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Ayodhya opens its arms to tradition and modernity

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

The upcoming consecration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, where Ram Lalla will be enshrined on January 22, unveils a unique architectural marvel that sets it apart from conventional structures.

“Crafted without the use of iron, steel, or cement, this temple showcases a blend of traditional Nagara style with cutting-edge construction technology,” Anil Mishra, a trust member of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust said.

One of the distinguishing features of the Ayodhya Ram Temple is its exclusive use of stone, a decision rooted in making the structure earthquake-resistant. Mishra explained, “We have chosen stone for its durability, surpassing that of other construction materials. The temple was constructed using remarkably malleable stone, deliberately avoiding iron due to rust concerns and ensuring earthquake resistance.”

The stones utilised in the temple’s construction are distinctive, each bearing a groove cut into it, eliminating the need for cement joints between them. These stones hail from Bansi Paharpur in Rajasthan’s Bharatpur, enhancing the temple’s unique character.

During the initial foundation testing, the construction team encountered an unexpected challenge — the absence of soil, replaced by sand at the site. To overcome this, specialists cleared out the sand and applied 56 layers of a concrete mix known as Rolled Compact Concrete to prepare the rocks for the foundation. This



specialised mix, which eventually adheres to the rocks, served as the base for the temple.

The construction process, steered by the Nagara style, notably seen in structures like the Khajuraho Temple, Somnath Temple, and the Sun Temple of Konark, eschews the use of iron and steel. Collaborating with some of the country’s brightest minds from IIT-Chennai and the Central Building Research Institute (CBRI), the temple aims to stand the test of time.

A spokesperson from the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust emphasised, “Using only stones, the temple is designed to withstand decay from air, sun, and water, ensuring its longevity for at least 1,000 years.”

The integration of ancient architectural styles with modern engineering techniques positions the Ram Temple as a testament to India’s rich heritage and technological prowess.

Ram Nagari to be fortified

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a proactive move to ensure the safety of the sacred city of Ayodhya, widely recognised as Ram Nagari, comprehensive security measures will be enforced from January 20 to 22. As part of this heightened security initiative, the city will transition into a secure zone with sealed borders, imposing restrictions on the entry of vehicles originating from outside Ayodhya Dham.

“No outsider will be allowed to enter the city from midnight on January 20,” Special Director General (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar said. He shared insights into the security arrangements, emphasising the transformation of Ayodhya into a high-security zone during this crucial period. “Special arrangements have been put in place to ensure the security of the city during the significant ceremony,” he disclosed during an interview with this correspondent.

The meticulously planned security protocol includes stringent checks at key intersections such as Udaya intersection, Saket petrol pump, Naya Ghat, and other entry points. Exclusive access will be

granted to residents holding valid identification cards, underscoring the necessity for a meticulous screening process to uphold Ayodhya’s security. In a gesture to accommodate Ayodhya residents amid the heightened security measures, individuals living within Ayodhya Dham and the city will be allowed to return to their homes during the specified period. An appeal has been issued by the police administration, urging residents to exercise caution and refrain from unnecessary outings on January 21 and 22. This plea seeks the cooperation of the local populace in adhering to the security guidelines, fostering a collective responsibility for the welfare of the entire community.

Special DG Prashant Kumar underscored the significance of the upcoming event, stating, “The programme in Ayodhya is a very important day for the country and the whole world. Extensive security arrangements are being made for that. Surveillance is also being done through CCTV.”

Seven days rituals begin

BHANU PRATAP SINGH ■ AYODHYA

The Secretary of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Trust, Champat Rai, announced on Monday that the consecration rituals for the idol of Lord Ram, known as Ramalala, in the sanctum sanctorum of the Ram Mandir will commence on January 16 and continue until January 22. He also announced that the statue crafted by Karnataka’s Arun Yogiraj would be placed on the pedestal of the sanctum sanctorum.

Speaking to the media in Ayodhya,

Champat Rai said, “During the consecration ceremony, Prime Minister, Narendra Modi; Chief of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh Mohan Bhagwat; president of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Trust Mahant Nrityagopal Das; and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will be present in the sanctum sanctorum,” Rai said. Additionally, representatives from various traditions and backgrounds, including engineers from L&T and Tata, are expected to participate in this historic event.

Amitabh Bachchan buys land

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a move that aligns with Ayodhya’s burgeoning economic landscape, Bollywood luminary Amitabh Bachchan has reportedly purchased a plot in The Sarayu, a forthcoming seven-star mixed-use enclave slated for a formal launch on January 22. Developed by Mumbai-based The House of Abhinandan Lodha (HoABL), this strategic acquisition by Bachchan underscores the evolving economic dynamics of

Ayodhya. The Sarayu, covering an expansive 51 acre, is strategically positioned to capitalise on the cultural and spiritual significance of Ayodhya, particularly with the imminent inauguration of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Temple. Bachchan’s undisclosed but substantial investment, estimated to be valued at ₹14.5 crore for a 10,000-square-foot plot, reflects not only confidence in the local economic potential but also a keen appreciation for the town’s rich spiritual heritage.

INDIA Bloc fragments further

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/LUCKNOW/KOLKATA

In what could be an advantage for the BJP in the general elections, BSP president Mayawati announced on Monday that her party would contest the upcoming Lok Sabha elections on its own and would consider a post-poll alliance.

The announcement by the BSP, though politically expected, will weaken the prospects of the Opposition alliance INDIA Bloc, comprising the Congress and the Samajwadi Party, which was hoping to rope in the BSP for a mega Congress, SP, and the BSP combine to upset the ruling party’s tally in the State which sends the highest number of Lok Sabha members.

On the other hand, the tussle continues in the larger Opposition Bloc INDIA Bloc, as the West Bengal Congress has now officially communicated that any truck with the TMC would be “suicidal.” The BSP is not part of the Opposition INDIA Bloc. Although there have been reports that some alliance members have tried to persuade Mayawati to join the group, the SP has indicated that it is not keen on this.



Talking to reporters at the State party office in Lucknow on her 68th birthday, Mayawati also categorically denied reports in a section of the media about her retirement from politics and stressed that she will continue to strengthen the party until her last breath. Mayawati also cautioned her party members against her rival in the State, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav, saying he changed colours like a chameleon to mislead them. She said after the Lok Sabha elections, the BSP can join the Government at the Centre on the basis of proper representation to the party. “The party will not contest the elections in alliance with

anyone, but after the polls, unlike the previous times, the party is no longer going to give ‘free support’ from outside,” the BSP chief said. “Regarding the elections, I want to make it clear again that our party will fight the Lok Sabha polls alone on the strength of the poor and marginalised sections, especially Dalits, tribals, Muslims, and people of other religious minority communities. It was on their strength that in 2007, we formed a Government with full majority in Uttar Pradesh by contesting the elections alone. Therefore, keeping in mind the past experience, our party will contest the Lok Sabha elections alone,” she said.

Rejecting reports of her retirement circulating on social media after she recently made her nephew Akash Anand her political successor, Mayawati said they are “fake” and have no basis. “I will continue to strengthen the BSP until my last breath.” Akash Anand was not present at the Press conference. Mayawati clarified that the BSP will keep its distance from all parties having casteist, capitalist, and communal views.

Scindia rebuffs hooligans for unpalatable behaviour

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Monday that unruly passenger behaviour is unacceptable and ‘will be dealt with strongly’ in line with existing legal provisions. Scindia said the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) will issue an SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) to ensure ‘better communication and facilitation of passengers to minimise discomfort in view of flight cancellations and delays due to adverse weather.’

Besides, Delhi airport operator DIAL has been directed to expedite the operationalisation of the CAT III-enabled fourth runway. “It is my earnest request to all travellers to bear with us during this difficult period. All stakeholders are trying their best to minimise passenger inconvenience. Incidents of unruly behaviour amidst this are unacceptable and will be dealt with strongly in line with the existing legal provisions,” Scindia said. Meanwhile, the DGCA on Tuesday asked airlines to publish accurate real-time



information regarding flight delays and appropriately sensitise staff at airports to suitably communicate with passengers amid fog-related disruptions at airports. The DGCA has invoked the Civil Aviation Requirement (CAR) Section-3, Series M Part IV, titled “Facilities to be provided to passengers by airlines due to denied boarding, cancellation of flights and delays in flights.” Against the backdrop of a significant number of flights getting delayed and cancelled and passengers facing tough times, the DGCA has come out with a set of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

PM Modi embraces welfare for all

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday that the country can only develop if various welfare schemes reach everyone. He asserted that it is his guarantee that everyone, even those in the remotest areas, will benefit from these schemes. Releasing the first instalment of ₹540 crore to one lakh tribal beneficiaries of a rural housing scheme under the Pradhan Mantri Janati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN) via video conferencing, he said the 10 years of his Government have been dedicated to the poor.

Invoking Shabari, a tribal woman depicted in the epic Ramayana who served berries to Lord Ram during his stay in forests, the PM said it is natural for him to remember her when he has undertaken a special religious ritual till the consecration ceremony at the Ram temple in Ayodhya on January 22. “The story of Shri Ram is not possible without Mata Shabari,” he said, asserting that she played a significant role in the transformation of ‘prince’ Ram into ‘maryada purushottam’ Ram. “Be it the story of Raja Ram in Treta Yuga or the current situation, welfare is not possible without uplifting the poor, deprived, and the tribals,” he said, noting that over four crore permanent houses were constructed for the poor in the last 10 years. “Modi has reached out to those who were never cared for earlier,” he added.

The budget of many welfare schemes for the Scheduled Tribes has risen by five times, and the scholarship for tribal students has grown by two-and-a-half times in the last 10 years, the PM said, adding that the work is on to construct more than 500 Eklavya model schools for them while only 90 existed earlier. His Government has exerted its full force to



ensure that the extremely backward among the tribal population benefit from every scheme, he said. Modi also credited guidance from President Droupadi Murmu, India’s first tribal woman head of State, for the PM-JANMAN scheme, saying as someone who has come from the same background she often spoke about the issues facing them during her interactions with him. Noting that Diwali is being celebrated in Ayodhya in the run-up to the consecration of Lord Ram’s idol at the temple there, he said the festival is also being celebrated in the homes of these one lakh families who have received the first instalment of the funds to construct their own houses. This is a matter of significant happiness for him, the PM said.

Indian economy welcomes Ayodhya power boost

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

As the consecration of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya on January 22 enters its final stages, and the countdown begins for one of the largest events of the decade, it is likely to generate business worth ₹one lakh crore across India due to the high demand for replicas of the Ram Mandir, printed kurtas, caps, T-shirts featuring the image of the Ram Mandir, flags, hotel bookings, diyas, mithai, etc.

The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) based its estimate on feedback received from trade associations in 30 cities across different States. Initially, trade bodies and shopkeepers expected to generate business worth over ₹50,000 crore. In Delhi alone, traders’ bodies

are expected to do business worth over ₹20,000 crore, as temples, markets, and residents’ welfare associations are ready to decorate the national Capital like Ayodhya. According to Praveen Khandelwal, the national secretary-general of the CAIT, traders had initially estimated a business of ₹50,000 crores. Still, given the tremendous enthusiasm among the people and the feedback received from trade associations in 30 cities across India, they have now revised the figure to ₹1 lakh crore by way of spending on the purchase of goods and availing different services for the events.

The demand for models of the Ram Mandir has also seen a rapid increase, and it is expected that over five crore

models will be sold across the country, with small manufacturing units working day and night in many cities in different States. “Mass-scale devotional musical programmes, hiring a large number of traditional musical instrument players like dhol, tashe, naffri, shehnai, band groups, and craftsmen for the preparation of tableaux for Shobha Yatra, etc., are also going to contribute significantly to the temple economy. Hoardings and other outdoor publicity on a large scale are also on the agenda. Electrifying markets will be another significant step in the celebrations,” Khandelwal said.

Speaking about the revised estimate of one lakh crore, Khandelwal highlighted that the passion and commitment



People are shopping for Ram flags at Sadar Bazar in New Delhi ahead of the upcoming inauguration of the Ram temple in Ayodhya
Ranjani Dilmri / The Pioneer

of businesses and other sections of society towards the Shri Ram Mandir are resulting in the organisation of approximately 30,000 different programmes by trade associations across the country. These events include market processions, Shri Ram Chowki, Shri Ram rallies, Shri Ram Pad Yatra, scooter and car rallies, and Shri Ram assemblies. Sharing details about the upcoming events in Delhi markets, Khandelwal said Delhi will also witness numerous cultural programmes, with folk dancers and singers coming from Vrindavan and Jaipur for performances in many markets.

“Over 200 Shri Ram Dialogue programmes will be organised, along with approximately 1000 Shri

Ram Assemblies, Shri Ram kirtans, recitations of Shri Sundarkand, Shri Hanuman Chalisa, continuous 24-hour chanting of Ramayana, uninterrupted lighting of lamps for 24 hours, and devotional music evenings on a large scale are scheduled by trade associations. Besides, more than 200 major markets in Delhi and a large number of smaller markets will witness Shri Ram flags and decorations, with every market adorned with decorative lights. Over 300 Shri Ram processions and Shri Ram pad yatras are planned in various markets across Delhi, along with the lighting of thousands of clay lamps in all markets and at the homes and shops of traders.

Classifieds

LOST AND FOUND

I, Haneel Sharma s/o Dinesh Chander Sharma H.No. 183/20, Geeta Bhawan Road, Near Ashoka Trader, Gurdaspur declare that I have lost my 10th standard Pass Certificate. Person who return these certificate be awarded.

PUBLIC NOTICE

We Jagtar Singh S/o Manohar Singh and Rupinder Kaur W/o Jagtar Singh R/o Village Chhajjalwadi, Tehsil Baba Bakala Sahib, Distt. Amritsar declare that our son Sarjot Singh and his Jashanbir Kaur are out of our control and living in abroad. We disown them from our movable and immovable property. Anybody dealing with them at their own risk. We and our family have no relation with them.

I, Tasleem Ahmad S/o Mohd. Ibrahim R/o House No. 44, Phase-1, Bapu Dham Colony, Sector 26, Chandigarh declare that my son Mohd. Faraz is out of my control. I disown him from all my moveable/ Immoveable properties. Anybody dealing with him will do so at his/her own risk and responsibility.

I Vina Devi M/O Avishek Kumar R/O # 424/2, Sector 45a Chandigarh Declare That My Correct And Actual Name Is Vina Devi Instead Of Beena Devi, Which Has Been Wrongly In Educational Records Of My Son Avishek Kumar.

I Yogender Sharma Father Of Avishek Kumar R/O # 424/2, Sector 45a Chandigarh Declare That My Correct And Actual Name Is Yogender Sharma Instead Of Joginder Sharma, Which Has Been Wrongly In Educational Records Of My Son Avishek Kumar.

I Am Lakhveer Kaur Sidhu W/O Rajinder Singh Sidhu R/O Village Bannawala Tehsil And District Fazilka That My Husband's Name Is Mentioned As Rajinder Singh In My Passport Whereas All The Documents Of My Husband Like Aadhaar Card, Driving License And Passport Are There. His Name Is Recorded As Rajinder Singh Sidhu, Hence His Real Name Is Rajinder Singh Sidhu.

I Gurmeet Kaur W/O No-1546108-P, Rank-Nk/Ts, Name-Late Sher Singh. Residence Of - Vill-Railan Kalan, Tehsil & District-Rupnagar, State- Punjab, Pin-140001, Declare That I Change My Name (Gurmit Kaur To Gurmeet Kaur) And Date Of Birth (01-06-1956 To 22-02-1958) Due To Erroneously Recorded In My Husband Army Record.

I, Bharat Taluja S/O Raj Kumar R/O H.No-479, Ward No-6, East Bhatia Nagar, Jagadhri, Yamuna Nagar, Haryana-135001 Declare That Name Of My Mother Is Wrongly Written As Shakuntla In My Cbse Class 10th Educational Documents. Actual Name Of My Mother Is Shakuntla Rani.

Idr Vageesh Gutain So Hari Ram Gutain, Ro House Number 131445, Sanjeevani Hospital, Gupta Colony, Yamunanagar. I Declare That My Wife's Name In My Passport Is Written As Ramita Gutain, I Want To Rectify It To Rameeta Rasauda.

We, Usha W/o Pal Singh and Pal Singh S/O Chatar Singh, R/O H. No. 401, Shiva Enclave, Victoria City, Zirakpur (SAS Nagar), disown our daughter Neha from movable/ immovable properties, as she is beyond our control. Anybody deals her do at own risk/ responsibilities, we shall not be responsible.

I Harbans Singh S/O hukamr Singh R/O Basti Aziz Wali (Kaku Wala) Distt Ferozepur Declare That My Daughter Shimla Rani Is Out Of My Control. So I Disown Her From All My Movable And Immoveable Properties. Anybody Dealing With Her On Their Own Risk.

I, Salmi Samad D/o Somnath Samad R/o VTC Hui Hundu, P.O. HuiHundu Sub. Distt. Namkum, Distt. Ranchi, Jharkhand-835221 now presently residing at Village Lohat, Tehsil Balachour, P.O. Rakkar Bet, Distt. Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar Declare that Name of Mine and my father has been wrongly written as Salmi and SomNath in my School Matriculation Certificate. The Actual name of Mine & My Father are Salmi Samad & Somnath Samad. Which may be amended accordingly.

It is for general information that I, Heena Soni W/o Chandra Prakash Sharma R/O H.No. 97, Eldeco Garden, Jalandhar, Pin-144026, Punjab India, declare that my name has been wrongly written as Heena Sharma in the passport No. S9304824 of my daughter Tashvi Sharma. My correct name is Heena Soni, which may be amended accordingly. It is certified that I have complied with other legal requirements in this connection.

I, Sunita Devi W/o Ishwar Singh Vill.Pabnawa Tehsil Dhand Distt.Kaithal My Son Sohan Lal is out of my control. I, disown them from all My moveable and immoveable properties. If Anybody deals with him at Their Own risk.

I, Mohindro Devi W/o Late Inder Singh R/O H.No. 1069 HBC Dhanas Chandigarh declare that my elder Daughter Sona Devi is out my Control. So I disown her from my movable and immovable Properties and we have no relation with her, Anybody deal with her he/she/they will be do so own his risk, we have no responsibility.

I, Mohindro Devi W/o Late Inder Singh R/O H.No. 1069 HBC Dhanas Chandigarh declare that my younger Daughter Manju Devi is out my Control. So I disown her from my movable and immovable Properties and we have no relation with her, Anybody deal with her he/she/they will be do so own his risk, we have no responsibility.

I Gurmit Kaur W/o Late Ajai Singh R/o Vill Salempur Sekhan Teh Rajpura Distt Patiala declare that my daughter Balwinder Kaur and her husband Ajay is out of my control and always create disputes and disturbance in my house, so I evict them from all of my Moveable and immoveable property. Anyone who can deal with both of them, will do at their own risk, me and my family will not be responsible for it.

I Smt Rajwinder Kaur Spouse of army No. JC-511247K Rank: Sub Name Rajwinder Singh resident of VPO Kofatta, Tehsil and Distt Bathinda, Pin. 151101, have changed my name from Smt Ranjeet Kaur to Rajwinder Kaur vide affidavit date: 04-01-2024 of Thouval Nottary Public Bathinda.

I, Hariom S/O Sh. Kuldeep Raj R/O House Number 21/10 Dhangu Peer, Housing Board Colony, Pathankot, Punjab 145001, India Declare That On My Previous Passport No. J3660218 My Name Is Wrongly Entered As Hari Om Alias Hira Lal Instead Of Hariom Vide Affidavit Dated 15-01-2024

I, Maneesha Is Legally Wedded Wife Of No. 15621270m, Rank: Hav, Name: Anil A Of Unit: 19 Gaards C/O 56 Apo And R/O Kap 2 Bn, Mutikulangara Puthuppariyaram-1, Palakkad, Kerala-678594 Declare That In Army Documents Of My Husband My Name Is Wrongly Entered As Maneesha Instead Of Maneesha G Vide Affidavit Dated 15-01-2024 Before Notary (Govt Of India)

I, Hitherto Known As Ravandeep Alias Ramandeep Singh Khosa S/O Baggar Singh R/O Village Chander, P.O. Mudki, Tehsil & Distt. Ferozepur, Punjab-142060 Have Changed My Name And Shall Hereafter Be Known As Ravandeep Singh Khosa. It Is Certified That I Have Complied With Other Legal Requirements In This Connection.

I, Kulwinder Son of Ranjit Kumar Permanent resident of H.No.155, Mohalla Shahpuri Gate, Sujanpur, P.O. Sujanpur Tehsil & District Pathankot (Punjab), Pin Code -145023 declare that in my 10th certificate/DMC my name and D.O.B is wrongly entered as Kulwinder Kumar and 20-06-2005 instead of Kulwinder and 20-05-2005 vide Affidavit dated 26-10-2023.

I, Brijesh Sharma S/O Rambrich R/O # 175, Dashmesh Colony, Tehsil Jagadhri, Distt Yamunanagar, State That In My Son Anand School Certificate My Name Written As Brijesh Which Is Incorrect, While My Correct Name Is Brijesh Sharma.

I Anand Sharma S/O Brijesh Sharma R/O # 175, Dashmesh Colony, Yamunanagar State That In My Passport No. V 4688055 My Name Written As Anand & My Birthplace Chakan (UP), Which Is Incorrect. While My Correct Name Is Anand Sharma & My Birthplace Is Chaknarayanpur, Distt Kushi Nagar (UP).

I Lalit Parkash S/O Sat Parkash R/O # W.No. 03, Near Durga Mandir Sadhaura, Teh. Bilaspur, Distt Yamunanagar States That In My 10th Certificate My Name Written As Lalit Prakash S/O Sat Prakash Which Is Incorrect. While My Correct Name Is Lalit Parkash S/O Sat Parkash.

I, Sunita Sharma W/O Chani Bhushan D/O Hori Lal R/O B-I-X, 920/18, Preet Nagar, Teh. Jagadhri, Distt Yamunanagar That In My Passport My Husband Name Is Wrongly Written As Channi Bhushan Sharma To Chani Bhushan.

मैं सुशील कुमार पूर श्री वेद प्रकाश निवासी म.नं. 326/10, रामराय गेट, जीन्द तह. व जिला जीन्द अपने हल्फ से बयान करता हूँ कि मेरा पुत्र साहिल व उसकी पत्नी मेरे कहने-सुनने से बाहर हैं। मैं उपरोक्त दोनों की अपनी चर्च व अचल सम्पत्ति से बेदखल करता हूँ। आज के बाद जो भी कोई उपरोक्त दोनों से लेन- देन या व्यवहार रखेगा, वह स्वयं जिम्मेवार होगा। मेरी व मेरे बाकि परिवार की कोई जिम्मेवारी नहीं होगी।

CHANGE OF NAME

I Rohini D/O Sh. Jasbir Singh H No 1549 Sector 26 Panchkula Have Changed My Name From Rohini To Rohini Bibyan.

I, Anish Kumar S/o No 2671394X Hav Yash Paul Rai (Retd) R/o Village Palli, PO Bhatel, Tehsil Mukerian, Distt Hoshiarpur (Punjab) have changed my name from Anish Kumar to Aneesh Kumar. Concerned Note.

I, Har Simran Singh S/o Gurdial Singh R/O H.No.368/18, Lajpat Nagar, Delhi camp, Delhi Road, Sonipat have changed my name from Har Simran Singh to Harsimran Singh Bhullar for all future purposes.

