

OPINION 6

RUMBLINGS UNDER
THE JOSHIMATH HILLS

WORLD 9

US-CHINA OFFICIALS MEET ON
ECONOMY, AIM TO EASE TENSION

MONEY 10

MARKETS CLIMB FOR 2ND DAY AS HDFC
TWINNS MAINTAIN MOMENTUM

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11 SPORT

WFI prez accused of sexually exploiting women wrestlers

Olympic medallists
protest in Delhi;
Brij refutes charges,
says, 'hang me, if
allegations proved'PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

India's top wrestlers, including Olympians, on Wednesday staged an unprecedented protest at Janatar Mantar in New Delhi, accusing Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) president and BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh of sexually exploiting women wrestlers for many years and sought the intervention of the Prime Minister and the Home Minister for his removal.

The protesting wrestlers said they will not compete in any international competition until the WFI president is removed.

Those who attended the protest included: Vinesh Phogat, a world championship medallist and Olympian, Tokyo Olympics bronze medallist Bajrang Punia, Rio Olympics medallist Sakshi Malik, world championship medallist Sarita Mor, Sangeeta Phogat, Satyawart Malik, Jitender Kinha and CWG medallist Sumit Malik were among 30 wrestlers who



Wrestlers Vinesh Phogat, Sakshi Malik and Bajrang Punia, and others during a press conference regarding wrestlers' protest against the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI), in New Delhi, on Wednesday. (Top right) Vinesh Phogat cries during the press conference. (Right) In this Feb 2, 2022 file image, BJP MP and Wrestling Federation of India president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh is seen at Parliament in New Delhi



assembled at Jantar Mantar on Wednesday.

Refuting the allegation, the sitting BJP MP from Kaiserganj in Uttar Pradesh said, "There is no truth in any of the allegations."

"Why should I quit? Even if one woman wrestler comes and proves the sexual harassment charge, I am ready to be hanged. There is an industrialist behind it (conspiracy)," said the 66-year-old WFI pres-

ident.

"There can be an investigation by the CBI or police. There is no dictatorship. These same wrestlers had met me a week back and did not say anything," he added.

Going beyond the WFI president, Vinesh alleged that several coaches at the national camp in Lucknow have also exploited women wrestlers.

The 28-year-old clarified that she herself never faced

such exploitation but claimed that "one victim" was present at the "dharna" they began at Jantar Mantar on Wednesday.

Vinesh also claimed that she had received death threats at the behest of WFI president from officials close to him because she dared to draw Modi's attention to several issues plaguing Indian wrestling when she met him after the Tokyo Games.

Continued on Page 2

KCR gives fresh impetus to non-Cong Opp unity

T CM launches
self for national
role, tries to unite
regional parties
for 2024 battlePIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

After BSP chief Mayawati announced she would go solo in the next year's Lok Sabha polls, Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao on Wednesday got in high gear to bring together on one platform regional parties which may not be comfortable in joining hands with the Congress to put up a united challenge against the Modi Government at the Centre.

KCR held a massive rally at Khammam where the list of speakers itself sent a clear message of his intent to float an Opposition front minus the Congress. Rao's emphasis on the formation of a BRS-propped Government as the alternative to the Modi Government clearly indicated that the Telangana leader was working on a plan in the run up to the Lok Sabha polls.

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, AAP leader and Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Maan, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, his Kerala counterpart and CPI(M) leader Pinarayi Vijayan, and CPI's D Raja were among senior Opposition leaders who addressed the rally.

All of them kept a safe dis-



Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao with Chief Ministers Arvind Kejriwal (Delhi), Bhagwant Mann (Punjab), P Vijayan (Kerala), Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav, CPI leader D Raja and national leaders and farmers' representatives of many States ahead of a BRS (Bharat Rashttra Samithi) rally, in Khammam, on Wednesday

stance from Congress leader Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo yatra.

The AAP sees the Congress as a main obstacle in its ambition to expand its base at the national level and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav has been evasive on the issue joining hands with the Congress, and the Left and the Congress are main rivals in the Marxist stronghold of Kerala. KCR had also invited JMM leader and Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren, but he chose not to turn up.

The Opposition leaders gave a clarion call for regime change at the Centre by dislodging the BJP in 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Taunting the Central Government over a host of

issues, including those on inter-State water and development issues, Rao, in his address said Prime Minister Narendra Modi would go home and a dispensation propped up by BRS shall stop initiatives like the "LIC disinvestment" and implement welfare measures like the Rythu Bandhu for farmers across the nation.

The meeting was carefully planned to elevate KCR as national leader, beyond the south. Amid sloganeering by cadres on BRS regime's schemes on farmers' welfare, the first public meeting of the ruling BRS went lively with political songs that hailed K Chandrasekhar Rao's national emergence.

Continued on Page 2

Tripura polls on Feb 16; Meghalaya, Nagaland on Feb 27; results on Mar 2

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Wednesday fixed February 16 as the date for the Tripura Assembly polls and February 27 for the elections to the Nagaland and Meghalaya Assemblies, the first tranche of Assembly elections to be held in 2023. The counting of votes will be held on March 2.

The tenures of the three Assemblies, with 60 seats each, end on March 12, 15 and 22, respectively. These three north-eastern States will kick-start the election season in 2023 and will be followed by Assembly polls in Karnataka, Mizoram, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Telangana.

Together, they will set the tone for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections when India will vote to elect its new Government.

"All the constituencies of



Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar with Election Commissioner Anup Chandra Pandey during a press conference for the announcement of schedule of general elections to the Legislative Assemblies of Nagaland, Meghalaya and Tripura, in New Delhi on Wednesday

Tripura will vote in a single phase on February 16. Meghalaya and Nagaland will vote on February 27. The election results of these States will be declared on March 2.

Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said while addressing a Press conference.

In Tripura, the date of the issue of gazette notification is January 21 and the last date for

filing nominations is January 30. The last date for the withdrawal of candidatures is on February 2. In Meghalaya and Nagaland, the gazette notification will be issued on January 31. The date for filing nominations is February 7.

The CEC said polling dates have been fixed keeping in mind the exam season. The Commission held a series of meetings with political parties and officials from the administration from January 11 to 15. He said that women's participation in the voting process has always been high in all these three states.

Sharing details of voters, CEC said, "There are 2.28 lakh voters who have been added in the three states. 97,000 voters are above the age of 80 and 31,700 voters are with physical disabilities. Voters above the age of 100 are 2600."

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Scindia: Surya opened plane's emergency door, he has apologised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Wednesday admitted that BJP MP Tejasvi Surya accidentally opened the emergency exit of an IndiGo plane last month. The Minister said Surya himself reported and apologised for the incident.

The Minister's admission comes against the backdrop of the Congress raking up the incident and identifying Surya, the ruling BJP's Bengaluru South MP, as the culprit for the incident that happened on December 10 at Chennai airport. Tejasvi Surya was on the flight with Tamil Nadu BJP chief K Annamalai.

"When the incident hap-



pened, Tejasvi himself reported that incident, based on which the full protocol was followed as Directorate General Civil Aviation itself has investigated and enunciated.

The full protocol was followed and pressurisation was checked, all the other checks were in place and only then (did) the aircraft take off. I think he himself apologised.

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AAP MLA shows bribe money, alleges job scam in city hospital

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid ruckus on the third day of the ongoing Winter Session of the Delhi Assembly, AAP MLA from Rithala, Mohinder Goyal, created a flutter in the Delhi Assembly on Wednesday, showing wads of currency notes inside the House alleging corruption at a city Government hospital.

He claimed that a private contractor at the Dr Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital in Rohini tried to bribe him.

Terming it a serious matter, Assembly Speaker Ram Niwas Goel referred it to the petitions committee of the House.

Earlier, the AAP MLA claimed in the House that he received a bribe of ₹15 lakh for the recruitment of nursing staff

at the Government hospital.

"Money that I showed was given to me as a bribe. ₹3 lakh was given as token. I have been raising this corruption issue since January 5," Goyal said.

The AAP MLA said a tender had been floated for recruitment for many posts including nursing in Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital.

He alleged that contractors were taking money for recruitment to these posts. Waving the note bundle, the MLA said the contractors had attempted to strike a deal with him as well. Goyal said there is a clause for recruitment to various posts in the hospital that 80 per cent of the old employees have to be retained, but this does not happen.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

'Tamizhagam' used in cultural context only, explains Guv

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi on Wednesday asserted that he referred to the State as "Tamizhagam" in historical and cultural context and construing it as a suggestion to change the name of Tamil Nadu is "erroneous" and "far-fetched".

In an event at the Raj Bhavan on January 4 to felicitate the volunteers of Kashi Tamil Sangamam, while dwelling upon the historical cultural connect between the two places, Ravi said he referred to the word "Tamizhagam". "In those days, there was no 'Tamil Nadu'. Hence in historical cultural context, I referred to the word 'Tamizhagam' as a more appropriate expression," Ravi said in a press note issued by Raj Bhavan.

"An interpretation or inference that it was a suggestion to change the name of the Tamil Nadu is erroneous and far-fetched. Without understanding the basis of my speech, arguments that the Governor is against the word 'Tamil Nadu' have become a topic of discussion. Hence, I am giving this clarification to put an end to it."

The event, a month long festival celebrating the age old cultural connect of Tamil people with Kashi, concluded recently.

India ride crest of Gill's sensational double tons

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Shubman Gill settled the debate for the opener's slot with a coming of age doubled hundred before India survived Michael Bracewell's blitzkrieg to pull off a nervy 12-run win over New Zealand in the first ODI of the three-match series here on Wednesday.

Gill oozed class in his special 208 off 149 balls and batted through the innings to power India to 349 for eight. Skipper Rohit Sharma's 34 off 38 was the second best score of the innings, highlighting that it was very much a one-man show.

Chasing a big target, New Zealand were down and out at 131 for six before Michael Bracewell (140 off 78) came up with a stunning century to bring his team back in the game. He shared 162 off 102 balls with fellow left-hander Mitchell Santner (57 off 45), New Zealand's highest seventh wicket stand in ODIs, to test India's nerves.

Playing in front of his home crowd, pacer Mohammed Siraj (4/46) produced a match-winning effort to stop New Zealand, who ended at 337.



Shubman Gill celebrates his double century during the first ODI cricket match between India and New Zealand, at Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium, in Hyderabad, on Wednesday

After India opted to bat, the 23-year-old Gill owned the stage and became the youngest batter to score a double hundred in ODI history. By doing so, he broke the

record of Ishan Kishan, who was controversially dropped for the Sri Lanka ODIs after smashing a double ton in Bangladesh last month.

Gill, who was touted as the next big thing in Indian cricket ever since he displayed his talent in the 2018 U-19 World Cup, hammered 19 fours and nine

sixes, six of them coming after his 150. The double century was his second successive three digit score.

After India opted to bat, it was a good contest between the openers and New Zealand pacers as the hosts reached 52 for no loss in the first 10 overs. Rohit once again promised a big hundred but flattered to deceive.

Lockie Ferguson was generating serious pace as usual from one end but after getting lucky with a mistimed pull in the fourth over, Gill produced a crisp cover drive to deny him a maiden in his following over.

Usually a wicket silences the Indian crowd but following Rohit's dismissal, the crowd welcomed superstar Virat Kohli with a massive roar.

Having scoring three hundred in his last four innings, Kohli began with a crunchy cover drive before being undone by a beauty from left-arm spinner Santner.

Kishan, who was accommodated in the middle-order after missing out against Sri Lanka, too did not last long as he edged an angled delivery to wicketkeeper Tom Latham.

Continued on Page 2

SIMI'S BID FOR ISLAMIC RULE IN INDIA CAN'T BE CONDONED: GOVT TO SC

New Delhi: The Centre has told the Supreme Court that SIMI's objective to establish Islamic rule in India cannot be permitted to subsist and activists of the banned outfit are still indulging in disruptive activities capable of threatening the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country.

P4

MAN JUMPS IN FRONT OF METRO TRAIN, DIES

New Delhi: A 26-year-old man died after allegedly jumping in front of a train at the Mandi House metro station here on Wednesday, police said. The deceased has been identified as Ravi, a resident of Poornima in Bihar, they said, adding that no suicide note has been recovered from him.

UKRAINE MIN KILLED IN HELICOPTER CRASH

Bravrov: Ukraine's Interior Minister died on Wednesday in a helicopter crash near the capital that killed more than a dozen other people, including children, authorities said.

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NCR-PULSE

METRO'S MAGENTA LINE SERVICES HIT AFTER CABLE THEFT
New Delhi: Services on a section of the Delhi Metro's Magenta Line corridor have been affected for several hours since morning due to a case of attempted theft of signalling cable, the DMRC said on Wednesday. The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation tweeted to alert commuters.

CYCLE TRACK AT NEHRU PARK: FOUNDATION STONE LAID
New Delhi: Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Wednesday laid the foundation stone of a cycle track which will be developed by the New Delhi Municipal Council around the Nehru Park, an official statement said. Spread over an area of 75 acres, Nehru Park in Chanakyaपुरी is surrounded by various foreign embassies, high commissions, residents of diplomats and high-profile dignitaries and houses of central government employees.

THOMSON DIGITAL ANNOUNCES FORAY INTO EDETECH INDUSTRY
New Delhi: Thomson Digital has announced its foray into the EdTech industry with the launch of Q&I (www.qanditoday.com), a first-of-its-kind assessment-led platform for the preparation of JEE and NEET. Speaking on the occasion, Vinay Singh, Executive Director and CEO, Thomson Digital and Q&I, said, "Q&I is a platform specifically curated for students preparing for JEE and NEET. The platform understands that each individual is unique, with different strengths, goals, and needs and accordingly aims to help students with a personalized approach using the power of AI."

OUTSTANDING SPORTS PERFORMANCE LAUDED
New Delhi: The RD International School Chairperson Jai Khsan, Principal Yogita Dhaka and Vice Principal Ritika Verma on Wednesday congratulated all the students and expressed happiness for their outstanding performance at Delhi State School Games. On the occasion, Principal Yogita Dhaka said that it's the result of our school Coach Amit Barak's passion and consistent efforts that brought this achievement.

AAP MLA shows bribe money, alleges job...

From Page 1
"There is corruption on a large scale in the recruitment. Even after getting the job, the employees do not get the full amount of salary. The contractors take a lot of money from the employees as a share. The employees sat on strike in the hospital over the issues and they were assaulted," he alleged. "I deliberately received a bribe of Rs 15 lakh as I wanted to expose the nursing recruitment scam at the Government hospital and unmask the faces behind it. I informed the DCP that I had been offered Rs 15 lakh and wanted the culprit caught red-handed. But no action was taken," he said. AAP MLA said he has already reported the matter to Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena, the deputy commis-

sioner of police (DCP), and the chief secretary. They (contractors) attempted to strike a deal with him. Goyal claimed that there was a threat to his life from "powerful" people trying to silence him. "Despite complaints to DCP, no action was taken against it. I'm risking my life, they're musclemen. It should be probed. I need protection. My life is in danger. I hope the Delhi Assembly will act on my complaint," he added. The MLA further said he was not deterred by the threats and demanded action against the private contractor. Delhi Congress president Anil Chaudhary alleged that the incident in the House was "proof" that the MLA of a ruling party accepts bribes and the AAP is involved in "neck-deep corruption".

AAP Govt OK's ₹18 cr project for central verges on roads

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP-led Delhi Government given nod to construct new central verges on Rohtak, MP and Kotla Road and also directed the officials to ensure that the design of the central verge adheres to all necessary standards and codes and should include well-trimmed and maintained shrubbery wherever feasible. The Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia has approved the projects worth Rs 18.19 crores for the construction of new a central verge design at three road stretches namely Rohtak Road (NH10), MP Road No. 142, Mayur Vihar Phase III and Kotla Road. Sisodia said that the safety of commuters on Delhi roads



is the priority of the city government and PWD is continuously working to improve the city's road infrastructure to ensure this. "The department is regularly exploring new strategies to improve safety and aesthetics of all Delhi roads and is therefore creating a new central verge design that is aligned with global best practices," Sisodia stated. Deputy CM noted that central verges serve an aesthetic

function in addition to providing better road safety. "They work to prohibit the entry of vehicles in specific dangerous areas. They are one of the effective ways of controlling dense and high-speed traffic on roads," he claimed. Sisodia underlined that the PWD officials have been directed to ensure that the new medians are of a single colour with reflectors mounted at regular intervals. "Their design will be in compliance with the latest IRC/UTTIPEC guidelines and where space permits, well trimmed and maintained shrubbery will be planted in the median. Additionally, at junctions and U-turns there will be a drop in height of the median to ensure improved visibility," he added.

RERA directs promoter ILD Grand to refund full amount to allottee

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM



Gurugram -based promoter GILD Grand at Sector 37C will have to refund the full amount to its allottee, as directed by the real estate regulatory authority (RERA), Gurugram. As per the court directions, the promoter will have to return the full amount of Rs 72 lakh approximately to the aggrieved allottee. "The authority directs the promoter to return the amount received by him Rs 72,09,911 with interest at the rate prescribed under Rule 15 of the Haryana real estate (regulation and development) Rules 2017 from the date of each payment till the actual date of refund of the amount within the timelines provided in rule 16 of the Haryana Rules 2017," said the order.

The order said that the promoter is responsible for all obligations, responsibilities and functions under the provisions of the Act of 2016 or the Rules and Regulations made thereunder or to the allottee as per the agreement for sale under Section 11(4)(a). The order further said that the promoter has failed to complete or is unable to give possession of the unit in accordance with the terms of the agreement for sale. "The promoter is fully liable to the allottee, as the allottee wishes to withdraw from the project, without prejudice to any other remedy available, to return the amount received by him in respect of the unit with interest at such rate as may be prescribed," said the order. The due date of possession as per the agreement for sale was August 2017 - failing what the complainant allottee approached RERA in February 2019 for relief.

India ride crest of Gill's sensational...

From Page 1
The venue of the meeting here, which teemed with enthusiastic cadres and office-bearers, echoed with political songs in Hindi and some of them cheered to the tune of "Ek do theen chaar, desh ke neta KCR." In his speech, KCR was critical of both the Congress and BJP on the issue of interstate water issues. He focused on national issues that Rahul has been flagging during his Bharat Jodi yatra. For example, he said the 'Make in India' initiative has become a 'joke in India' and declared that if the BRS proposed Government came to power at the centre the Agnipath scheme for recruitment in Armed forces would be abolished. Rao also said free power would be provided to farmers across the country if a 'BRS proposed government' captured power at the Centre in 2024, following polls to the Lok

KCR gives fresh...

Sabha. The emphasis on a BRS proposed Government at the Centre is seen as a clear give-away to his national ambition. Schemes like Telangana's Rythu Bandhu (for the welfare of farmers) should be implemented throughout the country and it is his party's slogan and demand, KCR asserted. He also said the BRS is opposed to the 'disinvestment of LIC'. He slammed the BJP and Congress, alleging that both the parties are responsible for interstate water issues. Kejriwal said people of the country will have an opportunity to dislodge the NDA Government at the Centre in the 2024 general election. The AAP leader said it is not the governors of some States who are troubling the elected Chief Ministers, but Modi, indicating that they act on the behest of the PM. "Now, the country wants a change. People came to know

that these people (NDA government) did not come to change the country. They just came to ruin the country. The 2024 elections are an opportunity for you (people). Ten years is over. How long will you wait?" Kejriwal said. He advised the people to bring a Government that would think about the country, unemployment, healthcare and price rise. The Delhi Chief Minister alleged that Modi is not concerned about the people's issues but he is only thinking about which MLA has to be purchased and which government has to be brought down. Akhilesh said Modi commented in his party's national executive meet that only 400 days are left for the 2024 LS election. The ruling BJP has started 'counting its days' and it would not last a day more in power after its present tenure, Yadav said. "BJP will be out of power after 399 days and a new government will be in place on the 400th day," Yadav said.

Tripura polls on...

From Page 1
Tripura is ruled by the BJP, while the saffron party is part of the ruling coalition in Meghalaya and Nagaland. By winning Tripura in 2018, the BJP ended the long Left rule and Biplab Deb became the Chief Minister. But the party had to remove him in May 2022 over performance issues and made Dr Manik Saha the new Chief Minister. Saha also faces the challenge of ironing out the differences growing within the state unit. Besides, the BJP's relationship with its key ally -- tribal outfit Indigenous Peoples Front of Tripura (IPFT) -- is on the rocks. Bypoll to the Lakshadweep Lok Sabha seat, which was vacated following the disqualification of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) member Mohammed Faizal after his conviction in a criminal case, will be held on February 27, along with by-elections to six Assembly seats spread over five states. All the bypolls will take place along with the Assembly polls in Meghalaya and Nagaland. According to the Election Commission, the counting of votes will be taken up on March 2, the day the results of the Tripura, Meghalaya and Nagaland Assembly polls are scheduled to be announced. The Tripura Assembly polls will be held on February 16. While two bypolls will take place in Maharashtra (the Kasba Peth and Chinchwad seats), one bypoll each will be held in Arunachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, the EC said in a statement on Wednesday. The Lumla seat in Arunachal Pradesh fell vacant following the death of incumbent MLA Jambey Tashi. The Ramgarh seat in Jharkhand

was vacated after the disqualification of Mamta Devi. The Erode (East) seat in Tamil Nadu was vacated after the death of incumbent MLA E Thirumahan Everaa. West Bengal's Sagardighi Assembly seat fell vacant after the death of incumbent MLA Subrata Saha. The death of Congress MP from Jalandhar Santokh Singh was not "reported" to the EC by the Lok Sabha secretariat. Hence, bypoll to the parliamentary seat was not announced on Wednesday, sources later explained. Union Home Minister Amit Shah recently visited the state to sort these issues out and flagged off Jana Vishwas Yatra to mobilise support for the party. The Congress and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) are expected to join hands to take on the BJP in Tripura, where the Left ruled for 25 years while the Congress was its main rival. The Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress (TMC) is also making a determined bid to prove its clout outside West Bengal by contesting these polls. The Congress emerged as the largest party in the Meghalaya assembly election in 2018, but its tally of 21 seats fell short of the halfway mark in the 60-member legislature. The BJP supported the NPP to form the government in the state. Conrad Sangma became the chief minister. Recently, fissures surfaced between the NPP and the BJP. In a spur-of-the-moment reaction, Sangma had said his party would go it alone on all the seats in 2023. Recently, two MLAs resigned from the NPP and joined the saffron party. The BJP in 2018 had won only two seats. The party aims to lead the coalition Government this time.

Scindia: Surya opened plane's emergency door, he has...

From Page 1
"The person concerned, Tejasvi himself reported to the crew and the pilot following which all the protocols were followed and only then was the aircraft allowed to take off," the Minister told reporters on the

sidelines of an event. Meanwhile, social media users are sharing photos and videos of the emergency exits asking how one can open the emergency exit door by mistake. A demo video of IndiGo's ATR 72 showing how to open the emergency exit is doing the rounds. In the video, the demonstrators pull the top portion of the gate marked as 'Pull to open' to fully open the emergency exit door. Tamil Nadu Congress leader Mohan Kumaramangalam shared a representative photo of the IndiGo ATR in which Tejasvi travelled and said even Baba Ramdev can't rest his hand accidentally on the lever of the emergency exit. Apart from the demo video, the photo of the IndiGo ATR 72 is also going

viral. In the photo, it can be seen the red button to open the emergency exit is above the window. Tejasvi was on the window seat. The incident reported on Tuesday has triggered a massive row with the Congress raising many questions over how it happened and why the incident did not come to light immediately. The airline said it happened by mistake and the flight took off only after all checks were done. Officials said the flight was delayed by over two hours as the aircraft took off for its destination, Tiruchirappalli, only after stringent engineering checks. Surya "rested his hand on the door", unlocking the exit, according to officials. Interestingly, the Press state-

ment did not mention the identity and details of the passenger. Several Opposition leaders are questioning why Surya "got away with a mere apology" and did not face more serious action. Supriya Shrinete, Chairperson of Social Media and Digital Platforms of Congress, said, "A mischievous man opens the emergency exit door on a flight, causing the flight to be delayed by 3 hours, the name of the person who put people at risk and inconvenience was not revealed for a month. Drunk on power - that MP spreads hatred everyday. This spoiled Surya needs to be taught a lesson." Shiv Sena MP Priyanka Chaturvedi posted, "Shouldn't

one take suo moto cognisance of this incident? What if this happened once the aircraft had taken off rather than when it was taxiing on the runway, should an apology suffice?" On Tuesday, IndiGo said a passenger accidentally opened the emergency exit of the plane after boarding at Chennai airport but did not disclose the identity of the person. When asked about the incident, Scindia said it had happened on the ground. IndiGo said a passenger travelling on flight 6E 7339 from Chennai to Tiruchirappalli on December 10, 2022 accidentally opened the emergency exit during the boarding process. "The passenger immediately apologised for the action. As per SOPs (Standard Operating

Procedures), the incident was logged and the aircraft underwent mandatory engineering checks, which led to a delay in the flight's departure," it had said. A senior official at aviation regulator DGCA on Tuesday said the event was duly reported and that no safety was compromised, adding that it appears that by mistake, the right hand emergency exit got opened by a passenger while the aircraft was on the ground. "The crew took note and resolutely, all appropriate airworthiness actions such as reinstalling the door, pressurization check etc were carried out before the release of the aircraft for departure. No safety was compromised," the official had said.

