brought up West Indies' 100 in the 14th over. As soon as Rashid completed his four overs and a superb 2-11, Sam Curran was spanked in one over by Powell for 4-6-6-1 wide-6-6-1 wide, then caught on the boundary, out for a halfcentury. King carried his bat and ended up with five sixes and eight boundaries in his secondbest T20 innings. England didn't have a King to hold down an end. Phil Salt, Will

Jacks and Liam Livingstone made starts without going on, mainly exploiting Russell, who conceded 14 runs in his first over, and 22 runs in another. Curran gave the chase a lift but as soon as he reached his maiden T20 fifty off 31 balls, he was out, slicing Alzarri Joseph.

Russell was given the last over but his off day was compensat-

shocked fancied Pakistan by 11

runs to set up a date with Bangladesh in the final.

UAE made 193 all out largely

thanks to a 55 (57 balls) by captain Aayan Khan and a 46 off

70 balls by opener Aryansh

They then defended the target

zealously to bowl out Pakistan

(Aayan Khan 55, Aryansh Sharma 46, Ethan D'Souza 37;

Ubaid Shah 4/44) beat

Pakistan: 182 all out in 49.3

overs (Saad Baig 50, Azan

Awais 41; Ayman Ahmed 2/18

Sharma.

to spare.

In the first semifinal, UAE Hardik Pai 2/35) by 11 runs.



progression: Stokes

PTI ■ LONDON

next two weeks.

Star England all-rounder Ben Stokes on Friday said that his rehabilitation after a knee surgery last month has been going on well and he's hoping to make further progress in the

Stokes underwent a successful

surgery on his left knee on November 29 in a bid to stay fit for the Test series in India, The 32-year-old had been struggling with long-standing issues on his left knee before undergoing surgery. He was unable to bowl in the final three Ashes Tests against Australia this year and only featured as a batter at the recent World Cup in India, with his body unable to cope with the rigours of bowling. On Friday, Stokes took to Instagram to share a video of his

workout in the gym following the surgery, which mainly involved small squats. '2 week post knee op. First 2

weeks was just relentless icing to get the swelling down and very small amounts of exercises to keep my knee moving," he

"Great to be able to start some work in the gym, hoping for good progression over the next weeks. Rehab been going really well," said the England Test captain.

to 182 all out with three balls **BRIEF SCORES:** UAE: 193 all out in 47.5 overs

AP ■ PERTH (AUSTRALIA)

ustralia hit back with two late Awickets as Pakistan clawed to 132 for two and trailed by 355 runs in the first Test on Friday.

Pakistan fast bowler Aamer Jamal grabbed six for 111 in his debut test, claiming the last four of the five wickets before Australia was bowled out for 487 after it resumed Day 2 at 346

Opening pair Abdullah Shafique (42) and Imam-ul-Haq (38 not out) thwarted the pace trio of captain Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood and Mitchell Starc before offspinner Nathan Lyon and Mitchell Starc struck in the last session.

Lyon had Shafique caught at leg slip for 42 off 121 balls as the Pakistan right-hander fell in the trap and attempted an aggressive shot while walking out of his crease. Lyon moved closer to the 500-wicket mark as he took his tally in Test cricket to

Pakistan trails Australia by 355 runs 497 by finishing the day at one for 40. Captain Shan Masood nearly

chopped Lyon's delivery back onto his stumps off the first ball he faced before showing plenty of aggression, hitting five boundaries in his knock of 30. The left-hander, who scored a double century in the warm-up First-Class game against a Prime Minister's XI, attempted one too many shots to edge Starc late in an eventful last ses-

Umpire Richard Illingworth adjudged Masood not out, but Australia went for a successful television referral that showed the Pakistan skipper had got a thick edge as the ball flew into the hands of the wicketkeeper.

Imam, who shared a 74-run opening wicket stand with Shafique, was batting on a patient 136-ball knock with nightwatchman Khurram Shahzad not out on 7 off 18 deliveries

Imam stonewalled the world champion side for almost a couple of sessions with the Australian pacers beating the outside edge of the lefthander's bat numerous times without any luck. Lyon came close to separating the

opening pair after tea when Shafique was on 33, but television replays clearly showed the ball had missed the bat as Alex Carey collected the ball down the leg side and Australia wasted one of its reviews.

Earlier, Jamal's impressive debut helped Pakistan bowl out Australia shortly after lunch.

All-rounder Mitchell Marsh's attempt at his fourth test century ended on the first delivery after lunch, bowled on 90 by fast bowler Shahzad. The home side added only 11 runs after



going to lunch at 476 for seven, as Jamal cleaned up the tail quickly. Pakistan went into the test match

without a specialist spinner and handed debuts to the 27-year-old Jamal and Shahzad

Jamal roared in delight and then kissed the stadium turf after claiming his fifth wicket. He raised the ball to warm applause from the crowd as he walked off with his teammates after Australia's innings was brought to a close.

Jamal's haul marked the first time an overseas player had taken five wickets on debut in Australia since India's Abid Ali took six for 55 at Adelaide Oval in 1967.

On Thursday's first day of the three-match series, David Warner hit a commanding 164 off 211 balls in his farewell Test series as Australia reached 346 for five. Warner's first Test century in a year vindicated captain Pat Cummins' decision to bat first on a hard bouncy pitch.

The 37-year-old Warner, who will be retiring after the last test in his

made Pakistan toil in the first two sessions before he holed out at deep square leg in the last hour. He hit 16 fours and four sixes

Sydney hometown early next month,

Warner had endured a lean patch in test cricket since his double hundred against South Africa in Melbourne last year. He was heavily criticized by former Australia fast bowler Mitchell Johnson in the days leading up to the first test, who said Warner had become a liability to the team and didn't deserve to have a big farewell when he retires from Test cricket.

"People make comments, but you get on with it and you know you've got to go out there and score runs, and today, I did that," Warner said Thursday.

"If people are out to get you or make a headline from your name, then so be it. I can't worry about that. I've got to worry about what I've got to do for the team - keep scoring runs and putting the team in a great position."

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