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Supreme Court asks Lok Sabha Secretariat to respond to Mahua Moitra's petition against her expulsion

Sanjay Kumar New Delhi, January 3: The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the Lok Sabha Secretariat to respond to TMC leader Mahua Moitra's petition challenging her expulsion from the House. A Bench led by Justice Sanjiv Khanna, however, refused to allow Moitra - who represented

told senior advocate AM Singhvi after he sought permission for Moitra to take part in House proceedings. "Let reply be filed by first respondent (Lok Sabha Secretariat) in two weeks, rejoinder in three weeks thereafter," the Bench said, posting the matter for hearing in March. It said her plea for interim relief would be considered after examining the Lok Sabha Secretariat's reply. Moitra has challenged her expulsion that took place after the Lok Sabha adopted the report of its ethics committee that held her guilty of accepting gifts and illegal gratification from a businessman. Moitra had equated her expulsion with hanging by a "kangaroo court" and alleged that a parliamentary panel was being weaponised by the government to force the opposition into submission.



Krishnanagar constituency in West Bengal before her expulsion - to take part in proceedings of the Lok Sabha. "No, no. We will take it up when listed," the Bench

PM Modi writes to welfare scheme beneficiary whose house he visited in Ayodhya

Simmi Kaur Babbar New Delhi, January 3: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has written to the woman whose home he visited in Ayodhya, saying

drink tea prepared by you," Modi said in his letter dated January 2. "After coming from Ayodhya, I saw your interview on many TV channels. It was nice to see your confidence and that of other family members, and



you is my capital, my biggest satisfaction, which gives me new energy to work wholeheartedly for the country," the prime minister said. Modi said Majhi becoming the 10th-crore beneficiary of Ujjwala Yojana was not just a number, rather it was linked with the fulfilment of big dreams and resolves of crores of people of the country. "I have full faith that in the Amrit Kaal, the enthusiasm of crores of people of the country, full of aspirations, like you, will play an important role in achieving our goal of building a grand and developed India," he said. Modi on Saturday had visited the house of Majhi near the Lata Mangeshkar Chowk in Ayodhya. Modi, who was in the temple town to unveil a 'new look old' city with an airport, a revamped train station and multiple projects, made a sudden stopover at the house of the woman who holds the distinction of being the 10th-crore beneficiary of the Ujjwala scheme. The scheme was started in May 2016 to provide LPG connection to women belonging to below poverty line (BPL) families.

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Truck drivers coming back to work, normalcy to return in a day or two

New Delhi, January 3: Truck drivers, who went on strike to protest against the new stringent law on hit-and-run cases, have started coming back to work and normalcy will return in a day or two, truckers' body All India Motor Transport Congress (AIMTC) said on Wednesday. AIMTC on Tuesday appealed to protesting truck drivers to end their strike after the government assurance that the decision to invoke stringent jail and fine provisions for hit-and-run cases under the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS) will be taken after consultation with the truckers' body. Representatives of AIMTC met Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla on Tuesday to raise the issue of stringent provisions for hit-and-run cases. "We had not given any strike call...striking drivers are coming back to work and normal operations would be restored in one or two days," AIMTC general secretary N K Gupta told PTI. Gupta said the strike by truck drivers in some places was a spontaneous reaction to the new laws and "the drivers need not worry now and should join the work and contribute to the growth of the economy". Some truck, bus and tanker operators had begun a three-day strike on Monday in several states to protest against the "stringent punishments" provisions.

Sanjay Kundu back as Himachal Pradesh DGP

New Delhi, January 3: Senior IPS officer Sanjay Kundu will be back as the DGP of Himachal Pradesh as the Supreme Court on Wednesday stayed the High Court's order to shift him from the top post. A Bench led by CJI DY Chandrachud also stayed the Himachal Government's order shifting him as the Principal Secretary of the Ayush Department. The Bench granted liberty to Kundu to move the High Court to seek recall of its December 26 order to the state government to shift him in view of allegations of interference in an ongoing criminal probe. Noting that the direction for transfer of Kundu from the post of DGP would



remain stayed until the recall application was disposed of, the Bench urged the High Court to dispose of such an application in two weeks. The order came after senior counsel Mukul Rohatgi submitted on behalf of Kundu that the High Court passed the impugned order without hearing him. Rohatgi had on Tuesday said the action against Kundu was "extraordinary" as the High Court did not hear him out before directing the state government to shift him. Following the High Court's order, the Himachal Pradesh Government had on Tuesday transferred Kundu to the Ayush Department as Principal Secretary. Kundu has moved the Supreme Court against the High Court's Order to shift him to ensure that he doesn't influence the probe into the alleged harassment of Palampur businessman Nishant Sharma. The Himachal Pradesh High Court had on December 26 ordered the state government to shift Kundu and Kangra Superintendent of Police Shalini Agnihotri to other posts before January 4, 2024, to ensure that "they didn't have an opportunity to influence the investigation". Nishant had, in an email complaint to the High Court, alleged that he and his family feared for their lives as he was "attacked in Gurugram and in McLeodganj". He had sought the High Court's intervention on the grounds that he "needed protection from powerful people as he was living in constant fear of being killed". In a complaint to the High Court, Nishant had alleged threat to his life from "two extremely rich and well-connected persons, a former IPS officer and a lawyer, as the complainant and his father had not yielded to their pressure".

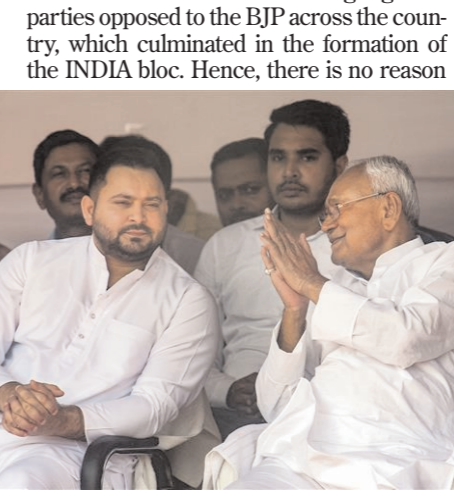
Disabled ward of ex-servicemen entitled to lifetime pension if they were dependent on it at time of accident

Chandigarh, January 3: About 20 years after family pension being paid to him was stopped, the Armed Forces Tribunal has held that the disabled ward of an ex-serviceman is entitled to family pension for life if he had earlier been dependent on the pension. According to pension rules, ordinary family pension is paid to the ward of a government employee whose both parents have died till the age of 25 years, or for lifetime if disability renders him unable to earn an income. The recipient's father had died in 1994 and his mother in 1996. He was sanctioned family pension thereafter which was to be paid till 2004, when he attained the age of 25 years. However, in 2000, he met with an accident which resulted in 65 percent disability for life. On learning that wards of Armed Forces pensioners suffering from any mental or physical disorder or disability that makes them unable to earn a livelihood shall be granted family pension for life with effect from September 2012, he submitted a representation for grant of family pension. The claim, however, was rejected by the Principal Controller of Defence Accounts (Pensions), Allahabad, on grounds that none of his deceased parents during their life time ever declared his disability and he had declared his disability after death of his parents.

Nitish Kumar is experienced, would be great if he is made INDIA bloc convenor: Tejashwi Yadav

Navdeep Singh Sahni

Gaya/Patna, January 3: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar was an experienced leader and it would be great if a proposal came to make him the convenor of the INDIA coalition, his deputy Tejashwi Yadav said on Wednesday. Yadav, who belongs to the RJD, also exuded confidence that the seemingly thorny issue of seat-sharing will be sorted out "without any problem". "Nitish Kumar is such a senior leader. If such a proposal comes, it will be great for Bihar," Yadav told reporters at the Gaya airport when his comments were sought on the speculation that the JD(U) president could be made the convenor of the opposition coalition. The young RJD leader, whose party is the largest constituent of the ruling Mahagathbandhan in Bihar, recalled that the alliance, which was in opposition until August 2022, decided to align with the JD(U) with the objective of defeating the



BJP "We came together in Bihar after which efforts were made to bring together parties opposed to the BJP across the country, which culminated in the formation of the INDIA bloc. Hence, there is no reason

last couple of weeks. Replying to another question, he said findings of the caste survey, conducted by the Nitish Kumar government, were now in the public domain with the report having been tabled before the assembly in its last session. Meanwhile, in Patna, state Congress president Akhilesh Prasad Singh told a press conference that his party acknowledged Nitish Kumar's stature and would not flinch from backing him if other constituents of INDIA agreed to make him the convenor. "Nobody has any doubts about the calibre, stature, personality and political acumen of Nitish Kumar. Also, there cannot be any two views about the crucial role he played in bringing together anti-BJP parties across the country," said Singh, a Rajya Sabha member. "The decision of making him a convenor would require a consensus. If other constituents of the INDIA bloc give their consent, rest assured that the Congress will not hesitate in throwing its weight behind such a proposal," he added.

No ground to order investigation by SIT into allegations against Adani group: Supreme Court

Tejinder Kaur Babbar

New Delhi, January 3: The Supreme Court on Wednesday rejected petitions seeking to transfer the probe into allegations of stock price manipulation levelled by Hindenburg Report against Adani Group from SEBI to an SIT. A three-judge Bench led by CJI DY Chandrachud - which had reserved its verdict in the case on November 24 last year - said there was no ground here to transfer the probe in this case and it could only be raised if there was wilful or deliberate violation of rules. Noting that SEBI had already completed probes into 22 of the 24 matters, the Bench directed SEBI to complete the investigation in the other two cases in three months. The Bench, however, said, "This court has the power under Articles 32 and 142 to transfer the probe to CBI, etc, but such powers can only be used sparingly and

this court will not ordinarily supplant this role, and the petitioners must put forth strong evidence to show that the investigative agency acted in a biased man-



ner." It also rejected allegations of conflict of interest against the Expert Committee appointed by it to look into the matter. "The Govt of India and the SEBI to look into if there is any infraction

of law by Hindenburg Report on short selling, and if so, take action in accordance with law," the CJI said, pronouncing the verdict. It directed the Centre and SEBI to take into consideration the recommendations of the Expert Committee to protect interests of the Indian investors. The report of OCCRP cannot be taken into account to doubt the SEBI investigation, it said. "The reliance on OCCRP report is rejected and reliance on a third party organisation report without any verification cannot be relied upon as a proof," the top court said. While reserving the verdict, the top court had on November 24 said that it had no reason to "discredit" SEBI, which probed allegations against the Adani group, as there was no material before it to doubt what the market regulator had done and the court did not have to treat what was set out in the Hindenburg report as a "true state of affairs".

ISRO to use Musk's SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket to launch communication satellite in 2024

Bengaluru, January 3: ISRO's commercial arm NewSpace India Ltd has announced plans to launch its communication satellite GSAT-20 onboard Elon Musk-owned SpaceX's Falcon-9 rocket in the second quarter of 2024, to meet the broadband communication needs of the country. GSAT-20 (renamed as GSAT-N2) is a high throughput Ka-band satellite. Ka-band satellites deliver high-speed broadband internet connectivity and digital video and audio transmission. In a statement, the state owned NSIL said the bulk of the high throughput satellite (HTS) capacity onboard GSAT-20 satellite has already been secured by Indian service providers. GSAT-20 offers Ka-band HTS capacity with 32 beams having pan-India coverage including in Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands, it said. "NSIL is realising GSAT-20 satellite through ISRO and will be launched onboard Falcon-9 under a launch service contract between NSIL and SpaceX, USA. GSAT-20, weighing 4,700 kg, offers HTS capacity of nearly 48Gbps. The satellite has been specifically designed to meet the demanding service needs of remote/unconnected regions," the statement read.

JMM-led coalition MLAs meet to discuss political situation, Hemant Soren to remain CM

Naresh Malhotra

Ranchi, January 3: Legislators of the ruling coalition partners in Jharkhand on Wednesday expressed solidarity with the Hemant Soren government and said the JMM leader will continue as the state chief minister. Coming out from the meeting held here to discuss the present political scenario in the backdrop of the ED's summons to Soren, the lawmakers said they stand united and "solidly" behind Soren and there is no threat to the present government. Senior JMM leader, Mithilesh Thakur, who holds the drinking water and sanitation portfolio, said Soren will continue as the chief minister and JMM will contest the 2024 Lok Sabha and state Assembly polls under his leadership. The meeting was chaired by Soren himself. "The MLAs of the coalition parties are united, there is no threat to the present government. There was no talk of any change in the leadership in the state," a legislator said after the meeting. Soren, the 48-year-old executive president of JMM, has been in the

eye of a political storm since the Enforcement Directorate summoned him in connection with its probe into an office-of-profit case. A statement from the chief minister's secretariat said "An important meeting of ministers and MLAs of the ruling coalition was held today under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Shri Hemant Soren. The latest political situation in the state was specifically discussed in this meeting. The chief minister gave his views on the entire incident and informed everyone about it. ... All the MLAs expressed their full confidence in the chief minister." All the legislators expressed solidarity with the chief minister "under all circumstances", it said. "In any situation, all of them (MLAs of the coalition parties) are completely united and they will thwart any conspiracy against

the chief minister and the state government," chief minister's office had told PTI that the timeline for reply to the summons to Soren by the ED will end on January 5. The summons, the seventh one, was issued in December last year. Soren has skipped six earlier summonses by the ED and accused the BJP-led government at the Centre of using central agencies to destabilise his democratically elected government. The Election Commission had sent a letter in August 2022 to the then governor of Jharkhand, Ramesh Bais which is believed to have recommended his disqualification as an MLA as a mining lease given to him was renewed during his tenure as the chief minister. However, neither Bais nor his successor C P Radhakrishnan

opened the letter. Meanwhile, Soren has dismissed speculations that his wife Kalpana will contest from Gandey assembly constituency in the state, which was vacated

barely a year before the November-December state election. Soren has termed the speculation that his wife will be anointed the chief minister as a "complete imagination" of the opposition BJP. "There is not an iota of truth in the speculations," he said. The speculations were triggered by the ED's latest summons to Soren coupled with the sudden resignation by JMM MLA from Gandey, Sarfaraz Ahmad on Monday. "The possibility of my wife contesting any election in the near future is completely an imagination of the BJP ... The speculation about handing over reins to her by me is a fabric woven by the BJP to plant a false narrative," the chief minister told PTI on Tuesday. The saffron party has claimed that Ahmad was made to quit so that Kalpana Soren could contest from the Gandey in case of any eventuality in connection with the ED summonses. The coalition has 47 members - 29 of JMM, 17 of Congress and one of the RJD. The opposition BJP has 26 members and AJSU Party three. The NCP and CPI (ML) have one lawmaker each, apart from two Independents.



2 B-Tech students dupe banker of Rs 21 lakh with London job offer, held

MUMBAI. The cyber crime police have arrested two B-Tech students from a university in Punjab for allegedly cheating a 47-year-old assistant general manager of a private bank in the western suburbs of Rs 21 lakh with the lure of a general manager's job in a London bank. Three more accused, who had withdrawn money from various ATMs, are on the run. Police have frozen 12 accounts belonging to the accused and recovered Rs 1 lakh cash. The complainant told police that on July 22, 2023, he had received an email offering him a general manager's position in a reputed bank in London. Later, he received a phone call from a person who said he was from a recruitment agency and had seen his profile on a social media site. After several calls, an online interview was scheduled. "The complainant gave the interview, but could not see his interviewer as his camera was switched off. The complainant was later informed that he had been selected," said a police officer.

The complainant received several calls from the accused asking him to pay fees for profile verification, portfolio management, certification, ID, and seat confirmation. Between July 26 and August 10, 2023, he transferred a total Rs 21 lakh to two bank accounts provided by the fraudsters. After paying the fees, he did not get any response from the recruiting agency. Despite several attempts, when he couldn't contact the person from the agency, he realised he had been cheated and filed a complaint with the crime branch's cyber police station on September 26, 2023. A team supervised by crime branch head Lakhmi Gautam and DCP D S Swami, and comprising senior inspector Suvarna Shinde, and officers Mahendra Jadhav, Amit Utekar, Deepak Tayade, staff Keshav Takik and Vijay Jadhav detected the case. They first arrested Pratik Singh (20), who spilled the beans on his accomplice Rushabh Dubey (25). As Dubey was in a Bhopal jail in a cyber fraud case, police took his custody on a production warrant.

Palayam traders raise disputes over rehabilitation blocks

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. The temporary rehabilitation blocks being constructed to facilitate the redevelopment of the century-old Palayam Connemara Market are nearing completion. According to official sources, two of the three temporary blocks will be ready by January 15. However, the allocation of temporary shops has sparked a row, with a section of beneficiaries raising disputes over the inadequacy of space allotted for them. Around 50 traders running shops in Trida (Trivandrum Development Authority)-owned land at Palayam close to the market have come out with stiff protests. "Trida had promised to give us proper rehabilitation in the temporary rehabilitation block but now we are not being allotted the promised space. We have been running shops here for the past six decades and we gave away land for road widening and underpass construction. Trida promised to give permanent rehabilitation in the temporary blocks but now it's not being given. There are restaurants and the allotted space is not adequate. The redeveloped market is only for the traders who will be displaced from the market. We are not eligible for that," said Siyad S, president, Thozhiludama Association, an association affiliated to Kerala Vyapari Vyavasayi Ekopana Samithi.

Beyond spice to medicine, culture, & more

KOCHI. India holds the title of the world's leading producer of turmeric. Beyond production, it is a significant consumer and exporter of this versatile spice, often called 'Indian Saffron.' Turmeric, or 'Haldi' as mentioned in the ancient 'Atharva Veda' dating back to 1000-1500 BC, has deep roots in India's history. Its uses extend beyond a mere spice; it has been integral to religious ceremonies, traditional medicine, and even as a natural dye. Ayurveda, the ancient Indian medical system, recognises turmeric for its medicinal properties, and recent global research has sparked heightened interest in its biomedical potential, especially in the wake of the Covid pandemic.

The rise of Turmeric Board

Turmeric, a multi-faceted commodity, is now on board with the recent establishment of the Turmeric Board by India government. In response to the growing significance of turmeric, the Government of India has recently established the Turmeric Board based in Telangana, one of the leading turmeric-producing states.

According to the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, this initiative aims to provide leadership, enhance efforts, and foster coordination among various government bodies and the Spices Board for the development and growth of the turmeric sector. India's dominance in the global turmeric market is evident, accounting for over 62% of the world's turmeric trade in 2022-23. More than 380 exporters facilitate the export of 1.534 lakh tonnes of turmeric and turmeric products (valued at \$207.45 million).

'Kutch among districts highly vulnerable to coal phaseout'

AHMEDABAD. In the Conference of Parties (COP) 28 held in November-December in Dubai, India reasserted that the country cannot afford to transition from coal, its biggest power source that accounts for 75% of its energy generation requirements. A group of researchers from Ahmedabad University, who studied India's relationship with coal from economic dimensions, claimed that 10 of the districts — primarily concentrated in central India — are highly vulnerable to coal phaseout. The study 'Just transition away from coal: Vulnerability analysis of coal districts in India' by Kopal Agrawal, Minal Pathak, Kaushik Jana, Jeemol Unni and Priyadarshi Shukla was recently published in Elsevier journal Energy Research and Social Science. These vulnerable districts include Singrauli, Chatra, Bokaro, Dhanbad, Bardhaman, Korba, Jharsuguda, Rajgarh, Angul and Chandrapur. "We study 88 coal districts representing 90% of the coal mining capacity

and over 50% of coal-based power generation capacity of the country. We find the vulnerability of the coal transition in India is highly regional and concentrated in 10 districts," said a researcher. Talking about the 10 districts, the researchers added that the local economy including revenue and employment is highly dependent on coal infrastructure. "The local population has low adaptive capacity in context of gross value added (GVA), low literacy rate, multidimensional poverty and higher share of unskilled labour to cope with the coal phase out," said an author. The authors added that the objective of the study was not to discuss whether India should have coal phase out/phase down, but instead a need to understand challenges for a just transition at local level. They advocated directing the efforts of just transition policy to most vulnerable districts and rebuilding districts through redevelopment, environmental improvement, skill enhancement for local



population, reviving traditional livelihoods and diversifying industries. In Gujarat, the study took into consideration Bharuch, Kutch and Surat districts for mines and plants, Bhavnagar for only mines and Ahmedabad, Jamnagar and Kheda for only plants. Kutch is considered most vulnerable with coal transition, and Surat less vulnerable, whereas other districts were termed least vulnerable. We also published

the following articles recently Coal scam: CBI closes case pertaining to 1998 allotment of Kihoni block CBI files closure report in Kihoni coal block allotment case; investigation into alleged irregularities in allocation of coal blocks from 1993-2005; closure report filed due to lack of evidence; NDIL involved in criminal conspiracy to cheat the Government of India.

