

**OPINION 6**  
LAC: PUTTING TOGETHER  
THE JIGSAW PUZZLE

**WORLD 8**  
DEATH TOLL IN LANDSLIDE IN  
SW CHINA RISES TO 31

**MONEY 10**  
INDIA COAL PRODUCTION TO  
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12 SPORTS

## LORD RAM HOSTS GRIHA PRAVESH

Five lakh devotees attend the homecoming



Illuminated premises of the Ram Mandir after its consecration ceremony in Ayodhya

PTI

**BISWAJEET BANERJEE/  
BP SINGH ■ AYODHYA**

As the morning sun cast its glow, a multitude of devotees gathered at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, each filled with anticipation for their first darshan of Ram Lalla after the Praan Pratishtha ceremony. The atmosphere, rather than just spiritual, carried a sense of collective enthusiasm as devotees converged at the main gate of Shri Ram Temple, some as early as 3 am,

propelled by their passion to worship and witness the divine presence of Ram Lalla. Commissioner Ayodhya Gaurav Dayal has claimed over five lakh devotees had darshan on first day. In a more subdued tone, a devotee, Ramesh Dixit, shared, "This day holds significance for all of us. The anticipation to have darshan of Ram Lalla has been palpable, and today, our prayers find fulfillment." Having spent the entire night at Dharam Path, Dixit, a



resident of Radauli, located 45 kilometres from Ayodhya, faced roadblocks on Monday morning. Despite being denied entry into the city, he,

along with three friends, successfully navigated the restrictions, reaching the main gate at around 2 am. "I initially thought the early

hour would see fewer people. However, upon reaching the main gate of Ram Janmabhoomi, I was astounded by the large number of devotees. I just joined them," he shared. The doors of the new Ram Temple opened at 7 am, extending a warm welcome to devotees from diverse backgrounds. The consecration of Ram Lalla signalled the initiation of darshan for common people on Tuesday, January 23.

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## BHARAT RATNA FOR JAN NAYAK KARPOORI THAKUR



**DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■  
NEW DELHI**

Former Bihar Chief Minister Karpoori Thakur will be posthumously awarded India's highest civilian award, Bharat Ratna. The socialist icon is well-known for his efforts to uplift the backward classes in Bihar. Politically, the announcement came as yet another masterstroke of Narendra Modi's Government, countering the Opposition Bloc INDIA's charge that the BJP Government is anti-OBC. To further the Congress agenda, a couple of non-BJP ruled States, including Bihar, had also announced plans for a caste census. "The President (Draupadi Murmu) has been pleased to award Bharat Ratna to Karpoori Thakur

(posthumously)," a one-line release from Rashtrapati Bhavan said. The announcement of the Bharat Ratna award for him comes ahead of his 100th birth anniversary on January 24. Karpoori Thakur was a pioneer in providing the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) with the benefit of reservation, implementing the recommendations of the Mungeri Lal Commission during his tenure as Bihar CM from 1977 to 1979. "I am delighted that the Government of India has decided to confer the Bharat Ratna on the beacon of social justice, the great Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur Ji, especially at a time when we are marking his birth centenary. This prestigious recognition is a testament to his enduring efforts as a

champion for the marginalised and a stalwart of equality and empowerment," the Prime Minister said in a statement on social media. "His unwavering commitment to uplift the downtrodden and his visionary leadership have left an indelible mark on India's socio-political fabric. This award not only honours his remarkable contributions but also inspires us to continue his mission of creating a more just and equitable society," Modi said.

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**PM Modi pens a poetic tribute to this legend on his 100th birth anniversary. Please see Page 7 for the article**

## NETAJI BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

### PM Modi greets India on Parakram Diwas

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said nepotism, dynasty, and corruption in politics impede India's development after Independence. He called on people, especially women and the youth, to end these "evils". Speaking at a function to celebrate the 127th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Modi said the twin evils of nepotism and dynasticism began dominating India's democracy after Independence. "Netaji had said if we want to make India great, the foundation of political democracy and democratic society should be strong. Unfortunately, after Independence, his idea came under severe attack," the Prime Minister said. Earlier, Modi extended greetings to the people of India on Parakram Diwas, highlighting Netaji's dedication to the nation's freedom. The birth anniversary of Netaji Bose is celebrated as Parakram Diwas. Today, on the Jayanti of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, the Prime Minister honoured the life and courage of Netaji. In a social media post, the Prime Minister said, "Greetings to the people of India on Parakram Diwas. Today on



Prime Minister Narendra Modi pays floral tributes to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on the occasion of his birth anniversary at Central Hall of Samvidhan Sadan, in New Delhi on Tuesday

PTI

his Jayanti, we honour the life and courage of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. His unwavering dedication to our nation's freedom continues to inspire." Modi said Netaji understood very well the challenges facing the country and warned everyone about them. "After Independence, evils like nepotism and dynasticism started dominating India's democracy. This has also been a major reason why India could not develop at the pace it should have," Modi said. He said India's youth and women power can free the country's politics from the evils of nepotism and

corruption. "We will have to show courage to end these evils through politics and defeat them," the Prime Minister said.

Modi also launched 'Bharat Parv', which will be held until January 31, to showcase the country's rich diversity with Republic Day tableaux and cultural exhibits featuring efforts of 26 Ministries and Departments, highlighting citizen-centric initiatives, vocal for local, diverse tourist attractions, among others. It will take place at the Ramlila Maidan and the Madhav Das Park in front of the Red Fort.

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## Elon Musk bats for India at UNSC

**PTI ■ NEW YORK**

Billionaire tech magnate Elon Musk has said it is "absurd" that India does not have a permanent seat on the UN Security Council despite being the most populous country on Earth, as he called for an overhaul of the United Nations organs. The remarks by Tesla CEO came after UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres raised concerns about the absence of any African nation from the list of permanent members of the UNSC. "How can we accept that Africa still lacks a single Permanent Member in the Security Council?" "Institutions must reflect today's world, not that of 80 years ago. September's Summit of the Future will be an opportunity to consider global governance reforms & re-build trust," Guterres wrote on X, which is owned by Musk. Responding to Guterres' post, Michael Eisenberg, a US-born Israeli venture capitalist, raised the issue of India's representation. Musk also jumped into the debate and said the current structure of the UN does not adequately represent the world's most populous nations. "At some point, there needs to be a revision of the UN bodies," he said. "The problem is that those with excess power don't want to give it up. India not having a permanent seat on the Security Council, despite being the most populous country on Earth, is absurd," Musk, 52, said in his response on X. India has been at the forefront of years-long efforts to reform the Security Council, saying it rightly deserves a place as a permanent member at the UN high table, which in its current form does not represent the geo-political realities of the 21st Century. Currently, the UNSC has five permanent members - China, France, Russia, the UK and the US. Only a permanent member has the power to veto any substantive resolution.



## CISF to secure Parliament before Budget Session

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI**

A contingent of 140 Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel has been deployed at the Parliament complex as part of the new measure to frisk visitors and their baggage for the Budget Session commencing from January 31. The Union Home Ministry sanctioned the strength after a comprehensive security review of the facility was undertaken following a breach by a few individuals who entered Parliament hall filled with MPs and sprayed colored smoke canisters on December 13 last year. In a related development, Parliament staff has been warned against clicking pictures and making videos inside the Parliament House complex, as such activities are prohibited under the security protocol. In a circular, the acting joint secretary (security) of Parliament House observed that despite repeated instructions, some officials are not adhering to the protocol.

A total of 140 personnel from the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) took charge at the Parliament complex from Monday. They will frisk visitors, check their belongings, and provide fire safety cover to the building, sources said. An Assistant Commandant (AC) rank officer of the force will head the CISF unit, which will include 36 personnel from the fire wing, sources said. The contingent is familiarising themselves with the Parliament complex along with other security agencies already present so that they are ready for the task when the Budget Session commences on January 31, sources said. The CISF will render access control to the new Parliament building in an airport-security-like fashion, where body frisking of persons and their belongings will be done through X-ray machines, hand-held detectors, with a provision to even scan shoes, heavy jackets, and belts by putting them on a tray and passing them through the X-ray scanner, sources said.

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## India's stock exchange overtakes Hong Kong

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

India's stock market has overtaken Hong Kong's for the first time in another feat for the South Asian nation whose growth prospects and policy reforms have made it an investor darling. According to the data compiled by the Bloomberg, the combined value of shares listed on Indian exchanges reached \$4.33 trillion as of Monday's close, versus \$4.29 trillion for Hong Kong, according to data compiled by Bloomberg on Tuesday. That makes India the fourth-biggest equity market globally. Its stock market capitalisation crossed \$4 trillion for the first time on December 5, with about half of that coming in the past four years. Moreover, India has positioned itself as an alternative to China, attracting fresh capital from global investors and companies alike, thanks to its stable political setup and a consumption-driven economy that remains among the fastest-growing of major nations, Bloomberg reported. On the other hand, Hong Kong markets have slumped, where some of China's most influential and innovative companies are listed. The total market value of Chinese and Hong Kong stocks has plunged by more than \$6 trillion since their peaks in 2021.

## Prime Minister captures Ayodhya through his moving lens

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI**

A day after Lord Ram's consecration ceremony in Ayodhya, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday that what the world witnessed will be etched in memories. "What we saw in Ayodhya on January 22nd will be etched in our memories for years to come," Modi wrote in a social media post. He also shared a video, showing glimpses from the

'praan pratishtha' ceremony when thousands of people chanted Lord Ram's name, and a helicopter showered flower petals over the temple. In the three-minute video, the Prime Minister can be seen walking into the sanctum sanctorum of the temple, holding a silver umbrella on a folded red dupatta. The video also showed Modi taking part in the consecration ceremony at the newly constructed temple and receiving blessings from the new Ram Lalla idol.



The Prime Minister walked inside the temple premises with a silver 'chatter' (umbrella) placed on a red folded dupatta. Dressed in a golden kurta teamed up with a cream dhoti and patka, he took 'sankalp' for the 'praan pratishtha' ceremony and later moved to the sanctum sanctorum for the rituals. In the clip, Sadhvi Ritambhara, a prominent leader of the Ram temple movement, was seen crying during the 'praan pratishtha' rituals. Cricketer Sachin

Tendulkar, superstar Rajnikanth, and Deepika Chikhlia (who played a role of Sita in the Ramayan serial) were seen in the video. Modi on Monday gave a clarion call to go beyond the grand mandir's construction to build the foundation of a "strong, capable, and divine" India for the next 1,000 years. As the inauguration of the temple marked the culmination of a decades-long campaign to reclaim a disputed religious site in Ayodhya, Modi said it was the

advent of a new era. "Our Ram has arrived after centuries of anticipation," Modi can be heard saying in the clip as he addressed over 7,000 dignitaries at the Ram Mandir inauguration ceremony. Modi can also be seen showering flower petals on the workers who were involved in the construction of the Ayodhya temple. An idol of the new Ram Lalla was consecrated at the Ayodhya temple on Monday, a landmark event led by Modi.

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# Ayodhya temple vital in UP \$ one trillion economy target

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Several Indian and international financial agencies have projected a huge influx of pilgrims in Ayodhya following the grand consecration ceremony on Monday. The temple was opened for the pilgrims for darshan on Tuesday. They predicted that the Ayodhya temple would play a vital role in the realisation of the \$1 trillion economy target of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Larsen & Toubro, the company involved in the construction of the temple, has claimed that it would remain in existence for the next 1,000 years because of the quality of construction and engineering and that its economic impact would be equally significant.

A study conducted by SBI Research recently claims that owing to the Ram temple and other tourism-centric initiatives, Uttar Pradesh is expected to have a tax collection of Rs 25,000 crore in 2024-25. The report said that Ayodhya would be the most important factor in this with pilgrims coming to the city not only from within the country but also from different parts of the world. It reveals further that with the growth in tourism, Uttar Pradesh would become richer by about Rs 4 lakh crore this year. Foreign stock market research firm Jefferies claims that Ayodhya will surpass Vatican City and Mecca in terms of



number of devotees visiting the place. Notably, Vatican City is the holiest place for the Roman Catholics and millions visit every year. Similarly, Mecca in Saudi Arabia, which is the major pilgrimage site for the Muslim community, sees millions of visitors annually.

According to the report, Ayodhya is expected to attract around 5 crore devotees annually, making it a major tourism destination not only within Uttar Pradesh but also in the entire country.

Jefferies has also said that with the construction of the Ram temple as well as provision of various facilities, such as a new international airport, an advanced railway station, town-

ship, road connectivity, and new hotels, Ayodhya is becoming a hotspot for tourism.

This will further strengthen Uttar Pradesh's second place as a tourist destination on the map of India, it states further.

According to the report, along with the increase in the number of devotees, Ayodhya will also see a growth in its annual revenue.

It mentions that Tirupati Balaji in Andhra Pradesh, which attracts 2.5 crore devotees every year, generates an annual revenue of Rs 1,200 crore, whereas Vaishno Devi receives 80 lakh people annually and gets an annual revenue of Rs 500 crore.

Similarly, in Agra, the Taj Mahal attracts 70 lakh visitors, generating an annual revenue of Rs

100 crore, while Agra Fort sees 30 lakh visitors, contributing to an annual revenue of Rs 27.5 crore.

The report says that Mecca attracts 2 crore people annually, contributing to Saudi Arabia's annual revenue of 12 billion dollars, whereas the Vatican City, with 90 lakh visitors annually, generates an annual revenue of 315 million dollars.

According to another estimate, more than one lakh devotees are expected to visit Ayodhya every day for Lord Ram's darshan. This number can soon reach 3 lakh per day.

If this happens, over 10 crore devotees may visit Ayodhya annually. If each devotee spends approximately Rs 2,500 during the visit, the local economy of Ayodhya alone will add up to Rs 25,000 crore.

Notably, devotees travelling to Ayodhya are likely to visit other religious sites such as Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi and Banke Bihari Temple in Mathura.

This will also positively impact the local economies of Varanasi and Mathura.

In this way, the economy of Uttar Pradesh could receive an additional dose of nearly Rs 1 lakh crore directly each year. This direct boost could have a ripple effect on the local economy, potentially resulting in approximately five times the impact, ultimately contributing to India's economic development.

# No move to declare holiday on Netaji birth anniversary: Mamata

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday played what critics called the "Netaji card" to balance out the apparent advantage that the BJP might have drawn out of the Monday's inauguration of Ram Temple at Ayodhya wondering why despite repeated requests there was no move from the Centre to declare a national holiday on January 23, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's birth anniversary.

Though she would refer to any particular event like the consecration ceremony at Ram Temple, the Chief Minister said "whereas holidays are being declared for political publicity around certain events ... no effort is being made to celebrate a national hero like Netaji by declaring a national holiday on his birth anniversary." While delivering a speech after paying homage at the statue of the national icon Banerjee said that she was ashamed and sad that despite repeated reminders to the powers that be no holiday was being declared by the Centre. Tuesday was the national icon's 127th birth anniversary. "I feel shame and sad that holidays are given for political programmes to gain publicity and not to commemorate our national heroes who laid down their lives for the (freedom of) the country," the Chief Minister said adding



she had for the past two decades had been writing letters to the Centre to consider January 23 as a holiday but nothing was being done about that.

"For the last 20 years I have been fighting to get Netaji's anniversary declared as a national holiday ... I have written several letters to the Centre for that but nothing has been done towards this ... I am sorry and sad for this," Banerjee who on Monday came down heavily on the

Centre for playing divisive politics and setting the nation to fire said.

While the Centre and some other States had declared a half-day holiday on Monday, States like Uttar Pradesh had announced a full day leave for the people to celebrate the consecration ceremony at Ram Temple.

Banerjee also attacked the BJP for showing the "biggest dishonor" to Netaji by doing away with the Planning Commission as soon as it

came to power. "They did away with Planning Commission which was conceptualized by Netaji and replaced it with Niti Ayog which is nothing but a powerless institution ... a wax statue," she said. The BJP immediately hit her back for maintaining hypocritical standards. "Unlike others who she blame it is Mamata Banerjee is trying to politicize Netaji's anniversary ... she should remember that she bears the legacy of the Congress Party and has not shunned that yet ... it is the same Congress Party leaders which did everything to defame, embarrass and even decimate Netaji's name and his contribution to Indian freedom struggle," Bengal BJP spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya said.

The CPI(M) which is a political ally of Forward Bloc a Left Front constituent once led by Netaji attacked both the Centre and the State Government for their alleged "duplicity."

Left Front chairman Biman Bose said, while the Left Government had declared Netaji's anniversary as Desh Prem Diwas neither the Centre nor the State had done anything about that. "Now some people are shedding crocodile tears but they don't celebrate this day as Desh Prem Diwas that we had declared when we were in power," Bose a CPI(M) politburo member said.

# Bengal CM close to me, says Rahul in bid to soothe ruffled feathers

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

A day after Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee expressed her huff at "not getting enough preference" in the Indian National Development Alliance (INDIA) meetings and days after Pradesh Congress president Adhir Chowdhury cocked a snook at the Trinamool Congress saying he did not care for TMC's support, Rahul Gandhi got down to assuage the ruffled feelings reminding how dearly Banerjee was rated by the Janpath, iterating in addition that talks on a possible alliance with the Bengal ruling outfit were still on.

"Mamata Banerjee is very close to me. Sometimes leaders at local levels say something here and there which should be ignored ... such comments should not matter," Gandhi a former Congress acting president said reminding that he had in fact invited both Mamata Banerjee and Nitish Kumar to join his Naya Yatra when it would pass through Bengal and Bihar. Chowdhury had strongly reacted last week to a purported direction by Banerjee to the TMC workers to start preparing to contest all the 42 seats including the two seats of Behrampore and Malda South presently held by the Adhir Chowdhury and AH Khan Chowdhury in that order. Reacting to Banerjee's direction



of them from Bengal ... there can be no alliance with the CPI(M) here," she said. Incidentally the Left has already ruled out any alliance with the TMC keeping its doors open for the Congress. A majority of the Congress want an alliance with the Left and not the TMC against which they claim to be fighting for the past more than a decade. "The TMC has oppressed, tortured and devastated our workers in the villages ... they have broken the party ... they have perpetrated so much hardship on us in a matter of few years that the CPI(M) would not do ... there were occasional turf wars with the Left but they never engineered defection in our party ... Mamata Banerjee has literally demolished us in Bengal ... so if we ally with her party it will be difficult to take along with us the grassroots and in that case the Congress will lose its votes either to the CPI(M) or the BJP," a senior PCC leader and a former MLA said. The alliance talks between the TMC and Congress is stuck on the number of seats. While the Congress wants 6-8 seats -- namely Darjeeling, Raiganj, Malda North and Malda South, Murshidabad, Jangipur, Behrampore, Purulia --- the TMC is not willing to leave the present two seats of Behrampore and Malda South presently held by the tri-colour outfit.

to her party men in an organizational meeting to "prepare for defeating Adhir Chowdhury ... don't be afraid ... because if we work united then everyone ... and even Adhir Chowdhury can be defeated," Chowdhury had said that he was least bothered about what others said. "I don't care who says what ... I have been winning the seat for the past more than 20 years and will win it even now ... if anyone wants to contest against me ... one is welcome." While Chowdhury's remarks had reportedly angered Banerjee what tended to irk her more was the preference the CPI(M) got at the INDIA meetings. "I feel very sad that despite the name INDIA was conceptualized by me I am neglected there ... the CPI(M) gets more preference than me and the meeting is run according to their agenda ... I am sorry I cannot take this because we have fought that party for 34 years and got rid

# NMC urges medical colleges to do away with seat leaving bonds



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Stating that concept of seat leaving bond, a common practice for medical students specially PG students, is leaving such individuals in anxiety and stress, the National Medical Commission (NMC) has urged the States and UTs to do away with such norms in medical colleges so as to help create a supportive environment for the students. Instead of imposing a heavy seat leaving bond, states may consider debarring students who wish to leave the seat from admission in their state the next year, the NMC's Anti Ragging Committee recently said in a letter to the Principal Secretary, Health and Medical Education of all states and UTs. President of the Under Graduate Medical Education Board of the NMC, Dr Aruna

V Vanikar said in the letter that the Commission has received grievances pertaining to the "alarming levels of stress, anxiety, and depression" faced by medical students specially PG students across various institutions. These mental health challenges are primarily due to inability of the individual to acclimatise with a different environment prevailing within their new colleges/institutions as compared to the one in which they had grown up or completed undergraduate education, Dr Vanikar said. "A noteworthy impediment hindering affected students from seeking relief is the imposition of a hefty seat leaving bond. Such exorbitant amounts not only exacerbate the financial strain on students but also act as a deterrent for seeking necessary mental health support from the family," Dr Vanikar said in the letter on January 19.

# Ram not personal property of anyone: Uddhav slams BJP



T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Taking a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the ruling BJP, Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray said on Tuesday that the Lord Shri Ram was not a personal property of an individual or a political party and if "some people are thinking like that, we will have to say 'BJP-mukht Jai Shriram'." Kick-starting his party's campaign for the Lok Sabha polls at a state party convention at Nashik in north Maharashtra a day after the am temple consecration ceremony in Ayodhya, Uddhav demanded to know as to how it could call itself a party of "Ram bhakts", given that it did not have a single quality of Lord Shri Ram and that it had "failed" to keep the promises it had made to his party.



Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture Meenakshi Lekhi on Tuesday released a book titled 'Sahaj Gita' in the presence of Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh. 'Sahaj Gita' entire BhagavadGita in simple Hindi poetic form has been authored by Avinash Kumar, an alumnus of IIT-Kanpur & IIM Bangalore. Apart from being a simplified translation of BhagavadGita into Hindi poetic form and having rhythmic structure, the book offers examples of everyday life where the core principle of Gita can be adopted for a happy and simple living. The book has been published by Prabhat Prakashan.

# Muraleedharan slammed for dithering over Kerala CM daughter IT case

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The morale of the BJP which has been buoyed by the recent two visits of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the State took a severe beating as a senior party activist expressed doubts over the action/inaction of V Muraleedharan, Union Minister of State for Foreign Affairs.

T G Mohan Das, former convener of the Kerala BJP's intellectual wing, said he was aghast over the indecisiveness of the Union Minister regarding the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal case involving Veena Mohammed Riyaz, daughter of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and a private sand mining company in Kochi.

Exalogics, a Bangalore based software form owned by Veena has reportedly received Rs 1.7 crore from the mining company according to the department of Income Tax. But she has failed time and again to furnish to the Income Tax Department details about the kind of work executed by her company to the sand mining company. The finding by the Income Tax Department is that an amount of Rs 2 crore has been exchanged by the mining company to Veen's Exalogic Ltd between 2017 to 2020. The Interim Board for Settlement of the Income Tax Department has found that though there was a deal between Veen's

company and the sand mining firm, no work has been executed by the software firm and the amount received by the chief minister's daughter is enmeshed in mystery. The Bangalore office of the Registrar of Companies ordered a probe into the whole deal by a high-level team of officials from the Ministry of Company Affairs. But it is not known whether the probe is being pursued. Being a representative of Kerala in the council of ministers, it was the responsibility of Muraleedharan to ensure the speedy investigation by Central agencies into the scam. But we are yet to see any kind of action in this issue," Mohan Das told media persons the other day.

The CPI(M) dominated Kerala media preferred to black out the statement made by Mohan Das giving credence to allegations by the Congress that there was a deal between the comrades and the BJP in the State. "It is not a big job for Muraleedharan to get this scam investigated by central agencies. But his inaction has given rise to doubts in the minds of party cadres about a possible secret deal between the CPI(M) and the BJP," said Mohan Das. The stance of Muraleedharan in the 2019 gold smuggling scam too has caused resentment among the BJP's state leadership.

# PM Modi greets...

From Page 1

The programme this year will be a multifaceted celebration seamlessly weaving together historical reflections and vibrant cultural expressions. Visitors will get an opportunity to engage with an immersive experience through exhibitions of archives, showcasing rare photographs and documents that chronicle the remarkable journey of Netaji and the Azad Hind Fauj.

Meanwhile, President Droupadi Murmu paid her respects, highlighting his unwavering commitment to India's Independence and his enduring impact on the nation's freedom struggle. "I pay my tributes to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on his birth anniversary, observed as Parakram Diwas! Netaji demonstrated extraordinary commitment to the cause of India's freedom. His

unparalleled courage and charisma inspired Indians to fight fearlessly against colonial rule. His powerful personality had a profound impact on our freedom struggle. The nation will always remember Netaji with utmost gratitude," President Droupadi Murmu posted on social media.

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar also commemorated the birth anniversary of freedom fighter Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, observed as Parakram Diwas (Day of Valour).

In a tweet, Dhankhar wrote, "Remembering the fearless leader, #Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, on his birth anniversary, celebrated as Parakram Diwas. His indomitable spirit and unwavering commitment to India's independence continue to inspire us all."

# LORD RAM HOSTS...

From Page 1

The eagerness among the devotees was evident, with a sizable congregation gathering since the early hours of the day. Devotees, hailing from various States, united to witness this auspicious event.

The opening of the temple gates triggered a surge of enthusiasm among the devotees, resulting in a rush. The administration, faced with challenges in managing the overwhelming crowd, saw the Rapid Action Force (RAF) taking charge to restore order. Reflecting on the energetic scene, Harish Joshi, a native of Uttarakashi in Uttarakhand, remarked, "The crowd was overwhelming, and everyone wished to be among the first to catch a glimpse of Ram Lalla. It's heartening to witness such devotion, though prioritising safety is

crucial. I am pleased the authorities intervened to manage the situation."

