**OPINION 6** 

**NEPAL'S VERY OWN** 

'GAME OF THROWNS'

**WORLD 9** 

CHINA CASTS LONG SHADOW OVER

**US-AFRICA LEADERS SUMMIT** 

DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

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### NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 14, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

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# **Army thwarted PLA incursion bid firmly: Rajnath**

'No fatalities to Indian troops as they pushed back PLA to their posts'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Army "bravely" prevented the Chinese PLA from "transgressing" and changing the status quo in the Indian territory and "compelled them to return to their posts" in the Yangtse area of Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang sector on December 9. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said in Parliament on Tuesday amid walkout by the Opposition

Giving a suo motu statement in the Lok Sabha first, the Defence Minister said there were no fatalities or serious injuries to Indian troops in the scuffle. He made an identical statement in the Rajya Sabha.

Demanding a discussion on the issue, the Opposition staged a walkout in both the Houses of Parliament after Singh concluded his statement. Speaker Om Birla and Deputy Chairman Rajya Sabha Harivansh did not permit any clarifications on the Defence Minister's statement in the respective Houses.

In his brief statement, Singh said Indian troops confronted the attempt in a "firm and resolute manner", and Chinese personnel went back



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh speaks in the Rajya Sabha in New Delhi on Tuesday

to their locations due to the the Indian Army bravely pretimely intervention of Indian commanders.

Singh's statement came a day after the Indian Army said troops from two sides clashed along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Tawang sector and the face-off led to "minor injuries to a few personnel from both sides".

"On December 9, PLA troops tried to transgress the LAC in the Yangtse area of the Tawang sector and unilaterally change the status quo. The Chinese attempt was contested by our troops in a firm and resolute manner," Singh said.

"The ensuing face-off led to a physical scuffle in which December 11 to discuss the

vented the PLA from transgressing into our territory and compelled them to return to their posts," he said.

Singh said the scuffle led to injuries to a few personnel on both sides. "I wish to share with this House that there are no fatalities or serious casualties on our side. Due to the timely intervention of Indian military commanders, PLA soldiers went back to their locations. the Defence Minister said.

Singh said as a follow up of the incident, the local commander of the Indian Army in the area held a flag meeting with his counterpart on

is conducted on this subject

issue in accordance with established mechanisms.

'The Chinese side was asked to refrain from such actions and maintain peace and tranquillity along the border. The issue has also been taken up with the Chinese side through diplomatic channels,"

The Defence Minister assured the House that Indian forces are committed to protecting the country's territorial integrity and will continue to

thwart any attempt made on it. "I am confident that this entire House will stand united in supporting our soldiers in

their brave effort," he said.

Continued on Page 2

# statement on LAC situation

Defence Minister's statement in Parl incomplete: Cong

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Congress on Tuesday said Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's statement in Parliament on the Sino-India border clash in Tawang was "incomplete" and accused the Government of hiding the truth from the nation. The Opposition party sought a statement from Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the situation at the border.

Former Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah termed as unfortunate the faceoff between the armies of India and China in Arunachal Pradesh and said the two countries should work together to improve their relations.

Congress spokesperson and deputy leader of the party in the Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi demanded that the Government should tell the truth. Gogoi and party media publicity chairman Pawan Khera accused the Centre of diplomatic failure with China, claiming that India has lost its pre-eminent position in Southeast Asia

Rajya Sabha member Randeep Surjewala urged the Prime Minister to make a statement and hold a discussion over the issue in the Rajya Sabha, Similar unconfirmed reports of Chinese transgressions are coming from Doklam area, he said.

"Public interest demands that the PM make a statement in the House and apprise the nation of the Chinese transgressions into Indian territory across the LAC, since April 2020 till date," Surjewala said.

The party leaders demand ed that the Government should agree to a detailed discussion on the border situation and ties with China, alleging that Prime Minister Modi's remarks made in June 2020 that "no one has entered Indian territory nor has anyone occupied its territory has emboldened China to indulge in such misadventures.

'Why did Rajnath Singh give a statement so late, as the incident is of December 9? Why was this not given yesterday in Parliament? What are they hiding? This Government wants to hide the truth from o hide the truth from on." ic security concerns.
"The situation is being monitored closely by both the

# Cong seeks PM's IAF scrambled jets to counter Chinese threat

The Indian Air Force (IAF) scrambled fighter jets last week following China's increasing air activities on its side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh.

The IAF's move followed the deployment of some aerial platforms, including drones by China in the region preceding the Chinese attempts on December 9 to unilaterally change the status quo in the Yangtse area of the Tawang sector, officials said.

A number of Chinese drones flew close to the LAC prompting the IAF to scramble the jets and increase the overall combat readiness. The IAF has also increased the frequency of sorties by its combat jets in the region, they said.

The IAF has also stepped up its overall surveillance in areas in view of the Chinese attempt of transgression on December 9 in line with the standard operation procedures (SOPs), including scrambling of fighter jets in case of specif-

IAF and the Army," another official said. On Monday, the Indian

Army said troops from the two sides clashed along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Tawang sector and the face-off led to "minor injuries to a few personnel from both sides".

The face-off took place amid the over 30-month border standoff between the two sides in eastern Ladakh.

Chief of Air Staff VR Chaudhari reviewed the IAF's operational readiness following the December 9 incident.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said in Parliament on Tuesday that the Indian troops bravely thwarted the attempt by Chinese PLA to "unilaterally" change the status in the Yangtse area of the Tawang sector and there were no fatalities or serious casualties to the Indian

troops in the scuffle.

## None can capture an inch of India Border situation till Modi is in power, asserts Shah

'FCRA cancellation of Cong's RGF behind

their disruption of Parl'

sserting that no one can Acapture an inch of Indian land till the Narendra Modi Government is in power, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday alleged that the real reason behind the disruption of Parliament by the Congress on Tuesday was not the clash between Indian and Chinese soldiers but the cancellation of FCRA registration of the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation

(RGF). On the border issue, the Minister made it clear that the "BJP Govt will not allow any incursion on land. We will not leave an inch of land. The bravery shown by soldiers is appreciable, they have saved

Shah spoke to reporters in then what is the outcome of it," the LAC clash in both the Houses of Parliament. Shah said if the Question Hour, which was a washout following the Opposition's protest, had continued, then he would have told the House that the RGF's (Regulation) Act (FCRA) registration was cancelled as it got ₹1.35 crore from the Chinese embassy for research related to development of the Sino-India relationship while its registra-

tion is for social work. In a swipe at the Congress, Shah said since the RGF might already have conducted the research, has it included the issue of the occupation of thousands of hectares of Indian land by China in 1962? "If research

Parliament after the Congress targeted the Govt over its handling of the border dispute with China seeking clarification on Council because of the personal relationship its leaders had with foreign leaders. He asked whether the party also researched issues like Jawaharlal Nehru "sacrificing" India's seat in the United Nations Security Council, Contribution denial of visa by China to the then Chief Minister of

> and Kashmir. He also said the RGF headed by Congress leader Sonia Gandhi received ₹50 lakh from hate preacher Zakir Naik, founder of the Islamic Research Foundation (IRF), which has been banned for its alleged

Arunachal Pradesh Dorjee

Khandu and issuing of staple

visa to residents of Jammu

involvement in terrorism. Continued on Page 2

# 'generally stable', claims Beijing

hina on Tuesday said the Situation along the "border" with India was "generally stable", days after the troops of the two countries clashed in the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh and soldiers on both sides sustained minor injuries.

Hours after the comments by the Chinese Foreign Ministry on the Indo-China border situation, Senior Colonel Long Shaohua, spokesman of the Western Theatre Command of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), issued a statement, claiming that the clash on December 9 took place when its troops on regular patrol on the Chinese side of

(LAC) were blocked by Indian

Addressing a media briefing in Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said the two sides have maintained smooth communication on border-related issues through diplomatic and

military channels However, Wang declined to provide details of the December 9 clash at the Yangtse area of Tawang sector in Arunachal Pradesh.

"As far as we know, the current border situation between China and India is generally stable," Wang said in response to a question on the December 9 incident.

Continued on Page 2

# **Reach IGIA 3.5 hrs before** flight time, fliers directed

A mid complaints of chaos, and major delays at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport, airlines have advised passengers to reach the airport at least 3.5 hrs prior to domes-

tic departures.

So, if someone is travelling from Delhi to Chennai and the flight timing is at 12.10 pm, the passenger is supposed to report at 8.40 am at the airport. The airport authorities also asked the passengers to carry only one piece of hand baggage weighing 7 kgs for a smooth

security check. The Ministry of Civil Aviation on Tuesday asked airlines to deploy adequate manpower at all check-in and baggage drop counters to ensure smooth flow of passengers as

14 mn ha degraded landscape



Crowd at T3 IGI Airport departure, in New Delhi on Tuesday

check-in counters at certain airports were found unmanned or inadequately manned leading to congestion and chaos.

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture will take up the issue of congestion at Delhi airport with the CEO of airport oper-

ator DIAL on December 15. IndiGo in its social media

post on Twitter said "The Delhi airports are experiencing high footfalls and the check-in and boarding time is expected to be longer than usual. Passengers are requested to reach the airport at least 3.5 hours prior to domestic departures, and to carry only 1 piece of hand baggage weighing 7 kgs for a smooth security check."

Continued on Page 2

### **CAPSULE**

**LEADERS PAY TRIBUTE TO** PARL ATTACK MARTYRS New Delhi: President Droupadi

Murmu, Vice-President and Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday led the nation in paying tributes to those who laid down their lives during the 2001 Parliament terrorist attack

#### KERALA BILL TO REMOVE **GUV AS CHANCELLOR OK'D** Thiruvananthapuram: The

Kerala House proceedings on Tuesday saw drama as it passed the Bill to replace the Governor as the Chancellor of universities in the State and appoint eminent academicians in the top post, while the opposition UDF boycotted the House over nonacceptance of its suggestions regarding the bill

#### **CONG LEADER ARRESTED OVER 'KILL MODI' REMARK Bhonal/Damoh:** Congress

leader and former Madhya Pradesh Minister Raja Pateria was arrested on Tuesday morning for his controversial 'be ready to kill Modi to save the Constitution' remark

# Nitish dropped hint at passing mantle to Tejashwi: CPI(ML)

PTI ■ PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Tuesday dropped further hints that he is looking forward to passing on the mantle to his young deputy Tejashwi Yaday, leaders emerging from a meeting of legislators of the ruling "Mahagathbandhan" said.

The septuagenarian JD(U) supremo, once again, ruled himself out as a Prime Ministerial candidate for the next Lok Sabha polls even as he maintained that a "united Opposition" could defeat the Narendra Modi-led BJP in 2024. "The Chief Minister pointed towards Tejashwi and said he is the leader of the

future, under whose leadership

the 2025 Assembly polls in the State would be fought," said Mahboob Alam, the legislature party leader of the CPI(ML)

Liberation which supports the government from outside.

He also said "we are of the view that it will benefit the grand alliance which is fighting the communal forces represented by the BJP. Tejashwi is a young and energetic leader".

Notably, Yadav, the younger son of RJD's founding president Lalu Prasad, had steered

Mahagathbandhan", which then did not have the Chief Minister on its side, to an impressive electoral performance in 2020 Assembly polls in which the NDA could barely scrape through. After dumping the BJP in August this year, Kumar, whose love-hate relationship with Lalu is the stuff of legend, had been asserting that he was done with the long association that he has had with

the saffron party.

Continued on Page 2

#### **SC** judge recuses self from Bilkis' plea against rape convicts' release PNS NEW DELHI

Supreme Court judge Bela M Trivedi on Tuesday recused herself from hearing a plea filed by Bilkis Bano, who was gangraped and seven members of her family killed during the 2002 Gujarat riots, challenging the remission of sentence of 11 convicts in the case by the State Government.

As soon as a bench of justices Ajay Rastogi and Bela M Trivedi sat for the day, Justice Rastogi announced his sister judge will not like to hear the case. "List the matter before a bench in which one of us is not a member," the bench headed by Justice Rastogi ordered without specifying any reason for the recusal of Justice Trivedi. Advocate Shobha Gupta,

only predicament is that winter vacation of the court is approaching and she wants the matter to be heard at an earlier date.

appearing for Bilkis, said her

Continued on Page 2

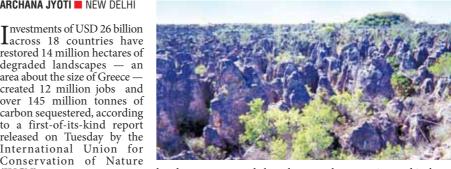
### restored across 18 nations ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI Tnvestments of USD 26 billion **⊥**across 18 countries have restored 14 million hectares of

degraded landscapes — an area about the size of Greece created 12 million jobs and over 145 million tonnes of carbon sequestered, according to a first-of-its-kind report

India is among four countries, including Ecuador, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan, which are still in the process of finalising the data, the Restoration Barometer report 2022 said.

The report details how 18 countries are using the Restoration Barometer tool to track progress on their restoration commitments under global agreements, which total 48 million hectares by 2030.

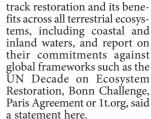
At present, only the restoration of inland waters, terrestrial habitats and coast-



lands are covered by the Barometer. Next year, the Barometer will be further extended to include restoration efforts relating to several key marine solutions and habitats including kelp, seagrasses and shallow reefs.

being used by Governments to

Endorsed by over 50 Governments, the Restoration a statement here. It will also allow countries Barometer was developed by IUCN with the support of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection. It is the only tool that is already



to track progress against restoration commitments under the forthcoming post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework targets leaders will set at COP15. Continued on Page 2

### 5 judges for SC PNS NEW DELHI

**Collegium lists** 

The Supreme Court Collegium headed by Chief ustice of India DY Chandrachud on Tuesday recommended the names of five High Court judges for appointment as Supreme Court judges. The judges who have been

recommended for the elevation to the apex court are: Justice Pankaj Mithal, Chief Justice of Rajasthan High Court; Justice Sanjay Karol, Chief Justice of Patna High Court; Justice PV Sanjay Kumar, Chief Justice of Manipur High Court; Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah, Judge of Patna High Court; and Justice Manoj Misa, Judge of Allahabad High Court. Currently, the Supreme

Court has 28 judges while the sanctioned strength is 34. Once these recommendations are cleared by the Central Government, the working strength of the Supreme Court will rise to 33. Apart from CJI Chandrachud, senior most five judges were also part of the Tuesday's collegium meeting. **Continued on Page 2** 

# **G Noida to New Delhi Rly** stn in 1 hr via Metro soon

¬he DMRC on Tuesday I signed an agreement with the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority for preparing the detailed project report for the construction of the proposed metro rail link between New Delhi Railway Station and Greater Noida, officials said.

The proposed rail link is part of the Uttar Pradesh Government's plan to provide last-mile metro connectivity till the Noida International Airport in Jewar, they said.

A team of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) made a presentation to YEIDA officials regarding the rail line between Greater Noida's Knowledge Park area and New Delhi Railway Station, covering a distance of 37 km over 11 stations in an estimated one hour time, according to a press

Separately, Shailendra Bhatia, YEIDA's officer on special duty and nodal officer for the Noida Airport said the



plan is to provide hassle-free connectivity to passengers between both the airports, which are around 75 km apart.

There will be two metro rail stretches -- one between Noida Airport and Knowledge Park in Greater Noida and the other from Knowledge Park to New Delhi Railway Station -which are to be developed. From New Delhi Railway Station, there is already a connecting link to the Airport Express for Delhi airport," Bhatia told PTI.

According to the press release, the YEIDA has asked the DMRC to submit the complete DPR by March 31, 2023.

YEIDA that the proposed metro route between the Noida International Airport in Jewar and the Indira Gandhi International Airport can be connected via the New Delhi Railway Station, according to the statement

"Along with this, the check-in facility for Noida International Airport will be available to the passengers at various stations of this airport line. In the presentation, it was also informed by DMRC officials that the distance between the two airports will be about 1 hour due to the construction of this new metro route," the statement men-

"The total number of stations on this route has been proposed to be 11. The prodistance from Knowledge Park in Greater Noida to New Delhi Railway Station will be about 37 km, of which 3 km will be underground and 34 km will be ele-

None can...

From Page 1

questions about then Prime Minister

Manmohan Singh's visit to Arunachal

Pradesh on October 13, 2009, he asked

if the party carried research on the issue.

had received Rs 1.35 crore from the

Chinese embassy. After following due

diligence, the Home Ministry cancelled

the FCRA registration of the RGF," he

Between 2005 and 2007, the RGF

Recalling that China had raised

# Need to record India's rapid infra dev, says Thakur

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur on Tuesday stressed on the need to document the story of India's rapid strides in development of infrastructure such as roads, tunnels, expressways, bridges and high speed railways.
"India's brightest and bril-

liant minds were truly re-imagining the country's potential and pushing the envelope with each new engineering marvel be it road tunnels, river and seaports, expressways, airports, bridges, high-speed railways," he said at a function here.

Thakur was speaking at a function to unveil a new documentary series 'Build India -A Story of Building New India' created by Effective Initiatives Pvt Ltd in partnership with Discovery Channel. Union ministers Bhagwanth Khuba and Bhagwat Karad were also present at the event.



series is curated and anchored by Vaibhav Dange, Advisor, National Highway Authority of

Thakur said the government has set a scorching pace of construction of highways as part of efforts to boost the

"The pace of national highways (NHs) construction has increased by three times since 2014-15. The average per day figure has grown from 12 km per day in 2014-15 to 37 km per day in 2020-21," the minister said.

Plaint against Delhi CM for accusing BJP leader of horse-trading STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP leader Yogendra Chandolia on Tuesday filed a complaint with the Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) against AAP leaders, including Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, and MP Sanjay Singh, for being accused of horse-trading.

Addressing a Press conference along with Chandolia, BJP MP Ramesh Bidhuri accused the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders of using "shoot and scoot" tactics by levelling allegations on Opposition leaders and then seeking apology when cornered. "The AAP leaders instead of thinking about how to serve the people, after mandate given to them in MCD polls are resorting to shoot and scoot by levelling baseless allegations on us," Bidhuri said.

Chandolia, who is in charge of BJP's northwest Delhi unit and a former mayor, alleged that Kejriwal was part of a "conspiracy" to accuse his party of trying to poach the AAP coun-

### Apologise to Sarma, Bidhuri tells Sisodia after SC's observation

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

After Supreme Court's strong observation against Delhi Deputy CM Manish Sisodia that he will have to face consequences regarding a defamation case filed by Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri advised Sisodia to publicly apologise to Sarma.

He said considering the number of lies by the leaders of the Aam Aadmi Party, they should apologise for all the other false allegations as well. Due to these allegations, crores of rupees from Delhi's exchequer are wasted.

The LoP said Sisodia had accused Sarma that the Assam Government had bought PPE kits at a higher cost from the company of the CM's wife during the period.

On this Sarma had filed a defamation case against him in Kamrup court, terming the allegations as false.

### **AAP** to organise training event for it newly elected **Councillors**

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP will organise a day-long training session for its newly elected councillors on December 14 to acquaint them with the funds at their disposal and the protocols they need to follow, party sources said on Tuesday.

The training will be conducted by ex-councillors, they

The AAP emerged victorious in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) elections early this month, winning 134 of the 250 wards. The BJP, which had ruled the civic body for three consecutive terms, bagged 104 wards to finish second

"The new councillors will be acquainted with the funds they have at their disposal and what kind of development work they can get done with them. The training programme will also see them getting to know about their responsibilities in the House and how can they meet with MCD officers," a party source said.

#### **School students** join call to save **Aravallis**

Gurugram: More than 750 students from schools across NCR came together and joined the campaign to celebrate 'Aravalli Day' and to save Aravali here in the Aravalli region in Gurugram on Tuesday. The students contin-

#### ue their protests against the NCR Draft Plan 2041 proposal seeking a rollback of the draft

**SC** judge recuses

self from Bilkis...

From Page 1 The top court said that a new bench will be constituted and the matter will be taken up thereafter. Gupta told the bench that when the matter is taken up, she would like to press her application seeking a stay of the remission order.

Bilkis Bano has also filed a separate plea seeking a review of the apex court's May 13, 2022 order on a petition by a convict in which it had asked the Gujarat government to consider premature release of the convicts in terms of its policy

### 2 students die after hit by car

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

Two students of class 9 died after being hit by a car while they were crossing the Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh. According to police, the car driver has been arrested.

The students, Vanshika Mishra and Manvi, were both aged 14 and studied in Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya in Peeragarhi village.

a remission petition within a

period of two months. The

review plea was also listed for

consideration before a bench of

Justices Rastogi and Vikram

Nath at 1.30 pm in chambers.

The order on the review plea is

seized of PILs filed by CPI(M)

leader Subhashini Áli, inde-

pendent journalist Revati Laul,

former vice chancellor of

Lucknow University Roop Rekha Verma, and TMC MP

Mahua Moitra against the

release of the convicts. Bilkis

Bano was 21 years old and five

months pregnant when she was gang-raped while fleeing

The top court is already

yet to be uploaded.

According to law, any NGO which intends to receive foreign funding must register itself under the FCRA. of July 9, 1992 about deciding

Shah also alleged that when the Indian soldiers were fighting the Chinese PLA at Galwan, someone from the Congress was throwing a dinner for an official of the Chinese embassy and asked why work on vital infrastructure projects was stalled in 2012 following a threat from China.

The FCRA registrations of the RGF and Rajiv Gandhi Charitable Trust (RGCT) were cancelled in October last after an investigation carried out by an inter-Ministerial committee formed by the Home Ministry in 2020.

The trustees of the RGF are former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Congress leaders P Chidambaram. Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Suman Dubey and Ashok Ganguly. The trustees of the RGCT are Rahul Gandhi, Ashok Ganguly, Bansi Mehta and Deep Joshi.

# Nitish drops...

From Page 1

"The Chief Minister has been saying, for quite a while, that the future belongs to Tejashwi and young-sters like him. He had said so yesterday in Nalanda where I, too, was present. He said it again today," said Vijay Kumar Chaudhary, one of the closest aides of Kumar, who also holds key portfolios in the State Cabinet. Chaudhary was referring to Kumar's speech on the previous day when the latter had inaugurated a dental hospital in his home district and spoken about backing

Yadav, however, showed characteristic composure when approached for comments by journalists. "At present, we are running the Government together. And we need to concentrate on the principal challenge before us, and that is the 2024 Lok Sabha polls," said Yadav. Chaudhary also said at the legislators' meet, Kumar "made it clear again that he was not in the race for prime ministership. But he still feels the BJP can be defeated in 2024 if the Opposition stands united. And he will continue to work in that direction".

Meanwhile, the BJP, which has been sore over the loss of power it suffered as a result of the upheaval in August this year, sought to drive a wedge between Kumar and the RJD.

"If Nitish wants to make someone his successor, he should show the moral courage to actually hand over power. He will not be able to do so because it would lead to a revolt in the JD(U). His party men are already upset over Tejashwi running the show through remote control," said Nitin Nabin, BJP MLA and former

Another former BJP Minister Jibesh Kumar raked up the installation as CM of Jitan Ram Manjhi, and unceremonious removal thereafter, by Kumar and asserted, "Nitish is not someone who can stay without power. He is only hoodwinking Tejashwi. Take it from me in writing."