PUBLIC NOTICE
NOTICE is hereby given that 1000 Equity shares of Rs.1/- each of Dabur India Ltd having Folio No. DIL0903822, Certificate No. 85229 & Distinctive Nos. from 602880495 - 602881494 standing in the name(s) of Helen D Costa & Felix D Costa have been lost or mislaid and undersigned has/have applied to the Company to issue duplicate Certificate(s) in the said shares. Any person who has a claim in respect of the said shares should lodge such claim with the Company at its Registrars KFin Technologies Ltd, (Unit: Dabur India Limited) Karyi Selenium Tower B, Plot 31-32, Gachibowli, Financial District, Hyderabad, Telangana - 500 032 within one month from this date else the Company will proceed to issue duplicate Certificate(s). Name(s) of Applicant(s) Helen D Costa Date: 16.01.2023

कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम, भोपाल
यांत्रिक विभाग (मुख्यालय) गाँवदियपुरा (बी.एच.ई.एल.)
निविदा आमंत्रण घोषणा-पत्र
क्र. 239/यां.वि./2023 भोपाल, दिनांक 17.01.2023
निम्नलिखित निमांण कार्य हेतु दो लिफाफा पद्धति के अनुसार म.प्र. लोक निर्माण विभाग में केन्द्रीकृत व्यवस्था के अंतर्गत पंजीकृत ठेकेदार परसेन्टेज मोहर बंद निविदाये निर्धारित प्रपत्र पर ऑनलाईन आमंत्रित की जाती है।
क्र. ऑनलाईन निविदा क्र. कार्य का नाम अनुमानित राशि धरोहर राशि प्रपत्र राशि कार्य हेतु निर्धारित एस.ओ.आर. कार्य की अवधि
01 2022_UAD_232773_2 Asphaltting work of Road From Semra Sabji Mandi to Power House road Chandbad Ward 36 and 38 Zone 09 1,39,85,370/- 69,92/- 12,500/- MPUADD ISSR 2021 6 Month-
1. Interested bidders can view the NIT on website <https://www.mptenders.gov.in/>
2. The Bid Document can be purchased only online from 10:30 A.M. (time) 18.01.2023 (date) to 17:30 P.M. (time) 02.02.2023 (date).
3. Amendments to NIT, if any, would be published on website <https://www.mptenders.gov.in/> only, and not in newspaper.
The initial period of 05 (Five) year after completion shall be treated as Defect Liability Period (DLP)
Executive Engineer
Municipal Corporation Bhopal
District Bhopal
नि.क्र. 1369/022/023

PUBLIC NOTICE
ICICI Bank
Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005
The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.
Sr. No. Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address Property Address of Secured Asset / Asset to be Enforced Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice NPA Date
1. Balwinder Singh Kohli/ Gurpreet Singh Kohli/ Satinder Kaur Kohli/ Virender Kohli/ Nausher Singh Kohli/ Farhad Singh Kohli/ Shehzadi Kohli/ Sahebzadi Kohli/ Baraj Singh Kohli/ LBLUD00002118951/ LBLUD00002417322 Flat No.703, 7th Floor, Block No.21, Heritage City, Village Sirhau, Tehsil & Distt. Gurgaon Haryana November 09, 2022 Rs. 2,02,88,878/- 07/06/ 2021
The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.
Date : January 18, 2023
Place : Delhi/NCR (Gurgaon) Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given on behalf of Mr. Jaljeet Singh S/o. Late Mr. Bhooop Singh who is owner of Residential Property no. 640, area measuring 200 sq. yds, comprised in Kharsa no. 262 min, situated in the abadi of Village Saidulajab, Tehsil Saket (M.B. Road), New Delhi: vide Relinquishment Deed dated 21.08.2020, which is registered as Doc. No. 3480, in the office of Sub-Registrar, V.A. Hazukhas, New Delhi, which is executed by 1) Mr. Manjeet Singh, 2) Mr. Jitender Singh (both sons), 3) Ms. Rajesh 4) Ms. Sudesh Choudhary 5) Ms. Mukesh 6) Ms. Rani (all Daughters) upon death of their father Mr. Bhooop Singh; and intend to mortgage the said property against the financial assistance from Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any Person having any type of claim /right / title / interest / creating mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc.
Lucem Legal LLP
136, Basement Floor, Uday Park, near Mother Dairy, New Delhi-110049
Contact# 011-40046316 & 41667327

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is to inform to the public at large that Mrs. Shikha W/o. Mr. Mahender Singh who is owner of the Entire Built-up residential Property bearing Plot No.RZF-128, and area measuring 50 Sq. Yds. (i.e., 41.8 Sq. Mtrs.), out of Kharsa No.87/5, situated in the revenue estate of Village Nangloi Jat, colony/abadi known as Ninal Vihar, Nangloi, New Delhi-110041; which is gifted by her husband Mr. Mahender Singh vide Gift Deed dated 29.09.2022, vide Document No.6799, registered with the office of Sub-Registrar-IIA, Punjabai Bagh, Delhi/New Delhi, registered on 29.09.2022 and same to be finance & mortgage by Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Limited. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any Person having any type of claim /right / title / interest / creating mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 15 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc.
Lucem Legal LLP
136, Basement Floor, Uday Park, near Mother Dairy, New Delhi-110049
Contact# 011-40046316 & 41667327

WFI prez accused of sexually...

From Page 1
"I know at least 10-20 women wrestlers who have told me about the sexual exploitation they faced at the hands of (the) WFI president. They told me their stories. I can't take their names now but I can definitely reveal the names if we get to meet the Prime Minister and the Home Minister of the country," Vinesh said addressing the media after staging a four-hour dharna at Jantar Mantar. "I have received death threats from people who are close to the WFI president. If anything happens to any of us sitting here, only the WFI president will be responsible." Singh was elected president of WFI for a third consecutive term in February 2019. Sitting beside Vinesh, Tokyo Olympics bronze medalist Bajrang Punia said the federation is being run in an arbitrary manner and they will not compete in any international competition unless the WFI president, who is no less than a "dictator", is removed. "Our fight is not against the Government or the Sports Authority of India (SAI). This

is against WFI. 'Yeh ab aar paar ki ladaai hai' (It's a fight to the finish). We will continue this protest until the WFI President is removed," Bajrang told PTI. "We will not compete in any international competition until the WFI president is removed. This is a fight to save Indian wrestling. While we are denied help and support of foreign coaches, the President has hired a foreign coach for his own academy in Gonda," Punia later said while addressing the media. "He uses abusive language against wrestlers, we can even show you videos of that." In December 2021, the WFI president had slapped an wrestler during the under-15 national championship when he insisted on competing after being disqualified. Responding to the allegation of death threats given to Vinesh on his behalf, Singh said, "Why did Vinesh not talk to me or approach the police at that time? Why did she not meet the PM or the Sports Minister? Why is she saying this now." The WFI boss indicated that the new policy and the rules they have introduced are perhaps causing a bit of discomfort to the wrestlers and

that's why the protest. He said the wrestlers are being asked to compete in the National Championships and appear in trials for fair selection, and there is nothing wrong in it. "Different States host nationals and all want the country's best athletes to compete. None of these wrestlers has competed in the nationals. We have made it clear that only those athletes who compete and win at the national c'hampionship will be selected for the national camp. The State of Haryana has been the pride of the country but we want to take wrestling to other states also. So we stopped the arrangements of states sending multiple teams at the nationals. States like Bihar, Jharkhand, Manipur, Nagaland and Mizoram are weak and we need to promote the game there. So we introduced national open championships apart from the regular nationals and there also Haryana claimed 61 per cent of the medals," said Singh. Vinesh said she is labelled an undisciplined athlete because she dares to speak her mind. "I am being tortured every day."

Asked why they did not raise the issue before, Vinesh said, "These are powerful, influential people. We could not muster courage. Now we were not left with any option. 'Ab paani sar se paar ho raha hai' (the limit has been reached). We have to think about the next generation of players as well." Adding to it, Bajrang said, "We are approaching the end of our careers. For how long will we play? 2024, 2026 or maybe 2028 but it is a question of the entire wrestling fraternity." It may be recalled that the WFI, while taking disciplinary action against Vinesh for not wearing the official singlet during the Tokyo Games, had banned her but later lifted it after receiving a written apology from the athlete. Vinesh said she did not wear that singlet because it was "zero quality." Explaining his position, the WFI president said they were facing action from the International Olympic Committee for flouting the rules and he had to take action against Vinesh out of compulsion because he did not want a ban on India.

DU college bans non-veg on premises

Hansraj College principal refuses to lifts ban despite uproar, says college follows Arya Samaj philosophy

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi University's Hansraj College will not be serving non-vegetarian foods in the hostel or canteen. Hansraj College principal Rama Sharma on Wednesday refused to withdraw an order discontinuing non-veg food in the hostel and canteen despite widespread criticism and asserted the DU constituent college follows Arya Samaj's philosophy.

Meanwhile, a group of students affiliated to the Students' Federation of India (SFI) has called for a protest at DU's Hansraj College against the "discontinuation" of non-vegetarian food at the institution and alleged attempts at "saf-ronising the campus".

Sharma also claimed that 90 per cent of the students are vegetarian and they had earlier protested over non-veg food being served in the hostel. Hansraj College's decision to discontinue serving non-vegetarian food at its canteen and hostel after it reopened following the pandemic in February last year has drawn sharp criticism from several quarters.

Though students claimed that no notice was issued in this matter, Sharma clarified that "a notice was issued and the hos-



tel prospectus mentioned that no non-veg food will be served at the hostel".

The principal claimed that non-veg food was never served in the canteen and it has been discontinued in the hostel after informing students. "Earlier, vegetarians and non-vegetarians used to sit separately. Now they can sit together and eat. Students had protested earlier about the canteen serving non-veg. They said the same utensils are being used and some students had apprehensions," she added.

"We are not going to withdraw the notice regarding non-veg food. It is an Arya Samaj college. We have our philoso-

phy and that is why we won't serve non-veg food. We conduct 'havan' regularly. We follow our rules. It is written in the hostel prospectus that non-veg food will not be served in the hostel".

"We don't ask St Stephen's (college) to conduct 'havan'. We don't interfere with Khalsa College rules. Then why are we being questioned? We don't say do not eat non-veg food. We just simply ask don't bring non-veg food in college," Sharma added.

Meanwhile, a group of students affiliated to the Students' Federation of India (SFI) has called for a protest at DU's Hansraj College against the

"discontinuation" of non-vegetarian food at the institution and alleged attempts at "saf-ronising the campus".

The Hansraj College unit of the SFI said in a statement that an uproar is scaling inside the college campus against the "ban" on non-vegetarian food and the protest will be held out-

side the Hansraj Hostel on January 20.

The students said Hansraj College stopped serving non-vegetarian food at its canteen and hostel after it reopened following the pandemic in February last year. There has, however, been no official order on this.

IIT student killed, another hurt after car hits them near institute

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

An Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi student was killed while another sustained injuries after a car allegedly hit them near the institute late on January 17 night. The deceased has been identified as Ashraf Nawaz Khan, 30, and the injured Ankur Shukla, 29 who is currently under treatment at Max Hospital, Saket, the police said, adding that the two were Ph.D. students at IIT Delhi.

Khan died during treatment at the Safdarjung hospital while Shukla is admitted to the Max hospital in Saket with

a fractured leg.

DCP (Southwest) Manoj C said the accident took place near gate number 1 of IIT Delhi at around 11.15 pm Tuesday. Two men, identified as Ashraf Nawaz Khan, 30, and Ankur Shukla, 29, were hit by a car while they were crossing the main road near the campus, he added. Both the victims are doing PhD from IIT Delhi. During treatment, Ashraf succumbed to his injuries at the Safdarjung Hospital and Ankur is undergoing treatment at Max Hospital in Saket. He has a fracture on his leg," said the DCP. The driver of the car has been identified, police said.

Ensure Aldermen don't vote in Mayoral polls: Assembly to MCD commissioner

L-G oppressing Delhiites, has forgotten his job is not to obey his masters but follow Constitution, says Sisodia



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Assembly on Wednesday passed a resolution moved by AAP MLA Saurabh Bhardwaj, seeking direction to the MCD Commissioner to ensure that nominated members (Aldermen) are not allowed to vote in the House during Mayoral polls, as stated in the Constitution.

Speaking on the resolution, Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Wednesday slammed Lieutenant-Governor VK Saxena saying he was acting like a "tribal chieftain to appease his big boss" by "interfering" in an elected Government's work.

Sisodia said that while oppressing the people of Delhi, the L-G has forgotten that his job is not to obey the orders of his masters but to follow the statutes of the Constitution.

"By constantly bypassing the elected Government, the L-G has insulted the Constitution, threatened our democracy, and

is in contempt of the constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court. The L-G has threatened to suspend and transfer officers to get his unlawful orders executed, and the appointment of the presiding officer of the MCD and Haj Committee members in an unconstitutional manner, is a prime example of this," the Deputy CM said.

"This House directs the Commissioner of MCD and the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi to ensure that elections of Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Standing Committee are conducted as per DMC Act and Constitution of India," the resolution stated.

Sisodia pointed out that the Constitution gave the L-G the task of handling the Delhi Police, but he paid absolutely no attention to this responsibility. "His sole task and achievement has been to bypass the Government. A young woman is dragged 12 km in a car and brutally murdered by

a BJP leader, but the L-G does not have the audacity to stand up and say that the BJP leader did something wrong," he said.

"The L-G will not talk about the responsibilities that fall under him," said Sisodia adding that Saxena will talk neither about land and the land mafia, nor about law and order and the police.

"The L-G will remain busy talking about how CCTV cameras should not be installed in Delhi, Mohalla Clinics should not be built, doorstep delivery should not be done as traffic will increase, yoga classes should be stopped, teachers should not go for training, Delhi Jal Board should not be funded, and medical staff should be removed," Sisodia said.

"I would like to request the L-G that he is on a constitutional post, it is his responsibility to follow the Constitution and not act as the Sardaar of any tribe.

He needs to work for the public, not to appease his Big Boss," Sisodia requested.

4 BJP MLAs marshaled out of Delhi Assembly

They were protesting over pollution in Yamuna

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Assembly Speaker Ram Niwas Goel on Wednesday marshaled out four BJP MLAs who were protesting in the House over the issue of "heavy" pollution in the Yamuna River. The BJP MLAs demanded a debate over the issue of pollution but the Speaker refused their request, saying he will not allow any debate under any rule.

The MLAs also submitted samples of Yamuna water in two bottles to the Speaker following which the latter threatened to "terminate the membership of BJP MLAs if the water was found contaminated with acid."

"The LG has paralysed the House and BJP MLAs should be ashamed of it. BJP MLAs



should go to L-G and ask him not to gag the House," Goel told BJP MLAs.

While BJP MLAs Ajay Mahawar, Anil Bajpai, Mohan Singh Bisht and OP Sharma were ordered to be marshaled out by Goel, the rest of the BJP MLAs decided to boycott the proceedings of the House in protest.

Earlier, BJP MLAs held a protest outside the Delhi Assembly over the issue of pollution in Yamuna River. They were carrying bottles filled with heavily polluted Yamuna water.

Following the expulsion, the BJP MLAs held a protest outside the Delhi Assembly.

Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said supply of dirty water from Yamuna was

harming the health of the people.

"It is causing cancer and damaging the kidney and liver as well as leading to other ailments. The Modi Government has provided the AAP Government Rs 2,500 crore for cleaning the Yamuna," he said.

Citing data from the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), the L-G office had said on Monday that pollution in the Yamuna river has doubled in the last eight years of the Arvind Kejriwal Government.

Bidhuri further said, "We want to ask Delhi Chief Minister Kejriwal where did this money go because a report of his own Government has said that Yamuna has been polluted 200 per cent more in the eight years of AAP rule."

He said the issue will be raised in the Assembly and if it is not debated upon, they will stage further protests over the issue.

"A notice has been given for a debate over the issue. If the Government runs away from debate, we will stage a dharna," he said.

AAP seeks suspension of CS, Finance Secy, Health Secretary

MLAs allege obstruction of Govt work by babus at L-G's behest; Speaker adjourns House

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Assembly proceedings were adjourned on Wednesday amid protests by AAP MLAs demanding the suspension of the Chief Secretary, Finance Secretary and Health Secretary for allegedly obstructing the Government's work. Adjourning the proceedings, Speaker Ram Niwas Goel also extended the Assembly session by a day as the three-day session was scheduled to conclude on Wednesday.

The protest started after MLA Saurabh Bhardwaj presented an interim report of the Assembly's Petitions Committee which recommended that the President and the Union Home Ministry "take cognisance of this report of the Committee on Petitions and take appropriate action against the Chief Secretary and the Hon'ble Lieutenant-Governor."

It also recommended that privilege proceedings be initiated against Principal Secretary, Finance, AC Verma, Health Secretary Amit Singla and Deputy Secretary, Finance, Manoj Sharma, for allegedly "misleading" the Committee and "disrespectful conduct and attempting to conceal information" during its hearing.

Presenting the report on the issue "sabotaging the functioning of OPD counters in Delhi Government hospitals at the behest of the L-G", Bhardwaj, a member of the committee, said the panel had depositions of the Chief Secretary, Principal Finance Secretary and Health Secretary among other officers.

"The Chief Secretary was



summoned by the Committee at 6.30 PM on Tuesday and he was there till 9.30 PM. We asked him about dozens of projects being stuck, but the Chief Secretary claimed that he did not have any knowledge of it," Bhardwaj said.

He said that many officers had said they were "arm-twisted" by the Chief Secretary "at the behest of" the Lieutenant-Governor to "impede" Government works.

Around three dozen works, schemes and projects of various departments were stuck, he said and cited non-payment of funds to the Delhi Jal Board by the Finance Department for six months.

He said that payments for salaries and other expenses of Mohalla Clinics and the DTC were also obstructed.

"We took confidential depositions of several officers. Many officers said they were threatened by the Chief Secretary at the behest of the L-G to obstruct the functioning of the Government," he said.

Bhardwaj said that the Chief Secretary as well as the Finance and Health Secretaries indulged in a "conspiracy" to "impede" the Government's functioning.

As Bhardwaj presented the report, AAP MLAs trooped into the Well of the House demanding the suspension of the Chief Secretary and the Finance and Health Secretaries, prompting the Speaker to first adjourn the proceedings till 4.15 PM. When the protesters refused to relent after the House reconvened, the Speaker to adjourn the proceedings for the day.

Amid Govt-LG tussle, Prez gives more powers to Saxena

L-Gs of 5 other UTs also given similar powers

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the ongoing tussle between the Delhi Government and Raj Niwas, President Droupadi Murmu has delegated two more powers to Lieutenant-Governor VK Saxena under the Industrial Relations Code, 2020 and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020. It is directed that the L-G will exercise the powers and discharge the functions of the appropriate Government or State Government under these rules until further order, mention two separate notifications issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on January 16.

The move will further escalate the tensions between Saxena and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. The recent flashpoint between Kejriwal and Saxena was triggered ahead of the January 24 election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the MCD. The AAP has accused the L-G of issuing orders on "practically everything" and bypassing the

elected Government.

As per the notifications, administrators and the L-Gs of five other Union Territories, including Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Chandigarh, Puducherry and Lakshadweep, were also delegated similar powers by Murmu.

"In pursuance of clause (1) of Article 239 of the Constitution, the President hereby directs that the administrator or L-G of the National Capital Territory of Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Chandigarh, Puducherry and Lakshadweep shall, subject to the control of the President and until further order, exercise the powers and discharge the functions of the appropriate Government or State Government under the Industrial Relations Code, 2020 (35 of 2020), to formulate the rules only in the areas where the Union territory of the National Capital Territory of Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Chandigarh, Puducherry and Lakshadweep are required to formulate rules either as appropriate Government or State

Government," states one of the notifications.

Under Industrial Relations Code, 2020, the appropriate Government may exempt any new industrial establishment or class of establishments from the provisions of the Code in the public interest.

Another notification mentions regarding delegation of powers of State Government and appropriate Government under the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 to the administrator and L-G of these six UTs.

"In pursuance of clause (1) of article 239 of the Constitution, the President hereby directs that the administrator or Lieutenant Governor of the National Capital Territory of Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Chandigarh, Puducherry and Lakshadweep shall, subject to the control of the President and until further order, exercise the powers and discharge the functions of the appropriate Government or State Government under the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 (37 of 2020)," said the notification.

Jan 2023 sees max cold-wave days in decade

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The national Capital has seen the most number of cold wave days in January in at least a decade. The national Capital on Wednesday logged its eighth cold wave day in January, the most in the month in at least 12 years, according to data available on the India Meteorological Department (IMD) website. Sadarjung observatory, the city's primary weather station, recorded a minimum temperature of 2.6 degrees Celsius, five notches less than the average for this time of the year. The city may also see light rain or drizzle towards Thursday night.

Delhi saw seven cold wave days in January 2020, while it did not record any such day last year. The city recorded an intense cold wave spell from January 5 to 9 this year, the second-longest in the month in a decade, according to the IMD data. Six cold wave days were recorded in 2013, data from the IMD shows. In January 2019, 2020, 2015, and 2014, there was one cold wave day each. In some years over the past decade, January has recorded no cold wave day at all, like in 2022, 2018, 2016, and 2012.

Traffic curbs on Kartavya Path ahead of R-Day

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police on Wednesday said that the traffic restrictions will be in place on Kartavya Path from 10:15 AM to 12:30 PM on January 18, 20 and 21 in view of Republic Day parade rehearsals.

The traffic advisory suggested routes to be taken for commuting from north to south Delhi and vice versa.

The advisory listed, "Ring Road i.E. Sarai Kale Khan - IP flyover - Rajghat. Lajpat Rai Marg - Mathura Road - Bhairon Road - Ring Road. Prithviraj Road - Rajesh Pilot Marg- Subramaniam Bharti Marg- Mathura Road- Bhairon Road - Ring Road. Barfkhana - Azad Market - Rani Jhansi flyover- Panchkulan Road - Hanuman Murti - Vande Matram Mard - Dhaula Kuan."

For travel from east to west Delhi and vice versa, it suggested, "Ring Road - Bhairon Road - Mathura Road - Subramaniam Bharti Marg- Rajesh Pilot Marg - Prithvi Raj Road - Safdarjung Road - Kamal Atatürk Marg - Panchsheel Marg - Simon Boliver Marg - Upper Ridge Road/Vande Matram Marg."

The list further suggested, "Ring Road - ISBT - Chandgi Ram Akhara - Mall Road - Azad Pur - Ring Road. From Ring Road - Bhairon Road - Mathura Road - Lodhi Road - Aurobindo Marg - Safdarjung Road - Teen Murti Marg - Mother Teresa Crescent - Park Street - Shankar Marg - Vande Matram Marg."

It suggested "Ring Road - Vande Matram Marg and vice versa," for travel from east to south west Delhi.

For people commuting from south Delhi to Connaught Place and Central Secretariat, it suggested "Mother Teresa Crescent - Park Street - Mandir Marg/Baba Kharak Singh Marg, Ring Road - Vande Matram Marg - Link Road - Panchkulan Road. Ring Road - Sardar Patel Marg - 11 Murti - Mother Teresa Crescent - R/A RML - North Avenue or Baba Kharak Singh Marg."

According to the advisory, motorists coming to Vinay Marg, Shanti Path and going to New Delhi and beyond should take Sardar Patel Marg - Mother Teresa Crescent - R/A RML - Baba Kharak Singh Marg or Park Street - Mandir Marg and proceed further to North Delhi or New Delhi.

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2. Open E-Tender No.: **2023/IRCTC/NZ/LCS/RR-JHS/OpenTender** for Operation, maintenance and provision of catering services in/through Refreshment Room/Jhansi under A1 Category Station under Indian Railways under IRCTC/North Zone. Prebid: **23.01.23 at 12:30 hrs** (through VC). Date & Time of Submission: **25.01.2023 upto 15:00 hrs.**
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Primary edu bounced back post-Covid, 98% enrolment recorded

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In good news in the primary education sector, the school enrolment figures have increased to a record high of over 98 per cent despite prolonged closure during the pandemic. The report published by the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2022 on Wednesday pointed out that the big turnaround during this period was the rebound of enrolment in government schools.