In a shift towards a more orderly approach, the administration has now implemented a strategy allowing visitors inside in small, manageable groups. This interactive adjustment seeks to provide each devotee with a tranquil and meaningful experience during their darshan. As devotees patiently await their turn, the air is imbued with a sense of unity and devotion. The Ram Temple, open to all, stands as a sacred space where fervent prayers and hopeful aspirations of devotees converge. The journey of darshan for the common people has begun, with each moment infused with a profound sense of spiritual fulfillment.

# CISF to secure Parliament...

From Page 1

The force has also written to the Home Ministry to sanction this manpower of 140 personnel for Parliament security in a permanent manner. "The current unit deployed at the Parliament will be regularised under the Government Building Security (GBS) unit of the CISF, which secures various government ministries and headquarters of probe agencies like the CBI and the ED," a senior officer said. The approximately 1.70 lakh personnel strong CISF is a Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) under the Union Home Ministry, guarding 68 civil airports in the country, apart from vital installations in the aerospace and nuclear energy domain. Sources have stated that both the new and the old

Parliament complex and their allied buildings will be brought under a comprehensive security cover of the CISF, which will also have the existing elements of Parliament Security Service (PSS), the Delhi Police, and the Parliament Duty Group (PDG) of the CRPF.

After the 2001 terrorist attack on the Parliament, the CISF GBS came into being and was entrusted with the security of Central Government buildings in the national Capital like the North and South blocks, Cabinet Secretariat, Vigyan Bhawan, UPSC building, the CGO complex, and other such buildings. The charter of the GBS is to "maintain a high level of security, including contingency response, access control, and conduct of anti-sabotage checks."

# Prime Minister captures...

From Page 1

The consecration of the Ram Mandir poses a challenge for the Opposition ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, given the mandir's resonance and political potency. The INDIA Bloc of Opposition parties stayed away from the ceremony.

# BHARAT RATNA FOR...

From Page 1

Senior JD(U) leader and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish

Kumar expressed his delight at the award bestowed on the greatest social reformer and politician of the State and country. "The Centre's decision has to be appreciated, as this demand I had been making for several

years," Nitish said in a statement. Coming ahead of the general election, it is seen as a move to please the Chief Minister of a State that has 40 parliamentary seats and has an on-again-off-again

relationship with the BJP. Nitish is now with the Congress-led INDIA Bloc, where he is playing truant on whether to continue with the bloc, which ideally was his own brainchild. Nitish severed ties with the

BJP and allied with his friend-turned-foe-turned-friend Lalu Prasad and the Congress to lead a Grand Alliance Government in Bihar. He now seems to be restless even in the present arrangement, as his party members allege that

the entire Bloc has been hijacked by the Congress. When the idea was conceived of a Congress-led Opposition Bloc, Nitish anticipated that he would be the Prime Ministerial candidate to counter Modi.



# Massive jam on Republic Day parade dress rehearsal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The commuters had a harrowing time while reaching their destinations as they were stuck in traffic near India Gate in central Delhi on Tuesday after vehicular movement was affected due to a full dress rehearsal for the Republic Day parade.

Heavy traffic was also reported on Delhi-Gurgaon border and the people took to X reporting about the bumper to bumper jam on the stretch.

One of the commuters posted on X his worst experience on the Jaipur-Delhi Highway. Another mentioned that huge jam from Hero Honda Chowk to Delhi road on NH8.

The traffic was affected on C-Hexagon, Ashoka Road and Rafi Marg near Krishna Bhawan. The traffic police personnel were deployed on these routes to manage the movement of vehicles.

The traffic was also affected on Outer Ring Road and near the Pragati Maidan tunnel, Sarai Kale Khan, ITO, near Zoo red light traffic, Majnu Ka Tila and Ajmeri Gate flyover from Paharganj to Ajmeri Gate etc.

Long jam on Barapullah flyover and whole ring road from AIIMS to Noida toll road due to caving in of road at Noida toll, one of the users said.

Meanwhile, the traffic police also took to X cautioning the commuters about the traffic situation near DND Toll Booth.

"Traffic is affected in the carriageway from Barapullah towards DND Toll Booth due to road cave-in at DND Loop. Kindly plan your journey accordingly," it wrote on X.

The motorists had a harrowing time getting to their destinations and many reached late.

A woman, who was coming from south Delhi to Connaught Place, said that she got stuck in heavy traffic near



Kartavya Path. "It takes me around 20 minutes to reach Connaught Place but today it took me around 35 to 40 minutes," she said.

Some commuters said that there were long queues at the entry and exit gates of the Central Secretariat metro station as many tried to ditch the traffic. Delhi Police had issued an advisory on Monday

informing the people about road closures in central Delhi for the full dress rehearsal.

The rehearsal began at 10:30 am from Vijay Chowk and passed via Kartavya Path, C-Hexagon, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose statue roundabout, Tilak Marg, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg and Netaji Subhas Marg before culminating at the Red Fort. To facilitate smooth passage of the parade, the traffic movement on Kartavya Path, from Vijay Chowk to India Gate, was stopped at 6 pm on Monday.

The stretch reopened after the dress rehearsal was completed on Tuesday. The advisory said commuters are requested to plan their journeys in advance and avoid the parade route from 9.30 am to 1 pm, according to the advisory.

Metro services will remain available from all stations during the dress rehearsal. However, boarding and de-

boarding from the Central Secretariat and the Udyog Bhawan stations will not be permitted from 5 am till 12 pm, it stated.

Though no restrictions have been imposed on traffic movement from north Delhi to New Delhi railway station or Old Delhi railway station yet, the advisory has asked people to plan their journeys in advance to avoid possible delays.

The movement of city buses will be curtailed at Park Street/Udyan Marg, Aram Bagh Road (Paharganj), the Kamla Market roundabout, Delhi Secretariat (IG Stadium), Pragati Maidan (Bhairon Road), Hanuman Mandir (Yamuna Bazar), Mori Gate, ISBT-Kashmere Gate, ISBT-Sarai Kale Khan and Tis Hazari Court, it stated.

Buses from Ghaziabad bound for Shivaji Stadium will take National Highway-24, Ring Road and terminate at Bhairon

Road. Those coming from National Highway-24 will take the right turn on Road No 56 and terminate at ISBT-Anand Vihar, the advisory said.

Buses to Wazirabad Bridge from Ghaziabad will be diverted at Mohan Nagar towards Bhopra Chungi.

According to the advisory issued on Monday, flying of sub-conventional aerial platforms such as paragliders, paramotors, hang gliders, unmanned aerial vehicles, unmanned aircraft systems, microlight aircraft, remotely piloted aircraft, hot air balloons, small size powered aircraft, quadcopters or para jumping from aircraft are prohibited over the National Capital Territory of Delhi till February 15.

The advisory requested motorists to observe traffic rules and follow directions of police personnel deployed at intersections.

# No respite from bone chilling cold

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The residents of Delhi on Tuesday once again woke to bone-chilling cold and fog that also hit flight and rail operations, leaving thousands of passengers waiting for hours at the airport and railway stations.

The national capital has recorded a minimum temperature of 6.9 degrees Celsius, a notch below the season's average. The maximum temperature was settled at 19.5 degree Celsius, a notch below the normal.

People of Delhi and NCR got some relief in the daytime due to sunlight while morning and nights are extremely cold here. Delhi has experienced five cold day conditions and five cold wave conditions in January so far, the highest in the last 13 years, according to India Meteorological Department (IMD) data.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said the maximum temperature was recorded in Palam at 17 degree Celsius, Lodhi Road at 18.2 degree Celsius, Ridge at 17.6 degree Celsius, Ayanagar 18.2



degree Celsius, Narela at 16.3 degree Celsius, Pitampura at 18.6 degree Celsius and SPS Mayur Vihar at 16.1 degree Celsius. Similar cold day conditions will prevail on Wednesday. There is an orange alert for Wednesday.

The national capital is experiencing cold day conditions and dense fog in the morning and during the nighttime, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). The national capital has not received any rainfall in January so far - an unusual occurrence when compared to previous years, according to

the India Meteorological Department's data.

At least 180 people, mostly homeless persons, have died in Delhi this month due to cold conditions, non-government organisation Centre for Holistic Development (CHD) has claimed and written to chief minister Arvind Kejriwal requesting him to make proper arrangements for such people during winters. While officials from the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) denied that deaths have occurred due to cold, officers of the Delhi Police acknowledged that the number

of deaths among homeless people suffering from medical issues goes up during winters. According to NGO, 359 homeless people were died in the month of January in 2023.

"Even though the allegations were made few months back by BJP, it came to light that such data is being extracted from Delhi Police's zipnet website in which figures of unidentified dead bodies and death in road accidents are included. Unfortunately, claims were made that those people died due to cold. No post-mortem report has been attached or referred. These are just allegations based on website where figures of each month including summers are similar. Until the cause of death is conclusively proven, it is highly inappropriate to assert that they succumbed to homelessness. Despite that, Urban Development Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj has issued written instructions to his department to promptly arrange for night shelters wherever needed. Unfortunately, even after such instructions 'Dandi Park

Shelter' were demolished in directions of earlier CEO of DUSIB. We would request LG saab to taken action against the then CEO Garima Gupta," the AAP said in a statement.

The foggy conditions also reduced the visibility in the region, which resulted in the delay and cancellation of flight operations from Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA). Around 70 flights faced delayed at IGI airport. Several passengers were left stranded at NCT's railway stations as 28 Delhi-bound trains, including Howrah-New Delhi Rajdhani Express and Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express, were running late due to dense fog and coldwave conditions.

According to IMD, the national capital has not received any rainfall in January so far - an unusual occurrence when compared to previous years. In the last seven years, Delhi saw one to six days of rain in January where normal rainfall during the month is 8.1 mm at Safdarjung Observatory, the India Meteorological Department data showed.

# Delhi BJP plans to send its workers for Ram Lalla darshan

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi BJP has planned to send its workers for a 'darshan' of Ram Lalla at the newly built Ram temple in Ayodhya ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, party leaders said on Tuesday.

Workers from each of the seven Lok Sabha constituencies in the national capital will be sent to Ayodhya in the coming days and each of them will pay Rs 789 for the pilgrimage, a senior BJP leader said, citing a plan made by the party's Delhi unit for the trips to the holy city in Uttar Pradesh.

The trips to Ayodhya will start after Republic Day, around January 30, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said. Besides this, the Delhi BJP will also 'manage' visits of people to the city in the coming days, he added. The doors of the Ram temple were opened for the public to have a 'darshan' of Ram Lalla on Tuesday, a day after the 'Pran Pratishtha' (consecration) ceremony of



the idol of the deity.

Delhi BJP leaders said the 'Pran Pratishtha' held in Ayodhya has generated massive desire among the people to visit the temple.

"There is a lot of enthusiasm among BJP workers, and they are yearning for a 'darshan' of Ram Lalla. We are organising trips to Ayodhya for them so that they can confidently get going with preparations for the Lok Sabha elections," another party leader said.

The Delhi BJP leaders said with the construction of the Ram temple and installation of

the idol of Ram Lalla, a dream of hundreds of years has been realised. With these, the party has also fulfilled its promise to build a Ram temple there, they said.

"The Ram mandir in Ayodhya used to be our main agenda in previous elections. Now, this promise has been fulfilled and we can confidently go into preparations for the Lok Sabha polls under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," a leader said.

The BJP under the leadership of Modi won all the seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi in 2014 as well as in 2019.

# JNU announces students union polls after 4 years

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) on Tuesday issued a notification announcing the JNU Students' Union elections, which is pending for the last four years, will be held within eight weeks from the date of commencement of the academic session for Phd students on February 2.

The move comes hours after the JNU's students union threatened to launch an agitation against the university administration.

The notification stated that the elections will be held between six to eight weeks of the commencement of the academic session for the Phd students.

"This is to bring to the kind notice of all concerned that JNU Students Union Elections 2023-24 will be held between 6 to 8 weeks of commencement of the academic session for Phd



students i.e February 2, 2024," the notification read.

A detailed guidelines for holding the students union elections will be issued by the Office of Dean of Students in the due course, it added.

Earlier in the day, the Jawaharlal Nehru University Students Union (JNUSU) called for a 'university strike' on January 30 demanding to notify the students union elections at the earliest.

The students union submitted a fresh memorandum to Vice-Chancellor Santishree D Pandit to conduct the JNUSU elections and revoke the CPO manual and disciplinary action

against the students.

"Despite repeated representations to your office regarding - JNUSU elections and revocation of the CPO manual and proctorial inquiries -- there has been no written communication or response to the same," the letter submitted to the VC read. The students body had written to the vice-chancellor on January 15 and to the dean of students on January 17.

The students body said it will start a complete non-cooperation movement with the administration if the notification regarding the elections is not released by February 2.

"Despite verbal assurances that the notification for JNUSU elections will be announced with the new academic calendar, the JNU administration has not released a single circular regarding holding of elections," the students body said in a statement threatening to stage an agitation if their demands are not met.

# Schoolboy thrashed by seniors dies in hospital; probe ordered

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The family members of a schoolboy, who died at a city hospital days after allegedly being thrashed by his seniors, said that the 12-year-old boy wanted to become a fighter pilot.

The incident happened at a government school in north Delhi's Shastri Nagar area on January 11. The boy succumbed at a hospital on January 20. The post-mortem was conducted on Tuesday. The child's family has demanded stringent action against the accused.

Vinod Sharma, the victim's grandfather, said, "My grandchild's dream was to become a fighter pilot, but our dreams are now shattered. We got his body on Tuesday evening after the post-mortem and we are returning to our home after his cremation."

He further said that the family members, including the child's father, had visited the

government school more than three times and the school principal assured them of action in the matter.

"We send our children to school to become good human beings. It was the responsibility of the school teachers and principal to take care of our child," Sharma said.

Police said they are waiting for the post-mortem reports to know the actual reason behind the child's death after that they will lodge an FIR.

The victim's father, Rahul Sharma had said that his son was assaulted by his seniors in the school and he received injuries on his leg. "On January 11, when my son, a student of Class VI, returned home from the government was in extreme pain. I asked him about the matter, but he did not utter anything," Sharma had stated over the phone.

According to him, the child was taken to a hospital where

he was given some medicines and asked to rest for a few days. But his health deteriorated and then the family members took him to another hospital in Rohini where he died on January 20.

In a statement, the AAP government said that Delhi Government's heart goes out to the bereaving family, who lost their child in such a tragic incident.

"The alleged incident took place outside of the school's premises, as parents sought the CCTV footage that has been ascertained. A prompt inquiry has been ordered already in the matter soliciting a report from the committee within 2 days and a formal report from the Head of the School is to be submitted by today itself.

The Delhi Government is actively taking essential measures, including counseling students, to foster a positive state of mind and prevent any potential unforeseen incidents," it said in a statement.

# Delhi poll office internal note creates flutter about LS polls dates; clarifies later

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

An internal note circulated by the office of Delhi's Chief Electoral Officer having April 16 as the tentative 'poll date' to help officials schedule various activities "in the build up" to the Lok Sabha elections created a flutter among journalists about the possible schedule of the upcoming polls.

Responding to queries, the Chief Electoral Officer's office clarified that the date was mentioned only for "reference" for officials to plan activities in accordance with the Election Planner issued by the poll panel.

"Some media queries are coming referring to a circular by @CeodelhiOffice to clarify whether April 16 is tentative poll day for Lok Sabha elections. It is clarified that this date was mentioned only for 'reference' for officials to plan activities as per Election Planner of

ECI," the CEO office posted on X.

In a communication issued to all the 11 district election officers on January 19, the CEO's office had referred to the Election Planner issued by the ECI in which various activities in the build up to the election has been given along with the timelines and durations for each activity to start and to be completed.

"For the ensuing General Election to the Lok Sabha 2024, the Commission has tentatively given the Poll Day as 16.04.2024 for the purpose of reference and to calculate start and end dates in the Election Planner," the circular read.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, the office of the Delhi CEO clarified that in the run-up to the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, "it is required to plan and complete a large number of activities pertaining to election".

# Parliamentary security breach accused self motivated to do something big for fame: Police

STAFF REPORTER/PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police probing the Parliament security breach case for more than 40 days on Tuesday said the six accused were "self-funded and self-motivated" to do "something big" for fame.

According to police, the accused also assumed that they would be let off even if they were arrested, thinking they were not committing any "serious crime".

According to a senior police officer, the mastermind is suspected to be Manoranjan D, who had created a 'Bhagat Singh Fan Club' page on the social networking site Facebook and used it to moti-

vate "like-minded" people to do "something big" for fame.

"The accused were known to each other for the last four years but the plan to breach parliament was hatched a year ago," the officer said. However, not everyone in the fan club was on board with the idea of doing anything illegal like breaching parliament's security. As a result, several other members had left in the days leading to the December 13 incident, police said.

"Since Manoranjan had access to the BJP MP in Mysore, he decided to barge into parliament and replicate freedom fighter Bhagat Singh's act which was done in the Delhi Assembly during British rule," another officer said.

# Wrote to MCD commissioner to initiate desealing of shops: Mayor

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Mayor Shelly Oberoi on Tuesday said she has written a letter to the MCD commissioner asking him to initiate the process of de-sealing shops that have been sealed since 2017.

According to a resolution passed in the MCD House on January 17, the de-sealing of shops was supposed to be carried out on January 19.

Speaking at a press conference at the Civic Centre here, Oberoi said the de-sealing work has been halted because Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) Commissioner Gyanesh Bharti rejected the resolution passed by the MCD House for de-sealing of shops that were shut in the last five to six years for violating land use rules.



"The livelihood of thousands of traders and shop owners has been impacted because of the sealing action. The MCD House passed a resolution to de-seal these shops to give relief to these traders but it was rejected by the commissioner," she said.

Delhi BJP Spokespersons Praveen Shankar Kapoor and Shikha Rai slammed the Delhi Mayor saying she is trying to mislead the local shopkeepers

and spreading a false narrative. "The AAP is propagating that they are in favour to de-seal their shops but the officials are not allowing desealing of the local shopping centre's shops. The AAP leaders want to extort election fund from these shopkeepers and therefore Mayor has prompted the MCD officials to move Court so that they could bargain with the traders," Kapoor said.

Shops and restaurants were sealed in several markets of Delhi during a drive by the MCD against land use rules violations.

The sealing drive took place in Defence Colony, Rajinder Nagar, Greater Kailash, Green Park, Hauz Khas and South Extension following orders of a monitoring committee constituted by the Supreme Court.

# No action as no complaint filed against Babri sloganeering in Jamia: Cops

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Tensions gripped Delhi's Jamia Millia Islamia on Monday after several purported videos of students sloganeering for 'Babri Masjid' on the university campus surfaced online amid the pran pratishtha or consecration ceremony of Ram Lalla in Ram Janmabhoomi Temple in Ayodhya.

The development prompted the Delhi Police to deploy its personnel outside the campus to tighten vigilance.

The Delhi Police on Tuesday said it was held inside the campus and no action can be taken as no formal complaint was received. A group of youths, carrying placards, assembled inside the campus and raised slogans such as



"Strike for Babri," they said.

The protest was held on the day of the consecration of the new idol of Ram Lalla at the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

In the video, the security guards of the campus can be seen removing the protestors and two of the youths can be seen carrying the placards.

A police officer said that an information was received yesterday about some protest by a group called Fraternity Movement led by Lubabib Bashir inside the campus but no complaint was received

from the university administration. As a "precautionary measure", the security personnel were deployed outside the campus, the officer said.

Fraternity Movement is a student outfit in the campus.

The Ram temple has been built at the site where the 16th Century Babri Masjid once stood before being demolished by the kar sevaks in 1992.

After the video went viral on Monday, the Jamia Millia Islamia administration said that academic activity was not disrupted because of the "protest" and the situation was under control.

"It was just two to three students, who engaged in sloganeering. The classes and examination continued without any disruption. The situation is under control, it said.

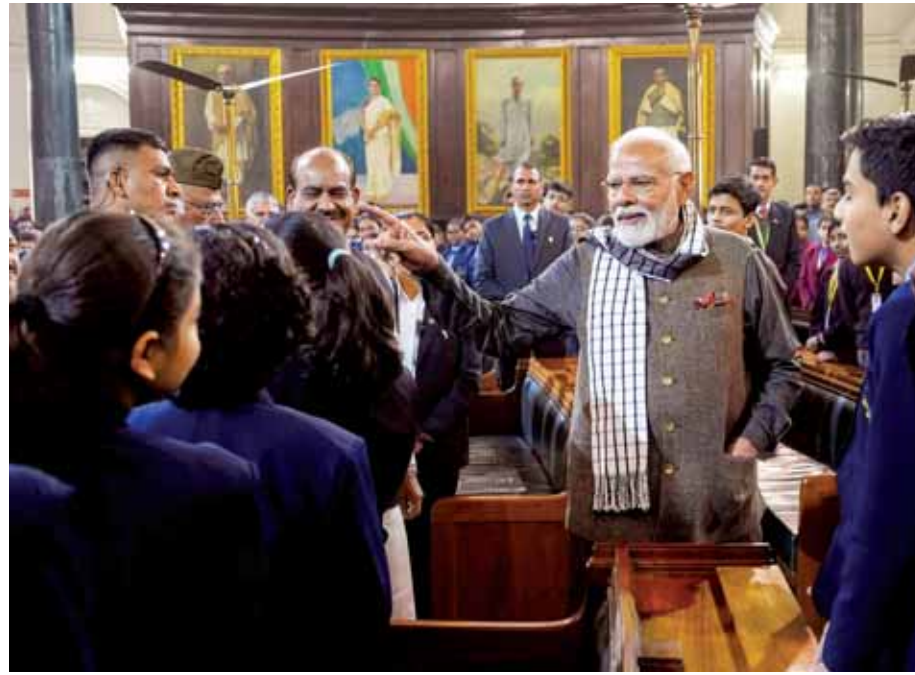


# Lord Ram ideals will pave way for developed India by 2047: Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the power of the ideals of Lord Ram will pave the way for creation of developed India by 2047. A day after returning from the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony, PM Modi in his letter to President Droupadi Murmu, said, "Shri Ram who has inspired me to adopt 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas Aur Sabka Prayas'. The country is witnessing the results of this mantra. Over the past ten years, 25 crore people have come out of poverty". "The grand Ram temple in Ayodhya will 'continue to inspire us' to create new paradigms of development and success," he said. "Upon returning from Ayodhya Dham after witnessing the most unforgettable moments of my life, I am writing this letter to you. I have returned with an Ayodhya in my heart, an Ayodhya which can never be separated from me," PM

Modi said. He was responding to Murmu's letter to him a day before the January 22 consecration ceremony of the new idol of Ram Lalla at the temple. Noting that he received Murmu's letter a day before leaving for Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh, Modi said he is very grateful for her good wishes and affection. "Every word of your letter expressed your compassionate nature and your immense happiness at organisation of the consecration ceremony," he said. Modi said when he received Murmu's letter, he was in a different state of mind and her letter gave him immense support and strength in handling these feelings and in coming to terms with them. "I visited ayodhya Dham as a pilgrim. My mind was overwhelmed with many emotions after going to the holy land where such a confluence of faith and history has taken place," he said. "To witness such a historic occasion is both a privilege and a responsibility. You had also discussed about my 11-



day religious exercise and the 'Yama-Niyams' related to it. Our country has been the witness to countless people who kept many vows for centuries so that Ram Lalla once again resides at his birthplace," Modi said. "Being the medium of the fulfilment of these centuries-long resolves was a very emotional moment for me and I consider it my good fortune," the prime minister said. Along with 140 crore people, seeing Ram Lalla and welcoming him was amazing, Modi said. "That moment

was possible only with the blessings of Lord Shri Ram and the people of India, and I will always be grateful for it," he said. "As you said, we not only worship Lord Shri Ram but also take inspiration from him in every aspect of life, especially in the social sphere," Modi said. The prime minister noted that President Murmu in her letter had discussed the impact of the scheme PM-JANMAN and the empowerment of extremely backward people in the tribal society. "Being associated with the tribal society, who can understand this better than you? Our culture has always taught us to work for the most deprived sections of the society. Many campaigns like PM-JANMAN are bringing a big change in the lives of the people of the country today," Modi said. The ideals of Lord Ram "give us constant energy for the welfare works and empowerment campaigns for the poor," he said. "It is Lord Shri Ram who has given the inspiration

for 'sabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka vishwas aur sabka prayas' in every chapter of his life," the prime minister said. The results of this mantra are visible everywhere today, and in the last decade, the country has succeeded in bringing about 25 crore people out of poverty, he said. The eternal thoughts of Lord Ram are the basis of India's glorious future, Modi said. "The power of these ideals will pave the way for all the people of the country to create a developed India by the year 2047," Prime Minister Modi said. He said the grand temple of Lord Ram will "continue to inspire us to create new paradigms of development and success". In her letter to the prime minister, Murmu had said the nationwide celebratory atmosphere around the inauguration of the grand Ram temple was an uninhibited expression of India's eternal soul and the start of a new cycle in the country's resurgence. Murmu had complimented

Prime Minister Modi ahead of the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony. In a two-page letter to him, the president had said that "as you prepare yourself to go for 'Pran Pratishtha' of Prabhur Shri Ram's 'murti' (idol) at the new temple built at his birthplace in Ayodhya, I can only contemplate the unique civilisational journey that will be accomplished with each step taken by you in the hallowed precincts". Referring to the 11-day rigorous 'anushtthan' that the prime minister has undertaken, Murmu said it is not only a sacred ritual but also a supreme spiritual act of sacrifice and submission to Lord Ram. Sending heartfelt wishes, the president said that the nationwide celebratory atmosphere around the inauguration of the grand temple of Prabhur Shri Ram in Ayodhya Dham is an uninhibited expression of the eternal soul of India. "We all are fortunate to witness the commencement of a new cycle in the resurgence of our nation," she had said.

