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UNTAPPED POTENTIAL
OF YAKS IN THE NE

WORLD 9
PRO-BOLSONARO RIOTERS STORM
BRAZIL'S TOP GOVT OFFICES

MONEY 10
MARKETS RALLY AFTER 3-DAY
DECLINE ON FIRM GLOBAL EQUITIES

DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR
RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

Late City Vol.33 Issue 9
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

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the pioneer



INDIA TO FACE
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11 SPORT

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CAPSULE

CONVERSION SERIOUS ISSUE, OBSERVES SC

New Delhi: Observing that religious conversion is a serious issue which should not be given a political colour, the Supreme Court on Monday sought the assistance of Attorney General R Venkataramani on a plea seeking direction to the Centre and States to take stringent steps to control fraudulent religious conversions. **P4**

PIL AGAINST U'KHAND UCC PANEL REJECTED

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a PIL challenging the decisions of the Uttarakhand and Gujarat Governments to constitute committees for implementing Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in their respective States. **P4**

DELHI TO GIVE ₹10 LAKH TO KANJHAWLA FAMILY

New Delhi: Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is to provide a compensation of ₹10 lakh to the family of victim of the Kanjhawla hit and run case in Delhi. Lieutenant Governor of Delhi VK Saxena has approved the proposal. The LG assured help to the family. **P3**

NGT ASKS LG TO HEAD CLEAN YAMUNA BODY

New Delhi: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Monday constituted a High-Level Committee (HLC) of concerned authorities in Delhi where pollution of Yamuna is higher (about 75 per cent), compared to other river basins States. The bench headed by Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel on Monday while constituting the Committee requested the Lieutenant Governor (LG), Delhi, who is chairman of DDA, to head the Committee. **P3**

HC slams CBI for illegal arrest of Chanda, hubby

Not disclosing true and correct facts can't be reason for arrest: Bombay HC

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a major embarrassment for the CBI and the Magistrate who "authorised" their further detention, the Bombay High Court on Monday held that the arrest of former Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of ICICI Bank Chanda Kochhar and her husband Deepak Kochhar as illegal on the ground that it did not comply with the provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).

While releasing Kochhars on bail against a sum of ₹1 lakh each, with one or two sureties for the like amount, a HC bench of justices Revati Mohite Dere and PK Chavan held that their arrests were not in accordance with law. In their 49-page judgment, the two judges observed that the grounds stated in the identical arrest memos of the Kochhars did not record any specific grounds for arrest as mandated by Section 41 of the CrPC.

"Nothing specific has been noted/set-out therein, as mandated by Section 41(1)(b) (ii) (a) to (e). The only reason mentioned is that the peti-



tioners have not co-operated and not given true and correct disclosure. The same cannot be a ground for arrest. The ground for arresting the petitioners as stated in the arrest memos is unacceptable and is contrary to the ground(s) on which a person can be arrested. 'Not disclosing true and correct facts' cannot be a reason, inasmuch as, the right against self incrimination is provided for in Article 20(3) of the Constitution," the HC bench observed.

Virtually pulling up the CBI for arresting Kochhars without specific grounds, the HC bench noted, "It is further observed that if arrests are made in a routine manner, it could cause incalculable harm to the reputation and self-esteem of a person and that presumption of innocence is a facet of Article 21, which would ensure to the benefit of an accused".

"What was the reason to

Kumar (Supra) and Satender Kumar Antil (Supra)".

"It is incumbent on the judicial officer authorising detention under Section 167 the CrPC to be first satisfied that the arrest made is legal and in accordance with law and that all the constitutional rights of the person arrested are satisfied. The same is not an empty formality," they observed.

"If the arrest affected does not satisfy the requirements of Section 41 the CrPC, the concerned court is duty bound not to authorise further detention of the accused and release the accused forthwith. In fact, when an accused is arrested and produced before the concerned court, it is the duty of the said judge to consider whether specific reasons have been recorded for arrest, and if so, prima facie, whether those reasons are relevant and whether a reasonable conclusion could at all, be reached by the officer that one or the other conditions in Section 41(1)(b)(ii) (a) to (e) are attracted," the HC bench noted.

"A perusal of the remand order passed by the learned Special Judge, Mumbai, does not record the satisfaction as required to be given for authorising the detention of the petitioners with the respondent No.1-CBI. The onus of recording satisfaction lies not only on the officer but even on the judge," the judges noted.

Pravasis are 'rashtra doots' of India: Modi

PM hails NRIs' contribution, says their role is diverse

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/INDORE

Hailing the contribution of Pravasi Bharatiyas or Non-Resident Indians (NRI) in various parts of the world, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday described them as the "brand ambassadors" and "rashtra doots" of India on foreign soil and said they have a significant place in the journey of the country as it enters the "Amrit kaal" of the next 25 years.

Addressing them after inaugurating the 17th edition of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) convention in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, Modi also referred to India's G20 Presidency this year and said it is being seen as a big opportunity to tell the world about the country.

President of the Republic of Suriname Chandrikapersad Santokhi was the special guest of honour and Guyana President Mohamed Irfaan Ali was the chief guest at the event.

"I consider Pravasi Bharatiyas as brand ambassadors of India on foreign soil. Your role is diverse. You are the brand ambassador for yoga, Ayurveda, cottage industry, handicrafts and also millets,"



Prime Minister Narendra Modi welcomes Guyana President Mohamed Irfaan Ali during the 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention in Indore on Monday **PTI**

Modi said. "The GenNext Pravasis are also curious to know about the country of their parents' origin," the Prime Minister said.

Modi said, "India not only has the capability of becoming a knowledge centre but also a skilled capital. Our youth has skills, values and honesty and determination toward work. Our skilled capital can become the world's growth engine."

"The present India is looked at with hope and curiosity and India's voice is being heard on the global stage... India is also the host for this

year's G20. We do not want to make it only a diplomatic event, but an event of people's participation," Modi said.

The Prime Minister also urged universities in India to document contributions made by the diaspora in their respective nations for the benefit of students. "Migrants from India have settled in different countries for many centuries. The Indian diaspora has made extraordinary contributions in nation-building, we should document their life, struggles and achievements," he said. **Continued on Page 2**

2 held for drinking alcohol on flight

Incident on IndiGo flight from Delhi to Patna was reported by a passenger

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Two people were arrested on Sunday for allegedly consuming alcohol on Delhi-Patna IndiGo (6E-6383) flight. Consumption of alcohol is prohibited on domestic flights in India. The arrested persons have been identified as Rohit Kumar and Nitin Kumar, while a third person, Pintu Kumar, managed to escape from the airport.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said that a passenger informed the crew that some people were drinking beer inside the flight. The airline denied reports of

any scuffle and said that a complaint was filed after the incident as per protocol. An FIR was lodged after the aircraft landed around 8.50pm on Sunday.

Sources said that before landing at Patna airport IndiGo informed Air Traffic Control (ATC) that the two were carrying liquor and also filed an official complaint.

Indigo, in its statement, said there was no altercation on board the aircraft, as was being reported in some sections of social media.

At Patna airport, the CISF took the two passengers into custody and handed them over to the airport police. Airport SHO Robert Peter confirmed the arrest of the two inebriated passengers and said the duo would be taken to court.

AI failed to report unruly behaviour by 2 flyers

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

After the November 26 peeing incident, Air India is yet again in the dock for not reporting two cases of unruly behaviour by passengers on flight AI-142 from Paris to New Delhi on December 6, 2022.

In the first incident, a drunk passenger was caught smoking in the lavatory. In a second incident on the same flight, another passenger allegedly urinated on a vacant seat and on blanket of a fellow female passenger when she went to the lavatory. The media has already reported the second incident. But Air India didn't report both incidents until the DGCA sought the report from the airline on January 05, 2023.

Continued on Page 2

Residents reluctant to leave sinking Joshimath

Number of cracked homes has soared to 678, evacuation on

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

As the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) members met Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami regarding the looming disaster due to land subsidence at Joshimath in Chamoli district on Monday, many residents are reluctant to leave their homes declared unsafe.

Now, the number of cracked homes has increased to 678 with more than 80 families being shifted to temporary accommodations arranged by the authorities.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court on Monday asked a



A SDRF official inspects a house in sinking Joshimath on Monday **PTI**

petitioner seeking the court's intervention to declare the crisis in Joshimath as a national disaster to mention his plea Tuesday for urgent listing.

Uttarakhand Chief Secretary SS Sandhu stressed that every minute is important and directed immediate evacuation of people from the affected zone.

The district administra-

tion had put red cross marks on more than 200 unsafe houses in the sinking town.

It asked their occupants to either shift to the temporary relief centres or rented accommodation for which each family will get assistance of ₹4,000 per month for the next six months from the State Government.

Continued on Page 2

Rahul gives reason for wearing T-shirt in cold

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi on Monday disclosed why he chose to wear a T-shirt during his Bharat Jodo Yatra in biting cold.

Talking to the media on the sidelines of the yatra in Ambala, Rahul, whose T-shirt has often been the talk of the social and political corridors, said his decision was aimed at uplifting the morale of those poor children who are compelled to brave chilly winter without warm clothes.

Rahul narrated an incident in Madhya Pradesh when the yatra passed through the State last month and said it made him think about wearing a T-shirt and feeling cold.

"One fine morning at 6 in our Madhya Pradesh leg of the yatra, which till then had crossed the sultry summer of



southern India, including humid climes of Kerala, three poor girls joined me in the interest of having a photo with me. When I held their hands to bring them closer for the snap, I realised they shivered with cold.

"Then and there I decided to continue wearing a T-shirt to feel the severity of the cold. When these poor girls will have access to warm clothes then I will comfortably wear a sweater," Rahul said to a huge round of applause at the nukkad event in Ambala. **Continued on Page 2**

Rail, air traffic go haywire as fog engulfs north India

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 267 trains, including 82 express trains, 140 passenger trains and 40 sub-urban trains, were cancelled during the last 24 hours and over 100 flights delayed as a "very dense fog" engulfed swathes of north Indian plains on Monday.

The dense fog impacted visibility across the region even as the air quality worsened to the "severe" category in Delhi amid severe cold wave conditions. Satellite images showed a fog layer extending from Punjab and adjoining north-west Rajasthan to Bihar through Haryana, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh.

Delhi witnessed intense cold wave for the sixth consecutive day while very dense fog reduced visibility to just 25 metres, hitting road, rail and air traffic movement.

The minimum temperatures in the national Capital



People during a cold and foggy morning in New Delhi on Monday **Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer**

rose marginally though. The Safdarjung observatory, Delhi's primary weather station, recorded a minimum of 3.8 degrees Celsius as against 1.9 degrees on Sunday.

The cold wave spell in

Delhi has been so intense that the national Capital has been recording minimum temperatures lower than that of most places in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. **Continued on Page 2**

Shun distasteful reportage on deaths, violence: Govt advisory to TV channels

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has asked television channels not to compromise on "good taste and decency" while reporting cases of accidents, deaths, and violence, including violence against women, children and elderly in manners.

The Ministry on Monday issued detailed advisory to TV channels after noticing several instances of lack of discretion. The Ministry has said that television channels showed dead bodies and blood-splattered images/videos of injured persons as also instances of violence against women, children and elderly persons.

The advisory has pointed out an instance of repeat-show over several minutes of a teacher brutally beating a child and said no precaution was taken to blur the images. "It has further highlighted

that the manner of reporting such incidents is distasteful and distressing for the audience," the Ministry has said.

The advisory has highlighted the impact such reporting has on various audiences. It has stated that such reports can also have an adverse psychological impact on the children.

"There is also a crucial issue of invasion of privacy which could be potentially maligning and defamatory, the advisory has underlined. Television, being a platform usually watched by families in households with people from all cohorts — old aged, middle aged, small children, etc — and with various socio-economic backgrounds, places certain sense of responsibility and discipline among the broadcasters, which have been enshrined in the Programme Code and the Advertising Code," it said **Continued on Page 2**

Stalin objects to straying, Guv walks out of House



MLAs belonging to the allies of the ruling Government raise slogans against Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi before staging a walkout during his address at the first session of the year of Tamil Nadu Assembly in Chennai on Monday **PTI**

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi on Thursday staged an unprecedented walkout from the Assembly following a face-off with Chief Minister MK Stalin over the former's customary address to members of the house in its first session of the year.

In his address, Ravi skipped a few portions of the draft prepared by the

Government, prompting Stalin to expunge from records all such comments made by the Governor that didn't conform to the draft. It is customary that the Governor adheres to the draft of his speech prepared by the Government. The incident marked another low point in a tenuous relationship between the Governor and the political executive in the southern State. **Continued on Page 2**

Siddaramaiah as Tipu Sultan: Court stays book release

PTI ■ BENGALURU

A sessions court on Monday gave an injunction against the release of a book titled "Siddu Nijakanasugalu" (Real dreams of Siddu) (Real dreams of Siddu) on Congress leader and former Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, hours before its launch.

The court granted the interim injunction restraining State Higher Education Minister CN Ashwath Narayan and others from publishing, releasing, packaging, selling and displaying the book till the next date of hearing.

Following the court order, the book launch event was cancelled. The court's directive came on a petition filed by Siddaramaiah's son and Varuna MLA Yathindra Siddaramaiah. The book cover has a picture of Siddaramaiah wearing an attire resembling Tipu Sultan and holding a sword. **Continued on Page 2**

Massive blaze in G'gram village as 150 cylinders burst

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

A major fire broke out at Ghasola village in Sector-49 Gurugram here on Monday morning after some small gas cylinders burst into flames. A massive fire had also broken out in the same place two years ago. Reportedly, after over 150 small gas cylinders burst into flames, the blaze spread rapidly with smoke filling up the sky. The fire engulfed several huts of which more than 160 shanties were completely gutted. The cause of the fire is suspected to be a blast in small cylinders. Fire personnel evacuated residents from the huts and it took them about three hours to control the fire. No casualties or injuries have been reported.

According to the fire officials they received the fire incident call at around 11.55 AM at the Sector-29 fire station. More than 2,000 people



became homeless due to the fire. They suspected that the fire incident took place due to blasts in small cylinders which cause a fire in the area and it spread rapidly to other huts. Soon the entire area was engulfed in flames.

The residents left their valuables behind and ran to safe places to save their lives. Rajesh Kumar, a fire official said, more than twenty tenders reached the place and brought the situation under control in three hours. Twenty fire-tenders from Sector-29 fire station, Manesar, Udyog Vihar fire station, Sector-37 fire station and Bhim Nagar fire station were rushed to the spot.

Shah to open new Light & Sound Show at Red Fort

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The much-awaited one-of-its-kind Light and Sound Show at Red Fort, a UNESCO heritage site in the national capital will be inaugurated by Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday. The new avatar titled 'Jai Hind' will be a presentation of bravery and the history of India from the 17th century to the present day.

The one hour long Light and Sound Show 'Jai Hind' divided into three parts will bring to life key episodes from India's history including the rise of the Marathas, the 1857 War of Independence, the rise of the Indian National Army and the INA trials, the fight for Independence and India's continuing progress over the past 75 years by using all forms of performance art - projection mapping, live action films, light and immersive sound, actors, dancers and puppets. The show will be showcased at different monuments inside Red Fort starting with Naubatkhana to Deewan-e-Aam to Deewan-e-Khas, according to a statement from the Union Culture Ministry.

Pravasis are 'rashtra doots...

From Page 1
"Many of our elders will have many memories of that era. I urge that efforts should be made for an audio-visual and written documentation of the history of our diaspora in various countries through universities," Modi said.

Talking about India's Presidency of the G20 this year, Modi said, "India is seeing this responsibility as a big opportunity. It is an opportunity for us to tell the world about India."

Today India's voice, its message and words have a different significance at the global stage. This growing power of India is going to increase further in the coming times, Modi said. When there are discussions on peace-loving, democratic and disciplined citizens in different countries of the world, then the Indian pride of being the "mother of democracy" increases further, he said while mentioning the role of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) in the world. "When the world assesses the contribution of our non-resident Indians, it hears the sound of a strong and capable India," he said. "We started an extraordinary tradition of global trade centuries

ago. We crossed the ocean that seemed limitless. India has shown how commercial relations between different civilizations in different countries can open the way for shared prosperity," he added.

The Prime Minister also spoke about the record of developing indigenous vaccines for COVID-19 and providing its 220 crore doses free of cost.

He said India has been included in the top five economies of the world and as the third largest start-up nation. The pace of development India has achieved in the last few years and the achievements it has made are extraordinary and unprecedented, the Prime Minister said.

Modi said 40 per cent of the world's digital transactions have happened in India alone. India is counted among the countries with the most advanced space technology, making a record of launching 100 satellites in one go, he said. While assuring all possible help to the NRIs to protect their interests, Modi appealed to them to keep cultural and spiritual knowledge as well as updated information about the growing potential and progress of the country to share it with

the rest of the world. Whenever an Indian goes to a foreign land and meets a co-patriot, then he feels the entire country met him, he said.

Modi also said Madhya Pradesh has a number of natural sites, including the Narmada river and the recently developed Mahakal Lok at the famous Mahakaleshwar Temple in Ujjain, and urged the diaspora to visit them.

"Recently, the grand and divine expansion of Lord Mahakal's Mahalok has also taken place in Ujjain. I hope all of you will go there and seek the blessings of Lord Mahakal and also be a part of that wonderful experience," he said.

Lavishing praise on Indore, Modi said the city is not only the cleanliness capital but also the capital of "swaad" (taste) in the country. Indore is ahead of its time not only in cleanliness but also takes care of its heritage. The delicacies of Indore are mouth-watering and the people who taste them once will never turn to anything else, he added.

The Prime Minister also released a commemorative postal stamp 'Surakshit Jaayen, Prashikshit Jaayen' to underline importance of safe, legal, orderly and skilled migration.

Rahul gives reasons for wearing T-shirt

From Page 1
Rahul's T-shirt has been making news everyday both in political circles and even in social media networks. He himself has faced a number of questions by the media during the last one month on this count. He has always dismissed such questions saying the real issue is not his T-shirt, but the plight of children, farmers and labourers of India, who are forced to walk around without warm clothes during winter.

Earlier in a veiled attack in the same event, Rahul dubbed RSS as "21st century Kauravas". "Who were the Kauravas? I will first tell you about the 21st century Kauravas, they wear khakhi half-pants, they carry lathi in hand and hold shakkhas.... India's 2-3 billionaires are standing with the Kauravas," Rahul alleged, referring to the RSS.

"Did the Pandavas do demonetisation, implement the wrong GST? Would they have ever done so? Never. Why? Because they were tapasvis and they knew that demonetisation, wrong GST, farm laws are a way to steal from tapasvis of this land.... (Prime Minister) Narendra Modi did sign on these decisions, but the power of India's 2-3 billionaires was behind it, whether you agree or not," he said.

"People don't understand this, but the fight which was at that time, it is the same today. Between whom is this fight? Who were Pandavas? Arjuna, Bhim...They used to do tapasya," he further said. He asked the gathering if they had heard about the Pandavas spreading hatred on this land and doing any crime against an innocent person.

"On one hand there were these five tapasvis and on the other hand there was a crowded organisation. With the Pandavas, there were people of all religions. Like this (Bharat Jodo) Yatra, nobody asks anyone from where he comes. It is a shop of love. The Pandavas had also stood against injustice, they too had opened a shop of love in the market of hate," Rahul said.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The general public is informed that the cars with the following car numbers which have completed their life Petrol Cars 15 Years Diesel Cars 10 Years. The MCD drive was confiscated by Pine View Technology Pvt Ltd and has not been claimed by anyone till now. All these vehicle owners are informed to come to the company's office and claim the scrap value of the vehicle. Otherwise, all these vehicles will be scrapped in the next three days.