### **Army thwarted PLA** incursion bid firmly...

From Page 1

Earlier in the day, the issue of Indian Army-PLA troop clash disrupted the Lok Sabha proceedings. Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha proceedings were adjourned till 12 noon following opposition protests over the

After obituary reference vere made to those who laid down their lives while foiling terror attack on Parliament on December 13, 2001, Opposition members, including Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, Gaurav Gogoi (both Congress), T R Baalu (DMK) and Asaduddin Owaisi (AİMIM) raised the issue of the border clash in Arunachal Pradesh. Parliamentary Affairs

Minister Pralhád Ioshi responded by saying that the Defence Minister will make a statement on the matter at 12

However, the Opposition members did not relent and continued to protest and sought immediate discussion on the issue.

demanded that there should be a discussion immediately after Singh's statement. Gogoi said Prime Minister Narendra Modi make should statement.

Speaker said that if the Opposition wants a discussion, it should give a notice and that would be discussed at the **Business Advisory Committee** and a decision would be taken accordingly. As protests continued, the Speaker announced adjournment of the House till

In Rajya Sabha, the Congress-led-Opposition staged a walkout after it was denied permission to seek clarifications on Defence Minister's

Congress members said there was no point in sitting inside the House if they are not given clarifications. Members of the CPI, CPI-M, Shiv Sena, RJD, SP and JMM joined the Congress members in staging a walkout from the House. Earlier, the Defence

Minister held a high-level meeting with the National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, Army chief General Manoj Pande and Chief of Defence staff Lt. General Anil Chauhan on the December 9 clash at the

the issue. The Tawang incident is While standing in their the first major clash between respective seats, Chowdhary the India and the Chinese

Rinchen La in eastern Ladakh. Indian and Chinese troops were engaged in a brief face-off

armies since August 2020 near

near Yangtse in October last year as well and it was resolved following talks between local commanders of the two sides according to established pro-The ties between India and

China nosedived significantly following the fierce clash in the Galwan Valley in June 2020 that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades. Both sides gradually enhanced their deployment by rushing in tens of thousands of soldiers and

heavy weaponry.

Following the eastern
Ladakh standoff, the Indian Army significantly bolstered its operational capabilities along the LAC in the eastern theatre.

The army put into place an effective surveillance apparatus and there has been a substantial improvement in overall monitoring of the areas in the last two years, military officials

The Indian army said in a statement on Monday that Indian and Chinese troops clashed along the LAC in Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh on December 9 and the face-off resulted in "minor injuries to a few personnel from both sides".

should work together to improve

their relations. "We are not able to

have good relations with our neigh-

bouring countries. Everyone knows

the status of our relations with

Pakistan but the relations with

China are also not working out.

China has not completely gone

# Collegium lists 5...

From Page 1 Normally, five judges form collegium including CJI. The change in the collegium has occurred due to the fact that after the CJI, none of the four senior-most apex court judges – justices SK Kaul, S Abdul Nazeer, KM Joseph and MR Shah — would become the head of the judiciary. This time the total number of collegium members went to six. with the entry of Justice Sanjiv Khanna, who is in line to suc-

the Gujarat riots of 2002.

From Page 1

"As countries commit to ecosystem restoration, like Canada has done through ambitious Bonn Challenge pledge, the Restoration Barometer tool enables them to build a comprehensive picture of their progress, helping them to identify what is working, where and how, which leads to more impactful action and better targeted investments.

"This means restoration efforts can not only be maximised but fully sustained during this critical decade to save our natural

world," Carole Saint-Laurent, Head of IUCN's Forests and Grasslands Team said while Stewart Maginnis, Deputy Director General - Programme, IUCN, was of the view that: "To drive restoration ambition and action at the scale that is needed to make the Global Biodiversity Framework a success requires sound and credible information on how restoration is progressing on the ground and what impacts are being achieved for biodiversity, for climate and for economies.

Director, Directorate-

"The Restoration Barometer tool fills this gap," added the statement. Christiane Paulus,

General, Nature Conservation, Sustainable Use of Natural Resources, Nature-Based Climate Action, German Federal Environment, echoed similar views saying that the Barometer supports governments to track progress on their restoration targets and to report to the UN Conventions efficiently and consistently on protecting and helping biodiversity to recover while also sequestering\_ and storing

carbon. Natalia Alekseeva, UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration Coordinator, Environment Programme, said: "The UN Decade on Ecosystem

Restoration can only succeed if we measure progress on the ground. This is where like IUCN's Restoration Barometer are crucial. Countries have promised to restore 1 billion ĥectares - an area the size of China. But where is that restoration happening? And how successful is it?

The 18 countries which have submitted their progress report are Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Uganda, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

# Cong seeks

From Page 1

"And our demand from day one has been to tell the truth to the nation," Gogoi told reporters at a Press conference.

He said the Congress is concerned about the security of the nation and that is why it was asking questions to the Government. He alleged that whenever an issue of national security comes up, the Prime Minister hides behind his Ministers".

'The BJP Government is not able to protect the territorial integrity of our country. They do not have the time to think about the country except elections and doing communal politics," he said, adding that we have to prepare a united strategy after taking everyone together but there is no time for it with this Government.

He also accused the Government of "diplomatic failure" and that is why China is indulging in such clashes along the border. 'Modi ji, dariye mat. (Don't be afraid). Name China and assure the country that what he said earlier was wrong and spell out how India plans to take on this challenge strongly," Gogoi said.

Khera said in 1962, as many as 165 MPs participated in the discussion on China when even our MPs criticised our Government then and Nehru ji listened. "But, look at this Government they attack us when we ask them questions." Abdullah said the two countries

back from Ladakh and now there are reports of a face-off in Arunachal Pradesh," Abdullah told the media. "They (Centre) have only kept

those (old) laws here which can be used to harass people. There is no (Public) Safety Act anywhere in the country...It is only in Jammu and Kashmir. I have said it earlier and I repeat when the National Conference Government comes, on the first day, this law will be repealed," Abdullah told party workers at Dooru in Anantnag dis-

M/S SHREE MAHALAXMI STEEL INDUSTRIES Registrar of Firms Reg. No. 439 of 2006 Dtd 27.02.2006. Address Khasra No 76 Village Ranholla, Nangloi, New Delhi 11004 has following changes in partners: 1.Sh. Hari Krishan (HUF) partner resigned w.e.f. 31.03.18 2. Sh. Anish Gupta,joined as partner w.e.f. 01.04.18

ceed Justice Chandrachud as

the CJI on November 11, 2024.

3. Sh. Anish Gupta,Partner resigned w.e.f. 31.08.1 4.Sh. Shri Krishan Gupta joined as Partner w.e.f. 01.09.19
Final Partners are as under:

1. Shri Krishan Gupta, Partner 2. Saurabh Gupta, Partner

3. Abhinav Gupta, Partner

Public Notice

NOTICE is hereby given that Mr. Klrurshid Alamis owner of the Buit-up First Floor, Rear Side Pvt. Portion No. 204, Facing Small Gali (Without roof rights), Part of Property Bearing No. 782-901-B. Gali No. 24, area measuring 104.17 sq. mtrs., i.e. approx. 125 sq. yds., carved out of Khasra No. 450, studied at Tughtakabad Ext., New Delhi-11001 yde Sale Deed dated 05.11.07 (Doc. No. 5982), Mr. Khurshid Alam has misplaced the Original Sale Deed dated 23.05.2007 executed by MrS Kataria Builtack Pvt. Ltd. in favour of Dr. Jahanara in respect of sald floor 'Doc as 6371, vol no. 7335, Pages 162 to 169. Anyone who find the above said document shall handover the same to the Manager of Bajaj Housing Finance Ltd. Now Mr. Khurshid Alam is availing a loann on this property from Bajaj Housing Finance Ltd. by mortgaging the said property, the same may be raised within 7 days of this publication to be with fine 1404coates), Law Veritas North, Unit no 907, 9th Floor, GD-ITL Tower, (B-08), Neraji Subhash Place, Delhi-110034 or contact at 9066707172/9818228636 (M).

## **Reach IGIA** 3.5 hrs...

From Page 1

The airline said passengers should use gate number 5 and 6 to get inside the Delhi airport, T3, as these entry points are nearest to the Indigo

The air traffic data showed that 4.18 lakh domestic air passengers travelled domestic on December 12.

Vistara has also asked its passengers to arrive at the airport at least three hours prior to domestic as well as international flights. Citing high footfalls at airport terminals, SpiceJet has issued an advisory to passengers asking them to reach early and carry not more than one hand baggage of up to 7 kgs only.

Several passengers on twitter reported that at least a dozen scuffles

broke out at the IGI airport in the morning. "Early morning at a Delhi fish market! At least a dozen scuffles have broken out in the last 20 mins", Nikhil Inamdar wrote on Twitter.

The Ministry has requested the scheduled airlines to place real time data on their social media feeds regarding waiting time at respective airports' entry gates. According to the ministry, it has come to the notice that the airline check-in counters at certain airports are found unmanned or inadequately manned during early morning hours leading to congestion at the airports, thereby causing inconvenience to the passengers.

"Scheduled airlines are therefore advised to deploy sufficient manpower at all check-in/baggage drop counters well in advance to ensure de-congestion and smooth flow of passengers at airports," it said. Further, the Ministry has requested airlines to place real time data on their social media feeds regarding waiting time at respective airports' entry

Taking note of the IGI chaos, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture's chairman Vijayasai Reddy will take up the issue of congestion with the CEO of airport operator DIAL on December 15. The panel is to hear the views of the DIAL CEO and the Chairman of the Association of Private Airport Operators (APAO) on the 'development of greenfield and brownfield airports and issues pertaining to civil enclaves in defence airports', according to the notice.

Interestingly, the issue of airport chaos and congestion, however, turned into fodder for meme lovers on social media, with many narrating their past experiences. A user compared the security queues at the Delhi airport with those seen outside "ration shops in the seventies" or "East Bengal Mohun Bagan match ticket counters". East Bengal vs Mohun Bagan rivalry in West Bengal is a crowd-puller.

### **IAF** scrambled jets to...

From Page 1 'On December 9, PLA troops tried to trans-

gress the LAC in the Yangtse area of Tawang sector and unilaterally change the status quo. The Chinese attempt was contested by our troops in a firm and resolute manner," Singh said.

"The ensuing face-off led to a physical scuffle in which the Indian Army bravely prevented the PLA from transgressing into our territory and compelled them to return to their posts," he said.

It was the first major clash between the Indian and Chinese armies since May 2020 in the Galwan area of eastern Ladakh.

Indian and Chinese troops were engaged in a brief face-off near Yangtse in October last year as well and it was resolved following talks between local commanders of the two sides as per established protocols.

The IAF increased its

overall deployment strength in various key bases in the eastern theatre, including in Tezpur where a fleet of Su-30 jets were deployed. A squadron of Rafale jets is based in Hasimara air base in West Bengal and

it also carries out sorties

in areas under the eastern

theatre.

# Border...

Wang also said Beijing hopes that the "Indian side will work with us in the same direction and smoothly deliver the important common understanding reached by leaders of both sides and act strictly on the spirit of relevant bilateral agreements signed by both sides and jointly preserve peace and tranquility in the

In his statement, Senior Colonel Long said on December 9, the border defence forces organised regular patrols on the Chinese side of the LAC in "Dongzhang" area in the eastern sector of the China-India border, which was "blocked by the Indian Army

illegally crossing the line". 'Our troops' response is professional, firm and standard, which has helped to stabilise the situation. Both sides have been under disengagement since then," Long

"We ask the Indian side to strictly control and restrain the front-line forces and work with the Chinese side to maintain peace and tranquility along,"

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# **Insurance holders defrauded in** name of RBI, FM, IRDA; 4 held

Using data of insurance policyholders and producing forged letters in the name of Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, a Delhibased gang cheated over 3,000 people on the pretext of providing them money against their insurance policies, police officers said. The Intelligence Fusion & Strategic Operations (IFSO) unit of the Delhi Police said on Tuesday that they busted the gang and arrested the four accused, identified as Mehtab Alam (33), Sartaj Khan (31), Mohd Junaid (29) and Deen Mohd (27). All of them are from Delhi and have previously worked at insurance

Mehtab Alam, the alleged kingpin, also has experience in dealing with websites and email registration. He convinced his associates to work with him to earn easy money. They fraudulently obtained insurance policyholder data and started contacting them with fake email IDs created in the name of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority

companies.

light after the Finance Ministry approached the Delhi Police Commissioner about the fraud and impersonation, following which the police found a forged letter and several complaints. Similar complaints were also received during the enquiry. In one of the complaints, a man stated that he received a call from a person who posed as a senior RBI official. The accused told him that some amount had been sanctioned against his lapsed policy. The police said one victim was duped of Rs 1,27,000 using the same modus

According to police, "The victim was asked to provide his email ID. He later received a fake RBI email saying he will receive Rs 12 lakh. The caller asked him to pay Rs 44,000 as processing charges. When he paid the amount, he was again asked to pay Rs 27,000 as NOC charge. The victim then received a forged cheque of Rs 12 lakh via post. The accused then asked him to pay Rs 52,000 as the final fund release charges to get the cheque amount. In total, the victim was cheated of Rs 1.2 lakh."

The gang used forged doc-



uments of the Ministry of Finance bearing the signature of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, RBI Regional Director SMN Swamy, the IRDA (Bima Lokpal) and officials from various life insurance companies, the police said.

Deputy Commissioner of

Police, IFSO, Prashant Gautam said after analysing the technical aspects and cyber trailing, the team zeroed in on the location and identity of the fraudsters. Despite the accused constantly changing their locations, police managed to arrest Alam from New Delhi's Mustafabad following a raid. Later, his three associates were arrested, Gautam said. Elaborating on the gang's modus operandi, Gautam said the accused used to call the insurance policyholders posing as IRDA, RBI and Ministry of

FRAUD ALERT

Finance officials and lured them on the pretext of providing maturity amount against their existing or lapsed policies. "In order to convince the

policy holders, they sent emails using IDs similar to that of Government financial institutions with forged documents seemingly issued from the RBI, Ministry of Finance and the IRDA," Gautam said.

They also sent forged cheques by post to the victims in order to induce them. After that, they asked for charges, including processing, NOC and fund releasing. "Upon getting the cheques, the victims transferred the amount into the accounts provided by the accused persons and then the accused would withdraw the amount from different locations in Delhi," the senior police official said.

# Women to fill all 22 posts of Sub-Registrars in Revenue Dept

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

In a first, all 22 Sub-Registrars in the Delhi Government's Revenue Department would be women officers. The Government had earlier appointed six women Sub-Registrars in July. Delhi Lieutenant- Governor (L-G) VK Saxena has directed Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar to appoint only all women Sub-Registrars.

The Sub-Registrar's offices are responsible for land registry sale, purchase and lease, registration of properties, sale deeds, issuing share certificates, marriage registrations, issuing of caste certificates, income certificates, verification of documents and other services that have a direct bearing on the common people.

After assuming charge, Saxena, with an aim of empowering women in Government services by placing them in positions of importance, had envisaged that the Sub-Registrar offices be headed by women officials. This, he had, underlined would also ensure more sensitive, corruption-free and empathetic public dealing, as experience around the world had established.



In an official statement, the L-G's office said that it is expected that with women officers at the helm, the "prevalent corruption at such offices will be mitigated". The Sub-Registrar offices are at the cutting edge of Government's interface with the common citizens, it said. The Government believes women officials will be "clean and corruption-free".

"While through an earlier order, six women Sub-Registrars had been appointed, another 16 women officials have been selected and appointed as Sub-Registrars in the remaining 16 Sub-Registrar offices, thereby taking the total number to 22," the statement

"It may be noted that of late, many cases of corruption had come to the fore recently, wherein the Lieutenant-Governor had suspended Sub-Registrars. and it is expected that with women officers at the

helm, the prevalent corruption, red-tapism and harassment of people at such offices will be mitigated," the statement

Earlier, Naresh Kumar, following Saxena's directions, had also appointed a woman Officer on Special Duty (OSD) on October 8 for developing an eplatform' to ensure that all Sub-Registrar offices become faceless and the services are provided to the people through the online mode.

Welfare Resident Associations (RWAs) in Delhi on Tuesday welcomed the announcement, saying the move will empower women. However, the RWAs are sceptical about whether the decision would be able to curb the menace of corruption, saying it is too early to comment on that. "It is a welcome move that will help in the empowerment of women. It will promote gender equality. It is a strategic move. It will change the way society sees women," said Atul Goyal, president, United Residents Joint Action (URJA), a confederation of 2,500 RWAs in Delhi. Goyal, however, questioned whether the decision would have any impact on the menace

#### LG to chair meet along with CM to take stock of G-20 summit preparations

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant-Governor VK Saxena will chair a meeting along with Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and other Ministers to review and take stock of preparations in the run up to the G-20 summit and various other meetings preceding the summit on Wednesday.

The meeting comes in the wake of Prime Minister Narendra Modi meeting with all Governors, L-Gs and CMs last week, where he had urged for all to put in their best efforts to make the international event a success. This would be the first meeting between the L-G and the Delhi Chief Minister on the preparations for the projects related to the G20 summit.

# Over 40L of Delhi's 57.60L domestic power consumers apply for subsidy

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government's I data showed that more than 40 lakh of the national Capital's 57.60 lakh domestic power consumers have applied for subsidy under the ruling AAP Government's free electricity scheme till Tuesday. The data also showed that

47 lakh consumers received subsidies when consumers didn't need to apply for the The Delhi Government

revamped its subsidy scheme to make it mandatory for domestic consumers to apply to avail of the benefit of the power subsidv. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had earlier announced that from October, only those consumers who apply for power subsidy would get it.

40,28,915 consumers have applied for the subsidy. These includes 9.88 lakh consumers Limited, 18.28 lakh BSES Rajdhani Power Limited consumers and 11.28 lakh Tata Power Delhi Distribution

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

 $F^{\text{rom making daily video calls to an}}_{\text{Investigating Officer to staying inside his home while guards keep a}}$ 

watch outside, former INU student

Umar Khalid an accused in the 2020

north east Delhi riots case, will have

to abide by strict conditions imposed

by a city court that granted him interim bail for

one week to attend his sister's wedding. Granting

bail to Khalid on Monday, Additional Sessions

Judge Amitabh Rawat has imposed certain

restrictions to him as the prosecution's fears that

he may influence witnesses while out on inter-

younger sister of the accused, this court is

inclined to grant interim bail for attending the

marriage-related functions. Regarding appre-

hensions of prosecution, those can be taken care

of by attaching conditions in the bail...,"

"....In view of the marriage of the real

As of Tuesday evening,



Limited consumers. Another 13,882 consumers under the New Delhi Municipal Council area have also applied, the official figures revealed.

"Only those consumers who submitted their applica-tions till November 15 will get the subsidy for October. Applications filed after November 15 will be considered for December and subsequent months," a senior Government officer said. More than 37 lakh consumers had opted for subsidy up to November 15.

the subsidy was earlier set at the subsidy scheme. The October 31. Over 35 lakh con- amount earmarked for the sumers had applied for the scheme in 2021-22 was Rs scheme by the last date, which

Khalid to abide by strict conditions

imposed by court during interim bail

was later extended to November 15.

Of the 47 lakh consumers who received subsidies earlier, nearly 30 lakh used free electricity up to 200 units per month. The Government provided 50 per cent subsidy (up to Rs 800) to around 16-17 lakh consumers with monthly consumptions of 201-400 units. Any consumer who fails to apply for the subsidy can get it from the next bill cycle after submitting an application. For the current financial

year, the Delhi Government

Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh

shall not get in touch with any of the witnesses nor will tamper with evi-

dence and will provide his mobile

(phone) number to the investigating

officer (IO) and shall keep his mobile phone open (on) till the period of

"The accused...upon his release

Rawat said in the order.

interim bail," the court said. The court directed Khalid to contact the IO through video calls

daily, besides not talking or giving any interviews

lic. He will be entitled to interact with his fam-

ily members, relatives and friends during the

marriage ceremony, but during his entire inter-

im bail period, he shall remain at home...except

to attend marriage functions on December 26,

27 and 28 at the designated place," the court said.

It said police may guard the house from outside

but shall not go inside the premises.

"He shall not meet any members of the pub-

to "any media, including social media."

# Govt will provide 450 free medical tests: Kejriwal

The AAP Government will provide 450 types of medical tests free of cost at its hospitals and health centres from Ĵanuary 1, with Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal saying that the move will help those unable to afford private health-

"Until now 212 types of tests were conducted free of cost in Government hospitals, polyclinics and Mohalla Clinics in Delhi. The State Government has decided to further increase the number of types of tests to 450 to provide relief to the people who are already burdened by inflation," said Kejriwal.

The facility will be avail-

able to the people of Delhi. "It is the endeavour of the Delhi Government that all sections of the people get all kinds of quality health facili-

ties free of cost in Government

hospitals, polyclinics and Mohalla Clinics, so that the people who are facing financial crisis can get some relief," said Delhi CM Kejriwal.

Kejriwal decided to increase the facility of free tests in government hospitals, polyclinics, mohalla clinics and mobile health clinics. In this regard, he has approved the proposal received from the Health Department. After his approval, the Delhi government will be able to conduct 450 types of tests free of cost for the citizens of Delhi.

"After this expansion, Delhi Government will be able to provide 450 types of tests in its Aam Aadmi Mohalla Clinics, Mahila Mohalla Clinics, Polyclinics and Mobile Health Clinics. The Kejriwal government has also partnered with private laboratories, which ensure testing and sample transportation as per standard



approved by the authorities,"

These tests include urine routine pH, specific gravity, sugar, protein, and microscopy; urine microalbumin; stool routine; stool occult blood; haemoglobin (Hb); total leucocytic count (TLC); differential leucocytic count (DLC); total red cell count with MCV, MCH, MCHC, DRW; complete haemoglobin/CBC, Hb, RBC count and indices; and platelet

"Currently, the Delhi Government has 522 Aam

Aadmi Mohalla Clinics, four Mahila Mohalla Clinics, 21 Polyclinics and Dispensaries in the city, where the testing facility will be available free of cost to the people," said kejriwal.

Taking the matter to twitter, Kejriwal commented, "It is our mission to provide good quality health and education to all sections of people. Healthcare has become very expensive. Many people cannot afford private healthcare. This step of the Delhi govern-ment will help all such people."

secretary

Sandeep Pathak

appointed AAP's

national general



STAFF REPORTER 📕 NEW DELHI

The AAP has appointed its I senior leader and Rajya Sabha member Sandeep Pathak as national general secretary (organisation), after it recently became eligible for national party status. Pathak was the party's election in-charge for Punjab as well as for Gujarat, where Assembly polls were held this month. In Punjab, the AAP wrested the State from the March. He was the AAP's surprise pick for the Rajya Sabha after Arvind Kejriwal's party registered a thumping victory

Though the Arvind Kejriwal-headed AAP had won only five of the 182 seats in the Gujarat polls, it got a nearly 13 per cent vote share. On the party's performance, Kejriwal had said that the AAP has not won many seats but the votes the party got helped it attain national party status.

"The party hereby appoints Dr. Sandeep Pathak as the Rashtriya Sangathan Mahamantri (National General Secretary Organisation)," AAP said in a release. "He will also be a Permanent Invitee to the Political Affairs Committee (PAC) of the party. "Sources in the AAP also said the appointment has been made eyeing the 2024 Lok Sabha elections

### Govt to add 50 low-floor e-buses to fleet

SAURAV GUPTA NEW DELHI

A iming to make Delhi the Electric Vehicle (EV) capital of the country, the AAP Government on Tuesday announced that as many as 50 new low-floor electric buses are all set to hit the streets of the national Capital.

Talking to *The Pioneer*, Delhi Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot said that the new buses will ply on nine routes of the Capital and will cover around 3 lakh

Emphasising on the need for electric buses in the city, Gahlot said that this year the Air Quality Index of the Capital had turned into the 'severe' category for only three days. Delhi Government is fully ded-

icated to making the city pollution free.
Giving the details of the routes on which these new buses will ferry the commuters, the transport department officials, said that Route Number 165 for which the originating point will be Shahbad Dairy and will terminate at the Anand Vihar Inter-State Bus Terminus (ISBT).

