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UNIQUE GIFT OF KRIYAYOGA ASHRAM AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE TO GIVE IMPETUS TO WORLD BUILDING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

Lord Ram's appeal cuts across national geographies, says PM Modi

The six stamps released by him feature the Ram temple, Lord Ganesh, Lord Hanuman, Jatayu, Kevatraj and Shabri'



NEW DELHI: Amid mounting excitement over the consecration of Ram Mandir, Prime Minister Narendra Modi released six special commemorative postage stamps dedicated to the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi temple along with an album carrying similar stamps released by other countries, the US and Canada included, and said Lord Ram has been a global role model. In a video message released on the occasion, the PM said Lord Ram's appeal cut across national geographies. "Ramayana, which shows sacrifice, unity and courage even in the most difficult

times, teaches the victory of love and connects entire humanity with itself. This is the reason why Ramayana has been the centre of attraction all over the world," Modi said, adding, "Ram, Sita and Ramayana are connected to every person, beyond the boundaries of time, society, caste, religion and region." Modi said the album released by him showcased how Lord Ram was an equally great role model outside India, and was an influence on all civilisations of the world and modern nations. "The books being launched today are a reflection of these

sentiments as to how Lord Ram, Mata Sita and Ramayana are viewed with great pride all over the world. It will be very interesting for the youth of today's generation to see how different countries have been issuing postal stamps based on Shri Ram," Modi said in his message as a massive build-up is taking place for the consecration ceremony on Jan 22. He said America, Australia, Cambodia, Canada, Czech Republic, Fiji, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, New Zealand, Thailand, Guyana and Singapore had issued postal stamps on the life sto-

ries of Lord Ram with great respect and affection. The six stamps released by him feature the Ram temple, Lord Ganesh, Lord Hanuman, Jatayu, Kevatraj and Shabri. Components of the stamps' design include the Ram temple, Chaupai 'Mangal Bhavan Amangal Hari', Sun, Saryu river and sculptures in and around the temple. The PM also praised the saints who, along with the Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, guided the postal department in coming up with the commemorative stamps.

First glimpse of Ram Lalla idol inside Ayodhya temple's sanctum

Ayodhya

The idol of Ram Lalla was placed in the sanctum sanctorum of Ayodhya's Ram Janmabhoomi temple on Thursday afternoon, setting the stage for the upcoming grand consecration ceremony on January 22. Covered with a veil, the first photo of the idol was revealed during the placement ceremony in the sanctum sanctorum earlier today, accompanied by the chanting of prayers. The 51-inch idol of Lord Ram, made from 'shyamal' (dark) stone was crafted by artist Arun Yogiraj of Mysuru which portrays



the deity as a five-year-old child standing on a lotus also crafted from the same stone. The idol of Ram Lalla was placed in the sanctum sanctorum of Ayodhya's Ram Janmabhoomi temple on Thursday afternoon, setting the stage for the upcoming grand consecration ceremony on

January 22. Covered with a veil, the first photo of the idol was revealed during the placement ceremony in the sanctum sanctorum earlier today, accompanied by the chanting of prayers. The 51-inch idol of Lord Ram, made from 'shyamal' (dark) stone was crafted by artist Arun Yogiraj of

Mysuru which portrays the deity as a five-year-old child standing on a lotus also crafted from the same stone. The eyewitnesses note that due to the lotus and the halo, the idol weighs 150 kg, with a total height of seven feet when measured from the ground. On the third day of rituals, the Ganesh Abmika puja marked the auspicious occasion. Among the 121 acharyas, led by Ganeshwar Shastri Dravid and supervised by his son Arun Dixit, a group was tasked with reciting the four Vedas in the Gudh mandap.

Two incidents of skirmishes between Indian, Chinese troops along LAC come to light

NEW DELHI: There have been recent revelations of two previously undisclosed instances of clashes between Indian and Chinese troops along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). These incidents were brought to light

through citations for gallantry awards bestowed upon Indian Army personnel. The citations were read out during an investiture ceremony by the Army's Western Command, which took place last week.

They provided brief accounts of how Indian troops responded firmly to the aggressive behaviour exhibited by soldiers from China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) along the LAC. The Army's Western

Command, headquartered in Chandimandir, had initially uploaded a video of the ceremony on its YouTube channel, featuring commentary on the gallantry awards. However, the video was deactivated on Monday

Tests on India's own space station by next year: Isro chief S Somanath

NEW DELHI: Isro plans to carry out the first tests of the proposed Bharatiya Antariksha Station (Indian space station) next year and "talks are on with the industry to manufacture, test and launch its first module by 2028", the space agency's chief S Somanath said on Thursday. On the sidelines of the India International Science Festival in Faridabad, Somanath told reporters, "It (space station tests) will happen next year. On Tuesday, I reviewed the Bharatiya Antariksha Station architecture. Our people are working on so many options. Which one to choose, I am really having mixed feelings now."

Last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi set Isro a target to launch the Bharatiya Antariksha Station by 2035 and land an Indian astronaut on the Moon by 2040. The Isro chief said the PM's announcement has really created an enthusiasm in the agency and Isro has begun discussing the project with industry partners. "It is a space station, not a person. The person will come whenever they are there. It will still work if there is nobody there," Somanath said, indicating that initially the station will remain unmanned. He said the agency also plans to launch a mission to Venus in 2028. "Venus mission has already been proposed once, we are looking at how to bring down the costs. There are some high-value items we want to bring down the cost," Somanath said. He said Isro was also working on developing a new rocket to launch heavier payloads. The Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV) is being developed as the country is now pursuing missions to send humans to the Moon. The Antariksha Station is likely to weigh around 20 tonnes and maintain an orbit of approximately 400 km above the Earth, where astronauts could stay for 15-20 days.

After Sharad Pawar, Lalu Yadav also turn down Ram Temple invite

NEW DELHI: Rashtriya Janata Dal supremo Lalu Yadav has declined the invitation to attend the Ram Mandir pran pratishtha ceremony, which is scheduled to take place on January 22. Earlier, Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar has also decided to not attend the pran pratishtha ceremony of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. In a letter addressed to Champat Rai, the gen-



eral secretary of Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra, Pawar expressed his intention to visit Ayodhya at a later date for "darshan". Expressing gratitude for receiving the invite, the NCP Chief, in

a letter, wrote, "After the pran pratishtha ceremony is completed on January 22, I will freely take out time and come for darshan and by then the construction work of Ram temple will also be completed." He also said that Lord Ram is a symbol of faith and devotion for crores of people across the world and added that he plans to visit Ayodhya soon. Earlier this month, par-

ties associated with INDIA bloc has also decided to skip the event. Congress party members including Mallikarjun Kharge, Sonia Gandhi, and Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury have respectfully declined the invitation. "Religion is a personal matter but the RSS and the BJP have made Ayodhya temple a political project," the party said in a statement.

here was a lot of ruckus in the meeting of Allahabad High Court organization

Allahabad There was a lot of ruckus in the meeting of Allahabad High Court organization, the meeting was called in the library hall. Akhand Bharat Sandesh Prayagraj. There was a lot of uproar in the general meeting of Allahabad High Court Bar Association on Thursday. The association had called a gener-



al meeting on various issues. In this, due to lack of consensus among the lawyers, an uproar started and the situation reached the level of fighting. The lawyers somehow handled the case. The tenure of the cur-

rent executive of the High Court Bar Association is ending on January 23. The annual general meeting of the Bar Association was convened on Thursday, in which the announcement of new elections was to be discussed along with the presentation of the annual budget. Even before this the uproar started.

Ministry of home affairs revokes FCRA license of Centre for Policy Research

The Ministry of home affairs has revoked the FCRA license of the Centre for Policy Research (CPR), a well-known non-governmental organization, due to alleged violations of regulations. CPR's license had been suspended eleven months ago and the cancellation order was issued last Wednesday. CPR maintains that it operated in accordance with the law and will assess its options to seek justice. Several other NGOs have faced cancellations or suspensions of their FCRA licenses. The Ministry of home affairs has revoked the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) license of the Centre for Policy Research (CPR), a well-known non-governmental organization, due to alleged violations of reg-

January 22 fervour: Expectant parents push for C-sec 'muhurat



Ayodhya Anticipation surrounds January 22 as expectant parents nationwide seek "muhurat deliveries" to coincide with the consecration of Ayodhya's Ram temple. Couples like Bharti and Anoop Mishra from Kanpur are adjusting due dates, influenced by the belief that babies born on this day will be imbued with qualities that define "Maryada Purushottam". Bharti's due date, originally Feb 7, has been moved forward by more than two weeks. The couple desires the birth to align with the Ayodhya ceremony, emphasising an astrologer's forecast promising wealth and a long, healthy life for their

child born on January 22. Hospitals across India are experiencing pressure from expectant parents to schedule Caesarean-sections on January 22. This influx of "Ayodhya consecration" births has raised ethical and medical considerations. Dr Niranjan Chavan, president of Mumbai Obstetrics and Gynaecologist Society, acknowledged multiple hospitals receiving similar association does not encourage "muhurat deliveries". The day falls a few days after Makar Sankranti, a Hindu festival that marks the Sun's northward movement into Capricorn (Makar). Uttarayana.