DL4CNA3385	DL4SY9619	DL1CX0145
DL3CAL3735	DL9SAQ2835	DL3CAK9133
DL4CE1657	DL4ST17400	DL1CP1021
MALAA51HR	DL4SAM8338	DL4CAG9221
8M2763538	DL4SFB1179	DL8SAM2209
SJ411N178947	L4SFB1179	DL8S06029
DL2FAV0111	DDJ5227	DL8SAE3965
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DL2CN3890	DL4SAM8638	RJ14SC0376
DL3CC5829	DL4SAF5336	DL4SAR6971
DL9CC1870	GJ16S3305	GJ5EC878
HR26BD9675	DL4S28655	DL4SAG8320
DL3CAQ9224	HR21C4668	DL8SAG3991
DL2CAF6555	DL1SP4223	DL8SAE7609
DL3CS9368	DL8SZ1558	DL8SAB0176
DL10CE2855	DL8SW6698	UP14J8697
ST91N162090	DL9SS5583	DL4SAG524
DL4CAV3572	DL4SAD1099	DL8SAE3776
WDB1240226	GJ1CA3267	DL4S26139
C273714	DL8SAE8776	DL6S76223
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UP14J8697	DL8CK0770	DL8SAG9733
DL8SAF924	DL4CAB440	DL8CAJ4514
DL8SAE3776	DL2CAF3560	DL4SAR9776
DL4S26139	DL2CZ7841	DL4SAM7337
DL6S76223	DL2CZ7841	DL4SAM7337
DNK9817	HR51T9270	DL8SAK1200
UP15W7748	HR26AG5400	HR03F2027
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DL8SAG524	DL9CC3595	UK07K9563
DL5E7870	NOREG76	DL4SAJ0500
DL4SU1741	DL2CAD2229	DL8CBF5555
DL4SBB8371	DL9CR1343	



Anurag Thakur, Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, addresses the 18th Jambodri closing ceremony of NCC and Scouts in Jaipur on Monday

Dense...

From Page 1
"A total of 267 train, including 82 express trains, 140 passenger trains and 40 sub-urban trains, were cancelled," a railways official said. On Sunday, around 335 trains were delayed, 88 cancelled, 31 diverted and 33 short terminated due to foggy weather.

Five flights were diverted and 30 delayed due to the foggy conditions, officials at the Indira Gandhi International Airport said. An Air India Express flight from Sharjah to Delhi has been diverted to Jaipur. A Delhi to Trivandrum Vistara flight has been delayed by an hour.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD) the long spell of intense cold to a large gap between two western disturbances, which meant frosty winds from the snow-clad mountains blew in for a longer-than-usual period.

A senior IMD meteorologist said short-term relief is likely after the 24 hours under the influence of back-to-back western disturbances. When a Western disturbance — a weather system characterised by warm moist winds from the Middle East — approaches a region, the wind direction changes. Hence, the chilly northwesterly winds from the mountains will stop blowing for a few days leading to an increase in temperatures, he said. The visibility levels dropped to 50 metres at the Palam observatory, near the IGI Airport, and 25 metres at the Safdarjung observatory and the Ridge weather station, an official of the IMD said.

Residents reluctant to...

From Page 1
The NDMA members suggested the root cause of the subsidence and the place where water is retained must be ascertained. Assuring the State all necessary assistance, they stated that active participation of the scientists from the institutions concerned will be sought to resolve the problem.

The NDMA members also said the locations identified for rehabilitation of the affected families should also be geologically surveyed.

All necessary action including the drafting of plans and action on reports from all institutions should be implemented under one roof so that the benefit of study reports is experienced soon, they said.

Talking to the NDMA members, Dhama said the carrying capacity of other mountain towns in Uttarakhand must also be ascertained for which necessary scientific research and testing should be

facilitated. On the same day, Chief Secretary Sukhbir Singh Sandhu also held a meeting with senior officials to review the situation in Joshimath. He ordered that measures to address the toe erosion taking place should be started immediately.

The buildings which have developed cracks and are dilapidated must be demolished soon so that the buildings do not cause any more damage. It was also decided that the Chief Secretary will take a meeting on a daily basis to review the situation in Joshimath.

Even as the authorities are requesting all residents in the affected area — about 40 per cent of Joshimath — to shift immediately to temporary accommodations facilitated by the authorities, many are still living in their damaged homes.

The Chief Secretary directed that the affected area must be vacated without further delay.

Shun distasteful...

From Page 1
The Ministry has observed that in most cases the videos are being taken from social media and broadcast without editorial discretion and modifications to ensure compliance and consistency with the Programme Code. A list of examples of such recently broadcast content is as below:

- 30.12.2022: Shows the distressing images and videos of a cricketer injured in an accident, without blurring.
- 28.08.2022: Shows disturbing footage of a man dragging the dead body of a victim and also focusing on the face of the victim with blood splattered around.
- 06-07-2022: Shows distressing incident in which a teacher can be seen brutally thrashing a 5-year-old boy until he lost consciousness in a coaching classroom in Patna, Bihar. The clip was played without muting it in which painful cries of the child begging for mercy can be heard and was shown for over 09 minutes.
- 04-06-2022: Report shows the distressing gory images of the dead body of a Punjabi singer without blurring.
- 25-05-2022: A video shows a disturbing incident of a man brutally beating two minor boys with a stick in Chirang district of Assam. In the video, the man can be seen mercilessly beating boys with sticks. The clip was played without blurring or muting in which the boys' painful cries are clearly heard.
- 16-05-2022: An incident about a woman advocate brutally assaulted by her neighbour in Bagalkot district of Karnataka was shown continuously without edits.
- 04-05-2022: Report showing a man hacking his own sister to death in Rajapalayam, Virudhunagar district of Tamil Nadu.
- 01-05-2022: A report shows a man being hung upside down from a tree and brutally thrashed with sticks by five people in Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh.
- 12-04-2022: An accident in which distressing visuals of five dead bodies are continuously shown without blurring.

Siddaramaiah...

From Page 1
Earlier on Monday, Siddaramaiah said the book about him is being released with an intention to humiliate him ahead of Assembly polls in Karnataka and termed it "totally defamatory".

The Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly had said he is contemplating legal action against it.

"I don't know, everything is yellow for those with a jaundice eye. Who wore dress like Tipu

(18th century ruler of erstwhile Mysuru Kingdom Tipu Sultan) and held a sword in their hand, it was (former CM) Yediyurappa and (BJP MP) Shobha Karandlaje. Who wrote a foreword for Sheikh Ali's book on Tipu, isn't it duality?" Siddaramaiah had asked, alleging BJP's role behind the book.

"Purposely to humiliate me ahead of election, they are bringing out a book. It is totally defamatory. I will see what is to be done legally," he added.

Stalin objects...

From Page 1
The high drama on the floor of the House soon snowballed into a heated debate online between the supporters and critics of the ruling DMK, even as #GetOutRavi trended on Twitter, with many calling for the ouster of Ravi from the gubernatorial post.

However, the state BJP threw its weight behind Ravi, describing as "disrespectful and amateurish," Stalin moving a resolution against the Governor whilst Ravi was still seated in the House.

The DMK-dominated House had convened for the first session of the year with the Governor's customary address to the members, which the main opposition AIADMK dubbed as a "disappointment" and said it was "indecent" on the part of the CM to have "spoken" when the Governor

was seated, alluding to the resolution moved by Stalin. Earlier, Ravi began his address amid slogan shouting against him by MLAs belonging to allies of the ruling DMK.

As soon as he began his address in Tamil, greeting members on the New Year and the harvest festival 'Pongal', legislators raised slogans including 'Tamil Nadu Vazhgate' (Long live Tamil Nadu) and 'Engal Nadu Tamil Nadu' (Our land is Tamil Nadu). The slogans later ceased.

Ravi made a reference to Swami Vivekananda, much to the indignance of the treasury benches, skipping certain portions from his customary speech. He omitted the names of Dravidian stalwarts including the late EV Ramasamy 'Periyar' and CN Annadurai.

AI failed to report...

From Page 1
The DGCA has issued a show cause notice to the "accountable" manager of Air India why action should not be taken against them for "dereliction" of their regulatory obligations.

This comes after the shocking incident on an Air India New York-Delhi flight on November 26, when a drunk passenger urinated on a woman passenger. "Air India didn't report the incident until DGCA sought the report from them on 05.01.2023. After perusal of the reply submitted by Air India through email it emerged that 203-

visions related to handling of an unruly passenger have not been complied with. It has been noted that the response of the airline has been lackadaisical and delayed," the DGCA said in a statement.

"However, to follow principles of natural justice, they have been given two weeks time to submit their reply to DGCA and based on that further action will be taken," it said. As per the regulations, the concerned airline is responsible for informing the DGCA within 12 hours of landing of aircraft in case of any incident of unruly passengers/passenger rage/passenger misconduct reported in their flight.

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE
Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)
1st CORRIGENDUM NOTICE
No. 128-W/280/OET/2022-23-W-V/NIT-32-A, B, D & E-2022-23-W-V/Date: 09.01.2023
The advertised tender notice No. 128-W/280/OET/2022-23-W-V/NIT-32-A, B, D & E-2022-23-W-V dated 04.01.2023 in which date of opening of 2 tenders (32-B-2022-23-W-V & 32-E-2022-23-W-V) are now changed from 27.01.2023 to **03.02.2023**, all other terms and conditions are same. 96/2023

कार्यालय जिलाधिकारी (दक्षिण-पूर्व)
ओल्ड गार्गी कालिज बिल्डिंग, बिहाड़ एल.एन.आर. कालिज, लाजपत नगर-IV, दिल्ली-110024
सांख्यिक सूचना
जबकि, श्री आई. के. टाकुर, अधिकृत हस्ताक्षरी, मैसर्स पैसिफिक डेवलपमेंट कॉर्पोरेशन लिमिटेड, 5वां तल, पैसिफिक मॉल, साइड-4, शाहिदाबाद औद्योगिक क्षेत्र, गाजियाबाद, उ००१०१० ने जरोला अपोलो नेट्रो स्टेशन, सखिटा विहार, नई दिल्ली में स्थित कॉमर्शियल कॉम्प्लेक्स प्रोपर्टी डेवलपमेंट (सीपीडी-48) ने 10 स्क्रीन मल्टी-लैक्स के निर्माण के लिए प्रॉपोजनल सर्विफिकेट प्रदान करने हेतु अग्रहस्ताक्षरी के पास आवेदन किया है। जबकि, उपरोक्त श्री आई. के. टाकुर को दिल्ली सिनेमेटोग्राफ नियम, 2008 की धारा 4 के अन्तर्गत इस कार्यालय के पत्र संख्या DM(SE)/Lic./Cinema Pacific/2022/1291-1297 दिनांक 14.11.2022 के द्वारा प्रॉपोजनल सर्विफिकेट प्रदान किया गया है और उपनिदेशक (बिल्डिंग) सी एंड आई, सीडीए, सी-1, प्रथम तल, विकास सदन, आईएनए, नई दिल्ली को ऊपर उल्लिखित इस कार्यालय के पत्र के बाबत सूचित कर दिया गया है। सामान्य जनता को एतद्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि उपरोक्त स्थल पर सिनेमा हॉल का निर्माण किया जा रहा है।
हस्ता/- उप जिलाधिकारी
लाईसेंसिंग दक्षिण-पूर्व
DM/Lic./2023

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE
Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi-110005
Whereas The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.
Sr. No. Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.) Name of Branch
1. Kunwer Sachdev/ Kanav Sachdev/ LBGUR00002961874 Flat No. 1625 B, The Magnolias, DLF Golf Links, DLF City, Phase V, Gurgaon Haryana/ January 05, 2023 Rs. 6,55,95,469/- NCR
The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.
Date : January 10, 2023
Place: Delhi/NCR
Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

OFFICE OF THE PROJECT MANAGER, CONSTRUCTION UNIT, UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL NIGAM
GHINGARIKHAL, RANIKHET, DISTT.-ALMORA 263645
Letter No.: 29/NVida/07 E-Tender Notice Date: 09-01-2023
1. Name of the work: CONSTRUCTION OF REPAIRING WORKS OF TYPE-II RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS FOR REVENUE DEPARTMENT AT TEHSIL RANIKHET, DISTRICT ALMORA.
2. Estimated Cost: - Rs. 24.26 Lakh
3. Period of Completion: 04 Month
4. Date and Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal: 10-01-2023 (10.00hrs)
5. Online Bid submission: End date :- 23-01-2023 (17.00 hrs)
6. Date & Time of Technical bid Opening : 25-01-2023 (10.30 hrs)
7. Name and Address of the Officer inviting bid: - Project Manager, Construction Unit, Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam, Ranikhet.
8. Pre-bid meeting details (if required) Date & Place:- 13-01

L-G urges Kejriwal to resume weekly meets

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the continued power tussle between the Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) VK Saxena and the AAP-led Delhi Government, the L-G on Monday asked Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to hold regular meetings with him in the "interest of consciously deliberative and conflict free governance".

In a letter to Kejriwal, Saxena said they used to meet every week till October 2022 but the CM expressed his inability due to his "preoccupation with State Assembly and municipal elections."

Saxena said that after receiving several letters from Kejriwal, he would like to appreciate him for the fact that he had "started taking" governance in the city seriously and gotten into the intricacies of Constitutional provisions, Statutes and Acts that



outline the multi-layered scheme of administration in the National Capital Territory of Delhi. "The provisions governing administration in Delhi emanate out of serious deliberations in the Constituent Assembly, State Reorganisation Commission and the Parliament of India, apart from having been clearly interpreted by the Supreme Court of India on several occasions," the L-G stated.

Saxena said that provisions

are amply clear for any practitioner of statecraft, lawyer, scholar as indeed a common citizen concerned with it, for the sake of ample clarity; I would like to invite you for a meeting where we could discuss the issues threadbare."

Saxena pointed out that they were used to meet regularly till October 2022, where after CM expressed his inability to meet due to your preoccupation with State Assembly and Municipal Elections.

The L-G said that now the elections are over so it will be in the fitness of things that such meetings are resumed in the interest of consciously deliberative and conflict-free governance of the city, in the interest of its people.

"The CM's office may accordingly fix up any mutually convenient date for a meeting, that I am sure will lead to broader clarity," Saxena further stated in his letter.

Hold public debate on you bypassing Govt: CM to L-G

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a response to Lt Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena's letter, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday wrote a letter asking him for the public debate over his interference into the elected government and bypassing the Council of Ministers.

In the letter, Kejriwal stated that in the beginning of the L-G letter, he has sarcastically mentioned "...you have started taking governance in the city seriously..." after my election campaigns. AAP is a national party and as its national convener, I have to attend to elections campaigns in different parts of the country.

Comparing the campaign of AAP, Delhi CM said that the Prime Minister, Home Minister and many BJP Chief Ministers like Yogi Adityanath, Shivraj Singh, Pushkar Dhami etc were also campaigning for their party at that time in Gujarat



and Delhi. Kejriwal also thanked L-G for inviting him for discussions. "I will definitely come. I will fix up a convenient time with your office. However, an important discussion has started in the last few days, which has critical bearings on Indian democracy," he said.

"I would urge you to kindly make your stand on those issues public. When your good self unilaterally appointed 10 aldermen, presiding officer and the Haj Committee bypassing the elected Government and directly getting the officers to issue necessary notifications, there was strong public criticism. A statement was issued by your office on January 7 in

which you admitted having taken all those actions unilaterally bypassing the Government," Kejriwal asked. "However, you justify your actions saying that in all those Acts and provisions, it was written that 'Administrator/LG shall appoint...' or the Act defined govt as 'Administrator/LG', therefore, those Acts gave you the powers to act eo nomine.

In my letter on same date, which was made public to take this debate forward, I had requested you to kindly make your stand public whether this was your position that from now onwards, on all those subjects where the law uses the words "Administrator/LG", elected govt would be bypassed/ignored and LG would directly deal with the officers and directly run those departments? For instance, all laws and Acts related to electricity, health, water, education etc - all define the government as "Administrator/LG".

NGT sets up panel to oversee Yamuna cleaning



Tribunal urges L-G to head high-level committee, CS to act as convener

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Monday constituted a 'High Level Committee' (HLC) to oversee the implementation of its orders with regards to cleaning of the Yamuna.

The tribunal has requested Delhi Lieutenant-Governor VK Saxena to head the committee, who is chairman of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and administrator of Delhi. The other members of the committee will be the Chief Secretary of Delhi who will act as convener.

Outlining the failures of different agencies, the Principal Bench headed by Adarsh Kumar Goel observed that having multiple authorities in Delhi may be one of the reasons for not achieving success so far. "There appears to be lack of ownership and accountability. A huge amount has already spent without the desired results. Judicial oversight has continued for almost 29 years.

"The DDA has to take measures for protecting flood plain zones while drain owning agencies — the DJB, Irrigation Department, Municipal Corporation etc. have to maintain drains free from pollution," the Bench said.

The Principal Bench observed, "It does appear that the situation to a great extent

remains unsatisfactory, in violation of judgment of the Supreme Court and orders of this Tribunal, fixing rigid timelines which are being defied at whims, without accountability and without visible improvement in ground situation.

Thus, effective execution regime appears to be necessary with involvement of topmost administrative authorities with flexibility of procedures for award of works for execution of pollution prevention projects."

"In the light of above discussion, we constitute HLC of concerned authorities in Delhi where pollution of Yamuna is higher (about 75%), compared to the river basin States. We request the Lieutenant Governor, Delhi, who is Chairman DDA and Administrator of Delhi under Article 239 of the Constitution, to head the Committee," the NGT has ordered.

Basing its orders on the status of Sewerage Treatment Plants (STPs), unchecked flow of sewerage into Najafgarh and Shahadra Drains etc., non-laying of sewerage network in various residential localities and the level of pollution in the Yamuna as displayed on the Delhi Pollution Control Committee website, the Tribunal noted that its earlier order dated 27.01.2021, was not being complied by the Delhi Govt. despite expenditure of Rs 1500 Cr.

Disposing of a petition filed by Ashwani Yadav, the bench observed that this is yet another petition on the issue of unabated pollution of River Yamuna and continued failure of the authorities in taking adequate remedial measures in terms of specific orders on the subject passed by the Supreme Court and this Tribunal."

AAP, BJP spar over issue of oath to aldermen in MCD

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP and the BJP on Monday hit the streets over the issue of oath to aldermen in the MCD House last week, and the ensuing row, with both parties staging demonstrations against each other.

AAP volunteers led by Minister Raaj Kumar Anand and party chief spokesperson and MLA Saurabh Bhardwaj protested near BJP headquarters at ITO. During the protest, the councillors, MLAs and volunteers of the party raised slogans against the LG and the BJP. AAP leader Bhardwaj said that the BJP has been trying to take over the MCD through illegal means despite losing the elections. The majority is clearly with AAP and the people have also categorically stated that the Mayor should be from AAP, he said.

The AAP had on Saturday staged a protest outside LG VK Saxena's house over the appointment of aldermen by him, accusing him of helping BJP gain control over the standing committee and zonal committees of the MCD.

The Delhi BJP, too, staged



AAP activists raise slogans during a protest against the BJP, near BJP headquarters in New Delhi on Monday

a protest near Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence on Monday in Civil Lines over an alleged attack on BJP councillors by their AAP counterparts in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) meeting last Friday.

As he led the protesters near Kejriwal's house, Delhi BJP working president Virendra Sachdeva said, "What happened in the MCD House on January 6 was extremely shameful. The AAP councillors

attacked BJP councillors including women. We are prepared to retaliate to the hooliganism of the AAP." He said the party will not relent until the Kejriwal apologises over the "hooliganism" of his councillors.

Police on Monday detained several leaders including Sachdeva, MP Parvesh Verma, state general secretaries Harsh Malhotra and Dinesh Pratap Singh, and state vice president Sunil Yadav, as they tried to



BJP activists try to cross the police barricade during a protest regarding clashes during MCD Mayor's election, near the residence of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, in New Delhi on Monday

cross a police barricade at Chandgi Ram Akhara, en route to Chief Minister's residence. They were later released by the police, the party said. "The incident that took place in the House on January 6 is very shameful in which political decorum was violated.

It is unfortunate for the people of the national capital that they have a 'Tulu Pump' CM who has been exploiting them for the last eight years," said Sachdeva, while address-

ing the gathering. Delhi BJP working president also demanded an apology from the CM to the countrymen and women councillors of the saffron party, and warned that till then their struggle will continue.

Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said that AAP MLAs and councillors have insulted the constitution written by Baba Bhimrao Ambedkar at the behest of Arvind Kejriwal.

A row erupted between AAP and BJP councillors on Friday in the MCD House, when AAP councillors opposed oath being administered to the 10 aldermen appointed by the LG. The meeting was adjourned without election to the posts of mayor, deputy mayor, and members of the standing committee.