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Fovernment has prepared a winter action

plan for the homeless which

includes food and lodging facil-

ities across all shelter homes in

the national capital. There are

195-night shelters for homeless

people in Delhi which include

19 for families, 17 for women,

four for drug addicts, three

facility to the maximum num-

ber of people of the Capital, a

24x7 centralised control room

has been set up and multiple

helpline numbers (14461, 011-

23378789 and 011-23370560)

People can inform DUSIB

"The Delhi Government is

about the homeless through this helpline and DUSIB's res-

cue team will reach the location

to take the homeless to the

nearest shelter.

To ensure the benefit of the

recovery shelters.



"After the addition of the 50 new lowfloor electric buses, the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC's) electric fleet will increase to 300 buses," he said.

"The second will be Route Number 879 which will originate at Shahbad Dairy and the final drop location will be Janakpuri D-Block. The third route is 901, covering the designated points between Mangol Puri and Kamla Market," he said.

The fourth is Route number 957 which will originate at Rohini Sector 22 Terminal and the endpoint will be Shivaji Stadium. The fifth route is 971 for which the pickup point is Rohini Sector 1 Avantika to the final destination Anand Vihar ISBT," he stated.

department for these buses is 990A, from Rohini Sector 25 (Deep Vihar) to Shivaji Stadium. The seventh route is 990 Extenstion, offering service from Rohini Sector 23 (Pocket-Č) to Shivaji Stadium," the officials said. 'The eighth route is The Mudrika Seva

"The sixth route finalized by the

(TMS) (-), the originating and destination points for which will be Wazirpur Depot. The last route is TMS (+), with the pick point and final point being Wazirpur," he "Each one of these buses is estimated

to cut 0.33 million tonnes of PM 2.5 and PM 10 Carbon Dioxide (CO2) each in its life span of 10 years," he claimed. Speaking about the charging stations

in the city, he said that currently there are 2,200 charging points for 2-Watt, 3-Watt, and 4-Watt capacities.

"Apart from this, three depots have been completely electrified for electric lowfloor buses. These depots have their own chargers deployed inside the premises," the transport department official said.

#### JNUTA demands reversal of Centre's decision to withdraw Maulana Azad National Fellowship

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

¬he Jawaharlal Nehru Tuniversity Teachers' Association on Tuesday demanded an immediate reversal of the Centre's decision to withdraw the Maulana Azad National Fellowship for minority students, terming the move

an "anti-minority policy".

"The JNU Teachers'
Association (JNUTA) notes with deep dismay the media reports appearing on December 10, 2022, that the Ministry of Minority Affairs has decided to withdraw the Maulana Azad Fellowship (MAF), a five-year fellowship provided by the Centre in the

form of financial assistance to six notified minority communities — Muslims, Buddhists, Christians, Jains, Parsis and Sikhs, to pursue PhDs," it said in a statement.

Last week, in a written reply in the Lok Sabha, Minority Affairs Minister Smriti Irani announced the decision to discontinue the Maulana Azad National Fellowship from the 2022-23 academic session, saying it overlapped with various other fellowship schemes for higher education being implemented

by the Government. Reacting to it, the JNUTA called the discontinuation of the scheme an attack on the values of "inclusivity and democracy" integral to the higher education system required in India.

'The JNUTA demands an immediate reversal of the antiminority policy evident in the withdrawal of the MAF and the upholding of the democratic rights of all teachers to participate in higher education with dignity and without fear," the teachers' body said. In the statement, the

JNUTA also noted that academic excellence could only thrive in an environment that was not only free and devoid of fear but one that actively sought to remove social disadvan-

determined to provide a dignified life to every person residing in the Capital, including homeless people. To ensure that no one is left out in the cold during the peak winter season, the Government has established fooding and lodging facilities for homeless people across 195 shelter homes which have the capacity of accommodating over 17000 people," said Sisodia, while informing about the night shelters. "The Kejriwal government will increase the capacity of these shelters if needed in winter. Contact can also be established with the control room of the night shelters through helpline numbers 011-23378789 and 011-23370560," Deputy CM said. "Briefing the Deputy Chief Minister about the Winter Action Plan, the officials of

have also been issued by the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB). DUSIB, who is responsible for managing the night shelter facility across the capital primarily, along with the existing facilities of food, lodging and

medical care at the Rain Baseras, DUSIB has also established a 24x7 control room and a helpline 14461," Deputy CMO said, in a statement.

Winter action plan ready for homeless: Sisodia

"Anyone willing to get homeless people rescued from any part of Delhi can call on DUSIB's three helpline num bers or the "Rain Basera App". The officials also said that DUSIB has set up 15 rescue teams, each equipped with one

vehicle, for surveillance and rescuing the homeless," it said. "So far over 1500 homeless

people have been rescued by these teams in the past few weeks. On receiving informa-tion from the DUSIB control room or from any other sources the rescue teams immediately respond to pick up the homeless from the identified location and take them to the nearest shelter home," it stated.

"It is noteworthy that 195night shelters for homeless people in Delhi include 19 for families, 17 for women, four for drug addicts, three recovery shelters. The facilities provided to the people in these government shelter homes are food, lodging, lockers, complaint boxes, ambulance and free medical facilities, three meals per day, free medicines,

# Concert in Jaipur on Friday to mark 100 days of Yatra

To mark 100 days of the Bharat Jodo Yatra, the Congress will organise a concert in Jaipur on Friday with a live performance from singer Sunidhi Chauhan. The yatra started from Kanyakumari on September 7 and has so far covered Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. It will conclude in Jammu and Kashmir in early February 2023.

AICC General Secretary Jairam Ramesh said the 'Bharat Jodo Concert' will be attended by Congress leaders including Rahul Ğandhi, who will also address a press conference at Dausa on the day. "The (Bharat Jodo) Yatra will complete 100 days on December 16 and it will be a milestone," Ramesh said at a press conference in Sawai Madhopur.

New Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu and Congress MLAs from the state will join the yatra on Friday. Ramesh added that a huge public meeting would be held in Alwar on December 19. Rajasthan is the only Congress-ruled state the



yatra has entered and will cover about 500 km over 17 days before entering Haryana on

Former Union minister Namonarain Meena said the yatra had received overwhelming response and added that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's lies had been exposed. The Congress' Rajasthan unit chief Govind Singh Dotasra, on the other hand, said the feedback received during the yatra would be communicated to the government.

Earlier in the day, the yatra resumed its journey from Jeenapur before pausing at Soorwal bypass for its morning break. In the evening phase,

chartered accountants, entrepreneurs and youths from tribal communities walked in separate groups and also spoke to

During the afternoon break, Rahul Gandhi met representatives of several organisations working for the development and welfare of the Dalit community in the state, a party spokesperson said.

Rahul Gandhi listened to their grievances and asked Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, who was sitting with him, to resolve their problems at the state level.

He said Dalits gave the Constitution to India and should never be forgotten. He SC, ST and OBC communities in the power structure -- be it administration, judiciary or media -- was not as much as it

While the Bihar Congress announced for a month end beginning of the Bihar Yatra the Uttar Pradesh Congress president Brijlal Khabri too launched the regional Bharat Jodo Yatra from Ravindralaya Charbagh in Lucknow and said the foot march is a sign of change under former party president Rahul Gandhi's leadership. Congress has divided Uttar Pradesh into six zones organisationally and Bharat Jodo Yatra is being organised in every zone.

## Who is 'Pappu' now: Mahua's jibe at Centre over fall in industrial output

TMC Lok Sabha member Mahua Moitra on Tuesday cited Government data showing fall in the country's industrial output to question the Centre on the economic and employment scenarios, saying who is the 'Pappu' now.

Participating in a debate in the Lower House of Parliament on demands for additional grants for 2022-23, Moitra accused the Narendra Modi government of spreading "falsehood" about India's growth and appealed to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to take control of the economy, which, according to the TMC leader, is going

She also took a swipe at the BJP over its defeat in the justconcluded Himachal Pradesh assembly elections, saying the ruling party's president could not hold on to his home state. "Who is the Pappu now?" she

Himachal Pradesh is the home state of BJP national president JP Nadda and in the elections, the Congress wrested the state from his party.

Seeking to corner the Centre on the economic front, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP said, "This government and the ruling party

coined the term Pappu. You use it to denigrate and signify extreme incompetence. But the statistics tell us who the actual Pappu is.

Referring to the latest data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), Moitra claimed that while the country's industrial output shrunk by four per cent in October to a 26-month low, the manufacturing sector, which is "still the biggest generator of jobs", has contracted to 5.6 per cent.

'Seventeen of the industry sectors that make up the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) has recorded negative growth rates. Forex reserves have fallen by 72 billion dollars in under a year," she said.

The manufacturing sector's output declined by 5.6 per cent in October 2022 as against a growth of 3.3 per cent recorded in the year-ago month, according to the IIP data released by the NSO.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday mentioned during the Question Hour how 50 per cent of Foreign Institutional Investors inflows into emerging markets are coming to India, but the government in reply to a question told the House last Friday that almost 2 lakh people renounced their Indian citizenship in the first 10 months

of 2022, Moitra said. "This exodus of 2022 takes the total number of Indians renouncing Indian citizenship under this government in the past nine years since 2014 to over 12.5 lakh people," she

"Is this sign of a healthy economic environment or a healthy tax environment (in the country)?" she asked, adding, Who is the Pappu now?"

The TMC member alleged that there is an "atmosphere of terror" in the country today with the "sword" of the Enforcement Directorate hanging over "businessmen and high-net worth individuals" as well as leaders of opposition parties.

"The ruling party buys lawmakers for hundreds of crores of rupees and yet members of the opposition represent 95

per cent of the lawmakers under investigation by the Enforcement Directorate," Moitra alleged.

She accused the government of spreading falsehood over India's growth story under Prime Minister Modi and said demonetisation of high value currency enforced by it 2016 had failed to achieve its targets as cash is "still king" and phasing out of fake currency is still a distant dream.

"This government has us believe every February that this country's economy is going great guns, we are the fastest growing most efficient global player, everyone is getting employment, cylinders, electricity and pucca houses. This falsehood flies for eight to 10 months and the truth comes out limping after it," The TMC

## 77% prisoners in country awaiting trial, Centre cites NCRB data in Parl

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

 $T^{
m he}$  Centre on Tuesday told Parliament that out of the 5.54 lakh prisoners in the country, 4.27 lakh or 77.1%, were awaiting trial.

"The undertrial inmates are detained in prisons on the orders of the court by following the due process of law," the Union Home Ministry said citing the data available with the National Crime Records Bureau as on December 31,

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Ashish Mishra gave the figures in response to a question by Bahujan Samaj Party leader Shyam Singh Yadav in the Lok Sabha. Mishra said that as per NCRB data, there were 90,606 undertrial prisoners in the state of Uttar Pradesh.



belonged to the Scheduled ing in jails across the country. Caste community, 4,657 belonged to the Scheduled Tribe community and 41,678 belonged to Other Backward

Class," the Minister said. Recently, the Supreme Court has asked the Union Home Ministry to collect data of undertrial prisoners from the States. President Darupadi Murmu also in a seminar at Supreme Court, urged Judges to bring out some solution to

In reply to another question the Ministry said that there are about 1,500 complaints of cybercrime reported daily across the country in the

last three years of which only two per cent have turned into FIRs. Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai shared this information in Lok Sabha while giving data about cybercrime incidents in the country from January 1, 2020 the increasing number of to December 7, 2022 -- about

### Citizenship law row: SC asks lawyers to decide issues for adjudication

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

¬he Supreme Court on ■ Tuesday asked the counsel for the contesting parties to decide issues for adjudication in a batch of petitions challenging the constitutional validity of Section 6A of the Citizenship Act relating to illegal immigrants in Assam.

A five-judge Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud took note of the submissions of senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for one of the petitioners, that the petitions needed to be segregated and the issues needed to be formulated for adjudication. The Bench, also compris-

ing justices MR Shah, Krishna Murari, Hima Kohli, and PS Narasimha, agreed to the submissions that the petitions be kept for directions on January 10 next year for issuing the directions with regard to laying



ing. "We are going to resolve how the matters have to be segregated. We will sit together and resolve this. Just put it on after vacation," Sibal said.

"The counsel would segregate the cases which fall for decision before this court into distinct categories and the order in which the arguments are to be made," the bench said, adding "We will keep it for directions." The bench directed the apex court registry to provide scanned soft copies of the complete set of pleading filed on the issue.

Citizenship Act was inserted as

the citizenship of persons covered by the Assam Accord. The provision provides that those who have come to Assam on or after January 1, 1966, but before March 25, 1971, from specified territories, including Bangladesh in 1985, and since then are residents of Assam, must register themselves under section 18 for citizenship.

As a result, the provision fixes March 25, 1971, as the cut-off date for granting citizenship to Bangladeshi migrants in Assam. As many as d on the issue. 17 petitions, including the one Section 6A in the filed by Assam Public Works in 2009, are pending on the issue

### CBI books 6 Def PSU officials for irregularities in award of contracts in IAF's IACCS

¬he CBI has booked six officials of Defence PSU Bharat Electronics Ltd. In a corruption case for irregularities in the award of contracts in the Integrated Air Command and Control System (IACCS) network of the Indian Air Force. The agency has booked then General Manager and

CMD of Network Centric System of BEL, Sunil Kumar Sharma, former GM RK Handa, Senior DGM SS Chaudhary, Senior DGM Gurjit Singh, AGM, Infra. NCS, BP Pahuja and DGM (Infra) of NCS, Manish Goyal and three private firms---RD Konsultants, SR Ashok and Associates and Constructions along with their directors.

The accused persons and entities have been booked for

Code Sections relating to criminal conspiracy and cheating Prevention of Corruption Act relating to abuse of official

The CBI had registered a Preliminary Enquiry (PE) on November 11, 2021 following a reference from the Defence Ministry and the FIR follows prima facie merit in the alle-

"The enquiry prima facie revealed that during the award of contracts of Preliminary Project Report, Detailed Project Report and Civil Work Contract under IACCS Phase II Project, gross irregularities, violation of contract manual and CVC guidelines were violated by the above mentioned BEL officials in criminal conspiracy with M/s R.D. Consultants and others during the period 2011 to 2017," reads

### Frequent use of mobile phones to calm kids increases emotional dysregulation: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

 $F^{\mathrm{requent}}$  use of devices like smartphones and tablets to calm upset children aged 3-5 was associated with increased emotional dysregulation in kids, particularly in boys, according to a Michigan Medicine study in JAMA Pediatrics.

"Using mobile devices to settle down a young child may seem like a harmless, temporary tool to reduce stress in the household, but there may be long term consequences if it's a regular go-to soothing strategy," said lead author Jenny Radesky, developmental behavioral pediatrician at University of Michigan Health CS Mott Children's Hospital. "Particularly in early childhood, devices may

displace opportunities for development of independent and alternative methods to self-regu-

The study included 422 parents and 422 children ages 3-5 who participated between August 2018 and January 2020, before the COVID-19 pandemic started. Researchers analysed parent and caregiver responses to how often they used devices as a calming tool and associations to symptoms of emotional reactivity or dysregulation over a six-month period.

Signs of increased dysregulation could include rapid shifts between sadness and excitement, a sudden change in mood or feelings and heightened impulsivity.

Findings suggest that the association



between device-calming and emotional consequences was particularly high among young boys and children who may already experience hyperactivity, impulsiveness and a strong temperament that makes them more likely to react intensely to feelings like anger, frustration and

"Our findings suggest that using devices as a way to appease agitated children may especially be problematic to those who already struggle with emotional coping skills," Radesky said.

### Special board convened to promote 246 women Army officers, Centre tells SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

The Centre on Tuesday told The Supreme Court a Special Selection Board has been convened from January 9 to consider around 246 women Army officers for promotion.

Senior advocate R Balasubramanian, appearing for the Centre, informed a bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice P S Narasimha that the special selection board-III will consider the issue of promotion of these officers.

"We are seized of the matter. They are saying the special selection board will be over by January 23. We will keep it after January 24," the bench noted and posted the matter for further hearing on January 30.

The apex court said the respondent shall file an updated report before setting out the



results of the special selection board. The top court was hearing a plea by 34 women Army officers who have alleged junior male officers are being considered over them for promotions to perform "combat and commanding roles" in the

While hearing the matter on December 9, the apex court had asked the Army to put its "house in order", saying it feels the Army has not been "fair" to the women officers who have alleged delay in promotion after being granted permanent commission on the directions of the top court in 2020.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi pays homage to martyrs who lost their lives in the 2001 Parliament attack on its 21st anniversary, at Parliament House complex in New Delhi on Tuesday

# 'Easily available, cheap drug Carboplatin increases cure rate of breast cancer'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI** 

commonly available and Ainexpensive drug, carboplatin, increases the cure rate and survival of a very aggressive type of breast cancer, called triple-negative breast cancer, especially among young women, according to a recent study by the Tata Memorial Centre, Mumbai.

The study was conducted at two cancer hospitals in Varanasi - Mahamana Pandit

Madan Mohan Malviya Cancer Centre (MPMMCC) and Homi Bhabha Cancer Hospital (HBCH) - both under the purview of TMC. TMC director Dr Rajendra A Badwe is the principal investigator of this study, which was conducted by the Breast Cancer Working Group of

Dr. Badwe, recently, through a video conferencing, explained the findings and said that carboplatin increased the cure rate and survival of

triple-negative breast cancer. He said that the study was a randomized controlled trial which enrolled women with stage II-III triple negative breast cancer from 2010 to 2020 who were divided into two groups, both of whom received chemotherapy to downstage the disease prior to

Women in the standard treatment group received standard chemotherapy consisting of once per week paclitaxel for 8 weeks followed by

doxorubicin plus cyclophosphamide every 3 weeks for 4 cycles. In the platinum group, women received the same chemotherapy with the addition of injection carboplatin once per week for 8 weeks, given with paclitaxel.

Women in both groups underwent surgery after the last cycle of chemotherapy followed by radiotherapy. They were then followed up once every 6 months.

Dr Badwe explained the four main findings. First, in the whole study population cure rate increased by 6.6% from 64.1% in the standard arm to 70.7% in the platinum arm and the overall survival increased by 7.6% from 66.8% in the standard arm to 74.4 % in the platinum arm, which was statistically significant.

Second, when the results were analyzed by age, the benefit of weekly carboplatin was almost exclusively confined to women younger than 50 years who had a large 12.5% increase in cure rate

and an 11.2% gain in overall survival. Third, platinumbased chemotherapy wiped the tumour clean as assessed by pathologists in the operated breast specimen in 61% of younger patients compared with 41% by standard chemotherapy. Fourth, carboplatin-based chemotherapy was well tolerated without a high rate of toxicity.

A commonly available and inexpensive treatment like carboplatin will now be routinely offered as part of

The results of the landmark 'TMC Study - Platinum in TNBC' were presented by

### Carboplatin

pre-operative chemotherapy regimen to women with TNBC. The implications of this result are very important,

Dr Sudeep Gupta, professor of Medical Oncology at the TMC, at the ongoing San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium, which is the largest and most important breast cancer conference in the

# **Azad in spot post 'J&K Mins have** links with terror groups' claim

I had informed then PM Manmohan, HM Shivraj, Nabi had said recently; J&K Cong asks why he didn't act upon it as CM, accuses him of dancing to BJP's tune

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

 $F_{
m and\ Democratic\ Azad\ Party}^{
m ormer\ J\&K\ Chief\ Minister}$ (DAP) chairman, Ghulam Nabi Azad has been caught in a catch-22 situation over his recent claims that no action was taken by the former Prime Minister and Union Home Minister after he had shared 'confidential' reports of mainstream politicians having links with the militant outfits.

During an interview with a private TV news channel last week, Ghulam Nabi Azad had claimed as a Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir he had sent a report to the then Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh and Union Home Minister, Shivraj Patil about the links of some political leaders of the State with the militants but the Central leadership took no action in this regard.

Taking serious note of this sensational disclosure, newly appointed Chief of Jammu and

Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee Vikar Rasool Wani Tuesday decided to hit back saying the former Chief Minister was making fictitious allegations against the Congress on the instructions of his masters in the BJP and RSS.

"Azad, who was one of the influential Chief Ministers, is making fictitious claim that Prime Minister Manmohan RSS and the BIP". Singh and then Home Minister Shivraj Patil did not act on his report in which he had informed them about links of some of his ministers with the

"Azad claims to be a nationalist. What kind of a nationalist is he who did not sack the minister even after knowing about his militant links? Why did he not arrest them? After 20 years, he is now expressing regret," Wani added.

The Congress leader said the truth behind Azad's claims was that he is "dancing to the tunes of his masters - PM Modi, the Home Minister, the



The same man does not get tired while highlighting how he arrested an IPS officer and a DySP in human rights violations cases. Azad was the head of the home department, he had full cooperation of security agencies including the army as he was chairman of the unified headquarters. What stopped him from acting against those ministers?" Wani

The PCC chief said the Democratic Azad Party (DAP) leader should have known that the nation is supreme, and nothing including the party

"The aim is to damage the Congress. He has been sent here to damage our party," Wani said.

During his interview with the news channel Azad had clarified,"Since I do not believe in hearsay, I tried to gather all the concrete proofs and then sent a detailed report to the then Prime Minister and the then Home Minister of India. But unfortunately there was no

When asked whether it

was due to the soft policy of the then Congress Government at the Centre towards militants, Azad said he would not say that it was due to the soft stance of the then Government but there were some mainstream leaders acting as 'double cross'. They had links with the terror outfits and at the same time were befooling New Delhi by projecting themselves as great nationalists and mainstream leaders. "I don't know when such people will meet their fate," Azad regretted.

# Centre neglecting Meghalaya, other North-East: Didi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister
Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday attacked the BJP led Centre for depriving the Northeastern States including Meghalaya.

Asking the party men to walk together to success, Banerjee who was presently touring the north eastern State told a Trinamool Congress workers' convention that "the Centre has totally neglected Meghalaya and the North-

Alleging how divisive politics was being played every-where she said, "why divide the people on the basis of caste and religion ... let us walk together on the path of progress.

Banerjee was visiting Meghalaya to attend TMČ organisational meetings ahead of the next year's Assembly elections promised ₹1,000 to one woman of every house-

"The women of Meghalaya have suffered enough ... the State Government has neglected them, but here we have come to empower them," Baneieesaid.

The TMC became the principal opposition party in Meghalaya after 12 out of 17 Congress MLAs switched sides to join Banerjee's party under the leadership of former State Chief Minister Mukul Sangma. Later one MLA resigned to bring the TMC's strength to 11.

Earlier Banejrjee distributed ₹5 lakh each to the next of kin of those who were recently killed in border clash-

es along Assam and Meghalaya. "Today I have met the families of the victims of the firing and it was my duty to stand by them," the Chief Minister, who earlier told that Assam would not decide the fate of the north-eastern States

Besides Meghalaya the TMC is also trying to set foot in Tripura and Assam where the party has created its organ-

## Mamata condemns death of Bagtui carnage accused in CBI cutody, seeks probe



Family members of Lalan Sheikh with villagers protest outside the camp office of the CBI, in Birbhum on Tuesday

**SAUGAR SENGUPTA** KOLKATA

 $B_{\text{Mamata Banerjee has con-}}^{\text{engal Chief Minister}}$ demned the custodial death of Lalan Sheikh the prime accused in the Bagtui carnage case and demanded a thorough investigation into the matter.

