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DEHRADUN HYDERABAD
VIJAYWADA

NEW DELHI, SUNDAY FEBRUARY 4, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹4



sunday pioneer

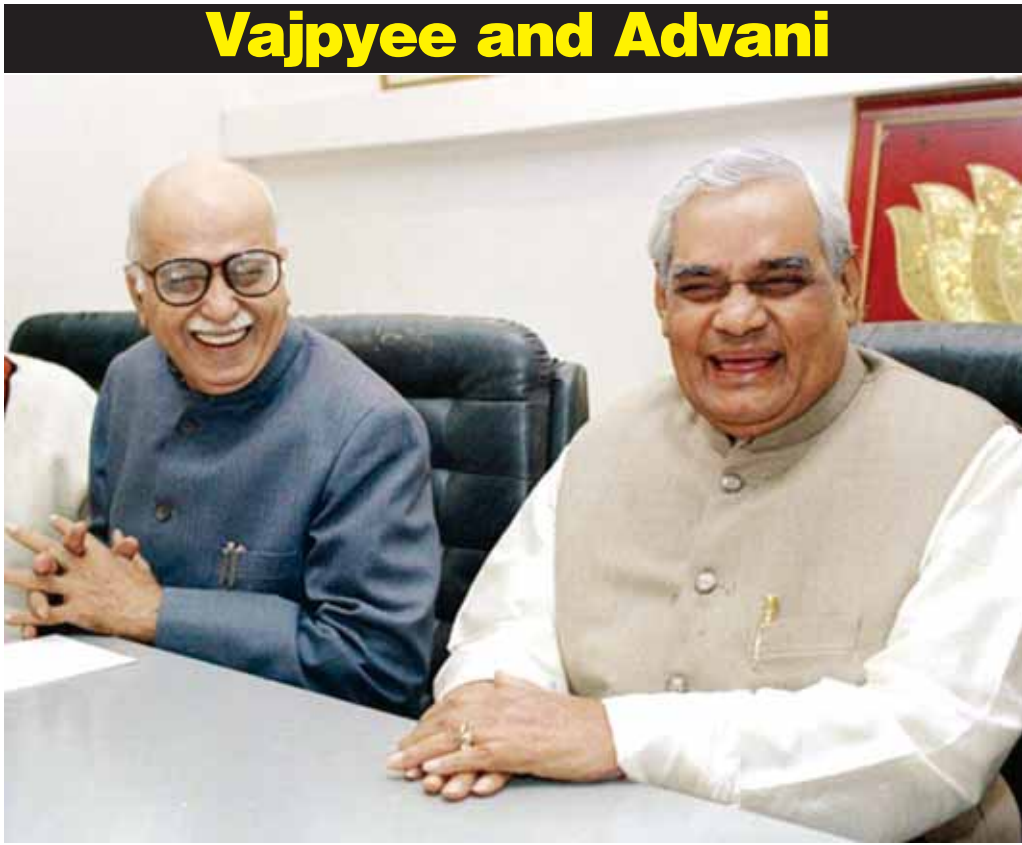
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Modi Makes Two Bharat Ratnas meet

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Former Deputy Prime Minister and BJP patriarch Lal Krishna Advani, who catapulted the party into national reckoning with his Rath Yatra for Ayodhya's Ram Temple in the early 1990s, leading to the consecration of Ram Lalla at a new temple in the holy city, has been conferred with the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award. Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to him on Saturday and conveyed the news. While announcing the honour for the veteran, the Prime Minister stated that Advani's role in the development of India is monumental, and he referred to him as one of the most respected statesmen of India. Soon after the Prime Minister's announcement, a communication from the Rashtrapati Bhawan mentioned that President Droupadi Murmu has been pleased to award the Bharat Ratna to Advani. Advani is the second top BJP leader after the late Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who was conferred with the Bharat Ratna. Acknowledging the award, Advani expressed that the Bharat Ratna is not only an honor for him as an individual but also for the ideals and principles that he strove to serve throughout his life to the best of his ability. "With utmost humility and gratitude, I accept the Bharat Ratna that has been conferred on me today," he said in a statement soon after Modi announced his name for the country's highest



Vajpayee and Advani

civilian honour. The 96-year-old leader, the longest-serving president of the BJP, mentioned that ever since he joined the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) as its volunteer at the age of 14, he sought reward in only one thing - "dedicated and selfless service to my beloved country in whatever

task life assigned to me." He said what has inspired his life is the motto: "This life is not mine. My life is for my nation." Today, he expressed gratitude and remembered two persons with whom he had the honour of working closely - Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya and Atal Bihari Vajpayee, both awarded

the Bharat Ratna earlier. He expressed heartfelt gratitude to millions of BJP workers, RSS volunteers, and others with whom he had worked in his public life. Advani thanked Murmu and Modi for the honour. "I also express my deepest feelings for all members of my family, especially my dear

departed wife Kamla. They have been the greatest source of strength and sustenance in my life," he said. He added, "May our great country progress to the pinnacle of greatness and glory." The Prime Minister mentioned that he felt privileged to have interacted with and learned from Advani. "The conferring of the Bharat Ratna on him is a very emotional moment for me," Modi said. "One of the most respected statesmen of our times, his contribution to the development of India is monumental. His life began with grassroots work, eventually leading him to serve as our Deputy Prime Minister. Distinguishing himself as our Home Minister and I&B Minister, his Parliamentary interventions have always been exemplary, filled with rich insights," he said. "Advani ji's decades-long service in public life has been marked by an unwavering commitment to transparency and integrity, setting an exemplary standard in political ethics. He has made unparalleled efforts towards furthering national unity and cultural resurgence. The conferring of the Bharat Ratna on him is a very emotional moment for me. I will always consider it my privilege that I had countless opportunities to interact with him and learn from him," he said. The development comes days after the Modi Government announced the Bharat Ratna for former Bihar Chief Minister and OBC reservation pioneer Karpoori Thakur.

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Modi slams Congress for insulting President Murmu

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ BHUBANESHWAR/ GUWAHATI/ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi came down heavily on the Congress and its allied parties for "insulting" President of India Droupadi Murmu, whose candidature was opposed by Opposition parties in the Presidential elections. Addressing a rally at Sambalpur in Odisha, the PM said the insult of Murmuji was an insult to all Adivasis and the entire State of Odisha. "I have worked with tribal people and know their plight and difficulties. They (Congress) have always used tribals as their vote banks. However, in the last 10 years, the BJP has been continuously working towards the development of tribals in Odisha and other States," the Prime

Minister said during his Odisha tour. Late in the evening, the PM reached Guwahati, Assam, for a two-day whirlwind tour of the State and to dedicate several projects to benefit the northeastern region. While assuring the people of Odisha that his party would ensure the development of the State and its people, Modi said the recent Budget provides a guarantee for the development of all sections of society, including youths, women, the poor, farmers, and tribals. Modi said his guarantee is the 'guarantee of guarantees, as his Government is the last hope for helpless people across the country.' "Modi's guarantee means a guarantee of complete fulfillment," said the Prime Minister.

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Outrage as Poonam fakes her death

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

Making a mockery of Mentire societal norms — the law of the land, medical ethics, society, and the profession — actor-model Poonam Pandey 'hoaxed' her death, taking the citizens for a ride for almost 72 hours. Now, facing the wrath after appearing on social media a day after her 'PR' team 'concocted' and claimed that Pandey died from cervical cancer. The All Indian Cine Workers Association has written a letter to the Vikhroli Police Station in Mumbai, urging them to file an FIR against Pandey and her manager. "This fake news has hurt the sentiments of all Indians who paid tributes to her. Strict action against them is necessary," the association said in its complaint. Pandey's team had dropped the bombshell news of her death from the disease on Friday, but it was a hoax - a stunt pulled off by the actor. She appeared in a video on Saturday, declaring that she is "alive." According to Pandey, the intention behind the stunt was to spread awareness about cervical cancer. A day before she faked her demise due to cervical cancer, the Centre in its Union Budget allocated funds to the cause of cervical cancer. On Saturday, Pandey took to Instagram to post a video saying, "I am alive." Actor Pandey, who hit the headlines in 2011 with her declaration that she would strip if India won the cricket World Cup, was reported to have died of cervical cancer at the age of 32, as her publicist announced on Friday. "I feel compelled to share something significant with you all — I am here, alive. Cervical cancer didn't claim me," Pandey posted, a day after the news of her apparent death broke the internet, leaving her fans disheartened. "Ridiculous," "disgraceful,"

and "a new low" is how netizens and several celebrities reacted to Pandey's reappearance on social media a day after her team claimed that she died from cervical cancer. While the cause itself is undoubtedly worthy of attention, the method employed raises concerns about the dangers of misinformation and the responsibility of news outlets in this age of viral information. Women's rights activist Advocate Rekha Singh said Pandey's reappearance with the intention to commit fraud is definitely an offense under various provisions of the law. "But here in this particular case, she has not faked her death with the intention of causing fraud, which leaves her in the green with respect to the law. In legal and punitive terms, Pandey can be accused of causing public nuisance. According to section 290 of the Indian Penal Code, whoever commits a public nuisance in any case not otherwise punishable by this code shall be punished with a fine that may extend to Rs 200. So, if Pandey is prosecuted for the offense of causing a nuisance, she will get away by paying a fine of just ₹200," Rekha told *The Pioneer*. Actor Pooja Bhatt, Sara Khan, Aly Goni, and Rahul Vaidya furiously slammed Pandey for faking her death and demeaning an important cause. Bhatt, who was among the celebs who had offered condolences on Pandey's alleged death, said she has deleted her earlier post. "I never delete tweets but did so in the case where I expressed my shock at news of Pandey's demise due to cervical cancer. Why? Turns out the news was engineered by a digital/PR team. Absolute disgrace and disservice to those battling the same, including her," she posted on social media.

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Notice to Kejriwal over MLAs poaching claim

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After a five-hour drama, Crime Branch officials of the Delhi Police on Saturday served a notice to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, asking him to reply within three days in a probe into his claims that the BJP attempted to poach seven AAP MLAs. A Delhi Police officer said, "We have served the notice on him (Kejriwal). He can give the reply in three days in written form." The police sources said the notice was finally handed over to the officials present at the CM residence. The Crime Branch has asked Kejriwal to reveal the names of AAP MLAs who were claimed to have been approached by the BJP.

The development comes a day after a Crime Branch team visited the Chief Minister's residence but failed to deliver the notice. The Delhi Police Crime Branch notices came at a time when Kejriwal is under scrutiny by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with the alleged liquor scam. The AAP leader has skipped five summons by the probe agency so far. Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva, in a Press statement, alleged that Kejriwal's behaviour has become like that of criminals. He has no evidence, and the allegation of "Lotus 2.0" is a fabricated story to divert attention from his corruption, he said. BJP leader Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, in the



statement, said FIRs should be filed against Kejriwal and Atishi if they fail to prove their allegations. Stringent action should be taken against them, he added. Earlier, a drama unfolded at

Kejriwal's residence at Civil Lines on Saturday as a Crime Branch team arrived again for the second straight day to serve him a notice to join a probe over his claim that the BJP was trying to poach AAP MLAs.

The team, led by an Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP)-level officer, insisted they would hand over the notice to Kejriwal only as it is in his name, while officials at the Chief Minister's residence said they are ready to take the notice and give a receipt to the Crime Branch. AAP sources claimed the police have brought the media with them to tarnish the chief minister's image. "The police's aim is to defame the CM, not to serve the notice," the sources added. Outside the premises, AAP leader Jasmine Shah was seen trying to seek an explanation from a Crime Branch official on the legal provision under which he was insisting on handing over the notice to

Kejriwal personally. "I asked a simple question of the Delhi Police officer standing in front of the entrance of the residence of Kejriwal: Under which law is he insisting on handing over a notice personally to the CM? He had no answers. It is clear they are only here to do nautanki (drama)," Shah wrote, posting a video on X. Delhi Cabinet Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj claimed the police were deliberately not delivering the notice to the CM's office. "This is so embarrassing for the Modi Government. The BJP is totally exposed today. Yesterday, all BJP spokespersons alleged the CM office did not receive a police notice."

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Punjab Governor and Chandigarh Administrator Purohit resigns



PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Governor and Chandigarh Administrator Banwarilal Purohit submitted his resignation to President Droupadi Murmu on Saturday, citing personal reasons. "Due to my personal reasons and certain other commitments, I tender my resignation from the post of Governor of Punjab and Administrator, Union Territory, Chandigarh. Please accept the same and oblige," Purohit (84) wrote in his resignation letter. Purohit's resignation came a day after he met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Delhi. Their meeting came days after

the BJP swept the Chandigarh mayoral polls, retaining all three posts, a setback to the Congress-AAP alliance which alleged tampering with ballot papers by the presiding officer. Before being appointed as the Governor Punjab and administrator of Chandigarh, Purohit had also been the Governor of Assam from 2016 to 2017 and the Governor of Tamil Nadu from 2017 to 2021. Purohit had also been a three-time Lok Sabha member from Nagpur in 1984, 1989 and 1996. He had also won the Nagpur East in 1978 and from Nagpur South in 1980. In his more than two-year eventful term as the Governor,

Purohit had been at loggerheads with Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann over several issues, including holding the Assembly sessions and appointments of vice-chancellors. They had not been on the best of terms as squabble between the Raj Bhavan and the AAP Government surfaced over many issues. Their relationship nose-dived when the Governor thwarted the Mann-led regime's plan to summon a special Assembly session in September 2022 to bring a confidence motion after he withdrew his order of summoning it. AAP had alleged that the BJP offered money to its 10 MLAs. The row between the Raj Bhavan and the AAP Government escalated when Purohit declined appointment of a cardiologist as Vice Chancellor of the Baba Farid University of Health Sciences and also sought removal of Punjab Agricultural University Vice Chancellor. The AAP had accused the Governor of interfering into the functioning of the Mann Government at the behest of the BJP and dubbed the Raj Bhavan as the "head office of the BJP."

ACB claims 65,000 ghost patients in Delhi Mohalla Clinics

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

A preliminary inquiry by the Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) of the Delhi Government has revealed that, during the 11 months of 2023, 65,000 ghost patients underwent pathological tests at the Mohalla Clinics through private labs. These Mohalla Clinics are the pet project of the Arvind Kejriwal Government. Analysis of patient data from one of the private laboratories revealed the listing of 12,457 tests with blank mobile numbers, 25,732 tests with 'zero' mobile numbers, 913 tests with fake mobile numbers like 1, 2, 3, etc., and 2,467 tests with mobile numbers repeated more than 80 times for different patients, as shown in the report. Approximately 6,121 tests were conducted using the mobile number 9999999999 for different patients, identified as an invalid/fake number. Similarly, 2,399 tests were conducted using the mobile number 9821749455 for different patients, and the inquiry revealed that the mobile holder had never undergone any tests. Additionally, 11,350 tests were



conducted using mobile numbers that were repeated more than 130 times for different patients. There are significant discrepancies between the registration of patients and the number of patients whose tests were conducted with the same mobile number. According to sources, the preliminary inquiry revealed that from February 2023 to December 2023, nearly 22 lakh tests were conducted by the two private labs, for which they were paid ₹4.63 crore by the Delhi Government. Out of this, more than 65,000 tests were found to be fake or manipulated. The cost of conducting each

of these tests varied from ₹100 to ₹300. On further probing with random people whose mobile numbers were picked up during investigations, it was revealed that an overwhelming 63 per cent had neither undergone any tests nor visited any Mohalla Clinic. The labs were paid ₹4.63 crore by the Government for the tests conducted by them, according to the sources. Last month, Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena recommended a CBI probe into the reports of irregularities in lab tests conducted at the Mohalla Clinics.

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BJP MLA shoots at Shinde Sena leader; arrested

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a major embarrassment for the ruling BJP, its MLA Ganpat Gaikwad shot at and critically injured an Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena leader Mahesh Gaikwad at Ulhasnagar's Hill Lines Police Station on Friday night, prompting the police to arrest Gaikwad and two others in connection with the incident. In the bizarre shoot-out that took place at around 9.40 pm on Friday and has been captured on CCTV, BJP MLA Ganpat Gaikwad fired at Shiv Sena Kalyan President Mahesh Gaikwad at a point blank range inside the chamber of Senior Police Inspector Anil Jagtap. The injured Sena leader was rushed to Thane's Jupiter Hospital where his condition continues to be "critical". The incident — which took place in chief minister Eknath Shinde's home district of Thane and that too at a time when deputy chief minister Devendra



Fadnavis holds the state Home portfolio — has sparked a fierce political controversy, with the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) demanding Fadnavis' resignation. The CCTV footage, which has gone viral in social media, showed the BJP MLA getting up suddenly in the Senior PI's cabin and opening fire indiscriminately at Mahesh Gaikwad and his associates Rahul Patil and Chainu Jadhav sitting opposite him. Of

Mahesh Gaikwad's two associates, Rahul Patil was also injured. The incident is believed to be a fall-out of a land dispute. While he was being taken away after his arrest, Ganpat Gaikwad told media persons that he had resorted to opening fire on Mahesh Gaikwad seeing his son being manhandled by the Shiv Sena leader's men right inside the police station. Meanwhile, a medical bulletin

put out by the Jupiter Hospital where Ganpat Gaikwad has been admitted, said, "Patient Mahesh Gaikwad came to Jupiter Hospital with multiple gunshot injuries on the night of February 2, 2024. He was operated at night immediately as an emergency life-saving surgery. Post-surgery he is in the intensive care unit and on a ventilator. His condition is currently critical and the expert team of specialist doctors including an intensivist, general surgeon, and thoracic and orthopedic surgeon are monitoring the vitals closely". Chief Minister Shinde visited Jupiter Hospital on Saturday and enquired about Ganpati Gaikwad's condition. Following the incident, 56-year-old MLA Ganpat Gaikwad and two of his associates Harshal Kene (34) and Sandeep Sarwankar (45) have been arrested. They have been booked under sections 307 (attempt to murder), 120B (conspiracy) and sections of the Arms Act.

On Saturday evening, Ganpat Gaikwad and two others were to be produced before a Ulhasnagar First Class Judicial Magistrate (FCJM) Mrs AA Nikam who remanded them in police custody till February 14. Apart from Ganpat Gaikwad, Harshal Kene and Sandeep Sarwankar, Ganpat Gaikwad's son Vaibhav G. Gaikwad, Nagesh Badekar, Vicky Ganotra and others have been booked in connection with the Ulhasnagar shooting incident. Meanwhile, Opposition MVA leaders like Nana Patole, Vijay Wadetiwar (Congress), Sharad Pawar, Supriya Sule, Dr. Jitendra Awhad (NCP-SP), Sanjay Raut (Shiv Sena-UBT) condemned the incident and demanded resignation of Deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnavis who also holds the Home portfolio. Under fire from various quarters, Fadnavis has ordered a SIT probe headed by Assistant Commissioner of Police Nilesh Sonawane.

Shinde has unleashed goonda raj, alleges arrested MLA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ MUMBAI

Ruling BJP MLA Ganpat Gaikwad, who has been arrested in connection with the attempt to murder Shinde-led Shiv Sena leader Mahesh Gaikwad, has opened the pandora's box by alleging that Chief Minister Eknath Shinde had unleashed a "goonda raj" in Kalyan. Talking to a television channel while he was being taken by the police after his arrest in connection with the Friday night shoot-out, Ganpat Gaikwad said, "I resorted to firing because my son was being manhandled at the police station right in front of the police officials. Because of the police intervention, my son survived the attack on Mahesh Gaikwad's men". "I bought a plot of land ten years ago. We paid money to the owner of that place, two times three times they did not come to sign the documents, then we approached the court and we won from the court. When 7/12 is in the name of our company, Mahesh Gaikwad came and occupied it by force," Ganpat Gaikwad said. "Even on the first day, they were requested by



me not to take possession by force, and bring the order from the court," Ganpat Gaikwad said. "They (Mahesh Gaikwad's men) bullied us even today, those people who broke into the compound and forcibly grabbed the land for which my son had come to the police station to lodge the complaint," the BJP MLA said. "And in front of the police station he (Mahesh Gaikwad) brought around 500 to 500 people. My son was leaving the police station at that time. They pushed my son, I couldn't bear it," Ganpat said.

