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Congress kicks off yatra from Manipur; Rahul attacks Modi

"We don't want to tell you about our 'mann ki baat' but to hear about your 'mann ki baat'," he said



Imphal
Senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday kickstarted the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra from Thoubal district in ethnic strife-torn Manipur with a promise to bring "peace and harmony" back in the northeastern state, saying his east-to-west march cutting across 15 states will highlight the social, economic and political injustices prevailing in the country. Congress leader Rahu Addressing a public meeting at a private ground in Khongjom before embarking on the yatra, Gandhi said the situation in Manipur suggests that perhaps for Prime Minister

Narendra Modi, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the northeastern state is not a part of India. "I had come to Manipur on June 29 last year and what I saw and heard then, I had never heard or seen. I have been in politics since 2004. But it was the first time I saw a collapse of governance in a state. Manipur is now divided with hatred spread in every corner," Gandhi

said. "Lakhs were affected, and people got killed in front of family members. But the Prime Minister hasn't visited Manipur to erase your tears, to embrace you. Maybe for him, the BJP and the RSS, Manipur is not a part of India, and your pain is not his pain," he added. Manipur has lost what it holds precious because of the politics of hatred of the BJP-RSS, the Wayanad lawmaker said, adding that the Congress "will

bring back the harmony, peace and affection that the state has always been known for." "We are here to listen to you, share your pain, and present a new vision of India that is one of harmony and equity," the former Congress president said. "We don't want to tell you about our 'mann ki baat' but to hear about your 'mann ki baat,'" he said in an apparent dig at PM Modi and his monthly radio show, Mann Ki Baat.

With Deora exit, exodus of Rahul band of 'dynasts' nearly complete

NEW DELHI: The departure of Milind Deora from Congress marks a significant chapter in Rahul Gandhi's political journey, as it nearly completes the exodus of the original band of young "dynasts" who came to be identified with the Gandhi scion during his initial days. After Jitin Prasad and Jyotiraditya Scindia, Deora is the third of the second-generation Congress leaders who hogged the headlines as Team Rahul during the UPA decade. Another of the coterie member R P N Singh



has also joined BJP, like Prasada and Scindia, though he is still awaiting his legislative rehabilitation. The fourth of the link, Sachin Pilot, is now a CWC member and an AICC office-bearer, who appears in for a long haul in the party after his brief rebellion shook the

Congress in Rajasthan three years ago. Ironically, Deora was only recently appointed the joint treasurer in AICC, which indicated that he had made his peace with his career in drift, unable as he has been to enter Parliament after the precipitous fall of

Congress post-2014. What ties the four departures from Congress is the impression that the young resourceful leaders do not see much of a future in the party, whose fate stays sealed in the Modi era. During this decade, party flame has at best flickered to deceive, like the sense of comeback signalled by the end-year assembly election sweep in 2018, and the massive Karnataka victory after the raucous response to the Bharat Jodo Yatra led by Rahul Gandhi in 2023.

Congress must do justice to its netas: BJP takes swipe at Nyay Yatra

NEW DELHI: BJP on Sunday took a swipe at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra' and said opposition party should first look at doing justice with its own party leaders and refrain from divisive

politics before talking about "uniting" the country. "Rahul Gandhi's campaign is not to unite but divide the country. This is another attempt to launch Congress's famous crown prince Rahul

Gandhi, who has failed in every test. This is Rahul Gandhi's second journey of hatred and disintegration. Congress seems to be filled with hatred after construction of Shri Ram temple in Ayodhya," said BJP

Rajya Sabha MP Anil Baluni. He said the country had seen in Rahul's first yatra how he had spread hatred in society. "Also, he had taken along those working against the country in his journey.

Trailer hai, picture abhi baaki hai: Eknath Shinde hints at more Congress exits

NEW DELHI: Indicating that many Congress leaders may soon follow the footsteps of former Union minister Milind Deora and join Shiv Sena, chief minister Eknath Shinde on Sunday said: "Yeh to trailer hai, picture abhi baaki hai (This is just a trailer, the main picture is yet to come out)." A Congress leader claimed that Mumbai Congress working president Naseem Khan will soon join Shiv Sena and be sworn in as a cabinet member. However, when contacted, Khan denied the claim. "I am not joining Shiv Sena...I am with Congress and there is no question of changing the party," Khan told. Welcoming Deora into the Shiv Sena fold, Shinde said he was one of the most educated and humble politicians whose entry will help strengthen the party. "I understand his emotions and feelings. I had gone through a similar situation before making a decision one-and-a-half years ago. Today, I feel successful in achieving my goal," the CM said, adding that his dream is to make Mumbai a world-class city. "Last year, when we were in Davos, everyone was asking about Mumbai. I felt proud. I want to make Mumbai the best city in the world. I am working towards making the city pothole-free in the next two years by building cement-concrete roads in a time-bound period," he added. Calling dislodging the Uddhav Thackeray-led MVA government his "biggest-ever operation", Shinde said he "did not even use an injection and it was a great success". Taking a dig at Thackeray, who is a photography enthusiast, the CM said he believed in hard work and never worked from home. "In the last one-and-a-half year, I have never taken leave. When I had gone to my hometown, I travelled by helicopter to save time. I worked there in the fields and did not indulge in photography."

HC directs 5 lakh compensation to child victim subjected to 'two-finger test'

SHIMLA: On finding the columns of the MLC (medico-legal case) prepared by civil hospital Palampur in Kangra district demeaning, self-incriminating, self-inculpatory and hitting directly on the privacy of a minor rape survivor and that the minor child victim in the instant case was subjected to "two-finger test", which violated her



privacy, physical and mental integrity and dignity apart from creating fear and trauma to the child victim; the High Court of Himachal Pradesh has directed the

State Government to pay a compensation of Rs 5 lakh to the child victim and recover the same from the erring doctors and to hold an inquiry against all those doctors, who

designed the MLC proforma and to fix their responsibility. Court also said that the mere fact that some of these doctors have since retired will not come in the way of the State in fastening the financial liability on them. It said that inquiry should be held against all those doctors, who medically examined the child victim.

Unfortunate, says Congress; Sanjay Raut rules out LS seat compromise

MUMBAI: Following former Union minister and ex-MP Milind Deora's decision to quit Congress and join Shiv Sena on Sunday, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut said it was his personal decision and there would be no compromise on the Mumbai South Lok Sabha seat. While state Congress chief president Nana Patole and legislature party leader Balasaheb Thorat termed it a 'bad omen' on the day of



Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra launch, city Congress chief Varsha Gaikwad said it was an unfortunate decision. Deora had recently expressed disapproval at Shiv Sena (UBT)'s claim to the Mumbai South constituency during meetings of the

Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) and the INDIA bloc for the ensuing polls. Raut said: "Shiv Sena nominee Arvind Sawant had won the seat for two consecutive terms, in 2014 and in 2019, under such circumstances, it would be wrong to give up the claim on our traditional seat. Under such circumstances, it was for Deora to make a decision, which he has taken today."

India shelves biggest project to develop advanced UAV

NEW DELHI: India has shut down its biggest project to develop an advanced unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) for strategic reconnaissance and surveillance after it failed to meet operational military requirements, in a major blow to indigenous capabilities in this critical arena of modern day warfare, reports Rajit Pandit.



The DRDO project for the Tapas medium-altitude, long-endurance (MALE) drones, which was first sanctioned way back in February 2011 at an initial cost of Rs 1,650 crore, has been officially closed as a "mission-mode"

project, top government sources confirmed on Sunday. The Army recently also inducted four satcom-enabled Heron Mark-II UAVs. Tapas failed to meet altitude requirements. The initial deadline for DRDO's Tapas project was August 2016, but there were multiple problems with the increase in the UAV's.

Government seeks nominations for new national science award

NEW DELHI: Government on Sunday called for nominations/applications for newly instituted national science award — Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar (RVP) — for individuals or teams in various fields of science, technology and tech-led innovation. Unlike previous nearly 300 odd science awards (now



scrapped) given by multiple institutions, the nominations

for the RVP can be submitted on unified award portal of the home ministry in four categories by February 28 (National Science Day). Like Padma awards, these science awards too will not have a cash component. The awards will be announced on May 11 (National Technology Day).

Munawwar Rana, Urdu poet, dies

LUCKNOW: Eminent city-based writer and Urdu poet Munawwar Rana died due to multiple organ failure at SGPGI on Sunday night. Munawwar's only son Tabrez Rana confirmed his demise. The hospital is yet to issue a medical bulletin. Tabrez told that Munawwar, who had not been keeping well for a few months, was to be airlifted for treatment to AIIMS-Delhi. Rana's son-in-law, Arshi, told TOI that five days ago, he had suffered a heart attack, following which he was shifted to SGPGI. He was in its critical care unit where he later developed multiple issues. He was honoured with the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2014 for Shahdaba, a poem written by him. He returned the award about one year later. In 2012, he was awarded Maati Ratan Samman by Shaheed Shodha Sansthan for his services to Urdu literature.

Fix accountability for Silkyara disaster, directs cabinet secretary



NEW DELHI: Fix accountability and take action against those responsible for lapses resulting in the Silkyara tunnel collapse in Uttarkashi, cabinet secretary Rajiv Gauba has instructed the NHID-CL and road transport ministry. Gauba on Saturday chaired a review meeting on the findings of the probe into the tunnel collapse and steps being taken to salvage the project. Sources said the highways ministry made a detailed presentation on the project since its inception and changes in the design to shift the wall

(egress tunnel) from one side to the middle of the tunnel corridor with cross section at regular interval, which was meant to improve safety (escape facility) and efficiency during operation and maintenance besides provisioning better lay bye options and increased carriageway width. It also mentioned that the environment impact assessment (EIA) report has approved tunnel alignment and cross section. Referring to the probe on tunnel collapse, the presentation mentioned that the detailed project report (DPR).

Rs 14,342 crore borrowed, Rs 5,600 crore assets sold: Punjab's 32-year emigration journey

CHANDIGARH: These eye-popping figures have come up following a recent study conducted by Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), Punjab, which also found that around 56% of the emigrants borrowed money to fulfill their foreign dream. However, what is startling is the finding that it is not the loss of their assets that pinches the family members left behind, but loneliness and neglect of elderly. 19.38% sold land, house, gold or car to settle abroad: Study Simply put, out of 100 Punjabis, who have moved abroad out of villages of Punjab from 1990 to 2022, around 74 have landed on foreign shores only after 2016. This shows there was a spurt in emigration from Punjab in the last 6-7 years. And what is most important is that this wave of new immigrants is comprised of those who are leaving country by availing student visas," said Prof Shalini



Sharma, who, along with Prof Manjeet Kaur and assistant professor Amit Guleria, department of economics and sociology, PAU, conducted the study. The study is based on the primary data covering 44 villages of 22 districts (Malerkotla was not carved out as a separate district when the scientists were conducting the study). The researchers first conducted a census survey of 9,492 households. A total of 640 migrant and 660 non-migrant households were interviewed. According to the study, Punjab has seen a rise

in emigration with approximately 13.34% of rural households having at least one member migrated. The study observed that around 19.38% migrants had sold their assets like agricultural/residential land, house, gold, car, and tractor.

