OPINION 6

TAIWANESE CONUNDRUM

MONEY 10

EMERGED STRONGER, SAYS ADANI ON



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SPINNERS PUT INDIA IN STRONG POSITION

NEW DELHI, FRIDAY JANUARY 26, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3 the pioneel

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Modi Fulcrum of BJP Manifesto

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

A head of the Lok Sabha elections in April-May this year, BJP president JP Nadda officially launched the party's 2024 election campaign, releasing a video featuring a thomas cong dedicated to Prima theme song dedicated to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The theme song in Hindi, Nahi Haqeeqat Bunte Hai, Tabhi Toh Sab Modi Ko Chunte Hai" (Not dreams, but (we) weave reality, that's why everyone chooses Modi), highlights how Modi delivered on his promises and fulfilled people's dreams after they elected him at a time when the country was in a "bad shape". The campaign song was released by Nadda at an event where Prime Minister Narendra Modi

addressed young voters virtually. In a virtual interaction with millions of first-time voters from across 5,800 locations in the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi invited the nation's youth on Thursday to contribute to the Bharatiya Janata Party's manifesto for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. He urged them to share their thoughts on the NaMo app. The Prime Minister expressed his anticipation of meeting some of

contributors soon. Additionally, he provided a link to the website narendramodi.in, where individuals can share their inputs for the BIP's manifesto. He and 13-second video, expresses the

also called upon the connected youth through social media not only to vote but also to assist people whose names were not on

the voters' list in getting them

included.

"I invite the youth of India to contribute to the BJP manifesto for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Share your thoughts on the NaMo App. I look forward to meeting some of the contributors myself in the future," said PM Modi.

His social media post about the BJP manifesto came on the occasion of National Voters' Day, during which he also urged those who have not yet registered themselves as voters to do so.

The song, presented as a 2-minute



ruling party's confidence and emphasises that Modi is all set to become the Prime Minister for the third consecutive term. It features a photo of Modi performing dandavat pranam in front of Ram Lalla in Ayodhya.

video highlights government's achievements in various sectors and the launch of schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Har Ghar Nal Scheme, Pradhan Mantri Ujiwala Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi, and the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) that were introduced in the last 10 years of the Modi regime.

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Highways on a high under Gadkari

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) is poised to transition to a Quality-Cum-Cost-based selection system for bidding on various road construction and related projects, replacing the age-old L-1 least-cost selection process. This shift aims to enhance the quality of the undertaken works

Nitin Gadkari, the Union Minister of Road Transport and



Highways (MoRTH), said, "The Ministry of Roads will soon adopt a qualitative tendering

process instead of the least-cost bidding process to promote quality and road safety in various projects. Qualitative tendering will facilitate the incorporation of safer road footness in designs considering features in designs, considering the behaviour of road users." Gadkari lamented the fact that there have been several instances where officers in the ministry have omitted safety features in highway projects to reduce costs, ostensibly in the pursuit of financial viability.

Continued on Page 2



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, and others during the inauguration and foundation stone laying ceremony of various developmental projects in Bulandshahr on Thursday

Gifts Bulandshahr with dream projects

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE BULANDSHAHR/NEW DELHI

After inaugurating and laying the foundation stone for development projects worth over Rs 19,100 crore in Bulandshahr ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted on Thursday that he merely heralds the call for development, while it is the people who sound the poll bugle for him. Touching upon the completion of the praan pratishtha ceremony in Ayodhya, the Prime Minister emphasised the priority of 'Rashtra Pratishtha,' urging its elevation to new heights.
"We must strengthen the path

from Dev to Desh and Ram to Rashtra," PM Modi declared during a massive rally in Bulandshahr. western Uttar Pradesh. He said that the time had come to elevate 'Rashtra Pratishtha" to greater heights, aiming to transform India into a developed nation by 2047. Modi also mentioned the late BJP leader and former UP CM, Kalyan Singh, saying that he would have been pleased to witness the development in Ayodhya. "This region gave us Kalyan Singh, who devoted his life to 'Ram Kaaj' and 'Rashtra Kaai', Modi remarked in Bulandshahr.

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Kerala Governor delivers knockout punch in Assembly

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

 $T^{he\ CPI(M)-led\ Kerala}_{Government\ found\ itself\ in}$ an embarrassing situation as Governor Mohammed Arif Khan concluded his address to the Legislative Assembly on Thursday, the opening day of this year's session. The Governor, after his customary salutations to the House, read out the concluding line of the policy statement and promptly left the House, all within a

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan (also known as Karana Bhoothan) stood bewildered and perplexed as the Governor exited the House, leaving both the shocked treasury and Opposition benches aghast. This is the first incident of its kind reported from anywhere

span of one minute.

in the country. There is nothing surprising in this development. The policy statement given to the Government given to the for reading out in the House is complete nonsense. The State Government has blamed

the Centre for all its omissions and commissions, leading the Governor to skip the entire speech. However, according to PC

George, a seven-time legislator and former chief of the Kerala whip Government, the Governor has done nothing wrong, as this incident was waiting to

He said what is interesting is the speeches to be delivered by the Congress during the discussion on thanking the policy statement.

"The Congress and the CPI(M) are constituents of the INDI Alliance, and Kerala is the only State where they are not together. If the Congress is sincere, its legislators should expose the failures of the government. We saw a woman assistant public prosecutor committing suicide in Kollam earlier this week due to the harassment meted out to her by the CPI(M) leaders. A physically

challenged person committed suicide in Wayanad because

the State government failed to

due to him, while the octogenarian Mariyamma, another pensioner, has been going around the state with a begging bowl soliciting financial help from good Samaritans, as the CPI(M) government has failed to reimburse her dues for more than a year," said George. The 63-page-long speech,

intended to be read out by the Governor, was full of eloquence on Pinarayi Vijayan and a scathing attack on the Centre. While highlighting NITI-Ayog's praise for the 'unprecedented' progress made by the State in the Human Development Index, the Keralaeeyam Global Show, and the Nava Kerala Sadass, which ended in a fiasco, the speech blamed the Centre for every setback suffered by Kerala, pointed out the veteran lawmaker.

VD Satheeshan, leader of the Opposition, blamed the CPI(M) and the BJP for the Governor's actions. "He humiliated the people of

Kerala," alleged Satheeshan.

Continued on Page 2

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Maratha quota march reaches Mumbai doorsteps Left joins Congress

The clamour for reservations for Marathas in The clamour for reservations for instances of jobs and education reached the doorsteps of Mumbai on Thursday evening, as thousands of Marathas, led by Shivba Sanghatana leader Manoj Jarange-Patil, arrived in Navi Mumbai en route to the historic Azad Maidan in south Mumbai, where they will converge on Friday. The Maratha activists, who began their march to Mumbai from Jarange Patil's home village of Antaravali-Sarate in Jalna district in the Marathwada region on January 20, will lay siege to Maharashtra's State capital on Friday morning to pressure the Shinde Sena-BJP-NCP (Ajit Pawar) Government to fulfill its promise of implementing reservations for their community.

Raising slogans like "Ek Maratha, Lak Maratha", the Maratha agitators stepped into Navi Mumbai on Thursday evening, a satellite town of Mumbai, where they will stay overnight in the Vashi APMC Market area before heading towards Azad Maidan via Chembur in north-central Mumbai. Given that the Mumbai Police have declined permission for the Maratha procession to enter several venues in the metropolis, including Azad Maidan, Shivaji Park, and other locations, citing a lack of space, it remains to be seen how the Mumbai police will tackle the lakhs of Marathas who have threatened to storm Azad Maidan in



government had sent out a delegation to meet Jarange Patil, who is leading the morcha, to engage in discussions. However, the talks did not yield any results, as the Maratha leader was in no mood

seats to be arrived at among

three MVA constituents in

Maharashtra, Ambedkar had

on January 8 sought to know

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav

Thackeray as to what kind of

seat-sharing arrangement was

being reached among the three

MVA partners –Sena (UBT), Congress and NCP (SP).

As per the understanding

ners, the VBA will be allotted

a seat or two from the Shiv

Within hours after Sena

spokesperson and MP Sanjay

Raut went to town saying that

the VBA could contest the

Akola LS seat and none of the

MVA allies would object to it,

Ambedkar upped the ante on

the lack of clarity in the seat-

sharing formula being worked

out among the MVA partners.

know as to why the SS-UBT

kept harping only on the Akola

seat when he could contest any

seat in the state. The VBA chief,

it may be recalled, was elect-

ed twice from Akola and later

served a term in Rajya Sabha.

contest it, I can stand for elec-

even from Badayuni (Badaun)

Congress and NCP (SP)?,"

Ambedkar had asked.

Sena (UBT) quota.

reached among the MVA part-

Speaking to the media, Jarange Patil said, "How can we talk to some government officials? We want Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Ministers Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar to sit across from us and resolve the issue. We are prepared to cooperate with the State gov-

For more than five months, Jarange-Patil has been leading the agitation, demanding reservations for Marathas in jobs and education.

It may be recalled that Jarange-Patil, who had initiated a hunger strike in Antarwali Sarati village in Jalna district from August 29, demanding reservations for the Maratha community, called off his fast on September 14. This decision came after Chief Minister Eknath Shinde met him and assured that his government would fulfill all demands, including providing Kunbi OBC community caste certificates to all Marathas. Since then, Jarange-Patil has expanded his sup-

port base by addressing rallies in various district headquarters across the State.

In a related development, Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) president Nana Patole said that the fact the Maratha community had to come to Mumbai was the biggest failure of the Shinde-BJP government. Patole added, "The state government made announcements and even issued statements that it would give reservations to the Maratha community. But, so far, nothing has happened. The Shinde government has been misleading the Maratha community. The Maratha community has been misled by the state government in the name of reservation, and the Maratha community coming to Mumbai is a big failure of the Shinde-BJP

yatra in West Bengal

SAUGAR SENGUPTA KOLKATA

While the national Congress leadership continued to engage in diplomatic discussions with Mamata discussions with Mamata Banerjee, emphasising the Bengal Chief Minister's signif-icance within the INDIA alliance, the Trinamool Congress persistently displayed its hostility by protesting against the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra as it entered Bengal on Thursday it entered Bengal on Thursday. Meanwhile, the Left Front acted swiftly and strategically to bridge the widening gap between the TMC and Congress, participating in the Yatra as it transitioned from

Assam to Coochbehar. In Coochbehar's Baxirhaat, TMC supporters staged protests against the Yatra, chanting slogans against the Congress. They expressed, "Didi (Mamata) is sufficient for us here, and we do not need any outsiders in Bengal." Rahul Gandhi, still considered the final authority in his party, patiently listened to their concerns, said, "I have come to hear your grievances and to stand by you against the hatred being spread by RSS and BJP." He refrained from speaking against the TMC support-

In an apparent attempt to soothe the ruffled sentiments of Banerjee, who was discontented with the demeanor of Pradesh Congress president Adhir Chowdhury, another senior AICC leader, Jairam Ramesh, reiterated that the Chief Minister was an "important" component in the INDIA wheel, consistently highly regarded by the party's national leadership.
"We would like and anticipate

Mamata ji to join our Yatra, even if only for 10-15 minutes as it crosses Bengal," Ramesh stated, emphasising the good relationship between the two parties and expressing confidence in resolving their differences soon.

Subsequently, Gandhi had to hastily depart for Delhi from the Hansimara military airport, citing "urgent work." However, the Congress leaders did not delve into whether this "urgent work" had any connection to Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, who reportedly had been in touch with the BJP leadership.

Interestingly, on Wednesday, Banerjee stated that the Congress had not extended an invitation to her, while both Rahul Gandhi and Ramesh claimed that an invitation had indeed been sent to Banerjee. They did not even have the courtesy to invite us to the Yatra

while it was passing through my state," Banerjee remarked, whereas Gandhi had mentioned a day earlier, "My party and I share a good relationship with Mamata ji, and we have even invited her to join the

Meanwhile, the Marxists took swift action, with their senior leader from North Bengal, Jibesh Sarkar, joining the Congress' Yatra in Siliguri along with a large number of his followers. The Congress promptly welcomed the Left leaders, according to sources.

When asked about their participation in the Yatra, Sarkar, a ĈPI(M) State Committee member, stated that his party was invited, and they decided to join against the BJP's communal and undemocratic politics. "We are against the BJP's policy to divide the electorate and TMC's goondaism and corruption and so we have joined the Yatra after being invited," a

Setback for Maha Vikas Aghadi

T N RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI

In a setback for the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), the Prakash Ambedkar-led Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) on Thursdow rejected the invite Thursday rejected the invitation extended to it by the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) for seat-sharing talks for the Lok Sabha polls. VBA chief Prakash Ambedkar, whose party has tied up with the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena to contest the Lok Sabha polls, spurned the invite from the MVA - comprising Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (Sharad Pawar within hours after the MVA sent him an invite to attend the seat-sharing talks later in the evening

Ambedkar, whom the MVA had long kept on tenterhooks by keeping him away from its seat-sharing talks, did not take kindly the joint Opposition front's invite to him for talks after weeks on end. So much so that he sent off a stern letter to Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee president Nana Patole asking him "not to play mind games" with the people of Maharashtra.

"It seems that you are playing mind games with the people of Maharashtra or perhaps there Ambedkar stated in his letter alluding to a popular dialogue on 'chemical locha' (chemical muddle) from the Bollywood comedy blockbuster, "Lage Raho Munnabhai" (2006).

The invite sent to Ambedkar to attend the seat-sharing talks - convened at a five-star hotel in Mumbai on Thursday evening -had been signed by Patole,, NCP (SP) state President Jayant Patil and Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut. Declining the invite sent on a MVA letter head, signed by its top leaders, Ambedkar said that instead of Patole, the letter must have been signed by Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, along with NCP(SP) President Sharad Pawar and Shiv Sena (UBT) President Uddhav Thackeray.

Ambedkar, who is the grandson of late B R Ambedkar, said: "The other two signatories to the letter other than Patil i.e., have clearly told me in multiple meetings that the Congress high-command has not bestowed you with any decision-making authority for alliance and coalition-related decisions in Maharashtra".

Miffed by the delay in the finalising the seat-adjustments by the MVA for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, Ambedkar had earlier this month asked his party's ally Shiv Sena (UBT) to "come clean" on the electoral understanding it had reached with two other MVA partners Pawar).

Fearing that his party might be short-changed in the "seatsharing" pact for 48 Lok Sabha

Man sets motorcycle on fire to keep himself warm

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As biting cold grips Delhi, a man in Pul Prahladpur area of the city allegedly set a motorcycle on fire on Thursday to keep himself warm, police

In a 2.5-minute video that surfaces on social media, Kishan Kumar can be seen setting a motorcycle, parked in a lane in GC Block, on fire. The video also shows Kumar

standing in front of the burning two-wheeler for a while. "At about 3 am, Kumar set a sack, kept on a Hero Splendor motorcycle, on fire with the help of a matchstick," a police he was feeling cold.

After noticing the motorcycle on fire, its owner and another neighbour came out of their houses and informed the police, the officer said

'We received the call at 4.37 am and a team was sent to the spot. The blaze was doused with the help of the fire department but by then the motorcycle was completely charred," the officer said. Police said they identified Kumar with the help of CCTV footage and arrested him from

Kumar told police that he set alcohol or any narcotics subthe motorcycle on fire because

He has been booked under sec-

tion 435 (Mischief by fire or explosive substance with intent to cause damage) of the IPC, police said. As per the eyewitnesses, some

residents saw him sitting in an auto rickshaw parked near the spot before the incident. Kumar works as a mason and

lives with his family in the same block where the incident happened, police said.
The police have medically

examined him to know if he was under the influence of

Ayodhya Ram temple darshan timings extended

Joining issue with Raut, Ambedkar had wanted to The extended timing to offer prayers at the new Ram temple in Ayodhya came into effect on Thursday with 'darshan' being allowed from 6 am as key roads leading to the temple town remained closed to regulate vehicular movement. "Why are you talking about only Akola?... Let anybody Authorities have implemented strict security measures in Ayodhya amid a huge rush of tion from Mumbai, or Pune, or people following the January 22 consecration ceremony. in Uttar Pradesh... Nobody Rapid Action Force and

spell out to us what agreement personnel have been deployed has been reached with the outside the temple and roads Basti, Ambedkarnagar, Barabanki,



15 kilometres ahead of their borders with Ayodhya.

On Wednesday, the temple management decided to let people offer prayers from 6 am to 10 pm, and allotted 15 minutes for 'aarti' and 'bhog' from 12 noon. Earlier, it was 7 am to 6 pm with a two-hour break in between. On Thursday, devotees started arriving in the temple town on the occasion of 'Paush Purnima' and thousands were seen taking a holy dip in the Saryu river.

Gaurav Dayal earlier said, "We are trying to ease the situation. We are allowing emergency vehicles and vehicles carrying

Faizabad but the entry into Ayodhya town is still cĺosed." Véhicles from nearby districts have been prohibited from entering Ayodhya district, he

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday held a meeting with officials in Lucknow to review the steps taken for crowd management and advised VIPs planning to visit the temple to inform authorities in advance. Meanwhile, Modi has requested his Cabinet colleagues to avoid visiting the Ram temple in Ayodhya at least until March.

Highways on...

"Road engineering is the primary factor contributing to the rising number of road accidents in the country. A recent road safety audit of seven roads in the country revealed approximately 57 engineering shortcomings on the Pune-Mumbai expressway alone, and 25-28 per cent engineering defects on other roads. After rectifying the 57 faults on the Pune-Mumbai expressway, the accident rate has almost dropped to zero," said Gadkari during a conference titled "Vision Zero, Targeting Road Safety by 5E's with Innovative Technologies," organised by the International Road Federation (IRF) in collaboration with MoRTH as part of the ongoing Road Safety month.

"Road engineering solutions must be carefully considered when preparing Detailed Project Reports (DPR). There are numerous instances where people choose to cross roads, risking their safety and that of others, rather than using foot over bridges (FOBs) constructed on highways. FOBs should be designed to be user-friendly, equipped with escalators or lifts, and provisions for twowheelers and bicycles to facilitate safe crossing," said

MoRTH emphasised that promoting a safe transportation system requires a holistic approach, encompassing the engineering of roads and vehicles

enforcement, education, and emergency care. "These 5Es are recognised worldwide as pillars of success in promoting road safety. The effective implementation of the 5E's in road safety leads to increased awareness, the development of safer road infrastructure, better compliance with traffic laws, the promotion of responsible behavior, and the

continual refinement of safety measures.

The ultimate outcome is a significant reduction in road accidents, injuries, and fatalities, creating a safer and more secure road environment for everyone," said KK Kapila, president emeritus of the International Road Federation (IRF), a Genevabased global road safety organisation working towards better and safer roads worldwide, while speaking at the conference.

To reduce fatal road accidents worldwide, the concept of forgiving roads is gaining popularity, aiming for zero fatalities.

The 5E's of a safe road system include Engineering of Roads, Engineering of Vehicles and Policy Corrections, Education, Enforcement, and Emergency care, which should be simultaneously implemented on all roads," added Kapila.

Gifts Bulandshahr...

From Page 1

"In Ayodhya, I declared that 'pran pratishtha' has been completed, and now it is time to elevate 'rashtra pratishtha' to new heights," he added.

Regarding 'Modi ki guarantee,' aimed at

achieving the saturation of welfare schemes, the prime minister emphasised, "What our government promises, it delivers. Our efforts are focused on ensuring that the benefits of government schemes reach all intended recipients. Modi is providing a guarantee of saturation, a guarantee of one hundred percent (saturation of schemes)." "When the government reaches all beneficiaries, there is no room for discrimination or corruption," he asserted. Shedding light on the public welfare

schemes implemented over the past 10 years to empower small farmers and women, the Prime Minister highlighted the construction of millions of pucca toilets, tapped connections, and the provision of pension facilities for farmers and laborers. He also mentioned the PM Crop Insurance Scheme, through which over Rs 1.5 lakh crores have been disbursed to farmers in case of crop failure, as well as the free ration scheme and Ayushman Bharat scheme.

"The government is committed to ensuring that no beneficiary is deprived of these schemes. To achieve this, Modi Ki Guarantee vehicles are reaching every village, enrolling lakhs of people, even in Uttar Pradesh," Modi emphasised.

"It is my guarantee that every citizen benefits from these government schemes. Today, the nation sees Modi's guarantee as an assurance of fulfilling any promise," the Prime Minister declared. "We are making every effort to ensure that the benefits of government schemes reach every intended recipient. That's why Modi is guaranteeing saturation and emphasising reaching 100 percent of beneficiaries," he added, noting that this approach eliminates any possibility of discrimination or

corruption. "This is true secularism and social justice," he concluded, noting that the dreams of farmers, women, the poor, and youth are the same in every society. The Prime Minister also highlighted that due to genuine government efforts, 25 crore people were lifted out of poverty in the last 10 years. The prime minister expressed his

commitment to swiftly reaching all those in need without any discrimination. "For a long time after Independence, slogans like 'Garibi Hatao' were given, and promises of social justice were made, but the reality was that only a few families prospered, and their politics thrived," he said, taking an apparent dig at the Congress. Modi also addressed certain channels that speculated he would use this program to sound the poll bugle. 'Farmer's welfare remains a top priority

for the government," Modi emphasised. He highlighted the government's efforts to create a protective shield for farmers, including substantial investments to ensure the availability of low-cost fertilizers. Modi mentioned that a bag of urea, which costs Rs 3,000 outside India, is provided to Indian farmers for less than Rs 300. He also discussed the development of Nano urea, where a small bottle replaces a sack of fertilizers, reducing consumption and saving money. The prime minister informed that the government has transferred Rs 2.75 lakh crores to the bank accounts of farmers under the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme. "I observed in the media that Modi

would sound the election bugle in Bulandshahr. Modi heralds the bugle of development; he sounds the bugle for the welfare of the last person in the queue. Modi neither needed to sound the poll bugle earlier nor does he need to now, and he will not need it in the future," he said. "People do it for him. When others sound the bugle, Modi doesn't need to invest time in it; he dedicates his time to serving the people," the Prime Minister

He went on to express that for decades after Independence, development was confined to a few regions, leaving a significant part of the country deprived. Modi added that Uttar Pradesh was neglected for decades after Independence as those in governance behaved like rulers, keeping the people deprived.

'Such individuals viewed the path of

dividing society as an easy route to attain power," Modi said, emphasising that it was the BJP's double-engine government that accelerated development in Uttar Pradesh. He added that building a developed India is not possible without the rapid development of Uttar Pradesh. The prime minister also reiterated that farmers' interests were his government's top priority, and a 'suraksha kavach (protective shield)' was being created around their families. Concluding his address, the Prime Minister said, "For me, you are my family. Your dream is my resolution." He underscored that Modi's wealth

remains in the empowerment of the common families of the nation and assured that the campaign to empower everyone, including villages, the poor, youth, women, or farmers, will continue. Earlier in the day, the prime minister inaugurated a 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 through a video conference.

He also inaugurated a rail line connecting the Mathura-Palwal section and the Chipiyana Buzurg-Dadri section. These new lines will enhance rail connectivity from the national capital to southern, western, and eastern India. Modi unveiled multiple road development projects and inaugurated the Tundla-Gawaria pipeline by Indian Oil. This 255-km-long pipeline project, built at a cost of approximately Rs 700 crore, was completed well ahead of its scheduled time.

The PM further inaugurated the renovated Mathura sewerage scheme, including the construction of a sewage treatment plant at a cost of about Rs 460

Modi Fulcrum...

From Page 1 It also showcases the inauguration of

the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya on January 22, along with Modi's interactions with global leaders and soft landing on the Moon.

for release in the coming days.

Hai" campaign, as described by Nadda, has organically emerged from the sentiments of the people, aligning with mass sentiment and

complementing the ongoing national fervour linked with the "Modi Ki

India making history by achieving a The campaign song states that India's situation was deplorable, and then

the country chose Namo as the PM. "Namo kept his promise, and the dream of a developed country did not merely remain a dream. Namo chose the right paths and wove reality, not a dream. That is why everyone chooses Modi," the lyrics continue. "He considers Bharat his mother, and the countrymen as God. He chooses work before fame. That's why everyone, every country, listens to him. Indian women emerged as leaders while corrupt people are scared... he remained close to the ground but reached the sky (a reference to Chandrayaan)" the campaign song says. The video ends with a photo of PM

Modi lying prostrate in front of the Ram Lalla idol following the praan pratishthaa on January 22 in Ayodhya's Ram Temple. Additionally, a foot-tapping mass song, along with digital hoardings, display banners, digital films, and TVCs, are planned The "Tabhi Toh Sab Modi Ko Chunte

Guarantee" movement. At the launch event, which coincided with the first-time voters' conclave

(Nav Matdata Sammelan), a music video was released, highlighting how Prime Minister Modi transformed the dreams and aspirations of millions of Indians into reality. The BJP believes that this campaign slogan is not merely a sentiment experienced by a few but also resonates with the masses across the country. Addressing party workers, Nadda urged them to connect with the people's sentiment and spread awareness about the campaign throughout the nation. He highlighted Prime Minister Modi's track record of turning dreams into reality and delivering on promises that span generations. "PM Modi turns dreams into reality,

guaranteeing delivery on promises and dreams spanning the previous generation, the present generation, or the future generation of Amrit Peedhi. Dreams spanning years, decades, or even dreams going back 500 years have been delivered by PM Modi," said Nadda during the launch. In 2019, before the general elections, the party had released its slogan, "Phir ek baar Modi sarkar" (Modi government, once again). was released by then Finance

Minister Arun Jaitley. At that time, the BJP had focused on the Modi government's achievements, including national security measures and various schemes.

