OPINION 6

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STRATEGIC DILEMMA

WORLD 8

14 YEARS IN PRISON

IMRAN, WIFE SENTENCED TO

IMPORT DUTY ON MOBILE PARTS

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NEW DELHI, THURSDAY FEBRUARY 1, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3

ED takes Hemant Soren into Custody

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI /

¬he 72-hour-long drama between Jharkhand and the Enforcement Enforcement Directorate (ED) came to an end late on Wednesday evening with the arrest of the "absconding" JMM leader Soren. Hemant Sources claimed JMM leader was "evasive" in his replies during his questioning and hence was taken into custody under the Prevention Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The sources said the agency put across 15 questions to Hemant during the second round of questioning in the case.

He had to resign as Chief Minister, followed by the probable appointment of the seniormost MLA and State Transport Minister, Champai Soren, to step into his shoes and take up the reins of the JMM-Congress, RJD coalition government.

As of the filing of reports, JMM spokesperson Mahua Majhi said that Soren had been taken into custody by the ED. Cabinet Minister Banna Gupta shared with the media that Champai would take over as the new Chief Minister of Jharkhand. Speculation is rife that someone from Hemant's family, including wife Kalpana (who is not an MLA), could be named to lead the State.

Hemant Soren is the first sitting Chief Minister to be arrested in a corruption case.

Along with ED officials, Hemant went to Raj Bhawan to meet Jharkhand Governor Radhakrishnan and submitted his resignation from the post of chief minister. Sources suggest that Hemant wanted to be arrested in his home State to sympathy from the people during the Lok elections.

A delegation of the JMM-led coalition also met the Governor and submitted a list of support from 47 MLAs, claiming their backing to form government. Champai Soren said he has staked a claim to form a new government and have the support of 47 MLAs. Champai has been a legislator

from the Serikela Assembly constituency for more than three decades since 1991 and is known to be a lovalist of IMM supremo Shibu Soren. Earlier, legislators gathered at Hemant Soren's residence elected Champai as the leader of the JMM legislative party, with the party spokesperson Vinod Pandey saying that a consensus was reached on his

hectic activities, IMM coalition MLAs gathered at the Chief Minister's residence earlier in the day to express their solidarity with their leader. They also signed a letter of support without any name, as speculation is rife that Hemant's wife will be handed

CHAMPAI SOREN CM DESIGNATE IN JHARKHAND



Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren gestures as he leaves from his residence for Raj Bhavan in Ranchi on Wednesday

Soren's wife, Kalpana Soren, who is not an MLA, was also present at the meeting. Byelections cannot be held in the last year of any Assembly's term, so Kalpana Soren could not have been elected an MLA even if she was named the Chief Minister.

Reports were also circulating that Soren's family, including his sister-in-law and JMM

MLA Sita Soren (widow of consensus could not be around 1:20 pm to record his Durga Soren), and Basant Soren, openly oppose any move to make his wife Kalpana the chief minister. Sita Soren represents the Jama constituency in the Assembly and told the media that she would like to ask why only Kalpana Soren, who is not even an MLA and has no political experience.

spokesperson Vinod Pandey said that a general consensus was reached on Champai Soren. ED sources reported that the

reached on Kalpana Soren as statement. The agency was not the next chief minister, the satisfied with the answers provided by the chief minister. decided to elect Champai Soren as the new Soren had skipped the 10th summons before his arrest in connection with investigation into a "huge racket of illegal change of land ownership by the mafia" in

Iharkhand. officers of the ED reached the Simultaneously, Soren also CM's residence in Ranchi lodged an FIR against ED Simultaneously, Soren also

conducted by the agency at his Delhi residence on Monday, officials said. Soren alleged that the ED conducted the search to "harass and malign him and his entire community," the officials said, quoting the FIR.

Ahead of the scheduled questioning, the ED wrote to the Jharkhand government, seeking extra security. Prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the CrPC, which were earlier effective from 9 am to 10 pm on Wednesday, have now been extended until further notice within a radius of 100 metres at kev locations, including the CM House, Raj Bhavan, and the ED office at Doranda. As part of the restrictions, demonstrations, rallies, and meetings cannot be held in and around these areas. The three-member special team was led by finance secretary Prashant Kumar and included mines director Arva Rajkamal and special branch IG Prabhat Kumar.

ED officials had reached the CM's residence in Ranchi around 1:20 pm to record his statement. Meanwhile, evewitnesses said three tourist buses entered Soren's house on Kanke Road around 5:30 pm amid hectic activities. Soon after that, Chief Secretary L Khiangte and DGP Ajay Kumar Singh met Soren's wife, Kalpana Soren. Earlier in the day, Soren lodged an FIR

against senior ED personnel at the SC/ST police station here over searches conducted by the agency at his Delhi residence, officials said. The ED has, so far, arrested 14

people in the case, including the 2011-batch IAS officer

Chhavi Ranjan, who served as

the director of the State's social welfare department and deputy commissioner of Ranchi, Earlier, the ED had recorded his statement on January 20 under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). Hemant was taken into custody in connection with an alleged land scam, minutes after meeting the governor handing in his resignation. Sources said he had discussed the matter with the officials, declaring that he would sign the arrest memo only after stepping down. The ED officials then took him to meet the Governor. A Chief

Minister can be arrested under

the anti-money laundering

rules if he evades summons

thrice. Soren, after evading the Enforcement Directorate over the weekend, had agreed to be questioned by the Central agency this afternoon. His statement was recorded during the questioning. Soren, who had evaded seven summons for questioning in an alleged money laundering case linked to the Rs 600 crore land scam, was anticipating arrest for a

Introspect, none remembers President Murmu celebrates disruptors, urges PM Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted on Wednesday that the country progress, and its journey of all-inclusive and all-round development will continue with the people's blessings. In his customary remarks to the media before the Budget Session, Modi greeted them with "Ram Ram" (an invocation of Lord Ram) and noted that there is a tradition of not presenting a full Budget

before the polls.
"We will follow the same tradition and present a full-fledged budget before you after a new government is formed," he said, adding that Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will, in her Budget to be tabled on Thursday, introduce measures showing a direction. Modi has frequently expressed confidence that his government will retain power

in the elections.
Ahead of Parliament's last session before the Lok Sabha polls, the PM took aim at Opposition MPs disrupting parliamentary proceedings, saying those habituated to creating a disrobing and



session of Parliament on Wednesday. Union Ministers Pralhad Joshi, Arjun Ram Meghwal, Jitendra Singh and V Muraleedharan are also seen

introspect as they meet in the that no one remembers those last session before the polls. "If these MPs inquire even in disruptions," Modi said. their own parliamentary

democratic values should constituencies, they will find behind such ruckus and Continued on Page 2

the rise of New Bharat PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday hailed the Modi Government's big-ticket and mentioned that the centuries-old desire to build a

Ram temple in Ayodhya has now become a reality, while apprehensions over the abrogation of Article 370 are a thing of the past.
In her first address to a joint

sitting of the two Houses in the new Parliament building, during which she touched on varied issues ranging from insurgency to inflation, Murmu said a country can progress at a fast pace only when it defeats the challenges of the past and puts maximum energy building the future.

Murmu arrived in a buggy at Parliament House to deliver her address to the joint sitting of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. She entered the House with the "sengol" being carried in front of her. She asserted that the armed forces were giving a befitting reply to terrorism and

expansionism. Murmu also mentioned that India is now a prominent voice against terrorism in the world.



minister.

President Droupadi Murmu addresses the joint session of Parliament on the opening day of the Budget session, in

The government, she said, believes that the grand edifice of a developed India will stand on the four strong pillars of youth power, women power, farmers, and the poor. "In the last 10 years, the country has witnessed the completion of projects for which the people had waited for decades. There was a desire for building the Ram Mandir for centuries, and today it has become a reality,"

she said to thumping desks from the treasury benches. "In cultural history, there are some milestones that decide the future of centuries. In India's history also, there have milestones. On January 22, the country witnessed one the country witnessed one such milestone. After a centuries-long wait, Ram Lalla now resides in a grand temple in Ayodhya," she said. She said there were apprehensions over the removal of Article 370 from Jammu and Kashmir "but they have become history they have become history now.

There is an environment of peace and security in Jammu & Kashmir, with vibrancy in markets instead of the "silence of shutdowns" witnessed in the past, the President said. Incidents of insurgency have gone down in the Northeast, she asserted. The government has also established strict laws against triple talaq, she said. She also mentioned that the Indian economy, which used to be among the "fragile five", is now moving in the right direction and at the right pace due to several reforms undertaken by the government in the last 10

Continued on Page 2



Fog, rain disrupt travel in north India

RAJESH KUMAR NEW DELHI

Parts of northern India remained shrouded in dense fog for the third consecutive day, with zero visibility in the morning hours, leading to disruptions and delays in road, rail, and flight services. The much-needed incessant rain, the first of the season, in the afternoon aggravated foggy conditions further in northern India, including Delhi and the NCR. Due to almost zero visibility,

traveller and daily commuters faced a harrowing time traveling from one place to another. As many as 250 flights were delayed at Indira

Gandhi International Airport with at least three flights being diverted, as the disruption index went up to 3.0, according to the flight Massive chaos erupted at Delhi airport on Wednesday as passengers staged a protest as passengers staged a protest and raised slogans against IndiGo airline after it cancelled a Deoghar-bound flight. The flight was scheduled to take off from Delhi airport's Terminal 2. Delhi received 8.5 mm of rainfall on Wednesday as the national Capital witnessed incessant rainfall accompanied

up to 30-40 kmph. Continued on Page 2

by gusty winds with speeds of

ive new wetlands earn Ramsar tag, total rises to 80

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Pive more wetlands in India, recognised as nature's kidneys for their water-regulating and waste-filtering capabilities, have received the international designation of Ramsar sites, bringing the country's total to 80. The inclusion of these sanctuaries expands the Ramsardesignated areas to cover a vast expanse of 1.33 million hectares. An announcement in this regard was made on the eve of World Wetland Day by Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav, who highlighted the theme of World Wetland Day 2024: Wetlands and Human Wellbeing. The government

plans to observe the day at Sirpur Lake in Indore. these Certificates for

waterlogged ecosystems were presented by Dr Musonda Mumba, Secretary-General of the Ramsar Convention, in the presence Union Environment Secretary Leena Nandan, Jitendra Kumar (DG Forest), and Dr Sujit Kumar Bajpayee (Joint Secretary Wetlands, National Focal Point for the Ramsar Convention). With the addition of more wetlands, Tamil Nadu now boasts the highest number of at the confluence of the Ramsar Sites (16 sites), followed by Uttar Pradesh (10

The

Ramsar

encroachment, development, waste dumping, and poaching are strictly prohibited within these designated areas.

An official from the Ministry provided insights into the ecological importance of the designated newly Ankasamuura Conservation Reserve, a Village human-made Irrigation Tank, is rich in biodiversity, hosting various

plant and animal species. The Aghanashini Estuary, formed Aghanashini River and the Arabian Sea, provides diverse ecosystem services and Convention, established in supports a significant 1971, aims to globally protect population of waterbirds. significant



wetlands. Activities such as Additionally, the mangroves Karaivetti bird sanctuary in Tamil Nadu

bordering the estuary help protect the shores against storms and cyclones. Similarly, the Magadi Kere Conservation Reserve, initially constructed for rainwater storage, is now home to a variety of bird species, including vulnerable and near-threatened species. The Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary, one of Tamil Nadu's largest inland wetlands, serves as a crucial source of groundwater recharge and supports diverse agricultural activities.

The Longwood Shola Reserve wetlands provide Forest endangered and vulnerable bird species makes bird species, making them integral to the Western Ghats and harboring a significant number of endemic bird

These wetlands serve as habitats for the globally endangered Black-chinned Nilgiri Laughing thrush, Nilgiri Blue Robin, and vulnerable Nilgiri Wood-pigeon. A total of 14 out of 26 endemic bird species of the Western Ghats are found in these wetlands. The convention to protect

wetlands was signed in Ramsar in 1971. Wetlands play a crucial role in flood control, providing water, food, and supporting biodiversity.

The global Ramsar list currently includes over 2,500 sites identified by member countries for their ecological services and biodiversity

GYANVAPI CASE Court permits puja in mosque cellar

The Varanasi district court on Wednesday granted a priest the right to worship Hindu deities in the Gyanvapi mosque cellar, Hindu side counsel Madan Mohan Yadav

The order was passed by judge A K Vishvesha who directed the district magistrate to make arrangements within seven days to facilitate puja there by Shailendra Kumar Pathak, Yadav said.

The prayers will be facilitated by the Kashi Vishwanath Trust, which manages the Kashi Vishwanath temple which stands adjacent to the mosque. Hindu litigants claim the mosque was built after demolishing a part of the temple.

According to the petition filed by Pathak, his maternal grandfather, priest Somnath Vyas, used to perform prayers there till 1993 when the cellar was closed by the authorities. Pathak had sought the right to worship the deities there.

Yadav said the barricades before the Nandi statue in front of the 'wazu khana' -- where where ablutions are performed before offering namaz -- in the every Hindu with joy."



mosque complex will be removed to make way for the petitioner to perform puja. The Hindu side counsel said the puja of deities there was stopped during the rule of chief minister Mulayam Singh Yadav in 1993 in response the Babari

Mosque demolition on

December 6, 1992. The Muslim side has argued that the cellar is part of the mosque complex, and hence permission to perform puja there should not be granted. Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) president Alok Kumar welcomed the court's decision, saying, "Today, a court in Kashi has given a very important decision filling the hearts of

Hindu society over the court's decision and said, "We hope that after this, the court's verdict on the Gyanvapi case will also come soon. We are confident that the decision will come in favour of Hindus based on evidence and facts.'

The Varanasi district court had on July 21 last year directed the ASÍ to conduct a "detailed scientific survey" -- including excavations, wherever necessary -- to determine if the mosque located next to the Kashi Vishwanath temple was built on the remains of a temple. According to the Hindu side, the report of the scientific survey suggests the mosque was built on the remains of a pre-existing temple.

BJP indulged in disrobing Parliament: Congress

Congress on Wednesday hit back at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for accusing the Opposition of causing disruptions in Parliament and said it is the BJP that indulged in "disrobing" of Parliament and posed a threat to democracy in the country.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said data from the past two decades show that most interruptions in Parliament occurred during the 15th Lok Sabha (2009-2014) when the BJP was the principal opposition party.

"So it is the BJP which has indulged in 'cheerharan' (disrobing) of Parliament, and not the Opposition. Democracy is in danger: Courtesy BJP," he alleged. Kharge alleged that the "autocratic" BJP government was corroding parliamentary democracy, violating the Constitution and "strangulating" the voice of the opposition. He said as many as 14 bills were passed in merely three days after the unprecedented step of suspending 146 MPs in both

The Congress chief claimed 64 bills out of 172 have been passed in the current Lok Sabha with less than one hour of discussion and as many as 61 bills passed in Rajya Sabha with less than one hour of discussion during the same tenure.

"Pradhan Mantri ji made a statement outside the Parliament. We want to remind him how his government is

area of defence collaboration. During the two-day visit to

responsible for corroding Parliamentary democracy. In the last session of Parliament, as many as 14 Bills were passed in just three days, by suspending an unprecedented 146 MPs from both Houses," he said in a statement. "The current Lok Sabha will finish its five-year term without a Deputy Speaker, a position conventionally reserved for an opposition member. This shows how an to assuage her alleged ruffled autocratic Modi Government is violating the Constitution, and strangulating the voice of the Opposition," he alleged.

The 17th Lok Sabha, which is set to conclude on February 9, would have sat for the least number of days for all Lok Sabha that completed their full five-year terms, he said.

"This points out how the Modi Government is hell-bent on subverting Parliamentary democracy," Kharge also said. "For all the claims made by PM of passing a record number of Bills. In his first term, 179 Bills were passed by both Houses and in his second term 213 Bills were passed, which are lesser than 297 Bills passed under UPA-1 and 248 Bills passed under UPA-2, despite wide-spread disruption by BJP," he

Will fight LS polls solo in Bengal, declares Mamata

SAUGAR SENGUPTA KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee once again made it clear that her party Trinamool Congress would alone fight in Bengal and that there would be no alliance with the Congress which had teamed up with the CPI(M) that had a history of heaping untold torture on the TMC supremo when she was the opposition leader. Ignoring Akbar Road's efforts

feelings Banerjee on Wednesday reiterated her party stance of fighting solo in Bengal. "Despite the fact that I do enjoy personal ties with families (read Congress) I don't have any political relationship with them in Bengal," she said before directly referring to the Congress Party.

"Though the Congress does not have even a single seat in Bengal I had offered them two seats in Malda ... but they were asking for a large number of seats which was not possible for us and so I said we will fight it alone in Bengal, the Chief Minister who had earlier denied being engaged in seat-sharing parleys with the Congress said.

Banerjee who was addressing a meeting at Behrampore and had for the past several days



held a number of road shows along the same routes traversed by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi ignoring the national leadership of that party to join Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra for even a few minutes.

Banerjee counted another reason for her not joining cause with the Congress in Bengal even as she said how the tricolour party had surrendered to the Marxists who had a long history of torture on the Congress and later TMC men. The Congress considers the CPI(M) as its master so they are with them here ... and I cannot be with a party that takes advice from the communists ... I cannot forgive the Marxists ... I cannot forget how they have attacked me on several occasions," Banerjee said adding "in Bengal supporting any party other than the TMC would amount to supporting the BJP."

'Rahul car was hit in Bihar, not in Bengal' saugar sengupta Kolkata

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has strongly refuted allegations that the vehicle Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was travelling in was attacked and vandalized at Harischandrapur, a village that falls in Bengal bordering Bihar. "I was in the helicopter when I got a message that Rahul's car has been vandalized ... Immediately inquired into the incident and was told that the incident had taken place in Katihar district of Bihar and not in Bengal ... the car entered Bengal with the glass already broken ... I condemn this attack ... but also criticize those people who are creating a drama out of this," Banerjee

Banerjee said, "instead of blaming the TMC the Congress should find out the real culprits .. it may be that after Nitish Kumar has been allowed to join the NDA there may be some anger in Bihar and for this the vehicles may have been attacked," adding, "the TMC does not believe in attacking others m... In Bengal there is no bar in holding democratic and peaceful programmes ... will only remind everyone that from February 2 the board exams are beginning and so the loudspeakers systems must not be used during this period."

India, Oman ink MoU for defence material procurement

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

India and Oman on Wednesday signed a memo-

understanding(MOU)on procurement of defence material and equipment during talks between Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane and his counterpart Secretary General, Ministry of Defence, Oman Mohammed Bin Naseer Bin Ali Al Zaabi in Muscat. The Defence Secretary co-

chaired the 12th Joint Military Cooperation Committee (JMCC) meeting with Ali Al Zaabi, defence ministry officials said here.

During the meeting, both sides reviewed and appreciated the robust defence cooperation between India and Oman. The delved into many new areas of cooperation in the fields of training, Joint exercise, Information sharing,



Oceanography, Ship Building and MRO, that would build mutual trust and interoperability between militaries of both nations.

Further, they also exchanged views on regional and global issues of shared interest. Both sides discussed effective and practical initiatives to further boost bilateral Defence engageindustries collaboration, offi-

Towards implementing India -

Oman, Defence Secretary also held bilateral talks with the Secretary General. During the talks, Aramane highlighted the potential of domestic defence industry with capacity, capability and looked forward to a fruitful partnership with the Armed Forces of Oman. Oman side expressed confidence in the capability of Indian defence industry. Defence Secretary also invited Secretary general and his del-Oman Joint Vision Document entitled 'A Partnership for the Future, adopted during the visit of Head of State of the

egation to visit India to witness the defence industrial capability, especially in aerospace and maritime sectors Oman is one of India's closest

defence partners in the Gulf region and defence cooperation has emerged as a key pillar of the strategic partnership two countries are committed to work under the vision of strate-

DMRC installs interactive exhibits to engage more with passengers

Visitors at a prominent Delhi Metro station can get an experience of 'driving' a train as the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has installed interactive museum exhibits to engage more with passengers and people in general. Among the highlights of the new exhibits is an interactive display showing Delhi Metro's journey so far through years and historic photos. The exhibits were unveiled on

Wednesday at the Shivaji Stadium metro station in the presence of Vikas Kumar, Managing Director of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation. To provide a hands-on experience, DMRC has also installed a Simulator where commuters can experience what it's like to innovative step allows passengers to gain understanding of driving a Metro train while cre-



Besides, an interactive digital display through a wide screen mounted on a kiosk allows visitors to navigate through the history of the DMRC since its inception in 1995 to the first ground-breaking held on October 1, 1998, onto opening 2002.

Another interactive exhibit is the Tourist Map, which pro- es the underground and ele-

vides an easy-to-use guide for tourists visiting Delhi. This map highlights popular tourist destinations, including heritage sites, making it an invaluable resource for both domes-

tic and international visitors. Additionally, an Interactive Quiz will test commuters' knowledge about the Delhi aspects. Also, a working model with a running train showcas-

vated tracks. Bridges and viaducts are also integrated

Also, a huge working model depicts a train, underground and elevated tracks, bridges and viaducts at the station's inter-

A demonstration by some of the sniffer dogs deployed as part of the CISF security cover was also held on the occasion.

The exhibits at the Shivaji Stadium metro station have been installed, besides the existing museum of Delhi Metro at Patel Chowk station. Started in 2009, this museum has space constraints, the officials said.

The DMRC is now planning to set up a bigger metro museum at the Supreme Court metro station on the Blue Line, where the exhibits currently placed at tion will be relocated, and many more exhibits will be

Fog, rain disrupt travel in north...

The incessant rainfall further aggravated cold Weather conditions. fluctuations are expected to continue until February 3 because of a western

disturbance, with further changes anticipated thereafter, according to the Meteorological Department (IMD). Rainfall over northwest India during January 2024 (3.1 mm) was the second lowest since 1901, as per the IMD.

The IGI airport witnessed long queues of passengers waiting to get updates about their flights. Many passengers were seen waiting at the airport with their luggage. The disruption index went up to 3.0, according to the flight tracker information system. According to airport sources, take-offs continue at Delhi at or near the earth's surface

a total of five flights were various diverted on Tuesday and 7 am on Wednesday.

Out of these, three were diverted to Jaipur in Rajasthan, and one each to Ahmedabad in Gujarat and Mumbai in Maharashtra. For arrivals, around 95 flights were delayed, and 15 were cancelled. Zero visibility was reported at

Indira Gandhi Airport at 6:30 am as a thick layer of fog engulfed the area. The visibility remained the same until 9 am, according to airport officials.

Owing to the dense fog conditions and low visibility, the Delhi airport has issued an advisory for passengers. It said, "While landings and

Airport, flights that are not CAT III compliant may be destinations between 9:30 pm affected. Passengers are requested to contact the airline concerned for updated flight information. Any inconvenience caused is deeply regretted."

Sultanate of Oman, Sultan

Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik in

December 2023, the Defence

Secretary and Secretary

Understanding (MoU) per-

Equipment which would pro-

signed

General

Memorandum

In a video viral on social media, a group of passengers can be heard raising slogans like "IndiGo have have" and "bandh karo bandh karo". Earlier in the day, IndiGo issued an advisory and said that flight operations in Delhi. Srinagar, Chandigarh are likely to be impacted due to inclement weather. "Please check your flight status before leaving for the airport," IndiGo said.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), fog is formed when air

becomes saturated by any of the three processes cooling, addition of moisture, or mixing with another air parcel. Generally, fog forms in a stable air mass environment. The minimum temperature was recorded at 7.3 degrees Celsius, a notch below the season's normal

Wednesday morning, while the maximum temperature was settled at 18.3 degrees Celsius, four notches below the normal. The minimum temperature in Palam was settled at 9.4 degrees Celsius, Ayanagar at 9 degrees Celsius, and Ridge at 8.4 degrees Celsius, two notches below the normal.

Delhi witnessed a bonechilling January in 2024, as most days were cold and sunless due to the fog this month. Very poor air quality, cold days and five cold waves. These MPs should not let go

heavily foggy mornings, and bitter cold defined January 2024, making this month the coldest in terms of daytime, or maximum, temperature since 2003. The national capital recorded its coldest January in 21 years in terms of

day temperatures. maximum mean temperature in January at Safdarjung was 17.9 degrees Celsius. It was the same as in 2015 and the lowest since 2003. The normal maximum temperature in January is 20.1 degrees Celsius, 2.2 degrees higher than what was

recorded this month. This January also saw the coldest minimum or night temperature since 2013. The mean minimum temperature this month was 6.43 degrees Celsius, which came with five

Introspect, none remembers...

From Page 1

But those who benefited Parliament with their superb ideas, even if they were sharply critical in their views, are remembered by a very big section of people, he said. Their words will become a part of history, he said.

Modi said he believed that a big section of the country's democracy-loving people will appreciate the conduct of those MPs who used their wisdom and talent and showed their concerns for the masses, even though they might have been critical in their views. But no one will probably remember those whose behaviour was all about negativity and creating a ruckus, the Prime Minister asserted.

of the opportunity in this last session before the polls and should present the best of their ideas, he said.

Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha suspended 146 MPs in the last session for their relentless disruption of proceedings over a host of issues, including a security breach in the lower House. All of them will be participating in the Budget Session, but the government has cautioned that bringing placards into the chambers and causing disruptions in violation of rules may invite disciplinary action.

Expressing confidence in people's support for the ruling BJP-led NDA in the elections, he said, "I am firmly of the belief that the country is moving forward and touching

new heights of progress... The country is experiencing allround and all-inclusive development. This journey will continue continuously with people's blessings."

mentioned Modi President Droupadi Murmu addressing a joint sitting of lawmakers and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presenting the Budget on Thursday is, in a way, a festival of women power. The Republic Day showcased women power, and the first session of Parliament in its new building recorded the passage of the women's reservation bill, he said, referencing a host of developments under his government to boost women's participation in different

President Murmu celebrates the rise of Bharat

"According to the NITI Aayog, in the 10-year rule of my government, nearly 25 crore people have come out of poverty," she said. "We have been hearing slogans of eradicating poverty for a long time; now, for the first time, we are seeing poverty being eradicated on a large scale," she said.

Over the past decade, Murmu said, government has made good governance and transparency cornerstones of every system. "My government is continuously working on

business in India and

environment for it," she said. Murmu mentioned that the commitment

empower MSMEs and small entrepreneurs. Earlier, the country's inflation rate was in double digits and is now within 4 per cent, she said. Murmu congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the passage of the Women's Reservation Bill.

