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DRONE ADVANCES IN UKRAINE COULD
BRING DAWN OF KILLER ROBOTS

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PUBLIC FLOAT RULES

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No extra curbs on MPs, MLAs' free speech: SC

'Minister's statement can't be vicariously attributed to Govt'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday held that no additional restrictions can be put on Ministers, MPs and MLAs as they too enjoy equal freedom of speech like all under Article 19(2) of the Constitution.

A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice SA Nazeer also said that a Minister's statement cannot be attributed "vicariously" to the government even when applying the principle of collective responsibility. In a separate, but concurring judgment, Justice BV Nagarathna said it is the duty of every Indian to ensure dignity and freedom of speech should not convert into hate speech.

"Statements made by a Minister even if traceable to any affairs of State or protecting the Government cannot be attributed vicariously to the Government even applying the principle of collective responsibility. Fundamental rights under Article 19(1)(a) can be exercised even against other instrumentalities other than the State," said the bench, also comprising Justices BR Gavai, AS Bopanna, V

Ramasubramanian.

Justice Nagarathna agreed that greater restriction cannot be imposed on free speech, in addition to grounds under Article 19. She, however, said such statements can be vicariously attributed to the Government in case a minister makes disparaging statements in his "official capacity".

"A mere statement by a Minister inconsistent with the rights of citizen does not form to be a constitutional tort but if it leads to omission or commission of offence by a public official, then it is a constitutional tort," said the judgment, adding that "the right to freedom of speech and the restrictions can be exercised not only against the State but also against non-State actors".

"The right can be exercised even against other instrumentalities other than the State. The State is under a duty to affirmatively protect the fundamental right of a citizen even if the violation is by a non-state actor," the court held.

The SC was hearing a plea filed by a man whose wife and daughter were gangraped in July 2016 on a highway near Bulandshahr. He was seeking transfer of the case to Delhi and lodging of an FIR against then Uttar Pradesh Minister Azam Khan for his statement that the gang-rape case was a "political conspiracy".

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Rights can't turn into hate speech: Judge Nagarathna

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hate speech strikes at the foundational values of the Constitution and leads to inequalities in the society, Supreme Court judge Justice BV Nagarathna said in her separate judgment in the case on freedom of speech of public functionaries.

Justice Nagarathna said while freedom of speech and expression is a much needed right so that citizens are well informed and educated on governance, it cannot turn into hate speech. "Hate speech strikes at the foundational values by making the society unequal and also attacks citizens from diverse backgrounds especially in a country like us

that is Bharat. It shall be the duty of every Indian to uphold the dignity of every individual irrespective of religion, caste etc and also uphold the dignity of women," she observed.

Asking individuals, particularly those in public life, to be cautious when delivering speeches or making statements, she said public functionaries and celebrities having regard to the reach and impact their statements can have on the public have to be more responsible and should exercise more restraint on speech since it impacts the citizens at large.

"One should speak only when it is like pearls strung on a thread and when Lord hears it and says 'yes yes it is true,' her judgment said.

Anjali not assaulted sexually, death from injury: Autopsy

Accused knew girl was stuck under car but didn't stop, says victim's friend & eyewitness

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A preliminary autopsy report on the body of 20-year-old woman Anjali Singh, who died on the New Year eve in Delhi's Sultanpuri after being dragged by a car for 12 km, "has ruled out any sexual assault on her as there were no injury on her or on her private parts".

The provisional cause of death is believed to be from injury caused by the accident and her subsequent dragging by the car on the road.

The post-mortem was conducted on Monday by doctors from the city's Maulana Azad Medical College. The mortal remains of Anjali were cremated amid heavy security on Tuesday evening at Aman Vihar crematorium. Scores of people carrying banners that read "Anjali ko insaaf do (give justice to Anjali)" joined the funeral procession.

They were accompanied by protesters demanding the accused be hanged.

Meanwhile, fresh CCTV footage shows a woman on a scooter passing through a narrow street and then seconds later a car going the other way,



Body of the 20-year-old woman, who was killed after being hit and dragged by a car, being brought to her residence after the autopsy, at Karan Vihar area of Sultanpuri, in New Delhi on Tuesday PTI

leaving a lone shoe behind.

Meanwhile, Anjali's friend Nidhi who was with her at the time of the accident claimed that the accused inside the car knew that the woman was stuck under their vehicle but they kept dragging her and didn't stop even once to save her. She also claimed that Anjali was drunk and insisted on driving the scooter.

Special Commissioner of Police (Law and order Zone II), Sagarpreet Hooda said the report stated that the provisional cause of death was

"shock and haemorrhage as a result of antemortem injury to the head, spine, left femur, both lower limbs".

"All injuries produced by blunt force impact and possible vehicular accident and dragging. Also, the report indicates that there is no injury suggestive of sexual assault. The final report will be received in due course," Hooda said.

According to a doctor from the medical board at MAMC who conducted the autopsy, there is an "accidental injury pattern" with "dragging injuries

over her back and head and buttocks".

"All injuries collectively can cause death in the ordinary course of nature. However, injury to the head, spine, long bone and other injuries can cause death independently and collectively in the ordinary course of nature," the doctors opined.

The doctors said they would be able to offer a final opinion after the receipt of chemical analysis and biological sample reports.

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Rajnath opens projects to boost border infra

₹724 crore projects comprise 22 bridges, 3 roads along border

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI, BOLENG (ARUNACHAL PRADESH)

Giving a major boost to infrastructure projects, including bridges, tunnels and roads along the borders facing China, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday dedicated to the nation 28 projects worth ₹724 crore undertaken by the Border Roads Organisations (BRO) and said India is capable of meeting any threat to protect the country.

The projects comprise 22 bridges, three roads and three other projects in seven border States and Union Territories of northern and NE regions.

The event at Along-

Yinkong Road witnessed physical inauguration of the strategically-important Siyom Bridge in Arunachal Pradesh. The Defence Minister dedicated the other projects to the nation virtually. The Siyom Bridge is a state-of-the-art 100-metre long, Class 70 Steel Arch Superstructure over Siyom River in the border state.

Incidentally, this was Rajnath's first visit to Arunachal Pradesh since troops of India and China clashed on December 9 last year.

It was the first major flare up since stand-offs erupted in May 2020 in Eastern Ladakh leading to a bloody brawl in the Galwan valley. Eight of these projects are in Ladakh, five in Arunachal Pradesh, four in Jammu & Kashmir, three each in Sikkim, Punjab and Uttarakhand and two in Rajasthan.

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Make India self-reliant with out of box innovations: PM to scientists

Modi: Work in fields of energy, integrated disease surveillance

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maintaining that the scientific community must work to address the needs of the country and make it self-reliant, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday exhorted the scientists to make innovations in fields related to energy requirements, undertake "Integrated Disease Surveillance" and prepare vaccines for new diseases.

Addressing the 108th Indian Science Congress in Nagpur on the theme "Science and Technology for Sustainable Development with Women



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the 108th Indian Science Congress on the theme 'Science and Technology for Sustainable Development with Women Empowerment', via video conferencing, in New Delhi on Tuesday PTI

Empowerment" through video-conferencing from New Delhi, the PM said, "Today, I want to put forward some issues before you, which will be helpful in deciding the direction of science in India. The basic motivation of our scientific com-

munity should be the development of science in India to meet the needs of the country. Scientific works should give momentum to 17-18 per cent of the world's humanity that leaves in India."

The PM said the scientific

community should work on such issues which were important for the entire humanity. "For example, if we take the issue of energy, India's energy needs are going to grow continuously. In such a situation, if the scientific community of India makes innovations related to energy requirements, then it will be of great benefit to the country,"

Alluding to the National Hydrogen Mission undertaken by the Government, he said, "To make it successful, it is necessary that various essential components like electrolyzers should be made in the country itself. If there is scope for any new options in this direction, then research should be carried out in that direction also. Our scientists and the industry have to work together in this regard."

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Ayodhya temple head priest wishes Rahul's Bharat Jodo success

KAMLESH SRIVASTA ■ AYODHYA

The head priest of the Ram temple in Ayodhya has created a political stir when he wrote a letter to the Congress leader Rahul Gandhi extending his support to his Bharat Jodo Yatra which entered Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday morning.

The December 31 letter said the Congress leader has the blessings of Lord Ram.

"A Congress leader Gaurav Tiwari Viru asked me to join Bharat Jodo Yatra but as I am not feeling well, I refused. After which he asked me to extend wishes for Bharat Jodo Yatra so I wrote a letter to Rahul and wished him success," Acharya Das told local reporters after the letter surfaced on the social platform.

In that letter, written in

Hindi, Chief priest Das prayed for the success of the campaign (Bharat Jodo Yatra) and wished Rahul success in his work undertaken in the country's interest. He also prayed for the Congress leader's good health and long life.

Das Das extended his support to Rahul for uniting the country. "You are working for the noble cause that is 'sarva-jan hitay sarvan sukhay' in the interest of people and for the happiness of the people. I wish the blessings of Lord Ram be upon you always," it added.

Confirming the letter, Sunil Krishna Gautam, district spokesperson of the Congress in Ayodhya said Das was keen "to participate in the journey however due to health reasons, he gave his moral support to this journey".

CAPSULE

₹ TUMBLES 22 PAISE TO ALL-TIME LOW OF 83/\$

Mumbai: The rupee pared initial gains and slumped 22 paise to close at its all-time low of 83 against the US dollar on Tuesday, pressured by a strong greenback overseas and sustained foreign fund outflows.

RAHUL, PRIYANKA SHARE SIBLING LOVE



Ghaziabad: The brother-sister duo of Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra shared some affectionate moments during the Bharat Jodo Yatra as it entered UP on Tuesday.

FOG IN DELHI, COLD WAVE TO RETURN ON WEEKEND
New Delhi: Shallow fog wrapped parts of the national capital on Tuesday morning, reducing visibility and affecting vehicular movement.

Cinema halls can stop moviegoer from carrying outside food: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

At a time when moviegoers are forced to shell out exorbitant prices for popcorn and other eatables on the cinema premises, the Supreme Court on Tuesday held that an owner of a cinema hall has the right to regulate moviegoers from carrying food and beverage from outside into the movie hall.

Setting aside the decision of Jammu & Kashmir High Court, the bench of Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and Justice PS Narasimha underlined that a cinema hall is the private property of the owner and he is entitled to put such terms and conditions as he deems fit provided the same are not contrary to public interest or safety.

"A cinema hall owner has the right to regulate the entry of food and beverage. Whether to consume what is available is entirely upon the choice of the moviegoers. Viewers visit the



hall for entertainment," the court said, adding that if a viewer enters a movie hall, s/he has to adhere to the rules of the cinema hall owner and it is evidently a matter of commercial decision of the theatre owner.

Jammu & Kashmir High Court ordered multiplexes and movie theatres not to prevent cinema goers from carrying their own food and beverages into movie halls.

"The High Court exceeded jurisdiction in passing such an order. It has been submitted to movie hall owners that drinking water will be supplied free of charge and when an infant accompanies a parent, as a matter of practice, hall owners do not object to reasonable amounts of food for infants,"

said the apex court.

The SC was hearing a batch of appeals filed by theatre owners and Multiplex Association of India challenging a 2018 verdict of the High Court.

The High Court had passed directions to allow outside food in cinema halls after noting that the rules framed by Jammu & Kashmir did not prohibit movie goers from carrying their own food or water bottle inside the hall.

"...It is open to the theatre owner to determine as to whether food from outside the precinct of the hall should be permitted within," said the apex court, adding that it is evidently a matter of commercial decision of a theatre owner.

The bench noted that during the course of the arguments, the counsel appearing for the appellants stated that due arrangements are made for the supply of hygienic drinking water to moviegoers without levying any charge within the precinct of the cinema hall.

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PM Modi, King Charles discuss bilateral ties

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and the United Kingdom (UK) on Tuesday reviewed their bilateral ties and global issues during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's telephonic talks with King Charles.

It was the first time the PM had an interaction with him since the monarch assumed office in the UK.

Modi wished the King a "very successful reign". They discussed a number of subjects of mutual interest, including climate action, conservation of biodiversity, and innovative solutions for financing energy-transition, among others, according to the PMO.

"It was a pleasure to speak with His Majesty King Charles III on issues of mutual interest, including environmental protection, climate resilience, and the Commonwealth. Also discussed the priorities of India's G20 Presidency, and the potential of Mission LiFE," Modi tweeted.

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Steam-spewing black beauty incarnate to pull heritage trains

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

In a New Year's gift to heritage lovers, the Indian Railways will introduce a green revolution in heritage train sectors such as Kalka-Shimla Railway, Darjeeling hills, Neelgiri Mountain Railways and others. The trains on these heritage sectors will now be pulled by hydrogen fuel propulsion engines in place of traditional coal and diesel locos.

Further, in an effort to go green and simultaneously secure the heritage and promote tourism, the Indian Railways has also started working on bringing back the "steam engines" in a new avatar.

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said electric and hydrogen propelled engines will be given appearance of the old steam-spewing "black beauty".

"The new avatars of the old engines will be equipped with vintage sirens and it will peri-



odically spout "green" steam vapour.

"There are several sectors where such engines can be rolled out to promote tourism and the children of today can relive the past which is so far only confined to museums, text books and photographs. We will get to see these vintage beauty chugging again very soon," Vaishnav told *The Pioneer*.

The prototype model of such steam engines are being shaped at The Golden Rocks Workshop, of the railways, in Tamil Nadu. The railways

workshop at Ajmer too could also be equipped with such facilities.

Vaishnav said all the eight heritage train were neglected until Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked the Railways to work to keep these attractions intact. According to the Minister, the cabins or the coaches of the heritage trains will be retro-fitted with a hydrogen propulsion mechanism. These trains will have vistadome coaches from where the passengers can enjoy the natural landscape of the region.

The other heritage train routes identified are Mathan Hill Railways, Kangra Railway, Bilmora Waghai, Mhow Patalpani and Marwar Devgarh Madriya

"The hydrogen propelled engines will also be used for commercial purposes by year end. That will bring India in the league of select nations like Germany, France, China which are manufacturing hydrogen engines," Vaishnav said.

AAP MLAs meet CP, seek punishment for Anjali’s killers

Police, L-G trying to save Kanjhawala accused due to affiliation with BJP, says Atishi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A delegation of AAP MLAs on Tuesday met the Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora and demanded strictest punishment for the people involved in the Kanjhawala incident.

AAP senior Atishi alleged that the Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena and Delhi Police are leaving no stone unturned in protecting the perpetrators of Kanjhawala because they are BJP leaders.

"It seems that the entire police department from top to bottom is trying to save the accused despite the gruesomeness of the crime. Along with the accused, strict action should also be taken against the police officers who weakened the case, so that police personnel also fear that strict action can be taken against them if they do not maintain

law and order," she demanded.

The Police Commissioner ensured them that after the investigation, strict action will be taken against the guilty police officers, and hope that he is not making empty promises.

"The Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has directed the Prosecution Department to ensure that Delhi's best criminal lawyer is given to the victim's family so that even if there are some shortcomings of the police, they can overcome them too. Police officials have weakened the FIR; they even delayed the FIR related by 15 hours and the post-mortem by 36 hours. It is clear from this case that the local police was making every possible effort to suppress the case by weakening the FIR and defending the accused," said AAP leader Saurabh Bhardwaj.

Lashing out on the lapse of police action regarding the incident, Atishi said that there

were police officials from the area of the crime who did not see the accused drag this girl under their car for 12 kilometres. There were police officials who did not rush to protect the girl even after receiving numerous PCR calls.

"There were officers who initially filed an FIR under lighter penal provisions and that too only against one of the accused. There was a DCP of Delhi Police who publicly defended the accused and also threatened journalists when they asked him if this could be a case of rape and murder," she said.

"The DCP even went to the extent of forcing news reporters to delete their tweets from social media. Besides taking the strictest of action against the accused in this case, we have also requested the Delhi Police Commissioner to take exemplary action against police offi-



cers who failed to do their duty in this case. This is necessary as there should be an element of fear installed in such officers who do not listen to the people whom they are duty-bound to protect," she added.

The AAP delegation submitted a memorandum listing their five demands including the accused were being shielded by the DCP, the DCP in this case should be dismissed, all the policemen posted on that route

should be dismissed, officer who lodged the FIR under minor sections should be sacked.

"Apart from this, strictest action should be taken considering this matter as the rarest of rare cases, and according to media reports, the accused in this incident have political clout, Delhi Police should take the strictest action against the accused without coming under political pressure," the memorandum stated.

AAP leaders politicising Sultanpuri mishap, says Delhi BJP chief

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva on Tuesday said that the way AAP leaders are making politically motivated statements after the Sultanpuri mishap is condemnable. It is a matter of regret that CM Arvind Kejriwal himself has spoken irresponsibly in this matter and he has given freedom to his party colleagues to speak freely in this sensitive matter which is not desired.

Sachdeva said that the manner in which the AAP leaders have been making personal comments against the LG and a DCP for two days is completely motivated by political bias. The people have continuously seen in the last seven



months that the present LG has taken several decisions in the interest of Delhi while speeding up the development works like cleaning the Yamuna river banks and Najafgarh drain while on the other hand his decisions on liquor scam, advertisement scam recovery order, class room scam inquiry, exposure of Minister Satyendar Jain's lavish jail stay have politically exposed the AAP government.

Fresh CCTV footage shows exactly what happened

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A fresh CCTV footage shows what happened the night Anjali died — a woman on a scooter passing through a narrow street and then seconds later a car going the other way, leaving a lone shoe behind.

The footage made it crystal clear that the 20-year-old woman, killed on Sunday early morning after her scooter was allegedly hit by a car, was dragged under the car for over an hour as it shows the Maruti Baleno car making a U-turn on a road in Kanjhawala in North West Delhi with the woman still trapped underneath it.

Another CCTV footage that surfaced online on Tuesday showed Singh fighting with



another woman Nidhi outside a hotel just hours before the accident. The CCTV footage was retrieved by police from the hotel where the woman had gone with a few of her friends, sources said.

The footage showed them to have changed places, with the victim in driver's seat when

it was hit by a car, according to police. Anjali, 20, a resident of Sultanpuri, was killed in the early hours of Sunday after her scooter was hit by a car and she was dragged under it for 12 kilometres. Her body was found naked on a road in outer Delhi's Kanjhawala area, according to police.

Form high-level committee to tackle crimes against women: DCW to Union Home Secy

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) on Tuesday wrote a letter to Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla, suggesting that a high-level committee be formed for a coordinated strategy to tackle crimes against women, following the Kanjhawala incident.

In the letter, DCW Chief Swati Maliwal recommended that the panel be chaired by the Union home minister and include Delhi's lieutenant governor, chief minister and the police commissioner. It should meet once a month and "create a coordinated strategy for tackling crimes against women and girls in the capital", she said.

Maliwal said that this heinous incident on the night of New Year again raises serious



concerns over the functioning of Police in the Capital. "India would be hosting the G20 summit this year and the government must take urgent steps to improve law and order in the capital," she asserted.

Maliwal recalled the 2012 Nirbhaya gang rape and murder and said nothing much had changed since. On an average, Delhi continues to witness over six rapes daily. Even an eight-month-old child and a 90-year-old woman have been brutally raped in the capital, she said.

Lack of police resources

and accountability are the major reasons for high crime rate against women and girls in Delhi, she said.

The proposed high-level

panel, she recommended, should take urgent steps to increase the accountability of Delhi Police and sensitise its officers.

Stop victim shaming, tweets DCW chief Maliwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In another tweet, DCW chief Swati Maliwal on Tuesday slammed "cheap statements" being shown on TV in connection with the Kanjhawala case, and asked people to stop victim-shaming. Sources said the victim and her female friend were partying with four or five of their friends in a hotel, sources said.