On an average, each immigrant has sold assets worth Rs 1.23 lakh, which was estimated at Rs 5,639 crore for the state. The majority of low-caste, low-income, landless, and labourers migrant households sold houses and gold ornaments to meet the expenses.

Haryana police recover ex-model's body from canal

NEW DELHI:

In a major breakthrough in Divya Pahuja murder case, Haryana police have recovered the body of the ex-model from a canal in Tohana. Divya was shot dead allegedly by hotel owner Abhijeet Singh in Gurugram. He, along with two others, allegedly dragged the body into a car and dumped it in Patiala. According to police, Pahuja, 27, was killed because she had allegedly been extorting money from the hotel owner by blackmailing him

with his 'obscene pictures'. Five individuals have been apprehended by the police in the murder case so far: Abhijeet Singh, Hemraj, Om Prakash, and Megha Phogat - who is accused of assisting in concealing the murder weapon and Pahuja's belongings, along with Balraj Gill, who is alleged to have disposed of the body. Another accused, Ravi Banga, is still reported to be on the run.

Gurugram police on Thursday arrested Balraj Gill from Kolkata airport. He

fled from Patiala after dumping his car near the bus stand. On January 5, Gurugram Police said it had recovered the car that was allegedly used to dispose of the body of the former model. "The car was captured in a security camera as being parked near the toll plaza. We learnt that the vehicle was being driven towards Patiala. We were trying to trace the vehicle that was used in the crime," Karan Singh, constable, Crime Branch of Gurugram Police, said earlier. - With agency inputs

ASI shoots allegedly succumbed to a self-inflicted gunshot

NEW DELHI: An Assistant Assistant sub inspector (ASI) of Delhi Police allegedly succumbed to a self-inflicted gunshot wound with his service revolver in the BP Marg area during the night between Friday and Saturday, according to an official statement. Officials stat-

ed that ASI Ramavtar and SI Prem Singh were assigned night picket duty at BP Marg in New Delhi. Around 3am, ASI Ramavtar reportedly advised SI Prem Singh to take a 10-minute break and proceeded to sit in his car, parked near the barricade. Upon checking on him later, SI Prem

discovered that ASI Ramavtar had shot himself with his service pistol, resulting in his death, according to officials. He originally hailed from VPO Chithroli in District Mahendergarh, Haryana, and had joined the Delhi Police in 1993, according to the officials.

Delhi experienced its coldest minimum temperature of the season

● "Delhi experienced its coldest minimum temperature of the season, dropping to 3.6 degrees Celsius"



NEW DELHI: The Railways reported delays of one to six hours for 18 trains bound for Delhi due to fog. As per the IMD, visibility between 0 and 50 meters is categorized as very dense fog, between 51 and 200 meters as dense, between 201 and 500 meters as moderate, and between 501 and 1,000 meters as shallow.

At 9am, Delhi's Air

Quality Index (AQI) was recorded at 365, as per data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). An AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', and 401 and 500 'severe'. Delhi experienced its coldest minimum temperature of the season, dropping to 3.6 degrees Celsius on Saturday, as per the India Meteorological

Department (IMD). Thick fog covered various areas of the city. The previous day, Delhi had marked a minimum temperature of 3.9 degrees Celsius, the lowest in the past five years. Saturday's maximum temperature is expected to reach approximately 19 degrees Celsius, according to the IMD. At 5:30am, the visibility at Safdarjung Observatory, Delhi's primary weather station, was recorded at 200 meters.

Revenue crunch: Pay hike unlikely as Karnataka govt may put 7th Pay Commission

BENGALURU: State government employees are likely to go without a pay hike this year as the proposal to increase salaries is shrouded in uncertainty with the government mulling delaying implementation of the 7th Pay Commission. Officials cite a revenue



crunch as the primary cause for the delay, emphasizing that the focus of next month's state budget will be on mobilising resources to fund the government's five guarantee schemes. Representatives of Karnataka State Government Employees

Association (KSGA) are concerned over this potential delay and are hopeful that chief minister Siddaramaiah will accept the pay commission's report and allocate funds. A meeting between KSGA and the CM scheduled for Fri-

day was postponed since Siddaramaiah was occupied with the launch of the Yuva Nidhi scheme. Sadanand Nelagudri, KSGA secretary, said the demand for a salary increase is a longpending one and emphasised the government's commit-

ment to meeting it. KSGA also said the pay hike need not be announced in the budget and that Siddaramaiah could address it outside the budget presentation. In 2018, Siddaramaiah had accepted recommendations of the 5th Pay Commission and announced a 30% pay hike for employees just before presenting the budget for 2018-19 in February. It increased government expenditure by Rs 10,508 crore. But a senior finance department official said the government may be constrained this time.

Man flees with ATM cash van carrying Rs 2 crore in Gujarat

RAJKOT: The police will register an offence after the primary investigation. The cops are scanning footage of the CCTVs installed in the Banking Circle area and the road going to Mithi Rohar to gather more clues about the car in which the thieves fled. Gandhidham, home to one of India's biggest government ports Kandla, witnesses a large amount of cash deliveries in the banks and ATMs. The cash was to be refilled in the ATM of a nationalized bank in the town. In a scene straight out of a Bollywood pot-boiler, an unknown man drove away with an ATM cash refilling van containing Rs 2 crore in the port town Gandhidham on Friday. The driver, security guard, and three other people stopped for a tea break at around 11am

Police said the cash inside the van was intact and it was brought to the Gandhidham police station for further investigation.

near the busy Banking Circle area. Barely had they started sipping their cuppa, a man unlocked the van with a duplicate key and sped away. Seeing him, a couple of staffers borrowed a bike from someone near the tea kiosk and started chasing the van and alerted the police too. While following the van, they saw a car constantly driving behind it. Going ahead, the staff even requested a car driver for help, and he obliged by giving them his four-wheeler. When they reached Mithi Rohar, some 15 km from Gandhidham town, the accused abandoned the van on

the road, sat in the car following the van, and fled. "Probably, he noticed that along with van staff, a police vehicle was also following them. So, he abandoned the vehicle and fled. We will nab them soon" said Sagar Bagmar, superintendent of police (Kutch east). Police said the cash inside the van was intact and it was brought to the Gandhidham police station for further investigation. Police strongly suspect that someone who was well acquainted with the regular movement of the van had hatched a plan to steal the cash.

The teenagers in today's world are facing a new challenge from gadgets

CHENNAI: Mere downloading and watchiWith the click of a button, youngsters can be exposed to endless pages of adult content, the judge added. "The teenagers in today's world are facing a new challenge from gadgets, which bombard them with all kinds of information without any censor, at the touch of a button. There is adult material, which also draws the attention of the children whose mental faculty is at a growing stage," the judge said. This is in view of the fact that it is easily available in electronic gadgets and by repeatedly watching the same, it becomes a habit and, ultimately, the person gets addicted, he added. The court then quashed the prosecution initiated against a 28-year-old man who was booked under Pocco and IT Acts for downloading and watching child porn."This court advised the petitioner, who was present in person, to attend counselling, if he is still afflicted with this addiction," the judge said. Quashing of the criminal proceedings by itself will not help the petitioner and the peti-



tioner has to help himself by getting rid of the addiction, he added. ng of child pornography is not an offence under the Pocco Act and Information Technology Act, said Madras high court on Thursday. To make out an offence under Pocco Act, a child or children should have been used for pornography purposes. And to constitute an offence under IT Act the accused must have published, transmitted and created the material, Justice N Anand Venkatesh said. Citing a Kerala high court judgment, which took a similar stand, the judge said, "...in view of the fact that this act is done by the person in privacy without affecting or influencing anyone else. The moment the accused person tries to

circulate or distribute or publicly exhibits obscene photos or videos, then the ingredients of the offence starts kicking in." Like smoking and drinking, watching porn videos has become an addiction for the current generation and punishment cannot be a solution, he added. "Generation Z children are grappling with this serious problem and instead of damaging and punishing them, society must be mature enough to properly advise and educate them and try to counsel them to get rid of that addiction," Justice Anand Venkatesh said. "Rise in porn addiction among youngsters'Porn addiction is becoming a growing concern due to accessibility of sexually explicit material on the internet.

t'll be a joyous moment if Advani visits Ayodhya: Temple chief priest

Ayodhya The people of Ayodhya welcomed the announcement that BJP veteran Lal Krishna Advani would be present at the consecration ceremony of the Ram temple on January 22. After much controversy and confusion, Vishwa Hindu Parishad working president Alok Kumar said Advani would attend the ceremony. Ram Janmabhoomi temple chief priest Acharya Satyendra Das said, "It will be a joyous moment for Ayodhya if Advani visits the temple town to have a darshan of Ram Lalla. All the credit for creating awareness among Hindus regarding Ram Janmabhoomi goes to Advani." "Ayodhya will be fortunate to see Advani-ji after such a long time. He will definitely bring good luck to the residents of the temple town," said local priest Pran Nath Tripathi. The former deputy PM had last visited Ayodhya in 2005.

This year, the biennial civil aviation show is being held



Hyderabad: This year, the biennial civil aviation show is being held a couple of months earlier. The theme for the show will be 'Advanced Air Mobility - India'. The 777-9 flight test airplane is expected to arrive in Hyderabad on January 16 and will be on static display for visitors at Wings 2024 from January 18-19. Touted as the world's largest and most efficient twin-engine jet, the 777-9 is based on the 777 twin-aisle aircraft with advanced technologies from the 787 Dreamliner family. "We welcome the opportunity to introduce the state-

of-the-art 777-9 to India and look forward to its induction in our customers' fleets over the coming years. The 777-9 will become the flagship of many airlines around the world," said Ryan Weir, vice-president, commercial sales and marketing for India at Boeing. Boeing has already booked over 450 orders for its 777X family of aircraft, including the 777-8 and 777-9 passenger aircraft as well as a 777-8 freighter. Air India will also be receiving 10 777-9s as part of the substantial order it placed in 2023, Boeing said.

The American aerospace biggie will also showcase the interiors of the 777X passenger aircraft in an immersive display at the show. Apart from these, Air India Express will be hosting static and flying displays of its 737-8, with the 'Kalamkari' inspired tail design, a unique weaving pattern of Telangana. American aerospace giant Boeing's new widebody 777-9 aircraft will be landing in India for the first time for the Wings India 2024, the civil aviation air show that is scheduled to be held at the city's Begumpet airport from January 18 to 21, 2024.

Several hawkers in the area on came out against the pushback

Kolkata: Several hawkers in the New Market area on came out against the pushback plan adopted by the Town Vending Committee (TVC) for those who are still occupying carriageways and lion's share of pavements. A TVC meeting held at the Kolkata Municipal Corporation headquarters on Thursday adopted a resolution to give a 72-hour ultimatum to the hawkers in the New Market area, asking them to fall in line and remove their wares from the carriageways and leave 2/3 space on pavement free for the pedestrians. Accordingly, the KMC brass on asked cops to start a campaign in the area, asking the hawkers

to make the carriageways and pavements encroachment-free. witnessed cops issuing warning against encroachment of roads and pavements in areas like Humayun Place, Bertram Street and Lindsay Street. An officer of the New Market PS, who was sent to carry the message of the TVC to the hawkers, said that while a section of the hawkers agreed to remove their dallas from carriageways by the next two days, some simply said they would not be able to do that as they had no space to shift. We were instructed to convey the decisions of the TVC to the hawkers who are rigid. But if any hawker refuses to shift from carriageways

or illegally occupy a greater portion of a pavement, we will be compelled to take action against the hawker from Monday," said the officer. Sheikh Sikandar, a hawker who sells soft toys on Humayun Place, expressed his concern over the TVC decision that will lead to shifting of more than 60% hawkers from the New Market area. "We are not against the state or the KMC. But before evicting us, we want to check the rehabilitation package that the TVC may offer," said Sikandar. However, according to the KMC secretary Harihar Prasad Mondal, who is one of the key functionaries of the TVC.