“The enrolment rate for the 6 to 14 age group has been above 95 pc for the past 15 years. Despite school closures during the pandemic, overall enrolment figures have increased from 97.2 pc in 2018 to 98.4 pc in 2022. The proportion of children in this age group who are not currently enrolled has dropped to 1.6 pc,” the report said.

ASER is a nationwide, citizen-led household survey that provides a snapshot of children’s schooling and learning in rural India. The first ASER was conducted in 2005 and repeated annually for 10 years. ASER 2022 is the first field-based “basic” nationwide ASER after



a gap of four years. It comes at a time when children are back in school after an extended period of school closure in view of the pandemic.

Across rural India, the proportion of 3-year-olds enrolled in some form of early childhood education stands at 78.3 per cent in 2022, an increase of 7.1 percentage points over 2018 levels. “There is a substantial shift in enrolment patterns of young children in the age group 3-5 years who have

moved into the ICDS (anganwadi) system from other forms of pre-school and school provision.

In 2022, 66.8 pc of 3-year-olds were enrolled in Anganwadi Centres as compared to 57.1 pc in 2018. Among 4-year-olds, Anganwadi enrolment has increased from 50.5 pc (2018) to 61.2 pc (2022),” it said.

According to ASER 2022, the proportion of not currently enrolled 6-14 year-old chil-

dren however is almost half of what was observed in 2018 and the lowest we have seen in the decade since the Right to Education Act came into effect.

“Even more heartening is that we see a secular decline in the proportion of children not currently enrolled in the 15-16 age group – the age group considered most at risk for dropping out. In 2010, the proportion of 15-16 year-olds who were out of school was 16.1 pc. Driven by the government’s

push to universalise secondary education, this number has been steadily declining and stood at 13.1 pc in 2018. The decline continued in 2020 to 9.9 pc and this proportion stands at 7.5 pc in 2022,” it said.

“Private school enrollment had been rising for almost a decade. In 2018, 30.9 pc children were enrolled in private schools. This has come down to 25.1 pc in 2022. This 5.8 percentage point decrease amounts to a sudden 19 per cent drop in private school enrollment, and an 11 per cent increase in rural government school enrollment,” it said.

Pvt tuitions boom in UP, Bihar, Jharkhand: ASER

ASER also mentioned that the proportion of students taking private tuition classes after school has increased by more than four percentage points over the pre-Covid-19 levels across the country. The increase in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand is, in fact, up to eight percentage points.

Edu Min seeks report from Bengal Govt on ‘Azad Kashmir on map’ question paper row

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/KOLKATA

The Ministry of Education has sought a factual report from the West Bengal Government on a Class 10 model question paper asking students to mark “Azad Kashmir” in a map. A political row has erupted in West Bengal after its image went viral on social media, with the opposition BJP claiming it to be a “jihadi conspiracy” and the ruling TMC in the State terming it a mistake that it does not support.

“The ministry has taken a serious view of news reports on a question for class 10 examination 2022-23 of the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education asking the students to identify ‘Azad Kashmir’ on India’s map. The MoE has asked for a factual report along with an Action Taken Report from the Education Department of West Bengal in connection with the question in the test paper,” MoE official

sources said.

Union Minister of State for Education Subhas Sarkar demanded a state-level inquiry into the matter and called for action against the publisher and the person who has set the paper. “It shouldn’t happen. The paper-setter is anti-national & inspiring terrorism. State’s Education Minister should write to him & this test paper cell should be shut immediately. We’ll examine this & take a decision,” Sarkar said in a tweet message.

West Bengal Board of Secondary Education president Ramanuj Ganguly, however, conceded that the “goof-up” took place in the test papers published by the autonomous body, adding that action was being taken against those responsible for the mistake.

The question paper was issued in an exercise book of a Bengali-medium school for Madhyamik aspirants. In the paper, the students were asked to identify several places on the

map – Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (referred to as ‘Azad Kashmir’ in Pakistan), the place where Gandhiji had first undertaken the Satyagraha movement, and the Chittagong battleground.

“A high-level probe must be ordered. This incident proves that the state government promotes jihadi thoughts to appease its vote bank,” BJP leader Rahul Sinha said. BJP national vice-president Dilip Ghosh also hit out at the TMC government and said it not just “supports jihadi elements but also tries to influence the minds of the schoolchildren”.

Hitting back at the BJP, TMC state spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said his party doesn’t support anything that is wrong. “If someone has set such a question, he has done wrong. We don’t support such acts. The TMC is a secular party which does not believe in appeasing any particular community. Sarkar has made a baseless comment against our party,” Ghosh said.

Parties opposing EVMs won polls with it: CEC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Parties that have complained against the reliability of Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) too have won elections held using the same device, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said on Wednesday days after BSP leader Mayawati alleged discrepancies in the EVMs and called for holding all polls using ballot papers.

Responding to a question on allegations that EVMs can be manipulated, Kumar said, “If the EVM could speak, it would have perhaps said ‘jisme tere sar par tohmat rakhhi hai, maine uske bhi ghar ki laaj rakhhi hai’ (Those who have accused you, I have even looked after them).” He said following an



amendment in the Representation of the People Act, the use of EVMs came into force, hence it is the duty of the poll panel to implement the

law. Kumar noted that several judicial verdicts, including by the Supreme Court, have hailed the EVMs. People who have

filed public interest litigations against EVM use have been fined by courts.

Former CEC Sunil Arora too had slammed parties questioning EVMs, saying it should not be used as “political football”.

Kumar recalled that the Commission had published an advertisement in newspapers giving out details of various parties in opposition that have won polls held using the machine.

He said 36,000 paper trail machine (VVPAT) counts have been matched with EVM count and the match between the results of the two have been 100 per cent.

He said there has not been a single mismatch, proving the efficacy of the EVMs.

‘SIMI can’t be allowed to subsist’

Banned outfit is a persistent danger to country’s sovereignty, integration, MHA tells SC in counter-affidavit

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry has told the Supreme Court that SIMI’s objective to establish Islamic rule in India cannot be permitted to subsist and activists of the banned outfit are still indulging in disruptive activities capable of threatening the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country.

In a counter affidavit filed

in the apex court, which is hearing a batch of pleas on the ban imposed on the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has said the activists of the organisation are in “regular touch” with their associates and masters based in other countries and their actions could disrupt peace and communal harmony in India.

“Their stated objectives are contrary to the laws of our country. Especially their object of establishing Islamic rule in India can, under no circumstances, be permitted to subsist,” said the affidavit, filed MHA. The matter came up for hearing on Wednesday before a bench comprising Justices S K Kaul, A S Oka and J B

Pardiwala. Advocate Rajat Nair, appearing for the Centre, told the bench they have submitted a counter affidavit to one of the petitions filed in the matter.

He said the ban on SIMI is continuing and the petitions have challenged its imposition and subsequent extensions. The counsel appearing for some of the petitioners said they would examine the counter affidavit filed by the Centre. After both the parties requested the court to adjourn the hearing, the bench posted the matter for next month.

In the counter affidavit, the Government has said the SIMI aims to mobilise students and youth for propagation of Islam and obtain support for ‘Jihad’ (religious war), formation of ‘Shariat’ based Islamic rule

through ‘Islami Inqalab’. The organization does not believe in nation-state or in the Indian Constitution including its secular nature. It regards idol worship as a sin, and finds its ‘duty’ to end such practices,” it said.

It said that SIMI, through its members, has contacts in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh and Nepal and, being an organisation of students and youth, SIMI is influenced and used by various fundamentalist Islamic terrorist organisations operating from Jammu and Kashmir.

“Also, terrorist organizations such as Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Toiba have successfully managed to penetrate into the SIMI cadres to achieve their anti-national goals,” it said.

IN SHORT

MORE GOLD, CASH SEIZED FROM RTD RAILWAY BABU

New Delhi: The CBI has recovered an additional ₹36 lakh and 457 grams of gold coins from the locker of retired Railway officer Pramod Kumar Jena in an ongoing search operation in Odisha. The agency had carried out searches at the premises of Jena, a 1987-batch Indian Railway Traffic Service officer who retired in November last year as principal chief commercial manager in East Coast Railways, for allegedly amassing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income.

MEA MOURNS GAMBIAN VICE-PREZ DEATH IN INDIA

New Delhi: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday said he was grieved to learn about the passing away of Gambian Vice-President Badara A Joof, who was undergoing treatment in India. He said the MEA will render all necessary assistance to the Gambian authorities.

FOREIGN SECY VISITS BHUTAN TO BOOST TIES

New Delhi: Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra kicked off a three-day visit to Bhutan on Wednesday with the focus expected to be on boosting cooperation in the hydel-power sector, defence ties and reviewing the situation in the strategically-sensitive Doklam tri-junction.

CBI RAIDS 20 LOCATIONS AGAINST U’KHAND BUILDER

New Delhi: The CBI on Wednesday conducted searches at 20 locations in connection with four separate cases against builder Sudhir Kumar Windlass and others regarding encroachment of public land in Uttarakhand.

REPORT ON GUJARAT ENCOUNTERS FILED IN SC

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday heard the matter related to alleged fake encounter cases in Gujarat from 2002 to 2006 for whose monitoring it had set up a committee under former apex court judge H S Bedi. Justice Bedi was appointed as the chairman of the monitoring committee probing 17 alleged fake encounter cases from 2002 to 2006 and had submitted a report to the top court in a sealed cover.

R-Day parade: 32k tickets for sale online, Egyptian military contingent to take part

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Republic Day celebrations this year will take place on the revamped Central Vista avenue, and the Government has put 32,000 tickets on sale online for the masses, Defence Ministry officials said on Wednesday.

For the first time, all official invites for the ceremonial event will be sent online.

This will be the first Republic Day celebrations hosted at the ceremonial boulevard after Rajpath was renamed to ‘Kartavya Path’ last year.

A presentation on the celebrations to be held from January 23-31 as part of the Republic Day celebrations was made on Wednesday after a press briefing by Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane at the South Block here.

The Republic Day celebrations will be held in a spirit of greater ‘janbhagdari’ (public participation) and workers of



Women personnel of Assam Rifles march past during rehearsals for the Republic Day Parade 2023 at Kartavya Path, in New Delhi on Wednesday

PTI

Central Vista project and their family members, maintenance workers of Kartavya Path, vegetable vendors, milk booth workers, grocery shopkeepers and rickshaw-pullers will be “special invitees”,

the officials shared during the presentation.

“Before Covid-19, over a lakh people used to attend the Republic Day celebrations, which was drastically cut in the immediate years following the outbreak of the pandemic in India (in early 2020).

“This year about 42,000 people are expected to attend it and 32,000 tickets for seats at the event have been put online, and the response from people have been good,” the senior official said.

New bleachers and retractable seats have been put up in the lawns of the Kartavya Path, and with more space between two seats, he said.

The celebrations will begin with a grand event on the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on January 23 and go on till Gandhi Jayanti, the defence secretary said.

A military contingent from Egypt will also be taking part in the celebrations, officials said.

Court grants bail to Nath’s kin in IFFCO money laundering case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Wednesday granted bail to Ratul Puri, nephew of former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath, in a money laundering case linked to a fertiliser scam in IFFCO for which ₹685 crore was claimed to have been paid as kickback. Special Judge Vikas Dhull granted the relief to Puri after he appeared before the court pursuant to summons issued against him. The judge noted that Puri was not arrested during the investigation and said no purpose will be served by sending him to custody at this stage.

Puri’s bail plea was opposed by ED’s Special Public Prosecutor Nitesh Rana, who claimed if granted the relief, the accused may flee from justice. Rana said Puri may also influence the witnesses and tamper evidence. Earlier, summons to Puri, the judge had said prima facie there was enough evidence to prosecute him. Puri is also an accused in cases relat-

ed to the AgustaWestland chopper scam and Moser Baer scam. He is currently out on bail.

According to the ED, the fertiliser scam case, which also involves RJD Rajya Sabha MP Amarendra Dhari Singh and IFFCO Managing Director and CEO US Awasthi, relates to illegal commissions worth over ₹685 crore allegedly paid to the NRI sons of Awasthi and Indian Potash Ltd (IPL) Managing Director P S Gahlaut, and some others by overseas suppliers during 2007-14. Indian Farmers Fertiliser Co-operative Limited (IFFCO) is a multi-state farmers’ cooperative, while IPL is its company involved in supplying fertilisers for which the Government provides subsidies to keep the rates affordable, the ED said. The agency said that Awasthi and others in IFFCO generated proceeds of crime and layered it through various unrelated entities, and part of that was transferred to the entities controlled by Awasthi and others.

NIA arrests PFI ‘reporter’ in Kerala case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday conducted searches at a location in Kollam district of Kerala and arrested Mohammad Sadik, who was working as a ‘reporter’ for the PFI in the Kerala PFI case.

“Investigations have revealed that the PFI had assigned the job of a ‘reporter’ to the accused, Mohammed Sadik. A ‘reporter’ in the PFI system collects details about leaders of other communities for possible targeting by ‘Hit Squads’ of the PFI,” the NIA said in a statement.

The searches were conducted in connection with the activities of PFI, its office bearers, members and affiliates in Kerala, for conspiring to indulge in unlawful activities, by creating enmity between members of different religions and groups prejudicial to maintenance of the peace and communal harmony. The NIA is



also probing the role of the outfit for encouraging vulnerable youth to join terrorist organisations, including Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)/Daesh and Al-Qaida and conspiracy to establish Islamic rule in India by committing terrorist act as a part of violent jihad, the agency said.

The case was suo-motu registered by the NIA Kochi on September 19. Sadik is a resident of House No. 1, Manalezhuthu Thata, Chavara, Kollam.

During the searches, digital devices and several incriminating documents have been seized from the house of the accused. Further investigations in the case are in progress, it added.

CBI books 31 including 18 Navy staff for I-T refund fraud in Kerala

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has booked 31 persons of Kerala, including 18 Navy personnel, for allegedly claiming Income Tax refunds worth over ₹44 lakh by making false claims of various deductions (relating to rent paid and donations to political parties) which were not included in Form-16.

The CBI has booked personnel of Navy and police, and executives of two private companies technology service major (Hewlett Packard Enterprise Global Soft Private Limited) and life insurance provider (Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance Company Limited)



besides public sector insurer SBI Life Insurance Company Limited for allegedly using services of agents to make the fake claims, officials said.

The agency has alleged that the agents were charging 10 percent of the Income Tax refund as fee, they said.

The CBI action came on a complaint from the Principal Chief Income Tax Commissioner of Kerala, who alleged that a total of 51 people had made the false claims.

“Out of these 51 assesseees, 20 individual assesseees, who had falsely claimed and received refund of income tax, repaid the refunded amount totalling ₹24,62,788 to the Income Tax Department, after a notice was issued to them by the IT Department, admitting that they had committed mistake in claiming the income tax refund,” the FIR alleged.

The CBI has alleged that the remaining 31 people, all salaried employees, 18 of them belong to the Indian Navy and two of Kerala Police, booked in the FIR have yet not returned the falsely claimed income tax refund totalling ₹44,07,623 to the income tax department.

Drive to mark role of rivers, ports, shipping in life of citizens launched

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister of Shipping, Waterways and Ports, Sarbananda Sonowal on Wednesday launched a unique drive to highlight the role of rivers-ports-shipping in everyday life of a common man through a series of events where regional, national and international dialogues, conferences and awards have been planned in the coming months.

“At a time when our Prime Minister Narendra Modi is leading the world on a new path, the initiative by Institute for Governance, Policies and Politics (IGPP) to bring forth the significance of shipping, ports and waterways to the minds of common people, is appreciable. It will create awareness about the issues of the industry,” said the Minister.

He reminded that while rivers and seas remain central to our spiritual life, we are no longer concerned about riverbeds, cleanliness of our rivers as we have become used to running water from our



taps. “No longer are the songs celebrating our rivers, expressing our sorrows when they flood and praying for seafarers safety part of our daily existence. Such traditions have remained limited to communities settled on riverbanks and coasts,” the Minister added.

It is important that people living on land are also reminded of the significance of rivers and seas. This should become part of our social psyche, the ‘janmanas’, of our people.

The Government under its flagship program Sagarmala,

has aimed to achieve port-led development and integrate the common people in India’s success story, Sonowal said.

Bharat Pravah is being organized at a time when India is celebrating Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsava with a focus on economic, cultural and historical significance of India’s waterways, ports and shipping. It is also important to understand its contributions to our everyday life and various nuances attached to it which presently we are largely either unaware of or ignored, said Manish Tiwari from IGPP.

Modi to kick off Shinde Sena-BJP campaign today for BMC polls

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will kick off the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena-BJP alliance's campaign for the crucial Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) polls, when he launches a slew of projects worth Rs 36,000 crore that promise to transform the country's commercial capital on Thursday.

Modi's visit to Mumbai is of considerable political significance as he is visiting for the first time ever since the Shinde-Devendra Fadnavis government in June last year after toppling the Uddhav Thackeray-led MVA government and the visit comes ahead of a formal announcement about the impending BMC elections.

Among the projects that he



would inaugurate during his visit to the metropolis, Modi will dedicate Rs 12,600 crore worth Mumbai - 2A and 7 - Metro Line projects which will connect the western suburbs between Andheri and Dahisar. The Prime Minister had laid the foundation stone of these metro lines in 2015.

In addition to the throwing open the two metro lines to the public, hModi Modi is scheduled to launch the "MUMBAI 1 Mobile App and National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) Mumbai -1, an App

will facilitate ease of travel, can be shown on the entry gates of Metro Stations and supports digital payment to buy tickets through UPI.

In an effort to boost civic amenities in Mumbai, the Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone of seven sewage treatment plants, which will be built at a cost of around Rs 17,200 crores. These sewage treatment plants will be set up in Malad, Bhandup, Versova, Ghatkopar, Bandra, Dharavi and Worli. They will have a combined capacity of around 2,460 Million Litres a Day (MLD).

Similarly to strengthen health care infrastructure in Mumbai, Modi will inaugurate 20 "Hinduhridaysamrat Balasaheb Thackeray Aapla Dawakhana" (civic hospitals).

This initiative will provide essential medical services like health checkups, medicines, investigations and diagnostics completely free, to the people.

The Prime Minister will also lay the foundation stone for redevelopment of three hospitals in Mumbai viz. 360-bedded Bhandup Multispeciality Municipal Hospital, 306-bedded Siddharth Nagar Hospital, Goregaon-West and 152-bedded Oshiwara Maternity Home. This will benefit lakhs of residents of the city and will deliver top class medical facilities to them.

Modi will also kick-start the road concretisation project for around 400 km roads of Mumbai. This project will be developed at a cost of about Rs 6,100 crore.

Unnao rape victim alleges threat to witnesses

Video released soon after Sengar was granted bail by Delhi HC

PNS ■ LUCKNOW



The victim in the 2017 Unnao rape case has alleged threat to witnesses in the case after convict and former Bharatiya Janata Party legislator Kuldeep Sengar was granted parole by the Delhi High Court.

In a video released right after Sengar's parole, the victim sought the Supreme Court's intervention to keep him under police custody to prevent him from intimidating the witnesses.

"If the Delhi High Court has given interim bail to

Kuldeep Singh Sengar, then he should be taken out of jail in custody of Delhi Police and kept under the supervision of the CBI. Because he is going to his daughter's wedding for 14 days. All my witnesses and all my advocates will be finished. It will be a great favour to all of you," the victim said.

Sengar, convicted for life for allegedly raping a minor girl in 2017, was on Tuesday granted 15 days' parole to attend his daughter's wedding. The parole was granted

by a division bench of Justices Mukta Gupta and Poonam A Bamba from January 27 to February 10. It directed Sengar to report to a prescribed station house officer on a daily basis during his release period and furnish two sureties of Rs 1 lakh each.

Sengar was sentenced by trial court on December 20, 2019 to "life imprisonment till the remainder of his biological life". The trial court found Sengar guilty under Section 376 (rape) of the Indian Penal

Code and sections 5(c) and 6 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. The rape case dates back to June 4, 2017, when the victim, then 17, was allegedly raped by the four-time BJP MLA from Bangermau in Uttar Pradesh's Unnao district.

Sengar was also sentenced in another case on March 13, 2020 to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 10 lakh after the victim's father, who was allegedly framed and arrested in an illegal arms case, died in judicial custody on April 9, 2018. On July 28, 2019, the victim's two aunts were killed when a speeding truck hit the car in which they along with the victim and her lawyer were traveling. The victim and her lawyer were critically injured in the accident.

Sengar was expelled from the party by the BJP in August 2019.

BJP ignites spark right before Rahul's Yatra enters J&K

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Ahead of the entry of ACongress leader Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra' in Jammu and Kashmir the local unit of Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) Wednesday ignited the spark by demanding that he should apologise to the Nation, especially the people of Jammu & Kashmir, for the blunders and the sins committed by his family and party in the region over the last 70 years.

At the same time the J&K Congress unit faced a piquant situation after its spokesperson Deepika Pushkar Nath resigned from the party, citing its decision to "allow" former minister Lal Singh to join the Bharat Jodo Yatra. Singh is currently the chairman of Dogra Swabhimani Sangathan Party (DSSP). "In view of Ch.Lal



Singh's proposal of joining Bharat Jodo Yatra and J&K Congress allowing the same, I am left with no other option but to resign from the Congress party. Lal Singh was responsible in sabotaging the Kathua rape case in 2018 by brazenly defending rapists", Deepika tweeted late Tuesday evening.

Reacting on the issue, J & K Pradesh Congress Committee chief spokesperson

Ravinder Sharma said, "Deepika announced her decision to resign from the party on Twitter. The high command has taken note and will decide on it".

"He said, the stand of our party on the rape and murder case is crystal clear as we stand with the family of the victim and have always favoured a fair probe to bring the culprits to book".

Go, advise Taliban: Adhikari to Amartya

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Days after Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen backed Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's claim to Prime Ministership, State Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari on Wednesday slammed the Shantiniketan-groomed economist for his alleged "hidden agenda" and "politically biased" statements and advised him to go abroad and take rest.

Speaking on Sen's views Adhikari said "he (Sen) should now go abroad and take rest ... he is giving politically biased statements now but where was he during the pandemic when the people of the country were dying ... where was he when the BJP workers in Bengal were attacked and murdered after the 2021 Assembly elections

"And now he has come to issue politically biased opinions ... he does not seem to be



speaking like an economist or an academic ... he is speaking like a politician with a hidden agenda ... no one needs his advice here ... he should better go and advise the Taliban Government or for that matter Zelenski instead of making politically biased predictions."

Much to the joy of the Trinamool Congress leadership while speaking to a news agency about Mamata Banerjee's chances to become India's Prime Minister, a few days ago said that Banerjee was

quite capable of being one.

"It's not that she does not have the ability to do it. She clearly has the ability. On the other hand, it's yet not established that Mamata can pull the forces of public dismay against the BJP in an integrated way to make it possible for her to have the leadership to put an end to the fractionalisation in India," he said even as the TMC supremo immediately lapped up the statement saying Sen's views were like a command to her.

"Amartya Sen is a world-class scholar ... of our pride. His observations guide us. His advice is a command for us. His observation and assessment of the current situation in the country should be taken seriously by all," Banerjee said later said adding Sen was aware of the importance of regional parties in different states, which was why he wanted to raise awareness in this regard with his speech.

Ban on public meetings on roads: SC to hear Andhra's plea against HC order

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday said it will hear on January 19 the plea of the Andhra Pradesh government challenging the High Court's recent directive suspending the operation of a government order that prohibited public meetings and rallies on roads, including national highways.

A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice PS Narasimha agreed to hear the Andhra Pradesh government's petition on Thursday after the standing counsel for the state sought an urgent hearing.

On January 12, the Andhra Pradesh High Court had suspended till January 23 the operation of the government order (GO) that barred public meetings and rallies on state roads and national highways.

"Court is prima facie of the opinion that the impugned



GO No.1 is contrary to the procedure provided under Section 30 of the Police Act, 1861," it had held.

The high court had passed the interim order on a writ petition filed by CPI state secretary K Ramakrishna challenging the GO and posted the case for further hearing on January 20. It had sought the state government's response before that date.

The petitioner has contended before the high court that the GO was brought to "stifle" the opposition's voice against the government.