"Cheap statements of the hotel owner are being shown on TV since morning wherein he is saying that the women had drunk alcohol, were fighting and he had thrown them out. If the women were fighting after being intoxicated, police would have been called. Why were they kicked out of the hotel late at night? What is the proof of intoxication? STOP VICTIM SHAMING!" she said in a tweet in Hindi.

Special Commissioner inspects 12-km stretch where victim was dragged

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Special Commissioner of Police Shalini Singh with her team has inspected the 12-km-long stretch from Sultanpuri to Kanjhawala along which a 20-year-old woman was dragged after her two-wheeler was hit by a car in outer Delhi, police said on Tuesday.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has sought a detailed report of the incident from the Delhi Police.

The Delhi Police has constituted an inquiry committee, headed by Special Commissioner Shalini Singh, and asked her to submit a report as early as possible in connection with the incident.

A senior police officer said that as part of the inquiry, Singh with her team on



Monday night visited the crime scene and inspected the stretch of road in outer Delhi, where the woman was dragged by a car after she got stuck under it.

According to sources, the team's primary responsibility is to do an analysis of the stretch and suggest improvements to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.

It will also be looking if all Standard Operating Procedures were followed by the police and whether they responded in

time to the incident, and on the basis of the outcome, assign responsibility.

"After it has done its analysis and recorded statements of police personnel who were the first responders, a detailed report will be submitted which may also include suggestions such as if extra lights, patrolling vehicles, and CCTV's need to be installed along the stretch," said a source.

The woman, who was the sole breadwinner of her family, was dragged for 12 kilometres under the car on the December 31 night and was found naked by a road in Kanjhawala, according to police.

Five men who were allegedly in the car were booked for culpable homicide among other sections on

Monday even as the police came under charges of conducting a "shoddy investigation" in the matter.

All five accused were sent to a three-day police custody on Monday.

Prima facie, it is suspected that the accused were intoxicated at the time of the incident.

Sources said that their blood samples have been sent for medical examination to ascertain if they were drunk at the time of the incident. The report is awaited.

New high-quality security camera footage confirmed horrific witness accounts, according to which, the woman, who worked with an event management firm, was dragged under the wheels for over an hour.

Rahul resumes yatra’s 2nd leg after prayers at Hanuman Mandir

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As the national capital witnessed icy cold winds, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra on Tuesday resumed its second leg of the journey from the Hanuman Mandir (Marghat wale Baba) near Yamuna Bazar area on Outer Ring Road after a nine-day year-end break. Before resuming his yatra, a ceremonial 'gada' (mace) was held after he visited the Marghat Wale Baba mandir. He spent around 15-20 minutes with the priest and others who clicked photos with him. Accompanied with thousand of party workers, Rahul in his traditional White half sleeve T shirt, resumed the yatra at around 10 am.

Scores of Congress leaders and workers gathered at the Marghat Wale Baba mandir in Yamuna Bazar, from where the yatra resumed, holding flags, and banners and chanting slogan "Bharat Jodo." The marchers joined the Yatra with the singing of patriotic songs and beating of drums, as they proceeded towards Uttar Pradesh. The stretch from Marghat Wale Baba to Ghaziabad was decked with tricolour flags and balloons. A huge police force was deployed and roads were intercepted with barricades at several locations to provide the nationwide yatra with a safe passage.

Camps were set up by Congress workers and members at various points across the route towards Ghaziabad. Small cultural events were also organised at sever-

al points along the way. While many yatris were spotted wearing white T-shirts with picture of Rahul i on it, several others joined the Yatra wrapping tricolour scarf around their neck. Many citizens also gathered across the road and their terraces to catch a glimpse of the Yatra.

The city witnessed snarls in several places including Loha wala pull-Shastri park-Gandhi Nagar-Dharampur-Seelampur-SDM Court Chowk-Jaffrabad-Maujpur-Gokulapuri Chowk- Dayalpur Police station as the yatra progressed towards Uttar Pradesh with hundreds of supporters in tow. However, traffic in several parts of the city on the Ring Road was thrown out of gear. The situation was worse in central Delhi where long jams led to chaos during the peak hours. Earlier, the Congress' Delhi unit president Anil Chaudhary had inspected the routes from Hanuman Mandir near Kashmere Gate to Ghaziabad's Loni.

As the Yatra moved across central Delhi, a huge police force was deployed to ensure there is no onward incident. Meanwhile, Delhi Traffic Police asked commuters to avoid Ring Road from ISBT



towards Rajghat and vice-versa to avoid getting stuck. An officer said that the police received over a dozen calls regarding traffic jams on the Ring Road, before the jams relented somewhat by the afternoon.

"The GT road in Shahdara and Seelampur area heading towards Kashmiri Gate was jam-packed. Vehicles crawled and people honked. I had to take another route to reach Connaught Place," said a commuter who was stuck in traffic for several hours near Kashmiri Gate.

Senior Congress leader Jai Prakash Agarwal said Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra is echoing the voice of the citizens. "He's interacting and listening to the problems of the common man. So far, the Yatra has been very successful. We have received an overwhelming response," he noted.

Alla introduces millet-based dishes in its canteen



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Taking a cue from Parliament's kitchen which recently hosted a sumptuous healthy all-millets lunch for MPs from all parties and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), a central autonomous organization on Tuesday introduced a wide array of millet-based dishes in its canteen as a part of its healthy food offerings, marking the start of the new year 2023 as the 'International year of millets'. The canteen is visited by hundreds of patients and their relatives everyday seeking simple

non-spicy cooked food.

"Introduction of 'Pathyahaar' meal at the canteen has been a welcome step as this will expand the option of healthy foods that have been made available to the patients and scholars in AIIA," Union Rural Development Minister Giriraj Singh said after inaugurating the new addition in the cuisine list of the canteen of the institution.

Spearheaded by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Government had floated the proposal for International Year of Millets (IYM) 2023 which was accepted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

Cold conditions grip Delhi as frosty Himalayan winds sweep through plains

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Cold day' conditions gripped the national capital on Tuesday as frosty winds from the Himalayas swept through the plains, according to India Meteorological Department.

The national capital was on Tuesday enveloped in shallow fog and reduced visibility with the maximum temperature settled at 16.1 degrees Celsius, three notches below the normal for this time of the year with the citizens shivering in the cold. The maximum temperature dropped five notches below normal at many places in the national capital including Lodhi Road, Palam, Jafarpur and Mayur Vihar, the IMD said.

The minimum temperature in the city settled at 8.5 degrees Celsius, a notch above the normal for this time of the year, the IMD noted. At least 21 trains to Delhi were delayed by one-and-a-half to five hours due to the foggy weather, an Indian Railways spokesper-



son said.

An official at the Indira Gandhi International Airport here said five flights were diverted to Jaipur on Monday night due to bad weather in Delhi.

Delhi's primary weather station Safdarjung observatory recorded 85 percent humidity in the weather at 8:30 AM and 69 percent at 5:30 PM.

The observatories at Ridge, Ayanagar, Najafgarh, Pitampura, Palam, and Lodhi Road recorded the maximum temperature of 15.4 degrees Celsius, 15.9 degrees Celsius, 15.3 degrees Celsius, 16.5 degrees Celsius, 15 degrees Celsius and 15.8 degrees Celsius respectively, according to the data released by Safdarjung observatory.

BJP chief may get an extension as polls loom

Party's national exec meet on Jan 16-17 to discuss strategy for Assembly, LS elections

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of a series of Assembly polls, the BJP will hold its national executive meeting here for two days on January 16-17 and is expected to endorse extension to its incumbent national president JP Nadda's tenure.

The meeting will extensively discuss the strategy for Assembly elections and Lok Sabha polls, 16 months away.

Apart from the northeastern States of Nagaland, Tripura and Meghalaya, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Telangana are going to have Assembly elections this year. Nadda, whose three-year term as the party president ends later this month, may get extension as party chief in view of the forthcoming elections, sources said.

The deliberation on countrywide programmes planned by the Government to mark India's presidency of G-20 is also likely to be one of the highlights of the meeting, with the BJP set to praise Prime Minister Narendra Modi's efforts in this regard and prepare a road map to involve its cadres in the exercise, sources said.

Postponement of the organisational polls in view of the assembly elections and Lok Sabha polls in 2024, too may come up for discussion at the



meeting. According to sources, the process of internal polls in the party may begin after the Lok Sabha polls are over in April-May 2024.

Nadda's predecessor and Home Minister Amit Shah had also got an extension to spearhead the party's preparation for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

It was only after the parliamentary elections that the BJP's organisational polls began and Nadda was elected unopposed with Shah joining the Union Cabinet during Narendra Modi's second stint as the prime minister.

The tenure of the three north eastern state assemblies is ending on different dates in March. While Tripura is ruled by the BJP, the Nationalist Demo-

cratic Progressive Party is in power in Nagaland. Meghalaya is governed by the National People's Party, the only party in the northeast to have national party status.

Elections in three states will be held simultaneously and after that elections will be held in Karnataka. The term of Karnataka's 224-member assembly ends on May 24 where elections could be held in late April or early May.

At the same time, the terms of the assemblies of Mizoram, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Telangana will end on different dates in December this year and January 2024. Elections could be held in these states before the expiry of their assembly terms.

China has not adhered to peace pacts with India

Beijing tried to unilaterally change LAC leading to tense situation, says Jaishankar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/ AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/VIENNA

China has not adhered to agreements with India to maintain peace at the border and tried to unilaterally change the Line of Actual Control (LAC) leading to a "tense" situation, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said.

His remarks came days after troops of both the countries clashed on December 9 last year in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh. It was the first major flare up since stand-offs erupted at the LAC in Eastern Ladakh in May 2020, leading to a bloody brawl in the Galwan valley there.

China did not observe agreements with India on border issues and that is why there is a "tense situation" between the two neighbours, Jaishankar pointed out as he explained how Beijing tried to "unilaterally change the LAC".

During an interview to Austria's national broadcaster ORF on late Monday, Jaishankar said India had agreements with China not to mass force in the border areas.

However, China did not observe those agreements, "which is why we have the currently tense situation that we do",



he said while responding to a question. "We had an agreement not to unilaterally change the Line of Control (LAC), which they (China) have tried to unilaterally do," he said.

Replying to a counter question on what if China also says India did not observe the agreements, Jaishankar said it's difficult for Beijing to say that as the "record is very clear".

"Today, there is a lot of transparency in satellite pictures. If we see who moved the forces to the border areas first, I think the record is very clear. So, it is very difficult for China to say what you have suggested they could," Jaishankar said.

Meanwhile, the external affairs slammed the slammed the slow pace of the United Nations(UN) reforms, saying those who are enjoying the benefits of permanent membership are not in a hurry to see reforms.

India has been at the forefront of efforts at the UN to push for urgent long-pending reform of the Security Council, emphasising that it rightly deserves a place at the UN high table as a permanent member.

"You will have a situation

when the world's most populous country is not among the permanent members of the security council, what does it say about the state of the UN", Jaishankar said in the interview.

Asked how long will it take until this reform of the UN Security Council, he said, "...Those who are today enjoying the benefits of permanent membership clearly are not in a hurry to see reform. I think it's a very short-sighted view...Because at the end of the day, the credibility of the UN and their own interests and effectiveness are at stake."

"So my sense is, it will take some time, hopefully not too much time. I can see a growing body of opinion among UN members who believe that they must be changed. It's not just us," Jaishankar said.

The five permanent members are Russia, the UK, China, France and the United States and these countries can veto any substantive resolution.

"You have entire Africa and Latin America left out, with developing countries vastly underrepresented. This was an organisation invented in 1945. It's 2023," he added.

BJP leader makes light of Rahul's warning on China

He wants India to surrender before Beijing, says Sudhanshu Trivedi



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Making light of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' and his comments on the India-China face-off, the BJP on Tuesday accused the former Congress chief of being "perpetually confused" and alleged that he wants India to surrender before China.

Addressing a press conference here, BJP national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi took a swipe at Rahul's yatra, saying the Congress leader had become a victim of confusion during his travels.

India cannot be understood only by travelling across the country, one needs to understand Indianness, Trivedi said. "Discovery of India has been going on for four generations (of Gandhi's family)," Trivedi said in an apparent reference to Jawaharlal Nehru's 'Discovery of India'.

In his interview with actor-turned-politician Kamal Haasan, Rahul had likened India's situation vis a vis China

to that of Ukraine with Russia. "Essentially, what the Russians have done in Ukraine is that they have said we do not want Ukraine to have a strong relationship with the West and that if it does, then we (Russia) will alter your geography. That is the exact same principle that can be applied to India."

Referring to Rahul's remarks on the tensions along the Line of Actual Control with China with Haasan, Trivedi said, "Rahul has made his intention clear that India should surrender before China in the same way it used to happen during his party's Government."

He said that the interview was an interaction between a "perpetually confused and tensed leader" and "confused film star". "But he has dispelled India's illusion... His statement on China is indicating that India should bow down to China", Trivedi added.

Maintaining India as the only surviving civilisation of the ancient world, Trivedi condemned the Congress and Rahul for "lowering the country's honour".

He also asked if Rahul was making such comments because of "donations his party got from China or because of agreements between his party and the Communist Party of China".

Def Min inks MoU to enhance education, skills of Agniveers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to enhance skills of soldiers or Agniveers now inducted into the armed forces through the Agnipath scheme, the Defence Ministry on Tuesday inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Ministries of Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.

Describing the Agnipath scheme, which was rolled out in June last year, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the scheme is a game changer for the armed forces which is going to act as force multiplier in making Indian military one of the best in the world with a youthful, high-tech and ultra-modern outlook.

He addressed in the virtual mode the MoU Exchange Ceremony 'Outreach Programme with Ministry of Education & Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship' here.

During the event, the three Ministries and all the three Services signed agreements with various stakeholders to facilitate continued education of Agniveers while serving in the military and award of appropriate skill certificates in accordance with their expertise or experience.

Under these MoUs with National Institute of Open School (NIOS) and Indira Gandhi National Open



University (IGNOU), suitable 12th Class certificates and Bachelor's degree will be awarded to the Agniveers respectively.

The Job Roles and Skill Sets of Agniveers, while being trained and deployed with the Armed Forces, have been mapped with National Occupational Standards (NOS), in coordination with National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and Sector Skill Councils (SSCs). Based on these qualifications, market-ready and industry-accepted, 'Kaushal Praman Patra' will be issued to Agniveers at the time of their exit from the Armed Forces.

Rajnath said with the signing of these MoUs, Agniveers will be able to complete their education in a timely manner and develop additional qualities and skills. When Agniveers return to the society after being equipped with all these qualities, they will contribute to nation building, he said.

Army sends woman officer to world's highest battlefield

Capt Shiva Chouhan became first female officer to be operationally deployed in Siachen glacier

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a major step to induct women officers into operational areas, the Army, for the first time, has deployed a Captain at the Siachen glacier, the world's highest battlefield.

Fire and Fury Corps officer Captain Shiva Chouhan became the first woman officer to be operationally deployed at the Kumar Post at a height of 15,632 feet on the Siachen glacier. She will serve a three to four month stint there.

"Captain Shiva Chouhan of Fire and Fury Sappers became

the first woman officer to be operationally deployed in Kumar Post, at the highest battlefield of the world," tweeted the official account of the Leh-based Fire and Fury Corps of the Indian Army.

The Twitter post has added the caption, 'Breaking the Glass Ceiling', celebrating Shiva's feat. The officer of the Corps of Engineer had to undergo arduous training before her posting at the Kumar Post.

Giving details of the officer, Army officials said here on Tuesday

Captain Shiva Chouhan from Rajasthan is a Bengal Sapper Officer. She has done her schooling from Udaipur and holds a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from NJR Institute of Technology, Udaipur.

She lost her father at a young age of 11 years and her mother, who is a housewife, took care of her studies. Since her



childhood, she was motivated to join Indian Armed Forces and showcased unparalleled zeal during training at the Officers Training Academy (OTA), Chennai and was commissioned into the Engineer Regiment in May 2021.

At a young service of one year, Captain Shiva displayed grit and determination by suc-

cessfully leading the Sura Soi Cycling Expedition from Siachen War Memorial to Kargil War Memorial conducted on the occasion of Kargil Vijay Diwas in July 2022 covering a distance of 508 kms.

The officer then took up the challenge of leading the men of Sura Soi Engineer Regiment at the world's highest battlefield

IAS officer jailed in PMLA case gets bail

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday granted interim bail to suspended Jharkhand cadre IAS officer Pooja Singhal in a money laundering case to look after her ailing daughter. A Bench comprising Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Abhay Oka also directed the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to respond in three weeks to Singhal's main bail plea.

Appearing for the anti-money laundering probe agency, Additional Solicitor-General SV Raju said the plea was incorrect and devoid of



merits. The top court, which has now listed the suspended IAS officer's plea for hearing on February 6, has imposed some conditions, including that she will not visit Ranchi unless a court case is listed for hearing in the city.

Singhal has been in custody since May 11 after raids were conducted at properties linked to her. The ED has accused Singhal, a former State Mines Department Secretary,

of money laundering and said its team seized more than Rs 36 crore cash linked to alleged illegal mining as part of two separate money laundering investigations. Apart from the 2000-batch IAS officer, her businessman husband, a chartered accountant associated with the couple and others were also raided by the ED as part of a money laundering probe linked to a case of alleged corruption in the MGNREGA scheme. Singhal was suspended by the State Government following her arrest. Suman Kumar, a chartered accountant linked to Singhal, and her husband were also arrested.

Govt panel to safeguard rights of Ladakhis

High Powered Committee set up to guard land rights, employment opportunities for people of Ladakh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry has formed a High Powered Committee (HPC) to safeguard land rights and employment opportunities for the people of Ladakh. The 17-member committee will be headed by Junior Home Minister Nityanand Rai and the committee will include as members Ladakh Lieutenant-

Governor (L-G) RK Mathur, MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, chairmen of Leh and Kargil Hill councils, representatives of Apex Body Leh, Kargil Democratic Alliance and nominee officials of the Home Ministry.

"It has been decided to constitute a High-Powered Committee under the chairmanship of Nityanand Rai, Minister of State for Home Affairs, for the Union Territory of Ladakh," reads the Home Ministry order.

The HPC has been set up to discuss measures to protect Ladakh's unique culture and language taking into consideration its geographical location and its strategic importance.

The committee will also discuss measures to ensure protection of land and employment for the people of Ladakh, reads the order. The committee will discuss measures for inclusive development, employment generation in the region, and empowerment of Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council Leh and Kargil.

The move comes amid an increasing demand from the people of Ladakh who are seeking constitutional safeguards for jobs and land after the Centre abrogated Article 370 and bifurcated erstwhile State of J&K into two Union Territories — J&K and Ladakh.

Plans to bring 2nd batch of 12 cheetahs to Kuno soon

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the first lot of Cheetahs brought in September from Namibia to Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh exhibiting signs of settling down and making kills, plans are afoot to bring a second batch of 12 cheetahs, from South Africa in January. A senior official said that discussions with South African authorities to translocate 12 cheetahs to Kuno National Park are at an advanced stage and the animals are likely to arrive in January. However, when contacted, SP Yadav, head of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) which is overseeing the Cheetah Reintroduction Project refused to share the details, saying that nothing is crystal clear at this stage.

Sources said, officials from the Kuno National Park gave a presentation on the prepared-



ness for the introduction of the 12 cheetahs, comprising seven males and five females, at the 20th meeting of the NTCA at the Bandipur Tiger Reserve in Karnataka.

The cheetahs have been in quarantine in South Africa for the last six months.

A memorandum of understanding for the intercontinental transfer of the spotted felines

is yet to be signed, the sources said.

