**OPINION 6** 

TRUMP EXPLOITS

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UKRAINE SHOOTS DOWN 2 RUSSIAN

COMMAND AND CONTROL AIRCRAFT

**MONEY 10** SENSEX CLOSES AT RECORD HIGH



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# Ayodhya opens its arms to tradition and modernity

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," 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, enĥancing 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?

integration of ancient architectural styles with modern rich heritage technological prowess.

engineering techniques positions the Ram Temple as a testament to

The Sarayu, covering an expansive this correspondent.

> intersections such as Udaya intersection, Saket petrol pump, Naya Ghat, and other entry points. Exclusive access will be

Ram Nagari to be fortified granted to residents holding

valid identification cards,

underscoring the necessity

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

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 The meticulously planned

security protocol includes stringent checks at key

for a meticulous screening process to Ayodhya's security. gesture accommodate Ayodhya residents amid 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

the police administration, residents to exercise caution and refrain 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 significance upcoming event, stating,

programme in Ayodhya important day for the country and the whole world. Extensive security arrangements are being made for that. Surveillance is also being done through

CCTV." Continued on Page 2

### Seven days rituals begin Amitabh Bachchan buys land

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.

Continued on Page 2

n 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

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.

Continued on Page 2

### INDIA Bloc fragments further Scindia rebuffs hooligans | PM Modi embraces welfare for all

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

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 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 68th birthday, Mayawati also categorically denied reports in a section of 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 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, specially 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 capitalist, and casteist, communal views.

Continued on Page 2

# 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 ing 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.

Delhi airport Besides, operator DIAL has been directed to expedite the operationalisation of the CAT IÎI-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 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 touch and passengers facing tough times, the DGCA has come out with a set of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

### PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

 ${\displaystyle P^{\text{rime Minister Narendra Modi said on}}_{\text{Monday that the country can only develop}}$ 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 Janjati 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 Kam 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. Continued on Page 2 | 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.

Continued on Page 2

Assemblies, Shri Ram kirtans,

### Indian economy welcomes Ayodhya power boost

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

s the consecration of the ARam 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 from received 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 models will be sold across the worth over ₹20,000 crore, as are ready to decorate the national Capital like Ayodhya.

According to Decorate the scale devotional control of the scale devo markets, and 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 the passion and commitment

country, manufacturing units working programmes, hiring a large number of traditional musical instrument players like dhol, tashe, nafiri, shehnai, band groups, and craftsmen for the preparation of tableaus for Shobha Yatra, etc., are also 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

People are shopping for Ram flags at Sadar Bazar in New Delhi ahead of the upcoming inauguration of the Ram Ranjan Dlmri / 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 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

recitations 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

Continued on Page 2

## **Tendulkar becomes latest** victim of deepfake video

 ${
m T}$ rashing a deepfake video that showed him endorsing a new app and narrating how it had helped his daughter Sara earn easy money, Sachin Tendulkar on Monday dubbed the video as "fake", said it reflected "rampant misuse of technology" and called for swift action to stop spread of misinformation.
Taking to "X" (former Twitter),

Tendulkar tore into a deepfake video featuring endorsing the gaming app "Skyward Aviator Quest" that has been making rounds on various social media platforms, termed it as "fake" and asked the agencies concerned to act swiftly against the imposters creating and spreading such "fake" content.

An apparent AI creation, the fake video — which Tendulkar made mince meat of — carried a voice that is strikingly similar to that of the master blaster. In the video, the legendary cricketer is shown purportedly saying: "These days everyone is talking about my daughter playing Skyward Aviator Quest and earning as much as Rs



1,80,000 every day, Sometimes wonder how easy it has become to make big money. It is interesting to know that this application comes free. Any Iphone owner can download this App".

Calling the video as "fake", Tendulkar wrote on his "X' handle: "These videos are fake. It is disturbing to see rampant misuse of technology. Request everyone to report videos, ads & apps like these in large num-

Lamenting that lack of alertness and responsiveness on the part of the social media platforms to deal with complaints against this kind of "fake" videos, the

cricketer called for "swift action to stop spread of misinformation and deepfakes.

"Social Media platforms need to be alert and responsive to complaints. Swift action from their end is crucial to stopping the spread of misinformation and deepfakes," Tendulkar wrote, as he tagged Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar and Maharashtra Cyber Crime.

Significantly enough, this is suspends them." not for the first time that the "Entertainment should never Tendulkars have fallen victim to come at the expense of the deepfakes. In the third week of truth. Let's encourage commu-November last year, Sara nication that's based in trust and Tendulkar had taken to reality," she added.

### Sandeskhali case: Court rebukes Bengal Police

The Calcutta High Court on Monday rebuked the Bengal Police for carrying out a sloppy investigation in the Sandeshkhali case where a raiding team of the Enforcement Directorate was attacked by the supporters of local TMC leader and strongman Shahjehan Sheikh. The ED was raiding the house of Shahjehan in connection with the Rs 10,000 crore ration scam that has seen Bengal minister Jyotipriya Mallick going to jail.

Dealing a judicial rap on the Police knuckles the Bench of Justice Joy Sengupta asked why they had managed to arrest only four persons in the past 10 days when hundreds of people were seen carrying out the attack giving serious injuries to the ED officials besides damaging their vehi-

The Judge also asked as to how the Police were not able to nab the main accused Shahjehan who had managed

to file a petition from his 'undisclosed' location before the High Court with a pleading of being heard.
The Court asked the police to

produce the case dairy o the next date of hearing.

The Police have earlier told the court that Shahjehan was absconding whereas many local party men and villagers were telling the media that he was very much in his village and contrary to reports that he might have slipped into Bangladesh was conducting his party affairs from his

Meanwhile, the ED officials on Monday conducted fresh raids in four locations in Kolkata. The raids were conducted in money transferring offices allegedly owned by another TMC leader from Bongaon Shankar Adhya who is now in police custody. ED has been quizzing Adhya to know his alleged role in transferring thousands of crores of rupees belonging to the top leadership Bangladesh, Dubai, Baharin

### Congress finalises candidates in Kerala for Lok Sabha poll

ongress-led United Democratic Front in Kerala has almost finalised the list of candidates for the 20 constituencies in the State for the Lok Sabha polls scheduled for March-April 2024. Most of the sitting UDF MPs from the State would be renominated barring a couple of persons whose performance during the last five years was anything but satisfactory.

K Sudhakaran, KPCC president who represents the Kannur constituency is likely to move out from the race due to an ailment for which he is undergoing treatment. He is likely to be nominated as Rajya Sabha candidate to help him to stay out of the din and hectic journeys associated with campaigning.

Kannur is likely to get a young and new candidate and it could be Dr Shama Muhammed, the young dental surgeon who is also the national spokesperson of the party. Rahul Gandhi has been impressed by her performance

well as in countering the charges made by the BJP. Since K Sudhakaran, KPĆC chief who is the sitting member from Kannur is not in the best of health, Dr Muhammed is likely to be fielded as the candidate from Kannur," said a senior party leader in the Kasaragod, the northern most

constituency in Kerala, represented by Rajmohan Unnithan will also see a change of candidate. "The Muslim League has demanded three seats instead of the two seats which has been allocated to the party in the previous hustings. Since the constituency has a considerable Muslim population, the Congress is likely to offer Kasaragod to Muslim League," said the leader who does not want his name to be quoted. There is widespread resentment against the style of functioning of Unnithan who scrapped through with a thin majority of 40,000 in the last election, said a veteran socio-

#### AAP to hold Sundar Kand recitals across Delhi

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

Tn an apparent attempt to Lounter the BJP's focus on the consecration ceremony at the Ram temple in Ayodhya and cleanliness drive at temples, the AAP has announced its plan to hold "Sundar Kand" recital programmes across Delhi on Tuesdays.

The consecration ceremony at the Ram temple in Ayodhya will be held on January 22 and Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be present there.

AAP national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said he will join a "Sundar Kand" recital event along with his wife in the Rohini area and invited people to attend such programmes to be held near their homes.

"Sundar Kand" is one of the chapters in the Ramayana devoted to Lord Hanuman.

"The Aam Aadmi Party is tomorrow organising Sundar Kand recitals at many places in Delhi for the peace, happiness and progress of all. I will along with my wife join the devotees at a temple in Rohini for the Sundar Kand recital at 3 PM. You all are invited to attend the recitals near your homes as per your convenience," Kejriwal posted on X.

AAP leader and Delhi minister Saurabh Bharadwaj said, "Sundar Kand' recitation programme will be held in all Assembly constituencies and municipal wards on the first Tuesday of every month.

Party MLAs, councillors and office bearers will take part in the programmes that will held at over 2,600 places in the

He invited the people of Delhi to participate in the programme enthusiastically.

#### **Keiriwal** addresses NCC cadets at camp

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

 $D^{\text{elhi Chief Minister Arvind}}_{\text{Kejriwal said on Monday}}$ the National Cadet Corps with its motto of 'Unity and Discipline' has been instrumental in strengthening the patriotic and secular values which are enshrined in the Indian Constitution.

Addressing a gathering at an event hosted at the ongoing NCC Republic Day Camp at the Delhi Cantonment, he also asserted that the Corps extends them a great opportunity to imbibe qualities of discipline, spirit of adventure, and service

#### Delhi LG gives nod for notifying 147 acres in Rani Khera for industry

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

Twitter accounts spreading mis-

information using her name.

Sara, who has 5.9 million fol-

lowers on Instagram, had

expressed serious concern over

the social media activity being

done by accounts impersonat-

'Social media is a wonderful

space for all of us to share our

joys, sorrows and daily activi-

ties. However, it is disconcert-

ing to see the misuse of tech-

nology as it takes away from the

truth and authenticity of the

internet. I have come across

some deepfake photos of me

which are far from reality,"

Sara wrote in a detailed state-

Maintaining that she does not have an account on "X", Sara

wrote: "A few accounts on X

(formerly Twitter) have obvi-

ously been created with an

intent to impersonate me and

mislead people. I do not have an

account on X, and I hope X

looks into such accounts and

Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has given his nod for notifying 147 acres of land in northwest Delhi's Rani Khera locality for developing it as an industrial area, Raj Niwas officials said on Monday. The land was transferred to the

Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (DSIIDC) from the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) in 2007. The DSIIDC had plans to

develop the multi-level manufacturing hub but due to the stay imposed by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) on December 14, 2017, the project got stuck until the Supreme Court vacated the NGT order on July 31, 2023.

After the legal hurdles were cleared, the Delhi government's Industries department sought Saxena's approval on January 3 for notifying Rani Khera for development as an industrial area by the DSIIDC under the provision of Sub-section (k) of Section 2 of the Delhi Industrial Development Operation and Maintenance (DIDOM) Act, 2010, in terms of the Master Plan of Delhi

The Lieutenant Governor's nod for notifying 147 acres of land in Rani Khera Industrial area comes three months after he gave similar approval for specifying 55.20 acres of land at Baprola Industrial area in September 2023 and 920 acres of land at Kanjhawala Industrial area in May 2023.

#### PM Modi embraces welfare...

From Page 1

and other countries.

Those who were always ignored earlier have not only been reached out by him but also worshipped, he said. During the event, Modi interacted with beneficiaries JANMAN as they highlighted the positive changes in their lives after they availed various Government schemes to get access to cooking gas connections, electricity, piped water, and housing.

"It is the endeavour of our

Government that no one is

left out of its welfare schemes," he said. The first instalment of ₹540 crore was released to beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin under IANMAN, which was launched for the socioeconomic welfare Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) on November 15 on the occasion of Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas.

PM-JANMAN, with a budget of approximately ₹24,000 crore, focuses on 11 critical interventions through nine Ministries and is aimed at improving socio-economic conditions of PVTGs by saturating PVTG households and habitations with basic facilities such as safe housing, clean drinking water, and sanitation. It also seeks to provide improved access to education, health and nutrition, electricity, road and telecom connectivity, and sustainable livelihood opportunities.

Modi said the biggest beneficiaries of Government's 'Aspirational Districts Programme' to boost development in relatively backward districts are Scheduled Tribes. "Today the tribal society is seeing and understanding how our government is working for their culture and dignity," he

cultural organisation.