"I condemn the incident," Banerjee said adding, "If the CBI is so smart then why did this death happen ... the CBI will have to explain this incident ... I have learnt that his (Lalan's) wife has already lodged and FIR ... the Government will also take it up," Banerjee who is presently touring Meghalaya on Tuesday said.

Curiously enough Banerjee's Cabinet colleague and Bengal Minister for correctional homes Akhil Giri said Lalan might have died out of illness.

"He was already suffering from some disease and was getting treatment for that ... I have information that he might have died out of that illness," Giri said Sheikh, the prime accused in the Bagtui carnage case that claimed 10 lives on March 21 this year was in CBI custody and was found hanging late on Monday afternoon.

shall not be published in any newspape

FDR Amount

Bs 50 000 00 ( Bs Fifty

Thousand, In favour of Secretary, DDUPSS &

bidder jointly valid

for 15 Years)

Meanwhile, in an explosive statement Lalan's wife Reshma accused CBI of murder. Bringing bribery charges against the CBI officials, Reshma said "they had asked ₹50 lakth from us ... when they brought my husband to our house for spot inspection they told me to produce the hard disk of the CCTV in front of my house ... or else they asked for ₹50 lakh and said they would settle everything in favour of my wife ...when I told that we do not have money they threatened of dire conse-

Later a district court at Rampur hat ordered a judicial inquiry into the incident.

quences.

**Durg District Urban Public Service Society** Room no. 48 DDUPSS Office

Municipal Corporation Bhilai, GE Road Supela Bhilai Phone no 0788-2350125,4040118 Pin 490023, Chhattisgarh

Email-dbcitybus@gmail.com

RFP NOTICE

Establishment of Fair Price Outlets for Medicines, Consumables at Chandulal Chandrakar Government Medical college premises Kachandur district durg under state sponsored Shri Dhanwantri Generic Medical Store Yojana (<u>Farlier Mukhya</u>

(1st Call)

Through this notice DURG DISTRICT URBAN PUBLIC SERVICE SOCIETY (DDUPSS)" invites proposal through online Electronic Chhattisgarh Government Procurement System (eGPS) <a href="https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in">https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in</a> as per RFP from Organizations for Establishment of Fair Price Outlets for Medicines, Consumables etc.

at Chandulal Chandrakar Government Medical college premises Kachandur district Durg under state sponsored Shri Dhanwantri Generic Medical Store Yojana (Earlier Mukhya Mantri Sasti Dawa Dukan Yojana).Interested Bidders should provide

information demonstrating that they have the required qualification and relevant experience to perform the relevant tasks.

Amendment/Corrigendum in RPF, if any, will only be uploaded on the website and

At least 10 people including women and children were on March 21 charred to death after alleged TMC gangsters attacked a village and torched three houses hours after Bhadu Sheikh the Trinamool Congress deputy pradhan of Bagtui panchayat in Birbhum district was bombed to death.

A TMC block president Anarul Sheikh was arrested in connection to the incident. Subsequently prime accused Lalan Sheikh, a close aide of Bhadu was arrested early this

Bhilai, Dated :- 12/12/22

Last Date of Bid Last Date of Physica

02/01/2023

04/01/2023 Time 5.30 PM

**Durg District Urbar** 

Public Service Society

SECRETARY

#### Will make K'taka stand on border row clear during meet with HM: Bommai "The Union Home from either side being target-Minister has called Chief ed, leaders from both states Marathi-speaking population. It also laid claim to 814 The winter session of leg-**PTI** MYSURU The Chief Minister has been under intense pressure for

rarnataka Chief Minister Tuesday said he will make the State's stand clear on the border dispute with Maharashtra during the meeting of Chief Ministers of both states, called by Union Home Minister Amit Shah. The meeting is likely to take place in New Delhi on Wednesday evening. Bommai also said he is prepared to discuss the cabinet expansion with Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP leadership, if the issue comes up for discussion, during his New Delhi

Ministers of both states to discuss the border dispute, where we will make our stand clear. I will be sharing details about all the developments that have taken place after the State Reorganisation Act till nowwhen the case (is) before the Supreme Court," Bommai said. Speaking to reporters here,

the Chief Minister said, he will also elaborate on the provisions of the Constitution, State Reorganisation Act, and petition about the dispute before the Supreme Court.

The border row had intensified last week, with vehicles ed, leaders from both states weighing in, and pro-Kannada and Marathi activists detained by police amid a tense atmosphere in the border district of Belagavi. Following this, the Karnataka and Maharashtra Chief Ministers spoke to each other over phone and agreed that there should be peace and law and order should be maintained on both sides.

The border issue dates back to 1957 after the reorganisation of states on linguistic lines. Maharashtra laid claim to Belagavi, which was part of the erstwhile Bombay Presidency, as it has a sizeable Marathi-speaking villages which are currently part of Karnataka. Karnataka maintains the

demarcation done on linguistic lines as per the States Reorganisation Act and the 1967 Mahajan Commission Report as final.

And, as an assertion that Belagavi is an integral part of the state, Karnataka has built the 'Suvarna Vidhana Soudha', modelled on the Vidhana Soudha, the seat of legislature in Bengaluru, and a legislature session is held there islature is scheduled to be held in Belagavi from December 19 to 30. Bommai also said he is prepared to discuss the cabinet expansion with Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP leadership, if the issue comes up for discussion, during his New Delhi visit.

"Officially the meeting is regarding the border dispute, after that if he (Shah) raises the issue, I will be going prepared," the Chief Minister said in response to a question on cabinet expansion. Bommai had earlier indicated that the cabinet exercise is likely after Gujarat Assembly polls.

some time now, over expansion and rejig of cabinet not taking place, to make way for the fresh faces, ahead of Assembly elections next year. There were some reports of ossible cabinet expansion by

filling in six vacant posts or a kind of a rejig by dropping a few and inducting an equal number of new faces. There were also talks in

some quarters that a Gujaratlike complete top to bottom overhaul of the state ministry may take place. However, many aspirants feel it is "too late now" with polls fast approaching

## Stalin's son to take oath as **Cabinet Min today**

U year-old elder son of Chief Minister MK Stalin is being sworn in as a Minister in the Council of Ministers of Tamil Nadu on Wednesday. The swearing-in is being held at 9.30 AM in Raj Bhavan. According to highly-placed sources in the DMK, Udhayanidhi would be made a Cabinet Minister in charge of Special Programme Implementation, presently being held by Chief Minister Stalin himself. He would also be given charges of the Departments of Sports Development and Youth Affairs as part of Stalin's initiative to make Tamil Nadu a venue for future s[porting events like World Cup Football and Olympic Games.

dhayanidhi Stalin, the 45

Udhayanidhi has contested the 2021 assembly election from Chepauk, a constituency represented thrice by his grandpa M Karunanidhi, the former chief minister and DMK founder. Though it was widely expected that Udhayanidhi would make it to the council of ministers in 2021 itself, his mother Durga Stalin after astrological consultations decided to hold the coronation after November 27 when he turns 45. "Durga Stalin had consulted a battery of astrologers who unanimously decided the date and time of swearing on the most auspicious day. Wednesday happens to be the most auspicious Muhurtha of the season

and hence the swearing in has been scheduled on that day,"

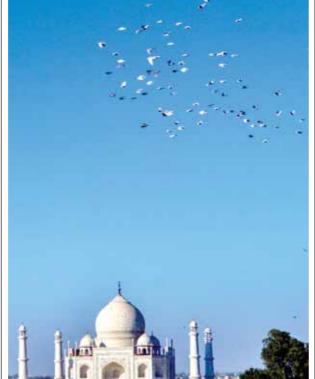
"After six months, Udhayanidhi would be elevated as deputy chief minister to give some relief to Stalin who is overworked and exhausted," said R Varadaraj, founder and president of Nethaji Makkal Katchi, a fledgling political

Though the decision to induct Udhayandhi has caused heartburning among senior DMK leaders, Stalin has sent a message through R S Bharati, the party's legal luminary, to the cadres not to lose heart. "I myself was made a MP after the age of 66 though I had put in decades of service for the party. There are many sincere party workers who are upset that their services have not been recognised. You have to wait patiently because Thalapathy (Tamil for commander, as Stalin is known in party circles) is closely scrutinising your performances," Bharati told party

leaders in a meeting.

Varadaraj said that the Stalin family has taken absolute control of the party and has converted it into a family enterprises. "This is what Karunanidhi had wanted. Stalin has literally decimated all kinds of dissidence and filled the party with acolytes," said

Some of the ministers who did not rise up to expectations may be shown the door or downgraded to innocuous departments, said Varadaraj.



A flock of pigeons flies over Taj Mahal in Agra on Tuesday

### Twenty years' RI under POCSO in 4-year-old rape case of minor in UP

PNS ALIGARH

ADJ POCSO, Pratham Omveer's court has senorous 20 years of imprisonment in a four-year-old case of rape of a five-year-old girl in Barla area of Aligarh. A fine of ₹20,000 has also been slapped on him. Orders have been given to pay the entire amount to the victim as compensation.

Special Public Prosecutor Lalit Singh Pundhir said that the incident took place on

November 23, 2018. The case was filed by a person living in a village in Barla area. In this, it was said that at three o'clock in the afternoon, his five-year-old daughter was playing outside the house. From there Raju, a relative of his neighbor, took the girl with him by luring of ₹10. After this, he took her to the bushes in a

Ansari's mother Sahrun Nisa,

his brothers Naushad Ali &

Dilshad Ali, sisters-in-law Soni

Bano & Yasmeen, sister Badki,

Tahkan Nisha, and Bhola

Masood. The accused were

booked under UP Prohibition

of Unlawful Conversion of

Religion Act and also for abus-

ing and rioting.



secluded place in the outskirts of village and raped her.

The accused had also bitten the girl's cheek. The people of the village came on the noise of the girl. When I saw, the baby girl was crying there. People caught Raju and hand ed him over to the police.

On this basis, a case was registered against him. The police filed a charge sheet against Raju. The court has declared Raju guilty on the basis of session test and witnesses. After being found guilty, the culprit is sentenced to 20 vears of rigorous imprisonment and a fine of ₹20,000 have also been slapped on him. The amount has to be paid to the victim as compensation

# **Couple sells**

In a shocking incident, a couple allegedly sold their newborn for ₹1 lakh in Meerut. The accused were later taken into

As per reports, ₹82,000 in cash were recovered from the accused, who struck the deal even before the delivery at Lala Lajpat Rai Medical College in Meerut. Just after the delivery, the accused took the money in return for the new-

The woman was admitted to the labour room of Lala Lajpat Rai Medical College on Monday and delivered late in

A few hours later, her husband handed over the baby to a couple in lieu of ₹1 lakh. In the meantime, there was an allegation of child theft while police also reached the spot. During the police probe, the mother of the newborn disclosed that everything worked out as per their plan.

#### पर्यावास भवन, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, जिला-रायपुर (छ.ग.) // सर्व संबंधित को सूचना // भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय की ई.आई.ए. अधिसूचन

छत्तीसगढ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल

दिनांक 14/09/2006 ( यथा संशोधित ) के अंतर्गत सर्व संबंधित को सुचित किया जाता है कि मेसर्स निरोज इस्पात प्राईवेट लिमिटेड, 14-ए हैवी इण्डस्ट्रियल एरिया, हथखोज, भिलाई, जिला-दुर्ग (छ.ग.) में Expansion of Sponge Iron (97,500 TPA to 1,40,000 TPA), MS Billet (90,000 TPA to 1,92,500 TPA), Rerolled Steel Products (90,000 TPA to 1,80,000 TPA:- Through Hot Charging 1,26,000 TPA and through Reheating Furnace 54,000 TPA). Existing Captive Power 8 MW (through WHRB) and Pipe Mill 1,75,000 TPA (new) within existing plant premises के पर्यावरणीय स्वीकृति हेतु लोक सुनवाई बाबत् छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, नवा रायपुर में आवेदन प्रस्तुत किया गया है। उक्त परियोजना के संबंध में आपत्ति / सुझाव / विचार / टीका टिप्पणी, इस सूचना के जारी होने के दिनांक से 30 दिवस के अंदर क्षेत्रीय अधिकारी, छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, 5 / 32 बंगला, भिलाई, जिला-दुर्ग के कार्यालय में मौखिक अथवा लिखित रूप से कार्यालयीन समय में प्रस्तुत की जा सकती है। इस परियोजना के लिए लोक सनवाई दिनांक 16/01/2023 को समय दोपहर 12:00 बजे स्थान - सी.एस.आई.डी.सी. कमर्शियल जोन, इंजीनियरिंग पार्क, हथखोज, तहसील - भिलाई-3, जिला - दुर्ग (छ.ग.) में नियत की गई है। यह भी सूचित हो कि:-लोक सुनवाई के दौरान सम्मिलित होने वाले व्यक्तियों को फिजिकल / सोशल डिस्टेंसिंग क

पालन करना अनिवार्य होगा।

2. लोक सुनवाई में सम्मिलित होने वाले व्यक्तियों द्वारा मास्क का उपयोग किया जावेगा तथा समय - समय पर सेनेटाईजर का उपयोग किया जाना अनिवार्य होगा।

3. लोक सुनवाई स्थल पर सम्मिलित होने वाले व्यक्तियों की बैठक व्यवस्था कम से कम 0°

मीटर की दूरी रखना अनिवार्य होगा।

 कोरोना वायरस के नियंत्रण एवं रोकथाम हेतु शासन द्वारा जारी समस्त दिशा-निर्देशों क अक्षरशः पालन किया जाना अनिवार्य होगा।

ई.आई.ए. नोटिफिकेशन 14 सितम्बर 2006 (यथा-संशोधित) प्रावधानों के अनुसार संबंधित व्यक्तियों के अवलोकन / पठन हेतु ड्राफ्ट ई.आई.ए. रिपोर्ट, कार्यपालक सार हिन्दी एवं अंग्रेजी भाषा तथा सी.डी. (साफ्ट कॉपी) डायरेक्टर, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवाय परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार, इंदिरा पर्यावरण भवन, जोर बाग रोड, नई दिल्ली, क्षेत्रीय अधिकारी एकीकृत क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार, अरण्य भवन, नार्थ ब्लॉक, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर, अटल नगर, जिला-रायपुर, छत्तीसगढ़, कलेक्टर, कार्यालय कलेक्टर, जिला-दुर्ग, मुख्य कार्यपालन अधिकारी, जिला पंचायत, जिला-दुर्ग, आयुक्त, नगर पालिक निगम, भिलाई- चरोदा, जिला - दुर्ग, मुख्य महाप्रबंधक, जिला व्यापार एवं उद्योग केन्द्र, जिला-दुर्ग, क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल 5/32 बंगला, भिलाई, जिला-दुर्ग एवं मुख्यालय, छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, पर्यावास भवन, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर, अटल नगर, रायपुर में रखी गई है।

हस्ता/- सदस्य सचिव नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, जिला- रायपुर (छ.ग.)

#### 127 political parties to take part in UP civic polls announced the list of 127 regmagistrates. The 16 recognised $\,$ Lucknow bench of the Pradesh government not to

PNS LUCKNOW

he Fatehpur police booked

I a 'maulvi' and nine others

for allegedly attempting to con-

vert an 18-year-old Hindu girl

and perform her 'nikah' with a

man named Ahmed Ansari.

The incident took place on

December 9. According to

reports, the girl had mysteri-

ously disappeared from

Fatehpur Sadar Kotwali area

around eight months ago. Her

mother had also filed a miss-

ing report with the police. On

PNS LUCKNOW

s many as 127 political par-Aties are likely to participate in the Uttar Pradesh urban local bodies' elections. As compared to the last urban local bodies' elections held in 2017, as many as 37 new political parties have emerged in the last five years. The State Election Commission (SEC) has

istered political parties. This number includes 16 recognised political parties, three non-recognised parties and 108 parties with provisional registration.

The commission has deregistered Lok Janshakti Party and Samta Party. The SEC has forwarded the list of 127 parties to all the 75 district

political parties' are Nationalist Congress Party, BSP, CPI, BJP, Congress, Janata Dal (United), CPI (ML), CPI (M), Samajwadi Party, Rashtriya Lok Dal, Rashtriya Janata Dal, Janata Dal (Secular), All-India Forward Block, AIMIM, Aam Admi Party, and Indian Union Muslim League. Earlier on Monday, the

Allahabad High Court had directed the SEC not to announce dates for the urban local bodies' election till Tuesday, the next date of hearing on a public interest litigation (PIL) challenging the reservation of wards/seats in the civic polls. The Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court directed the Uttar

'Maulvi', nine others booked in bid to convert

December 9, the girl somehow

managed to tell her mother that

she would be converted and

married off to Ansari last in

tried to rescue her daughter.

However, Ansari and his fam-

ily allegedly abused, groped,

and assaulted her. The police

were informed about the brawl

by locals. The police booked 10

people for kidnapping, assault,

and molestation of a woman.

The accused included the

maulvi (Lallu), Ahmed Ansari,

She reached the village and

18-year-old girl, perform nikah in Fatehpur

Satonpeet village.

issue the final order for reservation of wards based on the draft order issued on December 5. On Tuesday, the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court directed the SEC to stay the announcement of election dates. When the hearing started on Tuesday, the state government was asked to file a reply on Wednesday.

### ₹1L in Meerut PNS LUCKNOW

newborn for

The police arrested the 'maulvi' and Ahmed Ansari based on the complaint filed by the girl's mother. While efforts were on to nab the other

the night.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

# Flare-up doused

The Tawang clash may not have escalated but India can ill-afford to lower the guard against the Chinese

The physical clash between Indian and Chinese soldiers along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Tawang last week seems to have blown over, with India showing no inclination to escalate the matter and China saying that "situation is stable overall." Chinese forces attempted to "unilaterally change the status quo" in Arunachal Pradesh by transgressing the LAC, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said in parliament on Tuesday. Our soldiers prevented the Chinese from making a land grab in Arunachal Pradesh and "compelled the Chinese troops to return to their posts." A few Indian soldiers were injured but there was neither any serious injury nor death, Singh said. Chinese soldiers too suffered minor injuries. "Both sides immediately disengaged from the area," the Indian Army said. Meanwhile the government opened diplomatic channels soon after the clash. Beijing downplayed the incident. Foreign Ministry spokesman



Wang Wenbin said that "the China-India border situation is stable overall." The two sides "maintained unobstructed dialogue on the border issue through diplomatic and military channels," he added. It is good to know that both sides are trying to douse the flareup, but we should not forget a few facts. First, it is part of China's strategy to keep the border with India ambiguous so that it could lay claim on any piece of land it wants to at any time in future. China accepted the McMahon Line with Burma (now Myanmar) in 1960, but it has obstinately and mischievously refused to accept it as the border with India.

Second, Chinese President Xi Jinping is beleaguered with a variety of crises: the unwise zero-Covid

policy has triggered widespread protests across the country; for all his bluff and bluster, he failed to subdue Taiwan which had the courage to invite US House of Representatives' chair Nancy Pelosi; the economic is slowing down; and the Western nations are becoming less accommodative of Beijing's infractions. There is no better way than starting a border skirmish and arousing hyper-nationalistic sentiments to divert people's attention from the failings in governance. Third, the Tawang clash, even if occasioned by Xi's desire to distract his own people, should be seen as an episode of the 'unrestricted warfare' that the CCP is waging against India. It is a wellknown fact that China sees India as its rival—at least in its neighbourhood—and tries to restrain it by all means possible. It has been trying to 'encircle' us in a hostile neighbourhood: Pakistan (and now also the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan) in the north-west, a spy ship in Sri Lanka, Beijing-friendly politicians in Nepal, and so on. Fourth, China is an implacable foe. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has gone out of his way to befriend Xi. He had 18 one-on-one meetings with Xi: the denouement was Galwan. Our PM tried to break the ice at Bali where he again met Xi: now there is Tawang. This proves, if any proof is required, that India must remain prepared for any trouble from China.



A procession taken out to mark the first anniversary of the Kashi Vishwanath Dham, in Varanasi

# **Carbon credit in India**

The passing of bill to curb carbon emission could

prove to be revolutionary

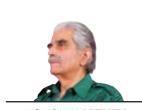
arbon Credit trading has now been allowed in the country. In a major move for climate control, The Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill, 2022 has been passed by the parliament. The Rajya Sabha passed the bill with a voice vote. The Lok Sabha had passed the bill last year in August. The bill is significant as it gives a mandate to use non-fossil energy sources such as biomass, ethanol and green hydrogen and allow carbon credit trading in the country for the first time. In a significant move to arrest greenhouse gases, the bill provides for penalties for violations by industrial units, automobiles, and on manufacturers, if they fail to comply with fuel consumption norms or use unscrupulous means to lower their carbon emissions. However the biggest change that the bill is going to make is in allowing the carbon credit trading in the country. It would promote renewable energy and help

the development of domestic carbon which would go a long way in lowering the carbon footprint of the country.

The bill fulfills India's commitment in the Paris agreement to reduce the use of non-fossil fuels for energy requirements and speed up de-carbonization of Indian industry and manufacturing units. Indeed the bill is a step towards reducing carbon emissions. Besides, the Energy Conservation Code for buildings will also apply to office and residential buildings with a connected load of 100 kilowatt or above. Presently, 24 percent of the energy consumption is by the housing sector. Though the state governments could use their discretion in lowering the load up to

50 kilowatt. The country is likely toachieve over 50 percent of its power generation capacity from non-fossil fuels by 2030. The opposition has rightly criticised the government for not consulting them and not sending it to the parliamentary standing committee finalize it. Besides, it has also pointed out that the bill would have been even better than its present form had it been introduced after taking inputs through sharing the bill draft. They have also pointed out that it is not clear who will be responsible for the carbon credit certificate and who will regulate it. But overall the government has done a decent job which is timely and apt, minor hiccups could be taken care of in due course of time. A beginning has been made in the right direction.

# Nepal's very own 'Game of Throwns'



With no party securing a majority in the recent elections, it is a political cliffhanger in Nepal

he second multiparty elections in Nepal on 20 November after the new constitution 2015 have been unique. For the first time, the simultaneous federal and provincial elections were contested as pre-poll alliances with several independent parties, candidates and rebels participating. It is not simple casting four ballot slips in a mixed electoral system (first past the post and proportional representation) that does not throw up a clear majority unless various factions and parties unite to form coalitions. In 2017, Communist parties merged as Nepal Communist Party and swept the elections. This time, no single party dared to fight independently.

This election bucked the trend of local elections in 2017 when Communists took Kathmandu's Parliament as well as six or seven provinces. This time, results are scattered due to the meteoric rise of independent parties like Rashtra Swatantra Party; and Janmat and Nagarik Unmukti parties in Madhes, decimating traditional Madhesi parties. Power equations have changed significantly and neither major coalition - Nepali Congress led by Prime Minister SB Deuba and CPN (UML) led by former Prime Minister KP Oli has managed to reach the 138 majority mark. Deuba's coalition consists of former PM Prachanda's Maoists, former PM Madhav Nepal's Unified Socialists, Mahanta Thakur's Loktantrik Janata Samajwadi Party and Chitrabahadur KC's Rashtriya Jan Morcha. Upendra Yadav's Janata Samajwadi Party, the original constituent of NC coalition jumped ship and joined UML coalition and was replaced by Thakur Saab. Unsurprisingly, CPN (UML) won the highest votes -28,45,641 - giving it 34 additional PR seats. NC was close behind with 27,15,225 votes and 32 PR

The Game of Thrones started a week ago, to guess which oalition President Bidya Debi Bhandari will invite to prove all options open" but next day majority on the floor. Prachanda the party reneged saying it

हिविद्यम आयोज नेपाल ELECTION COMMISSION NEPAL is deeply embarrassed by Maoist's poor showing with just 32 seats when he expected at least 45. Similarly, NC, as the single largest party, won 57 plus 32 (89) seats. Its strike rate was 57 of 91 seats it contested. CPN UML which fought 141 of 165 seats won just 44 plus 34 PR (78 seats). The UML coalition has reached 104 against NC's 136 seats. It is Prachanda's Maoists which as third largest party, have progressively declined from 329 to 83 to 51 and now 32 seats in elections since 2008. According to a pre-poll understanding, if Prachanda was to fetch 44 and more seats, NC and Maoists would share power with Prachanda holding the reins for the first two and a half years and later handing over to Mrs Deuba-Arzu Rana Deuba. She is known to have tied a rakhi this year to BJP's Vijay Chauthaiwale, in charge of the party's foreign affairs cell. Power-sharing stabilizes

In order to improve Prachanda's bargaining power, Maoists are looking over their shoulder. Party Vice President KB Mahara last week announced that Maoists will keep

unwieldy coalitions they say.