Meanwhile, during the protest at ITO, Saurabh Bhardwaj said, "We will not let the BJP and the LG use illegal tactics and act like goons and try and take over the MCD. We are not the Congress party to get scared of the BJP and surrender. Each of our party workers can give up their lives to fight against the BJP which is making a mockery of our Constitution." Social Welfare Minister Raaj Kumar Anand said that this is the unconstitutional face of the BJP. "First of all we want this to be highlighted to the residents of Delhi and the people in the country. We also want to point out that if the AAP wanted, it could have also forcefully elected the Mayor from our party on the day the ruckus in the MCD was created by the BJP," he said.

Sisodia hands over ex-gratia relief of ₹1 cr each to kin of 3 Covid warriors

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia handed over ex-gratia relief of Rs 1 crore each to the families of three persons who lost their lives during the Covid pandemic. Prem Babu, Operation

Theatre staff at Delhi government's GTB hospital, bus marshal Ravindra Singh and civil defence volunteer Satnam Singh lost their lives during the pandemic while serving Covid patients, a statement said.

On the occasion, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said that the COVID warriors of the national capital worked selflessly during the pandemic and sacrificed their lives to protect humanity and society without caring for their own lives.

"Delhi government salutes



their spirit. No amount can compensate for the loss of the family of the deceased COVID warriors, but their family will

definitely get a means to live a dignified life through this amount," he said.

"COVID-induced pan-

demic was a terrible crisis for the entire humanity which inculcated fear in society but corona warriors in Delhi risked their lives to get the Capital out of this crisis.

Thousands of corona warriors including doctors, medical staff, support staff, and sanitation workers worked day and night to fight this unprecedented pandemic and many of them were martyred while serving the people," Sisodia said.

"Delhi Government will always stand with the families of the COVID warriors. This scheme of the Delhi government gives confidence to the families of COVID warriors that the government and society are always with them. Though this is a small amount, it will help the families lead a dignified life," Sisodia added.

Prisoners in central jails to get hot water for basic needs

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid cold wave conditions, inmates in all the 16 Central Jails of Tihar, Rohini and Mandoli will start getting hot water for their bathing and sanitary needs with immediate effect. Apart from this, all prisoners above 65 years of age will get a mattress, in addition to a wooden cot and a durri that is provided to the prisoners.

According to the sources at Raj Niwas, this humane decision that will go a long way in taking care of basic human requirements of the inmates, was taken by the Delhi Lieutenant Governor, Vinai Kumar Saxena in the recent fortnightly review meeting for prisons.

"During the meeting with the inmates, the L-G learned that the inmates whom are under trial prisoners also, do not get this basic facility of hot water even in this biting cold



and that influential inmates manage to get hot water in the Jail at the rate of Rs 5000/- per bucket, Saxena issued instructions to DG (Prison) and the Pr. Secretary (Home), to immediately make hot water available to all inmates," they said.

The sources said that similarly, upon learning that many an inmate, especially the older ones, complain of not having a mattress in this biting cold and that their orthopedic malices get aggravated, the LG instructed officials to ensure that mattresses are made available to the prisoners above 65 years of age.

Water supply to be hit due to interconnection of new WTP pipelines

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Water supply will be affected in many areas in Delhi on Thursday and Friday due to work related to interconnection of new pipelines at the Haiderpur Water Treatment Plant.

Water supply in several areas and colonies, including those in northwest, west, central, and south Delhi, will not be available from 10 AM on January 12 to 10 PM on January 13. The Delhi Jal Board (DJB) asked the residents of the areas going to be affected to store sufficient quantities of water.

According to statement issued by the DJB, the board is working on the interconnections of new pipelines (water mains) that carry the raw water mains within Haiderpur Water Treatment Plant (WTP) Phase-I. It said that the infrastructural development will impact the

water supply in Delhi. The DJB said that due to the interconnection work at Haiderpur WTP, the water supply in several areas/colonies will not be available from 10:00 am on January 12 (12.01.2023) to 10:00 pm on January 13.

Informing about areas in which water supply will be affected, it stated areas are Raja Garden, Basaidarapur, Raghuraj Nagar, Madipur JJC and Village, Punjabi Bagh Extn., Ramesh Nagar, Khayla, JJ Colony Khayla, Moti Nagar, Tagore Garden, Tihar Village, Tilak Nagar, Sant Garh, Guru Nanak Nagar, Pocket B Vikas Puri, Varun Niketan, Rajouri Garden, Hari Nagar, Subhash Nagar, Ravi Nagar, Vishnu Garden, Saraswati Vihar, Sharda Niketan, Sainik Vihar, Harsh Vihar, Lok Vihar, Part of Pitampura, Wazirpur, Keshav Puram, Ashok Vihar-I, II, III and IV, JJ Colony and Village Wazirpur.



Vehicles ply on a road on a cold and foggy winter morning in New Delhi on Monday

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Anjali's family home in Sultanpuri burgled

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Kanjhawala case victim Anjali Singh's family has alleged that someone broke into their house in Karan Vihar here and stole an LED TV along with other belongings, while they were away.

Singh's family members have been staying with a relative since Anjali's death and were informed about the theft by their neighbours on Monday morning, officials said.

The family apprehended

that Nidhi, who was riding pillion on Anjali's scooter at the time of the accident, and the accused in the case could be behind the theft.

Anjali was killed in the early hours on January 1 after her scooter was hit by a car which dragged her for 12 km from Sultanpuri to Kanjhawala. Nidhi fell to the side and fled the spot after the accident claiming she was "scared".

Anjali's family reported the theft at Aman Vihar police station at 8:30 AM. A police team immediately reached the

spot and found the lock on the door of the house broken, the police said, adding, a crime team also examined the spot and lifted exhibits. According to the complaint, an LED TV, some clothes and utensils were stolen from Singh's house, a senior police official said.

A case has been registered in the matter under sections 457 (lurking house-trespass or house-breaking by night in order to commit offence punishable with imprisonment) and 380 (theft in dwelling house, etc.) of the Indian Penal Code, the officer

said. The police are looking into the family's allegations and investigating the case from all angles. Initially, the police arrested Deepak Khanna (26), Amit Khanna (25), Krishan (27), Mithun (26), and Manoj Mittal in connection with the case.

Later, two more persons, Ashutosh and Ankush Khanna, were arrested for allegedly shielding the accused. The police later traced Nidhi after scanning the CCTV footage of the incident site.

Jammu's security to be boosted

CRPF to set up more check posts, give arms training to VDCs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

After sending 18 companies of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) for deployment in Jammu following killing of seven minorities, plans are afoot to further strengthen the security grid in the area by erecting more check posts and providing training to the Village Defence Committees (VDCs) through the CRPF.

The VDCs will be trained in handling and operating arms for self defence in case of any exigency. The CRPF is preparing a training module for the self defence course along with arms training, officials said.

Training and arming the VDCs is not a new idea but, of late, the practice was discontinued owing to peace in Jammu division. Earlier, the Jammu and Kashmir police



used to train the committee members for such a defensive cause, they said.

The move comes amid Intelligence input about the possibility of more terror attacks in the Jammu region. Following this input, the Union Home Ministry ordered mobilisation of more forces for deployment in Jammu.

Six people, including two children, were killed and many

another IED was spotted in the area near the village which is about eight km from Rajouri town. The explosion took place near the house where four civilians were killed and many more injured by terrorists in a targeted shooting incident on January 1.

Incidentally, it was a former VDC member who fired from his long-unused weapon to force the terrorists to flee without inflicting any further damage. About a dozen people were injured in the two terror attacks. In the terror attack on January 1, two armed terrorists barged into three homes separated by a distance of around 50 metres from each other and opened indiscriminate fire. The attack led to the killing of four civilians and injuries to six others. On December 16, two persons were killed outside an Army camp in the third such terror attack in Rajouri district.

Don't give conversion political colour: SC

Terming it serious matter, top court seeks A-G's help

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Observing that religious conversion is a serious issue and it should not be given a political colour, the Supreme Court on Monday sought the assistance of Attorney-General R Venkataramani on a plea seeking direction to the Centre and States to take stringent steps to control fraudulent religious conversions.

The Bench comprising Justices MR

Shah and CT Ravikumar was hearing a petition to prevent religious conversions through "intimidation, threatening, deceptively luring through gifts and monetary benefits." "We want your assistance also, AG. Religious conversions by force, allurement etc. There are ways and means, anything by allurement, if that is happening, when what should be done? What are the corrective measures?" the Bench said, hearing the petition by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay. During the arguments, senior advocate P Wilson, appearing for Tamil Nadu, called the petition a "politically motivated" PIL, insisting there was no question of such conversions in the State.

The Bench took objection and

remarked, "You may have different reasons to be agitated like this. Don't convert court proceedings into other things. ... We are concerned for the entire State. If it is happening in your State, it is bad. If not, good. Do not see it as targeting one State. Do not make it political."

The court had warned a "very difficult situation" will emerge if proselytisation through deception, allurement and intimidation is not stopped. The Gujarat Government had told the top court at an earlier hearing that freedom of religion does not include the right to convert others, and requested it to vacate a HC stay on the provision of a State law that mandates prior permission of the DM for conversion through marriage.

Declare Joshimath national disaster: PIL

SC tells petitioner to mention plea today for urgent listing

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday asked a petitioner, who has sought the court's intervention to declare the crisis in Uttarakhand's Joshimath as a national disaster, to mention his plea on Tuesday for urgent listing.

A Bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice PS Narasimha on Monday asked advocate Parmeshwar Nath Mishra, appearing for Swami Avimukteshwaranand Saraswati, who mentioned out of turn for urgent listing of the plea, to follow the process and again mention it on Tuesday.

"Mention again on Tuesday after following the due process when your matter is in the mentioning list", the bench said. Saraswati has contended that the incident has occurred due to large-scale industrialisation and sought immediate financial assistance and compensation to the people of Uttarakhand. The plea has also sought direction to the National Disaster Management Authority to actively support the residents of Joshimath in this challenging time.

"No development is needed at the cost of human life and their ecosystem and if any such thing is to happen, then it is the duty of the State and Union government to stop the same immediately at war level", the plea of the Seer said.

Cong: Halt projects till eco experts give report

'Hike damages being paid to residents'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday demanded that the land subsidence situation in Uttarakhand's Joshimath should be declared a national calamity and all developmental projects in the area halted till a report by experts and environmentalists is submitted on the issue. The Opposition party described it as a man-made disaster and sought enhanced compensation for each house affected due to the "unbridled development" in the area. It asked the government to preserve the old Joshimath town and develop a new town to rehabilitate the residents.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said, "Protect nature. The whole country is worried and is with the people of Joshimath, where unbridled development has created cracks in Uttarakhand's 'Devsthal'." "We have three demands from the Modi government - The Joshimath tragedy should be declared a national calamity."

"Stop all new projects, including of railways and hydel power, until a newly appointed high-level committee of experts, scientists, environmentalists and local people submits its report," he said in a series of tweets in



Hindi. "The oostees of Joshimath be given adequate compensation from PM CARES fund, instead of only Rs 5000," Kharge also said. Addressing a press conference, Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera said all development projects in the vicinity of Joshimath should be stalled till the advice of experts and locals is sought. "We demand that after what is happening in Joshimath, the government should declare it a national calamity, as the state government is unable to handle the situation."

"This is a man-made disaster as all this is happening because of the tunnel of the NTPC that is being dug up and that should be filled up," Khera said at AICC press conference. Congress mentioned the problem has erupted due to the blasting in the NTPC tunnel that is being dug up in the area.

He also alleged that the

compensation given by the state to those whose houses have developed cracks is a "cruel joke" on the people of Joshimath. Devendra Yadav, the Congress in-charge of Uttarakhand affairs, alleged that the BJP government in the state does politics in the name of religion and is playing with the sentiments of people.

The manner in which the BJP government in the state has acted on the Joshimath incident shows its insensitivity and callousness and we condemn its attitude. A Congress delegation will meet the chief minister soon and also submit a memorandum to the governor in this regard," he also said.

Former chief minister Harish Rawat has also demanded that the compensation be increased to Rs 50,000 per victim and a 'new Joshimath' be established while preserving the old town.

SC nixes plea challenging U'khand, Guj's UCC panels

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a PIL challenging the decisions of the Uttarakhand and Gujarat Governments to constitute committees for implementing a Uniform Civil Code (UCC). Pointing out that the Constitution empowers the States to set up such panels, the court said the constitution of such committees by the States cannot be challenged for being ultra vires the Constitution.

"There was nothing wrong for the States to constitute committees under Article 162 of the Constitution, which gives the power to the Executive to do so," said the Bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice PS Narasimha.

Both Uttarakhand and Gujarat Government have constituted committees to look into the issue of implementation of UCC, which will govern matters of divorce, adoption, inheritance, guardianship, succession of all citizens equally regardless of their religion, gender and sexual orientation.

"The Governor has given his permission to establish an expert committee to check all the relevant laws which control personal matters for people living in Uttarakhand, and to prepare a report on amendments in the present laws," according to a State Government communication.

Several other petitions are pending before the court seeking UCC and procedures.

Diplomacy on PBD sidelines

Modi holds talks with 2 Presidents in bid to boost ties with Guyana, Suriname

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/INDORE

In an effort to forge more robust ties with Suriname and Guyana, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday held bilateral talks with Suriname President Chandrikapersad Santokhi and President of Guyana President Mohamed Irfaan Ali. The parleys focused on bilateral cooperation in areas of Defence, digital technology and capacity building. The meetings took place on the sidelines of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD).

Santokhi and Ali are attending the mega event as the chief guest and special guest of honour. About Modi's meeting with Santokhi, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the talks focused on cooperation in areas of mutual interest including hydrocarbons, defence and maritime security. "In their meeting, both leaders held discussions on cooperation in areas of mutual interest including hydrocarbons, defence, maritime security, digital initiatives and ICT, and capacity building," it said in a statement.

"Suriname appreciated restructuring by India of



Prime Minister Narendra Modi welcomes Suriname President Chandrikapersad Santokhi and his wife Mellisa Santokhi Seenacherry during the 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention, in Indore, on Monday. PTI

defence and maritime security. "In their meeting, both leaders held discussions on cooperation in areas of mutual interest including hydrocarbons, defence, maritime security, digital initiatives and ICT, and capacity building," it said in a statement.

"Suriname appreciated restructuring by India of

Suriname's debt arising from Lines of Credit availed by Suriname," it said. After the conclusion of the PBD, Santokhi will visit Ahmedabad and New Delhi.

On talks between Modi and Ali, the ministry said they held comprehensive discussions on a wide range of issues including cooperation in ener-

gy, infrastructure development, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, technology and defence cooperation. "Both leaders recalled the 180 year old historical bonds of friendship between the people of India and Guyana and agreed to deepen them further," it said. President Ali will also visit Delhi, Kanpur, Bengaluru and Mumbai.

'India doesn't believe in hierarchical world order'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India's ties with other nations are based on sovereign equality and mutual respect and it does not believe in a "hierarchical" world order where few countries are considered superior to others, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said here on Monday.

His observations came in the backdrop of China's growing assertiveness in South China Sea and the Indo-Pacific beside continuing tension with India at the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Making the country's stand clear while addressing a roundtable conference of ambassadors ahead of the Aero India Exhibition in Bengaluru from February 13-17, he also said India's international relations are guided by the very essence of human equality and dignity and it does not believe in making or becoming a client or satellite state.

Eighty ambassadors attended the conference organised by Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence. The defence minister said India's national efforts towards 'Make in India' are neither "isolationist" nor are they meant for the country alone as he made an open offer of partnerships with New Delhi for production of various military equipment.

"We do not believe in making or becoming a client or satellite state, and so, when we partner any nation, it is on the basis of sovereign equality and mutual respect," he said while



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with representatives of different countries during the Ambassadors' Roundtable conference for Aero India 2023, in New Delhi, on Monday. PTI

inviting the ambassadors to the mega event.

Rajnath said "partnership and joint efforts" are the two key words that differentiate India's defence industry cooperation with other nations. "India does not believe in a hierarchical conception of world order, where few countries are considered superior to others."

Underlining that the 'make-in-India' programme encompasses make-for-the-world, the defence minister asserted that the self-reliance initiative is the beginning of a "new paradigm of partnership" with India's partner countries.

"Within the domain of

defence research and development and manufacturing, it translates into an open offer to you all, for joint efforts and partnerships in defence R and D and production," he said.

"When we are procuring defence equipment from our valued partner nations, very often, they are sharing the technical know-how, setting up manufacturing plants in India, and working with our local firms for various sub-systems," the defence minister said. He noted that it is India's endeavour to transcend the relation of buyer and seller to that of a co-development and co-production model, "irrespective of whether we are a buyer or a seller."

NHA to grade AB-PMJAY hosps on value-based care

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to ensure quality healthcare services to the satisfaction of the patients, the National Health Authority (NHA) is introducing a new system wherein performance of the hospital empaneled with the central flagship scheme Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) will be graded on value-based health care instead of the volume of services they can provide.

As per new value-based care model, the hospitals performance will be measured based on five indicators includ-

ing beneficiary satisfaction; hospital readmission rate; the extent of Out-of-Pocket Expenditure; confirmed grievances and improvement inpatient's health-related quality of life, Dr. RS Sharma, CEO, NHA said. Traditionally, from the payer's perspective, the healthcare model has been focussed on the quantity of services delivered, where case-based bundled payment is made on the basis of the number of services provided.

However, the new initiative will introduce the concept of 'value-based care', where payment will be outcome based and providers will be rewarded according to the quality of

the treatment delivered.

Under the new model, the providers will be rewarded for helping the patients improve their health, which consequently will reduce the effects of disease in the population in the long term. The step promises significant increase in the overall health gains and is expected to be a win-win for all concerned stakeholders from patients to healthcare providers, payers and suppliers.

While the patients will get better health outcomes and higher satisfaction out of the services they receive, providers stand to get better care efficiencies. Similarly, payers will be able to maximize the health

benefits generated out of the spending incurred, he added.

"To ensure PM-JAY beneficiaries receive both cashless healthcare benefits and high-quality care at every empaneled hospital, the NHA has implemented various measures. These measures include standardizing the cost of treatment under the scheme and adding new and advanced treatment procedures.

"Additionally, NHA has made a provision to incentivize best performing hospitals that provide quality care to patients," said Sharma.

In a value-based healthcare system, the payers can exercise strong cost controls. A health-

ier population with fewer claims translates into less drain on payers' premium pools and investments. Suppliers would benefit from being able to align their products and services with positive patient outcomes and reduced cost, he added. Altogether, value-based care promises to significantly improve healthcare landscape in India by incentivizing and encouraging healthcare providers to focus more on delivering patient centric services. The performance of the hospitals based on the above indicators shall be made available on a public dashboard that will help the beneficiaries to make informed decision.

Furore over NEET-PG exams from March 5

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Board of Examination (NBE) NEET-PG bulletin stating that the examination date set for March 5, 2023. >50% of interns ineligible, their career at stake. States altogether aren't eligible. Will lead to demands of postponement and last minute chaos. Urgent resolution needed," it tweeted. The doctors' body has now shot off a letter to Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, requesting postponement of this cut-off date, saying interns in states like Delhi, Madhya Pradesh,

year. They said that in actuality around 40,000 to 50,000 students' futures will be impacted.

"NEET-PG bulletin drops bombshell: internship completion date set for March 31, 2023. >50% of interns ineligible, their career at stake. States altogether aren't eligible. Will lead to demands of postponement and last minute chaos. Urgent resolution needed," it tweeted. The doctors' body has now shot off a letter to Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, requesting postponement of this cut-off date, saying interns in states like Delhi, Madhya Pradesh,

Rajasthan will be disqualified from appearing in the exam, as they will complete their internships after the cut-off date. "This is especially devastating for interns in States such as Delhi, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and many others who have been altogether disqualified as most of the States currently have interns who will attain their completion after the aforementioned date..." said the letter signed by Dr Mathur (FORDA President), Dr Sarvesh Pandey (FORDA General Secretary) and Dr Anuj Aggarwal (FORDA Vice President).

SC tells Centre to pay OROP arrears by March 15

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Observing that there should be no further delay, the Supreme Court on Monday granted time till March 15 to the Centre for payment of arrears of One Rank-One Pension (OROP) to all eligible pensioners of the armed forces.

Attorney General R Venkataramani, appearing for the Centre, said the tabulation process has been completed by the Comptroller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA) and now the tables have been sent to the Ministry of Defence for final approval.