From Page 1

Speaking on the investment, Bachchan was reported to have said, "I am looking forward to embarking on this economic journey with The House of Abhinandan Lodha for The Sarayu in Ayodhya, a city that holds a special place in my heart." The economic implications of Bachchan's involvement in The Sarayu are notable, given the broader context of Ayodhya's infrastructure and economic development since the landmark Supreme Court verdict in 2019.Abhinandan Lodha, Chairman of HoABL, hailed Bachchan as the "first citizen" of The Sarayu, underscoring the potential economic impact of his association with the project. "His investment signifies not only confidence in the city's economic potential but also a deep appreciation for its spiritual heritage," Lodha reportedly said.

# Indian

From Page 1 Various associations are

providing their members with or 11 lamps," he added. More than 500 LED lights and sound systems will be

installed, and drummers will play traditional instruments at over 300 locations. Additionally, around 100 Shri Ram processions will be held in markets, featuring banners and traditional attire, where women will participate in traditional attire with Shri Ram kalash on their heads. Delhi will also witness numerous cultural programs, with folk dancers and singers coming from Vrindavan and Jaipur for performances in many markets.

# INDIA

"If the Lok Sabha elections are held as free and fair as the 2007 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections when there were no irregularities or rigging in EVMs, then our party will bring better results by contesting the polls alone," she said.

Giving the reason for not siding with any party or alliance in the upcoming elections, Mayawati said, "Our party is contesting alone because its leadership is in the hands of a Dalit against whom the casteist mentality of most of the parties has not changed yet." 'Many parties want to

with the BSP... But it is very important for us to look consider going it alone in after the interest of our the State --- "which would

However, the BSP chief said the support can be extended after the elections if there is proper participation, but this support will not be given for free.

She said all the Opposition parties want to keep the BSP away from power by uniting and adopting various tactics. The former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister also said she has received an invitation for the January 22 consecration ceremony in

Ayodhya, but a decision on attending it has not been taken yet because of certain party programmes.

According to West Bengal Congress sources, the PCC leaders through Congress observer GA contest elections in alliance communicated to the AICC

that either the party should - or consider an alliance with the Left Front.

"An alliance with the TMC will not only counterproductive suicidal," a senior PCC leader said. Mir, who was recently in Kolkata - to discuss' the preparations of Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, which is likely to pass through some parts of this State too — had met senior PCC leaders like Adhir Chowdhury.

While the Left Front has already said there is no question of allying with the TMC, what seems to have jolted the INDIA Block further in Bengal is the TMC's unwillingness to part with more than two seats in

# Ram Nagari to be

From Page 1

minimise inconvenience for devotees attending the programme those afterward, comprehensive arrangements are being implemented," Kumar added. Over strategically placed CCTV cameras will enable thorough surveillance Ayodhya, across emphasising commitment to security during this momentous occasion. Kumar highlighted the use

of state-of-the-art equipment in the security plan, emphasizing its effectiveness in supporting

law enforcement efforts. The security measures have been meticulously devised, taking into consideration both the consecration ceremony and the expected influx of devotees.

"In ensuring the safety and well-being of all attendees, the security team aims to create an environment where devotees can participate in the Pran Pratishtha program without facing any inconveniences," he said.

This heightened state of security aligns with the ongoing Shri Ram Charan Paduka Yatra, a significant pilgrimage that began in Chitrakoot on Makar

Sankranti (January 15) and scheduled to reach Ayodhya on January 19. The yatra involves sacred rituals, including the collection of water from the pond at Bharatkup and the worship of Paduka. As participants through Prayagraj, Shringverpur, Pratapgarh, and Sultanpur, cultural programmes and overnight stays in various districts are planned.

monumental development for the grand Shri Ram temple Ayodhya, a 2100 kg Ashtadhatu bell is poised to be installed. Crafted over four years in Jalesar, Etah,

this imposing bell stands at an impressive six feet in height and five feet in width. Expected to be the largest bell within the temple complex, it not only contributes to architectural splendor but also resonates with a captivating sound that is anticipated to echo far and wide. The construction of this bell, a symbol of spiritual significance, incurred a cost of approximately Rs 25 lakh. After undergoing hours of darshan and worship, the commenced its journey to Ayodhya on January 8, adding another layer of sanctity to the sacred city.

#### Seven days rituals...

Karnataka's Arun Yogiraj would be placed on the pedestal of the sanctum sanctorum. "The statue,

He said the statue crafted by

weighing between 150 and 200 kilogram, depicts the divine figure of Ramlala standing with a bow and arrow, exuding a regal and Vishnu-incarnation aura. Ramlala will be seated on a lotus flower in the sanctum sanctorum, with an estimated height of about 8 feet, including the lotus," he

said. Rai clarified that owing to the preparations, the darshan of Ramlala would not be held from January 20 to 21.

The ceremonies were to feature the anointing of Ramlala with water from all the rivers of India, along with gifts from Ram's inlaws' house in Nepal and maternal grandfather's house in Chhattisgarh. Musical instruments from across the country were to be played

during the puja, showcasing the rich cultural diversity of India.

Divisional The Commissioner of Ayodhya, Gaurav Dayal, revealed that seating arrangements for people had been meticulously planned on the temple premises. Special codes would be assigned to distinguish seating for distinguished guests. Rai emphasised the inclusivity of the event, extending an invitation to dignitaries from various fields, highlighting the culmination of a historic journey in the construction of the Ram Mandir.

As the nation eagerly awaited the consecration ceremonies, the cultural and religious landscape of Ayodhya brimmed with anticipation, devotees enthusiasts from different corners of the country poised to participate in this momentous occasion.

The seven day schedule of the consecration function:

January 16: Atonement by the host appointed by the temple trust, Dashavid bath on the banks of river Saryu, Vishnu worship and Godan. January 17: Procession will visit Ayodhya with the idol of Ramlala, devotees will reach the temple carrying Saryu water in Mangal

January 18: Formal rituals will start with Ganesh Ambika Puja, Varun Puja, Matrika Puja, Brahmin Varan, Vastu Puja etc. January 19: Agni Sthapana,

Navagraha Sthapana and Havan. January 20: After washing the sanctum sanctorum of

the temple with the holy water of Saryu, there will be Shanti Vaastu and Annadhivas. January 21: After a divine

bath with 125 urns, Shayadhivas will be done. January 22: After morning worship, the deity of the Ramallah will be consecrated in Mrigashira Nakshatra in the afternoon

### Scindia rebuffs.

The DGCA said there should also be appropriate sensitisation of the airline staff at the airports to suitably communicate with and continuously guide and inform the passengers about flight delays, according to a

"In view of the prevalent fog season and adverse weather conditions, airlines may cancel, sufficiently in advance, such flights that are anticipated to be delayed or consequentially delayed on account of such conditions beyond a period of 3 hours with a view to obviate congestion at the airport and mitigate passenger inconvenience," DGCA said. The SOPs have been issued in view of the "fog-induced disruptions and adverse weather conditions at various airports, including Delhi airport, causing delays, cancellations and inconvenience to passengers", an official release

Delhi airport has four runways - RW 09/27, RW

11R/29L, RW 10/28, and RW 11L/29R. One of them is not operational now. The airport is the country's largest airport and handles around 1,300 flights

As the cold wave worsened on Monday, the mercury plunged four degrees below normal to 3.3 degrees Celsius, four notches below the season's average, the lowest this season so far, in Delhi, even as dense fog enveloping the Capital reduced visibility to zero at Palam for around two hours and disrupted air traffic as more than 150 flights were delayed.

Four flights were diverted to Jaipur, and one flight to Ahmedabad between 1 am and 5 am. There are also reports of several trains being either delayed or canceled due to low visibility or late running.

Delhi airport has four run-ways — RW 09/27, RW 11R/29L, RW 10/28, and RW 11L/29R. One of them is not operational now. The airport is the country's largest airport and

handles around 1,300 flights daily. Data from 5 am to 9 am shows that the CAT-III Runway RWY 11R/29L handled 30 landings and 1 takeoff during the 4hour period, whereas the non-CAT III Runway RWY 9/27 couldn't handle any flight movement, and RWY 11L/29R handled 2 Take-offs during the period, the civil aviation ministry said in a post on X on Monday. Apart from reduced visibility, the situation got worse because Delhi Airport currently has only one CAT IIIequipped runway for operations in low visibility. Runway 28/10 has been closed for scheduled re-carpeting since mid-September. In Lodhi Road, the mini-

mum temperature dropped to 3.1 degrees Celsius. A foggy and cold morning gave way to a sunny day in the national Capital on Monday, bringing slight relief to Delhiites who woke up to the season's coldest morning with a minimum temperature of 3.3 degrees Celsius. However, owing to bright sunshine in the afternoon, the mercury reached a high of 19.7 degrees Celsius, normal for this time of the year, the India Meteorological

Department said. Earlier, in a disturbing inci-

dent, a passenger on an IndiGo flight was arrested after he assaulted a pilot when he was making an announcement regarding a delay in takeoff at the IGI airport. The incident came to light after a video went viral on social media showing the passenger running up to the captain of the IndiGo flight and slapping him. The captain was making an announcement regarding delays when the man punched him. The incident happened on a day dense fog majorly impacted operations at the Delhi airport leading to 500 flights being diverted, canceled, or delayed, leaving thousands of passengers waiting for hours. The passenger was deboarded after the incident and handed over to central security forces. A First Information Report (FIR) was lodged in the matter based on the complaint by the captain of the Delhi-Goa IndiGo flight. The flight took off from Delhi at 6 pm after a delay of more than 10 hours, according to the flight tracking website flightradar24.

In the video, the air hostesses tried to keep the passenger away; he can be heard telling the

pilot: 'Nahi chalana toh mat chala, bol de (If you don't want to fly the plane, then don't).' To this, one of the flight attendants said, "Sir aap aisa nahi kar sakte (sir, you cannot do this)." As other passengers were shocked and agitated, a man in a blue hoodie can be seen trying to calm the man down at the end of the video. The video was originally shared on an Instagram story by a user Evgenia Belskaia on Sunday night. According to the police, the co-pilot of flight number 6E 2175, between Delhi and Goa, and other security personnel gave a complaint regarding one passenger assaulting and misbehaving with them in the flight.
The Indira Gandhi

International Airport (IGI) DCP, also assured to take appropriate legal action against the accused. A case under sections 323 (punishment for voluntarily causing hurt), 341 (punishment for wrongful restraint), and 290 (punishment for creating public nuisance) of the IPC and section 22 of the Aircraft Rules has been registered against the passenger, and investigations are on, another police officer

Late City Vol. 34 Issue 15 \*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

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With the Blessings of Mahaprabhu Shree Jagannatha The 'Shree Mandira Parikrama Prakalpa' will be inaugrated on 17th January 2024

The inauguration ceremony will be telecast live on all Odia TV channels and live streamed on the "IPR Odisha" YouTube Channel 7 AM onwards

### IMD instrumental in protecting lives, advancing climate research: Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday com-mended 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 kickstarted 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 healthcare 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

launched a mobile app of the IMD's forecast accuracy has IMD -- 'Mausam' -- that inteimproved by 40 per cent in the grates all services offered by the last five years compared to the weather office and unveiled preceding five years, challenges persist in predicting smallnew initiatives such as the scale severe weather events Panchayat Mausam Seva, Decision Support System and the National Framework for such as cloudbursts. To address this challenge, Rijiju

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

Murmu visits Modi Gallery at PM Sangrahalaya

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 oneand-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 state-

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

 $\mathbf{I}$ ndia 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

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 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

The paper also shows that the pace of decline in poverty headcount ratio using the exponential method was much 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 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 Mukt 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,

Targeted 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 Yoiana 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 vated 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 multi-dimensional poverty.

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

to establish 11 radars in the

eastern Himalayan region,

Rijiju shared.