THE GAME OF **THRONES** STARTED A WEEK AGO, TO GUESS WHICH COALITION PRESIDENT BIDYA DEBI BHANDARI WILL INVITE TO PROVE MAJORITY ON THE FLOOR.

will stick by the NC coalition and signed a press release of coalition partners sans Thakur Saab, to that effect. It seems Maoist well-wishers are campaigning for Prachanda's premiership and working to increase the party's flock by roping in Nagarik Unmukti Party led by Resham Choudhary who is in Kathmandu jail for the fifth year but his party brings along three seats plus one independent. In the four-some are Choudhary's wife and father. Also pledged to join are Prabhu Shah, a former Maoist who joined Oli and an independent. The surprise star of Madhes, Dr CK Raut, who routed Upendra Yadav, met Deuba and Prachanda and will bring six seats. Onlinekhabar reported that Prachanda commands support of 60 legislators. Now, even Rabi Lamichhane (21 seats) has offered to support Deuba who will need to be discreet in selecting partners. The contenders for PM are many in NC- Deuba, dark horse Shekhar Koirala and gold

star Gagan Thapa. Eventually,

as always, experience will

trump new blood with Deuba

likely chosen by the NC par-

liamentary party as its leader

for the sixth time. Other options are afloat. First, Oli has offered his bête noir Prachanda a powersharing deal. #no not again Mr Oli. All three years from 2018 to 2021, Oli and Prachanda fought bitterly over leadership and split the party. Oli has forgotten his clarion call: "Never let Prachanda become Prime Minister ". That Oli will make Prachanda PM is makebelieve. Overall it appears the NC coalition will cobble an inflated coalition struggling to form a stable government. The constitution cushions such a government with the provision of a two-year bar on no confidence motion. Nepali journalists asked me: who does India want as Prime Minister? My reply: the one whom the alliance will select. India will not micro-manage the selection of PM. The first decision the new PM will make is on Agniveer - one factor that lost BJP Himachal Pradesh last week.

(The writer, a retired Lt Gen, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, & founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currentiy tne integratea Dejence Staff; views expressed are

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### **POLITICIANS AND THEIR PROMISES**

Sir — While inaugurating development projects in Nagpur, the Prime Minister criticised the attitude of political parties capturing power through false promises, which is inappropriate given his own track record of failing to keep lofty promises. During his first campaign for national office in 2014, he made a memorable pledge that if elected as prime minister, he would launch a crusade to repatriate untaxed wealth stashed abroad by unscrupulous business people and would deposit Rs. 15 lakh in the bank accounts of BPL families after recovering the bounty. He also asked people to open Jan-Dhan bank accounts so that he could deposit Dan-Dan (money) in their names, and then betrayed them. A local broadcaster asked the Indian leader's election mastermind and closest political ally, Amit Shah, what had happened to the PM's promise about a year after he won. Shah said, "Look, this is a jumla." Modi promised doubling farmers' income and housing for all Indians, 24x7 electricity for all, fully operational bullet trains, a USD 5 trillion economy, and two crore job opportunities for the youth. By not fulfilling the lofty promises, he has betrayed the trust of the people. The Prime Minister is expected to give a mature speech, to demonstrate responsibility and seriousness.

KV Chandramouli | Mysuru

#### **BREAST CANCER IS PREVENTABLE**

Sir — For years breast cancer has been the major health issue among Indian women. It accounts for 14 percent of all cancers among our women. Statistically, one in every 28 women in India is at risk of developing breast cancer in her lifetime. And, unfortunately, in our country the number of breast cancer cases reported each year is rising at higher rates than ever. ("Awareness & alertness can prevent breast cancer", Dec. 13). Numerous studies have shown that regular screening of women with no symptoms of breast cancer has lowered the number of women who die from the dis-

### **Afghan plight**



he winter had started to be harsher in both Asia as well as in Europe. But the world had hooked their eyes on Ukraine only, which right now is facing harsh and cold winter with temperature dripping down upto minus 20 Degree Celsius. It was after the Ukraine-Russia war, that Ukrainian were compelled to stay without power supply, adequate food, and life of normalcy. Luckily Ukraine had all arms next to help

them out in their time of extreme hardship. But nobody thinks about Afghanistan, who is in the group of cold winters, no food and people under threat of Taliban. After the US forces pull off from Afghanistan, the local peoples are dying every day. Unfortunately there is no one to listen to about their plight. As pandemic economic recoverv and Ukraine-Russia war has diverted all of

our attention from these poor people. The world must draw attention to the critical condition of Afghan's too. They too need our help to survive. Just like Ukrainians their fundamental rights too are equally violated, their life is also not normal and the world must voice them too, just like we raise our voices together for the Ukrainian. We must not be biased by forgetting about Afghanistan and its people. We must stress some concern on their conditions too, to establish global peace and stability.

Kirti Wadhawan I Kanpur

ease. Women with a strong family history of cancer can take special steps to protect themselves. Increased body weight and weight gain as an adult, are linked with a higher risk of breast cancer after menopause. The American Cancer Society recommends women to stay at a healthy weight throughout their life and avoid excess weight gain by balancing the food intake with physical activities. Diet plays a very small but measurable role in breast cancer prevention. However, women who adhere to a healthy diet should still take other preventive measures, such as having regular mammo-

Rangnathan Sivakumar | Chennai

#### **CONGRESS MAKES IT IN HIMACHAL**

Sir — On the face of it, Congress in a show of pragmatic political sagacity has this time successfully tackled its internecine bickering in Himachal Pradesh by appointing Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu from Lower Himachal Pradesh as new Chief Minister, journalist-turned politician Mukesh Agnihotri his deputy

and Pratibha Singh the state PCC chief and thereby pacified all the three stakeholder factions in the party. Coming from humble milieu, Mr Singh has risen to this top job by dint of his grit and persever-ance-from National Student Union of India(NSUI) president to HP Shimla Mayor to state Congress president to the Chief Minister. Former stalwart and CM Virbhadra Singh's daughter, Pratibha Singh was claimant to the throne notwithstanding, was eventually prevailed upon to relent and give in.

Proverbially speaking 'All's well that ends well', Keeping a Hindi adage 'Savdhani Hati, Durghatna Ghati' in mind and taking a sage editorial advice in this context, the Congress leadership must take every step with a pint of salt before experimenting them in Himachal Pradesh that has a record of alternating the governments between the BJP and the

Sharafat Manzi | Rampur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneér@gmail.com

Congress has been trying to "wake up" the government on the Chinese actions on the border but it is silent in order to

"protect its political image. AICC general secretary Jairam Ramesh



Paul Whelan Former US President - Donald Trump

My father was against me coming into film because of the struggle that he had to go through.





Multan Former England captain Nasser Hussain

Rahul Gandhi Will



**President Indian Youth Congress** 

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### **FIRST COLUMN DELINQUENCY OF BENGALURU STUDENTS**

students carrying condoms to school need reflection





SOUMYA AGGARWAL

he recent event in Bangalore has sent a wave of shock across the parent and teacher community. There is an increasing trend in risky behaviour amongst students in India. One can easily reminisce from the time they were in school and compare it to the present generation's experience. Never had the parents imagined their wards carrying condoms, oral contraceptives, alcohol, lighters, cigarettes, whitener, and even a substantial amount of money in their school bags. Today substance use is prevalent in about 18% of school students in India

According to the various reports, what initially began as a drill to check for phones, became an eve-opener for the school authorities. In combination with this, children as young as ten were found using abusive language, obscene gestures, and bullying peers. The schools carefully chose to handle the situation by issuing a notice to parents and suggesting counselling for the students instead of punishing or expelling them. However, counselling alone is not enough. As such behaviour becomes more common at schools, it becomes essential for parents and teachers to understand its root cause

As students approach their teenage years, they undergo a period of transformation where physical, mental, physiological, and cognitive changes happen while asserting autonomy from their guardians. Their affinity towards experimenting grows exponentially to carry out the task of self-exploration. Adolescents adopt different methods of sexual exploration and other experimentation, which may constitute risky behaviour.



This journey of self-discovery is influenced by multiple factors like environment, peers, and family. The most common reason for such risky behaviour is societal pressure. When children are at a psychologically vulnerable stage, adults should be able to guide them and keep a healthy check on them. When information on any topic is easily accessible and available in multitudes, the parents must supervise the content consumption. Open conversations must be had to build trust amongst the family members, enabling better understanding. Experimentation and exploration should be allowed within a safe space and under specific parameters. Bangalore, is now highly urbanized and exposed to western culture. A race to match up with the speed of growth could be one of the leading factors for a change in the behav-

Schooling has always been a time of focus where children gain knowledge and undergo experiences to develop personality and build character traits. At times like these, parents and teachers realize the importance of building strong core values in their children from a young age and guiding them toward a higher goal. Be it the sense of "Viveka" or the quality of discernment or "Anushasan" or discipline. It is high time we learn from the age-old wisdom our culture has to offer and go back to our roots to integrate Indian Knowledge Systems for more holistic development of our children.

This can be done primarily in two ways. A large part of this would be to revise the schools' curriculum and teaching methods in India. We need to move to a pre-Macaulay method of education which promotes culture and values over trends and competition and promotes Western values over Indian morals. The current education system fails to ground its students in reality. Another way would be to strengthen the values departed in every household. As the family structure moves to a more nuclear setup where both parents are working, there is a need for conscious and mindful parenting. (Soumya Aggarwal is COO, Rishihood University; Aparna Patel

is Program Coordinator, RishiEd, Rishihood University)

# Fountainhead of bad governance



The people of Delhi-NCR benefited due to the work of DDA but today it is synonymous with corruption that breeds incompetence

he Delhi Development Authority (DDA) was created in 1957 by the Government of India as a role model for systematic urban development. There have been many milestone achievements by it since its creation especially after the civic administration was in turmoil and flooded with migrants from Pakistan occupying vacant lands all over the national capital in the wake of the partition of the country. It prepared its first Master Plan in 1962 so that a well-structured, planned and systematic development of the city can be ensured.

The DDA thereafter became a role model for autonomous bodies for the planned urban development in states and a large number of urban agencies or authorities were created all over the country, including in NOIDA, Gurgaon and Faridabad in the National Capital Region (NCR). It started several planned housing schemes as well as developed the land in a planned manner after acquiring it and played a key role in creating better civic amenities like electricity, water, sewage disposal and other infrastructural facilities in Delhi.

The people of Delhi and adjoining states in NCR benefited immensely due to the work of the DDA in developing several group housing projects. The population of Delhi is now more than two crore and is steadily increasing due to migration of people. It modified its master plan in 1982, 2007, and 2021. Now the DDA is on way to focus on a master plan for 2041.

However, today the DDA is synonymous with rampant corruption and misgovernance (except when a few honest officers were posted headed it) and it does not augur well for the national capital where such negative publicity tarnishes the name of the country abroad.

One of the negative fallouts of democratic governance in India during the last 75 years has been the increasing encroachments on government properties by people and organised mafia, especially on land resources, due to vote bank politics practiced by political parties and Delhi was no exception. Because of rampant diversion of forest lands, former prime minister Indira Gandhi enacted the Forest conservation Act, 1980. Politicians used to encourage encroachments on forest and other government lands and then nearer to the Assembly elections used to make provisions for regularization of encroach-

On account of political patronage as much as 50 lakh people live in unauthorised colonies located in private or public land in Delhi; East Delhi has the maximum of such colonies. Most of the illegal colonies came up through agreement to sell through will or general power of attorney which not only was a criminal negligence both in the eyes of law as well



ONE OF THE

NEGATIVE FALLOUTS OF **DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN** INDIA DURING THE LAST 75 YEARS HAS BEEN THE INCREASING ENCROACHMENTS ON GOVERNMENT PROPERTIES BY PEOPLE AND ORGANISED MAFIA DUE TO **VOTE BANK** 

**POLITICS** 

(The author is a former Director-General in the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change)

as loss to the government on stamp duty and the sub-registrars were willing partners in this.

In 2011, in a landmark judgment, the Supreme Court declared the sale of property on general power of attorney illegal but it continued unabated nonetheless. In one case when a builder was found committing forgery in sale through the power of attorney, he did not correct the sale deed in where it was originally registered but in another. This tendency killed the spir-

it for which the DDA was created and corruption and harassment of people became an integral regular feature in the DDA and no one would bother to take action against any such illegal gratification because most of the powerful politicians and bureaucrats became party to the systematic corruption. Without the connivance and laxity of government officials no illegal settlement can come up. One of the weakest points in government supervision is no penalty provision for deliberate negligence of duty in protecting such open resources like land from the encroachers.

In 2019, Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said in the Lok Sabha that corruption existed in the DDA and it could be checked only when the functioning of the organisation was fully digitised.

However, even after three years of his statement not much is being

done by the DDA to arrest the corruption and provide relief to citizens. The technology vendors are harassed so much that they leave the job mid-way. Though the digitization of the land records has been completed, the top echelons of the DDA have shown absolutely no urgency in reigning in the corrupt babus and middlemen and through nexus want even the non-performers in a consortium to be paid if they can pull wires. In recent years, the Prime Minister's UDAY Yojna announced with great fanfare to regularize around 1731 illegal colonies is the victim of corruption and negli-gence as well of poor perception of

More than four lakh registrations were done but so far a little more than a few thousands conveyance deeds have been registered for regularization of the property. The main reason for this is the corruption at the lower level in DDA which is ignored by senior officers deliberately for obvious reasons or insensitivity. Several people in Gagan Vihar and Preet Vihar area have told me that the DDA office will for PM Uday scheme mark on some flimsy ground the form as incomplete and then ask for two to three lakhs for each property. One Assistant Director Preet Vihar office Mr Pankaj Kumar was arrested by CBI in the month of February 2022 for demanding bribes and was caught red-handed when accepting Rs 30,000.

One of the reasons (according to one political activist) for the BJP's loss in the recent MCD elections has been the tardy implementation of PM Uday scheme due to open corruption.

In the office of Lt Governor Delhi several letters by the Minister and public representatives on DDA corruption remained unattended because no one is serious about bringing transparency and being a long complicated land related complexity the officers are past masters in obfuscating the matters. It is a galore of confusion worse confounded for the common cit-

The Urban Development Minister and Lt Governor Delhi must seriously review the working of the DDA and rid it of perpetual corruption, incompetence and highhandedness, otherwise the Master Plan 2041 and PM Uday scheme by the Government will keep people facing insurmountable hurdles. The people in power must wonder that only criticising the past rulers will not pay dividends any more.

The Aam Aadmi Party lost in Gujarat though it made a lot of noise about freebies and the BJP won even after 27 years of incumbency because the BJP did extremely well in solving the people's problem and with a clean and transparent model of governance in Gujarat. The future is of performers now as the recent elections results have shown.

SENSE OF DEFEATING HIM. — EX CONGRESS MINISTER **RAJA PATERIA** 





INSTIGATING THE PUBLIC AND CONGRESS WORKERS FOR THE MURDER OF NARENDRA MODI BY FORMER MINISTER RAJA PATRIA IS EXTREMELY SERIOUS & CONDEMNABLE. — BJP MP **VD SHARMA** 

# Cryptocurrencies are risky: Regulate or ban them Apart from other dangers, Cryptocurrencies also consume a lot of energy which is bad given the world energy crisis

¬he tulip mania took hold of Europe in the early 17th century and is widely described as the first financial bubble in history. In the 1590s, Carolus Clusius started planting tulips in his private garden at the University of Leiden which gave rise to tulip cultivation in the Netherlands. He devoted the latter years of his life to studying the mysterious tulip phenomenon known as tulip breaking, a strange occurrence in which the petals of tulips would change to multicoloured patterns. This strange phenomenon gave rise to the Tulip Mania as it was suddenly seen as a social symbol to own a tulip and at its peak, accounted for inflation; a normal tulip could be trading between \$50,000 and



prices at its peak. However, many years later it would be discovered

\$150,000, similar to bitcoin

that the strange phenomenon which gave rise to Tulip Mania was nothing but the result of a virus that infected the tulips. This could be seen as a direct comparison to the current cryptocurrency frenzy happening worldwide.

Since the mysterious Satoshi Nakamoto launched Bitcoin in 2009, cryptocurrency has only grown bigger and gained more traction. In this day and age of technology, cryptocurrency is widely viewed as a deregulated anti-establishment currency that gives the people power. Crypto supporters hail the fact that this form of currency takes the power of volatility, inflation, interest rates, and power to spend from the establishment and gives that power to the people since they can mine the supposed currency through blockchains.

However, this could not be further away from the truth and from the reality behind crypto. Bitcoin has a limited number of 'coins' that can be mined and as more 'coins' are mined the harder it will get to mine more and this has serious environmental complications. According to a study done by the Cambridge Center for Alternative Finance (CCAF), Bitcoin at its peak in 2021 consumed around 110 Terawatt Hours per year, 0.55 per cent of the global electricity production,

equivalent to the annual ener-

gy draw of a country like alaysia.

Given the energy crisis the world is facing today, the sheer wastage of fundamental commodity electricity is obscene. Nevertheless, this barely scratches the surface of the evil of crypto.

Post-2016 newer cryptocurrencies, crypto platforms, and non-fungible tokens have taken the space and have widely done the trick to promote the cryptocurrency and get investors for the 'coins' and 'tokens' as crypto is emerging in India. However, as people come to terms with cryptocurrency, they understand how dangerous it is. Over the past year, the crypto market has lost over \$2 trillion in market cap from its peak of \$3 trillion in their life savings in crypto as reportedly demanded an cryptocurrencies.

2021. On the eve of launch of 'digital rupee' by RBI, it is not out of place to say that India under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been one of the first countries which struck a balance between promoting innovation, human adventure and endeavour via issuance of CBDCs for promoting digital

payments using blockchain technology but also at the same time cautioning and protecting the general public from crypto mania.

Our failure as a system to recognise cryptocurrency as nothing but a Ponzi scheme is going to hurt the people most at risk as seen recently with the crash of FTX, where the majority of the losses were taken by people who put

an investment.

In 2018, the RBI banned all its regulated entities from participating in cryptocurrencies but the same was overturned by the Supreme Court in 2020 resulting in mushrooming of various

existing crypto exchanges. Going forward, apart from focusing on the menace of fraud, money laundering, private risks, etc., we should spell out the systemic risks posed by these instruments to the stability of the entire economy and populace at large. The cyber-attack on servers of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi where the breach has compromised personal data of three to four crore of patients and hackers have amount of 200 crore in cryptocurrency is a case in point.

In the history of financial bubbles, deregulation added with a sudden frenzy has given rise to numerous bubbles from Tulip Mania to the 2008 crash. Any legislation for regulation can be effective only after significant international collaboration on evaluation of the risks and benefits and evolution of common taxonomy and standards. Until then, the only viable solution to protect the environment from massive energy surges, protect gullible retail investors from losing their life savings, and to crack down on the illegal activities happening across the internet is to either have a regulated cryptocurrency or ban all

(The author is a Lok Sabha

# Ukraine Prez asks West for latest weapons

krainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy pres-sed Western leaders on Monday to provide more advanced weapons to help his country in its war with Russia, and he repeated his calls for Russian forces to withdraw from occupied areas of Ukraine, suggesting Christmas as a retreat

During a video conference, Zelenskky told host Germany and other leaders of the Group of Seven industrial powers: "Īt would be right to begin the withdrawal of Russian troops from the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine this Christmas. If Russia withdraws its troops from Ukraine, then a reliable cessation of hostilities will be ensured.

He added: "The answer from Moscow will show what they really want there: either a further confrontation with the world, or finally an end to aggression.

The Kremlin has rejected all previous appeals to reverse its land grabs in Ukraine. It didn't immediately respond to this latest one.

The two countries haven't engaged in any recent peace talks and there is no end in sight for the war, which is in its 10th

wounded tens of thousands of people and left dozens of Ukrainian cities and towns in

Russia has illegally annexed parts of eastern and southern Ukraine, including the Crimean Peninsula in 2014, though it doesn't fully control all of them. Zelenskyy has said his goal is to reclaim all occupied territory, while Russian President Vladimir Putin insists on solidifying his forces' control over the

In his address to the G-7, Zelenskyy echoed his prime minister's Sunday appeal for long-range missiles, modern tanks, artillery and missile batteries and other high-tech air defense systems to counter Russian attacks that have knocked out electricity and water supplies for millions of Ukrainians. He acknowledged that, "Unfortunately, Russia still has an advantage in artillery and

Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal told French broadcaster LCI that in addition to making Ukrainians suffer, Russia wants to swamp Europe with a new wave of Ukrainian refugees by continuing to strike power stations and other infrastructure. Zelenskyy said protecting Ukraine's energy facili-

ties from Russian missiles and Iranian drones "will be the protection of the whole of Europe, since with these strikes Russia is provoking a humanitarian and migration catastrophe not only for Ukraine, but also for the entire EU.

Poland's president, Andrzej Duda, said his nation already has

seen an increased demand to shelter refugees.

"The number of refugees in Poland has risen (recently) to Steinmeier in Berlin.

Millions of Ukrainians fled after Russia invaded on February 24. Thousands of people have died and dozens of cities and towns across Ukraine have been reduced to rubble. On Monday, Russia shelling again mostly focused on eastern and southern

Ukrainian calls for Patriot surface-to-air missiles — a highly sophisticated system. During the LCI interview, he also asked for more German and French air-defense systems, resupplies of artillery shells and modern bat-

Organizers in France expect more than 45 nations and 20 international institutions to take part in a Paris conference starting Tuesday to raise and coordinate aid for Ukraine's water, power, food, health and transportation needs during the tough winter months.

Providing Patriot missiles to Ukraine would mark a major advance in the kinds of defense systems the West is sending to help the country repel Russian aerial attacks.

So far, no country has offered them, and such a step would likely mark an escalation in the fight against Russia.

A US official told reporters that the Pentagon has no current plans to send Patriot missiles to Ukraine, but that discussions continue. The key issue is that the complex, high-tech system requires significant maintenance and training, said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss ongoing operations in Ukraine.

topic of a phone call Zelenskyy held Sunday with US President Joe Biden. Żelenskyy, his office said, told Biden "about 50 per cent of the Ukrainian energy infrastructure was destroyed."

Biden "highlighted how the US is prioritizing efforts to strengthen Ukraine's air defense through our security assistance, including the December 9 announcement of USD 275 million in additional ammunition and equipment that included systems to counter the Russian use of unmanned aerial vehicles," the White House said.

Russian drone attacks near the Black Sea port of Odesa over the weekend destroyed several energy facilities and left all customers except hospitals, maternity homes, boiler plants and pumping stations without

The president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mirjana Spoljaric, completed a visit to Ukraine, including Odesa, on Monday. She said she "saw how families have been torn apart and how power cuts and freezing temperatures have increased the suffering for too many during this difficult winter."