Kerala.

From Page 1 "Although the Governor skipped the entire speech, the fact that he came to the House and greeted the members is an indication that the speech has been delivered by him. This is a fallout of what the

CPI(M) has been doing to the Governor for quite some time now. The Governor has done his best to avoid all kinds of controversies and has depended on consensus. However, politicians in the State, including the BJP, have been trying to humiliate and disgrace him. Kerala does not deserve a gentleman like Arif Mohammed Khan as its Governor," said a source close to the Governor.

Praan pratishthaa moment of immense happiness: Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

ust days after the grand opening of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday talked about the grand praan pratishthaa ceremony at the new Ram temple in Ayodhya on January 22 and called it a matter of "immense pride and happiness". "The Praan happiness". Pratishthaa of the Ram temple in Ayodhya on January 22 was a matter of immense pride and happiness for everyone across the world," Kejriwal said while addressing the Republic Day function at Chhatrasal Stadium. The AAP convener further said that the Delhi Government had already adopted the 10 principles essential for 'Ram Rajya' and his government is trying to govern the city according to the "definition of Ram Rajya as given in the Ramayana".

"Inspired by 'Ram rajya', our government gives good education and health for all. Lord Ram never discriminated on the lines all backgrounds receive the of caste and religion, but society has been divided on the same lines," Kejriwal said days after the consecration ceremony at Ram temple in Ayodhya. Lord Ram never discriminated on the lines of caste and religion, but society today has been "divided on those lines", Kejriwal said.

In his Republic day address, the Delhi Chief Minister said it was important to "imbibe the principles that Lord Ram exemplified". He said the Delhi government, with inspiration from 'Ram rajya', provides good education and health, pension for senior citizens and round-theclock power supply and free water supply.

Kejriwal said that the Delhi government provides free rations to the poor and unem-ployed while establishing night shelters."Following Lord Rama's example, where both kings and commoners studied in gurukuls,

same education in government schools," Kejriwal said. The Chief Minister, in his speech, high-lighted how Delhi has improved government hospitals and opened neighbourhood clinics, providing free medication and medical treatment to all citizens. Running an administration with inspiration from 'Ram rajya' also includes providing 24/7 power supply. It also means respecting the elderly and we have been doing that by increasing their pension and arranging free pilgrimages for them. "It includes providing free water supply to poor and middle class people that we have been doing since we came to power," he said. The chief minister said that the Delhi government plans to sponsor the travel of devotees from Delhi to Ayodhya.

'We will try our best to sponsor the travel of devotees from Delhi to Ayodhya Ji. On the one



try" the AAP convener said.

83,000 people have taken on one can stop India from becoming the world's number 1 coun-'teerth-yatra'. Many people have expressed their desire to visit Ayodhya ji. We will try to take 'We conduct 'teerth-yatra' to 12 pilgrimage sites for senior citias many people as possible to zens free of cost. Till now,

ernment increased the old-age pension from Rs 1000 to Rs 2500 per month. The Delhi government has created jobs through new schools and neighborhood clinics, and a job portal has provided employment to 10-12 lakh youth, said Kejriwal. Citing a recent survey, the AAP leader claimed Delhi has the lowest inflation rate in the country, at 2.95 per cent, compared to the national average of 6 per cent. Kejriwal said that the Delhi government also focuses on safety of women in the national capital, adding that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) makes efforts on the issue even though the Delhi Police does not come under their control. The Delhi government has created jobs through new schools and neigh-borhood clinics, and a job portal has provided employment to 10-12 lakh youth, said Arvind Kejriwal.

The grand ceremony of pran pratishtha of Ram Lalla at

the country, it also elicited mixed responses from the oppomixed responses from the opposition alliance. The Congress, CPI(M) and TMC had slammed the BJP for "politicising" the event, other parties including AAP, SP and the NCP, had joined in celebrations across

the country. Making a veiled attack at the Centre, Kejriwal said that the aim of having a USD 5 trillion economy is good only when the financial benefit reaches all poor people in the country. "But the country will remain poor if 4

trillion out of that remain with

one or two people," he said.
"In the last 75 years, the rich have become richer and the poor have become poorer. Bringing down inflation is part of the con-cept of 'Ram rajya' followed by us. Delhi has minimum price rise as per central government reports. If people are suffering from price rise we cannot say it's Ram Rajya," he said.

for Republic Day



Ranjan Dimri / The Pioneer

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi has turned into a fortress' for the grand Republic Day celebrations in the national capital with more than 70,000 personnel being deployed across the city on the occasion of the 75th Republic Day parade on January 26. Out of over 70,000 personnel, 14,000 will be deployed at and around Kartavya Path for the security of the Republic Day parade. The Delhi Police are patrolling, conducting anti-sabotage checks and verification drives as part of

the security cover. According to Delhi Police officials, 14,000 security personnel will be guarding the areas strict vigil and avoid any untoward incident at the mega annual event. Elaborate security arrangements have been put in place for the safety and security of the 77,000 visitors expected at Kartavya Path to watch this year's parade, they added.

Police have also issued advisory on traffic arrangements and restrictions put in place for the smooth conduct of traffic on Friday in the city. Extensive arrangements have been made for the safety and security of the 77,000 invitees expected at Kartavva Path to watch this year's parade, the officials said Delhi Police in coordination with MapMyIndia, a digital mapping platform, has created navigation links to facilitate pick up and drop for Republic Day invitees who will be using the parking facility.On Wednesday, the traffic police had said they would provide alighting facility for VIPs, including senior bureaucrats and politicians, near their seating area this time on Republic Day. After dropping the VIPs near their seating area, the cars would be sent to a designated parking spot.

A senior police officer said, "In a first of its kind initiative, Delhi Police in coordination with MapMyIndia has created links to facilitate pick up and drop for Republic Day event attendees." Using the navigation links, the invitees can reach their alighting point from where their vehicles will go to the des-ignated parking area with the help of the map. Later when the parade ends, their vehicles will paick up the invites from their pick up the invitees from their spots and proceed accordingly, the officer said.

The police have issued an advisory regarding special parking arrangements for the visitors attending the Republic Day event. Parking spots 3 and 4 behind Vigyan Bhawan have a capacity of 300 vehicles. Once the capacity exceeds at these spots, the visitors are required to alight only on Maulana Azad their vehicles will be accommodated at parking spots 1 and 2 (behind Nirman Bhawan and Udyog Bhawan), 2A (inside Nirman Bhawan and Udyog Bhawan), 5 (behind Zabta Masjid), 6 (Kota House Jam Nagar House and Jailsaimer House), 7 (Vanijya Bhawan), the advisory stated.

Apart from this, vehicle parking is not allowed at the parking lots at New Delhi, Old Delhi, Nizamuddin and Anand Vihar railway stations from 10 pm on Thursday to 12 pm on Friday, it

Apart from this, vehicle parking is not allowed at the parking lots at New Delhi, Old Delhi, Nizamuddin and Anand Vihar railway stations from 10 pm on Thursday to 12 pm on Friday, the advisory added.

"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 10 pm on Thursday to 12 pm on Friday.

"All are advised to use public transport vehicles. The pick-up and drop vehicles will be available outside railway stations for the use of commuters/passengers," the police said.

Delhi turns into fortress Remission for old jail inmates on Republic Day

hand, while we have to devote

ourselves to Lord Ram, on the

other hand, with utmost honesty

we have to dedicate ourselves to

the welfare of our nation. If we

tread the path of Lord Ram, no

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has granted special remission of 20-90 days to convicts undergoing varying periods of sentences on the occasion of Republic Day, Raj Niwas officials said on Thursday. Special provision has been made in case of prisoners aged 65 years and above

In case of prisoners aged 65 years and above lodged in Delhi jails, they said.

Remission by the government may be granted on the occasion of days of national importance and public repicing. The remission is not applicable for convicts sentenced under charges of crimes against tenced under charges of crimes against women, the National Security Act (NSA), Official Secrets Act (OSA) among others. All prisoners above the age of 65 years will be eligible to get a remission of 90 days, in cases where sentences are more than 10 years. A remission of 60 days will be applicable for other inmates, they said. A remission of 60 days will be accorded to



inmates (aged above 65 years) undergoing sentences of five years and above and up to 10 years. For male prisoners below the age of 65 years, the period of remission will be 45 days, they said.

A remission of 30 days will be granted to all categories of prisoners undergoing sentences above one year to five years. In case of sentences up to one year, all women and men aged 65 years and above will get a remission of 20 days, and other inmates will get a remission of 15 days, they said.

The proposal of remission was submitted by the Delhi government's prison department, through the Home department, under Delhi Prison Rules and CrPC provision, officials said. Section 432 CrPC empowers the Government to give remission to convicts and as per Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India notification dated 20.03.1974, the power of Government under section 432 of CrPC is to be exercised by Lt. Governor. Prisoners awarded life imprisonment on or after December 18, 1978 for an offence for which death is one of the penalties or whose death sentence has been commuted to life imprisonment are not eligible for remission, officials said.

Tribal guests get free Metro ride in Capital

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Metro on Thursday facilitated a Metro ride for the 100 tribal community members representing every State and Union Territory of India. They traveled from INA to Patel Chowk Metro station on Yellow Line to get a firsthand experience of the world class Metro system followed by a visit to the Metro Museum situated at Patel Chowk station itself.

These tribal guests- two each, comprising one male and one female member from every State and Union Territory of India are invited every year by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs,

the Republic Day celebrations. The invitees subsequently meet the President and Prime Minister of India besides witnessing the Republic Day Parade in the capital.
"Delhi Metro from time to time

Government of India as part of

keeps facilitating such special visits comprising underprivileged children, youths from remote areas of Jammu & Kashmir, bravery award winning children, tribal community etc. DMRC feels privileged to provide an enriching Metro experience to these special guests while promoting inclusivity and cultural exchange," Delhi Metro

mowed down by cluster bus

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

Athree-year-old child was mowed down allegedly by a cluster bus in southwest Delhi Najafgarh area, police said on Thursday. The bus driver has been arrested, they added.

The incident took place on Wednesday evening when Priyanshu and his three-year-old son Gopal were returning from a marpura area on an e-rickshaw, the oolice said.

The father and his son were returning home after refilling gas cylinder. The driver of the e-rickshaw pressed brakes, due to which Gopal slipped from his seat and fell on the road and a cluster bus from behind mowed him down," a senior police officer said.

The officer said the child was taken to a hospital with help of a police team, but he was declared brought dead. After the incident, several locals gathered at the spot and allegedly pelted stones on the bus, the police said.

The bus driver, identified as Sunil, tried to flee but was overpowered by the police, they added. Heavy police deployment was made in the area to maintain law and order condition. "An FIR under Sections 279 (rash driving or riding on a public way) and 304-A (causing death by negligence) of the Indian Penal Code has been registered in the matter. The driver has been arrested and further investigation is

underway," said the officer. 'Whenever an accident happens, our depot manager and operator visit the site and speak to witnesses and locals to ascertain the sequence of events. Then they also visit the police station to gather details. Till now, we have come across three different versions for the accident through this exercise," a senior transport official said.

Three years old | Simplify process of divyang identity card certification, officials told

STAFF REPORTER

Delhi Social Welfare Minister Raaj Kumar Anand on Thursday directed the officials to simplify the process of Unique Disability Identity card certification by segregating pending cases based on category and criteria.

A thorough review and followup meeting was chaired by Anand, where representatives of UDID-notifie special secretary of Health, secretary of Social Welfare, and other senior department officers were present.

CPJ College

New Delhi: CPJ College of

Higher Studies and School of Law, Narela, affiliated to Guru

Gobind Singh Indraprastha

University, Ďelhi, will organ-

ise Winter Fest "ULLAAS" on

Abhishek Jain, General Secretary of CPJ College and

Yugank Chaturvedi, Director

General, released a joint state-

ment and said that the

upcoming Winter Fest will be

a spectacular display of rich

traditions with music and

dance competitions, fashion parade and Mr and Miss

Ullaas titles. Apart from this,

the explosive music of live

band performance by

Swarism would be the main

attraction of the Winter Fest.

Narela MLA Sharad Chauhan

will grace the festival as the

winter fest

on Feb 3

February 3

During the meeting, concerns regarding the visible backlog of UDID applications on the website were discussed. Several reasons causing delays in the digitisation of applications were identified, prompting the need for strategic solutions, the officials said. The Delhi minister said the digitisation of certifications for representatives/ members of the disability boards must be completed by February 15 and issuance of UDID by March 31.

"The meeting effectively tackles the substantial backlog in UDID certification, ensuring that Persons with Disabilities

37-year-old Nigerian man

Awas arrested for allegedly

extorting money from a woman

after threatening to upload her

objectionable photos and videos

on social media, police said on

Thursday. The accused has been

identified as Evans, who was

(PwDs) can promptly access government schemes for their social and financial upliftment. Concerns regarding the visible backlog of UDID applications on the website were discussed. Several reasons causing delays in the digitization of applica-tions were identified, prompting the need for strategic solutions," the government said. Minister Anand mentioned,

'These measures emphasise the government's commitment Certification process, ensuring that PwDs promptly access essential schemes and pro-

had come to India on a business

"We received a complaint from

a man who alleged that his

cousin was befriended by an

unidentified person on social

media. The man fraudulently

induced her and duped her of Rs

2.25 lakh," Deputy Commissioner of Police (IFSO) Hemant

visa, they said.

NDMC plans to offer free NEET, JEE coaching to 100 meritorious students



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

 $T_{\text{Council (NDMC) plans to}}^{\text{he New Delhi Municipal}}$ tie-up with a reputed coaching centre to provide free NEET and JEE preparatory classes to 100 meritorious students studying at its schools and the Navyug schools, officials said.

It will be a two-year integrated coaching for students studying in Class XI at these schools. The NDMC has floated a tender to invite bids from coaching institutes to kick off the project to prepare students for National Eligibility-cum Entrance Test and Joint Entrance Examination

"Around 50 students each will be enrolled for coaching for JEE and NEET. This means that in the first year, 100 students will be enrolled for JEE-NEET coaching and the numbers will start increasing from the subse-"The coaching will be provided under the comprehensive programme being run by the institute through offline mode. The coaching partner will include the shortlisted students in the classes run by the institute. Thus, no separate group will be formed solely for the students of NDMC school," the official added.

The official said the coaching institute cannot make any distinction between students shortlisted through the scheme and students enrolled by them directly. He said the institute will have to provide study material. conduct mock tests, psychology sessions through reputed psychologists to the students.

The coaching centre is expected to provide up-to-date study material/test materials, analyse the student's usage pattern, evaluate the test answers, evaluate the test answers periodically (at least once a month), and provide progress and all India ranking report to the student and to the education department, NDMC," he added.

The important condition is that the coaching centre should have at least one centre running in Delhi, preferably around the NDMC area, with all requisite infrastructure like premises,

staying in Greater Noida and Tiwari said. Fire in factory, all five rescued

Nigerian held for extortion

with explicit content threats

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI had come to India on a business

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

fire broke out at a two-storey Autensil manufacturing factory in Northwest Delhi's Wazirpur Industrial area on Thursday afternoon, officials said. No one was injured in the incident, they said. According to an official of the Delhi Fire Services (DFS), a call regarding the incident was received at 12.40 pm and eight fire tenders were

pressed into service. The blaze was brought under control by 1.50 pm and five workers trapped inside the building were

rescued, the official said. The fire broke out at the first floor of the building and soon spread to the second floor, he said, adding that a short circuit is suspected to be the reason behind the incident. He also said some articles and furniture were completely gutted in the fire.

quent years," said an official. The selected coaching centre will conduct a screening test of Class Xi and Class XII students to shortlist the 100 students.

Dense fog may reduce visibility during Republic Day Parade: IMD

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD)on Thursday predicted moderate to dense fog may affect visibility during the 75th Republic Day celebrations in the capital on Friday. The IMD said people would be able to see up to only 400 metres until 8.30 am on Friday due to foggy weather. The visibility levels may thereafter improve to 1,500 metres by 10.30 am. The minimum temperature is likely to settle in the range of 5 to 7 degrees Celsius, the Met office said.

The national capital region saw "cold day" conditions on Thursday, there was a sharp dip in minimum temperature across the city, with it recorded at - three degrees below normal. The minimum temperature in Lodhi Road was settled at 4.4 degree Celsius. Dense fog engulfed the national Capital for over six hours on Thursday morning, which saw delays of over 100 flights and 24 trains. The maximum temperature was noted at 20.5 degrees Celsius, one notch below the normal,

according to the bulletin. The national capital is experiencing cold day conditions and dense fog in the morning and night, the IMD said. Despite this, Delhi's air quality showed a marginal improvement, returning to the 'very poor' category after touching 'severe' a day earlier. As per the Central Pollution Control Board's data, the 24hour average Air Quality Index (AQI) on Thursday settled at 332 in the 'very poor' category. The absence of active western disturbances (WD) ?weather systems that originate in the



Mediterranean region and bring unseasonal rainfall to northwest India is one of the primary reasons behind the blinding layer of fog persisting over the plains in the region since December 25, the IMD said.

Generally, five to seven WDs impact the region during these months. The region has not seen any strong WD this winter so far, it said. According to IMD, fog formation requires three conditions: weak low-level winds, moisture, and overnight cooling. Strong WDs, characterised by strong winds and precipitation, disrupt these conditions. Delhi has experienced five cold days and five cold wave days in

January so far, the highest in the past 13 years. IMD said visibility was down to 50 metres at Palam at 1:30am and remained the same till 8am, when it improved marginally to 100 metres. A vellow alert has been issued for Friday, forecasting moderate to dense fog across the city. The IMD said that due to fog the

remained the same till 8am,

visibility at Delhi-Palam was reduced to 25 metres and 50 m at Safdarjung at 5:30 am and

100 metres. A yellow alert has been issued for Friday, forecasting moderate to dense fog across the city.
The IMD forecasted that very

when it improved marginally to

dense fog conditions are likely to continue to prevail over North India during next 4 days. The weather agency said that light rainfall or snowfall is likely over Western Himalayan Region from 25 to 30 January. The IMD also warned of severe cold day conditions prevailing over North India during next 2 days and decrease in intensity thereafter.

Republic Day celebrations to showcase democratic values

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

President Droupadi Murmu will lead India in celebrating the 75th Republic Day with an imposing display of its rising military might and rich cultural heritage during a 90-minute parade at the majestic Kartavya Path on Friday.

The grand celebrations, with an overarching theme of projecting the nation's women power and democratic values, will be graced by French President Emmanuel Macron as the chief guest

The armed forces will display an array of home-grown weaponry and military equipment such as missiles, drone jammers, surveillance systems, vehicle-mounted mortars and BMP-II infantry combat vehicles at the parade.

For the first time, an all-women triservices contingent will be part of the country's biggest ceremonial event. In another historic first, Lieutenants Deepti Rana and Priyanka Sevda,

who are among 10 women officers commissioned into the Regiment of Artillery for the first time last year, will lead the Swathi weapon locating radar and Pinaka rocket system at the parade.

The parade will be heralded by over 100 women artistes playing Indian musical instruments such as Sankh. Naadswaram, Nagada for the first time instead of the traditional military bands.

Around 15 women pilots will also enthrall the audience during the Indian Air Force's fly-past, representing 'Nari Shakti' (women power). The contingents of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) will also consist of only women personnel.

The Republic Day parade will commence at 10:30 am and will run for a duration of around 90 minutes. The ceremony will start with the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to

the National War Memorial, where he will lead the nation in paying solemn tributes to the fallen heroes by laying



Minutes later, President Murmu and her French counterpart Macron will arrive in the 'traditional buggy', a practice that is making a comeback after a gap of 40 years, the defence ministry said.

The national flag will be unfurled followed by the national anthem with a booming 21-gun salute to be given with indigenous gun system 105-mm Indian Field Guns.

Four Mi-17 IV helicopters of 105 Helicopter Unit will shower flower petals on the audience present at Kartavya Path. This will be followed by 'Aavaahan', a band performance by over 100 women artistes playing various types of percussion instru-

The parade will then commence with President Murmu taking the The parade will be commanded by Lieutenant General Bhavnish Kumar, General Officer Commanding, Delhi

The Kartavya Path will be witness to a march past by a combined band and marching contingent of the French Armed Forces.

A 30-member band contingent will be headed by Captain Khourda and will be followed by a 90-member marching contingent from France. Six Indians will be part of the French marching contingent.

One multi-role tanker transport aircraft and two Rafale fighter jets of the French Air and Space Force will fly above the contingents while they march past the saluting dais.

The first Indian Army contingent leading the Mechanised Column will be of 61 Cavalry to be led by Major Yashdeep Ahlawat. Raised in 1953, the 61 Cavalry is the only serving active Horsed Cavalry Regiment in the world. It will be followed by 11 Mechanised Columns, 12 marching contingents, and a fly past by

Advanced Light Helicopters of Army Aviation Corps.

Tank T-90 Bhishma, NAG missile system, infantry combat vehicle, allterrain vehicle, weapon locating radar system 'Swathi', drone jammer system, and medium range surface-to-air missile will be among the key displays by the mechanised columns.

The Indian Air Force (IAF) contingent will comprise 144 airmen and four officers, and it will be led by Squadron Leader Rashmi Thakur. Squadron Leaders Sumita Yaday Pratiti Ahluwalia and Flight Lieutenant Kirti Rohil will march past as supernumerary officers behind the contingent commander.

The celebrations will end with the flvpast by 46 aircraft of the Indian Air

The IAF fleet will include 29 fighter jets, seven transport aircraft, nine helicopters and one heritage plane. All these aircraft will operate from six different bases.

Fifteen women pilots, including six from the fighter streams, will operate various IAF platforms during the

For the first time, indigenously-built Tejas aircraft will fly in a formation of four aircraft.

There was a previous occasion of one Tejas jet being part of the Republic

But for the first time the aircraft will fly in a formation.

Day parade.

Over 260 women personnel from CRPF, BSF and SSB will exhibit the country's 'Nari Shakti' by carrying out daredevil stunts during the motorcycle display.

A total of 16 tableaux from states and Union territories and nine from central ministries and departments will roll down the Kartavya Path during the parade.

The states and Union territories are:

Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana, Manipur, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan. Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Ladakh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Meghalaya, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Telangana

26 tableaux to showcase women empowerment on Kartavya Path

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

 $F^{\text{rom women's roles in socio-}}_{\text{economic activities to contri-}}$ bution of women scientists, 26 tableaux are set to roll down the Kartavya Path highlighting "women empowerment" this Republic Day.

The Centre has already announced that the 75th Republic Day parade at Kartavya Path will be women-centric with 'Viksit Bharat' and 'Bharat - Loktantra ki Matruka' to be the main

Highlighting women's crucial roles in socio-economic activities, the Manipur tableau will feature women working with delicate fibres of lotus stems and making yarns using traditional 'charkhas'

The front side of the tableau will feature a woman collecting lotus stems from Manipur's Loktak lake. Women riding on boats and collecting lotus stems will be displayed on the sides of the tableau.

A replica of 'Ima Keithel' - a unique all-women market - has been made behind the Manipur tableau. The market is several centuries old and is run entirely by women

The tableau from the northeastern state will also feature popular fabrics innovated by Manipuri women. The process of making lotus silk was innovated by Bijayshanti Tongbram,

Besides displaying critical systems and technologies, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is set to portray the significant contribution of its women scientists in core areas of defence research. From an anti-satellite missile to

a third generation anti-tank

guided missile and light combat aircraft Tejas, women's involvement in DRDO will be prominently highlighted in their

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will showcase one of its biggest feats, Chandrayaan-3, at its landing site Shiv Shakti point on the

The tableau of Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways will display the development of India's maritime sector - from rise in the number of women seafarers to development of lighthouse and cruise tourism. The Madhya Pradesh tableau, on the other hand, will showcase

the state's achievement of women's integration directly into the development process through its welfare schemes. Highlighting the self-reliant and Pradesh, the tableau will focus on the active participation of women in the areas from modern service sector to small-scale industries and traditional

The tableau will have Madhya Pradesh's first woman fighter

pilot, Avani Chaturvedi, of Indian Air Force (IAF), who will be seen standing beside a fighter plane model. It will also feature women artists painting on pots, the Badal Mahal gate of Chanderi and the weavers of globally renowned Chanderi, Maheshwari and Bagh print

> While Odisha's tableau will disolay women's involvement in handicrafts and handloom sectors, Chhattisgarh's tableau will reflect female dominance in the tribal communities of Bastar.