Reasons behind bone chilling cold decoded

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The bone-chilling conditions gripping North India, including the national Capital, have been attributed to the Siberian High by researchers from the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Mohali, and the National Institute for Space Research (NISR), Brazil. The study, published in the journal Weather and Climate Extremes and led by Professor Raju Attada from IISER Mohali, highlights that the cold assault is further intensified by the presence of high-latitude weather systems, referred to as 'Atmospheric blocking'. The study is crucial as it focuses on the atmospheric conditions and large-scale weather patterns playing a significant role in the formation and intensification of these cold wave events (CWEs). This research gap emphasises the need for an improved understanding in this area, as it can significantly enhance our ability to forecast and implement effective early warning systems. According to the researchers, identifying a CWE becomes a nuanced endeavour, involving normalised minimum temperature anomalies and a standard deviation of less



than minus 1 for a span of four or more consecutive days. Elevating the severity entails a deviation plummeting below minus 2 for an equivalent duration, as per the study. Analysing data from 1982 to 2020, the researchers discern a decline in the number, duration, and intensity of cold wave events. This regression is tethered to escalating winter minimum temperatures due to global warming and a diminishing count of western disturbances (WDs), which originate in the Caspian or Mediterranean Sea and deliver non-monsoonal rainfall to northwest India. Currently, Delhi and its northern counterparts have succumbed to a heightened state of fridity. Recently, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) reported an astounding 506 per cent increase in the number of cold waves in India between 2010 and 2018, despite rising

global temperatures due to global warming. KS Athira from IISER Mohali and V Brahmanada Rao from NISR, Brazil, co-authors of the study, identified 509 cold wave days, including 45 days of severe cold wave events. The researchers noted that the implications of cold waves extend beyond human health, impacting agriculture, livestock, and causing disruptions to transportation. The risk of hypothermia and frostbite, particularly for vulnerable groups, emphasises the urgency for clear policies at various administrative levels, they said. Attada stressed the need for prioritising actions to save human lives during cold waves. "Understanding the synoptic features and the dynamics behind the formation of cold waves is important for the accurate prediction of cold wave events," he added

Ladakh shows unity, strength in support of full Statehood

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Sharing their 'Mann ki Baat' in the run-up to the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the cold desert region of Ladakh on Saturday demonstrated its 'unity' and 'strength' in support of full 'Statehood for Ladakh'. Holding placards displaying slogans, 'Statehood for Ladakh' the residents also batted for granting constitutional safeguards under the 6th Schedule of the Indian Constitution as promised by the ruling party, job reservation for locals, and a parliamentary seat each for Leh and Kargil. Famous environment activist and educationist Sonam Wangchuk while making a passionate appeal before Prime Minister Narendra Modi read out a long list of assurances given by the union ministers, and senior party leaders to the residents of Ladakh. Acknowledging the commitment of the Union government towards the people of Ladakh Sonam Wangchuk noted despite receiving assurances at the highest level the aspirations of the people of Ladakh have not been fulfilled since 2019. He said the Bharatiya Janta Party had listed the demand for the declaration of Ladakh under the sixth schedule in its Manifesto of the 2019 Lok Sabha polls and later in 2020



during the polls of Leh Hill council. He said today by assembling in large numbers the people of Ladakh are once again sending out a clear message to the Union government not to pay heed to the vested interests working at the behest of industrial lobbies to exploit the natural resources in the region. The residents took a vow to continue their agitation till their demands were not met by the Union government headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The tone and tenor of the speeches made by the local Buddhist and Shia leaders in the Leh and Kargil districts made it clear that they were in no mood to retract from their stated position and were ready for the long haul to achieve their desired goals. The protest was jointly spearheaded by the Leh Apex Body (LAB), an alliance representing Buddhist groups in

Leh, and in the Shia Muslim-dominated Kargil by the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA). Ladakh was carved out as a separate UT out of Jammu and Kashmir state in August 2019 after which Ladakhis have been demanding statehood and more constitutional guarantees that they enjoyed under Article 370 that stands scrapped. Ahead of the February 3 call for Ladakh bandh the Union Home Ministry reached out to the agitating apex bodies of Leh and Kargil. The Home Ministry has already convened a meeting of the High Powered Committee (HPC) headed by Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai, in New Delhi on February 19 for further deliberations on the issues submitted by Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) jointly to the MHA on January 16.

Modi Makes Two Bharat Ratnas...

From Page 1

The Bharat Ratna will be bestowed on Advani in a year of the Ram Mandir's pran pratishtha, marking a triumphant closure for the BJP on an issue thrust into popular consciousness by the veteran leader through his 'Ram Rath Yatra' in 1990. The yatra and the mass appeal it drew boosted the party's vote share, making it the key challenger to the Congress, the then biggest national party. The Bharat Ratna for Advani at this time is likely to add to the BJP's Temple narrative ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha polls. The announcement of the Bharat Ratna for Advani is significant given the complicated relationship that Modi has shared with the 96-year-old BJP leader. It is widely believed that Advani promoted Modi as a young RSS worker, elevating him in the BJP ranks and helping him eventually become Gujarat Chief Minister in the early 2000s. It is also said that Advani favoured Modi after the 2002 Gujarat riots when then PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee appeared to be disappointed over it. If the recognition for Thakur, years after his passing in 1988, was seen by many political experts as part of the BJP's push to deepen its roots among the economically backward classes (EBC), a category from which he came,

the honour for Advani is being seen as an ode to his instrumental role in shaping the party's core ideology, which has come to dominate the country's polity under Modi. During his long political career, Advani held several party and Government positions, including the role of Deputy Prime Minister in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government, Leader of the Opposition, and BJP president. Born in Karachi, Advani migrated to India after the partition and settled in Bombay. He joined the RSS in 1941 at the age of fourteen. In 1951, he became a member of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, founded by BJP icon Syama Prasad Mookerjee. The Jana Sangh was the political precursor to the BJP. Advani first became a member of the Rajya Sabha in 1970 and served four terms until 1989. In 1977, following the Janata Party's victory in the general elections, he became the Minister for Information and Broadcasting and the Leader of the House in Rajya Sabha. He is one of the founding members of the BJP and served as the party's president three times. In 1989, he became a Lok Sabha member for the first time. When Vajpayee formed a Government in 1999, Advani served as the Minister of Home Affairs and the Deputy Prime Minister.

Modi slams Congress...

From Page 1 He added that under the PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana, crores of farmers have received direct benefits, including around 40 lakh in Odisha. Farmers in Odisha have received ₹30,000 in their bank accounts under the PM Kisan Yojana, he said. Citing an instance of farmers' development, Modi pointed out that while the Government prior to 2014 was procuring paddy worth ₹36,000 crore under the MSP mechanism from Odisha, the present Government has procured paddy worth ₹1.10 lakh crore from the State. "This is because the BJP is seriously working for the real empowerment of farmers," Modi said. Similarly, he said the BJP Government is taking all steps to uplift the fishing community. The Government continues to lay emphasis on improving the lives of fish farmers, he said. Making his first public rally address in five years in Odisha, Modi also inaugurated and laid the foundation stones for projects worth over ₹68,000 crore in Odisha. Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Governor Raghubar Das, and Union Ministers Dharmendra Pradhan, Bishweswar Tudu, and Ashwini Vaishnav were present at the function. Besides inaugurating the ₹400-crore permanent campus of IIM, Sambalpur, Modi unveiled several

infrastructure projects across various sectors such as power, roads, and railways in the state. Modi had laid the foundation stone for the IIM campus in 2021. After unveiling 18 projects in the state, the prime minister said, "These projects will benefit the youth of Odisha and will create employment opportunities. The Centre is supporting Odisha in every sector." The PM also flagged off the Puri-Sonepur-Puri weekly express, which will improve connectivity in the region, and dedicated the Jharsuguda Head Post Office Heritage Building to the nation. He also inaugurated the 412-km Dhamra-Angul pipeline section of the Jagdishpur-Haldia and Bokaro-Dhamra pipeline project (JHBDPL). Built at a cost of around ₹2,450 crore under the 'Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga', the project will connect Odisha with the National Gas Grid. The PM also said the Central Government is also working towards ensuring increasing household savings with the provision of ₹10,000 crore for the rooftop solar scheme in the Budget. "With the rooftop solar scheme, people will have zero energy bills," he said. On women empowerment, the Prime Minister said the Centre also extended the benefits of the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme to ASHA and anganwadi workers who will get medical care services up to ₹5 lakh.

ACB claims 65,000...

From Page 1 The Ministry of Home Affairs has directed the CBI to undertake an investigation into the matter. The private labs allegedly conducted tests on ghost patients who never visited any Mohalla Clinic, as claimed by an ACB official. The ACB also conducted random tele-verification of mobile numbers of patients at both private labs, revealing that a large number of tests were conducted on either invalid mobile numbers or mobile numbers not related to the patients. The examination of the patients revealed that they had never visited or undergone any tests at Mohalla Clinics. While the two private labs conducted tests on 'ghost patients' who never visited any Mohalla Clinic, it has also emerged that the Lab Management Information System (LIMS) containing the names and mobile numbers of the patients was developed, operated, and 'conveniently manipulated' by the two private labs, namely, Agilus Diagnostic Ltd. and M/s Metropolis Healthcare Ltd. The report found that the two private vendors have 'full control and access over the data and system software, and hence, the possibility of manipulation of data by the outsourced lab vendors could not be ruled out.' The cost of conducting different tests at Mohalla clinics varied from ₹100 to ₹300. The preliminary inquiry revealed that a tender process

for outsourcing lab tests/diagnostic services in AAMCs, etc., was initiated vide tender file No. F.11(25)/LBSH/Outsourcing/Lab services/2022/2983 dated 29.04.2022, and the same was awarded to M/s Agilus Diagnostic Ltd. (formerly SRL Ltd.) for cluster A 86B (comprising 8 revenue districts-North District, Centre District, South-West District, West District, South-East District, South District, New Delhi District, North-West District) and M/s Metropolis Healthcare Ltd. for cluster-C (comprising 3 revenue districts-North-East District, East District, Shandara District) as the lowest bidder. Reacting to the ACB findings, Delhi BJP slammed the Kejriwal Government over the procurement and supply of alleged spurious and non-standard drugs in Government hospitals and Mohalla Clinics, saying the alleged scam was being undertaken at the behest of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. Delhi BJP president Veerendra Sachdeva has said the Kejriwal Government conducted 22 lakh fraudulent or unnecessary tests with no contact details provided for over 25,000 tests. Sachdeva said Delhi has a Government with a long list of corruption cases, and recent revelations about a major scam in Mohalla Clinics popped up by the Delhi Government confirm the extent of corruption.

Over 100 bureaucrats join Sadhguru five days leadership programme

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

More than 100 IAS, IPS and other civil services officers undertook an inner engineering leadership retreat programme designed by spiritual leader Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev at the Isha Yoga Centre in Coimbatore. The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), in association with Isha Foundation, organised the five-day in-ser-

vice leadership programme for the officers from the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS), Indian Forest Service (IFoS) and other central services. The programme, designed by Sadhguru, was conducted between January 29 and February 2. "Wonderful to see so many #CivilServiceOfficers invested in inner engineering for inner wellbeing and higher possibilities.

Outrage as...

From Page 1

While TV actor Goni was a bit abusive about the stunt by Pandey, singer and former "Bigg Boss" contestant Vaidya said he never believed in the news that Pandey died from cervical cancer. The hashtag #PoonamPandey attracted over 60 thousand posts on X with the majority being critical of the actor. Talking about Cervical Cancer, Pandey, in her Instagram post, said, "It has claimed the lives of thousands of women who suffered from a lack of knowledge on how to tackle this disease. Unlike some other cancers, Cervical Cancer is entirely preventable. The key lies in the HPV vaccine and early detection tests." "We have the means to ensure no one loses their life to this disease. Let's empower one another with critical awareness and ensure every woman is informed about the steps to take. Visit the link in the bio to delve deeper into what can be done. Together, let's strive to put an end to the devastating impact of the disease and bring," Pandey captioned the video.

the BJP had launched "Operation Lotus 2.0" in Delhi. "They had made a similar attempt to poach AAP MLAs last year by offering them money but failed," she said. After the allegations were made, a delegation of the Delhi BJP led by its chief Virender Sachdeva met Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora on January 30, seeking a probe. A team of Delhi Police officials reached Kejriwal's residence on Friday to serve notice but failed, with sources saying the men at his home refused to accept it. A Crime Branch team had visited the residence of Atishi also on Friday but could not deliver the notice as she was not present.

Notice to Kejriwal over MLAs...

From Page 1 Today, they are exposed. Police ACP deliberately not delivering notice to CM office," he wrote on X. Another AAP leader Sandeep Pathak said, "All officials will now have to learn to say no, no matter how much pressure they face (from the Centre)." Refuting the claims, a senior Crime Branch officer said that the notice will be served only to the CM in person and not to any of his office staff. The officer added that some preliminary questioning will also take place, besides serving him the notice. According to police sources, the notice purportedly contains questions, asking Kejriwal to furnish evidence

related to the allegations made. An officer said the team is again expected to go to his residence on Saturday to serve him the notice in person. Reacting to the police's attempts to serve him a notice over his MLA poaching charge against the BJP, Kejriwal said he sympathised with the police who were being made to indulge in "drama" by their "political bosses" instead of preventing crime in the city. Sharing a video of some policemen at his residence, Kejriwal posted on X that he sympathised with the police officers sent to serve him notice and added "it's their duty to stop crime in Delhi, but they are being made to indulge in drama. That is

why crime is rising in Delhi". He also said in the post, without naming any party or leader, that the "political bosses" are asking him which AAP MLAs were contacted for switching sides. In an apparent swipe at the BJP, he asked why there was drama on the issue when the party knew who was behind toppling Governments of other parties across the country in the last few years by poaching MLAs. Last week, Kejriwal, in a post on X, had alleged that the BJP offered Rs 25 crore each to seven AAP MLAs to quit the party in order to topple his Government. Shortly after Kejriwal, Delhi Minister Atishi held a Press conference and alleged that

Kejriwal must give evidence of MLAs poaching claims: BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting and Youth and Sports Affairs Anurag Singh Thakur on Saturday slammed the AAP convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for failing to accept the notice of the Delhi Police Crime Branch following his accusations that the BJP was trying to poach AAP MLAs. Thakur said Kejriwal should provide evidence of his accusation as his own spokesperson claimed to assess audio evidence, adding AAP convener was trying to divert the attention from corruption charges against him and his government. Thakur,

who was in Himachal Pradesh, responded to a query regarding a notice being issued to Kejriwal by Delhi police. "Kejriwal ji should provide evidence of this accusation as his own spokesperson claimed to possess audio evidence. Today, he should present this evidence to the country; otherwise, he will once again be proven to be dishonest. Kejriwal has faced criticism in the past and has been exposed. He has apologized multiple times to leaders and courts for spreading falsehoods. Kejriwal should produce evidence promptly or issue another apology to the country and the BJP," he said. Thakur further remarked, "Kejriwal fabricates allegations against the BJP to divert attention from his involvement in a liquor scam. The Enforcement Directorate has summoned him five times, yet he has not appeared. He has endorsed the integrity of his ministers, all of whom are currently incarcerated without bail. The public now understands that Kejriwal and his party engage in corruption and deceit." Reacting sharply on the Delhi police crime branch notices, BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla said, "It's a strange situation. People of Delhi are today compelled to call Kejriwal a 'bhagoda' (fugitive)." It is because when the Enforcement Directorate issued

five summons to Kejriwal in connection with the alleged liquor scam, he "ran away". He did not appear before the probe agency and cooperate in the investigation, Poonawalla charged. "When the Delhi



Police crime branch reaches his doorsteps to serve him notice under CrPC for his cooperation in the investigation into the allegations levelled by him only, then too he runs away," the BJP leader said in a press

conference. "Delhi CM Kejriwal is considered a 'betaj badshah' (crownless king) of corruption who is always on the run when it comes to facing law enforcement and probe agencies. On the run and hit and run: This is Kejriwal's character and politics. That's why people of Delhi are saying 'Bhag Kejriwal Bhag' (run Kejriwal run)," Poonawalla added. The BJP leader alleged there is no department left in the Aam Aadmi Party government in Delhi where "Kejriwal and company" did not cheat and commit loot, be it excise policy, medicines, education or his "sheesh mahal", the official residence of the chief minister.

"Fugitive Kejriwal has no faith in the Constitution. He considers himself above the Constitution, law and order as well as probe agencies. That's why he is called 'nizam-e-Kejriwal'. That's why he is on the run," Poonawalla said. Poonawalla said Kejriwal and his party leaders had levelled "scurrilous" allegations that the AAP was trying to poach AAP Delhi MLAs and to lure them into the party fold, a hefty cash to the tune of Rs 800 crore was kept ready. "After levelling such a serious allegation of corruption, it was your (AAP leaders') duty to handover its proof to the law enforcement agency (Delhi Police). But, Kejriwal went

silent after levelling allegations following his politics of hit and run, shoot and scoot," Poonawalla said. It was a BJP leaders' delegation which approached the Delhi Police and filed a complaint seeking probe into Kejriwal's claims. It's because the BJP pursues the "politics of morality" and it has nothing to hide, he added. "Kejriwal is a big cheat and a turn master," the BJP leader charged and asked, "It's been more than a year (since allegations were made), where is the audio tape that they claimed to have as proof of the allegation? No such audio tape has been handed over to the law enforcement agency so far," he added.

ED moves court against CM for repeatedly skipping summons

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate on Saturday filed a complaint against Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in a court for not appearing before it in a money laundering case linked to the alleged excise policy scam. The complaint was filed before Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Divya Malhotra, who put up the matter for further hearing on February 7. "Fresh complaint case" for non-attendance in compliance of Section 50, PMLA, 2002, received by way of assignment," the judge noted. The judge heard the part arguments and adjourned the matter. "This is a fresh complaint case. Submissions heard. Put up for remaining submissions/consideration on February 7, 2024," the judge said. Additional Solicitor General SV Raju appeared and made submissions for ED.



Kejriwal on Friday skipped the fifth summons issued to him by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for questioning in a money laundering case linked to an alleged liquor policy scam and instead joined AAP leaders and workers in a protest near the BJP headquarters on DDU Marg. The ED on Wednesday had issued a fresh and the fifth summons to Kejriwal after he skipped four earlier summons over the last four months. Kejriwal will not appear before the agency for questioning, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) said. Terming the summons "illegal",

the party said the ED is repeatedly sending notices to Kejriwal to arrest him. The AAP also alleged that the BJP wants to topple its government in Delhi by getting Kejriwal arrested. The AAP will not let this happen, it said. Kejriwal skipped ED summonses for November 2 and December 21 in 2023 and January 3 and January 18 this year. He had called these notices "illegal". 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 VK Saxena recommended a Central Bureau of Investigation probe, following which the ED registered a case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Officials directed to expedite issuance of caste certificates

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Minister for Welfare of SC/ST, Raaj Kumar Anand has directed the Revenue Department to enhance the efficiency of caste certificate issuance within a stipulated time frame of 15 days. At a meeting with Revenue Department officials, it was told by the revenue department that due to an error while filling out the application form and uploading the documents by the applicant, the form gets rejected on verification if there is a mismatch of any of the details given by the applicant. To overcome the issue, the Minister asked the Revenue Department to collaborate with NIC, to check the possibility of editing the bar so that relevant changes can be made, if need be. This would resolve issues promptly to streamline the application process within the stipulated time frame. To check the genuineness of the rejected applications, Minister for Welfare of SC/ST, Raaj Kumar Anand directed the Revenue Department to compile district-wise data for the past six months.