MTC to get 100 A/C e-buses this year

CHENNAI: The city is set to finally join the list of metros having electric buses. Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC) will get 100 e-buses which will not only be supplied but also be operated and maintained by a private entity to be selected through a tender that was floated. These low-floor A/C buses with a carrying capacity of 70 people with 35 seats

(2+1 pattern) will be operated from the Adyar and Central (Pallavan Salai) depots along 27 different routes including 29C (Thiruvanimiyur-Perambur), 570 (Kelambakkam-Koyambedu) and 40A (Anna Square-Pattabiram) connecting such transit hubs as Tambaram, Broadway, Thiruporur and Chennai

Central railway station. Each of the buses, estimated to cost around 1.2 crore, will have batteries with an 8-hour capacity and that can be charged in 30 minutes during day breaks. Charging stations will also be created at the two depots by the selected private firm and the setup will allow 4-hour overnight charging too.



Stalin denies rumours his son will be deputy CM

CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu CM M K Stalin dismissed Saturday rumours about state sports minister Udhayanidhi Stalin being elevated to deputy CM. In a letter to the people on Pongal, Stalin said, "At a time when there is so much enthusiasm about the DMK youth wing conference (to be held on January 21), a section tried to spread rumours about my health. At the Tamil Diaspora Day function, I said when people were happy why should I be worried. I am happy and healthy. I am working, working and working. As one rumour failed, the next sprang up, about the elevation (of Udhayanidhi) as deputy CM. Udhayanidhi himself rubbished the rumours by saying all ministers are standing by the CM's side. Party cadres should be careful to not give space to those deliberately trying to divert attention from the conference," Stalin said.

'Poll guarantee': Karnataka govt gives Rs 3,000 stipend to unemployed graduates

SHIVAMOGGA: Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah on Friday launched Yuva Nidhi, Congress's fifth guarantee, at a well-attended function here and said his government has "walked the talk" on the promises the party made in the run-up to assembly elections in May last year. He said the government decided to launch Yuva Nidhi, which promises a monthly stipend of Rs 3,000 for graduates and Rs 1,500 for diploma holders, as "unemployment is increasing by the day" in the country. "It was 5.5% in 2014-15 and now it has gone up to 10.5%.

A college dropout wanted in a case of online cheating was arrested

● "Mulund police with the help of the Central Industrial Security Force (CSIF) at the Pune International Airport nabbed



MUMBAI: The case was registered against the accused on October 31, 2023, based on a written application filed on September 9, 2023. "Bhalerao was tracked through technical assistance. This was the first attempt that he claimed to have made to dupe a person online," said a police officer of the Mulund police station. Bhalerao committed the fraud on September 9, 2023, after the complainant called him after coming

across the phone and being shown to be sold at less than the market price. In the complaint, the student said: "I called the number that was there in the online advertisement. The person introduced himself as Rajendra Kale. He told me that I could get the mobile from a mobile shop in Mulund (West) and asked me to visit there. I transferred the money after he told me to hand over my call to the

salesman at the shop. I thought he had asked him to hand over the mobile for which I paid the money. Later I realised that I was duped when he switched off the mobile." Based on the complaint, DCP (Zone VII) Purushottam Karad supervised the team--Mulund police senior inspector KD Kothmire, inspector Adinath Gawde, sub-inspector Shivanand Apurne.

ED and CBI were "mere actors playing out an old pre-poll script"

KOLKATA: Criticising central agency actions, Trinamool spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said ED and CBI were "mere actors playing out an old pre-poll script of political conspiracy penned by BJP." "Rejected by people, they (BJP) are morally and politically bankrupt. They are trying to restrain, harass and disturb TMC leaders, hoping to empty the political field. They believe the only way they can fight this political battle (in Bengal) is by playing on an empty field. But



people know what 'Khela Hobe' means, they are with CM Mamata Banerjee and Trinamool," Ghosh said. The TMC spokesperson added: "The entire issue is a political vendetta... a conspiracy. BJP is

publicly said 'see what happens in the district'. They are predicting where ED and CBI will go and the agencies are treading the same path. It is very evident that these (raids) are happening on BJP's instructions, to help them politically." "CM has taken some decisions on North 24 Parganas. She has formed a core committee and Sujit (Bose) has been tasked to look after Dum Dum and Basirhat. Because of this, Sujit is BJP's target.

Tamil Nadu floods: Shah has assured release of funds by Jan 27, T R Baalu says

CHENNAI: DMK parliamentary party leader T R Baalu on Saturday said that Union Home minister Amit Shah had assured a delegation of all party MPs that the Centre would release 'as much funds as possible' under National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) to Tamil Nadu by January 27. A delegation of MPs, including K Jayakumar (Congress), Vaiko (MDMK), K Subbarayan (CPI), S Venkatesan (CPM) and D Ravikumar (VCK), met the Union minister and urged him to take immediate action on the memoranda submitted by the state government seeking Rs 37,907 crore towards interim and permanent restoration in the flood-affected districts of Tamil Nadu. "The minister said he



fully realized the gravity of the disasters that struck the state. An inter-ministerial team from the Union government touring the southern districts will submit a report after January 21. He said the Centre was duty-bound to support the people and would certainly release the funds by January 27," Baalu told reporters in Delhi. The DMK leader said that

Tamil Nadu was not 'neglected' as the Centre deputed three inter-ministerial teams so far for assessment of damage. Union ministers Rajnath Singh and Nirmala Sitharaman to review the situation. "We believe the Centre is considerate to Tamil Nadu. Whether they are biased or not will be known when the funds are released," Baalu said.

Hyderabad Skyline To Billow As 30+ High-Rises Get Nod

Hyderabad Authorities approve more high-rise plans, doubling the number of tall buildings in the city by 2023. Most will be between 30 and 40 floors, with some exceeding 40. The trend of vertical growth in Hyderabad continues, with the western corridor being a hotspot for high-rise development. Hyderabad Skyline To Billow As 30+ High-Rises Get Nod Hyderabad's realty market is witnessing a rapid growth in vertical homes, with at least half a dozen high-rise plans approved by GHMC in 2023. The city's skyline is set to get taller with authorities approving at least half a dozen high-rise plans in 2023, which is almost double the pre-pandemic times. Most of these vertical homes are expected to crop by 2027-28 and are expect-



ed to be between 30 and 40 floors high, if not more, officials said. Since the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) was formed in 2007, permissions were given to as many as 1,248 high-rises of which 634 were sanctioned between 2021 and 2023. Till date, approvals have been given to nine high-rises that are above 30 floors and among them six got green-lit in 2023 alone. This also includes four high-rises beyond 40

floors. As per official records, the city's tallest skyscraper is set to be a 50-floor building in Kanchi Gachibowli to be developed by Aparna Infra Housing Pvt Ltd. **Boom in western corridor** "Majority of the high-rises are concentrated along the western corridor of the city. A lot of high rises are coming up in areas like Raidurgam, Serilingampally, Gachibowli, Gopanpally and Hi-Tec City. Since there is no cap on floor space index

(FSI), a lot of developers are coming forward to get approvals for high-rises," said a senior official from the town planning wing of GHMC. Realtors said that capitalising on this FSI factor, Hyderabad has been eyeing vertical growth for the past few years as developers and stakeholders are actively pursuing such growth with the IT belt becoming a hub for high-rise clusters. Bounces back after covid lull "After Covid-19, there is a positive sentiment among developers to take up high-rises. Majority of them are coming up in areas where the land value has gone up as developers are building more floors to make their projects economically viable," said Rajashekar Reddy, president, CREDAI Hyderabad. He added.

New butterfly species discovered in Western Ghats

MADURAI: A new species of Silverline butterfly has been discovered in the Megamalai division of Srivilliputhur Megamalai Tiger Reserve in Tamil Nadu, marking the first discovery of a new butterfly species in the Western Ghats in 33 years. The species is named 'Cigaritis megamalaiensis'. In a statement, Supriya Sahu, additional chief secretary of environment, climate change and forests department, said the new species has been named after the region, Megamalai, which translates to 'cloud mountain' in English. Researchers from Vanam, an NGO based in Theni, led by Kalesh Sadasivam, S Ramasamy Kamaya and CP Rajkumar made the discovery. "This has been published in the current issue of peer reviewed journal, 'Entomon'. With this discovery, the total number of butterflies in the Western Ghats has risen to 337 species, including 40 Western Ghats endemics.

Editorial

How 2024 will be a decisive year for democracy

The year 2023 ended as the warmest year in the history of the planet Earth, with unprecedented floods on one side and nearly 25 per cent of the world population famishing in the famine on the other. The year 2024 is set to bring never experienced tremors, quakes and tsunamis.

But there is a difference.

The debris left in the wake of this tsunami either lead the world closer to an apocalypse or it can be one of happy endings. In 2024 the global population is likely to be little over 8 billion, removing the 1.4 billion population of China, the rest of the world will be 6.6 billion. Though China will not be impacted but it will cause or will try to cause as many tremors as it can, that have potential to bring the tsunami. And no continent of the world from Asia to Europe, from Africa to North and Latin America and Oceans will be immune from getting engulfed in the tsunami of the year.

It is time to end the suspense: The nature of this tsunami will be political.

Never in the History

The year 2024 is the Superbowl equivalent year for the political arena. The dance of democracy (the elections) will be witnessed in at least 81 elections in minimum 78 countries impacting lives of more than sixty per cent of humanity (which periodically take to hustings fair or unfair). It has never happened on earth in the past and may not happen in the lives of currently living generations again.

What a Year

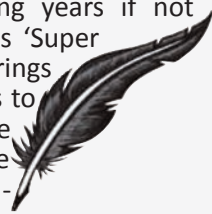
It is a year that can change the future trajectory of humanity. Some of the countries that go to polls are the smallest in the world, including but not limited to Tuvalu (0.01 million), Palau (0.02 million), San Marino (0.03 million), Kiribati (0.14 million), Iceland (0.38 million). Others are either the most populous or the most influential. Nations in this category include India (Population 1.44 billion), the European Union (total of 27 EU states with a population of 448 million), the United States of America (441 million), Indonesia (279 million), Pakistan (243 million), Bangladesh (174 million), Russia (144 million), Mexico (128 million), Islamic Republic of Iran (89.5 million), the United Kingdom (67.9 million), South Korea (51.8 million), Algeria (46 million), Ukraine (37.4 million), Uzbekistan (35.4 million), and Ghana (34.4 million).

Also in the ring are the European nations of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Portugal, Austria, Slovakia, Finland, and the nations perennially in conflict zones like South Sudan and Rwanda.