Climate Services. The function

was attended by Earth Sciences

Minister Kiren Rijiju, Earth

Sciences Secretary M

Ravichandran, IMD Director

General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, former secretaries

of the ministry and former

Union minister Kiren Rijiju

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. Rijiju emphasised that weather and

climate impacts are more pro-

nounced than ever, and India

strives to become a more cli-

mate-resilient country.

directors general of IMD.

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 par-

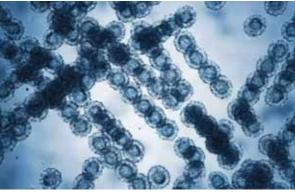
ticularly problematic in individuals with weakened immune systems, such as those with HIV/AIDS, cancer undergoing patients chemotherapy, and organ transplant recipients. There are about 12 million species of fungi thriving in marine, freshwater, desert, forests and almost all other ecosystems on the 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

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 dis-

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,

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.

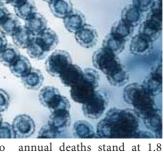
"This work is the first global comprehensive annual incidence estimate of fungal disease, yet many gaps and uncertainties remain," said Denning.
Around a third of 3.23 mil-

lion chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) deaths worldwide are linked to infection with the fungus 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

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

Lung and bronchus cancer



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.

al 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

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 İndia. 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 Malaysia, Singapore, 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 transed 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

"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

"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 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

The project will run over the next 18 months, with further trials expected to follow in a Nipah-affected country, they

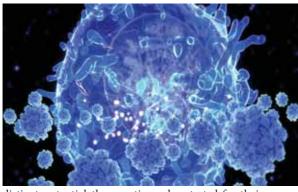
#### US scientists find immune cell that can eliminate cancer, Covid-19

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI** 

n a groundbreaking discov-Lery, 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

The cells were tested in mouse models with cancer, according to the preclinical research published in the journal Cell. "We have identified human Hematology & Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation at City of

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 cancerkilling 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

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 harvest-ing 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 partner-

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

US-based 32-year-old Apatient 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 Fortis Hospital

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

'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 cuttingedge 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 natu-

The reduced recovery time meant that she could resume her daily activities relatively quickly, added Dr. Anjana

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 official 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.

# Jagannath cult stretches back to 3000 BC

of history which say that the cult of Lord Jagannath started from 1112 AD, the Rig Vedic period together with Hindu mythological scriptures unmistakably point out that the cult stretches back to 3000 BC and even beyond that period. Quoting copiously from scriptures about the Lord's existence, it has been proved to be time older than the dull dispensation of pedantic scholars, observes Sugyan Choudhury.

That the cult of Lord Jagannath is nothing but a part of the Vedic civilization is evident from the RigVeda. The cantos from the Rig Veda "Adaujaru Plabate Sindhutire Apoursham" (10/155) means that an unborn tree from the water, air and earth the trunk of which floats across the ocean and which is not caused by any subject whosever. And again in the Taitariya Prakarana of Rig Veda Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Maa Subhadra exist outside the south ocean, which speaks very much for itself.

In the Utkal Skandh of the Skadh Purana, Lord Brahma has said to have exhorted to the Gods that "Long before my creation, Lord Jagannath shines in His blue sapphire colour being resplendent from time immemorial. Today in the second half of my life, Lord Jagannath has taken the icon of a demon size one and shall continue in this holy land of Puri till my life ends". The scriptures have ascertained that oneday in the life of Lord Brahma amounts to 432 crores of years of human era.

Likewise 360 days of Lord Brahma contributes to one Brahma year. It is depicted in the pages of Purana that the tribal king Biswabasu was worshipping the Lord as Nilamadhaba at Nilakandara. Similarly, it has been described



that Ajasabar was worshipping the Lord as Sabarinarayan in Kalebar dense forest. It is all acceptable that Lord Nilamadhaba and Lord Sabarinarayan are one and the same being identified with Lord Jagannath. Sir Samant Chandrasekhar has mentioned in his epoch-making book "Siddhant Darpana" that anyway in the first half of the creation Lord Jagannath existed in the form of Nilamadhaba. In the second half of the creation the Lord has assumed the form of Darubrahma under-

ation of the time. Although Herman Kulke has traced the origin of Lord Jagannath to 12th century (AD), but from the scripture of Indrabhuti, it is proved that Lord Jagannath belongs to 8th Century AD. Dr Benumadhab Padhi has mentioned in his book 'Darudevata' that Lord

neath beautifully embellished

crowned blue wheel of temple

of Srimandir. But the said

temple may not be possible at

the very beginning of the cre-

Jagannath belongs prior to

1200 century AD. From the museum at Karachi, three deities are opined to have been

historians opine that this temple was constructed in 1112 AD by King Anangbhima Dev. But the cult

the pages of the Mahabharata wherein at page 114, the Mohavedi beside

Mahodadhi or the ocean has

ultimately stretches our findings to the face that Lord Ramachandra had instructed Bibhisan to worship Lord

Bramhapurusha of the great Lord sleeping beside the seashore unmistakably point out to the same purusa is no one but Lord Jagannath himself. All the abataras or manifestations owe their origin to that great Lord or creator. The incarnations may come out from this world. But according to Utkaliva Baishnab cult, all the incarnations come from Lord Jagannath. It is mentioned that Lord Krishna and Arjun had come to Purushottam Khetra i.e. Puri and observed three days' penance and paid their obeisance to Lord Jagannath. In the divine scripture of 'Prem Panchamruta' of Bhupati Pandit, it is mentioned that King Basudev had come as a pilgrim to visit Lord Jagannath at Puri. During his rest at Puri and on the auspicious day of Hari Uthan Ekadasi, King Basudev was placed with boons from Lord Jagannath.Consequently, King Basudev was blessed with two sons, Krishna and

The Skandha Purana mentions that King Indradyumna was identified to witness the Lords who were metamorphosed as Darubrahma and by visiting whom the people

gained wisdom of self or soul. Thus it is concluded that the worship of Lord Jagannath had existed much before the manifestation of Lord Krishna and Lord Rama. As per the rites of the Srimandir, it is seen that the worship of Rama and Krishna takes place, after getting the divine dictum in the form of a garland from Lord Jagannath. Thus it can be safely concluded that worship of Lord Jagannath stretches back to long ages. Many a temple has been either lost to the violent claims of the sea or destroyed by ravages of time but then the presiding spirit and the sanctum sanctorum of Lord Jagannath continues to exist here at Puri since time immemorial where all historians and archaeologists admit their failures in tracing His



worshipped from 1st century and their origin belonged to the period of the "Kushan" dynasty. Not only that, Nikolas Natovin of Russia has mentioned that Lord Jagannath belongs to before the birth of Christ and was acclaimed as the quintessential Lord throughout the envelope of Asian continent. But now of Lord Jagannath did exist much before it and safely be accepted.

Noted historian MM Ganguli has mentioned out of his research that the cult of Lord was prevalent before 4th century BC. In his opinion Mahabharata was composed before 4th century BC. Dr Ganguli rests his finding from

been vividly depicted as the sanctum sanctorum of the Lords.

In the Balmiki Ramayan preceding the composition of the Mahabharat, it has been mentioned that Lord Jagannath belongs to "Ikshaku Kula Daivatam" or that Lord Jagannath belongs to lineage Ikshaku. This means that this

ascertained to have been composed 3000 years before the birth of Christ. Probably this is the reason for which Lord Jagannath was already accepted as the God long before.

Jagannath. The Rigveda was

The illustrious descriptions of Krushna -Arjuna riding through their chariot Nandighosh and reaching the





In Charingal GP of Badachana block in Jajpur district, Muslim people take initiative for the Jagannath Parikrama Rath. Sarapanch Nur Jahan Begum leads the event with PS Member Chandrakala Samal





Jagannath Parikrama Arpan Rath moves in Puri town. Ranjan Ganguly

#### i model show on Prarikrama

To give a thrilling experience to devotees

BHUBANESWAR

A show on the mini model of the Shreemandir Parikrama Prakalpa will be screened on January 17 in the Jagannath Ballav auditorium premises, which will continue till January 22. The devotees after tak-

corridor project will have thrilling experience after they take a whole view of the project. A 60 feet long and 12 feet wide big screen will be fitted for the purpose. The show will display about the Parikrama Prakalpa project, besides many things related to Lord Jagannath. A Delhi-based agency has been assigned to run the show.

Besides, for the first time, light and sound show will be



Municipality market wall. It will display the Kanchi Abhijan of the Lords, starting from Gajapati Purushotam Dev's love affairs with Kanchi princes Padmabati to the war with the King of Kanchi. The show will run in evening. To make the project inauguration event memorable, the light and sound show has planned as per the direction of 5T Chairman VK Pandian.





On the 4th day of Parikrama, Arpan Rath is in Ghatagaon, Jhumpura and Sadar blocks of Keonjhar district. People particularly, women, are waiting outside their houses to greet the Arpan Rath.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

#### **Abandonment**

Former Union Minister Milind Deora spoils the Cong's Nyay Yatra party with abrupt resignation

n what has come as a surprise to many, second-generation Congress leader Milind Deora resigned from the party the very day Rahul Gandhi kicked off his Nyay Yatra. The departure of the senior Maharashtra leader to Chief Minister Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena adds to the challenges the Congress has been facing in recent times, and raises questions about its internal dynamics and overall strategy. It is also a telling comment on the way the party is being managed. His father Murli Deora was a veteran Congress leader and the family has had a 55-year association with the Congress. Deora's departure adds to a growing list of young leaders who have left the Congress to embark on new journeys. The lack of resolution for lingering issues and intra-party factionalism has prompted several promising leaders from the Rahul camp to leave. Rahul confidant and former Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia resigned to join the BJP in March 2020 and is currently a Minister in the Modi Cabinet. Another ex-UPA Minister, Jitin Prasada, left the



Congress, citing the party's growing disconnect with people. Subsequently, a series of exits occurred, with Priyanka Chaturvedi joining the erstwhile undivided Shiv Sena, former Mahila Congress chief Sushmita Deb quitting for the TMC, former Union Minister RPN Singh, former Punjab Congress chief Sunil Jakhar and party spokesperson Jaiveer Shergill joining the BJP. The exodus began with then Assam Congress leader Himanta Biswa Sarma leaving for the BJP ahead of the 2014 polls. Congress stalwarts Capt Amarinder Singh, Ghulam Nabi Azad and Kapil Sibal also remain on the Though the 47-year-old Deora did not give a reason

for severing ties with the Congress, he has strongly criticised it for not focusing on "constructive issues, suggestions, merit and ability". He also blamed the party for engaging in the criticism of industrialists and businessmen. Though certainly a jolt, Deora's exit will not be a major setback for the Congress as it is already aligned with the Shiv Sena led by Uddhav Thackeray. But it must introspect the reasons for such decisions by second-generation Congress leaders. Though poaching is not new to Indian politics, the party leadership must be concerned about the issues its young Turks might have. Deora's departure brings attention to the internal conflicts and dissent within the Congress. It highlights the need for the leadership to address internal grievances and foster a more inclusive and cohesive environment. Learning from such setbacks, the leadership should focus on rebuilding trust within its ranks and projecting a united front to regain public confidence. A transparent and participatory decision-making process should be implemented to foster inclusivity within the Congress since the top-down approach is not working for it anyway. However, the party should take such incidents in its stride and focus for now on its Nyay Yatra, which should be continued with renewed vigour, focusing on grassroots engagement.