"By March 15, the money will start flowing into the accounts of 25 lakh pensioners of armed forces", AG told the



apex court. A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice PS Narasimha asked the Centre to ensure that all arrears are paid expeditiously to the pensioners of the armed forces and that there is no further delay. The apex court granted liberty to ex-servicemen association to file an application, if

they feel aggrieved by any action of the Centre on payment of arrears of the OROP. Last month, the Government moved the top court seeking extension of time till March 15, 2023 for payment of arrears of OROP scheme to all eligible pensioners of the armed forces. This is the sec-

ond extension given by the top court to the Union Government to pay the arrears after it had first moved the top court in June, last year and sought three months to compute and make payments in accordance with the March 16, 2022 verdict of the top court.

The top court's 2022 verdict came on the plea filed by the Indian Ex-servicemen Movement (IESM) through advocate Balaji Srinivasan against the Centre's formula.

The apex court had said in terms of the communication dated November 7, 2015, the benefit of OROP was to be effected from July 1, 2014 and the communication states that "in future, the pension would be re-fixed every five years".

MHA designates KTF's Arsh Dala a terrorist under UAPA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Monday designated Canada-based Khalistani ultra Aarshdeep Singh Gill, who has been involved in targeted killings, terror financing and extortion in Punjab, a terrorist under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

In a notification, the Union Home Ministry said that Gill alias Arsh Dala, who was born in Ludhiana but is currently based in Canada, is involved in the cross-border smuggling of drugs and weapons on a large scale.

Gill is associated with the banned Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF) and runs terror modules on behalf of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a designated terrorist. He is the fifth individual to be des-

ignated as a terrorist within a week. All these terrorists are based in countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and Canada. Gill is an accused in various cases registered and investigated by the National Investigation Agency (NIA), including targeted killings, extorting money for terror funding, attempt to murder, disturbing communal harmony and creating terror among the people in Punjab.

According to inputs with Centre, Gill is involved in terrorism leading to his designation as a terrorist under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. The Home Ministry, in exercise of the powers conferred by clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 35 of the UA (P) A, declared Gill as a terrorist.

Didi markets her own dev model with humane face

G 20 SUMMIT: MAMATA TAKES ON HER OPPOSITION

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee stuck to her known brand of politics — even at the G 20 meeting on Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion — taking on her political opponents and praising her own government for affording humane face to the cause of development by creating 12 million jobs and running "outreach programmes" beneficial to common man.

Speaking on Monday at a meeting attended by international dignitaries Banerjee said how the previous Left Front Government had left Bengal economy in a disarray and how her party supported inclusive and not divisive politics, apparently stopping short of reproving the BJP for pursuing what her Trinamool Congress calls a "politics of division and hatred."

"We launched the Duare Sarkar (government at your doorstep) programme to ensure that people get the benefits of our development initiatives. The programme won a national award," Banerjee said, mentioning emphatically about the Lakshmir Bhandar scheme under which her Government doles out Rs 500 to Rs 1,000 to some definite category of women.

"The women, especially, those from the backward Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities have been benefited by this direct money transfer scheme," Banerjee said, adding how her government has been running many such welfare schemes.

Reminding that though there was a national slowdown her State Bengal had registered a healthy 4 percent growth in terms of State Domestic Product pointing out sans development of people true financial inclusion and growth could never be achieved. She referred to a multi-party democracy where "we will have to work with a united approach even as crit-



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee addresses the first 'Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion' meeting of the G20, at New Town in Kolkata, on Monday. PTI Photo

ics frowned upon the need for projecting the issue of Central-State divide on "situations as delicate and formal as this." Reminding that though Bengal was run by her party, Trinamool Congress which was ideologically different from the one that ran the Union Government, "we should adopt a united approach towards human development."

Banerjee tended to have more unkind words for the erstwhile Government run by the Left Front which of late has been drawing impressive crowds in rural rallies.

She said the Left ruled Bengal for 34 years at a stretch leaving Bengal in shambles, economically adding it was left on her Government that came to power in 2011 to put the economy back on track.

"When we came to power in the state, we witnessed a state of stagnation in every sphere including the economic affairs. The development work totally collapsed during the previous regime. But we took up there and made steady progress since then," she said.

The CPI(M) central committee member, and former MP Sujana Chakrabarty was quick to hit back saying international platforms like a G20 summit was hardly a place to air her views on internal politics. "Such international platforms are meant for different reasons ... not for raising your own political views ... At least we would not have ever done that," he said.

Man hacks sister-in-law to death after failed rape bid

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a sensational incident reported from Jalaun, a man tried to rape his sister-in-law and after failing in his efforts, he hacked her to death and later tried to burn her body to conceal the crime.

The incident took place when the woman had gone to the farm in village Kurchauli under Nadigaon police station of Orai town. The police have registered a case of murder against the accused and launched a hunt to arrest him. The half burnt body of a woman found in the field was also sent for autopsy.

According to reports, a half-burnt body of a woman was found in the field in Kurchauli village under Nadigaon police station on Sunday evening. The local residents informed the police about the body after which the police reached the spot. During identification, it came to light that the body was of 35-year-old Pooja of Kurchauli village.

Investigation revealed that Pooja was murdered by her brother-in-law Neetu Sharma. After the murder, some people saw him running away after burning the body.

Pooja's daughters told the police that their uncle tried to force himself on their mother, and when she protested, he attacked her with an axe. After preliminary investigation, the police registered a case of murder against Neetu.

Additional Superintendent of Police Asim Chaudhary inspected the spot of the incident and instructed the police to arrest the accused as soon as possible.

Pooja used to sell pani puri with her husband Satish Sharma and two daughters and had returned to the village only a few days ago. Since then Neetu was making amorous advances to her.

Police station incharge Virendra Singh said that on the complaint of husband Satish Sharma, a case of murder had been registered against Neetu.

Meanwhile two cousin sisters were also found dead under mysterious circumstances in Barabanki on Monday morning. Local police claimed that they consumed some poisonous substances late on Sunday night in Baddapur police station area of Barabanki district.

No anticipatory bail for man held for duping bizzman in Shah's name

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday refused to grant anticipatory bail to a man accused of duping a businessman of Rs 2 crore on the false assurance of arranging a meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah in relation to a railway contract.

The High Court dismissed the plea for pre-arrest protection and said considering the overall facts and circumstances of the case, no ground was made out for grant of anticipatory bail to accused Anish Bansal and noted that specific role of each accused in the entire conspiracy needs to be unearthed.

"Moreover, this court also notes that accused persons have used the name of Union Home Minister for inducing the complainant to part with a huge amount of money,

knowing fully aware that the assurance he was being given was false.

"Since it had dawned on the complainant that there was no connection between the accused/ applicant and the Union Home Minister or his family with accused Brijesh Ratan or his father that he had started demanding back the money and had realised that he had been cheated in the name of constitutional authority," said Justice Swarna Kanta Sharma, pointing to the gravity of offence with names of such constitutional authority and his family used to cheat the complainant. Investigation needs to be carried out regarding the same."

A case was registered by the Special Cell of Delhi Police in 2022 for the alleged offences of cheating, criminal breach of trust and criminal conspiracy under the Indian Penal Code.

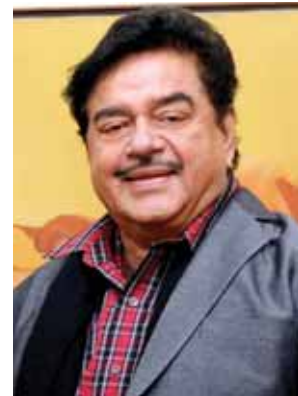
Shatru compares Rahul's yatra to Advani; his opinion, says TMC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress has distanced itself from the statements made by party MP and superstar Shatrughna Sinha praising Congress MP Rahul Gandhi.

"If he has praised Rahul Gandhi that is his own view ... they are mutually well acquainted for many years ... so he may have praised him ... But the Trinamool Congress does not hold the same opinion," TMC Rajya Sabha MP Dr Shantanu Sen on Monday said. On Sunday Sinha had praised Gandhi for his Bharat Jodo (Unite India) initiative saying the Bharat Jodo Yatra was the need of the hour.

He said "Rahul Gandhi has emerged as a youth icon and a serious leader" destroying the image that his Opposition tried to project about him. "I do not remember such a yatra — drawing people from women to children to youth in such great numbers



— taking place for many years ... I think a nearest parallel may be drawn with the Yatra led by my friend, philosopher and guide LK Advani ji or for that matter the one organized by (former Prime Minister) Chandrashekhar ji," Sinha a TMC MP from Asansol who had earlier left the Congress to join Mamata Banerjee's party said.

When asked to comment on Sinha's statement about Gandhi — a leader in whom

the TMC sees a challenger for Mamata Banerjee's prime ministerial ambitions — Dr Sen said that Sinha's statement was made on personal capacity and that the TMC had nothing to do with that.

"It will not be right for me to speak about the political programmes of other parties ... Whatever Mr Sinha said is his personal opinion and not the stand of the party," Sen said, adding Gandhi should have first tried to unite his own party before embarking on a Bharat Jodo Yatra.

"A person who is trying to unite India through the Bharat Jodo Yatra should first attempt to keep his own party united ... They are the oldest political party of the country ... but now they are a divided house ... see how their senior leaders like Ghulam Nabi Azad, Kapil Sibal and others have left the party ... the Congress is today ridden with factionalism ... and Rahul Gandhi should first look into that before going for Bharat Jodo," the TMC MP said.

Dense fog claims 7 lives in two separate incidents



A man rides a bicycle on the GT Road on a foggy and cold winter evening, in Kanpur, on Monday. PTI Photo

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

At least seven people were killed and dozens injured in two separate incidents that took place on Agra-Lucknow Expressway amid dense fog causing near-zero visibility, police said on Monday.

According to the police, in the first incident, three passengers were killed and at least 18 others were injured after a bus on its way to Sultanpur

from Delhi hit a truck and fell in an about 20 feet deep ditch near Thathia in Kannauj. In another incident, four passengers were killed, and at least 10 injured when their bus rammied into a truck on the expressway near Auras in Unnao district, police said.

"Two women and a child were killed and 18 injured when the bus overturned after hitting the truck and went down the ditch. All the injured

were admitted to the Kannauj medical college hospital in Tirva," Station House Officer Thathia, Kamal Bhatia, said. The deceased were identified as Anita Bajpai (50), Sanjana (25) and Devansh (10), all of Rae Bareilly. "Six members of our family were coming to Rae Bareilly from Delhi," said a family member of the victim. "I came to know that six members of our family met with an accident in which three mem-

bers died," he added. In the Unnao accident, a Nepal-bound bus rammied into a truck on the Agra-Lucknow Expressway as a dense fog covered the area on Monday.

The driver and three Nepalese citizens died in the mishap, officials said. Six other passengers, four of them from Nepal, were injured and were hospitalised.

Additional Superintendent of Police Shashi Shekhar Singh said the bus carrying 60 passengers was going from Rajkot in Gujarat to Nepal.

The accident occurred in the Auras area of Unnao. A blinding fog cover engulfed a large part of the state this morning, lowering the visibility considerably. The bus hit the truck from behind on the Agra-Lucknow Expressway around 5:30 am, Singh said.

He added three male passengers of the bus died on the spot, while one woman succumbed to her injuries on the way to the hospital.

Hasanganj Sub-Divisional Magistrate Ankit Shukla said the deceased were identified as Chandra Saud (50), Lalit Saud (35) and Nirmala (25), all of Kailali district of Nepal. The fourth deceased is Sajid, the bus

driver. The injured included Ibrar (25) of Bahraich, Punbhaben (39) of Ahmedabad, Gujarat; Janki (30) and Amar (35), both residents of Kanchanpur in Nepal; Deepak (30), a resident of Kailali in Nepal; and Dhansara (50), also from Nepal. Around 40 passengers with minor injuries were lodged in a local marriage hall after being given first-aid at the local community health centre.

The bodies were sent for post-mortem, police said. District Magistrate Apoorva Dubey, who reached the accident site, said a team of doctors were treating the injured and coordinating with authorities in Lucknow.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed the district magistrate and senior police officers to ensure adequate medical assistance to the injured. He also expressed grief at the deaths of the passengers in the mishaps.

Meanwhile, four more people were killed in separate mishaps. In Jhansi, a truck loaded with goods went out of control and fell down from the overbridge. Three people, including the truck driver, were injured in the accident.

Rohit Pawar elected president of MCA

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Following the footsteps of the NCP president Sharad Pawar, his grand nephew Rohit Pawar has taken a plunge into the cricket administration. He has been elected unopposed as the President of the Maharashtra Cricket Association (MCA).

The Ajay Shirke panel, in which Rohit was a prominent candidate, swept the polls at an election to the managing committee of the Maharashtra cricket body held at the MCA International Stadium in Pune on Sunday.

An MLA from Karjat-Jamkhed constituency in Ahmednagar district, 37-year-old Rohit had been first elected from the Affiliated Clubs category in the apex council before being unopposed as the president of the MCA. He succeeds Vikas Kakatkar.

"I have been working for sports in my own way. But, I have long been doing something for my favourite game of cricket. Thanks to the blessings of @PawarSpeaks, I have now been elected as president of MCA," Rohit tweeted immedi-

ately after his election as the MCA chief. "Pawarsabheb has done a long work for the betterment of all kinds of sports. Being an ordinary worker, I may not be able to achieve as much as Pawarsabheb has done. but I will look up to the beacon of Sahyadri heights and work honestly for the game under his guidance," Rohit added.

Apart from Rohit, the other office bearers who were unopposed are: Kiran Samant, Vice-president, Shubhendra Bhandarkar, Secretary, Santos Bobde, Joint secretary and Sanjay Bajaj, Treasurer.

Rohit was earlier for building a state-of-the-art cricket stadium in his family bastion of Baramati. Rohit is a fourth generation Pawar. He is the grandson of Sharad Pawar's elder brother Appasaheb Pawar.

He has been in politics since 2017. Having been elected to the Pune Zilla Parishad first, Rohit was elected to the Maharashtra Assembly from Karjat Jamkhed in the 2019 elections. Rohit's grand uncle Sharad Pawar was the president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) from 2005 to 2008.

UPPCL for power tariff hike of 18-23% in FY23

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Public sector power utility Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (UPPCL) has proposed a hike in electricity tariffs for domestic category of consumers by 18 per cent to 23 per cent in the next financial year 2023-24.

The UPPCL and its five subsidiaries on Monday filed the annual revenue requirement (ARR) statement for 2023-24 with the power regulator. In the ARR statement filed with the power regulator, UPPCL has sought an average hike of 15.85 per cent in power tariff for the next fiscal. The

hike sought for the industrial consumers is 16 per cent, for



agriculture 10-12 per cent and 17 per cent for the below poverty line or lifeline category of consumers.

The power consumer organisation has questioned the ARR saying the UPPCL has surplus of Rs 25,133 crore and it is duty bound to pass on the benefit to the power consumers.

Avadesh Verma, president of UP Power Consumer Forum, said instead of a hike the UP Electricity Regulatory Commission should slash the power tariff by 35 per cent or 7 per cent each year for the next five years.

Verma described the ARR

for 2023-24 as an unconstitutional demand of relief in power tariff instead of hike as law of the land does not permit hike in tariff in view of the huge surplus of over Rs 25,000 crore with the UPPCL.

The UPPCL, in the ARR, has projected the revenue requirement of Rs 92,547 crore and line loss of 14.9 per cent. The ARR has projected revenue gap of Rs 9,140 crore and cost of power purchase is estimated at Rs 1,34,751 crore. In the last tariff order announced in July last year there was no hike in power tariff for all categories of consumers for 2022-23.

The UPERC in July 2022

had directed UPPCL for 100 per cent metering of the power connections of existing and retired employees of the power utility.

The regulator has computed it as a deemed revenue of Rs 422.50 crore from this head so that the burden is not borne by other power consumers.

To check power theft, the regulator has directed the UPPCL to expedite installation of 40 lakh smart meters. The UPPCL has also been directed to submit the technical/financial impact of the smart meter rollout on their system. The UPPCL is yet to comply with both the directives.

UPPCL steps up efforts to maintain power supply

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited, (UPPCL) has stepped up efforts to ensure power supply as per schedule across the state in view of the cold wave sweeping the state.

UPPCL CMD M Devraj said here on Monday that adequate electricity was available in the state and supply was being made against the

demand of 21,196 megawatts. He said in January 2022, the average demand of electricity was 13,865 MW which had increased to 16,118 MW.

He said as per the schedule of power supply, round-the-clock supply was being maintained in all big cities, district headquarters and area under Taj trapezium, for 18 hours in rural areas and for 21 hours 30 minutes in tehsil headquarters and nagar panchayat towns.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Reprieve

The Kochhars get bail, with HC saying the arrests were in clear breach of the mandatory provisions

While granting bail to former ICICI bank CEO Chanda Kochhar and her husband Deepak Kochhar, the Bombay High Court rightly said, "What was the reason to arrest the petitioners after four years is not spelt out in the arrest memos, as mandated. The ground for arrest of the petitioners mentioned in the arrest memos is in clear breach of the mandatory provisions." The court went on to say that just because "an accused does not confess, it cannot be said that the accused have not cooperated with the investigation." The Central Bureau of Investigation had arrested the couple on December 23. It speaks poorly about a law-enforcement agency if it has to depend on the confession of the accused to make its case in a court of law. Unfortunately, a lot of investigation depends on confession, which is often obtained by means that are not very nice. Cops euphemistically call it 'sakhti se puchhtachh' (tough interrogation). This mostly happens when the accused are not educated or well-off; the underclass often ends up facing sakhti se puchhtachh. The Kochhars are not from that section of society. The CBI has accused them and Videocon Group Chairman Venugopal Dhoot of corruption and conspiracy. According to the CBI, ICICI Bank under Chanda Kochhar sanctioned a loan of Rs 3,250 crore to Videocon companies violating the Banking Regulation Act, RBI guidelines, and ICICI's credit policy. As quid pro quo, Dhoot invested Rs

64 crore in Deepak Kochhar's Nupower Renewables in a circuitous manner. All these charges may be true, but that would be adjudicated by the court. At any rate, the CBI cannot force the accused to confess and implicate themselves.

The Bombay HC also questioned the timing of the Kochhars' arrest, coming as it did weeks before their son's wedding on January 15. Perhaps they were arrested not in spite of but because of the wedding. It was reportedly planned as a destination wedding, with all the attendant glittering celebrations that one expects from such a high-profile event. After all, Chanda Kochhar was a corporate celebrity not a long ago. A couple accused of corporate fraud having a nice time with the rich and the powerful (that was also expected in such a wedding) would not have been good optics for the CBI or its political bosses. But the point is that the premier investigating agency should be bothered about cracking corruption cases, not optics. We commented earlier that the arrest of the Kochhars and Dhoot made no sense. The arrests did not satisfy the conditions laid down by the Supreme Court. For the alleged scam is four years' old; in this period, they would have already tampered with evidence and influenced or intimidated witnesses. In other words, the arrests were carried out because of reasons not related to the investigation. This leaves a bad odour all around; this frightens businesspersons. This is certainly not how we attract investment in the country.

PICTALK



Migratory ducks at a pond, in Agartala

Untapped potential of Yaks in the NE

Yak breeding is done in Arunachal Pradesh by the Brokpas. Now scientific methods are being employed to conserve Yak, with immense potential



BRIJENDER SINGH PANWAR

Indigenous traditional knowledge of Yak breeding and management by the Brokpa (Yak rearers) community is practiced both in West Kameng and Tawang districts of Arunachal Pradesh to conserve the animals through the adoption of traditional breeding methods, classifying the animals, diagnosis the diseases and preventing the disorders and diseases by using locally available ethnoveterinary practices. However, over the years, the need was felt to undertake a scientific survey of breeds leading to the generation of information like demographic and geographical distribution, the native environment and enumeration in terms of age, sex in a population, management practices, and utility, quantitative and qualitative characterisation of Yak about morphological traits, production potential, and reproductive status and qualitative and quantitative description of unique animals, elite producers and rare or unusual characteristics in certain specimens. Considering the above mentioned aspects, a survey plan was developed for 24 months. A technical program was adopted to conduct scientific surveys of Arunachali

Yak by following modern sampling designs in suitable formats. The scientific and contemporary descriptors and questionnaires were followed to collect all possible relevant information in its defined zoo-geographical zone.

