OPINION 6

BHARAT RATNA: HONOURING

THE LEGACY OF JAN NAYAK

WORLD 9

IMRAN KHAN WARNS HIS

DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR

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PM urges Ministers not to crowd Ayodhya

day after a massive rush at Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, Ram Mandır ın Ayounya, Prime Minister Narendra Modi advised all his Cabinet colleagues on Wednesday to refrain from visiting the holy city for now and to plan their pilgrimage from mid-February onwards. Besides, well-placed sources in the government and sources in the government and within the ruling party BJP told The Pioneer that each party parliamentarian and party office bearer has been given a target to facilitate an Ayodhya visit for people within their constituency or jurisdiction, particularly for women and elderly Ram Bhakts. Sources mentioned that during the Cabinet meeting, the Prime Minister suggested that, due to the heavy rush and to prevent inconvenience to the public caused by VIPs with protocols, Cabinet members should avoid visiting at this time. The Prime Minister's advisory came after devotees flocked to Ram Mandir in huge numbers a day after the praan pratishthaa ceremony on January 22.

The ministers will visit the Ram Mandir for darshan later from February onwards, sources said. Sources also mentioned that party MPs, as well as the entire Council of Ministers, will "facilitate" at least 2,500 people/devotees from their constituency for the Ayodhya pilgrimage.

In the run-up to the Lok Sabha polls likely to be held in April-May, the same pattern to enable a **PRIORITY TO**



large number of visitors to Ayodhya could be replicated by the State ministers and leaders as

The Ram Temple at Ayodhya has been a major poll plank and included in the party's manifesto for the BJP for three decades, along with the abrogation of Article 370, and both processes have been completed.

This was the second time that the PM had to urge refraining from visiting Ayodhya, with the first instance occurring in December after he inaugurated several projects, including the airport and railway station.

On December 30, anticipating a turnout, Modi had suggested that people, out of emotion, should refrain from

visiting Ayodhya on the praan prathishtaa day and instead plan their pilgrimage a couple of days later. In the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday, Modi also inquired about the feedback from the public after the inauguration of the highly-awaited Ram

mandir in Ayodhya. An idol of the new Ram Lalla was consecrated at the Ayodhya

temple on Monday, with PM Modi leading the event. The ceremony was live-streamed across the country.

Addressing the media after the Cabinet meeting, Union Minister Anurag Thakur shared that the Union Cabinet congratulated PM Modi on the successful praan pratishthaa ceremony.

Continued on Page 2

INDIA Bloc speaks in confused tones

SAUGAR SENGUPTA/PNS KOLKATA/NEW DELHI

rinamool Congress supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday announced that her party will go solo in the forthcoming general elections. This announcement comes even as her Punjab counterpart and Aam Aadmi Party leader Bhagwant Mann expressed confidence that the Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP will win "all" the Lok Sabha seats in the State. Both the TMC and the AAP have been major stakeholders in the seven-month-old Opposition coalition, INDIA bloc, led by Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge as its chairman.

Interestingly, the main person who conceived the Opposition group, JDU president and Bihar CM Nitish Kumar, in June 2023 after severing ties with longtime ally BJP, is now believed to be hobnobbing to return to the NDA

Putting an end to the ongoing consultations and seat-sharing meetings held by Congress with alliance partners, Mamata said, "There is no relationship with the Congress. There is no alliance in Bengal. Let the Congress contest in 300 seats, and let the regional parties contest in the remaining seats. We will not tolerate interference in regard to those seats, and if anyone (read the Congress) causes any interference,

then we will handle it in our own way. We will go it alone in Bengal." Similarly, Punjab Chief Minister said Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) will win all 13 Lok Sabha seats in Punjab in the 2024 general election. Dismissing the possibility of an alliance with the

Congress party in the State, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said, "AAP is not going with them (Congress)." "I have said it on several occasions that Punjab will become a hero in the country, and the AAP will win 13-0 in the 2024 Lok Sabha election," Mann said, talking to the media in Chandigarh after a

Cabinet meeting.
A visibly irked Mamata also rejected the friendship offer from Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, saying that she had not been contacted by anyone from the

grand old party.

Continued on Page 2

Air India fined ₹1.1 crore for safety breaches

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has imposed a 10 crore on Air India after an airline employee alleged safety violations on flights operated on certain long-range terrain-critical routes, specifically regarding the operations of

leased Boeing 777 planes to the US. This is the second time in a week that the regulator has penalised Air India. The DGCA had received a complaint from a former Air India pilot alleging that the airline operated Boeing 7777 planes to the US without having the required emergency oxygen supply

A comprehensive investigation into the matter was carried out by the DGCA, which also issued a show-cause notice to the airline. "Since the operations of the leased aircraft were not in line with regulatory/OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) performance limits, the DGCA has initiated enforcement action and imposed a penalty of Rs 1.10 crore on Air India," the DGCA said in a release on Wednesday.

Reacting to the development, Air India stated that the raised issue had been

thoroughly examined by the airline along with external experts. It was concluded that there was no compromise on safety whatsoever, the

airline added.
"We disagree with the order issued by the DGCA. The issues raised were thoroughly examined by Air India along with external experts, concluding that there was no compromise on safety whatsoever," Air India said.

Continued on Page 2

PM headed for mega projects launch in Bulandshahr

RAJESH KUMAR NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address his first electoral Thursday. Given that Varanasi is the home constituency of Prime Minister Modi, the decision to start the campaign from Bulandshahr has sparked speculation about the strategic reasoning behind this choice. The Prime Minister will launch development projects worth more than ₹19,100 crore, including the 173-km-long double-line electrified section between New Khurja and New Rewari on the dedicated freight corridor (DFC), by flagging off goods trains from the two stations. The rally in Bulandshahr will mark the beginning of the election campaign for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls and comes days after the praan pratishthaa of Ram Mandir

The BJP claims that around five lakh people will attend PM Modi's rally in Bulandshahr. Many in the BJP feel that Bulandshahr is also lucky for Narendra Modi, as the PM launched his campaign for the 2014 Lok Sabha polls from this

Prime Minister Modi also intends to connect with voters and supporters in areas where the party faced challenges in the previous elections. The focus is on sharing the winning mantra and garnering support in a bid to secure victory in the contested



seats of western Uttar Pradesh. The BJP, which swept Uttar Pradesh in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections by winning 71 out of 80 seats, saw, albeit inconsequential, a decline of nine seats in the 2019 general elections. Notably, the BJP holds eight out of 14 seats in western Uttar Pradesh, with defeats in six constituencies in

With the upcoming 2024 elections, Prime Minister Modi aims to reverse this trend, particularly in the eight out of 14 seats the BJP currently holds in

the region. As Congress and the Samajwadi Party engage in seat-sharing talks for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls, the political landscape in Uttar Pradesh seems poised for an intriguing

contest in the months to come. On this occasion, PM Modi will launch development projects worth more than ₹19,100 crore, including the 173-km-long double-line electrified section between New Khurja and New Rewari on the dedicated freight corridor, by flagging off goods trains from the two stations.

Officials stated that this new DFC section is crucial as it establishes connectivity between the western and eastern freight corridors. The section is also noteworthy for its remarkable engineering feat, featuring a one-kilometre-long double-line rail tunnel with highrise electrification, the first of its kind in the world. This tunnel is designed to seamlessly operate double-stack container trains. The new DFC section is expected

passenger trains due to the shifting of goods trains onto the DFC track, they explained.

The prime minister wil inaugurate the fourth rail line connecting Mathura-Palwal and Buzurg-Dadri Chipiyana sections, along with multiple road development projects. These road projects, developed at a cumulative cost of more than ₹5,000 crore, will improve connectivity and contribute to the economic development of the region, they added.

Among other projects Modi will inaugurate is the Indian Oil's Tundla-Gawaria pipeline and an "integrated industrial township at Greater Noida" (IITGN), developed in line with the prime minister's vision of integrated planning and coordinated implementation of infrastructure connectivity projects under PM-

GatiShakti. Built at a cost of ₹1,714 crore, the project is spread over 747 acres and is located near the intersection of the eastern and western dedicated freight corridors, with the Eastern Peripheral Expressway to the south and the Delhi-Howrah broad gauge railway line to the east. IITGN's strategic location unparalleled ensures connectivity, infrastructure for multi-modal connectivity is present in the vicinity of this project,

officials said.

Centre allows mobile tower in forest to meet 4G target

ARCHANA JYOTI NEW DELHI

The Union Environment Ministry is treading strike a balance between technological progress and the preservation natural habitats. It has relaxed regulations for the installation of mobile towers in forestprotected areas, including national parks and wildlife habitats across the country. However, the core and critical wildlife areas of tiger homes are excluded.

This move aims to support the government's ambitious project, spearheading the extension of seamless 4G internet connectivity 24,680 uncovered villages in the country. The project entails the construction of at least 16,464 telecom towers. However, the approval for such construction

protected areas comes with conditions. Protected land can be allocated to a "user agency" only if no private or alternative revenue land is available.

In its recently issued guidelines, the Ministry also stipulates that the user agency must obtain an undertaking from the district magistrate confirming the unavailability of alternative land. A user agency refers to the entity proposing and overseeing the



the mobile tower. This entity could be a mobile network operator, government agency, or another party seeking permission for installation within a protected area.

Notably, no proposal for the installation of mobile towers in the core/critical tiger habitat, as notified under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, will be allowed.

guidelines The formulated in response to a significant number of proposals from various States and Union Territories seeking approval from the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife under the Ministry. These proposals aimed at the installation of mobile towers and laying of Optical Fiber Cables inside national parks, sanctuaries, tiger reserves, and tiger

corridors.

Continued on Page 2

Lakshadweep scripts a melodious story of

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

akshadweep, a group of Lislands Arabian Sea, which witnessed anti-India protests for a couple of months by secessionist forces who were out to create a hub of narcotics trade, is back to normalcy and that too in style. The residents of the picturesque islands are busy driving the economy in full speed adding colour to the Blue Revolution conceived by the Centre.

Now it is time for agatti, arabianesis, koyas, sulci

palma and purushothamani to rejuvenate the lives of Lakshadweep population. What and who are these characters? That we will come to later in the story. It all began last month with

the two-day long tour of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the islands where he interacted with the local residents, especially women. When the women shared with Prime Minister Modi how they are struggling to meet both ends, the latter explained to them about the potential of Pradhan Mantri Matsya





Sampada Yojana (PM MSY), a scheme to bring about the Blue Revolution through sustainable and responsible development.

The Prime Minister conferred with scientists of National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources, a unit under Indian Council of Agricultural

Agricultural Research (ICAR). Dr UK Sarkar, director, ICAR, briefed the Prime Minister about the five varieties of ornamental shrimps developed by the Centre for Peninsular Marine Fish Genetic Resources.

"Captive breeding of these shrimps is an ideal profession for women because it needs care, skill and of course the motherly touch. Beautiful shrimps with unique colour and design patterns have been developed in captivity by our scientists and we handed them over to the women in Lakshadweep," said Dr UK

Sarkar. Dr TT Ajith Kumar, principal scientist and the chief architect of the project, said community units, each aquaculture with an investment of Rs 2.5 lakh and

started functioning before the Minister's Prime reached New Delhi.

minimum ten women fishers

"There are 45 women fully engaged in breeding these unique shrimps which are a treat to the eyes. We have developed ornamental fish breeds and they command a good market," Ajith told The Pioneer. "The ornamental shrimps will

go much higher places than the ornamental fish breeds and will add colour to the Blue Revolution," he added.

Continued on Page 2

ED grills NCP chief Pawar grandnephew for 11 hours

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) continued to question NCP chief Sharad Pawar's grand nephew and MLA Rohit Pawar for more than eleven hours till late on Wednesday night, in an alleged money laundering case relating to Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank (MSCB)

Thirty-eight-year-old Rohit Pawar -- who went into the ED office at around 10.30 am after seeking the blessings of NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar and party's Working President and MP Supriya Sule at the nearby party office in south Mumbai had not stepped out of the investigation agency's office at 9.30 pm, sparking speculation about the possibility of his arrest in the case.

Earlier, a large number of the NCP workers, led by Supriya Sule, had gathered in front of the ED's office to cheer Jr Pawar and boost his morale ahead of his questioning by the ED. On his part, before entering the ED office, Rohit Pawar said: "I am carrying all the files



and documents that the agency had asked for. I will answer all the questions of ED and will support them. The ED officials are just doing their work, I don't have anything against

"I am ready to support the ED in every possible way. If these things are being done to put pressure on me, then they should realise that they are experimenting on the wrong person. I am not scared of anyone. I don't think they are going to arrest me but we will fight," Ir Pawar said.

Talking to media persons outside the ED office, Supriya said: "Satyameva jayate'... Let the truth triumph". is that he indulged in 'diversion of funds' to a company that made a bid to buy an ailing sugar cooperative factory.

On his part, Jr Pawar has consistently denied all the charges against him and said that he had not indulged in any wrongdoings as alleged by the police and ED, which had raided the company recently.
The Opposition Maha Vikas
Aghadi (MVA) leaders have

come out in support of Rohit Pawar. Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aditya Thackeray said that there was no rule of law in the country and those who spoke against the government were implicated in false cases. "This is typical of an authoritarian regime that we have in India. Are we in India or someplace like Pakistan? We appeal to the judicial system to uphold the rule of the law," Aditya said. MP Sanjay Raut came down heavily on the central investigation agency charging: "ED has become a branch of the Bharatiya Janata Party" which is targeting Opposition leaders in Maharashtra and other Opposition-ruled states in the

BJP launches Ayodhya chalo campaign

PNS LUCKNOW

Tn the wake of the consecration of Ram Lalla, the Bharatiya Janata Party launched its 'Ayodhya Chalo' campaign on Wednesday and it is set to continue until March 25.

Senior BJP leaders will lead nearly one lakh party workers to Ayodhya daily as part of this massive mobilisation

Devotees from various parts of the country have already begun their pilgrimage to Ayodhya for the 'darshan' of the newly-consecrated Ram temple. The BJP strategically aims to leverage the temple issue in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, with expectations that this religious sentiment will resonate positive-

Sources indicate that the BJP is meticulously organising arrangements for 50,000 to one lakh workers to visit Ayodhya daily over the next two months. Each day, a senior BJP leader will make the journey to Ayodhya and pay a visit to the Ram temple. The party is in the process of compiling a list of leaders who will partake in this symbolic campaign, with BJP's national general secretaries

and state in-charges entrust ed with the responsibility. Notably, during the consecra-

tion ceremony held on January 22, key BJP figures, including Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, party president JP Nadda, and chief ministers of BJP-ruled states, were notably absent. However, under the 'Ayodhya Chalo' campaign, these leaders are expected to join the pilgrim-

age to Ramnagari.
In a recent development, Nadda held a meeting with national general secretaries of the party in which leaders from Úttar Pradesh also took part. The meeting aimed to chalk out a strategy to seamlessly send one lakh workers to Ayodhya daily as part of the campaign. States have been urged to provide the names of leaders and the number of workers participating in this mass mobilisation effort.

The sources also suggest that the Lok Sabha elections might be announced in the first week of March. Consequently, the Ram temple issue is anticipated to take centre stage as a primary election focus, further underscoring the significance of the 'Ayodhya Chalo' campaign in the BJP's politi-

Second ED raid at Shahjehan house in Bengal yields nothing



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **KOLKATA**

The Enforcement Directorate officials secured by a large posse of central forces personnel and State police on Wednesday conducted raids at the house of Sheikh Shahjehan but returned almost barehanded. The raid was conducted I connection with the alleged Rs 10,000 crore ratio scam which has seen a number of TMC functionaries including former Bengal Food Minister Jyotipriya Mallick and a former municipal chairman Shankar Adhya from bordering town of

Bongaon going to jail. The ED officials had raided the same house of Shahjehan at Sandeshkhali in North 24

Parganas but returned with bloody noses, fractured heads and damaged vehicles when thousands of local supporters of Shahjehan a TMC tough and district board member attacked them forcing the central team to abandon its raids. Subsequently the Calcutta High Court on whose orders the investigations are being carried out while reprimanding the police and the ED officials wondered whether they would find anything I subse-

The TMC strongman who has since January 4 been have not surrendered before the law. "We have stuck a summons notice in his house asking him to appear before at ED office on January 29," an official

quent raids.

Simultaneous polls: Kovind holds fresh round of consultations with retired judges, industry body

 $F^{\rm ormer\ president\ and\ head}_{\rm of\ the\ high-level\ commit}$ tee on 'one nation, one election' Ram Nath Kovind has held fresh round of consultations on simultaneous polls with retired judges and industry leaders, an official statement said on Wednesday. In his fourth round of con-

sultations, Kovind met Justice Dilip Bhosale, former chief justice of Allahabad High Court, and Justice Rajendra Menon, former chief justice of the Delhi High Court, who gave their considered opinion on the subject, the statement

"Initiating discussions with financial and economic experts, Kovind also held interactions with Ajay Singh, president of ASSOCHAM, and chairman and managing director of Spicejet airlines who was also accompanied by Assistant Secretary general of ASSOCHAM," it said.

Singh put forth his views in detail on the economic advantages of holding simultaneous elections for the nation.



Earlier, Kovind had met Justice Munishwar Nath Bhandari, former chief justice of the Madras High Court, Justice Gorla Rohini, former chief justice of the Delhi High Court and former CEC Sushil

Separately, the committee has received nearly 21,000 suggestions from the public out of which 81 per cent "affirmed" the idea of simultaneous polls, an official statement had on Sunday said. Suggestions were also invited from 46 political parties. "Till date, suggestions have

ical parties," it had said. Various opposition parties, including the Congress and the TMC, have opposed the idea of holding simultaneous

Court disposes of FIR plea against Rahul for revealing identity of rape victim

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday disposed of a petition seeking registration of an FIR against Rahul Gandhi for revealing the identity of an alleged rape victim, after taking note of the submissions by the Congress leader, the city police and social media platform X that the post has been taken down.

reply given in Lok Sabha,

Supriya said: "As per the infor-

mation by the Government

through a reply given in Lok

Sabha, 95% of cases of ICE

meaning income tax, CBI and

ED are on people who are in

the Opposition parties... This is

not something that I am alleg-

ing.. Investigation must be

transparent and fair. I have full

faith in the ED and I am sure

Rohit Pawar, the CEO of

Baramati Agro Ltd, against

whom the Mumbai police reg-

istered an FUR in August 2019,

faces purported money-laun-

dering charges linked to Rs

25,000 crore MSCB loan dis-

they will hear Rohit's side".

Advocate Tarannum Cheema, representing Gandhi, told a bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Manmeet PS Arora that the tweet was withheld in India and has been taken down internationally. The counsel for social media

platform X (formerly known as Twitter), where the tweet was posted, also confirmed that Gandhi deleted the tweet which revealed the identity of the minor Dalit girl who was allegedly raped and murdered before being cremated in

Delhi government standing Tripathi, representing the Delhi Police, submitted a status report stating that an FIR was registered against Gandhi in 2021 and the investigation in is still going on.

He said unless the main crime of rape was proven, the subsequent act of publishing the identity of an alleged victim does not become a crime, and investigation on the issue of revelation of the victim's identity by Gandhi was under-

Disclosing the identity of a rape victim constitutes an offence under Section 228A of the Indian Penal Code and is punishable with imprisonment up to two years and fine.

In the post, which stands geoblocked by the social media platform, Gandhi had published a photograph with the parents of the nine-yearold girl who died under suspicious circumstances on August 1, 2021, with her parents alleging that she was raped, murdered and cremated by a crematorium's priest in southwest Delhi's Old Nangal

Following the post, Gandhi's account was suspended by the social media platform for some time but restored sub-

The court was hearing a 2021 petition by social activist Makarand Śuresh Mhadlekar seeking registration of an FIR against Gandhi for revealing the identity of the victim.

Noting the submissions o the parties, the high court said the prayers in the petition stand satisfied and disposed of the plea.

The court also noted the FIR was registered at the instance of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) registrar.

In response to the petition, the Delhi Police had said the plea had become infructuous after an investigation was ordered and the post made unavailable in India, and sought permission to file a status report in a sealed cover as it did not want to "scandalise" the matter.

Counsel for NCPCR had contended that the identity of a victim of sexual assault has to be protected from the moment the crime comes to light and that the protection does not come into force after the trial has concluded.

The counsel for the family of the child had objected to the discussion on the criminal case taking place in an open court. The petitioner's lawyer had stand, saying they failed to understand the seriousness of the matter and the identity of the child has to be protected even at the stage when allegations are being made.

NDA to organise Statewide padayatra in Kerala ahead of 2024 LS elections

PTI THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

s part of its groundwork for Athe upcoming Lok Sabha polls, the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in Kerala is organising an extensive statewide foot march for a month from January 27.

The primary objective of the campaign is to seek support from the people in a state where opposition parties hold sway before Lok Sabha polls, party sources said here on Wednesday.

BJP president J P Nadda will inaugurate the march in Kasaragod district on January 27. The month-long campaign, led by BJP state chief K Surendran, is scheduled to commence from the Thalippadupu ground in the evening on the said date. Titled "NDA Kerala Padayatra",

the foot march would pass through Lok Sabha constituencies in various districts before culminating in Palakkad ment said here.

Surendran would meet religious and social leaders and cultural icons during the journey and interact with the beneficiaries of various Central

the release of the development schemes. Besides Nadda, union ministers and national leaders will inaugurate the padayatra in various

ering each day. The padayatra would cover Kottayam, Alappuzha and Thiruvananthapuram con-stituencies on February 9, 10 and 12 respectively and Union Home Minister Amit Shah would inaugurate the march in the state capital, it said.

districts and address the gath-

At least 25,000 people, including those who have made their mark in different fields, would constituency.

Besides the exhibition of tableaux featuring various schemes implemented by the Narendra Modi government, the march would also witness

document of the NDA, the statement added. The march comes amid

renewed enthusiasm among party workers, following two consecutive trips by PM Modi to the southern state where he held two massive road shows -- one in Thrissur and another in Kochi -- early this month. Addressing a conclave of women in Thrissur, Modi sounded the poll bugle for the saffron party in the state by highlighting the implementation of promises he had guar-

Despite efforts since the 1980s the BJP is yet to make significant inroads into the state's politics, which is dominated by the Congress-led UDF and the CPI(M)-headed LDF.

Centre...

The construction of each mobile tower is estimated to require 0.02 hectares of land, equivalent to 200 square metres. To address potential concerns, the guidelines emphasise avoiding overlapping high radiation fields. New towers are cautioned against installation within a one-kilometer radius of existing towers. If new towers are deemed necessary, they must be erected with meticulous care precautions obstructing bird flight paths and prevent an increase in

Additionally, to ensure that mobile tower connectivity in protected areas is not misused by individuals violating forest and wildlife laws, such as poaching, the guidelines require the sharing of all call data records of suspected persons with relevant authorities.

combined radiations from all

towers in the area, as per the

The guidelines, signed by Rakesh Kumar Jagenia, Deputy Inspector General of Forests (WL) at the Ministry, also state that 'the location and frequencies of cell phone towers and other towers emitting EMR should be made available in the public domain. Location-wise GIS mapping of all cell phone towers should be maintained, which would, among other things, help monitor the population of birds and bees around the mobile towers and in and around protected

Air India fined ₹1.1...

'We are studying the order in detail and will review the options available to us, including our right to appeal, as well as taking it up with the

detailed probe after receiving a voluntary safety report from an airline employee alleging safety violations on flights operated by Air India on certain long-range terraincritical routes.

Since the investigation prima revealed compliance by the airline, the DGCA said a show cause notice was issued to Air India, it added. Specific details were not disclosed in the release. The DGCA analysed the airline's response to the show cause notice with respect to stretches the laid-down stipulations under the relevant statutory provisions and performance limits stipulated in critical documentations taking the enforcement action, the release said. On October 29, 2023, the pilot, who had served as a B777 commander, complained about the airline's practice of not carrying the required system of emergency oxygen supply. At that time, sources had said the complaint was that Air India has been operating flights with leased B777 aircraft that carry a chemically-generated oxygen system which lasts around 12 minutes, and hence should

not be used for the airline's

direct flights to and from San

The airline must consider that, in the event of an emergency depressurisation situation, there should be sufficient oxygen supply for regulator." all crew and passengers for According to the DGCA, the regulator conducted a minutes. According to the complaint, in the case of depressurisation, it is mandatory for the aircraft to descend to a flight altitude of 10,000 feet or lower. When flying over high mountainous terrain, which could be more than 9,000 to 10,000 feet, it might not be possible to descend to 10,000 feet within

12 minutes. This is due to the requirement of maintaining a minimum flight altitude of more than 10,000 feet for more than 12 minutes to be clear of vast mountainous terrain below, extending for hundreds of miles, as stated in the complaint.