Artistes perform during the celebration of Bhogi, the first day of the four-day festival of Pongal, in Hyderabad

# Trump exploits legal loopholes



As Trump faces charges of election interference, his reliance on presidential immunity raises concerns about the erosion of democratic values in American politics

onald Trump has historically abused technicalities to justify his conduct. Trump's businesses have involved over 4,000 state and federal legal actions, including six bankruptcies. Contrary to established precedent, Trump had stoutly refused to release his tax returns during his Presidential campaign and when portions of his returns were released, it was found that he had paid no taxes for years. Trump had brazenly said that he had "brilliantly used' U.S. tax rules to his advantage and that he was "smart", for having done so! He was able to minimize his tax liability by reporting heavy losses across his empire, and reports suggested that before 2020, he had not paid taxes in 10 out of the 15 previous assessment years, despite his confessed suitability for the Oval Office - the amoral man had taken cover of technicalities and shunned moral transparency, to cover his tracks. Trump also had the dubious distinction of being the only US President to be impeached twice in office but acquitted each time with the technicality of having requisite numbers of Republicans in the Senate, bailing him out both times. Today, when Trump faces charges of conspiring to overturn the 2020 Presidential election results (won by Democrat candidate, Joe Biden) - he is yet again invoking the technicality of being a President to seek immunity from prosecution charges

However, the provocative conduct of Trump during the 6th Jan 'insurrection' is well documented when he provoked his supporters in Proud Boys, Oath Keepers, QAnon and other far-right supremacists, neo-Nazis, neo-Confederates etc. Right through the proceedings, Trump's patent and weaponised language of falsehoods and misrepresentations was additionally loaded with inflammatory suggestions e.g., if you don't fight like hell, you are not going to have a country anymore", "invade the capitol", 'storm the capitol etc., even when he knew that some of his supporters were dangerously armed, as he made his proverbial, 'last stand'. In the bargain, Trump even sold

out his Vice President, Mike Pence, by asking him recklessly to alter the election results and stop Biden from assuming Presidentship, unconstitution-

But as is often the case in participative democracies, many amongst the electorate were convinced and encouraging of Trump's open disdain towards constitutional morality, and propriety and openly supportive of his active 'othering' of those, who didn't fit his worldview. Such diminishment wasn't just reserved for partisan rivals amongst the Democrats, but even for those within the Republican ranks like the late Senator, John McCain, who were shocked at the extent to which the naturally right-wing Republican cadre under Trump had started turning hyper-right, to an extent that it became an exclusivist party. Indecorous aspersions were attributed to Trump's own Vice President, Mike Pence when he refused to toe Trump's wildly unconstitutional advice. Despite his consistently amoral history, Trump leads the Republican Presidential Primaries by a huge margin, and that says something about the 'new normal' in American politics. But if the latest unhinged remark of Trump is anything to go by, it is the 'constitutional propriety' itself that



**DESPITE HIS** CONSISTENTLY AMORAL HISTORY. TRUMP LEADS THE REPUBLICAN **PRESIDENTIAL** PRIMARIES BY A HUGE MARGIN, AND THAT SAYS SOMETHING ABOUT THE 'NEW NORMAL' IN AMERICAN **POLITICS** 

the electorate who at least, unthinkingly prefer the unconstitutional language of illiberality, authoritarianism, and intolerance.

Besides talking about the dangerous "bedlam" in case he is denied a shot at elections, he shamelessly spoke about wanting to be, "a dictator for one day" to shut illegal crossings at the US-Mexico border and boost energy projects. Implicit in his invocation of dictatorship was the subliminal suggestion, that firstly he is drawn to unconstitutional solutions i.e., dictatorship, and that the strong-arm methods were the only way to resolve pressing issues. It is also suggestive of his whimsical wish to change the constitution if he had his

Just days earlier Biden had posted a sage warning, Whether democracy is still America's sacred cause is what the 2024 election is all about". Yet Biden tellingly trails behind Trump, as if the Americans have tired of the democratic, constitutional, and inclusive ways, and now seemingly prefer a no-holds-barred approach of Trump, despite his unprecedented and unabashed derelictions.

Biden has been unable to connect the defence of democracy to the day-to-day concerns of the American electorate. Even the cold fact that the Democrat dispensation has been able to deliver better results on the most pressing issues for Americans i.e., inflation, health care, jobs, immigration, climate issues etc., - all these hard statistics count for nothing in the face of naked hate, divide and 'revenge'/'retribution' (as repeatedly called out by Trump). Hate is a more potent currency than the language of civility or unity, which is increasingly, wrongly and often fatally, perceived to be a sign of weakness and indeci-

The dangerous sign is that Trump's promises and portents don't share a basic belief in constitutional and participative democracy, and that is exactly what enthrals and galvanises his electoral appeal. It isn't about partisan positions as Trump is building his cult and rules. It is as fellow Republican and President George Bush warned about the Trump era, "A malign force seems at work in our common life that turns every disagreement into an argument, and every argument into a clash of cultures. So much of our politics has become a naked appeal to anger, fear and resentment."

(1 ne writer, a military veter ิ an, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

### The enduring musical heritage of the legends



Both Ustad Rashid Khan and Dr Prabha Atre played pivotal roles in globalising Indian classical music, taking it beyond geographical confines

¬he news of the passing away of Ustad Rashid Khan on January 9, 2024, came as a big jolt to the entire fraternity of Indian classical music. As tributes poured in – and continue – again the tragic news of the passing away of Dr Prabha Atre on January 13, 2024, has left all of us in shock. This recent departure of two stalwarts, Ustad Rashid Khan and Dr Prabha Atre, has left an indelible void that resonates through the hearts of music enthusiasts globally. These legendary artists were not just virtuosos in their respective domains, but torchbearers who illuminated the path of classical music with their innovative prowess, dedication, and profound 'sadhana'.

Ustad Rashid Khan, a name synonymous with the enchanting strains of Hindustani classical music, embarked on his musical journey from a lineage steeped in tradition. Hailing from the illustrious 'Rampur-Sahaswan Gharana, Rashid Khan was a maestro par excellence, wielding the sarangi of his soul with unparalleled finesse. The delicate Kirana gharana which she divine through music.

fabric of his melody, woven

with intricate raag renditions, left audiences spellbound and created a timeless legacy.

One cannot help but marvel at Ustad Rashid Khan's mesmerizing exploration of diverse raags, each performance a celestial journey. His rendition of the timeless raag Yaman, or raag Durga for instance, transcended the boundaries of time and space, echoing the purity and precision that defined his artistry. The maestro's command over the intricacies of taal and laya, coupled with the soul-stirring alaaps, revealed a musical genius at the zenith of his

Similarly, Dr Prabha Atre, on the other hand, was a luminary in the realm of Hindustani classical vocal music. Her velvety voice and impeccable command over various raags marked her as a true proponent of her

proudly represented. Dr. Atre's journey began in the vibrant cultural milieu of Pune, where she imbibed the essence of the 'Kirana Gharana, ultimately crafting her unique style.

One cannot discuss Dr. Prabha Atre's contributions without acknowledging her groundbreaking research and dedication to the art form. Her scholarly pursuits delved into the intricacies of raag structures, laying the foundation for an enriched understanding of the classical repertoire. Her treatises and writings became invaluable resources for students and scholars alike, elevating the discourse surrounding Indian classical music. Dr Atre's dedication to her craft manifested in her rigorous 'sadhana' a term encapsulating the disciplined and continuous practice that defines the life of a true artist - manifested during her renditions of complex ragas like Maru Bihag or Jogia which became a testament to the countless hours spent honing her craft, transcending the realm of mere

performance to attain a spir-

itual communion with the

Ustad Rashid Khan and Dr. Prabha Atre globalized Indian classical music, transcending borders through collaborations and performances. Rashid Khan's duets with Yo-Yo Ma highlighted music's universality. Dr. Atre, through captivating international performances, spread classical music globally, fostering understanding and appreciation for this ancient art form beyond geographical confines.

Maestros Ustad Rashid Khan and Dr. Prabha Atre, honoured with prestigious awards like Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan, exemplify unparalleled dedication and artistic brilliance, celebrated through numerous accolades. Ustad Rashid Khan and Dr. Prabha Atre's departure from the earthly world has left an irreplaceable void in the world of Indian classical music. Their legacy, however, lives on through the timeless melodies and profound impact they have left on generations of music enthusiasts. Farewell!

(The writer is a programme executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, views are personal)

seems to be the problem with

**TOURISM IN LAKSHADWEEP** Sir — If there is one travel destination everyone talked about last week, it's Lakshadweep. After PM Modi's nowfamous photos on the archipelago and the subsequent diplomatic fracas with the Maldives, the union territory suddenly made it to everyone's must-visit bucket list. While increasing tourist footfall will benefit the region financially, we couldn't help but worry about what hordes of tourists would mean for its fragile ecology. Environmentalists, locals, and government officials would have to assess the implications of this

newfound popularity. For all those who think traveling to Lakshadweep is as easy as buying a flight ticket, we have the complete lowdown in our thorough guide on the permits required, how long it takes to get them, travel and stay options, and more. But if it's a beach holiday that you are looking for, India has plenty of other options. From white sand beaches to offbeat destinations to the prettiest islands and that includes Marina Beach of Chennai. It is time to maintain beaches all around India to provide the best

environment and ambiance. C K Subramaniam | Chennai

#### **REVISITING SWAMI JI'S CALL**

Sir - National Sample Survey and Global Hunger Index depict alarming child wasting and stunting in India. Swami Vivekananda's words echo on misplaced priorities, criticizing temple politics and extravagant space missions. He emphasized the great sin of neglecting the masses, attributing it to India's downfall. Vivekananda urged a focus on mass education, nourishment, and care, emphasizing the need to uplift the underprivileged. His call to work for the well-being of the masses remains pertinent for India's regener-

What Swami Vivekananda said long ago about poor people paying for our education is still relevant today as India

#### **Alarming rise in alcohol consumption**



**LETTERS** TO THE EDITOR

larming rise in alcohol consumption among voungsters, including teenagers. poses serious risks. Studies emphasize the unsafe nature of alcohol consumption under 18, contributing to increased road rage and violence. Whisky, especially detrimental to teenage brains, can lead to memory issues and poor academic performance. A survey reveals a concerning 57 million Indians grappling with alcohol addiction, with a rising percentage among the youth. Peer pressure and curiosity drive many

relies more on indirect taxes. A poor

person has to spend almost all his

money to buy essential items and goods

and thus has to pay moderate to high

teenagers to start drinking, leading to addiction. The impact on brain function, causing unconsciousness, raises accident and road rage risks. Legal consequences, including imprisonment, further highlight the urgency of addressing this

Parents should also investigate if their children are involved in this. To make their children stop drinking, they should also cease drinking if they partake. If they do not drink, they should send their children to a counselor. Banning alcohol is not a solution because, due to human psychology, individuals tend to do things they are told not to do. In India, in the past 12 months, state governments earned 1.75 trillion from the sale of alcohol. Banning can also have a negative effect on the economy. The government should instruct alcohol sellers not to sell to youngsters. Banning is not a solution; resistance

Krishna Kararia | Delhi

GST in the process. The fact of the matter is the poor pay more taxes than the rich in proportion to their respective

Sujit De | Kolkata

#### **INDIAN ARMY DAY**

incomes.

Sir - On January 15, 1949, KM Cariappa became the first Indian Army Commander-in-Chief post-independence, succeeding British Commander Francis Butcher. Born in 1899 in Karnataka's Coorg district, Cariappa led the army in the 1947 Pakistan war and retired in 1953.

The day is commemorated with army drills in New Delhi, honoring soldiers with medals. The Indian Army, established in 1776, is the world's largest, including the Assam Rifles, the largest paramilitary force, founded in 1835. Army Day pays tribute to India's rich

military history. The Indian Naval Academy in Ezhimala, Kerala, is Asia's largest. The Indian Army houses a unique cavalry regiment, one of only three globally. The Intelligence Department, established in 1941, gathers classified information. India boasts 53 army camps and 9 bases. Post-independence, the army engaged in conflicts, including Kashmir, the 1962 Sino-Indian War, and wars with Pakistan in 1965 and 1971, leading to Bangladesh's independence.

The 1971 war witnessed a remarkable victory, forcing Pakistan's significant surrender. The Kargil War unfolded in 1999. The Indian Army, known for building the world's highest bridge in 1982, actively contributes to global peacekeeping under UNO mandates, safeguarding the country's borders ceaselessly, 24/7

Shantaram Wagh | Pune

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneér@gmail.com

#### **FIRST COLUMN**

#### **CONTRASTS IN GLOBAL ROAD ETIQUETTE**

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



SANJAY CHANDRA

t 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

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



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



BKP SINHA

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

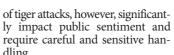
he tale of tigers highlights the impact of human activities on wildlife bringing out the urgent need for effective conservation strategies to protect these magnificent creatures and their habitats. The surge in the human population and its impact on all entities, living and nonliving, has led geologists 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

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 humantiger 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



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 (CWH) 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 domi-nate 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 unlicenced singlebarrel 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 selfcreated 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.