Four killed as fresh violence erupts in Manipur

NEW DELHI: Four people were shot dead in Bishnupur district of Manipur on Thursday evening as ethnic violence continued in the northeastern state. According to the police, the incident took place at Ningthoukhong Kha Khunou, including a man and his 60

year-old father. Authorities are currently investigating the case. "Five to six armed individuals arrived while the laborers were working on the farm-land and shot them from close range", news agency PTI quoted an eyewitness who managed to escape. Following the

incident, the assailants fled to the nearby hill ranges from where they had come. These latest casualties bring the total number of deaths to seven, including two police commandos, in separate districts of Manipur since Wednesday.

Punjab Congress takes 'Hitler' jab at Kejriwal, Mann amid pact in key polls

And if you carefully see the picture of Hitler, it matches with one of their (AAP) leaders," Bajwa said, adding that the AAP government practices "dictatorial government". 'I cannot guarantee that...':



Chandigarh
Leader of opposition in the Punjab assembly and Congress leader Pratap Singh Bajwa on Wednesday equated chief minister Bhagwant Mann and his Delhi counterpart Arvind Kejriwal with Adolf Hitler and said the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) lead-

ers should remove pictures of BR Ambedkar and Bhagat Singh from their offices and put up the picture of the former German dictator. "The first thing I would like to advise them is to pull down the pictures of Baba Saheb Ambedkar and Bhagat Singh from their offices

and replace them with Adolf Hitler. And if you carefully see the picture of Hitler, it matches with one of their (AAP) leaders," Bajwa said, adding that the AAP government practices "dictatorial government". 'I cannot guarantee that...': Jaishankar breaks

silence on Bajwa's remarks came hours before both allies of the major Opposition coalition, in a rare show of unity at the local level, teamed up in what is seen as the 'first match of BJP vs INDIA (bloc)' ahead of the Chandigarh mayoral election. "Congress and APP in Chandigarh have become the first constituents of Indian National Democratic Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) parties to implement the decisions and sentiments of INDIA to not let BJP win elections by default," senior Congress leader Pawan Bansal wrote on X (formerly Twitter) after pictures of him and AAP MP Raghav Chadha chatting together in a

lawn were surfaced. However, the political tension between Congress and AAP appears to be surfacing not very far from Chandigarh in the Punjab assembly, and the leader of the opposition's comment bellies the unity call of the INDIA allies.

Despite being members of the larger coalition in the centre, Congress and AAP often don't match their steps at the state level.

The decision to jointly contest the mayoral polls came in the backdrop of leaders from both parties demanding to contest the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in the state separately, apart from setting up an alliance.

IndiGo pilot refuses to fly after getting news of grandma's death

New Delhi

The aircraft, with 162 passengers on board, had left the parking bay to prepare for take off when the first officer got the news about his grandmother's demise. Amid delays due to fog and poor visibility, an IndiGo flight (6E-126) from Patna to Pune was delayed by over three hours on Wednesday, as the pilot of the aircraft refused to fly it soon after getting the news of his grandmother's death, said airlines sources. The aircraft, with 162 passengers on board, had left the parking bay to prepare for



take off when the first officer got the news about his grandmother's demise.

The distraught pilot, aborted the flight as he was not in the right frame of mind to fly, and returned to the parking bay, said the an-

airport source. "The first officer received information of sudden demise of his grandmother. Alternate crew was arranged for the flight, and the passengers were served refreshment," said an airlines source.

Navy's INS Visakhapatnam rescues merchant ship attacked by drone in Gulf of Aden

New Delhi: The Indian Navy's guided missile destroyer, INS Visakhapatnam on Wednesday night responded to a distress call by a Marshall Island-flagged ship in the Gulf of Aden. According to reports, the ship was victim to a drone attack launched by unknown assailants.

INS Visakhapatnam has been deployed by the Indian Navy in the Gulf of Aden for anti-piracy operations. The naval ship responded to a distress call by Marshall Island flagged MV Genco Picardy.

The Indian naval ship acknowledged the distress call and intercepted the vessel at

12.30 am today and provided assistance. MV Genco has 22 crew, including 9 Indian sailors. No casualties were recorded. The Navy's EOD specialists from INS Visakhapatnam boarded the vessel in the early hours of 18 January 24 to inspect the damaged area.

YS Sharmila to assume role of Congress chief in AP on Jan 21



Amaravathi

YS Sharmila, who was appointed by the Congress as the president of the Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee recently, will assume the new role on January 21, the party said in a statement.

The event will be attended by Manikkam Tagore, in charge of Andhra Pradesh Affairs at the All India Congress Committee, along with Members of Parliament, CD Mayappan, Secretary of AICC, and Christopher Tilak, AICC Secretary, they said. The program is expected to be attended by Members of the CWC, former Union Ministers, former Members of Parliament, former leg-

islators, working presidents, and senior party leaders. The wide-ranging participants encompass Coordination Committee Members, Pradesh Congress Committee Vice Presidents, General Secretaries, AICC Members, and PCC Members; District Congress Presidents and Executive Committee Members; City Congress Committee Presidents and Executive Committee Members; Assembly Constituency Coordination Committee Members; Mandal Department Presidents and Members; as well as all members of the frontal organisation, departments, and cells at the state and district executive levels.

EPFO removes Aadhaar as valid proof for date of birth



New Delhi

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) will no longer accept Aadhaar card as a valid proof for date of birth. The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) under the Ministry of Labour and Employment of the Government of India, made the announcement through a circular (No: WSU/2024/1/UIDAI Matter/4090) on Tuesday. The decision has been made with the approval of the Central Provident Fund Commissioner (CPFC). The Employees'

Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) will no longer accept Aadhaar card as a valid proof for date of birth (File photo). The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) will no longer accept Aadhaar card as a valid proof for date of birth (File photo). EPFO has followed a directive from the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI). As per UIDAI's directive (Circular No. 08 of 2023), Aadhaar was being considered as proof for date of birth by several benefi-

ciaries. Aadhaar, while a unique identifier, was not recognized as proof of date of birth according to the Aadhaar Act, 2016. In its directive, UIDAI emphasized that Aadhaar was a proof of identity, not proof of birth. In light of UIDAI's directive, EPFO has removed Aadhaar from the list of acceptable documents for correcting date of birth. The circular noted that Aadhaar's removal pertained to Table-B of Annexure-1 of the Joint Declaration SOP issued earlier.

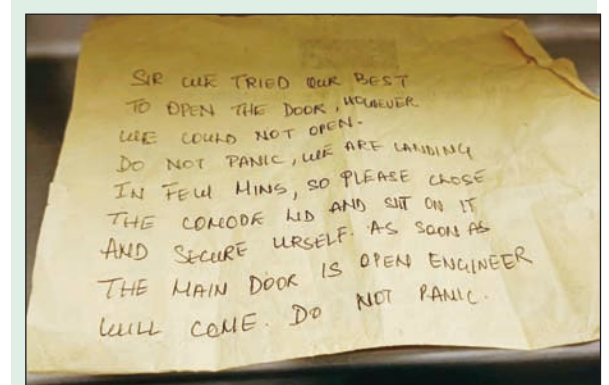
Dense fog in Delhi as visibility falls to 50m in morning; AQI stays 'very poor'

New Delhi

The IMD said visibility at the Delhi airport oscillated between 50 and 100 metres between 12:30am and 6:30am, impacting flight operations. Delhi's minimum temperature rose by a degree at most locations across the national Capital on Thursday, even as dense fog persisted for nearly six hours, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. Safdarjung, representative of Delhi's weather, recorded a minimum temperature of 6.6°C on Thursday, a degree below normal. The Met department said visibility fell as low as 50 metres in the early hours of the day, remaining dense for six hours between 12:30am and 6:30am. According to forecasts, dense fog is likely over the next two days as well.



SpiceJet crew slipped 'don't panic' note to passenger stuck in aircraft lavatory



New Delhi

SpiceJet on apologised for the inconvenience caused to the passenger and announced to provide him with a full refund. A SpiceJet passenger who was stuck inside the aircraft's lavatory mid-way on Tuesday was slipped a 'do not panic' note by the crew members when they failed to open the door and get him out. The passenger was stuck for almost an hour as the door of the toilet malfunctioned mid-air. A picture of the crew members' 'do not panic' note to the passenger is going viral on social media. "Sir we tried our best to open the door, however, we could not open. Do not panic, we are landing in a few mins, so please close the commode lid and sit on it and secure yourself. As soon as the main door is open, an engineer will come. Do not panic," the handwritten note read.

Mahua Moitra moves Delhi HC against eviction order; matter listed

New Delhi: Trinamool Congress leader Mahua Moitra has yet again moved the Delhi High Court against Directorate of Estate's notice to vacate the government bungalow in the national capital. The case has been listed before the bench of Justice Girish Kathpaliya of the Delhi High Court, reported ANI. The DoE has asked Moitra to vacate the government bungalow because of her expulsion from the Lok Sabha last year. The house was allotted to her as a Member of Parliament. Since she is no longer an MP, the department has asked her to vacate the house. The Directorate of Estates manages and maintains the Central government's official and residential properties. On Wednesday, it was reported that the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry sent her another notice to vacate the house. "Since the eviction notice was issued to her (Moitra) on Tuesday, a team of officials from the directorate of estates will now be sent to ensure that the government bungalow is vacated at the earliest," a source had told PTI.