A Unique Challenge

As said earlier, the world has not encountered a year like this in the past and is unlikely to see the same volume of elections at least until 2050. These high-stakes elections will witness many things hitting the surface, including but not limited to the extent of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, growing aspirations, impatience, and frustration of the electorate, including the tolerance or intolerance of unfair elections, misinformation, and electoral malpractices.

My gut feel is that these elections will have drama of both Bollywood and Hollywood, boring and inspiring, most comical and outrageous at the same time. For many if not all, results of these elections will be fraught and likely to turn consequential for many long years if not decades altogether. Also, this 'Super Bowl' of an election year brings in its train unique challenges to the global community in the myriad arena including the election administration, regulatory challenges.



How saffron party's organisational structure with Modi hallmark makes a difference

Chattisgarh, for instance, was nowhere in contesting positions for the BJP. So much so that many had considered the Congress victory in the state a given. But that was well before Modi stepped into the electoral battle. Through the year, PM Modi was involved in multiple projects, including ones with international implications for Bharat, i.e., the G20 India summit. Soon after it was over, PM Modi entered the electoral campaign, and things started looking brighter for his party. CM Madhya Pradesh, Mohan Yadav, is now popular for his skills with the sword that he perhaps learnt at the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's Shakra; Bhajan Lal Sharma is looked upon as a man who single-handedly managed the party office. And, then, we have the first tribal chief minister of Chattisgarh, Vishnu Deo Sai. The elevation of these three, overlooking or putting aside claims of some stalwarts in their respective states, says a lot about the BJP's way of functioning. Passionate about staying fit the natural way,



Kangana Ranaut on Maldivian minister's remarks against PM Modi's Lakshadweep visit: 'Suffering from Muslim phobia...' With this remarkable win in the run-up to the 2024 gen-

eral elections, PM Modi and the BJP have established themselves as forerunners, leaving the Gandhi family-led Congress much behind. There are, of course, many reasons behind it, and Congress would need to do deep introspection to understand it. However, one reason that gives the BJP an upper hand is the organisational workings of the BJP. It has been some time on the national level that party leaders have shared their thoughts on how the BJP works. Yet, it continues to surprise many. But this is one key factor that separates the BJP from other parties: The organisational working of the party, with Modi hallmark on it. After travelling across the country and per-

haps taking blessings and guidance from Sadhus in the Himalayas and Saints in the South, young Narendra Modi in the 1970s got back to his home state of Gujarat and joined the RSS. It was through his learnings that he realised the importance of organisation building. PM Modi has written about it in a book about how so many in the Sangh leadership shaped him into the man that he is today.

by Taboola Sponsored Links After growing through the ranks through service in the RSS, Modi was shifted to the BJP organisation in Gujarat. It was for the first time here that Modi's organisation-building activities began showing positive results for the BJP in Gujarat.

Over the next few years, Gujarat BJP turned into a model organisation. In the mid-1990s, Modi shifted to Panchkula, Haryana, as the National Secretary-in-Charge for Haryana, among other states. The organisational watermark was visible in the 2014 state assembly elections in the state when the BJP won polls in the state for the first time.

The functioning of the party, wherein the organisation reigns supreme, has become a permanent feature of the party. In fact, it is precisely this aspect that has kept factionalism or intra-party rivalries under control. Of course, there is an overarching impression of Modi-Shah functioning, which ensures things stay as smooth as they could be. This sense of discipline and towing the party line are features of the party today. Everyone is important, and nobody is untouchable. Take the case of Rajasthan before the elections. Vasundhara Raje was tipped to be the possible CM. Though there were other names, of course. More names were added to the list after the results. However, not many were expecting a first-time MLA to step out of the hat, heading straight to the helm in the state. Similarly, many still consider it a major surprise

that Shivraj Singh Chauhan, the beloved 'Mama' in Madhya Pradesh, was sidelined for Yadav. But, as the decision was taken, there was no scope for diversions. Likewise, in Chattisgarh, former CM Raman Singh was appointed as speaker, and Vishnu Deo Sai from Raigarh became the chief minister. By giving new leadership a chance, the party saw and accepted the need for a change in organisation at the state level. In fact, it is to the credit of the party organisation that it not only saw the change coming but also accepted it. This particular aspect shows the difference between the BJP and other parties. It also shows the level of internal democracy that the party has successfully instilled in its organisation over the years.

The electoral victory in three states was as much about PM Modi's hard work as it was about the functioning of the party organisation at different levels. It also proved that the BJP organisation was not leader-centric, contrary to what popular perception has been in the last several years. In a way, the Kshatrap-style functioning of political governance is a thing of the past. The BJP president actually reflected on the same when he said that the party looks at each worker very closely.

How a divided world allows Houthis to hold global trade hostage

The Red Sea, or, one should say, the Houthi backwaters, has been the surprise package of Israel's war. Iran is not doing anything. Hezbollah is not retaliating, but Yemen's Houthis are doing a lot. These are ragtag militants fighting a civil war. But how are they holding global trade hostage? It is because the world is divided. While most countries agree the attacks should stop, they won't say it out loud. The UN Security Council passed a new resolution on Wednesday, which demanded an immediate end to Houthi attacks. As many as 11 members backed the resolution, and the remaining four — Russia, China, Algeria and Mozambique — abstained. "I would like to once again

underscore that this resolution cannot be seen as legitimising the actions in the Red Sea of the so-called coalition made up of the US and its allies," said Vasily Nebenzya, Russian Federation's permanent representative to the UN. US, allies reiterate call for end to attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels on ships in the Red Sea "The draft resolution remains ambiguous on several key issues, which makes us worry that it might not be able to achieve the intended effect or even lead to negative consequences," said Zhang Jun, China's permanent representative to the UN. Here is the problem: They won't send warships, nor would they condemn Houthis or back a resolution, but they won't veto it

either. It means no one wants to be the bad cop against the Houthis. They fear it will be seen as anti-Palestine because the Houthis claim to be fighting for Palestine. It's not just Russia and China; Arab countries are also guilty here, especially Jordan and Egypt. Egypt earns around nine billion dollars annually from the Suez Canal. It is a mainstay of their economy. If ships don't use the Red Sea, Egypt will lose that money. Same with Jordan, the Red Sea is vital for their trade; it carries 33 per cent of their imports and 54 per cent of their exports. Yet both countries are silent; they would much rather suffer losses than speak out, so the Houthis simply carry on.

US is the biggest loser in Israel-Hamas war

This is a war of losers, and possibly so is every war nowadays, as they don't swiftly conclude and tend to defy all standard postulates. As such, wars are being launched for expansion of territory and influence, to enforce politico-military superiority and influence, to support an alliance partner, and for revenge and retribution, which may or may not serve geopolitical or geo-economic objectives. But unfortunately, the only thing that is assured is destruction and humanitarian disaster. This over-three-month-old ongoing Israel-Hamas war has witnessed many firsts, but not many of them might be flattering to the warring sides. Terror attacks by Hamas on October 7 against Israeli civilians were unprecedented in scope and scale and perhaps went beyond their own expectations being compared to a dozen 9/11s. They may have achieved certain objectives but at what cost knowing too well that fury and might of Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) and that of Hawkish Netanyahu will bring unprecedented death and destruction to Gazans and Palestinians. When the dust settles down both sides will face searching and uncomfortable questions on strategic lapses. Netanyahu is yet to achieve his singular objective of destroying Hamas, with which he was in a truck once. Regional countries lost as they were not able to take a decisive course of action to prevent



unprecedented civilian casualties which some of them and others call 'genocide' and South Africa and Malaysia have gone to International Court of Justice against Israel. Clearly they were unable to largely differentiate between their utter dislike of Hamas and disproportionate mayhem caused by Israeli bombings. A house divided leads to its destruction. Israel has also lost a great deal as it not only did not achieve its military objectives but its myth of invincibility has been busted despite tremendous superiority. It also lost a great deal on regional and international sympathy and budding friendships with regional majors whose leaders were moving to normalise ties despite or perhaps due to the waning importance of the Palestinian cause in their strategic calculations.

In fact, President Biden warned Netanyahu that he was losing international support, which was also a headache for the American foreign policy establishment. Abraham Accords, I2U2, and IMEC are all on the backburner for fear of the ire of the Arab street, which has been recharged due to the continued spat of

killings of hapless women and children. But Bibi is sitting on a lion for as long as he can, since the moment he comes down, his political fate is unknown as the 130 hostages await their release. Russia and China have also not acquitted themselves creditably, even though furtive, unimplementable statements and paper tiger resolutions flew around with alacrity from condemnation to quietude, with verbosity galore as usual but maintaining eventual ambivalence. Moscow may have benefited somewhat from the US distraction, as is evident from the Zelenskyy tirades in Western capitals. But they may have also lost their dependency quotient, which both Moscow and Beijing are trying to project in the region. Emerging and leading powers like India also adopted a wait and watch approach even though at the UNGA and BRICS and bilaterally right messaging was conveyed seeking end of the conflict and humanitarian assistance was provided promptly to Gazans.

We are not living an era of swift wars. Today they impact everyone. Irony is that if a superpower is

Beyond the beaches, Goa aspires to become a Global Opportunities Aggregator

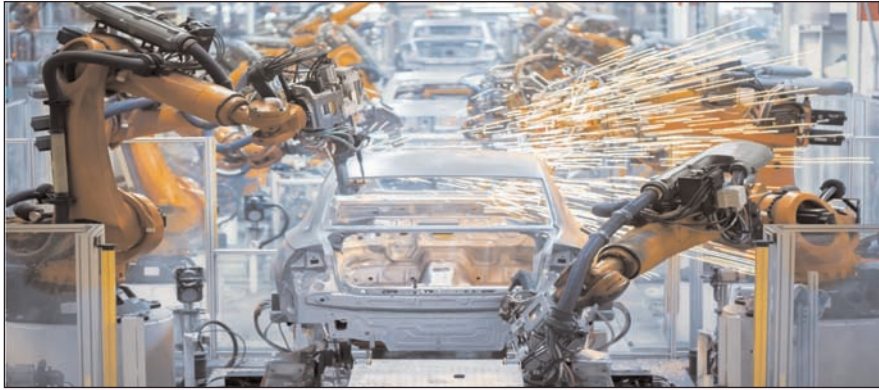
Goa, a southwest state of India, embraced by the lateritic plateaus of the Sahyadris and the Arabian Sea, is well known for its pristine beaches and lush greenery. A day in January could have been the best time to find tourists drinking coconut water, dancing on the shores, and tanning under the sun beside the sea. Booze and rejuvenation are things the little state is known for. But now the Goan government looks beyond the 'sea, sun, and sands'. Coming to tourism and hospitality, it is a sector that contributes to 16.4 per cent of the state GDP (GSDP) and as much as 33 per

cent of the employment of the former Portuguese colony. Beyond the beaches Goa aspires to become a Global Opportunities Aggregator. An ordinary street view in Goa Goa is conventionally conceptualised as a place possessing breathtaking shores. A dream honeymoon destination that has impressive churches, basilicas, and cathedrals with a harmonious construct of multiple cultures where 450 years of colonial influence silently yet prominently tells its tale. But as a poet has beautifully said, 'Trees are much more than the shades they give.'

