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Modi slams Congress for neglect of North East

PM champions cultural heritage of Assam, says projects will enhance NE connective

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **GUWAHATI/NEW DELHI**

ontinuing his attack on the Congress, Prime **⊿**Minister Narendra Modi claimed on Sunday that those in power Independence could not understand the significance of places of worship and set a trend of being ashamed of their own culture for political reasons. Addressing a massive rally in Guwahati after unveiling projects worth Rs 11,600 crore, Modi said no country can progress by erasing its past. He had slammed the Congress at a rally in Bhubaneswar a day

Regarding the Kamakhya temple corridor project, which is to be developed by the Centre at a cost of Rs 498 crore, Modi said that once completed, a large number of devotees would visit the Shakti Peeth, boosting the tourism sector of the entire Northeast.

"It will serve as the gateway to the North-East. Despite challenges thousands of years, these symbols of our culture showcase how we have preserved our heritage. Unfortunately, many of these culturally significant symbols now lie in ruins," Modi

expressed. He mentioned that the



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, arrives to attend the inauguration and foundation stone laying ceremony of various developmental projects in Guwahati

"Kamakhya Divvalok would bring Pariyojana" about significant transformation pilgrimage experience to the Shakti shrine.

that those who governed the country for an extended period after Independence

failed to comprehend the value and significance of places of belief, neglecting them. He pointed out that, driven by political gains, there was a trend of distancing The Prime Minister asserted themselves from their own culture and history. Stressing the importance of preserving the past and maintaining

development, "However, the situation has changed in the last 10 years. Modi added that the BJP-led "double-engine" government is committed to a policy of both development protection of heritage. He cited Assam as an example, saying that it is a where beliefs, spirituality, and history are intertwined with modernity. Modi mentioned that the projects he unveiled will enhance connectivity not only in the North-East but also throughout the rest of

"Today, the youth aspire to witness the development of Assam and the North-East on par with South Asia. Your dream is Modi's commitment. Modi will spare no effort to fulfill your dream. This is Modi's guarantee," the Prime Minister added.

Continued on Page 2



GIVE PROOF Police ask Atishi on MLA poaching jibe

STAFF REPORTER

After serving notice on (AAP) convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, the Delhi Police Crime Branch issued a notice to PWD and Finance Minister Atishi on Sunday, asking her to respond to charges of poaching attempts by the BJP with evidence. A team from the crime branch also visited residence at Atishi's Mathura Road and served her the notice. The police waited outside her home as she was not present.

Meanwhile, Atishi, who holds the portfolios of education, PWD, culture, and tourism, instructed members of her camp office to receive any notices from the police on her behalf

Later, it was revealed that Atishi, along with AAP leader and Rajya Sabha member Raghav Chaddha and spokesperson Priyanka Kakkar, were at Chief Minister Kejriwal's residence. A video showed the crime branch and the media outside Atishi's home in Delhi. Atishi asserted that these

engaged in MLA poaching in Uttarakhand, Goa, Madhya Karnataka, Pradesh, and Maharashtra over the last 8 years. The AAP leader expressed concern, saying, "The political masters of police

were the same individuals from the BJP who had

officers, who have a passion to serve the country and protect women, have turned them into a prime-time

gimmick." Continued on Page 2

ISI agent working at Indian Embassy in Moscow arrested

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Uttar Pradesh Police has arrested an Indian national Moscow for allegedly spying for Pakistan's ISI, an official statement on Sunday said. The Meerut field unit of UP's Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) called Satendra Siwal, who was working as the IBSA (India Based Security Assistant) in the Indian Embassy in Moscow from 2021, for interrogation, the statement said. resident Shahmahiuddinpur village in Hapur, could not give satisfactory answers and confessed to his crime during

"questioning", it said. Meanwhile, sources said the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) is aware of Siwal's arrest and working with the investigative authorities in this case. "MEA continues to work with the investigative authorities in the matter," said a source. Siwal was employed as a Multi-Tasking Staff (MTS) at the MEA.

He was arrested after an FIR was registered against him at ATS police station, Lucknow, under Section 121A of the IPC (waging war against the country) and the Official Secrets Act, 1923, the statement said.

The ATS in its probe through electronic and physical surveillance found that he was involved in anti-India activities with the network of the ISI handlers, it said. The ATS said





Satendra Siwal, an Indian national working at the country's embassy in Moscow, who was arrested by Anti-Terrorist Squad of Uttar Pradesh Police for allegedly spying for Pakistan's ISI

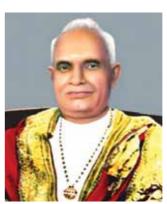
that he was providing important confidential information regarding the strategic activities of the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian military establishments for money.

South India's pioneer of social justice goes global

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

M ore than five decades after his death, the legend of Mannathu Padmanabhan (1878-1970), the founder of the Nair the country's social and Service Society (NSS), is economic life. He declared an reaching the global arena. open war against untouchability Mannam, as he is known and discrimination based on throughout Kerala, was south caste and creed. The impact nioneer in advocating social justice, inclusive growth, and the abolition of anti-people customs and traditions in Nair society. He opened the doors of his family temple to Harijans and members of the backward community, long before selfstyled rationalists and atheists staged demonstrations across Tamil Nadu by garlanding Hindu deities with footwear and

Mannam exhorted the Nair community members not to rest on their laurels but to pursue higher education and utilise their knowledge for the upliftment of created on the national psy his views is still not widely known in the outside world. G Sukumaran Nair, the general secretary of NSS, said, "Mohandas Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, drew inspiration from Mannathu Padmanabhan, which is why he undertook a political pilgrimage to Kerala to participate in the struggle of the oppressed and depressed classes, enabling them to walk on public



MANNATHU PADMANABHAN (1878-1970)

roads and worship in temples." The NSS, founded by Mannam, has published a book titled "Sri Mannathu Padmanabhan: Living

Beyond the Ages" this month. A team of researchers led by Prof S Sujatha, Principal of NSS Hindu College, Perunna, has recreated the life and times of Mannam, wno is addressed as Samudayacharyan. The lead addressed article has been authored by Sukumaran Nair. Sujatha expressed that it was a

e true for her to be entrusted with this task. She remarked, "Though there was an attempt to translate his works into Ênglish, it did not bear fruit because Mannam's flowery language could not be aptly translated. He was the Winston Churchill or Samuel Johnson of the Malayalam language," said Suiatha.

There is no sphere in Kerala untouched by Mannam. He

advocated for special care for Harijans and communities. "Reservations, as seen today, are unscientific and counterproductive. Economically backward people should also receive special consideration, but merit should never be compromised," said Sukumaran Nair.

Nair himself has w chapter of the book, explaining how Mannam, the community leader, integrated service to the community with national and political services.

Reverently addressed as the "Kerala Lion" due to his leadership in the Liberation Struggle of 1959, Mannathu Padmanabhan

played crucial role.

Continued on Page 2

RAJESH KUMAR ■

garbage.

The national capital witnessed light rainfall on Sunday, leading to disruptions in road, flights, and rail operations, causing inconvenience to commuters amid chilly commuters amid chilly conditions. The rainfall is a result of a fresh western disturbance that hit northwest India on Saturday and currently, along with an induced cyclonic circulation, lies over southwest Rajasthan and adjoining Pakistan. Dense fog, which slightly subsided in the past two days, will make a comeback in Delhi-NCR as the India

More rain in offing; flight delays, road chaos, fog woes continue

Meteorological Department (IMD) predicted the same in the morning hours of February 5 and 6. According to the IMD, no cold day conditions were observed on Sunday. The IMD has predicted more rain and moderate fog during the night

In its advisory to Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, and Western Uttar Pradesh on Sunday, the IMD said dense fog may affect air, rail



routes, and road traffic in the area on Monday and Tuesday. The advisory further suggests driving carefully, and unless

precautionary measures are

taken, it may lead to some road traffic collisions. A fresh spell of snowfall in Himachal Pradesh has led to the closure of 518 roads in the State, while snowfall across the Kashmir Valley affected normal life on Sunday, with all flights cancelled at Srinagar airport. Officials said 161 roads have been closed in Shimla, followed

by 157 in Lahaul and Spiti, 71 in

Kullu, 69 in Chamba, and 46 in

Mandi district. Continued on Page 2

influenced by adults who

indulge in fear-mongering

and spread hatred towards

stray animals throughout the day," said PFA volunteer

PFA Trustee Ambika Shukla

Surabhi Rawat.

Minor throws puppy from high rise, sparks outrage

STAFF REPORTER ■ NOIDA

In a distressing incident, a child threw a puppy from a high-rise onto the road, leading to the road, leading to the month-old dog's demise. The incident occurred in Gaur City-14th Avenue, falling under the jurisdiction of the Bisrakh police station area in Greater Noida. The Greater Noida police have registered an FIR against unknown persons in an incident involving a minor boy allegedly throwing a puppy from a high-rise onto the road, resulting in the young canine's death. A complaint filed by People For Animals (PFA) volunteer

the boy, aged around 9-10 years and residing in a highrise tower, was captured in a video purportedly showing him committing the act.

video has surfaced, showcasing heartwrenching incident in a society in Greater Noida West, where a child picked up a helpless puppy before tossing it into the basement of a parking lot.

The boy in the CCTV footage appeared to be a minor, callously picking up the helpless puppy, who was hiding with its siblings in a bush. In the 14-second video, the child can be seen picking up and throwing it down the Surbhi Rawat highlighted that driveway, while onlookers



watch the entire inhuman act unaffected by the puppy's unbothered.

The FIR stated that the entire act was recorded and circulated in the society groups and on social media as a reel, encouraging others to do the same.

FIR mentioned that the boy,

According to the FIR, the video clip depicts the boy, under allegedly supervision of an adult, ruthlessly picking up the nearly month-old puppy, which was hiding in a bush with its siblings. The boy carried the puppy towards the road, despite the canine's desperate squeals and unsuccessful attempts to escape from his clutches. The

desperate cries, proceeded to throw it from a height, leading to its death. The FIR requests the child's

appearance before the juvenile court and an assessment of his mental

"In the same society, just days ago, a person intentionally crushed a puppy under his vehicle. Another puppy was found dead in suspicious circumstances, possibly poisoned. An autopsy will be conducted. The reason for

such brutal actions against

puppies is the hatred spewed

on the society's WhatsApp

group. Kids nowadays have

phones and get easily

expressed concern about seeing a child devoid of any feelings. "It reveals a psychopathic tendency that must be dealt with urgently lest we find a monster in our midst. Those who hurt and abuse animals set a dangerous example that can lead to tragic consequences. Let us not

with our own prejudices," she Continued on Page 2

pervert a whole generation

Law enforcement shouldn't consider borders as hindrance: Shah

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said crimes and criminals do not respect geographical borders and hence, law enforcement agencies should not consider borders as a hindrance and should rather consider those as meeting points for solving crimes.

Addressing Commonwealth Education Association (CLEA) Commonwealth Attorneys and Solicitors General Conference (CASGC) here, Shah also said when the three recently-enacted criminal justice laws are implemented in the country, one can get justice up to the level of high court within three years of the registration of an FIR.

graphical borders have become irrelevant when it comes to commerce and crime.

The home minister said there are cross-border challenges for justice delivery, trade, commerce, communication and added that for trade and crime, there is no border.

"Crimes and criminals do not respect geographical borders. Therefore, law enforcement agencies should not consider geographical borders as a hindrance. In the future, geo-graphical borders should be the meeting point for solving crimes," he said.

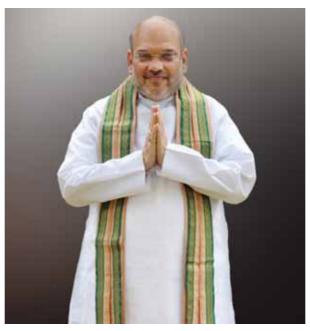
Shah said geographical boundaries are neither important for trade nor for crime. "Trade and crime are both becoming borderless and at such times, to deal with trade disputes and crime in a borderless manner, model that justice should

system and tradition," he said. Shah said governments need to work in this direction as from small cyber fraud to global organised crime, from local disputes to cross-border disputes, from local crimes to terrorism, all are linked in some way or the other.

Referring to the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and Bharatiya Sakshya Act, he said after the implementation of these three new laws, India will have the world's most modern criminal justice systems. The three laws will replace the

colonial-era Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure and Indian Evidence Act, 1872 respectively.

The home minister said the government has worked on a



accessible, affordable and

He said the scope of the conference is not limited only to courts, but it is related to the Commonwealth countries and in a way, the common people of the entire world.

Shah said the Constitution of every country has justice and rights as a common factor and it is the judicial system that does the work of realising those concepts on the ground and delivering justice to the last

person. He said the connection between small cyber fraud to global organised crime is becoming very deep.

"From local disputes to crossborder disputes, the connection is becoming deeper. The entire process from small theft to hacking the banking system connection of international terrorism with local crime is also becoming deeper," the home minister said.

He said crime and criminals do not recognise borders, hence law enforcement agencies will have to be strengthened to control them, otherwise uncontrolled crime will make trade difficult.

A lot of work has been done on many issues, such as exchangerate fluctuations, trade-protection treaties, issues related to international standards and regulation complaints and contract and dispute resolution, Shah said.

There are still many issues where there is a need to work to control crime, he added. The home minister stressed the need to increase the use of technology to the extent that it

all the changes that will take place in technology in the next 100 years.

He said due to the changing scenario, the judiciary will also have to change and in view of cross-border cases, the use of

technology will have to be

adopted in the entire process of We cannot deliver justice in the 21st century with laws of the 19th century," Shah said, citing the three new laws that were enacted taking into account the advancement of

technology. He said one can benefit a lot from an artificial intelligencebased translation process in the judicial system.

We can make great use of AI in understanding the nuances of the legal system and cases,'

Adhir renews attack against Didi after as she targets Sonia

Bengal Congress president Chowdhury renewed his attack against Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for attacking his party instead of the BJP wondering whether she was afraid of the saffron government in the Centre.

"It is unfortunate that such a senior leader like Mamata Banerjee is continuously attacking the Congress when she should have targeted the BJP ... it sounds strange ... she is doing what the BJP has been doing ... that it attacking the Congress in a bid to weaken ... I fail to understand as to what is in her mind ... she is saying that the Congress will not get more than 40 seats ... my question is does she

want that to happen being a constituent of Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance," Chowdhury said wondering whether some kind of dread was chasing the Chief Minister. "She is telling all kind of bad things the BJP usually says

against the Congress ... is she afraid of the BJP that she has to change her stance every day," Chowdhury said.

Chowdhury's remarks came a day after Banerjee slammed

Rahul Gandhi for holding Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in Bengal. She also asked the Congress to see its own face in the mirror before bringing corruption charges against the TMC government.

"Rahul Gandhi took out Yatra in Bengal but did not even

care to formally inform me ... I got the information through the administration," Banerjee said while senior TMC leader Kunal Ghosh said the 'Congress always raises the corruption issues against us but what about Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi ... are they not facing charges ... are they not out on bail ... they should first look at their faces in the mirror.'

Banerjee who is apparently upset about the Congress yatra in north and central Bengal where it drew huge crowds has already said that she would go alone in the

Alleging that despite her offer of two seats in the State the Congress refused to cooperate and asked for more seats forcing her to withdraw from a joint show Banerjee earlier said, "I proposed that Congress contest 300 seats (across the country where BJP is the main opposition), but they did not listen to us. Now, they have come here to tickle the Muslim voters in Bengal by holding the yatra ... now I say there will be no alliance and let them fight all the 42 seats... we will fight

Track II summit between Sonia, Mamata likely

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

With the possibilities of Congress-Trinamool Congress electoral alliance in Bengal becoming bleaker by the day after Mamata Banerjee's declaration that she would fight alone in the State some senior leaders have embarked on a track-two diplomacy to bring the two parties closer at least for the time being. Accordingly efforts are on for a dialogue between Sonia Gandhi and the Bengal Chief Minister when she travels to Delhi next week. Banerjee will be in the Capital to take part in a meeting on "one nation one vote" policy being floated by the Centre.

Though the Chief Minister earlier said that "my visit is purely official and there is noth-

ing political there," but sources said that there could be a brief parley between the two leaders "because both of them enjoy a personal chemistry since the days of Rajiv Gandhi whose contribution in making her a first time MP was immense."

When reminded that the Chief Minister has already gone on record saying that there would be no electoral alliance in Bengal and that the Congress leadership had been rude to her by not only not inviting her to the Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyaya Yatra but also asking for plenty of seats instead of the two-seat offer made by her, a Congress leader said that "she may come out of the meeting and say that Sonia ji was extremely cordial to her and so she is changing her mind.'

Fiscal federal terrorism by BJP **Government: TMC**

SAUGAR SENGUPTA | KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress on Sunday alleged that the BJP Government was indulging in "fiscal federal terrorism" by get-ting the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General to indulge in "malicious propaganda."

Saying that the claims made by the BJP citing CAG reports that utilization certificates of previous central grants had not been provided by the Bengal Government to the Centre --leading to the stoppage of the future funds for MNREGA,, rural housing and other projects --- TMC Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien on Sunday said that "this is fiscal federal terrorism" the BJP's claim citing CAG reports were "nothing but an attempt to target Bengal because they cannot take on the TMC politically.

The statements in the CAG report were being "twisted deliberately by the opposition to engage in malicious propaganda. The Trinamool Congress will not take responsibility for the Left's lack of accountability during their regime as we have followed all protocols while in power," O'Brien said.

Drawing comparison with the BJP-ruled States where the central grants were easily made available O'Brien said that in BJP-ruled States like Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan etc no mention of this utilization certificates are made.

"But when it comes to Bengal they raise all kind of issues which are not raised in the meeting ... we had raised this issue with the Prime Minister who assured of an official level meeting" which "indeed took place but no UC was discussed," O'Brien said wondering why if the central bank of the country could waive loan of Rs 12 lakh crore of the corporate it could not clear the rightful dues of the workers who had worked under the 100-days' work schemes. The State BJP citing the "discrepancies" shown in the CAG reports had been attacking the TMC for organizing a "mother of all scams worth Rs 2 lakh crore."

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had on Saturday alleged that MNREGA wages to the tune or Rs 7,000 crore had been blocked by the Centre for the past three years. "About 21 lakh workers have not been paid their dues ... it is illegal ... it is an offence and one is liable to be sent to jail if the rightful wages are not paid after work," Banerjee had said announcing that she would start payment of the wages from February 21 from the State government's cof-

Avalanche alert in Kashmir hilly areas

PTI ■ SRINAGAR

S nowfall across the Kashmir Valley affected normal life on Sunday with all flights cancelled at Srinagar airport, officials said.

The plains of Kashmir saw moderate snowfall, while heavy snowfall has been reported in the higher reaches, they said.

Authorities are clearing snow from roads so that vehicular movement is possible, they said. But traffic movement was slow as the roads are slip-

The snowfall has forced the cancellation of all inbound and outbound flights from Srinagar airport for the day. Authorities have issued avalanche warnings for hilly and mountainous areas of Kashmir, urging the residents

ment for the next 24 hours. The snowfall has resulted in a rise in the minimum temperatures but the day temperatures have fallen in most

to avoid unnecessary move-

places of the valley. As per the MeT department forecast, the weather is expected to improve in Kashmir from Tuesday onwards. Qazigund town in south Kashmir was the warmest place on Saturday, recording a high of 3.2 degrees Celsius followed by Kokernag at 3.1 degrees Celsius.

The mercury in Gulmarg skiing resort in north Kashmir has stayed several degrees

below freezing point for the past 72 hours with a low minus 7.0 degrees Celsius recorded on Sunday. Pahalgam in south Kashmir, which serves as the base camp for the annual Amarnath

Yatra, recorded a low of minus

3.5 degrees Celsius. Kokernag and Qazigund towns in south Kashmir recorded a low of minus 2.2 degrees Celsius and minus

3.0 degrees Celsius respectively, the officials said. Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir,

recorded a low of minus 0.7 degrees Celsius. Although 'Chilla-i-Kalan' -- the 40-day harshest winter period -ended earlier this week, the cold wave has continued in Kashmir. The valley is currently going

through a 20-day-long 'Chilla-i-Khurd' (small cold) which shall be followed by a 10-day 'Chilla-i-Bachha' (baby cold).

South India's pioneer of social justice goes...

'The Communist Government led by EMS Namboodirippad had undermined civil rights and democracy, and Kerala's basic culture was thrown to the winds. It was the Liberation struggle under Mannathu Padmanabhan that saved Kerala from a major disaster." Nair's article, titled Karmayogi, sets the tone for the work. True to Mannam's agenda, the NSS has maintained an equidistant policy from all political

parties. However, members are free to work for the political party of their choice, with the condition that they will not misuse the forum for propagating party ideology.

GIVE PROOF: Police ask...

The BJP has created an image of Delhi Police as cowards; even criminals might be contemplating why they should fear those who are scared of mere cameras."

Sources have reported that the staff of the Delhi minister received the notice after the Crime Branch team visited the AAP leader's residence for a second time at 12:55 pm on Sunday. Earlier in the day, police officials had arrived at the minister's residence, but she was not present. "The team visited again to serve the notice to Atishi. They initially visited her house in the morning when she was not at her residence," explained a senior police officer from the Crime Branch.

Later, addressing a press conference, Atishi said that the notice served to her by the police in connection with the MLA poaching allegation she made does not mention an FIR or include penal provisions.

Expressing sympathy for the Crime Branch officers, she asserted that they were being compelled by their "political bosses" to engage in what she referred to as "theatrics."

"At present, the Delhi Police's Crime Branch has served notices to both Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and me. However, it's crucial to note that the notice lacks any reference to an FIR and does not cite any sections from the IPC (Indian Penal Code), CrPC (Code of Criminal Procedure), PMLA (Prevention of Money Laundering Act), or Prevention of Corruption Act," Atishi said.

In response to the notice, AAP leader Jasmine Shah stated that the notice lacks information about a summons, an FIR, or any section of the IPC or CrPC. "This is just a letter on white paper," Shah remarked.

He continued, "Crime Branch officials also reached the residence of Delhi Minister Atishi today to serve her a notice. They wanted to give it only to her personally and not to her officials. Should Delhi ministers always stay at their homes to personally receive each and

every delivery?" Shah added that police officers had waited five hours before delivering the notice to an official of the Chief Minister's Office (CMO). According to the notice, the Crime Branch has asked Delhi Chief Minister Arvind

Kejriwal and Atishi to provide information on

the allegations of poaching leveled against the BJP. The statements by them suggest they were "privy to certain information regarding the commission of a cognizable offence." They have been instructed to respond to the notice 'An inquiry is being conducted by the Crime Branch, Delhi Police, based on a complaint received regarding the allegations made by

you that the BJP has offered Rs 25 crore each

to sitting MLAs of the Aam Aadmi Party to leave AAP and join the BJP. These allegations were posted by you on X (formerly Twitter) on January 27," read the notice. The plain reading of the said tweet indicates that you are privy to certain information regarding the commission of a cognizable offence. Therefore, you are hereby requested to provide answers to the questionnaire

enclosed herewith by February 5," the notice continued. "Any additional or supplementary information that you may wish to share, or which may be deemed by you to be of any assistance for the inquiry, may either be tendered in writing or can be recorded by the undersigned on the date and venue mentioned above," it added.

This notice comes a day after Crime Branch officials 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. On January 27, Kejriwal and Atishi had claimed that the BJP was trying to poach AAP MLAs by offering Rs 25 crore each and a ticket to contest next year's assembly poll to topple the AAP government.

IIT Mandi training women to become kisan drone operators

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ceveral women in Himachal • Pradesh are receiving training to operate drones for agricultural purpose with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Mandi launching "Drone Didi", a one-of-its-kind skill development programme.

According to officials, the agricultural drone applications will save time and pesticide and are very cost-effective. This will also reduce the impact of pesticides on human health. Participants are being trained to leverage drone technology for enhanced agricultural prac-

"Our vision is to create a paradigm shift in agricultural practices through the empowerment of women. By integrating skill development with drone technology, we are not just training women to become proficient 'kisan drone opera-

tors' but are also paving the way for them to emerge as leaders and entrepreneurs in this field.

"The aim is to expand its reach, enhance technological capabilities, and continuously evolve to meet the dynamic and operational demands of agriculture and entrepreneurship, Somjit Amrit, CEO, IIT Mandi i-Húb told PTI.

According to Amrit, the programme has a comprehensive three-month residential training regimen.

"Ğiven that we are in Himachal Pradesh, a state known for its fruit production, the role of kisan drone operator is highly relevant and has the potential to generate numerous employment opportunities, including entrepreneurship. This training encompasses various facets of drone operations, providing hands-on experience and preparing aspiring women for

Modi slams Congress for neglect.