18 trains, several flights delayed as Delhi sees no respite from dense fog

New Delhi

A layer of fog continues to shroud north and northeast India on Thursday, obstructing visibility and lowering it as low as zero metres at several places, affecting air and rail traffic. A passenger train moves in early morning fog and chill in South West Delhi of dwarka. A passenger train moves in early morning fog and chill in South West Delhi of dwarka. Dense to very dense fog prevailed in parts of Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Assam and Odisha. According to

the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the current weather conditions are likely to prevail in the next five days. "Cold wave to severe cold wave conditions are likely to continue over north-west India for five days," it said.

18 trains running late A total of 18 trains arriving in Delhi were delayed by up to six hours due to heavy fog ensheathing the railway tracks, the India Railways spokesperson said. The visibility was reduced to only 50 metres, which impacts the flight operations.

Dehradun

Ahead of the much-awaited consecration ceremony at Ram temple in Ayodhya, pictures of Lord Ram were displayed through laser light on the clock tower in Dehradun on Wednesday night. In a video posted by news agency ANI, several images can be seen projected on the clock tower amid a busy road. The Ram temple consecration ceremony will be held on January 22 in the holy city of Ayodhya, while the seven-day Vedic rituals (Pran Pratishtha) have already begun. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be the chief guest at the grand



event where thousands of people, including celebrities, saints, and politicians have been invited. On, the idol of Ram Lalla was brought inside the sanctum sanctorum of the Ram temple, Shri Ram Mandir Construction Committee chairperson Nripendra Mishra said. Prior to this, a special puja was held in

the temple premises. According to Mishra, the idol of Lord Ram is likely to be installed in the sanctum sanctorum on Thursday. Meanwhile, several rituals of Teerth Poojan, Jal Yatra, and Gandhadhivas will be held in the temple on Thursday. On the fourth day of the Pran Pratishtha, rituals of

Aushadhdivas, Kesaradhivas, Ghrithadhivas will be held in the morning, while the Dhanyadhivas ritual will take place in the evening.

On Saturday morning, the Sharkaradhivas and Phaladhivas rituals will take place, while the Pushpadhivas ritual will be done in the evening.

On the last day of the Pran Pratishtha event on Sunday, a day before the consecration ceremony, Madhyadhivas ritual will take place in the morning while the Shaiyadhivas will be held in the evening.

Editorial

Why Iran's 'surgical strike' inside Pakistan is no surprise

Two weeks ago, Iran witnessed one of its deadliest suicide attacks in decades, claiming the lives of 90 people. The perpetrators, identified as the Jaish al-Adl, triggered a swift response from Tehran, vowing retaliation. Today, that promise was fulfilled as Iran launched a surgical strike on Pakistan, targeting the terrorist group's bases in Balochistan. The recent suicide attacks in Kerman, Iran, on the death anniversary of General Qassem Soleimani, set the stage for today's events. More than 90 lives were lost in the explosions, with reports suggesting that the strikes on Pakistan were a direct response to this tragedy.

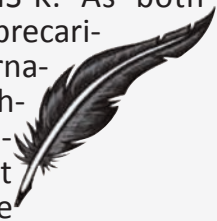
Jaish al-Adl, also known as the "Army of Justice," is a Sunni terrorist group with a stronghold in Pakistan. Fundamentally driven by religious differences, this group aims to break up the country, specifically seeking to separate Sistan-Baluchistan from Iran. The group has been a menace to the region conducting various attacks including suicide bombings, kidnappings, ambushes and hit-and-runs.

Iran has repeatedly urged Pakistan to take action against Jaish al-Adl, reminiscent of India's calls for action against similar groups. Despite Tehran's efforts, Pakistan's response has been lukewarm, leading to a burgeoning threat. The recent attack on Pakistan marks a turning point in Iran's approach, as it takes matters into its own hands to neutralise terror camps.

Jaish al-Adl has now emerged as an affiliate of the Islamic State Khorasan (ISIS-K). Reports suggest that the recent bombings in Iran were executed with the collaboration of both groups, further complicating the regional landscape. Although Tehran has not made any evidence public, it appears convinced of this link.

Diplomatic fallout

In the aftermath of today's strikes, diplomatic relations between Iran and Pakistan have reached a nadir. Pakistan's recall of its ambassador to Iran and the expulsion of the Iranian envoy signify a deepening rift. High-level visits have been suspended and the diplomatic tension is palpable. Iran's retaliatory strikes on Pakistan underscore a growing distrust between the two nations and highlight the complex web of regional tensions. The conflict, rooted in religious differences, has broader implications, with Jaish al-Adl evolving into a formidable threat and aligning itself with ISIS-K. As both countries navigate this precarious situation, the international community watches closely, wary of potential repercussions that could extend beyond the region.



Two big issues that will show the way on India-Iran ties

Recently External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, visited Iran, engaging in crucial discussions with top officials. The focus of their talks included addressing the threat posed by Houthi attacks and navigating complex geopolitical issues.

During the visit, Jaishankar expressed concerns about the Houthi threat, emphasizing the international community's shared interest in resolving the issue. He highlighted recent incidents, including the drone attack on the MV Chem Pluto, a ship

bound for India. Despite the United States attributing the attack to Iran, India refrained from contesting these claims, choosing instead to pledge a commitment to halt such attacks and punish the perpetrators. Jaishankar reinforced India's unwavering stance against terrorism, characterising the attacks as acts of terrorism that require a resolution. However, one month after the MV Chem Pluto incident, India has yet to publicly identify the attackers, prompting speculation about its internal

deliberations. "We have even seen some attacks in the vicinity of India. This is a matter of great concern to the international community. This fraught situation is not to the benefit of any party and this must be clearly recognised," said Jaishankar. During discussions in Tehran, reports suggest that Jaishankar provided an assessment to Iranian officials, outlining India's perspective on the Houthi threat. However, the views on the matter diverged, with Iran not entirely endorsing

India's position. The disagreements between India and Iran extend beyond the Red Sea tensions. Jaishankar's meeting with Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi touched upon two crucial issues: Israel's actions in Gaza and India's investments in Iran. Raisi expects India to play a greater role in influencing Israel to end the bombings in Gaza. Iran publicly stated its desire for India to contribute to ending the conflict, lifting the blockade and supporting the rights of the Palestinian people.

India-Taiwan relations under Lai Ching-te: Opportunities and Challenges

Taiwanese Vice President Lai Ching-te, also known as William Lai, left, celebrates his victory with running mate Bi-khim Hsiao in Taipei, Taiwan, on 13 January, 2024. AP More than half of the world's population is expected to exercise their voting rights in 2024, making it a crucial year for the whole world. With the elections in Taiwan, the results of which are expected to resonate well beyond its boundaries, winding up on 13 January, there is little doubt that the Asian geopolitical theatre is set to witness radical developments and changes. Taiwan's elections saw the coming of the Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) third successive term, with Lai Ching-te, often referred to as a 'dangerous separatist' and a 'troublemaker' by Beijing, succeeding Tsai Ing-wen as president of the Republic of China (ROC). For India, this comes as good news! The continuance of the DPP and Tsai legacy for another four years provides more diplomatic opportunities for improved bilateral relations and more trade and commercial collaboration. In recent years, the ties between India and Taiwan have gained unprecedented momentum, owing primarily to increased support for Taiwan among Indian civil society organisations.



Taiwan, in turn, has actively reached out to India, leveraging its carefully crafted New Southbound Policy. President Tsai Ing-wen launched this strategy in 2016, and it serves as a road map for greater engagement with prospective allies and partners, including India. India's Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific outreach efforts have further encouraged Taiwan to broaden and deepen its connection with India. This development, however, is a relatively recent phenomenon influenced by strategic, geopolitical shifts in the region. As the Indo-Pacific construct solidifies, the ties between New Delhi and Taipei are poised to take on a more tangible, institutionalised form and can play a meaningful role in strengthening their bilateral

relations, which were established in 1995. For a significant period, the shadow of China had loomed over India-Taiwan relations. While Taiwan maintained a conciliatory stance toward China before President Tsai's tenure, India's multifaceted relationship with China also impeded the strengthening of ties with Taipei. However, China's reluctance to address India's territorial concerns and territorial incursions, whether in Doklam or Galwan, prompted India to reassess its China policy, thereby benefitting India-Taiwan relations. During the initial phase of Narendra Modi's government (2014-17), signs emerged of India gradually shedding its hesitancy toward Taiwan, albeit prudential behaviour remained. Tsai Ing-wen's vic-

tory in 2016 represented a watershed moment in Taiwan's politics, marking a transition away from its economic dependence on mainland China. Taiwan's New Southbound Policy seeks to diversify its economic and investment relationships, posing issues for governments adhering to a One China Policy, notably India. Taiwan has identified India as a top priority under its New Southbound Policy, focussing on trade, commerce, economic cooperation, talent exchange, resource sharing and regional connectivity. Keeping up with this, the India-Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Forum was established in 2016 as a formal platform for fostering friendship. In terms of commercial and industrial engagement, the Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TECC) and the India-Taipei Association (ITA) formalised a memorandum of understanding in 2017 for the promotion of industry collaboration. This was preceded by multiple MoUs signed between Taiwan's Chinese National Federation of Industries and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry in the same year. The inaugural India-Taiwan Trade Forum in Taipei in 2018 and the opening of the Taipei World Trade Centre's

New Delhi office further underscored the growing economic ties. India's interest in expanding economic and sociocultural ties with Taiwan is evident. Nevertheless, given the prominent roles both nations play in the world economy, the existing bilateral economic relationship falls short of expectations. Nations should continue to expand their partnership as the relationship between India and Taiwan is set to play a significant role in the evolving dynamics of the Indo-Pacific region.