According to the 'Action Plan for Reintroduction of Cheetah in India' prepared by the Wildlife Institute of India,

around 12-14 wild cheetahs (8-10 males and 4-6 females) that are ideal for establishing a new cheetah population would be imported from South Africa, Namibia and other African countries as a founder stock for five years initially and then as required by the programme.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had released the first batch of eight cheetahs — five females and three males — from Namibia into a quarantine enclosure at the Kuno National Park on his 72nd birthday on September 17.

Minister of State for Environment Ashwini Kumar Choubey informed Parliament last month that all the eight cheetahs had been released into larger acclimatisation enclosures and none of them were under quarantine. No health complications have been reported in the introduced cheetahs, he had said

Five cases of XBB.1.5 variant found in India

Govt shoots down IMA suggestion for 4th Covid jab

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Five cases of Covid's XBB.1.5 variant, responsible for the rise in cases in the US, have been found in India, according to data from the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG). Last year, India had reported four cases of Covid's BE.7 variant, a highly transmissible virus that has led to the surge in cases in China.

Of the five XBB.1.5 cases, three were found in Gujarat and one each in Karnataka and Rajasthan, according to INSACOG figures on Tuesday.

The XBB.1.5 strain is a relative of the Omicron XBB variant, which is a recombinant of the Omicron BA.2.10.1 and BA.2.75 subvariants. Combined, XBB and XBB.1.5 make up 44 per cent of cases in the US.

Covid-19 variant Omicron and its sub-lineages continue to be the dominant variant in India with 'XBB' being the most prevalent sub-lineage circulating all over the country. Meanwhile, the Government, it seems, does not approve the idea of the Indian Medical Association which had recently sought the nod for the fourth Covid dose or second booster vaccine for the medical fraternity in view of rising cases in some countries. The Ministry, said the sources, feels that most people in the country are yet to receive their third dose.

India began administering a precautionary or booster dose in January 2022 and till now only 28 per cent of the eligible population have taken it.

"A fourth Covid shot is unwarranted at the moment as most people in the country are yet to receive their third dose," sources in the Union Health Ministry told a news agency.

Also, there is no data available on the utility of a second booster for the currently used vaccines, they said. "The need for a second booster dose of Covid vaccines is not on the agenda of the Government as of now nor are discussions over it underway. Most importantly, the majority of the population are yet to receive a third dose and those who are due for it should take it," an official source said.

‘All conversions can’t be said to be illegal’

Supreme Court refuses to stay MP High Court’s order restraining State Govt from prosecuting interfaith couples who get married without informing District Magistrate

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday observed that all conversions cannot be said to be illegal and refused to stay a Madhya Pradesh High Court order restraining the state government from prosecuting interfaith couples who get married without informing the District Magistrate.

A bench of Justices M R Shah and C T Ravikumar issued notice in the matter and posted the matter for hearing on February 7.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta sought a stay on the High Court order but the apex court refused to pass any direction.

Mehta said marriage is used for illegal conversions and "we cannot turn a blind



eye" to this.

The HC, in an interim order, had directed the State Government not to prosecute under Section 10 of the MP Freedom of Religion Act (MPFRA) adults who solemnise their marriage on their own volition.

The high court on November 14 observed that Section 10, which makes it obligatory for a citizen desir-

ing (religious) conversion to give a (prior) declaration in this regard to the District Magistrate, is "in our opinion ex facie, unconstitutional in the teeth of aforesaid judgments of this court".

The MPFRA forbids conversions by misrepresentation, allurement, use of threat of force, undue influence, coercion, marriage or by any other fraudulent means.

Vande Bharat damaged in stone pelting in Bengal

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Four days after India’s seventh edition of Vande Bharat Express was flagged off by Prime Minister Narendra Modi stones were on Tuesday pelted at the country’s flagship train damaging some of its glass panes.

The train was coming from New Jalpaiguri and the incident took place between between Kumarganj and Samsi stations in Malda district of North Bengal.

Door panes of the C-13 coach of the Howrah-bound train were shattered leaving the passengers in panic, sources in the North East Frontier Railway said adding, the Division Railway Manager of Katihar Division under which the stretch falls had ordered an inquiry into the matter.

The incident took political colours with the BJP linking the Tuesday’s incident to Jai Shri Ram slogans shouted by saffron workers in front of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee who too was present during the launch of the train at Howrah Station on December 30.

Bengal BJP president Sukanta Majumdar wondered whether the stones were pelted at the train by the people who did not endorse the Jai Shri Ram slogan.

“Is it a fallout of the Jai Shri Ram slogans being shouted by BJP men in presence of the Chief Minister during the inauguration of the train on December 30 ... if so they who responded in this manner should now prepare to listen such slogans for eternity,” he said.

State Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari who was addressing a rally at Gajol block in the same district attacked the Trinamool Congress saying the supporters of the party which were against Jai Shri Ram slogan and the party which has organised the stone pelting on the Vande Bharat Express should now get prepared to receive bulldozers at their houses.

“The supporters of the party which does not want cherish Jai Shri Ram slogan should now get prepared because the bull-dozers will soon come to their houses ...

it started in UP and then went to Assam and now it is almost on the verge of entering Bengal,” Adhikari said.

The TMC however strongly dismissed its involvement even as its spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said “let there be an inquiry and let the people who perpetrated this nuisance be punished ... a train is a national property and no one has a right to damage it ... but the TMC is in no way connected to it and those who are trying to give it a political colour should refrain from doing so.”

Meanwhile, a case under Section 154 of the Railways Act had been registered against unknown persons, Sabyasachi Dey, Chief Public Relations Officer of NF Railways said adding the Railway Protection Force had been deployed for investigation into the matter.

“A warning has been issued that any repeat incident will be dealt with strongly,” he said. NF Railway sources also said that the authorities at Samsi and Kumarganj stations have been asked to send a report to the Railway Ministry.



NHRC team to visit Didi’s turf

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

The National Human Right Commission is sending a team to Bengal to take stock of the situation arising out of falling law and order and recruitment scandals.

According to sources the team comprising 12 to 15 members will be led by a retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and will inquire into the law and order situation as also the situation arising out of various scams and related unrests.

The team is likely to submit its reports to President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah sources said.

Earlier another NHRC had visited Bengal soon after the 2021 Assembly elections when several BJP men were murdered and their houses were looted allegedly by the TMC goons.

Epicentre mild word, EAM slams Pak for stoking terror

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/VIENNA

Hitting out at Pakistan for stoking cross-border terrorism in India, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said he could have used “much harsher words than epicentre” for the neighbouring country as he underlined that the world needs to be concerned about terrorism.

Jaishankar, who has often described Pakistan as the ‘epicentre of terrorism’, in an interview to Austria’s national broadcaster ORF late Monday in Vienna also criticised European nations for not condemning the (terrorism) practices that have been going on for multiple decades.

“Because you are a diplomat, doesn’t mean you are untruthful. I could use much



harsher words than epicentre. So believe me, considering what has been happening to us, I think epicentre is a very diplomatic word,” he said while responding to a question on using the word “epicentre of terrorism” for Pakistan.

“This is a country which has attacked the Parliament of India some years ago, which attacked the city of Mumbai, which went after hotels and foreign tourists, which every day sends terrorists across the border...” Jaishankar said, referring to Pakistan.

If the terrorist camps operate in broad daylight in cities, with recruitment and financing, can you really tell me that the Pakistani state doesn’t know what’s going on? Especially if they’re being trained in military-level combat tactics?” Jaishankar said.

“So, when we speak about judgments and principles, why don’t I hear sharp European condemnation of these practices which have been going on for multiple decades?” he asked in response to a question.

Asked if the world has to be concerned that someday there could be a war between India and Pakistan, the minister said, “I think the world needs to be concerned about terrorism.”

“I think the world has to be concerned that there is terrorism going on and the

world often looks away. The world often feels it’s not my problem because it’s happening to some other country. I think the world needs to be concerned about how sincerely and strongly it takes up the challenge of terrorists...” he asserted.

On Monday, addressing a joint press conference with his Austrian counterpart Alexander Schallenberg in Vienna, Jaishankar said the effects of terrorism cannot be contained within a region, especially so when they are “deeply connected to narcotics and illegal weapons trade and other forms of international crimes”.

“Since the epicentre (of terrorism) is located so close to India, naturally our experiences and insights are useful to others,” the minister had said, without naming any country.

India has repeatedly said it desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan in an environment free of terror, hostility and violence. India has said the onus is on Pakistan to create an environment free of terror and hostility.

India has also told Pakistan that “talks and terror” cannot go together and has asked Islamabad to take demonstrable steps against terror groups responsible for launching various attacks on India.

Jaishankar is in Austria on the second leg of his two-nation tour. This is the first external minister-level visit from India to Austria in the last 27 years, and it takes place against the backdrop of 75 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 2023.

NCERT syllabus in UP madrasas from March

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Madrasa Education Board will introduce the syllabus of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) from the next academic session commencing from March.

“Modern education will be imparted along with religious education to the students. Now, children in madrasas will be able to study computers, mathematics and science,” UP Madrasa Education Board chairman Iftikhar Ahmed Javed said here on Tuesday.

In November, the Uttarakhand Waqf Board had also decided to introduce NCERT syllabus in all the 103 madrasas run by it across the



state. It has also decided that from this year’s academic session, madrasas will be open to children of all religions and that a uniform dress code will be introduced as part of efforts to modernise education in Islamic schools.

“Bringing madrasa students into the mainstream is our priority. We will also try

and get a Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) affiliation for madrasas in the years to come,” Javed said.

In September, the UP government had ordered the survey of unrecognised madrasas across the state to gather information such as source of funds, number of teachers and curriculum among other details.

Bharat Jodo Yatra enters UP after a week’s break in Delhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/GHAZIABAD

Congress’s Bharat Jodo Yatra Cled by former party chief Rahul Gandhi resumed on Tuesday after a week break in the national Capital which saw presence of National Conference leader and former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir Farooq Abdullah and former Congress leader now a Shiv Sena member in Rajya Sabha Priyanka Chaturvedi.

On the day Congress general Secretary and Uttara Pradesh incharge Priyanka Gandhi, who joined the yatra alongwith her family members including children, described her brother Rahul a “warrior” who is not afraid of the might of the government. She did the customary welcoming of the yatra at the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border.

Among those who joined the yatra in Delhi included AICC general secretary K C

Venugopal, party MP Pramod Tiwari, Delhi Congress chief Anil Kumar Chaudhary and other Congress leaders like Ambika Soni and Abhishek Dutt.

Party’s Uttar Pradesh Congress chief and former MP Brijlal Khabri and CLP leader in Uttar Pradesh Aradhna Mishra were among those present at the Delhi-Ghaziabad Loni border. While Chaturvedi participated in Delhi after the yatra resume from Hanuman Mandir near Kashmir gate ISBT, Abdullah joined when it reached Ghaziabad. Former RAW chief Amarjit Singh Dulat also joined the yatra.

“Joined the Bharat Jodo Yatra in Delhi in solidarity with the idea of an India which celebrates unity in its diversity. Best wishes to Rahul Gandhi as the yatra moves ahead,” Chaturvedi said while walking along Rahul. “The time has come for the opposition to unite and confront the current

situation in the country,” Chaturvedi added, who was a spokesperson in Congress before joining Shiv Sena.

The State top leaders like SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, BSP supmeo Mayawati, both former Chief Ministers, who were invited by Rahul to join the yatra when it moves in UP excused themselves but wished Rahul the best and good luck for the yatra to go ahead.

After an expression of brother sister bonding when the yatra entered the most politically versatile state of UP that is eyed by major political parties for the number game in Lok Sabha, Priyanka Gandhi claimed big industrialists like “Adani and Ambani may have bought many a politician, PSUs and the media,” but “they have not been, and will never be, able to buy my brother”.

“People say Rahul Gandhi does not feel cold even in winter, this is because he is wearing the shield of truth,”

Priyanka said. Rahul Gandhi has been constantly seen wearing T-shirts in this chilly weather conditions in northern India and has been questioned over this attire in many occasion.

Priyanka said she was proud of welcoming the yatra, which entered Uttar Pradesh traversing 3,000 kms from Kanyakumari. “Look at my elder brother, I take the maximum pride in you. Because the establishment put all its pressure. The government spent thousands of crores to destroy his image. But, he did not deter from the path of truth. Agencies were deployed but he did not feel afraid, as he is a warrior,” she said at the Loni border.

She said Rahul has opened “the shop” to spread love in the “market of hatred” and was marching to unite the people. “I urge everyone in Uttar Pradesh to open a franchise of this ‘mohabbat ki dukaan’

(shop to spread love),” she said.

AICC in-charge for Delhi affairs of the party Shaktisinh Gohil said he saw a great turnout in Delhi. “The yatra has been a huge success and we have received a great response from the public,” he said.

The yatra will travel though Uttar Pradesh for two days and will enter Haryana’s Panipat by Thursday evening. On the first night on Tuesday, it will halt at Mavikala in Baghpat. After traversing Punjab and a day through Himachal Pradesh, the yatra will enter Jammu and Kashmir.

The Bharat Jodo Yatra, which started from Kanyakumari on September 7, will end with the hoisting of the national flag by Rahul Gandhi in Srinagar on January 30. The yatra has so far covered 3,122 km from Gandhi Mandapam in Kanyakumari to the Red Fort in Delhi.

Over the 108 days, the



Yatra has covered 49 districts in nine states and one Union Territory -- Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Delhi.

AICC spokesman informed so far, there have been 87 sitting interactions of 30-40 min with various groups,

usually 20-30 people in each group. These groups raise various issues of the localities and states we are walking through and there have been over 200 planned walks with smaller groups of 4-5 people, which range from celebrities to intellectuals to activists to ex-servicemen to local children.

To convey the message of

the yatra, there have been 95 corner meetings, where Rahul Gandhi makes a short speech about the message of the yatra at the end of the day. In addition, 10 large public meetings have been held, to which lakhs of people have attended. There have also been nine press conferences so far, the last one being in Delhi on December 31.

Akhilesh, Maya praise Rahul but skip his yatra

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav and Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati skipped the Bharat Jodo Yatra as it entered Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday. The two leaders, however, showered generous praise on Rahul Gandhi’s initiative and wished all the success to the yatra. The Bharat Jodo Yatra resumed its second leg from the national capital Delhi after a 9-day break.

Akhilesh wished all success to the yatra on its way ahead and lauded it for generating the public support it did on its way to Delhi. Yadav tweeted a letter expressing his support to the yatra’s continued success while turning down an invite from the Congress to join the march. Mayawati also tweeted her best wishes while refusing to join in.

While the yatra was criticised for spending less time in the then-poll bound Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, the state which holds the key to the Lok Sabha, the decision to invite the

leadership of the SP and BSP hinted at a possible, yet distant, rapprochement.

Rahul Gandhi had himself hinted at a press conference in Delhi that the opposition should iron out their differences ahead of the Lok Sabha elections in 2024.

The Bharat Jodo Yatra entered Uttar Pradesh from Loni in Ghaziabad. The Congress had invited SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, SBSP president OP Rajbhar, SP MLA Shivpal Singh Yadav, RLD president Jayant Chaudhary and CPI secretary Atul Anjan. Apart from these, BJP leader and former deputy CM Dinesh Sharma was also invited.

The Congress workers lined up on both sides of the road at the Loni border in Ghaziabad and welcomed Rahul Gandhi and other ‘yatri’s as the march entered the state. AICC general secretary in-charge for UP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra joined the march and welcomed her brother amidst presence of leaders of the UP



& Delhi Congress.

The yatra flag was handed to the leaders of both the states on a stage set up for the purpose. AICC general secretary KC Venugopal, Delhi Congress chief Anil Kumar Chaudhary, and Congress leaders of Uttar Pradesh, including CLP leader Aradhna Mishra, were among those present on the occasion.

UP Congress Committee president Brijlal Khabri said he

saw a great turnout in Delhi and that leaders of various opposition parties would join the yatra.

“Rahul Gandhi is interacting and listening to the problems of the common man. So far, the yatra has been very successful. We have received an overwhelming response,” Khabri said.

The yatra will remain in Uttar Pradesh for two days

before entering Haryana’s Panipat by Thursday evening.

After traversing Punjab and a day through Himachal Pradesh, the yatra will enter Jammu and Kashmir. Starting from Kanyakumari on September 7, the yatra has so far travelled over 3,000 kms. It will conclude on January 30 in Srinagar with the hoisting of the national flag by Rahul Gandhi.



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with former Research and Analysis Wing chief AS Dulat during the party’s ‘Bharat Jodo Yatra’, in New Delhi on Tuesday. The Bharat Jodo Yatra resumed in Delhi on Tuesday after a nine-day break for Christmas and New Year.

Ghastly accident

A young girl meets with a horrible death, but AAP and BJP are still fighting their petty wars

The national capital, indeed the entire nation, woke up in the new year to become painfully aware of the horrible death of Anjali Singh, a 20-year-old event manager. Investigations so far have shown that it was not a case of sexual assault and murder, but that is no relief to the parents of the unfortunate girl who was dragged for about 13 km by a car. Apparently, it's a hit-and-run case. The five young men in the car, who are reported to be drunk, didn't bother to find out the fate of the riders of the scooty they had hit. The Delhi Police have arrested and charged them with culpable homicide not amounting to murder, rash driving, and causing death by negligence. The ghastly accident has left behind several questions in its wake. The first is about the responsiveness of Delhi Police. It has been widely reported that cops took a lot of time to react. The Delhi Police have a lot of explaining to do. Anjali's friend, Nidhi, who was at the scene, was not hurt by the accident. She must have seen that Anjali's leg had got stuck in the car. She reportedly not just fled the scene but also didn't inform anyone about the accident. That's odd; surely it's not a friendly reaction. Some of the eyewitnesses, who didn't know the victim, did much more than Nidhi. Why did she behave the way she did? It is also worth pondering as to why some people believe that they can get away with hit-and-run incidents. Are they of the view that the long arm of the law can't reach them? Where

does their belief emanate from?

The police, the judicial system, and government have to strengthen the belief that however rich and powerful one may be, they are still not mightier than the law. This requires a steely resolve, considerable perseverance, and a great deal of effort on the part of those who matter. Unfortunately, what we see all around is unpleasant politicking and a blame game. The Delhi Government and the Aam Aadmi Party seem more interested in blaming the Lieutenant-Governor, whom the Delhi Police Commissioner reports to, and the Central Government than offering concrete solutions to make Delhi safer. Bharatiya Janata Party leaders, on their part, are accusing the AAP Government of not having installed enough cameras.

This is the pattern that is repeated in the aftermath of every high-visibility crime in the national capital, whether the Shradha Walkar murder or the Anjali Singh case. Unsurprisingly, the law and order situation doesn't improve. In August, the National Crime Records Bureau's report revealed that two minor girls were raped every day in 2021 in Delhi, earning it the dubious distinction of being the most unsafe metropolitan city for women in the country. In 2021, there were 13,892 cases of crimes against women. AAP and BJP leaders should work together to make the capital safer for people, especially women, instead of accusing each other all the time.



Women perform 'Kulvi Naati' dance during the Manali Winter Carnival 2023, in Manali

Shocking discrimination

It is inhumane and derogatory to the core but the discrimination against Harijans continues

A shocking and nauseating practice from Tamil Nadu has been revealed by a young IAS officer by the name Kavitha Ramu, the district collector of Puthukottai. Harijans are served tea in paper cups while upper-caste customers get their quota of the beverage in exclusive glass tumblers. The two-tumbler system has been in vogue in the State for more than sixty years and this is nothing other than an extension of the practice of untouchability. Though Chief Minister M K Stalin has been claiming that the Dravidian Model of development followed in Tamil Nadu should be emulated in the rest of the country, he remains tight-lipped over this ugly discrimination that is prevalent across the State.