Setting a new precedent, President Murmu entered the new Parliament Building escorted by Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, with an official carrying the 'Sengol,'

adopted as a cultural symbol by the government.

government is working with arrival, Rajeev Sharma, a senior Marshal in the Lok Sabha dressed in traditional attire with a decorated scarf and a turban, removed the Sengol and walked in a procession with Speaker Birla, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi, and Secretaries General of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, Utpal Kumar Singh and PC Mody in tow, amid drum rolls.

and Lok Sabha

Speaker Birla welcomed her

at the Gaja Dwar of the

Parliament building and proceeded to the Lok Sabha Ahead of President Murmu's chamber in a procession led by the officer carrying the Sengol reverentially. A band of musicians played

the 'Hathroi' tune as the President entered the Lok Sabha chamber amid loud applause from the members of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha assembled together. Slogans of 'Bharat Vice President Dhankhar, seat in the Chamber. Prime Minister Narendra

Mata Ki Jai, 'Jai Shri Ram', 'Jai Siya Ram', and 'Jai Jagannath' filled the air as President Murmu took her The Sengol was placed in front of the President's desk

throughout her address and

accompanied Murmu until

the Gaja Dwar of the Parliament building as she exited the chamber after her speech. The gold-plated sceptre was later placed in thumping of desks by the its case next to the Speaker's members of the ruling chair.

As many as 58 diplomats, including the ambassadors of Brazil, Egypt, Maldives, and Nepal, and the High Commissioner of the United Kingdom, were attendance.

Attendance was thin for President Murmu's address to the members of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, as many empty seats were seen in the cavernous Lok Sabha chamber that has a seating capacity of 888 waiting for centuries.

The President's 75-minute speech was punctuated with frequent applause and members of the ruling

alliance. The loudest applause was heard when President Murmu mentioned the passage of the Women's Reservation Bill and the building of the Ram Temple

in Ayodhya. The Lok Sabha chamber reverberated with chants of Jai Shri Ram and Jai Siya Ram when she said, "Ram Lalla has now been enshrined in his grand temple in Ayodhya after

The President quoted from poems by former Prime Bihari Minister Atal Vajpayee and famous Odiya Utkalmani poet Gopalbandhu Das during her speech.

While the ruling party members applauded Murmu at regular intervals during her address, the Opposition members listened to the speech in silence, barring a "no reference to ur" remark from stray Manipur" Congress member Prathapan.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and leader of the Congress in Parliament Sonia Gandhi were seated in the first row,

which was occupied by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, Sabha Deputy Rajva Chairman Harivansh, BJP president JP Nadda, Home Minister Amit Shah, Union Ministers Nitin Gadkari, Nirmala Sitharaman, S Jaishankar, Arjun Munda, Smriti Irani, Narayan Rane, Kumar and Virendra Dharmendra Pradhan. Two seats, allotted to former

prime ministers HD Deve Gowda and Manmohan Singh remained vacant. While Gowda was seen sitting in the last row, Singh was not present in the

Mani's daughter gets RWA notice over Ram Temple remarks

Senior Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar's daughter Suranya Aiyar has been asked by the Resident Welfare Association (RWA) in Delhi's Jangpura Extension to vacate her home for "creating tension and hatred" following her comments on the Pran Pratishtha of Ram Mandir in on social media. The RWA's notice comes after Suranya had expressed solidarity with Muslim citizens and denounced acts done in name of Nationalism and Hinduism The house is owned by Mani Shankar Aiyar, as per his affidavit submitted to the Election Commission of India. RWA has alleged that Suranya condemned the grand 'pran pratishtha' ceremony of Ram Mandir on social media. She

ple's consecration. The RWA's letter to Aiyar and her father urged them to adhere to the norms of good citizenship and refrain from "creating hatred and mistrust". The association requested Mani Shankar Aiyar to condemn his daughter's actions, stating that "it's not in good taste for the colony and the society as a whole".

Aiyar in a video posted on Facebook, however, stated that she did not live in the colony represented by the RWA and that she did not receive any "notice" (letter) from it. She said that it was decided by her to not to speak to the media over the issue for the moment. Mani Shankar Aiyar, when contacted, refused to comment on it. In a letter addressed to the Aiyars, Jangpura Extension Residents' Welfare Association

association was approached by residents of the colony over her social media "stand/rant" and keeping fast from January 20-

It is the responsibility of an RWA to see that there is cordial relation between all the residents and "we do not appreciate a resident rant which may disturb the peace in the colony or hurt religious sentiments of the residents," read the letter dated January 27. The "pran pratishtha" (conse-

cration) ceremony of Ram Lalla was held in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the newly built Ram temple in Ayodhya on January 22. The RWA accused Suranya of "hate speech" and requested her to follow the norms of a good citizen. It claimed the colony was inhabited by residents who came to India from Pakistan



after partition.

Kakkar requested Mani Shankar Aiyar in the letter to "condemn" the act of his daughter, saying the RWA will highly appreciate it since it was not in good taste for the colony. "In case you still think what you have done in protesting against the consecration (ceremony) of Ram Mandir at Ayodhya, we would suggest you to kindly move out to another colony...,



Kakkar said in the letter. He said the letter was sent to Mani Shankar Aiyar

Suranya in her Facebook video said, "First, the relevant Residents' Welfare Association is from a colony where I do not live! Secondly, I have decided for the moment not to speak to the media as right now." She also criticised the media of spreading "toxicity and confu-

people of all political backgrounds. "I leave my work here on my Facebook and YouTube pages for you to think for yourselves. I am going to try and avoid a media circus as I believe that we all in India deserve better. Let us stop abusing each other and try some thinking instead. Jai Hind!" she said.

She said further that reasons for her disagreement were expressed by her in a previous speech (video). "I made a spiritual presentation of my own pain about this by fasting peacefully in my home," she

'What matters is that whatever point of view we put forward, whether people are able to see some sense in it. And if at the end of the day, at the end

even just find a more civilised, a more thinking and a more sincere way of talking and feeling about these things, then we would have achieved something," she said. Kakkar said, "What kind of Hindu is she who is demean-

ing her own religion. We asked her to regret her provocative statements. We will not ignore it." He said that the RWA was awaiting the Aiyars' response. Suranya in her video posted on YouTube on January 19, said, With the forthcoming event in Ayodhya on January 22, the atmosphere here in Delhi...Has thickened to a spiritually poisonous and unbreathable concentrate of Hindu chauvinism,

malice and bullying.' She said that she was deeply anguished as an Indian and a Hindu and after thinking hard decided to go on a fast from

doing this first and foremost as an expression of my love and sorrow to my fellow Muslim citizens of India. I cannot let this moment pass without saying as loud as I can to my Muslim brothers and sisters that I love you and that I condemn and repudiate what is being done in the name of Hinduism and nationalism in

Ayodhya," she said. Reacting to the development, the BJP said the action of the RWA should serve as a message to everyone who believes abusing Hindu beliefs is "par for the

The RWA has "asked Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar and his daughter to apologise for defiling the Pran Pratistha ceremony at Ram Mandir, and leave the residential colony," BJP IT department head Amit Malviya said in a post on X.

Kejriwal issued ED summons for fifth time in excise policy scam case

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

has also reportedly observed a

Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned AAP convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, asking him to appear on February 2 in connection with the liquor excise policy case. This is the fifth summons sent to Kejriwal; he was first summoned on November 2, followed by December 21, January 3, and January 13. Sources in the AAP said the

party will hold a protest outside the BJP headquarters in Delhi on February 2 over alleged cheating in the Chandigarh mayoral polls. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his Punjab counterpart Bhagwant Mann will also take part in the protest. The decision to hold the protest comes on the same day Kejriwal was issued a fresh summons by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for questioning in connection with an excise policy-linked money laundering case.

Kejriwal did not appear for questioning on the previous four occasions, he has responded by way of letters, citing various prior commitments, including a 10-day meditation

retreat, and allegations the agency's calls were "illegal" and designed to arrest him less than three months before a general election. Last month, after the third summons, he slammed the agency's actions as "politically motivated" and

Reacting to the development, AAP chief national spokesperson Priyanka Kakkar said in a brief statement, "We have received news about the fifth summons. Our legal team is studying it and we will decide what to do as per law. The earlier summonses were illegal and we had sought a reply from the Enforcement Directorate.'

He skipped the first summons because he was campaigning for the Madhya Pradesh election. As per the fourth summons, he was asked to appear for questioning on January 18. However, he wrote to the ED that he was busy with Rajya Sabha elections and Republic

before the fourth summons, the AAP had announced that Kejriwal would visit Goa between January 18 and 20. Kejriwal and the AAP asked the ED why the Chief Minister had been called if he has not, so far, been named as an accused in the case.

Day preparations. A few days

"This is being done to stop him from campaigning for the Lok

Sabha polls. ED has said Kejriwal is not an accused... then why were summons issued to him," the AAP had said. In his letter, Kejriwal also called the summons "illegal" and said it had not been made clear to him in which capacity he was to appear—as a witness or an accused.

AAP leaders Manish Sisodia and Sanjay Singh apart from communications in-charge of the party Vijay Nair and some businessmen have been arrested in this case by the ED till now. The ED had claimed in its charge sheet that the AAP used "proceeds of crime" to the tune of about Rs 45 crore in its

Goa election campaign. It is alleged that the Delhi government's excise policy for 2021-22 to grant licences to liquor traders allowed cartelisation and favoured certain dealers who had allegedly paid bribes for it, a charge repeatedly refuted by the AAP.

The policy was subsequently scrapped and Delhi Lt Governor V K Saxena recommended a CBI probe, following which the ED registered a case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Delhi CM holds Constitutional post, he should appear before ED for questioning, says BJP

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The BJP on Wednesday said Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal should appear before the Enforcement Directorate for questioning in the Delhi excise policy-related money laundering case as he holds a constitutional post. However, it remains to be seen if the AAP will once again announce a travel plan of the chief minister for the date of questioning, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said. The BJP reactions came after the ED issued the fifth summons to Kejriwal, asking him to appear on Friday. The Chief Minister of Delhi himself is holding a constitutional post and by refusing last four summons, he has made a mockery of the Constitution by trying to escape by making new excuses. Our advice to Kejriwal

is that he should appear for questioning before the ED,"

Sachdeva said,, adding that



we are watching whether or not they (AAP) come up with a travel plan of CM Kejriwal for the date when he is scheduled to be questioned by the ED, as has happened earlier," he said. Sachdeva said that Kejriwal's situation has become like that of an economic fugitive who is hiding from the ED notice. Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri advised Kejriwal to appear before the ED in the excise policy scam case.

The Chief Minister holds a constitutional position and

should respect the law. Kejriwal has been avoiding the investigation by creating different excuses four times, but such excuses four times, but such evasive behaviour cannot last long. The AAP convener has been deliberately avoiding the ED's summons," said Bidhuri, adding Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren avoided the summons ten times but eventually had to participate in

the investigation.
"Kejriwal has claimed to be 'kattar Imandar' or he is only honest politician in the country, then why is running away?," he questioned. 'Kejriwal cannot portray himself as innocent and avoid it by labelling it as a fake case. The public also understands that there is something fishy, so Kejriwal is not participating in the investigation," he added. Earlier, AAP's chief national spokesperson Priyanka Kakkar said the party's legal team is studying the ED summons and will decide what to do as per

It is alleged that the Delhi government's excise policy for 2021-22 to grant licences to liquor traders allowed cartelisation and favoured certain dealers who had allegedly paid bribes for it, a charge repeatedly refuted by the AAP. The policy was scrapped after

Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena recommended a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe, following which the ED registered a case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The then Delhi deputy chief minister and excise department incharge Manish Sisodia was arrested by the CBI in connection with alleged irregularities in the formulation and implementation of the policy on February 26 last year. Kejriwal was questioned by the CBI in connection with the case in

Maliwal asked to take oath of office twice after 'inquilab' sloganeering



STAFF REPORTER

Swati Maliwal, former chief of the Delhi Commission For Women (DCW), took oath as Raiva Sabha MP on Wednesday but that came out with a minor controversy. Maliwal, who is known for her blatant statements on issues concerning safety of women, had to take the oath of office twice as after her first oath she raised slogan 'Inquilab Zindabad'.

Besides Maliwal, two others -Narain Dass Gupta, Satnam Singh Sandhu- became the first three members to take the oath as MP in the new Parliament building.

Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar asked AAP leader Swati Maliwal to take oath twice because of two reasons. First, she took the wrong oath initially as she read the version of the oath meant for nominated Rajya Sabha members. The second reason was unwarranted sloganeering.

Maliwal was elected to Rajya Sabha unopposed. Her party colleague and financial policy expert, Narain Dass Gupta, also took the oath who will be in his second term in the Upper House.

Delhi Government approves release of ₹803 crore to MCD

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi government has 803.69 crore to the municipal corporation so that civic employees continue to receive their salaries on time, officials said on Wednesday. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has been allocated Rs 2,642.47 crore in 2023-24 by the Arvind Kejriwal government, compared to Rs 854.5 crore in 2014-15, the office of Delhi Finance Minister Atishi said in a statement.In addition, the MCD is provided funds under several heads by the Delhi government, it said.

Informing this, Delhi Finance Minister Atishi on Wednesday said the decision to release the installment of Rs 803.69 crore by the Keiriwal government will ensure timely payment of salaries and pensions to the employees of the MCD.

"In addition, sanitation workers, paramedical staff, doctors in the MCD will also receive their salaries on time. This decision will inspire and motivate them to provide better services to the



the Kejriwal government will assist the MCD in delivering better services to the people of Delhi," Atishi said. "The funds allocated to MCD has increased to reach three times of 2014-15 allocation; MCD funds increased to 2.5 times in just the past 5 years. MCD allocated 22.642.47 Crore in 2023-24 by the Kejriwal Govt, compared to ?854.5 Crore in 2014-15. In addition to this, funds are provided under several heads to the MCD by the Delhi Government," the AAP government said in a statement. Atishi said Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had promised that there would be no shortage of funds in the MCD. Along with this, salaries for all MCD employees will be paid on time, and attention will be given to the

cleanliness of Delhi She mentioned that the Kejriwal government is working with utmost seriousness to make the national capital Delhi clean, beautiful, and modern. Previously, employees in the BJP-ruled MCD were not receiving their salaries on time, leading to forced strikes. As a result, employees and the people of Delhi had to face difficulties. However, with the funds released by the Kejriwal government, MCD employees will now receive their salaries on

Being tortured to accept ties with Opposition: Parliament breach case accused tell court

 $F_{ ext{ed}}^{ ext{ive}}$ of the six people arrested in the Parliament secutold a court here that they were allegedly being tortured by Delhi Police to accept their association with opposition

The submission was made before Additional Sessions Judge Hardeep Kaur, who extended the judicial custody of all the six accused till March 1. Five of the accused --Manoranjan D, Sagar Sharma, Lalit Jha, Amol Shinde and Mahesh Kumawat -- told the court that they were forced to sign about 70-odd blank papers.

Accused persons were tortured/given electric shocks to sign and confess (to) the commission of crime under the UAPA and their association with national political parties... Two accused persons were forced to write on the paper about their association with the political party/leader of opposition political party," the accused told the court in a joint petition.



The court sought a reply from police in the matter and fixed February 17 for hearing the application.

The sixth accused in the case is Neelam Azad, who had earlier alleged before the court that police had forced her to sign several blank papers.

Azad's application is currently pending before the court. During (after/before the conduction

polygraph/narco/brain mapping), the associated persons conducting the tests pressed two accused persons to name a political party/leader about their involvement.

"Each were asked about their current/old mobile phone numbers and made them visit the Airtel/BSNL/Vodafone offices for issuance of SIM

and current SIM card numbers for reasons best known to the prosecution. During this illegal their biometrics/signed for issuance of SIM cards," the joint petition stated. The accused persons claimed

they were forced to provide all their social media account, email and phone passwords. In a major security breach on the anniversary of the 2001 Parliament terror attack, Sagar Sharma and Manoranjan D jumped into the Lok Sabha chamber from the public gallery during Zero Hour on December 13 last year, released vellow gas from canisters and shouted slogans before they were overpowered by some

Around the same time, two other accused -- Amol Shinde and Neelam Azad -- sprayed coloured gas from canisters while shouting "tanashahi nahi chalegi" outside the Parliament premises.

These four were taken into custody from the spot, while Lalit Jha and Mahesh Kumawat were arrested later.

India premier institute IIMC granted deemed to be university status

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI ¬he Indian Institute of Mass Communication, a 58-year-old institution known for its journalism and mass communication courses, was on Wednesday granted the status of a deemed-to-be university, empowering it to award degrees rather than just diplomas, according to the Union Ministry of Education.

The newly-awarded status will also empower the Indian Institute of Communication (IIMC) to offer doctoral programmes.

The institute, established under the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in August 1965, is one of the country's premier institutions of its kind, providing quality

training in journalism and undertaking meaningful research in media and mass communication. 'On the advice of the UGC

(University Grants Commission), the Ministry of Education, in exercise of powers conferred under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956, hereby declares the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi, along with its five regional campuses in Jammu, Amravati (Maharashtra), Aizawl (Mizoram), Kottayam (Kerala) and Dhenkanal (Odisha) as an institution deemed-to-be-university under distinct category," the ministry said in an official

notification. "IIMC, New Delhi, shall become compliant with the UGC (Institutions-deemed-

to-be-Universities) Regulations, 2023, within a period of six years from the date of issuance of the notification. The entire moveable and immoveable assets will be legally transferred in the name of IIMC, New Delhi, within one year," it said.

IIMC shall not indulge or engage in any activities that are of commercial and profit-making in nature, the notification added.

The institute currently offers postgraduate diploma in journalism courses in English, Hindi, Urdu, Odia, Marathi, Malayalam, radio and television, and advertising and public relations. Headquartered at the full-

in 2011), Jammu (established in 2012) and Kottavam (established in 1995) to provide quality media education in the respective regional lanfledged campus in New Delhi, guages, in addition to various IIMC has regional campuses courses offered at the nationin Dhenkanal (established in 1993), Aizawl (established in The IIMC is also the training



academy Information Service (IIS) offi-Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur, in a post on X, called it a special and his-

toric day for IIMC. "It is a special and historic day for the Indian Institute of

Mass Communication (IIMC) as it receives deemed university status. This institute has a glorious history of imparting quality education in media subjects like journalism, advertising, public relations," he said in the post.

The granting of university status marks a new beginning, as more courses could be added to the curriculum along with research and doctoral programmes. This step will provide our youth with new opportunities and help them explore new avenues, he added.

The idea to grant deemed university status to IIMC is not new. The Union Information and Broadcasting Ministry had approved the plan in 2016.

During a review of higher education institutes by the

ommended that the IIMC be merged with either the Jawaharlal Nehru University's Centre for Media Studies or Jamia Millia Islamia's AJK Communication Mass Research Centre. However, the institute, the

Niti Aayog in 2018, it was rec-

Union Information and Broadcasting Ministry and the Education Ministry (the then Human Resource Development Ministry) had rejected the idea. The UGC in 2018 formed a

four-member committee headed by BK Kuthiala, the vice-chancellor of Makhanlal Chaturvedi University in Bhopal, to analyse a proposal by the IIMC in this regard. The panel was later disbanded and two committees -- one headed by Sachidanand Joshi, member secretary of the

Centre for the Arts, and the other by MS Parmar, vicechancellor of the Kushabhau Thakre University of Journalism -- made the recommendation. Based on the committees

Indira Gandhi National

recommendations and inspection teams' feedback, the UGC had then recommended that the ministry should issue an LoI to the institute. "A big thank you to the UGC

for declaring Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi, and its five regional centres as a deemedto-be-university under distinct category. IIMC is committed to give its best to promote education, training, and research in mass communication," the institute wrote in

India giving befitting reply to expansionism, terrorism: President

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

 $P^{\text{resident Droupadi Murmu}}_{\text{said here on Wednesday}}$ India's armed forces are giving a befitting response to expansionism and terrorism. It was in an apparent reference to the eastern Ladakh border row with China and Pakistan's proxy war in Jammu and . Kashmir.

In her address at a joint sitting of the two houses of Parliament, President Murmu also said India's defence production has crossed the Rs one lakh crore mark as she highlighted the government's efforts to boost the domestic defence manufacturing.

She also mentioned indigenous construction of aircraft carrier INS Vikrant, production of light combat combat jets Tejas, plans to produce C-295

aircraft engines in India. President Murmu also referred to the increasing role of women in the armed forces and said women are now operating fighter jets and commanding naval ships.

"Today, my government is building modern infrastructure along the entire border. This work should have been done long ago on (a) priority basis. Be it terrorism or expansionism, our forces today are giving a befitting response," she

Indian and Chinese troops are locked in an over three-andhalf-year confrontation in certain friction points in eastern Ladakh even as the two sides completed disengagement from several areas following extensive diplomatic and military

The President, who is also the armed forces, said the tangible



results of the government's supreme commander of the efforts to strengthen internal

"There is a sense of security in Jammu and Kashmir today.

There has been significant reduction in the incidents of separatism in the North East," she added. In her first address at the new Parliament building, Murmu also listed the government's initiative to strengthen

"This year's Republic Day Parade was also dedicated to women empowerment. In this parade, the world once again witnessed the capability of our daughters," she said.

Nari Shakti'.

"My government has enlarged the role of daughters every-where -- in water, land, sky and space," she said.

President Murmu said "for the first time, women cadets have been given admission in Sainik Schools and the National Defence Academy." She also said "Today, women are also fighter pilots and are also commanding naval ships for the

results of the Modi government's efforts to strengthen internal security are visible before everyone. She said naxal-affected areas have shrunk and there has been a steep decline in Naxal vio-

President Murmu said the central government has, for the first time, brought development to areas which had remained neglected for decades.

"The villages adjoining our borders were viewed as the last villages of the country. We recognised them as the first villages of the country. In order to develop these villages, Vibrant Village Programme has been started," she said.

The President said remote and faraway islands like Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep were also deprived of development but the government has

Roads, air connectivity and high speed internet facilities have been provided there. Just

a few weeks ago, Lakshadweep was also connected with underwater optical fibre. This will benefit the local population as well as tourists," she said.
The President said under the 'Aspirational Districts

Programme', the government has laid emphasis on the development of more than 100 dis-

tricts of the country. She said in the wake of its success, the government has also launched the Aspirational Blocks Programme.

President Murmu said building of airports at various places is also advantageous and now the Northeast is witnessing record tourist arrivals. Now there is heightened excitement about Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands, she

Scope of Indian foreign policy broadens far beyond constraints of past: President

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

President Droupadi Murmu said here on Wednesday the scope of India's foreign policy has gone far beyond the "constraints of the past" and New Delhi firmly placed the coun Delhi firmly placed the country's interests before the world even in this era of global disputes and conflicts.

In her address at a joint sitting of the two houses of Parliament, President Murmu said the successful hosting of the historic G-20 Summit strengthened India's global standing and that the country's efforts in making the African Union a permanent member of the bloc was widely appreciat-

The President said, today India is a leading voice in the world against terrorism. In the backdrop of various conflicts and global turmoil, the government has established India as a 'Vishwa-Mitra' (friend of the world) in these difficult times, she said.

"Even in this era of global disputes and conflicts, my government has firmly placed India's interests before the world. The scope of India's for-eign policy today has gone far



past," she said in her first address at the new Parliament

President Murmu said the world was introduced to the real potential of India through holding of programmes across the country and that Jammu and Kashmir and North East witnessed such big international events for the first time. "In the last 10 years, another conventional way of thinking has been changed Earlier, the Delhi Declaration even in

were confined to the corridors of Delhi. My government has ensured direct participation of the public in this also," she said. 'We saw a great example of this during India's G-20 presidency. The way India connected the G-20 with the public was unprecedented," she added. Murmu said the whole world appreciated the historic G-20 summit held in India.

"The unanimous adoption of

a fractured environment is historic. India's vision from women led development' to environmental issues has become the basis of the declaration," she said. The President said India's "efforts to secure permanent membership of the African Union in the G-20 have also been appreciated."

"During this conference, the development of India-Middleeast-Europe corridor was announced. This corridor will further strengthen India's mar-

itime capability," she said. President Murmu described the launch of the Global Biofuel Alliance as a big event as such steps are expanding India's role in solving global

Today, India responds strongly and takes initiatives for the humanity caught in crises. Wherever there is a crisis in the world today, India tries to respond promptly," she said. The President said the government has instilled new confidence in Indians working across the world. "Wherever crisis occurred, we have evacuated every Indian safely through campaigns like Operation Ganga, Öperation Kaveri, Vande Bharat," she

"My government has made continuous efforts to propagate the Indian traditions of Yoga, Pranayam and Ayurveda to the entire world," she said. "Last year, representatives of 135 countries did yoga together at the United Nations Headquarters. This is a record in itself," she added. "The World Health Organization's first Global Centre for Traditional Medicine is being established in India," President

Seminar on progress of national mission for mentoring organised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) organised a two-day Year End Seminar for Sharing Best Practices and Periodic Review/continuous evaluation of National Mission for Mentoring (NMM) with all stakeholders.

According to a Press Information Bureau Press note, the seminar aimed to bring together the 60 National Mentors, Mentees, Principals, Nodal Officers, academic dignitaries & educational administrators of the country to discuss and review the progress

NCTE launched NMM in pilot mode on 29th July 2022 in selected 30 Central Schools (15 KVs, 10 JNVs, 5 CBSE) across the country. NCTE also organized 2-day capacity building workshop for the onboarded 60 mentors on 31st May and 1st June 2023 for the effective implementa-tion of NMM as envisaged in NEP 2020.

NMM, as envisaged in para 15.11 of National Education Policy (NEP 2020), has been established to create a large pool of outstanding professionals willing to provide professional and personal support to school teachers across the country and ensure their continuous professional development.

NMM recognizes the crucial role of mentoring in the professional and personal development of teachers, as well as the positive impact it has on student learning outcomes. It aims to create a network of mentors who will guide and support teachers in developing the necessary 21st century skills.

This program is not only enhancing the teaching abilities of the mentee teachers but also facilitating a culture of continuous learning, enabling teachers to stay updated and relevant in today's dynamic educational

Through this seminar, NCTE aimed to foster a collaborative environment for sharing best practices and experiences, as well as to provide a platform for Mentors and Mentees to voice their challenges and suggestions for upgradation. Prof. Yogesh Singh, Chairperson, NCTE graced the Year End Seminar as Chief Guest and addressed the dignitaries and stakeholders present there.

Later, he also launched the NMM Webpage in the presence of Ms. Kesang Y. Sherpa IRS, Member Secretary NCTE for the ongoing support and guidance for mentors and other stakeholders.

The launch of NMM website is an important step towards enhancing the mentorship ecosystem in the country.

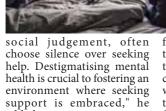
reporting rate for mental illness in India

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

 $\mathbf{I}^{ ext{ndia}' ext{s}}$ recognition as the world's suicide capital, with over 2.6 lakh cases reported annually, starkly contrasts with the less than one per cent self-reporting rate for mental health issues. While this discrepancy reflects individuals reluctance to openly acknowledge and report their struggles due to societal judgment and stigma, a study by IIT, Jodhpur and USA's Ohio State University has found that those seeking help have to incur significant expenses largely due to reliance on the private sector.