Powers) Act, 1958 (AFSPA),

has been withdrawn from

From Page 1

Modi also highlighted that peace has returned to Assam in the last decade, with over 7,000 individuals laying down their arms and reintegrating into the mainstream.

"More than 10 major peace accords have been signed. At one point, I worked in Assam for the party. I witnessed incidents such as road blockades and bomb blasts in Guwahati with my own eyes. Those are matters of the past a significant opportunity in

Modi mentioned that the Armed Forces (Special

many areas in the State as well as the region. "A record number of tourists have visited the North-East in the past decade. We are launching a new scheme to uplift historical places, which is why we have focused on tourism in this year's budget. There is

Assam and the Northeast for that," he said.

The Prime Minister claimed expenditure for developmental activities in the region has quadrupled in the last 10 years. "This was not done earlier, even when the prime minister was elected from Assam," Modi stated without explicitly mentioning former PM Manmohan Singh, who was a Rajya Sabha member from

Minor throws puppy from high...

From Page 1

Recently, Rajya Sabha MP Saket Gokhale moved a private member's bill seeking an amendment to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act with the "unanimous support" of the House, as he posted on 'X'. "According to the current laws, the punishment for inflicting cruelty on animals is only a petty fine of Rs 500. My bill seeks to amend the law and increase the punishment for people inflicting cruelty on animals to a fine of up to Rs 1 lakh and imprisonment of up to one year," he explained. Gokhale emphasized that the bill was a responsibility to protect animal friends who cannot speak for themselves. "Inflicting wanton cruelty on animals must have an exemplary punishment," he asserted.

Meanwhile, the residents of Avenue Gaur City-2 protested against the FIR and demanded the removal of stray dogs from the area. In a video shared on social media, the residents alleged that the dogs attacked children and adults in the society.

More rain in offing; flight delays, road chaos...

From Page 1

As many as 478 transformers water supply schemes have been disrupted.

The national capital and the surrounding areas woke up to light rain and strong icy winds as the minimum temperature in the capital city rose to 11.9 degrees Celsius, three notches above the season's average. Strong surface winds added to the chill in the night and morning in Delhi and the surrounding areas.

IMD data showed that different pockets of Delhi received rain between 5 am and 8 am, and the city received 3 mm of rainfall in the last 24 hours at 8:30 am.

Saturday and Sunday morning, combined with a thin layer of fog, affected ground operations at the Indira Gandhi International Airport, leading to delays in several flights. The visibility at Safdarjung was observed to be 500 meters at 8:30 am. Among the delayed flights, a significant number were scheduled to fly to international destinations expected to affect the such as Riyadh, Abu Dhabi, Viana, Toronto, Bangkok, and Dubai.

settled at 20.3 degrees Celsius, two notches below the normal. Palam, Lodhi Road, Ridge, Ayanagar, mountain regions. Rainfall Jafarpur, Narela, Pitampura, and snowfall may be

Light rainfall overnight on and SPS Mayur Vihar recorded maximum temperatures of 20.3 degrees Celsius, 19.4 degrees Celsius, 19.9 degrees Čelsius, 19.2 degrees Celsius, 20.8 degrees Celsius, 20.4 degrees Celsius, and 18.2 degrees Celsius. IMD Scientist Naresh says that after a western

disturbance brought recent rainy weather to north India, another disturbance is weather this weekend in the mountainous areas. He said, Another Western The maximum temperature Disturbance will start affecting from tomorrow, which will lead to heavy snowfall and rainfall in the

per cent of the stations." He added on February 4, snowfall is expected in Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh, while Punjab, Haryana, Western

Uttar Pradesh, and North-West Madhya Pradesh may experience light hailstorms. He went on to say that Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir are expected to receive snowfall on February 4, while light hailstorms are possible in Punjab, Haryana, Western Uttar Pradesh, and northwest Madhya Pradesh. "Whenever there is a Western Disturbance, it leads to changes in wind patterns.

So it results in a rising

not expect the temperature to drop in north-west India and central India. Temperatures will increase during the morning. Dense fog may be expected in the morning in isolated pockets in Punjab, Haryana, and Delhi NCR," Naresh said. He continued by saying that due to the western disturbance, cold wave conditions will not prevail in north India in the coming days. He said, "There will not be a cold day, as temperatures will not drop in the next few days. So we are not expecting a cold day in the next few days. We are also not expecting a cold wave in the next 5-7 days."

tendency in temperature. We

LG writes to Kejriwal over pathetic state of hospitals

recent court order on the Astate of government hospitals in Delhi has sparked a let-ter war between the Arvind Kejriwal government and Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena. In a letter to Keiriwal, Saxena has expressed his "deep concern" over the "pathetic state" of hospitals under the city government. In his letter dated February 3, Saxena also made references to media reports. In a sharp response to Saxena's letter, Kejriwal has blamed two secretaries' "insubordination" and "refusal to obey orders" from the Health Minister. He further urged him to the Finance Secretary and Health Secretary as they are responsible to the present health system of the

in the letter, Kejriwal acknowledged his concerns and assured that he had instructed the Health Minister to provide a

state of health infrastructure. However, he highlighted a longstanding issue regarding the Health Secretary, Deepak Kumar and Finance Secretary Ashish Verma. Kejriwal expressed dissatisfaction with Kumar's performance, alleging inefficiency and a tendency to openly defy both oral and written orders from the Health

The latest flashpoint in the AAP government vs Lieutenant Governor tussle to control Delhi comes after the high court's strong remarks on the state-run Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital. The court last week pulled up Delhi government while hearing a 2017 public interest litigation on non-availability of ICU beds and ventilator facility in government

The court said it wants to help Delhi government in "fixing things". "If you don't give us the correct position, it is very dif-

(on paper) everything looks hunky-dory but on (the) ground people are denied admission," said the high court

Days after the high court's observations, Saxena wrote to Kejriwal saying that he is writing to express my deep disappointment and concern with regards to the pathetic state of hospitals under the Health department of the GNCTD (Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi)."

"Even as tall claims to the contrary have been made consistently by you and your ministers, recent media reports highlighting the scathing observations made by the Hon'ble Delhi High Court on the dismal state of affairs in Delhi's government hospitals have brought to the fore a rot that seems to have become deep rooted," Saxena said. The national capital "deserves

a world-class healthcare system that prioritises the well-being of its citizens and not one plagued by systemic dysfunction and neglect, as the case is now", Saxena added.

He also made references to said in the letter. He also sought a "factual media reports in connection with court cases related to report" at the earliest on the Delhi government-run hospistate of health infrastructure in tals."These issues are not meremajor Delhi government hos-

al obligations, as I have done in the past, when I flagged various issues of misgovernance and abrogation of your constitutional duties, I once again urge you to take immediate and decisive actions to address these critical concerns", Saxena said. The Lt Governor further said that "your government had inherited a fairly robust health infrastructure", which is "enormously supplemented" by the health institutions run by the Centre in Delhi. "At the same time, there are

disposal, as indeed the best medical manpower in the city. Such a situation leaves little scope or space of inaction and failures and finding alibis thereto," Saxena said. The court observations present a "unique opportunity for introspection and positive change", Saxena said and added, "We cannot afford to let this moment pass."

ample funds available at your

tive and time-bound response that involves concrete steps to address the serious situation at hand. I would appreciate (it) if a factual report on the state of health infrastructure in major Delhi government hospitals is sent to me at the earliest," Saxena said. On the other hand, Kejriwal in

his letter said that he has asked the Health Minister for a report on the same. "However, I wish to state that I have written to you earlier also to replace Health Secretary Deepak Kumar, who is not only inefficient but openly defies the oral and written orders of his minister. How can an elected government function if the senior-most bureaucrat in that department refuses to follow orders of his Minister?" Kejriwal said.

The letter further addressed concerns about the Finance Secretary, Ashish Verma, who allegedly halted payments for salaries, and specific health schemes.

In his letter, the Chief Minister also pointed out the Finance Secretary's open defiance of orders from the Finance Minister, emphasising the negative impact on the entire

health system.

"It is extremely important that the bureaucrats follow the orders of their ministers. The Constitution Bench of Hon'ble Supreme Court has also laid down in its order dated May 11, 2023, the triple chain of accountability in our parliamentary democracy - bureaucracy is accountable to the Council of Ministers, the Council of Ministers is accountable to the Legislature and the Legislature is accountable to the people. If any one component of this triple chain breaks, the entire governance system would collapse," the

Not going to bend: Kejriwal as he claims BJP asking him to join party

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELH

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday alleged that there is pressure being exerted on him to join the BJP, adding though the BJP has given him an offer to join the party, he will never do that. "Won't join BJP, not going to be bent", Kejriwal said. Addressing an event where he

laid the foundation of two schools in Kirari, the AAP chief claimed that the BJP wanted them to join the party but he was firm on not doing so. "They can hatch any conspiracy against us but nothing is going to happen. I am standing firm against them and I am not going to bow down. They say, 'come and join BJP and we will leave you alone'. But I will never join BJP. Why should we join BJP? If you join BJP, all sins are forgiven," Kejriwal said. His latest attack on the BJP came a day after he received a notice from the Delhi Police



crime branch over his recent claim that the BJP had offered Rs 25 crore each to seven AAP legislators in a bid to topple the Kejriwal-led government.

They (BJP) can conspire against us all they want, but they will fail. I am standing against them, will never give up. They tell me I should join, but I told them I will never join them. Why should I?," Kejriwal

The AAP national convenor

wrong, we would have joined BJP like others who got their cases closed. When we have not done anything wrong, why should we join BJP? All the cases filed against us are false. If not today, tomorrow, all the cases will end," he said in the post in Hindi.

"If we had done something

He also said development works will not stop in Delhi, and "as long as are alive, we will continue to serve the country

The Centre has unleashed all agencies like CBI and ED behind AAP's leaders to step them from working for the betterment of people, he alleged. He asserted even if he was sent to jail, the work on building schools and providing free treatment to people will not

"The BJP wants us to join their party but we will not bow down," he said, adding that the prayers of Delhi residents have kept them going.

Kejriwal allegations bundle of lies, says Delhi BJP chief

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

these are direct violations of the

fundamental duties of the gov-

ernment, as indeed the funda-

mental right to health, and cast

a long shadow of disrepute on

the nation's capital," Saxena

Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva on Sunday said here Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's statement that he has received an offer that if he joins BJP, all his cases will be over, is a new bundle of lies.

Just like Chief Minister Kejriwal, Minister Atishi, in the beginning of her press conference, made a false claim of revealing the name of the person who had approached AAP" MLAs for defection to BJP but in the entire press conference she kept repeatedly referring to some "Woh" and without mentioning the name of that "Woh" who contacted the MLAs the Minister got up and left. This clearly shows that she was telling a white lie, Sachdeva claimed. He challenged Kejriwal and Delhi Minister Ms. Atishi to tell the people of Delhi which BJP leader had offered him to



join BJP or else resign. Sachdeva said on January 27, Chief Minister Kejriwal falsely accused the BJP of breaking the Aam Aadmi Party MLAs by running Operation Lotus 2 and now for the last days he has been evading police investigation, but today again he has levelled baseless allegation that he has received an offer to join BJP. The claim is completely misleading and is proof of diverting

public attention from the allegations of corruption against him, state BJP chief said. Sachdeva said proverbs and

idioms are made for some reason and the way Delhi Chief Minister Kejriwal lies or rather creates lies, it shows that the old adage Even as truth wears its shoes the lie travels across the world was specially coined to describe a character like that of Kejriwal. Delhi BJP President claimed

Aam Aadmi Party(AAP) is now a disintegrating clan which is ready to form an alliance with Congress even after giving 5 out of 7 seats in Delhi in the Lok Sabha elections. If he has courage Kejriwal should deny this statement of mine said the Delhi BJP President.

Sachdeva also said Kejriwal is now facing political opposi-tion all over Delhi, somewhere from Home Guard and Civil Defense people and somewhere from local residents. Hundreds of local residents of Kirari, including some BJP workers, protested on Sunday against the Chief Minister, Sachdeva said. Entire Kirari remains like a pond even without rain for the last two years and the local MLA has no concern, in protest against Kirari's pathetic condition the local citizens and BJP District President protested against Kejriwal on his arrival in a program.

Kejriwal takes dig at Opposition for false promises before polls

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

 T^{aking} a dig at the Opposition for doing petty politics on the unauthorised colonies, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said every time before elections, politicians from other parties promise to provide all conveniences if you vote for them, but none has done anything. The Delhi chief minister was addressing a foundation stone laying ceremony of two government schools here in northwest Delhi's Kirari village. The Chief Minister stated that

people in unauthorized colonies have been used for political gains the most but politicians from other parties have done nothing for them. He mentioned that the work done in unauthorized colonies for the past 75 years has been achieved within just 5 years by his government. In these five years, we have constructed 3,000 roads in the Kirari Assembly, and we will complete the remaining 2,000 roads in the next year. Before the upcoming assembly elections, all roads in every unauthorized colony will be made concrete. The Delhi chief minister was addressing a foundation stone laying ceremony of two government schools here in northwest Delhi's Kirari village.

"Today, we are constructing roads, installing sewer pipelines, and laying water pipelines within all the unauthorized colonies across Delhi. In the Kirari Assembly constituency, a total of 5,000 roads are being built by combining all the unauthorized colonies. Out of these 5,000 roads, 3,000 roads have already been constructed. We have achieved in 5 years what wasn't done in 75 years. In the past 75 years, the opposition parties have not built a single road in the Kirari Assembly, while we have constructed 3,000 roads in 5 years. The remaining 2,000 roads are under construction and will be



Kejriwal said. The Chief Minister announced

that before the next assembly elections, not a single 'kaccha road' will remain in Kirari; all of them will be made pucca. Sewer and water pipelines are being laid along these roads. The largest sewage pumping station in Delhi is under construction in Kirari, and it will be ready in three months. After its completion, the waterlogging on both sides of the roads will be eliminated, ensuring no accumulation of dirty water. The two schools will come up at Sector 41 in Rohini to ben efit the children of denselypopulated areas of Kirari village, an official statement said. The foundation stone laying ceremony was also attended by Education Minister Atishi.

"In the last 9 years, the gov ernment schools in Delhi have transformed because of the education revolution started by Chief Minister Kejriwal. Today, the government schools in Delhi produce excellent results and have become better than private schools in the city," she

The schools will come up on two separate plots with more than 100 classrooms. One of the schools will have a fully airconditioned multi-purpose hall with a 300-seat capacity, Atishi

During Kejriwal's visit, Outer Delhi BJP District President Ram Siya Sharan along with party workers held a protest and raised slogans against him. Later all the protesters were detained by the police and released after a stern warning.



added: "If you go to the BJP, all

your crimes are forgiven, what

wrong have we done? We are

building schools, hospitals,

roads, and repairing sewers. Is

The chief minister said they

were working to improve

schools and hospitals in the

national capital and asked what

was wrong in that. Later in a post on X, Kejriwal asserted

that all cases against AAP lead-

this a crime?

later this year, Congress has begun the process of seeking suggestions and advice from the Congress workers and the general public. People can send the names of

the candidates they feel suitable to Delhi Pradesh Arvinder Singh Lovely and India Congress Committee(AICC) General Secretary and In-charge of Delhi Deepak Babaria, the party said here on Sunday. It also said the names thus

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI received will be discussed and given preference while In an effort to find suitable selecting the Congress candidates for Delhi for dates for the general elections. mount an aggressive campaign against the BJP and the Delhi Government, to prepare the party's ground work for all the seven Lok Sabha seats in

It may be recalled that after a break, Congress party has become very active at all levels, and strengthened and consolidated its position at the grass-root level. Delhi Congress' Jawab Do-Hissab Do campaign, under Lovely's leadership, had received overwhelming response from the Congress workers and gener-



Congress seeking advice from workers, public over candidates for 2024 LS polls

public, including senior leaders, former Ministers, ex-

MPs, ex-MLAs, as the party became fully activated in all

selecting the Congress candidates very seriously by inviting suggestions and advise from the Congress workers and general public. He said the party has also decided that under the leadership of Lovely, all big and small leaders will not only interact with the Congress workers in the 15,000 polling booths in all the 14 Districts, but will also make door-to-door contacts

with the people. Sharma said Delhi Congress will not only aggressively raise the failures of the BJP

Government and the MCD, Senior leader and ex-MLA but Congress workers will Mukesh Sharma said the also come out on the streets

In a statement, Delhi BJP Spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor has said that the Congress leaders, who have gifted a large part of their leaders, organization and voters to the AAP in the last few years, are still in a state of contradiction. Kapoor said on the one hand, the talk of candidate selection on seven seats and on the other hand the talk of alliance is confusing the Congress workers as well as the general pub-

BJP leader files police complaint against Mani Shankar's daughter

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

 $S^{\text{enior BJP leader and}}_{\text{Supreme Court advocate}}$ Ajay Agarwal has filed a police complaint against Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar's daughter—Suranya Aiyar for her post on social media in which she allegedly condemned Ayodhya Ram Temple consecration ceremony. The complaint was filed at Delhi's Cyber Crime Police station. In his complaint, Agarwal alleged that Suranya Aiyar made "objectionable remarks" on different social media platforms on January 20, against

the consecration ceremony. "Suryanya Aiyar has posted a seriously objectionable statement on Facebook, YouTube and other social media platforms on January 20 and other dates. Please go through this entire clip and register an FIR under section 153-A (for promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion) and other sections of IPC and other acts as you deem appropriate after watching the 36-minute video," Agarwal said in his complaint.

In his complaint, Agarwal

made "objectionable remarks' on different social media platforms on January 20, against the consecration ceremony. "Ms Suryanya Aiyar has posted a seriously objectionable statement on Facebook, YouTube and other social media platforms on January 20 and other dates. Please go through this entire clip and register an FIR under section 153-A (for promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion) and other sections of IPC and other acts as you deem appropriate after

watching the 36-minute video,"

Agarwal said in his complaint.

On January 19, Suranya Aiyar

had written on Facebook that

she would be observing a fast

for three days, starting from

January 22, in support for the

alleged that Suranya Aiyar

"Muslims of India" against what she called was being done "in the name of Hinduism and nationalism in Ayodhya". Suranya Aiyar's post triggered a controversy which led the Resident Welfare Association (RWA) of Delhi's Jangpura. RWA wrote a letter to Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar,

and his daughter asking them to move out of the colony, for disturbing peace and harmony. Urging Suranya to move out of the society if she thinks what she did was right, the notice read, "In case you still think what you have done in protesting against the consecration of Ram Mandir at Ayodhya [was right], we would suggest you to kindly move out to another colony where people and RWA's can turn a blind eye to such

Woman arrested for stealing jewellery, cash from her mother house

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police here have arrested a 31-year-old woman for allegedly stealing jewellery and cash from her mother's house, an act that she committed due to financial distress and "lack of love" from her mother.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) Ankit Singh said the police got a complaint on January 30 regarding a theft in a house in Uttam Nagar. The complainant told police that a burga-clad woman entered her house at 2 pm, stole gold and silver jewellery as well as cash amounting to Rs 25,000 and

left at 2.30 pm. The officer said an FIR under section 380 (theft in any building, tent or vessel) of the Indian Penal Code was registered and a probe launched by multiple teams. The team from the antiburglary cell checked the CCTV footage and analysed

the crime scene. "We found that there was no forced entry into the house by the suspect, neither the door of the almirah was broken," the DCP said.

He said a woman wearing a black burqa was seen entering the house. The team subsequently zeroed in on the complainant's daughter and arrested her, the officer said, adding that the stolen jewellery has also been recovered.

'She confessed to her crime and told police that her mother loves her younger daughter more than her and that she had some financial burden and hence, she hatched the conspiracy," the officer said. He said the accused stole her sister's jewellery.

"In January, the accused asked her mother to help her to relocate her house from the Mohan Garden area to Uttam Nagar. On January 30, she cleverly stole the keys to her mother's house when she was packing her goods. She went to a public toilet, where she changed her clothes, and went to her mother's house. Later, she also expressed grief about the theft,' the DCP said.

The accused had sold the ornaments to a local jewellery shop,

Police bust fake call centre in **Paschim Vihar,** 3 arrested

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Police said that they have arrested three accused and identified them as Shubham Chaudhary (24), a resident of Rani Bagh; Akhil Baradia (30), a resident of Rajouri Garden; and Rahul Gusain (26), a resident of Hari Nagar. Police said that on January 30,

specific information was received at Cyber Police Station, Outer District regarding a call centre is being run in Paschim Vihar area which may be involved in large scale cyber cheating with US citizen impersonating as the executives of leading internet firms and inducing the citizens to pay them money on the premise of solving a non-existent problem. We got to know about people involved in large-scale cheating of US citizens by posing as executives of leading Internet companies and inducing them to pay to solve their problems," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) Jimmy Chiram said a raid was conducted and three people were apprehend-

India in driver seat of Quad: US envoy

US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti said India is in the "driving seat" of the Quad, while America is in the seat next to it with the "corrective steering wheel", and added that it is up to India to "forcefully define" the nature of the diplomatic partner-

Garcetti, speaking here at the 17th edition of Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF), used a rather unique analogy of 'eating, drinking and sharing a ride together' to explain the different roles of member countries in the Quad.

The Quad is a diplomatic partnership between India, the US, Australia, and Japan to deepen economic, diplomatic, and military ties among the four countries.

"India is very much in the driver seat of the Quad... May be America is in the next seat with the corrective steering wheel, I think Japan has been an avid navigator from the beginning and Australia is really excited to be back in the car and asking if everybody has enough to drink and eat,



and where we are going. "So it is a great time and we love these different roles. I want to sit in the back some other time and relax, but it is in some ways up to India to most forcefully define what we want to do with the Quad," said Garcetti on Saturday in a session, "Heart of the Matter: Quad and the new Indo-

The 53-year-old said the Quad can be the "model for the world" as it is "very strong and stable", not just in geometry but in diplomacy as well - more than multilateral insti-

tutions such as the UN, which he claimed "don't have much

"Bilaterals are always engaging but the two countries get little bored of each other when it is just direct," he

Garcetti used another analogy to explain his point better. "It is like a dinner party, invite three people, it gets more interesting, four people, now you have a party, when others want to come to the party... Now you know you have got something special,"

Though he admitted that the Quad is not a group where the dreams are different but we four member countries agree have a lot of dreams in comon every vote in multilateral mon, and they are the ones institutions, Garcetti asserted that Shinzo Abe defined in his it is not a "talk shop" either. original vision. He gave examples with the kind of work being done by

"Countries that are committed to freedom... Doesn't mean that they are going to agree on every issue but it does mean that they can stand together to defend freedom, sovereignty and the openness that democracy demands," Turnbull, one of the key people behind the reinstatement of the Quad in 2017, added.

The Quad group, which had first met in 2007, went into cold storage after protests from China. It was reinstated in 2017 -- after a gap of 10 years -- in the face of China's growing assertiveness in orld affairs.

Australian Ambassador to India Philip Green and former foreign secretary Shyam Saran also participated in the session. The JLF 2024, touted to be the "biggest literary festival in the world", will see participation of the world's best thinkers, writers, and speakers till February 5.

CBI chargesheets Air India former CMD, IBM, SAP in software deal irregularities

The CBI has filed a charge sheet against the then CMD of Air India, German firm SAP AG and IBM in connection with alleged irregularities in procurement of software worth Rs 225 crore by the national carrier in 2011, officials said on Sunday.

The CBI has registered the case on the recommendation of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) which found prima facie procedural irregularities in the procurement of the software, according to people in the investigation agency in know of the development.

After nearly six years of probe, the CBI has filed a charge sheet against former CMD Air India Arvind Jadhav, IBM India Private Limited, SPA India Private Limited and six others under the IPC section 120-B (criminal conspiracy) and provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act, they said. The CVC, in the note to the cer shows that the national carrier had selected the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software system from SAP AG without following proper tendering procedure. It was also alleged that there was no approval from the civil aviation ministry even though Air India had claimed that it had made a presentation before the Group of Secretaries on July 9, 2009,

Air India's chief vigilance offi-

The commission had said that CBI, said that initial probe by Air India had selected the

Ministers in 2010.

and before the Group of

provider of the world without justifying the need for the same since already a similar system of Oracle was in operation. It was stated that the Oracle system had some problems but no efforts were apparently made to either set them right or upgrade the existing system.

Also, open tender system was not adopted for procurement of new ERP software, the CVC said in the note.

"Instead, the contract was awarded to SAP and IBM on

YouTuber chargesheetd by CBI for presenting forged documents at death of actress Sridevi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

The CBI has filed a charge sheet against a self-styled investigator alleging that she presented "forged" letters from high dignitaries, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, to support her claims made in a YouTube video regarding the death of actor

Last year, the CBI registered a case against Deepti R Pinniti, based in Bhubaneswar, and her lawyer Bharath Suresh Kamath following a complaint from Mumbai-based lawyer Chandni Shah, which was referred to the agency by the Prime Minister's Office.