The Dravidian Model of development is centered on the ideology of a classless and casteless society. But the State is the epicenter of untouchability. There are many Panchayat offices in Tamil Nadu where elected representatives including the president belonging to Harijan communities are not allowed to sit on the chairs meant for them and are made to sit on the floor. Harijans are not allowed to sit on chairs and benches inside tea shops in village and town squares. They are also not allowed inside temples. Untouchability is rampant in Tamil Nadu and the Dravidian political outfits have failed to tackle this social evil. The honor killings are yet another face of untouchability. The story of Dr V Pugalendhi, an orthopedic surgeon of eminence, should have served as an eye-opener to the powers that be. The first Harijan to become the head of the department of the famous Government Rajaji General Hospital, Madurai, was humiliated by his peers and subordinates because of his "lower" caste. Though the district collector has ordered the police to register a case under the Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, records prove that it is a futile act. These developments happen at a time when a section of Harijans under the leadership of Dr Krishnasami, a medical doctor-turned-political activist wages a battle against the Govt demanding that they be delisted from the SC/ST list. Fight against untouchability should be unleashed from the heart and not from political stages. The DMK stands for Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and not the Dynasty of Muthuvel Karunanidhi. The State is light years behind its counterparts in inclusive growth and social justice.

The Govt must check brain drain

The Government must formulate measures that can curb the exodus of high networth individuals without infringing upon their civil liberties

Are Indians going abroad for greener pastures? Should we be worried as to why intelligentsia is keen on settling abroad? And what are the ways in which the number of emigrants can be brought down significantly? As per a report, over 1.6 lakh Indians renounced their citizenship in 2021 and around 1.8 lakhs in 2022. So far, this is the first time in two consecutive years that the highest number of people have opted for foreign citizenship and let go of their Indian one.

Many surveys and assessments have been done in the past to ascertain the possible reasons behind the masses giving up Indian citizenship. They include a better standard of living, better pay, social security, tax terrorism, red tape, better education from renowned institutions, and perhaps even more open-minded societies. Come to think about it, many of the individuals who become successful in the field of medicine, engineering, academics, and so on leave the country, and become the skilled workforce of some other foreign nation. Does it bode well for a developing country like India? Certainly not. They amass their knowledge using Indian resources and by studying in Indian educational institutions, however, they, later on, end up contributing to the GDP of other nations. According to the Global Wealth Migration Review, data showed that around 7,000 Indian millionaires or high-net-worth individuals moved abroad permanently in 2020. Most of them included highly skilled doctors, engineers, financial professionals, and others.

In the decade following Independence, millions of Indians migrated overseas to avoid poverty, inequality, unemployment, and political instability. However, in today's era, things stand differently and emigrants are driven more by their personal set of aspirations. What's made the move of settling abroad easier is the access to robust technologies via which people can take care of the



financial requirements of their loved ones. Besides, traveling from one country to another has become more seamless and affordable now.

Many of the developed nations have relaxed their immigration policies to attract a skilled workforce, triggering an exodus of people from mainly developing nations. The reasons that can best explain the move are - the debilitating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, low population, and low birth rate. Developed countries such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and EU countries face an acute shortage of skilled workers. Japan and Italy are 'demographic time bombs'. The population of Japan is projected to lose 20.7 million people in the coming years, a shrinking of around 17%. Similarly, Italy is also the victim of a declining population, which is expected to shrink from 61 million to 28 million.

According to World Bank data, another issue is the aging population, wherein over 23% of Italian people are over 65 years. Young people in developed countries are deciding to forgo having children. Almost all developed countries share a similar sorry picture. This explains why



MANY OF THE DEVELOPED NATIONS HAVE RELAXED THEIR IMMIGRATION POLICIES TO ATTRACT A SKILLED WORKFORCE, TRIGGERING AN EXODUS OF PEOPLE FROM MAINLY DEVELOPING NATIONS.

they pinned their hopes on immigration. At a time when our country requires a major technological push in sectors of agriculture, education, health, defense, communication, and logistics, the record number of emigrants poses a challenge, a thorn in the flesh. India can take a cue from the 'Citizenship by Investment Program' of various countries that allows individuals to get foreign citizenship easily. Over 100 countries in the world have some form of investment migration legislation in place. For instance, if an individual can generate employment in a foreign country, they get priority for migration to that country. It's about time the Govt provided tax incentives to people who generate employment inside India.

The Government should come up with plans to incentivize high-networth individuals who invest in agriculture, defense technology, health, education, and other projects. Businessmen must be protected from tax terrorism and entrepreneurship thriving on innovation should be patronized by the state. These measures may be able to stem the tide of the massive exodus to some extent.



SHREYA GARG

What is thought-provoking is how the Govt has to spend a large sum from the exchequer to buy niche technologies, which require a high level of technical expertise. These could well have been developed in our own country had the brain drain been checked over a period of time.

To be sure, some degree of migration is healthy, as it allows people of Indian origin to integrate into the global economy and bring recognition and revenue too. But the numbers we are staring at present paint a grim picture. Has brain drain, a glaring problem, taken a backseat in the midst of other political, social, and economical issues? Perhaps, it has. To combat it, the Government must decide on some punitive measures that can be taken to reduce the rising number of emigrants. While they may prove counterproductive, the government must definitely formulate measures that are dissuasive in nature that don't end up infringing upon the civil liberties of aspiring immigrants.

(The author keenly follows news pertaining to women's rights and writes to shape opinion on social and environmental issues. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PUNISH THE GUILTY

Sir — The 5 high caste family boys who killed a girl by dashing with their car to her scooty and driving the car 4 kilometers along her body causing her to die on the night of January first the 5 unkind and merciless boys were caught by the Police But the young boys belong to the wealthy family The parents can spend some crores to police and judiciary and get the accused boys free from all the charges. But I suggest that all the accused should be hanged before the coming of January 24th and their parents who could not make them pious and gentle should be ousted from Delhi and punished to go and reside in a far-off village till the end of their lives This is the black spot on their white colors they also brought a bad name to Delhi which is the capital of India,

Dr Maqdoomi | Gulbarga

VERDICT ON DEMONETISATION

Sir — The Supreme Court (SC) in a 4:1 majority verdict upheld the Modi government's 2016 decision to demonetise the Rs 1,000 and Rs 500 denomination notes, saying the decision-making process was not flawed. Though the majority of judges admitted that to them it's 'Not relevant whether objective achieved or not'. Though I agree with the lone dissenting Judge Justice BV Nagarathna, the note ban decision was well-intentioned and well-thought-off as it targeted evils such as black money, terror funding, and counterfeiting. Even Justice S A Nazeer's lead bench, also comprising justices B R Gavai, A S Bopanna, and V Ramasubramanian, said the Centre's decision-making process could not have been flawed as there was consultation between the RBI and the Union government. But the big question was did the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) apply its independent application of mind? Never, because the Modi government only requested RBI's opinion, which cannot be said to be a recommendation.

It's a pity that the ostensibly learned judges need to apply some practical thinking on whether or not Demonetisation

The Yatra, prologue and epilogue



In the days of the Raj, MK Gandhi held several padayatras, the major ones being one in Odisha to fight for the rights of Harijans and one in Naokhali for Hindu-Muslim unity. The salt march is of course the most well-known. In post independence era there have also been many yatras but reasons are different. Jagan Mohan Reddy who took a year-long Yatra in 2017, across his state of Andhra Pradesh, to reclaim his father's political legacy. And that saw

the exit of the CM, Chandra Babu Naidu. The ongoing Yatra of Rahul Gandhi, across the nation, has refreshingly remained a nonpolitical movement. Initiated with some spirit, its intent and purpose had been misty, to be gathering some cogent content only of late. The Yatra is never expected to dramatically reverse the existing political dispensation. Should it however pave the way for the opposition to reclaim its voice and clout, within and without legislative chambers, it would have served a valuable purpose. It is a laudable effort from Rahul Gandhi to think of Yatra to spread the message of love and even. Even the most authoritative captain running a tight ship must depend on the lookout, perched high above in the crow's nest for an alert. More so when the seas are rough and progress is pressing. Democratic nations fashion their opposition for this sole purpose.

R Narayanan | Mumbai

was right or wrong. The whole of India knows that Demo was a disaster. People suffered; many lost their hard-earned money and many died in the process of exchanging the notes. It's been done and black money hasn't vanished nor has currency circulation reduced. Demo was not either illegal or bad. But the way the Modi government applied it was unwise, and unnecessary and put the citizens at harassment at the whims and fancies of PM Modi. The main thing is that none of its objectives were met, so it was a failure. Though the SC has not given a clean chit on the success or failure of Demo, the way Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is once again misleading the country regarding this verdict, surely is a matter of shock.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

NETANYAHU AGAIN

Sir — The Government of Benjamin Netanyahu is back in power in Israel again, this is his sixth time as the country's head. His Likud party loves to stay in power either on its own or via coalition settlement no matter what. But this

return will be alarming for a new low between the Israeli -Palestinian hostilities. Benjamin is pro-Jews and fosters all agendas for settlement expansion to annex the West Bank to crush Palestinians' voices at large. One can expect more hostilities in the new year 2023, except what we all have been facing as a result of the Russia-Ukraine war. Definitely, Gaza, West Bank, and Palestinian rights will be making global headlines resulting in the return of Netanyahu to the highest office. In fact, immediately after his return as Israeli PM denied accepting the UNGA vote on the ICJ views on the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories.

There will be a tussle between Israel and Palestine in 2023. Hope that Netanyahu must learn from the Russia-Ukraine war consequences and would try to reach a legitimate solution to this very complex problem.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

As far as the 2024 Lok Sabha election is concerned, Rahul Gandhi will not just be the face of the opposition but will be its prime ministerial candidate too.



Congress leader
— Kamal Nath

I am not going to pretend that all our problems will go away in the New Year.

UK Prime Minister
— Rishi Sunak

Making the film 'Hey Ram' was my idea of saying sorry to Babu (Mahatma Gandhi).



Actor
— Kamal Haasan

I ensure they will feel that they are playing India in India. So we don't need to go and sledge them, our body language is enough for them to feel intimidated.

Indian skipper
— Hardik Pandya

If the Opposition stands effectively with a vision, what I am hearing and seeing on the ground during the 'Bharat Jodo Yatra', it will be very difficult for the BJP to win.




Congress leader
— Rahul Gandhi

FIRST COLUMN

RESOLVING LIFE'S DILEMMAS IS AN ART

Celebrations, measurements play a significant role in life



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Another New Year, in the form of 2023, is on our calendar. As usual December 31 marked both verve and spirited celebrations. Nothing is wrong with that; however, a simple question about the celebration on December 31 is inherent in the situation.

How was December 31 different, say, from November 30, or coming January 31? It is the same diurnal circulation of the earth. The sunrise of January 1 was not any different from any other day!


A calendar is clearly a manmade division of time, marked by a convenience for time calculation. There are different calendars around the world, of which the Gregorian Calendar, the Vikram Samvat Calendar, the Saka Calendar are only a few of the many variants.

Be that as it may, celebrations and measurements play a significant role in human life. Thus it is that concepts and everyday living have to be blended together for a healthy lifestyle. The art of doing so is the art of effectiveness. Ultimately, it is the mind that shapes the understanding of the world and relationships.

Art lies in resolving life's dilemma and seeing 'meaning' into things. This happens even when does not formally realise it. It is this 'perception' and 'reality' that affects behaviour.

All human expressions of love, hate, attraction, depression and more are, therefore, also, sensory experiences. And it is this iteration that creates human civilisation with its linkages to 'territory'.

It is important to realise that values provide the link between self and the external world. It is this connect, also, that is a challenge to unravel. Be it philosophy, be it the arts, or whatever else, it is embedded in matter and driven by spirit. To be in sync with this relationship, is the requirement of life.



Art of life is, also, embedded in values and the ability to redeem one's word. This is why organisations are formed to deliver as per certain known 'standards'. To organise this is the route to success. It is this ability to generate, sustain, and implement standards that is at the core of organizations. It covers everything from individual demeanour to societal relationships.

The word "organisation" has a rough Sanskrit translation, "Yojana". This word is derived from the Sanskrit root word 'yuj'. Translated it means to "organise". In the Vedas, there is a dictum which roughly translated means "it is difficult to find someone who can organise".

To organise, one must have standards, fair play, and the ability to articulate forms. The Sanskrit dictum clearly says that to do this is difficult. A look at the history of institutions of all kinds reveals that only those with the ability to 'organise' survived. To organise, therefore, requires the enunciation of principles and the ability to follow these principles.


To organise is, in other words, a high form of human relationship: the relationship between matter and spirit, the relationship between matter and matter, and, ultimately, any activity that needs to be goal-driven.

A calendar is a link in this ability to organise, and it is central to any assessment or measurement.

This approach has to be made a part of the training to the individuals and training of groups. This covers everything from the private to the public sectors, it includes the local governments, state governments, the national government, the army, the cooperative movement. The day one realises this, one will really usher in a 'New Year', in a manner of speaking.

(The author is an internationally acclaimed management consultant)

Humanities develop a rounded personality



VK KARTHIKA

S&T institutes will not be able to foster holistic development of students without the study of humanities which are crucial for building character


A few minutes into a discussion to convince the head of a private university in India about the importance of restructuring the language curriculum, I realised he had programming languages in mind, while human languages were my concerns. He dismissed the discussion by stating "as I always think about significant things like 'these' (these being C, C++, JAVA, and PYTHON), I didn't understand that you're talking about English and French". By then I was familiar with the ecosystem of Science & Technology (S&T) institutes and was not surprised by the elitist attitude underlined by the use of the word 'significant' and the subservient reality that faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) were subjected to.

As John Hildebidle says it is not easy to establish the relevance of the "innumerate mole" called humanities in the 'techno-jungles' of science and technology institutes.

For some, humanities and social sciences are subjects that are shallow which encourage research without producing any visible outputs. For many, HSS is a service department and the faculty of HSS can teach anything other than Sciences, Maths and Technology. Many of them do not even distinguish between the numerous disciplines that exist under the umbrella term humanities and social sciences, thereby over-generalising the concept of 'specialisation'.

Those who fail to understand the actual role of humanities or liberal arts in education consider this discipline, says John Hildebidle, as a "blend of providing a way for high-powered scientific workers to relax and offering some ill-defined moral instruction." "S&T counterparts of humanities often wonder what these fascinating topics are researched in an HSS department without producing tangible output. They question, as Pramod K. Nayar rightly points out, the social usefulness of the humanities stream and the research by evaluating them in terms of the contribution to the society, to the knowledge community and to the parent institute. The touchstone here is the measurable, laboratory-based, experimental research framework that generates concrete results. The intellectual labour that the HSS faculty and scholars undertake becomes incomprehensible as there is usually a complete closure to anything that cannot be objectively measured, quantified and experienced.

Humanities departments in S&T institutes are an overlooked entity as they are forced to fit within the criteria that are designed for the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) departments. As Costa underscores, by ignoring the specificities of humanities discipline, the system forces the department to belong to the evaluation frame-



THE FAST-DEVELOPING FRAMEWORK OF DESIGN THINKING EMPHASISES THE ROLE OF CREATIVITY AND CRITICAL THINKING. ARTISTS AND NUCLEAR PHYSICISTS ARE COLLABORATING IN THE WORLD'S LARGEST PARTICLE PHYSICS LABORATORY

(The author is Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, National Institute of Technology, Trichy)



work designated for the STEM departments. This results in diminished social impact and deviation in research orientation in the field of humanities.

The architecture of the S&T institutes in terms of documentation is not conducive for the needs of research in humanities.

After all, what could go under 'consumables' when a researcher in literature submits a project proposal!

Structurally, HSS department exists as a stand-alone entity inside the vistas of an S&T institute. By no means can one argue that humanities discipline produces morally sound and ethically perfect humans.

The conversation between Albert Einstein and Rabindranath Tagore on the nature of reality back in 1930 is worth mentioning here. True genius sees beyond the superficial and understands the obscurities and impossibilities in offering definite characteristics to the phenomenon called 'truth'. Towards the end of a series of interesting exchanges about spirituality and scientific truth, about the abstract and the concrete, Einstein said to Tagore: "Then I am more religious than you".

The scientific temperament which endorses the importance of finding truth through objective, experimental, scientific method also values the abstract, philosophical, subjective positionality that thinkers absorb in their process of finding truth. The reality in the present world is worrying though. Perceptions and perspective generation are not given importance in the S&T Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as the focus is more on product than the process. The pursuit of absolute truth often becomes a pseudo search because researchers fail to understand the ultimate goal of any research: the common good of humanity.

While discussing the distinction between education for profit making and that for a more inclusive type of citizenship, Martha Nussbaum foregrounds the role of humanities in enabling democracies to deal responsibly with the global challenges.

It is through the learning of literature, liberal arts, and languages that students develop their perspectives and acknowledge diversity that exists in a multicultural world in which they function. Of course, studying/researching the STEM subjects is important as it helps create a world that is worthy of living as Jared van Duinen maintains; but human imagination and higher order thinking skills were the pivotal factors that triggered all inventions and discoveries. The fast-developing framework of Design Thinking emphasises the role of creativity and critical thinking. Artists and nuclear physicists are collaborating in the world's largest particle physics laboratory. Various S&T institutes have gradually begun to recognise the value of humanities and allied disciplines. IIT Gandhinagar established a Centre for Creative Learning back in 2017 and in the first week of October 2022, by integrating Art into the STEM stream, a STEAM mission was announced to educate over 1 million children in India.

This transformation from STEM to STEAM is still not recognised by many S&T institutes in India even when they endeavour to implement the new education policy - NEP 2020 — that emphasises the importance of humanities in all disciplines.

Haim Ginott, a Holocaust survivor and an educational psychologist, in his famous work writes to the teachers: "I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness: gas chambers built by learned engineers, children poisoned by educated physicians, infants killed by trained nurses. So, I am suspicious of education. My request is: help your students become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, and educated Eichmanns." Global citizenship, multicultural competencies, higher order thinking skills and 21st century skills are all aligning well with the humanities discipline and without recognising the quality research that is definitely interdisciplinary in nature and the teaching that focuses on the philosophy, ethics and the very art of living, S&T institutes will not be able to foster holistic development of their student community.

POINT COUNTERPOINT


THE MAJORITY VERDICT BY THE SUPREME COURT HAS STEERED CLEAR OF WHETHER THE OBJECTIVES OF THE DEMONETISATION EXERCISE WERE ACHIEVED AT ALL. — CONGRESS LEADER P CHIDAMBRAM



THE SC HAS HELD A DECISION TAKEN IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST VALID. WILL RAHUL GANDHI NOW SAY SORRY FOR HIS CAMPAIGN AGAINST DEMONETISATION? — BJP LEADER RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD

Cong's new agility yet to translate into poll success

With Rahul's Bharat Jodo Yatra, the grand old party is trying to reach out to people in remote areas and villages



KALYANI SHANKAR

Congress would like to rebrand Rahul Gandhi as a young, caring, and ideological leader before the 2024 polls. Has Rahul shown a new image after the Bharat Jodo Yatra, completed over 100 days, as intended? For the first time after many years, the grand old party is trying to reach out to people in remote areas and villages.

True to the script, he has shown a different persona during the yatra—a son was tying his mother's shoelaces, hugging older women, and playing with children—as a kind, warm-hearted person. Rahul began his 3,500-km journey from Kanyakumari, flagged by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin, on September 7. It has taken a

(The author is a senior journalist)

recess for a week and will resume on January 3. It will end in Jammu and Kashmir by the end of January.