Addressing this issue is crucial to fostering a more supportive environment where individuals feel comfortable seeking help for their mental health concerns, said the study published in the International Journal of Mental Health Systems and Co-authored by Dr Alok Ranjan, Assistant Professor, School of Liberal Arts (SoLA), IIT Jodhpur and Dr. Jewel Crasta, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, The Ohio State University, Columbus, USA. The study revealed that the self-reporting of mental illness was less than one per cent based on the 75th Round National Sample Survey, 2017-18. The survey completely relied on the self-reporting of the individuals," Ranjan said. The data was collected from 5,55,115 individuals from randomly selected 8,077 villages and 6,181 urban areas, including 283 outpatient and 374 hospitalisation cases due to mental disorders in India.

"Stigma in society acts as a significant barrier to reporting mental health issues. In today's society, the reluctance to report mental health issues persists due to the prevailing stigma. Individuals, fearing



The study also shed light on the significant out-of-pocket expenses incurred by individuals seeking mental health services, largely due to reliance on the private sector. There are also not enough mental health professionals in the public sector too to treat people who do seek help. This is especially true in rural parts

Calling the observations as yet another wake up call, Dr Shweta Sharma, Clinical Psychologist and Joint Secretary of the Indian Association of Clinical Psychologists who is not related to the study said "Mental health has not been a significant focus in India, primarily because many issues are perceived to be resolved through psychotherapy, often dismissed as mere conversa-

'The value of trained professionals is underestimated. Unclear policies and a lack of awareness among the general population about mental health treatment contribute to confusion regarding whom to consult, when to seek help, and the importance of mental

health check-ups. This situation allows untrained practitioners to set



tioners are expensive, and consulting psychologists is a waste of both money and time. She underscored the need for

serious attention to mental health and licensed mental health professionals. "The rising number of suicides among aspiring engineers and medical students highlights the overwhelming stress they face. The government must prioritize policies, shape training programs, and provide health coverage for mental disorders. A well-structured plan, coupled with public awareness, is imperative at this

The study echoed similar views as it also uncovered a socioeconomic divide, with self-reporting of mental dis-orders being 1.73 times higher among the richest income group population compared to the poorest in India. The private sector emerged as a major provider of mental health services, accounting for 66.1 pc of outpatient care and 59.2 pc of inpatient care.

'A mere 23 per cent of individuals hospitalised for men-tal disorders had health insurance coverage at the national level. The study revealed that average out-of-pocket expenditures for both hospitalisation and outpatient care were significantly higher in the private sector than in the public sector," Ranjan shared.

Study reveals less than 1 per cent self | ICG to celebrate 48th Raising Day today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) is celebrating its 48 th Raising Day on February one. From a modest beginning with just 07 surface platforms in 1978, ICG has grown into a formidable force with 152 ships and 78 aircraft in its inventory and is likely to achieve targeted force levels of 200 surface platforms and 100 aircraft by

The ICG is now considered to be one of renowned Coast Guards in the world due to its achievements and for the efficiency with which it operates its assets in a challenging envi-



ronment, thereby ensuring round the clock safety and security.

True to its motto "Vayam Rakshamah" meaning "We Protect", the service has to its credit, saving over 11,554 lives

since its inception in 1977 and 200 lives in the year 2023, which translates into saving one precious life every second day. To ensure security in the Maritime Zones of India, the Indian Coast Guard has maintained 24 x 7 vigil by deploying about 50 to 60 ships and 10 $^{\circ}$ to 12 aircraft daily. This is to fulfill the nation's expectation to keep our seas free and secure in order to facilitate sustainable progress on blue economy efforts by various stakeholders, besides ensuring a safe environment for maritime transportation through our sea

It is envisioned that the future ICG shall be omnipresent by showing strong presence in Maritime zones of India. The vast seas with overlapping jurisdiction provide avenues for anti-nationals to exploit the sea routes by posing themselves as mariners at work at sea.

Maritime Law Enforcement has been strengthened multifold and the hawk eye vigil by the ICG in our near coast and blue waters has resulted in seizure of weapons, contraband and narcotics worth Rs 15,343 Crores since inception with Rs 478 crore worth being seized in the year 2023 alone. The President of India, Vice President, Prime Minister and Defence Minister have extended greetings and congratulated the Indian Coast Guard on completion of 47 glorious years of yeoman service to the nation and appreciated the remarkable role played by the service in pursuit of the nation's interests in the Maritime Zones

'Normal to above normal rainfall likely in North India this month'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

After experiencing a drier-than-usual December and January, north India is expected to see normal to above-normal rainfall in February, the Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Wednesday.

Addressing a press conference, IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said India cumulatively may experience above-normal rainfall in February. Northwest India recorded just 3.1 mm of rainfall in January, the second lowest since 1901, the IMD said. North India consisting of seven meteorological sub-divisions is most likely to receive abovenormal rainfall (more than 122 per cent of the long period average) in February.

"Monthly rainfall over the

country as a whole during

February is most likely to be

above normal (more than 119

per cent of the long period

Most parts of the country are

likely to witness above-normal minimum temperatures. Northwest, west central, northeast and parts of east-central India are likely to see above-

peninsular India.

average)," Mohapatra said.

Normal to above-normal rain-

fall is predicted over northeast

and central India. Below-nor-

mal rainfall is likely over south

normal maximum temperatures in February, according to the IMD. Normal to below-normal maximum temperatures are likely

in most parts of peninsular

India and parts of east-central India, the IMD said. 'Below-normal cold wave days

are expected over some parts of central India during February," it said. The strong El Nino conditions

- abnormal warming of surface waters in the central Pacific Ocean -- are likely to weaken steadily and turn to ENSO neutral conditions by the end of the spring season. Most models indicate a transition to La Nina conditions, considered favourable for Indian southwest monsoon, around July-September, Mohapatra said.

NEET PG exam fee reduced by ₹750 for all medical aspirants

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

n a significant move aimed to provide financial relief to ticipating in NEET PG exams, the National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) has decided to reduce the exam fees by Rs 750 for all aspiring medical

professionals. Any candidate submitting the application form for the forthcoming examination after January 1, 2024 will have to pay the reduced fee," an official from the Union Health Ministry said, citing a notification issued in this regard. The reduced fee would be less than the application fee charged in

In 2013, application fee for general and OBC category was Rs 3,750, which was raised to Rs 4,250 in 2021 (the current fee). This has been reduced to



January 1, 2024. In 2013, the application fee for

SC, ST and PWD candidates was Rs 2,750, which was raised to Rs 3,250 in 2021. This has been reduced to Rs 2,500 now. It may bear recall, the NBEMS has revised the examination date for NEET PG 2024. Earlier, the tentative date was March 3, however, now NEET PG 2024 will be held on July 7, 2024. As per the information, the NEET PG eligibility cut-off has been set to August 15, 2024. Application forms, information bulletin, and other details related to the exam are hosted on natboard.edu.in, said the offi-

Kerala Congress leader George joins BJP

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

¬he BJP, struggling to get a mooring in Kerala, got L a shot in the arm as a veteran leader of the Kerala Congress (a party representing the interests of the Church) joined the Hindutva party in New Delhi on Wednesday. George, a seven-time legislator of the Kerala Legislative Assembly and former chief whip during the UDF rule (2011-2016) was received to the party by union ministers Rajeev Chandrasekhar,

Muraleedharan, Prakash Javadekar MP, Anil Antony, national general secretary and Radhey Shyam Aggarwal MP. The Pioneer had reported early last month that George was all set to join the BJP. A crusader against corruption and a fire brand leader.

George was the first Christian leader to sound the alarm bell against Love Jihad and Narcotics Jihad which was later taken up by the spiritual leaders of the Catholic community to which he

also merged the Janapaksham, a political outfit launched by him into the BJP. George's son Shaun and the entire Janapaksham leaders too joined the BJP. "This decision is a fall out of our understanding that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the only national leader who is working sincerely for the progress of India. More and more members of the Christian community will join the BJP in days to come," said George after joining the BJP. Both the CPI (M) and the Congress aided by Islamist



forces had joined hands in the 2021 assembly polls to defeat George, in his eighth husting in the electoral battle and he

majority. Having joined the Kerala Congress as a fiery student leader, George won seven successive elections to the assembly, a rare feat in a

PUBLIC NOTICE

My Husband Late Sh. Harendra Singh Varma S/o Sh. Babu Singh Varma And My Father in Law Late Sh. Babu Singh Varma S/o Sh. Sultan Singh

R/o Sector-C, Pocket -9, Flat No. 9271, Vasi

Kunj, Delhi -110070, Booked a Shep No: 11 (LM Tower) in project called Supertech Eco-Citi situated at GH-03, Sector-137, Noida, After the

death of My Husband and My Father in Law, requested to M/s Supertech Limited to transfe this Shop in the name of Mrs. Sadhna Verma W/

Late Sh. Harendra Singh Varma R/o Sector-I Pocket-9, Flat No. 9271, Vasant Kunj, Delhi

110070. If anybody has any objection, he/sh may contact to M/S Supertech Limited office a Plot No C-2, Sector 96, Noida, Uttar Prades

201303 within 15 days of the Published notic

the Marxists and Congress are blaming the BJP for the communal pogrom in Manipur.

'The people in Kerala are not aware of the complex reality of the caste politics in Manipur. The entire media has gone gaga over the embarrassment faced by the BJP due to the Manipur riots. The reality is entirely different and I myself will clear the apprehension in the minds of the community in Kerala," George told The Pioneer.

Interestingly, there were suggestions from various Hindu outfits in Kerala to field George as a candidate for the Sabha polls from Pathanamthitta constituency. George said there is no difference between the

State like Kerala. George is CPI(M)-led LDF and the force to reckon with in Kerala joining the BJP at a time when Congress-led UDF. "Both the politics." But I am not sure forces are the same and the dofference is only on their names. What they have been doing all these years was to cheat the people," he said.

K T Paily, a former official of Social Indian Railways who is an active leader of the Catholic community, said George is a will pay rich dividends and

about the surge in votes cast during the election. George commands respect all over the

State," said Paily. The Christian Alliance for Action (CASA) welcomed George's move to

join the Hindutva party. "It

there is a possibility of the BIP opening its account in Kerala," said Kevin Peter, president, CASA.

Father Shaiju Kurian, a priest of Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church and 47 families belonging to the sect had joined the BJP in December 2023, the first of its kind development in the State.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Countrywide Promoters Private Limited

OT-14, Third Floor, Next Door, Parklands, Sector -76, Faridabad, Haryana-121004 Phone No.: 0120-4492-650 website: www.bptp.com

This Public Notice is being issued in compliance with Memo No. ZP-416-Vol.II/AD(GK)/2024/3294 dated 30.01.2024 issued by the District Town Planner (HQ) for the Director, Directorate of Town & Country Planning - Haryana, Chandigarh ("DTCP").

WHEREAS Countrywide Promoters Pvt Ltd. has developed two residential towers i.e. Tower A and Tower B as a part of 16.331 Acres Group Housing Colony namely "Discovery Park" having License no. 44 of 2008 dated 07.03.2008 in Sector-80, Faridabad and the DTCP has issued in-principle approval/ provisional Occupation Certificate vide above referred Memo No. ZP-416-Vol. II/AD(GK)/2024/3294

AND WHEREAS in Tower "A" total number of 88 dwelling units have been constructed against 86 sanctioned dwelling units. As per the earlier approved building plan, 4 dwelling units were initially sanctioned on the first floor of Tower A whereas we have constructed 6 dwelling units while reducing the height of the stilt floor. Similarly in Tower "B" total number of 142 dwelling units have been constructed against 140 sanctioned dwelling units. As per the earlier approved building plan, 6 dwelling units were initially sanctioned on the first floor of Tower B whereas we have constructed 8 dwelling units

on the first floor while reducing the height of the stilt floor. AND WHEREAS the above changes have resulted in amendment of building plan though neither the height of tower, nor the ground coverage has increased and further the green area has also remain unchanged. The sanctioned dwelling units on all other floors in Towers A & B remain unchanged. There is no impact on the Green Area and the units have been increased within the available FAR and Density norms. The increase in units has not impacted the area of any sold/unsold dwelling units

AND WHEREAS, in view of the above, DTCP has vide above referred memo directed us to issue a Public Notice for inviting objections and suggestions from the existing allottees of Towers A & B of the Group housing through publication in newspapers informing about the revision/amendment in the earlier approved Building Plans of Tower A and Tower B part of project "Discovery Park".

Accordingly, by this Public Notice, we are inviting objections and suggestions from the existing allottees of Tower-A & B w.r.t. revision/amendment from the earlier approved Building Plans of Tower A and Tower B of the group housing colony being developed under the above-referred License.

A copy of the earlier approved Building Plans and the revised as-built plans (being approved in principle) are available on our website i.e. "www.bptp.com" and the same can also be perused at our abovementioned registered office as well as in the office of the Senior Town Planner, Faridabad.

Any existing allottee of unit in Tower A and Tower B of the said Group Housing Colony (developed under License No. 44 of 2008 dated 07.03.2008) having any objection/suggestion to the revision/amendment in the earlier approved Building Plans of Tower A & Tower B, may file his/her/their objection/suggestion in the office of the Senior Town Planner, HSVP Complex, Sector-12, Faridabad within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which it shall be presumed that none of the existing allottees

has any objection/suggestion to the proposed revision/amendment in the Building Plan

Place: Faridabad Date: 01.02.2024

Rohit Mohan

For Countrywide Promoters Private Limited



lost the poll by a wafer thin

large number of farmers from

different states and districts of

the country were present in the

क./न.पा./2023/7232

PUBLIC NOTICE

Sh. Babu Singh Varma R/o Sector-C.Pocket-9 Booked a Flat No: R-1405, in project calle Supertech Eco-Citi situated at GH-03, Sector 137, Noida, After his death I-requested to M/ Supertech Limited to transfer this flat in the name of Ms. Heena Varma D/o Late Sh Harendra Singh Varma R/o Sector-C, Pocket-9 Flat No. 9271, Vasant Kunj, Delhi-11007(Alone). If anybody has any objection, he/sh at Plot No C-2. Sector 96. Noida. Utta notice Ms. Heena Varma

Farmers income 'has almost doubled' since 2018: Yogi



PTI LUCKNOW

hief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday said the farmers income "has almost doubled" since 2018 and this "positive trend" extends beyond Uttar Pradesh.

The chief minister said the farmers across the country are embracing agricultural diversification, aligning with Minister Narendra Modi's "visionary approach", consequently "doubling their income"

Inaugurating the 'Kisan Mela' organised by the Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CIMAP) on Picnic Spot Road here, Adityanath highlighted Prime Minister Modi's transformative vision.

The chief minister, according to a press statement issued by state government, ow the prime minister set the target of doubling the farmers' income by 2022 and subsequently launched various schemes such as the Soil Health Card, Prime Minister Crop Agricultural Insurance, Irrigation, and Kisan Samman Nidhi for steering the farmers toward economic upliftment, coupled with a robust integration of scientific research and innovation.

Underlining the tangible impact of these initiatives, Adityanath said the farmers' income has almost doubled since 2018.

This positive trend extends beyond Uttar Pradesh as the farmers across the country are embracing agricultural

Acourt in Haryana's Nuh district has sentenced three

Rohingya men to 10 years of rig-

orous imprisonment in a human

sessions judge Ajay K Verma

According to the police, a

Rohingya man identified as

Mohammad Ayas had brought

the women, aged 19 and 20, to

Later, Mohammad Ayas and

two other Rohingya men —

Nuh from Delhi.

district

trafficking case of 2021. Additional

PTI NUH

diversification, aligning with Prime Minister Modi's Minister visionary approach,

consequently doubling their

income," he said. Highlighting the fertile land and abundant water resources in Uttar Pradesh, the chief minister outlined the state's pivotal role in agricultural production, contributing over 22 per cent of the country's food grains despite having 11 per cent cultivable land.

He noted the presence of 89 agricultural science centers and four state agricultural universities, with establishment of the fifth one underway. Adityanath stressed the

government's proactive role in connecting the farmers of Uttar Pradesh to medicinal farming and horticulture, and promoting herbal products. This diversification, h

कार्यालय नगर पालिका परिषद, दमोह (म.प्र.)

-:: द्वितीय निविदा सूचना ::-

दमोह दिनांक 30.01.2024 एतद् द्वारा सर्वसक्षम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से ऑनलाईन निविदायें आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा का विस्तृत

विवरण वेबसाईट <u>www.mptenders.gov.in</u> पर देखा जा सकता है।

क्र.	टेण्डर नं.	कार्य का नाम एवं विवरण	समयावधि एवं	निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य	निविदा की
			अनुमानित लागत	एवं अमानत राशि	अंतिम तिथि
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नो	र∙_ 1 टच्छ	क विविदादाना विस्तृत विविद्या एवं अन्य समस्त्र जा	ਜੁਨਾਸੀ ਏ <u>-</u> ਟੇਸਟਸਿੱਸ	ा पोर्टल www.mnter	dere gov in

पर Key-Date अनुसार देखी जाकर निविदा प्रपत्र ऑनलाईन क्रय किये जा सकते है। 2. निविदा में यदि कोई संशोधन होत है तो केवल ऑनलाईन किया जावेगा समाचार पत्र में नहीं।

Eighty Nine Thousand Five Hundred Fifty Six Only) NPA (06-06-2018)

(LC No. 27900000446 of Noida - Sector 2 Branch) 18-01-2024 /₹ 4689556 /-(₹ Forty Six lakh

मुख्य नगर पालिका अधिकारी नगर पालिका परिषद दमोह

Flat No 1107, 11th Floor, Tower- B Newtech La

Flat No 1106, 11th Floor, Tower- B Newtech La Palacia, Plot No. Gh-09a Sector Tech Zone-4 Greater Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar

Flat No-801, 8th Floor, Tower- B La- Palacia, Plo No- G H-09 A, Techzone-4, Greater Noida West

Greater Noida West Gautambudh Nagar Uttar

Flat No 601, 6th Floor, Tower B La Palacia, Plot

Nagar Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh :-201308 No G H-09 A Techzone4. Greater Noida West G

radesh :- 201308

Pradesh :- 201301

Palacia, Plot No. Gh-09a Sector Tech Zone-4 Greater Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh :- 201308



Guarantor(s)

PIRAMAL CAPITAL & HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED

(Formerly Known as Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Limited)

Registered Office Address: Unit No.601, 6th Floor Piramal Amiti Building, Piramal Agastya Corporate Park, Kamani Junction, Opp Fire Station, LBS Marg, Kurla (West), Mumbai 400 070. CIN: L65910MH1984PLC032639, Webside:www.piramalfinance.com Branch Address: Dhiraj Baug, Building "A" Ground & 1st Floor, Beside Axis Bank, Opp. Monalisa Building, Agra Road, Hari Niwas Circle, Naupada, Thane (West) – 400 602.

DEMAND NOTICE Under Section 13(2) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement Of Security Interest Act. 2002 read with Rule 3 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules. 2002. The undersigned is the Authorised Officer of Piramal Capital & Housing Financial

Limited (PCHFL) (formerly known as Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd.(DHFL)) under Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act). In exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Authorised Officer has assued Demand Notices under Section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the following Borrower(s) (the "said Borrower(s)"), to repay the amounts mentioned in the respective Demand Notices under Section 13(2) of the said Borrower(s) to pay to PCHFL, within 60 days from the publication of this Notice, the amounts indicated the herein below, together with further interest as detailed Demand Notice(s), from the date(s) mentioned below till the date of payment and/or realization, payable under the loan agreement read with other documents/writings, if any, executed by the said Borrower(s). As security for due repayment of the loan, the following assets have been mortgaged to PCHFL by the said Borrower(s) respectively. Demand Notice Date and Amount with NPA date Name of the Borrower(s)/

connecting the farmers of	Guarantor(s)	Date and Amount with NPA date
Uttar Pradesh to medicinal farming and horticulture, and	(LC No. 07700000522 of Ghaziabad Branch) Ashwani Tripathi (Borrower) Amita Tripathi (Coborrower 1)	16-01-2024 /₹ 1197607 /-(₹ Eleven lakh Ninety Seven Thousand Six Hundred Seven Only) NPA (09-01-2024)
promoting herbal products. This diversification, he explained, has significantly	(LC No. 13000000238 of Gurugram - MG Road Branch) Yash Pal Sethi (Borrower) Bhawna Sethi (Coborrower 1)	16-01-2024 /₹ 11164693 /-(₹ One Crore Eleven lakh Sixty Four Thousand Six Hundred Ninety Three Only) NPA (06-05-2018)
increased the farmers' earnings, becoming a	(LC No. 07700001293 of Ghaziabad Branch) Manoj Kumar (Borrower) Anuj Tyagi (Coborrower 1) Roopali Tyagi (Guarantor 1)	18-01-2024 /₹ 3792845 /-(₹ Thirty Seven lakh Ninety Two Thousand Eight Hundred Forty Five Only) NPA (05-03-2020)
transformative catalyst in improving their lives. The chief minister also	Anuj Goel (Borrower) Poonam Goel (Coborrower 1)	16-01-2024 /₹ 2898759 /-(₹ Twenty Eight lakh Ninety Eight Thousand Seven Hundred Fifty Nine Only) NPA (03-02-2018)
inaugurated an exhibition at the fair and inspected the stalls set up while interacting with the farmers.	(LC No. 01400003551 of New Delhi Branch) Color Palette Pvt Ltd (Borrower) Orchid Corporat Services India P Ltd (Coborrower 1) Naveen Chauhan (Coborrower 2) Abhishek Sharma (Guarantor 1)	03-01-2024 /₹ 20474154 /-(₹ Two Crore Four lakh Seventy Four Thousand One Hundred Fifty Four Only) NPA (10-12-2023)
Notably, over 4,000 farmers from more than 15 states participated in the fair.	(LC No. 09600000917 of Delhi - Pitampura Branch) Akhil Gupta (Borrower) Shivali Gupta (Coborrower 1)	18-01-2024 /₹ 11688907.58 /-(₹ One Crore Sixteen lakh Eighty Eight Thousand Nine Hundred Seven Only and Fifty Eight Paise) NPA (04-07-2019)
The CIMAP will also launch an 'Aroma Mission App' for the	(LC No. 1970000003 of Gurugram - MG Road Branch) Mitheel Verenkar (Borrower) Rakhi S Patkar (Coborrower 1)	16-01-2024 /₹ 3598009 /-(₹ Thirty Five lakh Ninety Eight Thousand Nine Only) NPA (05-04-2018)
farmers involved in cultivating medicinal plants. This app will act as a bridge between the farmers and the industry.	(LC No. 1330000367 of Delhi - Pitampura Branch) Sanjeev Sharma (Borrower) Rajender Sharma (Coborrower 1)	18-01-2024 /₹ 6298041.58 /-(₹ Sixty Two lakh Ninety Eight Thousand Forty One Only and Fifty Eight Paise) NPA (03-02-2018)
farmers and the industry. Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shahi, Council of	(LC No. 19700041279 of Gurugram - MG Road Branch) Rohit Sharma (Borrower) Parul Kamboj (Coborrower 1)	16-01-2024 /₹ 6198404.58 /-(₹ Sixty One lakh Ninety Eight Thousand Four Hundred Four Only and Fifty Eight Paise) NPA (04-12-2017)
Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Director	(LC No. 1300000463 of Gurugram - MG Road Branch) Anita Jaggi (Borrower) Jaggi Dharmesh (Coborrower 1)	16-01-2024 /₹ 14810020.58 /-(₹ One Crore Forty Eight lakh Ten Thousand Twenty Only and Fifty Eight Paise) NPA (04-12-2018)
ingya men 📙	(LC No. 11900001190 of Noida - Sector 2 Branch) Deepti Chirstia Roy (Borrower) Charles C Roy (Coborrower 1)	18-01-2024 /₹ 7945215.58 /-(₹ Seventy Nine lakh Forty Five Thousand Two Hundred Fifteen Only and Fifty Eight Paise) NPA (04-12-2018)
rs jail for	(LC No. 19700041351 of Gurugram - MG Road Branch) Purushottam Somani (Borrower) Rinku Mundada (Coborrower 1)	16-01-2024 /₹ 2087827 /-(₹ Twenty lakh Eighty Seven Thousand Eight Hundred Twenty Seven Only) NPA (04-08-2019)
	(LC No. 13000000535 of Gurugram - MG Road Branch) Gurdeep Singh (Borrower) Shubh Jit Kaur (Coborrower 1)	16-01-2024 /₹ 7790972 /-(₹ Seventy Seven lakh Ninety Thousand Nine Hundred Seventy Two Only) NPA (03-02-2019)
fficking	(LC No. 01400003882 of Noida - Sector 2 Branch) Anand Prakash (Borrower) Supriya Singh (Coborrower 1)	18-01-2024 /₹ 12402377.58 /-(₹ One Crore Twenty Four lakh Two Thousand Three Hundred Seventy Seven Only and Fifty Eight Paise) NPA (03-02-2019)
Hafeez Ahmed and Mohammad Yunus — took the two women to Malab village in	(LC No. 19700044527 of Gurugram - MG Road Branch) Vikas Lohchob (Borrower) Deepa Jakhar (Coborrower 1)	18-01-2024 /₹ 5306558 /-(₹ Fifty Three lakh Six Thousand Five Hundred Fifty Eight Only) NPA (09-07-2021)
Nuh district and decided to sell them in Kashmir Valley for Rs 70,000 each, the police said.	(LC No. 09200001257 of Delhi - Pitampura Branch) Vijay Grover (Borrower) Reena Grover (Coborrower 1)	18-01-2024 /₹ 11767302.58 /-(₹ One Crore Seventeen lakh Sixty Seven Thousand Three Hundred Two Only and Fifty Eight Paise) NPA (03-02-2019)
Acting on the information, a team of the Child Welfare	(LC No. 2820000030 of Noida - Sector 2 Branch) Varun Kapoor (Borrower) Rajeev Kapoor (Coborrower 1)	16-01-2024 /₹ 6986095.58 /-(₹ Sixty Nine lakh Eighty Six Thousand Ninety Five Only and Fifty Eight Paise) NPA (03-02-2019)
Committee conducted raids at their place in Malab and rescued the women. Following medical	(LC No. 27900000425 of Noida - Sector 2 Branch) Jaspreet Singh (Borrower) Sarabjeet Singh (Coborrower 1)	18-01-2024 /₹ 5669212.58 /-{₹ Fifty Six lakh Sixty Nine Thousand Two Hundred Twelve Only and Fifty Eight Paise) NPA (06-05-2018)
Following medical examination, it was revealed that the two women were raped and tortured.	(LC No. 27900000423 of Noida - Sector 2 Branch) Sarabjeet Singh (Borrower) Jaspreet Singh (Coborrower 1)	16-01-2024 /₹ 5630358.58 /-{₹ Fifty Six lakh Thirty Thousand Three Hundred Fifty Eight Only and Fifty Eight Paise) NPA (06-06-2018)
An FIR was registered under relevant provisions of the IPC	(LC No. 27900000524 of Noida - Sector 2 Branch) Jyoti Bansal (Borrower) Santosh Bansal (Coborrower 1)	16-01-2024 /₹ 4835581 /-(₹ Forty Eight lakh Thirty Five Thousand Five Hundred Eighty One Only) NPA (06-05-2018)