Khel Mahakumbh shaping future of new generation: Modi

Athletes are being picked up for further training under Sports Authority of India, says PM

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday inaugurated the second phase of Sansad Khel Mahakumbh 2022-23 organised at Shaheed Satyawani Stadium via video conferencing.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath was also present on this occasion.

Recalling the time when sports was considered just an extracurricular activity with little importance, the prime minister said that this led to many talented sportspersons not achieving their potential.

"But today's nation has a different perspective towards it, and more children and young people are considering sports as a career," he added.

The prime minister said that the effects of change could be seen through the achievements of the country in the field of sports. He said sports were



getting due prestige in society.

Modi said that about 200 MPs had organised such khel mahakumbh in their constituencies. "By organising such events, the MPs are shaping the future of the new generation," the prime minister said, and added,

"Through these games, performing athletes are being picked up for further training under the Sports Authority of India."

Expressing delight over wit-

nessing the kho-kho game played by the girls during the event, the prime minister said, "The daughters of the land played the game with great skill, dexterity and team spirit. I congratulate all the daughters. Our daughters are participating in the Sansad Khel Mahakumbh. I have faith that the daughters of Basti, Purvanchal and Uttar Pradesh will continue to show their strength in national and international competitions."

COPD patients likely to die year after major surgery: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



Patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), who undergo major surgery, are 61 per cent more likely to die in the year after surgery, an Indian-origin researcher-led study has revealed in a study published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal.

These patients are also likely to incur higher health care costs than similar patients without COPD, found a new study published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal. "Because patients with COPD are often frail and have many health problems, their management around the time of surgery should address not only COPD but all their health issues," said Dr Ashwin Sankar, an anesthesiologist at St. Michael's Hospital, a site of Unity Health Toronto, and the University of Toronto.

The study included 932 616 patients aged 35 years and

older in Ontario who underwent major surgery, including total hip or knee replacement, gastrointestinal surgery, vascular surgery and other elective noncardiac surgeries. Of all patients, about 1 in 5 (170,482) had COPD.

Patients with COPD were older, and more likely to be male, frail, have lower income and have pre-existing conditions such as coronary artery disease, diabetes and lung cancers.

Researchers found that compared with demographically similar patients without COPD undergoing similar surgery, people with COPD had a 61 per cent increased risk of dying and a 13 per cent

increase in health care costs in the year after surgery.

These increased risks and costs were evident long after the immediate 30-day postoperative period.

"Patients with COPD typically have concurrent comorbidity, biopsychosocial issues and frailty," the authors wrote. "Our findings highlight the importance of careful risk prediction and decision-making for patients with COPD who are considering surgery."

They hope that their findings of increased health care costs will help with system-level planning by policy-makers and hospital administrators to better respond to the postsurgical needs of people with COPD.

TMC, not Cong, can resist BJP: Abhishek

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

Close on the heels of ignoring Rahul Gandhi's invite to join Bharat Jodo Yatra the top Trinamool Congress leadership on Wednesday launched a frontal attack on the parent party for failing to live up to the expectations of the opposition voters and hence it should be the TMC and not the Congress that should be seen as the true anti-BJP face.

Speaking at an election rally in Meghalaya which goes to polls next month TMC general secretary Abhishek Banerjee on Wednesday said if the people of the north-eastern State wished to take the BJP head on then "not the Congress but the Trinamool Congress is the right platform."

Speaking at a rally at Tura in Meghalaya Banerjee who is also the nephew of Mamata Banerjee said "death knell had been sounded on the BJP," but



it was not the Congress but the TMC that could match up to the people's expectations.

"If you are thinking of voting for the Congress then remember that one vote to the Congress means a vote to the BJP because you saw what happened in Goa and Madhya Pradesh," where the Congress failed to discharge the duty of a true opposition party and not only lost to the BJP but also allowed its leaders to defect to the saffron party, junior Banerjee said.

The TMC in Meghalaya owes its existence to a massive defection from the Congress in Meghalaya Assembly.

Rhino returns to forest cleared of encroachment in Assam

PTI ■ NORTH LAKHIMPUR

Days after encroachments were cleared from almost 90 per cent area of Pava Reserve Forest in Assam's Lakhimpur district, a one-horned rhino was spotted in the evicted site, bringing cheers to wildlife protectors, officials said on Wednesday.

According to Lakhimpur Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Ashok Kumar Dev Choudhury, the adult rhino was seen roaming on Tuesday in the villages that were cleared of encroachment from the Reserve Forest.

"Though villagers have claimed to have seen three rhinos, we have noticed one. Public are disturbing the rhinos, who attacked and injured three persons yesterday," the DFO told PTI.

Choudhury said that the rhino most likely came out



from Kaziranga National Park and reached Pava.

"If the public cooperates with us, we will send it back to Kaziranga again," he added.

Some experts, however, opined that this lone rhino probably lost its path and strayed into the village lands, now freed from encroachment, inside Pava.

The administration had

started an eviction drive to clear encroachment on January 10, which continued for several days, to evict around 500 "illegal settler" families.

Expressing happiness over spotting the rhino inside Pava Reserve Forest, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the animals were seen in the land freed from encroachment just a few days ago.

Woman kills 2-month-old daughter in dire poverty

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a heartbreaking incident, a woman who murdered her two-month-old daughter due to poverty in Jhansi was arrested, police said on Wednesday.

The infant's body was found in a drain behind the house 28 hours later by the Poonch police probing the incident. The incident came to light when the father of the infant sought the police help to trace his missing daughter. The woman kept giving contradicting accounts on her whereabouts at the time of crime. She broke down later during interrogation and admitted to the crime citing her poverty.

Senior Superintendent of Police Rajesh S said 112 (emergency helpline) police received information on Sunday that a two-month-old baby was missing from a

house in Nai Basti under the jurisdiction of Poonch police station. "Acting on the complaint, the police immediately reached the spot and launched a search operation," he said.

About 28 hours later, on Monday, the infant's body was found in a drain behind the house, after which the police started questioning the family members, including the mother. Investigations revealed that the woman and the infant were alone at the house when the incident occurred.

The woman said she had gone out for some time on Sunday and she found the baby missing from the residence. She claimed that it could have been the handiwork of cats from the thick forest adjoining her backyard. However, her stories fell flat after the lifeless corpse of the infant was fished out of the drain.

Army obtains copyright for new uniform



TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Indian Army has obtained Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) of the design and camouflage pattern of its newly introduced Camouflage Pattern Dress.

The copyright of the design is with the Indian Army for 10 years extendable by another five years. The Army has obtained IPR of the design to "prevent unauthorized vendors from manufacturing and selling the combat pattern dress in the open market as it was posing a serious security threat for the Indian Army and the Nation as a whole".

The improved combat uniform was unveiled by the Chief of Army Staff during the Army Day.

Nadda keeps his job

The BJP national executive was all about sounding the poll bugle and re-electing Nadda as party chief

The main takeaway from the BJP’s two-day National Executive meeting in Delhi was the extension of the term of JP Nadda who would now be the party president till the next General elections to be held in 2024. The speech of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other senior leaders reflected the seriousness with which the BJP is going to the next year’s general elections. In this context, the extension granted to Nadda is significant. He is seen as a leader who is both acceptable to the Big Two in the BJP and also capable of delivering the expected result. Union Home Minister Amit Shah made the formal announcement to this effect asserted that the BJP was a political party of India that follows democratic processes and values in its functioning the most. “Right from the days of Jan Singh’s establishment to date — the BJP has conducted elections from booth to the national president as mandated by our constitution,” he said. He conveniently forgot that for democratically electing a candidate you need at least two contestants, or else it is a nomination, not an election.

However, before he oversees General elections, he would have to take the litmus test of state elections that are to take place this year. As many as nine states would be going to polls including Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, and Rajasthan where a tough fight is on the cards. These elections come on the heels of three elections where the party did not do as well as it would have liked to. It lost Himachal Pradesh, Nadda’s home state, and could not make a comeback in the Delhi Civic elections. With the party now poised to face the next General Elections with him at the helm it would be indeed a challenging task. Though the state elections are quite different in their approach and substance, they do have a bearing on the General elections if they are not very far in time from the General elections. These nine states send 116 MPs to Parliament and so would be crucial for any party that wants to do well in General elections. The BJP leaders were all praise for JP Nadda for his organizational skills and credited him with the wins the party posted in his tenure. Amit Shah said that the BJP, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the organizational hand of Nadda, was poised to win the 2024 General Elections with a bigger mandate than in 2019. He also praised Nadda for his ‘Sewa hi Sangathan’ outreach during the COVID-19 pandemic and for directing party workers in providing help. How much JP Nadda lives up to these accolades only the election results would tell. The national executive had all the fanfare that has now become customary in all the BJP’s functions. The eye-catcher of course was the Prime Minister’s roadshow to the convention centre that qualified as a show of strength.



Participants at a boat racing competition on the Ganga, in Varanasi

PTI

Mundane & esoteric

Pilot takes potshots at his bête noire, CM Gehlot, this time over the paper leaks scam

The truce between Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and his archrival Sachin Pilot seem to be evaporating, with the latter addressing rallies and even attacking his own party’s Government in the state. At a rally on Monday, Pilot, who served as Deputy CM under Gehlot, insisted on the arrest of the big fish behind the recent paper leaks, not just small-time middlemen. Sometimes question papers are leaked, sometimes exams are cancelled, Pilot said, adding that it is very painful and distressing. Children and their parents go through so much trouble. Students toil for their exams. “I hope the government acts against the big fish instead of going after the small-time touts.” The Gehlot Government in Rajasthan used bulldozers to demolish a coaching institute allegedly run by the main accused in the question paper leak scandal; the examination was for the recruitment of second-grade teachers. It’s a typical scam; you can predict what everyone will say. The Bharatiya Janata Party talked about “betrayal” of the candidates and demanded a CBI inquiry. Pilot appears to be trying to embarrass the administration under bête noir, Gehlot. What is conspicuous here is the Congress top leadership’s indifferent attitude to the big scam that can hurt its electoral prospects in the state Assembly poll which is 10 months away.

This is despite the fact that Rajasthan is the biggest state in which the grand old party is in power; loss in the desert state — which, like Himachal Pradesh, is known to vote out the incumbent in Assembly polls — should bother the

Gandhi family. That, however, doesn’t seem to be the case. Rahul Gandhi, who appears to have attained nirvana, is too engrossed in his Bharat Jodo Yatra to be disturbed by such mundane matters as dissidence in the party. Sonia Gandhi is not in the pink; and Priyanka Vadra, who many in the party thought had the charisma, is yet to exhibit her political acumen, if she has any. Meanwhile dissidence in Rajasthan festers badly. Unfortunately for the GOP, infighting among top leaders is a big problem in other states as well. Rahul and others need to acknowledge the fact that while national unity and social harmony are laudable ideas, cohesion in the party is also a prerequisite for revival. The mundane cannot be ignored for the sake of the esoteric.

Rumblings under the Joshimath hills

Commissioning of hydro-electric projects in Uttarakhand is an ecological harakiri. Despite warnings, the NTPC project in Vishnugad was carried on

Joshimath is one of the four ‘maths’ discovered by Adi Guru Shri Sankaracharya in the 8th century AD. Situated at an altitude of 2100 metres in the Chamoli District, and has for time immemorial been the preferred halt for pilgrims while proceeding to the Char Dham Yatra of Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri, and Yamunotri. This simple town home to 20,000 population, has now made the headlines with the authorities declaring the place disaster prone due to land subsidence. Nearly 700 commercial, residential and army structures in the town have developed cracks due to rapidly sinking land. Thankfully there has been no loss of life reported till date although 60 families have been evacuated from dangerous buildings till date and a further 6000 to 25 residents are expected to be evacuated by the state government in the coming days.

The holy town being at the junction point for people visiting Auli, a skiing spot has high tourist footfalls. According to the State Tourism Department data 1,65,000 tourists descended on Joshimath in 2021 for visiting Auli whereas nearly half a million pilgrims passed through the town in the same year visiting Char Dham Yatra and Hemkund Sahib. But this figure reached dizzying levels in 2022 when close to five crore tourists, 3.8 crore Kanwar Yatris and 45 lakh Char Dham pilgrims visited the hapless town of Joshimath. Given these spectacular numbers, it was no wonder that the state government held 2022 as one of the most successful years for tourism in Uttarakhand.

The burgeoning tourism brought growing commerce and urbanisation which translated into building of nearly 50 motels and restaurants in the town in total violation of hill building norms. The state government, busy feeding on tourism revenue, turned a complete blind eye to these transgressions. The result was evident in disturbed natural water drainage, undercut slopes, and uncontrolled discharge of water. The fact that the town had formed over time on an ancient landslide site and that a river cur-



rently flows under the town did not help as the base landscape is shifty in nature at best and is unable to handle stress.

But the damages inflicted by tourism, people and commercialisation of Joshimath probably pale in comparison to large scale infrastructure development done in the region in utter disregard for the fragile ecology and geology of the region. In fact, as long back 1976 The Mishra Committee report observed that Joshimath is a deposit of sand and stone — it is not the main rock — hence it is not suitable for a township. But the town still grew and in recent times a slew of developmental initiatives such as Hydroelectric projects, bypass roads and rail projects have transformed the quiet environs of Joshimath town region into a beehive of construction and infrastructure development activity.

These projects in due course took their toll on the local environment and ecology. Many environmental experts, nature conservation NGOs and locals repeatedly raised alarm about the deteriorating ecological conditions of Joshimath. The residents blamed the tunnelling work being done on the Rishikesh-Karnprayag rail project and the dynamiting taking place for

“THE NTPC PROJECT TUNNEL PASSING THROUGH JOSHIMATH GOT PUNCTURED IN DECEMBER 2009 AND ABOUT 600 LITRES OF WATER STARTED FLOWING OUT PER SECOND. FOR THE LAST 12 YEARS, THIS WATER HAS BEEN FLOWING OUT

the extension of the Char Dham road for the sinking of land and cracks. The residents also blamed the construction of the Helang bypass, meant to shorten the distance to Badrinath by 30 km, but these protests fell on deaf ears. Over the last three years, the Joshimath Bachao Sangharsh Samiti had also issued repeated warnings to the state government on the sinking town.

The NTPC hydro project at Tapovan-Vishnugad is now fast emerging as the eye of the Joshimath storm. Local environmental activists such as Atul Sati and several other geologists are of the opinion that the NTPC’s under-construction power project at Tapovan-Vishnugad and its tunnel passing below Joshimath is to be blamed for the current disaster. Owing to this NTPC has issued a statement that the tunnel is being built using a Tunnel Boring Machine, and not by doing any blasting.

However, experts and activists believe that the NTPC project’s tunnel passing through Joshimath got punctured in December 2009 and about 600 litres of water started flowing per second and for the last 12 years, this water has been flowing. This means that an aquifer beneath the town

had burst, and water kept flowing. Now that the reservoir is empty, the land is sinking. This information finds mention in a paper titled ‘Disaster looms large over Joshimath’, by geologist Dr MPS Bisht and Piyoosh Rautela, Executive Director at Uttarakhand State Disaster Management Authority.

The authors wrote that “a tunnel boring machine (TBM) was employed for excavating the head race tunnel and on 24 December 2009, it punctured water-bearing strata 3 km inward of the left bank of Alaknanda near Shelong village. The site was a kilometer below the surface, somewhere below Auli. The water discharge was reportedly between 700 and 800 litres per second,” the paper says, adding that “the aquifer discharge was about 60–70 million litres daily, enough to sustain 2–3 million people”. Bisht and Rautela had warned about the consequences of this accident and said this sudden and large-scale dewatering of the strata had the potential of “initiating ground subsidence in the region”. This prediction seems to have ominously come true for Joshimath.

(The first of a two-part series on Joshimath. The author is a policy analyst)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ARTIFICIAL INTEL COMES OF AGE

Sir — The open-source platform is the new buzz in Silicon Valley which has taken more than a million users by surprise. Founded in late 2015, San Francisco-based Open A.I. was the handiwork of Sam Altman, Elon Musk, and others. It has aroused the consciousness and curiosity of internet users.

This software can write poems, articles, and journal essays with perfection, sending alarming signals to educational institutions and university professors who are thinking of even banning or restricting their use in England and America.

Ever since Chat GPT, a new Chatbot that the startup called Open AI was released in November last year, Silicon Valley has sparked a fresh debate about whether to make it available free to all internet users which is fraught with danger or run the risk of plagiarism on a vast scale. It works by learning from vast amounts of data how to answer any prompt by a user in a human-like way offering loads of information for an aspiring writer or novelist.

Artificial intelligence is set to change the contours of learning and writing in a big way. It can often mislead people into believing facts that are untrue. It is still prone to misinformation and biases that have plagued previous versions of GPT as well. If machines Can do all the writing, can creative prowess take a back seat and will there be anything new for the students to explore are questions that need to be answered Society and industry must be ready for newer challenges posed by the changing trends of A.I.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Almora

A NICE GESTURE

Sir — It is nice to learn that the last titular Nizam VIII of Hyderabad, the late Mukarram Jah Bahadur had contributed immensely to the social welfare acts of the poor in Hyderabad (for education and health) via his trust (and institutes run by it). Late Mukarram was officially Nizam (prince) of Hyderabad for 4 years from 1967 till 1971. Mukarram died at 89 years, on 16th Jan 2023, in Istanbul, Turkey. Late

A difficult task for the FM



The Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has a difficult task cut out for her as she may have to address some of the genuine demands this time as it will be the last full-fledged budget of the BJP-led Narendra Modi government before the Lok Sabha polls in April-May 2024. As it is, Sitharaman will have to make a tightrope walk to balance the growth momentum with inflation, though the slowdown is still at uncomfortable levels, partly triggered by the

global economic situation. Given the impending elections, the FM cannot afford to be harsh, particularly to the middle class, the chunk of whom formed a major constituency. India’s tax-GDP ratio is still much lower than advanced economies. But high growth gave some room for tax mobilization efforts.

This year, both indirect and direct tax collections are buoyant. As it is, India’s food subsidy bill is very high after the government decided to provide food ration during COVID to 80 crore people, some of whom lost jobs. The middle-class and salaried class were sandwiched during COVID and the wrong policies of the government. The senior citizens had it worse with bank interest rates falling and their savings eroding with increased medical expenditure during COVID. It has been a double whammy for them.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

Mukarram declined the post of vice president offered to him when the late Indira Gandhi was the PM. Once he visited Iraq as PM’s special envoy. His relatives in Hyderabad and India could help the nation in fostering better relations with Arab and Muslim nations.

Height of surprise that Late Mukarram’s grandfather was the richest man on the planet and owed a fleet of Rolls Royce cars and a diamond worth ₹1000 crore, which he used as a paperweight. This now stands deposited with RBI (at HO in Mumbai). It was bigger than the Kohinoor diamond (of India), which was taken away by the British, to adorn the crown of their Queen (Elizabeth II). Late Mukarram’s property was always in several court cases due to his descendants, his five wives, and relatives.

WINNING WAYS

Sir — The confidence reposed by the national party and the ruling disposition at the BJP exuding confidence in winning all nine state assembly elections this year is a confident one. The party under

Modi-Shah combined made a big leap from holding a couple of parliamentary seats to this level is highly phenomenal. Their backup team and IT worked wonders in the past and continue their supremacy at the highest level. The resounding victory in the Gujarat elections is a rejoinder to the opposition.

Once the election is over in a state, the team plunges to action for the next term and thereby has a full measure and the pulse of the voters very much. We don’t have stiff opposition at the center and in states, the regional parties post some resistance but not up to the expected level. Even though it is not a cakewalk, BJP is having a vice-like grip on the election scenario and confidence personified. Leave alone winning all the 9 states in a heap, even winning 7 out of 9 is a brilliant performance to the ruling dispensation. Good luck BJP aim for a big win and they understood the winning ways before the other parties could commence election preparations.

CK Subramaniam | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

Pegasus, Rafale, ED, Central Vista, Reservation, and Demonetisation... these were the topics on which the opposition accused the Prime Minister through baseless claims but he had to face the court.

Finance Minister — Nirmala Sitharaman

Freedom to protest is a fundamental principle but not absolute... Before Christmas, I promised to better support law enforcement to stop disruptive protests. Today, this government has delivered on that promise.

UK Prime Minister — Rishi Sunak

We are just divided by time zones and a little bit of an accent. Other than that, what an actor goes through in the West is exactly the same process as in the East.

Actor — JR NTR

It was a great series for us. Lots of positives. Good to see how he (Siraj) was bowling... deserved all those slips.

Indian skipper — Rohit Sharma

Today, the AAP has the Govt in Delhi and they (BJP) have the L-G. Tomorrow, it is possible we have a Govt at the Centre and our L-G. I assure you our L-G will not behave like this.

Delhi CM — Arvind Kejriwal

FIRST COLUMN

NAAC HELPS STUDENTS CHOOSE INSTITUTION

We must not see NAAC accreditation just as an event



Quality is a concept; it's a philosophy; it's a journey; it's also what we practice. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) strives to create awareness and understanding of quality, and quality assurance in higher education as a necessary ingredient to national development.

The accreditation status in case of higher education signifies that the particular Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) – a College, a University, or any other recognized unit therein achieves the standards of quality as set by the accreditation agency on grounds of performance, linked to the educational processes and outcomes, covering the programmed, teaching-learning, evaluation, faculty, research, infrastructure, learning resources, organization, governance, financial well-being and student services.

From the point of view of students, NAAC grading helps the students to choose the institution for higher studies. Getting the highest grade of A++ for any institute is certainly a great achievement. For the record, many big brands in the field of higher education, living on their past glory or on the strength of an associated corporate brand, have not been able to rise to the challenge which the rigorous NAAC inspection poses.



The inspection is based on both qualitative and quantitative criteria. Guided by its vision, "to establish, maintain and promote centers of excellence for imparting quality professional education in India and abroad" and striving to achieve its mission of "Man Making, Character Building, Nation Building", Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies has always believed in the holistic development of its students.

This is the spur behind our elevation to the highest category after a recent inspection. Shouldering the responsibility of being a HEI, we believe in disseminating relevant knowledge, identifying skill gaps, and running specially designed programs to build the right skills to develop a workforce suitable to the changing needs of the economy. Providing the best state of the art infrastructure along with introducing progressive initiative to hone the cognitive, problem solving, leadership and communication skills of our students has been at the center of the years of efforts that the Institute has put in and will continue to put in to transform "education".

With various Centers of excellence, numerous value-added and skill enhancement courses, lectures from the best experts in the field, workshops for hands-on experience, VIPS continuously strives to cater to the needs of the changing order of the business environment. The teaching pedagogies followed at the Institute are specially designed to ensure maximum student engagement. Not just intellectual, VIPS caters to the socio-emotional and mental wellbeing of its students and staff. Inner Space – The spiritual Centre at VIPS is a unique offering that provides students and staff a place to unwind and be with oneself. The NAAC A++ grade reflects the untiring efforts and commitment of the Institute towards imparting quality education par excellence.

Constant support and motivation from the management provided additional zeal to the team to take care of any minute change required to present the work more comprehensively and meaningfully. The team worked beyond their comfort zone to take care and cover all technical aspects of the process. Continued commitment to contribute, a visionary leadership and a meticulous team are the key pillars to reaching this milestone in our unstoppable journey.

We must not see NAAC accreditation as an event that concludes with receiving the accreditation certificate. When viewed from the lens of the inspiration and purpose of internal improvements, it gives a new sense of direction to build strength and overcome weaknesses and also helps in strengthening systematic ways of planning. It's an exercise which every teaching institution should undertake.

(The authors are Chairman and Principal of Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies, New Delhi)

Instability in Pak can be cause for concern



India can help Pakistan if the latter checks terrorism emanating from its soil, stops raising Kashmir and gives India the 'Most Favoured Nation' status

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself". Unfortunately, both the immediate neighbours – Pakistan and China – are hostile towards India. However, the growing political and economic instabilities in Pakistan are a serious concern for India, resulting in refugee problems, terrorism and nuclear weapons going in the wrong hands of terrorists.

India's motto of relationship with other countries is Vasudev Kutumbakam, meaning that the whole world is one family. The growing political instability in Pakistan cannot but be a source of concern for India. Former Prime Minister, Imran Khan, who survived an assassination attempt, resumed his long march to Islamabad to press for early general elections. He took on not just the ruling Shehbaz Sharif-led administration but also the army, which wields the real power in that country. The army considers the former premier's charges as "absolutely unacceptable".