"The matter in question is laid down by the OEM before multi-dimensional and has already been examined by Air India and external experts. We will refrain from offering any comment on this specific case, but we wish to reiterate that the safety of our passengers and crew is our foremost priority, and there is no compromise on the same," an Air India spokesperson said on November 3 last year regarding the complaint.

Meanwhile, on January 17, the DGCA imposed a fine of Rs 30 lakh on Air India for lapses in rostering pilots for operating flights in low visibility conditions.

Lakshadweep scripts a melodious story of...

According to Dr Sarker, the captive breeding of ornamental shrimp has the potential to emerge as an alternative livelihood for people in the coastal communities. Ajith says the shrimp developed in Lakshadwep will be different from that bred in Gulf of Mannar. "In the course of time, the Lakshadweep and Gulf of Mannar breeds will emerge as global trademarks," said Ajith.

With the Union Government giving the green signal for an international airport at Kavaratti, the islanders' concern about marketing the shrimp stand was resolved. Praful Patel, administrator of the islands, who had to face the ire of a group of people when he took charge in 2022, is a much relieved official now. Whatever he launched was met with suspicion. Even his efforts to make fresh and quality dairy products available to the residents were met with allegations that he was trying to saffronize the islands.

Agatti, arabianesis, koyas, sulci palma and purushothamani are shrimp varieties invented by Dr Ajith and his team of researchers.

The variety Koyas is a tribute to the sea faring population of the islands while purushothamani is the ICAR research scholar who lost his life mid-way through the research. The scenic islands will soon emerge as a hub of unique ornamental shrimps.

PM urges Ministers not to crowd ...

From Page 1

Sources said that while reading out the resolution adopted during the Cabinet meeting, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said that PM Modi fulfilled a centuries-old dream of the people. "The resolution stated, 'In 1947, the 'body' of the country gained independence, but its Pran Prathishta happened on January 22," Rajnath added. Several thousand people,

including top politicians,

businessmen, sportspersons,

and celebrities, were invited

to the consecration ceremony. The invitees later

had a darshan of the deity

soon after the consecration

ceremony ended. For the general public, the doors of the temple opened on Tuesday morning, with nearly five lakh devotees visiting the temple on the first day.

Access' for vehicles on specific roads leading to the temple has been temporarily suspended, requiring devotees to approach on security plan, involving personnel from the UP 8,000 8,000 police assigned for officers management in Ayodhya

over the last few days. Uttar Pradesh DG Law and Order Prashant Kumar mentioned that crowd management has been improved, and devotees are being facilitated for darshan in a very structured way. "Several channels/queues have been arranged so that all visitors can spend time at the temple. At the same foot. A comprehensive time, there is an appeal that people should be patient and not hurry or rush to the holy Police, Rapid Action Force city, particularly the elderly (RAF), and private security and the divyangs. The guards, has been administration and law & implemented, with over order have made elaborate arrangements for pilgrims," Prashant Kumar told The Pioneer.

INDIA Bloc speaks...

Rahul had mentioned on Tuesday that he and his family enjoyed a good chemistry with Mamata and that "talks are on with her, and things will soon fall into place."

Denying any talks of an alliance with the Congress, the West Bengal CM said, "I had no discussions with the Congress or anyone else. We had given a proposal which they refused from the start. Since then, our party has decided that we will fight alone in West Bengal. It is the decision of the party members, and I have to accept

Mamata even criticised the Congress leadership for not inviting her to Rahul's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, which has started from Manipur and will traverse through the breadth of the country, ending up in Maharashtra. She alleged, "They did not have the courtesy to invite me to the Nyay Yatra, which will pass through my State, despite the fact that TMC is a part of the INDIA alliance."

Interestingly, Rahul had earlier said that Mamata had indeed been invited to the Yatra. Apologising for some "occasional sparks that take place when some people from this side or that side make certain remarks," the top Congress leader mentioned on Tuesday that his party had "invited both Mamata ji and Nitish Kumar to join the (Congress') Nyay Yatra when it passes through Bengal and

Keeping her post-poll options open, Mamata said that she

was very much a part of INDIA alliance and would consider her commitments after the elections. Later in the day, she suffered a minor head injury after her car was involved in an accident. She was returning from Burdwan

to Kolkata by road. On Monday, Mamata had alleged that despite her being a part of the INDIA alliance and despite the name being conceived by her, she received little importance in the meeting where "the Left leaders' advice is given more preference, and the proceedings are run by the CPI(M)."The Left had already made it clear earlier that they would never go with the

The West Bengal Chief Minister is reportedly angry with certain remarks made by Pradesh Congress president Adhir Chowdhury, who had been asking for an honorable alliance. According to sources, a majority of Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) members,

Chowdhury, had demanded 6-8 seats from the TMC, whereas Banerjee was not willing to spare the two -Behrampore and Malda South presently being held by the Congress.

to Mamata's Reacting remarks, Congress chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh tried to do some damage control, expressing hope that things would be sorted out soon. He said, "Without TMC, the INDIA alliance cannot be thought of," adding, "Some way would emerge after discussions."

Security tightened for Republic Day at Kartavya Path

Elaborate security arrangements are being put in place in the national Capital ahead of the 75th Republic Day celebrations. Delhi Police said that around 14,000 security personnel will be deployed in and around Kartavya Path, where the Republic Day parade will take place. The decision has been made keeping in mind the safety and security of the 77,000 invitees expected at Kartavya Path.

According to police, about 14,000 security personnel will be deployed in and around Kartavya Path where the Republic Parade will take place on January 26.

Extensive arrangements have been made for the safety and security of the 77,000 invitees expected at Kartavya Path to watch this year's parade, they said. To maintain law and

night of January 25. To ensure smooth management of traffic, Dhaliwal requested that the people coming to witness the Republic Day parade use the park and ride facility and maximum public transport to reach the venue. During a press conference at the Delhi Police headquarters, Special Commissioner of Police (Security) Dependra Pathak said professional, robust and flawless security arrangements have been put in place all around Delhi for Republic Day.

The police has ensured that peace prevails in Delhi's vulnerable" areas following consecration ceremony at the Ram temple in Ayodhya. Peace is being maintained in the border areas with help of interstate Special Commissioner



Police (Law and Order, Zone II) Madhup Tiwari said at

Meteorological

Department data showed.

However, there has been no

rain in the city in January with

seven days to go in the month.

Last year in January, Delhi

received 20.4 mm of rain, more

than the normal of 19.1 mm,

IMD data showed. In January

2022, the city received 88.2 mm

of rain, more than the normal

of 21.7 mm.Before this year, the

winter of 2016 saw a deficit in

IMD has predicted that very

dense fog conditions are like-

ly to continue to prevail over

North India during next 4

days. IMD predicted severe cold day conditions likely to continue to prevail over North

India during next 2 days and

decrease in intensity there-

after. Light rainfall or snowfall

is likely to occur over Western

Himalayan Region from 25 to

rainfall.

"We have divided the New Delhi district, where the

Centre to hold off

parade will take place, into 28

arrangements, Tiwari further stated that missing persons booths, helpdesks, first-aid and separate facilitation booths where the visitors can deposit their vehicle keys before the parade have been set up. He also urged the people to reach the venue on time and cooperate with the security personnel during the thorough checking

On the question of checking shoes at the entry point, Tiwari said "frisking" will take place. Tiwari further said the force is on high alert to keep a tab on the areas of high footfall and the bordering areas of Delhi.

that will take place.

Missing Missing persons booths, helpdesks, first-aid kiosks and separate facilitation booths where the visitors can deposit their vehicle keys before the parade have been set up, he people to reach the venue on time and cooperate with the security personnel during the thorough checking that will take place.

Additionally, heavy transport vehicles and light goods vehicles will be barred from entering the national capital. In view of Republic Day celebrations, Delhi Police has issued a traffic advisory for the general public, which will be effective from 8pm on January 25 to 12 noon on January 26. 'In view of Republic Day

celebrations, General public is informed that the parking of vehicles in the parking lots at New Delhi Railway Station, Old Delhi Railway Station, Nizamuddin Railway station and Anand Vihar Railway station is not allowed from 2000 Hrs on 25.01.2024 to 1200 Hrs on 26.01.2024. All are advised to use public

up & drop vehicles will be available at outside railway stations for the use of commuters/passengers," according to the advisory.

Delhi Traffic Police also asked commuters to use public transport vehicles. "The pickup and drop vehicles will be available at outside railway stations for the use of commuters/passengers," the

advisory states. Meanwhile, special traffic arrangements have been made in the national capital due to Bharat Parva, a nineday annual mega event being held at Red Fort from January 23 to 31.

The event showcases Republic Day tableaux, performances Armed Forces bands, cultural performances, a pan-India food court, a crafts bazaar, and pavilions of state governments and central

City gets light rain as cold wave conditions continue

Some parts of Delhi and its neighbouring areas in the National Capital Region (NCR) received light rainfall in the early hours of Wednesday as cold wave conditions continued to prevail in the national Capital and several other places in North India. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) reported 'trace' rainfall at the Safdarjung observatory. Delhiites on Wednesday woke up to a slight respite from biting cold as the national capital recorded a minimum temperature of 8.3 degrees Celsius, a notch above the season's average. The maximum temperature was settled at 18.3 degree Celsius, two notches below the normal. Dry icy winds added the chill to the capital. Mungeshpur was the coldest station which recorded at 14.8 degree Celsius. Followed by Jafarpur at 15.1 degree Celsius,. The city saw some respite from "cold day" conditions on Wednesday with a slight rise in maximum and minimum temperatures, although the weather department expects respite to continue towards Thursday. Delhi has experienced five cold days and five coldwave days in January so far, the highest in the past 13 years, according to Meteorological

ious observatories in Delhi late night on Tuesday, with Safdarjung recording a visibility of 500 metres and Palam recording 700 metres at 11.45 pm. Delhi's Indira Gandhi Înternational Airport reported a visibility of 600 metres from 5.30 am. Several flights were delayed at the Indira Gandhi International Airport. According to the Indian Railways, 24 Delhi-bound trains were delayed by one to six hours due to fog in parts of northern India

According to IMD, the national capital has not received any rainfall in January so far, an unusual occurrence when compared to previous years, according to IMD's data. 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 stricter curbs on better air forecast

 $A^{
m mid}$ worsening air quality, the Centre on Wednesday decided to hold off the implementation of stricter measures to curb pollution in Delhi-NCR as forecasts suggested that the situation may improve.

Delhi's 24-hour average Air Quality Index (AQI) on Wednesday breached the 400 mark, a level requiring authorities to invoke stricter curbs under Stage 3 of the Centre's air pollution control plan called the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP). The AQI at 4 pm was recorded at 409 in the national capital.

"CAQM Sub-Committee for operationalisation of GRAP met today and took stock of the air quality situation, and meteorological forecast and the projected air quality index by the Meteorological Department and the Indian Institute of Tropical

With the India Meteorological Department (IMD) and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) forecasts suggesting an improvement in the air quality, the Sub-Committee unanimously decided to watch the situation for a day or more, before invoking Stage 3 of GRAP. ongoing

preventive/restrictive actions implemented under Stage 1 and Stage 2 of GRAP will continue, it said. Stage 3 curbs include a ban on non-essential construction work and the plying of BS III petrol and BS IV diesel four-wheelers in Delhi-NCR.

Construction work related to national security or defence, projects of national importance, healthcare, railways, metro rail, airports, interstate bus terminals, highways, roads, flyovers, overbridges, power transmission, pipelines, sanitation, and water supply were

NDMC takes slew of decisions, thanks Modi for Ram temple



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) on Wednesday approved various proposals relating to citizens, employees and tech-driven education initiatives.

The members of the NDMC also proposed a vote of thanks to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the inauguration of Ram temple in UP's Ayodhya and expressed their gratitude to him.

The Council approved distribution of Pre-loaded Tablets for Digital Learning to the students and teachers of Class-9th to Class 12th in NDMC and Navyug Schools. "NDMC had distributed 811 tablets to the students of Class 10th and 12th in four Schools as pilot project. Now, this project is being extended for procuretablets to the students of classes from 9th to 12th and teachers teaching from 9th to 12th classes of all NDMC/Navyug Schools," it said.

It said that the strength of stu-

dents from 9th to 12th and teachers teaching in these classes of all NDMC/Navyug schools is 8766. Tablets (out of which 8138 tablets are for students and 628 tablets are for teachers) for current session i.e. 2023-2024 are required. Therefore, a total of 8766 tablets are proposed to be procured and distributed, exact number may slightly vary as per actual enrollment in 2024-25 academic session in these 4 classes (Class IX to XII) in which these Tablets are likely to be distributed.

The agency said that up-gradation of 29 Computer Labs in NDMC & Navyug schools has

BJP welcomes Lokayukta notice to AAP leaders Jain, Sisodia

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The BJP on Wednesday welcomed the issuance of notice to former Delhi Ministers Manish Sisodia and Satyendar Jain by the Lokayukta of Delhi Justice Harish Chandra Mishra on a petition filed by MP Manoj Tiwari alleging Class Room Scam . According to Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva and MP Manoj Tiwari, the Lokayukta has issued notices to Sisodia and Jain.

Sachdeva has said that the Lokayukta in his order in the matter of Tiwari's complaint has found a prima facie case against Sisodia and Jain and thus issued notices to them. Tiwari was represented by his lawyer Amit Tiwari.

BJP MP Manoj Tiwari said that it has been a long case for me and the Delhi Government tried its best to get it dropped mid way but our advocate pursued it well enough to take it to a culmination of getting a notice to them. Tiwari said AAP ministers have misused their admistrative position and got the Rs. 989 crores Class Room project broken down in 16 tenders of less then Rs. 100 crores each so as to get them cleared by using their power & influence in Expenditure

Take down flags with images of Lord Ram carefully, officials told

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Department data.

¬he Municipal Corporation **I** of Delhi (MCD) and the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) have issued directions to carefully take down the flags and banners with pictures of Lord Ram and Hanuman that have been put up to decorate city streets to celebrate the consecration ceremony of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

According to the Chamber of Trade and Industry (CTI), an umbrella body of around 800 trade organisations in Delhi, 10 lakh flags were placed in 700 markets in the capital on the occasion of Ram Lalla 'pran pratishtha' ceremony. The civic body has directed the

officials to keep a check on flags, posters and banners bear-

and take them down to avoid them from falling down on the

"We have directed all sanitation officers to keep a check on such posters/banners and dispose them off with dignity so as to ensure that no sentiments are hurt," an official of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) said.. On being asked when is the

process expected to be completed, the official said the work is being carried out with desired urgency. The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has also directed the market associations in their areas to remove the decorative items respectfully and dispose them as per protocols. The council has identified 14 places



and urged the RWAs and markets association to dispose off these flags here,

"We have directed the market associations to respectfully take down the flags and items that were put up by the market associations," the official said.

Khan Market Traders' Association president Sanjeev Mehra said that they had put up 150 flags and approximate-

y 2,000 metres of danglers for the occasion. "We are environ-mental friendly market association and we believe in sustainability. We did not buy plastic flags or any other material. All the decorative material was of cloth and we have

them in transparent bags and kept them at the store. We will use them next year when January 22 arrives. Some flags were stolen also," he said.

Federation on Sadar Bazar Trade Association president Rakesh Kumar Yadav said they will remove all the flag posters collecting items bearing Lord Ram's name and image after the Republic Day celebrations. They plan to donate these flags to the temples and ashrams.

"The damaged flags will be buried in the soil," Yadav said. The Trade Association has also made a public announcement to ensure that the fallen fags or any other decorative item bearing Lord Ram's picture is handled with care till the time they are taken off.

formed a team of traders in all markets to responsibly take down the flags in their respective markets. The traders association has launched an initiative to take down the flags and banners carefully and keep them safely.

'The 'pran pratishtha' utsav of Ram Lalla has been completed now. Now, there is a need to save these sacred flags, which can fall due to wind," the CTI said in a statement. "If these flags can be used in future, then preserve them, otherwise dispose of them as worship material," it added. The 'pran pratishtha' ceremony of Ram Lalla took place in Ayodhya on January 22 in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Metro services to begin at 4 am on Republic Day

he Delhi Metro will com-I mence services at 4 am on all its lines to facilitate the public to reach Kartavya Path for the Republic Day parade on January 26, DMRC officials said on Wednesday.

Services will be available at a headway of 30 minutes till 6 am and the regular timetable will be followed after that for the rest of the day, they said. "People who will be in possession of bona fide e-invitation cards or e-tickets for attending the Republic Day

coupons on production of government-issued identity cards at stations, which will be valid for exits from Central Secretariat and Udyog Bhawan stations only to reach Kartavva Path," a Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) statement said.

The same coupon will be valid for return journeys from these two stations. The officials further said passengers with invitation cards marked for enclosures 1 to 9 and V1 and V2 should deboard at Udyog Bhawan.

LG reviews progress of important DDA projects in city

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has reviewed the progress of important projects being undertaken by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) in the city. "The projects worth over Rs 4,500 crore are slated to be completed between February-April this year and have the potential of positively altering the cityscape, the city's skyline as well as giving impetus to inclusive in situ rehabilitation of slum dwellers in the national capital, the LG office said on Wednesday.

During the meeting convened by him on Tuesday, the LG along with all concerned senior officers of DDA went into details of the civil and electrical works, procurements and

for the projects and fixed the timelines in accordance with the developments that have taken place so far.

Saxena expressed satisfaction over the status of installation of various artefacts that include a huge Nandi Statue at Yashobhoomi in Dwarka, lifesize Elephant and Lion figurines and fountains in Dwarka and Baansera.

to the delay being caused in the development of Vaishnavi-the Nursery-cum-Garden-cum-Recreational Space in Ashok Vihar in North Delhi.

mandatory clearances required

He expressed grave exception

'Vaishnavi, which was con-

ceived on the very second day of Saxena taking over as LG in a visit to the location, has been hanging in balance for the past more than one year with much work pending due to the



tractor," the LG office said. The LG ordered for the contract to be revoked, EMD and bank guarantee of the con-

tractor to be seized and the firm be blacklisted and asked officers to float a fresh tender. It may be mentioned that Saxena has ever since taking over been monitoring all on-

going projects on a weekly basis and visiting the sites to assess actual progress on ground.

The projects being implemented by the DDA included Jailorwala Bagh in situ rehabilitation project that will house 1,675 families living in neighbourhood slums is complete and will be handed over

to the beneficiaries by the first week of March Among others, the ambitious

Karkardooma ToD project has the potential of not only changing the skyline of east Delhi, but also bringing about unprecedented socio-economic changes in the area. The cost of the entire project is Rs 1,168.54 crore.

Dwarka with iconic replicas of

all States and UTs, represent-

Among others, the ambitious KarkardoomaToD Project has the potential of not only changing the skyline of East Delhi. The project will have its EWS housing component, comprising 498 flats in a G+22 floors with basement parking complex will be ready by February, 2024. The cost of the entire project is Rs 1168.54 cr. The first phase of the grand Bharat Vandana Park in

ing a Mini India will be completed by March, 2024. The 200 acre park, in all respects will be ready by June this year. The cost of the project is Rs

512.47 cr. Sporting infrastructure that includes Golf Course in DwarkaSector-24,and several 'Centres of Excellence" at Dwarka Sector-8, 19, 23 and Rohini Sector-33, pertaining to specific aquatic and field sports will be ready between March and April, 2024. The total amount being spent on creating this Sport Infrastructure is to the tune of Rs 377.08 cr. Works under the recently

a u n c h e "DilliGramodayaAbhiyan" in all villages of the city, will receive a major fillip with the first pilot project in Qutabgarh Village getting completed by

Walk-in/Online Interview for following position(s)/ discipline(s): VC No. Post vacancies 40/24 **Environmental Social Monitoring** 2 Junior Design Engineer (Mechanical)/ Medical Gas Line System Junior Design Engineer (Electrical) CAD Draughtsman (Structural) 1 CAD Draughtsman (Electrical) CAD Draughtsman (HVAC) CAD Draughtsman (Water Supply) CAD Draughtsman (External Work) CAD Draughtsman (Equipment) For details regarding Position, pay scale, qualification, age

date & venue, selection process etc., candidates may see the detailed advertisement posted on RITES website www.rites.com under Career Section.

PM calls NCC cadets, NSS volunteers Amrit Peedhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Ahead of Republic Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacted with NCC cadets and NSS volunteers in the national Capital on Wednesday. "Your generation is called GenZ in your language. But I will call you Amrit Peedhi..." the PM told NCC, NSS cadres. Reiterating India's resolve to become a developed nation by 2047, the Prime Minister emphasised the importance of the next 25 years for the future of India and the present generation.

"It is the Government's resolve to fulfill all the dreams of the Amrit Generation, create countless opportunities, and remove all obstacles in their paths", the Prime Minister said. He stated that the discipline, focused mindset and coordination witnessed in today's performance are also the basis for realising the dreams of

The Prime Minister reiterated that 'Nation First' should be the

guiding principle of the Amrit Generation. The Prime Minister also told the young audience never to allow despair to set in their lives. Stressing the importance of every small contribution, PM Modi, stressed "Yahi Samay hai Sahi Samay hai, Ye Aapka Samay Hai - This is the right time, this is your time."

Stressing the importance of the present moment, the Prime Minister asked the youth to impart strength to their resolve to achieve the goal of Viksit Bharat. And to expand the horizon of knowledge so that Indian geniuses could give new direction to the world and gain new capabilities so that India could solve the world's problems. He elaborated on the steps for creating new avenues for youth to realize their full potential and mentioned creating new opportunities in newly opened sectors. PM Modi gave examples of creating new opportunities in the space sector, push towards Ease of Doing Business, creating a private sector in the



defence industry, establishing the National Research Foundation and creating modern educational facilities to cater to the 21st century.

Mentioning the Government's decision of Bharat Ratna for Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur, PM Modi marked this as the government's good fortune and underlined the need for the young generation of today to know about the great personality. The Prime Minister recalled his rise despite extreme poverty and social inequality as he became Chief Minister and always maintained his down-to-earth

The Prime Minister also mentioned reforming the education system in India which allows attaining higher education in the mother tongue and not being bound to a particular stream or subject. Encouraging the youth to engage in research and innovation, the Prime Minister mentioned Atal Tinkering Labs which inspire creativity and innovation. He underlined that the govern-

tunities for girl students who want to make a career by joining the army. "Now, girl students can also be admitted to various Sainik schools", the Prime Minister said urging them to move forward with full confidence. "Your efforts, your vision, your potential will take India to new heights", he added. Throwing light on his connections with NCC, the Prime Minister said that institutions like NCC, NSS or cultural camps make the youth aware of society and civic duties. He informed about the creation of another organization - 'My Yuva Bharat' and urged the youth to register as 'My Bharat' Volunteers.

During this Republic Day Celebration, the Prime Minister highlighted the multiple opportunities to witness multiple programs, visit various historical places and meet experts. "This will be an experience that you will remember for the rest of your life. Every year whenever you watch the Republic Day parade, you will

will also remember that I told you this", Modi said. He also urged them to record their experiences and learnings from the Republic Day celebrations which can also be shared with the Prime Minister in writing or video recording on NaMo App. "Today's young generation can stay connected with me continuously through the NaMo App", PM Modi empha-

Concluding the address, the Prime Minister expressed belief and faith in the strength of the youth. He urged them to study hard, be a conscientious citizen, protect the environment, avoid bad habits and be proud of the nation's heritage and culture. "You have my blessings, my best wishes", PM Modi concluded. Union Minister of Defence, Shri Raj Nath Singh, Union Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs, Shri Anurag Singh Thakur, and Union Ministers of Tribal Affairs, Shri Arjun Munda were present on the occasion

PM to interact I bow to Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur: Modi with young voters today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

 $P_{\text{Modi will speak to a large}}^{\text{rime Minister Narendra}}$ number of young voters on the National Voters Day on Thursday through a programme organised by the youth wing of the ruling BJP. Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) president Tejasvi Surva said that young voters played a key role in electing Modi as Prime Minister in 2014 and then his re-election

"They are very enthusiastic for electing Modi ji as prime minister for a third term," he told reporters, claiming that there have been unparalleled opportunities for youngsters in the BJP-led NDA government.

