

OPINION 6 BHARAT RATNA: HONOURING THE LEGACY OF JAN NAYAK

WORLD 9 IMRAN KHAN WARNS HIS PARTY CANDIDATES

MONEY 10 SPACE INDUSTRY SEEKS LIBERAL FDI POLICY, PLI IN BUDGET

NEW DELHI, THURSDAY JANUARY 25, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



ROHIT MEN BANK ON SPIN FOR FIRST STRIKE 12 SPORTS

PM urges Ministers not to crowd Ayodhya

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI/AYODHYA

A day after a massive rush at Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, 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.

ACCORD PRIORITY TO DEVOTEES



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

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.

visiting Ayodhya on the praan pratishthaa day and instead plan their pilgrimage a couple of days later.

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

INDIA Bloc speaks in confused tones

SAUGAR SENGUPTA/PNS ■ KOLKATA/NEW DELHI

Trinamool Congress supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday announced that her party will go solo in the forthcoming general elections.



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.

Air India fined ₹1.1 crore for safety breaches

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has imposed a penalty of ₹1.10 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.

PM headed for mega projects launch in Bulandshahr

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address his first electoral rally scheduled in Bulandshahr on 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.



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.

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 (DFC), by flagging off goods trains from the two stations.

to enhance the operation of passenger trains due to the shifting of goods trains onto the DFC track, they explained. The prime minister will also inaugurate the fourth rail line connecting Mathura-Palwal and Chhipiyana Buzurg-Dadri sections, along with multiple road development projects.

Centre allows mobile tower in forest to meet 4G target

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Environment Ministry is treading cautiously as it attempts to strike a balance between technological progress and the preservation of natural habitats. It has relaxed regulations for the installation of mobile towers in forest-protected areas, including national parks and wildlife habitats across the country.



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

Lakshadweep scripts a melodious story of hope

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Lakshadweep, a group of islands 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.

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.



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

"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.

minimum ten women fishers started functioning before the Prime Minister's flight reached New Delhi. "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.

Security tightened for Republic Day at Kartavya Path

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

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 Day 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

order in the national capital, borders will be sealed on the 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 Monday's consecration ceremony at the Ram temple in Ayodhya. Peace is being maintained in the border areas with help of interstate coordination, he said. Special Commissioner of



Police (Law and Order, Zone II) Madhup Tiwari said at least 77,000 invitees are expected at the parade. "We have divided the New Delhi district, where the parade will take place, into 28 zones to ensure security. These zones are headed by

senior officers," Tiwari said. Speaking about the security arrangements, Tiwari further stated that 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 also urged the people to reach the venue on time and cooperate with the security personnel during the thorough checking that will take place. 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. 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

said. Tiwari also requested the 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

transport vehicles. The pick-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 pick-up 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 nine-day annual mega event being held at Red Fort from January 23 to 31. The event showcases Republic Day tableaux, performances by Armed Forces bands, cultural performances, a pan-India food court, a crafts bazaar, and pavilions of state governments and central ministries.

City gets light rain as cold wave conditions continue

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

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 India Meteorological Department data. The visibility improved at var-



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 International 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 Safdarjung Observatory, the

Centre to hold off stricter curbs on better air forecast



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

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. The 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 exempt from the ban. Amid 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 India Meteorological Department and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology," a statement said.

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 procurement and distribution of

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 administrative position and got the Rs. 989 crore Class Room project broken down in 16 tenders of less than Rs. 100 crore each so as to get them cleared by using their power & influence in Expenditure Finance Committee.

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

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Municipal Corporation 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-

ing the pictures of Lord Ram and take them down to avoid them from falling down on the streets. "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 approximately 2,000 metres of danglers for the occasion. "We are environmental 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

taken them down, preserved 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 flags or any other decorative item bearing Lord Ram's picture is handled with care till the time they are taken off.

Meanwhile, the CTI has 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

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Metro will commence 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

ceremony will be issued 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 Kartavya 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 with enclosures 1 to 9 and V1 and V2 should board 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 impact of 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

mandatory clearances required 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 Yashbhoomi in Dwarka, life-size Elephant and Lion figurines and fountains in Dwarka and Baansera. He expressed grave exception to the delay being caused in the development of Vaishnavi-the Nursery-cum-Garden-cum-Recreational Space in Ashok Vihar in North Delhi. "Vaishnavi, which was conceived 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



non-performance of the contractor," the LG office said. The LG ordered for the contract to be revoked, EMD and bank guarantee of the contractor 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. Among others, the ambitious Karkardooma ToD 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 Dwarka with iconic replicas of all States and UTs, represent-

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 Dwarka Sector-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 launched 'Dilli Gramodaya Abhiyan' in all villages of the city, will receive a major fillip with the first pilot project in Qutabgarh Village getting completed by February.