It is time to assess the impact so far of the yatra on the party, the Opposition, the ruling BJP, and the public. Rahul maintains that the yatra is not for political or personal interest but against the politics of hate, fear, and violence. He has impressed the public with his tireless walking, sweating in the heat and dust, and soaking in the rain—all with one aim—to fight the RSS. One cannot find fault with Rahul's efforts. He is physically quite fit.

As the yatra marches on, Rahul sticks to his narrative, "we are here to open the shop of love in your bazaar of hatred". Gandhi has covered

parts of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Haryana and Delhi.

During the yatra, Rahul gets first-hand information from the cadre. Congress workers who had come out of their homes, in the streets, and on the road these past few months accompanied him. The response in the south cheered the Congress and alerted the BJP.

Will the yatra help Congress to get better electoral gains? And will it change perceptions about Rahul? He has changed his campaign style to a nuanced one. Listening to senior leaders in his party, Rahul has demonstrated restraint in personally attacking Prime Minister

Narendra Modi. His aggressive attack on Modi in 2019 had not clicked.

Secondly, his criticism of the business houses of Adani and Ambani, whom he alleged Modi had favoured, has become subtle and nuanced. Rahul questions India's wealth concentrated in the hands of a few individuals without taking their names.

Thirdly, Rahul talks of love and hatred and how the RSS brand of politics has torn society with hate. As for the impact on Congress, the Yatra's response has boosted the workers' morale. There are plans to ask the state leaders to cover their respective states on foot following this Yatra in the months ahead.

Rahul's efforts have temporarily united the factional Congress leaders in different states, including Karnataka, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, where Congress has a direct fight with BJP.

As for the ruling BJP, it is clear that the Modi government first ridiculed but is now disturbed about the Yatra. Initially, the BJP wrote off the Yatra, claiming it would only click in the south, where the BJP is weak. Crowds in Tamil Nadu were credited to the ruling DMK, a Congress ally.

So, the government has cautioned Rahul and his party about the increasing covid cases to destabilize the Yatra. While Yatra's success in the south has been good, it is a question of whether the other regional satraps would join

the Yatra. Some prominent opposition leaders, particularly in UP, have given a lukewarm response to Rahul's invitation to join the Yatra. Keeping the 2024 elections and nine Assembly polls this year in mind, Rahul has signaled to the opposition leaders to unite if they want to halt the BJP juggernaut.

Over the past 100-odd days, Congress Chief Ministers, some Bollywood actors, academics, activists, and even some opposition leaders from other parties have joined the march in a show of support. Former Reserve Bank Governor Raghuram Rajan's presence added to the prestige of the march.

The Congress hopes its three-pronged attack on the Modi government, India's

China's policy, inflation, and unemployment, would capture popular support. However, it may not alter the political landscape but may strengthen the democratic process.

Though the Congress has begun well, it still needs a popular political narrative to lure swing voters, especially the middle classes. Can Congress rise to the challenge of keeping the momentum up till the 2024 Lok Sabha polls? Will Congress work hard to improve its electoral prospects, harvesting the goodwill from the yatra? However, Congress's new-found agility is yet to translate into electoral success. The results of the nine Assembly elections this year will give some clues.

Russia, shaken by Ukrainian strike, said mulling more drones

AP ■ KYIV

Russia is preparing to step up its attacks on Ukraine using Iranian-made exploding drones, according to Ukraine's president, as Moscow looks for ways to keep up the pressure on Kyiv after a Ukrainian attack killed at least 63 Russian soldiers in the latest battlefield setback for the Kremlin's war strategy.

"We have information that Russia is planning a prolonged attack by Shaheds (exploding drones)," President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address late on Monday.

He said the goal is to break Ukraine's resistance by "exhausting our people, (our) air defence, our energy", more than 10 months after Russia invaded its neighbour.

Russian President Vladimir Putin appears to be exploring ways to regain momentum in his flawed war effort, which in recent months has been frustrated by a Ukrainian counteroffensive backed by Western-supplied weapons.

That has brought sharp rebukes in some Russian circles of the military's performance.

In the latest embarrassment for the Kremlin, Ukrainian forces fired rockets at a facility in the eastern Donetsk region

where Russian soldiers were stationed, killing 63 of them, according to Russia's Defence Ministry. Other, unconfirmed reports put the death toll much higher.

It was one of the deadliest attacks on the Kremlin's forces since the war began more than 10 months ago.

In the attack, Ukrainian forces fired six rockets from a HIMARS launch system and two of them were shot down, a Russian Defence Ministry statement said.

However, the Strategic Communications Directorate of Ukraine's Armed Forces claimed on Sunday that around 400 mobilised Russian soldiers were killed in a vocational school building in Makiivka and about 300 more were wounded.

That claim couldn't be independently verified. The Russian statement said the strike occurred "in the area of Makiivka" and didn't mention the vocational school.

Satellite photos analysed by The Associated Press show the apparent aftermath of the strike. An image from December 20 showed the building standing. An image from January 2 showed the building reduced to rubble. Other days had intense cloud cover, making seeing the site by standard satellite imagery impossible.

Vigils for soldiers killed in the strike took place in two Russian cities on Tuesday, the state RIA Novosti agency reported.

In Samara, in southwestern Russia, locals gathered for an Orthodox service in memory of



the dead. The service was followed by a minute's silence, and flowers were laid at a Soviet-era war memorial, RIA reported.

Unconfirmed reports in Russian-language media said that the victims were mobilised reservists from the region.

For the Russian military, the

Iranian-made exploding drones are a cheap weapon which also spreads fear among troops and civilians. The United States and its allies have sparred with Iran over Tehran's role in allegedly supplying Moscow with the drones.

The Institute for the Study

of War said that Putin is looking to strengthen support for his strategy among key voices in Russia.

"Russia's air and missile campaign against Ukraine is likely not generating the Kremlin's desired information effects among Russia's nation-

alists," the think tank said late on Monday.

"Such profound military failures will continue to complicate Putin's efforts to appease the Russian pro-war community and retain the dominant narrative in the domestic information space," it added.

Zelenskyy warned that in the coming weeks, "the nights may be quite restless."

Putin's additional reliance on drones might not help him achieve his goals, however, as Ukraine claims a high success rate against the weapons.

During the first two days of the new year, which were marked by relentless nighttime drone attacks on Ukrainian cities and energy infrastructure, the country's forces shot down more than 80 Iranian-made drones, Zelenskyy said.

Since September, Ukraine's armed forces have shot down almost 500 drones, Ukrainian air force spokesman Yuriy Ihnat claimed in a television interview on Tuesday, news website Ukrinform reported.

As well as hoping to wear down resistance to Russia's invasion, the long-range bombardments have targeted the power grid to leave civilians at the mercy of biting winter weather as power outages ripple across the country.

"Every downed drone, every downed missile, every day with electricity for our people and minimal shutdown schedules are exactly such victories," Zelenskyy said.

In the latest fighting, a Russian missile strike overnight on the city of Druzhkivka in the partially occupied eastern Donetsk region wounded two people, the deputy head of Ukraine's presidential office, Kyrylo Tymoshenko, reported on Tuesday.

A reporter with French broadcaster TF1 was live on television screens when a blast from one of the strikes erupted behind him in Druzhkivka. A German reporter with Bild newspaper suffered a minor injury from shrapnel in the same bombardment.

Officials said the attack ruined an ice hockey arena described as the largest hockey and figure skating school in Ukraine. Overnight Russian shelling was also reported in the northeastern Kharkiv region and the southeastern Dnipropetrovsk region.

In the recently retaken areas of the southern Kherson region, Russian shelling on Monday killed two people and wounded nine others, Kherson's Ukrainian governor, Yaroslav Yanushevich, said on Tuesday.

Drone advances in Ukraine could bring dawn of killer robots



AP ■ KYIV

Drone advances in Ukraine have accelerated a long-anticipated technology trend that could soon bring the world's first fully autonomous fighting robots to the battlefield, inaugurating a new age of warfare.

The longer the war lasts, the more likely it becomes that drones will be used to identify, select and attack targets without help from humans, according to military analysts, combatants and artificial intelligence researchers.

That would mark a revolution in military technology as profound as the introduction of the machine gun.

Ukraine already has semi-autonomous attack drones and counter-drone weapons endowed with AI. Russia also claims to possess AI weaponry,

though the claims are unproven. But there are no confirmed instances of a nation putting into combat robots that have killed entirely on their own.

Experts say it may be only a matter of time before either Russia or Ukraine, or both, deploy them.

"Many states are developing this technology," said Zachary Kallenborn, a George Mason University weapons innovation analyst. "Clearly, it's not all that difficult."

The sense of inevitability extends to activists, who have tried for years to ban killer drones but now believe they must settle for trying to restrict the weapons' offensive use.

Ukraine's digital transformation minister, Mykhailo Fedorov, agrees that fully autonomous killer drones are "a logical and inevitable next step"

in weapons development. He said Ukraine has been doing "a lot of R&D in this direction."

"I think that the potential for this is great in the next six months," Fedorov told The Associated Press in a recent interview.

Ukrainian Lt. Col. Yaroslav Honchar, co-founder of the combat drone innovation non-profit Aerorozvidka, said in a recent interview near the front that human war fighters simply cannot process information and make decisions as quickly as machines.

Ukrainian military leaders currently prohibit the use of fully independent lethal weapons, although that could change, he said.

"We have not crossed this line yet – and I say 'yet' because I don't know what will happen in the future," said Honchar, whose group has spearheaded drone innovation in Ukraine, converting cheap commercial drones into lethal weapons.

Russia could obtain autonomous AI from Iran or elsewhere. The long-range Shahed-136 exploding drones supplied by Iran have crippled Ukrainian power plants and terrorised civilians but are not especially smart. Iran has other drones in its evolving arsenal that it says feature AI.

Without a great deal of trouble, Ukraine could make its semi-autonomous weaponised drones fully independent in order to better survive battlefield jamming, their Western manufacturers say.

Those drones include the US-made Switchblade 600 and the Polish Warmate, which both currently require a human to choose targets over a live video feed. AI finishes the job. The drones, technically known as "loitering munitions," can hover for minutes over a target, awaiting a clean shot.

EU, Beijing heading for collision over China's Covid crisis

AP ■ BRUSSELS

The European Union and China on Tuesday moved closer to a political standoff over the COVID-19 crisis, with Beijing vehemently rejecting travel restrictions some EU nations have started to impose that could well be expanded in coming days.

An EU offer of help, including vaccine donations, was also as good as slapped down, with Beijing insisting the situation was "under control" and medical provisions "in adequate supply," government spokesperson Mao Ning said.

And as the 27-nation bloc was moving closer to imposing some sort of restrictions on travellers from China, Beijing clearly laid out what to expect in return.

"We are firmly opposed to attempts to manipulate the COVID measures for political purposes and will take counter-measures based on the principle of reciprocity," Mao said.



Still, the EU seemed bent on taking some sort of joint action to ensure incoming passengers from China would not transmit any potential new variants on to the continent.

"Travellers from China need to be prepared for decisions being taken at short notice," Sweden, which holds the EU presidency, warned in a statement.

Several member nations announced individual efforts over the past week. At the same time, the EU's European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control insisted that the situation in China didn't pose an immediate overall health threat.

"The variants circulating in China are already circulating in the EU, and as such are not challenging for the immune

response" of EU citizens, it said in its latest impact study published Tuesday.

Other scientists have also said limits on travel would have little impact on containing the disease, but they also insisted on the value of looking for potential variants not in Europe at the moment.

Yet fearful not to be caught unawares like at the outset of the global pandemic in early 2020, medical experts from EU member states were already preparing potential action to be taken up by an Integrated Political Crisis Response meeting on Wednesday, where measure like EU-wide entry requirements could be decided.

Over the past week, EU nations reacted in a chaotic cascade of national measures to the crisis in China, disregarding an earlier commitment to act in unity before anything else.

Italy was the first EU member in requiring coronavirus tests for airline passengers coming from China, but several

others have said such measures might not be the best option to protect local populations since new variants now coming from China have already been around in Europe, often for many months.



France, Spain and Italy have already announced independent measures to implement tougher COVID-19 rules for passengers arriving from China.

France's government is requiring negative tests, and is urging French citizens to avoid nonessential travel to China. France is also reintroducing mask requirements on flights from China to France.

Spain's government said it would require all air passengers coming from China to have negative tests or proof of vaccination.

The United States announced new COVID-19 testing requirements Wednesday for all travelers from China, joining some Asian nations that had imposed restrictions because of a surge of infections.

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
TENDER NOTICE (Through E-Tendering)	
Name of Work with its Location	Provision of LAN Connectivity from nearest RCIL Pop for HMIS implementation in Health unit over Delhi Division.
App. Cost of the work (₹)	₹ 1,19,72,546.62/- only
Earnest Money Deposit (₹)	₹ 2,09,900.00/- only
Address of the Office	Senior Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer-C, Northern Railway, 3rd Floor, Annexe-1, DRM Office, New Delhi-110055.
Date & Time for upload the tender / closing of tender	Tender uploading / closing date & time - 25.01.2023 up to 15.00 hrs.
Website particular & notice board location where complete details of the tender can be seen etc.	See the Northern Railway website www.ireps.gov.in & Notice board at S & T branch, 3rd Floor, DRM Office, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055.
 Tender No.: 558-Sig-16-Tele-OT-965 Dated:02.01.2023	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
NOTICE INVITING TENDER	
	
Name of Work and its Location:-	30-Elect-43-T-R1-22-23-E3 A) Comprehensive annual maintenance contract (CAMC) of Johnson make escalators installed at Delhi Main (02 Nos.) and NDLS station (10 Nos) total 12 Nos. for three years. B) Comprehensive annual maintenance contract (CAMC) of Johnson make escalators Installed over Delhi Division for three years. C) Comprehensive annual maintenance contract (CAMC) of 02 nos. Johnson make escalators installed at ANVT Railway Station for three years.
Approx Cost of the works in:-	Rs. 300.01 Lacs
Address of the Office:-	Sr. Divil. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.
Bid Security:-	Rs. 300000.00
Date & time of submission of tender:-	27.01.2023, 12.00 Hrs.
Opening of tender:-	27.01.2023, 12.00 Hrs.
Website & Notice Board:-	www.ireps.gov.in & Sr. Divil. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	
22/2023	



Workers clean rubbles after Ukrainian rocket strike in Makiivka, in Russian-controlled Donetsk region, eastern Ukraine, on Tuesday. Russia's defense ministry says 63 of its soldiers have been killed by a Ukrainian strike on a facility in the eastern Donetsk region where military personnel were stationed (AP Photo)

New Congress to convene, but will McCarthy be House Speaker?

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The new Congress opens with House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy grasping for his political survival, with the potential to become the first nominee for speaker in 100 years to fail to win initial support from his own colleagues in a high-stakes vote for the gavel.

Lawmakers convene Tuesday to a new era of divided government as Democrats relinquish control of the House after midterm election losses. While the Senate remains in Democratic hands, barely, House Republicans are eager to confront President Joe Biden's agenda after two years of a Democratic Party monopoly on power in Washington.

But first, House Republicans must elect a speaker.

McCarthy is in line to replace Speaker Nancy Pelosi, but he heads into the vote with no guarantee of success. The California Republican faces entrenched detractors within his own ranks. Despite attempts to cajole, harangue and win them over — even with an endorsement from former President Donald Trump — McCarthy has fallen short.

The noontime showdown could very well devolve into a prolonged House floor fight, a spectacle that divides the Republican Party, weakens its leadership and consumes the first days of the new Congress.

"This is a lot more important than about one person," said Doug Heye, a former Republican leadership senior aide. "It's about whether Republicans will be able to govern."



House Republicans will huddle behind closed doors early in the morning, ahead of the floor action, as newly elected lawmakers arrive for what's traditionally a celebratory day.

Families in tow, the members of the new Congress prepare to be sworn into the House and Senate for the start of the two-year legislative session.

A new generation of

Trump-aligned Republicans are leading the opposition to McCarthy, inspired by the former president's Make America Great Again slogan. They don't think McCarthy is conservative enough or tough enough to battle Democrats. It's reminiscent of the last time Republicans took back the House majority, after the 2010 midterms, when the tea-party class ushered in a new era of hardball politics, eventually sending Speaker John Boehner to an early retirement.

Typically it takes a majority of the House's 435 members, 218 votes, to become the speaker. With just a slim 222-seat majority, McCarthy can afford only a handful of detractors. A speaker can win with fewer than 218 votes, as Pelosi and Boehner did, if some lawmakers are absent or simply vote present.

Lanka sees 700,000 int'l tourists in 2022



IANS ■ COLOMBO

Last year ended on a good note for Sri Lanka's tourism sector as the arrivals of international visitors to the country topped the 700,000 mark despite the ongoing economic and political crisis, local media reported on Tuesday.

According to official statistics, December saw a total of 91,961 tourists arriving in the island nation, recording the third-highest monthly arrivals in 2022, taking the total number of visitors last year to 719,978, reports Xinhua news agency.

Industry stakeholders said the Tourism Ministry expected to close the year with at least 800,000 tourists, for which several initiatives and promotional campaigns were carried out in potential source markets in the fourth quarter.

Based on the data released by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, India topped the list with 17 per cent of the total tourist arrivals.

Russia ranked second accounting for 13 per cent and Britain became the third largest source market with 12 per cent.

Beijing threatens response to 'unacceptable' virus measures

AP ■ BEIJING

Beijing blasted Covid-19 testing requirements imposed on passengers from China and threatened countermeasures against countries involved, which include the US and several European nations.

"We believe that the entry restrictions adopted by some countries targeting China lack scientific basis, and some excessive practices are even more unacceptable," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said at a daily briefing Tuesday.

"We are firmly opposed to attempts to manipulate the COVID measures for political purposes and will take countermeasures based on the principle of reciprocity," she said. Australia and Canada this week joined a growing list of countries requiring travellers from China to take a COVID-19 test prior to boarding their flight, as China battles a nationwide outbreak of the coronavirus after abruptly easing restrictions that were in place for much of the pandemic.

Other countries including the US, UK,



India, Japan and several European nations have announced tougher COVID-19 measures on Chinese travellers amid concerns over a lack of data on infections in China and fears of the possibility that new variants may spread.

China, which for most of the pandemic adopted a "zero-COVID" strategy that

imposed harsh restrictions aimed at stamping out the virus, abruptly eased those measures in December.

Chinese authorities previously said that from January 8, overseas travellers would no longer need to quarantine upon arriving in China, paving the way for Chinese residents to travel.

Philippines' Marcos Jr heads to China amid sea disputes

AP ■ MANILA

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr Flew to China on Tuesday for a three-day state visit, saying he looks forward to his meeting with Chinese leader Xi Jinping as they work to boost bilateral ties.

"As I leave for Beijing, I will be opening a new chapter in our comprehensive, strategic cooperation with China," he told officials and diplomats, including the Chinese ambassador, prior to boarding his flight from an air base in the capital.

"I look forward to my meeting with President Xi as we work towards shifting the trajectory of our relations to a higher gear that would hopefully bring numerous prospects and abundant opportunities for peace and development to the peoples of both our countries," he added.

Alluding to the two coun-



tries' territorial dispute in the South China Sea, he said he looks forward to discussing bilateral and regional political and security issues.

"The issues between our two countries are problems that do not belong between two friends such as Philippines and China," he added. "We will seek to resolve those issues to mutu-

al benefit of our two countries."

China claims virtually the entire South China Sea and has ignored a 2016 ruling by a tribunal in The Hague that invalidated Beijing's claims to the waterway. The case was brought by the Philippines, which says China has since developed disputed reefs into artificial islands with airplane runways and other

structures so they now resemble forward military bases.

Most recently, a Filipino military commander reported that the Chinese coast guard forcibly seized Chinese rocket debris that Filipino navy personnel had retrieved in the South China Sea last month.