The European Union's foreign ministers gathered Monday in Brussels to discuss fresh sanc-

Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney sharply condemned "deliberate targeting by Russia of civilians in terms of inflicting suffering on a broad population."

He described Russia's actions as "a crime, in terms of both aggression and a crime against humanity."

Slovakia said that in cooperation with Germany, it has opened a center to repair Ükrainian howitzers and air defense systems of Western origin. The center is located inside a military base in the town of Michalovce, some 35 kilometers (22 miles) west of the border with Ukraine, the EU member nation's Defense Ministry

In Ukraine, the eastern Donbas region, which is made up of Donetsk and Luhansk provinces, again has become a focus of intense fighting, particularly around the city of

Ukrainian officials said Monday the country's forces hit a hotel in the Luhansk region that served as a headquarters of the Wagner Group, a private Russian military contractor and mercenary group that has played a prominent role in eastern

# Donors meet in Paris to get Ukraine through winter, bombing

Dozens of countries and international organisations threw their weight and hundreds of millions of euros (dollars) behind a fresh and urgent push Tuesday to keep Ukraine powered, fed, warm and moving amid the onset of winter, responding defiantly to sustained Russian aerial bombardments that have plunged millions into the deepening cold and dark by targeting critical infrastructure.

An international donor conference in Paris quickly racked up pledges of financial and inkind support for Ukraine's beleaguered civilian population to survive freezing tempera-tures and long nights.

It also heard impassioned arguments from Ukraine's president that such help could pressure Russia into suing for peace. There was also strong con-

demnation from donors of the

Kremlin's savaging of civilian French President Emmhost, denounced Moscow's

as war crimes He said the Kremlin is pounding civilian infrastructure because its troops suffered setbacks on the battlefields and

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been exposed to all."

cal strategy, aiming to destroy civilian infrastructure in order to put Ukraine on its knees," Macron said.

"The objective is clear: Respond to military defeats by spreading terror among civilians, try to break the back as it can't maintain the front.

As temperatures plunge and snow falls, Ukraine's needs are huge and pressing. Russia's has Ukrainian power grid and other critical infrastructure since early

Successive waves of cruise missiles and exploding drones have destroyed about half of Ukraine's energy infrastructure,

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their "military weaknesses have the Kyiv government has said. Úkraine's prime minister says Russia is trying to create a Russia "has chosen a cyni-

> Russia says that by striking civilian infrastructure, its military aim is to weaken Ukraine's ability to defend itself and to disrupt the flow of Western weapons to the invaded country.

Ukrainian President Volodmyr Zelenskyy, who addressed the Paris conference by video link, said some 12 million Ukrainians — roughly onelation before Russia launched its full-scale invasion in February were living with power out-

fresh wave of refugees to Europe.

Zelenskyy argued that a concerted international effort to keep Ukraine's utility systems

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Moscow from further attacks and potentially force it to the negotiating table, and also prevent new waves of Ukrainians fleeing to elsewhere in Europe.

"Russia will have to think about how to stop the aggression," Zelenskyy said. "Energy is one of the keys to this."

In presenting a long list of immediate needs, Zelenskyy said Ukraine requires electricity generators as urgently as it also needs armoured vehicles and armoured vests for its

Donor pledges quickly surged past the 400-million euro mark, the equivalent of more than \$420 million, Macron's office said.

The total included 125 million euros (\$131 million) worth of aid from host France.

The European Union's chief executive, European Commission President Ûrsula von der Leyen, announced funding for the purchase of 30 million energy-saving light bulbs that Ukraine requested to reduce

Von der Leyen said the Russian missile and drone bombardments were intended to kill Ukrainian morale but added: "Russia will fail because the Ukrainian spirit remains unyielding and unbroken."

# EU reaches deal on Ukraine aid, tax on big corporations



**AP** BRUSSELS

he European Union reached The European Union reached a deal in principle to send an 18 billion euro (USD 18.93 billion) financial aid package to Ukraine and approve a minimum tax on major corporations in a big move that narrowed a rift between the bloc and recalcitrant member Hungary.

The 27 envoys of the EU nations reached a tentative agreement lateon Monday in a deal that also sees Budapest getting a bigger part of promised funds that had long been in jeopardy over complaints by the other member states that Prime Minister Viktor Orban democratic rule of law.

"Megadeal!," the EU's Czech presidency said on Twitter. The deal is still tentative because it needs to be signed off on but no major obstacles are expected.

Hungary had used its veto

get his recovery and aid funds. The deal comes ahead of Thursday's summit of EU leaders and a continued rift with Budapest could have turned the meeting into a major standoff.

deals through, amid complaints

from others that Orban was

abusing his powers so he could

Under the agreement in principle, Hungary sees a pan-demic recovery plan approved worth 5.8 billion euros if Budapest implement 27 "super milestones" on democratic reforms to unlock the funding. Many nations had already said Hungary had made some positive efforts. And the nations also posed suspension in regular aid funds by about 1.2 billion euros to some approximately 6.3 billion euros in commitments.

The deal allows Orban to claim victory because he was able reduce the penalties he

with major fines that are likely to impact his struggling econo-

"A small but important victory" for the rule of law in the EU, said Petri Sarvamaa, the parliament's negotiator on the issue.

The EU as a whole will be able to present a united front backing Ukraine after unseemly scenes of political brinkmanship had delayed the process for long and left a needy ally in the lurch and facing a major struggle to make financial commitments next year.

Equally, the EU had been unable to live up to a commitment to stop the race to the bottom in corporate tax rates. With Monday's measure, the profit of companies with annual turnover beyond 750 million euros will be

taxed at 15 per cent or more.

The EU institutions have been in a standoff with Orban for years. They decided to go after Orban for what he calls his brand of "illiberal democracy" but which is seen by others as sense of Western democratic liberalism. Many divisive issues with Orban remain though, not least his relationship with Russia which is seen as lenient to Moscow compared to those of his 26 partners.

Cornered in Ukraine, Putin ditches annual news meet

AP MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin will not be holding his annual year-end marathon news conference this month amid the war in Ukraine, a break in the long-held tradition that observers have attributed to the Kremlin's uneasiness about a

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has confirmed that Putin wouldn't hold the annual news conference for the first time in 10 years. He didn't comment on the reason behind it, but many commentators attributed it to the Russian leader's reluctance to face unpleasant questions about what he calls Russia's "special military operation" in

Ukraine. The annual news conference has been used by the Kremlin to polish Putin's image. The tightly stage-managed show televised live lasted for up to 4 1/2 hours and featured Putin talking about a wide range of domestic and foreign policy

issues. Political analyst Abbas Gallyamov said in a video commentary that Putin cancelled the annual news conference because "he has nothing to say from the

point of view of strategy." "The press conference has become a significant fixture in Putin's calendar of public engagement and has frequently been used as an opportunity to demonstrate the supposed

integrity of Putin," the UK Defence Ministry said in a commentary on Twitter. "Although questions are

almost certainly usually vetted in advance, the cancellation is likely due to increasing concerns about the prevalence of anti-war feeling in Russia," it said. "Kremlin officials are almost certainly extremely sensitive about the possibility that any event attended by Putin could be hijacked by unsanctioned discussion about the special military operation." Amid a string of military

setbacks in Ukraine, Putin spiked another annual fixture, a televised call-in show in which he takes questions from the public to nurture his father-ofhe-nation image.

Putin also so far has failed to deliver the televised state-ofthe-nation address to parliament, a speech he's obliged by the country's constitution to deliver each year.

### **Ukraine: Doctors** from occupied city open hospital in Kyiv

**AP** ■ KYIV, UKRAINE

nurse wounded by a A Russian sniper was spirited out wrapped in sheets. Another, sickened by the thought of working for the people who destroyed his home, sneaked out a side door and walked out through Mariupol's shattered streets. Doctors shed their scrubs

for street clothes. And one by one, the staff of the largest hos pital in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine slipped away as



the city's center.

Months later, around 30 staff members from Mariupol's Hospital No. 2 have reassembled in Kyiv. Along with 30 specialists from a cardiac hospital in Kramatorsk, a Donetsk city that remains under Ukraine's control, they are opening a pareddown version of a public hospital to help displaced Ukrainians in need of care.

Dmytro Gavro, a nurse who is studying to become a cardiologist, recalls each child who arrived at the hospital in Mariupol during the dark days of March, when the city was under siege and bombardment sion of Ukraine.

the occupation of our hospital," Mariupol because he could not work for the Russians, who focused on the port city as a strategic prize and bombed into surrender over 86 days.

### EU again seeks elusive gas price cap to contain energy costs

AP BRUSSELS

With frost biting outside European Union headquarters, energy ministers again sought to overcome deep dif-ferences Tuesday on a natural gas price cap that many hope would make utility bills cheap er so people can stay a little warmer during harsh winter days — if not this year, then later.

EU energy ministers have been forced into five emergency meetings because they cannot come to agreement on a maximum ceiling to pay for gas because of fear that global suppliers will simply bypass Europe when others offer more money.

Despite the time pressure two days ahead of an EU leaders summit, Tuesday's meeting "will not be easy also because member states do have very different views and very different concerns," EU Energy Commissioner Kadri Simson said. "Everybody has to show some flexibility, and everybody has to be able to propose some compromises."

The 27 nations have stuck together through eight rounds of sanctions against Russia over the war in Ukraine and energy-saving measures to avoid shortages of the fuel used to generate electricity, heat homes and power factories. But they cannot come close to agreement on setting a complicated price cap that had been promised in October as a way to reduce energy bills that



cap to push down gas prices for households — including Greece, Spain, Belgium, France and Poland — while nations like Germany and the Netherlands are insisting supplies are at risk if a cap stops EU countries from buying gas above a certain price. They have failed to agree on issues including what the price ceiling would have to be, how many days it should take for it to kick in, and when and how it should be deactivated.

"So far, we were able to show

the unity and the solidarity, and I believe we are strongly asked to continue with this approach," said Jozef Sikela, the Czech industry minister chairing Tuesday's meeting. If not, he said, "there is a reputation risk, there is a lot of risk around." One side is demanding a

Rubberrised road surface, widening etc. (NIT 66following Russia's Feb. 24 inva-Tender No.19/UJVNL/EE(M&G)/KPS/2022-23 "Gardening and Switchyard cleaning work at Kulahal Power Station 2. Approx Cost of Work (1) Rs. 59,99,245.49 (2) Rs. 1,90,65,291.01 (3) "I remember everyone, Tender No.20/UJVNL/EE(M&G)/KPS/2022-23 "Refilling of fire Rs. 73,85,191.76 (4) Rs. 1,84,68,314.35 starting from the first girl who extinguisher & other miscellaneous fire equipment related work at (1) Rs. 1,20,000.00 (2) Rs. 2,45,300.00 (3) Rs 3. Earnest Money Kulhal Power station was brought to us and ending 1,47,700.00 **(4)** Rs. 2,42,400.00 Tender No.21/UJVNL/EE(M&G)/KPS/2022-23 "Procurement and with the two last children, who Date and Time of submission of Bidding Start date for work no. Up to tender and opening of tender 15:00 hrs. on 23.12.2022 opening of etesting of Generator Rotor Pole coil at Kulhal Power station' were brought to us shortly before 15:00 hrs. on 23.12.2022 opening of e-Estimated cost: Rs. 1516519/-, Rs. 579500/-& Rs. 2472000/- GST Extra Tender at 15:00 hrs. on 06.01.2023 Date of availability of bid document on website: 13/12/2022 11:00 Hrs Gavro said. He said he fled Website particulars, published e-Last date for submission of tender: 03/01/2023 15:00 Hrs

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some 3 million. That will probably also mean an increase in their numbers in Germany," Duda said following talks with German President Frank-Walter

regions that Putin illegally

# China casts long shadow over **US-Africa Leaders Summit**

ith dozens of African leaders descending on Washington this week, the Biden administration is offering a not-so-subtle pitch in its economic competition with China on the continent: The US offers a better option to African

Ahead of Tuesday's start of the three-day U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, Deputy Commerce Secretary Don Graves acknowledged that the U.S. Has fallen behind as China has surged past American foreign direct investment in Africa but argued that the U.S. Remains the "partner of choice" in Africa. "We took our eye off the ball

so to speak, and Ú.S. Investors and companies are having to play catch up," Graves said at an event hosted by the news outlet Semafor. He added, "We're bringing the best technologies and innovations, the highest standards.... The U.S. Helps to build capacity in our partner countries as opposed to exploiting those countries."

Heads of states from 49 African nations and the African Union have been invited to take part in the summit that has been billed as an opportunity for President Joe Biden's administration to re-engage the conti-



nent's leaders. The continent, whose leaders often feel they've been given short shrift by leading economies, remains crucial to global powers because of its rapidly growing population, significant natural resources, and a sizable voting bloc in the United Nations. Africa remains of great strategic importance as the U.S. Recalibrates its foreign policy with greater focus on China what the Biden administration sees as the United States' most significant economic and military adversary.

Even before the summit

officially began, the White House announced Biden's support for the African Union becoming a permanent member of the Group of 20 nations and that it had appointed Johnnie Carson, a well-regarded veteran diplomat, to serve as point person for implementing initiatives that come out of the sum-

to tackle the core challenges of our time." "If you compare what the United States is committing over the next three years to what any other country is committing, I think we stack up extremely favorably," Sullivan said.

mit. White House national secu-

rity adviser Jake Sullivan on

Monday also said that the

administration would commit to

spending USD 55 billion in

Africa over the the next three

years on "a wide range of sectors

And while the administration has tried to minimize concerns about China's deepening presence on the continent as a

driving force at this week's talks Beijing's shadow over the biggest international gathering in Washington since the start of the pandemic nearly three years ago looms large.

Without direct mention of China, Deputy Treasury Secretary Wally Adeyemo on Monday sounded the alarm about petering private invest-ment in middle- and lowincome countries, particularly in Africa. The infrastructure finance gap, or money needed for essential projects like lighting homes and businesses, responding to the COVID pandemic and to making communities resilient against extreme weather, sits at USD 68 billion to USD 108 billion per year, Adeyemo said.

At the same time, Adeyemo lamented that huge amounts of private capital among the wealthy nations around the globe remains untapped. "There is a clear disconnect

between the large amount of available private sector capital and the urgent need to fund critical infrastructure projects in Africa and elsewhere. The question for us is: how do we connect this massive supply of savings with high-quality infrastructure projects in Africa?" Adeyemo said at the U.S. Trade and Development Agency.

## Biden to sign gay marriage bill at White House ceremony

**AP** ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden is inviting thousands to celebrate at the White House on Tuesday as he signs into law gay marriage legislation before a bipartisan crowd that reflects growing acceptance of same-sex unions.

Lawmakers from both parties will be there, as will first lady Jill Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris and her husband, Doug Emhoff. The White House promised musical performances but was trying to maintain suspense about the headliners.

The triumphant mood will play out against the backdrop of a right-wing backlash over gender issues, which has alarmed gay and transgender people and their advocates.

Among the attendees will be the owner of Club Q, a gay nightclub in Colorado where five people were killed in a shooting last month, and two survivors of the attack. The suspect has been charged with hate crimes.

Plaintiffs from lawsuits that originally helped secure the nationwide right to gay marriage are also expected to be there, according to the White House.

The new law is intended to safeguard gay marriages if the U.S. Supreme Court ever reverses Obergefell v. Hodges, its 2015 decision legalizing same-sex unions nationwide. The new law also protects interracial marriages. In 1967, the Supreme

Court in Loving v. Virginia struck down laws in 16 states

barring interracial marriage. 'Congress has restored a measure of security to millions of marriages and families," Biden said in a statement when the legislation passed last week. "They have also provided hope and dignity to millions of young people across this country who can grow up knowing that their government will recognize and respect the families they build."

The signing will mark the culmination of a monthslong bipartisan effort sparked by the Supreme Court's decision in June to overturn Roe v. Wade, the 1973 ruling that made abor-

tion available across the country. In a concurring opinion in the case that overturned Roe, Iustice Clarence Thomas suggested revisiting other decisions, including the legalization of gay marriage, generating fear that more civil rights could be imperiled by the court's conservative majority.

Lawmakers crafted a compromise that was intended to assuage conservative concerns about religious liberty, such as ensuring churches could still refuse to perform gay mar-

In addition, states will not be required to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples. But they will be required to recognize marriages conducted elsewhere in the country.

A majority of Republicans in Congress still voted against the legislation. However, enough supported it to sidestep a filibuster in the Senate and ensure

"Together, we showed that it's possible for Democrats and Republicans to come together to safeguard our most fundamental rights," Biden said.



### Netanyahu inches closer to power with new House Speaker

**AP** ■ JERUSALEM

Israel's parliament on Tuesday elected a new speaker closely allied to the country's likely next prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, setting the stage for a flurry of contentious new legislation to appease the former leader's expected coalition part-

Lawmaker Yariv Levin's election as speaker comes as Netanyahu continues negotiations to forge a coalition government after elections were held last month. With his religious and ultranationalist partners, Netanyahu is set to lead what is expected to be Israel's most right-wing government

Netanyahu's partners have made demands that critics say give too much power to extremist lawmakers and could imperil the country's democratic fundamentals, including sweeping reforms to the country's justice system.

As speaker, Levin, a close Netanyahu confidante, is set to clear the way for votes in the coming days on crucial legislation seen as necessary to make the coalition coalesce.

Among these is a vote to change a law that would pave the way for Netanyahu's key coalition partner, Aryeh Deri, to become a Cabinet minister. Under the law, Deri is legally barred from doing so because of a conviction on probation this year for tax offenses. Critics say the move bends the rules to accommodate a convict and could encourage corruption among politicians.

Two other pieces of legislation will pave the way for two other likely coalition partners ultranationalists Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir — to be granted greater powers over the West Bank Jewish settlement enterprise and the police, respectively.

impasse.
"I have no intention of spoiling peo-

ple's Christmas," he told British broad-

tributing to that spoiling of the people's

Christmas because they've brought these

strikes on by stopping the companies

RMT is opposed to proposals it says will

lead to job losses, force employees to work

more nights and weekends and com-

say they need to change the way the rail

network operates to control costs after the

rejected reports that he blocked an offer

that would have increased pay for rail

the BBC. "Ouite the reverse ... I made

sure there was an improved offer on the

workers by 10% over two years.

pandemic reduced passenger traffic.

promise the safety of the network.

In addition to seeking higher pay, the

Train companies and the government

Transport Secretary Mark Harper

"I haven't blocked any offers," he told

from making suitable proposals.

# US, S Korea, Japan to curb illicit N Korea cyber activities

AP JAKARTA

Senior diplomats from the United States, South Korea and Japan agreed Tuesday to boost efforts to curb North Korea's illicit cyber activities and other methods to finance its nuclear programme and evade international sanctions.

Meeting in Indonesia's capital, the three envoys in charge of North Korea's nuclear programme also agreed to strengthen their trilateral security cooperation in the face of North Korea's advancing nuclear and missile arsenals.

In his opening remarks, Sung Kim, the US envoy who also serves as Washington's ambassador in Jakarta, said that North Korea's provocative run of missile tests this year has proven

yet again that the North "presents one of the most serious security challenges in the region and beyond.

Calling North Korean threats "a global issue," Sung Kim said the challenges posed by North Korea can only be addressed when the international community stands together and speaks with one voice.

After the meeting, South Korea's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the three envoys decided to "double down their efforts to block North Korea's financing of nuclear and missile programmes via cyber activities and other means and its attempt to evade sanctions on the

North Korea has been under 11 rounds of United Nations sanctions imposed over its repeated nuclear and



 $R^{\text{ailroad workers across England}}_{\text{walked off the job Tuesday, disrupt-}}$ 

ing what is expected to be a month of

strikes by public service workers demand-

ing higher pay as soaring inflation erodes

union has called two 48-hour strikes this

week, canceling most services on Tuesday

and Wednesday then again on Friday and

Saturday. The strikes come after unions

rejected the latest offer on pay and work-

ing conditions from Network Rail, which

runs the rail network, and 14 train oper-

drivers are among the other workers set

to strike this month, forcing the govern-

ment to discuss mobilizing the army to

staff vital public services this winter. The

strikes also threaten to curtail business for

Nurses, border guards and ambulance

ating companies.

The Rail, Maritime and Transport

missile tests since 2006. South Korean officials said recently that North Korea has been turning to cybercrime and covert ship-to-ship transfers of unauthorised goods as a way to violate those UN sanctions.

In recent months, North Korea test-fired dozens of missiles, including powerful ballistic weapons that flew over Japan and demonstrated a potential to reach the American mainland. But the UN Security Council has failed to adopt fresh sanctions on North Korea because of opposition from China and Russia, two veto-wielding members that are locked in confrontations with the United States.

Kim Gunn, the South Korean envoy, said North Korea's nuclear ambitions would only undermine its

hardships. He expressed hopes that North Korea would return to denuclearisation talks while repeating a demand for China, the North's last major ally and economic pipeline, to play a constructive role to help resolve the North Korean nuclear issue. Takehiro Funakoshi, the Japanese

own security, prolong its diplomatic isolation and worsen its economic

envoy, said that North Korea's recent intercontinental ballistic missile test prompted Tokyo to increase its defence budget. "We will examine all options

including counter-strike capabilities," Funakoshi said. He said that Japan will be more vigilant against malicious cyber activities by North Korea though it remains committed to seeking dialogue with the North.

# China urges citizens to leave Rail workers to start month of UK strikes Af after Kabul attack by ISIS

**AP** ■ ISLAMABAD

hina on Tuesday advised its Ccitizens in Afghanistan to leave the country "as soon as possible", following a coordinated attack by Islamic State militants the previous day on a Chinese-owned hotel in the heart of Kabul.

The Chinese advisory appeared to be a setback for Afghanistan's Taliban rulers who seek foreign investments in hopes of halting the downward spiral of the Afghan economy since their takeover of the country more than a year ago.

The militant Islamic State group - a key rival of the Taliban - claimed responsibility for the attack Monday afternoon on Kabul Longan Hotel, which left three assailants dead and at least two hotel guests injured as they tried to escape by jumping out of a window.

Plumes of smoke rose from the 10-story building in the central Shar-e Naw neighbourhood, according to images posted on social media as the attack unfolded. Residents reported explosions and gunfire.

Taliban forces rushed to the area and blocked all roads leading to the site. Khalid Zadran, the Taliban-appointed spokesman for the Kabul police



eral hours, followed by a cleanup operation. Ôn Tuesday, Chinese

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin called the attack "egregious in nature" and said China was "deeply shocked".

Beijing demanded a "thorough investigation" and urged the Taliban government "to take resolute and strong measures to ensure the safety of Chinese citizens, institutions and projects in Afghanistan," Wang said.

The Chinese Embassy in Kabul sent its team to the site to help with the rescue, treatment accommodations for the victims of the attack, Wang

"In view of the current security situation in Afghanis-

tan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs once again advised Chinese citizens and institutions in Afghanistan to evacuate from Afghanistan as soon as possible," Wang said.

The Taliban swept across the country in August 2021, seizing power as US and NATO forces were in the last weeks of their final withdrawal from Afghanistan after 20 years of

Since their takeover, the international community has balked at extending official recognition to the former insurgents who have broken promises of pursuing a more moderate path forward, including reopening schools to girls beyond the sixth grade and safeguarding minority rights.