> A tableau on Dhordo village in Kutch, which recently made it to the list of 54 best tourism villages, will be showcased in the Republic Day parade in New Delhi, the Gujarat government said on Monday.

> An official release said. 'Dhordo: Global Identity of Gujarat's Border Tourism' will be showcased during the parade on the Kartavyapath on the 75th Republic Day celebrations on January 26. Dhordo, which the United

Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) included on the list of 'best

tourism villages of 2023', will take centre stage in showcasing "the unique blend of tradition, tourism and technology that defines the essence of a developed India", the release said. The Tamil Nadu tableau will showcase the polling process implemented during 10th century Chola era, by displaying leaf

ballots in pots. Rajasthans tableau will be a demonstration of the develop-ment of women's handicraft industries along with the festive culture of the state. The tableau will portray the famous 'Ghoomar' dance of Rajasthan depicted through a mannequin of a dancer. It will also have a beautiful statue of Meera Bai, who is considered to be a symbol of devotion and power.

The tableau will also display a glimpse of the rich handicraft traditions, including bandhej, bagru print and applique work. Haryana's tableau will display empowerment of women in their state through the government programme 'Mera parivar - Meri pehchan'.

The tableau will feature Harvanvi women holding digital devices to symbolise how the Digital India initiative enabled them to access government schemes with just one click. The Chhattisgarh tableau will reflect female dominance in the tribal communities of Bastar. It has been decorated with bell metals and terracotta artefact to

The tableau of Andhra Pradesh this year is on the subject of transforming school education and making the students globally competitive. The Ladakh tableau will showcase Indian women's ice hockey team which comprised Ladakhi women.

Panchayati Raj representatives, yoga teachers, farmers among special invitees

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

 $S_{
m tives}$ everal elected representatives from the Panchayati Raj Institutions, a battery of yoga teachers and farmers and members of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) as well as their families will be among the government's special invitees expected to attend the 75th Republic Day Parade Celebrations 2024 in the national capital. Ahead of the general elections slated next few months, the Ministries such as Panchayati

Raj, Ayush and Agriculture have taken initiative to ensure that representation of their sector is at the Kartavya Path on the D-Day. Ministry of Ayush."

ers/instructors from various states of India will witness the Republic Day parade as special invitees. The Government has invited 291 yoga teachers and Instructors along with their family

Union Ayush Ministry in a

statement said that yoga teach-

members for their remarkable contribution in providing primary health care through Yoga at grassroots level across the ers are engaged in the prima-

"These Yoga instructors/teachry health care/wellness sector through AHWCs (Ayush Health and Wellness Centres) working under flagship scheme of National Ayush Mission of the special invitees will also interact with Sarbanada Sonowal, Union Ayush Minister at his residence. These special invitees will visit

After the Republic Day event all

different historical places of importance in Delhi. Similarly, about 500 guests,

including elected representa-

tives of Panchayati Raj Institutions from across the country and their spouses, have been invited. The selected participants are from those panchayats which have received the National Panchayat Awards in the previous years, or their panchayats have done remarkable work, said an official from the Panchayati Raj Ministry.

"The objective is to provide an opportunity to the panchayat representatives to take part in the national festival, in line with the government's vision of 'Jan Bhagidari'. This initiative holds immense significance as it reinforces the democratic ethos by recognising and involving panchavat representatives in the national celebration," said the

After attending the Parade, they will meet Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister Giriraj Singh at his residence. Minister of State for Rural Development Faggan Singh Kulaste and Minister of State for Panchayati Raj Kapil Moreshwar Patil will also be present at the interaction.

Shettar returns to BJP, quits Congress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Former Karnataka chief minister Jagdish Shettar, who had quit the BJP to join the Congress ahead of the state assembly polls last year, rejoined his old party on Thursday. Shettar cited his long association with the BJP, and said many of his well-wishers wanted him to join back the party.

The Lingayat leader joined the party in the

presence of former Karnataka chief minister B S Yediyurappa, Union ministers Bhupender Yadav and Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Karnataka BJP president B Y Vijayendra and its media head Anil Baluni. sources said Shettar had Minister Amit Shah and its national president J P Nadda as he was persuaded to rejoin the saffron organisation which he had quit in a huff after being denied a ticket to contest the assembly polls.

Shettar also praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, saying India has been strengthened under him.



The 68-year-old Shettar, a staunch RSS man and a senior BJP leader, switched to the ing the 2023 assembly election. The Congress has, however, made him a MLC, a position he has now quit to join the BJP. When he left the BJP in April 2023, he said he was humiliated by the senior leaders of the BIP and that his decision to quit the saffron party was final. "How the BJP leaders treated me in the last few days is nothing but

a humiliation. I was ill-treated by the party members which forced me to announce my resignation. Some leaders in the state are misusing the BJP system," Shettar said at that

Shettar has contested the 2023 Karnataka Assembly Elections as a Congress candidate from Hubli-Dharwad-Central. Shettar suffered defeat. He was beaten by the BJP's Mahesh Tenginakai by over 34,000 votes, after which he blamed "money power and pressure tactics".

Shettar, a six-time MLA, served as the Karnataka Chief Minister for 10 months between 2012 and 2013. He began his politpositions within the BJP, including state president and leader of the opposition in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly. The 67-year-old Lingayat strongman held

various ministerial positions in the Karnataka government, including the portfolio of Rural Development and Panchayat

Government ready to discuss all issues in Parliament as per rules, says Meghwal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

head of Parliament's Budget Assession, Union minister Arjun Ram Meghwal on Thursday said the government was ready to discuss all issues as per rules. The Budget session of Parliament, the last of the present Lok Sabha before parliamentary elections are announced, begins on January 31 and will conclude on February 9. Responding to a question on the

opposition's allegation that the government was not allowing it to raise issues in the House, the minister of state for Parliamentary Affairs said, "We are ready to discuss every issue that the speaker of the Lok Sabha and the chairman of the Rajya Sabha decide under the rules. "We have always done this. We appeal (to the opposition) to give notices to the speaker and the chairman and if they accept, then we are ready for discussion," Meghwal told PTI-Video. Asked about his expectations from the session, he said it will be a short session.

The President will address the joint sitting of the two Houses. The Interim Budget will be presented on February 1. There will be a debate on the motion of thanks on the President's address followed by a discussion on the Interim Budget, he said. "I think everyone should partic-

ipate in this discussion," he added. Responding to a question on the opposition raking up the issue of suspension of nearly 150 MPs from both the Houses, Meghwal, who also heads the law ministry, said all parties had agreed with the speaker on not bringing placards in the House. Despite the assurance, they displayed placards and disrupted proceedings. "The Lok Sabha speaker warned them but they persisted. They didn't even listen to the speaker. The speaker had to take action then. The Rajya Sabha chairman also took similar action," he said.

'Risk of death drops 2 per cent with UP DGP Kumar awarded every additional year of education'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Risk of death drops by two per cent with every addi-tional year of education or simply put those who complet-ed six years of primary school had a lower risk of death by an average of 13 per cent, according to the largest study of its kind published in The Lancet Public Health.

The decline in death risk is regardless of age, sex, location, and social and demographic backgrounds, according to the researchers.

They found that after graduating from secondary school,

the risk of dying was cut by nearly 25 per cent, and 18 vears of education lowered the risk by 34 per cent. Researchers also compared the effects of education to other risk factors such as eating a healthy diet, smoking, and drinking too much alcohol, and they found the health outcome to be similar. For example, the benefit of 18

years of education can be compared to that of eating the ideal amount of vegetables, as opposed to not eating vegeta-Not going to school at all is as

bad for you as drinking five or more alcoholic drinks per day

or smoking ten cigarettes a day for 10 years. "Education is cant difference in the effects of important in its own right, not just for its benefits on health, but now being able to quantify the magnitude of this benefit is a significant development," said Dr. Terje Andreas Eikemo, head of Centre for Global Health Inequalities Research (CHAIN) at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). While the benefits of educa-

tion are greatest for young people, those older than 50 and even 70 years still benefit from the protective effects of

over 10,000 data points collect-África where data is scarce.

ment issued here said that, "if

the contents of the news report,

if true, amounts to serious

violation of human rights of the

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE cant difference in the effects of **NEW DELHI** education between countries that have reached different stages of development. This means that more years of edurity system at Ayodhya during the Ram Temple consecration cation is just as effective in rich Uttar Pradesh Director General countries as in poor countries. The study identified data from of Police (Law & Order) Prashant Kumar has been con-59 countries and included ferred with the President's Medal ed from over 600 published articles. Most of the studies reviewed for this study were from high-income settings, highlighting the need for more research in low- and middleincome countries, particularly from sub-Saharan and north

for gallantry on Republic Day (Friday) for his bravery in the encounter of a dreaded criminal when he was ADG (Meerut). While the award is also bestowed on the then SSP Meerut Mrs Manzil Saini for her bravery, the 2024 President's gallantry medal will be Prashant Kumar's fourth of the total of 109 various national and state level The Commission, in its state-

President Medal

ouple of days after provid-

Cing a safe and secure secu-

commendable and exemplary services as police officer. Prashant has also received cash awards twice by the State government. Born and brought up in Bihar, the 1990 batch IPS of UP cadre,

Prashant Kumar holds the distinction of being awarded the gallantry medal for three consecutive years (2020, 2021 and 2022 and now in 2024.

"Indeed it's a proud moment for me, my family and above all my department led by the State Government in extending full cooperation and giving me a free hand to work as a uniformed man in service of the people. Wish I continue to meet the expectations of people in providing a safe and secure atmosphere in the State and now particularly in Ayodhya where millions of



Lord Ram. Jai Hind," Prashant told The Pioneer when sought his remarks on yet another award for distinguished ser-As ADG, Prashant Kumar was conferred with the President's

Police Medal for meritorious services in 2007 and President's Medal for distinguished services in 2014. He, along with nine other policemen, received a reward of?3 lakh each as Chief Minister's Appreciation on January 7, 2022 for bravery in the encounter of dreaded brigand Uday Bhan Yadav alias Gauri Yadav on October 30, 2021. Uday Bhan carried a reward of ?5.5 lakh on his head. Prashant Kumar's role for a successful grand ceremony at Ayodhya early this week which handled a host of who's who of the country led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. UP CM Yogi Adityanath and more than 10 lakhs visitors in a span of three days has been lauded at various levels as the event was incident free.

NHRC to extend probe after Indore orphanage torture report PIONEER NEWS SERVICE located in different states.

NEW DELHI

Taking suo motu cognizance of reports that the children were being subjected to torture at an orphanage in Indore, Madhya Pradesh and the police has registered an FIR in the matter, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has decided to extend its enquiry beyond the specific case and look into the status of minor inmates in other branch-

es of the same organization

The move aims to probe into the potential widespread nature

of the issue and ensure the wellbeing and rights of children in various facilities associated with the orphanage. The Indore police had registered an FIR on the basis of the complaint registered by the State Children Welfare Committee. Reportedly, apart from Indore,

states of Rajasthan, Gujarat,

mentioned in the reports. the orphanage has its branches in Jodhpur, Surat, Kolkata and Bengaluru under four

West Bengal and Karnataka. Accordingly, the NHRC has issued notices to the Chief Secretaries and the Directors General of Police of the States of Rajasthan, Gujarat, West Bengal and Karnataka seeking an action taken report in the matter after conducting an enquiry/ inspection of the branches of the orphanage The authorities have been asked to submit a report in this regard within the next four

inmates at the orphanage. It has noted that taking lawful action, an FIR has been registered by the police at Indore, but the matter has inter-state ramification. Therefore, an enquiry/ inspection of the other branches of the orphanage, situated outside Indore is also necessary." As per the NHRC, it found that the media report had quoted the District Collector of Indore saying that the CWC team has found violations of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act and they have sealed the hostel and shifted the children to government facilities.

New era of peace has begun in Jammu and Kashmir: Shah

Dedicating a fleet of e-buses to the people of Jammu, Union Home Minister Amit Shah claimed on Thursday that a new era of peace has begun in Jammu and Kashmir. This is marked by a sharp decline in incidents of terror ist violence and civilian killings after the abrogation of Article 370. Shah mentioned that the Narendra Modi government is also rigorously cracking down on terror financing, sealing and freezing the assets of terrorists. Additionally, several terrorist organizations have been outlawed to intensify the crackdown on them.

During the event conducted via video conferencing, Shah handed over appointment letters to Jammu and Kashmir Administrative officers compassionate appointees. In his address, the Union Home Minister credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership for transforming Jammu and Kashmir, once "known for terrorism," into a burgeoning tourism hub. "I want to inform you that

there has been a 66 percent reduction in terrorism-related incidents. There has been an 81 percent decline in civilian killings and a 48 percent decrease in security forces' casualties after the scrapping of Article 370," he announced to the gathering.
"This indicates that a new era

of happiness, peace, and normalcy has begun in stone pelting in 2010, but no Jammu and Kashmir," he civilian lives were lost in stone

Sharing statistics, Shah mentioned that 2,654 organised stonepelting incidents occurred in Jammu and Kashmir in 2000, but no such incidents took place in 2023. "As many as 132 organised shutdowns occurred in 2010, but there were none in 2023. A total of 112 civilians lost their lives in

pelting in 2023. Additionally, a total of 6,235 civilians were injured during that period (2010)," he added.

The minister highlighted that terror financing has also been curbed in Jammu and Kashmir. "Properties are being sealed and attached, and many terrorist organisations have been banned to curb their activities," he said. Emphasising the investment

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The entire security grid in Jammu and Kashmir has

been kept on a state of high

alert in the run up to the

Republic Day celebrations in

the wake of the prevailing

security situation in the region.

The security forces are relying

on drone cameras to conduct

aerial reconnaissance of all

the main venues of the

Republic Day functions and

other vital installations.

mentioned that Jammu and Kashmir received investments worth Rs 297 crore in 2019-20, which increased to Rs 2,153 crore in 2022-23. "Nearly 6,000 crore of investments are in the pipeline. This demonstrates progress," he added. Jammu and Kashmir's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) has increased from Rs 1 lakh crore in 2014-15 to Rs 2,27,927 crore in 2022-23. Shah further appealed to the youth of Jammu and Kashmir to enroll themselves as voters and become part of the democratic setup of the country. "The youth of Jammu and Kashmir, who carry computers in their hands instead of stones, are connected and contributing to the progress of Jammu and Kashmir. Över 7 lakh youths have taken part in sports, and this is significant," he said. Shah mentioned that 173 projects have been completed under the Smart City Mission, and homes for 1,45,000 people have been allocated within a very short

period from 2019 to 2024.

have been activated along the

border areas to maintain a

tight vigil on the movement of

suspected persons in the area.

The joint teams of security

forces have been kept on high

alert and frequently conduct

area domination patrols in

The security in and around

the vital security installations

has been beefed up as per the

standard protocol to prevent

entry of any miscreant and

their areas of jurisdiction.

TMC: Adhir hurdle in Opp alliance

rupter of the INDIA Alliance in

Bengal is Adhir Chowdhury,

who has been dancing to the

tunes of the Left, which itself

has zero seats in Bengal. We are

relieved and happy because

now we will be able to tell the

secular voters to choose either

between TMC and the

Congress-Left, who are zero in

Bengal. Zero and zero make for

zero only. Adhir Chowdhury is

batting for the BJP. Tomorrow,

the people of Bengal will not

While Chowdhury had previ-

ously called Banerjee an

opportunist personality who

herself cannot remember when

she spoke the truth last time,"

one of his close confidants

and former Bengal Minister

Manoj Chakrabarty added an

appellation for the Chief

Minister, calling her a "dalal" or

SAUGAR SENGUPTA KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress has said that Adhir Chowdhury, the president of the Bengal Pradesh Congress, has diminished the chances of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance in Bengal. A day after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee ruled out any electoral alliance with the Congress, accusing it of not only ignoring her at the instance of the CPI(M), senior TMC leader Derek O'Brien said on Thursday that, apart from the BJP, against which the INDIA alliance had been formed, Adhir Chowdhury was the person who undermined the anti-saffron coalition in the state. In an apparent reference to

Chowdhury's previous remarks that the Congress was not dependent on the TMC, O'Brien said the AICC member was "speaking the language of the BJP," reiterating, The three reasons for the alliance not working in Bengal are Adhir Chowdhury, Adhir Chowdhury, and Adhir

Not only did O'Brien, the TMC spokesperson, express this sentiment, but Kunal Ghosh, another TMC spokesperson, also stated, "The main dis-

Chowdhury.

Special security checkpoints anti-national element.

was "leaking messages to the BJP" to save her and her family's skin. Another senior PCC leader,

Soumya Aich, also attacked Banerjee for "literally decimating" the Congress "not through elections but by engineering defections in our party using the police and her goons. Another PCC leader, Kaustav Bagchi, said, "Joining hands with the TMC will be hara-kiri in Bengal, as the revival will be lost. The Congress votes will then go to the Left and even the

Against this backdrop, a majority of the PCC leadership, with a few exceptions like Malda South MP AH Khan Chowdhury, were inclined towards an alliance with the Left, which had recently experienced a significant revival by winning about 21 per cent of the votes, just behind the BJP, in the rural elections last year. However, the State Congress demanded at least 6-8 seats if an alliance were to be imposed on the State party.

They sought Darjeeling Raiganj, Malda North, Malda South, Murshidabad, Jangipur, Behrampore, Basirhat, and Purulia. The TMC, on the other hand, was not willing to concede Malda South and Behrampore, presently held by Khan Chowdhury and Adhir. agent of the BJP in INDIA who

Gyanvapi case: 11 applications High alert in JK for Republic Day for copies of ASI survey report

PTI VARANASI

 $E^{\rm leven\ people,\ including}_{\rm from\ both\ the\ Hindu\ and}$ Muslim side, applied for copies of the ASI survey report on the Gyanvapi mosque complex adjoining the Kashi Vishwanath temple here on Thursday, counsel for the Hindu litigants said.

The applicants are likely to get the report either on Thursday or Monday after a scrutiny of the applications, Hindu side counsel Madan Mohan Yadav said. Following an order of the

district court passed on July 21 last year, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) carried out a scientific survey of the Gyanvapi premises determine whether the mosque was constructed over a pre-existing structure of a Hindu temple.

"Till afternoon, 11 persons applied from sides for copies of ASI survey report," Yadav said. said advocates representing the petitioners from the Hindu side, Anjuman Intezamia Masjid committee, Kashi Vishwanath Trust, the state government, the chief the home secretary, secretary and the Varanasi district magistrate have applied for the copy of the survey report.

On Wednesday, District Judge A K Vishvesh ruled that the ASI survey report on the Gyanyapi mosque complex will be given to

PUBLIC NOTICE nurm to the public at large that Mr. Mukesh Kun nurchasing the Plot No.202, in Block-B, Sec area measuring 175 sg. mtrs. situated (Dwarka) Residential Scheme, New Delhi fir ralwasia Industries Pvt. Ltd. Vide Sale de 08.2011 duly registered as Decumental

3. No. of work

4. Tender Paper cost

5. Class of Contractor

the website

6. Available of bid document

7. Date of opening of Bid

tender can also be seen in the said website

both the Hindu and Muslim

After hearing the matter, Judge Vishvesh said both the parties to the suit must be provided copies of the survey report filed by the ASI in the court so that they can file objections against it. The court also allowed the Kashi Vishwanath temple trust, Varanasi DM and the state's home secretary to get a copy of the ASI survey report.

The court passed the order on a petition filed by Rakhi Singh and others.

The survey was ordered by the court after the Hindu petitioners claimed the 17th-century mosque was constructed over a pre-existing temple. The ASI had submitted its survey report to the district court in a sealed cover on December 18.

BMC/2023-24

Ashnoor Textile Mills Ltd.

Khandsa, District Gurugram, Haryana-122001 E-mail: atml_delhi@yahoo.com

Phone: 91 0124 4809755

CIN: L17226HR1984PLC033384

NOTICE
NOTICE NOTICE is hereby given, pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements)

Regulations, 2015, that a meeting of the Board

of Directors of the Company will be held or

Tuesday, February 13, 2024, inter-alia, to consider and approve Unaudited Financia

Results of the company for the Third Quarte

This information is also available on Company's website at www.ashnoortex.com and also or

By the order of Board

Suneel Gupta

Managing Director DIN-00052084

the website of BSE, i.e. www.bseindia.com

E-mail: ceroads.bbsr@gmail.com

ended December 31, 2023.

January 25, 2024

Gurugram, Haryana

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"-PROCUREMENT NOTICE

WORKS DEPARTMENT

Bid Identification No. CE-DPI & R-37/2023-24

1. The Chief Engineer (DPI & Roads), Odisha on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites

8. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from

the website: https://tenderodisha.gov.in . Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of

percentage rate bids in double cover system in ONLINE MODE form eligible contractors for

Road works

Rs.10,000.00

Special Class/Super Class

Dt.13.02.2024 at 4.35 P.M.

From 10.00 A.M. of 30.01.2024 to 4.30 PM of

Chief Engineer (DPI) & Roads), Odisha(I/C)



PUBLIC NOTICE

My Client Karan Dixit S/o Sh. Gaja Nand Dixit and Smt. Gauri Dixit W/o Sh. Karan Dixit B/o H.No. 119A, Pocket-F, MIG Flats GTB Enclave, Delhi-110093, Adopted on 03-10-2023, a daughter child girl namely Kanisha Sharma from Ms. Indu Sharma (Natural Mother) who unable to afford her maintain her with all her rights, titled, interest in family gathering and in the presence of friends. From now on Kanisha Sharma will be known as Kanisha Dixit.

Sd/R.S. SHARMA



THANKSGIVING • Thank you holly spirit for

all the blessings Celine.

OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, BHOPAL

PD(252)C

<u>Water Work Department</u> Municipal Corporation Rest House, Shyamla Hills, Bhopal

Ph. No. 0755-2701669

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS

Online tenders are being invited for the following works. The bidder can obtained detailed information and tender document on website https://mptenders.gov.in Corrigendum for this NIT shall not be issued separately in newspapers. Corrigendum regarding correction

Tender ID. Estimated | Earnest Money | Bid Submissio NIT No. Details of Work Cost (INR) (EMD) End Date 5. 6. 7. 04/SE/WWD/ 2023_UAD Augmentation, Renovation and Extended 1.90 Crore 08.02.2024

in Bhopal City under AMRUT 2.0 Tender document conditions is amended as per MP UADD Order no. 10413/ 2023, Dated 01.09.2023 Superintendent Engineer (WWD) Municipal Corporation, Bhopal T.N.1484/023/024

Whereas, Late Mr. Ram Saran S/o Mr. Seva Ram, was the owner of the eva Ram, was the owner 5. statesidential House No. 143B/1B dmeasuring around 244 Sq. Yds. situated in NIT-1, Faridabad. Whereas, a Will dated 02.04.1991,

vas executed by Mr. Ram Saran in avour of his daughter Mrs. Sunita which is registered with the office of he Sub-Registrar, Faridabad as document no 2356, whereby, he equeathed all his movable and nmovable property in favour of his

Whereas, Mr. Ram Saran died or

Whereas, by virtue of the said WILL dated 02.04.1991, Mrs. Sunita becamthe owner of the aforesaid Property Whereas, Mrs. Sunita intends to Sel the aforesaid property to Mrs. Santosh

Any person who has any objection regarding the Sale of the said property by Mrs. Sunita, may submit his/her bjection within 14 days from the date the Notice in writing. The objection may be kindly sent to the ndersigned by way of the Registered Post on the address given below and

Priy Mitra Gaur (Advocate) C-401, Fourth Floor, Nirvana Courtyard, Nirvana Country, Sector-50, Gurugram-122018 have

Kashmir Police, R R Swain on Thursday asserted that all security measures are in Meetings conducted at various levels,

Referring to the security

General of Jammu and

Director

arrangements,

including discussions with the army, CAPF led by CRPF, other intelligence agencies to ensure peaceful conduct of the Republic day

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE
The general public is hereby informed that Smt.
Poonam Makhija w/o Shri Vikas Makhija residing at C116, on 3rd floor, J.V.T.S. Garden Chattapur Extn.,
Hauz Khas South Delhi Til0074 the owner of Entire
Second Floor, without roof/terrace rights, Built-up
Property Bearing No. 144, area measuring 48.00 sq.
mtrs., Block H, Pocket T, Sector-16, Situated at
Rohini Delhi have lost the Original Sale Deed dated
24.07.2011 Aving doc no. 9425, registered with the
Sub-Registrar VI, Delhi and online F.I.R. has been
lodged on 30.08.2023 vide LR No.842405/2023, SO
No. 430 / 2014 Delhi Police. Any person who has
found this document or in it's possession or is claiming
to have any rights, title, interest in respect of the said
Property, is/are requested to return the original deed
or intimate the objection / claim in writing to the
undersigned with supporting documents within 14

undersigned with supporting documents within 14 days from the date of publication of this notice.