Bolstering relations under Lai Ching-te

With the DPP winning a third straight term, led by current Vice-President Lai Ching-te, there is expected to be a policy consistency that India could capitalise on to further its ties with the island nation. Lai has pledged to support Tsai's cross-strait policies, asserting Taiwan's right to self-determination in the face of China's territorial claims on the island. Numerous opportunities for cooperation between Taiwan and India, including commerce, business, tourism, and education, remain inadequately utilised. In light of this, analysts advise that India designate Taiwan as a consultative partner in its Make in India initiative.

How Turkiye is 'secretly' winning the race in Africa

In the ever-evolving global landscape, Africa has become a battleground for influence and investment with China leading the charge. However, amidst the giants, a surprising contender has emerged in the form of Turkey, making significant strides in the region. As we delve into the numbers, it becomes evident that Turkey, led by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, is positioning itself strategically in Africa, leveraging economic, political and military avenues. Turkey's Erdogan vows to intensify strikes against Kurdish fighters in Syria and Iraq. Turkish firms have undertaken over 1,800 projects in Africa, with a total investment exceeding \$85 billion. These ventures have not only contributed to

the continent's economic development but have also generated employment for approximately 100,000 Africans. The bilateral trade between Turkey and African nations has witnessed substantial growth soaring from \$5.4 billion in 2003 to an estimated \$50 billion in the last year. Turkey's growing presence in Africa is not accidental. Rather, it is a result of a meticulously crafted long-term strategy. In 1998, faced with the denial of full European Union membership in 1997, Ankara pivoted its foreign policy. Erdogan, first as prime minister and later as president, actively redirected attention towards Africa culminating in the unveiling of the Action Plan for Africa. Political and diplomatic

engagement The diplomatic outreach is palpable with the number of Turkish embassies in Africa escalating from 12 in 2002 to 44 two decades later. Erdogan, personally invested in this relationship, has visited Africa an astounding 40 times in 20 years, more than any other world leader. Turkey's efforts were recognised with observer status at the African Union in 2008 and a declaration as a strategic partner. Turkey's approach in Africa combines cultural influence, economic projects and military cooperation. Erdogan's security agreements with 30 African nations, including training programs for soldiers and military deployments, have established Turkey as a key player in the region.

Hostile shift in Maldives' relations with India

India-Maldives relations are straining as a result of events that happened recently. Concerns were raised by the swift deterioration of India-Maldives ties, which occurred only one month after Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with Mohamed Muizzu, the recently elected president of the Maldives. The catalyst was a series of tweets from three Maldivian ministers denouncing Prime Minister Modi's visit to Lakshadweep and his close ties with Israel. India and the Maldives have long-standing historical ties in terms of ethnicity, language, culture, religion, and trade. The partnerships have been multifaceted, amicable, and sincere. Following Maldives' independence in 1965, India was one of the first countries to recognise the country and open diplomatic ties with it. India's quick intervention in the 1988 coup attempt resulted in the growth of mutual trust and peaceful, long-lasting bilateral ties with the Maldives. Our forces' prompt evacuation when they were deemed unnecessary allayed concerns about potential Indian territorial aspirations and supremacy. Since 1988, India and Maldives have worked closely together in the fields of security and defence. In order to accommodate the Maldivians'



needs for defence equipment and training, India took a highly cooperative and versatile approach. In April 2016, a comprehensive Action Plan for Defence was also signed in order to strengthen the defence collaboration. Social media turmoil underscores India's importance for Maldives; Muizzu's 'India Out' campaign must take a backseat. When the Tsunami struck in 2004 and Malé faced a water crisis in December 2014, India was the first country to step up by aiding the Maldives. The Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital (IGMH) was built in 1995 with Indian grant assistance. At a cost of Rs 52 crore, major renovations to the IGMH sponsored by the Government of India culminated in June 2017. During her visit to Malé on 17-18 March, 2019, the late EAM Sushma Swaraj entrusted the renovations of IGMH to the people of Maldives. India's credentials as the "first responder" have been further cemented by the country's prompt delivery of 30,000 doses of the

measles vaccine in January 2020 to stop an outbreak in the Maldives, as well as by its prompt and all-encompassing aid to the Maldives since the start of the Covid epidemic. Tourism, which is the main source of government revenue and foreign exchange gains, is a major contributor to the Maldivian economy. About 25 per cent of the Maldives' GDP is derived directly from tourism, with a far larger percentage coming from indirect sources. For Maldivians, the hospitality sector provides over one-third of direct employment prospects. India remained the leading market in 2021 and 2022, with approximately 2.91 lakh and 2.41 lakh arrivals of Indian tourists, and a 23 per cent and 14.4 per cent market share respectively. An open skies agreement between Maldives and India was reached in March 2022, substantially enhancing connectivity between the two nations. With 100,915 visitor arrivals (up to June 13, 2023), India ranks as the top source market for the

The minimum investment duration has changed dramatically due to the EB-5 Reform



Delhi: The minimum investment duration has changed dramatically due to the EB-5 Reform and Integrity Act of 2022. These USCIS reforms, enacted on October 11, 2023, allow Indian students greater opportunities to study in the US. The EB-5 Reform and Integrity Act of 2022 requires investors to put their capital at risk for two years after deployment to the job-creating organization.

Due to RIA reforms, investors no longer need to maintain their investment throughout their conditional resi-

According to research fellows, close to 1,900 beneficiaries in 27 universities across India are awaiting stipends for the last three months and a revision of fellowship amount for the last six months

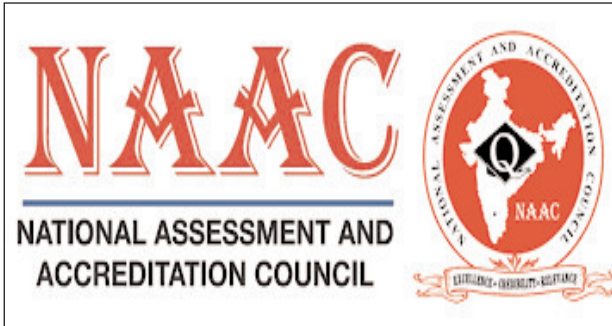
dence, which may be many years away and contingent on visa availability. The investment must now last at least two years if job creation standards are reached. This policy change streamlines US Green Card applications for investors.

US Immigration Fund

(USIF) President and CMO Nicholas A. Mastroianni III said "the reformed EB-5 program is particularly advantageous for Indian students seeking educational and career opportunities in the US." EB-5 Green Cards allow students to attend top US universities with lower acceptance rates and in-state tuition. The curriculum also offers unlimited job options, allowing students to work off-campus, intern, and get vital work experience to improve their career prospects in the competitive US labor market."

Indian universities ranked A by NAAC are 1 in 3

Around 30 colleges' grades rose significantly between accrediting cycles, prompting NAAC to re-DVV or examine them. Data validation and verification (DVV) is a standard operating process that verifies an institute's figures. Possibly an NAAC first, re-visit sends a new team of academics to campuses to verify scores. published articles in 2023, NAAC admitted "inflated" grades. "Over two cycles, HEIs should improve. The standing committee suggests a re-DVV or revisit if the increase is sufficient to ensure accuracy "NAAC executive committee chairman professor Anil



Sahasrabudhe stated. Before making a decision, an internal staff evaluates the assessment and advises the standing committee. As needed, a different partner or peer-team performs the assessments "said. NAAC's weak standards were highlighted by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) in March 2023 for "discrepancies"

in its assessment procedure. The grade inflation has left 140 of India's authorized universities with A grades, long coveted. A closer inspection shows that 42 lead with an amazing A++. Eight, mostly private and reputed universities, have scored higher by NAAC than the Indian Institute of Science, the country's top campus according to NIRF.

Canada plans to restrict international student admission

Delhi: The Canadian government plans to reduce overseas student enrollment. "It's really a system that has gotten out of control," Minister for Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Marc Miller said, suggesting freezing international student admissions in the coming months.

"That volume is disconcerting," he said CTV News of the 900,000 international students studying in Canada. The Canadian government may have targets, but Miller did not reveal them. We can imagine their numbers and their reduction. As a courtesy to my provincial counter-

parts, we'll have those discussions over the bargaining table first, he told CTV News in a Sunday interview. India has the most international students. By November 2023, they made up 215,910 of 579,075, almost 37%, according to IRCC figures.