The state government of Goa is getting prepared to look up to 'Regenerative Tourism' as a new model of sustainable bottom-up approach to include environmental restoration, cultural preservation, and community empowerment. Acknowledging the complex relationship between tourism and indigenous communities, this path seeks to bring economic opportunities and cultural exchange together while addressing the challenges to cultural integrity, social structures, and the natural environment. Beyond the beaches Goa aspires to become a Global

Opportunities Aggregator. "Facing unique challenges, including competition from countries like Thailand and Indonesia, modern cities like Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok, and large Indian states, Goa has set its sights on innovative solutions post-COVID. Emphasising technology adoption and collaboration, the focus is on making people and communities decision-makers in the tourism sector," said Rohan Khaunte, the Minister of Tourism, IT, and E&C, Goa government, adding that Goa is transitioning from a sea-shore-centric tourism model to a more inclusive.

IIP growth slowest in 8 months, retail inflation at 4-month high



New Delhi: The retail inflation, based on Consumer Price Index (CPI), rose on account of spurt in prices of vegetables, pulses and spices. The inflation was 5.6% in November 2023 and 5.7% in December 2022. The rate of price rise in the food basket, which constitutes nearly half of the CPI, increased to 9.5% in December against 8.7% in the preceding month and 4.2% in December 2022, according to the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO). CPI inflation rose to a four month high... due to increase in food price

retail inflation rose to a four-month high of 5.7% in December 2023 on the back of a spurt in food prices, according to a set

inflation.

Inflation in all the other components increased at a lower rate when compared to the previous month. The pick-up in inflation was driven by an unfavourable base effect of around 10 bps. The good thing is that CPI and core CPI remain in equilibrium long run relationship

with CPI adjusting towards the core CPI, which has continued its downtrend from the last 12 months to reach 3.8% in December 2023. ...We expect CPI inflation to come down to 5% by March 2023," said Soumya Kanti Ghosh, chief economic adviser, SBI. Factory output grew 2.4% in November, the slowest pace of expansion in last eight months, while retail inflation rose to a four-month high of 5.7% in December 2023 on the back of a spurt in food prices, according to a set of government data released.

Goyal highlighted challenges being faced by business visitors

NEW DELHI:

Goyal highlighted challenges being faced by business visitors from India due to visa processing time periods and requested US to augment processing. Enhanced engagement is likely in several areas. "They (ministers) identified certain areas, including critical minerals, customs and trade facilitation, supply chains, and trade in high-tech products, in which the US and India will develop an ambitious and forward looking roadmap for enhanced cooperation in order to

achieve economically meaningful outcomes," the statement said. During the meeting, Goyal sought the restoration benefits for India under the US Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) programme. "Ambassador Tai noted that this could be considered, as warranted, in relation to the eligibility criteria determined by the US Congress," it said. With India-US trade set to cross \$200 billion in 2023, commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal and US Trade Representative

Katherine Tai on Friday sought to ensure that technical regulations do not impact shipments and vowed to work together on critical minerals, pharma and medical devices. A joint statement issued after a meeting of the Trade Policy Forum said the two ministers noted that the movement of professionals and skilled workers, students, investors, and business visitors between the countries contributes immensely to enhancing the bilateral economic and technological partnership.

Michael Patra has been reappointed as RBI governor for one year

MUMBAI: Michael Patra has been reappointed as RBI governor for one year. He was initially appointed in January 2020 for a three-year tenure, which concludes on January 14. Patra was appointed deputy governor in place of Viral Acharya who quit in July 2019, six months

ahead of his tenure. Prior to being appointed deputy governor, Patra was the executive director in charge of the monetary policy and was a member of the monetary policy committee. He played a key role in developing the inflation-targeting and liquidity frameworks of

the RBI. A PhD in economics from the Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai, Patra, served in various capacities in the RBI, which he joined in 1985. He is also a fellow of Harvard University, where he undertook post-doctoral research in financial stability.

CAPSULES

HC: Banks or NBFCs are not obliged to adopt the restructuring process on its own without there being any application by the MSMEs

MUMBAI: Bombay high court on Thursday dismissed a bunch of petitions filed by small scale enterprises on a limited challenge to the decisions of banks and non banking financial companies (NBFCs) declaring them as Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) without following provisions of a 2015 notification. A division bench of Justices BP Colabawalla and MM Sathaye found that the Banks or NBFCs are not obliged to adopt the restructuring process on its own without there being any application by the MSMEs (Micro, small, medium enterprises) The HC said hence it is not necessary to deal with the arguments of the Banks NBFCs about the effects of the subsequent Notifications and Circulars. The HC said "the limited argument of the Petitioners" on ground bases on the notification, fails. "There is no merit in these petitions and the same are dismissed," it said but added, "we however grant leave to the Petitioners to agitate the other issues in their petitions, which may vary on facts, on a case-to case basis by adopting alternate remedies, as available under law." The HC, on a request by advocate Mathews Nedumpara, counsel for the petitioners, who said issues involved in the petitions are important and he would like to text them before the Supreme Court, extended stay granted earlier against any action for two weeks. After two weeks they shall be automatically vacated, unless extended by the SC, said the HC.

Vedanta launches 3rd phase 'Project Panchhi'; empowers young Odisha girls

Vedanta launches third phase
In her address, Ms. Aboli Sunil Naravane, Collector and District Magistrate, Jharsuguda said, "I extend my appreciation to Vedanta Aluminium for this wonderful initiative, which is helping young girls realize their dreams. Jharsuguda District Administration will always lend their support for such transformative initiatives." Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Sunil Gupta, COO, Vedanta Aluminium, said, "Project Panchhi exemplifies Vedanta Aluminium's commitment to empowering women. Our Chairman's vision not only promises a brighter and more inclusive future for these

● "I extend my appreciation to Vedanta Aluminium for this wonderful initiative, which is helping young girls realize their dreams"

young girls, but also heralds a ripple effect of positive change radiating throughout the communities that surround us." He further mentioned, "We believe in empowering the youth, particularly young girls, to overcome obstacles and achieve their aspirations. This initiative is a testament to our belief in the transformative power of education

and the potential of these young minds to shape a better future." Mr. Dilip Sinha, CHRO, Vedanta Aluminium, added, "At Vedanta, we recognize the importance of creating equal opportunities for all, and Project Panchhi aligns perfectly with our commitment to cultivating talent, diversity, and equality. By investing in the education and empowerment of these young girls, we aim to break the cycle of limitations they face, therefore opening doors to a brighter future for them and their communities." Ms. Aliva Patel, one of the girls selected as part of the recruitment drive, expressed her feelings saying,

Suspicious activities are noticed by investors

MUMBAI: When suspicious activities are noticed by investors, the facility of freezing/blocking of accounts is currently not available with majority of the brokers. This was the main trigger for Sebi to put in place a mechanism for freezing/blocking of trading accounts. By April 1, the framework for freezing and blocking of trading accounts should be made public by the Brokers' Industry Standards Forum

(ISF), an industry trade body that sets processes that brokers should follow. The framework should be operational by July 1, Sebi said. Sebi said that there should be detailed guidelines on how to put in place a mechanism for freezing and blocking of accounts. Sebi also wants each broker to inform their clients about this facility. "Many times, investors raise issues of suspicious activities

in their trading accounts and thus, there is an urgent need to address the situation of having a facility for blocking of trading accounts as it is available for blocking of ATM cards and credit cards," Sebi said in its release. After this process is launched on July 1, the stock exchanges have to submit a compliance report about its facility to the regulator by August 31, Sebi said. "Stock exchanges shall put in place an appropriate

reporting requirement by (brokers) to enforce the above system." In another circular, Sebi said that stock exchanges should put in place a mechanism to monitor investors' funds with stock brokers. Earlier, Sebi had said that investors' funds and securities parked with their brokers should be periodically settled. This was to ensure that investors' funds and securities lying in brokers' pool account is not used.

Citigroup Inc has announced a major restructuring plan under CEO Jane Fraser's

Citigroup Inc has announced a major restructuring plan under CEO Jane Fraser's leadership, aiming to eliminate 20,000 roles. This move, integral to Fraser's strategy, is expected to save the company as much as \$2.5 billion, positioning it for stronger returns in the coming years. Despite the planned savings, Citigroup braces for immediate costs. "In the meantime, though, the firm expects to incur as much as \$1 billion in expenses tied to severance payments and Fraser's restructuring of the bank this year," the company said in a statement. Fourth quarter woes Citigroup's fourth-quarter performance fell short of expecta-



tions. "The fourth quarter was very disappointing," Fraser admitted. The fixed-income traders particularly struggled, marking their poorest showing in five years, with a 25% revenue drop to \$2.6 billion. Restructuring for efficiency Fraser's September-initiated restructuring aims to reduce Citigroup's bureaucratic layers from 13 to 8. "We are moving quickly, but we are doing it thoughtfully," Fraser explained in a memo. This overhaul

is projected to save \$1 billion annually, cutting 5,000 managerial roles. Focus on profitability Fraser reaffirmed her goal to boost the bank's return on tangible common equity to at least 11% by 2027. Citigroup's strategic decisions, like exiting certain business units, align with this objective. "We are prepared to exit additional businesses... if they don't make sense for the go-forward strategy," CFO Mark Mason commented.

Binance's split with WazirX in 2022 had initially favored Binance

Binance's split with WazirX in 2022 had initially favored Binance, but a government crackdown on offshore exchanges in India has shifted the dynamics. Traders are now flocking to domestic rivals like WazirX, CoinDCX, and CoinSwitch Kuber. The removal of Binance's app from Apple's App Store further boosted the inflows to these local platforms. WazirX said volumes haven't budged much, while CoinDCX said the slight uptick it's noticed in the past two weeks may be more due to overall bullish crypto sentiment. Binance loses India traders to WazirX, CoinDCX after crackdown Since Indian authorities in late December began



restricting access to Binance and other foreign crypto exchanges operating there without local registrations, traders have flocked to local exchanges. When Binance Holdings Ltd acrimoniously split with its Indian affiliate WazirX in 2022, the world's largest cryptocurrency exchange looked near-invincible in the local market while WazirX was flailing. A government crackdown on offshore platforms has abruptly reversed the competi-

tive dynamics. Since Indian authorities began restricting access to Binance and other foreign crypto exchanges operating there without local registrations, traders have flocked to domestic rivals like WazirX. Many of them are moving deposits across from Binance, according to the local venues. It's a welcome reprieve for WazirX and competitors like CoinDCX and CoinSwitch Kuber,

which were pummeled by a 2022 taxation regime that drove traders to offshore exchanges. They appear poised for further gains after Apple Inc.'s App Store this week took down the apps of Binance and seven other foreign exchanges after a request from India's government. Deposit inflows at WazirX jumped about 250% in the four days following India's December 28 compliance show-cause notice to nine offshore platforms, compared with the four days leading up to it, according to the company. CoinDCX reopened for deposits right after the event and they immediately began pouring in, CEO Sumit Gupta said.

Alliance Air adds 2 flights a week to Lakshdweep

NEW DELHI: Aerial connectivity to Lakshdweep will get a boost from next week. Alliance Air will operate an additional Kochi-Agatti-Kochi flight on Wednesdays and Sundays from January 21 to March 27, 2024. Alliance is the only airline with flights to the archipelago with a daily on this route. Following PM Modi's recent trip to Lakshadweep, there is heightened interest and demand for travel there. To meet the same, Alliance has as of now added two flights a week. The only fixed wing public sector airline, which is yet to be divested, operates a 70-seater turboprop ATR-72 to Agatti. Airline officials say they are looking at having a double daily between Kochi and Agatti.