I, Farha Kazmi D/o Rehman Kazmi R/o Flat No. 705-E, Ravindra Apartment Resident Welfare Society Baltana, Mohali have changed my name from Farha Kazmi to Alisha.

I, Nitu W/o Sachin Gupta R/o 1570, new HBC, Sector-14, Sonipat, Haryana have changed my name to Neetu Gupta for all purposes.

I, Renu Sharma W/o Rajendra Sharma R/o House No.773, Sector-15A, Hisar (Haryana)-125001 have changed my name from Renu Sharma to Renu Rajendra Sharma.

I, Noukiran Kaur D/o Sadha Singh W/o Bhupinder Singh R/o 63, Shastri Colony, Yamuna Nagar have changed my name from Noukiran Kaur to Navkiran Kaur. My correct date of birth is 17.12.1975.

I, Parmjeet Kaur D/o No. 3204225M L/NK Amit Kumar R/o VPO Ledti, Tehsil Chhachhrauli, Distt Yamuna Nagar have changed my name from Parmjeet Kaur to Parmjeet Kaur. My date of birth is 15.08.1988.

I, Raghvender Kumar Singhal S/O Anand Parkash R/o 1782, New Christian Colony, Jagadhri, Distt Yamuna Nagar have changed my name to Raghvender Singhal, also I have changed my address from 1639, Jaroda Gate, Jagadhri, Distt Yamuna Nagar to 1782, New Christian Colony, Jagadhri, Distt Yamuna Nagar.

I, Satpal Singh father of No. 3204225M L/NK Amit Kumar R/o VPO Ledti, Tehsil Chhachhrauli, Distt Yamuna Nagar have changed my name/date of birth from Satpal/15.06.1963 to Satpal Singh/01.01.1962.

I, Suresho Devi mother of No. 3204225M L/NK Amit Kumar R/o VPO Ledti, Tehsil Chhachhrauli, Distt Yamuna Nagar have changed my date of birth from 19.05.1965 to 01.01.1963.

I, Kulpid Kumar S/o Ashok Kumar R/O H No. 117/2, Small Flats Maloya have changed my name from Kulpid Kumar to Kuldeep Kumar.

I, Rita Tiwari W/o Sh. Sudhir Kumar R/O H No. 664-B, Sector 44-A, Chandigarh have changed my name from Rita Tiwari to Rita Dubey.

I, Shilpa Kaushal W/o Vishal R/o #59, Police Line, Sector-25, Panchkula (Haryana) have changed my name from Shilpa Chauhan to Shilpa Kaushal.

I, Sharanjeet Kaur W/o Kashmir Singh R/o Village Kotli Fassi Teh. Batala Distt. Gurdaspur have changed my name from Sharanjeet Kaur to Sharanjeet Kaur. Concerned note.

I, Priya Rani W/o Raghav Aren R/o #241, Sector-10, Panchkula (Haryana) have changed my name from Priya Rani to Priya Aren.

I, Hitesh S/o Ashok Kumar, R/O House No 663/17, Mithan Moholla, Near Sarafa Bazar Karnal Haryana changed my name from Hitesh to Hitesh Sharma.

I, Devender Kumar S/o Sh. Gaje Singh R/o village Liwaspur, Teh. Rai, Distt. Sonipat declare that I have change my name from Devender Kumar to Devender Singh for all purpose.

I, Richa D/o Ashok Kumar R/o # 185, Raiyan Mohalla, Khanpuri Gate, Hoshiarpur Punjab have changed my name to Richa Gill. Concerned note.

I, Sukhjeet Singh S/o Paritam Singh R/O Post Office Manawala Kalan, Block Jandiala Guru, Amritsar, Punjab have changed my name from Sukhjeet Singh to Sukhjit Singh.

I, Divya Grover W/o Rajat Kumar R/O #110, Near Singh Sabha Gurudwara, Nasirpur, Ambala City, Ambala (Haryana) have changed my name from Divya Grover to Divya.

I Seema W/o Shri Neeraj Kumar R/o Plot No. 72, Gali No. 1, Madhu Colony, Chitta Mandir Road, Yamuna Nagar declares that I have changed my name from Seema to Gurmeet Kaur.

I, Chirag son of Harish Kumar #151, sector 18-A Chandigarh have changed my name to Chiragg Kalra.

I, Natisha D/o Hans Raj # 1497, Morigate Manimajra Chandigarh have Changed my name to Natisha Natisha.

I, Jai Pal S/O Ram Singh # 1478, Mauli Jagran Complex, Chandigarh have changed my name to Jai Pal Sisodhiya.

I, Vani Panwar w/o Aman Kumar R/o Ward no. 10, Nissing Sub Tehsil Nissing, Distt. Karnal have changed my name from Vani to Vani Panwar. In future I should be known as Vani Panwar.

I, Loveleen Narang D/o Sh. P.L. Narang now wife of Sh. Pawan Gupta R/o H.No. 482-P Sector-6, Rohtak (Haryana) declare that I have changed my name from Loveleen Narang to Loveleen N. Gupta. In future I will be called by name of Loveleen N. Gupta for all purposes.

I, Reena W/o Rohit Kumar R/O House No. 738, Sector 3, Thanesar, Kurukshetra, (Haryana), have changed my name from Reena to Reena Kumar. Concern Noted.

I, Narendra Adhikari S/o Man Singh R/O H.No. 14/3, b s t colony Ganaur Sonipat declare that I have changed my name from Narendra Adhikari to Narendra Singh Adhikari in future I should be known as Narendra Singh Adhikari.

I, Vikas Maan S/o Satbir Singh R/O H.No.1959, near post office, balla (30) Karnal declare that I have changed my name from Vikas Maan to Vikas in future I should be known as Vikas.

I Pervash W/o Sh. Surender Kumar R/O H.No 2626C, Block C, Ansal Sushant city, Panipat, declare that Pervash urf Neelam both name are of same person.

I, Roop Lal S/o Ram Saran R/O Village Bassi Kalan, Distt. Hoshiarpur Punjab have changed the name of my minor son from Abhijot to Abhijot Lal. Concerned note.

I, Mahavir S/o Dariya Singh R/O Village Mundri, Distt. Kaithal (Haryana) declares that I have changed my name from Mahavir to Mahavir Singh. In future, I will be known by the name of Mahavir Singh. All concerned please note.

I, Seema W/o Mahavir Singh R/O Village Mundri, Distt. Kaithal (Haryana) declares that I have changed my name from Seema to Seema Devi. In future, I will be known by the name of Seema Devi. All concerned please note.

I, Tanuj S/O Dilbag Singh R/O VPO Jakhouli, Distt. Kaithal (Haryana) declares that I have changed my name from Tanuj to Shamsher Singh. In future, I will be known by the name of Shamsher Singh. All concerned please note.

I, Shaisha Goyal D/o Surinder Goyal #46-A, Sec-14, T-End,Rani Bagh, Ambala Cantt, Haryana declared that Shaisha Goyal and Shaisha is one or same person. Please Note.

I, Sumit S/o Sh. Om Parkash R/O H.No. 1001/1, Indira Colony, Rohtak, (Haryana) declare that I have changed my name Sumit Kumar to Sumit, for future all purposes.

I, Hitherto Known As Sonia Daughter Of Padam Dev Sambhal Wife Of Satpal Singh Residing At H.No.24, 1, Baba Jand Peer Colony, Amritsar-143104 Punjab Have Changed My Name And Shall Hereafter Be Known As Sonu Sambyal.

I, Hitherto Known As Meera Seth Daughter Of Kama Seth Wife Of Karan Mehra Residing At H.No.283, Varindavan Garden, Fatehgarh Churian Road, Amritsar-143008 Punjab Have Changed My Name And Shall Hereafter Be Known As Meera Mehra.

I, Hitherto Known As Jagraj Singh Son Of Gurmial Singh Residing At Nede Bajli, Ghar. Talwandi Bhai, District Ferozepur-142050 Punjab Have Changed My Name And Shall Hereafter Be Known As Jagraj Singh.

I, Hitherto Known As Simranjeet Singh Jagga Son Of Harbjajan Singh Residing At Vpo Machhi Bugra District Ferozepur-142052 Punjab Have Changed My Name And Shall Hereafter Be Known As Simranjeet Singh.

I, Hitherto Known As Gurvinder Singh Son Of Balwinder Singh Residing At Vpo Sulhani District Ferozepur-142050 Punjab Have Changed My Name And Shall Hereafter Be Known As Gurwinder Singh.

I, Govinder Singh Sandhu S/O Gian Singh R/O Ward No.11, Gali Walla Wali, Amritsar Road, Tarn Taran Have Changed My Name From Govinder Singh Sandhu To Govinder Singh

I, Harpreet W/O Kamalpreet Singh R/O H.No. 60 Gali No. 8 Kot Mangal Singh Ishwar Nagar Taran Tarn Road Amritsar Have Changed My Name Harpreet To Kaur Harpreet , Kaur Is Surname, All Please Note It.

I, Gulzar Singh Son Of Roorth Singh Resident Of Village Galib, P.O. Gaggo Mahal, Tehsil Ajnala District Amritsar Have Changed My Name From Gulzer Singh To Gulzar Singh

I, Monika Arora W/O Rajesh Kumar Anand R/O H.No.28, Gali No.7, Near Gopal Mandir, Prem Nagar, Amritsar Have Changed My Name From Monika Arora To Monika Anand. After Marriage

I Rajwinder Singh S/O Satnam Singh R/O Vpo Bham Tehsil Batala Distt Gurdaspur Have Declare That Rajwinder Is My Given Name And Singh Is My Surname

I, Simarjeet Kaur Alias Simmi W/O Arvinder Singh R/O H.No.10, Gali No. 6, Ganda Singh Colony Tarn Taran Road, Amritsar Have Changed My Name To Simarjeet Kaur

I, Sukhjinder Kaur D/O Ranjit Singh R/O Vpo Wakilan Wala Tehsil Zira District Ferozepur Have Changed My Name Sukhjinder Is My Given Name And Kaur Is My Surname

I, Gurnaam Singh S/O Jaswant Singh R/O Village Riali Khurd District Gurdaspur Declare That Gurnaam Is My Given Name And Singh Is My Surname

I, Surinder Pal Singh S/O Manjit Singh R/O H.No.8114, Gali No.2, Bahadar Nagar, Sultanwind Road, Amritsar Have Declare That My Fatther Was Known By Two Name Manjit Singh And Manjeet Singh One And Same Person

I, Sandhu Babaljeet Kaur And Babaljeetkaur Bakhtawarsingh Sandhu W/O Tejveer Pal Singh R/O Village Baghel Singh Wala, Jhabal Kalan District Tarn Taran Have Certified ThatAbove Both Neme's Are Mine One And Same Person.

I, Parkash Chand Ranga alias Parkash Ranga S/o Moola Ram R/O H.No. 722 Sector 7 Urban Estate Kurukshetra, declare that Parkash Chand Ranga and Parkash Ranga is the same and one person. And these are my names. All Concerned, please note.

I, Krishan Kumar S/o Ram Parshad R/o Bahri Mohalla Thanesar District Kurukshetra have changed my minor daughter's name from Bhavi to Bhavi Saini.

I, Krishan Kumar S/o Ram Parshad R/o Bahri Mohalla Thanesar District Kurukshetra have changed my minor son's name from Daiwik to Daiwik Saini.

I, Balkishan S/O Santu Ram R/O Jogna Khera Tehsil Thanesar District Kurukshetra, have changed my name from Sher Singh to Balkishan.

I,Rajinder Singh S/O Balkerar Singh R/O Village Bannawala Post Office Jandwala Bhime Shah Tehsil And District Fazilka Have Changed My Name Rajinder Singh Sidhu.

I Avishek S/O Yogender Sharma R/O # 424/2, Sector 45a Chandigarh Have Changed My Name From Avishek To Avishek Kumar.

I Navneet Ahluwalia W/O Tejinder Pal Singh Ahluwalia, R/O Plot No.369 Industrial Area, Focal Point, Phase-9, Mohali have Changed My Name To Navneet Ahluwalia W/O Tajinder Pal Singh Ahluwalia.

I Pradeep Kumar S/O Sh. Bhagat Ram R/O House No 133, Moginad Sector-30, Panchkula, Have Changed My Name From Pradeep Kumar To Pradeep Nirala.

I Gurpreet Singh S/O Dharan Singh R/O Village Kambo Dhaivalwa Tehsil & District Tarn Taran I Have Changed My Name From Gurpreet Singh To Singh Gurpreet All Concerned Notes.

I Avrinder Singh S/O Gurbir Singh R/O Village Rakhdinewal Tehsil Khadur Sahib Distt Tarn Taran Have Changed My Name To Singh Avrinder.

I Anju W/O Krishan Kumar R/O #2245, Urban Estate Jind Have Declare That My Name Changed From Anju Kumari To Anju. In Future All Purposes.

I, Santosh Mor W/O Anil Mor R/O Village Ludana Teh. Safidon Distt. Jind Have Declare That My Name Changed From Santosh Mor To Santosh. In Future All Purposes.

I Dalip Sharma S/O Ghyansham Dass Sharma R/O Vpo Saharanwas Distt Rewari And Presently R/O #1019p, Sec-3, Part-2, Rewari Tehsil & Distt Rewari Have Changed My Neme From Dalip To Dalip Sharma.

I Isha Rani W/O Gulshan Kumar R/O Gali Machhian, Zira, Distt. Ferozepur Have Changed The Name Isha Arora.

I Jagdish Chand S/O Dillu Ram Thakur R/O Ward No.3, Vill-Balakpuri, Po Tehsil Joginder Nagar Mandi, Himachal Pradesh Have Changed My Name From Jagdish Chand To Jagdish Chand Thakur.

I Jagdeep Kaur W/O Gurjeet Singh Dhaliwal R/O V.P.O. Mansoordeva, Tehsil Zira, (Ferozepur) Have Changed Jagdeep Kaur Dhaliwal.

I Amit Sharma S/O Vinod Kumar R/O Vill-Khandra (10), Panipat, Shera, Haryana-132113 Have Changed My Name To Amit Kaushik.

I Akashdeep Singh S/O Shivraj Singh R/O Vpo Faqarsar Teh Gilderbaha Distt Sri Muktsar Sahib Have Changed My Name To Akashdeep Singh Dhillon.

I, Hitherto Known As Gulzar Masih S/O Sadiq Masih R/O Village Ittan Badhi Po Manak Rai Tehsil & District Jalandhar, Punjab 144201, Have Suffixed Masih As My Surname And Now My Name Is Gulzar And My Surnames Masih. It Is Certified That I Have Complied With Other Legal Requirements In This Connection.

I, Hitherto Known As Jarina W/O Gulzar Masih R/O Village Ittan Badhi, Po Manak Rai, Tehsil & District Jalandhar, Punjab 144201, Have Changed My Name And Shall Hereafter Be Known As Jareena. It Is Certified That I Have Complied With Other Legal Requirements In This Connection.

I, Pritika D/o Sh Amarjit, Vill Bhallri, Tehsil Nangal Distt Ropar declare that my father's right name is Amarjit.

I, Ranjit Kaur Multani W/o Sukhjinder Singh, Vill, Naushera Sadrabat, Tehsil Malerkotla Distt Malerkotla, have changed my name to Ranjit Kaur.

I Harnek Singh S/O Ranjeet Singh R/o Village Khaira Tehsil & Distt Ambala have changed my name from Harnaik Singh to Harnek Singh

I Rajesh Kalsi S/o shri Gurdayal Singh R/O W.No.5 H.No.4 Hardawala Mandir Naraingarh Distt. Ambala have changed my name from Rajesh Kumar to Rajesh Kalsi.

I, Rupinderjeet kaur w/o Kuljit Singh R/o Village Ghandran Po Mirthal Tehsil & District Pathankot Punjab 145101. Declare That name of mine have been wrongly written as Rupinderjit Kaur in my minor son Jasleenpreet singh aged 17 years in his 10th class educational documents. The actual name of mine is Rupinderjeet kaur which may be amended accordingly. It is certified that I have complied with other legal requirements in this connection.

I, Jonny S/O Vijay Kumar R/O Village Bassa, P.O. Shahpurkandi, Tehsil Dhar Kalan, District Pathankot, Have Changed My Name From Jonny To Jonny Thakur, Please Note.

I Ravi Dayal Nanda S/O Devki Nandan Nanda R/O H.No.0, Purani Sabji Mandi W/O No.8 Nagar Palika Pathankot-145001 Have Changed My Name From Ravi Nanda to Ravi Dayal Nanda.

I Pratham Kumar S/O Prem Kumar R/O Ward No 07,Guru Ram Das Nagar Firozepur, I Have Changed My Name From Pratham Kumar To Kumar Pratahn And Kumar As My Surname And Pratham As Given Name, Note All Concerned

I Gulshan Kumar S/O Pappu R/O Basti Bag Wali Firozepur, I Have Changed My Name Gulshan Kumar To Kumar Gulshan And Kumar As My Surname And Gulshan As My Given Name, Note All Concerned

I, Jaspinder Kaur Wife Of 2495247K Ex (Ts) Nk Harpal Singh Resident Of Vpo Jhurar, Tehsil Malout, Distt. Sri Muktsar Sahib Have Changed My Name To Lakhvir Kaur

I, Sunita Devi Of Spouse No.3195409f Rank L/Hav, Name Gajendra Singh Tomar, Presently Resident At Village Garhsauli, Post Barouli, Tehsil Mahavan, District Mathura, State Up, Pin 281301, Have Changed My Name From Sunita To Sunita Devi Affidavit No. In-Pb77052126888810w, Dated 15 January 2024 Before At Notary Ferozepur.

I, Jc-277677p Ex Sub Barjinder Singh R/O Vpo Chuchak Wind Tehsil Zira And Distt Ferozepur (Punjab), I Want To Change The Name Of My Wife From Kulpid Kaur To Kuldeep Kaur And Her Date Of Birth From 10 Aug 1972 To 07 Apr 1969 In My Army Service Records.

I Balwant Singh Father Of No. 3009213x Hav Manjeet Singh Unit 17 Rajput C/O 56 Apo Resident At House No.3-B E Block, Lalita Nagar, Bhopal Hazur, Bhopal, State Madhya Pradesh, Pin 462042, India Declare That In My All Civil Documents My Date Of Birth Is Mentioned As 12-06-1956 But As Per My Son Service Record It Is Erroneously Mentioned As 01-07-1956.

I Janki Devi, Mother Of No. 3009213x Hav Manjeet Singh Unit 17 Rajput C/O 56 Apo Resident At House No.3-B E Block, Lalita Nagar, Bhopal Hazur, Bhopal, State Madhya Pradesh, Pin 462042, India Have Changed My Name From Janki Bai To Janki Devi And Change Date Of Birth From 01-07-1966 To 14-04-1963.

I, Bashiron Mallick Mother Of Abdul Mannan Mallick Residing At Village Radhanagar, Po Radhanagar Colony, District Nadia, State West Bengal, Pin 741126 Have Changed My Name From Basirun Bibi To Bashiron Mallick Vide Affidavit Dated 15 January 2024 Before At Notray Ferozepur.

I, Gurbachan Singh Dab s/o Jagir Singh Dab r/o H. No. 224/3, Mission Hospital Road, Dhariwal Distt Gurdaspur have changed my minor son's name from Sahildeep Singh to Sahildeep Singh Dab. Concerned note.

I, Sharanjeet Kaur W/o Kashmir Singh R/o Village Kotli Fassi Teh. Batala Distt. Gurdaspur have changed my name from Sharnjeet Kaur to Sharanjeet Kaur. Concerned note.

I, Satish Sharma S/o Sh. Sita Ram Sharma R/o H.No. 748, Village Khedi Naru, Karnal (Haryana) have changed my name from Satish to Satish Sharma for all future purposes.

I, Bimla Devi W/o Ashok Kumar R/o 130, Barwala Road, Sunder Nagar, Hisar, 125001 declare that I have changed my name from Bimla Rani to Bimla Devi for all future purpose.

I, Tini Verma D/o Ashok Kumar R/O 130, Sunder Nagar, Hisar, 125001 declare that I have changed my name from Tini Bararia to Tini Verma for all future purpose.

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CM Khattar lays foundation stone of Medical College & Hospital in Panchkula

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Monday laid the foundation stone of the Medical College and Hospital to be built on 30 acres of land in Sector-32, Panchkula at a cost of Rs 800 crore. While interacting with media persons, the Chief Minister informed that the new Medical College and Hospital to be constructed by Haryana Shahri Vikas Pradhikarn (HSVP) would be named after Dr. Mangal Sen. The initial phase will involve an expenditure of Rs 500 crore, with an anticipated additional expenditure of Rs 300 crore. The entire project is slated to be completed within 30 months. It will have 100 MBBS seats.

The Chief Minister said, "After assuming office in 2014, we announced to establish a Medical College and Hospital in each district of the state. Except two districts of Charkhi Dadri and Palwal, Medical College and Hospitals have been established in every district. Out of which 15 had already been commissioned including 6 government, 1 aided and 8 private. The process is underway for the commissioning of medical colleges in the remaining district."

Responding to a query, the Chief Minister stated that in 2014, the state had 6 medical colleges. This count increased to 12 between 2014 and 2019, further reaching 15 from 2019 to the present. With the completion of all, the medical col-



lege count will rise to 29 in the future. Upon the completion of all medical colleges, the total number of MBBS seats in the state will reach 3500, he added.

Highlighting the importance of healthcare professionals, Khattar expressed confidence that the state will get 3500 doctors annually. Additionally, the number of PG seats is set to rise from 851 to 1200, addressing the need for specialized doctors. He said that Para-medical colleges and Physiotherapy colleges will also be set up within these medical colleges. This comprehensive approach aims to eliminate shortages of both general and specialized medical professionals in the state.

He said certain African countries, including Uganda, have expressed interest in forging agreements with Haryana and sending their students to Haryana for MBBS courses, adding that Uganda has a pop-

flows through electricity" is the theme of the book fair. Addressing the gathering, Khattar said, "Books enhance knowledge. Whenever we get time, we must read books, not just for show but to gain real knowledge. In ancient times, shruiti gyaan was used to impart knowledge to the future generations. Books also free us from mental stress. Books on various subjects including spirituality, sports, culture, stories, narratives and satirists are available in libraries. Every person should buy books."

He said today in the digital age the concept of e-library has also come and on 22 October 2020, the first e-library by power corporations under CSR was inaugurated in Kachhwa village of Karnal district.

Khattar also inaugurated three more libraries namely Sardar Patel Library Samana Bahu Karnal, Sardar Patel Library Mohadi Kurukshetra and Sardar Patel Library Dholra Yamunanagar through remote.

On this occasion, Additional Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister, Dr Amit Agrawal said that books are our best friends. Books are the best source of knowledge, hence everyone must read books. The meaning of the theme of today's book fair is that just as electric light is reaching everyone's homes, similarly the light of knowledge should also reach everyone's homes, so that man can make his valuable contribution to the progress of society and the country.

CM inaugurates second Book Fair in Panchkula

After inaugurating the second Panchkula Book Fair, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Monday said that the coordination of language in books is akin to the mutual relationship between body and soul.

The second Panchkula Book Fair are being organized by six departments under the aegis of power companies in Panchkula.

The National Book Trust also has a special contribution in this fair. The book fair will continue till January 22. Nearly 100 publishers have put stalls in the fair, in which books of Hindi, English, Urdu, Sanskrit, Punjabi etc. will be available. "Haryana illuminates with the light of knowledge, knowledge

Haryana govt declares dry day on Pran Prathistha ceremony of Ram Temple January 22

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Haryana government on Monday declared a 'dry day' on January 22 given the 'Pran Prathistha' ceremony at the Ram temple in Ayodhya. The announcement was made by Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar. An official statement said all liquor establishments in the state will be closed on January 22.