Actually, Khan became PM with the help of the all-powerful army but fell out as he chose to go against the army. Interestingly, not a single Prime Minister in Pakistan has completed a full five-year term since the country's independence in 1947. Pakistan's political tensions and Army's direct interference in the political upheaval have resulted in serious economic fall, resulting in high inflation, enormous unemployment of youth and poor foreign exchange reserves. The worst has been nature's fury of floods in the country from June to October last year, which killed 1,739 people, 45,000 wounded and caused ? 3.2 trillion (\$14.9 billion) of damage and ? 3.3 trillion (\$15.2 billion) of economic losses. Floods have also damaged over 9.4 million acres of crops and 33 million people became homeless. Extending "heartfelt condolences" to victims of the floods, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 29, 2022 said he was saddened by the situation, in a rare outreach to the neighbouring country. People of Pakistan expected financial and material aid from India on humanitarian grounds but its raising of the Kashmir issue in the UN Security Council during that time constrained India for any aid.

Due to political instability and high corruption especially in the Army, Pakistan's economy had a free fall from six per cent to two per cent of the GDP and due to this natural disaster, Pakistan's economy further dipped to only 0.4 per cent of the GDP as per World Bank.

The Shehbaz Sharif Government is finding it difficult to tackle the raging double-digit food inflation. Wheat price inflation in rural areas has spiraled from 4.8 per cent in January 2022 to 38 per cent in July, which is bound to severely impact the living condition of the population.

The prices of wheat, vegetables and fuel have skyrocketed. It is buying wheat



ISLAMABAD HAS SECURED LOAN PLEDGES FROM ITS ALLIES LIKE CHINA, UAE AND SAUDI ARABIA. BUT SERVICING ITS MASSIVE EXTERNAL DEBT OF \$130 BILLION CANNOT BE PRIORITISED AS IT FASHIONS A POLICY RESPONSE TO A CLIMATE CHANGE-RELATED DISASTER

(The author is a retired professor of international trade)



and coal from Afghanistan at very exorbitant rates. Pakistanis are fighting for wheat flour (atta), dal, vegetables and fruits due to dire shortages of foodstuff as their rogue army diverts all funds to terrorists and shipping army brats to England, Australia and USA at taxpayers' expense.

To be sure, Islamabad has secured loan pledges from its allies like China, UAE and Saudi Arabia. But servicing its massive external debt of \$130 billion cannot be prioritised as it fashions a policy response to a climate change-related disaster. The forex reserves of the country dropped to \$7.93 billion; China has contributed \$2.3 bn, Saudi Arabia \$3.2 bn and the IMF \$1.4 bn to shore up its forex. The depreciation of the PKR exchange rate peaked at PKR 225 per dollar however, in the black-market PKR is 240 per dollar.

The Pakistan Government needs at least \$5 billion for 2022-23 on top of the IMF loan but nothing seems to materialise. The debt servicing requirement is \$34 bn this year. Pakistan said on January 9 that donors committed to give more than \$8 billion. This is to help it recover from last year's devastating floods in what is seen as a major test for who pays for climate disasters.

Officials from some 40 countries, as well as private donors and international financial institutions, gathered for a meeting in Geneva under the chairmanship of United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres who requested for massive investments to help Pakistan recover from what he called a "climate disaster of monumental scale" as Islamabad sought help covering around half of a total recovery bill

of \$16.3 billion.

Pakistan Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb said that pledges had reached \$8.57 billion – more than it had initially sought. Among the donors are the Islamic Development Bank (\$4.2 bn), the World Bank (\$2 bn), the Asian Development Bank (\$1.5 bn), as well as the European Union and China.

A failing State is only a recipe for more cross-border terrorism and a more "active" line of control. It may cause refugee problem towards the neighbouring countries including India as it happened during the Bangladesh liberation war with West Pakistan in 1971, an estimated 10 million people of East Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh) fled the country and took refuge in India particularly in the Indian states of West Bengal and Indian North East region, especially Tripura and Assam.

The insurgent group Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) also known as Pakistan Taliban is an alliance of militant networks formed in 2007 to unify opposition against the Pakistani military. TTP's stated objectives are the expulsion of Islamabad's influence in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and neighboring Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province in Pakistan, the implementation of a strict interpretation of sharia throughout Pakistan.

The Taliban are providing a haven to the anti-Pakistan insurgent group the TTP, which has killed thousands of Pakistanis and seeks to establish a Taliban-style, Shariah-compliant state in Pakistan. This has stunned Islamabad, which was operating on the assumption that

the Taliban government of Afghanistan would be beholden to

Pakistan out of gratitude for years of support during the fall of Kabul but failed to do so.

Taliban militants in Pakistan will no longer abide by a monthslong ceasefire with the Pakistani government. In November last year, the TTP called off an indefinite ceasefire agreed with the government in June 2022 and ordered its militants to carry out attacks on the security forces. The TTP, which is believed to have close links to al-Qaeda, has threatened to target top leaders of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's PML-N and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari's PPP if Pakistan continued to implement strict measures against the militants.

India can certainly help Pakistan in case it stops terrorism from its territory, stop raising Kashmir issue at international forums and give India Most Favoured Nation's (MFN) status which is mandatory for all the 164 member countries of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). India granted MFN status to Pakistan in 1996, just a year after the formation of the WTO. Pakistan refused to do so till the Kashmir issue was resolved.

In February 2019 at least 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel lost their lives in a dastardly suicide bombing attack in Pulwama, the Indian government immediately withdrew "Most Favoured Nation" status to Pakistan. Hence, India's decision would significantly hit Pakistan's exports to India, which stood at \$488.5 million (around Rs 3,482.3 crore) in 2017-18 as it has drastically increased the prices of its goods in Pakistan.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

REFRAIN FROM MAKING UNNECESSARY COMMENTS ON MOVIES AS THESE PUT OUR DEVELOPMENT AGENDA ON THE BACK BURNER.
— PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI



NO FILM INSULTING HINDUTVA WILL BE TOLERATED. 'JNU DHARIS' ARE AIMING TO INSULT THE 'JANEU DHARIS'. WE WON'T ALLOW ANY ANTI-HINDU FILM.
— BJP MLA RAM KADAM

Mission Amrit Sarovar shows a sense of urgency

The Government has requested all the States to ensure completion of 'Amrit Sarovar' in a planned manner

The Niti Aayog, the Prime Minister-headed, says that around 60 crore people in the country face high to extreme water stress. About three-fourth of the households in India do not have drinking water at their premises and rely on unsafe sources of water. Nearly 70 per cent of available water is contaminated and our major rivers are dying because of pollution and other factors, pushing India to 120th slot among 122 countries in the water quality index.

According to the most recent study of the Central Ground Water Board data, as many as 256 of 700 districts in India have reported critical or over-exploited groundwater levels. These data are



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

enough to understand how serious the water crisis has become in the country.

This grim situation has forced the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to embark on a new Mission termed as 'Amrit Sarovar'. With a view to conserve water for the future, the Prime Minister launched it on April 24, 2022. The Mission is aimed at developing and rejuvenating 75 water bodies in each district of the country as part of the celebrations of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'. Altogether, it would lead to creation of 50,000 water bodies of a size of about an acre or more.

This Mission has been launched with a whole of government approach in which six Ministries /Departments, dealing main-

ly with water conservation and sanitation issues, besides the Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Application and Geo-informatics (BISAG-N), have also been engaged as technical partners.

The Mission works through the states and districts, through refocusing of various schemes such as Mahatma Gandhi NREGS, XV Finance Commission Grants, PMKSY sub schemes such as Watershed Development Component, 'Har Khet Ko Pani', besides states' own schemes. It may also be mentioned that the Mission encourages mobilisation of citizens and non-government resources for supplementing these efforts.

The 'Mission Amrit Sarovar' is to be completed by

August 15, 2023. Around 50,000 such 'Amrit Sarovar' may be constructed in the country within this period. Each of these 'Amrit Sarovar' will have about an area of one acre with a water holding capacity of 10,000 cubic meter. So far, 12,241 sites have been finalised for construction of 'Amrit Sarovars' by states/districts, out of which, works have started on 4,856 'Amrit Sarovars'.

The Government is trying to ensure people's participation in the Mission for success. For this, local freedom fighters, their family members, Martyr's family members, Padma Awardees and citizens of the local area, wherein an Amrit Sarovar is to be constructed, will be engaged. It has also been

decided that on every August 15, National Flag hoisting will be organised on every Amrit Sarovar site.

The Government has requested all the states to ensure the completion of 'Amrit Sarovar' in a planned manner, emphasising on the use of technology at every stage of the execution. States have also been requested to form the water structure users' association and impart required training for better development of the 'Amrit Sarovars'. Technical and other concerns of the states have already been addressed and the states/UTs have given very positive responses to the Mission.

Coming back to the water crisis, a Niti Aayog report says that India is suffering from

the worst water crisis in its history. The report goes on to add that 21 cities, including Bangalore, Delhi, Hyderabad and Chennai, probably exhausted their groundwater resources in 2021.

Agriculture remains the main consumer of water stock in India. In rural India, 80 to 90 per cent of drinking water needs are fulfilled by groundwater resources. What is more worrisome is that groundwater levels in India declined by over 60 per cent between 2007 and 2017, and of the extracted water, almost 90 per cent is used in agriculture. According to a report by the Central Pollution Control Board, cities are home to 36 per cent of India's population but account for 70 per cent of water pollution. This makes

getting water in the majority of the places of the country much more difficult as the water table has dropped, making India the world's largest extractor of groundwater, accounting for 25 per cent of the total. This puts especially women at a higher risk of vulnerability as they have to walk miles for water related needs in rural areas.

In a 2014 report, the Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation estimated that 70 per cent of India's farming is rainfed. Yet, 65 per cent of its total rainfall ends up in the sea. Water pollution is another cause of worry, which further vitiates the problem. Clearly, we all need to work towards efficient and optimal utilization of water and recycling with a sense of urgency.

(The author is a senior journalist)

Ukraine interior Min, others killed in helicopter crash

AP ■ BROVARY (UKRAINE)

Ukraine's interior minister died on Wednesday in a helicopter crash near the capital that killed more than

a dozen other people, including children, authorities said.

Interior Minister Denys Monastyrskyi, who oversaw Ukraine's police and emergency services, is the

most senior official to die since Russia invaded nearly 11 months ago.

His death, along with two others from his ministry, was the second calamity in four days for Ukraine,



after a Russian missile strike on an apartment building killed dozens of civilians. There was no immediate word on whether the morning crash, near a kindergarten and reportedly in heavy fog, was an accident or related to the war, but Ukrainian authorities immediately opened an investigation. No fighting has been reported recently in the Kyiv area.

Ukraine's State Emergency Service said that 17 people were killed in the crash, including nine people who were aboard the helicopter and four children who presumably were on the ground.

It said 25 people have been injured, including 11 children. Early official reports gave slightly different casualty figures, including a higher death toll. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy

described the crash as "a terrible tragedy" on a "black morning". "The pain is unspeakable," he wrote on Telegram.

British Home Secretary Suella Braverman called the 42-year-old Monastyrskyi "a leading light in supporting the Ukrainian people during Putin's illegal invasion." She said she was "struck by his determination, optimism and patriotism".

Monastyrskyi's deputy Yevhen Yenin and State Secretary of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Yuriy Lubkovich were also among those killed, according to the chief of Ukraine's National Police. Senior officials routinely travel by helicopter during the conflict, often low and at high speed.

Nine of those killed were aboard the chopper when it crashed in

Brovary, an eastern suburb of the Ukrainian capital, police chief Ihor Klymenko said. The others who died were apparently on the ground.

At the scene of the crash, which was near a kindergarten, at least four bodies on the ground were covered by reflective sheets. Officials cleared chunks of charred, mangled wreckage, lying against an apartment building and in a playground. Some walls were partly demolished and blackened.

"It is too early to talk about the reasons," for the crash, the spokesperson for Ukraine's Air Forces, Yuriy Ihnat, told a television channel. He said an investigation could take some time.

The helicopter was a Super Puma supplied by France, he added.

A French defense official said the helicopter was sold to Ukraine in 2019 and was not part of equipment that France has provided since the start of the war. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to be named, according to ministry policy.

The Security Service of Ukraine is conducting an investigation, prosecutor general Andriy Kostin said. "For now, we are considering all possible versions of the helicopter crash accident," he said on Telegram.

IN OTHER DEVELOPMENTS ON WEDNESDAY:

■ President Vladimir Putin defended his invasion again on Wednesday — offering a variation on

arguments he has used previously. The Russian leader told a gathering of veterans that Moscow's actions were intended to stop a "war" that has raged for years in eastern Ukraine, where Russia-backed separatists have battled Ukrainian forces.

"All what we are doing today as part of the special military operation is an attempt to stop this war. This is the meaning of our operation — protecting people who live on those territories," he said.

Ukraine and its Western allies have rejected Russia's justifications arguments, saying Kyiv posed no threat to Moscow and the invasion was unprovoked.

■ Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov repeated that the goals behind the invasion are "determined by Russia's core legitimate interests".

"There must be no military infrastructure in Ukraine that poses a direct threat to our country," Lavrov said at his annual news conference. He claimed that the goal of Ukraine's Western allies is to use the conflict to exhaust Russia.

■ Fighting is continuing in eastern Ukraine around the city of Bakhmut and the nearby salt mining town of Soledar, governor of the Donetsk region Pavlo Kyrylenko said.

A total of 14 cities and villages were shelled in the partially occupied Donetsk region over the previous 24 hours, Ukraine's presidential office said. Two civilians were wounded.