India's relations with the US have never been so strong says

NAGPUR:

India's relations with the US have never been so strong as they are now, he said.

"Ties began to improve since the tenure of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Now, America recognises our tech prowess and is enthusiastic about investments. Also, our relationship with Australia has improved dramatically." He also mentioned how many countries helped stop a UN resolution when two members moved the UN Security Council after the nullification of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir. "They categorically said it was India's internal matter. We provided Covid vaccines to over 100 nations during the pandemic and many are still grateful," said Jaishankar. On the recent rift with Maldives, the Union minister said, "What we are trying to do, and with a lot of success in the last 10 years, is to build a very strong connection.

Covid-19 diplomacy and a successful hosting of the G-20 summit amid the Russia-Ukraine war dramatically raised India's global stature

Politics may go up and down, but the people of that nation have warm feelings towards India and understand the importance of strong ties. "External affairs minister S Jaishankar, who will touch down in Tehran on Sunday, just 48 hours after the US-UK joint strike on Iran-backed Houthi militias, told a gathering in Nagpur about India's dramatic rise in geopolitics in the last decade amidst the United Nation's dwindling relevance due to the stranglehold of five countries, some of whom were no longer top global economies.

Covid-19 diplomacy and a successful hosting of the G-20 summit amid the Russia-Ukraine war dramatically raised India's global stature, Jaishankar said, adding "New Delhi is now consulted in every major international issue. The world has come to us". Talking about Sino-India relations, he said, "A strife-torn border and good business can't go together. I have unequivocally told my Chinese counterpart that relations can't improve if mutual agreements are violated. You don't want to fight and do trade at the same.

Supreme Court: Consider hiking hit-&-run payouts in 8 weeks

NEW DELHI: Expressing serious concern about the wide gap between the number of hit-and-run accidents in the past five years and the minuscule number of victims' kin getting a paltry compensation of Rs 2 lakh each, the Supreme Court on Friday mandated the police to inform the kin of such accident victims about availability of compensation scheme under the Motor Vehicle Act. A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Pankaj Mithal said the ministry of transport and highways has published reports which indicate on

an average 65,000 hit-and-run accidents in India, but the concerned minister's statement in Parliament indicated that in the last five years "there were 660 deaths in hit and run cases, and there were 113 injury cases for which compensation of Rs 184.60 lakh was disbursed". Writing the judgment and asking the Centre to consider within eight weeks an enhancement in compensation, Justice Oka said, "If we compare the number of hit and run road accidents reported and the number of cases registered for seeking

compensation, what stares at the face is that a negligible number of victims have taken advantage of the said scheme." The bench asked the SC-appointed standing committee on road safety to look into the causes of non-implementation of the scheme under the MV Act and direct corrective measures to be taken to ensure that every claimant who is entitled to benefit of the scheme is encouraged to take benefit thereof. It also directed the police in all states that once they conclude an accident to be a hit-and-run case.

Airline 'locked' passengers in aerobridge for hours, says actor

MUMBAI: Actor Radhika Apte on Saturday claimed she and other passengers at an airport were locked in the aerobridge for hours after her flight was delayed. " ...Today morning I had a flight at 8:30. It's 10:50 now and the flight has still not board-

ed. But the flight said we were boarding and put all the passengers in the aerobridge and locked it," Apte said on Instagram. An IndiGo spokesperson said the airline's Bhubaneswar-bound flight from Mumbai was delayed due to "operational reasons".

"I managed to escaped briefly to speak to the very stupid staff woman outside who kept saying there is no issue and no delay. Now I'm locked inside and they just told us that we will be here till minimum 12pm, all locked in. No water, no food. Thanks for the fun ride," Apte said.

CAPSULES

Supreme Court shields Chittorgarh Fort from mine blasting

NEW DELHI: Chittorgarh Fort, one of the last bastions of Rajput resistance against Mughal emperor Akbar constructed nearly 500 years ago, is now fighting a battle for survival as much against the withering effect of time as also the booming blasts at limestone mines in its vicinity. Unlike Rana Pratap Singh who bravely waged a lonely battle against the mighty Mughal army, Chittorgarh Fort is fortunately backed by the mighty Supreme Court, which on Friday ordered no blasting in limestone mines within a 5km radius of the Unesco heritage monument, which brings to a history student's mind the stories weaved around its grit, valour and devotion that is etched in the Fort's structures including the Vijay Stambh, Kirti Stambh, Padmini Palace, Kumbha Palace and Meera Mandir. A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and S V N Bhatti ordered: "We declare and hold that notwithstanding any liberal recommendation on undertaking blasting operations nearer to the Chittorgarh Fort, keeping in perspective the continuous exposure of ancient monuments to peak particle velocity (PPV) arising from blasting, a radius of 5km from the compound wall of the fort shall not be subjected to mining by blasting or use of explosives for mining of any minerals. In other words, the manual/mechanical mining operations permitted within a radius of 5km are allowed to be continued, subject to the lessees possessing a valid lease in accordance with law." It said exploitation of limestone mineral in the surrounding area by the mining lease holders, particularly in an unscientific manner or disproportionate exploitation of minerals in hard and rude mining activities.

Ex-CM Yediyurappa praises Siddaramaiah government's 'poll guarantees'



SHIVAMOGGA: The 'poll guarantees' initiative introduced by Siddaramaiah-led Congress government in Karnataka has come under attack by BJP leaders and even PM Modi, but former B S Yediyurappa Saturday refused to criticise the pro-

gramme, saying positive contributions needed to be acknowledged regardless of party affiliations. He also dismissed claims, as made by Pejawar seer Vishwaprasanna Tirtha, that the existence of Ram temple depended on Hindus

● "He said it was unfortunate that Congress leaders had expressed displeasure over the consecration ceremony"

remaining a majority in the country. The BJP veteran emphasised that the temple enjoyed popular support, asserting that Lord Ram symbolised unity across religious lines. He said it was unfortunate that Congress leaders had expressed displeasure over the consecration ceremony, speculating that BJP would claim sole credit for Ram Mandir.

12 locals were arrested in connection with the assault

PURULIA:

On Friday, 12 locals were arrested in connection with the assault. Residents also lodged a complaint against the three sadhus, alleging stalking and kidnapping of local girls.

BJP leaders targeted West Bengal government over the attack, comparing the incident with the lynching of two sadhus in Palghar in April 2020. Purulia police and Trinamool Congress, however, said a language barrier sparked the rumours of abduction which led to

Bengal BJP chief Sukanta Majumdar also spoke to the m over the phone. Three sadhus hailing from Bareilly in UP, who had come to Purulia on their way to Gangasagar, were assaulted

the attack, adding "facts are being misrepresented". The three sadhus, accompanied by two others, were travelling in a car, and had stopped at Gourangdih More in Kashipur police station area, where they asked

three minor girls about the way to a local brick kiln, as they wanted to meet its owner for alms. The girls, who were going to a temple, got scared as they saw strangers approach them, and suspecting them to be child-lifters,

fled from the place. Soon, men and women gathered there with lathis, vandalised the car, dragged the men out, took them to a local temple and bashed them up. BJP MP from Purulia took the sadhus to Kashipur town Friday, where party supporters felicitated them.

Bengal BJP chief Sukanta Majumdar also spoke to the m over the phone. Three sadhus hailing from Bareilly in UP, who had come to Purulia on their way to Gangasagar, were assaulted.

Credit card spend as a proxy for consumption by affluents

NEW DELHI: Even company product portfolios are feeling the change. So, not only has Nestle grown faster than Hindustan Unilever, HUL's premium portfolio has grown faster than its overall revenue. Using credit card spend as a proxy for consumption by affluents, the report notes credit card ownership has increased 80% since FY19 and credit card spend has jumped 250% in the same period (the calculation is based on trailing 12-month average). Screenshot 2024-01-13 11:41:24



divergence in consumption for companies that address top-end consumption compared to those that address broad-based consumption was due to the impact of Covid restrictions. Covid restrictions had a greater impact on low-income jobs like those in the service industries, such as, hotels and restaurants. However, Covid restrictions were fully lifted in early 2022, and yet the divergence in growth rates has continued till the end of 2023. We are now 24 months post the lifting of all restrictions, and most services shut down during Covid have fully opened up. The diver-

gence was not just caused by Covid restrictions, but by fundamentally faster growth of 'Affluent India'..." The report identified changes in government's tax policy, a correction in stock and gold prices and competition for established entrants as potential risks. 'Affluent' Indians may number 100 million in four years. To put this in perspective: There are only 14 countries in the world with a population of 100 million-plus. And these Indians, already responsible for a consumer and wealth creation paradigm shift, will have an even bigger.

Kharge to ensure closer coordination, says Rahul

NEW DELHI: A proposal to appoint JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar as convener was also mooted and unanimously backed by those present, but the Bihar CM is learned to have favoured setting up a team of party chiefs for closer coordination rather than appointing a convener for the group. Sources said following insistence by some on having a convener, Nitish favoured RJD's Lalu Prasad to take up the role. With JD(U) functionaries emphasising that Kumar was not keen on taking up a formal position within the opposition grouping, Kharge intervened and said the matter should be put off until after he reaches out to the absentees. Of 28 parties that are part of INDIA, only 10 - Congress, DMK, JD(U), RJD, AAP, CPM, CPI, NCP, JMM and NC - attended the coordination committee meeting. TMC chief Mamata Banerjee, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav were absent.

Sena's Sanjay Raut, however, spoke to the Congress chief later. Nitish's name as convener was doing the rounds at a time when there was no plan to have



a chairperson of the alliance. But during the December 19 meeting of the bloc in Delhi, Mamata Banerjee and Arvind Kejriwal stumped everyone by suddenly proposing Kharge's name as chairperson. As proceedings unspooled on Saturday with Sitaram Yechury proposing Nitish's name as convener and Lalu seconding it, the Bihar CM was not amused. In fact, Nitish's suggestion of Lalu as convener was seen as an expression of discontent over the developments. Credited for bringing together disparate parties, some of which had even proposed a third front earlier, Nitish expected due recognition to him for the role he played.

Appointment of a chairperson is seen as sapping the post of convener of much importance. Convened to discuss seat-sharing and joint programmes, the meeting on Saturday saw Rahul Gandhi emphasise the need for all alliance partners to work together. He is learned to have said that Kharge, as chairperson, will ensure closer coordination among the constituents.

Kharge to ensure closer coordination, says Rahul
TMC chief Mamata Banerjee, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav were absent. Sena's Sanjay Raut, however, spoke to Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge later.

Deora dismisses speculation about quitting Congress to join Shiv Sena led by Shinde

MUMBAI: Senior Congress leader Milind Deora has dismissed rumors that he is leaving the party to join the Shiv Sena led by Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde. While he acknowledged that he is holding discussions with his supporters, Deora stated that he has not made a decision yet. Responding to reports in the media, Deora called them mere rumors and clarified his stance. The Shiv Sena (UBT) recently claimed the Mumbai South Lok Sabha constituency, which Deora had previously represented. This move did not sit well with the Congress leader, who expressed his displeasure in a video statement last Sunday. Deora emphasized that if such statements by an alliance partner persist, his party too can announce candidates for seats. It is important to note that formal talks on seat.