Adv. Vikram K. Saw 4E/9, 2nd Floor, Jhandewalan Extn., N. D.-110055 Email: vikshalegal@gmail.com Landline · 011-35668622

functions across the Union territory. "We have ensured the security

of the venue and considered all potential threat scenarios. We assure you that the celebration will be peaceful, and we encourage citizens to celebrate it with full fervour", he added.

Paying tributes to the martyred police officers, DGP said that in 33 years, J&K Police have lost more than 1600 personnel in Pakistan

Sponsored Proxy war which is the largest among security forces in J&K.He said that losing 1600 personnel is the benchmark and watermark in terms of demonstrating the commitment to the national security effort.

DGP said that besides sacrificing their life, many displacement, and various forms of vilification and intimidation in the line of

LOSS OF ID CARD

This is to bring to the notice of the general public that one ID Card of Mr RAGHUBIR SINGH issued by ICICI Bank ltd. having ID card no. 2303543 has been found missing and/or lost on 23/01/2024 Anyone, who finds the said ID card, is requested to return the said ID card to the Manager Debt Services & Management Group, ICICI Bank Limited, SD Shoppers Arcade Plot no- 1 Community Center Sector-8 Rohini- Delhi 110085

Therefore, all the customers of ICICI Bank Limited are hereby notified not to make any payment to any unauthorised person holding the said ID card no 2303543

Please take further notice that anybody making payment to any person holding the said ID card shall do so at his/her own costs, risk and peril and

ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any payment For ICICI Bank Ltd. Date: 26-01-2024

BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, New Delhi Date: 25.01.2024 TENDER NOTICE Sealed tenders under two Bid System (Unpriced & Priced) is invited for following job from all bidders Brief Tender Description CMC/BR/24-25/ UNIT RATE FINALISATION FOR ROVIDING 16,24,000/-Rs 16.24 15 02 2024 Crs. (Annual) RB/CR/SL/1177 | MANPOWER OF VARIOUS CATEGORIES IN 1500 HRS 1530 HRS VARIOUS DEPARTMENT OF BRPI

Cost of each Tender Document: ₹ 1180/- (Non Refundable)

For details in respect of Equipment/BOM/Services, Qualifying requirements, Terms & conditions, purchase/submission of tender documents etc. please visit our website www.bsesdelhi.com.

Head (Contracts & Materials)

Regd Office: Flat No-502, 502-A 5th Floor, 23 Barakhar

22 July 2024 i.e., 180 days from date of CIRP

Reg No: IBBI/IPA-001/IP-P01373/2018-2019/12155

Address: 322, Zest Business Spaces, M G Road, Ghatkopar East, Mumbai 400 077

Address: 322, Zest Business Spaces, M G Road, Ghatkopar East, Mumbai 400 077.

Email: dpatel@ckpatel.com

Email: cirp.shipra@gmail.com

el: 022-25083300

February 2024

Regd. Off.: BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, BSES Bhawan, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110019 I Corporate Identification No.: U40109DL2001PLC111527
Telephone No.: +91 11 4910 7235 I Website: www.bsesdelhi.com

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

Public Notice

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

Secretary - Bihar Bandhu CGHS Ltd

PUBLIC NOTICE to inform the Public at large that Sethi W/o. Sh. Chaman Sethi is the n possession of **Entire Second Flo** Built Up Residential Property Bearin 1064, Block – D, New Friends Colo .H.B.S. Ltd., New Friends Colony, New Delhi 10025 admeasuring 247.00 sq. mtrs. reinafter referred to as "Schedule Property" vid-onveyance Deed dated 09.03.2022, dul gistered as Regn. No. 3364, Book No. 1, Vol. No. 86, pp. 46–50 on 23.03.2022 in the Office of the 8286, pp. 46-50 on 23 03.2022 in the Office of the Sub Registrar – VII, Vikas Sadan, New Delhi. That original documents of the erstwhile owners pertaining to the Schedule Plot being (i) Perpetua Sub-Lease Deed dated 27.12.1989 and (ii) General Power of Attorney Chain with Agraement to Sell and Receipt all dated 26.03.1992, have been lost/ misplaced and are untraceable as or date, in lieu of which Information Report date 24.01.2024 bearing LR No. 1375592/2024 has been filled with Delhi Polica. This notice is thus issued to the Public at large, i.e. any Person(s) Company(ies), Authority(ies), Society(ies), Organisation(s), Financial Institution(s), Bank(s), HUFs etc. having any knowledge, custody or Company(ies), Authority(ies), Society(ies), Organisation(s), Financial institution(s), Bank(s), HulFs etc. having any knowledge, custody or possession of the above mentioned lost/misplaced/untraceable original documents for the Schedule Plot or otherwise having any claims, rights, title, interests, possession etc. in the Schedule Property or the Entire Schedule Plot, by way of Ownership, Succession, Inheritance, Sale, Mortgage, Exchange, Charge, Lien, Gift, Trust, Encumbrance etc. or objection to the sale of the Schedule Property by the Title Holder, may come forward with supporting documents, to be delivered to the undersigned within 10 days from the date of this Publication, post expiration of which, any claim(s) or objection(s), if raised or received, shall be treated as null & void and as waived, and the Title Holder shall proceed to self the Schedule Property, as is presently intended.

Chamber Address: 363, Saket Cantt, New Delhi-Schamber Address: 363, Saket Cantt, New Delhi-Cant. No. 9999228185

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

(Under Regulation 6 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India isolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Persons) Regulations, 20:

FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE CREDITORS OF SHIPRA ESTATE LIMITED

RELEVANT PARTICULARS

Name of corporate debtor SHIPRA ESTATE LIMITED

Date of incorporation of corporate debtor 26 October 1987 Authority under which corporate debtor Registrar of Companies - Delhi U70101DL1987PL0029594

principal office (if any) of corporate Road, Narain Manzil, New Delhi, India, 119001 **Principal Office:** Plot No-9, Shipra Mall, Vaibhav Khand,

ndirapuram, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, India 201014 By National Company Law Tribunal, Delhi Bench order dated, 24 January 2024 in Company Petition No: C.P. No IB/513/ND/2022 Insolvency commencement date in

Estimated date of closure of insolvency

Identification No. of corporate debtor

resolution process

Name and registration number of the

insolvency professional acting as interim

resolution professional Address and e-mail of the interim resolution professional, as registered

with the Board

Address and e-mail to be used for correspondence with the interim resolution professional Last date for submission of claims

clause (b) of sub-section (6A) of section 21, ascertained by the interin

identified to act as Authorised Representative of creditors in a class

(b) Details of authorized representatives Physical Address: Not applicable

Notice is hereby given that the National Company Law Tribunal has ordered the encement of a corporate insolvency resolution process of the SHIPRA ESTATE LIMITED on 24 January 2024.

The creditors of SHIPRA ESTATE LIMITED are hereby called upon to submit their claims with proof on or before 7 February 2024 to Interim resolution prof nentioned against entry No. 10. The financial creditors shall submit their claims with proof by electronic means only. All othe

creditors may submit the claims with proof in person, by post or by electronic mea A financial creditor belonging to a class, as listed against the entry No. 12, shall indicate its choice of authorised representative from among the three insolvency professionals listed against entry No.13 to act as authorised representative of the class [specify class] in Form

Submission of false or misleading proofs of claim shall attract penalties

URRDA, Dehradur Dhanshyam Patel

Chief Engineer

_295932_4 | Area Coverage of Water supply System

can be seen on the website https://mptenders.gov.in

First Floor, Directorate of Panchayatiraj, Opp-IT Park, Sahastradhara Road, Dehradun. Phone No. 0135-2608125, Fax No. 2608126, Email: ut-urrda@pmgsy.nic.in, urrda@yahoo.com

Crore

e-Procurement Notice 30/2023-24

The Government of India has received a loan/credit number "LN 8864 IN" from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/International Development Association towards the cost of Rural Roads Project (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana) and intends to apply a part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the contracts for construction of works as detailed in NIT. Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the bidding document.

bids in electronic tendering system for construction of works under Pradhan Mantr Gram Sadak Yojana in the Districts of Nainital for 01 number of packages with estimated cost totaling to Rs. 0.92 Crore including their maintenance for five years from the eligible contractors (Class-A and above) registered with PWD/CPWD or

Date of release of Invitation for Bids through e-procurement: 25.01.2024. Availability of Bid Documents and mode of submission: The bid documents are

available online and should be submitted online in www.pmgsytendersuk.gov.in. The bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of the bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities.

The bidders are required to submit original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document as per provisions of Clause 4.4 B (ii) of ITB with CONCERNED CIRCLE OFFICES, mentioned in SBD/MBD, only up to or before the part of the bid (for regular PMGSY Works), either by registered post or by hand, failing Last Date/Time for receipt of bids through e-procurement: 07-02-2024 01:00 PM

Chief Engineer, Uttarakhand Rural Roads Development Agency, ात्रांकः 2127/ I1-02(xix)-2/ITCO/URRDA/23 Dated: 25.01.2024

"PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY)"

The Chief Engineer, URRDA on behalf of Governor of Uttarakhand invites the item rate

time and date of the submission of the Bids (for World Bank funded works) and on a date not later than three working days after the opening of technical qualification which the bids shall be declared non-responsive. No physical documents will be accepted after the closing date and time of submission of bids.

For further details please log on to www.pmgsytendersuk.gov.in

*Non Registered bidders may submit bids, however, the successful bidders must get registered in appropriate class with appropriate authorities before signing the contract. Note: Fore-Procurement for any sort of queries 0135-2608125 number may be contacted 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM.

BHOPINDER SINGH

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

To each their own

Two major players in INDIA bloc plan to go it alone in LS polls. Where does it leave the Oppn grouping?

Despite the constituents' best efforts to paper over their differences and present a united facade, the worst apprehensions about the INDIA bloc are coming true. Its seatsharing formula is just not taking shape. The much-hyped bloc, an alliance of 28, Opposition parties aiming to counter the BJP's dominance, seems to be unravelling. Recent announcements by key constituents indicate a shift in strategy, with prominent leaders opting for independent paths in the Lok Saabha elections. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's rejection of sharing seats with the Congress and AAP's decision to go it alone in Punjab are enough to upset the bloc's apple cart even before it could start its electoral journey. Mamata, the TMC chief and a key architect of the INDIA bloc, has signalled a fracture in the purported unity. She has emphasised the need for regional parties to assert themselves and prioritise State-centric issues over national alliances. This stance has added an element of unpredictability



to the bloc's future, as it challenges the idea of a united front against the BJP. As if Mamata's stance were not enough, AAP has also decided to go it solo. In Punjab, the party has declared its intent to contest the elections independently. It comes as a major blow to the INDIA bloc: In retaliation, the Congress could go it alone in Delhi and Haryana, effectively making it a three-cornered contest in Delhi, Punjab and

The challenge for the INDIA bloc now lies in reconciling the divergent aspirations of its constituent parties and finding common ground to build a cohesive narrative on. It is, however, essential to acknowledge

that the dynamics of Indian politics are fluid and alliances can evolve swiftly. The INDIA bloc could potentially reassess its strategy and work towards a more unified front as the general elections approach. The posturing by the TMC and AAP should make the INDIA bloc leaders go back to the basics and rework their strategy. It may find renewed purpose in addressing shared concerns while respecting the autonomy of individual parties. The success of the INDIA bloc at the hustings hinges on its ability to navigate internal differences. The bloc's initial promise lay in consolidating regional strength; for this, it must overcome fissures and present a coherent vision for governance at the national level. It needs to convince voters that a coalition of regional parties can provide stable and effective leadership, addressing both local and national concerns. Its success will depend on its capability to forge a common agenda, communicate it effectively to the electorate and demonstrate a united front against the ruling party. While the bloc's future appears uncertain at the moment, political landscapes are known for rapid transformations. The road to general elections will test the resilience and adaptability of the INDIA bloc, determining whether it can emerge as a potent force capable of shaping the national narrative and challenging the status quo.



Devotees take part in a religious procession to celebrate Thaipusam festival, in Chennai

Managing diversity in

Taiwanese conundrum for mainland China

The best bet for the Chinese is to seek organic support for 'reunification' with the main land from the Taiwanese themselves. A coercive posture and rough language would not help

ontrary to Chinese assertions, insistences, and sensitivities to what it unilaterally calls 'Chinese Taiwan' or 'Taiwan, China', the Republic of China (ROC) or Taiwan has its own functional democracy, constitution and approximately 3,00,000 combatants protecting its territorial sovereignty. With mainland China claiming to represent One-China as the legitimate power, the battle of wits tilted in favour of mainland China in 1971, when the United Nations switched diplomatic recognition onto mainland China. Since then, mainland China has flexed its patent admixture of financial, military, industrial and diplomatic power to bludgeon support in its favour. Today, the fast-receding number of countries that recognize Taiwan has fallen to a meagre 12 countries. Even this list includes relatively 'lightweight' nations like St Vincent and the Grenadines, Eswatini and Tuvalu, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, Palau, Nauru, Holy See, Marshall

Chinese President Xi Jinping has repeatedly warned against Taiwanese independence separatism" and promised that Taiwan would "surely be unified". Xi's rhetoric is deeply suggestive and intimidatory. However, audiovisuals of choreographed brinkmanship aside, such a belligerent move would be anything but a cakewalk in terms of consequences for the Chinese. Practically, Chinese sabre-rattling is part of deliberately postured nationalism that is vital to buttress the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party(CCP) regime, as the main lever of legitimacy i.e., socio-economic upliftment of the Chinese, is now under extreme stress. In the absence of economic prosperity, muscle-flexing against Taiwan distracts and galvanises the

The disproportionate Chinese military strength to Taiwan's militaristic preparedness on paper notwithstanding, the near-certain international reactions of sanctions and embargoes onto the undoing of any residual sup-Chinese if they were to attack Taiwan, would break the proverbial camel's back, in terms of fur- famed Taiwanese 'porcupine'



ther economic sufferings for the Chinese masses. It could lead to unsustainable economic regression and societal discontent. It is a price that Xi Jinping simply cannot afford, especially as the economic upside of a forcible integration, would pale in comparison to the downsides of a plausible invasion.

Besides, Taiwan is extremely well-fortified with missiles, early warning systems, precision-strike weapons, underwater mines, and other counterattack capabilities that could inflict significant damage on any invasion attempt, irrespective of the ultimate result. In any case, the Chinese would have to mount a significant fleet and accompanying wherewithal which could easily alert of an impending invasion - a discreet and sudden Chinese attack, is next to impossible. Even the fact that a potential Chinese invasion would involve breaking through large urban squalors and cities, it would entail deadly urban warfare that has tested the skills of even hardened Israelis and Russians in recent times, let alone the untested Chinese PLA soldier. Urban warfare and associated costs could lead to the port the Chinese may have amongst the Taiwanese. The

XI JINPING HAS REPEATEDLY WARNED AGAINST **'TAIWANESE INDEPENDENCE** SEPARATISM' AND PROMISED THAT TAIWAN WOULD 'SURELY BE UNIFIED'. XI'S RHETORIC IS **DEEPLY SUGGESTIVE** AND INTIMIDATORY strategy is predicated on making a heavily laden Chinese invasion fleet face a prickly proposition and based on defensive survivability. The fact that such an invasion could draw the committed US forces would have its own resultant algorithms.

So realistically the best bet for

the Chinese is for organic support for 'reunification' with the mainland Chinese, by the Taiwanese themselves. This is not an unfathomable situation, given the existence of 'pro' China and 'anti' China sentiment amongst Taiwanese political parties. While the recent Taiwanese Presidential elections have brought back the decidedly 'anti-China' forces of the Democratic Progressive Party(DPP) with 40.05% of the popular vote (third successive victory), the fact that the other two parties have varied shades of 'pro-China' anchorage i.e., Kuomintang (KMT) and Taiwan's People Party(TPP), garnered 33.49% and 26.46% respectively, shows faultlines. It could be credibly argued that while the Taiwanese were aligned with DPP's nationalistic stand, there must have been anti-incumbency on local issues like iow wages, unanoraable housing etc., that led to significant support for KMT

Islands and Puducherry. The However, the competitive race

ly signalling the continuation of stalemate and tensions. If the Chinese were to overdo the further sanctioning against provisions of an existing free trade agreement with Taiwan (or even suspend it altogether), it would lead to painful hardships for the Taiwanese, but also to further anti-Chinese sentiment that clearly cannot be countered by military superiority or plausible invasions. The best bet for the Chinese is to have the local Taiwanese perceive more socio-economic merit in 'unification' as opposed to 'independence, a battle that puts Beijing on the backfoot given stories coming out of Hong Kong or Tibet. So, the Chinese battle-rattle-tattle for crossing the straits in a purported invasion will continue, howev-

to a steady assertion of locals

identifying themselves as just

Taiwanese' as opposed to

'Both Taiwanese and Chinese'

or plain 'Chinese'. Yet, post the

electoral results the Chinese

foreign ministry reiterated,

in Taiwan, the basic fact that

there is only one China", clear-

Whatever changes take place

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

er, the costs to walk the talk

will remain prohibitive.

small and remote teams HIMA BINDU KOTA

Small companies managing multi-location teams thrive through clear communication, inclusivity and technological leverage

n the modern era of remote work and globalisation, small companies are increasingly embracing multi-location teams to tap into diverse talent pools and expand their reach. Effectively managing teams spread across different locations presents unique challenges and opportunities. Small companies can mitigate these challenges by exploring strategies that help to successfully navigate the complexities of managing multi-location teams. First and foremost, since technology has made remote working possible, it should be further leveraged for seamless communication. It is the cornerstone of managing multilocation teams. Small companies should invest in reliable communication tools that facilitate seamless collaboration. Platforms like video conferencing, project management software, and instant messaging can bridge the geographical gap. Having established a connection with the team, it is vital to ascertain clear communication protocols that are essential to

avoid misunderstandings and

ensure everyone stays

informed. Establish guide-



lines for virtual meetings, project updates, and team communication channels. Consistency in communication practices helps maintain a sense of unity among team members, regardless of their physical locations. While written communication is valuable, face-to-face interactions build stronger connections. It is beyond doubt that distance can create a sense of isolation, making team building crucial for multi-location teams. It is therefore important to include virtual teambuilding activities, such as online games, virtual happy hours, or collaborative projects. These initiatives promote camaraderie and create a positive team culture.

In a long-distance, multilocation work environment, clarity is the king. Clearly defining roles and responsibilities for each team member to avoid confusion and ensure accountability is a must. Small assess the well-being and

companies should establish a transparent framework that outlines expectations and deliverables. This clarity minimizes the risk of duplication of efforts and promotes efficiency within the multi-location team.

Utilizing the requisite project management tools play a pivotal role in coordinating tasks and projects across different locations. Small companies can benefit from using tools that enable real-time collaboration, document sharing,

and task tracking. These tools enhance productivity and streamline workflows within the multi-location team. In addition, inclusivity is vital for the success of multi-location teams. Small companies should actively cultivate a culture that values diverse perspectives and contributions. Provide opportunities for skill-building, training, and career advancement for all team members, regardless of their location. This investment enhances individual capabilities. Another important aspect that helps to manage a small multi-location team is regular check-ins and feedback sessions to

progress of each team mem-

Small companies should create an open and supportive environment where team members feel comfortable sharing concerns or ideas. Constructive feedback sessions help in addressing challenges and fostering continuous improvement. To enhance transparency in the muti-location teams, a centralized knowledge repository accessible to all team members is a vital requirement. This repository can contain important documents, project updates, and resources, ensuring that everyone has access to the information they need. This type of centralised hub enhances transparency and minimises the risk of information silos within the multilocation team. Last but not least, being a multi-location team, embrace and celebrate the diversity within the multilocation team. Small Companies should promote cultural awareness, acknowledging the unique backgrounds, customs, and perspectives of team members.

(The writer is assistant professor at Amity University; views are personal)

FIR AGAINST RAHUL GANDHI

Sir — The under-pressure Assam police on Tuesday registered an FIR against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and other leaders for "wanton acts of violence" on Tuesday, Frustrated Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said. The Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Nyay Jatra is currently in Assam and the alleged acts of violence took place while the party supporters and leaders allegedly clashed with police personnel in their bid to enter Guwahati. Four police personnel were injured in the scuffle, Guwahati Police Commissioner Diganta Bora said. Under fear. Sarma had earlier in the day instructed the Director General of Police G P Singh to register a case against Rahul Gandhi for provoking the crowd to break the barri-

Gandhi said the chief minister directing the DGP to file a case against him shows "that they have fear in their hearts... They are afraid as the people of Assam are standing up as 'Tufan' and 'Andhi' (storm) against them". The barricades were erected along a highway to prevent Congress leaders and supporters taking part in the Yatra from entering the main thoroughfares of Guwahati, the largest city of the northeastern state. As Congress supporters removed the barricades, a scuffle with the police personnel ensued leading to injuries suffered by state Congress president Bhupen Borah and leader of the opposition in the state assembly Debabrata Saikia. Gandhi alleged that while BJP president J P Nadda was allowed to take the same route earlier, Congress was not per-

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

CONTRIBUTION OF NETAJI

Sir — The country can always remember the contribution of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose to the freedom movement. His slogan 'Give me blood, I will give you freedom' sparked a new revolution in the country. The army 'Azad Hind Fauj' formed by him forced the British to leave India. The British had first handed over the

Yemen crisis

HE EDITOR



strikes on the positions of Iran-backed Houthi separatists active in Yemen, in retaliation for blocking and attacking fleets in the Red Sea. Not only this, America has once again declared Houthis as a terrorist group. But instead of solving the area's problems, they are becoming more complicated day by day. First of all, poor countries like Yemen, where today every area has fallen into the hands of fighters. The group of Arab countries, which includes Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, tried to control all the forces

Hind Fauj and Netaji hoisted the tricolour there on 30 December 1943. Netaji had become synonymous with courage, bravery and patriotism.

Netaji's death remains a mystery. The present Central Government has expressed gratitude to Netaji by celebrating his birthday as Parakram Diwas (23 January), making public all the files related to him and installing the statue of Netaji at India Gate. Netaji's life will always continue to inspire patriotism among the youth.

N Mateeni | Pune

BHARAT RATNA FOR THE JAN NAYAK

Sir — The centre has posthumously fulfilled a long-standing demand by announcing the Bharat Ratna award for the Former Chief Minister of Bihar, Karpoori Thakur, a dedicated leader committed to uplifting the poor and marginalized. As a notable figure in Bihar politics, Thakur's lasting impact on India's socio-political landscape is evident, offering hope and positivity to Dalits and backward classes. Hailing from Andaman and Nicobar Islands to the Azad

opposing each other by entering that country but

Now an in-depth investigation has revealed that the UAE, while fighting there, has carried out many targeted killings with the help of money. American mercenaries were given a contract by the Emirati government to kill members of a specific group. Most of those killed by these mercenaries were members of 'Islah', the Yemeni branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. It is a popular international Sunni Islamist movement that no one has ever classified as a terrorist organization but is banned in many Arab countries. They are included in the United Arab Emirates where its political activism and support for elections is seen by the country's royal family as a threat to their rule. Had gone to Yemen to restore peace but started killing Islah members. This should be investigated by the United Nations. The dark deeds of the UAE should be exposed.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

a backward class and affectionately known as the "Jannayak" or people's hero, Thakur embodied the ideals of Subhas Chandra Bose and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. His commitment to breaking caste boundaries was represented during his 28-day fast unto death in support of Telco labourers, showcasing his dedication to social justice and work-

As Bihar's Education Minister, Thakur promoted Hindi, removed English as a compulsory subject, and became the first Chief Minister to enforce total alcohol prohibition, addressing crucial social issues and challenging established norms. His legacy is evident in the transformed India where individuals from backward classes now hold prominent positions. Karpoori Thakur's Bharat Ratna is not merely an award; it's a recognition of his unwavering pursuit of justice and equality, shaping a more inclusive and equitable India.

Preetiyukta | Bhubaneswar

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FIRST COLUMN

INDIA'S COMPLEX GLOBAL CHALLENGES IN 2024

India navigates global complexities amid elections and geopolitical uncertainties



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

ven as the world gathered to witness once in a lifetime event in the historic dusty small temple town of Ayodhya EAM Jaishankar was speaking about the changing concepts of multilateralism and international relations in the realigning world order in Kampala and Lagos, Nigeria. India's strategic focus on being the leading voice of the global south, at a time when major democracies including India, are going to face the elections and two wars are showing little signs of ebbing, have made the path a tad more difficult.