RITES LIMITED
(A Government of India Enterprise)
Shikhar, Plot No.1, Sector-29, Gurgaon-122001

Walk-in/Online Interview for following position(s)/ discipline(s):

VC No.	Post	No. of vacancies
40/24	Environmental Social Monitoring Specialist	2
41/24	Junior Design Engineer (Mechanical)/ Medical Gas Line System	3
42/24	Junior Design Engineer (Electrical)	1
43/24	CAD Draughtsman (Structural)	1
44/24	CAD Draughtsman (Electrical)	1
45/24	CAD Draughtsman (HVAC)	2
46/24	CAD Draughtsman (Water Supply)	2
47/24	CAD Draughtsman (External Work)	1
48/24	CAD Draughtsman (Equipment)	3

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 ■ NEW DELHI

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 Amrit Kaal. 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 humility. 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-

ment has created new opportunities 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

remember these days and you 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 emphasized. 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 among others.

PM to interact with young voters today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will speak to a large 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 Surya said that young voters played a key role in electing Modi as Prime Minister in 2014 and then his re-election in 2019. "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 indirectly 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 country. 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.

I bow to Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur: Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra 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 people's lives. 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 same," he said. 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 create 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 years." Today, when people from OBC, SC and ST Communities are 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 Nayak!"

Researchers find correlation between energy drink consumption, poor sleep



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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 Open. 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 sleep. 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.

Insomnia was also more 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 Borge 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, AshimSanyal, CEO of Consumer VOICE, a consumer rights organization working in the field of cardiovascular health for sever-

al years said that this should 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 packaged foods will help consumers identify foods that are high in fat, sugar and salt," he said. These products are clearly also root causes for NCDs affecting individuals across all age groups and regions. 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 age. "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 diet."

Delhi needs neighbours aid to beat smog woes: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the blame game between the national 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 implications. 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 pollution through airshed approach" published in ScienceDirect recommends tackling air pollution at a regional level instead. This means identifying the wider area where a city's pollution is produced - its so-called "airshed". 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

the Delhi Pollution Control Committee, said, "Delhi's neighbouring States have an important role to play in helping save lives in our city - and 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 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 limits, 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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A genetic marker linked to premature ageing 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

physical activity program for weight management in children 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 recommended 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 Robinson.

"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 cardiovascular 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," Rehkopf said.

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 and Entrepreneurship here. 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 Kaushal Vikas Yojana (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 ■ LUCKNOW
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.



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 groups."

In adherence to the strict instructions 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 devotees.



Monkey enters Ram temple; beautiful incident, says Trust

PTI ■ LUCKNOW
A monkey entered the sanctum 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.

Gyanvapi survey to be given to both sides: Varanasi court

PTI ■ VARANASI
A Varanasi 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 said.

Yogi bid to check gun culture in Bulandshahr

PTI ■ BULANDSHAHR (UP)
Nearly 400 'tamanchas' wielding people in western 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, 1959.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS
THANKSGIVING
Thank you holly spirit for all the blessings Celine.
PD(251)C

विक्रम विश्वविद्यालय
उज्जैन
क्रमांक/भण्डार/2024/761 दिनांक 24.01.2024
प्री-एण्ड पोस्ट परीक्षा परिणाम प्रोसेसिंग कार्य हेतु द्वितीय ई-निविदा विज्ञापित

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given that my client veena rani is in process to avail the LAP against his L-Type Portion of Property Bearing Municipal No. L-2120, Area Measuring 8.88 Sq. Yds., Old Plot No. 120, Situated at Shastri Nagar, Delhi-110052

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

PUBLIC NOTICE
My Client Sh. Darvesh Vashista S/o Sh. Surender Vashista is the Owner of Built-up Property Bearing No. WZ-295-C, Area Measuring 20.90 Sq. Mtrs. Kharsa No.60/20, Village Palam, Situated in Unauthorized Colony Palam Village Extn. Area, New Delhi-110045

APPENDIX IV-A
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

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

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

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 -11, North West Delhi-110009, Swapnil Parashar & Vinay Parashar

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

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

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



www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

Up, up and away!

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

In 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, amidst 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.

PICTALK



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

Policy reforms needed to boost manufacturing

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

With 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.



logistics hubs, and efficient transportation networks to reduce manufacturing costs and improve competitiveness.

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 business-

friendly environment will encourage investment and growth in the manufacturing sector. Implementing a single-window system for approvals, clearances, and licenses can facilitate ease of doing business.

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

Bharat Ratna: Honouring the legacy of Jan Nayak



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

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

The 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.