## 200 projects for ₹1.25 lakh crore in five years identified under Parvatmala Pariyojana: Gadkari

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari said more than 200 projects at a cost of Rs 1.25 lakh crore have been identified in the coming five years under National Ropeways Development Programme, "Parvatmala Pariyojana". Parvatmala Pariyojana or the national ropeways development programme is part of larger efforts for developing infrastructure. "The Parvatmala project, which we have started under the guidance of the prime minister, is very important for the country. We have identified...Projects worth Rs 1.25 lakh crore (under the Pariyojana) and the number of such projects can increase to 400 or more," Union minister Nitin Gadkari said on the sidelines of an event. Addressing 'Ropeway : Symposium-Cum-Exhibition'



in the national capital, Gadkari said 60% Construction Support is provided under Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM for Ropeways) as compared to 40% support provided under National Highways to attract more private players for development of ropeways under Parvatmala Pariyojana. Gadkari said India is on its path to become a \$5 Trillion economy and achieve the dream of Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji. He said today, our economy stands at 5th position, and we aim to reach 3rd position. The Union Minister said focus is on time-bound, Cost-Efficient, Qualitative and Sustainable infrastructure development. He said creation of 'World-Class' infrastructure ensures 'Ease of Living' of citizens and

with a ropeway length of over 1,200 kilometres in five years under the programme. The government is promoting the manufacturing of ropeway components under the 'Make in India' initiative. Asserting that India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world, Gadkari said there was a need to develop a very good infrastructure in the country. "Today ours is the fifth position...And we will be third in the next five years...That is the reason we are developing world-class infrastructure in the country," the Road Transport and Highways minister said. Expressing concerns over traffic congestion on the Dhaulta Kuan-Manesar stretch in the national capital region, Gadkari said that if a sky bus is made to run on a single pillar or if a double-decker bus service is started on this stretch, then not only the traffic will be reduced but people will also reach on time.

## Modi meets Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar awardees

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday interacted with children who were awarded the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar this year and shared his insights on music, culture, solar power and sports. The award was given to 19 children -- nine boys and 10 girls -- from 18 states and Union Territories on Monday for exceptional bravery, artistic prowess, innovative thinking and selfless service. During the interaction at his 7 Lok Kalyan Marg residence, Prime Minister Modi engaged in a free-wheeling conversation with the awardees and also presented souvenirs to each of them, according to an official statement. The children shared the details of their accomplishments that led to their selection for the coveted award. Discussions between them and the prime minister covered several topics, including music,



culture, solar power, and sports such as badminton and chess, the statement said. The children also seized the opportunity to pose questions to Prime Minister Modi, creating an interactive and inspiring atmosphere, it said. In response to a question, the prime minister shared his passion for music and how it aids him in meditation. Asked about the recently launched Pradhanmantri Suryodaya Yojana, he recalled his initiatives to harness solar energy during his tenure as the chief minister of Gujarat, elucidating the benefits that the scheme will bring to the people, the statement said. The prime minister also took the opportunity to enlighten the young minds about 'Parakram Diwas' and how the government is honouring the legacy of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, it said. 'Parakram Diwas' marks Bose's birth anniversary.

## Parliamentary staff directed not to click pictures, make videos inside complex

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Parliamentary staff have been warned against clicking pictures and making videos inside the Parliament House complex as such activities are prohibited under the security protocol. In a circular, the acting joint secretary (security) of Parliament House has observed that despite repeated instructions, some of the officials are not adhering to the protocol. "The Parliament Complex is the most threatened place in India. As a part of its strategic security arrangements, prohibition of photography/video shooting in Parliament House Complex is also a part of its planned strategy," the January 19 circular said. Underlining that cameras, spy cameras and smartphones are



a direct threat to the safety and security of the complex, it informed all officers and staff of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha secretariats, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and other allied agencies working in Parliament House Estate that any type of photography inside the Parliament House Complex is strictly prohibited. "Officials/visitors permitted

## New Canadian student visa caps impact Indians

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The crippling housing and healthcare crisis in Canada has, for now, cast a shadow on the dreams of several international students, including Indians aspiring for higher studies in the country. The Justin Trudeau Government announced on Monday capping the number of study permits for students from outside the country for two years as a way to address pressure on basic infrastructure and amenities. The decision is to impact students in India, which was the first among the top ten origin countries of study permit holders in 2022 in Canada, with a total of 319,000 students. The limit will result in a decrease of 35 per cent in approved study permits. However, the move will not affect current study permit holders or renewals.



Immigration Minister Marc Miller announced the cap on Monday, stating that Canada aims to approve around 360,000 undergraduate study permits this year. Each province and territory will be allotted a portion of that total, determined by population and current student intake. Provinces will then decide how to distribute these permits across their universities and colleges.

"Ahead of the September 2024 semester," stated Miller, "We are prepared to take necessary measures, including limiting visas, to ensure designated learning institutions provide adequate and sufficient student support as part of the academic experience." The cap also represents a significant shift in policy for Canada, which has historically relied on open immigration to fill job vacancies and address its rapidly aging workforce. Over 800,000 foreign students were in Canada in 2022, up from 214,000 a decade earlier. The new measures are also meant to ensure the "integrity" of the system, officials said. However, domestic universities will also suffer a loss, say experts, as tuition paid by international students helps offset costs for some domestic students, and universities struggle with limited Government

funding and budgets. The cap will only apply to students at a diploma or undergraduate programme and will not affect students applying for study permit renewals. As part of the change, the Government will also no longer grant work permits for students graduating from colleges that operate under a public-private partnership model, most commonly found in the province of Ontario. "It's unacceptable that some private institutions have taken advantage of international students by operating under-resourced campuses, lacking support for students, and charging high tuition fees, all while significantly increasing their intake of international students," Miller said. Some economists have linked housing unaffordability to a spike in immigration, as home construction has not kept up

with Canada's unprecedented population growth, according to reports. The reports also point out that in 2022, the country grew by over a million people in the span of one year for the first time ever, a growth largely driven by newcomers. Last year, Canada's population hit a record of 40 million people. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, a national housing agency, estimates that the country needs 3.5 million more housing units by 2030 to restore affordability. While population growth is part of the problem, experts have also highlighted other pressures such as high-interest rates that make homes less affordable, skyrocketing costs of building materials due to inflation, and Covid-19 pandemic-induced supply chain disruptions.

## Five new species of reptile that gives birth to young ones discovered

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a rare feat, a new genus and five new species of 'Viviparous Skinks' — a reptile that gives birth to young ones — have been discovered by the Thackeray Wildlife Foundation (TWF) from the forests of Maharashtra, Goa and Tamil Nadu. This is said to be the first such record of a viviparous reptile in the Indian Subcontinent. Discovered by Ishan Agarwal, Tejas U. Thackeray and Akshay Khandekar from the Foundation, the feat has been accorded recognition by the international scientific journal, 'Vertebrate Zoology', published from Germany. This feat is also considered very significant, as only five skink species were discovered in India in the last more than 40 years, including just two from peninsular India, and the endemicity of these species



underlines the importance of their habitat conservation. As a tribute to the main region of south India where the discovery was made, the researchers have named the new genus 'Dravidoseps', a combination of the Sanskrit words 'Dravid' and 'Seps'. The Dravidoseps genus is distinct from the Subdoluseps genus as it gives birth to its young - instead of laying eggs - plus it has transparent lower

lids and other genetic differences, said the researcher trio. All five newly-discovered species are from the state of Tamil Nadu, and have been christened as 'Dravidoseps Gingeensis' (from the Ginge Hills), 'Dravidoseps Jawadhuensis' (Jawadhu Hills), 'Dravidoseps Kalakadensis' (Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve), 'Dravidoseps Srivilliputhurensis' (Srivilliputhur Megamalai Tiger Reserve) and 'D. Tamilnaduensis' (Kolli, Pachaimalai and Yercaud Hills). Three more species, 'Ryopa Gowaensis', 'Subdoluseps Pardi' and 'Subdoluseps Nilgiriensis', have been relocated in the newly discovered genus. "All the members of the Dravidoseps are the first known Viviparous Skinks from peninsular India and the only known Viviparous Lygosominins besides a few species of east African Mochlus. The discovery of a new genus and five new species reiterates the high levels of diversity and endemism present in peninsular India and how much more remains to be discovered," said the research paper. The species 'Dravidoseps Gouensis', included in the new genus, has been recorded from Utsum in North Goa as well as Sindhudurg (Amboli) and

Kolhapur districts of Maharashtra. In Kolhapur district, it has been reported from the areas of Radhanagari, Pandivare (Bhudargad), Talye (Gaganbawda) and Vashi (Panhala). The research team collected 89 samples of Skinks from 33 places and after five years of research, expeditions and labour, they finally succeeded in discovering the new genus and five new species spread across the three states, two in the west and one in south India. The researchers explained that the timing of giving birth to a young one in reptiles is linked to low-temperature habitats. Presently, there are more than 40 species of reptiles recorded in India but this is the first-ever record of a Viviparous Skink for the Indian subcontinent, and it has generated a lot of curiosity in the scientific world.

## Quantum Mission invites proposals to set up thematic hubs in niche areas

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a significant step towards advancing quantum technologies, the Department of Science and Technologies (DST) has invited proposals from academia institutions and research labs. This initiative, under the National Quantum Mission (NQM), aims to establish Thematic Hubs (T-Hubs) in specific niche areas such as Quantum Computing, Quantum Communication, Quantum Sensing & Metrology, and Quantum Materials & Devices. The Union Cabinet had approved the NQM last April being implemented by DST with a total outlay of Rs.6003.65 Crore for a period of eight years. By focusing on these specialized domains, the DST is fostering collaboration, accelerat-

ing research, and positioning India at the forefront of the global quantum research community. The announcement seeking proposal was made in this regard by DST Secretary, Professor Abhay Karandikar on the sidelines of the 9th edition of the India International Science Festival at Faridabad, Haryana. "The launch of the pre-proposal is an important step in the National Quantum Mission approved by the Cabinet last year. With a brainstorming session with researchers to identify expertise, strengths and opportunities scheduled soon, the National Quantum Mission is expected to see substantial progress in the next few months. "The NQM will also work in collaboration with industry and startups to translate

research to deployable technologies. The DST will provide necessary resources for the success of submission and to facilitate researchers so that India evolves to a competitive position at the international level," said Karandikar. The pre-proposals should demonstrate the quantum technologies to advance the application of quantum science and technology. The highlights of the call as well as other details were elaborated upon by Senior Adviser DST and Secretary SERB Dr Akhilesh Gupta. Recently at the 1st meeting of Mission Governing Board (MGB) of National Quantum Mission (NQM) the committee had approved the decision to invite Call for Pre-proposals for inviting proposals for setting up of four technology hubs under NQM in consortia format.



# Final electoral roll of Jammu and Kashmir published

**MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU**

An estimated number of 8.5 lakh voters, added to the voter list during repeated summary revision of the electoral rolls since 2019, are going to make or break the future of candidates running for Lok Sabha polls in Jammu and Kashmir. Among them, a sizable 4.83 lakh female voters would hold sway as compared to their male counterparts in the poll arena. According to the office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Jammu and Kashmir, an estimated number of 86.93 lakh electors including 44.35 lakh male and 42.58 lakh female voters will be exercising their right to

franchise in the coming Lok Sabha polls. The candidates will be testing the political waters on five Lok Sabha seats wooing young age voters. In 2019, BJP won two Lok Sabha seats in the Jammu region while National Conference candidates won all three seats of Srinagar, Baramulla, and Anantnag in the valley. This time the ruling BJP is eyeing at least three Lok Sabha seats after the Abrogation of Articles 370 and 35-A. In the latest revision of the electoral rolls, a total number of 2.31 lakh new voters have been added to the final list. The rolls were published on January 22, 2024.



During the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the total electorate size was 78.44 lakh voters in Jammu and Kashmir. Between 2019 and 2024, 4.83 lakh female voters and 3.67 lakh male voters have been added to the electoral rolls in Jammu and Kashmir. Out of 78.44 lakh voters, 40.68 lakh were male and 37.75 lakh were female voters. In contrast, out of 86.93 lakh voters, there will be 44.35 lakh males and 42.58

lakh female voters in the fresh list. According to the office of Chief Electoral Officer, 86,000 names have been deleted because of death, shifting or other reasons besides correction in details of 1.45 lakh electors during the process. The elector population ratio has also improved from 0.59 to 0.60 and gender ratio from 924 to 954. The process of Special Summary Revision of the Electoral Roll with a qualifying date of 1st January, 2024 was carried out as per the directions of the Election Commission of India (ECI).

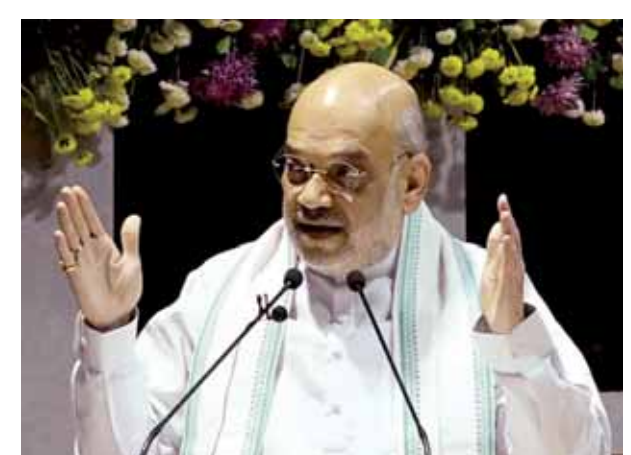
# INDIA allies concerned only about securing votes in name of caste census: Nadda

**PTI ■ AHMEDABAD**

BJP chief JP Nadda on Tuesday alleged that Congress and its allies in the INDIA bloc are interested only in garnering votes in the name of caste census and are not bothered about the welfare of various sections. He was addressing BJP workers and leaders after inaugurating the Gandhinagar Lok Sabha Constituency office in Thaltej area of Ahmedabad. Nadda also virtually inaugurated similar offices for the rest 25 LS constituencies in Gujarat from the stage. "The Congress and INDI Alliance (INDIA) parties are

talking about a caste census. They are not concerned about the welfare of castes, but are interested only in securing votes in the name of caste census," the BJP president alleged. While Opposition parties pursued the politics of the vote bank, Prime Minister Narendra Modi united the countrymen by giving the concept of 'GYAN' (Garib, Yuva, Annadata and Nari Shakti), said Nadda. "Modiji said Garib, Yuva, Annadata and Nari Shakti are the only four castes in India. We will work for them. While the INDI Alliance was dividing the country in the name of castes and religion,

Modiji united the country by the concept of 'GYAN,' he said, adding that these four categories include everyone, irrespective of caste or religion. Nadda claimed about 50 crore people are now covered under the Ayushman Bharat scheme wherein beneficiaries get free treatment up to Rs 5 lakh annually based on their income and "not on the basis of caste." "PM Modi changed the definition and culture of politics in India by introducing the politics of accountability and credibility wherein votes are sought only on the basis of performance," he said.



# Government working on integration of technology in policing system: Shah

**PTI ■ GANDHINAGAR**

The government is working on the "big challenge" of modernising the policing system using technology without changing its basic structure, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said here on Tuesday. As technology is changing rapidly, police need to stay "two generations" ahead of criminals, he said at a seminar on 'behavioural forensic' at the National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU). India's criminal justice system will be the most advanced in the world in the next five years once all the systems under the three new criminal laws — Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and Bharatiya Sakshya Act — are in place, he said. "Unless we integrate forensic science with all the stakeholders of the judicial process, we will not benefit. Forensic science should be used for investigation, prosecution, and justice. Now, time has come to go a step forward by adopting forensic science in education," Shah said. "When we are moving

towards a journey of 100 years of independence with a strong foundation, I can see four challenges in our criminal justice system. Integrating technology in the entire policing system to make it a modern policing system without changing its basic structure is a big challenge before us," the Union minister said. Hybrid and multi-dimensional threats arising out of new technologies such as Artificial Intelligence also pose a challenge, and there is a need to identify and create a network to protect our systems, he said. The Union government has taken steps to meet the requirement of more than 9,000 scientific officers and forensic science officers that the country will need to recruit every year, Shah said. "We have worked on three challenges — creation of human resources through NFSU, creation of a technological database, completion of data integration and creation of software using Artificial Intelligence and making them legal," he said.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Subject: Transfer of ownership for House No. 1276-P Sector 45, HUDA, Urban Estate, Gurgaon-2, Haryana Consequent upon The Intestate Death of Smt. Chanchal as per records, Died on 11.08.2014 leaving behind following heirs: (1) Sandeep Chhabra (2) Subhash Chander Chhabra (3) Rekha Gulati (4) Deepa Chhabra (Sandeep Chhabra S/o. Sh. Subhash Chander Chhabra R/o H.No. 10-P, 1st Floor, Sector 45, Gurugram, Haryana. Intends to apply for transfer of the said in her favour the legal heir and requests for Re-Allotment in the name. If any person is having objection to the above transfer of the said House, He/She can submit objection to the Estate Officer-2, HUDA, Sector-34, Gurugram, Haryana along with supporting documents within 30 days of publication of this notice, otherwise the Estate Officer may sanction mutation of the property as per HUDA policy and may not entertain subsequent claim if any.

**Sandeep Chhabra (Legal Heir)**  
on behalf of Estate Officer-2

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

**PUBLIC NOTICE: Builder Cancellation**

This is to bring to your notice that RAJEEV RANJAN/ SARB NARAYAN MALLIK (borrower/s) has availed Home loan facility vide facility agreement number LBNOD00002078874 located at FLAT NO. 3B-117 TOWER-B, FLOOR-17 GOLF VIEW APARTMENTS, SUSHANT GOLF CITY SULATANPUR ROAD LUCKNOW UTTAR PRADESH. The borrower/s has failed to pay the contractual amount to the builder as per the terms and conditions of the agreement.

The Bank had informed the same to the borrower through letter dated January 12, 2024, informing that TULSIANI CONSTRUCTIONS & DEVELOPERS PVT. LTD. has cancelled the allotment of the above mentioned property. You are therefore requested to resolve this matter with the builder within 7 days from the date of this publication. Please take further notice that post cancellation of the allotment of the said property ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any other allotment done by the builder.

**Dated: January 24, 2024** For ICICI Bank Limited  
**Place: Delhi** Sd-

**AXIS BANK LTD. PUBLIC NOTICE FOR E-AUCTION OF PLEDGED ASSETS BEING GOLD ORNAMENTS**

THE BORROWERS, IN SPECIFIC AND THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED THAT PUBLIC AUCTION OF THE GOLD ORNAMENTS PLEDGED IN THE BELOW ACCOUNTS IS PROPOSED TO BE CONDUCTED BY THE AXIS BANK AT THE BELOW MENTIONED BRANCH. THE BELOW MENTIONED BORROWERS HAS AVAILED THE CREDIT FACILITY FROM THE AXIS BANK LIMITED AGAINST THE PLEDGE OF GOLD ORNAMENTS ("GOLD LOAN FACILITY") IN FAVOUR OF THE BANK TOWARDS THE SECURITY. THE DEMAND NOTICES WERE ISSUED TO THE BORROWERS/GUARANTORS CALLING UP THE BORROWERS/GUARANTORS TO PAY THEIR OUTSTANDING AMOUNT TOWARDS THE GOLD LOAN FACILITY AVAILED AS THE BORROWERS/GUARANTORS HAVE FAILED TO REPLY THE OUTSTANDING LOAN AMOUNT. THE BANK IS CONSTRAINED TO INVOKE THE PLEDGE AND PROPOSED TO CONDUCT AN E-AUCTION SALE OF PLEDGED GOLD ORNAMENTS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY HERUNDER ON 03.02.2024 AT 12.30 PM TO 03.30 PM ON "AS IN WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS", "WHATSOEVER THERE IS" AND "NO RECOURSE BASIS".

**DETAILS OF BORROWERS AND OUTSTANDING AMOUNT**

Sr. No.	CUSTOMER NAME	LOAN A/C NO.	AMOUNT OUTSTANDING (IN RS.)	DATE OF RECALL NOTICE	GROSS WEIGHT	NET WEIGHT
<b>B.O.: ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL]</b>						
1	PANKAJ KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX5957	Rs. 37,394.42	30-05-2023	9.300	8.700
2	PANKAJ KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX3350	Rs. 122,193.05	30-05-2023	35.100	33.700
<b>B.O.: DARYAGANJ, DELHI [DL]</b>						
3	SACHIN KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX8291	Rs. 153,920.00	10-10-2023	57.800	54.100
4	KULDEEP	XXXXXXXXXXXX6560	Rs. 273,781.00	30-05-2023	87.200	76.200
<b>B.O.: DLF, GURGAON [HR]</b>						
5	VIKAL KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX4118	Rs. 31,146.00	09-11-2023	7.640	7.440
<b>B.O.: FARIDABAD [HR]</b>						
6	SANU RAI	XXXXXXXXXXXX9114	Rs. 44,407.00	08-02-2023	11.800	11.340
7	PRATIHA RAI	XXXXXXXXXXXX0122	Rs. 47,481.31	09-11-2023	14.300	13.100
8	MONU	XXXXXXXXXXXX8932	Rs. 146,468.00	28-08-2023	47.300	45.200
9	AKSHAY PANDEY	XXXXXXXXXXXX6881	Rs. 273,445.00	12-10-2022	81.900	80.400
10	KSHITIJ SHARMA	XXXXXXXXXXXX0659	Rs. 317,959.34	25-08-2023	122.700	102.780
11	ANIL SHARMA	XXXXXXXXXXXX9080	Rs. 465,023.00	30-05-2023	150.100	138.900
12	TEK CHAND	XXXXXXXXXXXX5944	Rs. 662,781.72	27-06-2023	257.400	244.900
<b>B.O.: GHAZIABAD [UP]</b>						
14	SURENDER SINGH NAGAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX8358	Rs. 25,981.00	20-11-2023	9.100	7.600
15	MALAYA DAS	XXXXXXXXXXXX0206	Rs. 32,652.00	20-11-2023	11.300	9.300
16	SURJESH KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX5956	Rs. 185,871.00	10-10-2023	58.500	50.900
<b>B.O.: JYOTI NAGAR DEL DL</b>						
17	AMIT PANWAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX1673	Rs. 164,906.94	25-10-2023	52.700	49.700
<b>B.O.: MAYUR VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL]</b>						
18	SANJAY SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX7825	Rs. 65,430.00	28-08-2023	18.700	18.160
<b>B.O.: NAZAFGARH, NEW DELHI [DL]</b>						
19	SANYOG KUMAR BHARTI	XXXXXXXXXXXX2761	Rs. 27,413.00	20-09-2023	7.900	7.800
20	PANKAJ KUMAR SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX0374	Rs. 36,436.43	30-09-2023	12.200	11.500
21	ROHIT	XXXXXXXXXXXX3941	Rs. 95,200.00	15-06-2023	36.200	25.200
<b>B.O.: NEW FRIENDS COLONY, NEW DELHI</b>						
22	MD KUMAIL	XXXXXXXXXXXX0313	Rs. 82,921.00	10-10-2023	29.900	24.000
23	AKASH	XXXXXXXXXXXX4371	Rs. 37,831.36	27-06-2023	8.300	8.000
<b>B.O.: NOIDA [UP]</b>						
24	PRAMOD	XXXXXXXXXXXX7729	Rs. 41,715.85	09-11-2023	13.000	12.500
25	ANIMESH ADITYA	XXXXXXXXXXXX2904	Rs. 128,238.00	30-05-2023	36.400	34.900
26	RAMKRIPAL SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX1463	Rs. 286,068.92	30-05-2023	93.300	88.700
<b>B.O.: NOIDA EXTENSION GNO UP</b>						
27	ANNU SRIVASTAVA	XXXXXXXXXXXX1494	Rs. 62,933.41	20-11-2023	25.700	25.000
<b>B.O.: PALAM VIHAR, GURGAON [HR]</b>						
28	AMIT BISWAS	XXXXXXXXXXXX6613	Rs. 32,354.00	25-10-2023	10.400	10.000
29	RUBEL RANA	XXXXXXXXXXXX8849	Rs. 33,346.39	30-09-2023	8.000	8.000
30	AJAIJ SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX1571	Rs. 54,388.92	28-10-2023	19.800	18.100
31	GAURAV SHARMA	XXXXXXXXXXXX2456	Rs. 88,421.00	30-05-2023	28.100	24.500
32	PAWAN KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX8290	Rs. 91,776.00	09-11-2023	27.000	26.100
<b>B.O.: PALAM, DELHI [DL]</b>						
33	ARVIND KUMAR SINHA	XXXXXXXXXXXX7234	Rs. 31,110.00	30-05-2023	11.200	9.700
34	RAJINI SAHAI	XXXXXXXXXXXX3592	Rs. 56,305.70	09-11-2023	36.300	32.800
35	SHALIN GEORGE	XXXXXXXXXXXX4136	Rs. 62,241.00	20-09-2023	18.000	17.400
36	MANDAKINI BAJPAI	XXXXXXXXXXXX1705	Rs. 151,343.00	30-05-2023	43.000	41.000
37	SUDHISH KUMAR RAI	XXXXXXXXXXXX4791	Rs. 155,060.00	29-09-2023	51.700	46.800
38	MANPREET MENON	XXXXXXXXXXXX2960	Rs. 222,280.00	15-06-2023	72.300	69.200
<b>B.O.: PUSHPVIHAR, DELHI [DL]</b>						
39	SONAM SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX2259	Rs. 116,034.75	25-10-2023	31.900	30.830
<b>B.O.: ROHINI, DELHI [DL]</b>						
40	ONKAR SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX7719	Rs. 143,617.44	25-10-2023	39.000	38.000
41	RESHMA KUMARI	XXXXXXXXXXXX1570	Rs. 182,209.00	30-05-2023	55.300	52.900
42	RITU	XXXXXXXXXXXX5205	Rs. 300,369.00	30-05-2023	78.900	76.000
<b>B.O.: SECTOR 10A, GURGAON [HR]</b>						
43	PARDEEP	XXXXXXXXXXXX4823	Rs. 38,967.00	05-09-2023	12.670	11.870
44	ROSHAN KUMAR MISHRA	XXXXXXXXXXXX8257	Rs. 45,557.00	09-11-2023	15.100	14.100
45	FOUJUNDDI ALI	XXXXXXXXXXXX2489	Rs. 46,648.00	09-11-2023	11.800	11.600
46	MO ANAS	XXXXXXXXXXXX5714	Rs. 65,863.32	25-10-2023	17.700	17.000
47	ROSHAN KUMAR MISHRA	XXXXXXXXXXXX3486	Rs. 69,957.37	09-11-2023	24.800	23.960
<b>B.O.: SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR]</b>						
48	YUV RAJ LOHIA	XXXXXXXXXXXX0617	Rs. 107,058.00	25-08-2023	35.400	34.400
<b>B.O.: SECTOR 16, FARIDABAD [HR]</b>						
49	PAWAN KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX5141	Rs. 68,643.41	27-06-2023	15.100	14.800
50	SANTOSH PRASAD	XXXXXXXXXXXX2609	Rs. 247,579.00	10-10-2023	71.200	64.150
<b>B.O.: SECTOR-24, ROHINI, NEW DELHI [DL]</b>						
51	AMIT GARG	XXXXXXXXXXXX4460	Rs. 174,233.45	10-10-2023	50.200	46.700
<b>B.O.: SHALIMAR BAGH, DELHI [DL]</b>						
52	RAJESH KUMAR KUNDNANI	XXXXXXXXXXXX5007	Rs. 113,164.63	28-02-2023	35.800	34.400
53	NAGENDRA KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX5979	Rs. 121,095.00	18-07-2023	31.100	29.550
<b>B.O.: SOUTH PATEL NAGAR DL</b>						
54	ROHIT KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX7180	Rs. 38,315.09	20-09-2023	9.700	9.400
<b>B.O.: TILAK NAGAR, DELHI [DL]</b>						
55	RAM SHANKAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX0956	Rs. 44,036.00	20-11-2023	10.800	10.600
<b>B.O.: UTTAM NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL]</b>						
56	ASHISH KUMAR SAHU	XXXXXXXXXXXX5141	Rs. 37,856.00	20-10-2023	10.900	10.500
57	LATA	XXXXXXXXXXXX8091	Rs. 105,096.95	25-10-2023	41.200	32.300
<b>B.O.: VAIBHAV KHAND UP</b>						
58	VIRENDRA PRATAP SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX4839	Rs. 36,634.00	20-10-2023	11.230	10.630
<b>B.O.: VAISHYAPURI, NEW DELHI [DL]</b>						
59	HIMANSHOO CHADHA	XXXXXXXXXXXX5313	Rs. 68,618.65	10-10-2023	23.200	22.000