CAPSULES

Beyond security, DU's new degree includes the mother's name

Delhi: Respect for both parents is shown by adding the mother's name. University of Delhi (DU) will soon offer 'currency-like', non-tearable polythene degrees with an invisible ink logo and hidden image for security. In addition to strengthened security to prevent forgery and duplication, DU has opted to emphasize the mother's name in the degree. After UGC's 2014 directive to include a mother's name on college, institute, and university degrees and certificates, the topic has gained attention. The UGC issued the directive to help children of unmarried, divorced, and separated moms escape the column father's name shame. DU degrees delivered in 2024 will include the mother's name, student's name, and colored portrait. Students raised by single mothers asked the institution to incorporate their mother's name in their degrees. Arora said the University answered their needs one-on-one, but this year we integrated it in the degree to provide a permanent solution. Arora said the directive is about respecting moms or both parents. New security features help identify legitimate certificates. Furthermore, these certificates will be waterproof, heat-resistant, chemical-resistant, and color-resistant and quality-retaining up to 200 degrees Celsius. The convocation trencher (gown) will also change at DU. We are constructing a traditional Indian ethnic attire for the convocation ceremony to add an Indian touch. Arora said this will enable pupils to showcase their rich Indian culture.

Mate, kem cho! the first foreign institution to open a campus in India, Deakin institution in Australia visits Gujarat

● "The University Grants Commission (UGC) gave international universities permission to establish and run campuses in India"



Australia's Deakin University has become the first foreign university to open a campus in India. Philip Green, Australia's High Commissioner to India, officially opened the GIFT City campus in the Gandhinagar area of Gujarat. "It fills me with great pride that Deakin University in GIFT City, Australia, is the first university in the world to open a campus in India. This is just the start of

a new chapter in the educational relationship between Australia and India, according to a statement from Green. The University Grants Commission (UGC) gave international universities permission to establish and run campuses in India two months ago. This was in keeping with the 2020 National Education Policy

(NEP) recommendations. Deakin University is a public university in Victoria, Australia, that was established in 1974. At its new branch campus in Gujarat, Indian students will be able to study Master of Business Analytics and Master of Cybersecurity (Professional) courses commencing July this year.

Courses Increase, But SOL Lacks Space

Delhi: With more courses provided under the National Education Policy 2020 and more students at Delhi University's School of Open Learning (SOL), infrastructure upgrades are needed. SOL's North Campus building is so crowded that students had to take exams in tents last month. Exam space is a serious concern for SOL students, who only see teachers on weekends. There are 15 weekend honours and 15 pass classes, sometimes overlapping. Two



courses were added. The Enhancement Compulsory Course is now offered online on Saturdays. Core discipline-specific and generic electives are taught in person on Sundays. In 2019, SOL

built a seven-story facility in Tahirpur, east Delhi, for student convenience. Two further centers in Rohini and Uttam Nagar were planned. Protests by first-year students after the Choice Based Credit System prompted the

decision. Students complained that the study centers were far away and didn't have adequate space for weekend personal contact program classes. Tahirpur's building is unfinished. We got no land in Rohini or Uttam Nagar, says SOL director Payal Mago. The new building opens in June for the new academic year. The school contains 1,000 seats and two labs with 250 computers. Four classrooms on each floor allow 1,500 students to take exams."

Five handy tips every candidate should know to avoid anxiety during exam preparation

While it is normal to feel stressed, an overdose may be detrimental to success. Here are five ways of keeping your calm particular during final revision hours. It is quite natural a phenomenon for any student sitting for an important examination to feel a bit anxious and nervous during the final days of preparation before the exams. It only shows the candidate's willingness to do well and succeed in the business at hand. However, while it is absolutely normal to feel a little stressed with the approach of exams-- whatever its kind -- for the conscientious student; an overdose of such stress and nervousness may be detrimental to success itself

thereby leading to the defeat of the purpose in sight. Dr Ritwik Sharma, a medical officer from the Narayana Hospital in Guwahati, said, "Most young individuals who are preparing for examinations often tend to get tensed despite completing their syllabus. While anxiety is a natural phenomenon, it tends to instill a negative thought process." If you too are sitting for an exam soon and worrying about the outcome, here are a few tips recommended by experts to keep your mind and emotions under control to maintain your calm before the exams. It is common knowledge that regular studies yield high dividends at the end of the day. It

is advisable, under the circumstances, not to keep postponing any preparation till the last minute. Prof Gayatree Goswamee, a former HOD of Education at Gauhati University, said "The final days are meant only for revision and not for learning any new lesson. Such a practice is sure to boost the level of your confidence and keep your anxiety at bay to lead eventually to a wholesome performance as desired." Whatever the level of your preparation do not let any negative thoughts interfere with your confidence. Rely on your past achievements to guide you to your avowed goal and concentrate on what ever you already know and are confident;

DU orders colleges to install CCTV 'in front of girls' washrooms, dressing rooms' during fests

Delhi: The Delhi University has ordered colleges to install CCTV cameras outside women's bathrooms and changing rooms during fests. After IIT-Delhi ladies were secretly filmed changing, the advise was issued. To prevent accidents, the university has urged its colleges and departments to install CCTV cameras at every institute and hostel entrances. In light of the IIT-Delhi incident, we added fest guidelines per Delhi Police suggestions. We urged institutions to install CCTV in front of females' washrooms and dressing rooms during fests for student safety "DU proctor Rajni Abbi said. In October 2023,



10 Bharti College students from Delhi University claimed they were surreptitiously caught changing in an IIT-Delhi restroom during a fashion presentation at the fest. Police detained a 20-year-old contract-

al sweeper and placed him in judicial detention. Kishangarh police registered a voyeurism case under Indian Penal Code section 354C. The amended guidelines require colleges to inspect their

perimeter walls before large events and install low concertina wires to prevent strangers from scaling them. The advice recommends centralized public announcements at all institute entrances. Any institute must organize an advanced security liaison meeting with all stakeholders before inviting outside students to a large event. The advise also limits event attendance, hires door frame metal detectors, and covers gloomy spots with lights. Google Forms should restrict event entry, and copies must be sent to the police and other departments, the warning said.

IIT, NIT experts to help AICTE evaluate engineering college seat increases

Delhi: A top official said the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has hired over 700 faculty from the Indian Institutes of Technology and National Institutes of Technology to evaluate its affiliated technical colleges before increasing seats. Last month, the technical education regulator lifted the intake cap for top-performing institutions that maintained high education quality. Technical colleges may have 240 seats in any one branch before. Member secretary Rajive Kumar said the council has begun 2024-25 seat clearance. He said it hired top experts to inspect universities before providing authorization. Kumar added, "The council has specified some quality parameters for all technical Institutions, including sufficient faculty, fully equipped laboratories and updated infrastructure."

LIC gets Rs 25,464 interim bonus income tax refund



Delhi: Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) won a Rs 25,464.46 crore refund indication from the Income Tax Department for seven assessment years. LIC and the Income Tax Department are disputing whether the corporation's interim incentive to policyholders is deductible. In a stock exchange statement, LIC said the Rs 25,464 crore return covers AY 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15, 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2019-20. LIC argued that interim bonus payouts were permitted expenditure for taxation purposes, but the Income

● LIC argued that interim bonus payouts were permitted expenditure for taxation purposes, but the Income Tax Department's assessing officer first thought it was taxable

Tax Department's assessing officer first thought it was taxable since surplus was being distributed. LIC appealed the assessing officer's decision to ITAT, which ordered the IT Department to

reexamine the case. After review, the assessing officer issued a refund for seven assessment years and a demand order for two others for Rs 2,133 crore. Instead of the estimated refund of Rs 27,500 crore for seven assessment years, LIC received Rs 25,464 crore after modifying Rs 2,133 crore, sources said. LIC proposes to challenge all demand orders for various assessment years—Rs 2,133.67 crore, Rs 1,395 crore, and Rs 1,370 crore—to Commissioner, Appeals.

Piyush Goyal denies removing wheat, rice, and sugar export restrictions

Delhi: Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal denied removing the wheat, rice, and sugar export prohibition on Saturday. "No plan exists to abolish wheat, rice, and sugar export prohibitions. India would not import sugar or wheat." The government banned exports of several vital foods to boost domestic availability and lower inflationary prices. According to official estimates, India's retail inflation jumped to 5.69% in December from 5.55 percent in November due to increasing food prices.



Food inflation, which accounts for over half of the CPI, rose 9.05 percent from 8.657 percent in November. The month saw strong price increases for vegeta-

bles, legumes, spices, and fruits. According to government estimates, rice and wheat prices rose 9.93% and sugar prices rose over 7% throughout the month.

India cuts back on buying Russian crude oil because of price issues

India bought less oil from Russia because the prices were too high, not because they were having trouble paying, said Hardeep Singh Puri, the oil minister. Puri told the press, "There is no payment problem... It is a pure function of the price at which our refineries

will buy." India's Russian oil imports dropped to their lowest level in 11 months in December, as five ships carrying light sweet Sokol grade oil left for other places. This was because the U.S. sanctioned some ships and shippers for not following the G7-set \$60 per barrel

price caps for oil at Russian ports. "India's leaders only want one thing: that the Indian people get energy at the best price and without any problems," he said, adding that India buys about 1.5 million barrels of oil from Russia every day on average.

