OPINION 6

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RELIGIOUS PLACES

MONEY 10

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SOUTH AFRICA CRUSH INDIA TO WIN OPENING TEST

12 SPORTS

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Ayodhya dressed to welcome Ram

WORLD 9

ISRAELI STRIKES ACROSS

GAZA KILL DOZENS

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA NEW DELHI/AYODHYA

With the countdown to the consecration of the Ram Temple nearing, the birthplace of Lord Ram Lalla, Ayodhya, is now set to gain international connectivity and a newly revamped railway station that has been rechristened as Ayodhya Dham Railway Station, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will open the railway station and flag off eight trains, as well as Maharishi Valmiki International Airport on Saturday

He will also review the preparations for the opening ceremony, for which dignitaries from across the globe have been invited. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath reached the holy city on Thursday to assess the preparations for the Prime Minister's visit, which includes a massive road show on December 30.

To enhance accessibility to the upcoming Shri Ram Mandir, the Prime Minister will inaugurate four newly redeveloped, widened, and beautified roads in Ayodhya

Rampath, Bhaktipath, Dharampath, and Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Path. He will lay the foundation stone of a greenfield township being developed at a cost of more than ₹2,180 crore and the Vashishtha Kunj Residential Scheme to be developed at a



also dedicate several other railway projects to the nation. On the same day, after an hour, the PM will inaugurate the newly built Ayodhya Airport followed by a public

programme where he will

inaugurate, dedicate to the

nation, and lay the foundation

multiple

more than ₹15,700 crore in the State. These include projects worth about ₹11,100 crore for the development of Ayodhya and its surrounding areas and projects worth about ₹4,600 crore related to other projects across Uttar Pradesh.

'Prime Minister's vision is to develop modern world-class infrastructure in Ayodhya, improve connectivity, and revamp its civic facilities while also conforming to the rich history and heritage of the city. In realisation of this vision, a new airport, a newly development projects worth redeveloped railway station,

newly redeveloped, widened, and beautified roads, and other civic infrastructure are being inaugurated in the city. Further, foundation stones of a number of new projects will be laid that will contribute to the beautification and revamp of civic facilities in and around Ayodhya," said a

senior government official. The Phase-I of the state-ofthe-art airport has been developed at a cost of more than ₹1,450 crore. The airport's terminal building will have an area of 6,500 sqm, equipped to serve about 10 lakh passengers annually. The facade of the Terminal Building depicts the temple architecture of the upcoming Shri Ram Mandir of Ayodhya. The interiors of the terminal building are decorated with local art, paintings and murals depicting the life of

Bhagwan Shri Ram. The terminal building of Ayodhya airport is also equipped with various sustainability features like an insulated roofing system, LED lighting, rainwater harvesting, landscaping with fountains, water treatment plant, sewage treatment plant, solar power plant, and many

other such features have been provided to meet GRIHA 5 star ratings.

"The airport will improve connectivity in the region, leading to a boost in tourism, business activities, and employment opportunities," added the official.

The redeveloped Ayodhya Railway Station, now known as Ayodhya Dham Junction Railway Station, has been developed at a cost of more than ₹240 crore. The threestorey modern railway station building is equipped with all modern features such as lifts, escalators, food plazas, shops for puja needs, cloakrooms, and waiting halls. The station building will be accessible for all and IGBC certified green station building.

The programme at Ayodhya Junction Railway Station will witness the Prime Minister flagging off a new category superfast passenger trains in the country — the Amrit Bharat Express. The Amrit Bharat train is an LHB push-pull train with non-airconditioned coaches. This train has locos at both ends for better acceleration. It provides improved facilities for rail passengers such as beautifully designed and attractive seats, better luggage racks, mobile charging points with suitable mobile holders, LED lights, CCTV, public information systems, among others.

Continued on Page 2

Indian Navy men on death row in Qatar get reprieve

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

In a major reprieve on Thursday for eight former Navy personnel sentenced to death by a Qatar court, they will now face reduced punishment. It could involve serving a sentence in jail. However, details are awaited since the judgment has not been released.

The commutation of the death sentence by an appellate court in Qatar comes weeks after Prime Minister Narendra Modi met the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, on the sidelines of the CoP28 summit in Dubai. Details of the conversation were never made public, but there was speculation that this issue was raised. After the meeting on December 1, Modi said they discussed the well-being of the Indian community in Qatar.

The eight Indians were awarded the death penalty in October, reportedly on charges of espionage. The charges were not made public. The eight Indians are Purnendu Tiwari, Sugunakar Pakala, Amit Nagpal, and Sanjeev Gupta, who are Commanders, and Navtej Singh Gill, Birendra Kumar Verma, and Saurabh Vasisht, who are Captains. The eighth individual is

Sailor Ragesh Gopakumar.

today of the Court of Appeal of Qatar in the Dahra Global case, in which the sentences have been reduced. The detailed judgment is awaited," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement on Thursday. "Our Ambassador to Qatar and other officials were present at the Court of Appeal today, along with family members. We have stood by them since the beginning of the matter, and we will continue to extend all consular and legal assistance. We will also continue to take up the matter with the Qatari authorities," it added. Noting that a detailed

touch with the legal team as well as the family members to decide on the next steps. "Due to the confidential and sensitive nature proceedings in this case, it would not be appropriate to make any further comment at this juncture," the MEA said.

judgment was awaited, the ministry said it was in close

Some of the arrested individuals are highly decorated military personnel who once commanded Indian warships and were working for a private firm providing training and related services to Qatar's armed forces.

Continued on Page 2

Vijayakanth dies of Covid complications

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Vijayakanth, once rated as the future Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and the founding leader of Dravida Kazhagam, breathed his last on Thursday morning. The seventy-one-year-old Vijayakanth had been suffering from a series of ailments since 2016 and was not in the best of health for the last five years. He was the Leader of Opposition in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly during 2011-2016. He was diagnosed with Covid-19 and pneumonia and was on life support in a private hospital in Chennai for the last four days. Vijayakanth is survived by his wife, Premalatha (who was elected as MDMK general secretary earlier this month), and two sons.

Known as Black MGR and the poor man's Rajnikanth, the actor who had a series of hits in low-budget movies turned to politics in 2005 with the launching of DMDK. The party won 8.38 per cent of popular votes in the 2006 Assembly poll despite contesting without any alliance.

Continued on Page 2

Priyanka named in Vadra land deal chargesheet

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Purchase of three plots of land in Haryana in 2005-06 by Congress leader Sonia Gandhi's son-in-law Robert Vadra from a real estate agent is being probed along with a land deal made by ivanka Gandhi Vadra Enforcement Directorate (ED) claimed in a recently filed money laundering case chargesheet.

The federal agency filed the chargesheet (prosecution complaint) in November before a Delhi court against UAE-based NRI businessman CC Thampi, who is allegedly linked to Robert Vadra, and Sumit Chadha, a relative of alleged

middleman Sanjay Bhandari. Though Robert Vadra and Priyanka Gandhi, a Congress general secretary, have not been named as accused in the chargesheet, this is the first time that

Priyanka has been named in a chargesheet filed before a court.

A special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court in Delhi took cognisance of this chargesheet on December 22 and listed the matter for

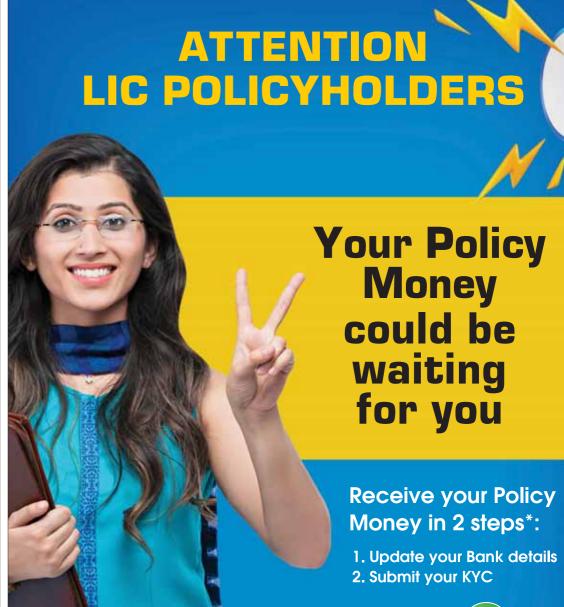
next hearing on January 29, 2024. Bhandari fled to the UK in 2016 and the British government approved his extradition to India in January this year acting on a legal request made by the ED



The two federal agencies are probing charges of money laundering and tax evasion against the alleged middleman for holding alleged undisclosed assets abroad.

The ED stated in the chargesheet that it came across the land purchase and sale transactions of the Vadras after it registered a Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) case against 67-year-old Thampi in 2015. A "long and thick rolation in 2015 and the second of th thick relationship" existed between Robert Vadra and Thampi, the ED said. Robert Vadra has been questioned by the agency in this case in the past and he had

denied any wrongdoing. Thampi, the ED said, had purchased about 486 acres of land between 2005 and 2008 in Amirpur village in Haryana's Faridabad district through HL Pahwa, a real estate agent based in Delhi-NCR.



Dense fog to ring in New Year

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

bout 25 per cent of the Apopulation in India is experiencing dense fog, with visibility dropping to less than 50 metres for the fourth consecutive day. In Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh, visibility ranged from 50 to 25 metres. Satellite imagery reveals the presence of fog in the north India region.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), dense fog is expected over Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Punjab until January 1, 2024. A total of 134 flights and 22 trains were delayed, with visibility dropping to as low as 50 metres in some parts of Delhi. Passengers were seen queuing up at the gates of the Indira Gandhi International Airport and railway stations amid intense fog.

The Gautam Buddh Nagar administration on Thursday



schools across Noida and

Greater Noida on Friday and

Saturday due to cold weather

This is a yearly ritual of sorts

when air and rail traffic is

severely affected for days as

fog engulfs the northern part

conditions.

visibility

ordered the closure of all flights, despite the myriad old as well as new technology being used to minimise the

impact." impact.
At 5:30 am, IMD reported that visibility at Delhi's Safdarjung Observatory Safdarjung Observatory dropped to 50 metres, while Palam, near Delhi airport, of the country, and near-zero recorded a visibility of 25 visibility disrupts the metres. In Punjab, Haryana, operations of trains and Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar

Thursday morning, two degrees above normal, compared to 7.8 degrees Celsius a day earlier. Delhi airport reported delays in flight operations, affecting approximately 134 flights, including both arrivals and

Pradesh, visibility ranged from 50 to 25 metres.

The IMD had issued an

'orange' alert, forecasting 'dense' to 'very dense' fog. It also predicted cold day

conditions in isolated parts of

temperature in Delhi stood at

8.4 degrees Celsius on

minimum

The

Delhi.

departures (domestic and international), due to fog.
Among them, 35 international flight and departures international arrivals were delayed. Additionally, 43 domestic departures and 28 domestic arrivals faced delays. The airport classifies a flight as 'delayed' when it is late by more than 15 minutes.

Continued on Page 2

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INS Imphal shining example | CAA is BJP tool to divide and rule: Didi of self reliance: Rajnath

Having taken serious cognisance of the recent drone attacks on the two Indian ships in the high seas, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said here on Thursday that the perpetrators of these attacks would soon be brought to justice and dealt with sternly.

Speaking after commissioning stealth guided missile destroyer INS Imphal in Mumbai, the Defence Minister said that since India is playing the role of a Net Security Provider for the entire Indian Ocean Region, the Government would not spare the perpetrators of the recent drone attacks on two Indian ships in the high seas. "India plays the role of a Net Security Provider in the entire Indian Ocean Region. We will ensure that maritime trade in this region touches greater heights. For this, together with our friendly countries, we will keep the sea lanes secure. We have full confidence in the ability and strength of our Navy," Rajnath said.

Alluding to the recent drone attacks on Merchant Vessel (MV) Chem Pluto in the Arabian Sea and the attack on 'MV Sai Baba' in the Red Sea. the Defence Minister said,"We have taken the attacks very seriously and the Navy has increased its surveillance. The perpetrators of these attacks



will soon be brought to justice and strict action will be taken

Rajnath said India's growing economic and strategic power had filled some forces with jealousy and hatred, he reiterated the Government's resolve to lay equal emphasis on the modernisation of all the three Services to safeguard national interests.

The earlier governments focussed only on protecting the country from land-based threats," he said.

Describing INS Imphal as a example of 'Aatmanirbharta' in defence, he said it was a reflection of the commitment of Indian Navy, Mazagaon Dock Shipbuikders Limited (MDL) and other

India's growing maritime power and it will strengthen it further. It will bolster our principle of 'Jalmev Yasya, Balmev Tasya' (One Who Controls the Sea is All Powerful) in the Indo-Pacific region," the defence minister said.

The ship measures 163m in length, 17m in breadth with a displacement of 7,400 tonnes and is amongst the most potent warships built in India. It is propelled by four powerful Gas Turbines, in a Combined Gas & Gas configuration, and is capable of speeds in excess of

The Raksha Mantri said that INS IMPHAL was a conglomeration of different strengths of

"With 75 per cent indigenous content, enhanced stealth features & state-of-the-art equipment, the ship will further strengthen India's maritime power & safeguard national interests, he said.

He stressed on the need to continuously develop the Navy's capabilities as global trade is of great importance to India to secure its national interests. Rajnath said that wiith the Himalayas in the north and the hostile behavior of Pakistan in the west, most of India's goods trade comes through sea, which

made it an island country from

In his address, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral R Hari Kumar said that INS Imphal possessed the distinction of being a shining symbol of Indian Navy's unflinching commitment towards achieving the vision of self-reliance in defence.

He said that he ship would not only tackle physical threats that emanate from the seas, but will also demonstrate the strength of an integrated coun-

"ÍNS Imphal will deter the various designs that try to harm national unity. It will breath fire upon the enemy and demonstrate unflinching resolve in the face of adversity," he said.

The commissioning of INS Imphal marked the formal induction of the third of four indigenous 'Visakhapatnam' class destroyers, being designed by the Indian Navy's Warship Design Bureau and constructed by MDL, Mumbai.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Flag Officer Commanding -in-Chief, Western Naval Command Vice Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi and Director (Finance) with Additional Charge of Chairman & Managing Director, MDL Sanjeev Singhal were among those present at the ship commissioning cere-

 $B^{\text{engal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee}}$ Bon Thursday slammed the BJP for digging up the bogey of Citizenship Amendment Act to divide and terrorise the voters ahead of the next year's general elec-

Two days after Union Home Minister Amit Shah assured the voters that CAA would definitely be implanted in India Banerjee hit back at the saffron government for "creating a needless flutter among the people by digging up a dead issue like CAA."

She said, "some people are saying that citizenship will be given to the (Hindu) immigrants after the CAA is implemented ... but I want to assure that this is a pre-poll gimmick as there is no need of CAA to gain citizenship because already you (the people) are citizens of India," asking "if you are not citizens already then how you are getting benefits of government schemes, how you are getting your PAN and Aadhar Cards, how you are getting government jobs, how your children are going to government schools." She further asserted that 'some parties (read BJP) are trying to beguiling the people in the name of CAA ... you all are citizens of this country and no one can take that right from you ... they are trying to raise the issue because they want to discriminate among the people ...but we have to remain alert against their trick ... we will have to remain united and thwart their designs to divide the people in the name of religion, caste etc in order

Shah had on Tuesday told a BJP organizational meeting in Kolkata that the workers would have to reach out to the people and tell them that CAA would definitely be implemented.

Attacking Banerjee for standing in the way of CAA he said, "Didi is misleading the people but let me tell you that CAA is a law passed by the Parliament and is a reality ... now no one can stop it from being imple-

Not INDIA, only TMC to fight BJP in Bengal, says Mamata

The Indian National Democratic Inclusive Alliance or INDIA on Thursday received a setback at least in Bengal after the State Chief Minister virtually ruled out any possibility of a pre-poll alliance with either the

Left or the Congress. She said, "INDIA is a vibrant force and it will very much stay and work all over the country ... but in Bengal only TMC will contest against the BJP because only we can defeat them."

Accusing the Left and the Congress of forging alliance with the BJP, Banerjee said, "if there is any party that can fight the BJP it is the TMC and we will lead the fight in Bengal ... The CPI(M), BJP, and the Congress have forged an alliance in Bengal and are actively campaigning against us ... this is the reason INDIA will take on the BJP nationwide, but here the TMC will fight the

mented ... where is the problem if our brothers --- who have been pushed out of neighbouring countries ... who have fled those countries because they were being forced to change their religion --- are given citizenship ... they will definitely get citizenship and no one can stop it."

Alerting the people against the "new pattern of veiled dictatorship being practiced by the BJP Government," Banerjee said, "they have passed laws after suspending 150 MPs ... this is unprecedented in the history of Indian democracy ... this is a dictatorship ... today India is witnessing democracy run by the Agencies (ED and CBI) only

Attacking the BJP for targeting the oppo-

kind of alliance with the Trinamool Congress in Bengal, the State Congress had left it all on the national leadership but asked for at least 6 seats if at all the two parties were to fight together in the State.

According to sources a team of Adhir Chowdhury, Deepa Dasmunshi, AH Khan Chowdhury, Shankar Malakar and Nepal Mahato had earlier told the Congress national leadership that the Pradesh Congress which had all these years been fighting against the alleged TMC misrule would fight together with them for the sake of INDIA alliance provided the ruling party left them six seats of Malda North and South, Darjeeling, Behrampore, Murshidabad and Purulia.

Subsequently AH Khan Chowdhury on Wednesday claimed that the TMC had agreed to leave only Malda South and Behrampore seats which are presently held

sition leaders in the name of corruption and doing nothing to their own corrupt leaders, she said, "BJP is a big washing machine where the corrupt leaders from other parties take shelter ... after these traitors join the BJP nothing is done against them ... on the other hand they are arresting the leaders like Balu (Bengal Forest Minister Jyoti Priya Mallick) so as to prevent them from working before the elections."

The BJP was branding the other parties as thieves, she said adding, "if the other parties are thieves then they are big dacoits who are looting India ... today you (BJP) are in power but tomorrow you may not be there ... then all your misdeeds will

Dense fog to ring...

"The four-airstrip Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport currently has only CAT-III runway, allowing planes to land during very low visibility. The main runway, 28/10, is currently closed for repairs. Due to insufficient lowvisibility operation-trained crew rostered by airlines and the closure of the main runway, delays and diversions have become common at Delhi, India's busiest aviation hub, especially on days with dense fog. Once an aircraft is delayed. other scheduled across the airline's network for that day may also face delays or cancellations. Other contributing factors include fog at other airports, right planes and crew for lowvisibility landings, and typical engineering issues.

The problem lacks an easy fix, as the location makes North India, particularly Delhi, susceptible to fog. As winter arrives, the ground cools rapidly at night, especially over the Indo-Gangetic Plain, causing the air close to the ground to cool down as well. Since cold air can hold less moisture, the water vapor present condenses into tiny water droplets, forming fog.

Northern Railways

spokesperson mentioned that at least 22 trains were delayed by more than one hour on Thursday morning. This included the Puri-New Delhi Purushottam Express, which was running late by more than six hours.

"In winters during dense fog, trains are run at reduced speeds to avoid any mishaps," the spokesperson explained. Meanwhile, Delhi's air continued to remain 'very poor' on Thursday, showing marginal improvement in the past 24 hours. The average air quality index (AQI) was 377 (very poor) at 9 am, settling at 358 at 4 pm. Forecasts indicate that Delhi's air quality is likely to remain 'very poor' till December 30. I

MP Danish Ali against removal of Sunehri Masjid STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

ok Sabha MP from Amroha Lok Sabha MP Irom Annoma Danish Ali has raised objections on the proposed removal of the Sunehri Bagh Masjid in Delhi, saying the mosque has historical importance.

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has sought public opinion on the mosque's proposed removal.

In a notice issued on Sunday, NDMC invited citizens' objections and suggestions on the matter by January 1. The mosque, which stands on a roundabout in central Delhi, has been proposed to be removed on grounds of traffic snarls in the area.

In a letter to the Heritage Conservation Committee (HCC), Ali said that such a

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

officials said.

agreement here.

tripartite peace accord between the pro-talks faction of

A tripartite peace accord between the pro-tained liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), and the

Central and Assam governments will be signed here on Friday,

aiming to end decades old insurgency in the northeastern state,

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Assam Chief Minister

Himanta Biswa Sarma and more than a dozen top leaders of

the pro-talks faction of the ULFA, headed by Arabinda

Rajkhowa, will be present during the signing of the peace

The accord will take care of a host of long-standing political,

economic and social issues concerning Assam, besides pro-

viding cultural safeguards and land rights to the indigenous

The hardline faction of the ULFA, led by Paresh Baruah, will

not be part of the agreement as he has been consistently reject-

Two top leaders of the Rajkhowa group -- Anup Chetia and

ing the olive branch offered by the government.

Jharkhand CM: Will attend Ram Temple consecration if invited

PRANAV PRATYUSH ■ RANCHI

As the INDI Alliance leaders distinctly look divided over attending the Ram Temple consecration ceremony in January this year, Jharkhand Chief Minister, Hemant Soren, braving the heat of Enforcement Directorate investigations, has said that he will attend the ceremony if he gets

an invitation. "If I get an invitation for the Ram Mandir consecration ceremony to be held on January 22, 2024 in Ayodhya, I will definitely attend the programme. We do not believe in the politics of religion, we believe in politics of development and benefits for all. I am a person who goes to a temple, a mosque, Gurudwara and also

ULFA, Centre, Assam Govt

to sign peace accord today

Mandir consecration ceremony, I will definitely go there. However, I have not received an invitation for the event," said Soren, talking to media persons here on Thursday. Notably, Trinamool Congress

has cleared that West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and no other party leader will attend the Ram Temple consecration ceremony. CPI(M) leader Sitaram Yechuri has also rejected the invitation. Congress is yet to take a decision, while some of the alliance leaders have said to be attending the event.

Meanwhile, talking about the selection of a PM's face in INDIA alliance, Soren said that the Opposition parties' alliance does not need a PM's

affairs A K Mishra.

India planning to launch 50 satellites for intelligence gathering in five years: ISRO

Mumbai: India is aiming to launch 50 satellites in the next five years for geo-intelligence gathering which will include the creation of a layer of satellites in different orbits with a capacity to track the movement of troops and image thousands of kilometers of area, Indian Space Research Organisation (İSRO) chairman S Somanath said here on Thursday.

Speaking at `Techfest', an annual science and technology event organised by the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, he said it is important to improve the ability of satellites to detect changes, to bring in more of AI-related and datadriven approach to analyse data, reduce data downloads and get only the necessary information.

Study: People with poor objective sleep quality exhibit elevated BP



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW

People with poor objective sleep quality exhibit unfavourable physical health indicators, particularly elevated blood pressure, a study has consists not only of the total sleep duration, but also the amount of the different sleep stages, the duration of wake period, and the frequency of awak-

Researchers from the University of Tsukuba in Japan conducted a comprehensive study involving 100 adults aged 30-59 years by employing electroen-cephalogram (EEG) measurements to assess sleep quality for five nights at the participants' homes. Electroencephalography is a method to record an electrogram of the spontaneous

electrical activity of the brain. Additionally, detailed health examinations were conducted at a health care facility in Tokyo.Ten sleep parameters derived from the EEG data collected during the five-night home study were used to categorise participants into three groups—namely, the good sleep group (comprising 39 participants), the intermediate group (comprising 46 participants), and the poor sleep group (com-

prising 15 participants).
The study, published in the journal Scientific Reports, utilised a form of unsupervised machine learning within the domain of artificial intelligence (AI) to evaluate 50 physical groups. The researchers observed statistically significant differences in systolic and diastolic blood pressure, GTP (a marker of liver function), and serum creatinine (a marker of kidney function).

Of these, the differences in systolic blood pressure - which measures the pressure in arteries when the heart beats — were particularly pronounced, consistently higher among participants of the poor sleep group, the researchers said.

The study unveiled a weak correlation between objective sleep quality, as measured by EEG during sleep, and subjective sleep quality. Notably, only objective sleep quality exhibited an association with systolic blood pressure, the researchers said. Additionally, the research identified specific combinations that displayed relatively strong correlations between the 10 EEG-derived sleep metrics and the 50 physical health parame-

on death row in Qatar get reprieve From Page 1 All eight have been in jail since

Indian Navy men

August last year and were handed death sentences on October 26, after a brief trial in March. Bail was denied numerous times during their incarceration and trial.