The survey was conducted in two Yak rearing districts of West Kameng and Tawang and nine persons from these two districts were selected and trained at the Yak farm of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)-National Research Centre on Yak (NRCY) to conduct the survey. In this survey, Arunachali Yaks were surveyed for different breed characteristics which included calves upto one year, stock from one year to three years, and adults of three years and above including milking females. These animals were surveyed from a total of 47 households from Jang, Thaingbo, Sharon, Rho, Jangda, Zemithang, and Tawang of district Tawang and Mandala top, Banglejeb, Shingchang, NagaGG,



Dongchikpu, Wangdorpo, Tseskang and Nyukmadung of West Kameng district. According to the 19th Livestock Census, 2012, the population of Yak was 13,758. Arunachali Yak varies widely in coat color; even in a single herd, a mixture of different phenotypes exists. Based on body conformation and hair pattern Yaks are categorized into different types.

The most predominant common type of Yaks is small-sized, docile in temperament, and predominantly used for milk purposes. Although Arunachali Yak is also used for meat, wool as well as a pack animal. In the survey report, a total of 1400 Arunachali Yak were surveyed for different breed characteristics. This number includes 270 calves upto one year, 480 stocks from one year to three years, and 650 adults of three years and above.

The survey report indicated that individual Yak productivity is only one of the criteria considered by Yak herders in maintaining their herds or maintaining white coat colour is more profitable if Yak is reared for wool. Black (85%) is the predominant coat colour of Yak which is followed by dark brown, light brown, white brown, white, and grey. Although the majority of ani-



THE SURVEY REPORT INDICATED THAT INDIVIDUAL YAK PRODUCTIVITY IS ONLY ONE OF THE CRITERIA CONSIDERED BY YAK HERDERS IN MAINTAINING THEIR HERDS OR MAINTAINING WHITE COAT COLOUR IS MORE PROFITABLE IF YAK IS REARED FOR WOOL

mals are with back hair (86%) coat pattern, several animals are also found with brown hair. Yak wool is another production trait having vast economic importance. The Yak hair is a valuable and essential item for Yak farmers. Traditionally, the down and the coarse fibers depend on the fiber length, the position of the body from which the hair is derived, and the down content. The long hair that grows on the fore and rear ends of the body and on the legs is used to make ropes for tying up tents, bags, rugs, slings, sacks, and caps. The average age of clippings of hair is 12-18 months and per clipping average of 1.5 kg is collected per animal.

According to the survey report, the milk yield of female yak is very low compared to other bovine or hill cattle and lactation month hardly goes up to seven months. On average, individual female Yak has six months long lactation producing approximately 185 kg of milk in 180 days of lactation length. The peak milk yield is observed during the second and third months of lactation producing an average of 1.1-1.6 kg of milk. The overall daily milk yield of Yak in West Kameng is (1.04 kg) which is slightly higher than Tawang district (0.98 kg). This may be because of the availability of

more green pastures as well as scientific intervention in West Kameng than Tawang district.

Although the amount of milk produced by Yak is of less quantity but is sufficient to prepare different milk products like cheese, paneer, etc. due to the high fat (7.45%) and SNF (11.5%) in Yak milk. Another productive trait of Yak is pack performance. The male Yak has a working life of 10-12 years. The Yak bull which is not used for breeding purposes is castrated at an early age and used for carrying a load. A Yak bull or dzo can carry between 40 to 70 kgs depending on the body condition of the animals which is highly influenced by the feed and weather conditions.

The report recommended that the conservation of Yak should be ensured by setting up nucleus breeding herds; improvement of reproductive and productive traits by genetic selection and an incentive to select for a higher yield in Yak is most likely to arise with an expanded market for milk destined for sale.

(The writer is a senior journalist and Chairman, Panwar Group of Institutions, Solan, Himachal Pradesh. The views expressed are personal. This is the concluding part of a three-part series.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FOCUS ON ISSUES AFFECTING ALL

Sir — All Indians (perhaps irrespective of their religious beliefs as India and Hinduism are being turned into "synonymous terms") have been graciously assured that the Ram mandir would be found completed on the 1st day of 2024!

Similarly, can any specific date or deadline be proposed within which all Indians would be guaranteed food, clothing, shelter, health education and justice?

The hapless Indians (who form an overwhelming majority of the nation's population) are eagerly waiting for such a day when all would receive the minimum rights entitled to human beings!

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

DISASTER IN THE HILLS

Sir — The disaster faced by the people of Uttarakhand's Joshimath town can be classified as a national disaster, as Joshimath's ground keeps sinking under the surface. The town of Joshimath is facing a major crisis, as the ground remains sinking. Cracks have been discovered on the walls of houses and several structures, leading to speculations that they can collapse anytime soon, leaving hundreds homeless. The incident occurred due to large-scale industrialization, the plea filed by Swami Avimuktেশ्वaranand Saraswati sought immediate financial assistance and compensation.

The plea has also sought direction from the National Disaster Management Authority to actively support the residents of Joshimath in this challenging time. It is the duty of the State and Union government to stop the same immediately at the war level. Joshimath is one of the most popular pilgrimage sites in India and sees a footfall of lakhs every year. One of the prime reasons why the town is sinking is because of the excessive tourism and developmental projects. More than 600 families are currently facing the threat of losing their homes as deep cracks can be seen on residences and roads in Uttarakhand's Joshimath, with the government being helpless.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

SKY: One-man cricket army



Sunny Surya Kumar Yadav does NOT speak for himself. His records speak for this one-man cricket army. His records in T20: i)

Fastest to reach 1,500 runs in T20s in terms of balls faced ii) First non-opener to score 3 centuries iii) In just 45 T-20 matches he has 3 centuries, 13 half centuries, a strike rate of 180. That implies triple shine.

YES! His initials S K Y prove that even the sky is not a limit for this Surya or sun, a person with limitless infinite shots in his army.

Surya Vs. Surya... The incomparable 1-man-army ... Triple shine cricket sun (cum son of India) ... A (learning) book of 360 degrees shots (of all types, at all angles, towards all sides).

PV Srinivas Sreelekha | Secunderabad

TREAT ALL CRIMINALS THE SAME

Sir — It is a popular proverb that people of state follow and practice the faith of rulers. So one more proverb has been coined long back: "Yetha raja, tatha praja". Now, in Delhi and other cities of our country, the crime rate is increasing by the day. Delhi has taken the top position and all types of crimes are being committed by the outlaws to strengthen their rule try and to liquidate their opponents. Now today's rulers are practicing the same principle. In the same way, the people are also practising the same ideology. As a result, the killing spree is rampant in society. For minor reasons, the parties involved resort to killing the opponents. What the criminals say is "Na rahega baans, na bajegi baansuri".

Recently, in the Capital city of Delhi, six murders were reported in different places across the city. Some killers were apprehended by the police while some have gone scot-free. In Hinduism or the so-called Hindutva, there is no strong faith in accountability before God and there is no fear of Hell. Instead there is the faith of Punarjanam. Those who believe they will be resent on the Earth to kill or murder their opponent and then there are those who are doubtful if they commit murder.

Until and unless Hindus adopt strong

faith in life hereafter, such crimes will not decrease in frequency or intensity. Even after 70 years of Independence, our country is progressing in shooting and killing those it assumes to be the enemies of the majority community within the State... Dr Maqdoomi Maindargi Solapur.

This letter reproduced above was posted three years earlier. But we see the increase in the crime rate going up unabated. Rape and gang rape are seen increasing to the extent of one every ten minutes. It will, therefore, not be a far-fetched idea to rechristen the Capital of India as "Rapistan". The important thing to keep in mind, going forward, is that every criminal is just that: a criminal! It has everything to do with breaking the rules, norms, laws and set parameters of the civil society and nothing to do with one's religion. It's simple as this: You break the law, you get penalised and punished. According to our Constitution, nobody is liable to be punished extra or longer for the same offence. In the same vein, nobody is privileged or obliged to be taken a lenient view of a similar crime because s/he happens to belong to the majority community.

Dr Maqdoomi | Gulbarga

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

The government has tied up with many countries to open doors to a better environment, security, and opportunities for Indian people abroad... India has the largest and the most talented diaspora.



External Affairs Minister — S Jaishankar

The will of the Brazilian people and the democratic institutions must be respected!



French President — Emmanuel Macron

Unfortunately, the pie of it is with the movie stars, which should not be the case. It's not that every movie star can open a film at every given point in time. But you are paying them top dollar.



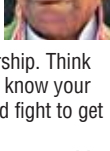
Film producer — Karan Johar

I will be tempted to play Rituraj Gaikwad. He has been warming the benches for quite some time now.



Former cricketer — Wasim Jaffer

For everything Modi, in a democracy if you make one person a god, it is not a democracy it is an autocracy, and it will lead to dictatorship. Think about it. You have to know your rights and you should fight to get them.



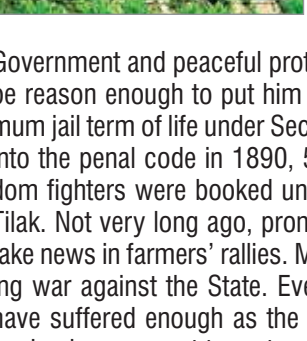
Congress president — Mallikarjun Kharge

Sedition law, again

The law is being debated after being laid dormant by the Supreme Court in May last year

The infamous sedition law is back in the news as the Supreme Court took it up for hearing on Monday. It was earlier heard in May last year and, in a bold move, the Supreme Court though did not give a verdict but agreed that the law was being misused and had debarred its use, practically making it null and void. That is in principle the Court thought that it was being misused and so decreed that no FIR should be filed invoking sedition law. It heard petitions challenging the colonial-era penal law on Monday and the Government gave its take, too. The Government has not been opposed to the law and in fact Minister of State for Law and Justice Kiren Rijiju showed displeasure about the court's stand in the May 11 court directive. Now a Bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice PS Narasimha is hearing 12 petitions, including the one filed by the Editors Guild of India, against the law. If one law which can be called diametrically opposed to democracy, it is sedition law.

Section 124A of IPC defines sedition as: "Whoever, by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards, the Government established by law shall be punished...". This leaves no scope for even peaceful protests and anything against the Government of the day is criminal and punishable under the law. The law does not distinguish between an armed attempt to overthrow the Government and peaceful protests. Even a slightest resentment of an individual can be reason enough to put him behind bars under sedition law. It provides for maximum jail term of life under Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code for. It was brought into the penal code in 1890, 57 years before Independence and many of the freedom fighters were booked under it including Mahatma Gandhi and Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Not very long ago, prominent journalists were booked in 2021 for spreading fake news in farmers' rallies. Many FIRs have been filed against the activists for waging war against the State. Even after years of trial when they are vindicated, they have suffered enough as the process itself is punishment. It is high time the draconian law was put to rest.





FIRST COLUMN

DIGITAL DEMENTIA IS A GLOBAL CHALLENGE

Early intervention may prove beneficial to beat it



SAKSHI SETHI

Technology is a part of our society; there is no getting around it. Recent research suggests that excessive usage of the internet and the emerging world of social media over prolonged periods of time may negatively affect some cognitive functions, particularly attention and short-term memory. Not only this, its usage can also evoke a psychophysiological state characterized by high positive valence and arousal. With winter looming and the COVID-19 pandemic keeping us indoors, the increased dependency on technology has precipitated the effects of the digital dementia epidemic.

Digital dementia is a modern day newly coined term by a German neuroscientist, Manfred Spitzer in 2012, resulting in a sensory mismatch in the brain due to over utilisation of technology and surprisingly due to excessive slouched sitting posture. According to Spitzer, technology has allowed people to outsource mental activity by storing endless amounts of information such as phone numbers, passwords and schedules.



The youth, especially the adolescents, demonstrates a decline in their cognitive abilities. Further, the research shows that kids raised in this digital age are developing cognitive problems, attention issues and are also struggling with memory, organisation, reasoning, problem-solving and in-person social communication.

Digital dementia is an ignored epidemic of this century, which in turn is affecting our future generations. Today, we are all in the state of digital dementia where we are so distracted by meaningless discussions that we cannot even complete the basic daily tasks.

The only difference is dementia affects people with age, but digital dementia can affect even children with developing brains. Digital dementia develops when individuals spend an excessive amount of time on their electronic devices. With poor posture, a sensory dissociation occurs where the back of the brain is overactive, and the front of the brain is under active. These regions of the brain are responsible not only for higher order thinking and good behaviours such as motivation, goal setting, reading, writing, memory and socially appropriate behaviours but are also responsible for the movement and body position sense.

Digital dementia is a real thing. It is becoming a huge problem among people today. Today, many of us make a habit out of media multitasking, the consumption of multiple streams along with switchover of media simultaneously. A recent research suggests that engaging simultaneously with multiple forms of digital or screen-based media, be it watching television or texting or Instagram, Facebook or Twitter, may impair attention in young adults too, worsening their ability to later recall specific situations or experiences.

The overuse of electronics at a young age is a rising concern for doctors around the world. Social seclusion, lack of movement, anger, short term memory loss, developmental delays are some of the symptoms of digital dementia.

Even in classrooms, use of technology is unavoidable and is employed increasingly. But it's never too early to teach the next generation how to use it wisely. Studies have shown that reading print materials boost reading comprehension. Using more print media such as magazines, comics, newspapers rather than tablets, smartphones or Kindle for reading gives the child a break from looking at screens.

The act of playing and exercising is also extremely important to keep the brain active and healthy. Using puzzles and games, such as chess, scrabble, jigsaw puzzles, playing outdoor sports instead of games that let the computer do the thinking promotes real-time problem-solving.

Try taking one day away from social media and see the difference in life. With great power comes great responsibility. Hence, one should be cognizant of accessing digital information at a measured rate.

(The author is a teacher at a reputed school in Delhi)

Chorus for OPS rises; demand has reasons



KV BAHUGUNA

The difference between the old and new pension schemes is too big to be ignored by Government employees

The Government of India in a major reform in the financial sector stopped the pension of all government servants recruited after April 1, 2004, except the Armed Forces. Instead, the government introduced a contributory market-oriented National Pension Scheme (NPS) for its employees and also replicated in May 2009 for all citizens of the country.

After a few state governments under political compulsions reverted to old pension scheme (OPS) for their employees, the Federation of Central Government Employees have become active and wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for reverting back to the old pension scheme for Central Government employees recruited after April 1, 2004. In OPS, the employees were getting 50 per cent of the last pay drawn.

The NPS is managed by the NPS Trust. The staff federation had stated that "it is amply clear that the NPS employees despite their contribution of 10 per cent of their wages every month for their entire service are getting only a very meagre pension and are worse off vis-à-vis the OPS. Further, the pension under New Pension Scheme (NPS) remains static and there is no Dearness Relief to compensate for the price rise/inflation as available in the OPS".

There is a big opposition to the NPS from all quarters of beneficiaries both in the public and private sectors due to its inherent weakness in ensuring a sustainable and comfortable payment of pension after retirement as after 18 years of its implementation several retired employees are getting a paltry sum and it has become difficult to live with that amount.

One of the reasons for Congress winning the Himachal Pradesh state Assembly elections in November 2022 was that a big chunk of government employees' votes were transferred on the promise of implementation of the old pension scheme. The Governments of Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand have already started implementing the old pension scheme and Punjab is also considering reverting back to the old system.

The West Bengal Government has not implemented the NPS at all so quite a good chunk of government employees in the country will be enjoying the benefits of the old pension system. So far around 22.8 lakh Central Government employees and 56 lakh state government employees are enrolled under the NPS.

This tussle on pension is going to become a serious poll issue for the political parties in garnering the votes of the employees in next Assembly and Lok Sabha elections. Let us examine the issue in its entirety.

The Indian pension system for government employees' benefit, with support



THE NPS IS A MARKET-DRIVEN, TWO-TIER CONTRIBUTORY PENSION SCHEME. WE MUST ALL RECOGNISE THAT, UNLIKE IN EUROPE AND OTHER DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM IN INDIA IS ALMOST NON-EXISTENT

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



from the exchequer, was introduced by the British in 1857 after winning the war of independence. It was an extension of the British system. However, it was the Royal Commission on Civil Establishments, in 1881, which first awarded pension benefits to the government employees. Since then, after independence, the governments' servants were granted pension under the Central Civil Services (CCS) Pension Rules 1972 which now is based on 50 per cent of the last salary drawn and is stepped up every year twice by Dearness Relief.

Article 309 of the Constitution allows the government to regulate the service conditions of the employees and hence pension is a welfare-oriented scheme as a tribute to employees for their work in their twilight years. The NPS is a market-driven, two-tier contributory pension scheme. We must all recognise that, unlike in Europe and other developed countries, the social security system in India is almost non-existent.

If we look at the world pension architecture, we find that Iceland has the best Pension scheme followed by Netherlands, Denmark, and Israel, etc. In most of the countries, the beneficiaries do pay a minimum amount every month but the excellent social security guarantees provide for a minimum pension to everyone, even when very little, or nothing, has been paid into a pension

fund like in Iceland. The situation is similar in other developed countries and the contributory system has an element of social security which works well. Under the Indian system when the government started financial reforms it was felt to reform the pension architecture in 2001 to reduce the burden on government.

However, in the Indian situation the Government should have thought of its social implications due to volatile market system and just allowing its employees at the mercy of market forces who have given their prime for the country is unacceptable in a welfare state because an employee of the government maintains a minimum standard of living with his or her salary and suddenly they find that they are at the mercy of market forces. The pension reforms were sponsored mostly by private sector economists who earned quite well. The government considering the socio-economic profile of its people and absence of social security should have thought of first cutting the flab of over staffing and creating a studied system of sustainability.

The way our institutions function and financial scandals the country had faced in the past, the NPS system is still evolving and is not a sure bet for maintaining and ensuring a better standard of living and has not proved to gain the confidence of employees. The same is true of the Employees

Pension Scheme for the private and public sector undertaking where the Supreme Court has given some orders but these orders are still insufficient to lead a respectable life.

It is therefore, absolutely necessary for better governance, to evolve a political consensus at least by the BJP and Congress on pension at the national level as the issue is going to be very emotive and unless serious thought is given to it, it will disarray the economy badly due to competitive politics and without checking profligacy in expenditure.

The Government must ensure that NPS is made as sustainable in India as it is in other countries, because they have social security elements inherent in their system. So, first of all, the political parties must come to terms that we need a pension system that is viable, sustainable and acceptable to employees. For this, the government, if it wants to retain the NPS, must create a corpus of few lakh crore and build it up every year by putting it in government securities so that the corpus could grow and meet the gap in pension from NPS so that after certain years of service the employees must get a fixed percentage of his last salary as guaranteed pension. The second option is to go back to the old system but with drastic cuts in the employees and to control it by an Act of Parliament.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THE JAGAN GOVT HAS BROUGHT IN THE DRACONIAN ORDER BANNING ROADSHOWS ONLY TO CURTAIL THE OPPOSITION FROM REACHING OUT TO PEOPLE.

— JANA SENA PARTY CHIEF PAWAN KALYAN



THE MASK IS DOWN. PAWAN HAD GONE TO NAIDU ONLY TO DISCUSS THE PACKAGE HE WOULD GET IF THERE IS AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES.

— SENIOR YSRCP LEADER MALLADI VISHNU



Environment conservation needs roadmap for 2023

This year can prove to be an environmental achievement year for India, which is further made possible by India's G20 presidency

India has seen a localised climate disaster nearly every day in the first nine months of 2022, according to the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE). The country experienced extreme weather events on 241 of 273 days till October 1, which claimed 2,755 lives, affected 1.8 million hectares of crop area, destroyed 416,667 houses and killed 69,007 livestock.

This pattern of destruction is a testament to the fact that climate change presents a clear and present danger for the world in general and India in particular. India cannot afford a rerun of the same or worse in 2023 or subsequent years, and to ensure this there is an express need to change the narrative regarding how India perceives environmental con-



KOTA SRIRAJ

servation and fights climate change starting 2023.

As countless COP events and other environmental conferences have shown that mere talk is not getting the world anywhere on climate change, it is time now to establish action driven milestones in the fight against climate change. If the world is faltering on this effort, India must take the lead.

As part of the same, 2023 presents an opportunity for India to make progress in multiple spheres of environmental conservation based on technology and innovation. The roadmap towards ensuring a greener 2023 must include various sectors of India and guiding them towards sustainable development.