	Property address	Name of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)	
	Flat No : 104, jasmine-4 Hindon Heights, raj Nagar Nh-58 Ghaziabad Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh :- 201001	(LC No. 27900000420 of Noida - Sector 2 Branch) Rahul Kumar Gola (Borrower) Poonam Gola (Coborrower 1)	18- Sev On
	Unit- Ocb0022102 Jaypee Greens Orchard Sec- 128 Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh :- 201301 Flat No:1225,12th Floor Block- C,1st Type,high	(LC No. 25500000422 of Delhi - Pitampura Branch) Edward Hewitt (Borrower) Rashmi Hewitt (Coborrower 1) Kiara Travels And Tours	16- Fift
	End Paradise, Noor Nagar Ghaziabad Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh :- 201011	Pvt Ltd (Coborrower 2) (LC No. 20000041720 of Noida - Sector 2 Branch)	
	Unit No-1612, 16th Floor, Socrates 1, Supertech Czar, Plot No- Gh-02 Sector- Omicron-1 Uttar Pradesh IN 201308	Bikash Chutia (Borrower) Sri Sirakh Chutia (Coborrower 1)	akh Six (09
	Unit No. 102 Tower 1 Floor - 1st Amber Unitech Golf And Country Club (grande) Sector 96, 97 And 98 Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh :- 201301	(LC No. 11900001529 of Noida - Sector 2 Branch) Rahul Singh (Borrower) Shivangi Sharma (Coborrower 1)	Thi Hu (05
	Flat No. 602, 6th Floor, Tower D1 Type Diamond,	(LC No. 19700042560 of Gurgaon - Sohna Road Branch) Ritu Bajaj (Borrower) Rakesh Kumar Bajaj (Coborrower 1)	On On
	Plot No. Gh-2 Victory Ace, Sector-143 Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh :- 201301	(LC No. 11900003100 of Noida - Sector 2 Branch) Sneh Lata (Borrower) Roshan Lal (Coborrower 1)	18-
	Flat No R-401, 4th Floor Carnation- R, Terra Floor Terra City, Alwar By Pass Bhiwadi Alwar Rajasthan :- 301019	(LC No. 2660000401 of Delhi - Pitampura Branch) Tabrez Akhter (Borrower) Pravez Akhter (Coborrower 1)	18- lak Eig
	Unit No A03 , Ground Floor, Tower- A, La Galaxia, Plot No H R A - 11, G H S, Surajpur Site- C, Phase- 2, Greater Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh :- 201310	(LC No. 13000001284 of Gurugram - MG Road Branch) Rajender Singh (Borrower) Suman Raj Singh (Coborrower 1)	18- Tw Nir
	Unit No. C 02 Ground Floor Block C La Galaxia Hra 11-1 A Surajpur Site C Greater Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh :- 201308	(LC No. 13000001304 of Gurugram - MG Road Branch) Kunwar Singh Kushwah (Borrower)	18-
	Flat No 12a03 12a Floor (As Per Docs) 13th Floor Physically Tower No T 5 Plot No Gh 02 Sector 119 The Aranya Heights Noida	Monica Kushwah (Coborrower 1)	Eig
	Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh :- 201301 Flat No 1907 19th Floor Tower A Gh 02 The	(LC No. 09200001546 of Rohini Branch) Nitin Jain (Borrower) Nidhi Jain (Coborrower 1)	16- Nir On
	Aranya Sector 119 Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh :- 201301	(LC No. 20000042468 of Noida -sector 2 Branch) Rajender Singh (Borrower) Dharna (Coborrower 1)	03- Nir NP
1	Flat No S 306 3rd Floor Block Life Suite Gayatri Life Plot 1 F Sec 16, Greater Noida West, Uttar Pradesh IN 201301 Unit No 2503 24th Floor Type Shades A Tower	(LC No. 27400000690 of Bhiwadi Branch) Yogender Singh Gahlot (Borrower) Suman Gahlot (Coborrower 1)	18- lak Tw (30
	A 2 Plot No Gh 2 Victory Ace Sector 143 Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh :- 201301 Flat No: 102, First Floor Tower- D-2, Plot No: Gh	(LC No. 25400000359 of Azadpur N S P Branch) Om Prakash Sharma (Borrower) Geeta Sharma	16- Eig
	-02 Victory Ace Sec-143 Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh :- 201301	(Coborrower 1) (LC No. 27900001665 of Noida - Sector 2 Branch) Faisal Shah (Borrower)	On 03- lak
	Flat No F-151, 15th Floor, Tower- F Meadows Vista Phase- 2 Raj Nagar Extension Ghaziabad Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh :- 201010	(LC No. 19600043982 of Delhi - Safdurjung	and 18-
	Flat No 101 First Floor Tower D2 Type Diamond Plot No Gh 02 Victory Ace Sector 143 Noida	Branch) Shradha Agarwal (Borrower) Ashish Kumar Gupta (Coborrower 1) (LC No. 13000002449 of Gurgaon Branch)	Thi On 16-
	Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh :- 201301 Flat No 602 6th Floor Tower A2 Type Spades A	Sarwan Kumar (Borrower) Jyoti Gulati (Coborrower 1)	Nir Tw
d	Victory Ace Plot No Gh02 Sector 143 Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh :- 201301	(LC No. 24900001816 of Delhi Janakpuri Branch)	16-

Guarantor(s)	Date and Amount with NPA date	
(LC No. 2790000420 of Noida - Sector 2 Branch) Rahul Kumar Gola (Borrower) Poonam Gola (Coborrower 1)	18-01-2024 /₹ 5571207.58 /-(₹ Fifty Five lakh Seventy One Thousand Two Hundred Seven Only and Fifty Eight Paise) NPA (06-05-2018)	Flat No 1006, 10th Floor, Tower B La Palacia, Plot No G H-09 A Techzone4, Greater Noida West G B Nagar Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh: - 201308
(LC No. 25500000422 of Delhi - Pitampura Branch) Edward Hewitt (Borrower) Rashmi Hewitt (Coborrower 1) Kiara Travels And Tours Pvt Ltd (Coborrower 2)	16-01-2024 /₹ 8052821.58 /-{₹ Eighty lakh Fifty Two Thousand Eight Hundred Twenty One Only and Fifty Eight Paise) NPA (04-12-2018)	Unit No. 1602, 16th Floor, Tower- A The Aranya, Plot No. Gh-02, Sector-119, Noida Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh :- 201301
(LC No. 20000041720 of Noida - Sector 2 Branch) Bikash Chutia (Borrower) Sri Sirakh Chutia (Coborrower 1)	18-01-2024 /₹ 7774366.58 /-{₹ Seventy Seven akh Seventy Four Thousand Three Hundred Sixty Six Only and Fifty Eight Paise) NPA (09-01-2019)	Unit No 1503 14th Floor Tower A1 Victory One Ace Plot No Gh 02 Sector 143 Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh :- 201301
(LC No. 11900001529 of Noida - Sector 2 Branch) Rahul Singh (Borrower) Shivangi Sharma (Coborrower 1)	Thirty Three lakh Fifty Nine Thousand Six Hundred Sixty Only and Fifty Eight Paise) NPA (05-04-2019)	Unit No D 1 1601 Victory Ace Gh 02 Sec 143 Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh :- 201301
(LC No. 19700042560 of Gurgaon - Sohna Road Branch) Ritu Bajaj (Borrower) Rakesh Kumar Bajaj (Coborrower 1)	03-01-2024 /₹ 2101973 /-(₹ Twenty One lakh One Thousand Nine Hundred Seventy Three Only) NPA (10-12-2023)	Flat No A 804 Sky View Apartment, Vasundhara Nagar P No: G H 2 Bhiwadi Alwar Rajasthan :- 301019
(LC No. 11900003100 of Noida - Sector 2 Branch) Sneh Lata (Borrower) Roshan Lal (Coborrower 1)		Flat No 302 3rd Floor Tower A4 Type B Srs High Tech Homes Sec 87 Faridabad Faridabad Haryana :- 121001
(LC No. 2660000401 of Delhi - Pitampura Branch) Tabrez Akhter (Borrower) Pravez Akhter (Coborrower 1)	18-01-2024 /₹ 8813838.58 /-(₹ Eighty Eight lakh Thirteen Thousand Eight Hundred Thirty Eight Only and Fifty Eight Paise) NPA (03-02-2019)	Unit No. B-1-2002, 19th Floor Victory Ace, Plot No. Gh-2 Sector-143, Gb Nagar Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh :- 201307
(LC No. 13000001284 of Gurugram - MG Road Branch) Rajender Singh (Borrower) Suman Raj Singh (Coborrower 1)	18-01-2024 /₹ 2828819 /-(₹ Twenty Eight lakh Twenty Eight Thousand Eight Hundred Nineteen Only) NPA (04-01-2019)	Flat No-602 Tower E Golf Green Avenue Plot No-gh-p4 Sector-25 Yamuna Express Greater Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh:- 201301
(LC No. 13000001304 of Gurugram - MG Road Branch) Kunwar Singh Kushwah (Borrower) Monica Kushwah (Coborrower 1)	18-01-2024 /₹ 3453288 /-(₹ Thirty Four lakh Fifty Three Thousand Two Hundred Eighty Eight Only) NPA (03-02-2019)	Flat No 1004 Tower E Golf Green Avenue Gh 04 Sector- 25, J P Green City Sdz Yamuna Expressway Greater Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh :- 201301
(LC No. 09200001546 of Rohini Branch) Nitin Jain (Borrower) Nidhi Jain (Coborrower 1)	16-01-2024 /₹ 4192252 /-(₹ Forty One lakh Ninety Two Thousand Two Hundred Fifty Two Only) NPA (09-01-2024)	Plot No-107 & 108, Ground Floor, Pocket-01 , Sector-20 , Rose Convent School, Rohini New Delhi New Delhi Delhi :- 110085
(LC No. 20000042468 of Noida -sector 2 Branch) Rajender Singh (Borrower) Dharna (Coborrower 1)	03-01-2024 /₹ 699548 /-(₹ Six lakh Ninety Nine Thousand Five Hundred Forty Eight Only) NPA (10-12-2023)	Flat No. Ugf - 02, Ugf Rear Side Plot No-a-70 ,kh No - 1212 hayat Enclave, Loni Ghaziabad Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh :- 201001
(LC No. 2740000690 of Bhiwadi Branch) Yogender Singh Gahlot (Borrower) Suman Gahlot (Coborrower 1)	18-01-2024 /₹ 7743642.58 /-{₹ Seventy Seven lakh Forty Three Thousand Six Hundred Forty Two Only and Fifty Eight Paise) NPA (30-09-2020)	Flat No. A-303, 3rd Floor, The Skyz, Ramprastha City, Sector-37 D Gurgaon Gurgaon Haryana :- 122001
(LC No. 25400000359 of Azadpur N S P Branch) Om Prakash Sharma (Borrower) Geeta Sharma (Coborrower 1)	16-01-2024 /₹ 1785107 /-(₹ Seventeen lakh Eighty Five Thousand One Hundred Seven Only) NPA (09-01-2024)	Plot No-d-9/2 first Floor aawasiya Colony, Dlf Ankur Vihar Village Saadullabad, Paragna Loni Ghaziabad Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh:- 201010
(LC No. 27900001665 of Noida - Sector 2 Branch) Faisal Shah (Borrower)	03-01-2024 /₹ 2187068.71 /-(₹ Twenty One lakh Eighty Seven Thousand Sixty Eight Only and Seventy One Paise) NPA (30-04-2021)	Flat No. 4 on Third Floor (Rear L.H.S.), Property Bearing No. 296, Khasra No. 316, situated in the abadi under Lal Dora of Village Neb Sarai, Tehsil Saket, New Delhi-110068,
(LC No. 19600043982 of Delhi - Safdurjung Branch) Shradha Agarwal (Borrower) Ashish Kumar Gupta (Coborrower 1)	18-01-2024 /₹ 3437559 /-(₹ Thirty Four lakh Thirty Seven Thousand Five Hundred Fifty Nine Only) NPA (09-09-2023)	Plot No-11,first Floor,gali No-02,lal Dora,kha No- 340/145,shakarpur Khas Village Shakarpur Khas Shahdara, Delhi New Delhi Delhi :- 110092
(LC No. 13000002449 of Gurgaon Branch) Sarwan Kumar (Borrower) Jyoti Gulati (Coborrower 1)	16-01-2024 /₹ 1091522.08 /-{₹ Ten lakh Ninety One Thousand Five Hundred Twenty Two Only and Eight Paise) NPA (14-01-2023)	P.No.Q-57,F.F Back Side,Kh No 79 Vill Bindapur, Block.Q,Gali No.06 Vikas Vihar, Mans Kunj Road Uttam Nagar New Delhi New Delhi Delhi :- 110059
(LC No. 24900001816 of Delhi Janakpuri Branch) Sanjeev Jain (Borrower) Sangita Jain (Coborrower 1)	16-01-2024 /₹ 1727166 /-(₹ Seventeen lakh Twenty Seven Thousand One Hundred Sixty Six Only) NPA (09-01-2024)	Flat No-GF-3, Ground Floor, Front Side, Plot No- 21, Block-C-10, Village- Saddulabad, pargana, loni, ghaziabad, UP Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh:- 201102
(LC No. 200NOD33544 of Noida - Sector 2 Branch) Md Firoj Ahmad (Borrower) Aisha Rahman (Coborrower 1)	16-01-2024 /₹ 13314996.58 /-(₹ One Crore Thirty Three lakh Fourteen Thousand Nine Hundred Ninety Six Only and Fifty Eight Paise) NPA (09-07-2015)	FLAT NO.1053, 5TH FLOOR SHIV KALA CHARMS, PLOT NO. 7, SEC-PI-II,GREATER NOIDA, Uttar Pradesh IN 201308
(LC No. 199FBD31756 of Faridabad Branch) Harvender Kumar (Borrower) Reena Kumari (Coborrower 1)	18-01-2024 /₹ 2467371 /-(₹ Twenty Four lakh Sixty Seven Thousand Three Hundred Seventy One Only) NPA (09-01-2022)	H/FLAT NO.J 1001 , FLOOR NO. 10TH , SAVANA TOWER , VILLAGE . GHAZIABAD GHAZIABAD Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh :- 201001
(LC No. 200NOD37257 of Noida -sector 2 Branch) Amit Singh (Borrower) Nisha Manjari (Coborrower 1)	Ninety Two Thousand Eight Hundred Ninety Two Only) NPA (10-12-2023)	H/FLAT NO.301 , FLOOR NO. 2ND, DARIUS 7 TOWER , PLOT NO. GH-02 , SUPERTECH CZAR SUITES GREATER NOIDA Uttar Pradesh :- 201308 H/FLAT NO.H-1204 . FLOOR NO. 12 FLOOR , PLOT
(LC No. 198PTM32316 of Delhi - Pitampura Branch) Robit Shah (Borrower) Meenakshi Shah	16-01-2024 /₹ 5429131.58 /-(₹ Fifty Four lakh	H/FLAT NO.H-1204 , FLOOR NO. 12 FLOOR , PLOT NO. H-07A . RG LUXURY HOMES . SECTOR-16B.

Twenty Nine Thousand One Hundred Thirty

Eighty Four Thousand One Hundred Sixty en Only and Sixty Eight Paise) NPA

One Only and Fifty Eight Paise) NPA

pronounced the sentence on their place in Malab and Tuesday. The court also rescued the women. imposed a fine of Rs 10,000 on medica Following examination, it was revealed each of the convicts. According to public prosecutor that the two women wer raped and tortured. Pratap Singh, the Child An FIR was registered under Welfare Committee of Nuh received secret relevant provisions of the IPC information in February 2021 at the City police station in

Three Rohingya men

get 10 years jail for

human trafficking

that two young Bangladeshi Nuh and the three accused women had been brought to were arrested in December India by some people via Mizoram and Kolkata. The accused had confessed to

> judicial custody, the police said. "During the trial, the prosecution proved all the charges," the public prosecutor

the crime and were sent into

Date: 01-02-2024

16-01-2024 /₹ 2684167.68 /-(₹ Twenty Six lakh H/FLAT NO.C1-303 , FLOOR NO. 3RD FLOOR

NO. H-07A , RG LUXURY HOMES , SECTOR-16B,

01, GREATER NOIDA, Uttar Pradesh IN 201308

GREATER NOIDA, Uttar Pradesh IN 201308

I I I (100-11-2022) |

If the said Borrowers shall fail to make payment to PCHFL as aforesaid, PCHFL shall proceed against the above secured assets under Section 13(4) of the Act and the applicable Rules, entirely at the risks of the said Borrowers as to the costs and consequences. The said Borrowers are prohibited under the Act from transferring the aforesaid assets, whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise without the prior written consent of PCHFL. Any person who contravenes or abets contravention of the provisions of the said Act or Rules made there under, shall be liable for imprisonment and/or penalty as provided under the Act. Sd/- (Authorised Officer)
Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited

Branch) Rohit Shah (Borrower) Meenakshi Shah

(LC No. 200NOD38710 of Noida - Sector 2

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

On the brink

The Maldives is running into one crisis after another; now an impeachment motion looms over Muizzu

nerally known for its turquoise waters, pristine beaches and coral reefs, the name of the Maldives as a destination for Indian tourists is currently mud. The archipelago's complex political scenario has raised concerns not only within the country but also in the larger geopolitical landscape. The looming impeachment motion against Md Muizzu, the Maldives President, coupled with a shocking fall in Indian tourist numbers, underscores a shifting dynamic in the Indian Ocean region. The developments have triggered apprehensions about the country's stability. Given its strategic location, the internal political dynamics are crucial not only for the Maldives but also for the Indian Ocean region. As China seeks to expand its influence, India finds itself at a strategic crossroads, requiring thoughtful and proactive measures to counterbalance these developments. The core of the problem is Muizzu's desire to distance himself from India and align with China. The Maldives is the newest country to fall prey to Chinese designs:



The dragon has been steadily increasing its economic and infrastructural footprint in the region by way of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), with significant investments in key projects. This has raised concerns in India about China's expanding influence in a region traditionally considered India's sphere of influence. The Maldives has asked India to remove its military base, which is a big loss for India and will make China stronger in the region.

Though India has flexed its soft power and dissuaded its tourists from going to Maldives, that approach may not work with China's support to the Maldives. But the position of the Maldives has become a little

untenable as it earns the major share of revenue from tourism; the recent decline in Indian tourist numbers has hit it hard. Holding the top spot just three weeks ago, Indian tourist arrivals have now slipped to the fifth position. India and the Maldives share ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious and commercial links steeped in antiquity. The relations have been close, cordial and multi-dimensional: India was among the first nations to recognise the Maldives after its independence in 1965 and to establish diplomatic relations with it. Now, India must adopt a nuanced and strategic approach to maintain influence in the Maldives and counterbalance China's expanding footprint. Strengthening diplomatic ties with our neighbour is paramount. Besides, India should bolster economic cooperation by offering viable alternatives to Chinese investments. Initiatives that promote sustainable development and address the Maldives' economic concerns can help strengthen economic ties. It goes without saying that India would have to back the pro-India Maldivian leaders; for example, the pro-India Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) has recently claimed a landslide in Male's mayoral election. This is indeed a good sign for India and, if Muizzu is impeached, India could have the chance to reestablish its cordial relations with the Maldives that it has always had.



An artiste hoists 'Thirumudi' (Royal crown) of Muchilot Bhagavathi on 'Perumkaliyattam' festival, in Kannur

Myanmar: India's strategic dilemma



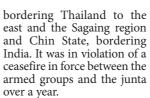
India needs to evolve a realistic strategic blueprint in line with the 'Neighbourhood First' policy to save Myanmar from China's Belt and Road Inititiative

refugees and insurgents from across porous border owing to the unabated crisis, the Indian government has decided to fence the Myanmar border to discontinue the free movement regime (FMR), as with the Bangladesh frontier which may act as a deterrent and preventive measure to control the existing menace. India must act cautiously: Given Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu's honeymoon with China, India needs to evolve a realistic strategic blueprint in line with the Neighbourhood First' policy to save Myanmar from China's overtures to the junta through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), besides supporting border areas rebels by brokering peace between warring groups and army generals in this violence-plagued country. India took a cautious stand when the army, known as Tatmadaw, engineered a coup on February 1, 2021. India had diplomatically

and indirectly supported the junta, refraining from openly supporting the democratic forces led by Aung San Suu Kyi, which has now put it in a dilemma. India faces the challenge of checkmating China, which is dangerous because it supports some ethnic groups.

In this complex scenario, "OPER-ATION 1027" was undertaken in December 2023 by 'The Three Brotherhood Alliance' comprising the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, AA and the Myanmar National Democratic Álliance Army, which had shaken the junta. An offensive against the junta had dealt it a devastating blow, prompting China to support it.

The Three Brotherhood Alliance' had captured key roads and military posts, hitting the cashstrapped junta's revenues and obstructing troop movements. Reports from the conflict zone suggested that the surprise attacks on the Shan state were followed by the AA opening a front against the army in its base in Rakhine state on the west coast. It was a coordinated attempt by insurgents to spill over to Kayah State army.



The bold move threatens the military's control over crucial trade routes to China thereby hitting its interests. It was a welcome step for China when the army led by Min Aung Hlaing dethroned the elected government, but now the pendulum has swung in the opposite direction, thereby challenging the junta. The Brotherhood is Junta's

biggest challenge: The alliance has been successful in cutting off the junta from a stretch of land that handles about 40% of bilateral border trade with China; around \$1 billion of the trade comes from natural gas piped into China. The fighting erupted recently in Shan, Kachin and Chin states, which are situated in the country's north as well as in Rakhine state in the west. Three Brotherhood fighters have claimed they have overrun dozens of military posts across the region and seized major roads leading in and out besides forcing the surrender of over 100 soldiers of the Myanmar army, demoralizing the junta. The armed groups nave taken the fight to the Tatmadaw in Kayah State in the country's east which is important to the Myanmar



CHINA HAS URGED MYANMAR TO RESTORE BORDER STABILITY EVEN AS THE JUNTA'S **CONFLICT WITH** ARMED GROUPS **INTENSIFIES** India must rethink its strategy: India will need to rethink its old-fashioned position towards Myanmar before the fallout threatens its interests. India feels the US should seize the moment to enhance engagement with India in Myanmar and work to alleviate the humanitarian situation thereby supporting the antijunta forces and establishing a federal democracy. India has tried to maintain equidistance between the military generals and pro-democracy political parties to ensure that the junta does not fall into China's lap. Junta to hit back: The army generals were not ready for the alliance's huge offensive, which set off a chain reaction, cornering the junta. Armed groups are reported to have taken control of fifty towns and villages and 100 posts. Army chief Hlaing has promised to undertake a counterattack on terrorists in the north, which

Armed rebellion by ethnic armed organizations has dealt a diplomatic blow to the army generals who have been exposed; China will be directly impacted. The Ukraine war had come as a blessing in disguise for the junta as the US and EU were preoccupied with it. The Hamas attack on israei nas furtner alienated Western powers from Myanmar but the attack by armed groups may change the entire scenario. The

might expose the junta's weak-

National Unity Government (NUG) formed by opposition lawmakers in Burma is considered close to the West, which is feeling encouraged after the successful offensive by the

armed groups. China's double speak: China has urged Myanmar to restore border stability even as the junta's conflict with armed groups intensifies. Myanmar has been asked by China to 'cooperate' with it to maintain stability on the common borders. China's official stand is intriguing; "As a friendly neighbour, China sincerely hopes that Myanmar will restore stability and development as soon as possible, and supports all parties in Myanmar to properly resolve differences within the constitutional and legal framework and achieve reconciliation through dialogue."

A recent visit by Assistant Foreign Minister Nong Rong holds significance after armed groups stepped up an offensive, which put Chinese residents and infrastructure at risk. Some former diplomats are surprised over the 'Dual Policy' adopted by China, which has been actively supporting the militant groups. The United Wa State Army (UWSA) in Myanmar's northeastern Shan state receives weapons and oniticai suste nance from China.

(The writer is a political analyst and an expert on South Asia, views are personal)

Road conditions hinder village development



Deteriorating roads in Bhopalaram village of Bikaner hinder development, affecting health, education and mobility

evelopment Bhopalaram village, situated in the Lunkaransar block of Bikaner, Rajasthan, has come to a halt due to the lack of proper roads. The absence of a paved road is a significant challenge for the nearly two thousand residents in the village. According to 47-year-old resident Baluram Jat, the main road connecting the village to the block headquarters was constructed around eight years ago and has not been maintained since, rendering it impass-

The road's deteriorated condition has made it challenging even for families to transport patients to the hospital. During Vimla's childbirth, the ambulance broke down due to the damaged road, forcing the family to arrange a private vehicle to reach the hospital. Vimla, a 28-yearold young woman from the village, noted that her condition worsened due to the road's large potholes. She highlighted that many pregnant women in the village prefer going to their parental homes for childbirth due to



for those unable to do so, the journey to the hospital becomes exceedingly diffi-

The challenging road conditions in the village have significantly impacted the lives of individuals with disabilities as well. Rajaram, a 26year-old affected by polio in both legs, shared that although the government provided him with a handoperated bicycle, the deteriorating state of the roads poses a considerable obstacle to his mobility. The uneven and damaged surfaces make it challenging for Rajaram to use his bicycle

effectively for travel, exacerbating the difficulties he faces due to his disability. The advancement of development is hindered by deteriorating roads. When the road conditions are subpar these challenges. However, in a given area, the progress ties will persist until the

in other sectors is inevitably hampered. In Bhopalaram village, Vinod, another resident, points out that the deteriorating road has led to a severe water problem. Water tankers from the block have to navigate the broken road, causing more than half the water to spill before reaching the village. This not only leads to water wastage but also compels villagers to incur additional expenses to procure water once more. The deteriorated road has had a detrimental impact on the education of village girls as well. Seventeen-year-old Malati reveals that she had to halt her education after completing 10th grade because she faced challenges travelling eight kilometres to reach the Higher Secondary School in Lunkaransar Block for her 12th-grade studies. The poor condition of the road resulted in limited transportation options from the village, and her parents couldn't afford to purchase a scooter for her. Malati also highlights that although some portions of the road have been patched with bricks, persistent difficulentire road is improved. In this regard, the Chairman of the Gram Seva Sahakarita Samiti, Asuram, explains that a space of 50 feet was allocated for this road, but it was constructed only within 20 feet. Due to its small and deteriorated condition, villagers face daily challenges. If there is any hindrance in tendering for the construction of this road, it can also be done under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Guarantee Act (MGNRE-GA). This would not only

Employment improve the condition of the road but also provide employment to people under MGNREGA. Asuram asserts that the village's most crucial need should be promptly fulfilled through the Panchayati Raj Institutions because the road is not just a means of transportation but plays a significant role in opening new avenues for development. It is not only a means of access but is also intricately connected to education,

health, and the economy. (Tamanna is a student of Class 12 from Lunkaransar, Rajasthan. Views are personal. Charkha Features)

GANDHIAN PRINCIPLES

Sir — Considering the war foreboding and sense of anarchy around the geo-political world order, it's a good time to practice and remember the ideological principles of Gandhi Ji. Mahatma Gandhi was popularly called as 'Father of Nation' and "Bapu". He was killed following a prayer vigil in New Delhi on January 30, 1948. He teaches us the canon of non-violence, civil disobedience, the welfare of all, interfaith harmony, equality social justice and constructive work but world order is dysfunctional. Rather the current situation of countries is filled with atrocities and savagery, and destroying one or the other.