An appeal was immediately lodged, and last month, the Qatari court accepted that appeal. The eight were working for Dahra Global Technologies and Consultancy Services when arrested.

The Navy veterans were awarded death sentences on October 26, and India had then described the ruling as "deeply shocking" and vowed to explore all legal options in the case. In its reaction to the MEA last month said it is attaching "high importance" to this case. The charges were filed against the Indian nationals on March 25.

Admiral R Hari Kumar, earlier this month, said the government is putting all-out efforts to bring back all incarcerated personnel from Qatar. "We are working closely to ensure that their interests are looked after," Admiral Kumar said at a media

Meanwhile, Navy Chief

briefing. Earlier this month, the MEA said two hearings had taken place in connection with the case. "There have been two hearings. We filed an appeal, with the families, and the detainees had a final appeal. Two hearings have since been held. One was on November 30th, and the other was on November 23rd. I think the next hearing is coming up soon," MEA spokesperson Arindham Bagchi had said.

Vijayakanth dies of Covid complication

people, the officials said.

Though the DMDK fielded candidates in all the 234 constituencies, Vijayakanth was the lone winner. He forged an alliance with the AIADMK in the 2011 assembly election and bagged 29 seats, making the DMDK the second-largest party in the House after the AIADMK.

believed to be residing at a place along the China-Myanmar The ULFA was formed in 1979 with the demand for a "sovbanned outfit in 1990.

ereign Assam". Since then, it has been involved in subversive activities that led to the central government declaring it a

Sashdhar Choudhary -- have been in the national capital since

last week and gave the final touches to the peace agreement

Those who have been talking to the ULFA faction from the

government side include Director of the Intelligence Bureau

Tapan Deka and the government's advisor on the Northeast

The Rajkhowa-led ULFA faction had begun unconditional

talks with the central government in 2011, despite strong oppo-

sition from hardline faction led by Paresh Baruah, who is

along with government interlocutors, the sources said.

The Rajkhowa faction joined peace talks with the government on September 3, 2011 after an agreement for Suspension of Operations (SoO) was signed between the ULFA, central and state governments.

> expressed his sorrow over the demise of Vijayakanth. "Extremely saddened by the Nadu's passing away of Thiru Vijayakanth Ji. "A legend of the Tamil film world, his charismatic performances captured the hearts of millions. As a

committed to public service, leaving a lasting impact on political landscape. His passing leaves a void that will be hard to fill. He was a close friend, and I fondly recall my interactions with him over the years. In this sad hour, my thoughts are political leader, he was deeply with his family, fans, and

numerous followers," said the Prime Minister in his social media post. Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi, senior BJP leaders, and Chief Minister MK Stalin expressed their condolences and pain over the death of the DMDK leader. "Deeply pained by the passing away of

leader, and great humanitarian Vijayakanth. His outstanding contributions to cinema, politics, and service to society will ever be remembered. My prayers are with his family and countless followers," said the Governor in his message.

lay the foundation stone of an

accomplished actor, dedicated

Ayodhya dressed to welcome Ram

From Page 1

The Prime Minister will flag off two new Amrit Bharat trains: Darbhanga-Ayodhya-Anand Vihar Terminal Amrit Bharat Express and Malda Town-Sir M. Visvesvaraya Terminus (Bengaluru) Amrit

Bharat Express. Modi will also flag off six new Vande Bharat Trains, including Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra-New Delhi Vande Bharat Express; Amritsar-Delhi Vande Bharat Express; Coimbatore-Bangalore Cantt Vande Bharat Express; MangaloreMadgaon Vande Bharat Jalna-Mumbai Express; Vande Bharat Express; and Avodhya-Anand Vihar Ayodhya-Anand Vande Bharat Terminal Express. The Prime Minister will also

dedicate to the nation three railway projects worth Rs 2300 crore to strengthen rail infrastructure in the region. The projects include the Rooma Chakeri-Chanderi third line project; Jaunpur-Nagar, Akbarpur-Ayodhya, Sohawal-Patranga, Safdarganj-Rasauli sections of the Jaunpur-

Ayodhya-Barabanki doubling project; and the doubling and electrification project of the Malhaur-Daliganj railway section. Modi will also inaugurate and

This saw his rise as Leader of

the Opposition. But the

camaraderie with Jayalalithaa

ended soon, and since then,

the DMDK failed to win any

seats in the assembly polls.

Prime Minister Narendra

Modi, who always maintained

a special relationship with the

politician,

actor-turned

dedicate to the nation a number of projects that will strengthen civic infrastructure and beautify

public places in and around Ayodhya. These inaugurated projects include Rajarshi Dashrath Autonomous State Medical College; a four-lane road connecting Ayodhya-Sultanpur Road-Airport; a four-lane road to Tedhi

Bazaar Shri Janmabhoomi via NH-27 bypass Mahobra Bazaar; beautified roads several across the city and the Avodhya bypass; Jagdishpur-Faizabad section of NH-330A; widening and strengthening of the Maholi-Baragaon-Deodhi road and Jasarpur - Bhaupur -Gangaraman-Sureshnagar road; an ROB at Badi Bua Railway Crossing on Panchkosi Parikrama Marg; a solid waste treatment plant in the village Pikhrauli; and new buildings and classrooms in

Brajkishore Homoeopathic College and Hospital, among others.

The Prime Minister will also inaugurate works related to Mukhyamantri Nagar Srijan Yojana work and five parking and commercial facilities. Additionally, he will lay the foundation stone of new projects that will further help in the revamp of civic facilities in Ayodhya while also strengthening the rich cultural heritage of the city. These include conservation four

historical entrance gates in Ayodhya; new concrete ghats between Guptar Ghat and Rajghat and the rehabilitation of pre-built ghats; the development and beautification of tourist facilities from Naya Ghat to Ghat; Laxman construction of a visitor gallery for Deepotsav and other fairs at Ram Ki Paidi; and the strengthening and renovation of the pilgrim path

Temple.

from Ram Ki Paidi to Raj Ghat and Raj Ghat to Ram The Prime Minister will also

NH-28 (new NH-27) Lucknow-Ayodhya section; strengthening and modification of NH-28 (new NH-27) existing Ayodhya bypass; the establishment of the CIPET center in Ayodhya, and the construction work of the Municipal Corporation Ayodhya and Avodhya Development Authority office. During the public programme, the Prime Minister will inaugurate and dedicate to the nation other significant projects across Uttar Pradesh.

10,000 cops to man Capital for safe New Year

The Delhi Police has inten-1 sified security arrangements across the city in view of New Year celebrations with more 10,000 personnel slated to be on ground to rein in hooliganism and traffic violations. Police will work in two different shifts and all SHOs have been ordered to be on road to maintain law and order. Additionally, Delhi Traffic Police will deploy 2,500 personnel to ensure smooth movement of vehicles and 250 teams will be tasked with checking drunken driving on New Year's

To ensure the smooth flow of traffic on New Year's Eve, the Delhi Police have issued a traffic advisory for a smooth regulation of traffic in the entire national capital, saying people will throng restaurants, malls and other public places on New Year's eve, which may

congestion. According to the police, hidden cameras are installed to catch the violators be allowed in the inner, middle, or outer circle of Connaught Place except for those carrying valid passes.

'We have prepared two different shifts for deployment. First shit will start from 5 pm to midnight 12 am. Another shift will be 12 am to 6 am," Deputy Commissioner of Police (northeast) Joy Tirkey said. Police have also made elaborate security arrangements to prevent stunt-biking and hooliganism on the New Year eve. "I will not allow any motorcycle rider showing stunt or triple riding at any cost. Our teams will impound motorcycle immediately if anyone found guilty and strict action will be ensured," said the DCP Tirkey. Another senior police officer said that more than 10,000 police personnel -- from traffic and different unit of the Delhi Police -- will keep a strict vigil on December 31. Special Commissioner of Police (traffic) SS Yadav said the traffic moving towards Connaught

Place will be regulated after 8 pm on Sunday. "Around 2,500 traffic personnel will be deployed for smooth vehicular movement and 250 teams will be deployed to check drunken driving. Around 450 motorcycles will also be positioned at different places," Yadav said. "Dangerous and stunt driving or riding will not be tolerated. Vehicles will be towed away if found parked improperly," Yadav said. Police will also carry alcometres to determine whether or not a person has alcohol in his blood, he added. Adequate personnel will be deployed in the areas where high footfall is expected, police said. "Around 450 motorcycles will also be positioned at different places," said the Special Commissioner. Another police officer said that they have already strengthened the security at high-footfall market

"To ensure the safety of the common man and prevent hooliganism or traffic violations on the occasion of New Year, we have already identified

cacy of the medicines being

distributed to various patients

in Delhi government hospitals

are "Not of Standard Quality".

It further said that as per

Section 25 of the Drugs and

Cosmetics Act, 1940, the report

by the Government Analyst is

the conclusive and is accord-

ingly punishable under section

27 of the said act. It is noticed

that various companies were involved in the distribution

chain between the manufac-

turers and the end users i.e.

The vigilance departments stat-

ed that any action for supply-ing such kind of "Not of

Procurement Agency (CPA)

and there is a need to investi-

gate the entire supply chain viz.

role of suppliers who procured

hospitals (patients).

more than 500 vulnerable points. Special checking teams will be deployed at 287 major intersections and 233 drunken points (vulnerable points) to detect and prosecute traffic violations," said the officer. Police urged people not to drink and drive on New Year and observe traffic signals and stay within prescribed speed

'Not to indulge in racing or competition with other vehicles. Especially two-wheeler riders to wear helmets and avoid triple-riding and not indulge in reckless, dangerous or zig-zag driving," a senior police officer of south district

As per traffic police advisory, no vehicle will be allowed to proceed towards Connaught Place beyond Mandi House roundabout, Bengali Market roundabout, north foot of Ranjit Singh Flyover (Barakhamba Road - Tolstoy Marg Crossing), Minto Road -Deen Dayal Upadhaya Marg crossing, Chelmsford Road, near Munje Chowk (New Delhi Railway Station), RK Ashram Marg - Chitragupta Marg Crossing, Gole Market round-

Gandhi Road - Ferozshah Road Crossing, Jai Singh Road -Bangla Sahib Lane, Panchkuian Road - Bangla Sahib Lane, Windsor place roundabout, Buta Singh Marg roundabout, and State Entry Road - New Delhi Railway Station.

Delhi Railway Station.
Motorists can park their vehicles at the following places in the vicinity of Connaught Place: Near Gole Dak Khana on Kali Bari Marg, Pt. Pant Marg, Bhai Veer Singh Marg, near Patel Chowk on Rakab Ganj Road behind AIR, Mandi House on Conemicus Marg up House on Copernicus Marg up to Baroda House, Minto Road on Deen Dayal Upadhaya Marg and Press Road area, Panchkuian Road on RK Ashram Marg, Chitragupta Road and Basant Road towards Paharganj, and KG Marg -Ferozshah Road Crossing on Copernicus Lane as well as KG Marg towards C Hexagon.

According to the advisory, parking will also be allowed near the Bengali market roundTansen Marg, Windsor Place on Rajender Prasad Road and Raisina Road, Gole Market at Peshwa Road, Service Road along Bhai Veer Singh Marg and RK Ashram Road, and near Buta Singh roundabout on Jantar Mantar Road and Raisina Road.

Limited parking space will be available near Connaught Place on a first come first serve basis. Improperly parked vehicles will be towed away and prosecuted. Alternative routes have been made for commuters travelling to New Delhi Railway Station. Routes to the Old Delhi Railway Station, though, will not be affected.

People can travel via Ram Manohar Lohiya Park Street, Mandir Marg, Rani Jhansi Road, Jhandewalan roundabout, and Deshbandhu Gupta Road. Commuters can also use the GPO roundabout, Kali Bari Marg, Mandir Marg, Rani Jhansi Road, Jhandewalan roundabout, and Deshbandhu Gupta Road. The third option is the Winsor Place roundabout, Ferozeshah Road, Point, DDU Marg and BHAV Bhuti Marg.

Entry from Connaught Place, Chelmsford Road shall be prohibited. The traffic police advisory said that motorists can take the second entry gate of Ajmeri Gate side. They can reach the station via Paharganj, Shiela Cinema or through Ajmeri Gate, JLN Marg side via BSZ Marg, Delhi Gate, and JLN

Commuters can take the Ring Road from ISBT to the Ashram or via Delhi Gate, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, Mathura Road to reach Ashram and vice-versa or via ISBT, Rani Jhansi Marg, Panchkuian Road, Mandir Marg, Park Street, Mother Teresa Crescent Road & beyond or via Rani Jhansi Marg, Panchkuian Road, Hanuman Murti, Ring Road. The Noida Police also issued a traffic advisory for December 31, cautioning the public about diversions that will come up near crowded markets and shopping malls on New Year's

mented within 4-6 months. The Chief Secretary was him-

self present in the meeting. Despite this, the project is yet

to take off, plunging a significant part of Delhi in water

'When I took over as the DJB

crises yet again," she said.

Hold CBI probe into spurious drugs case, Department of Vigilance writes to MHA

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Government's Department of Vigilance has written to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) for a CBI inquiry into the spurious drugs supplied to hospitals in the national capital. Five medicines- amlodipine, levetiracetam, pantoprazole, cephalexin and dexamethasone have been found spurious during laboratory tests. These medicines were supplied to Delhi government-run hospital-Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narain, Deen Dayal Upadhayay, Institute of Human Behaviour & Allied Sciences (IHBAS). " Lt. Governor, Delhi, consid-

ering the aforesaid facts based on material records, has directed that "the matter of Mohalla Clinics is already entrusted to Clinics is already entrusted to CBI, this case, which may, inter alia, also involve supply of these failed "Not of Standard Quality" drugs to such clinics, may also be entrusted to the Central Agency, especially in light of the fact that the investigation theories involves multitigation therein involves multi inter-state stakeholder including Central Procurement Agency, Directorate of Health Service Delhi government, suppliers/dealers, manufacturers agencies," Department of Vigilance said in a note to MHA. The vigilance depart-

stantiated the fact that the effi-

held on 24th December in which the Controller of Drugs and Deputy Controller of Drugs, GNCTD and Drug Inspectors were present. Subsequently, a joint exercise was undertaken by the Drugs Control Department on 25.07.2023 to collect the samples of medicines on random basis from Delhi Government Hospitals for the purpose of sending them to approved labs for test/analysis as per the provisions of Drugs and Cosmetic Act, 1940. Three teams were deployed to lift samples from Delhi Government Hospitals that includes IHBAS, LNJP The samples were lifted as per Standard Quality" drugs should

law and thereafter the samples were sent for testing to various laboratories. The reports of the

from the manufacturers and provided supply to the end users i.e. hospitals (patients) Besides, there is a need to lift the corporate veil to understand the gravity and motives of supplying "Not of Standard Quality" drugs.

"In this context, it is not out of place to mention that the matter of "Mohalla Clinics was already entrusted to the CBI and Preliminary Enquiry (PE) was also registered vide PE No. PE-DAI-2018-A-0002 dated 13.02.2018. It needs to be investigated whether the same drugs which have been procured by Central Procurement Agency (CPA) are also being distributed to the patients through 'Mohalla Clinics" or not," read the note. The government analyst have

substantiated the fact that the efficacy of the medicines being distributed to various patients in Delhi Government hospitals are "Not of Standard Quality". Providing medicines which are "Not of Standard Quality" to the citizens of Delhi is a serious issue and amounts to compromising with public health and safety besides spending huge budgetary resources on such drugs which are "Not of Standard Quality". The impliwhich are "Not of Standard Quality" is far and wide with reference to the public health,"

Submit report on high ammonia levels in Yamuna, CS directed

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Expressing displeasure over high level of ammonia in Yamuna, causing less supply of drinking water across the Capital city, Delhi Water Minister Atishi on Thursday directed Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar to submit a comprehensive report on the delay in establishing the insitu ammonia treatment plant at Wazirabad Pond, demanding a clear timeline by January 1, 2024. In a note to the chief secretary, the minister further directed him to personally monitor the swift implementation of the project, ensuring tender is floated by January 15, 2024. The minister has also asked him to submit a timeline as to when the in-situ ammonia treatment plant will be functional.

"Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal gave directions to Delhi Jal Board to set up an ammonia treatment plant in Wazirabad in March. The work was to be finished within six months. Despite constant follow up, DJB has not even started the project. This even started the project. This is essential so that people of Delhi don't repeatedly suffer due to this recurrent probmer Twitter).

'The increased levels of Ammonia impacted the pro-



Chandrawal and Wazirabad. Due to this, I have been informed that the production capacity of Wazirabad and Chandrawal plants dipped by upto 50% of its capacity and the average production loss was around 35-40%. This crisis adversely impacted almost one fourth of the national capital affecting densely pop-ulated areas such as Sadar Bazar, Civil Lines, Old Delhi, Mukherjee Nagar, Saari, Patel Nagar, Kajirder Nagar, Karol Bagh, Majnu Ka Tilla, ISBT. Barafkhana, Bara Hindu Rao, Kamala Nagar, Roop Nagar to name a few. Several urgent the DJB to resolve the issue at hand," the minister said in

Atishi further stated that the

rising levels of ammonia in Yamuna river has now become a recurring problem that occurs every year impacting the lives of lakhs of people living in the national capital. "Effluents released by Haryana coupled with nonmaintenance of ecological flow of the river by Haryana are the major reasons behind rise in ammonia in Delhi. However no effective steps have been taken to resolve this persistent crisis. The Chief Minister chaired a meeting of DJB on 15_03.2023, where this issue was discussed at length. Ir the meeting, it was decided that ment of ammonia inside Wazirabad pond. This project

Chairperson, this issue was the first issue that was discussed extensively. However, I am disappointed to say that no work has started on ground to implement this important project. This is a serious lapse on the part of the DJB. If decisions taken in High level meetings chaired by the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Ministers-in-charge arid Chief Secretary are not implemented then it raises serious questions on the Government's working machinery. This should not be tolerated because nonimplementation of such key projects adversely impact the lives of lakhs of Delhiites. It was the Ial Board that had committed to the timeline of 4-6 months for completing

ly adhere to timelines committed by them in such high level meetings, especially if it pertains to key projects such and not to cause them any

The department must strict-

this project.

Parliament security breach: Accused taken to places where they assembled, brought flags

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI The Delhi Police Special

Cell took the Parliament security breach accused to places where they assembled and the shop from where they bought flags before the security breach on December 13. In a related development, the Delhi Police on Thursday moved a court here seeking permission to conduct the polygraph test of all six people arrested in this connection. According to sources, Sagar Sharma and Manoranjan D, who had entered the parliament, were on Wednesday taken to Sadar Bazar where they bought Indian flags and India Gate where they assembled before entering the Parliament. The accused had distributed the flags and smoke canisters at India Gate before the parliament, a source

The two were also taken to the Maharani Bagh area in New Friends colony where they had held a meeting to discuss their plan, the person said. An official privy to the investiga-tion said that the accused were being taken to these places to establish the sequence of events that culminated with the Parliament security breach.

The Delhi Police has arrested six people - Sagar Sharma, Manoranjan D, Neelam, Amol Shinde, Lalit Jha, and Mahesh Kumawat - for allegedly breaching the Parliament security. All six have been booked under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. On Thursday, the Delhi Police moved an application to conduct a polygraph test, also called a lie detector test, before the court. The application was moved before Additional Sessions Judge Hardeeep Kaur, who posted the matter for January 2, noting that the counsel representing some of the accused was not present. Police had also brought the six accused before the court during the hearing of the plea. The accused, Manoranjan D, Sagar Sharma, Amol Dhanraj Shinde, Neelam Devi, Lalit Jha and Mahesh Kumawat, are currently in police custody till January 5. The Delhi police, represented by Public Prosecutor Akhand Pratap Singh, had earlier told the court that "the attack was well planned."

He had further submitted before the court that the custodial interrogation of the accused was required to find out the "actual motive behind the attack," and if they had any association with any other enemy country or terror organisations.

In a major security breach on the anniversary of the 2001 Parliament terror attack --Sagar Sharma and Manoranjan

D -- jumped into the Lok Sabha chamber from the public gallery during Zero Hour, released yellow gas from canisters and shouted slogans before they were overpowered by the MPs.

 $T^{\text{he MCD House meeting on}}_{\text{Thursday witnessed chaot-}}$ ic scenes as Opposition councillors stormed into the well of the House, raising slogans against the AAP-led government demanding discussion on several issues. Mayor Shelly Oberoi adjourned the meeting within a few minutes of starting stating that the BIP councillors deliberately disrupted to halt the House from beginning its proceedings. The councillors demanded

the arrest of Delhi Health Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj over the alleged supply of "substandard" drugs in city government hospitals.

The mayor suspended the Leader of Opposition Raja

Iqbal Singh for 15 days from the House along with other BJF councillors Ravi Negi, Yogesh Verma and Gajendra Singh for repeatedly trying to halt the House proceedings. "Due to repeated attempts of causing disruption in the House halting its proceedings, the four members of the House have been suspended for 15 days," Oberoi told reporters in a press conference

She added that the suspended councillors will not be allowed to attend the next House meeting if it's held before their suspension is over.

Responding to the suspension and a bar on his entry in the next House meeting, Raja Iqbal Singh said that the AAP-led government doesn't want to answer issues concerning pub-



Chaos as Opposition storms into Well of MCD House

lic welfare and that he will participate in the next meeting despite the suspension.

"We have been suspended today. The mayor does not want us to raise the voice of the public. For the first time in the history of MCD, this hap-

pened. We were not informed about the agenda before the House. The questions we gave were rejected. The mayor even refused to read the condolence motion to me before the House began," he told

"We will continue to participate in the next House meeting," he The House was adjourned amid heavy sloganeering by the BJP and Congress councillors who congress councillors who protested by holding placards with slogans "Saurabh Bharadwaj ko jail bhejo", "House tax mafi yojna laao", "kya hua tera wada, pehli tareekh ko salary kaha tha" written on them.

was supposed to be imple-

Amid the ruckus, the mayor gave a green signal to 18 proposals including an item on collection of toll tax and ECC from commercial vehicles entering Delhi.

The House postponed three proposals and referred back to two items that will be reconsidered by the MCD commissioner to be tabled in the next

Critcising the functioning of AAP in the MCD, Delhi BJP President Shri Virendra Sachdeva has said that was an autocratic and anarchic party which does not believe in allowing opposition to speak & raise public issues in the Delhi Assembly or Municipal Corporation of Delhi House. "The Arvind Kejriwal government does not allow Question Hour in Delhi Assembly and now it doesn't allow opposition to raise any issue in M.C.D. House too. It is surprising that Kejriwal and his party who cry for their MPs rights in Parliament get all Opposition BJP MLAs suspended from Delhi Assembly when the raised Government's scams in the House," he said.

LG approves proposal to implement Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Act 2021

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lt Governor V K Saxena on Thursday approved a proposal to implement the amended Medical Termination

Pregnancy(Amendment)Act,2 021 providing for universal access for women to comprehensive abortion care and termination of certain Registered Medical Practitioners (RMP). Giving details here, officials said Parliament had amended the MTP Act two years back and the central government wrote to all states and Union Territories(UT)to notify the

amendments. Saxena expressed grave displeasure and surprise that the matter was presented for approval after a lapse of more than two years, the communication for which was mailed by the Central Government to the GNCTD in December 2021.

While considering the significance of the issue and agreeing to the proposal, the LG directed the Health Department, GNCTD to ascertain the lapses leading to inordinate delay in processing the matter and asked to assign the responsibility and exercise caution in future.

Reacting on the LG's move, Delhi Health Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj said though the note of LG saab has not reached his office yet, however, like earlier occasions contents of official note have been leaked to Media. So his response is based on assumption that Media got the contents from some Senior Government officials working at LG office. Though it's a prevalent practice to leak official notes to Media/social media, however, the attempt of CS Naresh Kumar to intimidate my office staff for alleged release of official note to Media/social media is laughable.

