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WORLD 8
SOUTH KOREA TO INSPECT ITS
BOEING FLEET AS IT STRUGGLES
TO FIND CAUSE OF PLANE CRASH

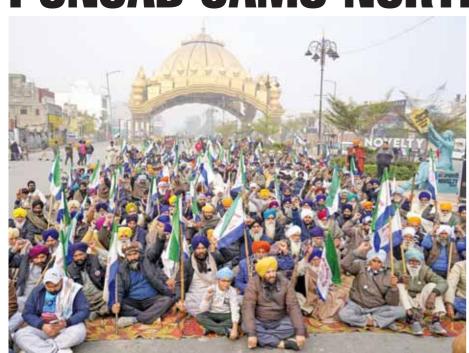
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RAIPUR, TUESDAY DECEMBER 31, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3

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D FROM: DELHI I LUCKNOW I BHOPAL I BHUBANESWAR I RANCHI I RAIPUR I CHANDIGARH I DEHRADUN I HYDERABAD I VIJAYWADA

PUNJAB JAMS NORTH INDIA



Farmers block a road during the statewide 'bandh' called as part of their ongoing protest at Punjab borders, in Amritsar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

ife was hit across Punjab due to a 'bandh' imposed by farmers who have been agitating against the Centre for a legal guarantee of a minimum support price for their crops. Rail and road traffic was crippled and commercial establishments remained shut in several places of the State. Farmers staged 'dharnas' on several roads and highways including in Patiala, Jalandhar, Amritsar, Ferozepur, Bathinda, and Pathankot as part of their bandh call from 7 am to 4

pm, throwing commuter traffic out of gear. A call for a statewide

week ago by Samyukta Kisan A high-level team of Punjab Morcha (Non-political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha over the Centre not acting on the farmers' demand for a legal guarantee for the MSP. The bandh was also enforced to express solidarity with farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal who has been on a fast for the last 35 days at Khanauri border protest site of farmers. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court would on December 31 examine Punjab

Government's measures to provide treatment to the ailing farmer leader. A team of the Punjab Government officials on December 29 attempted to persuade the septuagenarian to take medical aid, but he declined it, fearing use of forces to oust shutdown was given over a him from the protest site.

situation warranted. The Punjab Government said

it was facing a huge resistance from the protesting farmers who had encircled Dallewal and prevented him from

being taken to a hospital.
On Monday, farmers observed a sit-in at Dhareri Jattan Toll Plaza which affected vehicular movement on the Patiala-Chandigarh National Highway. At Amritsar's Golden Gate, scores of farmers staged a dharna near the city's entry point. Police there assisted some stranded foreign tourists by arranging autorickshaws for them to reach the Golden Temple. Farmers squatted on tracks at

many places, forcing the railways to cancel several trains passing through the state and short-terminated or short-originated some trains. In Ferozepur, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, and Bathinda, passengers were stranded at stations. In Phagwara, farmers staged a dharna near the Sugarmill Crossing on NH-44, blocking the roads leading from Phagwara towards Nakodar, Hoshiarpur,

Nawanshahr. Grain markets were shut in several places across the State. In the Mohali district, farmers staged a dharna at a few points throwing normal movement of vehicular traffic out of gear. Public transport remained off roads at several places, while most private bus operators suspended services, abiding by the bandh call. Many long-distance private buses and trucks carrying fruits and vegetables were held up due to the bandh.

Continued on page 2 Delhi,



COLD WORSENS THE FREEZE

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

mid the inclement Aweather conditions, north and northwest India would face the brunt of cold day spell over the coming days. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has also forecast 'dense to very dense' fog in northern and western parts of the country during the next two-three days. Dense fog may affect some airports, highways and railway routes in the areas of met-sub-division. According to IMD, a fresh western disturbance in north India starting January 4, expected to bring snowfall and rain. Scattered precipitation is likely in the western Himalayan region from January 1 to 3, with widespread rainfall and snowfall predicted for January 4 and 5. The entire north India was covered by a blanket of dense to very dense fog on Monday.

Satellite imagery "Recent detected fog layer over South Punjab, Haryana, north Rajasthan, Jammu, north

WEATHER



MAX 15°C(-5) 10.3°C(+3)

Madhya Pradesh, west and south Uttar Pradesh, south Himachal Pradesh, south Uttarakhand, southwest Bihar, Jharkhand, west north Chhattisgarh and Gujarat," IMD wrote on X. The IMD has also predicted rain or snowfall over the 'western Himalayan region'

between January 1 and January 5 due to a western disturbance. The weather department anticipated that foggy conditions would continue late at night and early in the morning across regions such as Odisha, Assam, Meghalaya, and other northeastern states until December 31. These

conditions were expected to

persist in Punjab, Haryana,

and Chandigarh until January

Continued on page 2



ISRO's PSLV-C60 carrying SpaDeX and its payloads, lifts off from the first launch pad at Satish Dhawan Space Centre, in Sriharikota

AAP in Election Mode

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

On a day when the imams affiliated with the Delhi Waqf Board protested outside former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence, demanding their overdue salaries, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Monday announced a new scheme that a monthly honorarium of Rs 18, 000 to Hindu temple's Pujaris and Granthis of Gurudwaras if elected to the upcoming Assembly polls. In a bid to dent the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP's) Hindu's vote bank the AAP's convenor said the registration for the Pujari Granthi Samman Yojana will begin on Tuesday. He also said he would visit the Hanuman Mandir Connaught Place on Tuesday to oversee the registration process for priests there. Registration will also be done at other temples and

the AAP workers, he said. During their protest the All India Imam Association claimed their monthly honorarium of Rs 18,000 (for Imams) and Rs 16,000 (for Muezzins) have been delayed for over one and a half years and accused the Delhi government of ignoring their

Gurudwaras across the city by

Amid a huge row over a scheme that promises a stipend



unemployed women, the announcement by Arvind Kejriwal is a continuation of his welfare schemes for the people of Delhi which has however led to serious He first controversies. announced the Sanjeevani scheme for senior citizens, then the Mahila Samman Yojana, Dr Ambedkar Samman Scholarship scheme for Dalit students and now the monthly salary scheme for priests. "Today I am making an

important announcement regarding a scheme. The name of the scheme is Pujari Granthi Samman Yojana. Under this, there is a provision to give an honorarium to the priests of temples and the 'granthis' of the Gurudwara. They will be given an honorarium of about Rs 8,000 per month", Kejriwal to announced while addressing a

press conference "This is happening for the first time in the country. The priest is a class that has carried forward the rituals from generation to generation. They never paid attention to their family and we never paid attention to them," the AAP chief added.
Terming Kejriwal's 'Pujari
Granthi Samman Yojana' a
"political stunt", the BJP claimed that no one would get even a single rupee since the latter does not have any data with him. Delhi BJP chief Veerendra Sachdeva said that Kejriwal is now a "defeated and desperate" leader who is making populist announcements daily to stay

Government officials had

met Dallewal requesting him

to accept medical treatment

irrespective of the fast

continuing. A vacation bench

of Justices Surya Kant and

Sudhanshu Dhulia would

hear the matter virtually at

around 11 am on December

31. On December 28, the top

court came down heavily on

the Punjab Government for

not moving Dallewal to a

hospital and doubted the

intention of the agitating farmers for resisting the administration of medical aid

The Bench, however, gave the

State Government time till

December 31 to persuade

Dallewal to move him to a

hospital, giving it the liberty

to seek logistical support

to their ailing leader.

in power. Former Delhi MP Parvesh Verma claimed that Kejriwal is remembering 'Ishwar' and 'Waheguru' due to the fear of

LG's New Year greetings to Delhi's Temporary Chief Minister

RAJESH KUMAR NEW DELHI

Extending season's greetings to Delhi Chief Minister Atishi, Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has taken the opportunity to hit out at her predecessor and AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal for calling her a "temporary Chief Minister". In a strongly worded letter to Atishi, Lt disapproval of the AAP chief referring to her as 'temporary Chief Minister'. The letter, criticised the

remark as an affront to constitutional values and the dignity of the office. Saxena described the comments as not only insulting to Atishi but also disrespectful to the President of India and himself as her representative. He emphasised the importance of maintaining a respectful level public discourse. particularly regarding the role of the Chief Minister.

objectionable and I was hurt by it. It was not only an insult to you, but also to your appointee, the President of India and to me as her representative' As Lieutenant Governor, I am concerned about this level of public discourse and at the same time, I am hurt by the conversation of presenting the full-time Chief Minister of my Continued on page 2 government as a temporary Chief Minister..." reads the

I found this very



letter.

Taking a jibe at AAP over the announcement, the Delhi Bharativa Janata Party (BJP) shared a poster on X, showing Arvind Kejriwal controlling with strings, Atishi insinuating that he would run Delhi government the through her.

In a statement Delhi BIP President Virendra Sachdeva, stated that the letter written by the Lieutenant Governor Vinay Kumar Saxena to Chief Minister Atishi Marlena reflects the true reality of the Delhi government. He said that while political ideologies may differ, it is "at least evident that Atishi Marlena is carrying administrative duties as a Chief Minister, something that has been notably absent during the almost ten-year tenure of Arvind Kejriwal, a d m i n i s t r a t i v e who merely functioned as a responsibilities. "For the first



'ribbon-cutting' Minister" The LG further outlined the

challenges faced by the Delhi government including the Yamuna pollution crisis, garbage management, and the poor state of infrastructure in industrial and slum areas. He slammed the AAP supremo and said, "The public and said, characterisation of temporary or stopgap chief minister, as articulated by Shri Kejriwal, has no constitutional basis. It is also a deplorable violation of the democratic spirit and values enshrined in the Constitution authored by Babasaheb Ambedkar".

The Lieutenant Governor lauded Atishi for her approach in governance, contrasting it with her alleged predecessor's reluctance to take on

seen a Chief Minister actively performing the duties of the office," he wrote. Saxena had earlier offered words of praise for Atishi, calling her "a thousands times better" than her predecessor, with whom has had several tempestuous run-ins, on legal, administrative, and governance issues, over the In September, AAP leader

Atishi was named as the new Chief Minister of Delhi Kejriwal's following announcement to resign from the top post after being granted interim bail for his alleged involvement in the Delhi liquor policy case. The official announcement was made by Delhi minister Gopal Rai. Notably, several other AAP leaders were in the fray to succeed Kejriwal, including Kailash Gahlot, Saurabh Bharadwaj and Gopal Rai.

Atishi was elevated to the position of cabinet minister in the Delhi government after Satyender Jain and Manish Sisodia tendered their resignations last year. She, along with Saurabh Bharadwaj, were made Delhi ministers, but Atishi was given charge 14 of including departments, education, finance, planning, PWD, water, power and public relations.

Continued on page 2

Security upgrade for New Year's eve time during my tenure, I have

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

 T^{onight} , On the eve of 2025, many will party the night away, but there are some who will be on duty keeping the National Capital safe. Meet the brave hearts zho will stand chilling cold to help ensure that the celebrations go on

safely. 'We do not consider this to be a conundrum at all, we are happy to serve the people so that they can celebrate the New Year without any problem and enjoy it to the fullest," were the words of police officers who will ensure that security arrangements do not fall short and crime elements do not hamper celebrations of the common people on December 31st and January

Delhi Police remains on alert as people from its neighbouring states are also expected to come to Delhi for celebrations in large numbers. Delhi shares borders with Haryana and Uttar Pradesh and lies close to Rajasthan. The traffic and local police personnel say they are neither worried nor frustration remains on their

Continued on page 2

Falling Sensex, Rising Rupee: Where is India headed?

The din around the falling Sensex worth noting that these indices I and depreciating Rupee has been hard to miss, and understandably, human nature makes us worry when markets falter. For many investors, even those with mutual fund investments, the recent market trends might feel like storm clouds on the horizon. But markets, much like seasons, naturally cycle through growth, correction,

and recovery phases. What's happening now isn't the collapse of some fear; rather, it's a moment for

perspective, patience, and clarity about the underlying factors at

The equities landscape has seen corrections in the Sensex and and global fund reallocation than a Nifty, particularly since September loss of confidence in India's long-2024, causing unease. However, it's term growth prospects.

have been on a nine-year bull run, delivering around 9per cent growth year-to-date, even after recent declines. Much of the decline stems from significant selling by Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs), who have offloaded over Rs 1.19 lakh crore worth of equities through exchanges this year. Interestingly, while exiting the secondary market, FIIs have invested more than

Rs 1.2 lakh crore in the primary market during 2024, including Rs 17,331 crore December alone, making them net

investors in India. This dual approach suggests the sell-off is more about short-term profit-booking

measures boosted the CSI 300 index by 25per cent since the announcement, diverting significant FII flows from India. diverting Investors, however, are closely watching to see how effectively the government can address structural economic challenges and navigate concerns of potential overvaluation in the market. Weak domestic Q2 earnings, with 44per cent of companies missing profit expectations as per an analyst report, further dampened shortalone, term sentiment.

The year 2024 was a battleground between bulls and bears, characterised by intense volatility driven by key events such as the Indian general elections, the US presidential race, and a host of geopolitical tensions, including the Israel-Iran conflict. Yet, India's

Global factors have also fueled this

sell-off. China's aggressive stimulus



fundamentals macroeconomic remain strong with high potential bank lending, 13-year low gross non-performing assets (GNPA) at 2.5 per cent as of September 2024, expected inflation easing, and robust private spending. This correction, while concerning, does not signal a structural problem. Now, let's address the Rupee, another point of concern. Over

If translated into policy, these are expected to increase the US economy's inflation. As a result, the 10-year US Treasury yield, now above 4.5per cent, has made US assets more attractive, narrowing the India-US bond yield spread to ~230 basis points, its lowest level since 2006, and has halved in 2 years. All this makes capital outflows from emerging markets, including India. Although the Rupee is hitting lows against the US Dollar, its exchange rate has scaled 2024, the Rupee depreciated by an all-time high in real terms. The

approximately

Real Effective Exchange Rate around three per cent, with (REER) index of the rupee touched two per cent occurring in the last quarter against a record of 108 in November 2024, the US Dollar. The Dollar is strengthening by 4.5per cent during this calendar year. The strengthening because of Donald Trump's public pronouncements REER measures the rupee value not favouring universal tariff hikes only against the dollar, but against (more on the import of Chinese the global currencies. goods), mass deportation of illegal immigrants and income tax cuts.

This was a broad dollar strengthening that reduced the attractiveness of the Indian currency, thus making it vulnerable to greater selling pressure and further depreciation. The rupee is not weakening as much as the dollar is strengthening against all currencies. The Rupee has appreciated against major currencies like the Euro, Pound, and Australian Dollar. The Euro fell from Rs 91.84 on December 31, 2023, to Rs 89.10 by December 30, 2024. Similarly, the Australian Dollar dropped from Rs 56.64 to Rs 53.33 and Swiss Franc dipped from

period. This shows the Rupee's resilience even against some of the world's strongest currencies.

Rs 98.88 to Rs 94.71 over the same

Despite these challenges, India's external accounts have shown resilience. The Current Account Deficit (CAD) narrowed slightly to 1.2per cent of GDP in Q2 FY25 from 1.3 per cent in the previous year. The fiscal deficit, which had ballooned to 9.2 per cent during the pandemic, is now down to 5.6 per cent. In this context, the Rupee's movements reflect global dynamics rather than intrinsic weaknesses in India's economy. Emerging market currencies, including the Brazilian Real, Indonesian Rupiah, Chinese Yuan, and Russian Ruble, also depreciated against the Dollar, reflecting the Dollar's global strength rather than specific Rupee Continued on page 2

IT Department denys reports linking DigiYatra to tax data

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE - NEW DELHI

The Income Tax Department has dis-I missed media reports claiming that data from the DigiYatra app would be used to track tax evaders. In a statement on Monday, December 30, 2024, the department clarified, "News articles are circulating about DigiYatra data being used to crack down on tax evaders. We want to confirm that, as of now, there is no such initiative by the Income Tax Department. The clarification came after a media report alleged that the tax department had accessed passenger data from the DigiYatra

app. The article claimed this data was being compared with tax filings to identify discrepancies, particularly focusing on frequent flyers and those taking high-value international trips. According to the report, notices were expected to be issued in 2025 targeting individuals who either don't file tax returns or underreport their income. Responding to the concerns, Suresh Khadakabhavi, CEO of DigiYatra, also clarified that the app does not centrally store passenger data. In a post on X, he explained, "DigiYatra ensures data security and privacy. There is no central storage of biometric or personal information. All

data remains on users' devices, and facial authentication is decentralized. With over 9 million users and 42 million secure journeys, privacy is our top priority." Press Information Bureau's Fact Check Unit also described the media report as "fake news". DigiYatra is a Government initiative under the Ministry of Civil Aviation aimed at making air travel paperless and more convenient. The app uses facial recognition technology along with passengers' ID, biometric, and flight details to enable faster access through airport checkpoints. However, it is important to note that using the app is entirely optional for travelers.

LG Urges AAP to increase ASHA worker stipends

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Lieutenant Governor (LG) on Monday advised the AAP government to enhance the stipend of ASHA Workers and release the salary of Aangwadi Supervisors pending for months at the earliest. This comes following his meet with a delegation of ASHA and Aangwadi Workers who shared their grievances and asked for his help and intervention.

An official from Raj Niwas said that the Delhi LG advised

enhance the stipend being paid to ASHA Workers in Delhi from the existing Rs and that the salaries of 3,000 per month to Rs 9,000, given the fact that their last enhancement had been done in 2018, despite provision being there for such revisions to take place every three

years.
He has also asked for the salaries of Aangwadi supervisors to be released at the earliest.

"This missive from the LG comes after, Saxena interacted with a delegation of ASHA and Aangwadi Workers, who met the LG today at Raj Niwas and brought to his

Aangwadi Supervisors had not been paid for the past seven months. They also brought to the fore various difficulties being faced by them in terms of livelihood and requested the LG for help/intervention," statement said.

It added that accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) Workers, who act as nonmedical health workers in the community under the National Health Mission (NHM), been complaining of being under

paid despite inflation and the government not listening to them, despite repeated representations and protests. "The stipend being paid to them was last fixed/revised in 2018 and was asserted." 2018 and was supposed to be revised every three years as per the cabinet decision taken at that time. The ASHA and Aangwadi

paid despite inflation and the

delegation that met the LG, brought up these issues and requested him for help. Saxena informed them that the issues raised by them were with regards to transferred subjects, which were fully under the domain of the AAP government," it read,

BJP defends holiday changes, NC calls it disrespectful to Kashmir

MOHIT KANDHARI JAMMU

mid severe cold wave con-Aditions, the political temperatures are soaring in the Kashmir valley over the issue of excluding Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's birthday and July 13, Martyrs' Day, from the list of holidays for

The holiday calendar was released by the Union Territory Administration headed by Lieutenant Governor Manoj

Sinha on Sunday. The National Conference reacted sharply by claiming the decision reflects the BJP's disregard for Kashmir's history and democratic struggle.

However, the Bharatiya Janta Party has appreciated the decision of the government to maintain the status quo in the list of public holidays to be observed in the JK UT during 2025 issued by the General Administration Department. For the first time, the two-state holidays on July 13 and December 5 were deleted from the list of public holidays by the LG administration on December 28, 2019, after the Abrogation of Articles 2019 and 35-A.

So far Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has not reacted on the issue. But one of his close aides and Chief Spokesman of

the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Tanir Sadiq Monday said, "The list of holidays and the decision reflects the BJP's disregard for Kashmir's history and democratic struggle. While we had hoped for the inclusion of holidays commemorating leaders like Sher-e-Kashmir Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and the martyrs of July 13, their absence does not diminish their significance or our legacy. These holidays will be

restored one day" M Y Tarigami, CPI(M) central committee member and member of the J&K legislative assembly from Kulgam constituency said that it is very unfortunate that July 13 & December 5 have been dropped from the list of holidays for the 2025 calendar

vear. The restoration of these two holidays was included in its election manifesto by the National Conference during the Assembly polls. After forming the government many leaders and legislators including the party's general secretary had passionately appealed to the LG to declare December 5, 2024 as a public

holiday but in vain. The popular government also exerted pressure on the LG by submitting a cabinet proposal demanding the inclusion of December 5 in the list of hol-

The firm stand taken by the LG and ignoring the parochial demand is really praiseworthy," stated Brig (Retd) Anil Gupta, Spokesperson of the Party. National Conference

Spokesman Tanir Sadiq also observed that under the Union Territory framework, a lot of decisions fall under the domain of the LG administration as they need his approval. We are hopeful that the Lieutenant Governor's administration will not create roadblocks and hurdles for the government's pro-people initiatives. That is why we want early restoration of statehood," Sadiq said.

BJP Spokesman Brig (Retd) Anil Gupta explained, "Both the holidays were mired in controversy and were thrust upon the people of the other two regions of the erstwhile state by the National Conference".

Gupta claimed December 5 was never a state holiday between 1948-1981 and was declared a holiday to celebrate the birth anniversary of Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah after he died in 1982 by his son and successor Dr Farooq Abdullah. He added that controversy surrounds the actual According to MY Taing, a noted Kashmiri historian and literary assistant of the Sheikh for writing the latter's autobiography Aatish-e-Chinar, December 5 is not the actual birth date of the Sheikh. Even Sheikh has not mentioned December 5 as his birthdate in his autobiography. "What is the

birth date of Sheikh Abdullah.

justification of December 5 as a state holiday when the Sheikh himself does not acknowledge it as his birth date" exclaimed Brig Gupta!

Brig (Retd) Anil Gupta also claimed nothing can be more controversial and divisive than celebrating July 13 as a state holiday with full government support. While it was celebrated as Martyrs Day in Kashmir, it was celebrated as a Black Day by the Hindus in Jammu including the Kashmiri Pandits to protest against the plundering of their properties in Kashmir by members of the majority community and also endangering their dignity, honour and lives. Historically, the events of that day divided the people on a regional, religious and ideological basis. The divide continues to persist and has widened further due to the monolithic

attitude of Kashmir-based

regional

Prayagraj's boatmen to become storytellers in Mahakumbh 2025

BISWAJEET BANERJEE **PRAYAGRAJ**

 P^{rayagraj} is preparing for Mahakumbh 2025, and as part of an innovative initiative, boatmen are being trained to serve as storytellers, offering visitors an enriched experience of the region's historical and mythological heritage. This project, led by the state tourism department, aims to blend tradition with hospitality to impress the anticipated 40 crore devotees expected at the

The tourism department has partnered with Manyawar Kanshiram Institute of Tourism Management, Lucknow, and the NGO Bewajah Society to empower 4,000 boatmen across the state. "We have signed a nemorandum of un ing (MoU) with these institu- Chitrakoot alone, 35 boatmen during accidents. To modern- training by early next year.

guides in storytelling, disaster management, and modern amenities like digital payments," said Aparajita Singh, regional tourism officer of Prayagraj.

The storytelling aspect of the initiative focuses on equipping boatmen with the skills to narrate folk tales and historical accounts in a compelling manner. "Boatmen possess rich knowledge of local stories. If presented emotionally and engagingly, these tales can create lasting impressions on visitors," said Gaurav Srivastava, president of Bewajah Society. Training sessions com-

menced with 60 boatmen trained in Prayagraj and another 30 in Shringverpur. Similar programs are underway in Ayodhya, Mathura, Chitrakoot and Bateshwar Ir

tions to train boatmen and have already completed their sessions. This initiative is not just

about enhancing tourist experiences but also uplifting the boatmen community. "These boatmen are moving beyond rowing boats-they are becoming river guides and ambassadors of the region's cultural heritage," said Srivastava.

The training extends beyond storytelling to include disaster management and water safety. "Boatmen are also being trained in life-saving techniques, CPR, and flood rescue measures. These skills will enable them to ensure safety at the ghats during emergencies," explained Singh. Prakhar Tiwari, assistant professor at the tourism institute, highlighted that the sessions also cover boat handling and relief

ize their approach, boatmen are being introduced to digital payment systems to cater to tech-savvy tourists.

Sunil Pandey, a boatman said, "Earlier, rowing a boat was just a means to earn a living. Now, I can talk about Prayagraj's heritage. It makes my work fulfilling.

Besides boatmen, tour guides who serve as the face of Prayagraj's tourism, are also undergoing transformation. Over 1,000 guides are being trained in hospitality, management, and storytelling techniques. "Tourists don't just want to see-they want to experience," said Neha Sharma, a newly certified guide. "This training has given me the confidence to deliver that experience." With 420 guides already certified, the remaining batches are

Naidu richest CM in India with assets over ₹931 Crore

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

Andhra Pradesh CM N Chandrababu Naidu is the richest Chief Minister in India with assets worth over Rs 931 crore, while West Bengal's Mamata Banerjee is the poorest with just Rs 15 lakh, according to an Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) report released on Monday. The total assets of 31 Chief Ministers are worth Rs 1,630 crores. Arunachal Pradesh's Pema Khandu is the second richest Chief Minister with total assets worth over Rs 332 crores, Karnataka's Siddaramaiah is the third on the list with assets worth more than Rs 51 crore. Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, the second poorest in the list.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW government's demand in this

The Odisha government on Monday announced extension of the deadline till January 1 for farmers to submit the report on crop damage due to unseasonal rains, and make claim for compensation. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi made the announcement after the state

regard was accepted by the He said farmers can now report

Odisha crop damage claims deadline extended

and claim compensation over crop loss till midnight of January
1. The initial deadline was December 29, which was later extended till December 30. Majhi and other ministers had visited different rain-affected districts on Sunday, following

which the state government had requested the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Empowerment to extend time for the farmers to report crop loss. "Keeping in view the interests of the farmers, the central government has extended the time.. Farmers can now inform the insurance companies about the crop loss till January 1, 2025," says a statement issued by the CMO.

Punjab Jams North India

Kapurthala and Jalandhar also observed the bandh all commercial establishments remaining closed. Langars of tea and 'daal-parshada' were arranged for the protesters. The bandh's impact was also seen in some neighbouring areas of the state, including Ambala. Hundreds of daily commuters travelling from

thrown off stride because of the shutdown. Buses took alternate routes to go from Ambala to Chandigarh as they had to cross a stretch of the national highway that passes through Punjab.