There is a spread of anti-humane dispensation among the nations vis-a-vis the Russia-Ukraine war, entire West Asia giving a sense of anarchy and retaliation between Iraq, Gaza, Yemen, Pakistan and the Indo-Pacific extent where Philippines and Taiwan are acting against the power but India too has dealt with the external as well as internal crisis of Naxalism, security threats in Parliament, suspension of 141 Members of Parliament for the first time in the history. Gandhi ji believed that change could be achieved through peaceful means, advocating for dialogue and understanding even in the face of adversity and ensuring that the benefits of progress reached every stratum of society. Let's hope that everyone should practice and follow the Gandhian axions that are carved out to build the better society that

Dimple Wadhawan | Kanpur

SUICIDE IS NOT A SOLUTION

Sir — In a shocking incident a JEE aspirant from Kota, Rajasthan committed suicide just days ahead of the exam. The year 2023 has already witnessed many student aspirants committing suicide in Kota due to exam pressure and the latest tragedy yet again pinpoints how entrance exams are causing severe mental agony, panic and pressure among young students. The suicide cases occurring in Kota and elsewhere in the country pinpoint how much men- expenses are Rs 98.14.!There is little left for

Rhino killing is a cause of concern



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

found, with its horn missing, in Assam's Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, which houses nearly seventy per cent of India's rhino population. Later, in December, another Rhino was spotted dead due to suspected spear penetration; surprisingly its horn was intact. These incidents took place after an uneventful 2022 when no rhino was harmed. Now, poachers have struck again by killing an adult female rhino and decamping with its horn. The carcass of the animal was

tal tension students experience and also

expose certain flaws in the exam system

and the societal beliefs prevalent which

focus only on marks, passes, ranks and suc-

cess. It is high time that the Ministry of

Education in the States and the Centre take

the matter seriously and take suitable mea-

sures so that our young students do not

make such harsh decisions just in the name

of exams and how it is conducted. Parents

and teachers have to inculcate in children

the mentality to face problems with

courage and willpower and to face chal-

Sir — An economy on relatively placid

waters and the sanguine prognosis of an

assured continuity of the govt in office

should help focus on a largely marginalised

key element of any budget: the fiscal deficit.

Whereas In Defense two-thirds go towards

salary, pensions and establishment expens-

es, the Operating Ratio for Railways was 98.14% in 2023, ie, to earn Rs100, the

CRUX OF BUDGET FOR 2024-25

M Pradyu | Kannur

lenges boldly.

n March 2023, the carcass of a rhinoceros was

found on January 22. Poaching is the biggest threat to the one-horned rhinos. Local poachers, hand-in-glove with international smugglers, pose a big threat to the rhinos.

The Assam government had set up a special task force to achieve zero poaching of rhinos in 2022. The task force, set up by the Assam government. and consisting of dedicated commandos, did a commendable job by ensuring nil poaching of the endangered animals in 2022. So, it can safely be assumed that there was a massive breach in security or that a few unscrupulous elements in the park were hand-in-gloves with the poachers that resulted in the latest rhino killing. The entire security apparatus including the CCTV cameras require an extensive examination and overhaul. At the same time, a methodical review of logistics, personnel and training would not be out of

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

capital outlays. With allocations to infrastructure on Defense and Railways being the highest in these two, deficit financing is inevitable. And then, even the most selfassured govt has to make space for an election year largesse. Issues in the agricultural sector and the income of farmers have been the bugbear of this govt. Ever since the agitation over the Farm Bills, the government has been wary of this huge vote bank. The yearly assistance of Rs 6000 may go up to Rs 9000. This will be a big outgo on top of various subsidies already in place. Tax-paying public is another sector that needs to be kept happy in an election year. However, the scope for concessions in personal taxation may stay cosmetic . The budget is expected to set the fiscal deficit at a vulnerable 5.3% against street estimates of 5.5%. The actuals may take it even beyond. The crux of budgeting for 2024-25 must hence lie in managing the wily Deficit -

R Narayanan | Mumbai

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FIRST COLUMN

THE DIVINE WISDOM OF **BHAGAVAD GITA**

The Gita implores us to recognise the significance of fulfilling our duties



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

et me start with verse # 3.8 of the Bhagavad-Gita, which is, "You should always do your duty. Because action is superior to inaction. Maintenance of the body will also not be possible through inaction." We all know what our duties are according to time, place and circumstances. We also know that neglecting our duties impacts our maintenance. For example, a student does not pay attention to his studies. What happens subsequently? He finds it hard to maintain himself. For whose benefit was this verse spoken?

Let me take another verse, which is very famous. I am referring to verse #2.47, which goes like this, "You have a right only in action, not ever in predetermining fruits. You should not speculate about the fruit of action; your attachment to inaction also should not be there." For whose benefit was this verse spoken? Do we really have any other right except to do our duties? And we must not neglect to do them. As regards the results of our actions, the right to decide them has been kept by God with Himself. Can you imagine what will happen if all of us are free to decide the results? Complete chaos. And who will lose in such chaos? We will

The third verse chosen by me is very telling, in which Lord Krishna promises, "People who worship Me with undivided attention, meditating on Me, for these regular practitioners of yoga, I help in getting what one does not have and provide security of what one has." This is wonderful. What more could we ask for? Therefore, do what the Lord instructs. How else to decide about who deserves such enormous mercy? Verse after verse the Lord is cajoling us to do what will fulfil all our desires, which are according to dharma. God couldn't be a party to anything against dhar-



The fourth verse in this connection is: "Where there is yogeshwara Shri Krishna and where there is Arjuna (meaning us), there will be opulence. victory, wealth and morality." (18.78) What are our desires generally? That we should succeed in our endeavours. We would if we were aiming for what is according to morality, i.e. dharma. The same is about wealth. Don't we need enough resources for our maintenance? Not only wealth, there will be 'saubhagya' (good fortune). Who benefits from all these? We do; God doesn't because He is complete in all respects. (3.22) The next verse is about gaining peace and a perfect destination. Lord Krishna instructs, "In all respects, take My shelter only. By My mercy, you will achieve supreme peace and the eternal abode." What is it that we lack after gaining material needs, comforts, etc.? It is peace, which is what God is promising. Not only that, God is also assuring eternal abode, which is free from the defects of this material world. How nice it will be to not be subjected to repeated birth and death? God is prepared to grant this also. As a matter of fact, God is always wanting to give. He has so much to give if we become deserving. Isn't that fair? How do we become deserving? Lord Krishna describes, "Develop My consciousness; become My devotee; make sacrifices for Me; and offer obeisance to Me." (18.65) One may feel that all these activities relate to God. No, far from it; they only purify our existence.

I will take up one more verse, which is, "Having My consciousness, you will cross all impediments by My grace." (18.58) This is quite an amazing offer from God. Aren't we all struggling with one problem or another throughout our lives? We do, but our ego comes in the way. We are not prepared to accept that somebody can be superior to us and to such an extent that we have to take His shelter and His alone. (18.66) We would rather suffer but won't do as instructed by God. Do we realise that our acts will benefit the world if we obey God's instructions? We will become better persons by following dharma.

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

Tread the WTO quagmire with caution



The battle for a permanent solution to Public Stock-Holding programme is a difficult one; India must fight it deftly

n a meeting of the Committee on Agriculture (CoA) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) – held on October 2, 2023, in Geneva, the European Union (EU) agreed to consider India's demand for a permanent solution to public stock-holding (PSH) program for food security. This is a significant change of stance since March 2023, when the EU along with the USA and Canada had challenged it.
The issue will be taken up for delibera-

tion in the 13th ministerial conference (MC) of the WTO (World Trade Organization), scheduled from February 26-29, 2024 in Abu Dhabi. The MC is the highest decision-making body of the global trade watchdog (read: WTO) that includes 164 member countries.

While, the USA and EU countries want a comprehensive discussion on agriculture encompassing the value-chain, market access, and export restrictions besides the PSH program, India has categorically stated "it won't negotiate any other issue in the agriculture sector till a permanent solution on PSH is found".

It has also conveyed that support measures given to its poor farmers like input subsidies such as on electricity, irrigation, fertilizer and even direct transfers are non-negotiable.

Under the PSH program, government agencies like the Food Corporation of India (FCI) buy agri-produce such as wheat, rice/paddy, and coarse cereals from farmers at the minimum support price (MSP) and distribute it at a subsidized price of Rs 2/3/1 per kg respectively to meet the needs of India's poor and vulnerable population under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) that was enacted in 2013. From January 1, 2023, these staple foods are given to the bene-ficiaries 'free'; initially in force till December 31, 2023, this arrangement has been continued for five years till December 31, 2028.

The excess of MSP plus handling, storage and distribution cost over the realization from the sale (that is, Rs 2/3/1 per kg prior to January 1, 2023, and 'zero' thereafter) is paid as a subsidy from the Union Budget. This can be bifurcated into two components (a) subsidy to the farmer, which is the excess of MSP of, say, rice over its international price also known as External Reference Price (ERP) in WTO parlance and (b) subsidy to the food consumer, being the excess of ERP over the price paid which currently is 'nil'. The WTO is concerned with (a) branded as "product-specific" subsidies. It requires some explanation.

The international price/ERP of any commodity is based on global demand-supply forces and is determined in a competitive manner. All farmers irrespective of their country of location are expected to receive this price. In case, because of the intervention by the government of a member country say India, the farmers therein receive a price/MSP higher than this, they are presumed to have been subsidized to the extent of excess of MSP over

The WTO is also concerned with subsidies on agricultural inputs like fertilisers, seeds, irrigation, power, etc., referred to as "non-product specific" subsidies.

The developed countries argue that such subsidies distort international trade; hence these need to be curbed. Their argument found acceptance at the WTO.



ONE WONDERS WHETHER A MERE **DECLARATION BY** PRIVATE TRADERS **ACQUIRING SUCH** STOCKS WOULD

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> **NEIGHBOURING** COUNTRIES

Accordingly, under the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), the total of product and non-product-specific subsidies or aggregate measure-ment support (AMS) is capped at 10 per cent of the value of agricul-tural production for a developing country (for developed countries, this threshold is 5 per cent). If a member country gives AMS over 10 per cent, it is a violation.

The AoA came into force in 1995. For India, until 2005, MSP was less than ERP. Thereafter, MSP has been higher than ERP and, in the last decade, this gap widened. During 2018-19, in the case of rice, for instance, AMS was at 11 per cent, exceeding the 10 per cent cap. During 2019-20, it was even higher at 13.7 per cent.
For over a decade or so, India along with other developing countries but he are realistic.

tries has been making efforts at WTO to wriggle out of the situation. In the 9th Ministerial Conference (MC) held in Bali (2013), it secured sanction for a "peace clause". It said, "If a developing country gives AMS in excess of 10 percent, no member will challenge this until 2017 when the WTO would look for a permanent solution."

In the General Council (GC) held in December 2014, this sanction was modified to say "The peace clause will stay till a permanent solution was found." However, the peace clause comes with several riders, such as the submission of data on food procurement, stockholding, distribution and subsidies. These also include establishing that subsidies are not "trade distorting." Besides, programs implemented after 2013 are not covered under the ambit of the

clause' several times at the WTO for breaching the 10 per cent ceiling in case of subsidy on rice - the latest being for the marketing year 2020-21. However, developed countries have objected to such invocation. They want India to be more transparent about its PSH program and put in place safeguards to prevent 'illegitimate' exports But, this can't go on ad infinitum.

The WTO should go for a permanent solution within a time-bound manner. In fact, the MC held in Bali (2013) had implicitly given a deadline of 2017 ".....no member will challenge this until 2017 when the WTO would look for a permanent solution." Unfortunately, the GC held in December 2014 deferred it indefinitely. India has done right by

insisting on a deadline now. MC isn't the right way to go. India is trying to delink PSH from a comprehensive look at agriculture. It is attempting to delink things that are intertwined with each The PSH program involves buy-

ing food from the farmers and distributing it to the beneficiaries. Here, we are talking about the entire supply chain involving procurement, handling, storage, distribution and so on. So, the issues of market access, and sale in the domestic and international markets can't be brushed aside.

India's PSH program is openended under which the government's agencies buy the highest possible quantities of wheat and rice from the farmers at everincreasing MSP. Since these purchases are unrelated to the requirement under the NFSA India has invoked the 'peace (courtesy vote bank politics), sur-

plus stocks with agencies are inevitable which they dispose of by auctioning to private traders etc under the Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS). Under OMSS 'all the bidders are compulsorily asked to give an undertaking that they won't export it'.

One wonders whether a mere declaration by private traders acquiring such stocks would satisfy the developed countries. We have also seen instances of heavily subsidized food (now free) being smuggled to neighbouring countries. It won't come on record but it disturbs the global demandsupply equation.

India should put everything on the table and talk. It is widely recognized that the formula for the computation of AMS under the AoA suffers from several flaws. The ERP used for comparing with MSP (albeit current) dates back to 1986-88. This is bound to "artificially" inflate the subsidy. By using the current ERP, India's subsidy will automatically go below the 10 per cent threshold. Besides, AoA calculation doesn't exclude subsidies given to resource-poor farmers. These farmers mostly produce food for self-consumption meaning they don't have a surplus to sell. So, the question of subsidies to them distorting trade doesn't arise. Their exclusion will also reduce the AMS.

Meanwhile, the government should end the open-ended procurement and restrict purchase only to what is required for giving to the NFSA beneficiaries. It should also consider switching to ʻgiving subsidy in cash' using DBT

(The writer is a policy analyst;

Nitish's ninth move on Bihar's political chessboard

With Nitish Kumar's latest move, Bihar has witnessed a seismic shift, with ramifications extending far beyond the State's borders

¬he political chessboard of Bihar has recently witnessed a profound transformation, sending ripples across the entire nation. As the Lok Sabha elections loom on the horizon, every twist and turn in Bihar's political saga holds the potential to significantly impact the grand political finale. Nitish Kumar's latest move, switching sides for the fifth time in just over a decade and assuming the Chief Minister's role for the ninth time, has added an intriguing layer to the unfolding drama. While Nitish's political acrobatics have grabbed the spotlight, the BJP's strategic gamble in this intricate game has not gone unnoticed.

Amidst the evolving scenario, questions arise about Nitish



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

Kumar's commitment to social justice, considering his shifting allegiances and recent embrace of temple politics. The perplexity deepens as Bihar grapples with the implications of this political manoeuvre on the Mandal forces, reflecting the state's political narrow-mindedness and the weakening influence ment of the BJP's influence in of caste arithmetic. The focus now shifts to the RJD, found-

the charismatic Lalu Yadav, whose legacy seems at odds with its preparedness for the

While Nitish manages to retain power through an alliance with the expanding BJP, questions persist about his credibility, especially in comparison to the broader social coalition led by the RJD. The isolation of the RJD in Bihar and the BJP's steady progress as a formidable alternative force set the stage for a crucial message ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. The recalibration of the "social justice" agenda, impacted by Nitish's move, necessitates a reassess-

this domain. The political dynamics have ed on the accomplishments of shifted beyond the tradition-



al Mandal vs. Mandir narrative, evolving into a complex interplay of Mandal vs. Mandal and Mandir plus Mandal, with "good governance" emerging as a pivotal factor. Nitish Kumar's decision to realign with the BJP becomes a litmus test for the leadership of Tejashwi Yadav, the young successor of the RJD, who faces the challenge and maintaining the party's political standing.

As Tejashwi positions himself as a "development man," distancing from his father's rule characterized as "jungle raj," the RJD embarks on a campaign to showcase its achievements, especially in job creation. The political chess match intensifies, with Tejashwi asserting that the game has just begun, and the RJD will strategically reveal its cards in due course. The RJD's shift toward economic justice signals a new direction, expanding its support base beyond traditional vot-

The repercussions of Bihar's political upheaval reverberate nationally, drawing reactions from prominent leaders and strategic shifts have rede-

of navigating a family feud across party lines. As Bihar's political maestro, Nitish Kumar, navigates through another historic yet controversial chapter in his twodecade-long career, the political landscape awaits the settling of dust from Sunday evening's events.

In the intricate tapestry of Bihar's political narrative, Nitish Kumar's recent manoeuvre stands as a pivotal chapter, influencing not only the state's dynamics but resonating across the national political spectrum. As the dust settles on the dramatic events of Sunday evening, Bihar finds itself at a crossroads, with implications stretching far beyond its bor-

ders. The ever-evolving alliances

fined the contours of political discourse, challenging conventional narratives of Mandal, Mandir, and governance. Nitish Kumar's alliance with the BJP, marked by its expanding influence in the state, prompts a reevaluation of political equations and the potential impact on the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Tejashwi Yadav, stepping into the limelight as the face of the RJD, navigates the party through the challenges of a family feud, asserting a commitment to economic justice and development. The RJD's attempt to redefine its image, distancing from the perceived shortcomings of the past, sets the stage for a renewed

political strategy. As Bihar becomes a battleground of ideologies, the reactions from national leaders underscore the significance of these developments. The shift from social justice to economic justice, coupled with the evolving political landscape, necessitates a recalibration of strategies for all stakeholders. In the end, Bihar's political

arena remains unpredictable, with each move sparking debates and reflections on the past, present, and future of the state's political trajectory. As the nation watches the unfolding drama, the impli-cations of Bihar's political metamorphosis will continue to resonate, shaping the contours of Indian politics in the days to come.

(The writer is a senior journalist; views are personal) the pioneer

Imran, wife sentenced to 14 years in prison

Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi were sentenced on Wednesday to 14 years of rigorous imprisonment each in a corruption case, a day after the beleaguered leader was given a 10-year jail term for leaking state secrets.

The verdict by an accountability court, which comes eight days before the February 8 general elections, has added to the legal woes of the 71-yearold cricketer-turned-politician's bid to return to power. Khan is already serving a three-year jail term after being convicted of corruption in a separate Toshakhana case on August 5

Khan's party, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI) faced numerous troubles before the election starting with the denial of its election symbol, the cricket bat, to the rejection of nomination papers of Khan, former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and several other party leaders. Accountability Court Judge Mohammad Bashir conducted the hearing at Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail, where Khan is incarcerated.

In the Toshakhana corruption case, he was accused of retaining expensive state gifts they received during his tenure as Pakistan's premier from 2018-2022. Khan and his wife were also barred from holding any public office for 10 years and slapped with a fine of Rs 787 million each. Bushra Bibi, 49, did not appear before the court on Wednesday.
At the outset of the hear-

ing, Judge Bashir asked Khan if he recorded his statement. To this, the former premier said that he would submit his statement once his lawyers came. "I have been deceived as I was only called to mark my attendance for the hearing," Khan said. Following the verdict, Bushra Bibi arrived at the Adiala jail and surrendered before the authorities.

"Why are you in a hurry? Even yesterday, the conviction was announced in haste," the ex-prime minister said, referring to the verdict in the cipher case a day earlier. "My lawyers are not here yet. I will submit the statement after showing it to them when they come,"



Imran said, adding that he had appeared before the court only to mark his attendance.

He then exited the courtroom, after which the court sentenced the ex-premier and his wife in absentia. Khan won the election in 2018 on a ticket of anti-corruption, but has been embroiled in political controversy and alleged corruption cases since he was dramatically ousted in a parliamentary no-confidence vote in April 2022. Reacting to the verdict, PTI's current chief Gohar Khan said the judgment only served to lower the respect of the judiciary. "The accused were not given time and the process was hurried to conclude the trial," he said, adding that the defence was not given the right of cross-examination. "Complete destruction of every existing law in Pakistan in 2 days. Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi have faced yet another kangaroo trial in which no right to defence was given to both. Like cipher, this case has no basis to stand in any Higher court. It's shameful how a complete disregard and mockery of law is in place," PTI said in a post on X. Separately, the PTI in a statement said that these decisions, reached in haste, cannot impact the fervour, any PTI supporter talks of, around election time.

It alleged that the star witness was changed and a witness who's a part-time worker did an evaluation of gifts by showing photos, while no cross-questioning was allowed, no final argument concluded and decision popped up like a predetermined process in play.

"This ridiculous decision will also be challenged," the

party announced. Khan's sister Aleema Khan said that the 'judicial system has buried itself" today. Last month, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) filed a fresh case against the two in an accountability court for retaining a jewellery set which included necklaces, earrings, bracelets and a ring worth Rs 1.57 billion received from the Saudi crown prince against undervalued assessment. Khan and Bushra had only paid Rs 9 million and had fixed the price of the jewellery set through a private firm, reports said. The sentence comes just a day after a special court established under the Official Secrets Act sentenced Khan and Qureshi to 10 years

ed from power in 2022. Previously, Khan was convicted in the Toshakhana case on August 5, and sentenced to three years' imprisonment. The revious Toshakhana case was filed by the Election Commission of Pakistan in the charges of hiring the sale of state gifts. According to reports, Khan and his wife received 108 gifts from various heads of state, out of which they kept 58 gifts. They were also undervalued by them while paying a mandatory price to the state.

in prison for the breach of state

secrets. The latest conviction

and sentencing are Khan's third

since 2022 when he was oust-

Under the rules governing Toshakhana - a Persian word meaning "treasure house" government officials can keep gifts by paying a price for them but first the gift should be deposited. The two either failed to deposit the gift or got it for a low price by allegedly using their authority.

Court reserves verdict in Imran Khan & wife's marriage case

PTI ISLAMABAD

A Pakistani high court on Wednesday reserved its verdict on a petition seeking the dismissal of a case challenging the 'un-Islamic' marriage of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan to his third wife, Bushra Bibi. The Islamabad High Court (IHC) Chief Justice Aamer Farooq heard the case filed by Bibi's ex-husband, Khawar Maneka, in November last year, The Express Tribune newspaper

It sought legal action against 71-year-old Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party supremo Khan for marrying his present wife while she was reportedly on iddat period. The iddat period (three months) is a waiting period that a Muslim woman must observe on account of the death of her husband or the dissolution of the marriage.

During the hearing on Wednesday, PTI party lawyer Salman Akram Raja said that the case was only aimed at humiliating the petitioners, highlighting that the com-plaint against Khan's marriage was filed five years and 11 months after the nikkah in November 2023. The counsel for Maneka told the court that witnesses had testified in the trial court that Bibi was in another marriage with Imran at the time of their marriage ceremony, the report said Following arguments by the counsels of both parties, the court reserved a verdict on the case, it said.

Earlier this month, a trial

court indicted Khan and Bibi in the marriage case. Bibi, 49 hails from a family of landowners in Punjab. Her first marriage, which lasted about 30 years, was to Maneka, who is from a politically influential Punjab family. Earlier in the day, an accountability court sentenced the former prime minister and his wife, Bibi, to 14 years of rigorous imprisonment in a corruption case. In the Toshakhana corruption case, the jailed PTI founder was accused of retaining expensive state gifts they received during his tenure as Pakistan's premier.

EU leaders exhort allies to do more for Ukraine

The leaders of five European Union countries urged their neighbours and allies Wednesday to ramp up military support for Ukraine, while the bloc's defence ministers debated ways to help meet the war-ravaged country's ammunition shortfall. In their appeal, the leaders of the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Germany and the Netherlands warned that Europe's security is tied to the fighting that started almost two years ago with Russia's invasion of its neighbour.

"Our ability to continue to support and sustain Ukraine's defense, both during the winter and in the longer term, is decisive," they wrote in the Financial Times newspaper. "In fact, it is a matter of our common European security." With neither Russian nor Ukrainian troops demonstrating an advantage in the drawnout conflict, fears are growing

Ukraine's war effort is waning. EU and NATO leaders, who are among Ukraine's main backers, have shifted from praising the country's battlefield gains to celebrating its ability to survive against a more powerful enemy.

The prospect of Donald Trump returning to the White House after the US presidential election in November is also driving leaders and military officers to demand that Europe must do more to defend itself. During his last term, Trump undermined confidence among NATO allies that the US would back them in a security crisis.

In the Financial Times, the five leaders said it was vital to speed up arms deliveries up given that the war was unlikey to end soon. "Russia doesn't wait for anybody, and we need to act now. If Ukraine loses, the long-term consequences and costs will be much higher for all of us," they wrote. "We Europeans have a special responsibility. Therefore, we depends on it."

According to EU estimates, Ukraine was firing around 4,000 to 7,000 artillery shells each day last summer, while Russia was launching more than 20,000 shells a day in its neighbour's territory. Russia's arms industry far outweighs Ukraine's, and Kyiv has relied on Western help to match Moscow's firepower.
Yet the 27-nation EU's

plans to produce 1 million artillery rounds for Ukraine have fallen short, with only about a third of the target met. Senior EU officials have said they now expect the European defence industry to be capable of producing around 1 million shells annually by the end of this year. But the shells will not arrive quickly. NATO's procurement agency said last week that delivery of ammunition orders can take anywhere from 24 to 36 months. Even the five leaders conceded that deliver-

Russian lawmakers approve bill to confiscate assets of people who 'discredit' army

Moscow (AP): The lower house of Russian parliament on Wednesday approved a bill that would allow the confiscation of money, valuables and other assets from those convicted on charges of spreading "deliberately false information" about the country's military. The State Duma swiftly voted to approve the bill, which is now expected to quickly sail through the upper house and be signed by President Vladimir Putin.

Duma speaker Vyacheslav Volodin has said that the new law would apply to people who are convicted of publicly inciting "extremist activities" or calling for actions that would hurt the security of the state, as well as "discrediting" the armed forces. Discrediting the armed forces is a criminal offense under a law adopted as part of a sweeping government crackdown on dissent after Moscow sent troops into Ukraine in February 2022. "Everyone who tries to destroy Russia, who betrays it, must suffer the deserved punishment and pay compensation for the damage inflicted on the country, at the cost of their property," Volodin said. The proposed law does not appear to include real estate among the assets that can be seized. The existing law against "discrediting" the Russian military, which covers offenses such as "justifying terrorism" and spreading "fake news" about the armed forces, has been used extensively to silence Putin's critics.