The 'pran prathistha' ceremony will be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other dignitaries. Several BJP-ruled states, including Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, have already declared a dry day on January 22. On the prime minister's call for cleanliness at religious places, Khattar said 'poos' and cleanliness activities are being held at religious places in the state from January 14 to January 22. He encouraged everyone to light diyas at home on January 22 and said that the 'pran prathistha samaroh' will be broadcast live in educational institutes and other places. The CM emphasised that the inauguration of the 'Ram Mandir' in Ayodhya is not a political event as it holds deep sentimental significance for the people.

Punjab launches road safety month

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

In a concerted effort to enhance road safety and decrease mortality rates resulting from accidents, Punjab Transport Minister Laljit Singh Bhullar on Monday inaugurated the Road Safety Month. The month-long initiative, spanning from January 15 to February 14, 2024, is organized by the Punjab State Road Safety Council and aims to foster year-round commitment to road safety. Bhullar, addressing stakeholders, emphasized the importance of collective responsibility in curbing road accidents. He stressed the need for ongoing efforts beyond the

designated month, involving concerned departments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and commuters.

Highlighting the positive outcomes of measures implemented by the state government, including the Sadak Surkhiya Force (SSF) and effective monitoring, Bhullar shared statistics from the Annual Report on Punjab Road Crashes and Traffic-2022, which indicated a 0.24 per cent decrease in road accident fatalities in 2022 compared to the previous year, even as the nation witnessed a 9.4 per cent increase in road fatalities.

Punjab, bucking the national trend, recorded 4,578 road accident fatalities in 2022.

Pb Govt gears up for panchayat elections, seeks information on completion of terms

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

In a significant move, the Punjab Government has initiated preparations for panchayat elections by soliciting information from the officers of the state Rural Development and Panchayat department regarding the completion dates of the five-year terms of each panchayat. The directive aimed at facilitating the appointment of administrative officers following the completion of the stipulated terms.

The development comes in the wake of a tumultuous period where the State Government, in a controversial move, prematurely dissolved all panchayats in August 2023. However, the decision was later rescinded after facing legal challenges, with two senior officials from the Department being suspended for allegedly providing misleading information to the government regarding the premature dissolution.

As part of the government's latest orders, messages have been issued instructing the appointment of Administrative Officers — Assistant Engineers (AE), Junior Engineers (JE), Village Development Officers (VDO), Senior Citizen Promotion Officers (SCPO), and Panchayat Officers — for the management and record-keep-

ing of the dissolved panchayats. The government aimed to appoint administrators after the completion of the five-year term ever since the first meeting of the panchayat was held.

To facilitate the distribution of responsibilities, crucial information from each panchayat is required, and officials have been instructed to submit the necessary data by January 16 (Tuesday).

The deadline aligns with the Government's urgency to finalize administrative appointments promptly. Punjab, with a total of 13,268 panchayats, has been witnessing political dynamics around the conduct of panchayat elections. The last panchayat elections were held in January 2019, and the term of the elected representatives is set to conclude in January 2024. The State Government is keen on avoiding delays and is contemplating holding the elections in January 2024 itself.

The controversy surrounding the premature dissolution of panchayats began in August 2023, when the government decided to dissolve all panchayats despite their terms expiring in January 2024.

The decision prompted Shiromani Akali Dal's secretary-general Gurjeet Singh Talwandi to approach the Punjab and Haryana High

Court, arguing that the Government's action was illegal and improper.

He had argued that all gram panchayats in the State were illegitimately dissolved before completing their terms, citing the misuse of power under Section 29E of the Punjab Panchayati Raj Act, 1994.

In response to the legal challenge, the Punjab Government took a U-turn, with the Chief Secretary filing a response in the Court expressing the Government's willingness to reconsider the decision. The reversal was met with criticism from opposition parties, highlighting the Government's inconsistency in its approach.

Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann had taken decisive action against two senior IAS officers from the Rural Development and Panchayat Department — principal Secretary DK Tiwari, and director Gurpreet Singh Khehra — by suspending them on August 31, 2023. While they were reinstated a month later, the Government has yet to assign them new postings.

The latest directive, seeking information on the completion of terms, signifies the government's renewed efforts to prepare for panchayat elections. The orders emphasized the need for accurate information regarding the first meeting

date of each panchayat, ensuring transparency in the process.

The episode surrounding the dissolution of panchayats has been marked by administrative changes, including the suspension and subsequent reinstatement of senior IAS officers from the Rural Development and Panchayat Department. The leaked files related to the Government's orders became a point of contention, leading to criticism from the opposition.

In the letter issued by the Joint Director of the Rural Development and Panchayat Department, it has been stated that preparations are underway for conducting general elections in the state.

Consequently, a list of those panchayats whose terms (since their first meeting) have completed five years is being compiled.

The letter also emphasized the importance of ensuring that officers verify and confirm the completion of five years since the first meeting of the relevant panchayats when submitting this information. Additionally, the letter instructed them to provide the specific date of the remaining meeting — indicating the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) led state government's cautionary and proactive approach in preparing for upcoming rural elections.

Power pacts during SAD-BJP's decade-long rule under vigilance scanner

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Vigilance Bureau has cranked up the heat on the energy pacts made between 2007 and 2017 by zeroing in on the power plays involving thermal projects and solar ventures during this crucial period under the decade-long rule of the SAD-BJP coalition. Armed with records from the state's power utility, Powercom, the Vigilance is on a mission to expose any shady dealings or irregularities buried in these energy agreements.

With experts dissecting records and potential inquiries looming large, past officials and political bigwigs could be on the hot seat if any skeletons tumble out. The probe, sparked by the shadows of the Akali Dal and BJP coalition era, promises a suspenseful narrative rewrite of Punjab's power dynamics.

The scrutiny extended back to the time of the Akali-BJP coalition government,

which ruled from 2007 to 2017. During the Congress-led Government under Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi before that, in 2021, an announcement was made to investigate these power agreements by the then Chief Vigilance Commissioner Justice Mehtab Singh Gill.

Records related to these agreements were also sought by Gill in November 2021, although the matter had not progressed significantly at that time. The Vigilance Bureau is expected to review the findings of the previous investigation to ensure a more comprehensive examination.

The focus of the current investigation primarily includes the examination of Talwandi Sabo Thermal Plant with a capacity of 1980 megawatts (MW) and Rajpura Thermal Plant with a capacity of 1400 MW. Additionally, agreements related to solar energy projects are also under scrutiny. During the Akali-BJP govern-

ment, there were 91 agreements for solar energy projects totaling 884 megawatts, with electricity procurement rates ranging from Rs 3.01 to Rs 8.74 per unit. Before this, during the tenure of the Akali-BJP government, 22 agreements were made with solar projects, with relatively higher rates. Powercom had purchased solar energy and biomass projects for Rs 4487 crore and Rs 1928 crore during 2011-12 and 2021-22, respectively. The present government has entered into nine agreements so far, with electricity rates ranging between Rs 2.50 and Rs 3.

The initiation of the investigation coincided with the purchase announcement of the Goindwal Thermal Plant by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann. During this time, he declared that an investigation into past power agreements would take place. He refrained from directly naming certain individuals, stating that significant players would not be spared.

AAP set to have Mayor from its party as alliance with Congress is sealed

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

In what could be a precursor to Lok Sabha polls, the AAP and Congress have arrived at an understanding on contesting the Chandigarh mayoral polls in an alliance, to deny BJP the post.

Under the arrangement, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) will fight for the mayor's seat while the Congress will contest the posts of senior deputy mayor and deputy mayor. The development came amid the AAP and the Congress, both constituents of the INDIA bloc, holding talks over seat sharing for this year's Lok Sabha polls.

With the AAP and the Congress deciding to have a

tie-up for the January 18 Chandigarh mayoral polls, it is going to be a two-way contest and the two parties will have an edge over the Bharatiya Janata Party.

In the 35-member Chandigarh Municipal Corporation, the BJP has 14 councillors. The party also has an ex-officio member MP who has voting rights.

The AAP has 13 councillors and the Congress seven. The Shiromani Akali Dal has one councillor in the House.

Polls for the posts of mayor, senior deputy mayor and deputy mayor will be held on Thursday.

The Congress abstained from voting in 2022 and 2023, leading to the BJP's victory in

the mayoral polls. Elections for the three posts are held every year during the five-year term of the House. This year, the mayor's seat has been reserved for the Scheduled Caste (SC) category.

Senior Congress leader and former Union Minister Pawan Bansal said the "beginning of the end of BJP's rule will initiate from Chandigarh". He stated that this would honour the mandate of the people of Chandigarh and will also force the BJP to sit in opposition in the Municipal Corporation. After the alliance between AAP and Congress, leaders and candidates from both parties arrived at the Municipal Corporation on Monday to withdraw their

nominations. Before the alliance decision, both Congress and Aam Aadmi Party had fielded their candidates for all three positions, but now, with the change in the situation, Congress's Jasbir Banti has withdrawn his name for the mayor's position, and the AAP candidate has withdrawn for the positions of Senior Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

In the 35-member Chandigarh Municipal Corporation, the BJP has 14 councillors.

The party also has an ex-officio member MP who has voting rights. AAP has 13 councillors and the Congress seven. The Shiromani Akali Dal has one councillor

'Illegal' Mining in Ropar: NGT issues notice to Punjab Govt, DC on Sidhu's plea

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Stepping into the issue of illegal mining in Ropar, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Monday issued notice to the Punjab Government, Ropar's District Commissioner, and others on a petition filed by senior Congress leader and former Minister Navjot Singh Sidhu. The case is now scheduled for further proceedings on March 11.

Sidhu, addressing the media after the hearing in New Delhi on Monday, expressed concern not only about the specific case in Ropar but also about the broader issue of deteriorating conditions across Punjab. He emphasized that such activities are driven by personal gains, and the NGT petition has effectively made the Punjab Government, the District Commissioner, and the Mining Department parties to the case. Cricketer-turned-politician highlighted the adverse effects

of illegal mining on the environment and the economy, deviating from the teachings of their spiritual leaders. He stated that politicians have started accumulating wealth for their benefit. Although the Punjab government faces fines totaling Rs 630 crores, no payment has been made so far, he pointed out.

Accusing ministers of encouraging illegal mining, Sidhu minced no words to say that politicians, officers, and police officials from the Punjab Government are involved in this black business. He called for immediate action against officers participating in these illegal activities.

Furthermore, Sidhu questioned the accuracy of mining reports, stating that the survey reports were incorrect and lacked both expertise and proper technology. He pointed out that illegal mining has led to deep pits of up to 50 feet, raising concerns about flooding in the area. Expressing gratitude

towards the NGT for issuing notices to the Punjab Government, the District Magistrate, and relevant officials regarding alleged illegal sand mining in Rupnagar, Sidhu said: "I would like to thank the National Green Tribunal Honourable Court. Some very important issues related to the environment and economy of Punjab have been brought to the attention and cognizance of the Court, and the Court has also taken immediate action. This is such a double-edged sword that is hampering not only our environment but also our economy."

In his petition, Sidhu raised several compelling contentions highlighting the adverse environmental impact and the imminent danger of flooding due to rampant illegal mining in Ropar district. Sidhu contended that extensive illegal mining, using heavy machinery and crushers in Ropar, is causing detrimental effects on the environment. He

emphasized that the unauthorized, irregular, and unscientific mining activities can alter the course of rivers, posing a heightened risk of floods in the region as was witnessed in the months of June and August the previous year.

Sidhu, in his petition, also presented evidence suggesting the involvement of government officials in these illegal activities. He urged for the identification of these officers overseeing areas where unauthorized mining is taking place, and initiating stringent actions against such officials to ensure accountability.

Expressing urgency, Sidhu stated in the petition that immediate steps must be taken to halt illegal mining activities. He underscored the potential devastation that Ropar faces if these illicit practices are not promptly addressed. Sidhu emphasized the urgency, pointing out that individuals engaged in this unlawful business are showing disregard for the orders issued by the NGT.

Punjab earns record Rs 472.50-cr revenue from mining

Punjab Government has collected a total revenue of Rs 472.50 crore over the past two financial years. Sharing the information, the state Mining and Geology Minister Chetan Singh Jauramajra on Monday claimed that the record revenue was achieved despite offering sand and gravel at historically affordable rates. The Minister highlighted that the Department achieved revenues of Rs 247 crore in the financial year 2022-23 and Rs 225.50 crore in the ongoing financial year 2023-24 up to January 2, 2024, from various major heads.

Elaborating on the revenue collection, he mentioned that revenue receipt from public mines sites (PMS) stands at Rs 13.5 crore, commercial mining sites (CMS) at Rs 8.8 crore, interstate activities Rs 146.1 crore, brick kiln owners license at Rs 22.5 crores, revenue from short term permits Rs 96.03

crores, from penalty imposed under Rule 75 at Rs 7.92 crores, from other sources like crusher, registrations, crusher EME, demand notices, vehicle permits etc at Rs 94.21 crore, revenue from de-silting sites Rs 30.86 crore, and revenue receipt from blocks remained at Rs 60 crores.

"Revenue from de-silting sites is excluded in the current financial year due to the Punjab and Haryana High Court order, resulting in an approximate loss of Rs 450 crores due to surrendering of de-silting sites from the Mining Department," he pointed. The Minister projected revenues of Rs 307 crore for the financial year 2023-24 and Rs 300 crore for the subsequent financial year 2024-25.

"Apart from this, the state government has cracked down heavily on the sand mafia with registering record FIRs and arresting people involved in illegal mining compared to previous dispensations," he said.

ED arrests Dharamsot in money laundering probe

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH/JALANDHAR

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday took the former forest minister and senior Congress leader in Punjab Sadhu Singh Dharamsot into custody under the stringent Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The arrest was made in connection with an ongoing investigation into an alleged forest scam in the state, adding another layer of complexity to Dharamsot's legal troubles.

The 64-year-old seasoned politician, with a five-time MLA record, was apprehended in Jalandhar, marking a severe turn in the case.

The ED had previously conducted raids in November the previous year at the residences of Dharamsot, along with another Forest Minister Sangat Singh Gilzian, and several forest department officials.

The investigation revolve around accusations of corruption within the state forest

department, focusing on alleged bribery in the issuance of permits for tree felling, as well as in matters related to departmental transfers and postings.

The ED has been meticulously probing the financial aspects linked to these purported irregularities.

Dharamsot, who previously faced legal complications, was also arrested by the Punjab Vigilance Bureau last year in a case connected to alleged possession of disproportionate assets.

His legal entanglements seem to be multiplying, putting the Congress leader under heightened scrutiny.

Representing the Nabha assembly seat, Dharamsot has been a prominent figure in Punjab politics, but the allegations surrounding the forest scam have cast a shadow over his political legacy.

Meanwhile, Sangat Singh Gilzian, the other forest minister implicated in the investigation, is an MLA from the Umar seat in Hoshiarpur district.

IMD instrumental in protecting lives, advancing climate research: Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday commended the India Meteorological Department (IMD) for its exceptional services to the nation, saying it has been instrumental in safeguarding lives and advancing climate research. “Today we mark 150 years of the India Meteorological Department’s exceptional service to our nation. From pioneering weather forecasting to advancing climate research, IMD has been instrumental in safeguarding lives and enhancing our understanding of the environment,” the prime minister posted on X. The IMD kick-started its 150th anniversary celebrations on Monday with the launch of the ‘Panchayat Mausam Seva’ that aims to take weather forecasts to every farmer in every village. It also rolled out the National Framework for Climate



Services to mainstream climate information in every sector and activity. Launching the portals, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar said the IMD’s impact transcended mere weather forecasts and has emerged as a safety net, protecting national interests and shielding citizens from the wrath of nature. Dhankhar said there was a time when rainfall forecasts issued by the weather office proved to be incorrect, due to lack of scientific progress, but now the pre-

dictions were precise, “down to seconds.” He said the IMD’s impact transcended mere weather forecasts and has emerged as a safety net, protecting national interests and shielding citizens from the wrath of nature. “From agriculture and health-care to aviation and energy, its influence is omnipresent, touching the lives of every single citizen - from farmers tilling the land to jawans guarding our borders,” Dhankhar said.

The vice president also launched a mobile app of the IMD -- ‘Mausam’ -- that integrates all services offered by the weather office and unveiled new initiatives such as the Panchayat Mausam Seva, Decision Support System and the National Framework for Climate Services. The function was attended by Earth Sciences Minister Kiren Rijju, Earth Sciences Secretary M Ravichandran, IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, former secretaries of the ministry and former directors general of IMD. Union minister Kiren Rijju said India aims to detect and predict all small-scale severe weather events through the augmentation of its weather observation network and the procurement of more powerful computing systems. Rijju emphasised that weather and climate impacts are more pronounced than ever, and India strives to become a more climate-resilient country.

He said that although the IMD’s forecast accuracy has improved by 40 per cent in the last five years compared to the preceding five years, challenges persist in predicting small-scale severe weather events such as cloudbursts. To address this challenge, Rijju highlighted the importance of augmenting the network of doppler radars and automatic weather stations. The procurement of high-power computing systems will enable the IMD to run higher-resolution models, enhancing the ability to detect and predict all small-scale events in the future, he said. “Everything depends on observations. The more observation capacity we have, the better our forecasting capacity,” the minister added. The meteorological department has already installed 10 doppler radars in the western Himalayan region and plans to establish 11 radars in the eastern Himalayan region, Rijju shared.

Murmu visits Modi Gallery at PM Sangrahalaya

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



Newly curated Narendra Modi Gallery at the Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya which will be opened to the public from Tuesday i.e. January 16, 2024 already had a first visitor on Monday, the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, saw the displays there with deep interest. Later, the President shared her experience at the venue on a social platform X saying, “My visit to the Prime Ministers’ Sangrahalaya was a pleasant and illuminating experience. “The galleries dedicated to the past Prime Ministers of India not only rekindled many memories but also offered new ways to engage with our past. As the first visitor of the gallery devoted to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, I was glad to see his contributions to the various spheres of nation-building coherently showcased in one place. The use of advanced technology makes the content all the more engaging.” During her visit of nearly one-and-a-half hours, the President

also saw the Constitution Gallery in the old building as well as various sections such as Sushashan, Paryavaran, Vikas, Antarrashtriya Sadbhaava, Vigyanodaya, Sanskritik Dharohar, and Suraksha, Jan Bhagidari. She was particularly impressed by immersive and interactive displays. She also visited the experiential zone Anubhuti. President expressed her appreciation for the Sangrahalaya by writing, ‘I am convinced that every Indian citizen who comes here and sees the various galleries of the Sangrahalaya will feel proud’ in the visitor book, according to a statement here. The new building Sangrahalaya has the Freedom and Unity

Gallery, which shows films on Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, before proceeding to the galleries of various Prime Ministers. “The President saw with interest the Badminton racket and charkha, and the passbook of Lal Bahadur Shastri. She also saw with deep interest the letters of Jayaprakash Narayan and his jail diary. She saw the recreation of Pokharan 2 nuclear tests, the display on Golden Quadrilateral, and the Kargil War film. The President also saw with deep interest the display of the Indo-US Civil nuclear deal,” said the statement.

India has seen significant reduction in poverty in last one decade: Niti Aayog

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India has experienced a significant reduction in its poverty in the last one decade with 24.82 crore people exiting multidimensional poverty line between 2013-14 to 2022-23, a report by government’s think tank NITI Aayog said on Monday. The Paper by Prof Ramesh Chand, Member, NITI Aayog which was released in presence of BVR Subrahmanyam, CEO NITI Aayog, said India has registered a significant decline in multidimensional poverty line from 29.17 per cent in 2013-14 to 11.28 per cent in 2022-23 i.e. a reduction of 17.89 percentage points. Uttar Pradesh registered the largest decline in the number of poor with 5.94 crore people escaping multidimensional poverty during the last nine years followed by Bihar at 3.77 crore, Madhya Pradesh at 2.30 crore and Rajasthan at 1.87 crore. The paper also shows that the pace of decline in poverty headcount ratio using the exponential method was much faster between 2015-16 to 2019-21 (10.66 per cent annual rate of decline) compared to period 2005-06 to 2015-16 (7.69 per cent annual rate of decline). All 12 indicators of MPI have recorded significant improvement during the entire study period. To assess the poverty levels in the year 2013-14 against the current scenario (i.e. for the year 2022-23), projected estimates have been used due to data limitations for these specific periods. Significant initiatives covering all dimensions of poverty have led to 24.82 crore individuals



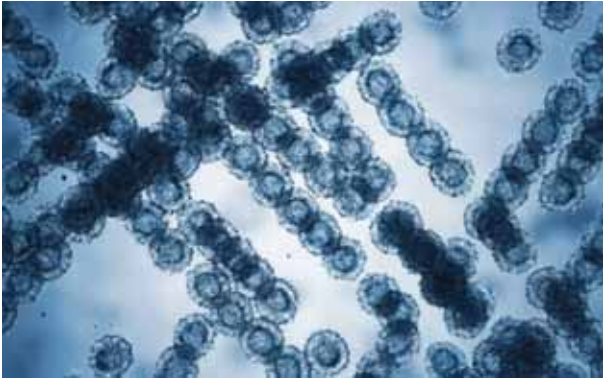
escaping multidimensional poverty in the last 9 years. As a result, India is likely to achieve its SDG target of halving multidimensional poverty well before 2030. The Government’s persistent dedication and resolute commitment to enhancing the lives of the most vulnerable and deprived have been instrumental in this accomplishment, said the report. The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is a globally recognized comprehensive measure that captures poverty in multiple dimensions beyond monetary aspects. MPI’s global methodology is based on robust Alkire and Foster (AF) method that identifies people as poor based on universally acknowledged metrics designed to assess acute poverty, providing a complementary perspective to conventional monetary poverty measures. The report attributed the decline in poverty to initiatives like Poshan Abhiyan and Anemia Mukht Bharat which have significantly enhanced access to healthcare facilities, leading to a substantial decrease in deprivation. Operating one of the world’s largest food security programs,

the Targeted Public Distribution System under the National Food Security Act covers 81.35 crore beneficiaries, providing food grains to rural and urban populations. Recent decisions, such as extending free food grain distribution under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana for another five years, exemplify Government’s commitment. Various programs addressing maternal health, clean cooking fuel distribution through Ujjwala Yojana, improved electricity coverage via Saubhagya, and transformative campaigns like Swachh Bharat Mission and Jal Jeevan Mission have collectively elevated living conditions and overall well-being of people. Additionally, flagship programs like Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana and PM Awas Yojana have played pivotal roles in financial inclusion and providing safe housing for the underprivileged. While the performance of States varies, some States which were traditionally having high poverty have made remarkable progress in helping people escape poverty, thus reducing inter-state disparities in multidimensional poverty.