For instance, currently, whenever the air quality index

in Delhi touches severe levels, the government under the stage 3 of the Graded Response Action Plan puts a ban on the construction sector. This notoriety of the construction sector as the usual suspect has to end and for this the government in cohesion with the sector stakeholders and ecological experts has to increase stress on green buildings and urban forests.

Additionally, small scale builders have abnormally high levels of natural resource consumption; they must be made accountable and sensitised towards adopting more ecologically sustainable practices.

Similarly, consumer electronics and the e-waste sector must be overhauled in a major way to account for the well-being of the environ-

ment. Due to ever changing technology the quantum of e-waste generated is tremendous. This is exacerbated due to low e-waste recycling capabilities in India.

Hearables such as headphones and chargers comprise the most of e-waste generated. The government needs to adopt a two-pronged strategy to tackle e-waste menace in 2023, first on the producer side, the government must push the companies to make it mandatory to ask consumers to deposit/exchange their old headphones when they buy a new one.

Additionally, the e-waste collection and recycling mechanism must be made sharper, and accessible to everyone. This can be done by starting doorstep e-waste collection

drives from residential, industrial and corporate areas.

The year of 2023 must also become the year of electric vehicles (EV). The government must ensure that safety of EV usage, plentiful charging stations, especially along the national highways and incentives and subsidies for buying EVs are handled on priority basis in the new year. The EV technology and production has caught the fancy of India Inc. Recently, Hero Motors has announced Rs 1,500 crore investment into EV production and technology.

Given this kind of push, it will become easier for the government to make India EV ready possible in near future. But perhaps the biggest push the government must aim at is the electric commer-

cial vehicle segment in India.

Currently, diesel trucks run by imported oil cause high levels of greenhouse gas and air pollution emissions. India imports 88 per cent of the oil it uses and of the total petroleum consumed by the country's transport sector, nearly 60 per cent is used by freight trucks. These trucks are responsible for 71 per cent of the carbon dioxide emissions, 74 per cent of the particulate matter emissions, and 55 per cent of the nitrogen oxide emissions from road vehicles.

Based on India's current grid emissions, electric trucks would reduce greenhouse gas emissions nine per cent, to 35 per cent per km compared with diesel trucks. A study from the Department of Energy's Lawrence Berkeley

National Laboratory (Berkeley Lab) and UCLA shows that advances in battery technology and decreased battery costs in recent years mean that battery electric trucks would be more affordable to operate than diesel, and India could become a world leader in producing electric commercial vehicles. This transition enabled by the government in 2023 can help India reduce its reliance on imported oil, improve the air quality, and meet the goal of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2070.

The Year 2023 can prove to be an environmental achievement year for India, made further possible by India's G20 presidency. For this to happen, a roadmap based upon the above factors is crucial.

Ukraine school spurns Russian claim of troops killed there

AP ■ KRAMATORSK (UKRAINE)

Officials at a vocational school in an eastern Ukraine city dismissed claims by Russia that hundreds of Ukrainian troops were killed in a missile strike there, saying on Monday that a rocket merely blew out windows and damaged classrooms.

Russia specifically named the vocational school in Kramatorsk as the target of an attack in the almost 11-month war.

The Russian Defence Ministry said its missiles hit two temporary bases housing 1,300 Ukrainian troops in the city, killing 600 of them, late on Saturday.

Associated Press reporters visiting the scene in sunny weather Monday saw a four-story concrete building with most of its windows blown out.

Inside, locals were cleaning up debris, sweeping up broken glass and hurling broken furniture out into a missile crater below.

A separate, six-story school

building was largely undamaged. There were neither signs of a Ukrainian military presence nor any casualties.

Yana Pristupa, the school's deputy director, scoffed at Moscow's claims of hitting a troop concentration.

"Nobody saw a single spot of blood anywhere," she told the AP.

"Everyone saw yesterday that no one carried out any bodies. It's just people cleaning up." She said that before the war began last February the school had more than 300 students, most of them studying mechanical engineering, with most lessons moving online when Russia invaded.

The students "are now in shock," she said, adding, "What a great facility it was."

Ukrainian officials on Sunday quickly denied the Russian claims it had lost a large number of soldiers in the attack.

Despite the absence of any evidence that hundreds of Ukrainian troops died in the strike, Moscow wouldn't budge. Kremlin spokesman



Dmitry Peskov said reports from the scene didn't shake senior officials' faith in defense authorities.

"The Defence Ministry is the main, legitimate and comprehensive source of information about the course of the special military operation," Peskov said on Monday in a conference call with reporters, using the Kremlin's term for the war.

During the war, both sides have regularly claimed killing hundreds of each other's soldiers in attacks. The claims can seldom be independently verified because of the fighting.

Moscow's allegations may have backfired domestically, however, as some Russian military bloggers criticised the Kremlin's claims about the Kramatorsk strike.

The Institute for the Study of War think tank said the bloggers "responded negatively to the Russian (Ministry of Defence) claim, pointing out that the Russian MoD frequently presents fraudulent claims and criticising Russian military leader-

ship for fabricating a story ... Instead of holding Russian leadership responsible for the losses accountable."

A Russian Defence Ministry spokesman said the strikes on Kramatorsk were retaliation for Ukraine's attack in Makiivka on New Year's Eve, in which at least 89 Russian soldiers gathered at a temporary barracks died, according to Moscow.

Ukrainian authorities said the death toll in that attack ran into the hundreds.

It was one of the deadliest attacks on the Kremlin's forces since the war began more than 10 months ago and an embarrassing loss.

Such revenge strikes have occurred before.

When Ukraine in early October struck a bridge linking the Russian-occupied Crimean Peninsula with Russia, damaging an important supply artery for the Kremlin's faltering war effort in southern Ukraine and hitting a key symbol of Russian power in the region, the Kremlin sent a first massive barrage against Ukraine's energy facilities.

It was billed as retaliation for the bridge attack and heralded a period of relentless bombardments against Ukraine's energy infrastructure.

Ukraine's presidential office reported on Monday that at least three civilians were killed and 12 others wounded in the country over the previous 24 hours as nine Ukrainian regions in the southeast of the country were shelled.

In one attack on Monday, two people were killed and five others, including a 13-year-old girl, were wounded by a Russian rocket strike that hit a village market in the northeastern Kharkiv region, Ukrainian officials said.

Kharkiv regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said the strike hit Shevchenkove village. Photos posted by Syniehubov on his Telegram channel showed ruined pavilions, some of them still on fire, and rubble all around them.

According to Ukrainian officials, more people could be trapped under the rubble.

Russia launches criminal probes on prominent Kremlin critics



AP ■ MOSCOW

Russian authorities on Monday announced parallel criminal probes against a famous actor critical of the war in Ukraine and a philanthropist who supports the Russian opposition, the latest in a months-long, sweeping crackdown on dissent.

Russia's Investigative Committee said in a statement that its chief Alexander Bastrykin ordered the launch of

a criminal case against Artur Smolyaninov, a prominent Russian film and theater actor who left the country after Moscow's forces invaded Ukraine and repeatedly spoke out against the war.

According to the statement, Smolyaninov "made a series of statements directed against Russia in an interview to a Western media outlet." The Investigative Committee didn't clarify which of Smolyaninov's actions constituted a criminal

offense and what charges it would bring against him.

Smolyaninov's most recent interview last week sparked outrage among Kremlin supporters. The actor told the Novaya Gazeta Europe that if he had to fight in the war, he would fight "on the side of Ukraine." "For me, it is on the side of my brothers who were attacked by my other brothers," Smolyaninov said.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Monday welcomed a

probe against Smolyaninov, noting that it is "important that our relevant (law enforcement) bodies think about these remarks."

The probe against Smolyaninov comes amid increasingly harsh rhetoric about Russians who left the country because of the war. Lawmakers have suggested seizing the property of those who moved abroad, or increasing taxes for those continue to work remotely for Russian companies. Others have simply condemned them as "traitors."

Separately, Russia's Interior Ministry placed prominent philanthropist Boris Zimin on an international most wanted list on fraud charges, officials said Monday. Zimin has funded several Russian independent media outlets as well as projects of imprisoned opposition leader Alexei Navalny. He was reported to have left Russia in 2015.

Navalny, the Kremlin's fiercest foe, said that it was Zimin who paid 79,000 euros for his medical evacuation to Berlin in August 2020, when the politician was poisoned with a nerve agent and lay in a coma in the Siberian city of Omsk.



Ukrainian servicemen administer first aid to a wounded soldier in a shelter in Soledar, the site of heavy battles with Russian forces in the Donetsk region, Ukraine (AP Photo)

Alabama woman who joined ISIS hopes to return from Syria camp

AP ■ ROJ CAMP (SYRIA)

A woman who ran away from home in Alabama at the age of 20, joined the Islamic State group and had a child with one of its fighters says she still hopes to return to the United States, serve prison time if necessary, and advocate against the extremists.

In a rare interview from the Roj detention camp in Syria where she is being held by US-allied Kurdish forces, Hoda Muthana said she was brainwashed by online traffickers into joining the group in 2014 and regrets everything except her young son, now of preschool age.

"If I need to sit in prison, and do my time, I will do it... I won't fight against it," the 28-year-old told US-based outlet The News Movement. "I'm hoping my government looks at me as someone young at the time and naive."

It's a line she's repeated in various media interviews since

fleeing from one of the extremist group's last enclaves in Syria in early 2019.

But four years earlier, at the height of the extremists' power, she had voiced enthusiastic support for them on social media and in an interview with BuzzFeed News. IS then ruled a self-declared Islamic caliphate stretching across roughly a third of both Syria and Iraq. In posts sent from her Twitter account in 2015 she called on Americans to join the group and carry out attacks in the US, suggesting drive-by shootings or vehicle ramming targeting gatherings for national holidays.

In her interview with TNM, Muthana now says her phone was taken from her and that the tweets were sent by IS supporters.

Muthana was born in New Jersey to Yemeni immigrants and once had a US passport. She was raised in a conservative Muslim household in Hoover, Alabama, just outside Birmingham. In 2014, she told her fam-



ily she was going on a school trip but flew to Turkey and crossed into Syria instead, funding the travel with tuition checks that she had secretly cashed.

The Obama administration cancelled her citizenship in 2016, saying her father was an accredited Yemeni diplomat at the time she was born — a rare revocation of birthright citizenship. Her lawyers have disputed that move, arguing that the father's diplomatic accreditation ended before she was born.

The Trump administration maintained that she was not a citizen and barred her from returning, even as it pressed European allies to repatriate their own detained nationals to reduce pressure on the detention camps.

US courts have sided with the government on the question of Muthana's citizenship, and last January the Supreme Court declined to consider her lawsuit seeking re-entry.

That has left her and her son languishing in a detention camp

in northern Syria housing thousands of widows of Islamic State fighters and their children.

Some 65,600 suspected Islamic State members and their families — both Syrians and foreign citizens — are held in camps and prisons in northeastern Syria run by US-allied Kurdish groups, according to a Human Rights Watch report released last month.

Women accused of affiliation with IS and their minor children are largely housed in the al-Hol and Roj camps, under what the rights group described as "life threatening conditions." The camp inmates include more than 37,400 foreigners, among them Europeans and North Americans.

Human Rights Watch and other monitors have cited dire living conditions in the camps, including inadequate food, water and medical care, as well as the physical and sexual abuse of inmates by guards and fellow detainees.

Kurdish-led authorities and

activists have blamed IS sleeper cells for surging violence within the facilities, including the beheading of two Egyptian girls, aged 11 and 13, in al-Hol camp in November. Turkish airstrikes targeting the Kurdish groups launched that month also hit close to al-Hol. Camp officials alleged that the Turkish strikes were targeting security forces guarding the camp.

"None of the foreigners have been brought before a judicial authority ... to determine the necessity and legality of their detention, making their captivity arbitrary and unlawful," Human Rights Watch wrote. "Detention based solely on family ties amounts to collective punishment, a war crime."

Calls to repatriate the detainees were largely ignored in the immediate aftermath of IS' bloody reign, which was marked by massacres, beheadings and other atrocities, many of which were broadcast to the world in graphic films circulated on social media.

But with the passage of time, the pace of repatriations has started to pick up. Human Rights Watch said some 3,100 foreigners — mostly women and children — have been sent home over the past year. Most were Iraqis, who comprise the majority of detainees, but citizens were also repatriated to Australia, France, Germany, Canada, the Netherlands, Russia and the United Kingdom.

The US has repatriated a total of 39 American nationals. It's unclear how many other Americans remain in the camps.

These days, Muthana portrays herself as a victim of the Islamic State. Speaking with TNM, she describes how, after arriving in Syria in 2014, she was detained in a guest house reserved for unmarried women and children. "I've never seen that kind of filthiness in my life, like there was 100 women and twice as much kids, running around, too much noise, filthy beds," she said.



Russia moves to spike European anti-corruption agreement

AP ■ MOSCOW

Russia on Monday opted out of a European convention on fighting corruption, a move that comes in the wake of its withdrawal from the Council of Europe following start of Moscow's military action in Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin asked the lower house of parliament, the State Duma, to terminate adherence to the Council of Europe's convention on fighting corruption that Russia signed in 1999. The date for a vote on termination hasn't been set yet, but it's expected to come soon.

Putin argued in his letter to the Duma that the opt-out was the result of the Council's decision to restrict Moscow's participation in a body charged with overseeing general compliance with the convention, something he called "unacceptable" and "discriminatory."

The Council of Europe, the continent's top human rights organization, suspended Russia's participation shortly after it sent troops into Ukraine on February 24.

Russia withdrew from the Council in March and warned that it will also opt out of conventions that it signed as part of its membership in the organisation. Moscow backed out of the European Convention on Human Rights in September.

China's 'wolf warrior' diplomat Lijian shifted

PTI ■ BEIJING

China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian, widely regarded as a "wolf warrior" diplomat, especially for his aggressive remarks and tweets against the US and other countries, has been transferred to the ministry's Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs.

Before he was appointed a spokesman of the Chinese Foreign Ministry in 2019, Zhao, 50, served as Deputy Ambassador to the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad.

He used to speak about his posting in Pakistan in laudatory terms at his press briefings as the spokesman of the Foreign Minister whenever he answered a question on the country.



While there is no official announcement here about his transfer, his name has been removed from the list of spokespersons on the Chinese Foreign Ministry's website and added as Deputy Director General of the Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs, which largely

deals with China's claims and agreements related to land and ocean boundaries.

Significantly, his transfer coincides with the appointment of Qin Gang, Beijing's envoy to the US as China's new Foreign Minister, replacing the incumbent Wang Yi.

In his farewell message from the US, Qin, who is a close confidant of President Xi Jinping, said his priority is to improve the strained ties between China and the US.

Zhao, who began his posting as spokesman of the Chinese Foreign Ministry in 2019, came to the limelight with his tweet accusing the US Army of bringing coronavirus to China in March 2020 when China faced the full force of the virus which

first surfaced in Wuhan and later spread to the world, becoming the pandemic of the century and claiming millions of lives all over the world.

"When did patient zero begin in the US? How many people are infected? What are the names of the hospitals? It might be the US army who brought the epidemic to Wuhan. Be transparent! Make public your data! US owe us an explanation!" Zhao tweeted on March 12, 2020.

He cited the comments of the US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Robert Redfield purported remarks that some flu patients in the US may have been misdiagnosed and had coronavirus.

Pope meets with Benedict's aide amid funeral, book fallout

AP ■ ROME

Pope Francis met on Monday with Archbishop Georg Gaenswein, the longtime secretary of Pope Benedict XVI who was a key figure in his recent funeral but who has raised eyebrows with an extraordinary memoir in which he settles old scores with the reigning pontiff and reveals palace intrigue.

The Vatican provided no details about the content of the private audience, other than to say that it happened.

Speculation about Gaenswein's future has swirled now that his main job tending to Benedict has come to an end



following Benedict's December 31 death.

But questions have also been raised about what Francis will do with Gaenswein following this week's publication of his tell-all book, "Nothing But the Truth: My Life Beside Pope Benedict XVI."

In the text, Gaenswein reveals previously unknown details of some of the biggest hic-

cups and bad blood that accrued during the last 10 years in which Benedict lived as a retired pope alongside Francis following his 2013 decision to retire, the first pope in six centuries to do so.

In one of the most explosive sections, Gaenswein says he was "shocked and speechless" when Francis essentially fired him from his day job as the head of the papal household in 2020 after a scandal over a book Benedict co-authored.

Francis told Gaenswein to stop coming back to the office and to dedicate himself to caring for Benedict, essentially ending his job as the "bridge" between the pontificates.

Pro-Bolsonaro rioters storm Brazil's top Govt offices

AP ■ RIO DE JANEIRO

Supporters of former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro who refuse to accept his election defeat stormed Congress, the Supreme Court and presidential palace Sunday, a week after the inauguration of his leftist rival, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

Thousands of demonstrators bypassed security barricades, climbed on roofs, smashed windows and invaded all three buildings, which were believed to be largely vacant on the weekend.

Some of the demonstrators called for a military intervention to either restore the far-right Bolsonaro to power or oust Lula from the presidency.

Hours went by before control of the buildings on Brasilia's vast Three Powers Square was reestablished, with hundreds of the participants arrested.

In a news conference from Sao Paulo state, Lula accused Bolsonaro of encouraging the uprising by those he termed "fascist fanatics" and he read a freshly signed decree for the federal government to take control of security in the federal district.

"There is no precedent for what they did and these people need to be punished," Lula said.

TV channel Globo News showed protesters wearing the green and yellow colours of the national flag that also have come to symbolise the nation's conservative movement and were adopted by Bolsonaro's supporters.

The former president has repeatedly sparred with Supreme



Court justices, and the room where they convene was trashed by the rioters.

They sprayed fire hoses inside the Congress building and ransacked offices at the presidential palace. Windows were broken in all of the buildings.

Bolsonaro, who flew to Florida ahead of Lula's inauguration, repudiated the president's accusation late Sunday.

He wrote on Twitter that peaceful protest is part of democracy but vandalism and invasion of public buildings are "exceptions to the rule."

Police fired tear gas in their efforts to recover the buildings, and were shown on television in the late afternoon marching protesters down a ramp from the presidential palace with their hands secured behind their backs.

By early evening, with

authorities' control of the buildings restored, Justice Minister Flavio Dino said in a news conference that roughly 200 people had been arrested and officers were firing more tear gas to drive away lingering protesters.

But with the damage already done, many in Brazil were questioning how the police had ignored abundant warnings, were unprepared or were somehow complicit. Lula said at his news conference there was "incompetence or bad faith" on the part of police, and that they had been likewise complacent when Bolsonaro supporters rioted in the capital weeks ago.

He promised those officers would be punished and expelled from the corps.

The incident recalled the Jan. 6, 2021, assault on the U.S. Capitol by supporters of then-President Donald Trump.

Political analysts have warned for months that a similar storming was a possibility in Brazil, given that Bolsonaro has sown doubt about the reliability of the nation's electronic voting system — without any evidence.

The results were recognised as legitimate by politicians from across the spectrum, including some Bolsonaro allies, as well as dozens of foreign governments.

Unlike the 2021 attack in the U.S., few officials were likely to have been working in the Brazilian Congress and Supreme Court on a Sunday.

U.S. President Joe Biden

told reporters that the riots in Brazil were "outrageous." His national security adviser Jake Sullivan went a step further on Twitter and said the U.S. "condemns any effort to undermine democracy in Brazil."



Officials seek to punish rioters

AP ■ RIO DE JANEIRO

Brazilian authorities were vowing to protect democracy and preparing to mete out punishment Monday after thousands of ex-President Jair Bolsonaro's supporters stormed Congress, the Supreme Court and presidential palace then trashed the nation's highest seats of power.

The protesters were seeking military intervention to either restore the far-right Bolsonaro to power or oust the newly inaugurated leftist Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, unleashing chaos and destruction that bore striking similarities to the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the US Capitol.

Rioters donning the green and yellow of the national flag on Sunday broke windows, toppled furniture, hurled computers and printers to the ground. They punctured a massive Emiliano Di Cavalcanti painting in five places, overturned the U-shaped table at which Supreme Court justices convene, ripped a door off one justice's office and vandalized an iconic statue outside the court.