The unemployment rate is at an all-time low amid the rapid

pace of economic growth and huge boost to infrastructure which has directly and indi-rectly benefitted the youth in

a big way, he said. Surya said lakhs of young voters will virtually connect with the prime minister at nearly 5,000 places across the coun-

It is historic as this is the first time a prime minister will be interacting with young voters at such a scale, he said, asserting that such an exercise will encourage their participation in elections and deepen the country's democratic roots.

There are over seven crore voters in the 18-25 years group, he noted, adding that the government has brought numerous schemes and policies to help them, including by establishing many new IIMs, IITs and medical colleges.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

 $P^{\text{rime Minister Narendra}}_{\text{Modi on Wednesday paid}}$ heartfelt tributes to two-time Bihar Chief Minister Karpoori Thakur, who has been named for the country's highest civilian award Bharat Ratna, on the occasion of his 100th birth anniversary, acknowledging his significant contributions to social justice and unwavering commitment to the welfare of the people. Modi said Thakur's relentless pursuit of social justice created a positive impact in

Sharing his write-up on the pioneering backward caste leader, Modi posted on X, "I bow to Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur Ji on his birth centenary. On this special occasion, our Government has had the honour of conferring the Bharat Ratna on him. I've penned a few thoughts on his unparalleled impact on our society and polity."

Overcoming numerous obsta-

cles, Thakur achieved a lot and worked for societal betterment, the prime minister said.

Thakur's most significant contributions to India was perhaps 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, he said. His decision was met with heavy opposition but he did not bow to any pressure and his policies laid the groundwork for a more inclusive society, where one's birth did not determine one's fate, the prime minister wrote in an article which appeared in many newspapers on Wednesday. Modi said his government over

the last 10 years has walked on Thakur's path, bringing in schemes and policies that have brought transformative empowerment. The prime minister said, "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." He said the life of 'Jan Nayak', as Thakur came to be known

as, revolved around the twin pillars of simplicity and social justice, and his simple lifestyle and humble nature resonated deeply with the common people till his last breath.

Those who worked with him recall how he preferred to spend his own money for 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

When Thakur passed away in 1988, several leaders went to his village to pay tributes and were moved to tears seeing the condition of his house, he noted.Looking at his torn kurta at an event to mark the birthday of socialist icon Jayaprakash Narayan in 1977, Chandrashekhar, another political stalwart, asked people to donate some money so that Thakur could buy a new kurta. but the then Bihar chief min-

ister donated the amount to the CM Relief Fund, he recalled. Modi said social justice was most dear to Thakur and his political journey was marked by monumental efforts to cre-Today, when people from OBC, SC and ST Communities are ate a society where resources were distributed fairly, and everyone, regardless of their social standing, had access to opportunities.

He took a distinctly anti-Congress line because he was convinced very early on that the Congress had deviated from its founding principles, Modi said. Education was a subject very close to his heart and he worked throughout to improve education facilities for the poor, the prime minister said.

One of the biggest tragedies of our polity has been that barring a few leaders like Thakur, the call for social justice was restricted to being a political slogan, he said. Modi added, "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

becoming entrepreneurs due to MUDRA Loans, it fulfills Thakur's vision of economic Independence, he said. "Likewise, it was our government which had the privilege of extending SC, ST and OBC reservation. 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," he added. As a person belonging to the backward classes himself, Modi said, he has much to thank Thakur for. He said, '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 heart and minds of crores of people due to his work. He was a true Jan

Researchers find correlation between energy drink consumption, poor sleep



Marketed as mental and physical pick-me-ups, energy drinks are popular with college students and young people in general. However, a significant correlation between the consumption of energy drinks and poor sleep quality, as well as insomnia, has been revealed in a large Norwegian study published in the journal BMJ

The study, conducted among college students, found that the higher the frequency of energy drink consumption, the fewer hours of nightly sleep students experienced. Even occasional consumption, defined as 1-3 times a month, was linked to an increased risk of disturbed

Energy drinks contain an average caffeine content of 150 mg per liter, along with sugar, vitamins, minerals, and amino acids, said the study, drawing on over 53,000 participants aged 18 to 35 and indicated that daily consumption led to around half an hour less sleep than occasional or no consumption.

Both men and women who reported daily consumption experienced associations with waking after falling asleep, taking longer to fall asleep, and poorer sleep efficiency.

prevalent among those reporting daily consumption compared to occasional or no consumption.

Sex differences were noted in energy drink consumption patterns, with women more likely than men to report never or seldom consuming energy drinks. The study highlights a dose-response association, indicating that as energy drink consumption increased, so did the risk of sleep problems across various aspects, with the strongest associations found for short sleep duration.

The observational nature of the study conducted by researchers Siri Kaldenbach, Mari Hysing, A Strand and Børge Sivertsen from various top research institutes and Hospitals in Norway, means that causation cannot be definitively established, and reverse causality (poor sleep leading to energy drink consumption) could also be a factor. Nonetheless, the findings suggest that the frequency of energy drink consumption may be a modifiable risk factor for sleep issues among college and university students. Concurring with the study

observation. Ashim Sanyal, CEO of Consumer VOICE, a consumer rights organization working in the field of cardiovascular health for sever-

serve as yet another wakeup call for the Government and ensure a clear and interpretive Front of Packaging labels (FOPL) so that a buyer knows what he/she is purchasing. "Consumers have a right to make informed choices on the foods they eat. Having a simple Warning Label on pack-

> he said. These products are clearly also root causes for NCDs affecting individuals across all age groups and regions.

aged foods will help con-sumers identify foods that

are high in fat, sugar and salt,"

According to Kavita Devgan, noted nutritionist and author, "Some so-called health/energy drinks for children actually fall under the dangerous HFSS (High Fat Salt Sugar) category and can lead to obesity, diabetes, and other related problems from an early

"Parents often introduce these sugary drinks to children as early as 2 years thinking that they will supplement the missing nutrition from their children's diet,

But these sugar-laden drinks can add a lot of extra sugar to their diet and may increase the risk of lifestyle diseases among children. So parents must read the labels carefully before introducing any new packaged food in their child's

mid the blame game Amid the plant guarded Capital and its neighbouring States over the issue of emitting pollution, a review carried out by the University of Surrey and regional Government officials in Delhi has said Delhi needs the help of its rural neighbours to finally beat its killer smog problem.

Professor Prashant Kumar, founding director of Global Centre for Clean Air Research (GCARE) at the University of Surrey, said: "Air pollution doesn't respect city boundaries - and so it must be tackled at regional level. If cities like Delhi want to avoid the lethal smog seen in recent years, they'll need neighbouring rural areas to help them.

"We know this approach works



we've seen success in places like Mexico City and Los Angeles. By working together, we can tackle air pollution." In most Indian cities (60%), the air is over seven times more polluted than it should be. This has huge health implica-

Some of this pollution comes from neighbouring rural areas

- from crop burning, wood stoves, or power plants.

Yet measures to tackle urban smog usually ignore rural sources. Instead, they focus only on measures within the city limits – like boosting public transport or controlling pollution from industry and building sites.

The GCARE review "A critical

review of managing air pollu-the Delhi Pollution Control ommends tackling air pollution at a regional level instead. This means identifying the wider area where a city's pollution is produced - its so-called "air-

The organization has enlisted a slew of measures such as regional air quality plans should be drawn up – which has worked well in places like Mexico City and Los Angeles. "Smog forecasts" could be produced with better monitoring. Satellites could spot bonfires and other sources of pollution. Scientists could then predict how it would interact with weather conditions. "Airshed Councils" could help local, regional and federal agencies co-ordinate their efforts. Dr Anwar Ali Khan, Senior

Environmental Engineer on

in their areas too. We need an action plan with a sound scientific basis, and we need better monitoring. "This requires cities, governments and others to work together. A joined-up approach

important role to play in help-

ing save lives in our city - and

is the only way to defeat this deadly health hazard." Dr Mukesh Khare, Professor **Emeritus of Civil Engineering** at the Indian Institute of Technology, said, "A significant portion of air pollution stems from sources outside city lim-

its, which requires a shift from city-specific to region-specific emission reduction targets. The establishment of an airshed will be a critical tool for effective air quality management and planning."

Genetic markers linked to premature ageing reversed in children with diet

physical activity program for

weight management in chil-

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

Agenetic marker linked to premature aging was reversed in children with obesity during a six-month diet and exercise programme, according to a recent study led by the Stanford School of Medicine.

Children's telomeres - protective molecular "caps" on the chromosomes — were longer during the weight management program, then were shorter again in the year after the program ended, the study found. The research has been published in Pediatric Obesity. Like the solid segment at the end of a shoelace, telomeres protect the ends of chromosomes from fraying. In all people, telomeres gradually shorten with aging. Various conditions, including obesity, cause premature shortening of the telomeres.

The new study is the first to

link a behavioral eating and

dren with obesity to healthy changes in average telomere length. The discovery may help scientists understand how the biological benefits of losing weight, eating healthier and being more physically active occur. The findings also imply that telomere length may be a good marker for measuring the benefits of healthy dietary changes, physical activity and weight management, as changes in telomere length appeared to be somewhat independent of traditional markers such as body mass index. 'We saw that the recommend-

ed behaviors everyone knows about — eating fewer high-fat or high-sugar foods and fewer calories, increasing physical activity, and reducing screen time — can slow down biological aging associated with obesity in children," said the study's senior author, Thomas

"It's remarkable to see effects on the chromosomes with behavioral treatments," he said. Understanding how behavior changes to reduce obesity are biologically linked with other conditions such as heart disease and diabetes would help scientists understand how the process might be slowed or reversed. "We know a lot about cardio-

vascular risk for adults, but for kids, we've just said 'obesity is bad' yet we don't know, biologically, how cardiovascular risks linked to obesity start in children," said the study's lead author, David Rehkopf, ScD, associate professor of epidemiology and population health and of medicine. "To have this biological measure with a strong genetic component turn out to be changeable when we give kids resources to be healthier, especially over a

short period of time, was very

interesting and exciting,

Murmu inaugurates Kaushal Bhawan



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday inaugurated Kaushal Bhawan - a new building of the Ministry of Skill

Development Entrepreneurship According to a statement here, the President visited the exhibition stalls set up by the beneficiaries of various initiatives of the Government such as PM Vishwakarma, PM JANMAN, Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP), Pradhan Mantri Vikas Yojana Kaushal (PMKVY) and interacted with them. The Kaushal Bhawan whose

foundation stone was laid in March 2019 will provide office space for the Ministry as well as its associated organisations the Directorate General of Training, the National Council for Vocational Education and Training and the National Skill Development Corporation.

Three lakh devotees offer prayers at Ram temple

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Despite temperatures plummeting to 2.9 degrees Celsius, the unyielding devotion of pilgrims continues to illuminate Ayodhya, as devotees persist in seeking darshan of Ram Lalla for the second consecutive day. By the afternoon, 3 lakh people had paid obeisance to Ram Lalla, officials said.

Ramesh Mohan Shastri, a 62-year-old devotee from Chhattisgarh, shared his profound commitment, stating, "The cold weather does not deter us. The darshan has given me

new energy. I am energised." Usha Mishra, another devotee, highlighted the patience and dedication of Ram Bhakats, saying, "Ram Bhakats have patience. They are ready to stand in line in this cold, just to have darshan of my Prabhu." The vibrancy of the scene is further enhanced by the presence of devotees, some barefoot on the marble floor, braving the cold with unwaverSanjay Singh, a member of the Rapid Action Force (RAF) deployed outside the temple, expressed his emotional response to witnessing the devotion of the people. He said, "It is heartening to see such devotion. Eldery people, some mothers carry-ing their children, are patiently waiting in line. The chant of 'Jai Sri Ram' is giving them the energy and power

Following an overwhelming first day where over 5 lakh pilgrims had darshan strict consults. shan, strict security measures were intensified on Wednesday after the crowd of devotees went out of control the previous day. Singh, reflecting on the security measures, stated, "Our primary concern is ensuring the safety of the devotees. It's emotionally overwhelming to witness their devotion."

As a precautionary measure, the movement of inter-State buses through Ayodhya has been halted, with no buses allowed to enter the city. Long-route buses now pass through the outer periphery of the city to maintain smooth traffic flow.



Barricading inside the temple premises has been strategically implemented to streamline the devotees'

movement and prevent chaos. A security official highlighted the organised arrangement, saying,

"There was a queue outside the temple today. There was an atmosphere of chaos on Tuesday, but that is no

more. Devotees are being sent to the sanctum sanctorum by forming

of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, devotees are granted entry onto the Ramjanmabhoomi path after thorough checks. To control the crowd. the police installed sturdy steel railings on Tuesday night, ensuring a structured and safe passage for the

The detailed makeup of Ram Lalla, adorned in green clothes and a gold crown, adds a visual spectacle to the devotion. Anticipating a continuous influx of devotees, Ramlala is scheduled to give darshan for 15 hours, from 7 am to 10 pm. At noon, the temple doors will briefly close for 15 minutes, dedicated to offering food and aarti to the deity.

"The spectacle of devotion, resilience, and meticulous arrangements continues to underscore the profound significance of the ongoing pilgrimage in Ayodhya, where the spirit of 'Jai Sri Ram' reverberates, providing devotees with the energy and power to persevere in the midst of the cold," Sanjay Prasad, Home Secretary to UP



Monkey enters Ram temple; beautiful incident, says Trust

monkey entered the sanc-Atum sanctorum of the new Ram temple in Ayodhya and left without creating any trouble, a "beautiful incident" shared by the temple Trust on social media. The Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust said security personnel deployed there felt as if Lord Hanuman himself had come for a darshan of Ram Lalla, the child Ram deity consecrated at the temple on Monday.

The temple trust shared the incident, that took place on Tuesday night, on its official 'X'

"A beautiful incident happened in Shri Ram Janmabhoomi 5.50 pm, a monkey entered the It has also been placed in the sanctum sanctorum through the southern gate and reached

near the 'Utsav idol'. The security personnel posted outside ran towards the monkey thinking that it might drop the idol on the ground

"But as soon as the policemen ran towards the monkey, it ran calmly towards the northern gate. Since the gate was closed, it moved towards the east and passed through the crowd of visitors and went out through the eastern gate without causing any trouble to anyone. The security personnel said that for them it is as if Hanuman ji himself had come to see Ram Lalla," the Trust posted on X, formerly Twitter. The old idol of Ram Lalla, which was earlier kept in a makeshift shrine, is now being referred to as 'Ut-

sanctum sanctorum of the new Ram Lalla temple.

Gyanvapi survey to be given to both sides: Varanasi court

PTI VARANASI

AVaranasi court on Wednesday ruled that the ASI report on the Gyanvapi mosque complex survey will be given to both sides while making it clear that the report should not be made public, the counsel for the Hindu litigants

District Judge A K Vishvesh said both the Hindu and Muslim parties shall give an affidavit to keep the report with them and not make it public, said Madan Mohan Yadav, the counsel for Hindu side. Following a July 21 order of the district court, the ASI carried

out the scientific survey of the Gyanvapi premises, located next to the Kashi Vishwanath temple here, to determine

whether the mosque was constructed over a pre-existing structure of a Hindu temple.

Yadav said the ASI submitted its survey report in the Fast Track Court of Justice Prashant Singh after which the matter came in the district judge court

who ordered to provide hard copies of the report to the par-

On Wednesday, the Muslim side pleaded in the district court that the survey report should be with the parties and not be made public.

On this, the court said while acquiring that report, the parties shall give an affidavit to keep the report with them and not make it public. The survey was ordered by the

ers claimed the 17th-century mosque was constructed over a pre-existing temple. The ASI had submitted its survey report to the district court

court after the Hindu petition-

in a sealed cover on December The ASI had on January 3

urged the court not to make its Gyanvapi complex survey report public for at least four more weeks, citing the December 19 judgment of the Allahabad High Court.

is in process to avail the LAP against his L-Type

Portion of Property Bearing Municipal No. L-

Yogi bid to check gun culture in Bulandshahr

PTI ■ BULANDSHAHR (UP)

Nearly 400 'tamancha'-wielding people in west-ern Uttar Pradesh's Bulandshahr district have been rendered ineligible for contesting the elections or Government jobs in the last three years courtesy their conviction under the Arms Act,

2023, according to official Those convicted have been

igible for contesting the elections, getting Government jobs or tenders for contract works and cannot apply for passports or arms license, police officials said, citing provisions of the Arms Act. Spread over 4,353 square kilometers with a population of over 35 lakh (2011 census), Bulandshahr is known for its Bulandshahr is known for its rich agricultural land, sugarcane production, pottery works and historical sites like

chas" in the region.



विक्रम विश्वविद्यालय उज्जैन

क्रमांक/भण्डार/2024/761

दिनांक 24.01.2024

प्री-एण्ड पोस्ट परीक्षा परिणाम प्रोसेसिंग कार्य हेत् द्वितीय ई-निविदा विज्ञप्ति विक्रम विश्वविद्यालय, उज्जैन प्री-एण्ड पोस्ट परीक्षा परिणाम प्रोसेसिंग कार्य

कराया जाना है। एतद हेतु इस कार्य में दक्षता रखने वाली फर्म/संस्थानों से प्री-एण्ड पोस्ट परीक्षा परिणाम प्रोसेसिंग आदि कार्य कराए जाने हेत द्वितीय ई-निविदा www.mptenders.gov.in पर आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदाओं का विस्तत विवरण विक्रम विश्वविद्यालय, उज्जैन की वेबसाइट www.vikramuniv.ac.in

APPENDIX IV-A

म.प्र. माध्यम/113418/2024

NORTH : PLOT NO. 257

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

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

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

Paramjeet Singh/ Dimpal/ Appartment No. 147, 3 BRF (UGF), Gulmohar March 04, 2013 Delhi/ NCR

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

Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession

City, Derabassi, Mohali/ January 23, 2024

with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICÍ Bank Limited

nongage in respect thereof. For Juris NextGen Law Offices E-56, LGF, Greater Kallash Enclave Part-1 New Delhi-110048

2/120, Area Measuring 8.88 Sq. Yds., Old Plo No. 120, Situated at Shastri Nagar, Delhi 110052 (availing loan from SHFL) acquired the 01.09.2023 executed by Ramesh Kumar, Raj Kumar, Monika, Pushpa Dang, Goldy, Shilpa Vohra & Saurav Kumar in favour of Veena Rani. (Doc. No. 9943), she confirmed that she is not

having the below documents pertaining to the property in question, in lieu of that she lodged an FIR on dated 17/1/24: ●Original regd. GPA, ATS and Will dated 13.12.1973 executed by Nayyar Jahan Begun in favour of Satya Parkash.(Doc. No. 7151) ● Original GPA, ATS and Will dated 04.03.1974 executed by Satya Parkash in

intimate or delivered at the below address

Unit No. FF-2. First floor, Mahaluxmi Metro Town

Sec-4, Vaishali, Gzb., U.P., Mob. 9810063351 APPENDIX IV-A

Authorized officer

Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited

THE PIONEER A

THANKSGIVING Thank you holly spirit for all the blessings Celine.

PD(251)C

PUBLIC NOTICE Notice is hereby given that my client Shiv Kumar is in process to purchase the Freehold Residential Plot area measuring 80 sq. yds. Out of Khasra no. 409M Situated at Village Haldoni Pargana & Tehsil Dadri Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar Uttar Pradesh (availing loan from Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Ltdl from Cast Recent Carts Cast. Smt. Poonam, Gupta, Smt. Laxmi Gupta, Smt. Himanshi Gupta, Ms. Kanchan Gupta, Ms. Chanchal

Gupta Sh. Hitinder Gupta all are the legal heirs of Lati

Gupta Sh. Hitinder Gupta all are the legal heirs of Late Smt. Birnla Dev. who acquired the same vide Sale Deed dated U6.04.2017 (Doc no. 4198) executed by Sh. Rohtash Sharma
All personls having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, (icense, lein, charge, pledge, easement or otherwise howsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date heroof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned. Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate) Unit No. FF.2, First floor, Mahaluxmi Metro Tower Sec.4, Vaishali, Gzb., U.P., Mob. 9810063351

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known to all that Our Client namely Anuradha Sharma Sahni W/o Sh Vikas Sahni R/o F-8/9, Model Town -II, North West Delhi 110009, Swapnii Parashar & Vinci Parashar S/o & D/o Late Sh. Sarvesh Parasher and Late Smt Anita Parashar R/o F-8/9, F Block, Mode Town-II. North West Delhi 110009 has been trying to find/trace Sh. Shivi Sharma S/o Late Sh. Mahesh Sharma and Late Smt. Ameeta Sharma R/o H No 23C, C2B Block, Janakpuri. New Delhi, the legal heir of late Sh. Jagdisl Prasad Sharma and Late Smt. Prem Lata Sharma for several months and even after their sincere efforts the above said person is not traceable.

Any other person(s) having any whereabouts

the person is requested to contact the undersigned since Our Client, is unable to get the Surviving Member Certificate made for the deceased namely Sh. Jagdish Prasad Sharma and Late Smt. Prem Lata Sharma. The concerned person or anyone having the where about of the abovementioned person i requested to contact the undersigned, failing which Our Client would get the Surviving Membership made from the concerner registrar and any claim thereafter by anyone would not be entertained thereafter.

Pushp Saini (Advocate Surviving Advocate Surviving Su

Satyam Legal Offices Advocates and Solicitors 115A, Ekta Enclave, Peeragarh Metro Station, Delhi - 110087 My Client Sh. Darvesh Vashistha S/o Sh. Surender Vashistha is the Owner of Built-up Property Bearing no. WZ-296-C, Area Measuring 20.90 Sq. Mtrs. Khasra No.60/20, Village Palam, Situated in Unauthorized Colony Palam Village Extn. Area. New Delhi-110045 Vide Registered Authorization Slip Regd. No. 7663, Dated- 02.07.2022 SR- IX, New Delhi Executed By DDA PM-UDAY CELL. This Abovemental property is sonig to be Mortzage with Feld nentioned Property is going to be Mortgage with Fed Bank Financial Services Limited. If Any Person/ bank/financial Institution having any claim/right, lien, any objection whatsoever in regard to above property, should notified to the undersigned/Adv. Vishal Mehan, E-713, Karkardooma Court, Delhi-110092 along with locumentary evidence under address through egistered A/d within 15 days from the date of ublication of this notice failing which any claim, lier objection shall be deemed to have been waived. Adv. Vishal Mehan, E-713, Karkardooma Court, Delhi-110092; Mobile no. 9811215181

Public Notice

pursuance to rule 19(2) of DCS rules 2007, it is to inform publicly that Ms. Radha Devi (M.No. 239) member of Bihar Bandhu CGHS Ltd.has resigned rom the membership of the society and she had been refunded through accoun payee cheque for her contributions anyone has any objections he/shmay file his/her objection in the office of the RCS, Parliament Street New Delhi-110001 or at society office i.e. Flat No. 3, Pocket-5, DDÁ Flats Sector-12, Dwarka, NewDelhi-110075 within 15 days from the date of publication of the public notice. Secretary - Bihar Bandhu CGHS Ltd

the date of receipt of the said notice.

Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number

LBDEL00001483338

Accici Bank | Branch Onice, 1010, 52111

BIHAR BANDHU CO-OPERATIVE GROUP HOUSING SOCIETY LTD Flat No.3, Pocket-5, DDA Flats, Sector-1 Dwarka, New Delhi-110075

PUBLIC NOTICE

Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Properties E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) and Rule 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement)

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Properties mortgaged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN: L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor"), the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and whatever there is " has is on 12 02 2024 from 02 00 PM, to 04 00 PM, for recoven whatever there is basis on 12.02.2024 him to 2.00 F.M. to 04.00 F.M., to 16.00 et al. of Rs. 64,89,203/- (Rupees Sixty Four Lakh Eighty Nine Thousand Two Hundred Three only) pending towards Loan Account No. HHLDPM00514883, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 13.01.2024 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 14.01.2024 along with legal expenses and other harges due to the Secured Creditor from SUNIL PAHWA, KAIZEN PAHWA TECHNOCRATS PVT. LTD. (THROUGH ITS DIRECTORS) and CHARU PAHWA. The Reserve Price of the Immovable Properties will be Rs. 59.00.000/- (Rupees Fifty Nine Lakh only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 5,90,000-(Rupees Five Lakh Ninety Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve

> DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES PROPERTY NO. 1

ENTIRE UPPER GROUND FLOOR OF BUILT - UP PROPERTY BEARING NO. 252 WITHOUT ROOF RIGHTS) AREA MEASURING 25.90 SQUARE METERS NOT NOT NOT NOT SELECT, WE WEAD NOT 25.30 SQUARE WELLERS, BLOCK/POCKETD-11, SECTOR 7, ROHINI, NEW DELHI-110085ALONGWITH ONE - FOURTH UNDIVIDED SHARE IN STILT PARKING AND WHICH IS **BOUNDED AS FOLLOWS:-**

SOUTH : PLOT NO. 253

Rs. 14,38,789/- & Mohali

Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited

ENTIRE UPPER GROUND FLOOR OF BUILT - UP PROPERTY BEARING NO. 253

(WITHOUT ROOF RIGHTS), AREA MEASURING 25.90 SQUARE METERS, BLOCK/POCKETD-11, SECTOR7, ROHINI, NEW DELHI-110085 ALONGWITH ONE-FOURTH UNDIVIDED SHARE IN STILT PARKING AND WHICH IS BOUNDED AS FOLLOWS:-NORTH : PLOT NO. 252 SOUTH: PLOT NO. 256

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided

PROPERTY NO. 2

on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiabullshomeloa bidding, log on to www.auctionfocus.in Authorized office Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited Place : NEW DELHI

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

Pallavi and Mr. Vipin Mahotra and Mrs. Pallavi and Mr. Vipin Mahotra have approached Jana Smilinance Bank Limited for financial assistance and herefore shall be mortgaged with the said Bank We give this public notice that if any person having any claim/objection regarding ownership and/or creating mortgage of the said property or any part of the said property in favour of Jana Small Finance Bank Limited: is/are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to undersigned with supporting documentary evidence at the address mention below within 7 days from the date oublication of this notice, falling which any claim, if any, of such persons will be consider to have been waived and/or, abandoned and our client shall proceed with the disbursement of loan against the sald property and subsequent creation of Mortgage in respect thereof.

Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation an Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) and Rule 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN: L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor") the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whateve there is" basis on 12.02.2024 from 02.00 PM, to 04.00 PM, for recovery of Rs. 22,00,298/- (Rupees Twenty Two Lakh Two Hundred Ninety Eight only pending towards the Loan Account No. HHLGRG00242059, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 18.01.2024 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 19.01,2024 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from SANJAY SRIVASTAVA and ARCHANA SRIVASTAVA. The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 10.60.000/- (Rupees Ter

Lakh Sixty Thousand only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 1,06,000/- (Rupees One Lakh Six Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF UPPER GROUND FLOOR, REAR RIGH

HAND SIDE (THE SAID FLOOR) ADMEASURING 41.81 SQ. MTR. BUILT ON PROPERTY BEARING NO. 125 OUT OF KHASRA NO. 351, SITUATED IN VILLAGE BINDAPUR, DELHI, AREA ABADI NOW KNOWN AS COLONY T BLOCK EXTENSION, UTTAM NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110078, DELHI WITH PROPORTIONATE RIGHTS OF LAND UNDERNEATH, COMMON STAIR CASE ENTRANCE, PASSAGE & SUBMERSIBLE, WITH ALL COMMON RIGHTS OF THE BUILDING, INCLUDING RIGHTS APPURTENANT THERETO WITH COMMON ONE CAR PARKING SPACE AT GROUND FLOOR.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provider on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiabullshomeloans.com. Fo bidding, log on to www.auctionfocus.in

Authorized office Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited

APPENDIX IV-A

Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and

Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable Property mortgaged to Indiabulish Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN: L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor") the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whateve there is" basis on 27.02.2024 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of Rs. 18,64,585/- (Rupees Eighteen Lakh Sixty Four Thousand Five Hundred Eighty Five only) pending towards Loan Account No. HHLVAS00421841, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 18.01.2024 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other elated loan document(s) w.e.f. 19.01.2024 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from VIPIN MISHRA and JYOTI SHARMA.

The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 15,00,000/- (Rupeer

Fifteen Lakh only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 1,50,000/(Rupees One Lakh Fifty Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF FLAT NO. 301, HAVING COVERED AREA OF 51.09 SQ MTRS., FIRST FLOOR, FRONT RIGHT HAND SIDE (WITHOUT ROOF)

RIGHT), BUILT ON PLOT NO. A-7/2, DLF ANKUR VIHAR, RESIDENTIAL COLONY, LONI, GHAZABAD - 201010, UTTAR PRADESH. THE SAME IS BOUNDED AS UNDER: EAST: FLAT NO. 302 WEST: PLOT NO. A-7/1 NORTH: 9 METER ROAD AT G. FLOOR SOUTH: C. PASSAGE AND FLAT NO. 304

Date: 18.01.2024 Place: GHAZIABAD Authorized office Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided

on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. ww

In the last three years, a total of 392 accused have been convicted by the local court under Buland Darwaza. the stringent law, with their numbers rising from 49 in 2021 to 122 in 2022 and 221 in

jailed and also rendered inel-

However, the district also infamously gained prominence over the past few years due to the prevalence of illegal firearms, particularly single-shot pistols called "taman-

APPENDIX IV-A Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property

Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 ead with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and the **physical possession** of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever there is" basis on 27.02.2024 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of Rs. 21,02,382/- (Rupes Twenty One Lakh Two Thousand Three Hundred Eighty Two only) pending towards Loan Account No. HHLNOI00285096, by way or outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 18.01.2024 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w. e. f. 19.01.2024 along with legal expenses and other

charges due to the Secured Creditor from RAJESH KUMAR and ASHA. The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 15,75,000/- (Rupees Fifteen Lakh Seventy Five Thousand only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 1,57,500/- (Rupees One Lakh Fifty Seven Thousand Five Hundred only) i. e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY FLAT NO. UG-3, UPPER GROUND FLOOR, REAR SIDE MIG FLAT, PLOT NO. F-

24, BLOCK - F, SLF VED VIHAR, LONI, GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH - 201102. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiabullshomeloans.com. For bidding, log on to www.auctionfocus.in

Date: 18.01.2024 Place: GHAZIABAD

APPENDIX IV-A

Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property
E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and

Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to Indiabulla Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN: L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor"), he constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whateve there is" basis on 27.02.2024 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of Rs. 2,58,36,615/- (Rupees Two Crore Fifty Eight Lakh Thirty Six Thousand Six Hundred Fifteen only) pending towards Loan Account No. HHLLAJ00501980, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 18.01.2024 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 19.01.2024 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from KUNSANG TENSING TAMANG and

TENŽIN SANGMO. The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 2,70,00,000/- (Rupees Two Crore Seventy Lakh only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 27,00,000/- (Rupees Twenty Seven Lakh only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY ENTIRE SECOND FLOOR WITHOUT ROOF RIGHTS, (I. E ABOVE STILT FLOOR

AND FIRST FLOOR (UPPER GROUND FLOOR), ALONGWITH 1/4TH OWNERSHIP RIGHTS IN STILT PARKING, PART OF ABOVE SAID FREEHOLD BUILT - UP PROPERTY BEARING PLOT NO. 83, BUILT ON LAND MEASURING 202.500 SQUARE METERS SITUATED IN MODEL TOWN, NEW DELHI – 110009, ALONGWITH FREEHOLD PROPORTIONATE RIGHTS IN THE LAND

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiabullshomeloans.com. For idding, log on to www.auctionfocus.in

Place: NEW DELHI

Authorized officer Indiabulis Housing Finance Limited

APPENDIX IV-A Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property

E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN: L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor"), the **physical possession** of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on **"as is where is"**, "**as is what is" and "whatever there is**" basis on **27.02.2024** from **02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M.**, for recovery of Rs. 12,66,059/- (Rupees Twelve Lakh Sixty Six Thousand Fifty Nine only) pending towards Loan Account No. HHLNOI00271167, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 18.01.2024 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 19.01.2024 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from MANZOOR ALIANSARI and SHAISTA.

The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 10,25,000/- (Rupees Ten Lakh Twenty Five Thousand only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 1,02,500/- (Rupees One Lakh Two Thousand Five Hundred only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price

> DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY GF-1 (L. I. G), HAVING COVERED AREA ABOUT 350 SQUARE FEET

(32.51 SQUARE METERS) ON GROUND FLOOR (WITHOUT ROOF RIGHTS), RIGHT HAND FRONT SIDE, PLOT NO. B-1/22 A, DLF ANKUR VIHAR, PARGANA & TEHSIL LONI, GHAZIABAD – 201005, UTTAR PRADESH. BOUNDED AS: EAST : COMMON PASSAGE & STAIRS WEST : 12 METER WIDE ROAD NORTH: FLAT NO. GF-2 SOUTH: PLOT NO. B-1/22B

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiabullshomeloans.com. For

Authorized officer Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited

Date: 18.01.2024 Place: GHAZIABAD

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Up, up and away!

The Indian stock exchange overtakes Hong Kong's, securing fourth place globally

■ n what must come as happy news for its economy, India's stock exchange has surpassed Hong Kong's to become the fourth largest global equity market. This accomplishment underscores India's economic resilience and its growing significance in financial arena. The surge of India's stock exchange to this reputable position is due to a confluence of factors. Foremost among these is the comprehensive economic reforms in recent years. Measures such as the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and the establishment of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) have created a business-friendly environment, fostering investor confidence. Simultaneously, India has witnessed a steady inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI), driven by initiatives like 'Make in India' and liberalised FDI norms. These efforts have positioned India as an attractive destination for global investors. Technological advancements have played a pivotal role in transforming the Indian stock market into a more accessible and efficient



platform. The widespread adoption of online trading platforms, mobile applications and other technological innovations have democratised investment, expanding the investor base. India's stock market has exhibited resilience during global economic challenges, navigating the uncertainties brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. This ability to weather economic storms and rebound swiftly has reinforced investor confidence on both domestic and international fronts. The implications of India's stock exchange securing the fourth spot on the global stage are profound.

This achievement is expected to attract increased foreign capital, stimulating economic growth, job creation

and supporting infrastructure development. Furthermore, the higher global ranking enhances India's visibility and credibility as an investment destination. The thriving stock market has the potential to translate into capital appreciation for individuals and institutions, thereby potentially boosting consumer spending and overall economic activity. However, amid these positive developments, challenges such as market volatility, regulatory concerns and geopolitical factors must be accounted for. A responsive regulatory framework is crucial to ensuring the stability and integrity of financial markets. Unfortunately, many cases of insider trading and unscrupulous practices have come to light. The sad part is that SEBI, entrusted to safeguard investor interests and regulate the market, has often failed in controlling the frenzy which results in wiping away a sizeable amount of small investors' money. That is a concern to be addressed immediately and SEBI must be made more powerful to deal with unscrupulous brokers and entrepreneurs. Indeed, India's stock exchange securing the fourth position globally is a momentous achievement that reflects growing appeal for investors. As India continues to enact reforms, attract foreign investment, it is poised for sustained economic growth. Managing challenges proactively will be essential to ensuring the long-term stability and vibrancy of our markets.



Students in traditional Punjabi attire during the full dress rehearsal for the Republic Day Parade 2024, in Amritsar

Bharat Ratna: Honouring the legacy of Jan Nayak



The Bharat Ratna, conferred posthumously to Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur, gives a fitting tribute to his work and ideals

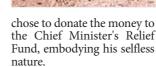
he celebration of Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur's birth centenary has been marked by a momentous announcement from the Indian government, bestowing upon him the prestigious Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian award in the nation. Renowned for his relentless dedication to reshaping social justice, Karpoori Thakur has left an indelible mark on the lives of millions. His remarkable journey, from the marginalized barber community to the pinnacle of political leadership, is a testament to his unwavering commitment to social reform.

In the dynamic tapestry of Bihar's socialist movement, Karpoori Thakur's name resonated alongside stalwarts such as Ram Vilas Paswan, Sharad Yadav, and Chandrashekhar. Emerging from a disadvantaged background, he surmounted numerous obstacles to not only enhance his social standing but also to champion the cause of those on society's periphery. His enduring influence on the underprivileged persists, symbolizing mental fortitude for the backward society.

The government's decision to posthumously honor Karpoori Thakur with the Bharat Ratna underscores the extraordinary legacy of this Bihar-born socialist leader. A statement from Rashtrapati Bhavan lauds him as a trailblazer of social justice and an inspirational figure in Indian politics. The award serves as a fitting tribute to his lifelong dedication to uplifting the deprived sections of society and his relentless pursuit of social justice.

Karpoori Thakur's life was a testament to simplicity and social justice, pillars that defined his persona as the people's hero. From his unassuming lifestyle to his humility, he endeared himself to the common folk. Anecdotes abound, such as the incident with Chaudhary Charan Singh, where he refused personal gains even when offered a plot of land during his tenure as Chief Minister.

, another instance snow cased his simplicity when he the foundation for a more joined party leaders in a torn kurta for a celebration in Patna. Despite offers for a new kurta, he hailing from the most back-



The Bharat Ratna announcement, made a day before his centenary, elevates Narendra Modi's standing among the Bihari and socialist public. Karpoori Thakur, a champion of social justice, envisioned a society where resources were equitably distributed, and opportunities were accessible to all, irrespective of social sta-

His political journey, beginning in the 1950s, saw him win every election, reflecting the trust bestowed upon him by the people. Serving as Chief Minister from 1970 to 1971 and later from 1977 to 1979, he aligned himself with the working class, laborers, and small farmers. As the Education Minister, he championed the abolition of English in matriculation exams and focused on improving education facilities for the underprivileged. Participating in the Quit India Movement as a youth, Karpoori Thakur remained unwavering during the Emergency, earning praise from leaders like JP, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, and Charan Singh. His pivotal role in strengthening affirmative action for backward classes, despite strong opposition, laid inclusive society.

Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur,



THE POSTHUMOUS CONFERRAL OF THE BHARAT RATNA UPON JAN NAYAK KARPOORI THAKUR STANDS AS A **POIGNANT** RECOGNITION OF A **LEADER** WHOSE LIFE WAS **DEDICATED** TO THE SERVICE OF THE **MARGINALISED** AND THE **UPLIFTMENT OF THE**

ward section of society, stands as a beacon of inclusivity and a true people's hero, making the Bharat Ratna bestowed upon him a fitting tribute to his monumental contributions to Indian society. The recognition posthumously bestowed upon him not only honors his memory but also serves as an inspiration for future generations to continue the pursuit of social justice and equality. As India reflects on the life and legacy of this exceptional leader, it is a reminder that the struggle for a just society is an ongoing journey, and the ideals championed by Karpoori Thakur still remain relevant. The posthumous conferral of the Bharat Ratna upon Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur stands as a poignant recogni-tion of a leader whose life was dedicated to the service of the marginalized and the upliftment of the downtrodden. As we commemorate his birth centenary, this prestigious award serves as more than a tribute; it is a testament to the enduring impact of his vision for a just and inclusive society. Karpoori Thakur's legacy is multifaceted, embodying simplicity, humility, and an unwavering commitment to social justice. His journey from a humble background to the echelons of political leadership serves as an inspiration, proving that resilience and dedication can break through societal barriers. The government's

Ratna upon him is not merely a recognition of past achievements but a call to contemporary and future leaders to emulate his principles. In a time when the pursuit of social justice remains a critical imperative, Karpoori Thakur's life provides a roadmap for leaders to navigate the complexities of governance with integrity and compassion. As Narendra Modi's government makes this historic announcement, it resonates not only with the people of Bihar but with the entire nation. It underscores the importance of recognizing and celebrating leaders who prioritize the well-being of the most vulnerable in society. The Bharat Ratna for Karpoori Thakur is a bridge between the past and the present, con-

necting the ideals of a bygone era with the challenges and opportunities of today. In honouring Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur, India acknowledges the pivotal role he played in shaping a more inclusive society and encourages a new generation of leaders to champion his ideals. As the nation pays tribute to this true people's hero, the Bharat Ratna becomes a symbol not only of recognition but also a call to action, urging us all to carry forward the torch of social justice and equality in our ongoing pursuit of a more just and compassionate India.

(The writer is a senior journalist, views are personal)

THE EDITOR

Policy reforms needed to boost manufacturing



JAY SHAH

By creating an environment conducive to manufacturing, India can attract investments and become key player in the global manufacturing hub

ith the swift expansion of India's manufacturing sector, the country is poised to become a leading global manufacturing force. Currently positioned among the top three preferred global manufacturing locations, India has the potential to boost its exports to an impressive USD one trillion by 2030. However, within the spectrum of various supply chains, the challenges and opportunities of Indian manufacturing are evident in the wooden pallet sector. To consolidate its position in the pallet industry, essential policy reforms are necessary for sustainable growth and global leadership. Indeed, critical policy changes are required for India to smoothly transition into a global manufacturing hub, ensuring enduring growth and competitiveness on the international stage.

Infrastructure Development India needs to focus on developing robust infrastructure, including transportation, power, and telecommunications, to support the manufacturing sector. The government should invest in building modern industrial parks,



transportation networks to reduce manufacturing costs and improve competitive-

Sustainable Manufacturing In the era of increasing environmental awareness, sustainable and eco-friendly manufacturing practices are becoming imperative. The government should encourage manufacturers to adopt green technologies and sustainable processes by providing incentives and enforcing regulations that promote environmental responsibility. This not only aligns with global trends but also enhances the reputation of Indian products in international markets.

Simplified Regulations The regulatory environment in India is complex, and businesses face bureaucratic hurdles. Streamlining regulations and creating a more businessfriendly environment will encourage investment and growth in the manufacturing sector. Implementing a singlewindow system for approvals, clearances, and licenses can facilitate ease of doing busi-

Skilled Labour Development India's education system needs to adapt to the changing needs of the economy by providing relevant skills training. Addressing the shortage of skilled workers in the manufacturing sector is crucial for its growth. The government should focus on creating appropriate skill sets among the workforce to meet the demands of modern manufacturing

Government schemes

The government has introduced Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes to promote domestic manufacturing and increase India's share of global exports. These schemes encourage investments in manufacturing and provide incentives for various sectors, contributing to the growth of the manufacturing industry.

Foreign Investment India's trade policies and foreign investment regulations play a significant role in attracting global manufacturers. The government should continue to focus on policies that promote domestic manufacturing, reduce import dependence, and encourage foreign investment in the manufacturing sector.

Tax Reforms A competitive and stable tax regime is essential for attracting investment. India needs to rationalise its tax structure, ensuring that it is transparent and predictable. Reducing corporate tax rates, providing incentives for research and development, and promoting innovation through tax breaks will encourage manufacturing companies to invest

and operate in India. Becoming a global manufacturing hub requires a comprehensive and coordinated effort from the Indian government, industry players, and other stakeholders. The success of these reforms will not only boost the economy but also create employment opportunities and enhance India's standing in the world of international trade and commerce.

(The writer is an Industry expert, views are personal)

BAIL PROCESS DELAYS

Sir — Indian judiciary is known to move at a snail's pace. As much as bail is a matter of right it is equally important that the right is accorded expeditiously to individuals. In bail orders, there should not be undue delay in the orders of the court reaching the prison authorities. The Supreme Court has said that despite its repeated directives, High Courts are delaying adjudication of bail applications. With the exception of an intervening application, all bail matters have to be decided within two weeks of being filed and all anticipatory bail within six weeks, the top court has reiterated again recently.

This order came after an anticipatory bail application was kept pending for judgment for one year by a High Court after it was initially heard. Though bail is a temporary privilege by definition, the nonuniformity in its interpretation has, sometimes, led to chaos. Despite the sheer number of bail applications filed before them, High Courts should evolve a mechanism for their speedy disposal because Section 436 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) defines bailable offences and the underlying principle behind granting of bails by courts, as "personal liberty". Freedom and personal liberty are fundamental rights of a citizen as laid down by Article 21 of the Constitution.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

POLITICAL ALLEGATIONS

Sir — Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday said that the Union Home Minister once had termed the National People's Party (NPP) led Meghalaya government "the most corrupt" in the country but later allied with them. Addressing the public in Ri Bhoi district, Rahul Gandhi said, "Meghalaya is not ruled from here but from Delhi. This is not acceptable. The nation is facing the highest levels of unemployment in the last 40 years. Rahul Gandhi reiterated his

Coffee plantation in Odisha

decision to bestow the Bharat



 he Odisha state cabinet has approved a coffee plantation for sustainable livelihood (CPSC) scheme with an outlay of 1,144 crore. Under this scheme, Coffee plantations in the state will be extended to one lakh from ten thousand acres. The scheme will be implemented in the six districts in the state. Koraput, Rayagada, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Keonjhar, and Gajapati will benefit from this scheme

Additionally, women's Self-help groups will be involved in raising coffee nurseries which will benefit more than fifty thousand farm families in the region. Recently, Coffee has emerged as one of the major production from Odisha due to its agro-friendly climate and support from the state machinery.

The coffee produced in the state has already gained international recognition. Coffee is a profitable commercial crop because of its growing popularity in the market. Good quality coffee production on a large scale will make a scope for export to other countries. This scheme will encourage the tribal people of the area to engage in these activities and earn profits. This will boost the economy, tourism, and scientific education in these six districts. If distribution and marketing are done properly Odisha's coffee will spread more and get worldwide recognition through this

Deba Prasad Nayak | Dhenkanal

Modi for "not visiting Manipur" and said that the ideology of the Bharatiya Janata Party has destroyed the idea of Manipur. Politics of hatred and violence have torn the state apart.

Prime Minister after so many months has not bothered to visit Manipur. Is Manipur, not an Indian state?" Congress leader said. Earlier in February last year, the Union Home Minister had said that the Meghalaya government was filling its coffers with poor people's money and said that it is the most corrupt government in the country. BJP and NPP were partners in the outgoing government but fought the assembly polls separately. After the Assembly poll results, the BJP came into coalition with the NPP by extending support. With this, it is a double standard game which is unfortunate. Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM SUMMIT Sir — The 'Back to Basics' strategy, attacks on Prime Minister Narendra embraced at the World Economic Forum

(WEF) summit in Davos, fell short with elaborate discussions and superficial intentions. Conversations about warinflicted economic crisis barely captured the scenes. The looming threats of Greenwashing, market volatility, erosion of the tax base through havens, and other critical economic issues were largely neglected.

While the IMF anticipates a substantial economic downturn in 2024 alongside mounting debts, the Davos meeting appears devoid of any therapy. Furthermore, the persistent notion that 'Europe's problems are the world's problems' continues to resonate, disadvantaging the ailing Global South. Following a lacklustre COP28 and now the WEF, the desertification of multilateralism is paving the way for the return of Cold War-era bloc politics.

Abhisek Pani Bhubaneswar

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FIRST COLUMN

TO STAY BLESSED, **TAKE SHELTER IN GOD**

Those who take shelter in God and have faith in him are under His protection



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

et us examine in detail some of them. Money is most sought after by almost one and all. Is it a shelter? Yes, it provides material objects, comforts in life, etc. But are these sufficient for quality of life? If they were, rich people would be peaceful, happy and secure. Are they? Because money cannot buy these. One has to go to God for them. One has to do spiritual activities to please God. This is the way the System works. Let us agree that money has an important role in our lives, but it cannot be our shelter. By the way, God can provide what we lack and provide security for what we have, if we remain in His shelter. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 9.22) The next most soughtafter shelter is a sense of enjoyment like eating tasty food, watching something exciting, etc. These are fine if they are appropriate for our needs. (6.17) Otherwise, as the verse tells us our troubles will not reduce. Troubles there must be in this world, an impermanent place of miseries. (8.15) Rather our sufferings will increase manifold if we seek shelter in sex, considered the highest sense of pleasure. It must always be within the limit of dharma to be acceptable. (7.11) Then, there are many, who take shelter in work. They are called workaholics. A new addiction has arrived. These are our cell phones. People are forever checking it for messages, and information, and what happens? The Internet takes charge of us through provocative ads and promises of easy money. One corrupts and the other fools. It has become a pandemic, far from being a shelter.