AXIS BANK LTD. HAS THE AUTHORITY TO REMOVE ACCOUNT/CHANGE THE AUCTION DATE WITHOUT ANY PRIOR NOTICE. AUCTION WILL BE HELD ONLINE [HTTPS://GOLD.SAMIL.IN](https://gold.samil.in) BETWEEN 12.30 PM TO 03.30 PM.

FOR DETAILED TERMS AND CONDITIONS, PLEASE LOG INTO GIVEN WEBSITE [HTTPS://GOLD.SAMIL.IN](https://gold.samil.in)

**PLACE: DELHI, DATE: 24.01.2024** Sd., AUTHORIZED OFFICER, AXIS BANK LTD.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

**ICICI Bank** Branch Office: ICICI BANK LTD Office No 201-B, 2nd Floor, Road No 1, Plot No-B3, Wifi IT Park, Wagle Industrial Estate, Thane(West)- 400604.

The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset/ Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Mohd Firoz Rahmatullah Khan/ Sayra Firoz Khan/ (LBMUM00005295618/ LBMUM00005295935) The 83 Armd Regiment, C O 56, Apo 084, Hisar, Haryana, Hisar- 125001	Flat No 1002, 10th Floor C Wing, Olmpus Charms Paradise, Near Goveli Octroi Titwala, Maharashtra, Thane- 421605	January 01, 2024 Rs. 26,12,302/-	03/08/2023
2.	Bharti Anshukumar/ Pratishtha Sandilya/ (LBAHR00005736207) & C-200/01, Samrudhhi Park, Kaparda Patia, Behind Dornodinos Pizza, Bhadkora, Bharuch, Ankleshwar- 393001	Plot No-B/5-8 (As Per Approved Plan-A-8), Garden City, Behind Gidc Quarters, Valia Road, (New R/S No-462), R/S No-371, GIDC, Jitali, Bharuch, Ankleshwar- 393003	December 22, 2023 Rs. 49,11,456/-	02-10-2023
3.	Tarun Choubey/ Surksha Choubey/ (LBCH0000473499) C/o Ramdev Bhawan Behind Collector Banna, Panna Road, Madhya Pradesh, Chhatarpura- 417001	Khasra No.3260/21, Nagarpalika House No.1573, P.H No.51, Dev Ward No.17 B, Madhya Pradesh, Chhatarpura- 417001	December 29, 2023 Rs. 15,08,195/-	03-10-2023

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

**Date : January 24, 2024** For ICICI Bank Limited  
**Place : Delhi/NCR** Authorized Officer, ICICI Bank Limited

**New Okhla Industrial Development Authority**

**Administrative Building, Sector - 6, Noida - 201301 (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 website: [www.noidaauthorityonline.in](http://www.noidaauthorityonline.in) & <https://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.

**A) Fresh-Tender Work :-**

S. No.	Jobs No.	Name of the Work	Tender Amount (Rs. Lacs)
1	37/DGM/SM(WC-6)/2023-24	M/o Drain (Raising repairing and cover of drain and other misc. work on (Mahagan Mazaria to Anrishi) in sector-78), Noida.	50.17
2	38/DGM/SM(WC-6)/2023-24	M/o Village (Providing and laying RMC work of Campus and other misc. work in Community Centre in Village Sorhka Jahidabad), Noida.	39.42
3	08/SM(WC-8)/ET/2023-24	M/o Road (Supply Fixing Board in Sector-105 & 108), Noida.	41.12

The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 06.02.2024 up to 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on dated 07.02.2024 at 11.00 AM.

**B) Re-Tender Work :-**

S. No.	Jobs No.	Name of the Work	Tender Amount (Rs. Lacs)
4	47/DGM/SM(WC-7)/ET/2023-24	Horticulture Civil Work (C/o Boundary wall of Park in Transport Nagar, Sector-88), Noida.	70.77
5	27/DGM/SM(WC-1)/2023-24	M/o Drain (Re-Construction of R.C.C. drain along W-17 to W-120 & X-Block Sector-12), Noida.	44.94

The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 30.01.2024 up to 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on dated 31.01.2024 at 11.00 AM.

**Dy. General Manager (Civil)**  
**NOIDA**

**CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA**

**SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE**

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

**Whereas**

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

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken 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 with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Nitin Kumar Singhal/ Nikhil Kumar Singhal/ LBGHZ00003889514/ LBGHZ00003889524	Flat No G1, Ground Floor (Without Roof Rights), Plot No-399a, Sector-5, Vaishali, Teshil & District Ghaziabad/ January 19, 2024	September	





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Winter blues

Prolonged cold wave in north India leads to health issues and vehicular traffic nightmares

With north India already reeling under an extended cold wave, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a 'yellow alert', with predictions of dense to very dense fog engulfing parts of Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh over the next five days. This weather pattern, characterised by sub-normal temperatures and low visibility, is also raising concerns among individuals with pre-existing health conditions. According to the IMD, cold wave conditions have prevailed in isolated pockets of Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim, Punjab and Haryana. The visibility at Delhi's Safdarjung Airport area was as low as 500 metres at 5:30 am, while the Indira Gandhi International Airport reported 1,000 metres of visibility at 6:30 am. These conditions pose significant challenges to commuters and daily activities. The dense fog that has enveloped Delhi in the recent days has not only created an eerie atmosphere across the city but has also severely disrupted transportation services. The low visibility caused by the thick fog has led to a series of flight delays at the IGI Airport, impacting both domestic and international travel. Airport authorities have been forced to implement precautionary measures, including delayed take-offs and landings, to ensure the safety of passengers. Similarly, train schedules have been adversely affected, with several services experiencing delays as dense fog hampers visibility along railway tracks.



The persistent cold wave has raised concerns, especially for individuals with cardiovascular issues. Cold temperatures can constrict blood vessels, leading to increased blood pressure and heart rate. For such patients, this can exacerbate existing conditions and pose a higher risk of cardiovascular events. Furthermore, the dense fog and low visibility can hinder emergency response systems, making it challenging for patients to receive timely medical attention. Ambulance services in particular may face difficulties navigating through foggy conditions, potentially delaying critical interventions for those in need. The recorded humidity levels between 55-95 per cent, along with an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 333 falling in the "very poor" category, add to the health concerns. Poor air quality can aggravate respiratory problems, impacting not only heart patients but also individuals with pre-existing respiratory conditions. Given the challenging conditions, patients are advised to take extra precautions: Limit outdoor activities, especially during early morning and late evening when temperatures are lower, and wear layered clothing to stay warm, including a hat and gloves to protect extremities. It is crucial for both the public and healthcare providers to remain vigilant, take preventive measures and ensure timely medical interventions to mitigate the impact of these challenging weather conditions.

temperatures can constrict blood vessels, leading to increased blood pressure and heart rate. For such patients, this can exacerbate existing conditions and pose a higher risk of cardiovascular events. Furthermore, the dense fog and low visibility can hinder emergency response systems, making it challenging for patients to receive timely medical attention. Ambulance services in particular may face difficulties navigating through foggy conditions, potentially delaying critical interventions for those in need. The recorded humidity levels between 55-95 per cent, along with an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 333 falling in the "very poor" category, add to the health concerns. Poor air quality can aggravate respiratory problems, impacting not only heart patients but also individuals with pre-existing respiratory conditions. Given the challenging conditions, patients are advised to take extra precautions: Limit outdoor activities, especially during early morning and late evening when temperatures are lower, and wear layered clothing to stay warm, including a hat and gloves to protect extremities. It is crucial for both the public and healthcare providers to remain vigilant, take preventive measures and ensure timely medical interventions to mitigate the impact of these challenging weather conditions.

### PICTALK



Tableau artistes during the full dress rehearsal for the Republic Day Parade 2024 at the Kartavya Path, in New Delhi

## Safeguarding the Himalayan ecosystem

Establishing 'snow reserves' can significantly contribute to the preservation of the Himalayan ecosystem

Snowfall brings cheers to people residing in the Himalayan states, as it brings money to its economy through tourism-related activity. But this year, many regions of the Himalayas that used to harbour snow from December to January have been bereft of any snow so far. Popular tourist destinations like Shimla, Manali, and Gulbarga have no active snowfall. This drastically declined the number of tourists visiting these places, affecting the local economy. The temperatures at Shimla and Manali were warmer than in the national capital region during January. Even though there are no official statements from the India Meteorological Department (IMD) regarding the decline in snowfall, even a layman's observation will reveal that something is wrong with our climatic patterns, scientists may come up with many theoretical explanations related to global climatic changes, but accurate scientific studies based on local climatic problems are lacking. Snowfall occurs when moisture in the atmosphere freezes into ice crystals and falls to the



ground. It's important to note that the conditions in the atmosphere, such as temperature and humidity, play a crucial role in determining whether precipitation falls as rain or snow. Warmer temperatures generally favour rain, while colder temperatures lead to snow formation. Snow spans an area of almost 46 square kilometres each year and plays a vital part in the Earth's climate system. The presence of this entity has a role in controlling both the Earth's surface and atmosphere, exerting an impact on local weather patterns. Snow has significantly higher reflectivity than trees, reflecting more than 80% of incoming sunlight, while trees only reflect roughly 30%. Considering these factors, it is not unexpected that changes in snowfall and

snowpack can have substantial effects at both local and global levels. Global warming is the main element expected to cause changes in precipitation and snowpack. Contrary to common intuition, global warming does not necessarily result in a decrease in snow accumulation. The amount of snowfall in a certain area depends on the orographic conditions, particularly those present in the adjacent mountains. Tourism and development activities in Himalayan hill stations like Manali and Gulmarg have significantly altered the landscape. The influx of vehicles, coupled with tunnel construction and hydroelectric projects, raises local temperatures and causes pollution. Irresponsible tourist behaviour, including littering in the snow, is compounded by similar actions from the local community. Even government agencies remain passive observers. Such trends jeopardize the livelihoods of locals dependent on tourism and agriculture. The impact on plants, like apple trees, crucial for the region's economy, is severe. Snow plays a vital role in their

growth, acting as an insulator and contributing to soil moisture. The changing environment poses a long-term threat to the delicate ecological balance. IMD scientists should address the local orographic factors affecting snowfall in our mountains. They must train local students well versed in that region's ecology and climatic conditions and recruit them into their scientific fold. Students have to undergo on-site training with scientists even during their coursework. The government should also bring stringent regulatory measures to protect our snowfalling regions by declaring them as 'Snow Reserves' so that tourism and developmental activities can be regulated in these regions. If we don't take corrective measures now, it will affect the lives of the entire Himalayan belt and elsewhere. Mother Nature has already given us the warning symbol, it is for us to act. (The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru; views are personal)



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

## LAC: Putting together the jigsaw puzzle

The Government's secrecy and censorship cast shadows on the true story of LAC, leaving critical gaps in the nation's defence narrative



ASHOK K MEHTA

Unlike soldiers, diplomats and government officials are like the three wise monkeys. One such person not in that league I met more than a year ago told me about Chinese intrusions across LAC in 2020 and Operation Snow Leopard, the Indian Army's only riposte to the intrusions. Former COAS, Gen Naravane's book Four Stars of Destiny and periodic statements by the hawk-eyed Chushul Councillor Konchok Stanzin throw new light on the ground situation. The government has put the lid on Manipur and LAC. No debate has been allowed in Parliament on LAC nor has any discussion been permitted in Parliamentary Standing Committees on Defence, Home, Defence and Foreign Ministers have made cryptic statements that are neither here nor there. Questions on LAC are conflated with questioning the integrity of 'our brave jawans'. This was illustrated most effectively during Uri's surgical strikes and Operation Balakot, the 2019 election clinchers. Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Ajay Bisaria, questioned by Karan Thapar on the Wire in his recent book Anger Management: The Troubled Diplomatic Relationship between India and Pakistan about the effectiveness of Balakot strike, said: "We have got a narrative...but no proof".

The government was clearly surprised by Chinese actions. As the first movers, the Chinese had the advantage. He explained that due to the overlapping perception of LAC host of issues which the Chinese refuse to resolve have arisen. The overlap in perception led to the Chinese grabbing their 1959 Claim line. He insisted that what China had done was 'transgression' not intrusion and did not involve the loss of Indian territory. The two remaining friction points Depsang and Demchok will not be settled now. I suggested this might have been due to Indian actions at Doklam and Home Minister Amit Shah's parliamentary statement about reclaiming Aksai Chin. He referred to problems of patrolling due to buffer zones but said that this could be resolved by



regulating patrols on both sides. Out-of-the-box procedures could be initiated to resume patrolling on fixed days and nominate no patrolling zones where clashes would not take place. On DMZs while he mentioned the specifications of relocations of the two sides in the Fingers area, Kailash Heights being declared a buffer zone was not mentioned. Only on 29 December Congress leader Jairam Ramesh cited Stanzin reporting that the memorial built after the 1962 war on Kailash Heights to commemorate the Rezang La battle was demolished as it fell into the DMZ where all manmade landforms had to be removed as per the withdrawal agreement. India had insisted PLA erase all writings in Mandarin and English indicating the Fingers area as belonging to China. India not only vacated Kailash Heights but also let the Chinese turn it into DMZ, a strategic folly compounded into a blunder for perpetuity as India could no longer reoccupy its own territory. The most interesting aspect of our conversation was this: it was the Army, my friend said, that chose to vacate Kailash Heights as the government would have preferred it to be held as it gave a clear advantage to our forces as events



THE GOVERNMENT WAS CLEARLY SURPRISED BY CHINESE ACTIONS. AS THE FIRST MOVERS, THE CHINESE HAD THE ADVANTAGE

later proved. Excerpts from Naravane's book contain a blow-by-blow account of Op Snow Leopard but reasons for vacating Kailash Heights are not. The excerpts so far released by the publishers - who have been told not to publish any further excerpts till the book is cleared for publication will leave a crucial blank in the narrative. The excerpts from Operation Snow Leopard show the lack of decisiveness in government leadership about dealing with a critical situation that followed from the massing of tanks especially when India must not be the first to open fire. Naravane writes he got these orders from the very top. All this might seem like history but like the present government keeps flaying Nehru for losing Aksai Chin, a future non-BJP government will castigate it for letting China realise its 1959 Claim Line in Ladakh and the government for surrendering the gains of Op Snow Leopard. The government official in 2022 ruled out any military or diplomatic breakthrough on LAC. He said India has achieved what China is willing to concede. He also said there will be no high-level meetings though we know that Modi did try for one at the G20 summit in Bali, Indonesia. He also said nothing will happen till

after the 2024 elections as the government will keep a lid on LAC till it has won a third term. 90 per cent of his predictions have turned out true and for the rest we have to wait. It is a pity we may not know about the blanks in the LAC story as Naravane's book is likely to be heavily censored if it is released at all. Ajay Bisaria's book has had no such problems though it contains critical details about operational matters as it shows that both the Balakot air strikes (whose effectiveness he does not confirm) and the readiness of nine missiles that were ready to be launched to force Wing Commander Abhinandan's release were evidence of governments muscularity. PM Modi himself bragged in an election rally about targeting Pakistan with nine missiles, adding these were not meant for Diwali. For an election speech, it breached many red lines. All is forgiven and forgotten about publishing classified information when it demonstrates the government's strength and power. Naravane's book apparently does not. (The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. Views are personal)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### GAZA HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

Sir — The war between Israel and Hamas has killed more than 24,000 people on the Gaza side and now more people are being pulled towards death as affected people face pathetic living conditions sans water, power, food and medical aid. On the other hand, Israel, which has seen 1400 plus deaths, insists on the release of more than 100 hostages still held by Hamas and continues pounding the Gaza Strip relentlessly. Given these catastrophe incidents External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday said that the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip requires a "sustainable solution that gives immediate relief" to those most affected. However, there is needed quick relief and an inevitable ceasefire in Gaza for the sake of humanitarian and saving Palestinians from genocide, may be possible only by worldly leaders' support.

Tauqueer Rahmani | Mumbai

#### TRUMP'S INFLUENCE

Sir — Dozens of criminal and financial cases are about to begin in US courts against former President Donald Trump, yet his hold on the Republican Party is growing stronger, day by day. Following the Iowa primary election results, his Indian-origin rival Vivek Ramaswamy left the race after receiving only 7.7 per cent of the vote. But ahead of Tuesday's second primary vote, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis suspended his presidential campaign on Sunday and endorsed his support to Trump. Another Indian-origin American woman, Nikki Haley, has survived in the field. Haley seems to be a fighting woman. She is a politician and diplomat who served as the 116th Governor of South Carolina from 2011 to 2017 and the 29th United States Ambassador to the United Nations from January 2017 to December 2018. But there does not seem to be diminishing support among Republicans, for the main architect of the attack on Capitol Hill. She will have to surrender within a

#### Padma awards



This refers to the Padma awards which are announced on the eve of January 26 every year. "Exceptional" and "distinguished" are the words used while decorating men and women with these awards. Indeed, civilians with memorable service to the country and mankind have found themselves honoured with prestigious awards. It is also true that, of late, some hidden gems are discovered and

honoured but such cases are only few and far between. It may be recalled that there were demands in the past that the Padma awards be scrapped altogether. The Padma selection committee is headed by the Cabinet secretary. It consists of the Home Secretary, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Secretary to the President and persons of "eminence" whose number is not specified. For the 2023 awards, there were 15 such members besides the bureaucrats. Though the NDA government scrapped the system of "nomination by ministers", grumblings and rumblings remain because its replacement "any citizen" meant anyone could propose anybody. Many stalwarts, with self-respect, have therefore not found themselves on the list, and some have rejected the awards. It would be beneficial if the selection committee goes about the task without prejudice or favour. Moreover, once stipulated to be in the vicinity of 50 or so, now the total number of awards is fixed at "not more than 120".

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

week. Then in the elections of November 5 this year, there will be a contest between Donald Trump and Joe Biden once again. Now the American people have to decide whom they will elect. He or she will elect the one who just lies and is busy dividing American society day and night, or who is not only willing to work for every American while looking at all Americans with one eye, but has been doing so for the last four years. Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

#### WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM 2024

Sir — The World Economic Forum was held in Davos, Switzerland. The summit released a list based on the Global Risk Report 2024. The list mentioned, extreme climate change ranked first and the AI-derived misinformation and disinformation got the second rank. This technological advancement is the

biggest threat to the world. This can lead to the spread of fear and propaganda during this election season as 40 countries are having elections this year including India. With the help of Artificial Intelligence (AI) cybercriminals and hackers are weaponizing it by doing malicious activities. The recent viral 'Deepfake' videos in which manipulation of audio and visual are possible are posing a threat to an individual's identity. Apart from this, AI is taking over the human workforce and increasing unemployment mostly in the tech sector. Before it goes out of hand, people should know the greater risks that are inches away from us in this AI age. Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com





## FIRST COLUMN

## HUMANS WILL ALWAYS BE HUMANS

Humans cannot be God, no matter how smart they become



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

A few years back a movie had been released wherein the main lead used to curse God every now and then for his sufferings. One fine day God appeared and offered him to be in his seat for 24 Hours & enjoy all his Supreme Powers. The man-god excited and readily grabbed the offer, however much to his surprise, he found that being Almighty was not exactly what he had thought or imagined. In Fact, he found an end number of messages/emails that were full of complaints, hatred & negativities. In the end, he realized how difficult it is for the Almighty to tolerate humans & finally, he surrendered to the Supreme.

The moral of the story is that 'Humans can't be God' no matter how smart they become. If we closely observe within as well as around ourselves, we would find that almost all of us irritate God endlessly by constantly complaining to him or bargaining with him. For example, we complain & crib all the time about our state of being, our family, our office, our job, the list goes on and on.. we also bargain with him that if he fulfils this wish our's, then we will that, if he doesn't do this, then we do that. Just imagine the level of our shamelessness when some of us very casually say 'So what? It's purely human to forget the promises as promises are made to be broken. Wow!



How would this sound if someone betrayed us & left us in the lurch? Would we still be forgiving towards such betrayers? The list of such betrayals would be infinite if at all God thinks about counting it, because we all are experts at breaking promises we made to HIM, aren't we? Of Course, we are! Well!!! But what is it about us that makes us so selfish & what is it about him that makes HIM so selfless and altruistic? The answer to this lies in one word i.e. Unlimited, YES!! We humans are limited in our thoughts & actions, but the Almighty who is the Ocean of Love is an Unlimited source that keeps on showering his love, compassion & blessings on his children. Though HE understands every trick of the book that we humans use against him in spite of all our cheatings & betrayals, he remains Innocent and keeps on giving us fresh chances in order to sustain our self-esteem.

Where would one find such an entity? Just look around and see if there is someone like HIM, we won't find any human with such magnanimity. It's impossible because humans are always restricted to self-interest whereas Almighty is always concerned about the interests of his beloved children.

We carry so much burden of other's deception, perfidy, and treachery on our minds whereas HE always remains light by just Forgiving every sinner & trying to reform him by lifting his self-confidence. After reading so many nice things about HIM, doesn't it sound exciting to be God? Just give it a try, if not for a day, then maybe for an hour or even for a few minutes. All the Best!

(The writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist, views are personal)

## A tribute to Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur



NARENDRA MODI

Jan Nayak wanted to create an egalitarian society where resources were distributed fairly and everyone, regardless of their social standing, had access to opportunities

Today is the birth centenary of Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur Ji, whose relentless pursuit of social justice created a positive impact on the lives of crores of people. I never had the opportunity to meet Karpoori Ji but, I heard a lot about him from Kailashpati Mishra Ji, who worked closely with him. He belonged to one of the most backward sections of society, the Nai Samaj. Overcoming numerous obstacles, he achieved a lot and worked for societal betterment. Jan Nayak Kapoor Thakur Ji's life revolved around the twin pillars of simplicity and social justice. Till his last breath, his simple lifestyle and humble nature resonated deeply with the common people. There are numerous anecdotes that highlight his simplicity.