#### shops, hotels and restaurants that rely on of 11.1% and employer pay offers failed RMT leader Mick Lynch insisted his members have the support of the public the Christmas season to boost revenue. to keep pace with the cost of living. Some United places huge order with

Boeing to replace aging planes



**AP** WASHINGTON

United Airlines said Tuesday that it ordered 100 new Boeing 787s, a large, twin-aisle jetliner, to replace planes that are nearing retirement age and allow United to expand its international routes. United also added to its

order book for the smaller Boeing 737 Max, which is used on domestic flights.

The companies did not dis-close financial terms of the orders. United said it can choose among three sizes of the 787. which carry list prices ranging from \$248 million to USD 338 million per plane, but airlines routinely negotiate deep discounts on aircraft orders.

United is scheduled to begin

Labor unrest has increased in recent

months after rising food and energy

prices pushed inflation to a 41-year high

receiving the 787s in 2024, and it took options on 100 more. The massive order -United called it the biggest ever by a U.S. Airline for twin-aisle or 'widebody" planes — is a bold move for an airline that lost demic until the middle of this vear. Executives at United and other airlines are sounding bullish, however, as travel demand

The order also is welcome news at Boeing. The U.S. Aircraft maker is still struggling to recover from two deadly Max crashes, production flaws on the 787, and setbacks in other build two new Air Force One presidential planes. It has lost more than USD 21 billion since

United picked the 787 to replace its Boeing 767 jets and some of its Boeing 777s that are nearing 30 years in age - some of the 767s have already hit that milestone. The Chicago-based airline could have chosen the A350, built by Boeing's European rival, Airbus. United already has 45 A350s on order but doesn't expect to start receiv-

United CEO Scott Kirby told reporters United went with United's domestic flying.

### **EU reels as scandal** tarnishes parliament's

**AP** ■ BRUSSELS

417,000 working days were lost to strikes

in October, the highest number in a

**r**he European Union's par-I liament was reeling Tuesday, it's credibility under threat, as a corruption and bribery scandal damaged lawmakers' careers and fingers pointed at Qatari officials accused of seeking to play down labour rights concerns ahead of the soccer World

The scandal, which started unfolding publicly last week, has scarred the reputation of the EU's only institution comprised of officials elected directly in the 27 member countries. It has undermined the assembly's claim to the moral high ground in its own investigations, such as into allegations of corruption in member country Hungary.

"It is so profound because it jars so fundamentally with what parliament pretends to stand for," Ghent University Professor Hendrik Vos, an EU expert, told The Associated Press. "The parliament pretends to stand for transparency, unable to be

bribed, to defend fundamental values. And then then you get something like this."

Referring to her barely suppressed "fury, my anger, my sorrow," Parliament President Roberta Metsola told EU lawmakers on Monday that "European democracy is under attack." While they convened in in Strasbourg, France, Belgian police picked up a haul of computer data from the assembly's other seat in Brussels. The parliament, however,

has always been a ripe target for people seeking funds or favours or to influence policy, from tobacco lobbyists and auto industry representatives to officials from national governments. The difference this time is that Belgian prosecutors

### EU member states agree to give Bosnia candidate status

**Brussels:** European affairs ministers from the 27 EU nations agreed Tuesday to endorse a recommendation from the bloc's executive arm to grant Bosnia candidate member status. Despite continuing criti-

cism of the way the Balkan nation is run, Bosnia made a significant step toward the wealthy club after getting unanimous support from the minister gath ered in Brussels.

### Paroled Indonesia bombmaker apologises for 2002 Bali attack **AP** ■ TENGGULUN (INDONESIA)

n Indonesian militant who Awas paroled last week after serving about half of his original 20-year prison sentence for making the explosives used in the 2002 Bali bombings on Tuesday apologised to victims'

Hisyam bin Alizein, better known by his nom de guerre Umar Patek, was a leading member of the al-Qaida-linked network Jemaah Islamiyah,



that killed 202 people — mostly foreign tourists — including 88 Australians. "I apologise not only to the

which was blamed for the blasts

at two nightclubs in Kuta Beach

people in Bali in particular, but I also apologise to all Indonesian people," Patek told reporters while visiting former

militant Ali Fauzi, a longtime friend who runs a programme aimed at deradicalising militants in East Java's Tenggulun

money throughout the panhas bounced back nearly to 2019 levels and ticket prices have surged higher than a year ago because of fewer flights.

programs including a contract to

ing them until 2030.

Boeing because it already flies the 787 and did not want to add a new plane to the fleet now, when it is busy hiring pilots and trying to expand its route network. At the same time, Boeing converted options on 44 Max jets to firm orders, and added a new order for 56 Maxes. Those 100 planes are scheduled to show up between 2024 and 2028 and will replace aging jets and allow for modest growth in

# credibility

# **Decriminalisation of GST** offences: Council to decide

The GST Council, chaired by The GS1 Council, chance 7, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, is likely to decide on a number of issues such as decriminalisation of GST offences, setting up of Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunals and tax evasion by pan masala and gutkha companies at its meeting on December 17

According to sources, the law committee of the GST Council, comprising tax officers from the Centre and states, in a report has suggested increasing the monetary threshold for launching prosecution for GST offences.

The law committee has also suggested that the fee payable by taxpayer for compounding of GST offences be lowered with a view to improving ease of doing business.

However, the issue of taxation of online gaming, casinos and horse racing is unlikely to be taken up by the GST Council on Saturday as the GoM on the matter is yet to submit its

"Usually we need to give notice to members in the GST Council before tabling any agenda. Since the report has not yet been submitted, it is unlikely that... It would come for discussion in Council," an official said.

The GoM, in its last meeting in November, had agreed



on 28 per cent GST on online gaming, casinos and horse racing. The report of the GoM on tax evasion by pan masala and gutkha companies is likely to be taken up for discussion in the Council, sources said.

Regarding decriminalisation of GST offences, the law committee has suggested raising the threshold of launching prosecution to Rs 20 crore, from Rs 5 crore at present. Launching of prosecution by taxmen means commencement of legal proceedings against the

The Council, in its meeting to be held virtually on December 17, is also likely to consider removing those penal offences which are already covered under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) from the GST Act to make it more taxpayer

The committee has also suggested that the fee for comounding offences be reduced to 25 per cent of the tax amount, from 50-150 per cent currently.

Currently as per the GST Act, the amount payable for compounding of offences is 50 per cent of the tax amount involved subject to a minimum Rs 10,000. Maximum fees for compounding is 150 per cent of the tax involved.

Once the proposal of GST law decriminalisation is approved by the GST Council, amendments to the central GST Act is expected to be introduced in the ongoing Winter session of Parliament.

Once approved by Parliament, states would be required to amend their state GST laws in their legislative

# Sensex snaps 2-day BSE adds 1 crore investors in losing streak, climbs 403 points

**PTI** ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex Enotched up smart gains on Tuesday after a two-day losing run as investors accumulated IT, finance and energy stocks in the wake of encouraging retail inflation data.

Retail inflation dipped below the RBI's upper tolerance level of 6 per cent for the first time in 11 months in November as softening prices of food items brought relief, as per official data released post market hours on Monday.

However, India's industrial production contracted by 4 per cent in October, the sharpest fall in 26 months, mainly due to a decline in output of manufacturing and subdued performance of mining and power generation sectors.

After a subdued opening, the 30-share BSE Sensex gained momentum as the session progressed to close 402.73 points or 0.65 per cent higher at

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty advanced 110.85 points or 0.60 per cent to end at

IndusInd Bank topped the Sensex gainers' chart, spurting 2.46 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finance, Infosys, HCL Tech, M&M, TCS, Tech Mahindra and Bharti Airtel

Only five counters closed in the red — Tata Steel, Nestle India, Maruti Suzuki, Titan and HUL, slipping up to 0.54 per cent.

"Markets were on a firm footing on the back of short covering as retail inflation easing to 11-month low raised hopes that the rate hike regime could slow down and take a pause going ahead.

"Also, overnight gains in the US markets further aided the local market sentiment, which had slipped into a rangebound mode over the past few sessions," said Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said PSÚ banks led the rally while IT snapped its losing streak on bargain buy-

"The US inflation figures, which are due before the Fed announcement, will provide an indication of the Fed's policy stance," he added.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge rose 0.40 per cent and the midcap index gained 0.25 per cent.

Among sectors, telecommunication climbed 1.48 per cent, teck jumped 1.32 per cent, IT 1.11 per cent and financial services 0.72 per cent.

take a buyback of up to Rs 850 crores (excluding buyback taxes and other transaction costs) at Digital financial services One97 a maximum price of Rs 810 per One97 share and has opted for the open market route through stock exchanges method, which is to be completed within a maximum period of six months," Paytm said in the fil-

for the open market route through stock exchanges method for the buyback programme and expects the process to be completed within a maximum period of six months, the company said in a

148 days to reach 12 cr-mark

Leading stock exchange BSE on Tuesday said it has added 1 crore registered investor accounts to its platform in a span of 148 days, taking the total count to 12 crore.

The exchange added one crore investors' accounts between July 18 and December 13, BSE said in a statement. In comparison, the

exchange took 124, 91, 85 and 107 days for the previous milestones of 11 crore, 10 crore, 9 crore and 8 crore, respectively. BSE crossed the milestone

of 12 crore registered users based on Unique Client Code (UCC) on December 13, 2022," the exchange said.

Of the 12 crore users, 42 per cent fall in the 30 to 40 age

brackets, followed by 23 per cent in 20-30 years and 11 per cent in the 40-50 age bracket.

In terms of states, Maharashtra leads in terms of investors with a share of 20 per cent of the total 12 crore investors. This was followed by Gujarat at 10 per cent, Uttar Pradesh at 9 per cent and Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu at 6 per cent each.

The exchange did not specify how many of these accounts are active or only for mutual fund investments, as a vast majority of trading volume is on rival bourse NSE

Founded in 1875, BSE (formerly Bombay Stock Exchange) is the world's fastest stock exchange with a speed of

BSE has a broad share-



leading global exchange -Deutsche Bourse — as a strategic partner. It provides trading in equity, debt instruments, equity derivatives, currency derivatives, commodity derivatives, interest rate derivatives, mutual funds and stock lending and borrowing.

**80 startups in India** 

go for IPO in next 5

have potential to

### Paytm to buy back shares worth ₹850 cr at ₹810 apiece

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Communications, which operates under the Paytm brand, on Tuesday announced a share buyback worth Rs 850 crore at Rs 810 apiece.

The company has opted regulatory filing.

"The company will under-

**years: Report** PTI ■ NEW DELHI Tndia is likely to see over 100 Imature, large-scale profitable or on the path to profitability startups in the next five years, of which 80 have the potential to go for public listing, market

> Redseer said on Tuesday. Redseer Strategy Consultants, in a report on IPOs, said 20 of the mature startups have gone public so far.

research and consultancy firm

India may see over 100 matured, large-scale profitable/path-to-profitability start-ups in the next five years. With about 20 of them already being listed, about 80 start-ups have the potential to look at an IPO journey," Redseer said in the report. It also said technology IPOs have seen a steeper crash compared to stocks of consumer companies mainly due to the global macro situation. The report, authored in collaboration with HSBC, noted that technology companies have now prioritised

growth. "A typical company that would be cash flow positive two years from now would see discounting of at least 20-30 per cent of their valuations in a low-interest rate situation. which goes up significantly in a high-interest rate situation which we are seeing right now," it said. The firm sees significant room for growth in public

Out of the about USD 43 trillion market capitalisation in the US, around 25 per cent can be attributed to technology or new age companies which includes giants like Apple and

## Rupee declines 9 paise to end at 82.60 against US dollar



The rupee declined by 9 paise to close at 82.60 against the US dollar on Tuesday, weighed down by persistent foreign capital outflows from the capital markets.

Risk aversion sentiment among investors ahead of the US Federal Reserve's interest rate decision also impacted trading, forex dealers said. At the interbank foreign

exchange market, the rupee the greenback and witnessed a high of 82.60 and a low of

It finally settled at 82.60, down 9 paise over its previous close of 82.51 Meanwhile, the dollar

index, which gauges the green-

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, climbed 1.73 per cent to \$ 79.32 per bar-

back's strength against a basket

of six currencies, fell 0.15 per

In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex closed 402.73 points or 0.65 per cent higher at 62,533.30. The broader NSE Nifty rose 110.85 points or 0.60 per cent to 18,608.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) remained net sellers in the capital markets on Monday as they offloaded shares worth ₹138.81 crore,

according to exchange data. dipped below the RBI's upper tolerance level of 6 per cent for the first time in 11 months in November as softening prices of food items brought relief, but the central bank may wait for more data before pausing hikes

### **Gold falls ₹8**; silver jumps ₹82



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price fell ₹8 to ₹54,534 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday amid a fall in prices of precious metal in overseas market, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the vellow metal had settled at ₹54,542 per 10 grams. Silver, however, jumped ₹82 per kg to ₹68,267 per kilo-

In the international market, gold was quoting lower at \$1,787.80 per ounce while silver was up at \$23.48 per ounce.

five months low in thin trading volume as investors remained cautious ahead of US Consumer Inflation data," said Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst Research (Commodities) at HDFC

### Gold ETFs log ₹195 crore outflow in Nov on profit booking

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

After attracting funds in October, gold exchange-traded funds (ETFs) witnessed a net outflow of ₹195 crore last month primarily due to profit booking amidst a rally in the markets.

In comparison, the seg-ment had attracted a net inflow of ₹147 crore in October and ₹330 crore in September. Prior to that, gold ETFs saw a net withdrawal of ₹38 crore in August, data with Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) showed.

The latest outflow could be attributed to profit booking and gold demand in the households for the prevailing wedding season," Priti Rathi Gupta, of LXME,

While the fund inflow in October was mainly on account of festive season demand as

investors might have chosen to buy physical gold. Overall, the gold ETF cat-

egory has received a net inflow of ₹1,121 crore so far this year, the data showed. Despite the outflow, the assets under management

(AUM) of the instrument

surged to ₹20,833 crore at the end of November from ₹19,882 crore at October-end. Also, the category saw an increase in the number of folios by over 11,800 to 46.8 lakh during the period under

This suggests that investors might continue to invest in gold ETFs as a means to diversify financial instruments a hedge

against market risks. Gold ETF, which aims to track the domestic physical gold price are passive investment instruments that are based on gold prices and

### **India, UK trade Ministers** review FTA talks progress

PTI NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and his UK counterpart Kemi Badenoch on Tuesday reviewed the progress of talks for the proposed free trade agreement between the nations, an official

The UK Trade Secretary is here to kickstart the sixth round of free trade agreement bilateral talks with Goyal.

The negotiations are happening after a brief gap due to recent political developments in the UK. The last round of talks was held on July 29. Negotiations for the FTA started on January 13 this year.

"Both the ministers held bilateral talks and also met industry representatives of both sides. The Indian side has stated that they are committed to making the FTA happen in the spirit of accommodation of each other's sensitivities," the official said.

The decision for share

buyback was taken at the com-

pany's board meeting held on

Tuesday. "All directors present

voted unanimously in favour of

the proposal, including all

independent directors," Paytm

The meeting of the ministers assumes significance as it was the first major deliberation on the proposed pact between Sunak government took office in the UK in October. In a free trade agreement,

two countries either significantly reduce or eliminate customs duties on the maximum number of goods traded

to other countries.

#### Chennai strongly positioned as a focused analytics, AI hub: Ramamoorthy

**PTI** CHENNAI

hennai is gaining ground as the analytics hub of the country with the presence of several companies engaged in this sector, a top industry official said on Tuesday.

The city has an enviable ecosystem of multi-service information technology companies, pure-play analytics companies, global capability centres (GCCs) with focus on analytics while educational institutions offer data science and business analytics programmes, Catalines Partner Ramkumar Ramamoorthy said at an event here.

Several pure-play analytics and artificial intelligence companies such as LatentView Analytics, Tiger Analytics, Ganit, Crayon Data were supporting global and regional clients in analytics and artificial intelligence from Chennai, he said at the 'PHYGITAL 2022' organised by Madras Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCC) here.

Ramkumar Ramamoorthy is former Chairman and Managing Director of information technology major Cognizant India.

The one-day conference was held to highlight the emerging trends in artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and latest technologies to support the aspirations of the

### Reliance India's most-visible company: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

 $R^{\text{eliance Industries Ltd,}}_{\text{India's largest corporate by}}$ revenues, profits, and market value, topped the 2022 Wizikey Newsmakers report as India's most-visible corporate in the State Bank of India, ICICI

Bank Limited, Bharti Airtel Limited, and One 97 Communications Limited, which owns Paytm, are the other firms in the top five rankings, Wizikey said in a statement. The rankings are based on

Wizikey's News Score which measures news visibility for brands & individuals by analyzing the volume of news, headlines presence, and the reach of publications. Wizikey's AI and ML tech-

nology gathers media intelligence from over 50 million news articles across 400,000plus online publications. The report considered over 1000 Indian corporates for analysis. For its No.1 position Reliance has a news score of

92.56 for 2022, becoming the

first Indian company ever to

cross the threshold of 90.

Reliance improved its news score from 84.9 in 2021. Wizikey's news score is the world's first standardised metric to measure news visibility for brands and individuals



data, machine learning and media intelligence.

The news score takes into account various key criteria like the volume of news, headline presence, the reach of publications, and readership. The score ranges from 0 to 100, and is based on monitoring of over 400,000 publications. It represents the media presence of a brand in publications that matter. The news score calculations for Reliance exclude standalone headline mentions of the group's other most visible consumer brands like Jio, Mumbai Indians, Network18, Moneycontrol and Hamleys.

This was the third year in row when Reliance topped Wizikey's Newsmakers rankings among all Indian corporates. This latest report by Wizikey recognizes the "hottest companies and Newsmakers of 2022, that have been visible for various reasons from investments, acquisitions, partnerships, and more", the statement

## IL&FS resolves debt of ₹56,943 cr, reduces number of entities to 101

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Infrastructure finance firm IL&FS said it has resolved its debt of up to ₹56,943 crore by September 30, 2022 through monetisation of various assets and reduced the number of entities to 101 from 302.

informed about the progress made in the ongoing resolution process till September 30, 2022 in an affidavit filed before the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT). "Estimated debt resolution as on date" was ₹55,612 crore,

and another ₹1,331 crore debt

was fully served by its green

entities, which are profitable,

said Infrastructure Leasing &

Financial Services (IL&FS).

The debt-ridden firm

Moreover "entities in the respondent no 1 (IL&FS) has reduced to 101 from 302", which includes 88 domestic entities and 13 offshore entities, said the affidavit filed by its Managing Director Nand

IL&FS, which defaulted its loan repayment for the first time in September 2018, had to pay back its lenders over

₹90,000 crore at that time. In its earlier affidavit filed by the new board then headed by Uday Kotak in February this

year, IL&FS group had said it will resolve ₹55,000 crore debt by March 2022. The new board of IL&FS initiated various measures to pair debts, which included asset monetisation, debt

restructuring, cost optimisation and liquidity management. It has also been focused on multiple resolution initiatives, including expediting loan recoveries and investment by IL&FS group companies.

The amount will be utilised towards discharging claims of creditors in accordance with the revised distribution frame-

### hold satellite spectrum auction: Trai Chairman

India will be first to

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India will be the first country to auction spectrum for satellite communication, and it should be designed to attract investments in the sector, telecom regulator Trai chairman PD Vaghela said on Tuesday.

Speaking at a Broadband India Forum summit on SatCom, Vaghela said the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) will soon make recommendations to make permissions required for satellite communication from various ministries — Information and Broadcasting, Space and Telecom — seamless to enhance ease of doing business



in the sector. He also said Trai has

received a reference from the Department Telecommunication for the spectrum required to be put to auction and associated aspects

"I think India will be the first to handle the issue of auctioning the space base spectrum. We are working on it,"

of satellite-based communica-

## Kotak arm raises ₹5,328 crore

the statement said.

Kotak Mahindra Bank arm on A Tuesday announced it has raised ₹5,328 crore to invest in infrastructure projects in the country.

Kotak Investment Advisors Ltd (KIAL) is targeting to raise ₹6,000 crore in total for the Kotak Infrastructure Investment Fund, and this is the maiden close for the platform, according to a statement. The fund will be focusing on infra-

structure credit and this is the first time

where a fund is being set up with signifi-

cant commitments from global investors,

Majority of the ₹5,328 crore fund in commitment has been made by the Canadian Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB), while the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has pitched in with a USD 100 million (about ₹828 crore)

The fund will be providing senior and secured credit, and will be attempting to

deliver returns which will be higher than equity to its investors by measuring and pricing risks better, the fund's Chief Executive Suman Saha said, adding that it will provide credit solutions to stressed infrastructure assets, as well as capital for "Infrastructure is the backbone for an

economy and is the key to the government's plan to make India a \$5 trillion economy by 2025. This fund will play a key role in solving the balance sheet correction issues in infrastructure assets at a time when other sources of capital have dried up," KIAL's Managing Director Srini

revenue to rise 70% to around ₹1,300 cr this year

WeWork India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Vaghela said.

o-working major WeWork Undia's revenue is set to jump 70 per cent this calendar year to around ₹1,300 crore on rising demand for flexible office space and the company is expanding its portfolio to achieve similar growth in 2023, its CEO Karan Virwani said on

# MOROCCO COACH WANTS MORE WC HISTORY

rever mind the fireworks and deafening pop music that await at Al Bayt stadium — the real prematch show for the World Cup semi-final between Morocco and France was provided on Tuesday by Walid Regragui.

The 47-year-old coach of the first African and first Arab team to reach the last four of the World Cup took full advantage of the chance to address the world's football press in a Doha auditorium, the day before the clash with Didier Deschamps'

The Moroccan exuded pride, optimism, defiance and humour in a refreshing contrast to the usual drone of noncommital cliches that coaches ritually role out before big games.

He mocked the game's modern focus on possession, ridiculed the 'Expected Goals' stats and laughed in the face of those who wrote of his team before they eliminated Spain and Portugal.

But along with the quickfire responses and talking points, there was a defiant refusal to play the role of the satisfied minnow and an evidently burning belief that his team can beat France and then do it again against Argentina or Croatia in Sunday's final.

"We want to win the World Cup," he said, "It's not just words, we have to go further, maybe we won't have another opportunity," he said.

"We are not the favourites but we are confident — maybe that makes me mad, crazy? A bit of crazy can be good," he said

Having already dubbed his team as "the Rocky Balboa of



this World Cup" after they knocked out Portugal in the quarter-finals, Regragui was not pulling any punches.

Asked whether his team will continue in the same style, which has seen opponents enjoy plenty of possession, he was unapologetic about his team's approach.

"We will play to our strengths... this idea of posses-

sion, it is amazing how football journalists love these figures about 60-70% possession, but it is no good if there are only two shots on goal," he said, perhaps recalling Spain's 77% possession and one shot on target against

#### STOP WITH STATISTICS'

"The expected goals too...'we should have won, we

had 4% expected goals'....Well, we are here to win, that's all," he

"If France give us possession, we will take it but I don't think they will. So we will try to stop them," he added.

If Morocco's application of the well-established strategy of mass defence and rapid counterattack are not in fashion at the moment, statistics certainly are and Regragui has little time for the focus on numbers.

"Let's stop with the statistics. I'm going to ask (FIFA president) Gianni Infantino to add points for beyond 60% possession," he added.

"We had a 0.01% chance of winning the World Cup at the start," he said before a reporter told him the probability is now

praise be to Allah. We will work on that.'

Regragui suggested that his team was being criticised, in part, for refusing to play the role of the entertaining losers.

"European journalists criticise our style, I think it bothers them to see an African team playing as they do. They like to see a dance

and see (winger Sofiane) Boufal doing two nutmegs and then going back home," he said. Certainly, though, not even

the most critical could question Morocco's determination and work-rate along with their defensive resilience.