Shah alleged that Pinniti had produced several documents, including letters from the



prime minister and the defence minister, along with documents related to the Supreme Court and records from the UAE government, which appeared to be forged. Pinniti has been an active par-

ticipant in social media dis-

including a "coverup between the two governments" in one interview, based on her "inves-After filing an FIR against her

she made sensational claims,

the member countries on semiconductors, artificial

intelligence and space projects. "We can talk about the domain awareness in the Indian Ocean that is actually

commencing and moving for-

ward. Space projects that are

actually not talk but actually

probably as robust as any

place on earth. So I don't

think it is a talk shop but it is

also not ever going to be a

place where 'Hey! How are we

all going to vote at the UN

Former Australia PM

Malcolm Turnbull, who was

also part of the panel discus-

sion, said one should look at

how far the Quad has come

since its inception in 2007,

rather than reflecting on why

it hasn't turned into a "whole

He called the Quad to some

extent a case of "same bed,

strategic alliance".

different dreams".

together," he pointed.

last year, the CBI had conducted searches at her residence in Bhubaneswar on December 2, seizing digital devices, including phones and

According to the CBI's report submitted to a special court, the investigation revealed that the documents presented by her during YouTube discussions, pertaining to the prime minister and the defence minister, were "forged.

The agency has filed a charge sheet against her and Kamath under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code, including 120-B (criminal conspiracy) 465, 469, and 471.

NIA files chargesheet against 3 Myanmar nationals for trafficking of Rohingyas

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed a charge-sheet against three nationals of Myanmar in a case involving the illegal infiltration and trafficking of foreign nationals, primarily of Rohingya origin, into India through the India-Bangladesh border, an official said on

The accused are Rabi Islam alias "Rabiul Islam", Shafi Alam alias "Sofi Alom" alias "Sayedul Islam", and Mohammad Usman -- all permanent residents of Maungdaw district in Myanmar -- a spokesperson of the federal agency said.

According to the NIA, they had entered India illegally, in collusion with traffickers and touts, without valid travel doc-



uments and were also involved in facilitating the infiltration of numerous other foreign nationals through unauthorised and illegal border routes.

Part of a well-organised network of traffickers and touts involved in various illegal activities, they were also engaged in luring vulnerable Rohingya women, who had taken refuge in Bangladesh, into India on the false promises of marriage

to Rohingya men, the official The NIA said such women

were then sold for forced marriages across various Indian states, including Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jammu and Kashmir, Telangana and

The NIA's investigation uncovered instances and evidence of forgery of documents and established that Rabi Islam and Mohammad Usman had obtained Aadhaar cards fraudulently. The duo had also used these cards to procure multiple SIM cards and open bank accounts, further concealing their true identities, the spokesperson said.

With this charge sheet, the official said the NIA, which had started probing the case on November 7 last year, has taken a significant step towards uncovering and dismantling a major international human trafficking racket.

health secretary in top shakeup

PNS NEW DELHI

Cenior bureaucrat Sanjay Jaju Owas on Saturday appointed as the new Information and Broadcasting Secretary, in place of Apruva Chandra who was holding the post as along with Health Secretary.

Chandra was appointed as the full time Health Secretary as part of a top-level bureaucratic reshuffle effected by the Centre on Saturday. Chandra is a 1988batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of Maharashtra cadre.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved Chandra's appointment as Secretary, Department of Health and Family Welfare, an order issued by the Personnel Ministry said. Jaju, a 1992-batch IAS officer, is

currently serving in his cadre state of Telangana. Besides them, eight other senior officers have been appointed in different central government departments and in the anti-corrup-

Sukhbir Singh Sandhu, a 1988batch (retired) IAS officer of Uttarakhand cadre, has been named Secretary to the anti-corruption ombudsman Lokpal on contract basis for a period of one year, it said.

Ashish Kumar Bhutani, a 1992-

Secretary, Ministry Cooperation.

Senior bureaucrat Raj Kumar Goyal has been appointed as Secretary, Department of Border Management. Legal Affairs Secretary Niten

Chandra will now be Secretary, Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare, and K Moses Chalai has been named Secretary of Inter State Council Secretariat under the Ministry of Home

Chalai is currently Secretary, North Eastern Council Secretariat, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region

Niten Chandra, who was the first IAS officer to be appointed to the post of legal affairs secretary, is also the secretary to the high-level committee on "One Nation, One Election"

Senior IAS officer Anil Malik has been appointed as Officer on Special Duty (OSD), Ministry of Women and Child Development. He will take over as Secretary, Ministry of and Development after superannuation of incumbent Indevar Pandey on February 29, the

Sumita Dawra, Special Secretary (Logistics) in the Department added.

batch IAS officer of Assam- for Promotion of Industry and Officer on Special Duty in the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

cussions on the death of

Bollywood actors such as

Sridevi and Sushant Singh

Sridevi died in Dubai in the

United Arab Emirates in

With regard to Sridevi's death,

February 2018

She will take over as Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment after the retirement of Arti Ahuja this month-

Vijay Kumar, Special Secretary in the Ministry of Cooperation, has been named as Chairman, Inland Waterways Authority of

The ACC has also approved insitu upgradation of posts held by four officers.

Accordingly, P Daniel will now be Secretary, Central Vigilance Commission in the rank and pay of Secretary. Rashmi Chowdhary will be Secretary, Information Central Commission in the rank and pay of Secretary to the government of India. A Neeraja will be Special Secretary in the Department of Fertilizers and Shyam Bhagat Negi has been appointed as Special Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat.

The ACC has also approved appointment of Reeta Vasishta, in-charge of Central Agency Section, Ministry of Law and Justice, as the Member 22nd Commission of India, the order

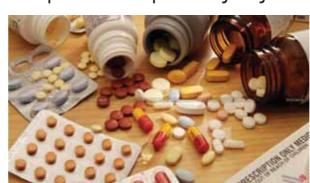
Sanjay Jaju I&B secretary, Chandra | Government extends track and trace system implementation for pharma exports by 1 year

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Tn a breather to the pharmaceutical sector, drugmakers have got yet another extension, this time up to one year till February next for implementing the Track and Trace system for export of pharmaceuticals and drug consignments. The move aims to address counterfeit and product recall chal-

In simple words, the Track and Trace system is typically designed to monitor and trace the movement of pharmaceutical products throughout the supply chain. This can include tracking the production, distribution, and sale of medications, with the aim of preventing counterfeit drugs, ensuring product authenticity, and improving overall safety for consumers.

According to the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), the date for implementation of track and trace system for export of drug formulations with respect to maintaining the parent-child relationship in packaging levels and its uploading on Central Portal has been extended up to February 01, 2025. Notably, the extension is applicable to both



and non-SSI manufactured

'This initiative aims at enhancing transparency and accountability in the export of drug formulations, emphasizing the maintenance of the parentchild relationship in the packaging levels and their movement in the supply chain," said Santosh Kumar Sarangi, director general (DG), DGFT.

The new implementation deadline will provide pharmaceutical companies with additional time to align their operations with the stringent requirements of the track and trace system. This extension comes as a relief for pharmaceutical manufacturers, allowing them more time to integrate the necessary technological infrastructure, ensuring the seamless implementation of the track and trace system.

"The parent-child relationship in packaging levels is a crucial aspect that demands meticulous attention, and the extended timeline acknowledges the complexities involved in adapting to the new standards,"

explained Sarangi. He further added that the decision to extend the track and trace system implementation deadline is aimed at fostering a robust and compliant pharmaceutical export ecosystem. The industry players are grappling with the challenges of integrating the required systems and processes.

The system was mooted a few years ago. The latest extension comes in the backdrop of pharexporters' Pharmexcil's representation to the Commerce Department citing members' difficulties in joining the system.

products can lead to uncontrolled asthma: Study

Regular use of cleaning

NEW DELHI

Beware, the crisp scent of dis-infectants and the inviting aroma of cleaning products that seems to create an atmosphere of cleanliness and wellbeing can be an invitation for

uncontrolled asthma. According to the Journal of Allergy and Immunology, frequent use of household disinfectants and cleaning products (HDCPs) and uncontrolled asthma are proportionally connected with

each other. The study, utilizing data from the 2018 French Web-based NutriNet-Santé cohort, analyzed the habits of 37,043 participants, revealing noteworthy insights. Asthma is a condition in which your airways narrow and swell and may produce extra mucus. This can make breathing difficult and trigger coughing. In severe cases, it may even escalate to life-threatening asthma attacks. Asthma can't be cured, but its symptoms can be controlled.

The research indicates that the risk of uncontrolled asthma significantly escalates with almost daily use of HDCPs, including irritants, green products, sprays, and disinfecting



Demographic factors played a role, with those who had current asthma and uncontrolled asthma tending to be younger, female, current smokers, and overweight. Additionally, individuals with uncontrolled asthma generally had lower educational status.

Notably, specific products showcased distinct associations. Those using irritants and green products almost daily were found to be at least twice as likely to experience uncontrolled åsthma. Ŝimilar heightened risks were observed with the regular use of sprays and disinfecting

Even when not used in conjunction with irritants and sprays, both disinfecting wipes and green products retained statistically significant associations with uncontrolled asthma. The study also highlighted a stronger association between the use of irritants, sprays, and green products and current asthma among subjects with overweight.

ly belong to the people of

India, to spend on schools and

hospitals, for secure govern-

ment jobs, but it has been

handed over to PM Modi's friends," he alleged.

"India's Modi-made jobs

famine as a result of Modani-

Congress attacks BJP over 'unemployment crisis' in last ten years

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

ongress on Sunday Cattacked the Centre over the issue of unemployment, alleging that Prime Minister "Modi-made jobs famine" is the height of the "anyay kaal" of the last 10 years.

Congress chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh cited an analysis of long-term trends in job creation in the Indian labour market to attack the govern-

Ramesh said that during the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, Rahul

highlighting the urgency of "Yuva Nyay (justice for the youth). The jobs famine in the country has been caused by the Modani-karan (Modanisation) of the economy," he

Gandhi has been consistently

Now, a new analysis of India's unemployment crisis "exposes" the unemployment crisis of the last 10 years under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he claimed. Ramesh said it comes from one of the world's leading economists, a professor at the London School of Economics. "Compared to 10 years ago, less

people are working, the youth are worst affected, and jobs are paying much less," he said. Citing the analysis, Ramesh claimed that the percentage of

Indians who have jobs is still lower than it was 10 years ago. Youth unemployment rate reached a peak under the Modi government, and today at above eight per cent, is much higher than the four per cent it was 10 years ago," he said. Ramesh further said that for the first time in more than 30

years, Prime Minister Modi has

managed to decrease the share

of workers getting a salary.

"It had been rising continuously from 15 per cent to almost 25 per cent under the previous government but has now come all the way back down to 22 per cent," he said. "Even for the lucky few with

iobs, after taking away the effect of price rise, earnings have not increased at all under the Modi government. Salaried workers' earnings are 12 per cent lower than (what was) five years ago, while rural labourers' earnings are 5 per cent lower," Ramesh claimed.

Meanwhile, the prime pinister is handing India's resources away to his "crony industrialist friends", while stealing the future of India's youth, he

"Today, the top 20 companies make 90 per cent of profits, while all the lakhs of other companies in India are left with just 10 per cent of profits. In 2014, the market was much more fair --? the top 20 companies made 40 per cent of profits," he said.

Adani was the 609th richest person in the world in 2014, with USD 8 billion in net worth, Ramesh said.

"However, with 10 years of 'Modi magic', his wealth grew 10 times to USD 80 billion, and he became the world's second richest person. The prime minister generously gifted Adani six airports, power plants, gas pipelines, and now Dharavi in Mumbai," he alleged.

Even making weapons for our armed forces has been handed over to "the PM's best friend", Ramesh claimed. "How many jobs has this created? Very less," he added.

In 2019, the Modi government cut corporate taxes by 25 per cent, leading to a loss of over Rs 1 lakh crore per year, the Congress leader alleged.

"Rs 14.5 lakh crore in bank

loans have been waived off. All

these lakhs of crores rightful-

in his post.

raising concerns over "increasing" unemployment and price

karan of the economy is the height of ANYAY-KAAL of the last 10 years," Ramesh said The Congress has been attacking the government over its handling of the economy and

Sikkim CM sounds Assembly election bugle

Promises regularisation of all Government staff working for over 4 years

PTI GANGTOK

rikkim Chief Minister Serem Singh Tamang on Sunday announced that all government employees, who have been working for more than four years, will be regularised and notification in this regard will be issued this month.

"He said that 300 beneficiaries from each of the 32 constituencies of the state will get houses under Garib Awas Yojna from this

"Tamang also sounded the poll bugle, as he urged

dream of a developed and prosperous state in the next five years.

"The assembly election in the small Himalayan state is due in a few months. Tamang, the president of the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM), became the chief minister in May 2019.

"All government employees who have been working for more than four years on adhoc, muster roll and work charge basis who have crossed 4 years in service will be regularized. The notification for this will be people to give him a second issued within this month,



"He was addressing a gathering on the occasion of the party's 12th foundation day at Rango.

"We have brought Sikkim on the track of peace and development by respecting each vote cast in favour of the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha in the last assembly polls. I seek your votes again for a second term in office to fulfil my dreams for a developed and prosperous Sikkim," Tamang said. "The SKM president named

various schemes of the state and central governments during his speech.

state cabinet has decided to revert to the old pension scheme.

The chief minister said that government committed to help Sikkimese youths get a better education for which steps like sponsoring seats for MBBS students and supporting students for higher studies

are being taken. "On the assembly election, Tamang said that the SKM has identified candidates for all 32 assembly seats. He, however, did not divulge their names.

"He asked the party cadres to

dedicate themselves to the service of Sikkim and its people. "The chief minister thanked

the people of Sikkim for reposing their trust in his party to serve them and asserted that he will continue to strive to work in the best interests of the state.

""Together, surmounted challenges, embraced progress, and diligently worked towards a brighter future for our state. We must continue to make significant strides toward our shared goals through our unity, dedication, and collective spirit," he said.



BJP protests over Suresh 'separate nation' remarks

Several members of the BJP gathered outside the residence of Congress MP DK Suresh here on Sunday to protest his recent statement that southern states would be forced to demand for a separate nation if the 'injustice' in distribution of funds is not rectified by the Centre. Protesters were heard shouting slogans 'Vande Mataram', 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai', 'down down D K Suresh' outside his residence in Sadashivanagar However, the agitators were soon removed from the spot by the police and shifted into a bus, police said. Suresh is the brother of Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister and state Congress President D K Shivakumar. "A group of members from the BJP had gathered outside the residence of the Congress

MP. They tried to stage a

separate nation for southern

immediately removed them

police officer said. Suresh, Lok into custody. The situation is very clear and it is being under control," a senior distorted by the BJP.

PTI MORBI

Dresident Droupadi Murmu Pwill on February 12 attend an event to be organised by the Arya Samaj to mark the 200th birth anniversary of its founder Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati at his birth place Tankara in Gujarat's Morbi district, the organisers said on

"Murmu will be the chief guest at the event on February 12 and address the Arya Samaj members who will gather in a large number from all over the world for the celebration to be organised from February 10 to 12, said a release by a committee organising the

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually address the event on February 11, it said. "Gujarat Governor Acharya Devvrat and Chief Minister

Bhupendra Patel will attend the inaugural event on February 10, while Union Home Minister Amit Shah will attend the event on February 11, the release said. "The event is set to attract a

remarkable assembly of more than two lakh Arya Samaj worldwide, members representing the impact of the profound teachings of Maharshi Dayanand

Saraswati," it stated. "Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati was born in Tankara on February 12, 1824, and

who represents the Bangalore constituency, had also alleged that Hindi was being 'imposed' on South India in every aspect. Reacting to the protests, Suresh said in a democracy everyone has the right to protest and freedom of speech. "... I happily welcome their protests... May god bless them," he told reporters here. Accusing the BJP of trying to 'distort' his statement, the lone Lok Sabha member of Congress in Karnataka said, "I never said this country has to be divided, they (BJP) are moving in that direction, they are trying to do politics."
Asked why BJP is trying to twist his statement, Suresh said, "you (media) should ask them... Media which is showing my statement has to go through it and speak. I don't know whether it is media's mistake or BJP's or statement over demand for a the fourth estate in a democracy, if you say no we states. But our officials are in favour of one side, I can't do anything," he said, from the spot and took them adding that his statement is

President Murmu to attend Swami Dayanand 200th birth anniversary

devoted his entire life pursuing Vedic knowledge and cultural

"Through his ideas and messages he motivated the society towards prosperity,

Dayanand Saraswati's birth anniversary is of historical and philosophical the

establishment of the reform movement in India and his ardent advocacy for the Vedas and Vedic culture," the release

Minister Modi officiated the year-long celebrations commemorating the 200th birth year of Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati, and the upcoming event will serve as the pinnacle of these exuberant festivities, it said.

"Maharshi Dayanand 200th birth Saraswati's anniversary presents significant occasion to reflect upon his concepts and pay tribute to his immeasurable

3 killed, 1 injured in road accident in Sikar

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Three people were killed and a 15-year-youth was injured after a speeding car collided with a pole in Rajasthan's Sikar district, police said on Sunday.

"The incident occurred late Saturday night in Losal police

station area, they said. "Shishram (20), Dharmendra Jat (19) and Lokesh Jat (20) died on the spot while Sunil Jat (15) was injured after the car going from Sanglia to Molasar collided with a pole on Didwana road, police said. "The bodies have been kept in the hospital mortuary for post-mortem, they said. The injured youth has been admitted to a hospital for

treatment, police said.

PUDUCHERRY, FEB 4 (PTI)

 $W_{\text{the BJP would field}}^{\text{ith indications that}}$

Puducherry, the Union

Territory's Home Minister

A Namassivayam exhorted the party workers and

cadres to put in an 'united

emerged victorious' from

the constituency in the forthcoming

Puducherry unit's office-

bearers at a consultative meeting here Saturday,

Namassivayam, a senior BJP leader, said "we should

put in strenuous efforts for

the success of the party in

"He said the high

command would finalise

the party's nominee and that "it is the duty of

the victory of the party."

in organisation to work for

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Parliamentary elections.

"Addressing

the polls."

evervone

Sabha seat in

NCP asks why Goa CM protecting Gaude amid **Speaker scam allegations**

The Nationalist Congress Party on Sunday asked why Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant was defending his minister Govind Gaude after the latter was accused by Assembly Speaker Ramesh Tawadkar of being involved in a scam.

"In a media statement, Clyde Crasto, the Goa observer of the Sharad Pawar-led NCP, said Tawadkar had accused Gaude of being involved in a scam pertaining to alleged misuse of funds given to clubs organisations by the state arts and culture department.

Puducherry Minister urges BJP workers

to work for party win in Lok Sabha polls



claimed that CM Sawant was informed about the scam by sarpanches.

"Even when the NCP had raised questions about funds being given for renovation of the Kala Academy building without inviting tenders, the

"After the roof of the Kala Academy collapsed, we had sought an inquiry but in vain. Why is the CM supporting Gaude? Both Sawant and Gaude are answerable to the people of Goa," Crasto said. "Gaude, who is minister of

art and culture, had earlier claimed the funds were distributed to various clubs and organisations to hold events in order to encourage grassroot talent.

"Refuting all allegations, Gaude had said funds disbursed are taken back if these clubs and organisations fail to submit utilisation

Former Gujarat Congress MLA Chirag joins BJP

PTI AHMEDABAD

 $\begin{array}{cccc} F^{ormer} & {\it Congress} & {\it MLA} \\ {\it Chirag} & {\it Patel} & {\it joined} & {\it the} \\ {\it ruling Bharatiya Janata Party in} \end{array}$ Gujarat on Sunday in the presence of state BJP chief CR Paatil. "Patel, a first-time MLA from

Khambat seat in Anand district, resigned as member of the state assembly on December 14, 2023 after citing disappointment with the working style of the Congress leadership and alleging groupism in the party's state unit. In the December 2022 state assembly polls, Patel had defeated BJP's Mayur Raval by a narrow margin of less than 4,000 votes. "On Sunday, Patel joined the BJP along with a large number of his supporters at an event in Khambhat.

"State BJP chief Paatil, who is also an MP, inducted Patel into the party fold. "In his speech, Paatil indicated that Patel might be the BJP's candidate from Khambhat seat for the by-election, necessitated after his resignation.

"Earlier in the day, around 2,500 Congress workers including sarpanchs and booth level workers from Borsad assembly constituency joined the BJP in Paatil's presence at Borsad Anand district.

"Chirag Patel, in his speech, said he has joined the BJP to participate in the task undertaken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and state BJP head Paatil to make the country and the state prosperous and united. "He urged Paatil to pay special attention to Khambhat's development. He also thanked the BJP leadership for taking up the issue of water supply

assembly seat. 'Paatil said the government will not let the area lag behind in development. "He praised Modi's leadership and said people all over the world are

and the government for sanctioning Rs 160-crore project for 56 villages in the

praising the manner in which the PM is taking India ahead.

Sunday.

freedom and equality. "Maharshi

> significance, commemorates

"In February 2023, Prime

contributions, it added.



Chopra both R/o 131. Antariksha Co-

operative Group Housing Society Ltd. (known as Antariksha Apartments) Plot No.21 Block-H, Vikaspuri, New Delhi-110018, purchaser of flat No.131, Category "A", Antariksha Co-

operative Group Housing Society Ltd. (Known as Antariksha Apartments) Plot

(Known as Antariksha Apartments) Flot No.21 Block-H, Bodella, Phase-II, Vikaspuri, New Delhi-110018, have applied for conversion of the said Flat from leasehold to freehold in our favour, vide application No. LD33758GH/CON/18082023 in DDA. The

Original Allotment Letter issued by The Antariksha CGHS Ltd. in respect of the above

said flat has been misplaced/lost. An FIR to

this effect has been lodged in the Police Station Crime Branch, Delhi vide LR No.1390682/2024 dated 29.01.2024.

Any person(s) claiming any right interest.

Any person(s) claiming any right interest, having any objection or found in possession of the above said original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above address/phone No.9988077754, within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this account of the person of the

property can personally inform or write to the

Dy. Director, (GH) or Director (RL), Vikas

New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh. Delhi- 110005

PUBLIC NOTICE - TENDER CUM E-AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET

[See proviso to rule 8(6)]

Notice for sale of immovable assets

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial

Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the

below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Physical possession

of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited will be sold on "As is where is", "As is

The online auction will take place on the website of e-auction agency M/s NexXen Solutions Private

Limited (URL Link- https://disposalhub.com). The Mortgagors/ noticee are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till February 28, 2024 before 05:00 PM else this secured asset will be sold

The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column

E) at ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, Plot No.23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh. Delhi-110005

on or before February 28, 2024 before 05:00 PM and thereafter they need to submit their offer through the

above mentioned website only on or before February 28, 2024 before 05:00 PM along with scan image of Bank

acknowledged DD towards proof of payment of EMD. Kindly note, in case prospective bidder(s) are unable to

submit their offer through the website then signed copy of tender documents may be submitted at ICICI Bank

Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, Plot No.23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh. Delhi- 110005 on or before

February 28, 2024 before 05:00 PM. Earnest Money Deposit DD/PO should be from a Nationalised/Scheduled

For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the auction or submission of

what is", and "Whatever there is" basis as per the brief particulars given hereunder;

Details of the

Secured asset(s) with known

encumbrances, if any

Ground Floor (without roof rights) Nehru Nagar

an area of 102.17 SQ MT

Plot No. III-F-1/21

self-confidence the success would emerge for the party's candidate. Whoever is the candidate fielded by the party

Group Housing Society Ltd. (known

Antariksha Apartments) Plot No.21 Block-H3, Bodella, Phase-II, Vikaspuri, New Delhi-110018, purchaser of flat No.165, Antariksha Co-operative Group Housing Society Ltd. (known as Antariksha Apartments) Plot No.21 Block-H, Bodella, Phase-II, Vikaspuri, New Delhi-11018, have applied for conversion of

Delhi-110018, have applied for conversion of the said Flat from leasehold to freehold in my

the said Flat from leasenoid to reemoid in my favour, vide application No. LD34834GH/CON/04102023 dated 06.10.2023 in DDA. The Original Share certificate allotment letter...Issued by the Antariksha CGHS Ltd. in respect of the above said flat have been misplaced/lost. An FIR to this effect has been deaded in the Pelijos Ethica Citing Reports.

lodged in the Police Station Crime Branch, Delhi vide LR No.1088024/2023 dated

Any person(s) claiming any right interest

having any objection or found in possession of the above said original documents, may

write/contact with above named person

write/contact with above named person at above address/phone No.8076758094, within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property can personally inform or write to the

Dy. Director, (GH) or Director (RL), Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi.