Those who worked with him recall how he preferred to spend his own money on any personal matter including his daughter's wedding. During his tenure as Chief Minister of Bihar, a decision was taken to build a colony for political leaders but he himself did not take any land or money for the same. When he passed away in 1988, several leaders went to his village to pay tributes. When they saw the condition of his house, they were moved to tears- how can someone so towering have a house so simple! Another anecdote of his simplicity dates back to 1977 when he had just taken over as CM of Bihar. The Janata Government was in power in Delhi and Patna. That time, Janata leaders had gathered in Patna to mark Loknayak JP's birthday.

Among the galaxy of top leaders walked in Chief Minister Karpoori Thakur Ji, with a torn Kurta. In his own style, Chandrashekhar Ji asked people to donate some money so that Karpoori Ji could purchase a new Kurta. But, Karpoori Ji was Karpoori Ji- he accepted the money but donated it to the CM Relief Fund. Social justice was most dear to Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur Ji. His political journey was marked by monumental efforts to create a society where resources were distributed fairly, and everyone, regardless of their social standing, had access to opportunities. He wanted to address the systemic inequalities that plagued Indian society. Such was his commitment to his ideals that despite living in an era where the Congress Party was omnipresent, he took a distinctly anti-Congress line because he was convinced very early on that the Congress had deviated from its founding principles. His electoral career began in the early 1950s and since then, he has become a force to reckon with in the legislative chambers, powerfully voicing the struggles of the working class, labourers, small farmers and youngsters. Education was a subject very close to his heart.

Throughout his political career, he worked to improve education facilities for the poor. He was a proponent of education in local languages so that people from small towns and villages could climb the ladder and attain success. As CM, he took many measures for the welfare of senior citizens as well. Democracy, debate and discussion were integral to Karpoori Ji's personality. This spirit was seen when he immersed himself in the Quit India movement as a youngster and it was again seen when he resisted the Emergency tooth and nail. His unique



I CAN SAY WITH CONFIDENCE AND PRIDE THAT JAN NAYAK KARPOORI THAKUR JI WOULD HAVE BEEN VERY PROUD OF INDIA'S FEAT OF FREEING 25 CRORE PEOPLE FROM THE CLUTCHES OF POVERTY IN THE LAST FEW YEARS

perspectives were greatly admired by the likes of JP, Dr. Lohia and Charan Singh Ji. Perhaps one of Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur Ji's most significant contributions to India was his role in strengthening the affirmative action apparatus for the backward classes, with the hope that they were given the representation and opportunities they deserved.

His decision was met with heavy opposition but he did not bow to any pressure. Under his leadership, policies were implemented that laid the groundwork for a more inclusive society, where one's birth did not determine one's fate. He belonged to the most backward strata of society but he worked for all the people. He had no trace of bitterness in him, which is what makes him truly great.

Over the last ten years, our Government has walked on the path of Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur Ji, reflected in our schemes and policies that have

brought transformative empowerment. One of the biggest tragedies of our polity has been that barring a few leaders like Karpoori Ji, the call for social justice was restricted to being a political slogan. Inspired by Karpoori Ji's vision we implemented it as an effective governance model.

I can say with confidence and pride that Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur Ji would have been very proud of India's feat of freeing 25 crore people from the clutches of poverty in the last few years. These are people from the most backward sections of society, who were denied basic facilities nearly seven decades after freedom from colonial rule. At the same time, our efforts towards saturation- ensuring every scheme reaches 100% coverage echo his commitment to social welfare. Today, when people from OBC, SC and ST Communities are becoming entrepreneurs due to MUDRA Loans, it fulfils Karpoori Thakur Ji's vision of economic

independence. Likewise, it was our government that had the privilege of extending SC, ST and OBC reservations. We also had the honour of setting up the OBC Commission (which was opposed by Congress, sadly), which is working on the path shown by Karpoori Ji. Our PM-Vishwakarma Scheme will also bring new avenues of prosperity for crores of people belonging to OBC communities across India. As a person belonging to the backward classes myself, I have much to thank Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur Ji for. Unfortunately, we lost Karpoori Ji at a relatively young age of 64. We lost him when we needed him the most. Yet, he lives on in the hearts and minds of crores of people due to his work. He was a true Jan Nayak!

(This is a special article by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on the 100th birth anniversary of Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur)

## Doctors tirelessly care for us, but who takes care of them?

Ladakh is experiencing a shortage of healthcare professionals, necessitating a substantial increase in recruitment of doctors and paramedical staff

In the relentless battle against COVID-19, our doctors and nurses have emerged as resilient heroes, bravely standing at the forefront to shield us from the pandemic. Yet, behind their courageous facade lies a story of immense challenges and personal sacrifices. This article delves into the untold narrative of the healthcare heroes from remote villages of Leh, Ladakh, exploring the hardships they've faced during the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. From enduring exhausting work hours to navigating intense emotions, this is a tale of their unwavering dedication and determination in the face of adversity. During the outbreak of this massive disease, chaos ensued as no one had any prior



SOHAIL QHAYSAR

knowledge of the coronavirus. Chuchot, a village in Ladakh, situated 8 km away from Leh, was declared a containment zone, and it was among the country's earliest hotspots. Its residents were strictly confined within barricades. Throughout the period from the end of 2019 to the end of 2021, doctors and paramedical staff in Chuchot faced relentless challenges. They worked tirelessly for endless hours,

wearing masks and personal protective equipment (PPE) kits, experiencing both physical exhaustion and a sense of hopelessness.

During this time, they had the additional responsibility of compiling and submitting data to higher authorities on a daily basis. The healthcare workers also revealed that, in the initial stages, a single case required the mobilization of all available resources, including doctors, nurses, and policemen, for effective contact tracing. The situation in Chuchot reflected the immense strain on medical professionals, showcasing the hardships they endured while grappling with the uncertainties of the pandemic. Are you aware that Ladakh is facing a shortage of doctors

and paramedical staff, requiring a significant increase in recruitment, as reported by the medical staff in Leh? During the summer, recruitment drives under the National Health Mission (NHM) are observed, attracting mostly non-local staff. These individuals receive their initial training, exposure, and experience in Ladakh. However, a concerning pattern emerges as, after six months, with the onset of winter and challenging weather conditions, particularly in rural areas with limited facilities, many doctors choose to leave their positions and relocate to urban areas for better perks. To address this issue, it is imperative for the government to initiate permanent recruitment, considering that

NHM recruitments are based on one-year contracts. Offering doctors a permanent position would make them reconsider leaving their jobs, ensuring a more stable healthcare workforce. Since the declaration of Ladakh as a Union Territory, there has been an absence of permanent doctor recruitments, emphasizing the immediate requirement for systemic changes to address staffing challenges in the region. In 2023, a Division Bench of the High Court of J&K and Ladakh had directed the Commissioner/Secretary, Health and Medical Education Department, Ladakh to personally file an affidavit without fail indicating steps taken to deal with the shortage of Medical Officers (Doctors) as well as non-

medical (Para Medical Staff) and other supporting staff in the district of Ladakh. In addition to the shortage of doctors, a medical officer highlighted a concerning trend, stating, "After the bifurcation of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir, a new issue has emerged - VIP duties. Despite the shortage of doctors in Ladakh, VIPs enjoy doctor facilities. With Ladakh gaining immense popularity among tourists, VIPs visit here to spend their summers with family and relatives." Expressing strong disapproval of this practice, he added, "These VIPs often summon doctors for routine checkups like blood pressure, oxygen levels, sugar levels, etc., forcing us to wait outside their offices for 2-3 hours. If VIPs

have health concerns, they should visit hospitals designed for this purpose. Some physiotherapists were even exploited, providing therapy to VIPs' relatives while patients waited in line at the hospital. I personally confronted a VIP who requested an ECG machine to be delivered to their residence, as we had only one machine available at that time." The lack of necessary equipment was also highlighted by the staff. According to them, Chuchot Primary Health Centre urgently requires an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) machine to address cardiac emergencies—essentially delivering a shock to restart a patient's heart. Referred to as a lifeline, this device can be instrumen-

tal in giving patients residing in this far-flung region a second chance at life. Additionally, the necessity for an Advanced Life Support ambulance (ALS) in Chuchot was also highlighted. Presently, the health centre only has Basic Life Support Ambulances equipped with stretchers. These ambulances, often utilised as 108 ambulances in the Chuchot vicinity, have encountered breakdowns. Given Ladakh's vast geographical spread and population distribution, it is imperative to have ambulances strategically stationed at key points across the region to ensure prompt and efficient emergency response services. (The writer is a student in Leh, Ladakh. Views are personal) Charkha Features)



# Russian missiles target Ukrainian cities killing 5, wounding dozens

AP ■ KYIV

Russian missiles targeted Ukraine's two biggest cities early Tuesday, damaging apartment buildings and killing at least five people after Moscow shunned any deal backed by Kyiv and its Western allies to end the almost two-year war.

The Russian barrage included more than 40 ballistic, cruise, anti-aircraft and guided missiles, officials said. Ukraine's air force said it intercepted 21 of them.

The attack injured at least 20 people in four districts of Kyiv, the capital, including a 13-year-old boy, according to Mayor Vitalii Klitschko. Officials said initial reports that a civilian had been killed in the Ukrainian capital were incorrect, and clarified that the wounded person was on life support in hospital.

In Kharkiv, in northeast Ukraine, the onslaught killed five and injured 48, including four minors, as the missiles damaged around 30 residential buildings and shattered hun-



Police inspect a yard near building damaged by a Russian attack in Kyiv, Ukraine on Tuesday. AP/PTI

dreds of apartment windows in icy weather, regional Governor Oleh Sinyubov said.

Russia used S-300, Kh-32 and hypersonic Iskander missiles in the attack, he said.

Kharkiv Mayor Ihor Terekhov said the tempera-

ture in the city was minus 7 degrees Celsius (19 degrees Fahrenheit). An entire section of a multi-story residential building was destroyed, trapping an unknown number of people there, Terekhov said. Kharkiv, about 30 km (18

miles) from the border with Russia, has often felt the brunt of Russia's winter campaign of long-range strikes that commonly hit civilian areas.

The attacks keep Ukrainians on edge while the 1,500-km (930-mile) front line has barely budged. Both sides' inability to deliver a knockout punch on the battlefield has pushed the fighting toward trench and artillery warfare. Analysts say the Kremlin's forces stockpiled missiles at the end of last year to press a winter campaign of aerial bombardment.

There appeared to be scant chance of an end to the war any time soon. Russia's foreign minister defied the United States and other Ukraine supporters at a UN meeting on Monday, ruling out any peace plan they support.

Sergey Lavrov, the top Russian diplomat, claimed that Ukrainian forces have been "a complete failure" on the battlefield and are "incapable" of defeating Russia. The attacks on Kyiv and Kharkiv came

two days after Moscow-installed officials in eastern Ukraine claimed that Ukrainian shelling killed 27 people on the outskirts of Russian-occupied Donetsk. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov called it a "monstrous terrorist act". The Ukrainian military, however, denied it had anything to do with the attack. Peskov said Tuesday's attacks should not be seen as Moscow's response to the Donetsk strike. He repeated Kremlin's argument that its forces don't strike civilian areas, though there is substantial evidence to the contrary.

The Ukrainian civilian deaths have helped stir international outrage over Russia's invasion of its neighbour, and Ukrainian officials have pointed to the attacks in their efforts to secure further military aid from the country's allies.

NATO signed Tuesday a \$1.2-billion contract to make tens of thousands of artillery rounds to replenish the dwindling stocks of its member countries.

## 'Pentagon has no more money for Ukraine'

Washington (AP): For the first time since Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin established the international group to support Ukraine in April 2022, the United States will host the monthly gathering of about 50 countries out of money, unable to send the ammunition and missiles that Ukraine needs to fend off Russia's invasion.

While waiting for Congress to pass a budget and potentially approve more money for Ukraine's fight, the US will be looking to allies to keep bridging the gap.

Tuesday's meeting will focus on longer-term needs, deputy Pentagon press secretary Sabrina Singh told reporters. "Even though we aren't able to provide our security assistance right now,

our partners are continuing to do that," Singh said. On Tuesday in Brussels, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg announced a new USD 1.2 billion joint contract to buy more than 2,22,000 rounds of 155 mm ammunition. The rounds are some of the most heavily used munitions in this conflict, and the contract will be used to backfill allies that have pushed their own reserves to Kyiv.

While the conflict between Israel and Hamas has dominated headlines since October, Russia's bloody onslaught of Ukraine has continued.

Russia on Tuesday launched a barrage of more than 40 ballistic, cruise, anti-aircraft and guided missiles into Ukraine's two biggest

cities, damaging apartment buildings and killing at least five people. The assault came a day after Moscow shunned any deal backed by Kyiv and its Western allies to end the almost two-year war. Ukraine's air defenses were able to intercept at least 21 of the missiles, however, the attacks injured at least 20 people in four districts of Kyiv, the capital.

Additional air defense systems and munitions for them remain a top need of Ukraine, Singh said Monday.

The Pentagon announced its last security assistance for Ukraine on December 27, a USD 250 million package that included 155 mm rounds, Stinger anti-aircraft missiles and other high-demand items drawn from existing US stockpiles.

## Death toll in landslide in SW China rises to 31

AP ■ BEIJING/KUNMING

The death toll from a landslide that struck southwest China's mountainous Yunnan province has climbed to 31, with scores of others still missing, local authorities said on Tuesday. Thirty-one people were confirmed dead after a landslide struck a village in Zhenxiang County, southwest China's Yunnan Province on Monday, state-run CGTN reported quoting local authorities.

The landslide occurred in Liangshui village in Zhaotong city on Monday morning, trapping a total of 47 people. Situated in the cold mountainous region of the province, where snow persists for days, the rescue site remains covered in a thick layer of snow.

More than 1,000 rescue workers equipped with 45 res-

cue dogs and 120 vehicles, including excavators, loaders and transport vehicles, were carrying out search and rescue work at the site.

As many as 33 firefighting vehicles and 10 loading machines were also mobilised to search for the missing.

The government has also deployed the military and militias for the rescue operation. A total of 104 militia members in Zhenxiang County were also mobilised. The Ministry of Emergency Management upgraded the emergency response level to the second-highest level from the Level-III emergency response for disaster relief activated by the Provincial Commission for Disaster Reduction immediately after the landslide.

The ministry dispatched teams to the disaster-hit area to guide the rescue and relief

work, according to the state-run Xinhua news agency.

The Chinese government has allocated funds totalling 50 million Yuan (about USD 7 million) to support disaster relief and emergency rescue work focusing on search and rescue, the relocation of affected people, secondary disaster detection, the repair of damaged homes, and other areas, the report said.

Preliminary investigation by an expert group determined that the landslide was triggered by the collapse of a steep cliff-top area, said Wu Junyao, Director of the Natural Resources and Planning Bureau of Zhaotong.

The collapsed mass was approximately 100 metres wide and 60 metres tall, with an average thickness of around 6 metres, the report quoted him as saying.

## 7.1 magnitude earthquake rattles China, 6 injured

AP ■ BEIJING

A magnitude 7.1 earthquake struck a sparsely populated part of China's western Xinjiang region early on Tuesday, injuring six people and damaging or collapsing more than 120 homes in freezing cold weather, authorities said. The quake was the latest in a series of seismic events and natural disasters to hit the vast country's western regions.

The quake rocked Uchturpan county in Aksu prefecture shortly after 2 a.m., the China Earthquake Networks Centre said. Around 200 rescuers were dispatched to the epicentre. The county is called Wushi in the Mandarin language spoken by most Chinese. Of the six people hurt, two had serious injuries and four were minor. In addition, 47 houses collapsed, 78 houses were damaged and some agricultural structures collapsed, the government of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region posted on its official Weibo social media account. The quake downed power lines but electricity was quickly restored, Aksu authorities reported.

Mountainous Uchturpan county had around 233,000 people in 2022, according to Xinjiang authorities. Urumqi Railroad Bureau resumed services after 7 a.m. following safety checks that confirmed no problems on the train lines. The suspension had affected 23 trains, the bureau serving the Xinjiang capital said on its official Weibo account. The US Geological Survey said the quake measured 7.0 magnitude and occurred in the seismically active Tian Shan mountain range. It said the area's largest quake in the past century was 7.1 magnitude and occurred in 1978 about 200 kilometres to the north of one early Tuesday. Multiple aftershocks were recorded, the strongest of them at 5.3 magnitude. The rural area is populated mostly by Uyghurs, a Turkic ethnicity that is predominantly Muslim and has been the tar-

get of a state campaign of forced assimilation and mass detention. The region is heavily militarised and state broadcaster CCTV showed paramilitary troops moving in before dawn to clear rubble and set up tents for those displaced.

Uchturpan county is recording temperatures well below freezing, with lows down to negative 18 degrees C (just below zero F) forecast by the China Meteorological Administration this week.

In Yunnan province in China's southwest, rescue workers were still searching for victims buried by a landslide Monday in the village of Liangshui. Eleven bodies have been recovered, and two survivors were rescued from among the 47 people buried in 18 homes in freezing cold and falling snow. The tremors from Tuesday's earthquake were felt hundreds of kilometres away. Ma Shengyi, a 30-year-old pet shop owner living in Tacheng, 600 kilometres from the epicentre, said her dogs started barking before she felt her apartment building shudder. The quake was so strong her neighbours ran downstairs. Ma rushed to her bathroom and started to cry.

"There's no point in running away if it's a big earthquake," Ma said. "I was scared to death."

Chandeliers swung, buildings were evacuated and a media office building near the epicentre shook for a full minute, the official Xinhua News Agency reported. A video posted by a Chinese internet user on Weibo showed residents standing outside on the streets bundled in winter jackets, and a photo posted by CCTV showed a cracked wall with chunks fall off.

Tremors were felt across the Xinjiang region and in the neighboring countries Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. In the Kazakh capital of Almaty, people left their homes, the Russian news agency Tass reported. In both Xinjiang and Kazakhstan, classes were suspended to allow children to recover from the shock.

## NATO signs key artillery ammunition contract

AP ■ BRUSSELS

NATO signed on Tuesday a USD 1.2-billion contract to make tens of thousands of artillery rounds to replenish the dwindling stocks of its member countries as they supply ammunition to Ukraine to help it defeat Russia's invasion.

The contract will allow for the purchase of 220,000 rounds of 155-millimeter ammunition, the most widely sought after artillery shell, according to NATO's support and procurement agency. It will allow allies to backfill their arsenals and to provide Ukraine with more ammunition.

"This is important to defend our own territory, to build up our own stocks, but also to continue to support Ukraine," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg told reporters.

"We cannot allow President (Vladimir) Putin to win in Ukraine," he added.

"That would be a tragedy for the Ukrainians and dangerous for all of us." Ukraine was firing around 4,000 to 7,000 artillery shells each day last summer, while Russia was launching more than 20,000 shells daily in its neighbour's territory, according to European Union estimates.

Russia's arms industry far outweighs Ukraine's and Kyiv needs help to match Moscow's firepower.

But the shells will not arrive quickly — delivery on orders takes anywhere from 24 to 36 months, the NATO agency said.

The European Union plans to produce 1 million artillery rounds for Ukraine have fallen short, with only about a third of the target met.

Senior EU officials have said that they now expect the European defense industry to be producing around one million shells annually by the end of this year.

## 'Ram temple consecration proud moment for Hindus'

Kathmandu (PTI): Nepal foreign minister N P Saud has said that the consecration of the Ram temple in Ayodhya is a "proud moment for all the followers of Sanatana Dharma" and Lord Ram and Mata Sita symbolise the profound cultural and civilisational linkages between India and the Himalayan nation. In a late night post on X on Monday, Saud said, "Maryada Purushottam Sri Rama and Mata Sita, daughter of Nepal, were the epitomes of courage, sacrifice, justice and righteousness." "Jay Shree Ram! Inauguration of Ram Mandir by Honorable Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi Ji and accomplishment of sacred Prana Pratishtha ceremony is a proud moment for all the followers of Sanatan Dharma," he wrote, sharing a picture of the Ram Lalla idol.

## International journalists to cover Feb 8 elections

Islamabad: International observers and journalists would monitor and cover the February 8 general elections in Pakistan and the government is processing over 170 requests, including two dozen from India, Caretaker Information Minister Murtaza Solangi said on Tuesday.

"As many as 49 visas had been issued so far to foreign journalists while 32 were currently under process. Our High Commission in New Delhi has received around 24 requests that are also under process. The total requests received from various outlets are 174," Solangi told a news conference here. Dawn.com reported that the information minister said in case of international observers, 25 applications from Britain, eight from the Russia, 13 from Japan, five from Canadian parliamentarians, two from South Africa, and five requests from Commonwealth nations were also being processed. Solangi also regretted that some people

were spreading rumours that no international observers or journalists were visiting Pakistan to cover the elections. "He said that those spreading such rumours were of the view that 'we will conduct a burqa-clad election' (but) 'There is no truth in it'," the Dawn quoted him as saying.

The accreditation cards issued to foreign journalists and international observers were only restricted to Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad, the Minister said adding, "But if any foreigner wants to visit any other city, it is being processed on a case-to-case basis."

Soon after the general elections were announced in October 2023, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had asked the Foreign Office to take all necessary steps to invite international observers for the elections. Later that month, the electoral watchdog had extended an invitation to international observers, the Dawn.com said. PTI

## Chinese vessel permitted to dock: Maldives

Male (PTI): A Chinese ship, equipped to carry research and surveys, will be docking at a Maldivian port after being permitted by the Male government to make a port call for replenishment.

The permission to allow the Chinese ship comes amid strains in ties between India and Maldives after its new President Mohamed Muizzu came to power and made Beijing as his first port of call early this month after assuming office. Traditionally, New Delhi has been the first port of call for a Maldivian President.

In a statement on Tuesday, the Maldivian Foreign Ministry said a diplomatic request was made by the Chinese government for the necessary clearances to make a port call, for rotation of personnel and replenishment. The statement, however, said the Chinese Research Vessel Xiang Yang Hong 3, will "not be conducting any research while in the Maldivian waters".

## SL Parliament votes to debate online safety bill

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's Parliament on Tuesday voted to go ahead with a scheduled debate on a controversial Online Safety Bill that critics say will stifle freedom of speech.

Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena had called for a vote to decide if the two-day debate should proceed. Out of 225 legislators, 83 voted in favour of holding the debate while 50 voted against it. The Opposition parties had sought more time for consultations on the bill.

Opposition MPs and other critics have warned that the Online Safety Bill could be a threat to freedom of speech. Tiran Alles, the public security minister, while opening the debate said the Supreme Court had suggested amendments to the bill and they would be incorporated after the bill is approved in parliament

on Wednesday. As Alles was speaking, a civil group demonstrated near Parliament to oppose the bill.

They said the government aims to censor the expression of public opinion through social media.

The bill aims to establish the Online Safety Commission, make provisions to prohibit online communication of certain statements of fact in Sri Lanka and prevent the use of online accounts and inauthentic online accounts for restricted purposes. It also makes provisions to identify and declare online locations used for prohibited purposes in the island nation, suppress the financing, and other support of communication of false statements of fact.

The Asian Internet Coalition (AIC) in a letter to Alles had objected to the bill. "The proposed legislation,

## Group of SL Tamil leaders seek Indian intervention in implementation of 13A

PTI ■ COLOMBO

A group of Sri Lankan Tamil legislators has sought India's intervention to ensure that Colombo fully implements the New Delhi-mooted 13th Amendment, which provides for the devolution of power to the minority community, a source here said on Tuesday.

The group led by the veteran politician R Sampanthan met India's new High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, Santosh Jha, on Monday, said the source from the Tamil National Alliance, which represents Sri Lanka's Tamil minority. The two-hour-long talks were centred on the 13A, which created the provincial councils system for the island nation's nine provinces. The Tamil parties pointed out the need for India's intervention in the current Sri Lankan political context for the meaningful devolution of power, the source said. They also highlighted the issue of the Tamil

political prisoners and the Tamil land grabbing by the state.

India has been pressing Sri Lanka to implement the 13th Amendment brought in after the Indo-Sri Lankan agreement of 1987. The 13A provides for the devolution of power to the Tamil community. The 13A became a part of Sri Lanka's constitution in 1987 through the direct intervention of the then-Indian government led by prime minister Rajiv Gandhi as part of the Indo-Lanka Accord. President Ranil Wickremesinghe has held talks with Tamil political parties for the implementation of 13A without the police powers to the provinces. However, the proposal was shot down by the powerful Buddhist clergy, who have traditionally opposed any power-sharing proposals with the Tamil minority, claiming that the move could endanger the unitary state of Sri Lanka. Since the elimination of the

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the moderate Tamil leaders have called for a devolved solution within a united Sri Lanka. The LTTE, which fought for a Tamil homeland for nearly 30 years, had rejected the 13A.

They fought the Indian Army deployed as part of the Indo-Lanka Accord until they were fully withdrawn in 1990.

The current Tamil political parties are sceptical of the political will of the majority Sinhala to fully implement the 13A. The Tamils put forward their demand for autonomy since gaining independence from Britain in 1948, which, from the mid-70s, turned into a bloody armed conflict. Over the years, the Sri Lankan government has been aggressive against Tamilian groups following its war with LTTE, which collapsed in 2009 after the Sri Lankan Army killed its supreme leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran.