CAPSULES

Airtel, Jio may drop unlimited 5G internet package, charge 10% more: Report

Delhi: Jio and Airtel may soon end their unlimited 5G

internet deals for premium subscribers. Analysts predict that 5G services will cost 5-10% more than 4G



starting in the second half of 2024. The goal is to increase monetisation and income. Industry experts estimate the two telecom operators will boost mobile charges by at least 20% in the September quarter of 2024 to improve their ROI on 5G infrastructure investments and user acquisition costs. Vodafone-Idea and government-owned BSNL have not launched 5G services. Ericsson's pre-commercial Reduced Capability (RedCap) software was tested on Airtel's 5G network by Bharti Airtel and Ericsson. The 5G TDD network was tested with Qualcomm's 5G RedCap test module, marking India's first RedCap implementation and validation. The business stated Ericsson RedCap, a new radio access network (RAN) software solution, introduces new 5G use cases and allows more 5G connections from smartwatches, other wearables, industrial sensors, and AR/VR devices.

Australia blasts Musk's X for major trust, safety team layoffs

Delhi: Elon Musk's X has been criticized by Australia for failing to remove damaging information and complying with a legal notice. In its latest transparency report, the Australian eSafety Commissioner stated X had made "deep cuts" to its trust and safety teams since the tech billionaire bought it in October 2022. X cut trust and safety workers by 30% globally and 45% in Asia-Pacific. According to eSafety, X cut content moderators by 52% and global trust and safety engineers by 80%. X slashed public policy workers globally by 68% and in APAC by 73%. "Online safety requires adequate trust and safety resource allocation. Online hate and other damages may be harder

● When asked how Twitter Blue tweets are treated, X Corp said no accounts are amplified

to address for companies with few trust and safety staff, according to eSafety. It said the user or group facing abuse bears the safety burden rather than the platform assuming responsibility for damaging content and conduct on their service. X said that Twitter did not have a worldwide hostile conduct team or full-time workers dedicated to this topic. "It (X) said that instead,

a broader cross-functional team has this in scope and collaborates on a set of policies that are related to toxicity more broadly," the paper said. In its legal notification response, X stated that Twitter "had not replaced the Trust and Safety Council" with another advisory body "on matters relating to the safety of users, including hateful conduct" after disbanding it in December 2022. X failed to act on 99 percent of 'Twitter Blue' content that the Centre for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH) flagged as hate on its paid subscription service 'Blue'. When asked how Twitter Blue tweets are treated, X Corp said no accounts are amplified.

Market value of RIL surpasses Rs 18 lakh crore

Delhi: As the stock reached a record high, Reliance Industries' (NS:RELI) market capitalization surpassed Rs 18 lakh crore. When RIL's stock crossed the Rs. 2,700 barrier, it increased by 2.5 percent, and its market capitalization reached Rs. 18.36 lakh crore. Prior to the release of US inflation data and the beginning of the Q3FY24 earnings season, Siddhartha Khemka, Head of Retail Research at Motilal Oswal



(NS:MOFS) Financial Services, stated that the Nifty moved laterally during the session and ended modestly higher at 21,647 levels. Oil and gas, consumer durables, autos, and PSU banks were the top-

performing industries. In anticipation of better demand prior to the general elections, cement equities saw new buying. Investors' reactions to TCS (NS:TCS) and Infosys (NS:INFY) Q3 results are anticipated to

bring attention to the IT sector on Friday. He claimed that their management advice and criticism will provide insight into the sector's prospects going forward. Nagaraj Shetti, Senior Technical Research Analyst, HDFC Securities said after demonstrating a sustained upswing from the lows on Wednesday, Nifty went into a consolidation with positive bias on Thursday and closed the day higher by 28 points.

Infosys will purchase a semiconductor design company

On January 11, Infosys announced that it would buy InSemi, a top supplier of embedded services and semiconductor design. The IT company plans to invest Rs 280 crore to acquire a 100% share in the business. "This strategic investment further strengthens Infosys' engineering R&D capabilities and demonstrates its continued commitment to co-create with global clients to help them navigate their digital transformation journey," the IT services company said in a release as it shared its December quarter numbers. As businesses compete to create the most potent chips in order to capitalize on the artificial intelligence (AI) boom, the next big technological frontier, semiconductors, which are at the core of electronic products ranging from toys



to smart devices, are in the limelight. By introducing specialized design skills at scale, Infosys claimed the transaction would help expedite its chip-to-cloud plan. It would also blend in perfectly with its current investments in industry collaborations and AI/automation platforms. The third-quarter net profit of India's second-largest IT services business, Rs 6,106 crore, fell 7.3% year over year, below Moneycontrol's projections of Rs 6,244 crore. InSemi, which was established in 2013,

provides comprehensive semiconductor design services, specializing in electronic, platform, embedded, and software technologies. Leading international companies in the semiconductor, consumer electronics, automotive, and high-tech sectors are served by it. "The need for next-generation semiconductor design services integrated with our embedded systems creates unique differentiators with the introduction of AI, Smart devices, 5G and beyond, and electric vehicles."

TCS reports better Q3 earnings and announces an interim and special dividend of Rs 27

● "Strong deal momentum is being observed in all markets, and this has led to a healthy order book that shows our long-term growth"

Major software company Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS) reported a greater net profit of Rs 11,097 crore at the end of the third quarter of FY24. Additionally, the business announced that the Board of Directors has decided a special dividend of Rs. 18 per equity share of Re1 and a third interim dividend of Rs. 9. TCS has disclosed in a regulatory filing that it finished the third quarter of FY24 on December 31, 2023, with sales of Rs 60,583 crore (Q3FY23 Rs 58,229 crore) and a profit of Rs. 11,097



crore (Rs 10,883 crore). Our robust performance during a seasonally bad quarter, despite facing challenges from the macroeconomic environment, highlights the resilience of our business model, which is based on a customer-centric strategy and a well-diversified portfolio. Strong deal momentum is being observed in all markets, and this has led to a healthy order book that shows our long-term growth. K. Krithivasan, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director,

stated, "We are leading the innovation and exploratory efforts for our customers in this area and are seeing tremendous interest in Generative AI." The Chief Operating Officer and Executive Director, N. Ganapathy Subramaniam, stated: "The MCX platform is processing record transaction volumes and scaling well." The rollout of the BSNL 4G/5G network is proceeding as planned. With our AI playground platform, we are making good progress in upskilling our staff in generative AI.

US SEC approves Bitcoin ETFs



Delhi: The first US-listed exchange-traded funds (ETFs) that track Bitcoin have received approval from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). According to analysts, the licensing of 11 spot Bitcoin ETFs will not only improve accessibility for investors but also help build a more stable and regulated cryptocurrency market. Many scandals have occurred in the past, and many people have lost money as a result of wallet hacks or abrupt business closures. However, with ETFs now listed on tightly-regulated US stock exchanges, accessibility for individual investors will be enabled through their current brokerage accounts. These

India clinch double Super Over thriller to sweep series

NEW DELHI:

Afghanistan lost both Mohammad Nabi and Gurbaz to leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi as they failed to score any runs in the second Super Over, signalling the end of a winding match. Rohit remained the star of the night among all that commotion, also silencing those who doubted his suitability to be in India's T20 scheme of things.

A strike-rate of 175 often will give the picture of manic hitting but his innings was anything but that.

His top-order colleagues' callousness while playing the pull shot meant that Rohit had to restrain himself in the initial part of his stay. Even Rinku displayed his destructive instincts judiciously and that gradually-building crescendo was the trademark of their alliance.

The Afghanistan spinners found a hint of grip from the surface, and Rohit had to bring out a rather rare shot from his arsenal, reverse sweep to



unsettle opposition spinners. In fact, a reverse sweep off leg-spinner Qais Ahmad fetched him a T20 fifty off 41 balls, a first since October 2022. But even a restraint Rohit can be a sight for sore eyes.

There were those inevitable and archetypal pulls that make a Rohit innings such a compelling watch. Perhaps, a message for other top-order batters on the safe execution of that shot. The Mumbai's on-one-leg pull off pacer Mohammed Saleem that sailed into second tier was an astounding shot. But once he felt that India had reached a safer shore, Rohit unleashed himself on the Afghans as 71 runs flowed from the next

28 balls he faced. The fifty soon blossomed into a hundred off 63 balls, Rohit's first in T20 since his 111 against the West Indies at Lucknow in 2018.

This was also Rohit's highest score in T20s, surpassing his 118 against Sri Lanka at Indore in 2017.

At the other end, Rinku had the simple job of keeping his end up and the left-hander did that job with maturity.

Rinku, though, vented his belligerence when the opportunity presented itself, such as a flicked six off Saleem over square leg and carried on to register his second T20 fifty as the Afghans wilted under continuous onslaught.

We have one more...': Rohit eyes T20 World Cup glory

NEW DELHI:

The dejection was clearly evident on Rohit Sharma's face when the broadcasters asked the ODI skipper about the ODI World Cup loss. India, who were the only unbeaten team till the final in the quadrennial event, held in India, had lost to Australia in the title clash at the jam-packed Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad in November last year.

Following a triumphant 3-0 victory in the three-match Twenty20 International (T20I) series against Afghanistan, Rohit faced questions from the broadcasters regarding the ODI World Cup setback.