During its G20 presidency last year, India achieved a horizontal consensus, successfully obtaining a joint communique despite stark differences between Russia and the US. Impressively, India also brought the African Union, a pivotal constituent of the Global South, into the dialogue. However, the conflict in West Asia, teetering on the brink of genocide, is now extending from the Gaza Strip to the Red Sea. Pakistan and Iran, two major Islamic nations, engaged in reciprocal surgical strikes, each claiming to eliminate terrorist bases.

Iran's influence on certain terror groups obstructs crucial maritime routes in the Red Sea, resulting in increased shipping costs. Recently, External Affairs Minister Jaishankar visited Iran to discuss the imperative of secure maritime routes. Nevertheless, the broader Gaza Strip conflict and its potential impact on the upcoming US elections seem unlikely to subside. India has adeptly cultivated a strong bilateral and bipartisan relationship with the US over the past decade, despite occasional disputes on trade and human rights. It is evident that India views the US as a crucial ally in countering the military expansion of China, safeguarding security, and promoting fair practices in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond. During the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) conference, the External Affairs



Minister (EAM) reiterated India's call for a multipolar world and the reform of global institutions, including the UN. India's longstanding demand for a permanent seat at the UN Security Council has faced opposition from China. Notably, tech billionaire Elon Musk has backed India's bid for a permanent seat. In the past decade, India has advocated for a multipolar world order, emphasizing each powerful nation's distinct sphere of influence. The Ukraine conflict has reignited tensions between Russia and Western powers, while bipartisan support in the US for containing China persists under President Biden. The upcoming 2024 election, where Republican Trump may challenge Biden, could elevate immigration issues and super nationalism, potentially shifting American international influence away from multilateralism.

The current Indian government, led by Prime Minister Modi, is perceived to have a positive rapport with Trump, should he return to power. However, potential challenges may arise regarding India's key concerns, as emphasized by the External Affairs Minister during the NAM summit. These concerns include establishing regional economic hubs, resilient supply chains, predictable mobility, and trusted data flows. People-centric policies, sustainable lifestyles, digital public infrastructure, food, energy, and health security, women-led development, prioritized connectivity with respect for sovereignty, and adequate resourcing for climate action and SDG realization are highlighted as crucial aspects.

If Trump returns to the White House in 2024, India's global climate change initiatives may lose US support. Immigration challenges, exemplified by a large influx of Indian citizens at US borders, could escalate. India's upcoming elections face the daunting task of convincing voters, particularly in border states, that China has not encroached on Indian territories. The year 2024 poses significant challenges for international relations.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

Is the Government's debt sustainable?

UTTAM GUPTA

The Government should take recourse to borrowings only for the creation of long-term assets. This will help generate income streams that can help in servicing the loans



ecently, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has forecast that India's general government debt - it comprises the debts of the Centre and states – will overshoot 100 per cent of the GDP (gross domestic product) by the financial year (FY) 2027-28. Responding to this, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) clarified that this wasn't under a 'baseline scenario' – a jargon to describe normal economic conditions. It added the IMF was referring to a 'worst-case scenario' wherein a global shock would equally affect all countries. Is the government's debt sustainable? The government's debt is linked with how

it manages its total expenditure vis-à-vis its total receipts or fiscal deficit (FD) which is excess of the former over the latter. The expenditure and receipts are broadly of two types viz. revenue and capital.

Revenue expenditure (RE) is essentially consumption expenditure which does not result in the creation of assets. It includes expenses for the normal running of government departments and various services, interest charges on debt incurred by the government, subsidies and so on. Capital expenditure (CE) includes the money that the government spends on long-term assets such as property, plant, and equip-

Revenue Receipts (RR) are receipts that neither create any liability nor lead to any reduction in the assets of the government. These comprise tax and non-tax receipts, duties and fines, and interest and dividends receipts on government investments and assets. Capital receipts (CR) are those receipts that either create liabilities or reduce the asset value of the government. These are loans raised by the government to fund long-term developmental needs. Ideally, RR should fully pay for the RE implying that revenue deficit (RD) – the difference between RR and RE - should be zero. The government should take recourse to borrowings only for the creation of longterm assets. Spending in this manner will help generate income streams that can help in servicing the loans thereby making such debt sustainable. In reality, RR have consistently fallen



THE FINANCE **MINISTRY**

EXUDES CONFIDENCE THAT THE CENTRE IS 'ON TRACK TO **ACHIEVE ITS** STATED FISCAL CONSOLIDATION TARGET' OF

REDUCING FD TO 4.5 PER CENT BY

short of RE leading to a revenue deficit which meant that the government was borrowing merely to finance consumption expenditure. Besides, even the loans taken for financing CE were not productively used. The result was an increase in debt to an unsustainable level. As a result, even in 2003-04 when the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act (2003) was passed by the then Vajpayee-led NDA – government, interest payments accounted for one-third of the RE.

Under the FRBM Act (2003), the Vajpayee government promised the elimination of RD by the year 2008. It also committed to reducing FD to 3 per cent of the GDP. Against these pledges, during 2008-09, RD was 4.7 per cent whereas, FD was 6.2 per cent.

In his budget speech for 2016–17, the then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley announced the intent of the Modi government to review the making the FD target more flexible. For this, he had set up a committee under Dr N K Singh. The committee recommended a "glide path" for the next six years, i.e., from 2017–18 to 2022–23. It recommended an FD target of 2.5

per cent, RD of 0.8 per cent, a combined Centre-state debt ceiling of 60 per cent, and a central debt ceiling of 40 per cent for the terminal year, i.e., 2022–23. Further, it fixed 3 percent FD to be achieved during 2018–19. The committee also allowed the Union Government to breach the target - by up to 0.5 per cent - in the case of "far-reaching structural reforms with unanticipated fiscal implications."

In the amendment to the FRBM Act in the Finance Bill 2018-19, even while retaining the "escape clause" to cover unanticipated events, the government adopted the glide path of achieving a 3 per cent FD by 2020–21 instead of 2018–19, which was mooted by the committee. Further, it set the debt limit at 40 per cent for the Centre to be reached by 2024–25 instead of the mandated 2022–23. The relaxation in the glide path may be seen in the backdrop of the gov-

ernment missing the FD target for 2017–18 by 0.3 per cent and seeing no hope of achieving 3 per cent during 2018–19, as recommended by the committee. In the Budget for 2020-21, the finance minister (FM) Nirmala

Sitharaman had already invoked the

escape clause of the FRBM (Amendment) Act to alter the FD targets for 2019-20 from 3.3 percent as provided in the Budget to 3.8 percent in the revised estimate and for 2020-21, from 3 percent as per the glide path required under the Act – to 3.5 percent. Seen in relation to the target set by the N K Singh Committee or even to the FRBM (Amendment) Act, tne performance of the government had been off the mark. For instance, during 2018-19, the FD was 3.7 per cent against the 3 per cent required as per the Singh Committee. If deferred subsidy payments (DSPs) are also included (in those years, substantial amounts of major subsidy bills, viz., food, fertilizers, and fuel, were kept pending), the FD would be 5.7%. Likewise, for 2019-20, including DSPs, the FD would be 5.1 per cent.

Due to Corona pandemic, the year 2020–21 saw plunging revenue and ballooning expenditure. As a result, the FD zoomed to 9.1 per cent against BE of 3.5 per cent. Being an exceptional year, a comparison with the glide path may not

In the following year, even as the pandemic waned and the economy rebounded, in her budget speech for 2021-22, Sitharaman fixed the FD target at 6.9 per cent saying her

goal was to achieve 4.5 per cent by the year 2025-26. The actual FD for 2021-22 was lower at 6.7 percent. For 2022-23, she set the target at 6.4 per cent describing this as advanc-ing on the road to fiscal consolidation. The actual was precisely at 6.4 per cent. For 2023-24, she kept the target at 5.9 per cent. It is likely that even this would be achieved. From the above, the finance min-

istry exudes confidence that the Centre is "on track to achieve its stated fiscal consolidation target" of reducing FD to 4.5 per cent by 2025-26. This is misleading. To reset the fiscal trajectory making it substantially relaxed and then claim that fiscal numbers are well on track looks amusing. Let us not forget that even as per the FRBM (Amendment) Act, the Centre should have achieved 3 per cent in 2020-21.

Against this, the actual FD during 2021-22 and 2022-23 was more than two times whereas during the current year, it is expected to be nearly twice this level. The RD at 4.1 per cent during 2022-23 and 3 per cent during 2023-24 (expected) is 4 to 5 times the 0.8 per cent level as recommended by the NK Singh Committee. The debt to GDP ratio of the Centre is around 60 per cent against the 40 per cent mandated as per the amended Act.

As per the FRBM Act (2003), the FD was to have come down to 3 per cent by 2008. Against this, we are talking of 4.5 per cent by 2025-26. As per the Act, RD was to become 'Zero' by 2008. During 2023-24, it is stuck with 3 percent. It shows how much the Centre has lagged behind in managing its fiscal situation. True, but for Modi's efforts in boosting tax revenue, the situation would have been much worse. Nonetheless, a lot more needs to be done especially by slashing RE.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

NEP: Multidisciplinary approach in higher education

NEP is fostering inclusivity and merit-based research to address security challenges and encouraging multidisciplinary practices

Telson Mandela once c o m m e n t e d, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Over the past few years, there has been a notable shift in the landscape of education, emphasizing its pivotal role in shaping individuals physically, intellectually, and morally. Education is seen as a liberating force, breaking the chains of darkness and bigotry. Recently, there has been a concerted effort to integrate real-life experiments of democracy, environmental awareness, globalization, and governance into the framework of the new education system.

The intellectual establishment plays a crucial role in providing theoretical rationale and



strategies for educational advancements. It is imperative to explore how innovations in higher education can drive positive changes, instil confidence among the masses, and disseminate the latest global research and developments in education. This discourse aims to delve into the multifaceted aspects of the evolving higher education system, emphasizing the need for inclusivity and growth.

The strength of any higher education system lies in creating internal dynamism to ensure inclusive growth. Even a well-designed system is influenced by the individuals who make a difference. Human and financial relations are intricate matters that require constant monitoring by competent authorities. In India, universities are encouraged to improve their performance by transitioning towards a more merit-based,

peer-reviewed research approach, aligning with the goal of establishing a highly efficient and inclusive educational apparatus. The New Education Policy (NEP) has provided a framework to analyze and address multidimensional issues in the education sector, offering

from diverse backgrounds. These guidelines aim to meet the key demands of higher education while maintaining a synergy between various stakeholders. The constant monitoring of the education sector by authorities is crucial for growth, especially in changing circumstances. Acknowledging the gravity

of challenges faced by higher education, it is essential to address concerns related to competition, comparison, and personal greed, which may lead to manipulation and shortcuts. The right to freedom of expression in democratic societies has been debated extensively, and recent developments in the academic world present new challenges and competition.

opportunities for students The efforts by the University Translation and Interpretation Grants Commission (UGC) have introduced fair practices and policies consistent with present circumstances. Reforms in the examination system are aimed at ensuring that only talent prevails, fostering an environment that supports academic excellence. The NEP's emphasis on exploring domestic underpinnings, gender sensitization, and addressing the concerns of marginalized communities through Special Education Zones is commendable. Provisions such as Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs), the National Research Foundation, the Educational National Technology Forum, and the Indian Institutes of

create an environment for students to excel globally. These initiatives also highlight the importance of social responsibility.

The NEP encourages a new approach that provides a clear path for students interested in Security Studies, offering opportunities to learn new techniques. The provisions under NEP ensure the collaborative creation of ideas, providing insights into even the most complex issues.

At various educational levels, the NEP's approach involves mentors fully engaging in new techniques and developing challenging strategies to meet the needs of all students. To enhance students' standards, there is an imperative need for self-academic orien-

tation and excellence, fostering problem-solving and inquiry-based learning activities. Introducing a new syllabus can provide a deeper insight into strategic and security-related affairs, offering a roadmap for foolproof encountering strategies. This approach addresses issues such as the rise of terrorism, its causes, and the funding nexus between organised crime and terrorism.

The NEP's vision is to make India competitive in the field of Strategic education, attracting aspiring academicians and students. By providing multidisciplinary fervour, students will have wider exposure and opportunities for comparative studies, enriching analytical and theoretical rationale for crisis manage-

ment in India.

As India faces myriad security challenges, there is an urgent need to address these issues on the international stage. The NEP's input will undoubtedly make each discipline richer in content and varied in ideas, providing a holistic educational experience. Even science students will be exposed to the nuances of international, national, socio-political, and economic issues through multidisciplinary practices. The ingenious display of this government's approach demonstrates a pure genius that promises to reshape the educational landscape.

(The writer is a recipient of the Bharat Gaurav award and is a professor and expert on strategic affairs)

Washington and Baghdad plan to hold talks soon

 $T^{\text{he United States and Iraq}}_{\text{ expect to begin formal talks soon to wind down the mission}}$ of a US-led military coalition formed to fight the Islamic State group in Iraq, both governments said on Thursday.

The US has had a continuous presence in Iraq since its 2003 invasion. Although all US combat forces left in 2011, thousands of troops returned in 2014 to help the government of Iraq defeat IS. In the years since, the presence of US forces, who have remained there to conduct counter-IS missions and training, has been a lightinfluential faction of Iranaligned militias and politicians in the country.

In a statement, Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said the discussions will take place as part of a higher military commission that was agreed upon last summer — before the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war on October 7 rocked the region and will discuss the "transition to an enduring bilateral security partnership between Iraq and the United States."

Iraq's foreign ministry in a statement said Baghdad aims to "formulate a specific and clear timetable that specifies the duration of the presence of international coalition advisors in Iraq" and to "initiate the gradual and deliberate reduction of its advisors on Iraqi soil," eventually leading to the end of the coalition mission and a "move to comprehensive bilateral political and economic relations with the coalition

It added that Iraq is committed to ensuring the "safety of the international coalition's advisors during the negotiation period in all parts of the country" and to "maintaining stabil-

ity and preventing escalation."
Iraqi officials have periodically called for a withdrawal of coalition forces for years, particularly in the wake of a US airstrike in January 2020 that killed Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani and Iraqi militia outside the Baghdad airport.

The issue has surfaced again since Israel launched its major counteroffensive in Gaza following the October 7 Hamas-led attack in southern

Since mid-October, a group of Iran-backed militias calling itself the Islamic Resistance in Iraq have launched regular attacks on US forces in Iraq and Syria, which the group said are in retaliation for Washington's support for Israel in the war in Gaza.

Those estimated 2,500 US troops and the bases they serve on have drawn more than 150 missile and drone attacks fired by the militias. Scores of US personnel have received minor injuries including traumatic brain injuries during the

The US has struck militia targets in return, including some linked to the Popular Mobilization Forces, a coalition of mainly Shiite, Iran-backed paramilitary groups that is officially under the control of the Iraqi military although in practice it largely operates on its own. Iraqi officials have complained that the US strikes are a violation of Iraqi sover-

Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos earlier this month, Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said that there is no longer justification for the coalition's presence in Iraq and that the Iraqi army is capable of tracking and fighting the remaining IS cells in the country. "We are a sovereign country, and therefore it is only natural that we moved towards this position," he said. "This is a request from the people, and this is a democratic country."

An Iraqi government official who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to journalists about the matter said that Iraq had sent a written request for the withdrawal of the coalition forces to the White House in November

Czech lawmakers reject int'l women's rights treaty

Prague(AP): Czech lawmakers have voted against ratifying an international treaty on women's rights. Only 34 of the 71 Senators present in the upper house of the Czech Parliament late Wednesday voted in favour of the treaty known as the Istanbul Convention. The result was two votes short of the majority needed to pass. After the vote, the lower house of Parliament will likely not deal with the treaty and the Czech Republic will be among those countries that have signed the document but not ratified it. The Council of Europe

adopted the document in 2011 in a bid to deter violence against women throughout Europe. The Czech Republic, also known as Czechia, signed it in 2016. The vote reflected a split between conservative and Conservatives have argued the document challenges traditional roles for men and women in society and that its ratification in other countries didn't help reduce violence against women there.

Despite 2 losses, Haley tries to claim victory in Republican presidential race

AP ■ NORTH CHARLESTON

Despite losing both Iowa and New Hampshire to Donald Trump,Nikki Haley is nevertheless trying to frame those losses as a victory and vowing to head off a "coronation" of Trump as the 2024 Republican nominee. The path through the next states to vote, however, may not be any easi-

"We were thrilled," Haley said during a rally before hun-dreds of sign-waving fans on Wednesday night in North Charleston, South Carolina, casting her second-place New Hampshire finish as a win given how little support her campaign had in its early days.
"We got out there, and we

did our thing and we said what we had to say, and then Donald Trump got out there and just threw a temper tantrum," Haley added, referencing Trump's primary night remarks in which the former president repeatedly insulted her in a speech far angrier than his remarks after his Iowa victory. Haley did

perform better in Tuesday's New Hampshire primary than she had in the Iowa caucuses a week earlier, where she finished third, well behind Trump and only slightly down from Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who has since shuttered his campaign.

But Haley had been banking on a stalwart showing in New Hampshire, a state where her attempt to appeal to independents and more moderateleaning Republicans appeared to take root. Trump still won by double-digits on Tuesday night, leaving some to wonder whether she would keep going. Haley has affirmed that she will do just that, speaking

virtually to Republican voters in the U.S. Virgin Islands — which hold their caucuses Feb. 8 before flying from New Hampshire to South Carolina.

The Wednesday night event served two purposes for Haley. It was a welcome-home gathering for the South Carolina resident and an opener for her campaign in the first-in-the-South GOP voting state, which has historically been influential in determining the party's nominee. Since 1980, only one winner of South Carolina's Republican balloting has lost the nomination.

Since his 2016 primary win there helped cement Trump's dominance in that year's race, South Carolina has stayed loyal to him. For the 2024 campaign, he boasts endorsements from all but one of the state's U.S. House Republicans, as well as the governor, lieutenant governor and both US senators. Trump is in a command-

ing position in South Carolina," one of those senators, Lindsey Graham, said Wednesday at the U.S. Capitol, commending Haley's effort but forecasting her loss in their home state. "I think for all practical purposes, the primary is over.

Outside Haley's rally, severdozen Trump supporters waved flags and made their presence known, albeit from a marked-off zone away from the ballroom entrance. Ahead of New Hampshire's vote, the super PAC supporting Haley's candidacy was quick to point

Democrat she hopes to face in the general election, hadn't been successful in the first several contests of his 2020 bid, but ultimately won the nomination. That comparison, however, doesn't take into account the fact that Black voters propelled Biden's ultimate victory once he reached the South, a factor not expected to weigh heavily in the

GOP primary.

Nonetheless, during a call with reporters on Wednesday, Mark Harris, chief strategist for that super PAC, SFA Inc., insisted that Haley "has a path" to the GOP nomination, regardless of Trump's two early wins. Casting South Carolina as the campaign's next "battleground" of the Trump-Haley direct matchup — Nevada's GOP caucuses are Feb. 8, but Trump has already claimed victory there since Haley isn't participating -Harris noted that its open primary means that any Democrats who opt not to participate in their party's Feb. 3 contest can choose to support Haley in the Feb. 24 vote.

'Shooting of **US-Palestinian** teenager was unprovokeď

Ash-Sharqia (West Bank) (AP): The fatal shooting of an American-Palestinian teen driving a pickup truck in the West Bank was unprovoked, the sole passenger told The Associated Press, describing apparent Israeli fire hitting the back of the vehicle before it overturned several times on a dirt road.

At least 10 bullets struck the truck, which was seen by The Associated Press after Israeli investigators examined it. Most hit the back windshield and truck bed, supporting 16-year-old Mohammed Salameh's account of the incident that killed his friend, Tawfic Abdel Jabbar, 17, a Louisiana native. In an initial statement, Israeli police said Friday's shooting targeted people "purportedly engaged in rock-throwing activities along Highway 60", a main West Bank thoroughfare. Police didn't identify who fired the shots.

4 Indians die in mass drowning

 $F^{our\ Indians,\ including\ three}_{women,\ on\ a\ family\ day\ out}$ were killed when they drowned at an unpatrolled beach in Australia in the worst tragedy in the state of Victoria in almost 20 years, officials said on Thursday.

The incident took place on Wednesday at Phillip Island, Victoria and a close relative, who was devastated on Thursday, confirmed the names of the victims to the Australian media. The four were identified as

Jagjeet Singh Anand, a 23year-old man; students Suhani Anand and Kirti Bedi, both 20year-old women; and Reema Sondhi, a 43-year-old Indian national who was visiting her family in Australia.

The three younger victims lived in Clyde.

Anand, a Melbourne-based nurse, was a permanent resident in Australia. Bedi and Suhani were on student visas.



Sondhi, who was from Punjab, arrived in Australia two weeks ago for a holiday. All four are believed to be related, news.com.au website reported.

The victims were part of a group of about 10 people who had been enjoying a day out at the beach, the report added. Victoria Police Eastern

Region Assistant Commissioner Karen Nyholm said the victims entered the water near Forrest Caves close to Cape Woolamai on the Bass Strait side of the Phillip Island's south-eastern peninsula – on Wednesday afternoon. Off-duty lifeguards surfing nearby rushed to their aid after the group got into difficulty, pulling three people from the water unresponsive.

Life Saving Victoria commander Kane Treloar said lifeguards from Cape Woolamai were called at about 3.40 pm on Wednesday and a rescue boat retrieved the fourth person. All required CPR. Three of the victims were pronounced dead at the scene while one of the 20year-old women was resuscitated and flown to The Alfred. She died in hospital, police said on Thursday morning.
The Indian

Commission in Canberra on Thursday posted on X, the tragic drowning.
"Heartbreaking tragedy in

Australia: 4 Indians lost their lives in a drowning incident at Phillip Island, Victoria. Deepest condolences to the families of the victims.

@cgimelbourne team is in touch with friends of the

deceased for all necessary assis-@DrSJaishankar," the High Commission posted.

On Thursday, Treloar said it was the worst drowning incident the state had seen in "We all worked tirelessly to

help those people," Ambulance Victoria manager Paul James said. "It's tragic... only a week ago we had three other separate rownings here in Gippsland." Life-Saving Victoria operations general manager Liam

Krige said 19 people had drowned in Victoria since December 1 – two more than during the same period last "Behind each one of these drownings there is a family;

there's a brother, there's a sister, there's a mother, there's a daughter," he said at a press conference at Forrest Caves car park on Thursday.

"It is extremely tragic and our heartfelt condolences do go

Myanmar court orders auction of home where Suu Kyi spent house arrest

Bangkok(AP): A court in military-controlled Myanmar on Thursday ordered the family home of ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi, where she spent 15 years under house arrest, put on auction in March following a bitter decades-long legal dispute between her and her brother.The decision by a district court in Yangon, the country's largest city, came nearly 1 1/2 years after the Supreme Court upheld a special appeal lodged by Suu Kyi's estranged older brother, Aung San Oo,

A legal official familiar with the case, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to release information, said the district court decided to auction the property on March

granting him half ownership of

the family property that the sib-

lings inherited in Yangon.

20 with a floor price of 315 billion Myanmar kyats (about

\$90 million).

He said the auction will be held in front of the historic property. The 1.923-acre (0.78hectare) family property on Inye Lake with a two-story colonial-style building was given by the government to Suu Kyi's mother, Khin Kyi, after her husband, independence hero Gen Aung San, was assassinated in July 1947. Khin Kyi died in December 1988, shortly after the failure of a mass uprising against military rule in which Suu Kyi took a leadership role as a co-founder of the National League for

Democracy party. Suu Kyi was detained in 1989 ahead of a 1990 election. Her party easily won the polls but was not allowed to take power when the army annulled the results.

China accuses US of 'abusing' int'l law by sailing in SCS

AP BEIJING

Thina accused the US of Cabusing international law with its military maneuvers in the western Pacific, one day after an American naval destroyer sailed through the politically sensitive Taiwan Strait. While China welcomes military-to-military communication with the United States, Defence Ministry spokesperson Wu Qian said Thursday that US warplane and warship activity "on China's doorstep" is the root cause of the problems between the two military pow-

"The United States side should stop abusing international law, cease all dangerous and provocative behaviour, and strictly restrain the activities of front-line troops, which is the fundamental way to avoid accidents at sea and in the air," he said at a monthly briefing. The

USS John Finn sailed Wednesday though the 160-km (100-mile)-wide waterway that separates China from Taiwan, a self-governing island that China claims as its own territory. China agreed to resume military contacts with the US at a meeting last November between Presidents Joe Biden

and Xi Jinping in California. In part, the argument for doing so was to be able to manage an unintentional collision or other incident that could happen as both sides hold drills and patrol the waters in regional hotspots including the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea.

The US defends its actions as in line with international laws that guarantee freedom of navigation. "No member of the international community should be intimidated or coerced into giving up their rights and freedoms," the US Navy's 7th Fleet said in a news release on the John Finn's transit of the Strait. "The United States military flies, sails and operates anywhere international law allows."