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 man-grove 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 humanwildlife interactions across different regions and should guide forestry professionals to find practical and sustainable solutions. Foresters today face the challenge

The information that deterrence is

plexities 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

of unravelling the roots and com-

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 Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam". Yes, our planet belongs to all species!

chief conservators of forests, UP and Maharashtra, views

security apparatuses and

police must diversify activ-

ities, bringing together tech-

nical and professional exper-

tise. The focus should be on

anticipating security needs

through specialized courses.

Addressing the roots of ter-rorism and creating general

awareness, along with pub-

lic support against terrorist

acts, are essential steps.

However, the government's attempt to delegate judg-

ment to police and armed

forces must be balanced to

avoid diluting benefits and

impeding peace and negoti-

(The writers are former principal





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

# 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

¬he 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



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

devices at airports in Dubai and Midlands a few years

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

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 worldefforts to garner support Sana, the capital of Yemen, wide. Despite increased gov-have led to a substantial for planting explosive ernment efforts, terrorism,



tional, 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

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 significant role, as irrespon- well-thought-out approach In a changing environment,

to dealing with incidents and their consequences, is vital. Good intelligence, police work, and collaboration with individuals and groups can significantly contribute to improving securi-

Á high-level intelligence network is crucial to anticipate and counter threats, especially with the increasing nexus between drug smug-glers 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 ter-

(The wrtier is recipient of Bharat Gaurav and Rastriya Gaurav Award is a

professor and an expert of strategic affairs, views are personal)

### Good governance is Rajasthan Government priority: CM

**PTI** ■ JAIPUR

sserting good governance Ais his government's prior-ity, Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma on Monday said that no one should be left out of the public welfare schemes.

Addressing a meeting of divisional level officials at Tripura Sundari Temple complex located in Umrai, Banswara, the chief minister laid emphasis on holding public hearings at the gram panchayat level.

Sharma, according to an official statement, said good governance is the state government's

The chief minister said the Rajasthan government is taking important decisions to ensure the progress of the state.

The role of every officer and

employee is very important in implementing the public welfare schemes and the decisions of the government on the ground and providing benefits to the eligible persons, he added. Sharma reviewed the schemes

and programmes run in the division and gave necessary guide-

The chief minister also gave instructions for effective monitoring of the 'Vikas Bharat Sankalp Yatra'.

Sharma said that officers should always be available to serve the

Everyone should work with coordination and cooperative spirit and there should not be any kind of carelessness or laxity, he added.

The chief minister said that regular public hearings should be ensured at the gram panchay-



at level so that people do not have to come to the district headquarters and the capital for their grievances

Sharma said the 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra' started under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's guidance is proving to be a boon for the underprivileged.

It is the responsibility of everyone that no eligible person in the state should be deprived of the government schemes, he added The chief minister said that his government has taken a pledge to make Rajasthan free from

"The government is working on

corruption.

the policy of 'zero tolerance'. As soon as the government was formed, the government took decisions to stop paper leaks, gangsters and corruption. The effect of which is already visible," he added.

Sharma directed the officials to take strict action against the corrupt, mining and land mafia. The chief minister said the state government is committed to the development of Banswara and the entire tribal area. He said

Earlier, Sharma offered prayers at Tripura Sundari Temple for the happiness, prosperity and prosperity of the state.

there is immense potential for

development in the area.

The chief minister met the members of the Tripura Sundari Temple Management Committee and took information about the arrangements.



BJP National president JP Nadda paints party's logo on a wall during the launch of party's Wall Writing Abhiyan, in New Delhi

### crore pilgrims take holy dip at Gangasagar

PTI GANGASAGAR (WB)

Nearly one crore pilgrims from across the country attended the Gangasagar Mela and took a holy dip at the confluence of the Ganga and the Bay of Bengal on Makar Sankranti early Monday, a senior official said senior official said.

Traditionally, every year during Makar Sankranti, lakhs of devotees make their way to Gangasagar in West Bengal's South 24 District to take the ritualistic dip and engage in prayer rituals at the revered Kapil Muni Temple.

"This year, the gathering at Gangasagar has broken all past records with a footfall of nearly one crore. Nearly a crore pilgrims took a dip in the sacred waters. Additionally, these pilgrims also offered prayers at the Kapil Muni Temple," a press statement said.

Describing the Gangasagar Mela as one of the world's largest religious congregations, state power minister Aroop Biswas urged the Union government to declare it as a "national fair". Last week, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the same request.

However, ferry services to Gangasagar, located in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district, faced disruptions for approximately six hours on Monday due to dense fog, according to a police officer. "Ferry services experienced an 9:40am because of heavy fog. The suspension was implemented as a safety precaution,"



explained the officer from Sundarbans Police District. Disruptions affected ferry services from Kachuberia and Lot

Koteswara Rao confirmed the resumption of ferry services after visibility conditions improved.

This disruption resulted in a backlog, with at least 40 vessels ferrying passengers to or from Gangasagar, the officer added. Given the substantial congregation of pilgrims, the state government heightened security measures at Sagar Island.

In addition to state police, personnel from NDRF, SDRF, and the Coast Guard have been deployed with appropriate equipment to respond to any potential emergencies. Biswas on Sunday, had said,

"Nearly 65 lakh pilgrims have Sunday noon since the fair's inauguration on January 8." He added that the fairground,

their acts and omissions fol-

The pleas claimed the Speaker

had failed to consider that

along with giving up the mem-

bership, the (Sena-UBT) mem-

bers also voted against the

Shiv Sena-led government in

cahoots with the Congress and

the Nationalist Congress Party

(NCP), thereby seeking to top-

ple the ruling dispensation. As per the HC's website,

Gogavale's petitions would be

taken up for hearing on January

22. While Gogavale moved the

HC on January 12, the

Thackeray faction on Monday filed a petition in the Supreme

split in June 2022.

lowing a split in June 2022.

sprawling across the beach, is now under the surveillance of approximately 1,100 CCTV cameras and 22 drones. Security personnel, including 14,000 policemen, oversee the event, and 45 watch towers have Superintendent of Police been erected.

> Pilgrims are being transported to Sagar Island through 36 vessels, 100 launches, and six barges operating across 22 jet-

To enhance visibility on the Muriganga River, 300 fog lights have been strategically installed. According to Hrishikesh Panjika, the auspicious timing for punya snan' or the holy bath on Makar Sankranti began at 12.13am on Monday and will continue for the next 24 hours. Most of the devotees will follow this timing and take the holy

However, some devotees folaccording to which, the auspicious timing for the holy bath began at 8.42am on Sunday.



#### Nitish attends Lalu Makar Sankranti feast

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Monday treated himself to a Makar Sankranti feast hosted by RJD president Lalu Prasad, belying speculations that the alliance between the two arch-rivals has hit a rough patch.

Prasad's younger son and heir apparent Tejashwi Yadav, who is also the state's deputy chief minister, expressed delight over the visit of his boss and made light of the speculations of a rift in Mahagathbandhan. 'We were pleased to have at our

place the honourable chief minister on a day we have been, since long, treating people to 'Dahi Chura' (flattened rice with curd), items made of til (sesame) and 'konhre ki sabzi' (pumpkin stew). Other colleagues in the cabinet have been dropping in as well. We welcome them all", said Yadav, who briefly interacted with the posse of journalists. The young RJD leader accused

the opposition BJP in the state since Kumar took over as the JD(U) national president, replacing Rajiv Ranjan Singh

"Lalan" who gave up the post mid-term. "Ever since Lalu ji and Nitish ji joined hands, the BJP has been scared. Also, we are running a government that has delivered on its promise of job creation on a large scale. As such, there is no need for any explanation on the various theories that have been doing the rounds", asserted Yadav.

Notably, a section of the media had claimed that Lalan ran afoul of Nitish Kumar after he allegedly hatched a conspiracy to dethrone the latter so that Yadav could take over as the chief minister.

Lalan has reacted by slapping legal notices on the media out-lets concerned and claimed that he relinquished the top party post to focus more on his Lok Sabha constituency. Lalan has also said it was upon

his request that Kumar, the JD(U)'s de facto leader, agreed to take over as the party chief. Yadav was also asked about the perception that the JD(U) was running out of patience because claims by competing agathbandhan nartners were causing a "delay" in finding a formula for seat-sharing for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

### No question of sparing anyone in gangrape case: Siddaramaiah PTI ■ HAVERI (KARNATAKA)

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said there was no question of sparing anyone involved in the gangrape of a Muslim woman allegedly by six youth from the

same community.
Six people allegedly barged into a hotel room and assaulted an inter-faith couple during their stay in Hanagal Taluk of Haveridistrict on Innursy 8, following district on January 8, following which two of them have been arrested.

The BJP has accused that attempts are being made to hush up the case. 'We have arrested all the

accused persons. Investigation is going on. We will not allow anyone to take law into their hands irrespective of the faith and caste they belong to," the Chief Minister told reporters here. Stating that nobody will be allowed to law into their hands, Siddaramaiah said the government will take action as per law. There is no question of sparing

anyone, he added. On the question of no one from the government having consoled her or offered any relief, the Chief Minister said he received the application just now and government will consider her

Regarding the BJP's demand for setting up a Special Investigation Team (SIT), Siddaramaiah explained that those investigating the case now are police and those who will be part of the SIT



will be police only.

Investigations are going on. Let the preliminary investigation report come out. Just because former chief minister Basavara Bommai has demanded an SIT probe we will not form it," the Chief Minister said.

He also said there is no question of covering up the case.

The survivor also charged that "Those who perpetrated the crime will face stringent action,"

the case seriously. PUBLIC NOTICE
TO WHOM SO EVER IT MAY CONCERN

General public is hereby Informed that Mr. Pramod Kumar S/o Mr. Ram Prakashi s the owner of the House No. B-26, of area measuring 1 Marie 6 Sarsai i.e. 50 Sq. Yds., out of Khewat/Khata No. 551/587, Killa No. 337/587-09, Situated at Situana in the Village Kadlpur, Hall Colony Sarswati Enclave, Sub-Tehsili Kadlpur, District Haynan, to be financed & mortgaged by my client with Mahindra & Mahindra Fannacial Services Limited, The Original Sale Deed dated 08.04.2009, as Doc. No. 319, pertaining to the aforesaid property have been lost and complaint bearing Application No. 132270852400076, was registered with Gurugram Police Any person(s) found in possession of aforesaid original documents, then kindly contact the undersigned along with original property document, within 7 days from date of this notice on below address, failing which, the claim as per aforesaid sale deed shall be treated as null and void in respect of the subject property.

Raghav Tiwari, Advocate Ch. 830, Patiala House Courts, New Delhi — 110001 Mob.: +91-8076188328

PUBLIC NOTICE

IAHS) having Pan - AACFI8647P is a egistered Partnership firm at New Delhi. We hereby Declare & Confirm hat There are only 02 present partners n the firm. Manisha Saxena & Maj. T.N. Tomar. All previous partners have resigned & the account has been settled with them. MANISHA SAXENA



#### CHANGE OF NAME

I, Umesh Agarwal S/o Sh. Madhu Sudan Agarwal R/o J-15, Hauz Khas Enclave, New Delhi-110016. Have changed my name for all purposes in future to Known as Umesh Madhu Agarwal.

PD(242)C

# ATHE PIONEER O

I, Vinaya Shriram Joshi W/o Shriram Chandrahas Joshi R/o: 203 Kalinga Tower, Indraprastha Apartments-1, IP.Colony, Opp: Oyo Town House, Sector-30-33, Amar Nagar, Faridabad-121003, Haryana Have Changed My Name From Vinaya Joshi To Vinaya Shriram Joshi For All Future Purposes.