Everyone is looking for security, beginning with a toddler. He gets it from his parents, especially from his mother. One can understand this, as this is nature's arrangement. But as we grow, we need to make the right choices. We don't; some of us seek from influential persons, and now bogus gurus. Everything has a price, but people generally don't seek it from God, where it is best available. Why? They are not prepared to pay its price, which is to surrender to the Almighty. If one does, troubles will come and go, because God will help. (18.58) Otherwise, they will take their time, as destined. Yes, many turn to God in distress. (7.16) God appreciates it also. (7.18) But again one has to deserve such help by pleasing God by spiritual acts. (18.65)But the modern man chooses to sleep over proper action. Sleeping pills have become quite common. Eat them and everything will be fine. Does it become?

Seeking shelter in greed is a common refuge, fueled by the prevailing materialism that drives the pursuit of quick wealth. However, success is not solely determined by greed or hard work; destiny plays a crucial role. Even the poorest work diligently, challenging the notion that wealth is solely a result of effort. The human psyche often grapples with negative emotions such as anger and revenge, leading to a loss of inner peace.

The alternative proposed is seeking refuge in God. Amidst life's uncertainties, relying on God's protection is advocated to avoid potential misfortunes. Actively seeking shelter from God instills confidence and invites abundant grace into one's life. Surrendering to God's guidance in the spiritual journey attracts positive fortune, transcending the challenges posed by human nature. Although the decision may contradict inherent tendencies, spiritual intelligence can overcome such resistance. Associating with spiritually wise individuals in satsang proves beneficial in navigating this transformative journey. Once embarked upon, the spiritual path becomes irreversible, guided by the munificence of God

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

Has the Non-Aligned Movement lost its plot?



Acknowledging the paradoxical essence of the Non-Aligned Movement, let us openly recognise the recent assembly's inherent absurdity

ollowing the opulent Davos event, the World Economic Forum of Klaus Schwab, gathered by Western elites, scrutinized topics ranging from the implications of AI to the looming threat of mysterious Disease X, a surge of anti-Netanyahu sentiments emerged in Kampala. This sentiment was notably expressed by members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) during their gathering. The choice of location held historical significance, situated around 53 kilometres from the site of Operation Entebbe, where Benjamin Netanyahu's brother tragically lost his life almost five decades ago. Over the years, Kampala and Entebbe have undergone transformative changes, witnessing the rise and fall of rulers. Yoweri Museveni, Africa's fourth-longest-serving head of state, now leads NAM, a leader with a complex history, having ousted the tyrannical regimes of Idi Amin and Milton Obote and faced serious accusations of crimes against humanity. The irony lies in Museveni now advocating for justice in Gaza and accountability against Israel, encapsulating the conflicting ideologies within NAM.

Addressing the paradoxical nature of NAM, let's candidly acknowledge the absurdity of its recent gathering, which diverted attention from pressing global issues. While many member states grapple with internal conflicts and political chaos, the organization indulges in verbose deliberations. Though we are passing a moment of need, it is crucial to refrain from romanticizing historical achievements and confront current failures. Instead of lamenting only the plight of Palestinians, perhaps NAM should focus on alleviating the tangible struggles of its member countries. If they genuinely wanted to help Palestinians, redirecting financial resources towards essentials such as drinking water and medicine could have a more meaningful impact. Providing victims with necessities rather than holding conferences to indulge in rhetoric would be a more effective use of public funds, emphasizing the organization's responsibility and accountability.

Despite its historical significance, the NAM finds itself in a state of decline, resembling

a fading relic. Decades have passed since the departure of its original leaders, leaving the organization with waning influence. The current members show little intent to breathe new life into this slowly deterioratentity. It is essential to grasp the reality that the heyday of NAM is long gone. The organization, which once played a pivotal role, now struggles for relevance. The lack of a cohesive vision and commitment among member countries hastens NAM's natural demise. The time has come for a critical reassessment of its purpose and the genuine dedication of member nations to its survival.

The architects of the NAM were visionary leaders from Europe, Asia, and Africa, including Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia, Jawaharlal Nehru (India), Gamal Abdel Nasser (Egypt), Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), Sirimavo Bandaranaike (Sri Lanka), and Sukarno (Indonesia). These eminent figures envisioned not only the destiny of the Third World and developing nations but also recognized the crucial role of international peace and security for humanity. Their collective insight emphasized that freedom from superpower rivalry, the cessation of colonialism and imperialism, and global peace required collaboration, not division. The founders aimed to shield newly inde-



DESPITE ITS HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE, THE NAM FINDS ITSELF IN A STATE OF DECLINE, RESEMBLING A FADING RELIC. **DECADES HAVE** PASSED SINCE THE DEPARTURE OF ITS ORIGINAL LEADERS, LEAVING THE **ORGANISATION** WITH WANING

INFLUENCE

what began as a utopian dream evolved into a stagnant organization, a consequence of strategic missteps rather than a natural progression. This year's NAM conference in Uganda, like its predecessors, appeared incapable of achieving substantive outcomes beyond consuming time and resources ostensibly devoted to addressing political crises. It is undeniable that this floundering organization lacks a viable future, and the persistent squandering of public funds yields no palpable benefits for human development. Despite being recog-nized as the largest multi-state organization after the United Nations, the NAM's discussions on global challenges have been confined to mere oratory, lacking the capacity to resolve crises. The platform, once rooted in the Bandung Principles, has devolved into a sanctuary for vacuous communication, funded by the hard-earned money of citizens in member coun-

Since the inception of NAM, the socalled third-world and developing countries have witnessed numerous military conflicts, often initiated and sustained without hindrance by the West and the Soviet Union. The territories of NAM member countries became pawns in the geopolitical objectives of these power blocs, with ruling elites aligning with either the Soviet or Western camps for political survival. Noteworthy conflicts such as the Vietnam War, the Six-Day War, the Yom Kippur War, the Soviet-Afghan War, the Iran-Iraq War, the Gulf War, the Bosnian War, the Rwandan genocide, the Kosovo War, the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, the Syrian civil war, and the Yemeni Civil War unfolded in the Global South. The NAM's failure to collectively and responsibly implement its principles contributed to this tragic legacy, as accountability and responsibility could have prevent-

moribund enterprise inevitably invites chaos, yielding neither renewed hope nor the impactful contributions promised at its inception. This is the predicament in which the NAM finds itself, failing to live up to its proclaimed principles while catering to the interests of a privileged few. No amount of picturesque portrayal can conceal the stark reality, as the structure of NAM stands as a façade masking inherent falsehood and decay. During this year's conference, leaders reiterated the narrative of member states breaking free from colonialism but grappling with new forms of inequality and hegemony, conveniently neglecting the role of their own hegemonic politics and corruption in fostering these dispar-

As discussed at the conference, in the era of globalization, leaders perceive economic concentrations, while the rest of the world sees mere markets or resources. The pandemthe smallest needs of these countries from distant production centres. However, amidst politically correct and universalist narratives that neglect traditions, the conference amounted to little more than eloquent words in a spurious sermon, devoid of constructive significance and laden with political hypocrisy. While the dream of a multipolar world is commendable, its realization remains elusive without collective agreement. Proposals for economic decentralization and regional production lack substance if member states, lacking capital management, persist in dependence on Western financial markets and facilitate capital outflow to Western countries through money laundering, rendering the pursuit of economic independence a delusion. Changing the global order necessitates both practical and sincere measures, including the establishment of regional economic hubs, resilient

tred policies promoting sustainable lifestyles and digital public infrastructure exemplify the potential benefits of technology. Prioritizing relationships while respecting sovereignty and ensuring viability, especially in addressing food, energy, and health security, as well as promoting women-led development, remains critical. However, since the end of the Cold War in 1991, the foundational principles of the Non-Aligned Nations were shattered. Attempts to recreate the movement faced a lack of consensus among member state leaders. Instead, these states formed selective ties to advance political goals, rendering the "non-aligned" policy a mere pseudo-vocabulary. Unfortunately, leaders within the movement engaged in arbitrary activities, using the platform to cover up abuses rather than addressing them.

As the old world order gave way to a new multipolar reality post-Cold ic underscored the detachment of War, the NAM struggled to adapt to emerging dynamics. Instead of col lectively facing the challenges, many leaders prioritized narrow political goals, hindering the movement's relevance in the changing world. Faced with the need to redefine its purpose and adapt to new challenges, the movement encountered various forms of sabotage and unrest. The failure to interpret challenges during this transitional period affected several organizations within the movement. Ironically, many leaders refuse to acknowledge the end of this history, preventing the birth of a redesigned and reinvented global order that could contribute to achieving a multipolar world. Consequently, the idea of a multipolar world remains but a day-

(The writer is a Sri Lankan journalist and worked as a communications consultant for the Government of Sri Lanka; views are personal)

Combating the deepfake menace necessitates stern legal measures

Securing truth in the age of synthetic realities is more difficult than ever before. It must be curbed before it becomes unmanageable

¬he use of deepfake technologies has made it easier to impersonate another person physically or verbally these days. Sachin Tendulkar, the Cricket Legend, is one of the recent victims of deepfake, where in a morphed video, he is shown endorsing a gaming app and explaining how easily money can be drawn using this app. Rashmika Mandana to Alia Bhat, famous Indian Actresses, fell prey to deepfakes, hitting their reputation and prestige not only as respected Indian actresses but also as women. Some time ago, Telangana Minister KT Rao, after becoming a deepfake victim, wrote to the Election Commission and mentioned the incident and its effect on voters and the public. Seeing these incidents hap-



pening frequently, it can be easily predicted that deepfake technology may achieve an

- blurring the lines between real and synthetic. These incidents also reflect a major concern about the misuse of deepfake technologies in the spread of disinformation and misinformation that is directly hitting the informational security of society at large. In layperson's language, deepfakes are images or videos of a person's likeness or other related things that have been digitally altered in a bid to misrepresent what happened in reality such as facial expression manipulation, face morphing, face swap, face generation and full body puppetry. The synthetic media not only inflict individual harm but have a profound impact on organisations, governments, and society at large. The deleterious effects of deepunprecedented level of realism fakes transcend mere person-

al consequences, encompassing psychological, financial, and societal realms; they erode the trust that underpins organizations, sow doubt in the halls of justice, and may even threaten the foundations of democracies.Imagine a world where your carefully crafted reputation can be shattered in an instant by a fabricated video. Where companies become pawns in blackmail schemes orchestrated through manipulated footage. Where legal proceedings lose their legitimacy as the authenticity of evidence becomes suspect. This dystopian reality is no longer fiction; it's the chilling consequences of deepfakes. The IT Rules 2021 provides a complete list of prohibited content under rule 3(1)(b). Intermediaries are already

removals, blocking, or complaints regarding any deepfake content posted on their platform.There are speculations that the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology is soon to come up with new provisions under the IT Rules, 2021 to curb the prevalence of deepfakes. As per the author's understanding, to restrain the spread of deepfakes on the intermediary's platform, there are two ways in which IT Rules, 2021 may be amended. First, to define 'deepfake' and put it in the prohibited category of content under rule 3(1)(B) of the IT Rules, 2021. By doing this, automatically all the other due diligence requirements on intermediaries will apply in case of fake technology. Second, deep-deepfakes as well. However, the fake may be regulated under cal tools for recognizing false

bound to act in case of major consequences of deepfake, misinformation, and impersonation are already included in the prohibited category of the list. Deepfake is emerging as a service company. The increased demand for deepfakes has also led to the establishment of several companies that deliver deepfakes as a product or even online service. These services are intended for use by marketers to personalise videos, eliminating the need to record video for each recipient. Essentially, these services make producing a deepfake video as easy as editing text. Hence, the most appropriate and effective way to restrain deepfake is to directly regulate these companies that provide such deep-

the proposed Digital India Act by introducing a new class of online platforms, i.e., AI Synthesis Online Platforms (as the name may be called), and providing separate rules for their compliance. The proposed Digital India Act may include a few obligations for AI Synthesis Online Platforms. First, requiring them to ensure adherence to all the existing cyber and data protection legislation in India. Second, such online platforms, in order to ensure transparency, should provide information regarding the number of users of such platforms, their platform's management rules, adopted technologies, tools deployed, and any other relevant information. Third, they may be

and damaging information created using services of the platform, implement a realidentity information authentical system, and adopt a review mechanism of synthetic data. It should also be obligatory on such platforms to tag or label those contents that are generated by using deepfake technologies. In view of the rising deepfake incidents and the government's apparent concern for the same, it is probable that we may not have to wait for long for the necessary regulations as well as the Digital India Act to come into (Siddhartha is Sr Assistant

Professor at the Faculty of Law, University of Delhi and Bhavna is a techno-legal policy professional; views are personal)

'UK has no plans for conscription'

The UK government said on Wednesday it has no plans to introduce conscription, after the head of the British Army said a "citizen army" would be needed to fight a future war with a country like Russia. Chief of the General Staff Gen. Patrick Saunders said preparing for a potential land war would have to be a "whole-of-nation" undertaking. He praised European nations closer to Russia for "prudently laying the foundations for national mobilization.'

Saunders, who has long argued for more military spending and is due to leave his job this year, said that "within the next three years, it must be credible to talk of a British Army of 120,000."

"But this is not enough," he added during a speech at the International Armoured Vehicles conference in London. "Taking preparatory steps to enable placing our societies on a war footing when needed are now not merely desirable but essen-

He said "Ukraine brutally illustrates that regular armies start wars; citizen armies win them."

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's spokesman, Max Blain, said the government 'has no intention" of introducing conscription.

The British military has a proud tradition of being a voluntary force. There are no plans to change that," he said. He added that "engaging in hypothetical wars" was "not helpful." Defence Secretary Grant Shapps has also used stark language about the threat to the UK. Last week he referred to Britain "moving from a post-war to pre-war world." Despite that, the government has no plans to increase the size of the army from its current level of about 74,000 full-time troops, down from 102,000 in 2006. The government says it will increase military spending from just over 2 per cent of GDP to 2.5 per cent — still much less than at the height of the Cold War.

The British Army conscripted soldiers during World War I, and again during and after World War II, but it has been an all-volunteer force for most of its 364-

Maldives oppn parties express concern about 'anti-India stance'

Calling India as the "most long-standing ally," the two main opposition parties in Maldives on Wednesday expressed concern about the government's "anti-India

The open support by the two parties — the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) and the Democrats — came a day after the Maldives government said 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 strained ties between India and Maldives after its recentlyelected President Mohamed Muizzu made Beijing as his first port of call early this month soon after assuming office. Traditionally, New Delhi has been the first port of call for a Maldivian President.

'The current administration appears to be making a



In picture, Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu during official talks in Beijing, earlier this month

foreign policy" of the Maldivian government. "Consecutive governments of the country must be able to work with all development

partners for the benefit of the

people of the Maldives, as the

opposition parties said in their

sessment on "the direction in

done. Stability and security in the Indian Ocean is vital to the stability and security of the Maldives," they told a joint news conference. MDP's chairperson and former Minister Fayyaz Ismail and the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament, MP

Maldives has traditionally

Democrats party president MP Hassan Latheef and the Parliamentary Group Leader, MP Ali Azim addressed a joint press conference to flag the issues. The two parties committed to work together on several governance-related issues and expressed concern on another set of issues including the foreign policy and lack of

transparency.

The MPs of the two parties together hold 55 seats in the 87-member house. The joint statement was posted on the official websites of the two parties and their official X handles too.

The other issues of concern included a lack of transparency in the financial status of the state and the lack of transparency in the MOUs and Agreements that the Government is signing, especially, with foreign parties, although no country was named in the statement.

The opposition also criticised the attempts at censoring the media and meddling with the freedom of the press.

Building fire kills 39 people in China

PTI BEIJING/ NANCHANG

At least 39 people were killed, nine injured and some others still trapped in a building fire in east China's province Wednesday, official media reported. The fire broke out at a street shop in Xinyu city, the local fire response emergency headquarters was quoted as saying by the state-run Xinhua At least 39 people were

killed and nine others injured in the blaze, while some others are still trapped on the site, the report said. Videos circulating on social media showed a column of thick, dark smoke billowing from the building, and fire trucks and ambulances were at the scene of the acci-

The building where the fire broke out had internet cafes and training institutions, Central China Television

The cause of the fire is unclear and an investigation is underway. Following the mishap, Chinese President Xi Jinping has ordered steps to

curb repeated occurrences of such accidents and to protect people's lives and property and social stability. Fatal fires in China are not uncommon due to lax enforcement of building and safety standards.

On Jan 20, at least 13 students were killed when a fire broke out in a school dormitory in central China's Henan province. All the victims were third-grade students. In November last year, 26 people died after a large fire ripped through an office building in Luliang city in Shanxi province.

A hospital fire in Beijing last April claimed the lives of at

least 29 people - mostly patients - and triggered an investigation which saw 12 people detained by police for questioning.

China working to de-escalate tensions in Red Sea

China, the world's biggest exporter, says it is deeply concerned about tensions in the Red Sea that have upended global trade by forcing many shippers to avoid the Suez Canal. China has been in 'close communication with all parties concerned and making positive efforts to de-escalate' the situation in which Iranbacked Houthi rebels have attacked international ships with missiles, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said at a daily briefing on

China calls for a halt to the harassment and attacks on civilian ships and urges all relevant parties to avoid fanning flames in the area and jointly ensure the safety and security of the route in the Red Sea, Wang said. Since November, the Iranian-backed Houthis have launched at least 34 attacks on shipping through the waterways leading up to Egypt's Suez Canal, a vital route for energy and cargo coming from Asia and the Middle East onward to Europe.

The Houthis, a Shiite rebel group that has held Yemen's capital Sanaa since 2014 and coalition backing Yemen's exiled government since 2015, link their attacks to the Israel-Hamas war. However, the ships they've targeted increasingly have tenuous links to Israel – or none at all. "We are deeply concerned about the recent escalation of the Red Sea situation. The Red Sea is an important international trade route for goods and energy," Wang said. Wang also referenced the Gaza conflict, linking it to the Red Sea tensions, saying, "The priority now is to end the fighting in Gaza as soon as possible to avoid further escalation and prevent the situation from

getting out of control." "Čhina is willing to work with all parties to cool down the situation and maintain security and stability in the Red Sea," Wang said.

China exported more than \$3.5 trillion in good in 2022, the last year for which figures were available. That was about \$1.5 trillion more than the United States, the world's No. 2 exporter. Some of the world's largest container shipping companies and oil giant BP have been sending vessels on longer journeys around Africa that bypass the Red Sea. In response

to the growing impact on global trade, the United States and a host of other nations have created a new force to protect ships.At least 90% of the container ships that had been going through the Suez Canal are now rerouting around Africa and the Cape of Good Hope, according to Drewry, a maritime research consultancy.

stark pivot towards an anti-

India stance. Both, the MDP

and The Democrats believe

alienating any development

partner, and especially the

country's most long-standing

ally will be extremely detrimen-

tal to the long-term develop-

ment of the country," the two

The cost to ship a standard 40-foot container from China to northern Europe has jumped from \$1,500 to \$4,000, according to the Kiel Institute for the World Economy in Germany. But that is still far from the \$14,000 seen during the pandemic.The delays contributed to a 1.3% decline in world trade in December, reflecting goods stuck on ships rather than being offloaded in port. The US and its allies have been striking targets Washington has said are involved in the attacks against US forces in Iraq and Syria and were threatening US military and commercial vessels in the Red Sea. China has maintained close ties with Iran, largely based on investment and oil imports, and last vear hosted talks resulting in the restoration of Tehran's diplomatic relations with Saudi

'Shipments affected by Houthi assaults'

Jerusalem (AP): Qatar, one of the world's top exporters of liquified natural gas, warned Wednesday that its deliveries had been affected by ongoing attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels on Shipping over Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The statement by QatarEnergy came as an explosion struck near a ship Wednesday travelling through a crucial strait near Yemen, though no damage or injuries were reported, the British military said. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, but suspicion immediately fell on the Houthis.

Ships carrying liquified natural gas from Qatar had been delayed previously before heading through the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea. That's where the Houthi attacks have snarled shipping in a key route for Asia and the Middle East to ship cargo and energy to

Qatar, which has served as a key mediator between Hamas and Israel, has yet to see any of its ships attacked, however. A statement from its state-owned Qatar Energy producer said

that its "production continues uninterrupted, and our commitment to ensuring the reliable supply of LNG to our customers remains unwavering". "While the ongoing develop ments in the Red Sea area may impact the scheduling of some deliveries as they take alternative routes, LNG shipments from Qatar are being managed with our valued buyers," the statement said. The statement suggests QatarEnergy's cargos now are travelling around Africa's Cape of Good Hope, likely adding time to their trips. Meanwhile, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, an organisation monitoring Mideast waterways overseen by the British military, reported a blast Wednesday near the Bab el-Mandeb Strait off Yemen. The explosion happened some 100 metres (325 feet) from the vessel, but caused no damage and its crew is safe, the British said. The Houthis, who have been launching attacks on ships

US and the UK have launched rounds of airstrikes targeting suspected missile storage and launch sites used by the Houthis over the attacks.

EXPLOSION STRIKES NEAR SHIP

An explosion struck near a ship on Wednesday travelling through a crucial strait near Yemen, though no damage or injuries were reported, the British military said. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, but suspicion immediately fell on Yemen's Houthi rebels.The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, an organisation monitoring Mideast waterways overseen by the British military, reported the blast happened near the Bab el-Mandeb Strait off Yemen.

The explosion happened some 100 metres from the vessel, but caused no damage and its crew is safe, the British said.

The Houthis, who have been launching attacks on ships since November over Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip, did not immediately acknowledge the incident.

Fighting in Gaza leaves patients stranded | Donald Trump wins

AP ■ RAFAH (GAZA STRIP)

Israeli forces battled Palestinian militants Wednesday near the main hospital in Gaza's second-largest city of Khan Younis, where medics said hundreds of patients and thousands of displaced people were unable to leave because of the fighting.

Israel has ordered residents to leave a swath of downtown Khan Younis that includes Nasser and two smaller hospitals as it pushes ahead with its 3-month-old offensive against Hamas. The United Nations humanitarian office said the area was home to 88,000 Palestinians and was hosting another 425,000 displaced by fighting elsewhere.

The aid group Doctors Without Borders said its staff was trapped inside Nasser Hospital with some 850 patients and thousands of displaced people because the sur-

rounding roads were inaccessible or too dangerous. Nasser Hospital is one of only two hospitals in southern Gaza that can still treat critically ill patients, the group said. Gaza's Health Ministry also said the hospital had been isolated.

The Israeli military said its forces were battling militants inside Khan Younis after completing their encirclement of the city the day before. It said aircraft were striking targets as part of the operations there and had also targeted suspected militants in central and northern Gaza.

Thousands of people fled south from Khan Younis on Tuesday toward the town of Rafah. The UN says some 1.5 million people — around twothirds of Gaza's population are crowded into shelters and tent camps in and around Rafah, which is on the border with Egypt. Even there, Palestinians have found little 63,354. Its count does not dif-

safety, with Israel regularly carrying out strikes in and around the town. Palestinian witnesses said that in recent days Israeli soldiers and tanks had pushed into parts of Muwasi, a sandy area along the coast that Israel had declared a safe zone, where tens of thousands of people were living in tents without basic ser-

> In all, some 1.7 million people have been displaced within Gaza, according to the UN refugee agency. Most have fled from the north, where Israel's air and ground offensive has reduced entire neighbourhoods to shelled-out wastelands, raising the question of whether residents will ever be able to return.

Gaza's Health Ministry says the offensive has killed at least 25,490 people — the majority women and children and wounded another

ferentiate between civilians and combatants. UN officials have expressed fears that even more people could die from disease, with at least one-quarter of the population facing starvation. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to press ahead with the offensive until "complete victory" against Hamas, which started the war with its assault across the border on Oct 7 killing some 1,200 people and abducting another 250.

ISRAELI DIVISIONS

OVER WAR AIMS Netanyahu says Israel is also committed to returning the over 100 hostages that remain in captivity after most of the others were freed in exchange for the release of Palestinian prisoners during a November cease-fire.But many Israelis, including at least one member of Netanyahu's War Cabinet, say that's impossible

without reaching another agreement with Hamas. The militant group says it won't release any more hostages until Israel ends its offensive. Families of the hostages are also calling for a deal, and have staged increasingly aggressive protests against Israel's leaders, even interrupting a parliamentary committee meeting Monday.