China denied the forcible seizure. Marcos said he would seek further clarification on his visit to Beijing.

Accompanied by a big business delegation, Marcos said they will seek cooperation in various areas including agriculture, energy, infrastructure, trade and investments, and people-to-people exchanges. He said they expect to sign more than 10 key bilateral agreements during the visit.

China accounts for 20 per cent of the Philippines' foreign trade and is also a major source of foreign direct investment.

Jan 6 panel shutting down after referring Trump for crimes

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The House January 6 committee is shutting down, having completed a whirlwind 18-month investigation of the 2021 Capitol insurrection and sent its work to the Justice Department along with a recommendation for prosecuting former President Donald Trump.

The committee's time officially ends Tuesday when the new Republican-led House is sworn in. With many of the committee's staff already departed, remaining aides have spent the last two weeks releasing many of the panel's materials, including its 814-page final report, about 200 transcripts of witness interviews, and documents used to support its conclusions.

Lawmakers have said they want to make their work public to underscore the seriousness of the attack and Trump's multi-pronged effort to try to overturn the election.



"Accountability is now critical to thwart any other future scheme to overturn an election," Chairman Bennie Thompson and Vice Chairwoman Liz Cheney wrote in a departing message on Monday. "We have made a series of criminal referrals, and our system of Justice is responsible for what comes next."

Some of the committee's work — such as videotape of hundreds of witness interviews — will not be made pub-

lic immediately. The committee is sending those videos and some other committee records to the National Archives, which by law would make them available in 50 years. Members of the committee said they didn't release that videotape now because it would have been too difficult to edit it and redact sensitive information.

Incoming Republican leaders may try to get those materials much sooner, though. A provision in a pack-

age of proposed House rules released Sunday calls for the National Archives to transfer "any records related to the committee" back to the House no later than January 17.

It is unclear whether the GOP-led House could enforce the provision and what they would do with the materials.

The committee's conclusion comes after one of the most aggressive and wide-ranging congressional investigations in recent memory. The panel formally or informally interviewed more than 1,000 witnesses, collected more than 1 million documents and held 10 well-watched hearings.

The two Republicans and seven Democrats on the panel were able to conduct the investigation with little interference after House Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy declined to appoint minority members, angry that House Speaker Nancy Pelosi had rejected two of his suggested appointments.

Iran president vows vengeance 3 years after general's death

AP ■ DUBAI

Iran's president on Tuesday vowed to avenge the killing of the country's top general on the third anniversary of his death, as the government rallied its supporters in mourning amid months of anti-government protests. Gen Qassem Soleimani, the architect of Iran's regional military activities, was killed in a US drone strike in neighbouring Iraq.

He is hailed as a national icon among supporters of Iran's theocracy, while the protesters have torn down billboards and defaced other images of him.

Addressing a ceremony marking the general's death, President Ebrahim Raisi said those behind it "should know that retaliation is obvious", adding that "there will be no relief for murderers and accomplices".

He said Soleimani had defeated "US hegemony" and praised him for his role in leading Iran-backed forces against the Islamic State extremist

group. Soleimani was also mourned in neighbouring Iraq alongside Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, an Iraqi militia leader killed in the same strike. Iranian-backed militias make up the bulk of Iraq's state-supported Popular Mobilization Forces.

Iran responded to the killing of Soleimani by launching a barrage of missiles at US bases in Iraq, causing dozens of brain concussion injuries but no deaths among US soldiers stationed there. Iranian officials have repeatedly vowed to take further steps and imposed sanctions on individuals accused of taking part in the operation.

On Monday, Iran's state-linked Jam Jam newspaper published the names and photos of 51 Americans it said were involved in the strike and were "under the shadow of retaliation". The list included several current and former senior US civilian and military officials as well as individuals who appeared to be soldiers involved in aircraft maintenance at regional bases.

Florida sheriff: Burglars call 911 to get help moving stuff

AP ■ POINCIANA (US)

Two people in Florida were arrested after one of them made a 911 call to get help with moving their belongings from a home they were burglarising, authorities said.

Deputies responded to a home Saturday after a 911 call was made but nobody spoke, the Polk County Sheriff's Office said. At the home, the deputies

concluded that nobody lived there, but they found a male suspect and his girlfriend inside the home after entering it through an unlocked door.

Deputies had been searching for the male suspect after identifying him from security video as a burglar at a Dollar General store in Poinciana, Florida, where several items were stolen earlier in the day, the sheriff's office said in a statement.

<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Known to all that my client KAMAL KAKKAR is purchasing property, i.e. Plot No. III-B-88, Area Measuring 2005 Sq.Yds. Situated at Nehru Nagar Colony-III, Ghazabad, U.P., from Ravish Chander Kakkhar and mortgaging the same with Shriram Housing Finance Ltd., and RAVISH CHANDER KAKKAR not having Originals. Sale deed in favour of Sh.Ravish Chander Kakkhar with original complete back chain related this property, it is informed that any deal with said documents by any person except my said client and said institution regarding said property, shall be deemed as null and void. If any person having any claim, right in said property then he may contact and handover the same and apprise his claim to undersigned within 8 days of this publication.</p> <p>AD REM LEGAL SOLUTION Ch. No. 760, Dwarka Court Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-75 M: 9138151515</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Invite for Prequalification Application Pre-qualification applications are invited from experienced, qualified financially sound Civil Contractors to undertake the work of extension in existing 79 Flats of a Group Housing Society in Dwarka, New Delhi. The said contractor must have completed successfully minimum five C.G.H.S in Dwarka. Please apply with full infrastructure eg. Qualified experience Site Staff, Machines & Site Equipments and profile to, The President, New Adarsh C.G.H.S. Ltd., Plot No-22, Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-110075 within 10 days.</p>
<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of our client that Mr. Adish Singh is the owner of Built up Property bearing No. F-299, built on Plot No. 13, area measuring 100 Sq. Yds., out of Kharsa No. 667 & 668, Situated in the revenue estate of Village Basal Darapur, Delhi State Delhi, colony known as Sudarshan Park, New Delhi, vide GPA, Will and ATS dated 08.03.2010. All persons are hereby informed that above mentioned owner will to sell the said property to a person who intends to obtain loan from any bank against the said property. If anybody has any objection/s upon the ownership of above owner over the said floor, its sale/mortgage/litigation, and any other objections, kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.</p> <p>Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants) 201, Indus 23, Shalimar Marg, West Nagar, New Delhi-15 Ph: 011-41112227-28 kumar.associates.advocates@gmail.com</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>To be known to all that I, Nandita Gantayat D/o Goldar from Mishra, Cont. 9266774505, Email: subbendu.g@yahoo.com, R/o. Flat no. - D-701, The Jagaran GHGS Ltd., plot No. - 17, Sector-22, Dwarka, New Delhi, has applied for the conversion of aforesaid property. The documents like original Member's Share Certificate, issued by Society, of aforesaid property have been lost. An FIR to this effect has been lodged in police station on dated 28.10.2022. Any person(s) claiming any right, having any objection or found in possession of original document may write/contact with above named person at above address within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice & can personally contact: Deputy Director (GH) C-block, 2nd floor, Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi.</p>

S Korea: Talks with US on mgmt of nukes underway

AP ■ SEOUL

South Korea reconfirmed Tuesday that Seoul and Washington are discussing its involvement in U.S. Nuclear asset management in the face of intensifying North Korean nuclear threats, after President Joe Biden denied that the allies were discussing joint nuclear exercises.

The purported difference came after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un entered the new year with a vow to mass-produce battlefield nuclear weapons targeting South Korea and introduce a more powerful inter-continental ballistic missile capable of striking the mainland U.S. Some experts say Kim would eventually aim to use his enlarged weapons arsenal to wrest outside concessions like sanctions relief.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said in a newspaper interview published Monday that the two countries were pushing for a joint planning and training involving U.S. Nuclear assets and that the United States responded positively about the idea.

Asked by a reporter later at the White House about whether the two countries were discussing joint nuclear exercises, Biden replied, "No."

Yoon's top adviser for press affairs, Kim Eun-hye, issued a statement Tuesday saying that Seoul and Washington "are discussing an intel-sharing, a joint planning and subsequent joint execution plans over the management of U.S. Nuclear assets in response to North Korea's nuclear (threats)."

Kim said Biden likely answered "no" because a reporter tersely asked him about a nuclear exercise without providing any background information.

In the Chosun Ilbo interview, Yoon said that while the U.S. Nuclear weapons belong to the U.S., planning, intel-sharing and exercises involving them



must be jointly conducted with South Korea. He said he finds it difficult to assure his people of a security guarantee with the current levels of U.S. Security commitment.

South Korea has no nuclear weapons and is under the protection of a U.S. "nuclear umbrella," which guarantees a devastating American response in the event of an attack on its ally. But some experts question the effectiveness of such a security commitment, saying the decision to use U.S. Nuclear weapons lies with the U.S. President. Yoon's office didn't provide many details about his government's discussion with the United States. Some observers say South Korea is seeking to obtain a greater role on U.S. Decision-making process on the deployment of its nuclear assets in times of tensions with North Korea.

Kim Taewoo, a former head of Seoul's Korea Institute for National Unification, said the reported South Korea-U.S. Discussion likely "benchmarked a NATO-style nuclear-sharing arrangement" that allows NATO member states' warplanes to carry U.S. Nuclear weapons. He said the discussion still appears to be falling short of the NATO arrangement because possible nuclear exercises between the two countries would likely be South Korean air force aircraft escorting U.S. Aircraft simulating nuclear strikes during joint

drills. "North Korea would take this sensitively, (South Korea and the U.S.) are discussing this to get North Korea to take this sensitively... because that can be a deterrence against North Korea," Kim Taewoo said.

He said South Korea and the United States are likely using unofficial channels to discuss the topic. That allows South Korea to claim it's discussing the issue with the U.S. At the same time it allows Washington to deny that, he said.

Last year, North Korea performed a record number of weapons tests by launching a variety of ballistic missiles capable of reaching the U.S. Mainland and its allies South Korea and Japan. In September, North Korea also adopted a new law authorizing the preemptive use of its bombs in a broad range of cases, including non-war scenarios.

After their annual meeting in November, the defense chiefs of the United States and South Korea issued a joint statement reaffirming the U.S. Commitment to providing extended deterrence to South Korea and deploying U.S. Strategic assets in a timely and coordinated manner as necessary and identify new steps to reinforce deterrence against North Korean threats. The statement also carried their agreement to bolster the alliance's information-sharing, joint planning and execution.

UK trains disrupted again

As workers stage fresh strikes

AP ■ LONDON

Commuters returning to work on Tuesday after the Christmas break were advised not to travel as tens of thousands of British rail workers stage a fresh round of strikes that will disrupt services all week.

Around half of the UK's railway lines are closed, and only one-fifth of services are running amid a long-running dispute over pay and working conditions.

Members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport union were striking Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, while drivers in the Aslef union will strike Thursday. Many places, including most of



Scotland and Wales, have no train services.

Transport Secretary Mark Harper urged union leaders to come to the negotiating table and said the government has offered a "very fair pay offer". But union boss Mick Lynch said officials have not put forward any fresh proposals and suggested the government was blocking an agreement.

"What we keep hearing is the same stuff from the gov-

ernment across the sectors that they want to facilitate an agreement, but they don't actually do anything," Lynch told Sky News from a picket line at London's Euston train station.

Train companies and the government argue they need to change the way the rail network operates to control costs after the coronavirus pandemic reduced passenger traffic and changed commuting patterns.

Rail workers, like others who work in the public sector, say wages have failed to keep pace with the skyrocketing cost of living. Inflation in the UK has soared to a 41-year high of 11.1%, driven by sharply rising energy and food costs.

Nurses, airport baggage handlers, ambulance and bus drivers and postal workers were among those who walked off their jobs in December to demand higher pay.

Israeli ultranationalist Minister visits Jerusalem holy site

AP ■ JERUSALEM

An ultranationalist Israeli Cabinet minister visited Tuesday a flashpoint Jerusalem holy site for the first time since taking office in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's new far-right government last week.

The visit is seen by Palestinians as a provocation. Earlier in the day, Palestinian officials said a 15-year-old boy was killed by Israeli army fire near the occupied West Bank city of Bethlehem.

The Israeli military said its forces had shot a person involved in violent confrontations with soldiers. In Jerusalem, Itamar Ben-Gvir entered the site known to Jews as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary flanked by a large contingent of police officers.

Ben-Gvir has long called for greater Jewish access to the



holy site, which is viewed by Palestinians as provocative and as a potential precursor to Israel taking complete control over the compound.

Most rabbis forbid Jews from praying on the site, but there has been a growing movement in recent years of Jews who support worship there.

The site has been the scene of frequent clashes between Palestinian protesters and Israeli security forces, most recently in April last year.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which acts as custodian of the contested shrine, condemned Ben-Gvir's visit "in the strongest terms."

Ben-Gvir's stated intention of visiting the site earlier this week drew threats from the Islamic militant group Hamas.

Ben-Gvir wrote on Twitter after his visit that the site "is open to all and if Hamas thinks that if it threatens me it will deter me, they should understand that times have changed."

Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem said that Ben-Gvir entering the site on Tuesday was "a continuation of the Zionist's occupation aggression on our sacred places and war on our Arab identity." "Our Palestinian people will continue defending their holy places and Al-Aqsa mosque," he said.

Ofir Gendelman, who has long served as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Arabic-language spokesman, released a video showing that the "situation is completely calm" at the holy site following Ben-Gvir's departure.

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY e-TENDER CALL NOTICE

Name of the work: "Restoration work to the damaged portion of North and South Breakwater".

EMD cost: Rs.9,46,261/-. Last Date and time of submission of Bid: 17.01.2023 up to 17:15 Hrs. For details please refer our Website: eprocure.gov.in/ eprocure/app.

Executive Engineer, Harbour Works Division No. I, Paradip Port Authority.

PPA/PR/217/2022-23, D1.02.01.2023

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the following blank cheque no 675604, 675605, 675606, 675607, 675608, 675609, 675610, 675614, 675615, 675616 of Punjab National Bank account no 4960002100000208 in the name of PATANJALI AYURVED LIMITED, are missing from the custody accounts & finance department of the company. The police complaint has already been submitted for the same. If any person misuses the bank cheques that will be considered as invalid and ineffective.

If any person/s who finds it, is requested to return the same to us at the below mention address.

PATANJALI AYURVED LTMIED
Vill. Padartha, Laksar Road, Haridwar-249408, Uttarakhand.

UJVN Limited
H.O. : "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006
Telephone: 0135-2763808, Fax No.: 0135-2763508
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: www.ujvn.com

Tender Notice Dt. 03.01.2023

Office of the Executive Engineer (Civil-SHP), Munsyari, invites sealed tenders from interested parties. Brief summary of tender is given below: Tender No. 01/EE/Civil-SHP/Munsyari/2022-23

Name of work: Repair and strengthening of headworks of 2X2.5MW Suringad-II SHP

Estimated cost : Rs. 17,42,000.00 + G.S.T. extra.

Date of availability of bid document on website : 04/01/2023

Last date for submission of tender : 28/01/2023 upto 15:00 hrs.

For fuller & further details, kindly visit our website. The tender documents can be downloaded from the Nigam's website www.ujvn.com.

Executive Engineer (Civil-SHP), Munsyari

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

EASTERN COALFIELDS LIMITED
(A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)

"All the tenders issued by CIL and its subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works & Services are available on i) Website of Coal India Limited: www.coalindia.in, ii) Website of ECL: www.easterncoal.nic.in, iii) CIL e-Procurement Portal: <https://coalindia.tenders.nic.in>, iv) Central Public Procurement Portal: <https://eprocure.gov.in>. In addition, procurement is also done through GeM Portal: <https://gem.gov.in>".

(By Order) ECL

ECL's Website : www.easterncoal.gov.in

Rupee tumbles 22 paise to all-time low of 83 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee pared initial gains and slumped 22 paise to close at its all-time low of 83 against the US dollar on Tuesday, pressured by a strong greenback overseas and sustained foreign fund outflows.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened on a positive note at 82.69 against the greenback, but pared the gains and fell to an intra-day low of 83.00.

The domestic currency finally settled at 83.00, down 22 paise over its previous close of 82.78. The domestic currency had last closed at the 83-mark on October 19, 2021.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 1 per cent higher at 104.55.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures inched up 0.02 per cent to USD 85.93 per barrel.

According to Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities, the Indian rupee continued its downward drift as importers rushed for dollar buying, while the inflows remained muted as traders awaited Wednesday's Federal Open



Market Committee (FOMC) meeting minutes.

Spot USD-INR has been consolidating in the narrow range of 82.40 to 82.95.

"Looking at the greenback price action against the major currencies, the chance of an upward breakout is higher in the pair. Once the breakout confirms above 83, the short-covering rally will be imminent and levels of 83.50 and 83.70 can be seen in a short span of time," Parmar added.

The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 126.41 points or 0.21 per cent higher at 61,294.20, while the broader NSE Nifty climbed 35.10 points or 0.19 per cent to 18,232.55.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) remained net sellers in the capital markets on Tuesday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 628.07 crore, according to exchange data.

Anindya Banerjee, VP - Currency Derivatives & Interest Rate Derivatives at Kotak Securities Ltd, said, "Market will be nervous going into Fed minutes tomorrow night. We expect USD-INR to trade within a range of 82.70 and 83.25."

Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst at LKP Securities, said the rupee has been trading between 82.50-83.00 since mid-December 2022 and looks set for another round of weakness if it breaches 83.00.

Govt exempts PSUs from minimum public float rules



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government has exempted public sector entities from the Minimum Public Shareholding (MPS) norm which mandates at least 25 per cent public float for all listed companies. The exemption would apply on these entities regardless of the government's direct or indirect holding.

The exemption from MPS norm will be valid for a "specified period" even if there is a change in ownership or control after the exemption is granted, a Gazette notification said.

The notification exempts "any listed entity in which the Central Government or State Government or public sector company, either individually or in any combination with other, hold directly or indirectly, majority of the shares or voting rights or control of such listed entity, from any or all of the provisions of this rule (MPS norms)." The Securities Contracts (Regulation) Amendment Rules, 2022 was notified by the government on January 2.

Following the notification, IDBI Bank will be exempt from MPS even after partial stake sale by LIC and the government.

Last month, the government extended the deadline to submit preliminary bids for the lender till January 7.

The government and LIC together are looking to sell 60.72 per cent of IDBI Bank and had invited bids from potential buyers in October. The last date for submitting expression of interest (Eoi) or preliminary bids was December 16. The government and Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) hold 94.71 per cent stake in IDBI Bank.

The successful bidder will have to make an open offer for acquisition of 5.28 per cent stake from public shareholders.



5G rollout to drive telecom hiring in 2023, says staffing company NLB Services

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The 5G rollout is expected to drive hiring in the telecom sector in 2023, as the expansion of the high-speed service unleashes a "compounding impact" on recruitment for both non-niche skills and technical skills, according to NLB Services.

As compared to 2021, demand for specialised telecom technology talent grew by almost 20 per cent in 2022, the international staffing and recruiting company said in a statement.

Going forward, the hiring demand is not going to be restricted to the telecom sector alone, it estimated.

NLB Services predicted that sectors such as healthcare, retail, manufacturing, and automotive are also expected to recruit tech talent to scale up their service capabilities around 5G.

Data scientists, and cybersecurity professionals are some of the key profiles in non-telecom sectors.

"In the last year, there has been a 15-20 per cent rise in demand for technology talent in the telecom and allied sectors, and the trend is expected to create a new record 25-30 per cent in the coming year," NLB Services said.