Time of Property Inspection

05:00 PM

Date & Time of E-Auction

(G)

February

16, 2024 29, 2024 From From 03:00 PM to 11:00 AM

31.10.2023.

(Sarita Chopra & Praveen Kumar Chopra) (Sham Lal Dogra @ Sham Nath Dogra).

Amount Reserve Outstanding Price

(D)

37.40.317/

as on Februar

02, 2024

Price Earnest

(E)

76.50.

000/-

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, Plot No.23,

""You should all put in high command it is the duty of arduous work and through everyone in the party to work everyone in the party to work hard and with unity for the success of the candidate, Namassivayam told partymen at the meeting.

ELECTION PROGRAMME

Election programme for the election of the Managing Committee of The Jatauli Primary Agriculture Co-operative Society Ltd., Jatauli at Hailymandi to be held on 17.03.2024.

OLIVO.	aluculai	Date	TITICO	I lacc
01.	Exhibition of List of voters as required under Sub Para(2) of rule 35 and objection on the list of Voters will be submitted on the last day Exhibition of Voter list in the office of Assistant registrar, Coop. Societies G	05-02-2024 to 12-02-2024	9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.	In the Regd. Office of the Society & village failing in the area operation of the society Assistant Registrar Co-operative Socieites, Gurugram Near John Hall Civil Line, Gurugram Central Co-operative Bank, Gurugram
02.	Hearing of objection of the list of voters as required under sub para(4) of rule 35	13-02-2024	10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.	ARCS Office, Gurugram
03.	Filing of Nomination Papers.	26-02-2024	10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.	In the office of Assistant Registrar, Co-opeartive Societies. Gurugram, Near John Hall, Civil line, Gurugram
04.	Scrutiny of Nomination Papers.	27-02-2024	10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.	Do
05.	Display of List of Validly nominated Candidates.	27-02-2024	04:00 p.m.	Do
06.	Withdrawal of Nomination Papers.	01-03-2024	10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.	Do
07.	Allocation of Symbols	01-03-2024	03:00 p.m.	Do
08.	Display of List of contesting candidates.	01-03-2024	04:00 p.m.	Do
09.	Taking of poll, if necessary.	17-03-2024	08:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.	In the premises as per list of Booth attached

(2) Election will be held as per orders of Hon'ble High Court of Puniab & Harvana in BejulSomaja Vs. State of Harvana in CWP no. 3648 of 2007 Assistant Registrar, Co-operative Societies, Gurugram, (Returning Officer)

ELECTION PROGRAMME Election programme for the election of the Managing Committee of the Tarika Co-operative Group Housing Society Ltd., Gurugram to be

held on 03.03.2024. Sr.No.

01.	Exhibition of List of voters as required under Sub Para(2) of rule 35 and objection on the list of Voters will be submitted on the last day Exhibition of Voter list in the office of Assistant registrar, Coop. Societies G	05-02-2024 to 09-02-2024	9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.	In the Regd. Office of the Society Assistant Registrar Co-operative Socieites, Gurugram Near John Hall Civil Line, Gurugram
02.	Hearing of objection of the list of voters as required under sub para(4) of rule 35	12-02-2024	10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.	ARCS Office, Gurugram
03.	Filing of Nomination Papers.	20-02-2024	10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.	Do
04.	Scrutiny of Nomination Papers.	21-02-2024	10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.	Do
05.	Display of List of Validly nominated Candidates.	21-02-2024	04:00 p.m.	Do
06.	Withdrawal of Nomination Papers.	22-02-2024	10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.	Do
07.	Allocation of Symbols	22-02-2024	03:00 p.m.	Do
08.	Display of List of contesting candidates.	22-02-2024	04:00 p.m.	Do
09.	Taking of poll, if necessary.	03-03-2024	08:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.	In the premises of the Tarika CGHS Ltd. Gurugram
Note:-	(1) Election of the Managing Committee of the said so	ciety will be held	as per section 28 ibid of th	ne Haryana Cooperative Societies Act 1984

2) Election will be held as per orders of Hon'ble High Court of Punjab & Haryana in BejulSomaia Vs. State of Haryana in CWP no. 3648 of 2007 (3) Election will be held under the instructions of Government (Covid-19) as applicable.

Assistant Registrar, Co-operative Societies, Gurugram, (Returning Officer)

ELECTION PROGRAMME

Election programme for the election of the Managing Committee of the Farrukh Nagar Agriculture Co-operative Society Ltd., Farrukh Nagar to be held on 17.03.2024.

Sr.No	Particular	Date	Times	Place
01.	Exhibition of List of voters as required under Sub Para(2) of rule 35 and objection on the list of Voters will be submitted on the last day Exhibition of Voter list in the office of Assistant registrar, Coop. Societies G	05-02-2024 to 12-02-2024	9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.	In the Regd. Office of the Society & village failing in the area operation of the society Assistant Registrar Co-operative Socieites, Gurugram Near John Hall Civil Line, Gurugram Central Co-operative Bank, Gurugram
02.	Hearing of objection of the list of voters as required under sub para(4) of rule 35	13-02-2024	10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.	ARCS Office, Gurugram
03.	Filing of Nomination Papers.	26-02-2024	10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.	In the office of Assistant Registrar, Co-opeartive Societies Gurugram, Near John Hall, Civil line, Gurugram
04.	Scrutiny of Nomination Papers.	27-02-2024	10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.	Do
05.	Display of List of Validly nominated Candidates.	27-02-2024	04:00 p.m.	Do
06.	Withdrawal of Nomination Papers.	01-03-2024	10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.	Do
07.	Allocation of Symbols	01-03-2024	03:00 p.m.	Do
08.	Display of List of contesting candidates.	01-03-2024	04:00 p.m.	Do
09.	Taking of poll, if necessary.	17-03-2024	08:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.	In the premises as per list of Booth attached

Note: (1) Election of the Managing Committee of the said society will be held as per section 28 ibid of the Haryana Cooperative Societies Act 1984 (2) Election will be held as per orders of Hon'ble High Court of Punjab & Haryana in BejulSomaia Vs. State of Haryana in CWP no. 3648 of 2007

 Election will be held under the instructions of Government (Covid-19) as applicable. Assistant Registrar, Co-operative Societies, Gurugram, (Returning Officer)

Please note that Marketing agencies 1. NexXen Solution Private limited 2. Augeo Asset Management Pvt Ltd. 3. Hecta Proptech Pvt. Ltd. have also been engaged for facilitating the sale of this property. The Authorised Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit www.icicibank.com/n4p4s

Date: February 05, 2024 Authorized Officer Place: Ghaziabad ICICI Bank Limited www.dailypioneer.com

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Dead, Undead!

Poonam Pandey's crude act, if anything, has belittled cervical cancer survivors and activists

dult entertainer Poonam Pandey's latest antic has not entertained people one bit, rather it has left them shocked and angry. Hours after she posted steamy photos from Goa on her social media account, her PR manager claimed that Poonam has died of cervical cancer, only for her to disclose a day later that she was "here, alive". The pathetic excuse for the reprehensible 'death' hoax: It was to raise awareness about cervical cancer, to make people talk about it. Effectively, does she believe that all our brand ambassadors for polio eradication, menstrual safety and suchlike social awareness campaigns need to announce their deaths for the public to start talking about the cause close to their heart? But ye public hai, sab jaanti hai.... Everyone knows it for what it was – a cheap publicity stunt for another 15 minutes of fame! But this time, Poonam has crossed the line and ventured into uncharted territory. The incident has sparked outrage on social media, with users and celebrities severely con-



demning her action. On Friday, her team announced that Poonam had died on Thursday night due to cervical cancer. However, the very next day, the modelactor's posts announced that she was alive. In her videos, she said, "I am alive. I didn't die of cervical cancer. Unfortunately, I can't say that about those hundreds and thousands of women who have lost their lives because of cervical cancer." She went on to discuss the disease, expressing concern about the lack of knowledge surrounding it and emphasising the need for awareness. The 'news', which initially prompted messages of condolence and mourning, quickly gave rise to a storm of criticism on social media. Users

started slamming Poonam for what they considered a tasteless and insensitive publicity stunt. Celebrities, including her industry friends, expressed disappointment and disbelief, with some accusing her of crossing ethical boundaries. This is not the first time Poonam, whose claim to fame is showing skin and indulging in theatrics, has courted controversy for publicity. She gained attention for her promise to strip if the Indian cricket team won the 2011 Cricket World Cup.

Reckless publicity stunts, especially those involving fake deaths or serious health issues, must be unequivocally condemned due to their inherent unethical nature. Breaking the law of the land (and this one in particular is a criminal offence), causing public nuisance, manipulating emotions, spreading false information and exploiting sensitive topics for personal gain demonstrate a lack of moral integrity and a disregard for the potential harm caused to society. Individuals engaging in such behaviour not only compromise their credibility but also harm the cause. Public figures have a responsibility to act with integrity and authenticity as their actions influence and shape public perception. Admonishing those who resort to deceptive publicity stunts sends out a clear message that ethical boundaries must be upheld, fostering a more honest and transparent media approach. Encouraging genuine efforts for awareness and social causes ensures that the public remains informed and engaged without falling victim to any manipulation. Even if we are to assume that she had a genuine desire to raise awareness about cervical cancer, how did she achieve that? In a way, her act ridiculed cancer survivors and used their plight to garner likes and increase her online following. If one is serious about cancer patients, one could do it many ways; this was certainly not one of them. While Poonam has gained attention for various reasons, it is henceforth important to approach any information about her with reinforced scepticism. She has been a controversial figure, often making headlines for her bold and provocative statements or actions. In the past, she gained attention for her association with the Kingfisher Calendar, which propelled her into the limelight. She later ventured into acting and appeared in a few forgettable Bollywood films. Poonam has often used her social media presence to grab attention and boost her career. This incident also has lessons for those who blindly believe in media posts. They would do well to cross-check facts rather than believe every news that comes their way, especially through social media. Poonam's fake death stunt has undeniably backfired; it sheds light on the lengths some individuals may go to hog the limelight in the age of social media. Even if it be a rap on the knuckles, Poonam must face legal consequences. Time alone will tell how the public and the entertainment industry she belongs to, make her pay. Ideally, she ought to! We demand legal action.

West Asia crisis: A threat to global peace



The spectre of escalating tensions in West Asia casts a shadow that extends far beyond; if steps are not taken now, it would be a catastrophe on global scale

he recent series of Houthi attacks, ongoskirmishes between Israel and Hamas, and mounting tensions over the UNRWA's involvement in the October 7, 2023, attack on Israel have reignited concerns about the prospects for peace and negotiation in the volatile region of West Asia. As Israel continues to deny accusations, the coming days are poised to present defining moments for the peace prospects in the area. **Efforts to Resolve the Conflict:** Various initiatives have been undertaken to quell the long-standing regional conflict. The President of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), Mr. Joan E. Donoghue, called on Israel to halt its strikes across Gaza, offering a glimmer of hope. However, the situation remains dire, with the West Asian Conflict having already claimed over 26,000 lives and caused substantial devastation in recent months. Palestinian Prime Minister

Mohammed Shtayyeh has urged an immediate end to Israel's offences and called for an expedited relief operation to save lives. The Houthis' increasing support for the Palestinian cause, coupled with their recent attacks on Israel in the Red Sea, has further heightened tensions. The backing from Hamas and Hezbollah for the Houthis raises concerns about the expanding web of terror and conflict in the Red Sea, affecting trade, commercial interests, and maritime security in the Indian Ocean Area.

India, expressing concern for regional peace, has consistently called for the de-escalation of violence and emphasized the importance of negotiations. India advocates for peaceful coexistence by respecting Israel's security needs while fostering an international environment for Palestine to exist independently and securely.

The United States is also apprehensive about the rising tensions in the region. However, recent trends indicate the difficulty in ersuading Hamas to abandon its plans for further strikes on Israel, considering its history of attacks, including the ruthless assault on October 7, 2023, which claimed



over 1,200 Israeli lives. Challenges Faced by Israel: Israel's preparedness to counter new and unexpected forms of attacks, such as kidnappings and chemical assaults, relies heavily on gathering comprehensive intelligence daily. Both the U.S. and Israel have designated Hamas as a terrorist organization, complicating the situation further, given Hamas's refusal to recognize Israel's right as a state and its territorial claims.

Hamas enjoys a significant advantage due to political, military, and local factors. The Palestinians' desire for Israel's withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, coupled with Hamas's military capabilities and ideological mobilization at the grassroots level, poses a formidable challenge.

The Historical Context:

The Struggle for Peace:

The conflict between Israel and Palestine has deep historical roots, with both sides gradually realizing the necessity of a two-state solution for survival. While initial agreements, such as the Oslo Peace Accord in 2007, provided a ray of hope, subsequent develop-ments, including ongoing Israeli attacks, have jeopardized the peace process. The existence of separate governments in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has complicated Efforts towards negotiations

must address complex issues, including settlement disputes, security concerns, education, water, refugees, and other vital aspects. The international community, especially Islamic nations, must carefully navigate the delicate situation to prevent the region from turning into a battlefield.

Challenges to Mediation:

Peter T. Coleman's perspective on polarized conflicts suggests that understanding the system as a whole is crucial for finding a resolution. Awareness of the context and detailed considerations of the stakeholders' positions can pave the way for more effective mediation efforts. The current escalation of tensions in West Asia demands careful handling and diplomatic efforts to navigate the intricate landscape. As the world watches these critical developments, the need for comprehensive and nuanced approaches to peace remains paramount. The global community must work towards establishing a permanent link between Israel and Palestine, fostering an environment where negotiations can address underlying issues, In the face of extreme circumstances and the seeming absence of hope for reconciliation, addressing the root causes of the conflict becomes

paramount. The ongoing violence necessitates a comprehensive approach, delving into minute details to understand and resolve the multifaceted challenges at play. As efforts for mediation intensify on a global scale, a nuanced and allencompassing strategy is required to address the intricacies of the Israel-Palestine

Key issues such as resolving settlement disputes, ensuring security, providing essential services like food and education, addressing water concerns, handling the refugee problem, and seeking amicable solutions through peaceful negotiations must be central to any diplomatic initiatives. International support, particularly from Islamic countries, can play a pivotal role in guiding the region toward a more stable and secure future. Despite past agreements and hopeful moments, the persistent challenges have made the situation increasingly complex. Yet, as the region grapples with the aftermath of recent events, there is an opportunity for the global community to reevaluate and reinvigorate efforts towards lasting peace in

(The writer is a recipient of the Bharat Gauray award and is a professor and expert on strategic affairs; views are

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AS THE WORLD

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India fast emerging as ultra luxury destination



High-end real estate rates soar in the country as global demand attracts high networth investors

≺here has been a definite turnaround in the real estate market. After the Covid-19 pandemic, homebuyers are increasingly opting for larger and more luxurious homes. This surge in demand for luxury housing, defined as projects priced above Rs 1.5 crore in most Indian cities, has led to a substantial increase in the launch of new projects in this category. According to a report from real estate consultancy Anarock in October, out of the 116,220 units launched in Q3 2023 across various price brackets in India's top seven cities, approximately 27 per cent were in the luxury category. This represents a significant rise from Q3 2018 when luxury housing comprised only 9 percent of the total units launched. Anuj Puri, Chairman of Anarock Group says "This quarter's luxury supply is the highest in the past five years. Moreover, ultra-high-net-worth individuals (UHNIs), with a net worth of \$30 million or more, have have interest in the luxury real estate market.

Popular destinations for Indian real estate investments abroad include London,



Dubai, Singapore, Australia, and New York. Dubai, in particular, is a favoured location due to its tax-friendly environment, business opportunities, and the benefits of golden visas. In Q1 2023, Indian investors contributed 20 per cent to all property transactions in Dubai, totalling close to \$2 billion. London is also attractive for its potential for capital growth, strong rental yields, and an easy purchase process. But interestingly enough India is also emerging as a chosen destination for UHNIs across the world. Now it ranks just below the UK, UAE, and USA and is at par with Canada. In terms of regional trends, Hyderabad led in new luxury supply in Q3 2023 among India's top seven cities, followed by the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR). The demand for luxury homes is notably driven by high-net-worth individuals, including corporate C-suite executives and startup entrepreneurs, residing in these cities. The desire for expansive luxury properties as alternative living destinations, particularly those offering a second home in green surroundings, has become a significant aspect of

the Indian ethos post-pan-The future of commercial real estate in the United States is undergoing significant changes, marked by uncertainties in the economy, shifts in technology, and transfor-mations in how and where people work. The industry's tectonic changes, including inflation, interest rate increases, and technological shifts, impacting the demand for various types of properties is the reason new destinations are emerging. To fill in the supply side many new ventures are coming up. Godrej properties, Mahindra lifespaces, Oberoi reality were already there and are now upbeat Many new ones are joinging them. For instance, Forbes Property, a JV of media house Forbes has ventured into properties its Indian arm is already in the business. In India's 14 Tier 1 cities, including Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Chennai, there have been 4.13 lakh new launches, out of which there were 14,754 luxury projects (per unit more than INR 5 crore) and almost all, 14,654 had immediate takers. It is noteworthy that luxury projects make up nearly 4% of the total launches. Michael W. Jalbert, CEO, of Forbes Global Properties, is optimistic about the India story. "Our expansion into India is particularly meaningful. The nation's burgeoning markets present unlimited opportunities for discerning buyers and investors seeking ultra-luxurious homes, coveted estates, and premium developments," he said. Their first offering will be in New Delhi. It has tied up with the JV of Orange Smart City in Navi Mumbai for the development of 1200 acres of land. Indeed, after a short lull due to the pandemic, the Indian property market is all set to reach dizzy heights!

(The writer is a market con*sultant; views are personal)*

TELEPATHIC REVOLUTION

Sir — In a twist reminiscent of our favourite childhood sci-fi movies, Elon Musk's Neuralink is turning Professor X's telepathic dreams into reality. Musk recently announced the successful implantation of the first telepathy chip in a human brain, marking a pivotal moment in the convergence of science fiction and reality.

This telepathy chip will revolutionize human communication by allowing individuals to control electronic devices with their thoughts. Neuralink's surgical robot, implants the chip, enabling wireless communication between the brain and Neuralink. With Alexa and Google AI nestled inside our heads, the implications are profound, ranging from aiding the disabled to transforming how we interact with technology

Yet, this technological leap comes at a cost. The potential invasion of privacy is staggering. The chip's ability to read thoughts and record memories poses a threat to personal information, passwords, and the very essence of human cognition. The imaginary scenario of humanity succumbing to artificial intelligence looms large, with the risk of widespread hacking and manipulation.

While the telepathy chip offers unparalleled benefits, enhancing the lives of those with disabilities and neurological disorders, its dark side raises alarms. Are we on the edge of a utopian future or hurtling towards a dystopian nightmare where humanity is assimilated into a robotic existence?

Preetiyukta Mohakud | Bhubaneswar

THE DROP BOX IS DISAPPEARING

Sir — The drop box facility which was hitherto available 24x7 is now dispensed with in all banks purportedly due to new instructions from the RBI. The drop box is available now but with a rider. The customer has to visit the bank during working hours to drop the cheques. To my surprise, today when I wanted to drop a

Snow leopard count falling



•he presence of the elusive and enigmatic snow leopard is a vital indicator of the Himalayan ecosystem, especially the region's The Snow Leopard Population Assessment in India (SLPAI), under the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Programme (GSLESP), has put the number of snow leopards in India at 718. The study that covered 1,20,000 km of the trans-Himalayan region has recommended the setting up of a dedicated snow leopard cell at the Wildlife Institute of India

Appropriate, considering India's 5 per cent share of the global snow leopard population. One of the most lovely big cats, snow leopards are seen predominantly in six Himalayan states----Ladakh, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.

Their anatomy is perfect for high altitude because

West Asia.

they possess a large nasal cavity and an abundant number of Red Blood Corpuscles (RBC), that help them breathe oxygen well unlike other animals. The large and thick fur, along with the long and girthy tail. help the snow leopard to wrap itself up in the biting cold of the Himalayas. No wonder, it is a 12--country--range animal. Sadly, habitat loss, poaching for its skull, climate and infrastructural change, and man-animal conflict have reduced the snow leopard- number. Among these, the last mentioned factor is avoidable since the big cat's favourite feast, the white sheep(argalis), is the livestock of the locals.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

work, I could not do so as banks were accordingly instructed to give access to the drop box only during working hours of the bank. When enquired, the officials contend quoting RBI that the cheques are safer when the drop box is accessible only during working hours. How did RBI reach this conclusion.? Was there largescale misuse of stealing drop boxes or pouring water etc and if so to what percentage, more so when security is provided round the clock.? Why should a customer lose a day just because he/she cannot drop the cheques at their convenience? I request RBI to reconsider this

D Nagarjuna | Kushaiguda

IMRAN KHAN ON A STICKY WICKET

Sir — Imran Khan getting two separate jail terms for 10 & 14 years in just two days for revealing some official secrets and for illegally selling state gifts respectively, comes as a severe blow to the crickcheque in the early hours before going to eter-turned-politician, and the verdicts

seem to have totally annihilated his political career. Pathetically, Khan, who was hailed as one of the most popular politicians in Pakistan, has already been knocked out of the general elections contest scheduled to be held in the country on February 8.

A wily cricket captain during his international playing days, Imran Khan was always on a sticky wicket on the political field. The two latest verdicts should foment Khan to introspect, to understand the mistakes that he committed, and to take corrective measures. The story of Imran Khan teaches an important lesson that charisma and popularity alone will not be enough to govern a country. Rather it underscores the need for efficiency, transparency, accountability, and above all sense of responsibility.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennnai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneér@gmail.com



THE POWER OF BEEJ **MANTRAS**

Harnessing natural vibrations for spiritual growth



Beej mantras, also known as seed mantras, are ancient and powerful sound vibrations deeply rooted in the spiritual transition. Hinduism and Buddhism. These sacred syllables are believed to carry a unique resonance that connects the practitioner to higher states of consciousness, facilitating spiritual growth and well-being. The term "Beej" is derived from the Sanskrit word for "seed," emphasizing the potential for profound transformation inherent in these primal sounds. **Origins of Beej Mantras:**

The origins of 'beej' mantras can be traced back to ancient Vedic texts, where the power of sound was recognized as a fundamental force in the universe. According to Vedic philosophy, everything in existence has a vibrational frequency, and by chanting specific sounds, individuals can harmonize with these frequencies to invoke positive energies.

The efficacy of 'beej' mantras is believed to lie in the vibrational quality of the sounds. Each syllable is considered to resonate with a particular frequency that corresponds to a specific chakra or energy centre in the body. Chanting these mantras is thought to activate and balance these energy centres, promoting physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. For example, the mantra "Om" is a universal beej mantra that is said to represent the primordial sound of the universe.

Popular Beej Mantras and Their Significance:

Om (Aum): Significance: Represents the sound of the universe, symbolizing the essence of ultimate reality. Associated with the crown chakra, promoting spiritual awakening and connection to the divine.

Shrim: Significance: Linked to the goddess Lakshmi, the embodiment of wealth, prosperity, and abundance. Aligns with the heart and solar plexus chakras, fostering love, compassion, and abundance.

Hrim: Significance: Connected to the goddess Durga, symbolizing strength,



courage, and protection. Activates the solar plexus chakra, enhancing

inner strength and confidence.

Kleem: Significance: Associated with the goddess Kali, representing transformation and the fierce aspect of the divine feminine. Influences the root chakra, aiding in grounding and overcoming obstacles.

Chanting and Meditation with Beej Mantras:

The practice of chanting beej mantras is often incorporated into meditation and spiritual rituals. Devotees may repeat the chosen mantra either verbally or internally, focusing on the vibrations and the intended qualities associated with the mantra. Repeat the chosen beej mantra with sincerity and intention. Allow the vibrations to permeate your being, fostering a deep connection with the divine energy.

Benefits of Beej Mantra Meditation:

Stress Reduction: Regular practice of beej mantra meditation has been shown to reduce stress and promote relaxation.

Enhanced Concentration: Ithelps improve focus and concentration, making it an effective tool for those seeking mental clarity.

Spiritual Growth: The transformative power of beej mantras facilitates spiritual growth, awakening a deeper connection to the self and the divine. Balanced Energy Centers: By activating and balancing the chakras, beej mantra meditation promotes holistic well-being, both physically and energetically. Beej mantras serve as potent tools for spiritual seekers, offering a pathway to connect with the divine within and without. The profound impact of these sacred sounds lies in their ability to resonate with the universal energy that permeates all of creation. Whether seeking inner peace, abundance, strength, or transformation, the practice of beej mantra meditation provides a time-honoured and accessible approach to spiritual growth.