BUFFER ZONE IN GAZA

Hamas was still attacking Israeli forces, even in some of the most devastated areas, and firing rockets into Israel. An attack Monday near the border killed 21 Israeli soldiers, the military's biggest loss of life in

a single attack since Oct 7. Israeli media said the troops were working to create an informal buffer zone about a km (half a mile) wide along the border to prevent militants from attacking Israeli commu-

Donald Trump has defeated Indian-American politician Nikki Haley in the New Hampshire Republican primary, continuing his march toward the party's presidential nomination and a possible final contest with President Joe Biden in the

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

November 5 election. With three-quarters of the votes counted, Trump, 77, was leading 55 per cent to 44 per cent. Although only two states have voted so far, Trump's victory in Tuesday's primary underscored his dominance of the

Republican Party. The former president won a landslide in Iowa's caucuses renominating Trump would lead the party to defeat.

Speaking after the results,

Republican primary a Kamala Harris presidency,"

since November over Israel's

war on Hamas in the Gaza

Strip, did not immediately

acknowledge the incident. The

she said. "And the next one is my sweet state of South Carolina, she said. Haley is hoping a strong showing in South Carolina could propel her into the March 5 Super Tuesday contests. Trump said that Haley "had a very bad night" and was "doing a speech like she'd won"

Trump called her "delusional". "Who the hell was that imposter that went up on that stage that went before and claimed victory?" he asked.

Team Haley hit back almost immediately, 'describing his speech as a "furious and rum-

bling rant". Notably, Trump is the first non-incumbent Republican presidential candidate to win both the Iowa Caucus and the New Hampshire primary backto-back.Trump is the only Republican candidate to have won the New Hampshire pri-

mary thrice. This is a decisive win for Donald Trump tonight," former Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy told Fox News in an interview. He said that Haley must withdraw from the race in favour of

Trump. In a statement, the Trump campaign asked Haley to drop out of the race. Haley does not have a path to victory. Instead, if Haley stays in the race, she will play an active role in advancing the re-election of Harris-Biden, it said. "Nikki Haley said she's running to stop the re-election of Harris-Biden. Yet, without a viable path to victory, every day she stays in this race is another day she delivers to the Harris-Biden campaign," said Taylor Budowich, CEO of Make America Great Again Inc.

Indian American couple convicted after forcing cousin to work at gas station Washington (PTI): An Indian-origin Sikh couple has been

found guilty of exploiting their cousin by compelling him to work extended hours at their store, subjecting him to physical abuse, threats, and confiscating his immigration documents, a US attorney has said. Harmanpreet Singh, 30, and Kulbir Kaur, 43, were found

guilty of conspiracy to commit forced labour and other charges after the pair forced the victim, Singh's cousin, to work at Singh's North Chesterfield convenience store for little pay, the Department of Justice said in a statement on Monday. According to court documents, the victim — who was a

minor at the time — came to the US in 2018 after the couple promised to help him enrol in school. After arriving, Singh and Kaur took the boy's immigration documents and immediately put him to work, prosecutors said. According to court documents, the victim was forced to sleep in an office inside the store for days at a time. He was denied access to food, and the couple also refused his requests to return to India and forced him to overstay his visa. Prosecutors said Singh also slapped and kicked the victim when he requested his immigration documents and tried to leave. On several occasions, Singh also threatened the victim with a gun when he tried to take a day off and leave the store. Prosecutors said the abuse and forced labour started in March 2018 and continued through May 2021. Assistant

Attorney General Kristen Clarke

of the Justice Department's Civil

Rights Division said the Singh

couple exploited the victim so

they could keep him working for

their profit.

US strikes three facilities in Iraq

Washington (AP): The US military struck three facilities in Iraq on Tuesday, targeting an Iranian-backed militia in retaliation for missile and drone attacks on American troops in Iraq and Syria over the past several days, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said.

The US strikes hit militia facilities in western Iraq, near the Syrian border, US Central Command said. "At President Biden's direction, US military forces conducted necessary and proportionate strikes on three facilities used by the Iranian-backed Kataib Hezbollah militia group and other Iran-affiliated groups in Iraq," Austin said in a statement. "These precision strikes are in direct response to a series of escalatory attacks against US and Coalition personnel in Iraq and Syria by Iranian-sponsored militias."

N Korea appears to demolish 'reunification arch' as Kim turns against ties with South

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korea appears to have torn down a huge arch in its capital that symbolized reconciliation with South Korea, a week after leader Kim Jong Un dismissed decades of hopes for peaceful reunification with the war-divided peninsula's south, according to satellite photos analyzed by The Associated Press on Wednesday. South Korea's military also said Wednesday that North Korea fired several cruise missiles into waters off its western coast.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un last week described the Pyongyang monument as an "eyesore" and called for its removal while declaring that



long-standing goals of a peaceful unification with South Korea and ordered a rewriting of the North's constitution to

define the South as its most hostile foreign adversary. Satellite images from Planet Labs PBC appeared to show the destruction of Pyongyang's Charters for National Reunification, also called the Arch of Reunification. An image Tuesday clearly showed the arch missing along a road-Clouds and snow cover

made it difficult to ascertain when North Korea tore down the monument, but it appeared to be within the last few days. NKNews, a website focused on North Korea, first reported on the satellite images. The arch was a 30-metre

(about 100-foot) tall structure that looked over a highway leading to the city of Kaesong near the border with South Korea. The cruise missile launches were North Korea's second known launch event of the year, following a January 14 test-firing of the country's first solid-fuel intermediate range ballistic missile, which reflected its efforts to advance its lineup of weapons targeting US military bases in Japan and Guam. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said Wednesday that the US and South Korean militaries were analyzing the latest launches. It did not immediately confirm the exact number of missiles fired or their specific flight details. "Our military has increased

surveillance and vigilance and is closely coordinating with the United States while monitoring for further signs and activity from North Korea," the Joint Chiefs of Staff said in

when she lost.

New Hampshire

last week. Trump's victory is remarkable, considering he faces 91 criminal charges, including those related to seeking to overturn the 2020 presidential election.But Haley, 52, the former South Carolina governor and ambassador to the United Nations, vowed to fight on, giving a feisty speech to supporters on Tuesday night in which she questioned the former president's mental fitness and warned Republicans that

Haley - who campaigned hard in the state - congratulated Trump, saying he "earned it". But she said the race was "far from over" with "dozens of states left to go". "I'm a fighter, and I'm scrappy," Haley, Trump's last remaining rival in the Republican nomination race, said. Haley said when she started, there were 14 of them in the race, and she was polling at two per cent in the polls. "And now we're the last one standing next to Donald Trump," Haley said. "A Trump nomination is a Biden win and

Imran Khan warns his party candidates

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

 $P^{\text{akistan's jailed former prime minister}}_{\text{Imran Khan has warned his party can}}$ didates to launch their poll campaigns peacefully, failing which their tickets to contest the February 8 elections will be cancelled, according to a media report on Wednesday. The 71-year-old Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder made the statement while talking to reporters at Adiala jail in Rawalpindi on Tuesday after the hearing of the cipher case, the Geo News reported. PTI-backed candidates are struggling to launch their election campaign

amid a crackdown on the party supporters.
Asking his party's candidates to take out "massive rallies" and organise public gatherings to show the strength of the PTI in their constituencies, Khan war-ned that he would replace "inactive" nominees with "suitable candidates" if the party electioneering did not pick up steam by Sunday.

Khan, who is facing multiple cases, has been incarcerated at high-security Adiala Jail since August last year. His party's electoral 'bat' symbol — a major voter driving force was taken away this month. Furthermore, the party — PTI-Nazriati with which it sought an alliance also backtracked from its commitment.

However, the PTI has vowed not to boycott the polls and run without its iconic electoral symbol. Since the 'bat' symbol has been taken away, all its candidates will be running with different signs.

EX-PAK AMBASSADOR REJECTS MENTION OF 'THREAT' IN CIPHER

Pakistan's former ambassador to the US and a key witness has rejected the mention of the words "conspiracy" or "threat" in the secret document at the centre of controversy in the cipher case. Involving jailed former prime minister Imran Khan and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, who also is a senior leader from his party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI), the cipher case pertains to a piece of paper, purported to be a diplomatic cable — the cipher — that Khan had waved at a public

rally on March 27, 2022. Naming the US, Khan had claimed that it was 'evidence' of an "international conspiracy" to topple his government. Khan and Qureshi, accused of mishandling it for political purposes, were indicted in December 2023 and both have pleaded not

During a hearing on Tuesday at the Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi, former Ambassador Asad Majeed gave a first hand account to the special court Judge Abual Hasnat Zulgarnain about his meeting with a top US government official in March 2022, The News newspaper reported on Wednesday. Majeed was the ambassador of Pakistan to the United States from

Bringing out details about the meeting in public domain for the first time, Majeed said, on March 7, 2022, Assistant Secretary of the US Department of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Donald Lu was invited to a working lunch, which was a prearranged meeting hosted at Pakistan House in Washington.

Communication took place in the meeting, so a cipher telegram was sent to the foreign secretary. The deputy head of Mission and defence attaché were also present in the meeting.

"In the meeting, both sides knew that minutes of the meeting were being taken. The conversation in the meeting was reported to Islamabad in cipher telegram. There was no reference to the words 'threat' or 'conspiracy' in the secret cipher telegram," he said. Majeed further told the court that he was also called to the National Security Committee meeting. "And in the meeting, it was decided to issue demarche. I had proposed to issue the demarche."

He said that the cipher issue was a setack for Pakistan-US relations. Majeed is one of the 25 witnesses who have recorded their statements in the

cipher case, which was launched on August last year. Earlier on Monday, Pakistan's former foreign secretary Sohail Mahmood said that the copy of the controversial cipher had not been returned to the foreign ministry until his retirement in September 2022.

PAK EC TO HOLD MOCK TEST **OF TRANSMISSION TECH**

Pakistan's top electoral watchdog will conduct a mock test of its online system on Friday to transmit and tabulate the results of the February 8 general elections, a media report said on Wednesday. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has prepared the Election Management System (EMS) app for the transmission of results from each polling station to a centralised system where tabulation of all results would be completed.

Through a letter addressed to all four provincial election commissioners, the ECP issued standard operating procedures and guidelines to hold a mock exercise of EMS on January 26, the Dawn newspaper reported. According to the letter, all returning officers (ROs) must certify and finalise Forms 28 and 33 in the EMS and map the presiding officers to polling stations till January 25. The said forms carry details of candidates and the number of polling stations in each constituency, according to the report. The top election body's letter added that dummy Form-45 will be provided to all ROs on Thursday, and they will ask the presiding officers to send results of one-two pages of each National Assembly and Provincial Assembly constituency from their mobile app on Friday at 5 pm.

'Pita didn't violate law, can remain lawmaker'

AP BANGKOK

hailand's Constitutional Court ruled ■ Wednesday that popular progressive politician Pita Limjaroenrat, who was blocked from becoming prime minister even though his party placed first in last year's election, did not violate the election law and can retain his seat in Parliament. Pita had been suspended from the legislature pending the court ruling on whether he violated the law by owning shares in a media company. He was the executor of his father's estate which included stock in ITV, a company that is the inactive operator of a defunct independent television station.

The court agreed with Pita's contention that ITV was not an operator of a media business. By law, political candidates are prohibited from owning shares in any media company when they register to contest an election.

Pita was forced to step down as leader of the progressive Move Forward Party when he was suspended from Parliament. The party's election victory last year reflected a surprisingly strong mandate for change among Thai voters after nearly a decade of mil-

itary-controlled government. But the party was denied power by members of the conservative unelected Senate.

The Senate, whose members were ppointed by the military, joined the elected lower house in casting votes to choose a prime minister under a constitution that was adopted in 2017 under a military government. The Move Forward Party now heads the opposition in Parliament.

The nine-member panel of judges ruled 8-1 in Pita's favour on Wednesday.

"ITV did not operate any newspapers or media businesses, therefore, the shareholding didn't violate the Constitution's Article 98. According to the above reasoning, the accused member's parliamentary status isn't suspended," the ruling said.

"I'm happy and will keep working planned," Pita said after the verdict. About 40 supporters who had gathered outside the court with signs and

flowers cheered Pita as he walked out. 'There is justice for the people. At first, I didn't trust the court but now I see justice," said Jiraporn Bussawaket,

Pita still faces another serious legal challenge this month.

Thousands forced out of their homes after 7.1 quake in China

Uchturpan (AP): As aftershocks continued to rock western China on Wednesday, more than 12,000 people were staying in tents and other shelters, lighting bonfires to fend off the freezing weather. The previous day, a magnitude 7.1 earthquake in a remote part of China's Xinjiang region killed three people and left five injured, while damaging hundreds of buildings.

The quake caused significant damage amid freezing temperatures, but the toll on lives and property was relatively light, owing to the sparse population around the epicenter in Uchturpan county, near the border with Kazakhstan.

Footage shown by state broadcaster CCTV on Wednesday showed evacuees eating instant noodles in tents with bonfires providing heat. Jian Gewa, a 16-year old stu-

dent in Uchturpan, said he was in the bathroom when the quake began. The entire building shook

violently.

"I just thought I had to get myself to safety as quickly as possible," Jian said.

He was evacuated to a

school where he was staying in a dorm room with his grandfather, joining about 200 others. to check houses' stability before people could return.

The earthquake hit in a sparsely populated area with clusters of towns and villages scattered across an otherwise barren winter landscape. A two lane highway runs from the city of Aksu about 125 kilometers (78 miles) to the area, through frozen brown flatlands on one side and craggy outcroppings on the other. Power lines and an occasional cement factory are virtually the only signs of human presence.

China restores diplomatic relations with Nauru

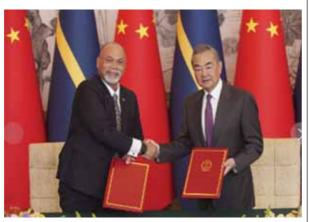
hina and Nauru formally Crestored diplomatic relations Wednesday after the tiny Pacific island nation cut its ties with Taiwan earlier this month, in a further move by Beijing to isolate Taipei's democratic government. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Nauru's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Lionel Aingimea at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing, and Wang said the resumption of ties "once again demonstrates to the world that adherence to the one-China principle is an irresistible historical trend."

Aingimea said Nauru recognized that Taiwan is part of China, despite the fact that the People's Republic of China has never governed the island and that Taiwan's 23 million people overwhelmingly reject Beijing's claims to sovereignty over them.
"We look forward to the

practical cooperation that's going to happen between Nauru and China. The prospect is bright," Aingimea

Nauru's announcement on Jan. 15 came just two days after and left the self-governing republic with only 12 remaining diplomatic allies, although it enjoys strong unofficial relations with the US, Japan and most other major nations.

American officials expressed disappointment with the decision. The United States has diplomatic relations with China but also maintains extensive unofficial ties with Taiwan, including selling it fighter jets and other weaponry for its defense. Nauru first established diplomatic ties



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Nauru's Minister for Foreign Affairs and

with Taiwan in 1980, then switched to Beijing in 2002, Chir then back to Taiwan in 2005, amid allegations that both sides were paying off or otherwise pressuring Nauruan officials. China claims Taiwan as its territory and doesn't recognize its government or its right to diplomatic recognition, participation in global bodies such as the United Nations or any official contact with foreign political entities.

"This policy change is a significant first step in moving forward with Nauru's development," Nauru's government announcing the severing of relations with Taiwan.

China has been gradually poaching Taiwan's diplomatic allies, partly to punish the ruling Democratic Progressive Party that advocates maintaining the status quo under which Taiwan has its own government, military and defacto independent status outside of the control of the PRC.

Ten countries have switched ties from Taipei to Beijing since the initial election offer hefty financial induceof DPP President Tsai Ing-wen ments.

China says that Taiwan must come under its control at some point and has staged military drills around the island to demonstrate its determina-

At the time of the break with Nauru, Taiwan's Deputy Foreign Minister Tien Chungkwang accused China of purposefully timing the news to the election of current Vice President Lai Ching-te as the island's new leader. He said China's authoritarian oneparty Communist government's intention was to "attack that the Taiwanese people are proud of." Taiwan now has official ties with 11 countries and the Vatican. Seven are in Latin America and the Caribbean, three are in the Pacific islands and one is in Africa. Nauru's switching of relations has further intensified the focus on Taiwan's remaining allies, most of which are developing nations seen as vulnerable to China's global influence and willingness to

Death toll in SW China landslide rises to 34

Beijing (AP): The death toll from a landslide in a remote, mountainous part of southwestern China rose to 34 on Wednesday, while 10 people remained missing, Chinese state media reported. The disaster struck early Monday in the village of Liangshui in the northeastern part of Yunnan province.

Search and rescue operations continued amid freezing temperatures and falling snow.

More than 1,000 rescuers were working at the site with the help of excavators, drones and rescue dogs, the Ministry of Emergency Management said Tuesday. Two survivors were found Monday and were recovering at a local hos-

State news agency Xinhua, citing a preliminary investigation by local experts, said the landslide was triggered by the collapse of a steep cliff top area, with the collapsed mass measuring around 100 metres (330 feet) wide, 60 metres (200 feet) in height and an average of 6 metres (20 feet) in thickness. It did not elaborate on what caused the initial collapse.

Aerial photos posted by Xinhua showed the side of a heavily terraced mountain had spilled over several village homes. More than 900 villagers were relocated. Zhenxiong county lies about 2,250 kilometres (1,400 miles) southwest of Beijing, with altitudes ranging as high as 2,400 metres (7,900 feet).

Rescuers struggled with snow, icy roads and freezing temperatures that were forecast to persist for the next days. Heavy snow has been falling in many parts of China, causing transportation chaos and endangering lives. Last week, rescuers evacuated tourists from a remote skiing area in northwestern China where dozens of avalanches triggered by heavy snow had trapped more than 1,000 people for a week. The avalanches blocked roads, stranding both tourists and residents in a village in Altay prefecture in the Mongolia, Russia and Kazakhstan.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This public notice is being issued under the instruction of our clientess, Mrs. Nilima Gupta W/o Mr. Shvam Hari Gupta, resident of F-5/6 DLF City Phase-I, near Community Centre, Sikanderpur Ghosi, Gurgaon, Haryana-122002, who intends to purchase the property bearing no. A-10/22, situated in DLF Phase-l also known as DLF Qutub Enclave Complex, Gurugram, Haryana, for a valuable consideration, owned and possessed by Mr. Cristolard Annual Control Con S/o Narender Dhingra, residing at 31A, Anubhav Apartment, Sector-13, Rohini, New Delhi- 110085 on 18th December, 2023 and Mr. Toshank Dhingra by virtue of the terms in his agreement has agreed to nominate his right under his agreement to sell thereby executed an agreement to sell with our clientess on 22hd January, 2024.

This public notice is being issued with a view make certain 'that there is no encumbrance the property bearing A-10/22, situated in DLF Phase-I also known as DLF Qutub Enclave Complex, Gurugram, Haryana accordingly, if any persons' has any right, title or interest in the above said property of any nature whatsoever, either through Shri Vijay Kumar Khanna or Mr. Toshank Dhingra, may feel free to submit their written objection of their claim over the property bearing no. A-10/22, situated in DLF Phase-I also known as DLF Qutub Enclave Complex, Gurugram Haryana and any objection against the aforementioned agreement(s) to sell.

The objections, if any, along with the justifiable grounds, must be submitted in writing within wenty (20) days from the date of this publication to the undersigned at the following

Date: 25.01.2024 Place: New Delhi

N.P Singh Associates Advocates & Solicitors G-3, L.G.F, South Extension, Part-II, New Delhi- 110049 Cont. No : 011-46020893, 46020894 E-mail: npsinghandassociates@gmail.com

NAGAR NIGAM DEHRADUN Telephone: 0135-2714074, Website: www.nagarnigamdehradun.com

Email: nagarnigam.ddn@gmail.com

Nagar Nigam Dehradun invites Request for Proposal (RFP) For For Scientific Dumpsit Remediation of Legacy Waste and Land Reclamation through Bio-mining, Resource Recovery and Rejects Disposal at Danda Lakhaund site, Dehradun from eligible bidders having experience as indicated in the RFP document. Interested bidders are requested to procure the RFP document

up to 13.02.2024 from e-tenders portal of government of Uttarakhand. Pre-bid meeting is scheduled at 12:00 noon on 31.01.2024. Any Addendum/ Corrigendum including date of extension will be uploaded only on www.uktenders.gov.in. The Municipal Commissioner have right to cancel tender at any stage without giving any reason. The last date for online submission of bids is 13.02.2024 at 3:00PM.

No 26/Legacywaste/2023-24 Date: 24.01.2024

Municipal Commissioner Nagar Nigam Dehradun

SL Parliament approves Online Safety Bill leader Saiith Premadasa's assertion to

Colombo (PTI): Sri Lankan Parliament on Wednesday approved with amendments the controversial Online Safety Bill that seeks to regulate online content amid criticism from the opposition that claimed it will stifle freedom of speech. As many as 108 parliamentarians voted for it while 62 voted against the

bill that was passed after a two-day debate. The new legislation would lead to the establishment of the Online Safety Commission which is empowered to make punitive rulings on offenses. A false statement on line would be

liable, if convicted, to an imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years or to a fine not exceeding five hundred thousand Sri Lankan rupees. At the committee stage proceedings,

the government went ahead presenting the amendments, which had come from the Supreme Court that checked its constitutionality. The apex court had ruled to amend at least 31 of the full 57 clauses of the bill. The main opposition speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena to postpone the committee stage claiming the action was unconstitutional was ignored by the chair. Earlier, the bill was severely criti-

cised as one which impinged the free-dom of expression. The opposition argued, citing the Asian Internet Coalition (AIC), that the bill would hamper efforts to invite foreign investment. The opposition also vowed to repeal it when in power.

The AIC had said, "The proposed

legislation, in its present form, poses significant challenges that, if not addressed comprehensively, could undermine the potential growth of Sri Lanka's digital During the day one of the debate on

Tuesday, the opposition urged the Speaker to postpone the two day debate accusing the government of rushing through with it. They cited insufficient public consultation.

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER, CONSTRUCTION WING, UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL NIGAM

E-Tender Notice Name of the work Tender Value Period of (Rs. In Lakh) Completion Construction of Remaining Works of Rs 134 40 12 Months Community Health Centre at Lamgarha Distt. Almora. Repair & Renovation work at Bipin Chandra Rs.90.90 12 Months Tripathi Kumaon Engineering College Dwarahat Block Dwarahat, Distt. Almora.

3.Date and Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal: 25-01-2024 (10.00 hrs)

4. Online Bid submission: End date :- 08-02-2024 (17.00 hrs)

5. Date & Time of Technical bid Opening: - 10-02-2024 (11.00 hrs)

6. Name and Address of the Officer inviting bid: - General Manager (Kumaon) Nirman Wing, Uttarakhand Pey Jal Nigam, Haldwani.

7.Pre-bid meeting details (if required) Date & Place :- 30-01-2024 (11.00 hrs) Project Manager Construction Unit, Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam,

8. For further details, details of subsequent Amendment / correction documentation etc. may be obtained from the e-Procurement portal

www.uktenders.gov.in **GENERAL MANAGER** Office of the Superintending Engineer



3rd Circle, Public Works Department, Pithoragarh Email: sepwdpth@rediffmail.com

Dated: 23/01/2024

National Competitive E-Tender Notice

The Superintending Engineer 3rd Circle, Public Works Department Pithoragarh invites tender through E-Tendering (Two Bid System) on behalf of "Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand"

for following works in anticipation of sanction. All other information will be available online from date 27-01-2024 at 5.00 PM onward on website http://www.uktenders.gov.in Earnest | Cost of | Validity Name of Work Money Tender Category of No.