Annual deaths from fungal diseases spike to 3.75 million, reveals study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Indicating a disturbing rise in deaths from fungal diseases worldwide, a global study using data from 80 countries including India has said that the annual total of mortalities from such ailment is now estimated at 3.75 million, a figure that doubles previous estimates, and outnumbers deaths from malaria six-fold and from tuberculosis three-fold. Fungal diseases can be particularly problematic in individuals with weakened immune systems, such as those with HIV/AIDS, cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy, and organ transplant recipients. There are about 12 million species of fungi thriving in marine, freshwater, desert, forests and almost all other ecosystems on the earth. Of these, a fraction cause infections in humans. The research, published in the journal Lancet Infectious Diseases, calculated an annual total at about 6.55 million acute cases. The work is the result of a collaboration of over 300 professionals across the world who contributed to published estimates for their country and individual fungal diseases. Previous estimates were imprecise as many fungal diseases exacerbate an existing disorder, itself often severe, such as leukaemia or AIDS, said David Denning, a professor of infectious disease at The University of Manchester, UK. However, according to the



study, of the deaths linked to fungal disease, around 68 per cent or 2.55 million were likely to have been directly caused by it. Around 1.2 million deaths (32 per cent) had other underlying disease, with fungal disease contributing. “This work is the first global comprehensive annual incidence estimate of fungal disease, yet many gaps and uncertainties remain,” said Denning. Around a third of 3.23 million chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) deaths worldwide are linked to infection with the fungus Aspergillus, the researcher explained. Though pulmonary tuberculosis was classified as the cause of death in 1.2 million people in 2019, as many as 340,000 (3.4 lakh) of these could actually be fungal disease deaths, the researchers said. Of the estimated 311,594 (3.1 lakh) leukaemia deaths globally in 2020, 14,000 (4.5 per cent) could be attributable to aspergillosis, and some to other fungal infections, they said. Lung and bronchus cancer

annual deaths stand at 1.8 million, with the new estimate indicating that aspergillosis is implicated in 49,000 deaths (2.7 per cent) of them. Candida -- another type of fungal infection -- is a serious problem in intensive care, complex surgical patients, diabetes, cancer and renal failure, as well as premature babies. The researchers estimate that about 1.57 million people suffer from Candida bloodstream infection or invasive candidiasis with 9,95,000 (9.9 lakh) deaths (63.6 per cent), each year. “Our prior estimates of annual mortality were 1.5 to 2 million, yet we now find the probable number dying with or of a fungal infection is double this at about 3.75 million,” Denning added. Fungal diseases, also known as mycoses, can affect various parts of the body and can range from mild to severe, depending on the individual’s immune system and the specific type of fungus involved. Common fungal infections include candidiasis, aspergillosis, cryptococcosis, and others.

First in human trials for deadly Nipah vaccine launched in UK

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

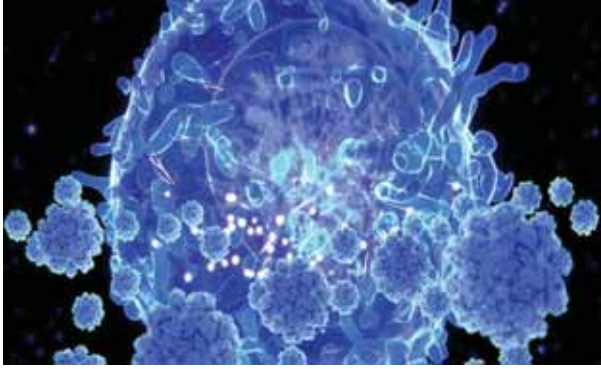
Scientists at the University of Oxford in the UK have launched first-in-human vaccine trials for the deadly Nipah virus which impacts many Asian countries, including India. The trials of the ChAdOx1 NipahB vaccine will consist of 51 people aged 18 to 55, which will be led by the Oxford Vaccine Group. Nipah virus is a zoonotic virus that can be transmitted from animals to humans. It can cause severe respiratory illness and encephalitis, with outbreaks reported in several Asian countries, including India. Developing a vaccine for Nipah virus is crucial due to its potential for causing deadly outbreaks. Outbreaks have occurred in countries in Asia, including Singapore, Malaysia, Bangladesh and India, with a recent one in Kerala in September last year, they said. Nipah virus is carried by fruit bats and may also be transmitted by contact with infected animals (such as pigs) or from person-to-person via close contact, according to the researchers. The virus, which is recognised by the World Health Organization as a priority disease requiring urgent research, belongs to the same family of paramyxoviruses as more well-known pathogens like measles, they said. Despite the first outbreaks of Nipah virus occurring 25 years ago in Malaysia and Singapore, there are currently no approved vaccines or

treatments. “Nipah virus was first identified in 1998, and yet 25 years on the global health community still has no approved vaccines or treatments for this devastating disease,” said the trial’s Principal Investigator, Brian Angus, from the University of Oxford’s Nuffield Department of Medicine. “Due to the high mortality rate and the nature of Nipah virus transmission, the disease is identified as a priority pandemic pathogen. This vaccine trial is an important milestone in identifying a solution that could prevent local outbreaks occurring, while also helping the world prepare for a future global pandemic,” Angus said. In-Kyu Yoon, acting executive director of vaccine research & development at CEPI, funders of the trial, said Nipah has epidemic potential, with its fruit bat hosts found in areas home to over two billion people. “This trial is a step forward in efforts to build a suite of tools to protect against this killer virus. Knowledge gained could also inform development of other Paramyxovirus countermeasures,” Yoon said. The vaccine uses the ChAdOx1 platform, the same viral vector vaccine platform that was used for the Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, the researchers said. The project will run over the next 18 months, with further trials expected to follow in a Nipah-affected country, they added.

US scientists find immune cell that can eliminate cancer, Covid-19

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a groundbreaking discovery, researchers from City of Hope, California has given a ray of hope to cancer patients as they found that a type of immune cell in the human body known to be important for allergy and other immune responses that can also attack and eliminate cancer and fight viruses like SARS-Cov-2, that causes Covid-19 infection. Since these cells which are called human type-2 innate lymphoid cells (ILC2s), can be expanded outside of the body and applied in larger numbers to overpower a tumour’s defences and eliminate malignant cells in the future could be manufactured, preserved by freezing, and then administered to patients. “In the future, these cells could be manufactured, preserved by freezing, and then administered to patients. Unlike T cell-based therapies like CAR T-cells, which necessitate using the patient’s own cells due to their specific characteristics, ILC2s might be sourced from healthy donors, presenting a



distinct potential therapeutic approach as an allogeneic and ‘off-the-shelf’ product,” Yu added. The cells were tested in mouse models with cancer, according to the preclinical research published in the journal Cell. “We have identified human ILC2 cells as a new member of the cell family capable of directly killing all types of cancers, including blood cancers and solid tumours,” said Jianhua Yu, Professor in the Department of Hematology & Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation at City of Hope, California, US. In a previous research focussed on mouse cells, ILC2s had not consistently shown promise

when tested for their cancer-killing abilities. However, in the new study, researchers found “that human ILC2s function as direct cancer killers while their mouse counterparts do not,” said Michael Caligiuri, Professor in the Department of Hematology & Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation at City of Hope. To test human ILC2s, Yu and the team first isolated the cells from a blood sample. Then, they developed a novel platform that in four weeks can expand ILC2s harvested from the body 2,000-fold. They next injected these externally expanded ILC2s into mice engrafted with human acute

myeloid leukaemia (AML) or solid tumours, including pancreatic cancer, lung cancer and glioblastoma. The results showed that this ILC2 population could kill these tumours via a previously unknown cancer-killing mechanism. “One convincing and direct piece of evidence appeared when we placed one ILC2 and one tumour cell directly together and found that the tumour cell died, but the ILC2 cell survived,” Yu said. “This proves that the ILC2s directly killed the cancer cell in the absence of any other cell.” ILC2s are rare in the body, Caligiuri said, found in highest numbers in the lungs, gut and skin. Yu noted that the ILC2s do not need to come from the cancer patient’s own cells, meaning that there may be the possibility of harvesting and freezing ILC2s from healthy donors for ILC2 treatment options in the future. “We aim to really expand the applications of these findings, potentially beyond cancer treatments,” Yu said, noting that “ILC2s may even work against viruses, such as COVID-19”.

Modi, Putin discuss ties



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday had a “good conversation” with Russian President Vladimir Putin as they discussed various positive developments in the two countries’ “special and privileged strategic partnership.” In a post on X, Modi said he and Putin also agreed to chalk out a road map for future initiatives. “Had a good conversation with President Putin. We discussed various positive developments in our Special & Privileged Strategic Partnership and agreed to chalk out a roadmap for future initiatives. We also had a useful exchange of views on various regional and global issues, including Russia’s Presidency of the BRICS,” the prime minister

Robotic assisted myomectomy performed on US based patient successfully

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A US-based 32-year-old patient diagnosed with two large fibroids within her uterine muscle was successfully treated at an Indian hospital recently in the NCR region through robotic-assisted myomectomy, showcasing the reach of robot-assisted arms in the body parts where human hands cannot reach. The patient has been married for four years and had sought medical attention due to heavy and painful menstrual periods and her inability to conceive. A medical examination revealed the presence of two fibroid, measuring 5 cm and 10 cm in size, causing her distressing symptoms and infertility issues, said Dr. Anjana Singh, Director & HOD, Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Fortis Hospital Noida. Explaining about the functioning of the robot-assisted myomectomy, the doctor said that the sophisticated gadget helps the surgeon put tools and a tiny camera through


small incisions on the lower belly. “This gives the surgeon a better view of the area which moves the tools using a robotic controller. The advanced dexterity of the robotic arms allows meticulous fibroid removal while preserving the integrity of the uterus,” she said, adding that the use of robotic technology decreases postoperative pain, ensuring a more comfortable healing process. The patient was under the follow-up of the doctors for over three weeks after the surgery, after which she flew back to the USA in the last week of December. The doctors also said that any delay in surgery would have caused the fibroid to grow, worsening her symptoms and requiring a more complicated surgery thereafter. “The benefits of this cutting-edge procedure were manifold. Firstly, the patient experienced a significant reduction in her heavy and painful menstrual periods, leading to a substantial improvement in her quality of life. Additionally, the removal of

the fibroids eliminated the pressure on her uterine lining and cavity, increasing her chances of conceiving naturally. The reduced recovery time meant that she could resume her daily activities relatively quickly,” added Dr. Anjana Singh. The case also highlights the growing demand of Indian medical tourism among foreigners. “As in this patient’s case not only were the waiting times for surgery unreasonably long, but the associated costs were also exorbitant. This led her to explore alternative options. In India, she got medical reprieve at a low-cost budget,” said an official from Fortis Noida. According to reports, India’s medical tourism has grown rapidly in recent years, with an increase in foreign tourists from 183,000 in 2020 to 304,000 in 2021. It is expected that the medical tourism market is likely to grow at a CAGR of more than 20% between 2023 and 2027 to more than USD 35 billion from current USD 6 billion.

FIRST COLUMN


CONTRASTS IN GLOBAL ROAD ETIQUETTE

A touch of empathy on the road can enhance the quality of life in cities



SANJAY CHANDRA

It might have been around 1965. One afternoon, returning from the market in Aligarh in my father's jeep, we stopped at a red signal. One car, driven at a very high speed, coming from right to left, jumped the signal. He hit a cyclist, and another man crossing the road on the left side, and possibly a few others as well. I can still remember those who had fallen. But the driver did not stop. This left such an impression on my tender 6-year-old mind, that I fear crossing even a traffic signal that is green for me unless I have fully ascertained that no vehicle is moving in any other direction. Over the years, as I have roamed the globe quite extensively, I have noticed an inherent disregard for traffic rules in the Indian subcontinent, where everyone on the road assumes that only they have the right of way. People in other parts of the world are not so callous. One time we were travelling back from a project site to Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, a drive of more than 500 kilometres. I must have dozed off and woke up with a start when I heard a loud thud. Our vehicle had hit an old man at some speed. As per the sequence narrated to me by colleagues travelling with me, the old man was at fault.



My Indian mind was scared, and as the road was deserted, I am ashamed to recall that I, and probably a few of those sitting in the rear, implored the driver to rush from the spot. Reluctantly he tried to move when out of nowhere the nearby villagers rushed in. Local policemen took us to the village police station for our safety. We requested to be permitted to leave as we had to catch a flight. The local policemen eventually decided to let us go, but with the stipulation that one of them would accompany us to Addis; the driver would then have to return to the village next morning with the policeman for the law to take its course. The local driver was persistent that he should be arrested as he had committed an accident. Another time, I travelled to Switzerland. One early morning we were picked up by our host around six. On a deserted junction, our host cum driver stopped at a red traffic signal even though no vehicles were visible in any direction. We stood there till the light turned green. I have seen vehicles waiting patiently on the crowded Sukhumvit in Bangkok, and even in other cities elsewhere, if even a single pedestrian has stepped onto the zebra to cross the road. No driver would honk impatiently instigating the driver in the front to run over the hapless pedestrian. To me these instances across the globe have been revealing, as I continue to see law being broken with impunity by even the very powerful on our roads. Just a little empathy towards others is what is needed in this fast-paced life!

(The writer is an engineer and author of three books and a creative writing coach; views are personal)

Conservation strategies to protect big cat stripes

The primary threat to India's tiger population is the illegal trade in its body parts; international demand for tiger skin and bones never dries up

The tale of tigers highlights the impact of human activities on wildlife bringing out the urgent need for effective conservation strategies to protect these magnificent creatures and their habitats. The surge in the human population and its impact on all entities, living and nonliving, has led geologists to characterize the current epoch as the Anthropocene. As we navigate through it, we bear the responsibility to ensure that the tiger's roar continues to resonate in our forests. This is especially significant as our country shelters around 3,167 tigers, which is more than 75% of the global tiger population. The Status of Tigers Report released in 2023 by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) shows a 6.7% increase in tiger population over 2018 figures. This promising news, unfortunately, is tinged with concern. The Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) reported a worrying increase in tiger deaths, from 143 in 2022 to 206 in 2023. Disturbingly, the figures for tiger mortality and poaching (including seizures), have also risen from 104 and 39 in 2022 to 150 and 56 in 2023, respectively. The authorities need to be concerned also because as per the NTCA report, the figure of 6.7 percent for 2018-2023 is a significant drop from the 33 percent increase between 2014-2018. Further, there is a decrease in tiger populations in the Western Ghats and the Northeastern hills & Brahmaputra plains from 981 and 219 in 2018 to 824 and 194 in 2023. The primary threat to India's tiger population is the illegal trade in tiger bones, coveted for their use in traditional oriental medicine, and the international trade in tiger skin and body parts. However, it's vital not to let the issue of illegal trade overshadow the grassroots issues contributing to the rise in tiger deaths and slowing population growth. The long-term survival of tigers is influenced by the changing dynamics between humans and these majestic creatures. A global study on large carnivore attacks from 1950 to 2019, analyzing 5,440 incidents, highlights escalating conflicts in areas where human activities overlap with carnivore habitats. This complicates conservation efforts, especially in regions with frequent human attacks. Diverse geographical landscapes present different scenarios due to increasing human populations encroaching into shrinking tiger ranges, co-expansion of human and tiger populations, and areas where they were previously extirpated and are now making a return. The overarching challenge in all these areas is the development of effective systems that promote coexistence between humans and the potentially threatening species. Foresters have an onerous task here! Tiger conservation success largely depends on local communities' attitudes towards cohabitation with them. The incidence of carnivore attacks is intricately tied to the socioeconomic context, with recreational activities in affluent areas and livelihood pursuits in low-income remote regions posing distinct risks. The interplay of socioeconomic and ecological factors shapes a complex dynamic that influences human-tiger interactions. Similarly, deforestation, urbanization, infrastructure development, mining, and farmland expansion are causing habitat fragmentation and encroachment, disrupting tiger habitats and increasing human-tiger encounters which cannot be attributed solely to the tigers. Incidents



THE INCIDENCES OF CARNIVORE ATTACKS IS INTRICATELY TIED TO THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT, WITH RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN AFFLUENT AREAS AND LIVELIHOOD PURSUITS IN LOW-INCOME REMOTE REGIONS POSING DISTINCT RISKS

of tiger attacks, however, significantly impact public sentiment and require careful and sensitive handling. Of late, escalating encroachments, triggered by unchecked regularizations and illegally recognised forest rights under the Forest Rights Act 2006 (FRA) in the country are bringing larger human populations into closer contact with wildlife. In Protected Areas, tiger reserves were intended to be set up adhering to scientific and objective standards. Critical Tiger Habitats (CTHs) were intended to counteract the irreversible damage to wildlife from human activities. Critical Wildlife Habitats (CWHs) could be created under FRA by modifying forest rights in cases where the co-existence of wildlife and forest dwellers is not possible. While many tiger reserves and CTHs have come into existence under the Wildlife Act, no CWHs appear to have been created under FRA. Rather, there are several tiger reserves wherein ineligible forest rights have been recognized under FRA. It is important to realize that close coexistence triggers anthropogenic changes in both human and wild species' behaviours and results in conflicts that dominate people's lives. Traditional methods of prevention and coexistence are fast diminishing and people are becoming less tolerant while sharing landscapes with tigers. While it is important to use the available legal instruments for conserving tigers and their habitat, preventive measures like expanding protected areas including interstate and trans-border tiger reserves, creating corridors, prioritizing relocation of human communities, improving and restoring habitats, enhancing habitat connectivity, and increasing natural prey availability, are all vital components of a comprehensive strategy to contain tigers within their habitat and prevent potential conflicts and deaths. Decisions favouring habitat heterogeneity, such as mosaic of natural and anthropogenic landscapes cou-

pled with the loss of natural prey do emerge as major drivers behind tiger deaths. The predatory attempts of tigers struggling to survive foster a perception that they are adversaries and need to be eliminated. The arrest of villagers and seizure of a cache of 158 unlicensed single-barrel muzzle loader guns as well as pistols, handguns, long-barrel air guns, gunpowder, handmade bombs and an arms-making unit on the boundary of Simlipal Tiger Reserve in Odisha highlights such perception. In lower-income and rural areas, the majority of attacks occur during work or livelihood activities, such as farming, livestock grazing, fishing, and gathering forest products. Inadequate victim rescue and hospitalization facilities reduce the survival chances of human victims further enhances animosity and triggers poaching. With suburbanization, the carnivores may inadvertently approach houses or parks, drawn even by stray animals and anthropogenic food sources. Lack of prey base makes them food conditioned with alteration in their behaviour. Improper garbage management lack of appreciation of risks and inappropriate human behaviours also contribute to attacks on urban peripheries. With such self-created risk levels, people look towards the forest department to keep them safe from 'their' wildlife! Development of safe behaviour patterns requires dissemination of knowledge about defensive reactions by a tigress with offspring, involuntary sudden encounters, food-related attacks (e.g., when a predator is surprised while defending a carcass), predatory or unprovoked attacks, attacks by wounded or trapped animals, avoidance of provocation, or chasing of wild animals etc. Further, the information that the attacks commonly target children, squatting individuals, and solitary beings including animals can also reduce potential conflicts and help manage human-tiger coexistence across diverse conditions.

The information that deterrence is more challenging in the case of predatory attacks as compared to defensive reactions and that predatory attacks primarily focus on the weakest and smallest individuals is also important for foresters. Notably, research reveals that tiger attacks in the Sundarbans mangrove area (Bay of Bengal) were mostly predatory, while leopard attacks in the Kashmir region exhibited a similar pattern. In contrast, tiger attacks and leopard attacks in other areas of India were predominantly defensive. Such intriguing variations highlight the nuanced dynamics of human-wildlife interactions across different regions and should guide forestry professionals to find practical and sustainable solutions. Foresters today face the challenge of unravelling the roots and complexities surrounding tiger deaths and finding solutions, changing people's mindsets, and ultimately ensuring tiger conservation. Negative attitudes toward tigers built because of anthropogenic biases often intensify and flare up after attacks, emphasizing the importance of proactive measures. With limited resources at their disposal and multiple institutions influencing the relationship between humans and tigers, advocacy, as well as coordination, must also become essential traits of foresters. A professional approach that avoids hasty generalisation underscores the urgent need to carry out research that covers ecological and social contexts along with consideration of external threats posed by poaching as well as the internal challenges within the country's conservation framework. As we stand at this critical juncture, it's important to follow the philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'. Yes, our planet belongs to all species!


(The writers are former principal chief conservators of forests, UP and Maharashtra, views are personal)



The pragmatic approach to counter international terrorism

The idea that a person labelled as a terrorist by one may be considered a freedom fighter by another, needs to be discarded

The recent events in the Red Sea, involving the targeting of an Israeli ship by Iran-backed Houthi groups, followed by retaliatory actions from Israel, along with airstrikes by the UK and US on Houthi locations in Yemen, have heightened tensions in the region. The support extended by Hamas and Hezbollah to the Houthi group raises concerns about the potential for a significant terrorist threat. Previous Israeli strikes, resulting in the death of IRGC General Sayyed Razi Mousavi and Hamas Deputy Leader Saleh-al-Arouri, added to the delicate situation. Abdul-Malik al-Houthi's efforts to garner support have led to a substantial



SUDHIR HINDWAN

increase in the frequency of attacks. Additionally, the double blasts in Karman, Southern Iran, on January 3, 2024, resulting in over 85 casualties and 290 injuries, have further escalated the volatile situation. The violence is spreading to Lebanon and Syria, with incidents like the use of Sana, the capital of Yemen, for planting explosive

devices at airports in Dubai and Midlands a few years ago. From these recent developments, two key lessons emerge. Firstly, there is a likelihood of a surge in transnational terrorist incidents with far-reaching consequences. Secondly, international terrorism is expanding its influence into sea routes, waterways, international trade, logistics, and economies of targeted nations. The global scenario reflects the ability of modern terrorists to strike accurately at chosen times and locations, signaling the growing influence of terrorism in the political landscape worldwide. Despite increased government efforts, terrorism,



both domestic and international, continues to thrive. To address the West Asia issue, collaborative efforts among nations are crucial. A

robust international mechanism for dealing with transnational terrorism must be in place. Media plays a significant role, as irrespon-

sible and exaggerated coverage can fuel terrorism and reduce moral opposition to counter-terrorism measures. Failure to diagnose and address terrorism early can have severe consequences for nations. The strategies of imposing arms and economic sanctions on so-called rogue nations have been counterproductive, garnering international sympathy for these nations. While a permanent solution remains distant, a mature understanding of terrorism by powerful nations is essential. Effective preparedness programs at the government level are necessary. Understanding the motivations of individuals involved in terrorism, along with a well-thought-out approach

to dealing with incidents and their consequences, is vital. Good intelligence, police work, and collaboration with individuals and groups can significantly contribute to improving security. A high-level intelligence network is crucial to anticipate and counter threats, especially with the increasing nexus between drug smugglers and terrorists. The concept of one man's terrorist being another man's freedom fighter must be discarded. Local cooperation with law enforcement, even at personal costs, is essential. Prompt and strict decisions by nations are necessary for psychological control of terrorists. In a changing environment,

security apparatuses and police must diversify activities, bringing together technical and professional expertise. The focus should be on anticipating security needs through specialized courses. Addressing the roots of terrorism and creating general awareness, along with public support against terrorist acts, are essential steps. However, the government's attempt to delegate judgment to police and armed forces must be balanced to avoid diluting benefits and impeding peace and negotiation.

(The wrtier is recipient of Bharat Gaurav and Rastriya Gaurav Award is a professor and an expert of strategic affairs, views are personal)

Missile strikes US-owned vessel off Yemen

AP ■ JERUSALEM

A missile fired from Yemen struck a US-owned ship just off the coast of Yemen in the Gulf of Aden, less than a day after Yemen's Houthi rebels fired an anti-ship cruise missile toward an American destroyer in the Red Sea, officials said.

Suspicion immediately fell on the Iranian-backed Houthis, though the rebels did not immediately acknowledge carrying out the assault on the Gibraltar Eagle. It marked the latest attack roiling global shipping amid Israel's war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The Houthis have targeted that crucial corridor linking Asian and Mideast energy and cargo shipments to the Suez Canal onward to Europe over the war, attacks that threaten to widen that conflict into a regional conflagration.