China's rise has given it the ability to project military power into the western Pacific, which brings it into conflict with the United States, long the dominant military power in the region. The American military activity is aimed in part at deterring China from launching any attack on Taiwan or using its strength to enforce its territorial claims in disputes with smaller neighbours such as the Philippines.

Chinese and Philippine ships clashed last year as disputes over shoals and other outcroppings in the South China Sea flared. China has blamed US support, such as recent joint patrols with the Philippines, for emboldening

Poland's pro-EU govt, oppn disagree on whether pardoned lawmakers can stay on

AP WARSAW

The fate of two Polish opposition politicians became the focus on Thursday of a running feud between the country's new pro-European Union government and conservative opposition as the sides disagreed whether they can remain lawmakers. The weeks-old government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk has moved to reverse policies of his predecessors that were deemed harmful and led to clashes with the EU, especially in the judiciary.

However, the previously ruling right-wing Law and Justice party, frustrated over its loss in the October parliamentary elections, has been protesting the moves.

As the lower house of parliament, or Sejm, convened on Thursday, officials and experts were divided on whether two



Poland's President Andrzej Duda, center, poses with former deputy interior minister Maciej Wasik, left, and former interior minister Mariusz Kaminski, right, in Warsaw, Poland on Tuesday. AP

senior Law and Justice lawmakers, who served in the previous government, can attend the proceedings. Parliament Speaker Szymon Holownia had stripped them of their mandates after they were convicted in December of abuse of power.

They were released from prison on Tuesday, after President Andrzej Duda pardoned them and after spending two weeks behind bars

Law and Justice and their ally Duda insist the two — former Interior Minister Mariusz

Kaminski and his former deputy, Maciej Wasik — may continue to sit in the Sejm. The two were not present at the session start on Thursday.

Experts say the dispute exposes the extent to which Law and Justice had bent Poland's legal system to serve its own political interests during its eight years in power that ended in December.

Tusk recently criticized Law and Justice, saying it puts its political goals above the law.

"We are facing the need to reconstruct the legal order in a way that will put an end to the constant and glaring conflicts of interpretation," Tusk told a new conference this week. Kaminski and Wasik were convicted of abuse of power and forging documents for actions taken in 2007, when they served in an earlier Law and Justice-led gov-

S Korean lawmaker attacked

Seoul (AP): South Korean police say a governing party lawmaker is being treated at a Seoul hospital after being attacked by an unidentified man who struck her head with a rock-like object. A police official in Seoul's Apgujeong district said a suspect was arrested at the scene after the attack on Thursday on lawmaker Bae Hyunjin in southern

The severity of Bae's injury wasn't immediately clear. The police official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorised to talk to the media, said Bae was conscious as she was being taken to the hospital.South Korean media reported that her condition wasn't life threatening, citing her aides. Calls to Bae's office weren't immediately answered. The attack comes weeks after a man stabbed South Korean opposition lawmaker Lee Jae-myung.

Greece students protest plans to introduce private universities

Several thousand university students and supporters took part in a protest in central Athens Thursday to oppose plans by Greeces conservative government to allow privately run universities. The protesters, chanting "Students, United, Will Win," filed past the main Athens University building and statues of the ancient Greek philosophers Plato and Socrates as they marched through central Athens and riot police took up positions in nearby side streets. Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis' centre-right government is pushing through several key pieces of legislation early in the new year, taking advantage of a landslide reelection in 2023, and a huge lead in



opinion polls. It argues the measure would stop thousands of Greeks going abroad each year to study, and would keep vital skills in the country.

But opponents say it would undermine public universities, which are already facing funding difficulties. The government has faced

a series of protests by various professional groups in recent weeks, triggered by the legislative reforms and the cost of living crisis.In central Greece Thursday, farmers used tractors to block sections of a highway, demanding additional financial support from the government to reduce production costs. Farmers' groups told The Associated Press that they were holding meetings Thursday to consider further action

Alabama set to execute inmate with nitrogen gas (US)(AP): United States. "It's an experi- make another attempt to exe- the lethal injection attempt — Alabama, unless blocked by ment," said the Rev Jeff Hood, cute him after the failed lethal and place a "full facepiece supthe US Supreme Court, will Smith's spiritual advisor and a injection. Smith is one of two plied air respirator" over his attempt to put an inmate to death penalty opponent. Smith's men convicted in the 1988 face. death with nitrogen gas on attorneys on Thursday asked murder-for-hire slaying of

tion was called off at the last south Alabama prison.

a new execution method since attorneys wrote. the 1982 introduction of lethal

imental. Kenneth Eugene and unusual punishment and who was deeply in debt and Smith, a 58-year-old convicted deserves more legal scrutiny wanted to collect on insurance. least 15 minutes or "five minkiller whose 2022 lethal injec- before it is used on a person.

minute because authorities regarding death by nitrogen night that he believes the courts longer," according to the state couldn't connect an IV line, is hypoxia. When the State is will allow the execution to proprotocol. scheduled to be executed at a considering using a novel form ceed. My office stands ready to Alabama plans to put an been attempted anywhere, the Sennett. Two courts have now could be delayed until because industrial-type respirator mask public has an interest in ensur-rejected Smith's claims. I remain of legal action or preparation.

over Smith's face and replace his ling the State has researched the confident that the Supreme The state has until 6 am Friday breathing air with pure nitrogen method adequately and estabgas, causing him to die from lished procedures to minimize side of justice, and that Smith's

injection, now the most com- rejected Smith's argument that chamber where he was strapped States, are increasingly difficult mon execution method in the it would be unconstitutional to down for several hours during to find

Thursday night, a never before the US Supreme Court to halt Elizabeth Sennett. Prosecutors to make a final statement, the used execution method that the execution to review claims said he and the other man were warden, from another room, the state claims will be humane that the new method violates each paid \$1,000 to kill Sennett will activate the nitrogen gas. but critics call cruel and exper- the constitutional ban on cruel on behalf of her pastor husband, The nitrogen will be adminis-

> of execution that has never carry on the fight for Liz to begin at 6 pm local time but Court will come down on the to carry out the execution.

After he is given a chance tered through the mask for at Alabama Attorney General utes following a flatline indica-"There is little research Steve Marshall said Wednesday tion on the EKG, whichever is The execution is scheduled

Some states are looking for

lack of oxygen. The execution the pain and suffering of the execution will be carried out," new ways to execute inmates will be the first attempt to use condemned person," Smith's Marshall said. Alabama plans to because the drugs used in lethal strap Smith to a gurney in the injections, the most common Justices on Wednesday execution chamber — the same execution method in the United

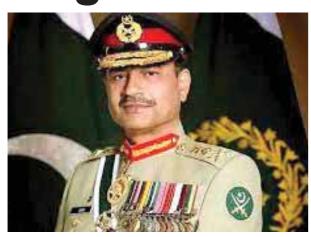
Pakistan Army chief takes a dig at Iran

Taking a dig at Iran, Pakistan Army chief Gen Asim Munir has said that those who "backstab" the country will get a "befitting reply", days after the two neighbours conducted titfor-tat military strikes at alleged terrorist bases in both countries. During an interaction with students from public and private sector universities nationwide here on Wednesday, Munir mentioned about the recent missile attacks by Tehran within Balochistan and said that no one would be allowed to breach Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity, The Express Tribune newspaper reported on

"You cannot backstab us, and if you do, you will get a befitting reply," he said. Earlier this month, Pakistan conducted "precision military strikes" against what it called "terrorist hideouts" in Iran's Sistan-Baluchistan province that killed 9 people. The attack was seen as retaliation to Iranian missile and drone attacks which targeted two bases of the Sunni Baloch militant group Jaish al-Adl in Pakistan's unruly

Balochistan province.

Munir claimed that the insurgency in Balochistan has long been supported by Afghanistan, and the western neighbour has never shown friendship towards Pakistan. Afghanistan was the only country that opposed Pakistan's admission to the United



he said. Referring to the Taliban-led administration of Afghanistan, the army chief warned, "Do not look towards Pakistan. We are ready to sacrifice anything and everything."
"When it comes to the

safety and security of every single Pakistani, the whole of Afghanistan can be damned," he said. The army chief said Pakistan provided food for five million Afghan nationals for 50 years, but "when it comes to our children, we will pursue those who attack them".

Pakistan has refused to negotiate with the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), whose terrorist activities in Pakistan have increased manifold since the return of the Afghan Taliban to power in August 2021. Islamabad has also applied its economic leverage to force Kabul to take action against terrorists attack-

ing on its soil from Afghanistan. There has been an increase in militant attacks in Pakistan since November 2022, when the TTP, a close ally of the Afghan Taliban which seized power in Afghanistan, ended a monthslong cease-fire with the government. During the interaction, Munir also ruled out reconciliation with India. "India has not reconciled with the concept of Pakistan, then how can we reconcile with it?," he was quoted as saying by The Express

Tribune. The army chief briefly mentioned his recent visit to the US and stated that during the visit, he conveyed to Americans that Pakistan is a country with consequences. "There are 80 million middle-income people in Pakistan; with 65 per cent of its population being young, the country is ready to reap benefits from these resources,

Had told Imran to remain engaged with US: Pak ex-foreign secretary

Pakistan's former foreign secretary Sohail Mahmood has said that he had told the Cabinet of former prime minister Imran Khan how declassification of a diplomatic communication from the country's embassy in Washington can

affect relations with the US.
Recording his statement in the cipher case involving Khan and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, who also is a senior leader from his party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Însaaf (PTI), Mahmood said he also advised Khan's government "to remain engaged with the US." The cipher case pertains to a piece of paper, purported to be a diplomatic cable — the cipher — that Khan had waved at a public rally on March 27, 2022, and naming the US, had claimed that it was 'evidence' of an "international conspiracy" to topple his government.

Khan and Qureshi, accused of mishandling it for political purposes, were indicted in December 2023 and both have pleaded not guilty. This is the first time that the details of the case are being brought out in the public domain even as Khan and Quereshi continue to face the case along with others bringing no relief to them ahead of the February 8 general elec-

"Purpose of this advice was to protect the relations of Pakistan with an important

country and to avoid public and politicised discussion on a secret and privileged communication," Mahmood told the trial court on Monday, according to The News International, which said it had accessed a copy of his tes-timony. The former foreign secretary also shared the details of a cabinet meeting, which was called to discuss "Declassification of cipher telegram" and another meeting held in Banigala residence of the then prime minister. In the cabinet meeting, held on April 8, Mahmood said he had underlined that "declassification of cipher telegram was neither possible nor advisable in view of the cipher security guidelines, the legal position and the foreign policy implications."

He also told the cabinet that neither there was any past precedent of declassification of cipher nor there was any legal provision in this regard for the primary reason that disclosure of text could compromise the cipher communication system, The News said. "I also added that it could affect the working of the missions and the ministry as the trust underlying confi-dential exchanges with foreign interlocutors could be undermined. It could also affect relations with the US and some other countries and strained relations with the US could also complicate matters with multilateral financial



Giant Kavadi offering cages are carried by Hindu devotees in a procession during the Thaipusam festival at Batu Caves, outskirts of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on Thursday. Thaipusam, which is celebrated in honour of Hindu god Lord Murugan, is an annual procession by Hindu devotees seeking blessings, fulfilling vows and offering thanks

China expands loan access for property developers

China has rolled out new crules meant to expand access to commercial bank loans for property developers as Beijing doubles down on its effort to end a prolonged crisis in the real estate industry. The policies will allow real estate companies to use bank loans pledged against commercial properties such as offices and shopping malls to repay their other loans and bonds and to cover operating

They were announced late Wednesday by the People's Bank of China, the National Financial Regulatory Administration and the Finance Ministry. Beijing has moved this week to stabilise ailing financial markets and boost the economy by freeing up more money for lending in various ways. That includes cutting required bank reserves.

The flurry of new measures and pronouncements from senior Communist Party officials about the need to stabilise financial markets and build confidence in the economy, the world's second largest, appears

to reflect a renewed determination to get growth back on track. Dozens of developers have defaulted on their debts after the government cracked down on excessive borrowing in the industry several years ago. The largest, China Evergrande, is still trying to resolve more than USD 300 billion in debts and a Hong Kong court is due to hold a hearing on its restructuring plans next week. The latest policies are not a full reversal of the effort to rein in debt and control risks in the property industry.

The new rules say the bank loans cannot be used to buy commercial housing or rental housing or to start new construction or buy land. Loans cannot exceed 70 per cent of the appraised value of the property being used as col-lateral and should generally last a maximum of 10 years, with an absolute limit of 15 years. They also order banks to fully conduct due diligence before and after loans are issued to mitigate and minimise risks.

It's unclear what impact the new rules might have on the overall crisis gripping the

property market. Land sales have long been a major revenue source for local governments that now are grappling with mounting debts. At the same time, stalled construction of new homes has hit contractors and suppliers of construction materials and home furnishings. In a research note, UBS economists said "the pace and potential size of such loans remain uncertain as banks will likely watch the commerciality and risks of such loans". But they added that the move was a "significant step" to increase support

for developers. Sales of new homes and home prices have been falling, discouraging consumers from spending since Chinese families tend to have much of their wealth tied up in property. The industry as a whole accounts for about a quarter of business activity in China. "For developer financing to fundamentally and sustainably improve, property sales need to stop falling and start to recover, which could require more policy efforts to stabilize the property market," the UBS

'China ready to work with Pak to upgrade CPEC project' Pakistan-occupied Kashmir Foreign Secretary Syrus Sajjad

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD/BEIJING

hina has said that it stands Cready to work with Pakistan to upgrade the multi-billion dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project to deepen the political mutual trust between the two "allweather" allies, a media report said on Thursday. Caretaker Prime Minister

Anwaarul Haq Kakar said after having achieved the first phase of the CPEC, Pakistan is benefiting from its early harvest projects while remaining engaged with China to execute the next phase. Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin while answering a ques-

Wednesday said, "China stands ready to work with Pakistan to deliver on the important common understandings between the leaders of the two countries, deepen political mutual trust, and expand practical cooperation." China has said it is ready to work with Pakistan to upgrade the CPEC and accelerate the building of an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era, the Dawn newspaper reported.

The CPEC, which connects Gwadar Port in Pakistan's Balochistan with China's Xinjiang province, is opposed by India as it is being laid through

(PoK). About the recent visit of Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong to Pakistan, Wang said, he called on President Arif Alvi, Prime Minister Kakar, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Chief of the Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir and Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani to have an indepth exchange of views on bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest.

The spokesperson added that the Chinese minister also co-chaired the fourth meeting of the CPEC Joint Working Group on International Cooperation and Co--ordination with

Qazi. "China and Pakistan are all-weather strategic cooperative partners," he said. China appreciates Pakistan's firm commitment to the One-China principle and supports Pakistan in defending its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, stability, development and prosperity.

In Islamabad, Prime Minister Kakar said that after having achieved the first phase of CPEC, Pakistan is benefiting from its early harvest projects while remaining engaged with China to execute the next phase. "We have already achieved the CPEC's first phase and we are benefiting from its early harvest

ond phase. We do need more deliberations when it comes to the second phase," he said in an interview recorded by CGTN during his recent visit to Davos to attend the World Economic

The Chinese state-run news outlet ran the interview on Wednesday. Prime Minister Kakar said the CPEC's second phase required road and air connectivity around industrialisa-tion projects. "Both sides are engaged and we have developed a lot of connectivity — road, air and the rest of the connectivity corridor. We are benefiting from the ecosystem of doing trade with one another," he said.

Flight recorders found from plane that Nepal asks Russia to send Separatist leader who called Putin conversion to send Separatist leader who called Putin crashed with Ukrainian POWs aboard

AP MOSCOW

 \mathbf{I} nvestigators have found the flight recorders of a Russian military transport plane that crashed in a border region near Ukraine, Russian media reported Thursday, a day after Moscow accused Kyiv of shooting down the aircraft, which it said was carrying 65 Ukrainian prisoners of war. The Il-76 crashed in a

huge ball of fire in a rural area of Russia on Wednesday, and authorities said all 74 people on board, including the POWs, six crew and three Russian servicemen, were killed. Ukraine's president has demanded an international investigation into the episode, which has triggered a spate of claims and counterclaims. Russian officials accused Kyiv of shooting down the plane with two missiles and said the prisoners of war were headed for an exchange. They offered no evidence for their allega-

The Associated Press could not independently confirm who was aboard or how the plane was downed. The commander of Ukraine's air force accused Russia of "rampant...propaganda" - though he did not specifically address the allegations. Ukrainian authorities confirmed a prisoner exchange was due to happen Wednesday, and that it was called off, but said they had no information about who was on the plane. "We haven't seen any indi-

cation that such a large number of people was on that plane, Ukrainian citizens or not," Dmytro Lubinets, Ukraine's human rights ombudsman, said on national television Thursday. Ukrainian officials noted that Moscow didn't ask for any spe-



at the memorial to soldiers who died in the Great Patriotic War "Enternal Flame" in

cific airspace to be kept safe for information to troops on the a certain length of time, as it has in past exchanges. Without mentioning the crash, the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine said that the country would target any Russian military transport plane believed to be delivering missiles, especially near the border. As the conflict approaches the two-year mark, the 1,500-km (930-mile) front line has been largely static amid a second winter of fighting. With both sides seeking to replenish their weapons stockpiles, the war recently has

focused on long-range strikes. Earlier this month, in a significant blow to the Kremlin's forces, the Ukrainian air force claimed to have shot down a Russian early warning and control plane that can spot targets up to 650 km (400 miles) away and a key com-

mand centre aircraft that relays

The discovery of the transport plane's flight recorders was reported Thursday by the state-owned RIA Novosti news agency, citing emergency services. However, there is slim hope that the circumstances of the crash and the Russian allegations will be clarified. The war has often featured conflicting accusations, used as ammunition in the bid to sway opinion at home and abroad.

On Thursday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov repeated the allegation that Ukraine had downed the plane, describing it as "a total-

ly monstrous act". Mykola Oleshchuk, Ukraine's Air Force Commander, alleged that "rampant Russian propaganda is directing a fake stream of information to the interna-

to discredit Ukraine in the eyes of the global community". President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who turned 46 on Thursday, didn't directly address Moscow's allegation but said Ukraine would push for an international investigation. "It is necessary to establish all the facts, as much as possible, considering that the plane crash occurred on Russian territory — beyond our control," he said in his nightly video address late Wednesday. "It's obvious Russians are playing with lives of Ukrainian POWs, with the feelings of their relatives and the emotions of our society."

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov called for an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council, which was expected to take place on Thursday afternoon in New York. Andrei Kartapolov, head of the defense affairs committee in the lower house of the Russian parliament, said Russia would continue exchanging prisoners despite the crash. "We can't abandon our boys and so we will speak to the devil himself to get them

out," he told reporters. Meanwhile, Ukraine's largest oil and gas company, Naftogaz, said Thursday that one of its data centres had come under a large-scale cyberattack that shut down the company's web sites and call

Ukraine's national postal service, Ukrposhta, also reported a major technical failure of its IT systems. It didn't specify whether the issue was caused by a cyberattack. Ukraine's State Service for Transport Safety also reported a technical failure of its data center that shut down its website and other services.

back its citizens recruited to fight against Ukraine

AP ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal has asked Russia to send back hundreds of Nepali nationals who were recruited to fight against Ukraine and repatriate the bodies of those who died in the conflict, Nepal's top

diplomat said on Thursday. The Russian army is estimated to have recruited more than 200 Nepali nationals to fight in Ukraine and at least 14 of them have died there, Nepal's Foreign Minister Narayan Prakash Saud said in an interview with The Associated Press. "We have asked Russia to immediately stop the recruitment of Nepali nationals in their army, immediately return those who are already serving in the army, repatriate the bodies of those killed, and treat and return those who were wounded in the fighting," Saud said.

Nepal is also seeking monetary compensation from Russia for the families of those Nepali nationals who were killed in the fight-

ing, Saud said. Among the 14 confirmed killed Nepali nationals, Russia has said it is in possession of 12 bodies. Most Nepali people want the bodies of their deceased relatives to be cremated following religious rituals. "We have information that five of our citizens who fought on behalf of the Russians are being held captive by the Ukraine side. We are asking the Russian side to take initiatives to get them freed," Saud said. Russian officials have not commented on the recruitment of foreign nationals for military service in Ukraine, but media reports have said that along with Nepal the Russian military has recruited some people from Cuba. Russian law allows foreign nationals to enlist in its army after they sign a contract with the Defence Ministry. In September, Cuban authorities arrested 17 people in connection with what they said was a network to recruit Cuban nationals to fight for Russia in Ukraine.

cowardly sentenced to prison Tallinn (Estonia): The Moscow City Court on Thursday convict-

ed a former Ukraine rebel leader who called President Vladimir Putin cowardly of extremism and sentenced him to four years in prison. Igor Girkin, who used the surname alias of Strelkov (shooter), was the most prominent leader of Russian-backed separatist fighters in Ukraine's Donetsk region in 2014, when rebellion arose after the ouster of Ukraine's Russia-allied president.

He briefly became the self-declared separatist government's defence minister, but left the post in August 2014 after rebel forces shot down a Malaysian passenger airliner over Donetsk, killing all 298 people aboard. He was convicted in absentia of murder in the Netherlands, where the flight had originated, for his role. He returned to Russia and became a nationalist commentator and activist. He supported launching Russia's war in Ukraine, but sharply criticised authorities for being inept and indecisive in carrying out the fight. Girkin called Putin a "nonentity" and a person of "cowardly mediocrity". He was arrested in July on extremism charges and remained in custody since then.

Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar **Tender Notice Reference**

No. GNDU/Gen/01/2024 The Department of G.N.D.U. Amritsar invites online bids for the

Item: Allotment of Canteens/shops Quantity: 23 Closing date &time: 15/02/2024

at 5:00 p.m. details www.eproc.Punjab.gov.in Note: Any corrigendum(s) to the Tender Notice shall be published

on the above website only. Superintendent (General) **Guru Nanak Dev University**

NA/12/21562/2023/31762 Dated CHD :- 1/25/2024



Regd. Office 7th K.M. Stone, Barwala Road, Hisar - 125001 (Haryana) CIN: L17115HR1993PLC032092 **Notice**

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY

e-TENDER CALL NOTICE

Name of the work: Construction of Com-

pound Wall, Drain adjacent to PMR and

along RRS-I & II tracks at MCHP area.

Estimated Cost: Rs.3.05.60,262.83. Last

Date & time of submission: 08/02/2024

Refer our website for details:

eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, PRD, PPA

United Textiles Limited

up to 17:00 Hrs.

Notice
Pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations & Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, Notice is hereby given that the Meeting of Board of Directors of the Company is scheduled to be held on Tuesday, 13th February, 2024 at 11.00 AM at the Regd. Office of the Company to consider the Unaudited Quarterly Results for the Period Ended 31st December, 2023. Further as per the Company's Code of Conduct for Prevention of Insider Trading, the trading window for dealing with

he trading window for dealing with ecurities of the Company will remain close from 31.12.2023 to 48 hours after the declaration of the Financial Results. The said information is also available on Company's Website www.unitedtextileslimited.com and also on the website of stock exchanges at www.bseindia.com.

For United Textiles Limited (Vivek Aggarwal) Whole Time Director 24 (DIN 07079208) Dated 24.01.2024

14.02.2024 at 3:00PM. Municipal Commissioner No 28/SBM-U/NCAP-MRS/2023&24 Date: 25.01.2024

NAGAR NIGAM DEHRADUN Telephone: 0135-2714074, Fax: 0135-2651060

Website: www.nagarnigamdehradun.com Email : nagarnigam.ddn@gmail.com

Nagar Nigam Dehradun invites Request for Proposal (RFP) Supply, Delivery and Commissioning of two (02) Nos. of New Mechanical Road Sweeper Machines with 5 years comprehensive Operation and Maintenance (further extendable for 2 year) under SBM-U/NCAP in Dehradun form eligible bidders having experience as indicated in the RFP document. Interested bidders are requested to procure the RFP document up to 25.01.2024 from e-tenders portal of government of Uttarakhand. Pre-bid meeting is scheduled at 12:00 noon on 01.02.2024. Any Addendum/ Corrigendum including date of extension will be uploaded only on www.uktenders.gov.in. The Municipal Commissioner have right to cancel tender at any stage without giving any reason. The last date for online submission of bids is

Nagar Nigam Dehradun

We have emerged stronger, says Adani on anniversary of Hindenburg report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

year after a damning report by a US short seller ripped through his apples-to-airport conglomerate, billionaire Gautam Adani on Thursday said the "trials and tribulations" of the past year have made the Adani group stronger as it continued on growth path, improving asset base and launching key projects, including the Dharavi redevelopment.

In a column in a leading newspaper, he said the Adani group raised Rs 40,000 crore of equity — equal to debt repayment for the next two years — through stake sales in some firms, repaid Rs 17,500 crore of margin-linked financing, and trimmed debt.