| AXIS BANK PUBLIC NOTICE FOR E-AUCTION OF PLEDGED ASSETS BEING GOLD ORNAMENTS | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------|
| THE BORROWERS, IN SPECIFIC AND THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL ARE HERE BUY NOTIFIED THAT PUBLIC AUCTION OF THE GOLD ORNAMENTS PLEDGE IN THE BELOW ACCOUNTS IS PROPOSED TO BE CONDUCTED BY THE AXIS BANK AT THE BELOW MENTIONED BRANCH. THE BELOW MENTIONED BORROWERS HAS AVAILED THE CREDIT FACILITY FROM THE AXIS BANK LIMITED AGAINST THE PLEDGE OF GOLD ORNAMENTS ("GOLD LOAN FACILITY") IN FAVOUR OF THE BANK TOWARDS THE SECURITY. THE DEMAND NOTICES WERE ISSUED TO THE BORROWERS/GUARANTORS CALLING UP THE BORROWERS/ GUARANTORS TO PAY THEIR OUTSTANDING AMOUNT TOWARDS THE GOLD LOAN FACILITY AVAILED. AS THE BORROWERS/ GUARANTORS HAVE FAILED TO REPAY THE OUTSTANDING LOAN AMOUNT, THE BANK IS CONSTRAINED TO INVOKE THE PLEDGE AND PROPOSED TO CONDUCT AN E-AUCTION SALE OF PLEDGED GOLD ORNAMENTS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY HEREUNDER ON 28.01.2023 AT 12.30 PM TO 3.30 PM ON "AS IN WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS", "WHATEVER THERE IS" AND "NO RECOURSE BASIS". | | | | | | |
| DETAILS OF BORROWERS AND OUTSTANDING AMOUNT | | | | | | |
| SR. NO. | BRANCH NAME | CUSTOMER NAME | LOAN A/C NO. | AMOUNT OUTSTANDING | DATE OF RECALL | GROSS WEIGHT |
| 1 | ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | LOVENEET SINGH | XXXXXXXXXX0928 | ₹ 1,391,520.00 | 20-01-2023 | 29.10 |
| 2 | LAJPAT NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | JAGJIT SINGH MAKKAR | XXXXXXXXXX4479 | ₹ 983,034.00 | 09-06-2022 | 92.20 |
| 3 | PALAM VIHAR, GURGAON [HR] | HARJEET SINGH | XXXXXXXXXX0261 | ₹ 886,261.00 | 20-01-2023 | 92.50 |
| 4 | FARIDABAD [HR] | BABITA | XXXXXXXXXX3377 | ₹ 837,591.00 | 26-07-2022 | 40.80 |
| 5 | SWASTHYA VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | NAVEEN KUMAR | XXXXXXXXXX2323 | ₹ 841,574.00 | 26-07-2022 | 101.30 |
| 6 | DARYAGANJ, DELHI [DL] | BALJIT SINGH | XXXXXXXXXX0423 | ₹ 661,484.00 | 26-07-2022 | 24.70 |
| 7 | ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | LOVENEET SINGH | XXXXXXXXXX00931 | ₹ 610,367.00 | 20-01-2023 | 37.10 |
| 8 | FARIDABAD [HR] | SUSHMA CHOPRA | XXXXXXXXXX4764 | ₹ 575,400.00 | 22-06-2022 | 4.80 |
| 9 | NOIDA [UP] | RAJESH YADAV | XXXXXXXXXX3145 | ₹ 561,636.00 | 11-08-2022 | 18.70 |
| 10 | KALKAJI, NEW DELHI [DL] | AGAMYA JHA | XXXXXXXXXX1894 | ₹ 559,589.00 | 13-04-2022 | 3.50 |
| 11 | ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | LOVENEET SINGH | XXXXXXXXXX8713 | ₹ 534,000.00 | 20-01-2023 | 38.10 |
| 12 | MAYUR VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | RAJEEV CHAUHAN | XXXXXXXXXX2876 | ₹ 455,408.00 | 18-06-2022 | 9.80 |
| 13 | ROHINI, DELHI [DL] | VASHNU KUMAR | XXXXXXXXXX05920 | ₹ 454,138.00 | 20-01-2023 | 48.00 |
| 14 | SECTOR 16, FARIDABAD [HR] | SUNITA YADAV | XXXXXXXXXX1266 | ₹ 435,825.00 | 22-06-2022 | 95.30 |
| 15 | ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | ARTI | XXXXXXXXXX09011 | ₹ 418,653.00 | 22-07-2022 | 24.10 |
| 16 | NAZAFGARH, NEW DELHI [DL] | SURJEET SINGH | XXXXXXXXXX2938 | ₹ 425,223.00 | 03-09-2022 | 119.70 |
| 17 | KALKAJI, NEW DELHI [DL] | GAURAV DUBEY | XXXXXXXXXX8283 | ₹ 407,704.00 | 22-07-2022 | 5.50 |
| 18 | MEERA BAGH, NEW DELHI [DL] | BILAL RIYAZ | XXXXXXXXXX1862 | ₹ 406,364.00 | 22-07-2022 | 97.60 |
| 19 | LAJPAT NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | SANJAY KUMAR TEWATIA | XXXXXXXXXX2401 | ₹ 380,715.00 | 22-07-2022 | 13.90 |
| 20 | FARIDABAD [HR] | BABITA | XXXXXXXXXX6541 | ₹ 371,868.00 | 26-07-2022 | 7.10 |
| 21 | ROHINI, DELHI [DL] | RAJ KUMAR SINGLA | XXXXXXXXXX4135 | ₹ 347,837.00 | 25-08-2022 | 28.60 |
| 22 | ROHINI, DELHI [DL] | ANIL KUMAR MISHRA | XXXXXXXXXX06436 | ₹ 343,356.00 | 22-06-2021 | 17.40 |
| 23 | KALKAJI, NEW DELHI [DL] | MANOJ KUMAR | XXXXXXXXXX0160 | ₹ 309,890.00 | 20-01-2023 | 16.70 |
| 24 | VAISHALI, GHAZIABAD [UP] | MANOJ KUMAR TIWARI | XXXXXXXXXX06511 | ₹ 308,361.00 | 18-07-2022 | 18.10 |
| 25 | DARYAGANJ, DELHI [DL] | SUNITA | XXXXXXXXXX4829 | ₹ 296,375.00 | 22-06-2022 | 25.00 |
| 26 | UTTAM NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | MANAS KUMAR PARIDA | XXXXXXXXXX2417 | ₹ 304,264.00 | 22-07-2022 | 7.60 |
| 27 | NEW FRIENDS COLONY,NEW DELHI | SNEHLATA | XXXXXXXXXX5461 | ₹ 277,150.00 | 20-01-2023 | 3.50 |
| 28 | JANAKPURI, NEW DELHI [DL] | VISHAL RAI | XXXXXXXXXX2041 | ₹ 276,590.00 | 20-01-2023 | 21.40 |
| 29 | ROHINI, DELHI [DL] | BHUPINDER SINGH RANDHAWA | XXXXXXXXXX5213 | ₹ 276,663.00 | 09-06-2022 | 21.30 |
| 30 | FARIDABAD [HR] | LOKESH | XXXXXXXXXX4270 | ₹ 266,066.00 | 22-06-2022 | 3.30 |
| 31 | SHAHADARA, DELHI [DL] | VISHAL KUMAR BISAIYA | XXXXXXXXXX9808 | ₹ 249,562.00 | 22-07-2022 | 87.50 |
| 32 | NANGLOI DEL DL | ARTI | XXXXXXXXXX3220 | ₹ 240,278.00 | 22-07-2022 | 52.90 |
| 33 | ROHINI, DELHI [DL] | BHUPINDER SINGH RANDHAWA | XXXXXXXXXX3453 | ₹ 238,246.00 | 09-06-2022 | 49.60 |
| 34 | FARIDABAD [HR] | JITENDER KUMAR | XXXXXXXXXX9641 | ₹ 227,240.00 | 20-01-2023 | 8.20 |
| 35 | VAISHALI, GHAZIABAD [UP] | DEEPAK TYAGI | XXXXXXXXXX6531 | ₹ 239,317.00 | 07-01-2022 | 10.60 |
| 36 | ROHINI, DELHI [DL] | ISHWAR CHAND | XXXXXXXXXX6325 | ₹ 222,341.00 | 24-03-2022 | 8.50 |
| 37 | ROHINI, DELHI [DL] | SARABJEET KAUR | XXXXXXXXXX6879 | ₹ 212,064.00 | 05-09-2022 | 24.90 |
| 38 | MAYUR VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | HARISH KUMAR SOLANKI | XXXXXXXXXX2516 | ₹ 214,765.00 | 25-08-2022 | 9.50 |
| 39 | SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR] | SHIRAJ BAQUAR | XXXXXXXXXX4432 | ₹ 207,361.00 | 20-01-2023 | 61.30 |
| 40 | SECTOR 16, FARIDABAD [HR] | AMIT MAHAJAN | XXXXXXXXXX09044 | ₹ 213,084.00 | 22-06-2022 | 29.60 |
| 41 | LAJPAT NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | SHASHI BHUSHAN MANDAL | XXXXXXXXXX2195 | ₹ 208,602.00 | 22-07-2022 | 26.30 |
| 42 | SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR] | SHIRAJ BAQUAR | XXXXXXXXXX9960 | ₹ 192,929.00 | 20-01-2023 | 50.00 |
| 43 | FARIDABAD [HR] | SUSHMA CHOPRA | XXXXXXXXXX4688 | ₹ 186,665.00 | 18-07-2022 | 10.50 |
| 44 | VAISHALI, GHAZIABAD [UP] | DEBASHIS BISWAL | XXXXXXXXXX3079 | ₹ 185,476.00 | 25-08-2022 | 16.50 |
| 45 | VAISHALI, GHAZIABAD [UP] | ANURADHA KATYAL | XXXXXXXXXX4508 | ₹ 190,526.00 | 20-01-2023 | 76.20 |
| 46 | ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | SUNIL KUMAR | XXXXXXXXXX7661 | ₹ 174,272.00 | 20-01-2023 | 7.50 |
| 47 | NOIDA [UP] | ADESH KUMAR | XXXXXXXXXX9822 | ₹ 173,795.00 | 11-08-2022 | 58.10 |
| 48 | DWARKA, DELHI [DL] | ARVIND KUMAR PANDAY | XXXXXXXXXX9300 | ₹ 163,918.00 | 03-09-2022 | 5.50 |
| 49 | DARYAGANJ, DELHI [DL] | KAJAL MEHRA | XXXXXXXXXX0181 | ₹ 157,750.00 | 12-10-2022 | 3.80 |
| 50 | SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR] | SHIRAJ BAQUAR | XXXXXXXXXX2855 | ₹ 152,516.00 | 20-01-2023 | 48.20 |
| 51 | SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR] | KAMINI | XXXXXXXXXX4371 | ₹ 141,654.00 | 05-09-2022 | 4.20 |
| 52 | SWASTHYA VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | RAJESH KUMAR | XXXXXXXXXX8553 | ₹ 140,064.00 | 21-04-2022 | 11.30 |
| 53 | TILAK NAGAR, DELHI [DL] | SANJAY PRASAD GUPTA | XXXXXXXXXX5752 | ₹ 127,987.00 | 11-08-2022 | 23.60 |
| 54 | LAJPAT NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | AMIT GUPTA | XXXXXXXXXX3832 | ₹ 129,304.00 | 03-09-2022 | 5.30 |
| 55 | NOIDA [UP] | RAJNISH SHARMA | XXXXXXXXXX7413 | ₹ 124,265.00 | 20-01-2023 | 42.60 |
| 56 | NOIDA [UP] | SNEH LATA | XXXXXXXXXX9361 | ₹ 120,089.00 | 25-08-2022 | 10.00 |
| 57 | ROHINI, DELHI [DL] | ANIS AHMED | XXXXXXXXXX9711 | ₹ 115,478.00 | 20-01-2023 | 10.00 |
| 58 | SHAHADARA, DELHI [DL] | SAYAD SARFARAJ | XXXXXXXXXX3042 | ₹ 114,329.00 | 28-07-2022 | 37.30 |
| 59 | LAJPAT NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | AMIT GUPTA | XXXXXXXXXX4052 | ₹ 111,257.00 | 06-06-2022 | 16.60 |
| 60 | SWASTHYA VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | PRIYA KUMARI | XXXXXXXXXX9640 | ₹ 103,032.00 | 26-07-2022 | 3.50 |
| 61 | PALAM VIHAR, GURGAON [HR] | ANOUSHKA YADAV | XXXXXXXXXX2725 | ₹ 97,498.00 | 05-09-2022 | 28.20 |
| 62 | FARIDABAD [HR] | KANCHAN KUMARI | XXXXXXXXXX9321 | ₹ 94,462.00 | 18-07-2022 | 2.50 |
| 63 | ROHINI, DELHI [DL] | ASHISH HANS | XXXXXXXXXX2618 | ₹ 97,513.00 | 18-07-2022 | 31.10 |
| 64 | SECTOR 10A,GURGAON [HR] | DEEPAK KAR | XXXXXXXXXX1094 | ₹ 89,151.00 | 20-06-2022 | 3.80 |
| 65 | SWASTHYA VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | KUNDAN KUMAR JHA | XXXXXXXXXX4908 | ₹ 84,691.00 | 21-04-2022 | 11.50 |
| 66 | MALVIYA NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | GDUDIA DEVI | XXXXXXXXXX1438 | ₹ 81,103.00 | 20-01-2023 | 22.60 |
| 67 | VAISHALI, GHAZIABAD [UP] | DEBASHIS BISWAL | XXXXXXXXXX3922 | ₹ 81,525.00 | 03-09-2022 | 28.80 |
| 68 | SWASTHYA VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | SHUBHAM | XXXXXXXXXX2456 | ₹ 73,166.00 | 18-07-2022 | 16.20 |
| 69 | PALAM VIHAR, GURGAON [HR] | HUNNY | XXXXXXXXXX3323 | ₹ 67,316.00 | 20-01-2023 | 22.20 |
| 70 | MEERA BAGH, NEW DELHI [DL] | BALDEV | XXXXXXXXXX4897 | ₹ 65,624.00 | 09-01-2023 | 3.60 |
| 71 | ROHINI, DELHI [DL] | KARAN SINGH | XXXXXXXXXX5865 | ₹ 65,402.00 | 20-01-2023 | 10.40 |
| 72 | ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | SALMA | XXXXXXXXXX0139 | ₹ 63,382.00 | 20-01-2023 | 8.30 |
| 73 | KISHANGANJ OD DL | ADARSH KUMAR | XXXXXXXXXX9001 | ₹ 60,393.00 | 20-01-2023 | 16.00 |
| 74 | MAYUR VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | HARISH KUMAR SOLANKI | XXXXXXXXXX2571 | ₹ 49,788.00 | 05-09-2022 | 12.50 |
| 75 | ROHINI, DELHI [DL] | KARAN SINGH | XXXXXXXXXX5518 | ₹ 47,336.00 | 20-01-2023 | 7.80 |
| 76 | JANAKPURI, NEW DELHI [DL] | SNEH LATA | XXXXXXXXXX7923 | ₹ 43,244.00 | 20-01-2023 | 13.10 |
| 77 | GHAZIABAD [UP] | PANKAJ KUMAR | XXXXXXXXXX0089 | ₹ 41,666.00 | 09-01-2023 | 6.10 |
| 78 | ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | MOHD RASHID | XXXXXXXXXX5038 | ₹ 39,819.00 | 05-09-2022 | 3.20 |
| 79 | SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR] | ISHMEET SINGH RAINA | XXXXXXXXXX3849 | ₹ 40,138.00 | 28-07-2022 | 5.70 |
| 80 | NOIDA [UP] | KAMAYANI KUMARI | XXXXXXXXXX2956 | ₹ 34,109.00 | 20-01-2023 | 3.70 |
| 81 | SECTOR 10A,GURGAON [HR] | ATAUR REHMAN | XXXXXXXXXX9065 | ₹ 32,763.00 | 24-03-2022 | 14.32 |
| 82 | SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR] | MOHD IRSHAD | XXXXXXXXXX9053 | ₹ 31,086.00 | 18-07-2022 | 5.20 |
| 83 | VAISHALI, GHAZIABAD [UP] | HAMMAD | XXXXXXXXXX8411 | ₹ 26,301.00 | 20-01-2023 | 3.50 |
| 84 | ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | KARAN MADANI | XXXXXXXXXX9965 | ₹ 464,768.00 | 18-07-2022 | 15.80 |
| 85 | ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | PRITHVI SINGH CHAUHAN | XXXXXXXXXX1180 | ₹ 329,329.00 | 03-12-2021 | 19.70 |
| 86 | PALAM VIHAR, GURGAON [HR] | POOJA BARALA | XXXXXXXXXX6441 | ₹ 307,967.00 | 22-07-2022 | 42.70 |
| 87 | UTTAM NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | ROHIT SODHI | XXXXXXXXXX6566 | ₹ 268,103.00 | 18-06-2022 | 36.00 |
| 88 | SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR] | PINKI | XXXXXXXXXX4678 | ₹ 240,113.00 | 21-04-2022 | 21.20 |
| 89 | FARIDABAD [HR] | RAHUL | XXXXXXXXXX8068 | ₹ 236,037.00 | 30-04-2021 | 23.40 |
| 90 | PARADISE MALL S GUR HR | HEERA LAL | XXXXXXXXXX6863 | ₹ 195,529.00 | 03-09-2022 | 4.90 |
| 91 | JYOTI NAGAR DEL DL | SUNIL SINGH | XXXXXXXXXX5778 | ₹ 193,274.00 | 03-09-2022 | 37.30 |
| 92 | SECTOR 16, FARIDABAD [HR] | VINOD KUMAR | XXXXXXXXXX3778 | ₹ 217,157.00 | 17-05-2022 | 7.00 |
| 93 | BALI NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | ASHISH KUMAR MISHRA | XXXXXXXXXX5363 | ₹ 195,981.00 | 05-02-2022 | 5.50 |
| 94 | SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR] | RAMBAHADUR SINGH | XXXXXXXXXX6013 | ₹ 152,455.00 | 17-05-2022 | 4.20 |
| 95 | JYOTI NAGAR DEL DL | MOHIT | XXXXXXXXXX7592 | ₹ 128,349.00 | 18-06-2022 | 40.30 |
| 96 | SECTOR 10A,GURGAON [HR] | AALAM | XXXXXXXXXX4797 | ₹ 124,051.00 | 28-07-2022 | 45.50 |
| 97 | TILAK NAGAR, DELHI [DL] | MUJAMIL | XXXXXXXXXX5442 | ₹ 123,153.00 | 22-07-2022 | 5.50 |
| 98 | PARADISE MALL S GUR HR | MANORANJAN SANDHIBIGRAH | XXXXXXXXXX6371 | ₹ 120,980.00 | 22-07-2022 | 10.10 |
| 99 | TILAK NAGAR, DELHI [DL] | RANI DEVI | XXXXXXXXXX0166 | ₹ 128,118.00 | 17-05-2022 | 13.60 |
| 100 | SWASTHYA VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | ARTI AGGARWAL | XXXXXXXXXX8175 | ₹ 138,187.00 | 18-06-2022 | 31.40 |
| 101 | KISHANGANJ OD DL | AJAY KUMAR SHARMA | XXXXXXXXXX6135 | ₹ 113,847.00 | 28-07-2022 | 17.70 |
| 102 | SECTOR-24,ROHINI,NEW DELHI [DL] | SACHIN KUMAR | XXXXXXXXXX8879 | ₹ 106,137.00 | 25-08-2022 | 1.20 |
| 103 | FARIDABAD [HR] | REENA | XXXXXXXXXX2234 | ₹ 96,304.00 | 24-03-2022 | 15.30 |
| 104 | ROHINI, DELHI [DL] | SUSHIL KUMAR | XXXXXXXXXX3764 | ₹ 97,501.00 | 18-07-2022 | 7.00 |
| 105 | FARIDABAD [HR] | PARMANAND SINGH | XXXXXXXXXX6771 | ₹ 103,440.00 | 18-06-2022 | 9.60 |
| 106 | VAISHALI, GHAZIABAD [UP] | MOHD AKHLAK | XXXXXXXXXX6740 | ₹ 106,708.00 | 22-06-2021 | 2.80 |
| 107 | LAJPAT NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | RAGINI SINHA | XXXXXXXXXX0746 | ₹ 90,281.00 | 13-09-2022 | 7.20 |
| 108 | PARADISE MALL S GUR HR | SUNITA | XXXXXXXXXX9032 | ₹ 86,133.00 | 24-03-2022 | 13.00 |
| 109 | NAZAFGARH, NEW DELHI [DL] | RAHUL | XXXXXXXXXX3685 | ₹ 84,748.00 | 17-05-2022 | 36.20 |
| 110 | BALI NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | RANVEER KUMAR | XXXXXXXXXX3835 | ₹ 78,376.00 | 03-09-2022 | 6.10 |
| 111 | ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | MANOJ | XXXXXXXXXX3344 | ₹ 72,972.00 | 28-07-2022 | 20.60 |
| 112 | ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | WASI AHMED | XXXXXXXXXX3648 | ₹ 69,933.00 | 18-06-2022 | 4.90 |
| 113 | NOIDA [UP] | AKASH YADAV | XXXXXXXXXX8768 | ₹ 72,756.00 | 17-05-2022 | 21.40 |
| 114 | MALVIYA NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | RAKESH KUMAR | XXXXXXXXXX00972 | ₹ 65,478.00 | 03-09-2022 | 29.50 |
| 115 | SECTOR 16, FARIDABAD [HR] | PARMOD GUPTA | XXXXXXXXXX5808 | ₹ 77,623.00 | 24-03-2022 | 25.70 |
| 116 | MAYUR VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | AJAY VIR SINGH | XXXXXXXXXX9853 | ₹ 67,894.00 | 17-05-2022 | 7.20 |
| 117 | TILAK NAGAR, DELHI [DL] | MUJAMIL | XXXXXXXXXX2117 | ₹ 62,292.00 | 28-07-2022 | 19.50 |
| 118 | KISHANGANJ OD DL | AJEET KUMAR | XXXXXXXXXX4400 | ₹ 60,113.00 | 18-06-2022 | 4.10 |
| 119 | GHAZIABAD [UP] | HAKIAT KUMI | XXXXXXXXXX9608 | ₹ 62,809.00 | 28-02-2022 | 2.70 |
| 120 | SECTOR 10A,GURGAON [HR] | ARIAMOT MISHRA | XXXXXXXXXX4133 | ₹ 59,965.00 | 17-05-2022 | 10.16 |
| 121 | PALAM, DELHI [DL] | GYAN SINGH RAWAT | XXXXXXXXXX7873 | ₹ 56,662.00 | 28-07-2022 | 12.50 |
| 122 | SECTOR 16, FARIDABAD [HR] | GIRRAJ SHARMA | XXXXXXXXXX5567 | ₹ 56,598.00 | 20-06-2022 | 27.70 |
| 123 | JYOTI NAGAR DEL DL | MOHIT | XXXXXXXXXX07494 | ₹ 54,839.00 | 18-06-2022 | 9.00 |
| 124 | ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | SANJAY CHOUDHARY | XXXXXXXXXX4679 | ₹ 57,872.00 | 28-07-2022 | 11.30 |
| 125 | SECTOR 16, FARIDABAD [HR] | BHOLA PRASAD GUPTA | XXXXXXXXXX1908 | ₹ 54,088.00 | 28-07-2022 | 7.10 |
| 126 | NEW FRIENDS COLONY,NEW DELHI | SACHIN GUPTA | XXXXXXXXXX6135 | ₹ 52,930.00 | 03-09-2022 | 13.90 |
| 127 | ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | SUNNY DAYAL | XXXXXXXXXX3043 | ₹ 52,772.00 | 26-07-2022 | 7.80 |
| 128 | NOIDA [UP] | AMIT KUMAR | XXXXXXXXXX00984 | ₹ 47,664.00 | 12-09-2022 | 3.40 |
| 129 | FARIDABAD [HR] | ASHOK KUMAR | XXXXXXXXXX3152 | ₹ 49,245.00 | 22-06-2021 | 9.10 |
| 130 | ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL] | AMIT JAIN | XXXXXXXXXX04197 | ₹ 49,148.00 | 17-05-2022 | 10.00 |
| 131 | MEERA BAGH, NEW DELHI [DL] | AMIT KUMAR TIWARI | XXXXXXXXXX7643 | ₹ 41,112.00 | 18-07-2022 | 10.00 |
| 132 | SECTOR 16, FARIDABAD [HR] | MUKESH CHAUHAN | XXXXXXXXXX06771 | ₹ 36,928.00 | 28-07-2022 | 8.70 |
| 133 | NEW FRIENDS COLONY, | | | | | |

US-China officials meet on economy, aim to ease tension

AP ■ ZURICH

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen met Wednesday with her Chinese counterpart and pledged an effort to manage differences and "prevent competition from becoming anything ever near conflict" as the two nations try to thaw relations.

Yellen's first face-to-face meeting with Vice Premier Liu He was the highest-ranking contact between the two countries since their presidents agreed last November to look for areas of potential cooperation.

Liu, for his part, said he was ready to work together to seek common ground between China and the U.S.

"No matter how circumstances change, we should always maintain dialogue and exchanges," he said.

The meeting comes as the U.S. And Chinese economies grapple with differing, but intertwined challenges on trade, technology and more.

Yellen, in opening remarks in front of reporters, told Liu: "While we have areas of disagreement, and we will convey them directly, we should

not allow misunderstandings, particularly those stemming from a lack of communication, to unnecessarily worsen our bilateral economic and financial relationship."

She said the two countries "have a responsibility to manage our differences and prevent competition from becoming anything even near conflict."

Both economies have their challenges.

The Chinese economy is reopening after a COVID-19 resurgence killed tens of thousands of people and shuttered countless businesses. The U.S. Is slowly recovering from 40-year-high inflation and is on track to hit its statutory debt ceiling, setting up an expected political showdown between congressional Democrats and Republicans. The debt issue is of keen interest to Asia, as China is the second-largest holder of U.S. Debt.

There is also the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which hinders global economic growth — and has prompted the U.S. And its allies to agree on an oil price cap on Russia in retaliation, putting China in a difficult spot as a friend and economic ally of Russia.



And high interest rates globally have increased pressure on debt-burdened nations that owe great sums to China.

"A wrong policy move or a reversal in the positive data and we could see the global economy head into a recession in 2023," said Josh Lipsky, senior director of the Atlantic

Council's GeoEconomics Center. "Both countries have a shared interest in avoiding that scenario."

The World Bank reported last week that the global economy will come "perilously close" to a recession this year, led by weaker growth in all the world's top economies —

including the U.S. And China. Low-income countries are expected to suffer from any economic downturns of superpowers, the report said.

"High on the list is debt restructuring," Lipsky said of Wednesday's talks. Several low-income countries are at risk of debt default in 2023 and many of them owe large sums to China. "Leaders have been trying for two years to get some agreement and avoid a wave of defaults but there's been little success and one reason is China's hesitancy. I expect Yellen to press Liu He on this in the meeting," Lipsky said.

Liu laid out an optimistic vision for the world's second-largest economy in an address Tuesday at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

"If we work hard enough, we are confident that in 2023, China's growth will most likely return to its normal trend. The Chinese economy will see a significant improvement," he said.

After her stop in Switzerland, Yellen will travel to Zambia, Senegal and South Africa this week in what will be the first in a string of visits by

Biden administration officials to sub-Saharan Africa during the year.

Zambia is renegotiating its nearly \$6 billion debt with China, its biggest creditor. During a closed-door meeting at the Africa Leaders Summit in Washington in December, Yellen and Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema discussed "the need to address debt sustainability and the imperative to conclude a debt treatment for Zambia," according to Yellen.

The Zurich talks are a follow-up to the November meeting between President Joe Biden and China's Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the Group of 20 summit in Bali, Indonesia. The two world leaders agreed to empower key senior officials to work on areas of potential cooperation, including tackling climate change and maintaining global financial, health and food stability. Beijing had cut off such contacts with the U.S. In protest of then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's trip to Taiwan in August.

"We're going to compete vigorously. But I'm not looking for conflict," Biden said at the time.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony

Blinken will be traveling to China in early February.

Among economic sticking points, the Biden administration blocked the sale of advanced computer chips to China and is considering a ban on investment in some Chinese tech companies, possibly undermining a key economic goal that Xi set for his country. Statements by the Democratic president that the U.S. Would defend Taiwan against a Chinese invasion also have increased tensions.

And while the U.S. Congress is divided on many issues, members of the House agreed last week to further scrutinize Chinese investments.

New House Speaker Kevin McCarthy of California has identified the Communist Party of China as one of two "long-term challenges" for the House, along with the national debt.

"There is bipartisan consensus that the era of trusting Communist China is over," McCarthy said from the House floor last week when the House voted 365 to 65 — with 146 Democrats joining Republicans — to establish the House Select Committee on China.

EU lawmakers replace disgraced VP as suspect cuts plea deal

AP ■ STRASBOURG (FRANCE)

European Union lawmakers voted on Wednesday to replace a disgraced former parliament vice president after a key suspect in a cash-for-influence scandal rocking the EU assembly made a plea bargain with prosecutors, raising the prospect of more people getting named.

Former European Parliament Vice President Eva Kaili was removed from her post after she was taken into custody early last month on charges of corruption, money laundering and membership in a criminal organisation.

Lawmakers held a secret ballot in Strasbourg, France, to choose among three nominees for vice president. They picked Marc Angel of Luxembourg, who belongs to the same centre-left political group, the Socialist and Democrats (S and D) as Kaili.

The corruption scandal linked to Qatar and Morocco has ravaged the S and D group, the second-largest in the EU assembly.

Kaili was responsible for the Middle East, but Parliament President Roberta Metsola wants to appoint an anti-corruption vice president to repair the assembly's tarnished image. It's unclear whether Angel would be



given such a portfolio.

Belgian prosecutors suspect that Kaili; former parliament member Pier Antonio Panzeri; Kaili's partner and Panzeri's friend Francesco Georgi; and Nicolo Figa-Talamanca, head of the charity group No Peace Without Justice, were paid by Qatar and Morocco to influence decision-making at the assembly. Both countries deny the allegations.

The federal prosecutor's office said Tuesday that Panzeri had agreed to become an informant and reveal more information about the scandal in exchange for a lighter sentence.

He's pledged to tell investigators the names of those involved and what financial arrangements were made with other countries.

Japan court again acquits ex-execs over Fukushima disaster

AP ■ TOKYO

A Japanese court on Wednesday found three former executives of Tokyo Electric Power Company not guilty of negligence over the 2011 Fukushima nuclear meltdowns and subsequent deaths of more than 40 elderly residents during their forced evacuation. The Tokyo High Court ruling upheld a 2019 lower court decision that also acquitted the three former top TEPCO officials noting that a tsunami of that magnitude was unforeseeable.



The case is the only criminal trial related to the nuclear accident that led the former TEPCO executives to face charges. Minutes after Wednesday's court session for the verdict opened, supporters held up posters saying: "All found not guilty. Unjust Ruling." The court said ex-TEPCO

Chairman Tsunehisa Katsumata, 82, and two other former executives were also not guilty of causing the deaths of 44 elderly patients whose already waning health deteriorated during or after forced evacuations from a local hospital and a nursing home.

The executives were accused of failing to anticipate the massive tsunami that struck the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant on March 11, 2011, following a magnitude 9 earthquake, and of failing to take measures that might have saved the plant.

Threats, advantages seen in China's shrinking population



AP ■ BEIJING

For seven decades, China's Communist Party has ruled the world's most populous country. As the country's population crests and begins to shrink, experts say, it will face challenges ranging from supporting the elderly to filling the ranks of its military. Population growth has been slowing for years, but the announcement on Tuesday that the country's population fell by about 850,000 in 2022 came sooner than earlier projections. "Those developments... May well feed domestic challenges at home and strategic challenges abroad. The Party, in short,

may be in for a rough go," said Mike Mazza, an analyst of Chinese military modernisation at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington. Others are less pessimistic. "China's increasingly becoming a higher-tech nation, so concentrating on improving the educational system, particularly in impoverished rural areas, and even in cities, is vital. So as well as increasing productivity. Wealthier people will buy more, which also increases GDP," said June Teufel Dreyer, a Chinese politics specialist at the University of Miami. With the trend expected to continue, the UN estimates China's population will fall from 1.41 billion to about 1.31 billion by 2050 and keep shrinking from there. Beijing previously tried to rein in its population growth. Worries that China's population was getting too big prompted it to adopt its "one-child policy" in the late 1970s.

Deep 6.1 earthquake shakes east Indonesia, no known damage

AP ■ JAKARTA

A deep earthquake shook eastern parts of Indonesia on Wednesday, but no serious damage or injuries were reported.

The US Geological Survey said the magnitude 6.1 earthquake was centred 147 kilometers (91 miles) under the sea, 65 kilometres (40 miles) south-southeast of Gorontalo. It shook parts of Gorontalo, North Sulawesi, North Maluku, and Central Sulawesi provinces.

No tsunami warning was issued by Indonesia's Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency.

Nepal plane crash: Search on for last missing person

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

The search for the last missing person in the Nepal plane crash resumed on Wednesday after rescuers on Tuesday pulled out one more body from the crash site where a Yeti Airlines aircraft carrying 72 people, including five Indians, had plunged in a river gorge in the resort city of Pokhara.

Two days after the fatal crash, a woman's body was found deep down in the Seti River gorge on Tuesday. With this, the bodies of 71 people who died in the crash have been retrieved.

The search for the missing person started early morning on Wednesday with the help of divers and four drones, rescuers have given up hope of finding the missing person alive,



MyRepublica newspaper reported.

The Yeti Airlines aircraft took off from Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport at 10:33 am on Sunday and crashed on the bank of the Seti River between the old airport and the new airport in Pokhara, minutes before landing.

Fifty-three Nepalese passengers and 15 foreign nation-

als, including 5 Indians, and four crew members were on board the Yeti Airlines aircraft when it crashed.

The five Indians, all from Uttar Pradesh, have been identified as Abhishek Kushwaha, 25, Bishal Sharma, 22, Anil Kumar Rajbhar, 27, Sonu Jaiswal, 35, and Sanjaya Jaiswal.

As many as 48 bodies of the deceased have been brought to Kathmandu, the report added.

The dead bodies except that of the locals and those who could not be identified and those of foreigners were flown to Kathmandu on Tuesday afternoon.

The bodies of the 48 victims have been brought to Kathmandu via Nepal Army helicopters for post-mortem at Maharajgunj-based Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital.

M.P. MADHYA KSHETRA VIDYUT VITARAN CO. LTD.
(Govt. of M.P. Undertaking)
NISHTHA PARISAR, BIJALEE NAGAR, GOVINDPURA, BHOPAL-462023
Phone No. : 0755-2602033-36, Fax : 2589821, 2586636

Ref. : MD/MK/04/ NIT/2853

Date : 18.01.2023

TENDER NOTICE

MPMKVVCL, Bhopal, invites following bids from manufacturers through e-tendering :

| Sr. No. | Tender Specification Number | Particulars | Approx. Value (Rs. Lakh) | Tender Fee Including GST (In Rs.) | Date of Pre-Bid Conference | Date of Opening of Tender |
|---------|-----------------------------|---|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. | MD/MK/04/875 | DLMS Compliant Three Phase 10-60 Amp Energy Meter with CMRI | 291.68 | 11800 | 27.01.2023 03.00 PM | 03.02.2023 03:00 PM |

Other details and full Tender documents would be available on Company website <https://portal.mpcz.in> & Govt. Website <https://mptenders.gov.in> shortly.

M.P. Madhyam/108214/2023

CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (PROC.)



Church of England refuses to back same-sex marriage

AP ■ LONDON

The Church of England said Wednesday it will allow blessings for same-sex, civil marriages for the first time but same-sex couples still will not be allowed to marry in its churches. The decision followed five years of debate and consultation on the church's position on sexuality. It is expected to be outlined in a report to the church's national assembly, the General Synod, which meets in London next month.