Farmers, under the banner of SKM (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha, have been camping at the Shambhu and Khanauri border points between Punjab and Harvana since | Mohali, Patiala and other February 13, after their Kheri violence.

by security forces. A "jatha" (group) of 101 farmers attempted to march to Delhi on foot three times between December 6 and 14 but were stopped stopped by secur personnel from Haryana. Besides the MSP, farmers are also demanding a debt waiver, pension, no hike in electricity withdrawal of police cases, and "justice" for the victims

COLD WORSENS THE FREEZE

The mercury dipped but remained above normal in the national capital on Monday even as icy northwesterly winds improved the air quality to the moderate category and a shallow fog reduced visibility.

Delhi recorded cold to severe cold day conditions on Monday, with the maximum temperature settling 5.4 notches below normal at 15 degrees Celsius and higher than 18 degree Celsius a day earlier. The Met office has forecast similar cold day

conditions in the next few The minimum above normal. It was 13 degree Celsius a day earlier. The narrowing gap between the maximum and minimum temperature and northwesterly wind leading to cold wave conditions in Delhi and its neighbouring states. Celsius, coldest in the national capital. Delhi capital. experienced overcast skies and winds while the humidity level fluctuated between 81 and 87 per cent, the weather

The Met Department said the temperature of 10.3 degree minimum was likely to dip by Celsius was three degrees another 2-3 degree Celsius in and hover around 7 degree Celsius on Tuesday. The IMD has forecast the maximum to remain below normal till December 31, hovering around the 18°C mark, as nights become colder again. For the past two days.

Palam recorded 8.3 degree maximum temperatures were recorded in the cold day category but the minimum temperatures remained above 10 degrees Celsius. Today (Monday), cold day to severe cold day conditions were

observed over Delhi," a Met official said. The Met office has predicted mainly clear skies with cold day conditions at isolated places for Tuesday. The surface wind predominantly likely to blow from the northwest at a speed of less than 6 kilometres per hour during the morning and will be accompanied by smog or shallow fog at most places and moderate fog in isolated areas. Wind speeds are expected to increase to 10 to 12 kilometres per hour in the afternoon before decreasing to less than 8 kilometres per hour in the evening and the

An average Air Quality Index of 173 (moderate) was recorded at 4 pm on Monday compared to 225 (poor) at Sunday on northwesterly winds returned on Sunday due to a western disturbance that brought rain across the northwestern plains on Friday and Saturday. The shallow fog reduced visibility to 600 metres at Safdarjung, which is representative of Delhi's weather, at 5:30am.

According to data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), December

marked Delhi's cleanest first half ever, with only one 'very poor' air day recorded between December 1 and December 15. The lowest AQI of this month was recorded on December 28, at 139, marking the cleanest December day on record. The average AQI during this period stood at 238, significantly lower than the usual AQI of over 300 for this time of year.

comparison, average AQI was 348 last December, 319 in 2022, and 336 in 2021. The previous lowest December AQI was 300, recorded in 2015.

LG's New Year

Delhi's Temporary

From page 1

The letter also saw LG expressing his concern about the level of political discourse congratulated

did not have a single department government and neither did he sign files, you took charge of many departments and tried to work on various issues of administration,"

AAP in Election Mode

From page 1

But he did not remember them for the last 10 years, Verma alleged, adding he only used to remember 'maulvis' of the mosque, and used to see only one religion and one vote bank.

Taking a dig at Kejriwal, South Delhi MP Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said that Kejriwal should tell how many temples gurudwaras are there in Delhi and what is the total amount estimated to be spent on this scheme.

Earlier this month, Arvind Kejriwal launched the Mahila Samman scheme which offered a stipend of Rs 2100 per month to unemployed

women. AAP leaders started a registration drive for the scheme. However, the next day, the government's women child development (WCD) (WCD) department advertised that the "Mahila Samman" scheme was "nonexistent" and urged residents not to share personal data. The AAP later claimed the officers involved in the fiasco were under BJP's pressure. The party also vowed action against them. Delhi Lt Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has ordered an inquiry against private persons allegedly collecting personal details of women in the name of enrolling them for the proposed scheme of the ruling AAP in Delhi.

Falling Sensex, Rising Rupee: Where is India headed?

From page 1

For investors, fluctuations in equities and currency understandably cause concern. Yet, mutual funds remain among the most effective tools for navigating such volatility. diversification spreads risk across sectors and asset classes, cushioning downturn impacts. Professional management ensures investment decisions are datadriven and strategic, avoiding emotional reactions.

These strategies particularly well in volatile markets like today's. History offers reassurance too. Market corrections are not new, and those who stay invested typically see rewards over time. The Sensex has weathered several corrections, each

followed by strong recoveries. Mutual funds' long-term focus allows investors to ride out market cycles without attempting the challenging task of market timing. What we see today is flux, not

collapse. The Sensex and Nifty

remain among the top-performing indices globally over the past decade, and the Rupee's movement aligns with trends in other emerging market currencies. India's strong economic fundamentals, structural reforms, and strategic trade agreements suggest the longterm trajectory remains

a reason to exit but a reminder to stay the course. The writer is Professor of Finance - XLRI Xavier School of Management and a BJP

upward. This correction is not

"If we think like that, we will

never be able to solve people's problems. There are army men doing duty in Siachen in minus degrees, Delhi is much better than that. So we don't take it like that. I am happy that I am celebrating my New Year with my fellow officers on the ground helping others enjoy, said a traffic police officer, who will be on a 12-hour shift from 8 pm to 8 am on December 31 and January 1

Defence Colony Station House Officer Sunjay Sharma, who will be stationed at a picket near Ansal Plaza where thousands of youngsters come to celebrate New Year, said that police officers are prepared to serve their country and let go of their own personal desires. "We join duty understanding what our responsibilities will be. There is no question about any negative thoughts or feelings of being away from our families on such occasions," he said, adding that there are common people who celebrate with them too by on duty. Twentyseven-year-old Pratap,

who is patrolling for the first time on the New Year, shared similar thoughts. "I can celebrate with my friends and families even after my duty hours. This is more important and I am looking forward to serving alongside my seniors,"

witnessed all over Delhi, districts like New Delhi, South and Southwest remain the most flocked area by tourists and residents alike. Local police are heightening deployment of personnel, using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to detect any unlawful activity and roping in the traffic police to ensure smooth flow of traffic.

In New Delhi district, where Connaught Place/Connaught Circus, Khan Market, five-star hotels, including The Lalit, Imperial, Park, Royal Plaza, Shangri-La, Le Meridien, Taj Mahal, Vivanta, Taj

bringing them sweets, or clicking selfies with the police

While the festivities will be

Claridges, Metropolitan,

Ashoka, Samrat, ITC Maurya, and Taj Palace, India Gate, 'C' Hexagon and Kartavya Path, temples and gurudwara are located, police will use 'Ikshan' vans which have Face

unwanted elements.

Ikshana is equipped with 360 degree cameras which are being monitored through AI operated software, which has the data of suspects who roam around in the crowd. "If they come in the sight of these cameras, 'Ĭkshana" will immediately inform the police about it after which the "yodha" of the police will catch them," Deputy

Commissioner of Police (New

Recognition System (FRS)

cameras to identify any

Delhi) Devesh Mahla said. In the South district, where elite clubs and bars are located along with the Saket select city walk mall, the police have roped in the traffic police to facilitate the smooth movement of vehicles and avoid congestion, DCP (South) Ankit Chauhan said. He added that around the mall

lies a hospital and Sheraton

hotel, which attracts many

Security upgrade for New Year's eve people during the New Year's eve. "We have reduced the halting point, made limited numbers of entry/exit points and allotted designated places for commercial vehicles to keep the traffic flow around the area in check," the DCP said, adding that a meeting with this regard was also held with the traffic

Alcometer, devices used to detect alcohol levels in drivers, will also be provided to the police to curb drink and A senior officer said that

officers will also be given 'shoulder lights' which is a beacon mounted on the ground personnel's shoulders and can be seen from a distance even in fog. "It will help people to approach the police, and also save the officer on duty from any accident due to the dark,"

Police said two ambulances, two fire tenders, two jail vans, two teams of bomb disposal squad, 28 door frame metal detectors, two teams of SWAT. three teams of Parakram

motorcycle-patrolling teams, 43 foot-patrolling teams, 29 border pickets, 30 vehicle-checking parties at parking lots, seven plain-cloth spotters and five arrest parties will be deployed in the busy New Delhi. According to police, buses headed towards Connaught

vehicles, 33 MPVs, 30

Place will be diverted, starting from 7 pm on December 31. and the exit gates of Rajiv Chowk Metro Station will be closed after 9 pm on December 31 to prevent overcrowding. Two doctors will be deployed in the area to conduct medical examinations of people driving under the influence of alcohol An Excise inspector will be checking deployed for violations of Excise laws and prohibition regulations.

Hauz Khas village is a popular party place, 27 designated checkpoints with barricades are established to regulate vehicular movement and ensure road safety while 35 key locations are identified for special security

greetings to **Chief Minister**

in the capital. "On the occasion of swearing in you as the Chief Minister, I had also wholeheartedly and wished you and in the period from then till now, for the first time in my two and a half years of tenure, I saw a person holding the post of Chief Minister doing the work of the Chief Minister. Where your predecessor Chief Minister In Southwest Delhi, where

Saxena said.

the pioneer RAIPUR | TUESDAY | DECEMBER 31, 2024

Cabinet nod to release of incentives to rice millers



STAFF REPORTER

The Chhattisgarh cabinet on Monday decided to release a second instalment of long pending incentives to rice millers for Kharif season

A meeting of the state cabinet was held at Mahanadi Bhawan Mantralaya under the

chairmanship of Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai.

An official told newspersons said the cabinet also decided to table the action taken report on recommendations of the fourth state financial commission.

The cabinet decided to compensate the amount of State Goods and Services Tax (SGST) for making the film 'The Sabarmati Report' tax free in Chhattisgarĥ.

The cabinet also approved the rates prescribed by the cabinet sub-committee transportation of paddy and rice for decentralized procurement scheme in the Kharif year 2022-23, 2023-24

Olympic medal in judo my dream: Hembati

STAFF REPORTER

Chhattisgarh's budding national judo player Hembati Nag on Monday called on Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai and shared her dream of winning an Olympic medal.

Sai, encouraging her, advised to constantly strive

to attain success and assured her every possible support. Hembati was recently felicitated by President Droupadi Murmu with the National Children Award on the occasion of Veer Bal Diwas.

Kondagaon district in Bastar region and has secured many medals in the state and national level judo competitions. Sai hailed Hembati and

Hembati hails from



said she had made Chhattisgarh proud by clinching medals at Khelo India National Games and other national competitions.

inspiration for other girls in the state. The state government is committed to promoting such talent,"

2,500 kg of adulterated paneer seized in Raipur



STAFF REPORTER

The Food & Drugs Department on Monday seized 2,500 kg of adulterated paneer on the outskirts of the Chhattisgarh capital.

The team raided Kashi Agro Products located in Birgaon locality and seized the paneer made up of chemicals, Controller Chandan

The action followed a tip that the product was made and packed without using milk but by adding chemicals such as hydrochloric acid and skimmed milk among

The unit owner failed to produce information regarding stock register, kit free certificate and nutritional values of the product following which it

Vyapar Mahotsav 2025 from Jan 16 to 19

STAFF REPORTER

 $T_{ ext{Chamber}}^{ ext{he Chl}}$ Chhattisgarh Commerce and Industries (CCCI) will hold a trade fair called 'Vyapar Mahotsav 2025' in Bhilai city from January 16 to 19. Senior officials of CCCI

released a related poster on Monday. At the inaugural, international motivational

speaker Dr. Vivek Bindra will speak about the ways to adapt to the changing business environment. CCCI President Amar

Parwani said the four-day business expo will see draw more than one lakh people.

General Secretary Ajay Bhasin said the fair will hold workshops every day



on four themes to upgrade

of Police Mohit Garg said.

During the recruitment

They were arrested under

process, the mark obtained by

Chnadravanshi in the

physical efficiency test was

sections 318 (4), 338, 336 (3),

340 (2), 61 (2) and 3 (5) of

BNS. A court sent them to

a total of 11 persons including

four police constables, two

technical team members and

a female candidate so far.

The police have arrested

tampered.

prison.

The 'New direction of

start-up businesses and self-reliance in an effort to bridge generational gaps in business, he said.

The 'Digital revolution in business' workshop will address business growth using social media and the role of artificial intelligence.

The 'Role of Women Entrepreneurs' workshop will discuss the dual role of women in strengthening family, society and nation maintaining harmony between business and family, he said. A fund management workshop will educate participants about new financial options apart from banking for business growth.

The fair will also more than 170 stalls.

Year 2024 was full of achievements for C'garh: Sao

STAFF REPORTER RAIPUR

hhattisgarh Deputy Chief Minister Arun Sao on Monday claimed that 2024 was full of achievements in Chhattisgarh.

The BJP government in the state fulfilled almost all the promises made in its manifesto "Modi Ki Guarantee" and worked in the direction shown by late Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, he said.

"We are working on the motto "Ham Hi Banaye Hai Ham Hi Sawarenge" and the motive for which the separate state was carved by Atalji was being fulfilled," he said. Progress which halted for

five years during Congress rule has been activated and



Chhattisgarh was now surging development, Sao said. ahead on the path of

"We are working on the motto "Ham Hi Banaye Hai Ham Hi Sawarenge" and the motive for which the separate state was carved by Atalji was being fulfilled,"

was now an environment of enthusiasm and happiness

Sao expressed hope that the BJP will sweep the ensuing civic body elections, scheduled

Four more held for police | NSUI demands action recruitment irregularities | against corrupt official



STAFF REPORTER RAJNANDGAON

Three policemen were 1 among four persons arrested on Monday in connection with alleged irregularities in the police constable recruitment in Rajnandgaon district in Chhattisgarh.

Constables Vikas Singh Rajput (27), Kartik Dhritlahre (43) and Sundar Lal Netam and a woman candidate, Neha Chandravanshi (23), have been taken into custody,

Date: 31.12.2024

STAFF REPORTER **RAIPUR**

he National Students ■ Union of India (NSUI) on Monday demanded action against a corrupt official in connection with financial irregularities. NSUI activists led by its

district president Shantanu handed

www.ireps.gov.in

memorandum in this regard to the District Education Officer (DEO).

Jha said the state government had ordered a FIR against then Raipur DEO GR Chandrakar for embezzling Rs 74 lakh sanctioned as fees for underprivileged students but no action has been taken against him so far.

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

against corrupt official

E-AUCTION NOTICE: No. COM/C/G/R/E-auction/24 Dated: 26.12.2024 E-Auction for Earning and Leasing Contracts from Raipur Division has been

Sr.	Asset Description	Auction	Auction Time	
No.	Asset Description	Date	From	To
1	Tender Notice for advertisement Contract for Supply, Installation, Operation, Mainte- nance of Digital Display System comprising of 95 LED Plasma Screen (Approx. 855 Sq. Ft. Area in Total) along with Integrated Public Announcement System	10.01.2025	From	

IDFC First Bank Limited

(Formerly known as IDFC Bank Ltd) | CIN : L65110TN2014PLC097792

Registered Office: - KRM Towers, 7th Floor, Harrington Road, Chetpet, Chennai- 600031. Tel : +91 44 4564 4000 | Fax: +91 44 4564 4022



Divisional Commercial Manager

South East Central Railway, Raipur

X @secrail

APPENDIX- IV-A [See proviso to rule 8 (6) & 9 (1)] SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES Rule 8 (6) & 9 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s), Co-Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) as per column (iii) that the below described immovable propertie

as per column (iv) mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Formerly known as IDFC Bank Ltd. will be sold or As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" as described hereunder, for the recovery of amount due to IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (Formerly known as IDFC Bank Ltd) from Borrower (s) and Co-Borrower (s) as per column (I). For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on IDFC FIRST Bank website i.e. www.idfcfirstbank.com

	S. NO	(i) Demand Notice Amount	(ii) Agreement ID	(iii) Name of Borrower (s), Co-Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s)	(v) Reserve Price Amount	(vi) EMD Amount	(vii) Date and Time of Auction	(viii) Date and Time of EMD Auction	(ix) Date and Time of Inspection	(x) Authorized Officer Name & Contact Number
Ш	1	INR 14134123.54/-	13599057	Dynamic Hair Solution,	INR	INR	04-Feb-2025	03-Feb-2025	29-Jan-2025	Name - Vinay Soni
Ш	Demand Notice Arogeya Da Physiofit, 20202000.00		20202000.00/-	2020200.00/-	11.00 AM to	10.00 AM to	10:00 AM To	Contact Number- 8319378592		
Ш	dated: Shatrughan Sondhi &				1.00 PM	5.00 PM	4:00 PM	Name - Sandesh Jain		
Ш		30-Sep-2019		Sujata Sondhi						Contact Number- 8839140796
l	(iv) MORTGAGED PROPERTY ADDRESS: All That Piece And Parcel of Property Bearing of Khasara No. 149/36, Potiyakala, Ward No. 52, Ric Durg-1, Tehsil And District- Durg.									

Disclaimer: Please note that the said notice is issued for sale of immovable property only and IDFC FIRST Bank Limited has no right to sale of the movable assets, if any, presen

IDFC FIRST Bank Limited erly known as IDFC Bank Ltd)

Foldscope introduced to enhance agricultural yields

STAFF REPORTER

o promote pest infestation I management of crops and high-breed animal husbandry, the Chhattisgarh government has introduced a handheld microscope called 'Foldscope' in 20 villages of the state.

An official communique aid on Monday that the device helps reduce dependency on chemicals and promotes ecofriendly farming.

Indian-origin scientist Professor Manu Prakash and his team from Stanford University developed the Foldscope.

The device enables pest and disease detection, soil quality testing and water analysis - like powdery mildew, leaf blight, leaf spot and post-harvest diseases in

So far, 16 types of fungal



diseases and their causative organisms have been identified with the help of Foldscope.

It has also been helpful in cattle rearing and has improved the conception rate and grading of indigenous cattle breeds

The communique said new innovations were being introduced continuously to make farming modern and profitable in Chhattisgarh.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, CIRCLE NO-1 RAIPUR (C.G.)

Tender Notice (1st Call)

Contractors, Registered appropriate class in Unified Registration System [e- Registration] invited Online tenders for the following works:-

NIT No./ System Tender No.	System	
1	2	3
205/154333	Elevation Tiles Remove, Plaster And Textured Paint Work At Administrative Academy Nimora Raipur (C.G.)	
204/163122	S.R Work At-Hockey Stadium, Pitch-1, Pitch-2, Hostal, Gunman Room At Khel Parisar Raipur	
199/163168	Road Furniture Work of Various Roads of Under Vidhan Sabha Sub Division Raipur (C.G.)	
200/163164	Painting of Median at Tatibandh- Khamtarai Road under Vidhansabha Sub-Dn. Raipur	
201/163165	Ordinary Maintenance Work on various road under Vidhan Sabha Sub-Dn., Raipur (C.G.)	

Last date of tender Download Date up to 16.01.2025 Time

Note: All eligible/interested contracPtors are mandated to get enrolled on the e Procurement portal (https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in) in order to download the tender documents and participate in the subsequent bidding process.

Superintending Engineer P.W.D. Raipur Cirele No.1 G-242504952/4 Raipur (C.G.)

Mega placement camp on Jan 15

STAFF REPORTER RAJNANDGAON

Sao further said that there

Authorities in C h h a t t i s g a r h 's Rajnandgaon district will hold a job fair on January 15 offering to fill about 500

The fair will be held at the District Employment and Self-Employment Guidance

under section 25(2)(h) of the

Code is available at URL:



Centre. Private entities will offer jobs in securities, telemarketing and other fields. Interested applicants can walk in with their documents.

Rs. 2,00,000 (Through

Demand Draft) along

FORM G INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR HI TECH FERROUS & NON FERROUS INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED OPERATING IN METAL INDUSTRY (PROCESSING OF CHO WIRES) AT BAWAL, HARYANA AND MURAD NAGAR, HAZJABAD (Under sub-regulation (1) of regulation 35A of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Insolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Persons) Regulations, 2016)

	RELEVANT PARTICULARS					
	1.	Name of the corporate debtor	HI TECH FERROUS & NON FERROUS INDIA			
		along with PAN & CIN/ LLP No.	PRIVATE LIMITED			
'			CIN: U28112UP2009PTC037895			
			PAN: AACCH2609D			
	2.	Address of the registered office	106, Chander Puri Ghaziabad-201001, Uttar			
			Pradesh			
	3.	URL of website	https://hitechwires.com/			
	4.	Details of place where majority of	The Corporate Debtor has two factories at-			
		fixed assets are located	Bawal, Haryana and			
			2. Murad Nagar, Ghaziabad			
	5.	Installed capacity of main	Not known as the suspended management has			
		products/ services	not yet provided the records to the RP.			
	6.	Quantity and value of main	Not known as the suspended management has			
		products/ services sold in last	not yet provided the records to the RP.			
		financial year				
	7. Number of employees/ workmen		NIL (Except those hired by RP for CIRP)			
8. Further details including last Last available			Last available Balance Sheet as per ROC is for			
	available financial statements		the FY 2021-22. Further details have not been			
		(with schedules) of two years,	provided by the suspended management.			
		lists of creditors are available at				

interest bearing) with Expression of along with Resolution Plan Rs. 50,00,000 (Through Demand Draft) along with Tangible Net Worth Rs. 3,00,00,000 10. Last date for receipt of expression

Parameters

Refundable Earnest

Money Deposit (non-

of interest

Date of issue of provisional list of prospective resolution applicants 12. Last date for submission of 05.02.2025 objections to provisional list 13. Date of issue of final list of 15.02.2025 prospective resolution applicants 20.02.2025 memorandum, evaluation matrix and request for resolution plans to prospective resolution applicants

Date: 31 December, 2024 Place: New Delhi

Expression of Interest

15. Last date for submission of resolution plans Process email id to submit

> RESOLUTION PROFESSIONAL For M/s Hi-Tech Ferrous & Non Ferrous India Private Limited IBBI/IPA-002/IP-N01148/2021 2022/13963

<u>cirp-hitech@efficaxindia.com</u> Note: Communication to any other email ID shall

IBBI Registered Address: D-2020, Twin Hallmark, Sector 19A, Koparkhairene, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra ,400709 Correspondence Address: 70D, Third Floor, Pocket A Vikaspuri Extension, New Delhi-110018, Email Id: cirp-hitech@efficaxi AFA Valid up to: 31.12.2025

not be entertained.

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.

BJP attacks Rahul Gandhi for New Year trip, Congress Responds

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Launching a scathing attack Lon the Congress, the BJP on Monday alleged that Rahul Gandhi "exploited" former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's death for his "expedi-ent politics" and flew to Vietnam to ring in the New Vietnam to ring in the New Year while the country is mourning his demise. The Congress hit back and asked when will the "Sanghis stop this 'take diversion' politics". "While the country is mourning Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's demise, Rahul Gandhi has flown to Vietnam to ring in the new year," BJP's IT cell head Amit Malviya said in a social media post. Kahul Gandhi politicised and exploited Dr Singh's death for his expedient politics but his contempt for him is unmissable, he charged.

The Gandhis and the Congress hate Sikhs. Never forget that Indira Gandhi desecrated the Darbar Sahib," Malviya added. Reacting sharply, Congress leader Manickam Tagore responded saying when will the Sanghis stop this 'take diversion' politics?" He alleged that the way Prime Minister Narendra Modi denied Dr Singh a place for cremation on the Yamuna banks and his ministers cornered his family was "shameful". "If Gandhi travels privately, why does it bother you?" he asked Malviya and said "Get well in New year".

Defence Exports Hit ₹ 21,000 Crore: Defence Minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Monday India's defence exports have crossed a record Rs 21,000 crore from Rs 2,000 crore a decade ago.

Addressing officers at the Army War College (AWC) in more than two-centuries-old Mhow Cantonment, Singh said a target has been set to achieve defence exports of Rs 50,000 crore by 2029.

He said mastering frontier technologies is the need of the hour in the constantly evolving times, noting that military training centres are playing a crucial role in equipping and readying soldiers to deal with future challenges.

"Our defence exports, which were around Rs 2,000 crore a decade ago, have crossed the record figure of Rs 21,000 crore today. We have set an export target of Rs 50,000 crore by 2029," the defence minister said. He also said Made-in-India equipment is being exported to other countries.

Rajnath mentioned radical changes in warfare in his speech, saying that unconventional methods like information warfare, Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based warfare, proxy warfare, electromagnetic warfare, space warfare, and cyber-attacks are posing a big challenge.

He stressed the need for the military to be well-trained and equipped to fight off such attacks and lauded training centres in Mhow for their valuable contributions. The defence minister commended the training centres for constantly improving their training curriculum as per changing times, and striving to make the personnel fighting fit for every kind of

Rajnath said the Modi government is committed to strengthening integration and jointness among the three services. "In the times to come, the armed forces will be able to face challenges together in a better and more efficient way," he added. The defence minister said high-level training is provided to officers of all wings in the Mhow Cantonment. He appealed to



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh during his visit at the Army War College, at Mhow, in Indore district of

officers to explore the possibility of promoting integration through training in areas such as weapons training in Infantry School; AI and communication technolo-Telecommunication Engineering (MCTE),

and leadership - junior and senior command in AWC. Rajnath Singh said some officers will work as defence attaches in the future, and they should strive to secure national interests at the global level. "When you take up this post of defence attaches, you should imbibe the govern-

ment's vision of 'aatmanirbhar Bharat'. Only through self-reliance can India strengthen its defence capabilities and gain more respect on the world stage," he

The defence minister is on a two-day visit to Madhya Pradesh since Sunday. He said the government is committed to making India one of the strongest economic and military powers in the world. Economic prosperity is possible only when full attention is paid to security. Similarly, the security system will be robust only when the economy is strong. Both complement each other," he added.