Sustained focus on operations vielded the highest-ever quarterly profit in the second quarter of current fiscal, he said. Most of the listed group companies have recouped losses report "was a cunningly craft-induced by the Hindenburg ed set of selective half-truths induced by the Hindenburg

report. "We remained committed to maintaining our growth momentum. The Group continued its investments, evidenced by our asset base growth to Rs 4.5 lakh crore," he

'This period (of last one year) marked the launch of several key projects, including the world's largest renewable energy generation site in Khavda (in Gujarat), a new copper smelter, a green hydrogen ecosystem, and the long-awaited redevel-opment of Dharavi (slums in Mumbai).

Adani termed Hindenburg Research's charge of fraud and stock market manipulation as 'lies" and a "compilation" of "old and dead allegations" that his "detractors had been trying to resurrect".

"Fatuously self-styled as a research report", Hindenburg

sourced from disclosed and publicly available information," he said.

He expected the point-by-point rebuttal of the allegations put by his group to quickly put an end to it but the skinned as much as USD 150 billion in market value of his conglomerates listed companies at the lowest point.

Adani was ranked world's second richest at the start of 2023 but slipped out of top 20.

The lies against us were corrosive enough to substantially erode the market cap of our portfolio as, typically, capital markets are more emotional than rational," he said.

What pained me even more is that thousands of small investors lost their savings," he

Had detractors' plan fully succeeded, the domino effect could have crippled many crit-

PTI ■ MUMBAI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

agency ICRA.

The capacity utilisation of thermal power plants will

increase by a percentage point to 69 per cent in 2024-25, led

by the growth in electricity demand and limited thermal

capacity addition, says rating

 $\ensuremath{\mathsf{I\tilde{C}RA's}}$ outlook for the thermal

power segment is 'Stable', sup-

ported by the healthy improve-

ment in the thermal plant load

factor (PLF), coupled with the

reduction in dues from state

distribution utilities (discoms)

of the Late Payment Surcharge

(LPS) scheme since August

The current under-construc-

tion thermal capacity is about

30 GW, which is predomi-

nantly in the Central and the

state-owned generation seg-

ment and is expected to be

commissioned over the next

two to four-year period,"

Girishkumar Kadam, Senior

Vice President & Group Head

In our view, there is a clear

need for incremental capacity beyond this pipeline if the

said in the statement.

Corporate Ratings, ICRA,

2022, a statement said.



ical infrastructure assets, ranging from seaports and airports to the power supply chain — a catastrophic situation for any country, he said.

"However, thanks to our solid assets, the robustness of our operations and the high quality of our disclosures, the more informed financial community, including lenders and rating agencies, refused to be swayed by the swirling lies and stood solidly with us," he said.

Though Adani had to scrap a Rs 20,000 crore public issue at his flagship firm, Adani Enterprises.

We had no precedent path to handle this situation," he said, adding that the group focused on transparently outlining the facts and narrating its side of the story to expose the motives of those who attacked it. This led to a declining influ-

ence of negative campaigns against the Group, he said.

'A testament to the change in public perception is the significant growth in our shareholder base, a primary target of the follow-on public offering (in Adani Enterprises Ltd). Over this challenging year, our shareholder base expanded by 43 per cent, reaching nearly 70 lakh." On the lessons learnt, Adani, who is now ranked No 14 on the world billionaire list, said in hindsight, the crisis uncovered a fundamental weakness

the group did not pay enough attention to its outreach mechanisms.

"Few outside the infrastructure finance community knew of the size, scale and quality of what the Adani Group had done or was doing. We had all along naively believed that all our non-financial stakeholders too knew us and the truth about us — that our financials were robust, that our governance was impeccable, that our roadmap to growth was measured, and that we play an important role in building India's critical infrastructure,"

he said. This experience underscored the necessity of engaging effec-tively with non-financial stake-

"We had failed to proactively counter the twisted narratives of our debt levels and unfounded accusations of political partisanship, resulting in the spread of distorted percep-

'The fact is that, for our class of transport and utility companies, we have one of the lowest debt-EBITDA ratios. (For the half year ending September 2023, this was 2.5x). Further, with an infrastructure business footprint in 23 Indian states governed by political parties

across the spectrum, we are truly politically agnostic," he He concluded the piece by saying "the trials and tribulations of the past year have

taught us valuable lessons, made us stronger and reaf-firmed our faith in Indian institutions." This "devious attack" on the

group and its strong counter-measures will no doubt become a case study, he said, adding that he was sharing his thoughts as similar attacks could happen on other Indian groups as well in future. am under no illusions that

this is the end of such attacks. I believe we have emerged even stronger from this experience and even more unwavering in our resolve to continue our humble contribution to the India growth story," he said.



Industry seeks tax incentives in Budget

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian industry, including ▲exporters on Thursday, asked the government to provide tax incentives for research and more funds for marketing activities in the Budget to boost manufacturing and the country's outbound shipments.

They also urged the govern ment to consider developing a global shipping line in partnership with the private sector.

India's outward remittance on transport services is increasing with rising exports

"We remitted over USD 80 billion as transport service charge in 2021. As the country moves towards the goal of USD 1 trillion, this will touch USD 200 billion by 2030," Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) said, adding that the private sector may be engaged to develop the shipping lines.

This will also reduce arm-twisting by foreign shipping lines, particularly of our MSMEs, the

For promoting Research and Development (R&D) in the country, weighted tax deduction can be increased to 200 per cent, it said.

"Unfortunately, India's spending on R&D (less than 1 per cent of GDP) is well below that in major nations such as China (2.43 per cent of GDP), US (3.46 per cent), Korea (4.93 per cent) and Israel (5.56 per cent), Israr Ahmed President (Officiate) and Vice President FIEO

He said aggressive export marketing is required to showcase Indian products and services to

Initiative (MAI) scheme. "For aggressive marketing, there is a need for the creation of a corpus... For the scheme," Ahmed said, adding that the government can consider announcing a scheme on a pilot basis in 50 districts with a corpus of Rs 5,000 crore.

the global customers, and for

that more funds are required under the Market Access

Further, startup firm World of Circular Economy (WOCE) said the sustainability and climate solutions industry is urging the government for crucial

There is a need of funds and incentives for the industry. "Companies in the sustainability sector, especially SMEs, are facing multiple challenges, including immediate financial burdens and securing necessary resources. Urgent government intervention is needed to overcome these challenges and facilitate the seamless integration of

Garg said. Garg also urged the government to consider providing input tax credit for using green fuel in manufacturing processes; and subsidised loans for investment

sustainable practices," WOCE

Director Anun

in green technologies. Besides, he asked to incentivise carbon-intensive factories for traceability initiatives in the raw material supply chain; allo-cation of funds for R&D in greener technologies; and direct tax incentives for companies promoting the use of decarbon-isation tools and digital tech-nologies for reliable carbon

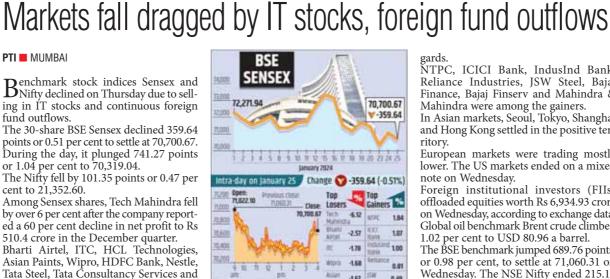
Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty declined on Thursday due to selling in IT stocks and continuous foreign fund outflows

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 359.64 points or 0.51 per cent to settle at 70,700.67. During the day, it plunged 741.27 points or 1.04 per cent to 70,319.04. The Nifty fell by 101.35 points or 0.47 per

cent to 21,352.60 Among Sensex shares, Tech Mahindra fell by over 6 per cent after the company report-

510.4 crore in the December quarter. Bharti Airtel, ITC, HCL Technologies, Asian Paints, Wipro, HDFC Bank, Nestle, Tata Steel, Tata Consultancy Services and Maruti were among the other major lag-

ed a 60 per cent decline in net profit to Rs



Thermal plants utilisation to

annual electricity demand between FY2024 and FY2030,

growth continues to exceed as per ICRA estimates.

toring in the renewable capac-

He stated that if annual

demand growth is stronger at

7.5 per cent till 2030, to meet

the same, the incremental ther-

mal capacity requirement will

need to be as large as 70 GW.

Coal has remained a dominant

fuel source to meet the base

load power demand in the

country, and its share in the

overall energy generation mix

is estimated to decline from 73

per cent in FY2023 to about 58-

60 per cent in FY2030, assum-

ing the renewable capacity addition scenario of 200 GW

Indian Bank wholly-owned

ity addition, he added.

gards. NTPC, ICICI Bank, IndusInd Bank, Reliance Industries, JSW Steel, Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the gainers. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai

European markets were trading mostly lower. The US markets ended on a mixed

and Hong Kong settled in the positive ter-

note on Wednesday.
Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 6,934.93 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 1.02 per cent to USD 80.96 a barrel.

The BSE benchmark jumped 689.76 points, or 0.98 per cent, to settle at 71,060.31 on Wednesday. The NSE Nifty ended 215.15 points, or 1.01 per cent, higher at 21,453.95.

December 2023, lower than the

Nonetheless, this remains sim-

ilar to the corresponding peri-

od of the previous year, it stat-

For the renewable energy segment, ICRA's outlook remains

'Stable', led by strong policy support, healthy demand

prospects, and superior tariff

Further, the realisation of past

dues and regular payment of ongoing bills by discoms fol-

lowing the LPS scheme remain

"the sharp decline in solar PV

yance of the order on Approved List of Models and Module

Manufacturers (ALMM) till

March 2024, and the timeline

extension approved for solar

and hybrid projects, are expect-

ed to lead to an improvement

in RE capacity addition to 18-

20 GW in FY2024 from 15 GW

This, he said, along with the

growing project pipeline, is

likely to support the scale-up in

capacity addition to about 25

GW in FY2025, mainly driven

by the solar power segment.

cell and module prices, abe

positives for the sector.

competitiveness

normative requirement.



CBIC notifications need simplification: GTRI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The complex language used in the notifications of the CBIC regarding customs duties needs simplification to help industry in understanding those orders as they carry crucial details, economic think tank GTRI said on Thursday. The Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said for this the CBIC (Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs) must use services of communication experts for help in drafting easy to understand notifications containing necessary

details. This will help over a lakh firms importing merchandise exceeding USD 660 billion in 2023 and it will also add to the ease of doing business with zero cost to the government and immense benefit of clarity to the Indian industry, it said. "Notifying import duties is a pay import

critical mandate of CBIC. notified by CBIC, but firms cannot do it on their own as the CBIC notifications use complex language and mostly refer to back notifications unintentionally hiding complete details needed to know the duty or import conditions on a product," GTRI Co-Founder Ajay Srivastava said.

Using simple language would also enhance transparency in its tariff and other notifications, he added. Import duties in India vary sig-

nificantly, ranging from 0-150 per cent.

These duties include compo-

Infrastructure Development Cess (AIDC), and IGST (Integrated Goods and Services Citing an example, the GTRI said a company importing ten-

nents like basic customs duty,

social welfare cess, Agriculture

nis shoes would pay 35 per cent basic customs duty, 3.5 per cent social welfare cess, nil AIDC, and 18 per cent IGST. However, the total duty is not a simple sum of these percentages but is calculated using a

specific formula, resulting in a total duty of 63.43 per cent. "It is impossible for a layman

to find out individual duty components for a product and calculate the total duty payable," Srivastava said.

This complexity poses a challenge, especially for small firms, in determining the correct customs duty for their products, the GTRI said, adding that they have to seek expert help to understand and comply with mation is spread across numerous notifications each year.

Talking about a recent notification regarding some gold items, it said a person needed to look at, at least 11 notifications that amended the oldest notification.

'This roundabout reference makes understanding the update challenging. The notification could have simply stated that the government has imposed an AIDC of 5 per cent on gold or silver findings, avoiding the need for cross-referencing multiple documents," it added.

Rupee settles 1 paisa higher at 83.11 a dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee rose 1 paisa in a range-bound trade to close at 83.11 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, as the support from weak American currency overseas was negated by rising crude oil prices.

Forex traders said the rupee is trading in a narrow range as muted domestic equities and sustained foreign fund outflows dented investor sentiments. At the interbank foreign

exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.13 against the greenback. The unit oscillated between an intraday low of 83.14 and a high of 83.08 and finally settled at 83.11 (provisional) against the dollar, 1 paisa higher from its previous

On Wednesday, the rupee had settled at 83.12 against the US dollar.

The rupee traded on a flat note amid weak domestic markets and rising crude oil prices. Foreign fund outflows also weighed on the domestic currency, said Anuj Choudhary Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Public sector Indian Bank is engaged in floating a whol-ly-owned subsidiary with a capital infusion of Rs 10 crore Thursday

The subsidiary would largely ing, collection, sales and mar-keting, Indian Bank Managing Jain said.

"Around a week back, we got the financial approval. It will be a wholly-owned subsidiary. We will be putting Rs 10 crore as capital and we are in the process of recruiting people at

focus on back-office process-Director and CEO Shanti Lal

and it is expected to commence operations in the next financial year, a top official said here on

the top level like CEO, CTO...." he told reporters. The plan to launch a subsidiary is to focus on sales and marketing, collection and recovery process, he said.

There are many works that we are doing. Call centre work, already we are in the process of recruiting people. Maybe in the next financial year, it will be in operation. This subsidiary will not be as big as Indian Bank, they will do our work, feet on the street for collection, recov-

subsidiary to start next fiscal: MD ery like that," he said responding to a query.
The bank on Wednesday

reported a 52 per cent jump in its net profits at Rs 2,119 crore in the October-December 2023 quarter, on the back of improvements in core income and a reduction in bad loans. The bank earned a net profit of Rs 1,396 crore in the corresponding quarter of last year. Observing that the digital transactions in the bank have increased to 87 per cent during

the quarter under review, he said, the bank has set a target of witnessing digital transactions to the tune of Rs 75,000 crore digital transactions and as of December 2023, it stood at Rs 52,000 crore.

in the generation mix is expect-

ed to remain significant till

The average spot power tariffs in the day-ahead market (DAM) of the Indian Energy

Exchange remained high at Rs 5.4 per unit in YTD FY2024,

owing to the sharp demand

The spot tariffs are likely to

remain elevated at around Rs

4.5-5.0/unit in the near-term

against a long-term average of

Rs 3.0-3.5/unit. Further, the

coal stock level for the domes-

tic power plants remained

modest at around 12 days as of

2030, it stated.

"We are moving towards the target (of Rs 75,000 crore) digital transactions in the current financial year...," he said. Jain said the lender has also earmarked Rs 200 crore towards upgrading cyber security over the next three years.

Bajaj Auto shares climb over 5 pc; mcap jumps ₹10,915 cr post Q3 earnings

in FY2023'

Shares of Bajaj Auto Ltd on Thursday climbed over 5 per cent after the company reported a 38 per cent jump in consolidated Profit After Tax (PAT) to Rs 2,032.62 crore in the December quarter.

The stock jumped 5.35 per cent to settle at Rs 7,596.85 on the BSE. During the day, it rallied 5.73 per cent to Rs $\dot{7}$,625 — its 52-week high.

Shares of the company on the NSE climbed 5.22 per cent to Rs 7,590. During the day, it advanced 5.71 per cent to reach a 52-week high of Rs 7,625,15.

The company's market valuation jumped by Rs 10,915.17 crore to Rs 2,15,127.41 crore. The company had posted a consolidated PAT of Rs 1,472.7 crore in the year-ago period, Bajaj Auto said in a regulato-

ry filing. Consolidated total revenue from operations in the third quarter of the ongoing fiscal stood at Rs 12,165.33 crore, up from Rs 9,318.54 crore in the year-ago period, it added.



JSW Steel Q3 profit jumps five-fold

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

reported five-fold rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 2,450 crore for December quarter 2023-24, on the back of strong domestic demand. The company had logged a net

SW Steel Ltd on Thursday

profit of Rs 474 crore in the year-ago period, JSW Steel said in a filing to BSE. Income during the third quarter increased to Rs 42,134 crore from Rs 39,322 crore in the

year-ago period.
"The strong performance was

driven by capacity utilisation ris-ing to 94 per cent during the quarter vs 89 per cent in Q2 FY24 at the Indian operations," the company said in a statement. JSW Steel is the flagship business of the diversified, USD 23 billion JSW Group. The group is also into energy, infrastruc-

Gold declines ₹150; silver jumps ₹200 'Spot gold prices (24 carats) in the

old prices declined Rs 150 to Rs G63,050 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday amid a fall in precious metal prices internationally, according to HDFC The yellow metal had ended at Rs

63,200 per 10 grams in the previous

trade. However, silver jumped Rs 200 to Rs 76,200 per kilogram.

Delhi markets are trading at Rs 63,050 per 10 grams, down by Rs 150, taking bearish cues from the overseas market," Saumil Gandhi, senior analyst of commodities at HDFC Securities, said. In the global markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,016 per ounce, down by USD 10 from the previous close.

However, silver was trading marginally higher at USD 22.78 per ounce.

Inion Minister Pralhad Joshi on Thursday emphasised on the importance of recycling metals for circular economy, saying the process reduces the burden on natural resources, which are "finite". The minister for coal and mines made

Material Recycling Conference (IMRC) in Kolkata. As far as minerals are concerned, their resources (reserves) are finite and recycling metals such as steel and aluminium, reduces the burden on natur-

the remarks at the 11th International

Recycling reduces burden on natural resources: Joshi

al resources for these materials, the minister said in a video address. Recycling is important because it is sus-

tainable. It plays an important role in consuming the available resources minimising the energy consumption in metal processing. The government wants to make India a hub of circular economy, Joshi said. However, mining is also important, he said, as the sector provides livelihood to crores of people in the country.

carbon emissions and saves energy consumption, Joshi added.

In his address, former NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant termed recycling as "a socio economic opportunity".

The recycling process helps divert the metal scrap from landfills, helps offset

ture, cement, paints, sports, and venture capital.

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Sabalenka beats US Open winner Gauff to reach final

efending champion Aryna Sabalenka Aryna avenged a US Open final loss to Coco Gauff and became the first woman since Serena Williams to reach back-to-back finals at the Australian Open on Thursday. Sabalenka attacked Gauff's serve

throughout a 7-6 (2), 6-4 semifinal win.

She will meet Zheng Qinwen or Dayana Yastremska in Saturday's championship decider. Zheng and No. 93-ranked Yastremska were playing their first-ever Grand Slam semi-final.

Sabalenka is on a 13-match roll at Melbourne Park, where she made her Grand Slam breakthrough last year. Williams reached consecutive finals here in 2015, '16 and '17. Gauff went into the semifinals unbeaten in 2024 after winning a title in Auckland, New Zealand.

The 19-year-old American was on a 12-match winning streak in majors and attempting to be the first player since Naomi Osaka in 2020-21 to win the US Open and Australian Open titles back to back.

She'd worked out how to beat Sabalenka in New York last September to win her first major title but didn't have the answers this time against the only player in the final four with semifinal experience in Australia. The first set contained six service breaks, with both players

Sabalenka led 5-2 and missed a set point as Gauff held firm and went on a four-game roll to take a 6-5 lead. Gauff also couldn't serve it out, with Sabalenka's booming returns continuing to cause her trouble.

missing opportunities to serve it

In the tie-breaker, Sabalenka raced to 5-1. Chants of "Coco, Coco" went up around Rod Laver Arena but they didn't help Gauff.

Almost a half-hour after her first set point, Sabalenka got five more. She clinched on the second of those with a big serve out

Gauff was able to win points on only three of her 17-second serves in the first set, and that made her push harder and led to double faults.

The second set was tight until Sabalenka got a service break in the ninth game. She missed her first match point

when Gauff saved with a forehand winner to end a 12-shot An ace down the middle earned

a second match point and Sabalenka clinched it after an hour and 42 minutes. In doubles, 43-year-old Rohan

Bopanna and Matthew Ebden advanced to their second consecutive Grand Slam men's final by beating Zhang Zhizhen and Tomas Machac 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (7). Tournament officials said Bopanna and Ebden, at a combined age of 79 years, will become the oldest No. 1 pairing in tourish history of the tour

in tennis history after the tour-

nament.

Bopanna and Ebden, ranked second in men's doubles, lost to Rajeev Ram and Joe Salisbury in the US Open final last September. In Saturday's final, they'll play Italian pair Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori.

Bopanna one match away from first Major trophy

Rohan Bopanna earned him-self one more opportunity to win a Grand Slam title by reaching the Australian Open men's doubles final with Australian partner Matthew Ebden after prevailing in a tense semifinal against Tomas Machac and Zhang Zhizhen here Thursday. The second seeded Indo-Australian pair faced some stiff resistance from their rivals in the third set but eventually the experience of playing Super Tie Breakers helped them nail the finish with a 6-3 3-6 7-6 (10-7) scoreline after two hours and two minutes.

Zhang (WR 54) and Machac (Wr75) are quality singles players, featuring in the top-100 list and their powerful hitting from the baseline did make it a tough contest for the experienced Bopanna and Ebden.

A day after he was assured of becoming the world number one player, Bopanna as usual served well on big points and also manage to pull out the strokes and tricks when they needed the most.

Bopanna has reached the US Open final twice (2013, 2023) but a Major trophy has eluded him in his career. Now at the fag end of his career at the age of 43, REACHES AUSTRALIAN OPEN FINAL WITH EBDEN

he will have the chance to tick that box on Saturday. Bopanna and Ebden will face

Italian pair of Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori, who beat German team of Yannick Hanfmann and Dominik Koepfer 6-3 3-6 7-6 (5) in the other semifinal.

"On the circuit, we have played lot of Super Tie Breaks, that gets us sharp. They (Machac and Zhang) return extremely well, we had to make sure we serve well and on spots. This partner-ship (with Ebden) has been good," Bopanna said after the match.

Asked about his success despite the age, Bopanna said, "A lot of stuff goes behind the scenes. A big team is part of me. I just made sure I stay focussed on what I need to do get to ready, that is mobility and recovery. I do not look to lift heavy, just do yoga. I feel mental strength helps me."

Ebden said winning in front of the home fans is special. "I could not be happier, winning

before the home fans is special. These guys are super dangerous players. The doubles specialist against singles specialist is great (contest). It's good for the fans. We have been working hard together for years. One more match to go," he said.

After splitting the first two sets, the second seeds were in a spot of bother in the opening game,

down 0-30 but Bopanna's big serve came into play and he managed to make an important hold. A cross-court passing winner between Zhang and Machac was a treat for eyes. Bopanna was all over with his fiery volley winners at the net, pulling the rug from the under the feet of their rivals to get the first break of the set. The break

and easy holds gave the second seeds a comfortable lead. Bopanna's sportsman spirit was on display yet again in Grand Slams when he touched net in game seven and himself conced-

ed the point. Soon, the second seeds were serving for the match but suffered a break to allow little opening to their rivals.

Bopanna hit a backhand long to be 15-30 and then Zhang found a cross court forehand winner to leave the Indian facing two

break points. Bopanna hit his backhand wide on the first to allow the rivals strike back in the match.

Zhang though was down 0-40 in next game to offer three match points to Bopanna and Ebden. They unseeded pair saved all three - one on Bopanna's return error second with serve and third with a crushing forehand winner down

MSLTA ties up with Ferroro academy to promote tennis in Maharashtra

The Maharashtra State Lawn Tennis Association (MSLTA) has tied up with former world number one Juan Carlos Ferrero's academy, considered to be one of the best in the sport for the development of the game in the state. The main objective behind the initiative it is to raise awareness about the Olympic Games in the state. Efforts will be made through this initiative to increase Maharashtra's representation in the quadrennial event and the athletes of the state to reach the podium in other events. "This is the academy of Ferrero, who is currently coaching Carlos Alcaraz and we are happy to join hands with him," MSLTA chairman Prashant Sutar said in

MSLTA players selected from the activities will enjoy full sponsorship from tra and Mahatennis Foundation. This will include tennis training, physio, travelling and fitness coach.

Hemant Bendre, senior coach and member of MSLTA coaching committee said, "We are looking for talent from various districts and taking those talented players in our training scheme.

"Selected players will be brought to Balewadi for a residential camp keeping track of their year-long training and progress," he added.

Further, talented players from Maharashtra will be sent to Spain for advance training at Ferrero's academy. Ferrero has so far produced world class tennis players like Pablo Carreno, Nicolas Almagro, Guillermo Garcia Lopez. Interestingly, all these players have reached the top fifty in the world rank-

Under this targeted initiative, the Juan Carlos Ferrero Academy will help the MSLTA to develop coaches and physical trainers in the state by imparting modern techniques and knowledge of sports science.

Coaches from all over Maharashtra will be brought to Mhalunge Balewadi for in-house training at the Jesse Ferrero Tennis Academy. Selected coaches will be sent to Spain for further training.