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

Interim Budget is a harmony in harvest



ANIL AGRAWAL

Budget 2024-25 allocates ₹1.27 lakh crore to agriculture, aligning with Sanatan Dharma principles

n the Interim Budget, the allocation for the Agriculture Ministry for the fiscal year 2024–25 has been ear-marked at Rs1.27 lakh crore, marking an increase from the revised estimates of Rs1.16 lakh crore in 2023–24 and the budget estimates of Rs 1.15 lakh crore for the same period. The budget reaffirms a commitment to enhance various initiatives aimed at value addition in the agricultural sector, empowering women, and augmenting the incomes of farmers.

Over the past decade, the government has provided direct financial assistance to 118 million farmers through the PM-Kisan Samman Yojana, a cash handout pro-gramme for every landholding agricultural family. These advancements are a result of farmer-centric policies, income support, risk coverage through price and insurance support, and the promotion of technologies and innovations facilitated by start-ups. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the agriculture sector has witnessed nearly 4% growth, reflecting a positive trajectory for inclusive development and increased productivity. The increase in the agricultural budget can be symbolically connected to the principles of Sanatan Dharma, the eternal and universal values inherent in Hinduism. Sanatan Dharma emphasises the interconnectedness of all living beings and the environment, fostering an attitude of reverence and responsibility towards nature. Increasing the allocation for agriculture reflects a commitment to supporting farmers, who are integral to the cycle of life and contribute significantly to the well-being of society. The budgetary focus on agriculture acknowledges the importance of nurturing the land, providing a livelihood for farmers, and foreign and the society of the so a harmonious relationship with the environment—an embodiment of the principles embedded in Sanatan Dharma.

In the vast tapestry of Bharat's cultural heritage, the philosophical connection between Sanatan Dharma and agriculture emerges as a thread that weaves through centuries, nurturing not just crops but a way of life deeply rooted in harmony, sustainability and spiritual understanding. Sanatan Dharma, often referred to as Hinduism, is not just a religious system; it is a way of life that encompasses diverse facets, including the intimate relationship with nature and agriculture. Sanatan Dharma and agriculture share a timeless bond, exploring the spiriuai, cuiturai and ecologicai dimensions tha have shaped this symbiotic relationship.

A Timeless Bond Nurturing Harmony At the core of Sanatan Dharma lies a deep respect for nature, considering it not merely as a resource but as a manifestation of the divine. The reverence for the Earth as "Bhudevi" and the acknowledgement of plants, animals and natural elements as integral parts of the cosmic order emphasises the spiritual significance attributed to agriculture. The concept of "Yajna," a ritualistic offering with roots in Vedic literature, symbolises the sacred reciprocity between humans and nature. Agriculture, viewed as a form of Yajna, becomes a spiritual act where farmers are considered custodians entrusted with the responsibility of nurturing the earth.

Cultural Festivals Mirroring Agrarian

The cultural landscape of Bharat is adorned with festivals and rituals intricately tied to agriculture, mirroring the agrarian cycles and seasons. Festivals like Makar Sankranti, Pongal, and Baisakhi mark the harvesting



Harmony with Sanatan Dharma In recent years, the Government of India has embarked on a transformative journey to promote organic farming, drawing inspiration from the timeless principles embedded in Sanatan Dharma. This paradigm shift reflects a commitment to sustainability, environmental stewardship and a holistic understanding of agriculture deeply rootea in the country's cultural and spir

The government has been promoting organic farming as a priority in the country since 2015-16 through the schemes of Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) and Mission Organic Value Chain Development for the North Eastern Region (MOVCDNER). Both schemes stress providing end-to-end support to farmers engaged in organic farming, i.e., from production to processing, certification, and marketing and post-harvest management training and capacity building, which are integral parts of the scheme.

Under PKVY, states and UTs of the country are provided financial assistance of Rs 50,000/ha for 3 years, out of which Rs 31,000/ha for 3 years is provided directly to farmers through DBT for on-farm and offfarm organic inputs. Financial assistance of Rs. 8,800/ha for 3 years is provided for marketing, packaging,

branding, value addition and other marketing initiatives. Apart from this, Rs 2,700/ha for 3 years is pro-vided for certification and residual analysis. Under the scheme, assistance is also provided at Rs. 7,500/ha for 3 years for training and capacity building.
Under MOVCDNER, the assis-

tance of Rs 46,575/ha for 3 years is provided for the creation of FPO, support to farmers for organic inputs, quality seeds and planting material, training, handholding, and certification. Financial assistance of Rs 32,500/ha for 3 years is provided to farmers for off-farm or on-farm organic inputs under the scheme. The government has also developed a web portal, www.Jaivikkheti.in/, as an online marketing platform for the direct sale of organic produce by farmers to consumers to help them achieve better price realisation. A total of over 6.09 lakh farmers have been registered under the Jaivik Kheti portal.

subordinate office of the Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare (DA&FW), has been organising various training and capacity-building programmes, namely a 30-day certificate course, field demonstration and training, an extension officer training programme, and a 7-day online or offline training course on various

aspects of organic farming. A multidisciplinary team of scientists from the Indian Council of Agriculture (ICAR) is involved in providing need-based training to farmers and extension agents and giving technical support to state agencies for the promotion of organic farming. Scientists at Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) organise regular training programmes for farmers and extension personnel on organic agriculture, including the production and use of organic inputs. Under Soil Health Card (SHC) schemes, the government is

also promoting Integrated Nutrient Management (INM) through the judicious use of chemical fertilisers in conjunction with bio-fertilisers and organic manures for improving soil health, fertility, and productiv-

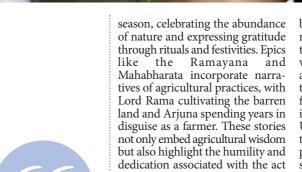
Prioritising Farmer Welfare Traditional agricultural practices,

often found in ancient texts like the Vedas and Puranas, emphasised the importance of working in harmony with nature. The use of natural fertilisers, crop rotation, and the avoidance of synthetic chemicals were integral to these practices, fostering a sustainable approach that resonates with the principles of organic farming. Farmers are encouraged to view their work as a service to the environment, promoting a sense of responsibility and reverence for the land.

Sanatan Dharma places significant emphasis on the welfare of all individuals, and the government's push for organic farming aligns with this principle by prioritising the well-The National Centre for Organic and Natural Farming (NCONF), a tural and spiritual values into agribeing of farmers. By integrating culcultural practices, Bharat aims to not only secure a healthier and more sustainable future but also to honour the timeless wisdom embedded in its cultural heritage.

This timeless bond between Sanatan Dharma and agriculture exemplifies a holistic worldview where spirituality, culture, and ecology converge harmoniously. As we navigate the challenges of modern agriculture and environmental concerns, revisiting the principles embedded in our cultural heritage can offer valuable insights into sustainable and ethical farming practices. In preserving and promoting this profound connection, we not only safeguard our agricultural traditions but also contribute to a more harmonious coexistence with the Earth—a timeless legacy that transcends generations.

(The author is a member of Rajya



PHILOSOPHICAL CONNECTION BETWEEN SANATAN DHARMA AND AGRICULTURE itual heritage.

EMERGES AS A THREAD THAT **WEAVES** NURTURING NOT JUST CROPS BUT A WAY OF LIFE DEEPLY ROOTED SUSTAINABILITY

UNDERSTANDING

THROUGH CENTURIES, IN HARMONY, AND SPIRITUAL

Collaborative innovation: Reshaping climate technology for a sustainable future

Collaborative spirit is now indispensable in the urgent realm of climate technology, where the need to combat global warming races against time

omplex problems require a collective ✓ intelligence system to conjure creative solutions. Just about a decade ago when Google was finding it difficult to make its machines learn to clearly distinguish between the pictures of a cat and a dog; the company felt that to meet the desired levels of accuracy in face recognition systems, it might require a substantial scale-up of its processing capacities. But then its engineers stumbled upon the NVIDIA GPU (Graphics Processing Unit) which is quite popular in enabling high-quality video gaming environments and is powered with better chipsets and algorithms.

Google partnered with NVIDIA and the collabora-



tion now delivers crucial breakthroughs in AI. It is widely acknowledged that the intersection of various disciplines is perhaps the most fertile space leading to path-breaking innovations; the Neuralink brain chip is one such very recent example. Such interdisciplinary collaborations become indispensable particularly in the realm of climate technology, ment efficiencies and nudge our approach to environ-

when there is a race against time to contain warming to 1.5 to 2 degree celcius limit. Key Challenges to a Collaborative Paradigm: The intellectual property regime is built upon the philosophical foundations where it is believed that healthy competition among the entities serves the greatest common good. However, for addressing an existential crisis like climate change, collective efforts too must be incentivised by the regulatory framework. Consortium-based

Innovation Model: An innovation model developed through integrating the industry, academia, and policymakers, can fast-pace the technological maturity, augconsumer behaviour towards sustainability. In high-velocity industries such as biotech, computers and electronics, an institutional consortium can create collaborative innovation wherein learning occurs through network relationships and institutions are both actors and the recipients of the skills and expertise that the learning brings. Moreover, the convergence of the key stakeholders also elevates the Research-Practice integration. Such accelerated learning mechanisms are much need-

ed for climate change management and adaptation. As we explore its application in climate technology, let's delve into specific areas where collaborative efforts can reshape mental challenges: Renewables and Storage: Unpredictability in solar and wind resources necessitates storage solutions in any reliable clean energy scheme. Thus, solar and wind developers getting formally networked with battery or other storage solution providers and grid managers could help towards building a more resilient energy ecosystem. On similar lines auto manufacturers too can be brought under the collaborative umbrella.

Imagine a scenario where the power grid has a demand surge, and one gets paid for supplying electricity to the grid through the battery in the electric vehicle. Time of Use tariffs and Device-Tagged Electricity Bills: through AI: Let's envision a vices could scale down the

Electricity during lean demand periods can be cheaper. Think of a washing machine in your house running only when the electricity is the cheapest during the day or night.

The collaboration of the device/appliances manufacturers, digital technology players and the power distribution companies can enhance transparency, and efficiency and cut down the peak demand requirements of the power generation units; notably such peaks are often met by coal-based plants. A power distribution network incentivised by time-of-use tariffs facilitates more sustainable consumer

behaviour. Augmenting Forecasting

scheme where satellite imagery of the cloud cover, projections on wind velocities and weather data get analysed by an AI model that predicts good sunshine and wind hours well in advance. Such early knowledge of the resource pattern would cut on wasteful spinning reserves that run as a backup to meet any sudden surge in power demand.

End-of-Life Planning and Sharing of Resources: A consortium-based system would inherently have a cradle-to-grave approach as the optimal end-use utilisation would be a natural spin-off. A re-purposing scheme of degraded batteries could be one such example. Also, cloud and web-based ser-

personal device hardware requirements, blockchain may edge out inefficient intermediates thus contributing to sustainabili-

The recent union budget announcement on the creation of a corpus of rupees one lakh crore targeted towards interest-free longterm assistance to private entities for research and innovation could go a long way towards cultivating a culture of innovation.

A synergy of efforts could indeed be a catalyst, as timing is crucial for the deployment of climate-friendly technologies.

(The writer is an Indian Railway Service officer and a Commonwealth scholar; views are personal)

US, UK and allies strike Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen

he US and the UK have conducted joint strikes on 36 Houthi targets across 13 locations in Yemen, in another wave of assaults intended to degrade the capabilities of the Iran-backed militia that has targeted international shipping vessels in the Red Sea in response to the Israel-Hamas

The Pentagon said the UK, Australia, Bahrain, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands and New Zealand were involved in Saturday's strikes against Houthi targets.

The latest strikes, executed with fighter jets and ships, come after the US launched strikes on 85 targets in Syria and Iraq on Friday in response to a deadly drone attack on a US military base in Jordan last Sunday that killed three of its service members.

"Militaries from the United States and the United Kingdom conducted additional strikes against the Houthi-controlled areas in Yemen," Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said in

This collective action sends a clear message to the Houthis that they will continue to bear further consequences if they do not end their illegal attacks on international shipping and naval vessels, Austin said.

"We will not hesitate to defend lives and the free flow of commerce in one of the world's most critical waterways," Austin

These strikes, he said, are intended to disrupt further and degrade the capabilities of the Iranian-backed Houthi militia to conduct their reckless and destabilising attacks against US and international vessels lawfully transiting the Red Sea.

Austin said that the coalition forces targeted 13 locations associated with the Houthis' deeply buried weapons storage facilities, missile systems and launchers, air defence systems, and radars, Austin said.

A joint statement issued by the US, the UK and its other coalition partners said that the militaries of the United States and United Kingdom, with support from Australia, Bahrain,

Netherlands, and New Zealand conducted an additional round of proportionate and necessary strikes against 36 Houthi targets across 13 locations in Yemen.

This was in response to the Houthis' continued attacks against international and commercial shipping as well as naval vessels transiting the Red

These precision strikes are intended to disrupt and degrade the capabilities that the Houthis use to threaten global trade and the lives of innocent mariners.

The strikes are in response to a series of illegal, dangerous, and destabilising Houthi actions since previous coalition strikes on January 11 and 22, 2024, including the January 27 attack which struck and set ablaze the Marshall Islands-flagged oil tanker M/V Marlin Luanda, the statement added.

"Today's strike specifically targeted sites associated with the Houthis' deeply buried weapons storage facilities, missile systems and launchers, air defence systems, and radars," it said.

The Houthis' now more



This photo issued by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) on Sunday, shows a RAF Typhoon FGR4 aircraft returning to the base, following strikes against Houthi targets in Yemen. The US and Britain struck 36 Houthi sites in Yemen in a second wave of assaults meant to further disable Iran-backed groups that have relentlessly attacked American and international interests in the wake of the Israel-Hamas war. In addition to the strikes on Saturday, US Central Command says it conducted an additional

than 30 attacks on commercial vessels and naval vessels since mid-November constitute an international challenge.

"Recognising the broad consensus of the international community, our coalition of like-minded countries commit-

ted to upholding the rulesbased order has continued to grow," the statement said.

"We remain committed to protecting freedom of navigation and international commerce and holding the Houthis

unjustifiable attacks on commercial shipping and naval vessels," it said

"Our aim remains to deescalate tensions and restore stability in the Red Sea but let us reiterate our warning to Houthi leadership: we will not hesitate the free flow of commerce in one of the world's most critical waterways in the face of continued threats," said the statement

issued by these countries. Two US destroyers fired Tomahawk missiles as part of the strikes on Houthi targets in Yemen, a US official told CNN.

The USS Gravely and USS Carney, both of which are Arleigh Burke-class guidedmissile destroyers, fired the land-attack cruise missiles during the operation.

F/A-18 fighter jets from the USS Dwight D Eisenhower aircraft carrier also took part in the strikes, officials said.

Earlier Saturday, the US struck six Houthi anti-ship cruise missiles before they were launched toward the Red Sea, US Central Command said.

US Central Command forces also conducted a strike in self-defence against a Houthi anti-ship cruise missile prepared to launch against ships in

The strikes on consecutive days come as the Biden administration has adopted a "multitiered" response to a drone attack that killed three US service members and wounded scores more last weekend.

Saturday's strikes are the third time in recent weeks that the US and UK attacked Houthi targets as part of a joint operation. On January 11, the two militaries struck approximately 30 Houthi sites. Less than two weeks later, the US and UK struck another eight sites. The previous strikes targeted Houthi weapons storage facilities and radar sites in an attempt to dis-rupt the ability of the Iranbacked rebel group to attack international shipping lanes in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, some of the world's most critical waterways.

But the Houthis have remained defiant, vowing after the last round of US-led strikes they are "more determined to confront" what they called the US and the UK "aggressors."

Iran-backed militias have mounted more than 165 drone, missile and rocket attacks on US troops in Iraq and Syria since the Israel-Hamas war began in

28 killed as shell hits bakery in Russian-occupied Ukraine

Moscow-installed officials say Ukrainian shelling killed at least 28 people at a bakery in the Russian-occupied city of Lysychansk.

At least one child was among the dead Saturday, local leader Leonid Pasechnik wrote in a statement on Telegram. A further 10 people were rescued from under the rubble by emergency services, he said.

Úkrainian officials in Kyiv did not comment on the

Both Moscow and Kyiv have increasingly relied on longer-range attacks this winter amid largely unchanged positions on the 1,500-kilometer (930-mile) front line in Russian forces had shelled the

the nearly 2-year-old war. However, Ukrainian forces have come under intense Russian attack over the past 24 hours, with continuous assaults along the front line, Ukraine's General Staff said in a statement Fighting has been partic-

ularly fierce in the eastern city of Avdiivka, where Moscow is attempting to encircle Kyiv's troops, while Ukrainian forces have also been on the defensive in Kupiansk, Lyman, Bakhmut and Zaporizhzhia, officials

The military administration for Ukraine's northern Sumy region said Sunday that

region in 16 separate attacks the previous day, firing on the border communities of Yunakivka, Bilopillia, Krasnopillia, Velyka Pysarivka, and Esman. Gen. Serhii Naiev, commander of the Ukrainian Joint Forces, also said that Kyiv's troops

had pushed back Russian

sabotage and reconnaissance

units attempting to cross the border in the Sumy region. With Ukraine's soldiers concentrated in the eastern regions of Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kharkiv, the reported incursion suggests that Moscow could be probing vulnerabilities on a new front to further stretch Ukrainian resources.

Republicans plan more military aid to Israel, leave out Ukraine

House Republicans will move forward with a USD 17.6 billion package next week that provides military aid to Israel and replenish US weapons, but leaves out more help for Ukraine, underscoring the challenges facing supporters of a comprehensive national security package that would also include billions of dollars for immigration enforcement.

The move gives Speaker Mike Johnson and House Republicans the chance to show support for Israel even though there is little chance the Senate will go along. Meanwhile, text of a broader Senate compromise is expected to be released this weekend and a key test vote on that package will be held during the week. Johnson said that Senate Congressional Budget Office leadership is aware that by failing to include the House in their negotiations, they have eliminated the ability for swift consideration of any legislation.

"As I have said consistently for the past three months, the House will have to work its will on these issues and our priorities will need to be addressed," Johnson said in a letter to col-

The House has already approved a nearly USD 14.5 billion military aid package in November for Israel that the Senate declined to take up. Republicans also insisted it be paid for with cuts elsewhere. The bill targeted the Internal

Hezbollah in neighbouring

Lebanon that it would be

"ready to attack immediately"

if provoked, as it recounted its

actions along the northern

border during four months of

war in Gaza and made a rare

acknowledgement of dozens of

airstrikes inside Syria against

our first priority, but we are cer-

tainly prepared," military

spokesperson Daniel Hagari

said, adding: "We will contin-

ue to act wherever Hezbollah

is present, we will continue to

act wherever it is required in

the Middle East. What is true

for Lebanon is true for Syria,

and is true for other more dis-

The comments followed

"We do not choose war as

the militant group.

though the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said doing so would end up costing the federal govern-ment a net USD 12.5 billion because of lost revenue from tax collections.

The tactic of including IRS cuts also turned it into a more partisan, 226-196 vote. Johnson said in his letter to colleagues that removing the offsets should allow for swift passage of the Israel aid.

"During debate in the House and in numerous subsequent statements, Democrats made clear that their primary objection to the original House bill was with its offsets," Johnson said. "The Senate will no longer have excuses, how-

Israel issues detailed

warning to Hezbollah

attack Hezbollah as needed.

Efforts to close wide gaps

between Israel and Hamas in

pursuit of a cease-fire contin-

ued in the region where con-

cerns about a wider war with

A top Hamas official, Osama Hamdan, said they

were studying the proposal

put forward by the US, Egypt,

Qatar and Israel but insist on

Israel accepting conditions

including a permanent cease-

Gaza has leveled vast swaths of

the tiny besieged enclave, dis-

placed 85 per cent of its pop-

ulation and pushed a quarter of residents to starvation. The

Health Ministry in Gaza said

Saturday that 107 people were

The war in Hamas-run

Iran-allied groups remain.

ever misguided, against swift passage of this critical support for our ally."

Rep. Ken Calvert, R-Calif., released the text of the military assistance bill for Israel. It would provide USD 4 billion to replenish missile defense systems and USD 1.2 billion to counter short-range rockets and mortar threats. There's also funding for the procurement of advanced weapons system and to enhance the production of artillery and other munitions. To ensure the support does not compromise US readiness, it includes USD 4.4 billion to replenish US stocks of weapons provided to Israel. There's also USD 3.3 billion for current US military operations in the region.

Parents wanted me to speak without accent, says Sunak

PTI ■ LONDON

Rishi Sunak, the UK's Indian-origin Prime Minister, has said that he experienced "racism" when he was a child and his parents sent him for extra drama lessons so that he could "speak properly" without an accent to "fit in". The 43-year-old former Chancellor of the Exchequer, a devout Hindu, is the youngest British prime minister in 210 years. He is also the first Hindu Prime Minister of Indian heritage

Speaking to ITV News, Sunak shared how his parents were so determined he should fit in and speak without an accent that he was sent for extra drama lessons. "You are conscious of

being different," he said. "It's hard not to be, right, and obviously I experienced racism as

Sunak also recalled the pain of hearing slurs directed at his younger siblings, adding that racism "stings" and "hurts in a

way that other things don't". He felt what he experienced would not happen to his children

Discussing his Indian heritage, Sunak said his parents "fit in and not for it to be, in any

His mother, he added, was particularly conscious of how her children spoke. "One of the things my mum was obsessed with was that we didn't speak with accents and we would speak properly," he said. "So she was

The first strike hit a residential building east of Rafah, extra drama." killing at least 13 people from a single family. Four women and three children were among the dead, hospital officials said

'Two children are still under the rubble, and we don't, still we don't know anything about them," relative Ahmad Hijazi said. The second strike hit a house in Rafah's Jeneina area, killing at least two men and two women.

ple including women and chil-

dren were killed in two sepa-

rate airstrikes overnight,

according to the registration

office at Abu Yousef al-Najjar

hospital where the bodies

ple have been

were taken.

the defense minister's warning killed over the past 24 hours, that a cease-fire in Gaza against bringing the wartime total to Tsrael's military has issued its the militant group Hamas 27,238. More than 66,000 peowere keen for him and his sib-In Gaza's southernmost town of Rafah, at least 17 peoway, shape or form, a barrier".

keen for us to try to do some

"I think any form of racism s simply unacceptable," he continued, adding that when he speaks to world leaders, "most people look to the UK as an example of how to get this right".

Sunak admitted that he never dreamed there might one day be an ethnic minority prime minister "because you didn't have role models like that. [It] hadn't happened yet."

Namibian President dies in hospital during treatment

during the 76th Independence Day commemoration ceremony of Sri Lanka in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on Sunday

AP ■ HARARE

Hage Geingob, President of Namibia, one of Africa's most stable democracies, died Sunday while receiving medical treatment at a local hospital, his office announced.

The Namibian presidency said Geingob's medical team at Lady Pohamba Hospital did its best to help him, but he died with his wife, Monica Geingos, and children by his side, in a post on X, formerly Twitter,

acting president, called for calm, will convene with immediate effect in order to make the necessary state arrangements in this regard."

Geingob was undergoing treatment for cancer. The 82-year-old had a colonoscopy and a gastroscopy on Jan 8, followed by a biopsy, his office said

last month.

Angolo Mbumba, Namibia's saying in the same post that the "Cabinet 2002. He also served in the same

He returned home on Jan. 31 from the United States where he had undergone a trial two-day "novel treatment for cancerous cells," according to his office.

In 2014, he said he had survived

Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin, centre, sits with Sri Lankan Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawaradane (left) and the First Lady of Sri Lanka Maithree Wickremesinghe,

Geingob, president of the southern African nation since 2015, was set to finish his second and final term in office this year. He was the country's third president since it gained independence in 1990, following more than a century of German and then apartheid South African rule.

After spending nearly three decades in exile in neighboring Botswana and the U.S. as an anti-apartheid activist, Geingob returned to Namibia as its first prime minister from 1990 to

capacity from 2008 to 2012. Soft-spoken but firm on advancing

Africa's agenda as an important stakeholder in world affairs, Geingob maintained close relations with the US and other Western countries. But, like many African leaders, he

also forged a warm relationship with China, refuting claims that Beijing is aggressively asserting economic influence over countries in Africa as a form

Myanmar guards forced to take refuge in B'desh

PTI ■ DHAKA

t least 14 members of Myanmar's paramil-Atleast 14 members of my amount of the least 14 members of my amount of sought refuge in Bangladesh after escaping the junta-run country amid reports of heavy gunfights between the government troops and the rebel resistance fighters, officials said here on

The soldiers entered through the Tambru border in predawn hours and sought shelter from the Bangladesh Border Guard (BGB).