## Filipino fisherman asks Chinese coast guard to go away

AP ■ MANILA

A Filipino fishing boat captain protested on Tuesday the Chinese coast guard's aggression in the disputed South China Sea where he said Chinese officers drove him and his men away from a disputed shoal and ordered them to dump their catch back to sea. The face-to-face confrontation on January 12, which Filipino fisherman Joely Saligan and his men reported belatedly to Manila's coast guard after returning from the sea voyage, is testing efforts by China and Philippines to deescalate tensions in a potential Asian flash-point.

At a January 17 meeting in Shanghai, Beijing and Manila agreed to take steps to ease tensions after a year of high-seas territorial face offs between

their ships in the sea passage, one of the world's busiest. The hostilities have sparked fears of a major armed conflict that could involve Washington, Manila's longtime treaty ally.

The fishermen, led by Saligan, reported to the Philippine coast guard that Chinese coast guard personnel drove them away from the disputed Scarborough Shoal off the northwestern Philippines on January 12 and ordered them to dump their catch of fish and seashells back to the sea. The confrontation happened on a coral outcrop, which juts out of the high seas like an islet at low tide. Saligan and his men took a dinghy from their mother boat and went to collect seashells and fish for food during their sea voyage. However, five Chinese coast guard personnel, three of

them armed with steel batons, followed by boat, alighted on the islet and ordered the fishermen to leave.

One Chinese officer tried to confiscate the cell phone of a Filipino fisherman, who resisted by pushing away the officer's hand. Both sides were documenting the confrontation either with video cameras or cell phones, Saligan said.

"This is Philippine territory. Go away," Saligan said he told the Chinese coast guard personnel, who he said insisted that they leave the shoal immediately.

The Chinese did not speak and used hand gestures, he said. "They looked angry. They wanted us to return our catch to the sea," Saligan told a small group of journalists, including from The Associated Press, in Manila.



Sri Lankan social media activists hold placards with slogans against the proposed Online Safety Bill during a protest near the Parliament in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Tuesday. AP/PTI

in its present form, poses significant challenges that, if not addressed comprehensively,

could undermine the potential growth of Sri Lanka's digital economy," it said.

The vote on the parliamentary approval of the bill is to take place on Wednesday.



# Sunak's Rwanda migration bill suffers blow in Parl

AP ■ LONDON

The upper house of Britain's Parliament has urged the Conservative government not to ratify a migration treaty with Rwanda. It's a largely symbolic move, but signals more opposition to come for the stalled and contentious plan to send some asylum-seekers on a one-way trip to the African nation.

The House of Lords voted by 214 to 171 on Monday evening to delay the treaty that paves the way for the deportation plan. The treaty and an accompanying bill are the pillars of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's bid to overcome a block on the deportations by the UK Supreme Court.

Members of the Lords, who are appointed rather than elected, backed a motion saying Parliament should not ratify the pact until ministers can show Rwanda is safe.

John Kerr, a former diplomat who sits in the Lords, said the Rwanda plan was "incompatible with our responsibilities" under international human rights law.

"The considerations of international law and national reputation... convince me that it wouldn't be right to ratify this



treaty at any time," he said.

The vote has little practical impact, because the House of Lords can't block an international treaty, and the government says it will not delay. However, ignoring the demand could later be used against the government in a legal challenge.

Lawmakers in the House of Commons approved the bill last week, but only after 60 members of Sunak's governing Conservatives rebelled in an effort to make the legislation

tougher.

Monday's vote indicates the strength of opposition in the House of Lords. Many there want to water down the bill — and, unlike in the Commons, the governing Conservatives do not have a majority of seats.

The Lords will begin debating the bill next week. Ultimately the upper house can delay and amend legislation but can't overrule the elected Commons.

The Rwanda policy is key

to Sunak's pledge to "stop the boats" bringing unauthorised migrants to the UK across the English Channel from France. Sunak argues that deporting unauthorised asylum-seekers will deter people from making risky journeys across the English Channel and break the business model of people-smuggling gangs.

London and Kigali made a deal almost two years ago under which migrants who reach Britain across the Channel would be sent to Rwanda, where they would stay permanently. Britain has paid Rwanda at least 240 million pounds (\$305 million) under the agreement, but no one has yet been sent to the East African country.

Human rights groups have criticised the plan as inhumane and unworkable. After it was challenged in British courts, the UK Supreme Court ruled in November that the policy was illegal because Rwanda isn't a safe country for refugees.

In response to the court ruling, Britain and Rwanda signed a treaty pledging to strengthen protections for migrants. Sunak's government argues the treaty allows it to pass a law declaring Rwanda a safe destination.

Human rights groups have criticised the plan as inhumane and unworkable. After it was challenged in British courts, the UK Supreme Court ruled in November that the policy was illegal because Rwanda isn't a safe country for refugees.

# 21 Israeli soldiers killed in deadly attack

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Twenty-one soldiers were killed in the Gaza Strip in the deadliest attack on Israel's forces since the October 7 Hamas raid that triggered the war, the military said on Tuesday, a major setback that could add to mounting calls for a cease-fire. Hours later, the military announced that ground forces had encircled the southern city of Khan Younis, Gaza's second largest, where dozens of Palestinians have been killed and wounded in heavy fighting in recent days.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu mourned the soldiers but vowed to press ahead with the offensive until "absolute victory" over Hamas. He has also promised to return over 100 hostages held captive in Gaza. But Israelis are increasingly divided on the question of whether it's possible to do either, and large numbers of Israeli casualties have pressured Israel's government to halt past military operations.

A senior Egyptian official meanwhile said Israel has proposed a two-month cease-fire in which the hostages would be freed in exchange for the release of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel and top Hamas leaders in Gaza would be allowed to relocate to other countries.

The official, who was not authorised to brief media and spoke on condition of

anonymity, said Hamas rejected the proposal and is insisting that no more hostages will be released until Israel ends its offensive and withdraws from Gaza. Israel's government declined to comment on the talks. The official said Egypt and Qatar, which have brokered past agreements between Israel and Hamas, were developing a multistage proposal to try and bridge the gaps. Families of the hostages have called for Israel to reach a deal with Hamas, saying time is running out to bring the hostages home alive.

On Monday, Israeli reservists were preparing explosives to demolish two buildings in central Gaza when a militant fired a rocket-propelled grenade at a tank nearby. The blast triggered the explosives, causing both two-story buildings to collapse on the soldiers inside.

At least 217 soldiers have been killed since the ground offensive began in late October, including three killed in a separate event Monday, according to the military.

Netanyahu acknowledged it was "one of the hardest days" since the war began and said the military would launch an investigation. "In the name of our heroes, and for our own lives, we will not stop fighting until absolute victory," he wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter. Israel launched its offensive after Hamas crossed the border October 7, killed over 1,200

people and abducted some 250 others. More than 100 were released in November in exchange for a weeklong cease-fire and the release of 240 Palestinians imprisoned by Israel.

The offensive has caused widespread destruction, displaced an estimated 85 per cent of Gaza's population and left over 25,000 Palestinians dead, according to health officials in the Hamas-run territory. The United Nations and international aid agencies say the fighting has caused a humanitarian disaster, with a quarter of Gaza's 2.3 million people facing starvation. The war has heightened regional tensions, with Iran-backed groups in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Yemen attacking United States and Israeli targets in support of Palestinians. The US and Britain launched another wave of strikes Monday against the Houthi rebels in Yemen, who have targeted international shipping in the Red Sea in what they portray as a blockade of Israel.

## DEADLY FIGHTING IN THE CENTER AND SOUTH

Hamas is believed to have suffered heavy losses but has continued to put up stiff resistance in the face of one of the deadliest air and ground offensives in recent history.

Militants are still battling Israeli forces across the territo-

ry and launching rockets into Israel.

The attack that killed the soldiers occurred some 600 metres from the border in Maghazi, one of three built-up refugee camps in central Gaza dating back to the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation.

Ground operations have been focused on the camps, as well as Khan Younis, after Israel claimed to have largely defeated Hamas in northern Gaza in operations that caused widespread destruction to that part of the territory, including Gaza City.

The military said its forces had killed dozens of militants in Khan Younis in recent days and had managed to encircle the city. It did not provide evidence, and it was not possible to independently confirm details about the fighting there. Israel believes Hamas commanders may be hiding in vast tunnel complexes beneath Khan Younis, the hometown of the group's top leader in Gaza, Yehya Sinwar, whose location is unknown. Hamas leaders are also believed to be using hostages as human shields, further complicating any rescue efforts. Gaza's internet and phone networks collapsed again Monday for the 10th time during the war, posing another challenge for first responders and making it impossible for people to reach loved ones in different parts of the territory.

# US, UK launch new round of joint strikes against Houthis

Washington (AP): The US and British militaries bombed multiple targets in eight locations used by the Iranian-backed Houthis in Yemen on Monday night, the second time the two allies have conducted coordinated retaliatory strikes on an array of the rebels' missile-launching capabilities.

According to officials, the US and UK used warship- and submarine-launched Tomahawk missiles and fighter jets to take out Houthi missile storage sites, drones and launchers. The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a military operation, said Australia, Bahrain, Canada and the Netherlands contributed to the mission, including with intelligence and surveillance.

In a joint statement, the six allied nations said the strikes specifically targeted a Houthi underground storage site and locations associated with the Houthis' missile and air surveillance capabilities. They added, "Our aim remains to de-escalate tensions and restore stability in the Red Sea, but let us reiterate our warning to Houthi leadership: we will not hesitate to defend lives and the free flow of commerce in one of the world's most critical waterways in the face of continued threats."

Britain's Ministry of Defense confirmed that four Royal Air Force Typhoon jets struck "multiple targets at two military sites in the vicinity of Sanaa airfield" with precision-guided bombs. The strikes, said Defense Secretary Grant Shapps, were "aimed at degrading Houthi capabilities" and would "deal another blow to their limited stockpiles and ability to threaten global trade."

One senior US military official told reporters the strikes dropped between 25 and 30 munitions and hit multiple targets in each location, adding that the US "observed good impacts and effects" at all sites, including the destruction of more advanced weapons in the underground storage facility. The official said this is the first time such advanced weapons were targeted.

The official also said fighter jets from the USS Dwight D Eisenhower aircraft carrier conducted strikes, and other ships involved included the USS Gravelly and USS Mason, both naval destroyers, and the USS Philippine Sea, a cruiser.

The joint operation comes about 10 days after US and British warships and fighter jets struck more than 60 targets in 28 locations. That was the first U.S. military response to what has been a persistent campaign of Houthi drone and missile attacks on commercial ships since the start of the Israel-Hamas war in October.

The Houthis' media office said in an online statement Monday that raids targeted Sanaa, Yemen's capital. And Jamal Hassan, a resident from south Sanaa, told The Associated Press that two strikes landed near his home, setting off car alarms in the street. An Associated Press journalist in Sanaa also heard aircraft flying above the skies of Sanaa overnight Monday.

# Canada announces 2-year cap on int'l student visas

Ottawa (PTI): Canada has announced that it is imposing an immediate two-year cap on new international student visas to tackle a housing crisis and target institutional "bad actors", a move that is likely to impact Indians planning to study in the country.

Immigration Minister Marc Miller said as part of the cap there will be a 35 per cent reduction in new student visas in 2024. The cap is expected to result in 364,000 new approved permits in 2024. Nearly 560,000 such visas were issued last year. The cap will be in place for two years; the number of permits to be issued in 2025 will be reassessed at the end of this year, he said.

"To maintain a sustainable level of temporary residence in Canada, as well to ensure that there is no further growth in the number of international students in Canada for 2024, we are setting a national application intake cap for two years from 2024," Global News quoted Miller as saying.

The move comes amid

pressure on the federal government from provinces on the increasing numbers of non-permanent residents entering Canada while the country struggles with a housing crisis, CBC News said.

Miller earlier this month said that a cap on international students would not be a "one-size-fits-all solution" to housing shortages across Canada. More than 800,000 international students were issued temporary study visas in 2022. Miller said last fall that 2023's numbers were on track to be more than triple the number accepted 10 years ago.

The move is expected to impact students from India who see Canada as a preferred destination for higher studies. India was the first among the top ten origin countries of study permit holders in 2022 in Canada, with a total of 319,000 students.

Miller said that by imposing the cap, the federal government is taking action against some small private

# Trump seeks control of GOP primary in New Hampshire after Haley

Manchester (AP): Donald Trump is aiming for a commanding victory on Tuesday in New Hampshire, securing a sweep of the first two Republican primary races that would make a November rematch with President Joe Biden look more likely than ever.

The biggest question is whether Trump's last major rival, former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley, will be able to eat into his margin — or pull off an upset outright. Haley has dedicated significant time and financial resources to New Hampshire, hoping to appeal to its famously independent-minded electorate. In the first results released early on Tuesday, all six registered voters of tiny Dixville Notch cast their ballots for Haley over Trump. The resort town is the only one in New Hampshire this year that opted to vote at midnight.

Trump won New Hampshire's Republican primary big during his

first run for president in 2016, but some of his allies lost key races during the midterms two years ago. Haley also has to contend with an opponent who has a deep bond with the GOP base and has concentrated on winning the state decisively enough that it would effectively end the competitive phase of the Republican primary. If successful, Trump would be the first Republican presidential candidate to win open races in Iowa and New Hampshire since both states began leading the election calendar in 1976 — a clear sign of his continued grip on the party's most-loyal voters. Trump's allies are already pressuring Haley to leave the race and those calls will intensify if the wins New Hampshire easily. Were she to drop out, that would effectively decide the GOP primary on its second stop, well before the vast majority of Republican voters across the country have been able to vote.

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**e tenders are hereby invited for the purchase and supply of following items:-**

Sr. No.	Name of Work/Item	Period/Tentative Qty
1.	Verka Head Office, Chandigarh Glucosin Delta Lactone (GDL)	Annual/19 MT
2.	Verka CPP, Bhatiana (Khanna) Purchase of cattle feed ingredients - De-oiled Rice Bran	Feb 2024-oct.2024

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

Dy. General Manager (Purchase)

**PARIJAT PAPER MILLS LIMITED**  
CIN: L21012UP1989PLC010589  
Reg. Off: 10.6 Km StoneBhopa Road, Vill-Jat Muljhera, Muzaffarnagar - 251308, (U.P)  
Website: [www.parijatpapermills.com](http://www.parijatpapermills.com), Email: [parijatpapermills@yahoo.com](mailto:parijatpapermills@yahoo.com)

**EXTRACT OF STANDALONE AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED 31ST DEC, 2023** (Rs. in Lacs)

Sr. No.	PARTICULARS	Current/	Year	Corresponding
		Quarter	Ended	3 months
		Year ending	Figures	ended in the
		31.12.2023	31.12.2023	previous year
		(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)
1.	Total income from operations (Net)	2525.27	7680.52	3181.26
2.	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extra ordinary items)	-27.83	263.04	122.79
3.	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	-27.83	263.04	122.79
4.	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	-30.98	214.52	103.63
5.	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit/(Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after Tax)]	-30.98	214.52	103.63
6.	Equity share capital (Face value Rs. 10/- each)	329.00	329.00	329
7.	[Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserves) as shown in the Audited Balance Sheet of the previous year	1051.46	1051.46	817.47
8.	Earnings per share (of Rs. 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations)	0.94	6.52	3.15
	a) Basic			
	b) Diluted			

**Notes:**  
1. The above results were reviewed by an audit Committee and thereafter taken on record by the Board of Directors in their meeting held on 23rd January 2024  
2. The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly/annual financial results filed with the stock exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the quarterly & year to date financial results are available on the Stock Exchange website ([www.mseai.in](http://www.mseai.in)) and the company's website ([www.parijatpapermills.com](http://www.parijatpapermills.com)).

For and on behalf of  
**Parijat Paper Mills Limited**  
Sd/-  
**Amit Mittal**  
Whole Time Director  
DIN:00754471

Date: 23.01.2024  
Place: Muzaffarnagar

# Iran executes another prisoner detained during 2022 protests

Dubai (AP): Iran on Tuesday hanged another prisoner over crimes committed during nationwide protests that erupted in 2022 following the death of a young woman detained for improperly wearing her headscarf.

According to a report on state television, Mohammad Qobadlu was executed after being sentenced for killing a policeman and injuring five others after he ran them over in his car during a rally in the town of Parand, near the capital of Tehran.

The TV report said the 23-year-old Qobadlu, who had confessed to his crime, had access to a lawyer during the trial. Qobadlu had appealed his death sentence, handed down by a lower court, but the Supreme Court later upheld the original verdict.

Qobadlu's execution was the ninth reported by the authorities since the protests started in the fall of 2022, according to a count by The Associated Press.

**Tender Notice BELONGING TO JINDAL ECOTEX LLP-3D & MINK PLANT**

**Affected factory at Near Karnal Estate, Batra Colony, PANIPAT-132103 (HARYANA)**

Period of inspection of damaged items	23.01.2024 to 31.01.2024 from 11.00 am to 6.00 pm
Contact person	Shri Luv Singla 9896232360
Last date & time of submission of tender document	By 1.00 pm on 02.02.2024
Date of opening of tender document	2.30 pm on 02.02.2024
Expected Minimum Price	Rs.50 to 65 lacs

**Cost of the Tender document would be Rs1000/- to be paid either in cash or in DD**

Sealed Tenders are invited from intending buyers for the disposal, strictly on "as-is-where-is" basis with all defects of Damaged Salvage (Referred as "Damaged Items") of **Burnt and melted textile machinery, electrical cables, electrical items, soot affected fabric and water and fire affected polyester yarn belonging to 3D & Mink division and lying at our Factory JINDAL ECOTEX LLP, at 96/24, NEAR NAVDEEP DHARAM KANTA, PACKI PHATAK, KABRI ROAD, PANIPAT-132103 (HARYANA)**

Tenders to be submitted on or before **02.02.2024 by 1.00 pm to THE COMMERCIAL HEAD at JINDAL ECOTEX LLP, at 96/24, NEAR NAVDEEP DHARAM KANTA, PACKI PHATAK, KABRI ROAD, PANIPAT- 132103 (HARYANA)**. Under no circumstances, tender forms will be accepted after this date. Tenders will be opened on 02.02.2024 at 2.30 p.m.

**SRF LIMITED**

Regd. Office: The Galleria, DLF Mayur Vihar, Unit No. 236 & 237, 2nd Floor, Mayur Vihar Phase, Noida Link Road, Mayur Vihar Phase I Extn, Delhi-110091

Corporate Office: Block-C, Sector 45, Gurugram, Haryana-122 003

Tel. No (Regd office) : (+91-11) 49482870; Fax : (+91-11) 49482900

E-mail: [cs@srf.com](mailto:cs@srf.com), Website: [www.srf.com](http://www.srf.com); CIN: L18101DL1970PLC005197

**NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given that Share Certificates pertaining to shares of the Company detailed below have been reported lost and request(s) for issue of duplicate Certificates in lieu thereof have been received by the Company :-

Sl. No.	Folio No.	Name of the Share Holder / Legal Heir (Claimant)	Cert-No.	Dist-No.	Lost Shares
1	S 0003001	SUDESH KAPUR	1124406	307924954-7129	2176
			90079916-18	9353610-709	100
2	S 0007750	SAROJINI BAIJAL	342375-78	16562083-2194	112
			491375-78	24581875-1986	112
			380774-76	17229832-54	23
3	SRF0042470	SHRAWAN KUMAR	529774-76	25249624-46	23
			1130811	310339926-40269	344
			90088870	9626806-45	40
			1129902	309968258-567	400
			90065583-85	89204486-585	100

Any person having any claim /objection in respect of the above requests should lodge such claim/objection with the company at its Corporate Office within 15 days of the publication of this notice, failing which the company will consider to give effect to the above requests.

Public is hereby cautioned against dealing with the aforesaid share certificates.

for SRF LIMITED  
Sd/-  
**RAJAT LAKHANPAL**  
Sr. VP (Corporate Compliance) & Company Secretary

Place: Gurugram  
Date: 23-01-2024

**SAR TELEVENTURE LIMITED**  
CIN: U45202HR2019PLC080514  
Formerly Known as Sar Televnture Pvt. Ltd.  
Reg Off.: Plot No. 346 A, 2nd Floor, Udyog Vihar, Phase-4, Gurugram-122016 Haryana  
Contact: +91-8587050050, Email Id: [info@sartelevnture.com](mailto:info@sartelevnture.com)

**NOTICE OF 05/2023-24 EXTRA-ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING, E-VOTING INFORMATION**

In compliance with applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 ("Act") and rules made thereunder, Securities and Exchange Board of India ("SEBI") (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 read with General Circular Nos. 14/2020 dated April 8, 2020, 17/2020 dated April 13, 2020, 22/2020 dated June 15, 2020, 33/2020 dated September 28, 2020, 39/2020 dated December 31, 2020, 10/2021 dated June 23, 2021, Circular No. 20/2021 dated December 8, 2021, Circular No. 3/2022 dated May 5, 2022 and Circular No. 11/2022 dated December 28, 2022 (collectively the "MCA Circulars") and SEBI (HO/CFD/CMD1/CIR/P/2021/11 dated January 15, 2021, SEBI Circular No. SEBI/HO/CFD/CMD2/CIR/P/2021/61 dated May 13, 2022 and SEBI Circular No. SEBI/HO/CFD/PO-2/P/2023/4 dated January 5, 2023 (collectively referred as "SEBI Circulars") (MCA Circulars and SEBI Circulars collectively referred as "Circulars"), NOTICE is hereby given that the **05/2023-24 EXTRA-ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING** of the Members of SAR Televnture Limited formerly known as **SAR Televnture Private Limited** ("Company") will be held on **Thursday, February 15, 2024 at 03.00 P.M. (IST)** through Video Conferencing/Other Audio Visual Means ("VC/OAVM"), without the physical presence of the Members at the EGM, to transact the business as set out in the EGM Notice. Members attending the EGM through VC/OAVM shall be reckoned for the purpose of quorum under Section 103 of the Act.

In compliance with the Circulars, EGM Notice has been sent only through electronic mode to those Members whose email ids are registered with the Company/Registrar and Transfer Agent (RTA)/Depository Participant ("DP"). The emailing of EGM Notice to all members has been completed on 23rd February, 2024. The aforesaid documents are also available on the Company's website at [www.sartelevnture.com](http://www.sartelevnture.com) website of the Stock Exchange i.e. NSE Limited at [www.nseindia.com](http://www.nseindia.com), and on the website of National Securities Depository Limited ("NSDL") at [www.evoting.nsdl.com](http://www.evoting.nsdl.com).

**Manner of registering / updating email address, mobile number and bank account mandate**

Members whose email ids are already registered with the Company/RTA/DP, may follow the instructions for remote e-Voting as well as e-Voting at EGM as provided in the EGM Notice. Members who have not registered their email ids, are requested to register the same for receiving all communications including Notices etc. from the Company electronically as per process mentioned below:-

- Members holding Equity Shares of the Company in physical mode are requested to provide a duly signed Form ISR-1 along with supporting documents to the Company's Registrar and Share Transfer Agent-Skyline Financial Services Private Limited, either at their office at Skyline Financial Services Private Limited, D-153/A, 1st Floor, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-I, New Delhi-110020, Tel: 011-40450193-97; or by e-mail at [admin@skylinefra.com](mailto:admin@skylinefra.com). The said form is available on the website of the Company at [www.sartelevnture.com](http://www.sartelevnture.com)
- Members holding Equity Shares of the Company in dematerialised form are requested to register / update their email address, mobile number and bank account details with their relevant depositories through their depository participants.

**Instructions for remote E-Voting and E-Voting during EGM**

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 108 of the Act read with Rule 20 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014, as amended from time to time, and Regulation 44 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 ("Listing Regulations"), Members will be provided with the facility to cast their vote electronically through the remote e-Voting facility (before the EGM) and e-Voting facility (at the EGM), on all the resolutions set forth in EGM Notice. The facility of casting votes will be provided by NSDL. Facility for e-Voting at the EGM will be made available to those Members who are present in the EGM through VC/OAVM facility and have not cast their vote on the resolutions through remote e-Voting. The Members who have cast their vote by remote e-Voting prior to the EGM may also attend/ participate in the EGM through VC/OAVM but shall not be eligible to vote at the EGM. All the Members are informed that:

- The business as set forth in the EGM Notice will be transacted through voting by electronic means in the form of e-Voting.
- The voting rights of member(s) shall be in proportion to their shares in the paid up equity share capital of the Company as on the cut-off date i.e. Thursday, February 8, 2024. A person whose name is recorded in the register of members or in the register of beneficial owners maintained by the depositories as on the cut-off date, i.e. Thursday, February 8, 2024 only shall be entitled to vote through remote e-Voting/e-Voting at the EGM.
- Any person who acquires shares of the Company and becomes member of the Company after sending the notice of the EGM and holding shares as on cut-off date i.e. Thursday, February 8, 2024, may obtain the User ID and password by sending an email to [evoting@nsdl.co.in](mailto:evoting@nsdl.co.in) or [info@skylinefra.com](mailto:info@skylinefra.com) by mentioning their Folio No./DP ID and Client ID. However, if a person is already registered with NSDL for remote e-Voting then existing user ID and password can be used for casting the votes.
- The remote e-Voting period commences at 09:00 A.M. (IST) on Monday, February 12, 2024 and ends at 05:00 P.M. (IST) on Wednesday, February 14, 2024. The remote e-Voting module shall be disabled by NSDL for voting thereafter. Once the vote on a resolution is cast by the Member, the Member shall not be allowed to change it subsequently.
- During this period, Members holding shares either in physical form or in dematerialized form may cast their vote by remote e-Voting before the EGM.
- The Members will be provided with the facility for e-Voting at the EGM and those Members participating at the EGM & who have not already cast their vote by remote e-Voting before the EGM, will be eligible to vote at the EGM.
- The Members who have cast their vote by remote e-Voting prior to the EGM may also attend/participate in the EGM through VC/OAVM, but shall not be eligible to vote again at the EGM.
- Detailed process and manner of remote e-Voting, e-Voting at the EGM and instructions for attending the EGM through VC/OAVM is being provided in the EGM Notice and also available on the Company's website at [www.sartelevnture.com](http://www.sartelevnture.com) and on the website of NSDL at [www.evoting.nsdl.com](http://www.evoting.nsdl.com)
- In case of any queries, you may refer the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Shareholders and e-voting user manual for Shareholders available at the download section of [www.evoting.nsdl.com](http://www.evoting.nsdl.com) or call toll free no. : 1800 1020 900 and 1800 2244 30 or send a request to NSDL at [evoting@nsdl.co.in](mailto:evoting@nsdl.co.in) who will also address the grievances connected with the voting by electronic means.
- The Board of Directors has appointed Ms. Lovleen Gupta (FCS No. 5287), Practising Company Secretary as "Scrutinizer" to scrutinize the process of e-voting during the EGM and remote e-voting held before the EGM in a fair and transparent manner.
- The Results shall be declared within two working days of the conclusion of the EGM and the same, along with the consolidated Scrutinizer's Report, shall be placed on the website of the Company at [www.sartelevnture.com](http://www.sartelevnture.com), NSDL at [www.evoting.nsdl.com](http://www.evoting.nsdl.com) and shall be communicated to NSE Limited at [www.nseindia.com](http://www.nseindia.com)

For SAR Televnture Limited  
(Formerly known as SAR Televnture Pvt Ltd)  
Sd/-  
**(Abhishek Jain)**  
Company Secretary & Compliance Officer

Dated: 24.01.2024  
Place: Gurgoan



# MoS IT: Meity to seek Cabinet nod for India AI programme entailing ₹10,000 crore investments

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Electronics and IT (Meity) will seek cabinet approval for the India AI program, which includes the setting up of GPU-based servers in public-private partnership mode with an outlay of over Rs 10,000 crore, Minister of Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar said on Tuesday.

Working groups formed by the government on Artificial Intelligence (AI) on Friday recommended setting up a three-tier compute infrastructure comprising 24,500 Graphics Processing Units (GPUs). "India AI program is worth over Rs 10,000 crore. It (the proposal) will be taken with cabinet for

approval," Chandrasekhar said on the sidelines of the inauguration of a semiconductor-focused software company Synopsys.

The minister said the AI program will be based on public-private partnership under which computer infrastructure capacity will be built both in private data centres as well as in data centres that are run by public firm CDAC.

The demand for GPU-based servers has increased as it can process data at higher speed compared to CPU-based servers.

At present, the US and China lead in computing infrastructure required for the development of AI technology.

According to Top 500 website,



top performing supercomputers are located in the US, Europe, Japan, China, South Korea, and Saudi Arabia where purchasing power parity is high.

As per the Top 500 list issued

in November 2022, China had 162 supercomputers, followed by the US with 127, while India has three.

According to industry estimates, NVIDIA dominates the GPU market with about 88 per

cent market share and there is a lag of 12-18 months in getting GPUs from the company due to its high demand across the globe.

The AI working groups have recommended setting up best-in-class AI compute infrastructure at five locations with 3,000 AI Petaflops computing power, with 15 times more capacity than the highest capacity installed at present.

The groups have recommended setting up an Inference Farm (2,500 AI PF) and Edge Compute (500 AI PF) systems.

The government has already spent Rs 1,218.14 crore in the last eight years to set up 24 Petaflops compute capacity under the National Supercomputing Mission.

# India coal production to touch 1 billion tonne for first time: Union Minister Joshi

PTI ■ BHOPAL

Union Minister for Coal and Mines Pralhad Joshi on Tuesday said for the first time, the country's coal production is going to cross 1 billion tonne. India is going to stop the import of substitutable coal from next year, Joshi said at the second State Mining Ministers' Conference here.

The union minister said there are going to be many difficulties in the coming days as the country will have to do gasification of coal.

"Along with these things (difficulties), as far as coal is concerned, this time we are going to cross production of one billion tonnes. This is happening for the first time... I am assuring the country that we are going to stop the import of all substitutable coal from next year," Joshi said.

According to him, like petroleum and natural gas, the mining ministry is also very important for the country's economy to grow and become the third largest in the world.



Further, he said that the mining revenue of Odisha was Rs 5,000 crore in 2013-14 and after the auction was resumed in 2018, it went up to Rs 25,000 crore.

When the Centre liberalised the policies and clearances, the revenue went up to Rs 49,000 crore in 2022-23, he added.

Joshi also said that the prime minister told him to remember that it is a 'sin' to import minerals which are available in the country.

Noting that the world order is changing, Joshi said, India will be at the forefront in the 21st century. The theme of the conference is 'Mining and Beyond', which had participants from prominent companies of mining, exploration, consultancies and startups. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav also addressed the gathering.

On the occasion, Madhya Pradesh was also given the 'Award of Appreciation' for securing first place in the mineral block auction in the country during 2022-23.

# BYJU operational loss widens to ₹6,679 crore on losses in White Hat Jr, Osmo

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Etech major Think and Learn, operating under brand BYJU'S, on Tuesday said its operational loss widened to Rs 6,679 crore in FY22, mainly due to losses incurred by subsidiaries White Hat Jr and Osmo.

Think and Learn posted an operational loss (EBITDA) of Rs 4,143 crore in FY 2021, the company said in a regulatory filing. Its revenue more than doubled to Rs 5,298.43 crore in FY22 from Rs 2,428.39 crore in FY21.

"Underperforming assets were primarily White Hat Jr (WHJ) and OSMO (Tangible Play), which amounts to 45 per cent of the losses at around Rs 3,800 crore," BYJU'S said.

Excluding WHJ and Palo Alto-based edtech start-up OSMO, BYJU'S recorded three-fold growth year-on-year in its total income in FY22.

BYJU'S subsidiaries Aakash and Great Learning grew 40 per cent and 77 per cent, respectively, immediately after the acquisition.

Aakash revenue increased by 40



per cent to Rs 1,491 crore in FY22 from Rs 1,065 crore in FY21.

Great Learning posted an 80 per cent rise in revenue to Rs 628 crore in FY22 against Rs 354 crore in the preceding fiscal.

The auditor observed that a material uncertainty exists that may cast significant doubt on the company's ability to continue as a going concern due to continuing net losses from operations and accumulated losses, in addition to the uncertainty related to the outcome of the litigation and its financial impact thereon in respect of the USD 1.2 billion

Term Loan B facility (TLB Loan) availed by BYJU'S Alpha Inc. However, based on a legal opinion, the management has shared its view that it is unlikely that the TLB loan will be required to be paid in the foreseeable future.

"The management has undertaken various measures to improve its operating financial condition, (and) is also in the process of securing necessary funding arrangements and exploring a sale of assets as needed, and hence is confident regarding the future viability of the company," the auditor note said.

# Investors wealth erodes by ₹8.50 lakh crore as markets tumble

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity investors became poorer by Rs 8.50 lakh crore on Tuesday as markets came under a bear attack, with the benchmark Sensex falling almost 1,053.10 points.

Equity benchmark index Sensex tumbled 1,053 points to close below the 71,000 level on Tuesday, dragged down by index heavyweights HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries and SBI amid mixed global cues.

Following the decline in the benchmark index, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies eroded by Rs 8,50,820.81 crore to Rs 3,65,97,915.97 crore.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies stood at Rs 3,74,48,736.78 crore on January 20.

Domestic equities opened on a positive note but soon drifted into red witnessing a huge sell-off amid profit booking, said Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd.

Global sentiments turned cautious after a Fitch Group statement that South Asian economies would be most affected, amid rising



hostilities in the Red Sea due to Houthi attacks and India's economic forecast faces a significant risk on account of a prolonged spell of disruptions, Khemka said.

Further, the Bank of Japan followed China and kept interest rates unchanged. Now investors are awaiting US GDP data due late today along with the European Central Bank rate decision due later this week. On the domestic front, this week is a truncated week with just three trading days.

Given weak global cues and mixed set of earnings released so far, the market is like-

ly to consolidate and may drop a little further till the next set of fresh positive triggers, Khemka added.

Among the Sensex firms, IndusInd Bank was the biggest loser and fell 6.13 per cent, followed by SBI (3.99 pc), Hindustan Unilever (3.82 pc), Axis Bank (3.41 pc) and HDFC Bank (3.23 pc).

Midcap and smallcap indices witnessed more decline compared to the benchmarks.

The S&P BSE MidCap fell 2.95 per cent to close at 37,247.84 and the midcap index settled 2.79 per cent

lower at 43,378.40. All the sectoral indices except healthcare settled with losses.

Realty and services indices fell the most by 5.46 per cent and 4.06 per cent, respectively. While metal declined 3.97 per cent, oil & gas lowered 3.96 per cent and energy went down by 3.70 per cent. Commodities, FMCG, financial services and capital goods were other laggards.

On the other hand, the healthcare index rose 1.02 per cent.

A total of 2,991 stocks declined while 938 advanced and 138 remained unchanged.



# REC net profit rises 13.5 per cent in Q3

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned REC Ltd on Tuesday posted about 13.5 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to Rs 3,308.42 crore for the December 2023 quarter, mainly on the back of higher revenues.

Its consolidated net profit was Rs 2,915.33 crore in the quarter ended December 2022, a BSE filing showed.

The total income rose to Rs 12,071.54 crore in the quarter from Rs 9,795.47 crore in the same period a year ago.

The board, in its meeting on Tuesday, also approved the incorporation of a project-specific special purpose vehicle as a wholly-owned subsidiary of REC Power Development & Consultancy Limited (a wholly-owned subsidiary of REC Ltd) for the selection of a successful bidder as Transmission Service Provider (TSP) for Eastern Region Expansion Scheme-XXXIX project allocated by the Ministry of Power through tariff based competitive bidding process.

Besides, it also approved the sale and transfer of the entire shareholding of six subsidiaries (power transmission projects), presently held by REC Power Development and Consultancy Limited (RECPDCL) to the successful bidders selected through a tariff-based competitive bidding process.

RECPDCL is a nodal agency for conducting tariff-based bidding of power transmission projects in the country.

These six projects are Dhule Power Transmission Ltd, Bidar Transmission Ltd, Siker Khetri Transmission Ltd, Pachora Power Transmission Ltd, Karera Power Transmission Ltd and Ishanagar Power Transmission Ltd.

# Gold rises ₹100; silver jumps ₹200

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices increased Rs 100 to Rs 63,250 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday amid a jump in precious metal prices globally, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous session, the yellow metal had settled at Rs 63,150 per 10 grams.

Silver also rose Rs 200 to Rs 75,700 per kilogram. It had closed at Rs 75,500 per kg in the previous trade.

"Spot gold prices (24 carats) in the Delhi markets are trading at Rs 63,250/10 grams, up by Rs 100, amid recovery in the overseas markets," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst-Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

In the international markets, gold and silver were trading higher at USD 2,028 per ounce and USD 22.24 per ounce, respectively.

Due to the unrest in the Middle East, safe haven buying helped gold prices trade slightly higher on Tuesday, Gandhi added.

# Government may announce steps to promote, make NPS more attractive

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government may make the National Pension System (NPS) more attractive by extending tax concessions on contributions and withdrawals especially for senior citizens above 75 years.

Pension fund regulator PFRDA has sought 'parity' with Employees' Provident Fund Office (EPFO) on the taxation front for contributions by employers and some announcements in this regard are expected to be made in the interim Budget.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is expected to present the interim Budget on February 1. This is going to be her sixth Budget.

At present, there is a disparity in the employers' contributions in building corpus for the employees, wherein contributions up to 10 per cent of basic salary and dearness allowances by a corporate are exempt from tax for

NPS contributions, while the same is 12 per cent in the case of EPFO.

To promote long-term savings through NPS and reduce the tax burdens for senior citizens above 75 years, the annuity portion of the NPS should be made tax free for the holders from the age of 75 years, according to Deloitte Budget expectations.

Moreover, NPS can be included along with interest and pension to ensure that senior citizens above 75 years of age do not have to file returns if they have NPS proceeds, it said.

At present the lump-sum withdrawal of 60 per cent is tax free. There is also clamour for providing tax breaks for NPS contributions under the new tax regime.

As of now, an individual's contribution of up to Rs 50,000 to the NPS under Section 80CCD (1B) as deduction under the old tax regime but not under the new tax regime.

This is over and above Rs 1.5

lakh tax relief provided under Section 80C in the old tax regime.

With regard to government employees, the government last year set up a committee under Finance Secretary T V Somanathan to review the pension system and suggest measures for its betterment.

The report of the panel is still awaited.

The committee would suggest whether in the light of the existing framework and structure of the National Pension System (NPS), as applicable to government employees, any changes therein are warranted.

As per its terms of reference, the committee would suggest measures to modify the same with a view to improving upon the pensionary benefits of government employees covered under the NPS, keeping in view the fiscal implications and impact on overall budgetary space, so that fiscal prudence is maintained to protect the common citizens.

# JSW Energy jumps 28 per cent in Q3

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

JSW Energy on Tuesday reported over 28 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to Rs 231 crore in the December 2023 quarter on the back of higher revenues.

"Profit After Tax for the quarter (October-December 2023) increased by 28 per cent YoY (year-on-year) to Rs 231 crore, compared to Rs 180 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year," a company statement said.

During the quarter, the total revenue increased 13 per cent year-on-year to Rs 2,661 crore from Rs 2,350 crore in Q3 FY23, driven by incremental contribution from renewable portfolio and strong thermal performance, largely driven by a buoyant merchant market, it added.

The consolidated net worth and net debt as of December 31, 2023, were Rs 20,976 crore and Rs 26,286 crore, respectively, resulting in a net debt-to-equity ratio of 1.3X. Liquidity continues to be strong, with cash balances at Rs 2,867 crore as of December 31, 2023, it stated.

The company has one of the strongest balance sheets in the sector, which gives it the headroom to pursue value-accretive growth opportunities, it noted.

It generated 6,128 million units (MU) of power in the third quarter, up from 4,274 MU a year ago,



driven by the higher thermal generation and contribution from acquired and greenfield RE (renewables) capacity additions.

It is presently constructing various power projects to the tune of 2.6 GW, with a vision to achieve a total power generation capacity of 20 GW by 2030.

The board, in its meeting held on Tuesday, also appointed Ashok Ramachandran, Chief Operating Officer, as an Additional Director and as a Whole-time Director (designated as Whole-time Director & COO) of the company for a term of 5 years with effect from January 23, 2024, till January 22, 2029.

Ramachandran, in his capacity as a Whole-time Director, is also appointed as a key managerial personnel of the company. Previously, Ramachandran had been appointed as the Chief Operating Officer, with effect from October 20, 2023.

## BUSINESS BRIEF

**GRADUATION DAY AT SRM VALLIAMMAI ENGINEERING COLLEGE HELD**  
Chennai: 19th Graduation Day of SRM Valliammai Engineering College at Kattankulathur was held in which over 600 youths, including rank holders received degrees. Addressing the gathering Dr. R.Velraj, Vice Chancellor, Anna University said, "A strong knowledge in a couple of domain specialisations, coupled with allied fields, and being updated with emerging technologies, accompanied by efficient skills and the right attitude will ensure that youth of India are well on the way to success in their career and contribute to the nation's growth story. Dr. Velraj said that the next 2 to 3 decades would be the era of opportunities for the youth of India - the nation with the largest number of youth in the world."



**NEW EMAIL SERVICE LAUNCHED TO CELEBRATE CONSECRATION**  
New Delhi: Indian company Data Xgen Technologies announced a new email service to commemorate the reconstruction of the Ram Mandir. This specially dedicated to the celebration of the consecration of Lord Ram was launched on January 22. The service has initially been launched in Hindi, with the launch event coinciding with the much-anticipated consecration ceremony. Data Xgen Technologies has introduced a free email service under the domain name jaishriram.bharat. To avail of this service, individuals can download the DataMail (DATAMAIL) mobile app from the Android and Apple App Stores and enjoy its benefits free of charge. The service is accessible on any device through mobile email applications and the web. "As 88 per cent of citizens in India primarily communicate in local languages, it is crucial for our email service to be available in their language. Hindi being a major language, soon it will be available in other vernacular languages as well," said Ajay Data, CEO of Data Xgen.

# ONGC gets nod for green energy, gas unit

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) will set up a new unit to house its gas business and clean energy projects such as green hydrogen, as it looks to fast-track foray into new areas.

In a stock exchange filing, the firm said it last month received approval of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas for formation of a wholly-owned subsidiary company for gas business and clean energy projects.



"The proposed name of the company is 'ONGC Green Limited' subject to approval of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India," it said, adding the company board at its meeting on Tuesday approved the formation of the wholly-owned subsidiary for green energy and gas business.

The wholly-owned subsidiary company will be for value-chains of energy business such as green hydrogen, hydrogen blending, renewable energy

(solar, wind and hybrid), biofuels/ biogas business and LNG, ONGC said.

The nation's largest oil and gas producer plans to spend Rs 1 lakh crore on installing 10 GW of renewable energy capacity, and setting up two million tonnes of green ammonia annual production capacity by 2035 as part of its decarbonisation strategy.

ONGC had in February 2021 proposed a separate unit for importing LNG and trading in

gas. It is India's largest gas producer but does not trade in the fuel. It sells most of the gas it produces from fields in Mumbai offshore and other place to the buyer identified by the government.

The government also sets the price at which it would sell most of the natural gas, which is used to generate electricity, produce fertilizers and turned into CNG for running automobiles or piped to household kitchens for cooking.

In the filing, the company also stated that its board has accorded in-principle approval for formation of a joint venture company either directly or through an affiliate with NTPC Green Energy Ltd (a wholly-owned subsidiary of NTPC Ltd).

"The said joint venture company shall be engaged into the business of offshore wind energy and other renewable energy," ONGC said.

ONGC had in September last year inked an agreement with NTPC Green Energy Limited for development of renewable energy projects. The agreement envisages collaborations on offshore wind projects and exploring opportunities in the storage, e-mobility, carbon credits and green credits, nuclear, green hydrogen business and its derivatives (green ammonia and green methanol).

ONGC has a renewable portfolio of 176 MW comprising 153 MW wind power and 23 MW of solar. It is aiming to add 10 gigawatt of renewable power to its portfolio by 2040.

# Axis Bank Q3 net profit rises to ₹6,071 crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Private sector Axis Bank on Tuesday reported a 4 per cent rise in standalone net profit at Rs 6,071 crore in the third quarter ended December 2023.

The bank had earned a net profit of Rs 5,853 crore in the October-December quarter of 2022.

The total income of the bank increased to Rs 33,516 crore in the third quarter of the current fiscal compared to Rs 26,798 crore in the year-ago period, Axis Bank said in a regulatory filing.

In the latest quarter, the bank's interest income rose to Rs 27,961 crore from Rs 22,226 crore in the same period last fiscal.

The gross Non-Performing Asset (NPA) ratio improved to 1.58 per cent as of December 31, 2023. In the year-ago period, it stood at 2.38 per cent.

Similarly, the net NPA declined to 0.36 per cent as compared to 0.47 per cent at the end of



December 2022.

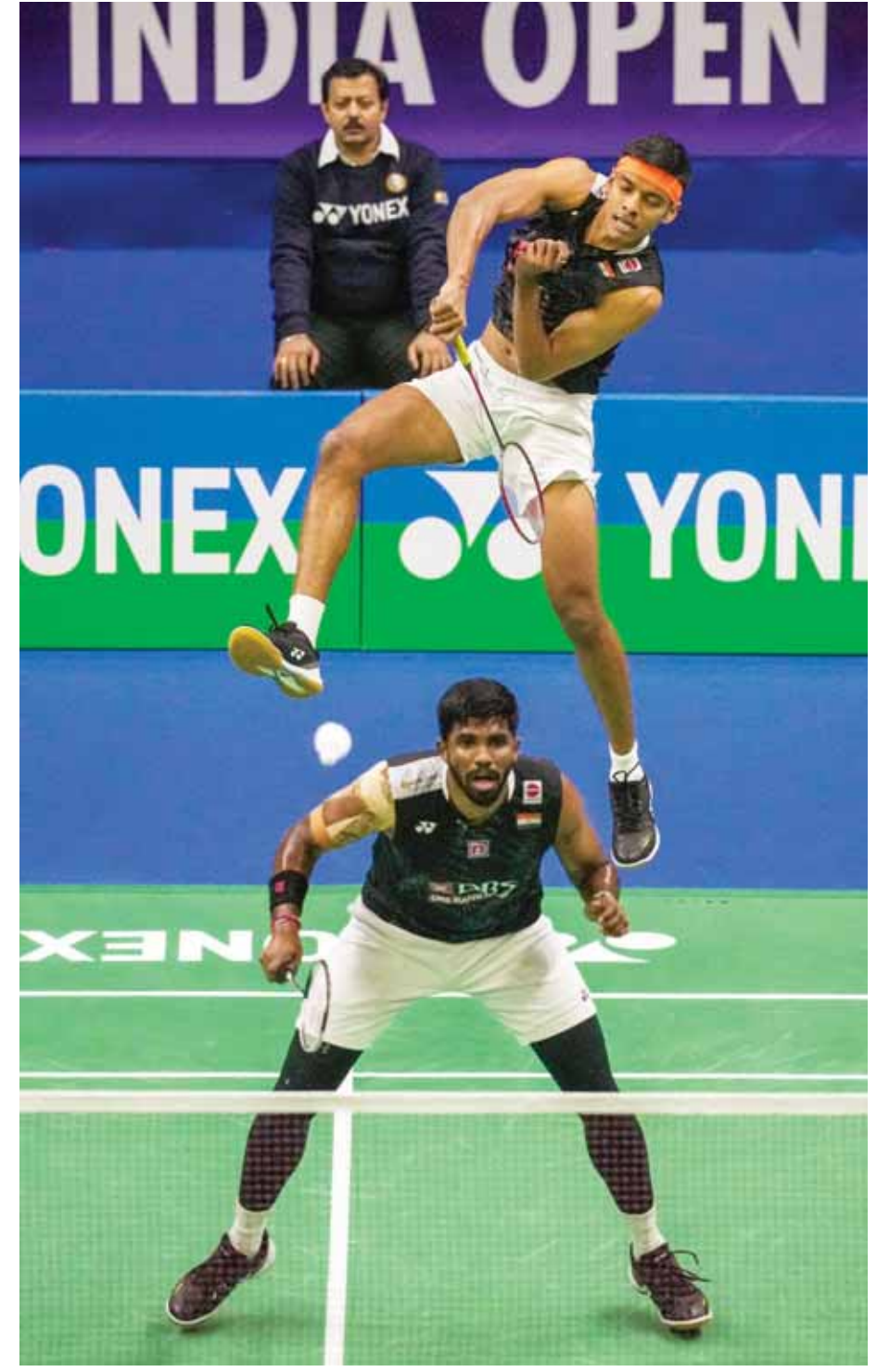
During the 2023 December quarter, the bank made a provision of Rs 181.70 crore in respect of investments in its Alternate Investment Funds (AIFs) pursuant to the RBI directive issued on December 19, 2023.

In the third quarter of this fiscal, the bank's Net Interest Income (NII) grew 9 per cent to Rs 12,532 crore while its Net Interest Margin (NIM) stood at 4.01 per cent.

However, the capital adequacy ratio of the bank declined to 14.88 per cent as compared to 17.60 per cent at the end of December 2022.



# SATWIK, CHIRAG PAIR REGAINS WORLD NUMBER 1 RANKING



**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
Riding on a stellar show in the last two weeks, India's Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty on Tuesday reclaimed the top spot in the BWF men's doubles rankings. The Asian Games champions reached the world no. 1 ranking for a second time after successive runner-up finishes in the Malaysia Open super 1000 and India Open super 750 badminton tournaments. The Indian duo had achieved its numero uno status for the first time after claiming the historic gold medal at the 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou last year. Satwik and Chirag, who had entered the India Open as

the world no 2, lost a tense final against world champions Kang Min Hyuk and Seo Sang Ja here on Sunday. Among other Indians, HS Prannoy moved a place to reach world no 8, while Lakshya Sen, Kidambi Srikanth and Priyanshu Rajawat stayed at 19th, 25th and 30th spots respectively.

# Equatorial Guinea captain emerging as unlikely hero with five goals



**AP ■ ABIDJAN (IVORY COAST)**  
It's never too late to star. Emilio Nsue, a 34-year-old right back for a third-division team in Spain, is emerging as one of the unlikely heroes of the Africa Cup of Nations. The Equatorial Guinea captain already has five goals, more than any other player, and has led his team into the knockout stage as the unbeaten winner of a tough group including Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Guinea-Bissau. It's only the fourth time Equatorial Guinea, a small country on the west coast of Africa, is participating in the Africa Cup. "We don't even believe it. This for us is history for our country, for our people," said Nsue, who plays as a forward for the national team. "It's a dream, a big dream." On Monday, Nsue scored twice as Equatorial Guinea upset Ivory Coast 4-0 and left the host nation on the brink of elimination. "Sometimes this happens in football. ... We shot the ball four or five times, we scored four. So, it's not a real game," Nsue said.