Coal sector achieves 10.9% growth among eight core industries in November The index of coal industry has achieved a growth of 10.9% (provisional) in November 2023, reaching 185.7 points, compared to 167.5 points in the same time last year. This growth is primarily due to a substantial surge in coal production, which reached 84.52 million tonne (MT), surpassing the previous year's production of 76.16 MT. The cumulative index of the coal sector during the period of April-November, 2023-24 has also increased by 12.8% over the corresponding period of the previous year.

Why are accused stripped in lockups, Bombay HC asks state govt

MUMBAI. The Bombay high court has asked the state government why accused are stripped in the lockup of police stations even as an inquiry has held four police officers attached to Tardeo police station responsible for illegally detaining a music teacher and making him strip naked in the lockup. "Why stripping is necessary of the accused (sic) when they are lodged in the lockup," said Justices Revati Mohite-Dere and Gauri Godse in a recent order. The teacher's wife moved HC with a habeas corpus petition to produce her husband.

Observing that his fundamental right to life and liberty was violated, the judges had on September 29 last year directed the state government to pay him Rs 2 lakh as compensation to be recovered from the salary of the cops found responsible for his illegal detention and to order an inquiry into the incident.

In June last year, on a student's complaint that the teacher spoke to her indecently when she questioned him about fee increase, a zero FIR was lodged at Malad police



station and transferred to Tardeo police station. On July 7, the teacher was booked for sexual harassment and insult to modesty of a woman. On July 17, on learning that he will be arrested, his advocate offered to furnish bail. Yet he was arrested at 9.30 pm and later taken to the Saat Rasta lockup. His advocate moved HC the next day. The judges, in their verdict, noted that the July 7 FIR was forwarded to the magistrate at 11.55 am on July 18 "only after we kept the matter at 2.30 pm." At 2.30 pm, they were told that he was released at 11.59 am. The judges

said the teacher's affidavit revealed that the officers "insisted that he is stripped naked ...and after a while allowed him to put on his underwear." December 22, prosecutor Prajakta Shinde submitted the inquiry report informing that compensation was paid to him. The judges noted that the inquiry officer had fixed responsibility on the senior inspector, a police inspector and two sub-inspectors. Compensation of Rs 1 lakh and Rs 50,000 will be recovered from the SI and the investigation officer (PSI) and Rs 30,000 and Rs 20,000 each from the other PSI and PI. Shinde said it will be recovered from their salaries. Also, a "circular will shortly be issued" as directed by HC for "appropriate guidelines/directions to police stations with respect to grant of bail in bailable offences." When Shinde sought further time to place on record what steps the police intend to take in view of what was done to the teacher while in lockup, the judges directed her to state why stripping of the accused is necessary.

Holistic wellness is paramount

HYDERABAD. New year brings forward the importance of holistic health, especially on International Mind-Body Wellness Day, observed on January 3. CE connects with experts who shed light on our collective mind and body well-being. The interconnectedness of the mind, body, and soul forms the cornerstone of our overall health. Achieving optimal health is a multidimensional journey encompassing various facets of our lives. Dr Sri Karan Uddesh Tanugula, Consultant General Physician at Yashoda Hospitals, underscores evidence-based advice for a healthy lifestyle. "First and foremost," Dr Sri Karan emphasises, "Prioritise a balanced and nourishing diet. Scientific studies consistently emphasise the significance of a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats. This not only ensures vital nutrients but also bolsters overall health, including heart function, immune strength, and weight management. Steering clear of processed foods, excessive sugars, and high salt intake further contributes to a healthier life." He continues, "Regular physical activity is paramount for overall well-being, encompassing aerobic exercises and strength training. Strive for 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise weekly, aligning with health organisations' recommendations.

Adequate sleep is vital for cognitive function and mitigating chronic conditions like diabetes and cardiovascular ailments. Aim for 7-9 hours of restorative sleep each night for bodily rejuvenation." Dr Sri Karan emphasises the pivotal role of stress management in fostering well-being. Chronic stress can profoundly impact both physical and mental health. Introducing relaxation techniques like deep breathing,



meditation, or yoga into your routine can significantly lower stress hormones and enhance overall resilience. Maintaining a healthy weight is equally crucial in preventing various health conditions. Aim for a body mass index (BMI) within your individual recommended range. Achieving and sustaining a healthy weight relies on a balanced diet coupled with regular physical activity. Regular health check-ups are indispensable for early detection and prevention of potential

health issues. Scheduling routine visits with your healthcare provider facilitates screenings, vaccinations, and assessments of critical health indicators, enabling timely interventions and better health outcomes. Avoiding harmful habits, such as smoking and excessive alcohol consumption, is paramount for overall health. Scientific studies consistently highlight the detrimental effects of smoking on respiratory and cardiovascular health. Similarly, excessive alcohol intake can lead to liver damage and various other health concerns. Quitting smoking and moderating alcohol consumption significantly contribute to improved health. Cultivating positive social connections and nurturing emotional well-being have a profound impact on overall health, supported by scientific evidence. Investing in relationships with family and friends, engaging in joyful activities, and seeking support when necessary are pivotal. The mind's role in physical health is often overlooked due to the absence of recognisable symptoms. However, neglecting mental health can lead to severe conditions over time. Researchers emphasise the importance of prioritising mental well-being. Mental strength aids in stress management, rational thinking, self-esteem, life balance, and productivity.



increase. Glitches in portal, confusion mars govt school admissions The non-operational portal caused confusion and disappointment for parents on the first day of admission in government schools. The education department has issued comprehensive guidelines to address the issues. The online admission process, similar to the EWS admissions portal, aims to streamline the process and save time for parents. The portal was scheduled to start on December 26, with an increase in seats. However, delays in the website becoming operational led to frustration and confusion among parents. The education department has reissued guidelines and admissions will start from tomorrow. Anna University students invited for Japanese scholarship Nagoya Institute of Technology, Japan, in partnership with Anna University, is accepting applications for the International Graduate programme for Global Engineers 2024. This two-year masters programme is open to students interested in employment opportunities with Japanese manufacturing companies. Students with good academic records have the opportunity to apply for a Japanese government scholarship (MEXT), which provides a monthly allowance of 1,44,000 JPY. The application deadline for the programme is January 12.

Fine dining: Do's and don'ts of dining etiquette

CHENNAI. Most of us love to have fine food. Now, restaurants with a wide variety of cuisine choices are aplenty. But how many are aware of the dining etiquette? No, it's not just about how to use the fork and knife properly. It's beyond the cutlery placed on the table. There are some etiquette basics one often overlooks. Following the do's and don'ts can make the dining experience more fun and jovial, and leave a positive impression on others too. Your manners at the table are secret codes sent to others on how we behave in life. "Etiquette is important for personality development. If one starts the practice right from a young age, over the years, it'll get finetuned," says Elizabeth Joseph Basil, founder of Regal Skills Training and Etiquette in Thiruvananthapuram. "Everything will come naturally then, compared to learning the whole thing all at once when one reaches their 20s. People will be able to learn it of course, but they might have to exert so much and forget to enjoy the exquisite dishes and the dining experience. At times, it may turn pretentious as well." According to her, though educational institutions are aware of table manners, not many are willing to

conduct etiquette classes. "It's not something that comes to you naturally. Etiquette has to be taught. However, many institutions aren't interested. They cite lack of time as the reason and the majority doesn't want to pay money to learn how to behave," she adds.

At a restaurant, people come in the finest of dresses. The moment they start ordering, one can learn a lot about the diners. Upon entering, many keep their bags and phones on the table. According to etiquette trainers, this behaviour is not ideal. "Tables are only meant for the utensils and the necessary cutlery. Instead, keep the personal belongings on the side of the seats," says Elizabeth. Also checking the phone while having food among company is considered a bad habit. If it's urgent, politely excuse yourself before checking the device. Never forget that people serving dishes at a restaurant are employees doing their jobs, and they need to be addressed with respect. "Say 'excuse me' while calling a server, instead of saying 'shoo', snapping fingers or clapping hands. Nothing is more demeaning than these gestures," says Elizabeth. While raising concerns about the service,



hospitality, or food in general, it is considered impolite to express the opinion publicly or in a rude manner, she reminds.

Table manners

When it comes to dining in a formal setting or casual events, understanding the cutlery etiquette is essential. Start with the utensils placed farthest from the plate for the first course and progress inward as each course arrives. Malayalis love eating their food using their hands, and many believe dishes taste great when felt first with the fingers. "If you prefer to eat with your hands, of course, go ahead. There's no need to look down on those who prefer that. And if one prefers to use cutlery, do so," says Elizabeth. However, she says, practising cutlery at home can come of use, especially when going to places that

consider touching food inappropriate.

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NEWS BOX

DU grad dies in crash on NY; law student held for rash driving

Gurgaon. Out to celebrate New Year's eve, a Delhi University graduate who recently started working for an IT company, died after the car she was travelling in with three of her friends rammed into a divider and overturned on Golf Course Road in the early hours of Monday. Siddharth Singhal (23), a law student at Amity University who was driving the Maruti Swift, was arrested on Tuesday for rash and negligent driving. Ananya, an Economic (Hons) graduate from Miranda House college, was sitting on the left rear seat of the car when the accident occurred around 5.30am, her father Prakash Singh said. A chief engineer with NCTC, her father told TOI that the Swift overturned after it rammmed a divider and recoiled after hitting a barbed wire. Ananya was thrown out of the car. Three others, including Singhal and another youth Sukrit, were not seriously hurt. She was admitted to Sanar hospital, where she succumbed to injuries.

The SHO of Sector 53 police station said an FIR was registered against Singhal under IPC sections 279 (rash driving) and 337 (causing injuries by negligence). "We have arrested Siddharth for rash and negligent driving after a complaint by her father," he said. Police said they are collecting CCTV footage to ascertain what may have happened. Prakash Singh told cops Ananya had left home with Singhal and Sukrit around 9.30pm on Sunday to celebrate New Year's eve and a friend's birthday. "My wife had a chat with Ananya at midnight to exchange New Year greetings. Ananya told her another friend will be joining them later in the night," he alleged. As Ananya was supposed to return home only in the morning, the family did not call her again. "At 8.28am on Monday, my wife received a call from Singhal's number, informing us about the crash. He said Ananya was critical. We reached the hospital, where we saw Siddharth and his parents. He had a wound above his eye. We got to know it was his car (DL9CAN8512) and he was driving rashly," Singh said. "My daughter is no more because of his negligent driving. I want the police to take action against him," he said. Ananya had recently joined HCL as a finance trainee.

DTCP razes six illegal colonies, frees 15-acre agriculture land

Gurgaon. Intensifying action against illegal colonies in and around the city, the enforcement wing of the town and country planning department (DTCP) demolished six illegal colonies, spread over 15 acres of prime agricultural land. During the demolition, people gathered at the site and DTCP officials appealed to them that they should not invest their hard earned money in such unauthorised colonies and should contact the office of DTP for any enquiry before buying a land/plot.

Tuesday's demolition drive was carried out in Hayatpur and Sadrana, falling in the Gurgaon Urban Area under Sector 10A police station. District town planner (enforcement) Manish Yadav said, "The demolition drive has been carried out successfully at three locations. An unauthorised colony, having an area measuring approx 4 acres in Hayatpur village, wherein two structures, boundary wall and an entire road network were demolished. Two more such colonies, having an area measuring approx 4 acres in Sadrana village, wherein an entire road network was demolished. Three other colonies, spread over an area of 7 acres in Hayatpur village, wherein 25 structures along with boundary walls, entire road network were demolished." According to officials, the offenders are using the gaps and carving out illegal colonies on prime agricultural land in violation of Haryana Development and Regulation of Urban Areas Act, 1975. Section 7A of the Act states that the registration of sale deed of a plot having a size less than 1 acre is not allowed without a no-objection certificate (NOC) from the DTCP. Officials said the violation of the Act is a punishable offence with imprisonment up to 3 years, therefore, the department informed the police to stop the development of unauthorised colonies being done by the offenders and register FIR against them. In the last one month, eight demolition drives were carried out in Gurgaon, Sohna and Pataudi where illegal colonies were razed. The demolition team used earthmovers in presence of police force to raze more than 200 structures and seven farmhouses.

Before GRAP came into force in October 2023, DTCP had demolished around 50 illegal colonies spread over 550 acre prime land in and around the city. These colonies were situated in urban areas of Gurgaon, Sohna, Pataudi and Farrukh Nagar.

Revamp soon for boosting strn to enhance water supply

Gurgaon: GMDA is planning to upgrade the Sector 16 boosting station in order to enhance water supply to a dozen tail-end areas such as Sikanderpur, Nathupur, Dundaheera, Udyog Vihar, Surya Vihar, DLF-1, 2, 3 and 5. New pump chambers will be constructed and fresh machinery will be installed to cater to the increasing demand. The project has already received administrative approval in May last year.

A GMDA official informed that they have already prepared the estimate and invited bids to commission the project. The cost is coming up to Rs 11.3 crore.

"Four new pumps will also be added to improve the existing pumping capacity and overall efficiency of the boosting station. The existing pump-sets in working condition will be retained while the defunct pumps will be removed. A new electric panel room will also be built," a senior GMDA official said.

While the GMDA is intended to complete the tendering process within the next three months, the project will take around 12 months to complete. GMDA had last increased the capacity of this boosting station in 2018. Additionally, three separate water supply pipelines will also be laid from the boosting station to cater to three zones namely MG Road, Sushant Lok 1 and Udyog Vihar to improve water supply.

"We are also planning to lay additional pipelines and water will be supplied from boosting station to three different zones," the official added. At present, the city requires 650 million litres of water per day (MLD) of water, as against the actual supply of 570 MLD. The shortfall is met largely by private tankers.

Decide on 10% abadi land by Jan 10 or will ramp up protest: Farmers to Noida

Noida. The farmers protesting outside the Noida Authority office will give the state government till January 10 to meet their demands for 10% abadi plots and compensation based on market rates during land acquisition for projects.

Till then, the farmers will withhold the next stage of protest they came up with on Tuesday, i.e., locking the Noida Authority office gate. The leaders said the plan changed as officials promised them that the industrial development commissioner in Lucknow would come up with solutions. Earlier, the farmers had refused to speak to the Noida Authority CEO, demanding solutions first. Farmers from more than 80 villages have been protesting outside the Noida Authority office for 22 days and called a maha panchayat last week to strengthen

"The officials met us on Tuesday and promised solutions for our demands through the industrial development commissioner in Lucknow. We have decided to give the Authority till January 10, after which we will further escalate our protests," said farmers' leader Sukhvir Khalifa.

In Greater Noida, farmers from 44 villages have been protesting outside the Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority (GNIDA) office for five months, demanding additional compensation for land acquired for new industrial areas and 10% residential plots for their families on the developed land. They also seek jobs for their children and free education in private schools, among other benefits.

Senior officials from the Noida Authority said they are in touch with the farmers and are trying to reach a solution so the protest ends. We also published the following articles recently: Farmers hold abadi land mahapanchayat outside Noida office. Farmers held a mahapanchayat at the Noida Authority office demanding 10% abadi plots or equivalent compensation for land acquired for development projects. The protest, ongoing since 2019, seeks rightful dues for farmers. The Greater Noida Authority



approved 10% residential plots for farmers on developed land, pending state government approval. 106305985

Abadi land stir: Farmers say will lock Noida office gates. Farmers protesting outside Noida Authority's office threaten to lock gates on January 2 if demands not met. Protest over pending demand for 10% Abadi plots. Farmers held maha

panchayat at Noida office. Demand is yet to be approved by state government. Farmers from 80+ villages gathered for protest. Industrial plots to cost 12% more in Greater Noida. The Noida Authority and Greater Noida have increased the prices of industrial plots by 12% in their recent board meeting. Plots measuring up to 1,000sqm will now be available at the rate of Rs 29,238 per sqm, while plots from 1,001-20,000sqm will cost upwards of Rs 23,975. The hike in rates is due to a change in the land allotment process. The authorities have also extended the deadline for completing industrial, IT, and ITES projects. Additionally, the Greater Noida Authority has taken decisions regarding visitor parking, water dues, road construction, and compensation for farmers

Dozens of deadlines gone, Dwarka away & cloverleaf may open in 1 mth

Gurgaon. The district administration has written to the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to open Dwarka Expressway and its cloverleaf for traffic. Work on the city section of the expressway is nearly complete. Officials from the administration said they expected traffic to be allowed in a month. The administration has also asked NHAI to conduct safety audits of national highways passing through the city by an independent agency in view of recent cave-ins. Recently, roads caved in on Delhi-Mumbai Expressway near Subhash Chowk and on NH-8 at IFFCO Chowk.

Deputy commissioner Nishant Yadav said the administration, through the state government, has written to NHAI requesting that the 18.9km portion of the expressway falling in the city be opened. "We have requested NHAI to at least open this section so that thousands of people living in new sectors get relief," said Yadav, adding that they are waiting for a reply from the highways authority. The delay in opening of Dwarka Expressway and its cloverleaf, which connects the high-

speed corridor with NH-8 and the Southern Peripheral Road (SPR), has been a matter of concern for years. Envisaged by the Haryana government in 2006, NHAI took up the project in 2016 and began construction in 2019, with an original deadline of two years. It has missed over a dozen deadlines since then. Though yet to be opened, many commuters have begun using the cloverleaf, as it provides easier access from new sectors to NH-8 and vice versa, as well as other parts of the city. The barricaded cloverleaf, as a result, sees high-speed traffic moving in both directions. Moreover, DC Yadav said in the past few months, a few incidents of cave-ins and damage to flyovers constructed over national highways have been reported in the city. "We have brought these issues to the notice of NHAI officials at the highest level and expressed our concern. We have requested them to conduct a safety audit of all NHs passing through the city by an independent agency," said Yadav, adding that the audit will help in checking the structural integrity of the expressways and whether any

interventions are required. Making a list of projects that are expected to start or complete this year, the administration said work on the Gurgaon Metro is also expected to gain pace as the state government has already approved the formation of a metro corporation on the lines of Delhi's DMRC for the construction of the metro network in the city. "A notification in this regard is expected this month, which will lead to formation of the body which will initiate work on the corridor," Yadav said. He Sheela Mata Medical College, two multi-level parking facilities at Kaman Sarai and Sadar Bazaar, the new district court complex, expansion of Civil Hospital and a new secretariat in Sohna are among the key projects expected to be complete in 2024. Two important roads expected to improve connectivity in rural areas within the city are also likely to be ready this year. The Gurgaon-Rewari road, which is being constructed by NHAI at a cost of Rs 900 crore, will link around 100 panchayats with Gurgaon and reduce travel time between Gurgaon and

After reshuffle, MCG engineers get back charge of infra work

Gurgaon: The exit of PC Meena as the MCG commissioner has led to the engineering department of the civic body getting back its powers. After being sidelined as Meena had given additional charges of the MCG's engineering work to GMDA engineers, the outgoing commissioner ordered a reshuffle in the engineering department on Monday evening, giving back the powers to the corporation's executive engineers. However, residents said frequent reshuffling in the engineering department makes it difficult to keep track of officers responsible for their areas and colonies. "The previous orders of engaging GMDA executive engineers had raised questions on the capability of MCG executive engineers. Moreover, it was hectic for the engineers to attend meetings at the GMDA office, then attend the field work and report back to the MCG office. We were managing the work earlier also and are capable of doing it. However, the shortage of engineers in the department is a concern that needs to be addressed. If all sanctioned posts of the engineering department are filled, our quality of work will improve since we are overburdened," said an MCG engineer. Nearly 55% of sanctioned posts in MCG are lying vacant. The most affected department, short on

Only 40% come up to clear power dues despite OTS

Noida. As the year came to an end, only 40% of the 1.6 lakh power consumers in the city who had defaulted on their electricity bill payments applied for the Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (UPPCL) one-time settlement (OTS) scheme to clear their dues. Officials said 65,098 applied for the scheme, including 2,500 on December 31. "We had arrears of Rs 348 crore. Of that, we recovered Rs 81 crore under the OTS scheme till December 31," said Rajeev Mohan, chief engineer of Noida power department, Pashchimanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited (PVVNL). On Monday evening, Uttar Pradesh energy minister AK Sharma announced the extension of the OTS scheme till January 16 on X (formerly Twitter). "There was a public demand to extend the scheme as many people still want to avail its benefits. So, the minister extended the deadline to January 16," said Mohan, adding that the power department is yet to receive the government order in this regard. While a majority of the defaulters are from rural areas, technical snags on the UPPCL website, followed by a lack of awareness and consumer apathy, may have led to the low recovery. Division 2 superintendent engineer of Noida power department said only 950 people from his area applied for the scheme till December 31 and deposited at least Rs 5 crore. Sanjeev Kumar Vaishya, superintendent engineer of divisions 1, 5 and 7 in Noida, told TOI that only 400 consumers applied for the scheme, with an overall recovery of Rs 5 crore in dues. Ghaziabad, which has 3 lakh defaulters across three divisions, also stood the chance to benefit from the scheme. Rajeev Kumar Gupta,

NAME CHANGE
I, SOMNATH S/O HANSRAJ BHALLA residing at H.NO-27, SHIVPURI SILVER PARK, KRISHNA NAGAR, DELHI-110051 changed my name to SOMNATH BHALLA permanently.

NAME CHANGE
I, hitherto known as PAVIT alias GURANSH SINGH ARORA S/O PARMINDER SINGH ARORA R/O HOUSE NO-208-G, DDA MIG FLATS, RAJOURI GARDEN, TAGORE GARDEN, WEST DELHI, DELHI-110027 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as GURANSH SINGH ARORA.

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is for general information that I AKHILESH SINGH S/O RAM BABU SINGH residing at B-181 KHASRA NO-47/1 BHAGYA VIHAR VTC-MADANPUR DABAS NORTH WEST DELHI, DELHI -110081. Declare that name of mine and my father has been wrongly written as A K SINGH AND RAM BABU in my driving Licence no - DL0720040015827. The actual name of mine are AKHILESH SINGH AND RAM BABU SINGH respectively which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE
I, hitherto known as BOBBY Alias BABI SINGH S/O BACHHU SINGH R/O JUGGI NO-1206, MAHIPALPUR, ARJUN CAMP, MALIK PUR KOHI Alias RANG PURI, MAHIPALPUR, SOUTH WEST DELHI, DELHI-110037 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as BOBBY.

NOTICE
General Public is hereby informed that my client Smt. Jaimala Kumari W/o Sh. Mahender Soni is the owner of Residential Plot no. 9, Kharsa no. 265, Situated at Shiv Park, Khoda Colony, Pargana Loni, Tehsil & Dist Ghaziabad (area measuring 75 sq. yds) vide Sale Deed Dated 05/04/2021 executed by Smt. Prakash Devi W/o Late Sh. Bhopal Singh in favour of Smt. Jaimala Kumari W/o Sh. Mahender Soni. (doc no. 4792, book no. 1, vol no. 17893, pages- 377 to 400, SR-11 Ghaziabad), Initially, Sh. Ritpal Singh S/o Sh. Khacode was the recorded owner of the said property. Who executed Registered GPA Dated 23/08/1996 in favour of Sh. Bhopal Singh S/o Sh. Ram Mehar. Who executed Notarized WILL/ GPA Dated 11/03/2009 in favour of Smt. Prakash Devi W/o Late Sh. Bhopal Singh. Who died Finally, Sale Deed Dated 05/04/2021 executed in favour of out abovementioned client who further intends to mortgage said property for his bonafide requirements with Fedbank Financial Services Ltd. Whosoever is having any objection to the said mortgage or acquisition or anyone has claim or right or interest in the property shall contact the undersigned with the objection within 07 days failing which it shall be presumed that there stands no objections. NEW DELHI. PRAGYA BHUSHAN ADVOCATE. Enr. No. D/72/102. Office: L-27, GF, Kailash Colony, New Delhi-48. Mob.: 9968006418.

NAME CHANGE
I, SAHIL SIDIOY S/O RAJINDER KUMAR residing at P-12/1 EXTENSION 1 MOHAN GARDEN UTTAM NAGAR DELHI-110059 have changed my name to SAHIL SIDIOY for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE
I, JC-552226H Rank-NB SUB Name-NORBU PHILLEY S/O SANGE LERA PHILLEY residing at VILL-SENGONG, PO+TEH-MECHUKHA, DIST-SHI YOMI, ARUNACHAL PRADESH 791003 have changed my minor daughter's name from TENZIN CHOTTON to TENZIN CHOTTON PHILLEY for all future purposes vide affidavit dated 03/01/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, Bihm Rana son of Ompal resident of Near Bus Stand, VPO Muana, Jind-126112, Haryana, have changed my name to (Given Name-Bhim) and (Surname-Rana) for all future purposes

NAME CHANGE
I, N ONGBI MOIRANG THOIBI DEVI I/MO NO-14847456F HAV N CHINLEMBLA SINGH R/O KUMBHI MAKHA, LEIKA WARD NO-4, DIST-BISHNUPUR, MANIPUR-795133, have changed my name from N ONGBI MOIRANG THOIBI DEVI to NONGMAITHEM ONGBI THOIBI DEVI for all future purposes. And my correct Date of Birth is 10.09.1968. Vide Affidavit Dated 26th Dec. 2023 before Public Notary Delhi.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/Traction Distribution, DRM's Office, State Entry Road, New Delhi for & on behalf of President of India, invites open e-tender for the under noted work:-

Name of Work with its location	Design, supply, erection, testing & commissioning of 25 Kv AC OHE in connection with Electrification of all Six Washing cum Pit Lines HN2M Depot to facilitate maintenance of upcoming Vande Bharat Train
Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 1,64,79,697.07/-
Earnest Money Deposit	Rs. 2,32,400/-
E-Tender Bid Online Submission Period	15.01.2024 (00.00 Hrs.) to 29.01.2024 (15.00 Hrs.)
E-Tender Bid Submission End Date & E-Tender Open Date & Time	29.01.2024 (15.00 Hrs.)
Fund Allocation	Capital (20427103)
Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen	www.ireps.gov.in
E-Tender No. : 25C-TRD-NDS-2023-24	Dated 02.01.2024

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No.RS(S)/2023/747/3 New Delhi, dated 03.01.2024
Sub:E- TENDER NO. 2023IS209 FOR PROCUREMENT OF 29,405 MT OF STAINLESS STEEL ITEMS.

1. On behalf of the President of India, the Executive Director, Railway Stores (S), Railway Board, New Delhi invites e-tender for procurement of 29,405 MT of Stainless Steel items on Running Contract basis. 2. The interested tenderers are advised to visit the website <http://ireps.gov.in> for details of the tender and submission of their e-bids. 3. No manual offers will be accepted against e-tender. 4. Tender will be closed at 15.00 hours on 06.02.2024.

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NAME CHANGE
I, Sanjay S/o Shyam Lal R/O House No. E-1594, Second Floor, Sainik Colony, Sector-49, Nit Faridabad, Faridabad, Haryana-121001 I have Changed My Name To Sanjay Arora For All Purpose.

NAME CHANGE
I, NO-15201426K Rank-HAV (DS) Name-WAREKAR SAMBHAJI PANDURANG S/O PANDURANG HARI WAREKAR residing at VPO-DEOWADI, TEH-SHIRALA, DISTT-SANGLI, MAHARASHTRA-415412 have changed my minor daughter's name from SHRAVANI to SHRAVANI SAMBHAJI WAREKAR for all future purposes vide affidavit dated 03/01/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, JC-552226H Rank-NB SUB Name-NORBU PHILLEY S/O SANGE LERA PHILLEY residing at VILL-SENGONG, PO+TEH-MECHUKHA, DIST-SHI YOMI, ARUNACHAL PRADESH-791003 have changed my minor son's name from LOBSANG CHOIKYONG to LOBSANG CHOIKYONG PHILLEY for all future purposes vide affidavit dated 03/01/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, KAVITA W/O ROHIT KUMAR residing at 106, GROUND FLOOR, POKET-1, JASOLA, DELHI-110025 have changed my name to KAVITA SINGH for all future purpose.

NAME CHANGE
I, PHULA S/O AMICHAND R/O VPO Sundawads, Hisar, haryana 125001 have changed my name to Harphool Singh for all future purposes

NAME CHANGE
I, hitherto known as RAM DEVI alias POONAM D/O DEVI DAYAL W/O VINOD KUMAR residing at House No. 467, Budh Mandir Kichhe Piche Wazli Gali No. 3, Azadpur, North West Delhi, Delhi -110033 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as POONAM.

NAME CHANGE
I, hitherto known as RAM DEVI alias POONAM D/O DEVI DAYAL W/O VINOD KUMAR residing at House No. 467, Budh Mandir Kichhe Piche Wazli Gali No. 3, Azadpur, North West Delhi, Delhi -110033 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as POONAM.

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is for general information that I, RAJESH KUMAR son of Shri ROSHAN KAVI, R/O House No.755A/29, Tilak Nagar, Rohtak-124001, Haryana, declare that name of my minor son was wrongly written as MITUL in my minor son MITUL HOODA aged 16 years in his 10th educational document. The actual name of my minor son is MITUL HOODA which may be amended accordingly

NAME CHANGE
I, Saima Arshad Zarabi, D/O Mr. Arshad Hassan, R/O C 126 A, himalaya lok building, JVTs Garden, chattarpur, Delhi-110074 have changed my name to Saima Arshad for future purposes.

NAME CHANGE
I, Arshad Zarabi, S/O Mr. Gulam Hassan, R/O C/373, 3rd floor, Ph-2, Ashok vihar, North west delhi, Delhi-110052 have changed my name to Arshad Hassan for future purposes.

NAME CHANGE
I, BAYYA VASANTHA KUMARI wife of No-16114651Y Rank-NK Name NUTHANAPATI MANJUNATH R/O 142, KAMMA VEEDHI, KUDAIR, KUDERU, ANANTHAPUR, KUDAIR, ANDHRA PRADESH-515711 have changed my name from BAYYA VASANTHA KUMARI to NUTHANAPATI VASANTHA KUMARI for all future purposes vide affidavit dated 03/01/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, JC-341038X SUB OM PRAKASH S/O DINA NATH R/O VPO-DEOL TEH-BALUNATH, DIST-KANGRA, HIMACHAL PRADESH-176125 have changed my name from OM PRAKASH to OM PAKRASH for all future purposes vide affidavit dated 20/12/2023 before Executive Magistrate, Baijnath (Kangra)JHP.

NAME CHANGE
I, AJEET SINGH S/O RAMESH CHANDRA R/O VILLAGE-KUNJIPUR, AJGAIN HASANGANJ, UNNAO, KUSHMBHI, UNNAO, UTTAR PRADESH 209859 have changed my name to AJIT SINGH for all future purpose.

NAME CHANGE
I, AJEET SINGH S/O RAMESH CHANDRA R/O VILLAGE-KUNJIPUR, AJGAIN HASANGANJ, UNNAO, KUSHMBHI, UNNAO, UTTAR PRADESH 209859 have changed my name to AJIT SINGH for all future purpose.

NEWS BOX

Man found dead at airport in Utah after climbing inside jet engine

Salt Lake City. A man was found dead inside an aeroplane engine on Monday in Salt Lake City International Airport in Utah in US after he breached an emergency exit door, walked onto the tarmac and climbed inside the jet's engine, said police. Officers found 30-year-old Kyler Efinger, of Park City, unconscious inside an engine mounted to the wing of a commercial aircraft loaded with passengers, the Salt Lake City Police Department announced on Tuesday. The plane had been sitting on a de-icing pad, and its engines were rotating. The manager of a store inside the airport had reported a disturbance just before 10 pm, telling dispatchers with the Airport Control Center that he saw a passenger pass through an emergency exit. Officers quickly found Efinger's clothing, shoes and other personal items on one of the runways. After locating him, the officers told air traffic controllers to notify the pilot to shut down the aircraft's engines. The specific stage of engine operation remains under investigation, police said Tuesday.

First responders pulled Efinger out of the engine intake cowl, which directs air flow to the engine fan. They attempted life-saving measures, performing CPR and administering naloxone, a fast-acting medication that can reverse opioid overdose and restore normal breathing. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

Salt Lake City police are working with the state medical examiner's office to determine the cause of death, which may include a toxicology report.

Passengers were removed from the plane when Efinger was found, but overall airport operations were not interrupted, police said. An initial investigation indicates the man accessed the airport's ramp area from the emergency exit and climbed inside the nearby engine. An airport spokesperson did not immediately respond to email and phone messages seeking comment.

US believes Hamas used Al Shifa Hospital but evacuated before Israeli operation: Report

Washington. US spy agencies assess that Islamist group Hamas and another Palestinian group fighting Israel used Gaza's Al Shifa Hospital to command forces and hold some hostages but largely evacuated the complex days before Israeli troops entered it, a US official said on Tuesday, citing declassified US intelligence.

The complex was used by both Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad to command forces fighting against Israel, the US official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. US intelligence agencies have not disclosed the evidence on which they based their assessment. The official said the US had independently confirmed the information. Israel has also said that Al Shifa, which it had occupied earlier in the war in Gaza, had been used by Hamas. Israeli troops entered the hospital in November.

The targeting of the hospital had stoked global alarm over the fate of civilians and patients who were inside.

The World Health Organization last month described the emergency department in the enclave's main health facility as resembling a "bloodbath."

The American government believed that Hamas used the hospital complex and sites beneath it to carry out command and control activities, store some weapons and hold a few hostages, the US official said.

US intelligence agencies obtained information that Hamas fighters had largely evacuated the complex days before Israel's operation and destroyed documents and electronics as they left, according to the American official. The US intelligence assessment was reported first by The New York Times. A classified version of the assessment was sent to lawmakers in the US Congress.

Israeli tanks advanced on Gaza City's Al Shifa hospital, with some patients still inside, in mid-November. Israel said the hospital sat atop tunnels housing headquarters for Hamas fighters using patients as shields, which Hamas denied. The Israeli assessment was at least partially correct that some hostages were held at or under the complex, but those hostages appeared to have been moved as Hamas evacuated, The New York Times reported. In November, White House national security spokesperson John Kirby said Hamas militants were sheltering themselves in the hospital and using the facility as a shield against military action, placing patients and medical staff at risk.

"We have our own intelligence that convinces us that Hamas was using Al Shifa as a command and control node, and most likely as well as a storage facility," Kirby said in November. Washington had at the time not declassified the sources of US intelligence.

Hamas' October 7 attack on Israel killed 1,200, according to Israeli tallies. Israel's subsequent assault on Hamas-ruled Gaza has killed over 22,000, according to Gaza health officials.

16-year-old UK girl virtually 'gang-raped' in metaverse game, probe on

WORLD. British Police are currently investigating a case where a girl's virtual reality (VR) avatar was allegedly gang-raped in a metaverse game, according to a report. The 16-year-old girl was using a Virtual Reality (VR) headset in an immersive game when her avatar was allegedly assaulted by avatars representing several men, the Daily Mail reported. While the victim did not experience physical harm, the emotional and psychological impact is being treated seriously by law enforcement, British officials said, as per the Daily Mail report. UK Home Secretary James Cleverly has voiced support for the investigation, stressing the significance of the psychological trauma inflicted upon the girl and warning against underestimating the seriousness of such virtual acts.

"I know it is easy to dismiss this as being not real, but the whole point of these virtual environments is they are incredibly immersive," he told LBC's "Nick Ferrari at Breakfast" program. "And we're talking about a child here, and a child who has gone through sexual trauma. It had a very significant psychological effect, and we should be very, very careful about being dismissive of this," he added.

POLICIES TO COMBAT ONLINE CRIMES

Ian Crichtley from the National Police Chiefs' Council highlighted the metaverse as a potential avenue for predators and stressed the importance of evolving policing strategies to combat online crimes. He also urged tech companies to enhance user safety measures. The game in question, Horizon Worlds, is a product of Meta, formerly known as Facebook. Reports indicate that the platform has seen various instances of virtual sexual misconduct, yet no legal actions have been taken in the UK to date.

US polls: Potential Biden-Trump rematch could reshape nation's politics

Laconia. U.S. presidential elections have been rocked in recent years by economic disaster, stunning gaffes, secret video and a pandemic. But for all the tumult that defined those campaigns, the volatility surrounding this year's presidential contest has few modern parallels, posing profound challenges to the future of American democracy. Not since the Supreme Court effectively decided the 2000 campaign in favor of Republican George W. Bush has the judiciary been so intertwined with presidential politics. In the coming weeks, the high court is expected to weigh whether states can ban former President Donald Trump from the ballot for his role in leading the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. Meanwhile, a federal appeals court is weighing Trump's argument that he's immune from prosecution. The maneuvers are unfolding as prosecutors from New York to Washington and Atlanta move forward with 91 indictments across four criminal cases involving everything from Trump's part in the insurrection to his efforts to

overturn the 2020 election and his hush money paid to a porn actress.

Depending on how Trump's appeals play out, he could be due in court as early as March 4, the day before Super Tuesday, raising the unprecedented prospect that he could close in on the GOP nomination from a courtroom. On the Democratic side, President Joe Biden is seeking reelection as the high inflation that defined much of his first term appears to be easing. But that has done little to assuage restless voters or ease widespread concerns in both parties that, at 81, he's simply too old for the job.

And at least three serious candidates who have launched outsider presidential bids threaten to scramble the campaign and eat into the support from independent voters who were critical to Biden's success in 2020. Facing such uncertainty, few expect the traditional rules of politics to apply in 2024. Jim Messina, who managed former President Barack Obama's reelection, said Trump could very well defeat Biden in the fall, even if the former president is in prison. "We just don't know," Messina



said. "Everyone in the world knows, especially me, that this election is going to be really, really close." Implications for abortion, immigration and U.S. role in the world. The results will have long-term implications on everything from the future of abortion rights and immigration policy to the role of the U.S. in the world. A Trump victory would raise the possibility of the U.S. largely abandoning Ukraine as it seeks to repel Russia's invasion. Domestic politics could also test Biden's commitment to Israel, a policy that threatens to erode his standing with young voters and people of color who are critical elements of his coalition. One of the few certainties at this

point is that Biden is a virtual lock to be the Democratic nominee again, facing only token opposition in this year's primary despite overwhelming concerns within his own party about his physical and mental fitness. And though a few rivals are fighting furiously to stop Trump, he is well positioned to win the GOP nomination for the third consecutive election. The strength of the GOP opposition to Trump will become more clear on Jan. 15 when the Iowa caucuses launch the nomination process. Trump holds a commanding lead in most national polls, although former U.N. ambassador Nikki Haley and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis are fighting to stop him. That hasn't been easy, however, as DeSantis has struggled to connect with voters and has embraced culture war topics that often left him competing for the same base of support as Trump. And Haley's pitch as a more sensible, moderate candidate was threatened last week when she was pressed on the cause of the Civil War and didn't mention slavery.

Russian missiles hit Ukrainian cities, killing 5 and injuring more than 100, Kyiv officials say

KYIV. Ukraine's two largest cities came under attack Tuesday from Russian missiles that killed five people and injured more than 100, officials said, as the war approached its two-year mark and the Kremlin stepped up its winter bombardment of urban areas. The Ukrainian Interior Ministry said Tuesday evening that the attack killed five civilians and injured 127 as air defences downed Russian Kinzhal missiles that can fly at 10 times the speed of sound. The Kremlin's forces targeted Kyiv, the capital, and the northeastern Kharkiv region whose provincial capital is also called Kharkiv, authorities said.

There was some confusion over the death toll as Kharkiv Gov. Oleh Syniehubov initially reported one death there but later said the injured woman thought to have been killed was in a coma. He said 52 people were wounded in Kharkiv.

Air defences shot down all 10 of the hypersonic missiles, out of about 100 of various types that were launched, Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief Gen. Valerii Zaluzhnyi claimed. It was the most Kinzhal used by Russia in one attack since the start of the war, Air Force spokesperson Yuriy Ihnat said. The barrage extended Russian attacks



that began Friday with its largest single assault on Ukraine since the war started, as fighting along the 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line has subsided into grinding attrition amid winter. At least 41 civilians were killed since the weekend. At a nine-story Kyiv apartment building where two people were killed, 48-year-old Inna Luhina was getting ready for work when a blast shattered her windows and she and other family members, including her 80-year-old mother, were struck by flying glass.

More than 100 survivors gathered at a school set up as a temporary shelter. Iryna Dzyhil, a 55-year-old resident of the same building, said the explosion threw her and her husband from their chairs, and a subsequent fire trapped them on the top floor until emergency crews rescued them via the roof.

"They say they're hitting military targets, but they're hitting people, killing our children and our loved ones," Dzyhil said of the Russians.

Russia fired almost 100 missiles of various types in the attacks, Zelenskyy said on X, formerly Twitter. He claimed at least 70 were shot down, almost all of them in the Kyiv area, noting that Western-supplied air defence systems such as Patriots and NASAMS had saved hundreds of lives. Russia's Defense Ministry said it had launched missile and drone strikes on military-industrial facilities in and around Kyiv. Depots storing missiles and munitions supplied by the West also were targeted, it said. The goal of the strike has been achieved, all the targets have been hit, it said without elaborating. It was not possible to independently verify either side's claims. Zelenskyy said that since Sunday, Russian forces have launched about 170 Shahed drones and dozens of missiles, with most aimed at civilian areas. The Kh-47M2 Kinzhal is an air-launched hypersonic ballistic missile. Russian forces rarely use such expensive missiles against Ukraine, due to their limited stocks.

Pakistan: Balochistan government suspends 44 employees for participating, facilitating protest sit-in against killing of Balaach Bakhsh

ISLAMABAD. Amid the ongoing Baloch protest in Islamabad, the Balochistan government has suspended 44 government employees in Turbat and Kohlu, including some officers, for allegedly participating in and facilitating a protest sit-in and rally against the alleged killing of Balaach Mola Bakhsh, Pakistan-based Dawn reported. The commissioner of Makran Division has issued an official notification confirming the action against 30 government employees from various departments in Turbat. According to the officials, the decision was taken during a recent meeting of the district intelligence coordination committee. During the meeting, these officers were identified as providing support to the participants of the anti-government sit-in and protest

rally, according to Dawn report. According to the notification, based on the recommendations of the meeting, the commissioner has suspended 30 employees from grade 1 to 15 and disciplinary action has been initiated against officials of grade 16 and above through letters to the secretaries of concerned departments. In addition, 14 government employees in the Kohlu district were suspended for participating in the sit-in and supporting the long march participants when it reached Kohlu in December, Dawn reported. According to the notification, the action against these government employees were taken under the Balochistan Employees Efficiency and Discipline (BEEDA) Act, 2011, Dawn reported. Most of the

employees against whom disciplinary action has been initiated belong to the education department, serving as teachers in various schools. Notably, the long march started in Turbat after the extra judicial killing of Balaach Baloch with other three in a fake encounter of Counter Terrorism Department (CTD). The authorities handed over the bodies to the families. However, Balaach's family did not accept the body and took the body to Shaheed Fida Chowk for protests, The Friday Times reported. Balaach's family requested that the city police to accept their FIR. However, the police refused to register the FIR. Then, the protestors increased and they took the protest to different areas of Turbat to let the residents join the protest, The Friday Times reported.

Harvard president Claudine Gay resigns amid plagiarism claims

Cambridge, Massachusetts. Harvard University President Claudine Gay resigned on Tuesday amid plagiarism accusations and criticism over testimony at a congressional hearing where she was unable to say unequivocally that calls on campus for the genocide of Jews would violate the school's conduct policy. Gay is the second Ivy League president to resign in the past month following the congressional testimony — Liz Magill, president of the University of Pennsylvania, resigned December 9. Gay, Harvard's first Black president, announced her departure just months into her tenure in a letter to the Harvard community. Following the congressional hearing, Gay's academic career came under intense scrutiny by conservative activists who unearthed several instances of alleged plagiarism in her 1997 doctoral dissertation. The Harvard Corporation, Harvard's governing board, initially rallied behind Gay, saying a review of her scholarly work turned up "a few instances of inadequate citation" but no evidence of research misconduct. Days later, the Harvard Corporation said it found two additional examples of "duplicative language without appropriate attribution." The board said Gay would update her dissertation and request corrections. The Harvard Corporation said the resignation came "with great sadness" and thanked Gay for her "deep and unwavering commitment to Harvard and to the pursuit of academic

excellence." Alan M. Garber, provost and chief academic officer, will serve as interim president until Harvard finds a replacement, the board said in a statement. Garber, an economist and physician, has served as provost for 12 years. Gay's resignation was celebrated by the conservatives who put her alleged plagiarism in the national spotlight — with additional plagiarism accusations surfacing as recently as Monday in The Washington Free Beacon, a conservative publication. Christopher Rufo, an activist who has helped rally the GOP against higher education, said he's "glad she's gone." "Rather than take responsibility for minimizing antisemitism, committing serial plagiarism, intimidating the free press, and damaging the institution, she calls her critics racist," Rufo said on X, formerly Twitter. "This is the poison" of diversity, equity and inclusion ideology, said Rufo, who has led conservative attacks on DEI both in business and in education. Gay, in her letter, said it has been "distressing to have doubt cast on my commitment to confronting hate and to upholding scholarly rigour — two bedrock values that are fundamental to who I am — and frightening to be subjected to personal attacks and threats fueled by racial animus." But Gay, who is returning to the school's faculty, added "it has become clear that it is in the best interests of Harvard for me to resign so that our community can navigate this moment of extraordinary challenge." Yoel



Zimmermann, a visiting research undergrad from Munich, Germany, studying physics at Harvard, said that as a Jewish student he's noticed fellow members of the Jewish community have felt uncomfortable with the climate on campus. "I think it was about time that Claudine Gay resigned," Zimmerman said. "She just did too many things wrong, especially with her testimony in Congress. I think that was just the kind of final tipping point that should have led to her removal immediately." Supporters of Gay lamented her resignation. "Racist mobs won't stop until they topple all Black people from positions of power and influence who are not reinforcing the structure of racism," award-winning author Ibram X. Kendi, who survived scrutiny of an anti-racist research center he founded at Boston University, said in an Instagram post. The Rev. Al Sharpton in a statement called pressure for Gay to resign "an attack on every Black woman in this country who's put a crack in the

glass ceiling" and an "assault on the health, strength, and future of diversity, equity, and inclusion." Critics welcomed her decision. House Committee on Education and the Workforce Chairwoman Rep. Virginia Foxx called Gay's resignation welcome news but said the problems at Harvard are much larger than one leader. "Postsecondary education is in a tailspin," the North Carolina Republican said in a statement. "There has been a hostile takeover of postsecondary education by political activists, woke faculty, and partisan administrators." Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz, in a statement on X, also weighed in on Gay's resignation. "A little context. A failure in leadership and denial of antisemitism have a price. I hope that the esteemed Harvard University will learn from this dismal conduct," he wrote. Gay, Magill and MIT's president, Sally Kornbluth, came under fire last month for their lawyerly answers to a line of questioning from New York Rep. Elise Stefanik, who asked whether "calling for the genocide of Jews" would violate the colleges' codes of conduct. The three presidents had been called before the Republican-led House Committee on Education and the Workforce to answer accusations that universities were failing to protect Jewish students amid rising fears of antisemitism worldwide and fallout from Israel's intensifying war in Gaza, which faces heightened criticism for the mounting Palestinian death toll.

Israeli forces are focused on Hamas but ready 'for any scenario': Military spokesman

TEL AVIV. Israel's military spokesman says the army remains focused on fighting Hamas after an explosion in Beirut that killed a senior leader of the Islamic militant group. The attack in Beirut, blamed on Israel, has raised concerns that Lebanon's Hezbollah group could strike back in revenge. Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, speaking to media Tuesday, made no direct mention of the death of Hamas official Saleh Arouri. "We are focused and remain focused on fighting against Hamas," he said. But he added, "We are on high readiness for any scenario."

Other updates

An apparent Israeli strike in the Lebanese capital of Beirut killed Hamas' second-highest ranking political leader Tuesday, marking a potential escalation of Israel's war against the militant group and heightening the risk of a wider Middle East conflict. Saleh Arouri, who was the most senior Hamas figure killed since the war with Israel began, was also a founder of the group's military wing. His death could provoke major retaliation by Lebanon's powerful Hezbollah militia. The strike hit an apartment in a building in a Shiite district of Beirut that is a Hezbollah stronghold, and Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah has vowed to strike back against any Israeli targeting of Palestinian officials in Lebanon. Hezbollah and the Israeli military have been exchanging fire almost daily over the Israeli-Lebanese border since Israel's military campaign in Gaza began nearly three months ago. But so far the Lebanese group has appeared reluctant to dramatically escalate the fighting. A significant response now could send the conflict spiraling into all-out war on Israel's northern border. Israeli officials declined to comment. Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said the strike was carried out by an Israeli drone.

The killing comes ahead of a visit to the region by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, even as the United States has tried to prevent a spread of the conflict, repeatedly warning Hezbollah — and its regional supporter, Iran — not to escalate the violence. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to press ahead with the assault in Gaza until Hamas is crushed and the more than 100 hostages still held by the militant group in Gaza are freed, which he has said could take several more months. At the same time, Israeli officials have increasingly warned in recent days of stepped-up action against Hezbollah unless its cross-border fire stops.

Beirut strike

Netanyahu and other Israeli officials have repeatedly threatened to kill Hamas leaders wherever they are.

Bajaj Finance hikes FD rates by 25 basis pts

Mumbai. Bajaj Finance has hiked interest rates on its fixed deposits by 25 basis points by introducing a 42-month deposit with an interest rate of 8.6% for the general public and 8.85% for senior citizens. The interest rate on the 42-month deposit compares favourably to the 8.35% offered on 44-month deposits. The 42-month scheme termed a 'digital fixed deposit' can be booked from the app, online, or through the assisted digital mode at branches. The rate increase comes in the wake of RBI asking finance companies to diversify their funding sources. We also published the following articles recently: Bajaj Finance offers 25 basis points more on fixed deposits. Bajaj Finance increases fixed deposit rates by 25 bps, introduces 42-month deposit with 8.6% interest rate for general public and 8.85% for senior citizens. The 42-month deposit offers higher interest compared to 44-month deposits. It can be booked digitally or at branches. Bajaj Finance has 30% of its funds from deposits, with 60% of deposits for around 44 months. Sachin Sikka, EVP of Fixed Deposits, states trust is important and Bajaj Finance is a trusted retail brand with AAA/stable rating. The company aims to target HDFC fixed deposit renewals with the rate hike.

SBI increases deposit rates by up to 50 basis points. SBI has increased interest rates on short-term fixed deposits by 50 basis points, the largest increase in recent months. The bank now offers 3.5% interest on deposits between 1 week and 45 days, up from 3%. Senior citizens will receive a return of 4% on these deposits, compared to 3.5% previously. SBI's Amrit Kalash scheme now offers 7.1% interest (7.6% for senior citizens) and is valid until March 31, 2024. Other banks are expected to follow SBI's lead in raising deposit rates.

Passengers from Gujarat agreed to pay Rs 60-80 lakh to enter US illegally'

AHMEDABAD. More than 60 people from Gujarat on board the Nicaragua-bound plane, which was sent back from France over suspected human trafficking, had agreed to pay Rs 60 lakh to Rs 80 lakh to immigration agents, who promised to cross into the US illegally after reaching the Latin American country, officials said.

According to a senior state Crime Investigation Department (CID)-Crime and Railways official, those passengers included 66 from Gujarat, who have already reached their respective native places in the state. Superintendent of police, CID-Crime and Railways, Sanjay Kharat, who is investigating the case, said these 66 Gujarat natives, including some minors, were mainly from Mehsana, Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar and Anand districts. "We have already questioned 55 of them and recorded their statements. Majority of them have studied till Class 8 to 12. Each of them admitted that they had agreed to pay Rs 60 lakh to Rs 80 lakh to the local immigration agents to help them cross into the US illegally after reaching Nicaragua via Dubai," he said. He stated CID has so far acquired the names and contact numbers of nearly 15 agents, who had promised to help these 55 persons enter the US illegally. "These agents had asked these 55 persons to pay the money only after reaching the US. The agents had told the passengers that their men would take them to the US border from Nicaragua and then help them cross the border. It was also revealed that the agents had also booked air tickets for these passengers and gave USD 1,000 to 3,000 to each passenger to deal with any emergency situation," Kharat said.

Coimbatore corporation seized 12 tonnes of banned plastic items in 2023

COIMBATORE. The Coimbatore City Municipal Corporation (CCMC) has seized around 12 tonnes of banned plastic items and collected around Rs 25 lakh as fine from shopkeepers in 2023. However, social activists said this was not enough and more needs to be done to ensure the ban on single-use plastics. On January 1, 2019, the state banned use of 14 plastic items including single-use bags and covers, but their use has been continuing. Traders cite the lack of alternative packing material and the high cost of biodegradable alternatives. A CCMC official told TNIE, "A total of 14,151 shops were raided last year and a total of 10,957 kg of banned single-use plastic items were seized. A fine amount of Rs 24,57,500 has been collected from the violators. Out of the five zones in the city, the Central Zone collected the highest amount of fine of Rs 3.85 lakh and the East Zone collected the lowest with Rs 98,300." However, social activists demanded the officials to impose hefty fines and initiate criminal proceedings against those using the plastic items. They alleged that CCMC is taking action against small traders and ignored the big fish.

CCMC Commissioner M Sivaguru Prabakaran told TNIE, "We have been constantly conducting surprise inspections over the banned plastic items in the city. Currently, we are collecting the fine amount based on the state government's guidelines, so we don't have any plans to increase them now. Also, in order to reduce the curb the usage of banned plastic items, we have to identify its source and have deployed teams to monitor the incoming of those items into the city.

Gujarat: Cardiac crisis at record high, EMRI got 1 call every 7.5 minutes in 2023

AHMEDABAD. Year 2023, marked by eerily high prevalence of sudden deaths due to cardiac arrests, had people's hearts in their mouths. EMRI 108 data reveals Gujarat witnessed record high cardiac emergencies in their 16-year operations in the state responding to one heart crisis call every seven and half minutes. Cardiac crisis EMRI 108 recorded 72,573 cardiac emergencies in 2023 which is a massive 35% higher compared to 53,700 in 2018. Even if one considers factors such as rise in population, the state registered 29% rise in cardiac emergencies on a year-on-year basis compared to 2022 that recorded 56,277 cases. When the data is extrapolated on the district-wise 2011 Census figures to understand prevalence of the cardiac emergency calls, Ahmedabad emerged at the top with 298 calls per 1 lakh population (21,496 calls), followed by 199 calls in Porbandar (1,167 calls), and 180 calls in Jamnagar and Devbhoomi Dwarka (1,981 calls). Major city-based hospitals specializing in cardiovascular diseases confirmed the trend. Tribal districts too recorded higher prevalence: EMRI data Major city-based hospitals specializing in cardiovascular diseases confirmed the trend and acknowledged rise in sudden deaths often spurred the citizens to be more conscious of the uneasiness they felt or

opted for preventive checks. Dr Chirag Doshi, director of the UN Mehta Institute of Cardiology and Research Centre (UNMICRC), said that cardiovascular diseases are on the rise globally due to lifestyle choices and other risk factors.

"For example, when we talk about relatively higher prevalence in Saurashtra region, consumption of tobacco could be a major risk factor. Right from food to sedentary lifestyle, we see several factors that often prompt onset of cardiovascular diseases relatively early," he said. While state education minister Kuber Dindor had claimed in December that about 1,000 persons died due to cardiac arrests in Gujarat in six months, health minister Rushikesh Patel had later said that the state government does not have such data.

Hundreds of videos on social media however indicated the nature of sudden deaths where the persons did not get time to even get basic intervention. Several of these persons were below 30 years of age. Even tribal districts of Dang (159 calls per 1 lakh population) and Tapi (156 calls per 1 lakh population) have recorded relatively higher prevalence, pointed the data. Cardiac related emergencies were the sixth highest after pregnancy, vehicular accidents, abdominal pain, non-vehicular trauma and



breathing problems for the EMRI 108 services.

"It is generally believed that the prevalence is higher in major cities such as Ahmedabad and Surat, but we must understand that access to health facilities is also a major factor that increases the number of cardiac emergencies relatively," said Dr Kamal Sharma, a city-based interventional cardiologist.

"When we talk about high prevalence of calls

for cardiac issues even in tribal districts, we must understand two factors - there is a definite urbanization of rural areas where there would not be matching infrastructure, but these areas also have similar food habits with high fat and lack of physical activities. Moreover, we also should understand that there are better diagnostics available at smaller centres due to which cardiac issues are coming to the fore earlier than before," he added.

Bengaluru airport among top 3 most punctual in world

MUMBAI. Travellers who flew to or from Hyderabad or Bengaluru airports last year would have experienced on-time performance that is among the best in the world. Hyderabad and Bengaluru airports have bagged the second and third rank respectively for on-time performance in 2023 in the 'global airports' category, according to rankings released by aviation analytics firm Cirium on Tuesday.

A flight is said to be on-time if it arrives or departs within 15 minutes of the scheduled time. On-time performance (OTP) is a valuable metric of reliability, with OTP arrivals used to rank airlines and OTP departures used to rank airports. Cirium said it uses 'Gate Arrival' to measure the OTP of airlines and airports. The difference between runway and gate arrival times can be anywhere

between five to 30 minutes, depending on the taxi track network of the airport and the congestion on ground. The global topper was Minneapolis' St Paul International Airport in the US, with an OTP of



84.44%. While Hyderabad's Rajiv Gandhi International Airport had 84.42% flights arrive or depart on time or within 15 minutes of scheduled arrival or departure,

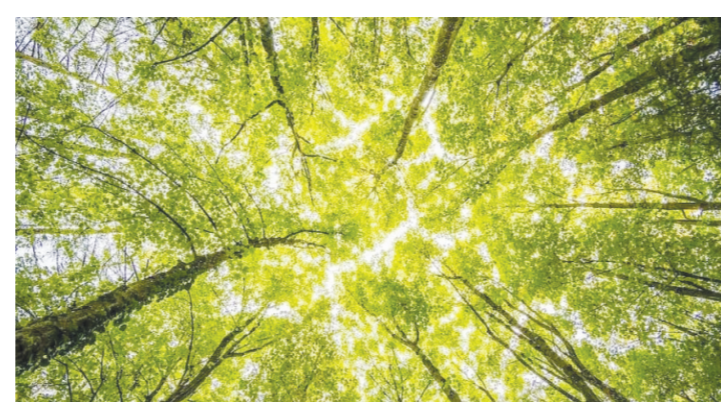
Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport, too, came close at 84.08%. "Hyderabad airport's OTP hasn't increased year-on-year. It actually decreased by 1 percentage point in 2023 compared to

2022. However the usual winners, Japanese airports, lost ground or declined significantly in OTP in 2023," said a Cirium spokesperson. The only other Indian airport to feature in the top ten on-time performance list was Kolkata's Netaji Subhash Chandra airport, which was ranked ninth, but in the 'medium airports' category, which is based on passenger volumes handled. Both Hyderabad and Bengaluru fall in the large airports category. While none of the Indian carriers featured in the top ten list of 'global airlines' for OTP, IndiGo secured the eighth rank in the low-cost carriers category, with 82.12% flights on time.

Indian carriers featured in the top ten list of 'global airlines' for OTP, IndiGo secured the eighth rank in the low-cost carriers category, with 82.12% flights on time.

Two lakh acres of forest land encroached in Karnataka: Minister

BENGALURU. Forest, Environment and Ecology Minister Eshwar Khandre on Tuesday said that two lakh acres of forest land have been encroached in the state, most of them in Shivamogga and Uttara Kannada districts. At a closed-door meeting with officials on Tuesday, Khandre directed them to clear the encroachments at the earliest on a priority basis. He said there are Central and state government lands for forest conservation, yet it is shocking to note that there is encroachment happening. "Encroaching forest land is a crime and cases should be booked against encroachers. The first priority in clearing encroachments should be in areas around Bengaluru, especially in Kothanur, where forest land worth Rs 400 crore was encroached and converted to revenue land



by the revenue department's sub-divisional officer and Tahsildar," he said, adding that while a case has been booked, the land is yet to be recovered. He added that increasing encroachment was also one of the reasons for the rise in man-animal conflict. In the last three months, around 2,000 acres of encroachments have been cleared, but more needs to be done. Khandre pointed out that there are

around 13,155 cases involving 31,864 acres of land. Of this, in 7,000 cases, land was granted. The nodal officers have been directed to check and dispose of the cases at the earliest. He also told the forest officials not to harass farmers who had encroached up to three acres of forest land before the 1980s, but instead to first target the bigger encroachers. He told the officials to prepare a list of encroachments -- district-wise, sector-wise, division-wise and circle-wise. Based on the details, the next course of action will be decided. Meanwhile, Khandre said that on getting cabinet approval, the forest department will open a three-month window for people possessing wildlife articles to surrender them. He added that a discussion has been held with the law department.



volunteers and student clubs. The institutions may create common clubs with various activities related to ragging prevention and non-use of substances. Under Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan programme, the departments of Higher Education, SSEPD and Health coordinate with the ministry for all aspects of drug abuse prevention, preventive measures, treatment and rehabilitation of drug users and creating public awareness on the issue. Around 5,263 youths in 50 HEIs have so far been covered under the programme in the state. The state government, on its part, is currently implementing the Navchetana programme under the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (launched last year) in 10 districts to reduce adverse consequences of drug abuse in adolescent students. As part of the programme, 10 schools in each of the 10 identified districts are being taken up with a focus on providing education and awareness on drug abuse among school-going children in the age group of 11-18 years.

Rice procurement still a challenge for Siddaramaiah govt

—The state government cannot procure grains, and is dependent on FCI to procure rice. It can only source it from the Union government.

BENGALURU. The Siddaramaiah government's pride 'Nudidante Nadedu Sarkara' has not materialised for the rice distribution guarantee, thanks to a number of challenges in procurement, and other circumstances. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who has been a stickler for fulfilling poll promises made by the Congress, has had to rely on cash payout instead of rice.

The Karnataka government had been working hard for about seven months to procure rice to fulfil its Anna Bhagya poll promise of 5kg rice per head, but a drop in output for the period ending December 31 has resulted in a 48 lakh tonne shortfall of rice across the nation. With the market price of rice remaining high, the state may not be able to procure the required quantity for its PDS scheme and be content to dole out cash. V Prasad, former chairman,

Food Corporation of India (FCI), quoted statistics and explained to TNIE, "The situation looks grim, with a shortfall in rice surplus states. In Chhattisgarh, there was a drop from 51.6 lakh tonne to

38.5 lakh tonne, Telangana saw a drop from 37 lakh tonne to 27 lakh tonne. In Uttar Pradesh, procurement dropped from 27 lakh tonne to 23 lakh tonne, and in Madhya Pradesh, from 20.5 lakh tonne to 11.6 lakh tonne. The overall shortfall is about 48 lakh tonne, so it could be difficult for the state to procure rice and it may have to continue with cash transfer." The state government cannot procure grains, and is dependent on FCI to procure rice. It can only source it from the Union government.

Food and Civil Supplies Minister K H Muniyappa tried several options, contacting rice millers, cooperatives and state governments, but has not been able to get the required



quantity. And again, he expressed confidence that he would get the requisite supplies, but encountered a number of hurdles -- the FCI said it would not be able to give Karnataka the required stocks, and international price of rice increased.

He held several meetings with stakeholders but could not procure the required quantity. FCI and the Centre will have no problem procuring rice for PDS, but will in all probability, have no surplus rice to give to state governments for state-sponsored rice schemes, informed sources said.

Opposition leader R Ashoka told TNIE, "This government is not doing anything in an organized and planned manner. The leaders did not ascertain whether they would be able to keep their word, but went ahead with promises to the people. They also claimed falsely that they have delivered their guarantees, but even now, they are struggling and this is the fate of all their schemes. The people will realise it soon."

A battle to win hearts and minds in J&K

NEW DELHI deserves credit for acting with despatch in handling the recent incidents in the Poonch-Rajouri area. Four jawans were killed in an ambush on December 21; a day later, three civilians, picked up for interrogation along with others, died in custody, allegedly after being tortured. The Army Chief, Gen Manoj Pande, and Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh visited the area within days of the civilian deaths. Neither of them addressed the brutality directly, but both sent a clear message to the Army against the recurrence of such incidents.

No doubt, the situation was an extremely difficult one for the Army. Three of the four jawans killed had been apparently decapitated. This was almost certainly aimed at instigating the kind of reaction that unfortunately did take place. The long-drawn insurgency is testing the nerves of the Army.

News reports suggest that it was New Delhi's intervention that led to the J&K police filing a case on the basis of a 29-second video clip shot in an Army camp, purportedly showing the torture. The media's role here was not particularly glorious. Most news reports spoke of three civilians being "found dead" in Bafliaz village of Poonch. Some even spoke of a 'mystery' surrounding the deaths. Since the three had been picked up by the Army a day earlier, it would not have taken a genius to realise that these were custodial deaths. What was striking was the political reaction. On December 27, the Defence Minister landed in Rajouri and exhorted the forces to "not only safeguard national interests but also win the hearts of the people." He said there should be "zero tolerance for violations of the well-established standard operating procedures." The minister met the families of the dead civilians and assured them of an "expeditious investigation into the incident, culminating in the delivery of justice." Two days later, BJP leaders, including state party president Ravinder Raina and local MP Gulam Ali Khatana, who is a Gujjar, also visited the families. They sought strict punishment for the guilty, whom they said had committed "a major crime."

Those killed were from the Gujjar and Bakarwal communities, which have largely worked with government agencies in the counter-insurgency (CI) campaign. Their support is an important element of the BJP's electoral plans in Jammu & Kashmir. The government has been suggesting that militancy in the state-turned-UT is almost over. This is not true. Given the level of security in the Kashmir valley, militancy has shifted its weight to the Pir Panjal region adjacent to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). Thirty-six soldiers and seven civilians have been killed in the region since October 2021.

Israeli military historian Martin van Creveld has said that there are two ways to fight an insurgency. First, a sledgehammer approach, such as the one adopted by Hafiz al-Assad when he crushed the Muslim Brotherhood uprising in the city of Hama in Syria in 1982. Assad simply levelled the city with artillery and tanks, killing tens of thousands of people. The second method is the one in which the British dealt with the Irish Republican Army (IRA) insurgency beginning in the late 1960s. There were regular shootings and killings and the IRA bombing campaign even expanded to the UK. They assassinated Lord Mountbatten and blew up the hotel where then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was to speak; they even attacked 10 Downing Street.

According to van Creveld, the British exercised "extreme self-control". They avoided firing at crowds and desisted from collective punishment such as blowing up houses. The army stayed within the boundaries of the law and refrained from arbitrary torture and killings. There were violations of this code of conduct, but they were kept to a minimum. The result has been a lasting victory for the British. Actually, van Creveld's typology could well be applied to the Israeli Defence Forces, which is adopting the Assad style in Gaza by using some of the heaviest weapons in its arsenal. Remember that the Assad strategy, applied to the civil unrest that broke out in 2011, led to the whole of Syria coming apart.

Prudent lending is crucial to rein in wilful defaulters

India should improve debt recovery instead of writing off large corporate bad loans. It is imperative to implement modifications in bank credit framework.

MINISTER of State (Finance) Bhagwat Karad told the Lok Sabha last month that as on March 31, 2023, there were 2,623 borrowers in India who had been officially categorised as wilful defaulters. These borrowers collectively owe Rs 1,96,049 crore to banks across the country. Karad stated that Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) and all-India financial institutions were required to submit credit information for all borrowers with a total exposure of Rs 5 crore or above to the Central Repository of Information on Large Credits.

According to data of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), banks have written off a staggering amount of over Rs 15 lakh crore since the 2012-13 financial year. A bank writes off a loan when the borrower has defaulted on the repayment and the likelihood of recovery is extremely low. The bank then removes the non-performing asset (NPA) from the assets section and records the amount as a loss. Experts frown on this practice, but banks routinely do it as part of their tax management clean-up process. The beneficiaries are almost always some of our most egregious industrialist defaulters. After a loan has been written off, banks are required to continue pursuing various options to recover it. However, according to the RBI, banks recovered only Rs 1,09,186 crore (18.6 per cent) out of Rs 5,86,891 crore in loan write-offs in the past three years. Everyone in the nation is impacted by the excessive loss to the banks because the money deposited there belongs to the country's citizens. According to RBI data, NPA write-offs in SCBs (including wilful defaulters) were to the tune of Rs 63,000 crore between FY2005 and FY2014, but they skyrocketed to Rs 12.3 lakh crore between FY2015 and FY2022. The increase is largely attributed to then UPA government's overzealous loan sanctioning and evergreening policies. Banks and businesses often use restructuring as a way to keep reporting their NPAs at low levels. Evergreening loans is the practice of giving more loans to a borrower who is about to stop paying so that the loan stays on the books as being paid. Between 2000 and 2014, companies could choose more flexible ways to restructure loans, which led to many of them getting new loans from banks to keep their loan portfolios going. Even though the bankruptcy code has made it harder to keep a business going forever, the rate of recovery is still very low. According to a reply made in the Rajya Sabha (March 28, 2023), the recovery of NPAs that had been written off was only 16.6 per cent from FY18 to FY22. The quantum of banking frauds has increased 17 times — from Rs 34,993 crore (2005-14) to Rs 5.89 lakh crore during 2015-23. According to the RBI's Financial Stability Report, which came out on June 28, 2023, the SCBs' gross non-performing assets ratio continued its downtrend and fell to a 10-year low of 3.9 per cent in March 2023. It should be noted that if the amount of write-off is included, the total NPAs would rise to 7.47 per cent, whereas banks are currently reporting 3.9 per cent. According to the report, "Write-offs by public sector banks increased from Rs 7,187 crore in 2013 to Rs 1,19,713 crore in 2022." The SBI has written



off the most money among these public sector banks in the past 10 years, amounting to Rs 2,97,196 crore, followed by PNB (Rs 92,511 crore), Bank of Baroda (Rs 75,429 crore) and Bank of India (Rs 53,961 crore). For private banks, the aggregate amount of write-offs rose from Rs 4,115.02 crore in 2013 to Rs 53,087.03 crore in March 2022. In FY21-22, the total write-offs by public and private sector banks totalled Rs 1,72,800 crore, far exceeding the amount allocated to any of the three key social sectors, namely rural employment (MGNREGA), health or education in FY23-24. The NDA government has so far given Rs 2.76 lakh crore for the recapitalisation of public sector banks. In India, deliberate defaults are characterised by insufficient assessment conducted prior to loan approval and a deficiency in monitoring. Banks experience a decrease in their net interest margin due to high NPAs, and at the same time, their operating costs steadily increase. In order to offset these expenses, banks increase the convenience fee imposed on their smaller clientele. The frauds in the banking industry can be divided into four categories — 'management', 'outsider', 'insider', and 'insider and outsider' (jointly). Operational errors are the root cause of fraudulent activities, regardless of whether they originate from within the organisation or externally. Deloitte's research indicates that inadequate examination prior to disbursing funds (21 per cent) and restricted supervision of assets following disbursement (38 per cent) were the primary factors contributing to stressed assets and NPAs, respectively. Prudent lending is crucial for banks as it helps mitigate the risk of NPAs caused by bad loans. Regulation of

chartered accountants is necessary to curb the occurrence of bank NPAs. Banks should exercise caution when lending to Indian enterprises with significant overseas loans. The internal and external audit mechanisms of banks require immediate enhancement. Senior officers are responsible for making judgments about the credit sanctioning committee, whereas lower officers frequently face culpability for instances of default. Therefore, it is imperative that senior officers are held responsible. Public sector banks should establish an internal rating agency to rigorously evaluate large projects before lending. To monitor a business project's early warning signals, a good MIS (Management Information System) is needed. RBI needs human and technical resources to supervise forensic audits. AI-monitored financial transactions can greatly reduce financial fraud. Digitisation beyond a certain point may be misguided because artificial intelligence only considers quantitative data. The branch's inputs on the borrowers' background and other ground realities are crucial to risk assessment. India should improve debt recovery instead of writing off large corporate bad loans. It is imperative to implement significant modifications in the bank credit framework, encompassing reforms that extend from the branches to the very core of the system. It is important to draw lessons from Islamic banking, where the bank does not provide loans but rather purchases the necessary assets on behalf of the borrower who is prepared to acquire them. In this scenario, the meal is directly provided to the 'beggar' to prevent him/her from using the alms wastefully.

Deeper into space

ISRO begins year with another cosmic exploration

HAVING conquered the moon in 2023 with its historic Chandrayaan-3 mission, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has begun the new year with another exciting journey into space with the successful launch of its PSLV-C58 rocket, which is carrying 11 satellites. Thanks to meticulous planning, the PSLV deployed the X-ray Polarimeter Satellite (XPoSat) into orbit 21 minutes later. This satellite is poised to unravel the mysteries of black holes by delving deeper into the X-rays emitted by celestial bodies. The latest cosmic exploration cements India's position in the space sector, which is dominated by the US, China and Russia. Once again, wondrously, the XPoSat has cost a mere \$30 million (Rs 250 crore) as against the \$188-million NASA IXPE mission, which is on a similar foray in space since

2021. In addition, XPoSat's expected lifespan is five years as compared to the two years that its US counterpart has. However, this feat is nothing new for ISRO; the organisation has time and again stunned the world by its ability to make quality rockets and satellites on shoestring budgets. This cost-effectiveness can be a game-changer as India gingerly opens the space domain to the private sector. The business of satellite-building has skyrocketed, with many domestic startups showing huge potential as they forge tie-ups with foreign companies. There is merit in ISRO Chief S Somanath's recommendation that regulations in the sector be eased so as to enable growth in space science development and eventually make India a hub of satellite-manufacturing.



Take pre-emptive action to curb terror ambushes

The perpetrators invariably enjoy local support. Without such assistance, it would not be possible for the terrorists to execute an ambush.

INDIA has been a victim of terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir over the past more than three decades. It is well known that the perpetrators are trained, funded and armed by the Pakistan army. There are also reports of terrorists and infiltrators carrying Chinese weapons; the collusion between the two 'all-weather friends' is no surprise. Of late, the thrust of these attacks has shifted from the Kashmir valley to the thickly forested southern slopes of the Pir Panjal range. These attacks continue unabated. Apart from the loss of precious lives, the frequency of these attacks creates doubt, at least in the minds of the uninformed, about the level of preparedness and efficacy of the drills and procedures adopted by the security forces. This has a negative effect on the morale of the security personnel. A ceasefire has been in place between India and Pakistan since 2003. Its observance was reiterated on February 22, 2021, during discussions over the established hotline between the directors general of military operations of the two armies. It was reported: "In a first joint statement issued by the two sides in years, India and Pakistan said they have agreed to a 'strict observance of all agreements and understandings and cease firing along the Line of Control (LoC) and all other sectors' with effect from the midnight of February 24/25." But the ground reality is different. It is empirically seen that the ceasefire is adhered to only by India. The existing situation ideally suits the Pakistan army in continuing its proxy war practically on a no-cost basis — without fear of retaliation. Even in the latest ambush that took place in the Rajouri-Poonch area on December 21, 2023, in which we lost four soldiers, the responsibility has been claimed by the little-known People's Anti-Fascist Front, which is reportedly linked to Pakistan-based terror group Jaish-e-Mohammed. It should be assumed that the Pakistani post nearest to the ambush site would have facilitated their infiltration. There is a case for subjecting such posts to appropriate deterrent punishment. Unilateral observance of the ceasefire is



proving to be counter-productive. The perpetrators invariably enjoy local support. There is no doubt that some residents would be helping the terrorists in hiding and sneaking away subsequently. Without such support, it would not be possible for the terrorists to execute an ambush. It would, however, be wrong to suspect a whole village or community. Such support is sporadic and obtained invariably through threat and coercion. While there is no foolproof system when dealing with jihadis who come determined to kill or die, we can minimise risks and losses. Our forces are

deployed to guard the long Line of Control over rough mountainous terrain. The movement of vehicles has to imperatively take place. Though a minimum number of vehicles in a convoy and their spacing are specified, these norms get violated at times.

A vehicle column is the easiest and most vulnerable target for ambushes in the mountains. It is road-bound and visible from a distance. This enables the terrorists to predict its time of arrival and occupy their ambush positions at the last minute, thus minimising the chances of detection. The confined space inside the vehicle also

restricts speedy use of weapons. The many vulnerable sites along the route, which make an ambush easier, can be identified. The site is invariably in a concave loop where members of a group of terrorists can remain in visible contact and in mutual support. The site chosen is also on an ascending slope, where the speed of vehicles is slower. Besides, the site has to have enough foliage or folds in the ground for the terrorists to hide as well as to facilitate their getaway into the forested areas. There is a case for acquisition of land of a 50-metre swathe along the road at these vulnerable sites. These can then be cleared of foliage to make it difficult for the perpetrators to hide. The road-opening parties should also focus on these sites instead of trying to cover the entire stretch of the road, which is not practical. The vehicles used in these areas need bullet-proofing. This not only reduces the speed of movement but also curtails the life of engines; both outcomes should be acceptable. The leading vehicle in each convoy must have armour plating and a periscopic infrared camera that can detect people hidden in the bushes. Drones can also be fitted with these cameras and used to reconnoitre routes ahead of the convoys. The Army has been involved in tackling irregular warfare since Independence; it is arguably the most experienced army in the world in this regard today. The number of attacks on its columns might indicate lacunae in its tactics and adherence to SOPs (standard operating procedures). But the reality is that of all the attempted ambushes, nearly 90 per cent get aborted because of a high level of alertness of our troops. These failed attempts do not become public, leading to an incorrect negative impression of the security forces' level of preparedness.

The unfortunate death of three civilians, allegedly during interrogation by the Army, must be investigated thoroughly and the guilty punished speedily to instil confidence in the public. Anger management is part of the training of troops deployed in such scenarios. Its violation must not be tolerated.

The famous National parks and game reserves of India

India, rich in flora and fauna, is home to some globally-recognised national parks and game reserves. From Uttarakhand's Jim Corbett National Park to West Bengal's Sundarbans National Park, all attract nature and wildlife enthusiasts in large numbers every year. Mentioned here are few of the famous parks and reserves of the country.

Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary

Binsar covers the top of the Jhandi Dhar hills, and is a mid-altitude wildlife sanctuary, home to wild boar, deer, monkey, black bear, porcupine, mountain goat, red fox, jackal, pine marten, leopards, 200 species of birds and more. At the top of the local hills there's a point with an amazing view of the Himalayan range: a 300-km wide stretch of peaks that include Kedarnath (6942 m), Chaukhamba (7140 m), Trishul (7120 m), Nanda Devi (7816 m), Nanda Kot (6611 m) and

Panchchuli (6904 m).

Sundarbans National Park

Including the region of mangrove forests between the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers, Sundarbans National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage site and home to the Royal Bengal Tiger. Other park fixtures include the Sajnekhali Sanctuary with its large bird population and Bhagabatpur, which is the world's largest hatchery of est

uarine crocodiles. The best time to visit the park is from September to May when the winter chill brings out the Royal Bengal Tigers to rest in the sunlight.

Manas National Park

Assam is a place of huge biodiversity, since it is largely unspoiled in terms of natural habitats. Its world famous Manas National Park, located on the lowest slopes of the Eastern Himalayas, preserves rainforests packed

with rare tree species and wetlands fed by some of the highest rainfall levels on earth, not to mention the Manas River, a tributary of the sacred Brahmaputra River. Species, such as the Asian elephant and Indian rhinoceros, which are dwindling fast in other areas, are beginning to thrive here with the assistance of various conservation projects. These animals, as well as tigers, leopa

ards, langurs, Indian wild dogs, pangolins, sloth bears, gibbons, monitor lizards and expansive fauna have made wildlife watching and eco-tourism increasingly popular among those who are happy with the basic accommodation available in this unspoiled chunk of paradise.

The only permanent human aspect of the Manas National Park is Agrang village, located in the very centre, in the tiger reserve; apart from being an isolated and beautiful forest community, it's also talked about for incidents of villagers being eaten by tigers in the 1970s!

Kaziranga National Park

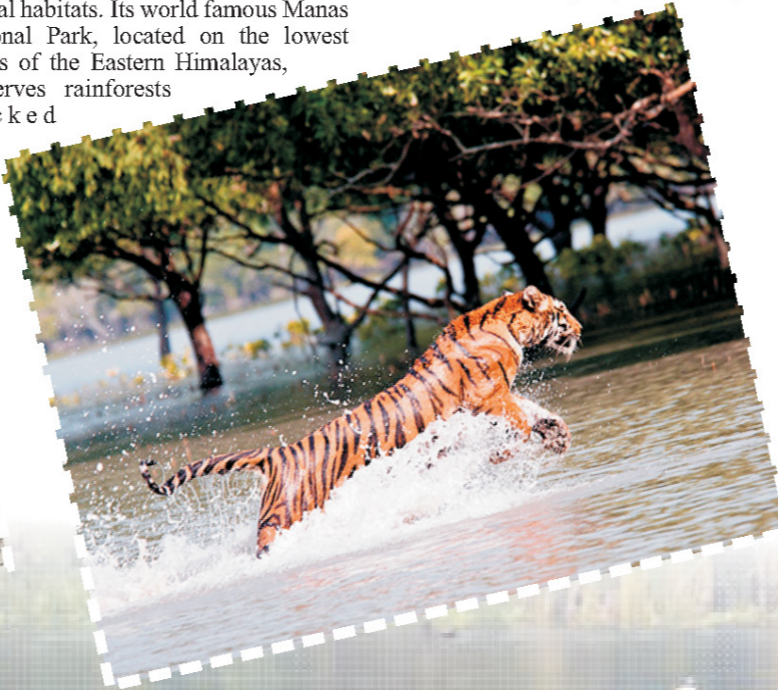
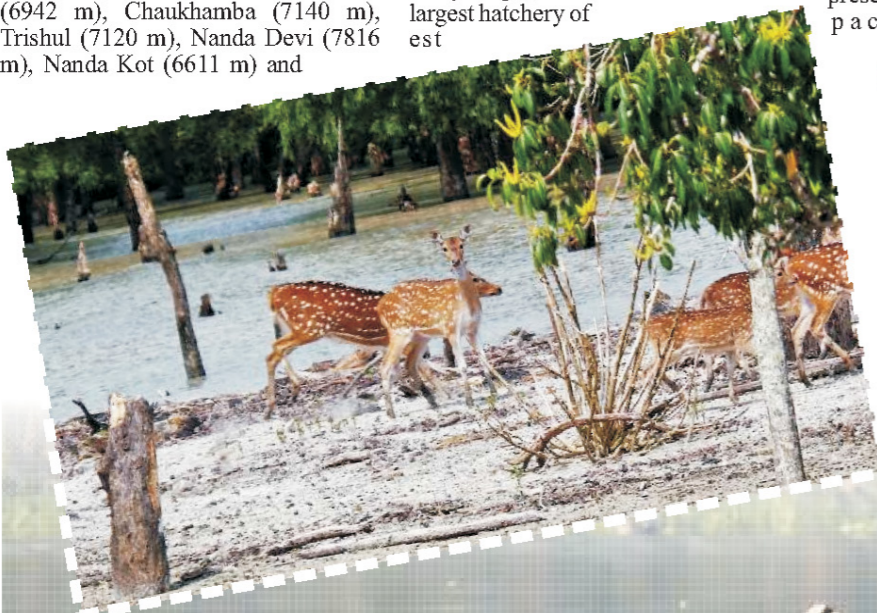
In the heart of Assam, this park is one of the last areas in eastern India undisturbed by human presence. It is inhabited by the world's largest population of one-horned rhinoceroses, as well as many mammals, including tigers, elephants, panthers and bears, and thousands of birds.



Jim Corbett National Park

A protected area housing India's endangered Bengal Tiger, the Corbett National Park, a jungle in the shadows of the Himalayas, is also home to over 650 species of animal (including 37 different species of dragon flies) and 480 different kinds of plants.

Named after Jim Corbett, the Irish, Indian-born hunter and naturalist, it was the first park established in India when it was first created in 1936 as Hailey National Park. The park didn't fare so well during WWII when it suffered poaching and tree felling, but Jim Corbett Park is now a major eco-tourism destination.



Honeymoon destinations in India



Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir
This capital city of Jammu & Kashmir is a paradise in every sense of the word. The lush valleys, sparkling lakes, high mountains and picturesque scenery make it a perfect honeymoon destination that you will remember all your life.

Goa
The land of sun, sand and sea – Goa is one of the top honeymoon destinations in India. Couples from all over the world come here to spend their honeymoon. Goa offers pristine beaches, scenic views, warm weather and a lot of fun and activity.

Coorg, Karnataka
Coorg in South India is a charming little town also known as the Scotland of India. The orange orchards, refreshing aroma of coffee and acres of verdant greenery is ideally suited for a cosy honeymoon.

Nainital, Uttarakhand
Nainital is a quaint and romantic hill station, perfect for honeymooners. It has charming lakes, beautiful scenery, boat rides and pleasant weather.

Jaisalmer, Rajasthan
Head to Rajasthan if you want to spend your honeymoon like royalty. This gorgeous city offers history, places, elephant and camel back rides and lots more. You can also check out other popular honeymoon destinations in Rajasthan such as Mount Abu,

Shimla, Himachal Pradesh

Shimla has been attracting honeymooners for a long time! This gorgeous hill station is a perfect place to visit to beat the heat. Shimla is peaceful, tranquil and complete with natural beauty.

Lakshadweep Islands
Lakshadweep is the smallest union territory of India and has the most exotic and uninhabited beaches. The beaches here have a bluish-green tinge and white sands. To heighten your honeymoon experience, book one of the cosy beach cottages.

Ooty, Tamil Nadu
Ooty is located in the Nilgiri hills and is one of the most celebrated hill stations. It promises a romantic honeymoon with lots of attractions in the town such as the Botanical Gardens, Rose Garden, Ooty Lake and Dodabetta peak

Darjeeling, West Bengal
Darjeeling is a lovely hill station which will make your honeymoon memorable. The acres of tea plantations and chilly weather will be the icing on your honeymoon cake!

Backwaters, Kerala
Kerala is known as God's Own Country and is a paradise for honeymooners. The backwaters are a unique web of lakes, canals and rivers. Hire a houseboat and enjoy your honeymoon in traditional Kerala style.

Delhi Police Form Panel To Study New Criminal Laws, Prepare Course Material

Although the Ministry of Home Affairs is yet to issue an official notification regarding the effective date of the bills, the Delhi Police Commissioner has constituted a committee of 13 officers, under chairmanship of IPS officer Chhaya Sharma.

New Delhi. The Delhi Police has set up a committee of high-ranking officers to study the three new criminal law bills recently passed by Parliament. The Bharatiya Nyaya (Second) Sanhita, 2023, Bharatiya Nagarik

Suraksha (Second) Sanhita, 2023, and Bharatiya Sakshya (Second) Bill, 2023, intend to replace the colonial-era IPC, CrPC, and Indian Evidence Act. These bills received President Droupadi Murmu's assent on December 25 during the winter session of Parliament. Although the Ministry of Home Affairs is yet to issue an official notification regarding the effective date of the bills, the Delhi Police Commissioner has constituted a committee of 13 officers, under chairmanship of IPS officer Chhaya Sharma. The committee is tasked with preparing course material for Investigating Officers to gain a practical understanding and study the new provisions and changes in procedures.

The officers of committee are as under:- DCP Joy Trkey, (North East), Addl. DCP Uma Shankar (DPA), ACP Hari Singh (E.O.W.), Insp. Rajiv Kumar (IFSO/Spl. Cell), Insp. Rajeev Bhardwaj (Spl. Cell), Insp. Naresh Malik (DPA), Insp. Devender Singh (SHO/Shahen Bagh) VIII. Insp. Arun Kumar (SHO/North Avenue), Insp. Suresh Kumar (E.O.W.), Insp. Anil Bermal (DPA), Insp. Sanjeev Kumar (E.O.W.), SI Somveer (DPA), and SI Rajni Kant (East



District). According to an order issued by Deotosh KS Singh, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Headquarters-II), on Tuesday, this committee shall also endeavour to update the skills of the investigating officers under the

new laws. The committee may co-opt a few lawyers and ex-Delhi police personnel at this stage to fine tune the course material to be in sync with judicial processes. The co-opted members will also be useful later in

conducting classes for Delhi Police personnel and train them in practice application of BNSS, BNS and BSA.

The names of Lawyers and ex-Delhi Police officers are as under:- 1. (ACP Retd.) Rajender Singh II. (ACP Retd.) Ram Singh III. Raunak Singh (Criminal lawyer) IV. Shri Akhand Pratap Singh (Criminal lawyer). This committee shall also endeavour to update the skills of the IOs under the new laws as mentioned above so that once the notification for application and change over from old Cr.P.C., I.P.C. and I.E.A. to new BNSS, BNS and BSA respectively is done, our 10s/Staff should be well aware of the procedural aspects as well as the nuances of the changes made in the new sections, it said. e Committee may begin to create new training material to be used by Delhi Police for its officers as ready reckoner and for study at DPA. The Committee shall also be consulting the District DCSF and Joint CSp of Delhi Police for improvements in the material and simultaneously consulting NPA, NLU and Judicial Academy for good references and training materials to be incorporated in our documents, it added.

14 killed, 27 injured as bus collides with truck in Assam's Dergaon

New Delhi. At least 14 people died, and 27 others received grave injuries after a bus carrying 45 people collided with a truck in Assam's Dergaon on Wednesday around 5 am. Police said the accident took place when the bus, carrying 45 passengers, was on the way to Tinsukia's Tilinga Mandir. It collided with a truck in Dergaon. They said that the picnic party embarked on their journey around 3 am and as they were about to reach their destination, a coal-laden truck coming from Margherita collided with the bus head-on.

Police rushed to the site, rescued the injured passengers and admitted them to the Jorhat Medical College. An official said that several injured people were in a critical condition. They recovered the bodies of the 14 passengers who died on the spot and sent them for post-mortem examinations. Police are investigating the matter.

India To Scrap Free Movement Regime On India-Myanmar Border: Report

New Delhi. The Free Movement Regime (FMR), which allows people residing close to the India-Myanmar border to venture 16 km into each other's territory without visa, will be ended soon, a senior government functionary said on Tuesday. The 1,643-km-long India-Myanmar border, which passes through Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh, currently has FMR. It was implemented in 2018 as part of India's Act East policy. Under the FMR, every member of the hill tribes, who is either a citizen of India or a citizen of Myanmar and who is resident of any area within 16 km on either side of border can cross over on production of a border pass with one year validity and can stay up to two weeks per visit.

We are going to end the FMR along the Indo-Myanmar border soon. We are going to put fencing along the entire border. The fencing will be completed in next four-and-a-half years. Anyone coming through will have to...get a visa," the functionary said. He idea is to not only to stop the misuse of FMR, which is used by insurgent groups to carry out attacks on Indian side and flee towards Myanmar, but also put a halt to influx of illegal immigrants, and paralyse drugs and gold smuggling networks.

Tendering for an advanced smart fencing system for 300 km of the India-Myanmar border is already in pipeline and the work will be started very soon. It may be mentioned that Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh had urged the Centre in September 2023 to end the FMR. The state government has argued that insurgents



use the free movement regime to further their activities. Manipur shares around 390 km of porous border with Myanmar and only about 10 km has been fenced so far. In July last year, the state government shared data that around 700 illegal immigrants entered the state. Besides, Mizoram has seen an influx of anti-Junta rebels in thousands since the military coup in Myanmar on February 1, 2021. According to government estimates, several thousand refugees are living in different parts of Mizoram since the coup. Mizoram shares a 510-km-long porous border with Myanmar. The Manipur chief minister had also said that several persons from Myanmar tried to enter into his state but returned on seeing the presence of a large number of security personnel. Manipur shares a 398-km border with Myanmar. Arunachal Pradesh shares a 520-km border with Myanmar while Nagaland shares a 215-km border with the country.

26 trains delayed as fog grips Delhi-NCR, temperature dips in north India

As foggy conditions continue to persist in Delhi, the minimum temperature in the city decreased to 6-9 degrees Celsius. In other parts of north India such as Punjab and Haryana, 'cold day' conditions are likely to prevail till January 5.

New Delhi. Delhi's minimum temperature settled at 7.3 degrees Celsius on Wednesday, according to the weather department. The Indian Railways today said that 26 Delhi-bound trains were delayed amid the presence of fog in the city. While visibility improved marginally in various parts of the national capital, Safdarjung, Delhi's primary weather station, recorded a visibility of 200 meters at 8:30 am on Wednesday, according to officials. In Uttar Pradesh's Noida and Greater Noida, the administrations ordered schools to be shut for students up to Class 8 till January 6 due to severe cold weather conditions in the district.

Through satellite imagery, the weather department observed fog over parts of



Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Gujarat, north Madhya Pradesh and Assam on Wednesday morning. The weather department said dense to very dense fog conditions are expected during the night and morning hours in parts of Punjab and Haryana from January 2 to 5, and in isolated pockets

thereafter for the following two day. Similarly, dense to very dense fog conditions are likely in early morning hours in some parts of Rajasthan on

January 3 and 4, as well as in isolated pockets over north Madhya Pradesh on January 3. Cold day to severe cold day conditions are likely to continue in many parts of Punjab and Haryana on January 3, and in some parts on January 4. Over the next two days, east India is expected to experience no significant change in minimum temperatures, followed by a subsequent rise of 2-3 degree Celsius. In Central India, minimum temperatures is likely to rise by 2-3 degree Celsius over the next three days, with no significant change thereafter.

Moderate To Dense Fog Blankets North India, Visibility Reduced

New Delhi. New Delhi: As cold wave conditions prevailed in North India, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Wednesday that moderate to dense fog cover was observed over parts of the region, including Punjab, Haryana, and central parts of Uttar Pradesh. According to the IMD, due to the fog cover late Tuesday evening, visibility in the areas was reduced, with Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly recording the lowest at 25. 'Very dense' fog is when visibility is between 0 and 50 meters, 51 and 200 meters is 'dense', 201 and 500 meters 'moderate', and 501 and 1,000 meters 'shallow.'

Taking to the social media platform X, the IMD said that at 11:30 pm on Tuesday, very dense fog enveloped isolated pockets of West Uttar Pradesh, and dense fog was over isolated pockets of East Uttar Pradesh



and East Rajasthan.

Moderate to Dense fog cover visible over Punjab, Haryana, north Rajasthan, West Madhya Pradesh adjoining East Rajasthan, Central parts of Uttar Pradesh south Assam & Tripura. Moderate to dense fog cover visible over Punjab, Haryana, north Rajasthan, West Madhya Pradesh adjoining East Rajasthan, Central parts of Uttar Pradesh south Assam & Tripura," IMD wrote in a series of

posts on X. Fog Observed at 2330 hours IST of 02nd Jan: Very dense fog in isolated pockets of West UP; Dense fog in isol. pockets of East UP & East Rajasthan; Moderate fog in isol. pockets of Jammu, Haryana & MP & Shallow fog in isol. pockets of Punjab, Delhi, West Rajasthan & Bihar," IMD added. As per IMD, the visibility recorded in West Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly was the lowest at 25, followed by Varanasi (50). While Ajmer in Rajasthan recorded visibility of 50, Kota and Jaipur each recorded visibility of 500. Earlier on Monday, the Director General of Meteorology, Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, told ANI that above-normal maximum temperatures are likely over most parts of peninsular and Northeast India. He also mentioned that during the upcoming winter season (January to March 2024), the rainfall over North India is most likely to be normal.

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren's Aide Searched By Probe Agency

Those who have been searched include Abhishek Prasad, the press adviser of Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren

New Delhi. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) is searching 10 locations in Ranchi and Rajasthan in a money laundering case linked to illegal mining in Jharkhand, sources said. Those who have been searched include Abhishek Prasad, the press adviser of Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren. The others who are facing the ED action also include Hazaribag deputy superintendent of police Rajendra Dubey, and Sahib Ganj district collector Ram Nivas. The district collector's home is in Rajasthan.

In another case linked to an alleged land scam, the ED on Saturday issued summons for the seventh time to Mr Soren seeking to record his statement. The ED in the summons warned the Jharkhand Chief Minister that it was his last opportunity to record his statement. "... We are giving you this last opportunity to record your statement under Section 50 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002... which should be within seven days of receipt of this notice/summons," the ED said in the summons to Mr Soren. Mr Soren has called the summons "illegal", news agency ANI reported on Tuesday. In a letter to the ED, Mr Soren said he has already given the details of his properties. Soren has written to the ED in response to the summons issued to him, saying the summons are illegal. He accused ED of making a media trial of the whole matter. In his reply, he said he had already given the details of properties. He accused the ED of trying to destabilise his government," ANI reported quoting an unnamed source. Mr Soren is also being investigated over allegations of money laundering linked to the illegal mining case in Sahebganj district. The Chief Minister, who is in charge of the mines and geology department, allegedly violated election rules by giving himself a mining lease in 2021. Soren has denied any wrongdoing and alleged a larger conspiracy to "harass a tribal leader". The ED searches comes just months ahead of the national election. Mr Soren has dismissed speculation about his wife Kalpana Soren being prepped to contest from Gandey assembly constituency as a "complete imagination" of the BJP.

The speculation was triggered by the ED's latest summons to Mr Soren, coupled with the resignation by the ruling Jharkhand Mukti Morcha's MLA Sarfaraz Ahmad on Monday.

The BJP has alleged Mr Ahmad was made to quit so that Kalpana Soren could contest from the Gandey seat in case of any eventuality in connection with the ED matter.

Hit-and-run law: Truckers end protest after Centre says decision after talks

The All-India Motor Transport Congress called off the agitation and urged truckers protesting against the new hit-and-run law to resume work. The development came after the truckers' body's key meeting with the government on the matter.

New Delhi. The truck drivers called off their nationwide protest against the new penal provisions regarding hit-and-run road accident cases as the government assured that it would consult the transport body representing them before implementing a contentious law against hit-and-run. The new rule that provides for up to ten years of punishment in hit-and-run cases has not been implemented yet, the government said, adding that any decision would be taken only after discussions with the transport body.

The truckers were also urged to resume work immediately after a late-evening agreement between the transport body and the government. However, several petrol pumps in Lucknow remained closed even after the transporters' strike was called off. "No stock" posters were seen at petrol pumps in the city, causing inconvenience to locals.

The staff is saying there's no stock. I am even unable to go to work. I don't know what the government is doing regarding

this issue," a local said.

HERE'S SARECAP

Truck drivers across the country lauched protest over a provision of the new criminal law codes dealing with the issue of hit-and-run accidents. The provision in question was recently brought in by the government under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, that replaces the ritish-era Indian Penal Code. According to the new penal law, any driver who causes the death of a person by rash and negligent driving and flees from the spot without reporting the accident to the authorities could be jailed for up to 10 years and/or be fined. Protestors blocked highways and roads in several parts of the country and refused to ply their vehicles. The nationwide protest sparked fears of fuel shortage, leading to panic buying. On Tuesday, visuals came in from several parts of the country showing people queuing up at petrol and



diesel pumps worried about an impending fuel shortage.

As the protests raged, the Ministry of Home Affairs held discussions with representatives of the All India Motor Transport Congress on January 2, the second day of the strike. Truckers protesting nationwide against the hit-and-run law were urged to resume work immediately after a late-evening agreement between the transport body

representing them and the government. The government said that any decision would be taken only after discussions with the transport body. Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla said, "There was a discussion with the All India Motor Transport Congress on the law imposing a punishment of ten years (in hit-and-run cases). This law has not yet been implemented. We will implement it only after discussing with the AIMTC." Meanwhile, Malkit Singh Bal, the Chairman of the truckers' body's core committee said, "We met and discussed the provisions under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), and all issues have been resolved. The new laws have not been implemented yet and will only be implemented after consultation with AIMTC." He also said that the strike would end soon and that the drivers have been urged to resume work.



Short trips from Mcleodganj and Dharamsala

Wondering what else lies hidden in the Himalayas around Mcleodganj and Dharamsala? If yes, you are in for some surprises for there are a lot of places to visit around Mcleodganj and Dharamsala. Both the towns are surrounded by some famous as well offbeat places, leaving you with plenty to pick from. You can choose from the adventure sport destinations of Bir and Billing, the old-world Dalhousie, the astonishing greens of Khajjiar and Chamba or Barot, a place well-guarded by cedar forests. You can also explore the tea estates of Kangra and Palampur on your way to Barot, Bir and Billing. Darang is another option with nothing much to do other than a stay at a 150 plus years old tea estate. Situated on the banks of the Bagmati River, the massive Pashupatinath complex is one of the holiest pilgrimage spots in Nepal. It's best-known for housing a major temple of the Hindu god Shiva, also known as Pashupati. While the present temple was constructed in the 17th century, its history dates back to 400 AD. It has been built in the



pagoda style of architecture, with a two-tiered roof rising above the central shrine. Only Hindus are allowed to enter the

temple premises. The central point of interest is the black four-headed idol of Pashupati, and a golden statue of his bull, Nandi.

Bir and Billing

Bir and Billing, two villages situated at some 60 km from Dharamsala, are perfect for a short trip from the town. The two picturesque villages in the Dhauladhar, now famous as one of the best paragliding spots in Asia, are a break from the more touristy Mcleodganj and Dharamsala. While hiking, camping and paragliding are the most sought after activities here, the place has a spiritual connection as well. Bir and Billing house two Buddhist monasteries - Chokling and the Palpung Sherabling Monastery. Both the monasteries are much revered by Tibetans and Buddhists in the region and are open to visitors. These are perfect for a short trip from Mcleodganj/Dharamsala if you are searching for a more solitary experience. A 3-4 hours drive from Dharamsala will have you in Bir-Billing.

Palampur

Palampur is a short drive (2-3 hours) from

Dharamsala and is one of the best places for the lovers of tranquility. Abundant with tea estates, trekking trails, campsites and quaint monasteries, it sees lesser crowd compared to Dharamsala. While Tashi Jong Monastery is one of the highlights of Palampur, you can also go hiking in the Dhauladhar, set camp in the pine forest around, visit the tea estates, gorge over some homemade thukpa and Tibetan food at one of the eateries around or do nothing other than stargazing. Perfect if you wish to avoid the weekend crowd of Dharamsala and Mcleodganj in summers.

Barot

Visit Barot if you have been scouring for a "do-nothing" place near Mcleodganj/Dharamsala. An idyllic hill town, it lies at a drive of around three hours from Mcleodganj. Barot is

hidden deep in dense cedar forest, often taking visitors by its surprisingly serene location. This charming place is lined with terrace fields and will bowl you over with the calm spread here. Only to be broken by the gushing sounds of some waterfall nearby. A lot of trekking trails in the pine forest, angling spots along Uhl river and a trout farm are some other highlights of Barot. Charming grins of the village people will, of course, woo your heart.

Chamba and Khajjiar

Another one for the lovers of offbeat, Chamba is as stunning as a tiny hamlet in Himachal Pradesh can be. It lies at some 130 km from Mcleodganj/Dharamsala and has a charm that is hard to beat. Explore the ancient temples, wooden forts, the rolling meadows and immerse yourself in the many folk tales that the locals are too happy to recount for anyone who looks keenly interested. Hailed as a land of Gods, Chamba fascinates with its sheer mysticism. Gorge over the famous rajma-chawal in one of the homestays here and head for the neighbouring Khajjiar. Its claim to fame is the title of "Mini Switzerland". A ground that resembles Alpine meadows, with a stream-fed lake in the middle, Khajjiar is a hill-lover's wish come true. You will find plenty of scenes of both Chamba as well as Khajjiar in the critically-acclaimed movie, The Blue Umbrella.

Dalhousie

Dalhousie lies at some 120 km from Mcleodganj. A tiny town that was much fancied by the British, it still retains its old-world charm. Walk along the pine-lined roads in the evening, savour a plate of fresh, steaming momos, buy a pair of mittens or more from the Tibetan market, visit the two churches, trek up to Dain Kund and enjoy a cup of coffee with some vintage books in the church library. If this sounds like a perfect getaway to you, hit the road to Dalhousie from Mcleodganj - a journey that is as enticing as the destination.



Guess what? You can also be a tomb raider!

Not everyone is Angelina Jolie, but then it is not mandatory to be one of the world's top actors to nurture a very niche sense of travelling. To start with, you can go globetrotting and visit some of the most famous tombs across the planet!

All of us have a set of heroes and idols - musicians, actors, athletes, authors, politicians and more - people we want to meet, see and talk to in person. But what if your heroes have bidden farewell to the world before you could catch a glimpse of them? Apart from (or rather than) penning elegies and wishing you could meet them, you can visit their tombs and pay your tribute like a true admirer!

But, in case, you find this idea outlandish and not worthy of a shot, we would like to share with you the fact that the tomb of playwright William Shakespeare is one of the most visited memorials on earth, let alone a forerunner in tomb destinations. The Bard of Avon was laid to rest in the Holy Trinity Church in his hometown of Stratford-on-Avon. Located on the banks of Avon river in Warwickshire, England, the tomb of the poet supreme bears an epitaph that is believed to be written by the maestro himself. More of a



warning, it reads like this:
Good friend for Jesus sake forbear,
To dig the dust enclosed here,
Blessè be the man that spares the stones,
And curst be he that moves my bones.

... So unless you intend to move the playwright's bones, there is no fear in visiting Stratford-on-Avon. When Elvis 'The King' Presley passed away in 1977, his fans found themselves at the end of a road that had no milestone on it, so they decided to make their hero's tombstone one! The Rock and

Roll legend rests in his home Graceland in Memphis, Tennessee. The fact that his tomb is visited by 600,000 people annually is just an indicator that 'tomb tourism' does exist. And if sources are to be believed, this alone brings over \$100 million a year to the city of Memphis!

Courtesy its illustrious founder Napoleon Bonaparte, the Pere-Lachaise cemetery in Paris marks a special territory for itself in the French capital. This place is home to the graves of eminent personalities like Edith Piaf, Max Ernst and Oscar Wilde. But the tomb that attracts maximum visitors is that of rock legend Jim Morrison's. The Lizard King, as he is often referred to as, breathed his last in the city of Paris at the age of 27, leaving a legion of fans that would make him a cult figure in coming decades. Jim Morrison's influence on music and pop culture does not need any testimony and it is obvious that thousands of music lovers flock to his last resting ground not only to offer their homage but also to celebrate Morrison's life as the poet-musician himself observed in an interview:

... People fear death even more than pain. It's strange that they fear death. Life hurts a lot more than death. At the point of death, the pain is over. Yeah, I guess it is a friend.

The same cemetery has the tomb of Irish playwright, novelist, poet Oscar Wilde; the tomb with the curious distinction of being one of the most kissed tombs on earth! Known for his quirky wit and sharp observation, Oscar Wilde now rests under a headstone that is decked with lipstick-covered kisses! While Wilde passed away in 1900, the practice of kissing his tombstone started somewhere in the late 1990s, when someone left a kiss mark on it leading to a flood of red in coming times. In 2011, the cemetery authority placed a glass barrier around the grave which met a similar 'lipstick fate' in no time!

Reggae legend Bob Marley, literally, rules from his grave! Being fans' favourite is one thing, while getting a national holiday on your death anniversary is another level of accomplishment and Bob Marley has both in his kitty! Every year on February 2nd (his death anniversary), thousands of Marley fans gather at a music festival near his grave in his native village of Nine Miles, Jamaica. What else to expect from someone, who was buried with a guitar (either a Les Paul or a Fender Telecaster) and marijuana bud? ROCKSTAR!

Period.

Marilyn Monroe, too, continues to be the benchmark of sensuality even in this age of Irina Shayks and Emily Ratajkowskis. The eternally beautiful actor's sudden death in 1962 took the world by shock and conspiracy theories refuse to die out even today. Buried in Westwood Village Memorial Park Cemetery in Los Angeles, the tomb of this timeless diva is a crowd puller in every sense of the term. What is more intriguing is the rumour that the tomb space directly above hers is reserved for Playboy boss, Hugh Hefner!

... In the year 1993, a martial arts teacher, a student and a 59-years-old former doctor from the Mongolian Olympic wrestling team walked 3700 miles from Mongolia to pay their homage at Bruce Lee's grave in Seattle's Lakeview Cemetery on his 53rd birth anniversary. This is just an indicator of the immense number of visitors the tomb of the kung-fu legend witnesses every year. The 'Fists of Fury' actor-fighter's life came to an abrupt end, when he passed away at the age of 33 due to 'an allergic reaction to aspirin'. Fans refuse to accept this reason even today and relate his death to some sort of curse that has been associated with the house Bruce Lee was living in.

Adani Group shares in focus after Supreme Court backs SEBI probe. Details here

NEW DELHI. Shares of Adani Group companies maintained stability after the Supreme Court (SC) backed the market regulator Securities and Exchange Board's (SEBI) investigation in the Adani-Hindenburg case on Wednesday. Although shares of all 10 listed Adani Group companies experienced a dip, likely due to profit booking by investors, they remained in positive territory. Adani Enterprises, the conglomerate's flagship entity, saw a 2.86 per cent increase, trading at Rs 3,016.40 around 11:15 am, while Adani Ports rose by 1.27 per cent to Rs 1,092.10 apiece. Adani Transmission, which surged up to 16 per cent in early trade, continued to trade 9.03 per cent higher at Rs 1,158.40. Despite a reduction in gains, all other Adani Group shares were resilient, aligning with the market's expectations for the verdict. Anticipating a favourable verdict, Adani Group shares soared before the announcement. In its verdict on a batch of petitions related to the case, the SC stated, "There is no ground to transfer the probe in this case from Sebi to a special investigation team (SIT)." The court emphasised that the power to transfer an investigation must be exercised in exceptional circumstances, requiring cogent justifications. The SC also dismissed arguments by petitioners regarding a perceived conflict of interest among the members of the Expert Committee formed earlier. Furthermore, it directed Sebi to conclude its probe into the Adani-Hindenburg case within three months. Additionally, both Sebi and the government were instructed to investigate the allegations of short-selling as mentioned in Hindenburg Research's report. The stability of Adani Group shares post-verdict indicates that the market largely anticipated this outcome.

Stock Markets Fall In Early Trade Dragged Down By IT Counters, Weak Global Trends



Mumbai. Equity benchmark indices fell in early trade on Wednesday pulled down by IT stocks and weak trends from global markets. Extending its previous day's decline, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 271.85 points to 71,620.63. The Nifty slipped 71.35 points to 21,594.45. Among the Sensex firms, JSW Steel, Tata Steel, Wipro, Infosys, HCL Technologies, Tata Consultancy Services, Tech Mahindra and Power Grid were the major laggards. Bajaj Finserv, ITC, Hindustan Unilever and Reliance Industries were among the winners. In Asian markets, Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong were trading lower. The US markets ended mostly lower on Tuesday. "Market has turned highly volatile with profit-booking triggered by high valuations. Even DIIs (Domestic Institutional Investors) who have been consistent buyers are booking profits," said V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services. Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.03 per cent to USD 75.87 a barrel. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 1,602.16 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data. The BSE benchmark fell by 379.46 points or 0.53 per cent to settle at 71,892.48 on Tuesday. The Nifty declined by 76.10 points or 0.35 per cent to 21,665.80.

Hyundai expects two-thirds of total sales from SUVs

This assumption by the Korean carmaker comes after SUV share in its total sales grew from 53% in 2022 to 60% in 2023

NEW DELHI. With the success of mini SUV Exter and the updated Creta to hit the market soon, the country's second-largest carmaker Hyundai (HMIL) feels that 65% or about two-thirds of its total passenger vehicle (PV) sales will come from Sports Utility Vehicles (SUVs) in 2024.

This assumption by the Korean carmaker comes after SUV share in its total sales grew from 53% in 2022 to 60% in 2023. In comparison, SUVs' contribution in market leader Maruti Suzuki sales increased from 22% in 2022 to 36% in 2023 while almost all of Mahindra & Mahindra's PV sales were SUVs.

"We feel Hyundai's SUV share in total sales can grow to 64-65% in 2024 while for the PV industry, SUV contribution can grow to 52% or 53%," said Tarun Garg, COO, Hyundai Motor India. "There were speculations that growing competition and launch of new Creta would impact demand of the current model. However, Creta remained the segment leader and did extremely well as its sales grew 12% year-on-year in 2024 to over 155,000 units," said Garg. In total, Hyundai sold over 6 lakh PVs in domestic market last year. Hyundai is all set to launch the new Creta this month and on Tuesday commenced bookings for a token amount of Rs 25,000. The new model will compete against the likes of recently launched Honda Elevate, Kia Seltos, Maruti Suzuki Grand Vitara, Toyota Hyryder, VW Taigun and Skoda Kushaq.

Led by strong demand for SUVs, annual passenger vehicle sales crossed the 40 lakh mark (about 41.08 lakh) for the first time in 2023. SUV segment's share in total sales increased from 42% in 2022 to nearly 49% in 2023. This is a sharp jump and SUVs contributed only about 20% of total passenger vehicle sales five year back. Kia India appoints Gwanggu Lee as MD, CEO

NEW DELHI: Kia India has appointed Gwanggu Lee as MD and CEO, effective immediately. He will be the third MD and CEO of Kia India, succeeding Kook Hyun Shim and Tae Jin Park. Park is retiring after his 36-year journey with Kia Corporation and 4 years stint with Kia India. Lee has held leadership positions in various capacities including roles in the US, Canada, Italy, Mexico, Kia Headquarters in Central and South America, and Kia Europe Headquarters in Germany.

Fuel pumps run dry as truckers protest over new law

There was a huge rush at pumps as people were seen refuelling their vehicles out of panic in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Punjab.

NEW DELHI. More than 2,000 petrol pumps in the country, particularly in remote areas, on Tuesday faced fuel crisis due to the ongoing protest by truck drivers. Petrol pumps in states such as Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Punjab either are out of petrol and diesel stock or on the verge of running out. There was a huge rush at pumps as people



were seen refuelling their vehicles out of panic in these states. However, oil companies such as Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation

Limited (HPCL) maintained that they have topped up tanks but if the protest continues for the next two or three days, there may be a crisis situation. "Our petrol pumps have started facing shortage today as oil tankers are not being

allowed by these protesters to reach the depot to refill petrol pumps. Moreover, there were reports of ransacking at Meerut depot. Therefore, I request truck drivers and protesters to shun violence and sort out the issue peacefully, by dialogue," according to Ajay Bansal, general secretary of All-India Petroleum Traders (FAIPT). It all began on Monday when truck, bus and tanker operators launched a three-day protest on the new criminal law Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), formulated to replace the Indian Penal Code, for hit-and-run cases.

According to the new regulation, a driver may face up to 10 years' imprisonment in a hit-and-run case. Truckers consider this law harsh on them. The drivers believe that in case of an accident, there are chances of mob lynching. There are about 1 lakh trucks that ferry petrol and diesel as well as LPG from oil company depots to petrol pumps and gas distribution agencies.

Adani Transmission shares near 52-week high after surging 16%

Adani Transmission shares reached a high of Rs 1,244.80 apiece, just a hair's breadth away from the previous 52-week high of Rs 1,246. As of 10:13 am, the shares were trading 15.3 percent higher at Rs 1,225.20 apiece.



is part of a broader trend seen across all 10 listed companies under the Adani Group. The flagship Adani Enterprises and Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone emerged as the top gainers on the Nifty50 index. The heightened buying activity and consequent surge in Adani Group stocks come just ahead of a crucial Supreme Court verdict on a series of petitions seeking a court-monitored investigation into allegations made by US-based short-selling firm Hindenburg Research against the Adani Group.

This surge in Adani Transmission shares The Supreme Court had reserved its

judgment in November of the previous year, and the anticipation surrounding the outcome has triggered increased investor activity.

The case centers on allegations raised by Hindenburg Research regarding the financial practices and trading activities of the Adani Group, prompting the involvement of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

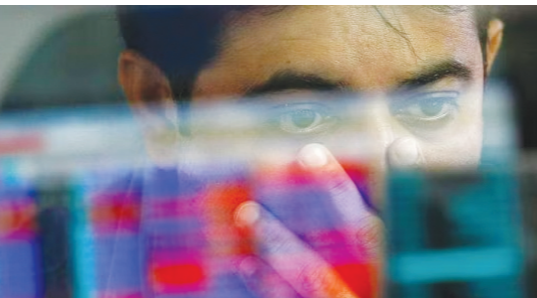
Investors appear optimistic about a favourable verdict for the ports-to-power conglomerate, resulting in a notable surge in Adani Group stocks.

As the market eagerly awaits the Supreme Court's decision, the buying momentum reflects the heightened interest and expectations regarding the outcome of the case.

The surge in Adani Transmission shares, approaching a 52-week high, underscores the speculative environment surrounding the impending verdict.

This assumption by the Korean carmaker comes after SUV share in its total sales grew from 53% in 2022 to 60% in 2023

NEW DELHI. Domestic equity market witnessed its first decline of calendar year 2024 as tensions in the Red Sea escalated in recent days and prompted investors to press the sell button. Local benchmark indexes fell by a half percentage points on Tuesday with the BSE Sensex closing below the 72,000 mark. At close, Sensex was down 379.46 points or 0.53% at 71,892.48, while the broader NSE Nifty50 was down 76.10 points or 0.35% at 21,665.80. "The ongoing conflict in the Red Sea has been making investors jittery as any flare up in violence could trigger upsurge in oil prices and weigh on the economy," said Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities. According to latest developments, one of the world's largest shipping companies, Maersk, again halted operations temporarily after maritime escalation between



Yemen's Houthis and US forces. Houthi rebels have been launching attacks on ships it identified as being linked to Israel that passed through the Bab el-Mandeb strait into the Red Sea. This has already forced many companies to take a longer and costlier route via the Cape of Good Hope to facilitate trade activity.

Vinod Nair, head of research at Geojit Financial Services, said on Tuesday the market extended Monday's last hour's sell-off, taking negative cues

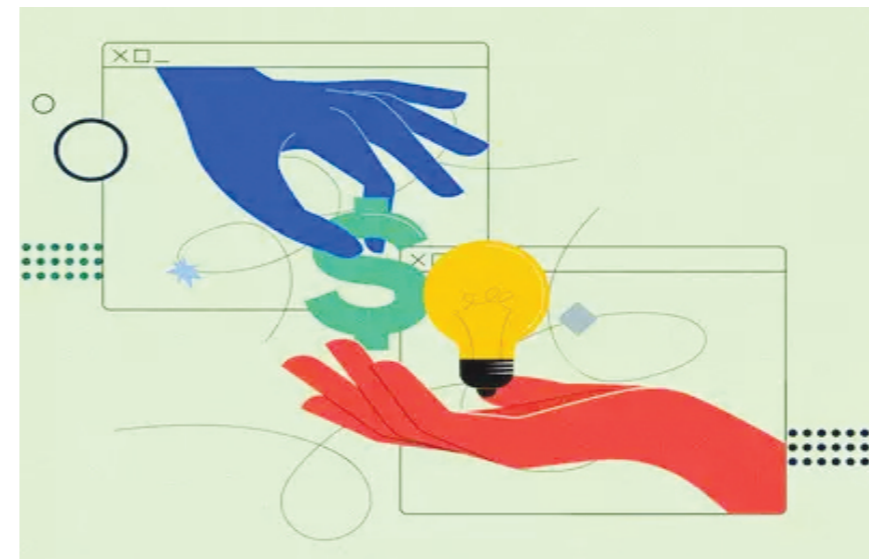
from Asian peers due to weak Chinese manufacturing data and mounting tensions in the Red Sea, which has the potential to disrupt global trade and crude supplies. Nair added that ahead of the impending results season, investors are adopting a profit booking strategy. Auto stocks declined on below-expected volume numbers, while pharma stocks were the standout due to catch-up in the US economy. Top losers in the 50-share Nifty pack were Eicher Motors, M&M, UltraTech Cement, L&T and Kotak Mahindra Bank which fell between 2.3% and 3.6%. Meanwhile, shares of Vodafone Idea fell over 5% after it denied that it was in talks with Elon Musk-promoted Starlink to manage its services in India.

CXO pre-nups: IT companies make jumping ship tougher

BENGALURU. With a spurt in C-suite movements in the Indian IT sector, and with some of them landing in courts, separation agreements that supersede previous employment contracts are coming into vogue.

Legal experts say they are used to remind outgoing employees of their continuing obligations towards the company and sometimes, to place additional restrictions specific to the employee's role in the company. "For instance, if the employee has relationships with one or more customers, the employer may use the agreement to remind the employee not to solicit those specific customers, which is even more critical if the employee is joining a competitor," a legal expert who did not want to be named said.

However, executives may need to be incentivised to sign such agreements, especially if they place onerous restrictions on them. Sources told TOI that former Infosys presidents Ravi Kumar and Mohit Joshi both signed separation agreements with Infosys before they quit. The agreements are said to have defined



their contractual obligations of confidentiality, non-solicitation, and non-disparagement.

Kumar moved to Cognizant as CEO less than three months after he quit Infosys. Joshi joined Tech Mahindra as CEO

designate in June, immediately after he left Infosys, and went on to assume full responsibility in December when incumbent CP Gurnani retired. In 2017, Infosys is said to have signed a separation agreement with exiting CEO Vishal

Sikka, which included mutual release and non-disparagement obligations.

At least a dozen senior executives have crossed over to competitors in the past couple of years. These leaders are privy to competitive business intelligence, deal pricing, client milestones, financial obligations and penalty clauses.

Wipro recently filed a suit against former CFO Jatin Dalal - who quit Wipro in November and joined Cognizant as CFO in December - on the grounds that he violated non-compete obligations.

Pooja Ramchandani, partner for employment, labour, and benefits at law firm Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas said a separation agreement is a mutually negotiated document which sets out the terms of separation of employment. "It not only includes details of the separation package but also typically covers aspects of waiver and release of claim. It imposes post-employment restrictions on non-solicitation," she added. An email sent to Cognizant, Infosys and Tech Mahindra on the matter didn't elicit a response till the time of going to press.