Under the proposals, the Church of England's stance that the sacrament of matrimony is restricted to unions between one man and one woman will not change.

However, same-sex couples would be able to have a church service with prayers of dedication, thanksgiving or for God's blessing after they have a civil wedding or register a civil partnership.

Same-sex marriage has been legal in England and Wales since 2013, but the church did not change its teaching when the law changed.

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, the spiritual leader of the Anglican Church, acknowledged that the proposals "will appear to go too far for some and not nearly far enough for others."

"This response reflects the diversity of views in the Church of England on questions of sexuality, relationships and marriage. I rejoice in that diversity and I welcome this way of reflecting it in the life of our church," Welby said.

"I hope it can offer a way for the Church of England, publicly and unequivocally, to say to all Christians and especially LGBTQI+ people, that you are welcome and a valued and precious part of the body of Christ," he added.

The church said bishops plan to issue a formal apology to LGBTQI+ people on Friday for the "rejection, exclusion and hostility" they have felt from within the church.

It said it would issue pastoral guidance to its ministers and congregations and urge them to welcome same-sex couples "unreservedly and joyfully."

NORTHERN RAILWAY
1st CORRIGENDUM NOTICE

No. 128-W/280/e Tender Notice/NIT-102/2022-23/W-3 Dated: 18.01.2023

The advertised tender notice no No. 128-W/280/e Tender Notice/NIT-102/2022-23/W-3 dated 12.01.2023 for the work namely "Replacement of Platform surface of Platform no. 2 at Subzi Mandi station in the section of SSE/W/NDL under ADEN/NDL" Contract value has been changed to Rs. 1,44,54,791.05 and EMD has been changed to Rs. 2,22,300/- on IREPS on administrative ground.

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

196/23

NORTHERN RAILWAY
OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE

The Sr. Divisional Engineer-III, Northern Railway, Delhi Division invites E-Tender for the following work.

| Sl. No. | Name of work | Approx Cost of Work | Earnest Money to be deposited | Cost of Tender Document | Date & Time of Submission of tender bid and opening of tender. | Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen. | Allocation |
|---------|---|---|---|-------------------------|--|---|------------|
| 1 | Provision of addl. PF coping for passenger safety, flooring at PF ½, Improvement of circulating area of MWC and Other stations in the section of SSE/W/NDL/Line under ADEN/NDL. | Rs.1,17,50,807.09 (Rupees One Crore Seventeen Lakh Fifty Thousand Eight Hundred Seven and Nine Paise Only). | Rs. 2,08,800/- (Rupees Two Lakh Eight Thousand Eight Hundred Only). | Rs. 0.00/- | 10.02.2023 @ 15:00 Hrs. | www.ireps.gov.in | 20536203 |

• The tenderer/s must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement system (IREPS) site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for participating in the e-tender system. • For all terms and conditions please refer tender document. • No manual offers are acceptable. • Cost of tender document and Earnest money will be acceptable through net banking or payment gateway only.

No. 128-W/280/e Tender Notice/NIT/109/2022-23/W-3 Dated: 17.01.2023

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

199/23

COURT NOTICE
IN THE COURT OF Ms. Sarita Solanki
Judicial Magistrate - 1st Class, Gurugram

M/S India Infoline Housing Finance Ltd
VS
NEW BODY SHOP SHOP
CIS NO. NACT/16170/2017
CNR No. HRGR03-046508-2017
Next Date:- 20-01-2023

PUBLICATION ISSUED TO:
NEW BODY SHOP
Address: No 24 SUMMER ARC RUPANI CIRCLE, RAJKOT GUJARAT THROUGH ITS PROP. YASHKUMARNDAVE

In above titled case, the accused could not be served. It is ordered that accused should appear in person or through counsel on 20-01-2023 at 10.00 a.m.

For details login to <https://highcourtdh.gov.in/> trs=districtnotice&district=Gurugram

Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class Gurugram

Dated, this day of 09-01-2023

COURT NOTICE
IN THE COURT OF Ms. Sarita Solanki
Judicial Magistrate - 1st Class, Gurugram

M/S India Infoline Housing Finance Ltd
VS
MANGALMURTI STEEL CENTER
CIS NO. NACT/10864/2017
CNR No. HRGR03-036912-2017
Next Date:- 20-01-2023

PUBLICATION ISSUED TO:
MANGALMURTI STEEL CENTER
Address: SRIMATIPTS, GR. FLOOR, SR. NO.80, AHER GARDEN, WALHEKARWADI CHINCHWAD, PUNE MAHARASHTRA THROUGH ITS PROP. BHAVARSINGH VISHANSHINGH PARIHAR

In above titled case, the accused could not be served. It is ordered that accused should appear in person or through counsel on 20-01-2023 at 10.00 a.m.

For details login to <https://highcourtdh.gov.in/> trs=districtnotice&district=Gurugram

Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class Gurugram

Dated, this day of 09-01-2023

GOA STATE CONSUMER DISPUTES REDRESSAL COMMISSION

Junta House, 1st lift, 4th floor, Panaji, Goa. Pin-403001
Tel:- 2222466, E-mail:- goa-sforum@nic.in

No. SC/Complaint. No. 08 of 2018/2022/857 Dated:- 14/12/2022

Apurba Sengupta,Complainant
Andheri West, Mumbai

V/s

M/s Alchemy India and Others.Opposite Party

Ref.1) No. No.SC/CC-08/2018/77 dated 05/03/2018
2) No. No.SC/CC-08/2018/2020/92 dated 07/02/2020
3) No. No.SC/CC-08/2018/2020/405 dated 09/11/2020
4) No. No.SC/CC-08/2018/2020/150 dated 12/04/2021
5) No. No.SC/CC-08/2018/2018/541 dated 08/09/2022

To
Eco Promoters Pvt. Ltd.,
Registered Office at 30,UGF, Devika Tower 6,
Nehru Place, New-Delhi-110019.

NOTICE

Whereas the above mentioned Advocate for Complainant has filed an application for Publication before the Goa State Commission.

AND WHEREAS, the above mentioned Notice sent to Respondents No. 2 by Registered Post A.D. and the Notice was return unserved to Respondents No. 2.

THEREFORE, the Advocate for Complainant has filed an application in this Commission, for publishing the Notice in the Local Daily Newspaper in Delhi. This Commission is satisfied that this is a fit case for ordering such substitute service.

NOW THEREFORE, Notice is hereby given to you to appear before this Commission on **30/01/2023 at 10.30 A.M.**, in person or through an authorized agent.

TAKE NOTICE, that in default of your Appearance on the date and time above mentioned, the above Complaint will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and the seal of this Hon'ble Goa State Commission on this day 14/12/2022.

(Mrs. Nilima Desai)
Registrar
Goa State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission

Place:- Panaji, Goa
Date:- 14/12/2022.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
CORRIGENDUM-4

Ref: Tender Notice No. 69/2022-23 dated 14.12.2022 S. No. 03 T. No. 77226005

Opening date 30.01.2023.

In reference to above tender, Successive Lots Closing Interval field has been modified. All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

Total 04 Corrigendum have been issued in above tender till date and published on www.ireps.gov.in. Date : 17.01.2023

203/2023

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

UJVN LIMITED
H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006
Telephones: 0135- 2763508, 2763808 & Fax: 0135- 2763507
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: www.ujvn.com

पत्र सं. 51 दिनांक: 17.01.2023

E-Tender Time Extension Notice

Due to unavoidable circumstances the date of submission and opening of NIT No - NCB/17/EE(E&M)/MB-11/Barrage/2022-23: Design, Manufacturing, Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Trashrack panels & one no. Hydraulically Operated Movable Trash Rack Cleaning Machine (TRCM) to safely handle rake capacity of 2.0 Tonne as well as log grapple capacity of 2.0 Tonne including dismantling of existing Trash rack panels & TRCM at Joshiyara Barrage, Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand, India invited by the office of Executive Engineer (E&M), Joshiyara Barrage, Joshiyara, Uttarkashi is hereby extended as follows:-

Last Date/Time for receipt of bid – 23.01.2023 up to 16:00 Hrs. **in the portal**

Last Date of receipt of hard copy of bid – 23.01.2023 upto 16:00 hrs.

Date of opening of bid on the website – 27.01.2023 at 11:30 Hrs.

Details of subsequent addendum/corrigendum/cancellation etc. may be obtained from the e-procurement portal <http://uktenders.gov.in>.

Executive Engineer

"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY"

कार्यालय नगर निगम, हरिद्वार

पत्रांक:- 2929 / सौसेन (नगरीकरण) / 2022-23 दिनांक:- 18.01.2023

ई-निविदा सूचना

नगर आयुक्त महोदय, नगर निगम हरिद्वार की स्वीकृति के क्रम में साराय स्थित एम०आर०एफ० प्लॉट के संचालन हेतु निम्नलिखित 03.01.2023 को की गयी ई-निविदा को निरस्त करते हुये पुनः उक्त कार्य हेतु दू-विड (तकनीकी एवं वित्तीय) प्रक्रिया के माध्यम से फर्म का चयन किये जाने हेतु www.uktenders.gov.in पर पुनः 7 दिवसीय ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा से सम्बन्धित सभी सूचना www.uktenders.gov.in से प्राप्त की जा सकती है।

| S. No. | Scheduled/Information | Date | Time |
|--------|--|------------|----------|
| 1 | Date of Online publication | 19.01.2023 | 10:00 AM |
| 2 | Document Download start Date | 19.01.2023 | 11:00 AM |
| 3 | Online Bid submission Start Date | 19.01.2023 | 11:00 AM |
| 4 | Online Bid submission End Date | 27.01.2023 | 12:00 PM |
| 5 | Offline Submission of Hard/ Original copy of Document End date | 27.01.2023 | 01:00 PM |
| 6 | Bid opening Date | 27.01.2023 | 02:00 PM |

उपरोक्त तिथियों में कोई भी संशोधन/परिवर्तन मात्र www.uktenders.gov.in वेबसाइट पर ही Publish किया जायेगा।

मुख्य नगर स्वास्थ्य अधिकारी
नगर निगम हरिद्वार

Markets climb for 2nd day as HDFC twins maintain momentum

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks extended their rally for the second straight session on Wednesday amid buying in index heavyweights HDFC twins and fresh foreign funds inflows.

A sharp appreciation in the rupee and largely positive global equities added to the momentum, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 390.02 points or 0.64 per cent to settle at 61,045.74. The broader NSE Nifty rallied 112.05 points or 0.62 per cent to 18,165.35.

Tata Steel was the biggest gainer among the Sensex components, spurring 2.72 per cent, followed by Larsen & Toubro, Wipro, HDFC Bank, HDFC, Bharti Airtel, NTPC, and ITC.

The HDFC duo accounted for around half of the benchmark's gains.

In contrast, Tata Motors, UltraTech Cement, IndusInd Bank, Nestle India, Bajaj Finserv, State Bank of India and Reliance Industries were the laggards, dropping up to 1.65

per cent.

"After the adverse performance during the last one and a half months, Indian market has been advancing in the last 2-3 trading days. The trend is supported by the marginal improvement in FII inflows and upside in domestic investments," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.46 per cent and the smallcap index gained 0.17 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, metal jumped 2.44 per cent, capital goods climbed 1.46 per cent, industrials (1.24 per cent), telecommunication (0.92 per cent), consumer durables (0.67 per cent), commodities (0.62 per cent) and financial services (0.62 per cent).

Utilities, auto, power and realty ended in the red.

"Domestic equities received a positive handover from its global peers, after the Bank of Japan maintained its current range of yield curve control....Market is showing



strength for last two days supported by healthy earning results so far and expectation of strong Budget before Union Election next year.

"FIIs marginally turning buyers have also helped to uplift the sentiments... Metal stocks are also likely to remain in momentum as prices surge globally due to shortage of inventory. Capital Goods too will remain in focus on the back of good order inflow and expectation of increase spending in Budget," said Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal

Financial Services.

Elsewhere in Asia, equity markets in Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled in the green, while Seoul ended lower.

Bourses in Europe were trading higher during mid-session deals. Markets in the US had ended mostly lower on Tuesday.

International oil benchmark Brent crude jumped 1.11 per cent to USD 86.87 per barrel.

The rupee pared its initial losses and settled 44 paise higher at 81.25 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday.

India's coal production target at more than 1 bn tonnes for FY24: Govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday said that it has set a coal production target of more than one billion tonnes (BT) for the next financial year.

Of the said target, state-owned CIL has been given the task to produce 780 MT of coal, followed by 75 MT for Singareni Collieries Company Ltd (SCCL) and 162 MT for captive and commercial mines.

"The ministry of coal targets to produce more than one billion tonne coal during the year 2023-24," the coal ministry said in a statement.

In a bid to achieve this aim, in-depth review has been carried out by coal secretary Amrit Lal Meena with all coal companies.

A total of 290 mines are operational in Coal India Ltd (CIL) out of which 97 mines produce more than one MT per year.

For all 97 such coal mines,



issues of land acquisition, forest clearance, environment clearance, rail connectivity and road connectivity have been discussed and timelines fixed.

With continued effort of coal companies, out of 97 coal mines, there are no pending issues in 56 mines. Only 41 mines have 61 issues, for which continued co-ordination and monitoring is being carried out by top management of coal companies with concerned state government authorities and the central ministries.

CIL produced 622 MT of coal during FY22 and 513 MT have been produced so far in the current financial year.

Adani files for ₹20,000 cr FPO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Richest Indian Gautam Adani-led group's flagship firm on Wednesday filed an offer letter with stock exchanges for a proposed Rs 20,000 crore follow-on public offer (FPO).

The FPO of Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL) is planned to open on January 27 and close on January 31, according to the offer letter.

Of the Rs 20,000 crore proceeds of the FPO, Rs 10,869 crore will be used for green hydrogen projects, work at the existing airports and construction of a greenfield expressway. Another Rs 4,165 crore will go towards repayment of debt taken by its airports, road and solar project subsidiaries.

Adani, 60, started off as a trader and has been on a rapid diversification spree, expanding an empire centered on ports and coal mining to include airports, data centers and cement as well as green energy. And AEL is the vehicle for most of the new business expansion.

AEL is India's largest list-



breeds business incubator and breeds businesses in four core industry sectors - energy and utility, transportation and logistics, consumer, and primary industry.

"We have, over the years, seeded new business interests for the Adani group, developed them into sizeable and self-sustaining business verticals and subsequently demerged them into independently listed and scalable platforms," it said.

Its current business portfolio includes a green hydrogen ecosystem, data centers, developing airports, developing roads, food FMCG, digital, mining, defence and industrial manufacturing, among others.

The company is tapping industry opportunities, such as green hydrogen, the aviation sector and data centers.

Corporate funding in global solar sector falls 13% in 2022: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Corporate funding in the global solar sector declined 13 per cent year-on-year to USD 24.1 billion in 2022, according to a Mercom Capital report.

Corporate funding includes venture capital and private equity (VC and PE), debt financing, and public market financing.

"Total corporate funding in 2022 (first nine months) stood at USD 24.1 billion, 13 per cent lower compared to USD 27.8 billion raised in 2021," the global clean energy consulting firm said in its report.

During 2022, VC funding activity rose 56 per cent to USD 7 billion compared to USD 4.5 billion in 2021.

In India, solar module manufacturer Waaree Energies raised USD 122.6 million from high net-worth individuals and private offices, and solar start-up SolarSquare raised USD 12 million in Series A funding led



by Elevation Capital and Lowercarbon, Chris Sacca's climate-tech fund.

In 2022, debt financing was at USD 12 billion, a 24 per cent decline compared to USD 15.8 billion raised during 2021.

In the domestic industry, Orb Energy received a USD 20 million follow-on loan from the US International Development Finance Corporation to support its ground-mounted solar customers in India.

Global public market financing in 2022 totalled USD 5.1 billion, 32 per cent lower

than USD 7.5 billion in 2021. A total of 128 mergers and acquisitions (M&A) transactions were recorded in 2022.

"The war in Ukraine has accelerated demand for solar around the world and the Inflation Reduction Act has boosted the sector in the US. In 2022, we saw record venture capital and private equity funding, solar companies were acquired in record numbers and solar projects saw their second best year for acquisitions," Raj Prabhu, CEO of Mercom Capital Group said.

Rupee gains 44 paise to close at 81.25 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee pared its initial losses and settled 44 paise higher at 81.25 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, tracking a weak greenback overseas and a firm trend in domestic equities.

However, rising crude oil prices capped the gains in the rupee, traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened weak at 81.80, but pared the losses and settled for the day at 81.25 (provisional), registering a rise of 44 paise over its previous close.

During the trading session, the local unit witnessed an intra-day high of 81.25 and a low of 81.82 against the American currency.

On Tuesday, the rupee had closed at 81.69 against the US dollar.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, declined 0.45 per cent to 101.93.



Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures rose 1.38 per cent to USD 87.11 per barrel.

According to Gaurang Somaiya, Forex & Bullion Analyst, Motilal Oswal Financial Services, volatility in rupee remained elevated after the Bank of Japan (BoJ) held rates unchanged.

Inflows on the domestic front also led to gains in the rupee.

"The BoJ decided to keep its yield curve tolerance band and ultra-dovish -0.1 per cent interest rate unchanged. The Japanese Yen lost by about over 2 per cent after the release of the policy statement," Somaiya said.

Ministry issues draft guidelines for certification of halal meat

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

All meat and its products can be exported as 'halal certified' only if they are produced, processed and packed under a valid certificate issued by a certification body accredited by a board of the Quality Council of India, according to the commerce ministry's draft guidelines on the subject.

With the aim of streamlining the halal certification process for export of meat and meat products from India, the draft guidelines on halal certification for export of meat and its products are proposed by the directorate general of foreign trade (DGFT).

The guidelines said that the certification bodies would follow the procedure laid down as per the Indian conformity assessment scheme (i-CAS) - halal.

It added that the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export



Development Authority (APEDA) would be designated as the overall monitoring agency for this purpose.

"All meat and meat products to be exported as 'halal certified' only if it is produced, processed and packed under a valid certificate issued by a certification body duly accredited by the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB), Quality Council of India," the draft guidelines said.

These draft guidelines are being circulated for the public/industry comments and feedback. The views can be sent by February 17 for compilation and to prepare the final guidelines.

With an objective to streamline the certification of meat and meat products as halal from the country, a scheme titled 'India Conformity Assessment Scheme (i-CAS)' has been developed.

FinMin deliberates steps to deal with cyber security issues

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry on Wednesday deliberated on steps being taken to mitigate the threats of cyber security in the financial segment amid the growing digitisation of the sector.

The symposium titled Financial Services Cyber Security (FINSCY) was organised by the Department of Financial Services (DFS) and Secretary Vivek Joshi inaugurated it, an official statement said.

The symposium provided an opportunity for senior officers from government departments, and financial services sector regulators, as also senior executives and chief information security officers of banks and financial institutions to share their ideas, practices and concerns on cyber security



measures, it noted.

It also discussed the readiness of the sector for future cyber threats and perspectives on the revised draft Digital Personal Data Protection Bill.

Besides financial services officers, officials of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Ministry of Home Affairs, government agencies viz., CERT-In, NCI-IPC, Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre; Regulators in the financial services sector viz., RBI, IRDAI and PFRDA attended the seminar, it added.

SBI raises ₹9,718 cr in second tranche of infra bonds



PTI ■ MUMBAI

State Bank of India (SBI) on Wednesday said it has raised Rs 9,718 crore through its second infrastructure bond issuance at a coupon rate of 7.70 per cent per annum for the 15-year maturity.

This is the second fundraising since early December when it had mopped up Rs 10,000 crore via infra bonds.

The fund proceeds will be utilised for enhancing long-term resources for funding infrastructure and affordable housing, the bank said in a

statement.

The issue attracted good response from investors with bids of Rs 14,805 crore, indicating an oversubscription of 2.96 times from 118 bidders, SBI said, adding investors were mutual funds, provident and pension funds, and insurers.

The pricing of 7.70 per cent represents a spread of 17 bps over the G-Sec curve. Before this, the bank had raised Rs 10,000 crore through infrastructure bonds on December 6, 2022, at a spread of 17 bps over the corresponding G-Sec curve.

CapitaLand India Trust to buy 1 mn sq ft IT park in Bengaluru

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

CapitaLand India Trust (CLINT) has agreed to acquire 1 million square feet IT park in Bengaluru for Rs 1,226 crore.

CLINT has entered into a forward purchase agreement to acquire a 1 million square feet IT Park located at Outer Ring Road, Bengaluru. It will provide funding for the development of the project as part of the forward purchase arrangement, CapitaLand India Trust Management Pte. Ltd, the trustee manager, said in a statement.

The project comprises two buildings with an aggregate net leasable area of about 1.5 million square feet.

CLINT proposes to fund the development of the project and subsequently acquire a net leasable area of 1 million square feet. The remaining net leasable



area of about 0.5 million sq ft will be retained by the landowners.

The landowners have appointed CapitaLand Services (India) Pvt Ltd to oversee the design, development and leasing of the project.

During the construction period, CLINT's investment in the construction of the project will be through debt and internal resources.

The total purchase price is expected to be Rs 1,226.1 crore, which includes the funding for the project.

Sanjeev Dasgupta, Chief Executive Officer of the trustee-manager, said, "The proposed acquisition will provide an opportunity to establish our presence in Outer Ring Road, India's largest office micro-market, which has demonstrated resilient performance during the COVID-19 pandemic."

As a result of the acquisition of one million square feet area, CLINT's portfolio size (inclusive of committed investment pipeline) will increase from about 28 million sq ft to 29 million sq ft.

POWERGRID bags award for massive procurement through GeM

PNS ■ GURUGRAM

Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID), a Maharatna PSU under Ministry of Power, Government of India has been awarded for extensive procurement through Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal.

POWERGRID's Director(Personnel) Dr. V. K. Singhand Executive Director (Contract Services) Sh. B. AnanthaSarma, received the Certificate of Appreciation from Sandeep Verma, Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Science & Technology, Government of Rajasthan and Sh. Prakash Mirani, Additional CEO, Government e-Marketplacduring the 8th Global Procurement Summit, organised by All India Management Association (AIMA) with support of Ministry of Finance, Government of India and The World Bank.

Govt proposes a slew of changes to insolvency law

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday proposed a slew of changes to the insolvency law, including fast-tracking the process and expanding the scope of pre-packaged framework.

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), which came into force in 2016, provides for a market-linked and time-bound resolution of stressed assets. The Code has already undergone various amendments.

"To strengthen the functioning of the IBC, changes to the Code are being considered



in relation to the admission of corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP) applications, streamlining the insolvency resolution process, recasting the liquidation process, and the role of service providers under the Code," the ministry said in a notice.

Among other changes, the

corporate affairs ministry has suggested developing a state-of-the-art electronic platform that can handle several processes under the Code with minimum human interface.

"It is being considered that this e-platform may provide for a case management system, automated processes to file applications with the AAs, delivery of notices, enabling interaction of IPs (Insolvency Professionals) with stakeholders, storage of records of CDs (Corporate Debtors) undergoing the process, and incentivising participation of other market players in the IBC ecosystem," the notice said.

Microsoft to axe 10K jobs, 5% of global workforce

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Microsoft will lay off 10,000 workers, about five per cent of its total workforce, its CEO Satya Nadella announced on Wednesday, terming it a hard choice that the tech giant had to make to remain a 'consequential company' amid global economic uncertainties.

Microsoft is the latest company after Facebook and Amazon to cut jobs as the bloodbath continues in the technology sector in 2023.

Describing the current

times as "significant change", Indian-origin Nadella said customers who accelerated their digital spend during the Covid-19 pandemic, are now optimising their digital spend to do more with less.

"Today, we are making changes that will result in the reduction of our overall workforce by 10,000 jobs" through the end of the third quarter of fiscal year 2023, he said.

"This represents less than 5 percent of our total employee base. We know this is a challenging time for each person impacted," Nadella said in an email sent to employees.



Bollywood mega star Amitabh Bachchan inaugurates Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital in Indore. Also, seen in the picture are Anil Ambani, his wife Tina Anil Ambani and Jaya Bachchan

Intent was to put bowlers under pressure: Shubman

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Young India opener Shubman Gill, who on Wednesday became the youngest player to slam a double century in ODIs, said his intent was to put the New Zealand bowlers under pressure and it paid off.

Gill struck a master-class 208 off 149 balls with 19 fours and nine maximums to lift India to an imposing 349 for 8. "I was waiting eagerly to go out and do what I want to do," Gill said while receiving the player-of-the-match award after India's nery 12-run win over New Zealand in the series-opener here.