# Messi has 3 shots on goal Exits in 2nd half in Inter Miami 1-0 loss to FC Dallas in MLS friendly

**AP ■ DALLAS**  
Lionel Messi had three shots on goal before exiting early in the second half in Inter Miami's 1-0 loss to FC Dallas in an MLS preseason game at the Cotton Bowl. Messi took three shots in the first half and left the game about 15 minutes into the second half with Inter Miami trailing in front of an announced crowd of 32,221 in a game played in a drizzle and 40 degrees (4 Celsius). Forward Jesús Ferreira scored on an uncontested shot three minutes into the match to give FC Dallas an early lead that held up. Messi's first two shots were saved by Maarten Paes, who dove to his left to deflect Messi's second shot in the 12th minute. Messi's third shot was wide left in the 27th minute. The eight-time Ballon d'Or winner scored twice in Inter Miami's comeback win over FC Dallas on Aug. 6 at Toyota Stadium in the Dallas suburb of Frisco. FC Dallas moved 30 miles north in 2009 after playing its first 13 MLS seasons at the Cotton Bowl, which was a 1994 World Cup venue. "We have a lot of good memories here from 1994 when Holland beat Brazil," said Paes, who is from the Netherlands. "It is very historic and beautiful. I love playing in this stadium. The atmosphere was great and the pitch was perfect." Uruguayan star Luis Suárez, who teamed with Messi at FC Barcelona from 2014-20, played in his first match on American soil since joining Inter Miami in December. Suárez had two shots on goal in the first half, the first saved by Paes. The second sailed wide right in the 44th minute. Inter Miami failed to score in its second straight preseason game after a 0-0 draw against El Salvador on Friday. FC Dallas held off a flurry of shots in the second half behind a pair of replacement keepers in Jimmy Maurer and Antonio Carrera. "To get to play against Lionel Messi is an unbelievable opportunity," FC Dallas president Dan Hunt said prior to the match. "For most people, it's a never. Most markets never get to bring him ... you have the greatest probably of all time, with maybe the exception of Pele, and you get to have him twice in your market. Once we hosted at our home, and then we get to share with a different part of the community in Dallas." The 36-year-old Messi arrived in Miami last July and scored 10 goals in seven games. He led the club to its first-ever trophy by winning the Leagues Cup final on Aug. 19. Inter Miami will travel to Saudi Arabia to face Al Hilal next Monday and Cristiano Ronaldo's Al-Nassr on Feb.

# AUSTRALIAN OPEN Gauff to play titleholder Sabalenka in semifinals

**AP ■ MELBOURNE (AUSTRALIA)**  
Coco Gauff hopes she's got her "bad" match out of the way at the Australian Open before meeting defending champion Aryna Sabalenka in the semi-finals. The 19-year-old US Open winner overcame 51 unforced errors, nine double-faults and had just 17 winners to beat Marta Kostyuk 7-6 (6), 6-7 (3), 6-2 Tuesday in a quarterfinal match that lasted three hours, eight minutes. That long three-setter had a knock-on effect that made for a light, but long night at Melbourne Park. It took Novak Djokovic 3 & 3/4 hours to hold off Taylor Fritz 7-6 (3), 4-6, 6-2, 6-3 and reach the Australian Open semi-finals for the 11th time. The first game took 16 minutes, the first set lasted an hour and 24 minutes. In the end, top-ranked Djokovic extended his winning streak at Melbourne Park to 33 matches, a tournament record he shares with Monica Seles. Djokovic is unbeaten in semi-finals and finals at the



Australian Open, where he's won 10 of his record 24 major titles. Sabalenka's title defence has been gathering momentum and her 6-2, 6-3 win over No. 9-seeded Barbora Krejčíková was her fifth straight-sets victory in a row. The extra-long day session

pushed the start of the night session back to after 9 pm local time, with Krejčíková serving to start the first of the two-night quarterfinals at 9:09 pm. "I played great tennis," Sabalenka said. "I hope I can keep playing that way, or even better." It wasn't until after 10:30 p.m. That No. 4 Jannik Sinner and No. 5 Andrey Rublev went on the court to start warming up for their match. Gauff has won 12 consecutive matches in Grand Slams and is two victories from winning back-to-back major titles, but she had a close call against first-time quarterfinalist Kostyuk. "Today was definitely a C game," Gauff said. "Didn't play my best tennis, but really proud that I was able to get through. Hopefully, got the bad match out of the way and I can play even better." Gauff's forehand was particularly vulnerable and Kostyuk took full advantage, racing to 5-1 only to show her fragility with two double faults to hand back one of the breaks. She recovered to save a set point at 5-3 before levelling at 5-5. Kostyuk had another set point in the tie-breaker, but Gauff won it. The mistakes continued to flow, and though she led 5-3 in the second set, Gauff could not close it out. She was two points from victory at 6-5, 40-40, but Kostyuk held and took the tiebreak 7-3 to level. The Ukrainian player said she was pleased to have made the quarterfinals at a Grand Slam tournament for the first time. "Very proud of myself," she said. "I won for myself today and it's the most important thing."

# Djokovic holds off Fritz To reach Australian Open semifinals for 11th time

**AP ■ MELBOURNE (AUSTRALIA)**  
Novak Djokovic held off Taylor Fritz 7-6 (3), 4-6, 6-2, 6-3 in 3 3/4 hours to reach the Australian Open semi-finals for the 11th time on Tuesday. When he gets through the quarterfinals in Australia, Djokovic is unbeaten. The 24-time major champion has won all 10 semifinals he's contested at Melbourne Park and all 10 finals. In his record-extending 48th Grand Slam semi-final, he'll play No. 4-seeded Jannik Sinner or No. 5 Andrey Rublev. Fritz saved the first 15 break-points he faced, an unheard-of stat against one of the best returners ever. "We all know Taylor has got one of the best serves in the world," Djokovic said. "I knew the kind of threat he poses when he serves on such a high quality. "My conversion was really poor, but in the end of the day, I managed to break him when it mattered. I upped my game midway through the third set, all the way to the end." The first game set the tone for a long, tough match. It lasted 16 minutes and contained 24 points, going to deuce nine times. Fritz fended off three breakpoints before finally holding. The first set lasted 1 hour and 24 minutes - the longest opening set of the tournament - and was in the balance until the tiebreaker. The match started in bright sunlight and almost 32-degree (90 Fahrenheit) heat and the shade moved from west to east across the court from behind the umpire's chair. After Fritz held in the 11th game, Djokovic was agitated and gesturing to get the attention of his support team, calling for salts.



But, after holding and taking the set to a tiebreaker, Djokovic finished a 21-shot rally with a stunning backhand crosscourt winner to get five set points. He put his finger to his ear, nodded his head and blew a kiss toward a commentary box at the rear of the court. It was Fritz who got the first service break to open the second set, having fended off eight in the first set against him. He saved another seven break-point chances in the second, mostly with clean winners, and maintained the break to level at one set apiece, closing with an ace. After all that resistance, though, Fritz was broken in the second game of the third set when Djokovic converted his 16th chance. Djokovic broke again, at love, in the ninth game to wrap up the third set in 38 minutes. In the fourth, Fritz struggled to hold in a game that contained 14 points and then was broken in the sixth. He hit back immediately, converting his second break point with a forehand that clipped the net and dropped for a winner. But, Djokovic denied any more twists by breaking back again for 5-3 and serving out. Djokovic had beaten Fritz in straight sets in all but one of their previous eight encounters, including last year's US Open quarterfinals. The exception was here in Australia in 2021 when it went to five. The first of the men's quarterfinals started in the late afternoon after US Open champion Coco Gauff's three-hour 7-6 (6), 6-7 (3), 6-2 win over Marta Kostyuk of Ukraine. The 19-year-old Gauff, on a 12-match winning streak in Grand Slams, will next play defending champion Aryna Sabalenka or Barbora Krejčíková.

# George enters main draw of Indonesia Masters

**PTI ■ JAKARTA**  
India's Kiran George produced a gritty show, notching up two narrow wins in the men's singles qualifying round to make it to the main draw of the Indonesia Masters Super 500 badminton tournament here on Tuesday. The 23-year-old from Kochi, who has so far won two Super 100 titles at 2022 Odisha Open and 2023 Denmark Masters, showed great resolve as he eked out a 21-17 12-21 21-15 win over Indonesia's Shesar Hiren Rhustavito before defeating France's Alex Lanier 12-21 21-18 22-20 in the qualifying round matches. Against Rhustavito, Kiran took time to get off the groove as he recovered from a 0-3 deficit to keep pace with his rival. He



then took six straight points from 13-12 to pocket the first game. Rhustavito came back strongly, jumping to 10-2 lead and kept his nose ahead to take the match to the decider. The Indian, however, regrouped and from 8-7, he reeled off five points on the trot to leave his opponent behind. In the second match of the day, Kiran slipped to 0-7 deficit and conceded the opening game

but he managed to take 8-5 lead in the second. Despite some tough fight from the opponent, Kiran claimed the second game to keep himself afloat. The third game was a tough battle as lead exchanged frequently and Kiran took a 11-9 cushion at the interval. The Indian was trailing at 14-15 lead but quickly recovered to 19-16 before sealing the match. In the main draw, HS Prannoy, the only seeded Indian player at No. 7, will begin his campaign against former world champion Loh Kean Yew of Singapore, while Lakshya Sen will be up against Weng Hong Yang of China. World No. 25 Kidambi Srikanth will face Lee Zii Jia of Malaysia, while 30th ranked Priyanshu Rajawat will meet Rasmus Gemke of Denmark.

# Madrid to start hosting Formula One race in 2026 around city exhibition centre

**AP ■ MADRID**  
A Madrid Grand Prix will join the Formula One calendar from 2026 on a track that will include street and non-street sections around the city's exhibition centre. F1 president Stefano Domenicali was in Madrid for the official announcement on Tuesday of the multi-year deal that will bring the series back to the Madrid region more than 40 years after it last hosted F1. The Spanish capital signed a contract with F1 until 2035. The city announced a lavish ceremony at the exhibition centre. Barcelona's current contract with F1 ends in 2026. The Barcelona-Catalunya track has been hosting the Spanish Grand Prix since 1991. The new 5.4-kilometer (3.3-mile) circuit, which still needs to be approved by FIA, is expected to feature 20 corners. F1 said the circuit will include a paddock building, a new race tower,



office spaces, VIP hospitality and entertainment areas. The last F1 race in the Madrid region was in 1981 at the Jarama circuit. The Jerez de la Frontera track in southern Spain hosted races from 1986-90 and in 1994 and 1997. The country also hosted the European Grand Prix on a street circuit in Valencia from 2008-12. The contract with Barcelona was extended to 2026 five years ago after the track committed to improvements ahead of the 2022 season. Spanish media said there were negotiations between F1 and Barcelona to have Madrid take its spot on the calendar in 2026. Barcelona organizers have said they hoped to extend their contract with F1 beyond 2026. Red Bull driver Max Verstappen won last year's Spanish GP at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya.



# ENGLAND BATSMEN MAY FACE SPIN TEST AT HYDERABAD

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

India head coach Rahul Dravid's words contained a mild warning to the England camp when he said the pitch for the first Test would offer assistance to spinners as the game moves on. Ahead of the first Test starting here from Thursday, the 22-yard trampoline here spotted a dry look, especially from the good length area on either side of it.

"Hard one to say (nature of pitch). We will have a look once it (match) starts and figure it out. It looks a good one from what I've seen," Dravid began his statement during Tuesday's media interaction in a rather mundane manner.

Then he added: "But may spin a little bit. How quickly and how fast, I'm not sure. But it might spin a little bit certainly as the game goes on."

Fast bowler Mark Wood, on the other hand, admitted that the England camp has had a discussion about the nature of pitch but without creating a bedlam in their minds.

"We've discussed the pitch. But I wouldn't say we discuss it at that length to worry about it. We have enough self-belief in our group that we can do something special. We've got



spinners, we've got seam, we've got good batters and we've got a good recent history behind us."

Wood, however, acknowledged that the England players will have to do well on the tracks on offer during the series.

"We know that this is a massive task. It's not good coming here and rolling over thinking it's going to be tough because the pitches are not what we're used to. We have to find a way.

"We'll adapt. We've got a captain who always wants to take the game forward. So, it should be an entertaining series," said Wood.

However, that adaptation just might not be an easy process for the Englishmen. "We've had enough time to prepare the pitch. There will be help for both batsmen and bowlers, but as the match moves on it will turn, but I think, these players are experienced enough to apply themselves and make runs," said an HCA official, who did not want to be named, told PTI.

Bumrah absent from India training Indian players hit the ground and sweated out earnestly here on Tuesday despite the training session being an optional one.

All the squad members, except pacer Jasprit Bumrah, attended the nets that lasted a little over two hours.



## Rohit leads ICC ODI Team of the Year

PTI ■ DUBAI

Rohit Sharma was on Tuesday named captain of the ICC ODI Team of the Year, which featured five other Indians including star batter Virat Kohli and the pace duo of Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj.

The team mostly included the World Cup finalists — India (runner-up) and Australia (winner) — besides players from semi-finalists New Zealand and South Africa, the ICC said in a statement.

All-rounder Ravindra Jadeja and off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin were the two Indians featuring in the Test Team of the Year, with Australian pacer Pat Cummins as its captain.

Ashwin was the leading wicket-taker for India in the Border-Gavaskar series, finishing with 25 wickets in four matches.

Jadeja performed quite well in the World Test Championship Final against Australia, picking up four wickets and adding a valuable 48 with the bat, despite India ultimately facing defeat.

Three Indians — Yashasvi Jaiswal, Suryakumar Yadav and Arshdeep Singh — figured in the ICC T20I Team of the Year.

Suryakumar, who was named captain of the T20I side, topped the runs chart with 733 runs in 18 matches at a strike rate of 155.95 to consolidate his position at the top of the rankings.

The ODI team's top order includes openers Rohit and Shubman Gill. While the Indian captain accumulated 1,255 runs at an average of 52 last year, the latter struck a brilliant 208 against the Kiwis and also finished as the highest run-scorer (1,584) in the format.

At number three was Travis Head, who was consistent throughout the year and performed exceptionally well during the global event, with his 137 in the final being the highlight.

The middle order comprised Indian stalwart Kohli, followed by Daryl Mitchell, Heinrich Klaassen and Marco Jansen.

Kohli finished as the second-highest run-scorer of the year in ODIs (1,337) and slammed six centuries during the year.

He surpassed Sachin Tendulkar's record of most international tons, besides winning the Player of the Tournament award during the World Cup.

Mitchell scored five centuries and accumulated 1,204 runs at an average of 52.34 and a strike rate of 100.24.

Klaassen too dominated the whole year with the bat, with his highlight being the match-winning 174 versus Australia in Centurion.

The bowling attack was made up of Australian Adam Zampa along with the Indian trio of Mohammed Siraj, Kuldeep Yadav and Mohammed Shami.

Zampa took 38 wickets in the entire year at an average of 26.31 and also fetched a four-for in three successive World Cup fixtures, besides finishing as the second-highest wicket-taker in the competition.

Siraj came up with 44 wickets in the year, the high point being six for 21 against Sri Lanka during the Asia Cup final that India won deservingly.

Kuldeep captured 49 ODI wickets last year, with his best figures being five for 25 versus Pakistan during the Asia Cup's Super-Four stage.

Shami was dominant throughout the year, claiming four fifties, while his best figures were seven for 57 against New Zealand during the World Cup semi-final in Mumbai.

# Bazball can fetch me heaps of wickets: Bumrah

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Jasprit Bumrah cannot really relate to the term "Bazball" but the linchpin of India's pace attack says the much-hyped ultra-aggressive approach that England have pioneered could end up working to his advantage and fetch him "heaps" of wickets in the upcoming five-match Test series.

England's offensive game-plan under coach Brendon McCullum of New Zealand and skipper Ben Stokes will be up against a massive challenge when the side faces India in a seven-week tour. The series-opener is slated to start here on Thursday.

"I don't really relate to the term Bazball," Bumrah, who boasts of 41 wickets in 10 Tests against England, told "The Guardian" in an interview.

"But they are playing successful cricket and the aggressive route of taking the opposition on, showing the world there's another way to play Test cricket."

In July 2022, Bumrah got a taste of the 'Bazball' when he cap-

tained India in Birmingham after Rohit Sharma was ruled out with COVID-19.

The match is remembered not just for England's offensive approach in securing a seven-wicket win but also for Bumrah's 29-run onslaught against Stuart Broad in a single over.

"As a bowler, what I think is that it keeps me in play. And if they're going for it, playing so fast, they won't tire me out, I could get heaps (of wickets). I always think about how I can use things to my advantage.

Kudos to them but, as a bowler, you're in the game," he added. "I always remind the batters that if they need some advice on playing the pull shot, they know where to come," Bumrah quipped.

**PACERS, 'SMART' CAPTAINS:** On his thoughts about captaining India, the 36-year-old said: "I did one game and it was the utmost honour."

Drawing inspiration from Pat Cummins, who has excelled as a seam-bowling captain for Australia, Bumrah is open to the idea of taking on the lead-



ership mantle in future. "Playing Test cricket is great, captaining was even better. Yes, we lost but we were ahead in the match and I loved the responsibility. Sometimes as a fast bowler you go down to fine leg and switch off but I loved being involved in every decision, right in the thick of things."

"And given the opportunity, of course, who wouldn't? (Cummins) plays for Australia, the number of matches differs and that kind of thing. Not many (seamers) have done it before. "But it's a good example that yes, fast bowlers are the smart ones, they do a hard job and they know what to do around the game."

**TEST CRICKET IS THE PINNACLE:** Despite breaking into the Indian team with solid performances for five-time IPL champions Mumbai Indians, Bumrah considers Test cricket as the king of formats. "I am of that generation where Test cricket is king," he said. "I will always judge myself on it. Yes I started with IPL but I

learned to bowl through first-class cricket; that's where I developed my skill, the art of taking wickets. In Test cricket you have to get the batsman out and that challenges you as a bowler," he asserted.

Bumrah said Test format eliminates the luck factor to a large extent.

"T20s, ODIs, some days you might send down five slower balls and get five guys out, when in a Test match they wouldn't have taken one. There is no luck in Test cricket, the better team wins, you cannot take 20 wickets through luck," he pointed out.

"I don't know how the youngsters look at it. But Test cricket has been around this long, it will find a way."

However, like most observers of the game, Bumrah also warned against an overkill of any format.

"Every format has its place — too much Test cricket would be boring, too much white ball the same. I think (the sport needs) a little bit of everything, rather than an overdose of one format or the other," he concluded.

## Arshdeep can be dependable left arm pacer: Amir

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former Pakistan pacer Mohammad Amir believes that the emergence of Arshdeep Singh could bring an end to India's prolonged search for a reliable left-arm pacer.

The Indian selectors have tried out several left-arm pacers over the years. But the lack of a consistent performer has not allowed the team to field a more versatile and well-rounded pace attack.

"Arshdeep can be a very good left-arm pacer. India needs one who can consistently bowl at 135-140," Amir said during a virtual media interaction on the sidelines of the International League T20 in Dubai.

Amir acknowledged the impressive growth of Indian pacers, particularly Mohammed Siraj.

"From last two-three years, the most impressive has been Mohammed Siraj. The way he has improved in white-ball cricket, it's a good sign for Indian cricket. The way (Mohammed) Shami, (Jasprit) Bumrah are performing after injury."

"Indian cricket is growing everyday. Their set-up, their leadership, whenever they bring one youngster, they give full time, which is very good," he added.

Amir praised the rotation policy adopted by the Indian team to keep its pace bowlers fresh to meet the demands of international cricket.

"India are always a settled side because they follow a process. They also now understand how to keep their pace bowlers fresh. In every series, they have a rotation policy. (Jasprit) Bumrah, (Mohammed) Shami, (Mohammed) Siraj, they are not playing all the matches and



series. I think the future of Indian fast bowling holds is good."

Speaking about his future plans, Amir said, "I've no plans to come back as of now."

**NASEEM A COMPLETE BOWLER:** Talking about the current crop of Pakistan pacers, Amir termed the young Naseem Shah as a "complete bowler", and his presence could have made a difference in the World Cup last year in India.

The 20-year-old was ruled out of the mega event with a shoulder injury and is currently undergoing rehab.

"Personally, I like Naseem Shah. To me, he is a complete bowler. It's Pakistan's misfortune that he got injured before the World Cup.

"He could have made a difference. After that Wasim Junior has improved a lot. Nobody has doubted the abilities of Pakistan fast bowlers. But they should be groomed properly."

Talking about Shaheen Shah Afridi's struggle post a knee injury, he said: "It happens after injury, you struggle. But, against Australia, he bowled well in the second Test.

"It seemed he's getting back to his rhythm. In the last two T20Is in New Zealand, he looked good. The more cricket he plays, the faster he will get back his confidence."

# Rahul will not play as wicketkeeper against England: Dravid

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

India head coach Rahul Dravid on Tuesday said KL Rahul will not be keeping wickets in the five-match Test series against England, and it will be a toss up between KS Bharat and Dhruv Jurel for the wicketkeeper-batter role.

Rahul had kept wickets in the two-match series against South Africa recently, and produced a rather nimble effort behind the stumps. The series against England starts here on Thursday.

"Rahul will not be playing as a wicket-keeper in this series and we are clear about that in the selection itself. We have picked two other wicket-keepers and obviously Rahul did a fantastic job for us in South Africa and really played a big part in helping us draw the series," Dravid said in a press con-

ference here. "But considering five Test matches (against England) and playing in these conditions the selection will be between the two other keepers we have," he explained.

The nature of pitches in India makes it mandatory for a wicketkeeper to stand up to the wickets against spinners, in this case R Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja, a role that should be assigned to a specialist stumper.

The 31-year-old Bengaluru player, has been a designated wicketkeeper only thrice in his 92 First-Class matches and none of those appearances came in India.

In that context, it might not have been wise for the team management to pick Rahul as wicketkeeper against England, considering the fact that the visitors' 'Bazball' style of cricket might just offer a



few chances to the gloveman. In contrast, Bharat, who stepped in when Rishabh Pant was injured in a car accident, has done reasonably well in the role, and often attracted plaudits.

Even though he has not really made a mark with the bat, his efforts behind the wickets cannot be brushed aside — from 91 First-Class matches, of which 82 have been in India, Bharat has amassed 287 catches and 33 stumpings.

Since Jurel is still a tad green behind the ears, Bharat is set to get the nod as wicketkeeper-batter for the series against England.

His unbeaten 116 that helped India A draw the first unofficial 'Test' against England Lions at Ahmedabad recently too might have boosted his stature in the eyes of the think-tank.

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Flamboyant all-rounder Glenn Maxwell actually lost consciousness and did not respond to efforts to wake him up before he was rushed to hospital after a late night drinking session in Adelaide last week, according to a report.

Earlier reports did not mention in detail under what circumstances Maxwell was taken to the hospital but a Sydney Morning Herald report said that he lost consciousness and woke up on the way.

Maxwell was watching a concert when the incident took place.

"...After the show, during which Maxwell was photographed with numerous members of the crowd, he and his friends retired to the backstage area where they drank and sang songs with 'Six and Out' (band) and other friends invited into the room," the report said, citing unnamed multiple sources.

"It was during this interlude that Maxwell lost consciousness and did not immediately respond to attempts by friends to rouse him. An ambulance was then called and Maxwell's next memory is of waking up on the way to hospital," it said.

According to reports, Maxwell was out drinking and watching a concert by band 'Six and Out' at The Governor Hindmarsh in Adelaide. Cricket Australia (CA) has already launched an investigation into the incident. Maxwell was, however, discharged from the hospital after a short stay and is back to training.

# Maxwell actually lost consciousness after late night drinking session: Report

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Australia captain Pat Cummins was also at the same venue as Maxwell on the night in question but "didn't cross paths" with his World Cup-winning team-mate.

"Potentially, I think only 'Maxy' can answer that one," Cummins said when asked whether Maxwell needed to reconsider his choices.

"I was there at the Gov for the concert, but I left pretty early



"I knew he was in town but I didn't cross paths with Maxy at all." Cummins, however, hinted that individuals will have to own consequences of their actions.

"We're all adults and part of being an adult is you make your own decisions," he said in the SMH report.

"In terms of this incident he wasn't on tour with Australia, he was over there for a private event, so he wasn't with the cricket team. So it is a little bit different, but absolutely, any decision you make you've got to own it and be comfortable with it."

Former captain Michael Clarke feels that Cricket Australia will get to the bottom of the incident. "To have to be put into an ambulance, that makes me nervous. With these sort of things, with off-field stuff, I like to go, 'Benefit of the doubt and innocent until proven guilty', Clarke said on 'Foxsports'.

"One thing I know, Cricket Australia will get to the bottom of it. These days there's cameras, there's people, so the truth will be told. The other thing we need to do is making sure he's OK. He didn't end up spending the night there (in hospital)."

"I can't think of a time where I've had to call an ambulance or an ambulance had to be called for me, no matter how drunk I was. So I'm worried is there more to this and I just hope he's OK first and foremost."

Maxwell, who last week stepped down as captain of BBL side Melbourne Stars after failing to make the finals, was not named in the 13-man squad to face the West Indies in a three-match ODI series from February 2 and 6.

"It is not related to him being replaced in the ODI squad, a decision that was made following the BBL and based on his individual management plan. Maxwell is expected to return for the T20 series. No further comment will be made at this time," CA had said in a statement.