At AWC, the defence minister was briefed by commandant Lt Gen H S Sahi on the role and significance of the institute towards training and empowering military leaders for war-fighting across the spectrum of con-

The defence minister was also briefed upon the significant steps in training methodology through jointness in multi-domain operations, infusion of technology in training curriculum and exchange programmes being undertaken with academia, universities and industries along with training of CAPF officers, a release stated.

CAPF officers, a release stated.

He was also apprised about the global footprints of the institute achieved through training the officers from friendly countries and contributing immensely towards military diplomacy. Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwiyedi and other senior officials of the Dwivedi and other senior officials of the Army were present on the occasion.

The defence minister laid a wreath and paid homage to brave-hearts at the Infantry Memorial. Earlier in the day, the defence minister and General Dwivedi offered prayers at the famous Mahakaleshwar temple in Ujjain city.

Film industry praises PM Modi's WAVES summit 2025 initiative

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Akshay Kumar, Anil Kapoor, Ektaa Kapoor, Prasoon Joshi and Sunjay Dutt were among personalities from the Indian film industry who praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the WAVES Summit 2025, an initiative aimed at making India a hub of global creation. In his monthly radio address

Mann Ki Baat, the prime minister on Sunday announced that India will host the World Audio Visual Entertainment Summit (WAVES) for the first time between February five and nine in New Delhi. The official social media page of

the Prime Minister also shared a post about the upcoming

event which was reposted by many celebrities on the microblogging platform.

In his address, Modi compared
WAVES to global events like the
World Economic Forum in

Davos, adding the leaders from the media and entertainment industry as well as creative minds from across the globe will gather in Delhi for the Summit. He also urged all stakeholders in the entertainment and creative industries to actively participate in the WAVES.

Actor Akshay Kumar termed WAVES Summit 2025 as a wonderful idea". "Now this is PM @narendramodi ji's vision towards promoting the Media & Entertainment sector... Waves 2025 summit will hopefully be a fabulous global forum to have

try come and grow together," he

Anil Kapoor said Modi's visionary leadership continues to inspire. "The #WAVES2025 summit is a groundbreaking step towards making India the global hub for film and entertainment. Looking forward to seeing the world come together to celebrate creativity and collaboration #MannKiBaat," the actor added.

"Excited to witness India become a global hub for film and entertainment. Looking forward to contributing to this landmark initiative," said producer Ektaa Kapoor.

Prasoon Joshi, CBFC head and lyricist-writer, said WAVES Summit 2025 will put the "spotlight on India's content indus-

Baghpat doctor kills man to fake his death, escape loan repayment; arrested

BISWAJEET BANERJEE LUCKNOW

In a chilling attempt to evade loan repayments, a Unani doctor from Baghpat, Dr. Mubarik, allegedly orchestrated his own "death" by burning a youth alive in a car. Inspired by a TV show, he meticulously planned the act to clear his debts amounting to Rs 20-25 lakh. The police, however, apprehended him after his plan unraveled due to a crucial mistake.

Disclosing the details of the case, Superintendent of Police (SP) Abhimanyu Manglik said: On December 23, Jabbar Ali of Bijopura reported a burned car near a canal bridge, containing a charred body. Later, on December 26, Gulzar, a resident of Khanalampura, filed a missing person report for his nephew Sonu (31), a resident of Yamunanagar, who had been missing since December 22." During the investigation, it

'Can't ignore speeches to brainwash youth':

was revealed that Dr. Mubarik, overwhelmed by debt, had devised this heinous plan after watching a TV show 'Crime Petrol'.

Six months earlier, he had

purchased two cars and two bikes on finance, taken out a Rs 10 lakh personal loan, and acquired Rs 5 lakh in insurance. Additionally, he owed Rs 9 lakh to his neighbor Masood, alias Leelu, for a land deal and had borrowed lakhs more from others. Dr. Mubarik bought a second-

hand Maruti 800 car for Rs 26,000 a month ago to execute his plan. He needed a body that matched his physical characteristics. After failing to procure a body, he befriended Sonu, a worker at his brother-in-law's factory, who bore a striking resemblance to

On December 22, Mubarik invited Sonu to a roadside eatery, where they drank together. He spiked Sonu's drink with sedatives, renderremoved his chain, doused the car with petrol, and set it ablaze with Sonu inside. His intent was to fake his death, allowing his wife to claim ?5 lakh in insurance and secure a death certificate to absolve the ?10 lakh personal loan. However, Dr. Mubarik's scheme failed when he returned to the crime scene on December 27 to check if the car had burned completely. Acting on a tip-off, the police detained him for questioning. Upon interrogation, Mubarik

ing him unconscious. The

doctor then drove Sonu to a

secluded spot near the canal,

times. Dr. Mubarik has been arrested, and further investigations are underway. The incident has shocked the local community, shedding light on the lengths some individuals go to

escape financial burdens.

confessed to the crime, reveal-

ing his meticulous planning

inspired by a crime show episode he watched multiple

Kerala BJP chief K Surendran in quandary over Annamalai's public flogging The Tamil Nadu BJP chief, him-

KUMAR CHELLAPAN ■ KOCHI

¬he anguish expressed by Tamil Nadu BJP chief K Annamalai by flogging himself in public over the ever increasing incidents of rape in the DMK ruled State has put his Kerala counterpart K Surendran in a major quandary. Annamalai's action was a fall out of a girl student getting sexually assaulted in a gruesome manner in the Anna University campus and also the charges by Annamalai that the incidents of rapes happening in the State are shooting up in an unprecedented manner under the DMK

Annamalai's anguish drew instant response from Governor R N Ravi on Saturday as he made an unscheduled visit to the university campus and interacted with students as well as the authorities. A late evening release by Rai Bhavan said the Governor expressed his concern over the attack on girl students and instructed the university administrative staff to beef up the security arrangements in the

self a former officer of the Indian Police Service, also declared that he would not wear footwears till the DMK Government was removed from power. Though the DMK leaders and ministers ridiculed Annamalai for his decision terming the same as theatrics, public response to his swear has rattled the State administration.

But neighboring Kerala, where the BJP is struggling to get a mooring, has been interesting. Annamalai's self-inflicted torture by flogging has earned wide

appreciation from all walks of ife. "He is trying to establish the BJP as a formidable force in the Dravida Land. His actions speak a lot and I will not be surprised to see the Hindutva party emerge as an alternative to the DMK and the AIADMK which is getting disintegrated fast under Edappadi Palaniswami, the reigning chief of Tamil Nadu BJP," said P Sujathan, author and political critic.

Many in Kerala want Surendran also to undertake a self flogging a la Annamalai style and stop wearing footwears till the ruling CPI(M)-led government is ousted from power in a democratic manner, "The present BJP leadership in Kerala is hand in glove with certain national leaders and they have not done anything to make the party an alternative force to the CPI(M) and the Congress. The BJP leaders in the State have resorted to attacking the minority community members, especially the Christmas Carols to send a message that the saffron brigade is an exclusive Hindu party," said Jaiby Kuruvithadam, a BJP leader based in Muvattupuzha.

AIIMS joins AI hype, to invest ₹300 Crore

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

¬he All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi, has also joined the artificial Intelligence (AI) bandwagon with Director Dr M Srinivas on Monday at a meeting held here revealing that plans are afoot to invest more than Rs 300 crore in AI by developing digital infrastructure, introducing innovative solutions that enhance patient care, streamline operations, and improve health outcomes.

According to various studies, 79 per cent of healthcare organisations are presently utilising AI technology. At the meet, leaders in healthcare, technology, and policy shared insights into how AI is poised to bridge critical gaps in health communication, making information more accessible, reliable, and patient-cen-

"AI is revolutionising everything from patient care to health communication," said Dr Srinivas, indicating AIIMS' commitment to integrating cuttingedge technology into healthcare,

furthering its mission to revo-

lutionize medical practices and

healthcare delivery. "We are investing over Rs 300 crore in digital infrastructure to ensure that every stakeholder -

patients, doctors, and researchers -- benefits from this innovation. By integrating AI, we can improve efficiency, reduce delays, and enable world-class research," he added.

The experts at AIIMS also stressed the need to bridge the gap of misinformation by delivering accurate, easily understandable, and personalised healthcare information via AI to people across diverse demo-graphics. Dr Srinivas also emphasised that leveraging AI to simplify and disseminate health information will empower patients and improve their engagement with healthcare systems, ultimately leading to better health outcomes.

good health system isn't reliant on individuals. AI can play a vital role in making healthcare more accurate, com-

passionate, and equitable," Dr. Kavita Narayan, Senior Technical Advisor, HRH for Health Systems at the Union Ministry of Health and Family

"To truly make a difference, we must integrate technology thoughtfully and ensure collaboration between policymakers, technologists, and healthcare providers," she added.

The experts also caution against overdependence on technology at the expense of human con-

nection. KP Kochhar, Professor and Head of the Physiology Department at AIIMS, felt that there was a need to balance innovation with empathy in healthcare. "While AI can enhance precision and efficiency, we must preserve the human touch in healthcare. Compassion and technology must work together to create systems that prioritise the wellbeing of patients," Kochhar said, adding that AI in healthcare is a game changer, especially for a diverse and populous countries

TN leads in third gender voters, but participation

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

More people enrolled themselves in the voters' list for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in the 'third gender' category but only 27 per cent of them turned up at the polling stations, according to Election Commission data. According to the data issued by the poll authority last week, 48,194 people were eligi-ble to vote as third gender elector in 2024, compared to 39,075 in 2019 -- an increase of 23.5 per cent over the five-year period. But only 13,058 of them actually exercised their franchise, which comes to 27 per cent of the total registered third gender electors. As per the data, Tamil Nadu had the highest number of registered third gender elector -- 8,467. But only 2,709 cast vote.

Delhi HC rejects appeal in UAPA case **STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI been committed," it said.

Speeches to brainwash innocent youth and recruiting them for illegal acts against the country cannot be completely washed away in the absence of a specific terrorist act, the Delhi High Court has said and dismissed the plea of a terror case accused. A bench of Justices Prathiba M Singh and Amit Sharma made the observation while rejecting the plea of Mohd Abdul Kehman, an alleged associate of Al-Qaida's Indian outfit, against his conviction and seven-year-five-month jail term by a trial court under the antiterror UAPA law.

"Speeches which are given to brainwash innocent youth coupled with attempts to recruit them for committing unlawful and illegal acts against the country cannot be completely

The appellant argued though he was held guilty of indulging in

preparatory acts for the commission of a terrorist act and recruiting persons for terrorist act, there was no evidence to show he committed such acts. The bench, however, said the terms terrorist act had a wide definition, enough to include "indulging in conspiracy with terrorist organisations and associated with persons who are rendering support to terrorist organisations", whereas the identification or existence of a specific act of terror was not required for punishment under the provisions.

The High Court upheld the trial court conviction verdict, observing evidence to show he was in close connection with the other accused who were a part of a larger network. The netwashed away on the ground that no specific terrorist act has work was said to be carrying out inflammatory speeches, dis-

seminating material, having links with Pakistan-based organisations and travelling there for secret meetings, recruiting persons for terrorist acts, collecting funds to help such travels and other activities fanning hatred against the country and its political leaders,

among other things.
"In conspiracies of this nature specific covert acts would not be required but secretive and clandestine support to declared terrorist organisations would also be sufficient. The evidence and the testimonies which have been recorded in the present case clearly disclose association with terrorist organisations for commission of conspiracy for committing a terrorist act.. The appeal is, accordingly, dismissed," the bench ruled.

The court said the planning to execute terrorist acts could extend over years and Section 18 of UAPA aimed to address such a preparation, even when a specific terrorist act was not identified. It said it was "common knowledge" that terrorist organisations like Al-Qaida in the Indian subcontinent functioned in an extremely secretive manner and its associates often

left no trail of evidence.

In February 2023, the trial court convicted the appellant and other accused persons for conspiracy to commit acts that constituted preparation towards commission of some terrorist act. The trial court considered the evidence that indicated the existence of a conspiracy to commit a terrorist act, including their illegal travel to Pakistan, inflammatory speeches, various passports by creating false and fabricated documents. The State said the material showed appellant's ideology professed violence against the country and the Prime

Muslim forum says no to Rushdie ban, calls for intellectual defense

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Opposing the Muslim organizations calling for reban of Salman Rushdie's "The Satanic Verses", the Indian Muslims for Secular Democracy (IMSD) on Monday urged the Muslims to remember iconic social reformer Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's teachings and to "fight words with words" instead of resorting to book bans or burn-

The renewed sale of Rushdie's book, which has returned to Indian bookshelves 36 years after it was banned by the Rajiv Gandhi government in 1988, has been strongly condemned by some Muslim organisations

"IMSD calls upon Muslims to recall the views expressed by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan well over a century ago. In his time, he staunchly opposed Muslims who made a bonfire of books they did not like, or demanded its ban by the authorities," the IMSD said in a statement. "His advice was simple. Fight words with words if the book

in question is worthy of a reasoned critique. Burning or banning such books implies that Muslims are incapable of an intellectual and moral defense of their faith. If the book (cortoon, play film) is book (cartoon, play, film) is nothing but a gratuitous, salacious or malicious attack on Islam or its Prophet, his sug-

gestion was: ignore it," the statement added. The IMSD's statement is

endorsed by 42 eminent citizens, including civil rights activist Teesta Setalvad, oral historian Sohail Hashmi, poetscientist Gauhar Raza, acclaimed theatre director Feroz Abbas Khan and documentary film-maker Shama Zaidi, among others.

Earlier in November, the Delhi High Court closed proceedings on a plea challenging the Rajiv Gandhi government's ban on

the book's import. The High Court stated the failure of officials to present the relevant notification from October 5, 1988 led to the assumption that the notification did not exist.

To buttress their point, the Muslim forum gave the example of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) founder Sir



Salman Rushdie holds a copy of the newly-published novel "The Satatanic Verses", during a speech in Arlington, Virginia on March 24, 1992. India was one of the first countries to ban the book's import and sale, citing concerns over its content being

Syed Ahmad Khan's approach to counter English writer William Muir's controversial book in 1861 where he allegedly made disparaging remarks against Prophet Mohammad. "In response, Sir Syed travelled to London to study the books and journals that Muir had relied on and eight years later published a reasoned critique debunking Muir's work," the statement said.

The IMSD said Sir Syed's advice to his fellow Muslims long ago is all the more relevant in today's 'new India' where "minorities are daily targets of Hindutva's hate politics".

"Any ill-advised or hotheaded response to the publication of Satanic Verses - a book not many Muslims are likely to have read earlier or will read fodder to the Muslim-baiters. Besides, it will only give free publicity to the very book they want banished," it added. Underlining the Constitution of India guarantees the right to freedom of speech along with penal action against hate

now -- will only provide more

speech, the statement said that Muslims, or anyone else, have the right to be offended by a book, cartoon, play or film and are within their right to invoke existing provisions of criminal law to seek redressal of their grievance. However, no one has the right to "silence the offender. A fatwa, firman or call to kill Salman Rushdie, as also the demand for a ban on Satanic Verses amounts to just that: silencing the offender," it

UP Govt invites CMs, Governors of all States for Mahakumbh 2025 Al-enabled cameras, RFID wristbands and mobile app tracking will be used to track headcount of the pilgrims: Minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Uttar Pradesh government will invite the President, Vice President, Prime Minister, and the chief ministers and governors of all states, among host of other dignitaries, for the Maha Kumbh Mela which is set to begin from January 13.

The mega religious event, which is held every 12 years, will continue for 45 days in Prayagraj. More than 40 crore devotees from all over the world are expected to attend the mega event.

State Finance Minister Suresh Khanna said at a roadshow in the national capital on Monday that invites are being sent to the governors the chief minister of all states, including those ruled by non-NDA parties.

"We have invited Lieutenant Governor of Delhi Vinai Kumar Saxena and will be meeting Delhi Chief Minister Atishi as well," he said at the

Yogi Adityanath met President Droupadi Murmu in New Delhi on Sunday and invited her to attend the Maha Kumbh. Adityanath also extended invitations to Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinay Kumar Saxena for the grand event.

As part of the invitation, the Chief Minister presented the dignitaries with special gifts, including a symbol featuring the Mahakumbh 2025 logo, a 'kalash' (sacred urn), literature related to the event, a New Year table calendar and a diary.

The Uttar Pradesh chief minister reached New Delhi on Saturday and met former President Ram Nath Kovind, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, BJP National President and Union Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda, and Mizoram Governor General VK Singh.

Each of them received person-

alised invitations and mementos related to the Mahakumbh. On Sunday, Yogi expressed gratitude to the dignitaries for their time through a post on his official handle on social media, sharing photographs of the meetings.

With the event just weeks away, the Uttar Pradesh government has intensified efforts to invite dignitaries and the general public from across the country, with the chief minister and his cabinet ministers personally leading the outreach campaigns in different states. Prime Minister Narendra Modi

on Sunday described the upcoming 'Maha Kumbh' as the "Maha Kumbh of unity" as he asked people to return from the grand religious congregation with a resolve to banish hate and division from society. Speaking in his monthly 'Mann ki Baat' broadcast, Modi said, Maha Kumbh ka sandesh ek ho pura desh (Message from the Maha Kumbh should be that the entire country must be united)." He added, "Ganga ki

aviral dhara, na bante samaj hamara" (Like the uninterrupted flow of Ganga, let our society remain one)

Noting the diversity of people visiting the mammoth congregation, he said there is no other example of such a sight of unity in diversity. "Maha Kumbh's speciality lies not just in its vastness but also in its diversity," he said. Artificial intelligence-enabled

efficiently managed using advanced technology.
"The first method is attribute

cameras, RFID wristbands and

mobile app tracking are among

the methods that will be used

to track headcount of the pil-

grims attending the Maha

Kumbh. Sharing details of the

arrangements being made for

the event, Khanna said the

headcount of pilgrims attend-

ing the Maha Kumbh will be

will be conducted using person attribute search cameras. The second method involves RFID wristbands, which will be provided to the pilgrims. Through these wristbands, entry and exit times will be tracked using RFID readers," Khanna said at a roadshow here.

"The third method is mobile app tracking, where with the consent of pilgrims, their location will be tracked through GPS using a mobile application," he added. The minister said the government is gearing up for a divine, grand and digital Maha Kumbh. "The preparations include the launch of a dedicated website and app, an AI-powered chatbot in 11 languages, QR-based passes for eople and vehicles, a multilingual digital lost and found centre, ICT monitoring for cleanliness and tents, software for land and facility allocation, multilingual digital signage (VMD), an automated ration supply system, drone-based surveillance and disaster man-

itoring 530 projects, an inventory tracking system and inte-gration of all locations on Google maps," he added. Khanna said the arrangements

have been made to ensure the tourists do not face parking issues. "In this regard, 101 smart parking facilities have been created, capable of accom-modating up to five lakh vehicles daily. The parking area spans 1867.04 hectares, which is 763.75 hectares larger compared to the 1103.29 hectares allocated for parking in 2019. These parking facilities will be monitored through the Integrated Command Centre,' he added.

Meanwhile, in compliance with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's instructions to ensure a 'digital' and 'cyber safe' Maha Kumbh, Uttar Pradesh Police has formulated a strategy to protect the devotees from cyber frauds.

'We have prepared a multidimensional strategy to fight cybercrime during the Maha

Kumbh. Apart from police officers, we have also roped in cyber experts from specialised institutions like IIT-Kanpur. Acting on the complaints received, police have already arrested some cyber frauds," Director General of Police (DGP), Prashant Kumar, said. We will also launch a comprehensive awareness campaign to protect the devotees from cybercrime during the event," he added.

A meeting of cyber experts and top police officials was held recently at the Integrated Command and Control Centre in Lucknow which discussed various issues concerning cybercrime, the DGP said. Held in hybrid mode under the chairmanship of Additional Director General of Police

(Prayagraj Zone), Bhanu Bhaskar, the meeting was attended by professors from IIT-Kanpur, ADGP (cyber crime), Prayagraj police commissioner, IG (Prayagraj range), and cyber experts, among oth-

Bitter-sweet 2024 for BJP in Uttar Pradesh

BISWAJEET BANERJEE

 $\Gamma^{
m or}$ the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Uttar Pradesh, 2024 will be remembered as a year of mixed fortunes. The party witnessed a significant decline in its Lok Sabha tally, dropping from 62 seats in 2019 to 32. The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) also saw a reduction, with its total seats in the state falling from 64 to 36. This dip diminished Uttar Pradesh's commanding presence in national politics. For the first time in his political career spanning from Chief Minister to Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, MP from Varanasi, had to head a coalition government where the BJP lacked an absolute majority. The year marked a historic

moment for the BJP, as it became the second-largest party in Uttar Pradesh after a decade. The setback was particularly poignant, as the party even lost the Faizabad (Ayodhya) seat—a symbolic constituency given its connection to the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. Political analysts saw this loss as a wake-up call for the party, emphasizing the need for recalibrating its electoral strategy. However, the



state assembly by-elections. This victory allowed the party to regain its position as the leading political force in Uttar Pradesh, offering a glimmer of hope amid a challenging year. The year began with optimism for the BJP, bolstered by the consecration ceremony of Ramlala at his birthplace in Ayodhya. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's role as the main host for the event was a defining moment. For the first time in independent India, a Prime Minister publicly aligned with the sentiments of the country's majority community. on a high note by securing this move was underscored by short of these expectations, seven out of nine seats in the comparisons to the objections with the party's reduced tally

raised by India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, during the re-establishment of the Somnath temple. Nehru had refrained from attending the event and even discouraged the President from participating. In stark contrast, Modi's presence at the Ramlala consecration symbolized a revolutionary shift in the political narrative.

This event generated immense enthusiasm among the BJP cadre and supporters, creating an atmosphere where Modi's slogan of crossing 400 seats in the Lok Sabha seemed achievsignaling the need for intro-

spection.

The assembly by-elections later in the year proved to be a turning point. Under the leadership of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the BJP reclaimed its dominance by winning seven out of nine contested seats. The Chief Minister's hands-on approach, including direct communication with party workers and meticulous planning for each constituency, played a pivotal role in this success.

"The by-election results reflect not just Yogi Adityanath's his ability to galvanize the organization in challenging

times," said a senior BIP leader. The results served as a testament to Adityanath's leadership and offered a morale boost for the party as it looked ahead to

From an organizational perspective, 2024 was a year of learning for the BJP. The party faced criticism for its inability to translate Modi's popularity into votes across all regions of Uttar Pradesh. "The year taught us valuable lessons about complacency and the importance of grassroots engagement," admitted a BJP strategist. "It's a reminder that even a strong leader's appeal needs to be complemented by robust onground efforts?

As the party charts its course for the future, the setbacks of 2024 are being viewed as opportunities for recalibration. The BJP's ability to turn defeat into a rallying cry will define its trajectory in the coming years.

While 2024 ended on a mixed note for the BJP, the year's experiences have set the stage for a reinvigorated approach to Uttar Pradesh's complex political landscape. The party's ability to adapt, strategize, and rebuild will determine whether it can reclaim its former dominance in the state. For now, 2024 stands as a year of introspecearned lessons for the BJP in Uttar Pradesh.

Kerala BJP cadres want party leader to undergo flogging a la Annamalai KUMAR CHELLAPPAN Government was removed The BJP leaders in the State

The anguish expressed by Tamil Nadu BJP chief K Annamalai by flogging himself in public over the ever increasing incidents of rape in the DMK ruled State has put his Kerala counterpart K Surendran in a major quandary. Annamalai's action was a fall out of a girl student getting sexually assaulted in a gruesome manner in the Anna University campus and also the charges by Annamalai that the incidents of rapes happening in the State are shooting up in an unprecedented manner under the DMK regime.

Annamalai's anguish drew instant response from Governor R N Ravi on Saturday as he made an unscheduled visit to the university campus and interacted with students as well as the authorities. A late evening release by Raj Bhavan said the Governor expressed his concern over the attack on girl students and instructed the university administrative staff to beef up the security arrangements in the campus. The Tamil Nadu BJP chief, himself a former officer of the declared that he would not wear footwears till the DMK

from power. Though the DMK leaders and ministers ridiculed Annamalai for his decision terming the same as theatrics, public response to his swear has rattled the State administration.

But neighboring Kerala, where the BJP is struggling to get a mooring, has been interesting. Annamalai's selfinflicted torture by flogging has earned wide appreciation from all walks of life. "He is trying to establish the BJP as a formidable force in the Dravida Land. His actions speak a lot and I will not be surprised to see the Hindutva party emerge as an alternative to the DMK and the AIADMK which is getting disintegrated fast under Edappadi Palaniswami, the reigning chief of Tamil Nadu BJP," said P Sujathan, author and political critic.

Many in Kerala want Surendran also to undertake a self flogging a la Annamalai style and stop wearing footwears till the ruling CPI(M)-led government is ousted from power in a demo-cratic manner, "The present BJP leadership in Kerala is hand in glove with certain national leaders and they have have resorted to attacking the minority community members, especially the Christmas Carols to send a message that the saffron brigade is an exclusive Hindu party," said Jaiby Kuruvithadam, a BJP leader based in Muvattupuzha. Sudheer Damodaran, a polit-

ical commentator, said that Surendran can revive the BJP in the State by following the footsteps of Annamalai. People in the State are waiting for a third force to emerge in the political landscape as it is known all over Kerala that the CPI(M) and the Congress are the two sides of the same coin," said Damodaran. Meanwhile the SNDP, the platform of the powerful Eezhava community in Kerala have made its displeasure public. There is no point in continuing our alliance with the BJP as it has ignored our interests while appointing Governors and chiefs of other Constitutional institutions. The Congress under Ramesh Chennithala is certain to perform well in the coming months," said Vellappilli Natesan, general secretary of

The NDA led by the BJP is almost certain to see a realignparty an alternative force to the CPI(M) and the Congress. days if the words of Natesan are any indication.

Didi finally lands at Sandeshkhali, slams BJP and LF

SAUGAR SENGUPTA KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday launched a scathing attack on the BJP and the Left for spending money to spread against canards Government even as she landed at Sandeshkhali for the first time after the all-women movement against land grab and mass rape that hit the national headlines last year. Some "mischievous" people had

been playing "a game of money and money only... they were intentionally misleading the people of this area ... But as lies cannot last forever they have failed in their dirty mission and the people of Sandeshkhali particularly the women have come in large number to this meeting," Banerjee told a massive gathering even as she promised a number of projects.

"I request the people of Sandeshkhali not to fall in the trap of the mischievous people ... the BJP has plenty of money and they spend these in misinformation campaign ... my message is to the mothers and sisters of Sandeshkhali to avoid those bad people ... you could see things

With your eyes how some people resorted to disinformation but finally nothing came out ... please don't go anywhere if someone asks you to. It's your right to get the benefits of Government schemes, Banerjee said asking the women not to go anywhere. "The Government will come at your doorstep with Duare Sarkar,' one of her patent schemes via which the Government functionaries hold regional camps to address people's problems.



Sandeshkhali hit the national headlines for several weeks last year when the local women came out in hordes against strong arm tactics of local Trinamool Congress strongman Sheikh Shahjehan whose men allegedly physically exploited women and grabbed their lands to convert them into

Post Sandeshkhali incident the State Government was repeatedly indicted by the National Commissions for Women and Scheduled Tribes. Subsequently Shahjehan, also accused of other crimes like multi-crore ration scam --- along with the jailed Food Minister Jyotipriya Mullick --- was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation and has since been in jail.

While there was a common refrain among the people against the Chief Minister for not visiting once this Sunderbans islands in North 24 Parganas off Basirhat, Banerjee's visit tended to impact the local women many of whom said they were willing to once again repose faith in her. This even as Banerjee asked the people to forget and leave behind the past incidents and move forward. "I want you to forget all that is past and proceed forwards ... I want

Sandeshkhali to tank among the

best ... a girl from Sandeshkhali to top the board exams... someone from here to become an IPS or IAS officer... This is not a place for riots and violence. We want peace," Banerjee said before announcing a plethora of Government pro-

Even as the locals requested the construction of a bridge joining the riverine islands with the mainland Banerjee said, "infrastructure projects like bridges require significant funding. I am noting your request, but we need to arrange the necessary resources... as you all know that the Centre provides us with nothing... they have stopped all the funds for rural development and I have to manage from my own resources.' Aware that the Left had been

quite active in the region Banerjee attacked the CPI(M) too saying, "BJP and Left have joined hands to malign the Government ... while the BJP spends their ill-gotten money to mislead the people and ignite violence the CPI(M) is a party that talks big having forgotten their bloody past ... they are a party of skeletons that killed people and buried them ... so never believe them.'

Reacting to Banerjee's charges local face of the movement Rekha Patra who even unsuccessfully contested on a BJP ticket in this year's parliamentary elections said, "Didi has missed the bus ... the people who have come ... have been forcibly brought here ... had she come the last year when the women were in trouble they would have definitely hugged her ... but now they hate her and she will never be welcome

Will focus on youth empowerment, overhauling education sector in 2025: Arunachal Pradesh CM

PTI ■ ITANAGAR

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu said his government would focus on youth empowerment and overhauling the education sector in 2025, noting that these areas are crucial for the state's development and prosperity.

The state government has declared 2024-25 as the 'Year of Youth' in its budget. This initiative highlights the administration's gratitude and recognition of the critical role young people play in shaping both the nation and the state, Khandu said. "The 'Year of Youth' is our acknowledgment of the immense responsibility our youth hold in building 'Viksit Bharat' (developed India) and 'Viksit Arunachal' (prosperous Arunachal)," the chief minister said told PTI in an inter-

He also noted that this initiative aligns with promises made in the ruling party's election manifesto.

One of the primary objectives of the 'Year of Youth' is to encourage entrepreneurship among the younger generation and not to depend solely on government jobs. The government aims to cre-

ate a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem through various schemes and policies. "Our government will lay emphasis on skill develop-

ment programmes to equip the youth with the tools needed to embark on entrepreneurial ventures," Khandu said. The Arunachal Pradesh

Entrepreneurship

Development Programme

(APEDP) has already been



launched to achieve this goal,

he added The APEDP, spearheaded by the state's Finance, Investment and Planning Department, aims to address local challenges by fostering entrepreneurship. The programme provides aspiring entrepreneurs with necessary support and mentorship to succeed.

'We envision a future where Arunachal Pradesh's youth become job creators instead of job-seekers, generating liveli-hoods for thousands in the process," Khandu said.

The Indian Institute of Management Calcutta Innovation Park (IIMCIP) has been roped in as the knowledge partner to run the programme, he said.

Additionally, the chief minister said that the state is collaborating with renowned institutions such as IIMs and the Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE) Guwahati, to offer advanced skill development training.

Khandu also revealed that special grants are being provided in the state.

to support youth-led startups The chief minister said that the education sector is another

Over the next three financial years, the state plans to undertake transformative changes to ensure quality education, improved infrastructure, and better opportunities for stu-

dents. To address the existing challenges, brainstorming sessions were conducted across the state, led by Education
Minister P D Sona and his advisor Mutchu Mithi," Khandu said.

These sessions aimed to identify core issues and propose practical solutions for the education department, he said. The outcomes of these sessions will be compiled into a comprehensive report with recommendations for reform, which the state government will fully implement.

"We are committed to cent per cent implementation of the recommended changes on the ground," he assured.

Preferring quality over quantity, Khandu highlighted the importance of improving the learning experience rather than merely increasing the number of schools. The government plans to develop well-equipped inter-village schools with facilities such as hostels, adequate teaching staff, and modern teaching methods, he said. "The government is focused on

quality education instead of just improving the state's literacy rate," the chief minister said. To optimise resources, the

government has already closed or merged approximately 600 non-functional schools or those with low enrollment. Schools with fewer than 50 stukey area of focus for the govdents are also being considered for closure.

Gurugram Traffic Police issued 13.66 lakh challans till 28 December

PARVESH SHARMA ■ **NEW DELHI**

n a significant crackdown on Itraffic violators, the Gurugram Traffic Police issued 13.66 lakh challans amounting to Rs 15.17 crore till 28 December 2024.

Under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Virender Vij, the department issued such huge number of challans, marking one of the most successful operations in 2024.

These fines include 1,74,073 challans for the wrong side, 1,49,462 challans for wrong parking, 694 challans for under-age driving, 2,15,390 challans for not wearing helmet, 27,439 challans for not wearing a seat belt, 25,968 challans for drink and drive, 17,122 challans for over speeding, 10,894 challans for signal jump, 10,967 challans for black film, 4,231 challans for using a mobile phone, 13,330 for triple riding, 33,107 without a number plate, 1,475 challans for illegal siren and 60,466 challans were issued for wrong lane driving.

"The operation was part of a larger special campaign launched across all traffic zones to target violators and reckless drivers. The traffic department is also strictly enforcing various provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act to maintain law and order on the roads," Vij said.

Apart from this, a special campaign was also conducted against the drivers who did not give way to the ambulance and



cles were impounded under NGT in the year 2024, out of which 108 are diesel and 225 are petrol vehicles. Apart from this, the Gurugram

Police also identify the places with black spots and remove them. In 2024, 05 black spots were also resolved/removed by Gurugram Police.

In 2023, a total of 494 people died in 1172 road accidents. Which decreased to 448 people dying in 1019 road accidents in the year 2024. Due to this, road accidents have reduced by more than 13 per

Gurugram Police has been monitoring traffic movement with the help of drones and fined those who change lanes/drive. Apart from this, with the help of drones. In 2024, a total of 45 green cor-

ridors were given by the Traffic Police Gurugram. Out of which 9 were given for ambulances and 36 for NSG/Army and Air Force.

Under the rules of GRAP-4, checkposts were set up by Gurugram Traffic Police on all Delhi borders, and during this time, more than 7,000 vehicles violating GRAP-4 rules were www.dailypioneer.com

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Country shamed

The victim blaming and procedural lapses in the Anna University rape case underscores the urgent need for reform

The recent sexual assault case involving a 19-year-old student at Anna University has once again brought shame upon the nation, highlighting the pervasive nature of gender-based violence and the systemic failures in addressing it. The horrifying incident, compounded by the insensitivity of law enforcement, has triggered widespread outrage and calls for accountability. On December 23, Gnanasekaran allegedly raped the student on the university campus after threatening to release videos of her. The accused confined the survivor for over an hour and recorded the assault. While the Chennai Police Commissioner, A Arun, claimed swift action by apprehending the accused within 24 hours, the Madras High Court highlighted glaring lapses in the police's handling of the case. Particularly damning was the revelation that the First Information Report (FIR) published on the police website disclosed the victim's details, leading to further victim shaming and mental agony. The High Court's rebuke of the police was

> scathing. A Bench of Justices SM Subramaniam and V Lakshminarayan criticised the language used in the FIR, terming it misogynistic and reflective of victimblaming attitudes. Such lapses, the Court noted, breach the victim's fundamental rights under Article 21 of the Constitution, which guarantees dignity.

To address these lapses, the Court ordered the formation of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) comprising senior IPS officers to probe the case. It also directed the Tamil Nadu government to provide interim compensation of Rs 25 lakh to the victim and ensure her protection. The Court has rightly underscored the necessity of sensitising police personnel to handle such

cases with empathy and professionalism. This case is not an isolated incident but a grim reminder of the larger problem of sexual violence that plagues India. Despite constitutional guarantees of equality and dignity, women continue to face systemic discrimination and violence. The societal tendency to blame victims, coupled with institutional apathy, exacerbates their trauma. The High Court's poignant questions — "Why can't a woman walk freely, dress as she wishes, or speak to a man without being judged?" — resonate deeply in a society still grappling with entrenched patriarchy. The Court rightly emphasised that the onus is on the State and society to protect women without perpetuating stigma or blame. The incident also exposed lapses in campus security at Anna University. The university, which allows unrestricted access to outsiders, failed to prevent the accused from entering the premises. The police's approach also came under scrutiny for prematurely ruling out the involvement of additional suspects. The Court directed the State to examine whether rules were violated during these proceedings. This tragic case underscores the urgent need for systemic reforms. Law enforcement must be trained to handle cases of sexual violence with sensitivity. The media, too, must exercise restraint in reporting such cases to avoid amplifying the victim's trauma.



Tourists enjoy after fresh snowfall, at Patnitop hill station in Udhampur

India's forest cover grows, but grim realities linger



KOTA SRIRAJ

While India's State of Forests Report highlights an increase in forest cover, it also raises concerns about troubling trends such as increase inforest fires and allegations of inflated data

ndia's State of Forests Report (ISFR) 2023, a biennial report published by the Forest Survey of India (FSI) under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change is finally out after a delay of almost one year. The report is being hailed as a harbinger of good news as it announced an increase in India's forest and tree cover by 1,289 Sq.km. since 2021 reaching 25.17 per cent of the total geographical area in 2023, which puts India's forest cover at 7,15,342.61 sq.km. But the report also highlights some grim aspects of India's state of forests.In the recent past, the incidence of forest fires has disturbingly gone up, especially in the hill states. These fires have destroyed many hectares of dense forests thereby ruining fragile ecosystems and irreplaceable

Himalayan biodiversity. The ISF report echoes the same and observes a sharp spike in forest fires especially in the mountain states of Himachal, Uttarakhand, and Jammu and Kashmir. The data collected using the Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite (VIIRS) presented in the report, showed that Himachal Pradesh witnessed an increase of forest fires by a stunning 1,339 per cent, while Jammu & Kashmir saw a rise in forest fire by a staggering 2,822 while Uttarakhand was relatively better off with 293 per cent rise in forest fire incidents. What the government was doing as the pristine forests turned to ashes, is a burning question. On the other hand, the report also highlighted the rapidly dwindling forest cover. Between 2003 and 2023, more than 24,000 sq km of dense forests — half the size of Punjab have disappeared. More concerning is the fact that the loss has occurred in ecologically fragile zones such as the Western Ghats and The Nilgiris over the past decade. The Western Ghats recognised as UNESCO World Heritage Biodiversity Hotspot suffered an overall loss of 58.22 sq km in forest cover. On the other



up call for the authorities even though the forest cover in the hill districts is just 40 per cent of their geographical area against the Forest Policy mandated 66.6 per cent. This is very alarming as the increased number of landslides and floods can be traced to the loss of forest cover in the hills. < The maintenance of the soil health, ecological stability, and ability to counter landslides and floods depend on adequate forest cover in the hills.The biennial ISF report has since its inception in 1991 served as a reference point for the nation to assess its forest wealth and understand the problems plaguing India's afforestation efforts. But this year's report has been criticised by experts who have pointed out discrepancies and have labelled the data as "inflated." Several experts for instance have criticised the inclusion of bamboo plantations, coconut groves, and orchards among others as part of the forest cover, as these are agroforestryrelated and make no meaningful contribution towards the environment.

The experts opine that the inclusion of agroforest plantahand, the Nilgiris reported the steepest decline of 123 sq km. The tus, acacia and mango, report also showed a decrease of coconut, areca nut and shade trees in tea and coffee plantations has led to the inflation in



FOREST LANDS DIVERTED FOR DAMS, ROADS, RAILWAYS AND OTHER SUCH **PERMANENT CONSTRUCTIONS** OVER TIME ARE LOST FOREVER BUT ARE NOT DELETED FROM RECORDS, THUS INFLATING THE FIGURES. INDIA LOST 30,808 SQ KM OF **OPEN AND SCRUB FORESTS ALONGSIDE**

MODERATELY DENSE

FORESTS

the tree canopy to 1,289 sq.km. But the reality is that these categories of trees are grown for commercial purposes and are harvested in time therefore not providing any ecological value for biodiversity, wildlife conservation or acting as effective carbon sinks. Moreover, the fact that the report does not establish a correlation between forest areas or areas designated as forests in government records and forest cover also adds to the problem.

Additionally, the experts also observed that the report failed to comply with the Supreme Court order in the Lafarge case which called for digitisation of forest maps, geo-referencing of Recorded Forest Areas (RFA), and documentation of diverted forest lands. The absence of these elements weakens the report's credibility.

Forest lands diverted for dams, roads, railways and other such permanent constructions over time are lost forever but are not deleted from records, thus inflating the figures. India lost 30,808 sq km of open and scrub forests alongside 14,073 sq km of moderately dense forests and 1,816 sq km of dense forests to 'non-forest'

eport 2023 seems to be in a hurry to increase forest cover in India. At least on paper. This could be to do with India's target of increasing its forest and

tree cover which can absorb an additional amount of 2.5 billion to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent by

The government could have done well to ensure the presentation of accurate data that was based on actual tree census and not plantations, groves, and orchards. The government should have also removed those forest lands from its database that have been permanently diverted for non-forest purposes. The ISF report has immense

significance for India as it is widely used as a primary information source by the central and state governments. Additionally, forestry professionals of State Forest Departments rely on the report for the effective discharge of their responsibilities. The inputs and data provided by this report regarding forest resources of India help in the evaluation and formulation of forest-related policies, programmes, and legislation. Given the crucial role played by the ISF report, the government must revisit the recent report and ensure that the questions and doubts raised by experts are effectively addressed. The onus is on the government to keep the trust intact by ing reports based on robust and

accurate data. (The author is a policy analyst. The views are personal)

The teachers who shaped my life: Lessons beyond the classroom



327.30 sq km in forest cover in the

northeastern region. This irre-

For me, the journey of learning began in classrooms with inspiring teachers and extended into workplaces with exceptional bosses

re meet several peo-ple in our lives. While we learn something from each person, many teach us invaluable lessons that help us navigate the rough and tumble of the daily grind. These are the teachers who shape our lives. The earliest I remember are two schoolteachers from my classes 5 to 7. Miss Kumar taught us English; Miss Singh was the Arithmetic teacher.

It is no wonder that I developed a liking for the unlikeliest combination of English and Maths. Another was my mathematics teacher from classes 10 to 11.

I was a favourite student, probably because I could discuss with him complex problems on the move while cycling to and from school. My love for communication and thinking on my feet were firmly entrenched in my psyche by him. In later years, I could not have navigated my professional journey but for the few outstanding bosses, I worked with. I joined my first job in a leading government manufacturing company. I stayed there for a year, only for the game. I was the head of a government to join the pri-

training. It seemed like an extension of college except that we were now paid a salary and were expected to lead a structured office life. I opted to spend the last few months of the training in the computer department. I surprised myself. This was one of the two subjects in college in which I had secured a

poor 'D' grade. developed a computerbased inventory management system for the plant, the first in the organization. I worked diligently, probably also committing a few mistakes, confident of the support of my Bengali boss.I joined the railway services. It was an entirely different ball

maintenance shed with 1000+ staff working under me. My boss went to the shed with me for the first week. The next week, he threw me, not in the swimming pool, but in the ocean. It was training by fire. Yet, he was always there to

guide and support me whenever I needed his help. The innumerable management lessons I learned in my first year were to hold me in good stead during my remaining professional journey of almost three decades.After 20 years of service with the railways, I decided to opt for retirement and join a gov-ernment company. My boss was a soft-spoken Sikh gen-

He also shared a common trait with my first railway boss. It was a complete freedom to operate.

He taught me everything that he knew about a new subject. His only demands were integrity and honesty. I had no problems with that. He would fight fiercely for me with his seniors if the situation demanded. I never regretted my decision to leave the railways. I quit the

vate sector. It was a new jun-

gle for me. The boardroom politics, criticism of a subordinate by those sitting at the head of the table in stage-managed whispers loud enough to be heard by the intended victim, and smirks by colleagues at the snub by a senior, were only a few of the goings-on I had not witnessed in the government

I had no hesitation in mentioning to a packed audience when asked about the reasons for the success of the government sector, 'Good bosses, who value others and mentor each individual like a teacher."I hope that someone else remembers me as fondly.

These words by an unknown author resonate with me, "I wasn't born to just teach, I was born to inspire others, to change people, and to never give up; even when faced with challenges that seem impossible.

(The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)

RELIEF FOR MIDDLE-CLASS

Madam —As the new year approaches, salaried employees are likely to face significant tax deductions from their salaries for the financial year 2024-2025. While taxes are deducted throughout the year, the months leading up to March 2025 will see an increased burden, further aggravating the financial challenges of India's middle class. Reduced take-home pay diminishes purchasing power, leading to decreased spending by the salaried class, which, in turn, impacts the economy.

Considering these challenges, the government is reportedly exploring measures to boost consumer spending. One such measure under consideration for the financial year 2025-2026 budget is making personal income up to Rs 15 lakh per annum taxfree. Speculations suggest that the government is actively working in this direction, and the decision on tax cuts in the upcoming budget appears almost certain. Taxation is currently governed by two systems: the old tax regime (OTR) and the new tax regime (NTR). A reduction in tax liability would particularly benefit salaried employees, increasing their disposable income. This would lead to higher consumer spending, ultimately helping the economy recover from its slowdown. For the financial stability and development of middle-class families, the central government's decision to make personal income up to Rs 15 lakh per annum tax-free in the 2025-2026 budget is crucial. This move would play a vital role in ensuring better financial planning and stability for the mid-

Dattaprasad Shirodkar | Ponda

PROFIT OVER HUMANITY

Madam — The article on caring for the stars and being careless to earth (December 30) presents worth considering arguments. The basic problem lies in the economic order in vogue in most parts of the world. The essence of the order is commodifying everything and chasing profit in every activity. In the process, small players arebeing gulped by the big

THE EDITOR



14.073 SQ KM OF By the looks of it, the ISF

¬he recent chess title victory by Koneru Humpy as World Rapid Chess Champion is another feather in India's Chess success. We all know that the year 2024 has been a marvellous year for Índia, particularly as we successfully managed to lift so many titles in the sport of Chess. The grit and brilliance of

fish to monopolise the field and then search for opportunities elsewhere with the State's help to emerge as an imperial force is the basic activity found all over. Leaving millions of people to starve to enrich the minuscule super-rich is the prioritised programme of the order in

Instead of political force deciding the economic course it is the economic force that decides the political course. The policies of the governments are designed to favour this ultra-rich section. If policies are not changed to its favour, the giants are capable of changing the government itself. Poverty, climate-related hostilities and human destruction due to induced and perverted conflicts between nations, faiths, races and the greedy groups are simply the fallouts of the empirical power money has gained over the human being instead of helping its inventors. Caring the stars and other planets while being cruel to fellow beings struggling around us is like searching for fuel sticks in a desert lot.

Course change is imminent. A G Rajmohan | Anantapur Indian Chess Champions has marvelled the entire world, be that the moment of India becoming the FIDE Chess Olympiad 2024 winner in Budapest, D Gukesh becoming the World Chess champion at the age of 18 in Singapore, and now Ms Koneru Humpy clinching her second FIDE World Rapid Crown in New York. This year in 2024 particularly, India spent a considerably wonderful time at the podium top stairs, enjoying

The chess prowess of Indians need no introduction today, thanks to our chess masters and grandmasters. Especially the young chess players deserve the epitome of appreciation for their wonderful game spirit, patience and sincere grit behind every move of check and mates.

many titles and trophies.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

INDIA'S LIBERALISATION ARCHITECT

Madam — From being an economist of great repute to RBI Governor, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Finance Minister and then becoming Prime Minister of India, not many can walk in his shoes. When the economy was stuttering and license raj was the order of the day and there was a suffocating environment for industrialists, Dr. Manmohan Singh became the architect of liberalisation in 1991 along with late PV Narsimha Rao, who allowed our country to take a great leap forward.

The Victor Hugo moment of our 1991 budget was doctored by him, which led to India emerging as an economic powerhouse. He may have been called an accidental Prime Minister but during those 10 years at the helm he did his job with aplomb under the given circumstances of compulsions of coalition pol-

Bal Govind | Noida

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FIRST COLUMN OVERCOMING THE GRIP OF FEARFUL THOUGHTS

Fearful thoughts often take hold of our minds, leading to obsession with worst-case scenarios



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

e routinely become obsessed with fearful thoughts. The word obsession is defined as a persistent disturbing preoccupation with an often unreasonable idea or feeling. We don't stop there; we think of the worst. What is the probability of that happening? But that does not prevent us from this common flaw; we do it willingly. There are several reasons for succumbing to this. We have many attachments. We are desperate for something like a good result, and a few like we shouldn't get sick. Unfortunately, these are decided by the Divine Authority based on our past 'Karmas' (deeds). We have no say in it, and they manifest at their designated times. Fortunately, they are very rarely the worst we think of. If so, life would be hellish, which it is not. This earth's planet is a place of misery (The Bhagavad Geeta 8.15) alright, but is not a concentration camp by any standard. But our imagination has no bounds.

The next big offender is a refusal to be prepared to tolerate. We want zero tolerance. Is it possible? Everything is changing like the weather. Bad 'Karmaphalas' (results of bad deeds) will manifest for sure because this is no Vaikuntha; we have most certainly a past with many bad karmas. How else are we here, not even in Heaven? We feel that we are intelligent, but hardly anyone escapes making this mistake. Yes, we are supposed to get fearful, because that protects us from acting foolishly, but excessive fear is due to faulty assessment. Due diligence is required.

The fourth offender is greed. Our desires are open-ended. Is it wise? The evidence shows that downfalls occur due to being too greedy.



But to become greedy and then fear the consequences makes zero sense. Over-stress also causes fearful thoughts, especially about health. It is better to avoid to lessen this possibility. We want to control and are unable to. We act stupidly and then fear the worst. The same problem exists in acting big, which no one can ever become; we are intrinsically small and will remain eternally so. Acting as the sole doer also evolves fearful thoughts. Giving control of our minds to fearful thoughts is making ourselves our enemies. Lord Krishna has warned about it (4.6). Similarly, intelligence is supposed to curb this tendency but, again, we find some justification in harming ourselves. This is also a sad commentary on our knowledge, about which we are so proud. A soul has severe limitations, as we realize; he must remain in the shelter of God. This is the only worthwhile solution. I am sorry to be so stern, but the proliferation of mental diseases points to it only.

God controls the Creation (9.10) and He, therefore, has to guide and help to deal with it. By ourselves, we are quite helpless really. How it works? It is quite simple, but a very long drawn exercise, because this problem involves our 'svabhava' (nature). This is what I do. The moment a fearful thought crosses my mind, I pray sincerely for guidance and help, because I need to know a way out. I need exact guidance for my actions.

God signals to me what I should do; He uses many ways to communicate. He helps where I fall short. Blissfully, my painful habit of fearing excessively is coming under some control. Thank God for this 'Kripa' (mercy).

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

Assessing efficacy and challenges of compensatory afforestation

With ecosystem at stake, the nation's approach to monetising and restoring nature demands careful evaluation and sustainable strategies write BKP SINHA and ARVIND KUMAR JHA

ompensatory Afforestation (CA) relates to the mitigation of environmental damage caused by the diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes and is a mandatory requirement for obtaining clearances under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980; now Van (Sanrakshanevam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam (VSSA) 1980 and Rules. The Government of India guidelines state that normally CA must be carried out on a suitable non-forest land equal to the forest area proposed for diversion and for minimizing the adverse impact on the micro-ecology, such land should be located as near as possible to the diverted area. If suitable non-forest land is unavailable, CA may be carried out on degraded forest land equal to twice the area of the diverted forest land. The unavailability of non-forest land in a district is certified by the District Collector and in the exceptional case of its unavailability in the whole state/union territory (UT), the chief secretary has to certify accordingly and CA land may be identified preferably in a neighbouring state/ UT.As regards CA, the Government of India guidelines of 2017 and 2019 emphasised compensation for loss of land by land and that of trees by trees.

They indicate that at least 1000 plants are to be planted in one hectare and in case 1000 plants are not possible to be accommodated, the balance may be planted in some other government forest identified by the state government. The states having more than 75% forest cover, however, are exempted from the task of procuring non-forest land for CA. Their CA can be taken up in states with deficient forest land/cover. As regards size, lands smaller than 5 hectares can also be accepted for CA if it is contiguous to a wildlife conservation area like National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries.Area equivalence criterion often leads to an understanding that any forest can be equated with tree plantations of any kind but the concept of Net Present Value (NPV) is additionally used to calculate the worth of diverted forests by attaching a monetary value to a whole range of goods and services provided by them. This amount is recovered from the project proponent.

The World Bank's 2002 strategy elaborates the NPV to include goods and services like wood and non-wood items, ecosystem services, support to wildlife, climate regulation, soil & water conservation and flood prevention, carbon sequestration, nutrient cycling, health support systems and non-material benefits which may be spiritual, inspirational, recreational, aesthetic, educational etc. Its value thus extends far beyond economics and considering the interest of different stakeholders, the values of different components may also vary, such as the cultural significance of a tree species ver

sus its commercial value as timber. The January 2022 guidelines of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) have clubbed the forests of India into six Ecoclasses to realize NPV instead of diverted forest land. Out of them, class I includes Tropical Wet Evergreen Forests, Tropical Semi Evergreen Forests, and Tropical Moist Deciduous Forests, while class II contains Littoral and Swamp





HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF GREAT NICOBAR ISLAND PROJECT IS WORTH A LOOK. THE RS 72,000 CRORE INVESTMENT WILL DIVERT 130.75 SQ. KM. OF FOREST INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT THAT INCLUDES A TRANS-SHIPMENT

PORT, AN AIRPORT, A POWER PLANT, A DEFENCE BASE, AN INDUSTRIAL PARK AND A **TOWNSHIP**

Interestingly, the per hectare value of NPV for both these classes has been kept the same, an equality that appears surprising. It is crucial to arrive at a monetized figure for a unit of Nature/biodiversity and ensure that investing in it will offset the loss caused by diversion. Simultaneous sustainable development of biodiversity is of course a formidable challenge. Accordingly, any oversimplification of biodiversity assessment can lead to inaccuracies and undermine genuine conservation efforts.

The limitations faced in offsetting losses just through CA are amply covered by CAG reports. Unfortunately, the resource position at the world level also, despite the wrath of climate change being faced globally, shows an annual funding gap of about USD 700 billion in nature conservation. Against the above background, the proposed CA and NPV to mitigate the diversion of forest land in the "Holistic Development of Great Nicobar Island (GNI) project is worth a look. The Rs72,000 crore investment will divert 130.75 sq. km. of forest land for infrastructure development that includes a transshipment port, an airport, a power plant, a defence base, an industri-

al park, and a township.
The project involves the felling of an estimated one million trees with habitat destruction that would also impact the life, livelihood, and forest rights of the Shompen; a particularly vulnerable hunter-andgatherer tribal group. The MoEFCC claims to have incorporated into the project some exemplary mitigation measures, including compensatory afforestation, into the project in compliance with the provisions of the VSSA 1980 while securing India's strategic national and defence interests. Out of the total CA area of 26,000 hectares, locating 24,354 hectares in Haryana is justified by highlight-

ing that planting native species in arid landscapes and near urban areas is of greater ecological value. Talks are said to be on with the Madhya Pradesh government for situating the balanced CA area. The CA in Aravali's arid/semi-arid region, approximately 2,400 kilometres away, to compensate for the loss of pristine rainforests of Great Nicobar is a significant departure from the guideline regarding the positioning of CA land. Reportedly, the CA with ?3000 crore's investment is expected to be mostly a revival plan to improve the soil texture and fertility and to make stone boundary walls since the proposed area already has root stock requiring just protection and sup-plemental planting wherever required.

Indicative of the natural limits imposed by edaphic, geographical, and climatic factors, the Forest Survey of India (FSI) 2021 report on forest status shows that the carbon stock per hectare in A&N forests is fourth highest in the country; next only to Himachal, Sikkim, and J&K while Haryana has the second lowest; next only to

This fact does raise questions regarding the possibility and efficacy of compensating adequately Nicobar's loss of carbon stock and biomass by investing CA money in Haryana. Considering the aspect of NPV, it is worth noting that Nicobar Island forests are more like that of Malaysia and Indonesia while the Andaman Islands' flora is more akin to the species found in Myanmar, Thailand, and Northeast India. FSI's rapid biodiversity assessment in A&N islands in 2018-19 found that shrubs and herbs together were more than double the number of trees. Many species found there do not occur in mainland India. The understory and emergent layers with profuse regeneration, herbs, and

shrubs indicate a vibrant ecosystem wherein approximately half of the mammals, a third of the birds, a quarter of the reptiles, and over a tenth of flowering plants are endemic. A crucible for the habitat rights of the Shompen tribe notwithstanding, it is home to the endangered Nicobar Megapode and Leatherback Turtle, and has over twenty thousand coral reefs in its vicinity. In 1989. The UNESCO declared a significant portion of the island as a biosphere reserve. Despite such uniqueness, distinctive parameters, and ecological significance; its NPV per hectare is exactly equal to the forests in Ecoclasses I and II. GIN is just one

project. An in-depth analysis of forest land diversion cases can provide, in addition to actionable issues related to limitations and risks in offsetting just through the prevalent CA and NPV model, important insights into ways to minimize harm to Nature, redeemability of loss to forest ecosystems, correct determination of NPV, efficient investments in Nature recovery and restoration initiatives, handling of habitat rights of the primitive tribes and pre-agricultural communities, and regulations needed to ensure account-

Nature's monetization and biodiversity markets are fast emerging as potential funding sources for conservation. Their effectiveness demands an honest valuation of diverted forests and a strict implementation of conservation strategies. The outcomes depend on those having the power to decide. Only time will tell, but the decisions made today will echo through the annals of history shaping the destiny of our country and of humanity itself.

(The writers are former PCCFs of U.P. and Maharashtra;

Indian agriculture and climate change: Challenges and strategies

India is forging a path toward climate-resilient agriculture, leveraging innovative strategies, integrated farming practices and government-led initiatives

¬he agriculture and allied sectors play a central role in the sustainable growth and development of India's economy. These sectors not only ensure food and nutritional security for the country's 1.4 billion people but also contribute significantly to production, employment, and demand generation through various backward and forward linkages. While agriculture constitutes about 16% of India's GDP, it supports nearly 49% of the workforce (Economic Survey, 2018). However, with over 50% of India's cultivated land dependent on rainfed irrigation, the sector is highly vulnerable to climate variability.

The ongoing challenges to sustain the natural resource base further



amplify the adverse impacts of climate change, which disproportionately affect the poor. Challenges Posed by Climate Change on Agriculture 1. Rainfall Variability: The

increasing intra-seasonal variability of rainfall has emerged as a major concern. Rainfall patterns are becoming increasingly skewed, characterized by fewer rainy days with higher intensity. This results in sig-

nificant soil erosion and exacerbates the length of dry spells. Deviations in the hydrological cycle are contributing to extreme events, such as floods caused by intense rainfall or droughts triggered by pro-longed dry spells, impacting different parts of the country. 2. Temperature Rise: Rising temperatures pose a greater threat to tropical countries like India, which already operate near the higher end of the temperature spectrum. Elevated temperatures influence various climatic factors, adversely impacting crop production. For instance, extreme heat reduces fruit setting in citrus crops and increases transpiration losses in vegetables. 3. Livestock and Poultry

Impact: Climate variability

also affects animal production

and reproduction. Increased temperatures and higher temperature-humidity index levels lead to reduced feed intake lower milk yields, and decreased meat and egg quality. Poultry, in particular, suffers from heat stress, resulting in thinner eggshells and increased egg breakage.

4. Pests and Diseases: Climate change influences the population, survival, and geographic distribution of pests and diseases. Rising temperatures and humidity levels create favorable conditions for pest proliferation, making control measures more challenging and

unpredictable. Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies

Adaptation to climate change involves anticipating adverse

impacts and taking proactive



measures to minimize damage or leverage emerging opportunities. Given that most Indian farmers are smallholders with limited coping capacity, building resilience is key.

Water Resource Management:Enhancing rainwater productivity through scientific rainwater harvesting, recycling, and precision water use is essential. Improved irrigation techniques and water budgeting can mitigate the impact of erratic rainfall.

2. Integrated Farming Systems: Combining crop cultivation with livestock, fisheries, and plantations offers diverse income streams and reduces climate vulnerability. Contingency planning for alternate crops and activities based on agro-climatic conditions further strengthens

3. Technology and Innovation: Developing stress-tolerant crop varieties, conserving agro-biodiversity, and promoting resource-efficient technologies are critical. Pest forecasting models, weather-based advisories, and agricultural risk management systems should be expanded to aid farmers in decision-mak-

4. Community Involvement and Education: Engaging

local communities in production system management and raising awareness about climate-resilient practices is vital. Farmers, consumers, and markets must be educated to embrace sustainable agriculture practices that align with cultural and social contexts. Government Initiatives to Address Climate Change

The Government of India has taken several steps to combat climate change.

National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC): Guided by the Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change, the NAPCC includes the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA), focusing on resource conservation, soil health, integrated farming, and water-use

National Innovations on **Climate Resilient Agriculture** (NICRA): This initiative provides scientific and technical guidance for sustainable agricultural development.Key Program Interventions: Policies like the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana, National Food Security Mission, and Soil Health Card Scheme aim to enhance soil health, water efficiency, and farm productivity.

Agricultural District Contingency Plans: These plans provide integrated solutions for crop, livestock, and fishery challenges arising from weather anomalies, supporting farmers during extreme conditions.

> (The writer is a retired IAS officer; the views expressed

RAIPUR | TUESDAY | DECEMBER 31, 2024

South Korea to inspect its Boeing fleet as it struggles to find cause of plane crash

South Korean officials said Monday they will conduct safety inspections of all Boeing 737-800 aircraft operated by the country's airlines, as they struggle to determine what caused a plane crash that killed 179 people a day earlier.

Sunday's crash, the country's worst aviation disaster in decades, triggered an outpouring of national sympathy. Many people worry how effectively the South Korean government will handle the disaster as it grapples with a leadership vacuum following the recent successive impeachments of President Yoon Suk Yeol and Prime Minister Han Ducksoo, the country's top two officials, amid political tumult caused by Yoon's brief imposition of martial law earlier this

New acting President Choi Sang-mok on Monday presided over a task force meeting on the crash and instructed authorities to conduct an emergency review of the country's aircraft operation systems.

month.

"The essence of a responsible response would be renovating the aviation safety systems on the whole to prevent recurrences of similar incidents and building a safer Republic of South Korea," said Choi, who is also deputy prime minister and finance minister.

The Boeing 737-800 plane

operated by South Korean budget airline Jeju Air aborted its first landing attempt for reasons that aren't immediately clear. Then, during its second landing attempt, it received a bird strike warning from the ground control center before its pilot issued a distress signal. The plane landed without its front landing gear deployed, overshot the runway, slammed into a concrete fence and burst into a fireball.

Alan Price, a former chief pilot at Delta Air Lines and now a consultant, said the Boeing 737-800 is a "proven airplane' that belongs to a different class of aircraft than the Boeing 737 Max jetliner that was linked to fatal crashes in 2018 and 2019. But South Korea's Transport Ministry said Monday it plans to conduct safety inspections of all of the 101 Boeing 737-800 jetliners operated by the country's airlines as well as a broader review into safety standards at Jeju Air, which operates 39 of those planes. Senior ministry official Joo Jong-wan said representatives from the US National Transportation Safety Board and Boeing were expected to arrive in South Korea on Monday to participate in the investigation.

Ministry officials also said they will look into whether the Muan airport's localizer — a concrete fence housing a set of antennas designed to guide



aircraft safely during land-- should have been made with lighter materials that would break more easily upon impact. Joo said the ministry has determined that similar concrete structures are in other domestic airports, including in Jeju Island and the southern cities of Yeosu and Pohang, as well as airports in the United States, Spain and South Africa.

Video of the crash indicated that the pilots did not deploy flaps or slats to slow the aircraft, suggesting a possible hydraulic failure, and did not manually lower the landing gear, suggesting they did not have time, said John Cox, a retired airline pilot and CEO of Safety Operating Systems in St. Petersburg, Florida. Despite that, the jetliner was under control and traveling in a straight line, and damage and injuries likely would have been minimized if not for the barrier being so close to the runway, Cox said.

Other observers said the videos showed the plane was suffering from suspected engine trouble but the landing gear malfunction was likely a direct reason for the crash. They said there wouldn't likely be a link between the land ing gear problem and the suspected engine issue. Earlier Monday, another Boeing 737-800 plane operated by Jeju Air returned to Seoul's Gimpo International Airport shortly after takeoff when the pilot



altar at Muan sport park in Muan, South Korea, on Monday.

detected a landing gear issue. Song Kyung-hoon, a Jeju Air executive, said the issue was resolved through communication with a land-based equipment center, but the pilot decided to return to Gimpo as a precautionary measure.

Joo said officials were reviewing whether there might have been communication problems between air traffic controllers and the pilot. "Our current understanding is that, at some point during the goaround process, communication became somewhat ineffective or was interrupted, ahead of the landing and impact," he said.

Ministry officials said Monday the plane's flight data and cockpit audio recorders were moved to a research center at Gimpo airport ahead of their analysis. Ministry officials earlier said it would take months to complete the investigation of the crash. The Muan crash is South Korea's deadliest aviation disaster since 1997, when a Korean Airlines plane crashed in Guam, killing 228 people on board.

The crash left many South Koreans shocked and ashamed, with the government announcing a sevenday national mourning period through Jan. 4. Some ques-tioned whether the crash involved safety or regulatory issues, such as a 2022 Halloween crush in Seoul that killed 160 people and a 2014 ferry sinking that killed 304 people. The Transport Ministry said authorities have identified 146 bodies and are collecting DNA and fingerprint samples from the other 33. Park Han Shin, a representative of the bereaved families, said they were told that the bodies were so badly damaged that officials need time before returning them to their fami-

"I demand that the govern-ment mobilize more personnel to return our brothers and family members as intact as possible more swiftly," he said, choking down tears.

The crash was yet more major news for South Koreans already reeling from a politi-cal crisis set off by Yoon's martial law decree, which brought hundreds of troops into Seoul streets and revived traumatic memories of past military rule in the 1970-80s. The political tumult resulted in the opposition-controlled National Assembly impeaching Yoon and Han. The safety minister stepped down and the police chief was arrested over their roles in the martial law inforcement.

The absence of top officials responsible for managing disasters has led to concerns. 'We are deeply worried whether the Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasures Headquarters really can handle the disaster," the mass-circulation JoongAng Ilbo newspaper said in an editorial

Shehbaz, Nawaz Sharif criticised for not offering condolences on Manmohan Singh's demise

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's decision of not offering condolences on the passing of former India premier Manmohan Singh was severely criticised on social media. Singh, who was born in Gah village in Chakwal district of Pakistan's Punjab and served as prime minister from 2004 to 2014, died in New Delhi last Thursday aged

While condolence messages poured in from around the world, neither Shehbaz Sharif nor his elder brother and three-time former prime minister Nawaz Sharif chose to offer any words on his demise. Ironically, only Pakistan Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar offered his condolences. Contrary to this, Shehbaz Sharif and other top func-

tionaries of the Pakistan gov-ernment wasted no time to offer condolences on the passing of former US president Jimmy Carter. They issued condolence messages on X, which is banned by the Shehbaz Sharif government to control dissenting voices of jailed former premier Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party on social media. "Neither Shahbaz nor Nawaz

Sharif have yet offered a public condolence on the loss of Manmohan Singh. There was a message from Ishaq Dar. Still, it's perplexing. They were contemporaries, had some similar economic views, and shared a desire for better India-Pakistan relations, Wilson Centre South Asia Institute Director Michael Kugelman said on X on Sunday. He further said: " I

really don't see so much at stake with India-Pak ties now that the Sharifs feel something could be lost if they upset Modi. Also not sure I see Modi being bothered if they do say something about Singh. It's all a bit odd!" Pakistani author and expert on military affairs Ayesha Siddiqa sarcas-tically said on X: "Seems they — the Sharif brothers — don't want to annoy Modi, or maybe typical PMLN (Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz) that whoever is gone is gone and so done and dusted with."

Pakistani journalist Ammara Ahmad said: "It has never happened before. This means that Pakistan and India have no diplomatic ties. Though they negotiated the Kartarpur corridor again this year. I can't imagine what prompted this decision. I have yet to find a press release even. Very lowly Mona Farooq Ahmad, an

and uncouth."

overseas citizen of Pakistan, said on Monday: "This level of pettiness is unprecedented. In the past, leaders have always set politics aside for such moments. Their silence is truly intriguing and disappointing. It's a missed chance to show humanity and statesmanship." Amer Mirza said on X: "These individuals -Shehbaz and Nawaz — are neither serious politicians nor statesmen. We cannot hold any expectation of dignified conduct or due protocol. They are a family consumed with sustaining their ill-gotten privilege under the dark auspices of the military junta. They neither have time nor respect for the people. They are little men in big offices." Dar on Friday said he was saddened by the passing of Singh who "played a

notable role in improving India-Pakistan ties".

Saddened by the passing of Dr. Manmohan Singh, former Prime Minister of India Born in a village in Pakistan's Chakwal district, Singh was a distinguished economist and political leader. He will be remembered for his wisdom and gentle demeanour," Dar said in a post on X.

"Beyond his remarkable achievements in the field of economics, Dr. Singh demonstrated a commitment to promoting regional peace. His approach to regional issues reflected his belief that mutual understanding, dialogue and cooperation were essential for collective progress. He played a notable role in improving Pakistan-India bilateral relations during his tenure as Prime Minister," Dar

Missing Indian student's body found in Scotland river

PTI LONDON

The body of a 22-year-old Indian student missing since earlier this month has been found in a river in Scotland and her family has been informed while formal identification is awaited.

Santra Saju from Kerala was enrolled at the Heriot-Watt University in the Scottish capital of Edinburgh. Police Scotland said in a statement over the weekend that they were made aware of a body in a river near Newbridge, a vil-

lage near Edinburgh.
"Around 11.55 am on Friday,
December 27, 2024, police were made aware of a body found in the water near to Newbridge," Police Scotland said. "Formal identification has still to take place however the family of Santra Saju, 22,

has been informed. The death is not believed to be suspicious," the police said. The statement added that a report will be sent to the

Procurator Fiscal, Scotland's prosecution service and death investigation body. Saju was last caught on CCTV at an Asda supermarket store in Almondvale, Livingston, on

December 6 evening. An urgent missing person's appeal was issued by the police, describing Saju as being around 5 feet 6 inches in height, of Indian ethnicity, slim build,

with short black hair. She was wearing a black jacket with a fur-lined hood, beige furry earmuffs and a black facemask. Enquiries also revealed she had a black rucksack in her possession. The police appeal encouraged anyone who may recognise her to

come forward with any information. Inspector Alison Lawrie from

Corstorphine Police Station said in a statement at the time: "We now know that Santra picked up a black and white shopper style bag from an address in Burnvale on Friday evening, but she did not have it when she entered the supermarket. "The bag is distinctive and someone may remember seeing her carrying it. We are continuing to review CCTV footage and have released images of Santra from the supermarket in the hope that someone recognises her. Extensive enquiries are being carried out in an effort to trace

Her friends and family had said the disappearance was out of character and had become very worried for her safety.

lalipan to close all NGUS employing Atgnan women

 $T^{
m he\ Taliban\ say\ they\ will\ close}$ all national and foreign nongovernmental groups in Afghanistan employing women. It comes two years after they told NGOs to suspend the employment of Afghan women, allegedly because they didn't wear the Islamic headscarf correctly.

In a letter published on X Sunday night, the Economy Ministry warned that failure to comply with the latest order would lead to NGOs losing their license to operate in Afghanistan.

The ministry said it was responsible for the registration, coordination, leadership and supervision of all activities carried out by national and foreign organisations. The government was once again ordering the stoppage of all female work in institutions not controlled by the Taliban, according to the letter.

"In case of lack of cooperation, all activities of that institution will be cancelled and the activity license of that institution, granted by the ministry, will also be cancelled." It's the Taliban's latest attempt to control or intervene in NGO activity.

Earlier this month, the UN Security Council heard that an increasing proportion of female Afghan humanitarian workers were prevented from doing their work even though relief work remains essential.

According to Tom Fletcher, a

senior UN official, the proportion of humanitarian organisations reporting that their female or male staff were stopped by the Taliban's morality police has also increased. The Taliban deny they are stopping aid agencies from carrying out their work or interfering

with their activities.

They have already barred women from many jobs and most public spaces, and also excluded them from education beyond sixth grade. In another development, the Taliban leader Hibatullah Akhundzada has ordered that buildings should not have windows looking into places where a woman might sit or stand.

According to a four-clause decree posted on X late Saturday, the

order applies to new buildings as well as existing ones.

Windows should not overlook or look into areas like yards or kitchens. Where a window looks into such a space then the person responsible for that property must find a way to obscure this view to "remove harm," by installing a

wall, fence or screen. Municipalities and other authorities must supervise the construction of new buildings to avoid installing windows that look into or over residential properties, the decree added.

A spokesman for the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing was not immediately available for comment on Akhundzada's

Bangkok hotel fire kills 3 foreigners AP BANGKOK

A fire broke out at a hotel near Bangkok's Khao San Road, a popular tourist destination, killing three foreigners and injuring several other people, Thai police said Monday.

The three who died in the fire on Sunday night were all foreign tourists, Police Colonel Sanong Saengmanee told The Associated Press. One was found dead at the scene and the other two died after. being transported to the hospital. Police later identified the dead as a Brazilian woman, a Ukrainian man and an American man. Four people were hospitalised, of whom one was in critical condition.

The fire erupted on the 5th floor of the six-story Ember Hotel, police said. Khao San Road is a popular backpacker street in the Thai capital that's also known for its lively nightlife.

The flames were eventually contained and the cause of the blaze is under investigation. Seventy-five people were staying at

the hotel at the time of the fire. Sreekanth Kolamala, a 37-year-old Indian national who lives in Singapore and was in Thailand on vacation, witnessed the rescue operation and said that firefighters "broke the glass over there to try to pull people out."

Sanga Ruangwattanakul, the president of the Khao San Road Business

Ember Hotel on Monday, looking at the damage. He said 20,000 people were expected at a New Year's Eve countdown event on Tuesday night. "Now everybody's scared about what happened and they're scared it will affect the event tomorrow. But

Association, stood outside The

definitely there's no worry because we already had a meeting with the police station and we have over 150 police and district staff to cover on Khao San Road for security," he said. Bangkok Governor Chadchart Sittipunt also emphasized the importance of safety following the incident, especially as New Year's Eve approaches, with fireworks and other celebrations planned across

river only with sticks.

A villager, Serak Boko, told AP

that moments before the acci-

dent, music was blasting out of

the truck and people dressed in

suits were dancing and waving.

It is common for people in

rural Ethiopia to hire trucks

Syria's long-ruling Baath party faces collapse

few days after insurgents in A Syria overthrew President Bashar Assad, his ruling Baath party announced it was freezing its activities, marking a stunning change in fortunes for the political group that had ruled for more than six decades.

Many members of the party's leadership have gone into hiding and some have fled the country. In a symbolic move, Syria's new rulers have turned the former party headquarters in Damascus into a center where former members of the army and security forces line up to register their names and hand over their weapons.

Calls are on the rise to officially dissolve the Arab Socialist Baath Party that had ruled Syria since 1963.

Many Syrians — including former party members — say its rule damaged relations with other Arab countries and aided in the spread of corruption that brought the war-torn nation to

only be dissolved, it should go to hell," said Mohammed Hussein Ali, 64, who worked for a state oil company and was a party member for decades until he quit at the start of Syria's anti-government uprising in 2011 that turned into civil war. He never left the country and said he is happy the Baath rule is over.

An official with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS, the group that led the insurgent offensive that overthrew Assad, said no official decision has been made on what to do with the Baath

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly about the matter, noted that HTS leader Ahmad al-Sharaa has said that officials who committed crimes against the Syrian people over the past decades will be brought to justice and hinted that they include party mem-

The Baath party, whose aim Rahman Ali, said he had no

its knees. "The party should not was to unify Arab states in one nation, was founded by two Syrian Arab nationalists, Michel Aflaq and Salaheddine Bitar, in 1947 and at one point ruled two Arab countries, Iraq and Syria.

A rivalry developed between the Syrian branch under Assad and his late father, Hafez, and the one in Iraq under Saddam Hussein, who was removed from power by a US-led invasion in 2003. In Syria, the Baath party

became inextricably associated with the Assad family, which took power in 1970. For decades, the family used the party and its pan-Arab ideology to control the country. Many senior military jobs were held by members of the family's minority Alawite sect, and party membership was used as a cover to give it a nationalist rather than a sectarian nature.

A former soldier and decades-

long Baath party member who

came to party headquarters to

cut his military ties, Abdul-

idea it was founded by Aflaq and Bitar. He had always thought that Hafez Assad was the founder. "I am happy. We have been lib-

erated from fear," said Ali, 43. Even the walls had ears. We didn't dare express opinions with anyone." He was referring to the dreaded security and intelligence agencies that detained and tortured people who expressed criticism of Assad or government officials. Many Syrians were required to join the Baath Vanguards, the party's youth branch, while in elementary school, where Arab nationalist and socialist ideology was emphasized. It was difficult for people who

were not party members to get government jobs or join the army or the security and intelligence services. In 2012, a year after Syria's

uprising began, a paragraph of the constitution stating that the Baath party was the leader of the nation and society was abolished, in a move aimed to appease the public's demand for

however, the party remained in control, with members holding majority seats in parliament and government.

Another former soldier, who gave only his first name, Ghadir, out of fear of reprisals as a member of the Alawite sect, said he came from a poor family and joined the party so he could enter the military for a stable income. "You could not take any job if you were not a Baathist," he said.

While few are mourning the party's fall in Syria, some are concerned that the Sunni majority that now controls the country could carry out a purge similar to the one in Iraq after Saddam's fall. A de-Baathification committee

was formed in Iraq and its main job was purging Saddam loyalists from government and military institutions. The Sunni minority considered it a means of sectarian score-settling by Iraq's Shiite majority. The Sunni resentment and disenfranchisement that followed helped to build a new Syria," he said.

political reforms. In practice, drive the rise of extremist groups in the country including al-Qaida and the Islamic State in Iraq. In Syria, a Baath party statement issued three days after Assad's fall called on all members to hand their weapons and public cars to the new authorities. On Dec. 24, party member and

former army colonel Mohammed Merhi was among hundreds who lined up at the former party headquarters and handed over weapons.