RUSSIA SAYS IT HAS SWAPPED 195 POWS WITH UKRAINE

Ministry says Russia and Ukraine have exchanged 195 prisoners of war each. The Russian Defence Ministry said the swap was conducted on Wednesday. The announcement came a week after Russia alleged that Ukrainian forces shot down a military transport plane carrying Ukrainian prisoners of war who were to be swapped for Russian POWs. The Defence Ministry said that missiles fired from across the border brought down the transport plane in Russia's Belgorod

Hungary opposes billions in new EU aid for Ukraine

European Union leaders at a Summit on Thursday will focus on the one member state blocking a 50-billion-euro (USD 54 billion) war support package for Ukraine: Hungary, the country in the bloc with the closest ties to Russia. Almost two years after Russian President Vladimir Putin launched the invasion of Ukraine, the war has ground to a virtual stalemate and Ukraine desperately needs financial

"Securing agreement is vital for our credibility, and not least for our commitment to provide steadfast support to Ukraine," EU Council president Charles Michel said in his invitation letter to leaders of the 27member bloc. The aid requires unanimous support. But Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban vetoed it at a previous summit in December and continues to oppose it. "In December, we still had

a little time. But from March onwards, Ukraine will start

according to international financial institutions," a senior EU diplomat warned ahead of the meeting in Brussels. The official spoke on condition of anonymity in accordance with EU practices. For most EU countries, helping Ukraine is crucial to protect the bloc from Russia's threats and maintain its credibility on the global stage.

"Ukraine is on European soil. It is a European country. And if we want a peaceful and stable Europe, we need to be credible in terms of our own security and defense vis-à-vis all our neighbours," French president Emmanuel Macron said. Orban has repeatedly angered EU leaders since Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022. He criticised EU sanctions on Russia as being largely ineffective and counter-productive. He pushed for peace talks between Moscow and Kyiv, though he hasn't detailed what that might mean for Ukraine's territorial integrity.

At the previous EU summit, however, Orban did not

membership negotiations with Ukraine. Concerned about democratic backsliding by Orban's government, the EU has frozen Hungary's access to tens of billions of euros in funds. Hungary, with its own economic concerns, has responded by vetoing some EU political decisions. Instead of unlocking the

prevent the EU from starting

new aid for Ukraine, Orban has proposed to split it into annual tranches and introduce a review mechanism. But that idea has not been well received because it would allow Orban to block the money later.

If the stalemate remains, it will not mean that Ukraine will suddenly be deprived of EU assistance. The EU diplomat said leaders will make sure it won't impact Ukraine in the short term. The 26 other countries could decide, on a voluntary basis, to decouple the aid from the EU budget. But it's not their favourite option since it would require approval from several national parliaments, creating more uncertainty.

Kyiv (AP): Russia's Defence

region on January 24.

Chinese rocket scientist expelled from advisory body

Beijing (PTI): China's national political advisory body has expelled a prominent Chinese rocket scientist from its Standing Committee for corruption, as the People's Liberation Army continues the purge of its missile force previously headed by the dismissed defence minister Gen. Li Shangfu. The decision to expel Wang Xiaojun from the 14th Standing Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) was taken at its meeting here on Monday, state-run

Xinhua news agency reported. The Standing Committee is composed of a core group of senior members. Wang is formally expected to be expelled from the CPPCC during its annual session here next month as the Standing Committee doesn't have the power to do so. Wang's expulsion is considered significant as he led the development of the Long March 7 rockets used to carry essential supplies to China's under-construction space station called Tiangong, as well as launching satellites. Besides being the leading rocket scientist, Wang also led the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology, a premier research body. His expulsion followed the

government's probe into allegations of corruption against the top officials of the Chinese military's key wing, the People's Liberation Army Rocket Force. İt adds to the mystery of last

month's major purge of the Chinese military in which nine senior generals of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), including senior officials of the country's Rocket Force, were dismissed from China's Parliament— the National People's Congress, (NPC). The Force, which handles the PLA's missiles division, was previously headed by former Defence Minister Gen. Li Shangfu, who was summarily dismissed last year on the charges of corruption. The dismissal of Li, whose whereabouts are not known yet, came after that of Foreign Minister Qin Gang, who

China defends President Xi accepting Af Taliban envoy's diplomatic credentials

PTI BEIJING

China on Wednesday defended its President Xi Jinping receiving the credentials from the official of the Taliban-headed interim government in Afghanistan, saying that it is a "normal diplomatic arrangement" and urged the international community not to exclude the Afghan militant group even though it is yet to respond to global concerns.

Xi on Tuesday received

the credentials of ambassadors from several countries, including from Bilal Karimi, the Taliban-appointed Afghan ambassador in what was termed the first diplomatic recognition of the Taliban government in Kabul, which is vet to get official recognition internationally. "It's a normal diplomatic arrangement for China to receive the new ambassador to China sent by the Afghan interim government and for him to present his credentials to the Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a media briefing here on Wednesday. When asked to state clearly if the move amounts to recognition of the Taliban government, he said, "You asked whether China officially recognises the Afghan interim government? I would like to say that China believes that Áfghanistan should not be excluded from the international community." China is committed to a

foreign policy of friendship towards all Afghan people and has maintained diplomatic ties and exchange and cooperation in various areas with Afghanistan, Wang said.

"We hope that the international community will step up engagement and exchange with the Afghan interim government, encourage it to actively respond to international concerns, jointly help with Afghanistan's reconstruction and development, and supcombat violent terrorist forces and contribute to regional peace, stability and prosperity," he said. Without referring to the global concerns over the Taliban's ban on women's education and work and its disinclination to share power with other political groups in the war-torn country, Wang said China hopes Afghanistan will further respond to the expectations of the international community.

Meanwhile, Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban's chief spokesperson, on Tuesday said, "China has understood what the rest of the world has not."

'We are not in a unipolar world," he posted on X, while calling on Russia, Iran and other countries to take similar steps and upgrade bilateral diplomatic relations with Kabul. According to the state-run Xinhua news agency, Xi told the new ambassadors that China is seeking deep friendship and

port Afghanistan's effort to mutually beneficial cooperation with their countries. Matthew Miller, spokesperson for the US State Department, said whether Beijing has officially recognised the Taliban regime is for Chinese officials to clarify. "I have seen some com-

ments from them to the contrary," Miller told Voice of America (VOA) on Tuesday. For the US, Miller said, the Taliban's relationship with the international community depends on their actions. "China may be getting ready to break ranks and take the final technical step either within the UN system or outside of it through a bilateral initiative," Omar Samad, a former Afghan ambassador was quoted as saying by VOA. China along with Pakistan and Russia maintained its embassy in Kabul after the Taliban took control of Afghanistan in August 2021, following the withdrawal of American troops from the

UN's top court is ruling in a case in which Ukraine accuses Russia of backing terrorists The Hague (AP): The United

Nations' top court is ruling on Wednesday in a case in which Ukraine accuses Russia of bankrolling rebels in 2014 and discriminating against Crimea's multiethnic community since its annexation of the region. It is the first of two decisions by the International Court of Justice linked to the decadelong conflict between Russia and Ukraine that exploded into a full-blown war nearly two years

Wednesday's legally binding final ruling comes in a case filed in 2017, accusing Moscow of breaching conventions against discrimination and the financing of terrorism. Kyiv wants the court to order Moscow to pay reparations for attacks and crimes in eastern Ukraine, including the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17, which was shot down by Russia-backed rebels on July 17, 2014, killing all 298 passen-

year, a lawyer for Ukraine, David Zionts, said that pro-Russia forces in eastern Ukraine "attacked civilians as part of a campaign of intimidation and terror. Russian money and weapons fuelled this campaign." Among the attacks was the downing of MH17. A Dutch domestic court convicted two Russians and a pro-Moscow Ukrainian in November 2022 for their roles in attack and sentenced them in their absence to life imprisonment. Also, the Netherlands and Ukraine are suing Moscow at the European Court of Human Rights over MH17. Russia denies involvement.

Another lawyer for Ukraine, Harold Koh, said that in Crimea, Russia "sought to replace the multiethnic community that had characterised Crimea before Russia's intervention with discriminatory Russian nationalism."

Billionaire Sultan Ibrahim sworn in as Malaysia's 17th king

AP ■ KUALA LUMPUR

The billionaire sultan who ■ rules Malaysia's Johor state was sworn in as the nation's new king on Wednesday under a unique rotating monarchy system. Sultan Ibrahim Iskandar, 65, took his oath of office at the palace and signed the instrument of the proclamation of office in a ceremony witnessed by other royal families, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and Cabinet members. A coronation ceremony will be held later.

One of the richest men in the country, Sultan Ibrahim has an extensive business empire ranging from real estate to telecoms and power plants. The candid monarch has close ties with Anwar and his rule

government, which faces a strong Islamic opposition. Nine ethnic Malay state rulers have taken turns as king for five-year terms under the world's only such system since Malaysia gained independence from Britain in 1957. Malaysia has 13 states but only nine have royal families, some that trace their roots to centuries-old Malay kingdoms that were independent states until they were brought together by the British. Sultan Ibrahim's election to

could bolster Anwar's unity

the national throne by his fellow rulers in October was widely expected based on an established rotation order. Sultan Nazrin, the ruler of Perak state and next in line to the throne, was reelected as

Known as the Yang Di-

Pertuan Agong, or He Who is Made Lord, the king plays a largely ceremonial role, as administrative power is vested in the prime minister and Parliament. The monarch is the nominal head of the government and armed forces, and is highly regarded as the protector of Islam and Malay tradition. All laws, Cabinet appointments and the dissolution of Parliament for general elections require his assent. The king has the power to proclaim an emergency and pardon criminals.

Sultan Ibrahim succeeded Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah of Pahang state, who presided over a tumultuous period that included COVID-



instability. The political influence of the king has grown in recent years. Sultan Abdullah intervened in the past to decide who became prime minister, including naming Anwar as prime minister after 2022 general elections led to a hung parliament. Sultan Ibrahim ĥas indicated he will maintain a hands-on approach. He said in a media interview last month that he would not want to waste five years on the throne as a "puppet king" but will focus on fighting graft and deepening unity in the country. The sultan and other rulers have also warned against attempts by the opposition to oust Anwar's government, calling instead for political

19 lockdowns and political

IBRAHIM? Sultan Ibrahim, whose

mother is English, is also vocal about welfare issues and takes annual road trips on his motorbike to meet the people in his state. He has also made no secret of his wealth. Earlier Wednesday, the sultan flew from Johor to Kuala Lumpur on his private jet, a gold -andblue Boeing 737. Apart from a fleet of jets, he has an extensive collection of cars and motorcycles, as well as properties abroad. Sultan Ibrahim is also the only ruler with a private army - a condition agreed upon for the state to join modern-day Malaysia. Sultan Ibrahim's high corporate profile — including a stake in the multibillion-dollar Forest City

development project in Johor with China's beleaguered developer Country Garden — has raised eyebrows amid concerns of a possible conflict of interest. He has said in the media interview recently that he plans to revive a high-speed rail link project with Singapore and bolster the troubled Forest City project. But the sultan has defend-

ed his business dealings. In 2015, he quipped that he has to "earn a living, like ordinary Malaysians" as he cannot rely on his 27,000 ringgit (\$5,700) monthly state allowance. His wife Raja Zarith Sofiah, who is from another royal family, is an Oxford graduate and a prolific writer who has authored several children's books. They have five sons and a daughter.

Blame game erupts between Maldives ruling, oppn parties

Hours after the Prosecutor General of Maldives was attacked by unidentified persons on Monday, a blame game has erupted between the ruling and the opposition parties that called the attack "politically motivated," according to local media and social media reports. "Prosecutor General Hussain Shameem was attacked on a street in Male City. He is receiving treatment for his injuries at the ADK Hospital," Sun.mv, a news portal, said.

Former Maldivian president Ibrahim Mohamed Solih described the attack as "politically motivated," prompting the Home Minister Ali Ihusan to ask him to share information to back his claim. In a post on X, Solih, also the interim leader of the largest opposition outfit, the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), said: "Politically motivated acts of violence have no

place in a democratic society ing this case as top priority and and I call on the government to be swift in bringing the perpetrators to justice."

Home Minister Ali Ihusan asked Solih to share information to back his claim that the violent attack on Prosecutor General Shameem was politically motivated. Responding to Solih's post on X from his official designation's handle of Minister of Homeland Security and Technology, Ihusan said, "Maldives police (@PoliceMv) is currently investigating this case. Former President declaring that the attack was 'politically motivated' suggests that former President has credible information about motive and people behind this attack."

"I would like to request former President to please share the credible information referred here with the Police immediately. I have asked investigators to coordinate with former Presidents office in this regard. Police is treat-

will bring perpetrators to justice," he said.

Meanwhile, condemning the attack on Shameem, the MDP said in a statement: 'The alleged close ties between top government officials and criminal gangs were resulting in open violent assaults on top state officials." The MDP accused President Muizzu's administration of failing to provide proper protection to officials charged with fulfilling constitutional duties and responsibilities.

'This party also notes that after having successfully driven down violent assaults in the Maldives during the former administration, such crimes have increased after President Muizzu took office," the portal reported, quoting the MDP statement.

Muizzu, considered to be close to China, defeated Indiafriendly incumbent Ibrahim Mohamed Solih in the presidential runoff held in

party believes that such fearless attacks on top state officials are a result of the close ties that top government officials have with criminal groups operating in the Maldives, and because of the protection the government provides these criminal groups," the opposition party

The MDP also called on the government "to sever its alleged ties with criminal groups," and to run a proper investigation into the attack on Shameem and bring the perpetrators to justice. The Prosecutor General's

Office (PGO) said in a statement that Shameem was attacked with a weapon by two people on a motorbike. "While neither the PGO nor the police have specified the type of weapon used, a police spokesperson had said earlier that they had ruled out the use of a sharp-edged weapon," the news portal said.

EU aims to launch Red Sea naval mission within 3 weeks

AP BRUSSELS

The European Union plans to launch a naval mission in the Red Sea within three weeks to help defend cargo ships against attacks by Houthi rebels in Yemen that are hampering trade and driving up prices, the bloc's top diplomat said Wednesday.

EU foreign policy chief
Josep Borrell said he wants the

mission to be up and running by February 17. Officials say that seven EU countries are ready to provide ships or planes. Belgium has already committed to send a frigate. Germany is expected to do the same. Last week, US and British forces bombed multiple targets in eight locations used by the Iranian-backed Houthis. It was the second time the two allies have conducted coordinated retaliatory strikes on the rebels' missile-launching capabilities. The Houthis have waged a persistent campaign of drone and missile attacks on commercial ships since the start of the Israel-Hamas war in October but Borrell insisted that the EU mission will not take part in any military strikes. "This is the purpose: protection of the ships. Intercepting of the attacks against the ships. Not participating in any kinds of actions against the Houthis. Only blocking the attacks of the

The ministers were expectto decide later on Wednesday which member country should lead the naval effort — France, Greece and Italy are vying for that role —

Houthis," Borrell told reporters

before chairing a meeting of

EU defence ministers in

and where the mission's head quarters should be based.

Borrell said that businesses have been demanding EU action, given the trade implications of forcing merchant ships to bypass the Red Sea on their way to and from Europe.

"Many European firms asked us to do that because their business model is suffering a lot due to the high increase in cost and having to go down to South Africa," he said, referring to the alternative route that commercial ships are taking. "It's affecting prices, it's affecting inflation. So, it's a natural endeavor for us to try to

The general public is informed that the cars with the following car numbers which have

completed their life Petrol Cars 15 Years Diesel Cars 10 Years. The MCD drive was confiscated by Pine View Technology Pvt Ltd and has not been claimed by anyone till now. All these vehicle owners are informed o come to the company's office and claim all these vehicles will be scrapped in the

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DL9SX1016,	DL4SA4252,	UP15A1515,
HR13B6068,	DL9SQ3932,	DL9SK3907,
DL9SR9186,	DL9SK9992,	DL5SU0550,
DL9CA1373,	DL9SQ2553,	UP78AP9847,
DL9CM4609,	DL9SR0306,	DNU1857,
SJ41IN167390	DL4SAW0767,	DL3SD7235,
DL1LJ8080,	DL4SF4012,	DL9SB6950,
DL7CJ0636,	DL7SH4707,	HR51M1266,
DL2CAH4903,	DND5984,	DL5SK4336,
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1812997511,	DL4CAE5144,	UP072604,
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HR26AR5410,	DL9SV1954,	DL9SJ0260,
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	DL9SX2327,	
HR25AZ6557,		UP64C1823,
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UP78AZ1702,	DL4CNE1707,	DL8SJ7085,
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US announces overhaul of its annual lottery for H-1B visas

The US has announced a major overhaul of its annual lottery for the H-1B speciality occupation visas, popular among Indian IT professionals, to curtail the potential for fraud and improve and streamline the registration system. Separately, the US on January 29 has formally launched a pilot programme to renew the much sought-after H-1B visas domestically, a move that is likely to benefit thousands of Indian tech professionals.

The H-1B visa is a nonimmigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.

Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China. The new overhauled system, among other things, includes the provision of a beneficiary-centric selection process for registrations by employers. As a result, unlike in

the past when multiple applica-tions by an individual often resulted in abuse in fraud of the system, the H-1B visa applications would now be counted and accepted based on individual applicants.

Even if one individual files multiple applications for various companies, they would be counted as one application based on their personal credentials like passport numbers.

US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) also announced a set of new rules which are aimed at strengthening the integrity of and reducing the potential for fraud in the H-1B registration This includes reducing the

potential for gaming the registration system and ensuring each beneficiary would have the same chance of being selected, regardless of the number of registrations submitted on their behalf, the federal agency said

"We're always looking for ways to bolster integrity and

curtail the potential for fraud while improving and streamlining our application processes," said USCIS Director Ur M

Jaddou.

"The improvements in these areas should make H-1B selections more equitable for petitioners and beneficiaries and will allow for the H-1B process to be fully electronic from registration, if applicable, until final decision and transmission of approved petitions to the Department of State," he said.USCIS also said the initial registration period for the fiscal 2025 H-1B cap will open at noon on March 6 and run through March 22.

During this period, prospective petitioners and their representatives, if applicable, must use a USCIS online account to register each beneficiary electronically for the selection process and pay the associated registration fee for each beneficiary.

Starting February 28, companies will be allowed to open their account which can be used to start and complete the registration process

USCIS said this final rule contains provisions that will create a beneficiary-centric selection process for registrations by employers, codify start date flexibility for certain petitions subject to the congressionally mandated H-1B cap, and add more integrity measures related to the registration process. According to USCIS, under the beneficiary-centric process, registrations will be selected by a unique beneficiary rather than by registration. This new process is designed to reduce the potential for fraud and ensure each beneficiary would have the same chance of being selected, regardless of the number of registrations submitted on their behalf by an employer, it said.

Starting with fiscal 2025, which begins on October 1, 2024, initial registration period, USCIS will require registrants to provide valid passport information or valid travel docuit determines that the fee assoment information for each ben-

The passport or travel document provided must be the one the beneficiary, if or when abroad, intends to use to enter the United States if issued an H-1B visa. Each beneficiary must only be registered under one passport or travel document, it

USCIS is also clarifying requirements regarding the requested employment start date on certain petitions subject to the congressionally mandated H-1B cap to permit filing with requested start dates that are after October 1 of the relevant fiscal year, consistent with current policy. Also, the H-1B final rule codifies USCIS' ability to deny or revoke H-1B petitions where the underlying registration contained a false attestation or was otherwise invalid. Also under the new rule, USCIS may deny or revoke the approval of an H-1B petition if ciated with the registration is declined, not reconciled, disputed, or otherwise invalid after submission, it said. In a statement, American

Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) Director of Government Relations Sharvari Dalal-Dheini said the Relations new H-1B registration process will revise how lottery registration is run and create a more equitable system.

"After last year's registration period, when more than 750,000 registrations were submitted for 85,000 visas, it was clear that the existing system was unworkable. AĬLÁ and our partners advocated for exactly the sort of changes announced in this rule; beneficiary-centric lottery process to level the playing field," she said. "It is commendable that DHS took steps to shift from a flawed model to one that will create a fairer system in time for this year's registration period," Dalal-Dheini

changes that will ensure a

Meanwhile, the pilot programme to renew the much sought-after H-1B foreign work visas domestically will allow H-1B visa holders who are currently in status to renew their visas in the US before a temporary trip abroad. An announcement in this regard was made during the historic State visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June last

CORRIGENDUM

Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh.

under SARFAESI Act for Loan LBPNP00004952659, LBNOD00005332938, LBPNP00004952664 Name of the Borrower Rajeev Ahuja/ Rekha Rani/Versha Rani property HOUSE NO 231 EWS, MEASURING 51.25 SQ YARD, SITUATED IN HOUSING BOARD COLONY PANIPAT WITHIN THE LIMIT OF M.C.ABADI KNOWN AS WEAVERS COLONY TEHSILAND DISTRICT PANIPAT HARYANA and 13.2 dispatch date is May 09th , 2023, were published as Demand Notice under section 13(2) dated May 03rd, 2023 & Symbolic notice under 13(4) dated November 06, 2023 and same was also published in The Pioneer + Uttam Hindu 13(2) notice publication dated July 12, 2023 & 13(4) notice publication dated November 09,2023 respectively. We wish to mention that inadvertently and unintentionally a respectively. We wish to mention that madvertently and unintentionally a typographical error has occurred in the said notices and address mentioned as, PART OF HOUSE NO 842, WARD NO 7, INSIDE MC LIMITS PANIPAT HARYANA, measuring area 31 Sq Yard AND 13.2 Dispatch date mentioned in publication as May 03rd 2023. We therefore, request you to please read the HOUSE NO 231 EWS MEASURING 51.25 SQ YARD, SITUATED IN HOUSING BOARD COLONY PANIPAT WITHIN THE LIMIT OF M.C. ABADI KNOWN AS WEAVERS COLONY TEHSIL AND DISTRICT PANIPAT HARYANA and 13.2 dispatch date is May 09th, 2023.

Date : February 01, 2024

bid documents in the portal:-

in the portal:-

ate: 01.02.2024

Last Date/Time for receipt of bids

10k Indian construction workers to reach Israel



PTI ■ JERUSALEM

With Israel's construction sector suffering a severe manpower crisis post the October 7 conflict with Hamas, some 10,000 workers from India are to make their way here starting next week, industry sources said on Wednesday. These 10,000 workers will reach in batches of 700 to 1,000 a week, a source in the Israel's Builders Association (IBA) told PTI

With Israel's latest conflict with Hamas in Gaza a little short of four months, and a ban on the entry of Palestinian workers and the departure of several thousand other foreign workers, the Israeli construction industry has been facing a deep crisis and several ongoing projects are getting either stalled or delayed.

Following the conflict, Israel has banned the entry of Palestinian workers. The departure of several thousand other foreign workers, the Israeli construction industry has been facing a deep crisis.

Israeli business daily The Calcalist in a report in Hebrew last week said that the quota of foreign manpower for the construction industry has been increased from 30,000 to 50,000 and that the Israeli government last month approved the arrival of 10,000 workers from India. The IBA source confirmed to PTI that the details in the Calcalist report

were correct. When asked about the arrival of the first batch of workers, the source said, "We hope they'll come next week."

The workers to arrive in Israel would be part of the private recruitment track, which was approved by the government in parallel with the bilateral (inter-governmental) track to enable rapid recruitment of workers into the construction industry.

The IBA is looking to hire workers also from other countries such as Mexico, Kenya and Malawi. Screening of workers is said to have begun three weeks ago in India, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan. "To date, out of about 8,000 workers examined, about 5,500 have been found suitable for work in Israel - the vast majority Indian," The Calcalist had reported.

"The Indian construction workers are at a high professional level. Many of them were previously employed in the Gulf countries, so these are skilled manpower. Most of them are fluent in English, and those who have worked in the Gulf also know Arabic, which is a great advantage," an industry source was quoted by the business daily as saying.

The selection process is led by IBA's CEO Igal Slovik and Izchak Gurvitz, who heads the association's division dealing with workers' issues and the selection team.

My Client Sh. Manish Juneja S/o Sh. Prithvi Raj Juncja, R/o A – 1/73A, Maa Shakti Apartment, Near Maa Kali Mata Mandir, Paschim Vihar, West Delhi – 110063 do hereby declare that the companies namely (i) Juneja & Bhel Trading (OPC) Pvt. Ltd., (ii) ZIRPHIMATIC traders Pvt. Ltd., (iii) Shum – Star Globewell Business Solutions Pvt. Ltd., are not belongs to my client as some people on the pretext of job take his sign on some unknown papers and make

Piyush Sharma (Advocate) (D/1395/2021) Chamber No.-F-611, Karkardooma Courts, Dclhi-32

THE PIONEER ()

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Mudit Bhardwaj S/o Shri

Satish Kumar Sharma R/o

B-63, Manas Apartment,

Mayur Vihar, Phase-1

Extension, Delhi-110091.

have changed my name

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some people on the pretext of job take his sign on some unknown papers and make him director of the companies. He is not responsible for the acts of the said companies.

Piyush Sharma (Advocate)

e-TENDER CALL NOTICE No.-EM/WSD-II/Sweeping Machine/02/2023/ Date: 29.01.2024 e-TCN No. EM/WS- /2024 Name of the work "Hiring of 01 no. of Truck Mounted Conveyorised Mechanical Road

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY

Sweeping Machine for a period of **Rs.6,61,00,020/-** excluding GST and cost of Diesel. Last date & time of submission of bid: dt. 19.02.2024 up to 18:00 Hrs. Refer our website for details

https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app. Sd/- Executive Engineer (M) Workshop Division-II **Paradip Port Authority**

PUBLIC NOTICE
To be known to all, SH. GULSHAN GANDHI S/o LATE SH.
B.S. GANDHI & SMT. MERNI GANDHI W/O SH. GULSHAN
GANDHI both R/o BG-7/136, PASCHIM VIHAR, NEW
DELHH-110063 allottee/co-allottee of PROPERIY NO.
157, BLOCK-C, POCKET-3, SECTOR-36, ROHINI, DELHI,
have applied for certified copies conversion from
leasehold to freehold in DDA. The original documents i.e.
Demand Cum Allotment Letter, Possession Letter, Site
Possession Sip & other Relevant Documents of the
above said property have been lost. An E.IR. R/CR/LR
No.1392475/2024 dated 30/01/2024 to this effect has
been ledged in P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi.
Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any
cobjection or found in possession of original documents,
may write/contact with above named person at above

Address/Phone No. 9650544898 within 15 days fro Address/Phote No. 900094698 Within 13 days in the date of publication of this notice. The person claimin any right, interest, objection with respect to this proper can personally inform or write to Deputy Director (LAI onally inform or write to Deputy Director (LAF Rohini, Delhi Develonment Authority Vikas Sadan, Nes Naveen Aggarwal (Advocate)

Ch.No. M-7, Near SBI, Western Wing, Tis Hazari Court, Delhi-54 81/2023-2024 कार्यालय नगर निगम, हरिद्वार त्रांक:- 503/सै०सै०/2023-24 पुनः **ई-निविदा सूचना**

नगर निगम हरिद्वार द्वारा स्वच्छता सर्वेक्षण-2024 हेतु परामर्श सहायता एवं अन्य समस्त कार्य फर्म के माध्यम से कराये जाने हेतु www.uktenders.gov.in पर ई—निविदा आमंत्रित की

S. No.	Scheduled/Information	Date	Time
1	Date of Online publication	01.02.2024	01:00 PM
2	Document Online Download start Date	01.02.2024	01:00 PN
3	Bid submission Online Start Date	01.02.2024	02:00 PM
	Bid Submission Online End Date	09.02.2024	
5	Offline Submission of Hard/Original copy of Document End date	09.02.2024	03:00 PM
6	Bid opening Date	09.02.2024	04:00 PN
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verka

Name of Work/Item For Verka Mohali Dairy Polyfilm/Polyliner scrap.