In 1977, another instance showcased his simplicity when he joined party leaders in a torn kurta for a celebration in Patna. Despite offers for a new kurta, he



chose to donate the money to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund, embodying his selfless nature.

The Bharat Ratna announcement, made a day before his centenary, elevates Narendra Modi's standing among the Bihar 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 status.

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 J.R. Jayaprakash Narayan, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, and Charan Singh. His pivotal role in strengthening affirmative action for backward classes, despite strong opposition, laid the foundation for a more inclusive society.

Jan Nayak Karpoori Thakur, hailing from the most back-

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 recognition 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 decision to bestow the Bharat

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, connecting 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 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 DOWNTRODDEN

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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 attacks on Prime Minister Narendra

Coffee plantation in Odisha



The 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 initiative.

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, embraced at the World Economic Forum

(WEF) summit in Davos, fell short with elaborate discussions and superficial intentions. Conversations about war-inflicted 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 Panji | Bhubaneswar

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



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

Let 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 sought-after 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?



NILANTHA LANGAMUWA

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

Following 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 deteriorating entity. 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-



DEPENDENT COUNTRIES FROM THE PRESSURES OF BLOC POLITICS. HOWEVER, 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 FLOURISHING ORGANIZATION LACKS A VIABLE FUTURE, AND THE PERSISTENT SQUANDERING OF PUBLIC FUNDS YIELDS NO PALPABLE BENEFITS FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT. DESPITE BEING RECOGNIZED 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 COUNTRIES.

Since the inception of NAM, the so-called 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 prevented

such widespread suffering. Sadly, attempting to resuscitate a 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 disparities.

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 pandemic underscored the detachment of the 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

supply chains, predictable mobility, and reliable data flows. Person-centred 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 War, the NAM struggled to adapt to emerging dynamics. Instead of collectively 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-dream.

(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

The 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-



SIDDHARTH MISHRA



BHAWNA SHARMA

pening frequently, it can be easily predicted that deepfake technology may achieve an unprecedented level of realism

- 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 deepfakes 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

bound to act in case of 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 deepfakes as well. However, the

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 a 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 deepfake technology. Second, deepfake may be regulated under

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 obliged to deploy technological tools for recognizing false

and damaging information created using services of the platform, implement a real-identity information authentication 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 long for the necessary regulations as well as the Digital India Act to come into existence.

(Siddhartha is Sr Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Law, University of Delhi and Bhawna is a techno-legal policy professional; views are personal)

Space industry seeks liberal FDI policy, PLI scheme in Budget

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
India's nascent space sector has sought a liberal FDI policy 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 margins.
"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

approval route and that takes months and months," Awais Ahmed, founder and CEO of Pixxel, a Bengaluru-based start-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-



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

Lt Gen (Retd) AK Bhatt said. 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.
IN-SPACE, the space sector regulator, has projected the country's space economy to increase to USD 44 billion by 2033.

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 said.
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 go-ahead 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.



Sweden keen on ties with India on sustainability solutions in aviation

PTI ■ New Delhi

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



Government aiming to hike scrap share in steel making to 50pc by 2047

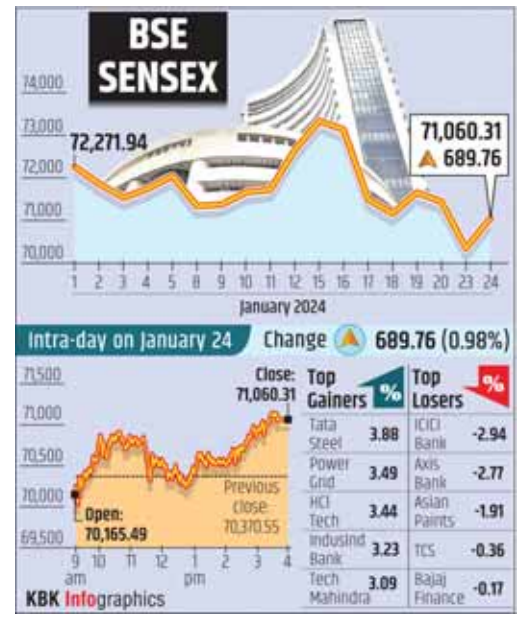
PTI ■ KOLKATA

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 Wednesday.
The steel minister emphasised on usage of scrap in steel making as manufacturing the metal through scrap and other waste products is less polluting and termed it as a step "towards green steel initiative".
"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 Conference in Kolkata.
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 minister said addressing through a video message.
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 added.
Today, around 25 million tonnes of scrap are produced in the country and around 5 million

Sensex surges 690 points to reclaim 71K level

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 Finserv and Bharti Airtel, among others.
On the other hand, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, Asian Paints, Bajaj Finance and TCS



stituents of the NSE Nifty witnessed gains. Elsewhere 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 higher 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 Tuesday, as they offloaded shares worth Rs 3,115.39 crore, according to exchange data.