Cybersecurity, cloud computing, data science, and data analytics are some of the most

sought-after job roles currently commanding almost 10-12 per cent better pay packages, it said.

It termed 2022 a "momentous year" for the Indian telecom industry as the idea of 5G became a reality bringing "green shoots in the job market as well".

"Leading telecom players have already rolled out 5G services in over 50 towns across India and are expected to cover most parts of the country in the next two years. This clearly indicates a compounding impact on hiring as well both for non-niche skills and technical skills," it pointed out.

Founded in 2007, NLB Services is a transformational workforce solution provider.



Gold jumps ₹506; silver zooms ₹1,374

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price in the national capital jumped Rs 506 to Rs 55,940 per 10 grams on Tuesday amid a rally in prices of the precious metal internationally, according to HDFC Securities.

The yellow metal had touched Rs 55,434 per 10 grams in the previous trade.

Silver also zoomed to Rs 1,374 to Rs 71,224 per kilogram. "Comex spot gold price have resumed trading on a positive note in early Asian hours on Tuesday. Safe haven demand pushed yellow metal's price higher," said an analyst at HDFC Securities.

In the overseas market, gold was trading in green at USD 1,843 per ounce while silver was up at USD 24.37 per ounce.

"Gold prices inched higher hitting a six-month high as market's attention turn to minutes from the US Federal Reserve's latest policy meeting, due this week. Minutes from the Fed's December policy meeting are due on Wednesday, which could offer hints on the central bank's tightening path," Navneet Damani, Senior VP - Commodity Research at Motilal Oswal Financial Services, said.

Markets extend gains in see-saw trade; bank, IT stocks sparkle

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Market benchmarks overcame bouts of volatility to close in the green for the second straight session on Tuesday, propped up by robust demand for banking, IT and pharma stocks amid a supportive trend overseas.

However, a depreciating rupee and sustained foreign fund outflows capped the gains, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex rose 126.41 points or 0.21 per cent to settle at 61,294.20. During the day, it hit a high of 61,343.96 and a low of 61,004.04.

The broader NSE Nifty gained 35.10 points or 0.19 per cent to end at 18,232.55.

Axis Bank led the Sensex gainers' chart, spurring 2.25 per cent, followed by Titan, TCS, Tech Mahindra, Sun Pharma, IndusInd Bank, Wipro and Nestle India.

In contrast, Mahindra & Mahindra, Reliance Industries, Hindustan Unilever, Tata Steel, Asian Paints, ITC and NTPC were among the main laggards, shedding up to 1.13 per cent.

"In the absence of major economic triggers, the domestic market shifted its focus towards the Q3 earnings season, which is set to kick off this week. Banks' initial quarterly business results revealed solid business traction supported by robust loan growth.

"IT and banks will take centre stage in the coming days as the trend in the market will be determined by the early signals from sector majors," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.22 per cent and smallcap index advanced 0.18 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, consumer durables jumped 1.56 per cent, healthcare 0.67 per cent, IT (0.65 per cent), financial services (0.64 per cent), bankex (0.58 per cent) and teck (0.53 per cent).

Commodities, FMCG, auto and metal chalked up losses.

"Markets were slightly volatile and moved in a range with a positive bias as investors resorted to select buying due to absence of cues from the US markets, which were shut on Monday. Surprisingly, European indices and other select Asian peers notched up significant gains and it failed to enthuse local traders in a big way.

"However, the trend may reverse soon as key catalyst like reports of US minutes of the meeting will be released this week," said Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd.

Elsewhere in Asia, equity markets in Shanghai and Hong Kong logged gains, while Seoul ended lower.

Equity exchanges in Europe were trading in the green in mid-session deals. Markets in the US were closed on Monday.

International oil benchmark Brent crude inched up 0.34 per cent to USD 86.20 per barrel.

The rupee pared initial gains and settled 82 paise lower at 82.86 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, weighed by a strong greenback overseas and sustained foreign fund outflows.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded shares worth a net Rs 628.07 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.



SMEV seeks extension of subsidies for electric vehicles under FAME-II in Budget

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Society of Manufacturers of Electric Vehicles on Tuesday sought extension of subsidies for EVs under the FAME II scheme and also include light to heavy commercial vehicles in it to promote electric mobility.

In its pre-Budget recommendations, the industry body also called for a uniform 5 per cent GST on spare parts for electric vehicles.

"The validity of FAME II is set to expire on March 31, 2024. We believe FAME's validity needs to be extended since we have yet to meet the penetration the subsidy was supposed to

catalyse," Society of Manufacturers of Electric Vehicles (SMEV) said in a statement.

The new FAME II scheme should be linked to e-mobility conversion rather than being time-based, it added.

The EV industry body said market trends suggest that e-mobility, particularly electric two-wheelers (E2W) has the potential to continue growing once it reaches 20 per cent of the total two-wheeler market.

"The subsidy can be tapered thereafter," it said, adding the FAME II scheme should have provisions to directly transfer the subsidy to customers.

SMEV also suggested inclu-



sion of light commercial vehicles (LCV) and medium and heavy commercial vehicles (M&HCV) on a project-mode basis as India must prepare for the transition to e-mobility in trucks and heavy commercial vehicles in three to four years.

For this, it said, "Increase the scope of FAME to include com-

mercial vehicles on a project mode basis. Today, trucks account for over 40 per cent of India's fuel consumption and over 40 per cent of the greenhouse gas emissions across the road transport sector."

Further, SMEV also sought expansion of the FAME II subsidy to electric tractors. On taxation, SMEV said while 5 per cent GST is levied on electric vehicles, for spare parts, there is no clarity and the industry ends up paying 28 per cent, except for batteries.

"The request, therefore, is for levying a uniform 5 per cent GST for all EV spare parts," it said.

ONGC, Indian Oil, Power Grid top profit making PSUs in FY22

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The net profit of operating public sector enterprises jumped 50.87 per cent to Rs 2.49 lakh crore during 2021-22, with ONGC, Indian Oil Corp, Power Grid, NTPC and SAIL emerging as the top five performers, according to a government survey.

The net profit of operating central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) stood at Rs 1.65 lakh crore in the previous fiscal.

The Public Enterprises Survey 2021-22 also revealed that the net loss of loss-making CPSEs narrowed to Rs 0.15 lakh crore in FY 2021-22 from Rs 0.23 lakh crore in FY 2020-21, showing a decrease of 37.82 per cent.

Major loss-making CPSEs include Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL), Mahanagar Telecom Nigam Ltd (MTNL), Air India Assets Holding Ltd, Eastern Coalfields Ltd and Alliance Air Aviation Ltd.

"Total gross revenue from the operations of operating CPSEs during FY 2021-22 was Rs 31.95 lakh crore as against Rs



24.08 lakh crore in FY 2020-21, showing an increase of 32.65 per cent," it said.

Dividend declared by operating CPSEs in FY 2021-22 stood at Rs 1.15 lakh crore, as against Rs 0.73 lakh crore in FY21, up 57.58 per cent.

The survey attributed the revenue rise in FY 2021-22 to better performance by the petroleum (refinery and marketing), crude oil and transport, and logistics segments.

Among the sectors, manufacturing, processing and generation sector continues to command the highest share, followed by services, and mining and exploration.

Three cognate groups -- petroleum (refinery and marketing), trading and marketing,

and power generation -- together contributed 69.08 per cent to the gross revenues in FY 2021-22.

The net profit of profit-making CPSEs stood at Rs 2.64 lakh crore in FY 2021-22 against Rs 1.89 lakh crore in the previous fiscal, up 39.85 per cent. The top five CPSEs with the highest net profits were ONGC, Indian Oil Corporation, Power Grid Corporation of India, NTPC and Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL), the survey said.

The contribution of all CPSEs to the central exchequer by way of excise duty, custom duty, GST, corporate tax, interest on central government loans, dividend, and other duties and taxes stood at Rs 5.07 lakh crore in FY 2021-22, as against Rs 4.97 lakh crore in FY 2020-21, showing an increase of 2.14 per cent.

The top five CPSEs contributing to the central exchequer were Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd, Bharat Oman Refineries Ltd and Chennai Petroleum Corporation Ltd.

Icra revises upwards road logistics sector growth forecast to 11-13% this fiscal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rating agency Icra on Tuesday revised its growth estimates for the Indian road logistics sector to 11-13 per cent for the current fiscal against the previous estimate of 7-9 per cent.

The rating agency said the growth is supported by a strong demand environment, coupled with the continuation of firm freight rates, also supported by the base effect to an extent, given that FY22 had a weak first quarter due to the second wave of COVID-19.

Icra further said it expects revenue growth of the Indian road logistics sector at a higher single digit for F24 over FY23 on an elevated base and continuation of a healthy demand scenario.

The debt coverage metrics of the logistic sector are expected to marginally moderate in FY23 and FY24 compared to the FY22 levels, owing to expected debt-funded capital expenditure for vehicle replacement required prior to the introduc-



tion of the scrappage policy, along with the rising interest rate regime, it added.

Further, Icra said multi-modal offerings are likely to gain from increased acceptance and traction going forward, as players offering multi-modal services have more flexibility.

In addition to these, timely and effective implementation of the National Logistics Policy and other such initiatives would be key to providing the requisite impetus to the sector, the agency said.

BharatPe CEO Suhail Sameer quits

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

BharatPe's chief executive Suhail Sameer, who had a fall out with ousted co-founder Ashneer Grover, has stepped down, sending the company scouting for succession planning.

In a statement, BharatPe said, "Sameer will transition from chief executive officer to strategic advisor effective January 7, 2023."

It did not mention the reason behind Sameer's resignation. "This (new role for Sameer) will ensure a smooth transition for current CFO, Nalin Negi, who has been appointed interim CEO to partner with senior executives to bolster execution in all phases of the company's business," it said.

BharatPe said its Board of Directors has retained a leading executive search firm to assist with succession planning and the critical CEO search.

Sameer had been overseeing the fintech company after it ousted Grover over alleged financial misappropriation.

Leasing of industrial, warehousing space up 6% at 46.3 mn sq ft in 2022 across tier I-III cities

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Industrial and warehousing space leasing rose 6 per cent to 46.3 million square feet last year across major cities of India, according to Savills India.

In its latest report, property consultant Savills India said that the leasing of industrial and warehousing space rose 3 per cent in 2022 across eight major tier-I cities to 36.2 million square feet from 35.1 million square feet.

The absorption of space in tier II-III cities increased to 10.1 million square feet in 2022 from 8.6 million square feet in the previous year.

The Tier II and III cities include Coimbatore, Guwahati, Indore, Nagpur, Lucknow, Jaipur, Rajpura, Bhubaneswar, Kochi/Ernakulam, Patna, Hosur, Madurai, Varanasi, Hubli and Ludhiana.

Among the major cities in India, Delhi-NCR saw the highest absorption in 2022 at 16 per cent, followed by Mumbai at 14 per cent.

Pune and Bengaluru saw absorptions at 13 per cent and



12 per cent, respectively, while tier II and III cities accounted for 22 per cent.

Third-party logistics (3PL) and e-commerce sectors continued to drive warehousing demand, together accounting for 52 per cent of the total absorption witnessed in 2022.

The manufacturing sector contributed 16 per cent in demand while the retail sector 13 per cent.

The consultant highlighted that Grade A space accounted for 42 per cent of the total absorption.

"The rapidly expanding and highly competitive e-commerce market has fuelled the growth of industrial, logistics and warehousing over the last two years," said Srinivas N, Managing Director, Industrial and Logistics, Savills India.

DJOKOVIC START 2023 WITH WIN



AP ■ ADELAIDE

Novak Djokovic maintained his winning streak in singles matches in Australia, beating Constant Lestienne of France 6-3, 6-2 on Tuesday in the first round of the Adelaide International.

It was the top-seeded Djokovic's 30th straight singles victory on Australian soil in a streak that goes back to 2018. It was Djokovic's first singles match of the season after losing in doubles the previous day, and the win keeps him on course for a possible semifinal matchup in Adelaide against seventh-ranked Daniil Medvedev, who earlier beat Lorenzo Sonego of Italy 7-6 (6), 2-1 when Sonego was forced to retire with a right arm injury.

Djokovic, whose last loss in Australia was in the fourth round of the 2018 Australian Open, will face either Jordan Thompson of Australia or Quentin Halys of France for a place in the quarterfinals. He was again warmly received by the crowd in Adelaide, where he won this tournament at the age of 19.

Djokovic is playing in Australia for the first time since 2021, having missed last year's Australian Open when he was deported because his unvaccinated status breached the country's vaccination requirement for in-bound travelers. His ranking has dropped to No. 5 after also being forced to miss other tournaments, including the US Open, last year.

"What you focus on, you become. If I focus on the negatives, that's what I'll attract, so I don't want to do that. I don't hold a grudge," Djokovic said when asked about his return to Australia.

"I am here to play tennis, to enjoy sports and spread good energy. To see the packed house for my first match was definitely a very pleasant surprise, and lots of support, lots of love."

Djokovic's arrival in Australia was much smoother this time around compared with last year.

"Well, I kind of was joking around with my team hoping that I can enter Australia this time, and that's what happened," he said.

"It was really, I would say, normal.

As with any other year coming into Australia except the last year, easy through the passport control, landed well." Earlier, Medvedev saved nine set points before taking the first set in a tiebreaker against the 45th-ranked Sonego.

"I didn't know it was nine (set points)," Medvedev said.

"That's actually crazy. Probably, maybe the first time in my life I've saved nine set points.

"What a match to start the year," he added.

Sonego was playing Medvedev for the first time and often seemed to have the upper hand in the first set. He had six set points on Medvedev's serve at 5-4 but Medvedev was able to rely on his big serve when he had to, saving all six.

Two games later, Sonego had three more set points at 0-40 on Medvedev's but Medvedev rallied again, eventually taking the set after 80 minutes.

"To be honest 0-40 was a tough moment," he said. "I didn't count but I knew I saved a lot of set points.

India's singles challenge ends at Tata Maharashtra Open



PTI ■ PUNE

Ramkumar Ramanathan Rsquandered his chances in the deciding set while Sasikumar Mukund went down fighting in his match as India's singles challenge ended in the first round at the Tata Open Maharashtra here on Tuesday.

Coming into the main draw from the qualifying route, Ramkumar lost 3-6, 7-5, 6-3 to Spanish world number 62 Pedro Martinez in two hours and 28 minutes.

Mukund, who got a wild card entry as the country's best-ranked player at number 340, matched Flavio Cobolli stroke for stroke from the baseline but his Italian opponent got the

points when it mattered and won 6-4, 7-5 in one hour and 38 minutes at the centre court.

Teenager Manas Dhamne and Sumit Nagal, who had also got wild card entries, had lost their first round matches on Monday.

Tata Open is India's biggest ATP event but the players have not been able to cash in on the chances that are coming their way.

In the other matches of the day, Dutch player Tim van Rijthoven knocked out Moldova's Radu Albot 6-4, 6-4 while the eighth seed Russian Aslan Karatsev made short work of Pablo Andujar 6-1, 6-3.

In an all-Indian affair, the pair of Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan and Sriram Balaji, who came in as an alternate team, beat wild card entrants Purav Raja and Divij Sharan 6-4, 6-3.

Ramkumar's serve and volley game worked wonders in the opening set but he allowed his rival to make a comeback.

Martinez moved Ramkumar around with deep returns and often landed shots near the Indian's feet, making it tough for him to pick up half volleys.

His passing shots were a delight to watch, and they made a lot of difference to the outcome of the match.

Egged on by the crowd, Ramkumar fought his heart out when Martinez was serving for the match but hit a forehand long at 30-all.

Ramkumar saved a match point when his rival netted a forehand. Martinez eventually closed the match with a deft volley winner.

Liverpool stunned by Brentford

AP ■ LONDON

Liverpool crashed to a shock 1-3 defeat against Brentford as a series of defensive blunders damaged their bid for a top four finish in the Premier League on Monday.

Jurgen Klopp's side endured a nightmare start to 2023 and they had only themselves to blame for the horror show in west London.

Ibrahima Konate's first half own goal set the tone for an evening scarred by mistakes at the back from Liverpool.

Yoane Wissa doubled Brentford's lead and although Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain got one back, Bryan Mbeumo wrapped up Brentford's first victory against Liverpool since 1938.

In his first appearance since playing in France's World Cup final defeat against Argentina in December, Konate took a large share of the blame for Liverpool's woeful defensive performance.

But the centre-back was far from alone in deserving criticism for a Liverpool display that left them in sixth place, four points behind fourth placed Manchester United who play their game in hand against Bournemouth on Tuesday.

Although seventh placed Brentford are on a six-game unbeaten run in the league, including an impressive win at champions Manchester City just before the World Cup, it was still surprising to see Liverpool torn apart so easily.

Darwin Nunez, signed from Benfica for £64 million (\$77 million) last year, was another poster-boy for Liverpool's struggles.

The 23-year-old had 13 shots without scoring in his pre-



vious two league games and was out of luck again in the early stages at the Brentford Community Stadium.

Mohamed Salah's superb pass unhinged the Brentford defence and Nunez looked certain to end his barren run when he rounded David Raya.

But Ben Mee scampered back to clear his shot off the line as Nunez held his head in disbelief.

Mbeumo went close with a blistering strike that Alisson Becker turned away for a corner.

It was only a temporary reprieve for Liverpool as Thomas Frank's team went in front from the resulting set-piece in the 19th minute.

Mee tried to flick on but it was Konate who got the final touch as the ball ricocheted off his knee and squirmed past the wrong-footed Alisson.

Liverpool were fortunate to

avoid more set-piece misery when Wissa struck from close-range after the Reds made a hash of clearing a corner, only for an offside call to deny Brentford.

Klopp's side failed to heed the warning and Wissa was left unmarked to drill home from yet another dangerous corner before an offside flag against Mee once again spared Liverpool's blushes.

In disarray at the back, Liverpool were unable to deal with Brentford's aerial threat and Wissa finally got on the score-sheet in the 42nd minute.

Mathias Jensen's cross picked out Wissa and the Congo forward got in front of Trent Alexander-Arnold for a header that just crossed the line before Alisson could claw it out.

Klopp was fuming on the touchline as he raged at his shell-shocked players.

The German responded by

MAC ALLISTER HAPPY AT BRIGHTON

AP ■ BRIGHTON

Alexis Mac Allister insists he is happy to stay at Brighton after helping Argentina win the World Cup.

Mac Allister has returned to his Premier League club after two weeks in Argentina celebrating their dramatic World Cup final penalty shoot-out victory over France in Qatar.

The 24-year-old impressed throughout the World Cup as he became Brighton's first ever winner of the tournament.

With the transfer window now open, speculation about Mac Allister's future is increasing amid links to Arsenal and Chelsea. But Mac Allister only

sending on Joel Matip, Andrew Robertson and Naby Keita at half-time, with Virgil van Dijk replaced after suffering a leg injury. Klopp's changes briefly sparked Liverpool and Nunez had an effort ruled out for off-side before they reduced the deficit in the 50th minute.

After being tormented by crosses in the first half, Liverpool took to the air as Alexander-Arnold's pin-point delivery was headed home by Oxlade-Chamberlain.

Rather than spur Liverpool onto a grandstand finish, that goal was as good as it got for the Reds, who lost their way as the half wore on.

Fittingly, Brentford's knock-out blow was a self-inflicted wound by Liverpool as Konate fell over while failing to deal with a long ball to Mbeumo, who ran clear to slot past Alisson.

signed a new Brighton contract in October committing his future until 2025, and is content on the south coast.

"I try not to read too much. I always say I am happy here, I don't have any rush to leave," Mac Allister told AlbionTV.

"I feel really good, I'm really grateful with this club, my team-mates and all the people who work here. I'm just focused on the next game and this club.