Merhi said the Baath party should be given another opportunity because its principles are good but were exploited over decades. But he said he might want to join another party if Syria becomes a multiparty democracy in the future.

He handed over his Soviet Makarov pistol and received a document saying he can now move freely in the country after reconciling with the new authorities.

"I want to become again a norfor the high number of casualties. Villagers said they tried to mal Syrian citizen and work to save people from the raging

66 killed as truck plunges into river in south Ethiopia

AP ADDIS ABABA

 $A^{\mathrm{t}\, \mathrm{least}\, 66}$ people have died after a truck plunged into a river in southern Ethiopia, a hospital director said Monday. The accident took place Sunday when an old, overcrowded truck that was contracted by wedding guests fell off the Gelan Bridge, where villagers said traffic crashes have happened before. The medical director at Bona General Hospital in the southern Sidama region, Lemma Lagide, told The Associated Press on Monday that 64 people died on site and two others at the hospital. He said those patients in need

of more sophisticated critical care were transferred to a bigger hospital in Hawassa. Delays in rescue efforts in the remote village were blamed instead of buses to transport them to social events like weddings because they are more affordable and carry many people. Most of those on the truck were men because they are culturally required to escort the bride from her home to the groom's house. "The area always has regular accidents around the river as it is poorly constructed, said resident Fasil Atara, referring to the road lacking bumps and warnings. With desolate infrastructure and overcrowded public transportation, Ethiopia has had similar accidents in the past. In August, 38 people died after a bus rolled over in Amhara

South Korean authorities seek warrant to detain impeached President Yoon in martial law probe

S outh Korean law enforcement officials requested a court warrant on Monday to detain impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol as they investigate whether his short-lived martial law decree on December 3 amounted to rebellion.

The Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials, which leads a joint investigation with police and military authorities into the power grab that lasted only a few hours, confirmed it requested the warrant from the Seoul Western District Court. They plan to question Yoon on charges of abuse of authority and orchestrating a rebellion.

Yoon Kap-keun, the president's lawyer, denounced the detention attempt and filed a challenge with the same court, arguing that the warrant request was invalid. He also claimed the anti-corruption agency lacked the legal authority to investigate rebellion charges. Still, he evaded answering how the legal team would respond if the court approved the warrant for the president's detainment.

"An incumbent president cannot be prosecuted for abuse of power," the lawyer said. "Of course, there are differing academic opinions on whether a president can be investigated for abuse of power and some assert that investigations are possible. But even when investigations are allowed, the pre-

The German government on Monday sought to

downplay efforts by tech entre-

preneur Elon Musk to get

involved in the country's gen-

eral election campaign by again

endorsing the far-right Alternative for Germany, or

Musk caused uproar over the

weekend after backing the AfD

in an opinion piece in a major

newspaper, leading to the res-

ignation of the paper's opinion

"Freedom of expression also

includes the greatest nonsense,"

government spokesperson

Christiane Hoffmann said,

adding that should wouldn't

comment further on Musk's

statements. She did, however,

say that "it is indeed the case

AfD, party.

editor in protest.

vailing opinion is that they should be exercised with the utmost restraint."

The anti-corruption agency didn't immediately respond to the lawyer's comments.

Han Min-soo, spokesperson of the liberal opposition Democratic Party, called for the court to issue the warrant, saying Yoon Suk Yeol's detainment would be the first step toward "ending the rebellion and restoring normalcy."

The warrant request came after Yoon dodged several requests by the joint investigation team and public prosecutors to appear for questioning and also blocked searches of his

While Yoon has the presidential privilege of immunity from criminal prosecution, such protections don't extend to allegations of rebellion or treason. It's not clear whether the court will grant the warrant or whether Yoon can be compelled to appear for question-

Under the country's laws, loca tions potentially linked to military secrets cannot be seized or searched without the consent of the person in charge, and it's unlikely that Yoon will voluntarily leave his residence if he faces detention. There are also concerns about possible clashes with Yoon's presidential security service if authorities attempt to forcibly detain him. Yoon's presidential powers were suspended after the National Assembly voted to impeach him on Dec. 14 over his imposition of martial law, which last-

German govt seeks to downplay Musk's

backing of far-right party ahead of poll

through his statement."

that Elon Musk is trying to

influence the federal election

In that context, Hoffmann also

pointed out that the AfD is

being monitored by Germany's

domestic intelligence service on

suspicion of being right-wing

extremist and that it has already

been recognised as such in

some individual German states.

Germany is to vote in an early

election on February 23 after

Chancellor Olaf Scholz's three-

party governing coalition col-

lapsed last month in a dispute

over how to revitalise the coun-

Musk's guest opinion piece for

Welt am Sonntag published in

German over the weekend,

was the second time this month

he had supported Alternative

'The Alternative for Germany

(AfD) is the last spark of hope

try's stagnant economy.

for Germany, or AfD.

ed only hours but has triggered weeks of political turmoil, halted high-level diplomacy and rattled financial markets.

Yoon's fate now lies with the Constitutional Court, which has begun deliberations on whether to uphold the impeachment and formally remove Yoon from office or reinstate him.

The National Assembly voted last week to also impeach Prime Minister Han Ducksoo, who had assumed the role of acting president after Yoon's powers were suspended, over his reluctance to fill three Constitutional Court vacancies ahead of the court's review of Yoon's case. The country's new interim leader is Deputy Prime Minister Choi Sang-mok, who is also finance minister.

To formally end Yoon's presidency, at least six justices on the nine-member Constitutional Court must vote in favour. Three seats are currently vacant following retirements and a full bench could make conviction more likely.

Choi, who has been handling the government's response to a plane crash on Sunday that killed 179 people, has yet to say whether he intends to appoint the Constitutional Court jus-

In a separate criminal investigation of Yoon, authorities have already arrested his defense minister, police chief and several other military commanders involved in the attempt to enforce the martial law decree, which harkened back to the days of authoritarian leaders the country hasn't seen since the 1980s.

In theory, the authority to investigate rebellion charges lies solely with the police, following a 2021 reform that redistributed investigative powers among law enforcement agencies and removed rebellion from the list of crimes prosecutors and the anti-corruption office could pursue. But those agencies have still been investigating rebellion accusations against Yoon, allegedly linked to charges related to abuse of power, a type of crime they are authorized to investi-

gate. Yoon and his military leadership have been accused of attempting to block the National Assembly from

THE PIONEER A

CHANGE OF D.O.B

of- No. 17031273H CFN Santosh Kumar Sharma, R/o-At Kasmabad, Po- Gangapur, Sultanganj, Bhagalpur, Bihar- 813213, declare that in my son's service records, my D.O.B. is wrongly written as 05/01/1955 whereas my correct D.O.B. is 05/01/1965, which may be amended accordingly.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Dinesh Chauhan S/o- Lajje Ram Village- Shahpur Sector-128 Gautam Buddha Nagar Noida, I have changed my name to Dinesh Kumar Chauhan for all future

I, JC-473048K Sub Sanjai Kumar Singh, R/o- Vill+Post-Mohammdabad, Dist-Ghazipur, U.P.- 233229, declare that in my service records, my Mother's name is erroneously recorded as Jayanti Singh, whereas her correct name is Jayanti, which

may be amended accordingly.

I Sukhchain S/o Sh Satpal, R/o Village Mandi Khurd Teh. Safidon District Jind Haryana have decided to change Name of my Minor Daughter from Rajkumari Anaya to Avira Singh for our family is 98 Wiles area measuring 100 Sq. fits studed at Colony Known as Khase heritage personal preferences via affidavit number 55AA 254375/2024 dated

PD(1174)C

I, Muskan D/o Shri Ram Bhajan Prasad, R/o B-27, O Rajeev Nagar Extension, Begum pur, Delhi 110086 my name is wrongly spelt Muskaan in marksheet but my actual name is Muskaan both are same person

I, Mohammad Aslam Asif S/o S.K. Ahamad Ali R/o H.NO.- Cbehind exchane, Sector-19, Noida, Gautam Buddha naar, Uttar Pradesh-201301 declare that My daughter name has been wrongly mentioned as (School) Arisha Faiza Musawwir whereas my daughter correct name is Arisha Asif

PD(1176)C

I, Ashi Chhabra W/o Sumeet Chhabra R/o A-241, Sector-43, Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. (201301), declare that after marriage I have changed my name from Deep Shikha Kukreja to Ashi Chhabra for all purposes.

> PD(1177)C Gulafsha, D/o Shri

Mohammad Jalaluddin, R/o House No-1191, Gali No 1, block D, Sangam Vihar, Pushpa Bhawan, South Delhi 110062 my Father name is wrongly writtes as Jalaluddin in 10th class marksheet but my Father actual name is Mohammad Jalaluddin. Jalaludin and Mohammad Jalaluddin both are same person

PD(1178)C

voting to end martial law by sending hundreds of heavily armed troops to encircle the building. Lawmakers who managed to get in voted unanimouslv 190-0 to lift martial law, hours after Yoon declared it in a late-night television

Yoon has also been accused of ordering defense counterintelligence officials to detain key politicians, including opposition leader Lee Jae-myung, National Assembly Speaker Woo Won Shik and the exleader of his own conservative party, Han Dong-hun, a reformist who supported investigations into corruption

PUBLIC NOTICE

and area measuring 25 Sq. yds., i.e., 20.90 Sq. ntr., out of Khasra No. 360/1, situated at Azad

Infl., but of Miasra No. 360/1, Situated at Azalo Whar, Village Khoda, Pargana Loni, Tehsil & District Ghaziabad, U.P., by virtue of Sale Deed dated 18.03.2013 executed by Mr. Virender Saw Sylo Mr. Dharmu Saw (Doc. No. 4542). Any person (s), institution(s) having any claim and/or objection in respect of the said property shall

communicate the same to the undersigned at our address within 07 days from the publication

f this notice with documentary evidence in

of this notice with documentary evidence in support thereof, failing which all the claim, of such person(s) / institution(s) shall not be binding upon the said property or purchaser, Mohd. K. Hussain, (Advocate), 2E/23, 3° Floor, Jhandewalan Extn., New Delhi-110055, Mob. 8810391672, 9871308962

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform to all concern that Mrs. Shakuntala W/o Shri Inderpal R/o Village

Chhalera Bangar, Sector-44, Noida G.B.Nagar U.P., who is the original owner of Residential Plot No.17, Block-BL, Sector-145, Noida (U.P),

Mrs. Shakuntala expired on Dt. 01.03.2023. The will was executed in favor of his son, Mr. Virendra Chauhan S/o Late Sh. Inderpal R/o

Village- Chhalera Bangar, Sector-44, Noida G.B.Nagar U.P. Which is registered at Sub Registrar, Sadar-I, Gautam Budh Nagar Bahi

No.3, Jilid No.1046, Page No.271-286, Serial No.964 at Dt 05.10.2021. So it is informed to all concern that the said Property is going to

the basis of registered WILL. If any one has/ have any objection he/she may file his/her

objection alongwith the sufficient proof in the

Residential Plot Department of the Noida Authority within 30 days from the date of

publication of this notice. Mr. Virendra Chauhan

Noida, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar U.P., who is the

original owner of Residential Plot No.162, Block-C Sector-44, Noida (U.P), Shri Inderpal expired on Dt

Virender & Shri Keshav, all S/o Shri Inderpal, all R/o

Village- Chhalera, Noida Distt. Gautam Budh Naga U.P. Which is registered at Sub Registrar-1

Noida, Bahi No.3, Jild No.504, Page No.137-146, Serial No.503 at Dt 09.03.2015. So it is informed

to all concern that the said Property is going to be

transfer in favour of Shri Shiv Kumar, Shri Jagat Singh, Shri Virender & Shri Keshav, all S/o Shri

Inderpal, all R/o Village- Chhalera, Noida Disti. Gautam Budh Nagar U.P., on the basis of registered

WILL. If any one has/have any objection he/she ma

Notice hereby given to Public at Large stating that Sh Rohit Yaday S/o Late Sh. Charan Singh is the Owne

No. 1449 & 1453, Village-Shahpur Bamhe

Pargana-Dasna, Tehsil and Distt. - Ghaziabad, U.P. b

virtue of Sale Deed dated 09.09.2023. It is notified that the Plot Number is missing in the Gift deed which was Bounded as i.e. EAST: Rasta 12 Ft. Wide, WEST

Other Property, NORTH: Property Deepak, SOUTH

Property Bayinder However the Boundaries of the

said Plot as on date are: EAST: Rasta 12 Ft. Wide, WEST: Property Devender, NORTH: Property Deepak, SOUTH: Property Ravinder. That, Sh. Rohit Yadav S/o

Late Sh. Charan Singh is now mortgaging the said Plot in Indostar Housing Finance (Vaishali Branch Ghaziabad). Anyone having objection can raise thei

laim within 5 days from the date of Publication to

Advocates & Consultants A-98, Sector-9, New Vijay Nagar, Ghaziabad, (U.P.)-201009, MOB- 9999826427, 9999721152

PUBLIC NOTICE

information is given to general public at large that Mr. Sandeep Choudhary who is/are purchasing the Western Half portion of built up property bearing No. 29-A, area measuring 114 sq. yds. out of Rect. No. 5, Killa No. 20/1 & 2, situated in the area of Villand Nureji Khas, in the abadi of Shiv Puri Extri., Illaqa Shahdara, Delhi-110051 from Mr. Mukesh Vij S/o Late Mr. Naubat Rai Vij who acquired the said property by virtue of registered Will dated 20.10.2023 (10c. No. 1038). weeked the Mrs. Dareba Kurrar Vill salas

036) executed by Mrs. Darshan Kumari Vij alia arshan Kumari w/o Late Mr. Naubat Rai Vij Intend t

nortgage the same against the financial assistant or Hero Housing Finance Limited. Probate Order or agistered Will dated 20.10.2023 (Doc. No. 1036) Jurviving Member Certificate of Late Mrs. Orsha (Umgri Vii alias Darsha Kungri are not available with

unwing Memore refinition of the wiss. Darantaman in an ond available with plers i.e Mr. Mukesh Vij S/o Late Mr. Naubat Rai Vij, comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give is public notice that if any person(s) having any objec-on regarding ownership and/or creating mortgage the said property is/are nereby requested to infi-ate in writing to the undersigned within 14 days at allow address.

Advocates & Consultants A-98, Sector-9, New Vijay Nagar, Ghaziabad, (U.P)-201009, MOB- 9999826427, 9999721152

NCR LAW ASSOCIATES

NCR LAW ASSOCIATES

NCR LAW ASSOCIATES (Advocate)

Shri Shiy Kumar

allegations against first lady Kim Keon Hee. Yoon has defended the martial

law decree as a necessary act of governance, portraying it as a temporary warning against the liberal opposition Democratic Party, which he has described as an "antistate" force obstructing his agenda with its majority in the National Assembly. Yoon has claimed he had no intention to paralyze the functioning of the ning to arrest politicians.

der of the Army Special Warfare Command, who testified in the National Assembly that Yoon called for troops to "quickly destroy the door and drag out the lawmakers who are inside" the assembly's main chamber where the vote occurred. Kwak said he did not carry out Yoon's orders.

The joint investigation team has also questioned Maj. Gen. Moon Sang-ho, commander of the Defense Intelligence Command who has also been arrested over suspicions that he sent troops to the National Election Commission in the city of Gwacheon after Yoon declared martial law.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform to all concern that Mr. Parvinder S/o Sh. Kartare R/o Vill- Harola, Sector-5, Noida

U.P), who is the original attottee of Plot No. B-281, Sector-151, Noida (U.P) had sold the said property on General power of attorney

basis to the following person(s). GPA was executed on in favour of Mr. Ravish Kumar S/o

Kosmos, Wish Town, Sector-134, Noida (U.P.

which is registered on Dated 19.11.2024 in

Il concern that the said property is going to be

ansferred in favour of Sh. Rinkal Goval S/o Sh

Noida (U.P) If any one has/have any objection

he/she may file his/her objection along with the sufficient proof in the Residential Plot Department

Police. All the persons are hereby informed not to carry Out any transaction on the basis of said lost document. Any transaction carried out on the basis of such lost document shall be illegal and would be hel such lost document shall be negal and would be held void. Any person having found or in possession of the said document is requested to approach the owner Mrs. Surita Takkar on vinordakar@hotmail.com, +477740101980 or Advocate Amandeep Singh at aman@dexterjuris.com, +919711570956.

Be it known to all that my client Shri

Harinder Pal Singh S/o Shri Harbans Singh R/o WZ-41, Prithvi Park, Tilak Nagar, New Delhi-110018 has disowned/debarred his son movable & immovable properties and has severed all relations from him due to his misconduct. Any person dealing with him shall be doing at his/her own risk.
PRAVEEN RASTOGI

Venkataraman S/o Sh. M.V. Raian R/o 16-C is the original attottee of Plot No.44, Block-A Sector-40, Noida had sold the said property on General power of attorney basis to the following person(s). GPA was executed on in favour of Smt. Anuradha Purohit D/o Sh. Gulshan Ahuia R/o I-48 Sector-41 Noida Distt. G.B. Nagar (U.P.). which is registered or Dated 10.03.1998 in Sub Registrar office Delhi The agreement to sell was not registered or not executed. So it is informed to all concern that the said property is going to be transferred in favour of Smt. Maya Rani Ahuja W/o Gulshan Abuia B/o H.No. A-50. Sector-40. Noida G.B. he/she may file his/her objection along with the sufficient proof in the Residential Plot Department of the Noida Authority within 15 days from the date of publication of this Smt Anuradha Purohit

Public Notice

This is to inform the general public that Mr. Pramod Kumar Shrivastawa is the owner Land area measuring 90 Sq. Yds. out of Khasra No. 676. situated at Vilage Roza Jalejbur, Pragnan and Tehsil Dadri, District Gautam Budh Nagar through Sale Deed dated 13.10.2020 as doc. No. 16352 executed by Mrs. Bithika Sarkar in favour of Mr. Pramod Kumar Srivastawa in respect of said property.

The above-said owner has misplaced the (1) Original title document dated 09.05.2018 executed by Mr. Atra in favour of Mr. Pradeep Kumar & Mr. Anii Kumar in respect of land area measuring 0.0075 hectare out of Khasra no. 676. (2) Original Sale Deed dated 18.03.2019 as doc. no. 5764 executed by Mr. Pradeeps Kumar & Mr. Anii Kumar in favour of Mr. Report of India area measuring 90 sq. yds. out of Khasra no. 676. 676. Application No. - 20240001017937, registered al Police Computer Centre, Technical Services HQ. Lucknow, na quated 29.12.2024. Anyone who finds

Mohan Estate.
Mr. Pramod Kumar Shrivastawa is in the process
the said properties with Her h respect to the said properties or the interests

n the stipulated 07-days period by contactin Veritas: North (Advocates & Lega sultants) at Office No. 11, 1st Floor, Buildin

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Road, New Delhi for & on behalf of President of India, invites open e-tender for the inder noted work

for conducting monitoring and live line Thermal scanning o 25 KV AC OHE System. Approx. Cost of work Rs 48 75 697 66 **Earnest Money Deposit** Rs. 97,500/ 09.01.2025 (00:00 Hrs.) to 23.01.2025 E-Tender Bid Online **Submission Period**

Website particulars where complete details of

🟡 Indian Overseas Bank SONIPAT BRANCH (Address : Gohana Road Opp. Om Petrol

Pump, Sonipat (Haryana) Pin code-131001 Phone No. 0130-2200193 & Email Id: iob2721@iob.in)

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

Dev Nagar Gali No. 06 Dist, Sonipat Haryana-131001 and Smt. Geeta W/o Shri Praveen Kumar S/o Ramkishan House no. 312/29, Dev Nagar Gali No. 06 Dist, Sonipat Haryana-131001. Smt. Geeta W/o Parveen Kumar/Mortgagor, having residential address House

 312/29, Dev Nagar Gali No. 06 Dist, Sonipat Haryana-131001, (hereinafter eferred as 'borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors') to repay the amount pentioned in the notice being Rs. 10,52,325.56 (Rupees Ten lakhs fifty two thousand three hundred twenty five and paise fifty six only) as on

 The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken 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

aid Rules on this 26th day of December 2024.

ot to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Indian Overseas Bank for an amount Rs. 10,52,325.56 (Rupees Ten lakhs fifty two thousand three hundred twenty five and paise fifty six only) as on 13.08.2024 with interest thereon at contractual rates & sts as agreed, charges etc., from the aforesaid date mentioned in the demand otice till date of payment less repayments, if any, made after issuance of s.Rs.10,47,501.50 (Rupees Ten lakhs forty Seven thousand five hundred one and paise fifty only)as on 26.12.2024 payable with further interest at contractual rates & rests, charges etc., till date of payment.

the Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to them, to redeem the

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

Equitable mortgage of residential plot having Property Id 35-C-282-U-122 Situated at Khewat No. 166 Killa no. 6//16/1(5-16) with otal land of 5K-16M, maria having share of 13/464" which works out to be neasuring 96 Sq.yds. i.e., situated at 4" sub internal street called Gali no. 06 near Sonipat Gas Agency/ Shiva Shiksha School Waka Called Gali no, 06 within the revenue estate of Jamalpur khurd within the abadi of Dev Nagar, Sonepat and within the M.C. limit, Sonepat pin code 131001 standing in the name of Smt. Geeta w/o shri Praveen and same is bounded by East: House of Promila West: House of Harshit & Deepak South: Plot of Ram Kumar

 Vehicle loan no. 272103452000131 availed in the name of Mr. Pravee Kumar and Geeta is also NPA with present outstanding of Rs. 3,32,411.94 (Three akhs thirty two thousand four hundred eleven and paise ninty four) as on

Sd/- Authorised Officer Indian Overseas Bank

EXTENSION OF PERIODICITY OF SPECIAL TRAIN

It is notified for the information of rail passengers that Railways have decided to extend the periodicity of the run of Train No. 05577/05578 Saharsa Jn.-Anand Vihar T.-Saharsa Jn. Garib Rath Special as per details given below:-

	Train No.	From	То	Days of Run	Notified up to	Period of Extension
ı	05577	Saharsa Jn.	Anand Vihar T.	Exp-Thu, Sat	31.12.24	01.01.25 to 28.02.25
ı	05578	Anand Vihar T.	Saharsa Jn.	Exp-Sat, Mon	02.01.25	03.01.25 to 02.03.25

Note :- Rest of the instructions will hold good.

For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table of other stations enroute and composition etc., passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No 139 or visit Indian Railways website https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in or NTES App.

Visit RailMadad Website:-



Helpline No. www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in



Your Convenience - Our Concern



New Okhla Industrial Development Authority

Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida, G.B. Nagar (U.P.) Website: www.noidaauthorityonline.in

E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tenders are invited from eligible contractors/firm for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website: www.noidaauthorityonline.in & https://etender.up.nic.in Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.

A) Short Term Fresh-Tender Work

SI. No. Jobs No.		Name of the work	Tender Amount (Rs. Lacs)
1.	36/DGM/SM(WC-1)/	M/o Building (Renovation & Maintenance work of House No. 16	33.44
	2024-25	in Sector-14A), Noida.	

The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 01.01.2025 up to 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/ downloaded on dated 02.01.2025 at 11.00 AM.

SI. No.	Jobs No.	Name of the work	Tender Amount (Rs. Lacs)
2.	21/DGM/SM(WC-1)/ 2024-25	M/o Building (Annual Maintenance Work in CAG Guest House, Police Control Room and Staff Quarter in Sector-14A and Sector-15A), Noida.	39.96

The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 01.01.2025 up to 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/ downloaded on dated 02.01.2025 at 11.00 AM.

नवीन ओखला औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण के अधिसूचित क्षेत्र में शासन से रवीकृत मास्टर प्लान एवं उत्तर प्रदेश औद्योगिक क्षेत्र विकास अधिनियम, 1976 के विपरीत प्लॉटिंग या किसी भी प्रकार का अन्य निर्माण पूरी तरह अवैध है। जनसामान्य को आगाह किया जाता है कि इस प्रकार की अवैध कॉलोनियों एवं अवैध निर्मित भवनों में भुखण्डों / अपार्टमेंट / दुकान / गोडाऊन / फार्महाउस की खरीद—फरोख्त से पर्णतः सचेत रहें तथा कॉलोनाइजर के लभावने एवं भ्रामक विज्ञापनों से बचें। साथ ही नौएडा अधिसूचित क्षेत्र के हिण्डन एवं यमुना नदियों के डूब क्षेत्र (Flood Plain Zone) में अनधिकृत / अवैध प्लॉट एवं फार्म हाऊसों के कारोबार में संलिप्त भूमाफियाओं के चंगुल में न फंसे। Dy. General Manager (Civil)

for this country," Musk wrote in his translated commentary He went on to say the far-right party "can lead the country into a future where economic prosperity, cultural integrity and technological innovation are not just wishes, but reali-

The Tesla Motors CEO also wrote that his investment in Germany gave him the right to comment on the country's condition.

The AfD is polling strongly, but its candidate for the top iob, Alice Weidel, has no realistic chance of becoming chancellor because other parties refuse to work with the

far-right party. lic image.

An ally of US President-elect Donald Trump, the technology billionaire challenged in his opinion piece the party's pub-

03/07/2024

block Muskan.Muskan

PD(1175)C

telephone

NOTICE OF LOSS OF SHARES OF ESCORTS KUBOTA LIMITED

Notice is hereby given that the following share certificates have been reported as lost/misplaced and the Company intends to issue duplicate certificates in lieu thereof, in due course. Any person who has a valid claim on the said shares should lodge such a claim with the Company at its Registered office within 15 days hereof. Name Folio No. Certifi- Distinctive

the holder	NO.	sha- res (Rs. 10/- f.v)	No.(s)	NO.(S)	-
		<u> </u>	1000000	From	To
af	9	50	1292570	64548908	
Saraf	0.0	50	1292571	64548958	6454900
8	운	50	1292572	64549008	6454905
Lalita	ESC0100791	50	1292573	64549058	6454910
تا	ш	10	1292574	64549108	6454911
		10	1292575	64549118	6454912
		5	1292576	64549128	6454913
		1	1292577	64549133	6454913
		1	1292578	64549134	6454913
		1	1292579	64549135	6454913
1	l	1	1202580	64549136	6454913

PREM KUMAR SARAF (HUF) (CLAIMANT

of the aforesaid firm.