Jaiswal, Dube steer India to 2nd T20 win over Afghanistan



For a moment, let's turn our focus away from discussing the T20I future of Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli. Instead, let us focus on Yashasvi Jaiswal because the left-handed opening batter is here to stay. Jaiswal's show should surely settle the debate on at least one opening slot for India at this year's T20 World Cup in the Caribbean and United States.(ANI) Jaiswal's show should surely settle the debate on at least one opening slot for India at this year's T20 World Cup in the Caribbean and

United States.(ANI) He underlined that with a sublime show at Indore's Holkar Stadium on Sunday, which should surely settle the debate on at least one opening slot for India at this year's T20 World Cup in the Caribbean and United States. In pursuit of 173 in the second T20I, Jaiswal smashed 68 off just 34 balls (5x4, 6x6), guiding India to a six-wicket win for an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series against Afghanistan. Shivam Dube, another left-handed batter, wasn't any less impres-

sive. The all-rounder from Mumbai (63*, 32 balls) backed up his 40-ball 60* in the opener with another big-hitting exhibition. On a day when Sharma was dismissed for a second consecutive duck and Kohli went after a quickfire 16-ball 29, the performance of the youngsters was a sign that they are equipped to shoulder India's hopes at the marquee event provided they are backed. "Seeing your captain blowing a fuse like that...": Ex-India cricketer on Rohit's outburst at Gill for run out mixup.

Novak Djokovic opens up about his bond with Virat Kohli

NEW DELHI:

"I have been to India only once so far in my life. It was, I think, 10 or 11 years ago. I came to play an exhibition event in New Delhi for two days. It was a very short stay. So, I really hope that I will be able to come back in the near future, too, because I have a great desire, great wish to explore your beautiful country that has so much history, so much culture to offer to the world and spirituality as well. It's amazing," the 36-year-old continued.

The 10-time Australian Open winner, Novak, will face Croatian Dino Prizmic in the first round of the Australian Open



on Sunday, in the year when Novak is all set to eye a Golden Slam.

On the other hand, India's star batter Kohli is set to return for the second T20I against Afghanistan in Indore on Sunday after missing the opening match of the series due to personal reasons. Novak Djokovic, the 24-time Grand Slam champion, disclosed that he maintains regular communication with Virat Kohli while expressing admiration

for the star Indian cricketer, revealing that they have known each other for a few years. Despite not having the chance to meet Kohli in person, Djokovic highlighted the fortunate opportunity to communicate with the Indian cricketer. Djokovic emphasised the positive and friendly nature of their relationship, acknowledging Kohli's stellar cricketing career and expressing gratitude for the kind words shared between them.

FC Goa secure Yasir on loan from Hyderabad

PANAJI: FC Goa have completed a loan move for Hyderabad FC winger Mohammad Yasir.

Goa have been in talks with the club and player for a while and after agreeing terms, completed the paperwork late on Friday.

At least two other clubs were jostling for his signature but reuniting with

coach Manolo Marquez proved to be decisive in the end.

"It's a done deal.

Hyderabad have already signed the documents," a source told TOI late on Friday.

Yasir's late night signing allows Goa to register the midfielder for the Super Cup, just before the deadline of January 13.

According to sources, Yasir will start training with Goa on Saturday.

The talented 25-year-old midfielder reunites with coach Manolo, who spent three years at Hyderabad FC where he spotted Yasir's talent and groomed him as a winger and attacking midfielder. After an impressive season with Hyderabad.

The guys aren't as patient anymore if there's a bit of movement...': Kallis

NEW DELHI: Jacques Kallis, a modern-day legend with 45 Test centuries, has expressed his observation that modern-day batters tend to lack patience, often opting to hit their way out of challenging situations on pitches that are not easy to bat on. Kallis, who stands second to Sachin Tendulkar in terms of Test centuries, questioned whether the approach of aggressive batting on challenging tracks is the right strategy. The recent Test match between India and South Africa in Cape



Town ended in just over two days, raising discussions about the nature of pitches and the balance between batting and bowling. Kallis' comments suggest a concern about the growing trend of batsmen favoring aggressive strokes over patient shot selection, especially on surfaces that offer assistance to bowlers. The debate on the

ideal approach for batting on decisive tracks continues in the cricketing world. Has the philosophy of Test matches changed with batters becoming tad too aggressive? "I think it has changed. The guys aren't as patient anymore if there's a bit of movement," Kallis said, referring to Newlands track, in an exclusive interview

with PTI. "Earlier, guys used to ride it out to get through that period. Now guys are trying to hit out and it's a completely different way of playing it. Is it good or bad? Time will tell," he said, giving an open-ended answer. Regarding the playing surface in the second Test where South Africa were bowled out for 55 in their first innings and India lost their last six wickets without adding a run, Kallis, who hails from Cape Town, emphasised that the pace of the wicket at Newlands wasn't the primary concern.

'We won't complain if pitches in India...': England vice-captain Ollie Pope

NEW DELHI: Pope, a 26-year-old right-handed middle-order batter, acknowledged that the nature of pitches was likely to be a prominent topic of discussion during the series. This statement reflects a willingness on England's part to adapt to different playing conditions and challenges, showcasing a sportsmanlike approach as they prepare for the Test series against India. "There will be a lot of outside noise. And pitches can be a massive talking point. But you have to



remember the two teams are playing on the exact same wicket, so we just need to be as well-equipped as we can," Pope was quoted as saying by 'The Guardian'. "In England, we might leave more grass on the pitch to suit our amazing seamers, so it's no

surprise if India do the same to suit their spinners," he said before England flew out to Abu Dhabi for a training camp ahead of the Test series. The recent headlines surrounding the nature of pitches gained attention, particularly after India secured a Test vic-

tory against South Africa in Cape Town within two days.

In response to this, India's captain, Rohit Sharma, expressed his willingness to play on pitches like those in Newlands, with the caveat that visiting teams refrain from criticising Indian pitches. Pope, who has accumulated 2136 runs from 38 Tests since his debut in 2018, echoed a similar sentiment. The England vice-captain expressed that he didn't mind low-scoring Test matches, describing them as "amazing to watch."

It's difficult when things don't go your way, ': Shivam Dube on World Cup preparations

NEW DELHI: All-rounder Shivam Dube emphasised the importance of the Indian Premier League (IPL) in preparing the Indian team for the upcoming T20 World Cup, scheduled to be held in June in the West Indies and the USA. Dube expressed his focus on the present task rather than looking too far ahead in terms of making it to the Indian side for the T20 World Cup. Despite being in contention for a spot in the T20 World Cup squad, Dube emphasised the importance of concentrating on the immediate challenges and responsibilities at hand. "Any player playing in the team aims to play in the World Cup. It's definitely in my mind to play the World Cup, but it's far away. Right now, I am aiming



to play tomorrow's game and take it on a match-by-match basis. "It was a good performance in the last game, and the aim would be to better it in the next game, contributing across departments and helping the side win," he added. Dube's outstanding performance in the opening clash in Mohali earned him the Man of the Match award. He made a significant contribution with the ball, claiming figures of one for nine, and followed it up with

a match-winning knock of an unbeaten 60 off 40 balls. Despite India facing challenges at 28 for two when he came to the crease while chasing a target of 159, Dube revealed that he focused on sticking to his skills and executing his plans. "It's difficult when things don't go your way, and you don't think about things you cannot do at that time. So, I thought about what I have done in the past would be better. I have practised.

Yuvraj sees nothing wrong in Kohli, Rohit returning to T20I fold

NEW DELHI: "It's because they play all the three formats, they are back after 14 months. You have to manage your workload if you play the three formats. It's a question for the selectors." "Rohit is a great captain" Yuvraj hailed Rohit as the leader of the Indian team. "I can say Rohit has been a great captain, he's got five IPL trophies, he took us to the (World Cup) final. He has been one of our great captains of IPL and India. We have to manage his workload." Asked whether Rohit or Hardik Pandya should be named as the captain in the T20 World Cup, he said: "I don't know what's the situation with Hardik's fitness at the moment. That is the selectors' call." Pandya is all set to captain the five-time IPL winning cap-



tain Rohit at Mumbai Indians in the upcoming season. On any potential ego clash, Yuvraj said: "When players play together these things happen. If they have an issue they should definitely sit and talk about it." "Rohit has always been very instrumental in getting the best out of Hardik whenever he has played for Mumbai Indians, especially in terms of his bowling to manage his workload." Hardik has always been good with the bat at death. Batting at 4 for

Gujarat, he batted like a batter. "They should definitely talk about it. I don't see an issue there," he said about the situation when Rohit is back leading Team India. "Whenever you are playing for your country, your priority is to put everything aside and give your 100 percent in the park. "They both are professionals, if they have any issue they will put it aside and give 100 percent for the country." "I could have played

more Tests' Yuvraj, who played a pivotal role in India's T20I and ODI World Cup victories, has minimal regrets about his cricketing career. However, the former left-hander does express a sense of lamentation for not having played "more than 40 Tests." Despite his success in limited-overs cricket, Yuvraj perhaps wishes he had more opportunities to showcase his skills in the longest format of the game. "The only regret is that I could have played more Tests. I played 40 Tests and I was 12th man for 45 Tests. "It was an era where Virender Sehwag, who was a middle-order batter, and he had to open. There was Dada (Sourav Ganguly) who was the captain, then (VVS) Laxman, (Rahul) Dravid, Sachin (Tendulkar).

Australia cruise past India 2-0 in Asian Cup group opener

NEW DELHI: Australia secured a comfortable 2-0 victory in their AFC Asian Cup opener against India in Doha. Jackson Irvine and Jordan Bos scored from close range to launch their title bid. Despite a challenging first half, where Australia missed several opportunities and India defended resolutely, Irvine broke the deadlock just after the restart. The midfielder capitalised on a loose ball in the box after India's goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu failed to deal with a cross, driving home from 10 yards. With the 2015 Asian Cup champions in control, Bos doubled Australia's lead shortly after the 70th minute. The 21-year-old, who came off the bench, slotted home from close range after a precise delivery from Riley McGree. The match, witnessed by a pro-Indian crowd at the Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium.

CAPSULES

Mohammad Kaif lifts Bengal against Uttar Pradesh in Ranji Trophy

KOLKATA: A 52-run ninth-wicket stand between Mohammad Kaif and Suraj Sindhu Jaswal saw Bengal put up a healthy total of 188 runs on Day II of their Elite Group 'B' Ranji Trophy match against Uttar Pradesh in Kanpur on Saturday.

The hosts, who were dismissed for 60 in the first innings, however, began their reply in a strong way getting to 46 without loss at stumps with openers Samarth Singh and Aryan Juyal staying unbeaten on 21 and 20, respectively as the hosts still trailed by 82 runs

Kaif came good with the bat after claiming 4 for 14 a day earlier, to remain unbeaten on 45. Veteran India seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar maintained his rhythm to pick up three more wickets on Saturday and end with his career-best excellent figures of 8 for 41 in 22 overs.

Beginning the day at 95 for five after another delayed start due to bad light, Bengal suffered early setbacks losing the wickets of overnight unbeaten batters Shreyansh Ghosh (41) and Karan Lal (12) along with Pradipta Pramanik (1) for 15 runs only. But Kaif stood tall, emerging as the top-scorer hitting four boundaries and two sixes playing 79 balls. Debutant Jaiswal (20) gave him good support as the duo managed to keep the UP attack at bay.