"Health, being a state, subject, comes directly under the purview of the elected government and with great confidence it is assured that the elected government is equally sensitive

towards universal healthcare for all, including women.It appears that Hon'ble LG has not been informed that till date that apart from Odisha neither any BJP ruled state nor any non-BJP ruled state has issued notification regarding the revised statutory forms the amended MTP Act,2021," Bharadwai said. In the year 2021 major amend-

ments were made in the MTP Act by the Central Government by which opinion of only one RMP will be required up to 20 weeks of gestation and of two RMPs for termination of pregnancy of 20-24 weeks of gestation under special circum-

4 AISAT staffers, 1 flyer to UK held for involvement in human trafficking racket

NEW DELHI

 $F_{\text{Services Private Limited}}^{\text{our Air India SAT Airport}}$ (AISAT) staffers and an Indian passenger bound for the UK were apprehended at the Delhi airport by CISF personnel for their alleged involvement in a human trafficking racket, a senior officer said Thursday. The incident took place on Wednesday at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport when the activities of a passenger, supposed to fly to Birmingham

on an Air India flight, were found suspicious, he said. The security personnel scanned CCTV footage and found that immigration officials first refused to allow the passenger as his travel documents were "doubtful" and they asked him to come back with airline officials for clarification, a Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)

spokesperson said. The passenger, however, did not go to the airline staff but approached an AISATS staffer,

Extradite Saeed, India tells Pakistan

In its determined fight against terrorism, India has officially requested Pakistan to extradite Hafiz Saeed, mastermind of the 26/11Mumbai terror attacks and founder of Laskhar-e-Tayabba(LeT). He has been listed as one of India's most wanted terrorists and carries a ten million dollar bounty placed by the US for his alleged role in the terror attacks in

It was reliably learnt that Ministry of External Ministry Affairs(MEA)has sent a formal request to Pakistan government urging them to initiate legal process of Saeed's extradition. However, there is no extradition treaty between the two neighbours.

When Pakistan's foreign ministry was asked about any such requests by India, it said, "The question is based on speculative reporting. We would not like to comment on such reports?

India has repeatedly demanded Saeed's extradition to face trial for the Mumbai attacks, but the absence of an extradition treaty between India and Pakistan complicates the



Despite his claims of innocence and denial of leadership within LeT, Saeed has faced various legal challenges over the years. He was first arrested in July 2019 and received an 11-year sentence just months before Pakistan's review by the Financial Action Task Force. In April last year, documents showed that a Pakistani court sentenced Saeed to 31 years in prison in connection with terrorism financing. However, it is unclear whether he is in jail, with some reports claiming that he remains a free man after being released from house arrest in 2017. Saeed has been

arrested and released several times over the past decade.

Last year, India declared Hafiz Saeed's son, Talha Saeed, a terrorist, under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA). Now, Talha Saeed is preparing to contest the upcoming general elections in Pakistan under the banner of the Pakistan Markazi Muslim League (PMML), a political party floated by his father.

New Delhi has asked Islamabad to take irreversible, verifiable, credible and sustainable steps on terror groups and financing of terror groups which is tak-ing place from any territory

Commutation of death sentence to Navymen in Qatar: Congress happy

The Congress has expressed its relief over the decision of the Court of Appeals in Qatar to commute the death penalty of eight former Indian Navy officers and hoped that even their jail sentence will be set aside and they will be set

In a huge relief for New Delhi, the appellate court in Qatar commuted the death sentence of the eight Navy veterans, who were arrested in a case of alleged espionage in August

"We have noted the verdict today of the Court of Appeals of Qatar in the Dahra Global case, in which the sentences have been reduced," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement on

Reacting to the development, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the party shares its relief over the deci-

Indian National "The Congress shares its immediate relief along with the entire nation that the Court of Appeals in Qatar has decided not to go ahead with the death penalty on 8 former Indian Navy officers. While

express the hope that even the jail sentence that has replaced the death penalty will be set aside and the officers will be set free," Ramesh said in a post on X. The Indian nationals, who

were working with Doha-based Al Dahra Global Technologies, were taken into custody in August last year. While the charges against them were not made public by Qatari authorities, they were sentenced to death by the country's Court of First Instance in October this year. The private firm provided training and other services to Qatar's armed forces and

Among the eight Navy veterans, Captain Navtej Gill was awarded the President's Gold Medal for excellence when he graduated from the Naval Academy and later, served as an instructor at the Defence Services Staff College at Wellington in Tamil Nadu. The others are Captain

Vasisht, Saurabh Commanders Purnendu Tiwari, Amit Nagpal, S K Gupta, B K Verma, Sugunakar Pakala and Sailor Ragesh. India moved the Court of Appeals in Qatar against their death sentence last month.

HC: Withholding mutual consent for divorce in failed marriage cruelty

Withholding mutual consent for divorce in a failed marriage or unilaterally withdrawing such consent amounts to cruelty to the other spouse, the Delhi High Court has said while upholding the divorce granted to a husband

by a family court here. A bench headed by Justice Suresh Kumar Kait, while dealing with an appeal of the wife who withdrew her consent for mutual divorce after a settlement, observed that the idea of a "no-fault-divorce" is to make the parties realise that there was a sensible way of parting on the

In the present case, the parties had agreed to divorce by mutual consent and a settlement was arrived at between them pursuant to which a demand draft of Rs 5 lakh was given by the husband to the wife but, after part-payment, she unilaterally withdrew her consent and returned the money.

"It is evident that the fight inter se the parties was not on any justifiable grounds, but was a war between the egos, prompted by the desire to wreak vengeance against the spouse. Such unilateral withdrawal from divorce by mutual consent thus, amounted to cruel-



ty," the bench, also comprising Justice Neena Bansal Krishna, said in a recent judgement.

"Withholding mutual consent in a failed marriage, is nothing but cruelty," noted the court as it remarked that the wife's conduct of making the husband believe that their disputes were going to end and then withdrawing from the settlement can "cause disquiet, cruelty and uncertainty" in his mind. Besides the withdrawal of consent, the court also held that false criminal complaints by the wife against the spouse and his family, including his 86-yearold grandmother, due to which they suffered "protracted litigation", was also an act of cruelty by her.

"The acts of the appellant/wife of filing not only false criminal cases against the husband and his family but also, appealing against them in a vexatious manner, amounts to cruelty,"

It noted that the false and unsubstantiated allegations of adultery against the husband, which constitute grave assault on his character, honour and reputation, also amounted to worst form of cruelty.

The couple had got married in 2001 but it survived barely for about 13 months as they separated in January 2003 and the husband subsequently filed for divorce on account of cruelty. The wife denied all allega-

In view of the incidents brought on record, the court observed that although they may not be of much significance in isolation but when viewed together, they clearly depicted the "non-adjusting attitude" of the wife "who had no maturity to sort out the differences with the husband without his public humiliamental cruelty".

The court refused to interfere with the family court's verdict and said the principal judge rightly observed that while matrimonial life in the present case survived only for 13 months, the civil and criminal litigation between them ran into more than 13 years.

We find no merit in the present Appeal, which is hereby dismissed", the court said.

Centre hiding worst territorial setback in 6 decades: Cong

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NFW DFI HI

ongress leader Jairam Ramesh Con Thursday alleged that the government is trying to cover up the worst territorial setback in six decades against the country and Chinese troops have been denying Indian patrols access to the strategic Depsang Plains, Demchok, and other areas in eastern Ladakh since May 2020. Ramesh on X cited a post by Ladakh-based politician Konchok Stanzin, who said a landmark at the site of the legendary Rezang La battle of the 1962 Sino-India

conflict in Ladakh was dismantled by the Army as part of the disengagement process with China. Stanzin is the councillor of Chushul in the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council.

"Chushul Councillor Konchok Stanzin has revealed here that the site at which Major Singh fell, where a memorial had been built, was dismantled as it fell in the buffer zone

negotiated with China in 2021. This is a huge fallen heroes of Charlie Company," Ramesh The Congress leader said the defence of

Rezang La by C Company of 13 Kumaon, led by the legendary Major Shaitan Singh, is one of the most storied episodes of Indian war his-

"If any proof was still needed that the buffer zones negotiated by the Modi government are in territory previously controlled by India, it is provided by this most shameful concession," he said.

"For four years, the Modi government has tried to cover up the worst territorial setback in six decades for India with its DDLJ

Figure 110005.

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Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address

M/s. Vintage Pasture Dairy Farms LLP,

Ankur Bhati (Partner), Adesh Kumar

(Partner), Ankur Bhati, Adesh Kumar,

Sundeep Chaudhary, 721851000001

B-112B, Ground Floor Sector 44 Noida Gautam Budhanagar- 201301

Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act. 2002

approach: Deny, Distract, Lie and Justify. Since

May 2020, Chinese troops continue to deny Indian patrols access to the strategic Depsang Plains, Demchok and other areas in eastern Ladakh," said the party general secretary. He also debunked the purported Indian triumph in Doklam in 2017, and cited the mounting encroachment by China on Bhutanese land. "Despite hollow claims of an Indian victory

stranglehold on Bhutanese territory in the past six years, increasing the threat to India's Siliguri Corridor, also known as Chicken's Neck," said Ramesh.

"China understands that if the Prime Minister is allowed to claim PR successes, he will continue to cede ground to the Chinese salamislicing tactics. And he will continue to lie to the nation proclaiming 'Na koi hamari seema mein ghus aaya hai, na hi koi ghusa hua hai," the politician said.

'It is time to tell the truth to the people of India, and to explain how and when the status quo ante will be restored in Ladakh," Ramesh added.

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2023

Congress will undertake caste census after coming to power at Centre: Rahul

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

ongress on Thursday →announced to undertake caste census after coming to power at the Centre.

Addressing a rally in Nagpur on the occasion of the Congress' 139th foundation day, party leader Rahul Gandhi said unemployment in the country has reached its highest point in the last 40

He said his party will undertake caste census after returning to power at the Centre.
Speaking at the event, named 'Hain Tayyar Hum', where the Congress kickstarted its campaign for next year's Lok Sabha elections, Rahul Gandhi said there is a battle of two ideolo-

gies in the country. "Unlike the BJP, even a junior and disagree with top party leaders," he said. Vice chancellors are being appointed not on the basis of merit but because they belong to a particular organisation, he added. Rahul said the OBCs, Dalits and tribals do not have enough representation in many sectors in the country and reiterated that a caste census will be conducted if Opposition's INDIA alliance came to power, while party chief Mallikarjun Kharge promised implementation of the NYAY scheme for the poor.

president Congress Mallikarjun Kharge and several top party leaders from Maharashtra and other states took part in the event, while its former president Sonia Gandhi and general secretary Privanka Gandhi Vadra did



not attend the rally. Addressing the crowd Kharge said Congress has always worked towards building an India that is based on parliamentary democracy and equality.

Kharge said Congress believes in an India that is based on parliamentary democracy, where there is equality and opportunities for all without any discrimination, and where political, economic and social Constitution are followed.

"We are proud that for the last 138 years we have been struggling with full honesty to build such an India. My heartiest greetings to every Indian on the occasion of Congress foundation day," he said.

Party's top leaders were speaking at the foundation day rally -- titled `Hain Taiyyar Hum (we are ready) -- in Nagpur city which also houses the headquarters of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and sounded the bugle for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

The Green Revolution, White Revolution and Information Technology revolution were ushered in by farmers, women and the youth, respectively, while the Congress governments laid down the vision for these revolutions, Rahul said.

Estimated ₹50,000 crore business to be generated with inauguration of Ram Temple

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

An estimated Rs 50,000 crore worth of business will be generated in January with the inauguration of Ayodhya's Ram Temple on January 22. According to the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT), all hotels in Ayodhya, Varanasi and Prayagraj have been booked ahead of the consecration of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya and business communities and traders have expected business worth of Rs 50,000 crore across the country on January 22. Additionally, the Uttar Pradesh government has received over 100 applications for permission to build five-star hotels in Ayodhya, which did not have a proper hotel even a few years back.

"There is huge demands, large quantities of special cloth garlands, lockets, key chains, pictures of Ram Darbar, models of Ram temple, Lord Ram Dhwaja, Lord Ram Angvastra etc., imprinted with the picture of Lord Ram are available in all the markets of the country. Many types of accessories including decorative pendants and bangles are available in the market. Traders in all the states have made extensive preparations to meet the demand of this additional trade," said CAIT Secretary Prime Minister Narendra Modi to declare January 22 as "Ram Rajya Diwas". Ahead of the consecration of Ram Mandir, large posters bearing images of the upcoming Ram temple and the new airport and a message that hails Ayodhya as a city of "Maryada, Dharm and Sanskriti" have been put up in the temple town and its surrounding areas.

According to Khandelwal, there is a high demand especially for models of Shri Ram Mandir and these models are being made in different sizes from hardboard, pinewood, wood etc. The important thing is that a large number of women are getting employment in making these models, while local artisans, artists and hand workers are also getting huge business in all the states. A large number of kurtas, T-shirts and other clothes are being prepared on which models of Shri Ram Temple are printed. Either it is being embroidered by hand or it is being printed and the special thing is that Khadi is being used in making kurtas," he said. In addition, earthen lamps, rangoli colours,

flowers for decoration and electrical items for

lighting the markets and homes are all set to get big business. Also the service sector is liketo get big business while the promotional material across the country including hoardings, posters, banners, leaflets, other literature, stickers etc. have also been fully geared up for substantial business.

Additionally, people associated with music business across the country are also not ntouched by this campaign. A large numb of songs are being composed across the country regarding Shri Ram Temple and the special thing is that small and unknown lyricists, composers and singers are getting work, while orchestra parties working in all the cities are also making programs related to Shri Ram

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to inaugurate the new airport and the redeveloped railway station on December 30. He

Lallu Singh said on Wednesday in a post on X. In addition, the Maryada Purushottam Shriram International Airport in Ayodhya will be inaugurated by the Prime Minister on December 30.

is also slated to hold a roadshow from the airport to the station. The Ram temple will be inaugurated with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath while over 6,000 people are expected to attend the the consecration ceremony of the Ram Lalla idol. The city's railway station to be inaugurated by PM Modi on December 30 has been renamed to 'Avodhva Dham Junction', Avodhva's MP

NEW OKHLA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY voigs Main Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida, G.B. Nagar (U.P.)

E-Tenders are invited from eligible contractors/firm for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website: www.noidaauthorityonline.in & https://etender.up.nic.in. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.

E-TENDER NOTICE

A) Tender Work:-						
SL No.	Job No.	Name of Work	Tender Amount (in Lacs.			
1	14/DGM(NTC) /Sr.M./DGM (E&M)/2023- 24	SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, COMMISSIONING AND TESTING Reverse Osmosis Work for Command Control Centre Building Near Mahamaya Flyover Sector- 94, Noida	49.01			

The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 11.01.2024 up to 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened / downloaded on dated 12.01.2024 at 11.00 AM

> Dy. General Manager (NTC) NOIDA

ULFA, Centre, Assam Govt to sign peace accord today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

A tripartite peace accord between the pro-talks faction of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), and the Central and Assam governments will be signed here on Friday, aiming to end decades old insurgency in the northeastern state, officials said.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and more than a dozen top leaders of the pro-talks faction of the ULFA, headed by Arabinda Rajkhowa, will be present during the signing of the peace agreement here. The accord will take care of a

host of long-standing political, economic and social issues concerning Assam, besides providing cultural safeguards and land rights to the indigenous people, the officials said.

The hardline faction of the ULFA, led by Paresh Baruah, will not be part of the agreement as he has been consistently rejecting the olive branch offered by the government.

Two top leaders of the Rajkhowa group -- Anup Chetia and Sashdhar Choudhary -- have been in the national capital since last week and gave the final touches to the peace agreement along with government interlocutors, the sources said. Those who have been talking to the ULFA faction from the government side include Director of the Intelligence Bureau Tapan Deka and the government's advisor on the

The Rajkhowa-led ULFA faction had begun unconditional talks with the central government in 2011, despite strong opposition from hardline faction led by Paresh Baruah, who is believed to be residing at a place along the China-Myanmar border. The ULFA was formed in

1979 with the demand for a "sovereign Assam". Since then, it has been involved in subversive activities that led to the central government declaring it a banned outfit in 1990. The Rajkhowa faction joined

peace talks with the government on September 3, 2011 after an agreement for Suspension of Operations (SoO) was signed between the ULFA, central and state gov-

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtaine

by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcemen

of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are

District Hapur

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as

applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of

this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financia

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

Property Address

Asset to be Enforced

Area 7370 Sq.mtr. Khasra No. 283

Sq.mtr. Khasra No. 296, Khata No. 164, Village Sakarpur, Tehsil and

Khata No. 50, Village Sakarpur, Tehsil and District Hapur. & Area 1180.41

Date: December 29, 2023 Place: Delhi/ NCR

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 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.		Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch		
	Sunil Karwatkar/ Daksha Sunil Karwatkar/ LBDEL00002003182/ LBDEL00002003183	Flat No.104, FF Satyam Tower, S Cube, Residency Old, Padra Road Vadodara/ December 26, 2023	January 30, 2020 Rs. 31,77,928/-	Delhi/ NCR & Vadodara		
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. Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited Date: December 29, 2023 Place: Delhi/NCR

CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA

NIA files 4,000 pages chargesheet against six in ISIS module case

¬he National Investigation Agency on Thursday filed a chargesheet against six people in a case pertaining to promoting terror activities in India at the behest of outlawed outfit ISIS.

The six accused, Tabish Siddiqui, Zulfikar Ali, Sharjeel Shaikh and Aakif Ateeque Nachan, Zubair Shaikh and Adnanali Sarkar, were held in July during multiple raids in Maharashtra by the NIA in the ISIS module case. The 4000-page chargesheet, which was filed in the court of Special NIA Judge A K Lahoti, has 16 protected witnesses.



The NIA said all six are members of the proscribed ISIS outfit and had hatched a conspira- threaten the security, secular cy to further terrorist activities ethos and culture of India as well of the organisation with the as its democratic system of gov-

intention to strike fear and terror among the people and to

ror organisation's anti-India The accused were found in posagenda, the NIA said. The case was registered by NIA session of incriminating mate-

rial related to 'Hijrah' to Syria,

along with propaganda magazines like 'Voice of Hind' and

'Voice of Khurasan' published by

ISIS, the NIA said in a press note.

Further, the accused had been

sharing DIY (Do It Yourself) kits

with their contacts and were also

found to be raising funds to finance their terror plans and

designs as per NIA investiga-

exposed the strong and active

links of the accused with ISIS

and their efforts to motivate vul-

nerable youth to further the ter-

tions, the press note said. The material seized clearly on June 28, 2023 against Tabish Siddiqui and others following information received by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) regarding a conspiracy hatched by them to disturb the unity, integrity, security and sovereignty of the country, and to wage a war against the Government of India by promoting the terrorist activities of

Further investigations in the case are continuing in accordance with the provisions of section 173(8) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).

station. The constable has been admitted

In Muzaffarnagar district of western UP.

two men were killed after being run over by a truck in Miranpur Police station area

motorcycle when a truck hit their bike

lided with a stranded pickup van in

Atraulia police station area of the district.

SHO Ravindra Rai said, "The accident

to a hospital, officials said.



TN, Kerala CMs take part in Vaikom satyagraha centenary

Thief Ministers of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, M K Stalin and Pinarayi Vijayan, who participated in the centenary of the Vaikom satyagraha here on Thursday emphasised that such renaissance movements were needed to establish an egalitarian society free from repression.

Both the Chief Ministers visited the Perivar Thidal here and paid floral tributes to rationalist leader Perivar E V Ramasamy who is hailed as "Vaikom Veerar.

The centenary event was a lowkey affair due to the sudden demise of actor and founder of Desiya Murpokku Dravida (DMDK) Kazhagam

Vijayakanth earlier in the day. A book on Periyar and the 1924 Vaikom struggle besides a centenary souvenir were released on the occasion. TN Chief Minister presented a copy of the souvenir to his Kerala

'Periyar was arrested twice during the agitation. The Vaikom protest lasted for a total of 603 days. Periyar participated in the agitation for 141 days and he was in jail for 74 days," Stalin said while describing the struggle that paved the way for temple entry in the country.

He called for a crusade against untouchability, caste inequality, against high and low thinking. Also, male-female discrimination should be eradicated, he said, and added that efforts would be made to strive and establish an egalitarian society on the path shown by revolu-

tionary social reformists. Describing the Vaikom Satyagraha as a people's movement unparalleled in Indian history, Pinarayi Vijayan said both Kerala and Tamil Nadu take pride in the Vaikom Struggle. 'When we commemorate a movement that brought different strands - social and political together for the common

good, it is imperative that we too strive to bring such different strands together to achieve the common good relevant to our times," the Kerala CM said and cautioned against regressive

thoughts and practices. He claimed that there were attempts to divide people along religious lines and region as well. Vijayan regretted that the Gubernatorial positions were being "misused for subverting the authorities of the elected governments of states" and that some Governors encroached upon the fields legitimately assigned to the judiciary by the constitution.

Dravidar Kazhagam president K Veeramani, TN Ministers: Duraimurugan, K N Nehru, A V Velu, M R K Panneerselvam, Thangam Thannarasu, M P Saminathan, Ma Subramanian, P K Shekharbabu, Anbil Mahesh Poiyamozhi, Chennai Corporation Mayor R Priva and senior government officials participat-

Four killed, 6 injured in road crashes due to fog in UP

MUZAFFARNAGAR (UP)

At least four people were killed and six Ainjured in separate road crashes in Uttar Pradesh due to reduced visibility caused by dense fog, police said on Thursday.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had to cancel his trip to Ayodhya on Thursday due to poor visibility because of dense fog, press secretary in the CM's office Mrityunjay Kumar said Adityanath had to fly to the temple town

ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit on December 30 to inaugurate a new airport and a new railway building. Sources said he might travel to Ayodhya by road either this evening or Friday morning.

According to the state Meteorological department officials, dense fog was reported from across Uttar Pradesh in the early hours of Thursday, with visibility plunging down to less than 40 metres in

The weather department officials have forecast dense fog with visibility dropping to 50 metres in the state for the next two

 K^{arnataka} Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday said the govern-

ment would introduce an

ordinance to ensure that 60

per cent of space on sign-

boards and name plates is

dedicated to Kannada, with

the rest left to any other lan-

guage. The ordinance will

The government will also

bring an amendment to sec-

tion 17(6) of the Kannada

Language Comprehensive

Development Act (KLCDA) -

2022, which was promulgated

by the previous BJP govern-

ment on March 10, 2023

ahead of the assembly elec-

Addressing reporters after a meeting with the officials of

the Kannada and Culture

Department and Bengaluru civic agencies, he said, "People

have to follow rules and if

someone ignores them, then

they will face the conse-

quences. This I am making

clear to everyone. I appeal to

all the organisations and the

activists not to take the law

The chief minister's statement

came in the wake of pro-

Kannada organisations going

on a rampage on December

27, demanding Kannada lan-

guage displays on signboards,

nameplates and advertise-

into their own hands.

28, 2024.

tions, he said.



days during the morning hours.

In Unnao, two men were killed when their motorcycle collided with a stationary truck here in Uttar Pradesh, police said on Thursday, suspecting that the accident took place due to dense fog. Govind Pathak (31) and Vivekanand (21) were travelling on a motorcycle and it collided with a truck on Wednesday night," Sehramau Station House Officer

(SHO) Kamal Dubey said "It appears that the duo failed to spot the truck due to dense fog. While Pathak was killed on the spot,

Vivekanand succumbed to injuries at a hospital a few hours later," he said. Early Thursday, police constable Dinesh Yadav, who was driving a police jeep, was injured when his vehicle collided with a truck in an area under the Purva police

and ran over the duo, killing them on the spot." Police have sent the body for post-In Azamgarh, five people were injured after the car they were travelling in col-

> occurred around 11 pm on Wednesday The injured have been admitted to hos pital." Dense fog also affected the movement of public transport in the state.

Uttar Pradesh State Transport Corporation (UPSRTC) Regional Manager in Baghpat Lokesh Rajput said, "We have rescheduled the timing of buses due to dense fog. Orders have also been issued to halt movement of buses in the night amidst dense fog to avoid accidents?

Will bring ordinance to make Kannada | Thousands of sardine fish must on nameplates, signboards: CM surface near Goa beach

Thousands of sardine fish have been surfacing near a beach in Goa for the past few days, providing locals with a visual treat and a bountiful catch. Experts said it's a "rare" phenomenon known as 'sardine

Shoals of the marine species are fluttering in shallow waters about 40 km from Panaji, on the Goa-Maharashtra border, according to those living in the

The Kerala government is set to launch a groundbreak-

ing initiative called K-SMART

This ambitious project aims to

provide digital access to ser-

vices offered by local self-gov-

ernment bodies through a uni-

fied platform across the state, an official statement said here

Chief Minister Pinarayi

Vijayan will inaugurate the

project at a ceremony in

Kaloor, Kochi, at 10.30 am on

January 1. The rollout will

cover all municipal corpora-

on January 1, 2024.

on Thursday.

Local fisherman Vaman Naik Dr Baban Ingole, a former (35) said the sardine fish, which are either eaten fresh or preserved in tins, have been swimming near the beach every evening since Monday.

"Thousands of fish are jumping out of the water. It's a treat for locals, who gather at the beach and collect the fish and take them home," said Naik, adding that he has seen something like this for the first time in A video of sardines rushing out of the water and people gathering to collect them has gone viral on the internet.

Kerala CM to launch K-SMART app for

Kerala Solutions for Managing

Administrative Reformation

and Transformation, brings

local services to people's finger-

This means residents can now

avail services from various

local bodies without physical-

ly visiting offices, thanks to the user-friendly K-SMART application developed by the

Information Kerala Mission

(IKM) for the Local Self-

The K-SMART app simplifies

the process by allowing online

submission of applications and

Government Department.

tions and municipalities in Kerala. K-SMART, short for vides digital updates on the sta-

email.

digital access to local body services

PTI THIRUVANANTHAPURAM tions and municipalities in complaints. Moreover,

researcher from CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) called the marine event very rare" and said it usually happens due to sudden changes in the temperature of sea surface water where sardines live.

"A drop or rise in sea surface temperature can induce migration of sardines in higher numbers and sometimes they get seen in the present video," he

He described the phenomenon as "sardine run".

vides digital updates on the sta-

tus of these submissions. An

Integrated Messaging System

ensures that applicants and

complainants receive receipts

through their respective logins, as well as via WhatsApp and

Addressing a press conference, Minister for Local Self-Government M B Rajesh said

K-SMART will make local

government services in Kerala

super easy with its 35 different modules. These cover things

like birth, death, and marriage

registrations, business licenses

property taxes, and more.



Shah offers prayers at Bhagyalakshmi temple

PTI HYDERABAD

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday visited the Bhagyalakshmi temple, located adjacent to historic Charminar here and offered

prayers. He was accompanied by Union Minister and Telangana BJP president G Kishan Reddy. Shah is in the city to attend a BJP state-level meeting today and chalk out a roadmap for the party's Telangana unit leaders and cadre leading up to the general elections to be held in a few

months. This is Shah's first visit to the state after the recently concluded Assembly polls in which the saffron party performance was

Each nation has its unique way of

'disappointing'. The BJP which emerged as a principal challenger to the BRS at one point of time after winning a couple of by-polls and the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation elections, before the November 30 Assembly elections, did however double its vote share to nearly 14 per cent besides improving its tally to eight seats in the 119-member

It had won four of the 17 seats in Telangana in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

The party is hopeful that national narratives coupled with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal will help it emerge stronger in the state in the Lok Sabha elections.

it," the chief minister said. Accommodation management system launched at Mata Vaishno Devi shrine

Kannada and Culture

Department," he said. "I have

asked the officials to bring an

ordinance because the assem-

The ordinance will come

into effect on February 28,

2024. All the shops, business

establishments, hotels, malls

and hospitals have to follow

this ordinance," he added.

Siddaramaiah also issued a

warning to the vandals who

went on a rampage on

Wednesday damaging offices,

shops, business establishments

and buildings in protest

against nameplates and sign-

boards not displaying infor-

'Government is not against

'We will not stop anyone

from protesting because we

believe in democracy and the

Constitution, but if anyone

goes against the law then the

government will not tolerate

peaceful protests at a designat-

mation

ed place

in Kannada.

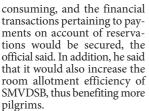
bly is not in session.

PTI JAMMU

Shrine Board (SMVDSB) has launched an accommodation management system for devotees visiting the holy shrine atop Trikuta hills in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district, an official said on Thursday.

The new system at the enquiry and reservation counter at Katra — the base camp for the pilgrims — was inaugurated by Anshul Garg, SMVDSB's Chief Executive Officer, the official said. He said the technologydriven initiative was meant to provide an optimal pilgrimage experience to the devotees.

With the robust accommodation management system in place, the check-in and checkout of the pilgrims would become easier and less time-



ments. Speaking about the KLCDA-2022, the chief min-

ister said section 17 (6) of the

Act says that commercial,

industrial or business organ-

isations, institutions, hospitals,

laboratories, entertainment

centres, hotels etc should allo-

cate half of the space on sign-

boards and name plates to

information in Kannada, with

the consent of either govern-

ment or the local representa-

The rest of the portion can be

in any other language.

However, he said that in his

previous stint as chief minis-

ter he had issued a circular on

March 24, 2018, which said that 60 per cent of the space

on nameplates and signboards

'Today we decided that the

signboards and name plates should be 60:40 as per the pre-

vious circular. We will bring

an amendment to section

17(6) of the said Act, which

was introduced by the

should be in Kannada.

pilgrims. Earlier, the SMVDSB inaugurated an online booking facility for the passenger ropeway from Mata Vaishno Devi Bhawan to the Bhairon Temple for the convenience of the pil-

The facility has been widely appreciated by the pilgrims

and based on the warm response, the online quota has been increased to 3,000 tickets per day from January 2024 onwards, the official said.

The shrine board has made concerted efforts for the adoption of a number of emerging technologies and response mechanisms for state-of-the-art facilities

These include a live 'darshan'

facility of holy 'pindies' for the benefit of devotees across the world, particularly those who are not able to visit the shrine physically, the official said.

This initiative has been taken by the board with the view to maximise the use of available technology and digitisation for the larger facilitation of devotees, the official said. In addition, to provide authen-

tic information to pilgrims, a bilingual interactive chatbot "Shakti" has been developed for the official website augmenting a round-the-clock toll-free helpline equipped with an Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) for addressing queries and grievances received from pilgrims.

Over 20,000 pilgrims are being facilitated every month by the call centre, the official said, adding that this facility has been providing all the relevant information on facilities provided by the board to pilgrims at the click of a button.

Along similar lines, the board has integrated digital payments in the various sale units to minimise the cash transactions by installing self-serve kiosk machines, QR codes, EDC machines, UPI payments and also on-boarding to popular digital platforms for donations and sale of Prasad. The digitalisation of the front-

end services of a helicopter, bat-tery car bookings, RFID yatra access cards and their real-time tracking with the dedicated RF Network and over 700 CCTV cameras by the board has facilitated the pilgrims and also improved administrative efficiencies through digital records and real-time report-

ing, the official said.

life derived from culture: Bhagwat world and "to fulfil this noble task, the revered spiritual leadnew generation. "Just like Assam's great saint

PTI ■ MAJULI (ASSAM)

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat on Thursday asserted that every nation has its own unique way of life which is derived from its culture.

The 'sanskriti' (culture) of Bharat is reflected through 'Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti' (truth is one but it's revealed by intellectuals differently). This all-inclusive tradition exists only in Bharat," Bhagwat said at the 'Poorvottar Sant Manikanchan Sammelan' at the North Kamala Bari Satra in Assam's Majuli.

He pointed out that in the present times, the country has to stand firm to give the message of peace and coexistence to the ers will have to come forward in our society"

"We all have the same ancestors and the same values. We will have to take our unity forward while adhering to our diversity. Unity is not uniformity, but it is unionness," he said.

The RSS chief pointed out that people will have to try hard to make society self-reliant through service, education, healthcare and employment. "There is a great need for nation-

al awareness in families to upkeep Bharat's eternal spiritual values and time-tested customs," he said

He requested all spiritual leaders to convey this message and the best spiritual values to the

Srimant Shankardev exemplified his noble life by bringing social reforms, in the same way, we all have to eliminate different social evils within our society through our benevolent behaviour," he A total of 104 spiritual leaders belonging to 48 satras of Assam

and 37 different religious institutions and sects from all over the northeastern states participated in the day-long conference. The main objective of the conference was to pursue coordination, goodwill and harmony among the different spiritual traditions and communities. Bhagwat is on a two-day visit to Majuli which will conclude on Friday after a public meeting.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Staying alert

Delhi reports its first case of Covid sub-variant JN.1; India sees single-day rise of Covid cases at 529

The danger is still lurking in the air as the stubborn Covid-19 is back, albeit in a new avatar. In a development that should cause concern, Delhi has reported its first case of Covid sub-variant JN.1, adding a new dimension to the ongoing battle against the pandemic. What is more worrisome is that COVID-19 cases across India have spiked; the nation has witnessed a single-day spike of 529 cases. This must set off alarm bells as the figure can shoot up if immediate measures are not taken to control the spread of the virus. This calls for heightened vigilance and strategic measures to curb the emergence and transmission of new variants. The identification of the JN.1 sub-variant in Delhi raises questions about the virus' adaptability and the potential impact on public health measures. Sub-variants often arise due to mutations in a virus' genetic code, and while not all mutations result in increased transmissibility or severity, they warrant close monitoring. There is no scope for taking it lightly; more often than not, mutants often

escape the protection provided by a vaccine against the original virus. At the same time, there is no need to panic as the virus is likely to be weak and the nation is much better prepared.

Meanwhile, health authorities are working to understand the characteristics of JN.1 and whether it poses unique challenges in terms of transmission, severity or vaccine resistance. The emergence of new variants underscores the need for continuous genomic surveillance to stay ahead of the virus's evolution and adapt public health strategies accordingly. The simultaneous announcement of a single-day rise of 529 cases across India serves as a stark reminder that the battle against

COVID-19 is far from over. This surge may be attributed to various factors, including increased social interactions, waning immunity and the potential influence of emerging variants. Testing, contact tracing and vaccination campaigns must be intensified to mitigate the impact of rising cases and prevent further spread. Besides, rigorous genomic surveillance is crucial to identify and track emerging variants promptly. It is time to communicate accurate information about the virus, its variants and preventive measures. People need to be aware of the risks associated with the new sub-variant and adhere to safety guidelines, including mask-wearing and social distancing. The information gathered from unauthentic sources often results in panic and chaos. Yet another aspect that the authorities must explore is international cooperation; given the global nature of the pandemic, international collaboration is crucial. Sharing data on emerging variants and coordinating efforts to contain their spread will be essential in controlling the virus' evolution. Health authorities, communities and individuals must work collaboratively to mitigate the impact of emerging variants. By maintaining vigilance, accelerating vaccination efforts and implementing effective public health strategies, we can enhance resilience against the evolving threat. We have defeated Covid before, and can surely defeat it again.



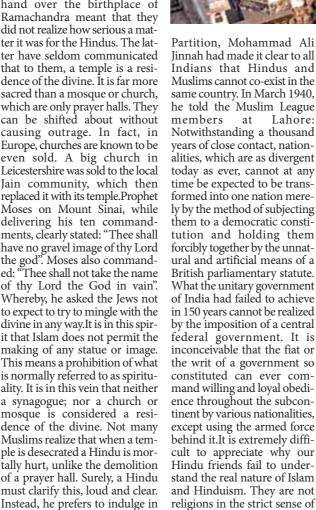
Theyyam artist dressed as Sree Muthappan Theyyam performs ritual at a temple festival, in Kannur

Reclaiming Hindu religious places



Poet Allama Iqbal had called Lord Rama "Imam-e-Hind", and yet it took Hindus 45 years after Independence to make a serious attempt to recover his birthplace

rime Minister Narendra Modi, while inaugurating the Swarveda Temple in Varanasi on December 18, right called for the restoration of cultural symbols hit by invading tyrants. The Babri edifice at Ayodhya was arguably the beginning of such a reconstruction. The poet Allama Iqbal had called Lord Rama "Imam-e-Hind", and yet it took Hindus 45 years after independence before making a serious attempt to recover His birthplace. Whereas a proud and selfrespecting nation should have retrieved within three or four years of becoming free. That the Hindus did not display their pride early enough was not only a case of delayed recovery but also a matter of poor communication. That the Muslims did not hand over the birthplace of Ramachandra meant that they did not realize how serious a matter it was for the Hindus. The latter have seldom communicated that to them, a temple is a residence of the divine. It is far more sacred than a mosque or church, which are only prayer halls. They can be shifted about without causing outrage. In fact, in Europe, churches are known to be even sold. A big church in Leicestershire was sold to the local Jain community, which then replaced it with its temple. Prophet Moses on Mount Sinai, while delivering his ten commandments, clearly stated: "Thee shall have no gravel image of thy Lord the god". Moses also commanded: "Thee shall not take the name of thy Lord the God in vain". Whereby, he asked the Jews not to expect to try to mingle with the divine in any way. It is in this spirit that Islam does not permit the making of any statue or image. This means a prohibition of what is normally referred to as spirituality. It is in this vein that neither a synagogue; nor a church or mosque is considered a residence of the divine. Not many Muslims realize that when a temple is desecrated a Hindu is mortally hurt, unlike the demolition of a prayer nail. Surely, a Hindu





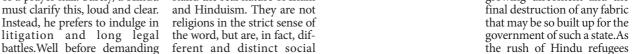
THE HINDUS AND MUSLIMS HAVE DIFFERENT **RELIGIOUS** PHILOSOPHIES, SOCIAL CUSTOMS LITERATURE orders. It is a dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality. This notion of one Indian nation has gone far beyond the limits and is the cause of most of our troubles and will lead India to destruction if we fail to revise this misconception in

The Hindus and Muslims have different religious philosophies, social customs and literature. They neither intermarry nor interdine and, indeed, they belong to two different civilizations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their views on life and of life are different. It is also quite clear that Hindus and Muslims derive their inspiration, from different sources of history. They have different epics and different heroes in different episodes. Very often the hero of one is a foe of the other and likewise, their victories and defeats overlap. To yoke together two such nations under a single state, one a numerical minority and the other a majority must lead to owing discontent and the

Partition was continually rising, even till 1948, Dr Syama Prasad Mookerji accompanied by Dr Rajkumari Amrit Kaur rushed to see Gandhi. Their mission was to appeal to the great man to accept Jinnah's proposal for an exchange of populations. Gandhi rejected this appeal categorically by stating that Partition was on 'territorial' lines and not on 'religious' grounds. What an astounding thing to say! As a result, most Hindu leaders were hesitant in telling the people that Pakistan was for Muslims and Hindustan was for others. This meant that all communal issues stood settled and India was now predominantly a Hindu country. On the contrary, the repeated use of the word 'secular' has confused Muslims to this day. They, therefore, do not feel embarrassed at holding on to sacred properties that were wrongly and forcibly acquired from the Hindus. Didn't the Hindus tail to communicate clearly

from East Bengal after

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed



Why non-proliferation of fossil fuel is needed



Instead, he prefers to indulge in

litigation and long legal

The global fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty could provide the much-needed breakthrough and ensure transparent and fair means to stop climate breakdown

◄he recently concluded COP28 event in Dubai, on 12th UAE December 2023 was a muchanticipated event for the global environmental community which hoped that concrete and meaningful environmental conservation measures would be the dividends of the

But in reality, the ground situation is different and was captured effectively in the opinion of The Wall Street Journal's Editorial Board, who dismissed the decisions taken at the conference as "phony climate promises" that merely created the illusion of progress. The COP28's 21page Global Stocktake document with 195 nations as signatories seems like noteworthy progress as it finally acknowledges that countries need to "transition away" from fossil fuels. However, the document is riddled with loopholes. Boiled down into three words, it says, essentially, "We will try." A new approach is urgently needed which ensures that the majority of fossil fuel reserves remain in the ground. Unless this is done on a priority basis

the limiting of global temper-



atures to no more than 1.5°C higher than pre-industrial levels will be impossible. In a report Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) advised carbon emissions must be cut by 45% by 2030 to hold global temperature rise below 1.5C. This will help avoid extreme climate events such as severe storms, floods, droughts, heat, and wildfires. A recent analysis by thinktank Carbon Tracker suggests that even to keep warming below 2C, 80% of current coal, oil and gas reserves need to be left untouched. The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation(FFNP) Treaty is a radical measure that can help keep fossil fuels untouched. FFNP is an international initiative on the lines of the "Treaty on the non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons" (NPT) that came into force over five decades ago. The FFNP idea born in must agree to a planned

2015 currently does not have many takers and quite understandably so as it requires nations to sign and commit to non-usage of fossil fuels. Even though FFNP gained momentum here on the sidelines of the Dubai COP28 many countries still do not endorse the initiative of phas-

ing out of fossil fuels. Given its weak representation, FFNP needs more backing and encouragement from the global community which must spearhead a push to secure a mandate to negotiate a new international mechanism to manage fossil fuels phase-out and finance a just and equitable global transition away from oil, gas and coal. Any more time must not be wasted in implementing FFNP because the global demand for coal, oil and gas is growing, with fossil fuels accounting for 81% of energy use. The International Energy Agency (IEA) projects that total fossil fuel use will rise. The FFNP must be acted upon by establishing 3 pillars of commitment. Firstly, all nations must agree not to exploit new reserves. Secondly, all signatory nations

decline of existing fossil fuel infrastructure. Thirdly, enable the financing of low-carbon alternatives through a global transition fund. As a first step towards this direction, all member nations could start with an assessment of existing reserves, as well as agreement on the principles for the sequencing of production phase-down targets across countries and fuel types, to align fossil fuel use with the Paris Agreement's 1.5C warming threshold. Commitments to phase out fossil fuels in the form of national targets and timetables could be sequenced reflecting the country's current emissions, historical contributions and capacity to transition to alternative energy sources.

The solution to holding down runaway global temperatures lies in implementing bold measures like FFNP. The global fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty could provide the much-needed breakthrough and ensure transparent and fair means to stop climate breakdown. This is the need of the hour.

(The writer is a policy analyst, views are personal)

ANOTHER YATRA BY RAHUL GANDHI

Sir — It is heartening news that, after careful consideration, the Congress party has finally announced that Rahul Gandhi will embark on the Nyaya Yatra from January 14 to March 20, covering a distance of 6200 km. The yatra will traverse 14 states and 85 districts, contributing to the advancement of the Congress party and the democratic process in India.

In the preceding Bharat Jodo Yatra, Rahul Gandhi's image evolved into that of a seasoned politician who shared his experiences in Parliament. This time, he is poised to share further insights during the budget session, which is expected to be brief. Despite the party's setbacks in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Chhattisgarh, the recent assembly elections revealed a silver lining—the Congress secured more combined votes than the BJP.

The Congress is set to organize a significant event in Nagpur, a grand show as proclaimed by the party. This will provide an opportunity to mobilize their workers and overcome recent defeats. Moreover, the INDIA bloc relies heavily on the Congress's role, with Rahul Gandhi playing a pivotal part in resolving differences among various parties. As Rahul Gandhi embarks on this extensive journey, every citizen wishes him success. It is hoped that his efforts will strengthen democracy by encouraging widespread citizen participation, deepening the roots of secularism.

Yash Pal Ralhan | Jalandar

BRING UNRULY REVELLERS TO BOOK

Sir — As the new year approaches, many tourists hold misconceptions about India's renowned tourist spots. Take Goa, for instance—a state rich in tradition and culture beyond its beaches and nightlife. Unfortunately, some tourists indulge excessively in the two 'B's, leaving Goa's beaches strewn with dirt, debris, and empty alcohol bottles. Such

Ensure women safety

THE EDITOR



Class 10 student was raped by her minor neighbour in Damoh district on Sunday. The girl consumed poison and has been admitted to the hospital, the police said on Monday. Tejgarh police station in-charge Dharmendra Upadhaya said the girl's parents had gone to attend a function on Sunday night and she was alone at

with, regardless of the tourists' origin. Similar issues exist in other popular tourist destinations. Sign boards warning against mischief should be prominently displayed at sensitive points, imposing fines and punitive actions. Heavy penalties should be levied for

essential to ensure cleanliness. While thousands treat tourist attractions with care, a significant population disregards decency and decorum. It is imperative to hold these uncivilized indi-

alcohol consumption, smoking, spitting,

and public urination. Continuous mon-

itoring of India's major beaches is

viduals accountable.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola A STATESMAN PAR EXCELLENCE

Sir — I refer to the enlightening article titled "Atal Bihari Vajpayee: A politician and a gentleman," published in The Pioneer on December 25, 2023, paying tribute to the former Indian Prime Minister on his 99th birth anniversary. In the dynamic landscape of Indian politics, leaders come and go, but only a few leave an indelible mark. Vajpayee easiunruly behavior should be sternly dealt ly stands alongside former Prime

house and raped her. After the incident, the minor drank insecticide kept in the house. When the girl's condition deteriorated, people nearby took notice and informed her parents

and properly?

The victim's family took the girl to Damoh District Hospital where the girl informed the police that she was raped. The medical examination confirmed that the minor was raped, after which police registered a case under POCSO Act. The police have taken the accused into custody. It is a matter of sadness and shame that now women are not safe even in their homes. Rape, as an egregious violation of human rights and dignity, inflicts severe and lasting trauma on survivors. It not only affects the individual victim but also leaves a profound impact on society as a whole.

Jahangir Shaikh | Mumbai

Ministers like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, P. V. Narasimha Rao, and Dr. Manmohan Singh, contributing significantly to India's economic liberalization and progress on the global stage. Vajpayee's era witnessed the inception of several initiatives shaping our economic landscape today. Though not all materialized during his tenure, it is apt to say that Vajpayee envisioned the future of the Indian economy. The telecom revolution, a hallmark of his government, has profoundly connected economic and physical lives in contemporary India.

. Honored with India's second-highest civilian award, the Padma Vibhushan, Vajpayee exemplified dedication and selfless service to his beloved country. While no longer with us, his works continue to resonate, reflecting his unwavering commitment to nationalism. Indeed in present times we need people like Atal Bihari Vajpayee to bring back the good old days of Indian politics

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneér@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

STOP BLAMING GOD FOR YOUR WOES

Realised souls would rather blame themselves for their faulty deeds



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

t is a faulty instinct. Let us understand what happens. We are suddenly hit by some trouble or are faced with a problem. Why did it happen to me? I was trying to live a normal life, not harming anyone. Why this punishment? We think like this. However, our thinking is faulty because we are unable to see the big picture.

What is the big picture? It is to see any situation in its totality. We get punished because punishment has become due to bad acts done earlier. These could be even from past lives, which have come to fruition now. An understanding of the 'Karmaphala Principle' is required. We are forever doing acts with our bodies, minds and words. They all result in phalas, i.e. good and bad fruits. And their period and type of rewards and punishments are determined by divine authority under the superintendence of God, (The Bhagavad-Geeta 9.10), who has set the rules for such implementation.

Essentially, they are based on dharma (sound moral principles) and justice. Whatever happens to us is essentially due to our good and bad acts. There is another factor in our woes. This earth planet is a place of misery (dukhalaya -8.15), which has three types of pains. They are: what we give ourselves, what others give us and what the material nature gives like excess heat, cold, etc. However, the Earth's planet is not like a concentration camp. With proper behaviour, one can enjoy unlimited 'sukha' (happiness) also. (5.21)



The next question is: why did we not qualify for better planets like Heaven or even Vaikuntha? The answer is the same: our acts with our bodies, minds and words did not make us deserving of them. However, the Earth's planet is very special for one reason. God pays special attention to it; He even incarnates here. (4.7) When we do good, pious acts, we get rewarded at some time in the future. It has to be paid first and again later. <

This is the way it must be. There cannot be fun now and fun later also. If we wish better life, and fewer problems and troubles, we must begin taking active shelter from God. The first requirement is to follow dharma, which is very dear to God.

The next requirement is to do all duties, i.e. according to time, place and circumstances. (3.8) There is no escape from there because that is the only right given to us. (2.47) Not doing them is dereliction and punishable. Additionally, we must serve others, because this is how the creation can exist. Imagine a day in our lives. How many must contribute to help us exist?

The next level is spiritual when we recognize the existence of God and begin praying to Him for whatever we need. We have four main requirements. (7.14) The first one is our material necessities. The next one is help in getting out of trouble. The third one follows; we desire to know more about God. This is when our spiritual journey takes off and ends in becoming knowledgeable about God. In this period, one will do many spiritual acts suiting one's natural circumstances, etc. Gradually, one will take shelter of God and will remain under it.

By now, one would have realised that everything is logical. There is nothing like chance; we reap what we sow. Realised souls do not ever blame God for their woes. Rather they blame themselves for their faulty deeds done earlier. This helps them in two ways. They become careful about what they do now because they are aware that bad acts will surely bring punishment later. And they remain in shelter of God thus safeguarding themselves against future troubles hoping to be bailed out by God (18.58) And God does, as He is very merciful.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher; views are personal)

AAP pushing discoms into crisis



UTTAM GUPTA

The AAP government's decision to supply subsidised power in Delhi is adversely affecting the financial health of discoms



ince the financial year (FY) 2019-20, the AAP government in Delhi led by Arvind Kejriwal has been subsidising the distribution of electricity to household (HHs) consumers. Whereas, HHs consuming up to 200 units per month are fully exempt from paying any charges, those with consumption between 201-400 units per month get 50 per cent of the bill amount as a subsidy subject to a cap of Rs 800. During FY 2019-20, the government spent Rs 2405 crore on subsidizing these consumers. The expenditure increased to Rs 2940 crore during FY 2020-21. It further increased to Rs 3090 crore during FY 2021-

In June 2022, based on the feedback received from a large section of the HHs that they were not interested in availing of the subsidy (as the Chief Minister put it) he came up with a proposition that 'from October 1, 2022, electricity subsidy will be given only to those households who ask for it. The expectation was that HHs who were well off and could afford to pay full costbased tariffs wouldn't ask for it.

The nouseholds were asked to give their written consent through multiple online and offline methods for availing subsidy on consumption of up to 400 units per month. The expectation that a good chunk would opt out - leading to a significant reduction in subsidy outgo - didn't materialise. During FY 2022-23, the government spent Rs 3162 crore on power subsidies even higher than in the previous year. But, the new dispensation came into force from October 1, 2022; so the comparison is not on all fours. For proper comparison and to gauge the full-year impact, we need to look at FY 2023-24.

For the current year, the government has made a provision of Rs 3250 crore in the budget. Now, it has made an additional allocation of Rs 100 crore taking the total to Rs 3350 crore. It means, things haven't panned out the way Kejriwal thought it to be. In June 2022 (then, the new scheme wasn't in force), 4.7 million consumers had availed of subsidy for consuming up to 400 units a month. Come November 2023, 5.1 million availed of subsidy - up by 0.4 mil-



HOUSEHOLDS WERE ASKED TO **GIVE THEIR** WRITTEN CONSENT **THROUGH MULTIPLE ONLINE AND** OFFLINE METHODS FOR **AVAILING OF** SUBSIDY ON CONSUMPTION UP TO 400 UNITS PER MONTH lion. There was an inherent flaw in Kejriwal's thinking.

If the government asks the consumers 'Do you want subsidized power?' A natural response by almost everyone will be 'Yes'. This is amply corroborated by the increase in the number of consumers availing of subsidies. Not just that, the consumers getting 'full waiver' on consumption up to 200 units increased from 3 million in June 2022 to 3.8 million in November 2023 even as those availing of 50 percent waiver for consumption between 201 and 400 units decreased from 1.7 million in June 2022 to 1.3 million in November 2023.

Such an outcome is inevitable when instead of making a decision based on a rational criterion (say, only poor HHs are eligible to receive subsidy), the government leaves the choice entirely to the consumers. This also gives rise to manipulative practices and corruption. How eise, one would explain a whopping increase of 800,000 in the number of consumers availing of the complete waiver on consumption up to 200 units?

This tendency has been seen in Punjab too where the AAP government had promised a full waiver of electricity bills on consumption up to 300 units a month. Thus, consumers whose 'actual' consumption is higher than 300 units have applied for multiple connections within the same HH. For instance, a household consuming 900 units a month, gets three meters installed to keep consumption of each under 300 units thereby ensuring zero bill. Reportedly, more than 100,000 meters have been bifurcated or trifurcated enabling even high-end consumers to avail of the free bonanza. As a consequence, currently almost over 95 per cent of power consumers in Punjab avail of subsidies. The swelling number of

connections has increased the subsidy by Rs 125 crore per month on average. As a result, the total domestic subsidy for the FY 2023-24 is now expected to be Rs 8,813 crore - Rs 1,500 crore higher than the initial estimate of Rs 7,313 crore. The cost of this indiscriminate subsidy to whoever comes forward is much more than what is evident from a plain reading of the numbers. For instance, in Delhi the subsidy of Rs 3350 crore (FY 2023-24) is arrived at by multiplying monthly consumption say 200 units with the applicable tariff - as per the prescribed slab - approved by the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC). That tariff of Rs 3 per unit itself is just about half of the average cost of purchase, wheeling and distribution.

Taking into account a plethora of levies viz. power purchase adjustment charge (PPAC) @31.6 per cent, surcharge @8 per cent and electricity tax 5 per cent – adding to 44.6 per cent – the under-recovery comes to Rs 4.3 per unit (3x1.446). On 200 units of monthly consumption, this is Rs 860 or Rs 10,320 per annum. For 3.8 million consumers, this comes to Rs 3922

Likewise, for those consuming between 201 and 400 units, the applicable tariff is Rs 4.5 per unit implying an under-recovery of Rs 1.5 per unit. Including the impact of charges @44.6 per cent, this comes to Rs 2.2 (1.5x1.446). On monthly consumption of 200 units, this will be Rs 440 or Rs 5280 per annum. For 1.3 million consumers, the under-recovery would be around Rs 686 crore.

Putting the two together, the total under-recovery would be Rs 4608 crore. This is cross-subsidized by charging more from industrial and businesses (besides HHs in higher consumption slabs) for which the

per unit. But, for this cross-subsidization, the Delhi government would have to spend that much more in addition to the budget provision of Rs 3350 crore. Meanwhile, the industries and service establishments continue to suffer due to the prohibitive cost of electricity leading to a high cost of production in turn, affecting their ability to compete in the domestic and international markets.

The populist policies of the AAP government also affect the financial health of power distribution companies or discoms. While raising their bills, the discoms don't charge anything from HHs consuming up to 200 units a month whereas from consumers in the 201-400 range, they reduce the bill amount by 50 per cent subject to a cap of Rs 800. The Delhi government is expected to reimburse them for these under-recoveries as a subsidy. But, the former often delays reimbursement and it isn't full.

The Discom stress could be pre vented if only the government gave subsidies directly to the beneficiaries under the direct benefit transfer (DBT) scheme. In 2018, the DERC issued an order requiring the Delhi Government to follow the DBT mode for giving subsidies. But, the order was never implemented and was quietly withdrawn early this year. So, it is business as usual.

Routing subsidy through discoms helps the government in shielding its fiscal profligacy by letting reimbursement dues pile up, making payments at its sweet will or not paying at all. It also comes in the way of reforms such as dismantling bureaucratic controls on the discoms, allowing more players in the electricity distribution business, fostering competition and lowering

(The writer is a policy analyst,

The Kashi Tamil Sangamam: Experience affinity in diversity

The Kashi Tamil Sangamam is a confluence of different verities of the cultural, philosophical, artistic, linguistic and literary manifestations

he Kashi Tamil Sangamam (KTS) 2022 reconnected the age-old interrelation Rameshwaram and Kashi and rejuvenated the ageless bonds between Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. The KTS 2023 being held from 17th to 30th December is a Sangamam of arts and architecture, languages and literature, philosophies and practices, shastras and sciences, tradition and technology. The connections that exist between Kashi and Tamil Nadu are countless. If the connecting stories start from Maharshi Agastya, who, as directed by Lord Vishwanath at Kashi, went down to Dravida Desha and wrote Tamil grammar a few thousand years ago, the latest connect is IIT Madras



Pravartak Technologies Foundation partnering with 'Vidya Shakti' scheme to provide Science and Maths education to rural, less-privileged students in and around Kashi. About 450 Kashi Vishwanath Temples all over Tamil Nadu including Shivakashi, Tenkashi, Vriddhakashi, etc. are the invigorators of the continuum of aadhyaatmika

originating from Kashi for several millenniums. From the Vaigai River to the Gangai River, from Madurai Meenakshi to Kashi Vishalakshi, the innate oneness in the cultural and civilisational manifestations is boundless and timeless. The KTS 2023 is for experiencing that oneness. While inaugurating the KTS on the 17th of December, Hon'ble PM Narendra Modi said that the Aatmiyataa in Vividhataa (Affinity in Diversity) is unique and could not be seen in any other civilisation outside India. Diversities like linguistic, philosophic, traditional, architectural, artistic, cultural, etc. of these two regions of India are innumerable and unparalleled. That is the bonding and saanskritika paramparaa beauty of Bharat. This beauty

of diversity can be sustained only by the strength of unity, and hence, unity is paramount. Affinity among the people is the cementing factor of the unity of the nation. PM Modi said that while the concept of nation is political in other countries, it is spiritual and cultural in India, and this is what has made our nation remain as one for thousands of years. Knowing each other and sharing each other's life experiences strengthen the affinity. Seven batches of delegates from Tamil Nadu are named

after the seven most sacred rivers of India - Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu and Kaveri which symbolise the civilisational unity and cultural harmony of Bharat. Altogether 64 stalls and exhibitions in the most modern Ghat, the NaMo Ghat, at Varanasi are like 64 Kalaas of ancient India. Cultural programs being held every day are a blend of both Tamil Nadu and Kashi traditions of Arts. The replica of the Sengol, Learn and Enjoy Tamil language Corner, Silk Saris of Kanchipuram and Banaras, ODOP, handloom and handicraft products, etc. are the star attractions of the exhibitions. The launching of 40 Classical Tamil texts in the Braille script by the Prime Minister is the reaffirmation of inclusive education. The release of Tirukkural in seven foreign languages shows the commitment of the Govt. of India to spread Tamil all over the world. Seven academic interactive sessions for exchanging

delegates and their counterparts in Kashi opened up new avenues for collaboration. Minister for Education, Skill Development

Entrepreneurship Dharmendra Pradhan, while welcoming the first batch of students, which comprised students from Tamil Nadu, emphasised multilingualism for 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'. Most of the delegates from Tamil Nadu didn't know Hindi and most of the Kashi people didn't know Tamil. But that wasn't in any way an impediment for them in communicating with and understanding each other because the affinity as fellow Bharatiya, the oneness within everyone, knowledge of some common vocabulary, common cultural

any type of divisive walls in their minds made them experience the immense love in each other's hearts transcending all the barriers.

Bharatiya languages are the primary vehicles of Bharatiya culture, arts, music, thoughts, and the bonds of unity and harmony of the people of Bharat. All are intertwined with each other. The Kashi Tamil Sangamam is not the confluence of two cultures, it is the confluence of different varieties of the cultural, philosophical, artistic, linguistic and literary manifestations of the same one all-inclusive culture, all-pervading and allencompassing throughout Bharat. Ragas are many, Bhakti is one. Rupas are many, Satya ideas and best practices by the understandings, common is one. Names are many,

moorings, and the absence of Ishwar is one. Systems are many, purpose is one. Languages are many, Bhav is one. Paths are many, destination is one. Regions are many, Bharat is one. It is time to shred off all divisive thought processes and work for "Oru Bharatam, Unnata Bharatam". In the history of Classical Tamil literature, there were three great Sangamams of highly learned men at Madurai. Triveni Sangamam at Prayagraj is well known to all. The Ministry of Education has been celebrating Yuva Sangam, Sourashtra Tamil Sangamam and Kashi Tamil Sangamam. Now again it is history in making and Vikasit Bharat in shaping. (The writer is Chairman

Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti views are personal)

available for us to provide security assistance to Ukraine,"

said Ryder, the Pentagon press

secretary. "We would, again,

continue to urge the passage of

the supplemental that we've

submitted. ... It is imperative

that we have the funds needed

to ensure that they get the most

urgent battlefield capabilities

China reaffirms military US announces new weapons package for Ukraine threats against Taiwan

Weeks before Taiwan holds elections for its president and legislature, China renewed its threat to use military force to annex the self-governing island democracy it claims as its own territory.

Ministry Defense spokesperson Col Wu Qian on told reporters Thursday at a monthly briefing that China's armed forces would "as always take all necessary measures to firmly safeguard our national sovereignty and territorial integrity." Taiwan's 23 million people overwhelmingly favor maintaining the island's defacto independent status, leaving the January 13 polls to be decided largely by concerns over housing prices, health care, employment and education. China has continued sending warships and fighter jets near Taiwan as an intimidation tactic, even as Taiwan's military said it's raising alert levels before the vote.

The ruling party's candidate, William Lai, holds a lead in most surveys, while the main opposition Nationalist Party's candidate, Hou You-yi, has sought to appeal to voters who fear a military conflict with China that could draw in the United States and lead to massive disruptions in the global economy. Hou's campaign literature,

affirmed his opposition to Taiwan independence and concurrence with Beijing's view of Taiwan as a part of China.

Long a melting pot of Asian and European cultures, Taiwan was a Japanese colony for 50 years until 1945, when it was handed over to Chiang Kai-shek's Chinese Nationalist government. The Nationalists, also known as the Kuomintang, then relocated to the island $\bar{\mathrm{in}}$ 1949 after the Communist Party under Mao Zedong emerged victorious from a bruconflict on the Chinese mainland in which millions were killed. During Thursday's news conference, Wu repeated accusations that the US was prompting Taiwan into deliberately raising tensions with China. Beijing has provided no evidence, but the claim meshes with China's posing itself as an unofficial ally of Russia in opposing the long-predominant Western liberal order, in favor of authoritarian rule.

"Any attempt to use Taiwan to contain China is doomed to failure. Seeking independence by military force is a dead end," Wu said. Taiwan has answered Chinese military expansions with boosts to its navy, air and ground forces, all backed by the possibility of swift intervention by US and allied forces spread across the Asia-Pacific.

China maintains the

with more than 2 million

enlisted, along with the largest

navy and the second-highest

annual defense budget, after the

US. Yet, the post of defense minister has been vacant since

the former occupant, Li

Shangfu, dropped from view in

August and was officially dis-

missed in October with no

word on the cause or his cur-

rent circumstances. The mys-

terious dismissal of Li, along

with that of ex-Foreign

Minister Qin Gang, have raised

questions about support with-

in the regime for Communist

Party leader and head of state

Xi Jinping, who has effective-

ly made himself leader for life

and has sought to eliminate all

political opponents. Even as the

defense minister position

remains vacant, Xi appointed

two newly promoted full generals to key military commands Monday.

political commissar of the

Southern Theater Command

that oversees China's operations

in the highly contested South China Sea. Hu Zhongming

will take over as navy comman-

der as China works to establish

itself as a global maritime power to protect its trade inter-

ests, consolidate its hold over

the South China Sea and East

China Sea islands, and expand

its global interests in order to

diminish US power.

Wang Wenquan will act as

 $T^{
m he}$ US on Wednesday announced what officials say could be the final package of military aid to Ukraine unless Congress approves supplemental funding legislation that is stalled on Capitol Hill.

The weapons, worth up to USD 250 million, include an array of air munitions and other missiles, artillery, antiarmour systems, ammunition, demolition and medical equipment and parts. The aid, provided through the Presidential Drawdown Autority, will be pulled from Pentagon stockpiles. In a statement, Lt Col Garron Garn, a Pentagon spokesman said there is no more funding to replace the weapons taken from department stocks. And the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, which provides long-term funding for future weapons

As a result, Garn said on Wednesday, "Without the supplemental funding, there will be a shortfall in replenishing US military stocks, affecting American military readiness."

President Joe Biden is urging Congress to pass a USD 110 billion aid package for Ukraine, Israel and other national security needs. It includes USD 61.4 billion for Ukraine, with about half to replenish Pentagon stocks. It also includes about USD 14 billion for Israel as it fights Hamas and USD 14 billion for US border security. Other funds would go for security needs in the Asia-Pacific.

Due to an accounting error that overvalued some of the weapons sent to Ukraine over the past year or more, there is still about USD 4.2 billion in restored drawdown authority. But since the



Pentagon has no money to replenish inventory sent to Kviv, the department will have to "rigorously assess" any future aid and its implications on the US military's ability to protect America, Garn said.

This is the 54th tranche of military aid taken from department shelves and sent to Ukraine, and it is similar in size and contents to many of the other recent packages. US defence and government leaders have argued that the

weapons are critical for Ukraine to maintain its defence and continue efforts to mount an offensive against Russian forces during the winter months. In a Pentagon briefing last week, Air Force Maj Gen Pat Ryder noted the recent letter that the Defence Department comptroller sent

to Congress warning that the

US will be using up the last of

its replenishment funds by the

end of the year. "Once those

funds are obligated, we will

that they require." The latest aid package comes as the war in Ukraine drags on into its 22nd month. Russia fired almost 50 Shahed drones at targets in Ukraine and shelled a train station in the southern city of Kherson where more than 100 civilians were gathered to catch a train to Kyiv. And a day earlier, Ukrainian warplanes damaged a Russian ship moored in the Black Sea off Crimea as soldiers on both sides are struggling to make much progress along the

Iran holds funeral for Gen Razi Mousavi

al Thursday for a high-ranking general of the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard who was killed by an alleged Israeli airstrike in Syria. Hundreds of mourners accompanied the flag-draped casket of Gen. Razi Mousavi from a central square of Tehran to a shrine in the north of the city where he was

The head of the Guard, Gen Hossein Salami, praised Mousavi and vowed his death would be avenged. "We will never keep silent in the face of martyrdom of the sons of this nation," Salami said. "Our revenge will be tough as always, but a revenge that could compensate for the martyrdom of Seyed Razi is nothing but the removal of Israel from the face of existence."

Iran does not recognize Israel and occasionally calls for destruction of the Jewish Salami described Mousavi as a close companion of Gen Qassim Soleimani, the head of Iran's elite Quds Force, who was killed by a US drone strike in Iraq in January 2020. He said Iran also would avenge Soleimani's death and that Hamas' October 7 attacks in southern Israel that triggered

lated and independent action. "I officially announce that the Al-Aqsa Storm was and is fully Palestinian. Palestine is capable on its own," the general said. The crowd chanted, "No

compromise! No surrender! Battle with America!" Israel views Iran as its greatest threat because of Tehran's disputed nuclear program and its support for regional militant groups like Hamas, Lebanon's Hezbollah and the Houthi rebels in Yemen who have targeted international shipping in what they portray as a blockade of Israel. Iran insists its regional allies act independently.

Earlier on Thursday Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Kĥamenei prayed before Mousavi's casket, state TV footage showed. Khamenei offered condolences to family of the general and a group of ranking officials who were present in the prayer. The killing of the general, a longtime adviser of the Guard in Syria, comes amid ongoing fears of the Israel-Hamas war broadening into a regional conflict. Iran-backed groups in Yemen, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq have launched attacks on Israel and its allies in

The state of the s

In this photo released by an official website of the office of the Iranian supreme leader, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, front, prays over the flag-draped coffin of Seyed Razi Mousavi, a high ranking Iranian general of the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, who was killed in an alleged Israeli airstrike in Syria on Monday, in Tehran on Thursday

'Human error behind Nepal airlines crash that killed all 72, including five Indians'

Kathmandu (PTI): The crash of a Yeti Airlines' aircraft in January this year that killed all 72 people on board, including five Indians, in Nepal's resort city of Pokhara was caused by human error, according to an inquiry report submitted to the government on Thursday. Yeti Airlines' 9N-ANC

ATR-72 aircraft crashed on the bank of the Seti River between the old airport and the new airport minutes before landing on January 15. A fivemember Investigation Commission formed after the crash said in its report that the

seeking a 30-day remand for

Shah Mahmood Qureshi, vice

chairman of jailed former prime

minister Imran Khan's party in

connection with the May 9

attack on military headquarters,

according to media report. The

development comes a day after

the 67-year-old former foreign

minister was manhandled by

police officials as they re-arrest-

ed him outside the Adiala Jail in

Rawalpindi, a step termed "ille-

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that I, **Sudhish Chander Garg** S/o Lt. Sh. R.D.Garg R/o 112, Pkt A-4

SFS Cat.II THD Fl. Kalkaji, New Delhi-

110019 has applied for conversion of the

aforesaid flat in DDA. The original documents i.e. Possession letter, NOC for electric & wate

connection of the above flat have been lost. A

online FIR to this effect has been lodged vide

the P.S. Anv person claiming any right

interest, objection with respect to this property can personally inform or write to Dy.Dir.(LAB)

Hsg., Blk D, 3rd Floor, DDA Vikas Sadan, New Delhi-110023.

PUBLIC NOTICE
To be known to all SUBHASH CHANDER
KAPOOR S/O LATE SH. MAHARAJ KISHAN R/O
PLOT NO.2, BLOCK-1, KHASRA NO.587/2, D.B.

PLOT NO.2, BLOCK-1, KHARAN ANSHAN NO PLAN PLOT NO.2, BLOCK-1, KHARAN AN. S87/2, D.B. GUPTA ROAD, PAHARGANI, NEW DELHI one of the owner of PLOT NO.02 (Area Meas. 377 Sq. Yds.), KHASRA NO.587/2, BLK-1, D.B. GUPTA ROAD, PAHARGANI, NEW DELHI Shops with Residential Plots, have applied for conversion from leasehold to freehold in DDA. The original documents i.e. PERPETUAL LEASE DEED of the above said property has been lost. An F.I.R./NC R/LR NO. 1286127/2023 acted 28/12/2023 to this effect has been lodged in P.S. Crime Branch Delhi. Any person (s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above Address/Phone No. 9910177002 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform or write to Deputy Director (OSB) or Director (OSB), Delhi Development Authority, Vikas Sadan, New Delhi-110023.

PUBLIC NOTICE

s Notice is hereby given to general public t Arjun Gupta, Mr. Raju Kumar, Mrs. Mon mari, Mr. Rajiv Kumar & Mrs. Soni Kumari w imed to be owner and in possession of

Kuman, Wr. Kajiv Kuman a Wils. Sulin Kuman vi clalaimed to be owner and in possession of the Property bearing no. 03, area measuring 109 dys, otto, otto (Khasra no. 12, situated in the area o Village Navneet Vihar, Khora, Pargana Loni, Teisa Dadh, Distt, Ghaziabad, (U.P.) by virtue of Survivin Member Certificate issued by Concerned SDM. afte demised Mrs. Savita. Now Mr. Arjun Gupta, Mr. Raji Kumar, Mrs. Monika Kumari, Mr. Ajin Kumar & Mrs. Soni Kumari are selling said property to Adul Kalan & Mohd Firasat and same approached Jana Sma Finance Bank Limited for financial assistance an therefore shall be montgaged with the said Bank. Wi give this public notice that if any person having an claim/objection regarding ownership and/or creating mortgage of the said property or any part of the said property in favour of Jana Small Finance Ban Limited. Slare hereby requested to notify the sam

Qureshi's 30-day remand

Islamabad (PTI): A court in Pakistan on Thursday reserved ahead of general elections on

2023, was due to human error, Nepal's official news agency The five Indians

Abhisekh Kushwaha (25), Bishal Sharma (22), Anil Kumar Rajbhar (27), Sonu Jaiswal (35) and Sanjaya Jaiswal (26) - were among 72 people on board when the plane crashed.

The Commission formed under the coordination of former Secretary Nagendra Prasad Ghimire submitted the report to the Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, three days for the Commission to carry out the investigation and prepare the report.

The government had formed the five-member probe commission on the day of the plane crash. Retired captain of the Nepali Army, Deepak Prakash Bastola, retired Captain Sunil Thapa, aeronautical engineer Ekraj Jung Thapa and Joint-Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Buddhi Sagar Lamichhane were the members of the probe

Verdict reserved in case seeking Pak court halts trial of Imran, Qureshi in cipher case

Thousands of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) support-Pakistan high court on ers stormed military and government installations across the country following Khan's arrest in an alleged corruption case on May 9 here this year. Since then, Khan and scores of PTI workers have faced multiple cases for attacking military installations and government buildings. On laws of the country. The Islamabad High Court

Thursday, appearing before Duty Magistrate Syed Jahangir Ali, Prosecution lawyer Akram Amin pleaded to the court for the PTI leader's remand saying that a remand of up to 90 days can be given in a terrorism Iail Rawalpindi.

accused earlier this month and indicted them on December 13 after the IHC annulled previous proceedings, including the indictment of October 23 by declaring that the proper procedure was not adopted for the jail trial. The new trial followed after correcting the anomalies highlighted by the high court while ensuring open trial in the presence of the media.

to the sensitivity of the matter.

During the hearing, the court asked why an in-camera trial was being conducted when it had ordered an open trial. "This court had ordered that an open trial should be held, why are in-camera proceedings being held?" the judge asked.

However, the court later on

accepted the government plea

for in-camera proceedings due

Later the court issued notices to the Federal Investigation Agency and stayed the trial until January 11. matic document sent by the Pakistan embassy in March last year. The Federal Investigation Agency filed a case on August 15 that the accused violated the secret laws of the country while trying to exploit the cable for political purposes. Both Khan and Qureshi were given bail by the Supreme Court in the cipher

The FIA on September 30 filed the charge sheet against Khan and Qureshi who signed its copies. The FIA invoked in the charge sheet sections 5 and 9 of the Official Secrets Act which may lead to a death sentence, or two to 14 years' imprisonment if convicted.

Khan and Qureshi, who had claimed that the cable contained a threat from the United States to topple the PTI's government, have pleaded not guilty to the charges.

Hong Kong man jailed for 6 years after

Cargo ship picking up Ukrainian grain hits Russian floating mine in the Black Sea

civilian cargo ship struck a ARussian mine in the Black Sea near Ukraine's Danube ports Thursday, injuring two sailors, officials and analysts said, in an incident that underscored the dangers faced by those exporting Ukrainian grain during the war.

The Panama-flagged vessel struck the floating mine during stormy weather as it went to pick up grain, according to Ukraine's Southern Defense Forces, adding that churning seas often increase the risk from mines. As the fighting grinds on through the winter and likely into a third year after Russia's February 2022 invasion, and with little recent change along the front line, Ukraine is aiming to strengthen its financial resources for what could be a protracted war.

After Russia pulled out of a UN-brokered export agreement

a new Black Sea shipping corridor to get grain, metals and other cargo to world markets. That has given a boost to Ukraine's agriculture-dependent economy.

The mine incident occurred about 130 kilometers (80 miles) southwest of Chornomorsk, which is near Odesa on Ukraine's southern coast, the Ambrey maritime risk analysis company said. The ship with 18 crew was on its way to Izmail, another port in the area. The mine detonated at the ship's stern, causing equipment and machinery failure and resulting in the vessel losing power, Ambrey said. The captain reportedly maneuvered into shallow water to prevent the ship from sinking.

Ukraine's much-anticipated counteroffensive last summer largely failed to shift the front line despite billions of dollars in weaponry sent by its Western

to the Kremlin's forces, especially as further Western aid is in question. One think tank argues that the front line is not currently "a stable stalemate." The Institute for the Study of War in Washington said in an assessment late Wednesday that "the current balance can be tipped in either direction by decisions made in the West or in Russia, and limited Russian gains could become significant especially if the West cuts off military aid to Ukraine." Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov suggested that the US and European Union countries plan to continue sending help to Kyiv. "Neither Washington nor Brussels refrain from assisting the Kyiv regime (Ukrainian government) because they realize it would be doomed without such assistance," Lavrov said in an interview with state news agency Tass that was released on Thursday.

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given on behalf of Mrs. Rajni Bhate Mr. Mahesh Kumaris the owner of Entire Ti with roof/terrace rights, out of freehold built by bearing No. J-9/16, land area measuring; situated at Rajouris Garden in the area of will

APPENDIX IV-A Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN: L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor") the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whateve there is" basis on 30.01.2024 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery o Rs. 16,84,281/- (Rupees Sixteen Lakh Eighty Four Thousand Two Hundred Eighty One only) pending towards Loan Account No. HHLNOD00297528, by war of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest til **26.12.2023** with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and othe 26.12.2025 with applicable future interest in terms of the Coal Agreement and our related loan document(s) w.e.f. 27.12.2023 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from SURENDER KUMAR and SANGEETA. The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 15,00,000/- (Rupees Fifteen Lakh only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 1,50,000/ (Rupees One Lakh Fifty Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY FLAT NO. FF -4 (M. I. G), HAVING COVERED AREA 600 SQUARE FEET ON FIRST FLOOR (BACK SIDE MIDDLE), CONSTRUCTED UPON PLOT NO. A-26, KHASRA

NO. 1277. IN THE COLONY KNOWN AS SLF VED VIHAR. SITUATED IN VILLAGE - LONI, PARGANA & TEHSIL LONI, GHAZIABAD - 201010, UTTAR PRADESH. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiabullshomeloans.com. For bidding, log on to www.auctionfocus.in

properly in favour of Jana Small Finance Bank imitted. Islare hereby requested to notify the same in writing to undersigned with supporting documentary evidence at the address mention below within 7 days from the date of publication o this notice, failing which any claim, if any, of such persons will be consider to have been waived and/or abandoned and our client shall proceed with the disbursement of loan against the said properly an subsequent creation of Mortgage in respect thereof. For Juris NextGen Law Offices E-56, LGF, Greater Kailash Enclave Part-New Delhi-110048 Date : 26.12.2023 Place : GHAZIABAD

Authorized office Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited

alleged mishandling of a diplo-

Arthursday halted until January 11 the ongoing trial of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan and his close aide ex-foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in the cipher case for allegedly leaking state secrets and violating the

judge, Justice Miangul Hasan Aurangzeb, issued the order while hearing the petition of 71year-old Khan against an incamera trial going in the Adiala

The Special Court started

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY E-TENDER CALL NOTICE TD/TM/GEN-235(Vol-VII)/23/2445, dtd.22.12.2023

Name of the work: "Allotment of O6(Six) nos of Mechanical Iron Ore/Iron Ore Pellet plots as 10HP." License Fees: Rs.2,92,05,000/-, Wharfage Fees: Rs.18,98,620/-, Last date & time o submission of bid: 11.01.2024 up to 15:00 hrs. Date and time of opening (technical bid): 11.01.2024 up to 15:00 hrs.

Refer our website for details https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app & http://paradipport.gov.in/. Sd/- Traffic Manager **Paradip Port Authority**

AP ■ HONG KONG

A Hong Kong man was sentenced on Thursday to six years in prison after pleading guilty to a terrorism charge under a Beijing-imposed national security law for his involvement in a foiled plot to bomb court buildings.
Prosecutors said Ho Yu-

wang, 19, was the plot mastermind who planned to manufacture explosives and target court buildings in 2021. The plot, involving mostly secondary students back then, was foiled due to a police investigation, while no bombs were made and no casualties occurred, the prosecution earlier said.

Police said they raided a guesthouse room in 2021 and seized equipment believed to be used for making explosives. They also alleged Ho had writ-

ten notes saying that his goal was to destabilize Hong Kong, promote conflicts between the central government and others, and build up a resistance group.

pleading guilty to a terrorism charge

Two other defendants received a jail term of up to six years for an alternative charge. Ho is a lesser-known activist in the semi-autonomous city's pro-democracy movement, but his case has drawn attention because most of those arrested for the plot were students when the prosecution began about two years ago.

Ín May, Ho pleaded guilty to conspiracy to organize, plan or commit terrorist activities under the security law imposed on the former British colony following the 2019 protests. The security law enacted in 2020 criminalizes acts of succession, subversion, terrorism and collusion with foreign

forces, leading to the prosecution of many leading activists in the city. Beijing and Hong Kong authorities hailed it for bringing back stability to the financial hub.

Judge Alex Lee said if the plot had been carried out it would have changed the social conditions in Hong Kong from bad to worse, and Ho had disregarded the rule of law and the risks of his "fellow gangsters."

He reduced his term from a starting point of 10 years, based on grounds that Ho made a timely plea and provided practical assistance to the police later. In his mitigation, Lee heard that Ho was grateful he had been arrested, barring his plan from materializing in the end, and that he has changed his mindset and resumed his studies, particularly of Chinese history

6 Indian family members killed in fatal crash in US

Houston (PTI): In a horrific accident, at least six members of an Indian family, including two children, were killed when their minivan collided head-on with a pickup truck in the US state of Texas, officials said. The accident occurred on Tuesday evening near Johnson County, near Fortworth, according to the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS).

Seven people of the same family from Amalapuram town in Andhra Pradesh were in the minivan, and only one of them, 43-vear-old Potabathula, survived with critical injuries. Authorities iden-

tified those who died as Potabathula's wife, 36-year-old Naveena Potabathula; the couple's children, 9-year-old Nishidha Potabathula and 10year-old Krithik Potabathula; and Naveena Potabathula's par-

60-year-old

as one of the deceased victims. The elderly were visiting their daughter Naveena and grandkids Karthik and Nishita from India, the Consulate General (CG) of India in Houston said. According to the Indian mission, the couple was working for TCS on an L1 visa. After death certificates are

issued, the arrangement will be

made to send bodies home.

Sitamahalakshmi Ponnada and

64-year-old Nageswararao

Ponnada. The DPS identified

the driver of the minivan, 28-

year-old Rushil Barri of Irving,

The victims were relatives of Mummidivaram MLA P Venkata Satish Kumar. According to DPS investigators, the pickup truck was driving southbound on US Highway 67 near County Road 1119 at around 4 pm on Tuesday, when the minivan was in the same

area, heading north.

the pioneer

Israeli strikes across Gaza kill dozens of Palestinians

AP DEIR AL BALAH

Israeli forces bombarded cities, towns and refugee camps across Gaza overnight and into Thursday, killing dozens of people in an air and ground offensive against Hamas that has widened to most of the territory and forced thousands more to flee from homes and shelters.

The war has already killed over 20,000 Palestinians and driven around 85 per cent of the population of 2.3 million from their homes. Much of northern Gaza has been leveled, largely depopulated and isolated from the rest of the territory for weeks. Many fear a similar fate awaits the south.

Israel has vowed to dismantle Hamas — which is still putting up stiff resistance, even in the north — and bring back more than 100 hostages still held by the militants after their October 7 attack into southern Israel, in which some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, were killed. Israel has brushed off

international calls for a ceasefire — saying it would amount to a victory for Hamas.

The United States — while providing crucial support for the offensive — has urged Israel to take greater measures to spare civilians and allow in more aid. But aid workers say the amount of food, fuel and medical supplies entering is still far below what is needed, and 1 in 4 Palestinians in Gaza are starving, according to U.N.

STRIKES FROM NORTH TO SOUTH

An Israeli airstrike on a home in the northern town of Beit Lahiyeh — one of the first targets of the ground invasion that began in October buried at least 21 people, including women and children, according to a family

Bassel Kheir al-Din, a journalist with a local TV station, said the strike flattened his family house and severely damaged three neighboring homes.

He said 12 members of his family — including three children aged 2, 7 and 8 — were buried and presumed dead, and that nine neighbors were missing.

In central Gaza, Israeli warplanes and artillery pounded the built-up Bureij and ed the built-up builting and Nuseirat refugee camps, leveling buildings, residents said. Israel said this week it would expand its ground offensive into central Ğaza, and typically launches waves of airstrikes and shelling before troops and

tanks move in.

A hospital in the nearby town of Deir al-Balah received the bodies of 25 people killed overnight, including five children and seven women, hospital records showed on Thursday. Nonstop explosions could be heard throughout the night in the town — where hundreds of thousands of people have sought shelter, with many spending cold nights sleeping on sidewalks.
"It was another night of

killing and massacres," said Saeed Moustafa, a resident of

the Nuseirat camp. He said people were still crying out from the rubble of a house hit by an airstrike on Wednesday.

"We are unable to get them out. We hear their screams but we don't have equipment," he said. Farther south, in Khan Younis, the Palestinian Red Crescent said a strike near its Al-Amal Hospital killed at least 10 people and wounded another 12. Much of the city's population has left, but many are sheltering near Al-Amal and another hospital, hoping they will be spared from the bombardment.

ANOTHER WAVE OF DISPLACEMENT

Rami Abu Mosab, who lives in the Bureij refugee camp, said thousands of people have fled their homes in recent days because of the intense bombardment. He plans to remain there because he doesn't feel that anywhere in Gaza is safe.

"Here is death and there is death," he said, "To die in your

Kim vows to bolster war readiness to repel US-led confrontations

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called for bolstered war readiness to repel what he said were unprecedented United States-led confrontational moves, state media reported onThursday, as rival South Korea vowed a stern retaliation against any provocations by the North.

Kim's comments during the key political meeting tasked with setting state objectives for 2024 indicated No. 17 for 2024 indicated North Korea will likely continue weapons tests to modernize its nuclear arsenal. Observers say Kim likely hopes to eventually use his boosted arsenal as leverage in potential diplomacy with Washington, possibly after the 2024 US presidential election in November.

During Wednesday's second-day session of the ruling party's plenary meeting, Kim set forth unspecified tasks for the military and the munitions industry to "further accelerate the war preparations" in the face of anti-North Korea "confrontation moves by the US and



its vassal forces unprecedented in history," the official Korean Central News Agency said.

It said Kim also clarified the party's stance on expanding North Korea's strategic cooperation with anti-imperialist countries amid the world's rapidly changing geopolitical

KCNA said Kim spoke about the direction of the North's dealings with South Korea as well, but didn't elab-The Workers' Party meet-

ing is expected to last several days, and state media are

expected to publicize details of its discussions after it ends, likely on December 31. Experts say North Korea is expected to come up with pledges and steps to strengthen its nuclear attack capability and expand cooperation with Russia and China, which are also locked in separate confrontations with the US.

South Korea's spy agency said Thursday there is a high possibility that North Korea will launch military provoca-tions and cyberattacks ahead of South Korean parliamentary elections in April and the US presidential election in November. The National Intelligence Service said in a statement that senior North Korean military figures believed involved in past major deadly attacks and provocations have been given top posts in recent months.

The NIS said North Korea has conducted nuclear and missile tests and flown a drone across the rivals' border ahead of the South's previous parliamentary elections.

During a visit to a frontline

army unit Thursday, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol called for a swift, stern retaliation against any provocations by North Korea."If provoked, you should immediately respond and retaliate before reporting to (your higher-ups) later. I'd like you to sternly and swiftly smash the enemy's intentions to stage provocations on the spot," Yoon told troops.

Lee Sang-sook, a research professor at Seoul's Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security, said that limited clashes triggered by North Korean provocations along the Koreas' tense border could happen

She said North Korea will also likely test-launch an intermediate-range missile, a submarine-launched ballistic missile, and other weapons under its five-year military buildup plan launched in 2021.

Topics to be dealt with at the North Korean meeting could include its push to operate more spy satellites following its launch of its first military reconnaissance satellite on November 21.

NYT sues OpenAI, Microsoft

AP NEW YORK

The New York Times is striking back against the threat that artificial intelligence poses to the news industry, filing a federal lawsuit Wednesday against OpenAI and Microsoft seeking to end the practice of using its stories to train chatbots. The Times says the companies are threatening its livelihood by effectively stealing billions of dollars worth of work by its journalists, in some cases spitting out Times' material verbatim to people who seek answers from generative artificial intelligence like OpenAI's ChatGPT. The newspaper's lawsuit was filed in federal court in Manhattan and follows what appears to be a breakdown in talks between the newspaper and the two companies, which began in April. The media has already been pummelled by a migration of readers to online platforms. While many publications — most notably the Times — have successfully carved out a digital space, the rapid development of AI threatens to sigcantly upend the publishing

Web traffic is an important component of the paper's advertising revenue and helps drive subscriptions to its online site. But the outputs from AI chatbots divert that traffic away from the paper and other copyright holders, the Times says, making it less likely that users will visit the original source for the information.

"These bots compete with the content they are trained on," said Ian B. Crosby, partner and lead counsel at Susman Godfrey, which is representing The Times.An OpenAI spokesperson said in a prepared statement that the company respects the rights of content creators and is "committed" to working with them to help them benefit from the technology and new revenue models. "Our ongoing conversations with the New York Times have been productive and moving forward constructively, so we are surprised and disappointed with this development," the spokesperson said.

AP JOHANNESBURG

 $R^{ ext{enowned South African}}_{ ext{playwright, producer and}}$

composer Mbongeni Ngema

has died in a car crash at the

age of 68, his family said. He

was best known for creating the

hit Sarafina! which first pre-

miered on Broadway in 1988.

It was adapted into a musical

drama starring Whoopi

Goldberg in 1992, becoming an

international success and was

nominated for the Tony and

Sarafina! told the story of

Grammy Awards.

Colorado Republicans appeal against Donald **Trump's 2024 ballot ban**

The Colorado Republican Party on Wednesday appealed that state's supreme court decision that found former President Donald Trump is ineligible for the presidency, the potential first step to a showdown at the nation's highest court over the meaning of a 155year-old constitutional provision that bans from office those who "engaged in insurrection."

The first impact of the appeal is to extend the stay of the 4-3 ruling from Colorado's highest court, which put its decision on pause until January 4, the day before the state's primary ballots are due at the printer, or until an appeal to the US Supreme Court is finished.

Trump himself has said he still plans to appeal the ruling to the nation's highest court as well. The US Supreme Court has never ruled on Section 3 of the 14th Amendment, which was added after the Civil War to prevent former Confederates from returning to government. It says that anyone who swore an oath to "support" the constiinsurrection" against it cannot hold government office.

The Colorado high court ruled that applies to Trump in the wake of his role in the January 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol, intended to stop the certification of President Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 residential election. It was the first time in history that the provision was used to block a presidential contender's cam-

"The Colorado Supreme Court has removed the leading Republican candidate from the primary and general ballots, fundamentally changing the course of American democracy," the party's attorneys wrote Wednesday.

They added: "Unless the

Colorado Supreme Court's decision is overturned, any voter will have the power to sue to disqualify any political candidate, in Colorado or in any other jurisdiction that follows its lead. This will not only distort the 2024 presidential election but will also mire courts henceforth in political controversies over nebulous accusations of insur-

Argentina's unions protest president's cutbacks

AP BUFNOS AIRES

Thousands of union members and activists took to the streets of Argentina's capital on Wednesday to protest a decree from President Javier Milei that imposes sweeping deregulation and austerity measures meant to revive the country's struggling

Unions had asked a court for a prior injunction to block measures lifting some labour protections, but a judge rejected the appeal, noting the decree had not yet entered into effect. It does so on Friday. Argentine labour activists

question whether Milei, a selfdescribed anarcho-capitalist who has long railed against the country's "political caste," can impose the measures by way of an emergency decree bypassing the legislature where his party has few seats.
"We do not question the

president's legitimacy ... but we want a president who respects the division of powers, who understands that workers have the need to defend themselves individually and within the is unconstitutionality," said Gerardo Martínez, general secretary of Argentina's construction workers' union.

The protest went off peacefully, except for a confrontation between a small group of protesters and police. Journalists were caught up in the scuffle as police broke up the group of protesters, and some were beat-The country is not for

sale!" some protesters chanted, apparently referring to proposals that would allow the privatization of state-run industries. Since taking office on December 10 following a landslide election victory, Milei has devalued the country's currency by 50 per cent, cut transport and energy subsidies, said his government won't renew contracts for more than 5,000 recently hired state employees and proposed repealing or modifying about 300

He says he wants to transform Argentina's economy and reduce the size of its state to address rising poverty and annual inflation expected to reach 200 per cent by the end of the year. The General Labor at the march on Wednesday saying Milei's decree "introduces a ferocious, regressive labour reform whose only purpose is to hamstring union activity, punish workers and benefit business interests."

Milei's administration has quickly faced protest. The government had said it will allow demonstrations, but threatened to cut off public aid payments to anyone who blocks thoroughfares. Marchers were also forbidden to carry sticks, cover their faces or bring children to the

Milei, a 53-year-old economist who rose to fame on television with profanity-laden tirades against the political establishment, became president with the support of Argentines disillusioned with the economic crisis. In a media interview ahead of the protest, he accused those who oppose his reforms of "not being aware of the seriousness of the situation." His initiatives have the support of Argentina's Business Association which called them a "historic opportunity" to fight the "excessive size of the state" and the negative consequences

10 die, 57 injured in Chain-reaction collision on Turkish motorway



Ankara (AP): A chain-reaction crash Thursday involving seven vehicles on a motorway in northwest Turkey killed at least 10 people and injured 57 others, officials said. The pileup occurred in dense fog and low visibility on the Northern Marmara Highway in Sakarya province, some 150 kilometers (93 miles) from Istanbul.

An investigation has been launched into the accident but Gov. Yasar Karadeniz of Sakarya said it likely occurred poor visibility, triggering other crashes at the rear.

At least three intercity buses were involved in the

told reporters at the scene.

in serious condition, the gov-

Police and emergency per-

'Drug cartel kidnapped 14 from towns where residents killed 10 gunmen'

AP MEXICO CITY

drug cartel in central Adrug carter in central Mexico has kidnapped 14 local residents, including four children, in apparent retaliation for an uprising by angry farmers earlier this month that killed 10 cartel gunmen, officials said.

Farmers in the village of Texcaltitlan and a neighbouring hamlet had apparently grown tired of cartel extortions. Armed only with sickles and hunting rifles, they chased down suspected gang members amid bursts of automatic gunfire on December 8, hacking, shooting and burning them. Four villagers also died in the clash. Prosecutors said late on Wednesday that the cartel then

abducted 14 people, including four children between the ages of 1 1/2 and 14. The abducted adults include three policemen who were seized at a cartel roadblock, and a wounded villager the gang snatched from a hospital soon after the clash.

It was unclear if there was an intentional symbolic meaning in the fact that 14 gunmen were killed by the farmers in the clash and that 14 people were kidnapped.

José Luis Cervantes, the head prosecutor for the State of Mexico, located west of the country's capital, Mexico City, said no ransom demand had been received. Previously, state officials had denied anyone was kidnapped, and said they

Playwright Ngema dies at 68

were simply "missing."

But residents of the village and a nearby hamlet said the Familia Michoacana drug cartel was demanding they hand over the leaders of the uprising, in exchange for releasing the kidnapped children and adults. Cervantes said none of the

villagers would face charges for the December 8 clash. because the confrontation had been classified as "legitimate self defense" because the farmers were defending their properties.nGunmen from the Familia Michoacana cartel, which has long dominated the area, had showed up in the village earlier, demanding local farmers pay a per-acre (hectare) extortion fee from farmers.

E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN: L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor") the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of th Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever there is" basis on 30.01.2024 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M. for recovery of Rs. 26,67,696/- (Rupees Twenty Six Lakh Sixty Seven Thousand Six Hundred Ninety Six only) pending towards Loan Account No. HHLDMT00358721, by way o outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest til 26.12.2023 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 27.12.2023 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from MR. AKHILESH KUMAR SINGH, MRS SUMITRA DEVI and MR. HARENDER KUMAR (GUARANTOR).

Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property

The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 16,75,000/- (Rupee Sixteen Lakh Seventy Five Thousand only) and the Earnest Money Deposi ("EMD") will be Rs. 1,67,500/- (Rupees One Lakh Sixty Seven Thousand Five Hundred only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

FLAT NO. SF-2, SECOND FLOOR (WITH ROOF RIGHTS), AMDEASURING TOTAL COVERED AREA OF 51.09 SQ. MTRS., FRONT LHS, SITUATED ON RESIDENTIAL PLOT NO. MM-72 (AREA 264 SQ. MTRS), DLF ANKUR VIHAR LONI, GHAZIABAD - 201102 UTTAR PRADESH. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided

on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiak

Date: 26.12.2023 Place: GHAZIABAD

Authorized office Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited PUBLIC NOTICE

M/S SHRI SAI INTERNATIONAL PLOT NO. 40, PHASE 1 Barhi industrial area, sonipat Haryana-131101 BIDDING NO. 2023-24/018/STOCKS

The Competent Authority invites E-bids for disposal of stock of Fire Affected Plant & Machineryas salvage which had been damaged due to fire i.e. (fire) affected on 'As is where basis' is.

The interested bidders are advised to visit the www.justauction.in. The details of the E-bidding including list of items, approximate quantity available for disposal and its pictures are displayed on website.

Contact Person: Mr. Naveen Gupta of M/s Shri Sai International Contact No.: 9911346090. Anita Jha (Surveyor office) Contact No.: 7011489391.

Machinery Can be done from 29.12.2023 to 04.01.2024 between 09:00 AM TO 05:00 PM. E-bidding will be conducted on 05.01.2024 at 03.00 P.M to 04.00 P.M.

https://rb.gy/wcg3bp No manual offers will be accepted Notice is herby given that my client Rajni Choudhary is in process to purchase the Built up Property Bearing No. RZ-P. 13 land area measuring 150 Sq. Vds. out of Khasra No. 225 Situated in the Revenue Estate of Village Nasirpur, colony known as West Sagarpur, New Delhi, lavailing loan from Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited) from Maya Devi, they acquired the same vide Sale deed dated 11.07.201e sexecuted by Mr. Mohan Singh and Mrs. Jasmati Devi, she confirmed that she is not having the below documents pertaining to the property in question:

Photocopy (CTC of Khatauni issued by Concerned Authority in favour of Mrs. Ram Piari in respect of Khasra No. 225.

Photocopy and Original of Regd, GPA dated 22.04.1974 executed by Mrs. Ram Piari in favour of Mr. Sunder Lal in respect of the Property. (Doc. No. 2832)

Photocopy of Death Certificate of Mr. Shanker singh who died on 21.12.1988

Photocopy of State Standa Devi as only legal heirs.

Photocopy of Death Certificate of Mr. Bakhtavar Singh.

Photocopy of Death Certificate of Mr. Bakhtavar Singh.

● Photocopy of Death Certificate of Mr. Bakhtavar Singh.
 ● Photocopy of Death Certificate of Mrs. Karnla Devi (W/o Mr. Bakhtavar Singh)
 ● Photocopy of SMC issued by District Magistrate after the death of Mrs. Karnla Devi reflecting the names of Mr. Harinder Singh and Mr. Kuldeep Singh as only legal heirs.
 All personis having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, lien, charge, pledge, easement or otherwise howsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned.
 Vamal Kant Gupta (Advocate)
 Unit No, FF-2, First floor, Mahaluxmi Metro Tower Sec-4, Vaishali, Gzb., U.P., Mob. 9810063351

Authorities believe some passengers died when they left their vehicles and were struck by another vehicle, Karadeniz

Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property

E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 ead with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. lotice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to **Indiabulls** Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN: L65922DL2005PLC1360291 ("Secured Creditor") the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is "and "whatever there is" basis on 30.01.2024 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of Rs. 28,74,729- (Rupees Twenty Eight Lakh Seventy Four Thousand Sever Hundred Twenty Nine only) pending towards Loan Account No HHLVAS00411929, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 26.12.2023 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 27.12.2023 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from SHARIFUDDIN MALIK and ROSHANARA MALIK.

The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 29,00,000/- (Rupees Twenty Nine Lakh only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 2,90,000/- (Rupees Two Lakh Ninety Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

FLAT NO. S. F 4 (M. I. G) ON SECOND FLOOR (REAR LEFT HAND SIDE) (WITHOUT ROOF RIGHTS), HAVING AREA 700 SQUARE FEET, EQUIVALENT TO 65.029 SQUARE METERS, IN THE COLONY KNOWN AS SHYAM PARK EXTENSION, CONSTRUCTED UPON PLOT NO. D/9A, BLOCK - D, BALAJI ARCADE - II, SITUATED IN SAHIBABAD, HADBAST VILLAGE JAGOLA GHAZIABAD-201010, UTTAR PRADESH.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiabullshomeloans.com. For idding, log on to www.auctionfocus.in

Date: 26.12.2023 Place: GHAZIABAD

Authorized officer Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited

APPENDIX IV-A

Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property -Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and

Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 ead with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN: L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor"), the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever here is" basis on 30.01.2024 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of Rs. 17,40,743/- (Rupees Seventeen Lakh Forty Thousand Seven Hundred Forty Three only) pending towards Loan Account No. HHLDMT00476331, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 26.12.2023 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 27.12.2023 along with legal expenses and other

charges due to the Secured Creditor from RAHUL and NANU RAM. The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 15,25,000/- (Rupees Fifteen Lakh Twenty Five Thousand only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 1,52,500/- (Rupees One Lakh Fifty Two Thousand Five Hundred only)

i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

FLAT NO. FF - 1 (M. I. G) HAVING COVERED AREA 500 SQUARE FEET (46.45 SQUARE METERS) ON FIRST FLOOR (WITHOUT ROOF RIGHTS) LEFT HAND FRONT SIDE, PLOT NO. F-22, SLF VED VIHAR, PARGANA & TEHSIL LONI, GHAZIABAD - 201102, UTTAR PRADESH AND WHICH IS BOUNDED AS OLLOWS:

EAST : FLAT NO. FF-2
WEST : ROAD 9 METERS WIDE
NORTH : PLOT NO. FF-23

SOUTH : COMMON PASSAGE & STAIRS & FLAT NO. FF-3

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiabullshomeloans.com. For oidding, log on to www.auctionfocus.in

Authorized officer Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited

a young student and how she inspired her peers to fight against racial segregation in apartheid South Africa after her teacher was thrown in jail. Apartheid was an institutionalized system that discrim-



ensured South Africa was ruled by the minority white population from 1948 till the early

Ngema's body of work included the lauded thea tre production Woza Albert, which first showed in 1981 and went on to win more than 20 political satire explored the second coming of Jesus Christ as a black man, returning to South Africa as a black man. 'Ngema was killed in a

awards across the world. The

head-on car accident while returning from a funeral he was attending in Lusikisiki in the Eastern Cape this evening," his family said in a statement Wednesday. The celebrated playwright was a passenger in the vehicle involved in the crash. Tributes to the noted play-

wright have been pouring in. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa praised the late Ngema in a statement.

pride among us as fellow South

The many productions he created or to which he contributed inspired resilience and around the world," Ramaphosa said Thursday. South África's ruling African National Congress party and one of its biggest rivals, the leftist Economic Freedom Fighters both con-

veyed their condolences.

Africans and took South Africa

and our continent into the

theatres, homes and conscious-

ness of millions of people

ment: "He was a globally acclaimed playwright, composer and producer. We have lost a true legend, a doyen, and a genuine ambassador of theatre." The Leftist party described him as "more than just an artist; he was a cultur-

al icon, and a beacon of hope

during some of our darkest

The ANC said in a state-

Inspection of fire affected Plant 8

M/s Shri Sai International

To place your bid-

Seven of the injured were

sonnel were seen clearing the

Markets hit fresh lifetime highs

TOP

GAINERS

2.81 M&M

2.68 NTPC

218 Power Grid Corp

2.02 Nestle India

Tata Motors

LOSERS

-0.72 L&T

-0.37 Wipro

-0.29 UltraTech Cement

-0.26 Asian Paints

quity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty advanced further to settle at record highs for the second straight session on Thursday, buoyed by lower crude prices in international markets and fresh foreign fund inflows amid largely positive global cues.

Hectic buying in energy, metal and FMCG counters also added to the momentum, traders said. Rising for the fifth consecutive day, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 371.95 points or 0.52 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 72,410.38. During the day, it rallied 445.91 points or 0.61 per cent to reach its lifetime peak of 72,484.34. The Nifty climbed 123.95 points

or 0.57 per cent to settle at a fresh record of 21,778.70. During the day, it zoomed 146.7 points or 0.67 per cent to hit its lifetime high of 21,801.45. In the last five sessions, the BSE

benchmark rallied 1,904.07 points or 2.70 per cent, and the Nifty climbed 628.55 points or 2.97 per cent.

"The benchmark index maintained its optimism and hit a fresh high owing to ease in the Red Sea issue and reversal of FII inflows. A decline in crude oil prices below USD 80 prompted widespread purchasing across oil and energy companies. "The Asian market too

advanced due to expectation of more aggressive rate cuts by the Fed next year," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Mahindra & Mahindra was the biggest gainer in the Sensex pack, rising 2.81 per cent, followed by NTPC, Power Grid, Nestle, Tata Motors, ITC, Bharti Airtel and Kotak Mahindra

In contrast, Larsen & Toubro, Wipro, JSW Steel, UltraTech Cement, and Asian Paints were among the laggards. In the broader market, the BSE

midcap gauge climbed 0.66 per cent, and smallcap index advanced 0.23 per cent. Among the indices, oil & gas jumped 2.45 per cent, energy rallied 2.18 per cent, metal (1.60 per cent), FMCG (1.24 per

cent), realty (0.97 per cent) and power (0.95 per cent). On the other hand, industrials and IT were the laggards.

"Asian shares scaled five-month

BSE Sensex

Previous day close:

72,038.43

71,500

71,100

peaks on Thursday as market wagers on ever-more aggressive rate cuts extended a huge rally in US stocks. Gains in Asia were led by Chinese shares, which

were headed for their best day in four months, boosted by a rotation into some of 2023's worst-performing sectors. European stocks opened mild-

GRAPHIC

SENSEX GAINS 370 POINTS

NSE Nifty

Previous day close:

21,654.75

ly lower," said Deepak Jasani Head of Retail Research, HDFC

In Asian markets, Seoul, Shanghai, and Hong Kong set-

Change ____ +123.95

tled with gains, while Tokyo ended lower. European markets were trading marginally lower. The US markets ended in the green on Wednesday.

TOP

GAINERS

4.20 Coal India

2.68 Hero Motocorp

2.52 Dr Reddys Labs

Adani Enterpris

-0.73 Adani Ports

-0.54 LTIMindtree

0.68 Eicher Motors

2.75 M&M

2.56 NTPC

LOSERS

-0.73 L&T

"Markets have been gaining for five consecutive trading sessions on the back of optimism over expected growth next year. Global markets were also supportive as investors hoped for an early rate cut in 2024.

"Also, FIIs have turned net buyers after being sellers for six consecutive days. Overall, we expect the positive momentum to continue and markets to end the year on a buoyant note," said Siddhartha Khemka, Head of

retail Research, Motilal Oswal

Financial Services Ltd. Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.73 per cent to USD 79.07 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) turned buyers on Wednesday after continuous offloading and bought equities worth Rs 2,926.05 crore, according to exchange data.

In the previous session, the BSE benchmark jumped 701.63 points, or 0.98 per cent, to settle at its all-time closing high of 72,038.43. The Nifty climbed 213.40 points, or 1 per cent, to settle at a record high of

Wealth of investors climbs ₹12.80 lakh crore in 5 days | ICRA sees bank credit growth

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With the equity markets rallying for the fifth day running, investors' wealth climbed Rs 12.80 lakh crore, amid prevailing bullish sentiments due to optimism over the country's macroeconomic fundamentals and fresh foreign fund inflows.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 371.95 points or 0.52 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 72,410.38 on Thursday. During the day, it rallied 445.91 points or 0.61 per cent to reach its lifetime peak of 72,484.34.

In the last five trading sessions, the BSE benchmark rallied 1,904.07 points or 2.70 per cent. Thanks to the optimistic trend in equities, the market capital-

Capital markets regulator Sebi on Thursday tweaked the regulatory

framework for Online Bond Platform Providers (OBPPs) to enhance the ease of doing business. This came after Sebi

received representations from stock

exchanges and market participants,

"The proposed modifications shall aid

in ease of doing business for OBPPs," the

Securities and Exchange Board of India

Under this, the regulator has modified

of order receipt, deal sheet and quote

receipt in case of products, securities or

On placement of an order by an

investor, Sebi said that OBPPs will have

to issue without delay an electronic

order receipt which includes the date

and time of the order, details of counter-

parties involved, quantity and amount

'LIC in active talk

proposed to be transacted

including online bond platforms.

(Sebi) said in a circular.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

isation of BSE-listed firms went up by Rs 12,80,559.2 crore in five days to reach an all-time high of Rs 3,63,00,558.07 crore. "Markets witnessed bullish bets on the monthly F&O expiry day, indicating that the risk-on sentiment is likely to continue

"The waning higher inflation concerns and expectations of an early rate cut in the world's largest economy has further strengthened hopes that India's growth momentum would continue further thus boosting investors' confidence," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd,

new year.

Among the Sensex firms, Mahindra & Mahindra, NTPC,

going ahead on hopes of a strong local macro play in the

Power Grid, Nestle, Tata Motors, ITC, Bharti Airtel and Kotak Mahindra Bank were the

major gainers. In contrast, Larsen & Toubro, Wipro, UltraTech Cement, Tata Consultancy Services and Asian Paints were among the laggards.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Shanghai, and Hong Kong set-tled with gains, while Tokyo ended lower. The US markets ended in the

green on Wednesday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.73 per cent to USD 79.07 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) turned buyers on Wednesday after continuous wednesday after continuous offloading and bought equities worth Rs 2,926.05 crore, according to exchange data. In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.66 per cent, and smallcap index advanced 0.23 per cent. Among the indices oil & gas Among the indices, oil & gas jumped 2.45 per cent, energy rallied 2.18 per cent, metal (1.60 per cent), FMCG (1.24 per cent), realty (0.97 per cent) and power (0.95 per cent). On the other hand, industrials and IT were the laggards.

at 12-13 per cent in FY'25

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

 $B^{\text{ank credit growth is expect-}}_{\text{ed to remain healthy at 12-}}$ 13 per cent in the next fiscal, rating agency ICRA said while maintaining a positive outlook on the banking sector.

In a statement, ICRA said the positive outlook on the banking sector is mainly driven by comfortable asset quality levels, with both corporate and retail portfolios performing well in terms of delinquencies, result-ing in limited net-NPA addi-

"Furthermore, credit growth is expected to remain healthy at 12-13 per cent in FY 2025 (16.5 per cent YoY as on December 1, 2023 and 15.4 per cent in FY2023), driven by strong demand in the services and the retail segments," it said. These factors, ICRA added, are

likely to be offset by the continued upward repricing of the deposit base in H2 FY2024, leading to compression in interest margins. While this repricing is likely to

mostly happen by the end of 2023-24, the expectations of a rate cut from August 2024 could start a downward pressure on lending yields and hence may continue during the next

"Despite this, we expect the operating profits for banks to remain steady supported by the loan growth, however, operating profitability levels would witness a mild moderation and stabilise at 1.8-2.0 per cent in FY2024-FY2025 compared to 2.2 per cent in FY2023," it said. Aashay Choksey, Vice President, (CRAs).

of major credit rating agencies Total number of downgrades as ICRA said that incremental credit expansion has been robust so far at Rs 15.5 lakh a ratio of total number of ratings (upgrades + downgrades + stacrore (for FY2024 till December ble) across three major credit rating agencies -- ICRA, CRISIL 1, 2023), against Rs 18.2 lakh and CARE -- remained stable or crore in the last financial year. declined in the first and second 'However, as we look beyond this year, credit growth is likequarter of 2023-24 relative to ly to come off as tight liquidity conditions would eventually the corresponding quarters of weigh down on growth," he said "This ratio, which touched a Besides this, Choksey said factors including weaker credit

peak of 20.3 per cent during Q1:2020-21, is at a low of 0.4 per cent at the end of Q2:2023-24," Moreover, across the three

CRAs, the total number of upgrades and number of ratings remaining stable have increased, while the number of downgrades has decreased in the first two quarters of 2023-24 relative to corresponding quarters of 2022-23.

Sebi tweaks framework for online bond platform providers



After the execution of the order, the entity will issue a deal sheet to the investor for all transactions, stating all the relevant information regarding the transaction which includes the date and time of placing of the order, settlement of the order, details of counter-parties involved, quantity and amount transact-

Additionally, Sebi said that all advertisements will be accompanied by a standard warning in legible font stating "investments in debt securities/ municipal debt securities/ securitised debt instruments are subject to risks including delay and/ or default in payment..." It further said that no addition or deletion of words will be made to the standard warning. The regulator said online bond platform

providers can offer securities such as Government Securities, Treasury Bills, listed Sovereign Gold Bonds, listed municipal debt securities, and listed products or securities that are regulated by a financial sector regulator such as Sebi, RBI, IRDAI or PFRDA, on their online bond platforms

Under the rules, OBPPs need to register themselves as stock brokers in the debt segment of the stock exchange. OBPs offer an avenue for investors, particularly non-institutional investors to access the bond market.

'Banks fare well in stress test, NBFCs show some weakness'

with RBI for access to debt data via CRILC'

 $S_{\mathrm{in}}^{\mathrm{tate-owned}}$ insurer LIC is $s_{\mathrm{in}}^{\mathrm{tate-owned}}$ active discussion' with the Reserve Bank and confident of getting access to the central bank's debt database CRILC, its chairman Siddhartha Mohanty on Thursday said and rued that despite being the largest debt investor it has no access to the debt data platform

He also urged the RBI to undo this anomaly to help it tide over the risks of the asset-liability mismatch it is saddled with.

Mohanty said he is expecting a positive decision from the Reserve Bank shortly as it is in active discussion with the regulator to get access to the RBI-run Central Repository Information on Large Credits (CRILC)

Since life insurance is a very long-term commitment, an insurer's liabilities are long-term while its assets are short-term, and the chairman said not having access to the CRILC data is a risk for the insurer.

"It's an irony that despite being the largest debt investor, we don't have access to debt or the national debt database CRILC, Mohanty said at an economic conclave organised by SBI here. However, he said that "LIC is in active discussion with the regulator RBI to rectify this anomaly and that they are confident

access to debt data".

With over Rs 45 lakh crore exposure to the markets and various market instruments, LIC is the largest financial entity in the

When asked about LIC's exposure towards non-government securities and state bonds, Mohanty told PTI that the national insurer has over Rs 3 lakh crore of exposure to corporate debt. While its equity exposure is over Rs 10.5 lakh crore, the total investments are over Rs

of getting the access". "The lack of access to CRILC tilts the balance negatively towards LIC as despite being the largest market participant, we are not present on the panel at all," Mohanty said, adding that he is optimistic that the central bank will allow the much-needed access to this database as the discussions with the regulator have been smooth and positive so far. Underlining the need for access to debt market data, he said, "When I sit with other market participants, I can sort out most of the issues, and thankfully, my regulator Irdai is more considerate to our demand now. Almost everything is in place now, but need more clarity on

45 lakh crore.

PTI ■ MUMBAI

 $B_{\rm with\ minimum\ capital}^{\rm anks\ will\ be\ able\ to\ comply}$ requirements under severe stress scenarios, while some weakness es were witnessed in the NBFC sector compared to the March 2023 position, according to an RBI's Financial Stability Report released on Thursday. The report reflects the collective

assessment of the Sub-Committee of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) on risks to financial stability and the resilience of the Indian financial

According to the report, India's financial sector has displayed stability and resilience, with ongoing improvement in asset quality, capital position and profitability during the first half of 2023-24.

Macro stress tests for credit risk indicate that even under a severe stress scenario, all banks would be able to comply with minimum capital requirements, it added.

However, the report said, "Stress in the NBFC sector has been assessed to be higher under a high-risk stress scenario relative to the March 2023 position. Contagion risks may warrant

monitoring on account of increased inter-bank exposure". System-level stress tests for assessing the resilience of the NBFC sector to shocks in credit risk were conducted on a sample of 146 NBFCs.

Macro stress tests are performed to assess the resilience of banks' balance sheets to unforeseen shocks emanating from the macroeconomic environment. FSR said the soundness and resilience of India's banking sector have been underpinned by ongoing improvement in asset quality, enhanced provisioning for bad loans, sustained capital adequacy and a rise in profitabil-



Credit growth remains robust, and deposit growth has also gained momentum, the report

"Lending by non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) accelerated, led by personal loans and loans to industry, and their asset quality has improved," it said, adding that bilateral exposures among entities in the Indian financial system continued to expand.

demand in the agriculture seg-

as well as the recent increase in

risk-weights to the unsecured

consumer lending & the NBFC

segments would also collec-

tively temper credit traction.

Meanwhile, the Reserve Bank's

Financial Stability Report (FSR)

on Thursday said the improve-

ment in corporate sector health

is also seen in rating decisions

The recent increase in risk weights of select retail loan categories may have implications for NBFC credit growth at the overall sectoral and sub-sectoral levels, the report noted. According to the FSR, the total outstanding bilateral exposures among the entities in the Indian financial system continued to expand, and the share of interbank exposures in the total assets of the banking system

reached a 3-year peak in September 2023.

Though contagion risk and consequent additional solvency losses to the banking system have increased marginally, it would not lead to failure of any hank," it said.

The Indian financial system is confronted with heightened global uncertainty and spillovers, it said, adding that close and continuous monitoring is warranted to detect any undue risk build-up in the system.

This, FSR said, has to be supported by prudent management of exposures and building of financial buffers.

Rupee rebounds 17 paise to 83.17 against US dollar

RUPEE VS DOLLAR

PTI MUMBAI

The rupee rebounded after two I straight days of fall to settle 17 paise higher at 83.17 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, amid a weak American currency overseas and a rally in domestic equity markets.

The inflow of foreign funds and a downward trend in crude oil prices also supported the Indian currency, forex traders said.

of 83.16-83.34 against the greenback. The local unit finally settled at 83.17 (provisional), register-

ing a gain of 17 paise over its previous close.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic currency opened at 83.33 and traded in a range

The rupee had lost 18 paise in the previous two sessions. On Wednesday, the domestic currency settled 15 paise lower at 83.34 against the dollar, a day after closing at a loss of 3 paise.

Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said the rupee appreciated on the weak US dollar and a surge in domestic markets.

Choudhary said the rupee is likely to trade with a slight positive bias on fresh foreign inflows and an extended decline in the US dollar. Also, "traders may take cues from weekly unemployment claims data from the US. USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range

of Rs 82.90 to Rs 83.50".

settlement of running accounts

Sebi eases guidelines for

To ensure uniformity and clar-Capital markets regulator Sebi on Thursday eased ity on dates of such monthly and quarterly settlement of client guidelines for settlement of accounts, Sebi asked stock running accounts of clients' exchanges to jointly issue the funds or securities lying with annual calendar for the settlestock brokers. Now, stock broment of running accounts kers can settle the running (quarterly and monthly) at the account of clients' funds on the beginning of the financial year. first Friday or Saturday of the Further, to safeguard against any quarter or month. The trading possibility of misuse of one client's funds to settle another members, after considering the End of the Day (EOD) obligaclients' running account, any tion of funds across all the funds received from clients will exchanges, will settle the runremain in the upstreaming ning accounts at the choice of account. The new framework the clients on a quarterly and monthly basis, on the dates will be applicable from the quarterly settlement of Januarystipulated by the stock March 2024 and monthly settle-

ment of January 2024, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a circu-Sebi, under the current frame-

work, had mandated settlement of the running account of the client's funds on the first Friday of the quarter or month. The move came after the

Broker's Industry Standards Forum (ISF) had represented various problems faced by brokers due to a single day of settlement — hectic activities on the day of settlement leading to chances of errors, missing out on payment timings of banks due to late finalisation, delayed instructions among others.

Man City rallies for 3-1 win at Everton

AP ■ LIVERPOOL

anchester City had to come from behind to beat Everton 3-1 and climb back into the Premier League's top four.

Just back from winning its first Club World Cup title in Saudi Arabia, City went behind to Jack Harrison's first-half goal but recovered after the break thanks to a well-taken strike by Phil Foden and a penalty by Julian

Alvarez on Wednesday. Bernardo Silva added the third when he pounced on a poor clearance by Jordan Pickford to curl home into an empty net in

It was only City's second win in seven league matches but lifted the defending champions above Tottenham into fourth place, five points behind leader Liverpool with a game in hand. Secondplace Arsenal can move six points clear of City by beating West Ham on Thursday. City was without Erling Haaland

again because of a foot injury and Pep Guardiola's side had a sluggish start as Everton took the lead in the 29th minute. City midfielder Rodri was pressured into an uncharacteristic loss of possession on the edge of his own area, and Dwight McNeil teed up Harrison to sidefoot home from close range. The former City winger almost scored a spectacular second with Ederson at full stretch to tip over his swerving outside-of-the-left-



City defender John Stones had to come off with an injury in the 43rd, but the visitors needed just 19 minutes after the break to turn things around. Foden was

edge of the area from a corner to beat Pickford with a low shot inside his left-hand post in the 53rd, and Alvarez put his team ahead from the spot after given too much space on the Nathan Ake's shot hit Amadou

Onana's arm as he slid in to block. Referee John Brooks awarded a corner before changing his mind and pointing to the spot, with Alvarez's blast down the middle proving too power-

ful as it went underneath the diving Pickford's legs. Silva's 20-yard effort into an

unguarded net secured the win after he collected Alvarez's block on the goalkeeper.



Chelsea gets rare home victory Beats Crystal Palace 2-1 with late penalty

Substitute Noni Madueke Sbailed out a misfiring Chelsea side with a late penalty to secure a 2-1 win over Crystal Palace in the Premier League for a rare home victory in 2023. Just as it looked like Chelsea's

inefficiency up front would cost it again, Madueke was tripped by Eberechi Eze inside the area and stepped up to the spot himself to send goalkeeper Dean Henderson the wrong way in the 89th minute.

It secured just a sixth home league win of the calendar year for Chelsea at Stamford Bridge, which used to be a fortress under Jose Mourinho and several managers after him but has been anything but under Mauricio Pochettino and his three most recent predecessors from last season.

Chelsea has not found any kind of consistency under Pochettino, who was forced to name the club's youngest-ever starting lineup for a Premier League game following a slew of injuries and suspensions.

The hosts started well, though, as they largely dominated the first half and took the lead through Mykhailo Mudryk in the 13th minute. But they missed several chances to double their advantage before Michael Olise equalized just before the break.

Pochettino's team continued to control possession in the second half but Nicolas Jackson missed their best chance to restore the lead in the 74th when the strug-gling striker lifted the ball wide after he was played clear through

Jackson then thought he had scored just minutes later when he steered in a cross into the box but he was ruled offside after a VAR check.

Referee Michael Salisbury initially waved play on after Eze's challenge on Madueke but was eventually called to the pitchside monitor by his VAR assistant to review the incident, and then pointed to the spot.

Chelsea is provisionally in 10th place after 19 rounds, with Palace now just three points out-

AFC Cup: Odisha FC to face ASEAN Zone champions in Inter Zone semis

Indian Super League side Odisha FC has been pitted against a yet to be determined ASEAN Zone champions in the Inter Zone semi-final of the ongoing AFC Cup during a draw ceremony here on Thursday.

Odisha FC had emerged victorious in the AFC Cup South Zone, having beaten Bashundhara Kings of Bangladesh in their final Group D encounter earlier this month. Four teams — Central Coast Mariners FC (Australia), Phnom Penh Crown FC (Cambodia), Macarthur FC (Australia) and Sabah FC (Malaysia) — are vying for the ASEAN Zone champions honour.

The ASEAN Zone final will take place on February 22 and the winner will face Odisha FC in the Inter Zone semi-final,

which will be a double-leg affair.
The opening leg will take place on March



6 or 7 at the home of the ASEAN Zone champions, followed by the return leg at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar on March 13 or 14. The winner of the Inter Zone semifinal will take on either FC Abdysh-Ata Kant (Kyrgyz Republic) or Futuro FC (Chinese Taipei), the other two semifinalists.

The Inter Zone final will be played in April and the winner will face the West Zone champions in the AFC Cup final on May 5. Odisha FC has been in decent form this season winning the Indian Super Cup, beating Bengaluru FC. It is currently placed third in the ISL.

Fresh 'concerns' emerge over Formula E race in Hyderahad

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

ormula E has raised fresh Formula E Has rance in concerns over its race Hyderabad, saying it might not be able to go ahead with the round scheduled for February 10 following the latest communique from the new Telangana government.

The inaugural electric race in the country was held in February this year with then IT Minister KT Rama Rao playing a huge role in bringing the race to the city. However, KTR's BRS party lost the state election to Congress in December.

Considering the operational challenges involved in hosting the first race, Formula E had dropped Hyderabad from the provisional calendar before including it in the final calendar in October.

The change of guard has put them in a tough spot with the Congress government's letter to Formula E adding to its woes



ahead of the race in six weeks'

"Following a recent official communication received from the new Government of Telangana, Formula E is seeking urgent clarification of their contractual commitments under the agreement and how it could impact the Hyderabad race. Based on the content of the let-

ter received, Formula E is concerned the race will not be able to go ahead as planned, Formula E said in a statement. Formula E officials had met

Initially, a four-year agreement was signed between Formula E, Telangana government and Greenko, which has pulled out of the event after the inaugural edition.

members of the new govern-

ment earlier this month.

'Formula E's senior executive team met with the new leadership of the Government of Telangana immediately following elections earlier this month. Discussions have been ongoing since then.

"With the event just a few weeks away and in its final stages of preparation, Formula E, partners and suppliers have already made significant commercial investments in the

"The inaugural Hyderabad E-Prix in February this year returned almost 84 million USD in positive economic impact to the region, many times more than the overhead costs invested by Formula E and the Government of Telangana, the statement added.

The cost of holding a Formula E race varies. The first race in Hyderabad cost the stakeholders more than Rs 150 crore. It was the first FIA World Championship status event held in India in 10 years, following Formula 1's departure in 2013. Formula E is staged around the world and in iconic world cities including Tokyo, Berlin and

Mourinho, Lukaku and Dybala set for different

Government didn't follow 'proper procedure' while suspending WFI, will challenge in court: Sanjay

Newly-elected WFI president Sanjay Singh on Thursday said that the sports ministry did not follow "proper procedure" while suspending the wrestling national body and will challenge the government's decision in a court.

The sports ministry on Sunday suspended the WFI, three days after its elections were held, for flouting its own constitution while taking certain decisions, including the announcement of U-15 and U-20 National Championships.

Sanjay, however, said that his "autonomous" and "democratically elected" body could not have been suspended by the government without hearing the WFI's side of the story. "We have won the elections (of WFI) democratically. The returning officer was the retired chief justice of J&K High Court, there were observers from the IOA and UWW (United World Wrestling). There were 22 state units (three absent out of 25 state associations) taking part in the elections, 47 votes were polled out of which I got 40," Sanjay

After all these, if you say we are suspended, we are not going to accept it. A democratically-elected body was not given a chance to explain its position which is against the principle of natural justice which everybody is entitled to under the Constitution of India.

Asked what is the way forward for his body, he said, "WFI is an autonomous body and the government has not followed proper procedure. We are going to talk to the government and if it (government) does not take back the suspension, we are taking legal opinion and going to court."
He said since the WFI is contesting the sus-

pension, he does not accept the three-member ad-hoc committee formed by the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) on Wednesday to run the day-to-day affairs of the nation-

al sports body.

'BAJRANG, VINESH AND SAKSHI
PLAYING POLITICS'

He said the visit by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in an akhada in Haryana to meet Olympic medallist Bajrang Punia made it clear that the trio, who led the five-monthlong protest accusing former WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh of sexually harassing women grapplers, were playing politics. "It is clear that they (Bajrang, Vinesh Phogat and Sakshi Malik) are being backed



these political parties," said Sanjay, a close

"Please tell me any fourth wrestler who is opposing the WFI other than these three. These three don't want the junior wrestlers to progress, they want to take away the rights of junior wrestlers. "Bajrang had gone (to the Hangzhou Asian

Games) without taking part in the trials and he came back with 10-0 loss. They are not in wrestling, they are in politics. Please come forward if you are concerned about wrestling, the road is clear for you, but if you want to do politics, please do it in the open." Sanjay also took a dig at Bajrang for leaving his Padma Shri on the road after he decided to return it to the government.

"It may be a personal matter, but the country's emotions are associated in Khel Ratna, it's not for a single person, but belongs to the whole society. Padma Shri is not something which should be put on a road."

After the election of Sanjay as WFI chief, Sakshi quit the sport while Bajrang decided to return his Padma Shri. Vinesh followed suit by returning her Khel Ratna and Arjuna Award.

'Hoping that UWW will lift ban on WFI' Sanjay also claimed that he had written a letter to the United World Wrestling requesting lifting of the ban imposed on WFI, and he is hopeful of a favourable decision from the international parent body.

"We have written to the UWW requesting to lift the ban imposed on the WFI, as the elections were held democratically. Office take some days.

He also claimed that the newly-elected office bearers did not violate any constitutional provision of the WFI while announcing dates and venue of the U-15 and U-20 National Championships in Gonda — Brij Bhushan's Lok Ŝabha constituency — after the December 21 elections.

"There was full quorum when we took the decision to hold the U-15 and U-20 $\,$ Nationals. There was an AGM on the day of the elections, we went to a hotel (in Delhi) and took the decision.

"If the Nationals were not held this year, the future of the young wrestlers would have been spoilt, which it has happened now. They will become overage. Everybody agreed to the venue also."

Asked why the newly-elected WFI secretary general Prem Chand Lochab was not involved in the decision making, he said, "We told the secretary general to go there (at the hotel) along with us but he did not come. I don't know what is his intention.

We followed the WFI Constitution to the full. If we did something (wrong), the government should have asked for an answer from us instead of restraining us from our work. WFI is an autonomous body and we were elected in a democratic way under our (WFI) constitution."

AP MILAN

Three people will get a spe-cial welcome when Roma visits Juventus in Serie A on Saturday.

Roma coach José Mourinho and forward Romelu Lukaku will likely face a hostile reception in Turin while there will be a much warmer welcome for former Juventus striker Paulo Dybala - if the Argentina international is fit enough to make

Mourinho led Juve's bitter rival Inter Milan to the treble of the Serie A title, Italian Cup and Champions League trophy in 2010 and the often controversial coach has reacted on previous occasions to being baited by the Bianconeri fans by holding up three fingers about

that haul. Lukaku, meanwhile, was subjected to racist chants by a section of Juventus fans when he was playing for Inter during the Italian Cup semi-finals in April

receptions when Roma visits Juventus in Serie A and he was shown a second yellow card and sent off for his reaction toward the home support after scoring a stoppagetime penalty — prompting a

scuffle between the two teams. Nevertheless, Lukaku - surprisingly — almost joined Juventus in the off-season. Still, a proposed cash-plus player deal to his parent club Chelsea fell through when Bianconeri forward Dušan Vlahovic opted to remain in Turin.

All that is set to increase the tension in what is already expected to be a heated match on Saturday. Second-placed Juventus is battling hard for the Serie A title and is four points below Inter, which visits Genoa

Roma has recovered from a difficult start to the season and last week's 2-0 win over defending champion Napoli left it three points below fourthplaced Bologna. Mourinho's side is 16 below Inter.

"It's not a criticism but we have a group of players with complicated injury histories," Mourinho said. "If we had everyone available for every game I'd have no problems coming out and saying that we can fight with everyone not for the title but for the top

"Without (Chris) Smalling, without Renato (Sanches), without Dybala, we don't have an excellent squad. With those three, we do. We also have a



. The often-injured Dybala's latest woe is a thigh problem sustained in Roma's 1-1 draw against Fiorentina on December 10 and the 30-yearold was expected to be unavailable until the new year. However, he returned to training this week and could be able to play some part in Sunday's match — although he is highlv unlikely to start.

If Dybala makes the trip to Turin, he will likely again be applauded by his former fans as he was last season.

Dybala spent seven years at Juventus and contributed 115 goals and 48 assists in nearly 300 matches. He also helped the Bianconeri to 12 trophies,

including five Serie A titles. However, he fell out of favour under coach Massimiliano Allegri after Juventus signed Vlahovic in January 2022. Dybala left the Turin club when his contract ran out a few months later, joining Roma in Vlahovic started from the

bench last week after just a goal in his previous 10 appearances for Juventus, but he came on to score a late winner in a 2-1 victory at Frosinone. 'It's not easy for a striker when

you don't score consistently, but work at my best every day and I'm confident I can lend a hand to the group," the 23-yearold said.

'I'm always on track and focused, with the help of the team and the coach, but the match is already over and I'm thinking about the next chal-

"I know that the team needs me and my goals, it's a moment in which I score less.

SA crush listless India to win opening Test

PTI ■ CENTURION

rirat Kohli scored a fifty but India failed to put up a fight with the bat to go down by an innings and 32 runs against South Africa in the opening Test here on Thursday.

India were bundled out for 131 in 34.1 overs in their second innings on the third day after they dismissed South Africa for 408 in 108.4 overs.

The visitors had scored 245 in the first innings.
On Thursday, South Africa

added 152 runs to their overnight score of 256 for 5 to take their overall lead to 163

Proteas pace trio of Nandre Burger (4/33), Kagiso Rabada (2/32) and Marco Jansen (3/36) then smothered the visitors with a disciplined attack.

Playing their second innings, Rohit Sharma and Yashasvi Jaiswal got a couple of unplayable deliveries, while Shubman Gill played an irresponsible shot as India, staring at an innings defeat, stuttered to 62 for 3 at tea on the third day of the opening Test against South Africa here on Thursday. South Africa, riding on Dean Elgar's superbly-crafted 185 and Marco Jansen's careerbest 84, posted a healthy first-

innings score of 408. Trailing by 163 runs, India's lack of preparedness was evident as the top order could neither handle movement nor bounce as they still need 101 runs to avoid an embarrassing innings defeat.

Virat Kohli (18 batting) and Shreyas Iyer (6 batting) were surviving dangerously with the deliveries flying all around. The sun was beating down, odd balls were keeping low and survival wasn't an option against a quality Proteas attack. Kagiso Rabada, just like he had got Virat Kohli in the first innings, bowled one in the off-



middle corridor to Rohit Sharma (0). The skipper closed the face of his bat after the ball had moved away, only to see the off-stump pegged back. Rohit had anticipated an inswing but it deviated away. Yashasvi Jaiswal (5) hasn't played on a track offering such

steep bounce. Nandre Burger

got one to rear up from length and Jaiswal's technique of swaying away from the delivery didn't help matters, with the ball kissing the gloves and landing into the keeper's

Shubman Gill (26) knew that attack was the best form of defence. But when Jansen fired one into the blockhole from wide of the crease, Gill played all over when the situation demanded a bit more discre-

Kohli hit some nice boundaries

but it will be a miracle for India to change the course of the

Earlier veteran Elgar missed

out on a well-deserved maiden double hundred but inflicted enough damage on India in company of young Jansen to potentially bat the visitors out

Elgar, whose previous highest Test score is 199, was inching towards his maiden double hundred before a faint tickle to

of the opening Test.

a leg-side bouncer from Shardul Thakur brought an end to his innings But that didn't deter the lanky

Jansen, not exactly known for his batting prowess, from negotiating a deflated Indian attack that looked out of sorts and bereft of ideas. The Elgar-Jansen pair added 111 runs for the sixth wicket. The Indian bowlers were even more disappointing on the third morning with Shardul Thakur (1/101 in 19 overs) and Prasidh Krishna (1/93 in 20 overs) spraying all over the place, only to be mercilessly punished by the former Proteas skipper Elgar and the lanky

left-arm seamer Jansen. The pair drove, pulled, cut at will and neither the old ball nor the semi-new ball could bring about any change in fortune for the visiting team bowlers. Jasprit Bumrah (4/69 in 26.4 overs) and Mohammed Siraj

(2/91 in 24 overs) once again were unlucky as they repeatedly beat the bat of Elgar and Jansen but didn't have the rub of the green going their way. Prasidh and Thakur were not only below-par but also missed both line and length. Prasidh was inducted into the squad to hit the deck and generate extra pace off the surface, but he missed the trick by consistently bowling length balls. Even someone like Gerald Coetzee dispatched him into the stands. On a track that demanded bowlers to bend their backs, Thakur literally floated the deliveries, which were hit all around the park. When he started using the short-ball tactic, Jansen hooked him for good as he didn't have enough

The only bowler who came out with his reputation intact was Ravichandran Ashwin, who for most part, came from an angular run-up but ended with figures of 1/41 in 18 overs. But, even his effort wasn't enough as the Prasidh-Shardul

pace to hurry the batter.

duo, having already conceded nearly 200 runs (194 in 39 overs) cumulatively in less than 40 overs, have severely dented their team's chance of

BRIEF SCORES:

India first innings: 245 all out. South Africa first innings: 408 allout in 108.4 overs (Dean Elgar 185, Marco Jansen 84 not out; David Bedingham 56; Jasprit Bumrah 4/69, Mohammed Siraj 2/91). India second innings: 131 all

out in 34.1 overs (Virat Kohli 76, Shubman Gill 26; Nandre Burger 4/33, Marco Jansen 3/36, Kagiso Rabada 2/32).

Prabir Majumdar passes

away, AIFF condoles



Phoebe, Ellyse help Australia women defeat India by six wickets

148-run partnership Abetween Phoebe Litchfield and Ellyse Perry helped Australia defeat India by six wickets in the first Women's One-day International here on Thursday.

Set a winning target of 283, Phoebe (78 off 89 balls) and Ellyse (75 off 72 balls) scored fine half-centuries before veteran allrounder Beth Mooney (42) and Tahlia McGrath (68 not out) made the task look easy.

Farlier. India's middle-order batters Jemimah Rodrigues and Pooja Vastrakar scored quick half-centuries, and shared a 68run partnership, to help the hosts post 282/8 in the first of their three WODIs at the Wankhede Stadium.

India's previous-best against Australia in ODIs was 281/4 at Derby in 2017.

With several top-order batters failing to convert starts, Jemimah battled energy-sapping heat and humidity to carry her imperious form, notching up her second fifty in four ODIs this year, and the first against Australia.

The right-handed batter also recorded her second-best score in the format, laced with seven boundaries off 77 balls. She also forged several partnerships in the middle at the Wankhede Stadium, including a 68-run stand with Pooja for the eighth Georgia Wareham (2/55) and

Pooja displayed her big-hitting ability yet again, smashing the ball to all corners of the ground to bring up her fourth fifty. The right-handed batter smacked seven fours and two sixes to remain unbeaten on 62 off just 46 balls

India's late surge saw the hosts collect 56 runs in the last six overs with Pooja carrying on after Jemimah had fallen to Ashleigh Gardner (2/63).

Earlier, it was a far-from-convincing start for the hosts, who lost Shafali Verma (1) in the third over with Darcie Brown (1/33) getting to nip one back into the right-hander.

Richa Ghosh was sent in at No. 3 and she made a sparkling start, hitting four boundaries to make 21 off 20 balls before mistiming one off Annabel Sutherland (1/43) to be caught at mid-off by Tahlia McGrath.

India suffered another massive blow when captain Harmanpreet Kaur walked back for a 17ball nine after Darcie took a stunning diving catch on her left at short fine leg, off Ashleigh. With wickets falling steadily, opener Yastika Bhatia continued to hold one end up to inch closer to a half-century. But she could not negotiate a tempting

Faizabad Road, Lucknow-226 016. Telephones: 0522-2346443, 2346444, 2346445.

was caught by Megan Schutt at

deep square leg. Yastika, though, deserves full marks, as the makeshift opener gave a decent platform to Jemimah and Pooja to build on with her 64-ball 49.

Both Deepti Sharma (21, 28 balls, 4x4s) and Amanjot Kaur (20, 36 balls, 1x4s) squandered good starts to be dismissed in identical manner.

After adding 39 runs for the fifth wicket with Jemimah, Deepti hit one straight to Phoebe Litchfield at mid-wicket off Alana King. Amanjot was also caught by Alana at mid-wicket off Georgia Wareham after putting on 45 for the sixth wicket with Jemimah. Megan Schutt ensured Sneh Rana (1) had a short stay in the middle when she cleaned up the all-rounder in the 38th over, which had the pair of Jemimah and Pooja joining forces in the

middle. **BRIEF SCORES:**

India Women 282 for 8 in 50 overs (Jemimah Rodrigues 82, Pooja Vastrakar 62 not out; Georgia Wareham 2/55, Ashleigh Gardner 2/63). Australia Women 285 for 4 in

46.3 overs (Ellyse Perry 75,

Phoebe Litchfield 78; Beth

Mooney 42, Tahlia McGrath 68

not out).

Ranji Trophy: Dhull to lead 26-member | Former India defender Delhi team, Badoni named his deputy PTI ■ NEW DELHI

♂oung Yash Dhull has once Young Yash Dhull has once again being named captain with Ayush Badoni as his deputy as Delhi on Thursday announced a 26-member squad for the opening two fixtures of the Ranji Trophy cricket tournament beginning on January 5. The 21-year-old Dhull, who had captained India to the U19 World Cup title in 2022 in the West Indies, was the skipper of the Delhi team in the last edition as well. Delhi will take on Puducherry (Jan 5-8) and Jammu & Kashmir (Jan 12-15) in the first two games at the Arun Jaitley stadium and Hostel Ground JKCA respectively.

Other prominent young names in the Delhi team include Vaibhav Sharma, Anuj Rawat, Hrithik Shokeen, Jitesh Singh, Shivam Tripathi and Sahil Malhotra.

The squad also comprises India



internationals Ishant Sharma, Navdeep Saini and Kuldeep Yaday.

In the last edition, Delhi, a seven-time winner, had failed to make it to the knockout stage after finishing sixth in Group B.

The team last won the prestigious title in 2007-08. Delhi has been clubbed in Group D alongside Puducherry,

J&K, Madhya Pradesh, Uttara

khand, Himachal Pradesh,

Baroda and Odisha.

Former Indian defender Prabir Majumdar died on Thursday after suffering from a brief illness. He was 77 and is survived by his wife and a son.

PTI NEW DELHI

and 1970s, Majumdar was a

member of the Indian team in the 1974 Asian Games. He also featured for the national side during the 1974 Asian

Games held in Tehran, where the team failed to create an impact and finished at the bottom of the group table. In the domestic circuit,

Majumdar was a part of East Bengal and Eastern Railways, besides also representing Bengal in the Santosh Trophy. His stint with East Bengal was

the highlight of his career dur-

ing the 1970s, as the club had a golden run during that phase. Expressed his condolences, the All India Football Federation (AIFF) president said: "Prabirda was one of the most depend-able and respected defenders of his time and stood out among

"I extend my sincerest condolences to his family at this time of sorrow. Majumdar won several titles

with East Bengal, which included the Calcutta Football League, IFA Shield, Durand Cup, Rovers Cup, DCM Trophy, Bordoloi Trophy, and many more.

"Prabir Majumdar was a top footballer of his time and continued to inspire footballers of later generations. His death has created a void in Indian football'.

AIFF Secretary M Satyanarayan said in a release.

Australia recovers from poor 2nd-innings start to lead by 241 runs

AP MELBOURNE

Australia lost its first four wickets for 16 runs in its second innings but a 153-run stand between Steve Smith and Mitchell Marsh had the hosts in a good position with two days to play in the second cricket test against Pakistan Marsh was out for 96 and Smith for 50 to

and with a 241-run lead going into the fourth day at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Marsh fell just short of his fourth test cen-

leave Australia at 187-6 at stumps Thursday

tury after Salman Ali Agha hung onto a spectacular diving catch in the slips. Smith battled his way to his first test 50 since the Ashes from 176 balls, the second-slowest half-century of his career. "It's obviously disappointing. I thought we

navigated our way out of a tricky situation in that partnership with (Smith)," Marsh said. "I guess there's a lot of history at this ground, the Boxing Day test, and a bloody big honors board that I was close to getting on, but it wasn't meant to be. Hopefully I get one more crack at it." Captain Pat Cummins took his 10th five-

wicket total in test matches earlier to help

Australia earn a 54-run first-innings lead. But Pakistan came back from the innings break to take the wickets of Usman Khawaja for a duck and Marnus Labuschagne for five, leaving Australia two wickets down for only six runs and an overall lead of 60 at lunch.

Cummins, who swung the Boxing Day test in Australia's favor late on day two, grabbed two wickets on Thursday morning to finish with figures of 5-48. Pakistan's tail showed far more resistance than expected to push its overnight score from 194-6 to be dismissed for 264 in reply to Australia's 318. Australia's 54-run lead after the first innings was helped by Pakistan's 52 extras.

Fast bowler Aamir Jamal frustrated Australia's bowling attack Thursday, hitting an unbeaten 33 in just his second test. Afridi, who averages 6.74 with the bat, also thrashed his way to his highest test score of

Cummins had strong support from spinner

Nathan Lyon (4-73). Pakistan is trying to avoid losing its 16th consecutive test in Australia.

Australia had resumed Wednesday on 187-3, following a rain-interrupted first day of play in which only 66 of the scheduled 90 overs were bowled

Australia won the first test in Perth by 360 The third test in the three-match series is

scheduled to begin Jan. 3 at the Sydney Cricket Ground, where Pakistan won its last test in Australia in 1995.

Post-lunch session delayed for a while as third umpire gets stuck in lift

PTI MELBOURNE

Start of post-lunch session Was delayed during the Boxing Day Test between Australia and Pakistan here on Thursday after third umpire Richard Illingworth got stuck in a lift at the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), leading to funny scenes on the field. After the players walked out after lunch on day three of the second Test, play couldn't be resumed for several minutes. On field umpires Joel Wilson and Michael Gough were informed that Illingworth had not reached his sta tion at the MCG. The broadcasters also panned the cameras toward his empty seat. "The game is delayed because

the third umpire...Is stuck in the lift," Cricket Australia's social media arm posted on X, formerly Twitter.

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