NEWS BOX

Wayne Rooney responds to sacking as Birmingham City manager after just 15 games in charge: 13 weeks not enough



London Former England and Manchester United footballer Wayne Rooney did not hold back as he expressed his disappointment over his sacking as the manager of Championship team Birmingham City FC on Tuesday, January 2. Rooney's tenure came to an abrupt end after a mere 83 days in charge, culminating in his dismissal following a string of disappointing results. Legendary Rooney had been at the helm for just 15 games, during which he managed only two victories. His short-lived stint saw the club plummet from a promising sixth place in the EFL Championship to a precarious 20th, teetering on the edge of the relegation zone. The decision to part ways with Rooney was described as being in the "best interests of the football club," a sentiment echoed in a statement by Birmingham's chief executive, Garry Cook. The club's management felt that despite Rooney and his coaching staff's best efforts, the outcome did not align with the expectations set at the beginning of his appointment. There was a sense of optimism when Rooney was unveiled as the manager in October at St Andrew's, but what was expected to be a promising association came to a crushing end. "I would like to thank Tom Wagner, Tom Brady and Garry Cook for the opportunity to manage Birmingham City FC and the support they all gave me during my short period with the club," Rooney said in a social media statement. "Football is a results business - and I recognise they have not been at the level I wanted them to be. However, time is the most precious commodity a manager requires and I do not believe 13 weeks was sufficient to oversee the changes that were needed," he added. Rooney expressed his intention to take a break with his family before preparing for the next chapter in his managerial career. "I have been involved in professional football, as either a player or manager, since I was 16. Now, I plan to take some time with my family as I prepare for the next opportunity in my journey as a manager."

Clinical Australia hand India first reality check of 2024

Given their losses against England in the ODI and T20 leg of the Ashes, it was a new territory for them. If there was any moment to silence Australia, it was this.



CHENNAI It was the 28th over of the chase in the third and final ODI against Australia. India were already seven wickets down while chasing 339 to avoid a clean sweep at the Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai. That is when Australian captain, Alyssa Healy introduced Annabel Sutherland. The medium pacer only bowled 18 balls, giving away nine runs while taking two wickets as India were bundled out for 148.

She was required for that job alone. Tahlia McGrath, the vice-captain, who was trapped in front on the first ball she faced, didn't even bowl a single over. Ellyse Perry, Australia's highest-ever wicket-taker in the format, didn't bowl in the entire series. And yet, Australia won the third and final ODI to burst India's bubble after a dominant Test

win. Before the white-ball series, it was clear that both teams were going through a transition. India, with the introduction of a few new faces like Saika Ishaque and head coach Amol Muzumdar. Meanwhile, this was Australia's first series after a change of guard with leadership. Many would say after the high of two back-to-back Test wins, India was ahead of going into the series. Australia, after their first-ever loss against India in Tests, were not runaway favourites like they always have been. Given their losses against England in the ODI and T20 leg of the

Ashes, it was a new territory for them. If there was any moment to silence Australia, it was this. Yet, the double World Cup champions ended up with one of their highest chases in the ODIs, a close win, and their highest score against India in the format. They showed that the engine room or even if the entire engine is changed, they will still collect trophies. It is not that the Indian squad has no talent at their disposal. Shreyanka Patil, in her debut ODI series, has looked million dollars with the ball. Jemimah Rodrigues and Pooja Vastrakar

have done their job with the bat. Deepti Sharma - the bowler - has once again proved her importance. Richa Ghosh's brave innings in the second ODI was a glimmer of hope as well. However, none of these individual performances have won India any matches. Harmanpreet Kaur's lean patch with the bat in the series - her scores read 9, 5, 3 - has to be one of the biggest concerns for the side. Smriti Mandhana has not converted her good starts into big innings. Shafali Verma was dropped after the first match. Deepti - the middle-order batter has not impressed at all in recent times. While the old guard of the team is having issues over a long period, doing the same thing again and again and expecting a different result does not seem to be helping. Neither does pinning the losses on one aspect of the game. "We always talk about their fielding. Skill-wise, we are very close, but their fielding is something we have always appreciated and taken from them," Kaur mentioned in the post-match presentation when asked what she would like to take from Australia. However, there is something she would like to take from the opposition as well. Despite losing their most decorated captain before the series, and their current captain coming from a lengthy injury break, Australia found a way to win. India has enough talent to make it happen too.

SA vs IND: Sanjay Manjrekar backs Mukesh Kumar to play 2nd Test, says 'he is more suited to these conditions'

- Mukesh Kumar did not play in the first Test in Centurion
- Mukesh Kumar made his Test debut last year against the West Indies
- India lost to South Africa in the Centurion Test



New Delhi. Sanjay Manjrekar said that fast bowler Mukesh Kumar should play India's second Test match against South Africa, starting Wednesday, January 3 at the Newlands in Cape Town. Mukesh made his Test debut earlier this year against the West Indies at the Queen's Park Oval in Port of Spain, Trinidad, where he picked up one wicket.

Manjrekar said that Mukesh is 'more suited to these conditions' in Cape Town. The veteran

also said that India should not field both Shardul Thakur and Prasidh Krishna in the same playing XI for the second Test. From what we have seen in the first Test, I don't expect Shardul Thakur and Prasidh Krishna to play together in the second Test. There will definitely be one change. If Ravindra Jadeja is fit, it will strengthen our batting. So, if Mukesh Kumar is bowling well in the nets, he could be brought in. He is more suited to these conditions," Manjrekar was

quoted as saying to ESPNcricinfo. India are 0-1 down in the two-match Test series after losing the opening Test by an innings and 32 runs at the SuperSport Park in Centurion.

Manjrekar also reckoned that skipper Rohit Sharma and head coach Rahul Dravid would back Yashasvi Jaiswal despite failing in the first Test. The veteran also hoped for the pitch to behave better in Cape Town.

"Since it is a two-match series, you are sometimes forced to make some changes. However, I don't think India will make any major changes to their batting lineup. Rohit Sharma and Rahul Dravid would have seen how Yashasvi Jaiswal played in the first innings, and they would continue to back him. "You cannot change things with the selection when it comes to batting. All you can do is hope that the pitch is a bit easier to bat on," Manjrekar added.

Haryana's Vikas Rana creates history, wins maiden gold in International cross country skiing in Germany

New Delhi. Vikas Rana, 31, daughter of a farmer in Haryana has created history by winning the maiden gold medal for the country in cross country skiing championship in Germany. Rana, who hails from Sukhain Khurd village in the Uchana area of Jind in Haryana, has also led India in the Asian Games. She won the gold sporting a ski band on her head that read 'Mahakaal'. "I won the gold in the five kilometre cross country skiing held in Germany on December 31. This was the first-ever medal in such a tournament. I worked really hard and trained at Gulmarg in Kashmir. I am really delighted to see the



applause I get from the country. "I am a devout believer of God Shiva and I believe he helped in winning the tournament. That's why I sported the Mahakaal band," said Rana. Vikas Rana won four gold, one silver and four bronze medals at the national games. Rana's father, Ompal is a farmer, and her mother is a homemaker. She started her skiing practice at a young age and practised most of the time in Gulmarg.

"Being from a humble financial background posed a problem but with the support of my family, friends, coaches and the facilities provided by the sports ministry, I overcame all the problems. I dedicated all my time to practice. A medal comes with a lot of preparation and years of planning. I am really thankful to my country for giving me an opportunity to prove myself," said Rana.

AUS vs PAK: Shaheen Shah Afridi opens up on 'workload management' after being rested for SCG Test

New Delhi. Shaheen Shah Afridi opened up on the reasons why he was rested for Pakistan's third and final Test against Australia at the iconic Sydney Cricket Ground.

Before the New Year's Test, former pacer Waqar Younis slammed the Pakistan team management for leaving out Shaheen. Sajid Khan got a chance in the playing XI in place of Shaheen. However, Shaheen said that the management took the call to 'manage my workload' after he bowled 'a lot of overs' in the first two Tests in Perth and Melbourne. "I played two games, and a lot of overs to be honest. They're just managing my workload, the medical team and team management decided to take a rest for this (Test)," Shaheen was quoted as saying to Channel 7 at Lunch on Day 1. Shaheen picked up eight wickets in the first two Tests, including a four-wicket



haul in the Boxing Day Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Shaheen, in the meantime, also rued the missed chances on the field in the ongoing Australian tour. In the MCG Test, Shaheen was hard done by in the first innings after Abdullah Shafique dropped a simple catch in the slip cordon to give David Warner a lifeline.

"I think that I can take more wickets, but unfortunately, catches win matches, and unfortunately we missed those opportunities on the field most of the time. It has been a good tour so far and the last game that we played was quite awesome. As a bowling unit, and as a team, we gave our best, the result was not in our hands, but we tried," Shaheen stated. Pakistan, captained by Shan Masood, are currently trailing the series 0-2, having lost their last 18 Tests on Australian soil.

Emma Raducanu enters Australian Open 2024 main draw after delightful comeback in ASB Classic

- Emma Raducanu will be a part of the Australian Open 2024 main draw
- USA's Lauren Davis pulled out of the tournament due to a shoulder injury
- Raducanu recently made her comeback in the ASB Classic



New Delhi. Emma Raducanu, on Wednesday, January 3, made her way through to the main draw of the women's singles in the Australian Open 2024. The 21-year-old, who recently made her comeback since last playing back in April 2023, was set to take part in the qualifiers of the hard-court tournament at the Rod Laver Arena. However, the British sensation entered the

main draw after Lauren Davis of the United States of America (USA) pulled out of the tournament due to a shoulder injury. Raducanu, who became the only qualifier to win a Grand Slam when she triumphed in the US Open 2023, is currently taking part in the ASB Classic in Auckland. In her comeback match, she defeated Romania's Elena-Gabriela Ruse 6-3, 4-6, 7-

5 in the Round of 32 match on Tuesday, January 2. Raducanu will next be up against Ukraine's Elina Svitolina, who had a stupendous 2023 after also beating World No. 1 Iga Swiatek at Wimbledon, in the second round. The Canada-born Raducanu, in the meantime, was over the moon after beating Ruse following her return to tennis. The youngster, however, admitted that she had to face challenges while being out of the sport for around eight months.

"It's difficult after having such a long hiatus. I'm grateful to be healthy and able to move my body. Not bedridden or in a wheelchair. It's amazing to be out here and playing. I'm just really happy to be back on the tour. Can't wait to start this season and carry on, hopefully injury free and healthy," Raducanu said.

David Warner shouldn't retire from Tests': Virender Sehwag recalls career-changing chat with Australia opener

- David Warner is all set to bring the curtains down on his Test career in Sydney
- Virender Sehwag recalled his chat with Warner during IPL 2009
- Sehwag has the best strike rate for a Test opener with at least 2000 runs

New Delhi When David Warner was smashing bowlers for Delhi Daredevils in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2009, the entire cricketing world was convinced about the left-hander becoming a superstar cricketer in white-ball cricket. Warner was ruthless at the top of the order and showcased his potential in the 7 games that he played during his maiden stint in the IPL. However, a certain Virender Sehwag saw a Test batter in Warner, someone similar to him. Having redefined the way openers went about their business in red-ball cricket, Virender Sehwag was confident that David Warner had the game to become a Test opener for Australia. Sehwag did not miss an opportunity to talk to Warner during the IPL 2009 season and plant that thought into his head. Coming from one of the

finest modern-day openers, who instilled fear in the minds of opposition bowlers, Warner was able to understand what Sehwag was telling him despite having not harboured thoughts of red-ball cricket in the past, considering the competition for sports in the Australian cricket team. Warner played two years of first-class cricket before he made his Test debut in 2011. There was no looking back from then on. Warner hit his maiden hundred in just his second Test. And in his 5th Test, Warner was up against a touring Indian side that had Virender Sehwag. Warner made it count in front of the man who pushed him to take up Test cricket, hitting a match-winning 180 for Australia at the WACA in Perth. 11 years later, Warner is all set to retire from Test cricket as one of



the finest modern-day openers. Warner did for Australia what Sehwag achieved for India at the top of the order. Much like Sehwag, Warner also played over 100 Tests (112 to be precise) and scored over 8000 runs. Warner went past his Sehwag's tally of 8207 runs last year and has 4 more hundreds than the former India opener. Warner will finish his career among the top 5 leading run-getters as openers in Test cricket.

THE DAY' Speaking to Cricbuzz ahead of David Warner's farewell Test, Virender Sehwag is a proud man. He is happy that Warner was able to break most of his records, except for the strike rate. "When David Warner came to play for Delhi Daredevils in IPL 2009, he'd just made his T20 and ODI debuts. But the way he used to bat and hit the ball, I could see he had all the talent and the control you need in a Test batter. But what happens for a young player like him is that you don't have the confidence that you have the skills to play Test cricket. When I saw him, I was convinced that he would be better in Tests than he even is in T20 cricket," Sehwag said.



Rashmika Mandanna

Sports A Big Smile In New Year Post, Fans Ask If Vijay Deverakonda Is The Photographer

Rashmika Mandanna, with her massive fan following, often makes headlines for her rumoured relationship with Vijay Deverakonda. The actress recently shared a video of herself soaking in the sun on the first day of 2024, and fans feel that the reason behind her happiness is none other than Vijay Deverakonda, who might have been behind the camera.

Sharing the video, Rashmika wrote, "Happy new year... hehe?". Rashmika radiated positivity in an olive green co-ord set, comprising a top and skirt. Her hair flowing freely, she complemented the look with stylish black shades. One of the fans speculated, "Vijay Deverakonda is taking the videooo," in the comments section. "Definitely Vijay must be shooting her. She is happy," read another comment.

Rashmika Mandanna and Vijay Deverakonda's dating rumours have been making headlines for a long time now. Earlier, in December, the actress took to her Instagram stories and shared a cryptic quote that read, "I just want to tell you, thank you for coming into my life." Sharing the post, Rashmika also dropped a white-heart emoji. While Rashmika Mandanna did not tag or mention anybody in her stories, fans are convinced that the message is for her alleged boyfriend, Vijay Deverakonda. "They are like rab ne bana di jodi," one of the fans



wrote. Another user asked them to "get married soon." "That's so sweet of her," a third comment read.

Earlier last year, during the promotions of Animal, Rashmika's co-star Ranbir Kapoor also seemingly confirmed her relationship with Vijay. The two appeared on Unstoppable with NBK to promote Animal with Sandeep Reddy Vanga when Ranbir shared a never-before-known scoop about Rashmika and Vijay. The conversation about Vijay came up when Telugu superstar Nandamuri Balakrishna asked Sandeep and Rashmika to pick one movie between Arjun Reddy and Animal. Ranbir asked Rashmika to pick who she believes is a better actor — her 'reel hero' (hinting at himself) or her 'real hero' (hinting at Vijay). When Rashmika refused to participate, Nandamuri asked Sandeep to dial Vijay's number. "Sir, let Rashmika call, Vijay won't pick (Sandeep's) call," Ranbir teased, leaving Rashmika blushing.

During the interaction, Ranbir also revealed, "Sandeep met Rashmika for the first time at Arjun Reddy's success party on Vijay's terrace." He even hinted that Rashmika has a special nickname for Vijay. Following this, Rashmika asked Ranbir not to share all the information. However, neither Rashmika nor Vijay have confirmed or accepted their relationship.

Isha Malviya

Calls Munawar Faruqui Undeserving, Says He Is Doing 'Nothing Extraordinary'

Even though Munawar Faruqui enjoys a massive fan following, several people have repeatedly questioned his performance inside the Bigg Boss 17 house. In the recent episode of Salman Khan's controversial reality show, Isha Malviya also expressed her opinion when she called the stand-up comedian undeserving. Isha argued that Munawar has not been doing anything extraordinary in the show. She went on to say that even though he won Lock Upp, he "lacks the X factor" for Bigg Boss. "Apart from Munawar, I see all other contestants as my competitors. I couldn't compliment anything about Munawar's journey in the Bigg Boss house as I didn't find him doing anything in the show apart from Aayesha's downfall there is nothing extraordinary that he did in the show," Isha said. "His (Munawar Faruqui) name is big outside because he won the reality show Lock Upp and came here. Otherwise, if he would have been a normal person like me, I don't think he would have been a deserving contestant on the show in the 12th week. I think he lacks the X factor that a Bigg Boss contestant should have," the former Udaariyaan actress added.

Previously, Salman Khan also criticised Munawar during the Weekend Ka Vaar and called him "thandi cheez". "Is ghar mein aapki dosti ho, dushmani ho, harr baat ko adhura chod dete ho. Sach baat toh yeh hai Munawar ki kal is ghar se nikal bhi jaate hai toh iss ghar ki story par koi farq nahi padega (Be it your friendship or enmity in this house, you leave every matter incomplete. The fact is even if Munawar leaves this house tomorrow it won't make a difference to the story of this house)," Khan said. Bigg Boss 17 premiered in October 2023. The show is likely to have its grand finale on January 28, 2024. Contestants who are left inside the Bigg Boss 17 house are Mannara Chopra, Munawar Faruqui, Ankita Lokhande, Vicky Jain, Abhishek Kumar, Aora, Samarth Jurel, Isha Malviya, Aayesha Khan and Arun Mashetty.



Did Katrina Kaif Turn Photographer For Vicky Kaushal? We Think So



Vicky Kaushal ended 2023 on a happy note. From winning hearts with his honest performance in Zara Hatke Zara Bachke to making us cry our hearts out in his cameo appearance in Dunki, the talented actor surpassed expectations with his stellar acting prowess. Despite locking horns with the Shah Rukh Khan-starrer Dunki, his latest release Sam Bahadur raked up positive responses from the masses. Now, Vicky has scooped some time out from his busy schedule and welcomed the New Year romantically, with his wife and actress Katrina Kaif. Jetting off to Rajasthan for a quaint vacation, the actor recently treated us with a picture of himself from the destination. Vicky Kaushal dropped a photo on Instagram where he was seen enjoying a cup of beverage. He added a bunch of not-so-random emojis to the post, indicating that the pic was clicked by his beloved partner Katrina Kaif. The snap captured the actor dressed in a zipped grey jacket and a pair of denim jeans. Sporting a vintage cowboy hat, he enjoyed a sip of the hot drink on a cold winter. From what could be made out of the picture, it seemed that Vicky was sitting inside a tent, during his stay in Rajasthan.

As soon as the picture surfaced on the internet, fans were quick to react to it. While one user promptly noted, "Your wife is an amazing photographer!" another pointed out his hat as they wrote, "Bro is going full cowboy mode." "We want moreeeee" requested a third individual. Earlier, Katrina Kaif offered a sneak peek into her travel diaries with Vicky Kaushal. In the string of pictures she shared on Instagram, the actress looked pretty in a white and floral-printed dress. The pair looked madly in love as they clicked a sun-kissed selfie. The next few photos showed the lovebirds enjoying each other's company at the historical place by listening to folk music on a bonfire night. In the last image, Katrina rested her head on Vicky's shoulders, creating a lovey-dovey moment. On the work front, Vicky Kaushal has joined hands with director Laxman Utekar for an upcoming historical drama, titled Chhaava. The film based on the life of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, the son of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, will reportedly hit the big screens on December 6.

SRK Attends Red Chillies COO Gaurav Verma's Housewarming Party, Helps Hang Nameplate

Shah Rukh Khan hit an all-time high with three much-appreciated films in 2023. Kickstarting with Pathaan, the Bollywood superstar continued his action-packed momentum with Jawan, followed by a somber conclusion with Dunki. Making a roaring comeback to the big screens after a hiatus of almost 4 years, SRK re-established his authority over the film industry and the audience's heart. Now that his promotional outings are over and Dunki is running successfully in the theaters, Shah Rukh Khan has shifted his attention to his personal relationships. Recently, he attended Red Chillies Entertainment's COO Gaurav Verma's housewarming ceremony. Pictures of King Khan having an enjoyable time there have arrested the attention of fans.

Photographs featuring Shah Rukh Khan from Gaurav Verma's housewarming function are circulating on social media. They capture the



actor engaged in the simple joys of spending time with the producer and his family, while also lending them a helping hand to decorate the house. In the first photo, SRK was seen sharing the same frame with Gaurav, his wife Karuna Verma, and their two daughters. All the four of them sported beaming smiles. In the next snap, the Pathaan actor was clicked helping Gaurav's wife to put up a name plate on a wall. While Gaurav and his family were decked up in traditional wear for the event, Shah Rukh Khan opted for a more easy-breezy style. He was dressed in a crisp white shirt, black trousers, Gaurav Verma is currently serving the Red Chillies Entertainment as the Chief Operating Officer. The production house has backed the Netflix film Darlings, starring Alia Bhatt, Vijay Verma, and Shefali Shah, Love Hostel, starring Vikrant Massey and Sanya Malhotra, Badla starring Taapsee Pannu and Amitabh Bachchan, and Bob Biswas among others, and a black cap, coupled with sunglasses.