Nyay Sankalp Sammelan rally held at Ramlila maidan

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday said Rahul Gandhi is taking out Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra under adverse conditions to save the country's democracy and constitution and if this struggle fails people will suffer under the Modi government. He was speaking at the 'Nyay Sankalp Sammelan' rally at Ramlila maidan, Geeta Colony, in east Delhi, organised by the Delhi Congress. Kharge thanked Rahul on behalf of the Congress and said that his decision to take out Yatra was perhaps the biggest step taken by any leader in the party so far. He is seeking justice for all including youth, women, farmers and poor people. Despite such adverse situations and cold conditions, he is taking out the Yatra. He is fighting against the atrocities of the BJP government, Kharge said. "This fight is to save democracy and the constitution of the country. If you fail to support the Congress in this fight, you will become a slave of Modi," Kharge said. In a blistering attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Congress president charged him with not fulfilling his promises to provide jobs to the youth and



recover black money generated in the country. "What is Modi's guarantee? His guarantee is not fulfilling promises," Kharge said. He accused the prime minister of trying to "impose his views on the country and punishing everyone for gaining power." "Our fight is against the RSS and BJP. They want to finish the country and alienate the poor. Congress will have to go to every household to create awareness against BJP's divisive policy," he said. He claimed that 411 legislators of opposition parties have been booked and sent to jail and the BJP tried to form governments in the states by framing and booking the MLAs of opposition parties ruling there. Kharge also lashed at Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for quitting the Mahagathbandhan alliance. "He used to talk a lot about socialism but turned out to be Paltu Kumar."

Project to beautify important road stretch approved

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government has approved a project for the beautification of the road stretch from the Timarpur traffic signal to the Chandgi Ram Akhara here, according to an official statement issued on Saturday. To provide citizens with smoother and more efficient commuting experiences, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government has approved the project to beautify one of the most important road stretches in the city, the statement said. Important buildings, such as the Vidhan Sabha, Metcalf House, Vikas Bhawan-II and Trauma Centre, are located along the road stretch. The design and estimate for the project were recently approved by Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Atishi, the statement said. "Under the project, the beauty of the road will be enhanced with splendid horticulture and the road will be illuminated with LED lights. Along with beautifying the road, there will also be a focus on making it user-friendly. Necessary changes will be made in the footpath to facilitate pedestrians. To enhance the beauty of the road stretch, sculptures will be installed along with street furniture," it added.

Capital likely to get rainfall until tomorrow, says MeT



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said in its latest bulletin that Delhi and its neighbouring States in North and Central India are likely to get widespread rainfall until Monday (February 5) owing to a fresh western disturbance. The western disturbance has been forecast to affect Northwest India starting Saturday. Delhi on Saturday recorded a minimum temperature of 6.7 degrees Celsius, two notches below the season's average, with dense fog in some isolated pockets of the city. The maximum temperature was settled at 23.2 degree Celsius, two notches above the normal. Palam, Lodhi Road, Ridge, Ayanagar, Jafarpur and Narela recorded the maximum temperature at 21.3 degree Celsius, 22.7 degree Celsius, 21.9 degree Celsius, 22.6 degree Celsius, 21.5 degree Celsius and 22.5 degree Celsius. The weather department has forecast generally cloudy sky and light rain thundershowers accompanied with

gusty winds on Sunday, the IMD said. The Palam area recorded 50-metre visibility at 5.30 am, the IMD, night and morning will be colder due to icy wind coming from hills. No dense fog was reported at Delhi Airports at 8.30 am on Saturday. Palam weather station reported 800-metre visibility and Safdarjung 1,500-metre. Delhi's air quality at 6 pm was recorded in the 'moderate' category with a reading of 193, according to data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). Earlier, in a special message to Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Earth Sciences and chief secretaries of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi, Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, the IMD warned of wet spell with thunderstorm and hailstorm at isolated places is likely over Northwest & adjoining Central India during 03rd to 05th with peak activity on 04th February, 2024.

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Solar panels coming on rapid rail platforms rooftops

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) is installing solar panels on rooftop spaces along the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS, which is expected to yield 12.5 million units of solar energy and reduce 11,500 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions annually. According to official, a solar capacity of about three MW has already been installed over the platform sheds of RRTS stations at Sahibabad, Guldhar, Duhai, Duhai Depot station and Duhai workshop of the priority section, which will be able to meet the auxiliary load requirement of these locations. "The NCRTC is poised to install about 11 megawatt of solar capacity over its rooftop spaces along the 82 km-long Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) corridor. This initiative is expected to yield 12.5 million units of solar energy annually and a reduction of 11,500



tonnes of CO2 emissions annually," an official said. Further solar power plants will be installed at the remaining stations of the RRTS corridor progressively. NCRTC aspires to cover 70 per cent of the total energy requirement of the entire Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor through solar energy, officials said. The Sahibabad station's solar power plant, with a total capacity

of 729 kilowatt and 1,620 high-efficiency solar panels, is expected to generate about 10 lakh units of electricity annually. The Duhai Depot houses a solar power plant with an installed capacity of 585 KW, they stated. The adoption of green technologies, including low-carbon initiatives, has been integral from the pre-design stage of the RRTS project, officials

said. Initiatives such as the use of fly ash bricks, efficient disposal of construction and demolition waste, creation of airy and comfortable interiors, energy-efficient designs, implementation of rainwater harvesting systems, and extensive utilisation of solar energy underscore NCRTC's dedication to sustainability, officials said. Throughout the design, construction, and operation stages, careful adherence to green parameters has been a priority, they said. Moreover, elaborate landscaping efforts at Sahibabad station and Ghaziabad RSS and the space beneath the RRTS viaduct contribute to a comprehensive approach that significantly reduces energy consumption and carbon footprint, they said. The NCRTC will further explore potential opportunities in electric and transformative mobility, a hydrogen-based economy, and other alternative fuel and energy sources to reduce the carbon footprint, they said. The 17-km long priority section of the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor is currently operational. Team NCRTC is working rapidly towards running Namoo Bharat trains in the additional 25 km long section from Duhai to Meerut South i.e. Beyond the priority section in another two months.

10/28 runway at IGA now operational: DIAL

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) on Saturday said the re-carpeted runway RW 10/28 is operational now. Now, Delhi airport has four operational runways - RW 09/27, RW 11R/29L, RW 10/28, and RW 11L/29R. The Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGA), the country's largest airport, now has four operational runways. In recent times, the airport has witnessed fog-induced operational disruptions that resulted in flight delays, cancellations, diversions as well as passengers facing long waiting hours and congestion. The Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) said the re-carpeting and refurbishment work of RW 10/28, also known as the second runway, has been successfully completed and handed over to the Air Traffic Control (ATC) for commercial



operations from February 3. "DIAL had undertaken the much-needed re-carpeting work of the 3,813 metre-long and 45 metre-wide second runway in the middle of September 2023, just after the conclusion of the historic G20 Summit. Re-carpeting work of the runway was completed in December 2023, after which Airfield Ground Lighting

(AGL) operationalisation was taken up," it said in a statement. The closure of the runway RW 10/28, which can handle flight operations at low visibility, was cited as one of the reasons in certain quarters for the congestion during the fog season. "The CAT III enabled Runway 10/28 at the Delhi Airport has been operationalised today. This would ensure further mit-

igation of weather-related congestion issues," Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said in a post on X. The re-carpeting works included milling the entire length of the runway and overlaying it with Polymer Modified Bitumen (PMB). PMB is bitumen combined with one or more polymer materials which enhances the mechanical properties of the bitumen material and it can withstand heavy-duty traffic and extreme weather conditions, the statement said. According to DIAL, the rehabilitation work of RW 10/28 was taken up for improved passenger experience, including induction of few additional taxiways. "With the completion of rehabilitation work, Delhi airport would become future-ready for undertaking operations with its full capacity. The passenger handling capacity of its three terminals

would increase to 100 Million Passengers Per Annum (MPPA) and the airside capacity will enhance to handle 140 MPPA," the statement said. In a message to the staff last month, Air India chief Campbell Wilson said the airline was looking at building a larger pool of pilots who can operate in lower visibility conditions, better roster planning and schedule buffers as well as more pre-emptive flight cancellations to deal with disruptions. "... As most of you in northern India are well aware we're in the 'thick' (so to speak) of an unusually bad fog season. This, coupled with the unfortunately-timed closure of one of Delhi's two 'low-visibility' runways for repair, has significantly impacted all airlines' operations, with consequential effect on staff and, of course, customers," Wilson said on January 25.

Cops rescue youth from kidnappers, arrest accused

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

The Gurugram Police on Friday night rescued a youth from the clutches of three kidnappers and arrested the accused from Sonapat within hours of the kidnapping incident. They had allegedly kidnapped the youth for not returning Rs 8.5 lakh out of the Rs 15 lakh which the youth had allegedly taken in the name of getting one of the accused a government job. Police have seized one licensed revolver, three cartridges and four mobiles from their possession, police added. According to police, a woman complained to police on Thursday that her son Manoj was kidnapped by three people from an area around M3M Residential society near the



Naurangpur village and taken to Sonapat. A team led by Sub-inspector Lalit Kumar, in-charge of the crime unit, Manesar and another team led by Inspector Ajay Kumar, SHO of the Kherki Daula police station were formed. Both the teams reached Sonapat and rescued Manoj by arresting the three accused. The arrested accused were identified as Sandeep alias Kala (42), resident of village Sanpera, Mohit (28), resident of village Dheeran

and Kunal Kumar (23), resident of village Hasanyarpur Tihar Kalan in the Sonapat district, said police. "During interrogation, the accused revealed that the victim Manoj had taken Rs 15 lakh in the name of providing a job to accused Sandeep's nephew. When he could not return the money, the accused took away Manoj's Hyundai car. Even after this, Rs 8.5 lakh remained outstanding," said Varun Dahiya, ACP crime.

Imran, wife get 7-year sentence each for un-Islamic marriage

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

A Pakistan court on Saturday sentenced jailed former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi to seven years imprisonment in the 'un-Islamic nikah' case, less than a week before the general elections. This is 71-year-old Khan's fourth conviction since 2022 adding to the troubles of the beleaguered founder of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party ahead of the February 8 polls.

Bibi's first husband, Khawar Maneka, had filed the case, alleging that she violated the Islamic practice of observing the mandatory pause or Iddat between two marriages.

Maneka also accused his ex-wife and Khan of being in an adulterous relationship before marriage, a crime punishable by death by stoning.

"The verdict was pronounced by Senior Civil Judge Qudratullah today, a day after



the hearing of the case was conducted inside the Adiala Jail premises at Rawalpindi for 14 hours on Friday," Geo News said and added that Qudratullah also slapped fines of Rs 5,00,000 each on the couple. Both Khan and Bushra were present in the courtroom when the verdict was announced.

Earlier this week, Khan, 71, was sentenced to 10 years in the cipher case and 14 years in the Toshakhana case.

Arrested on August 5 last year, when he was found guilty

in the Toshakhana corruption case filed by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), Khan has since been imprisoned - first in the Attock Jail and later shifted to the Adiala Jail.

Following his conviction in what has come to be known as the Iddat case, Khan told court reporters that the case against him was created to "humiliate and disgrace" both him and his spouse, Bushra Bibi.

"This marks the first instance in history where a case related to Iddat has been initi-

ated," Dawn.com quoted Khan as saying and added that he said, it was also the first time that someone was sentenced to 14 years imprisonment in a Toshakhana corruption case.

On Friday, the cross-examination of the four prosecution witnesses was completed, while Khan and Bibi, 49, submitted a joint statement, answering 13 questions. The court rejected the defence's request to produce additional witnesses. A plea of acquittal and jurisdictional pleas were also rejected.

"So far, cross-examination of the statements given by the four witnesses in the case has been completed. The statements of Khan and Bushra under section 342 have also been recorded (before the verdict was pronounced)," Geo News added.

Bibi declared the divorce certificate of November 14, 2017, as fabricated, claiming she completed her mandatory iddat period from April to August 2017 after receiving a

verbal triple talaq (divorce) from Maneka in April 2017.

The marriage with Khan was solemnised on January 1, 2018, and Bibi reportedly exercised a lot of influence on the former premier during his days in office.

She was supposedly a faith healer and the cricketer-turned-politician used to visit her for spiritual solace before the two developed a liking that ended in their marriage.

Khan has already faced three convictions since 2022 when he was ousted from power. He was arrested on August 5 when he was found guilty in the Toshakhana corruption case filed by the Election Commission of Pakistan. Since then he has been imprisoned - first in the Attock Jail and later shifted to the Adiala Jail. Khan and his wife were sentenced to 14 years in prison on Wednesday in a corruption case for retaining expensive state gifts when he was in power.

US issues travel advisory ahead of Feb 8 Pakistan elections

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD



The US has issued a travel advisory for American citizens visiting Pakistan and asked them to exercise caution ahead of the general elections scheduled for February 8, and also warned of potential poll-related violence.

The US Embassy in Pakistan on Friday issued an advisory and asked its citizens to remain vigilant and aware of the locations of political rallies occurring in areas they intend to visit.

The advisory said on February 8, election day, areas around polling stations may be crowded and US citizens not eligible to participate in Pakistan's elections should avoid them.

The mission noted that political parties in Pakistan were campaigning actively, such as taking out marches, rallies, and speeches, which are intrinsic to any democratic process. However, it further said that such public gatherings have the potential to block

traffic, disrupt transportation and create obstacles to free movement and safety.

The advisory also cautioned that in some instances, political activities in Pakistan have been targeted for violence. Scores of pre-poll attacks on political parties have been reported this week from the troubled provinces of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The US mission advised American citizens not eligible to participate in Pakistan's elections to avoid visiting areas around polling stations on February 8 as they may be

crowded.

There could also be disruptions to internet and cellular service leading up to and throughout election day, it said.

It also provided recommendations such as avoiding areas of large public gatherings, exercising caution if one unexpectedly finds themselves in the vicinity of a large gathering or demonstration and reviewing one's personal security plans.

The embassy urged US citizens to monitor local media, keep a low profile and also carry their identification documents and cooperate with police.

Minority Hindus feel left out of poll process in Pakistan

PTI ■ KARACHI

Ahead of the February 8 general elections in Pakistan, members of the minority Hindu community feel they are mostly left out of the poll process despite having a notable presence, especially in the southern Sindh province.

The census showed that Hindus account for just 2.14 per cent of the total population in Muslim-majority Pakistan and in Sindh itself their large concentration means they account for nearly nine per cent.

Under Pakistan's Constitution, 10 seats are reserved for members of minority communities in the National Assembly and 24 seats in the provinces.

Leaders and members of the Hindu community rue the fact that they are not given proper representation and many are not even registered as voters.

Ramesh Kumar Vankwani, the Patron-in-Chief of the Pakistan Hindu Council, noted that the Hindu community, especially those belonging to the lower economic sector or those living in remote villages in Sindh feel left out of the election process.

"In the national census carried out before the elections, the Hindus were not counted fully and we don't agree with the population tally finalised by the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) and with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) where you have to register as a voter," he said.

According to the law, a citizen must be registered with the state and then must register

with the ECP as a voter before they can exercise their right to franchise.

However, members of the lower caste Hindus, the largest minority community living in Sindh, claim that compared to their population, few people are registered as voters due to issues in their identification documents.

"The count of the Hindu population is not correct and because many live in remote areas and are not educated their identification documents carry discrepancies which means they are not registered as voters," said Shiva Kaachi, a local Hindu community leader from Mirpurkhas.

When the last general elections were held in 2018 approximately 105.9 million voters had exercised their right to vote and some 3.626 million voters were from minority communities.

Kaachi said in reality Hindus make up the largest minority community in Pakistan, especially in Sindh, numbering around 4.77 million but officially only 1.777 million are registered as voters.

The Christian community is second with 1.639 million voters. Ahmadis had 165,369 votes, while the Sikhs had 8,833 votes.

From 2.77 million in 2013 to 3.626 million in 2018, minority voters in Pakistan have increased by more than a million to 4.43 million in 2023 but Hindus from lower castes are still not given voting rights, another community leader, Mukesh Meghwar said.

"This means their impact and representation in the election process is not as it should be," he added.

Iranian-backed militia official downplays US strikes in Iraq

AP ■ BAGHDAD

An Iraqi militia official on Saturday hinted at a desire to de-escalate tensions in the Middle East following retaliatory strikes launched by the United States against dozens of sites in Iraq and Syria used by Iranian-backed militias and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard.

Hussein al-Mosawi, spokesperson for Harakat al-Nujaba, one of the main Iranian-backed militias in Iraq, in an interview with The Associated Press in Baghdad condemned the US strikes, saying Washington "must understand that every action elicits a reaction".

But he then struck a more conciliatory tone, saying that "we do not wish to escalate or

widen regional tensions".

Mossawi said the targeted sites in Iraq were mainly "devoid of fighters and military personnel at the time of the attack". Suggesting there was not too much damage could allow him to justify the lack of a strong response.

Syrian state media reported that there were casualties from the strikes but did not give a number. Rami Abdurrahman, who heads the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said that 23 people were killed in the Syria strikes, all rank-and-file fighters.

Iraqi government spokesperson Bassim al-Awadi said in a statement on Saturday that the strikes in Iraq near the Syrian border killed 16, including civilians, and there was "sig-

nificant damage" to homes and private properties.

A US official said on Saturday that an initial battle damage assessment showed the US had struck each of its planned targets in addition to a few "dynamic targets" that popped up as the mission unfolded, including a surface to air missile site and drone launch sites.

The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to provide details that were not yet public, did not yet have a casualty assessment.

Iraq's foreign ministry announced Saturday it would summon the US embassy's charge d'affaires — the ambassador being outside of the country — to deliver a formal protest over US strikes on "Iraqi military and civilian

against the Islamic State in 2014, but in practice it continues to operate largely outside of state control.

The Popular Mobilisation Forces said in a statement on Saturday that one of the sites targeted was an official security headquarters of the group. In addition to 16 killed, it said 36 had been wounded, "while the search is still ongoing for the bodies of a number of the missing".

The Iraqi government has been in a delicate position since a group of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias calling itself Islamic Resistance in Iraq — many of whose members are also part of the PMF — began launching attacks on US bases in Iraq and Syria on October 18.

The group described the

strikes as retaliation for Washington's support for Israel in the war in Gaza.

Iraqi officials have attempted behind the scenes to rein the militias in, while also condemning US retaliatory strikes as a violation of the country's sovereignty and calling for an exit of the 2,500 US troops in the country as part of an international coalition to fight IS.

Last month, Iraqi and US military officials launched formal talks to wind down the coalition's presence, a process that will likely take years.

One of the main Iranian-backed militias, Kataib Hezbollah, said it was suspending attacks on American troops following Sunday's strike that killed the US troops in Jordan, to avoid "embarrassing" the Iraqi government.