PD(243)A

#### Shinde led Sena moves court against Speaker decision to not disqualify Thackeray faction MLAs Shiv Sena political party by

**PTI** MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena has moved the Bombay High Court challenging the decision taken by the Maharashtra Assembly Speaker to not disqualify 14 MLAs belonging to the rival faction headed by former CM Uddhav Thackeray.

Petitions filed on January 12 by Bharat Gogavale, the chief whip of the ruling Shiv Sena against the 14 MLAs, said they were challenging the "legality, propriety and correctness" of the January 10 order passed by Speaker Rahul Narwekar dismissing the disqualification petitions submitted by him against the rival camp Assembly members.

In the petitions, Gogavale maintained the Thackeray group MLAs not only violated the whip but also voluntarily gave up the membership of the start up CEO police custody extended by 5 days PTI PANAJI

Goa murder: Al

The police custody of AI start up CEO Suchana Seth, accused of killing her four-yearold son, was extended by five days on Monday after a Goa court was told she was not cooperating with the probe. Seth was produced before Goa Children's Court after her initial remand of six days expired.

Police told the court it was yet to find the motive of the crime and also needed to confront her with details of the statement provided by her estranged husband Venkat Raman. Seth (39) was arrested from Chitradurga in Karnataka on January 8 while she was travelling in a taxi with the body of her son, who she is alleged to have smothered to death in a Candolim-based service apartment, stuffed in a bag. She was brought back to Goa and a court in Mapusa town had remanded her in police custody for six days. A senior official said she has been completely noncooperative and continues to deny she killed her son. "She has been confirming all other parts, including that she carried the child's corpse in a bag. But she refuses to confess that she killed him. She repeatedly claims her husband is responsible for the

Court challenging the Speaker's order declaring the Sena group led by Chief Minister Shinde as We had asked for an extension of her custody as we wanted the "real political party" after its more time to interrogate her. We have to also conduct other for-The Speaker had also rejected malities like taking her DNA the Thackeray faction's plea to disqualify 16 MLAs of the rulsample. We are yet to find out the motive behind the killing," ing camp, including Shinde.

child's death," he said.

PUBLIC NOTICE To be known to all that I, Juginder Kumar Rawal and Yashpal Rawal S/o Late Sh Amar Nath Rawal R/o. DDA Yashpal Rawal S/o Late Sh Amar Nath Rawal R/o, DDA MIG Flat No. 8-B First Floor Block-BA Wazirpur Delhi-52 Mobile-9810281460, Email: yprawal@gmail.com, has applied for the conversion of aforesald property. The original allotment letter,DDA possession, NGC to obtain water and electric connection and site possession slip issued by DDA of abovesaid property has been lost. A F.I.R to this effect has been lodged to police station dt 04/01/2024. Any person(s) claiming any right, having any objection or found in possession of original document may write/contact with above named person at above address within 15 days from

the date of publication of this notice & can personally contact - Deputy Director (LAB) housing, D-Block, lilrd Floor, MIG, DDA Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi

To be known to all that I, Surir lo De Known to all that I, Sunnider virolli S/o Ajit Pál Singh Virolh JO. DDA MiG Flat No-8-H Third Floor Block-a Munirka New Delhi, Mobile - 9869030847, Email: advocate12nm@gmail.com, has applied for the conversion of aforesaid property. The original DDA Allotment Letter, DDA Possession Letter, Water DDA anothern Letter, DDA Possession Letter, water and Electric NOC and Site Possession Silp issued by DDA of abovesaid property has been lost. A F.I.R to this effect has been lodged to police station dt 10/01/2024. Any person(s) claiming any right, having any objection or found in possession of original document may write/contact with above named person at above address within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice & can persona

M.P. PASCHIM KSHETRA VIDYUT VITARAN CO. LTD. Office of The Superintending Engineer (O&M) Circle
132, Navalpura Grid, Barwani O&M, CIN: U40109MP2002SGC015121,
Website: www.mpwz.co.in, E-mail: sempsebbarwani@rediffmail.com
sempsebbarwani1@gmail.com, Ph.: 9424005433
No./SE/O&M/Pur/23-24/NIT-TS-001/ **NOTICE INVITING TENDERS** Online-tender is invited for services as per tender specification given below :

T. S. Particulars online bid (In Cr.) ission of bid Outsourcing of Manpower Required for Miscellaneous works in the **O&M**, **Circle** Barwani MPPKVVCL, Barwani 05.02.2024 06.02.2024 Upto 15:00 Hrs. at 15:00 Hrs. For further information visit our Website https://www.mpwz.co.in or https://

www.mptenders.gov.in M.P. Madhyam/113287/2024 SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (O & M)

#### SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

Picici Bank | Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, Landmark Building, 4th Floor, 228A, AJC Bose Road, Kolkata 700020 CIN No: L65190GJ1994PLC021012, www.icicibank.com

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 Symbolic 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

Sr. No.		Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Mukut Ray Choudhury/ Sobha Ray Choudhury/ Roopak Roy Choudhury/ Indrani Bhattacharjee/ Scr 3 Unit 3 Kharvela Nagar Bhubaneswar Khurda Orissa Bhubaneswar- 751001/ LBBBS00003869761/ LBBBS00004424646/ LBBBS00003869777	Plot No. 3 (SCR) Kharvelanagar, Unit III, Revenue Plot No. 116, Khata No. 367, Mouza Kharvela Nagar-I, P.S. New Capital, Bhubaneshwar, Orissa (Admeasuring an area of 2700 Sq.ft. and 0.060 Dec.)/ Date of Symbolic 10.01.2024	August 03, 2023 Rs. 2,37,29,078/-	Bhubane- shwar/ Delhi

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: Delhi/ NCR Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited

Office Sector-39

the police were not investigating

involved in the crime.

Meanwhile, the 26-year-old sur-

vivor alleged that no protection

was given to her when she was

She also said that at least two accused whose photographs police showed her were not

Siddaramaiah said

taken home.

**NEW OKHLA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY** Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida G.B. Nagar,(U.P)
Website: www.noidaauthorityonline.in

**E-TENDER NOTICE** 

E-Tenders are invited from eligible contractors/firm for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official websites: www.noidaauthorityonline.com & https://etender.up.nic.in. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc. A) Fresh Tender Work:

JOB Number	Name of the Work	Tender Amount (in Lacs)
40/DGM Sr.M.(E&M)-II 2023-24/ET	Strengthening of Street light (Supply & Fixing of 6 Mtr Octagonal Pole) in Sector-5, Noida	57.21
41/DGM Sr.M.(E&M)-II 2023-24/ET	Annual Maintenance of 30 Mtr/16 Mtr High mast of E&M-II Area, (Sector-62, 63,63A 64,65,69, Rajat Vihar, Road No-6, FNG Road (Parthla Golchakker to Vill-Chhijarsi) Vill-Nawada & Basai, Noida	83.46
41/DGM(E/M)/ Sr.M.(E/M)-IV/ 2023-24	External Electricication and Providing Lighting arrangement on Newly Constructed road between Sector-166 & 167, Noida	60.18
42/DGM(E/M)/ Sr.M.(E/M)-II/ 2023-24	AMC and Servicing of 380 KVA 500 KVA 750 KVA DG set for Noida Stadium Sector-21A, Noiida	31.08
	Number  40/DGM Sr.M.(E&M)-II 2023-24/ET  41/DGM Sr.M.(E&M)-II 2023-24/ET  41/DGM(E/M)/ Sr.M.(E/M)-IV/ 2023-24  42/DGM(E/M)/ Sr.M.(E/M)-II/	Number  40/DGM Sr.M.(E&M)-II 2023-24/ET  Mtr Octagonal Pole) in Sector-5, Noida  41/DGM Sr.M.(E&M)-II 2023-24/ET  Mtr/16 Mtr High mast of E&M-II Area, (Sector-62, 63,63A 64,65,69, Rajat Vinar, Road No-6, FNG Road (Parthla Golchakker to Vill-Chhijarsi) Vill- Nawada & Basai, Noida  41/DGM(E/M)/ Sr.M.(E/M)-IV/ 2023-24  42/DGM(E/M)/ Sr.M.(E/M)-II/ 2023-24  Strengthening of Street ight (Supply & Fixing of 6 Mtr Octagonal Pole) in Sector-5, Noida  4nual Maintenance of 30 Mtr/16 Mtr High mast of E&M-II Area, (Sector-62, 63,63A 64,65,69, Rajat Vinar, Road No-6, FNG Road (Parthla Golchakker to Vill-Chhijarsi) Vill- Nawada & Basai, Noida  41/DGM(E/M)/ Sr.M.(E/M)-IV/ 2023-24  AMC and Servicing of 380 KVA 500 KVA 750 KVA DG set for Noida Stadium

The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 29.01.2024 up to 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on dated 30.01.2024 at 11.00 AM.

B) Re-Tender Work:-						
Sr. No.	JOB Number	Name of the Work	Tender Amount (in Lacs)			
1	42/DGM(E&M) /S.M.(E&M)-III 2023-24ET	D/o Village (Annual Electrical maintenance of Barat Ghar, Panchayat Ghar in Village-Sadarpur, Chailera Morna, Ghijore, Sarfabad & Parthala Kahanjapur), Noida.	37.46			
2	42/DGM(E&M) /Sr.M.(E&M)-I 2023-24	Restoration work of Park lighting &Internal Electrical Work at Biodiversity park, Medicinal park and Wetland park at sec-91 Noida	70.77			

The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 22.01.2024 up to 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on dated 23.01.2024 at 11.00 AM. Dy. General Manager

(E&M) Noida

### China fully backs sovereignty | Ukraine shoots down 2 Russian of Maldives, says Muizzu

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-

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 He added that the Maldives 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 person-nel 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

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

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

committed to the one-China

principle, which remains the

# command and control aircraft

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 more modern

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

are striving to keep world attention on the war amid concerns that the conflict is slipping down the list of global pri-orities. 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 Ğaza. Russia, meanwhile, was looking to deepen its ties with North Korea, whose foreign minister began a threeday 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.

Pyongyang 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

### North Korea tests solid-fuel missile tipped with hypersonic weapon

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

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

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 submarine-launched

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 | PTI to participate in elections postponed: Pak EC tells Senate

Pakistan's election commission on Magazi sion 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

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 Kĥan wrote a letter to Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani on Monday, saying that it was "disconcerting" that no "tangi-ble 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 resolu-

tion "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 con-

cerns 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 ■ ISLAMABAD/LAHORE ■ 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 indepen-

dents 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 judg-ment 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-

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 pro-ceedings against the ECP for allegedly not implementing the apex court's orders of providing the party with a level play-

party polls as "unconstitution- ing field for the upcoming al" and revoked its poll symbol. general elections. The plea was 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 (İmran Khan) as a terrorist party cannot be allocated an election symbol," she said.

#### IMF team overseeing SL bailout programme visits Jaffna

ing Sri Lanka's bailout pro- change on the northern talising the economy. gramme has toured the Tamil- region, the officials said. The 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-

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 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

verka

Colombo (PTI): A team of COVID operations, and the Sri Lanka's progress in implesenior IMF officials oversee- adverse effects of climate menting reforms aimed at revi-

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#### Iran sentences imprisoned Nobel laureate to additional prison term

AP DUBAI

Acourt 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

The ruling also banishes

same duration.

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 22year-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.

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For complete details regarding above tender (NIT), please visit our website i.e. e Tendering portal i.e. eproc.punjab.gov.in.
 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

 $B_{\text{above the 73,000 level for}}^{\text{enchmark Sensex closed}}$ the first time while broader Nifty scaled the 22,000-point peak on Monday as key stock indices stayed on the recordbreaking 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

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

"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

day high of 22,115.55. A strong rally in IT shares

TOP GAINERS BSE Sensex Change +759.49 250 HCL Tech 72,568.45 2.17 Infosys 2.50 Bharti Airtel Bajaj Finance Bajaj Finserv Tata Motors

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 Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv, Larsen & Toubro, Tata Motors, reported a 6.2 per cent increase

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 infla-

tion inched edged up 0.73 per cent in December from 0.26

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 set

### Gold rises ₹150; silver jumps ₹300



Old 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 pre-

cious 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.