"It was a good World Cup for this club and for the players who went to the World Cup. We know we've got a good team with really good players. This is a tough league, it will be hard, but we will try to finish as high as we can."

Marseille, Rennes post wins to maintain CL chase

AP ■ PARIS

Marseille and Rennes kept up their chase for Champions League football on Monday with both coming through after hard-fought 2-1 wins over Montpellier and Nice respectively.

Marseille won at Montpellier to notch up a fourth successive victory that keeps them third in Ligue 1 with Rennes two-points behind in fourth after a success at home against Nice.

Second half goals from Nuno Tavares and Maxime Esteve's own goal gave Marseille a 2-0 cushion but they had to hold firm in a fiery finish which saw on-loan Arsenal left-back Tavares sent off four minutes from time before Teji Savanier pulled one back from the penalty spot.

The win, which follows a 6-1 thrashing of Toulouse last week, takes Marseille three points clear of fifth-placed Monaco and leaves them four points behind second-placed Lens who beat Paris Saint-Germain on Sunday.

"We suffered a little, but it's a good victory," said Marseille coach Igor Tudor. "At the start, we lacked a bit of speed or something. The break allowed us to acquire a bit of freshness."

Goalless at half-time, the match sprang into life early in the second half when Tavares claimed his fifth goal of the season, following up quickly to bury the chance after Jonas Omelin had pushed away Jordan Veretout's header.

Just after the hour they were two up, central defender Esteve under pressure at the back post at a corner putting through his own goal.



The exit of Tavares and Savanier's penalty made for a torrid ending but Marseille clung on to take the points.

Benjamin Bourigeaud's 89th-minute winner gave Rennes the three points at home but the Brittany side lost striker Martin Terrier to injury.

Terrier had opened from close range after just five minutes but was stretched off in agony after half an hour with a right knee injury. Coach Bruno Genesio admitted the prognosis was "so far not very reassuring" for the 25-year-old.

Ross Barkley pulled a goal back after 20 minutes to set up

a tense finale before Bourigeaud struck following good work from Flavien Tait to leave Nice goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel on the wrong foot.

Lille missed the opportunity to go sixth when they were held to a 1-1 draw at home to Reims.

Jonathan David put the home side ahead just after the half hour when he was first to pounce on a loose ball after Yehvann Diouf had parried away a shot by Jonathan Bamba.

Reims, though, snatched a point 11 minutes from time when Thibault De Smet teed up Jens-Lys Cajuste for the leveller.

Manika Batra reaches career high 35 in world rankings

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian table tennis star Manika Batra on Tuesday gained three places to reach a career-high 35 in the ITTF world rankings.

The 27-year-old had produced a special performance to win India's first ever medal at the Asian Cup in November. She had stunned world number five Hina Hayata of Japan and world number seven Chen Xingtong of China on way to securing a historic bronze in Bangkok.

That effort fetched her 175 points in the rankings, contributing to her rise. She had also reached the semifinals of two WTT Contender events in Hungary and Slovenia.



"The Asian Cup performance was surely among my best alongside the run at the 2018 Commonwealth Games. I enjoyed my game and was very confident," Manika said.

The Asian Cup medal came after she returned home empty handed from the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. Four years earlier in Gold Coast, she had pocketed four medals, including two gold in an unprecedented run.

She will be in action later this week at the Asian qualification event in Doha for the World Championships. She will also be in Doha for the WTT Contender later this month before featuring in the WTT Star Contender in Goa next month.

In the men's rankings, G Sathiyan remained in 39th position while veteran Sharath Kamal slipped three spots to be 47th.

Unadkat takes first-over Ranji hat-trick vs Delhi

PTI ■ RAJKOT

Jaydev Unadkat, fresh from his fine bowling performance in the second Test against Bangladesh at Mirpur, returned to the Ranji grind and made a smashing impact, grabbing a hat-trick in the first over to leave Group B rivals Delhi in a disarray on Tuesday.

Delhi, who lost 7 wickets for just 10 runs, didn't face ignominy of lowest first-class score of 6 by a team called 'The B's' against England in an official match held in 1810.

Courtesy young Hrithik Shokeen (68), they finally managed 133 before Saurashtra scored 184 for 1 in just 46 overs as the visitors decided to play with two specialist bowlers.

Unadkat took wickets off the third, fourth and fifth deliveries to

achieve the distinction of becoming the only player to take a first-over hat-trick in Ranji Trophy's 88-year-old history.

The previous quickest Ranji hat-trick, a split one, is in the name of Karnataka's Vinay Kumar who achieved the feat over two overs - first and third.

Unadkat's hat-trick victims included opener Dhruv Shorey, Vaibhav Rawal and young Delhi captain Yash Dhill, all of whom departed for duck.

Sources close to the Delhi team management in fact were wondering as to why on a pitch that had moisture, a rookie like Ayush Badoni was sent to open on his debut.

Badoni, Rawal and even Dhill don't have the wherewithal to face Unadkat on a lightly damp wicket and they had no clue which one



was leaving them, which one came back in and the trademark one which skids straight after pitching.

And by the time he was done with his second over, the 31-year-old Unadkat had added two more scalps to accomplish his 21st five-wicket haul in first-class cricket.

Unadkat's continued to wreak havoc, finishing with career-best figures of 8/39 in his 12 overs on Tuesday.

Delhi, missing quite a few regular bowlers in their playing XI due to injuries, found themselves staring at an uphill task after being bundled out for 133. Their toothless attack was laid bare by Saurashtra opener Harvik Desai, whose unbeaten 104 off just 124 deliveries had guided the hosts to 184 for 1 — a 51-run lead — at stumps.

India start 2023 with win

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Shivam Mavi made a dream debut with a relentless display of fast-bowling as his four-wicket haul made the difference in India's narrow two-run win over a spirited Sri Lanka in the first T20I here on Tuesday.

India batters found the Sri Lankan spinners hard to put away before Deepak Hooda (41 not out off 23) and Axar Patel (31 not out off 20) took the hosts to 162 for five.

The Sri Lankans surely had the firepower to chase down 163 but Mavi's strikes at front and back end of the innings tilted the game in favour of the home team. The game went down to the wire with spinner Axar Patel managing to defend 13 runs in the final over. Mavi ended with envious figures of four for 22 in four overs.

The fighting knocks from skipper Dasun Shanaka (45 off 27) and Chamika Karunaratne (23 not out off 16) went in vain as Sri Lanka ended 160 all out in 20 overs.

This is the lowest total India defend at this stadium.

Skipper Hardik Pandya decided to bowl the first over and the pressure created by him helped debutant Mavi at the other end. Hardik bowled full tilt and hardly gave anything away, conceding only 12 runs in his three-over spell.

Mavi's moment to cherish came in his first over as he showed remarkable composure to strike back after being hit for two fours by Kusal Mendis. Having already got a life in Hardik's first over, Pathum Nissanka had no clue about Mavi's beauty of a delivery that



jagged back in to shatter the stumps.

In his second over too, Mavi got hit for a couple of fours before he had Dhanajaya de Silva caught at mid-on.

It became 47 for three in eighth over when Ishan Kishan took a brilliant catch running backwards after Charith Asalanka mistimed a pull off Umran Malik.

Pacer Harshal Patel got lucky with his first wicket as a

dangerous looking Mendis found the deep point fielder before getting rid of Bhanuka Rajapaksa with a slower ball, leaving Sri Lanka struggling at 68 for five in the 11th over. Hardik had to leave the field briefly after taking Rajapaksa's catch.

Hasaranga and skipper Shanaka made the game interesting with a quickfire 40-run stand off 23 balls. Hasaranga put the pressure back on the Indians

by smashing Yuzvendra Chahal for back-to-back sixes over mid-wicket, reducing the equation to a very gettable 56 runs off 36 balls.

Mavi was brought back to break the threatening partnership and that is what he did by having Hasaranga caught at mid-off. Shanaka kept Sri Lanka in the game singlehandedly before falling to Umran in the 17th over.

The game somehow went

down to the last over with Chamika Karunaratne providing a ray of hope for the visitors. With Hardik unable to bowl his fourth over after a fall on the field, Axar was called in to defend 13 in the final over.

Earlier, Hooda and Axar shared an unbeaten 68-run stand off 38 balls for the sixth wicket after India found themselves at a shaky 94 for five at the high-scoring Wankhede Stadium.

Ganguly set to join Delhi Capitals as Director of Cricket



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former BCCI president Sourav Ganguly will be returning to the IPL as Director of Cricket with the Delhi Capitals in the upcoming edition, sources close to the development said on Tuesday.

The former India captain, who stepped down from the BCCI president's post in October, will also oversee all the cricket verticals of the franchise along with the ILT20 team Dubai Capitals and the SA T20 league side Pretoria Capitals.

"Yes, Sourav will be back with Delhi Capitals from this year. The discussions and modalities are over. He has worked with the franchise, shares a good comfort level with owners and if he would have worked in IPL, it would have always been with DC," an IPL source tracking the developments said.

It couldn't be confirmed whether Ganguly will have any minority stake in the franchise co-owned by GMR and JSW groups. Ganguly was the mentor of Delhi Capitals during his stint with the franchise in 2019.

It is understood that Delhi Capitals' recent auction picks had both head coach Ricky Ponting and Ganguly's footprints. The IPL franchise owners, with their diversification, are now looking at global roles for all big names who are associated with the respective franchises. "If you look at Gautam Gambhir with Lucknow Super Giants and Durban Super Giants and Mahela Jayawardena with MI Emirates and MI Cape Town along with Mumbai Indians, the roles are becoming diverse as in foreign leagues, you aren't often dealing with same set of players," the IPL source added.

Ganguly and Ponting are two of the sharpest cricket brains but it will be interesting to see how the two collaborate in bringing about optimum performance from Delhi Capitals in the IPL. It will be a big challenge for both Ponting and Ganguly with regular skipper Rishabh Pant all but out of IPL after his horrifying car accident last week.

Pant the skipper is replaceable but Pant the batter-keeper remains one of the biggest game-changers despite his under-

Hopefully he'll recover soon and be back on the path: Ganguly on Pant

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Former India skipper Sourav Ganguly on Tuesday hoped Rishabh Pant would soon recover from the injuries he sustained in his car crash and "be back on the path."

The India wicketkeeper-batter met with a horrifying accident when he lost control of his car while driving on NH-58 on Friday. He is currently admitted at Max Dehradun with multiple injuries on head, back, knee and ankle.

"I wish him speedy recovery that's all I can say. You know things happen in life and you need to move on so hopefully he'll recover soon and be back on the path soon," Ganguly said.

whelming T20 performance.

In fact, Delhi Capitals had released Kona Bharat, who was picked at the last auction by Gujarat Titans.

None of the top line Indian white-ball wicket-keepers are available, with Sanju Samson (Rajasthan Royals), Ishan Kishan (MI), Wriddhiman Saha (GT), Upendra Yadav (SRH), KL Rahul (LSG) being already taken by one franchise or the other.

As of now, the only other available skipper in the squad is Englishman Phil Salt.



Winning WTC final proudest achievements for any New Zealander: Boult

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Winning the World Test Championship against India is one of the proudest achievements for any New Zealander, according to Kiwi quick Trent Boult, who feels that the exceptional feat is unlikely to be repeated again.

New Zealand had walked away with inaugural World Test Championship title, their first ever ICC title, after a composed eight-wicket win over a quality Indian side in 2021.

Boult feels for a country with a population over five million people to reach the WTC final and then beat India, which has so much talent at its disposal, "will never happen again".

"For us even to get to that stage as a Test-playing nation of however many people (five million), playing probably only eight Tests a year - if that," Boult, who is currently playing the Big Bash League, told 'The Age'.

"To get two years of results

to get into the final, and then beat India — 1.4 billion people - will never happen again.

"I think that's one of the proudest achievements any New Zealander could have, when you look at the sheer size of it," he added.

Last year, New Zealand Cricket (NZC) agreed to release Boult from his central contract as he wanted to make himself available for T20 leagues around the world.

However, Boult hopes that his recent decision will not complicate his chances of playing in the 2023 ODI World Cup in India later this year.

"I want to be there to have another crack and I hope that is still the case. It's still a wee way away."

While the 33-year-old feels the freelancing path is okay for cricketers to take later on in their career, youngsters opting to play T20 leagues instead of international cricket is a cause of concern for New Zealand.

Bumrah added to India's ODI squad for SL series

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Star pacer Jasprit Bumrah was on Tuesday added to India's ODI squad for the three games against Sri Lanka after National Cricket Academy declared him fit for home series beginning January 10.

Bumrah last played for India in September and had also missed the T20 World Cup in Australia due to a back injury.

"The All-India Senior Selection Committee has included pacer Jasprit Bumrah in India's ODI squad for the upcoming Mastercard 3-match ODI series against Sri Lanka.

"The pacer has undergone rehabilitation and has been declared fit by the National Cricket Academy (NCA). He will be joining the Team India ODI squad soon," said the BCCI in a statement.

The first ODI will be played in Guwahati on January 10, second in Kolkata on January 12 and third in Trivandrum on January 15.

With the focus on 50-over cricket in an ODI World Cup year, it is unlikely that Bumrah will feature in the shortest format till the ICC event at home in October-November.

His IPL workload too would be monitored closely by the NCA, as well as other "targeted" India players for the ODI World Cup.

One of the best in the business, Bumrah is vital to India's chances at the mega event as they look to win the coveted trophy for the second time at home after 2011.



Having made his India debut in 2016, the 29-year-old has represented the country in 30 Tests, 72 ODIs and 60 T20Is. **India's updated squad for Sri Lanka ODIs:** Rohit Sharma (c), Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Shreyas

Iyer, KL Rahul (wk), Ishan Kishan (wk), Hardik Pandya (vc), Washington Sundar, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Axar Patel, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohd. Shami, Mohd. Siraj, Umran Malik, Arshdeep Singh.

Still plenty to play for, says Elgar ahead of Sydney Test



PTI ■ SYDNEY

South Africa captain Dean Elgar says pride and the opportunity to still qualify for the ICC World Test Championship (WTC) final will be two major driving factors as they aim to bounce back from a crushing series loss in the third and last Test against Australia beginning here on Wednesday.

The clash at the SCG is a dead rubber as the hosts won the first two matches of the series in Brisbane and Melbourne.

All that the South Africans can now hope for is a consolation victory, although a win will also keep them alive in the hunt for a place in that WTC decider later this year.

Elgar and Co are presently placed fourth behind the Australians, India and Sri Lanka, with a win in Sydney for the home side guaranteeing a place in the final.

"There's plenty to play for," the Proteas skipper told the media ahead of the game.

"We're playing for pride, we're playing for a potential place to the WTC final. So we've also got a lot to play for."

"That's a massive incentive for us and for me you play every Test match like it's your last and

hopefully we can put on a better spectacle this time. We always want to play good Test cricket and be a thorn in the side of the opposition and we'll be aiming to do better again this time."

South Africa have been disappointing with the bat throughout the series, especially the top

order. Barring some exceptions like Kyle Verreynne and Temba Bavuma, Elgar believes the batters need to do far better in this game.

Theunis de Bruyn will miss the match due to paternity leave, meaning there will be at least one change to the line-up.

"You can't hide in Test cricket and the top five we obviously need to find a way to deal with and negate the demands of batting discipline in Test cricket," Elgar explained.

"I think Kyle's been brilliant for us at six and moving him around I don't think is going to help us or help him at all and I don't think it's fair."

"I think our only batting options are with those two (Rassie van der Dussen and Heinrich Klaasen) by squad composition."

SCG pitch has 'huge connection' to India: Cummins

PTI ■ SYDNEY

The Sydney pitch has a "huge connection" to the Indian conditions, said Australia skipper Pat Cummins ahead of the third Test against South Africa, hoping it will provide his side ideal preparation for their upcoming red-ball series in India.

Australia have typically struggled in subcontinent conditions and a dry, spinning surface is expected at the SCG, keeping in mind the upcoming tour of India in February.

"It's a huge connection to India," Cummins told reporters on Tuesday.

"Fast bowling and reverse

swing is going to come into it, which we can expect in India. Probably get more spin overs here, our batters are probably going to face more spin here as well, so it's a really good connection."

"Even personally, captaining here might be a little different to the last few Test matches," he added.

Australia are eyeing a WTC final in June before taking on arch-rivals England in the five-Test Ashes campaign.

"It's been a big driver for us over the last couple of years. I think playing in London (in) a final against India, say, at a neutral venue, that's really exciting."

Nervy Pakistan trails by 295 in 2nd Test against NZ

AP ■ KARACHI

Matt Henry and Ajaz Patel's last-wicket century stand helped New Zealand take control of the second Test against jittery Pakistan on Tuesday.

Henry made a career-best unbeaten 68 off 81 balls while Patel also notched his Test-best of 35 as they added 104 for the 10th wicket and propelled New Zealand to 449 on Day 2.

Both Henry and Patel then struck early blows and captain Babar Azam was run out in a bizarre mix-up with Imam-ul-Haq in the final session before Pakistan struggled to reach 154-3 at stumps.

Imam was unbeaten on 74 and Saud Shakeel, who took nearly an hour before getting his first run off his 42nd ball and also survived a dropped catch, was not out on 13.

Fast bowler Henry, playing his first Test since last June, induced a top-edge of Abdullah Shafique's (19) mistimed pull



shot and Patel got rid of Shan Masood (20) to leave Pakistan in trouble at 62-2 going into the final session.

Imam reached his fifty with a straight six over the head of offspinner Michael Bracewell in the last session, but New Zealand still managed to slow down Pakistan's progress and leads by 295 runs.

Earlier, Abrar Ahmed (4-149) struck twice and Naseem Shah (3-71) clean bowled Ish Sodhi at his overnight score of 11 to curtail New Zealand at 345-9 after it resumed on 309-6.

But Henry and Patel stretched New Zealand in a dominating aggressive century-stand against both pace and spin.

Henry and Ajaz defied Pakistan for 1.5 hours as Pakistan couldn't wrap up New Zealand's innings despite using all five of its bowling options against the last-wicket pair which took the visitors to 433-9 by lunch. Abrar finally ended Pakistan's frustration when he had Patel caught of a mistimed sweep soon after lunch.

Zampa tries his hand at 'Mankading'

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Melbourne Stars captain Adam Zampa tried to effect a 'Mankad' dismissal against Melbourne Renegades batter Tom Rogers during the Big Bash League game but found himself being 'stumped' by the TV umpire, much to the embarrassment of the spinner on Tuesday.

As Zampa completed his follow-through and was on the verge of releasing the ball to Mackenzie Harvey, he turned back and dislodged Rogers' bails and signalled to the umpire to give the marching orders to the batter.

However, unperturbed by Zampa's call, the umpire first reasoned out with the bowler, telling him that his arm had gone past the 'vertical' -- the



point where the ball is deemed to be bowled. He then checked with the TV umpire, who also came up with the same judgement, thus giving Rogers a reprieve.

While the second-last ball of the Renegades' innings created quite a buzz in the MCG crowd, it left Zampa bemused and he resignedly walked back to his bowling mark.

The MCC's Law 41.16 on 'Mankading' states that a bowler is permitted to attempt a run out

when the non-striker leaves his/her ground early.

"If the non-striker is out of his/her ground from the moment the ball comes into play to the instant when the bowler would normally have been expected to release the ball, the bowler is permitted to attempt to run him/her out."

"Whether the attempt is successful or not, the ball shall not count as one in the over. If the bowler fails in an attempt to run out the non-striker, the umpire shall call and signal a 'dead ball' as soon as possible," the rule adds.

In Zampa's case, he had completed his action without letting go of the ball. The batter had barely exited his crease but he wasn't watching Zampa's hand, and the TV umpire gave the decision in favour of the batter.