The Bengal tail continued to wage even after Jaswal's dismissal, as Kaif partnered with Ishan Porel (10) and added another vital 26 runs for the last wicket to take the hosts to a respectable total.

CAPSULES

Chief Minister gifts EV to Ayodhya, launches digital tourist app



Ayodhya

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday participated in various programs in Ayodhya. He flagged off electric vehicles (50 electric buses and 25 e-rickshaws) and presented them as gifts to the residents of Ayodhya. He further launched the official website of Ayodhya Police along with a Digital Tourism App. During the event, the Chief Minister said, "Before the consecration ceremony of Lord Shri Ram in Ayodhya, the inauguration of electric buses and e-rickshaws, as well as the launch of a tourism-centric mobile app and the official website of Ayodhya Police in Ayodhya Municipal Corporation and Ayodhya City, has been done to provide excellent public transportation facilities for the devotees coming for the event." He further said that January 22 is not only a day to honor India's faith and devotion, but also a sacred day to restore the pride and honor of India. When Lord Shri Ram will be seated in his magnificent temple after 500 years, it will not only mark the establishment of Ram Rajya in Ayodhya, but also the fulfillment of the work that began in 2014 to establish it throughout the country and the state. CM Yogi mentioned that Ayodhya is gearing up for the convenience of the devotees, faith-based travelers, and tourists on this historic occasion. The inauguration of infrastructure here was done by PM Modi on December 30, 2023. "Presently, everyone will be amazed to see Ram Path, Bhakti Path, Dharma Path, and Janmabhoomi Path in Ayodhya. From multi-level parking to the construction of ghats from Guptar Ghat to Ram Ki Paidi and naya ghat, beautification programs for Surya Kund, Bharat Kund, everything will leave everyone spellbound. In the same series, good tourist accommodation, construction of Dharamshala, good hotels, tent cities are also taking place for devotees' convenience during the consecration ceremony", Yogi added. The Chief Minister said that to ensure that the coming passengers do not face any problem, electric buses, e-autos and other facilities are being started here. Not only that, through the digital tourism app, any devotee can get an overview of every spot in Ayodhya. Extending congratulations and best wishes to the residents of Ayodhya, the Chief Minister said, "On this occasion, I congratulate and extend Makar Sankranti wishes to all Ayodhya residents. I extend my greetings to all the devotees coming to Ayodhya as well as residents of Ayodhya in advance." He remarked further: "Our generation has received this opportunity. After 500 years, Lord Shri Ram will be seated in his magnificent temple. The country and the world are eagerly looking forward to the event. We are fortunate to receive his blessings here", Yogi added. He stated that it is people's responsibility to make Ayodhya clean and beautiful. Infrastructure, widening of roads, railway lines, airport facilities, along with electric buses, will enhance the shine of Ayodhya. Their routes have already been determined. Approximately 200 electric buses are currently being provided to Ayodhya, but the government plans to increase it to 500. He said that the Transport department is actively involved in urban development in this regard. "The private sector should also be invited to contribute to this

sector. Ayodhya is set to become the country's first solar city, so we need to accelerate this program" He stated. CM Yogi stated that through the tourist app, people can view and easily access every significant aspect of Ayodhya. The app is available not only in English but also in languages listed in the Constitution, including Hindi and Sanskrit. This service will facilitate assistance from the police, locating police stations and outposts, accessing emergency

Emphasizing that this celebration extends beyond Ayodhya, he urged every village, house

Gorakhpur

To beautify the entire state of Uttar Pradesh before the consecration of Shri Ram Lalla in Ayodhya, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has emphasized the significance of cleanliness. While addressing the village heads and panchayat representatives via video conferencing on Saturday, he referred to cleanliness as a divine endeavour. He stressed the importance of sending a positive message nationwide by actively participating in the special cleanliness campaign. CM Yogi declared January 22 as



a national festival, marking the celebration of Lord Shri Ram taking his seat in the new, grand and divine temple after a 500-year wait. Emphasizing that this celebration extends beyond Ayodhya, he urged every village, house, and individual to join the unprecedented festivities. CM Yogi also urged people to celebrate Deepotsav in every home and temple on Shri Ramotsav, recommending the recitation of Ramnam Sankirtan in homes, temples, and public spaces. He also suggested celebrating Deepotsav at Amrit Sarovars (ponds) in the village, highlighting the potential role of chiefs and all rural public representatives in contributing to the grand occasion. To kickstart the Shri Ram Lalla festival with enthusiasm, CM Yogi has announced a special cleanliness campaign on January 14. Encouraging the participation of every town, village, family, and individual, he stressed the importance of cleaning and beautifully decorating Dev temples. Referring to the tragic impact of diseases like encephalitis, he highlighted the government's commitment to cleanliness and awareness as crucial measures in disease control.

CM Yogi starts special cleanliness & service ritual at Gorakhnath Temple

Gorakhpur

Before the arrival of Ram Lala, the Chief Minister initiates the 'Swachh Teerth Campaign' from Ayodhya. Lord Ram's arrival ends the long wait of 500 years, every devotee will give a grand welcome: CM Yogi. Chief Minister sweeps the streets, gives green signal to sanitation vehicles of the Municipal Corporation. CM Yogi appeals to residents to



say no to single-use plastic? Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday launched the Swachh Teerth Campaign by sweeping the Lata Mangeshkar Chowk of Ayodhya. CM Yogi urged people to making Ayodhya the cleanest city in view of the arrival of Lord Shri Ram and ensuring the cleaning of all the religious, tourist, pilgrimage sites, and other public places for the whole week. The Chief Minister said that the entire state.

Ayodhya residents will witness cultural presentations from other states of the country

Ayodhya

Under the guidance of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, different cultures from across the country will meet in Ayodhya. In this sequence, several new events will take place starting from Makar Sankranti (January 15). On various locations including Ram Ki Paidi, Dharam Path, Tulsi Udyan, Circuit House, Saket College, etc., visitors will be acquainted with cultural activities of different states. The event will introduce the

cultural theme of the new Ayodhya. From January 15, the renowned spiritual speaker Devkinandan Thakur will narrate the Ram Katha at Ram Katha Park. The Katha, which will run until January 23, will take place from 11 AM to 2 PM. Under the directive of CM Yogi, continuous Ram Katha has been organized from January 8. The Ram Katha, spanning 70 days, will feature different narrators each week, allowing devotees to listen to various versions of the epic. From January 8 to 14, Shri Chinmayanand Babu narrated the Ram Katha to devotees. People from several states of the country will present their offerings on the Ram Ki Paidi. On the Ram Ki Paidi, Shailesh Bhagwat from Maharashtra will play the 'Shehna'. Harsh Vardhan from Maharashtra will express his devotion to Lord Rama through the 'Sarangi', and Shashwat Mandal.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath participates in 76th Army Day program

Lucknow, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Sunday, participated in the 76th Army Day program. Union Defense Minister Rajnath Singh attended the event as chief guest. Governor Anandi Ben Patel was also present at the program. Brave soldiers displayed their various skills during the program organized at the Surya Sports Complex of the Central Command of the Indian Army. Notably, the Army Day program has been organized out-



side Delhi by the Indian Army for the second time. During this, Shaurya Sandhya was organized after the parade at Surya Sports Complex. The event featured various forms of martial arts including flypasts by Sukhoi and Kiran aircraft as well as several military displays.

Chief Minister inaugurates Nishadraj Guhya Guest House, arrangements made for 500 artists' stay



Ayodhya

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated the Nishadraj Guhya Guest House at Tent City on Tuesday during his visit to Ayodhya. Located near the new bus stand, it provides accommodation, food, and other facilities for 500 artists. The Chief Minister inspected all arrangements, including Sita Rasoi, and directed officials to ensure that artists are provided with all necessary amenities. He instructed officials to make proper arrangements for cleanliness, bedding, and other necessities. Around 400 folk artists from various states welcomed the Chief Minister. He interacted with the artists and boosted their enthusiasm. Subsequently, Ramotsav Cultural Art Yatra was organized from Tent City to Hanuman Bagh. During the event, Ayodhya in-charge minister Surya Pratap Shahi, Transport Minister Dayashankar Singh, Mayor Girish Pati Tripathi, District Panchayat President Roli Singh, MLAs Ved Prakash Gupta, Amit Chauhan etc. were present.

Ramotsav 2024 - Saga of Development of Ayodhya

Ancient temples of Ayodhya witness increase in number of devotees after rejuvenation of Ram Ki Paidi. Ayodhya, January 13. The Yogi government has completed various restoration and development projects worth Rs. 105.65 crores, to enhance the beauty of Ram Ki Paidi and give it a new and grand form. The Ram Ki Paidi not only has great historical and for being connected to ancient Ayodhya, but also plays a crucial role in the glory of 'Navya Ayodhya'. Notably, Ram Ki Paidi, despite its historical significance, faced neglect for years and struggled for existence during previous governments. However, its development and beautification carried out by the double-engine government.

Surya Kund in Ayodhya springs to life with Rs 40.95 cr makeover

Ayodhya

The Surya Kund of Ayodhya, which was neglected like many other places of historical significance in Ayodhya, during previous governments, has sprung to life once again with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's efforts. The Yogi government has renovated the Kund at the cost of Rs 40.95 crore. Presently, the Surya Kund has become a major center for people's entertainment,

offering health and virtue to people. The developed park here includes various attractions, including laser shows. Surya Kund is considered a site of great spiritual and historical significance where according to popular belief, the sun once stopped and Ayodhya experienced a month-long day without night. Bathing in the Kund cures leprosy and skin diseases, one attains eternal virtue. It is believed that during Lord Ram's coronation, all the gods came to Ayodhya, including the Sun god. The Sun god halted near Darshan Nagar, presently known as Surya Kund, where there is also a temple dedicated to the Sun god. Generations have it that the chariot of the Sun god stopped at this place, and during that time, Ayodhya experienced a month-long absence of sunset. It is said that the construction of the Kund.

Indians have an amazing skill of preserving their heritage: CM Yogi

Gorakhpur

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Saturday that while civilizations worldwide have faded, India continues to safeguard its thousands of years-old civilization and culture. Addressing the closing ceremony of the three-day Gorakhpur Festival 2024, Yogi said, "Indians have the talent to preserve their heritage even in the midst of all the conflicts. Shri Ram was incarnated thousands of years ago but every Indian is still connected to the tradition started

by him. It is the result of the tradition of preserving the heritage and the struggle for it at every level that Lord Shri Ram is once again going to be seated in his grand temple in Ayodhya on 22 January." Yogi emphasized that through defeating those who targeted Ayodhya and attacked culture and faith, Indians have reclaimed their identity. He highlighted the forthcoming Consecration ceremony of Lord Shri Ram as a symbol of this victo-

ry. Yogi praised festivals like Diwali, Holi, Ram Navami, Mahashivratri, and Rakshabandhan, stating that they effectively communicate Indian culture, bridging the gap for those who, for various reasons, were previously unaware. He stressed the special messages embedded in these festivals, advocating for festivals to serve as vehicles for conveying broader cultural messages. He stated that 35 lakh people visited Ayodhya in the year 2023 on Ram Navami.