"Špot 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,

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hoyo 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

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 state-

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 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 pil-grims to fully immerse them-

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

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 busi-

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, sur passing popular leisure destinations, such as Goa at 50 per cent and Nainital at 60 per

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.

#### Reliance, Jindal among six firms to get incentives for electrolyser manufacturing

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 electrolysers, 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 electrolysers, as per a SÉCI statement.

Bids for electrolysers 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 electrolysers.



Private Ltd and Jindal India Ltd have also bagged incentives of Rs 444 crore each for setting up 300 MW manufacturing capacity of electrolysers 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

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 Industries; Waaree Energies; Avaada Electrolyser; Green H2 Network India and Hild Under the 'Bucket-2: Electrolyser manufacturing capacity based on indigenously developed stack technology,

with Gensol Engineering; HHP Seven; ACME Cleantech

Solutions; Adani New

Homihydrogen and Adani New Industries have emerged as successful bidders. Homihydrogen will get incen-

tives of Rs 150.22 crore for setting up 101.5 MW of electrolysers 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, Pratishna Engineers, Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd and Newtrace.

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

PTI NFW DFI HI

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 liqui-dation 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



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," 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

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

Therefore, any VCF operating beyond their tenure specified in the Private Placement Memorandum (PPM) is in violation of the VCF rules.

Accordingly, Sebi suggested a new framework to facilitate VCFs to migrate to AIF Regulations, so that the proposed flexibility of Liquidation Period and the flexibility of dealing with unliquidated investments by opting for dissolution period / process, can

be availed by VCFs. Under the proposed regulatory framework for migration of VCFs to AIF Regulations, a sub-category should be created under Category I - VCFs called Migrated VCFs. Such VCFs can migrate themselves within 6 months of the date of Sebi's notification in this regard.

Sebi suggested that certain flexibilities under VCF rules should continue to be availed by migrated VCFs and accordingly the migrated VCFs should be exempted from the requirements of minimum investment requirement in AIF minimum corpus size, maximum number of investors in a scheme, manner of calculation of tenure and audit of terms of

Moreover, certain benefits of AIF Regulations that are not available under VCF rule should be extended to migrat-

### Rupee rises 6 paise to settle at 82.89 against US dollar

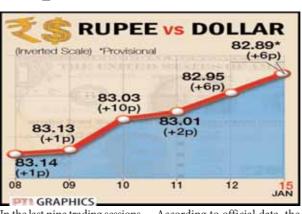
**PTI** ■ MUMBAI

The rupee strengthened for the ninth consecutive session to settle with a gain of 6 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

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

"We expect the rupee to trade with a slight positive bias on the weak US Dollar and positive 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

Brent crude futures, the glob-

al oil benchmark, slipped 0.66 per cent to USD 77.77 per bar-

On the domestic equity market global markets. Expectations of front, Sensex surged 759.49 tle 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

> 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

getary support in the upcom-

ing Budget, it will propel the

sector towards an accelerated

pace of growth, NRAI said in

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

taxation".

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 pandem-

ic 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-

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

smaller businesses, and there-

a new project significantly.

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

availability of ITC; a feature NRAI President Kabir Suri said the growth of the food designed to avoid cascading services industry in India The lack of ITC not only holds immense potential. The industry not only plays a pivreduces the operating margin of the business but also otal role in contributing to enhances the capital budget for government revenue but is one of the largest employers in This increased project cost 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 con-GST to 12 per cent from the tribution to overall economcurrent 5 per cent," NRAI ic growth and employment said. It further said, "We opportunities," said Suri, who understand that it may create also the co-founder & a compliance burden on the Director of Azure Hospitality

#### **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 mar-kets, 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 wellbeing 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 oppor-

mated 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 orga-

tunity of all six trends is esti-

nizations as well as a survey of 5,000 business executives conducted for the project by Phronesis Partners These opportunities are like-

ly 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.

# India gold rush continues as Yogesh wins double

Indian shooters' gold rush continued in the Asia Olympic Qualifiers with Yogesh Singh winning the top prize in individual as well as the prize in the control of the contro team event of the men's 25m centre fire pistol competition here on Monday. Yogesh claimed the individual

gold medal after shooting 573, finishing ahead of silver winner Muad Al Balushi of Oman (570) and Indonesia's Anang Yulianto (567).

The other two Indian participants in the event, Pankaj Yadav (567) and Akshay Jain (564), ended fourth and sixth respectively.

The Indian trio aggregated 1704 to bag the team gold ahead of shooters from Oman and Indonesia.

In the qualifiers for shotgun in Kuwait City, Lakshay settled for the bronze medal after shooting 33 in the six-man

#### PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) has contested the disqualification of trap marksman Manavjit Singh Sandhu, who was barred from competition at the Asia Olympic Qualifiers because of "faulty" gun stock, categorically telling the event's Jury of Appeal that he was not seeking any "unfair advantage". Shotgun coach Vikram Chopra

has written a letter to the tournament's jury of appeal, a copy of which is with PTI, that Manavjit, a former world champion, had not breached the two International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) rules cited by the tournament organisers for disqualifying the Indian athlete. The two rules under which Manavjit's gun was declared "faulty" are 9.4.2.11 and 9.4.1

Rule 9.4.2.11 states: "The depth of the buttstock (either adjustable or 'Monte Carlo' type) measured from the highest point of the cheek rest to the lowest point of the butt plate toe must



Manavjit was not seeking unfair

not exceed 170mm (17cm). Any

butt plate toe vertical extension

which is not an integral part of the buttstock and simply intended to increase its depth, is not

According to Rule 9.4.1 (a,b): a)

Athletes must use only equipment and clothing that comply

with the ISSF Rules; b) Any shot-

gun, device, equipment, acces-

sory or other item that may give

an athlete an unfair advantage

over others and that is not

specifically mentioned in these

Rules, or that is contrary to the

spirit of these Rules, including

accessories or devices used to

facilitate the counting of targets,

The Jury chairman Hassan

Binhdia, in his decision on

Sunday while disqualifying

Manavjit wrote that, "The jury

decided not to allow the shoot-

er to use the gun with the ver-

permitted."

is prohibited.

advantage, NRAI tells Jury of Appeal

tical extension made by the

"The jury committee created to

see the protest decided to deny

the protest because the gun

specification does not comply

with Rule 9.4.2.11, which is

saying (any butt plate-toe verti-

cal extension, which is not an

integral part of the buttstock and

simply intended to increase its

shooter.

qualification with a score of 119. final. He was placed fourth in

119. Iran's Mohammad Beyranvand (40) claimed the gold medal after prevailing in shoot-off with China's Yuhao Guo. Commonwealth Games gold medallist Shreyasi Singh had to be content with a fifth-place finish in the final of women's trap, having managed 10 trap, having managed 19

Shreyasi had qualified for the final in fourth position with a total of 115 across five rounds. Taipei's Wan-Yu Liu (44) won the gold medal in women's trap and China's Xinqiu Zhang (39) settled for silver. Kazakhstan's Mariya Dmitriyenko (30) ended with bronze.

The Indian trio of Shreyasi Manisha Keer and Bhavya Tripathi, however, won the silver medal in the women's trap team event with a total of 328, finishing behind China and ahead of Kazakhstan.

wrote to the jury: "Rule 9.4.2.11 does not specifically mention any height restriction on the butt recoil pad... The stock in question is 160mm (permissible limit 170mm) from cheek piece

shooter's shoulder, to reduce the amount of recoil of the

On Rule 9.4.1 (a,b), which pertains to "unfair advantage", the Indian camp wrote, "This does not apply as there is no 'unfair advantage' as there is no electronic or any other aid to the shooter... No unfair material is used." While senior vice-present Kalikesh Singhdeo has said that the NRAI will take the matter to approaching the ISSF and its athletes' commission, the champion shooter's hopes of representing the country at the Paris

Olympics for a fifth time have almost faded.

and meets the rule." A recoil pad is a piece of rubber, foam, leather usually attached to the buttstock of a shotgun. Its purpose is to provide additional padding between the typically hard buttstock surface and the

"logical conclusion" by



#### Back on track, spirited India eye Italy scalp to keep Paris Olympics hopes alive

 $T^{\text{heir campaign back on track}}_{\text{after a wobbly start, India}}$  would look for another spirited all-round performance to out-wit lower-ranked Italy in their final pool match and progress to the semifinals of the FIH Women's Olympic Qualifier here on Tuesday.

The Indians, ranked sixth in the world, did not have the best of starts to the tournament as they lost to world no. 12 USA 0-1 in their opening Pool B match.

But the Savita Punia-led side bounced back strongly and produced a masterclass performance to beat New Zealand 3-1 in a must-win match on Sunday, which kept their Paris Olympics hopes alive.

Having missed the bus through Asian Games, the ongoing tournament is India's only chance to qualify for this year's Olympics as top three teams from here will book Paris tickets. The USA are atop Pool B with two wins, while India and New Zealand currently have three points each but the hosts are below the Black Sticks on goal difference.

And come Tuesday, the Indians would look for nothing less than a comprehensive win over world no. 20 Italy to progress to the next stage Top two teams from each pool

will progress to the semifinals

If the performance against the Americans on Saturday was lacklustre, it was a complete turnaround for the Indians against the Black Sticks. Leaving behind the opening

match disappointment, the Indians played near-perfect hockey against New Zealand to secure the comfortable win. The Indians were guilty of hurrying with their passes and not

rying with their passes and not playing according to their style — short, crisp attacking hockey — against the USA. But Sunday night, it was a complete turnaround as they utilised every corner of the pitch, including flanks, to build their moves which bore fruit.

And chief coach Janneke

And, chief coach Janneke Schopman would be expecting the same from her side on Tuesday

There was perfect co-ordination among the backline, midfield and forward players, a thing which was missing against the USA.

Salima Tete was omnipresent on the pitch against New Zealand. She was stellar with her performance and build up attacks for the forwardline from left, right and centre.

The forwardline too shone bright with the likes of Sangita Kumari, Jyoti, Navneet Kaur and Lalremsiami living up to the team's expectations and the team management would be be

looking for an encore.

The backline, consisting of Monika, Beauty Dung Dung, Sonika and Udita were simply brilliant against New Zealand, drawing praise from coach Schopman, who will be looking for consistency from her side. Despite Udita converting a penalty corner against New Zealand, the Indians still have plenty to work on that front. Penalty corner conversion continues to be India's biggest prob-

one out of the 13 they earned in two matches. Italy, on the other hand, are out of the reckoning after losing two games but would be looking to spoil India's party.

lem as they have converted just

Schopman, expectedly, is not

taking the Italians lightly.
"It's going to be tough because they are feisty, they are Argentinian-spirited, mediterranean-style. But if we move the ball, if we show patience, then

our skills will come to shine,

Schopman said about India's

next match. "Penalty corner, we need to make sure we execute. We need to make sure that our strikers are in good position inside the

striking circle.

One advantage for India is that they will play after the USA vs New Zealand Pool B match on Tuesday, and they will have a clear idea about the margin of win they need against Italy.



### Gauff advances to Australian Open 2nd round

With increased confidence in her serve thanks to some advice from Andv Roddick, Coco Gauff began her quest for back-to-back Grand Slam singles titles with a 6-3, 6-0 victory over Anna Karolina Schmiedlova at the Australian Open on Monday.

The 19-year-old American, who won her first major at the U.S. Open in September, wrapped up victory in exactly one hour. "I was a little nervous the first

set," fourth-seeded Gauff said. "I think I did well returning, then I found my serve toward the end (of the set). When I was nervous at 3-3, I told myself: I feel good, I look good, so just have fun. That was able to relax me a little bit."

Gauff dropped just one point on her serve in the second set and said that former No. 1 Roddick had recently given her some

serving tips.
"It was really cool," she said. "He's a really chill guy. I met him before but never to that level. I went to Charlotte (North Carolina) for two days. It was a really good two days. I think that my serve has improved. He's probably one of the best servers in history.

Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova was beaten 6-1, 6-2 by Dayana Yastremska.

Seventh-seeded Vondrousova missed the Adelaide tune-up event with a hip injury and struggled on serve throughout, hitting seven double faults.