Russian President Vladimir Putin, second left, Tula Region Governor Alexei Dyumin, second right, Presidential Envoy to Russia's Central Federal District Igor Shchegolev, right, drink tea as they visit Yaroslav Shvetsov, a doctor at the Tula Region Oncology Centre's family in Tula, Russia, on Friday. (AP/PTI)

Labour party woos British Indians to counter PM Sunak

PTI ■ LONDON

The UK's Opposition Labour Party is overhauling its outreach efforts to British Indians, amid concern that the party's support among the country's largest ethnic minority has slumped in recent years, according to a media report.

Indian-origin people remain both the largest Asian ethnic group and largest non-white ethnic group in the UK and constitute 3.1 per cent of the population at 1.8 million, according to the 2021 UK census.

The Labour Party led by Keir Starmer has taken a series of measures designed to reconnect with British Indians, including hiring two community outreach volunteers, revamping the Labour Friends of India group and organising a trip to India for two of its senior shadow ministers. The Guardian newspaper reported on Thursday.

There is growing evidence that Labour has lost the support of people of Indian descent.

In 2010, 61 per cent of British Indians said they supported Labour, but a survey seen by the Guardian shows by 2019 that figure had dropped to just 30 per cent.

Senior Labour leaders worry that having Rishi Sunak as Britain's first Hindu prime minister could increase the trend.

Focus groups carried out late last year among first-, second- and third-generation Indians by the consultancy Public First showed the problem facing Labour.

One participant said Sunak's position showed the "tables were turning" for British Indians, while another commented: "It's really good how he's brought the Indian community into the traditions of 10 Downing Street."

The latest general election must be called in January 2025, but there is a very small chance that Sunak would want to delay the polls beyond next year.

According to the 2021 Census, Hindus in England and Wales enumerated 1,032,775, or 1.7 per cent of the population.

"We've taken Indian voters for granted for years, but it's becoming increasingly obvious they are going elsewhere and we need to do something about that," the paper quoted one party official as saying.

A party spokesperson said: "Keir Starmer's changed Labour party is back in the service of working people and continues to engage with people of all backgrounds and faiths — including our Indian communities."

The measures being taken by party supporters include setting up a new group called Labour Indians to organise community events and target messages to British Indians on social media.

Krish Raval, the group's chair, said: "As a canvassing umbrella initiative focused on event organisation and social media dissemination, we're looking to serve the widest group of stakeholders to ensure a Labour victory."

Two volunteers have been hired to work with the group, with part of their work focused on briefing Labour parliamentary candidates on issues of importance to India.

On Sunday the shadow foreign secretary, David Lammy, and the shadow business secretary, Jonathan Reynolds, will travel to Delhi and Mumbai on a five-day trip also designed to demonstrate the party is not hostile to Indian interests.

Indians are the second-largest immigrant group in the UK.

For years nearly two-thirds of British Indians supported Labour, in line with other minority-ethnic groups.

But that has fallen sharply in recent years.

Experts say the shift has come about partly for socio-economic reasons and partly for religious ones.

Hamas show signs of resurgence

Deploys police, relases salary payments to civil servants in areas of Israel withdrawal

AP ■ PARIS

Hamas has begun deploying police forces and making partial salary payments to some of its civil servants in Gaza City in recent days, resurfacing in areas from which Israel had withdrawn the bulk of its troops a month ago, four residents and a senior official in the militant group said on Saturday.

Signs of a Hamas resurgence in the Gaza Strip's largest city underscore the group's resilience despite Israel's deadly air and ground campaign against it over the past four months. Israel has said it's determined to crush Hamas militarily and prevent it from returning to power in Gaza, an enclave it has ruled since 2007.

In recent days, Israeli forces renewed strikes in the western and northwestern parts of Gaza City, including in areas where some of the salary distributions were reported to have taken place.

Four Gaza City residents

told The Associated Press that in recent days, uniformed and plainclothes police officers deployed near police headquarters and other government offices, including near Shifa Hospital, the territory's largest. The residents said they saw both the return of civil servants and subsequent Israeli airstrikes near the makeshift offices.

The return of police marks an attempt to reinstate order in the devastated city after Israel withdrew a significant number of troops from northern Gaza last month, a Hamas official told AP, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media.

The official said the group's leaders had given directions to reestablish order in parts of the north where Israeli forces had withdrawn, including helping prevent the looting of shops and houses abandoned by residents who had heeded repeated Israeli evacuation orders and headed to the southern half of

Gaza. During Israel's ground offensive, many homes and buildings were left half-standing or reduced to piles of scrap, rubble and dust.

Saeed Abdel-Bar, a resident of Gaza City, said a cousin received funds from a makeshift Hamas office near the hospital that was set up to distribute USD 200 payouts to government employees, including police officers and municipal workers.

Since seizing control of Gaza nearly 17 years ago, Hamas has been operating a government bureaucracy with tens of thousands of civil servants, including teachers, traffic cops and civil police who operate separately from the group's secretive military wing.

The partial salary payments of USD 200 for at least some government employees signal that Israel has not delivered a knock-out blow to Hamas, even as it claims to have killed more than 9,000 Hamas fighters.

Ahmed Abu Hadrous, a

Gaza City resident, said Israeli warplanes struck the area where the makeshift office is located multiple times earlier this week, including Saturday morning.

The strikes come roughly a month after Israeli military leaders said they had broken up the command structure of Hamas battalions in the north, but that individual fighters were continuing to carry out guerrilla-style attacks.

Meanwhile, combat continued in southern Gaza on Saturday.

At least 11 people were injured on Saturday after Israel's military fired smoke bombs at displaced people sheltering at the headquarters of the Palestinian Red Crescent in Khan Younis, the organisation said. It didn't elaborate and the Israeli military had no immediate comment.

The injuries followed violence earlier this week, when Israeli forces opened fire at the headquarters and an adjacent hospital, killing three displaced

people and an aid worker. Six others were injured, the Red Crescent said on Friday.

At least 17 people, including women and children, were killed in two separate airstrikes overnight in Gaza's southernmost town of Rafah, on the border with Egypt, according to the registration office at a hospital where the bodies were taken. The first strike hit a residential building east of Rafah, killing at least 13 people from the Hijazi family. The dead included four women and three children, hospital officials said.

The second strike struck a house in the Jeneina area of Rafah, killing at least two men and two women from the Hams family.

The 17 bodies were taken to the Abu Yousef al-Najjar hospital, the main health facility in Rafah, and were seen by an AP journalist.

The Health Ministry in Gaza said Saturday that 107 people were killed over the preceding 24-hour period, bringing the wartime total to 27,238.

Cops detain man who stabbed 3 in Paris station

AP ■ PARIS

A man injured three people Saturday in a stabbing attack at the major Gare de Lyon train station in Paris, another nerve-rattling security incident in the Olympic host city before the Summer Games open in six months.

Paris police said officers quickly detained the attacker who used a sharp weapon in the assault at around 8 am. One of the people injured was in a serious condition; the other two were more lightly hurt.

Police had no other immediate details.

Security in Paris is being ramped up as it prepares to welcome 10,500 Olympians and millions of visitors for the first Olympic Games in a century in the French capital.

The Games are to open with a massive open-air ceremony along the River Seine on July 26, a major security challenge in the city that has been repeatedly hit by terror attacks, most notably in 2015.

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PLI scheme only kickstart, competition will prevail: Goyal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The industry should look at the measures under the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme as an initial support because going forward, the industry has to face competition to grow further, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Saturday. He asked the PLI incentive beneficiary firms to share their "constructive criticism and feedback for better implementation of the scheme". The idea is to make India a manufacturing powerhouse and this is a long journey ahead, he said. More than 1,200 stakeholders, including government officials and industry players are meeting here and deliberating on the progress of 14 PLI schemes. The scheme incentives should not be seen as crutches and "we are not looking to make you dependent on

government subsidies. This is only like a kickstart... "The PLI scheme is only meant to give you that little bit of a boost to kickstart your effort and please look at it as a kickstart, an initial support (because) ultimately competition will prevail," Goyal said. "We will ultimately have to compete with each other and with the world," he added. The minister also suggested that the industry gradually focus on global markets and come out of the "cosy comfort" of India's large domestic market. A more outward looking effort would help add scale, volume and enhance cost effectiveness, he said, adding, "We are also looking for your cooperation and collaboration". Speaking at the meeting, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh called upon the industry to



focus on value addition as India's manufacturing Gross Value Added (GVA) is about 17.4 per cent. It is not enough for a country that is looking to become a developed nation and for huge job creation, Singh said. He added that certain quarters have raised some problems with

incentive and leave as they invest for a short time to get the subsidy, but "in this case, the scheme design is such" that it is "highly unlikely" that the industry will leave. The most important thing is that this government trusts the private sector and it has made this scheme in consultation with the industry. "The scheme will help you grow bigger. You will be able to change India's manufacturing landscape and really bump up our share in the GVA as (at present) it is really far too low for an economy that is trying to achieve a developed nation status in the next 25 years," Singh said. He added that there could be some "teething" issues in the scheme with regards to documentation or incentive disbursement, but those are "nuts and bolts" of the story on which "we would like your feedback". Officials from 10 ministries and

departments, project management agencies and industry players from 14 PLI schemes are attending the meeting. The discussions are likely to set higher standards of achievements of the PLI scheme and facilitate its effective implementation going forward. The government in 2021 announced PLI schemes for 14 sectors such as telecommunication, white goods, textiles, manufacturing of medical devices, automobiles, speciality steel, food products, high-efficiency solar PV modules, advanced chemistry cell battery, drones, and pharma, with an outlay of Rs 1.97 lakh crore. The schemes aim to attract investments in key sectors and cutting-edge technology; ensure efficiency, bring economies of size and scale in the manufacturing sector and make Indian companies and manufacturers globally competitive.



Cathay Pacific resumes direct flight between Chennai, Hong Kong

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Cathay Pacific has resumed direct flight connectivity between Chennai and Hong Kong nearly after a gap of four years, the airliner said. The first flight departed from Chennai on February 2, part of the three flights per week service. "This development marks a noteworthy return to service after a four-year pause, underscoring Cathay Pacific's commitment to delivering seamless global connectivity," a press release here said. "The resumption of direct flights from Chennai to Hong Kong underscores our commitment to delivering outstanding service and connectivity. Embracing our philosophy of Move Beyond, we ensure an elevated travel experience for all," Cathay Pacific Regional General Manager - South Asia, Middle East and Africa, Rakesh Raicar said. "With the resurgence of both leisure and business travel from Chennai, along with a noticeable increase in student traffic, we are committed to providing services that cater to the diverse requirements of our customers," Raicar said. Cathay Pacific would operate flights to Hong Kong on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays from Chennai and on the return direction Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.

Debt stricken Sri Lanka signs free trade pact with Thailand

AP ■ COLOMBO

Debt-stricken Sri Lanka signed a trade pact with Thailand on Saturday in a bid to boost trade and investment as the Indian ocean island nation is struggling to recover from its worst economic crisis that hit two years ago. The Sri Lanka Thailand Free Trade Agreement covering trade in goods, investment, custom procedures and intellectual property rights was signed in the capital Colombo in the presence of Sri Lanka President Ranil Wickremesinghe and Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin. Sri Lanka began talks with Thailand on a free trade agreement in 2016. The countries' two-way trade was worth about USD 352 million in 2022, with Thailand's exports at USD 292 million and Sri Lanka's exports at USD 58 million, according to Sri Lankan government's data. Sri Lanka exports include mainly precious stones,

apparel, tea and spices while imports from Thailand include smoked rubber sheets, natural rubber, plastic and cement. Sri Lanka's government expects the trade pact would boost two-way trade up to USD 1.5 billion. Thavisin said that the countries agreed to promote investment in areas such as fisheries, food processing, tourism and green energy. Thailand has made over USD 92 million in direct investment in Sri Lanka from 2005 to 2022. Giving further boost to tourism, Thavisin said that Thailand's flag carrier Thai Airways would resume daily flights from Bangkok to Sri Lanka next month. Sri Lanka has been struggling with an economic crisis since declaring bankruptcy in April 2022 with more than USD 83 billion in debt, more than half of it to foreign creditors. The crisis led to protests that ousted then-President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

KYC non compliance led to ban on Paytm Bank

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Money laundering concerns and questionable dealings of hundreds of crores of rupees between popular wallet Paytm and its lesser-known banking arm had led Reserve Bank of India to clamp down on tech poster boy Vijay Sekhar Sharma-run entities, sources said. The central bank has ordered Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL) to halt most of its business including taking

further deposits, conducting credit transactions and carrying out top-ups on any customer accounts, prepaid instruments, wallets, and cards for paying road tolls after February 29. This means customers can access their existing deposits and pay for services with money stored in their wallets till February 29. And in case, RBI does not relent, top-up for Paytm wallet will stop and transactions through it would no longer be carried. In a major action against



PPBL, the Reserve Bank earlier this week directed the lender to stop accepting deposits or top-ups in customer accounts, wallets, FASTags and other instruments after February 29. The PPBL, sources said, had lakhs of non-KYC (Know Your Customer) compliant accounts and in thousands of cases single PANs were used for opening multiple accounts. There were instances where the total value of transactions - running into crores of

rupees, much beyond regulatory limits in minimum KYC pre-paid instruments raising money laundering concerns, sources said. According to an analyst, Paytm Payments Bank has about 35 crore e-wallets. Of this, about 31 crore are dormant while only about 4 crore would be operative with either no balance or a small balance. An unusually high number of dormant accounts are prone to have been used as mule accounts.

SBI net profit declines 35 per cent in Q3

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The country's largest lender SBI on Saturday reported a 35 per cent fall in standalone net profit to Rs 9,164 crore for the December quarter. State Bank of India (SBI) had earned a net profit of Rs 14,205 crore in the year-to-date period. The bank's total income rose to Rs 1,18,193 crore in the third quarter

of the ongoing fiscal as against Rs 98,084 crore in the same period a year ago, the bank said in a regulatory filing. During the quarter, the bank earned interest income of Rs 1,06,734 crore as against Rs 86,616 crore in the same period a year ago. The bank's gross Non-Performing Assets (NPA) of the total advances declined to 2.42 per cent

at December-end from 3.14 per cent at the end of the third quarter of last year. Similarly, net Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) also eased to 0.64 per cent against 0.77 per cent at the end of the same period a year ago. On a consolidated basis, SBI Group's net profit slipped 29 per cent to Rs 11,064 crore as against Rs 15,477 crore in the same quarter a year ago. However, total income increased to Rs 1,53,072 crore as compared to Rs 1,27,219 crore in the first quarter of the previous fiscal. During the quarter under review, the bank acquired the entire 20 per cent stake held by SBI Capital Markets Ltd (SBICAPS) in SBI Pension Funds Pvt Ltd.

Ahead of IPO, Park Hotels garners ₹409 crore from anchor investors

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Aapeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Ltd, which runs hotels under the "The Park" brand, has mobilised Rs 409.5 crore from anchor investors days before its initial public offering. The company has decided to allocate 2.64 crore equity shares to 37 funds at Rs 155 apiece, which is also the upper end of the price band, according to a circular uploaded on BSE's website on Friday. Societe Generale, Citigroup Global Markets Mauritius, Integrated Core Strategies (Asia) Pte Ltd, Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance Company, SBI General Insurance Company, Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance Company, and CLSA Global Markets Pte Ltd are among the



anchor investors.

In addition, ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund (MF), Edelweiss Mutual Fund, Whiteoak Capital, Bandhan Mutual Fund and Quant Mutual Fund participated in the anchor round. The issue with a price band of Rs 147 to Rs 155 per share will open for public subscription on February 5 and conclude on February 7. The Rs 920-crore IPO is a combination of a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 600 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of equity shares to the tune of Rs 320 crore by promoters and investor shareholders. Those offering shares in the OFS are Aapeejay Surrendra Trust, Aapeejay Pvt Ltd, RECP IV Park Hotel Investors Ltd, and RECP IV Park Co-Investors Ltd. At present, promoters and promoter group members hold a 94.18 per cent stake in the company, and the two investors own 5.82 per cent shareholding in the firm.

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER, CONSTRUCTION WING, UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL NIGAM
E-32, JUDGE FARM, HALDWANI, DISTT. NAINITAL (PIN 263139)
Letter No.: 309/Nivida-Anubandh/Ranikhet/13 Date: 02-02-2024

E-Tender Notice

- Name of the work:** Furnishing, Lighting, Sound Reinforcement System, Projection System & Air Conditioning System in Auditorium Building At Bageshwar, District Bageshwar.
- Estimated Cost:-** Rs. 166.00 Lacs
- Period of Completion:-** 06 Months
- Date and Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal:-** 03-02-2024 (10.00 hrs)
- Online Bid submission: End date:-** 17-02-2024 (17.00 hrs)
- Date & Time of Technical Bid Opening:-** 20-02-2024 (11.00 hrs)
- Name and Address of the Officer inviting bid:-** General Manager (Kumaon), Nirman Wing, Uttarakhand Pey Jal Nigam, Haldwani.
- Pre-bid meeting details (if required) Date & Place:-** 07-02-2024 (11:00 hrs) Project Manager, Construction Unit, Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam, Ranikhet.
- For further details, details of subsequent Amendment / correction documentation etc. may be obtained from the e-Procurement portal www.uktenders.gov.in

GENERAL MANAGER

PUBLIC NOTICE

Know to all that my client Sarwar Ahmad, S/o Shri Anwar Ahmad, R/o D-672/1, Gali No. 14, Shri Ram Colony, Rajiv Nagar, Khajoori Khas, Delhi has withdrawn the General Power of Attorney dated 05.12.2023 and has cancelled all the documents pertaining to property bearing D-672/1 as part of Khasra No. 06 Gali No. 14, Shri Ram Colony, Rajiv Nagar, Khajoori Khas, Delhi-110090 such as General Power of Attorney, Agreement to Sell, Affidavit, Receipt and Deed of Will which were fraudulently and under pressure obtained from my client on 05.12.2023 by Smt. Jyotsna D/o Shri Manojan Halder R/o B-1065, Gali No. 13, Shri Ram Colony, Rajiv Nagar, Khajoori Khas, Delhi under the stamp of Notary Public and Smt. Jyotsna has also been called vide legal notice dated 03.02.2024 not to make any act on behalf of the above said documents and further hereby declare that if she acts or creates any documents or third party interest on behalf of the above said documents shall be null and void and will not have any effect in the eyes of law and that act would be an amount of illegal act and if anybody deals with her, will be at his/her costs, risks and consequences.

M. RAIS FAROOQUI (Advocate)
Ch.No. B-135, B.G.S. Block, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-54

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that **Sunita Mehta** claims to be owner and in possession of Upper Ground Floor back side portion of Prop. No. 24-A part of Khasra No. 151, Village Bindapur in Shri Ram Park (Sis Ram Park), Block A, Uttam Nagar, N.D. 59 (hereinafter called the said property) having purchased from Mukesh Kumar Varshney by virtue of Sale Deed Dated 14.11.2022 Doc No. 28779 and said Mukesh Kumar Varshney became the owner on basis of Relinquishment Deed Dated 07.07.2022 executed by the legal heirs of late Kamla Devi and Now Said **Sunita Mehta** has agreed to sell the said Property to Konark Gupta And Said Konark Gupta has agreed to create a mortgage in favour of our clients, **IDFC FIRST BANK LTD., Rajendra Place Branch, New Delhi.** All persons having any claim against or in respect of the said Property or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, lien or otherwise however, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 10 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned and our client shall proceed with the disbursement of loan against the said property and subsequent creation of mortgage in respect thereof.