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, which oversees Mideast waters, said Monday's attack happened some 110 miles (177 kilometers) miles southeast of Aden. It said the ship's captain reported that the "port side of vessel hit from

above by a missile".Private security firms Ambrey and Dryad Global told The Associated Press that the vessel was the Eagle Gibraltar, a Marshall Islands-flagged bulk carrier.

The ship is owned by Eagle Bulk, a Stamford, Connecticut-based firm traded on the New York Stock Exchange. The firm did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

Satellite-tracking data analysed by the AP showed the Eagle Gibraltar had been bound for the Suez Canal, but rapidly turned around at the time of the attack.

The US Navy's Mideast-based 5th Fleet did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Yemen's Houthi rebels did not acknowledge any attack, though they have fired missiles previously in that area. Sunday's attack toward the American warship also marked the first US-acknowledged fire by the Houthis since America and allied nations began strikes Friday on the rebels following weeks of assaults on shipping in the Red Sea.It wasn't presently clear whether the US would retaliate for the latest attacks,

though President Joe Biden has said he "will not hesitate to direct further measures to protect our people and the free flow of international commerce as necessary".

The Houthi fire on Sunday went in the direction of the USS Laboon, an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer operating in the southern reaches of the Red Sea, the US military's Central Command said in a statement.

The Houthis did not immediately acknowledge that attack either. The missile came from near Hodeida, a Red Sea port city long held by the Houthis, the US said.

"An anti-ship cruise missile was fired from Iranian-backed Houthi militant areas of Yemen toward USS Laboon," Central Command said. "There were no injuries or damage reported."The first day of US-led strikes Friday hit 28 locations and struck more than 60 targets with cruise missiles and bombs launched by fighter jets, warships and a submarine. Sites hit included weapon depots, radars and command centres, including in remote mountain areas, the US has said.

Sunak to face UK lawmakers

AP ■ LONDON

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak was due to face Parliament Monday to explain why the UK joined the US in striking Houthi targets in Yemen — and why British lawmakers did not get a say on the military action. Four Royal Air Force Typhoon jets took part in last week's US-led strikes on sites used by the Iran-backed rebels, who have been attacking commercial ships in the Red Sea. The US says Friday's strikes hit Houthi weapons depots, radar facilities and command centres.

The Houthis say they have targeted ships linked to Israel in response to the war in Gaza. But they have frequently attacked vessels with no clear links to Israel, imperiling shipping in a key route for global trade.US forces carried out another strike Saturday on a Houthi radar site. British Defence Secretary Grant Shapps said Monday that Friday's strikes had been



intended "as a single action" rather than part of a campaign, but did not rule out UK participation in further military strikes."We will now monitor very carefully to see what (the Houthis) do next, how they respond and we will see from there," he said.

Keir Starmer, leader of Britain's main opposition Labour Party, said he supported last week's strikes but expects more openness from the government in future.

"If the government is proposing further action, then it should say so and set out the case, and we're going to have to consider that on a case-by-case basis on the merits," he said.

The smaller opposition Liberal Democrats accused the government of "riding roughshod over a democratic convention" that Parliament should get a vote on military action. "For Rishi Sunak to attempt to ignore elected representatives is disgraceful," Liberal Democrat defense spokesman Richard Foord said.

Sunak's government is facing mounting demands on Britain's ever-shrinking military in an increasingly volatile world. Hours after the strikes on the Houthis, Sunak was in Kyiv, where he announced a further 2.5 billion pounds (\$3.2 billion) in military aid to Ukraine and signed a long-term security agreement with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Arevalo sworn in as Guatemala's Prez

AP ■ GUATEMALA CITY

Bernardo Arevalo was sworn in as Guatemala's president on Monday minutes after midnight despite months of efforts to derail his inauguration, including foot-dragging and rising tensions right up until the transfer of power. Arevalo arrives in the presidency after winning August's elections by a comfortable margin. But nothing has been straightforward since, with Attorney General Consuelo Porras and the establishment forces observers say she represents throwing one legal challenge after another at Arevalo and his party.

Despite hundreds of Arevalo's supporters pressuring lawmakers to follow the constitution, even clashing with riot police outside the congress building on Sunday, the inauguration process dragged for hours into the night before he took the oath of office just past midnight.

A progressive academic-turned-politician and son of a Guatemalan president credited with implementing key social reforms in the mid-20th century, Arevalo takes office with expectations of confronting Guatemala's entrenched corruption. But it will not be easy. He has little support in congress and Porras' term as the country's top law enforcement official extends to 2026, though Arevalo has said one of his first orders of business will be to request her resignation.

Supporters had been waiting hours for a festive inauguration celebration in Guatemala City's emblematic Plaza de la Constitucion and were fed up with yet another delay, sweeping police roughly out of their way before gathering outside congress demanding legislators stop delaying and name the delegation that must attend the ceremony.

"If they don't swear him in, we, the people, will swear him in," said one of the demonstrators, Dina Juc, the mayor of the indigenous village of Utatlan Solola. The inauguration was thus tinged by legal wrangling and tensions, just like almost every day since Arevalo's resounding August 20 elec-



tion victory. Congress, which was supposed to attend the inauguration as a special session of the legislature, engaged in bitter infighting over who to recognise as part of the congressional delegation, as members yelled at each other.

The leadership commission tasked with doing that was packed with old-guard opponents of Arevalo, and the delay was seen as a tactic to draw out the inauguration and weaken Arevalo.

"The commission is taking too long to review (legislators') credentials, and they are demanding requirements that aren't even in the law," said Román Castellanos, a congressman from Arevalo's Seed Movement.

Arevalo wrote in his social media accounts that "they are trying to damage democracy with illegalities, inconsequential details and abuses of power."

Samantha Power, administrator of the US Agency for International Development, representing the Biden administration at the inauguration, said via X: "There is no question that Bernardo Arevalo is the President of Guatemala. We call on all sides to remain calm — and for the Guatemalan Congress to uphold the will of the people. The world is watching."

Luis Almagro, secretary general of the Organization of American States, said in the name of the foreign delegations attending the inauguration that the congress must transfer power to Arevalo and respect the will of the people expressed in the elections.

'Gaza needs more aid'

Rafah (Gaza Strip) (AP): Gaza urgently needs more aid or its desperate population will suffer widespread famine and disease, the heads of three major UN agencies warned Monday, as authorities in the enclave reported that the death toll in the Israel-Hamas war had surpassed 24,000.

While the UN agency chiefs did not directly point a finger at Israel, they said aid delivery is hobbled by the opening of too few border crossings, a slow vetting process for trucks and goods going into Gaza, and continuing fighting throughout the territory — all of which Israel plays a deciding factor in.

Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza, sparked by the militant group's Oct 7 attack on southern Israel, has prompted unprecedented destruction in the tiny coastal enclave and triggered a humanitarian catastrophe that has displaced most of Gaza's 2.3 million population and pushed more than a quarter into starvation, according to the UN.

Civilians have become desperate. Video posted Monday to X by Al Jazeera showed hundreds of people rushing toward what appeared to be an aid truck in what the news outlet said was Gaza City. The Associated Press could not immediately independently verify the video and it was not clear when the video was filmed.

A day after the White House said it was time for Israel to scale back its military offensive, the World Food Programme, UNICEF and the World Health Organisation said new entry routes need to be opened to Gaza, more trucks need to be allowed in each day, and aid workers and those seeking aid need to be allowed to move around safely."People in Gaza risk dying of hunger just miles from trucks filled with food," said WFP Executive Director Cindy McCain. "Every hour lost puts countless lives at risk." The Health Ministry in Hamas-ruled Gaza said Monday that the bodies of 132 people killed in Israeli strikes were brought to Gaza hospitals over the past day, raising the death toll from the start of the war to 24,100.

Not interested in being vice-president: Haley

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Indian-American senior Republican Party leader Nikki Haley, the lone woman in the party's presidential race, has said she is not interested in being the vice-president, asserting that she's running to be the next US president and is contending "to win".Haley's remarks came ahead of the Iowa caucuses on Monday, which formally kicks off the beginning of the long process by which the Republicans and Democrats choose their nominees for the presidential election on November 5.

Replying to a question about how she felt about some voters saying they would prefer her as a vice president rather than a president, the 51-year-old former US Ambassador to the UN said, "I don't play for a second. I've never played for a second. I'm not going to start now."

"I'm not interested in being vice president. I'm running to be president, and I'm running



to win, and we will," the former South Carolina governor said in a CBS News interview.

With the Republican contest to choose the nominee for the November 2024 presidential elections beginning on Monday with the Iowa caucus, former president Donald Trump, a front-runner among the party candidates, maintains a sizable lead over Haley, his nearest rival.

According to the latest Des Moines Register/NBC News/Mediacom Iowa Poll, 48 per cent of likely Republican caucusgoers pick Trump, 77, as their first choice for president — a slight dip from the 51 per cent who said the same in December.

Haley has the support of 20 per cent, an increase of four per cent, while Florida Governor Ron DeSantis

slipped to third place with 16 per cent. Vivek Ramaswamy, another India-American in the race, though still in the race, has now fallen back, and experts don't see much hope for the 38-year-old biotech entrepreneur during the primary season beginning on Monday.

On being pressed further on what she would say to voters who like her for vice president but who are still backing Trump, the lone woman in the party's presidential race said, "Well, I think look, if you want four more years of chaos, that's what you're gonna get."

"But what's more concerning is, you look at those head-to-head polls, Trump and Biden are pretty much even. It's going to be a nail-biter of an election. We're going to be holding our breath — I don't want a President Kamala Harris," The Hill newspaper quoted her as saying.

On Sunday, the Indian-American politician said that the Republican contest to

choose the presidential nominee is going to be a two-person race between her and Trump.

"What you're going to see is this is quickly going to become a two-person race. I think it's going to be me and Donald Trump going into New Hampshire. And you're going to see it's already close. It's going to get even closer. And then we're going to take it to my state in South Carolina," Haley told Fox News in an interview on Sunday. Haley's popularity rating has increased in the last couple of weeks, with many experts now believing she is a viable candidate against popular Trump.

"This is going to be definitely an election with two people going into New Hampshire and then into South Carolina.

And so we'll take him on. If he chooses not to debate, that's his plan. But we're going to fight this until the very end. We very much see a path," she said.

Ramaswamy ruled out as ex-US prez running mate

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Donald Trump's top adviser Dhas ruled out Vivek Ramaswamy as the ex-US president's running mate after the Republican frontrunner publicly criticised the Indian-American presidential candidate ahead of the Iowa caucus. The Iowa caucuses, which begin on Monday, formally kick off the beginning of the long process by which the Republicans and Democrats choose their nominees for the presidential election on November 5.

Trump's top adviser, Jason Miller, told the New York Post that voters could "probably" rule out 38-year-old biotech entrepreneur Ramaswamy as the ex-president's running mate. "Pretty safe to say it won't be Vivek," Miller was quoted as saying in the report. On Saturday, Trump, 77, lashed out at Ramaswamy, who is



most closely aligned with him in the race for the Republican nomination, accusing him of "deceitful campaign tricks".

The former president's criticism stemmed from shirts that Ramaswamy's campaign is handing out that say "Save Trump, Vote Vivek" on them. Ramaswamy posted a photo with a group of young men wearing them after his event in Rock Rapids, Iowa, on Saturday, which caught the former president's attention.

"Vivek started his cam-

paign as a great supporter, 'the best President in generations,' etc. Unfortunately, now all he does is disguise his support in the form of deceitful campaign tricks," Trump wrote on Truth Social on Saturday. "Very sly, but a vote for Vivek is a vote for the 'other side' — don't get duped by this. Vote for 'TRUMP, don't waste your vote! Vivek is not MAGA," he added.

The criticism marks the first time Trump and his team have made direct, public attacks against Ramaswamy. Until now, Trump has largely avoided criticising Ramaswamy due to his strong praise and defence of the former president. However, the criticisms come as voters will start making their voices heard in the first-in-the-nation caucuses on Monday and as Ramaswamy has started to become more direct in laying out the case for why he is the Trump alternative, ABC News said.

Trump's grip on Republican politics is put to test in Iowa

AP ■ DES MOINES

Voting is set to begin on Monday night in icy Iowa as former President Donald Trump eyes a victory that would send a resounding message that neither life-threatening cold nor life-changing legal trouble can slow his march toward the Republican Party's 2024 nomination.

The Iowa caucuses, which are the opening contest in the months-long Republican presidential primary process, begin at 8 p.m. EST. Caucus participants will gather inside more than 1,500 schools, churches and community centres to debate their options, in some cases for hours, before casting secret ballots.

While Trump projects confidence, his onetime chief rival, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, is fighting for his political survival



in a make-or-break race for second place. Former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley, the only woman in the race, stands in DeSantis' way. The two have competed aggressively in recent weeks to emerge as the clear alternative to the former president, who has alienated many Americans and could end up being a convicted felon by year's end. "I absolutely love a lot of the things (Trump) did, but his personality is just kind

of getting in his way," said Hans Rudin, a 49-year-old community college adviser from Council Bluffs, Iowa. He said he supported Trump in the past two elections, but will caucus for DeSantis on Monday.

Polls suggest Trump enters the day with a massive lead in Iowa as Haley and DeSantis duel for a distant second. Entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy and former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson are also on the ballot, as is former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, who suspended his campaign last week.

With the coldest temperatures in caucus history expected and dangerous travel conditions in virtually every corner of the rural state, the campaigns are bracing for a low-turnout contest that will test the strength of their support and their organisational muscle.

'It's right time' for Israel to scale back Gaza war as fighting hits 100 days

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The White House said on Sunday that "it's the right time" for Israel to scale back its military offensive in the Gaza Strip, as Israeli leaders again vowed to press ahead with their operation against the territory's ruling Hamas militant group. The comments exposed the growing differences between the close allies on the 100th day of the war. Also Sunday, Israeli warplanes struck targets in Lebanon following a Hezbollah missile attack that killed two Israeli civilians — an older woman and her adult son — in northern Israel. The exchange of fire underscored concerns that the Gaza violence could trigger wider fighting across the



region. The war in Gaza, launched by Israel in response to the unprecedented October 7 attack by Hamas, has killed

nearly 24,000 Palestinians, devastated vast swaths of Gaza, driven around 85 per cent of the territory's 2.3 million residents

from their homes and pushed a quarter of the population into starvation. Speaking on CBS, White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said the US has been speaking to Israel "about a transition to low-intensity operations" in Gaza. "We believe it's the right time for that transition. And we're talking to them about doing that," he said on "Face the Nation."

Israel launched the offensive after the Hamas attack killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took 250 others hostage.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to press ahead until Hamas is destroyed and all of the more than 100 hostages still in captivity are freed.

Arctic freeze continues to blast huge swaths of US with sub-zero temp

AP ■ PORTLAND

A dangerous Arctic blast will continue sweeping across the US on Monday and linger through at least midweek, prolonging a bitter cold that set record-low temperatures in parts of the country and threatens to further disrupt daily life, including an NFL playoff game and the first-in-the-nation presidential nominating contest in Iowa.

The National Weather Service said wind chills are expected to push temperatures 30 degrees below zero from the Northern Rockies to northern Kansas and into Iowa, testing the hardness of caucus-goers willing to brave the deep chill on Monday. "You can't sit home," former President

Donald Trump told supporters Sunday. "If you're sick as a dog, you say, Darling, I gotta make it! Even if you vote and then pass away, it's worth it."

Arctic storms left at least four dead and knocked out electricity to tens of thousands in the Northwest, brought snow to the South and walloped the Northeast with blizzard conditions forcing the postponement of the Pittsburgh Steelers vs Buffalo Bills NFL playoff game hosted in bone-chilling Buffalo, New York.

The game was scheduled to be held Monday after being cancelled Sunday. New York Gov Kathy Hochul, a Buffalo native, posted a video on X, formerly known as Twitter, showing near-whiteout conditions. "Conditions right now in

Orchard Park, where the game would have started moments ago," she wrote early Sunday afternoon. "No visibility and dangerously high winds."

The Bills invited diehard fans to help dig out snow-filled Highmark Stadium, offering \$20 an hour for their labour.

"We made progress shoveling, but not much at all," said Logan Eschrich, a storm chaser who made his way to Buffalo and pitched in.

It remains to be seen if the show will go on Monday afternoon. The weather service expects heavy lake-effect snow to push into upstate New York from Lake Erie, adding to the 1 to 2 feet (30.4 to 60.9 cm) of snow already blanketing the region. Snow fell at a rate of 2 inches (5 cm) per hour.

China fully backs sovereignty of Maldives, says Muizzu

PTI ■ MALE/BEIJING

Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu has praised his country's strategic relationship with China, saying the two countries respect each other and Beijing fully supports the Indian Ocean island's sovereignty. Muizzu's comments came amid an unease in the Maldives' bilateral ties with India after he took office in November last year.

Muizzu, who returned to the Maldives on Saturday after a high-profile state visit to Beijing at the invitation of his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, noted that China has provided assistance to the development of the Maldives since establishing diplomatic relations in 1972. During his just-concluded visit to China, Muizzu, regarded as a pro-China leader, sought to align Maldives closer to Beijing and both countries elevated their ties to a strategic partnership. He also said China's Belt and Road Initiative has taken bilateral relations to a new level. China is not a country that would interfere with the internal affairs of the Maldives, which is why the two countries have a strong relationship, Muizzu was quoted as saying in an interview with China's state-

run CGTN channel.

He added that the Maldives and China respect each other, and China fully supports Maldives' sovereignty. The President expressed his belief that the China-Maldives relations will continue to grow stronger in the future, the official PSM News quoted him as saying in the interview. He also said his Chinese counterpart President Xi puts the interest of citizens first and that China's economy has reached new heights under his leadership.

He added President Xi has assured him that the Chinese government will help the Maldives achieve its goals. President Muizzu said his vision involves strengthening the economy of the Maldives and bringing progress in accordance with the expectations of the people. He also said he wants to transform the Maldives into a country that works in harmony with other developed countries within the framework of his vision. His remarks came amid a row between the Maldives and India over derogatory comments posted by three deputy ministers of the Muizzu government against Prime Minister Narendra Modi leading to a diplomatic row with India. Muizzu suspended the three

ministers after their social media postings, which stirred concern in India and calls for a boycott by Indian tourists who ranked highest in numbers followed by Russia. Chinese tourists figured third.

Muizzu has also asked India to withdraw its military personnel from his country by March 15. According to the latest government figures, there are 88 Indian military personnel stationed in the Maldives to help operate a Dornier aircraft and two helicopters provided by India. Speaking to the press on Saturday after returning from China, President Muizzu indirectly attacked India.

Without naming any country, he said, "We may be small, but that doesn't give you the license to bully us." He also announced plans to reduce the country's dependency on India, including securing imports of essential food commodities and medicine and consumables from other countries.

"We aren't in anyone's backyard. We are an independent and sovereign state," he said, addressing the reporters gathered at the Velana International Airport. He said that no country has the right to exert influence over the domestic affairs of a country, regardless of its size.

He vowed that he would not allow any external influence on the domestic affairs of the Maldives.

Male is also reviewing more than 100 bilateral agreements with New Delhi signed by the previous government here. Meanwhile, the government of Maldives has issued a statement, firmly backing China on the of Taiwan.

China views Taiwan as a rebel province that must be reunified with the mainland, even by force. The victory of Lai Ching-te in Saturday's presidential election is considered a setback for China's efforts to bring Taiwan under its control. His Democratic Progressive Party advocates maintaining the status quo on the issue of reunification.

"The Maldives is firmly committed to the one-China principle, which remains the bedrock of the Maldives relations with China," the foreign ministry said in a press release. The Maldives opposes "any statement or action that undermines China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, opposes all "Taiwan independence" separatist activities, and will not develop any form of official relations with Taiwan," according to the statement.

Ukraine shoots down 2 Russian command and control aircraft

AP ■ KYIV

The Ukrainian air force shot down a Russian early warning and control plane that can spot targets up to 650 kilometers (400 miles) away and a key command centre aircraft that relays information to troops on the ground in a significant blow for the Kremlin's forces, Ukraine's military chief said on Monday. The planes are fundamental tools in helping orchestrate Russian battlefield movements in Ukraine. Shooting them down, if confirmed, would be a landmark feat for Ukraine in the almost two-year war, as fighting along the front line is largely bogged down in trench and artillery warfare. Russia has largely ensured its air dominance during the war, as Ukraine fights with its fleet of Soviet-era warplanes against Moscow's more modern aircraft.

Gen Valeriy Zaluzhnyi, the commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian armed forces, didn't say how the two aircraft — a Beriev A-50 and an Il-22 — were brought down, but Ukraine has received sophisticated air defence systems from its Western allies.

Zaluzhnyi also did not say where the interceptions occurred, though he attached a video to his social media post



Switzerland's Foreign Minister Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis, left, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy sit in a helicopter of the Swiss Air Force after Zelenskyy's arrival at Zurich's Kloten airport, Switzerland on Monday.

with an airplane tracker showing two targets disappearing above the Azov Sea, which lies between Ukraine and Russia, north of the Crimea Peninsula and the Black Sea. There was no immediate official comment from Moscow. Russian war bloggers said both planes had come under friendly fire, though they presented no evidence of that. They claimed the Il-22 was damaged but made a successful landing.

The A-50, which is topped with a large radar, typically carries a crew of 15. The Russian air force reportedly has been operating a fleet of nine such aircraft. A February 2023 drone

attack at an airfield in Belarus damaged a parked A-50, but Russian and Belarusian officials described the damage as minor.

The Il-22 is an airborne command post. It oversees military operations and sends radio signals to troops on the front line. The Russian air force reportedly has a dozen such planes. Ukraine is eager to impress its Western supporters with its ability in deploying the advanced weapons it has received. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was due to meet Swiss President Viola Amherd in Bern later Monday before attending the World Economic Forum in Davos on

Tuesday. Ukrainian officials are striving to keep world attention on the war amid concerns that the conflict is slipping down the list of global priorities. The United Nations appealed on Monday for USD 4.2 billion to help people in Ukraine and displaced outside the country this year.

Martin Griffiths, the UN's humanitarian chief, acknowledged that "the competition for funding is getting greater" because of crises elsewhere, including the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza. Russia, meanwhile, was looking to deepen its ties with North Korea, whose foreign minister began a three-day visit to Moscow on Monday.

The Kremlin is eager to replenish its weapons stockpiles. It has in recent times turned to Iran and North Korea for supplies.

Pyeongyang has likely supplied several types of missiles to Russia to support its war in Ukraine, along with its widely reported shipments of ammunition and shells, the US and its allies have alleged. Russian and Iranian defense and foreign ministers spoke by phone on Monday to discuss bilateral military and military technical cooperation and regional security issues, according to official statements.

North Korea tests solid-fuel missile tipped with hypersonic weapon

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korea on Monday said it flight-tested a new solid-fuel intermediate-range missile tipped with a hypersonic warhead as it pursues more powerful, harder-to-detect weapons designed to strike remote US targets in the region.

The report by North Korea's state media came a day after the South Korean and Japanese militaries detected the launch from a site near the North Korean capital of Pyongyang, in what was the North's first ballistic test of 2024. The launch came two months after North Korea said it successfully tested engines for a new solid-fuel intermediate-range missile, which reflected a push to advance its lineup of weapons targeting US military bases in

Guam and Japan. The North's official Korean Central News Agency said Sunday's launch was aimed at verifying the reliability of the missile's solid-fuel engines and the maneuverable flight capabilities of the hypersonic warhead. It described the test as a success but didn't provide flight details. KCNA did not mention whether North Korean leader Kim Jong Un was present at the test, which it said was part of the country's regular weapons development activities. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the missile flew about 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) before landing in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan. The North's existing intermediate-range missiles, including the Hwasong-12 that may be able to reach the US military hub of

Guam in the Pacific, are powered by liquid-fuel engines, which need to be fueled before launch and cannot stay fueled for long periods of time.