		(in Lac)	(in Rs.)	Tender (day)	Completion (months)	Registration
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	PD PWD Pithoragarh Under Honorable Chief Minister's announcement No. 539/2023, the work of asphalting of the motor road from Km. 2 of Madmanle Dobans motor road to Barmo under Didihat assembly constituency of Pithoragarh district and three year maintenance work (Length- 3.125 Km.).	3.00	5000.00 +18% G.S.T.	120	12	Category 'B' & above for Road works in any State Govt./ Govt. of India/Govt. undertaking.
2	PD PWD Didihat Improvement and asphalting of Vinayak to Ghasad motor road in Didihat assembly constituency of Pithoragarh district Under the state plan. (Length - 3.00 km).	2.90	5000.00 +18% G.S.T.	120	12	Category 'B' & above for Road works in any State Govt./ Govt. of India/Govt. undertaking.
3	PD PWD Champawat Upgradation work of Circuit House building located in Champawat.	10.50	5000.00 +18% G.S.T.	120	06	Category 'A' & above for Building works in any State Govt./ Govt. of India/Govt. undertaking.

China to boost property lending to support its slowing economy

Bangkok (AP): China's central cut by 0.5 percentage points as bank said Wednesday it will cut the ratio of reserves banks must hold as part of a slew of measures to support the slowing economy. The announcement by the People's Bank of China prompted a surge in share prices, with Hong Kong's benchmark jumping 3.6%.

Chinese stock markets have languished in recent months as investors pulled money out, discouraged by a faltering recovery from the shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic. A sell-off earlier in the

week was followed by unconfirmed reports that the government planned to get stateowned investment companies to funnel offshore funds into the markets to help staunch the losses. The central bank's moves appear to be part of a concerted effort to stabilize the markets and instill greater confidence in the outlook for the world's second-largest

Central bank Gov. Pan Gongsheng said the deposit reserve requirement would be of Feb 5. Pan said that would inject about 1 trillion yuan (USD 141 billion) into the economy. As of December, the reserve requirement ratio was

Pan told reporters in Beijing that the central bank also plans to issue a policy soon on lending to property developers to help support the industry.

China's economy is recov-

ering, he said, allowing ample room for policy maneuvers. "At present, our country's financial risks are generally controllable, the overall operations of financial institutions are sound, and financial mar-

kets are operating smoothly,"

the government website

China.com cited Pan as saying. The economy expanded at 5.2% annual pace in the October-December quarter, enabling the government to attain its target of about 5% annual growth for 2023. But the recovery remains uneven, and most forecasts say the economy will grow more slowly in

<u>UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL NIGAM</u>

E-Tender Notice 1. Name of the work: - CONSTRUCTION OF APPROACH ROAD AT GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE ALMORA, DISTRICT-ALMORA

2. Estimated Cost: - Rs. 55.92 Lakh (Without GST)

3. Period of Completion: - 02 Month

4. Date and Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal: 25-01-2024 (17.00 hrs) 5.Online Bid submission: End date:-07-02-2024 (17.00 hrs)

6.Date & Time of Technical bid Opening:- 09-02-2024 (11.00 hrs).Name and Address of the Officer inviting bid:- Project Manager, Construction Unit, Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam

Ranikhet. 3.Pre-bid meeting details (if required) Date & Place: 27-01-2024 (11.00 hrs) Project Manager, Construction Unit.

Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam, Ranikhet. For further details, details of subsequent Amendment correction documentation etc. may be obtained from the e-Procurement portal www.uktenders.gov.in

PROJECT MANAGER

Sweden keen on ties with

India on sustainability

solutions in aviation

Keen for stronger ties with India, Sweden is looking

for cooperation with the coun-

try on sustainability solutions

in the aviation sector as well as

on electrification efforts in the

auto space. Besides, Sweden is

hoping for the resumption of

direct flight services with India, Johan Davidson, Sweden's State Secretary for Infrastructure

In an interview to PTI, he said

India is an important partner as it is also the world's fastest

growing aviation market. While noting that he is

impressed by the country's

extensive investments being

made in airports and aviation for expansion, he said, "there is

a lot of interest in Indian

growth and new business

opportunities for Swedish com-

panies"

and Housing, said.

Space industry seeks liberal FDI policy, PLI scheme in Budget

'ndia's nascent space sector has sought a liberal FDI pol-Licy on a par with the defence industry and production-linked incentive in the interim Budget that the government will present next week

The industry body Indian Space Association (ISpA) has also sought GST exemption for satellites, launch vehicles and ground equipment manufacturing, lower tax rates for external commercial borrowings and reduction of satellite sector withholding tax from 10 per cent to two per cent, given the low profit

"Our expectation is for enabling a more liberal FDI (foreign direct investment) policy in the space sector. As of now, even one per cent of FDI has to go through the government

Government aiming to

hike scrap share in steel

making to 50pc by 2047

The government is aiming to increase the share of scrap in

steel making process to 50 per

cent by 2047, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on

The steel minister emphasised

on usage of scrap in steel mak-

ing as manufacturing the metal

through scrap and other waste products is less polluting and

termed it as a step "towards

'As per our ministry's vision 2047 document, in the next 25

years, the percentage of scrap

will be 50 per cent along with the

balance 50 per cent as iron

ore," Scindia said at the 11th

International Material Recycling

Use of scrap not only reduces the

use of natural resources but

also cuts emission by 25 per cent

in comparison to the primary

route of steelmaking, the min-

ister said addressing through a

More scrap would be needed in

the future to reduce emission and produce green steel and for

this to happen there is a need for

environment-friendly formal

scrapping centres, Scindia

Today, around 25 million tonnes

of scrap are produced in the country and around 5 million

video message

green steel initiative

Wednesday

months and months," Awais Ahmed, founder and CEO of Pixxel, a Bengaluru-based start-

he pioneer

up, told PTI. "The defence sector has 74 per cent FDI through the automatic route. Beyond that, you have to go for the government route. At least matching what is there for the defence side would be really helpful in opening up the inflow of external capital for Indian space companies trying to scale up and build more things," Ahmed said.

He also sought a production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for space manufacturing. "We need to catalyse and innovate more by having suppliers and folks building a variety of different things for space technology

-- whether that is components, satellites, cameras, trackers. That would only be possible to inno-

tonnes are imported, he said.

Besides, various waste byprod

ucts generated during mining

and steel making can also be

effectively used in cement man-

ufacturing, road construction

and agriculture, the minister

Scindia further said, "Our steel

sector is known as a hard to

abate sector...With an emissions

intensity of 2.55 tonne of CO2

per tonne of crude steel pro-

At present, scrap contributes

around 30-35 per cent to India's overall steel production, Sanjay

Mehta, President, Material

Recycling Association of India

"India has the potential to

become a global leader in recy-

and the increasing awareness of

the importance of sustainabili-

zero goals and minimising

impact on the environment

(MRAI), said.



The industry body also wants the government to commit to procuring and adopting space

The association has also sought reasonable spectrum usage charges (SUC) as percentage of adjusted gross revenue (AGR) for satellite services allocated non-auctioned spectrum under the new Telecommunications Act, 2023

ISpA said satellite operators should be permitted 25 per cent depreciation on one-time fee and licence charges to optimise tax impact and capital subsidy on infrastructure investments with additional subsidy for facilities in remote areas to spur manufacturing capabilities, launch infrastructure advancement and downstream space offerings growth in India's private space industry.

Cabinet nod to ₹8,500 crore incentive scheme for coal gasification projects

PTI NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a Rs 8,500 crore incentive scheme for coal gasification projects, sources

The adoption of gasification technology in India is expected to reduce the country's reliance on imports of natural gas, methanol, ammonia and other essential products.

The cabinet has given its goahead to Rs 8,500 crore incentive scheme for coal gasification projects, the sources said.

The government is targeting to gasify 100 million tonnes (MT) of coal by 2030.

In gasification process, coal is partially oxidised by air, oxygen, steam, or carbon dioxide under controlled conditions to produce a liquid fuel known as syngas. Syngas or synthesis gas can be used for power generation and to make methanol as well.

the country is "keen to cooperate on the sustainability front in aviation and electrification in the auto sector".

'We have a lot of good companies that can contribute to the green transition in the Indian aviation sector," he said. To a query on air connectivity

between India and Sweden, Davidson said it is hoping for the opening of new direct flight between the two countries. 'In Sweden, the largest group of

people from abroad are Indians. We have some 60,000 plus Indians living in Sweden and most of them in Stockholm. A direct flight between India and Sweden would be a popular one, for tourism, business and exchange on a more frequent basis," he said. In the context of sustainability aspects in the aviation space, a key focus area is Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) and Sweden is open for cooperation with Indian on that

Sweden is a leading player in sustainable aviation. More than 80 Swedish companies are front too. Of course, we are open for active in the sector, with expertise across the value chain and that," Davidson said in response to a query on whether experience in implementing Sweden would like to be part of their solutions globally. Davidson, who was on a brief India's transition through SAF visit to India last week, also said as and when it happens.

Indel Money announces public issue

New Delhi: Indel Money

expansion plans to open 16 branches by March 2024

Delhi-NCR, in line with its Limited, one of the fastest growing NBFCs in the gold

loan sector, announced the 4th public issue of Secured NCDs of face value of Rs 1,000 each. The issue opens on January 30 and closes on February 12. The Tuesday, as they offloaded shares worth Rs 3,115.39 crore, according to exchange data. Company has simultaneously launched eight branches in

We aim to continue to grow our loan portfolio by expanding our branch network by opening new branches, said Umesh Mohanan, Executive Whole Time Director, Indel

vate or accelerate through a PLI scheme that sort of enables that to happen," Ahmed said. ISpA also demanded a PLI scheme for space-grade components along the lines of a similar scheme for drones

tech solutions across domains such as agriculture, disaster management. "Now, to propel this promising industry and drive innovation, it is crucial for the government for the development of a comprehensive regulatory framework and to address existing fiscal and taxation challenges," ISpA Director General

IN-SPACe, the space sector regulator, has projected the country's space economy to increase to USD 44 billion by 2033.

Sensex surges 690 points to reclaim 71K level stituents of the NSE Nifty witnessed

PTI MUMBAI

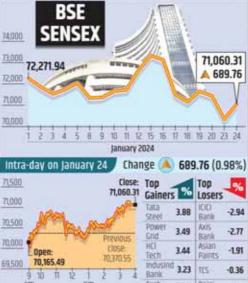
Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded sharply by 1 per cent on Wednesday after sliding for the past two sessions, propelled by bargain hunting in metal, commodity and telecom stocks.

Trading through a patchy track in the opening session, the 30-share BSE Sensex gradually gained ground and jumped 689.76 points, or 0.98 per cent, to settle at 71,060.31. The benchmark moved between an intra-day high of 71,149.61 and a low of 70,001.60. The broader NSE Nifty also closed 215.15 points or 1.01 per cent higher at 21,453.95.

Among the Sensex firms, major \ing 3.77 per cent, followed by HCL Tech, which gained 3.62 per cent.

IndusInd Bank and PowerGrid closed with a gain of 3,60 and 3.34 per cent, respectively. Other gainers were Tech Mahindra, Hindustan Unilever, Bajaj Finserve and Bharti Airtel, among oth-

On the other hand, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, Asian Paints, Bajaj Finance and TCS



were the only laggards, sliding up to 2.94 per cent. A total of 25 stocks of the 30-share benchmark settled in green, while 43 conElsewhere in Asia, Japan's Nikkei 225

lost 0.80 per cent, and Hong Kong's Hang Seng gained sharply by 3.56 per cent. China's Shanghai Composite also ended 1.80 per cent higher. European markets were higher on

Wednesday, with Germany's DAX and CAC 40 of France gaining 1.00 per cent and 0.58 per cent. London's FTSE 100 rose 0.29 per cent. In the US markets, the Dow closed

0.25 per cent lower on Tuesday, while the S&P 500 settled 0.29 per cent high-er and tech-heavy Nasdaq closed the session 0.43 per cent higher. Meanwhile, Brent crude futures, the

global oil benchmark, were trading higher by 0.58 per cent to USD 80.01 per barrel on Wednesday. On Tuesday, Sensex fell 1,053.10 points or 1.47 per cent to settle at 70,370.55. Nifty also declined 330.15 points or 1.53 per cent to close at 21,241.65.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on

Gold falls ₹50; silver jumps ₹300

old prices fell Rs 50 to Rs 63,200 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday, according to HDFC Securities. cious metal had closed at Rs 63,250 per 10 grams.

However, silver jumped Rs 300 ty. The recycling industry in to Rs 76,000 per kilogram while India has the potential to create it had settled at Rs 75,700 per jobs, reduce the impact of waste on the environment, and conkilogram in the previous close. tribute to the country's econom-"Spot gold prices (24 carats) in ic growth," Mehta said. the Delhi markets are trading at Around 2,000 delegates from Rs 63,200 per 10 grams, down by Rs 50, taking cues from the across 35 nations have attended the two-day conference which international market," Saumil focuses on increasing usage of Gandhi, senior analyst of commodities at HDFC Securities, scrap to promote circular economy, help India achieve the net

In the international markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,026 per ounce, down



USD 2 from the previous close. However, silver was trading higher at USD 22.70 per ounce. Gold was trading lower on Wednesday as traders remained cautious ahead of US macro data, including fourth-quarter GDP data due on Thursday, that could offer further insights into the trajectory of Federal Reserve's monetary policy approach, Gandhi added.

R ating agency Icra on Wednesday revised upward its bank credit growth projection at 14.9-15.3 per cent this fiscal, but said cent next fiscal.

At 14.9-15.3 per cent, the system level credit expansion in absolute terms will be Rs 20.4-20.9 lakh crore, it said, adding this will be the highest ever incremental bank credit growth and would surpass the previous high of Rs 18.2 lakh crore recorded in FY23

at a growth rate of 15.4 per cent. The agency had earlier estimated a 12.8-13 per cent credit demand for this fiscal.

However, citing the rising global headwinds and also the higher base coupled with the challenges in deposit mobilisation, the agency said it expects the rate of incremental credit expansion to slow down to Rs 19-20.5 lakh crore or 11.7-12.6 per cent in FY25. Weaker export demand in certain sectors,



Bank credit expansion projected at

15 pc in FY24, 12 pc in FY25: Icra

softer commodity prices, and challenges in deposit mobilisation could temper bank credit growth in FY2025, it added.

Further, the agency estimates corporate bond issuances to reach Rs 9.6-9.9 lakh crore in FY24, crossing the record level of Rs $8.7\,$ lakh crore in FY23.

Incremental bank credit growth touched nearly Rs 16.9 lakh crore in the first nine months of FY24 far outpacing the Rs 14.1 lakh crore expansion in the corresponding period last year. This was driven by the retail with annual growth of 33 per cent and 23 per cent, respectively, as of November 18,

While incremental bank credit growth remained reasonably strong at Rs 6.1 lakh crore in Q3 and Rs 10.8 lakh crore in the first half of FY24, it was lower by Rs 1.3 lakh crore in December 2023 against Rs 2 lakh crore during December 2022.

According to Anil Gupta, a senior vice-president at the agency, the relative deceleration in bank credit expansion seen during December 2023 reflects the regulatory measures on increased risk-weights on loans extended to consumer credit and nonbanking finance companies, apart from the tight liquidity conditions.

Tech Mahindra Q3 net falls 60

Tech Mahindra on Wednesday reported a 60 per cent decline in net profit at Rs 510.4 crore in the three months ended December 2023

The Mahindra group company had reported a net profit of Rs 1,296.6 crore in the year-ago period while the same was at Rs 493.9 crore in the quarter-ago period. Its overall revenue from operations declined 4.6 per cent to Rs 13,101 crore in the third quarter of the current financial year from Rs 13,734 crore in the

same period a year ago. There was a sharp decline in the operating profit, with the margin narrowing to 5.4 per cent from the 12 per cent in the year-

ago period. Shares of the company closed 3.09 per cent up at Rs 1,407.75 apiece on the BSE.

Rupee settles 2 paise higher at 83.13 against US dollar

Mehta said

The rupee stayed range-bound and settled 2 paise (provisional) higher at 83.13 against the US dollar on Wednesday.

Forex traders said the rupee is trading in a narrow range as pos-itive domestic markets and a soft US dollar supported the rupee while rising crude oil prices and foreign fund outflows capped gains. At the interbank foreign

exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.15 against the greenback. The unit oscillated between an intraday low of 83.16 and a high of 83.11 against the greenback and finally settled at 83.13 against the dollar, higher by 2 paise (provisional) from its previous close.

On Tuesday, the rupee had settled at 83.15 against the US dol-

"We expect the rupee to trade with a slight positive bias as the US Dollar has softened ahead of PMI data and gains in the Japanese Yen. Markets expect PMI data to be better than the previous month's reading. However, concerns over the Red Sea region and elevated



sharp upside," said Anuj Choudhary Research Analyst, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

Traders may remain cautious ahead of PMI data from Germany, the Eurozone, the UK and the US today. Investors may remain cautious ahead of the US GDP and ECB monetary policy decision on Thursday. USD/INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 82.90

to Rs 83.50. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.48 per cent lower at 103.11 on

"US Dollar declined on strong Yen on rising expectations that Bank of Japan may normalise its monetary policy in the coming months," Choudhary added.
Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, surged 0.35 per cent to USD 79.83 per barrel. On the domestic equity market front, Sensex advanced 689.76 points, or 0.98 per cent, to 71,060.31 points. The Nifty climbed 215.15 points, or 1.01 per cent, to 21,453.95 points. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Tuesday as they offloaded shares worth Rs

3,115.39 crore, according to

exchange data.

1 lakh Fronx sold in record time: Maruti

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Maruti Suzuki India on Wednesday said its model Fronx has crossed the 1 lakh sales milestone in the domestic passenger vehicle segment in record time. The model has crossed the milestone in 10 months, setting a new industry benchmark, the car market leader said in a statement. Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) had introduced Fronx in the domestic market on April 24, 2023.

"Fronx was strategically added to our portfolio to address the growing demand for another compact SUV that blends distinctive design with a captivating driving experience," MSI Senior Executive Officer (Marketing & Sales) Shashank Srivastava said.

The model has been instrumental in more than doubling the company's SUV segment share to 19.7 per cent last year from 10.4 per cent in 2022, he added.

MSI has also commenced exports of the Fronx for Latin America, the Middle East, and South-East Asian markets. So far, the company has exported

these markets.

over 9,000 units of the model to



Burmans get CCI nod for 31.27 per cent additional stake in Religare

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Competition Commission of India has approved the acquisition of 31.27 per cent of additional stake in Religare Enterprises by four entities of Dabur India promoter Burman family, enabling them to become majority owners in the financial services firm.

The fair trade regulator allowed the four entities to acquire Religare's 5.27 per cent through stock market purchase and another 26 per cent

through an open offer. The four entities — Puran Associates Pvt Ltd. M.B. Finmart Pvt Ltd, VIC Enterprises Pvt Ltd, and Milky Investment and Trading Company — are controlled by the Burman family, CCI said in a release on Tuesday

"The proposed combination envisages the acquisition of 5.27% of the total issued and outstanding equity share capital of Religare

Enterprises Limited (Religare) through open market purchases, and an open offer for up to 26% of the Total Expanded Voting Share Capital of Religare... By Puran Associates Private Limited, M.B. Finmart Private Limited, M.B. Finmart Private Limited, and VIC Enterprises Private Limited, Milky Investment and Trading Company," the CCI release said. Religare is engaged in the financial services busi-

ness through its subsidiaries and operating entities. The Burman family has investments across various sectors such as insurance and FMCG, among others.

As of December 2023, the Burman family's holding in Religare Enterprises stood at 21.17 per cent, according to the exchange data.

After acquisition of additional 31.27 per cent stakes through open offer as well as through purchase of shares in the open market, its ownership in Religare will surpass 52 per cent.

pc to ₹510 crore PTI MUMBAI

4 NATIONS HOCKEY TOURNEY IN SOUTH AFRICA

INDIA PLAY OUT 2-2 DRAW AGAINST FRANCE

he Indian men's hockey team failed to live up to its expectations after a bright start to draw 2-2 against France in its second game of the Four-Nation Tournament here on Wednesday.

Mandeep Śingh (8th minute) and Amit Rohidas (19th) scored for India, while France came back in the contest with goals from Timothee Clement and B Gaspard in the 37th and 59th minutes respectively.

The Indians had earlier defeated France 4-0 in their

Open semis

Alexander Zverev made no mistake with his sec-

ond chance to close out a

win over No. 2-ranked

Wednesday night and

moved into an Australian

Open semifinal against two-time finalist Daniil

The sixth-seeded Zverev was

a up a break in the third set

and missed a chance to serve

it out but the Olympic cham-

pion didn't blink when he

got another chance in the fourth, finishing off a 6-1, 6-

3, 6-7 (2), 6-4 victory. Alcaraz won Wimbledon

last year and was the only player to beat 10-time

Australian Open winner Novak Djokovic in a Grand

Slam match in 2023. The 20vear-old Spaniard won't get

the chance in Australia this

It was Zverev's first win over

a top-5 player at a Grand Slam, and the reward was a

spot in the semis for the sev-

Medvedev, a two-time final-

ist in Australia, outlasted

Hurkacz 7-6 (4), 2-6, 6-3, 5-

7, 6-4 to make it to the semi-

finals at Melbourne Park for

the third time in four years.

Djokovic will play Jannik

Sinner in the other semifinal

Zverev said he'd been taking

Medvedev recently but "maybe this will be it. Maybe

No. 12-seeded Zheng

Qinwen and Ukrainian qual-

ifier Davana Yastremska won

women's quarterfinals on Day 11 and will play their

first Grand Slam semi when

they meet after a night sleep.

The sixth-seeded Zverev was

on top of Alcaraz early, get-

ting 16 of his 18 first serves

into play in the first set and

this will be the place.'

Hubert

enth time at a major.

ninth-seeded

Carlos Alcaraz

AP MELBOURNE

(AUSTRALIA))

Medvedev.

Zverev ousts Alcaraz

to move into Australian

Monday.

The match began with both the teams showcasing their defending prowess to hold off the opposition. India broke the resistance with

Mandeep scoring the first goal for his side.

Rohidas doubled India's lead early in the second quarter as they took control of the proceedings with a solid 2-0 lead. France started showcasing urgency to get back to level terms, but the Indian defence managed to thwart their dangerous attacks. But India's defence finally

winning the point on all but two of them.

He got three set points when

Alcaraz netted an attempted

backhand drop shot and closed it out with an ace after

In the second set, Alcaraz

first time. Alcaraz got back

to 5-5 when he chased a shot into the doubles alley

and knocked a backhand down the line, beaming a big smile and shaking his

racket in a gesture that suggested: "Hello, still

He won the last seven points of the tiebreaker to make it

2-1, flashing a big smile

after earning four set points

when he chased a ball wide

and hit a forehand passing

After an exchange of service breaks to open the fourth,

Zverev got another chance

to close out the match after

breaking in the ninth game.

After clinching the win, the Olympic gold medalist

let out of a scream of relief

and shook his arms in cel-

ebration at about 1:20 a.M.

Medvedev's celebration was

led 4-2 in the fourth set but

more like a sigh of relia

Local time.

29 minutes.

breaks to lead 2-0.



broke down in the 37th minute when Clement reduced the margin.

In the final quarter, both India and France made attacking moves in search of quick goals. It was heartbreak for India as, at the stroke of the final hooter, Gaspard scored the equalis-

r for France.
The week-long tournament features France, the Netherlands, India and hosts South Africa.

India will take on South Africa in their third match on Friday, followed by a game against world No. 1 the Netherlands

got the better of Manav Thakkar 3-0 (12-10 11-6 11-7)

in the qualifying round 3. Jeet Chandra and Payas Jain

made their way into the main

egory as they registered a comfortable 3-1 (11-13 11-7 12-10

11-4) win over compatriots Yashansh Malik and

draw in the men's doubles cat

Nagal gets direct entry into Bengaluru Open

AP ■ BENGALURU.

Sumit Nagal on Wednesday became the only Indian to earn a direct entry into the Bengaluru Open, an ATP Challenger tournament, to be held here from February 10. Last week, Nagal scripted history as he became only the second Indian male player after Somdev Devvarman to advance to the second round of the Australian Open, after he defeated world no. 27 Alexander Bublik in his open-

With the cut-off for the Bengaluru Open being at 257, the 137th-ranked Nagal will be among the 21 players from 11 countries to qualify for the main draw of the ATP 100

Challenger tournament. "This edition is expected to be high on challenges, there are many strong contenders, making this edition more challeng-ing and definitely exciting to watch. My journey continues, and I am enthusiastic about going back on court and making a lasting impact," Nagal,

who won Bengaluru Open in 2017, said in a release. France's Benzamin Bonze, at world no. 106, is the highestranked player.