"I didn't practice because I was injured," she said. "I think that was the important thing. I lost myself at the beginning." Third-seeded Daniil Medvedev,

the 2021 and 2022 finalist at Melbourne Park, advanced to the second round when his opponent Terence Atmane retired early in the fourth set suffering from cramps. Medvedev had dropped the first set but was leading 5-7, 6-2, 6-4, 1-0 when the 22-year-old Atmane quit. "It's quite funny because when I was feeling tired in the third set, I looked up the other end and saw he was cramping," Medvedev said. "The conditions were fine but it has not been hot these seven days and then it was hot today, so you get more stressed." Stefanos Tsitsipas, who lost last

year's Australian final to Novak Djokovic in three sets, advanced with a 5-7, 6-1, 6-1, 6-3 win over Zizou Bergs. Stan Wawrinka, the 2014 Australian Open champion and three-time Grand Slam winner, was beaten 6-4, 3-6, 5-6-3, 6-0 by Adrian Mannarino.

Ben Shelton, a quarterfinalist here 12 months ago, beat Roberto Bautista Agut 6-2, 7-6 (2), 7-5. Another American, 25th-seeded Seb Korda, defeated Vit Kopriva 6-1, 6-4, 2-6, 4-6, 6-2. Five-time finalist Andy Murray lost to Tomas Martin Etcheverry 6-4, 6-2, 6-2 while Gael Monfils defeated Yannick Hanfmann 6-4, 6-3, 7-5.

Four-time major winner Naomi Osaka later makes her muchanticipated comeback to Grand Slam tennis after the birth of her daughter. The Japanese player takes on Caroline Garcia of France in the first round in the



depth is not permitted. Thirdly,

the gun does not comply with

Rule number 9.4.1 (a,b) equip-

A butt plate, made usually of

metal and attached to the butt

end of a gunstock, helps shoot-

ers get the right fit on their

shoulder and to adjust their

cheek on the stock before firing.

Chopra, in defence of Manavjit,

ment restriction.

AP ABIDJAN (IVORY COAST)

 $B_{\text{and Victor Osimhen endu-}}^{\text{ig names Mohamed Salah}}$ red a difficult start to the Africa Cup of Nations as Sunday turned into a day for the underdog. penalty to spare Egypt's embarrassment by drawing 2-2 against Mozambique, and Osimhen was unable to lift Nigeria to a win-ning start as the "Super Eagles" were held 1-1 by Equatorial Guinea in their opening game. Four-time champion Ghana conceded in injury time to lose 2-1 to Cape Verde, maintaining the small Atlantic island nation's record of never losing its opening Africa Cup game in four tournament appearances.

"It's a big team in Africa, in the world. Ghana has a lot of good players. But we showed tonight that we have a good team, good players, and we deserved to win," Cape Verde veteran Ryan Mendes said.

CHEERS FOR MOZAM-**BIQUE:** Salah stayed cool to score from the spot in the seventh minute of second-half stoppage time after Domingos was adjudged to have fouled Mostafa



Mohamed in a VAR review. That denied Mozambique its first-ever tournament win at the 13th attempt. But the team was still cheered by the majoriry of fans at the Félix Houphouët-Boigny Stadium. Salah had also set up Mohamed to fire in the opener in the second minute of the Group B game. The stadium, which had been filling up with Ghana and Cape Verde fans for the later match at the same venue, erupted when Mozambique winger Witi equalized with a header to Domingos' cross in the 55th, and again three minutes later when Clésio Baúque fired the underdogs in front.

"It's not the names that play, it's the team, it's everybody," said Mozambique defender Reinildo. "We all save, we all play, we all score, we all concede. That's what does it."

Fans booed when the seven minutes of injury time was announced and cries of "Mozambique, Mozambique" rang around the stadium.

But Salah showed no nerves as he salvaged a point for "The Pharaohs" as they began their bid for a record-extending eighth title.

NIGERIA DRAWS: Osimhen scored but missed several good

chances as Equatorial Guinea held on to draw 1-1. Goalkeeper Jesús Owono produced a string of saves to frustrate three-time champion Nigeria in the second half after Osimhen had equalized in the first.

start only to be caught out in the 36th minute when José Machín set up Iban Salvador to fire Equatorial Guinea ahead. Osimhen replied around a

minute later when Ademola Lookman's deflected cross dropped kindly for him to head in at the far post. The result leaves coach José

Peseiro's team under pressure going into Thursday's game against host nation Ivory Coast. which started the tournament Saturday with a 2-0 win over Guinea-Bissau.

GHANA LOSES OPENER: Cape Verde substitute Garry Rodrigues scored in stoppage time for a 2-1 win over four-time champion Ghana in Group B. The "Blue Sharks" got off to a great start with Jamiro Monteiro scoring in the 17th minute on a rebound from Jovane Cabral's initial shot saved by Richard Ofori in the Ghana goal.

the season in October in the

Spanish league. Barcelona played

a man down from the 71st after



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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Expectations will be high when Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty spearhead the home challenge at the India Open super 750 badminton 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

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. 25 Fang-Jen Lee and Fang-Chih Lee of Taipei in their opening round. Chirag added: "We are not done yet. India Open is coming up next week and we want to go one better." While Satwik-Chirag will be

one of the frontrunners for the title, all eyes will also be on HS Prannoy, Lakshya Sen, and Kidambi Srikanth in men's singles, especially in the absence of two-time Olympic medallist P V Sindhu, who is nursing a knee injury. Having fared poorly in Malaysia, world No. 8 Prannoy and Lakshya will look to find their rhythm quickly, while Srikanth must have got some confidence back following his win over Jonatan Christie in the opening round last week.

Prannoy and Sen will look for a good start, having suffered first-round exits in Kuala Lumpur, when they open against Chinese Taipei's Chou Tien Chen and Priyanshu

Rajawat respectively.
"India Open has always been special. Since 2012, I have been olaying in this tournament and I have a lot of good memories. Having a 750 stature is big for Indian badminton as fans can now see top players perform closely. So there is a lot of hunger to go out there and win this tournament," said Prannoy, who won the world champi-onships and Asian Games bronze medals in 2023.

#### Real Madrid beats Barcelona 4-1 to win Spanish Super Cup Barcelona in the first "clasico" of

**AP** ■ RIYADH (SAUDI ARABIA)

Vinícius Júnior did his best Cristiano Ronaldo impression in Saudi Arabia, scoring a hat trick and leading Real Madrid to a 4-1 rout of Barcelona and the Spanish Super Cup trophy.

Vinícius scored his three goals in the first half as Madrid beat Barcelona to lift its first trophy of the season on Sunday. After his first goal, the Brazil forward imitated the trademark celebration of the former Madrid great, with Ronaldo reportedly at the Rivadh stadium.

"It was for Cris, because he is my idol and now he is playing here," said Vinícius, who was named the best player of the final. "I'm very happy with myself and with my team. It's not last match on Rod Laver Arena. | easy to play against Barcelona



Robert Lewandowski scored

which now has 13 Super Cup trophies, one less than the Catalan club. It was Madrid's second Super Cup triumph since the tournament was moved to Saudi Arabia four years ago.

Spanish powerhouses was a rematch of last year's Super Cup final that Barcelona won 3-1 for its first trophy with coach Xavi Hernández and without Lionel

Madrid had also won at game.

defender Ronald Araujo was shown a second yellow card for a foul on Vinícius. Madrid was already winning 4-1 at the time. The victory added to Madrid's momentum as Carlo Ancelotti's team remains unbeaten in 21 consecutive games in all competitions. Its last setback was a 3-1 loss at Atletico Madrid in the Spanish league in September.

In contrast, the defeat adds to Barcelona's troubles and increases the pressure on Xavi, whose team hasn't played well recently. It trails second-place Madrid by seven points in the Spanish league, with Catalan opponent Girona another point ahead at the top having played an extra

on Sunday. Second seeds Satwik and

# Told to express freely, say big hitting Jaiswal

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 sixwicket 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

Prakhar breaks

Yuvraj Singh Cooch

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

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

India's premier U-19 domestic event is Vijay Zol's 451 not out for

Maharashtra against Assam in

Chaturvedi's epic effort included 46

"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

Charturvedi'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

Harshil Dhamani scored 179 in

Karnataka's innings. The game was

called of once Chaturvedi cross the

part of that Bihar squad.

ne highest indiv

fours and three sixes.

2011-12.

Behar record with

unbeaten 404

PTI ■ SHIVAMOGGA



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 57run 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 trywere 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 arget (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.

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

The rest (of the) four, Sharath.

Ankola, Banerjee and Das com-

pleted five zones. Once Chetan

was removed, the BCCI need

ed a man of stature and once

Agarkar was on board, we had

was always a convention. The

two from the same zone. But no rule was broken as it

in a sting operation.



# The range I have is

 $B^{\text{onafide six-hitter Shivam}}_{\text{Dube on Monday said his}}$ 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

an 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

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

Also grabbing the headlines with the willow was the returning Yashasvi Jaiswal, who hammered a 34-ball 68.

spare.

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.

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 was playing domestic cricket, was able to dominate all the bowlers, but when it came to IPL and Indian cricket it was not easy as bowlers were bowling

"I worked a lot with side arms, but it is more about the mind-

Dube had a poor start for India's white-ball team against Bangladesh more than four

Asked about the methods he has nificant improvement, he said,

They have brought out the best aged me and said that they believe in me. Stephen Fleming middle-order batsman, my role 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

### god gift: Shivam Dube to toy with the spinners, 30-year

Afghanistan, making a fairly good spin attack look pedestriover 140km/hr." set which I worked.

many areas of my game and I am getting the runs on the board," employed that's resulted in a sig-

"This credit goes to Chennai Super Kings and Mahi bhai (MS Dhoni) because I always had this game in me."

in me. They have always encourand Mike Hussey have shown faith in me." Speaking about his mindset as a finisher, the Mumbai all-rounder said, "As a is to take on spinners and improve the strike rate. But

myself calm and composed and just focus on one ball at a time.

way out as West Zone is already represented by chairman Ajit Agarkar. The BCCI posted an advertisement on its website vear term on December 31, 2023. They were given one-year

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 BCCI on Monday invited applications to replace one among the five senior national selectors and in all like-

lihood, former pacer Salil Ankola would be the one on his

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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-

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

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

BCCI invites application for one selector

tion panel, including chairman Chetan Sharma, was sacked. But when fresh applications were invited, Chetan returned to the fold to represent North

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

29-year-old is known for playing a variation of sweep shots.
"I've played a lot of cricket since then

and maturity is a big one for me in

'The biggest thing this time around is that whatever India throw at me, it's not going to be a shock. I've played on those kinds of pitches. I know full well what to expect when I get out there?

Talking about India's spin stalwart Ashwin, he said, "I wasn't the last lefthander to struggle out there in those conditions against Ashwin. He's so good everywhere.

"I'm sure he's going to get me out again, he's a world-class bowler. But I would back myself now on a good pitch or a flatter pitch to not feel like have to play aggressive shots or sweep every ball.

with the way this team have played over the last 18 months, I know what my strengths are and I'm certainly not going to die wondering?

#### north zone had no representa-In stark contrast to his penchant If India prepares pitches which turn a lot, England spinners will also come into game: Nasser

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 Ravi-chandran 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.

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.

Hussain also said that Indian fans are

"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-





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," Ducket, 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

ever, said he is aware India's seam

bowlers can do just as much damage as their spinners. "People talk about

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 Bandladesh Since then against Bangladesh. Since then, the

"If those pitches are spinning, and

### Mulani 10 wicket haul powers Mumbai to consecutive bonus point win

**PTI** ■ MUMBAI

400-run mark

eft-arm spinner Shams Lett-aim spinner.
Mulani grabbed a match haul of 10 wickets as Mumbai defeated Andhra by 10 wickets to secure a successive bonuspoint 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, set-

ting 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

Bhupen Lalwani's solid 61, aided by Tanush Kotian (54) and Mohti Avasthis'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 bowl-ing 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 (Riyan 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 Nigrodh 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,

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