Missiles with built-in solid propellants can be made ready to launch faster and are easier to move and conceal, which theoretically makes it harder for adversaries to detect and preempt the launch. The North since 2021 has also been testing hypersonic weapons, which are designed to exceed five times the speed of sound. If perfected, such systems could potentially pose a challenge to regional missile defense systems because of their speed and maneuverability.

Chang Young-keun, a missile expert at South Korea's Research Institute for National Strategy, said the test Sunday



This photo provided by the North Korean government, shows what it says a flight test of a new solid-fuel intermediate-range in North Korea Sunday. Independent journalists were not given access to cover the event depicted in this image distributed by the North Korean government. The content of this image is as provided and cannot be independently verified. Korean language watermark on image as provided by source reads: "KCNA" which is the abbreviation for Korean Central News Agency.

would have been focused more on developing a solid-fuel first stage for an IRBM than evaluating the purported hypersonic warhead. Experts say it's unclear whether the North's hypersonic vehicles consistently maintained a desired speed exceeding Mach 5 during its tests in 2021 and 2022. But it's likely that the North is trying to build a hypersonic weapons system powered by solid-fuel booster rockets, simultaneously with its efforts to develop the new IRBM, and may conduct more flight tests soon, Chang said. "In particular, a hypersonic missile with IRBM-level range would be an effective mean for evading US missile defenses and striking Guam," Chang said about the North's ambitions. Lee Sung Joon, spokesperson of South Korea's Joint Chiefs

of Staff, said the military was analyzing the North's latest test but declined to provide specific assessments about the North Korean capabilities demonstrated by the launch.

The South's Defense Ministry issued a statement demanding the North to halt its ballistic testing activities that violate UN Security Council resolutions. It said the South Korean military was maintaining a firm joint defense posture with its US allies and is ready to respond "overwhelmingly" in the event of a direct provocation by the North.

Hypersonic weapons were part of a wish-list of sophisticated military assets Kim unveiled in 2021, along with multi-warhead missiles, spy satellites, solid-fuel long-range missiles and submarine-launched

nuclear missiles.

North Korean military scientists and engineers have been checking off Kim's list of goals, testing for the first time last year a solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile, named Hwasong-18, which added to the North's arsenal of weapons targeting the US mainland.

The North's also launched its first military reconnaissance satellite in November and aims to launch three more satellites in 2024, as Kim describes those devices as crucial for monitoring US and South Korean military activities and enhancing the threat of his nuclear-capable missiles.

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula are at their highest point in years after Kim in recent months ramped up his weapons demonstrations.

Feb 8 polls can't be postponed: Pak EC tells Senate

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's election commission on Monday rejected a resolution passed by the Senate earlier this month seeking a delay in the February 8 general election, stating that all arrangements have been completed and it won't be "advisable" to put off the planned polls.

On January 5, the upper House of Parliament passed a non-binding resolution seeking a delay in the general election, citing cold weather and security concerns, increasing the political uncertainty in the country. The resolution, tabled by independent Senator Dilawar Khan, received overwhelming support in the Senate but was slammed as "unconstitutional" by major political parties. It was passed with only 14 lawmakers out of the Senate's 100 members in attendance.

In the statement on Monday, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) said that it deliberated on the resolution and observed that caretaker federal and provincial governments had been issued directions for "beefing up security matrix" and providing a "congenial environment to the electorate" for peaceful elections. The top electoral body said it had made all the necessary arrangements regarding the conduct of general elections, adding that it had also submitted a commitment to the Supreme Court to hold elections on February 8, 2024, the Dawn newspaper reported.

"Likewise, It would not be out of place to mention here that in the past, general elections and local government elections have been held in (the) winter season," it said.

The letter said that it would not be "advisable" for the ECP to postpone general elections "at this stage," according to the

report. Meanwhile, lawmaker Khan wrote a letter to Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani on Monday, saying that it was "disconcerting" that no "tangible steps" had been taken by the election commission to delay the general elections despite the passage of the resolution tabled by him in the Parliament's upper House.

Asserting that the resolution "aptly reflected the collective aspirations of the House", Dilawar said, "However, despite the Senate's explicit urging and the subsequent dispatch of a copy of the resolution to the ECP, it is disconcerting that no tangible steps have been taken by the ECP to postpone the general elections scheduled for February 8."

Dilawar said that as the mover of the resolution, he "firmly believed" that the concerns articulated in the motion must be promptly addressed. "It is imperative that we ascertain the progress made and ensure the postponement of the general elections scheduled for February 8, thereby facilitating the effective participation of people from all areas of Pakistan and across the entire political spectrum in the electioneering process," Dilawar was quoted as saying by the report. The non-binding resolution tabled by Dilawar was rejected by major political parties, which stated that further deferring the electoral process would be "unconstitutional".

A counter resolution was submitted in the Senate by Senator Mushtaq Ahmed Khan, emphasising the need to adhere to "constitutional requirements" and ensure the timely conduct of the polls.

Meanwhile, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) unanimously filed a requisition for the Senate session for timely polls last week.

PTI to participate in elections

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD/LAHORE

The embattled Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's top leader Barrister Gohar Khan on Monday said his party would not boycott the February 8 election despite being forced to contest without its cricket bat poll symbol. Gohar's statement came just days after the PTI party was deprived of its iconic electoral symbol cricket bat and left with no option but to field its candidates as independents for the polls.

"We won't boycott the elections and God willing fully participate in them," Gohar said, adding that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party would issue a list of supported candidates with their respective electoral symbols within three days. A three-member panel of the Supreme Court in its judgment on late Saturday upheld the decision of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) that in its ruling of December 22 had declared the PTI's intra-

party polls as "unconstitutional" and revoked its poll symbol. Speaking to the media outside the Adiala Jail said the apex court's verdict had affected the fundamental rights of the people of Pakistan and it was a "conspiracy against democracy". He also said the party would file a review petition against the judgment, noting that a five-member apex court bench should have heard the matter as the case concerned Article 17 of the Constitution.

When asked about his interaction with the PTI founder Imran Khan, who has been confined in the Adiala Jail, Gohar said Khan's message for all party supporters is: "Ghabrana nahi hay [don't worry], remain steadfast and peaceful. Protect your vote and exercise your right on February 8." Separately, the PTI withdrew its plea seeking contempt proceedings against the ECP for allegedly not implementing the apex court's orders of providing the party with a level play-

ing field for the upcoming general elections. The plea was filed on December 26 and the case was being heard by a three-member bench.

PTI A 'TERRORIST PARTY': MARYAM

Senior PML-N leader and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's daughter Maryam Nawaz on Monday said that Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party was deprived of its cricket bat election symbol because it is a "terrorist party". Addressing the maiden election rally of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party in Okara city, some 125 km from Lahore, Maryam fully supported Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa's decision to deprive the PTI of its iconic election symbol.

"The Supreme Court has rightly taken away 'bat' from you (Imran Khan) as a terrorist party cannot be allocated an election symbol," she said.

Iran sentences imprisoned Nobel laureate to additional prison term

AP ■ DUBAI

A court in Iran has slapped imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi with an additional sentence of 15 months for allegedly spreading propaganda against the Islamic Republic, her family said on Monday. According to a post on Instagram by Mohammadi's family, the new sentence was handed down on December 19. It said Mohammadi had refused to attend the court sessions. The verdict also said that after serving her time, Mohammadi would be banned from travelling abroad for two years and would be barred from membership in political and social groups and from having a mobile phone for the same duration.

The ruling also banishes her from the capital, Tehran, meaning she would likely have to serve the new sentence in another province in Iran. Mohammadi is held in Tehran's notorious Evin Prison where she is serving a 30-month sentence for spreading propaganda against the ruling system, disobediences in prison and defamation of authorities. The latest verdict reflects the Iranian theocracy's anger that she was awarded the Nobel prize last October for years of activism despite a decadeslong government campaign targeting her.

Mohammadi is the 19th woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize and the second Iranian woman after human rights activist Shirin Ebadi in 2003. The 51-year-old Mohammadi has kept up her activism despite numerous arrests by

Iranian authorities and spending years behind bars. Earlier in November, Mohammadi went on hunger strike over being blocked along with other inmates from getting medical care and to protest the country's mandatory headscarves for women. Mohammadi was a leading light for nationwide, women-led protests sparked by the death last year of a 22-year-old woman in police custody that have grown into one of the most intense challenges to Iran's theocratic government. That woman, Mahsa Amini, had been detained for allegedly not wearing her headscarf to the liking of authorities.

For observant Muslim women, the head covering is a sign of piety before God and modesty in front of men outside their families.

IMF team overseeing SL bailout programme visits Jaffna

Colombo (PTI): A team of senior IMF officials overseeing Sri Lanka's bailout programme has toured the Tamil-dominated Northern district of Jaffna for the first time under the current USD 2.9 billion agreement, officials said here on Monday. Led by Peter Brueur, the International Monetary Fund senior mission chief for Sri Lanka, the team last week met with the Governor of the Northern province, PMS Charles, and other senior officials and discussed issues related to economic growth in the province, demining programmes, resettlement of conflict-displaced individuals and compensation for conflict victims.

They also discussed the educational matters related to Jaffna University, post-

COVID operations, and the adverse effects of climate change on the northern region, the officials said. The team, which returned to Colombo on Monday, is scheduled to engage with the finance ministry. Talks are expected with Shehan Semasinghe, the state minister of finance, who leads the local IMF engagement under President Ranil Wickremesinghe.

The discussions in Colombo are anticipated to focus on the targets outlined in the current IMF programme, which advocates large scale economic reforms in the island nation.

In a meeting with President Wickremesinghe on Thursday last, Brueur had expressed satisfaction with

Sri Lanka's progress in implementing reforms aimed at revitalising the economy.

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e/sealed tenders are hereby invited for the purchase and supply of following items:-		
Sr. No.	Name of Work/Item	Period/Tentative Qty
1.	For Verka Bathinda Dairy Hiring the outsource Agency (service Provider) for providing Manpower (unskilled/semi-skilled/skilled/highly skilled & other categories) at Verka Bathinda Dairy.	01-04-2024 to 31-03-2026
2.	For Verka Gurdaspur Dairy a) Hiring of insulated Road Milk Tankers for transportation of :- i. Milk from BMCs/MCCs to Verka Gurdaspur Dairy Capacity -10MT. ii. Milk from Verka Gurdaspur Dairy to other milk unions (vice- versa) within and outside state.Capacity 15 MT, 20 MT. b) Hiring of power Plant for conversion of skimmed milk into SMP (Skimmed Milk Power) c) Supply of fresh cut fire wood.	04 03 01 No's
3.	For Verka Ludhiana Dairy a) Outsourcing of various activities of city supply dispatch dock. b) invited for sale of the unserviceable material.	One year with extension upto 3 months. One Time Basis
4.	For Verka Amritsar Dairy Sealed tender for :- a) Allotment of Verka milk booth through Draw System at :- i. Civil hospital Fatehgarh Churian. ii. Civil Hospital Majtha. iii. Govt. Bhai Dharam singh Memorial hospital, Ranjit Avenue iv. Primary Health Centre, Naushera. v. DTO Office Amritsar. b) Hiring of vehicles for supply of fresh milk and milk products on cash & carry basis at vaitcha and surrounding areas (Distance Approx 200 km.	05 01
5.	For Verka Jalandhar Dairy a) Steam Coal having calorific value not less than 5500 kcal/kg. b) The transportation of LSHS Premium & LDO from Panipat, Mathura & Hissar refinery to Milk Plant Jalandhar.	1500 MT (400-500 MT per month) Annual
6.	For Verka Mega Dairy, Bassi Pathana Engaging of outsource agency for providing un-skilled/semi-skilled/skilled/highly-skilled and other post against manpower at Verka Mega Dairy Bassi Pathana.	Annual
NOTE: 1. For complete details regarding above tender (NIT), please visit our website i.e. www.verka.coop & e Tendering portal i.e. eproc.punjab.gov.in . 2. Corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only.		
Dy. General Manager (Purchase)		

Sensex closes at record high

Nifty scales 22K, mounts on sharp gain in IT shares

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex closed above the 73,000 level for the first time while broader Nifty scaled the 22,000-point peak on Monday as key stock indices stayed on the record-breaking run powered by a rally in IT shares, Reliance and HDFC Bank.

Rising for the fifth day in a row, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 759.49 points or 1.05 per cent to settle at a lifetime closing high of 73,327.94. During the day, it rallied 833.71 points or 1.14 per cent to hit an all-time intra-day peak of 73,402.16.

The Nifty climbed 202.90 points or 0.93 per cent to settle at a new closing high of 22,097.45. During the day, it zoomed 221 points or 1 per

cent to reach a lifetime intra-day high of 22,115.55.

A strong rally in IT shares Infosys, TCS, Wipro and HCL Tech after better than expected Q3 results helped the indices scale new record high levels. Oil & gas and energy sector shares also boosted the rally.

“The market gained momentum, led by the uptick in the IT index with the growing optimism about increased discretionary spending and strong deal wins. The US bond yield edged lower as market participants bet on the FED easing cycle, which is expected to start in March,” said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

Among the Sensex firms, Wipro jumped over 6 per cent after the IT company’s



December quarter earnings beat estimates.

The other prominent gainers were HCL Technologies, HDFC Bank, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, Bharti Airtel and Reliance Industries.

HCL Technologies on Friday reported a 6.2 per cent increase

in consolidated net profit at Rs 4,350 crore, highest ever on a quarterly basis, in the three months ended December 2023 on the back of growth in both services and software businesses.

Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv, Larsen & Toubro, Tata Motors,

Tata Steel and Axis Bank were among the laggards.

IT majors were on the front foot while select heavyweights from banking and energy baskets also aided the uptick, according to Ajit Mishra, SVP - Technical Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.67 per cent and smallcap index rallied 0.11 per cent.

Among the indices, IT jumped 1.79 per cent, teck climbed 1.79 per cent, oil & gas (1.70 per cent), energy (1.66 per cent), telecommunication (1.41 per cent) and financial services (0.81 per cent).

Commodities and metal were the laggards.

Meanwhile, wholesale inflation index edged up 0.73 per cent in December from 0.26

per cent in the previous month mainly due to a sharp rise in food prices. Wholesale inflation was in the negative zone from April to October.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Shanghai settled in the green while Hong Kong ended marginally lower. European markets were trading mostly lower. The US markets ended on a muted note on Friday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.29 per cent to USD 78.06 a barrel.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 340.05 crore on Friday, according to exchange data.

The BSE benchmark zoomed 847.27 points or 1.18 per cent to settle at 72,568.45 on Friday. The Nifty climbed 247.35 points or 1.14 per cent to settle at 21,894.55.

Gold rises ₹150; silver jumps ₹300



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices rose Rs 150 to Rs 63,550 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday amid strong cues in the overseas markets, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal settled at Rs 63,400 per 10 grams.

Silver also jumped Rs 300 to Rs 76,700 per kilogram, while it had closed at Rs 76,400 per kg in the previous close.

“Spot gold prices (24 carats) in the Delhi markets are trading at Rs 63,550/10 grams, up by Rs 150, tracking positive cues

from overseas markets,” Saumil Gandhi, senior analyst of commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

In the international markets, gold and silver were quoting higher at USD 2,055 per ounce and USD 23.20 per ounce, respectively.

Gold prices resumed trading on a positive note, supported by haven demand, due to weak US producer price index (PPI) data and geopolitical tensions in the Middle East which have increased the expectations of interest rate cuts by the Federal Reserve at its meeting in March, Gandhi added.

OYO plans 400 properties in spiritual destinations, including Ayodhya, this year

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hospitality tech platform OYO on Monday said it is planning to launch 400 properties in major spiritual destinations like Ayodhya, Varanasi, Tirupati, and Katra-Vaishno Devi by the end of this year.

The planned expansion in major spiritual hotspots across the country has been fuelled by a surge in domestic travel and rising interest in spiritual tourism, OYO said in a statement.

The hospitality platform has selected various destinations, including Ayodhya, Puri, Shirdi, Varanasi, Amritsar, Tirupati, Haridwar, Katra-Vaishno Devi, and Char Dham route, to launch properties. There has been a 350 per cent increase in searches for Ayodhya on the OYO platform over the past year, driven by the upcoming opening of the grand Ram Mandir on January



22, 2024, it added.

“Spiritual tourism in India is on the precipice of a monumental surge, poised to be one of the biggest growth drivers of our industry in the coming five years. The opening of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya stands as a testament to this, and witnessing the excitement firsthand as I join in the grand ceremony will be truly humbling,” OYO founder and Group CEO

Ritesh Agarwal said.

Renewed fervour for spiritual journeys extends far beyond Ayodhya, with destinations like Puri, Shirdi, and Varanasi experiencing similar excitement, he added.

“By offering comfortable and affordable accommodation options across these sacred sites, we aim to ensure every spiritual journey finds a welcoming haven, allowing pilgrims to fully immerse them-

selves in the transformative power of religion and spirituality,” Agarwal said.

OYO said Ayodhya has consistently held the top position in searches on its app over the past year. On New Year’s Eve, the city witnessed a 70 per cent surge in OYO app users, surpassing popular leisure destinations, such as Goa at 50 per cent and Nainital at 60 per cent.

To cater to the influx of pilgrims in Ayodhya, OYO has launched 50 homestays, offering a total of approximately 1,000 rooms, it said, adding that the properties are strategically situated near key landmarks, providing easy access to prominent religious sites and tourist attractions.

OYO has also partnered with the Ayodhya Development Authority and Uttar Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation to ensure smooth and timely operations, the statement said.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Reliance Electrolyser Manufacturing, Jindal India and John Cockerill Greenko Hydrogen Solutions are among the six firms who have emerged as successful bidders for getting incentives to set up facilities to manufacture electrolyzers, a critical component required for green hydrogen production.

The bids came in response to a tender by Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) inviting players for setting up 1.5GW manufacturing capacity for electrolyzers, as per a SECI statement.

Bids for electrolyzers manufacturing were invited on July 7 last year. A SECI statement issued on January 12, 2024, showed that Reliance Electrolyser Manufacturing Ltd has bagged incentives of Rs 444 crore for setting up of 300MW of manufacturing capacities for electrolyzers.



Similarly, John Cockerill Greenko Hydrogen Solutions Private Ltd and Jindal India Ltd have also bagged incentives of Rs 444 crore each for setting up 300 MW manufacturing capacity of electrolyzers each.

Ohmium Operations Pvt Ltd has bagged Rs 202.76 crore incentives for 137 MW, while Advait Infratech Ltd (consortium with Rajesh Power Service Private Ltd) will get incentives of Rs 148 crore for 100 MW.

L&T Electrolysers Ltd has bagged incentives of Rs 93.24 crore for 63MW.

The six firms have bagged total incentives of Rs 1,776 crore for 1200 MW under the ‘Bucket-1: Electrolyser manufacturing capacity based on any stack technology’.

As many as 14 firms’ bids were qualified for the incentives. The eight firms which are not allocated any capacity under this scheme are Matrix Gas and Renewables in consortium

with Gensol Engineering; HHP Seven; ACME Cleantech Solutions; Adani New Industries; Waaree Energies; Avaada Electrolyser; Green H2 Network India and Hild Electric.

Under the ‘Bucket-2: Electrolyser manufacturing capacity based on indigenously developed stack technology’, Homihydrogen and Adani New Industries have emerged as successful bidders.

Homihydrogen will get incentives of Rs 150.22 crore for setting up 101.5 MW of electrolyzers manufacturing capacity, while Adani New Industries bagged Rs 293.78 crore for 198.5 MW.

Under the Bucket-2, seven firms were in the fray. As many as five were not allocated incentives under the scheme, which include Livehy Energy; C Doctor And Company, Pratishtna Engineers, Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd and Newtrace.

Sebi mulls flexibility for AIF, VCFs to deal with unliquidated investments beyond tenure expiry

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi on Monday proposed to provide flexibility to Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs), Venture Capital Funds (VCFs) and their investors to deal with unliquidated investments of their schemes beyond expiry of tenure.

In its consultation paper, the regulator suggested that instead of launching a new liquidation scheme by AIFs, the same scheme itself can be allowed to continue with the unliquidated investments beyond their tenure for a certain period or dissolution period for fully liquidating their unliquidated investments.



Additionally, the regulator proposed extending flexibility of the dissolution process to venture capital funds through migration to the AIF regime.

At present, the option to launch liquidation scheme is available only to those schemes of AIFs which are under ‘Liquidation Period’-- the period of one year following the expiry of tenure of the scheme for fully liquidating the scheme and not available to VCFs, irrespective of whether their tenure has expired or not.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has sought public comments till February 2 on the proposal.

The proposal came after Sebi received representations from participants in the AIF industry highlighting certain tax related issues. They also highlighted that setting up a liquidation scheme and winding up the original AIF scheme is a process involving time, cost, and efforts, which directly or indirectly, would ultimately be paid by investors.

In the consultation paper, the regulator suggested that during the liquidation period of an AIF scheme, if the AIF decides to opt for dissolution period, then AIF should obtain positive consent of 75 per cent of investors by value of their investment in the scheme.

After obtaining the consent, the AIF should arrange bids for

a minimum of 25 per cent of the value of the unliquidated investments.

The bids should be arranged for units representing consolidated value of all unliquidated investments of the scheme’s investment portfolio.

Sebi suggested that investor approval and bid should be obtained by the AIF before the expiry of the Liquidation Period of the scheme.

“Liquidation schemes that have already been launched by AIFs shall be grand-fathered,” Sebi said.

The regulator also suggested one-time flexibility to AIF schemes, whose Liquidation Period has expired or would be expiring within one month from the date of notification in this regard, to deal with unliquidated investment.

Also, it has recommended extending flexibility of the dissolution process to venture capital funds through migration to the AIF regime. It further suggested that such migration should be smooth and cost effective.

Under the VCF Regulations, VCFs are required to liquidate their investments within three months from the expiry of their tenure, whereas AIF Regulations provide AIFs a Liquidation Period of 12 months for the said purpose.

There is no provision in VCF Regulations for extension of

Rupee rises 6 paise to settle at 82.89 against US dollar

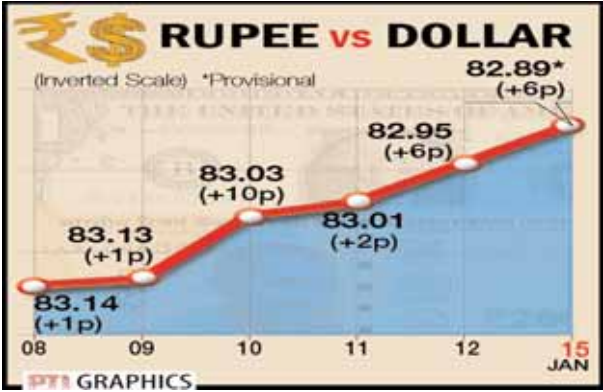
PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee strengthened for the ninth consecutive session to settle with a gain of 6 paise to 82.89 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, driven by a rally in the domestic equity markets.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the local currency opened at 82.82 and traded between 82.77 and 82.91 against the greenback during intra-day deals.