The monumental buildings' interiors were left in states of ruin. Authorities made a point to show that they were moving to prevent further attacks on Brazil's democratic rule of law.

China holds large-scale joint strike drills aimed at Taiwan



AP ■ TAIPEI

The Chinese military held large-scale joint combat strike drills starting Sunday, sending war planes and navy vessels toward Taiwan, both the Chinese and Taiwanese defence ministries said.

The exercises coincided with the visit of a group of German lawmakers who landed in Taiwan on Monday morning.

Leading the delegation is the Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann, who leads the German Parliament's Defence Committee.

The exercises have continued into Monday, Taiwan's defence ministry said, monitoring Chinese warplanes and navy vessels on its missile systems.

China's actions "have severely disrupted the peace

and stability in the Taiwan Straits and surrounding waters," the ministry said.

The German lawmakers will meet with Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen, as well as Taiwan's National Security Council head and the Mainland Affairs Council, which handles issues related to China.

China has stepped up its pressure on Taiwan's military in recent years by sending warplanes or navy vessels on an almost-daily basis toward the self-ruled island.

China claims sovereignty over the island, which split from the mainland in 1949 after a civil war. Over the course of 24 hours between 6 a.m. Sunday to 6 a.m. Monday morning, China's People's Liberation Army flew 57 warplanes and four ships toward Taiwan, Taiwan's Ministry of National

Defence said in a statement Monday morning.

Twenty-eight of those planes crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait, an unofficial boundary that both sides had previously stood by.

China announced the drills around 11 p.m. Sunday, saying their "primary target was to practice land-strikes and sea assaults," according to a statement from Shi Yi, a spokesperson for the PLA's Eastern Theatre Command.

At the end of December, China sent a record 71 planes and 7 ships toward Taiwan, the largest such scale exercise in 2022.

Taiwan will hold its annual two-day military drills starting Wednesday. The exercise ahead of Lunar New Year holidays is aimed at showcasing its defence capabilities.

Nurses go on strike at 2 big New York City hospitals

AP ■ NEW YORK

Nurses at two of New York City's largest hospitals went on strike on Monday in a dispute over pay and staffing levels after a weekend of negotiations did not produce a deal for a new contract.

The walkout involves as many as 3,500 nurses at Montefiore Medical Centre in the Bronx and about 3,600 at Mount Sinai Hospital in Manhattan. Patients are likely to see disruptions in care such as emergency room visits and childbirth.

The New York State Nurses Association, which represents the workers, said it was being forced into the drastic step because of chronic understaffing

that leaves them caring for too many patients.

"Nurses don't want to strike. Bosses have pushed us to strike by refusing to seriously consider our proposals to address the desperate crisis of unsafe staffing that harms our patients," the union said in a statement late on Sunday.

Montefiore officials said in a statement on Monday. "We remain committed to seamless and compassionate care, recognising that the union leadership's decision will spark fear and uncertainty across our community."

The hospital planned to assign managers not represented by the union to cover nursing shifts.

Mount Sinai officials said on



Monday, "Our first priority is the safety of our patients. We're prepared to minimise disruption, and we encourage Mount Sinai nurses to continue providing the world-class care they're known for, in spite of NYSNA's strike."

Montefiore and Mount Sinai had been getting ready for a walkout by transferring patients, diverting ambulances to other institutions, postponing non-emergency medical procedures and arranging for temporary staffing.

Gov. Kathy Hochul urged the union and the hospitals late Sunday to take their dispute to binding arbitration.

Montefiore's administration had said it was willing to let an arbitrator settle the contract "as a means to reaching an equitable

outcome".

The union did not immediately accept the proposal. In a statement, it said Hochul, a Democrat, "should listen to the frontline COVID nurse heroes and respect our federally-protected labour and collective bargaining rights".

Montefiore and Mount Sinai are the last of a group of hospitals with contracts with the union that expired simultaneously. The Nurses Association had initially warned that it would strike at all of them at the same time — a potential calamity even in a city with as many hospitals as New York.

But one by one, the other hospitals struck agreements with the union as the deadline approached.

Pope denounces Iran death penalty following protests



AP ■ ROME

Pope Francis on Monday broke his silence on the nationwide protests convulsing Iran, denouncing the recourse to the death penalty there and seemingly legitimising the rallies as demonstrations "demanding greater respect for the dignity of women."

Francis made the comments in an annual speech to ambas-

sadors accredited to the Vatican, a foreign policy speech outlining the areas of greatest concern for the Holy See.

In his remarks, Francis linked the Vatican's opposition to abortion to its opposition to the death penalty, saying both are a violation of the fundamental right to life.

Francis has changed church teaching on the death penalty, ruling it is "inadmissible" in all circumstances.

"The right to life is also threatened in those places where the death penalty continues to be imposed, as is the case in these days in Iran, following the recent demonstrations demanding greater respect for the dignity of women," Francis said.

Palestinian PM says Israel aims to topple PA



AP ■ TEL AVIV (ISRAEL)

The Palestinian prime minister on Monday accused Israel's new ultra-nationalist government of trying to topple the internationally recognised Palestinian Authority, and warned that a series of new Israeli sanctions could further inflame what has been a particularly deadly period of fighting.

In recent days, Israel has withheld millions of dollars of Palestinian tax revenues, stripped Palestinian officials of VIP privileges and broken up a meeting of Palestinian parents discussing their children's education. Late Sunday, Israel's security minister banned public displays of the Palestinian flag.

Palestinian premier Mohammed Shtayyeh said the Israeli measures, made in response to a Palestinian appeal for UN help, are "aimed at toppling the authority and pushing it to the brink financially and institutionally".

"We consider these measures a new war against the Palestinian people, their capabilities and funds, and a war against the national authority, its

survival and its achievements," Shtayyeh said during his weekly Cabinet meeting.

The Israeli measures have come in response to the UN General Assembly's decision to ask the UN's highest judicial body to give its opinion on the legality of Israeli policies in the occupied West Bank and east Jerusalem.

Israel vehemently opposed the Palestinian-backed move. Decisions by the International Court of Justice are not binding, but can carry great influence.

Shtayyeh rejected Israeli claims that such moves are counter to peace.

"We have the right to complain and tell the world we are in pain," he said in comments published in Haaretz earlier on Monday. "Israel wants to prevent even the most non-violent way of fighting the occupation."

A day earlier, Israel's national security minister ordered police to ban on the Palestinian flag in public.

"Today I directed the Israel police to enforce the prohibition of flying any PLO flag that shows identification with a terrorist organisation from the public sphere and to stop any incitement against the state of Israel," Itamar Ben-Gvir announced on Twitter.

A far-right firebrand known for his anti-Palestinian rhetoric, Ben-Gvir drew widespread international condemnation when he visited Jerusalem's most sensitive holy site last week.

Collective effort essential for achieving prosperity: Nepal's PM

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal's newly-appointed Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' said on Monday that collective effort was essential for achieving prosperity as he exuded confidence that the new parliament will be successful in meeting the expectations of the people.

Speaking at the first meeting of the House of Representatives after the November general elections, Prime Minister Prachanda also said that the parliament should be taken as an "examination centre" by the lawmakers.

President Bidya Devi Bhandari had called the first session of the new Parliament on January 9.

Prachanda told the lawmakers that the people had elected them on the condition that "we deliver good governance and prosperity, and to make it meaningful, parliament should be taken as an examination centre," My Republica newspaper reported.

He stated that all political parties should stand together to fulfill the common promises of good governance and prosperity made to the people during the elections.

He also made it clear that political parties have no choice but to proceed by addressing the expectations, complaints, interests and concerns of the people immediately.

Prime Minister Prachanda said that collective effort was essential for achieving prosperity and expressed his belief that the new parliament will be successful in meeting the expectations of the people.

He also expressed hope that they can search for solutions to the problems that have arisen in the country only by doing politics of action and not reaction. The Prime Minister said



that he considered the entry of new parties into the House of Representatives as a victory for democracy and civil liberties. He urged all the political parties to focus on the grand campaign of economic prosperity beyond

emotions and excitement.

Prachanda, the 68-year-old CPN-Maoist Centre leader, was sworn in as the Prime Minister for the third time on December 26 last year after he dramatically walked out of the pre-poll alliance led by the Nepali Congress and joined hands with opposition leader K P Sharma Oli. He was appointed as the prime minister as per Article 76 clause 2 of the Constitution with the support of 169 HoR members.

A prime minister appointed through such provision is required to seek a vote of confidence within 30 days of his or

her appointment.

Prachanda needs 138 votes for a clear majority in the House. He has the support of seven parties, including Oli's Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML) and the newly-formed Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP).

He is likely to seek a vote of confidence on Tuesday. After the vote of confidence, the process of electing the Speaker and Deputy Speaker will get underway. According to constitutional provisions, the Speaker and Deputy Speaker should be elected within 15 days of the first parliamentary meeting.

With high hopes, Thailand welcomes Chinese tourists' return

AP ■ BANGKOK

Three Cabinet ministers welcomed Chinese tourists with flowers and gifts as they arrived on Monday at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport after China relaxed travel restrictions in public.

The high-profile event reflected the importance Thailand places on wooing back Chinese travellers to help restore its pandemic-battered tourism industry — before COVID-19 struck, they comprised about one-third of all arrivals.

Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul and the ministers of transport and tourism were among those applauding as 269 passengers on Xiamen Airlines Flight MF833 from Xiamen in southeastern China entered the terminal.



It was one of the first flights arriving in Thailand since Beijing eased its coronavirus-related travel restrictions as of Sunday.

The travellers received garlands and small gift bags, and were greeted by a big banner saying "China and Thailand are one family. Amazing Thailand always warmly welcomes our

Chinese family." "I'm feeling good," said Simon Zou from Tianjin in northeastern China. "I can feel the hospitality of Thai people. We were given some small gifts. I feel very happy."

Asked what he plans to do in Thailand, he replied: "Eat! Have fun! And experience Thailand's culture."

"The number of tourists from China and other parts of the world traveling to Thailand tends to increase continuously," Anutin told reporters at the airport.

"This is a good sign for the Thai tourism sector, which generates income, adds value to the economy, creates jobs and opportunities for people?"

The arrival was heralded by Thai authorities as a symbolic step towards restoring the country's lucrative tourism sector.

But it also exposed how tricky it is for tourist-hungry nations to navigate the coronavirus issue.

As the Chinese tourists arrived, Anutin announced at the airport that visitors would not be required to show COVID-19 vaccination certificates.

UK Govt meeting unions in bid to end wave of strikes



AP ■ LONDON

UK government ministers met trade union leaders on Monday in a bid to end a wave of strikes that has hobbled the rail network and strained the overburdened health system.

There were some signs of progress but no breakthrough after a meeting between Health Secretary Steve Barclay and health care unions. Other ministers are meeting with railway

unions that have staged months of strikes, and teaching unions considering classroom walk-outs.

"There was definitely a change of tone today," said Sarah Gorton of UNISON, which represents some health workers.

However Onay Kasab, negotiator for the Unite union, said the talks had been a "missed opportunity" and that strikes planned for this month would go ahead.

Britain is going through its biggest strike wave for decades, with airport baggage handlers, bus drivers and postal workers among those who have walked off their jobs to demand higher pay.

Markets rally after three-day decline on firm global equities

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks ended over 1 per cent higher on Monday amid positive trends in global markets and buying in Reliance Industries and IT counters.

The 30-share BSE Sensex zoomed 846.94 points or 1.41 per cent to settle at 60,747.31. During the day, it jumped 989.04 points or 1.65 per cent to 60,889.41.

The broader NSE Nifty climbed 241.75 points or 1.35 per cent to end at 18,101.20.

"Nifty broke a three-day losing streak aided by positive global cues. IT stocks did well following gains on the Nasdaq and ahead of TCS quarterly numbers in the evening," said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities.

From the Sensex pack, Mahindra & Mahindra, HCL Technologies, IndusInd Bank, Tata Consultancy Services, Bharti Airtel, Tech Mahindra, Wipro, Infosys, Reliance Industries and Axis Bank were the major winners.

IT counters were in heavy demand ahead of earnings from TCS later in the day.

Titan, Bajaj Finserv and Maruti were the only laggards.

Elsewhere in Asia, equity markets in Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended in the green.

Equity exchanges in Europe were trading higher in mid-session deals. Markets in the US had ended sharply higher on Friday.



"Wall Street climbed in anticipation of a less aggressive US Fed as wage growth slowed and service activity contracted, fuelling bets that inflation is moderating. Furthermore, the December payrolls rising higher than anticipated increased the possibility of a softer landing for the US economy.

"These gains were also absorbed by the domestic market, with IT being the biggest gainer ahead of the release of sector earnings, as the favourable US economy boosted sector optimism," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge jumped 0.93 per cent and smallcap index climbed 0.50 per cent.

Teck jumped 2.61 per cent, IT climbed 2.54 per cent, power (1.79 per cent), metal (1.51 per cent), energy (1.38 per cent), capital goods (1.28 per cent), auto (1.16 per cent) and industrials (1.13 per cent).

Consumer Durables index

was the only laggard.

"Positive undercurrent in global markets had a rub-off effect on local equities, as investors resorted to short-covering after last week's correction helping key benchmark indices recapture their psychological levels. With China steadily lifting Covid restrictions, there are hopes that demand may pick up going ahead, which could give breathing space for the markets already battling recession fears, higher interest rate regime, and benign inflation levels. Despite the recovery, markets may remain choppy as most of the lingering worries are yet to subside," said Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd.

International oil benchmark Brent crude jumped 2.67 per cent to USD 80.67 per barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded shares worth Rs 203.13 crore on Monday, according to exchange data.



Rupee gains 31 paise to 82.35 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee gained 31 paise to close at 82.35 against the US dollar on Monday, supported by a weaker greenback overseas and a firm trend in domestic equities. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 82.41 and touched an intra-day high of 82.25 and a low of 82.44 against the greenback. It finally ended at 82.35, registering a rise of 31 paise over its previous close.

On Friday, the rupee settled at 82.66 against the dollar.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, declined 0.24 per cent to 103.62.

According to Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities, the rupee strengthened in line with Asian currencies and touched a month high.

"In the last couple of days, the rupee has underperformed among its regional peers amid a headwind of wide current account deficit and foreign fund outflows. But now, looking at the recent high-frequency data and rebound in the risk assets, we could see the rupee start catching up with the other Asian currencies," Parmar said.

The near-term focus will be on the movement of the Chinese yuan and this week's inflation data from the US and India, he added. On the domestic equity market front, the 30-share BSE

Sensex advanced 846.94 points or 1.41 per cent to end at 60,747.31, while the broader NSE Nifty jumped 241.75 points or 1.35 per cent to 18,101.20.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures rose 3.27 per cent to USD 81.14 per barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Friday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 2,902.46 crore, according to exchange data. According to Anuj Choudhary — Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, the Indian rupee appreciated on Monday on a surge in global equity markets and a decline in US Dollar. The dollar fell on Monday, extending Friday's losses on disappointing economic data from the US.

"Though labour market data remained tight, there were increasing expectations that the Federal Reserve may slow its pace of rate hike in the February Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC)," Choudhary said.

The rupee is expected to trade with a slight positive bias amid risk-on sentiments and a weak greenback. However, a surge in crude oil prices may cap sharp upside movement, he said.

"Investors may remain cautious ahead of inflation data from India later this week. USD/INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 81.80 to Rs 82.80," he added.

Banks raise record ₹91,500 crore in debt capital in FY23 so far: Report



PTI ■ MUMBAI

Amid tight liquidity conditions, banks have issued a record quantum of bonds, with gross issuances hitting an all-time high of Rs 91,500 crore so far this fiscal, and are likely to close the financial year with around Rs 1.4 lakh crore.

Gross bond issuances by banks is estimated to reach Rs 1.3-1.4 lakh crore this fiscal as debt sales have already hit record high of Rs 0.915 lakh crore, surpassing the previous high of Rs 0.8 lakh crore in FY17, Ica Ratings said in a note on Monday.

The agency said this alternate resource of fund raising by banks is on the back of widening credit-deposit gap. With credit demand continuing to outdo deposits throughout this fiscal, the overall gap between deposits and credit growth

widened substantially. Incremental credit expansion stood at Rs 12.7 lakh crore, while deposit accretion continued to trail at Rs 8.9 lakh crore, till December 16, 2022.

To bridge this gap, banks have been relying on various sources of funding such as refinancing from financial institutions, drawdown of excess on-balance sheet liquidity and debt capital market issuances. As a result, gross bond issuances by banks surged to Rs 0.9 lakh crore in the first nine months of FY23, up from Rs 0.7 lakh crore in FY22, and surpassing the previous high of Rs 0.8 lakh crore in FY17, Aashay Choksey, a vice-president & sector head, financial sector ratings at Ica, said.

He expects the system-wide credit-to-deposit ratio to firm up to 76.3-76.5 per cent by March from 74.8 per cent as of

December 16, 2022, and stand considerably higher than the low of 69.6 per cent seen during the pandemic. Accordingly, the overall gross bond issuances by banks may rise to Rs 1.3-1.4 trillion in FY23.

Tier I & II bonds qualify for inclusion in capital ratios besides shoring up growth capital for lenders and boost their liquidity coverage ratios and the net stable funding ratios. Banks also issue long-term infrastructure bonds to fund certain specified eligible assets.

Both public and private banks issued infrastructure bonds, public banks had a higher preference for tier-I bonds while private banks issued more of tier-II bonds.

Within overall bond issuances of Rs 91,500 crore in the first three quarters of FY23, tier-II issuance reached an all-time high of Rs 47,200 crore.



No K-shaped recovery in India, pandemic a "leveler" to reduce inequality: SBI Economists

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Economists at the country's largest lender SBI on Monday dismissed the 'K-shaped recovery' critique, saying the pandemic was a 'leveler' which helped in reducing inequalities.

They said government transfers to the poor alone are adding up to Rs 75,000 per household per annum.

It can be noted that in the months following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, concerns were being raised about deepening inequalities in India, with some calling it as a 'K-shaped' recovery, where rich emerged richer while the poor slipped down further.

After analysing data and studies, the SBI economists said, "... in hindsight, the pandemic may have been a leveler in terms of inequality with the poor getting protected through measures such as food transfers."

It said India has delivered a sharp recovery after the pandemic and acknowledged that critics are still quoting it as a K-shaped recovery for India.

"... It is true that the strong rise in financial assets resulted in an increase in inequality in 2021. However, when correlated with short-run asset price movements, such fluctuations in inequality always prove transient," the report explained.

"... In the Indian context, it is an incorrect conjecture to assume that inequality has worsened during the pandemic," it added, citing its study on how cereal procurement has helped reduce inequality.

The report said a higher procurement is benefitting the poorest of the poor in terms of subsequent free distribution of foodgrains, and also helping put money in the hands of smaller and marginal farmers, with distributional impact.

"With a progressive growth in output across states as proxied by GSDP, it is clear that the fruits of such a growth have clearly reverberated and dovetailed into an inclusive growth.

"India has thus done quite well during pandemic in terms of navigating income shocks across deciles of population," the study said.

Sebi extends deadline till Jan 27 for comments on proposal to strengthen grievance redressal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sebi on Monday extended deadline till January 27 for submission of public comments on a proposal to strengthen the existing complaint redressal process in the securities market by making use of online dispute resolution mechanisms.

The capital markets regulator had placed the consultation paper on its website on December 19, 2022 and had sought comments by January 9, 2023.

"It has been decided to extend the timeline for submission of comments to January 27, 2023," the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi)

said. In its consultation paper, Sebi has suggested measures to deepen the existing market infrastructure institution, or MII, administered mediation and arbitration mechanism by making these processes more accessible and effective.

MIIs are stock and commodities exchanges and depositories.

According to Sebi, these processes should be conducted online on an end-to-end basis using the capacity, technology, and other assistance of online dispute resolution institutions and proposed to modify the existing processes for the benefit of the investor.



The proposed modifications in the existing MII-administered mediation and arbitration mechanism include relabelling the investor grievance redressal committee process, providing for a sole mediator or

arbitrator irrespective of the amount of the dispute, and abolishing appellate arbitration system.

One of the suggestions is to extend the MII-administered mediation and arbitration mechanism for resolution of investor grievances against all specified securities market intermediaries.

This will make the grievance redressal process more simplified, streamlined and efficient for the investors.