Gold falls ₹50; silver jumps ₹300

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices fell Rs 50 to Rs 63,200 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at Rs 63,250 per 10 grams.
However, silver jumped Rs 300 to Rs 76,000 per kilogram while it had settled at Rs 75,700 per kilogram in the previous close.
"Spot gold prices (24 carats) in the Delhi markets are trading at Rs 63,200 per 10 grams, down by Rs 50, taking cues from the international market," Saumil Gandhi, senior analyst of commodities at HDFC Securities, said.
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.

Bank credit expansion projected at 15 pc in FY24, 12 pc in FY25: Icra

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Rating agency Icra on Wednesday revised upward its bank credit growth projection at 14.9-15.3 per cent this fiscal, but said the same will lose steam and grow at 12 per 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,



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 segment and non-bank finance companies, with annual growth of 33 per cent and 23 per cent, respectively, as of November 18, 2023.
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 non-banking finance companies, apart from the tight liquidity conditions.

Rupee settles 2 paise higher at 83.13 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Tech Mahindra Q3 net falls 60 pc to ₹510 crore

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 positive 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 dollar.
"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



crude oil prices may cap the 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 Wednesday.
"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 over 9,000 units of the model to these markets.



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, and VIC Enterprises Private Limited, Milky Investment and Trading Company," the CCI release said.
Religare is engaged in the financial services business 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.

INDIA SPINBALL VS ENGLAND BAZBALL

Rohit men bank on spin for first strike

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

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.



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 — off-spinner 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-year-old to keep improving his craft and since 2012, Ashwin has grabbed 283 wickets from 46 Tests averaging a shade

over 19. 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 average of 21. 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 minds.



Wood is an impact builder: Stokes

PTI ■ HYDERABAD
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 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 favour. "Obviously, what he brings

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 pre-match press meet here. So, how did the team management handle the situation of



looking over a highly-experienced bowler like Anderson? Stokes said Anderson has taken the whole episode quite professionally.

"Jimmy's incredible professional. 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 surgery.

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. Behind Ravichandran 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 if it doesn't have bounce, he (Kuldeep) still is a factor 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 pre-match 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 all-rounder, 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 all-round ability, gives us that batting depth. The consistency that he's shown, playing in these conditions in Test cricket, also is an important factor for 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. The 36-year-old also hoped that premier spinner Ashwin will deliver one more time in 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 500-wicket mark in Tests and he can also complete 100 career Test matches if he plays all the five Tests in the series.

More intent expected from Indian batters against Ireland U-19 World Cup

PTI ■ BLOEMFONTEIN
India'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 World Cup here on Thursday. While India disposed off Bangladesh by 84 runs in what turned out to be an easier than expected opener, Ireland game will provide them with an opportunity to play differently before tougher opposition comes calling during the Super Six phase starting next week. Ireland are coming into the game with a defeat against Bangladesh after beating min-

nows USA in the opening game. For India, more than battling the opposition, it will be about raising the bar for themselves and playing the 50-over game, keeping the modern approach in mind, compared to the early 1990s style of play. The skipper Uday Saharan, who scored 64 and top scorer Adarsh Singh (76), had strike-rates of 79 and 68 respectively, which is slightly unacceptable in modern times. That India had two terrific but vastly different left-arm

spinners Saumy Kumar Pandey and Musheer Khan doing a fantastic job for them meant coach Hrishikesh Kanitkar didn't have much to worry about. One hopes that Saumy, easily the best bowler by a distance in the first game, doesn't have too much of a shoulder 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.

Maxwell needs to hold up his end of bargain: McDonald

PTI ■ BRISBANE
Glenn Maxwell is a vital cog in 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. Last week Maxwell was hospitalised 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. "I've spoken to Glenn, had a



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 News. "We've given him the opportunity 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 opportunity to attend a golf 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 said.

SIRAJ WARNING

If England play Bazball, the match might get over within two days

PTI ■ HYDERABAD
India fast bowler Mohammed Siraj believes England's much-hyped 'Bazball' strategy won't work in Indian conditions and if the visitors go with their ultra-aggressive approach then the match may get over within two days. "Bazball", a hell-for-leather attacking batting approach, coined after Test team head coach Brendon McCullum, has given England tremendous success last year but it will face its baptism by fire on sub-continental tracks, which offer turn and bounce in equal measure.

"If England play Bazball in Indian conditions, the match might get over within a day-and-a-half or two. It's not easy to hit every time here as the 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 play it, it'll be good for us as the 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.

"In the first innings of one of these, I bowled five overs and 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."

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.

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 pacer 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 said. "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 in." 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 Gabba.