The unit finally settled at 82.89 (provisional) against the dollar, registering a gain of 6 paise over its previous close amid a bullish trend in domestic equities, wherein benchmark indices climbed to lifetime highs.

On Friday, the rupee settled with a gain of 6 paise to 82.95 against the US dollar.



In the last nine trading sessions, the local unit added 48 paise since the level of 83.32 against the dollar recorded on January 2.

Meanwhile, WPI rose 0.73 per cent year-on-year in December 2023 against 0.26 per cent in the previous month, but lower than the forecast of 0.9 per cent.

According to official data, the wholesale price index (WPI)-based inflation rose in December at 0.73 per cent mainly due to a sharp rise in food prices.

The WPI inflation was in the negative zone from April to October and had turned positive in November at 0.26 per

cent.

“We expect the rupee to trade with a slight positive bias on the weak US Dollar and positive global markets. Expectations of fresh inflows from foreign investors may also support the rupee,” said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

However, a surge in global crude oil prices and the escalation of geopolitical tensions in the Middle East may cap sharp gains. Traders may remain cautious ahead of India’s trade balance data. USD/INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 82.50 to Rs 83.20, Choudhary added.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback’s strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.09 per cent higher at 102.49.

Brent crude futures, the glob-

al oil benchmark, slipped 0.66 per cent to USD 77.77 per barrel.

On the domestic equity market front, Sensex surged 759.49 points, or 1.05 per cent, to settle at a fresh peak of 73,327.94 points. The Nifty also soared 202.90 points, or 0.93 per cent, to a new record of 22,097.45 points.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the equity market on Friday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 340.05 crore, according to exchange data.

On the domestic macroeconomic front, retail inflation soared to a four-month high of 5.69 per cent in December, while industrial production fell to an eight-month low of 2.4 per cent in November, according to a set of government data released on Friday.

Restaurant body seeks restoration of input tax credit, higher GST rate of 12 per cent

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The National Restaurant Association of India on Monday urged the government to restore input tax credit to restaurants while increasing the GST rate to 12 per cent from the current 5 per cent, ahead of the upcoming Union Budget.

In a letter to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) also called for an equitable and fair e-commerce policy, saying balanced policies and regulations are required to enable a level playing field, where platforms can continue to innovate, while restaurants, delivery partners and consumers are protected from potentially exploitative practices.

The restaurant industry was one of the sectors that suffered the most during the pandemic but showed great resilience to survive and has since been on a steady path of recovery. If the sector gets a certain amount of policy and bud-

getary support in the upcoming Budget, it will propel the sector towards an accelerated pace of growth, NRAI said in a statement.

Seeking restoration of GST input tax credit (ITC), the industry body said, “It is the only industry to be pegged at 5 per cent GST without the availability of ITC; a feature designed to avoid cascading taxation”.

The lack of ITC not only reduces the operating margin of the business but also enhances the capital budget for a new project significantly.

This increased project cost slows down the expansion plans, which massively impacts the overall growth of the sector, it added.

“The industry, therefore, recommends restoration of ITC to the restaurants while parallelly increasing the rate of GST to 12 per cent from the current 5 per cent,” NRAI said. It further said, “We understand that it may create a compliance burden on the smaller businesses, and there-

fore, we feel that this can be done on revenue slabs. While restaurants below a certain revenue threshold can continue with the current GST provisions, the organised sector with higher revenues and capex outlay may move towards the proposed GST regime”.

NRAI President Kabir Suri said the growth of the food services industry in India holds immense potential. The industry not only plays a pivotal role in contributing to government revenue but is one of the largest employers in the country.

“Balanced, fair and equitable policies by the government with respect to GST input tax credit, rationalised licensing norms and e-commerce policy will not only benefit businesses and consumers but also make a substantial contribution to overall economic growth and employment opportunities,” said Suri, who is also the co-founder & Director of Azure Hospitality Pvt Ltd.

India ranked 35th for leveraging future possibilities

PTI ■ DAVOS

India has been ranked 35th on a global index of countries best placed for leveraging future possibilities while the UK topped the list released here on Monday.

The Future Possibilities Index (FPI), a flagship global future trends study released by Newsweek Vantage and Horizon Group on sidelines of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, has Denmark, the US, the Netherlands and Germany in the top five after the UK.

Among large emerging markets, China is placed highest at 19th this year, followed by Brazil at 30th, India (35th) and South Africa (50th).

The study compared the factors that will help governments, investors and other private sector stakeholders leverage six global, transformational trends for growth and well-being across 70 countries.

These six global transformational trends are Exabyte

Economy (advanced digital technologies), Wellbeing Economy (health prevention and wellness), Net Zero Economy (reduction of carbon emissions), Circular Economy (recycling and reuse), BioGrowth Economy (food and agriculture innovations), and Experience Economy (consumption of experiences instead of physical goods).

The combined business opportunity of all six trends is estimated at more than USD 44 trillion by 2030, more than 40 per cent of global GDP in 2023, the study said.

The study used data from recognised international organizations as well as a survey of 5,000 business executives conducted for the project by Phronesis Partners.

These opportunities are likely to benefit the Global North more than the Global South in terms of economic growth and broader societal wellbeing and a strong industry base is needed to benefit, the report found.

Focus on Satwik, Chirag as home shuttlers look to dazzle at India Open

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Expectations will be high when Satwiksairaj Ranki-reddy and Chirag Shetty spear-head the home challenge at the India Open super 750 bad-minton tournament beginning here on Tuesday, hoping to annex their first silverware of the new season. With six titles in 2023, Satwik and Chirag have been a cut above the rest of the Indians, and the runner-up finish at the Malaysia super 1000 has only spiced things up as the Indian shuttlers look to deliver at home. The BAI flagship tournament, which was upgraded to super 750 in 2023, proved a dampener for home shuttlers last season when none of the Indians could cross the second round. In the 2022 edition, Satwik-Chirag and Lakshya Sen stood on the podium with the men's doubles and men's singles crown and the home shuttlers will hope to once again live up to the expectations and prove that last year was an aberration. Satwik and Chirag have the wherewithal to go the distance this time as the duo will be charged up after coming marginally short in the final in Kuala Lumpur on Sunday. "We want to do well in our home country next week, so we don't want to relax with this, we are more hungry and next week we want to do well in front of our home crowd," Satwik said on Sunday. Second seeds Satwik and Chirag, who were forced to pull out ahead of the second round last year due to an injury suffered by the former, will face world No.

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE



Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

Whereas

A housing loan facility was granted pursuant to a loan agreement entered into between ICICI Bank Limited ("Secured Creditor, which term shall include its successors and assigns) and the borrower & co-borrower, mentioned below ("Borrower(s)", which term shall include his/ its/ their respective [successors, assigns, heirs]. The undersigned being the authorized officer of the Secured Creditor ("Authorized Officer") under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 ("Act") and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, ("Rules") has issued demand notices under Section 13(2) of the Act calling upon the borrowers / co borrowers mentioned below to repay the amount payable pursuant to the loan agreement and as specifically mentioned in the said respective demand notices within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notices.

The borrowers / co-borrower, having failed and neglected to repay the amount as claimed in the said demand notices, a notice is hereby given to the borrowers / co-borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Section 13 (4) of the Act read with Rule 8 of the Rules. The details including date of symbolic possession of the properties are as mentioned below

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Mandeep Singh/ Jaswant Singh/ Maninder Pal Singh/ Rupinder Kaur/ Gurpreet Kaur/ Avneet Kaur/ LBPAT00001155813	House No. 63-64, New Officer Colony, Khewat Khautau No. 104/368, Khasra No. 1146/148, 1150/150, 1152/152, Patiala 147001 / January 11, 2024	February 29, 2012 Rs. 98,92,887/-	Patiala

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date : January 16, 2024
Place: Ludhiana

Authorized Officer
Secured Creditor

PHYSICAL POSSESSION NOTICE



Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

Whereas

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Physical Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Ram Chander Mansa Ram/ Manoj Kumar Mahipal/ Rajinder Kumar Mahipal/ Vijay Kumar Mahipal/ Puneet Kumar Mahipal/ Sneha Lata Mahipal W/o Rajinder Kumar/ Mamta Mahipal W/o Puneet Kumar Mahipal/ Neelam W/o Manoj Kumar/ Neelam/ Mamta Mahipal/ Ritu Mahipal/ Ritu Mahipal W/o Vijay Kumar Mahipal/ Sneha Lata Mahipal/ '073350001234/ '073355000005/ '0733550000038	A Shop Bearing House Tax No. B-309 Property Tax Id No. SRS/03/0010, Situated At Bhadra Bazar, Sirsa Within The Municipal Limits of Sirsa Vide Sale Deed No. 11385 Dated 24-02-2020, Sale Deed No. 11456 DT. 25.02.2020 and Transfer Deed No. 342, Dated 13-05-2020 Duly Registered In The Office of Sub Registrar, Sirsa/ January 10, 2024.	February 16, 2023 Rs. 2,61,58,608.00/-	Sirsa

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date : January 16, 2024
Place : Sirsa

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

PUNJAB & SIND BANK

ZONAL OFFICE, AMRITSAR

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES)

Whereas, the Undersigned being the "Authorised Officer" of Punjab & Sind Bank, under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of the Security Interest Act 2002 in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) read with Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a demand notice on the date mentioned against account calling upon the respective borrowers / guarantors to repay the amount as mentioned against account within 60 days from the date of notice / date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrowers / guarantors having failed to repay the amount, notice hereby given to the borrowers / guarantors and the public in general that undersigned has taken possession of the Properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him / her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 9 of the said rule on the date mentioned against each account.

The borrowers / guarantors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the Properties and any dealing with the Properties will be subject to the charge of the Punjab and Sind Bank, for the amounts, other charges, costs and interest thereon. The borrowers attention is invited to provisions of Sub Section (8) of the Section 13 of Act, in respect of time available to them, to redeem the Secured Assets.

Name of the NPA Account	Description of the Immovable Properties	Date of the Demand Notice	Date of the Possession	Amount Outstanding
(1) (i) Smt. Parminder Kaur W/o Baljit Singh (ii) Baljit Singh S/o Jagir Singh (iii) Harjit Singh S/o Jagir Singh (iv) Mamta Arora W/o Harjit Singh and Guarantor Parmjit Singh S/o Arjun Dass. Branch : Sri Guru Ram Dass Marg, Tam Taran	Residential Property measuring 1762.5 sq. Yards, House no. 4 Sardar Enclave, Near Langar Hall, Tam Taran bearing Khasra no. 324 (2-13), 335 (2-10), 1142/325 (1-8) as per Jamabandi for the year 2000-2001, standing in the name of Baljit Singh and Harjit Singh both sons of Jagir Singh S/o Sohan Singh, Registered vide Document no. 823, Volume no. 1 dated 18-05- 2007 at Sub Registrar Tam Taran	31-10-2023	11-01-2024	Rs. 14,88,756/22 + Interest, other charges w.e.f. 01-11-2023 and less recovery if any, till date affected
(2) (i) Smt. Mamta Arora (ii) Parminder Kaur W/o Baljit Singh (iii) Baljit Singh S/o Jagir Singh (iv) Harjit Singh S/o Jagir Singh. Branch : Sri Guru Ram Dass Marg, Tam Taran	Commercial Property measuring 33.33 sq. yards, situated at Noordi Adda Bazar Tam Taran, Registered vide Document no. 1764, Book no. 1 Volume no. 3270, Page no. 29 dated 23-07-2004 at Sub Registrar Tam Taran, in the name of Baljit Singh and Harjit Singh both Sons of Jagir Singh S/o Sohan Singh and Commercial property measuring 16.66 sq. yards Registered vide Document no. 4859, Book no. 1, Volume no. 3540, Page no. 8990 dated 23-02-2007 at Sub Registrar Tam Taran, in the name of Baljit Singh and Harjit Singh both sons of Jagir Singh S/o Sohan Singh.	31-10-2023	11-01-2024	Rs. 13,71,898/64 + Interest, other charges w.e.f. 01-11-2023 and less recovery if any, till date affected
(3) Sh. Deepak Chand Branch : Sh. Tarlok Chand Branch : Hall Bazar, Amritsar	Property i.e. One House Private no. 2 min, Khana Shumari no. 1390/9, 1391/9 total area measuring 32 sq. yards, situated at Rakha Inside Gate Hakima, Gali Hatim Tai, Tehsil & Distt. Amritsar, as per Registered Sale Deed dated 22-03-2012 bearing Document no. 12501, Book no. 1, Volume no. 11395 at Page no. 6465, owned by Smt. Seema Rani W/o Sh. Deepak Kumar and bounded as North : House no. 1, South : House no. 2, East : Street, West : Other Property	02-03-2020	11-01-2024	Rs. 4,53,218/50 as on 29-02-2020 + Interest, other charges w.e.f. 29-02-2020 and less recovery if any, till date affected
(4) M/s Amrit Overseas Smt. Jaspreet Kaur W/o Sh. Kamaljit Singh. Branch : Hall Bazar, Amritsar	One Industrial Plot, Property i.e. Khasra no. 716/2/2, 711/5/1, 512/5/1 min Khewat / Khatoni no. 64/78, 68/88 total area measuring 400 sq yards situated at Village Chetan Kalan, Rampura, Amritsar, Tehsil -II & Distt. Amritsar, as per Registered Sale Deed dated 01-10-2020 bearing Document no. 2020-21/931/14732, Book no. 1, owned by Sh. Kamaljit Singh S/o Sh. Harbans Singh and bounded as North : Rasta 24' wide, South : Other property, East : Other Open Plot, West : Property of Simranjit Singh and bounded as per Site North : Property of Simranjit Singh, South : Other property, East : Rasta 24' wide, West : Other	04-10-2023	11-01-2024	Rs. 8,48,830/01 as on 30-09-2023 + Interest, other charges w.e.f. 30-09-2023 and less recovery if any, till date affected
(5) Sh. Amarjit Singh S/o Sh. Pritam Chand. Branch : Hall Bazar, Amritsar	Residential Property area 65 sq. yards. i.e. Khana Sumari no. 185/9 (Old), 3578/1x-19 M.C.A. (Current), situated at Amritsar Urban, Akhara Kallu Gali no. 2, Gate Gali Bhaghat Wala Inside Municipal Corporation, Amritsar, as per Registered Sale deed dated 22-08-2014 bearing Document no. 3997, Bahi no. 1, Jild no. 14084 at Page no. 9698 owned by Sh Amarjit Singh S/o Sh. Pritam Chand and Smt. Rajni W/o Sh Amarjit Singh and bounded as North : House of Santokh Singh, South : Gali, East : House of Jaswant Singh, West : House (Khana Shumari no. 186/9,	22-03-2022	11-01-2024	Rs. 19,38,025/96 as on 28-02-2022 + Interest, other charges w.e.f. 28-02-2022 and less recovery if any, till date affected
(6) Sh. Rajinder Paul Singh S/o Sh. Harbans Singh and Sh. Jaskaran Singh S/o Sh. Rajinder Pal Singh. Branch : Hall Bazar, Amritsar	One Residential House Double Storey Private no. 1077, bearing Khasra no. 511/11, 511/12 min Khata Khatauni no. 2532/3245, 32579/3294 having measurement in length 72 ft and breadth 30 ft, total area measuring 240 sq. yards situated at Gumtala Sub Urban, Abadi R.B Estate, Amritsar, as per Registered Sale Deed dated 01-01-2014 bearing Document no. 11878, Book no. 1, Volume no. 5795, Page no. 4849 owned by Rajinder Paul Singh and Jaskaran Singh and bounded as North : Road, South : Plot no. 1081, East : Plot no. 1076, West : Plot no. 1078	03-04-2021	12-01-2024	Rs. 26,06,102/70 as on 31-03-2021 + Interest, other charges w.e.f. 31-03-2021 and less recovery if any, till date affected
(7) M/s Dogra Kohlu Char through its Prop. Smt. Geeta Sharma W/o Vijay Kumar and Guarantors (i) Vijay Kumar S/o Sh. Rattan Chand (ii) Sh. Rattan Chand S/o Sh. Moti Lal Branch: Civil Lines, Amritsar	Commercial Property measuring 70 sq yards, situated at Khana Shumari no. 1471/2, Kulcheyan Wall Gali, Near Gurudwara Lohgarh Sahib, Inside Lohgarh Gate, Amritsar, belonging to Smt. Geeta Shirma W/o Sh. Vijay Kumar and Sh. Vijay Kumar S/o Sh. Rattan Chand and bounded as East (39-0") : 1472/2 (Aakash Provisional Store), West (39-0") : 1470/2 (Dogra Enterprises, Rattan Chand); North 16-0") : Bazar (Street); South (16-0") : Property of Other	28-09-2023	11-01-2024	Rs. 13,46,267/50 as on 31-08-2023 + Interest, other charges and less recovery if any, till date affected
(8) Dilbagh Singh Warraich S/o S. Baaj Singh Warraich & Smt Rajwinder Kaur W/o S. Dilbagh Singh and Guarantor Sh Ashwani Kumar S/o Sh. Basant Lal Branch : Court Road, Amritsar.	Property i.e. One Plot no. 372, having measurement as per Spot having length 45' and Breadth 25', total area measuring 125 sq. yards and bounded as per Sale Deed East : Street Common, West : Plot no. 368, North : Plot no. 371, South : Plot no. 372-A, Minjulia Khasra no. 2021, Khewat Khatauni no. 867/1700 as per Jamabandi for year 2010-11 situated at Wadali Guru Urban, Inside Green City, Amritsar, in the name of S. Dilbagh Singh Warraich S/o S. Baaj Singh Warraich vide Sale Deed dated 03-05-2016 duly Registered with the Office of Sub-Registrar, Amritsar-II vide Document no. 1702, Book no. 1, Volume no. 6694 at Page 5961.	25-01-2022	10-01-2024	Rs. 20,44,397/- as on 31-03-2021 + Interest, other charges and less recovery if any, till date affected
(9) Smt. Bupinder Kour W/o Late S. Dilbag Singh and Guarantor Sh. Prabjot Singh S/o Sh. Gulzar Singh Branch : Court Road Amritsar.	Property i.e. One Plot no. 36, having measurement as per spot having length 45' and breadth 24' total area measuring 120 sq. yards and bounded as per Sale Deed East : Street 15' wide, West : Plot no. 26, 27, North : Plot no. 35, South : Plot no. 37 Khasra no. 133 Min previous and present Khasra no. 993/133 Min, Khewat Khatauni no. 36/61 as per jamabandi for year 2006-2007, situated at Tung Bala Sub Urban, Abadi Indira Colony, Amritsar, owned by Bupinder Kaur W/o Late S. Dilbag Singh and Late S. Dilbag Singh S/o S. Lakha Singh vide Sale deed dated 11-05-2010 duly Registered with the Office of Sub-Registrar, Amritsar vide Document no. 1950, Book No. 1, Volume no. 3996 at Page 7273 entered on 11-05-2010	09-04-2021	10-01-2024	Rs. 11,27,893/53 as on 31-03-2021 + Interest, other charges and less recovery if any, till date affected
(10) M/s Sodhi Wollen Mills through its Prop. Sh Dheeraj Sodhi S/o Sh Balbir Chand Sodhi & Guarantors (i) Smt Neetu Sodhi W/o Sh Dheeraj Sodhi (ii) Smt Prem Lata W/o Balbir Chand Sodhi Branch : Court Road Amritsar.	Residential Property / Plot Private no. 1, measuring 85.30 sq yards, in area situated at, Urban Circle no. 110, Abadi Bhawani Nagar, Majitha Road, Tehsil & Distt. Amritsar, standing in the name of Smt. Prem Lata W/o Sh. Balbir Chand Sodhi, vide Wasika no. 1329, Bahi No. 1, Volume No. 3257, Page no. 364 dated 20-01-1997 and bounded as East : 16ft wide Gali, West : Property Gian Chand, North : Remaining share of Plot no. 1, South : Harbans Lal	19-10-2023	10-01-2024	Rs. 16,55,704/- as on 30-09-2023 + Interest, other charges and less recovery if any, till date affected
(11) M/s Arpit Sales Corporation through its Prop. Sh. Dhaminder Singh Thakur S/o Sh. Jagdish Singh Thakur & Guarantors (i) Sh. Jatinder Singh Thakur S/o Sh. Jagdish Singh Thakur (ii) Smt. Renu Bala W/o Sh. Dhaminder Singh Thakur Branch : Court Road, Amritsar	Residential Property / Plot Private no. 110-A, Khasra no. 557, Khata Khatoni no. 591, measuring 125 sq yards in area situated at Rakka Ka Ghanapur, Urban Main Road G.T. Road, GT Road Chheharta, Abadi New Model Town, Tehsil and Distt. Amritsar, in the name of S Dhaminder Singh Thakur S/o Late S. Jagdish Singh vide Wasika no. 14859, Bahi no. 1, Jild no. 5875, Page no. 8586 dated 24-03-2014 and bounded as East : Plot no. 110, West : Gali no. 3, North : Main Street, South : Plot no. 111	04-10-2023	10-01-2024	Rs. 1526513/85 as on 31-08-2023 + Interest, other charges and less recovery if any, till date affected
(12) M/s Gill Sandhu Commission Agent through its Partners Mrs. Mandeep Kaur W/o Mr. Arvinder Singh & Mr. Baljit Singh S/o Mr. Sarwan Singh & Guarantors (i) Mr. Iqbal Singh S/o Mr. Chanan Singh (ii) Mr. Arvinder Singh S/o Mr. Salwinder Singh Branch : Bhikhiwind, Tam Taran	Property i.e. One Semi Industrial Plot / Shop no. 3, in Grain Market Bhikhiwind, having measurement in length 20', breadth 125', total area 277.77 sq. yards, situated at Grain Market, Bhikhiwind, Tehsil Patli and District Tam Taran owned by S. Arvinder Singh S/o S. Salwinder Singh Form B (Sale deed) dated 01-03-2004 duly Registered with the Office of Sub-Registrar, Bhikhiwind vide Wasika no. 2672, Jild no. 87, Safa no. 53/55 entered on 01-03-2004, in favor of S. Arvinder Singh S/o Mr. Salwinder Singh and bounded as per Title Deed North : Land of Joginder Singh, South : Road and platform, East : Shop no. 4, West : Shop no. 2	01-07-2023	10-01-2024	Rs. 15,51,078/14 as on 30-06-2023 + Interest, other charges w.e.f. 30-06-2023 and less recovery if any, till date affected

Date : 16-01-2024 Place : Amritsar SD/- Authorized Officer

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Amit Sharma Son of Nareesh Kumar resident of 17 175-19/256 Charkhi Mohalla Ambala City have changed my Minor Son name from Shasmit to Shasmit Sharma

I, Amit Sharma Son of Nareesh Kumar resident of 17 175-19/256 Charkhi Mohalla Ambala City have changed my Minor Daughter name from Vrinda to Vrinda Sharma.

I Gurpreet S/O Jatinder Singh R/O Pipa Rang Phagwara District Kapurthala Have Changed My Name From Gurpreet To Gurpreet Singh.

I Lovepreet S/O Surinder Pal R/O Pipa Rang Phagwara District Kapurthala Have Changed My Name From Lovepreet To Lovepreet Pal.

I Aarti Devi W/O Dube Durgesh Resident Of 5/8, Jagdish Mandir Chali Opp. Chepirog Hospital Behrampur Ahmedabad City Gujarat 380022 Have Changed My Name From Aarti Devi To Arti Durgesh Dube, Vide Affidavit No.IN-PB76456525371661W Dated 12-01-2024 Before (Notary Public).