Vishal Diwan (Advocate)
For Diwan and Company LLP
H. No. 2 (LGF), NRI Complex New Delhi-19
Mobile No. 9818399999

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
No. SS/CW/Re-tender/60/2024/10214 Dated 01-02-2024
The Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha, Assam invites bids for the building works from registered eligible Class-I (A, B & C) / Class-II contractor as per Govt. Notification No. DASR/132/2018/2 dated 20-07-2018 under PWD (Building), Assam having experience of similar nature of work in Assam. Details of the bid may be seen at e-procurement portal website i.e., www.assamtenders.gov.in and also in the office signboard of the undersigned during office hours from 05-02-2024 (0900 hours) to 26-02-2024 (1400 hours). The bidders must be enrolled in www.assamtenders.gov.in

Sd/-Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha Axom, Kahilpara, Guwahati-19

Government slashes windfall tax on crude petroleum

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government has hiked windfall tax on domestically produced crude oil to Rs 3,200 per tonne from Rs 1,700 per tonne with effect from Saturday. The tax is levied in the form of Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED). According to an official notification, SAED on export of

diesel, petrol, and jet fuel or ATF, has been retained at nil. The new rates are effective from February 3. India first imposed windfall profit taxes on July 1, 2022, joining a host of nations that tax supernormal profits of energy companies. The tax rates are reviewed every fortnight based on average oil prices in the previous two weeks.

Tesla to pay \$1.5 million over alleged hazardous waste violations

AP ■ STOCKHOLM

A California judge on Friday ordered Tesla Inc. to pay USD 1.5 million as part of a settlement of a civil case alleging the company mishandled hazardous waste at its car service centers, energy centers and a factory, multiple county district attorneys announced. The complaint filed in San Joaquin County alleged illegal disposal of hazardous waste and violation of laws involving storage and management of the waste, according to statements from several of 25 district attorneys offices in California involved in the case. Tesla did not immediately respond to an Associated Press email seeking comment. The district attorneys' statements said Tesla cooperated with the investigation and acted to improve compliance with laws that were brought to its attention by the prosecutors. "Electric vehicles play a role in



environmental betterment, yet it's imperative to recognize that their production and maintenance yield detrimental waste," said San Joaquin County District Attorney Ron Freitas. Tesla owns and operates approximately 57 car service centers and 18 solar energy facilities in California, and manufactures electric vehicles in the San Francisco Bay Area city of Fremont. The settlement includes USD 1.3 million in civil penalties, USD 200,000 to cover costs of the investigation, training of employees and third-party waste audits.

PRAKASH WOOLLEN & SYNTHETIC MILLS LIMITED
Regd. office. 18th KM Stone, Delhi Moradabad Road, NH24, Village-Amhera, Distt.: P.NAGAR-244102, U.P.
CIN:L17291UP1979P0004804
PH: 91-9760091983, Email: info@prakashwoollen.com, Website: www.prakashwoollen.com
Extract of Standalone Unaudited Results for the Quarter Ended 31/12/2023 (Rs in lakhs)

Particulars	Quarter ended		Nine months ended		Previous Year Ended	
	3 months ended (31.12.2023)	Preceding 3 months ended (30.09.2023)	3 months ended in the previous year (31.12.2022)	Year to date figure for current period ended (31.12.2023)	Year to date figure for the previous year ended (31.03.2023)	Year to date figure for the previous year ended (31.03.2023)
Total income from operations (net)	4889.55	2499.39	4639.95	9029.26	8860.5	10371.96
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before Tax and Exceptional Items	173.71	(153.74)	(147.60)	3.47	(536.52)	(515.75)
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax and after Exceptional Items	173.71	(153.74)	(147.60)	3.47	(536.52)	(515.75)
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax and Exceptional Items	172.70	(92.72)	(144.67)	13.88	(525.67)	(503.90)
Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	172.70	(92.72)	(144.67)	13.88	(525.67)	(498.83)
Equity Share Capital (Face value Rs 10 each)	1025.98	1025.98	1025.98	1025.98	1025.98	1025.98
Other equity	-	-	-	-	-	-
Earnings per share for discontinued & continuing operations (of Rs. 10/- each):						
(a) Basic	1.68	(0.90)	(1.41)	0.14	(5.12)	(4.91)
(b) Diluted	1.68	(0.90)	(1.41)	0.14	(5.12)	(4.91)

Notes:

- The above results were reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors at their respective meetings held on February 03, 2024.
- The standalone results have been prepared in accordance with the Companies (Indian Accounting Standards) Rules, 2015 (Ind AS) prescribed under Section 133 of the Companies Act, 2013 and other recognised accounting practices and policies to the extent applicable.
- The company is engaged in the blankets business, therefore, there is only one reportable segment in accordance with the Accounting Standards on Segment Reporting (Ind AS 108).
- The blankets business is seasonal in nature and accordingly financial results for the quarter are not representative of the whole year.
- Previous year/ quarter figures have been regrouped wherever required.

Place : Village Amhera (Amroha) By Order of The Board
Date : 03rd February 2024 For Prakash Woollen & Synthetic Mills Limited
Vijay Kumar Gupta
Whole Time Director & CFO
DIN: 00335325

SANEH INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENTS LIMITED
Regd. Office : Deltan House 4801 Bharat Ram Road 24 Daryaganj New Delhi - 110002 (India)
Phone No. 91-11-23273907, CIN: L74899DL1980PL060079

STATEMENT OF UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER / NINE MONTHS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023 (Rs. In Laks)

S. No.	Particulars	Standalone			Consolidated		
		Quarter ended 31.12.2023	Nine Months ended 31.12.2023	Quarter ended 31.12.2022	Quarter ended 31.12.2023	Nine Months ended 31.12.2023	Quarter ended 31.12.2022
		Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited
1	Total income from operations (net)	1.05	1.08	-	23.93	28.86	0.86
2	Net Profit for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and / or Extraordinary Items)	(0.28)	(1.86)	(2.20)	19.31	20.41	(2.04)
3	Net Profit for the period before Tax (after Exceptional and / or Extraordinary items)	(0.28)	(1.86)	(2.20)	19.31	20.41	(2.04)
4	Net Profit for the period after Tax (after Exceptional and / or Extraordinary Items)	(0.28)	(1.86)	(2.21)	19.31	64.25	(2.04)
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit for the period (after tax) and other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	287.01	397.31	6.86	1,105.91	1,578.36	31.92
6	Equity share capital (Face Value of Rs.10/- each)	24.00	24.00	24.00	24.00	24.00	24.00
7	Earnings Per Share (before extraordinary items) (Face Value of Rs.10/- each)						
(a)	Basic (Rs.)	(0.12)	(0.77)	(0.92)	8.05	26.77	(0.85)
(b)	Diluted (Rs.)	(0.12)	(0.77)	(0.92)	8.05	26.77	(0.85)

NOTES:

- The above is an extract of the detailed format of unaudited Quarterly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly / Half yearly Financial Results are available on the Stock Exchanges website www.cse-india.com.
- The above results have been prepared in accordance with principle and procedures of Indian Accounting Standards (Ind AS) as notified under the companies (Indian Accounting Standards) Rules, 2015 as specified under section 133 of the Companies Act, 2013.
- The above Unaudited Standalone and Consolidated Financial Results were reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors of the Company in its meeting held on February 03, 2024.

By order of the Board For Saneh Industrial Investments Limited
Sd/-
Vivek Gupta (Director)
DIN 00359116

Place : Delhi Date : 03.02.2024

Ramkumar, Balaji deliver in high pressure contest

Give India 2-0 lead over Pakistan

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

India blunted Pakistan's challenge on the opening day to take a 2-0 lead in the Davis Cup World Group 1 play-off tie with Ramkumar Ramanathan and N Sriram Balaji rising to the occasion in the high-pressure contest, here on Saturday. A fired-up Aisam-ul-haq Qureshi gave his all in a tight opening singles but the intensity of the match and tough conditions took a toll on him as he suffered a hamstring injury in the third set, which prevented a close finish to a hard-fought contest. Ramkumar served extremely well in the match and also returned better in the second set to prevail 6-7 (3) 7-6 (4), 6-0 while 43-year-old Aisam served 10 double faults in the match. Ramkumar's strong serving and percentage tennis was key to the outcome of the match. He served nine games at love, keeping the points short and crisp. Down by a set, Ramkumar wriggled out of a tough situation when he was down 15-40 in game eight of the second set and never looked back in the match in which he fired 20 aces.



Balaji, a doubles specialist, was challenged by Aqeel Khan, but the Indian defeated the veteran Pakistani player 7-5, 6-3 in the rain-hit second singles. Balaji had a grip over the match. He broke Aqeel once in both the sets. His movement, strong serve, use of drop shots all came together for a comfortable win in the end. India are now one win away from advancing to the World

Group I. Yuki Bhambri and Saketh Myneni will now look to seal the tie on Sunday when they take on Muzammil Murtaza and Barkat Ullah in the third match on Sunday. The freezing cold made the conditions challenging for the players. Ramkumar quickly overcame the initial jitters to serve out the opening game at love with an ace. Points were long when Aisam served but when the home

favourite hit a backhand service return winner on Ramkumar's serve in the third game, it was clear that the match was on. Ramkumar, though, served extremely well. He had fired five aces in his first three service games, closing the fifth for a hold with his third ace of the game. Aisam charged the net often and also used drop shots very effectively.

The Pakistani had served three double faults but he came back strongly in following points to stay unhurt. Ramkumar served five games at love in the opening set which was eventually settled in tie-breaker, in which Aisam raced to a 3-0 lead with a break of serve on the first point when Ramkumar hit a forehand wide. Aisam held his serves on the following points. A forehand lob from Ramkumar that went long gave Aisam his first set-point and he converted that with an ace and let out a roar. Ramkumar got the kind of start he needed in the second set. He reeled off eight straight points to go a break up as Aisam dropped serve at love. The Indian, though, squandered the opportunity to further build pressure by dropping his serve in game four. Aisam produced some stunning backhand shots. The one that stood out was a service return winner while he was down 30-40. He got breakpoint with a screaming backhand passing winner and Ramkumar buckled under pressure by hitting a forehand wide. Egged on by his family and home fans, Aisam held the

game easily for a 3-2 lead. In game eight, Ramkumar saved two breakpoints. It was Aisam's service return winner that earned him two breakpoints. Ramkumar saved both with some good serving. In a repeat of the first set, it all boiled down to tie-breaker and this time it was the Indian who got the break on the first point by hitting a service return winner. In no time, Ramkumar zoomed to a 4-0 lead and soon had five set points. Aisam saved the first four but Ramkumar nailed it on the fifth with an ace. Ramkumar drew the first blood in the third set, breaking Aisam in the second game. He attacked Aisam's service with his forehands. Aisam was up 40-15, but Ramkumar hit a passing backhand winner and followed that up with another winner to make it deuce. Ramkumar found a service return winner to earn a breakpoint and Aisam served a double fault to help his rival. Aisam was now struggling and took a medical time out to treat his groin and hamstring. Ramkumar just ran away with the match after that, finishing off with an easy backhand drop shot.



Prashanth shoots third under par round

PTI ■ PATTAYA (THAILAND)

Avani Prashanth endured a tough day but still managed a third straight under par score, a one-under 71, to lie 11th at the 2024 Women's Amateur Asia Pacific Championships (WAAP) here on Saturday. In the third round, Avani, who had 68-69 on the first two days, had two birdies, one of which was a hole out from the bunker on the second, and one bogey on the Par-5 eighth. Avani is now 8-under as Chinese Taipei's Chun-wei Wu (66) was on the top at 18-under. Wu was being chased by Philippines diminutive Rianne Mikhaela Malixi, who holed out from the fairway for an eagle on the Par-5 10th, in her record round of 9-under 63. Malixi is 14-under and second. On a day of low scoring for the top players, China's Zhang Yahui (66) and Korea's Hyosong Lee (67) were tied third at 13-under, while Thailand's Pimpisa Rubrong (68) was fifth. India's Saanvi Somu, just 15, and playing her first WAAP, shot 75 and is tied 48th. Saanvi had two birdies against five bogeys. The star of the day was Malixi, whose coach is Asia-based Canadian Rick Gibson, a multiple winner in Asia in the 1990s, and

twice runner-up at the Indian Open. Avani said, "I hit probably every fairway, but my approaches were just either too long or too short. Everything in the line of the pin, which is very frustrating. "I couldn't convert after hitting it that far off. Otherwise, it's a good thing that I hit all fairways. Hopefully, tomorrow is better, and I'll just go work on my approaches now." On seeing so many others go very low, Avani said, "Definitely does give confidence. I know I can shoot low. After hitting every fairway, I gave myself a chance on every single hole. "I have to get my approaches close, and I'll start making a lot more putts. That should get me my low round tomorrow." The Bengaluru golfer, who has already got an invite for the Augusta National Women's Amateur, which is one of the prizes for the winner this week, said her plan for the day was clear. "I've got nothing to lose, just go for the kill on every hole," said Avani, who flies to Kenya next week to play the Magical Kenya Ladies Open, a Ladies European Tour pro event, where she was in Top-10 last year. On an action-packed day, Thailand's Novaporn Soontreeyapas (69) got her second hole-in-one in three rounds.



Mbappé misses penalty then scores as PSG beats Strasbourg

AP ■ PARIS

Kylian Mbappé missed a first-half penalty and scored one of the simplest goals of his career a few minutes later as Paris Saint-Germain convincingly beat Strasbourg 2-1 to remain on top of the French league. Mbappé saw his seventh-minute spot kick parried for a corner by Strasbourg goalkeeper Alaa Bellaouch on Friday. But he was on hand 25 minutes later when Bellaouch fluffed a clearance straight at Marco Asensio and Asensio's pass left his teammate with an open goal from 20 meters. The same pair was involved in PSG's second three minutes into the second half. This time Mbappé broke on the left and crossed to Asensio, whose perfectly placed shot wrong-footed the keeper. Strasbourg got a goal back through Dilane Bakwa midway through the second half and it dominated the late exchanges but it was not enough to end a winless run against PSG that stands at 12 games.

Chouhan misses cut in tough conditions in Bahrain

PTI ■ BAHRAIN

India's Om Prakash Chouhan was unable to come to terms with the high, swirling winds and difficult scoring conditions to miss the cut at the Bahrain Championship. The 2023 Order of Merit winner in India's PGTI circuit, shot rounds of 1-under 71 and then went to 10-over 82 in the second. Chouhan, who missed the cut in Ras Al Khaimah last week, just couldn't find his way around the tough conditions. He dropped two double bogeys and seven bogeys

against just one birdie. Chouhan earned a DPWT card after topping the Indian Tour with a record earnings in 2023. Meanwhile, Jesper Svensson carded a red-hot seven-under par round of 65 to surge into a share of the lead alongside Dylan Frittelli and Joel Girschbach. The Swede was six-under through his first eight holes before going on to sign for a 65 to reach nine under par at the halfway stage. Frittelli, twice a winner on the DP World Tour who also won the 2019 John Deere Classic on the PGA TOUR, birdied his last hole with the light



fading late in the day to put the finishing touches to a four-under 68, making it a

three-way tie at the top after Switzerland's Girschbach set the target earlier in the day.

The weather on the second day in the Kingdom of Bahrain was in stark contrast to the first, with the calm conditions being replaced by high, swirling winds and subsequently scoring became much harder. The leading trio share a one-stroke lead from Spain's Alejandro del Rey, who is fourth on eight under par, while Guerrier is joined by countryman and round one leader Tom Vaillant, Welshman Jamie Donaldson, Australia's Harrison Endycott and South African Ockie Strydom in a share of fifth on seven under.

Dortmund held at Heidenheim to end its winning start



AP ■ HEIDENHEIM (GERMANY)

Donyell Malen had a goal ruled out for offside as Borussia Dortmund's winning start to the new year ended in a 0-0 draw at Heidenheim in the Bundesliga. Dortmund won its opening three games of 2024, scoring 10 goals, but a team depleted by injuries and illness - and without Jadon Sancho -

created few chances against Heidenheim's compact defense on Friday. Dortmund nearly gifted Heidenheim the lead when Dortmund's Salih Ozcan gave away the ball to forward Tim Kleindienst while trying to play a simple pass across the defense. Seemingly surprised to get the ball, Kleindienst shot high and wide. Dortmund celebrated when Malen put the ball in the net

in the 26th minute but it was ruled out for offside. Heidenheim nearly managed an upset win when Kevin Sessa's header bounced just wide of the post in stoppage time. Dortmund stayed fourth and missed a chance to overtake Stuttgart for third. It was 12 points off leader Bayer Leverkusen. Promoted Heidenheim moved up one place to ninth after taking a point from Dortmund for the second time this season. Heidenheim is unbeaten in seven Bundesliga games but the last four have been draws. Dortmund was missing Sancho, who has a muscle injury that coach Edin Terzic has linked to his long absence from Manchester United's team before rejoining Dortmund on loan last month. Goalkeeper Gregor Kobel and forwards Marco Reus and Julian Brandt all missed out with illness.

Theegala rises to 10th at Pebble Beach

PTI ■ PEBBLE BEACH (US)

Indian American Sahith Theegala carded 67 in the second round to rise to the tenth spot at the halfway mark of the USD 20 million AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am. Theegala, runner-up at the season-opening Sentry, made up for his first round 70 and is now 5-under for 36 holes with rounds of 70-67. Korea's Si Woo Kim, who was fourth after the first round, dropped to Tied-10th as his putter went cold. World No. 1 Scottie Scheffler (64), Sweden's Ludvig Aberg (65), and Belgium's Thomas Detry (70), who all played at par-71 Pebble Beach Golf Links, share the 36-hole lead on 11-under. The final two rounds will be played at Pebbles Beach. Scheffler, who opened with a 69, had a super round on his way to an 8-under 64 at Pebble Beach Golf Links, the low round of the week. Aberg began his round by making putts of 40, 35 and 30



feet on the opening four holes. That carried the Swede to a 65. Scheffler and Aberg were joined by Thomas Detry, who lost a few shots coming in at Pebble Beach for a 70. The 25-year-old Kim, seeking his fifth PGA Tour title, ground out a 1-under 71 at Spyglass Hills Golf Course as he stayed on the leaders' coattails in the second Signature event of the 2024

his five birdies coming on the back nine at Spyglass Hills Golf Course. He jumped 21 spots to tied 18th on 6-under 138. Kevin Yu of Chinese Taipei signed for a 68 at Spyglass Hills to sit on T34 on 140 alongside Korean S.H. Kim, who carded a successive 70 at Pebble Beach. Patrick Cantlay was poised to join the leaders except for missing a 10-foot birdie putt on the 17th at Pebble Beach, and then hitting his tee shot on the 18th onto the rocks, forcing him to scramble for a hard-earned par and a 70. He was one shot behind. Justin Thomas despite a poor day on the green was two shots behind as a storm, rain and wind are expected over the weekend. Nick Dunlap, the reigning U.S. Amateur champion who turned pro after he won The American Express two weeks ago, continued to have a rough time. He shot 74 at Spyglass Hill and was at the bottom of the leaderboard.

Lookman fires Nigeria into Africa Cup semis

AP ■ AABIDJAN (IVORY COAST)

Ademola Lookman scored again to fire Nigeria into the semifinals of the Africa Cup of Nations with a 1-0 win over Angola. Victor Osimhen on Friday failed to score after having a goal ruled out for offside but produced another tireless performance to help the Super Eagles emerge victorious from the tournament's first quarterfinal. They did not concede for the fourth straight game. Nigeria needed goalkeeper Stanley Nwabali - back after being stretchered off in the win over Cameroon - to deny Angola forward Mbululu an early lead. But Nigeria went on to dominate the game in terms

of possession and chances, and Lookman finally scored in the 41st minute after Moses Simon skipped a challenge and raced clear to set him up. It was Lookman's third goal of the tournament after scoring both against Cameroon. Nigeria captain William Troost-Ekong urged his teammates to concentrate after making a clearance to deny Estrela an immediate response. "I've had some experience now that I think the most crucial minutes are always directly after kickoff and after goals scored or conceded," Troost-Ekong told The Associated Press. "You just don't want to fall in the trap of working so hard to finally get a goal and then giving something away.