With the coronavirus pandemic, the MII-administered conciliation and arbitration mechanism happened online, using video conferencing tools. The existing partially online

mode can be enhanced further by effective use of tools, technologies and platforms, which will enable an end-to-end online experience for investors, intermediaries, mediators and arbitrators in conducting the arbitration process online, Sebi had said.

Presently, in case an investor is facing any issue, the investor first approaches the concerned intermediary for resolution of the complaint. If the investor is not satisfied with the resolution, a complaint is lodged with the SCORES portal.

In case the investor is still unsatisfied with the response, then he or she can opt for MII-based mediation.

PVR aims to become 1,000-screen film exhibitor by FY24

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Multiplex operator PVR aims to operate 1,000 screens by the end of FY24, by adding 100 more screens in the next 15 months, the company's Joint Managing Director Sanjeev Kumar Bijli said.

The company, which on Monday achieved the milestone of 900 screens, would invest around Rs 300 crore to add another 100 screens, Bijli said.

As part of the expansion, the company is entering into newer cities, especially in the south and east parts of the country, where it has a negligible presence.

PVR is looking for smaller cities, which are unserved and have "high potential", said Bijli.



When asked about expansion, Bijli said, in the current quarter, PVR would add 30 screens. Moreover, some of the screens which are currently under fit-outs would also be ready for operation in the March quarter.

"We are now aiming to have 1,000 screens by FY24," said Bijli, adding, "the company would

invest around Rs 300 crore to open 100 screens" in the next 15 months.

Besides India, PVR has a small presence in Sri Lanka where it operates nine screens.

Bijli ruled out any further overseas expansion of PVR, saying "we are not looking at any other markets" and would focus on domestic expansion, which has good opportunities.

About the business, Bijli said the current contents pipeline (for films) is encouraging. Last year on March 27, PVR and Inox Leisure announced their merger. This has been approved by their respective shareholders, creditors as well as leading bourses NSE and BSE.

Gold jumps ₹733; silver zooms ₹1,012

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price in the national capital jumped Rs 733 to Rs 56,380 per 10 grams on Monday amid a rally in the precious metal prices in the overseas market, according to HDFC Securities.

The yellow metal had touched Rs 55,647 per 10 grams in the previous trade.

Silver also zoomed Rs 1,012 to Rs 69,834 per kilogram on Monday from Rs 68,822 per kg in the previous trade.

"Comex Gold price traded higher in early Asian hours on Monday supported by weaker US dollar. Gold prices bullish trend will likely to continue for the day," said an analyst at



HDFC Securities. In the overseas market, gold was trading in green at USD 1,875 per ounce and silver was up at USD 23.92 per ounce.

"Meanwhile in other positive news for Gold, China reported an increase in its gold reserves for a second straight month, topping up holdings again after its first reported purchase in more than three years," the analyst added.

'Women workers in construction, real estate sector earn 30-40% less than male workers'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Informal women workers in Indian construction and real estate sector earn 30-40 per cent less than male workers, according to a report that highlights about gender inequality in this sector.

Consulting firm Primus Partners and World Trade Center on Monday released a report 'Pink Collar Skilling: Unleashing the Women's Power in the Real Estate Sector' stating that out of the total people employed in this industry only 12 per cent are women.

"In the domestic construction and real estate sector, which employs 57 million workers, 50 million of the people employed are men, and only 7 million are women," the report said.

Further, it added that the informal women workers engaged in construction in India earn 30-40 per cent less than their male counterparts.

This highlights the "gender inequality prevalent in the construction and real estate sector in India," it observed.

With a 34.5 per cent pay gap, the hourly wage of women



in the construction industry is Rs 26.15, the report pointed out. Men earn Rs 39.95 per hour.

India has only 2 per cent women executives in construction companies against UK's 14 per cent and US's 7 per cent.

"In real estate sector, there are a negligible number of women in managerial roles. The glass ceiling acts as a barrier for the few women employed in the space," the consultant said.

It classified the workforce in the construction industry into four levels -- leadership, technical, semi-skilled labour and unskilled labour. "Across industries, the representation of women on the corporate board stands at only around 17.3 per cent, but when it comes to the construction sector, the figure is much lower.

Tapovan Vishnugad hydel project's tunnel not responsible for landslide in Joshimath: NTPC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned power producer NTPC has said the tunnel of its Tapovan Vishnugad hydel project has nothing to do with the landslide happening in Joshimath.

NTPC's statement comes against the backdrop of Joshimath being declared as a landslide and subsidence-hit zone.

"The tunnel of Tapovan Vishnugad Hydropower project is also being held responsible for the landslide in Joshimath town. It is clarified that the tun-



nel constructed by NTPC is not passing under Joshimath town," the statement said.

According to the company, this tunnel has been constructed by tunnel boring machine and at present no blasting work

is being undertaken by the company at the project, which is being constructed on Dhauli-ganga river in the hill state.

"NTPC wants to inform with full responsibility that the tunnel has nothing to do with the landslide happening in Joshimath city. In such an odd situation, the company expresses its sympathy and sensitivity to the people of Joshimath city," the statement, dated January 5, said.

On Sunday, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) held a high-level meeting to review the situation in Joshimath.

SRM SIGNS MOU WITH TN APEX CENTRE

SRM Institute of Science and Technology is one of the best ranked university in India. College of Science and Humanities Vadapalani campus, a constituent of SRM IST, Vadapalani has carved a niche for itself among the academic fraternity and provides an ideal ambience for the holistic development of students. In the view to facilitate collaboration with industry the college has inked a MoU with TN APEX SKILL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE FOR LOGISTICS (TNASDCL) on January 4 in the presence of Harini Ravi, Director Academics Dr. S. Ramachandran, Dean Dr. K. R. Ananthapadmanabhan, and Mr. Giridharan, Managing Director TNASDCL. MoU will meet the following objectives

GLOBAL MEET ON DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION ORGANISED

Featuring over four plenary sessions and seven technical sessions, the conference saw the participation of delegates from academia and industry across 11 countries.

Amaravati / Vijayawada / Guntur 08th Jan 2023: VIT-AP School of Business organized the 2nd International Conference on Digital Transformation for Business Sustainability from January 5-7, 2023. The event was inaugurated by the Prof. Debashis Chatterjee, Director, IIM Kozhikode. Mr. Prashant Mohan, Chief Marketing Officer, Sharesight, Australia was the guest of honour.

Prof. Debashis Chatterjee, inaugurating the conference, pointed out how sustainability comes from the root word sustainer meaning 'to hold' and how the Sanskrit equivalent Dharma is a prerequisite to achieve business sustainability. He underlined the importance of creating B-School curricula that promotes communal wellness and offered solutions for creating really sustainable B-Schools.

He highlighted the collaboration happening in the corporate world to enhance sustainability.

INDIA BEGIN ODI WC PREPS WITH SL SERIES

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

India were left with mixed feelings on the eve of their ODI series against Sri Lanka as on one hand they will have stalwarts Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli returning to the side while on the other, unfit pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah will yet again miss the action.

Bumrah was expected to bolster the bowling attack in the three-match series commencing here on Tuesday, but his return has been delayed further after he failed to recover completely from the stress fracture in the lower back, which has seen him miss several assignments including the Asia Cup and the T20 World Cup.

There is now a question mark over whether the pace spearhead will be available for the white-ball home series against New Zealand beginning on January 18, and whether he will be in contention for the four-Test Border-Gavaskar series commencing on February 9.

With India set to host the ODI World Cup in October-November this year, Bumrah's last-minute exclusion is only adding to the mystery surrounding the pace bowler's recovery and rehabilitation process.

The return of old guards Rohit, Kohli and KL Rahul and also Shreyas Iyer, though, will give the hosts a huge boost as they eye the series after clinching the T20Is against Sri Lanka.

India have a packed ODI calendar — 15 matches excluding the Asia Cup — in the 10-month window in the build-up to the World Cup in October-November and the key will be to not just get the balance right but also manage the workload in the

midst of the Indian Premier League and the highly-anticipated Australia Test series.

But another injury scare to Bumrah has thrown the spanner in the works of the team management.

There also lies the problem of plenty in picking the top-five batters.

Opener Rohit and No. 3 Kohli pick themselves, while on form, it will be tough to drop Ishan Kishan and Iyer.

Kishan played a sensational knock in his last ODI in Bangladesh recently when he scored a career-best 210. The youngster could be in a direct clash with Shubman Gill to open with Rohit. While Gill did not play the Bangladesh series in December last year, he has proved his worth as an ODI format player.

Iyer had a dream run in ODIs last year and scored 724 runs at an average of 55.69 in 15 innings. He was the backbone of India's batting with his ability to rotate the strike and tackle spin in the middle overs -- a key skill on sub-continent tracks.

Then there's the phenomenon named Suryakumar Yadav, whose T20 exploits have forced the management to explore his utility in the 50-over format. The middle-order batter is fresh from a 51-ball unbeaten 112 in their 91-run win over Sri Lanka in the third and final T20I at Rajkot.

It was Surya's third century in the format in seven months, making him the first player in the history of the game to score three T20I ton while not opening the batting.

However, his ODI career hasn't really taken off so far. Surya has scored 384 runs in 16 matches with just two half-cen-



turies but he could get full backing from the team management to improve on his 50-over numbers in the lead-up to the World Cup.

With veteran quick Mohammed Shami also back in the ranks, he too should be in the playing XI along with either of Mohammed Siraj, Arshdeep Singh and Umran Malik.

New vice captain Hardik Pandya's bowling skills will also come in handy, but for someone who missed more than a year due to back injury in the lead-up to IPL 2022, it remains to be seen how many overs the skipper gets out from India's premier all-rounder.

It will be a happy headache for India as they would look to dominate the ODI leg and do a double against the visitors, who have an almost similar side that lost the T20I series 2-1.

Sri Lankan skipper and star all-rounder Dasun Shanaka led by example in the T20Is, emerging as their top run-getter with 124 runs at a strike rate of 187.87.

Sri Lanka would look for more stability at the top and hope opener Pathum Nissanka gives them a solid start.

Nissanka was their leading run-getter last year (491 runs from 11 matches) and he would like to continue from where he had left off.

The middle order will be steered by Charith Asalanka who also had a fruitful last year, averaging 53.25. The visitors have also drafted in leg-spinner Jeffrey Vandersay, who could be handy on Indian wickets.

Vandersay was their leading wicket-taker in ODIs last year, claiming 14 scalps from seven matches.

Bumrah ruled out after complaining 'stiff back' during net bowling



PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Jasprit Bumrah's return to action has been delayed further as he has failed to recover fully from his lower back stress fracture, ruling out the senior India pacer from the ODI series against Sri Lanka.

It is understood that Bumrah was ruled out after he complained of 'stiff back' during the last two net sessions at the NCA before he was supposed to fly to Guwahati for the first One-dayer.

Bumrah was named in the squad for the three-match series against Sri Lanka, starting Tuesday, but the BCCI's support staff and medical team have collectively decided that his 'return to play' should be pushed back, keeping the all-important Border Gavaskar Trophy in mind.

Team India pacer Jasprit Bumrah has been ruled out of the upcoming 3-match ODI series against Sri Lanka. Bumrah, who was set to join the team in Guwahati ahead of the ODI series, will need some

more time to build bowling resilience. This decision has been taken as a precautionary measure," the BCCI said in a statement.

"The All-India Senior Selection Committee has not named any replacement for Jasprit Bumrah," added the BCCI. Skipper Rohit Sharma termed it as "unfortunate".

"It's a very unfortunate incident with him. The poor guy (Bumrah) has been working really hard at the NCA for all this time.

"Just when he got back to his full fitness, when he started bowling and everything, in the last two days I think this incident happened where he felt a little bit of stiffness in his back," Rohit told mediapersons on Monday.

However, the skipper informed that it was "nothing major" and more of a safety measure. "It's just a stiffness, when Bumrah says anything you have to be very cautious about it. That is what we did, I thought it was very important to make that decision then — just pull him out.

"When we named him (Bumrah) he was in the process of getting his workload done, he was bowling at the nets. We need to be very careful with him. He had a major injury before the World Cup."

It will be interesting to see if Bumrah recovers to compete against New Zealand in the ODI series, starting January 18, and is fielded without playing even one domestic game.



Have to show up, play competitive cricket: Shanaka

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Sri Lanka skipper Dasun Shanaka on Monday said he's counting on the positives from the recently-concluded T20 series against India and put up a fight in the three-match ODI rubber beginning here on Tuesday. Sri Lanka came close in the first T20I before losing by two runs, while in the second T20I in Pune they defeated India by 16 runs.

In the series-decider in Rajkot, Suryakumar Yadav sealed a 2-1 win for the hosts with a swashbuckling hundred.

"None of the teams in recent past except for South Africa have won in India. Even we gave a good fight in Mumbai. But they came stronger, we need to play competitive cricket," Shanaka said on the eve of the ODI series.

Stressing on the need to do well, he further said: "It's an important tournament for all Sri Lankans because the World

Cup is going to be held here in India, so looking forward to this series."

"It's a very good preparation, the conditions would be similar. The boys are ready for that, they know the importance of this tournament."

The Lankan skipper was their top run-getter with 124 runs at a strike rate of 187.87 in the T20I series. "Before coming here, I really wanted to do well, practised more, it's very important to play well in India."

The Lankan skipper feels it will be a high-scoring affair.

"We have seen the deck and it appears to be a high scoring game."

Still reeling from Suryakumar's assault, Shanaka was asked how he plans to stop the in-form Indian batter. "This is a familiar question for all the captains. Suryakumar is a 360-player with the form he's in. It's about bowling in the right areas and executing your plans well."

Unfortunate we won't be able to play Ishan: Rohit in favour of giving Gill a 'long run'

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Indian skipper Rohit Sharma on Monday made it very clear that Ishan Kishan despite his fastest double hundred in his last ODI will have to wait for his next chance just like Suryakumar Yadav, who is currently world's No. 1 T20 batter.

India will be playing six ODIs in next two weeks against Sri Lanka and New Zealand respectively, starting with first game against the islanders here on Tuesday.

Ishan stunned the cricketing world with world record breaking 131-ball-210 against Bangladesh in Chattogram last month while 'SKY' has just scored his 3rd T20I hundred couple of days back in his 43rd innings.

But Rohit was clear that Shubman Gill (named on record) and Shreyas Iyer (dropped broad hints) will get a long run in these six games.

"Both openers have done really well. But looking at how both openers have gone through, it's fair that we give Gill a chance to have a good run," Rohit said ahead of the first game.

In Gill's favour, his superb consistency — 687 runs in 13 innings with 57 plus average and 99 plus strike-rate has gone in his favour.

"Gill has got a lot of runs in the last few games, so has Ishan. I am not going to take anything away from him (Ishan). He's been wonderful for us, got a double hundred. And, I know what it takes to get a double hundred, it is a great achievement," said Rohit, who is the only batter to have three ODI double hundreds.

"But just to be honest and fair to the guys who have done really well before, we need to give those guys enough chances as well before we make that call."

Terming it unfortunate, Rohit said Ishan would get share of chances as they have 15 ODIs and the Asia Cup lined up before the



World Cup in October-November.

"It's unfortunate that we won't be able to play Ishan. But looking at how things have panned out for us in the last eight-nine months and how the ODIs have gone through for us, it's fair to give Gill that run and he's done extremely well in that position.

But Rohit assured that Ishan remains very much in the mix.

"Yes, Ishan is certainly going to miss out but it is very unfortunate. But that does not rule out anything. We are going to try and keep everyone in the mix and see how it pans out for us as we play a lot of games ahead."

Rohit made it clear that form is important but so is the format and hence without naming indicated that Shreyas Iyer will make the cut in the playing XI.

"Those guys who have performed will get a run. It is as simple as that. Sometimes it's hard when we compare guys performing in different formats. I do understand the form. Form is important and so is the format," Rohit added.

Rohit said it's important not to "mix up" the two white ball formats.

"Look, I think it's a great headache (choice between Surya and Shreyas) to have rather than having no headache. Honestly, we will look at the performance of the guys who have done really well. The problem happens when we start comparing different formats to different formats."

"ODI is a different format, slightly longer than T20I and we are very clear that the guys who have done well will definitely get the opportunities," the skipper's vote seemed to be in favour of Shreyas, who has two tons and 14 fifties from 39 ODIs at a strike-rate of 96.

"We are very clear about giving opportunities to the guys who have done really well. That is what is going to happen as we move forward, play these six ODIs. The guys who are doing well will also get a lot of opportunities."

Star India asks BCCI for 'discount' in current deal, exiting Byju's wants board to encash bank guarantee

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's home season media rights holder Star India has asked the BCCI for a Rs 130 crore discount in the existing deal while jersey sponsor BYJU's, which is on its way out, wants the board to encash bank guarantee worth an estimated Rs 140 crore to honour the current agreement. The BCCI top brass deliberated on the two subjects for more than an hour in the emergent meeting of the Apex Council on Monday. It was a virtual meeting.

In November, BYJU's had communicated to the BCCI that it wants to exit as the jersey sponsor of the Indian cricket team but the board asked the ed-tech company to continue until at least March 2023.

However, in June, BYJU's had extended its jersey sponsorship agreement with the BCCI until November 2023 for an esti-

mated \$35 million. While an approximately Rs 140 crore will be paid to the BCCI through bank guarantee, the remaining, around Rs 160 crore, will be paid via installments.

"Only BYJU's and Star India issues were discussed in the meeting but that also took well over an hour. It was a serious matter involving millions of dollars so naturally it took time," a BCCI source said.

Byju's, which was one of the sponsors of the FIFA World Cup, plans to lay off around 2500 of its 50,000 workforce by March in its aim to become profitable.

It was also revealed in the meeting that Star, which had paid Rs 6138.1 for India's international and domestic cricket rights for the 2018-2023 period, has asked for an approximate Rs 130 crore discount in the existing deal.

Some of the matches in the deal period had to be resched-

uled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. "The issue was discussed at length but the board is yet to take a final call on it," the source added. However, an industry source said, Star has not sought any discount from BCCI.

"They have only asked that BCCI charge them as per the amount agreed upon in the agreement. Matches that were scheduled to be played in 2020 which got pushed to 2022 on account of the pandemic need to be charged at the 2020 rate and not the 2022 rate. Therefore to suggest that Star India has sort a 'discount' is grossly misleading," the source said.

The development comes at a time when the BCCI is preparing to sell media rights for the next five-year cycle after the current deal expires in March.

Considering the IPL media rights fetched a staggering Rs 48,390 crore, the BCCI is expecting another windfall.

Will likely miss first Test against India: Starc

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Injured Australian pace bowler Mitchell Starc has indicated he will most certainly miss the opening Test of the Border-Gavaskar series against India at Nagpur from February 9, saying he should be available from the second Test onwards.

Starc suffered an injury on the opening day of the Boxing day Test against South Africa, hurting the finger of his bowling arm while attempting a catch.

The 32-year-old Starc was diagnosed with a detached tendon in the middle finger and missed the third and final Test against the Proteas at Sydney.

"That's probably likely (I will miss the first Test). We'll see how we're placed at the end of the month," Starc was quoted as saying by Australian Associated Press on Monday.

"Hopefully I am there for the second Test if they want to play me. We'll see how the finger is."

With all-rounder Cameron Green also not a certainty for the opening Test due to a fractured finger he suffered during the MCG game after being hit by an



Anrich Nortje bouncer, Australia are left short of pace bowling back-up.

However, Josh Hazlewood will most likely play the Nagpur game — his second Test in Asia since 2017.

Hazlewood was in fine form during the third Test against the Proteas in Sydney where he claimed four first-innings wickets, forcing the tourists to follow on. But weather played spoilsport and the match ended in a draw.

Test skipper Pat Cummins too gave his verdict on Hazlewood, saying he is a certainty for the Nagpur Test.

"No qualms picking (Hazlewood), you know what you're going to get and it is quality," said Cummins on Monday.

"Getting four or five wickets on that (Sydney) wicket. Every time he (Hazlewood) bowled he looked threatening."

Last year's Ashes hero Scott Boland too could be in contention for a possible third pacer's slot with Green too doubtful. But Cummins said there would be no pressure to include three quicks, as Travis Head has given him a new option with handy off-spin during the Sydney Test.



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भारत 2023 INDIA

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Shivraj Singh Chouhan
Chief Minister, Madhya Pradesh

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Address by Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh

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