"With eight players ranked in the top 200, including four within the top 150, the level of tennis is such that distinguishing between players in the 100-200 range is challenging," said Priyank Kharge, chairman of the organising committee and a state minister.

The tournament is organised by the Karnataka State Lawn Tennis Association (KSLTA) at the KSLTA Stadium.

Each of the last five editions, held between 2018 and 2023, have thrown different singles winners. In 2023, Australia's Max

Purcell won the title while Aleksandar Vukic and Tseng Chun-hsin emerged winners in consecutive events in 2022. India's Prainesh Gunneswaran won the trophy in 2018 while James

Duckworth was the winner in 2020. The tournament was not held in 2019 and 2021.

Mani qualifies for main draw of WTT Star Contender Goa

PTI MAPUSA (GOA)

Indian table tennis player Nithya Mani qualified for the main draw of the ongoing WTT Star Contender Goa after winning her final qualifying round match at the Peddem Indoor Stadium here on Wednesday.

Chennai-based Nithya won a had break points in the sixth nail-biting contest against game but couldn't convert England's Tin-Tin Ho 3-2 (11-7 6-11 5-11 11-9 11-7) in a and Zverev took it away from him with two service women's singles qualifying The German was serving Round 3 match to move into for the match at 5-3 in the the main draw, scheduled to third, just after midnight, take place from Thursday. when Alcaraz broke for the

In the women's singles category, Ayhika Mukherjee lost 1-3 (11-5 9-11 6-11 6-11) to Turkev's Sibel Altinkaya, while Spain's Sofia Zhang beat Diya singles qualifying ro Chitale 3-1 (11-5 6-11 14-12 exit the tournament.



Sutirtha Mukherjee went down 1-3 (8-11 7-11, 12-10 4-11) against Hanna Ryu in women's singles qualifying round 2 to

11-0) in the qualifying round 3 In the men's singles category, to move into the main draw. Sathiyan Gnanasekaran lost 2-Sathiyan Gnanasekaran lost 2-3 (7-11 11-7 6-11 11-7 8-11) against Vincent Picard of France in qualifying round 2

Senegal's Ibrahima Diaw then the qualifying round 2.

Abhinandh Pradhivadhi. Sayali Wani and Taneesha Kotecha beat the India pair of Suhana Saini and Yashaswini Ghorpade 3-1 (9-11 11-9 11-6 11-6) in the women's doubles qualifying round 2 to reach the main draw.

> In the mixed doubles category, Manush Shah and Diya Chitale overcame the challenge of Snehit Suravajjula and Šreeja Akula 3-0 (11-4 11-3 11-8) in

Do not think anyone will ever come close to Djokovic: Tomic

PTI CHENNAI

With the Australian Open currently on, defending champion Novak Djokovic has once again been dubbed as a favourite to retain the title, and former world No. 17 Bernard Tomic of Australia firmly believes there will be no challenge the great Serbian.

Djokovic is the leading Grand Slam winner in the Open Era No. 9 Hurkacz rallied to force a fifth and took it to of tennis. He also has the a grueling four hours. The 2021 U.S. Open chamchance of winning the most Grand Slam titles across eras, pion took the decisive break in the seventh game of the as another win would allow fifth and held on for victohim to surpass the all-time ry, capped with a drop shot. record of Margaret Court. Djokovic is eying his 25th "Í'm so destroyed right Grand Slam title at the now," Medvedev, his hands clasped behind his head. Australian Open. said in his on-court inter-

AP ■ JAKARTA

akshya Sen and Kiran LGeorge advanced to the

second round but HS Prannoy and Kidambi Srikanth made

early exits after suffering nar-

row losses in their respective

opening matches at the Indonesia Masters Super 500

badminton tournament here

on Wednesday. World No. 19 Sen, who is

looking to qualify for the Paris

Olympics, avenged his

Malaysia Open first-round loss

to China's Weng Hong Yang with a 24-22 21-15 win in his

The 23-year-old George, who had won Super 100 titles at

2022 Odisha Open and 2023

Denmark Masters, bounced

back from an opening game

reversal to eke out a 18-21 21-

16 21-19 win over France's

Toma Junior Popov in anoth-

Malaysia Open champion

Anders Antonsen of Denmark

or Indonesia's Chico Aura Dwi

Wardovo in the next round.

while George will be pitted

opening round match here.

Tomic, who has lost to Djokovic on all six instances in the ATP circuit, dubbed him a "freak" and also the "G.O.A.T", besides adding that to beat him. one has to play at the highest level at all times.

"I was lucky enough to beat Djokovic at the Hopman Cup 11 years ago (chuckles). He is a freak. "You have no choice but to play

And, if you lower your level even the slightest against him, you will lose," he told PTI in an exclusive interaction on the sidelines of an ongoing ITF event here. "I firmly believe he will win the

(ongoing) Australian Open. And if he does win, anything is possible. He can even touch the 30-Slams mark. He is the greatest of all time, for sure. Tennis has mostly been defined by the 'Big 3' era, which has

Djokovic

But, with the era on the verge of ending, it is likely to open the doors for other players to assert their dominance in Grand

Talking on the same, Tomic

been dominated by Roger admitted that the trio has Federer, Rafael Nadal and raised the bar quite high for the raised the bar quite high for the sport in current date, besides terming the era as the "tough-

> However, he firmly believes there will be players coming up and dominating the circuit in about 10 years from now.

five years ago, as Federer, Nadal, Novak, and even Andy Murray were exchanging the top spot quite frequently, was probably the toughest era of tennis," Tomic said. Potro, (David) Ferrer, (Kei) Nishikori and (Jo-Wilfried)

"Like it or not, everything goes forward in life. Time moves on,

and different players come in. The era when I played about

Tsonga -- a lot of players who could have won Grand Slams. Of course, they (Big 3) have changed the modern-day tennis and raised the bar quite

"Obviously, a lot of similar players are coming through now, like (Carlos) Alcaraz and (Jannik) Sinner. I hope they will win many more Grand Ślams in the coming years, and about

initely be here talking about them or some other players." Although Tomic feels that Alcaraz of Spain and Sinner of Italy would be the next big thing in tennis, he warned that as long as Djokovic is around, others will have to wait for their

share of success.

10 years from now, we will def-

10 Grand Slams; Alcaraz as well. But, with Novak around for at least two more years, it's always going to be tough for anyone other than him," he continued.

'No, I don't think Novak is done vet, and no one has come close to him. I don't think anyone will ever come close to him in the next 10-15 years. Winning 20 Grand Slams itself will be a tedious task, and if he wins 30, it would be unreal.



Dabang Delhi beat Haryana Steelers

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

shu Malik pulled off two Araid points in dying seconds to help Dabang Delhi beat Harvana Steelers 35-32 in the Pro Kabaddi League contest here on Wednesday.

Vinay picked up three raid points as the Steelers took 4-2 lead in the fifth minute. However, Ashish and Vikrant effected brilliant tackles and helped Dabang Delhi take 6-5 lead soon after. Malik pulled off a brilliant raid as the Delhi side continued to forge ahead. Malik caught out Jaideep Dahiya and Yogesh tackled Ashish as Dabang inflicted the first all out

of the match. Siddharth Desai effected a raid and Rahul Sethpal tackled Manjeet, but the Delhi side still held a decent lead at 14-9. Vishal Bhardwaj and Yogesh picked up tackle points in quick

The Steelers tackled Manjeet in the last few minutes of the first half, but the two teams went into the break with Delhi leading 18-13. Desai pulled off a doublepoint raid in the opening minutes of the second half and narrowed the gap between the two sides. The Steelers rode on the momentum and inflicted an all out to take 23-21 lead. Desai continued to showcase

brilliant form as the Steelers surged ahead 27-24 in the 30th minute. However, the Delhi side fought back and levelled the scores at 28-28

Desai effected a raid to help the Steelers inch ahead, but Malik pulled off a magnificent raid soon after and locked the scores at 31-31.

Malik then effected two brilliant raids in the dying seconds of the game and helped the Delhi side clinch a thrilling win in the end.

succession as Dabang stayed ahead 15-10 in the 17th minute.

er opening round match. George, also a product of Prakash Padukone Badminton Academy, had qualified for the main draw after registering twin wins on Tuesday. Sen will now face either



Kiran, Sen enter second round; Prannoy,

Srikanth exit in Indonesia Masters

against China's Lu Guang Zu. However, world no. 8 Prannoy, who had reached the semifinals at India Open Super 750 last week, lost to former world champion Loh Kean Yew of Singapore 18-21 21-19 10-21 in his opening round match.

The 31-year-old Indian, who

claimed maiden bronze medals

at the Asian Games and world

championships last year, had lost in the first round at the Malaysia Open Super 1000 tournament as well For former world no. 1

Srikanth, it was vet another day when he had to return empty handed despite putting up a brave effort against Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia, ranked 10th. Srikanth, who is racing against time to qualify for Paris, squandered an opening game advantage to lose 21-19 14-21 11-21 to Lee in a 54-minute clash to bow out of tournament. It was his second successive first-round loss of the season.

Sen was under pressure to perform following his miserable start to the new season which saw him make first-round exits in both the events he had participated so far.

His loss against compatriot Priyanshu Rajawat in the India Open had affected his Olympic qualification hopes as he needs to get inside top 16 by April end to make the cut for Paris Games

On Wednesday, Sen watched his 7-3 lead evaporate as Weng dominated the proceedings to take a 19-12 advantage at one stage. But, Sen produced a rearguard action to pocket 12 of the next 15 points to leave his opponent behind.

After the change of sides, the battle for the first five points was a hard one before Sen marched to 11-6 at the break. Weng fought bravely to make it 10-11 but it was all a Sen show after that as the Indian reeled off six straight points and held his fort to emerge victorious.



Ivory Coast fires Gasset as coach

AP ■ ABIDJAN (IVORY COAST)

Tvory Coast coach Jean-Louis Gasset has been fired despite the team still having a chance of qualifying for the Africa Cup of Nations knockout stage.

The Ivorian Football Federation (FIF) said Wednesday that it was terminating the contracts of the French coach and his assistant 'for insufficient results in accordance to the contract of objectives they had with the

Former Ivory Coast midfield-er Emerse Faé was to take charge of the team on an inter-

im basis Ivory Coast is hosting the Africa Cup but failed to secure automatic qualification to the tournament's knockout stage when it was beaten 4-0 by Equatorial Guinea in its final

group game on Monday. It left the Elephants with just three points from three group games and reliant on results in other groups to finish among the best four third-place finishers for a place in the pre-quarterfinals.

Equatorial Guinea finished top of Group A with seven points, ahead of Nigeria on goal differ-

Wednesday's final group games in Groups E and F were to determine whether the host nation could squeeze into the knockout stage Gasset reportedly tendered his resignation to the president of

the FIF, Yacine Idriss Diallo, right after the loss to Equatorial Guinea. The defeat prompted some

irate Ivorian fans to vandalize commuter buses outside the

Rohit men bank on spin for first strike

India's unalloyed dominance at home over the last 12 years will be put through its most unique examination till date when Rohit Sharma's side faces a trend-defying England in the first match of what promises to be a stirring five-Test series from Thursday.

No team has been as invincible as India at home since their 1-2 defeat against the Three Lions led by Alastair Cook in 2012, stitching together a bull run of 16 successive series wins, including seven series sweeps. If one further breaks down the stats, India have lost just three Tests out of 44 they played in their own backyard in this phase, and this is a power walk even beyond the all-conquering West Indies in the '80s or Australia of the turn of the century.

Several factors have contributed to this astonishing run over the last decade, including favourable pitches,



bowlers who knew how to exploit those tracks and batters who churned out runs like popcorn from a vending machine.

But two players have stood head and shoulders above the rest in these conquests — offspinner Ravichandran Ashwin and left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja.

From Thursday, the Ash-Jaddu duet will be on show here at the RGI Stadium,

where the pitch is expected to turn and grip as the match moves towards its conclusion. England already have a taste of what these two can do from their past visits here, and they

will be worried, particularly

about Ashwin.

The 37-year-old still retains the burning zest of a 17-yearold to keep improving his craft and since 2012, Ashwin has grabbed 283 wickets from 46 Tests averaging a shade

Jadeja might often get viewed as a supporting act to Ashwin, but in his own right, the Saurashtra man is a potent threat, and his deliveries that dart on straight could confuse

the batters on a turner. Jadeja has taken 191 wickets from 39 Tests in the period where Ashwin kicked up a bedlam in opposition ranks to ensure that they don't get breathing space from both the ends. Together, they have bagged 500 wickets at an averbagged 500 wickets at an aver-

In all likelihood, India will also include a third spinner to the combination in the form of either Axar Patel or Kuldeep Yadav, with the former having a better chance at the moment England will be aware that no amount of preparation involving scruffing up pitches some 1600 miles away in Abu Dhabi will be enough to tackle this real menace, and in that sense they will also need to tame the demons inside their own



England frustration ends as rookie spinner **Bashir gets visa**

PTI ■ LONDON/HYDERABAD

England's Pakistan-origin Was on Wednesday granted Visa to play in the five-match Test series against India, end-ing a "frustrating" wait for the visiting side whose captain Ben Stokes felt "devastated" by the delay.

"Shoaib Bashir has now received his visa, and is due to travel to join up with the team in India this weekend. We're glad the situation has now been resolved," the England and Wales Cricket Board post-ed on its X (formerly Twitter) page on the eve of the first Test in Hyderabad.

The 20-year-old rookie, who plays for Somerset in the English county, was forced to head back to England from the team's Abu Dhabi training base after a prolonged wait for visa. His family is of Pakistani heritage but Bashir was born in Surrey

The delay snowballed into a major controversy with a British government spokesperson demanding "fair" treatment for the youngster and Stokes hardly mincing words in expressing his outrage. Bashir, who is a shock inclusion

in the squad with a mediocre 10 wickets from just six first-

class games, was never in contention for a place in the squad for the opening Test. "When I first found the news out in Abu Dhabi, I did say we shouldn't fly until Bash gets his visa," Stokes said in the pre-match press conference on Wednesday.

"But that was a little bit tongue in cheek. I know it's a way big-ger thing than doing that. That was probably just emotions around the whole thing. I'm pretty devastated that Bash has had to go through this," he added.

An unnamed British government spokesperson told 'ESPNcricinfo that it wasn't the first time that citizens of Pakistani heritage faced a delay in securing Indian visas.

"The specifics of this case are a matter for Shoaib Bashir and the Indian Government. But we absolutely expect India to treat British citizens fairly at all times in its visa process.

"We have previously raised the issues British citizens with Pakistani heritage experience applying for visas with the Indian High Commission in London," he said. India have, so far, not com-

mented on the matter. Stokes hoped that Bashir would be able to join the squad by the

It was a headache to decide between Axar and Kuldeep as third spinner: Rohit

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Indian skipper Rohit Sharma on Wednesday admitted that the team management had a tough time making the third spinner choice between Axar Patel and Kuldeep Yadav for the opening Test against England but hinted that the former might just have made the final cut.

Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja, India are primed to pick a third spinner for the first Test against England, starting here from Thursday.

"If the wicket has bounce or The 36-year-old also hoped if it doesn't have bounce, he (Kuldeep) still is a factor in will deliver one more time in those types of conditions because he's got superb variations. Obviously, he is a very mature bowler now from what he was a few years back," Rohit said in the prematch press conference.

"He's not played a lot of Test cricket in India because of Ashwin and Jadeja. We've seen it in the past as well. With our middle-order (batting), in the past, a lot of us (batters) got an opportunity pretty late.

But that's the reality of it, you can't hide away from it. But yes, he's a very tempting option," he added.

Although Rohit did not give away his final team for the match, he indicated that Axar might just be the one on the final team sheet. He underlined the utility of

the left-arm spinner as an allrounder, the strongest clue about the think tank's preference for this Test at least. He dispelled the notion that Axar packs similar abilities as Jadeja and, as such, he might slip down the pecking order. "Axar, you know, with his allround ability, gives us that batting depth. The consisten-cy that he's shown, playing in these conditions in Test crickfor us.

"But it was a headache to decide who it is going to be for us. But I am not going to say who it is," said Rohit.

that premier spinner Ashwin conditions familiar to him. "Ashwin, obviously, we know his class, we know his quality. Every time he plays the game for us, he tends to impress all of us by a notch (higher). We do appreciate that. "Every time he's gotten an opportunity, he's made sure to put the team ahead. He's shown it for a number of years now. So, yeah, I hope this series is no different for him, and he comes out and does what he does the best," said Rohit.

Ashwin is on the cusp of achieving twin milestones in his storied career.

The 37-year-old off-spinner is 10 wickets shy of the 500wicket mark in Tests and he can also complete 100 career Test matches if he plays all the five Tests in the series.

Wood is an impact builder: Stokes PTI HYDERABAD "Jimmy's incredible profession-

U-19 World Cup

England captain Ben Stokes
On Tuesday rated Mark
Wood as an "impact builder"
with high pace after they decided to enter the first Test against
India starting here from India, starting here from Thursday, with a solitary fast bowler and three spinners.

Wood was preferred over veteran James Anderson for this match, and Stokes said the Durham man's ability to touch 150 clicks tilted the scales in his "Obviously, what he brings

PTI ■ BLOEMFONTEIN

I ndia's young turks would be aiming for a more proactive

approach while batting when

they take on Ireland in the second group league encounter of the ICC U-19

what turned out to be an eas-

ier than expected opener,

Ireland game will provide

them with an opportunity to

play differently before

tougher opposition comes

calling during the Super Six

Ireland are coming into the

game with a defeat against

Bangladesh after beating min-

Tndia fast bowler Mohammed

Siraj believes England's much-hyped 'Bazball' strategy

won't work in Indian condi-

tions and if the visitors go with

their ultra-aggressive approach

then the match may get over

attacking batting approach, coined after Test team head

has given England tremen-

face its baptism by fire on sub-

continental tracks, which offer

turn and bounce in equal mea-

phase starting next week.

PTI HYDERABAD

within two days.

with his high pace...he is a real impact builder. Bowling the 90 mile an hour with a reversing ball is obviously going to be very difficult to play against. He's another weapon which you can use out here with short, sharp spells, wanting him to be bowling as fast as he can and short periods. There're no worries about these long spells because that's how we're going to use him this week," said Stokes during his prematch press meet here. So, how did the team manage-

ment handle the situation of

Indian batters against Ireland

nows USA in the opening

For India, more than battling

the opposition, it will be

about raising the bar for

compared to the early 1990s

The skipper Uday Saharan,

who scored 64 and top scor-

er Adarsh Singh (76), had strike-rates of 79 and 68

respectively, which is slightly

unacceptable in modern

That India had two terrific

but vastly different left-arm

More intent expected from

game.

modern

style of play.

World Cup here on Thursday. themselves and playing the While India disposed off 50-over game, keeping the



enced bowler like Anderson? Stokes said Anderson has taken the whole episode quite profes-

spinners Saumy Kumar

Pandey and Musheer Khan

doing a fantastic job for them

meant coach Hrishikesh

Kanitkar didn't have much to

One hopes that Saumy, easi-

tance in the first game, does-

n't have too much of a shoul-

der problem that forced him

to take a temporary break in

the first game in between his

first and second spells. On a

slowish Bloemfontein track,

Indian batters would need to

rotate the strike better and

also find more gaps in the

Powerplay overs.

worry about.

al. You never know how conditions might change and what you might feel as the best setup for your team. But now we're not looking at

having to manage Jimmy or his workloads or anything like that. You know, we put him in the spot because we think he's one of the best performers," said Stokes.

However, Stokes asserted that he will not bowl in the series The premier all-rounder is still recuperating from a knee

Maxwell needs to hold up his end of bargain: McDonald

PTI BRISBANE

Glenn Maxwell is a vital cog Gin Australia's white-ball set up but he must "hold up his end of the bargain" after his "less than ideal" incident in Adelaide, said head coach Andrew McDonald Andrew McDonald.

talised in Adelaide after he got too drunk after attending a concert by 'Six and Out', the band featuring former Australian pacer Brett Lee and passed out

He wasn't kept in the hospital for long and was discharged soon after and is now back in training.



good chat with him yesterday around the incident. Him looking after himself needs to be a consideration moving forward," McDonald was quoted as saying to Sydney Evening

"We've given him the opportu-"I've spoken to Glenn, had a nity to rest and rehab in that

period of time and I suppose the lessons for him around that would be to take up his end of the bargain in that space and take care of himself.

Maxwell was rested for next month's three-match ODI series against the West Indies at home and he took the event in Adelaide before the incident took place.

We want to see Glenn Maxwell playing cricket for the next three to four years for Australia. Can he get to the next World Cup in 2027 in South Africa? Who knows. But, he's a key player in our white-ball formats," McDonald

England are set to play five Tests against India. The 29-year-old Siraj has taken

68 wickets so far in 23 Tests since making his debut a little three years back in Australia. He said focussing on consistently hitting the right spot irrespective of the format and conditions has helped him in his career.

"I bowl with the new ball, so my line and length remain the same. I don't change things whether it's the white ball or the red ball. You have to bowl that length of five-six metres, because with the new ball, you have to pitch it up to get wickets," he said.

SIRAJ WARNING

If England play Bazball, the match might get over within two days "If England play Bazball in Indian conditions, the match might get over within a dayand-a-half or two. It's not easy to hit every time here as the ball turns sometimes and play it is preparations for the tour. Sirai said: "On how many even the condition of the

'Bazball', a hell-for-leather coach Brendon McCullum, dous success last year but it will ball turns sometimes and straightens on other occasions," Siraj told 'Jio Cinema' on the eve of the opening Test beginning here on Thursday.



"So, I think it'll be difficult to see Bazball here. But if they these, I bowled five overs and the see Bazball here. But if they match may get over quickly."
Talking about his preparations for the tour, Siraj said: "On their previous tour to India, the matches were getting over quickly. In that series (in 2021) I think I played two matches.

took two wickets of Joe Root and Jonny Bairstow. So, the aim will be to control runs in how many ever overs I bowl. If I get wickets fine, but I'll have to stay patient and continue building pressure on the batsmen."

Roach sees plenty of promise in fellow fast bowler Shamar

AP BRISBANE

West Indies veteran fast bowler Kemar Roach is predicting big things for the new guy on the team, 24-year-old fellow paceman Shamar Joseph. Ahead of the second Test — a day-night match — that begins Thursday at the Gabba in Brisbane, the 35-year-old Roach has 267 Tests wickets, placing him fifth on the all-time list for the West Indies.

In 2009, on his first Test tour,

Roach shattered Ricky Ponting's elbow with a blazing bouncer that forced Ponting to retire hurt from the match.

Joseph took 5-94 on debut in the first Test in Adelaide last week, including the wicket of Steve Smith with his first delivery. Australia won the first Test by 10 wickets in 2 1-2 days.

"The best advice I can give him is to build his own legacy and understand what you want from cricket," Roach said of Joseph. "That's up to him to determine ... If it's monetary, or if it's just stats and statistics or whatever. There's gonna be a lot of distractions and he's a hot commodity right now."

The (Twenty20) franchises are a big distraction but guys still want to relish red-ball cricket. Test cricket is still in the hearts of West Indian cricketers at home. It's just about us to provide support around it." Roach says the early signs from Joseph were all positive.

"He is a very confident young



man and has shared a lot of information with me. We have a lot of conversations," Roach

"He has a good energy I love. I am happy to be around him and to be a part of his career at the start of it. Let's see how long and how good he can be at the end of it. He is destined to be good if he puts the work

Meanwhile, Australia opener Usman Khawaja has been passed fit by Cricket Australia's medical team to play in Brisbane. And Travis Head is likely to play despite a recent positive COVID-19 test.

Khawaja was struck in the head by a West Indies bouncer during Friday's short run chase in Adelaide.

The 37-year-old completed concussion assessments earlier this week, and has been approved to partner Steve Smith in Khawaja's home Gabba test.

"Khawaja was assessed again

today and has no symptoms of delayed concussion," a Cricket Australia spokesperson said. After a match-winning century in Adelaide, Head subsequently contracted COVID-19 but Australia captain Pat Cummins said the 30-year-old was progressing well in his recovery. Head flew to Brisbane on Tuesday but decided to rest in the team hotel rather than join the Australian team for its late afternoon training session at the

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