"The key for us is spirit, we play a quality game every time with a good spirit. For me the spirit is the most important thing in football — we have to play with the heart and the spirit," he said.

Born in France, in what he called a "difficult" suburb southeast of Paris, Regragui spent the bulk of his playing career in France before moving to Morocco to coach. He only took over the national team in

It has been a short reign so far but his impact - and that of his team - has been enormous, resonating well beyond Morocco.

"If we can make young people dream and present as positive image of Africa, the Arab world and our religion that is great," he said. But what clearly is driving

Regragui is the satisfaction of surpassing all expectations and defying sceptics. "Before every round people

thought we would get knocked "But we are still here and we are going to fight to the end."

### France won't underestimate Morocco threat: Varane

**AP** ■ DOHA

 $F^{\text{rance defender Raphael}}_{\text{Varane has insisted that}}$ there will be no complacency from the World Cup holders when they take on surprise package Morocco in the semifinals on Wednesday.

Having edged out England in the last eight, Les Bleus are strong favourites to return to the final even though Morocco have already eliminated Spain and Portugal in the knockout phase in Qatar.

"We have enough experience in the team to not fall into that trap," said Varane, one of the survivors of France's victorious 2018 World Cup campaign, when asked about the danger of over-confidence.

'We know Morocco are not here by chance. It is up to us experienced players to make sure everyone is prepared for another battle."

France have reached the target set by the country's football federation of getting to the last four but Manchester United defender Varane said the team were hungry for a place in Sunday's final against Argentina or Croatia.

"It is not easy to get to a

World Cup semi-final so we are very pleased, but the only real objective is to win it," he said. "That was always the aim." Fellow defender Jules Kounde was full of praise for a Morocco team that have made history — the first African side to reach a World Cup semi-final and the first Arab team to do so.

Walid Regragui's men beat Portugal 1-0 in the quarterfinals after dumping out Spain on penalties in the last 16.

They also beat Belgium and drew with Croatia during the group phase and have conceded just a single goal, from an own goal, in their five matches so far.

They are very compact, with lines that are close together, and they leave little time for the player on the ball to organise himself," said Barcelona right-back Kounde.

They also run really fast, so we'll need to play with few touches, move the ball around quickly and try to unbalance them by moving from one side to the other. "It is remarkable to have only conceded one goal at this stage of the competition, all the more so given the teams they have faced."

## Neymar cleared of corruption over Barcelona transfer

 $B^{\text{razilian football superstar}}_{\text{Neymar was cleared of cor-}}$ ruption charges on Tuesday related to his transfer to

A court in Spain acquitted all nine defendants in the trial. In addition to Neymar, this included his parents, FC

Barcelona and former club presidents Josep Maria Bartomeu and Sandro Rosell, Santos FC and former president Odilio Rodrigues Filho, and N&N the company founded by Neymar's parents to manage his career.

Brazilian company DIS had argued they lost out financially on Neymar's transfer because



they owned 40 percent of Neymar's sporting rights at Santos and believed the true value of the deal had been obscured by those

"According to the court it has not been proved there was a false contract or that DIS was intended to be harmed," said the court in a statement. Neymar's high-profile trial got underway in mid-October in Barcelona, just a month before the start of the World Cup in Qatar.



Hugo Lloris has revealed he aftermath of the England captain's crucial World Cup penal ty miss against France and has backed his Tottenham teammate to bounce back quickly from his Qatar disappointment. Kane had already scored

ter-final against France goalkeeper Lloris before blazing another late kick over the bar, allowing the holders to beat England 2-1 and advance to the last four at the expense of Gareth Southgate's side.

"We had a text after the game. It was not easy to find the words straight after and I think he needed some rest," said Lloris, who has played alongside Kane at Spurs since 2013.

"It is a difficult time obviously for the English national



team and for Harry but I think he can be proud of what he has done in this World Cup.

"Top players have missed important penalties in their careers, like Leo Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo, like Kylian Mbappe.
"I have no doubt Harry

will keep his chin up and he will help Tottenham and the national team to shine.'

The pair will be reunited at their club after the tournament in Qatar with Tottenham's next Premier League game scheduled for December 26 away against Brentford.

# review Germany's World Cup flop

The German Football Association (DFB) on Tuesday announced a think tank of former internationals, including Karl-Heinz Rummenigge and Matthias Sammer, to help restore the country's fortunes after a dismal performance at the World Cup in Qatar.

Rudi Voller, Oliver Kahn and Oliver Mintzlaff will also participate in the group which has been 2024, which it will organise in 18 months, said DFB President Bernd Neuendorf.

Germany have struggled on the international stage since winning the World Cup in 2014, winning just three of their last 11 matches at a major

They failed to get out of the group stage at the 2018 World Cup in Russia and suffered the same fate in Qatar where they lost to Japan, drew with Spain and won their final match against Costa

Coach Hansi Flick has been confirmed in his role until 2024 despite the early elimination in Qatar but the DFB need to find a new team director after Oliver Bierhoff left his post.



The Germans will also have to line up, on a temporary basis at least, without their experienced goalkeeper and captain, Manuel Neuer.

The 36-year-old Bayern player broke his leg skiing after returning from Qatar and will miss the rest of the season.

#### **OTHER SPORTS**

## **INDIAN WOMEN LOOK TO BUILD** ON SPECIAL SUPER OVER WIN

High on confidence after an inspirational 'Super Over' win, Indian women will look to maintain momentum with improved fielding and bowling performance against the mighty Australia in the third T20I here on Wednesday

After the first two games at a packed D Y Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai, the cricket caravan moves to the iconic Brabourne Stadium in the Southern part of the 'Maximum City' where another belter of a track awaits the two teams.

The game on Sunday turned out be a perfect advert for women's cricket with a 47,000 plus crowd witnessing an edge of the seat thriller.

For a change, India, who have often gone suicidal from winning positions against Australia, were finally able to end up on the right side of the result.

However, the famous win is in the past now, and as pointed out by batting coach (acting head coach) Hrishikesh Kanitkar in a stirring speech after the game, India have a lot of work to do with the five-match series locked at 1-1.

The ability has always been there to regularly compete with the likes of Australia but India need to do the lit-



sistency of their rivals.

Indian batters have done their job but the bowling and fielding in the first two games left a lot to be desired. The hosts have been able to take only two wickets in the series so far and that is a major concern. The catching too has been pretty sub-standard.

The pace department doesn't give a lot of hope with Meghna Singh leaking runs and rookie left-am pacer Anjali Sarvani not able to provide early breakthroughs.

Renuka Thakur, who has been India's standout bowler in the last six months, too is yet to take a wicket. To be fair to Renuka, she does need a bit of nip in the air to let the ball do all the Wrist-spinner Devika Vaidya, who

is playing her first T20 series in eight

years, is yet to make an impact with the

ball but did her bit with the willow in a tense situation with a couple of boundaries.

With Yastika Bhatia warming the bench, Jemimah Rodrigues needs to find the runs after two failures while opener Shafali Verma needs to build on her quickfire starts.

Australia skipper Alyssa Healy would be eager to lead from the front in the crucial clash at CCI.

India ended their winning streak this year and Healy admitted that their bowling could have been better in the game. Her opening partner Beth Mooney has shown unstoppable form and would look to continue in the same vein. The same can be said about number three Tahlia McGrath.

As many as four bowlers ended up with an economy rate of 10 plus runs per over and Australia would be expected to correct that on Wednesday.

### Mandhana touches career-best ranking points her superb performances in the first



PTI DUBAI

Tndia opener Smriti Mandhana has reached a career-best 741 points as she continues to maintain her third position in the latest ICC Women's T20I Player Rankings for batters released on Tuesday.

The Player of the Match in the second T20I against Australia, which ended in a tie before India won in the Super Over, gained 11 rating points to reach the landmark. Australia's Tahlia McGrath is the

new No.1 in the rankings following

two matches of the ongoing series against India underway in Mumbai.

The 27-year-old Australian had unbeaten knocks of 40 and 70 and overtook compatriots Meg Lanning and Beth Mooney as well as Mandhana to become the fourth Australian and 12th batter to top the women's T20I rankings, according to

Mooney had been at the top since August 3 this year when she overtook

McGrath is No. 1 after only 16 matches. The last woman to reach the top in fewer matches was West Indies' Stafanie Taylor in 2010 (15 matches) while India opener Shafali Verma has been the fastest in recent years, reaching the top ranking after 18 matches.

Two more India batters, Shafali and Jemimah Rodriques, also figure in the list of top-10 T20I batters, with the former gaining a spot to be at sixth position. In the T20I ranking for bowlers,

India's Deepti Sharma and Renuka Singh Thakur have maintained their third and fourth spots respectively, with England leg-spinner Sarah Glenn up one place to second behind compatriot Sophie Ecclestone.

### lan Chappell not in favour of lifting Warner's captaincy ban



**PTI** ■ MELBOURNE

The legendary Ian Chappell The legenuary in Solitorine believes there is no point in lifting David Warner's lifetime captaincy ban as he feels that age is not in favour of the mercurial left-hander.

Chappell, 71, is of the view that Warner would have been a good leader if he was entrusted with the responsibility at a

young age.
"If Cricket Australia were to

lift the ban on Warner, what's that going to do? I mean, you're not going to appoint Warner

captain of any Australian team, are you? He's too old," Chappell was quoted as saying by Channel Nine's Wide World of Sports. "And he's not going to be given the role because the captain has got to be young enough to be able to lead by example,

The former Australia skipper feels Warner wanted his captaincy ban to be lifted as he wanted to lead his BBL side Sydney Thunder.

and those days are gone for

"I'think David probably wanted the leadership for his BBL team (the Sydney Thunder) so that he could help them," Chappell said.
"He (Warner) would have

been a very good leader for them, he thinks very aggressively about the game. Whatever leadership position he had, he would be good at it."

The lifetime captaincy ban was imposed on Warner for his

role in the 2018 ball tampering scandal in Cape Town, also known as 'Sandpapergate'. Chappell also hit out at Cricket Australia for the way it handled the issue, accusing the board of "protecting its own backside".

# INDIA TO PUSH FOR WTC FINAL QUALIFICATION

**PTI** CHATTOGRAM

L Rahul's tactical acumen will be tested along with his batting prowess when a depleted Indian team clashes with a tricky Bangladesh in the high stalkest was to the basis of the high stalkest was to be a second of the in the high-stakes two-match series, the result of which will have an impact on India's chances for the World Test Championship final qualification.

India are currently fourth in the WTC table behind Australia, South Africa and Sri Lanka. The only way of qualifying for the final in June is to straightaway win both the Tests against Bangladesh and then all four at home against Pat Cummins' Australia to eliminate any ifs and buts.

The journey starts at the Zahoor Ahmed Śtadium, which has traditionally favoured the batters but also offers some turn towards the business end of the match.

The visitors will start as overwhelming favourites in Test format, in which the Bangladesh is yet to beat India but the absence of Rohit Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami and Ravindra Jadeja could hurt the side.

Jadeja's absence on these kind of tracks always puts Indian team on the back-foot especially when the opposition team is batting in the third innings or fourth innings.

Jadeja-Ashwin duo, at least against lesser Test nations on sub-continental tracks could be lethal but Axar Patel has done his hard yards over the past two seasons as the second choice left-arm

As many as 10 Indian players, if all are fit, select themselves in the playing XI and the most important call that the two Rahuls — skipper KL and head coach Dravid — need to make is about the fifth specialist bowler — a third pacer or a third spinner.

Whether India will field a third



choice specialist spinner in wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav or slow left-arm orthodox Saurabh Kumar is there to be

Saurabh, who has been a star performer for India A team in the recently concluded two-Test series against Bangladesh A with 15 wickets, would feel that he has made his case for a Test Cap in at least one of the two games.

In the past one year, Rahul hasn't been exactly exceptional in terms of cricketing smarts as far as captaincy is concerned and this series where he is likely to get two games will be an acid

test as far as his long-term leadership ambition is concerned.

On Monday, during the trophy unveiling ceremony with his counterpart Shakib al Hasan, Rahul told the mediapersons that his team "plans to play aggressive cricket" as they know what exactly needs to be done in order to reach the WTC finals for the second consecutive time.

But Rahul, whose performances in white-ball formats has been a bit underwhelming to say the least, will have to walk the talk in terms of showing the required intent and aggression in batting department.

He will have young Shubman Gill for company with Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli and Shreyas Iyer manning the middle-order.

Rishabh Pant will be back in what could safely be termed as his favourite format where his uncluttered batting has been a delightful spectacle for the Indian fans.

In the bowling department, Umesh Yadav, a master at his craft on barren sub-continental tracks will have Mohammed Siraj, Ashwin and Axar

In case a third pacer is selected instead of an additional spinner, the choice will be between two bowlers of one-Test experience — domestic doyen Jaydev Unadkat and the skiddy Navdeep Saini, who is more remembered for being at the other end when Pant created history at the

As far as Bangladesh team is concerned, it will be keen to change its dismal winless record against India over the past 22 years.

În the traditional format, Bangladesh has never had the bowling resources to trouble teams regularly even when they have played at home. Pacers Taskin Ahmed, Ebadot Hossain, Shoriful Islam along with spinners Shakib and Taijul Islam would love to alter the script.

But they do have a steady batting line-up for home conditions with skipper Shakib having 4000 plus runs under his belt. Add Mushfiqur Rahim's tally of 5000 plus runs and another former skipper Mominul Haque's 3500 plus aggregate, the batting does have a solid look.

India: KL Rahul (captain), Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, Rishabh Pant (wk), Ravichandran Ashwin, Axar Patel, Umesh Yadav, Navdeep Saini, Jaydev Unadkat, Mohammed Siraj, Saurabh Kumar, Kona Bharat, Kuldeep Yadav, Abhimanyu Easwaran. Bangladesh: Shakib Al Hasan (captain),

Litton Das (wk), Mushfiqur Rahim (wk), Mominul Haque, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Mahmudul Hasan Joy, Anamul Haque Bijoy, Khaled Ahmed, Ebadot Hossain, Shoriful Islam, Taskin Ahmed, Taijul Islam, Najmul Hossain Shanta, Rejaul Rahaman Raja, Zakir Hasan (wk), Nurul Hasan (wk), Yasir Ali.

auction on December 23 in Kochi.

ing in a media release.

they want.

### We never advise Pant on how he should be playing: Mhambrey



**PTI** ■ CHATTOGRAM

The Indian team manage-I ment will never advise Rishabh Pant to curb his natural attacking game as he knows his role and expectations from him, bowling coach Paras Mhambrey said on Tuesday.

Pant, one of the most destructive players among the current crop has five Test hundreds and 10 fifties in 31 games with centuries in England, Australia and South Africa.

Ahead of the first Test against Bangladesh, Pant was seen going hammer and tongs at the nets on Tuesday and that prompted a query for Mhambrey about having conversations about the left-hander's approach.

"We are not having any special discussion with

Stokes, Green headline IPL's

Rishabh. That's his game and we know that. Nothing changes, that's the way he prepares for any format, white ball and he is pretty much aware about his role in the team," he said during the pre-match press conference.

"Our conversations are never around the way he is playing as he knows what the team expects out of him, Mhambrey, who has seen Pant from his India U-19 days,

While he didn't disclose whether India will go with a third spinner or a third pacer but he was happy that Umesh Yadav, with all his experience, will spearhead the Indian pace

"Umesh is a very experienced bowler. We all know what Umesh brings to the table. Unfortunately, he hasn't got too many opportunities as we had Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj playing in England," Mhambrey said.

The team management has spoken to him and had discussions and we have lot of clarity as far as Umesh is concerned. The other way I look at it is that he will spearhead the attack and he has lot of experience going into the series. I am also happy how Siraj has progressed in Tests and happy that he has deliv-

The former India seamer admitted that Bumrah and Shami will be missed.

"Bumrah and Shami will be missed but we look at it as others getting an opportunity to play Test cricket and perform for the country," said

## Babar not taking advice from seniors: Afridi

 $F^{\rm ormer\ Pakistan\ cricketer\ Shahid\ Afridi\ has}_{\rm claimed\ that\ captain\ Babar\ Azam\ is\ not\ tak-}$ ing advice from senior players in strategising and planning while blaming batting coach Mohammad Yousuf for not playing a proactive role in selection matters, as Pakistan lost the Test series to Ben Stokes' England.

"As a captain, I always felt one had to be a good leader and that was possible by uniting all the players. It means that you should discuss your plans with seniors. When you start taking advice from outsiders and not involve seniors, issues come Afridi said on a TV channel

Coach Yousuf was asked during the postmatch conference about the inconsistent form of vice-captain and wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Rizwan so far in the series, and the former Pakistan cricketer said he had "no role in selection matters". "I think it was not a great answer from Yousuf

and I feel Rizwan needs to be given a break and rested and Pakistan should bring in Sarfaraz Ahmed in his place for Test matches," said Afridi. The former skipper, however, demanded full

backing for Babar, the team's top batter. "If we don't back and value him, who will value? Every player has a bad match here and there. But Babar remains the backbone of this team and he got a century (in the first Test) and 75 in the second Test," he said.

Afridi added he would like to see Sarfaraz and batter Shan Masood get opportunities in the third and final Test at Karachi. Both players are in the squad for the series.

Pakistan coach Saqlain Mushtaq has also come in for criticism for saying that the team will try to get a consolation win in the third Test begin-



"Instead of talking about where we are going wrong, he is now talking about a consolation win. What sort of a coach is Saqlain?" former Test batter and ex-chief selector and head coach Mohsin Khan said.

Skipper Babar also faced the heat during the post-match conference, being asked uncomfortable questions about his performance in Multan where he failed in the second innings, scoring just

In response to a question, Azam said sarcastically, "When I score runs you say I got them on flat pitches and easy opposition and when I don't get runs, everyone says I can't perform in difficult situations. Please don't forget the 196 runs I got against Australia



### Pakistan to host NZ for two Tests, three ODIs from Dec 26

PTI ■ KARACHI

 $P^{\text{akistan will host New}}_{\text{Zealand for two Tests and}}$ three ODIs from December 26 to January 14 with most of the matches to be played here.

According to the itinerary released by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Tuesday, the Test series will commence in Karachi on December 26 while the second match will be played and Multan from January 3.

The ODIs are scheduled at the National Stadium in Karachi on January 10, 12 and 14. New Zealand were due to play an ODI and T20I series last year but returned from Rawalpindi without playing any match on the instructions of their government due to an unknown security threat to

a bonanza for Pakistan cricket as they have already hosted Australia, while England, after playing a seven-match T20I series in October, are now playing a Test series in the country. Pakistan did not host any Test or international series between 2009 and 2019 due to security concerns of foreign teams after militants attacked the Sri Lankan team in Lahore

The series against New Zealand has been brought forward by a day with the consent of both the Boards.

New Zealand last played a Test match in Pakistan in 2003. New Zealand will also tour Pakistan in April next year for another combined white-

in March 2009.

in one team or the other, out-of-favour national

Giants (Rs 23.35 crore), Mumbai Indians (Rs 20.55

crore), Delhi Capitals (Rs 19.45 crore) and

defending champions Gujarat Titans (Rs 19.25

crore) can also go a fair distance for the players

being the need of the hour, Stokes and Green are

likely to command anything in the range of Rs 15-

17 crore from at least two to three franchises.

With hard-hitting, pace bowling all-rounders

With most of the top Indian players already



team players Mayank Agarwal and Manish Pandey at Rs 1 crore base price will command a fair bit of bidding.

But the same cannot be said about veterans Ishant Sharma and Ajinkya Rahane, who have kept their going price at a modest Rs 50 lakh, expecting to get a team or two raise the paddle for them.

One of the players who can cause a bidding war is South African batter Rilee Rossouw, who has been prolific on Indian tracks.

Rising Englishman Harry Brook has kept his base price at Rs 1.5 crore.

# Delhi pacers hit back after batters struggled against Maharashtra

oung Yash Dhull had a tough Young rash Phon have initiation into first-class captaincy as Delhi wilted under overcast conditions to be bowled out for 191 before Ishant Sharma-led pace attack left Maharashtra reeling at 80 for 5 on the opening day of their Ranji Trophy Group B match, here Tuesday.

While the sun did peep in time and again but the ball nipped around a fair bit throughout with pacers Manoj Ingale (5/43), Rajvardhan Hangargekar (3/58) and Ashay Palkar (2/67) bowling fast and full in the corridor to cause the dam-

Delhi, though, had started off well with senior opener Dhruv Shorey (41) and Anuj Rawat (24) adding 54 runs for the first wicket before Maharashtra drew first blood

When Maharashtra batted, Simarjeet Singh (2/16) quickly got rid of Pavan Shah (3) and Kaushal Tambe (0) before Ishant Sharma (1/21) bowled a delivery to Rahul Tripathi, that he had often bowled during his heydays to the best in the

#### **HP SKITTLE HARYANA FOR 46** Rohtak: Himachal Pradesh seamers

made full use of early morning moisture as they shot hosts Haryana out for a lowly 46 before their batters took full advantage of the eased-out conditions to take control on the opening day of their group A match.

At stumps, HP were 246 for 1, riding on opener Prashant Chopra's century (137) and his 219-run opening stand with Raghav Dhawan (86 batting). Himachal as of now look favourites to win the match outright with three days of play still left.

#### KARN'S 8 FOR 38

Nagpur: Railways leg-spinner Karn Sharma snared eight wickets in a sensational bowling display but Vidarbha still managed 213, courtesy captain Faiz Fazal's century, on the first day of their Group D match.

Captain Fazal (112 off 219 balls) played a lone hand for Vidarbha as he saw wickets tumbling at the other end, seven of them of Sharma's bowling (8/38). He also fell in the end off Sharma as the ninth Vidarbha batter to be



In reply, Railways were 22 for 1

in 6.1 overs at stumps. In another Group D match played in Mohali, opener Prabhsimran Singh struck a double hundred as Punjab batters toyed with Chandigarh bowlers to post 363 for 3 on the first day of their Group D

In Agartala, Gujarat captain Priyank Panchal hit 111 in his side's 271 all out in 75.3 overs against Tripura on the first day.

### NADEEM, SINGH SEIZE MOMENTUM

Ranchi: Jharkhand spin twins Shahbaz Nadeem and Utkarsh Singh shared five wickets between them as Kerala failed to convert their strong start to be 276 for six on day one of their group C match.

Left-arm spinner Nadeem took the key wickets of Sanju Samson (72) and Rohan Kunnummal (50) en route to 3/108, while off-spinner Singh ended the dogged resistance of Rohan Prem (79 off 201 balls) in his 2/43 as Jharkhand seized some late momentum going into the sec-

Chandran (39 batting) and Joseph (28 batting) were in the middle at stumps after a 51-run unbroken partnership.

#### TARUWAR, GOSWAMI STAND TALL

Nadiad: Meghalaya bowlers, led by Rajesh Bishnoi (4/62), wrecked havoc but Taruwar Kohli produced a captain's knock of 123, while Shreevats Goswami chipped in with a splendid 74 to push Mizoram to 252 on day one of their plate group

Opting to bowl, Megahalya new ball bowlers Abhishek Kumar (2/37) and Akash Choudhary (2/40) blew away the top-order to reduce Mizoram to 8 for 3 inside four overs. But thereafter, it was skipper

Taruwar who took charge of the proceedings in an entertaining fourth wicket partnership with Goswami that yielded 136 runs. Taruwar hit 15 fours in his 250-

ball knock, while the left-handed Goswami smashed eight fours en route to a 122-ball 74 to drive Mizoram forward. Left-arm spinner Bishnoi then

triggered the collapse after he had Goswami LBW. Taruwar fell short of partners to see his side fold for