I Shrigunshyam Is Father Of Dube Durgesh Resident Of 5/8, Jagdish Mandir Chali Opp. Chepirog Hospital Behrampur Ahmedabad City Gujarat 380022 Have Changed My Name From Shrigunshyam To Ghanshyam Dube Vide Affidavit No.IN-PB76455351681083W Dated 12-01-2024 Before (Notary Public).

I Dube Durgesh Resident Of 5/8, Jagdish Mandir Chali Opp. Chepirog Hospital Behrampur Ahmedabad City Gujarat 380022 Have Changed My Son's Name From Ayush To Ayush Durgesh Dube, Vide Affidavit No.IN-PB76457080758523W Dated 12-01-2024 Before (Notary Public).

I Dube Durgesh Resident Of 5/8, Jagdish Mandir Chali Opp. Chepirog Hospital Behrampur Ahmedabad City Gujarat 380022 Have Changed My Daughter's Name From Vaishnavi To Vaishnavi Durgesh Dube, Vide Affidavit No.IN-PB76456090850023W Dated 12-01-2024 Before (Notary Public).

I Gurpreet S/O Baljinder Ram R/O Village Bhullarai, Tehsil Phagwara, District Kapurthala Have Changed My Name From Gurpreet To Gurpreet Ladher.

I Sagar S/O Harmesh Lal R/O H.No.457, Near ESI Hospital, Chajji Colony, Phagwara, District Kapurthala Have Changed My Name From Sagar To Sagar Sandhu.

I Manpreet S/O Charan Dass R/O Village Khera, Tehsil Phagwara, District Kapurthala Have Changed My Name From Manpreet To Manpreet Singh.

I Karan S/O Kulwinder Ram R/O Village Liddar Kalan, District S.B.S. Nagar Have Changed M Name From Karan To Karan Dadra.

I Sanjogita W/O Ashok Singh R/O Village Qadianwali P.O. Dorangla District Gurdaspur Punjab Have Changed My Name To Sanjogita.

I Srishta Rani W/O Satnam Singh R/O Village Khanni P.O. Lalwan District Hoshiarpur Punjab Have Changed My Name To Sarishta Rani.

I Jaspreet S/O Rajinder Pal R/O House No.B-1/659 Mori Mohalla Bahadarpur Hoshiarpur Punjab Have Changed My Name From Jaspreet To Jaspreet Saini.

I Manjit Kaur W/O Maninder Singh R/O Vill. Chattowal, P.O. Rajpur Gahot, District Hoshiarpur, Punjab Have Changed My Name From Manjit Kaur To Kaur Manjit.

I Sneh Lata Garg D/O Shubash Chandra W/O Rajnish Kumar Bansal R/O H.No.80A, Sector-51A, Chandigarh Have Changed My Name To Sneh Bansal.

I Inderjeet Kaur W/O Lakhveer Singh R/O Vpo. Lande Distt. Moga Punjab Have Changed My Name To Inderjit Kaur.

I Sulakhan Singh S/O Kartar Singh R/O Vpo. Tumber Bhan (Ferozepur) Have Changed My Name To Sulakhan Singh Khosa.

I Sirtaj Singh S/O Ajab Singh R/O Vpo. Loham (Ferozepur) Have Changed My Name To Sirtaj Singh Virk.

I Major Singh S/O Suba Singh R/O Vpo. Sheerwal Distt. Sri Muktsar Sahib Punjab Have Changed My Name To Major Singh.

I Swarnjeet Kaur W/O Major Singh R/O Vpo. Sheerwal Distt. Sri Muktsar Sahib Punjab Have Changed My Name To Swarnjit Kaur.

I Sarabjit Kaur W/O Gurjit Singh R/O H.No.-1468 Block-D Model Town Ext. Ludhiana Have Changed My Name To Sarabjit Kaur Sidhu.

I Gurjit Singh S/O Sohan Sidhu R/O H.No.-1468-D Model Town Extension Ludhiana Have Changed My Name To Gurjit Sidhu.

I Surinder Singh And Jasvir Singh S/O Balwant Singh R/O Village Kamalpur Tehsil Jagraon Distt. Ludhiana Am Known By Above Both Names.

I Harwinder Singh Battu S/O Bhagwan Singh R/O Behind Police Station Sudhar Ludhiana Punjab-141104 Have Changed My Name To Harwinder Singh.

I Amandeep Kaur W/O Inderjeet Singh R/O Vpo. Acharwal Distt. Ludhiana Have Changed My Name To Amandeep Kaur Gill.

I, Rukmini Bodo W/O SUB Sanjib Bodo R/O Vill Hojai Bishnupur Nagaon ASSAM India presently 327 Med Regt C/O 56 APO declared that in service record/ Documents my name and DOB wrongly written as Rukmini Bodo & 25/09/1976 instead of Rukmini Bodo and 25/12/1978 my correct name and DOB is Rukmini Bodo, & 25/12/1978

I Sukhwinder Kaur Bali W/O Sh. Lekh Raj Bali R/o House no. 1747 Sector 23 B Chandigarh. I have changed my name from Sukhwinder Kaur Bali to Sukhwinder Kaur

I Sero Devi W/o Pritam Singh R/o #130 Vill. Rajpura Po Karasan tehsil Naraingarh distt. Ambala that I have changed my name from Sero Devi to Shero Devi. Concerned note

I Sumita Kumari D/o Harbans Lal R/o H.no. 170-C Defence Colony Sector - C Near Water Tuble Well Ambala Cantt Distt. Ambala Haryana that I have changed my minor daughter's name from Tanvi to Tanvi Kumari . Concerned note

I, Kusum Lata spouse of No.13766816W Hav Paramjeet resident of Village-Ghoran, Post-Bhojpur, Tehsil- Nurpur, District-Kangra, State- HP, Pin-176402, have changed my name from Kusham Lata to Kusum Lata Vide affidavit No.IN-PB72296840246373V dated 29 Dec 2023 before notary public Pathankot

I, Vrushali spouse of No.2813575F Sep Vrushali Sagar Salunke resident of Village-Savkarwadi, Post- Savkarwadi, Tehsil- Malegaon, District-Nashik, State- Maharashtra, Pin-423208, have changed my name from Vrushali to Vrushali Sagar Salunke Vide affidavit No.IN-PB76434306106299W 12 Jan 2024 before notary public Pathankot

I, No.17028726X NK Sudheer Soni resident of Village-Pipliya Nagar, Post- Pipliya Nagar, Tehsil- Kalapipal, District-Shajapur, State Madhya Pradesh, Pin-465337, have changed my Mother name & DOB from Dhapu Bai To Dhapu Bai Soni and DOB from 15 May 1970 to 01 Jan 1967 Vide affidavit No.IN-PB76782278625970W dated 15 Jan 2024 before notary public Pathankot

I, Anita spouse of No.15820698W Hav Mallappa Gasti resident of Village- Satti, Post- Satti, Tehsil-Athani, District-Belagavi, State- Karnataka, Pin-591240, have changed my name from Anita to Anita Mallappa Gasti Vide affidavit No.IN-PB76429608859802W dated 12 Jan 2024 before notary public Pathankot

I, Rajeswari spouse of No.14839137A Hav Tupakula Raja Babu resident of Village-Krishnam Raju Peta, Post-Majjalalasa, Tehsil- Bheemuni Patanam, District-Visakhapatnam, State- Andhra Pradesh, Pin- 531162, have changed my name from Rajeswari to Thupakula Rajeswari vide affidavit No.IN-PB76432021131875W dated 12 Jan 2024 before notary public Pathankot

I, Lakhvir Singh Baring S/o Chhotta Singh R/o Vill: Bhaini Baringan (Ludhiana) have changed my name to Lakhvir Singh.

I, Gurinder Singh S/o Kanwaljit Singh R/o VPO Rauni, Tehsil Payal (Ludhiana) have changed my name to Gurinder Singh Benipal.

I, Inderjit Sedha S/o Jaswant Rai R/o W.No.13, Near Durga Mandir, Amloh (Fatehgarh Sahib) have changed his name Inderjit Sedha to Inderjeet Sedha.

I, Surinder Singh S/o Ujjagar Singh R/o Village Khanian (Fatehgarh Sahib) known by two names i.e. Surinder Singh & Salinder Singh, these both names are mine, one & same person.

I, Jaswinder alias Jaswinder Kaur Lotey W/o Tejinder Singh Lotey R/O 292/27, Lotey Street, Opp. Jawahar Optical, Chandigarh Road, Khanna (Ludhiana) have changed my name to Jaswinder Kaur.

I, Rajinder Kumar S/o Chaudhary Ram R/O H.No.8, St.No.1, College Colony, Khanna (Ludhiana) have changed my name to Rajinder Kumar Arora.

I, Riya Singhi W/o Kanav Dhawan R/o #114, Sector 10-B, Guru Ki Nagri, Opp. Railway Station, Mandi Gobindgarh (Fatehgarh Sahib) have changed my name to Riya Dhawan.

I, Anita W/o Harish Kumar R/O H.No.177, St.No.4, Krishna Nagar, Khanna (Ludhiana) have changed my name to Anita Paul.

I, No.JC-384648X Sub Dharmendra resident of Village-Chakbas, Post- Bharu, Tehsil-Mandawa, District- Jhunjhunu, State- Rajasthan, Pin- 333041, have changed my Father Indraj Singh DOB from 01 July 1942 to 03 Jan 1945 Vide affidavit No.IN-PB76782714738747W dated 15 Jan 2024 before notary public Pathankot

I, Santosh Devi spouse of No.JC-780587F NB/Sub Om Prakash Panwar resident of Village- Saidpur, Post- Saidpur, Tehsil- Kharkhoda, District- Sonipat, State- Haryana, Pin-131402, have changed my name & DOB from Santosh Devi to Santosh kumari and DOB from 09 Oct 1983 to 10 Sep 1983 Vide affidavit No.IN-PB76781967008103W dated 15 Jan 2024 before notary public Pathankot

I, Neema Devi spouse of No.4202974A L/NK Narendra Singh resident of Village- Liti, Post- Post- Liti, Tehsil- Kapkot, District- Bageshwar, State- Uttarakhand, Pin- 263633, have changed my name from Neema Devi to Neema Koranga Vide affidavit No.IN-PB76781341664595W dated 15 Jan 2024 before notary public Pathankot

I, Bhagrathi Devi Mother of No.4202974A L/NK Narendra Singh resident of Village- Liti, Post- Liti, Tehsil- Kapkot, District- Bageshwar, State- Uttarakhand, Pin- 263633, have changed my name from Bhagrathi Devi to Bhaguli Devi Vide affidavit No.IN-PB76781893903691W dated 15 Jan 2024 before notary public Pathankot.

I Jaswinder Kaur W/o Kabal Singh R/o Vill Jharu Nangal Po Dhulka Tehsil Baba Bakala Distt Amritsar Rural Punjab I have changed my name from Jaswinder Kaur to Jasvinder Kaur.

Told to express freely, say big hitting Jaiswal

PTI ■ INDORE

Picked to replace the usually swashbuckling but currently out of form Shubman Gill, Yashasvi Jaiswal made quite a statement with his 34-ball 68 against Afghanistan in the second T20I here and the promising youngster said it was all thanks to the “go out and express yourself” brief from the Indian team management. The 22-year-old’s strokeful knock at the top of the order and Shivam Dube’s 63 not out off 32 balls, helped India register a six-wicket series-clinching win here on Sunday as the hosts easily chased down the target of 173 with 26 balls to spare. “I have been told to go and express myself and I was trying to do that,” Jaiswal said at the post-match conference on Sunday night. “I was trying to punish the loose balls, and was focused to give my team a good start...I was trying to bat as deep as I can. I was trying to keep my strike rate good. I wanted to keep batting with a good strike rate,” said the 22-year-old opening batter. Jaiswal, who has played just four Tests and 16 T20Is, said he has tried his best to do well for the team whenever he has got a chance. He had scored a 60 against South Africa in December last year. “I keep working hard in my practice sessions and on my process. Whenever I get my chance, I try my best and make



sure that I am doing things for the team which is important,” he said, trying to give an insight into his thought process. “I am just trying to show my intent and trying to do well for my team,” added Jaiswal who hit five fours and six sixes during his innings last night. Asked what transpired between him and senior batter Virat Kohli in the middle during a 57-run stand, he said, “It was really nice...Whenever I bat with him, it’s an honour. “Lots of things to learn from him, like we had small chats about where we can hit. We decided that it was easy to hit over long on and mid off and we were trying to do that. The intent was there and the positive vibes were there and we were just trying to hit good shots.” Dube, on his part, said he and Jaiswal had planned to finish off the run chase. Jaiswal was, however, dismissed in the 13th over. “We both are stroke players. He was batting really well. We had a plan that both will be going, so let’s finish the match as soon as possible. There was not any target (to finish), but we’ve finished on time,” said Dube, whose 63 not out was decorated with five fours and four sixes. “There are many things I have worked on. It’s not about skill (only)... Being focused on every ball is important. I am working on my bowling as well,” Dube, who claimed one wicket in the series-opener in Mohali, said.



The range I have is god gift: Shivam Dube

PTI ■ INDORE

Bonafide six-hitter Shivam Dube on Monday said his ability to play a wide range of strokes against spinners is ‘god’s gift’ but overcoming issues against express pace and bounce will require plenty of hard work. One of the biggest hitters when the spinners are in operation, Dube blazed away to scintillating fifties in the first two T20 Internationals against Afghanistan, making a fairly good spin attack look pedestrian with his power-hitting. “It’s a pleasure to keep improving my performance as I am going along. The range I have is god’s gift and I have also worked a lot on it. I have developed many areas of my game and I am getting the runs on the board,” Dube told JioCinema. On way to his an unbeaten 63 off 32 balls in the second T20I here on Sunday, Dube smashed four towering sixes and five fours, as India chased down a target of 173 with as many as 26 balls to spare. Also grabbing the headlines with the willow was the returning Yashasvi Jaiswal, who hammered a 34-ball 68. On how hard it is to think only about the present and not about the forthcoming T20 World Cup, Dube said, “In the past I have thought a lot about the future. But I have realised that I got to focus on the present. I have to focus on how to improve my skills, so that’s more important to me. I just try to keep myself grounded and try to focus on what I have to do.” In stark contrast to his penchant

to toy with the spinners, 30-year-old Dube has often looked vulnerable against the short deliveries bowled at good pace. He admitted that the standard of fast bowlers in the IPL is much better than in domestic cricket. On the amount of work that has gone into improving his game against short balls, Dube said, “I have worked a lot on it. When I was playing domestic cricket, I was able to dominate all the bowlers, but when it came to IPL and Indian cricket it was not easy as bowlers were bowling over 140km/hr.” “I worked a lot with side arms, but it is more about the mind-set which I worked.” Dube had a poor start for India’s white-ball team against Bangladesh more than four years ago. Asked about the methods he has employed that’s resulted in a significant improvement, he said, “This credit goes to Chennai Super Kings and Mahi bhai (MS Dhoni) because I always had this game in me.” “They have brought out the best in me. They have always encouraged me and said that they believe in me. Stephen Fleming and Mike Hussey have shown faith in me.” Speaking about his mindset as a finisher, the Mumbai all-rounder said, “As a middle-order batsman, my role is to take on spinners and improve the strike rate. But when it is like getting 20-25 runs, I focus on that.” “What I have seen Mahi bhai do for a long time, I am working in that direction. I have to keep myself calm and composed and just focus on one ball at a time.



Prakhar breaks Yuvraj Singh Cooch Behar record with unbeaten 404

PTI ■ SHIVAMOGGA

Karnataka’s Prakhar Chaturvedi on Monday broke Yuvraj Singh’s 25-year-old record for the highest score in the U-19 Cooch Behar Trophy final with an unbeaten 404 off 636 balls against Mumbai here. Yuvraj, who went on to become an Indian great, had smashed 358 for Punjab in a game against Bihar back in 1999. India’s World Cup winning captain M S Dhoni was part of that Bihar squad. The highest individual score in India’s premier U-19 domestic event is Vijay Zol’s 451 not out for Maharashtra against Assam in 2011-12. Chaturvedi’s epic effort included 46 fours and three sixes. “Karnataka’s Prakhar Chaturvedi becomes the first player to score 400 in the final of #CoochBehar Trophy with his splendid 404* knock against Mumbai,” posted the BCCI on X. Chaturvedi’s marathon effort helped Karnataka amass 890 for eight in response to Mumbai’s 380. The game was drawn with Karnataka taking the first innings lead. Harshil Dhamani scored 179 in Karnataka’s innings. The game was called off once Chaturvedi cross the 400-run mark.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The BCCI on Monday invited applications to replace one among the five senior national selectors and in all likelihood, former pacer Salil Ankola would be the one on his way out as West Zone is already represented by chairman Ajit Agarkar. The BCCI posted an advertisement on its website listing the same requirements that have been in place for the past couple of years — the incumbent should have played either 7 Tests or 30 first-class matches. Applications will also be considered if the candidate has an experience of 10 ODIs or 20 first-class matches. The last date of submitting applications is January 25.

The five-man selection committee comprises Agarkar (chairman, Mumbai, West Zone), S Sharath (Tamil Nadu, South Zone), SS Das (Vidarbha, Central Zone), Subroto Banerjee (Bengal, Bihar, East Zone) and Ankola (Mumbai, Maharashtra, West Zone). “Save Ajit Agarkar, all the four others completed their one-year term on December 31, 2023. They were given one-year contract,” a senior BCCI official told PTI on conditions of anonymity. “Technically, there is no rule that you can’t have two selectors from the same zone, (but) the BCCI has always maintained the convention of having one selector from each zone and north zone had no representa-

LIKELY TO REPLACE SALIL ANKOLA



tion after Chetan Sharma got sacked,” he explained. After the 2022 T20 World Cup where India could only make the semifinals, the entire selec-

tion panel, including chairman Chetan Sharma, was sacked. But when fresh applications were invited, Chetan returned to the fold to represent North Zone following an interview by the Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) headed by Ashok Malhotra along with Jatin Paranjpe, and Sulakshana Naik. He was later sacked for loose talk on selection matters in a sting operation. “The rest (of the) four, Sharath, Ankola, Banerjee and Das completed five zones. Once Chetan was removed, the BCCI needed a man of stature and once Agarkar was on board, we had two from the same zone. “But no rule was broken as it was always a convention. The BCCI had given all of them a one year term, which is extended every year upto a period of four years. Unfortunately, it seems Salil will have to make a move,” the source added.

If India prepares pitches which turn a lot, England spinners will also come into game: Nasser

PTI ■ LONDON

Former England captain Nasser Hussain has advised India against preparing turning pitches during their five-Test series, saying doing so will also bring the visiting spinners into the game. The uncapped duo of Tom Hartley and Shoaib Bashir have been named as part of England’s quadruple spin attack alongside Jack Leach and Rehan Ahmed. India have also named four spinners in their squad for the first two Tests, beginning January 25, with Axar Patel and Kuldeep Yadav returning to action after missing the tour to South Africa. They will be joined by Ravichandran Ashwin and all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja. “I think what India should do is ask for good pitches that spin a bit because I think their spinners and batters will then out-bat and out-spin ours,” said Hussain on the Sky Sports Cricket podcast. “If they ask for pitches that spin a lot then it becomes a bit of a lottery and

brings England’s spinners into the game. The way Bazball goes about its business, they won’t die wondering.” England last won a Test series in India in 2012-13 under the captaincy of Alastair Cook where spin twins Graeme Swann and Monty Panesar starred in the momentous 2-1 triumph. Hussain also said that Indian fans are waiting to see how their side can put England’s Bazball strategy to bed. “There’s been a lot of talk about Indian cricket and there’s been a lot of talk about Bazball,” said Hussain. “My sense in the World Cup was that a lot of Indian fans are waiting to see how to put Bazball to bed.” England opener Ben Duckett, how-



ever, said he is aware India’s seam bowlers can do just as much damage as their spinners. “People talk about how good India’s spin bowling is but at the top of the order against the seam attack, it’s going to be tough no matter how flat the pitches are,” Duckett, who has been named in the 16-member touring squad, said. “I’ve obviously just played against, in my eyes, the best seam attack in the world this summer. I think the preparation in Abu Dhabi will be focused around facing the new-ball spin. “It’s going to be interesting, I don’t think I’ll get out blocking as many times as I did when I was last there.” Duckett made his Test debut in 2016 against Bangladesh. Since then, the

Mulani 10 wicket haul powers Mumbai to consecutive bonus point win

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Left-arm spinner Shams Mulani grabbed a match haul of 10 wickets as Mumbai defeated Andhra by 10 wickets to secure a successive bonus-point victory in the Ranji Trophy here on Monday. Following on, Andhra faced a daunting task in their second innings, and despite some resistance from Shaik Rasheed (66) and Hanuma Vihari (46), Mulani’s crafty spin proved too much to handle as the visitors folded for 244 in 73.4 overs, setting an easy target of 34. Mulani returned with 4/96 in the second innings, securing a match-haul of 10/161, his sixth 10-wicket haul in first-class cricket. Mumbai overhauled the target in 8.4 overs keeping all their wickets intact to secure seven points (six plus one bonus point). The 41-times champions, who defeated Bihar by an innings and 51 runs in the opening round, now sit pretty at top of the Group B standings with 14 points from two matches, four points clear of Chhattisgarh who bagged three points against Bihar in Patna.

Mumbai had dominated the proceedings from the start, posting a formidable total of 395 in their first innings. Bhupen Lalwani’s solid 61, aided by Tanush Kotian (54) and Mohti Avasthi’s (53) well-crafted half-centuries, gave them the early advantage. Mulani also contributed with the bat with a patient 38 off 111 balls before he dismantled Andhra’s batting lineup with impressive figures of 6/65. Andhra folded for 184 in the first innings as Ajinkya Rahane was quick to enforce follow-on. **BENGAL BAG THREE IN KANPUR:** Bengal had to settle for three points by virtue of first innings lead over Uttar Pradesh after the entire fourth and final day’s play at the Green Park Stadium in Kanpur was called off due to bad light. Speedster Mohammad Kaif (4/15 and 3/72) was named the man of the match for bagging an impressive seven wickets in the match while also scoring a fighting unbeaten 45. Earlier, after bowling out UP for just 60 in their first innings, Bengal managed to post 188, which helped them pocket the all-important first innings lead. UP’s second essay fightback was



steered by skipper Nitish Rana who was unbeaten on 47 with the team’s score of 178/4, ahead by 50 runs at close on day three. The match however could not get underway on the final day because of bad light as Bengal settled for three crucial points.

BRIEF SCORES

IN MUMBAI: Mumbai 395 and 34 for no loss. **Andhra** 184 and following on 244; 73.4 overs (Shaik Rasheed 66; Shams Mulani 4/96, Royston 3/45). Mumbai won by 10 wickets. Points: Mumbai 7, Andhra 0. **IN KANPUR:** Uttar Pradesh 60 and 178/4. **Bengal** 188. Match drawn. Points: Bengal 3, UP 1. **IN GUWAHATI:** Kerala 419. **Assam** 248; 64.5 overs (Riyen 116; Basil Thampi 5/82, Jalaj Saxena 4/58) and following on 212/3; 54 overs (Rahul Hazarika 107, Rishav 45). Match drawn. Points: Kerala 3, Assam 1. **IN PATNA:** Bihar 108 and 226/7; 77 overs (Sraman Nigroth 60, Babul Kumar 52, Bipin Saurabh 30 not out). **Chhattisgarh** 329/2 declared; 83 overs (Rishabh Tiwari 138, Ashutosh Singh 134). Match drawn. Points: Chhattisgarh 3, Bihar 1.