To this, Rohit, who looked emotional, said: "I don't want to think about it now (World Cup loss). For me, 50 over World Cup is the biggest World Cup. It's not like I don't give that importance to the T20 World Cup and World Test Championship. We have been brought up seeing

the 50-over World Cup. And when it is played in India, it's quite big." India went into the semi-finals after winning all their group matches. They defeated Australia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, New Zealand, England, Sri Lanka, South Africa and Netherlands.

Rohit Sharma smashes record 5th T20I century

NEW DELHI: Indian skipper Rohit Sharma stood tall and led the team's fightback from the front with a record fifth T20I century during the third and final match against Afghanistan in Bengaluru on Wednesday. Rohit, who failed to open an account in the first two games, made a remark-

able comeback to smash a hundred off 64 balls. He bailed India out from a precarious 22/4 with his superb knock. Having made his return to T20s after a hiatus of 14 months, Rohit went on to score his highest score (121 not out off 69 balls) in the shortest format. It was his first century in

all T20 cricket since January 2019. He rebuilt the innings and then tore into the opposition attack as he hit 11 fours and eight sixes to go past his previous best of 118. Rohit forged an unbeaten 190-run partnership with Rinku Singh (69* off 39) - highest stand for any wicket for India in T20Is.

Sri Lanka clinch T20I series 2-1 after record low Zimbabwe total

NEW DELHI: Skipper Wanindu Hasaranga led from the front with his four-for as Sri Lanka cruised to a nine-wicket win in the series deciding third and final T20I in Colombo on Thursday.

Hasaranga registered superb figures of 4 for 15 as he ran through Zimbabwe's lower order with the tourists succumbing to their lowest-ever T20 total. With the lop-sided win that came inside 11 overs, the Lankans clinched the series 2-1.



Pathum Nissanaka (39 not out) and Kusal Mendis (33) added 64 runs in 46 balls before a deceptive turner from left-arm spinner Sean Williams took the latter off-stump for

Zimbabwe's sole breakthrough. Nissanaka sealed Sri Lanka's win by launching Sikandar Raza for six over long-on when the scores drew level. Zimbabwe had a creditable start

with 56-3 after the first six overs of power play but struggled to score boundaries once fielding restrictions eased. Number three batsman Brian Bennett top-scored with 29 off just 12 balls, including four boundaries in the second over, before a Hasaranga catch off Angelo Mathews sent him back. But a quick collapse saw the tourists lose their last six wickets for just 11 runs including three in the final three balls of the innings.

Daniil Medvedev wins Australian Open match at 03:40 in morning

NEW DELHI: World no.3 Daniil Medvedev battled back from the brink of defeat to make the Australian Open third round in a contest which finished at 03:40 on Friday. Two-time runner-up Medvedev advanced to the next round after a thrilling five-set win over Emil Ruusuvuori.

Battling back from two sets down, Medvedev triumphed 3-6, 6-7 (1/7), 6-4, 7-6 (7/1), 6-0 in a contest that lasted more than four hours and 20 minutes on court. Medvedev had been just two



points from defeat when trailing his 53rd-ranked Finnish opponent 4-5 in the fourth set. However, he recovered to sprint

through the tie-break to level at two sets all and then swept the decider as Ruusuvuori struggled with a right shoulder injury.

Medvedev, the 2021 and 2022 finalist, will face Canadian 27th seed Felix Auger-Aliassime for a place in the last 16.

When Kohli told Team India's fielding coach he didn't want to stand in slips



NEW DELHI: For those who have tracked Virat Kohli's journey since his early days, it's evident that he has invested considerable effort behind the scenes to transform himself into the fittest cricketer on the global stage. His dedication to the sport and sacrifices, discipline, and commitment to fitness have not only reshaped his own

career but also positioned him as an inspiring figure for numerous aspiring cricketers worldwide. From a chubby cricketer who loved biryani, rolls, and his favourite 'choley bhaturey', to the lean run machine that he is now, Virat's cricketing and fitness journey has been a fascinating one. The 35-year-old's live-

wire athleticism was one of the key moments in India's thrilling win in the third and final T20I against Afghanistan. Virat was given the 'Fielder of the Series' award by coach Indian fielding coach T Dilip. The coach while giving the award to the batting star, also revealed how Virat once refused to take up fielding in slips.

Sakshi Malik advises wrestlers to participate in nationals conducted by ad-hoc panel

NEW DELHI: Olympic bronze medalist Sakshi Malik on Thursday recommended that the country's wrestlers opt to take part in the Nationals organized by the ad-hoc committee in Jaipur instead of the event arranged by the suspended national federation.

Sakshi, along with Bajrang Punia and Vinesh Phogat, played a key role in a protracted battle against the Wrestling Federation of India's (WFI) former president, Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. Singh faced accusations of sexual harassment and intimidation from the trio. "I urge the wrestlers to go and play in the Nationals organised by the ad-hoc committee and not to take part in the tournament organised by the WFI. The tournament organised by the ad-hoc panel is the recognised event," Sakshi said in a video on X. Last month, the ad-hoc committee governing the WFI announced that the senior national championships for



wrestling would be held from February 2 to 5 in Jaipur. The Brij Bhushan Bajwa-led panel said the event will feature competitions across senior free style, Greco Roman, and women's categories. The Bajwa-headed panel was formed by the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) to oversee the WFI after the newly-elected body, led by

Brij Bhushan loyalist Sanjay Singh, was suspended by the sports ministry for violating its own constitution. A woman wrestler from Rohtak, however, told PTI that they will compete in the Nationals to be conducted by WFI in Pune, despite the government according recognition to the Nationals organised by the ad-hoc panel.

How Sumit Nagal overcame fund crunch, injury and Covid

NEW DELHI: Last year when Sumit Nagal spoke about the "hardships" and "lonely battles" he faces on the ATP Tour, India's best men's singles player also pointed out the consequent "funds-related issues" he encounters to sustain his tennis career. Sumit, in a fervent appeal, had said that he had just 900 euros (approximately Rs 80,000) left in his bank account and needed a "big sponsor" to prolong his tennis career. After his confession, Gatorade, renowned for its history of supporting athletes globally, entered into a partnership with Sumit. "At one point last year, he (Sumit) faced acute financial problems due to lack of sponsors. He had a steady sponsor early in his career. It was a big corporate, but they too pulled out when Covid started.

CAPSULES

Govt. organizing an array of cultural events ahead of the Pran Pratishtha ceremony

Ayodhya

To enhance the grandeur and divinity of the Pran Pratishtha ceremony of Lord Shri Ram, the Yogi government is organising a variety of cultural programs at different locations in Ayodhya. This responsibility has been assigned to the Culture Department. The Lalit Kala Academy, operating under the Culture Department, has meticulously planned the schedule of various events. The planned events include a wall painting workshop on the main walls of Ayodhya Dham, captivating sand art portraying Lord Rama along the banks of the Sarayu River, an exhibition showcasing Ram Bal Leela and diverse artworks, as well as programs featuring mehendi application and photography. These programs started on January 18 and are set to continue incessantly until and after the Pran Pratishtha ceremony. Wall painting being done at Airport, Collectorate and Ram Ki Paidi Marg. The director of the Uttar Pradesh Lalit Kala Academy, Dr. Shradha Shukla shared that approximately 40 artists from various districts across the state is currently engaged in the creation of wall paintings. These paintings cover nearly 3,000 square feet on the CRPF wall near the Maharshi Valmiki International Airport, about 1,500 square feet on the wall of the Ayodhya Collectorate building, and approximately 1,200 square feet on the wall of the Irrigation Department building situated on the Ram Ki Paidi Marg. Additionally, at the Maharshi Valmiki International Airport, statues of Maharshi Valmiki, Lord Surya on Surya Kund, and Lord Ganesha statues made from Odisha sandstone on Ganesha Kund are being installed. Furthermore, starting from January 18, an exhibition of sculpture and painting, based on various episodes such as Lord Ram's Bal Leela, Ram's Gurukul Leela, Hanuman's Leela, Tadaka Vadha, Sita's Swayamvar, Ram-Jatayu Milan, and Hanuman-Sita Milan, is being organized. This exhibition, showcasing the artistry with paintings, will continue until January 26. Furthermore, 40 paintings and 10 sculptures will be created by 50 artists from different districts of the state. Along with this, home studio workshops based on Lord Shri Ram and his life character will be organized in 10 districts of the state namely Gorakhpur, Varanasi, Prayagraj, Jhansi, Kanpur, Agra, Aligarh, Meerut, Bareilly and Lucknow. This workshop will take place between February 1 and February 29. An exhibition of the artifacts selected in the workshop will be organized in Ayodhya Dham. The State Lalit Kala Academy, in collaboration with the Culture Department, is organizing a mehndi and other workshops for women and girls, supported by the Asia Delfic Council, where a thousand artists will participate. Additionally, as part of the Ramotsav program, a three-day independent photography competition will be held for photographers from the state and the country. The competition begins on January 20 and concludes on January 23. The selected artworks from the competition will be exhibited at Ramkatha Park by the Academy. Furthermore, the winning artists will be honoured with awards. Not only this but also on the banks of the Sarayu River in Naya Ghat, renowned sand artist Padma Shri Dr Sudarshan Patnaik, along with seven fellow artists, will organize a sand sculpture art camp based on Lord Shri Ram and Ramcharit, aiming to set a world record.