Disposal of other Unserviceable material lying in mair For Verka Chandigarh Dairy Manual Tenders:-Lids for Ice Cream cups (65ml & 80 ml) 12 lac 8 lac Lids for Ice Cream cones (125ml) Annual/ Chikki Krisp Refined Palm kernel Oil 11,500 kg 35 MT Mango Pulp- Concentrate lce Cream Cones with foil wrappers(125ml)(Butterscotch, Chocolate & Cookie delight) Labour contract for providing of unskilled, semi skilled, skilled highly skilled and suitable/eligible personnel for different posts Annual through outsourcing.

For Verka Bathinda Dairy

Operation, Repair and Maintenance of Pouch filling Machines, Tray Annual 35000 ltr. to 70000 Operation, values washer.

For Verka Ludhiana Dairy
a) Outsourcing the activity for Housekeeping and Horticulture appro.ltr per day Annual a) Outsourcing the activity for Housekeeping and Horticulture work.
b) Supply, Installation and Commissioning of:

• GLC Machine

• RP-HPLC Machine.

For Verka Amritsar Dairy

Hiring of can route vehicles for lifting of milk from DCS to MCC (Capacity: 1 ton & above 2 ton).

For Verka Jalandhar Dairy

Providing Un-skilled, Semi- skilled, Skilled, Highly skilled labour through service provider who is having EPF/ESI no. and labour providing License. One time purchase 01 No. 01 No. Annual/ 53 No's

1. For complete details regarding above tender (NIT), please visit our website i.e. www.verka.coop & e Tendering portal i.e. eproc.punjab.gov.in.
2. Corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only.

Dy. General Manager (Purchase)

Uttarakhand PEYJAL NIGAM, 11-MOHINI ROAD, DEHRADUI Off. Ph.: 2678078, 2672404 | Fax: 0135-2672337 E-mail: upsvnn@gmail.com Letter No. 49 / Nivida / 27

E-Tender Notice Name of Scheme Cost of Work Period (in (Rs. in Lakhs) (Including GST Construction of Proposed Type-2 Qtr For Fire Station, SIDCULAt Haridwar 249.10 (Uttarakhand) Construction of Proposed Type-2 Qtr 334.76 For Fire Station, Mayapur At Haridwa Uttarakhand) Name and Address of Officer General Manager (Admin), Inviting the Bid :-Head Office, Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam, Dehradun. Date and Time of Availability of 01.02.2024 - 12:00 Hrs.

btained from the website urther details can be seen from the e-procurement porta https://uktenders.gov.in" General Manager (Admin)

19.02.2024 - 17:00 Hrs.

MOULIN COMMERCIAL LIMITED Regd Office: 1, Anand Gram, Aya Nagar, Mehrauli, Gurgaon Road, New Delhi-110047

Company's website: www.moulin.co.in Extract of Statement of Unaudited Financial Results for the Quarter ended December 31, 2023				
S. No	Particulars	Quarter ended 31.12.2023 (Unaudited)	Nine months ended 31.12.2023 (Unaudited)	Quarter ended 31.12.2022 (Unaudited
1	Total income from operations (net)	29.59	86.30	21.8
2	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	12.50	27.84	6.2
•	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	12.50	27.84	6.2
4	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	9.13	20.34	4.7
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax)	40.07		
c	and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	10.37 57.30	20.34 57.30	4.7 57.3
6 7	Equity Share Capital Earnings Per Share (of ₹ 10/- each) (Not annualised)	57.30	57.30	57.3
	Basic:	1.81	3.55	0.8
	Diluted :	1.81	3.55	0.8

The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarter ended 31.12.2023 Un-audited Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarter ended 31.12.2023 Un-audited Financial Results are available on the website of the Stock Exchangi and of the listed entity, i.e., www.moulin.co.in.

Un-Audited Financial Results for the quarter ended 31st December, 2023 were reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors of the Company at their respective

Ashish Gupta Managing Director DIN: 00115090

DL3SAS7796 DL5SP4289, DL3CV3973, .4SAR0122, | MH31AV6838, L3SAF7655, DL9SV0442, DL4SAS2458, 3L09C36380. HR26AE4794 IN6713, L6SV8592, NOREG95, L5SR7827 H03X1844, DL4SNA0503 L9SV0497 L6SAA1810. DL4SNB1593 L2CAF8842 L5SD2291, DL4CAQ5175 L9SS2358. AS1T1126. L6SQ7653, L2SL3524. HR10H9552 UP85P4385 L4SAL3433 L9SR0961, JH02C5504. L9SR6278, DL9SK1316, DL9SJ9234, DL4SAZ1427, L9ST9242, HR51C8679 L9SL9699, DL8CZ8869, | DL9SU8435, UP32AB9261 L4CNA2284, DL4SAR871 L10CC1105. DL9SV9759. L9SX1916. MA3EYD81- DL1LY9863, DL8SNB1498 L7CN8522. DL9CB4993. L1SQ4460, UP17C8759, CJ500D4D-D04035. JB6J61295, L4CS1445. DL8CG8047 DL10CC2520 DL1SN2234, DL4SAS1446, DL4CNC3010 DL8SQ0316, IR30D8449, L4SAM9666. DL6SQ9948. L9SR4998. Details of subsequent addendum/corrigendum/cancellation etc. may be DL8SAJ9820, DL3SBJ7394, L8SAJ1047, GJ1CQ7944, HR26AP6148 L6SC4066, DL8ST3584, DL3SBC1910 HVBKE63212 DL3SAY3648 L4SP3450, DL4SAR1938 L8CM9233. L9SQ8620, UP70AA5722 HR17G9841, CG07LF2808 4P20JB1431. DL9SX1052. DBW5500 L9SU3063, KA03EL1252, DL6CM5095 L9SL8505, DHV4495 IR269553. BR17A5250. L9CL4055 L10CB4299, GA06B4185 L8CZ3858. DL9SU3883. DL6CM3429. DL8CV1022, 15628109884 DL7SAC1868 HR51V1007, DL7SAE1005 DL4CA8896. JP14AN0004 L3CAJ4845, RJ14AS3883 L3SBE1141, DL9CS6728, L4CQ0048. MP07S0392, DL9CU5042, MP20KF0231, DL1CL6950, L9SU7534, HR260166, DL9SL4473, DBK254, L3SAA8350, DL9SK3106 L4SAJ0500 L4SAR4171. DL3SAT0681 L4CR3336. DL4SAS1794, DL3SK8090, L9CN9597, DL9SK2163, L4CAA8007 L4CND6374. DL9SL3684. DL4CND1404

DL2CA0811,

L1CJ5495.

R02AF8258, DL9SL8490,

L7SAK4041, DL9SQ7681

(A07E9201, DL9CQS8228

DL9SF9045, DL7CJ3521,

PB70A8828.

DL9SX2221

DK9122.

Import duty on mobile parts cut to 10 per cent

day ahead of the interim Abudget, India has slashed the import duty on spare parts, like battery cover, lens and SIM socket, used in mobile phone manufacturing to 10 per cent, from 15 per cent.

The duty cut is aimed at boosting local production and exports, as well as reducing prices in local markets.

The finance ministry on January 30, notified the cut in duty on all goods for use in manufacture of cellular mobile phones to 10 per cent.

The other components include battery cover, front, middle and back cover of phone, main lens, screw, SIM socket, or other mechanical items.

Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw in a post on X said the duty rationalisation would strengthen the mobile phone through this measure.

"Rationalization of customs duties brings much-needed certainty and clarity for the industry," Vaishnaw said. GTRI Co Founder Ajay

Srivastava said the duty cut will have no impact on improving export competitiveness of mobile phones made in India as all inputs, parts, and components used in the making of mobile phones for exports can already be imported at zero duty under various government schemes SEZ, Advance authorisation. Firms like Apple use these schemes.

"The government should watch out if the benefit of duty cuts are passed to domestic mobile phone buyers through price cuts," Srivastava said.

The Indian Cellular and Electronics Association



Nangia

Chairman Pankaj Mohindroo said this is a critical policy intervention by the government towards making mobile manufacturing competitive in India.

'Electronics have improved from the 9th position a few years ago to India's 5th largest export in 2024. Mobiles

components brought down to nil duty rate in order to promote local manufacturing. Additionally, duties on display assembly parts for LCD panels have been reduced to 10 per cent for better alignment. The government has in effect constitute over 52 per cent of slashed the import duty on electronics exports thanks to mobile components with a Production-Linked clear intention of boosting the Incentive Scheme. This is the indigenous assembly of mobile

first industry to leapfrog out of phones. This positive move is poised to facilitate level playing import substitution to exportled growth within the last 8 field to Indian companies by years," Mohindroo said.

enhancing competitiveness at the global stage, ultimately contributing

import duty on components

like battery covers, main

lenses, back covers, and other

plastic and metal mechanical

items has been decreased to 10

per cent with corresponding

inputs/ parts used in manufacturing of a few

sector," Trivedi added.

SW India Practice Leader Indirect Tax Ankur Gupta said in pursuit of becoming the world's fourth-largest cellular mobile phone exporter, India is strategically working towards curbing the import of mobile phone components as finished products. "The government is redirecting its focus towards importing raw materials to stimulate domestic manufacturing of these crucial components.

implementation Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme is a pivotal step taken by the government to manufacturers incentivize within the mobile phone industry, encouraging not only the assembly of complete devices but also the production of individual parts," Gupta

RBI bars Paytm from accepting deposits after February 29

PTI MUMBAI

The RBI on Wednesday barred Paytm Payments Bank Ltd from accepting deposits or top-ups in any customer account, prepaid instru-ments, wallets, and FASTags, among others after February 29,

The Reserve Bank's action against Paytm Payments Bank (PPBL) follows Ltd comprehensive system audit report and subsequent compliance validation report of the external auditors.

revealed These reports persistent non-compliances and continued material supervisory concerns in the bank, warranting further supervisory action, the RBI said in a statement.

allowed in any customer accounts, prepaid instruments, wallets, FASTags, NCMC cards, etc. After February 29, 2024, other than any interest, cashbacks, or refunds which may be credited anytime," it said. The central bank further said withdrawal or utilisation of balances by its customers from their accounts including savings bank accounts, current accounts, prepaid instruments, FASTags, National Common Mobility Cards are to be without any permitted restrictions, up to their available balance. The RBI in March 2022 had directed PPBL to stop

"No further deposits or credit

transactions or top ups shall be

onboarding new customers with immediate effect.



4 members of Finance Commission appointed

The government has appointed former expenditure secretary Ajay Narayan Jha and SBI Group Chief Economic Advisor Soumya Kanti Ghosh, and two other members of the newlyconstituted 16th Finance Commission.

The commission, chaired by former vice chairman of Niti Aayog Arvind Panagariya, will have 4 members, who will be assisted by Secretary Ritvik Ranjanam Pandey, two joint secretaries and one economic

Besides Jha, who was also a member in the previous 15th Finance Commission, retired bureaucrat Annie George Mathew and Artha Global Executive Director Niranjan Rajadhyaksha have been appointed as full-time appointed members of the 16th Finance Commission.

Soumya Kanti Ghosh will be a part-time member, the finance "The chairman and other members of the commission shall hold office from the date on which they respectively assume office up to the date of submission of report or

earlier," the notification added. The government constituted the commission under the chairmanship of Panagariya on December 31, 2023. The panel would submit its report to the President by October 31, 2025. The report would be covering five-year period beginning April 1, 2026.

suggesting tax devolution between the Centre and states and revenue augmentation measures, the commission would review the present arrangements for disaster management initiatives with reference to the funds constituted under the Disaster

Management Act, 2005. Finance Commission is a constitutional body that gives suggestions on centre-state financial relations.

The erstwhile 15th Finance Commission under NK Singh had recommended that states be given 41 per cent of the during five-year period 2021-22 to 2025-26, which is at the level same recommended by 14th Finance Commission under Y

India gold demand dips 3 per

PTI MUMBAI

ndia's gold demand witnessed Ion-year decline of 3 per cent at 747.5 tonnes in 2023, and going ahead the spurt in demand could be anywhere between 800-900 tonnes, if prices hold out and are not significantly volatile, the World Gold Council said in a report. The country's total gold demand stood at 774.1 tonnes in 2022, according to the World Gold Council (WGC) Gold Demand Trends report

"India's gold demand in 2023 declined by 3 per cent to 747.5 tonnes, strongly influenced by rising gold prices. Although consumer interest remained high, it lagged trade sentiment. October's price correction during Navratri stimulated a robust consumer response,

boosting Diwali sales in November.

Andersen

Associate Director- Indirect

"However, demand declined in December as gold prices resumed an upward trend, resulting in a 9 per cent drop in fourth quarter jewellery demand compared to the same period of 2022," WGC Regional CEO, India, Regional Somasundaram PR told PTI. Price of gold was volatile throughout 2023, with the yellow metal reaching a new high of Rs 61,845 per 10 gm on May 4 in the domestic market and USD 2,083 an ounce in global markets, and this trend continued with the precious metal reaching another high of Rs 61,914 per 10 grams in November 16.

Looking forward to 2024, India's gold demand should benefit from ongoing positive economic conditions and if the



prices hold out are not significantly volatile there is likely to be a big spurt in demand which could be anywhere between 800-900 tonnes, he said.

The subdued demand range of 700-800 tonnes since 2019 attributable to continuous rise in prices, increase in duties, stock market outperformance,

near-term elections spending impact and acceptance of elevated price levels, suggest the potential for a spurt in demand in the near future.

However, any short-term impediments to higher demand could arise from another round of sharp price hikes and volatility triggered

The total jewellery demand in India dropped by 6 per cent to 562.3 tonnes in 2023, compared to 600.6 tonnes in the previous year, the report

Meanwhile, the total gold investment demand in the country grew by 7 per cent to 185.2 tonnes, compared to 173.6 tonnes in the previous year, the WGC report said. Bar and coin investment in

India rebounded, growing by 7 per cent to 185 tonnes year-onvear. The fourth quarter demand touched 67 tonnes, 64 per cent above the five-vear quarterly average.

The correction in gold prices led to some robust investment responses in third and fourth supported increased interest physically backed gold ETF investors, setting total holdings

in Indian-listed products to a record 42 tonnes by year-end," Somasundaram said. He said that recycling was 20

per cent higher due to low and supportive higher prices but at 117 tonnes, could be considered the normative expected level. Total gold imported to India in 2023 was 780.7 tonnes, up by 20 per cent compared to 650.7 tonnes in 2022, according to the report. "Net gold imports surged by 20

per cent to 780.7 tonnes in 2023, primarily due to substantial inventory building by the trade. In 2024, gold imports are

likely to be higher than the demand. The various Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) India has inked with many countries are expected to boost gold imports further this year," noted Somasundaram.

ADB mobilises ₹1,250 crore through green bonds

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

¬he Asian Development Bank on Wednesday said it has garnered Rs 1,250 crore (about USD 150 million) through its largest local currency green bond issue so

The issue is structured as a 4-year currency linked bond, with a one-time repayment at maturity and carrying a fixed interest rate of 6.72 per cent per year, ADB said in a statement

The bond is denominated in Indian rupees but settled in United States dollars, with returns to investors indexed to the performance of the Indian currency, it

as masala bonds in the Indian financial community, it said.

Proceeds of the green bond will be deployed to finance ADB's private sector renewable energy and green finance projects, which adhere to ADB's priority



for tackling climate change, building climate and disaster resilience, and enhancing environmental sustainability, it

"Sustainability is a key driver for international capital markets, and ADB is long established as a regular issuer of green change projects with local currency green bonds represents the apex of our ambition, while contributing to capital market development," said ADB Treasurer Pierre Van Peteghem.

The bond is listed on the Luxembourg

Stock Exchange. It was arranged by Standard Chartered Bank and subscribed by a group of the UK and US investors. Investors were drawn to the benchmark size for a local currency bond with a green theme backed by a multilateral development bank.

ADB has been a frequent borrower in the Indian rupee bond market, debuting in the domestic bond market in 2004 and completing multiple masala bond issues since 2014 to raise more than USD 1 billion equivalent.

The latest bond offering represents ADB's return to the Indian rupee bond market after a 3-year hiatus. ADB issued its first local currency green bond in Indian

ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. Established in 1966, it is owned by 68 members-49 from the region.



India sees 46 per cent of world total real time digital transactions, says Murmu

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India has emerged as the world's second-largest producer of mobile phones and logged a five-fold increase in mobile phone manufacturing in the last decade, President Droupadi Murmu said on Wednesday, outlining the global acknowledgement of India's prowess in digital transactions

and systems. Her first address to a joint sitting of the two Houses in the new Parliament building resonated with references to the rapid expansion of the startup ecosystem, nation's AI push, speedy 5G roll-out, as well as the semiconductor sector investments.

Today, 46 per cent of the world's total real-time digital transactions take place in India, she said, adding India is among the leading digital economies globally.

"Digital India has made life and business much easier in India. Today, the whole world acknowledges this as a great achievement of India. Even developed countries do not have a digital system like India has," she said.

Murmu noted that a record 1,200 crore transactions were done through UPI last month. "This amounts to a record transaction of Rs 18 lakh crore," she said.

Further, India achieved the fastest 5G roll-out in the world, the President said, adding that the Digital Personal Data Protection Act will make the digital space more secure.

The startup ecosystem has expanded, growing from only a few hundred startups in the country to more than one lakh today.

campaigns have become our

strengths. Today, India is the

India

Bharat

"Make

Aatmanirbhar

world's second-largest producer of mobile phones. During the last decade, there has been a five-fold increase in mobile phone manufacturing," she said Highlighting India's digital clout, she said other countries

of the world are also now

providing the facility of transactions through UPI. Digital India has made banking more convenient and disbursement of loans easier. The Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile (JAM) trinity has helped curb corruption, weeding out fake beneficiaries, and Rs 2.75 lakh crore of public money was prevented from going into the wrong hands. My government has so far

transferred Rs 34 lakh crore through DBT. Thanks to Jan Dhan Aadhar Mobile (JAM), about 10 crore have been beneficiaries weeded out from the system. This has helped prevent Rs 2.75 lakh crore from going into wrong hands," the president

The facility of DigiLocker is also making life easier, she said, adding over 6 billion documents have so far been issued to its users.

Digital Health IDs of around 53 crore people have been created under Ayushman Bharat Health Account. The number of broadband

users has increased 14 times. Nearly 2 lakh village panchayats of the country have been connected with optical fiber. More than 4 lakh common service centres have been opened in villages. These have become a major source of

employment," she said.

The government has focused on building modern facilities for remote and faraway islands like Andaman-Nicobar and Lakshadweep, which had been deprived of development.

Hoteliers expect lenient tax

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hoteliers are expecting a more lenient tax structure and an increased allocation in Union Budget 2024-25, which will give a boost to the tourism industry.

Amandeep Singh Grover, General Manager of Hilton Goa is hopeful of reforms that standardize offerings within the tourism sector. involve

could streamlining processes, enhancing infrastructure, and ensuring a consistent and high-quality experience for Standardization would not only elevate the overall appeal but also position the country as a more enticing destination for travellers, ultimately driving growth and

 $B_{\text{ly 1 per cent on Wednesday on buying}}^{\text{enchmark equity indices climbed near-}}$

in HDFC Bank and Reliance Industries.

Investors are eyeing the two important events lined up ahead — the interim budget and the US Fed interest rate

Recovering all the early lost ground, the

30-share BSE Sensex jumped 612.21

points or 0.86 per cent to settle at

71,752.11. During the day, it zoomed

711.49 points or 1 per cent to 71,851.39.

per cent to 21,725.70.

The Nifty climbed 203.60 points or 0.95

Among the Sensex firms, Sun Pharma, Tata Motors, State Bank of India,

Mahindra & Mahindra, Maruti, Bajaj

Finsery, Power Grid and UltraTech

Cement were the major gainers.

decision — to derive further cues from.

PTI ■ MUMBAI

sustainability in the hospitality sector," he said.

Also, a more lenient tax structure would make hospitality services more accessible and attractive to tourists.

"Outbound tourism is rapidly picking up especially with many countries implementing 'visa-free' or 'visa-on-arrival' strategies, it is important for us to be competitive and relax taxation and make it lucrative for travellers," he added.

Shilpi Khanna, General Manager at Hyatt Centric, Juhu "Operational costs in hotels are a big challenge for us. As costs rise, people's spending power will decrease because of inflation,"

Khanna noted that the hospitality industry was the

worst-hit sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. 2023 was a good comeback year for the sector, but it still could not

cover the losses. "Our appeal government is to please look after the taxation policy of the country. We are looking for lower income tax for the

smoothness of the business,"

she said. Khanna suggested that the government should relax taxes LTAs (Leave Travel Allowances) so that travel and tourism are encouraged, which will provide a big boost to the

hotel industry. She also called for an increased budget allocation for the industry

Harkaran Singh Seth, General Manager of Radisson Blu

Larsen & Toubro declined over 4 per cent

after its December quarter earnings. Titan

also ended lower from the 30-share pack.

In Asian markets, Tokyo, Shanghai and

Hong Kong ended lower while Seoul

European markets were trading on a

mixed note. The US markets ended mostly

settled in the green.

down on Tuesday

Mumbai International Airport said, "The hotel industry is the seventh pillar of the country. There should be multiple bodies to look after the hotels for ease of business. There should be a single window for approval of our projects, for faster implementations. It will create easier ways for cash flow and contribution towards the economy.

Singh said that easier loans will create more opportunities for the industry. He emphasised on increasing the budget allocation for the sector, saying that the allocation should be increased to Rs 3,000-3,500

"Reducing LTA would help every employee for the future Domestic tourism should also increased government," Singh added. He also emphasised on a

single-window

Markets settle one per cent higher Indian markets prior to the interim budget, although expectations are low, the market anticipates a lower fiscal deficit supported by buoyant tax revenues. The overall trend in the market is akin to a seesaw, and the buy-on-dips strategy is effective as of now. Global market cues are

> said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services. Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.91 per cent to USD 82.12 a barrel.

> mixed ahead of the FOMC meeting, and

US 10-year yields were marginally down,"

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,970.52 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data. The BSE benchmark fell by 801.67 points or 1.11 per cent to settle at 71,139.90 on Tuesday. The Nifty declined 215.50 points "A positive build-up was reflected in or 0.99 per cent to 21,522.10.



Mercedes-Benz sets eyes on smaller cities

PTI NEW DELHI

carmaker erman Mercedes-Benz is looking to expand its presence in the smaller cities in India where demand for luxury models is expected to grow robustly over the next few years.

The automaker, which on Wednesday introduced new GLA and AMG GLE 53 models, plans to enhance its sales and service infrastructure in the non-metro cities to cater to the needs of the increasing number of customers.

'We are clearly seeing that there is a lot of growth happening in mini metros in India and we are now increasing customer car parc in these cities," Mercedes-Benz India Managing Director & CEO Santosh İyer told PTI in an interaction.

To cater to the needs of the customers, the company is opening up 20 new workshops in 10 new cities like Jammu, Kanpur and Patna, he added.

'So we are very clear that in these mini metros, customers should not be driving a car for more than two hours to get the service done. So you want to go

closer to these customer pockets," Iyer said. The penetration of luxury cars in such cities remains low as

compared to the metros and

thus offers more opportunities

for growth, he noted.

annually.

For Mercedes, top metros currently account for around 70 per cent of the sales annually. Rest 30 per cent comes from...Mini metros and other smaller markets," Iyer stated. The luxury car market in India accounts for just over 1 per cent of the total passenger vehicle sales of around 40 lakh units

Mercedes-Benz is currently the leading player in the market. Iver said for Mercedes-Benz in the eight large cities and metros, the penetration level is at 2.5 per cent but in the smaller cities and towns, it is at 0.4 per

On Wednesday, the company launched the new GLA SUV priced between Rs 50.5 lakh and Rs 56.9 lakh (ex-showroom) The AMG GLE 53 4MATIC

price starts at Rs 1.85 crore. It can be customised with over 7,000 combinations with prices going up to Rs 2.2 crore.

MANJU ADDS 10KM GOLD TO HER KITTY

Punjab's international race walker, Manju Rani enjoyed a good run in the National Open Race Walk Championships here on Wednesday, winning the gold medal in the senior women's 10km competition

A day after winning gold in the women's 20km event, she dominated the senior women's 10km race to brighten her prospects of competing in the inaugural marathon race walking mixed relay that will feature at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.

Manju's gold medal winning time in 10km was 45:20.00s. The promising Punjab race walker had paired with Ram Babu to win bronze in the 35km mixed relay race walking team event at the Hangzhou Asian Games last

Manju was elated to have won back-to-back gold medals at the national competition.

"My main focus will be the mixed relay event this year and I hope to represent India at the Olympic Games," Manju said.

The senior 10km race walk was



included in the programme by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) to select potential athletes for the national team that will compete at the April 20-21 World Athletics Race Walk Team Championships to be

held in Antalya, Turkey.

During the Turkey competition, the world's top 22 teams will get automatic qualification for the Olympic Games. The final selection of the national team for Turkey will be done in March.

In the men's 10km event, Sahil of Punjab outclassed more experienced athletes to claim gold.

Patiala's Sahil, 22, clocked 39:25.00s. He had finished fifth in the men's 20km race walk on Tuesday.

Paramjeet Singh Bisht of Uttarakhand was second with a time of 39:36.00s, while Asian bronze medallist Vikash Singh of Delhi was third clocking

Goa's Vijay Omkar Vishwakaram won the men's 35km race with a time of 2:39:19.00s, while the women's 35km gold went to Bandana Patel of Uttar Pradesh, whose gold-medal winning time was 3:11:06.00s.

Srikanth moves to second round of Thailand Masters

Indian shuttler Kidambi Srikanth opened his cam-paign at the Thailand Masters badminton tournament with a straight game win over Chinese Taipei's Wang Tzu Wei here on Wednesday.

The former world number toiled hard for 45 minutes to get the better of Wang 22-20 21-19 and enter the second round.