S/d. PANKAJ MATHUR (PARTNER)

of ownership of the above said Land/Plot/Property, of deceased, in favor of my client (Smt. Vandana Gard), within a period of 14 days from the publication of this notice, with copied of proofs to support the claims/objections at below mentioned address. If no claims/objections are received within the period prescribed above, Haryana Shehari Vikas Pradhikaran shall be at the liberty to transfer the

PUBLIC NOTICE

LOST AND FOUND

n the Residential Plot Department of the Noida Authority within 30 days from the date of publication No:2448640/2024 dated 30.12.2024

Executed in favour of Akhilagya

18.09.2021.

06.07.2019. No. GDG-1-14698-2022-23 or

Akhilagya Solar Energy Private

Email: ayushi.dixit@renew.com Address: Commercial Block-1, Golf Course Road, DLF City, Zone 6, Sector 43, Gurugram, Haryana

and (2) Mr. Abhishek Mathur as per Indian Partnership Act. The term of its existence until 26th December 2024, thereby dissolving the said firm on said date after dopted by one of its partner Mr. Pankaj Mathur for dissolution of firm at will. It is also made clear by way of this publication that one of the partner Mr.

firm / individual / corporation deals with Mr. Abhishek Mathur in exchange of cash, goods or services, transactions will be cost and consequences.

assembly, saying that the troops were sent to maintain order, and also denied plan-Yoon's claims have been denied by Kwak Jong-keun, the now-arrested comman-Information is given to the general public at large that my client **Mr. Harsh Rajpoot** s/o Late Harish Mohan & Mr. Hemant S/o Pooran Singh who is the owner of Freehold Residential Plot of

> Sub Registrar office Noida-I Gautam Budh Nagar, Bahi No. 4, Jild No. 1822, Page No.125-138, NITIN BHASKAR (Advocates & Serial No.541. The agreement to sell was no registered or not executed. So it is informed to Consultants) Off.: Chamber No. G-712

PUBLIC NOTICE

Jautam Budh Nagar, UP. Hereinafter referred os as "said property".

NOTICE is hereby given to general public that wor client, Mrs. Kunti Devi has informed us that the is the owner of the said property vide Sale Deed executed by Mrs. Satendri Sirohi in her awour in respect of the said property. The said led is duly registered with the concerned bub-Registrar of Assurances as Document No. 55537, in Book No. 1, Volume No. 21950, pagis-17-4, registered on 14.10.2022 (SRO-Dadri). Dur clients have also informed us that Mrs. Satendri Sirohi purchased the said property form Mr. Pramod Kumar vide sale deed egistered with the concerned Sub-Registrar of Assurances as Document No. 5098 in Book No. Volume No. 1718, pages 104-107, registered on 14.06.2006. (SRC-Dadri). In this connection, ur client has further informed us that the taid sale deed dated 14.06.2006, in original, hereinafter called the "said document's and beard original part of chain documents, has been ost/misplaced and is not traceable. An FIR of this effect has also been lodged with Jttar Pradesh Police vide L.A.R. No. 2024000/1019536 dated 30.12.2024.

Ottal Pladesin Folice viole LAR. National College (1988) and the Assembly College (1988) and t

Notice is hereby given by Akhilagya Solar Energy Private Limited to the

with the crime branch, Delhi via online E ost Portal. If found, please contact the undersigned:

Solar Energy Private Limited

Sale Deed registered as Documen No. GDG-1-07049-2021-22 or

No. GDG-1-03338-2019-20 or 4. Sale Deed registered as Documen

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

ground Floor, Sant Nagar, East of Kailash, New Delhi-110065 was running under by its partners namely (1) Mr. Pankaj Mathur

Pankaj Mathur of M/s Daffodils nternational will not be liable for any ransaction already done with Mr. Abhishek Mathur or entered upon by him for exchange of goods or services which has been dealt in cash or any money amount taken by him in his personal accounts from the general public, representing as partner of the firm, the other partner Mr. Pankaj Mathur and its firm M/s Daffodils International has no concerned nor is liable for any miscreants done by Mr. Abhishek Mathur. Mr. Pankaj Mathur or his firm M/s Daffodils International will not be liable any further after publication of the aforesaid notice

has been informed that origina registered property documents of Mr Shiv Shankar Gautam S/o Sunder Lal Basti, Deoli, Khanpur, ND- 110062 have lost/Misplaced. If anyone finds the document please return/contact to

KKD Court, Shahdara, New Delhi-110032

FOR M/S INTELLECTIVE LAW OFFICES A-74, LOWER GROUND FLOOR, DEFENCE COLONY, NEW DELHI-110024

public at large that the originals of documents i.e. Sale Deeds listed below are lost and are not traceable. Therefore with respect to the loss of the below mentioned original Sale Deeds Akhilagya Solar Energy Private Limited through it's representative has lodged a lost and found complaint bearing no. LR

. Sale Deed registered as Documen No. GDG-1-06677-2021-22 or

24.09.2021. Sale Deed registered as Documen

Limited

Notice is hereby given that M/s Daffodils International, situated at 294, Lower

It is also persistent to inform all that if any

solely liable for doing at their own risk, This announcement serves as notice to all concerned and of the legal dissolution

of the Noida Authority within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice PUBLIC NOTICE Vijay Park, Naya Bazar, Najafgarh, Delhi-110043,

who was co-owner of Land/Plot/Property No. 75, Bahadurgarh, Haryana (Property ID No. 17, Priya Apartment, Sector 14, Rohini, Delhi-110085, expired on 12/09/2024, While alive, Smt transfer her ownership of above mentioned property, exclusively to Smt. Vandana Garg (her daughter On behalf of my client, i.e. Vandana Garg W/o of Sh Parmod Garg, R/o of Flat No. 17, Priya Apartment, advocate hereby invites claims or objections from other heir/s or claimant/s or objector/s for the transfer

ownership of the deceased to my client in the Deepak Kumar Gupta (Advocate) Ch. No: 34-35 Court Complex, Bahadurgarh,

Distt. Jhajjar, Haryana-124507. PH: 9215668791

E-TENDER NOTICE

RMITIS (Roof Mounted Infrared Thermal Imaging System)

23.01.2025 (15:00 Hrs.) E-Tender Open Date & Time

E-Tender No.: 43-TRD-NDLS-2024-25 Dated: 27.12.2024 SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

(for immovable property) [(Rule 8(1)] ned being the Authorized Officer of the Indian Overseas Bank SONIPAT BRANCH, Sonipat, under the Securitization and Reconstruction of inancial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(2) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated 13/08/2024 calling upon the borrower Shri Praveen Kumar S/o Ramkishan House no. 312/29

13.08.2024 with further interest at contractual rates and rests, charges etc. till date of realization within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrowers in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned

24.12.2024 payable with further interest at contractual rates & rests, charges etc., till date of payment Dated: 26.12.2024

CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA

UP unveils ambitious five year export policy to boost share to 7.5 per cent: Industry Minister Gupta

Pradesh Uttar government is gearing up to unveil a five-year export policy to boost its share in the country's overall outward shipments to 7.5 per cent and help the state become a USD 1 trillion economy.

The new export policy for 2025-30 will replace the existing five-year policy. state government provides a host of incentives hand-holds exporters to push shipments

from the state.

Uttar Pradesh Minister for Industrial Development, Export Promotion, NRI, and Investment Promotion Nand Gopal Gupta 'Nandi' said the state government is working on the 2025-30 export policy, with a focus on enhancing capabilities

formulated with a target to increase the state's share from 4.71 per cent in 2023-24 to 7.5 per cent. This also aims at accelerating economic growth and job creation," Gupta said in an email interview. The focus on

capabilities will propel Uttar Pradesh towards becoming a USD 1 trillion economy, driving revenue fostering development, he added.

"Since the state government has adopted export as well as investment-friendly policies, with continuous

one-product scheme has played a pivotal role in logistics facilities in the state, hence this will boost the creating employment and export from the state and upskilling traditional artisans engaged in various contribute significantly to make the state a USD 1 traditional arts of different trillion economy," Gupta noted. During the April-September period of the districts. The state government is providing providing training to upgrade the skills of artisans current financial year, Uttar

Pradesh's share in the and toolkits to artisans to country's total exports was enable them to establish estimated at 4.89 per cent. their own enterprises. Since the inception of the The minister also informed scheme, the government has trained 1,33,472 artisans that the state is already providing incentives to across the state, Gupta said. exporters under Marketing Development The scheme was launched in January 2018 with the objective of promoting the traditional arts and crafts

Rationalisation plans. He further said that the upcoming Jewar Airport will enhance connectivity to exporters with overseas

Assistance, Gateway Port

Scheme, and Air Freight

destinations. The airport will help in India's goods and services exports may cross USD 800 saving time and expenditure billion in 2024-25. It was on freight charges. Gupta also said the one-district-USD 778 billion in 2023-24.

Pradesh.

India Inc seek tax relief, fuel duty cut and job boosters in pre-budget meet

PTI NEW DELHI

Representatives from industry bodies sought reduction in personal income tax rates to ensure higher disposable income in the hands of the middle class, reduction in excise duty on fuel, and measures to provide impetus to employmentintensive sectors in their customary pre-Budget meeting with the Finance Minister on Monday.

Industry bodies also raised the issue of dumping of excess stock by China globally, including in India, and challenges posed to food security and inflation due to the "climate emergency", during the fifth pre-Budget consultation meeting. The 2025-26 Union Budget

will be presented on February

Apart from the finance minister, the meeting was attended by finance secretary, DIPAM secretary of (Department of Investment and Public Asset Management), Secretaries of

the Department of Economic He said the CII has sought Affairs and the Chief measures to provide impetus Economic Adviser to the to areas that have large Government of India, among employment potential like others. Speaking to the media garments, footwear, tourism, after the meeting, CII furniture, among others, President Sanjiv Puri said apart from suggestions for MSMEs and while the Indian economy is doing very well, globally there integrating India into global are a lot of challenges. value chains.

"From a perspective of boosting consumption, we have suggested that there be some relief provided to income tax up to a Rs 20 lakh on the marginal income tax rate so that it boosts consumption, there is more disposable income and in turn also leads to buoyancy in

overall development. "The new export policy is being enhancing Adani to sell stake in food venture Adani Wilmar,

raise over USD two Billion



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

 $B_{\text{group}}^{\text{illionaire Gautam Adani's}} \stackrel{\text{Gautam Adani's}}{\text{on Monday}}$ announced its exit from FMCG joint venture Adani Wilmar by selling its entire stake to the Singaporean partner and in the open market for an estimated over USD 2 billion in a first major deal since the US bribery

In a statement, Adani Enterprises Ltd - which held 43.94 per cent stake in Fortune brand cooking oil, wheat flour and other food product maker Adani Wilmar Ltd -- said it will sell 31.06 per cent stake to Wilmar International. About 13 per cent will be sold in the open market to meet requirements.

Adani will sell a 31.06 per cent stake to Wilmar for Rs 12,314 crore (share price of no more than Rs 305 apiece). Adding the share sale through OFS the total proceeds will exceed USD 2 billion (about Rs 17,100 crore).

"With this, AEL (Adani Enterprises Limited) will fully exit Adani Wilmar Ltd," it said. "Adani's nominee directors will step down from the board of Adani Wilmar Ltd." The transaction is expected to conclude before March 31,

will be used to turbocharge the growth of AEL in core infrastructure businesses. With this transaction, Adani is

back with a bang, removing the liquidity perception overhang. This is the first major transaction post US prosecutors in November charge-sheeted founder chairman Gautam Adani and his associates over a USD 265 million bribery scheme to win renewable energy supply contracts. Adani group has denied the allegations as baseless and said

it will seek legal recourse. "Adani Enterprises Ltd, Adani Commodities LLP (a whollyowned subsidiary of AEL) and Lence Pte Ltd (a wholly-owned subsidiary of Wilmar International Ltd) have entered into an agreement on December 30, 2024, pursuant to which Lence will acquire all the paid-up equity shares of Adani Wilmar Ltd held by Adani Commodities as at the date of exercise of the call option or put option, as the case maybe, in respect of a maximum of 31.06 per cent of the evicting naid share capital of AWL," the statement said.

In addition, "it has been agreed between the parties that AEL will divest a 13 per cent share in Adani Wilmar to achieve compliance with minimum public shareholding requirements," it said without giving details.

Adani Wilmar Ltd is an equal joint venture between Adani Group and Singapore-based commodity trader Wilmar. The two partners currently own a combined 87.87 per cent of Adani Wilmar, far the maximum Proceeds from the stake sale permissible 75 per cent.

Sebi to auction 23 properties of nine companies in February PTI NEW DELHI

Sebi on Monday said it has scheduled an auction of 23 properties belonging to nine firms, such as Tower Infotech and Vibgyor Group of Companies in February, aimed to recoup funds illicitly collected from investors.

Additionally, GBC Industrial Corporation, Waris Group, Pincon Group, Kolkata Weir Industries Ltd (KWIL), Annex Infrastructure India, Icore Group and MPS Group were the other firms whose properties will also be auctioned. The process for the sale of the

companies' assets has been initiated by the markets



watchdog following orders of Calcutta High Court.

The properties include plots, apartments and buildings located in West Bengal. It will be auctioned at a reserve price of Rs 55 crore, according to a notice issued by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi).

being practised in different

districts by identifying district-specific products for all 75 districts of Uttar

Sailendra Prasad Iustice Talukdar has been appointed as the one-man committee for liquidating the assets of the firm and repaying the investors. The move is part of

investors' money. Adroit Technical Services has been engaged by Sebi to assist it in the sale of the properties. Of the 23 properties, seven each belong to Tower Infotech and Vibgyor Group, two each related to the Waris Group and GBC Industrial Industrial Corporation and the rest belong to MPS Group, I-Core Group, Annex Infrastructure India, KWIL and Pincon

Sebi on behalf of the committee is inviting bids for the sale of the properties from the bidders. The regulator said the auction will be auctioned online on February 6, 2025, from 11 am to 1 pm. The markets watchdog has asked the bidders to make their own independent enquiries regarding the encumbrances, litigations, title of the properties put on auction and claims, before submitting their bid.

"We are seeing dumping of a

lot of products (by China)

into various parts of the world, including India. We

also have the issue of climate

emergency, which, besides

other things, also impacts

food and nutrition, (food)

security and inflation. In this

context we have made several

suggestions and ideas'

These firms had mopped up money from investors without complying with regulatory norms.

Vibgyor Allied Infrastructure had issued optionally fully convertible debentures in 2009 and raised Rs 61.76 crore

Tower Infotech had raised nearly Rs 46 crore through the issuance of nonconvertible debentures and redeemable preference shares between 2005 and 2010.

Sensex drops by 451 points, Nifty ends **below 23,650**

Benchmark Sensex declined by nearly 451 points on Monday due to selling in heavyweight stocks HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and Reliance Industries, weak global trends and unabated foreign fund outflows. In a volatile trading session, the 30-share BSE barometer

dropped by 450.94 points or per cent to settle at 78,248.13. As many as 23 of its constituents closed lower while seven closed with gains. The barometer opened lower but recovered losses in the mid session to hit a high of 79,092.70. The index failed to hold onto gains in the second half due to selling in bluechips and tanked 621.94 points or 0.79 per cent to touch a low of 78,077.13. The NSE Nifty declined 168.50 points or 0.71 per cent to settle at 23,644.90 as 38 of its components fell

and 11 closed higher. Motors fell the most by 2.24 per cent. Titan, Tata Steel, State Bank of India, Mahindra & Mahindra, NTPC, ICICI Bank, Maruti, HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries and Infosys were among the

Tech and IndusInd Bank were

The market began the week on a volatile note, ending with a loss of over half a per cent. After a flat opening, the Nifty gained ground in the first half but faced selling pressure in heavyweight stocks across

Prospects of economy expected to Rupee falls four paise to close improve in 2025: RBI Governor

PTI MUMBAI

 $F_{\rm government}^{\rm acing~criticism~from~the}_{\rm over~the}$ central bank prioritising inflation over growth, the new RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Monday said that prospects of the Indian economy are to improve back of high consumer and business confidence in 2025. "As we strive to preserve financial stability to support a higher growth path for the

Indian economy, our focus steadfast remains maintaining stability of financial institutions and, more broadly, systemic stability," Malhotra said in foreword to the Financial Stability Report.

He further said that despite the global uncertainties Indian economy is expected to pick up pace in the second half of the current financial year. "Notwithstanding



global macro-financial ethos as it unfolds, prospects for the Indian economy are expected to improve after the slowdown in the pace of economic activity in the first half of 2024-25. "Consumer and business confidence for the year ahead remain high and the investment scenario is brighter as corporations step into 2025 with robust balance sheets and high profitability," Malhotra who took over as 26th Governor earlier this month. Flagging the issue of growth moderation in the first half, the Finance Ministry in its November Monthly Economic

Review had raised concerns that the possibility that structural factors may also have contributed to the slowdown in H1 should not be ruled out

India recorded a slowdown in GDP growth to a sevenquarter low of 5.4 per cent for September 2024. For the first half, the GDP growth stood at per cent. Slowdown in growth and moderation in inflation are building case for RBI to slash policy rate in its upcoming Monetary Policy Committee meeting.

Malhotra further said that financial sector regulators in India too are intensifying reforms and sharpening their surveillance against the backdrop of the soundness of the financial system bolstered by robust earnings, low levels of impaired assets and strong capital buffers, as this report

at ₹85.52 against US dollar

PTI MUMBAI

The rupee dropped 4 paise to 85.52 (provisional) against the US dollar in early trade on Monday, as dollar demand from importers, foreign fund outflows and a muted trend in domestic equities sentiments.

Forex traders said the rupee witnessed heavy volatility on Friday as well on Monday significant dollar amid demand linked to the expiry of December currency futures and maturing positions in the outstanding forwards.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened on a weak note and witnessed an intra-day low of 85.59 and a high of 85.43 against the American currency. The local unit settled for the day at 85.52 (provisional), registering a fall of 4 paise over its previous close.



Friday, the registered the steepest fall in almost two years to hit its lifetime intra-day low of 85.80 before a likely central bank intervention helped recover some of its losses and settled 21 paise lower at a record low of 85.48 against the US dollar. "We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias on strength in the US dollar and month-end dollar demand from importers and oil marketing companies (OMCs).

laggards. Zomato, Tech Mahindra, HCL

among the gainers.

Silent firing' on a rise with rapid technological advancement: Report

PTI MUMBAI

With rapid technological advancement, silent firing - a strategy by companies to indirectly push employees to leave their roles - has picked up pace, with 10 per cent of employers preferring layoffs for redundant positions, a report said on Monday.

The report by staffing solutions and HR services provider Genius Consultants said that silent firing is often intertwined technological advancements, with employers adopting varied strategies to navigate the evolving workplace

landscape.
While 79 per cent of employers interviewed said they prioritise upskilling their current workforce to adapt to technological changes, 10 per cent prefer layoffs for redundant positions, the report said.

While 6 per cent resort to assigning workloads excessive underperforming employees as a subtle means of attrition,

it added. The report by Genius Consultants is based on a survey that analysed feedback



dynamics. According to the report, 39 per cent of employers

anticipate complete reliance on advanced technologies to manual of balancing technological growth with human resource

minimise intervention five years ahead, however, 31 per cent emphasised the importance

development. half of the

opposed replacing human employees with AI, employees emphasising the importance of a human-centric approach to workforce management.

On the other hand, 36 per cent of employers support the complete adoption of AI, reflecting growing inclination toward automation and technological advancement,

it stated. This split highlights the contrasting strategies organizations are considering as they navigate the balance between innovation and human capital, added the

Despite advancements, 52 per cent of employers believe manual intervention remains indispensable, underscoring the enduring importance of human contributions in the workplace, it said. Silent firing remains contentious, with 34 per cent rejecting it entirely, while 28 per cent use it frequently and 29 per cent occasionally, citing improved efficiency and professional growth opportunities justifications, it added. Meanwhile, from

rise of 'silent firing' and the implementation of advanced technologies have profoundly impacted their workplace

experiences.
When asked if they have faced sudden side-lining, exclusion, or isolation from critical projects and decisionmaking processes, 55 per cent of respondents confirmed that they have experienced this issue. A substantial 68 per cent of

employees have experienced

undue pressure from management, often citing AI technology benchmarks for performance, leading to workplace tension. Over 32 per cent believe their roles are becoming redundant due technological advancements, causing delays in promotions or acknowledgement, and resignation prompting considerations, said the report. The report also found the impact of technology on employee retention, with 41 per cent of respondents admitting they are feeling

manual roles. While 52 per cent disagreed, indicating that their roles are employees' perspective, the unaffected or that they have

compelled to quit their jobs

due to automation replacing

adapted to the technological changes. underscores the varied employee experiences in the face of automation, reflecting both the challenges and opportunities posed by the integration of advanced technologies

workplace. Nearly 32 per cent of respondents have felt that their positions are becoming increasingly irrelevant due to the rising influence of artificial intelligence, and a reassuring 61 per cent have expressed confidence in the continued value significance of their roles.

'Silent firing is an emerging phenomenon organisations must approach cautiously. While it may appear as a quick fix for anaging underperformance, it risks undermining employee morale and trust.

'Our survey underscores the importance communication, development, and empathy to foster a balanced workplace where both technology and human potential can coexist," Consultants Genius Chairman and Managing Director R P Yadav added.

INBRIEF

GNDU EXAMS POSTPONED. NOW ON JANUARY 12

AMRITSAR: Guru Nanak Dev University has announced that all annual and semester (theory) exams originally scheduled for Monday, December 30, have been postponed due to the Punjab

GNDU'S PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT LEADS MENTAL HEALTH OUTREACH PROGRAMS

AMRITSAR: The Department of Psychology at Guru Nanak Dev University (GNDU) is taking significant steps to address the growing mental health challenges in marginalized and underserved



LAW DEPARTMENT OF GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY SETS BENCHMARK IN LEGAL INTERNSHIPS

AMRITSAR: The Law Department of Guru Nanak Dev University has witnessed remarkable growth in its internship program over the past year, showcasing its dedication to providing students with practical legal exposure.

GNDU PROFESSOR SUNIL KUMAR APPOINTED AS MEMBER OF BSF VIDWAT MANDAL

AMRITSAR: In recognition of exceptional scholarship and literary achievements, Professor Sunil Kumar, Head of the Hindi Department and Dean of the Language Faculty at Guru Nanak Dev University, has been nominated as a member of the Border Security Force (BSF) Vidwat Mandal for three years.



Magnus Carlsen returns to World Blitz Championship after FIDE allows jeans

AP NEW YORK

Top-ranked chess player
Magnus Carlsen is headed
back to the World Blitz
Championship on Monday after its governing body agreed to loosen a dress code that got him fined and denied a late-round game in another tournament for refusing to change out of jeans.

Lamenting contretemps, International Chess Federation President Arkady Dvorkovich said in a statement Sunday that he'd let World Blitz Championship World Blitz tournament officials consider allowing "appropriate jeans" with a jacket, and other "elegant minor deviations" from the dress code.

He said Carlsen's stand — which culminated in his quitting the tournament Friday — highlighted a need for more discussion "to ensure that our rules and their application reflect the evolving nature of chess as a global and accessible sport."

Carlsen, meanwhile, said in a video posted Sunday on social media that he would play — and wear jeans in the World Blitz Championship when it begins Monday.

"I think the situation was badly mishandled on their side," the 34-



year-old Norwegian grandmaster to said. But he added that he loves end and wanted fans to be able

and that he was watch. encouraged by his discussions with playing blitz — a fast-paced form of the federation after Friday's

"I think we sort of all want the same thing," he suggested in the video on his Take Take Take chess app's YouTube channel. "We want the players to be comfortable, sure, but also relatively presentable.

The events began when Carlsen wore jeans and a sportcoat Friday to the Rapid World Championship, which is separate from but held in conjunction with the blitz event. The chess federation said Friday that longstanding rules prohibit jeans at those tournaments, and players are lodged nearby to make sartorial

switch-ups easy if needed. An official fined Carlsen \$200 and asked him to change pants, but he refused and wasn't paired for a ninth-round game, the federation said at the time. The organisation noted that another grandmaster, Ian Nepomniachtchi, was fined earlier in the day for wearing sports shoes in the day for wearing sports shoes, changed and continued to play.

Carlsen has said that he offered to wear something else the next day, but officials were unyielding. He said "it became a bit of a matter of

brinciple," so he quit the rapid and blitz championships.

In the video posted Sunday, he questioned whether he had indeed broken a rule and said changing clothes would have needlessly interrupted his concentration between games. He called the punishment "unbelievably harsh".



No Indian player among nominees for ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year award

PTI DUBAI

No Indian player features among the nominees for the ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year award which has Sri Lanka skipper Chamari Athapaththu and New Zealand's Amelia Kerr, among others.

The other two players nominated for the honour are Australia's Annabel Sutherland and South Africa captain Laura Wolvaardt.

"Sri Lanka's all-format captain has been producing the goods with the bat for a long time now for her country. now for her country. Athapaththu is ranked among the top-10 players in the ICC Women's rankings for batters and all-rounders in ODIs as well as T20Is, proving her mettle with both bat and ball," said ICC in a release.

"A stellar year with over 1,000 runs across formats, picking up 30 wickets as well along the way has underlined her position as one of the most impactful players in women's cricket," it added.

Athapaththu made 458 runs in nine ODIs at 65.42 and claimed nine wickets while in 21 T20Is, she scored 720 runs and took 21 wickets.

Kerr has been nominated for her stellar performances, especially in New Zealand's title-winning campaign in the Women's T20 World Cup.

"Melie Kerr had a remarkable year, highlighted by leading New Zealand to their maiden Women's T20 World Cup title and setting a national record for the most Women's T20I wickets in a calendar year," the ICC said.