"The 14 members of their BGP fled their country. They are now in our custody," an official of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) told reporters on Sunday at the southeastern Cox's Bazar, bordering Burma. Asked about the matter, Minister of Home Affairs Asaduzzaman Khan said, "There are about 14 of them. They are called BGP or Border Guard Police."

"As you know, they have been fighting with the Arakan Army. At one point, they came here and took shelter. We are speaking to the Myanmar government about the matter," news24.com quoted Khan as saying. Residents in several frontier Bangladesh vil-

lages moved to safety amid skirmishes between the Myanmar government troops and the rebel Arakan Army.

Chile forest fires cause devastation

tant places."

Intense forest fires burning around a densely populated area of central Chile have caused at least 46 deaths, Chile's president said Saturday evening, and officials said at least 1,100 homes had been destroyed.

In a nationally televised address President Gabriel Boric warned that the death toll could worsen as four large fires burn in the region of Valparaiso, where firefighters have struggled to reach the most threatened neighbourhoods.

Boric urged Chileans to cooperate with rescue workers. "If you are told to evacuate don't hes-

itate to do it," he said. "The fires are advancing fast and climatic conditions have made them difficult to control. There are high temperatures, strong winds and low humiditiy?

Interior Minister Carolina Tohá said earlier Saturday that 92 forest fires were burning in the center and south of the country, where temperatures have been unusually high this week.

The deadliest of the fires were in the Valparaíso region, where authorities urged thousands of people to evacuate their

meanwhile, residents were told to stay at

In areas farther away from the fires,



other emergency vehicles can get about on the roads with greater ease.

Tohá said two fires near the towns of Quilpué and Villa Alemana had burned through at least 8,000 hectares (19,770 acres) since Friday. One of the fires was threatening the coastal resort town of Viña del Mar, where some neighbourhoods had already been hit hard.

In Villa Independencia, a hillside neighbourhood on the eastern edge of the town, several blocks of homes and businesses were destroyed. Burned cars with broken windows lined the streets, which were covered in ash.

"I've been here 32 years, and never

imagined this would happen," said Rolando Fernández, one of the residents who lost his home.

He said he first saw the fire burning on a nearby hill Friday afternoon and within 15 minutes the area was engulfed in flames and smoke, forcing everyone to run

"I've worked my whole life, and now I'm left with nothing," Fernández said. Three shelters were set up in the Valparaíso region, and 19 helicopters and

more than 450 firefighters were brought into the area to help battle the blazes, Tohá The fires were burning on mountains

that are hard to reach, such as neighbourhoods built precariously on the edge of Viña del Mar. Officials reported power blackouts as a result of the fire, and Tohá said that in

the Valparaíso region, four hospitals and three nursing homes for the elderly had to be evacuated. The fire also destroyed two bus terminals, the interior minister said. The El Niño weather pattern has caused droughts and hotter than usual

temperatures along the west of South America this year, increasing the risk of forest fires. In January, more than 17,000 hectares (42,000 acres) of forests were destroyed in Colombia by fires that followed several weeks of dry weather.

THE PIONEER | NEW DELHI | MONDAY | FEBRUARY 5, 2024

DISTRIBUTION DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY OUTSIDE INDIA. INITIAL PUBLIC OFFER OF EQUITY SHARES ON THE MAIN BOARD OF BSE LIMITED ("BSE") AND NATIONAL STOCK EXCHANGE OF INDIA LIMITED ("NSE", AND TOGETHER WITH BSE, THE "STOCK EXCHANGES") IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE BOARD OF INDIA (ISSUE OF CAPITAL AND DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS) REGULATIONS, 2018, AS AMENDED ("SEBI ICOR REGULATIONS")







09

Code to view the RHP)

APEEJAY SURRENDRA PARK HOTELS LIMITED

was changed to Budget Hotels Limited pursuant to our Company becoming a public company with effect from October 26, 1990 and noting of such conversion in the certificate of incorporation by Registrar of Companies, Bangafore at Karnataka. Subsequently, the name of our Company was changed to Budget Hotels Limited pursuant to our Company becoming a public company with effect from October 26, 1990 and noting of such conversion in the certificate of incorporation by Registrar of Companies, Bangalore at Karnataka. Further, pursuant to the Acquisition Agreements, the entire issued and paid-up equity share capital of our Company constituting 571,940 equity shares of face value of ₹ 100 each, was acquired by Apeejay Hotels Delhi in two tranches and our Company became the wholly owned subsidiary of Apeejay Hotels Delhi. Subsequently, pursuant to the scheme of arne/gamation approved vide orders of the High Court of Madras dated June 13, 2003, Apeejay Hotels Delhi, and Gemini Hotels and Holdings Limited (a wholly owned subsidiary of Apeejay Hotels Delhi) were arnalgamated with our Company, with the appointed date being April 1, 2001. Thereafter, to closely identify the association of our Company with the Apeejay Surrendra Group, the name of our Company was changed from Budget Hotels Limited to Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Limited, pursuant to the resolution passed by our Shareholders' resolution dated November 30, 2016 and order dated June 22, 2017 passed by the Regional Director, South East Region, Hyderabad, our registered office was shifted from the State of West Bengal. For further details relating to changes in the registered office and name of our Company, see "History and Certain Corporate Matters" -Changes in the registered office of our Company" on page 282 of the red herring prospectus of our Company dated January 29, 2024 filed with the RoC ("RHP" or "Red Herring Prospectus").

> Registered Office: 17, Park Street, Kolkata - 700 016, West Bengal, India; Corporate Office: The Park Hotels. N-80, Connaught Place, New Delhi - 110 001, India; Telephone number: +91 33 2249 9000; Contact person: Shalini Keshan, Company Secretary and Compliance Officer, E-mail: investorrelations@asphil.in, Website: www.theparkhotels.com, Corporate Identity Number: U85110WB1987PLC222139

OUR PROMOTERS: PRIYA PAUL, KARAN PAUL, APEEJAY SURRENDRA TRUST AND GREAT EASTERN STORES PRIVATE LIMITED

INITIAL PUBLIC OFFERING OF UP TO [] EQUITY SHARES OF FACE VALUE OF ₹ 1 EACH ("EQUITY SHARES") OF APEEJAY SURRENDRA PARK HOTELS LIMITED (OUR "COMPANY" OR THE "ISSUER") FOR CASH AT A PRICE OF ₹ [4] PER EQUITY SHARE (INCLUDING A SHARE PREMIUM OF ₹ [4] PER EQUITY SHARE) AGGREGATING UP TO ₹ 9,200.00 MILLION (THE "OFFER"), COMPRISING A FRESH ISSUE OF UP TO [•] EQUITY SHARES AGGREGATING UP TO ₹ 3,200.00 MILLION BY OUR COMPRISING UP TO [+] EQUITY SHARES AGGREGATING UP TO ₹ 2,960.00 MILLION BY APEEJAY PRIVATE LIMITED (THE "PROMOTER GROUP SELLING SHARES AGGREGATING UP TO ₹ 230.00 MILLION BY RECP IV PARK HOTEL INVESTORS LTD AND UP TO [+] EQUITY SHARES AGGREGATING UP TO R 10.00 MILLION BY RECP IV PARK HOTEL CO-INVESTORS LTD (TOGETHER REFERRED TO AS THE "INVESTOR SELLING SHAREHOLDERS" AND SUCH EQUITY SHARES OFFERED BY THE SELLING SHAREHOLDERS, THE "OFFERED SHARES") ("OFFER FOR SALE").

THE OFFER INCLUDES A RESERVATION OF UP TO [+] EQUITY SHARES, AGGREGATING UP TO (*) MILLION (CONSTITUTING UP TO [+]% OF THE POST OFFER PAID-UP EQUITY SHARE CAPITAL OF OUR COMPANY FOR SUBSCRIPTION BY ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES (THE "EMPLOYEE RESERVATION PORTION"). THE OFFER LESS THE EMPLOYEE RESERVATION PORTION IS HEREINAFTER REFERRED TO AS THE "NET OFFER". THE OFFER SHALL CONSTITUTE [•]%, RESPECTIVELY, OF THE POST-OFFER PAID-UP EQUITY SHARE CAPITAL OF OUR COMPANY, IN CONSULTATION WITH BOOK RUNNING LEAD MANAGERS ("BRLMS"), OFFER A DISCOUNT OF UP TO [•]% (EQUIVALENT TO ₹ 7 PER EQUITY SHARE) OF THE OFFER PRICE TO ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEE RESERVATION PORTION ("EMPLOYEE DISCOUNT").

NAME OF SELLING SHAREHOLDER	TYPE	NUMBER OF EQUITY SHARES OFFERED (AMOUNT IN ₹ MILLION)	WEIGHTED AVERAGE COST OF ACQUISITION (IN ? PER EQUITY SHARE)*
Apeejay Private Limited	Promoter Group Selling Shareholder	Up to [●] Equity Shares of face value of ₹ 1 each aggregating up to ₹ 2,960 million	0.75
RECP IV Park Hotel Investors Ltd	Investor Selling Shareholder	Up to [•] Equity Shares of face value of ₹ 1 each aggregating up to ₹ 230 million	109.81
RECP IV Park Hotel Co-Investors Ltd	Investor Selling Shareholder	Up to [◆] Equity Shares of face value of ₹ 1 each aggregating up to ₹ 10 million	77.67

As certified by Raj Har Gopal & Co., Chartered Accountants, by way of their certificate dated. January 29, 2024

We operate our hotels through a combination of the following: (i) direct ownership of hotel properties, (ii) long-term lease for the land and/or buildings, (iii) operation and management agreements on a contractual basis using our brand on hotels constructed by third parties.

The Offer is being made through the Book Building Process pursuant to Regulation 6(2) of the SEBI ICDR Regulations.

QIB Portion: Not less than 75% of the Offer | Non-Institutional Portion: Not more than 15% of the Offer | Retail Portion: Not more than 10% of the Offer. Employee Reservation Portion: Up to [•] Equity Shares aggregating up to ₹ 100 million.

PRICE BAND: ₹147 TO ₹155 PER EQUITY SHARE OF FACE VALUE OF ₹1 EACH.

THE FLOOR PRICE IS 147 TIMES THE FACE VALUE OF THE EQUITY SHARES AND THE CAP PRICE IS 155 TIMES THE FACE VALUE OF THE EQUITY SHARES.

THE PRICE TO EARNING RATIO BASED ON DILUTED EPS FOR FISCAL 2023 AT THE FLOOR PRICE IS 53.45 TIMES AND AT THE CAP PRICE IS AS HIGH AS 56,36 TIMES AS COMPARED TO THE AVERAGE INDUSTRY PEER GROUP P/E RATIO OF 73.60.

BIDS CAN BE MADE FOR A MINIMUM OF 96 EQUITY SHARES AND IN MULTIPLES OF 96 EQUITY SHARES THEREAFTER.

A DISCOUNT OF UP TO [•]% (EQUIVALENT TO ₹7 PER EQUITY SHARE) IS BEING OFFERED TO ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES BIDDING IN THE EMPLOYEE RESERVATION PORTION.

In making an investment decision and purchase in the Offer, you must rely on the information included in the Red Herring Prospectus and the terms of the Offer, including the merits and risks involved and not on any other external sources of information about the Offer

In accordance with the recommendation of the Independent Directors of our Company, pursuant to their resolution dated January 30, 2024, the above provided price band is justified based on quantitative factors/ KPIs disclosed in the "Basis for Offer Price" section of the RHP vis-à-vis the weighted average cost of acquisition of primary and secondary transaction(s) disclosed in the "Basis for Offer Price" section beginning on page 153 of the RHP.

RISKS TO INVESTORS

- from our top five owned hotels with THE PARK Kolkata contributing 21.75% to the Total Income in Fiscal 2023. Any adverse development affecting these hotels or the regions in which they operate, may adversely affect our business, results of operations, cash flows and financial condition.
- Incurred Losses in FY22 and FY21: We had a restated loss of ₹ 282.02 million and ₹ 758.84 million for the Fiscals 2022,
- Risk pertaining to majority hotel bookings originating from online travel agents and intermediaries; Majority portion of our hotel bookings (approximately 49% of our total room bookings contributing about 49% of our total room revenue for Fiscal 2023) originate from online travel agents and intermediaries. In the event such online travel agents and intermediaries continue to gain market share compared to our direct booking channels, they may be able to negotiate higher commissions for services provided, or demand significant concessions or reduced room rates causing an 19. Floor Price and Cap Price as compared to the weighted average cost of acquisition ("WACA") based on primary adverse effect on our margins, business, and results of operations.
- Risk related to delay in development/construction: We are exposed to risks associated with the delay in development of our hotel properties and land banks. Any delay in the construction of new hotel buildings or expansion of our existing properties may have an adverse effect on our business, results of operations, financial condition, and cash flows.
- Non-compliance with covenants of financing agreements; We were not in compliance with certain covenants under certain of our financing agreements in the past and had delays in repayment of certain long-term rupee loans and working capital loans. In case of any breach of covenants or delay in repayment of facilities in the future, such non-compliance, if not waived, could adversely affect our business, results of operations, cash flows, and financial
- Concentration risk pertaining to significant portion of room revenue from corporate accounts and from leisure customers: We derive a significant portion of our room revenue from corporate accounts and from leisure customers, contributing approximately 80% of the total room revenue comprising approximately 40% each from corporate accounts and leisure customers in Fiscal 2023. Changes in travellers' preferences due to increased use of telepresence equipment, cost of travel, spending habits, and other factors may adversely affect the demand for hotel rooms leading to adverse effect on our business, results of operations, financial condition, and cash flows.
- Risk in relation to Indebtedness; We have incurred indebtedness which requires significant cash flows to service, and this, together with the conditions and restrictions imposed by our financing arrangements, fluctuations in the interest rates may limit our ability to operate freely and grow our business. As on September 30, 2023, we had total borrowings (including current borrowings, and non-current borrowings) of ₹5,970.90 million.
- Seasonality and Cyclicity Risk: Our business is subject to seasonal and cyclical variations that could result in fluctuations in our results of operations and cash flows. Further, the hospitality industry is subject to weekly variations as well. Also, the hospitality industry is cyclical, and demand generally follows key macroeconomic indicators.
- Material uncertainty for going concern: Our Statutory Auditors have included paragraph on material uncertainty on going concern in their audit reports and other audit qualifications in the annexure to the auditors' reports issued under the Companies (Auditor's Report) Order, 2016 for Fiscal 2021
- Liquidity ratio of the Company is and has been less than 1: Liquidity ratios of our Company for six months ended September 30, 2023, September 30, 2022 and Fiscals 2023, 2022, and 2021 have been less than 1, which may have an adverse impact on our ability to meet short term financial obligations of our business and operations.
- Risk related to expansion in real estate space: We are exposed to risks associated with the construction and development of serviced apartments at EM Bypass, which is a one-off project of our Company and of which the Company has no prior experience.
- Delay in payment of statutory dues: There are certain instances of delays in payment of statutory dues or non-payment of statutory dues on account of certain disputes. Any delay in payment of such statutory dues or non-payment of statutory dues in dispute may attract financial penalties from the respective government authorities and in turn may have an adverse impact on our financial condition and cash flows.
- Emphasis of matter in the Audit report: Our Statutory Auditors have included an emphasis of matter and other matters in their audit reports and other audit qualifications in the annexure to the auditors' reports issued under the Companies (Auditor's Report) Order, 2016 for Fiscal 2021, and the Companies (Auditor's Report) Order, 2020 for Fiscals 2022 and 2023.
- Risk related to credit rating downgrade: Credit rating downgrades may increase our cost of capital and future fund raising may cause a dilution in your shareholding or place restrictions on our operations. We cannot assure you that we will be able to maintain or improve such credit ratings.
- Mortgaged hotels and missing title deeds: Certain of our hotels are mortgaged with lenders, out of which the title deeds of certain immovable properties are not held in the name of our Company. Failure to comply with the terms of the mortgage agreements or inability to enforce our rights effectively in the event of any dispute or adverse action in relation to properties where the title deeds are not in our Company's name may result in adverse impact on our business, results of operations, financial condition and cash flows.

- Concentration Risk; A large portion of our revenue (approximately 75% of the Total Income in Fiscal 2023) is realised 16. Promoter and Directors are engaged in similar business activities and no non compete arrangements with Promoters: Certain of our Promoters and our Directors are engaged in business activities which are similar to those undertaken by our Company and Subsidiaries, or have interests in other companies, which are in businesses similar to ours, which may result in conflicts of interest. Further, we have not entered into any non-compete arrangements with our
- and 2021, respectively. Any losses in the future could adversely affect our financial condition, results of operations 17. Majority loans to be repaid from the proceeds are from ICICI Bank, which is an affiliate of one of the Lead Managers: Majority of the loans that we propose to repay from Net Proceeds (amounting to ₹ 3,674.19 million and constituting 61.67% of the total outstanding borrowings of our Company as on September 30, 2023) have been obtained from the ICICI Bank Limited, which is an affiliate of one of the Lead Managers to the Offer.
 - 18. The Offer comprises Fresh Issue by our Company and an Offer for Sale by the Selling Shareholders. Our Company will

Past Transactions	Weighted average cost of acquisition (in ₹)	Floor Price (in ₹)*	Cap Price (in ₹)*
WACA for Primary Transactions during 18 months prior to RHP	Nil	N.A.	N.A.
WACA for Secondary Transactions during 18 months prior to RHP	Nil	N.A.	N.A.

Since there were no primary or secondary transactions of equity shares of our Company during the 18 months preceding the date of filing of the Red Herring Prospectus, the information has been disclosed for price per share of our Company based on the last five primary or secondary transactions where our Promoters/members of our Promoter Group or Shareholder(s) having the right to nominate director(s) on the Board of our Company, are a party to the transaction, during the three years prior to the date of filing of this Red Herring Prospectus irrespective of the size of the transaction, is as below:

Based on primary issuances	Nil	NA	NA
Based on secondary transactions	0.08	1,837.50	1,937.50
*As certified by Rai Har Gonal & Co. Chartered Accountants, vide to	heir certificate dated Jar	uary 30 2024	

The details of Price/Earnings, Earnings per share, Return on networth and NAV as on and for the year ended March 31, 2023 are as follows:

Particulars	Price/ Earnings (at diluted EPS)		Return on Networth (%)	Net Asset Value per share (₹)
Company (Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Limited)*	56.36	2.75	9.03%3	31.81
Average of Industry Peers	73.601	5.651	12.86%2	39.73

*At upper end of price band.

not receive any proceeds from the Offer for Sale.

- EPS for SAMHI Hotels Limited is negative for the financial year ended March 31, 2023, accordingly the same has not been considered in Industry peers.
- 2) Return on networth for SAMHI Hotels Limited is negative for the financial year ended March 31, 2023, accordingly the same has not been considered in Industry peers.
- 3) Profit for the financial year ended March 31, 2023 divided by the average net worth attributable to the owners of the Company. 21. The details of weighted average return on net-worth for the last 3 full financial years, and six months ended September 30, 2023 and September 30, 2022 are as follows :-

Particulars	Fiscal 2021	Fiscal 2022	Fiscal 2023	Six months ended September 30, 2023	Six months ended September 30, 2022
Company (Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Limited)	(13.23%)	(5.40%)	9.03%	4.05%	3.58%

22. The details of market value to total revenue and the PE Ratio on the upper end/lower end of the price band are as

Deutlantara	Market value/	Total turnover	PE Ratio		
Particulars	Cap Price	Floor Price	Cap Price	Floor Price	
Our Company*	6.31	6.04	56.36	53.45	

*Based on financial year ended March 31, 2023

- Total revenue is for the financial year ended March 31, 2023.
- Market value has been adjusted for the Fresh Issue portion.
- Diluted EPS has been considered for the financial year ended March 31, 2023.

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23. Weighted average cost of all Equity Shares transacted in the one year, 18 months and three years preceding the date of the Red Herring Prospectus

Period	Weighted average cost of cquisition (in ₹)*	Cap Price is 'x' times the weighted average cost of acquisition*	Range of acquisition price: lowest price – highest price (in ₹)*	
Last one year preceding the date of the Red Herring Prospectus	MD		MI	
Last 18 months preceding the date of the Red Herring Prospectus	Nil	NA NA	Nil	
Last three years preceding the date of the Red Herring Prospectus	0.08	1,937.50	Nil to 0.08	

- *As certified by Raj Har Gopal & Co., Chartered Accountants by their certificate dated January 30, 2024.
- Average cost of acquisition of Equity Shares held by the Selling Shareholders ranges from ₹0.75 to ₹109.81 per Equity Share and Offer Price at higher end of the Price Band is ₹155.00 per Equity Share.
- Details of price at which specified securities were acquired by our Promoter, the members of the Promoter Group, the Selling Shareholders, and Shareholders with rights to nominate directors or other rights, in the last three years preceding the date of the Red Herring Prospectus:

Except as stated below, there have been no specified securities that were acquired in the last three years preceding the date of the Red Herring Prospectus, by our Promoters, Promoter Group, Selling Shareholders and the other

Shareholders having the right to nominate directors or other rights in our Company. The details of the prices at which these acquisitions were undertaken are stated below:

Sr. No.	Date of acquisition	Name of the acquirer	Acquisition price / transfer price per equity share*	Number of shares acquired /transferred
1	February 24, 2021	Apeejay Surrendra Management Services Private Limited	Nil	3,999,760
2	December 22, 2021	Great Eastern Stores Private Limited	0.08	52,500,000

*As certified by Raj Har Gopal & Co., Chartered Accountants by their certificate dated January 29, 2024.

26. The 3 BRLMs associated with the Offer have handled 94 public issues in the past three financial years, out of which 24 issues closed below the Offer Price on listing date:

Name of BRLM	Total Issues	Issues closed below IPO Price as on listing date
JM Financial Limited	12	1
Axis Capital Limited	12	3
ICICI Securities Limited	18	2
Common Issues of all BRLMs	52	18
Total	94	24

BID/OFFER PERIOD

BID/OFFER OPENS TODAY

BID/OFFER CLOSES ON: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 07, 2024*

*The UPI mandate end time and date shall be at 5:00 p.m. on Bid/Offer Closing Date

Submission of Bids (other than Bids from Anchor Investors):

Bid/ Offer Period (except the Bid/ Offer Closing Date)		
Submission and revision in Bids	Only between 10:00 am and 5:00 pm (Indian Standard Time ("IST"))	
Bid/ Offer Closing Date*	*	
Submission of electronic applications (online ASBA through 3-in-1 accounts) — for RIBs and Eligible Employees Bidding in the Employee Reservation Portion other than QIBs and NIIs	Only between 10.00 a.m. and up to 5.00 p.m. IST	
Submission of electronic applications (bank ASBA through online channels like internet banking, mobile banking and syndicate UPI ASBA applications where Bid Amount is up to ₹500,000)	Only between 10.00 a.m. and up to 4.00 p.m. IST	
Submission of electronic applications (syndicate non-retail, non-individual applications)	Only between 10.00 a.m. and up to 3.00 p.m. IST	
Submission of physical applications (bank ASBA)	Only between 10.00 a.m. and up to 1.00 p.m. IST	
Submission of physical applications (syndicate non-retail, non-individual applications where Bid Amount is more than ₹500,000	Only between 10.00 a.m. and up to 12.00 p.m. IST	
Modification/ revision/cancellation of Bids	*	
Upward revision of Bids by QIBs and Non-Institutional Bidders categories*	Only between 10.00 a.m. and up to 5.00 p.m. IST on Bid/ Offer Closing Date	
Upward or downward revision of Bids or cancellation of Bids by RIBs and Eligible Employees Bidding in the Employee Reservation Portion	Only between 10.00 a.m. and up to 5.00 p.m. IST	

*UPI mandate end time and date shall be at 5:00 p.m. on Bid/Offer Closing Date. | *QIBs and Non-Institutional Bidders can neither revise their bids downwards nor cancel/withdraw their bids.

An indicative timetable in respect of the Offer is set out below:

Event	Indicative Date
Finalisation of Basis of Allotment with the Designated Stock Exchange	On or about Thursday, February 8, 2024
Initiation of refunds (if any, for Anchor Investors) / unblocking of funds from ASBA Account	On or about Friday, February 9, 2024
Credit of the Equity Shares to depository accounts of Allottees	On or about Friday, February 9, 2024
Commencement of trading of the Equity Shares on the Stock Exchanges	On or about Monday, February 12, 2024

THE EQUITY SHARES OF OUR COMPANY WILL GET LISTED ON MAIN BOARD PLATFORM OF BSE AND NSE.

Simple, Safe, Smart way of Application!!!