He will take on compatriot Manjunath Mithun defeated Hong Kong's Jason Gunawan 21-17 21-8 in his first round men's singles match.

Sankar Muthusamy Subramanian also started his campaign with a 21-14 21-17 straight game win over Leong Jun Hao of Malaysia.

Sameer Verma made a first round exit, going down to Hong Kong's Angus Ng Ka Long 14-21 18-21 while Kiran



George retired after trailing 17-21 in his round of 32 match against China's Lei Lan Xi. Malvika Bansod and Ashmita Chaliha cruised to the second round of the women's singles

While Ashmita defeated Wong Ling Ching 21-10 21-16, Malivika got the better of Peru's Ines Lucia Castillo Salazar 22-20 21-8.

Malvika will next face Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrungphan, knocked out India's Imad Farooqui Samiya 21-14 21-18.

366Y • 335M

Avani to spearhead Indian challenge at Women's Asia-Pacific

PTI ■ PATTAYA (THAILAND)

The eloquent Avani Prashanth I will be accompanied by five other Indians as the region's finest young golfers get ready for the sixth Women's Amateur Asia-Pacific Championship here. This week the event returns to the Siam Country Club, which hosted the tournament two years ago. As many as 22 countries will be represented by 90 golfers.

Besides Avani, India will be represented by Vidhatri Urs, Mannat Brar, Heena Kang, Keerthana Rajeev Nair and Saanvi Somu. A little over a dozen of the 90 golfers are in the world's Top-100, and they will rub shoulders with players who are from countries in different stages of development

of the game. Avani said, "This tournament is a bookmark event for all of us in our calendars. It gives us exposure to play against the one big advantage.

"And just what the APGC does for all of us we're all so grateful for. And not only do we get to play with the best, but also make lifelong relationships that will become useful when you start playing on the LPGA or LET together.

"And I think once you win I think it's great because that gives you a head start as a

young amateur and what you should and should not do."

Defending champion, Eila Galitsky of Thailand, added, "So just what Avani said. It is great exposure, and the opportunity to just make friendships from around the world, around Asia, and the opportunity to get to play majors and compete with the top pros in the world is truly

While Avani is looking to make her fourth, and possibly, her last shot at WAAP, Galitsky is banking on a change in fortunes at the Siam Country

If the 17-year-old Galitsky, the winner at the Singapore Island Country Club last year, wins again, she will become the first player to defend her WAAP title and also the first two-time winner of the region's premier amateur event for women.

In 2022, Galitsky struggled with her putter at the Siam Course and was tied 35th.

Avani, at 42nd, is two places behind Galitsky in the World Amateur Golf Ranking. Avani and Galitsky, who have

forged a friendship going back to the time they were Under-10, have competed often against each. In six previous clashes around the world, they are tied 3-3 as their personal

Indian sailor Vishnu qualifies for successive Olympics

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

sian Games bronze medal-Alist Vishnu Sarvanan became the first Indian sailor to qualify for successive Olympics as he made the cut at the World Championships here on Wednesday.

A Subedar from the Mumbaibased Army Yachting Node, 24-year-old secured qualification for the upcoming Paris Games by finishing 26th out of 152 participants in ILCA-7

He thus becomes the first Indian sailor to make the cut for Paris 2024.

Vishnu secured the top rank among Asian countries, surpassing gold medallists from Singapore in the Asian Games and medal winners from Hong Kong and Thailand in the Continental Qualifiers. concluded competition with an overall score of 174. Following the standard rule, his least score of 49 in a race was subtracted, resulting in a net score of 125. The weather condition was windy and at its challenging best at the Adelaide Sailing Club, taking a toll on the

'NUMB FINGERS, LEGS DESTROYED': So gruelling has been the race that Vishnu's fingers have become "numb" and "legs are destroyed".
"I can't even hold my phone

now, fingers have become

numb, legs are destroyed. But it's all worth it. You get to go to Olympics," Vishnu told PTI. The ILCA 7 race refers to a specific category within the ILCA (International Laser

Association) sailing The ILCA 7 is a type of sailboat, specifically a singlehanded dinghy designed for

Sailors in ILCA 7 category races need to master various



sailing techniques, including tacking (changing direction into the wind) and gybing (changing direction with the wind at the stern).

It requires physical fitness and endurance as sailors need to be agile and capable of making quick adjustments and balance the boat with his body weight taking the whole pressure on the spine.

Vishnu could not qualify from the Asian Championships in Thailand in December and he

took the setback in his stride. 'Setback is always nice to have. It kept me focused. Here all in the top-10 were above 35 years, more than 10 years older to me. I can learn from their experience. It's good for me," he added.

At Tokyo Olympics, Vishnu competed in the men's laser category and finished 20th in a field of 35.

Making it to the finals is the target for Paris Olympics, while the ultimate target is to get a medal at Los Angeles 2028.

"In reality top 15 will be my goal, but if I make top-10 and goal, but if I make top-10 and reach the medal race it will be very good. I know how difficult it is going to be. Let's see how it goes," he said.
"For me, 2028 is the real chance where I can win an

Olympic medal. I've age on my side and will have time to improve."
ROLE MODEL NEERAJ SIR:

Sailing may not be a followed sport in the country but he believes that it can be made popular by winning a medal, like Neeraj Chopra has done in javelin throw.

True, it's still not very popular. But it will be when I win an Olympic medal, just like Neeraj sir. I hope I can be the one who can inspire a generation," he said. The sport requires heavy

investment in terms of and equipment

something he could afford hecause his father, his Ramachandran Saravanan, was a retired Army officer and former sailor.

"It depends on how you integrate it into the culture. With our extensive coastline, establishing a base in each coastal school, supported by the government, can involve a one-time investment in limited equipment that can last for 20 vears," said the 2019 Under-21 World Championship bronze medallist.

"This way, children can gain knowledge about the sport, similar to playing football or cricket in school. Many of us played these sports at some point, even if we didn't necessarily pursue them further," he concluded.

Vishnu was first coached by Alex Dennishook and for last two years he is being trained by Vujasinovic under

Former Tokyo Olympic official says he is not guilty of taking bribes

Haruyuki Takahashi, a former Tokyo Olympics organizing committee member, appeared in a court on Wednesday and said he was not ed to the Tokyo Games.

A former executive with the powerful Japanese advertising company Dents u, Takahashi is charged with accepting around 198 million yen (USD 1.4 million) in exchange for awarding Olympic contracts for the Tokyo Games held in Wearing a grey suit and blue

tie, Takahashi sat silently while



one of his defence lawyers read from a document for about two hours before a panel of three judges at Tokyo District

His lawyers argued that the money Takahashi received was

not bribes but legitimate consulting income as a sports marketing expert.

The defence also argued the Tokyo organizing committee had no power to make marketing decisions

sponsors or licensing, which was the realm of Dentsu, the powerful Japanese advertising company that headed Tokyo Olympic marketing.

The defence acknowledged Takahashi held power with worked. It also acknowledged Takahashi had close relations with International Olympic Committee officials and others in the sports world.

The next trial date was set for February 22. The indictment says Takahashi received bribes from business suit retailer Aoki Holdings, publisher Kadokawa and others. Sun Arrow, one of the companies implicated,

produced the stuffed toy version of the Olympic mascot, Miraitowa, and the Paralympic version, Someity.

About a dozen people have already been convicted in related bribery cases, but all have received suspended sentences.

myriad corruption investigations around the Tokyo Olympics are the latest to soil recent Games. French investigators have this year's vmpics under scrutiny over how contracts awarded.

Though the Olympics are funded partly by private money, they also rely heavily on taxpayer funding. In the case of Tokyo, at least 50% was public money. Tokyo says it officially spent USD 13 billion on the Tokyo Games, but a government audit says it might be twice that much.



Russia to host Serbia for first friendly against European team since Ukraine invasion

AP NYON (SWITZERLAND)

Russia is set to host Serbia for a friendly in Moscow in March for its first men's national team soccer game against a European opponent since the invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The Russian Football Union said in a social media post on

Wednesday that the game will be played on March 21 at Dynamo Moscow's stadium. UEFA confirmed it had permitted for the game.

Russian national teams and clubs are banned from UEFA competitions, but that suspension does not apply to friendlies. Since the invasion of Ukraine

saw Russia removed from international competitions, the Russian national team has mostly organized friendlies against teams from Asia and Africa, as well as one game against Cuba in November.

A game against Bosnia-Herzegovina was planned in late 2022 but never took place following objections from some Bosnian players. The Russian women's national team played friendlies against Belarus, China, Iran and

Paraguay last year. Serbian soccer has close ties to Russia, whose state energy firm Gazprom still sponsors storied club Red Star Belgrade after being dropped by UEFA as its longstanding commercial partner within days of the war starting in Ukraine.

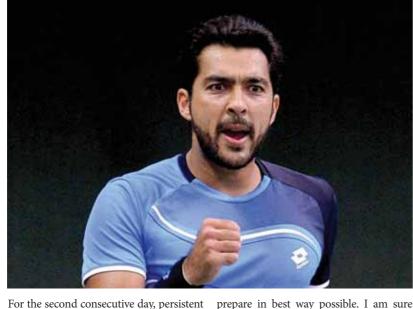
Davis Cup: Aisam drops hints of playing singles against India

isam ul-Qureshi, Pakistan's most suc-Acessful tennis player, does not play singles on the ATP Tour, but when national duty demands it, he willingly takes up the responsibility, and the Indian team might have to contend with him on the opening day of the Davis Cup World Group I tie, starting Saturday. The opening day of the tie will feature in

two singles, and Aisam could play in one of those against either Ramkumar Ramanathan or N Sriram Balaji, who will most likely play on Saturday. Aisam, 43, had even played against Indonesia in the home grass court tie in September 2023. He also did the singles duty against Lithuania (2022), Japan

(2021) and Slovenia (2020). "I have always considered myself to play singles, but I don't do it every single time. I am preparing for everything, singles and doubles, and the same goes for everyone in the team. We will see. We have one more day of training," Aisam told PTI. Aisam has 41-22 win-loss record in singles in 48 matches he has played in 44 nominations. Former Davis Cup captain Hameed ul Haq also reckons that if Aisam and veteran Aqeel Khan play the singles, the tie won't

be a lop-sided affair. "We have got some good results on grass but the Indian team is also very good on this surface. They know what is required. I feel India have better chances to win this tie but since Pakistan has two very experienced players in Aqeel Khan and Aisam ul haq Qureshi, if they play singles then the contest will be tight," he said.



For the second consecutive day, persistent drizzle disrupted Pakistan Davis Cup team's practice session, while the Indians were also forced to stay indoors on Wednesday

On Tuesday also, when the Indian team was nearing the end of its three-hour session, heavens opened up, forcing an early closure of their session.

Aisam said not getting to hit for two days in a row, indeed affects the preparations. "Definitely, these things affect the preparations. At the end of the day, these things are not in our control. We need to focus on things we can control and

Indian team's training has also been affected but it is what it is," said world number 154 Aisam, who was a top-10 olayer in doubles in 2011. "Hopefully, the weather will be good on

Saturday and Sunday so we can have a wonderful tie, Insha-allah," he added. Pakistan captain Mohammed Abid remained optimistic and opted looking at

the brighter side. Well, the players are now well rested. The bodies are relaxed now," he said before leaving with Mohammed Shoaib and Barkat Ullah for a gym session.

NATIONAL ROWING CHAMPIONSHIP: Manipur women dominate; Services, Army enter final

Manipur took top spots in the women's category while Services and Army produced dominating show in the men's category of the Open Sprint National Rowing Championship here on

Wednesday.
The Manipur women reserved their finals berth in the lightweight double sculls, as the pair of Poonam and Rukhmani clocked eight minutes and 29.3 seconds here at the Army Rowing Node situated in the College of Military Engineering (CME)

campus.
In the coxless pairs event,
Gurbani Kaur and Diljot Kaur
came up with an effort of 9:16.4 seconds to top the day. The third final came when the double sculls duo Thangjam Priya Devi and Haobijam Devi produced an effort of 08:46.6 seconds. Also, Maharashtra's Mrunmayee Salgaonkar kept her state's hopes alive by bringing up an effort of 09:40.6 seconds, which won her the

single sculls semi-final. In the men's category, Services accumulated five finals while Army secured three final

The Asian Games 2022 bronze medallists from Services;

Jaswinder, Bheema, Puneet and Ashish presented a dominant version themselves by winning the men's coxless fours Services reached the coxed

double eights, sculls, lightweight double sculls, quadruple sculls and single sculls event finals. Additionally, the defending champion Salman Khan

finished first in his semi-final by securing a time of 08:32.1 seconds.

The Army oarsmen presented their dominance with Asian

Games duo Babu Lal Yadav

and Lekh Ram, who did not break a sweat during the coxless pairs with an effort of 07:56.2 seconds to enter the finals. The Army also qualified for the coxed eights and double

sculls finals. Among the other exhilarating

races was the battle of two Olympians - Balraj Panwar, who represented India at Hangzhou, and Dattu Baban Bhokanal, Rio Olympian. It culminated in the former culminated in the former brushing aside the challenge in the singles sculls and reaching



NEED TO BE PATIENT WITH LIKES OF GILL, IYER: RATHOUR

PTI VISAKHAPATNAM

¬he likes of Shubman Gill and Shreyas Iyer deserve patience amid their current poor run, said India batting coach Vikram Rathour on Wednesday, urging his wards to tackle England's aggression with intelligence in the second Test

here.
The Indians lost the opening
Test in Hyderabad by 28 runs
despite having a 190-run first
innings lead. England
managed to shock the home
favourites with their 'Bazball'
approach with Ollie Pope
scoring a match-winning 196.
The second Test starts here on
Friday

"There are young batters in our team who have not played much Test cricket. So, we need to be a bit patient with them. Batters like (Shubman) Gill, (Yashasvi) Jaiswal and (Shreyas) Iyer will eventually start getting big runs, I'm sure of it," Rathour said at a press conference here.

Although Jaiswal played a knock of 80 in the first innings

of his fifth Test, Gill and Iyer failed to fire, continuing their struggles in the format. While Gill has played 21 Tests, Iyer has appeared in 13 five-day

Gill hasn't scored a 50 in his last nine Test innings. Iyer has been similarly off-colour.
Rathour said he expects better

application from the side's batters in second Test where

batters in second Test where the home team will once again miss the services of the redoubtable Virat Kohli. "There's a difference between playing with intent and playing attacking cricket. I want them to play with intent. If there is the opportunity to score some runs, they should take it," Rathour said. take it," Rathour said.

"They need to decide by looking at the surface and conditions. So, the batters to possess that intelligence as to which is the best or safest shot on the surface," he explained.

Rathour felt India's batting performance in the second innings of the Hyderabad Test probably lacked discipline.



"Could they have batted with more discipline? Maybe they could have. That's what they need to decide and come up with their plans," he observed. "But, they need to score runs by playing their shots as you by playing their shots, as you need to back your strengths. Batting is always about scoring runs. It's not about not getting out but how many runs you put on the board," he

England used the sweep shot quite well to blunt the effectiveness of Indian spinners but Rathour said it's not a stroke that can be added overnight to a player's repertoire.

"...You need to be prepared for that by practising it. If you add more shots to your game, it's always beneficial. We played traditionally. The strength of strong areas is going straight when it comes to using our

"We can keep doing that, and of course, if we can add more shots and score through the square of the wicket, that's always an addition," he said. Rathour also heaped praise on the English batters for playing brave cricket, especially Pope, effectively taking the game

away from Rohit Sharma's However, he maintained that England's strong showing has not put his team under any

additional pressure. "They (England) were brave. They took their chances, which worked for them. The kind of innings Pope played was exceptional. I haven't seen too many playing such a knock against our bowling knock against our bowling attack," he said.

"I don't think (there's any pressure). We are expected to win while playing in India, and the boys are used to that

by now.
"The message to them from the support staff is to play good cricket and not bother about results too much. The other teams also come wellprepared. Since we have won Test matches in Australia, England and South Africa, we also expect them to win a Test in India."

with the hardest: Foakes

PTI ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

England's Ben Foakes feels
Indian wickets are among the hardest for wicketkeepers as they require frequent improvisation and a tough mind pre-pared to deal with things occasionally going wrong. Foakes, who made a Test

comeback after 11 months, effected the stumpings of a well-set Ravichandran Ashwin and Mohammed Siraj in India's second innings that sealed England's epic 28-run win in the opening Test of the five-match series in Hyderabad.

He also scored 34 in a crucial 112-run partnership with the star of the match Ollie Pope (196) that gave England the decisive lead.

"In conditions like this, it's about trying to think on your feet and learn because it's not natural conditions (for me)," the 30-year-old was quoted as saying by 'ESPNCricinfo'.

"I've obviously kept away a lot and kept to spinners, but I find that Indian pitches, with the variable bounce, are up there with the hardest.

"The more extreme the conditions you know things are occasionally going to wrong so you just have to mentally strong enough to put The 30-year-old is bracing up for extreme conditions in the rest of the series as well.

"There is a good chance the next one is going to be a tough

"You're in the game, so it's nice as a keeper. It's obviously a very



hard place to keep, and you're aware of that. You're going to us in our shells. Whereas now aware of that. You're going to have some tough moments or a tough day. But you'd rather be in the game than watching the ball do nothing in front of you," he added.

In their tour of India in 2021, England had won the opening Test only to lose three in a row in the four-match series on rank-turners.

"All three were probably the worst pitches I've batted on. Going into that, I was thinking, 'These are horrific wickets — I just need to find a way to stay

Emphasising a shift in the team's mindset, he said: "I think now the group is more, if that's the situation, you've got to be positive; got to put it (pressure) back on the bowler and put them under pressure. "Before, there was more of a

it's not worrying that you are getting out and accepting that you probably are on those sort of surfaces. But how can you actually go and dominate at times as well?"

Keeping the tough Indian conditions in mind, Foakes was chosen as the specialist wicketkeeper ahead of Jonny Bairstow.

"The thing I've tried to develop when I go in is if we lose a couple of wickets, to expand early," he said about his

I think generally, throughout my career, when there's been those kind of situations where you have to grind in is when I've been most successful. That's where I need to keep improving, so it fits quite nicely into my game."

Indian conditions up there | Leach skips practice, unlikely to play in 2nd Test vs India

PTI VISAKHAPATNAM

England's most experienced spinner Jack Leach is all set to miss the second Test against India starting here on Friday, owing to a left knee injury sustained during the series-opener in Hyderabad. Leach didn't take part in the team's training session on Wednesday and was seen receiving treat-

ment from the physio on the sidelines. "He's a tough kid, Leachy. So, I am not sure. You never know with Jack. You can never really write him off. We'll see how he pulls up in a couple of days," opener Zak Crawley said at the media conference here. Leach had jarred his left knee while fielding on the first day of the Hyderabad



Test, which England won by 28 runs. He played through pain, bowling 26 overs in the first innings and 10 in the second essay despite bruising and swelling around the joint. He was seen limping during Wednesday's training session.

Leach's injury means that off-spinner Shoaib Bashir, who joined the team late in Hyderabad due to visa related issues, could be set for Test debut.

Crawley is confident that Bashir, if given an opportunity, will do well.
"He is a great kid. He has got a lot about him. He knows what he is trying to do with his bowling and he backs himself. I like that and feel like if he got his chance in this series he would go well."

Ashwin retains No 1 spot, Bumrah moves to 4th in

PTI DUBAI

Senior India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin maintained the top spot, while compatriot Jasprit Bumrah jumped to fourth in the latest ICC Test bowling rankings released on

ICC Test rankings

Wednesday.
Ashwin, who had grabbed a match haul of six wickets in India's 28-run loss in the opening Test against England, is on 853 rating points, while pacer Bumrah, who also claimed half a dozen wickets,

rose a rung to fourth. The third Indian in the top 10 in the bowling charts is leftarm spinner Ravindra Jadeja at

Jadeja also enjoys a healthy buffer at the head of the Test

all-rounder rankings. However, Joe Root, who has moved up to fourth place, might challenge him soon if

the Englland veteran maintains his good show with the ball. While Root is primarily known for his batting skills, the 33year-old showcased his handy spin by taking five wickets in the Hyderabad Test. He even opened the bowling for England in the second innings. This effort has seen Root rise to a new career-high rating on the list for Test all-rounders

and seen the evergreen England star jump one place to fourth. Root is behind Ashwin and

Shakib-Al-Hasan while Axar Patel has dropped a spot to sixth. Virat Kohli has moved to sixth

the top 10 batters while Ollie Pope, who stunned India with a magnificent 196 in the second innings, jumped a mammoth 20 places to 15th. Pope's England teammate Ben Duckett also improved his ranking, gaining five places to 22nd after knocks of 35 and 47

and is the lone Indian among

against India. Australia opener Usman Khawaja gained two places to eighth following a half-century in the opening innings of the second Test against the West

Indies at the Gabba. After their performance against Australia, three West Indies quicks also

improved their rankings. Kemar Roach moved up two places to 17th, Alzarri Joseph

'It will be a tough choice between Sarfaraz, Patidar'

PTI VISAKHAPATNAM

India's batting coach Vikram Rathour on Wednesday said it "will be tough" to pick one among Sarfaraz Khan and Rajat Patidar in the second Test against England.
The match begins here from

Friday, with hosts India seeking to draw parity after losing the series opener in Hyderabad.

After the first game, India faced injury concerns with allrounder Ravindra Jadeja and XI Rahul being ri the second Test, in addition to the absence of star batter Virat Kohli. This forced the selectors to add uncapped Sarfaraz Khan, Sourabh Kumar and Washington Sundar to the squad, and Rajat Patidar also made the team.

Afridi calls for all format captain

"It will be a tough choice. What value they bring to the team, of course, is that they are superb players. We have seen how well they have done in domestic cricket in the last few years," Rathour said of the reinforcements during a press

conference. "So on these kind of wickets, I think they can really add a lot of value to the team."

He added, "If we have to pick just one out of them, of course, it would be tough. But, that decision will be made by Rahul

keeping in mind the conditions. "It (pitch) is difficult to predict. It will turn, maybe not from the first day, but eventually, it will turn. That's how the wicket looks like."

RECOVERY': India slipped to fifth place on the World Test Championship (WTC) table following the loss in Hyderabad and the hosts would be desperate to bounce back here.

Rathour said that more than recovery, the players need to learn and move on.

"There's no question of recovery. You keep learning every game that you play. Of course, we could have done better in batting, bowling and The playing XI will be finalised and ideas are being shared, preparing well and hoping to do well in the next game?

He expressed confidence in the players' ability to bounce back and cited India's unbeaten record in Test series at home since 2012. "We keep talking

enough), but India has been winning a lot of series at home. We haven't lost a series at home for 12-13 years. "It means we are putting up

about our batters (not scoring

more runs than the other teams. These are tough conditions to score runs, but I'm sure that the batters will find a wav. 'Don't think players require too

much coaching At this level, Rathour said the

players just need to act as per the situation. "Once you come to this level. I don't require too much coaching. It's about reading the situations and making smarter decisions. "As long as they are asking the right questions and receiving the right answers, there is no chance of over-coaching," he concluded.

message to all players who is in charge," Afridi told reporters here.

Expressing support for team director Mohammad Hafeez, the 46-year-old said the the captain and team management should get at leat threeyear contracts. "If you think Muhammad Hafeez is good then don't just judge him on one

series give him proper time and the same should apply to the captain as well he should be there for three years." Afridi added that players in The T20

squad should be given a long run ahead of the World Cup later this year.
"The World T20 Cup is going to be a very tough tournament this year with some very strong teams in the hunt for the title. I also don't think this is the time to make any changes in the format squad," he said.

BCCI secretary Shah appointed ACC chairman for third consecutive term

Indian Cricket Board (BCCI) secretary Jay Shah was on Wednesday appointed as the president of the Asian Cricket Council for a third consecutive Shah's extension was proposed

by the Sri Lanka Cricket president Shammi Silva for the second time and the nomination was unanimously backed by all the members of the ACC at its annual general meeting in Bali. Shah initially assumed the role

in January 2021, succeeding Bangladesh Cricket Board President Nazmul Hassan.

Under Shah's leadership, the ACC successfully organised the Asia Cup in T20 format in 2022 and in ODI format in 2023.

"I am grateful to the ACC Board for their continued trust. We must remain committed to ensuring the allround development of the sport with a special focus on regions where it is still in its The ACC is infancy. committed to nurturing cricket across Asia," Shah said in a release.



"Under Shah's guidance, the ACC has been instrumental in unearthing and promoting talent in cricketing powerhouses like Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka," Silva said.

Pankaj Khimji, chairman of Oman Cricket and vice-president of the ACC, also extended congratulations on Shah's term.

'Today, stakeholders see value in investing in tournaments that the ACC conducts, and I credit him for this major transformation, which will further fuel the growth of the game in the region," Khimji

Welcoming reappointment, Hassan said cricket in Asia will continue to prosper under Shah's leadership, emphasising collaboration with the ACC in furthering this endeavor.



(PCB) to follow the policy of having one skipper across formats to prevent infighting over captaincy. Star batter Babar Azam had stepped

down as skipper from all three formats after Pakistan failed to advance from the group stages at the ODI World Cup last year with PCB naming Shaheen Shah Afridi and Shan Masood as the T20 and Test skipper respectively.

The PCB must have one captain for all formats and there is no need to have a vice-captain. This will give a clear



'Bazball' comes naturally to us: Crawley

PTI VISAKHAPATNAM

England opener Zak Crawley
On Wednesday said most of
his teammates have become better players since embracing the ultra-aggressive 'Bazball' approach, which is way more compatible with their natural game than the traditional "takeyour-time" strategy.
England upstaged India by 28
runs in the opening Test in
Hyderabad despite conceding
a 190-run first innings lead,

showcasing a fighting attitude that stunned the pre-series

favourites. England are yet to

lose a Test since pioneering 'Bazball' under their New Zealand coach McCullum.

"I suppose it ('Bazball') comes quite naturally as a lot of our teams are playing more aggressively. The mindset when I first came to England was to backlight or take your time and build a long innings and I didn't think that came naturally to me and a few of the others," Crawley said in a press conference ahead of the second Test starting here on

under this regime," he added. In contrast, India were also "A lot of us play a bit better

addition to finding answers to In contrast, India were also their poor performance in battling a selection crisis in Hyderabad after all-rounder

batter KL Rahul were ruled out due to injuries. The hosts are already without

mainstay Virat Kohli, who has opted out of the first two Tests citing personal reasons. Asked what it would mean for the English team, Crawley said

Ravindra Jadeja and top-order

his team is more focussed on its performance and planning. "...We haven't spoken about that. It sounds cliched but we stick to our own lead up ... We don't bother about what they are doing," Crawley said when asked if the absence of the duo is a boost for England.

climbed four spots to 33rd, and Shamar Joseph, who was the Player-of-the-Match at the Gabba, rose a significant 42 places to reach the 50th position in the rankings.

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