Yogi govt starts work under 'Navya Ayodhya' Project Phase-2

Ayodhya

After the successful completion of all the works under Phase 1 of the 'Navya Ayodhya' project, work has been started under Phase 2 in line with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's vision of 'Bhavaya' (grand) Ayodhya. In this sequence, a detailed action plan has been prepared to brighten the entry points of Ayodhya through median horticulture beautification. Additionally, as per the instructions of the Yogi Government, Ayodhya Municipal Corporation will carry out the greening and beautification of the 24 km stretch along the banks of Saryu River between Sahadatganj and Lata Chowk under National Highway 28 in Ayodhya. At present, the process to hire a contractor for a period of 5 years for decorating and preserving the middle and embankment slopes of the National Highway by planting ornamental flowers and trees is going on.

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UP govt raises sugarcane price, approves semi-conductor policy Yogi cabinet approves

Lucknow,

The Yogi cabinet, in a meeting held at Lok Bhavan under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, gave its nod to 8 important proposals. This includes the much-awaited Semi Conductor Policy 2024, along with an increase in sugarcane prices, providing a significant benefit to sugarcane farmers. In addition, approval has been given for three new universities in the state. Moreover, the proposal to change the name of Mundera Nagar Panchayat in Gorakhpur to Chauri Chaura also received the Cabinet's



approval. During the press conference held in Lok Bhavan, the state's Finance Minister Suresh Khanna, Higher Education Minister Yogendra Upadhyay, and Sugar Industry and Sugarcane Development Minister Chaudhary Laxmi Narayan informed the media about the decisions of the Cabinet. Yogi government's big

gift to sugarcane farmers. Providing information about the decisions made in the Cabinet meeting, Chaudhary Laxmi Narayan, the Minister of Sugar Industry and Sugarcane Development, mentioned that for the sugarcane purchased by all sugar mills in the state (cooperative sector, cor-

Dara Singh Chauhan files nomination in the presence of CM Yogi

Lucknow

In the presence of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Thursday, BJP candidate Dara Singh Chauhan filed his nomination papers for the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council (MLC) by-election. Notably, the election for the vacant legislative council seat, following the resignation of Dr. Dinesh Sharma, was initially scheduled for January 29.



However, after the announcement of a public holiday on January 22 due to the

consecration ceremony in the Election Commission issued a revised election schedule on Monday. Now, the by-election will take place on January 30. Additionally, the withdrawal of names will occur on January 23 instead of January 22. Dr Sharma's term for the MLC seat is until January 30, 2027. During this, Deputy Chief Ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak, along with State President Bhupendra Chaudhary were also present.

I am a monk because of Ram Mandir movement: CM Yogi

Lucknow

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Wednesday, made a major revelation about himself, saying that he became a monk because of the Ram Mandir movement. "We have been associated with movement from the beginning. However, we are not taking credit for the consecration ceremony of Lord Ram. We are going there as servants", Yogi added. Addressing the conclave organized by a TV channel at Taj Hotel,

the Chief Minister said that invitations for the temple have been extended to Congress and Samajwadi Party. He said that no one has been stopped from coming to the Ram temple. Those who come as servants of Lord Ram are welcomed, he remarked. The Chief Minister stated further: "We are fortunate that our revered Gurudev was one of the frontline warriors in the Ram Mandir movement. Even during that period, he had the leadership of this

CM inaugurates Air India Express' flight services between Ayodhya and Kolkata

Lucknow

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated the Air India Express flight services between Ayodhya and Kolkata and Bengaluru on Wednesday through a video conference from his official residence in Lucknow. During this, he said that Ayodhya is becoming a prominent city for tourists in India and globally. "Ayodhya already has a large number of local devotees, but considering the excitement nation-

wide, efforts have been made to facilitate the arrival of pilgrims here. The work done by the Ministry of Civil Aviation in this regard is commendable", he remarked. UP emerges as leading state in air connectivity. CM Yogi expressed gratitude to Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and General VK Singh for their special focus on enhancing Uttar Pradesh's connectivity, providing all possible support. He said,

"Under the leadership of PM Modi, Uttar Pradesh has shown excellent results in this direction, not only welcoming new airports in the past 9 years but also becoming a significant state in terms of air connectivity with 4 international airports." CM Yogi mentioned that on December 30, PM Modi inaugurated the Maharshi Valmiki International Airport in Ayodhya, marking a milestone.

'Ram Jyoti' will be illuminated with lamps made from the sacred soil of Saryu

Ayodhya

On January 22, the sacred soil of this land will once again light up the 'Ram Jyoti', not only in Ayodhya but also across the nation and the world. Devotees visiting the shrines of Shri Ram Lalla and Hanuman Garhi are buying lamps from local potters here. After the consecration ceremony, they will celebrate Diwali by lighting the 'Ram Jyoti' at their homes in the evening. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's visionary idea has opened up a significant market for local potters here, dis-

tancing people from using Chinese products. Now, with the economic and self-reliant focus on empowering potters, the state government is providing them the opportunity to celebrate Diwali twice a year. In line with CM Yogi's vision, the Tourism Department is also gearing up to decorate Ayodhya with 10 lakh lamps made by local potters on the big day. There are only five days left until January 22. In Jaipur, potters are now shaping their sweat into the form of lamps. They are eager

for the 'Ram Jyoti' to illuminate every home with the lamps they create. Despite adverse weather conditions, they are working day and night to produce more lamps. Potter Ashok Prajapati explains that they are sourcing clay from villages like Darshan Nagar, Kishundaspur, Baisin, and Kusamaha because the weather is challenging, and time is limited. Currently, they are making smaller lamps. People from Ayodhya are coming directly here to buy lamps to light up their homes.

Ayodhya

To facilitate the pilgrimage for Ram devotees and tourists visiting Ayodhya Dham by helicopter, the Yogi government is introducing helicopter services from six districts in the state. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will inaugurate the helicopter service from Lucknow. The government has also fixed the fare for helicopter service. Ram devotees and tourists will be offered helicopter services from Gorakhpur, Varanasi, Lucknow, Prayagraj, Mathura, and Agra. Plans are underway to expand this service to

additional districts in the state in the near future. In addition to this, the Yogi government is introducing an aerial darshan of Ayodhya city and the Ram temple for devotees. The Tourism Department has been assigned responsibility for this initiative. Devotees interested in having aerial darshan will need to make advance bookings to avail the facility. Experience the aerial darshan of Ram Temple for Rs 3,539. Principal Secretary Tourism Mukesh Meshram said that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had given

instructions to provide helicopter facilities to Ram devotees. Under this, helicopter service is being started from 6 districts of the state. This facility will be made available to devotees and tourists on an operator model. In addition, Ram devotees will have the opportunity for an aerial darshan of the Ram temple. The helicopter rides will take off from the heli-pad near the Tourism Guest House along the banks of the Saryu River. Devotees will enjoy an aerial tour covering renowned tourist destinations, including Ram Mandir.

A total of 650 e-carts will operate in the first phase, devotees will soon experience enhanced facilities

Ayodhya

In order to ensure a smooth experience for devotees visiting Ayodhya, the Yogi government has made extensive preparations to operate e-carts for transporting pilgrims to the Ram Temple and Hanuman Garhi for the darshan of Shri Ram Lalla. These e-carts or golf carts will be free for the elderly, divyangs and pregnant women. To execute this significant initiative, the Ayodhya Development Authority has called upon private industrial houses to contribute. Efforts are underway to encourage these private industrial houses to donate to this service in Ayodhya through their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds, thereby providing relief to the pilgrims. According to Vishal Singh, the Vice Chairman of the Ayodhya Development Authority, a large number of devotees, including the elderly, divyangs, and pregnant women, are expected to visit Ayodhya for the darshan of Shri Ram Lalla after the consecration ceremony. For devotees arriving in Ayodhya with their vehicles, the facility of e-carts will be available at the parking area. Through these e-carts, devotees can visit Hanuman Garhi and other religious sites in the vicinity, along with the darshan of Lord Ram. Furthermore, the plan includes providing free services for the elderly, divyangs, and pregnant women. The e-carts will take devotees heading to the Ram Temple. Subsequently, wheelchairs will be provided free of charge at that location for the elderly, divyangs, and pregnant women. The objective is to enable as many devotees as possible to have a darshan within a short timeframe, he added. Vishal Singh said that we have sent a proposal to those corporate houses for contribution to provide e-cart or golf cart service here. These corporate houses have previously expressed their desire to serve in Ayodhya through their CSR funds. After obtaining their approval, the plan will be implemented on a large scale. A total of 650 e-carts will come in the first phase. Ayodhya Development Authority's facility management partner, Kavach Global Konnects Pvt. Ltd., is playing a crucial role in this. Mr. Taksh Raval, Director of Kavach Global, said that through the tender process, they have secured various locations within the Ayodhya Development Authority. At these locations, efforts are being made to provide devotees with better facilities. As part of this plan, the intention is to offer devotees the convenience of 12-seater and 18-seater e-carts from these locations.