*Applications Supported by Blocked Amount ("ASBA") is a better way of applying to offers by simply blocking the fund in the bank account. For further details, check section on ASBA. Mandatory in public issues. No cheque will be accepted.



UPI-Now available in ASBA for Retail Individual Investors and Non-institutional Investors applying in public issues where the application amount is up to ₹500,000, applying through Registered Brokers, Syndicate, CDPs & RTAs. UPI Bidders also have the option to submit the application directly to the ASBA Bank (SCSBs) or to use the facility of linked online trading, demat and bank account. Investors are required to ensure that the bank account used for bidding is linked to their PAN. Bidders must ensure that their PAN is linked with Aadhaar and are in compliance with CBDT notification dated February 13, 2020 and read with press releases dated June 25, 2021 and September 17, 2021 and CBDT circular no. 7 of 2022, dated March 30, 2022, read with press release dated March 28, 2023.

ASBA has to be availed by all the investors except Anchor Investors. UPI may be availed by (i) Retail Individual Investors with an application size of up to ₹ 500,000 in the Non-Institutional Portion. For details on the ASBA and UPI process, please refer to the details given in the Bid Cum Application Form and abridged prospectus and also please refer to the section "Offer Procedure" on page 501 of the RHP. The process is also available on the websites of Association of Investment Bankers of India ("AIBI") and Stock Exchanges and in the General Information Document. The Bid Cum Application Form and the Abridged Prospectus can be downloaded from the websites of the Stock Exchanges and can be obtained from the list of banks that is displayed on the website of SEBI at www.sebi.gov.in/sebiweb/other/OtherAction.do?doRecognisedFpi=yes&intmid=43, respectively as updated from time to time. For the list of UPI apps and banks live on IPO, please refer to the link: www.sebi.gov in: UPT Bidders Bidding using the UPT Mechanism may apply through the SCSBs and mobile applications whose names appear on the website of SEBI, as updated from time to time. Axis Bank Limited and ICICI Bank Limited and IC November 1, 2018 as amended. For Offer related queries, please contact the Book Running Lead Managers on their respective email IDs as mentioned below. For UPI related queries, investors can contact NPCI at the toil free number: 18001201740 and mail id: ipo upi@npci.org.in:

In case of any revision to the Price Band, the Bid/Offer Period will be extended by at least three additional Working Days after such revision of the Price Band, subject to the Bid/Offer Period not exceeding a total of 10 Working Days. In cases of force majeure, banking strike or similar circumstances, our Company in consultation with the BRLMs may, for reasons to be recorded in writing, extend the Bid/Offer Period for a minimum of three Working Days, subject to the Bid/Offer Period not exceeding 10 Working Days. Any revision in the Price Band and the revised Bid/Offer Period, if applicable, will be widely disseminated by notification to the Stock Exchanges by issuing a press relea and also by indicating the charge on the websites of the BRUMs, and at the terminals of the Syndicate Member and by intimation to Self-Certified Syndicate Banks ("SCSBs"). other Designated Intermediaries and the Sponsor Bank(s), as applicable.

This Offer is being made in terms of Rule 19(2)(b) of the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Rules, 1957, as amended ("SCRR") read with Regulation 31 of the SEBI ICDR Regulations. The Offer is being made in accordance with Regulation 6(2) of the SEBI ICDR Regulations and through the Book Building Process wherein not less than 75% of the Net Offer shall be available for allocation on a proportionate basis to Qualified Institutional Buyers ("QIBs", and such portion, the "QIB Portion"). Our Company may in consultation with the Book Running Lead Managers, allocate up to 60% of the QIB Portion to Anchor Investors on a discretionary basis in accordance with the SEBI ICDR Regulations ("Anchor Investor Portion"), out of which at least one-third shall be available for allocation to domestic Mutual Funds only, subject to valid Bids being received from the domestic Mutual Funds at or above the Anchor Investor Allocation Price. In the event of under-subscription, or non-allocation in the Anchor Investor Portion, the balance Equity Shares shall be added to the QIB Portion (other than the Anchor Investor Portion) (the "Net QIB Portion"). Further, 5% of the Net QIB Portion shall be available for allocation on a proportionate basis to Mutual Funds only, and the remainder of the Net QIB Portion shall be available for allocation on a proportionate basis to all QIB Bidders other than Anchor Investors, including Mutual Funds, subject to valid Bids being received at or above the Offer Price. Further, up to [•] Equity Shares aggregating to ₹ 100 million will be available for allocation to Eligible Employees, subject to valid Bids being received at or above the Offer Price. Further, not more than 15% of the Net Offer shall be available for allocation to Non-Institutional Bidders such that; (a) one-third of the portion available to Non-Institutional Bidders, shall be reserved for applicants with application size of more than ₹ 0.20 million and up to ₹ 1 million and (b) two-thirds of the portion available to Non-Institutional Bidders, shall be reserved for applicants with an application size of more than ₹1 million, provided that the unsubscribed portion in either of the categories specified in (a) or (b) above, may be allocated to Bidders in the other sub-category of Non-Institutional Bidders, subject to valid Bids being received at or above the Offer Price and not more than 10% of the Net Offer shall be available for allocation to Retail Individual Bidders ("RIBs") in accordance with SEBI ICDR Regulations, subject to valid Bids being received at or above the Offer Price. Further, Equity Shares will be allocated on a proportionate basis to Eligible Employees applying under the Employee Reservation Portion, subject to valid Bids received from them at or above the Offer Price. All Bidders, other than Anchor Investors, are required to mandatonly utilise the Application Supported by Blocked Amount ("ASBA") process by providing details of their respective bank account (including UPI ID (defined hereinafter) in case of UPI Bidders), pursuant to which their corresponding Bid Amounts will be blocked by the SCSBs or the Sponsor Bank(s) as applicable, to participate in the Offer. Anchor Investors are not permitted to participate in the Anchor Investor Portion through the ASBA process. For details, see "Offer Procedure" on page 501 of the RHP.

Bidders/ Applicants should ensure that DP ID, PAN, Client ID and UPI ID (for UPI Bidders bidding through the UPI mechanism) are correctly filled in the Bid cum Application Form. The DP ID, PAN and Client ID provided in the Bid cum Application Form should match with the DP ID, PAN, Client ID available in the Depository database, otherwise, the Bid cum Application Form is liable to be rejected. Bidders/ Applicants should ensure that the beneficiary account provided in the Bid cum Application Form is active. Bidders/Applicants should note that on the basis of the PAN, DP ID, Client ID and UPI ID (for UPI Bidders bidding through the UPI mechanism) as provided in the Bid cum Application Form, the Bidder/Applicant may be deemed to have authorised the Depositories to provide to the Registrar to the Offer, any requested Demographic Details of the Bidder/Applicant as available on the records of the depositories. These Demographic Details may be used, among other things, for giving Allotment Advice or unblocking of ASBA Account or for other correspondence(s) related to the Offer Bidders/Applicants are advised to update any changes to their Demographic Details as available in the records of the Depository Participant to ensure accuracy of records. Any

delay resulting from failure to update the Demographic Details would be at the Bidders'/Applicants' sole risk. Investors must ensure that their PAN is linked with Aadhaar and are in compliance with the notification issued by Central Board of Direct Taxes notification dated February 13, 2020 and read with CBDT circular no. 7 of 2022 and press releases dated June 25, 2021, September 17, 2021 and March 28, 2023 and any subsequent press releases in this regard.

CONTENTS OF THE MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION OF THE COMPANY AS REGARDS ITS OBJECTS: For information on the main objects of the Company, please see the section "History and Certain Corporate Matters" on page 282 of the RHP. The Memorandum of Association of the Company is a material document for inspection in relation to the Offer. For further details, please see the section titled "Material Contracts and Documents for Inspection" on page 548 of the RHP. LIABILITY OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COMPANY: Limited by shares.

AMOUNT OF SHARE CAPITAL OF THE COMPANY AND CAPITAL STRUCTURE: As on the date of the RHP, the authorised share capital of the Company is ₹350,000,000 divided into 350,000,000 Equity Shares of face value of ₹ 1 each. The issued, subscribed and paid-up share capital of the Company is ₹ 174,661,760 divided into 174,661,760 Equity Shares of face value of ₹ 1 each. For details, please see the section titled "Capital Structure" beginning on page 118 of the RHP.

NAMES OF SIGNATORIES TO THE MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION OF THE COMPANY AND THE NUMBER OF EQUITY SHARES SUBSCRIBED BY THEM: The initial signatories to the Memorandum of Association are T. N. Krishan Reddy and P. Chenga Reddy who subscribed to one equity share each bearing face value of ₹100. For details of the existing share capital and capital structure of our Company, please see the section entitled "Capital Structure" beginning on page 118 of the RHP. LISTING: The Equity Shares offered though the Red Herring Prospectus, are proposed to be listed on the Stock Exchanges. Our Company has received 'in-principle'

approvals from BSE and NSE for the listing of the Equity Shares pursuant to their letters, each dated October 30, 2023. For the purposes of the Offer, National Stock Exchange of India Limited is the Designated Stock Exchange. A signed copy of the Red Herring Prospectus and the Prospectus shall be filed with the RoC in accordance with Section 26(4) and 32 of the Companies Act, 2013. For details of the material contracts and documents available for inspection from the date of the Red Herring Prospectus up to the Bid/Offer Closing Date, see "Material Contracts and Material Documents for Inspection" on page 548 of the RHP DISCLAIMER CLAUSE OF THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE BOARD OF INDIA: SEBI only gives its observations on the offer documents and this does not constitute

approval of either the Offer or the specified securities or the offer document. The investors are advised to refer to page 479 of the RHP for the full text of the disclaimer clause of SEBI. DISCLAIMER CLAUSE OF NSE (DESIGNATED STOCK EXCHANGE): It is to be distinctly understood that the permission given by NSE should not in any way be deemed or construed that the Offer Document has been cleared or approved by NSE nor does it certify the correctness or completeness of any of the contents of the Offer Document.

The investors are advised to refer to page 481 of the RHP for the full text of the disclaimer clause of NSE. DISCLAIMER CLAUSE OF BSE: It is to be distinctly understood that the permission given by BSE should not in any way be deemed or construed that the RHP has been cleared or approved by BSE nor does it certify the correctness or completeness of any of the contents of the RHP. The investors are advised to refer to page 480 of the RHP for the full text of the disclaimer clause of BSE.

GENERAL RISKS: Investments in equity and equity related securities involve a degree of risk and investors should not invest any funds in the Offer unless they can afford to take the risk of losing their investment. Bidders are advised to read the risk factors carefully before taking an investment decision in the Offer. For taking an investment decision, investors must rely on their own examination of our Company and the Offer, including the risks involved. The Equity Shares in the Offer have not been recommended or approved by the SEBI, nor does SEBI guarantee the accuracy or adequacy of the contents of the Red Herring Prospectus. Specific attention of the investors is invited to "Risk Factors" on page 29 of the RHP

JM FINANCIAL

JM Financial Limited 7th Floor, Cnergy Appasaheb Marathe Marg Prabhadevi, Mumbai - 400 025 Maharashtra, India

Telephone number: +91 22 6630 3030

E-mail: park.ipo@jmfl.com Website: www.jmfl.com

Investor grievance e-mail: grievance.ibd@jmfl.com Contact person: Prachee Dhuri SEBI registration number: INM000010361

BOOK RUNNING LEAD MANAGERS AXISCAPITAL

Axis Capital Limited 1st Floor, C-2, Axis House Wadia International Centre Pandurang Budhkar Marg, Worli Mumbai - 400 025; Maharashtra, India Telephone number: +91 22 4325 2183 E-mail: parkhotels.ipo@axiscap.in

Website: www.axiscapital.co.in Investor grievance e-mail: complaints@axiscap.in Contact person: Akash Aggarwal / Sagar Jatakiya SEBI registration number: INM000012029

ICICI Securities

ICICI Securities Limited ICICI Venture House, Appasaheb Marathe Marg Prabhadevi, Mumbai 400 025, Maharashtra, India Telephone number: +91 22 6807 7100 E-mail: parkhotelsipo@icicisecurities.com Website: www.icicisecurities.com

Investor grievance e-mail: customercare@icicisecurities.com Contact person: Gauray Mittal/ Ashik Joisar SEBI registration number: INM000011179

REGISTRAR TO THE OFFER **LINK** Intime

Link Intime India Private Limited C-101, 1st Floor, 247 Park, Lal Bahadur Shastri Marg, Vikhroli (West), Mumbai - 400 083, Maharashtra , India Telephone number: +91 810 811 4949

E-mail: parkhotels ipo@linkintime.co.in Website: www.linkintime.co.in Investor grievance e-mail: parkhotels.ipo@linkintme.co.in Contact person: Shanti Gopalkrishnan SEBI registration number: INR000004058

COMPANY SECRETARY AND COMPLIANCE OFFICER

Shalini Keshan 17, Park Street, Kolkata - 700 016 West Bengal, India Telephone number: +91 33 2249 9000 Email: investorrelations@asphi in

Investors can contact the Company Secretary and Compliance Officer, the BRLMs or the Registrar to the Offer in case of any pre-Offer or post-Offer related problems such as non-receipt of letters of Allotment, non-credit of Allotted Equity Shares in the respective beneficiary account, non-receipt of refund orders or non-receipt of funds by electronic mode, etc.

Availability of the RHP: Investors are advised to refer to the RHP and the "Risk Factors" beginning on page 29 of the RHP. Limited, Inventure Growth & Securities Ltd., Manwell Shares & Finance, Motifal Oswal Financial Services Limited, Normal Bang Securities Pvt Limited, Inventure Growth & Securities Ltd., Manwell Shares & Finance, Motifal Oswal Financial Services Limited, Inventure Growth & Securities Ltd., Manwell Shares & Finance, Motifal Oswal Financial Services Limited, Inventure Growth & Securities Ltd., Manwell Shares & Financial Services Limited, Inventure Growth & Securities Ltd., Manwell Shares & Financial Services Limited, Inventure Growth & Securities Ltd., Manwell Shares & Financial Services Limited, Inventure Growth & Securities Ltd., Manwell Shares & Financial Services Limited, Inventure Growth & Securities Ltd., Manwell Shares & Financial Services Limited, Inventure Growth & Securities Ltd., Manwell Shares & Financial Services Limited, Inventure Growth & Securities Ltd., Manwell Shares & Financial Services Limited, Inventure Growth & Securities Ltd., Manwell Shares & Financial Services Limited, Inventure Growth & Securities Ltd., Manwell Shares & Financial Services Limited, Inventure Growth & Securities Ltd., Manwell Shares & Financial Services Limited, Inventure Growth & Securities Ltd., Manwell Shares & Financial Services Ltd., Manwel shall be available on website of SEBI at www.sebi.gov.in and is available on the websites of the BRLMs, i.e. JM Financial Limited at www.jmfl.com, Axis Capital Limited at www.axiscapital.co.in, ICICI Securities Limited at www.icicisecurities.com, respectively and on the websites of BSE and NSE at www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com. respectively and the website of the Company at www.theparkhotels.com.

Availability of the Abridged Prospectus: A copy of the abridged prospectus is available on the website of the Company, the BRLMs and the Registrar to the offer at www. theparkhotels.com, www.jmfl.com, www.axiscapital.co.in, www.icicisecurities.com and www.linkintime.co.in, respectively. Availability of Bid-cum-Application Forms: Bid-cum-Application Forms can be obtained from the Registered Office of the Company, APEEJAY SURRENDRA PARK

HOTELS LIMITED, Telephone number: +91 33 2249 9000; JM Financial Limited, Telephone number: +91 22 6630 3030, Axis Capital Limited, Telephone number: +91 22 4325 2183, ICICI Securities Limited, Telephone number: +91 22 6807 7100 and at the select locations of the Sub-syndicate Members (as given below), SCSBs, Registered Brokers, RTAs and CDPs participating in the Offer, ASBA Forms will also be available on the websites of BSE and NSE and the Designated Branches of SCSBs, the list of which is available at websites of the Stock Exchanges and SEBI.

Sub-syndicate members: Almondz Global Securities Limited, Anand Rathi Share & Stock Brokers Limited, Anand Share Consultancy, ANS Pvt Limited, Ashwani Dandia & Co., Asit C Mehta Investment Intermediates Limited, Axis Securities Limited, Bajaj Financial Securities Ltd., Centrum Broking Ltd., Centrum Wealth Management Ltd. Choice Equity Broking Private Limited, DB(International) Stock Brokers Ltd., Eureka Stock & Share Broking Services Ltd., G Raj & Co. (Consultants) Limited, Globe Capital Markets Ltd., HDFC Securities Ltd., ICICI Securities Limited, IDBI Capital Markets and Securities Ltd., IIFL Securities Ltd., Jhaveri Securities, JM Financial Services Limited, Jobanputra Fiscal Services Pvt. Ltd., Kalpataru Multiplier Limited, Keynote Capitals Limited, KJMC Capital Market Services Limited, Kotak Securities Limited, LKP Securities

Investment Limited (Formerly known as Edelweiss Broking Limited), Patel Wealth Advisors PVI Limited, Prabhudas Litadhar PVI Ltd., Pravin Ratifal Share & Stock Brokers Limited, Religare Broking Ltd., RR Equity Brokers Pvt Limited, SBICAP Securities Ltd., Sharekhan Ltd., SMC Global Securities Limited, Systematix Shares and Stocks (India) Limited, Tanna Financial Services, Trade Bulls Securities (P) Ltd., Way2wealth brokers Pvt. Ltd. and YES Securities Ltd.

Syndicate member: JM Financial Services Limited Escrow Collection Bank, Refund Bank and Sponsor Bank; Axis Bank Limited.

Public Offer Account Bank and Sponsor Bank: ICICI Bank Limited

UPI: UPI Bidders can also bid through UPI Mechanism.

All capitalized terms used herein and not specifically defined shall have the same meaning as ascribed to them in the RHP

For APEEJAY SURRENDRA PARK HOTELS LIMITED On behalf of the Board of Directors

> Shalini Keshan Company Secretary and Compliance Officer

Place: Kolkata Date: February 02, 2024

APEEJAY SURRENDRA PARK HOTELS LIMITED is proposing, subject to, receipt of requisite approvals, market conditions and other considerations, to undertake an initial public offer of its Equity Shares and has filed the RHP dated January 29, 2024 with the RoC. The RHP is available on the website of the Company at www.theparkhotels.com, SEBI at www.sebi.gov.in, websites of the Stock Exchanges i.e. BSE Limited and National Stock Exchange of India Limited, at www.bseindia.com, respectively, and the BRLMs, i.e. JM Financial Limited, at www.axiscapital.co.in and ICICI Securities Limited, at www.icicisecurities.com respectively. Any potential investor should not eithat investment in equity shares involves a high degree of risk and for details relating to such risk, please see the section entitled "Risk Factors" beginning on page 29 of the RHP. Potential investors should not rely on the Draft Red Herring Prospectus filed with SEBI for making anyinvestment decision and instead should place reliance on the RHP.

The Equity Shares offered in the Offer have not been and will not be registered under the U.S. Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "U.S. Securities Act of 1933, as amended the u.S. Securities Act of 1933, as amended the "U.S. Securities Act o subject to, the registration requirements of the U.S. Securities Act and applicable state securities Act and the applicable laws of the jurisdiction where those offers and sales are made

RBI likely to continue status quo on short term lending

PTI MUMBAI

oming close on the heels of the interim which maintained the status quo on policy front, the Reserve Bank is likely to continue with the pause on the shortterm lending rate in its bi-monthly upcoming monetary policy this week as retail inflation is still near the higher end of its comfort

zone, say experts. "It is almost a year since the Reserve Bank has kept the short-term lending rate or repo rate stable at 6.5 per cent. The benchmark interest rate was last raised in February 2023 to 6.5 per cent from 6.25 per cent to contain inflation driven mainly by global developments.

The retail inflation in the current financial year has declined after touching a peak

of 7.44 per cent in July, 2023, it is still high and was 5.69 per cent in December 2023, though within the Reserve Bank's comfort zone of 4-6 per cent. Governor-headed

Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) will start its three-day deliberations on February 6. Governor Shaktikanta Das will announce the decision of the six-member panel on February 8.

"Madan Sabnavis, Chief Economist, Bank of Baroda, said the MPC is likely to maintain an unchanged approach in terms of both rate and stance.

"This is so as inflation, as per the December data, is still high and there are pressures on the food side. This is notwithstanding the fact that core inflation has come down," he said.

"Going by RBI's forecasts on



inflation it would remain above 5 per cent till June end and come down subsequently.

time. In fact, the RBI has the indicated that transmission of the 250 bps 'Also with growth being cut in rates is still not robust, there is less pressure complete and hence there is to think of a rate cut at this reason for a pause," Sabnavis

"It would be interesting to see if there are any revisions in the forecasts of GDP and

inflation for FY24.

GDP growth would turn out in FY25 will be useful given that the budget has outlined the contours," said the chief economist with the public sector bank

"The government has mandated the central bank to ensure the retail inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side. "On expectations from the

RBI on monetary policy, Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, Head Research and Outreach, ICRA, said the CPI-based inflation is expected to moderate in FY'25, although a well-distributed monsoon will be critical.

"We don't expect any change in rates or stance in the upcoming review. Our baseline expectation is that the earliest rate cut could be seen in August 2024 with a

preceding review," she said. Goldman Sachs report expects the RBI to keep the policy repo rate unchanged until the third quarter of calendar 2024 (Q3 CY24).

"With Q1 CY24 headline

inflation still above the RBI's target, we maintain our view that the RBI will keep the policy repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent at the February 8 policy meeting, continue with hawkish guidance, and reiterate the 4 per cent inflation target. We further expect the RBI to retain its tight liquidity stance," it said. Finance 'Meanwhile, Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is scheduled to address the central board of Reserve Bank of India on February 12 and highlight key points of the

interim Union Budget presented by her in Parliament on February 1.

"Sony Group Corporation (SGC) had said ZEEL did not

satisfy the merger conditions

and initiated arbitration

finance minister to address the Reserve Bank of India board after the Budget.

"Dhruv Agarwala, Group CEO, Housing.Com, too expects the central bank to maintain the repo rate at its current level in the upcoming monetary policy meeting.

"This decision reflects the central bank's cautious approach as it navigates the delicate balance between promoting economic growth and keeping inflation in check. With the persistent risk of inflation exceeding the upper limit of 6 per cent, the possibility of a rate cut may only materialize in the latter half of this fiscal year, once inflation shows signs of further moderation. Maintaining the status quo on the policy rate signifies a

commitment to stability in interest rates," he opined

Existing taxation structure for corporate very reasonable: **Revenue Secretary**

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The existing taxation structure for corporates with a 22 per cent tax is "very reasonable" when compared to an economy of the size of India and hence the concessional tax regime which was in force for four for new manufacturing units was not extended beyond March 2024, Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra

"In an interview with PTI, Malhotra said the Interim Budget 2024-25 provides for continuity in taxation regime and the benefits given to taxpayers in the last years are showing results in the form of huge buoyancy in personal

income tax. "Taxpayer services have been a major focus of the government and this will continue going forward. Taxpayer services includes rationalisation, simplification and trustbased taxation with less and scrutiny more pinpointed assessments and use of technology. We are hopeful taxpayer services will continue to improve collection efficiency,' Malhotra said.

"To a question on why the concessional tax regime for corporates was not extended beyond March 31, scheme was introduced in 2019 and companies were given a long time to set up concessional 15 per cent



""A long period of four years was given. This is the time that a large company put on the ground right from conceptualisation, planning, raising of funds, sufficient time was given it was extended by another year till March 31, 2024, because of Covid. These investments have a long gestation period.

The existing taxation of our country now for corporates at 22 per cent, when compared to the economy of our size, is very, very reasonable. In light of all these, it was felt that this was the date that it was to sunset and it should sunset," Malhotra said.

"The government in 2019 helping us in compliance announced that any new incorporated on or after October 1, 2019, making investment fresh manufacturing, will have the option to pay income tax at the rate of 15 per cent 2024, Malhotra said the if they commenced their production on or before arch 31, 2023. The date was extended till March 31, new units to avail of the 2024, in the Budget presented on February 1, 2023.

SIAC denies Sony plea to restrain Zee from approaching NCLT

Zee Entertainment
Enterprises Ltd on Sunday
said the Singapore Arbitration
Centre has denied Sony
Group's plea seeking a restrain against the Indian media company's move to the NCLT for enforcing the merger that was called off by the Japanese company's Indian arm.