"Her crowning achievement

came during the White Ferns' triumphant World Cup campaign, where she amassed 135 runs and claimed 15 wickets — a tournament record — culminating in their maiden Women's T20 World Cup crown."

World Com

World Cup.
"Laura Wolvaardt has been a force to reckon with for the Proteas, leading the team from the front as the all-format skipper as well as piling up runs when needed at the top of the batting order," the ICC

Wolvaardt scored 697 runs in 12 ODIs at 87.12 with a highest score of 184 not out, and made another 223 runs across three Tests with a highest score of 122. In nine T20Is, Wolvaardt made 673 runs at 39.58 with a highest

score of 102. Australia's Sutherland was rewarded for her knock of 210 against South Africa at Perth in the one-off Test in February. She also made 369 runs and took 13 wickets in 12 ODIs.

The 23-year-old set new standards with a breakout year that places her among the best all-rounders in the world in the 50-over format," the ICC

"Sutherland became the first cricketer in women's ODI history to score back-to-back centuries while batting at No 5 or lower in the ODI series against New Zealand. Sutherland also became the second-youngest Australian to score three ODI centuries behind former captain Meg



West Bengal, Kerala clash in blockbuster Santosh Trophy final

PTI HYDERABAD

West Bengal and Kerala, two of India's finest teams with a rich history in the game, will clash in a blockbuster summit showdown of the National Football Championship for the Santosh Trophy here on

The two states that have rightfully earned the tags of Indian football hubs are no strangers to the pinnacle of the national championships with West Bengal gearing up for a record 47th final and Kerala standing on the verge of playing their 16th summit

Both sides have shown form befitting of their stature in the tournament, winning nine of their 10 matches, while drawing one each.

Historically, Bengal have dominated at this stage, winning the tournament 32 times, while Kerala are seventime champions. In recent years, however,

Kerala have had the edge over their eastern rivals, winning the 2017-18 and the 2021-22 titles defeating West Bengal. History, however, has no part to play in the final on New Years' Eve, believes Bengal

head coach Sanjoy Sen. "Perhaps reaching the (Santosh Trophy) final is an achievement for other states,

but that is not the case for us. It means nothing to Bengal Zero," he exclaimed.

"Unless we win the trophy, it all counts for nothing.

"Yes, we have won the tournament 32 times in the past, but the Santosh Trophy is a much bigger tournament now in terms of the number of not intend to downplay past achievements, but I feel that it is more difficult to win it now," said Sen. Sen's counterpart Biby Thomas Muttath echoed similar expectations from his home state.

"The Santosh Trophy is like a World Cup for us, back in Kerala. The minimum expectation is for us to reach the final, but of course, everyone wants a win," he said. In the 10 matches so far, Kerala have scored 35 goals, while Bengal netted 27 times. The former have had a number of options for their goals, Naseeb Rahman (8), Muhammad Ajsal (9), and Sajeesh E (5) leading the charts for the southern state.

But then, Kerala players are no strangers to their Bengal counterparts. There are half a dozen players in the current Kerala squad, including the semi-final hat-trick hero Muhammad Roshal PP, who ply their trade in the Kolkata CFL and are known faces in the Maidan circle.

World Blitz Championship: Koneru Humpy eyeing a grand double

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Having achieved the monumental feat of winning the World Rapid chess title for a second time, Indian stalwart Koneru Humpy would be eyeing a grand double when the EIDE grand double when the FIDE World Blitz Championship commences here on Tuesday. Humpy had on Sunday capped a wonderful year for Indian chess, defeating Irene Sukandar of Indonesia to emerge the FIDE Women's World Rapid Chess champion.

The Indian had won the event back in 2019 at Georgia and, on Sunday, became only the second player after China's Ju Wenjun to clinch the title a



At stake is not just the title but a chance to win another USD 60,000 (around Rs 50 lakhs) cheque as the Blitz championship carries the same prize money as Rapid. strong Indian

contingent is geared up for

the championship that will have 13 rounds in the 'Open' category and 11 in the

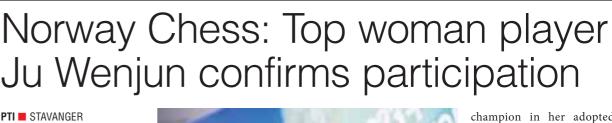
women's section. Another Indian, Dronavalli Harika is also a formidable force in Blitz, but the fans would be hoping for an improved performance from Deshmukh, both of whom failed to impress in the Rapid

Vaishali and Divya

In the 'Open' section, Magnus Carlsen, who was disqualified from the Rapid event following a dress code starts as the

overwhelming favourite. But the likes of India's R Praggnanandhaa and Arjun Erigaisi, France's Alireza Froujza and Uzbekistan's Nodirbek Abdusattorov can all give the Norwegian a run for his money.

Erigaisi, who missed the opportunity to win the Rapid title which was won by 18 year-old Volodar Murzin of Russia, will have to fight it all over for a place in the 2026 Candidates tournament.





Prolific Lille striker Jonathan David considering new contract offer

AP ■ LILLE Tonathan

David considering a new contract from Lille and says his chances of staying at the French club are "50-50." The 24-year-old Canada striker is enjoying his fifth season at Lille and tops the league's scoring charts with 11 goals from 15 games. He is out of contract at the end of June and has reportedly been offered a two-year contract. "As the president (Olivier

Létang) said several times, discussions are going on. We're talking but no decision has been reached," David told regional newspaper La Voix du Nord on Monday in an interview. "The door is never closed. It's 50-50.

David has netted 17 goals overall this season — including four in the Champions League and two in the qualifying rounds — to take his tally to 101 since joining in 2020.

He is one of the most soughtafter strikers in Europe and Lille risks losing him for nothing if he does not sign a

Women's world No.2 Ju Wenjun of China, No. 9 Anna Muzychuk of Ukraine and No. 21 Sarasadat Khademalsharieh of Spain on Monday confirmed their Norway Chess Women, which also has India's R. Vaishali in the fray.
The event will be held from May 26 to June 6. Vaishali, the elder sister of

Grandmaster Praggnanandhaa and one of the rising stars in women's chess, had confirmed her participation in prestigious tournament last month.

Wenjun is one of the most formidable figures women's chess with a live rating of 2,563. She is the reigning four-time Women's world champion, a two-time World Rapid champion, and the reigning Norway Chess



Women champion. She is also only the fifth woman in history to achieve a rating above 2600, marking her place among the elite.

Muzychuk is a three-time world champion in fast chess. She clinched the Women's World Rapid Championship in 2014 and the Women's World Blitz Championship in

both 2014 and 2016. Her feat of winning both the World Rapid and World Blitz Championships in the same year in 2016 places her alongside legends like Susan Polgar and Norway's Magnus

Carlsen.

Sarasadat, who is originally from Iran but now represents Spain, became the national

champion in her adopted country. She finished second in both the 2018 World Rapid and Blitz Chess Championships, as well as the 2015-16 FIDE Women's Grand Prix.

The Norway tournament brings together the top male and female players in a distinctive six-player double round-robin format.

India's recently-crowned world champion D. Gukesh will take on Magnus Carlsen, the world's highest-rated player, in a highlyanticipated contest in the

men's category. In 2023, Gukesh finished third in Stavanger. Besides

Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi, who recently became the second Indian after the legendary Viswanathan legendary Anand to reach the goldstandard ELO rating of 2800, will make his debut at the

prestigious tournament.

Paulo Fonseca fired by AC Milan

Paulo Fonseca has been fired by AC Milan, with the club confirming the decision Monday morning after the Portuguese coach was informed following a 1-1 draw at home to Roma the previous night.

"Yes, it's true. I'm out," Fonseca told reporters when he lowered his car window as he left San Siro following Sunday's match. "That's life. ... I did everything I could." Milan is expected to hire

Sergio Conceicao, another Portuguese coach, as Fonseca's replacement. The Serie A club released a short statement confirming Fonseca's dismissal.

"AC Milan announces that Paulo Fonseca has been



and wishes him the very best

Fonseca was hired in June and

produced only 12 wins in 24

across

in his future endeavours."

matches

as Milan coach was to be sent off for dissent in the first half

Milan is eighth in Serie A, railing leaders Atalanta and Napoli by 14 points — far worse than the second place result earned under Stefano Pioli last season. Pioli left the club at the end of the competitions. His last action campaign after a near five-

year stint that included the 2022 Serie A title.

Milan has fared better in the Champions League lately following four straight wins, including a 3-1 result at Real Madrid. The Rossoneri are in 12th place and on course to qualify for the knockout playoff round.

Fonseca was already under pressure early in the season after just one victory in his first five matches in charge but that eased following a derby victory over Inter Milan.

There were protests from fans before and during the match against Roma but the chants were mainly aimed at the club's American owners, with the supporters RedBird founder Cardinale to sell up.

Naomi Osaka wins her 1st match of new season

AP WELLINGTON

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m F}^{
m our ext{-}time}$ Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka made a winning return to the court after an almost three month absence Monday in the first round of the ASB tennis classic in Auckland, undeterred by protests outside the stadium against her Israeli opponent.

Osaka beat qualifier Lina Glushko 6-4, 6-4 in a tight contest in her first match since October when a back injury at the China Open ended her 2024

All the hallmarks of Osaka's game were present Monday: the powerful serve, forceful ground-strokes particularly from the forehand side and the aggression. She looked relaxed and comfortable on court with no sign of

her recent injury.
Osaka had to deal with a swirling wind on center court and with delays in play caused by the chants of a small group of protesters which were clearly audible



within the stadium. There was a longer break as Osaka was poised to serve out the first set when Glushko had to leave the court for treatment to a hip injury. "I had no idea what the score was most of the time," Osaka said. "I just kept trying to tell myself one point at a time and trying not to get discouraged.
"Thankfully it came out in my favor in

Osaka was supported at courtside by her new coach Patrick Mouratoglou who previously had a long-term association with Serena Williams. She broke Glushko in the third game of the first set and held comfortably to

The second set was tighter. Osaka broke Glushko in the third game but Glushko converted her only break point of the match to level at 2-2. Glushko held to love in the seventh

game to lead 4-3 but Osaka seemed to step up at that point, held with two aces for 4-4, broke for 5-4 and held serve to love to clinch the win Her serve was solid throughout. She sent down seven aces and won 74

percent of first serve points. Her first serve averaged around 180kmh (111mph) and her slice around 140kmh (87mph).

"I think she's a really amazing opponent. I've never played her before," Osaka said.

Australia beat India by 184 runs in fourth Test

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

ndia slumped to a demoralising 184-run loss to Australia in the fourth Test here on Monday with contemporary greats Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli failing to come good yet again, signalling that their walk towards the exit door is not too far.

Chasing a near improbable target of 340, both Rohit (9 off 40 balls) and Kohli (5) failed to battle their technical frailties and mental cobwebs as India lost seven wickets for 34 runs in just 20.4 overs in the final session to be all out for 155 in

Australian captain Pat Cummins (3/28 in 18 overs) was superb as usual and Scott Boland was also magnificent (3/39 in 16 overs) in his every spell.

Nathan Lyon (2/37 in 20.1 overs) took advantage of variable bounce while Mitchell Starc (1/25 in 16 overs) got the prized scalp of Kohli. This was after an 88-run fourthwicket stand between Yashasvi

Jasiwal and Rishabh Pant.
"Pretty disappointing. We wanted

to fight but we could not do it," a dejected Rohit said in the postmatch presentation.

"We tried everything but they fought hard. We did not grab our chances," he conceded.

Australia now lead the series 2-1 and unless India draw level in Sydney, a third successive World Test Championship final could become a distant dream. Even to retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, India would need to post a

Save Jaiswal (84, 208 balls), whose controversial caught-behind in which the third umpire overruled technology to adjudge him out, none of the other batters performed well enough to save the "They batted well in the middle

session. We knew that we had to get one breakthrough and anything can happen and that proved to be

"We had plenty of runs to play with, we had plenty of fielders with the helmet around," a beaming Cummins, who was also adjudged player of the match for his haul of



six wickets, said in the presentation ceremony.

The art of saving Test matches has slowly become extinct but India would have depended on their two

senior-most players, who are also fighting to save their legacy and reputation built over nearly two

In case of Rishabh Pant, it was one came to a naught.

bad shot too many after a full session in which he concentrated. He got a rank long hop from Travis Head but after a 103-ball vigil, it all Even Jaiswal's guts and grit couldn't prevent a once highly-rated, but currently a trifle over-rated, Indian batting line-up from implosion with over-the-hill seniors and young superstars unable to handle the pressure.

The defeat could have severe repercussions as there seems to be no light at the end of the tunnel for skipper Rohit.

As for Kohli, despite all his white-ball exploits, the problems outside the off-stump will stick out like a

sore thumb. For Rohit, his ultra-defensive approach in the opening slot, is causing India to stare down the

barrel with alarming regularity. Rohit did all the hard work during the first hour before opposition skipper Cummins got his bunny for the 10th time in Test matches. Kohli could never control his urge of playing the cover drive again

and was caught at first slip after Mitchell Starc pushed one across with the angle. Rahul was out without troubling

the scorers after getting a second good ball in the game.

Rohit's decision to bat up the order backfired and it also tinkered with Rahul's mindset despite him being perfectly fine opening the innings. The captaincy was pedestrian as he let the game drift on occasions and there were lot of phases that led to India's defeat but none more telling than the final wicket partnership between Scott Boland and Nathan Lyon where the target went out of

reach on Sunday. Save Jasprit Bumrah, who once again toiled manfully for 50 overs and took nine wickets, and find-ofthe-series Nitish Reddy, who scored a gritty hundred, there are no positives to be taken from this

The batting, save for the second innings in the opening Perth Test, has been absolutely below par and India won't be doing themselves any favours if they have walking wickets at the top of the order.

The team is going through a tough transition and it is now time that their feisty head coach Gautam Gambhir shows some spark along with chairman of selectors Ajit



Seniors like Rohit, Kohli haven't really contributed: Gavaskar

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

The legendary Sunil Gavaskar on Monday lashed out at senior players such as Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli for letting the team down and blamed the Indian top-order for losing the Boxing Day Test against Australia here. Set a target of 340 on the final day of the fourth Test, the Indian batters, with the exception of Yashasvi Jaiswal (84), faltered yet again to lose the match by 184 runs and trail 1-2 in the five-match series.

"It all depends on the selectors. The contributions that were expected have not come. It is the top-order which has to not contributing, why blame the lower-order.

"The seniors have not really made the contribution that they should have, all that they had to do was bat out today and live to fight another day in Sydney," Gavaskar told India Today. "It's just that the toporder didn't contribute and that is the reason India found itself in this position?

While Gavaskar praised Jaiswal for his gritty knock, the batting great once again was not impressed by Rishabh Pant's shot selection, which opened the floodgates for Australia. Joining hands at 33 for 3, Jaiswal and Pant looked to have settled down, taking India to 121 in the post-lunch session. before a rash shot from Pant set the team back. "Yes, absolutely around tea time when Rishabh

Operating at a level rarely seen in the game before,

India's peerless fast bowler

Jasprit Bumrah was on

Monday nominated for the

ICC Men's Cricketer of the

Year award and also featured

in the list for the best player in

Bumrah, who has left the

Australian batters scrambling

incredible display of fast

bowling in the ongoing five-match series Down Under,

has been nominated for the

top award, named after

legendary West Indies all-rounder Sir Garfield Sobers,

alongside England's prolific

duo of Joe Root and Harry

Brook, with swashbuckling

Australian batter Travis Head

Besides Bumrah, who has

been at the top of his game

throughout 2024, Root, Brook

and Sri Lanka's Kamindu

Mendis featured in the list for

the ICC Test Cricketer of the

completing the list.

survival with his

PTI DUBAI

the Test format.

Pant and Yashasyi Jaiswal had batted through the post-lunch session, it certainly looked India could achieve a draw because it was a matter of batting for another hour really without losing a wicket, and Australia would have then given up," Gavaskar said. The whole idea was try and

take into the mandatory overs and if around the mandatory overs India had just lost maybe four wickets then Australia, after a couple off overs, would have asked to shake hands but that didn't happen."

As Pant got a long hop from Travis Head after a 103-ball vigil, during which he shared 84 runs for the fourth wicket Mitchell Marsh at in the deep in search of a six.

...The issue is you know there is this shot called sixer in cricket and which is like a drug. Once you hit a couple of sixes, then you think that's a real a high because once you hit the ball cleanly of the middle of the bat and it goes into the stands, there is no better feeling for a batter. Sixer is a different feeling and it's a drug, it gets into your system," Gavaskar said. "The difference between a boundary and a six is just two runs but the risk percentage is 100 per cent. Boundary is hit along the ground no risk at all, a six is attempted with the ball up in the air and if you don't time it, if it hits the toe of your bat, it can go up and you can be out caught."

Year award.

Bumrah has been the best

bowler in Test cricket in 2024

with 71 wickets from 13

matches at an average of 14.92

and a strike rate of 30.16, the

been the top bowler in the

Border-Gavaskar Trophy with

30 wickets in a mere four

"Having returned to the Test

arena following his recovery

from a recurring back injury

in 2023, Bumrah dominated

the bowling charts in 2024.

Featuring across 13 Tests in

the calendar year, Bumrah

delivered his best-ever annual

finishing the year with more

Test wickets than any of his

counterparts," the ICC said on

"Be it the pace-conducive

conditions in South Africa

and Australia, or tougher

its website.

— 71 wickets —

best figures for any bowler. The right-arm pacer has also

New Zealand beats Sri Lanka by 45 runs in second T20

AP ■ MOUNT MAUNGANUI

Cri Lanka again fell short in a Stough run chase as New Zealand won the second Twenty20 international by 45 runs Monday to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

The tourists were edged by eight runs chasing 172-8 in the first match two days ago and again faltered late while chasing New Zealand's 186-5 on Monday. Sri Lanka was all out for 141 in 19.1 overs. "It's really important to finish

the game, no matter how it started," Sri Lanka captain Charith Asalanka said. The way you finish is the

most important thing. In the first game we were almost there to win and again we're disappointed." Once again, Jacob Duffy was

New Zealand's key bowler, dismissing opener Pathum Nissanka for 37 and returning



to remove Kusal Perera for 48 when both batters looked well placed to steer Sri Lanka to

Nissanka made 96 in the first match in a 120-run opening partnership with Kusal Mendis before Duffy turned that match in New Zealand's favor when he took three wickets in four balls, including Mendis, to stifle the Sri Lanka chase. He took 4-15 Monday to once

again stand out as the difference between the teams. After dismissing Nissanka, Duffy produced a superb yorker to remove Perera in the 16th over when Sri Lanka was 127-4 and still in with a good chance. He then removed Wanindu Hasaranga (1) and Maheesh Theekshana (0) in the space of three balls in the 18th over as the Sri Lanka tail again failed to fire.

Matt Henry took two wickets with consecutive balls in the 19th over before Zak Foulkes finished off the Sri Lanka innings with five balls

remaining.

New Zealand depended on a century partnership between Daryl Mitchell and Michael Bracewell to post a competitive total in the first match. It produced a more balanced batting effort balanced batting enormal Monday to reach a testing total on a tricky pitch which cometimes skidded, sometimes skidded, sometimes held up and provided a batting challenge. A strong wind across the Bay Oval also made hitting to one side of the ground difficult and

gave an edge to the bowlers. Tim Robinson made 41 from 34 balls at the top of the New Zealand innings, hitting three fours and two sixes to impart momentum Rachin Ravindra failed again and was out for 1.

decision made," he added.

on-field

Richard Kettleborough had

ruled in Rahul's favour

following Australia's appeal,

umpire

Mentally disturbing, we fell short in finding ways to win: Rohit Sharma

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Indian skipper Rohit Sharma Lon Monday said the 184-run drubbing at the hands of Australia in the fourth Test here is "mentally disturbing", conceding that his team failed to fight in the match. India will now head to Sydney

for the fifth and final Test trailing 1-2 in the five-match Border-Gavaskar Trophy. The series finale begins on January 3. "It is mentally disturbing when you can't do what you have come to do," Rohit, whose own poor form has been under the scanner, told reporters after the game.

"It is pretty disappointing. and we fell short in finding ways to win the game here. We wanted to fight till the end and unfortunately we couldn't do it," he said in the post-match presentation ceremony.

Australia were struggling at 90 for six in their second innings with the overall lead yet to touch 200 on Sunday but managed to make it a 340-run target for the visitors. Rohit admitted his team could not favourable exploit the situation.

"We had Australia 90 for 6. We know things can get tough, but

we want to play tough cricket from hard situations. But we were not good enough. I went back to my room and thought about what else we could have done as a team," Rohit said.

"But we threw everything we had, they fought hard, especially that last-wicket partnership, which probably cost us the game there," he

Rohit said the team wanted to have a go at the target despite

its daunting nature. "We knew 340 wasn't going to be easy. We tried to set a platform and keep wickets in hand for the last two sessions. but they bowled perfectly as well. We wanted to go for the target but we did platform from our side," he noted. The Mumbaikar lauded Nitish Kumar Reddy for making a fine hundred during the first innings, and hoped the youngster will climb the ladder. "He's coming here for the first time, these conditions can get really tough, but he

technique as well. "He's got everything to be successful at this level, I hope he goes from strength to strength, and he's got all the backing from the team as well, he said.

showed great character, solid

Jaiswal's caught-behind dismissal sparks controversy

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal's contentious controversy on the final day of the fourth Test against Australia here on Monday, as umpire Saikat Sharfuddoula ruled him out despite no edge being registered on the Snicko. Jaiswal, who was batting on

84, miscued a hook off pacer Pat Cummins' short-pitched, down the leg delivery, and the batter was initially given not out by on-field umpire Joel Wilson after Australia appealed for a caughtbehind dismissal.

However, upon review, third umpire Saikat adjudged that there was a deflection off Jaiswal's gloves/bat based on the visual evidence.

Saikat overruled the Snicko, which showed no spike, leading to chants of "cheater, around the

India's peerless fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah nominated



Melbourne Cricket Ground. Jaiswal was ousted after playing a solid 84 off 208 deliveries.

At one stage, he seemed to steer India to a draw before the visitors lost wickets in clusters in their chase of 340, eventually going down by 184 runs The left-hander argued with

the on-field umpires over the decision before walking "In my view the decision was out. The third umpire did similar controversy in the make the correct decision in the end," Former ICC Elite opener KL Rahul's dismissal Panel umpire Simon Taufel told Channel 7. technology the protocols, we do have a

hierarchy of redundancy and when the umpire sees a clear deflection off the bat there is no need to go any further and use any other form of technology to prove the case. 'The clear deflection is conclusive evidence. In this particular case what we have seen from the third umpire, is they've used a secondary form of technology, which for whatever reason hasn't shown the same conclusive evidence of audio to back up the clear deflection.

"In the end the third umpire did the right thing and went back to the clear deflection and overturned the umpire field. So, in my view correct

the home team used DRS to challenge the decision. Third umpire Richard Illingworth had overturned the call despite not having the benefit of a split-screen view which would have given

sparked a debate.

After

him a clearer picture of whether the Mitchell Starc delivery actually grazed the bat or the snicko responded to a hit on the pads.



CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES WELFARE HOUSING ORGANISATION

(An autonomous body of GOI under the aegis of M/o Housing & Urban Affairs) 9th Floor, 'B' Wing, Janpath Bhawan, Janpath, New Delhi - 110 001. Ph - 23717249/23355408/23322192

DEMAND SURVEY FOR HOUSING PROJECT IN BHOPAL

The Central Government Employees Welfare Housing Organisation (CGEWHO) has successfully completed 33 housing projects across India since its inception in 1990. CGEWHO is committed to providing affordable housing exclusively for employees of the Central Government, Central PSUs. State Governments, Union Territories, Autonomous Bodies, Corporations &

CGEWHO is now conducting a demand survey for a proposed housing project in Bhopal.

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For any queries, you may contact the following individuals: Sh. Roshan Kishore (M) 9560022232, Sh. Nitish Garg (M) 8826461114 CEO. CGEWHO reserves the right to abandon the scheme or the demand survey without

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assigning any reason whatsoever.

Nationalised Banks

Bhopal.

with each unit featuring three or four bedrooms. The units will have an approximate Super Builtup Area (SBA) ranging from 1500 to 2000 sq.ft.

Reservations: 50% of Dwelling Units (DUs) will be reserved for the respondents of the Demand Survey, allocated based on priority.

Completed forms must be submitted within 30 days through post or e-mail to the following

E-mail: marketingcgewho@gmail.com

Chief Executive Officer CGEWHO

conditions for quicks at Test Championship title," the 2024 T20 World Cup," the home, Bumrah was equally ICC said. sixth double century in Tests, England mainstay Root has impressive through the year. ICC said. and termed it one of his best However, it was on India's

memorable performances along with his dominating show in T20 World Cup. Bumrah nabbed 15 wickets from eight outings

including a couple in the final against South Africa — as India went unbeaten at the Head was nominated after

tour of Australia that the pace

The ICC rated Bumrah's

match-defining spells at Perth, to guide India to a 295-

run win, among his most

spearhead produced

magnum opus," it added.

and being at the forefront of Australian batting in Tests. "Typifying an aggressive brand of batting, the southpaw brandished runs at

finishing as the leading run-

scorer of the T20 World Cup

a brisk rate in the shortest format, and finished among the leading run-getters at ICČ Men's T20 World Cup 2024. In the Test arena, Head was vital to Australia's push for defending their ICC World

been the most dominant

batter in the year, amassing 1,556 runs from 17 Tests at 34-year-old crossed the 1,000-run mark in a calendar year for the fifth time in his career while scoring six tons and five fifties.

The game's global governing body said, "Across 17 Tests, Root compiled his second-best annual run-tally in Tests — second only to his 1,708 runs from 2021. It was also the fifth instance of Root scoring over 1,000 Test runs in a calendar year."

'With six Test hundreds to go alongside five half-centuries, Root was a consistent performer for England both home and away. His impressive run with the bat saw Root amass joint-fifth highest tons in Tests (36) alongside Rahul Dravid," it added. The ICC recalled Root's career-best 262 against Pakistan at Multan, also his