We're learning, I think we're getting better and better, more mature as well as a team." The Super Eagles maintained their dominance after the break, but Osimhen inadvertently impeded a good chance for Calvin Bassey and missed several late chances of his own. The Napoli star thought he'd sealed the win with a header to Lookman's free kick in the 75th, but the goal was ruled out for offside after a VAR review. Nigeria reverted to a 5-4-1 formation with Osimhen alone up front as the Sable Antelopes probed for an equalizer. Angola substitute Zini went closest when he hit the post. Nigeria's Frank Ogochukwu Onyeka was stretchered off late. Both Nigeria and Angola

danced their way into the stadium before the game on another hot and humid day in Abidjan. The temperature was 32 degrees (90 F) at kickoff. Nigeria coach José Peseiro has made defense a priority. Nigeria never before won four straight games without conceding in the tournament. "The formation helps us. The whole team is pulling their weight defensively," Troost-Ekong told the AP. "It's not just the defender or the goalkeeper. We're working very hard to try and keep them away from our goal. And if you're playing in a tournament, that has to be the basis of winning. How we are playing now, from the start, we believe we can win this tournament." LEOPARDS POUNCE FOR SEMIFINAL PLACE

Congo defeated Guinea 3-1 for the Leopards' first win within normal time of the tournament in Friday's other quarterfinal. Congo captain Chancel Mbemba conceded a penalty in the 17th minute, from which Mohamed Bayo scored with Guinea's first real chance in the 20th, but Mbemba atoned by equalizing from a difficult angle in the 27th. A penalty from Yoane Wissa in the 65th and free kick from Arthur Masuakut that deceived the Guinea defense in the 82th ensured the Leopards reached the semifinals for the first time since 2015. Congo, which won the last of its two titles in 1974, drew its three group games, then defeated Egypt on penalties to reach the quarterfinals.

Bumrah swings Test in favour of India

PTI ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Jasprit Bumrah put up a special exhibition of reverse swing on a flat deck after Yashasvi Jaiswal's maiden double hundred to bowl out England for 253 in their first innings and put India ahead in the second Test here on Saturday.

India tallied 396 all out in their first innings after starting day two at 336 for six. Jaiswal (209 off 290) became the third youngest double centurion from India in the morning session and was the sole shining light in an otherwise grim batting effort. In response, England were bowled out in 55.5 overs in the final session to concede a 143-run first innings lead to India.

Needing to bat five overs before stumps on day two, India were unscathed at 28 for no loss in their second innings.

England began aggressively courtesy Zak Crawley (76 off 78) before Bumrah halted their charge with a masterclass in reverse swing that resulted in his 10th five-wicket haul. He ended with figures of six for 45 in 15.5 overs, his best in India.

He also became the second fastest Asian fast bowler after Pakistan's Waqar Younis to complete 150 scalps.

Joe Root (5), Ollie Pope (23), Jonny Bairstow (25) and England skipper Ben Stokes (47) were victims of Bumrah's brilliance. The 30-year-old also completed 150 wickets in the process.

Kuldeep Yadav, playing his



first game of the series, supported Bumrah with three wickets. R Ashwin could not get a wicket while second pacer Mukesh Kumar was taken to the cleaners. India have managed to gain

advantage but will need to bat well on day three as no total can be considered safe against the 'Bazball' driven England side. The pitch is gradually deteriorating with the odd ball keeping low or bouncing

extra. On either side of the afternoon and evening session, watching Bumrah go about his business was a sight to behold. Everytime there was a

partnership developing, Rohit Sharma turned to Bumrah and he did not disappoint his skipper. He removing Root and Pope in a searing spell gave India much needed momentum

after Crawley attacked the home team spinners to ensure England reached 155 for four at tea. Bumrah put Root in his two minds by mixing the in and away swinger, leading to his

downfall. Root was protecting his pads expecting an inswinger but Bumrah got the ball to move away from the fourth stump, inducing an outside edge.

The lead India pacer's ball to dismiss Pope was even more special, a fast reversing yorker to which the England number three had no answer to. It was a 'banana in-dipper' that tailed from the fifth stump at a fair clip and England's first Test hero failed to bring his bat down in time.

Bumrah accounted for Bairstow, Stokes, Tom Hartley and James Anderson in the final session. His ball to Bairstow was similar to Root's and outcome was another catch to Shubam Gill at first slip.

Hartley (21) and Ben Stokes (47) frustrated the Indians with a 47-run stand for the eighth wicket until Bumrah breached the England skipper's defense. For the second game in a row, Stokes was left shell shocked by Bumrah's magic.

Kuldeep too played his part well and had Ben Duckett (21 off 17) caught at silly point shortly after the lunch break.

In the initial part of the second session, Crawley displayed brute force to put pressure on the opposition. He nonchalantly slog swept Kuldeep for a six to bring up his fifty before handing out similar treatment to R Ashwin later.

Birthday boy Crawley targeted Axar Patel as well but after hitting his first ball for a four, the opener mistimed one aerial shot to be caught by

Shreyas Iyer, who took a brilliant catch running backwards from backward point.

In the morning, India added 60 runs to their total before getting all out in 112 overs with little over 30 minutes left for lunch. As was the case on day one, India had to rely on Jaiswal (209 off 290) to get the majority of the runs. No other Indian batter even crossed 40.

The celebrations were euphoric for a dedicated cricketer who slept in tents at Azad Maidan in Mumbai in his growing up days, having come to the metropolis from a nondescript village in Uttar Pradesh. Besides Jaiswal, the star of the session was 41-year-old James Anderson who produced another masterclass in seam bowling on a flat surface.

In his relentless eight-over spell, Anderson got the ball to move both ways from a wobbled seam. Even for a well-set Jaiswal, his spell was too hot to handle.

The old horse removed R Ashwin (20) with a peach that straightened from middle stumps and took the outside edge of the bat. Thinking the ball had only brushed his right thigh, Ashwin took the DRS but ended up wasting it.

Running out of partners, Jaiswal decided to attack Anderson as well resulting in a catch at deep cover.

The young Shoaib Bashir opened the bowling alongside Anderson and ended up bowling 10 overs in the session.

Cricket fraternity hails Jaiswal maiden double ton

PTI ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The entire cricketing fraternity on Saturday was in awe of Yashasvi Jaiswal's maiden double century in Test cricket with the legendary Sachin Tendulkar being one of the most notable names to congratulate the youngster on his stellar show. Jaiswal on Saturday became only the third youngest Indian to achieve the feat in his nascent-but-remarkable career. Playing only his sixth Test match, the 22-year-old's sensational knock of 209 off 290 balls single-handedly powered India to 396 all out in 112 overs.

He hit 19 fours and seven sixes en route the double century, which was the lone bright spot in a below-par batting effort by the home team.

"Well done Yashasvi. Super effort," Tendulkar wrote on his 'X' account, formerly twitter.

Vinod Kambli holds the distinction of being the youngest Indian to score a double ton, also against



England, at the age of 21 years and 335 days back in 1993. The record for the second youngest Indian double centurion in Tests is also held by Kambli, who smashed it against Zimbabwe at the age 21 years and 355 days. Before Kambli, the record was held by Sunil Gavaskar who scored his maiden double in

the West Indies back in 1971. Jaiswal had scored 171 on his Test debut against the West Indies last year. He managed an 80-run innings in the series-opener against England in Hyderabad, where India lost by 28 runs. In the ongoing match, Jaiswal added another 28 runs to his tally on the second day with

fellow overnight batter Ravichandran Ashwin (20), who was dismissed by James Anderson.

Jaiswal eventually reached the milestone with a six and a four off debutant spinner Shoaib Bashir in the 102nd over. "Jaiswal - one of the greatest stories in world sport!"

former England skipper Kevin Pietersen wrote on his social media account, referring perhaps to the humble beginnings of the rising star. Former India left-arm pacer RP Singh also congratulated Jaiswal on his accomplishment.

"What a brilliant double century by the young #YashasviJaiswal. Congratulations," he wrote in his social media account.

Former India women's cricket team captain Anjum Chopra also heaped praise on Jaiswal for his superlative knock.

"A century is special and when you get a double it's a different high. Yashasvi... the name itself has a great meaning. To many more centuries...Well played Yashasvi Jaiswal, she tweeted.

Former India cricketer and current minister of state, sports and youth affairs in West Bengal government Manoj Tiwary also congratulated Jaiswal.

"Beginning of something massive in #IndianCricket! Keep shining @ybj_19," he wrote.

Why do we need turning tracks: Ganguly

PTI ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Jasprit Bumrah's throbbing afternoon spell on the second day of the second Test against England here on Saturday made former Indian skipper Sourav Ganguly advocating for sporting pitches rather than preparing rank turners. Bumrah homed in on Ollie Pope's stumps with a laser-guided yorker to dismiss the England batter for 23 off 55 balls, earning it a separate fan base altogether.

It wasn't entirely surprising then to see Ganguly, a lifelong supporter of pace bowling and sporting tracks, airing his views in favour of decks that keeps bowlers of all genres in the game, rather than just spinners.

"When I see Bumrah, Shami, Siraj, Mukesh bowl, I wonder why do we need to prepare turning tracks in India...my conviction of playing on good wickets keeps getting stronger every game.

They will get 20 wickets on any surface with Ashwin,



Jadeja, Kuldeep and Axar (for support)," Ganguly wrote on his X (formerly Twitter) account. The former BCCI chief had also expressed a similar view during India's home series against Australia early last year, particularly after the Indore pitch earned "poor" rating from the ICC. "Great to see Ashwin bowl so well on a good pitch... class will always show...Hopefully, this will be a good Test match...a good opportunity for Indian batsmen after some tuff wickets to bat on, in this

series," Ganguly had tweeted during the Ahmedabad Test after senior spinner Ravichandran Ashwin bagged six wickets. Here too, Ganguly hinted that the overall batting quality in the longer format has dropped in the last few years because of preparing pitches with quick results in mind.

"Batting quality dropping because of pitches in last 6 to 7 years at home...good wickets are a must...India will still win over 5 days," said Ganguly.

Kohli return for England Tests in doubt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The return of premier batter Virat Kohli to the Indian team for the remainder of the Test series against England still remains unclear even as the bigwigs are mulling to have a word with the former captain about his plans at the earliest. Kohli is currently out of the country and it is understood that selection committee chairman Ajit Agarkar or the BCCI's top brass will speak to him to get a clearer picture to find out whether he is in a position to resume national duty.

Kohli had taken a sabbatical from the first two Tests against England, citing personal reasons. "Family comes first as BCCI's press release stated and Virat will only play if he feels that he is in a position to play," a BCCI source in know of things told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

The personal reason for which Kohli opted out of the Tests is the impending arrival of his second child, as

revealed by his close friend and former Royal Challengers Bangalore teammate AB de Villiers on his YouTube channel. De Villiers said Kohli has done absolutely the right thing by taking a break. "Yes, his second child is on the way. It's family time and things are important to him. If you are not true and genuine to yourself, you lose track of what you are here for.

I think most people's priority is family. You can't judge Virat for that. Yes, we miss him. But he has made absolutely the right decision," said De Villiers. Shubman Gill and Shreyas Iyer, who have been struggling for big runs, will have to step up in the second innings of the ongoing Test against England in Visakhapatnam because KL Rahul could get fit in time for the third Test starting on February 14 in Rajkot. The squad for the remaining three Tests against England will be named next week after the conclusion of the

second Test. **Shreyas, Gill on notice as Rahul to return?**

Shubman Gill and Shreyas Iyer, who have been struggling for big runs in red ball format, will have to buckle up and score some runs when their turn to bat comes in India's second innings at Vizag. If they fail to do so, KL Rahul could walk in for one of them in the third Test. Rahul missed the second Test with a quadriceps injury but the word is that the Bengaluru man could be for the next match at Rajkot from February 15. Both Iyer and Gill haven't scored a single fifty in their last nine Test innings and time is running out for both of them with the red hot Sarfaraz Khan is sitting in the dug-out and Rahul's quadriceps problem getting better with each passing day. **Cloud over Shami, Jadeja** However, veteran pacer Mohammed Shami and all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja could not figure in the Test series against England.

BCCI likely to help Nepal teams get game exposure in India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Having been a pillar of support for Afghanistan struggling for close to a decade now, the BCCI is set to extend infrastructure and exposure-related assistance to Nepal's talented players with the aim to maintain a robust cricketing eco-system in the South Asian region.

If all goes well, there is a strong possibility that the senior national team of Nepal could train in Delhi and play some warm-up games before leaving for the United States to play the T20 World Cup in June.

Cricket Association of Nepal (CAN) president Chatur Bahadur met BCCI secretary Jay Shah in the national capital on Friday on the sidelines of a WPL meeting, with a request of helping the budding cricketers of his country get quality game time and access to infrastructure, which is not always readily available in the Himalayan nation. "CAN president Chatur



Bahadur had met BCCI secretary Jay Shah during an ACC (Asian Cricket Council) meeting recently and invited him to come to New Delhi for a discussion. Accordingly, Mr Bahadur and Mr Shah met and BCCI secretary has asked him to draft a formal proposal as to

what kind of help they expect from BCCI. Mr Shah has been very supportive of promotion of cricket in Nepal," a CAN source told PTI on the condition of anonymity. The passion for cricket in Nepal is unbelievable and whenever the national team

plays a match, the stadiums are packed to capacity.

The war-ravaged Afghanistan national and U-19 teams have trained in Greater Noida in the National Capital Region (NCR) for a number of years and BCCI is all set to help in the growth of Nepal cricket in coming years, which will also foster bonhomie between the neighbours.

It is understood that Nepal cricket currently needs help in three areas.

The senior national team needs an uninterrupted training camp before the T20 World Cup, which might not be possible in Kathmandu, with the weather being a key impediment.

The CAN officials feel that, logistically, Delhi-NCR during the early summer months of April and May will be the best training base. "We have Kathmandu-Delhi direct flight which makes it cost effective. We know the IPL will be on and we might not have access to the Ferozeshah Kotla but there

are so many good grounds in and around Delhi where the team can train," the CAN source said.

The second request is access to the upgraded National Cricket Academy facilities in Bengaluru where the upcoming Nepal cricketers can go for injury management and rehabilitation if the need arises.

Lastly, CAN wants match exposure for the U-19 and Nepal A team cricketers.

"The chance of getting quality game time in Nepal isn't great and CAN will put in a request that our U-19 and A teams can periodically get a chance to play practice games against U-19 and senior state teams, which will help them immensely in their growth as players. "It is still at a nascent stage but Mr Bahadur has got very positive feelers from Mr Shah, who also helped us organise the ACC Men's Premier Cup in Kathmandu in April-May 2023," the source said.

"When I write an original story I write about people I know first-hand and situations I'm familiar with. I don't write stories about the nineteenth century"
— Satyajit Ray



From a humble beginning to becoming a celebrated icon, PANKAJ TRIPATHI'S journey in the realm of acting is a testament to resilience and artistic excellence. GYANESHWAR DAYAL talked to him about his life, roles, and acting.



A SMALL-TOWN BOY WHO MADE IT BIG IN BOLLYWOOD

From a modest start to becoming a revered figure, Pankaj Tripathi's journey in the acting realm is a testament to resilience and artistic excellence. Pankaj Tripathi emerged from humble beginnings to establish himself as a powerhouse performer and a celebrated icon in the world of acting. With a natural ability to effortlessly transition into diverse roles, Tripathi has carved out a niche for himself, seamlessly moving between intense dramas

and light-hearted comedies. He weaves tales of authenticity and brilliance with each role he undertakes. A method actor, Pankaj honed his acting skills at the National School of Drama in New Delhi, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to his art. The portrayal of the endearing Sultan Qureshi in the critically acclaimed "Gangs of Wasseypur" (2012) marked a watershed moment in his career. The film not only showcased his acting prowess but also opened the floodgates to a

myriad of opportunities. His ability to breathe life into characters, no matter how complex or nuanced, has earned him accolades and widespread acclaim. Performances in movies such as "Newton" (2017), where he played the cynical Aatma Singh, and "Stree" (2018), as the endearing Rudra, highlight his chameleon-like ability to embody diverse personalities. The actor's rise to fame continued with his notable portrayal of the affable Kaleen Bhaiya in the web series "Mirzapur" (2018). His humility and grounded demeanor off-screen

stand in stark contrast to the intensity he brings to his on-screen characters, further endearing him to audiences. Pankaj Tripathi's journey is not just a tale of cinematic triumph; it is a saga of resilience, talent, and the unwavering pursuit of artistic excellence. He was in Delhi for his upcoming film "Main Atal Hoon," where The Pioneer caught up with him to get a glimpse into his world.

Thank you for joining us. Could you tell us about your upcoming film?

Thank you for having me. It is about Atal ji. I have tried to portray him as a poet, politician, and a statesman.

Making a film on politicians is a risky task as it can quickly run into controversy.

What was the source of your script material, and how did you research?

Well, I got a well-researched script, and that was my source. I watched a lot of videos to prepare for the role. How it was researched and written, my producer can tell better, but as far as I know, it is based on a book on Atalji. It is a biographical film directed by Ravi Jadhav and written by Rishi Virmanu.

Do you follow politics since you have done a biopic on India's one of the tallest leaders?

(Laughs) You open the newspaper, and politics is all over it, break into a conversation, and it gets political. Even if you don't follow politics, it follows you. But as far as I am concerned, I am more focused on my work and related issues.

How do you approach a role? Do you research the role or start living it as some actors do to get into the skin of the character?

Well, research is the most important aspect. Know the character as much as you can; then only one can get the grasp of the personality. For this role, for instance, I watched Atalji's videos, how he talked, walked, and spoke. He is a larger-than-life person for sure. He was a poet, statesman, and a politician, and it is so difficult to do justice to his persona. I have tried to do that.

I take the liberty of calling you a big paradox. You are so suave and gentle with a smiling face, yet the characters you have played are dreaded gangsters, murderers. Why do you think people cast you in such roles?

(Laughs) This is now that people see me. Had they seen my gentleness earlier, I would have got all the 'good guy' roles. But on a serious note, it is not the face but your acting ability to do justice to the role you are given. I try to do as much variety as possible. That is a challenge and interests me as an actor.

Going back to your performance, they are so authentic that you don't seem to act. What methods do you employ to get under the skin of the character?

I would say it is the script that matters the most. I read the script thoroughly and try to understand how the role has been portrayed there. For instance, in this film ("Main Atal Hui"), the emphasis is on his internal personality rather than his physical aspect, so I had to capture his moods, pensiveness, etc. He was a larger-than-life



character and so very difficult to portray.

From gangster films like "Gangs of Wasseypur" to the heartwarming "Stree," you've showcased your versatility. How do you choose your roles, and what draws you to a particular script?

Well, first of all, I look for characters that are challenging and have depth. It's essential for me to find something unique and different in each role. The script and the director's vision are crucial elements. If I can connect with the story and if the character offers me the opportunity to explore new dimensions as an actor, then I'm inclined to take up the project.

Your performances often have a certain authenticity and naturalness. How do you prepare for your roles, especially when you're taking on diverse characters?