"An Emergency Arbitrator of interim relief sought by Culver Max and BEPL (Bangla Entertainment Pvt Ltd) to

observing it lacks jurisdiction to pass such an order, ZEEL stated in a filing to stock exchanges. "We wish to inform that the

Emergency Arbitrator has passed an award dated February 4, 2024 denying the application for emergency interim relief filed by Culver Max and BEPL and has determined Singapore International Emergency Arbitrator has no Arbitration Centre denied the jurisdiction or authority to jurisdiction or authority to injunct the Company from approaching the NCLT to implement the Merger "Sony had last Scheme since these are terminated the



matters which fall within the agreement with ZEEL to statutory system and are for the NCLT to decide," it added. month had last

merge its two Indian entities -Culver Max Entertainment (earlier known as Sony Pictures Network India) and

proceedings before SIAC claiming USD 90 million (around Rs 748.5 cr) as a termination fee. While, ZEEL filed a petition by the NCLT. before the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), seeking a direction to Sony group to implement the

merger scheme. appropriate legal actions to contest the claims of USD 90 terminated

before SIAC. "It asserted that Sony Group firm Culver Max and BEPL (Bangla Entertainment Pvt Ltd), which were to be merged with ZEEL, "are in default of their obligations to give effect to" and implement the scheme of merger that was sanctioned

The company approached the NCLT, Mumbai-bench, inter alia seeking directions to implement the merger scheme," ZEEL had said in a "ZEEL had also initiated regulatory filed on January 24, two days after Sony million filed by Sony Group agreement.

Government, industry discuss ways | Mukesh Ambani No.2 globally for implementation of PLI schemes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Senior government and industry players have discussed ways to enhance collaborations and create a clear action plan successful implementation of PLI schemes, an official

statement said on Sunday. "Around 1,200 delegates beneficiary including companies under the PLI (production linked centive) sectors and officials met on February 3 to discuss and chart out the strategy for effective and seamless implementation of these schemes, the commerce and

industry ministry said. "Officials from ministries and departments, including NITI Aayog, electronics, IT, telecommunications, heavy industries, renewable energy, and pharmaceuticals,



participated discussions.

"The opening session was followed by two interactive sessions covering all the 14 sectors, with the objective of exploring areas collaboration between the government and industry champions and creating a clear action plan for successful implementation of

FMCG firms report single digit growth with better margin in Q3

PLI Schemes.

The opening session was followed by two interactive sessions covering all the 14 sectors, with the objective of exploring areas of collaboration between the government and industry champions and creating a clear action plan for successful implementation of PLI schemes," it said.

"Addressing the meeting, commerce and industry Minister Piyush Goyal encouraged industry's collaborative engagement to procedures and effectiveness of the schemes.

"Goyal has urged the industry champions to intensify their focus on enhancing competitiveness their respective within sectors, fostering a business environment that stimulates innovation, efficiency, and adaptability.

in Brand Guardianship Index "Brand Finance's survey gave

 $B_{\text{has been ranked first}}^{\text{illionaire Mukesh Ambani}}$ among all Indians and second globally in the Brand Guardianship Index 2024 compiled by Brand Finance. 'The chairman and managing

director of Reliance Industries Ltd overtakes the likes of Microsoft's Satya Nadella, and Google's Sundar Pichai to be ranked No.2 globally only Tencent's Huateng Ma. 'According to the publi

Brand Guardianship Index is a global recognition of CEOs, who are building business value in a sustainable manner, by balancing the needs of all stakeholders employees, investors, and the wider society.

"Tata Sons chairman N Chandrasekaran is ranked at No.5, up from No.8 in the 2023 ranking. He is followed by Anish Shah of Mahindra &



Mahindra at No.6 and "In the 2023 ranking as well Ambani was placed at No.2 position globally.

This year he was ranked No.1 in Brand Guardianship Index 2024 among the 'Diversified' conglomerates. "Ambani was ranked ahead of global majors like Satya Microsoft, Nadella Google's Sundar Pichai, Apple's Tim Cook and Tesla's Elon Musk.

"Brand Finance constructs a balanced scorecard of measures designed to identify the factors that best capture the ability of CEOs to act as a steward of their company's brand and steward long term "This year's analysis reveals

Ambani a BGI score of 80.3, just below 81.6 of Huateng

Ma of China-based Tencent.

that ESG has become the single most important driving force in determining CEO

"Being regarded as 'a sustainability champion' accounts for 14 per cent of variation in reputation scores, ahead of factors such as perceived trustworthiness (12.5 per cent), having 'a strong strategy and vision' and global recognition.

"According to Brand Finance, the role of a brand guardian is to build brand and business value.

Switch from Paytm to other payment apps: CAIT to traders

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Traders' body CAIT on Sunday issued a cautionary advisorv to other payment options for business-related transactions following RBI curbs on Paytm wallet and bank operations.
""The Reserve Bank of India

imposed certain restrictions, prompting CAIT to recommend that take proactive measures to protect their and ensure financial uninterrupted transactions. Large number of small traders, vendors, hawkers and women are making payments through Paytm and as such RBI restrictions on Paytm could lead financial disruption to people,' Confederation of All India

Traders (CAIT) stated. "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 Sharma-run entities, according to financial operations.

"The central bank has ordered Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL) to halt most of its business traders to switch from Paytm including taking further deposits, conducting credit transactions and carrying out top-ups on any customer 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 can be

carried.
"CAIT Secretary General
Praveen Khandelwal said that the recent restrictions imposed by RBI on Paytm have raised concerns about the security and continuity financial services provided by the platform.
"He emphasised the urgency

this advisory, traders to act urging and make promptly decisions to informed any potential mitigate adverse effects on their



helped quarter, moderating commodity inflation, though operating environment remained challenging. "Some of the companies also reported a decline in their

topline numbers, as they extended the benefits of softening commodity prices to the consumer by lowering the prices, which had a bearing on their gross sales numbers. 'Companies such as HUL,

ITC, Marico, Dabur, and Godrej Consumer Products said urban markets continued their moderate growth, while consumer demand from rural India remained subdued even as they expect an improvement in coming

Moreover, the late arrival of winter also impacted the pickup of relevant products such as lotions, oils and creams. "Hindustan Unilever (HUL)

reported a muted growth in consolidated net profit at Rs

2,508 crore and its sales were

marginally down to Rs 15,259 "Overall, FMCG demand

trends have largely remained stable and similar to what we saw last quarter. While market volumes grew at high single digits year-on-year, this came on a base period where volumes declined in mid-single digit," said HUL CEO & MD Rohit Jawa in his latest earnings call.

"Like past quarters, modern trade channels are doing well and continue to outpace general trade. Similarly, the volume growth of premium products is significantly ahead of mass products in the market. "Echoing the view, Marico

"General

continued to drag as it grappled with liquidity and

profitability constraints, while

alternate channels grew

healthily.

'Marico's India business posted a volume growth of 2 per cent in the third quarter year on year though its turnover was down 3 per cent to Rs 1,793 crore.

"During the quarter, demand trends were stable with no visible improvement from the preceding quarter. Rural demand remained soft, while urban demand steadied its moderate growth trajectory, said the earnings statement from Marico which owns brands like Saffola, Parachute, and Livon, among others.

"Within the sector, mass home and personal care categories aligned closely with the rural demand trajectory, while packaged foods led the sector owing to higher urban salience and penetration-led growth, it



BoM records highest growth in deposit mobilisation among PSU banks in Q3

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

of Maharashtra $B_{(BoM)}^{\text{ank}} \stackrel{\text{of}}{\text{has}} \stackrel{\text{Maharashtra}}{\text{recorded}} \stackrel{\text{the}}{\text{the}}$ highest growth rate in terms of deposit mobilisation among public sector lenders at a time when most lenders are facing difficulty in achieving double-digit growth.

Out of 12 public sector banks, only BoM and State Bank of India (SBI) could log a double-digit growth in deposits in the third quarter ended December 2023.

"The Pune-based lender BoM reported a 17.89 per cent growth in deposits followed by SBI at 12.84 per cent during the quarter, according to published quarterly numbers of the public sector banks (PSBs).

"However, SBI's total deposits were about 18.5 times higher at Rs 45,67,927 crore, as

compared to Rs 2,45,734 crore of BoM in absolute terms. "Central Bank of India was the third by clocking a 9.53 per cent growth in deposits while Punjab National Bank recorded a 9.10 per cent increase.

"In terms of low-cost CASA

deposits, BoM continued to top the chart with 50.19 per cent followed by Central Bank of India with 48.98 per cent. "Higher level of Current Account and Savings Accounts (CASA) helps banks to keep their cost of funds low "On the asset quality side, BoM and SBI reported the lowest gross Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) with 2.04 per cent and 2.42 per cent respectively as of December 31, 2023. In terms of Net NPAs, BoM and Indian Bank reported the lowest net NPA with 0.22 per cent and 0.53

per cent respectively.

Global summit on woodwork

Bengaluru: The 13th edition of INDIAWOOD will take place from February 22 to 26, offering a comprehensive showcase of woodwork and production furniture technologies at the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre, Bengaluru. Featuring over 950 companies, from more than 50 countries, 75,000+ trade visitors and 75,000 sqms of exhibition area. The event will offer a glimpse into the latest innovations, technology and offer unparalleled networking offer unparalleled networking opportunities. INDIAWOOD 2024 will bring together industry leaders, technology suppliers and buyers from around the world.

₹1020 million investment for lab grown diamonds

New Delhi: Bhavnagar based BSE SME listed company Dev Labtech Ventures Ltd has signed agreement with Government of India in Gujarat Vibrant Summit 2024. It has plans to invest Rs 1020 millions for expansion in manufacturing of ecofriendly lab grown diamonds having wide range of applications in semi-conductors plates, cutting tools blades and lazer machines. This expansion also provides further employment opportunities for more than 500 peoples.

ENGLAND 67-1, CHASE RECORD 399 TARGET

India's questionable batting approach left the door ajar for England's bazballers to go for a record yet achievable 399-run target in the second Test here Sunday, the hosts once again allowing their fearless opponents to come back into the game.

Like the series opener, India had the opportunity to bat the Englishmen out of the game after Shubman Gill's 104 off their balls but inexplicable batting approach in the final session left the door open for the visitors. India ended with 255 all out

in their second innings. On expected lines, England came out attacking through openers Zak Crawley (29 batting off 50) and Ben Duckett (28) before R Ashwin had the left-hander caught in his first over.

England ended at 67 for one



at stumps with Crawley and night watchman Rehan Ahmed (9 batting) in the centre, still needing for 332 runs for a famous victory. Though the odd ball is

keeping low, there doesn't seem to be any demon in the

pitch and England will be backing themselves to gun down the target and take a 2-0 series lead in the series. The West Indies getting to

395 in Bangladesh two years

ago remains the highest chase

India, who were 227 for six at tea and led England by 370 runs, could only manage 28 runs in 14.3 overs with their long tail not wagging again. Rather than going for strokes, the likes of R Ashiwn (29 off 61) and Jasprit Bumrah (0 off 26 balls) were happy to bat time, not helping the team's cause eventually.

In the first innings, barring double centurion Yashasvi Jaiswal no batter crossed 40 and in the second innings, the highest individual score after

Axar Patel.

While James Anderson (2/29) was relentless in his opening spell, the inexperienced spin trio of Shoaib Bashir (1/58), Rehan Ahmed (3/88) and Tom Hartley (4/77) bowled the bulk of the overs in the absence of Joe Root, who did not come out to field in the last two sessions after getting his on

little finger.
India's bizarre tactics came after Gill overcame a lean patch to score his third Test hundred before tea.

India made 97 runs in the afternoon session courtesy an 89-run stand between Gill and Axar.

Gill stole the show with his century but Axar also looked assured batting at number six. Gill, who had completed his half century before lunch continued to attack the

Shami bowl: Harmison cricket you would see in a long long time and in this Test, Anderson and Bumrah loves have been incredible," said watching the likes of Jasprit the tall fast bowler who took Bumrah and Mohammed 226 wickets in 63 Tests and Shami go about their business was part of the iconic Ashes

Love watching Bumrah,

PTI VISAKHAPATNAM

 $F_{\text{Steve}}^{\text{ormer}} \ \substack{\text{England} \\ \text{Harmison}}$

to

unbelievable skills, he feels

India have become a

formidable force in all

In fact, the second Test has been dominated by pacers

with Bumrah recording his

best figures in in Indian

Anderson defying age with

"They both have been

brilliant. It shows their class.

If you got great skill sets, you

will survive, you will ask good questions and that is what

Anderson and Bumrah have

got. They are unbelievable bowlers," Harmison told PTI

Bumrah got Root and Duckett, that was one of most

engrossing hours of test

Hyderabad, where

and

James

and thanks

conditions.

conditions

incisive spells.

on Sunday.

"In

triumph in 2005. Harmison, who played only one Test in India and is here commentary assignment, also is fan of

Shami, who is nursing an ankle injury and is not part of the India-England series yet, is a master of seam bowling Shami and Siraj's work. In his playing days, India did not have a battery of world class pacers like they possess while Bumrah on Saturday showed his wide of variety of now. As part of their tribe, Harmison can only be happy skills by running through the England batting with a sensational display of reverse about the rapid growth of fast bowling in India.

"The skills of Bumrah, Shami and even Siraj, I love watching them bowl. They have a great bowling attack, fantastic spin attack and seam bowlers who can be effective anywhere in the world. That is why there are one of the best team in the world," he reckoned.

Talking about the ongoing five-match series, Harmison feels the Ben Stokes-led side have a very good chance of succeeding.
"The 2005 Ashes was different

as it was in England where you have smaller totals and closer games. Here if a team bats first and gets a big score in the first innings it gets difficult (to comeback).

Williamson, **Ravindra tons lift New Zealand**

PTI ■ MOUNT MAUNGANUI (NEW ZEALAND)

Kane Williamson scored his 30th Test century and Rachin Ravindra his first as New Zealand reached 258-2 by stumps on the first day of the first Test against South Africa on Sunday when runs at times flowed like treacle.

Williamson was 112 not out at stumps and Ravindra 118 in an unbroken partnership

For much of the day, scoring had been difficult. New Zealand scored 65 runs from 25 overs in the first session and 60 runs from 27 overs in the second as a novice South Africa attack spirited performance and tied down

The payoff for that hard graft came in the extended last session when New Zealand scored 133 from 34 overs, bumping up their run rate for the day to three runs

Both players at times were Rayindra came to the crease frustrated by the slow pace of scoring. Williamson 2 in the 17th over, with the adapted and persevered home through an innings which had lasted almost 6-1/2 hours by stumps. Ravindra had a knack of picking out fielders when he played forcefully but he showed maturity to concentrate and carry on.

Both players gave catching chances: Williamson at 47 when he was dropped by Edward Moore from the when he was 80. Otherwise occasion.

they negotiated the day with patience and gradually put New Zealand in command.

Williamson played characteristic inni innings, showing again why he is the top-ranked batter in Test cricket. He was balanced, composed and patient, prepared to endure in the morning, then through the afternoon when runs were

scarce. He was more forceful in the final session, reaching his century with his 13th boundary from 241 balls. It was his fourth century against South Africa and his 17th in New Zealand.

Kiwi fans have waited a long time to see Ravindra realize his massive potential and produce such and innings in Tests. He made his debut previous highest score in three test matches was 18. It was serendiptitous that he

batted on Saturday with Williamson, who was such a calming influence and source of sound advice.

side considerable pressure. He dug in and had batted more than five hours by stumps in an innings which contained 13 fours and a six.

lineup South Africa's contained six new caps, including captain Neil Brand who won the toss on debut and chose to bat. Its novice attack, stripped of almost all of its big names bowling of Ruan de Swardt who remained at home two and Ravindra by Duanne play in a Twenty20 Olivier off the same bowler competition, rose to the

Jaiswal adaptability makes him different: Coach

recorded in Asia

Young opener Yashasvi Jaiswal's adaptability formats hetween and temperament make him stand out among his peers at the highest level, believes his childhood coach Jwala Singh.
At 22 years and 36 days,
Jaiswal on Saturday became
the third youngest from the
country after Vinod Kambli and Sunil Gavaskar to score a Test double ton. He smashed 19 fours and seven sixes to make 209 from 290 balls against England in the second Test at Visakhapatnam. "If you see his junior cricket,

Left-arm spinici Laborated a

seven wickets and fashioned a

48-run victory for Saurashtra

over Maharashtra in their

Elite Ranji Trophy Group A

The 26-year-old Bhut returned excellent figures of

7/44, as Saurasthra bowled

out Maharashtra for 164 in their second innings after being set a target of 208 on

the third and penultimate

Dodiya supported Bhut well

Dharmendrasinh Jadeja, who

also bowls left-arm spin, picked up one to cap off a fine

Jadeja's first-innings knock of

72, at a time when his team

was desperately looking for

someone to bail them out of a

precarious situation, and his 118-run partnership for the

afternoon of the match.

all-round performance.

Off-spinner

Bhut

Yuvrajsinh

kete while

match here on Sunday.

like when he was playing for Mumbai under-16s, he scored a double hundred, (also for) Mumbai under-19s, (in the) Mumbai under-19s, (in the) Irani Cup, Duleep Trophy and Vijay Hazare (Trophy). He has the knack of playing long innings with his aggressive nature," Jwala told PTI.
"He always puts pressure on the bowler because he keeps

the bowler because he keeps hitting the boundaries. This is how he has grown his cricket, his stroke-playing, his mindset. That is called

adaptability.
"In T20 cricket, he plays (with) a different attitude. In Test cricket, he plays with a different approach. His



temperament different from the others and that makes him different from the other players.'

Jwala said having long batting sessions during the pandemiccoronavirus induced break turned things around for Jaiswal.

When he came from the IPL (2021) in Dubai, he was very nervous and he cried over phone saying, 'Sir, my cricket is over. I don't think I will play (any) higher'. At that time, he was not a very aggressive player. He used to just play some good shots," Jwala

Bhut seals Saurashatra win I eft-arm spinner Parth Lions, bag series 2-0

PTI AHMEDABAD

India A spinners turned the knife into England Lions' batting line-up to give their side a commanding 134-run victory on the fourth day of the third and final unofficial 'Test' here on Sunday.

Chasing an improbable 403, the Lions were bundled out for 268 in their second innings as India A bagged the three-match series 2-0. Mumbai left-arm s

Shams Mulani (5/60) and Madhya Pradesh off-spinner Saransh Jain (3/50) grabbed eight wickets among them as England crumbled after resuming from overnight 83 for two.

England Lions opener Alex Lees, who started the day from 41, completed his fifty



But his stay was cut short snapping the partnership, when Mulani trapped him in England were 120 for 4 then and they lost another three wickets while adding 20 more runs to slip to 140 for seven. Mulani added the scalps of Lions' skipper Josh Bohannon (18) and Dan Mousley (5) to his kitty in this period. However, the Lions were not

ready to fade away without

Wicketkeeper-batter Ollie Robinson (80, 105 balls, 7x4, 2x6) and James Coles (31, 58 balls, 3x4) added 104 runs for an entertaining eighth-wicket stand from a little over 23 overs. The Lions moved past the 200-run mark with ease, but it always was the case of getting that one wicket. Mulani did the job of winning a leg-before appeal

Once Jain castled Robinson, the Lions' innings and the match came to a quick close. Brief scores: India A: 192 & 409 beat England Lions: 199 & 268 all out in 72.4 overs (Ollie Robinson 81, Alex Lees 55, James Coles 31; Shams Mulani 5/60, Saransh Jain 3/50) by 134 runs.

Zadran picks four as Afghanistan ends Sri Lanka 1st innings for 439

PTI ■ COLOMBO (SRI LANKA)

Fast bowler running pickets to picked up four wickets to help Afghanistan dismiss Sri Lanka for 439 runs in its first innings on the third day of the only cricket test against Sri Afghanistan was 35 without

ast bowler Naveed Zadran

loss at lunch on Sunday,

trailing the hosts by 206 runs. They were bowled out for 198 in the first innings.

Mankad (52), went a long way

in Saurasthra sealing the

wickets in Maharashtra's first

innings, and combined with Bhut and Dodiya, to bowl

their opponents out for 159

and ensure a handy first-

innings lead of 43 runs for

Bhut, who was out for a

golden duck and was one of

three Saurashtra batters to

match in their favour.

their team.

Ibrahim Zadran was batting on 21 with Noor Ali Zadran

Sri Lanka resumed the day on 410-6 with Sadeera Samarawickrama batting on 410-621. Chamika Gunasekara who is playing his first test joined

him at the crease as Sri tailender Prabath Jayasuriya Lanka's top scorer Angelo Mathews (141) was out hit wicket on the last delivery of the second day.

account in the second innings

Harvik Desai being the other

with the bat with a brilliant

show with the ball.Bhut, who

had grabbed two wickets to

leave Maharashtra struggling

at 104/5 at stumps on the third evening and still 104

runs adrift of the target,

picked up all the five wickets

to fall in the final morning to

secure full points for his team.

Cheteshwar Pujara and

Samarawickrama (27) was added Sunday when he caught by Rahmat Shah off Naveed Zadran.

Naveed Zadran bowled to bat.

(2) with an inswinger and seamer Nijat Masood ended the innings bowling out Asitha Fernando (0). Gunasekara (16) who was

dismissed with just 17 runs struck on the helmet by a Zadran bouncer had retired hurt after facing a few further deliveries and did not return

Kasun Rajith was used as the third seamer, a concussion substitute for Gunasekara, when Sri Lanka came out to bowl. Naveed Zadran retuned 4-83 on his test debut.

Mathews and Dinesh Chandimal formed the backbone of Sri Lanka's first innings having shared 232 runs for the fourth wicket on

Chandimal made 107, his 15th test century and Mathews recorded his 16th.

Dimuth Karunaratne made

77 runs.

This is the first test match between the two countries since Afghanistan was admitted as a test playing

Abbott leads Australia to series win against West Indies

sixth wicket with Prerak have failed to open their

AP SYDNEY

Sean Abbott exhibited his allrounder skills and powered Australia to a series deciding 83-run win over the West Indies in the second oneday international on Sunday. Abbott made a better than a

run-a-ball 69 and lifted Australia to a competitive 258-9 at his home ground after West Indies won the toss and opted to field.

The tall fast bowler then struck inside the batting powerplay before he picked up key wicket of Keacy Carty, who topscored with 40, in his return spell to finish with 3-40 as West Indies was held to 175 all out in 43.3 overs.

'We thought 220 would be competitive but were very competitive with partnerships, taking it over 250, Abbott said. "It's a really good (Australian) attack. It's such a good environment. I've been enjoying it. Love getting out Josh Hazlewood's (3-43) and there and playing in front of a home crowd. Just like at the MCG two days ago where Australia romped to

order stuttered against pace in their run-chase Abbott grabbed a superb catch at mid-off when Alick Athanaze tried to go hard at

Aaron Hardie and Jason

an eight-wicket win in the first

game, the West Indies top

Greaves was well caught by debutante Will Sutherland over his head before Abbott had the West Indies reeling at 34-3 inside the first 10 overs. Carty and captain Shai Hope (29) rebuilt the chase with a 53-run stand before both fell in

Abbott's return spells with the West Indies skipper losing his off stump to a brilliant Hazlewood ball that nipped back at the right-hander. Sutherland picked up 2-28 and Adam Zampa finished off the West Indies timid batting when he had No. 10 Gudakesh

Motie trapped leg before

Earlier, Australian top-order

wicket in his final over.



batters couldn't covert good starts before the home side was rescued by Abbott's career-best

ODI knock. Spinners Moti (3-28) and

Roston Chase (0-40) conceded

iust two boundaries in 20 overs between them before Abbott's countercharge against the fast bowlers.

Iake Fraser-McGurk had an eventful five deliveries on his ODI debut as he smacked a four and a six before edging Alzarri Joseph (2-74) in the first over and Josh Inglis (nine) was smartly caught by Roston Chase at point.

Fraser-McGurk made his debut in place of Travis Head, who has been released from the squad for the remaining limited-overs games to rest ahead of the test series in New Zealand starting in late February.

Sutherland made his debut and

replaced fast bowler Xavier Bartlett, while Hazlewood returned in place of Lance Morris.

Cameron Green (33) didn't

hold back and smashed Joseph consecutive three boundaries down the ground before captain Steven Smith dragged Matthew Forde back onto his stumps as the West Indies pacers kept striking at regular intervals inside the powerplay.

and Marnus Green Labuschagne (26) left Australia in a spot of bother at 91-5 but Australia's inexperienced middle-order showed plenty of batting

muscle. Hardie (26) and

for a half-century stand before Sutherland added further 57 runs with Abbott to give Australia a challenging total on a tricky wicket.

Matthew Short (41) combined

smashed Abbott successive sixes to Romario Shepherd (2-50) before he got deceived by the fast bowler's slower delivery and played on to his stumps, but his halfcentury proved enough to give Australia a 2-0 lead in the

series. The last match of the series will be played at Canberra on Tuesday before both teams compete in a three-match T20 series, starting at Hobart on

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