Federer amazed by how much Neeraj has achieved

With their fame, success and weighty legacy sitting lightly on their shoulders, it came as no surprise when Roger Federer and Neeraj Chopra gushed about each other during a recent rendezvous, which was marked by mutual respect, admiration, and stories of triumph and dedication.

Switzerland Tourism set the ball rolling by uniting the 20-time Grand slam winner and the Olympic and world champion from India at Zurich's La Reserve Eden au Lac for a casual and free-flowing conversa-It is not often that one gets to see two dedicated, charming, and passionate

sportspersons who have done their respective countries proud with their achievements, occupying the same I am amazed by how much Neeraj has achieved personally and for his

country through his grit and determination. "It's been great to meet him here in



ambassador for Switzerland Tourism. Federer, known for his longevity and prowess on and off the tennis court, warmly welcomed Chopra who is also Tourisn

Ambassador, to his home country, which was "a dream-come-truemoment" for the 26-year-old Indian. "It's a dream come true for me to meet

always admired his skill, his spirit of true sportsmanship and his ability to inspire millions around the world.
"Today, however, what inspired me the most was his humility and his easy-going charm that made me feel

so comfortable in his presence. "We had a wonderful time exchanging notes about our respective passions and life's experiences on and off the field," said Chopra.

While Federer presented Neeraj with an autographed tennis racquet, Chopra handed the former World No 1 a signed India jersey from the Asian

Chopra - who became India's second individual Olympic gold medallist at the pandemic-affected Tokyo Olympics in 2021 - is hoping to repeat the feat at the Paris Olympics later this

Since winning the gold medal at the Tokyo Games, Chopra has scripted more history by claiming a silver and World Athletics Championships.

an unprecedented gold medal at the He also retained his Jakarta Asian Games gold medal at Hangzhou last



retirement: Mary Kom

Her future is a subject of intense speculation since that final Olympic appearance in Tokyo back in 2021 but celebrated İndian woman boxer M C Mary Kom on Thursday refuted talk of retirement even though she is on the wrong side of the international cut-off age

The 41-year-old six-time world champion, who won an Olympic bronze in the 2012 London edition, found herself at the centre of a social media storm after reportedly declaring that due to the 40-year age cap for amateur boxers, she has been forced to retire. In a statement this morning, she declared that she had been misquoted and a formal announcement of retirement is still some time away.

"I haven't announced retirement vet and I have been misquoted. I will personally come in front of media whenever I want to announce it. I have gone through some media reports stating that I have announced retirement and this is not true," the Manipuri flyweight (51kg) category boxer asserted.

She then tried to give context to her earlier comment, insisting that she was merely talking about the international rules and not referring to herself specifically. "I was attending a school event in Dibrugarh (Assam) on 24 January 2024 wherein I was motivating children and I said I

still have hunger of achieving in sports but age limit in Olympics doesn't allow me to participate though I can carry on with my sport," she said.

Tam still focusing on my fitness and whenever I will announce retirement I will inform everyone. Please do correct this," she

Mary Kom has not been seen in loss in the Tokyo Olympics, which was her last appearance at the quadrennial showpiece. She attempted to appear for the 2022 Commonwealth Games trials but had to pull out on the day of the selection bouts due to a torn ACL (Anterior Cruciate Ligament) for which she underwent a surgery.

However, she resumed training after rehabilitation last year and insisted that she has another 3-4 competitive years left in her even though Olympics was now out of bounds for her.

Amid her gradual withdrawal, Nikhat Zareen has taken over the 51kg slot, and claimed two back-to-back world titles, the latest one coming last year.

Mary Kom, on the other hand, has been seen in several administrative roles given to her by the Indian Olympic Association. She recently headed an IOA oversight panel which investigated the sexual harassment charges levelled by some top women wrestlers against the then wrestling federation head Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh.

Xavi trophy hopes at Barcelona shrink after Copa del Rey exit

AP BARCELONA

 $T^{\text{he chances for Xavi Hernández to}}_{\text{ salvage Barcelona's season}} - \text{and} \\ \text{likely his own job} - \text{are quickly fad-}$

Barcelona has seen its best two chances of getting a title in this campaign evaporate. Xavi's side exited the Copa del Rey quarterfinals after los-ing in added time at Athletic Bilbao 4-2 on Wednesday, a loss that came two weeks after Barcelona was dismantled by Real Madrid in the Spanish Super Cup.

It just has the Spanish league and the Champions League to play for, and both look like long shots. Barcelona is in third place in La Liga,

eight points adrift of leader Girona and seven behind Madrid. While Xavi did lead Barcelona back into the

for the first time in three years, it is clearly one — or two — notches below the likes of Manchester City, Madrid and other heavyweights.

The 44-year-old Xavi, whose only other coaching experience was in Qatar, has recognized that a season without silverware will likely be too much for even a club great and fan favorite like him to survive despite a contract through to the end of next season. "All the coaches of big clubs depend on winning titles," Xavi said after the loss in Bilbao.

"It is a fact, if we are not playing at a competitive level the normal thing would be for me to go. This is a major club. I am at Barça. Today we fought and worked hard, (but) if you don't win, the coach takes the blame." Xavi returned to coaching his boy-

Champions League knockout rounds for the first time in three years, it is successfully led an overhaul of the team — financed by the club mortgaging its future — to win La Liga last season, its first major title since the exit of Lionel Messi

But Barcelona has been erratic this season, when it was supposed to get younger and fitter, after the departures of veterans Sergio Busquets and Jordi Alba to play with Messi in Miami, Barcelona also lost key midfielder Gavi Páez and goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen to injuries, but high-profile reinforcements Ilkay Gundogan and João Félix have yet to

make up for their loss. Fortunately for Xavi, his team returns home to host Villarreal in the league on Saturday. Villarreal is winless in its last four games overall and in 14th

"We must win on Saturday," Xavi said. "This team will turn it around by winning games. We must focus on the Spanish league and the Champions League."

Madrid is also in action on Saturday when it makes a trip to the Canary Islands to face a tricky Las Palmas. Normally, this would look like a relatively easy outing for Carlo Ancelotti's side. But Las Palmas is exceeding expectations for a modest club that won promotion last season. Las Palmas is in eighth place thanks to the second-stingiest defense which has allowed only 17 goals. Madrid has the best defense with only 13 goals allowed.

Surprising front-runner Girona, which has played one more game than Madrid and Barcelona, will visit Rafa Benítez's Celta Vigo on Sunday.

Avani to lead Indian team at Women Amateur Asia Pacific golf Q School and get in the top five, I'll get to play the whole year, and here I am. I'm happy that I won and now I can plan my season,"

he added. Randhawa, a former DP World Tour player, eight-time Asian Tour winner and one-time winner in Japan, was two shots ahead after three rounds and made it four by the end of the fourth round

Randhawa played and missed the cut at the Senior Open last year, when he had Jeev Milkha Singh, who finished in Top-15, and Arjun Atwal for company. Jeev played 10 events in 2023 and had Top-10s in four of them and finished 13th on the Merit

"I'm pretty young for starting out (on the Legends Tour). If I can go in there and win a tournathing a lot easier. My aim is to win one and take it from there," Randhawa said Randhawa's final round includ-

ed birdies on the final two holes for a total of 12-under 276. He had started the final day with a two-shot lead and remained in control of the tournament in blustery conditions on the New Course.

When Randhawa made another gain on the 10th, it looked like he would coast to victory. However, a double bogey on the

13th and a bogey on the 15th opened the door for France's Lionel Alexandre, Simon Griffiths of England and But Randhawa emphatically sealed victory with his two clos-

other four cards.

PTI ■ PATTAYA (THAILAND)

Avani Prashanth, the only Indian ranked inside top-50 amateurs in the world, will lead a six-member contingent from the country at the prestigious Women's Amateur Asia-Pacific (WAAP) championship in Thailand, starting February 1. The other Indian players are Mannat Brar, Heena Kang, Vidhatri Urs, Keerthana Rajeev Nair and Saanvi Somu. The WAAP champions receive

exemptions into three major championships in 2024 - the AIG Women's Open at St Andrews, the Amundi Evian Championship in France and the Chevron Championship in the United States of America. The winner will also receive invitations to a few other elite championships such as the Hana

Financial Group Championship, ISPS Handa Women's Australian Open, The 121st Women's Amateur Championship and the Augusta National Women's Amateur.

Avani, ranked 42 in the world, is the winner of the Queen Sirikit Cup individual honours in 2023, and was also fourth at the individuals in 2023 World Amateur Team Championships. She also won a pro event in Europe and finished in Top-10 in numerous professional events on the Ladies European Tour including the Hero Women's Indian Open.

She was also runner-up at the Australian Masters of Amateurs earlier this month in Melbourne. Her main teen rivals will include Iapan's Mamika Shinchi, Filipina Rianne Mikhaela Malixi and New Zealander Eunseo Choi.

Shinchi (33), Prashanth (42) and Malixi (43) are among the top ranked players in the field. Randhawa becomes first Indian to win Senior Euro Q-School Antalya, Jan 25 (PTI) Veteran golfer Jyoti Randhawa became the first Indian to finish on top in the Senior European Tour's Qualifying School and claim full playing rights in the Legends Tour this season. Randhawa finished with a 12-under 276 total and four shots ahead of his nearest rivals. Randhawa, who turned 50 in 2022 and played his first few events on the Senior Tour in Europe in 2023, shot rounds of 71-67-68-70 for 276 at the Gloria Golf Club in Antalya. Three players France's Lionel Alexandre (72), Simon Griffiths (72) of England and Spaniard Carlos Balmaseda (72) were tied for second at 280, while

Andrew Marshall of England tougher than the main event as "It feels really good," said

with 75 claimed the fifth and final card on offer. The final stage of Legends School is often considered

only five cards are available from the field. The field had 55 players this year and many were

Randhawa, a three-time (2000, 2006, 2007) Hero Indian Open winner. "I got a few starts last past European Tour champions. year but I thought if I come to

list to keep his card. ment then that makes every-

Spaniard Carlos Balmaseda. ing birdies, leaving the others to focus on the tight battle for the

SPINNERS PUT INDIA IN STRONG POSITION ON DAY ONE

PTI HYDERABAD

A fter spinners put England batters through a harsh scrutiny, Yashasvi Jaiswal rolled out his own version of 'Bazball' en route to a crushing fifty as India posted 119 for one to take the upper hand on day one of the opening Test here on Thursday

At close, Jaiswal (76 batting, 70 balls, 9x4, 3x6) and Shubman Gill (14 batting) were at the crease and the hosts are 127 runs in arrears of England's anaemic first innings total of 246, which was built around skipper Ben Stokes' hardheaded 88-ball 70. India were comfortably placed at 119 for one at stumps after bowling out England for 246 on the opening day of the first Test here on Thursday

Around Stokes, England batsmen crumbled as the spin troika of Ravichandran Ashwin (3/68), Ravindra Jadeja (3/88) and Axar Patel (2/33) rudely nudged them back to reality of batting on an Indian pitch that offers barrowful of turn and grip even from day one.

But when the Indian openers came out bat the RGI Stadium, pitch appeared to have lost its bite and the England tweakers

the pioneer

looked like a defanged lot. Jaiswal wrapped himself with the leader's cape despite the presence of his captain Rohit Sharma (24, 27 balls) at the other end, tearing into England bowlers with

gusto.
The gap between runs and balls could give the left-hander's innings a hue of carelessness but it was anything but that.

Jaiswal started his and the team's innings with a clipped boundary to square leg off pacer Mark Wood, but that was just the appetizer as the left-hander offered a harsh welcome to Tom Hartley to international cricket. The 22-year-old smashed the England left-arm spinner for two sixes in his first over, one over long-on and the other in

front of the square. His twinkling feet and fast hands made it tough for the England spinners to settle into a rhythm against him.

Jaiswal and Rohit added 80 runs in just 12.1 overs to give their side a wonderful launching

It came to an end when Rohit gave a catch to Stokes off left-



arm spinner Jack Leach while trying to clear him over the long-

But for the rest of the innings, it was a futile toil for the English bowlers as this could be the beginning of a long and tiring tour for them.

To make it even more exasperating for them, they have already exhausted all the three reviews for this innings as well.

However, the whole atmosphere was different when the Indian spinners were operating - the ball bounced, turned and gripped to leave the English batters an edgy group except a few

One of them came in the postlunch session when Joe Root (29, 60 balls) and Jonny Bairstow (37, 58 balls) added 61 runs for the fourth-wicket as England attempted to stay above the fast-rising water.

Root and Bairstow, generally, relied on sweep and the reverse avatar of that shot occasionally to gather runs. However, Root was culpable of being too premeditative and it eventually led

Jadeja hit a fuller length which resulted in a top-edge off Root's bat that flew to short fine leg where Jasprit Bumrah did not have to strain himself much to complete the catch.

Bairstow too did not last long as Axar delivered a peach from wide of the crease to take out the batter's off-stump.

Ben Foakes has this reputation of being a fine player of spin but on this day only struggle was visible as he departed with a 24-ball four, offering a simple catch to stumper KS Bharat off Axar as England lost five wickets in that session for 107 runs.

It was left to captain Stokes, who employed conventional and non- conventional sweeps to counter spin, to wage a lonely battle in the company of tailenders and even looked solid during his stay in the middle.

But then on dire occasions like the one England encountered here, even a lion-hearted warrior like Stokes could only add a modicum of respectability to the

After a sedate beginning, Stokes slipped into his own and played some dazzling shots before

Bumrah disturbed his stumps His innings contained six fours

and three sixes. In the morning session, England might have daydreamed of another buccaneering effort after openers Ben Duckett and Zak Crawley made 25 runs in

the first four overs which later swelled to 55 in 11.5 overs. But Ashwin underlined his mastery over left-handers for a zillionth time while dismissing Duckett.

The 37-year-old managed to skid one on to beat Duckett's defence to hit his pads as the latter played for non-existent turn. Umpire Chris Gaffaney did not have to think twice before raising his finger, and even a review could not save Duckett.

The Indian spinners rushed through that creek to dismantle the England innings as India tightened the grip over the pro-

England 1st innings: 246 all out in 64.3 overs (Ben Stokes 70; Ravindra Jadeja 3/88, R Ashwin

India 1st innings: 119/1 in 23 overs (Yashasvi Jaiswal batting



Jaiswal has taken to Test cricket like a fish to water: Ashwin

Veteran India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin is in awe of Yashasvi Jaiswal's batting in only his fifth Test, saying the youngster has not put a foot wrong in his 76-run knock against England and has taken to the five-day format "like a fish

Jaiswal remained unbeaten after playing 70 balls, hitting nine boundaries and three sixes on the opening day of the first Test. "He (Jaiswal) had a great time in the IPL had a wor first-class cricket. I am quite enjoying it. I am seeing Rishabh Pant there. His fearless cricket is

 $B_{\text{his umpteenth snub from the}}^{\text{arely 48 hours after receiving}}$

selectors, Mumbai's 'run-

machine' Sarfaraz Khan served

a stern reminder to the nation-

al selection committee with a

majestic 161 that put India A in

complete command over Eng-

land Lions on day two of the sec-

Having bowled out England for

152 on the opening day, India A,

starting the day at 150 for no loss, ended on 489 with a mas-

sive 337-run first innings lead

which will give them a good shot

of gunning for an innings victo-

ry. While seasoned Abhimanyu

Easwaran (58) and left-handed

Devdutt Padikkal (105) set the

ond 'unofficial Test' here.

PTI AHMEDABAD

serving him well," Ashwin said after the end of the opening say's

'Yashaswi has not put a foot wrong, he has taken to Test cricket like a fish to water," the senior spinner added.

"It was pretty interesting in the first session, maybe there was a bit of moisture. Because of the early moisture, there was enough speed. Then it slowed down. Not enough speed to carry through to the slips," Ashwin said.

"240 was a very very good competitive total. Thought 30-40 have liked. Someone making a hundred tomorrow will put us

platform with a 162-run opening stand, Sarfaraz took full

advantage of good batting conditions looting runs off the Lions spinners, who didn't have

answers to his repeated

Sarfaraz, expectedly hurt after being pipped by Rajat Patidar as Virat Kohli's replacement in the

two Tests against England, did the best possible thing — let his

The conditions were featherbed

at the Narendra Modi Stadium

'Ground A' but no one can take

the credit away from the burly

Mumbaikar, who gave a master-

class on how to tackle spinners.

All his five sixes came off spe-

cialist spinners — three he hit off

left-arm spinner Callum

bat do all the talking.

onslaught.

Rohit remains optimistic despite decade long ICC Trophy drought

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

India skipper Rohit Shama firmly believes that their "time will come" to win an elusive ICC trophy, a milestone they have been chasing for the past decade. The recent World Cup 2023 final loss to Australia saw India's quest for an ICC title stretch to 10 years with their last victory dating back to the Champions Trophy in 2013 under the leadership of MS Dhoni.

'The last three years have been great. Except winning the finals of ICC trophies, we have won everything," Rohit said while talking to JioCinema on the sidelines of their opening Test against England here.

That's one thing we've not been able to accomplish, but I think time will come. All we need to do is stay in a good mindset, not worry too much about the past, because you can't change the past.

is going to come next, so all of us are quite focussed on that. We are playing our hearts out." After being runners-up in the T20I World Cup in 2014, the

"What you can change is what

team faced semi-final exits in the 2015 ODI World Cup, the 2016 T20 World Cup, and the 2019

Champions Trophy along with

Parkinson, all down the ground

while a couple of maximums

came off off-spinner Oliver

Price, one of which was hit into

He took a special liking for

Parkinson, who was also hit for

nine of his 18 boundaries. He

repeatedly used his feet and also

the cow corner.



a semi-final loss in the 2022 T20 $\,$

World Cup.
They also lost the finals of the first two World Test Championship cycles. **NO NUMBER-GAME:** Sha-

rma, known for his aggressive style of strokemaking, further spoke about his approach to cap-

"I wanted to bring about certain change, players going out there The agony continued with defeats in the finals of the 2017 tical side of cricket out of this tical side of cricket out of this

played a lot of inside out drives.

Sarfaraz was also severe on opposition's best bowler

Matthew Potts (6/125), the right

arm seamer who has already

played for England. He was

creamed for half dozen bound-

aries as he repeatedly peppered

the cover and extra cover

"Numbers are overrated. In India, we do talk a lot about numbers and all of that. I got five hundreds in the 2019 World Cup, but we still lost. The hundreds don't matter.

"I may think about them may be 20 years later after I retire, but what did we get? I wanted the

"If you don't win trophies, I don't think those 5-6 hundreds make all about winning trophies, not about individual accomplishments," he added.

boundary region. He added 169 for the sixth

wicket with Washington Sundar

(57) and 96 for the seventh wick-

et with spinner Saurabh Kumar

(77), who was also in rollicking

form with the willow, helping

himself with 16 fours.
The innings would keep Sarfaraz firmly in contention for a Test berth as no one knows when

someone gets injured as he would certainly be the next in

line if Shreyas Iyer fails to get

BRIEF SCORES:

England Lions 152. India A 489

(Sarfaraz Khan 161, Devdutt Padikkal 105, Abhimanyu

Easwaran 58, Washington

Sundar 57, Saurabh Kumar 77,

Matthew Potts 6/125).

going in the current series.

The former India skipper finished the year with 1,377 runs which included six centuries and eight half-centuries. The year will forever be remembered as the one in which Kohli

Indian batting maestro Virat Kohli was on Thursday crowned the ICC men's ODI

Cricketer of the Year 2023 for his

excellent run in the format last

year headlined by a phenome-

nal outing in the World Cup at

This is the fourth such award for

Kohli, who was the second most

prolific run-scorer in ODIs last

year behind compatriot

surpassed the great Sachin Tendulkar's longstanding record of ODI centuries, and the award caps a memorable 12 months for the India batter, who guided the country to the World Cup final, winning the Player of the Tournament prize along the way for scoring a record 765 runs in 11 matches.

This is the seventh individual ICC award won by Kohli during his glittering career, and his fourth in the ODI category after previous wins in 2012, 2017 and He also won the Test award in

2018 while the years 2017 and 2018 saw him also win the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year. Kohli claimed the silverware

from a shortlist that included countrymen Gill and

Mohammed Shami, plus New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell. Kohli lost out on the race for the Cricketer of the Year Award to Australian captain Pat

Cummins, who won it ahead of

compatriot Travis Head and

Indian duo Ravindra Jadeja and

Kohli wins ICC Men ODI Cricketer

of the Year Award for fourth time

Cummins won the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for men's Cricketer of the Year and England all-rounder Nat Sciver-Brunt bagged her second succes-

Trophy for women's Cricketer of

the Year. Australia batter Usman Khawaja was named the men's Test Cricketer of the Year, holding off competition from fellow Australian run-scorer Travis Head, India spinner R Ashwin and England batter Joe Root. Lanka's Chamari

Athapaththu won her maiden women's ODI Cricketer of the Year award, becoming the first female cricketer from the country to win an ICC award.

A landmark year has not only seen Athapaththu clinch the individual award, but also saw her being named captain of both the ICC women's ODI and T20I Teams of the Year, announced earlier in the week England umpire Richard Illingworth won the David Shepherd Trophy for Umpire of the Year for the third time, after previously winning in 2019 and 2022.

Zimbabwe were revealed as the winners of the Spirit of Cricket

Award for their sporting conduct immediately following the thrilling victory over West Indies in the men's World Cup Qualifier match in Harare in

Cummins received the trophy after a phenomenal year which saw him produce outstanding individual performances while also leading his side to the World Test Championship and

World Cup titles. Cummins is the fifth Australian Ricky Ponting (2006 and 2007), Mitchell Johnson (2009 and 2014), Michael Clarke (2013) and Steve Smith (2015).

Cummins grabbed 42 wickets in 11 Tests during the year at an average of 27.50 with a best match haul of 10 for 47 in the Boxing Day Test against Pakistan. These notable contributions came as Australia claimed their maiden World Test Championship mace and retained the

Ashes on English soil. In ODIs, he grabbed 17 wickets in 13 matches at an economy rate of 5.74. His best figures of three for 51 against South Africa in the World Cup semi-final was followed by a crucial spell of two for 34 against India in the blockbuster final in Ahmedabad.

"It's a huge honour. It has been a big year, lots of wonderful team success. To get this individual honour is huge and I am pretty amazed. In terms of individual accolades, it is right up there,' Cummins said in an ICC press

Silva, Hodge lead West Indies to 266-8 against Australia

AP BRISBANE

Toshua Da Silva and Kavem Hodge rallied West Indies to 266-8 against Australia with resolute half-centuries on day one of the day-night test at the Gabba on Thursday.

Da Silva (79) and Hodge (71) shared a 149-run stand in almost two sessions in a rare frustrating day for the Australians in a home season that's seen them whitewash Pakistan 3-0 and win the first test against the West Indies at Adelaide by 10 wickets.

Off-spinning allrounder Kevin Sinclair, who made his test debut in place of Gudakesh Motie, was unbeaten on 16 while Alzarri Joseph counterpunched with seven boundaries among 32 runs before he edged Josh Hazlewood in the slips in the last over. Nathan Lyon broke up Da Silva and Hodge two overs before the second new ball became available. Lyon trapped Da Silva lbw on the back foot while bowling round the wicket.

The batter went for an unsuccessful referral. The second pink ball netted Hodge and Joseph.

Hodge was caught at second slip off Mitchell Starc, who took 4-68. Da Silva's patient 157-ball knock included seven boundaries. He braved a brief spell of short balls from the Australian quicks in the second session during which captain Pat Cummins used seven bowlers without any success.

Hodge, in his second test, pulled Starc for six over fine leg after dinner and hit eight boundaries in his 194-ball innings, playing some impressive drives to overpitched deliveries on the

West Indies' first century stand in the series early in the last session, but Hodge's nick flew through vacant second slip, then Cameroon Green couldn't hold on to a tough left-handed catch at gully off Starc. Hodge and Da Silva showed plenty of

Australia could have broken the patience against the Australia pace trio and Lyon's spin threat as they grinded out a brilliant partnership against a softened pink ball. The pitch also got better for batting in the twi-

Starc earlier became the fifth Australian bowler to take 350 test wickets when he claimed three in the

first session Starc got opener Tagenarine Chanderpaul caught at slip by Steve Smith on 21 and Alick Athanaze was caught behind by Alex Carey on 8 as the West Indies top order struggled with the bounce of the pitch. Starc

removed Justin Greaves on 6 with the last ball before tea. Australia has a perfect record in day-

night tests, winning all 11 it has played with the pink ball. As expected, Australia opener Usman Khawaja was passed fit to play. Travis Head is set to play despite a recent positive COVID-19 test.

After a match-winning century in Adelaide, Head contracted COVID-19 but Cummins said he was recovering well.

On Wednesday, Cricket Australia said allrounder Green and coach Andrew McDonald were the latest members of the squad to catch COVID-19. They were isolated until testing negative. In line with Cricket Australia protocols, Green and McDonald

were able to take their place in the test.

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