Preparation is a crucial part of my process. I spend a lot of time understanding the character's background, motivations, and the world they inhabit. I observe people around me, draw inspiration from real-life situations, and even conduct my research. It's important to be authentic and truthful to the character, no matter how different they are from me personally.

Do you agree that bad cinema can influence society in a negative way?

It is a symbiotic relationship; both influence each other in a way, but how much I can't say, I don't know. There are good things shown and bad things shown on the screen. How much people keep it is difficult to say. A person who has to rob a bank will do so regardless if he has seen a bank robbery movie.

How do you see the shift in the industry, and what opportunities do you think digital platforms provide for actors?

The digital platform has revolutionized the entertainment industry. It offers a different kind of storytelling, more freedom for experimentation, and a vast audience. As an actor, it's exciting to be a part of this change. Digital platforms allow us to explore unconventional stories and characters that might not have found a place in mainstream cinema. It's a dynamic space with immense potential for creativity.

But the Government seems to be heading towards controlling OTT platforms. It is alleged that there are a lot of explicit scenes,

violence, and abusive language in web series. What is your take on it?

When you are telling a story, sometimes all that you mentioned is required to portray a character and make the story come alive on screen. However, if it is unnecessarily used just to make it saleable, it should be discarded. It is discarded by the audience. Best is we should remain committed to good cinema and exercise restraint.

How do you exercise that restraint?

I, for one, would never do a thing that goes beyond the script. If the script demands it, then it is fine; otherwise, not. I say no to roles that I feel are vulgar or are crossing the line. I am very concerned about the quality of script and what it has to offer to me as an actor and the audience.

What roles would you be doing next?

I believe in staying open to all kinds of roles. I don't want to limit myself to a specific genre or type of character. Every role brings its own challenges and joys, and I look forward to exploring a wide spectrum of characters. As an actor, it's important to keep evolving and surprising both yourself and the audience.

Photos: Pankaj Kumar

PANKAJ TRIPATHI'S JOURNEY IS NOT JUST A TALE OF CINEMATIC TRIUMPH; IT IS A SAGA OF RESILIENCE, TALENT, AND THE UNWAVERING PURSUIT OF ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE

Exemplars of Healing Hands

In a rich tapestry of medical expertise, this year's Padma awardees form a diverse ensemble, ranging from cardiologists to hepatologists, burn surgeons to eye surgeons, and even encompassing traditional healing practitioners like Ayurveda and Vaidyraj. What unites these remarkable individuals, spanning generations from sexagenarians to nonagenarians, is a singular common thread — their extraordinary accomplishments. The HEALTH PIONEER delves into the profiles of the 13 Padma Bhushans and Padma Shris, celebrating the diverse brilliance that defines the forefront of medical excellence



PADMA BHUSHAN AWARDEES
Dr Ashwin Balchand Mehta: A trailblazer in Interventional Cardiology, Dr. AB Mehta holds the distinction of performing India's first cardiac catheterization and angiography on newborn babies in India, in 1973, the year when he introduced Bundle Electrography in the country. He is also credited with the performance or supervision of over 35,000+ angioplasties and over 75,000+ angiographies, contributing significantly to cardiac care in India.
Dr Tejas Madhusudan Patel: Renowned for pioneering A3, which enhanced the safety and precision of coronary interventions, Dr. Patel has made impactful developments in reducing morbidity and mortality rates. Currently, he serves as the Chairman and Chief Interventional Cardiologist at Apex Heart Institute in India.
"I have been working in the cardiologist field since 91, I have

served here for almost 31 years... The highest civilian award is not confined to only medical fields but every sector... It is a big moment for me and the medical fraternity as I have been awarded among the 17 selected in the entire nation... no field is perfect every sector comprises good and bad professionals...The future of the medical field is bright..."said Dr Tejas Patel.
Dr Chandreshwar Prasad Thakur: A former Union Minister, Thakur's legacy includes discovering the first oral drug for Kala Azar, a formidable parasitic disease. Additionally, he played a pivotal role in establishing AIIMS Patna, contributing significantly to healthcare infrastructure.
PADMA SHRI AWARDEES
Dr Prema Dhanraj: A burn victim turned surgeon, Dr. Dhanraj, 72, originally from Vellore, Tamil Nadu,

and a resident of J.P. Nagar, Bengaluru, survived with 50% of burns at the age of eight when a stove burst while she was playing in the kitchen. She triumphed over the personal tragedy to become a driving force of change.
She has dedicated her life to treating burn victims. Head of the Reconstructive and Plastic Surgery Department at Christian Medical College, Vellore, she has operated on over 25,000 economically disadvantaged burn victims.
Dr Radha Krishan Dhiman: As a Professor of Hepatology, Dr. Dhiman has contributed to eradicating Hepatitis C, managed COVID cases in Lucknow, and initiated an organ donation campaign by establishing SOTTO.
Dr Manohar Krishana Dole: At 95, Dr. Dole is an Ayurvedic Doctor known for his 38 years of providing free treatment to tribal eye patients in Pune. He has treated over 1.75 lakh patients for cataracts and other

eye ailments.
Dr Yazdi Maneksha Italia: A distinguished microbiologist, Dr. Italia pioneered the Sickle Cell Anemia Control Program in Gujarat, recognized nationally. His contributions extend to various ICMR research projects.
Dr Hemchand Manjhi: Vaidyraj Hemchand Manjhi practices traditional medicine, treating patients with special herbs from remote forests. His expertise includes treating serious diseases like cancer with herbs.
Dr Chandrashekhar Mahadeorao Meshram: A 69-year-old eminent neurologist, Dr. Meshram has championed brain health awareness and made extensive contributions to neurological education and research.
Dr G Nachiyar: An 82-year-old visionary Ophthalmologist, Dr. Nachiyar is a founding member of the renowned Aravind Eye Hospital in Madurai, contributing

significantly to the field of ophthalmology and eye care.
Dr Radhe Shyam Pareek: A 90-year-old veteran Homeopathy physician, Dr. Pareek is credited with treating over 23 lakh patients in a career spanning more than 60 years.
Dr Dayal Mavjibhai Parmar: An 88-year-old veteran Ayurveda practitioner, Dr. Parmar has authored over 50 books on the subject and provided free medical services to patients in his area.
Dr Chandrashekar Channapatna Rajannachar: Seventy-five-year-old veteran psychiatrist, Dr. Rajannachar has provided free mental health treatment to 50,000 patients and trained 20,000 professionals. Known as the "people's psychiatrist," he has been instrumental in making mental healthcare accessible to all.
His tireless efforts, spanning over 35 years, reflect a commitment to improving mental health services.



NORTH INDIA'S FIRST BILATERAL HAND TRANSPLANTATION AT SIR GANGARAM HOSPITAL

Offering a lifeline and a renewed opportunity for those grappling with critical health challenges, organ donation emerges as a beacon of selflessness where the gift of life can flourish.
In a posthumous display of altruism, Meena Mehta's organs, including a kidney, hands, liver, and corneas, became the source of new life for recipients at Fortis Gurgaon and Sir Ganga Ram Hospital. Mehta was the Administration head of New Greenfields School, Kalkaji.
"This successful tale of cadaver organ donation unfolds as a testament to the compassion and selflessness that thrive even in the face of loss," Sir Gangaram Hospital said in a statement.
The hospital also undertook North India's first bilateral hand transplantation when Mehta's hands were transplanted to Rahul (name changed), a 45-year-old resident of Nangloi, Delhi, who had lost both his hands in a tragic accident while crossing a railway track in October 2020.
After a painstakingly long operation lasting more than 12

AT AIIMS DELHI, DONORS SCRIPT HEART-WARMING STORY

Two families, within 48 hours, displayed profound generosity by consenting to multi-organ donations from their brain-dead loved ones. One heart, four kidneys, two livers, and four corners of a 51-year-old man from Bharatpur in Rajasthan and a 40-year-old woman from Haryana were retrieved by a team of specialized doctors at the AIIMA, Delhi.
According to AIIMS officials, 51-year-old Bachu from Rajasthan's Bharatpur died in a rail accident in Palwal following which his family gave consent to donate his organs.
The other donation came from 40-year-old Maya, who was a resident of Haryana. The family of Maya also donated her skin. Her family also donated skin, which is now preserved in the recently established Skin Bank at the Burn & Plastic Centre of AIIMS.
"In an extraordinary display of compassion and altruism, AIIMS Delhi witnessed two families consenting for multi-organ donations within 48 hours. The first, a heartwarming act by the family of a 51-year-old brain-dead male, Bachu, paved the way for a new life for many," said Dr Aarti Vij of AIIMS, Delhi.
"The second case involved Maya, a 40-year-old from Haryana, whose family took a brave decision to donate organs, marking two consecutive acts of the noble cause of multi-organ donations at AIIMS, Delhi," she added.
The organs were allocated to recipients through the National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO), she added.
In yet another case, three lives were saved after the family of a 70-year-old man decided to donate his organs at AIIMS trauma center on Sunday. Surti, who fell in his house in Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh, had sustained severe head injuries and was admitted to the trauma center on Jan 23, but doctors could not save him. He was declared brain-dead at AIIMS. His liver was given to a 62-year-old recipient at Army Hospital, and one kidney was donated to a 46-year-old man at RML Hospital. Another kidney was transplanted to a 54-year-old man at AIIMS, while the corneas have been preserved.
The organs donated, including the heart, kidneys, liver, and skin, have provided a new lease on life to multiple recipients.
The coordination through the National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO) ensured the efficient allocation of organs to those in need, further emphasizing the importance of organized systems to facilitate the donation and transplantation process.

WELL SERVED



DR MAHESH VERMA
Vice-chancellor, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University and Chairman of the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH)

DR DS NEGI
Chief Executive Officer, Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute & Research Centre, Delhi

DR MAHIPAL S SACHDEV
Chairman, Centre for Sight, a chain of Eye Hospitals in India

Since the time of Sushruta in the 6th BCE, there has been a huge transformation, including the path breakaway invention of antibiotics, in healthcare, but the fundamentals have not really changed. The challenge, however, the doctors face today are enormous due to vast expansion of the human population and diverse variants of diseases encountered by them. The doctors today are at the forefront of healthcare, whether it is in a primary healthcare centre in a remote corner of a state or in a tertiary care centre in a metropolitan city. Saving and improving the quality of lives of patients is the Holy Grail. The doctors therefore need recognition for the services rendered with skills, fortitude and empathy. This was evident during the pandemic years when they not only treated the Covid-19 patients but also sacrificed their lives trying to save them.

Medicine is a noble profession, epitomizing selfless service and unwavering dedication to alleviating human suffering. The recent recognition of 13 individuals in the medical field with Padma awards reaffirms the profound impact healthcare professionals make. As a Padmasree awardee, I've witnessed the transformative influence of such honors. The medical community's commitment to enhancing public health is unparalleled, and deserves increased governmental budgetary support. Recognizing and rewarding exemplary contributions not only inspires current practitioners but also encourages future generations to pursue excellence in healthcare, fostering a society where well-deserved accolades amplify the significance of medical service.

NEP 2020, NITI Aayog leave clinical psychologists in lurch

NEP 2020 has sparked concerns among experts who flag that MPhil discontinuation clashes with mandatory requirements for clinical psychologists under the Mental Health Act, finds out ARCHANA JYOTI

When you find yourself craving continental cuisine, but your chef is well-versed in Pacific culinary delights, it presents an interesting culinary challenge.
But this experiment cannot be applied on, at least health-related issues that too particularly when it comes to mental health issues.
More so, when we are seeing a huge surge in the mental health cases among younger generations including students, whether from medical or engineering to name a few.
To put in simple words, the analogy of craving continental cuisine with a Pacific-focused chef was used to illustrate a culinary challenge, but mental health challenges are complex and should be treated with the utmost seriousness and empathy.
This is what happened at a NITI Aayog meeting held last August to discuss the proposed modifications to the M.Phil. in Clinical Psychology. Attended by psychiatrists with no adequate representation of clinical psychologists who understand the field's complexities, the outcome looks like not only chaos but also an attempt to degrade the quality of the aspiring professionals in the sector.
Now Indian Association of Clinical Psychologists (IACP), representing the sector has approached UGC and the PMO for their intervention after Niti Aayog failed to redress the anomalies in its suggestions. Explains Dr Shweta Sharma, Clinical Psychologist and Joint Secretary IACP, "While the NEP explicitly states the discontinuation of the MPhil programmes (academic), it lacks clarity for current students and poses a challenge for clinical psychologists, as MPhil in Clinical Psychology (2 years professional degree) is mandatory after academic degree of Masters in Clinical Psychology for recognition and practice as a Clinical Psychologist by the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) under the Mental Health Act (MHA) 2017. Clinical Psychology MPhil programs recognised by RCI provide comprehensive training in various fields like,



emergency care, child and adolescent psychology, behaviour medicine, maternal mental health, and neuro-science to name a few. This curriculum builds a strong foundation to sever people in need for mental health care."
However, the think tanks proposed modification, in all likelihood, is set to impact the quality of mental health professionals in India.
This will lead to reducing the effectiveness of treatments, and the potential consequences for future generations seeking mental health support, adds Dr. Monica Sharma, Clinical Psychologist and Head, Department of Clinical Psychology IIS (deemed to be University), Jaipur.
Wasim Kakroo, a licensed clinical psychologist (alumni of Govt. Medical College Srinagar) and works as a consultant clinical psychologist at Centre for Mental Health Services (CMHS) at Rambagh Srinagar talks about the important role that clinical psychologists play in assessing children's psychology. "Children find it hard to express

their feelings, but psychologists can tell by watching how a child behaves around their parents, teachers, and peers. More complex emotions like assurance, hope, guilt, and pride become apparent as the child grows and develops. Teaching kids how to manage their emotions is crucial. Early detection of odd behavior by therapists or psychologists can help the child express their feelings in a healthy, constructive way."
The psychologists have also argued that clinical psychology is part of the medical field and should not be subject to changes suggested by NITI Aayog. Its move is also in stark violation of the RCI Act and the Mental Health Care Act 2017, which clearly define the roles and qualifications of Clinical Psychologists.
Earlier the program was titled as "Diploma in Medical and Social Psychology" which was renamed as M.Phil. in Clinical Psychology. The MPhil is considered an entry-level requirement for the doctoral programme in institutions like NIMHANS, as it ensures

candidates have confidence through theoretical tests, therapy skills and a research dissertation. The experts say that only after the three-pronged evaluation process in MPhil, license is given. They argue that while the government may change the program's title, the essential nature of the training for clinical psychologists remains crucial and the rigorous process ensures competent practitioners.
They cite countries like Canada, USA, Australia, UK, where a basic graduation in Psychology is required after which the Clinical Specialization is offered at Masters Level.
So what one can gather is that the Think Tank is trying to increase the number of professionals but without thinking that its efforts at hindsight are all set to decrease the quality of Clinical Psychologists, thereby affecting the quality of mental health treatment, say the researchers.
"Instead of degrading the professional training of Clinical Psychologists, efforts should be made to increase the number of seats for professional training in RCI approved institutes. "The foundation for effective mental health treatment lies in rigorous training post-master, and lowering the qualification to graduation level would compromise the necessary skills and maturity required for the profession," adds Dr. Dherendra Kumar, President IACP.
This will have impact on future generations seeking help for mental health issues like anxiety, depression and various psychological issues. "Instead of altering the structure of the program, the Niti Aayog should have renamed the degree to emphasize its authenticity and align it with other medical fields," says the Association which is seeking intervention from the PMO in the matter.
There has been high demand for M.Phil. graduates in mental health field due to their field experience and extensive supervised clinical training. However, institutions are awaiting clarity on the programme continuation without any temporary solutions.

Yanomami indigenous crisis: Lula's challenges

The Yanomami people of Brazil are confronting a significant threat to their lives and livelihoods. They reside in the northernmost province of Brazil, known as Roraima, which is one of the 26 states in the country and is the most logistically and geographically isolated from the rest of the nation. This region constitutes the largest indigenous territory in the country, comparable in size to Portugal in Europe. Currently, nearly 30,000 Yanomamis live in Roraima, and some also reside in southern Venezuela. Ironically, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, the current Brazilian President, popularly known as Lula, assumed power for the third time in January 2023 as the 39th President and visited the province of Roraima. During his visit, he declared that the Yanomami indigenous group is facing 'genocide.' Lula promptly attributed the situation to his predecessor, Jair Bolsonaro, and committed to addressing the issue urgently. This response was prompted by a series of publications in the Brazilian media that quickly disseminated photos of malnourished children in December 2023.



The reports have genuinely shocked the entire nation, raising awareness about the current situation of the Yanomami community in the distant province. Many argue that it poses an existential threat to this group of indigenous people. The crisis has unfolded, leaving many questioning how and who is responsible for it. For centuries, the Yanomami community sustained their way of life through hunting, farming, and gathering food from the bountiful rainforest provided by the Amazon. Each year, they moved from one place to another, allowing their lands to regenerate. Their ancestral lands and the surrounding forests were their sole sources of sustainability. However, with the ascent to power of Bolsonaro, a far-right and populist leader who served as the 38th President from 2019 to 2022 in this Amazon-rained state, things quickly took a turn for the worse. It must be clearly stated that the deterioration of the health and environment of the Yanomami continued for an extended period, not specifically during Bolsonaro's tenure. However, it is notable that he openly encouraged miners and other forest contractors to operate

in the region, aiming to enhance employment opportunities and the nation's wealth. The exploitation of the Yanomami was well underway during the two terms of President Lula from 2003-2010 and his protégé Dilma Rousseff from 2011-2016, until her impeachment. The conditions of the Yanomami group came to public attention primarily during the last few months of Bolsonaro's presidency. Lula has completed one year in office, promising Brazilians high hopes and commitments. The primary entities responsible for the Yanomami genocide are the Brazilian State, mega business corporations, illegal miners, and loggers, all with the knowledge of the government. Specifically, illegal gold miners inundated the region in the 1980s, but were largely expelled thereafter. However, with the rise in gold prices and an invitation by the Bolsonaro Government, these miners returned to the region. Environmental and media reports suggest that around 20,000 of these miners came back to Roraima during Bolsonaro's presidency. They are encroaching on the indigenous lands of the Yanomami group, forcing many to flee from their homelands. Unfortunately, despite a year of lofty

promises by the newly elected Lula in January 2023, many illegal miners and loggers have indeed returned to the Amazon rainforest, continuing their age-old exploitation of the local Yanomami. Currently, severe malnutrition and malaria are actively decimating the Yanomami. For years, stern warnings have been issued to the Federal Government in Brasilia, but no serious measures have been taken to halt the slow killing of the Yanomami. On record, the Federal Administration has declared a "public health emergency" regarding the conditions faced by the Yanomami. How do miners and other outsiders pose a threat to the Yanomami? Primarily, all the miners substantially destroy the animal habitat that these people rely on for their food. Secondly, these miners gradually occupy their fertile lands, which the community uses for farming. Thirdly, these miners use mercury during mining, directly releasing poison into the local rivers upon which the Yanomami have depended for generations to catch fish and fetch water for their daily livelihoods. Fourthly, years of mining have contributed to the creation of hundreds of water pools, providing fertile

grounds for mosquitoes to breed. This, in turn, causes a massive malaria epidemic among the locals. Finally, these miners continually search for new lands and grounds for profitable mining each year. This leads to the spread of illness, disturbances in normal lifestyle, and instability in the entire Roraima province. The Yanomami people, mainly living in isolation, have been exposed to outsiders for years, posing significant threats to their well-being. It is worth discussing here why genocide is an existential threat and what it entails. The term "genocide" was first coined by the Polish lawyer Raphael Lemkin in 1944 in his book titled "Axis Rule in Occupied Europe". The term genocide is composed of the Greek prefix genos, meaning tribe or race, and the Latin suffix cide, meaning killing. Lemkin developed this term for two purposes: one against the systematic killing of the Jewish people under Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime during the Second World War and also for earlier instances of targeted killing of a particular group or section of a community. Genocide was first recognised as a crime by the UN General Assembly in 1946 under international law (A/RES/96-I). To date, 153 countries have ratified the Genocide Convention.

Clearly, genocide is defined by the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, also known as the Genocide Convention. It is an instrument of international law that, for the first time, codified Genocide as a crime. On December 9, 1948, the Genocide Convention was adopted by the UN General Assembly as the first human rights treaty. This Convention once again reiterated the international community's commitment to "never again" after experiencing the loss of massive economic resources, grave hostilities, and heinous crimes, including the infamous "Holocaust" in Germany during the Second World War. The adoption of this Convention is a watershed moment in the modern history of humanity as it underscores the importance of universal human rights and condemnation of such acts by all civilized nations. The Convention, in its Article II, defines Genocide as any of the following acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group, as such: A. Killing members of the group; B. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; C. Deliberately inflicting on

the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; D. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; E. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. Brazil, being a signatory of the Genocide Convention, is fully responsible for protecting and preventing the menace against the Yanomami community in this northwestern part of the country. Brasilia must put in place all available legal instruments to hold the perpetrators of the crime accountable as early as possible. Under Lula da Inacio, Brazil is rapidly witnessing a severe crisis, encompassing both environmental and humanitarian hazards for the Yanomami indigenous people. There is widespread belief that genocide is being perpetrated against the Yanomami group. Lula's two terms of presidency in the 2000s were also marked by policies directly impacting the lives of indigenous people. For instance, he permitted the construction of the Bel Monte Dam on the Xingu River, which was later completed during the tenure of his successor and Worker's Party (PT) President, Rousseff. This dam resulted in the flooding

of about 500 square kilometres, displacing over 20,000 people, devastating the livelihoods of indigenous communities, and creating another deforestation zone in the Amazon, widely known as the "Lungs of the Planet". Furthermore, Lula's administration allowed land rights for squatters, leading to the legalisation of land grabs in the Amazon Forest. It offered amnesty to all those responsible for encroachment and deforestation of the lands of indigenous communities in the Amazon areas. Lula also favored the agri-business industry, equally responsible for exploiting indigenous communities. His permission for the meat lobby to expand their business directly impacts the lands of local people. Hence, Lula cannot simply blame Bolsonaro for the current environmental and humanitarian wreckage affecting the Yanomami people. The current crisis is not of recent origin; it has been escalating over many years. In 2020, a study conducted by UNICEF and Fiocruz, the Brazilian State Health Research Institute, confirmed that eight out of every ten children aged five or under suffered from chronic malnutrition. Lula, often hailed as a champion of social reform with economic growth, must reflect upon the tragedies unfolding against the disadvantaged and indigenous people of Brazil, particularly the Yanomami. Before he chairs the much-talked-about global conference summit called COP-30 next year, it is his responsibility to address one of the worst humanitarian and environmental catastrophes that has been occurring right under his nose. In March 2022, Junior Hekurari Yanomami, the President of the Yanomami Local Health Council, wrote on Twitter (Now X): "The miners are destroying our rivers, forests, and our children. Our air is no longer pure, our game is disappearing, and our people are crying out for clean water. We want to live; we want our peace back and our territory." So, the writing on the wall is clear. Lula is well aware of the tragedy. It is time for action, not to exacerbate the Yanomami tragedy!

The Yanomami people in Brazil's Roraima province face a dire threat to their existence, marked by severe malnutrition, malaria, and encroachment by illegal miners. President Lula, who declared their plight a 'genocide,' blames his predecessor, but the crisis is rooted in years of exploitation, including Lula's own policies, making urgent action imperative for this indigenous community.



MAKHAN SAIKIA

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PERSPECTIVE

Unravelling dynamics of federalism in India

India's federalism intricately balances centralised authority and regional autonomy. Recent Supreme Court cases on Delhi and Article 370 illustrate this dynamic, showcasing a blend of asymmetric and symmetrical federalism, shaping the nation's governance landscape toward progress and unity

Federalism lies at the heart of India's constitutional framework, embodying the delicate balance between centralised authority and regional autonomy. In the annals of Indian jurisprudence, the discourse on federalism has often been characterised by its intricate dance between asymmetry and symmetry. Recent judicial pronouncements have brought this dynamic to the forefront, illustrating the evolving contours of federalism within the Indian constitutional framework. Two seminal cases, the Government of NCT of Delhi v. Union of India and the In Re: Article 370 of the Constitution, have served as crucibles for testing the delicate balance between centralized authority and regional autonomy.

the constitutional conundrum surrounding the governance of the National Capital Territory of Delhi. The interplay between Articles 239 and 239AA of the Indian Constitution set the stage for a protracted power struggle between the Union Government and the Delhi administration. While Article 239 vested administrative control in an administrator appointed by the President, Article 239AA conferred upon Delhi a semblance of statehood, complete with an elected Legislative Assembly and Council of Ministers. The 2021 Amendment sought to recalibrate this delicate equilibrium by circumscribing the powers of the Legislative Assembly and reinforcing the authority of the Lieutenant Governor. In a landmark judgment, the Supreme Court reaffirmed the principles of federalism and struck a blow for regional autonomy. Chief Justice Dr DY Chandrachud, leading the bench, underscored the unique constitutional status



accorded to Delhi, labeling it an "asymmetric federal model." This model, while retaining Delhi's classification as a Union Territory, imbued it with federal characteristics, thereby reshaping the contours of the Union-Delhi relationship.

THE ARTICLE 370 DILEMMA

Contrastingly, the narrative

took an unexpected turn with the judgment on Article 370, which pertained to the erstwhile special status of Jammu and Kashmir. The court, in a departure from the asymmetric model, opted for a more symmetrical approach. It held that the special provisions accorded to Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 did not confer internal sovereignty akin to

that of a distinct State. Rather, Article 370 was construed as an instance of asymmetric federalism, wherein specific arrangements tailored to the unique circumstances of Jammu and Kashmir were accommodated within the federal framework. This shift towards symmetry in the context of Jammu and Kashmir's special status marked a departure from the

traditional understanding of federalism in India. By disavowing the notion of internal sovereignty, the court underscored the principle of uniformity within the federal structure, emphasising that differential treatment under Article 370 did not equate to a distinct form of sovereignty.

CONCLUSION

The juxtaposition between these two judgments accentuates the nuanced evolution of federalism within India's governance structure. While the Delhi verdict reaffirmed the validity of asymmetric federalism, the ruling on Article 370 signalled a shift towards symmetry, albeit with due consideration for regional nuances. Again, the Supreme Court of India stands as a paragon of constitutional stewardship, guiding the nation towards a more equitable and cohesive federal union. Through its astute interpretation of the law, the court deftly navigates the complexities of federalism, embracing the

dynamic interplay between asymmetry and symmetry. In doing so, it upholds the fundamental principles of both central authority and regional autonomy. As the nation grapples with its federal identity, these judgments serve as a testament to the judiciary's steadfast dedication to striking the delicate balance between centralisation and decentralisation. The Indian judiciary's continued endeavor to navigate the intricate labyrinth of federalism underscores its pivotal role in shaping the nation's governance landscape.

Boldly asserting the virtues of governance, these judgments epitomise the essence of federalism, serving as the harmonious melody that unites our diverse nation in its pursuit of progress and unity.

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SONAL GUPTA



RAHUL PARASHAR

THE DELHI CONUNDRUM

The saga began with the Government of NCT of Delhi vs Union of India, where the Supreme Court grappled with

WE ARE NOT HUMAN BEINGS HAVING A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE. WE ARE SPIRITUAL BEINGS HAVING A HUMAN EXPERIENCE
— PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN



YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This week brings a notable triumph, as you overcome a significant challenge and achieve a goal that earns public recognition. Your hard work on a recent endeavor is paying off, and you rightfully deserve the praise. Expect a wave of joy and success, enhanced by a sense of optimism. A travel opportunity may also arise, so be ready to embark on a journey. However, amidst these achievements, stay focused and avoid getting carried away. Important family decisions need your undivided attention and decisiveness. Don't let success cloud your judgment or delay crucial choices. On an emotional note, the week could be less favorable. You may face disappointments in personal relationships, possibly leading to feelings of betrayal or separation. For those navigating legal or formal separations, expect significant developments.

Lucky number 12 | **Lucky colour** Teal
Lucky day Wednesday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

Be mindful of letting external factors, like anxieties or negative habits, control your life. There's a heightened chance of being misled or making errors in judgment during this period. It's advisable to avoid hasty decisions or ventures, as they may lead to setbacks. Instead, embrace honesty and sincerity, as these qualities will bring long-term benefits. Remember, you're entitled to a fulfilling life, so maintain your self-respect and poise. Exciting opportunities and projects are on the horizon, which will keep you engaged and showcase your talents. As the week concludes, look forward to a time of joy and celebration, marking a significant and happy event in your life. Stay open to learning from the experiences that come your way, as they will enrich your understanding.

Lucky number 11 | **Lucky colour** Brown
Lucky day Saturday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

It's important to find equilibrium in various aspects of your life, like relationships, career, and finances, while embracing new challenges. Sometimes, you might face barriers that prevent you from achieving your goals, leading to worry or awkward situations. Prioritizing your physical, mental, and spiritual health is essential, as is reconciling conflicting interests. Avoiding responsibilities and commitments isn't advisable. Embracing a spirit of giving and involvement in altruistic activities can offer a sense of purpose and help overcome obstacles. Honesty and integrity are key; examine if any issues are of your own making. Work on shedding any negative behaviors to enhance your life journey. Remember, self-awareness and proactive steps are crucial in navigating life's complex tapestry.

Lucky number 6 | **Lucky colour** Sea Green
Lucky day Thursday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

Your sense of contentment will stem from domestic harmony, creating a nurturing environment at home. Upcoming conversations may revolve around organizing trips or planning for future occasions. A family member might need to adapt their travel plans unexpectedly, either altering their itinerary or coming home earlier. Embracing cherished family customs and valuing the knowledge passed down through generations will be significant to you. Professionally, you'll seek a role that offers fulfillment, financial stability, and a strong sense of community. Relying on your intelligence will be key in achieving your goals. A generous, perceptive, and thoughtful approach will lead to positive changes in your life. Expect to reach a point of financial comfort, allowing you to savor your accomplishments and indulge in life's tangible comforts.

Lucky number 8 | **Lucky colour** Orange
Lucky day Sunday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

This week, you're poised to accomplish significant tasks with determination, focus, and patience. Expect a noticeable enhancement in your financial status, bringing you greater comfort and a deeper understanding of what's truly important in life. Joy and tranquility will flourish in your domestic sphere. Consider adding new furnishings to your home or spending serene moments in your garden. The success of your endeavors, especially those akin to harvesting, will bring you immense satisfaction. Your connections to historical family values and relationships will offer you substantial support and security. Your activities will largely revolve around shopping, dining, gardening, and both earning and managing finances. This period is marked by a sense of abundance and stability. Additionally, a significant event like a wedding might be on the horizon.

Lucky number 11 | **Lucky colour** Pink
Lucky day Friday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

You're facing challenges in expressing your ideas, often encountering resistance. Obstacles are disrupting your progress toward achieving your objectives. You're longing to break free from a limiting situation or consider a change in your professional path. The issue stems from external factors, not from within you. Others are failing to meet their commitments, leading to setbacks. If you're feeling trapped and exposed, it's important to address these difficulties promptly. Liberating your mindset from fixed ideas is crucial. Once you attain a broader perspective, dedicate time to contemplate your true professional desires. In this journey, a supportive individual, particularly a woman, may offer valuable guidance and encouragement. Her empathy and insights could be instrumental in guiding you through these challenging times.

Lucky number 20 | **Lucky colour** Purple
Lucky day Saturday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

This week, you're brimming with energy and readiness to initiate new projects. A sense of impatience might accompany this surge of enthusiasm. It's a time for recognizing your own value and embarking on a journey of self-discovery. You'll feel empowered to tackle any challenge, using it as a measure of your capabilities. Expect a wave of creative energy that signals the beginning of a significant new chapter in your life. This period offers a chance to steer your future in a promising direction. Your innate curiosity will drive you to express your unique traits with vigor. Business-related travel is on the horizon. Additionally, this period marks a phase of professional advancement, possibly involving a new job or a significant shift in your career path.

Lucky number 10 | **Lucky colour** Maroon
Lucky day Monday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

In the upcoming week, maintaining a calm demeanor and avoiding disputes will be crucial. Tensions may rise, potentially leading to intense disagreements or even physical altercations, especially in professional settings. Embrace the essence of true competition, valuing the challenge it presents. While it's important to honor your adversaries, don't hesitate to assert your own beliefs. Remember, dwelling on the past or fearing the future can be counterproductive. Instead, strive for self-harmony and autonomy. Focus is key; without it, you might find yourself overwhelmed by an excess of information. Cultivate a sharp and insightful approach to understanding the core of any issue. Be aware, however, of the potential pitfalls of an overly rigid and emotionless analytical approach, as it can lead to unintended consequences.

Lucky number 3 | **Lucky colour** Royal Blue
Lucky day Tuesday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

This upcoming week promises to be quite promising, especially in terms of professional growth and personal connections. Unexpected opportunities for advancement in your career might surprise you. Be prepared for sudden work-related travel, which will likely yield beneficial results in the future. If you're currently renting, you might find yourself relocating, either in your professional space or your home. Emotionally, the week brings a surge of passion and sentimentality, stirring your romantic feelings. However, you might find yourself in a dilemma, torn between what you feel and what you think. Trust your instincts in this situation. As the week concludes, you'll find yourself gaining emotional stability and clarity, broadening your perspective on potential opportunities. This could be related to significant life events or personal achievements.

Lucky number 18 | **Lucky colour** Magenta
Lucky day Monday



CANCER June 21-July 22

Your hard work and unwavering commitment have set the stage for notable achievements. Expect a period of significant progress, particularly in areas where you've honed your skills. This could manifest as career advancements, educational triumphs, or profitable applications of your abilities. Be aware, your success might draw some jealousy this week. Consider focusing on tangible goals, like investing in long-term assets or dedicating yourself to meaningful projects. These efforts are not just steps toward material success but pathways for personal growth as well. As the week wraps up, embrace some quiet time for self-reflection. While solitude can be challenging, it's essential for recharging and renewing your inner strength. This period of introspection promises to fortify your confidence and resilience, paving the way for continued success.

Lucky number 7 | **Lucky colour** White
Lucky day Thursday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

You're at a crossroads, sensing a need to shift from your current path to one that maximizes your potential. Your drive and zest are remarkable, pushing you toward achieving great things. A supportive male figure in your life is poised to extend a helping hand. This person, known for their vigor and creative spirit, may also spark a romantic interest. However, your tendency to rush and react impulsively could lead to unnecessary conflicts or jealousy. This hurried nature risks turning favorable circumstances sour. Financial or professional worries might creep in, causing second thoughts about recent decisions. Despite these challenges, maintaining an optimistic outlook is crucial. Reflect on the simple pleasures of life and reconnect with your inner youth. Embracing the company of the younger generation can rekindle this joy and offer fresh perspectives.

Lucky number 13 | **Lucky colour** Black
Lucky day Sunday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

This period marks a phase of reflection and assessment regarding recent endeavors. Lessons will be gleaned from past errors, providing valuable insights. A substantial amount of effort has been invested in your pursuits, yet the full benefits of these endeavors remain untapped. You may encounter some challenging thoughts during this time. Midweek brings a surge of satisfaction and joy with the unexpected arrival of new business prospects, assignments, or career opportunities. These developments open doors to financial gains and potential ventures. As opportunities emerge, careful selection is key. Financial prudence is advised, as there's a tendency towards overspending. The week concludes with travel prospects. Plans for a recreational trip, a romantic outing, or a simple leisure activity are likely, offering a pleasant break from routine activities.

Lucky number 5 | **Lucky colour** Mustard
Lucky day Friday

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ASTROTURF
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Keep pace with callings of time

Perception drives a being, which every individual forms one's own exclusive way, depending on how each mind is inherently oriented. Accordingly, every mind involuntarily develops its defining principle, and which obviously varies from person-to-person. Over the same issue, different people look at it in different perspectives and accordingly form varied opinions. The paradox, however, is that dynamics of every emerging moment keeps varying widely and with no scope for drawing any parallel with the one in the past. Therefore, at times, the defining principle of the mind fails to have the required inputs on which to judge the callings of emerging times. For many, particularly those who do not wish to come out of the comfort zone of the past, it becomes difficult for them to digest impending change. They forget that the world always remains in a state of flux, ever

flowing, ever changing, and so change is unavoidable. We need to keep pace with time and therefore, wilfully accept change. Otherwise, we may be left behind in the run of time. Willingly or unwillingly majority adapt with the calling of time and thereby secure a smooth go in life. There are, however, some stubborn guys who wish to move on their own exclusive terms and in a demanding mode, and not open to look beyond even for a reality check. Such people come under stress, become grudging, grumbling, some of them come even under depression.

A couple of months back, someone lost his job. Worried, he came asking: "What is in store of my destiny? If I don't find a job within 3 months, I will lose my Visa and be forced to repatriate back to India with fresh challenge of finding a suitable job. Kindly guide." He was assured of a suitable job within the speci-



fied time frame, which happened. But as would happen with any transition, the work atmosphere changed. He now will have to work in shifts, periodically at night, as it is a production unit. At the very thought of shift working, he has

begun sulking and come under stress. In a state of desperation, he came asking: "Sir, astrology is a science, could you not see the discomfort coming my way?"

Well, astrological reading covers three factors – Desha, Kala, and Patra. Kala is destiny indicator. Your progressed chart strongly indicated job opportunities in offing, which happened. The comfort level, however, would be subject to two variables. First, Desha, which implies environmental condition. In your case it means overall job market and conditions if any associated with every job. You have no control over this factor. You need to get along with the callings of the job in hand. It needs to be appreciated that the world doesn't necessarily move to your asking. You can't just live in a demanding mode. You are just a part of a large organisation, having its own work environment and demands. You can't change it, and therefore, need to adapt yourself

to its callings. What really affects your comfort level is the second variable – Patra. It implies personality traits of a being, which holds the key to how you comprehend issues in hand, develop perception, and accordingly react and respond to the situation faced with. It is your Patra aspect that is wanting, which is why you feel so much challenged, rather than taking the change as a matter of new routine to follow. "How comes?" He questioned.

Your astrological pointers offer you with the answer. Mind signifying Moon occupies Virgo sign. It is placed adverse to mischievous Neptune, Saturn, Mercury, Jupiter, and Venus. In the first place, it indicates that you are stuck to self-defined illusionary beliefs and perceptions, distanced from ground realities. You are not open to look beyond even for a reality check. If things don't happen on expected lines, it becomes difficult for

you to digest. You then instead of facing it head on, try to somehow escape. Second, you have a negative mindset, which brings in pessimism and self-doubts. When faced with adverse situation, you find it convenient to shift the blame on others. Third, you are too much touchy and sensitive and so get emotionally overexercised even on trivial issues. You stretch them beyond due, unnecessarily brooding, contemplating, and worrying. In the process, you fail to look at issues in hand in the right perspective due. The result is there to see. "What's the way-out sir?" He asked. Change your thought process. Think positive. Be grounded and willingly be in accord with the callings of emerging times.

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