Gill stepped up his innings brilliantly with his first 50 coming off 52 balls. He went from 50 to 100 off just 35 deliveries and again from 100 to 150 off just 35 balls.

But it was his final flurry that saw the acceleration really take off, with Gill going from 150 to 200 in just 23 balls, passing the double-century mark, thanks to three consecutive sixes.

"With wickets falling, at times I wanted to unleash and I'm glad I could do it at the end. Sometimes when the bowler is on top, you need to make them feel under pressure," Gill said about his strategy.

"I needed to avoid dot balls and show some intent and hit hard into the gaps which I was doing."

"I wasn't really thinking of 200, but once I hit sixes in the 47th over, I did feel that I could. Before that, I was playing what was coming to me."

At 23 years and 132 days, Gill is now the youngest player to score a double-hundred in men's ODIs, eclipsing his teammate Ishan Kishan, who set the record with his 210 against Bangladesh last month at the age of 24 years and 145 days.

"He (Kishan) is one of my best mates... It feels nice when



Gill fastest Indian to complete 1,000 ODI runs

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Shubman Gill on Wednesday became the fastest Indian to complete 1000 runs in ODIs as he reached the mark in 19 innings, surpassing the likes of Virat Kohli and Shikhar Dhawan.

Gill, who made his ODI debut in January 2019, also became the joint second-fastest to 1000 runs in terms of innings alongside Imam Ul Haq of Pakistan. Fakhar Zaman had crossed 1000 runs in 18 innings.

Gill's India teammates Kohli and Dhawan, who he has replaced in the team, had completed 1000 runs in 24 innings.

The 23-year-old achieved the feat in the first ODI against New Zealand after getting to his second straight ODI century.

GILL STEPPED UP HIS INNINGS BRILLIANTLY WITH HIS FIRST 50 COMING OFF 52 BALLS. HE WENT FROM 50 TO 100 OFF JUST 35 DELIVERIES AND AGAIN FROM 100 TO 150 OFF JUST 35 BALLS

you are wanting to do something and it is coming off on a regular basis," Gill said.

Gill took 19 innings to complete 1000 runs in ODIs, joint-second fastest to the feat alongside Imam-ul-Haq.

Fakhar Zaman is the quickest to the mark, having got there in 18 innings.

Virat Kohli and Shikhar Dhawan (24 innings) were previously the quickest Indians to 1000 ODI runs.

"It (double ton) has sunk in pretty well. I won't call it a 'wow' feeling but it feels nice when the ball goes off the bat how you want it."

"There's certainly a feeling of satisfaction. This is certainly one of those things, like what dreams are made of," Gill said.

India skipper Rohit Sharma was also effusive in his praise for Gill. "Watching Gill bat is fantastic, clean striking and no aerial shots. We wanted to give him a run before the Sri Lanka series for the kind of form he was in. He is such a free-flowing batsman," Rohit said.

Rohit also heaped praise on India pacer Mohammed Siraj, who was the pick of bowlers for India with figures of 4/46.

"Siraj has been brilliant, of late even in the other two formats. He has gone from strength to strength, running hard and clear about what he wants to do. He is not afraid to use the short ball as well which is exciting," the skipper added.



Virat Kohli back in top-5 in ODI rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

Back at his vintage best, former India skipper Virat Kohli, who scored two centuries and scored 283 runs in three matches against Sri Lanka, jumped two places to break into top-five in the latest ICC ODI rankings released on Wednesday.

Kohli now has 750 points and has second-placed Rassie van der Dussen (766) and third-placed Quinton de Kock (759) in his sights, while Pakistan skipper Babar Azam remains way out in front with 887 points.

Kohli has the opportunity to close the gap further in the ongoing three-match ODI series against New Zealand.

Kohli's team-mates Shubman Gill, Mohammed Siraj and Kuldeep Yadav have also

moved up in rankings. Gill, who hit his maiden ODI century in India to complement his fifty during the series, has moved up 10 spots to 26th. The young Indian opener scored 207 runs at an average of 69.

Siraj, who emerged the leading wicket-taker in India's 3-0 series win against Sri Lanka, climbed 15 spots to rise to third on the list for ODI bowlers with his nine scalps.

The performance helped Siraj improve to a career-best rating of 685 points and close in on pace-setters Trent Boult (730) and Josh Hazlewood (727).

Kuldeep Yadav was also rewarded for his five wickets from just two matches against Sri Lanka, with the left-arm spinner moving up seven spots to 21st in the latest rankings for bowlers.

India Open: Srikanth bows out after losing to Axelsen

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Fighting Kidambi Srikanth couldn't sustain the pressure as he went down in straight games to Olympic and world champion Viktor Axelsen in his opening men's singles match at the Yonex-Sunrise India Open Super 750 tournament here on Wednesday.

Srikanth, a world championship silver medallist, flattered to deceive as he squandered a 14-5 lead in the second game to go down 14-21, 19-21 to the world No. 1 Dane, leaving the cheering fans at the IG stadium disappointed.

World No. 39 Aakarshi Kashyap and world No. 34 Malvika Bansod also couldn't match their fancied rivals -- USA's Beiwen Zhang and Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrung -- and bowed out after losing their respective matches.

While Akarshi lost 15-21, 12-21 to former champion Zhang, Malvika squandered an 11-8 lead in the opening game to eventually go down 17-21, 12-21 to world No. 12 Busanan.

With the crowd rooting for him, Srikanth, a former world No.1, made a good start as he dominated the rallies, extracting mistakes from Axelsen. The Indian tried to lunge his opponent forward, using his strokes to move the tall Dane.

He unleashed some sensational smashes to move to a 7-5 lead but an alert Axelsen caught up at 8-8 and then with a superb smash took a three-point lead at the break.



At 13-9, Axelsen committed a rare service error before another shot went to the net. Srikanth tried to set up the rallies but often erred in his finishing.

The Dane eventually sealed the opening game after the Indian smashed out twice.

Srikanth made an attacking start after the change of ends, using his smashes to good use, to lead 5-1.

Two tight smashes on either side helped the Indian to maintain his lead to

8-3 before he entered the break with a healthy seven-point advantage when Axelsen went to the net.

The Indian didn't let the intensity slip after resumption to lead 14-6 and it seemed he will be able to take it to the decider.

But Axelsen got back his bearing at the nick of time as the Indian suddenly committed a series of unforced errors to allow his rival to bring the equation down to 13-15.

Srikanth fluffed the lines, his taps went to the nets repeatedly as it was soon 17-16. Another net error helped Axelsen to draw parity at 18-18. Luck also seemed to have left the Indian as another return bounced off the tape and landed out.

Axelsen soon grabbed two match points and then produced a precise return on the front court to raise his hands in celebration.

"I played well overall but couldn't finish a few points," said Srikanth, the disappointment of not closing out the match, writ large on his face.

"Even in the first game, I had few tap-outs and smash-outs. In the second game as well, at 18-19, it touched the net and went out. It was a good match, but I made too many mistakes."

It was his second successive first-round exit following the Malaysia Open Super 1000.

Axelsen, who had retained the title in Kuala Lumpur last week, said he was lucky to win the match.

India seek big win against Wales

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

An unbeaten India will seek to address their penalty-corner woes to post a big win against bottom-placed debutants Wales in their final pool match and qualify directly for the quarter-finals of the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup here on Thursday.

India and England are on four points each after two matches with the latter ahead on goal difference — plus five as against the hosts' plus two. India, though, will have the advantage of knowing what to do before their match as they play after England's game against Spain on Thursday.

If England lose or draw against Spain, there will be no headache for India as they just need to beat Wales by any margin to top Pool D — considered the group of death — and qualify directly for the quarter-finals.

If England beat Spain, then India will need to defeat Wales by at least five goals. The number of goals India need to score will keep on increasing depending on England's victory margin.

If two teams are on equal points and have the same num-



ber of wins, the rankings in the pool stage are decided on the basis of goal difference.

In any case, India will not be knocked out of the tournament as they will finish second if they beat Wales — a task they are expected to accomplish. If India finish second in Pool D, they will play the third-place team in Pool C, which could be either New Zealand or Malaysia in the

'crossover' round.

India had beaten Spain 2-0 before drawing England 0-0, both matches played at the new Birsa Munda Stadium in Rourkela. They are going to play at the Kalinga Stadium for the first time in this World Cup.

The winning team in each of the four pools qualifies directly for the quarter-finals. The second and third-placed finishers

Hockey World Cup 1975 victory song penned

New Delhi: As the 2023 World Cup Hockey begins today in Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, wishes for the repeat of 1975 feat have poured from different quarters from the Indian team. In the history of Men's World Cup Hockey, India lifted the cup only once: on March 15, 1975, at Kulalumpur when India defeated Pakistan.

As a tribute to the World Cup winning Indian hockey team of 1975, Prof Vasisht, who teaches history at Malabar Christian College, Calicut, has scripted a song "Magicians of Kulalumpur".

in each pool will feature in crossover matches. A second-place finisher of a pool will play a third-place side of another pool and the winning team will face a pool topper in the quarter-finals.

If India top Pool D and qualify directly for the quarter-finals, they will play one match less and that may keep them fresh for the last-eight stage.

AP ■ MELBOURNE

Defending champion Rafael Nadal hobbled out of the second round in a huge upset at the Australian Open on Wednesday, as Coco Gauff beat Emma Raducanu in a battle of the rising stars.

Nadal's wife Mery was in tears as the injury-hampered Spanish great lost to 65th-ranked Mackenzie McDonald at Rod Laver Arena, where the roof was closed because of more rain in Melbourne.

The 36-year-old Nadal was clearly hindered by a hip issue that required a medical timeout, as he surrendered 6-4, 6-4, 7-5 to the American.

It was the reigning champion's earliest exit from a major in seven years and will lead to more questions about whether injury and age are catching up with the record 22-time major champion.

The men's title now looks Novak Djokovic's to lose.

Nadal said defeat "hurt" and acknowledged that injuries were taking a toll.

"I've never been in a position to complain, life has given me so many positive things that I have no right to complain," he said.

"(But) I am tired, I am sad, I am disappointed, all this is a reality."

"From here on... what I want is to continue playing tennis. Don't think I'm saying all this because I want to take a step back."

Nadal out of Australian Open



"It is not the case, but my current feelings are bad."

In contrast to Nadal's disappointment and pain, 27-year-old McDonald is into the third round and a match against Yoshihito Nishioka of Japan.

"He's an incredible champion, he's never going to give up regardless of the situation," said McDonald of his beaten opponent.

"I was trying to stay focused on what I was trying to do and he kind of got me out of my rhythm, and I just got through it."

Elsewhere, the Italian 15th seed Jannik Sinner, 16th seed Frances Tiafoe and sixth seed Felix Auger-Aliassime all won.

So too did Daniil Medvedev, the losing finalist at the past two Australian Opens, who overcame a partisan crowd to dismiss Australian wildcard John Millman 7-5, 6-2, 6-2.

Seventh seed Medvedev is another who will fancy his chances now that Nadal is on his way home.

'WE WERE NERVOUS'

The 18-year-old American Gauff, seen as the heir to now-retired Serena Williams, defeated Britain's Raducanu 6-3, 7-6 (7/4).

There are 70 places separating seventh seed Gauff and 2021 US Open champion Raducanu in the current rankings, but you wouldn't have known it as the pair tussled for an hour and 42 minutes of pulsating tennis on Rod Laver Arena.

OPENING-UP

China's opening-up on all fronts good omen for world's economy

"Hearing that the port is going to be opened today, I'm so excited," said Huang Haiyan, a border resident of Laos, Vietnam. On the morning of January 8, she came to the port before everybody else. After going through procedures such as inspection, declaration, and security check, she became the first Vietnamese passenger to enter China after the resumption of passenger clearance at Yunnan's Hekou port. On the same day, passenger clearance also resumed at Mohan and Jiegao ports connecting Laos and Myanmar, respectively.

Located in Hekou, Yunnan, Hekou port is only separated from Laos, Vietnam by a river. Huang used to be engaged in import and export trade. "With customs clearance resumed,

I'll search for new co-operation opportunities in China and continue to engage in import and export trade," she said.

China used to classify COVID-19 as a Class B infectious disease but subject it to the preventive and control measures for a Class A infectious disease. Now, China treats COVID-19 as a Class B infectious disease according to law. Taking into account factors such as the characteristics of novel coronavirus, epidemic situation, vaccination rates, available medical resources, and its accumulated experience in pandemic prevention and control, China issued a notification on interim measures for travelers between China and other countries and regions on January 8.

According to an ar-

ticle on the website of The Economist, China's reopening will be the most important economic event of 2023. Its impact will be felt on Thailand's beaches, in large companies, and at central banks around the world. Economic activities will rebound sharply alongside the world's growing demand for Chinese goods, services, and commodities.

After the implementation of the interim measures for travelers between China and other countries and regions, the outbound trips made by Chinese citizens are recovering in an orderly manner. Data from Ctrip, a Chinese online travel booking platform, show that China's outbound travel bookings for the upcoming Spring Festival holidays, which will start on January 21, have more than quadrupled year-on-year, with Bangkok of Thailand and Melbourne of Australia being the most popular destinations.

"The Thai society and economic circles welcome the adjustment of China's immigration policy. Chinese tourists and investors are of great significance to the Thai economy," Mr. Songrit RBhuket, president of the Thai-Chinese Economic Association of Thailand, said that China's adjustment of epidemic prevention and control policy will not only activate the Chinese economy but also bring substantial development opportunities to neighboring countries and inject strong impetus into the global economic recovery.

The international investment bank Citibank expects a strong recovery in Chinese outbound trips in the first quarter of 2023 and a massive recovery in global tourism in the second quarter. Julia Simpson, president and CEO of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), said that Chinese tourists will inject momentum into the recovery of the global tourism industry and bring about its rapid growth in the next decade.

According to reports, as the Chinese government optimizes its epidemic prevention and control measures, a number of international investment institutions have raised their forecasts for China's economic growth in 2023. Many foreign chambers of commerce in China believe that the adjusted measures will rebuild confidence in investment and business, restore

optimism in the market, and help China retain its position as a priority destination for foreign investment. A Bank of America survey showed that the percentage of fund managers who see higher growth in the Chinese economy recently rose to about 75 percent from 13 percent in November.

(Compiled by our staff reporters)



In the first 24 hours following the adjustment on January 8, China customs admitted 251,045 passengers, 396 vessels, 325 aircraft, 6,323 trucks, and 83 trains into the country.

FOCUS

Today's China is a country closely linked with the world. We cherish peace and development and value friends and partners as we have always done. We stand firm on the right side of history and on the side of human civilization and progress. We work hard to contribute China's wisdom and solutions to the cause of peace and development for all humanity.

— An excerpt from the 2023 New Year Address by Chinese President Xi Jinping

"The vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind points the direction for solving global problems"

Pierre Laurent, national secretary of the Communist Party of France, said in a recent interview with our reporters that the Chinese Communist Party has led the Chinese people to make a historic leap from having inadequate food and clothing to building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, and is now admirably striving to achieve shared prosperity for everyone and ensure that over 1.4 billion Chinese people have access to a modern life.

Since his first visit to China in 1983, Laurent has come back again and again. He saw remarkable changes in the country every time he visited China, and he was particularly amazed when Beijing became a city to host both the Summer and Winter Olympic Games last year. "From comprehensively deepening reform to opening further to the outside world, China has taken a series of new measures to attract global attention." Besides Beijing, Laurent has also been to Shanghai, Nanjing, and other Chinese cities, all of which have left beautiful and unforgettable memories for him.

In the eyes of Laurent, China has explored a development path in conformity with

its reality. "The CPC has led the Chinese people to forge ahead. After achieving the first Centenary Goal, the Chinese people are marching towards the second Centenary Goal and have entered a new stage of development." Laurent said that by fully understanding the historic juncture in China's development, the CPC has constantly adjusted its lines, principles, and policies and led the country to achieve steady development.

"Today, many of the problems facing countries are global in nature. More and more facts have proven that no country is an isolated island, and all countries are becoming an increasingly closely related community of common interest. We should work together to cope with global challenges. The vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind proposed by China has set the direction for addressing global challenges and problems." Laurent believed that this global vision of China has demonstrated that China is a responsible major country synergizing its own development with the common development of the world.

(People's Daily)

NEWS

China shifts focus to "protecting health and preventing severe cases" in epidemic control

The Chinese State Council Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism against COVID-19 held a press conference the other day. Mi Feng, a spokesman for the National Health Commission, said at the conference that China shifts focus from "preventing infection" to "protecting health and preventing severe cases" in its epidemic control.

China are taking multiple measures to protect health, prevent severe cases, and make its epidemic prevention and control more precise and scientific, including ensuring the public access to medicine and medical service, improving health service for the elderly and other key groups, promoting COVID-19 vaccination, and strengthening epidemic prevention and control in rural areas.

"The elderly are at high risk of serious symptoms and death when infected with COVID-19. How to ensure their safety is a key and decisive factor in our achieving the goal of protecting health and preventing severe cases," said Jiao Yahui, director general of the National Health Commission's Bureau of Medical Administration. Currently, according to Jiao, healthcare consortiums have basically been established at the city and county levels, which have laid

a vital foundation for health monitoring of the elderly.

As is learned, since the outbreak of COVID-19, China has been attaching equal importance to traditional Chinese medicine and Western medicine. Chinese doctors have given full play to the characteristics and advantages of traditional Chinese medicine and screened out clinically effective formulas, which have played an important role in raising the cure rate, reducing severe cases and death, and facilitating the early recovery of patients.

As of January 4, 2023, China had cumulatively administered 3.48 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines. Throughout the country, 1,309,886 billion people have been vaccinated, and 1,275,855 billion people have received a full course of vaccination, accounting for 92.9 percent of the national population and effectively reducing severe cases. China has established the world's largest COVID-19 vaccine production line, with an annual production capacity of more than 7 billion doses. To date, it has produced more than 5.5 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines, which can ensure that all people eligible for vaccination have access to it.

(CCTV News app and chinadaily.com.cn)

ECONOMY

Yunnan: Gross regional product expected to grow by 6% in 2023

At the first session of the 14th People's Congress of Yunnan Province held in Kunming on January 11, Governor Wang Yubo delivered a report on the work of the Yunnan Provincial Government.

According to the report, the province set its main targets for this year's economic and social development as follows: to increase the gross regional product by about 6 percent, the value added of industrial enterprises above the designated size by about 9 percent, the fixed asset investment by about 9 percent, the retail sales of consumer goods by over 10 percent, and the total imports and exports by about 15 percent; to keep the growth in residents' per capita disposable income basically in step with economic growth; and to reduce energy consumption per unit of GDP by 4 percent.

In 2023, Yunnan province will focus its work on ten areas, such as developing the real economy, promoting the transition to a model of green development, and advancing high-level opening up. In particular, the province will pick up speed to increase the size of trade for new breakthroughs in advancing

its high-level opening up.

Yunnan will make better use of the China-Laos railway, actively develop modern logistics, promote port economy, and strengthen international and domestic economic and trade cooperation. The province will accelerate the development of 50 major projects along the China-Laos railway, better connect "Lancang-Mekong Express" international freight trains with the China-Europe Railway Express and the Lancang-Mekong international shipping services, and launch cross-border passenger trains at an appropriate time to transport more than 10 million passengers and 13 million tons of goods annually. In addition, Yunnan will take an active part in the development of the China-ASEAN Sub-region economic co-operation, and increase the number of new enterprises in the Pilot Free Trade Zone, the province's total imports and exports, and its foreign investment by more than 30 percent.

In 2022, according to the report, Yunnan's gross regional product was estimated to grow by about 4 percent, higher than the

national average. Last year, the province increased its imports and exports by about 8 percent, put to use 726 million US dollars in foreign funds, and directly invested 1.167 billion US dollars in non-financial sectors in foreign countries.

Over the past five years, Yunnan's economic aggregate has increased to about 2.9 trillion yuan (0.433 trillion US dollars) from 1.64 trillion yuan (0.244 trillion US dollars) in 2017, with an average annual growth rate of 6.4 percent, and the province's per capita disposable income of residents has exceeded 26,000 yuan (3,879.2 US dollars). With the China-Laos railway, the Chinese sections of China-Vietnam, China-Laos, and China-Myanmar expressways, and the China-Myanmar-Indian Ocean new multimodal transport corridor going into operation, Yunnan's geographical advantages are becoming increasingly prominent. Today, Yunnan ranks first in Chinese provinces (municipalities, and autonomous regions) in the number of cities accessible to South Asia and Southeast Asia, and it has established 12 multilateral and bilateral cooperation mechanisms with 9 countries. (Yunnan Daily)

IN-PICS



Kunming: Flowers sell well with Spring Festival approaching

With the Spring Festival around the corner, the flower market in Kunming, Yunnan has ushered in another peak season. Many citizens are buying flowers in preparation for the 2023 Chinese New Year. This year, the Spring Festival holiday will last from January 21 to 27. (Photo by Xinhua)

STORY

Rosie: Witnessing Yunnan's vigorous development

"I keep an eye on major meetings in China every year. The ideas and requirements conveyed by these meetings have guided my teaching career," said Rosie, a Canadian who teaches English at Yunnan University of Finance and Economics. After teaching in China for more than ten years, she has developed a unique perspective on China's education.

Since she started her teaching career in Yunnan in 2004, Rosie has witnessed the improvement of China's education standards and educational system over the past 18 years. In her spare

time, she has taught English for free at many primary schools. In 2009, she won the Caiyun Award from the Yunnan provincial government—the highest honor for foreign experts working in the province.

For Rosie, China's basic education and higher education have been improving in both quality and standards. "The rapid development of China's education can be seen at high-end international conferences such as the COP15 and the China-South Asia Expo. Experts, scholars, volunteers, and interpreters in Yunnan have provided high-quality services for

these conferences," said Rosie. "Talents form the foundation for the future development of Yunnan and China."

"Yunnan is an open and inclusive province. I'm honored to live in Yunnan and witness its vigorous development," Rosie said emotionally. She hopes that more platforms for opening up like the China-South Asia Expo will be established in the future for various countries to deeply communicate and learn from each other, so that the world can embrace different civilizations and achieve mutual benefit. (Yunnan Daily)

TOURISM

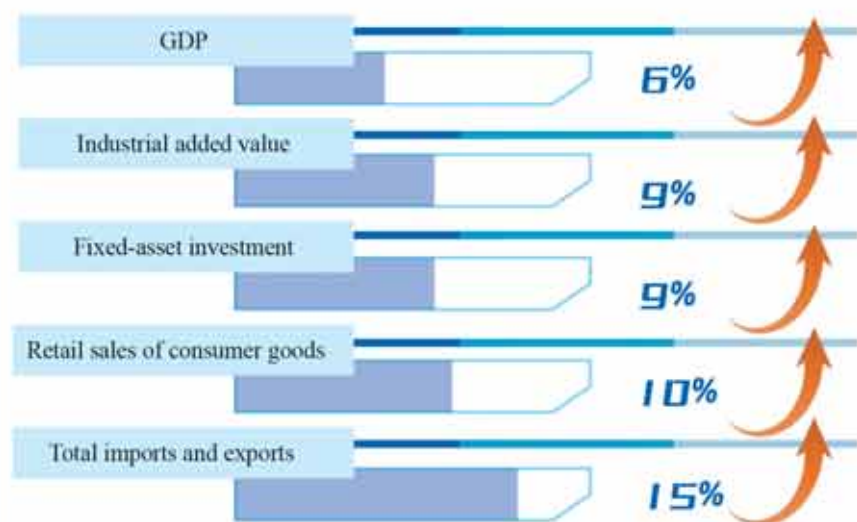
Yunnan tourism market recovering

"Our hotel has more than 100 rooms, which have been fully booked for the New Year's Day holiday (from December 31, 2022 to January 2, 2023). The number of our orders has basically reached the level in peak seasons," said a female hotel manager surnamed Li in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan. Since December 20, 2022, the number of tourists from

other parts of the province has gradually increased, and the hotel rooms are fully booked every day.

Since China began to treat COVID-19 as a Class B infectious disease according to law and implement interim measures for travelers between China and other countries and regions, the tourism industry in Yunnan is gradually recovering.

Statistics show that during the New Year's Day holiday, Yunnan received 6.4543 million tourists and registered tourism revenue of 4.749 billion yuan (0.7085 billion US dollars), up 29.6 percent and 35.9 percent year on year, respectively. These figures are 101.6 percent and 98.4 percent of those in the same period of 2019. (Yunnan Daily)



MAIN TARGETS FOR YUNNAN'S 2023 ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT